



Washington County Transit Needs Study FINAL REPORT

February 2018



In
association
with



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington County faces several challenges in achieving an efficient and cost-effective public transportation network. The county has suburban and rural populations. Many cities serve as bedroom communities for Minneapolis and Saint Paul, while also containing important local trip generators such as shopping centers, schools, hospitals, community centers, government services, manufacturing facilities, and job sites. A demographic analysis illustrates that traditionally transit-dependent markets are not concentrated in the more urban areas with better access to transit. Older adults, people with disabilities, Veterans, low-income households and non-English speakers can be found throughout the county, suggesting the need for a comprehensive approach to mobility in the county that addresses these population clusters in urban, suburban, and rural contexts.

The Washington County Transit Needs Study examines the challenges Washington County faces in providing transportation services. It also prioritizes a series of strategies that can be implemented within the short term. A primary outcome of the study is a recommendation for a coordinated approach to supplementing existing transit services by collaborating with human service agencies, cities, employers, and other entities to centralize travel planning, information, and the scheduling of trips.

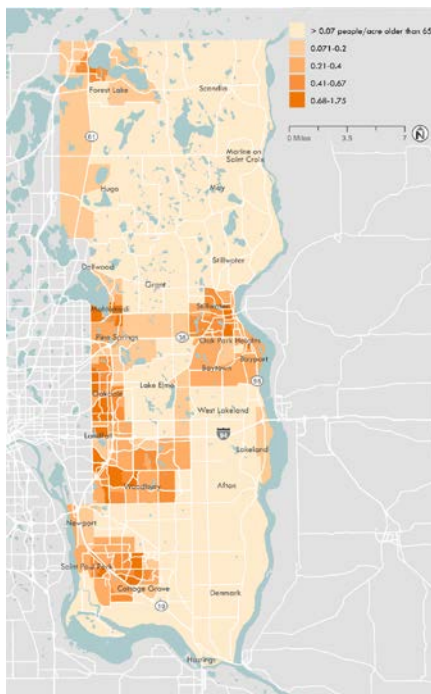
Existing Conditions

Located on the eastern edge of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, Washington County includes a mix of suburban, small-town, and rural populations. According to the Metropolitan Council's population projections, the countywide population is expected to grow from 251,000 residents in 2017 to 330,000 residents by 2040 (more than 30% increase).

The population of Washington County is predominantly concentrated in the western portion of the county, which is within short commuting distance to Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Woodbury, Cottage Grove, and Oakdale are the three most populous cities. Combined, they account for 50% of the total countywide population. For the most part, employment density in Washington County follows a similar pattern to population density. Overall, Washington County's employment density (concentration of jobs in specific areas) is relatively low, which presents a challenge to planning adequate transportation access to worksites around Washington County.

Older adults (65 years and older) are the fastest growing age group in Washington County. This population is projected to increase by 150% between 2010 and 2040 (from 24,984 to 62,309). This means that Washington County has a growing need for services and resources – including transportation services – that target older adults. Currently, 13.4% of Washington County

residents are 65 or older, just below the statewide average of 14.7% and the national average of 14.9%.



In some portions of Washington County, the proportion of senior residents is as high as 39%.

Using a measure of 185% of the federal poverty level as representing poverty, 14.4% of Washington County's total population is living in poverty. The highest concentration of people living in poverty is in Landfall, where 65% of the population lives in poverty. Over 20% of the population in Newport, St. Paul Park, Bayport, Oakdale, and Forest Lake is living in poverty. Overall, Washington County residents are more affluent than residents of other Minnesota counties. The median household income in Washington County is \$83,700, compared to the statewide average of \$63,500 and the national average of \$53,900 (in 2015 dollars).

8.4% of Washington County residents have a disability. 8% of Washington County residents age 18 or over are Veterans, on par with both statewide and national averages. Nearly one-half (48%) of Washington County Veterans are age 65 or older; 7% of Veterans are under the age of 35.

The majority of Washington County residents leave the county for work: out of 124,977 total daily commute trips, 30,445 end in Washington County (24%) while 94,532 trips end at work destinations outside of the county (76%). The predominant commute destinations for Washington County residents are Ramsey County, which accounts for 42,546 commute trips (34%), and Hennepin County, which accounts for 32,024 commute trips (26%).

Existing Service Coverage

Washington County's existing transit service illustrates a somewhat piecemeal approach to providing services to individuals with specialized needs, with much of the service provided by private, nonprofit and for-profit transportation operators and human service agencies, and organizations seeking to address their clients' needs. As a result, there is also a great deal of duplication of service.

- Most communities have no regular fixed-route local bus service. Only 14 of the 33 cities and townships within Washington County are served by regular scheduled transit service. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of Washington County residents work within the county, yet there are no local fixed-route circulator services within or between Washington County communities. The commuter/express routes operate between select communities and employment hubs in both Saint Paul and Minneapolis. See Table 3-2 for transit routes in Washington County.
- Washington County has limited fixed-route transit service compared to services in Ramsey or Hennepin County and some of the other suburban counties. Existing fixed-route services are generally restricted to peak commute periods, with routes between

- Minneapolis-Saint Paul and key cities such as Cottage Grove, Mahtomedi, Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, and Forest Lake. Thus, regularly scheduled transit services are not available to meet transit demands in most of Washington County's cities and towns. However, Washington County is also less dense than many other portions of the metropolitan area, which limits the feasibility of fixed-route transit solutions.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires paratransit service for certified riders that complements fixed routes (excluding express routes). In the metro area, this complementary service is known as Metro Mobility. Because of the limited fixed-route network, there is limited ADA Metro Mobility service in the county, though nearly all communities have general public demand-based service available through the Transit Link program, which serves primarily transit-dependent individuals.
 - Transit Link has some capacity constraints and has to turn away riders. Although a review of 2016 data found some months where trip requests in Washington County were denied as much as 9% of the time, 2017 data shows very few denials during summer months with winter and spring months averaging a 4% to 6% overall denial rate due to capacity limitations. Long travel times and advanced scheduling requirements make demand-response services a challenge for many residents' daily travel needs. Accordingly, Transit Link is neither convenient nor reliable for all Washington County trips. The result is that Washington County has an unreliable transit safety net that cannot meet many travel demands, including daily commutes.
 - A lack of weekend service on Metro Transit and Transit Link limits mobility for individuals seeing access to recreation, training, and certain jobs both within and outside of Washington County.
 - Human service agencies and nonprofit organizations provide or sponsor transportation services such as shuttles, non-emergency medical transportation, and dial-a-ride services. However, these programs are often limited to specific groups (e.g., older adults and people with disabilities) or trip purposes (e.g., rides to a medical facility).
 - A lack of coordination between these disparate services means that residents may not have comprehensive information to help them understand eligibility requirements, fares, payment methods, and eligible trip types and destinations.



Other organizations provide transportation services in Washington County. A Newtrax bus travels to pick up a client.

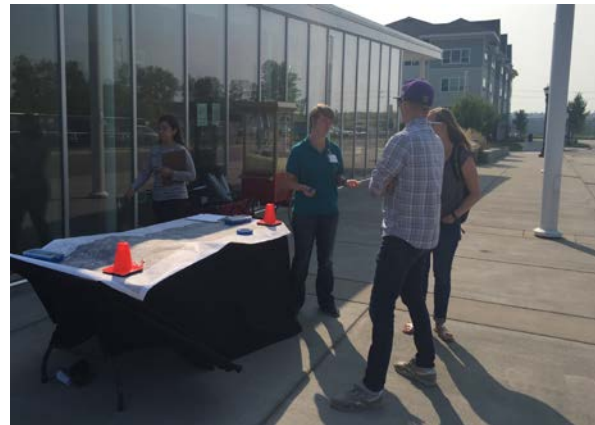
Public Input on the Role of Transit in Washington County

Through a series of meetings, outreach events, comment forms, and workshops, members of the public and stakeholders provided feedback. Stakeholders overwhelmingly acknowledged that the purpose of transit in Washington County *should be* to serve the markets with the greatest need. New services designed to lure drivers out of their cars would not meet the intent of this study: investments should be made that target people without other transportation options.

Existing public transit investment in Washington County by Metro Transit specifically targets commuters, including those who drive to a park-and-ride lot to ride to jobs outside of the county. While this service design approach focuses on offering the most productive services (highest passengers per hour) on fixed-route buses, the investment does little to address the priorities identified by stakeholders.

Stakeholders' priorities generally mirrored the general public's preferences for comprehensive and easy-to-access information on available transportation services, improved coordination among providers, the capability of taking a same-day trip (not needing to reserve a ride at least one day in advance), improving volunteer driver coordination, and promoting employer participation. A primary preference for individuals who provided input into the study was for improved transit services, including an expansion of bus routes, the elimination of capacity constraints (and improvements to reliability) for Transit Link, expanded service hours and shorter travel times. Addressing issues of costs and affordability was also identified by stakeholders and users alike, including strategies to subsidize the fares on existing services like taxis and ride-hailing services.

Participants from a variety of organizations – employers, cities, medical centers, and nonprofit service providers – expressed an interest in and willingness to participate in an effort to coordinate services and to contribute toward funding coordinated services.



Washington County staff talk with residents at the Newport Transit Station about their transportation priorities.

Examples from Elsewhere

To inform potential strategies to address the identified gaps and needs, it is valuable to consider practices from elsewhere in the metropolitan area and from around the US. Several examples highlight different approaches to addressing mobility needs through the direct provision of service, coordination, and mobility management:

- **SouthWest Transit**—a comprehensive local transit system, including several service types (express fixed routes that provide some local circulation and on-demand service for the general public)
- **DARTS LOOP**—local circulator routes for the general public and flex services and a more limited span of days and hours of service

- **Pomona Valley Transportation Authority**—a number of service types in cities the size of several Washington County communities, including shared-ride taxi for the general public scheduled in advance or with same-day service for older adults and people with disabilities, and a volunteer driver program
- **Lake County, Illinois**—primarily demand-response services provided in a county that is part of a large urbanized area that includes small urban, suburban, and rural communities
- **Tompkins County and South Central New York Mobility Management**—mobility management services and activities coordinated in one instance by a county department and in another by a nonprofit organization
- **Dakota County** – development of the Dakota County Transportation Coordinating Collaborative (DCTCC) and hiring of a transportation coordinator
- **Scott and Carver Counties** – development of joint demand-response service and creation of a brokerage operating a one-call/one-click center, known as SmartLink Mobility Management



Transit providers in other communities offer lessons for Washington County.

Evaluating and Defining Potential Service Strategies

The project team prepared an evaluation and prioritization process that considered (1) transportation benefits for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents, (2) community support, (3) financial feasibility, and (4) implementation feasibility. Evaluation criteria were developed with input from key stakeholders and Washington County staff.

The project team identified 26 transportation service alternatives that could potentially address the various mobility needs of Washington County residents. The list of alternatives was refined to a set of 14 strategies after review and input from staff, stakeholders, and the general public, categorized into four classifications:

- **Transit service strategies**, which focus on providing new or expanded transit services for the general public, including operating buses or other vehicles to pick up and drop off individuals, either along routes or following a demand-response model
- **Employer-supported strategies**, which are either led by employers (or major public or private organizations that attract consumers, students, or employees directly to their site), public-private collaboratives such as a Transportation Management Association, or by a public entity with significant involvement and support from private organizations
- **Personal mobility strategies**, which do not require the use of a vehicle or which can be carried out through an unscheduled or informal arrangement
- **Mobility management strategies**, designed to maximize resources through collaboration and coordination of transit providers and human service agencies, with a focus on meeting user needs and pooling resources

According to stakeholders in the study process, Washington County's short-term focus should be on providing a safety net – a basic level of transportation to address the needs of older adults,

people with disabilities and low-income Washington County residents. To do this successfully, Washington County will need to enlist the participation of select cities and both public and private human service agencies, as well as private transportation providers, both for-profit and nonprofit.

Based on the evaluation, the following alternatives are identified as Tier 1, or preferred, strategies:

- General purpose dial-a-ride: increase use of demand-response service
- Community circulator: local transit for shopping, commuting and participating in community activities
- Site-specific shuttle: “last-mile” connections for major employers, institutions, or retail destinations, providing a service that offers a link to and from a regional transit hub
- Subsidized taxi or ride-hailing service: implement program for use of vouchers or subsidies for taxis and other transportation services
- Volunteer driver program: volunteer reimbursement and driver incentives
- Travel navigation and information & referral services: compile and provide travel information & referral services, conduct countywide educational marketing campaign
- Trip brokerage: centralizing the scheduling of transportation services to maximize efficient use of resources and provide more choices for consumers



Participants at a Transit Needs Study Stakeholder Forum in September 2017 provide their input on strategies.

Other strategies were deemed to be Tier 2 or 3 strategies, meaning they could be carried forward but offer fewer benefits for the target markets, have higher projected costs, or are more complex to implement in the short term.

Implementation

While some of the strategies can be implemented individually by a single agency or organization — or group of several organizations — one of the essential elements of a successfully coordinated transportation approach is that Washington County staff working with a Washington County Transportation Coordinating Consortium should guide programming and service implementation efforts. Some key recommendations include the following:

- Policy oversight is essential for formal decision making about where resources should be focused and coordinated efforts should be directed. The Washington County Board of Commissioners should continue to serve in the overall transportation policymaking capacity for the county and each jurisdiction that opts to provide its own service would maintain a policy role for its local service. A joint powers authority (JPA) may be an appropriate governance structure in the event one or more city and the County itself were to implement new service in a specific area or set of communities within Washington County, or if Washington County plans to coordinate its services with one or more neighboring counties.

- An official Washington County Transportation Coordinating Consortium would ideally be added to advise the county board. Composition of the committee should be considered carefully to ensure equitable representation from elected officials, as well as organizations or jurisdictions serving or seeking to address the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents in Washington County.
- Based on input and interest from stakeholders, and the potential to create a coordinated strategy to address transportation gaps and service needs, a coordinated mobility management approach is proposed, with a goal of developing a brokerage approach, whereby Washington County's existing providers would make their services available to a larger share of the eligible population through coordinated scheduling, dispatch of trips across multiple providers, or both. Washington County could serve as the broker, or another Washington County provider such as Newtrax or Community Thread, or a provider outside of the county, including the potential of a contracted provider.

An implementation schedule would be based on several factors including, importantly, the availability of funding to advance the preferred strategies, continued leadership on the part of Washington County, partnerships with other entities or organizations that have a significant stake in transportation coordination and expansion, the success of programs underway, the demand for new services and programs, and changes in transportation technology which would allow Washington County to fast-track some strategies that are assumed to take place longer term. Some of the strategies could be initiated within a six-month timeframe if staffing and funding are available. Others may take several years to develop.

Funding

County staff are well versed in state and federal funding programs and at locating a variety of funding sources to supplement local funding sources. The county should continue to pursue all traditional funding programs. Both federal and state legislative support for transit funding is dynamic and transit finance will likely change in the future. Because of the changing landscape for transit funding, the county should employ a diverse range of funding and implementation strategies. In general, this means:

- Seek new and innovative forms of non-local assistance, and support legislation that will generate additional transportation funding assistance.
- Consider public-private partnerships as an appropriate way to equitably distribute costs resulting from development.
- Partner, pool resources, and jointly lobby with other agencies for outside funding assistance for major projects that could provide significant long-term benefits to Washington County.
- Continue to pursue regional transportation funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Program (STP), Transportation Enhancement (TE), etc.) through grant applications to the Metropolitan Council.

In addition to federal and state funding sources, there is a range of potential funding sources at the local level. Examples of local funding sources include property and sales taxes, fees, incentives, and many others. As the county evaluates strategies in this report for implementation, a thorough examination of possible local funding sources should accompany possible Federal and state funding sources. Regardless of which combination of funding sources are pursued,

Washington County will likely be challenged to implement all of the preferred strategies identified in this study.

1 INTRODUCTION

STUDY OVERVIEW

The Washington County Transit Needs Study focuses on the current and future travel needs of transit-dependent persons (older adults, people with disabilities and low-income individuals). The study assesses existing conditions in Washington County, identifies available transportation services, and develops options for new, improved, and better-coordinated services based on various funding scenarios. Washington County leads this study with participation and guidance from various partner agencies including Metro Transit, the Metropolitan Council, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

The Washington County Transit Needs Study provides findings and recommendations based on a variety of sources, including demographic and commute trip data, stakeholder interviews and group meetings, comments from members of the community, and feedback from members of a technical advisory committee (TAC) comprised of representatives from several Washington County departments, the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, and MnDOT. Staff from Washington County's Department of Public Works and Department of Community Services served as the project managers for this study, responsible for implementing the scope of work, monitoring progress of consultant activities, and serving as a liaison between the consultant team and other county departments and community partners.

This report is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 1** introduces the study and summarizes relevant studies and planning efforts in Washington County and the metro area.
- **Chapter 2** provides demographic data, including identifying where concentrations of the targeted populations reside. This information provides a basis for identifying where services may be needed or enhanced in Washington County.
- **Chapter 3** describes existing transit services, such as public transit services and social service transportation providers. This information allows for an understanding of where services operate today, whether services might be modified or coordinated to serve additional needs, and the capacity of the existing services to accommodate unmet transit needs and travel demands.
- **Chapter 4** summarizes stakeholder input and includes a synthesis of comments and concerns from representatives of Washington County's departments and diverse organizations, including human service providers, businesses, and advocacy organizations.
- **Chapter 5** looks at examples from other communities and regions that have addressed transportation needs for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents through different types of programs, providing examples for alternative approaches to service and organizational frameworks for transportation in Washington County.

- **Chapter 6** summarizes key needs and presents an identification and detailed evaluation of alternative transportation strategies considered for application in Washington County.
- **Chapter 7** provides a review of the highest-ranking strategies, along with a set of recommendations and considerations for oversight, administration and coordination as part of an implementation approach for Washington County.
- **Chapter 8** discusses funding opportunities for Washington County to carry forward the strategies identified in this study.

Overview of Existing Transit Conditions

Located on the eastern edge of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, Washington County includes a mix of suburban, small-town, and rural populations.

Due to the variety of communities located in the area, Washington County faces several challenges in achieving an efficient and cost-effective public transportation services network. Most communities within the county have no local scheduled bus service. Regular fixed-route bus service (service that operates along scheduled bus routes) operated by Metro Transit serves limited portions of the westernmost cities. Peak-hour or peak-period express routes, which operate during the morning and afternoon-evening commute periods with the most traffic congestion, serve only thirteen of the 33 cities and townships within Washington County. These commuter express routes operate between select communities and employment hubs in both Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires paratransit service that complements fixed routes (excluding express routes) for certified riders. In the metro area, this complementary service is known as Metro Mobility. Because of the limited fixed-route network, there is limited ADA Metro Mobility service in the county, though nearly all communities have general public demand-based service available through the Transit Link program, which serves primarily transit-dependent individuals.

Various human service agencies either directly provide or sponsor transportation for their clients, but such services tend to be limited to a particular client group or for specific trip purposes (e.g., people with a disability who are served with a specific program).

The Metropolitan Council, the planning organization for the Twin Cities metro area, expects the county's population to grow from about 251,000 residents in 2017 to 299,000 in 2030 and 330,200 by 2040, a more than 30% increase over 2017. Given the limited travel services particularly for individuals most dependent on transit, demand for more options is increasing as the county's population grows.

RELEVANT STUDIES AND PLANNING EFFORTS

In developing this study, the consulting team reviewed a number of existing plans and policies that provide context for future transportation planning efforts in Washington County and throughout the region. The purpose of this review is to provide relevant background information on regional and countywide priorities for housing, land use, and transportation, and to describe specific policies or projects that may impact transportation planning efforts in Washington County. These planning and policy documents are summarized briefly below.

Thrive MSP 2040

Metropolitan Council, May 2014

Thrive MSP 2040, developed by the Metropolitan Council, is the latest long-range policy plan for the Twin Cities region. This document focuses on five key outcomes: stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. It also establishes community designations and land use policies to guide regional growth. The Metropolitan Council develops a new long-range policy plan every ten years.

Thrive MSP 2040 sets forth five Community Designations that are based on development patterns and other characteristics: Urban Center, Urban, Suburban, Suburban Edge, and Emerging Suburban Edge.¹ These Community Designations help to guide appropriate levels of investment in transportation, parks, wastewater, and other services throughout the region.

2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)

Metropolitan Council, January 2015

The 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) builds upon the regional long-range policy plan (Thrive MSP 2040). This document focuses on transportation policy strategies, land use and local planning, and modal plans for transit, bicycles, pedestrians, freight, and aviation. The Metropolitan Council develops a new TPP every four years.

The 2040 TPP establishes five Transit Market Areas that encompass the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area.² These Transit Market Areas are similar to the Community Designations established in Thrive MSP 2040, but also include Freestanding Town Centers, areas with concentrated downtowns but relatively small population limiting potential for local fixed-route transit. Per the Metropolitan Council's methodology, Transit Market Areas are assessed using a Transit Market Index that is based on population density, intersection density, employment density, and availability of automobiles.³ Each of these variables is weighted based on their impact on potential transit demand. Further information on Transit Market Areas is presented in Chapter 3 of this report.

The 2040 TPP sets forth a Current Revenue Scenario that anticipated \$84 billion in transportation revenue between 2015 and 2040.⁴ The plan also establishes an Increased Revenue Scenario, should additional revenue sources become available. The following major capital investments are included in the Current Revenue Scenario (note that capital costs listed below may be different than what is listed in the TPP as the numbers have been updated per current estimates):

- **METRO Orange Line:** a 16-mile highway bus rapid transit system on I-35W south from Minneapolis to Burnsville (\$150 million)
- **METRO Green Line Extension:** a 16-mile light rail extension of the Green Line from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie (\$1.65 billion)

¹ Thrive MSP 2040, page 94. Metropolitan Council, May 2014.

² 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, page 6.16. Metropolitan Council, January 2015.

³ 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, page G.1. Metropolitan Council, January 2015.

⁴ 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, page 5. Metropolitan Council, January 2015.

- **METRO Blue Line Extension:** a 13-mile light rail extension of the Blue Line from Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park (\$999 million)
- **METRO Gold Line:** 9-mile dedicated bus rapid transit line from Saint Paul to Woodbury (\$420 million)
- **METRO Red Line Extension:** 3-mile extension of the Red Line from Apple Valley to Lakeville ⁵

Under an Increased Revenue Scenario, several proposed locations would be considered for additional transitways, including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Rush Line Corridor** between downtown Saint Paul and Forest Lake
- **Red Rock Corridor** along Highway 61 between downtown Saint Paul and Hastings
- **Highway 36** between downtown Minneapolis and Stillwater
- **I-35W** North from downtown Minneapolis to Forest Lake
- **Midtown** from the existing METRO Blue Line Lake Street Station to the planned METRO Green Line West Lake Station ⁶

Transportation Planning and Programming Guide for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

Metropolitan Council, November 2013

This guide describes the role of state, regional, countywide, and local entities that provide transportation services in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, from MnDOT down to local transit providers. It also provides an overview of state and federal transportation revenue sources that have traditionally been allocated throughout the region. Finally, the guide presents an overview of mandated state and federal planning and programming requirements, such as the Congestion Management Process (CMP), and describes which entities are responsible for meeting these requirements.

Washington County Strategic Plan

Washington County, September 2013

The Washington County Strategic Plan identifies six strategies for supporting future growth and enhancing quality of life for Washington County residents. These strategies are designed to address public services, workforce and employees, communication, technology, infrastructure, and the county's financial health.

Of relevance to this study, Strategy 5 is to “plan, prioritize, and commit to high priority capital improvements needed to protect assets, improve efficiency, and maintain affordability.”⁷ This strategy encompasses three actions, listed below:

- Develop guiding principles and long range plans for capital improvements that includes initial construction and on-going operation costs
- Identify the costs and benefits to alternative energy strategies for large capital projects
- Pursue improvements in public transportation for citizenry and clients

⁵ 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, page C.18. Metropolitan Council, January 2015.

⁶ 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, page 88. Metropolitan Council, January 2015.

⁷ Washington County Strategic Plan, page 40. Washington County, 2013.

2 COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on demographic groups that tend to have limited mobility options and a higher propensity to use public transit services. Specific demographic characteristics such as age, income, and disability status can tell a story about the complex travel needs of residents and employees, especially as they relate to the use of transit services. This section also provides a spatial analysis of key trip generators such as hospitals and medical centers, food banks, Veterans Administration (VA) centers, and other destinations that are critical to the livelihood of many Washington County residents.

Relevant demographic characteristics are illustrated via maps and tables to present a picture of transit-dependent populations in Washington County. The specific demographic groups that are highlighted in this chapter include:

- Older adults (age 65+)
- People with disabilities
- Youth (age 18 and under)
- People in poverty
- Zero-vehicle households
- Veterans
- Limited English Proficiency households

Data Methodology and Prison Populations

The demographic characteristics of Washington County are primarily based on data from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS). Unless otherwise noted, all ACS data is from the 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates. It should be noted that some cities in Washington County have prisons, including Oak Park Heights and Bayport. Deriving whether or not specific ACS data sets include prison populations is a complicated issue. Prisons are categorized as Group Quarters by the US Census (according to the US Census, Group Quarters include college residence halls, residential treatment centers, nursing facilities, group homes, military barracks, correctional facilities, and workers' dormitories).⁸ The ACS was expanded to include Group Quarters in January 2006. Vehicle data (percentage of zero vehicle households) and English proficiency data (percentage of Limited English Proficiency households) do not include Group Quarters, as these

⁸ American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2015 Subject Definitions, page 8. United States Census Bureau.

data sets are based on occupied housing units and not individuals. Furthermore, the disability data included in this report is based on a sample of the Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population, which does not include correctional facilities. The remaining ACS data sets (older adults, youth, individuals in poverty, and Veterans) *do* include people living in prisons and other Group Homes.

County Overview

Washington County is located to the east of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area. With a population of 251,000, it is the fifth most-populous county in Minnesota. Washington County is predominantly rural, with access to iconic natural landmarks such as the St. Croix River, the Mississippi River and numerous lakes, state parks and nature preserves. The county's larger cities serve as bedroom communities for Minneapolis and Saint Paul, as well as growing cultural, commercial, and employment destinations in their own right.

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Population

Figure 2-1 illustrates that the population of Washington County is predominantly concentrated in the western portion of the county, which is within short commuting distance to Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Woodbury, Cottage Grove, and Oakdale are the three most populous cities. Combined, they account for 50% of the total countywide population.

Other notable population clusters include:

- Forest Lake, the fourth most populous city in the county, has a total population of 19,200 (7.8% of the countywide population)
- Stillwater, the fifth most populous city in the county, has a total population of 18,700 (7.6% of the countywide population)
- Hugo, the sixth most populous city in the county, has a population of 14,100 (5.7% of the countywide population)
- The lakeside communities around White Bear Lake, including Dellwood, Mahtomedi, Willernie, and Birchwood Village, have a combined population of approximately 10,600 (4.3% of the total countywide population)

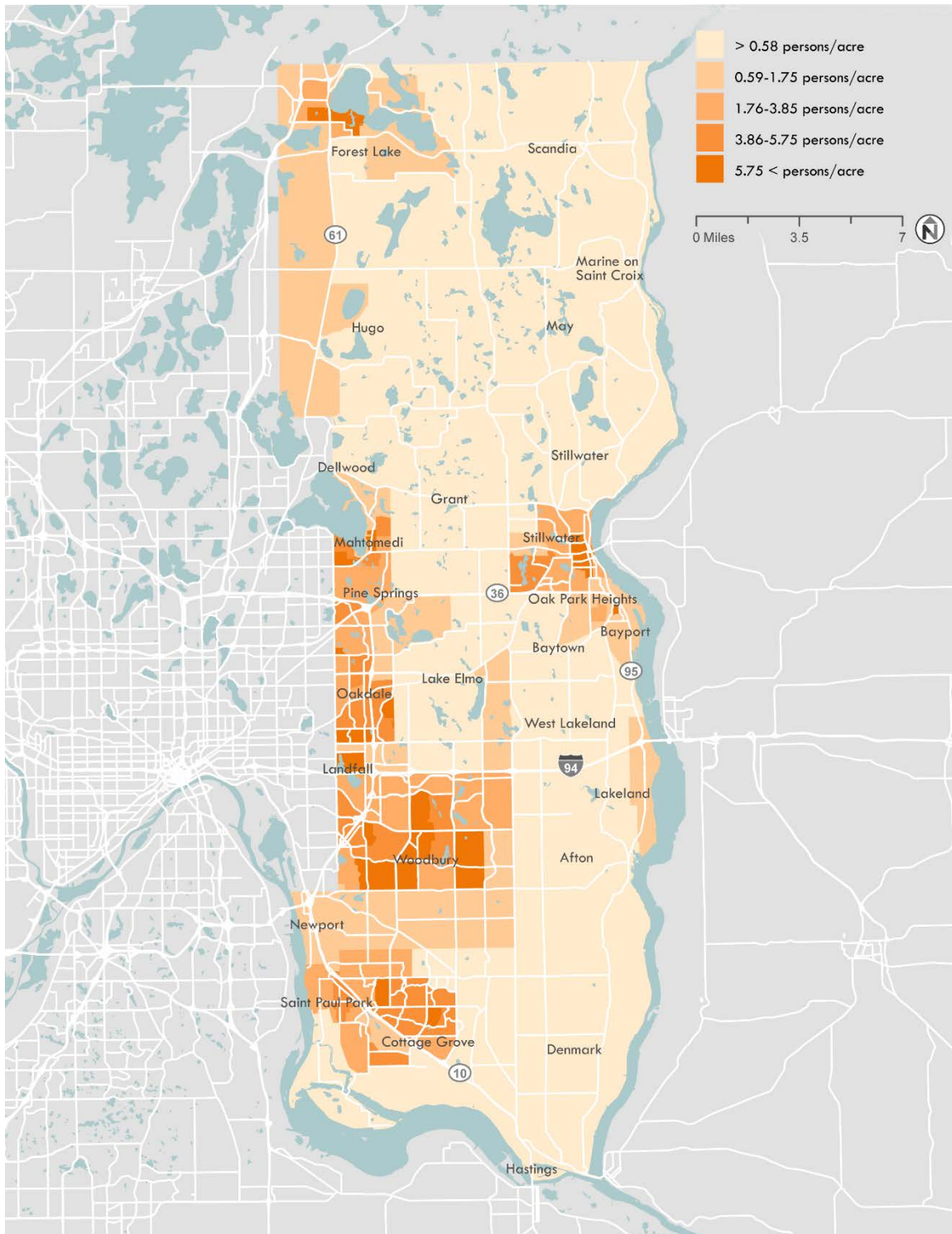
Outside of these population clusters, Washington County is predominantly made up of agricultural land combined with parks and open space, with a notable concentration of manufacturing and heavy industry along the Mississippi River on the county's southern border.

Employment

Figure 2-2 shows the distribution of jobs countywide by census block group. For the most part, employment density in Washington County follows a similar pattern to population density.

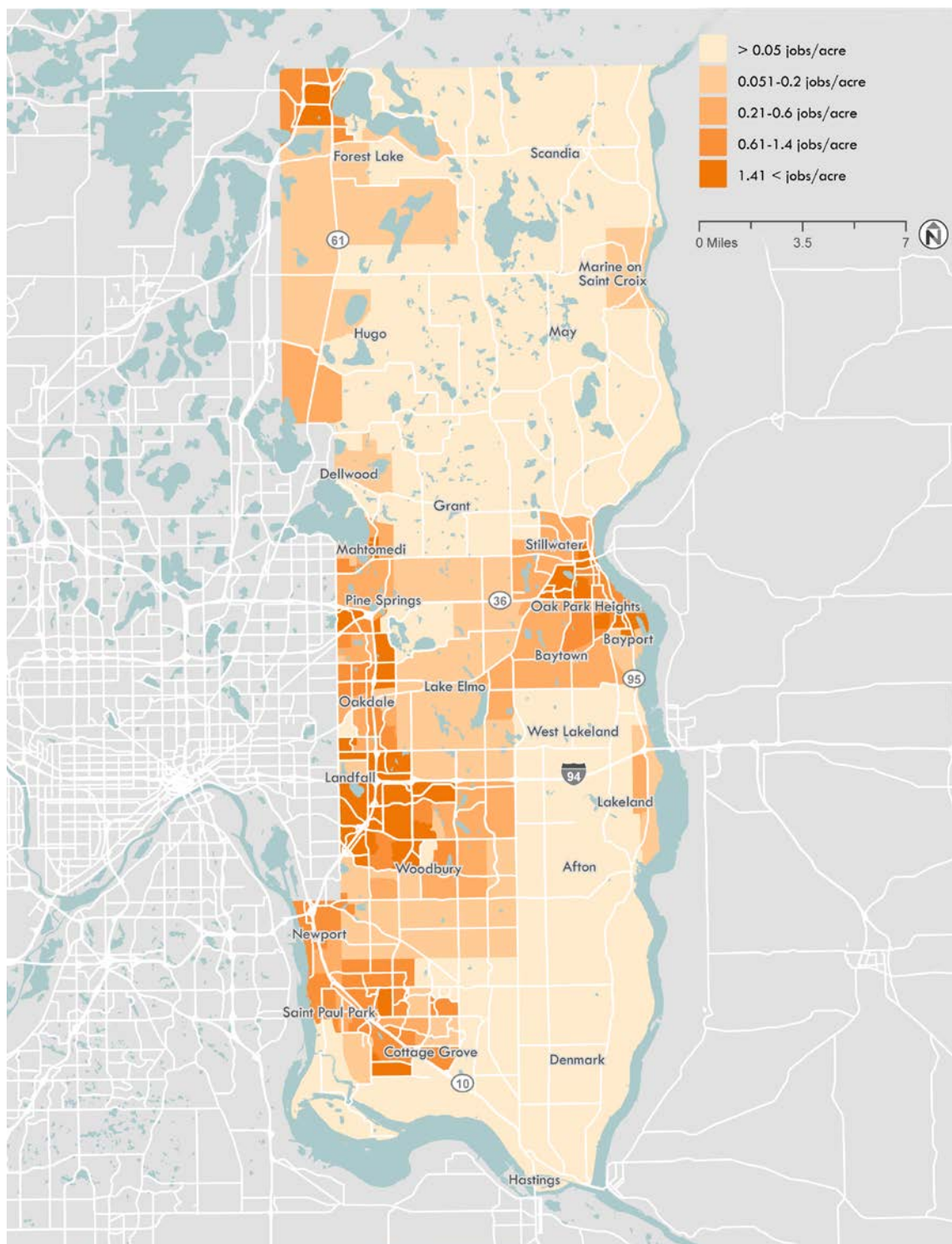
It is important to note that overall employment density is lower than population density: whereas some cities have a population density greater than 5.75 persons per acre, the greatest employment density is just over 1.41 persons per acre. This low employment density represents a challenge to planning adequate transportation access to worksites around Washington County.

Figure 2-1 Population Density in Washington County, 2015



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

Figure 2-2 Employment Density in Washington County, 2015



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

Older Adults

Figure 2-3 shows the growth in Washington County's population by age group for 2015-2050. Older adults (65 years and older) are the fastest growing age group in Washington County. This population is projected to increase by 150% between 2010 and 2040 (from 24,984 to 62,309). The figure illustrates that in the projections, between 2015 and 2040 the population of individuals age 65 and older will increase 85%. This means that Washington County has a growing need for services and resources – including transportation services – that target older adults.

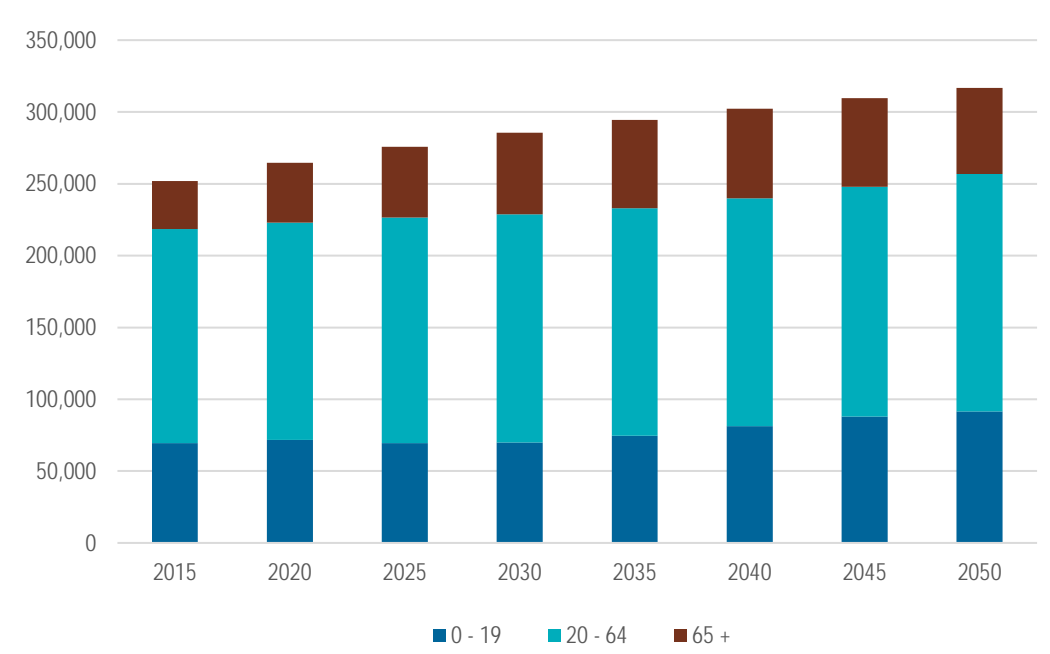
Figure 2-4 shows the geographic distribution of older adults in Washington County. 13.4% of Washington County residents are 65 or older, just below the statewide average of 14.7% and the national average of 14.9%. Oak Park Heights has a population of older adults that exceeds 30%, and over 18% of residents in Afton and Grant are older adults.

Youth

Figure 2-5 shows the geographic distribution of youth under 18 in Washington County. Washington County has a slightly above-average youth population compared to both statewide and national averages: 25% of Washington county residents are under 18, compared to 23.4% and the national average of 22.9%. Over 27% of residents in Woodbury, Cottage Grove, Forest Lake, and Hugo are under 18.

The Minnesota State Demographic Center projects that the percentage of Washington County residents age 19 or under will effectively plateau over the next few decades, growing just 1% percent between 2015 and 2050.⁹

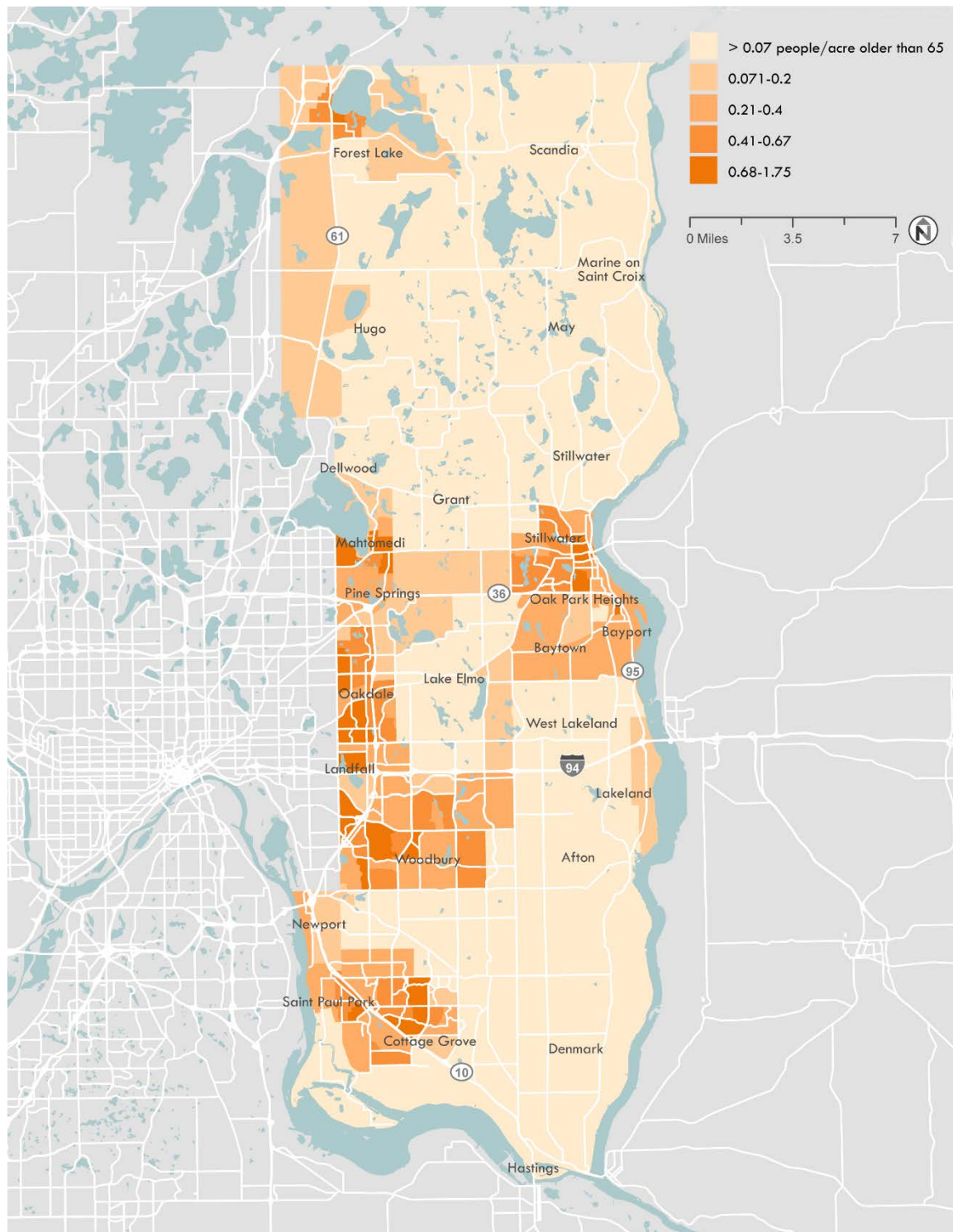
Figure 2-3 Projected Population Growth by Age Group, 2015-2050 for Washington County



⁹ The Minnesota State Demographic Center tracks youth at 19 and under, which differs slightly from the presentation of US Census data above and on the map in Figure 2-5.

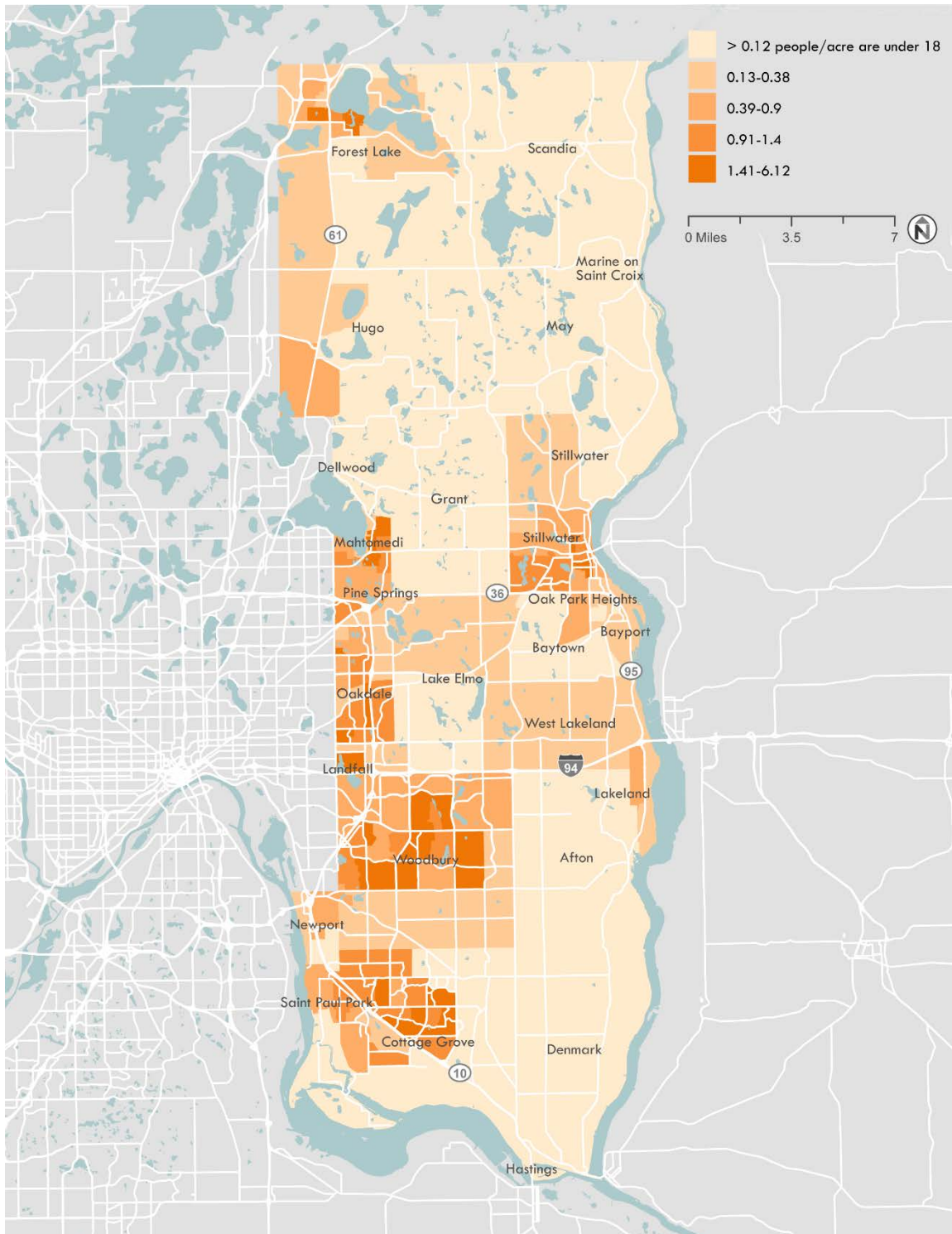
Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

Figure 2-4 Older Adults 65 and Over in Washington County, 2015



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

Figure 2-5 Youth Under 18 in Washington County, 2015



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

People with Disabilities

Figure 2-6 shows the distribution of Washington County residents with a disability. The American Community Survey, which provides most of the demographic data for this report, defines an individual with a disability as someone with one or more of the following characteristics:

- **Hearing difficulty:** deaf or having serious difficulty hearing
- **Vision difficulty:** blind or having serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses
- **Cognitive difficulty:** difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions due to a physical, mental, or emotional problem
- **Ambulatory difficulty:** difficulty walking or climbing stairs
- **Self-care difficulty:** difficulty bathing or dressing
- **Independent living difficulty:** difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping due to a physical, mental, or emotional problem

8.4% of Washington County residents have a disability. Over 10% of residents in Oak Park Heights, Mahtomedi, and Bayport have a disability.¹⁰

Poverty and Income

For this report, poverty is defined as anyone making up to 185% of the federal poverty level. Using this metric accounts for households on the margins of the federal poverty level, as well as the higher cost of living in Washington County compared with other regions across the United States. Several public and some nonprofit organizations (e.g., Metropolitan Council and Washington County Community Corrections) use 185% of the federal poverty level for measuring poverty levels and determining eligibility guidelines for assistance programs. Washington County's Department of Community Services uses a variety of guidelines for its programs, some of which include households making up to 200% of the federal poverty level.

Figure 2-7 the distribution of Washington County residents living in poverty. According to Office of the Federal Register, 185% of the federal poverty level for 2016 was \$21,976 for an individual and \$44,955 for a family of four. On average, 14.4% of Washington County's total population is living in poverty. The highest concentration of people living in poverty is in Landfall, where 65% of the population lives in poverty. Over 20% of the population in Newport, St. Paul Park, Bayport, Oakdale, and Forest Lake is living in poverty (additionally, over 20% of the population in Oak Park Heights is living in poverty; however, the presence of multiple prisons within the city may skew this data).

It should be noted that overall Washington County residents are more affluent than residents of other Minnesota counties. The median household income in Washington County is \$83,700, compared to the statewide average of \$63,500 and the national average of \$53,900 (in 2015 dollars).

¹⁰ The higher percentage of residents in Oak Park Heights with a disability may include the incarcerated population.

Zero-Vehicle Households

Figure 2-8 shows the distribution of Washington County residents who do not own a vehicle. People living in households without access to a vehicle are generally more likely to ride transit than those with vehicle access. Individuals in these households may be unable to afford a vehicle, may be unable to drive, or may prefer not to drive, all of which greatly increase the likelihood of transit use. 4% of Washington County residents do not have access to a vehicle. Over 6% of residents in Bayport do not have access to a vehicle. More than 6% of Oak Park Heights residents also do not have access to a vehicle (although institutionalized residents living in prisons within the city may skew this data.) Communities with low vehicle ownership rates may need expanded public transit services to access local destinations.

Veterans

8% of Washington County residents age 18 or over are Veterans, on par with both statewide and national averages. Nearly one-half (48%) of Washington County Veterans are age 65 or older; 7% of Veterans are under the age of 35.

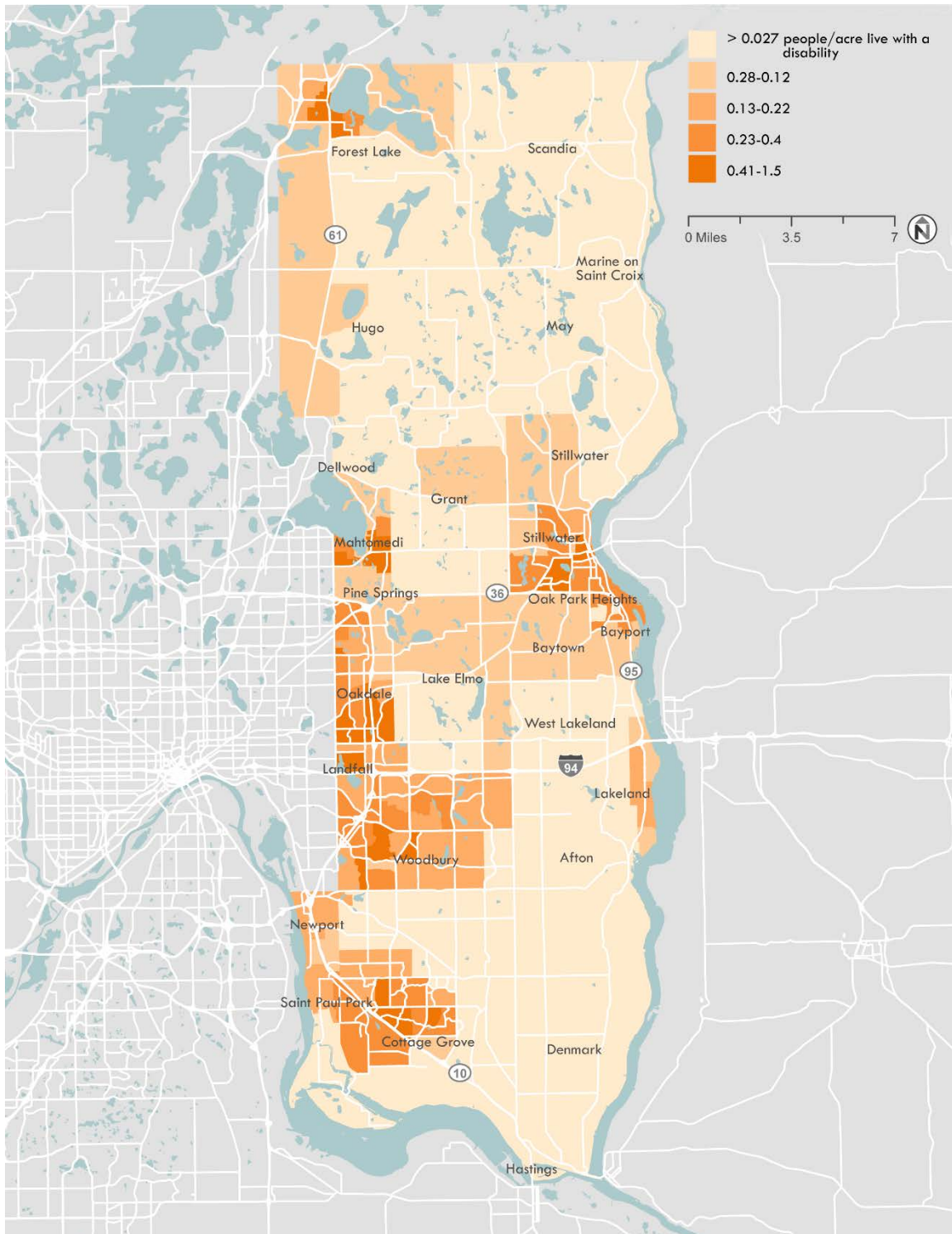
Figure 2-9 shows the distribution of Veterans across Washington County. Cities with a higher concentration of Veterans (between 10%-12%) include Lake St. Croix Beach and Birchwood Village. Cities with a lower concentration of Veterans (between 6%-7%) include Mahtomedi, Bayport, Lake Elmo, and Dellwood.

Limited English Proficiency Households

Figure 2-10 below shows the distribution of limited English proficiency households across Washington County. Countywide, 9% of the population speaks a language other than English at home, and 3% speak English “less than very well.” The most commonly spoken languages other than English are Spanish, Hmong, Somali, and Chinese, all of which have more than 1,000 speakers countywide.

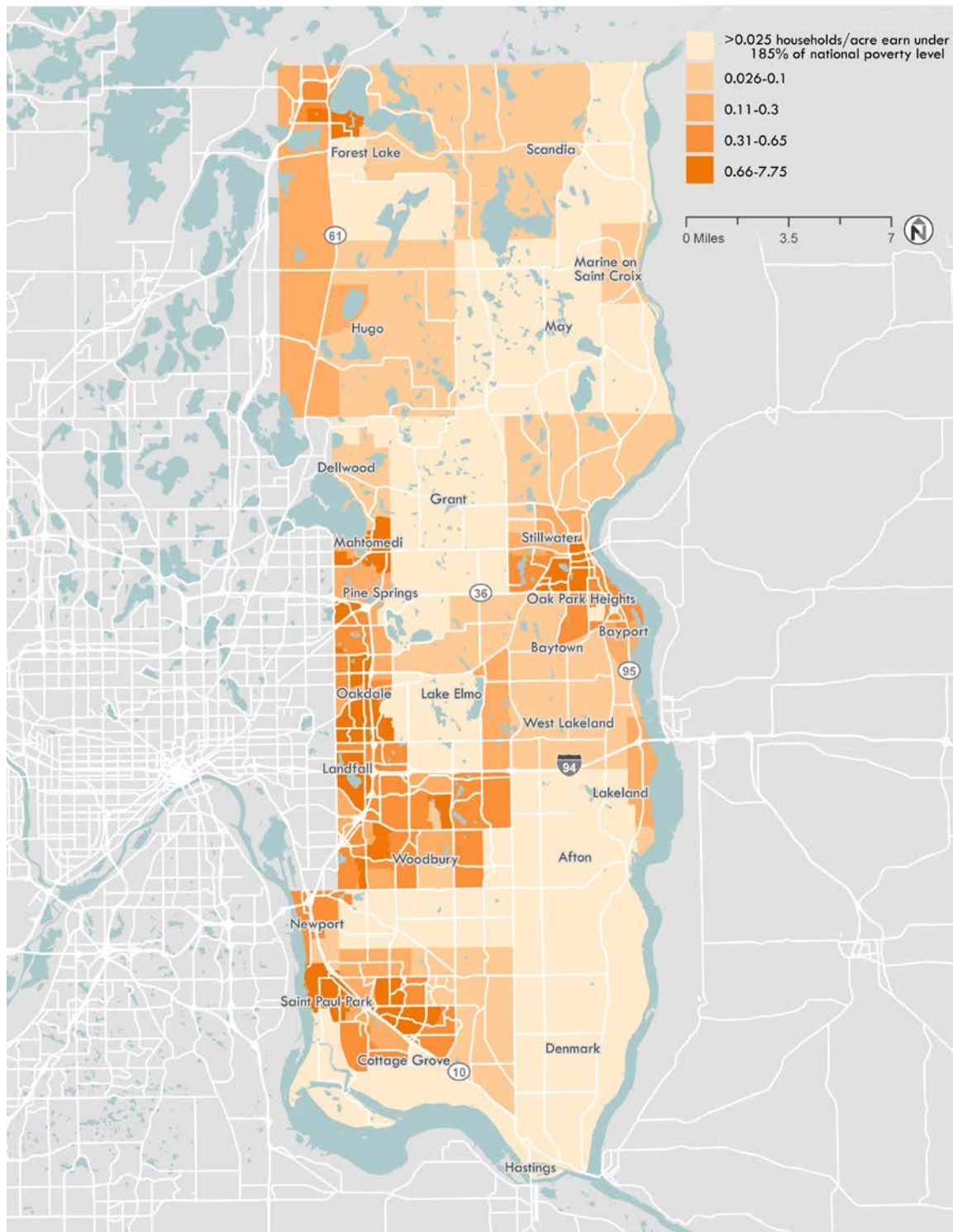
As Washington County diversifies over the next few decades, the percentage of people with limited English proficiency is likely to increase. The Minnesota State Demographic Center anticipates that the percentage of non-white residents in Washington County will increase from 15% in 2015 to 22% in 2050. Asian, Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander residents will increase from 5.8%-8.7% by 2050, and Hispanic and Latino residents will increase from 3.6%-5% by 2050. Transit services should take these demographic shifts into consideration by ensuring that ridership information is available in multiple languages.

Figure 2-6 People with Disabilities in Washington County, 2015



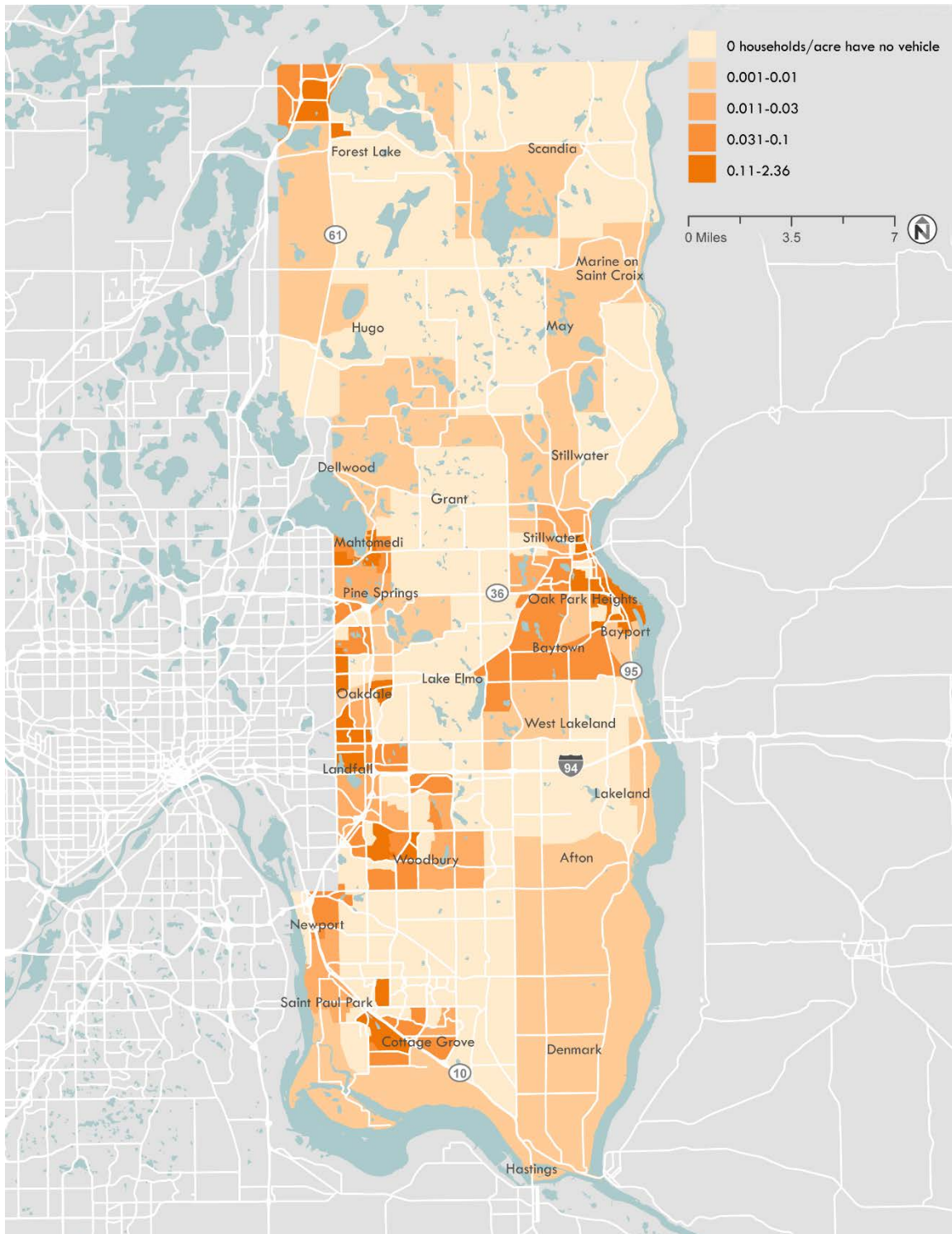
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

Figure 2-7 Residents Living in Poverty in Washington County, 2015



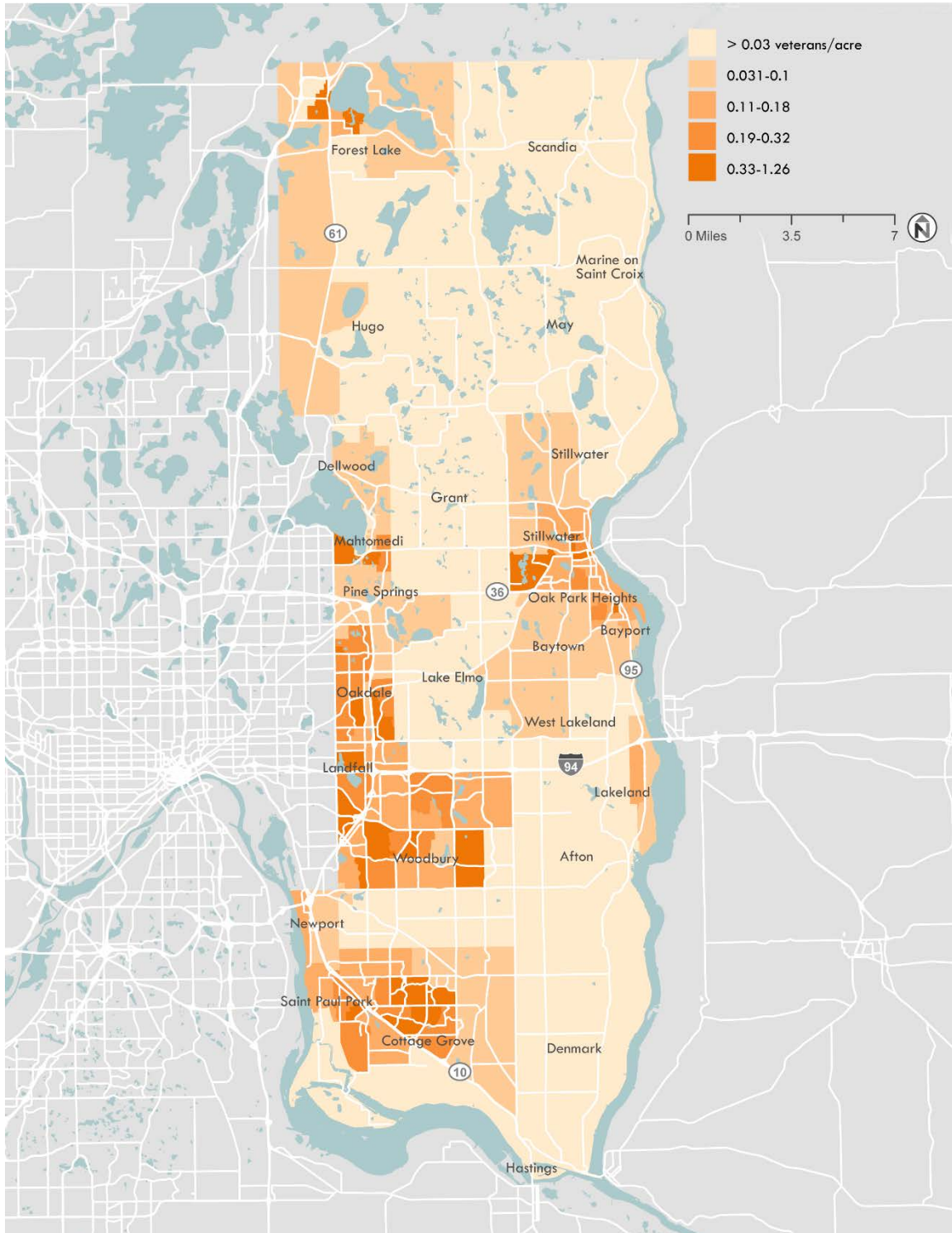
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

Figure 2-8 Zero-Vehicle Households in Washington County, 2015



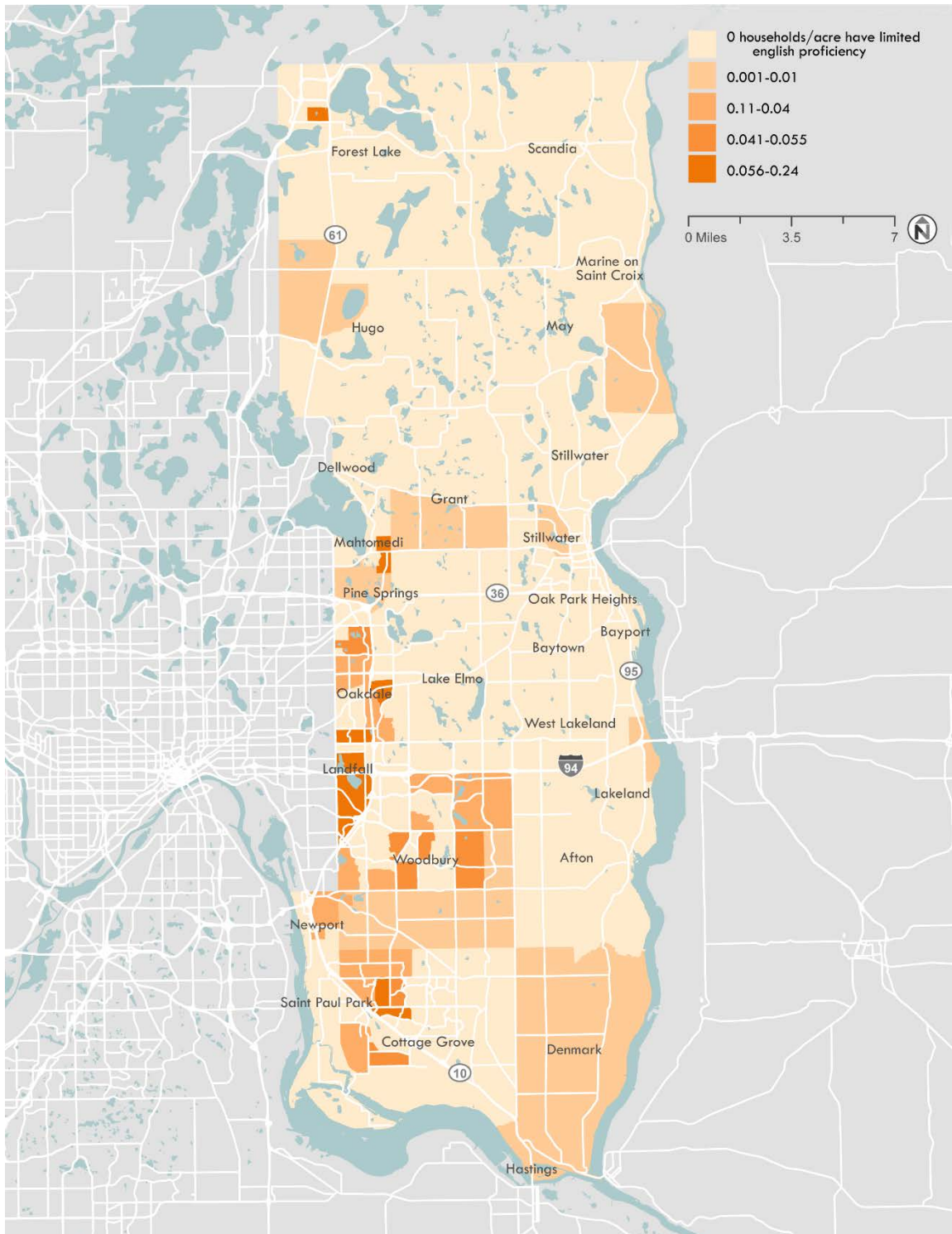
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

Figure 2-9 Veterans in Washington County, 2015



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

Figure 2-10 Limited English Proficiency Households in Washington County, 2015



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

TRANSIT PROPENSITY INDEX

Figure 2-11 presents a composite Transit Propensity Index that was created by combining the individual demographic factors that were explored in detail above, including older adults, youth, people with disabilities, residents living in poverty, zero-vehicle households, Veterans, and Limited English Proficiency households. Taken together, these factors help determine which areas of Washington County present the highest demand for transportation services.

Areas with high transit propensity are concentrated around Newport, St. Paul Park, Cottage Grove, Woodbury, Landfall, Oakdale, Pine Springs, Mahtomedi, Stillwater, Bayport, and Forest Lake. Rush Line Corridor between Forest Lake and White Bear Lake along Highway 61 displays lower transit propensity, as does Baytown, Lakeland, and pockets around Lake Elmo.

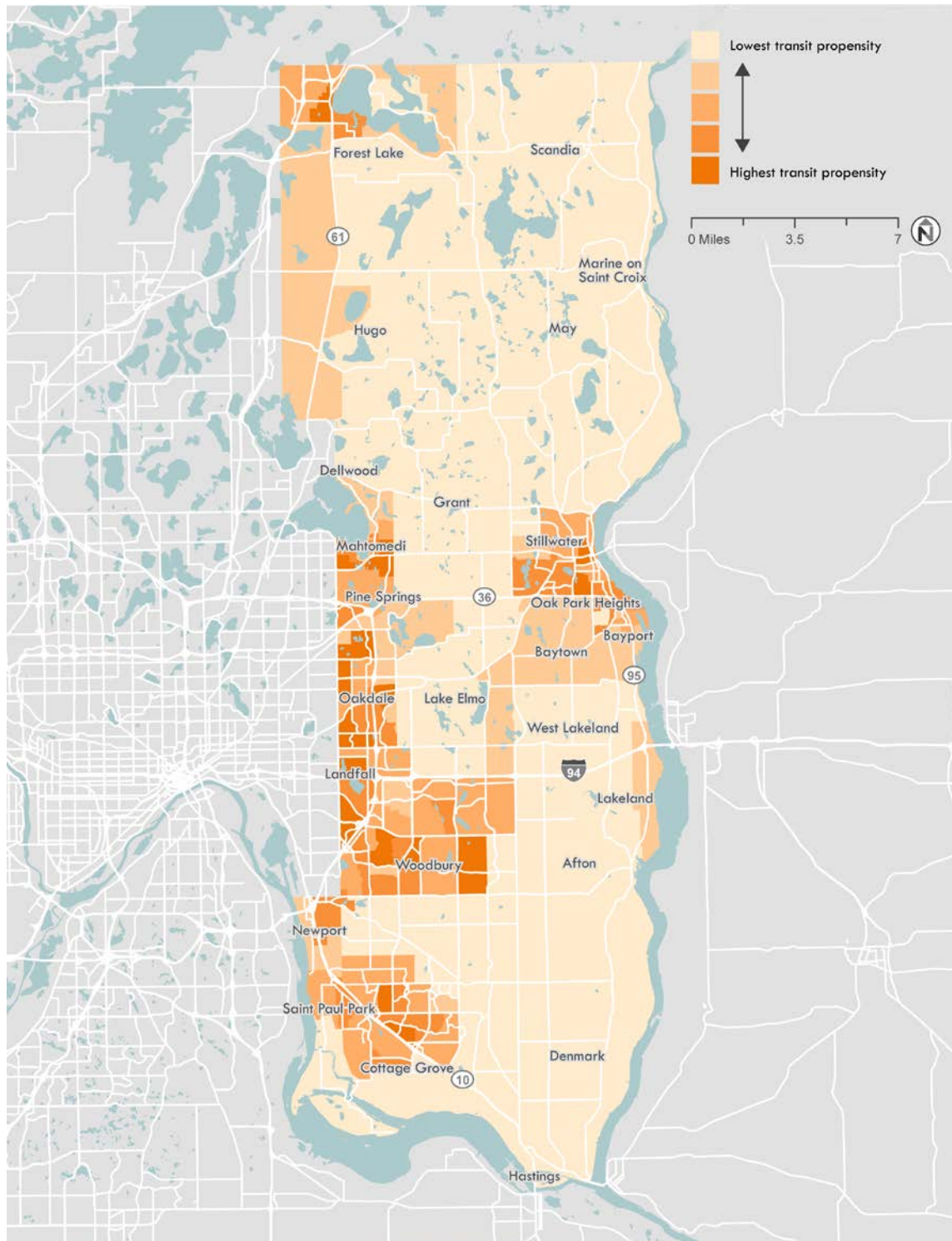
The Transit Propensity Index map may be compared to the Transit Market Areas assessment from the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), but they are not the same. While the Transit Propensity Index considers the unique demographic factors that are the focus of this study, the Transit Market Areas are based on a Transit Market Index that considers population density, intersection density, employment density, and automobile availability.

Figure 2-12 shows a map of Transit Market Areas for the Twin Cities metropolitan area.¹¹ Areas with dark shading in the Transit Propensity Index map (Figure 2-11) generally correspond with areas designated as Market Area III or Market Area IV in the 2040 TPP (Figure 2-12). According to the 2040 TPP, the recommended transit services for Market Area III is commuter express bus, limited local bus service, and general public dial-a-ride; the recommended transit services for Market Area IV is commuter express bus and general public dial-a-ride.¹² Further information on Transit Market Areas is presented on page 3-8.

¹¹ 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, page 6.18. Metropolitan Council, January 2015.

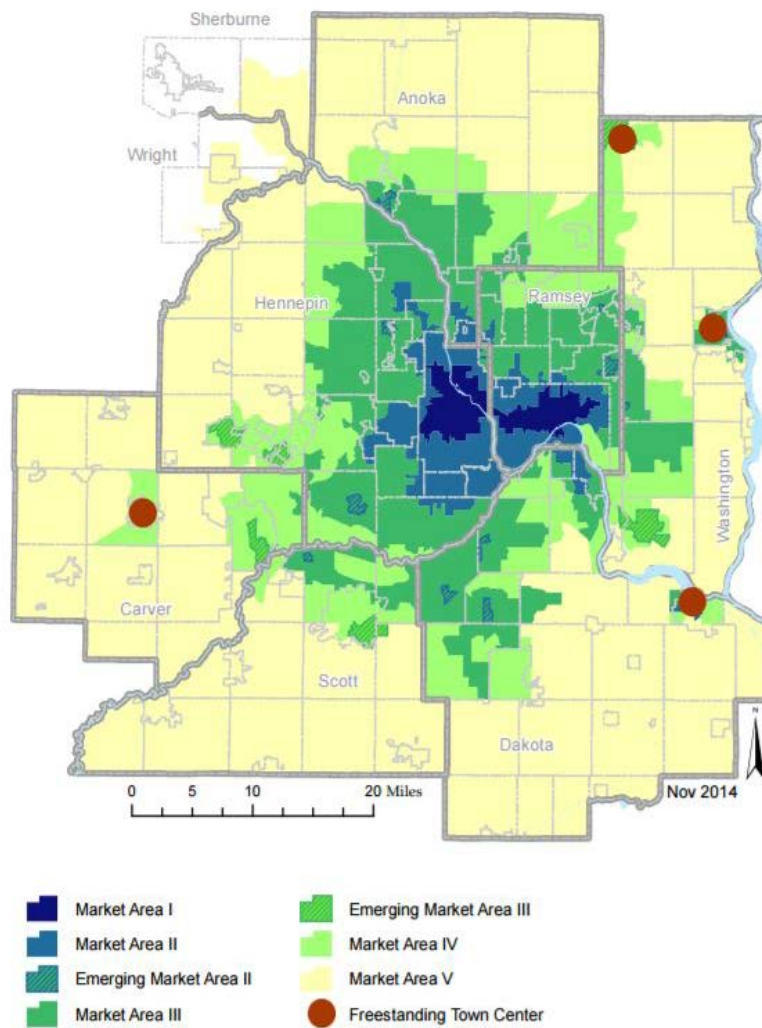
¹² 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, page G.5. Metropolitan Council, January 2015.

Figure 2-11 Transit Propensity Index for Washington County, 2015



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015

Figure 2-12 Metropolitan Council Transit Market Areas



Source: Metropolitan Council 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, page 6.18

TRIP GENERATORS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

Land Use

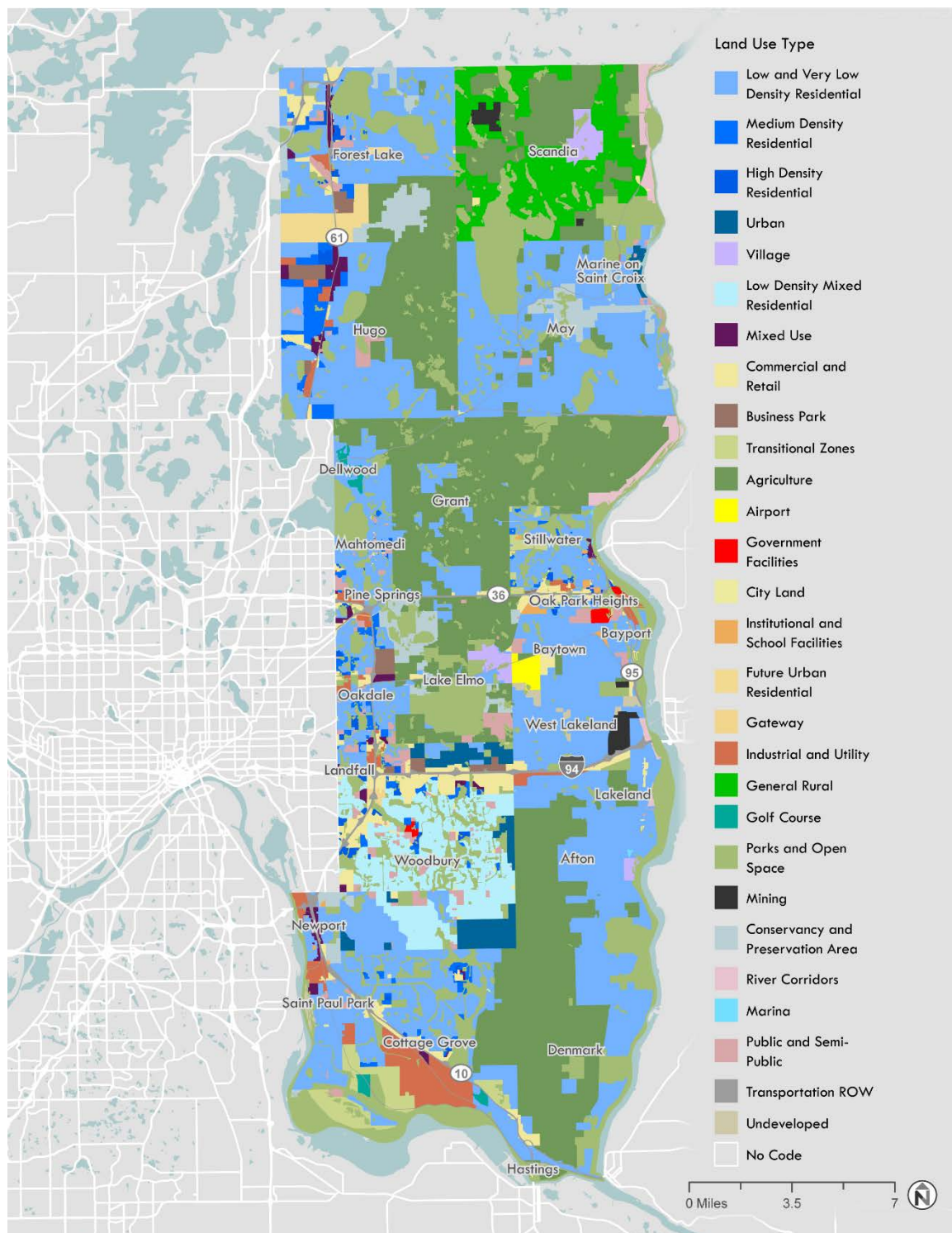
As shown in Figure 2-13, Washington County is primarily made up of low-density residential areas, with large swaths of agricultural land and designated parks and open space. Even the county's largest population centers, such as Woodbury, Oakdale, Cottage Grove, Forest Lake, and Stillwater, are predominantly categorized as either *low and very low residential* or *low density mixed residential*, with some pockets of higher-density residential or more urbanized areas.

Commercial and retail centers are primarily located along major highways, including Interstates 94 and 494 on the outskirts of Woodbury; Highway 61 (also known as Highway 10) between Newport and Hastings; and Highway 36 in Oak Park Heights and Stillwater. Retail clusters represent important transportation destinations, both as job sites and commercial destinations.

There is a strong concentration of heavy industry along the Mississippi River in southern Washington County. The 3M Cottage Grove plant is a 1,750-acre facility located along the banks of the Mississippi, which contains over 1,500,000 square feet of buildings, a wastewater treatment plant, and multiple manufacturing plants. Cottage Grove is the location for other employers like Renewal by Andersen and Werner Electric. The refinery in St. Paul Park is another large industrial center, occupying a 170-acre site between Newport and St. Paul Park. Other businesses include the Gerdau-Ameristeel Saint Paul steel mill, mining sites, and lighter industries such as automotive repair.

There are additional pockets of manufacturing and heavy industry elsewhere in Washington County. The Andersen Corporation, a global supplier of windows and doors and the largest employer in Washington County, has a manufacturing plant in Bayport. The 4Front Technology + Office Campus (old Imation Campus) in Oakdale is adding a number of businesses with potential to expand due to excess land. Other manufacturing and resource extraction companies are located along Highway 61 outside of Hugo, and along Interstate 94 outside of Lakeland.

Figure 2-13 Land Use and Zoning in Washington County, 2015



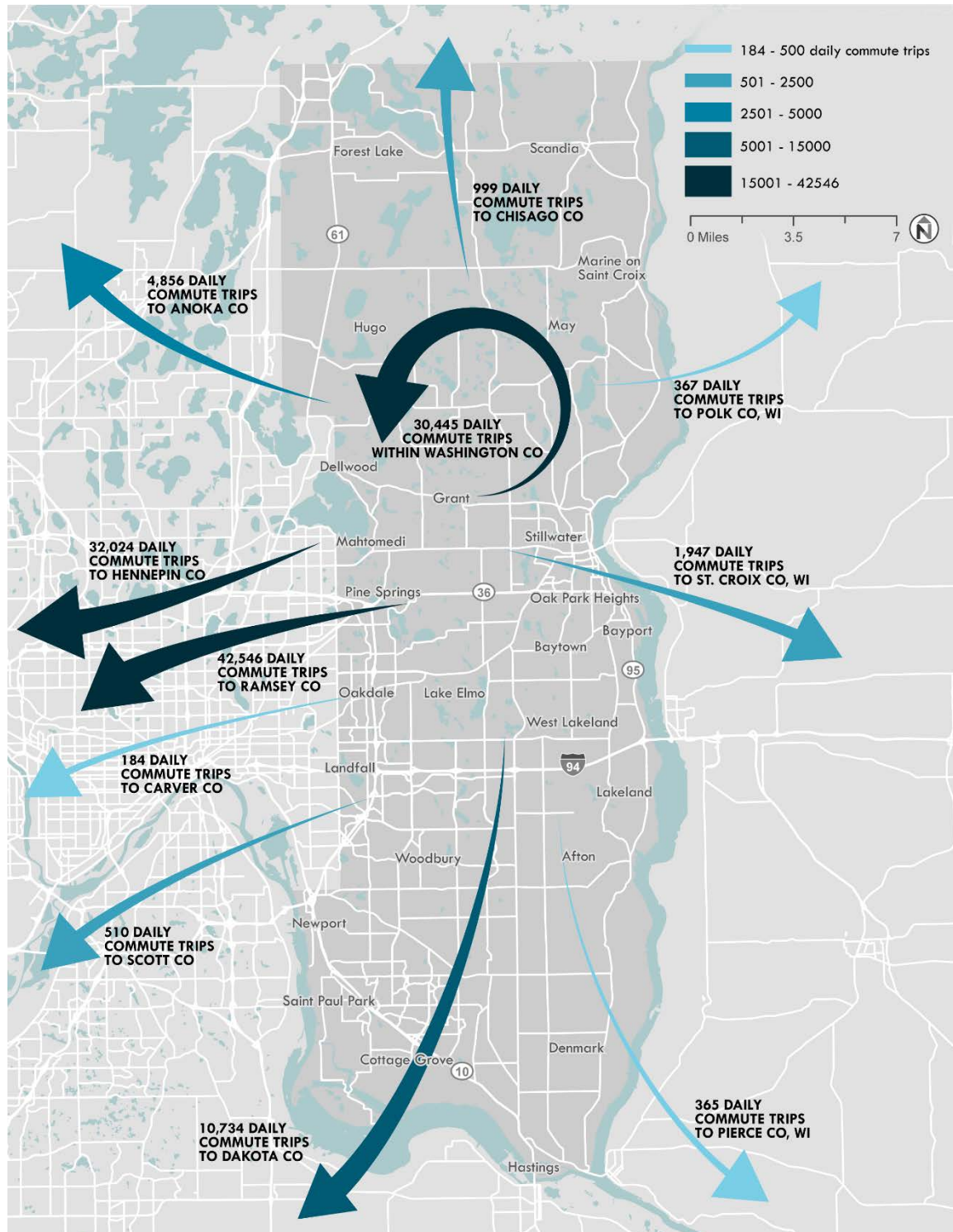
Commute Trips to Work

A robust and detailed picture of travel patterns is provided by analyzing commute trips to work for Washington County residents, as well as for residents of other counties accessing jobs in Washington County. The commute trip data included in this chapter is based on Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), which is provided by the US Census Bureau.

Figure 2-14 shows the primary commute destinations for Washington County residents. The majority of Washington County residents who work outside of their home leave the county for work: out of 124,977 total daily commute trips, 30,445 end in Washington County (24%) while 94,532 trips end at work destinations outside of the county (76%). The predominant commute destinations for Washington County residents are Ramsey County, which accounts for 42,546 commute trips (34%), and Hennepin County, which accounts for 32,024 commute trips (26%). Dakota County accounts for an additional 10,734 daily trips (9%). Transportation solutions that cater to Washington County commuters will need to focus on providing access to major employment and activity centers in Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

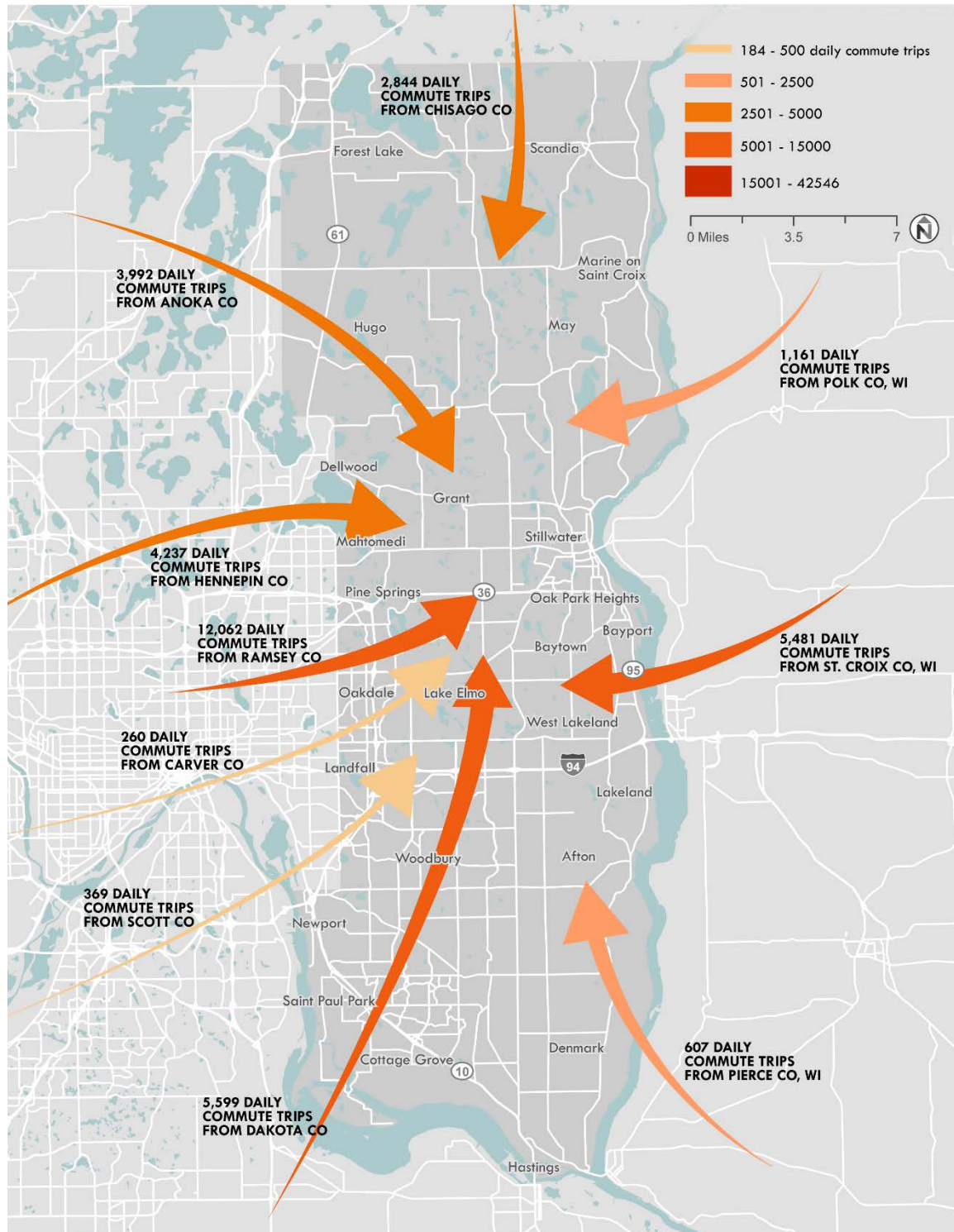
Figure 2-15 presents the flow of workers commuting to job sites within Washington County from outside the county. Almost half of people traveling to jobs in Washington County are Washington County residents: out of 67,057 daily commute trips, 30,445 both start and end in Washington County (45%), while 36,612 are commuters from neighboring counties (55%). Ramsey County generates 18% of commute trips to Washington County. Dakota County, and St. Croix County each generate 8% of total commute trips, while Hennepin County and Anoka County each generate 6% of total commute trips. Transportation solutions for employers in Washington County will need to cater to a more dispersed pool of workers traveling from Ramsey, Dakota, St. Croix, Hennepin, and Anoka Counties, in addition to accommodating the 45% of Washington County employees who commute from within Washington County.

Figure 2-14 Commute Trips to Work Starting in Washington County (Washington County Residents)



Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), 2014

Figure 2-15 Commute Trips to Work Ending in Washington County (Originating Outside Washington County)



Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), 2014

The graphics below present the commute data shown in Figure 2-14 and Figure 2-15 in a pie-chart format. Figure 2-16 shows the breakdown of work destinations for commute trips that start in Washington County. As was stated above, most Washington County residents travel to either Ramsey or Hennepin Counties for work, while the third-largest work destination is jobs within Washington County, and the fourth-largest destination is Dakota County.

Figure 2-17 shows the breakdown of commute origins for people working in Washington County. As described above, nearly half of people working in Washington County also live within the county borders. Ramsey County is the second most prominent county of origin, with Dakota, St. Croix, Hennepin, and Anoka Counties relatively evenly represented.

Figure 2-16 County of Destination for Commute Trips Starting in Washington County (7 Primary Destination Counties, Including Washington)

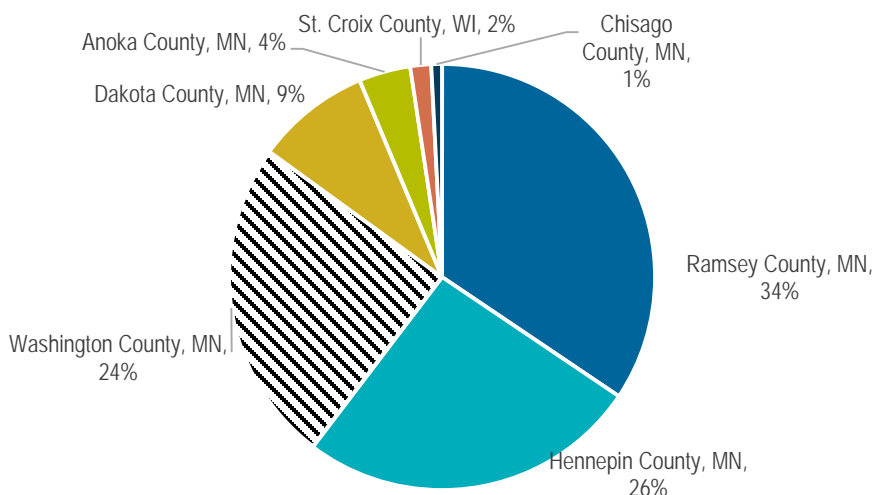
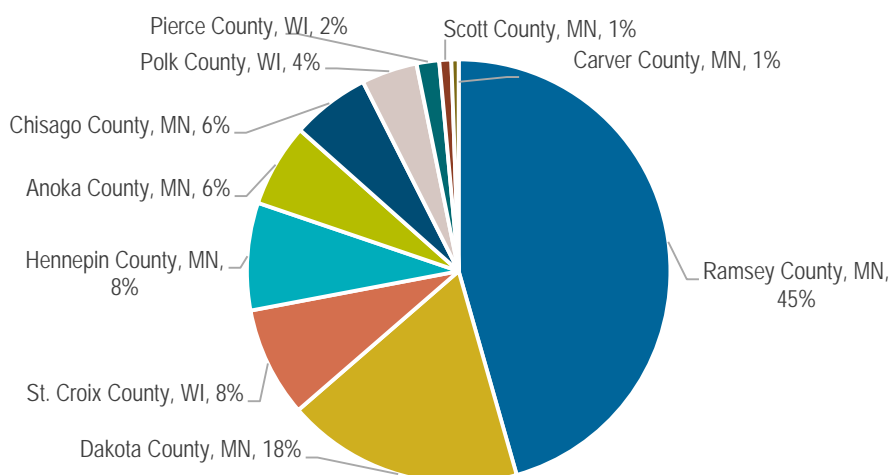


Figure 2-17 County of Origin for Commute Trips Ending in Washington County (10 Primary Counties, Excluding Washington)



Commute Trips To and From Ramsey County

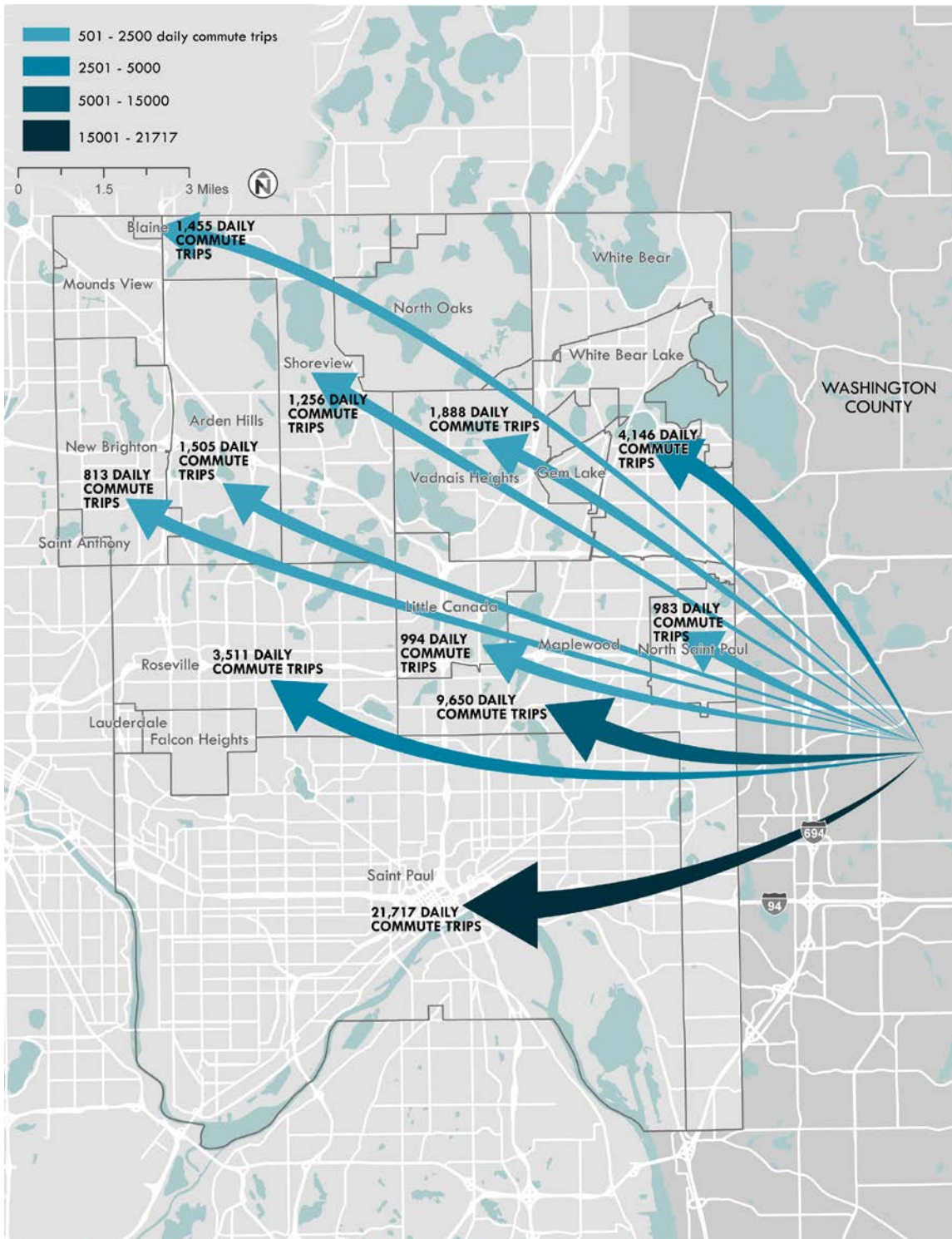
A special focus is made on commute patterns between Ramsey and Washington counties. For the sake of simplicity, commute origins and destinations are shown at the city level for Ramsey County and at the county level for Washington County. This provides a concise overview of commute patterns between the two counties.

As noted above, Ramsey County is a primary commute destination for Washington County residents: 34% of commute trips made by Washington County residents are to jobs in Ramsey County. Saint Paul is the most popular destination in Ramsey County for Washington County commuters, followed by Maplewood, White Bear Lake (which straddles Washington and Ramsey counties), and Roseville. Figure 2-18 lists commute destinations in Ramsey County for Washington County residents, in order of popularity. These commute patterns are further illustrated in Figure 2-19. Note that cities with fewer than 500 daily commute trips are not included.

Figure 2-18 Daily Commute Trips to Work: Washington County to Ramsey County

Commute Trip Origin (County)	Commute Trip Destination (City)	Total Commute Trips
Washington County	Saint Paul	21,717
	Maplewood	9,650
	White Bear Lake	4,146
	Roseville	3,511
	Vadnais Heights	1,888
	Arden Hills	1,505
	Blaine	1,455
	Shoreview	1,256
	Little Canada	994
	North Saint Paul	983
	New Brighton	813

Figure 2-19 Commute Trips to Work Ending in Ramsey County (Originating in Washington County)

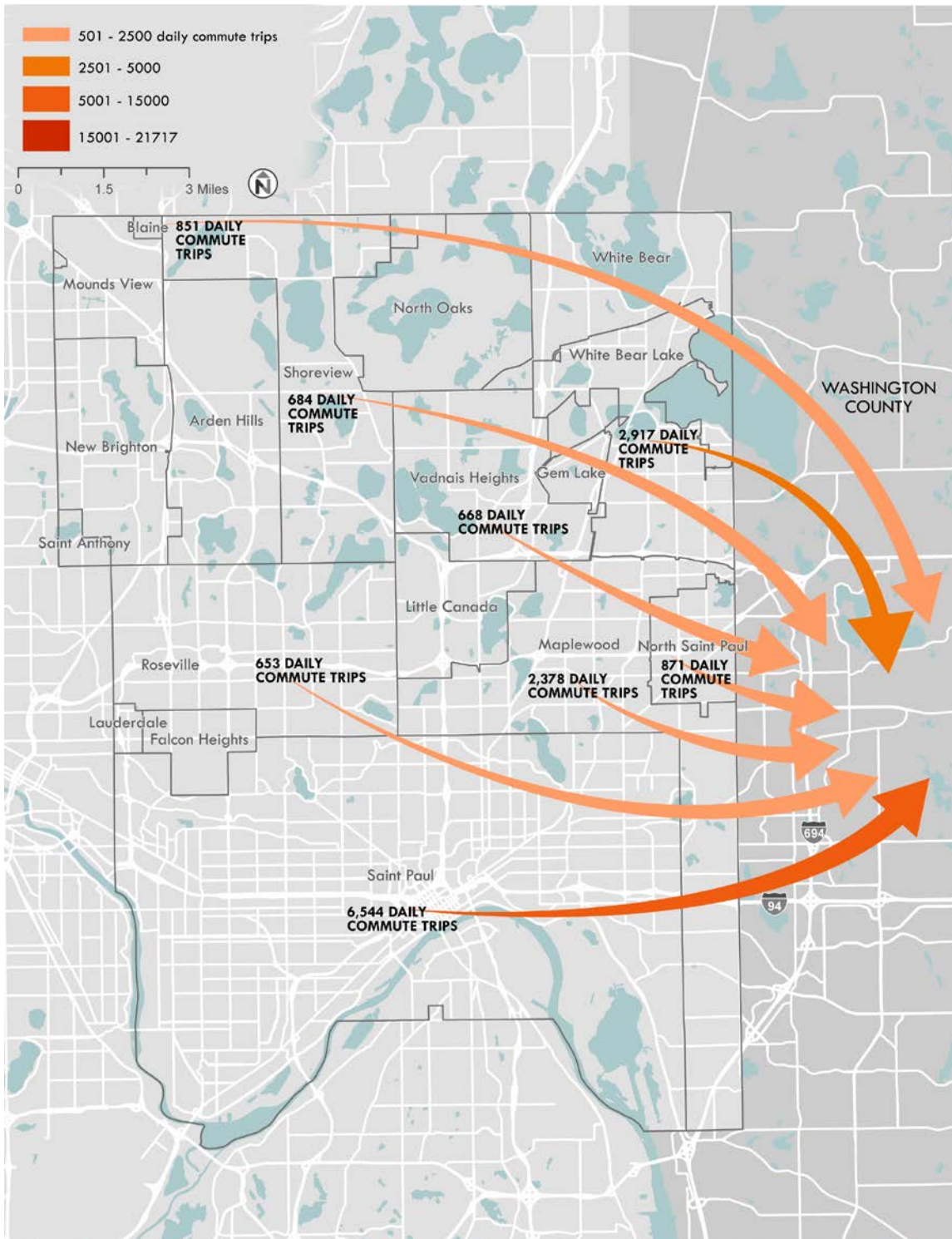


Ramsey County is also a prominent home location for people commuting to jobs in Washington County. The City of Saint Paul in particular has 6,544 daily commute trips to jobs in Washington County. White Bear Lake and Maplewood are also predominant commute origins, with 2,917 and 2,378 daily commuters, respectively. Figure 2-20 below lists commute origins in order of popularity for Ramsey County residents commuting to jobs in Washington County. These commute patterns are further illustrated in Figure 2-21. Note that cities with fewer than 500 daily commute trips are not included.

Figure 2-20 Commute Trips to Work: Ramsey County to Washington County

Commute Trip Origin (City)	Commute Trip Destination (County)	Total Commute Trips
Saint Paul	Washington County	6,544
White Bear Lake	Washington County	2,917
Maplewood	Washington County	2,378
North Saint Paul	Washington County	871
Blaine	Washington County	851
Shoreview	Washington County	684
Vadnais Heights	Washington County	668
Roseville	Washington County	653

Figure 2-21 Commute Trips to Work Ending in Washington County (Originating in Ramsey County)



Key Trip Generators

General Destinations

It is important to understand key trip generators in Washington County. The following tables provide detail on major trip generators in Washington County, including major employers (Figure 2-22), colleges and universities (Figure 2-23), retail centers (Figure 2-24), and medical destinations (Figure 2-25).

Figure 2-26 includes community destinations such as retail centers, recreational facilities, libraries, medical centers, activity centers, and colleges and universities. The majority of these destinations are clustered in portions of the county with above-average population and employment densities, specifically in the southwest portion of the county and in Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, and Forest Lake.

Figure 2-22 Major Employers in Washington County, 2015

Company	Location	Employees	% of Total Countywide Employment
Andersen Corporation	Bayport, Cottage Grove	5,700	4.24%
Independent School District 833	Cottage Grove, Newport, St. Paul Park, Woodbury	2,500	1.87%
Bailey Nurseries, Inc.	Newport	1,800	1.34%
Independent School District 622	North St. Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale	1,600	1.15%
Imation Corporation (Note: No longer in business)	Oakdale	1,500	1.12%
Wal-Mart	Forest Lake, Oak Park Heights, Woodbury, and Cottage Grove	1,200	0.87%
Washington County Government	Various	1,100	0.84%
Independent School District 831	Forest Lake	1,100	0.81%
Independent School District 834	Stillwater	1,000	0.77%
Target	Cottage Grove, Forest Lake, Stillwater, Woodbury, and Oakdale	900	0.66%
Total (among these employers)		18,400	9.43%

Source: Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for Washington County, Minnesota, December 2015

Figure 2-23 Colleges and Universities in Washington County

Name	Location	Enrollment
Century College	White Bear Lake	10,100
Globe University	Woodbury	N/A (campus is closing September 2017)
Rasmussen College	Lake Elmo	2,169
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota—Oakdale Center	Oakdale	5,900 enrollment overall, limited activity in Oakdale

Figure 2-24 Major Retail Centers in Washington County

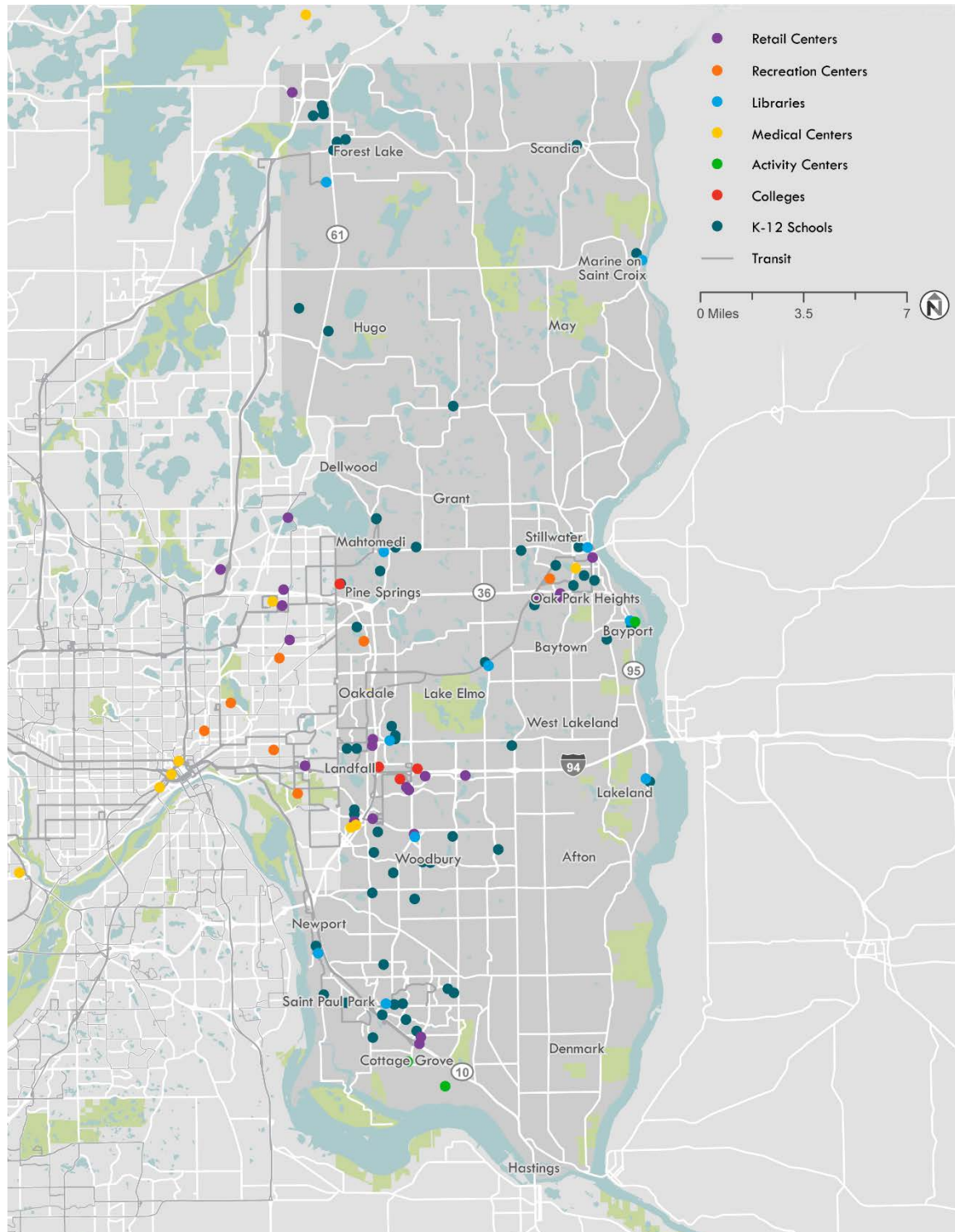
Name	Location	Retailers
Tamarack Village	Woodbury	60
TH 36 Commercial Strip	Oak Park Heights	75 (combination of various shopping centers and freestanding stores)
Valley Creek Mall	Woodbury	25
Woodbury Lakes	Woodbury	55
Woodbury Village	Woodbury	55

Figure 2-25 Major Medical Centers Serving Washington County

Name	Location	Beds	Admissions	Annual Outpatient Visits (2016)
Fairview Lakes Medical Center	Wyoming	49	2,864	91,187
Lakeview Hospital	Stillwater	54	3,736	61,852
Maplewood VA clinic	Maplewood	N/A	N/A	21,752
Minneapolis VA Health Care System	Minneapolis	309	8,689	776,958
Regions Hospital	Saint Paul	463	25,350	140,201
St. Joseph's Hospital	Saint Paul	234	11,492	54,651
United Hospital	Saint Paul	370	22,251	174,345
Woodwinds Health Campus	Woodbury	86	7,829	60,164

Source: Health Forum, LLC, the American Hospital Association; VA Medical Center provided data for VA facilities.

Figure 2-26 General Destinations for Washington County Residents



Residential Facilities and Essential Services

A number of trip generators provide essential services to transit-dependent populations in Washington County. Many of these are located in rural parts of the county with no access to fixed-route transit. For those services that are close to transit lines, it is important to note that many clients cannot travel within the limited peak-period service windows typical of Metro Transit routes in Washington County. Many of these services are also located outside of the Metro Mobility service area, which may present further barriers for people with disabilities.

Figure 2-27 shows the location of housing support facilities for older adults, people with disabilities, youth and adult foster care recipients, individuals experiencing homelessness, and others with special needs. Several of these facilities are located in low-density areas of Washington County, such as Scandia. Transportation is an important quality-of-life factor for residents who need to access jobs, health services, educational opportunities, and other services. Transportation for employees is also a concern, especially in remote areas where employees may have to commute from elsewhere in the county or metro area.

Figure 2-28 maps the location of resource centers, food shelves, and government centers in Washington County. Specific services include the Cottage Grove Government Center, Headwaters Service Center, and the WorkForce Center in Woodbury, as well as nonprofit and faith-based food shelves. Some of these services are in locations with limited fixed-route transit access (such as Stillwater, Cottage Grove, Oakdale, and Woodbury), while others are in remote parts of Washington County with no access to fixed-route transit.

Figure 2-29 shows the locations of Day Training and Habilitation (DT&H) centers in Washington County. Most of these services are located in cities with all-day or peak-only fixed-route transit access, such as Stillwater, Cottage Grove, Oakdale, and Woodbury.

Figure 2-27 Residential Facilities for Groups with Special Needs in Washington County

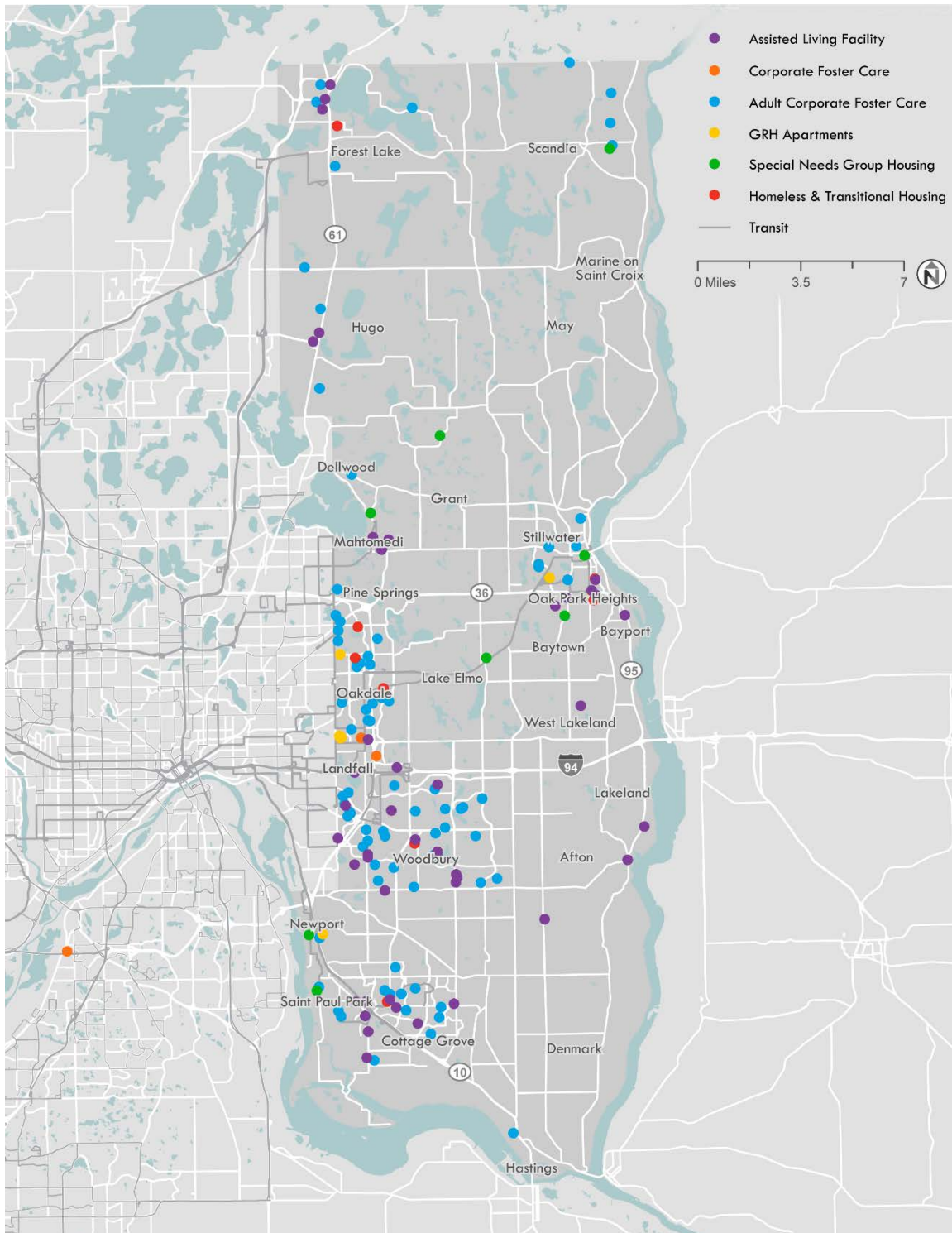


Figure 2-28 Resource Centers & Government Centers in Washington County

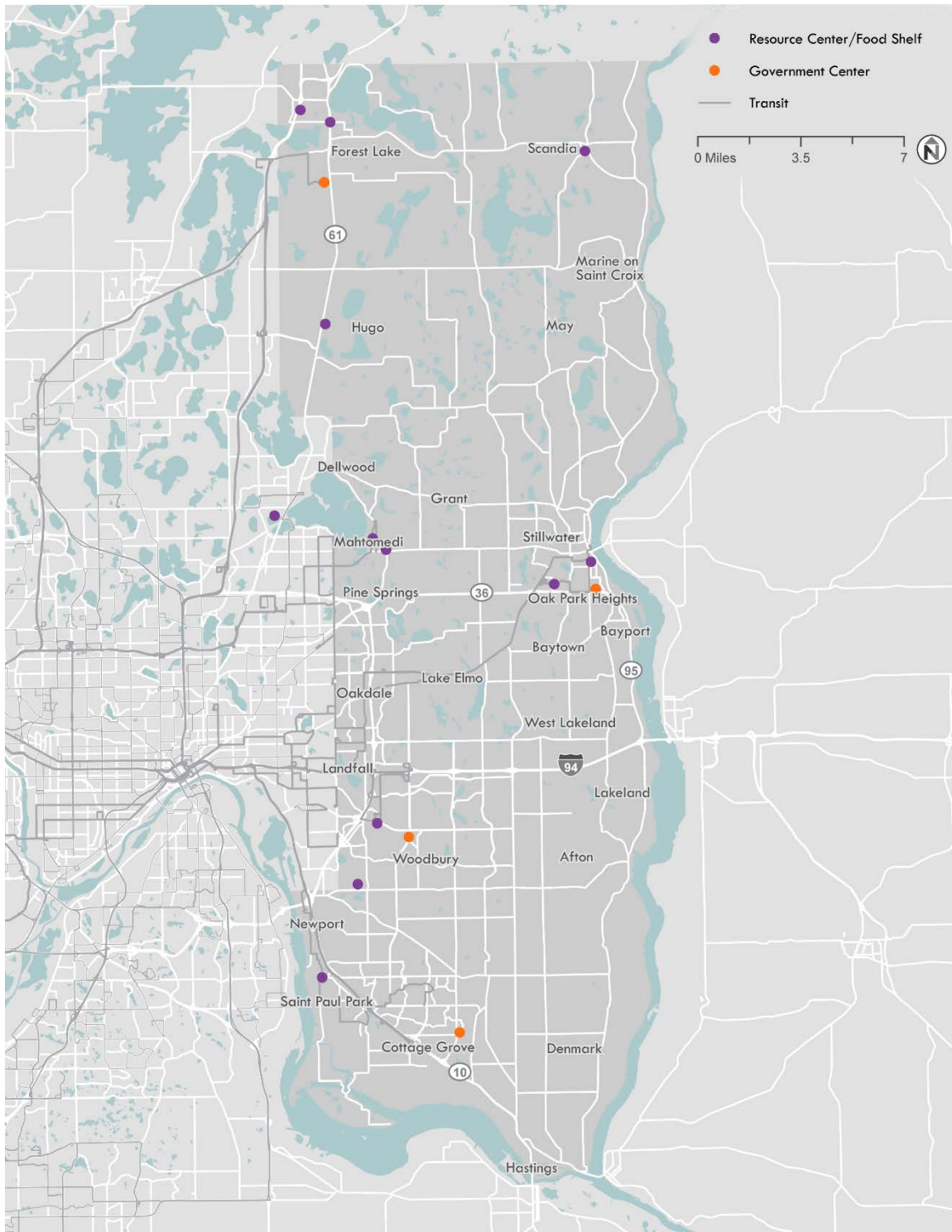
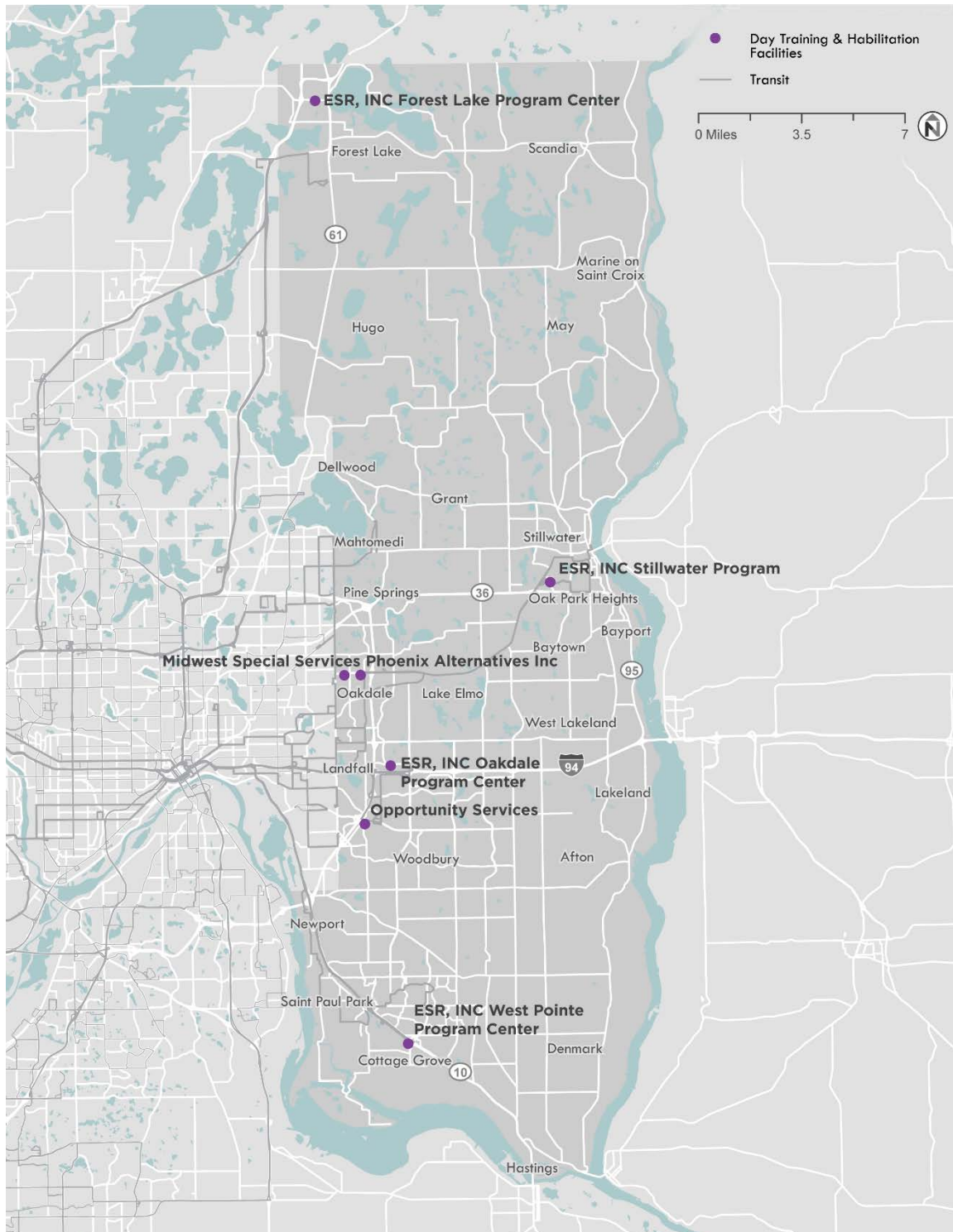


Figure 2-29 Day Training & Habilitation (DT&H) Centers in Washington County



3 EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

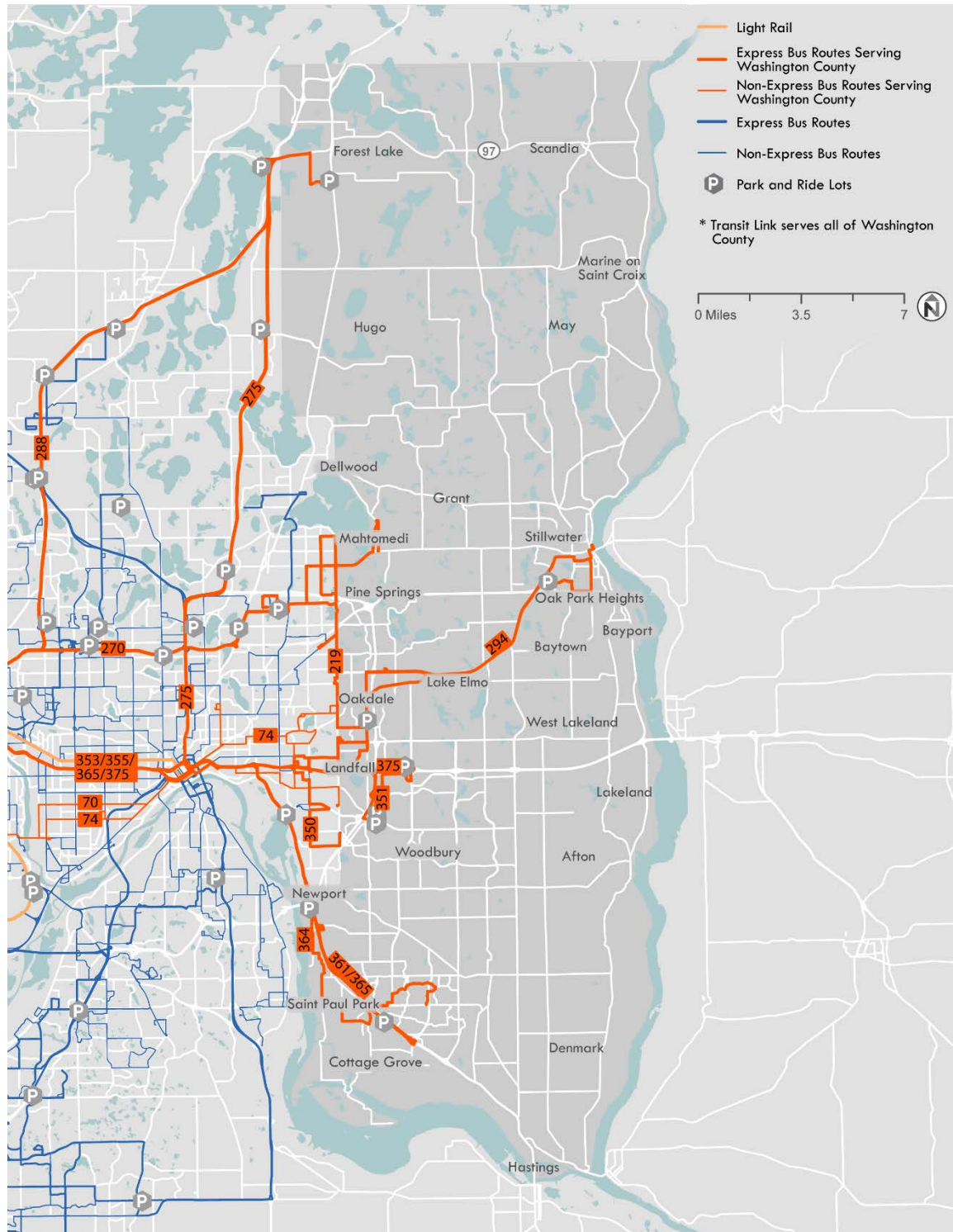
Public transportation in Washington County (and through much of the metro area) is administered by the Metropolitan Council, which is the regional policy and planning agency for the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area. The Metropolitan Council is responsible for overseeing housing, parks, transportation, wastewater and water, community development, and general planning activities within the Twin Cities region. It also a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and thus is responsible for managing transportation funding from many state and federal sources.

The Metropolitan Council's Transportation Division is divided into two bodies:

1. **Metro Transit** operates fixed-route transit services in the Twin Cities area, including bus and passenger rail, and oversees Metro Vanpool
2. **Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)** conducts long-range transportation planning, develops the short-range capital improvement program, and operates demand-responsive transportation services such as Metro Mobility and Transit Link.

Specific information regarding these services and their impact on Washington County is described below. This chapter also provides context for funding of transit services in Washington County and summarizes information about private and nonprofit providers in the county.

Figure 3-1 Existing Public Transportation Services in Washington County



Metro Transit

Fixed Route Service

Metro Transit is the regional transit provider for the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area. Metro Transit operates fixed-route bus services, park-and-ride facilities, and regional commuter rail. Figure 3-2 lists the Metro Transit routes that serve Washington County. All routes connect Washington County to Saint Paul or Minneapolis; Metro Transit does not provide any local circulator service exclusively within Washington County.

Figure 3-3 shows the span and frequency of Metro Transit routes in Washington County. Due to the limited number of local routes, service is concentrated in the morning and evening commute periods, with limited service spans (typically 3-4 hours) and limited frequency (typically every 30 minutes). Only three routes — 70, 74, and 219 — provide all-day service on weekdays, as well as some weekend service. The remaining twelve routes serving Washington County only provide peak-hour commuter service during weekdays. Note the times listed in Figure 3-3 are route averages and may not apply to Washington County portion of service. Refer to route schedules at metrotransit.org for details.

Metro Transit' bus routes are classified by role and the Market Areas they serve (see Figure 2-12). Those that operate along the periphery of Washington County or within the county include the following classifications:

- **Local:**
 - **Core Local Bus:** Core Local routes typically serve the denser urban areas of Market Areas I and II, usually providing access to a downtown or major activity center along important commercial corridors.
 - **Supporting Local Bus:** Supporting Local routes are typically designed to provide crosstown connections within Market Areas I and II. Typically these routes do not serve a downtown but play an important role connecting to Core Local routes.
 - **Suburban Local Bus:** Suburban Local routes typically operate in Market Areas II and III in a suburban context and are often less productive than Core Local routes. These routes serve an important role in providing a basic-level of transit coverage throughout the region.
- **Commuter and Express Bus:** Commuter and Express Bus routes primarily operate during peak periods to serve commuters to downtown or a major employment center. These routes typically operate non-stop on highways for portions of the route between picking up passengers in residential areas or at park-and-ride facilities and dropping them off at a major destination.¹³

¹³ 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, Appendix G: Transit Design Guidelines, Metropolitan Council, 2015

Figure 3-2 List of Metro Transit Routes Serving Washington County

Route	From	To	Washington County Cities Served	Classification
70	Saint Paul	Maplewood	Woodbury	Core Local
74	Minneapolis	Maplewood	Oakdale	Core Local
219	Saint Paul	Maplewood	Landfall, Oakdale, Mahtomedi	Suburban Local
270	Downtown Minneapolis	Mahtomedi	Mahtomedi, Birchwood Village, White Bear Lake, Willernie	Commuter and Express
275	Downtown Saint Paul	Forest Lake	Forest Lake	Commuter and Express
288	Downtown Minneapolis	Forest Lake	Forest Lake	Commuter and Express
294	Downtown Saint Paul	Stillwater	Oakdale, Lake Elmo, Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, Baytown Township	Commuter and Express
350	Downtown Saint Paul	Maplewood	Woodbury	Commuter and Express
351	Downtown Saint Paul	Woodbury	Woodbury	Commuter and Express
353	Downtown Minneapolis	Woodbury	Saint Paul, Woodbury	Commuter and Express
355	Downtown Minneapolis	Woodbury	Woodbury	Commuter and Express
361	Downtown Saint Paul	Cottage Grove	Saint Paul, Newport, Cottage Grove	Commuter and Express
364	Downtown Saint Paul	Cottage Grove	Newport, St. Paul Park, Cottage Grove	Commuter and Express
365	Downtown Minneapolis	Cottage Grove	Saint Paul, Newport, Cottage Grove	Commuter and Express
375	Downtown Minneapolis	Oakdale	Oakdale	Commuter and Express

Figure 3-3 Span and Frequency of Metro Transit Routes Serving Washington County

Route	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Frequency (minutes)	
				Weekday Rush Hour	Weekday Midday
70	4:26 AM - 9:49 PM	6:26 AM - 8:51 PM	9:34 AM - 6:35 PM	30	30
74	3:28 AM - 11:43 PM	3:29 AM - 11:43 PM	3:33 AM - 11:34 PM	15 - 20	30
219	5:44 AM - 9:42 PM	6:15 AM - 7:15 PM	--	30	30
270	5:20 AM - 8:20 AM; 2:43 PM - 6:54 PM	--	--	10	--
275	5:39 AM - 8:19 AM; 3:38 PM - 5:50 PM	--	--	30	--
288	5:41 AM - 8:57 AM; 3:00 PM - 5:43 PM	--	--	30	--
294	5:24 AM - 8:54 AM; 3:38 PM - 7:12 PM	--	--	30 - 60	--

350	5:32 AM - 7:58 AM; 3:40 PM - 6:32 PM	--	--	20 - 40	--
351	6:19 - 8:14 AM, 3:34 PM - 6:11 PM	--	--	20	--
353	5:41 AM	--	--	One AM trip	--
355	6:04 AM - 8:56 AM; 3:23 PM - 6:54 PM	--	--	10 - 15	--
361	6:16 AM - 8:07 AM, 3:13 PM - 5:43 PM	--	--	30	--
364	5:53 AM - 7:52 AM; 4:05 PM - 6:17 PM	--	--	30+	--
365	5:38 AM - 8:45 AM; 3:12 PM - 6:54 PM	--	--	10 - 20	--
375	5:51 AM - 8:25 AM; 3:02 PM - 6:22 PM	--	--	10 - 30	--

A summary of Metro Transit fares is shown in Figure 3-4 below. It should be noted that weekday commuter express bus service, which is the predominant form of bus service in Washington County, is not discounted for youth or older adults; it is discounted for Medicare cardholders and individuals with a state-issued disability ID. Non-rush hour express bus service, local bus, A Line, and METRO fares are discounted for youth, older adults, Medicare cardholders, and individuals with a state-issued disability ID.

Figure 3-4 Metro Transit Fares

Local Bus, A Line & METRO Fares		Non-Rush Hours	Rush Hours: Weekdays 6-9 AM & 3-6:30 PM
Regular Adult Fare			
Adults (ages 13 to 64)	Local Bus / A Line / METRO	\$2.00	\$2.50
	Express Bus	\$2.50	\$3.25
	Downtown Zone (Transfers Not Available) Bus/Metro Only	\$0.50	\$0.50
Reduced Fares			
Seniors (ages 65+)	Local Bus / A Line / METRO	\$1.00	\$2.50
	Express Bus	\$1:00	\$3.25
Youth (ages 6 to 12)	Local Bus / A Line / METRO	\$1.00	\$2.50
	Express Bus	\$1:00	\$3.25
Medicare card holders	Local Bus / A Line / METRO	\$1.00	\$2.50
	Express Bus	\$1:00	\$3.25
Mobility Fare (state-issued disability ID with an "A" or "L")	Local Bus / A Line / METRO	\$1.00	\$1.00
	Express Bus	\$1:00	\$1.00
Persons with Disabilities	Local Bus / A Line / METRO	\$0.75	\$0.75
	Express Bus	\$0.75	\$0.75
Ages 5 and under ride free (limit 3) and must ride with a fare-paying customer.			

Metro Vanpool

Metropolitan Transportation Services oversees a vanpool program that is available to all residents of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties. This regional program is subsidized by the Metropolitan Council to provide additional transportation options for those who do not live within close proximity to Metro Transit fixed-route service. Metro Vanpool provides 7-, 9-, 12-, or 15-person vans, depending on individuals' needs.

The cost of participating in a vanpool is on-average \$110 per month for each participant. Rates fluctuate depending on regularity, distance of trip, and number of participants. Vans are leased directly to the primary volunteer driver, and the primary driver rides free in exchange for driving and coordinating services. Rideshare by Enterprise leases all vans and the service includes insurance, maintenance, repairs, and 24-hour roadside assistance.

Currently, 70 active Metro Vanpool vans originate in Washington County and an additional 20 active Metro Vanpool vans originate in various cities and rural townships in western Wisconsin and travel via either Highway 61 or Interstate 94 via Washington County (without stopping) to employment locations throughout the Twin Cities.

Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) is a department within the Transportation Division of the Metropolitan Council. MTS is responsible for conducting short-range and long-range transportation planning within the Twin Cities area and operated fixed-route services, demand-response services, and the Metro Vanpool program. Within Washington County, MTS administers two demand-responsive transportation services, which are described below.

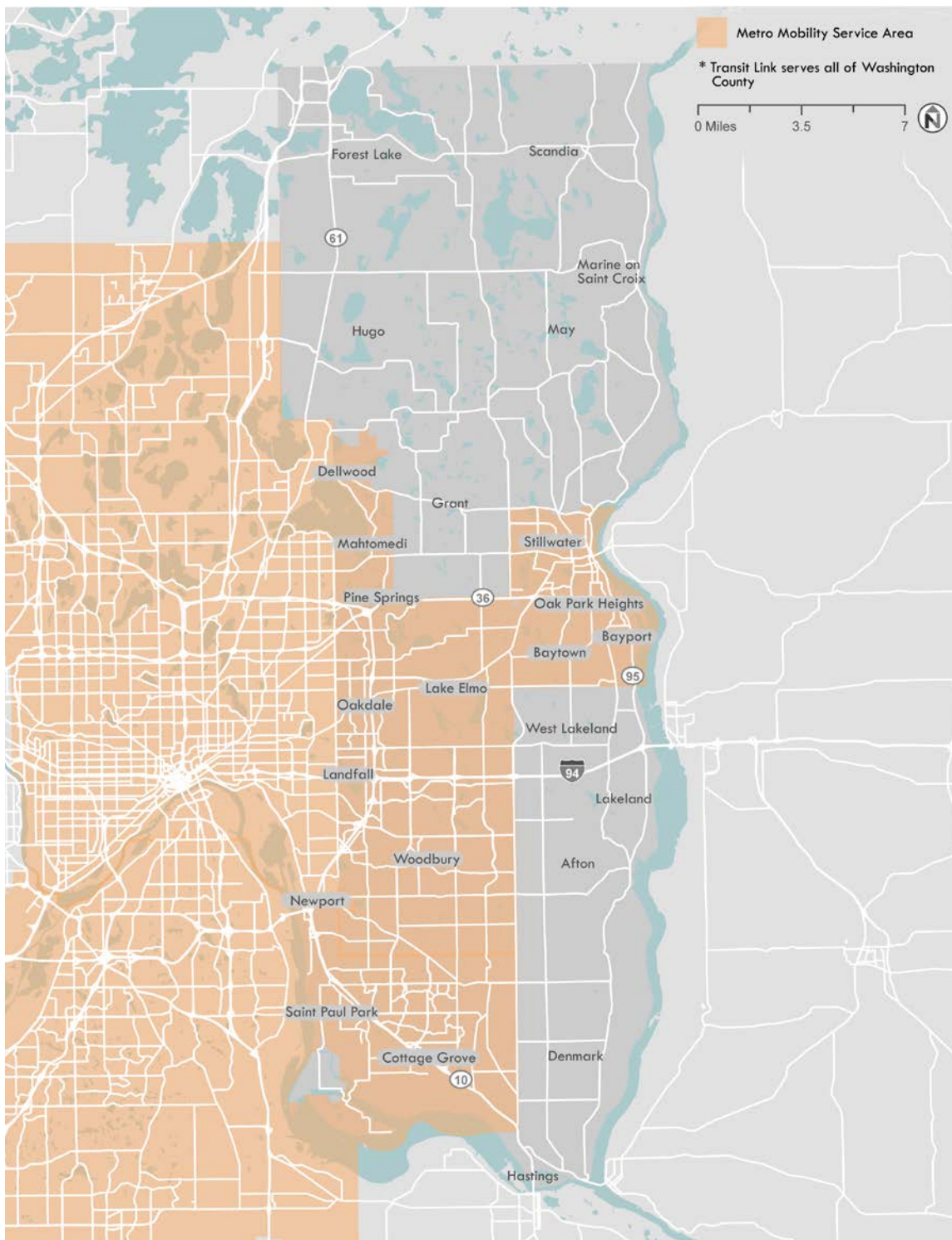
Metro Mobility

Metro Mobility provides demand-responsive transit service for eligible riders within the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area. Eligibility is determined by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, and includes those individuals who are unable to ride fixed-route transit services due to a disability. Figure 3-5 shows the Metro Mobility service area, which does not cover all of Washington County: coverage is provided to cities that are included within the 2006 transit-taxing district. The Metro Mobility service area covers most of Washington County's larger cities, including Cottage Grove, Woodbury, Oakdale, and Stillwater.

Several communities in Washington County with larger populations of people with disabilities are not covered by the Metro Mobility service area. Forest Lake (population 19,000) has a population of people with disabilities of 9.9%, and Afton (population 2,900) has a population of 9.8%.

A one-way trip fare is \$3.50 during the off-peak period and \$4.50 during the peak period. Peak-period service hours are between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 3:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. A \$.75 distance surcharge applies to non-ADA trips that are 15 miles or longer.

Figure 3-5 Metro Mobility Service Area



Transit Link

Transit Link is a demand-responsive dial-a-ride service available to all residents of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area. Riders must call ahead to reserve a ride for any trip that cannot be accommodated by regular fixed-route transit (such as local or express bus services); riders can use Transit Link to connect to another transit service. Transit Link riders are instructed to reserve trips one week in advance.

The Transit Link service area covers all of Washington County, as well as the following communities in Ramsey County: Gem Lake, Little Canada, Maplewood, North Oaks, and North Saint Paul, Saint Paul, Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake, and White Bear Township.¹⁴

Service hours are Monday-Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. To ensure that Transit Link does not duplicate fixed-route service, each trip is analyzed for eligibility. Trip requests are not considered eligible if they start and end within ¼ mile of a transit stop in winter, or ½ mile of a transit stop in summer. Transit Link is a curb-to-curb service, though ADA-eligible riders qualify for door-to-door assistance upon request. All riders are eligible to request assistance with up to four grocery-sized bags when accessing Transit Link. Figure 3-6 below shows Transit Link one-way fares.

Figure 3-6 Transit Link Fares

Trip Distance	Rush Hour Fare	Non-Rush-Hour Fare
<15 Miles	\$4.50	\$3.50
>15 Miles	\$5.25	\$4.25

Transit Market Development Implications for Washington County

The 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, adopted by the Metropolitan Council in January 2015, established five Transit Market Areas that encompass the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area.¹⁵ These Transit Market Areas were assessed using a Transit Market Index that is based on population density, intersection density, employment density, and availability of automobiles. Each of these variables is weighted based on their impact on potential transit demand. Figure 3-7 shows a map of Transit Market Areas for the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Washington County is predominantly categorized as Market Area V, with some areas categorized as Market Area III and IV, and with a portion of Oakdale classified as Emerging Market Area II. Emerging markets within Transit Market Areas III and IV that have a higher potential for transit usage than the rest of the market areas surrounding them. These areas are currently too small or non-contiguous to support a higher level of transit service. Focusing growth in and around these areas to connect to other areas of higher potential transit use will present good opportunities for future transit improvement. Washington County also contains two Freestanding Town Centers, which are defined as areas with dense urban form that could support high transit use, but are geographically isolated from other urbanized areas, which limits the potential for local fixed-route transit. According to the Metropolitan Council's service standards, the recommended transit services for Market Areas II-V are:

¹⁴ "Washington County Transit Link Service." Washington County Transit Link Service - Metropolitan Council. Web. 22 June 2017.

¹⁵ 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, pages 6.16-6.18, G.1-G.6. Metropolitan Council, January 2015.

- Market Area II: Limited local bus service
- Market Area III: Commuter express bus, limited local bus service, general public dial-a-ride
- Market Area IV: Commuter express bus, general public dial-a-ride
- Market Area V: General public dial-a-ride (not well suited for fixed-route service)

According to the 2040 TPP, the Metropolitan Council's recommended service span for commuter express routes is peak-period weekday service only. The recommended service span for suburban local routes is weekday peak-period, midday, and limited evening service (with no late-night or weekend service). The minimum recommended frequency for commuter express routes in Market Area III-IV is three trips per peak period. There is no minimum recommended frequency for suburban local routes.¹⁶

In assessing productivity, the Metropolitan Council evaluates each route based on average passengers per in-service hour.¹⁷ The Metropolitan Council's recommended ridership metrics for commuter express routes and suburban local routes are stated below:

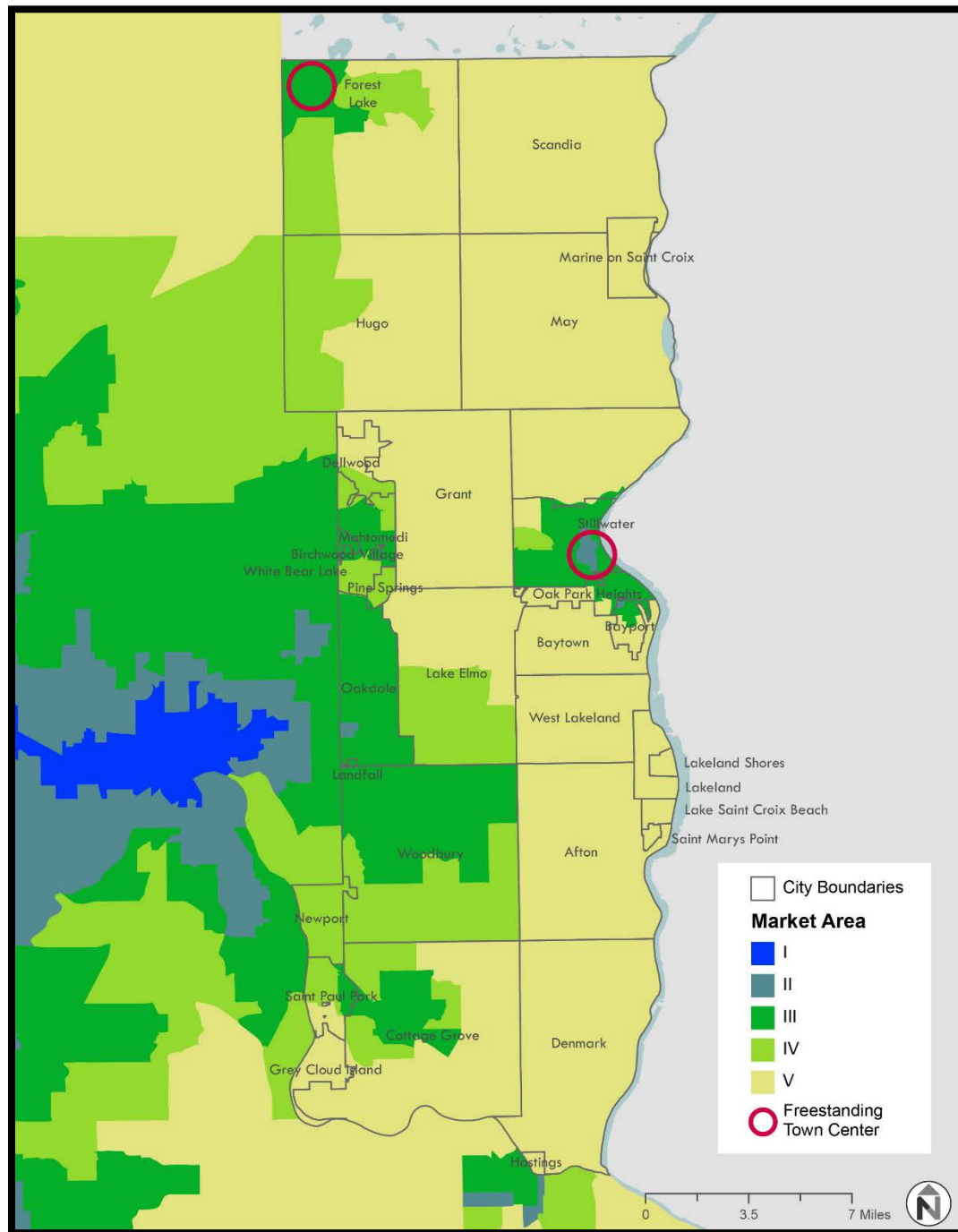
- Commuter express bus (peak): ≥20 (average), ≥15 (minimum per trip)
- Commuter express bus (off-peak): ≥10 (average), ≥5 (minimum per trip)
- Suburban local bus: ≥10 (average), ≥5 (minimum per trip)

The Metropolitan Council's recommended route types, service standards, and evaluation metrics for low-density and urban-fringe communities (such as those found in Market Areas III-V) are on par with industry standards. However, the Metropolitan Council's market areas assessment does not take into consideration the prevalence of transit-disadvantaged populations in Washington County, including older adults, people with disabilities, low-income individuals, and Veterans. It also does not account for the location of key transit destinations, such as hospitals, foodbanks, Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals and clinics, senior and group housing facilities, and corporate foster care facilities. Within Washington County, many key destinations for transit-dependent individuals are located in areas of the county that are designated as Market Area V, and therefore would not merit fixed-route service based on Metropolitan Council guidelines. Looking ahead, a key consideration of this study will be to identify transportation solutions for individuals accessing these destinations.

¹⁶ 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, pages G.12-G.13. Metropolitan Council, January 2015.

¹⁷ 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, pages G.15-G.16. Metropolitan Council, January 2015.

Figure 3-7 Metropolitan Council Transit Market Areas within Washington County, Aligned with Jurisdictional Boundaries



Source: Adapted from Metropolitan Council 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, page 6.18

PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Washington County has limited transportation services from private and national operators.

- **Amtrak** does not operate any bus or rail stations within Washington County. The closest Amtrak train station is the Saint Paul Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul, which serves trans-continental train routes such as the Empire Builder from Chicago to Seattle.
- **Greyhound Lines** operates one bus station in Washington County, which is located in Forest Lake close to the Headwaters Service Center. There is also a Greyhound station in Hastings (located in Dakota County), as well as several stations in Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

Many **taxicab companies** operate in Washington County. Figure 3-8 provides a summary of the *primary* taxicab companies serving Washington County (note that this is not a complete list). Many of these companies provide school transportation, wheelchair accessible vans, and non-emergency medical transportation in addition to standard taxi trips.

Figure 3-8 Summary of Taxicab Services Operating in Washington County

Company Name	Service Area	Services Offered	Fare	
			Flag or Base Charge	Cost per Mile of Travel
Anna's Taxi	Forest Lake and surrounding areas	Taxi, airport service	NA	NA
A-Taxi (ataximn.com)	Minnesota and Wisconsin	Taxi, group vans, airport service	\$3.00-\$4.00	\$2.50-\$3.30
Blue and White Taxi (blueandwhitetaxi.com)	Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area	Taxi, corporate accounts, airport service	NA	NA
Care Cab (caretransportation.com)	Minnesota (statewide)	Non-emergency medical transportation, children's transportation, Type III school bus transportation	NA	NA
Minneapolis Yellow Cab (yellowcabmn.com)	Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area	Taxi, corporate accounts, airport service, pre-paid taxi service ('ridecards'), Type III school bus transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, wheelchair van service, package delivery, special events	\$2.50	\$2.50
Suburban Taxi Green and White Taxi (suburbantaxi.com)	Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area	Taxi, corporate accounts, school accounts, medical accounts, airport service, non-emergency medical transportation, wheelchair van service, package delivery, special events	\$2.50	\$2.50
Town Taxi (towntaximn.com)	Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area	Taxi, airport service, Type III school bus transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, child seats	\$2.50	\$2.50
Woodbury Airport Taxi (woodburyairporttaxi.com)	Woodbury and surrounding areas	Taxi, corporate accounts, airport service, flat rate airport trips	NA	NA
Woodbury Taxi (taxiwoodbury.com)	Woodbury and surrounding areas	Taxi, corporate accounts, airport service	\$2.50	\$2.75

HUMAN-SERVICE AND NONPROFIT TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

A variety of community-based and nonprofit organizations operate transportation services in Washington County. These include dial-a-ride services, shuttles, and volunteer driver programs. Some services are limited to certain eligible populations, such as people with disabilities, older adults, Veterans, or medical patients and their families, while other services are available to the public-at-large. Organizations providing these transportation services are listed in Figure 3-9. Newtrax and Canvas Health, which are two of the most prominent nonprofit transportation service providers in Washington County, are discussed in more detail below.

Newtrax

Newtrax is a nonprofit transportation provider that primarily serves older adults and adults with disabilities in the northeast Twin Cities metropolitan area. Trips are provided to member organizations such as DT&H facilities, older adults or people with disabilities residential facilities, local employers, and faith-based organizations.

Newtrax was founded in 2011 by PAI and Merrick, both of which are DT&H providers with clients in Washington County. Today, Newtrax operates a fleet of over 40 vehicles and serves an average of 600 people per day, including 400-450 trips within Washington County (primarily on the northern and western parts of the county).

During an informational meeting with project staff, Newtrax staff expressed that transportation needs should be considered for the northeast metropolitan area as a whole, including both Washington and Ramsey counties, as their clients' transportation needs frequently transcend county borders. Newtrax staff identified the following key areas of concern:

- Transportation to and from jobs for individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities. Many organizations focus on providing employment opportunities for adults with disabilities, but transportation to access these jobs is still a key concern
- Transportation for older adults who live in their own residences
- Transportation after dark, especially for older adults and people with disabilities
- Transportation services to and from independent living and group living sites

Newtrax is interested in growing and taking a lead role in mobility management for the northeast metro area. They are currently expanding their role in workforce development and are looking to provide additional transportation services for major employers (e.g., they have recently begin providing services for FedEx). Because Newtrax focuses on weekday peak-period services, they have additional service capacity during the midday period and weekends. Newtrax is also currently initiating a volunteer driver program that would be operated in conjunction with local organizations. Other potential new services under consideration by Newtrax include local circulator services in key cities and non-emergency medical transportation in coordination with hospitals and care facilities.

Canvas Health

Canvas Health provides group transportation for older adults in Washington County. Canvas Health maintains two sixteen-passenger buses, both of which are equipped with wheelchair lifts. This service is available to groups of older adults either on a one-time basis or for regularly scheduled trips. Trips cost \$70 per hour (based on a two-hour minimum).

Canvas Health staff participated in outreach events that were hosted as part of the Washington County Transit Needs Study, and provided valuable feedback that contributed to the findings detailed in this report.

Summary of Transportation Service Providers

The table below provides an overview of community-based and nonprofit organizations that operate transportation services in Washington County.

Figure 3-9 Specialized Human Services, Private, and Nonprofit Transportation Providers

Name	Fleet	Eligible Riders	Eligible Trips	Service Type(s)	Service Area	Service Span
Allegiance Transportation	Wheelchair accessible vehicles	Older adults, Veterans, people with disabilities	Medical and non-medical trips	Demand Response	Twin Cities Metro Area	7 days a week 7am to 7pm
Always Best Care for Senior Services	Wheelchair accessible vehicles	Older adults	All trips	Demand Response	Bayport, Circle Pines, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Marine on Saint Croix, Scandia, Stillwater and Afton	7 days a week, 8am to 8 pm
American Cancer Society	NA	Cancer Patients who are ambulatory	Medical appointments	Demand Response	NA	M-TH 8am to 5:30pm and F 8am to 4:30pm
Canvas Health	2 Sixteen-passenger buses	Older adults and people with disabilities (groups as well)	One time special outing or regularly scheduled group trips (shopping etc.)	Demand Response	Washington County; trips outside of Washington County can also be scheduled	M-F 8am to 4:30pm
Community Thread	Car	Riders with no other means of transportation (must pass a pre-screen process to qualify)	Medical appointments	Volunteer Demand Response	Residents within the Stillwater School District	M-F 8am to 4pm (pending driver availability)
Disabled American Veterans of MN	Car	Veterans with VA Medical Center appointments	Medical appointments (VA Medical Center)	Volunteer Demand Response	Western Washington County (Oakdale, Woodbury, White Bear Lake, St. Paul Park, Cottage Grove)	M-F 9am to 1pm
Discover Ride	NA	NA	Medical appointments	Demand Response	Twin Cities Metro Area	M-F 9am to 1pm
Driving Miss Daisy	Car or Van	Older adults or people with disabilities	All trips	Demand Response	NA	M-F, 6am to 6pm
Home Instead Senior Care	NA	Older adults	Medical and non-medical trips	Demand Response	Washington County and surrounding areas	7 days a week 24 hours a day

Name	Fleet	Eligible Riders	Eligible Trips	Service Type(s)	Service Area	Service Span
Maximal Care Mobility	NA	NA	Medical and non-medical trips	Demand Response	Dakota, Ramsey, and Washington Counties	7 days a week, 5am to 10pm
Newtrax	15-passenger buses (most vehicles are wheelchair accessible)	DT&Hs, Residential facilities for older adults and people with disabilities, employers, faith organizations	All trips	Shuttle	Northeast Twin Cities Metro Area	NA
Premier Handicap Services	Wheelchair accessible vans	Individuals with special needs	All trips	Demand Response	Twin Cities Metro Area	M-F 5:30am to 6pm Saturday 6am to 12pm
TLC Special Transportation	Car, Bus, or Van	NA	Medical or other activities (group trips included)	Demand Response	Twin Cities Metro Area	M-F 5:30am to 5pm
Travelon Transportation	Wheelchair accessible vans and minibuses	Those who cannot drive (older adults, people with disabilities)	Medical and non-medical trips	Demand Response	Washington County	M-TH 5am to 8pm Saturday 5am to 5pm Sunday if drivers are available
Twin City Mobility	Wheelchair accessible vehicles	People with disabilities	Medical and non-medical trips	Demand Response	Twin Cities Metro Area	24 hour service
Twin City Transportation	Wheelchair accessible vehicles	Older adults, people with disabilities	Medical appointments or school	Demand Response	Twin Cities Metro Area	7 days a week

4 STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC INPUT

The community engagement process was organized into two phases, with Phase 1 early in the study process (January – April 2017) and Phase 2 later in the project (May 2017 – September 2017).

The purpose of Phase 1 was to gain high-level input on existing transportation services, common destinations, and gaps and needs. In Phase 2, the focus was to prioritize proposed improvement strategies. Figure 4-1 includes a description of stakeholder and public engagement activities, by phase. Refer to the separate Technical Appendix for detailed meeting notes from the stakeholder and community listening sessions.

Figure 4-1 Stakeholder and Community Member Engagement Overview

	Activity	Description	Topics Addressed
Phase 1	Listening Sessions	Multiple meetings with groups of people representing various stakeholder groups (e.g., older adults, Veterans, housing providers, workforce development, older adults, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel priorities Existing services and gaps Transportation needs Opportunities and priorities
	Stakeholder interviews	Phone or in person interviews with transportation providers, employers, and other key stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel priorities Existing services/services provided Transportation needs Opportunities and priorities
	Agency interviews	Phone meetings with representatives of key agency partners (e.g., MnDOT, MN Department of Human Services, Metro Transit, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency function and priorities Services provided/resources available Transportation needs/gaps
	Employer and transit user questionnaires	Separate questionnaires sent to major Washington County employers and their employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business location Number of employees and work shift times Role of transportation in employee retention Transportation challenges Opportunities and priorities
	Transportation Forum 1	Workshop with a range of stakeholders (e.g., older adults, Veterans, service and housing providers, employers, Washington County cities, health care providers, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County demographics and travel profiles Existing services Transportation needs Priorities for strategies

Phase 2	Pop-up meetings and community events	A table or a booth at popular community event or destination, such as a farmer's market, art festival, or a grocery store entrance, as well as locations at senior centers, food shelves, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify preferences of potential users Review and prioritize potential strategies
	Transportation Forum 2	Workshop with a range of stakeholders (e.g., older adults, Veterans, service and housing providers, employers, Washington County cities, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm the findings of the existing needs assessment Review and prioritize potential strategies Identify preferred investments to carry forward in Washington County

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

As an initial step in the Washington County Transit Needs Study, the project team developed a stakeholder engagement strategy to get input from key stakeholders including groups and individuals representing specific interests related to transit service options in Washington County. Target stakeholder groups include people with disabilities, older adults, and other transit-dependent populations. The following is a list of intended audiences for engagement activities:

- Older adults
- People with disabilities and related services providers
- Veterans
- Jobs and workforce
- Housing providers and services
- Existing transportation providers (public and private)
- County staff (e.g., Community Corrections, Community Services, Libraries, Public Health and Environment, Public Works, Veterans Service Office, etc.)
- Agency partners (e.g., Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Metro Transit, Metropolitan Council, and Washington County cities)
- General public

The following sections summarize the results of the stakeholder engagement activities.

Transportation Destinations

During the listening sessions and interviews, stakeholders described the reasons people need to travel, and identified common origins and destinations. People need to travel for a wide array of purposes to stores, jobs, schools, job training, recreational facilities, medical facilities, social services, meal programs, etc. Transportation needs are geographically dispersed throughout the county: people live, work, and play in all areas of the county and metro area. However, there are some common destinations such as medical facilities and clinics (i.e., Maplewood, Stillwater, Saint Paul, and Minneapolis) and population centers such as Stillwater, Woodbury, and Cottage Grove (e.g., for jobs, shopping, etc.). The following are the most common trip types and destinations identified:

- Hospitals and clinics:** Many people throughout the county — older adults in particular — need to make regular trips to and from medical appointments. Common destinations

- include the Health East Campus (e.g., St. John's Hospital) in Maplewood and Regions Hospital in Saint Paul. People also need to get to and from doctors' offices, clinics, and specialty care providers, which tend to be more localized within the major population centers in Washington County, such as Woodbury, Cottage Grove, Forest Lake, Wyoming, and Stillwater. One care provider noted that figuring out how to "get mom to the doctor" can "tear families apart."
- **Veteran's Administration medical facilities:** Many Veterans need rides to and from the VA hospital in Minneapolis, or the VA clinic in Maplewood. Occasionally, Veterans need transportation to a specialist who could be located elsewhere in the region. One participant reported needing to get to a specialist as far away as Duluth (approximately 130 miles from the northern part of Washington County).
 - **Community centers, recreation, and shopping:** There is a need for rides to and from community facilities, such as community centers, libraries, and other gathering places. There is also a need for "quality of life" trips within the county, such as to shopping, recreation and social destinations, and to faith-based organizations. These types of trips are especially important for older adults and people with disabilities who may have limited personal mobility. Common destinations include local grocery stores, retailers such as Target and Walmart, Mall of America, and Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport.
 - **Schools and colleges:** People need transportation to and from schools and colleges. Children have regular transportation to school, but extracurricular activities are difficult. Parents also have difficulty getting to and from schools for special events. People also need transportation to colleges and universities, such as the University of Minnesota campuses in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, Metro State University in Saint Paul, and Century College in White Bear Lake.
 - **Government Services:** People need to get to and from county government centers in Stillwater, Cottage Grove, Forest Lake, and Woodbury, as well as local city offices. These trips are particularly important for people visiting individuals who are incarcerated at the prisons in Oak Park Heights and Bayport and for individuals when they are released. Individuals previously incarcerated may have no personal transportation and must travel to court-mandated appointments at government centers.
 - **Employment Centers:** People require reliable transportation options to get to and from work. Major employers include Andersen Windows in Bayport and Cottage Grove (Renewal by Andersen), 3M in Cottage Grove and Maplewood (just outside of Washington County), and FedEx in Mahtomedi. Many people also commute to and from employment in Saint Paul and other parts of the metro area.

Existing Transportation Services

People were asked to share their opinions on the transit services currently available in Washington County, including bus service provided by Metro Transit, and curb-to-curb demand responsive service provided by Metro Mobility and Transit Link.

Metro Transit Bus Service

According to stakeholders, existing fixed-route bus service within Washington County tends to be commuter focused, providing trips to and from Saint Paul and Minneapolis, during the morning and evening peak-periods (i.e., rush hour). This type of service works well for those traveling to

and from the metro area during typical commute hours, but is challenging for many of the types of trips required by transit-dependent populations (e.g., older adults, individuals with a disability, working families, etc.), such as trips for medical appointments or part-time employment, which are often happen during times with no service (i.e., midday, evenings, or the weekend). Fixed-route bus service is particularly challenging for older adults and people with disabilities with limited personal mobility as they may need additional assistance to get out of their home, in a vehicle, and into a building.

Transit Link and Metro Mobility

Metro Mobility and Transit Link provide door-to-door and door-through-door transportation services. These services are well used by some stakeholder groups.

Transit Link and Metro Mobility do not work for all users or all types of trips. According to stakeholders, some people do not have the option to take Transit Link or Metro Mobility because they live outside of service areas, the limited hours of availability, or because the advanced scheduling requirements do not meet their needs. For example, a person who has a car break down on the way to work and needs a same-day trip would not be readily served by Transit Link.

Participants reported that, in their personal experience, Transit Link and Metro Mobility seem to have capacity limitations and long pick-up windows (stakeholders reported passengers being picked up after the 30-minute window provided by Transit Link). In addition, some stakeholders indicated that they believe travel times for Transit Link are excessive. One participant stated, “You could be on the bus for a really long time to get where you need to go. Sometimes more than an hour to go 20 miles,” which may speak more to a lack of understanding of the nature of a shared-ride regional service. Even still, these real or perceived shortcomings make it difficult for individuals to consider using Transit Link to commute to work when they expect reliable, scheduled service. Participants also expressed dissatisfaction at being denied ride requests. In response to this feedback, staff from the Metropolitan Council responded that Transit Link denies approximately 3 to 5% of ride requests.

Other Services

Stakeholders were asked to describe any additional formal or informal transportation services that are currently being used in Washington County.

- **Volunteer Drivers.** There are some volunteer driver services within the county, primarily serving Veterans. Many local Veteran organizations, such as American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFWs) posts, coordinate volunteer driver programs to provide trips for Veterans traveling to and from VA medical facilities in Minneapolis and Maplewood. The Washington County Veterans Service Office helps to provide referrals to these organizations, but cannot administer a formal volunteer driver program.

According to stakeholders, there are also informal trips taking place for older adults and people with disabilities. This type of transportation is often provided by staff of service providers (such as DT&H centers), family and friends, or faith-based organizations. Vehicle insurance and personal liability are a concern for volunteer drivers, when personal vehicles are used.

- **Service Providers.** Many care providers, such as senior living centers, corporate foster care and day programs, and some DT&H programs, have private vans or shuttles, which are used for the transportation needs of clients. Many of these organizations prioritize medical trips, with social and shopping trips only as time allows. There are also some

- private and nonprofit transportation providers, such as Newtrax and Canvas Health that provide transportation to certain types of service providers on a contract basis.
- **Taxi and Rideshare.** Taxi, rideshare, and ride-hailing services like Lyft and Uber are available in the more urbanized and suburban areas in the western portion of the county (e.g., Woodbury, Oakdale, Cottage Grove, etc.), but do not provide regular service in Stillwater, Forest Lake, or the more rural areas of the county.

Transportation Issues

Stakeholders were asked to share their perspectives on major transportation issues and challenges facing Washington County. The issues or themes identified most often are listed below. Typical comments relating to these themes are listed in Figure 4-2 and are noted as follows:

- Expand existing services
- Consider cost and affordability
- Better serve transit-dependent populations
- Provide options for employers and employees

Figure 4-2 Stakeholder Comments about Transportation Issues

Issue	Stakeholder Comments
Existing Services	Some participants expressed a general lack of understanding around the availability and use of existing transportation services provided by Transit Link and Metro Mobility. Many expressed the desire for a comprehensive, easy to access, and easy to understand resource to explain existing transportation options. Others noted that eligibility requirements to use existing services (i.e., Metro Mobility) are confusing and the application process is difficult to navigate.
	There is a perceived challenge of being a somewhat rural county adjacent to the Twin Cities Metro Area, where there is a more limited understanding of best practices for providing rural and regional services, so existing service are not as effective as they could be.
	There is a desire for more inter-county, city-to-city public transportation within Washington County.
	There is a need for better sidewalks and more bike infrastructure in many areas.
	There is demand for transportation services to and from Hudson, WI, but the St. Croix River is a barrier and there are few crossing opportunities.
	There is a need for better sidewalks and more bike infrastructure in many areas.
Cost and Affordability	Some participants noted that Washington County needs to be mindful of the economics of public transportation. Local resources are spread thin already and any new services would need new funding sources.
	Some participants noted that maintaining the affordability of transit service is critical.
	At least one participant felt that there is no need for additional investment in transportation service, since there is already door-to-door service in Washington County (i.e., Metro Mobility and Transit Link).
Transit-Dependent Populations	Many participants felt that there is a general lack of good transportation options for people with disabilities and there is a need for education on how to use public transportation (e.g., for older adults, for individuals with visual and hearing impairments, etc.). Older adults also need comprehensive transit information.
	Unreliable transportation leads to clients missing medical care appointments, which in turn leads to additional costs for both clients and providers.
	Some individuals with a disability who could work do not work because they do not have reliable transportation. This results in people staying in service programs such as Day Training and Habilitation, when they could be out and more independent.
Employers/Employees	Employers care about transit. There are jobs available, but without reliable transit options, employers cannot hire people without cars. Employers consider this when siting new facilities. There are large employers who would like to stay in Washington County when expanding, but transportation for employees is an issue.
	Existing services do not work well for employers with multiple shifts. Andersen Windows has approximately 1,600 employees working in three shifts at their Bayport facility. Shift start and end times vary and limit options for shuttling or van pooling. FedEx has between 500-600 people at their facility in Mahtomedi who work during three shifts (two during the day and one overnight). Existing transportation services do not align well with existing shift start and end times, and there are no options for the overnight shift.
	FedEx is developing a partnership agreement with Newtrax, a private transportation provider, to provide transportation services for its night shifts at its Mahtomedi location.

Opportunities

Stakeholders were asked to share ideas and suggestions for potential transportation improvements for Washington County. Most participants generally agreed that there is a need for improved public transportation within the county. Common suggestions are listed below:

- Provide comprehensive and easy to access information on existing transportation services
- Increase coordination and resource sharing for privately owned transportation, such as vans at corporate foster care, day programs, etc.
- Explore opportunities for a public ridesharing application or program such as Lyft or Uber
- Improve volunteer driver coordination and address insurance and liability issues
- Procure county-owned vehicles to serve Veterans, as is done in more rural counties in Greater Minnesota
- Consider implementing local circulator services in population centers like Stillwater and Woodbury
- Support opportunities for additional funding for transit
- Provide new mobility options for low-income communities
- Promote employer participation and special training programs for individuals with special needs
- Provide special event services for downtown Stillwater
- Co-locate multiunit housing near transit
- Engage employers in transportation conversations (e.g. Andersen Windows, 3M, others).
- Hire dedicated staff to help coordinate transportation resources

System Improvement Priorities

Input Provided Spring 2017

Participants in the April 2017 Stakeholder Forum were asked to complete an exercise designed to show the tradeoffs in decision making that are required when making investment decisions. The exercise allowed participants to choose select preferences for competing investment strategies on a spectrum, to illustrate priorities. Please refer to the separate Technical Appendix for detailed meeting notes from the stakeholder listening sessions. Preferences among the participants were diverse, but tended to be grouped toward the following:

- Service for people with limited transportation options over getting drivers onto public transportation (there was strong consensus on this tradeoff)
- Later weekday service over weekend daytime service
- All-day service within Washington County over commute-hour service to Saint Paul
- Investment in public transportation over pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure

There was no clear group consensus on the following:

- Local service vs. regional service
- Demand-response service vs. fixed-route service

Stakeholders overwhelmingly expressed that the purpose of transit in Washington County should be to serve individuals with the greatest need, including older adults, people with disabilities, youth, low-income residents, and Veterans. Rather than focusing on services that would help to lure drivers out of their cars, stakeholders expressed that transit investments should target people without other transportation options.

Current public transit investment in Washington County by Metro Transit specifically targets commuters, including those who drive to a park-and-ride lots and then take transit to jobs outside of the county. While this service design approach focuses on offering the most productive services (highest passengers per hour) on fixed-route buses, it does little to address the priorities identified by stakeholders. Future transit investments should focus on the needs of transit-reliant individuals, including increased mobility options for accessing destinations within Washington County.

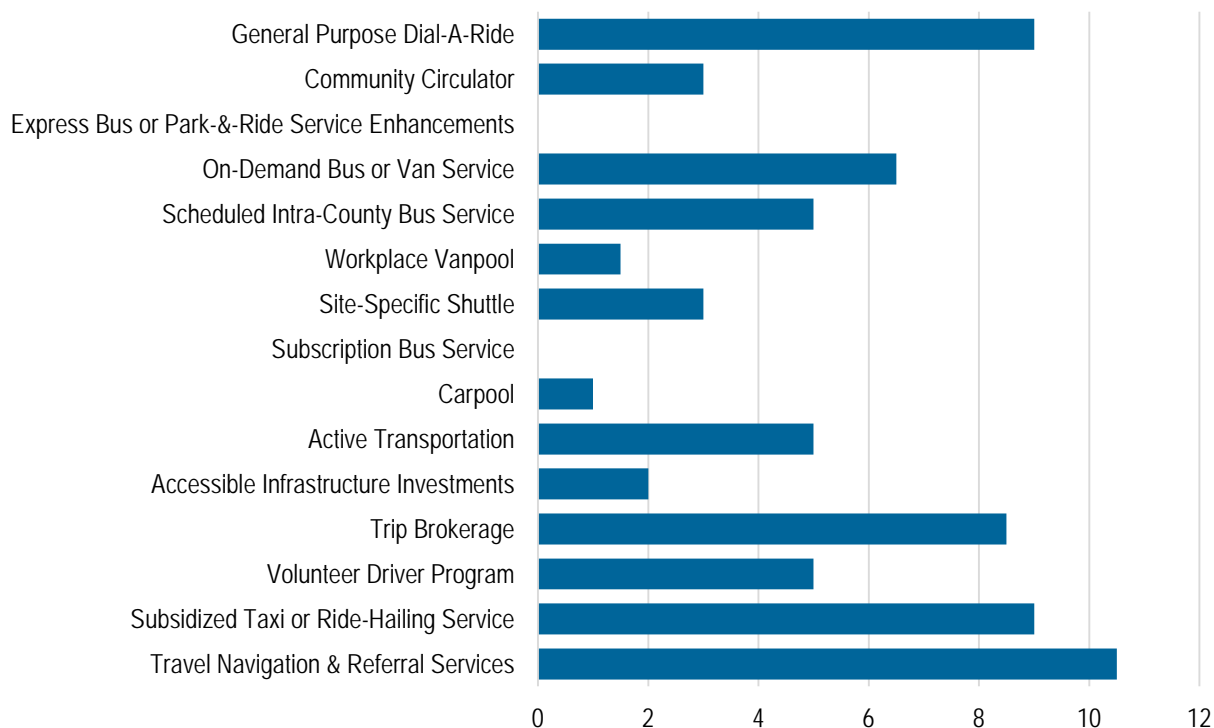
Input Provided Fall 2017

Many of the same stakeholders reconvened in September 2017 for a second Stakeholder Forum. The purpose of the meeting was to present draft study findings and to solicit input on the prioritization of strategies to address existing transit needs. Meeting participants included approximately 20 representatives from a range of stakeholder groups including older adults, Veterans, employers, housing providers, community services staff, health care professionals, and city administrators.

Participants were given an opportunity to prioritize their investments in different types of transit service alternatives, discussed in Chapter 6.

As shown in Figure 2-1, there was strong preference for Travel Navigation and Referral Services, General Purpose Dial-a-Ride, Subsidized Taxi or Ride-Hailing Service, and Trip Brokerage strategies. Participants preferred On-Demand Bus or Van Service, Volunteer Driver Program, Active Transportation, and Scheduled Intra-County Bus Service strategies. There was little preference for Site-Specific Shuttle, Community Circulator, Accessible Infrastructure Investments, Workplace Vanpool, and Carpool strategies and no preference for Subscription Bus Service or Express Bus or Park-&-Ride Service Enhancement strategies.

Figure 4-3 Voting Station Results



These preferences are generally reflected in the evaluation presented in Chapter 7, highlighting community support for these types of alternatives.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

In addition to the stakeholder meetings, outreach to the community included a public and employer comment form and a series of community meetings, which were held in July and August 2017 to solicit feedback on the Washington County Transit Needs Study.

Comment Forms

Washington County used two separate questionnaires for the Washington County Transit Needs Study. The first questionnaire targeted employers and the second focused on the general public. The purpose of the questionnaires was to collect information on how people walk, bike, and use existing public transportation services, as well as where gaps exist.

The questionnaires were distributed via direct invitation to employers (e.g., Anderson Corp., FedEx, 3M, etc.) and organizations serving the public in Washington County (e.g., Corporate Foster Cares, Day Training and Habilitation, Assisted Living, housing, and homeless service providers). This included both email and phone invitations to a representative group of participants in April and May 2017.

A total of 49 members of the public and employers completed the questionnaire. This includes 32 participants who identified as members of the public, and 17 who identified as employers or organizations.

A summary of the results from both the employer and the consumer questionnaires, including highlights, metadata, and a tabulation of the full results by question is available in the Technical Appendix.

Overall, employers provided useful feedback. When employers were asked what kind of transportation-related issues employees face, examples of some of their comments include the following:

- “Some clients do not have vehicles and cannot access Transit Link rides when they need them. Low income clients cannot afford car repairs so will drive cars when they are not safe to be driving.”
- “Our clients use Metro Mobility, although if a bus services was available, 2 or more would be willing to use public transportation.”
- “Clients with disabilities often struggle with transportation. Metro Mobility is not always reliable.”
- “Situations vary, but could have to do with not being able to drive (such as age), distance, time, do not own a vehicle, locations not connected to trails or sidewalk systems.”
- “I work with Veterans with barriers and often times those barriers are transportation. Some Veterans have driver’s license issues and use their service connected disabilities for transportation with Metropolitan Transit. When it does not go into Washington County it makes it hard for my clients to meet or travel to possible job opportunities.”
- “Some students cannot attend classes because we don't offer transportation in their location (outside of school district) or we don't offer it at a convenient time.”

In an open-ended question, employers were asked: What public transportation services or improvements would best serve your organization? Common suggestions were reliable evening and late-night transportation services, a bus stop near commercial and manufacturing areas, and public transportation that does not only connect people within Washington County, but across county boundaries and even state lines.

Consumers also made valuable comments. Among the input provided were the following comments:

- “I want more options. I don't always want to use Transit Link.”
- “I would like to see more bus service. It would be nice if Transit Link had more availability (longer hours, weekend hours). I would use the bus to medical appointments versus taxi (if Newport had more bus service) because the Taxi has left me in NSP [North St. Paul] without picking me up again.”
- “The very last thing this county needs is more sidewalks, cross walks etc.... This county needs more transportation options for the less fortunate, for years this county has limited opportunities for people to live in this county because of the lack of transportation. The question everyone should be asking themselves is: How would you be able to sustain employment or access services such as grocery store, department store or your children's school if your car broke down and you were unable to fix it or could not afford to replace the vehicle? Statistics have shown that majority of the people are just a paycheck away from being homeless; if family was unable to access alternative transportation they would lose their job and most likely end up homeless moving to a different county which would cause additional barriers as well as maintain housing and/or employment. Washington County used to have much more busing options in the 80's. What happened to that?”

- “I work for the Stillwater Senior Center. Many of the residents of Stillwater area would like to attend our programs, but are unable due to the lack of transportation. These are active seniors, but no longer own a car or drive.”

Community Meetings

The purpose of the meetings was to target both general travelers and traditionally transit-dependent populations (e.g., older adults, people with disabilities, lower-income families, etc.) in a conversation about transportation needs, existing transportation options, and preferences for transportation improvement strategies. Although staff tried to schedule meetings where stakeholders would be available, these activities were only available to individuals who were able to travel to the meeting location.

In total, there were eight meetings with approximately 240 people engaged. A summary of the meetings conducted is shown in Figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4 Community Meeting Summary

	Name	Date	Approximate Participants	Target Populations
1	Boutwells Landing, Oak Park Heights	Wed, Jul 12	40	Older adults
2	Valley Friendship Club, Oak Park Heights	Fri, Jul 14	20	People with disabilities
3	Hardwood Creek Library, Forest Lake	Tues, Jul 18	30	General public
4	Family Pathways Food Shelf, Forest Lake	Thurs, Jul 20	20	Lower income families & individuals
5	Community Dinner at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Mahtomedi	Thurs, Jul 27	20	Lower income families & individuals, general public
6	Senior Citizen's Day at the Washington County Fair, Stillwater	Wed, Aug 2	65	Older adults, general public
7	WIC Clinic, Cottage Grove	Mon, Aug 21	10	Lower income families & individuals
8	Newport Transit Station (MN State Fair Park and Ride)	Thurs, Aug 31	35	General public

Meetings were conducted in a “pop-up” style: the project team staffed a table, provided information about the study, and engaged passersby in conversation and two activities.

In the first activity, people were asked about their existing travel mode. Participants were presented with a board that asked, “How do you travel where you want to go?” and instructed to place a ‘dot’ sticker under each applicable heading:

- Drive myself
- Get a ride from friends or family
- Walk or bike
- Regularly scheduled bus service
- Pre-scheduled curb-to-curb service (Transit Link or Metro Mobility)
- Private bus or van

In the second activity, people were asked to prioritize among different types of transportation service options. Participants were presented with a board that asked, “How should Washington County prioritize transportation system improvements?” and were instructed to place a ‘dot’ sticker along a spectrum (high, medium, low, or not a priority) to indicate how they would prioritize the following:

- Pre-scheduled curb-to-curb service (Transit Link or Metro Mobility)
- Vanpool
- Taxi, Uber, or Lyft or another for-hire service
- Better options for walking and biking
- Regularly scheduled bus service
- Other

Staff incentivized people to participate in activities and conversation by offering games, healthy snacks, and small toys. They also took notes on the conversations they had about participants’ transportation needs.

Outcomes

Key points and outcomes from the community meetings are summarized by theme:

- **Centralized and Easy-to-Access Information**
 - Both transit users and non-users emphasized a lack of readily available information regarding transportation services.
 - Participants expressed a need for better and more centralized information on existing transit services. Some people were generally aware that services exist, but were unaware of how to use them or where to look for more information.
 - There was no consensus with regard to how people would prefer to get their information. Some people said they would like the information available at a central place on the internet while others want the information to be available in print. Still others said they would like to be able to call and ask for the information.
- **New and Expanded Regularly Scheduled Service (Bus Routes)**
 - Participants at all of the events discussed a preference for better geographic coverage and improved frequency of regularly scheduled bus services.
 - Many people requested that regularly scheduled bus service be expanded to include more trips, including during non-commute midday hours, evening, and weekends.
 - Participants prioritized regularly scheduled bus services over other transportation system improvements.
- **Improvements to Prescheduled, Curb-to-Curb Service**
 - Participants at several meetings said pre-scheduled transit options must become more reliable, more affordable, and should serve an extended geographic area (compared with where they currently operate). They also said times at which the pre-scheduled services operate should include evenings and weekends. Many people commented that pick-up and drop-off windows and vehicle travel times are prohibitively long for their needs.
 - Parents and guardians of people with disabilities said that those in their care experience difficulties getting to and from work, and they desire more transportation

independence. They were most focused on improving reliability and affordability of pre-scheduled services.

- **Preferences for Walking and Biking**
 - Participants at several meetings indicated that they prefer either not to walk or bike or are unable to walk or bike very far. Many of these participants were older adults or people with disabilities.
 - People who walk and bike generally like dedicated walking and biking facilities and hope to see more of those facilities in Washington County.
- **Private Transportation Services are Well Used**
 - Some of the larger senior living communities in Washington County offer private bus and van transportation to their residents and employees. Private transportation service is used by people at the senior living communities for daily shopping needs, medical services appointments, and recreation, and by employees to get to and from work.
- **For-Hire Service and Ride Sharing**
 - Many people expressed support for expanding taxi and ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft throughout Washington County, especially for trips not well served by existing transportation options.
 - Many low-income individuals and families said they rely on a network of ridesharing with family and friends to get places they need to go. Both the people who give the rides and the people who receive the rides said that more regularly scheduled transit is needed to supplement their formal or informal ridesharing.

Activity Results

The “existing mode of travel” and “transportation system improvement priorities” activities, as described above, had mixed success, with many participants choosing to engage in informal conversation with study team representatives rather than participate in the activity. As a result, the activity outcomes are not fully reflective of the comments received. For example, several residents of one senior community acknowledged using private buses to get where they need to go, but many of these people did not place a sticker under private bus or van on the dot activity. Subsequently, “private bus or van” usage is likely higher than what is indicated in the activity results.

The figures below show the combined results of the “existing travel mode” and “transportation system improvement” activities. The largest group of participants drive to get where they need to go. Many people get a ride from friends and family, or walk and bike. Very few reported using existing transportation services (e.g., regularly scheduled bus, pre-scheduled service, or private transportation).

Participants most often ranked regularly scheduled bus service as a high priority for potential transportation system improvements in Washington County. Improvements to pre-scheduled service was also a high priority, followed by better options for walking and biking, and for-hire services. Interest in prioritizing vanpool services was lower than the other options presented.

Figure 4-5 Existing Mode of Travel: Overall

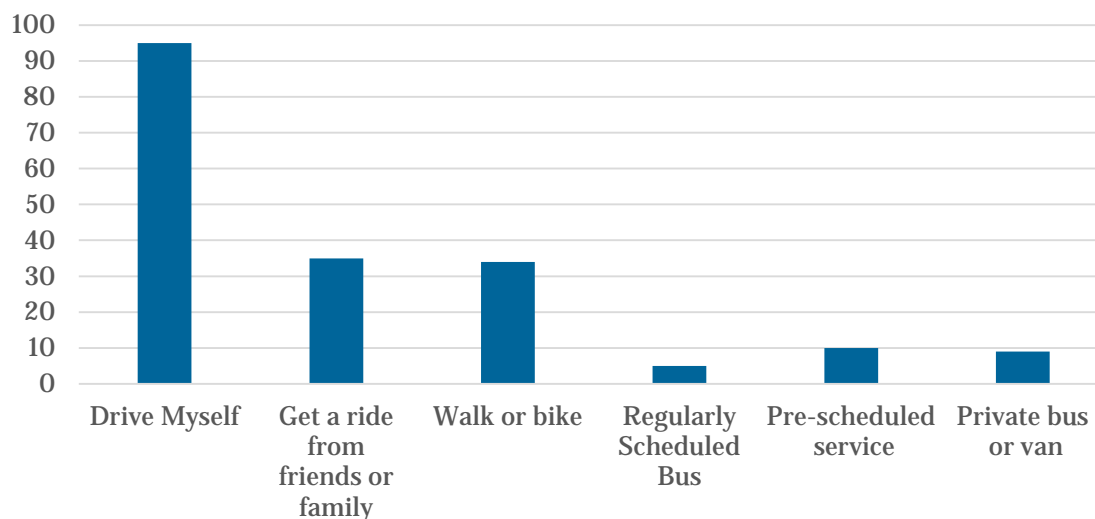
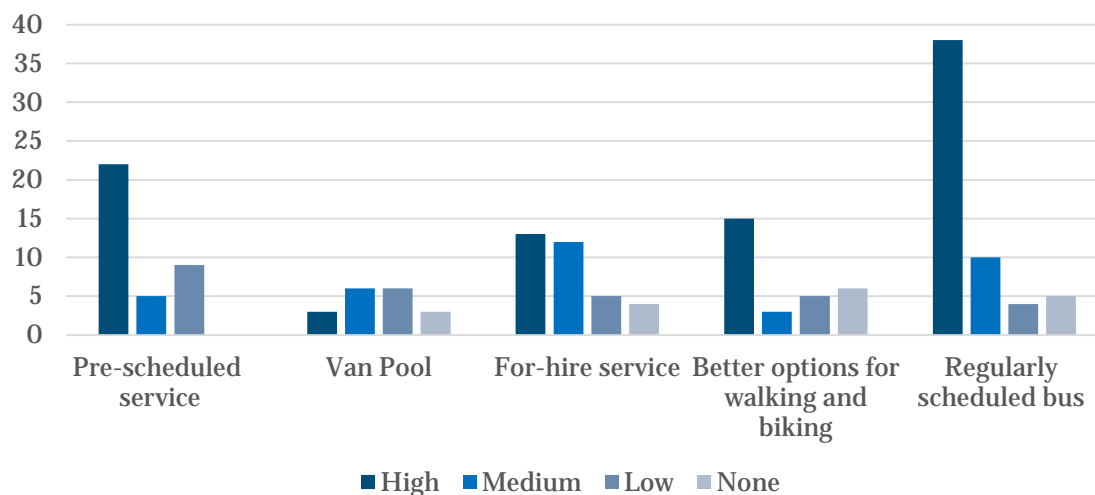


Figure 4-6 Transportation System Improvement Priorities: Overall



CONCLUSION

The purpose of stakeholder and public engagement was to connect with a diverse range of stakeholders and community members and to develop a general understanding of community attitudes towards transportation issues.

Overall input was thoughtful and useful in the evaluation process. Stakeholders offered a wide array of ideas and suggestions about Washington County's transportation future. Community members were happy to be asked to share their opinions. A key message from this participant engagement process was that transportation investments must focus on expanding services for those with limited options, including older adults, people with disabilities, youth, low-income residents, and Veterans. Strategies that focus on coordination-based solutions are critical for Washington County, because stakeholders acknowledge there is little funding for new transportation services.

5 BEST PRACTICES

Most of this report focuses on Washington County's internal factors: travel demands, demographics, and existing transportation providers. To gauge how other regions with characteristics similar to Washington County addressed travel demands, this chapter looks externally to examples of specialized transportation programs and mobility management efforts. Mobility management is a broad term that is used to cover a number of activities, including comprehensive coordination efforts at the city, county, or regional level. Mobility managers can be individuals who help customers identify transportation options and plan trips, or entities that have a wider range of responsibilities aimed at improving coordination among transportation programs and services across a specified jurisdiction. Typical areas of focus include identifying the most appropriate provider for an individual's trip, facilitating access to that provider's services, and developing a family of services to meet the widest possible range of transportation needs.

Examples of best practices are presented in this report to acquaint stakeholders in Washington County with approaches that are considered successful in other parts of the country for coordinating and managing transportation services.

METHODOLOGY

A variety of transit service approaches exist for addressing local transportation needs, including fixed bus routes and their variations in communities with higher densities of people and jobs, demand-response services, and complementary services such as volunteer driver programs and voucher programs to provide subsidized rides. This best practices review aimed to identify a manageable number of successful examples of the following types of services:

- Fixed routes following a set schedule and route
 - Circulator routes that provide direct connections between neighborhoods and key destinations
 - Destination-specific routes and group trips that focus on key destinations and rider groups
- Deviated or flexible services that combine a regular schedule (either stops or timepoints) and possibly a regular route; deviations off-route can be scheduled on-demand or in advance
- Demand-response service that offers scheduled in advance, door-to-door or curb-to-curb shared rides
 - Same-day or on-demand demand-response services
- Voucher programs that provide subsidized rides provided by public, private, or volunteer drivers (recruited by rider)
- Stand-alone, organized volunteer programs

- Subsidies provided to riders for services like Uber or Lyft

The review also sought to find practices that are in use in areas that are similar to Washington County in terms of total populations (257,900), contain communities similar in size to the more populated Washington County communities such as Cottage Grove, Forest Lake, Stillwater, and Woodbury, or both.

Best practices were also selected to illustrate a range of operating environments:

- Suburban portion of a large urban area
- Small urban communities
- Rural communities

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The best practices examples described below illustrate the following approaches to addressing transportation needs:

- **SouthWest Transit**—a comprehensive local transit system, including several service types (express fixed routes that provide some local circulation and on-demand service for the general public)
- **DARTS LOOP**—local circulator routes for the general public and flex services and a more limited span of days and hours of service
- **Pomona Valley Transportation Authority**—a number of service types in cities the size of several Washington County communities, including shared-ride taxi for the general public scheduled in advance or with same-day service for older adults and people with disabilities, and a volunteer driver program
- **Lake County, Illinois**—primarily demand-response services provided in a county that is part of a large urbanized area that includes small urban, suburban, and rural communities
- **Tompkins County and South Central New York Mobility Management**—mobility management services and activities coordinated in one instance by a county department and in another by a nonprofit organization

SouthWest Transit: Chaska, Chanhassen, and Eden Prairie, MN

The communities of Chaska (Carver County), Chanhassen (Carver and Hennepin Counties), and Eden Prairie (Hennepin County) withdrew from the Metropolitan Transit Commission in 1986 and formed SouthWest Metro Transit through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). Services are now provided under contract to the City of Carver. The SouthWest Transit Commission, composed of one elected official and one appointed individual from each city plus one appointed rider representative, provides policy guidance and oversight.

Total population of this service area is 113,049. Chaska and Chanhassen are comparable to Forest Lake in terms of population; Eden Prairie is similar in size to Woodbury. SouthWest Transit (SWT) provides commuter bus service and an innovative on-demand, shared-ride, demand-response service for the general public known as SW Prime, which serves part of Shakopee as well as the other three communities. Fixed-route service is operated by First Transit. Regional Transit Link service (like the service in Washington County) is also available throughout the SouthWest Transit service area.

SW Prime operates on weekdays from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. Using the SWT website, smartphone, or landline, riders request trips and are notified when the trip is assigned to a vehicle. Estimated vehicle arrival times are provided when the trip request is placed. The one-way fare for the general public is \$3.00. Transfers between the three SW Prime zones are free of charge; transfers to SWT bus routes cost \$1.00. In 2016, SW Prime service provided 25% of the total revenue hours for SouthWest Transit but at \$470,000 only represented 4% of the agency's operating costs. The average subsidy per passenger was \$6.50. Due to growth in ridership, operating costs in 2017 are expected to be approximately \$750,000.

DARTS: Hastings, West St. Paul, and South St. Paul, MN

DARTS is a nonprofit organization that offers programs and services for older adults, including transportation. Local circulator routes known as LOOP services operate in the communities of Hastings, West St. Paul, and South St. Paul. Open to the general public, the routes offer scheduled stops at key residential, shopping, medical, and community destinations. Door-to-door service is available on request. Service operates one day a week in each community in the morning and early afternoon. LOOP fare is \$5 for unlimited rides throughout the day.

Pomona Valley Transportation Authority (PVRTA)

PVRTA coordinates and oversees transportation services for the cities of Pomona, Claremont, La Verne, and San Dimas, CA. These cities are all between Stillwater and Cottage Grove in terms of population.

PVRTA's services include the Get About demand-response service and the Community Connections volunteer driver program for older adults and people with disabilities in all four cities. Get About offers door-to-door service on weekdays and weekends for a fare of \$1.00. Same-day service is available from Get About Ready Now during the same days and hours of service for a fare of \$4.50. Get About One Step Over the Line, also available on weekdays and weekends, provides trips for people with disabilities to a neighboring county for a fare that ranges from \$2.50 to \$12.00.

Shared-ride taxi service for the general public is available in Claremont (Claremont Dial-A-Ride) and San Dimas (San Dimas Dial-A-Cab). Group van service is also available as part of Claremont Dial-A-Ride. In Claremont, service is available Monday through Saturday, and 24/7 for older adults and people with disabilities, at a fare of \$2.50-\$4.00. In San Dimas, service is available 24/7.

PVRTA collaborates with Community Senior Services to offer volunteer rides for older adults and people with disabilities. Community Senior Services handles user registration. Riders identify their own drivers, who are reimbursed for mileage through the program.

Lake County, Illinois Division of Transportation

Lake County, with a population of 703,462, is located northwest of Chicago and is part of the urbanized area. As such, it receives commuter rail service, express bus service, some local bus routes, and ADA paratransit service from the region's commuter rail and suburban bus providers, Metra and Pace. Yet most Lake County communities are small urban, suburban, and rural in nature.

Many municipal demand-response services are available to meet local travel needs. Groups of those communities in several parts of the county have joined to provide coordinated services in an effort to reduce service overlaps and serve needs more efficiently.

Ride Lake County Central covers Fremont, Libertyville, and Shields Townships and the Villages of Libertyville and Mundelein. Curb-to-curb service is available for residents aged 60 and over and people with disabilities on weekdays from 5:30 AM to 6:45 PM. Service is provided within member communities and to specific medical, shopping, and education destinations outside of that area. The fare for a trip under 10 miles is \$3.00; for a trip over 10 miles, the fare is \$6.00.

Ride Lake County West provides service in Antioch, Grant, Lake Villa, Avon, Wauconda, and Fremont Townships (Fremont is part of both Ride Lake County West and Ride Lake County Central). Days and hours of service and fares are the same as those of Ride Lake County Central. However, service is open to the public and a reduced fare of \$3.00 for older adults and people with disabilities is available.

Both systems contract with Pace for operation of service and a coordinated call center. Pace in turn contracts with First Transit for service and call center operation.

Mobility Management in Minnesota

Two county-focused mobility management programs in the Twin Cities metro area are described below.

Dakota County

Dakota County, population 417,486, is located adjacent to the southwest portion of Washington County. Dakota County is also part of the transit-taxing district and receives a level of transit service similar to that in Washington County—some Metro Transit fixed bus routes and Metro Mobility service, and Transit Link, plus fixed route service in four communities provided by the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority. Human service agencies provide some transportation services, but stakeholders in a recent human service transportation coordination study reported a number of geographic and temporal service gaps.¹⁸

One of the recommendations of the human service transportation coordination study was the creation of a group to move coordination forward. In 2015, the county and a variety of stakeholder partners formed the Dakota County Transportation Coordinating Collaborative (DCTCC). The goals of the DCTCC include improving transportation for older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes in the county, and pursuing coordination of transportation services as a means of improving access for all residents to services and activities.

The county, on behalf of the DCTCC, applied to MnDOT for section 5310 funding to support a transportation coordinator position and the activities of the DCTCC, and received a \$160,000 grant. The fulltime Transportation Coordinator was hired in 2015, and is part of Community Services Administration in the Community Services Division.

Work of the Transportation Coordinator and the DCTCC in 2016 included DCTCC meetings, planning and research, and initial work on a pilot travel training program. In 2016, the collaborative continued its research by completing two surveys to identify service gaps and

¹⁸ Dakota County Human Services Research and Transportation Planning: Strategic Action Plan, Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota, March 2014.

opportunities for coordination and refine target populations, implemented the travel-training pilot, and began planning for a vehicle sharing initiative. Youth age 14-22 with a disability and older adults were identified as key target populations.

Scott and Carver Counties

Scott and Carver counties, located to the west of Dakota County, have populations of 143,680 and 100,262, respectively. Mobility management efforts in these two counties, which have been working together since 2009, focus on a one-call/one-click center.

The two counties formed a joint demand-response service, SmartLink Transit, in 2009 to provide trips for the general public (Dial-A-Ride) and human service agencies. (MVTA provides express fixed-route service between several Scott County communities and downtown Minneapolis.) State legislation that changed the administration of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) to a county-based system was the impetus for the creation of the one-call/one-click center, known as SmartLink Mobility Management, to centralize requests and scheduling for Dial-A-Ride, human service agency clients, and NEMT trips. Trips with volunteer drivers are also offered.

Trips may be provided by SmartLink or contracted service providers. Call takers identify the most appropriate and cost-effective provider for each trip. Vehicle schedules are prepared using SmartLink's scheduling system (Trapeze). A data warehouse was created to automate the production of driver manifests, reporting, and tracking of trips by funding source. New software was developed to connect the SmartLink trip database with the two counties' accounting systems to facilitate more timely and accurate billing.

SmartLink is currently planning an expansion of Dial-A-Ride service and provision of volunteer trips to reduce trip denials. Plans for contracted on-demand service are also under development.

Scott and Carver counties receive Section 5310 funding through MnDOT to support a coordination group and a mobility manager. User and provider groups have also been formed to discuss service and coordination issues. County transportation sales tax revenues are a major funding source.

Mobility Management in Upstate New York

A number of counties in upstate New York have developed mobility management programs. As described above, mobility management is a broad term that is used to cover a number of activities, including comprehensive coordination efforts at the city, county, or regional level. Mobility managers can be individuals who help customers identify transportation options and plan trips, or entities that have a wider range of responsibilities aimed at improving coordination among transportation programs and services across a specified jurisdiction.

Two mobility management efforts are described below.

Tompkins County

Tompkins County, population 101,564, is located in New York's Finger Lakes region and includes the City of Ithaca. Mobility management is coordinated by the Tompkins County Department of Social Services (DSS). A chief transportation planner acts as the mobility manager. Key partners include Cornell University, the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council (the area's MPO), and Tompkins Consolidate Area Transit (TCAT), the county's public transit system.

Way2Go Program

DSS utilizes the Way2Go program to administer many of its mobility management strategies, including:

- A one-call/one-click transportation repository to connect transportation providers, information services and support functions in an integrated system that allows individuals to conveniently find transportation information and support
- A car share membership program through Zimride, called the Tompkins Rideshare Program, that has 19,000 enrolled users and partners with 100 employers in the region
- A program to pay for taxi rides or car share to transport clients to job interviews
- Additionally, DSS oversees a volunteer driver program that connects people with transportation options to regional medical centers
- An employer education program and partnerships with employers to reduce transportation as a barrier to employment
- Transportation outreach activities at Cornell University, that include community education, implementation of a rideshare program and a carshare program
- A program to educate older adults about transportation resources and ensure safe travel
- Travel training to ensure that older adults and people with disabilities who can are able to use fixed route services
- Transportation for School Success works with school districts to promote awareness and use of transportation strategies
- Regional mobility manager outreach to support coordinated transportation education and marketing across counties in upstate NY to reduce regional transportation needs

Mobility Management of South Central New York (MMSCNY)

Mobility management services for five counties in South Central New York are provided through the Rural Health Network of South Central New York (RHNSCNY), a nonprofit organization. The total population of Broome, Tioga, Delaware, Chenango, and Otsego Counties is 407, 897. Broome County is the largest partner, with a population of 197, 349 and the City of Binghamton; other counties are primarily rural in nature with small urban communities in some.

MMSCNY's mobility management services include:

- GetThere call center, which is staffed by mobility and transportation advocates to provide information about transportation options and assist callers with trip planning
- Connection to Care, which identifies and facilitates the most cost-effective means of trips to medical facilities for older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. Rides are provided through volunteer drivers, fuel cards, bus passes, and taxis.
- New pilot transportation voucher program for Medicaid recipients' non-medical trips

Partners include a robust group of 20 local and seven regional public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND COMPARISON

Figure 5-1 summarizes key characteristics about each of these best practice examples.

Governance/Administration

Both public and nonprofit organizations are represented in Figure 5-1, showing that there are a number of ways to structure local transportation services.

SouthWest Transit and PVRTA are joint efforts by groups of cities to develop and implement the type and level of transportation services that best complement or replace transit services that are available in their areas. SouthWest Transit is governed by a formal JPA between its three member cities, while PVRTA's services are provided as a result of a less formal agreement among its four member cities. Both organizations receive guidance and oversight from a board composed of representatives of their members.

DARTS and RHNSCNY are nonprofit organizations that have missions that are broader than transportation, but provide transportation, mobility management services, or both that benefit not only their own clients, but also residents of the community at large. Both organizations are guided by a Board of Directors that includes representatives of community organizations.

Two counties are included in the best practices list: Lake County, Illinois and Tompkins County, New York. The Lake County Division of Transportation (DOT) performs a number of administrative and coordination functions for the municipalities that provide demand-response services for their residents, either as part of the two coordinated systems or individually. Lake County DOT:

- Applies for Section 5310 funds from the Regional Transportation Authority for the coordinated systems
- Represents Lake County on the RTA's Section 5310 advisory committee
- Handles grant reporting and billing to the regional service provider (Pace Suburban Bus)
- Disseminates public information about available demand-response services in the county
- Provides staff assistance to the Lake County Coordinated Transportation Services Committee
- Facilitates payment of Lake County's contribution of funds to match Section 5310 grants

Tompkins County is the lead agency in the county's mobility management program. Through a mobility manager housed in the Department of Social Services, the county develops and implements mobility management services, recruits partner organizations, applies for and administers grants from a wide variety of sources, provides leadership to the Mobility Management Network of New York, and facilitates Tompkins County's contributions to the mobility management program.

Coordination and Partnerships

Regardless of administrative structure and lead agency, partnerships with other organizations are important to the success of each of these transportation systems. Partner organizations serve on advisory boards, administer programs and services, and contribute funding to the systems.

Partners include:

- Local human service organizations—public and nonprofit—whose areas or populations of focus include older adults, people with disabilities, people with lower incomes, and health care, employment, funding, and community services of all types
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

- Local transit authorities
- Local governments—counties and municipalities
- Employers
- Universities

Transportation Services

The types of transportation services provided by these best practice systems include:

- Local fixed-route services and flexible services that include door-to-door deviations on request
- Express commuter services to large urbanized areas
- Demand-response services, either for the general public or specific user groups, such as older adults or people with disabilities
- Transportation voucher or subsidized taxi programs
- Volunteer driver programs
- Mobility management programs and services

The levels of service available from these systems represent a range of options. SouthWest Transit operates a comprehensive local transit system. DARTS offers more limited fixed route services together with demand-response services. Lake County coordinates extensive traditional demand-response services. PVRTA coordinates several types of shared-ride and demand-response services and volunteer rides. Dakota County mobility management activities focus on travel training and developing a vehicle sharing initiative. Scott and Carver counties operate demand-response services and administer a volunteer driver program, and centralize transportation information, trip reservations and scheduling, reporting, and billing. Tompkins County and the Mobility Management of South Central New York provide mobility management services that include some of the types of services available in other areas, as well as centralized transportation information.

Costs and Funding

Annual costs for each system are shown in Figure 5-1. These range as high as \$3 million for PVRTA's Get About services.

Funding sources are numerous and varied. Primary sources include the FTA Section 5310 and 5311 programs; state, regional, or local sales tax revenues; state transit operating assistance; contributions from county and municipal general funds; contributions from local transit systems; and contributions from private and nonprofit partner organizations.

Section 5310 is a primary funding source for mobility management activities, including the hiring of staff to coordinate programs and services and serve as mobility specialists.

Ridership

Annual ridership numbers for those systems that operate services are also shown in Figure 5-1.

Figure 5-1 Summary of Best Practices Examples for Washington County

Organization			Program or Service								
Name and Location	Service Area Population and Community Type	Lead Agency/ Administrative Structure	Name	Type of Service	Eligible Users	Days/Hours of Service	One-way Fare	Estimated Annual Operating Costs	Primary Funding Sources	Annual Riders	Notes
SouthWest Transit Chaska, Chanhassen, and Eden Prairie, MN	109,325 Suburban/ small urban	SouthWest Transit Commission formed by three communities through Joint Powers Agreement in 1986, after opting out of Metropolitan Transit Commission services	SW Prime (Chaska, Chanhassen, Eden Prairie, Carver, and parts of Shakopee)	On-demand	General public	Weekdays 6:30 AM - 6:00 PM	\$3.00	\$470,000	MN Motor Vehicle Sales Tax Regional Allocated MVST Fares Contract service revenues Advertising revenues	56,250-62,500	SouthWest Transit also operates commuter bus service to Minneapolis and local circulator routes
DARTS Hastings, West St. Paul, South St. Paul	62,088 Suburban/ small urban	Private non-profit organization primarily serving older adults	LOOP	Local circulator fixed routes	General public	One day a week on each LOOP, operating in morning and early afternoon hours	\$5 for unlimited rides all day		Section 5310 for vehicle purchases		Scheduled stops at key residential and community destinations; door-to-door service available on request. DARTS also offers group trips and individual demand-response rides.
Pomona Valley Transportation Authority (PVRTA) ¹ Claremont, Pomona, LaVerne, and San Dimas, CA, east of Los Angeles	256,680 Suburban/ small urban	Voluntary agreement between four cities; Board of Directors includes two representatives from each city	Dial-A-Ride and Dial-A-Cab (Claremont and San Dimas)	Shared-ride taxi Claremont DAR also includes group van service	General public	Weekdays 6:00 AM - 7:00 PM Sat 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM 24/7 for older adults, people with disabilities and in San Dimas	\$2.50-\$4.00	\$450,000 Claremont \$350,000 San Dimas	Proposition A local sales tax revenues from four cities FTA Section 5310 for capital and mobility management expenses	47,000 Claremont 26,000 San Dimas	
			Get About	Door-to-door service (in advance and same-day)	Older adults and people with disabilities	Weekdays 6:30 AM - 7:30 PM Sat 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM Sun 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM	\$1.00 \$4.50 \$2.50-\$12.00	\$2.95 M		138,000	Get About Get About Ready Now same-day service Get About One Step Over the Line for out-of-county trips
			Community Connections	Volunteer driver program	Older adults and people with disabilities	24/7		\$.40-\$.52/mile About \$5/trip	PVRTA Los Angeles County MTA OmniTrans Valley Transportation Services Community Senior Services Section 5317	72,000 - 84,000 in 16 cities in 2 counties	Riders identify their own volunteer drivers

Organization			Program or Service								
Name and Location	Service Area Population and Community Type	Lead Agency/ Administrative Structure	Name	Type of Service	Eligible Users	Days/Hours of Service	One-way Fare	Estimated Annual Operating Costs	Primary Funding Sources	Annual Riders	Notes
Lake County, IL Division of Transportation Outside Chicago	703,462 Small urban Suburban Rural	Lake County Division of Transportation coordinates with municipalities. Municipalities contract with service provider (Pace). Lake County Coordinated Transportation Services Committee (LCCTSC) provides coordination, guidance and facilitation	Ride Lake County Central <i>(3 townships, 2 villages, plus key medical, shopping, and education destinations)</i>	Demand-response	Residents age 60 and older, people with disabilities	Weekdays 5:30 AM - 6:45 PM	\$3.00 < 10 miles \$4.00 > 10 miles		Section 5310 Lake County general funds General funds from municipalities Pace Suburban Bus		Pace, the Chicago metropolitan area's transit agency, also provides fixed route, ADA paratransit, other local Dial-A-Ride, and flexible services in Lake County
			Ride Lake County West <i>(6 townships plus key medical, shopping, and education destinations)</i>	Demand-response	General public	Weekdays 5:30 AM - 6:45 PM	\$3.00 < 10 miles for seniors, disabled \$4.00 < 10 miles general public \$6.00 > 10 miles		Section 5310 Lake County general funds General funds from municipalities Pace Suburban Bus		
Dakota County, MN	413,486 Suburban Small urban Rural	Dakota County Transportation Coordinator provides support to Dakota County Transportation Coordinating Collaborative	Dakota County Transportation Coordinating Collaborative	Mobility management Travel training Vehicle sharing (under development)	Older adults, people with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes	NA	NA	\$160,000	Section 5310		
Scott and Carver Counties, MN	143,680 100,262	SmartLink Mobility Management	Joint transportation service and mobility management activities provided by two counties	Mobility management Centralized call center Centralized scheduling, reporting, and billing Volunteer driver program	General public, human service agency clients, NEMT customers	Weekdays 6:00 AM - 9:00 PM Weekends 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM	Dial-A-Ride \$2.25-\$6.75 ADA \$2 - \$3 Group trips \$2.25 - \$4.50 per person	\$336,817	Section 5310 County transportation sales tax revenues		
Tompkins County, NY In NY's Finger Lakes region, includes City of Ithaca	101,564 Small urban Rural	County Dept. of Social Services houses mobility manager Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC) and Cornell University are partners	Way2Go	Mobility management: One-call/one-click center, travel training, carshare, voucher program for job interviews, outreach and education, Cornell University TDM services	General public	NA	NA	\$790,150 includes demand-response and volunteer ride subsidies	Section 5307 Section 5310 Section 5311 FHWA flex funds through MPO Tompkins County	NA	County contribution of \$104,000 leverages funding from many other sources

Organization			Program or Service								
Name and Location	Service Area Population and Community Type	Lead Agency/ Administrative Structure	Name	Type of Service	Eligible Users	Days/Hours of Service	One-way Fare	Estimated Annual Operating Costs	Primary Funding Sources	Annual Riders	Notes
Rural Health Network of South Central NY (RHNSCNY) Broome, Tioga, Delaware, Chenango, and Otsego counties in south central NY; includes cities of Binghamton and Cooperstown	407,897 Small urban Rural	RHNSCNY houses Mobility Manager Local and regional partners include over 25 public, nonprofit, and private organizations	Mobility Management of South Central New York	Mobility management: GetThere call center, Mobility and Transportation Advocates, trip planning, information and referral, travel training, education and outreach , Connection to Care	General public	Call center in operation weekdays 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM	NA		Section 5310 Section 5311 NYSDOT State Operating Assistance NYS Office of Rural Health Robert C. Smith Foundation Tioga County United Health Services Hospitals United Way of Delaware and Otsego Counties County contributions		

¹PVTA is a mobility manager that coordinates providers and funders, develops and implements programs and services, and uses 5310 funds to provide the mobility management services.

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6 IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

Washington County faces several challenges in achieving an efficient and cost-effective public transportation network. The county has suburban and rural populations. Many cities serve as bedroom communities for Minneapolis and Saint Paul, while also containing important local trip generators such as shopping centers, schools, medical facilities, community centers, government services, manufacturing facilities, and job sites. The demographic data illustrates that traditionally transit-dependent markets are not concentrated wholly in the more urban areas with better access to transit: older adults, people with disabilities, Veterans, low-income households and non-English speakers can be found throughout the county, suggesting the need for a comprehensive approach to mobility in the county that addresses these population clusters in urban, suburban, and rural contexts.

According to the Metropolitan Council's population projections, the countywide population is expected to grow from 251,000 residents in 2017 to 330,000 residents by 2040 (more than 30% increase). The population of Washington County is also aging, and the percentage of older adults countywide is expected to reach 19% by 2050 (compared to 13.4% today). New transportation services should account for this overall population growth, as well as the specific mobility needs of a growing older adult population.

The first five chapters of this report provide background information for the development of alternatives for Washington County. Key considerations in assessing alternatives are described in the following sections.

Existing Service Coverage

Washington County's existing transit service illustrates a somewhat piecemeal approach to providing services to individuals with specialized needs, with much of the service provided by

private, nonprofit and for-profit transportation operators and human service agencies, and organizations seeking to address their clients' needs resulting in duplication of service.

- Most communities have no regular fixed-route bus service. Only 13 of the 33 cities and townships within Washington County are served by fixed commuter routes. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of Washington County residents work within the county, yet there are no local fixed-route circulator services within or between Washington County communities.
- Washington County has limited fixed-route transit service compared to services in Ramsey or Hennepin County and some of the other suburban counties. Existing fixed-route services are generally restricted to peak commute periods, with routes between Minneapolis-Saint Paul and key cities such as Cottage Grove, Mahtomedi, Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, and Forest Lake. Thus, regularly scheduled transit services are not available to meet transit demands in most of Washington County's cities and towns. However, Washington County is also less dense than many communities in other parts of the metropolitan area, which limits the feasibility of fixed-route transit solutions.
- Demand-response services such as Metro Mobility and Transit Link help to fill some of gaps left by limited fixed-route services. However, these options are not available or convenient for all Washington County residents.
- Transit Link struggles with capacity constraints and has to turn away riders. Although a review of 2016 data found some months where trip requests in Washington County were denied as much as 9% of the time, 2017 data shows very few denials during summer month with winter and spring months averaging a 4% to 6% overall denial rate due to capacity limitations.
- Long travel times and advanced scheduling requirements make demand-response services a challenge for many residents' daily travel needs. The result is that Washington County has an unreliable transit safety net that cannot meet many travel demands, including daily commutes.
- A lack of weekend service on Metro Transit and Transit Link limits mobility for individuals seeking access to recreation, training, and certain jobs both within and outside of Washington County.
- Human service agencies and nonprofit organizations often provide or sponsor transportation services such as shuttles, non-emergency medical transportation, and dial-a-ride services. However, these programs are often limited to specific groups (e.g., older adults and people with disabilities) or trip purposes (e.g., rides to a medical facility).
- Lack of coordination between these disparate services means that residents may not have comprehensive information to help them understand eligibility requirements, fares, payment methods, and eligible trip types and destinations.

The Role of Transit in Washington County

Stakeholders overwhelmingly acknowledged that the purpose of transit in Washington County *should be* to serve the markets with the greatest need. New services designed to lure drivers out of their cars would not meet the intent of this study: investments should be made that target people without other transportation options.

Existing public transit investment in Washington County by Metro Transit specifically targets commuters, including those who drive to a park-and-ride lot to ride to jobs outside of the county. While this service design approach focuses on offering the most productive services (highest passengers per hour) on fixed-route buses, the investment does little to address the priorities identified by stakeholders. It will be appropriate for Washington County to identify policy-level priorities for how its limited resources should be invested in transit services.

Transportation Needs

Demands exist for transportation throughout the county and to locations elsewhere in the metro areas. Based on stakeholder feedback, key destinations that Washington County residents need to access on a regular basis include:

- Hospitals and clinics
- Veteran Administration (VA) medical facilities
- Community centers, recreation, and shopping
- Schools and colleges
- Government services
- Employment centers

Commute trips to work are particularly challenging for low-income Washington County residents. People with disabilities in particular lack accessible services transportation to and from worksites. Employment opportunities for people with disabilities are dispersed throughout the county, making it difficult to provide access through traditional fixed-route services. Potential solutions include accessible employment or subscription routes that could provide a combination of fixed-route and flexible commute services, employer support of specialized services for employees, volunteer carpools, etc.

One of the challenges in Washington County is that some employment centers are not necessarily in areas that are convenient to serve by transit, including manufacturing jobs along the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers. Job openings exist in warehousing, shipping, and manufacturing positions that have a mix of work shifts and are often in facilities that offer employees ample free parking.

For employers in Washington County, nearly one-half of their workforce lives within the county limits, while the rest of their employment base is in Ramsey, Dakota, St. Croix, and other nearby counties. Providing reliable access to local jobs is a key concern for major employers, as well as city and county officials.

Opportunities for Coordination

The various transportation providers in Washington County tend to focus on specific markets, and there are few avenues for information sharing, comingling riders, or developing other approaches to providing services that are more efficient. Opportunities for coordination exist within Washington County, and some mobility management approaches may be effective to address the challenges related to limited coordination. The eventual implementation of strategies, depending on the preferred approaches, may require consensus-building and extensive coordination, and the acknowledgement that some responsibilities for providing certain types of transportation services in Washington County could be shifted to other or new entities to better serve the needs of the local and regional populations.

The case studies included in Chapter 5 illustrate other approaches that have been taken to address similar needs in other communities.

STRATEGIES FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY

The project team identified 26 transportation service alternatives that could potentially address the various mobility needs of Washington County residents. The list of alternatives was refined to a set of 14 strategies after review and input from staff, stakeholders, and the general public.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on defining and evaluating alternatives, all of which could be appropriate for implementation in Washington County. These include transit service strategies, employer-supported strategies, personal mobility strategies, and mobility management strategies. Figure 6-1 shows a list of needs identified in the first phase of the project, along with potential alternatives to address these needs, which are discussed in this chapter. Based on the evaluation and feedback from Washington County staff, elected officials, and stakeholders, implementation considerations are discussed in Chapter 7.

Figure 6-1 Summary of Primary Needs, Potential Alternatives, and Primary Beneficiaries of Addressing the Needs

Primary Needs Identified	Alternatives to Address Identified Needs														Primary Beneficiaries						
	Transit Strategies					Employer-Supported Strategies			Personal Strategies		Mobility Management Strategies				Users		Organizations				
	General Public Dial-A-Ride	Community Circulator	Express Bus/Park & Ride Service Enhancements	Intra-County Service	On-Demand Bus or Van Service	Vanpool	Site-Specific Shuttle	Subscription bus services	Carpool	Active Transportation Alternatives	Accessible Infrastructure Investments	Trip brokerage	Volunteer Driver Program	Subsidized Taxi or Ride-Hailing Service	Travel navigation/ Information and referral	Older Adults	People with Disabilities	Low Income	Private Industry	Nonprofits/ Human Svc. Agencies	Cities/Public Agencies
Service Quality Gaps (of existing transportation providers)																					
Reduced time to travel on vehicle	●	●	●	●	●							●		●		●	●	●	●	●	
Guaranteed trips; reduced service denials	●	●	●	●	●		●	●				●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	
Accessible bus stops/accessible path of access to bus stops	●	●		●	●						●					●	●			●	●
Affordable transportation services	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Transportation options	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Better and more reliable information and referral												●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Spatial Gaps (service not provided where it is needed)																					
Service to entry-level job sites/major retail centers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●	●	●	●	
Limited coverage of existing Metro fixed-route services	●	●	●	●	●							●			●	●	●	●	●	●	
Lack of circulation for local trips within a community (e.g., within Stillwater)	●	●			●					●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●
Scheduled service to major employers in Washington County		●	●	●		●	●	●	●						●		●	●			
Limited accessible/pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure	●				●					●	●	●			●	●	●	●		●	●
Service to dialysis clinics	●	●			●		●		●			●	●	●	●			●		●	
Service to major medical facilities and Veterans facilities	●	●		●	●		●		●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Service from Washington County to Twin Cities		●	●			●	●	●	●			●	●		●			●	●	●	
Temporal Gaps (service not provided when it is needed)																					
Weekend service not provided on Transit Link	●			●	●							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Service during various shift times (e.g., graveyard)						●	●	●	●									●	●		
Midday bidirectional express bus service			●	●												●	●	●	●	●	
Nighttime service (after 7:00 p.m.)	●			●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●			●	●	●	
Same day service (reserve and take a trip the same day)		●	●	●	●		●					●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●
Organizational Gaps																					
Single place for consumers and/or agencies to get transportation information												●			●	●	●	●		●	●
Dedicated staffing for transportation in Washington County												●			●	●	●	●		●	●
Local accountability and involvement in prioritizing transit investment	●	●	●	●	●							●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●

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EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES

Criteria for Evaluating Potential Service Strategies

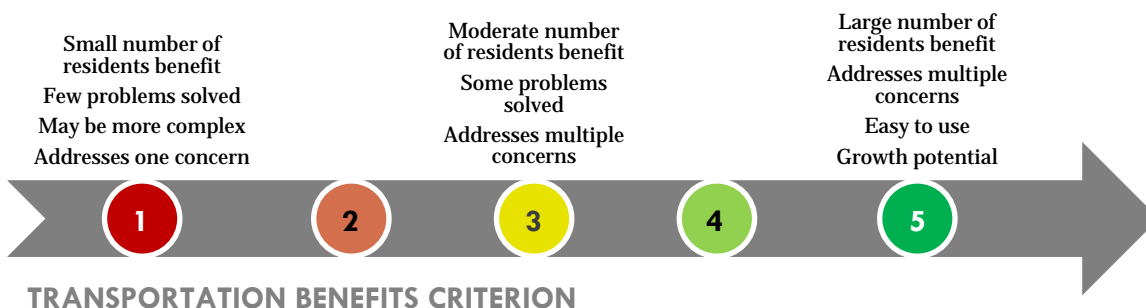
The alternatives were subject to an evaluation and prioritization process that considered (1) transportation benefits, (2) community support, (3) financial feasibility, and (4) implementation feasibility. Evaluation criteria were developed with input from key stakeholders and Washington County staff.

1. Transportation Benefits

The **Transportation Benefits** criterion is based on the following:

- Beneficiaries served among *Older Adults, People with Disabilities* and *Individuals and Households with Low Incomes* (measured at 185% of the federal poverty level). This factor looks at the number of individuals likely to be served, and is based on the findings of the demographic analysis conducted during the first phase of the study.
- Problems solved. This factor considers the number of gaps addressed, based on the analysis of existing transportation services that identifies areas with service limitations. These findings are also verified by stakeholders, employers and members of the public, and collected via the stakeholder forum and from comment forms.
- Needs addressed. This factor considers how well the stated needs are addressed, based on the input from stakeholders, employers and members of the public, and collected via the stakeholder interviews, public outreach efforts, the stakeholder forums and from comment forms.
- Ease of use. This factor reflects that some alternatives are a better fit for the ridership markets being targeted. It considers the characteristics of the strategy and the complexity of making a trip.
- Growth potential. This factor reflects that some services have the potential to expand to new markets and can offer additional benefits through service enhancements.

Ratings for this criterion reflect the following:

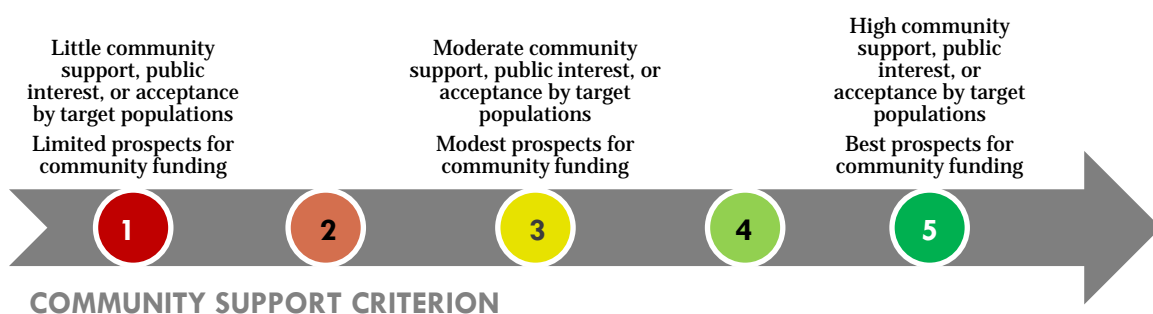


2. Community Support

The **Community Support** criterion uses the following as the basis for evaluation:

- **Community support.** This factor reflects the level of support for various alternatives among Washington County residents, based on feedback from stakeholders (interviews and the stakeholder forums), community outreach events, and comments collected via the electronic comment form.
- **Public interest.** This factor looks at the level of interest among members of the public to apply this strategy to address the identified needs. It is based on feedback from stakeholders, comments at community outreach events, and comments collected via the electronic comment form. Interest does not always match support: while the public has an interest in a robust transit system in the county, many community members support smaller scale efforts to target the needs in this study.
- **Community funding.** This factor considers the potential for new locally generated funding. Some cities and stakeholders said they would consider funding certain types of strategies that benefit their constituents, clients, etc. with support from Washington County. It is based on feedback from stakeholders, as well as comments collected via the employer comment form.
- **Accepted by the target populations.** Public interest and community support for some strategies may differ from the priorities of the target populations. This factor balances the willingness of the target markets to use the strategy with general public interest or community support. It is based on best practices that consider patronage levels of various strategies in other communities, as well as input from stakeholder meetings, community forum, comment forms, Washington County Board of Commissioners input, and the study's Technical Advisory Committee).

For this criterion, the following ratings were applied:



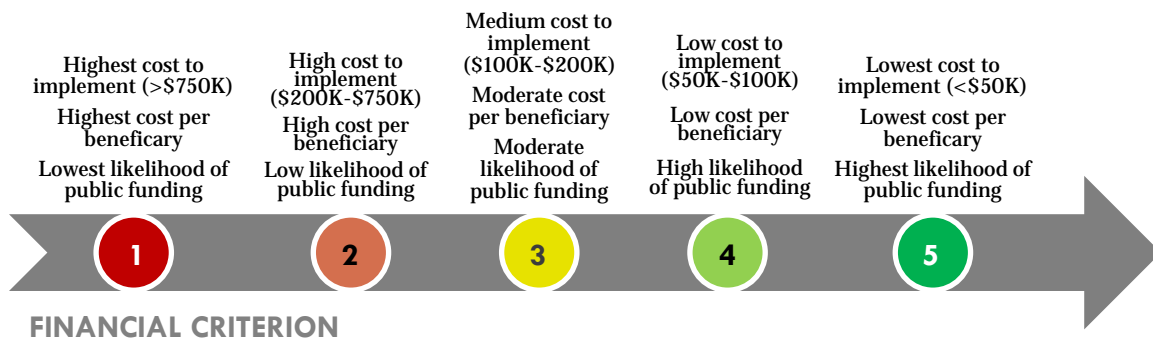
3. Financial

The **Financial** criterion is based on overall costs and costs per beneficiary of the strategy. The following serve as the basis for evaluation:

- **Overall cost.** This factor looks at projected costs for the strategies, relying on data from peers, the Metropolitan Council, and Metro Transit.
- **Cost per beneficiary.** This factor balances overall cost with cost-effectiveness, in terms of cost per beneficiary, making general assumptions about costs on a per-user basis. It is

- based on existing costs, information from peers, and current unit costs of services operated by the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit.
- **Funding availability and sustainability.** This broad factor considers the likelihood of existing public funding for ongoing operation of the strategy, and is based on operating and capital cost assumptions, Metropolitan Council funding priorities, and the potential for funding services (see Chapter 8).

For this criterion, the following ratings were applied:

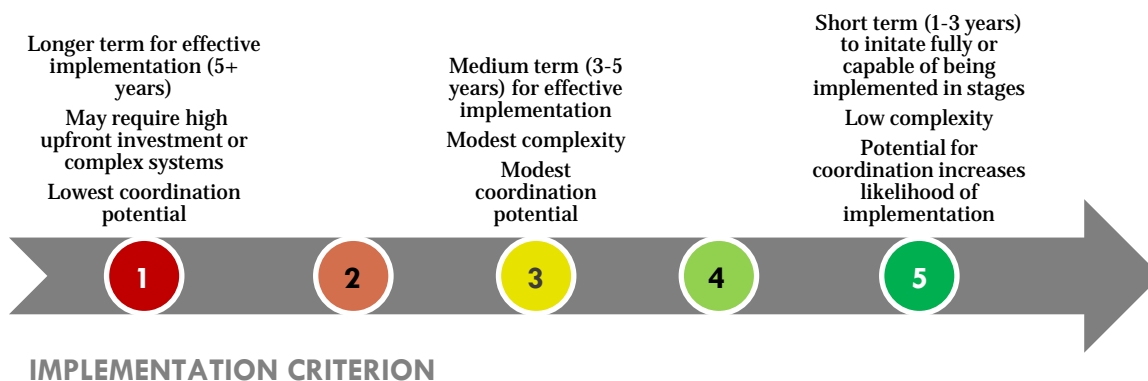


4. Implementation

The **Implementation** criterion is based on the following:

- **Implementation timeframe.** This factor considers the length of time it may take to implement the strategy, based on data from peers, proposed program characteristics, and potential leadership capacity within Washington County.
- **Complexity of implementation.** A strategy with multiple players, a lack of existing service in place, or few potential service providers may require high upfront investment, and may come with sensitivities that are more political. This factor considers this, based on information from peers, the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, and Washington County staff.
- **Coordination.** Strategies that invite higher levels of coordination are more likely to maximize existing resources, serve more markets, and ensure partnerships are in place to implement the strategy. This factor considers the potential for coordination, based on feedback from stakeholders, likely lead and support agencies, and staffing potential at Washington County.

For this criterion, the following ratings were applied:



Alternatives Evaluation Summary

Each of the alternatives was reviewed based on the evaluation criteria. Figure 6-2 summarizes the evaluation process and shows the compatibility of each service alternative with regard to the Metropolitan Council's designated Transit Market Area classifications, as described in Chapter 3. See Figure 3-7 for a map of the corresponding Transit Market Areas.

A low number (1 or 2, red or orange) indicates that the strategy receives a lower ranking; a higher number (4 or 5, chartreuse or green) indicates that a strategy receives a higher ranking. A number in the middle (3, yellow) means that strategy may not be ideal, but could be successful under certain circumstances, and therefore receives a medium ranking. All of the various scores were weighted equally to generate an average score.

The medium rankings also suggest that the strategy could potentially be implemented longer term because it may require baseline data, improved coordination, a longer lead time, or additional funding to be successful. It should be noted that the lowest ranking strategies are those deemed not appropriate for implementation in Washington County at this time due to high overall costs or cost per beneficiary, limited public support, or complexity of implementation. They could, however, be appropriate strategies in the future.

It is important to bear in mind that transit services can evolve along with the communities they serve. As an example, a vanpool program that is constrained by its own success can be converted into a subscription bus service, whereby an employer purchases or contracts for a bus route on which employees can reserve seats by paying a monthly "subscription" fee. Conversely, a fixed-route bus service that is failing to meet ridership goals could be transformed into a route deviation service (also known as a flexible route) to widen its coverage area. Some strategies require supportive infrastructure such as bus stops, park-and-ride lots, crosswalks, paved sidewalks, or signals. The strategies in this report are designed to be implementable in the near-term, and to provide opportunities for expansion or growth in the future.

Figure 6-2 Evaluation of Alternatives to Address Washington County Transit Needs

Countywide	APPLICABILITY					SERVICE	TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS			COMMUNITY SUPPORT	FINANCIAL	IMPLEMENTATION	AVERAGE SCORE (all weighted equally)
	Transit Market Area II	Transit Market Area III	Transit Market Area IV	Transit Market Area V	Older Adults		People with Disabilities	Low-Income Individuals					
Transit Service Strategies						<div>5</div> <div>High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.</div>	<div>5</div> <div>High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.</div>	<div>5</div> <div>High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.</div>	<div>5</div> <div>High community support: directly meets needs expressed by multiple participant groups; meets highest priority mobility needs as expressed by community members.</div>	<div>2</div> <div>High cost to implement expanded or new transit services in Washington County</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Implementation effort would fall to (1) the county for new implementation or for enhancements to (2) the Metropolitan Council. Enhancement of an existing regional service strictly within Washington County is likely to be challenging without region wide policy changes.</div>	4.2	
						<div>5</div> <div>High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.</div>	<div>5</div> <div>High impact: a flex-route community circulator will provide benefits to this group.</div>	<div>5</div> <div>High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.</div>	<div>5</div> <div>High community support: directly meets needs expressed by multiple participant groups; meets highest priority mobility needs as expressed by community members.</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Costs will vary depending on scale of operation. Depending on service design, may necessitate ADA paratransit complement at added cost.</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Implementation effort would largely fall to local municipalities; coordination between county and cities could be challenging.</div>	4.3	
						<div>2</div> <div>Low impact: this strategy primarily benefits commuters, older adults will be less likely to need access to workplaces, however a midday option would provide a benefit for appointments or shopping.</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Moderate impact: people with disabilities would benefit from scheduled bus service enhancements but some populations will have limited access to reach the bus stop(s).</div>	<div>4</div> <div>High impact: people with low incomes will benefit greatly from reliable access to jobs. Addition of a midday link provides additional access for non-commute trips.</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Moderate community support: directly meets needs expressed by multiple participant groups for regional travel; expanding headways on express routes will better serve people working non-traditional shifts; does not meet the needs of people living in rural parts of Washington County.</div>	<div>2</div> <div>High cost to implement new transit services in Washington County</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Relatively high complexity to implement new express bus services. Better potential for the implementation of additional midday services on existing routes. Ultimately, implementation falls to Metro Transit which has rigid standards for additional investment in corridor services.</div>	2.2	
						<div>3</div> <div>Moderate impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group in key corridors only.</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Moderate impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group in key corridors only.</div>	<div>4</div> <div>High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group in key corridors only.</div>	<div>5</div> <div>High community support: directly meets needs expressed by multiple participant groups</div>	<div>1</div> <div>High cost to implement new transit services in Washington County</div>	<div>1</div> <div>Most complex to carry forward. Implementation could be carried out by (1) Washington County establishing its own transit system or (2) expansion of services operated by Metro Transit.</div>	2.0	
						<div>4</div> <div>High impact: this strategy will enable older adults to make local trips in specific service areas and connect to existing services for longer trips.</div>	<div>4</div> <div>High impact: this strategy will enable people with disabilities to make local trips in specific service areas and connect to existing services for longer trips.</div>	<div>4</div> <div>High impact: this strategy will low-income individuals to make local trips in specific service areas and connect to existing services for longer trips. Connections are especially important to provide access to jobs.</div>	<div>4</div> <div>High community support: directly meets needs expressed by multiple participant groups for options for local travel where services are limited or non-existent and for ways to travel intercounty or to Twin Cities. Facilitates use of existing fixed route services. Does not meet the needs of rural Washington County residents.</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Relatively high annual operating costs.</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Somewhat complex implementation: determine responsibility for management/oversight; operate through contract with service provider. Some learning curve for existing contractors, possible upgrades of technology necessary.</div>	3.3	

Evaluation of Alternatives to Address Washington County Transit Needs (Continued)

Countywide	APPLICABILITY				SERVICE	TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS			COMMUNITY SUPPORT	FINANCIAL	IMPLEMENTATION	AVERAGE SCORE (all weighted equally)
	Transit Market Area II	Transit Market Area III	Transit Market Area IV	Transit Market Area V		Older Adults	People with Disabilities	Low-Income Individuals				
Employer-Supported Strategies					Workplace Vanpool	1 Low impact: older adults will be less likely to need access to workplaces.	3 Moderate impact: people with disabilities will benefit from reliable access to jobs, but vans must be ADA accessible.	4 High impact: people with low incomes benefit greatly from reliable access to jobs, however vanpools may not meet the needs for some service jobs or flexible work schedules.	2 Low community support: meets some specific transportation needs, but does not serve all transit-dependent groups.	5 Low cost to county for implementation and oversight.	5 Easy to implement: County will help local employers establish new vanpools for their employees, either through Metro Vanpool or through a private provider such as Enterprise.	3.3
					Site-Specific Shuttle (for Workplaces, Hospitals, Colleges, Human Services Agencies, and other key trip generators)	5 High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	5 High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	5 High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	3 Moderate community support: directly meets needs expressed by select participant groups; meets several of the mobility needs expressed by community members if fully implemented to all priority locations.	5 Low cost to county for implementation and oversight; funding would be supplied in large part by organizations and companies served by shuttle. The county could subsidize rides for older adults or people with disabilities.	3 Moderate implementation effort for county staff; most of the implementation effort would fall to organizations and companies served by shuttle(s). May be challenging to implement if organizations are not willing to support this program.	4.3
					Subscription Bus Service	2 Moderate impact: this strategy meets some specific transportation needs that benefit this group.	3 Moderate impact: this strategy meets some specific transportation needs that benefit this group.	3 Moderate impact: this strategy meets some specific transportation needs that benefit this group.	3 Moderate community support: meets the needs expressed by some participant groups, particularly for commutes; meets moderate-priority mobility needs as expressed by community members.	2 Relatively high cost, limited funding opportunities. Cost may be offset or paid for in full by organizations or companies served by route.	3 May require vehicle/contractor procurement; requires significant coordination with employers to sell seats on the bus. Service could be operated by Metro Transit.	2.7
Personal Mobility Strategies					Carpool	2 Low impact: older adults are less likely than other groups to need to access the same location on a daily basis, and are less likely to have access to an automobile.	2 Low impact: people with disabilities are less likely than other groups to benefit from carpools.	4 Moderate impact: people with low incomes would benefit from this strategy so long as they have access to personal automobiles.	2 Low community support: directly meets needs expressed by some participant groups; perceived as being less of a priority than expanding public transit services.	5 Low cost to county for implementation and oversight.	5 Easy to implement: County will help local employers establish carpool programs for their employees.	3.0
					Active Transportation	3 Moderate impact: These improvements make walking and biking safer, but may provide more limited mobility benefits than increased transit services.	3 Moderate impact: These improvements make walking and biking safer, but may provide more limited mobility benefits than increased transit services.	3 Moderate impact: These improvements make walking and biking safer, but may provide more limited mobility benefits than increased transit services.	3 Moderate community support: directly meets needs expressed by some participant groups; perceived as being less of a priority than expanding public transit services.	2 High up-front infrastructure costs for long-term and more robust improvements (concrete); low to moderate cost for short-term improvements (paint, landscaping, etc.).	2 Implementation effort would largely fall to local municipalities; coordination between county and cities could be challenging.	2.7
					Accessible Infrastructure Investments	5 High impact: Older adults benefit greatly from accessibility improvements that improve street safety.	5 High impact: People with disabilities benefit greatly from accessibility improvements that improve street safety.	3 Moderate impact: accessibility improvements make streets safer for children and families, which can benefit low-income individuals who are more likely to walk and use public transit.	3 Moderate community support: directly meets needs expressed by some participant groups; perceived as being less of a priority than expanding public transit services.	1 High up-front infrastructure costs; limited funding opportunities.	2 Implementation effort would largely fall to local municipalities; coordination between county and cities could be challenging.	3.2

Evaluation of Alternatives to Address Washington County Transit Needs (Continued)

APPLICABILITY				SERVICE	TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS			COMMUNITY SUPPORT	FINANCIAL	IMPLEMENTATION	AVERAGE SCORE (all weighted equally)
Countywide	Transit Market Area II	Transit Market Area III	Transit Market Area IV		Older Adults	People with Disabilities	Low-Income Individuals				
Mobility Management Strategies	▶			Trip Brokerage <i>Centralizing the Scheduling of Transportation Services to Maximize Efficient Use of Resources and Provide More Choices for Consumers</i>	5 High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	5 High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	5 High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	5 High community support: directly meets needs expressed by multiple participant groups.	3 Moderate start up costs; More robust dedicated funding required for ongoing brokerage function	2 Complex to implement with existing providers. May take time to coordinate services among multiple organizations, funding sources, and client needs.	4.2
	▶			Volunteer Driver Program <i>Volunteer Reimbursement and Driver Incentives</i>	4 High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	3 Moderate impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit ambulatory members of this group.	1 Low impact: this strategy is not designed to provide daily transportation services to jobs, school, or other destinations that are critical for low-income individuals.	5 High community support: directly meets needs expressed by multiple participant groups; many people are already using volunteer driver programs.	5 Low cost to county for implementation and oversight.	4 Numerous models exist for volunteer driver program implementation and expansion. County will help local organizations establish volunteer driver programs.	3.7
	▶	▶		Subsidized Taxi or Ride-Hailing Service <i>Implement Program for Use of Vouchers or Subsidies for Taxis and Other Transportation Services</i>	4 High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	2 Low impact: limited availability of ADA-compliant ride-hailing and taxi vehicles make this strategy less useful for non-ambulatory consumers.	4 High impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	4 Moderate community support: directly meets needs expressed by multiple participant groups; older adults may have difficulty adapting to ride hailing services.	4 Low cost to county, low cost per beneficiary.	4 High implementation effort for county staff; initial program set-up could be challenging, and would require coordination with multiple ride-hailing and taxi companies; ongoing program management could be low or high depending on program structure (programs that impose eligibility requirements on users will require more robust program management).	3.7
	▶			Travel Navigation and Information & Referral Services <i>Compile and Provide Travel Information & Referral Services, Conduct Countywide Educational Marketing Campaign</i>	3 Moderate impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	3 Moderate impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	3 Moderate impact: this strategy provides services that specifically benefit this group.	5 High community support: directly meets needs expressed by multiple participant groups; meets highest priority mobility needs as expressed by community members.	4 Funding availability; low cost per beneficiary.	4 Fast implementation with existing providers; can be expanded; sets the stage for more comprehensive coordination.	3.7

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TRANSIT SERVICE STRATEGIES

These strategies focus on providing new or expanded transit services for the general public — operating buses or other vehicles to pick up and drop off individuals, either along routes or following a demand-response model.¹⁹

GENERAL PURPOSE DIAL-A-RIDE

Increase Use of Demand Response Service

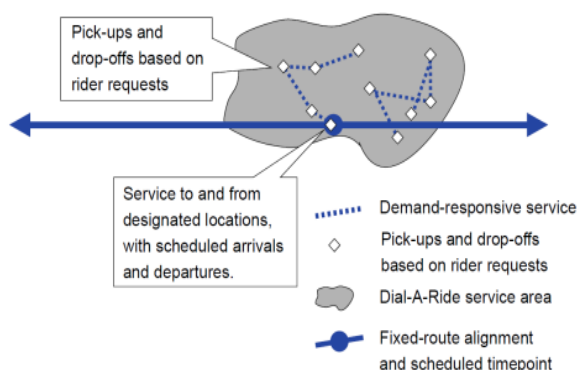
Overall Score (Tier 1)	4.2	Older Adults	5	Community Support	5
		People with Disabilities	5	Financial	2
		Low Income	5	Implementation	3

Concept

Dial-a-ride is a shared, curb-to-curb transportation service and is available to either the general public or is eligibility based. Both of these options are currently operating in Washington County. Complementary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit is not addressed in this section since new fixed-route services are unlikely to be implemented in most Washington County communities and existing Metro Mobility service is operated to comply with ADA regulations.

Overview

Demand-response services, such as general public dial-a-ride, are public transportation services that provide rides based on passenger requests. Passengers schedule their trip in advance and travel between pre-determined, requested locations. Dial-a-ride services are frequently successful in suburban and rural areas where demand is too low to justify fixed-route services (regular bus services that operate along a route on a specific schedule). Given the relative low density and the lack of adequate fixed-route transit coverage through most of Washington County, dial-a-ride service is a good fit for much of the county and this is why the Metropolitan Council provides Transit Link demand-response service in Washington County.



In dial-a-ride service, vehicle routing is determined entirely or primarily in response to passenger requests. Typically, passengers may request to be picked up from and taken to any location within the defined service area. Dial-a-ride services are called “door-to-door” if drivers assist passengers

¹⁹ Summary tables in this section include additional information about headways, vehicle requirements, and revenues that are not included in later sections.

between vehicles and the front door of pickup and drop-off locations; otherwise, the service is called “curb-to-curb.” In a large dial-a-ride system, with multiple vehicles operating throughout a large service area, trips must be requested through a call center where vehicles are scheduled and dispatched, as is currently the case with the Transit Link. Service areas may be designed to serve local trips, although provision can be made for intercity and inter-county trips on an exception basis. In smaller settings, it is common to have a single vehicle providing dial-a-ride service with all requests received and scheduled by the driver.

Expanding dial-a-ride services in Washington County means expanding the capacity of the service to improve availability and reliability, which will address the transportation demands expressed by individuals with low incomes, older adults, and people with disabilities, as well as the general public. Expanded demand-response service will support the most transit-dependent residents and create a safety net for members of the community, especially for people traveling occasionally, but will still not easily support ongoing and regular needs, such as commute trips.

Background and Need

Several justifications exist for the expansion of dial-a-ride service in Washington County. According to project stakeholders, many Transit Link riders in Washington County currently experience a lack of reliable availability, the need for advance planning, and long travel times, all of which limit the service’s effectiveness for daily commuting or other regularly scheduled trips. Community feedback collected as part of this study indicates that riders in Washington County report high trip denial rates. The Metropolitan Council increased investment in Transit Link in 2016 to help address capacity issues throughout the metro area.²⁰ As a result, capacity denials have been reduced to about 5% of trip requests. Furthermore, the Metropolitan Council has expanded service in select areas. For example, the Metropolitan Council recently collaborated with Ramsey County Workforce Solutions and the airport to add three new Transit Link buses in service between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. to serve people working at the airport.²¹ Similar service expansions or partnerships could be implemented to meet demand in Washington County.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Dial-a-ride services provide a very basic level of mobility coverage, usually in low-density environments with dispersed destinations
- Dial-a-ride services allow for coverage of a large geographic area
- Development of this strategy may lead to reduced travel times, fewer service denials, an expansion of affordable transportation, and better service options

Expected Benefits

- Provides service throughout county or within specific sections of the county
- Operates in Washington County as Transit Link and Metro Mobility (for ADA-eligible individuals) services

²⁰ 2016 Unified Budget, Metropolitan Council, Adopted December 9, 2015. Page C-5.

²¹ Committee Report Business Item No. 2017-116, Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee, June 14, 2017. Page 1.

- Provides local and regional door-to-door travel to destinations within Washington County; allows connections to services outside of Washington County
- Facilitates a connection to social services and other programs for people who need it most
- Meets basic mobility needs of transit-dependent members of the community and lays the foundation for a community-based transportation network
- Supports other human service and health agencies by helping them find transportation for their clients and patients

Potential Obstacles

- Service needs lead agency to operate
- Transit Link may not expand in Washington County
- Funding formula for cities and county to share in the cost of the service needed for a new service
- Vehicles and support equipment plus capital funds may be required to pay for these investments
- Program managers must work to sustain the interest of stakeholders to ensure that the service is valued by the broader community
- Dial-a-ride trips provide a high level of service to individuals that need it, but are expensive services to provide, especially in terms of cost per trip. The high cost of dial-a-ride service (the 2015 cost per rider in the metropolitan area was \$17 for Transit Link and \$28 for Metro Mobility) ²² requires managing demand, especially for people who do not need a higher level of service and particularly if other services are introduced in Washington County

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

Dial-a-ride service is highly personalized. Once consumers understand how to make reservations and standing appointments, this service can be particularly valuable for people without other transportation options.

Critical decisions for a dial-a-ride service include the size of the area to be served, how far in advance requests will be taken, whether requests will be phoned directly to the driver (which could be appropriate for a very small operation) or through a dispatcher, and whether unscheduled boardings will be allowed at a transfer point with a fixed-route service. A large service area may generate high levels of demand, but also limits the number of trips that can reliably be served with each vehicle, since each trip is likely to be longer than in a smaller service area.

Estimated Costs

Expanding dial-a-ride service in Washington County would require both capital and operating expenses. Capital expenses include the purchase of vehicles, information technology equipment, and dispatcher software, among other costs. Operating expenses would include driver wages and

²² 2016 Transit Report: A Guide to Minnesota's Public Transit Systems, Minnesota Department of Transportation, February 2016. Page 124.

a dispatcher to take trip requests, schedule rides, and coordinate with the driver on the road. Vehicles also need to be cleaned and maintained.

In order to expand the existing services in Washington County, additional vehicles will need to be placed into operation. Transit Link service is currently operating at or near capacity within Washington County, and any changes to improve service availability will require additional vehicles and staff. Annual operating costs for three to six vehicles operating during current Transit Link service hours are projected at \$580,000 to \$1.46 million. If the service were to be operated (using a third-party contractor) by Washington County, a .5 full-time equivalent (FTE) would be required to manage the contract, market the service, and manage the funding at an additional cost of approximately \$45,000.

Figure 6-3 Summary of General Purpose Dial-a-Ride Scenario

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Curb-to-curb, shared ride service based on pre-scheduled trips.		Additional vehicles, expanded service area, longer service hours.
Service Hours	Currently, Transit Link operates from about 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM on weekdays.	Longer hours: from about 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM on weekdays and weekends.	Service could begin operating at 4:30 AM and end operations after 10:00 PM on weekdays and operate on weekends, too.
Headways	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vehicle Requirements	Generally smaller vehicles (typically up to 27-foot buses).		Need for additional vehicles will depend on service expansion.
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	\$60-\$75 per hour, based on current operating costs for Metro Mobility and Transit Link. For an additional 3 to 6 vehicles operating weekdays only, annual operating costs, including administrative costs, are assumed at \$580,000 to \$1.46 million. Capital costs will depend on need for vehicle acquisition.	With a similar range of hourly costs, 3 to 6 vehicles operating longer weekday service hours and 8 daily weekend hours would cost approximately \$775,000 to \$1.94 million. Capital costs will depend on need for vehicle acquisition.	Will depend on service expansion.
Annual Farebox Revenues (estimated)	Farebox revenues will vary depending on level of service. Based on current Transit Link farebox recovery of 12.7%, incremental revenues would range from \$73,000 to \$185,000. The October 2017 fare increase may result in increased revenues.	Farebox revenues between \$100,000 and \$200,000.	Will depend on service expansion.

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Annual Ridership (estimated)	Annual ridership will vary depending on level of service. Under these scenarios, assuming efficient operation of the service in accordance with current Transit Link performance, 2.7 passengers per hour, increased ridership ranges from 26,000 to 52,000.	Increased ridership ranges from 34,000 to 70,000.	Will depend on service expansion.
Administrative Responsibility	Metropolitan Council, Washington County, a city in Washington County, or a nonprofit organization or human service provider.		Additional jurisdictions or a consolidated single administrative agency.

COMMUNITY CIRCULATOR

Local Transit for Shopping, Commuting and Participating in Community Activities

Overall Score (Tier 1)	4.3	Older Adults	5	Community Support	5
		People with Disabilities	5	Financial	3
		Low Income	5	Implementation	3

Concept

Community shuttles can be fixed-route or demand-response services in urban, suburban, or rural communities that provide a lifeline operation, operating a minimum of 1 to 3 days a week, and preferably more often. This was among the services most frequently identified by stakeholders to fill gaps in Washington County where local services do not exist.

Overview

A community shuttle is typically a small passenger bus or van that connects important community destinations, either travelling within the community or linking the community with a key destination.

Traditional fixed-route service is designed to serve population and activity centers along set corridors and with a pre-set schedule, and provides ADA-compliant services. However, the effectiveness of fixed-route service can be somewhat limited in low-density suburban environments or very small communities, as residents are often not within reasonable walking distance of major arterials, and retail and activity centers are designed with large parking lots separating the destination from the adjacent roadway (e.g., Tamarack Village in Woodbury).

A route-deviation service could provide a viable alternative to fixed-route bus service in Stillwater, Woodbury, and other communities that are designated as Transit Market Areas III and IV (see Figure 3-7). Such a service would operate along a designated route, but buses can leave the route upon request to pick up a passenger within certain parameters, and then return to the point of deviation so that no stops are missed. Stops could be widely spaced in some areas to allow deviations to occur between particular stops.

Route deviation service combines the accessibility features of dial-a-ride service with the scheduled reliability of fixed-route service, and is thus able to attract commuters and other users who would not generally consider dial-a-ride service.

Background and Need

Community circulators address the need for local circulation as identified by stakeholders. Data in Chapter 2 shows high levels of potential transit demand in some Washington County cities that are not currently served by fixed routes.

Metro Transit has implemented community circulators in the past that, according to staff, have not met regional performance standards. Although local circulators in Washington County would ideally have a unique set of performance standards, this is challenging under the regional Metropolitan Council umbrella standards. However, small urban transit providers outside the metro area, many of which are similar in size to some of Washington County's cities, average eight passengers per hour.²³ This suggests that a different set of standards could be appropriate for community circulators operating in Washington County compared to other parts of the Metro Transit service area.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Few transportation options are available for people with limited mobility
- There is demand for a low-cost to consumer option where transit is not readily available

Expected Benefits

- Offers a low-cost option to address some transportation needs
- Provides service linking major activity centers, including, retail stores, medical facilities and social service agencies
- Increases traveler independence
- Reduces demand for paratransit and demand response services in some instances

Potential Obstacles

- Secure funds for capital, administrative, and operating expenses
- Need to develop service, implementation and marketing plan
- Challenge to develop specific local routes

²³ 2015 Transit Report, Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Transit, Operating Statistics, Page 126.

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

A route deviation service operates along a specific path. A bus may deviate up to ½ mile or more from the fixed route on some systems before returning to the route to continue the service. Route deviation service could also allow the vehicle to follow a regular route and then deviate to any number of locations within an allotted period at specific locations/the route terminus. It is expected that any new deviated routes in Washington County cities would be available to the general public, and could deviate for the general public, although some systems deviate only for eligible riders, usually people with disabilities, youth, or older adults, and some systems charge higher fares for route deviations.

An alternative to a deviated flex route is a point deviation service, which operates within a defined service area and incorporates a series of designated locations (such as key landmarks) where the bus will arrive at designated times. However, the bus can circulate along any streets between those stops to pick up riders who have requested door-to-door service. Point deviation services in small cities are usually able to operate at a productivity level that exceeds dial-a-ride productivity, and have the added benefit of being able to serve a subset of the ridership in front of their homes and destinations. One variation on this alternative would be that while there are designated stops in the area, the bus would only travel to specific stops upon request of a general public rider (walk-on riders can only get off at certain locations); if the request is made by an individual who is ADA-eligible, then the driver would take that person to their destination. Trip requests can be either to a call center or directly to a driver's cell phone.

For a deviated service in any of Washington County's cities, expectations are that the service should carry at least five passengers per hour, which reflects the Metropolitan Council's minimum for a suburban local bus fixed-route service per trip, with a short-term goal of achieving a route average of 10 or more passengers per hour. MnDOT has different standards for deviated services in smaller cities, and if local funding is provided for this type of service, a reasonable expectation may be to initially meet MnDOT's lower standard of 5 to 7 passengers per hour.

In portions of Stillwater, Mahtomedi, Woodbury, and Cottage Grove, route average ridership greater than five passengers per hour may be anticipated, based on transit demand estimates. For comparative purposes, the Metro Transit's route average standard for Supporting Local Bus fixed-route service is 15 passengers per hour.

To be cost-effective, general public flex or deviated services may operate at 60-minute headways during off-peak hours (ideally 30 minutes or better during peak commute hours), and all services may be increased to 30-minute headways or better when ridership growth occurs and additional funding becomes available.

A baseline sample service assumes operations from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on at least three weekdays, with the potential for limited evening, nighttime, and weekend service. General public service in most communities would likely require as few as two vehicles, depending on the comprehensiveness of service implementation.

Estimated Costs

Operating costs — including administrative, fuel, and labor costs— are likely to range between \$60 and \$110 per hour, based on existing costs for transportation providers in the metro area. Total annual operating costs will vary depending on the level of service implemented, but a few examples to illustrate the range of costs can be provided. For example, two vehicles operating 12

hours on weekdays, 8 hours Saturday and 6 hours Sunday might cost between \$440,000 and \$815,000, whereas a larger operation with five vehicles could cost as much as \$2 million annually.

If the service were to be operated (using a third-party contractor) by a city within Washington County, up to .5 FTE may be required at the local level to manage the operation, market the service, and oversee the funding at an additional cost of approximately \$40,000.

Figure 6-4 Summary of Community Circulator Scenario

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Flex routes - deviated services developed in Washington County cities		Additional vehicles, expanded service area, longer service hours
Service Hours	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, a minimum of three days per week in selected cities. Ideally, services would be available all weekdays and some weekend hours.	Expanded hours - 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday, reduced hours on Saturday and Sunday; later evening hours could be provided if appropriate.	Service could begin as early as 4:30 AM to allow for connections to express bus services, and end operations after 10:00 PM on weekdays and operate on weekends, too. Service hours will ultimately depend on ridership during earlier implementation phases.
Headways	30-60 minutes, depending on trip times	15-30 minutes, depending on trip times	15-30 minutes, depending on trip times
Vehicle Requirements	2-5 in most small cities (or groupings of adjacent cities)		Need for additional vehicles will depend on service expansion.
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Will depend on service level implemented. For a weekday-only service operating two hours per day with two vehicles at approximately \$60/hour, costs range from \$220,000 (3 days) to \$360,000 (5 days). Full weekly service (7 days) is estimated at \$445,000 to \$2.04 million. Depending on city and provider, hourly costs range from \$60 to \$110.	With a similar range of hourly costs, 2 to 5 vehicles operating longer weekday service hours and 8 hours on weekends would range from \$516,000 to \$2.36 million. Capital costs will depend on need for more vehicles.	Will depend on service expansion.
Annual Farebox Revenues (estimated)	Will depend on service level implemented. General public one-way fares on similar services can cost around \$1.50+.		Will depend on service expansion.
Annual Ridership (estimated)	Will depend on service level implemented.		Will depend on service expansion.

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Administrative Responsibility	Cities that undertake this service would have primary administrative responsibility. Washington County would have key role in coordinating services. Day-to-day operations could be led by a human service provider or turnkey contractor.		Additional jurisdictions or a consolidated single administrative agency.

EXPRESS BUS/PARK-AND-RIDE SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Expanded Express Bus Service and a Midday Trip Option

Overall Score (Tier 3)	2.7	Older Adults	2	Community Support	3
		People with Disabilities	3	Financial	2
		Low Income	4	Implementation	2

Concept

Express bus/park-and-ride service is a nonstop or very limited-stop commuter service that operates in heavily traveled, congested corridors. This strategy generally provides a compelling alternative to private automobile travel. In Washington County, express bus service is currently provided by Metro Transit on limited corridors for commute hours only.

Overview

Express bus service is a tool used to facilitate transit travel between suburban areas and urban centers and to reduce congestion. Express bus service currently serves select park-and-ride lots in Washington County and offers a time-sensitive commute. While there are many benefits to express bus service as a strategy, it would meet only a small subset of travel demands for older adults and people with low incomes. However, enhancements to these services could create additional opportunities for these groups. For example, expanding service times beyond peak commute hours could better serve reverse-commute workers (people who travel into Washington County from Ramsey County and elsewhere for work) and those who need transportation for appointments or other non-work-related needs.

Express or limited-stop service is designed to serve key regional destinations only, rather than to provide broad coverage and many local stops. This service type works best where there are other complementary services such as local routes or circulators to provide access within a single area in addition to a commuter link between two places.

Furthermore, route modifications could attract additional riders by transferring the focus from park-and-ride lots. Express bus service allows residents to travel between nearby communities to

access retail, educational, healthcare, or employment opportunities that may not be available in each of Washington County's cities. In most cases, enhancements to express bus service that currently operates only during peak periods would mean additional regional travel opportunities along the existing established transit routes.

Background and Need

Transit service between Washington County and other metro area destinations is limited. Stakeholders — particularly those representing Veterans and employees traveling for work outside of Washington County — expressed strong demand for service to Saint Paul, Minneapolis, and other key activity centers. Given the suburban and rural nature of Washington County, express bus service is a reasonable solution for members of the general public, but has been limited in meeting the needs of this study's target populations, namely older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Investment in midday services and structuring express routes so that they not only serve existing park-and-ride facilities but also urban parking lots and denser, lower income communities can help to address some of the limitations of the existing express bus services.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- This service provides for a reduced commuting cost compared to driving alone, especially for long commutes
- There is potential for significant timesavings where high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes are available
- This service could provide for regional travel outside of Washington County to destinations in the Twin Cities

Expected Benefits

- Enhances commuting alternatives for Washington County residents
- Allows travelers to go shopping or to a doctor appointment when midday link is available and does not require a full day in Saint Paul or elsewhere in the Twin Cities
- Supplements existing resources and services
- Increases traveler independence

Potential Obstacles

- Funds must be secured for additional administrative and operating expenses
- Mechanism for purchase of services from Metro Transit for additional operations not readily available
- Service, implementation, and marketing plan must be developed

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

Traditional express bus services offer nonstop or limited stop service between a suburban or small urban park-and-ride facility and a major regional employment destination. However, they require individuals to have access to park-and-ride facilities. This can be challenging for low-income residents, older adults, and people with disabilities, many of whom would not have automobile

access to reach a park-and-ride facility. With implementation of local circulator service in select cities, however, more Washington County residents could have access to the express bus system.

This strategy has long-term potential to provide better regional transit links between Washington County and other locations in the metro area. Providing additional express bus routes is not a cost-effective solution for meeting the needs identified by stakeholders. However, small-scale improvements to existing routes could possibly improve their utility for older adults and people with low-incomes. These improvements could include adding a midday trip (that is extensively promoted) to allow for non-work-related travel or off-peak period commutes. Transit agency staff can also evaluate options for modifying existing routes to add local circulation at the end of the route with additional stops adjacent to areas with greater levels of demand for transit. Any improvement to express bus routes would need to be paired with other strategies for our target populations to use the service.

Estimated Costs

Adding midday trips on just three routes, weekdays only, could cost as much as \$370,000. Expansion of existing routes would incur additional costs.

Figure 6-5 Summary of Express Bus/Park-and-Ride Service Enhancements

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Addition of a midday trip on existing express routes operated by Metro Transit.	Expansion of express routes to provide additional trips, earlier and later based on user needs.	Further expansion; potential for additional midday express bus trips. Implementation of METRO Gold Line may address some of the needs identified in the short term.
Service Hours	Additional midday trip	5:30 AM to 9:00 AM and 3:30 PM to 7:00 PM Monday through Friday	To be determined based on expansion needs.
Headways	N/A	45-60 minutes during peak hours.	To be determined based on expansion needs.
Vehicle Requirements	3	1-2 depending on route requirements.	Need for additional vehicles will depend on service expansion.
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Approximately \$370,000 for one midday trip on three express routes serving Washington County, at an hourly cost of \$210.	Will depend on service expansion.	Will depend on service expansion.
Annual Farebox Revenues (estimated)	\$65,000. Will depend on selected route and fare policy for midday trips.	Will depend on service level implemented.	Will depend on service level implemented.

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Annual Ridership (estimated)	26,000 riders on additional services.		Will depend on service expansion.
Administrative Responsibility	Metro Transit, Washington County		Same

SCHEDULED INTRA-COUNTY BUS SERVICE

New Scheduled Bus Routes

Overall Score (Tier 3)	2.8	Older Adults	3	Community Support	5
		People with Disabilities	3	Financial	1
		Low Income	4	Implementation	1

Concept

A new network of bus routes within Washington County would provide reliable, regularly scheduled bus service, which is not currently provided in most of the county. These could be operated as fixed or deviated routes to meet local mobility needs and connect to regional networks.

Overview

Most of the population centers in the Twin Cities region are served by regular bus routes, typically operating as fixed routes (following a predetermined route and operating at a regular schedule). In lower-density communities throughout Minnesota, local and regional bus services operate as both fixed routes and deviated routes, often to eliminate a requirement for a separate ADA complement to the fixed route service.

Intra-county bus service refers to the expansion of the existing bus routes that operate on the western side of Washington County, adding routes or extending services to adjacent cities and across the county to serve other population centers. Intra-county bus service would be the available to the general public and would operate with consistent schedules and operating hours.

Many of the intra-county routes would provide connections between cities, operating at relatively high speeds and using direct routes, which may offer limited stops in rural areas. Stops are typically provided in urbanized areas and/or at locations where passengers can transfer to other services. In some cases where no connecting service is available, the service can deviate within a predetermined flex area within range of an established bus stop to provide service to passengers who request it.

Background and Need

Intra-county service would provide a connection for residents who desire a reliable, scheduled option for regional travel: it allows for a commute, or travel from one city to another to go to the doctor or purchase specialized goods or services not available in their own community.

Currently, Metro Transit operates only a few local fixed-route services on the western edge of Washington County, leaving approximately 90% of the county's geography without all-day fixed-route bus service. Stakeholders prioritized all-day bus routes in Washington County in discussions and stakeholder forums, and it is common for regional bus services to operate in counties like Washington. For example, to the north in rural Chisago and Isanti counties, Heartland Express, the public transit provider operates regional deviated routes that serve most of the populated areas in the two-county system. This type of operation may serve the demands of residents in Washington County.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Provides reliable, regularly scheduled intercity service within Washington County where it does not exist today
- Affords same-day travel without advanced reservations or scheduling (except in event of a deviation)

Expected Benefits

- Increases traveler independence
- Provide consistent and reliable service with scheduled departures and arrivals
- Attracts commute-oriented travel demand
- Addresses basic mobility needs of transit-dependent populations
- Provides connections to major ridership generators
- Flexible service to provide curbside pick-ups and drop-offs when needed

Potential Obstacles

- Funds must be secured for administrative and operating expenses
- Mechanism for purchase of services from Metro Transit for additional operations not readily available
- May be challenging to provide a reliable and consistent schedule, especially with deviations
- Official bus stops and amenities (some capital costs) will need to be planned and sighted
- May not achieve Metro Transit ridership standards given existing lack of service between these cities

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

It is assumed that in the short term, intra-county bus service would likely operate on weekdays only, with scheduled services based on passenger demand. Baseline service hours are recommended at 10 hours, but could be extended based on ridership. Headways should be

scheduled to allow for connections to existing scheduled routes and longer term, to provide connections to the METRO Gold Line. Costs savings may be generated by operating intra-county service initially as a supplement to the express services, but then extending the routes to provide better local circulation where community circulators are not present.

An ADA-complementary demand-response service would not be required where Metro Mobility service already exists, and route deviations could be limited to communities where the ADA paratransit service is not available.

The service(s) could be branded as Washington County-specific routes to attract new markets wishing to travel to locations around the county. Round trips between some cities may require long deadhead distances, which should be considered in operating the service.

Implementation of intra-county bus routes may allow resources to be shifted away from Transit Link services in some corridors, using the new routes to serve current paratransit riders. In most cases, however, it should allow Transit Link to provide more of the curb-to-curb services it offers, allowing resources to be redirected to reduce denials and improve on-time performance.

Estimated Costs

Estimated costs depend on the level of service implemented, the corridors where service is provided, and the service provider (e.g., Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, or another operator like Heartland Express). For a comparative estimate, four routes operating with two buses for 10 hours a day, weekdays only at an hourly cost of \$75 (based on Metropolitan Council contracted hourly cost) would be approximately \$1.5 million.

Figure 6-6 Summary of New Intra-County Bus Service

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Implement fixed or deviated-route service to local destinations within Washington County	Expansion of routes as service demand grows, implementation of new routes	Further expansion
Service Hours	Hourly service during weekdays with more frequent service during peak commute hours (morning and evening)	Extended morning/evening service, extended midday service, weekend service	To be determined based on expansion needs.
Headways	60 minutes off-peak, 30 minutes peak	30-60 minutes all day	To be determined based on expansion needs; some routes may be able to operate at 15-20 minute frequencies.
Vehicle Requirements	To be determined based on planned routes.	To be determined based on planned routes.	Need for additional vehicles will depend on service expansion.

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Approximately \$385,000 for one route operated by two buses for 10 hours a day, weekdays only, at an hourly cost of \$75 (based on Metropolitan Council contracted hourly cost). Four routes with these characteristics is approx. \$1.5 million.	Will depend on service performance and expansion.	Will depend on service performance and expansion.
Annual Farebox Revenues (estimated)	Will depend on fares, routes and fare policy.	Will depend on fares, routes and fare policy.	Will depend on fares, routes and fare policy.
Annual Ridership (estimated)	For four routes, assumes annual boardings of 100,000 to 185,000, based on minimum 5 passengers/hour standard to average 9 passengers/hour standard	Will depend on service expansion.	Will depend on service expansion.
Administrative Responsibility	Washington County in cooperation with the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, or another service provider such as Heartland Express		Same

ON-DEMAND BUS OR VAN SERVICE

New Publicly Operated Same-Day Service in Specific Communities

Overall Score (Tier 2)	3.3	Older Adults	4	Community Support	4
		People with Disabilities	4	Financial	2
		Low Income	4	Implementation	2

Concept

An on-demand bus or van service is a dedicated shared-ride public transit service that allows for same-day trip requests, typically for trip pickup and drop-off locations within a specified area. On-demand service often provides a local connection (sometimes called first- or last-mile service) to or from a regional transit hub, park-and-ride lot, or express bus route for trips beyond the dedicated service area, but can also be an effective way to serve local trips.

Overview

The purpose of this strategy is to address mobility needs in specific medium-density or small urban areas by offering shared-ride, curb-to-curb, demand-response service that is requested in real time or at short notice on the day of the trip within a specified service zone. Service is used for local trips within the service zone (or between multiple service zones) and for first- or last-mile connections to local or express bus services.

Customers use a smartphone app, web-based interface, or a direct phone line to a dispatcher (or to the bus driver) to request a pick-up. Customers can also request a trip in person at a transit hub or transfer center. Trips may be requested in real time, as a taxi would be, or within specified limits on the day of the trip (such as no less than one hour in advance).

Based on data from on-demand bus services in Carver and Hennepin Counties, as well as from the greater Chicago area, fares for this type of service are typically similar with fixed route bus fares in the service area. Transfers between service zones may be provided free of charge; transfers to a bus route are generally free or at a minimal cost.

In Washington County, on-demand service could be overseen by a mobility manager (or other county staff) employed by the county and operated through a new service contract with an existing private provider. Alternatively, the service could be piloted by the Metropolitan Council and operated by one or more of its contractors.

Background and Need

Existing fixed route transit service in Washington County, due to low population density in many areas, is limited to thirteen communities. ADA paratransit service is available only for eligible riders, and operates alongside fixed-route transit services (excluding express bus) and in a limited number of communities in Washington County that do not have fixed-route services. Transit Link service operates throughout the county, but struggles with capacity limitations, and may not be available to connect residents with fixed-route services or to serve other local trips. Limitations in service affect Washington County residents' ability to access jobs both within and outside of the county without driving.

In addition, Washington County residents have voiced the need for local options for traveling to key destinations including hospitals and clinics, Veterans Administration (VA) medical facilities, community centers, recreation and shopping destinations, schools and colleges, government services, and employment centers.

Ideally, on-demand service would serve communities in which express or local bus service already operates, such as Cottage Grove, Landfall, Mahtomedi, Newport, Woodbury, Lake Elmo, or Oak Park Heights. Connections to these services would allow residents to take full advantage of the existing transit network, in addition to meeting the demand for local trips within and between the specified service zones. On-demand service could also address local trip needs in higher-density communities where stakeholders have repeatedly identified transportation needs, such as Stillwater or Oakdale.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Same-day service, origin-to-destination or to transit hub or transfer point within a specific area where mobility needs are not met by existing services

- Target market is the general public, including job seekers and commuters, older adults, people with disabilities, Veterans, and other groups
- Relatively direct travel compared to services operating countywide (e.g., Transit Link)

Expected Benefits

- Increased mobility options in medium density areas for short-distance trips
- Improved connections to existing transit services for regional trips
- Added ability to reserve trips on day of travel, either in real-time or at relatively short notice

Potential Obstacles

- Requires a new provider for Washington County or expansion of service approach for an existing provider
- Requires investment in technologies and communications equipment to allow for on-demand reservations and trip scheduling

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

Key elements of this program would include the following:

- Pilot program in one or more communities to test the service concept
- Service in designated communities or service zones. Service zones could be individual communities or areas that include parts of multiple communities
- Service could initially be provided on weekdays only, for 8 to 12 hours per day
- Customers would request trips either in real time or at short notice (for example, up to one hour in advance) via a smartphone app, website, or phone call
- Demand-response service reservations and scheduling software could group trips for shared-ride service
- Fares could be similar to Metro Transit fixed route fares: \$3.25 during peak hours and \$2.50 during non-peak hours (based on new fares)
- Options for management and operation of the services include management by Metropolitan Council and operation by one or more of its service contractors or oversight by a mobility manager with the county or other staff and operation by a contracted service provider

Estimated Costs

Annual operating costs would depend on the number of communities in which service is provided. Experience with publicly operated on-demand service in Carver and Hennepin counties and the greater Chicago area suggests that costs might range from \$7 to \$16 per passenger trip. This type of service could be operated by a transit agency or a contracted provider, at an estimated hourly operating cost of \$50-\$60. Operation of one vehicle to provide weekday service, 12 hours per day, in one community or service zone would cost approximately \$153,000—\$183,600 annually, minus fare revenues.

Figure 6-7 Summary of On-Demand Bus or Van Service

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Pilot service in one or more communities, such as Cottage Grove, Stillwater, Oakdale, or Woodbury	Implement service in additional communities	Implement service in additional communities
Service Hours	Weekdays, 6 AM – 6 PM	Add Saturday service for local trips.	To be determined.
Headways	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vehicle Requirements	1-2 in most small cities (or groupings of adjacent cities)		Need for additional vehicles will depend on service expansion.
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Total cost depends on number of communities served. National/regional experience suggests a cost of \$8-16 per passenger trip. Hourly operating costs are likely to be \$50-60. Service 12 hours per weekday using only one vehicle would cost roughly \$153,000-\$183,600 annually.	Expansion to three in-service vehicles would cost between \$450,000 and \$550,000.	Will depend on service expansion.
Annual Farebox Revenues (estimated)	Will depend on ridership generated. General public one-way fares would likely be \$2.50-\$3.25.		Will depend on service expansion.
Annual Ridership (estimated)	Will depend on service level implemented.		Will depend on service expansion.
Administrative Responsibility	Washington County in collaboration with Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council.		Additional jurisdictions or a consolidated single administrative agency.

EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED STRATEGIES

The following strategies are either led by employers (or major public or private organizations that attract consumers, students, or employees directly to their site), public-private collaboratives such as a Transportation Management Association (TMA), or by a public entity with significant involvement and support from private organizations.

VANPOOL

Promote Metro Vanpool as a Cost-Effective Commute Strategy

Overall Score (Tier 2)	3.3	Older Adults	1	Community Support	2
		People with Disabilities	3	Financial	5
		Low Income	4	Implementation	5

Concept

Vanpools offer ridesharing to commuters using a sponsored van. Vanpools are typically used for long-distance commutes, often to destinations outside of the county where they originate. Currently 70 active vanpools administered by the Metropolitan Council vanpool program (Metro Vanpool) originate in Washington County and another 20 operate through Washington County to Ramsey County and others counties in the metro area.

Overview

Metro Vanpool is subsidized by the Metropolitan Council. It is available to those who live or work in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties. This regional program is intended to provide additional transportation options for those who do not live within close proximity to Metro Transit fixed route. Metro Vanpool provides 7-, 9-, 12-, or 15-person vans, depending on the needs of commuters and employers. Vans must carry a minimum of five people (including the driver) and must operate at least three days a week. Vanpool routes must not duplicate regular fixed routes (including bus, light rail, or the Northstar Commuter Rail Line). Moreover, subsidized vanpools are not permitted to arrive in downtown Saint Paul or downtown Minneapolis between 7-8:30 a.m., or depart between 3:30-5:30 p.m.

The cost of participating in a vanpool is on-average \$110 per month for each participant. Rates fluctuate depending on regularity, distance of trip, and number of participants. Vans are leased directly to the primary driver (a volunteer member of the vanpool), and the primary driver rides free in exchange for driving and coordinating services. Rideshare by Enterprise leases all vans and the service includes insurance, maintenance, repairs, and 24-hour roadside assistance.

Background and Need

Not all residents and employers in Washington County are aware of the Metro Vanpool program. Vanpool is especially attractive for residents who commute to other counties or to destinations across Washington County. Promoting Metro Vanpool and helping residents and employers navigate the program will help leverage this resource for Washington County residents. This strategy can also help county staff to build relationships with major employers and organizations, and would provide valuable data on commute needs

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Transportation option where no others may exist
- Commuting cost reduced compared to driving alone, especially for long commutes

- Timesavings where lanes reserved for carpoolers or toll-payers, such as HOV (also known as MnPass) lanes, are available

Expected Benefits

- Opens job markets to individuals with low incomes and others who are more likely to be transit dependent
- Provides opportunities for partnerships with employers to reduce costs in other county programs
- Increases cost effectiveness due to existing Metropolitan Council subsidies
- Expands opportunities for county's role in coordinating vanpool program in the future
- Reduces transportation costs for Washington County residents

Potential Obstacles

- Vanpools are most successful when they are operated through partnerships with employers or local agencies and organizations
- Metropolitan Council limits the type of vanpools that are eligible for subsidies (for example, vanpools must have 5 participants and operate 3 days or more per week)

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

The purpose of this strategy is to promote the existing Metro Vanpool program, and to help residents and employers in Washington County understand what it is and how they can benefit.

Key elements of this program would include the following:

- Include detailed information on Metro Vanpool on a forthcoming countywide mobility management website
- Perform outreach to local employers to identify if their employees would benefit from a vanpool program
- Track any residents or employees who want to set up a vanpool but are not eligible for a subsidy under the Metropolitan Council's guidelines
- Assist residents and employees who are interested in setting up a vanpool with navigating the program
- Work with local employers to establish a commuter benefits program to further subsidize vanpools (participating in the subsidized Metro Vanpool program costs on-average \$110 per month for each participant other than the driver)

Estimated Costs

This strategy relies on promoting the existing Metro Vanpool program, which is subsidized by the Metropolitan Council. Coordination between local employers, the Metropolitan Council, and Metro Transit would likely account for about 15% of a single FTE per year, or about \$10,000 per year.

Figure 6-8 Summary of Vanpool

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	A mobility manager with the county would identify local businesses whose employees may benefit from participating in the Metro Vanpool program. A mobility manager would work with employers to provide additional vanpool subsidies via an employer-sponsored commuter benefits program, and will assist with coordinating the vanpool as needed.	Further expand Metro Vanpool use by local employers and residents; provide additional subsidies for small businesses or low-income individuals.	County staff may choose to initiate their own vanpool program that is not limited by the restrictions imposed by Metro Transit. The county could work directly with Rideshare by Enterprise or another provider to lease vans.
Service Hours	NA	NA	NA
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Approximately \$10,000 for staffing to coordinate and market the program.	NA	NA
Administrative Responsibility	Washington County Community Services Department or other county department coordinating information and mobility management services; would require coordination with Metropolitan Council.		

SITE-SPECIFIC SHUTTLE

Last-Mile Connections for Major Employers, Institutions, or Retail Destinations

Overall Score (Tier 1)	4.3	Older Adults	5	Community Support	3
		People with Disabilities	5	Financial	5
		Low Income	5	Implementation	3

Concept

A site-specific shuttle is a jointly funded service designed to provide a last-mile connection from a major transit hub to a sponsoring employer, institution, or retail destination. For example, an employer such as Andersen Windows or a combination of employers at a specific office park or retail development might be beneficiaries of a site-specific shuttle.

Overview

A site-specific shuttle is a service typically funded in part by the private sector (usually an employer) to provide a connection to a sponsoring business or employment center that is beyond walking distance from a regional transit center or station. These connections improve job access for transit-dependent riders, and make transit more competitive for individuals who would otherwise drive alone. These services benefit employers and other retail and commercial destinations by expanding the pool of potential employees, especially when businesses are located beyond a comfortable walk from major transit hubs or fixed-route transit services.

In most US cities, successful employer or site-specific shuttles are facilitated by a Transportation Management Association, and are therefore a joint enterprise between the private and public sectors. A TMA is typically a private nonprofit organization run by a board of directors with a small administrative staff. In many cases, their members include employers, developers, building owners, residential communities, and public agencies. There has been a growing interest across the US for the private sector to assume a greater responsibility for transportation improvements. The creation of a TMA would provide opportunities for collecting private funds from individual employers, developers, and other organizations.

Background and Need

Low-income employees and others benefit from shuttle services that provide connecting services where they do not currently exist.

Several major employers, institutions, and retail centers are located within close proximity to transit stations, and would benefit from last-mile shuttles. With major employers located in some of Washington County's small towns and larger suburban cities, implementation of employer-sponsored site-specific shuttles would provide an alternative for people driving alone to work, and would also provide access to job seekers and others without a car or other form of reliable transportation. These shuttles put some of the responsibility on maintaining a strong, cost-competitive workforce on the employers themselves, allowing them to attract people with the right skills, giving them an advantage in recruiting employees over other businesses or commercial centers that offer no transportation alternative.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Transportation option where no others may exist
- Job access for low-income and other transit reliant individuals
- Off-peak transit for shift workers or those working a non-traditional schedule

Expected Benefits

- Opens job markets to low income individuals and others who are more likely to be transit dependent
- Provides opportunities to partner with employers to reduce costs in other county programs
- Provides opportunity for employers in a single area to coordinate service
- Shifts transportation behavior away from single-occupancy auto use

- Follows a private model where employers are beneficiaries of the service and offer the service as a benefit to their employees for recruitment, retention, and a competitive advantage
- Offers a low-cost to the consumer solution
- Complements existing regional investments in transit by facilitating last-mile connections

Potential Obstacles

- Employers must sponsor service
- Destinations must be located within close proximity to a transit center or station
- Public funding opportunities for transportation strategies focused on work trips limited
- Site-specific transportation services have difficulty generating demand
- Limited markets served (e.g., specific employers or commercial or medical developments)
- Costs may be too high for many employers to rationalize implementation of service

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a last-mile connection from transit centers to major employers, institutions, or retail destinations in Washington County.

If two major employers opted into a shuttle program, both would presumably serve an existing Metro Transit transfer point, operating a link to their worksite. This shuttle would likely operate during commute hours only, but a shuttle to a major shopping center, for example, could operate all day as a way to serve the commute needs of employees working varied shifts. It could also serve as an economic development tool for a city or developer, allowing patrons to ride to shopping centers.

Typically, site-specific shuttles operate on a fixed schedule (such as every 15 minutes) making it easy for commuters to opt to take the shuttle rather than drive all the way to work. Shuttles usually have a unique brand, with a message sign that makes it clear what the purpose of the shuttle is and who is eligible to ride it. Often, if a particular business sponsors the shuttle, the vehicle will be painted with the name of the business. Shuttles could be long-distance operations (e.g., travel to Bayport from Sun Ray Transit Center), or they could provide a local link between a residential neighborhood, downtown, and the employer.

Estimated Costs

Costs are dependent on a range of factors. Assuming an operating cost of about \$75 an hour, a two-to-four-vehicle operation would be between \$410,000 and \$820,000 annually. Site-specific shuttles have potential for success in Washington County, but identifying sustainable funding sources and an operating structure that will achieve support will likely be a challenge.

Figure 6-9 Summary of Site-Specific Shuttle

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Regular fixed route to be determined by employer or facility developing the shuttle.	Will depend on expansion needs and opportunities.	Will depend on expansion needs and opportunities.
Service Hours	Typically during commute and midday hours, from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Employers or facilities like hospitals with extended hours may need longer service hours.		
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	15-minute service or better in the peak, or a schedule designed around major employer shift start times. Could be used to provide access during non-peak times for shift workers. A two-to-four-vehicle operation would cost between \$410,000 and \$820,000.		
Administrative Responsibility	Employer or facility operator, with coordination and promotional assistance from Washington County.		If multiple sites are providing shuttles, development of a TMA or other entity to coordinate or consolidate shuttles may be appropriate.

SUBSCRIPTION BUS SERVICE

A Reserved Seat on a Regularly Scheduled Commuter Bus Route

Overall Score (Tier 3)	2.7	Older Adults	2	Community Support	3
		People with Disabilities	3	Financial	2
		Low Income	3	Implementation	3

Concept

A subscription bus route is one for which individuals must subscribe, usually by paying in advance. In return, they have a guaranteed seat aboard the vehicle. Subscription bus services are typically used for long-distance commutes, and are often subsidized by a private employer.

Overview

Subscription bus services, like site-specific shuttles, rely on private investment in transit. An employer-based subscription bus service would transport workers from a meeting point near their home to their place of work. Fares are based on distance or subsidized by the employer or a public entity. Such a service can be operated by a public or private organization.

Similar to a carpool or vanpool for commuters, users of an employer-based subscription bus service would pay a weekly or monthly fee to use the program to get to work. The employer, or a third-party organization, would take the lead to purchase the vehicle, arrange for a driver, and set up boarding and alighting times and locations, possibly with financial subsidy, technical assistance, or both from Washington County, a city government within the county, or a transit operator. Employers can also take the additional step of providing pre-tax commuter benefits or free or subsidized subscription bus passes as part of a compensation package or as an incentive (e.g., a monthly awards program), and may be rewarded through employer tax-incentive programs. Employers who may have difficulty maintaining a reliable workforce might be inclined to use the service as an incentive to recruit new workers.

Background and Need

Although a pre-paid passenger seat on a bus traveling to a major employment site may be a good commute solution for some long-distance commuters, the somewhat greater flexibility offered by vanpools (in terms of the number of participants and employers' more limited role in provision of vanpools) may make them a better solution in the short term. Subscription buses do little to address the needs of older adults and many people with disabilities, giving these services a more limited role in this plan in the short term. Nevertheless, high numbers of riders to particular destinations could ultimately suggest the need for subscription bus services to those locations.

Set work start and end times are necessary to make an employer-based subscription bus work. However, sometimes people must work late or return home before the end of the day (due to illness, illness of a child, or other personal issues). This is one of the challenges of subscription bus service, particularly for individuals with lower incomes. To make the service effective for all riders, subscription buses must operate on an agreed-upon fixed schedule, which may lead some workers to drive alone if they have that option.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Long-distance travel to a worksite, especially those that are difficult to access
- Affordable commute transportation
- Reliable scheduled transportation to work

Expected Benefits

- Services can become a comfortable, predictable experience for employees, which is usually desirable for commuting to work
- Services drop passengers off at the doorstep of their workplace unlike transit buses
- Programs are usually designed to help workers save on commuting costs and would benefit lower-wage earners depending on subsidy and users' costs

Potential Obstacles

- Cost must be reasonable for users
- Travel time between origin and destination must be competitive with that of an automobile (it should be direct)
- Participation and potential funding or subsidies required from participating employers

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a direct transit trip from an origin to a destination. Subscription buses are especially advantageous to operators because they know in advance how many people will ride and what the vehicle requirements will be.

For an employer-based subscription bus service to succeed, it must be competitive compared to a private vehicle in terms of cost and time. Pricing (including cost to the employee and subsidy) would have to be set so that it would be nearly the same or less expensive than for individuals to drive to work.

Time may be an even more decisive factor. The bus must serve the times that meet the employees' needs to be at work and to be at home. Like cost, the travel time between origin and destination must not be much more than what it would take for an individual vehicle to travel the same distance. Time calculations should factor in the time that employees leave or arrive home and the pick-up spot for the subscription bus service.

This alternative also depends on the cooperation of the participating employers, the primary entity that would implement a subscription bus service. A public-private partnership would be conducive to maintaining the employers' interest, especially if a public agency is willing to provide technical or financial assistance.

Estimated Costs

Costs will vary depending on needs, distances, etc. Based on current hourly operating costs for a full size bus in the metro area, such a service is projected to cost about \$65,000 for a trip in the morning and one in the evening along a single route, weekdays only. Although cost would be lower for a smaller vehicle, this is proposed as a longer-term strategy as employers test the success of vanpools.

Figure 6-10 Summary of Subscription Bus Service

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Major employers or groups of employers seeking employees from specific areas would tailor the service to design to meet the needs of their employees and shift times. Individuals would purchase a subscription	Subscription bus services can be expanded. In many cases, it will be appropriate to support vanpooling during the early implementation phase to assess demand. If sufficient, subscription bus services can	Will depend on needs of employers; ideally this is included as part of a comprehensive transportation demand management (TDM) plan at the employers to encourage use.

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
	in advance, prepaying for their transit trip.	be developed to replace multiple vans.	
Service Hours	Depends on schedule or shifts.		
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Approximately \$65,000 for a single full-size bus operating one trip in the morning and one in the evening along a single weekday route.		
Administrative Responsibility	Private employers working with private bus operators; could be facilitated a mobility manager or other function at Washington County.		A TMA or other entity may coordinate/consolidate subscription bus trips for multiple employers.

PERSONAL MOBILITY STRATEGIES

Personal mobility strategies are those that do not require the use of a vehicle or which can be carried out through an unscheduled or informal arrangement.

CARPOOL

Implement, Expand and Promote Carpool Programs

Overall Score (Tier 2)	3.3	Older Adults	2	Community Support	2
		People with Disabilities	2	Financial	5
		Low Income	4	Implementation	5

Concept

Carpools are defined as ridesharing among commuters using a personal vehicle to access daily commute destinations such as work or school. Carpools are often used for long-distance commutes and can be used to travel to destinations outside of Washington County. Ride matching services can help facilitate and promote carpooling. Such services can be operated by public, private, or nonprofit organizations. In addition to commute carpools, human service agencies and other organizations can encourage occasional carpooling to serve isolated individuals in Washington County.

Overview

Carpooling is effectively the shared use of a car by the driver—usually the owner of the vehicle—and one or more passengers.

Carpooling arrangements and programs involve varying degrees of formality and regularity. Carpools may be formally arranged through an employer, public website, etc., or casual, where the driver and passenger might not know each other or have advanced agreed upon arrangements. Carpools also depend on potential participants to have sufficiently similar commuting patterns. Carpooling has proven to be most successful in areas with little or no transit service, such as portions of Washington County that are not served by Metro Transit fixed routes.

Background and Need

Carpools can be an effective strategy to meet the needs of Washington County residents commuting to work. However, many variables affect success, including cost to an individual driver or rider, availability of an automobile, scheduling, effectiveness of ride matching programs, and ability to serve non-commute transportation.

Carpools can be an effective way of lowering commute costs for low-income residents, and may benefit people with disabilities who do not need ADA-compliant transportation services. However, they are unlikely to meet the needs of some populations of older adults, as many older adults do not make daily commute trips to a place of work.

While carpools can be a useful element of an overarching transportation strategy, they do not reliably meet the core transportation needs identified through this study. However, through informal carpools, neighbors might travel together to a common destination. While sharing the ride to the grocery store may not seem to be a critical focus for most carpooling programs, shared travel among older adults, for example, can also help reduce isolation by ensuring that others are aware of an individual's needs.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Transportation options where no others may exist
- Timesavings where lanes reserved for carpoolers or toll-payers, such as MnPass lanes, are available
- Lower costs for transportation options where transit is not viable, especially to serve isolated populations in Washington County

Expected Benefits

- Fewer vehicles to contribute to peak-hour congestion
- Commuting costs reduced for participants
- Easy to implement and minimal administrative burden
- Costs lower compared to other strategies
- Employers assist with the transportation needs of their employees

Potential Obstacles

- Not well suited for most occasional or periodic trips such as shopping or medical appointments
- Some participants required to own a vehicle, which may be prohibitive for residents with low incomes or those with certain types of disabilities
- May require partnerships with employers or local agencies and organizations

- Can be difficult to maintain due to changing travel patterns and needs
- Additional burden for drivers of potential legal action from passengers in case of an accident
- Low density communities can make it more difficult to find carpool partners

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

Ride matching services can help facilitate and promote commuter carpooling. Washington County could work with the Metropolitan Council to develop a campaign specific to Washington County to promote carpooling.

The easiest way to implement the effort would be to link from Washington County webpages (or forthcoming mobility management site) to the GreenRide ride matching page via Metro Transit.

For non-commuter carpools, human service agencies, churches, and senior centers, can work to promote ride matching for their consumers.

Estimated Costs

Implementing carpools is inexpensive. Carpools require some initiative by those who need a ride and their success depends on the availability of drivers and other riders who are traveling to the same destinations at the same times. Total operating costs are estimated to be less than \$10,000 per year in the short-term based on 15% FTE.

Figure 6-11 Summary of Carpool

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Promotion of carpool resources and tools for commuters and students. Carpool matching for occasional trips for older adults and other populations with limited resources, those risking isolation, could be developed as a supplement.		Development of a Washington County-specific carpooling promotion program for commuters and for occasional; carpools for older adults and others.
Service Hours	Route and schedule developed by participants themselves.		
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Approximately \$10,000 for staffing for program outreach and development.		\$25,000 for a larger scale, more robust effort.
Administrative Responsibility	Washington County Community Services coordinating with Metro Transit or other county department coordinating and overseeing commute information services OR nonprofit organization to		

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
	focus on non-commute carpooling.		

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Promote Biking and Walking, and Investing in Active Transportation Infrastructure

Overall Score (Tier 3)	2.7	Older Adults	3	Community Support	3
		People with Disabilities	3	Financial	2
		Low Income	3	Implementation	2

Concept

Walking and bicycling along appropriate rights of way (sidewalks, bike lanes, and multipurpose paths) constitute an underused option for many Washington County travelers. The first phase of this alternative is to develop marketing and educational campaigns to incentivize biking and walking, and to encourage safe driver behavior. Long-term opportunities include investing in capital improvements to make biking and walking safer and more enjoyable.

Overview

Whether an individual is walking or using a wheelchair, a well-designed sidewalk is essential for safety and direct access. Making the transition from an automobile-oriented county to one that supports all modes — including transit, bicycling, and walking — requires safe and accessible biking and walking conditions. Significant public and local jurisdictional support is required to define a new approach to integrating pedestrians and bicyclists into the transportation network.

Background and Need

In most Washington County communities, it is reasonable that individuals might walk or bike to jobs, schools, and services. Unfortunately, many towns and cities lack pedestrian-oriented infrastructure, and there has been resistance in some places to invest limited transportation funding in pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Unsafe walking and biking conditions for children, older adults, and people with disabilities
- Unsafe walking conditions for people accessing transit
- Obesity and other public health concerns

Expected Benefits

- Improved access to local destinations for children, older adults, people with disabilities, and the general public
- Lowered obesity rates possible by promoting biking and walking as viable transportation options
- Improved first-last mile access to transit services

Potential Obstacles

- Existing infrastructure in Washington County heavily favors automobile use
- Limited public demand for investment in active transportation infrastructure compared to other types of investments
- Many residents perceive this as being a lower priority than increased investment in public transit, especially for older adults and people with disabilities
- High capital cost to build new infrastructure

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

In the short term, the purpose of this strategy is to promote biking and walking as viable transportation options in communities across Washington County.

Key elements of this program would include the following:

- Developing and maintaining a website with comprehensive information on biking and walking conditions in Washington County
- Developing maps, pamphlets, and other marketing materials for an educational advertising campaign
- Distributing printed information about biking and walking options to individuals, agencies, and resource centers that serve transportation-disadvantaged individuals
- Working with schools and senior centers to develop educational programs that specifically meet the needs of children and older adults
- Conducting outreach events at key destinations countywide, including senior centers, VA facilities, hospitals and medical centers, colleges and universities, libraries, and food banks

Longer-term opportunities include:

- Identifying low-, medium- and high-priority infrastructure improvements to make active transportation safer and more enjoyable
- Working with local municipalities to identify potential funding sources
- Planning, designing, engineering, and constructing new active transportation facilities across the county in conjunction with local municipalities. Infrastructure investments may include, but are not limited to bike paths or lanes; multi-purpose pedestrian; secure bike parking; pedestrian countdown signals; sidewalks; crosswalks; traffic calming improvements such as mid-block crossing islands and corner bulb-outs; improved walking conditions surrounding bus stops and transit stations; improved walking and biking routes to schools, libraries, and other community destinations; lighting; and multi-modal signage and wayfinding.

Estimated Costs

The marketing and educational component of this strategy is included in the cost estimate for Travel Navigation, Information, and Referral Services (page 6-60).

Capital improvements range from relatively cost-effective solutions that use paint, planters, and other temporary materials, to high-cost improvements that require concrete (such as grade-separate bike lanes). A full cost estimate for building out biking and walking infrastructure countywide is not included in this transit needs assessment but costs can be high: a quarter mile of new sidewalk can cost \$250,000; bikeways can cost between \$5,000 and \$20,000 per mile; and a new pedestrian signal at an intersection ranges from \$8,000 to \$12,000.²⁴

Figure 6-12 Summary of Active Transportation

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	As part of Travel Navigation, Information and Referral Services (page 6-60), promote biking and walking and provide educational materials to support active transportation modes.	Identify low, medium and high priority infrastructure improvements to make active transportation safer and more enjoyable. Work with local municipalities to identify potential funding sources.	In conjunction with local municipalities, plan, design, engineer, and construct new active transportation facilities across the county.
Service Hours	NA	NA	NA
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Costs included in Travel Navigation, Information and Referral Services.		A full cost estimate for building out biking and walking networks countywide is not included in this study.
Administrative Responsibility	Washington County (collaborative effort among departments); support from nonprofit and advocacy organizations.		Additional roles and responsibilities for Washington County Public Works.

ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

Plan, Design, and Construct Accessible Infrastructure Improvements

Overall Score (Tier 2)	3.2	Older Adults	5	Community Support	3
		People with Disabilities	5	Financial	1
		Low Income	3	Implementation	2

²⁴ Task Guidebook, Non-Rail Infrastructure Upgrade and/or New Construction Due to Passenger Rail Implementation. National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), Nelson\Nygaard and SRF Consulting, 2012.

Concept

Street networks need to be easily navigable by people with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids, or who have limited vision or hearing. Many Washington County communities do not have complete pedestrian networks, accessible transit stops, audible pedestrian signals, and other essential components of an accessible transportation network. The purpose of this strategy is to make capital improvements that lead to safer access for those with limited mobility options.

Overview

Pedestrian facilities are necessary to provide paths of access to transit stops and activity centers in Washington County. Much of Washington County's public infrastructure is focused on streets and roads, but sidewalks and accessible crossings are an increasingly important part of the overall multimodal transportation infrastructure.

Land use, transportation, and urban design all affect the effectiveness of a transportation network. Some Washington County cities have accessible sidewalks, ramps and other features, but they are missing other elements. Where pedestrian infrastructure investments are made, sidewalks and crossings are required by the ADA to include accessible pedestrian signals, signage, and markings.

With careful planning and prioritized investment, more Washington County cities can support people with disabilities and older adults navigating the pedestrian infrastructure.

Background and Need

A key challenge for older adults and people with disabilities is being able to participate fully in local and regional events, services, and activities. An accessible infrastructure (and ongoing maintenance of that infrastructure, including during winter months when pathways and roadways can be blocked by snow and ice) can help reduce isolation, promote good health, and allow older adults and people with disabilities to access destinations in Washington County without a car or transit vehicle.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Unsafe walking and biking conditions for children, older adults, and people with disabilities
- Unsafe walking conditions for people accessing transit
- Obesity and public health concerns

Expected Benefits

- Improve access to local destinations for people with disabilities, older adults, and others with limited mobility options
- Benefit all pedestrians through investments in universal design
- Improve first-last mile access to transit services

Potential Obstacles

- High capital cost to build new infrastructure

- Availability of funding for infrastructure improvements

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

This is a broad category and defining specific investments to develop and improve accessible infrastructure will require careful analysis and a prioritization of capital improvements based on existing gaps.

Key elements of this program would include the following:

- Identify low-, medium- and high-priority infrastructure improvements to make streets safer for those with limited mobility
- Work with local municipalities to identify potential funding sources
- Plan, design, engineer, and construct new accessible transportation improvements across the county in conjunction with local municipalities. Infrastructure investments may include, but are not limited to, the following: ADA-approved accessibility improvements on all sidewalks and pedestrian routes countywide; audible countdown signals; crosswalks; traffic calming improvements such as mid-block crossing islands and corner bulb-outs; accessible routes to bus stops and transit stations; accessible routes to schools, libraries, and other community destinations; lighting; multi-modal signage and wayfinding; tactile paving (especially at transit stations).

Estimated Costs

Capital improvements will vary significantly in cost based on location and type of application. Maintenance costs must be tracked to ensure the infrastructure remains functional.

Figure 6-13 Summary of Accessible Infrastructure Investments

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Identify low-, medium- and high-priority infrastructure improvements to make active transportation safer and more enjoyable for people with disabilities. Identify potential funding sources.	In conjunction with local municipalities, plan, design, engineer, and construct new accessible infrastructure improvements.	Ongoing improvements and investments.
Service Hours	NA	NA	NA
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	A full cost estimate for building out accessible infrastructure countywide is not included in this study, but capital costs are projected to be high.		
Administrative Responsibility	Washington County Public Works Department; support from Public Health, Community Services, and nonprofit and advocacy organizations		

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
	serving older adults and people with disabilities		

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The mobility management strategies are designed to maximize resources through collaboration and coordination of transit providers and human service agencies, with a focus on meeting user needs and pooling resources. Several strategies seek to advance coordination activities and public awareness of transportation programs and services in Washington County.

TRIP BROKERAGE

Centralizing the Scheduling of Transportation Services to Maximize Efficient Use of Resources and Provide More Choices for Consumers

Overall Score (Tier 1)	4.2	Older Adults	5	Community Support	5
		People with Disabilities	5	Financial	3
		Low Income	5	Implementation	2

Concept

A coordinated mobility management effort in the form of a transportation brokerage can serve as a mechanism for the expansion, administration, and potential funding of transportation services in Washington County. This is a model that can be implemented over time, with the expectation that an effective transportation brokerage may take several years to develop; it could begin incrementally with the implementation of other mobility management strategies discussed in this section.

A centralized brokerage would provide a single link to all of the primary transportation services available to older adults, people with disabilities and people with low incomes allowing Washington County residents to schedule trips across providers and service areas by contacting a single agency or nonprofit organization.

The primary advantage of a brokerage model is centralization of information, scheduling, operations, and funding.

Overview

Coordination of transportation services through a transportation brokerage has been shown to increase efficiency and, as a result, improve mobility and cost savings. While brokerages by definition involve the centralization of some or all transportation functions, the role of the broker and the specific functions it performs can be selected to fit the circumstances of each particular situation.

With the goals of maximizing service availability and minimizing duplication and gaps in service, a brokerage provides coordination within and between service providers. A single entity is established or designated to manage the service network and serve as an information clearinghouse and contracting entity. The broker may be a public agency, a private nonprofit organization, or a professional brokerage management firm. The agencies that choose to participate in a brokerage determine the level and quality of service they would like to obtain and establish their own desired service policies regarding such issues as fares, allowable trip purposes, or degree of driver assistance.

Because the trips required by a number of agencies are funneled through the broker, more trips can be scheduled on each vehicle than would be possible otherwise; as a result, the cost of providing each trip decreases. However, savings are gained not only from the more efficient scheduling of trips but also from the competitive procurement of contract providers by the broker. Because of the high volume of trips achieved by combining the various agencies' transportation programs, more providers are likely to be interested in bidding for work. This can result in increased competition among providers, and therefore, lower rates.

Background and Need

The limits of existing travel information, few providers, and a large county make it difficult for consumers, employers, caseworkers, and others to understand the array of services that are available in Washington County. Furthermore, a good deal of duplication exists among service providers, few of which coordinate any of their services. The largest nonprofit human service transportation provider, Newtrax, has begun to consolidate transportation services for some agencies and employers that purchase services from the organization, but efforts have been modest thus far. Newtrax still has many underused vehicles with excess capacity during midday hours.

A brokerage model would be the best way to coordinate the various assets of multiple transportation providers and assemble them as a mobility solution with vehicles and drivers that can be scheduled to maximize efficiency. Through a brokerage, these services could be used by any number of public or nonprofit organizations in Washington County to provide transportation, as well as made available to a segment of the general population for specific types of trips. Successful models around the US have shown that a brokerage model is one of the most successful approaches to fill gaps and maximize resources.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Limited information about available services
- Lack of coordination among transportation providers
- Complexity of scheduling travel across Washington County or to neighboring counties
- Capacity limitations of existing services
- Inefficient use of existing resources

Expected Benefits

- Increased awareness of transportation options and use of these options
- Increased cost-effectiveness of existing services

- Improved cost-efficiencies by consolidating trip reservations and scheduling staff
- Maximized opportunities for ride sharing
- Improved service delivery and customer satisfaction
- Maximized federal funding by leveraging multiple funding sources
- Increased service levels as a result of cost savings

Potential Obstacles

- Requires a champion agency to take the lead on the mobility coordination role
- Needs lead agency to be respected by partner agencies and have the experience and capacity to lead a brokerage
- Requires leadership, ongoing attention, and committed staff
- Includes challenges such as unequal service quality, loss of control, and the role of individual communities in funding service
- Requires project governance, cost allocation and reimbursement models, and service delivery standards

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

While there are many forms of brokerages, core brokerage functions are relatively consistent and typically include:

- Provider procurement
- Contract management
- Customer registration
- Record keeping and accounting
- Quality assurance and customer relations

The most robust is a centralized brokerage model, where all trip reservations and vehicle scheduling are performed by the broker. Customers of all participating agencies (or agency personnel on behalf of their customers) call the broker to book their trips. The broker then develops schedules for each of the contract providers, choosing the most appropriate and cost-effective provider to serve each trip. In a decentralized brokerage, the broker performs the basic administrative and management functions such as provider procurement, contract management, customer registration, record keeping and accounting and quality assurance and customer relations. Each provider is responsible for performing its own trip reservations and scheduling. A hybrid brokerage combines centralized reservations (performed by the broker) and decentralized scheduling (performed by the providers). The broker is responsible for receiving requests for service from customers and assigning trips to providers, who then develop their own vehicle schedules for those trips.

Ultimately, the goal for Washington County may be to move toward a brokerage model, and there are many peer examples of counties that have used a brokerage model to coordinate the various services and underutilized vehicles for the providers in the county. Outcomes of an effort to develop a brokerage in all or part of Washington County would include the following:

- Updating a centralized list of transportation services

- Narrowing transportation options for user through a travel navigator or any number of online or telephone services
- Developing an approach and set of procedures for trip planning assistance
- Upgrading the trip planning assistance to a trip-booking function either through transferring calls to various transportation providers or using an online tool or database
- Implementing a full brokerage function where trips can be assigned via web-based scheduling or direct portals to participating providers' reservations systems

Estimated Costs

The cost is heavily dependent on the size of the operation, but is estimated at approximately \$140,000 per year for start-up phase (assumes 1 FTE and equipment), and would increase depending on size and structure of the brokerage function.

Figure 6-14 Summary of Trip Brokerage

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Expansion of travel navigation services; development of a comprehensive set of protocols to connect individuals with the transportation provider that can best meet their needs. Initiate decentralized brokerage model.	Implementation of a more centralized model. Development of shared databases and contracts with additional providers.	Further expansion of brokerage and use of public and private providers; integration of multiple mobility management tools.
Service Hours	A trip brokerage can operate daytime hours, with vehicles available at any time, depending on participating providers and program rules.		Expanded service area, including potential cross-county service
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Approximately \$140,000 per year for start-up phase staffing and equipment.	\$530,000 for staffing and equipment; integration licenses.	More than \$750,000, depending on size and complexity of approach.
Administrative Responsibility	Washington County Community Services Department or by larger nonprofit provider such as Newtrax.	Remains the same or could be replaced with a contracted trip broker.	

VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAM

Volunteer Reimbursement and Driver Incentives

Overall Score (Tier 1)	3.7	Older Adults	4	Community Support	5
		People with Disabilities	3	Financial	5
		Low Income	1	Implementation	4

Concept

Implementation of a volunteer driver program would be based on a model that allows for volunteer incentives, reimbursement, or both in the recruitment of drivers for people with mobility challenges.

Overview

Although some small-scale volunteer driver programs that serve Washington County already exist, implementation of a new volunteer driver program (as well as promotion of or support for existing programs) is an appropriate element of a comprehensive coordination effort in an area with limited transportation services.

Typically, a volunteer driver program is managed by a county government (or unit thereof, such as a Community Service Department) or a nonprofit human service organization. Identifying the appropriate sponsor agency will depend on the staff's capacity to administer a volunteer driver program, the potential for the agency or organization to be a recipient of grant funding and donations for the program, an agency's comfort with the liability exposure related to administering a volunteer driver program (and the ability to possess a minimum level of required insurance), existing volunteer pools or networks for recruiting volunteers, and organizational experience with coordinating volunteers. In Washington County, potential sponsor agencies other than the county itself could include any number of organizations, including senior centers and existing volunteer programs.

Volunteer driver programs are often sponsored by nonprofit organizations for several reasons, including the familiarity many nonprofits have with managing volunteer-based activities, funding opportunities available to nonprofits, and the perception that operating a volunteer driver program is riskier for an entity with deep pockets, such as a public entity. Some of the existing volunteer program administrators, such as Community Thread, Disabled American Veterans, and Minnesota Senior Corps could administer and oversee an expanded volunteer driver program in the county, depending on the scope of services and geographic areas covered.

Although several different types of models exist for a volunteer driver program, based on some of the input from stakeholders and the most successful approaches elsewhere, a proposed approach addresses issues of volunteer reimbursement, risk management, insurance and other issues.

Background and Need

A volunteer driver program in Washington County provides an opportunity to serve the most isolated populations who have very limited options, providing a safety net. It offers more flexibility to some of them than Transit Link can offer because trips can take place outside of

traditional service hours and a higher level of individualized service can be provided by volunteers. Key objectives identified for such a program would be to provide a service to riders who are in need of companionship or other assistance in addition to a ride, offer a transportation option for isolated older adults and ambulatory people with disabilities, and provide a new or expanded option for making longer-distance specialized trips.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Few transportation options for people with limited mobility
- Need for low cost (to consumer) option where transit is not viable
- Need for personalized or door-through-door service

Expected Benefits

- Links people with the greatest need to a basic lifeline service
- Offers a low-cost way to address some transportation needs
- Facilitates a connection to social services and other programs for people who need them most

Potential Obstacles

- Funding may be required to incentivize volunteers
- Insurance coverage for volunteer trips can be a concern
- Limited number of people who can be served by volunteer transportation
- Potential for unnecessary or fraudulent use of driver incentives
- Volunteer driver programs are one element of a comprehensive set of transportation programs, but rarely serve as the primary mode

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

The objectives of the program and the constraints and priorities of the sponsoring agency will ultimately determine which model is most appropriate. The “volunteer friends” model pioneered by the TRIP program in Riverside, California was established so that riders recruit their own drivers and schedule rides without involvement of the sponsoring agency. Mileage reimbursement is provided to the riders, who in turn reimburse their volunteer drivers on a monthly basis. This approach is intended to empower riders, reduce operating costs, and limit the sponsor agency’s liability related to recruiting, screening, training and monitoring volunteer drivers. Sponsors implementing programs inspired by the TRIP model often provide coaching to riders about how to identify and recruit volunteer drivers. In other communities, traditional volunteer driver programs exist that recruit, screen, train, and monitor volunteer drivers, as well as match riders with drivers, schedule rides, and reimburse drivers. In these programs, the sponsor agency has a central role in developing and implementing a range of policies and procedures, driver standards, driver screening and training activities, and other measures that reduce risk and liability exposure. Hybrid models also exist that rely on riders to recruit and schedule rides with their own volunteer drivers, but require drivers to pass a basic screening which typically includes verification of a valid drivers’ license, verification of insurance, and Department of Public Safety records checks. A hybrid model may supplement rider-identified volunteers with a pool of volunteers recruited by the sponsor agency.

Some volunteer programs do not reimburse or incentivize drivers, but these efforts usually are relatively small, often managed through a church or senior volunteer program.

In Washington County, a model that relies on some riders recruiting their own volunteer drivers may be a good starting point. This approach significantly reduces the staff time associated with recruiting, screening and training drivers and scheduling rides, and also reduces organizational liability associated with these activities. If this approach is implemented, it is recommended that the sponsor agency provide coaching to riders in recruiting a driver or drivers, as is done in various programs modeled after TRIP.²⁵ While the TRIP program does not vet volunteer drivers, if this program is pursued, it is recommended that volunteer drivers recruited by riders receive a basic level of screening.

If there is concern that some riders may be isolated, have difficulty recruiting volunteers for other reasons, or both, or if Washington County stakeholders prefer to adopt a model with a somewhat more centralized approach to volunteer recruitment and oversight, the sponsor agency could implement a hybrid model that provides for a pool of volunteers who are available to riders unable to recruit a driver.

Estimated Costs

Programs in communities similar to Washington County have budgets ranging from \$60,000 to \$500,000 annually. Assuming a per-mile reimbursement is the most effective and straightforward means of providing reimbursement in keeping with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations related to non-taxable income, Washington County's program could follow the Optional Standard Mileage Rates, which are established annually (and sometimes more frequently) by the IRS. As of January 1, 2017, the IRS Optional Standard Mileage Rates are 53.5 cents/mile for business miles driven, 17 cents/mile driven for medical and moving purposes, and 14 cents/mile driven in service of charitable organizations. The business mileage rate is applicable for both for-profit business mileage reimbursement and nonprofit business mileage reimbursement, including volunteer drivers. This does not mean that a volunteer program must reimburse drivers at this level. Several programs currently offer reimbursement in the 20-to-32 cents/mile range.

Assuming an average of 20 miles per round trip at a volunteer reimbursement rate of 25 cents/mile, if the service averages only 50 round trips per week, driver reimbursement costs would be approximately \$13,000. Even at 300 trips per week, annual reimbursement costs would be less than \$78,000. Assuming .25 FTE for staffing, at a cost of about \$23,000 annually, total operating costs are likely to be under \$100,000 annually at relatively robust ridership compared with ridership on existing volunteer driver services.

²⁵See: <http://ilpconnect.org/>.

Figure 6-15 Summary of Volunteer Driver Program

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Many models exist. For early implementation, it is proposed that riders recruit their own volunteers and the sponsor agency also recruits volunteers; Volunteers are reimbursed at a nominal per-mile rate. Volunteer drivers would furnish their own vehicles		A more centralized approach could be developed or formalized. Program could provide vehicles as needed.
Service Hours	Flexible: could be available any day, early and late trips if volunteers are available.		
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Approximately \$100,000 for reimbursements and staff time.		
Administrative Responsibility	Washington County Community Services Department or by nonprofit organizations or any of the existing smaller transportation providers in Washington County.		

SUBSIDIZED TAXI OR RIDE-HAILING SERVICE

Implement Program for Use of Vouchers or Subsidies for Taxis and Other Transportation Services

Overall Score (Tier 1)	3.7	Older Adults	4	Community Support	4
		People with Disabilities	2	Financial	4
		Low Income	4	Implementation	4

Concept

A subsidized taxi or ride-hailing service program typically involves an arrangement between a sponsoring organization and a participating taxi company or companies, limousine operators, ride-hailing services (such as Lyft or Uber), nonprofit organizations that operate transportation services, and transit providers. These programs accept and accommodate requests from sponsored customers, clients, or residents via a mobile phone app platform, accept vouchers provided by the sponsoring organization to riders as full or partial payment for the trip, or both.

Overview

A subsidized taxi or ride-hailing service program allows people to make a trip that might not be served by transit (without advanced planning) or pay a lower rate than the full price. Under this strategy, riders are issued vouchers (which can be paper tickets, debit cards, or simply a form of identification that allows for direct billing of services provided) or have access to a smart phone app to pay for part of their trip. Typically, an agreement is developed between a sponsoring organization and one or more participating transportation companies. These programs accept and accommodate requests from registered customers, clients, or residents, and accept vouchers or payment subsidies provided by the sponsoring organization to riders as partial payment for the trip.

Most programs like this focus on older adults, people with disabilities residing within specific service areas, or both, but some are available to the general public as well, and a number of transit agencies have signed agreements with ride-hailing services to provide service in lower-density suburban areas. Human service agencies that employ this strategy generally limit subsidies to agency clientele or program participants.

Numerous taxi providers operate to or from Washington County, and other providers such as Canvas Health, Driving Miss Daisy, Newtrax, Twin City Transportation, etc., are available to contract for services. In addition, ride-hailing services are expanding in the metro area and into Washington County.

While the various providers would need to be vetted to ensure they carry appropriate levels of insurance and costs are in-line with expectations for operation of a voucher program, the long list of providers included in Chapter 3 illustrates the array of potential options for contracted service.

One of the obstacles noted above — the need for more accessible vehicles — could be overcome if incentives to help transportation providers purchase accessible vehicles could also be used to encourage their participation in a voucher program. Some human service transportation providers that currently serve Washington County have been in discussion with ride-hailing services about strategies to expand the provision of accessible vehicles in the county.

In some communities, taxis are contracted to offer after-hours service for the public, or to provide trips in areas where it would not be cost effective for the transit agency to operate. For example, it could be more cost effective for taxi operations in some portions of the county than sending Transit Link vehicles to pick up riders.

Subsidizing existing transportation providers can be very popular with consumers, so strict limits on trips per month and the amount of the subsidy may be needed to control costs.

Background and Need

This type of program would serve the populations who have very limited options. Stakeholders reported that many of their clients must use a taxi from time to time and that the costs to do so are high.

In some ways, a subsidy program can offer greater flexibility than a countywide dial-a-ride service like Transit Link because trips can take place outside of traditional service hours and a higher level of individual service can be provided by drivers, both of which were identified as needs by stakeholders. A subsidy program is also far less expensive than the cost of operating a transit service and could help communities gauge the actual level of demand for improved public transportation services.

Individuals enrolled could be required to affirm that they are unable to drive, at least some of the time, and that they do not have access to a carpool or driver, cannot afford the cost of private transportation, or both.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Few transportation options for people with limited mobility
- Need for relatively low cost (to consumer) option where transit is not viable
- Need for personalized or door-through-door service
- General public, including job seekers, older adults, people with disabilities, Veterans, and other groups served

Expected Benefits

- Same-day, if not immediate, service provided
- Use of existing transportation services maximized
- Unanticipated travel and evening and weekend hours accommodated
- Trips outside of service area or underserved areas available
- Ability to set and control subsidy per trip and overall budget
- Market of accessible vehicles developed
- Choice of transportation provider available for users
- Start-up costs lower
- Service in both low-density and high-density areas an option
- Connection to social services and other programs for people who need it most

Potential Obstacles

- Requires well-managed controlled providers or taxi companies
- Needs taxi service or other for-profit or nonprofit providers within Washington County cities
- Involves accessible taxicabs and ride-hailing vehicles; neither are currently available
- Requires good communication among all parties
- Requires an agency to assume responsibility for day-to-day administration
- Includes implementing measures to prevent fraud
- Requires drivers to accept vouchers, which they may be reluctant to do

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

Implementation of this strategy would require a mechanism for paying the subsidy. It would also be necessary to make decisions about the amount of subsidy per trip and limits on the number or value of trips that will be provided per month. Some large subsidy programs use automated tools, mobile phone apps, and central call centers, but small-city or community programs usually use coupons or scrip in some form. If a program is limited to one or a small number of selected transportation companies, it may be possible to establish a system administered by the companies themselves with a general level of oversight from the lead agencies. Auditing and fraud control measures would need to be established.

This strategy is most likely to be successful if the area is well served by taxis, shuttles and nonprofit providers with extra vehicles or vehicle capacity. It is also helpful for a public entity to have effective taxi or shuttle regulations in place, and if there is good communication among all parties. Potential providers will be most interested in such a program if it can deliver a steady stream of business, and where the administrative requirements are not overly cumbersome for the driver and the company. Ride-hailing services will prefer to use their publicly available platform, although some have tailored their platform for specific client agencies.

As part of such a program, Washington County or another lead organization may wish to acquire accessible vehicles and provide them to the companies that agree to participate in the program.

Estimated Costs

The cost to administer a voucher program would vary significantly depending on the number of participants, which would depend on where the service is operating and who is eligible for it. For example, if it were a countywide service and an average taxi subsidy of \$20 per ride is established, and if an average of 100 one-way trips are provided per day (assuming seven-day service), the annual operating cost alone could be \$750,000, in addition to substantial administrative costs. A smaller program operating in a limited number of communities and providing a \$10 per-user subsidy for 50 one-way trips each day, could be as little as \$220,000, including administrative costs. The total available budget for taxi, shuttle, or ride-hailing service subsidies can be controlled with a daily ceiling, allowing trips on a “first-come, first-served” basis or by limiting the number of vouchers provided to participants.

Figure 6-16 Summary of Subsidized Taxi or Ride-Hailing Service

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	Determined by driver based on passenger request when using a taxi, shuttle or ride-hailing service. Could be implemented in select portions of the county with existing taxi providers.	Expansion of program to addition providers.	Development of a single payment platform for multiple providers and direct billing of participating agencies and organizations.
Service Hours	24 hours/7-day service could be available.		
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Varies depending on size of program; \$220,000-\$750,000 for implementation in selected areas with specific providers.	To be determined based on program needs.	
Administrative Responsibility	Washington County, working with taxi providers, human service agencies, ride-hailing services.		

TRAVEL NAVIGATION, INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

Compile and Provide Travel Information & Referral Services, Conduct Countywide Educational Marketing Campaign

Overall Score (Tier 1)	3.7	Older Adults	3	Community Support	5
		People with Disabilities	3	Financial	4
		Low Income	3	Implementation	4

Concept

Travel navigation and information and referral are different functions, but would have a common purpose in Washington County. Travel navigation, particularly for older adults and persons with disabilities, relies on individuals who are subject matter experts on the full range of transportation services, including public, nonprofit, for-profit, and volunteer options. Information & referral specialists are subject matter generalists who address questions and concerns to identify services for which a caller is eligible, and to provide them with the necessary information to make use of the available services. Both are key components of providing comprehensive information about a variety of services to ensure that people who are in need of assistance can access the array of services available to them.

In Washington County, 2-1-1 offers regional information and referral services, including contacts at transportation providers. Metro Transit's Transit Information Center provides limited travel navigation services for the general public seeking information on how to travel from one location to another in the metro area via public transit. The Transit Information Center does not offer personalized service to people with disabilities to assess services for which an individual might be eligible or provide guidance on coordinating trips that involve multiple providers. These are the types of services that could be offered through a comprehensive travel navigation program in Washington County.

Overview

Washington County is in need of a centralized source for transportation information. Due to the overlapping nature of many transit services throughout the county, it can be difficult for users to navigate inconsistent eligibility requirements, service areas, and schedule information. This strategy entails developing a public-facing website that would serve as a "one-stop shop" for transportation information, creating a staffed telephone hotline, and conducting a comprehensive transportation marketing effort.

The website would provide essential information (e.g., schedules, eligibility information, etc.) for public transit, dial-a-ride programs, subsidized taxis, and transit services provided by non-profits and human services agencies. The telephone hotline should provide an automated directory (with general information) and the option to speak to a trained staff-person who can answer individual questions.

Marketing efforts should include developing transportation resources, such as maps and pamphlets, which include an array of transportation services available in Washington County.

These resources should be distributed at shopping centers, grocery stores, senior centers, VA facilities, hospitals and medical centers, colleges and universities, food banks, and other key destinations throughout the county. Marketing efforts should also include in-person outreach at key destinations to encourage transit ridership and distribute up-to-date rider resources.

Background and Need

Many Washington County residents have difficulty learning about or understanding the transportation resources available to them. This need has been consistently highlighted at public outreach meetings and stakeholder events. Stakeholders identified a lack of understanding of the existing transportation services as a major obstacle to mobility in Washington County, particularly for older adults and others who may have difficulty navigating multiple web-based information sources. This service could be helpful to many consumers, and its services could be flexible and targeted to high-need issues and areas. The information provider would know the available resources, issues, and local culture and take part in targeted marketing efforts to make the program successful.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- These are intended to address a gap in navigating the array of mobility services available in Washington County and the metro area
- This service is valuable for the general public and agency representatives, and particularly for older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes

Expected Benefits

- Increase awareness of transportation services (this is especially valuable for persons who may have a high risk of isolation and may not know how to get information about the programs and services that would benefit them)
- Increase utilization and cost-effectiveness of existing services
- Increases mobility for the general population
- Increases mobility for transportation-disadvantaged individuals, such as older adults, youth, people with disabilities, low-income individuals, and Veterans
- Provide single point of information in multijurisdictional transportation environment

Potential Obstacles

- Requires champion agency to promote public awareness of transportation services
- Requires leadership, committed staff, and ongoing support to keep informational resources up to date
- Makes promoting and marketing services to a wide audience difficult in low-density communities
- Makes combining information from multiple sources challenging to navigate and keep updated

Operating Characteristics and Outcomes

The purpose of this strategy is to increase awareness of existing services and to provide a one-stop shop for transportation information that users can easily check for service changes and schedule updates. Advertising alone may not necessarily lead to an increase in ridership. Nevertheless, information, visibility, and tools to debunk misinformation and build support for transportation services in rural and suburban areas has tended to lead to an increased willingness to value transit, talk about transit, and ride transit. Key elements of this program would include the following:

- Develop and maintain a website with comprehensive information on transportation services in Washington County (a “one-stop shop” information center)
- Establish a telephone hotline to provide transportation information both via an automated directory and a live staff person who can answer individual questions
- Develop and maintain an internal database of transportation programs and services in Washington County for the purpose of updating the public-facing website
- Provide trip planning, scheduling, and other travel navigation services via a staffed telephone hotline
- Provide assistance to older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, and others requesting information about eligibility-based transportation programs
- Offer assistance and referrals to agency representatives, program providers, human services providers, and others
- Develop maps, pamphlets, and other marketing materials for an educational advertising campaign
- Distribute printed information about transportation programs to individuals, agencies, and resource centers that serve transportation-disadvantaged individuals
- Conduct outreach events at key destinations countywide, including senior centers, VA facilities, hospitals and medical centers, colleges and universities, libraries, and food banks

Estimated Costs

This program assumes 1 FTE for initial program implementation, with 3 FTEs at full build out. At full build-out, staffing would increase from 8 hours per day, 5 days per week to 8 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Computers, telephones, printers, a fast internet connection, database software, and other standard office equipment, which could be furnished by the lead agency, is assumed to cost about \$24,000 for initial program implementation, and increase by 25-50% at full program build-out. Printing and distribution costs are assumed at \$16,000 annually, with an advertising budget of \$10,000 annually. Advertising and printing costs are also anticipated to increase 25-50% at full program build-out. In the future, this function could require the need for dispatch and scheduling software, which has not been reflected in these cost estimates.

The estimated annual operating costs are \$115,000 per year for initial implementation (1 FTE), \$245,000 per year at full implementation (2 FTE), and \$348,000 per year for future expansion (3 FTE). These figures assume a \$65,000 annual salary per FTE.

Figure 6-17 Summary of Travel Navigation, Information and Referral Services

Elements	Early Implementation (Within 1-3 Years)	Full Implementation (Within 3-5 Years)	Opportunities (Longer Term or Phase 2)
Service Design	A single organization or entity is responsible for this mobility management information function, but works in collaboration with several partners and other information services in Washington County.	The organization that takes the lead in this effort might logically oversee other transportation services or implementation of a voucher program.	Travel navigation and information and referral, as well as general information and outreach, serve as a first step for a comprehensive mobility management program that could include brokered trips in the future.
Service Hours	Assumes staffing 8 hours per day, 5 days per week.	Assumes staffing 8 hours per day, 7 days per week.	Assumes increased staffing 8 hours per day, 7 days per week.
Annual Operating Costs (estimated)	Approximately \$140,000 per year.	Approximately \$312,000 per year.	Approximately \$450,000 per year.
Administrative Responsibility	Washington County Community Services Department or other county department coordinating and overseeing provision of travel navigation/information services in-house; or by organizations such as United Way, Metro Transit, Newtrax, or a nonprofit organization.		

CONCLUSION

A number of major funding and implementation considerations exist for carrying forward the preferred transportation strategies and maximizing the resources of a mobility management function housed in Washington County. Some of the strategies are longer term, and will require implementation in phases. As new strategies are implemented, some of the other strategies may be determined not to be effective or appropriate, and some may face financial challenges. A discussion of implementation opportunities is included in the next chapter.

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7 IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

Multiple players are involved in the provision of transportation services in the metropolitan area. As a result, Washington County faces some challenges in implementing local and countywide transit programs and enhancements.

The Metropolitan Council operates a majority of transit services in Washington County – through Metro Transit services, as well as Metro Mobility and Transit Link service. The Metropolitan Council also maintains funding and service allocation oversight responsibilities, and has established transit service design standards for the services it operates. The standards for implementing and operating services have been adopted regionwide and direct investments toward high-ridership areas, which means that Washington County is often not prioritized for fixed-route transit investment through the regional transit funding formula.

As a result of the policy framework in the Twin Cities region, Washington County is afforded few options for boosting transit service levels other than through a new dedicated tax (at the county level or municipal level) or through the reallocation of existing funds to transit (see Chapter 8).

Given the complexity of doing this, Washington County's short-term focus should be on providing a safety net – a basic level of transportation to address the needs of older adults, people with disabilities and low-income Washington County residents. To do this successfully, Washington County will need to enlist the participation of select cities and both public and private human service agencies, as well as private transportation providers, both for-profit and nonprofit.

In Washington County, human service agencies and cities have identified different levels of need for transit programs. The human service agencies, from very small organizations with only a few employees to larger DT&H facilities and county departments like Community Services or Community Corrections, have a stake in serving their clients or consumers' transportation needs. Many of their clients or consumers require transportation to access critical services. These organizations, some of which possess funding resources to offer transportation, seek to provide the services as effectively and efficiently as possible in accordance with their organizational mission. Even if their funding is reduced, it will be critical that they continue to provide a basic level of service.

Washington County's cities, on the other hand, see transportation as one of many services they could offer, but have generally identified the provision of transit as a lower priority, especially for the general population. Given competing needs for public safety, housing, schools, economic development, etc., few cities during this study process indicated their intention to develop transportation services at the local level, but some indicated they might

be willing to participate in a jointly funded transportation effort that includes both public and private partners.

In addition to the challenge of funding transportation, the fact that 33 cities and townships are located within Washington County presents a logistical obstacle for coordinating transportation services if cities were to try to develop independent transit programs.

Although Washington County is home to various organizations with specialized interests, few advocates have been able to advance a program of transportation service priorities over decades of conversation. Some organizations like Community Thread have worked to inventory existing services and develop partnerships with other like-minded organizations; these efforts have not yet resulted in substantive or long-term changes to existing services. Washington County has largely taken a background role in these previous efforts, but acknowledges through this study effort that it must assume a more substantial role to influence change and carry forward recommendations to implementation.

CONFIRMING PRIORITIES

Even faced with the challenging funding and political environment, a number of opportunities exist to implement strategies that improve coordination among agencies and enhance mobility for older adults, people with disabilities and low-income individuals and families. To carry forward the strategies presented in Chapter 6, it is important to prioritize the specific issues to be addressed, who would be involved in implementation, what the costs would be, and where funds might be available. In some cases, implementation efforts may involve pilot projects, or experiments to test various approaches.

Figure 7-1 provides a summary of the preferred strategies, based on the evaluation.

Figure 7-1 Summary of Highest Priority Strategies

Strategy	Administrative Roles	Implementation Timeframe	Staffing Requirements	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital or Operating)	Potential Funding Sources ²⁶
First Tier of Strategies					
General Purpose Dial-A-Ride <i>Increase Use of Demand-Response Service</i>	Metropolitan Council, Washington County, a city in Washington County, or a nonprofit organization or human service provider.	12 months for roll-out of new service, including planning, eligibility, contracting; expansion of existing service could occur within 4 months	No new staffing for service expansion; minimum of .5 FTE for a new small-scale county-led operation plus vehicle operators (assume 4-12 FTE)	\$60-\$75 per hour, based on current operating costs for Metro Mobility and Transit Link. For an additional 3 to 6 vehicles operating weekdays only, annual operating costs, including administrative costs, are assumed at \$580,000 to \$1.46 million. Capital costs will depend on need for vehicle acquisition.	FTA 5307 and 5311, FTA 5310, tax revenues from cities, donations from nonprofit agencies, in-kind services and fares
Community Circulator <i>Local Transit for Shopping, Commuting and Participating in Community Activities</i>	Cities that undertake this service would have primary administrative responsibility. Washington County would have key role in coordinating services. Day-to-day operations could be led by a human service provider or turnkey contractor.	For a new service, 18-24 months for roll-out in select Washington County cities, including planning, procurement, contracting, and securing start-up funding	Will depend on level of service implemented and in which city/cities. A small-scale operation may require .5-1.5 FTE for administration and scheduling in addition to vehicle operators; staffing should be scaled to the size of the operation	Will depend on service level implemented. For a weekday-only service operating two hours per day with two vehicles at approximately \$60/hour, costs range from \$220,000 (3 days) to \$360,000 (5 days). Full weekly service (7 days) is estimated at \$445,000 to \$2.04 million. Depending on city and provider, hourly costs range from \$60 to \$110.	FTA 5307 and 5311, sales tax revenues from cities and fares
Site-Specific Shuttle <i>Last-Mile Connections for Major Employers, Institutions, or Retail Destinations</i>	Employer or facility operator, with coordination and promotional assistance from Washington County.	6-10 months for planning, procurement, and contracting by employer or institution	Staffing needs will be at sponsoring entity; .1 FTE from Washington County for promotion and coordination	15-minute service or better in the peak, or a schedule designed around major employer shift start times. Could be used to provide access during non-peak times for shift workers. A two-to-four-vehicle operation would cost between \$410,000 and \$820,000.	Private funds, contributions from organizations or cities

²⁶ See Chapter 8 for definitions of primary funding sources

Strategy	Administrative Roles	Implementation Timeframe	Staffing Requirements	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital or Operating)	Potential Funding Sources ²⁶
Subsidized Taxi or Ride-Hailing Service <i>Implement Program for Use of Vouchers or Subsidies for Taxis and Other Transportation Services</i>	Washington County, working with taxi providers, human service agencies, ride-hailing services.	12-18 months to develop program, develop billing and invoicing procedures, and sign contracts with potential providers.	.25-.5 FTE	Varies depending on size of program; \$220,000-\$750,000 for implementation in selected areas with specific providers.	FTA 5307 and 5311, FTA 5310, tax revenues from cities, donations from nonprofit agencies, in-kind services and fares.
Volunteer Driver Program <i>Volunteer Reimbursement and Driver Incentives</i>	Washington County Community Services Department or by nonprofit organizations or any of the existing smaller transportation providers in Washington County.	10 months for recruitment of new volunteers, developing program guidelines and securing additional funding.	.5-1 FTE	Approximately \$100,000 for reimbursements and staff time.	Donations, contributions from faith-based organizations, other donations and in-kind services.
Travel Navigation and Information & Referral Services <i>Compile and Provide Travel Information & Referral Services, Conduct Countywide Educational Marketing Campaign</i>	Washington County Community Services Department or other county department coordinating and overseeing provision of travel navigation/information services in-house; or by organizations such as United Way, Metro Transit, Newtrax, or a nonprofit organization.	6 months to identify needs and establish preliminary database; 6 months to train staff, develop resources; install equipment.	1-2.5 FTE	Approximately \$140,000-\$312,000 per year.	FTA 5310, AAA, contributions from faith-based organizations, other donations and in-kind services.
Trip Brokerage <i>Centralizing the Scheduling of Transportation Services to Maximize Efficient Use of Resources and Provide More Choices for Consumers</i>	Washington County Community Services Department or by larger nonprofit provider such as Newtrax. Note that this strategy assumes Travel Navigation and Information & Referral Services are folded into this function.	18 to 24 months to initiate brokerage functions.	2.5-5 FTE, depending on the scale of operations.	Approximately \$140,000 per year for start-up phase staffing and equipment. \$530,000 annually for staffing and equipment, integration license, and other operations needs, excluding direct costs for providing transportation services. Purchase of transportation services may exceed \$1 million annually, depending on extent of program.	FTA 5310, contributions from faith-based organizations, other donations and in-kind services, human service funding.

Strategy	Administrative Roles	Implementation Timeframe	Staffing Requirements	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital or Operating)	Potential Funding Sources ²⁶
Second Tier of Strategies					
On-Demand Bus or Van Service <i>New Publicly Operated Same-Day Service in Specific Communities</i>	Washington County in collaboration with Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council.	12-18 months to develop service plan, software, procure providers, and sign contracts to begin service.	.25-.5 FTE to administer; 1-15 FTE for operations, depending on scale of service.	Service 12 hours per weekday using only one vehicle would cost roughly \$153,000-\$183,600 annually. Multiple in-service vehicles could exceed \$1 million annually.	FTA 5307 and 5311, FTA 5310, tax revenues from cities, in-kind services and fares.
Vanpool <i>Promote Metro Vanpool as a Cost-Effective Commute Strategy</i>	Washington County Community Services Department or other county department coordinating information and mobility management services; would require coordination with Metropolitan Council.	Ongoing; expanded outreach campaign could be implemented within 3 months.	.15-.25 FTE for expanded outreach.	The Metropolitan Council's program charges different fares to van users, depending on the distance an individual commutes. Costs for additional outreach might total \$10,000 to \$25,000.	FTA 5307, Metropolitan Council, user fees and employers.
Carpool <i>Implement, Expand and Promote Carpool Programs</i>	Washington County Community Services coordinating with Metro Transit or other county department coordinating and overseeing commute information services or nonprofit organization to focus on non-commute carpooling.	Ongoing; expanded outreach campaign could be implemented within 6 months.	.15-.25 FTE for expanded outreach.	Approximately \$10,000 for staffing for program outreach and development.	FTA 5307, Metropolitan Council, user fees and employers.
Accessible Infrastructure Investments <i>Plan, Design, & Construct Accessible Infrastructure Improvements</i>	Washington County Public Works Department; support from Public Health, Community Services and nonprofit and advocacy organizations serving older adults and people with disabilities.	Ongoing	Varies depending on level of investment.	A full cost estimate for building out accessible infrastructure countywide is not included in this study, but capital costs are projected to be high.	Impact fees, special districts, FTA capital funds.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES

While some of the strategies can be implemented individually by a single agency or organization — or group of several organizations — one of the essential elements of a successfully coordinated transportation approach is that Washington County staff working with a Washington County Transportation Coordinating Consortium should guide programming and service implementation efforts.

For a truly coordinated set of transportation programs, a single mobility management entity is recommended. With a brokerage model as a goal, this can serve as the framework for implementing the various prioritized strategies and setting the stage for the potential implementation of longer-term approaches.

Policy Framework: Washington County Board of Commissioners; Potential Joint Powers Agreement(s) Longer Term

For a new transit oversight approach, the Washington County Board of Commissioners could continue to serve in the overall transportation policymaking capacity for the county and each jurisdiction that opts to provide its own service would maintain a policy role for its local service. In this short term, this is appropriate. However, depending on the extent of services to be implemented at the local level or if there is a concentration of services to be implemented in only a small number of Washington County cities, longer term other transportation policy approaches could be implemented. For example, a joint powers entity could be created through a joint powers agreement (JPA) to give participating local jurisdictions a greater say in transportation programs that impact them; to define a potential new approach for sharing costs, staffing or equipment; or to limit potential liability risks for any new program or service developed exclusively within Washington County. Likewise, a JPA may be appropriate if Washington County were to enter into an agreement with an adjacent county or counties (such as Dakota or Chisago).

JPA's are formal decision-making bodies with a voting board, ruled by majority rather than consensus voting. JPA's often have an assigned staff and an annual operating budget funded by the participating agencies. They are commonly used in Minnesota to implement multijurisdictional services, especially programs designed to service specific cities and/or counties.

JPA's protect the participating parties from potential lawsuit. By creating a separate entity, the participating parties are no longer liable for actions made exclusively by the Joint Powers Authority. However, protection from legal action does not apply if the joint powers agreement only commits the parties to working together and not to the creation of a distinct body. Additionally, the parties continue to be responsible for the debts, liabilities, and obligations of the JPA unless the agreement specifies otherwise.

The joint powers law allows governmental units to cooperate in a wide variety of ways. There are three basic structural models: 1) a consolidated service approach; 2) a service contract approach; and 3) a mutual aid approach, which is rarely used for transit.²⁷

²⁷ League of Minnesota Cities Information Memo, March 1, 2010. www.imc.org

Under the consolidated service approach, two or more cities or counties agree under the joint powers law to create a joint board consisting of one or more representatives from each of the participating jurisdictions. Each entity provides financial support to the board. In turn, the board employs the necessary staff, owns or leases the equipment (or contracts for it), and manages the operations.

Under the service contract approach one city or county maintains and manages the operation and the other entity simply purchases services from the first entity. Typically, the agreement will specify the level and type of service to be provided, performance standards and so on.²⁸

Following the mutual aid approach, individual agencies/jurisdictions provide assistance to each other for a common benefit. Although mutual aid agreements could conceivably be used for transit in Washington County, managing costs would be challenging and the practice is uncommon: most apply to public safety (e.g., rescue, fire, police), but some communities have included agreements for transit providers to work with public safety agencies in emergencies.

A JPA may be valuable in the event one or more cities and Washington County itself were to implement new service in a specific area or set of communities within the county, or if Washington County plans to coordinate its services with one or more neighboring counties. In the short-term, without a high level of involvement from particular Washington County cities, the Washington County Board of Commissioners would provide policy direction for county transit investments, ideally with input from a countywide Transportation Coordinating Consortium (see next section).

Advisory Framework: Washington County Transportation Coordinating Consortium

Policy oversight is essential for formal decision making about where resources should be focused and coordinated efforts should be directed. What Washington County has lacked to this point is a formal approach to gathering ongoing and relevant information related to transit service needs and coordination opportunities. Community Thread comes closest to a coalition of individuals and organizations interested in human service transportation, but this study represents the county's first recent foray into bringing together stakeholders to discuss and prioritize transit needs.

Community Thread's efforts represent a grassroots initiative led by organizations with complementary concerns and priorities, and they address the needs of the markets targeted by this study. The organization-sponsored Transportation Summit held in June 2016 highlighted gaps and demands considered in this study effort. Persons invited to participate included primarily human service organizations. Nevertheless, stakeholders noted Community Thread is limited in its geographic focus, and therefore its efforts may not necessarily address the demands — and coordination opportunities — identified in other portions of Washington County.

Whether building on an existing coordination effort or developing a new one, an effective forum for coordinating transportation services and prioritizing strategies requires an organization perceived as representing all of Washington County, neutral in terms of its approach to funding or piloting projects, and ideally with dedicated staff to ensure a coordinating committee's efforts are

²⁸ IBID

sustained and ongoing. Participation is recommended from senior centers, colleges, major employers, and representatives from Washington County's cities.

Both MnDOT and the Minnesota Department of Human Services, in collaborating with the Metropolitan Council, are working to develop Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils. The Dakota County Transportation Coordinating Collaborative (DCTCC) was one of the pilot efforts developed in the metro area and has been instrumental in advancing a mobility management approach there.

Washington County currently has several advisory boards and committees with appointees charged with providing input on issues ranging from groundwater to child protection. An official Washington County Transportation Coordinating Consortium would ideally be added and include no more than about 15 representatives to keep discussions focused and keep the organization nimble. Composition of the committee should be considered carefully to ensure equitable representation from elected officials, as well as organizations or jurisdictions serving or seeking to address the needs of older adults, people with disabilities and low-income residents in Washington County. By assuming oversight of this committee, Washington County can solicit valuable input and seek commitments from potential partners to implement the strategies prioritized in this study.

Administrative Framework:

Mobility Management — Moving Toward a Brokerage Model

Based on input and interest from stakeholders, and the potential to create a coordinated strategy to address transportation gaps and service needs, a coordinated mobility management approach is preferred. This study assumes that such an approach in Washington County could begin with the provision of integrated information about services and high-touch outreach to assist Washington County residents with travel plans through travel navigation assistance and information & referral services (see 6-60). Putting this into place is seen as a building block toward a trip brokerage approach, whereby Washington County's existing providers would make their services available to a larger share of the eligible population through coordinated scheduling and/or dispatch of trips across multiple providers (see page 6-49). This is a model that may be implemented over time, with the expectation that a true "one click, one-call" transportation brokerage may not be in effect in Washington County for three years after a decision to implement such an effort. A voucher program (through a subsidized taxi or ride hailing service, described on page 6-56) could be an initial — albeit less efficient — step to allocate trips to multiple providers.

Study stakeholders indicated a strong preference for a brokerage model in Washington County. In order to most effectively implement such a model, a brokerage would provide a single link to all of the primary transportation services available to older adults, people with disabilities and people with low incomes.

At this time, only a few organizations in the county have the experience, breadth of service, or potential for staffing that would be required of a broker. These organizations include the following:

- Canvas Health
- Community Thread
- Newtrax

- United Way
- Washington County

Other organizations that are not currently headquartered in Washington County might also be potential brokers, as well as private brokerage operators with a presence in the Twin Cities region (such as Medical Transportation Management (MTM) or First Transit, among others) or contracting with a neighboring county or service.

Of the various nonprofit organizations in Washington County that are currently providing transportation services, Newtrax is well positioned to operate supplemental bus services. Newtrax management indicated they have organizational capacity to provide services for other organizations, to serve as a transit contractor to cities (i.e., for local circulators), or to provide special group trips. Newtrax also has the capacity to integrate multiple providers into its service network and act in a mobility management capacity. The organization has shown some success in getting both public and private dollars, and runs a sophisticated scheduling and dispatch program that allows funds to be allocated for trips based on riders' eligible funding sources.

While Newtrax shows potential strength in the administration and the direct provision of bus transportation services, other existing organizations have roles to play in an expanded pool of transportation offerings. For example, with additional funding and staffing, an organization like Community Thread could expand a program of volunteer drivers, providing incentives to aid in recruitment of volunteers and supplemental liability insurance for drivers to ensure their riders' safety. Various representatives from employers, medical centers, and local jurisdiction indicated an interest and willingness to consider funding the coordinated transportation solutions identified in this study.

Although any number of Washington County organizations could be called upon to offer their talents or share resources with the appropriate lead agencies and organizations to facilitate the implementation of strategies defined in this plan, only some have specific experience that suggests they might be positioned to take the lead role in a coordinated transportation brokerage. Figure 7-2 illustrates the five organizations on the list that have the most relevant experience, based on the types of functions/characteristics needed for a successful brokerage. The figure is neither intended to rule out any organization from assuming the role of broker, nor should it suggest that any of these organizations is interested in assuming a countywide brokerage role at this time, but highlights that even some of the organizations that have been most active in trying to coordinate transportation services in Washington County currently have limited experience with some of the functions that would likely be required of them.

Figure 7-2 Assets and Organizations: Potential Brokerage Leaders among Washington County Organizations

Identified Skill or Characteristic	Canvas Health	Community Thread	Newtrax	United Way	Washington County
Countywide focus?					
Brokers transportation services?					
Leader in transportation coordination efforts?					
Organizational focus on transportation services?					
Provider of transportation services?					
Operates call center for scheduling and dispatch?					
Provides information and referral or /travel navigation service?					
Provides public information about programs/services?					
Administers funding for transportation services?					
Experience with target demographics and constituencies?					
Experience working with an array of providers?					
Experience with vouchers/direct payment programs?					

	Organization has relevant skill or experience in this area
	Organization has relevant skill or experience in this area, but this is not a critical role for a broker
	Not a typical function for this organization; does not have relevant skill or experience in this area

Figure 7-2 illustrates that Newtrax, as discussed above, has the most relevant set of skills currently for carrying forward a brokerage in Washington County. Washington County submitted a grant application to fund a new mobility manager position and may, in the future, have dedicated staffing that could assume the role of managing a brokerage as a function of the county or providing oversight for a brokerage led by a nonprofit or contracted for-profit organization. It should be noted that some of the other brokerages discussed among the peers in this report started off as small operations serving specific population groups, so any number of existing organizations or a new organization could most certainly initiate a brokerage effort.

Some concerns about organizations taking the lead without experience serving the needs of all the markets that are the focus of this planning effort should be considered. In other words, Newtrax's focus has primarily been on people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, although their outreach efforts to expand their services have focused

on other populations. Likewise, Community Thread's primary market is older adults. Although these organizations work beyond their core mission, there may be some resistance by some agencies or cities to having transportation services brokered by an organization that is perceived to have a narrow focus. Another possible obstacle includes the perception that some organizations may not appear neutral (concerns they may favor their own clients over others, may opt to operate the services in-house that generate higher revenues, etc.). For these reasons, an existing organization might initiate a brokerage, but then transfer it from the original lead agency to create a stand-alone operation or new agency.

Some successful brokers do not provide the transportation services that operate as part of the brokerage: they may schedule rides, but assign trips to an array of different providers. For example, Washington County might ultimately broker trips but not operate transportation services, instead assigning them to other agencies, volunteer drivers, taxi providers, etc. Likewise, Washington County could opt to contract with a public or nonprofit entity outside of the county that is currently providing similar services, such as Heartland Express in Chisago and Isanti Counties or Dakota County.

Determining which agency might serve as a broker is not imperative at this time, but it is important for Washington County to consider the advantages of particular agencies or organizations that might lead a brokerage. Regardless of which organization ultimately brokers services, any number of partner organizations would likely have key mobility management roles in public awareness, funding, grant writing, and service expansion.

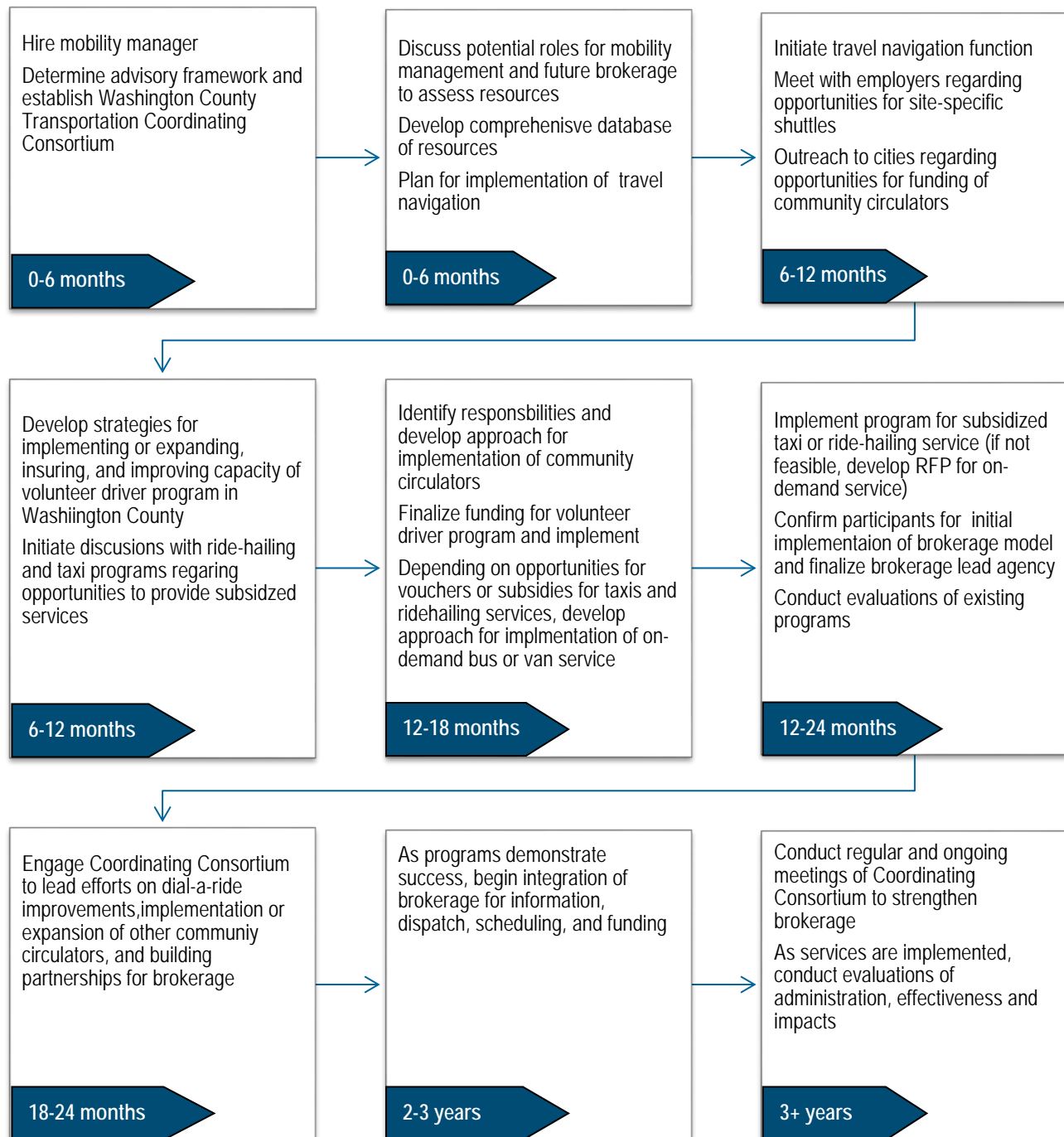
Implementation of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Strategies: Short-Term Steps toward a Brokerage

The most successful implementation of strategies will include centralized oversight, but in the initial phase, programs can continue to operate separately as they do today. Even so, setting the stage for a brokerage suggests several efforts would be beneficial.

A conceptual flow chart of general implementation steps to advance transportation coordination and the implementation of priorities services in Washington County is shown in Figure 7-3. The intention of this chart is not to proscribe a specific process or set of strategies for Washington County, but to identify how strategies might be carried forward over time.

An actual schedule for phasing implementation will be based on several factors including, importantly, the availability of funding to advance the preferred strategies, continued leadership on the part of Washington County, partnerships with other entities or organizations that have a significant stake in transportation coordination and expansion, the success of programs underway, the demand for new services and programs, and changes in transportation technology which would allow Washington County to fast-track some strategies that are assumed to take place longer term. As a result, evaluation of the strategies in operation will be a critical element to assess how far transportation stakeholders in Washington County will be able to carry forward the preferred strategies.

Figure 7-3 Conceptual Implementation Steps and Timeline for Washington County (Tier I and II Strategies)



Note: Assumes ongoing progress by a mobility manager in promoting vanpool and carpool programs, developing approaches for accessible infrastructure investments, and achieving funding for transit service expansion.

Staffing

Under a centralized brokerage, staff responsibilities could be consolidated within a single agency or shared among agencies or organizations. It is expected that the primary staff responsibilities would include the following:

- **Management of the program.** Oversee elements of management, staff supervision, budgeting, accounting, purchasing, marketing, and payroll.
- **Coordinate with partner agencies.** This includes ongoing communication and coordination with agencies that interface with the broker, as well as facilitating information sharing among partners, and program evaluation.
- **Market and distribute public information.** Maintain and update travel navigation tools or a special website developed for Washington County. Prepare newsletters and other outreach materials.
- **Implement specialized programs and offer technical expertise.** Staff would be responsible for training and serve as a resource for human service providers and cities in Washington County that need technical assistance for grant writing, driver training, registering participants in the brokered service, and outreach.
- **Manage and monitor the transportation provider contracts.** This involves oversight of transportation provider contracts including procurement of new providers, quality assurance checks, processing payment, and other day-to-day tasks to ensure contract compliance.
- **Develop, maintain and update a transportation program rider database.**
- **Perform trip navigation and scheduling tasks.** In the short term, performing ongoing information and referral and trip assistance functions will be a key element of the work responsibilities for the lead agency's staff. Longer term, additional staff will be required for scheduling trips.
- **Compile operating and financial statistics and prepare performance reports.** This function involves gathering all operating and financial data and developing a standard performance report including tables, charts and graphs. The report would be distributed to the Washington County Transportation Coordinating Consortium, the brokerage organization's governing board, and partner agencies and interested stakeholders.
- **Apply for and coordinate funding.** There are a number of opportunities for securing public and private funding sources to help finance programs, as discussed in Chapter 8. Applying for funds; coordinating with other partner agencies and businesses; following through with funding requests; and securing funding agreements are major responsibilities. This also involves cost-sharing among partner organizations and using funds appropriate for the specific services being offered by the broker and for specific rider groups (assigning costs to the appropriate funding sources).
- **Plan, implement and evaluate new types of services.** These responsibilities involve detailed planning and implementing of new types of service such as expanded Tier 1 and additional Tier 2 strategies that could be more easily implemented once a centralized brokerage is in place.

Specific staffing requirements are dependent upon the scale of the transportation programs and brokerage, but based on best practices elsewhere, it is assumed that a brokerage would require at least 1 or 2 FTE for management and oversight, program coordination, marketing, and finance. 0.5 FTE is assumed for technology needs. Depending on program size, between 2 and 10 FTE may be required eventually for outreach, scheduling, travel navigation, information and referral, and dispatch (if that responsibility is handled in house). Operations staff – drivers, maintenance personnel – could be in-house employees or contracted staff. An estimated breakdown of these functions is shown in Figure 6-1; with implementation of all of these functions, it is assumed there would be economies of scale allowing some functions to be consolidated under a brokerage.

Evaluation

Most successful strategies evolve by tailoring services in response to user and sponsor feedback. Collecting timely information allows a lead agency and program partners to track program progress and refine services as needed. Evaluation results also support marketing and outreach campaigns. Three different types of evaluations are recommended to determine the effectiveness of the strategies implemented in Washington County: from the perspectives of program administration, program efficiency, and program impact. Specific criteria for conducting the evaluations will need to be developed with input from the Washington County Transportation Coordinating Consortium, which should also provide direction to the county board on actions that would need to be taken if administrative weaknesses are identified or if specific strategies are not meeting the objectives they were intended to meet.

- **Program Administration.** An administrative review would focus on the overall administrative function and the performance of the responsible entity, individual and its partners. It should consider the lead agency's perspective on how well the operational aspects of the program are working, including eligibility and other program requirements, day-to-day procedures and number of staff hours (or FTEs) devoted to administering the service. The evaluation would ideally be conducted both by the lead agency and the Transportation Coordinating Consortium, likely involving feedback from consumers. The purpose of this evaluation is to answer the following types of questions:
 - Were the roles and responsibilities between the program administrator and partners clear, and were they followed? What types of problems did you encounter and how did you address them?
 - Were the established process and procedures followed for expanding transportation services, developing contracts, enrolling eligible individuals in the programs, encouraging partner participation, etc.? Were they easy to understand and administer?
 - Were program policies reasonable and were they consistently applied?
 - Who were the program users or participants? Were all eligibility requirements (if any) met?

Feedback should also be sought on marketing strategies and their effectiveness.

- **Program Efficiency.** A program efficiency evaluation should consider quantitative information for each transportation strategy focused on costs. Start-up or initial capital costs should be documented as well as ongoing operating costs including labor (staff time), direct expenses (marketing, printing, etc.) and in-kind services. The evaluation should include quantitative benefits such as the number of riders or program participants

during the first six and 12 months of operation and compare this program outcome with costs. This information can be useful for expanding the programs and sharing the outcomes achieved with any jurisdictions that may have concerns about participating in any initial strategies or programs, as a way to build valuable support for program expansion in other Washington County cities. Key performance indicators should address:

- Were the start-up costs in line with initial estimates and benchmarks from other successful programs?
- Is the trend showing increasing usage or participation over time?
- What are the operating costs per program participant?
- Is the cost per participant showing an improving trend over time?
- If performance standards were recommended, were they met? If not, are they expected to be met in the next six to 12 months?

The evaluation should also identify the users of the program or service, communities served, types of trips taken, reasons for using service, etc. This aspect of the evaluation should be tailored to each program element.

Based on the outcome of the efficiency evaluation, strategies that enjoy positive data and trends should be considered for expansion and carried forward. Strategies that are determined to be inefficient should be modified (e.g., tighten or loosen eligibility criteria, limit or expand a service area, impose limits on use, etc.) or discontinued.

▪ **Program Impact**

Critical to the evaluation process should be feedback directly from program participants on the impact of transportation services. Potential participants were considered carefully in the study process and participated in stakeholder and community outreach efforts as well as via the online comment form. Participant feedback is a valuable tool in evaluating the various strategies and can be used to understand the attractiveness and limitations of each effort and to track impacts in meeting mobility needs.

Surveys and interviews should be used to solicit information helpful to program and marketing design, such as participant's reasons for joining or using various services, how they heard about the service, and ideas for making it easier to use. Questions should also address behavioral changes to assess whether people are leaving their home more often, participating in new activities, going places they could not before, able to hold a job and reliably travel to that job, and questions can address whether there have been any health impacts. The outcomes should update a demographic analysis. In some cases, a before-and-after survey could be considered to understand if access to activities has been enhanced and how travel patterns have changed.

The focus of impact evaluation will be on assessing the impact of transit programs on mental and physical health, overall quality of life and connection to community.

CONCLUSION

A number of major implementation considerations exist for carrying forward the preferred transportation strategies and working within a mobility management framework to address Washington County's transportation gaps. Some of the strategies are longer term, and will require

implementation in phases. As new strategies are implemented, some of the other strategies may be determined not to be effective or appropriate, and some may face financial challenges.

This study identifies potential partners for building a baseline transportation network in Washington County, as well as the strategies that are most likely to be successful. To advance the recommendations, Washington County must convene potential partners — funders, transportation providers, and users (or organizations that need the services) — to consider potential operational approaches and coordination strategies for those who wish to participate. Developing a forum through a Transportation Coordinating Consortium allows county departments, cities, and agencies to focus on transportation at a scale that transcends jurisdictional boundaries.

The discussion in this chapter may be used as a starting point for further discussion and development of tools to expand transportation options for Washington County residents. Washington County's best strategy is perhaps to demonstrate the effectiveness of a limited number of Tier 1 programs, expand them, and implement new alternatives, including Tier 2 programs. At the same time, education and outreach to partners and consumers is important so that the community can better understand the availability and benefits of programs and services. Where successes can be demonstrated and their impacts understood, individuals and organizations may learn that transportation investment can drive healthy economic development in Washington County. They may also see the potential benefit of additional investment.

8 FUNDING STRATEGIES

Existing funding for transit in Washington County comes from a mix of federal, state, local sources. County staff are well versed in state and federal funding programs and at locating a variety of funding sources to supplement local funding sources. The county should continue to pursue all traditional funding programs. Both federal and state legislative support for transit funding is dynamic and transit finance will likely change in the future. Because of the changing landscape for transit funding, the county should employ a diverse range of funding and implementation strategies. In general, this means:

- Seek new and innovative forms of non-local assistance and support legislation that will generate additional transportation funding assistance.
- Consider public-private partnerships as an appropriate way to equitably distribute costs resulting from development.
- Partner, pool resources, and jointly lobby with other agencies for outside funding assistance for major projects that could provide significant long-term benefits to Washington County.
- Continue to pursue regional transportation funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Program (STP), Transportation Enhancement (TE), etc.) through grant applications to the Metropolitan Council.

The discussion of funding in this chapter considers potential funding sources that were known at the time the report was prepared. Funding may change based on new federal, state, or regional policy changes.

Federal Funding

Federal funding for transit comes primarily from formula funds that are distributed to states and major metropolitan areas to assist in financing the capital and operating needs of public transit systems. The Metropolitan Council is the recipient of these funds for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, which includes Washington County. MnDOT receives and administers these funds for small metropolitan and rural areas (e.g., Chisago County to the north of Washington County). The Council, in turn, allocates these funds to Metro Transit and other transit providers in the region. Formula funds come from several federal sources including 5303, 5304, 5305, 5307, 5311, and 5339 funds. There are also several discretionary federal funding sources that are distributed on a competitive basis. While the following is not a comprehensive list of federal funding sources, these are the primary sources relevant to transit facilities and services in Washington County.

Regional Allocation of Federal Formula Funding

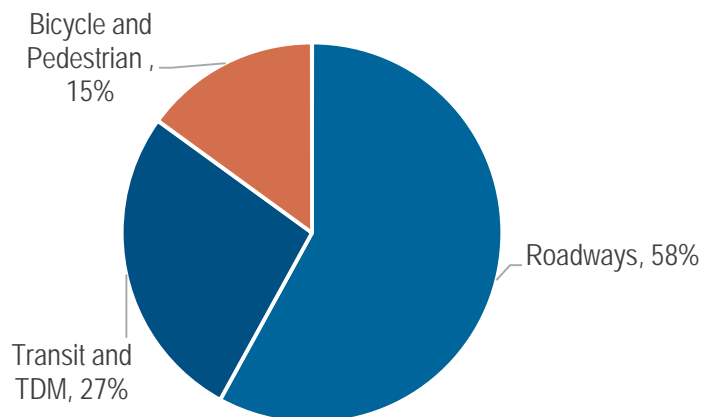
Federal transportation funds are allocated to local jurisdictions (i.e., cities, counties, and other qualified agencies) by the Metropolitan Council and the regional Transportation Advisory Board

(TAB) through competitive application process, known as the Regional Solicitation Process. There are two primary federal funding programs allocated through the Regional Solicitation Process, as described below. The rules and requirements for the use of these funds are established by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the regional Transportation Advisory Board (TAB).

- **Surface Transportation Block Grants:** A flexible program that includes funding for roadways, transit, bridges, and a variety of pedestrian and bicycle features.
- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ):** Funding program with a variety of eligible projects specifically addressing congestion and reducing air pollution. CMAQ grants may be used for any transit capital expenditures otherwise eligible for FTA funding if they have an air quality benefit.

Projects funded by the Regional Solicitation Process are grouped into three groups: (1) roadways, (2) bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and (3) transit and travel demand management projects. The general funding allocations for each these categories are shown in Figure 8-1.

Figure 8-1 2016 Metropolitan Council Regional Solicitation Funding Allocations



Discretionary Federal Funding Sources

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides funding to improve mobility, streamline capital project construction and acquisition, and increase the safety of public transportation systems across the country. Figure 8-2 provides a summary of the FTA grant programs most relevant to Washington County.

Figure 8-2 FTA Grant Programs

Title	Description
5339 – Buses and Bus Facilities	This is a competitive federal grants program to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and construct bus-related facilities. Only major bus transit systems such as Metro Transit are eligible to compete. The improvements must not be achievable through formula allocations.
5309 – Capital Investment Grants	This is a competitive federal grants program to fund major capital transit investments such as heavy rail, light rail, streetcars, and bus rapid transit. This also includes the Expedited Project Delivery for Capital Investment Grants Pilot, which allows up to eight projects to be selected for expedited grant awards if they are supported by a public-private partnership, demonstrate

Title	Description
	local financial commitment, and meet other requirements. The METRO Gold Line is an example of a project that would be eligible for this funding.
5309 – TOD Planning	This competitive program funds land use and transportation planning associated with a transit capital investment that will seek funding under the Capital Investment Grant program.
5310 – Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities	This formula-based program allocates funding to states to assist private, nonprofit groups in meeting transportation needs of the older adults and individuals with disabilities.
3006(b) of FAST Act	Recipients of 5310 funds are eligible to compete for this program that provides funding for innovative projects that improve the coordination of transportation services and non-emergency medical transportation services.
5311 – Formula Grants for Rural Areas	This formula-based program is administered by MnDOT, which provides funding to the Metropolitan Council to support transit capital and operating costs in the non-urban portions of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. These funds will cover 80% of capital costs, 50% of operating costs, and 80% of ADA paratransit costs (operating on capital).
5312 – Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Demo Program	This competitive program funds projects that promote innovative business models to deliver “high quality, seamless and equitable mobility options for all travelers.”
5312 – Public Transportation Innovation	This competitive program provides funding to develop innovative products and services assisting transit agencies in better meeting the needs of their customers.
5312(i) – Transit Cooperative Research Program	This is a competitive research grant program that is intended to develop near-term, practical solutions such as best practices, transit security guidelines, testing prototypes, and new planning and management tools.
Zero Emission Research Opportunity (ZERO)	Non-profit organizations may apply for funding to conduct research, demonstrate, test, or evaluate zero emission and related technology for public transportation applications.
TIGER	This competitive grants program provides funding for innovative, multi-modal, and multi-jurisdictional transportation projects that promise significant economic and environmental benefits to an entire metropolitan area, a region, or the nation.

State Funding

State General Fund and Motor Vehicle Sales Taxes

State transit funding comes from the State General Fund and Motor Vehicle Sales Taxes (MVST). These funds are received by Metropolitan Council and allocated to transit providers in the region. In 2016, MVST accounted for about 53% and the State General Fund accounted for about 10% of revenue for Metro Transit. Overall, about 65% of Metro Transit’s funding is from state and federal sources.

Minnesota Department of Human Services

Funding for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Services (NEMT) is available for qualified recipients through the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The recipient arranges transportation through a certified or common carrier (usually a county or tribal agency). The

services may be provided by private automobiles, volunteer drivers, buses, taxicabs, light rail, or other commercial carriers. Reimbursement is based on the specific assistance provided by the driver to the recipient of the services. Non-medical transportation is available through Home and Community Based Services. Figure 8-3 lists common transportation reimbursement models for the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Figure 8-3 Minnesota Department of Human Services Transportation Funding

Program	Description
Waiver funded transportation	Provides transportation for services to qualified recipients in the community (excludes transportation authorized as part of full-day Day Training and Habilitation (DT&H) Programs). Transportation must be necessary to meet individuals' needs as stated in a support plan. Waiver transportation rates are market rate services, as determined by the lead agency and service provider.
Day Training and Habilitation (DT&H)	Transportation services are provided for qualified DT&H participants. Transportation costs are added to the service costs and the rates are bundled. DT&H service providers may subcontract with a transportation provider and some subcontract with Metro Mobility and Transit Link.
Consumer Directed Community Support	Consumer directed community support (CDCS) is a service option that gives people flexibility to direct their own services and supports. People with self-directed CDCS can arrange their own transportation and determine the payment rate for their rides. Waiver transportation may be used by people with CDCS services.

Local Funding

In addition to federal and state funding sources, there is a range of potential funding sources at the local level. Examples of local funding sources include property and sales taxes, fees, incentives, and many others. As the county evaluates strategies in this report for implementation, a thorough examination of possible local funding sources should accompany possible federal and state funding sources.

Public-Private Partnerships

Direct or in-kind contributions can provide important marginal support for transit services. It is common, for instance, for retailers and merchants to financially contribute to a community circulator service, and major employers often contribute to transit linking job sites to major rail or bus connections. These contributions can include direct annual contributions for operating costs, or contribution of capital facilities such as passenger benches and shelters. Many examples exist of new JPAs being developed to oversee major public-private partnership efforts.

A Transportation Management Association (TMA) is an organized group of entities focused on facilitating the movement of people and goods within an area. TMAs are often legally constituted and frequently led by the private sector in partnership with the public sector to solve transportation problem: transportation, traffic and air quality issues. By working together, participating organizations usually focus on enhancing the local business environment.

TMAs are organizations whose members include employers, developers, building owners, residential communities, and public agencies. TMAs are often eligible recipients of several funding programs, allowing for opportunities for private and public funds, which would not otherwise be available to individual employers or developers.

EXISTING COST ALLOCATION TO TRANSPORTATION

The Washington County Department of Community Services conducted an internal assessment of resources allocated to serving the transportation needs of residents participating in Community Services programs. The assessment originally intended to capture the costs and staff time associated with providing transportation across county departments, but through discussions with other departments, it became clear that only Community Services is regularly providing transportation for county residents. The source of the information discussed in this section is the Washington County Department of Community Services.

If abundant transportation services were available in Washington County, it is likely county staff would not need to provide these trips, but without reliable and available same-day transportation in Washington County, the Community Services Department must provide these trips to meet a variety of needs.

Methodology

To calculate resources expended on consumer transportation, the Department of Community Services calculated the cost of client travel using two weeks of re-imbursement data as a methodology to estimate monthly and annual costs. The total reimbursement dollar amount for each staff person is summed and then divided by \$0.535, the current federal mileage reimbursement cost, to calculate the total mileage driven. In addition to the mileage cost, total staff time spent driving is calculated by looking at total miles driven and dividing by 45, based on an assumption that travel speeds average 45 miles per hour. This number is then multiplied by \$40 per hour to arrive at an estimate. The total number of trips was not recorded so the cost per actual trip is unknown.

Average weekly distance traveled per staff member in the May 2017 sample is 96 miles, with a range of 2 to 424 miles per staff member.

Using this methodology, Figure 8-4 shows the estimates of client travel cost and cost per mile.

Figure 8-4 Base Data Using Sampling Methodology

	Two Weeks Mileage Cost	Two Weeks Est. Miles Traveled	Two Weeks Est. Staff Cost	Two Weeks Est. Staff Time	Total Cost per Mile	Staff Cost per Mile
December 2014 Sample	\$1,057.00	1,887.50	\$1,677.78	42 hours	\$1.45	\$.89
May 2017 Sample	\$2,097.74	3,921	\$3,485.33	87 hours	\$1.42*	\$.89

*Lower cost is reflected in reduced reimbursement cost per mile (based on IRS standards from \$.56 in 2014 to \$.535 in 2017)

Given that the reimbursement report can be easily generated, using mileage re-imbursement cost to estimate client miles traveled is a simple and practical method. Estimating total annual costs, however, has a degree of uncertainty since the cost formula operates on multiple assumptions that may not reflect actual travel. Breaking the two weeks of sample data for 2017 into single weeks shows that there is some variance between weeks. There was a 33% difference between the mileage costs in the two weeks, as shown in Figure 8-5.

Figure 8-5 Variance by Week in Sample

	Mileage Reimbursement Cost	Estimated Mileage
Week of 5/15/2017	\$1,257.19	2350
Week of 5/22/2017	\$840.53	1571

While generating a mileage reimbursement report for the entire year would better illustrate if the two weeks of data are representative of normal travel and verify the accuracy of the cost projection for the mileage traveled, this methodology provides a sufficient snapshot of Washington County's expenditures to provide transportation services to residents.

Outcomes

Figure 8-6 shows the annual estimated expenditures in 2014 and 2017. The cost estimate in 2014 was \$71,104; in 2017, the estimated costs increased to \$145,159, an increase of 51%, even with the lower mileage reimbursement cost in 2017. Even if there is variation on a weekly basis, as the review of the sample data illustrates, the estimates suggest the County has allocated more resources to providing same-day transportation for residents served by the Department of Community Services. Whether expenditures have fully doubled based on the sample is uncertain, but an equivalent investment of \$145,000 would fund full-year weekday operation of a bus or van operating 9.5 hours per day.

Figure 8-6 Estimated Direct Transportation Costs Paid by Washington County: 2014 and 2017

	2014		2017		Percent Increase 2014-2017
	Month (Estimated)	Annual (Estimated)	Month (Estimated)	Annual (Estimated)	
Mileage					
Number of Miles	4,089.58	49,075	8,495	101,946	108%
Total Mileage Cost	\$2,290.17	\$27,482.00	\$4,545.09	\$54,541.11	98%
Staff Cost					
Total Staff Time (hours)	91	1,091	189	2,265	108%
Total Staff Cost	\$3,635.19	\$43,622.22	\$7,551.56	\$90,618.67	108%
Total Costs Estimate	\$5,925.35	\$71,104.22	\$12,096.65	\$145,159.78	104%

CONCLUSION

Washington County and the Metropolitan Council have enjoyed success in securing federal, state, and local funds for capital investments and should continue to pursue this strategy. Regardless of which combination of funding sources is pursued, Washington County will likely be challenged to implement all of the preferred strategies identified in this study. Consequently, support from the local communities that directly benefit from new transit services will be crucial to successful implementation.