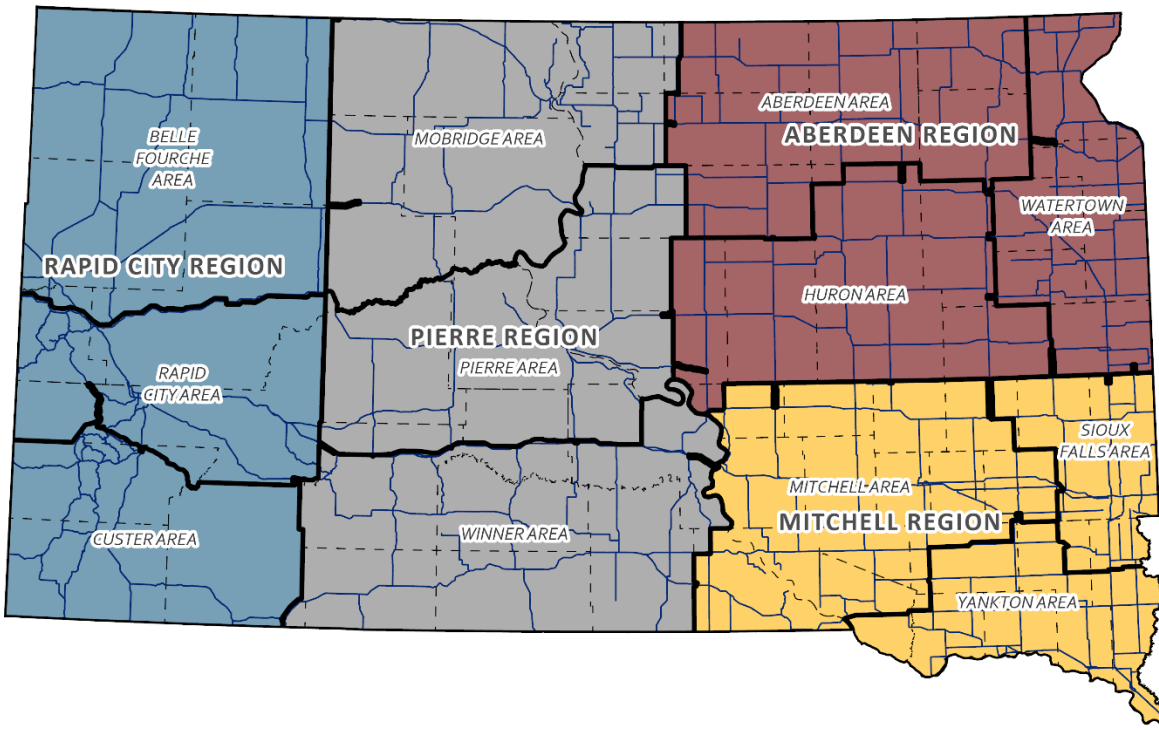**South Dakota**
Department of Transportation

Statewide Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Final Plan – July 2024

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Chapter 1
Background

Introduction

The South Dakota Department of Transportation's (SDDOT) Office of Air, Rail, and Transit initiated the development of this Statewide Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan. The planning process provided a variety of opportunities for state, regional, and local level stakeholders, and that include:

Meeting Federal Coordinated Transportation Planning Requirements – The plan was developed through a process that meets all Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines and incorporates the four required elements.

Expanding Mobility and Access through the Planning Process – The coordinated transportation planning process provided the opportunity to work with a variety of stakeholders to actively plot a future that addresses the transportation challenges many areas residents face daily.

Going Beyond the Federal Requirements – This Statewide Coordinated Transportation Plan provided the opportunity to look beyond the federal requirements, and to develop both state-level and local plans and potential efforts that that can serve as a collective blueprint for improving coordination and expanding mobility in South Dakota.

Supporting Local Transit Systems and the Communities They Serve – Previously local transit systems in South Dakota have been responsible for conducting coordinated planning efforts and the development of plans for their areas. While they continued to be key stakeholders in the planning process, outreach efforts and overall planning activities were led by the KFH Group/Olssen team, relieving the local providers of this responsibility that has been on top of all their other roles. The planning process also provided the opportunity for a more holistic plan that involved broader stakeholder engagement and encompassed the entire state.

Section 5310 Program / Coordinated Transportation Planning Requirements

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, enacted as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), maintained formula grants through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program. This program funds transportation services planned, designed, and provided to meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. As noted by FTA Section 5310 Program funding can be used for "traditional" capital projects and for "nontraditional" capital and/or operating projects that go beyond the scope of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit service or public transportation alternatives designed to assist older adults and people with disabilities.

One of the federal requirements of the Section 5310 program is that projects selected for funding must be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (coordinated transportation plan). As noted earlier in South Dakota these plans have been developed and updated primarily by local transit systems. Through the current planning process SDDOT regions and areas, shown in Figure 1-1 on the next page, were used to ensure a broader statewide effort.

FTA guidance defines a coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan as one that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people with low incomes; provides strategies for meeting those local needs; and prioritizes transportation services and projects for funding and implementation. There are four required plan elements:

(1) An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private and non-profit).

(2) An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service.

(3) Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, and opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery.

(4) Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

Figure 1-1: SDDOT Regions and Areas
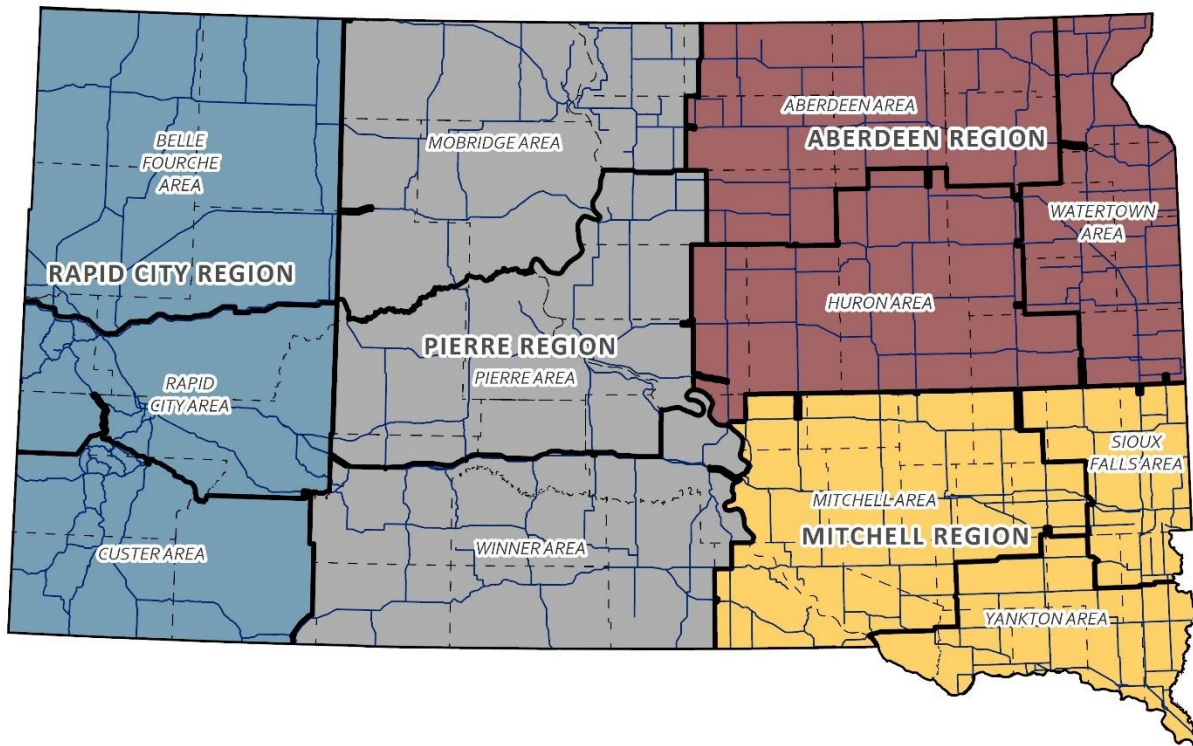
Measurable Results, as Defined in the FTA 5310 Circular

Section 5310 Program funds are available for capital and operating expenses to support the provision of transportation services to meet the specific needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities. Funds are apportioned to states through the following categories:

- **Traditional Section 5310 Projects** - Not less than 55% of the funding must be used for traditional Section 5310 projects, which involve public transportation capital projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the specific needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, unavailable, or inappropriate. Mobility management projects that support coordination activities are an eligible capital expense through this Section 5310 Program apportionment. The 55% is a floor, and not a ceiling, and Section 5310 funding recipients can use a higher percentage of their apportionment on these traditional Section 5310 Program projects.

- **Other Section 5310 Program Projects** - Up to 45% of the recipient apportionment can be used to fund for additional public transportation projects, to include those that allow transportation providers to go beyond the ADA minimum requirements or improve access to fixed-route bus services and decrease reliance on ADA paratransit services.

FTA guidance for the Section 5310 Program includes the following program measures:

Traditional Section 5310 Projects

(1) Gaps in Service Filled: Provision of transportation options that would not otherwise be available for seniors and individuals with disabilities, measured in numbers of seniors and individuals with disabilities afforded mobility they would not have without program support as a result of traditional Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

(2) Ridership: Actual or estimated number of rides (as measured by one-way trips) provided annually for seniors or individuals with disabilities on Section 5310 supported vehicles and services as a result of traditional Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

Other Section 5310 Projects

(1) Service Improvements: related to geographic coverage, service quality, and/or service times that impact availability of transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities as a result of other Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

(2) Physical Improvements: Additions or changes to environmental infrastructure (e.g., transportation facilities, sidewalks, etc.), technology, and vehicles that impact availability of transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities as a result of other section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

(3) Ridership: Actual or estimated number of rides (as measured by one-way trips) provided annually for seniors or individuals with disabilities on Section 5310 supported vehicles and services as a result of other Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

Coordination Laws and Policies

This section presents an overview of the laws and policies that impact coordination of public transit and human services transportation in South Dakota, with the primary impact being the federal requirement through the Section 5310 Program discussed earlier in this chapter.

Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program

One of the federal requirements of the Section 5310 program is that the recipient of these funds needs to certify that projects selected for funding must be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. There is flexibility on how Section 5310 recipients approach this requirement, as federal guidance notes that states and communities may approach the development of a coordinated plan in different ways based on the amount of available time, staff, funding, and other resources.

While the federal coordinated transportation planning guidance provides suggested stakeholders to be invited to participate in the planning process, it also notes that the suggested list of participants above does not limit participation by other groups, nor require participation by every group listed. It does highlight the role of transportation providers that receive FTA funding through the Section 5307 and 5311 Programs, and that they are the "public transit" in the public transit-human services transportation plan and their participation is assumed and expected. This is not an issue in South Dakota, as subrecipients of these programs previously led coordinated transportation planning efforts for their service areas and were actively engaged in the current planning process.

Federal coordinated transportation planning guidance for the Section 5310 Program also strongly encourages coordination and consistency between the local coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan and metropolitan or statewide transportation planning processes.

SDDOT Coordinated Transportation Planning Requirements

As the recipient of Section 5310 Program funds for South Dakota, SDDOT is responsible for the administration of these funds and adherence to federal coordinated planning requirements. For this oversight SDDOT has established the following requirements for subrecipients of this funding.

Overview

Beginning in FY2013, all Section 5310 Program subrecipients are required to develop or be part of a Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan. As noted earlier this plan identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities and older adults and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. This plan will be for a five-year period, and future projects funded through the Section 5310 Program must be included in the plan.

Plan of Action

The subrecipients are required to develop and submit a Plan of Action to address coordination from the statewide plan within their service area in conjunction with the Statewide Plan on the year of the plan development. The Plan of Action should include the following:

- Past Goals
- Successes
- Identify changes and coordination changes with other agencies.
- Newly set goals.
- Timeframes of these new goals.

Annual Update

In Years 2-4 subrecipients will be required to submit an addendum to their annual plan of action. Updates will need to be submitted to be eligible for funding. The update should address the individual agency's plan of action in conjunction with the statewide plan. The update should include measurable results for goals in the approved plan, new goals with timeframes along with any other major changes made to the individual agency's plan of action. Submit this information as a separate submission.

For example:

- Goals completed from prior year.
- Goals not completed from prior year.
- Any new goals for application year.
- Timeframes of these new goals.
- Identify changes and coordination changes with other agencies.
- Explain if your service area has changed.
- What previous year goals did not work and why?

While SDDOT does not set a page limit on the update, it is expected to submit more than a couple of paragraphs (2-3 pages minimum). SDDOT reviews and verifies the plan of action update to confirm it answers all the above-mentioned topics adequately.

SDDOT Administrative Rules

These administrative rules provide guidance on how State funds are distributed. The Eligible Grant Purposes section of Chapter 70:06:04 Intercity Bus Grants notes the coordination of rural area connections between small transit operators and intercity bus operators. The administrative rules also provide guidance on the criteria used to award state matching funds for eligible grantees and projects funded through Section 5307 and 5311.

Federal Coordination Efforts

Federal efforts to support the coordination of public transit and human services transportation at the state level have varied over the past 25 years, with a strong emphasis through the previous United We Ride program while at other times a limited focus at the federal level. However, as noted earlier there is a renewed effort through the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), a Federal interagency council that works to coordinate funding and provide expertise on human services transportation for three targeted populations: people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals of low income.

The CCAM works at the Federal level to improve coordination of transportation resources and to address barriers faced by states and local communities when coordinating transportation. The CCAM's mission

is to issue policy recommendations and implement activities that improve the availability, accessibility, and efficiency of transportation for CCAM's targeted populations, with the vision of equal access to coordinated transportation for all Americans.

While the current CCAM efforts are focused on greater coordination between federal agencies, there are aspects of these efforts that can be considered at the state level and were taken into account in the development of the implementation and coordination strategies discussed in Chapter 5 of this plan.

Coordination with Other Federal Programs

As part of the coordination efforts, CCAM encourages Federal fund braiding for local match that allows grant recipients to use funds from one federal program to meet the match requirements of another, such as the Section 5310 Program. The CCAM Federal Fund Braiding Guide provides information to potential grantees on acceptable fund braiding arrangements on transportation-related projects. The guide defines Federal fund braiding for local match and examines whether Federal fund braiding is allowable for 61 programs across CCAM agencies that may fund transportation. More information on CCAM and access to the braiding guide can be found at https://www.transit.dot.gov/coordinating-council-access-and-mobility. This website also provides links to multiple FTA-funded transportation technical assistance centers that can also offer guidance with coordination efforts.

In addition, in March 2022 FTA posted guidance clarifying coordination on human services transportation on a new transportation coordination webpage. As noted by FTA, coordinated transportation involves multiple entities working together to deliver one or more components of a transportation service to increase capacity. The transportation coordination guidance aims to reduce overlap between the federal programs across nine agencies that may fund human services transportation and incentivize collaboration by clarifying eligible reporting into the National Transit Database (NTD). This new guidance addresses the following topics as they relate to NTD reporting: definition of public transportation; paratransit; charter service; incidental use of transit assets; and trip brokering. This guidance can be found at
https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/access/ccam/about/transportation-coordination.

Going Beyond the Federal Requirements

While this coordinated plan meets federal coordinated transportation planning requirements, it is also consistent with FTA guidance that encourages broad efforts that incorporate activities offered under a variety of transportation programs sponsored by federal, state, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact.

Therefore, the planning process took a broad approach that included:

- Documenting the variety of transportation services offered across the state, and beyond those funded through the Section 5310 program.

- Incorporating and building upon ongoing and recent extensive planning efforts in each area.

- Providing strategies and potential projects beyond services funded through the Section 5310 program.

Potential Funding Sources

South Dakota already has a high level of coordination in its rural and statewide public transportation systems, as there are 13 rural public transit systems that are also specialized transportation providers, providing trips to both the general public and to persons with disabilities and elderly persons, including persons who are clients of human service agencies. SDDOT funds these systems with a combination federal funds for operations, capital (vehicles and facilities), and administration. These all represent potential funding sources that will be needed to address the priority strategy of maintaining the existing services.

These FTA funding programs that support these systems include:

- Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities: used in South Dakota to provide capital grants and operating funds to private non-profit organizations and to public transit entities where there is not a non-profit provider to provide transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities. These are provided to the state on a formula basis, for FY 2024 this is $712,886 for the three urban areas (Sioux Falls. Sioux City, and Rapid City), and $480,004 for the non-urbanized areas of the state.

- Section 5311: Rural Area Formula Grants: funding used in South Dakota to fund operations and administration of public transit providers in the non-urbanized areas of the state, including the 15% set-aside for rural intercity bus services. Under the SDDOT program, this funding source is not used for capital except for intercity bus. For FY 2024 South Dakota's allocation is $9,707,091 plus $142,844 for the RTAP program of technical assistance.

- Section 5339: Bus and Bus Facilities: Provides bus capital used in the SDDOT program to support the rural public transit systems. There is a minimum state allocation of $1.75 million; for FY 2024 South Dakota's formula allocation is $567, 517 for the Urbanized Areas, and $4,000,000 for the State allocation. There is also a significant discretionary component to this program, and SDDOT has been successful in using this to maintain the fleets.

In FY 2022 the total South Dakota program required $12,362,626, in addition to these federal funding sources SDDOT used a substantial amount of COVID relief funding to support the statewide system:

- $2,961,961 in American Rescue Plan Act and $684,630 in CARES Act funding.

- In addition, there was local funding to match the federal funds including $944,217 in state funds, only eligible for match towards 5311 and 5307 funds, and $1,329,416 in other local funds—including Medicaid, contract revenue, and local community funds provided to or by the systems.

- SDDOT already coordinates at the state level with the Department of Human Services, Division of Long-Term Services and Supports (DHS-DLTSS) which provides Title II-B funds through the SDDOT transit program to support transportation for persons who are elderly or have disabilities. In FY 2022 these funds provided $350,597 statewide.

Bearing in mind that the priority strategy at both the state and local levels is maintaining the existing services, providing funding as the ARPA and CARES funding ends is a key issue. ARPA funding needs to be obligated by December 31, 2024, and spent by December 31, 2025, while the CARES Act funding has no expiration date. The only South Dakota ARPA funds remaining are for intercity bus, and the state's remaining CARES funding is limited to state program administration.

SDDOT is already aware of and utilizing the available federal programs. Maintaining the current service levels will require using all the available federal funding—and potentially require more local funds, whether from the state or the local entities. Given the state's success in obtaining discretionary Section 5339 funding there may be an opportunity to use that to fund replacement vehicles instead of Section 5310 and using the available S. 5310 to contract for service (allowed by the FTA and in the SDDOT Section 5310 State Management Plan), providing some additional operating funds.

Expansion of access to the existing services (making people aware of the available resources) or other program improvements (technology for more efficient scheduling, for example) are most likely funded using Federal competitive or discretionary fund programs, as these generally support capital, technology or planning projects rather than on-going operations.

- The Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility Program is an example of one of these, as it has provided funding for innovative capital projects to support the provision of coordinated services, provides capital funds that can be used for innovative projects to coordinate, regional or statewide mobility management projects, technology deployment and one-call/one-click centers. For FY 2025 and FY 2026 national funding availability is $5 million each year. South Dakota could develop a competitive application to support mobility management or one-call/one-click technology, for example.

- Also a part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is a Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program to improve and expand rural surface transportation infrastructure. The overall ROUTES (Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success) program is designed to provide information on all the USDOT rural transportation funding options—but it does not provide specific funding for projects—but rather information to find opportunities such as the Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program ($10 million nationally over five years), a discretionary program through the Office of the Secretary to support the early stages of transit infrastructure projects (technical, legal and financial) in rural areas, or the SMART (Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation) grants ($100 million annually for five years to address technology solutions to

address mobility problems in different types of areas—which could potentially support technology to address South Dakota priority issues such as providing information to users statewide or coordinating long-distance trips for medical and other purposes.

- Other discretionary funding opportunities arise at different times and with different purposes, and SDDOT should monitor these opportunities to seek funding. For example, the Rural Surface Transportation Grant sub-program as part of the USDOT's Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant was due at the beginning of May, but there is likely to be another round in the future.

Some other funding options include those through national technical assistance centers funded by the FTA:

- The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) provides a variety of grant and other technical assistance opportunities to support coordination efforts, and that can be found at https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/ncmm-grants.

- The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) also offers various grant opportunities, including the current 2024 Rural Community Innovations: Transportation Planning Grant. More information is available at https://www.nadtc.org/grants-funding-resources/grants-funding/nadtc-grant-opportunities.

At the local level additional opportunities for operating funding for coordinated services could involve working with local human service agency representatives to provide additional trips under contract—though because of the existing high level of coordination the opportunity for this may be limited. Private non-profit agencies that operate their own vehicles, or that had sought funding for vehicles could be encouraged to forgo their own capital expenditures and purchase trips instead—even with Section 5310 funding. These activities would be supported by the strategy of developing ongoing local coordination committees to include agencies and groups that provide, purchase or need transportation for eligible populations.

While there are limited opportunities for additional federal funding to maintain the existing services and make them available to potential users, it should be noted that many states have realized the needs for specialized transportation exceed the available agency and federal funding and have developed state funding programs specifically to address this need. The Florida program mentioned above is one such program. Other examples include Maryland's Statewide Specialized Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP), providing funding to the transit systems to provide services to the elderly and persons with disabilities beyond what is possible with the available transit and agency funding; and a similar program in North Carolina, developed as the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (E&DTAP) has now been consolidated into an overall Rural Operating Assistance Program.

Chapter 2
Outreach and Planning Process

Federal guidance notes that individuals, groups, and organizations representing people with disabilities and seniors should be invited to participate in the coordinated transportation planning process – outreach efforts addressed these requirements – and engaged those that work with young people, veterans, and people with lower incomes. Federal guidance also notes that stakeholders should have reasonable opportunities to be actively involved in the decision-making process at key decision points.

This chapter discusses outreach efforts conducted in the development of this coordinated transportation plan, and the involvement of statewide, regional, and area stakeholders in the planning process. Federal coordinated planning guidance served as the foundation in the development of an approach that engaged a diverse group of individuals, agencies, and organizations. This chapter discusses how stakeholders were involved in the coordinated transportation planning process and had ongoing opportunities to provide their input.

Technical Oversight Panel

In addition to SDDOT, the planning process was guided by a technical oversight panel representing various agencies and organizations that work with older adults, people with disabilities, and others with transportation needs. An initial meeting provided the opportunity for SDDOT and the technical oversight panel to discuss proposed outreach efforts and community engagement activities.

The kickoff meeting included a discussion of the previous coordinated plans, how the plans had been developed through a local process, and that this statewide effort provided the opportunity for greater participation. It was also noted that existing Section 5310 Program applications primarily focus on preventative maintenance and capital funding for vehicles; and the statewide planning process may offer the opportunity to consider funding other types of projects.

Based on feedback from the panel, it was confirmed that a hybrid outreach process option would be preferred, allowing local stakeholders the opportunity to meet in-person or to join planning workshops through an online option, detailed in the next section.

Coordinated Transportation Planning Workshops

The primary outreach effort for the statewide coordinated transportation planning process involved area workshops that provided the opportunity to obtain input from a variety of stakeholders. The workshops provided a forum to discuss and confirm transportation needs as well as discuss potential strategies, projects, and services to improve mobility. The workshops were held in each of the 12 SDDOT areas (shown in Chapter 1), and as noted earlier were designed to provide both in-person and online participation options.

The schedule and locations for the area workshops are listed in Table 2-1. Invitations were distributed to numerous agencies and organizations that provide transportation or serve older adults, people with disabilities, people with lower incomes, and others facing transportation challenges.

With the assistance of the SDDOT, a press release also announced the workshops. Stakeholders were also encouraged to pass the invitation along to their individual contact lists to help ensure a broad outreach effort.

Table 2-1: Schedule and Locations of Area Workshops

SDDOT Area	Location	Address	Date	Time
Yankton	Vermillion Public Library	18 Church Street	Tuesday, March 26, 2024	9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. CT
Sioux Falls	Prairie West Branch Library	7630 W. 26th Street	Tuesday, March 26, 2024	1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. CT
Mitchell	Mitchell Public Library	211 N. Duff Street	Wednesday, March 27, 2024	9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CT
Huron	Huron Public Library	521 Dakota Avenue S	Wednesday, March 27, 2024	1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. CT
Aberdeen	Aberdeen Library	215 4th Avenue SE	Thursday, March 28, 2024	9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. CT
Watertown	Watertown Police Dept.	128 N. Maple	Thursday, March 28, 2024	2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. CT
Belle Fourche	Belle Fourche Library	905 5th Avenue	Tuesday, April 2, 2024	10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. MT
Rapid City	Rapid City Library	610 Quincy Street	Tuesday, April 2, 2024	2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. MT
Custer	Hot Springs Library	2005 Library Drive	Wednesday, April 3, 2024	12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. MT
Mobridge	AH Brown Public Library	521 N. Main St.	Thursday, April 4, 2024	9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. CT
Pierre	River Cities Transit	1600 E. Dakota Ave.	Thursday, April 4, 2024	3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. CT
Winner	Tripp County Library	442 Monroe Street	Friday, April 5, 2024	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. CT

The workshops began with a round of introductions, as the events provided a unique opportunity for the various stakeholders to come together to discuss mobility needs and potential improvements. The workshops provided a review of the coordinated transportation planning process, the Section 5310 Program and a discussion on the importance of stakeholders providing their input on transportation needs and potential solutions, as well as the collection of appropriate information and data for the plan. However, the workshops were primarily focused on obtaining feedback from participants, including:

- **Existing Transportation Services** provided by their organization/agency (if applicable).

- **Transportation Needs**, with the needs assessment from previous coordinated transportation plans serving as the foundation for this discussion.

- **Potential Strategies** for maintaining, improving, and expanding transportation services, also using ones from previous plans in the area.

The PowerPoint presentation from the first area workshop (Yankton area) is provided in Appendix A. For proceeding workshops, the presentation was updated with specifics transportation needs and strategies unique to the individual areas. Area specific needs and strategies were derived from previously completed local coordinated transportation plans in an effort to confirm transportation needs and build upon existing coordinated transportation strategies.

At the conclusion of each area focus group, participants were invited to continue their involvement with the coordinated planning process by participating in a survey to rank their priorities for the area. Participants were also invited to provide comments on a full draft plan, when available for their review.

Coordinated Transportation Planning Participants

While the types of stakeholders that participated in the area workshops varied from one area to another. Overall, these outreach events included participants and representatives from:

- Aging programs
- Community action agencies
- Counseling services
- Disability service providers
- Elected officials
- Emergency shelter service programs
- Healthcare facilities
- Human service agencies
- Independent living centers

- Local governments
- Local transit systems
- Mental health providers
- School districts
- Senior independent and assisted living communities
- South Dakota Department of Transportation
- Veteran organizations

Ongoing Stakeholder Input

While the workshops served as the project's formal gathering of area stakeholders, multiple opportunities have been provided throughout the planning process to provide input to the study team and review interim documents. As an example, a meeting was requested by Prairie Hills Transit and was conducted with their Board of Directors on April 3, 2024, to gain additional input for the plan.

Ongoing involvement has included:

- Prioritizing strategies identified as the most appropriate for improving mobility in the region.
- Reviewing and providing input on a draft version of this plan.

South Dakota Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Planning Website

To assist in outreach and planning efforts, a project website was established at https://southdakotacoordinatedplans.com. A screenshot is shown in Figure 2-1. This website offers a central location to view background information on the study. It was also used to promote the area workshops, and provides project team contacts for those who might be interested in the plan.

Figure 2-1: Home Page of the South Dakota Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Website
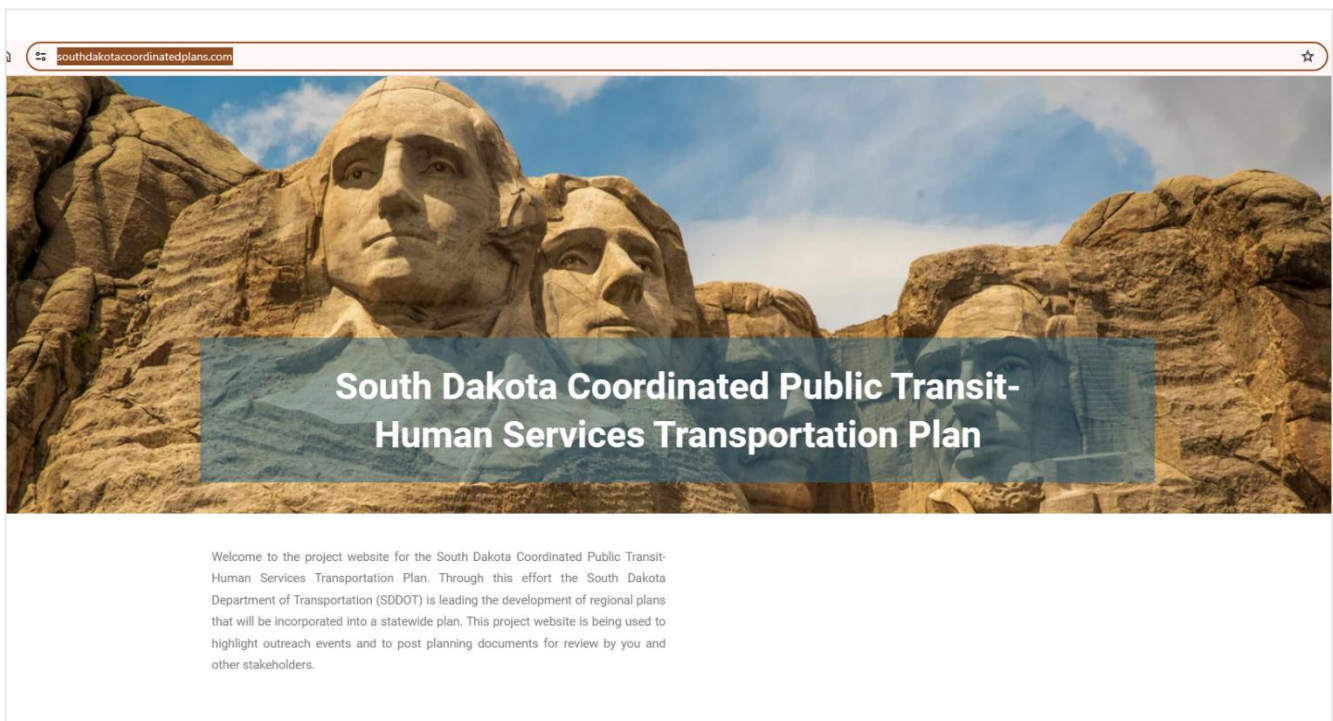
Chapter 3
Transportation Services and Resources

As noted earlier, the federal coordinated transportation planning requirements include an assessment of available transportation resources. A variety of public transit, human services transportation, and private transportation services are provided across South Dakota, and this chapter provides an inventory of these various transportation resources by region, and developed by a process that included:

- Using information from previous planning efforts
- Obtaining input from regional stakeholders through the coordinated transportation planning workshops
- Reviewing reports produced by SDDOT
- Conducting online research to obtain appropriate information on current transportation services
- Contacting public transit and human services transportation providers directly to obtain specific information on their current services

Aberdeen Region

Aberdeen Area

Public Transit

The Aberdeen Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- Aberdeen Ride Line Transportation Services
- Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton
- River Cities Public Transit

Aberdeen Ride Line Transportation Services

Aberdeen Ride Line is the public transit provider for the city of Aberdeen and areas within a 2.5-mile radius of the city, providing demand-response services for the community. Operating hours run from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Ride Line also provides a feeder service on weekdays to Summit, SD that connects with Jefferson Lines, the intercity bus carrier, to continue to Sioux Falls, SD or Fargo, ND. Ride Line also serves as the Medicaid Transportation Provider for Aberdeen.

Fares for Ride Line services are:

Category	Fare
General Public	$2.00
Children (under 5)	Free
10 rides	$20
20 rides	$40

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton provides demand-response services for a large area consisting of 15 counties. The six counties served by Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton in the Aberdeen area include:

- Brown
- Day
- Edmunds
- Faulk
- Marshall
- McPherson

This covers over half of the SDDOT Aberdeen Region and encompasses other DOT Areas outside of this region. Outside of the typical general public demand-response services, Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton provides Medicaid transportation, Nutrition Services, Special Services such as voting, and Medical Trips. The Medical Trips are carried out through a partnership with Prairie Lakes Hospital in the Watertown area. Trips within the immediate service area are free. The service area is Watertown city limits and designated areas around Lake Kampeska and Pelican Lake. Community Transit's current operating hours are 6:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday, 6:00 am to 4:00 pm Saturday, and 8:00 am to 4:00 pm (phone calls only) on Sunday.

Fares for Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton are:

Category	Fare
Area 1 – Immediate Watertown Area	$3.00
Area 2 – Outlaying Service Area	$5.00
Area 3 – Extended Service Area	$8.00

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit (RCPT) coordinates with multiple counties in the area to provide veterans with free transportation to VA medical appointments. The five counties served by RCPT in the Aberdeen area include:

- McPherson
- Edmunds
- Faulk
- Marshall
- Day

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Aberdeen Ride Line

- In addition to their demand-response services, Aberdeen Ride Line is a Medicaid Transportation Provider for non-emergency but medically necessary appointments. Rides must be scheduled a week in advance and trips to Sioux Falls require a travel time of 4 hours.

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton

- Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton also provides transportation for medical appointments for Medicaid recipients at no cost. Rides are limited to the recipient's home and the medical facility.

Safe Harbor

- Safe Harbor is a non-profit agency that helps victims of domestic violence in times of need. They provide legal resources, shelter, and aid for adults and children in crisis. Along with these, they also provide transportation services.

Sanford Health

- Large rural healthcare provider that offers a comprehensive list of healthcare services. Non-emergency medical transportation is also offered through the Sanford Ready Wheels program.

Primrose Retirement Communities Aberdeen

- Retirement Community that features independent living in townhomes. They offer nursing care, daily meals, community areas and a range of activities. Scheduled transportation is provided for residents.

Bethesda Parkside Retirement Community

- Retirement community administered by non-profit organization, which is sponsored by various congregations of the Lutheran Church. Bethesda Parkside provides in-home care, assisted living, independent living apartments, adult day services physical rehabilitation services, and transportation services for patients and residents.

Bethesda K.O. Lee Retirement Community

- Retirement community administered by non-profit organization, which is sponsored by various congregations of the Lutheran Church. Bethesda Parkside provides in-home care, assisted living, independent living apartments, adult day services physical rehabilitation services, and transportation services for patients and residents.

Independent Living Choices

- Non-profit organization that serves people with disabilities. With regional offices across South Dakota, their services are aimed to help those with disabilities work towards independence, build community, and attain meaningful employment. Transportation is provided for clients of Independent Living Choices.

AngelKare Home Health Care and Caregiving Services

- Home healthcare provider operating out of Aberdeen. AngelKare offers a wide variety of services including homemaking, Alzheimer care, safety supervision, dressing and bathing assistance, as well as transportation to medical appointments.

Aberdeen Health & Rehab

- Physical rehabilitation center located in Aberdeen that is part of the Accura HealthCare system. Some of the services offered include short-stay rehabilitation, skilled nursing, and other long-term care. Transportation is available to patients who require it to reach medical appointments.

Homecare Services

- Provider for at-home healthcare with several locations across South Dakota. The location in the Aberdeen area is in Aberdeen. They provide a wide range of services from healthcare needs to meals and grooming. Transportation for medical appointments and other trips such as grocery shopping and community activities are provided for patients.

Private Transportation Providers

Intercity Bus Services

There are a variety of intercity private transportation routes serving the Aberdeen Area. Routes consist of interstate and intrastate connections from:

- Jefferson Lines
- Aberdeen Ride Line feeder service

Taxi/Shuttle Providers

Using online research, the following taxi and shuttle providers were identified in the region:

- Aberdeen Taxi
- Aberdeen Shuttle and Taxi
- Lyft – limited to the city of Aberdeen and immediate surrounding areas.

Huron Area

Public Transit

The Huron Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- People's Transit
- Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton
- River Cities Public Transit
- Hyde County Transit

People's Transit

People's Transit is the provider of public transit services in the Huron area, offering demand-response transportation to community members. Outside of the service area of Beadle and Sanborn Counties, People's Transit offers out of town service to several cities in South Dakota for the following fares including:

Area	Out-Of-Town Fare
Sioux Falls	$125
Mitchell	$75
Aberdeen	$125
Brookings	$125
Watertown	$125
DeSmet	$50
Howard	$75
Wessington Springs	$75

Fares for People's Transit are:

Category	One-Way Fare	10 Tokens	20 Tokens
General Public	$3.50	$35.00	$70.00
Youth (3-17)	$2.50	$25.00	$50.00
Seniors (suggested donation)	$2.50	$25.00	$50.00
Outside City Limits (up to 3 miles)	$4.50	$45.00	$90.00
Children (0-3)	Free	Free	Free

People's Transit has a token program so that customers can pay for several rides in advance, as seen in the table above. The agency serves as a feeder service to Jefferson Lines, the intercity bus carrier. People's Transit provides a connection to Jefferson Lines in Mitchell on Tuesdays and Fridays only. People's Transit also serves as the Medicaid Transportation Provider for the Huron area.

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton provides demand-response services for a large area consisting of 15 counties. The two counties served by Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton in the Huron Area include:

- Clark
- Spink

This covers over half of Aberdeen Region and encompasses other DOT Areas within this region. Outside of the typical general public demand-response services, Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton provides Medicaid transportation, Nutrition Services, Special Services such as voting, and Medical Trips. The Medical Trips are carried out through a partnership with Prairie Lakes Hospital in the Watertown area. These Medical Trips are currently free of charge, as are the Special Services.

Fares for Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton are:

Category	Fare
Area 1 – Immediate Watertown Area	$3.00
Area 2 – Outlaying Service Area	$5.00
Area 3 – Extended Service Area	$8.00

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit is the public transportation provider for the Pierre region, but its coverage extends into the Huron Area. River Cities Public Transit provides demand-response transportation for the general public, medical trips, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and low-income individuals. River Cities Public Transit is also a Medicaid Transportation Provider for the area. Rides must be scheduled one day in advance.

River Cities Public Transit offers three different types of services including medical transportation, veterans' transportation, and youth transportation. Out-of-town fares for medical transportation to Sioux Falls, Mitchell, Chamberlain, Rapid City, and Fort Meade range from $40 to $100. River Cities Public Transit offers free transportation for veterans to VA medical appointments throughout much of the state, including parts of the Huron DOT Area. The Youth Services program offers children and young adults rides to extracurricular activities, the YMCA, and the Boys & Girls Club.

River Cities Public Transit also coordinates with multiple counties in the area to provide veterans with free transportation to VA medical appointments.

The five counties served by River Cities Public Transit in the Huron Area include:

- Hyde
- Hand
- Spink
- Clark
- Kingsbury

Fares for River Cities Public Transit are:

Category	Fare	Up to 10 miles	Over 10 miles
General Public	$2.00	$0.25/mile	$0.75/mile
Youth & Senior (suggested $2.00 donation for seniors)	$2.00	-	$0.25
Scheduled Same Day	$6.00	$0.50	$1.50

There is a $2.00 fee for each additional passenger going to the same location. Children under 3 ride free. This same fee is $6.00 for same-day scheduled rides.

Hyde County Transit

Hyde County Transit, operated by River Cities Public Transit, provides public transportation in the Highmore area and provides connections for out-of-town trips. In Highmore, transit services are available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Sunday (closed on Saturdays). through pre-scheduled (48 hours advanced notice) bookings. All trips are first come, first served based on driver availability.

Fares for Hyde County Transit services include:

Category	Fare
Local area of Highmore (Pre-Scheduled)	$1.00
- Youth Fare in-town & Holabird	$0.50
- Youth Fare to Harrold	$1.00
Out of Town Trips (minimum of 48 hours advance notice) *Trips are first come first served and based on driver availability*	$2.00 & $0.50/mile

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

People's Transit

- In addition to their demand-response services, People's Transit is a Medicaid Transportation Provider for non-emergency but medically necessary appointments.

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton

- Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton also provides transportation for medical appointments for Medicaid recipients at no cost. Rides are limited to the recipient's home and the medical facility.

River Cities Public Transit

- In addition to their demand-response services, River Cities Public Transit is a Medicaid Transportation Provider for non-emergency but medically necessary appointments, as well as veterans' appointments at VA centers.

Center for Independence

- The Center for Independence is a non-profit organization in Huron providing support and services to those with disabilities. Some services include supportive living, independent living, employment services and training, medical and behavioral services, nutrition assistance, as well as physical and occupational therapy.

Wheels and Meals Corporation

- Provides food and meal delivery in Huron for those unable to regularly leave their homes.

Home Instead

- Agency that provides in-home care to seniors in the Huron area. Some of the care they provide is for personal care, Alzheimer's, hospice, chronic illness, home helper, companionship, and transportation.

Sanford Health Clark Clinic

- The Sanford Health Clark Clinic is a city-owned healthcare clinic fully owned by the city of Clark. It is operated by Sanford health. This clinic provides primary care for the community through their physicians. The city owns a med van which it uses for patients of the clinic.

Good Samaritan Society

- Senior healthcare agency with multiple locations throughout South Dakota. The location in the Huron area is in Miller. They offer several different programs from senior living, long-term care, rehabilitation therapy, home-based services, caregiver support, and offer referrals to partners. Under their senior living programs, the independent living and assisted living programs offer transportation for residents.

Homecare Services

- Provider for at-home healthcare with several locations across South Dakota. The location in the Huron area is in Huron. They provide a wide range of services from healthcare needs to meals and grooming. Transportation for medical appointments and other trips such as grocery shopping and community activities are provided for patients.

Private Transportation Providers

Intercity Bus Services

There are a variety of intercity private transportation routes serving the Huron Area. Routes consist of interstate and intrastate connections from:

- Jefferson Lines
- People's Transit feeder service to Jefferson Lines

Taxi/Shuttle Providers

Using online research, the following taxi and shuttle providers were identified in the region:

- Fair City Taxi Co. LLC
- H&S Taxi Service

Watertown Area

Public Transit

The Watertown Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- Brookings Area Transit Authority (BATA Bus)
- Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton
- Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Department of Transportation
- River Cities Public Transit

Brookings Area Transit Authority (BATA Bus)

BATA Bus provides demand-response services within Brookings County to the general public. Customers must book rides one day in advance. The transit authority also provides a shuttle service to Sioux Falls three times per day with an advanced reservation. In addition to its local transit in Brookings County, Brookings Area Transit Authority manages two other transit services in different areas of the state. The Dells Xpress operates out of Dell Rapids. Freeman Community Transit operates in the greater Hutchinson County area.

Fares for BATA Bus services are:

Category	Fare
Within City Limits	$3.00
Same-day reservation (within city limits)	$9.00
Sioux Falls Shuttle Service (one-way or round-trip same day)	$30.00

BATA also serves as the Medicaid Transportation Provider for the Brookings area.

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton provides demand-response services for a large area consisting of 15 counties. The five counties served by Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton in the Watertown Area include:

- Codington
- Deuel
- Grant
- Hamlin
- Roberts

This covers over half of SDDOT Aberdeen Region and encompasses other DOT Areas within this region. Outside of the typical general public demand-response services, Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton provides Medicaid transportation, Nutrition Services, Special Services such as voting, and Medical Trips. The Medical Trips are carried out through a partnership with Prairie Lakes Hospital in the Watertown area. These Medical Trips are currently free of charge, as are the Special Services.

Fares for Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton are:

Category	Fare
Area 1 – Immediate Watertown Area	$3.00
Area 2 – Outlaying Service Area	$5.00
Area 3 – Extended Service Area	$8.00

Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Department of Transportation

Beginning in May 2022, the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Department of Transportation began running its own transit system. This system is made up of demand-response services that cover the Lake Traverse Reservation. The operating hours run from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm 7 days per week.

Category	Fare
Under 7 Miles	$3
Over 7 Miles	$5

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit also coordinates with one county in the area to provide veterans with free transportation to VA medical appointments. Within the Watertown Area, Deuel County is served by River Cities Public Transit's veterans service.

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Brookings Area Transit Authority (BATA Bus)

- In addition to their demand-response services, BATA is a Medicaid Transportation Provider for non-emergency but medically necessary appointments.

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton

- Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton also provides transportation for medical appointments for Medicaid recipients at no cost. Rides are limited to the recipient's home and the medical facility.

KSL Transportation

- Private company offering door-to-door non-emergency medical transportation for seniors and those with disabilities in the Watertown area. Trips can include local medical destinations or long-distance destinations. KSL can accommodate those with all mobility limitations.

Woodrow Wilson Keeble Memorial Health Center

- Located in Sisseton and part of the Indian Health Service, the health center provides non-emergency medical transportation to its qualifying patients.

New Horizons

- Human services agency serving the Watertown, Sisseton, and Milbank areas. New Horizons offers a range of health services from mental health resources, addiction and recovery, employment services. The agency provides transportation for those in need of their services.

Advance

- Non-profit organization in Brookings offering services and support for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Some of these services include residential services, medical services, employment services, and young adult services. Advance provides transportation for qualifying individuals.

Estelline Nursing and Care Center

- Nursing home that provides skilled nursing, healthcare, and residential services for patients in Estelline. The nursing home provides non-emergency medical transportation for its residents to reach their medical appointments.

Human Service Agency

- Non-profit organization that provides many different types of services with locations in Watertown, Sisseton, and Milbank. Through their different programs, Human Service Agency offers services for vocational training, mental health, addiction and rehabilitation, sober living, and developmental disabilities. Serentiy Hills is their halfway house and detox program that offers transportation on weekdays.

Edgewood Healthcare Brookings and Watertown

- Large regional senior living system operating throughout the upper Midwest. These facilities provide memory care, adult day services, short-term stays, and assisted living. Their assisted living facilities provide transportation for some trips and coordinate transportation for other trips.

Avantara Watertown

- Nursing homes located in Watertown and Brookings. A broad range of medical services are offered at this facility, some being complex medical services that would otherwise require a hospital visit. Avantara owns its own vehicle to transport patients to their medical appointments.

Good Samaritan Society

- Senior healthcare agency with multiple locations throughout South Dakota. The locations in the Watertown area are in Watertown and Clear Lake. They offer several different programs from senior living, long-term care, rehabilitation therapy, home-based services, caregiver support, and offer referrals to partners. Under their senior living programs, the independent living and assisted living programs offer transportation for residents.

Homecare Services

- Provider for at-home healthcare with several locations across South Dakota. The locations in the Watertown area are in Brookings and Watertown. They provide a wide range of services from healthcare needs to meals and grooming. Transportation for medical appointments and other trips such as grocery shopping and community activities are provided for patients.

Private Transportation Providers

Intercity Bus Services

There are a variety of intercity private transportation routes serving the Watertown Area. Routes consist of interstate and intrastate connections from:

- Jefferson Lines

Taxi/Shuttle Providers

Using online research, the following taxi and shuttle providers were identified in the region:

- Need a Ride LLC - Watertown
- Lake Area Taxi – Watertown
- Brookings Taxi - Brookings

Mitchell Region

Mitchell Area

Public Transit

The Mitchell Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- Palace Transit
- Yankton Sioux Tribe Transit
- Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit
- Freeman County Transit
- People's Transit
- River Cities Public Transit

Palace Transit

Palace Transit is the public transportation provider for the city of Mitchell, providing demand-response services for riders. Besides Mitchell, Palace Transit also serves the communities of Ethan and Mt. Vernon. Operating hours run Monday through Friday from 5:30 am to 8:00 pm, Saturday from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm and Sunday from 7:00 am to 2:00 pm. Trips must be scheduled the day before by 4:00 pm. Palace Transit is also a Medicaid Transportation Provider.

Fares for Palace Transit are:

Category	One-Way Fare
M-F 5:30am-7:00am	$3
M-F 7:00am-5:00pm	$2
M-F 5:00pm-6:00pm	$3
Saturday & Sunday	$3
Same-Day Rides	$10

Yankton Sioux Tribe Transit

Yankton Sioux Tribe Transit provides public transportation for the Yankton Sioux Tribe in and around the city of Wagner. Rides must be scheduled one business day in advance. Operating hours run from 5:45 am to 11:25 pm on weekdays with no weekend service. Outside of Wagner, some areas served include the Fort Randall Casino, Marty, Lake Andes, and Ravinia.

Fares for Yankton Sioux Tribe Transit are:

Category	Fare
One-way	$1.00

Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit

Rural Office of Community Services is a service-oriented private non-profit agency that serves south-central and south-east South Dakota. The counties served by Rural Office of Community Services Transit in the Mitchell Area include:

- Aurora
- Lincoln
- Brule
- Gregory
- Miner
- Hutchinson
- Charles Mix
- Jerauld

Along with many of their other programs, Rural Office of Community Services offers demand-response transportation to the general public. Despite the large service area, the main office is in Wagner but there are outreach offices all over south-central and south-eastern South Dakota including Yankton and Mitchell. The operating hours run from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. Passengers must schedule their rides 24 hours in advance.

Fares for Rural Office of Community Services are:

Category	One-Way	Round Trip
General Public	$2	$4
Seniors (60+)	Suggested donation	-

Freeman Community Transit

Freeman Community Transit is the public transit provider for Hutchinson County. This transit agency is managed by Brookings Area Transit Authority. They provide demand-response services for the Hutchinson County area. Service hours consist of 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. The fare for a one-way ride is $1.50 within Freeman city limits. Passengers must call dispatch for out-of-town rates.

People's Transit

People's Transit is the provider of public transit services in the Huron area, offering demand-response transportation to community members.

Fares for People's Transit are:

Category	One-Way Fare	10 Tokens	20 Tokens
General Public	$3.50	$35.00	$70.00
Youth (3-17)	$2.50	$25.00	$50.00
Seniors (suggested donation)	$2.50	$25.00	$50.00
Outside City Limits (up to 3 miles)	$4.50	$45.00	$90.00
Children (0-3)	Free	Free	Free

Outside of the service area of Beadle and Sanborn Counties, People's Transit offers out of town service to several cities in South Dakota for the following fares including:

Area	Out-of-Town Fare
Sioux Falls	$125
Mitchell	$75
Aberdeen	$125
Brookings	$125
Watertown	$125
DeSmet	$50
Howard	$75
Wessington Springs	$75

People's Transit has a token program so that customers can pay for several rides in advance, as seen in the table above. The agency serves as a feeder service to Jefferson Lines, the intercity bus carrier. People's Transit provides a connection to Jefferson Lines in Mitchell on Tuesdays and Fridays only. People's Transit also serves as the Medicaid Transportation Provider for the Huron area.

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit coordinates with multiple counties in the area to provide veterans with free transportation to VA medical appointments. The eight counties served by River Cities Public Transit in the Mitchell Area include:

- Buffalo
- Jerauld
- Sanborn
- Miner
- Brule
- Aurora
- Douglas
- Gregory

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Ability Building Services, Inc.

- Private non-profit organization that focuses on community service for seniors and those with disabilities. Located in Yankton, they provide general transportation for their clients. These trips can include non-emergency medical trips, trips for shopping or recreation, and trips to programs held by Ability Building Services, Inc.

Wagner HIS Health Care Facility

- Healthcare and service provider for American Indians. This healthcare facility, located in Wagner, facilitates non-emergency medical transportation for those in need.

Home Instead

- Agency that provides in-home care to seniors in the Huron area. Some of the care they provide is for personal care, Alzheimer's, hospice, chronic illness, home helper, companionship, and transportation.

LifeQuest

- Non-profit agency that offers many different types of services to those with developmental disabilities in the Mitchell area. Some of these programs include residential services, day services, career connections, and community life services. They own a vehicle that they use to transport clients for medical and non-medical trips.

Homecare Services

- Provider for at-home healthcare with several locations across South Dakota. The location in the Mitchell area is Mitchell. They provide a wide range of services from healthcare needs to meals and grooming. Transportation for medical appointments and other trips such as grocery shopping and community activities are provided for patients.

Private Transportation Providers

Intercity Bus Services

There are a variety of intercity private transportation routes serving the Mitchell Area. Routes consist of interstate and intrastate connections from:

- Jefferson Lines

Taxi/Shuttle Providers

Using online research, the following taxi and shuttle providers were identified in the region:

- EZ Ride Taxi - Mitchell
- Speedy Taxi - Mitchell

Sioux Falls Area

Public Transit

The Sioux Falls Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- Sioux Area Metro (SAM)
- Brandon City Transit
- East Dakota Transit Inc.
- Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit
- River Cities Public Transit

Sioux Area Metro (SAM)

Sioux Area Metro (SAM) is the public transit provider for the city of Sioux Falls. SAM operates fixed route bus service, ADA paratransit service, and on-demand micro transit service. Operating hours for SAM are weekdays from 5:45 am to 9:15 pm, and Saturdays from 7:45 am to 2:45 pm. There is currently no Sunday service.

Fixed Route

The fixed routes mostly operate as a hub and spoke system, with routes radiating from the downtown bus terminal outward across the city. The one exception to this design is Route 11, the Southwest Circulator. Route 11 serves the Southwest Transit Center, The Empire Mall, as well as other major shopping centers. Frequencies generally range from every 30 to 60 minutes on most routes, with 30-minute frequencies on major routes during peak periods. Children under 5 ride free with an adult, and youth under 18 ride free with a valid school ID. Veterans also can ride fixed routes free of charge.

Paratransit

SAM operates its paratransit for those with disabilities that prevent them from using the fixed route buses. The paratransit service operates within ¾ of a mile around all of SAM's fixed routes. Paratransit passengers must be eligible for this service and schedule rides ahead of time. Operating hours run from 5:15 am to 7:15 pm on weekdays and 7:30 am to 7:00 pm on weekends for the entire service area. There is a dedicated area, closer to the urban core, where ADA paratransit runs until 9:15 pm, or 9:30 pm if coming from the area around Route 6. The fare for paratransit services is $2.50.

Via SAM on Demand

Via SAM on Demand is on-demand service, or micro transit service operated by SAM. This service functions like a ride share service, such as Uber or Lyft, where customers download an application on their smartphone and reserve a ride through the app. Customers wait at their location where they will be picked up by a van. Wheelchair accessible vans are available. On weekdays this on-demand service operates in the southeastern area of the city, which has much less bus service than the rest of the city. On weekends, the on-demand service area expands to cover the entire city of Sioux Falls. Fares for Via SAM on Demand are $1.50 per ride. Children under 5 ride fare free and youth under 18 ride free with a valid school ID. The operating hours are similar to the fixed route bus service, running from 5:45 am to 9:15 pm on weekdays and 7:45 am to 2:45 pm on weekends.

Fares for Sioux Area Metro are:

Category	One-Way Fare	10-Ride Pass	1-Day Pass	7-Day Pass	30-day Pass
General Public	$1.50	$10.50	$3	$12.50	$30
Children under 5 (with adult)	Free	-	-	-	-
Youth under 18 (with valid school ID)	Free	-	-	-	-
Seniors (over 65)	$0.75	-	$1.50	$6.25	$15
Persons with disabilities and Medicare	$0.75	-	$1.50	$6.25	$15

Brandon City Transit

The City of Brandon operates Brandon City Transit, which is managed by the Rural Office of Community Services, Inc (ROCS). This is a demand-response system which requires passengers to schedule rides a day in advance. This service is open to the general public and operates within the city limits of Brandon. Brandon City Transit is also a Medicaid Transportation Provider. Operating hours are weekdays from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm.

Fares for Brandon City Transit are:

Category	Fare
One-way	$2.00
Round Trip	$4.00
Seniors (60+)	Suggested Donation

East Dakota Transit, Inc.

East Dakota Transit is a demand-response transit system that operates out of Madison. While this service is utilized primarily by seniors and those with disabilities, it is open to the general public. The service is free of charge for seniors (60+) for trips in town.

Fares for East Dakota Transit are:

Category	One-Way	20 Rides
General Public	$2.00	$40
Seniors (60+)	Free in town	-

Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit

Rural Office of Community Services is a service-oriented private non-profit agency that serves south-central and south-east South Dakota. The areas served by Rural Office of Community Services Transit in this area include:

- Canton
- Moody County
- Lake County
- Minnehaha County

Along with many of their other programs, Rural Office of Community Services offers demand-response transportation to the general public. Despite the large service area, the main office is in Wagner but there are outreach offices all over south-central and south-eastern South Dakota including Yankton and Mitchell. The operating hours run from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. Passengers must schedule their rides 24 hours in advance.

Fares for Rural Office of Community Services are:

Category	One-Way	Round Trip
General Public	$2	$4
Seniors (60+)	Suggested donation	-

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit coordinates with multiple counties in the state to provide veterans with free transportation to VA medical appointments. Within the Sioux Falls Area, Miner County is served by River Cities Public Transit's veteran's service.

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Avera Mckennan Hospital & University Health Center

- Major healthcare provider in South and North Dakotas, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Iowa. Mckennan Hospital is Avera's flagship hospital. Avera provides funding to other non-profits to provide medical transportation to its patients. Some of these agencies that Avera funds include Project CAR, which will be discussed below, River Cities Public Transit, and Aberdeen Ride Line.

LifeScape

- Healthcare and service provider for children and adults with disabilities and rehabilitation needs. LifeScape operates out of Sioux Falls and Rapid City. Services cover a wide range of disability and rehabilitation needs from mild to complex. Transportation for patients is coordinated through several of the local transit operators and other human service agencies.

South Dakota Head Start Association - Yankton

- Provides children with educational, nutritional, and developmental services. The Yankton program is part of the South Central Head Start Service Area. This Head Start program provides transportation for children going to and from classes in Yankton. The program owns the bus it uses.

Project CAR

- Non-profit transportation agency and faith-based ministry in Sioux Falls. Services are targeted at seniors and those with disabilities and other medical conditions. Transportation is coordinated through a network of social service agencies and churches. While Project CAR owns its fleet of five vehicles, all their drivers are volunteers.

Southeastern Behavioral Healthcare

- Private non-profit agency that focuses on mental well-being for adults and children in Lincoln, McCook, Minnehaha, and Turner counties. Services include counseling, therapy, activities, homeless outreach, and substance use disorder services and housing. The agency provides transportation for medical appointments.

Volunteers of America, Dakotas of Sioux Falls

- Faith-based non-profit organization providing support services for those with behavioral and mental health needs, those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, homelessness, and children and families.

Helpline Center

- Non-profit agency that provides resources for those in mental health crisis, suicide crisis, and substance abuse crisis. The Helpline Center also coordinates with individuals and agencies to provide resources for housing, food, shelter, and support groups among other things. For transportation needs, Helpline Center has its 211 Transportation program which coordinates with Lyft Concierge to connect individuals with the resources they need.

Good Samaritan Society

- Senior healthcare agency with multiple locations throughout South Dakota. The locations in the Sioux Falls area are in Howard and Sioux Falls. They offer several different programs from senior living, long-term care, rehabilitation therapy, home-based services, caregiver support, and offer referrals to partners. Under their senior living programs, the independent living and assisted living programs offer transportation for residents.

Sioux Falls Primary Homecare Services

- Company that specializes in at-home care for seniors with a variety of health needs. Sioux Falls Primary Homecare Services helps out with not only medical needs, but also basic homecare needs such as laundry and meal preparation. They provide transportation for medical and non-medical needs.

Wheelchair Express Sioux Falls

- Company that provides non-emergency medical transportation. Wheelchair Express Sioux Falls can provide transportation that has vehicles that can accommodate wheelchairs and stretchers.

Bethany Home

- Non-profit senior living facility with two locations in Sioux Falls and Brandon. Transportation is provided for residents for medical and general-purpose trips.

Synergy HomeCare

- Home care company that provides onsite care with locations across the nation. A wide range of services are available including care and companionship, fall and injury prevention, health and wellness, and transportation for medical and general-purpose trips.

Meadows on Sycamore

- Assisted living center in Sioux Falls that provides medical services, meals, and lodgings for its residents. Transportation for non-emergency medical and general-purpose trips is provided for its residents.

Homecare Services

- Provider for at-home healthcare with several locations across South Dakota. The locations in the Sioux Falls area are Sioux Falls and Madison. They provide a wide range of services from healthcare needs to meals and grooming. Transportation for medical appointments and other trips such as grocery shopping and community activities are provided for patients.

Trail Ridge

- Senior Living community located in Sioux Falls. They provide many different services from independent living to assisted living. Through their assisted living program, they provide transportation services for their residents.

Siouxland Paratransit Services

- A private transportation provider in Brandon that provides non-emergency medical transportation for its clients. Siouxland Paratransit Services operates a wheelchair accessible minivan.

Sioux Falls Wheelchair Transit Plus+

- A private company that provides transportation for non-emergency medical and general-purpose trips in Sioux Falls and the immediate area.

Bethel Assisted Living

- Assisted living facility in Madison. Bethel Assisted Living owns a vehicle that it uses to take residents to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and social outings.

Valiant

- A non-profit agency that specializes in care for those with developmental disabilities. They own a wheelchair accessible van that is used to transport their residents.

Private Transportation Providers

Intercity Bus Services

There are a variety of intercity private transportation routes serving the Sioux Falls Area. Routes consist of interstate and intrastate connections from:

- Jefferson Lines

Taxi/Shuttle Providers

Using online research, the following taxi and shuttle providers were identified in the region:

- Sioux Falls Taxi Service
- Best Taxi
- A to B Taxi
- Reliable Taxi Service
- Surf Taxi
- Midwest Taxi Service 24/7
- Uber
- Lyft

Yankton Area

Public Transit

The Yankton Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- Vermillion Public Transit
- Yankton Transit
- Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit
- Freeman Community Transit
- Sioux City Transit

Vermillion Public Transit

Vermillion Public Transit is a demand-response transit system administered through the Southeast South Dakota Activity Center, or SESDAC. Like many other demand-response systems, Vermillion Public Transit mostly caters to seniors and those with disabilities. The scheduling office hours are Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm, then 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm with an hour break in between. There is no weekend service. Rides must be scheduled at least one day in advance. Fares for Vermillion Public Transit are:

Category	One-Way Fare
Prescheduled	$3
Same Day	$6
Punch Ticket	$60
VIP Pass	$85
Out of Town	
Burbank & coffee cup	$9
Yankton	
1 Rider	$70
2 Riders	$56
3 Riders	$42
4+ Riders	$28
Dakota Dunes	
1 Rider	$85
2 Riders	$68
3 Riders	$51
Sioux Falls	
1 Rider	$135
2 Riders	$108
3 Riders	$81
4+ Riders	$64

Yankton Transit

Yankton Transit is a non-profit agency that provides public transportation in and around the city of Yankton. While many of its riders are seniors and those with disabilities, it is open to all members of the public. Rides must be scheduled one business day in advance. Operating hours run from 5:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekdays with no weekend service. Yankton Transit is also a Medicaid Transportation Provider.

Fares for Yankton Transit are:

Category	Fare
One-way (within city limits)	$2.50
20 Rides	$50
10 Rides	$25

Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit

Rural Office of Community Services is a service-oriented private non-profit agency that serves south-central and south-east South Dakota. Along with many of their other programs, Rural Office of Community Services offers demand-response transportation to the general public. Despite the large service area, the main office is in Wagner but there are outreach offices all over south-central and south-eastern South Dakota including Yankton and Mitchell. The operating hours run from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. Passengers must schedule their rides 24 hours in advance.

Fares for Rural Office of Community Services are:

Category	One-Way	Round Trip
General Public	$2	$4
Seniors (60+)	Suggested donation	-

Freeman Community Transit

Freeman Community Transit is the public transit provider for Hutchinson County. This transit agency is managed by Brookings Area Transit Authority. They provide demand-response services for the Hutchinson County area. Service hours consist of 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. The fare for a one-way ride is $1.50 within Freeman city limits. Passengers must call dispatch for out-of-town rates.

Sioux City Transit

Sioux City Transit is the public transit system of Sioux City, IA, providing fixed route and paratransit services for the city. While the majority of this system serves Sioux City Iowa, there is one route that crosses the border and serves North Sioux City, SD. Route 5 – Riverside makes a loop around North Sioux City, SD.

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Angelhaus

- Formerly known as Autumn Winds, this is an assisted living facility in Yankton with two wings, east and west. The east building is for senior living and the west building is for memory care services. Along with offering assistance booking trips through Yankton Transit, Angelhaus also has one wheelchair accessible van for medical trips.

Ability Building Services

- Non-profit community support agency in Yankton. They provide vocational training, residential services, as well as transportation to and from their day programs and residential facilities.

Avera Sacred Heart's Majestic Bluffs

- Senior living and hospice facility in Yankton administered by the Avera healthcare system. Majestic Bluffs provides transportation for medical trips as well as day activities.

Wagner HIS Health Care Facility

- Healthcare and service provider for American Indians. This healthcare facility, located in Wagner, facilitates non-emergency medical transportation for those in need.

Good Samaritan Society

- Senior healthcare agency with multiple locations throughout South Dakota. The locations in the Yankton area are in Scotland and Tyndall. They offer several different programs from senior living,

long-term care, rehabilitation therapy, home-based services, caregiver support, and offer referrals to partners. Under their senior living programs, the independent living and assisted living programs offer transportation for residents.

Autumn Wings Nursing Home

- Nursing home located in Yankton. Autmn Wings will provide assistance with coordinating travel for its residents who use Yankton Transit or taxis. The nursing home has a wheelchair accessible van that is used to transport residents to their medical appointments.

Lewis and Clark Behavioral Health Services

- Agency that focuses on rehabilitation programs and education, children's services, and drug and alcohol treatment services. They provide these services through outpatient medical programs. Clients and residents can utilize Yankton Transit, which Lewis and Clark Behavioral Health Services pays for on a monthly basis.

South Dakota Head Start Association – Yankton

- Head Start program located in Yankton and Vermillion. The program owns and operates a bus for children in its program.

Private Transportation Providers

Intercity Bus Services

There are a variety of intercity private transportation routes serving the Yankton Area. Routes consist of interstate and intrastate connections from:

- Jefferson Lines

Taxi/Shuttle Providers

Using online research, the following taxi and shuttle providers were identified in the region:

- Shuttle Express - Yankton
- Need-a-Ride Yankton

Pierre Region

Mobridge Area

Public Transit

The Mobridge Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- River Cities Public Transit
- Standing Rock Public Transit
- Community Transit of Watertown & Sisseton

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit is the public transportation provider for the Pierre region, but its coverage extends into the Huron Area. River Cities Public Transit provides demand-response transportation for the general public, medical trips, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and low-income individuals. The agency is also a Medicaid Transportation Provider for the area. Rides must be scheduled one day in advance. In the Mobridge Area, River Cities Public Transit serves Dewey and Ziebach counties.

River Cities Public Transit offers three different types of services including medical transportation, veterans' transportation, and youth transportation. Out-of-town fares for medical transportation to Sioux Falls, Mitchell, Chamberlain, Rapid City, and Fort Meade range from $40 to $100. River Cities Public Transit offers free transportation for veterans to VA medical appointments throughout much of the state, including parts of the Huron DOT Area. The Youth Services program offers children and young adults rides to extracurricular activities, the YMCA, and the Boys & Girls Club.

River Cities Public Transit coordinates with multiple counties in the area to provide veterans with free transportation to VA medical appointments. The three counties served by River Cities Public Transit in the Mobridge area include:

- Campbell
- Dewey
- Ziebach

Fares for River Cities Public Transit are:

Category	Fare	Up to 10 miles	Over 10 miles
General Public	$2.00	$0.25/mile	$0.75/mile
Youth & Senior (suggested $2.00 donation for seniors)	$2.00	-	$0.25
Scheduled Same Day	$6.00	$0.50	$1.50

There is a $2.00 fee for each additional passenger going to the same location. Children under 3 ride free. This same fee is $6.00 for same-day scheduled rides.

Standing Rock Public Transit

Standing Rock Public Transit is the public transit provider for north-central South Dakota and south-central North Dakota. The agency provides a few different types of service including demand-response, intercity, and trips to the Fort Meade Veterans Medical Center in South Dakota and the Fargo Veterans Medical Center in North Dakota. Despite being dial-a-ride service, there are several flexible routes that Standing Rock Public Transit uses. For the intercity bus connection, a shuttle is provided from Mobridge to Bismark, ND where passengers can connect to Jefferson Lines, the intercity bus carrier.

Community Transit of Watertown & Sisseton

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton provides demand-response services for a large area consisting of the following 15 counties. In the Mobridge Area, only Campbell County is served by Community Transit of Watertown & Sisseton. Outside of the typical general public demand-response services, Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton provides Medicaid transportation, Nutrition Services, Special Services such as voting, and Medical Trips.

Fares for Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton are:

Category	Fare
Area 1 – Immediate Watertown Area	$3.00
Area 2 – Outlaying Service Area	$5.00
Area 3 – Extended Service Area	$8.00

Cheyenne River Sioux Transit

Cheyenne River Sioux Transit, operated by River Cities Public Transit, provides public transportation for areas within the Cheyenne River Reservation. As a demand-response system, customers schedule rides at least one day in advance. Operating hours for the Eagle Butte area run from 5:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday and 6:00 am to 3:00 pm Saturday. Fares are $1 and $2 for same-day rides.

Cheynne River Sioux Transit operates fixed loop routes that originate in Eagle Butte and serve the outlying communities. A list of communities served and fares from Eagle Butte can be found below.

Community	Scheduled	Taxi
Bear Creek	$4.00	$7.00
Green Grass	$4.00	$7.00
Lantry	$4.00	$7.00
Dupree	$5.00	$8.00
Firesteel	$5.00	$8.00
Laplante	$5.00	$8.00
Red Elm	$5.00	$8.00
Ridgeview	$5.00	$8.00
Cherry Creek	$6.00	$9.00
Glenncross	$6.00	$9.00
Iron Lighting	$6.00	$9.00
Isabel	$6.00	$9.00
Marksville	$6.00	$9.00
Swiftbird	$6.00	$9.00
Thunder Butte	$6.00	$9.00
Timber Lake	$6.00	$9.00
Whitehorse	$6.00	$9.00
Blackfoot	$7.00	$10.00
Glad Valley	$7.00	$10.00
Promise	$7.00	$10.00
Red Scaffold	$7.00	$10.00
Takini	$7.00	$10.00
Trail City	$7.00	$10.00
Bridger	$8.00	$11.00

Medical transportation is also available through Cheyenne River Sioux Transit. Special trips to Pierre, Rapid City, and Mobridge (to connect to Standing Rock Transit) are available. These medical trips are available Monday through Friday, except the trip to Mobridge which is only available from Monday through Thursday with 48-hour notice and dependent on driver availability.

Fares are as follows:

Category	Fare (One-Way
Medical Trips to Pierre	$25
Medical Trips to Rapid City	$35
Eagle Butte to Mobridge (to connect to Standing Rock)	$10

Additionally, there is also shuttle service between Bismarck, ND, Fort Yates, ND, Mobridge, SD, Timber Lake, SD, McLaughlin, SD and Eagle Butte, SD. The fares for these shuttles can be found below.

City Pair	Fare
Bismarck – Fort Yates	$11.00
Bismarck – Mobridge	$20.00
Bismarck – Timber Lake	$26.00
Bismarck – Eagle Butte	$40.00
Eagle Butte – Timber Lake	$6.00
Eagle Butte – Mobridge	$20.00
Eagle Butte – Fort Yates	$30.00
Eagle Butte – Bismarck	$40.00
Fort Yates – Mobridge	$10.00
Fort Yates – Timber Lake	$24.00
Fort Yates – Eagle Butte	$30.00
McLaughlin – Mobridge	$6.00
McLaughlin – Timber Lake	$19.00
McLaughlin – Eagle Butte	$25.00
Mobridge – Timber Lake	$14.00

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Cheyenne River Health Center – Indian Health Service

- Healthcare and service provider for American Indians. This healthcare facility, located in Eagle Butte, facilitates non-emergency medical transportation for those in need

Good Samaritan Society

- Senior healthcare agency with multiple locations throughout South Dakota. The location in the Mobridge area is in Herreid. They offer several different programs from senior living, long-term care, rehabilitation therapy, home-based services, caregiver support, and offer referrals to partners. Under their senior living programs, the independent living and assisted living programs offer transportation for residents.

Homecare Services

- Provider for at-home healthcare with several locations across South Dakota. The location in the Mobridge area is in Mobridge. They provide a wide range of services from healthcare needs to meals and grooming. Transportation for medical appointments and other trips such as grocery shopping and community activities are provided for patients.

South Dakota Parent Connection

- A private non-profit agency that provides a wide variety of services to families who have a child (under the age of 26) with disabilities or special healthcare needs. Under their American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, transportation is one of the many services provided under this program. There are several locations across the state. In the Mobridge Area, they have offices in Dewey, Ziebach, and Corson counties.

Private Transportation Providers

Intercity Bus Services

There are a variety of intercity private transportation routes serving the Mobridge Area. Routes consist of interstate and intrastate connections from:

- Jefferson Lines

Standing Rock Transit and River Cities Public Transit both provide feeder services to connect to Jefferson Lines in Bismarck.

Pierre Area

Public Transit

The Pierre Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- River Cities Public Transit
- Haakon County Prairie Transit
- Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Red Tail Express Transit

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit is the public transportation provider for the Pierre region, but its coverage extends into the Huron Area. River Cities Public Transit provides demand-response transportation for the general public, medical trips, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and low-income individuals. River Cities Public Transit is also a Medicaid Transportation Provider for the area. Rides must be scheduled one day in advance. In the Pierre Area, River Cities Public Transit serves Haakon, Stanley, Hughes, Jones, Lyman, Sully and Potter counties.

River Cities Public Transit offers three different types of services including medical transportation, veterans' transportation, and youth transportation. River Cities Public Transit offers free transportation for veterans to VA medical appointments throughout much of the state, including parts of the Huron DOT Area. The Youth Services program offers children and young adults rides to extracurricular activities, the YMCA, and the Boys & Girls Club.

River Cities Public Transit coordinates with multiple counties in the area to provide veterans with free transportation to VA medical appointments. The counties in the Pierre Area which River Cities Public Transit coordinates with include:

- Haakon
- Stanley
- Jackson
- Jones
- Lyman
- Sully
- Potter

Fares for River Cities Public Transit are:

Category	Fare	Up to 10 miles	Over 10 miles
General Public	$2.00	$0.25/mile	$0.75/mile
Youth & Senior (suggested $2.00 donation for seniors)	$2.00	-	$0.25
Scheduled Same Day	$6.00	$0.50	$1.50

Fares for Medical Transport for River Cities Public Transit:

Area	Out-of-Town Medical Fare (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)	Out-of-Town Medical Fare (Tuesday and Thursday)
Sioux Falls	$100	$40
Mitchell	$100	$40
Chamberlain	$100	$40
Rapid City	$40	$100
Fort Meade	$40	$100

There is a $2.00 fee for each additional passenger going to the same location. Children under 3 ride free. This same fee is $6.00 for same-day scheduled rides.

Haakon County Prairie Transit

Haakon County Prairie Transit, operated by River Cities Public Transit, provides service in the local Philip area and out of town trips to Pierre and Rapid City. Service is available from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday; Saturday and Sunday service is available with 48-hours advanced reservations – all trips are first come, first served based on driver availability.

Fares for River Cities Public Transit's Bennett County service include:

Category	Fare
Local area of Philip	$2.00
- Youth Fares	$1.00
From Philiip to Midland or Kadoka (round-trip)	$10
From Philip to Kadoka / Belvidere / Wanblee (round-trip)	$20 on M-W-F $30 on T-Th
From Philip to Pierre (round-trip)	$40
From Kadoka to Kyle (round-trip)	$30
From Kadoka to Rapid City (round-trip)	$40
From Kadoka to Pierre (round-trip)	$40
From Philip to Rapid City / Ft. Meade (round-trip)	$30 on T-Th $50 on M-W-F

Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Red Tail Express Transit

Red Tail Express Transit, administered by the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, is the public transit system for the Lower Brule Reservation. This agency provides demand-response services on the reservation as well as shuttles to areas off the reservation. Hours of operation run from 7:00 am to 7:30 pm weekdays.

Fares for Red Tail Express Transit:

Category	Fare	Tickets
General Public	$1.00	$10.00
Senior	$0.50	$5.00

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Dakota Milestones

- Private non-profit agency in Chamberlain that provides support services for people with developmental disabilities. These services include developing working and living skills in a community setting.

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) – Department of Veterans Affairs

- The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) program offers free transportation to veterans through the Department of Veteran's Affairs. This program has a fleet of vehicles around the state to serve the needs of disabled veterans.

Homecare Services

- Provider for at-home healthcare with several locations across South Dakota. The location in the Pierre area is in Pierre. They provide a wide range of services from healthcare needs to meals and grooming. Transportation for medical appointments and other trips such as grocery shopping and community activities are provided for patients.

VistaCare

- Agency with multiple locations throughout the Midwest that provides support and care services to those with developmental disabilities. VistaCare provides many different types of services for its clients. Through its Support at Home program, they provide transportation for medical appointments.

Western Resources for Independent Living

- Non-profit agency the aids people with disabilities to achieve independence and self-determination. There are three locations in South Dakota which are Pierre, Rapid City, and Spearfish. Some of their services include peer support, independent living skills, home modifications, housing, employment services and transportation services.

South Dakota Parent Connection

- A private non-profit agency that provides a wide variety of services to families who have a child (under the age of 26) with disabilities or special healthcare needs. Under their American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, transportation is one of the many services provided under this program. There are several locations across the state. In the Pierre Area, they have an office in Lyman County.

Private Transportation Providers

Intercity Bus Services

There are a variety of intercity private transportation routes serving the Pierre Area. Routes consist of interstate and intrastate connections from:

- Jefferson Lines
- River Cities Public Transit offers feeder service from Pierre to Vivian to connect to Jefferson Lines.

Taxi/Shuttle Providers

Using online research, the following taxi and shuttle providers were identified in the region:

- Uber – mainly the Pierre area
- Lyft – Entire area

Winner Area

Public Transit

The Winner Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- Rosebud Sioux Tribe Transit
- Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Red Tail Express Transit
- Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit
- River Cities Public Transit
- Martin and Bennett County Transit

Rosebud Sioux Tribe Transit

Rosebud Sioux Tribe Transit is the tribal transit agency that serves the Rosebud Reservation and Mellette County. This is a demand-response transportation service for tribal members.

Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Red Tail Express Transit

Red Tail Express Transit, administered by the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, is the public transit system for the Lower Brule Reservation. This agency provides demand-response services on the reservation as well as shuttles to areas off the reservation. Hours of operation run from 7:00 am to 7:30 pm weekdays.

Fares for Red Tail Express Transit:

Category	Fare	Tickets
General Public	$1.00	$10.00
Senior	$0.50	$5.00

Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit

Rural Office of Community Services is a service-oriented private non-profit agency that serves south-central and south-east South Dakota. Within the Winner Area, only Tripp County is served. Along with many of their other programs, Rural Office of Community offers demand-response transportation to the general public. Despite the large service area, the main office is in Wagner but there are outreach offices all over south-central and south-eastern South Dakota including Yankton and Mitchell. The operating hours run from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. Passengers must schedule their rides 24 hours in advance. Fares for Rural Office of Community are:

Category	One-Way	Round Trip
General Public	$2	$4
Seniors (60+)	Suggested donation	-

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit is the public transportation provider for the Pierre Area, but its coverage extends into the Winner Area. River Cities Public Transit provides demand-response transportation for the general public, medical trips, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and low-income individuals. River Cities Public Transit is also a Medicaid Transportation Provider for the area. Rides must be scheduled one day in advance. The six counties served by River Cities Public Transit in the Winner Area include:

- Bennett
- Jackson
- Jones
- Lyman
- Mellette
- Todd

River Cities Public Transit offers three different types of services including medical transportation, veterans' transportation, and youth transportation. Out-of-town fares for medical transportation to Sioux Falls, Mitchell, Chamberlain, Rapid City, and Fort Meade range from $40 to $100. River Cities Public Transit offers free transportation for veterans to VA medical appointments throughout much of the state, including parts of the Winner Area. The Youth Services program offers children and young adults rides to extracurricular activities, the YMCA, and the Boys & Girls Club.

River Cities Public Transit coordinates with multiple counties in the area to provide veterans with free transportation to VA medical appointments. The seven counties served by River Cities Public Transit in the Winner Area include Jackson, Bennett, Jones, Mellette, Lyman, Tripp and Todd.

Fares for Medical Transport for River Cities Public Transit:

Area	Out-of-Town Medical Fare (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)	Out-of-Town Medical Fare (Tuesday and Thursday)
Sioux Falls	$100	$40
Mitchell	$100	$40
Chamberlain	$100	$40
Rapid City	$40	$100
Fort Meade	$40	$100

Fares for River Cities Public Transit are:

Category	Fare	Up to 10 miles	Over 10 miles
General Public	$2.00	$0.25/mile	$0.75/mile
Youth & Senior (suggested $2.00 donation for seniors)	$2.00	-	$0.25
Scheduled Same Day	$6.00	$0.50	$1.50

There is a $2.00 fee for each additional passenger going to the same location. Children under 3 ride free. This same fee is $6.00 for same-day scheduled rides

Martin and Bennett County Transit

Martin and Bennett County Transit, operated by River Cities Public Transit, provides in-town, local service in Martin and Bennett County along with regional trips to Rapid City, etc. In Martin, transit services are available from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday through pre-scheduled (48 hours advanced notice) bookings. All trips are first come, first served based on driver availability.

Fares for River Cities Public Transit's Bennett County service include:

Category	Fare
Local area of Martin	$2.00
- Youth Fares (Ages 4-17 Years)	$1.00
- Ages 3 and Under Ride Free	-
From Martin to Mission (round-trip)	$20
From Martin to Pine Ridge (round-trip)	$20
From Martin to Pierre (round-trip)	$50
From Martin to Winner (round-trip)	$40
From Martin to Rapid City / Ft. Meade (round-trip) *Schedule Doctor Appointments between 10am-2pm*	$40

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Rosebud Service Unit – Indian Health Service

Healthcare and service provider for American Indians. This healthcare facility, located in Rosebud, facilitates non-emergency medical transportation.

South Dakota Parent Connection

- A private non-profit agency that provides a wide variety of services to families who have a child (under the age of 26) with disabilities or special healthcare needs. Under their American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, transportation is one of the many services provided under this program. There are several locations across the state. In the Winner Area, they have offices in Bennett, Jackson, and Lyman counties.

Rapid City Region

Belle Fourche Area

Public Transit

The Belle Fourche Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- Prairie Hills Transit
- River Cities Public Transit

Prairie Hills Transit

Prairie Hills Transit is the public transportation provider for much of the western portion of South Dakota, including all areas of SDDOT Rapid City Region. It is the only public transit provider in the Belle Fourche area. Prairie Hills Transit's service area encompasses 8 counties in western South Dakota. The agency provides demand-response services in which customers must schedule rides one day in advance. Due to the large service area, there are some city-to-city routes that run daily or on certain days of the week, along with the demand-response service that is focused on the few cities in the region. In the Belle Fourche Area, there are two routes that run from Belle Fourche to Rapid City and Spearfish. Then there are routes that run from Newell, Vale, or Nisland to Rapid City or to Belle Fourche, Spearfish, or Sturgis.

Operating hours vary widely depending on the city or town. Generally, the operating hours are from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, with some routes ending at 12:00 pm and others running as late as 7:00 pm. Prairie Hills Transit also provides transportation for veterans for VA-related medical trips. Youth transportation is also provided for various activities including summer activities and school transportation, with the purchase of a pass. Prairie Hills is an authorized Medicaid Transportation Provider for South Dakota recipients. Passengers wishing to make long distance trips using the intercity bus carrier Jefferson Lines can purchase tickets at the Prairie Hills Transit Center in Spearfish.

Fares also vary widely depending on the distance of the trip and the origin. Generally, the fare for local trip is $2 for one-way and $2.50 for a one-way trip within the Deadwood-Central City-Lead-Pluma corridor. The city-to-city fare generally runs around $10, but the charts below break down the pricing for trips in the Northern Hills and Southern Hills areas.

NORTHERN HILLS

CITY TO CITY	Rapid City	Spearfish	Belle Fourche	Newell	Nisland	Vale	Sturgis	Whitewood	St. Onge	Lead Central City
Rapid City		$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Spearfish	$10.00		$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00	$10.00
Belle Fourche	$10.00	$5.00		$10.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Newell	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00		$5.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$8.00	$10.00
Nisland	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00		$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Vale	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00		$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Sturgis	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00		$5.00	$5.00	$10.00
Whitewood	$10.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00		$5.00	$10.00
St. Onge	$10.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00		$5.00
Deadwood Lead Central City	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	

SOUTHERN HILLS

CITY TO CITY	Rapid City	Custer	Hot Springs	Edgemont
Rapid City		$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Custer	$10.00		$10.00	$10.00
Hot Springs	$10.00	$10.00		$5.00
Edgemont	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit coordinates with multiple counties in the area to provide veterans with free transportation to VA medical appointments. The three counties served by River Cities Public Transit in the Belle Fourche Area include:

- Harding
- Butte
- Perkins

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Live, Inc.

- Private non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Lemmon area. Transportation to medical appointments and activities is provided by Live, Inc.

Private Transportation Providers

Taxi/Shuttle Providers

Using online research, the following taxi and shuttle providers were identified in the region:

- Anytime Taxi – Belle Fourche

Intercity Bus Services

There are currently no intercity bus services in this area. However, trips can be made through Prairie Hills Transit to get to Rapid City, Spearfish, or Sturgis to connect to Jefferson Lines.

Custer Area

Public Transit

The Custer Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- Prairie Hills Transit
- Oglala Sioux Tribe Transit
- River Cities Public Transit

Prairie Hills Transit

Prairie Hills Transit is the public transportation provider for much of the western portion of South Dakota, including all areas of SDDOT Rapid City Region. Prairie Hills Transit's service area encompasses 8 counties in western South Dakota. The agency provides demand-response services in which customers must schedule rides one day in advance. Due to the large service area, there are some city-to-city routes that run daily or on certain days of the week, along with the demand-response service that is focused on the few cities in the region.

Operating hours vary widely depending on the city or town. Generally, the operating hours are from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, with some routes ending at 12:00 pm and others running as late as 7:00 pm. Prairie Hills Transit also provides transportation for veterans for VA-related medical trips. Youth transportation is also provided for various activities including summer activities and school transportation, with the purchase of a pass. Prairie Hills is an authorized Medicaid Transportation Provider for South Dakota recipients. Passengers wishing to make long distance trips using the intercity bus carrier Jefferson Lines can purchase tickets at the Prairie Hills Transit Center in Spearfish.

Fares also vary widely depending on the distance of the trip and the origin. Generally, the fare for local trip is $2 for one-way and $2.50 for a one-way trip within the Deadwood-Central City-Lead-Pluma corridor. The city-to-city fare generally runs around $10, but the charts below break down the pricing for trips in the Northern Hills and Southern Hills areas.

NORTHERN HILLS

CITY TO CITY	Rapid City	Spearfish	Belle Fourche	Newell	Nisland	Vale	Sturgis	Whitewood	St. Onge	Lead Central City
Rapid City		$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Spearfish	$10.00		$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00	$10.00
Belle Fourche	$10.00	$5.00		$10.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Newell	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00		$5.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$8.00	$10.00
Nisland	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00		$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Vale	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00		$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Sturgis	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00		$5.00	$5.00	$10.00
Whitewood	$10.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00		$5.00	$10.00
St. Onge	$10.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00		$5.00
Deadwood Lead Central City	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	

SOUTHERN HILLS

CITY TO CITY	Rapid City	Custer	Hot Springs	Edgemont
Rapid City		$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Custer	$10.00		$10.00	$10.00
Hot Springs	$10.00	$10.00		$5.00
Edgemont	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	

Oglala Sioux Tribe Transit

Oglala Sioux Tribe Transit is the tribal transit agency that serves the Oglala Reservation and Oglala Lakota County. This is a demand-response transportation service for tribal members. The agency also offers fixed route bus service to many areas throughout the reservation. Bulk tickets can be purchased and are priced by distance. The box below shows the details of these bulk tickets.

Category	2 weeks	1 month
Yellow Tickets – Over 30 miles	$60.00	$120.00
Blue Tickets – Less than 30 miles	$30.00	$60.00
Red Tickets – Less than 15 miles	$20.00	$40.00

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit coordinates with multiple counties in the area to provide veterans with free transportation to VA medical appointments. The three counties served by River Cities Public Transit in the Custer Area include Custer, Fall River, and Oglala Lakota.

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Pine Ridge Service Unit – Indian Health Service

- Healthcare and service provider for American Indians. This healthcare facility, located in Pine Ridge, facilitates non-emergency medical transportation for those in need.

Behavior Management Services

- A private non-profit agency that provides a wide variety of mental health services to those with mental disabilities. With three locations in Spearfish, Rapid City, and Hot Springs, they provide transportation to their clients through their privately owned and operated vehicles, as well as reimbursing volunteers who use their own private vehicles.

South Dakota Parent Connection

- A private non-profit agency that provides a wide variety of services to families who have a child (under the age of 26) with disabilities or special healthcare needs. Under their American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, transportation is one of the many services provided under this program. There are several locations across the state. In the Custer Area, they have an office in Oglala Lakota County.

Intercity Bus Service

- There is currently no intercity bus service in this area.

Rapid City Area

Public Transit

The Rapid City Area is served by the following public transit systems:

- Prairie Hills Transit
- Rapid Transit System
- River Cities Public Transit
- East Pennington County Transit
- City of Deadwood

Prairie Hills Transit

Prairie Hills Transit is the public transportation provider for much of the western portion of South Dakota, including all areas of SDDOT Rapid City Region. It is the only public transit provider in the Belle Fourche area. Prairie Hills Transit's service area encompasses 8 counties in western South Dakota. The agency provides demand-response services in which customers must schedule rides one day in advance. Due to the large service area, there are some city-to-city routes that run daily or on certain days of the week, along with the demand-response service that is focused on the few cities in the region.

Operating hours vary widely depending on the city or town. Generally, the operating hours are from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, with some routes ending at 12:00 pm and others running as late as 7:00 pm. Prairie Hills Transit also provides transportation for veterans for VA-related medical trips. Youth transportation is also provided for various activities including summer activities and school transportation, with the purchase of a pass. Prairie Hills is an authorized Medicaid Transportation Provider for South Dakota recipients. Passengers wishing to make long distance trips using the intercity bus carrier Jefferson Lines can purchase tickets at the Prairie Hills Transit Center in Spearfish.

Fares also vary widely depending on the distance of the trip and the origin. Generally, the fare for local trip is $2 for one-way and $2.50 for a one-way trip within the Deadwood-Central City-Lead-Pluma corridor. The city-to-city fare generally runs around $10, but the charts below break down the pricing for trips in the Northern Hills and Southern Hills areas.

NORTHERN HILLS

CITY TO CITY	Rapid City	Spearfish	Belle Fourche	Newell	Nisland	Vale	Sturgis	Whitewood	St. Onge	Lead Central City
Rapid City		$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Spearfish	$10.00		$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00	$10.00
Belle Fourche	$10.00	$5.00		$10.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Newell	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00		$5.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$8.00	$10.00
Nisland	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00		$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Vale	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00		$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Sturgis	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00		$5.00	$5.00	$10.00
Whitewood	$10.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00		$5.00	$10.00
St. Onge	$10.00	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$5.00		$5.00
Deadwood Lead Central City	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	

SOUTHERN HILLS

CITY TO CITY	Rapid City	Custer	Hot Springs	Edgemont
Rapid City		$10.00	$10.00	$10.00
Custer	$10.00		$10.00	$10.00
Hot Springs	$10.00	$10.00		$5.00
Edgemont	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	

Rapid Transit System

Rapid Transit System is the public transit provider for the city of Rapid City. The system operates fixed-route bus service branded as RapidRide, and ADA paratransit service branded as Dial-A-Ride. Up until 2022, Rapid Transit System operated the City View Trolley. As of 2022, the Rapid City tourism board operates the trolleys. The operating hours for the Rapid Transit System run from 6:20 am to 5:50 pm on weekdays and 9:50 am to 4:40 pm on Saturday. The fixed route service is comprised of six fixed routes. In addition to these services, children can ride the Rapid Transit System for free for school and school-related activities. This policy has resulted in an increase in school attendance. Adults, seniors, and those with disabilities can ride unlimited for a $30 monthly calendar pass.

The fares for the Rapid Transit System are:

Category	One-Way Fare	10-Ride Pass
General Public	$1.50	$13.50
Route Transfers	Free	-
Youth under 18 (with valid school ID)	Free	-
Seniors (over 60)	$0.75	$6.75
Persons with disabilities and Medicare	$0.75	$6.75

Fares for Rapid Transit System Dial-A-Ride are:

Category	One-Way Fare
General Public	$3.00
Zone 2	$3.50
10-Ride Coupon	$27.00
10-Ride Coupon Zone 2	$31.50
Monthly Pass	$90.00

River Cities Public Transit

River Cities Public Transit is the public transportation provider for the Pierre region, but its coverage extends into the Rapid City Area. River Cities Public Transit provides demand-response transportation for the general public, medical trips, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and low-income individuals. River Cities Public Transit is also a Medicaid Transportation Provider for the area. Rides must be scheduled one day in advance. In the Rapid City Area, River Cities Public Transit Public Transit provides service to Pennington and Meade counties. The Rapid City Area is not included in River Cities Public Transit Public Transit Veterans Transportation program.

Fares for Medical Transport for River Cities Public Transit:

Area	Out-of-Town Medical Fare (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)	Out-of-Town Medical Fare (Tuesday and Thursday)
Sioux Falls	$100	$40
Mitchell	$100	$40
Chamberlain	$100	$40
Rapid City	$40	$100
Fort Meade	$40	$100

Fares for River Cities Public Transit are:

Category	Fare	Up to 10 miles	Over 10 miles
General Public	$2.00	$0.25/mile	$0.75/mile
Youth & Senior (suggested $2.00 donation for seniors)	$2.00	-	$0.25
Scheduled Same Day	$6.00	$0.50	$1.50

There is a $2.00 fee for each additional passenger going to the same location. Children under three ride free. This same fee is $6.00 for same-day scheduled rides.

East Pennington County Transit

East Pennington County Transit is administered by River Cities Public Transit. Operating out of Wall, the general service area is a 20-mile radius around the town of Wall which includes the communities of Quinn, Cottonwood, and Wasta. East Pennington County Transit also provides transportation to Rapid City every Wednesday. Rides to Rapid City should be scheduled 48 hours in advance. The fare for this service is $10 on Wednesday and $15 any other weekday. Service to Fort Meade is also offered on Thursdays and the fare is $25. Operating hours for East Pennington County Transit run from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Tuesday through Friday.

Fares for East Pennington County Transit within the 20-mile radius of Wall are:

Category	Fare
Within 20-mile radius of Wall	$5.00
Pre-scheduled fare (more than 24 hours' notice)	$2.00
Rapid City Wednesday/Any Other Day	$10/$15
Ft. Meade	$25

City of Deadwood

The City of Deadwood offers a trolley service around town for visitors and residents. Some stops include hotels and casinos. The fare for the trolley is $2 per ride. Passengers can pay in cash or through trolley tokens which can be purchased at the history and welcome center.

Human Service Transportation

The following section provides an overview of human service transportation providers identified in the region. It should be noted that the transportation services provided by these organizations are specialized in nature and are typically provided only to agency clients for specific trip purposes, generally either medical or to access agency locations. These services may be modified due to funding or other changes.

Black Hills Works

- Private non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Rapid City area. Black Hills Works provides a wide range of services including day activities, residential services, employment support and training, and healthcare services. Transportation is also provided to appointments and activities operated by Black Hills Works.

Oyate Health Center

- Healthcare center that serves the American Indian Community in the Rapid City area. A wide range of healthcare services are provided including urgent and primary care, dental care, pharmacy, and behavioral health services.

Rapid City YMCA

- The YMCA of Rapid city provides transportation for activities to seniors and those with disabilities.

Black Hills Special Services Cooperative

- Educational cooperative that is governed by a member of the one school board member from each of the 12 school districts in the area. The cooperative allows school districts to pool together resources to provide services and opportunities that may not otherwise be available for students. Black Hills Special Services Cooperative is divided into 5 divisions including Community & Family Services, Developmental Disabilities Programs, Education & Workforce Development, Health & Human Services, Compass Partners in Learning. Transportation to and from programs and some schools is provided to clients only. The primary service area for the cooperative includes Meade, Lawrence, Butte, and Fall River Counties.

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) – Department of Veterans Affairs

- The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) program offers free transportation to veterans through the Department of Veteran's Affairs. This program has a fleet of vehicles around the state to serve the needs of disabled veterans.

Adult Day Center of the Black Hills

- Activities center for seniors located in Rapid City. The center conducts a wide range of daytime activities and services for seniors in the area whether they live independently or with a caregiver. They also provide transportation to and from the center for seniors that live nearby. The Adult Day Center of the Black Hills recently purchased property to open up a second location on the northwest side of Rapid City.

Good Samaritan Society

- Senior healthcare agency with multiple locations throughout South Dakota. The locations in the Rapid City area are in Rapid City. They offer several different programs from senior living, long-term care, rehabilitation therapy, home-based services, caregiver support, and offer referrals to partners. Under their senior living programs, the independent living and assisted living programs offer transportation for residents.

Western Resources for Independent Living

- Non-profit agency the aids people with disabilities to achieve independence and self-determination. There are three locations in South Dakota which are Pierre, Rapid City, and Spearfish. Some of their services include peer support, independent living skills, home modifications, housing, employment services and transportation services.

Homecare Services

- Provider for at-home healthcare with several locations across South Dakota. The location in the Rapid City area is in Spearfish. They provide a wide range of services from healthcare needs to meals and grooming. Transportation for medical appointments and other trips such as grocery shopping and community activities are provided for patients.

Northern Hills Area CASA Program

- A non-profit agency in Spearfish that provides advocacy and services for neglected and abused children. While they do not own any vehicles, they reimburse their volunteer drivers to transport their clients.

Independent Living Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired

- A public agency that provides training and assistance for employment to the blind and visually impaired. There are monthly peer support meetings that the agency provides transportation to.

Behavior Management Systems

- A private non-profit agency that provides a wide variety of mental health services to those with mental disabilities. With three locations in Spearfish, Rapid City, and Hot Springs, they provide transportation to their clients through their privately owned and operated vehicles, as well as reimbursing volunteers who use their own private vehicles.

Private Transportation Providers

Intercity Bus Services

There are a variety of intercity private transportation routes serving the Rapid City Area. Routes consist of interstate and intrastate connections from:

- Jefferson Lines – serves Rapid City, Spearfish, and Sturgis. Prairie Hills Transit has routes connecting these cities to areas in Butte County. Tickets for Jefferson Lines can be purchased through Prairie Hills Transit at the transit center lobby during lobby hours (Monday-Friday 9:00 am-4:00pm).

Taxi/Shuttle Providers

Using online research, the following taxi and shuttle providers were identified in the area:

- Uber

- Lyft
- Rapid Cab – Rapid City/BlackHills
- City Cab – Rapid City
- Rapid Taxi, Inc. – Rapid City
- RapidShuttle – Rapid City
- Black Hills Grab-a-Cab – Deadwood/Black Hills
- Black Hills Taxi and Shuttle – entire area
- Dakota Taxi – Deadwood/Black Hills
- Deadwood Cab Company – Deadwood/Black Hills/Sturgis
- Giddy-up and Go Shuttle – Deadwood/Black Hills

Vehicle Inventory

The following table provides an overview of the vehicle inventory for all of the public transit agencies in South Dakota. The table lists how many of each type of vehicle each agency has. It should be noted that the vehicles listed for the Rapid Transit System were purchased with funds that were managed through SDDOT. As such, Sioux Area Metro and Sioux City vehicles were not included in this list. This table and its information were provided by the SDDOT.

Table 3-1: Vehicle Inventory

South Dakota Public Transit Agency Vehicle Inventory										
Agency	Cutaway Bus	Bus	Minibus	Minivan	Sport Utility	Van	Service Trucks	Automobile	Staff Vehicle	Vintage Trolley	Total
Aberdeen Ride Line	12		1	2	1		1				17
Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton	24		3	24	3	3					57
People's Transit	8			4		1					13
River Cities Public Transit	41	7	5	20		3	4	4	1		85
Brookings Area Transit Authority	16		1	10		4		1			32
Palace Transit	11										11
Yankton Sioux Tribe Transit	2		2	3							7
Rural Office of Community Services (ROCS) Transit	11		3	27		3		2			46
Brandon City Transit	3										3
East Dakota Transit Inc.	3										3
Vermillion Public Transit	5			2							7
Yankton Transit	12		1	3		1					17
Rosebud Sioux Tribe Transit				2	3	3					8
Prairie Hills Transit	27		1	11	2	5	1	2		1	50
Oglala Sioux Tribe Transit	5										5
Rapid Transit System	2				1						3

Chapter 4
Assessment of Transportation Needs

Another of the required elements of a coordinated transportation plan is an assessment of transportation needs, particularly for individuals with disabilities and older adults. These needs were identified through a review of previous coordinated transportation plans, input from stakeholders through the area workshops, and feedback from SDDOT and the technical oversight panel.

Perceptions of Transportation Services

Through the outreach process (discussed in Chapter 2) stakeholders expressed transportation needs that were provided in an earlier section of this document. Through this process the overall perception of public transit, human services transportation, and private transportation services were obtained from a variety of stakeholders, and particularly from providers of transportation and other services for older adults and people with disabilities. The need assessment also obtained information from stakeholders regarding the availability, quality, price, financial viability, and users' awareness of transportation services.

It should be mentioned, as noted earlier, that stakeholder input varied from one area and region to another across the state, largely based on transportation resources, travel distance to key locations, and a variety of other factors:

Availability of Transportation Services - Through the outreach process stakeholders noted the importance of the transportation services currently in place, and their value to the community in providing vital connections to healthcare facilities, shopping, jobs, and other key locations. However, the need to expand service spans so that public transportation is available earlier and later on weekdays and on weekends was often noted. Greater access to same-day trips was also mentioned, as was the need for service areas to be expanded. While much of the discussion at the area workshops focused on expanding services, the need to maintain current services was also highlighted.

Quality of Transportation Services - Overall stakeholders seemed pleased with the quality of public transportation services currently services in place. There was some feedback in regard to the unreliability of some private transportation services.

Price of Transportation Services – Some stakeholders mentioned there was a need for more affordable fares, and as noted in the needs assessment an evaluation of some fare structure may be necessary.

Financial Viability of Transportation Services – While stakeholders expressed the need for expanded public transit services, there was also discussion on the need to identify new and additional funding sources to support these expansions. The need for coordinated efforts to develop fund raising strategies was noted.

Users' Awareness of Transportation Services – A consistent message throughout the outreach process was the need for expanded marketing and education to ensure people in need of transportation services were aware of their mobility options.

Current and Evolving Needs

This section provides a summary of the current and evolving transportation needs and gaps in mobility across the state that were identified by stakeholders through outreach efforts and take into account the current state of coordination services, demographic analysis of future passenger demand and needs, and industry characteristics and trends.

Coordinated Services – With the regional transit systems that operate across South Dakota, services are often coordinated and as a result the need to improve coordination was a low priority in many areas. However, stakeholders in several areas reported that the opportunity to build upon current coordination and connectivity efforts between various transportation providers was a high priority, and they supported a more formalized coordination effort that builds upon the coordinated transportation planning workshops.

As noted in the area strategies, these efforts could involve area or regional coordinating committee structure that would provide an ongoing forum for members to explore coordination opportunities. While it was apparent that area agencies and organizations work well together, this framework would provide the opportunity to bring together additional community organizations, leaders, and consumers to discuss transportation issues within the context of other community priorities. Through this framework new ideas and different ways of doing things could be discussed and considered. Support from the state level could involve helping these areas with identifying the key agencies to be involved in this committee, and who would lead at the area level.

Service Providers – Transportation providers across the state were actively engaged in the coordinated transportation planning workshops. Through their input they identified a variety of current and evolving needs and expanded services for their customers, which include:

- Increasing weekend and evening services. While operating hours vary between different transit systems in the state, providers and other stakeholders expressed the need for expanded service hours that provide the ability to access jobs, shopping, and other key community locations outside of current operating hours. They also noted the need for additional transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities in accessing congregate meal sites, medical appointments, and social events.

- Providing more frequent services. Similarly, while transit systems in the state operate on different schedules, from a timing standpoint, a common theme was the need for more frequent services.

- Continuing to work with other transportation providers and key stakeholders to plan, coordinate, and implement expanded regional services to fill current gaps in transportation. In addition to expanded timing for services, it was noted that there are geographic areas that are underserved or unserved.

- Identifying opportunities to utilize emerging technologies to improve services and customer information, especially platforms (i.e., apps) that support on-demand services. While not an overwhelming need expressed by stakeholders, the national trend is to explore ways to implement microtransit services that allow customers to access trips through their smartphones and improved technology. This provides an opportunity to provide the more specialized services noted through outreach efforts, and one to expand mobility options across the state.

In addition to expanding and improving services, other current and evolving needs related to service providers include:

- Providing more affordable transportation services. Through the outreach process it was noted that fares for available transportation services may be cost prohibitive for people with lower incomes. Service providers can continuously reassess current fares structures and make changes accordingly. Nationally, many transit systems went fare free during the COVID-19 pandemic and have maintained this policy.

- Dealing with increased operating expenses. A number of factors have led to transit systems and transportation providers in the state and across the country to incur significant increases in operating expenses, and it is expected that this will continue in the future with the need to improve driver salaries and benefits. Service providers in South Dakota also face challenges with incurring significant operating costs when providing long distance trips.

- Expanding awareness of available transportation services. Marketing of service options is an ongoing effort, and despite a variety of outreach and education activities it was noted in some areas there is a lack of awareness of available transportation services. Service providers also need to take into account that customers want information communicated through a variety of methods, as some would like to receive information through different forms of technology and social media, while others may not use these ways to receive information through other marketing methods.

Fleets and Facilities – A high priority across the state was to continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing service and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need. While many of the strategies identified through the coordinated transportation planning process involve service expansion, maintaining and building upon the current capital infrastructure is continuing current mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Area strategies noted this need may involve the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, or other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure.

The need for new facilities was not noted through the coordinated transportation planning process and is typically assessed through a more detailed transit plan. However, in some areas where fixed route services are provided stakeholders expressed the need for improved bus stop amenities and

infrastructure, particularly to expand access to available transportation services. This can also involve greater land use coordination, and to ensure that passenger amenities such as bus stops and shelters and infrastructure needs such as sidewalks and curb cuts are considered during the initial planning stages of new residential or commercial developments.

Workforce – Similar to many communities across the country, stakeholders discussed challenges with recruiting and retaining a sufficient number of drivers. Many transportation providers across the state and nation have been faced with a significant shortage of operators, even prior to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the impacts on maintaining current services, the driver shortage prevents the ability to expand services. Multiple areas of the state identified the need to assess opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of vehicle operators as a high priority.

As noted in the prioritized strategies there are several considerations when addressing the need to attract and retain quality candidates, and that include:

- Providing competitive wages and benefits that are commensurate with the levels of risk, pressures, and responsibilities that come with the operator's position.

- Offering hiring bonuses paid in installments over the course of the first year to encourage continued employment. Bonuses for referrals from current employees can also be provided.

- Providing training, health benefits, and a quality work environment. Transit systems that offer healthcare benefits, CDL training, and that foster a quality working environment have lower vacancy rates.

- Taking advantage of the agency's mission and the impact on the community, emphasizing the self-worth that would result from the position as opposed to driving for transportation network companies such as Lyft or Uber. Obviously benefits also need to be stressed in conjunction with this discussion.

- Utilizing national resources, such as the Transit Workforce Development Technical Assistance Center (TWC). A program of FTA, the TWC provides a variety of publications, trainings, webinars, and materials to assist with these efforts. The Center can be access at https://www.transitworkforce.org.

Funding – Obviously critical to many needs is to identify additional funding sources to support increasing expenses and enable transportation providers to maintain and expand mobility options in their communities. Through the coordinated transportation planning process stakeholders highlighted the challenges in finding sufficient resources to maintain current services, let alone implementing new one, and identified several strategies to respond to funding challenges:

- Conducting advocacy campaigns that highlight the impacts of public transportation and human services transportation and helps to ensure elected officials and decision makers are aware of these impacts and the need for additional funding to maintain and expand transportation services, particularly for older adults and people with disabilities.

  While identified in a key strategy in many of the area plans, this advocacy campaign can be conducted at the state level and utilize national resources available through the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). As appropriate these efforts could involve SDDOT and/or the Dakota Transit Association.

- Identifying additional partnership opportunities to leverage additional funding to support public transit and other mobility options. While additional funding is needed through conventional federal and state programs, opportunities to obtain funding through non-traditional sources of funding through greater partnerships with private industry was identified as a high priority by multiple areas if the state.

Assessment of Transportation Needs by Area

This section provides a summary of the transportation needs and gaps in mobility identified by area stakeholders through previous coordinated transportation planning efforts and current outreach efforts. While many transportation needs are interrelated, they are broken out by the following key categories and themes that were expressed by regional stakeholders:

- Expanded or Improved Transportation Services
- Coordination
- Outreach, Marketing, and Education
- Funding
- Operational Challenges

It should be noted that these issues may vary from one jurisdiction to another within an area or a region, largely based on transportation resources, travel distance to key locations, and a variety of other factors. In addition, the summary captures need expressed by specific stakeholders and their experiences and may not reflect the consensus of the full stakeholder groups.

Building upon the needs expressed by area stakeholders, this section also provides an assessment of transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with lower incomes through an analysis of demographic data. Data sources include the 2020 Census and American Community Survey (ACS) 2016-2021 5-year estimates.

Aberdeen Region

Aberdeen Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Limited Span of Service** – In the previous coordinated plan, stakeholders mentioned that the current span of service does not serve all the needs of the community. Currently, there is a need for more opportunities early and late in the day, as well as weekend service. The stakeholders also mentioned that the service needs to expand during school trip times.

- **Limited Service Area** – Stakeholders in the previous coordinated plan mentioned a need to extend the service area beyond the 2.5-mile area in order to better serve Aberdeen market area.

- **Same Day Service** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for same day service to access clinic visits, as well as for other unplanned or unscheduled needs.

Coordination

- **Lack of Coordination** – In the previous coordinated plan, stakeholders mentioned that many providers are disconnected from each other and that there is a lack of coordination between transit agencies and providers. Another way to increase coordination is to implement a single routing software in all communities.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Improved Marketing of General Public Transportation Services** – While services designed to meet the needs of older adults and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to better communicate with the general public on available transportation resource to residents and riders.

Funding

- **Funding Challenges** – Stakeholders discussed the challenges in finding sufficient resources to maintain current services and to implement new services. There is a need to identify new funding to support service expansions.

Operational Challenges

- **Language Barrier** – Stakeholders mentioned that Ride Line does not currently have translators and therefore continues to have a language barrier with certain ridership, including Spanish, Somali, and Korean.

- **Private Transportation Concerns** – Stakeholders mentioned the unreliability of shuttle and private company operators. For example, the stakeholders noted that shuttle services do not answer the phones, many no-shows, passengers who are waiting required to find alternative rides, etc.

- **Challenges with Recruiting and Retaining Drivers** – Although there are some positions that do not require a CDL, there is a need for increased CDL training options in the area.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-1: Aberdeen Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-1 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Aberdeen Area. The American Community Survey was used to obtain data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. Areas with "Very High" concentrations of individuals with disabilities can be found in the northern portion of Faulk County. The area average for individuals with disabilities is 11.2%.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - ABERDEEN AREA INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
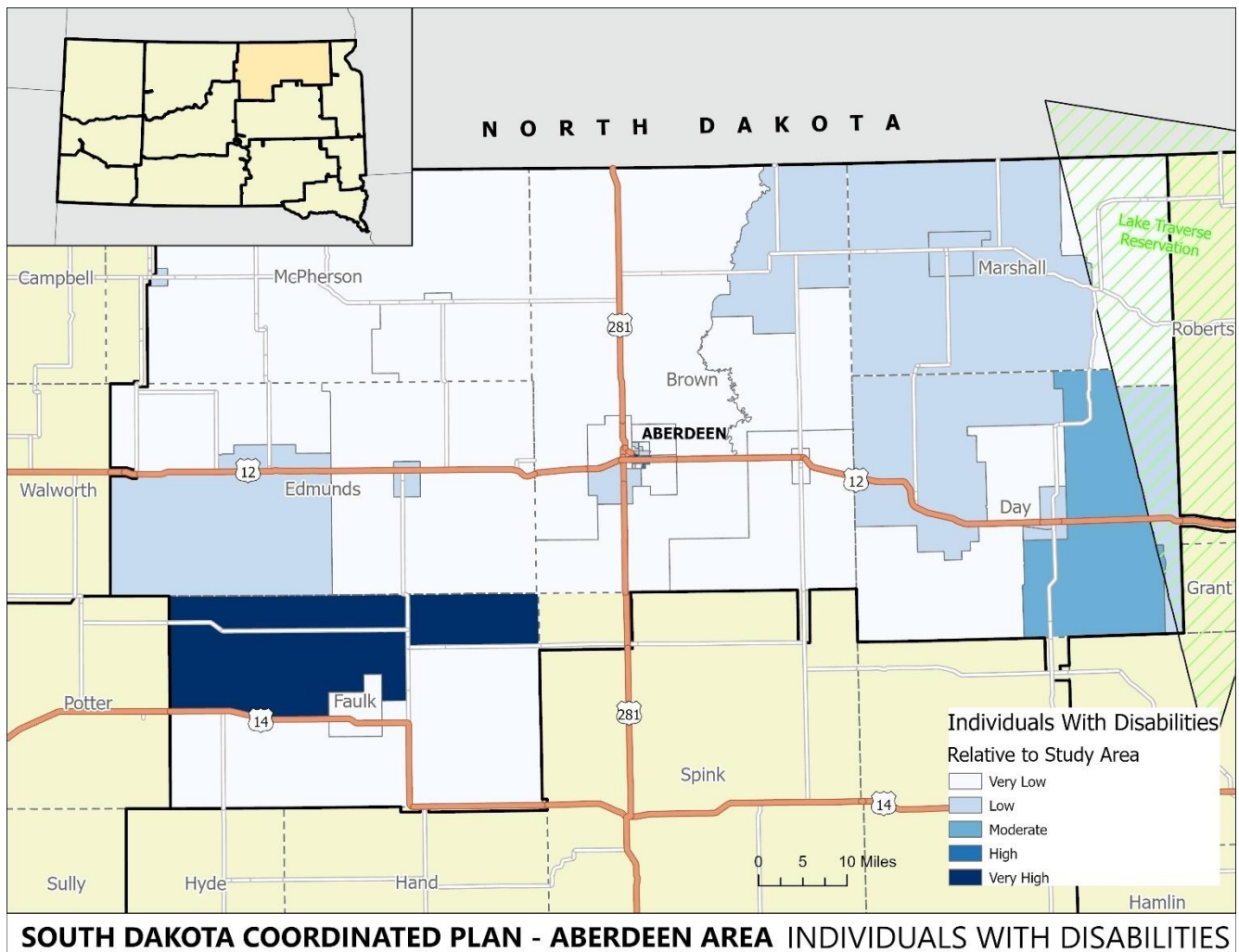
Figure 4-2: Aberdeen Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-2 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Aberdeen Area. Areas with "High" senior populations are in the Northern portion of Faulk County.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - ABERDEEN AREA

AGE 65+ POPULATION
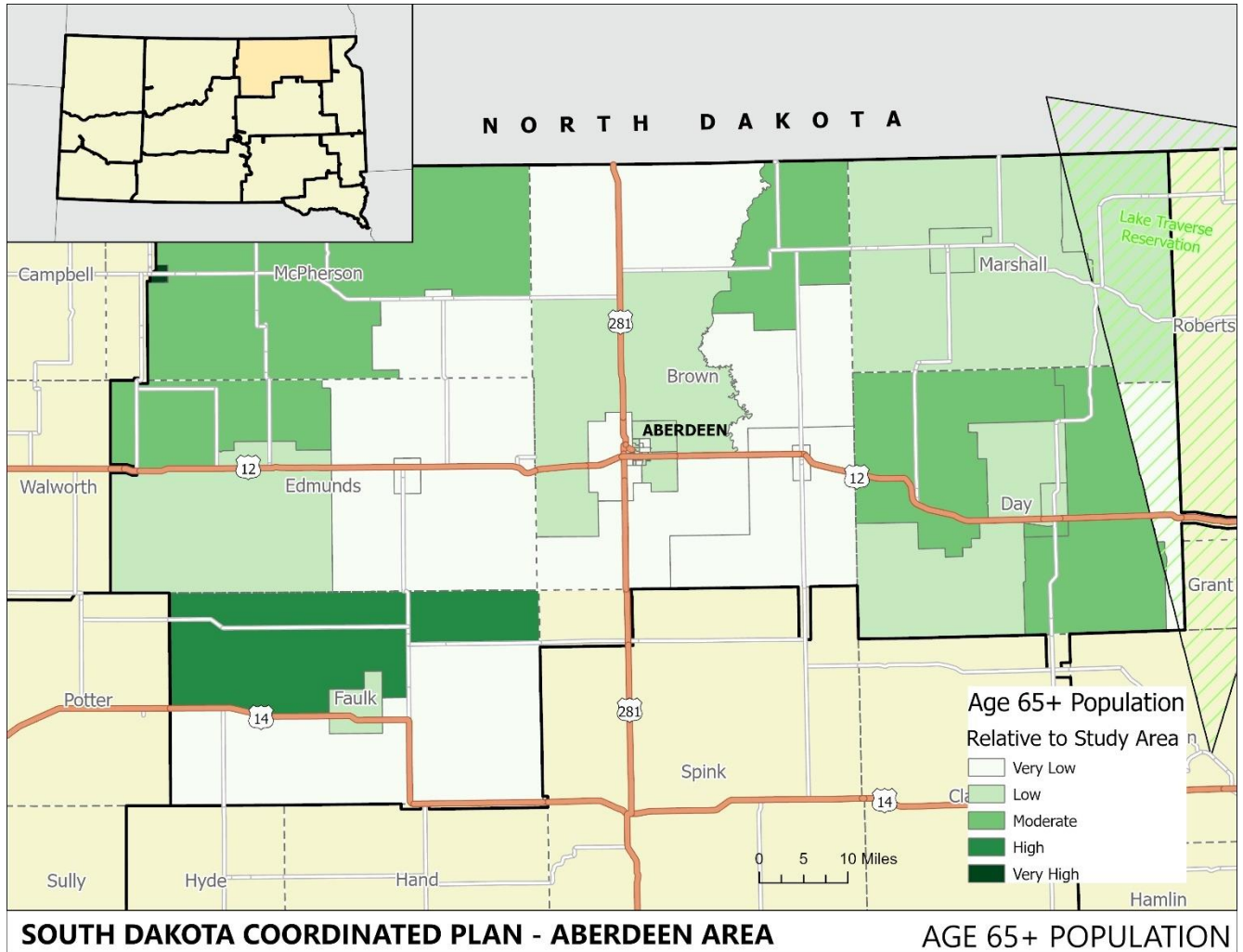
Figure 4-3: Aberdeen Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Aberdeen Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 11.4%. Figure 4-3 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty levels are clusters in much of Faulk County, the southwestern portion of Edmunds County, the southeastern portion of McPherson County, and much of Day County.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - ABERDEEN AREA   LOW INCOME POPULATION
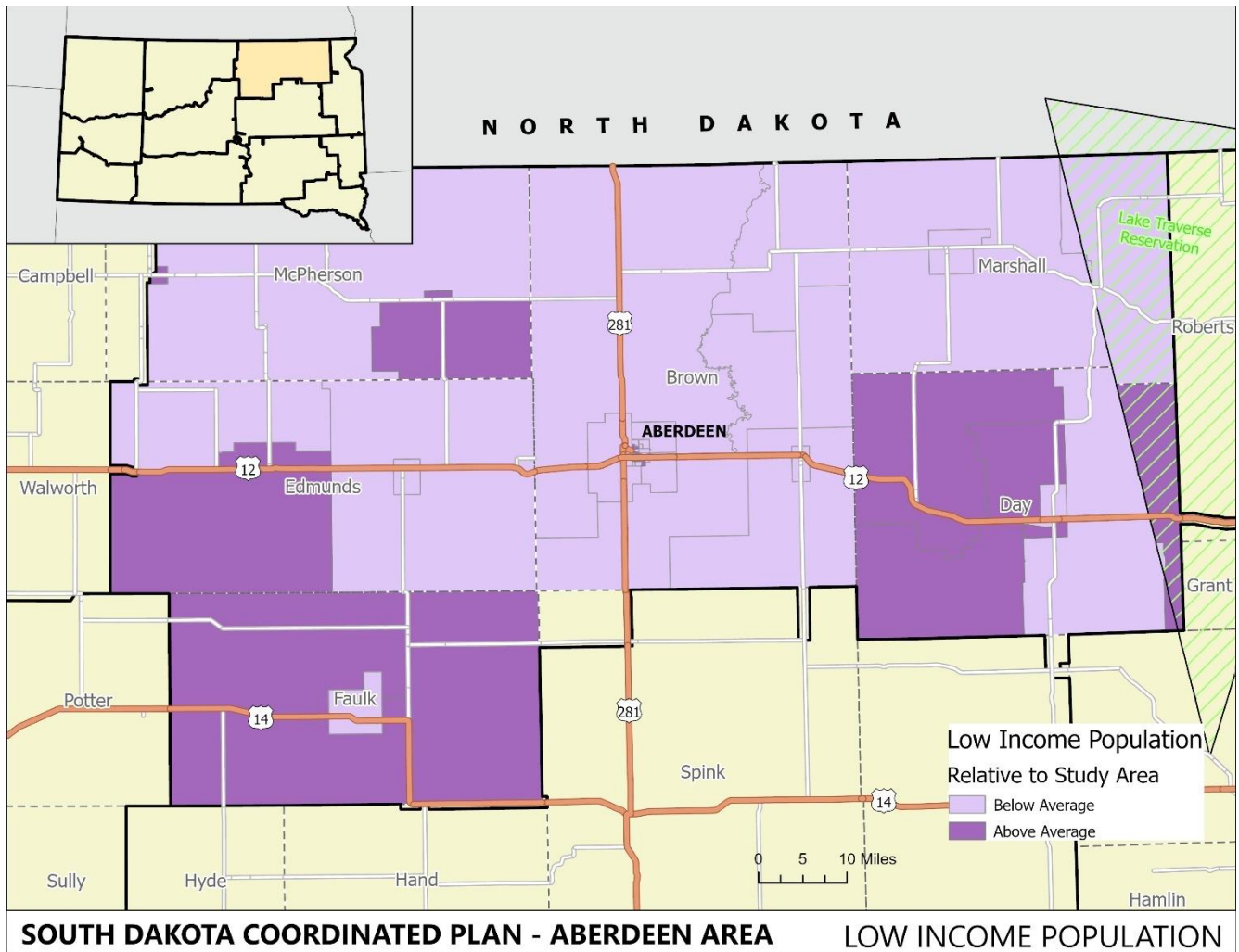
Huron Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Expanded Service Hours** – Stakeholders discussed a need for expanded service hours in the evening and on weekends, especially for community events and activities, such as church, appointments, and life events.

- **Pickup Locations** – Stakeholders mentioned the need for a central pickup area, especially for students of adult education facilities.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Improved Marketing of General Public Transportation Services** – While services designed to meet the needs of older adults and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to better communicate with the general public on available transportation resource to residents and riders.

Funding

- **CDL Training Assistance** – Coupled with driver shortages, stakeholders mentioned a need to assist with expenses for CDL license test, which would increase the applicant pool for drivers.

Operational Challenges

- **Challenges with Recruiting and Retaining Drivers** – Stakeholders discussed the need for both full-time and part-time drivers. Another issue with drivers is the lack of CDL certification training, noted in the previous need.

- **Drug and Alcohol Testing** – Stakeholders mentioned that some agencies struggle finding candidates that can pass the drug and alcohol testing.

- **Fare Structure** – Stakeholders mentioned there was a need for better priced fares that will be more affordable for all riders.

- **Technology** – Stakeholders mentioned the need to implement a single routing software in all communities.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-4: Huron Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-4 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Huron Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. The areas with "Very High" needs are located in the southern portion of Hand County. The area average for individuals with disabilities is 11.3%.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - HURON AREA   INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
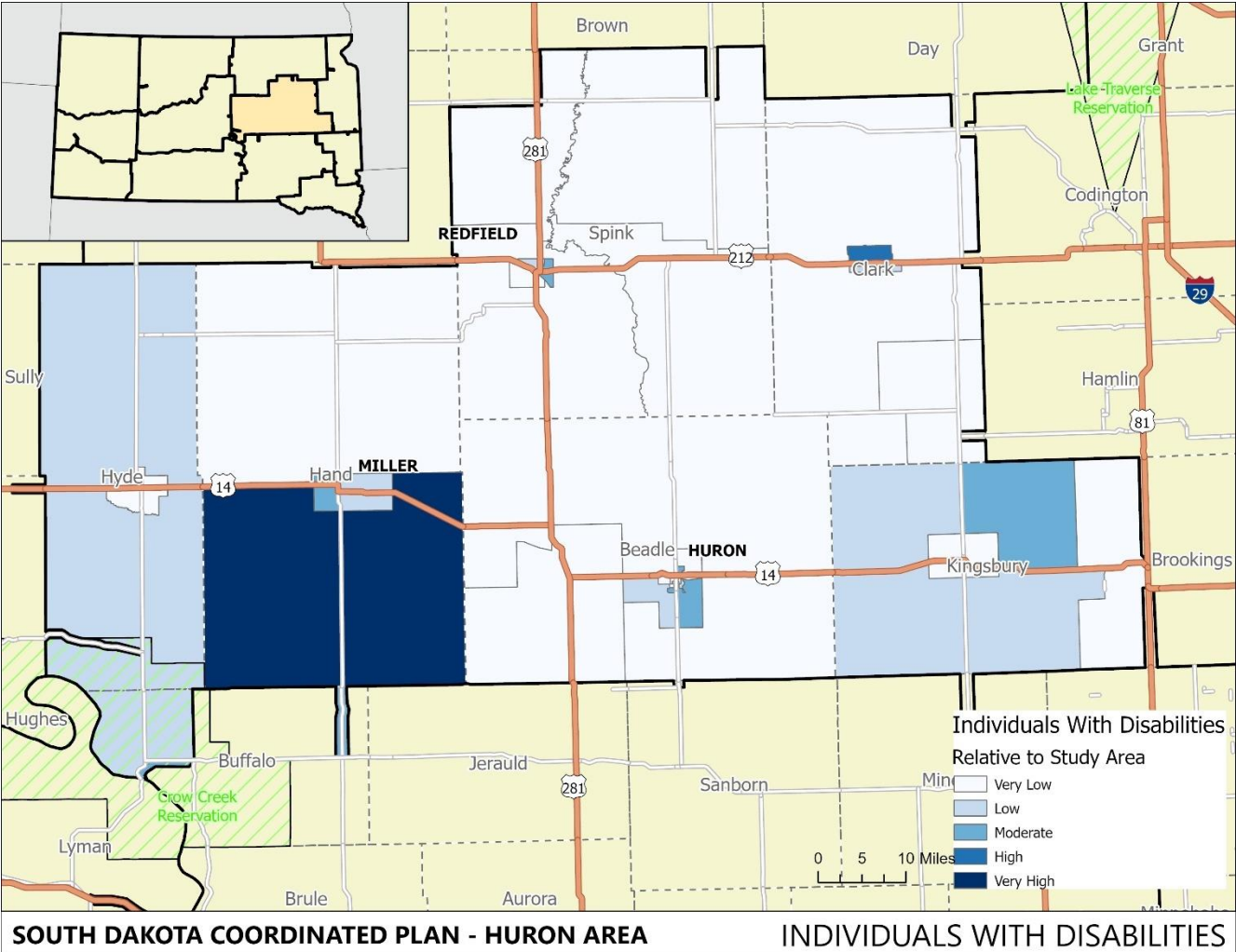
Figure 4-5: Huron Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-5 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Huron Area. Areas with "Very High" concentrations of seniors can be found in the northern area of Clark County, southwestern portion of Spink County, and in Hyde, Miller, Beadle, and Kingsbury Counties.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - HURON AREA   AGE 65+ POPULATION
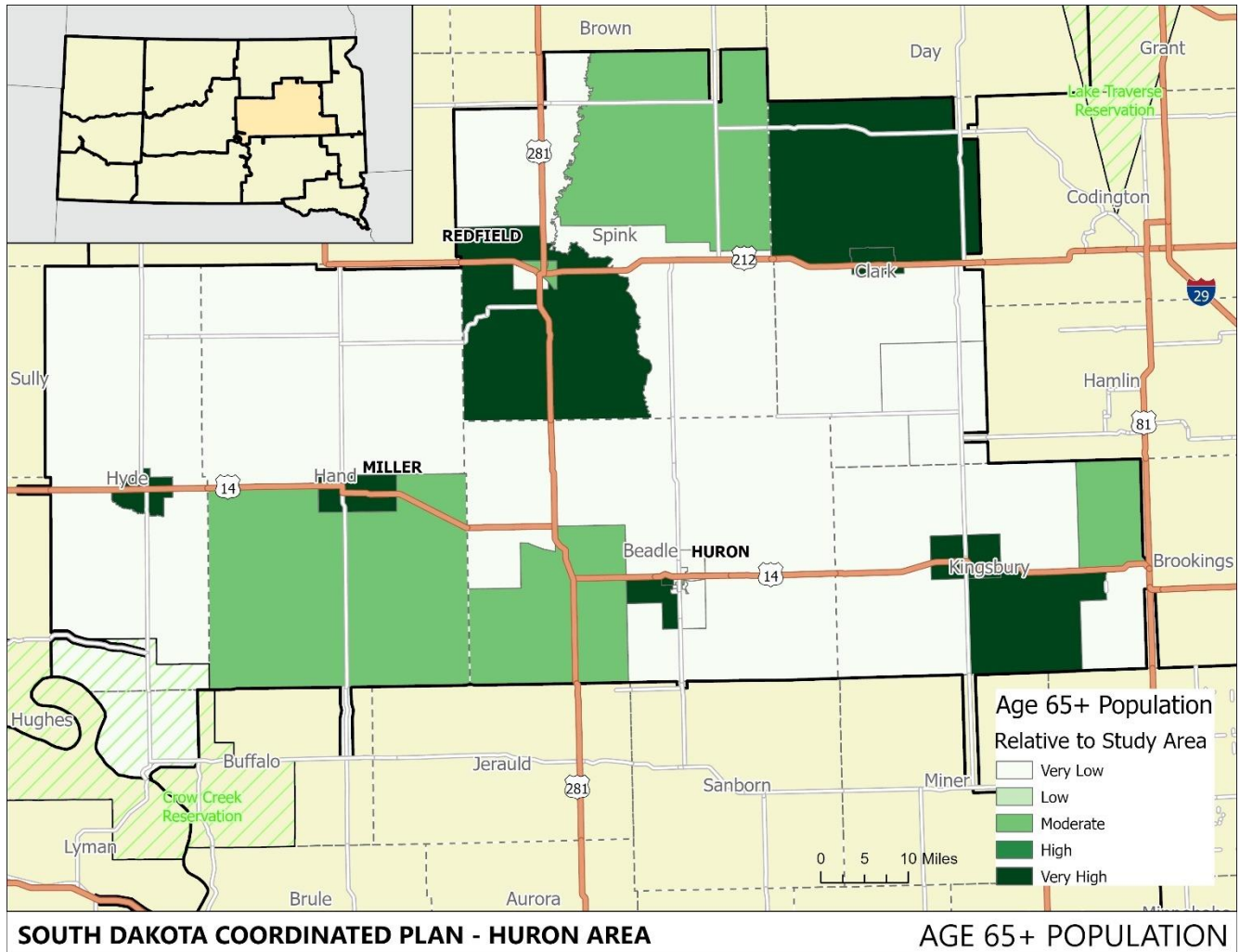
Figure 4-6: Huron Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Huron Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 10.5%. Figure 4-6 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty levels are clustered in much of Miller County, Hyde County, Spink County, and Kingsbury County.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - HURON AREA | LOW INCOME POPULATION
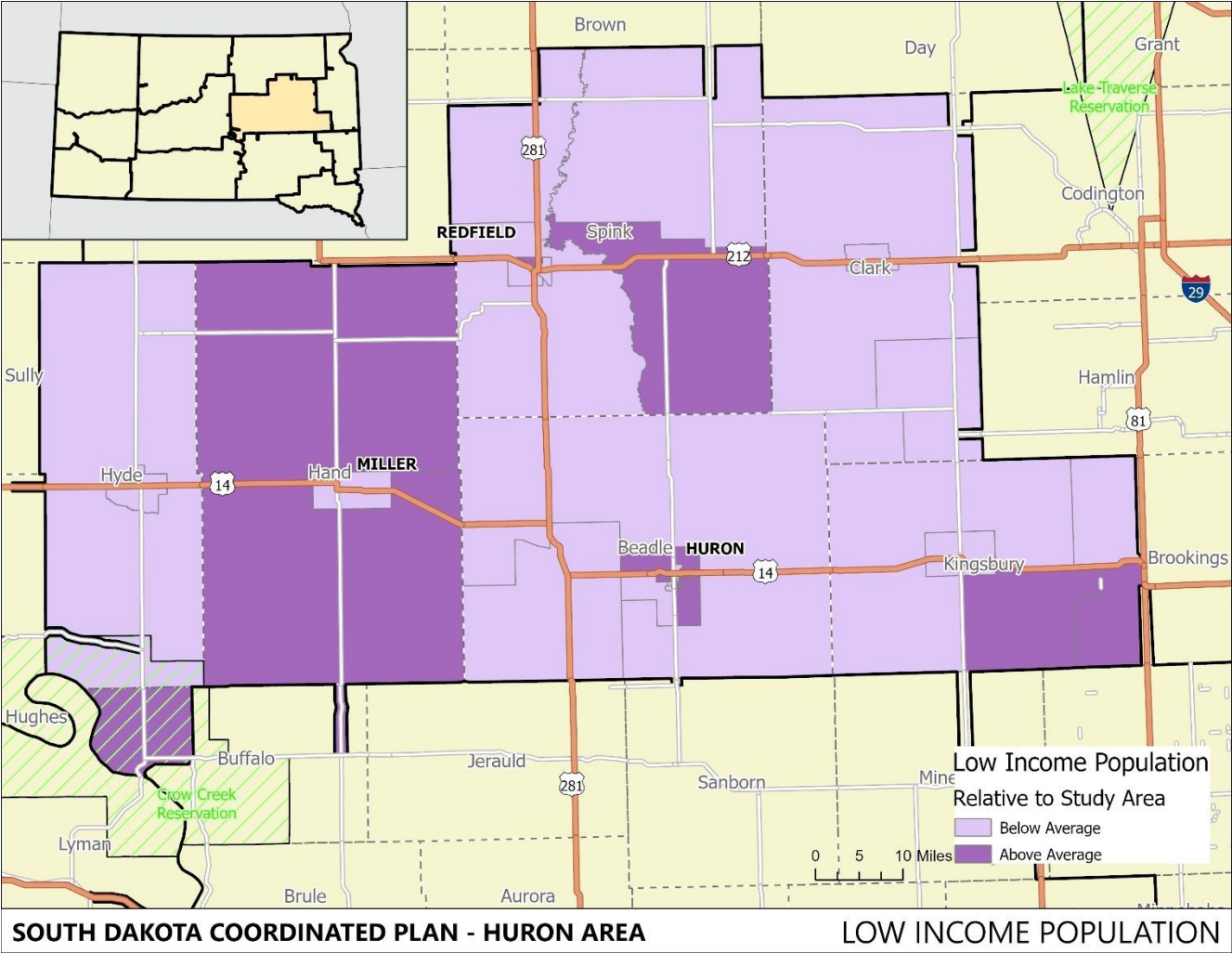
Watertown Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Expanded Service Hours** – Stakeholders mentioned the need for increased frequency and increased service hours, especially during the evening and on the weekend.

- **Expanded Service Area** – Stakeholders discussed the current need for expanding the service area outside of the county.

- **Same Day Service** – The lack of same day service as an option was mentioned as a current issue with ridership.

Coordination

- **Agency Coordination** – Stakeholders discussed the need for an ongoing forum between transportation agencies, either with a quarterly or annual regional meeting to discuss strategies and needs.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Improved Marketing of General Public Transportation Services** – While services designed to meet the needs of older adults and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to better communicate with the general public on available transportation resource to residents and riders.

Funding

- **Funding Sources -** Stakeholders mentioned a need to find new funding sources to expand frequency, service hours, and service area. New funding sources are also needed to update and upgrade the current fleet and facilities.

Operational Challenges

- **Scheduling Conflicts** – Stakeholders discussed the current issues with scheduling conflicts, especially for riders using wheelchairs or mobility devices.

- **Technology** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for continued technological improvements throughout the region, including dispatching technology.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-7: Watertown Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-7 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Watertown Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. Areas of Very High concentrations relative to the Area average of 9.9% are found in Watertown, Milbank, and eastern Grant County.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - WATERTOWN AREA   INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
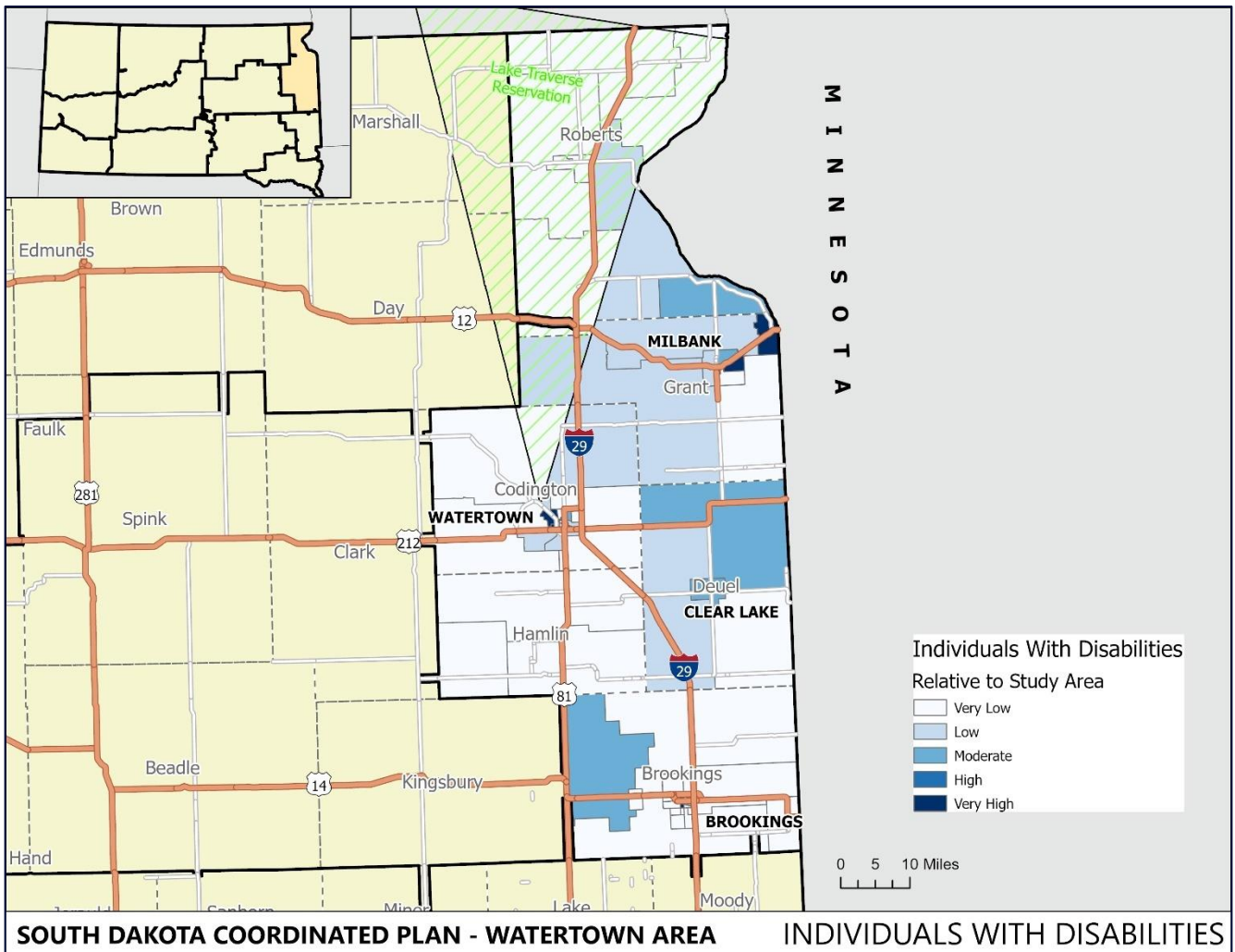
Figure 4-8: Watertown Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-8 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Watertown Area. Areas with at least High concentrations of individuals over 65 years old are clustered in northern Roberts County, northern Milbank County, and western Brookings County.
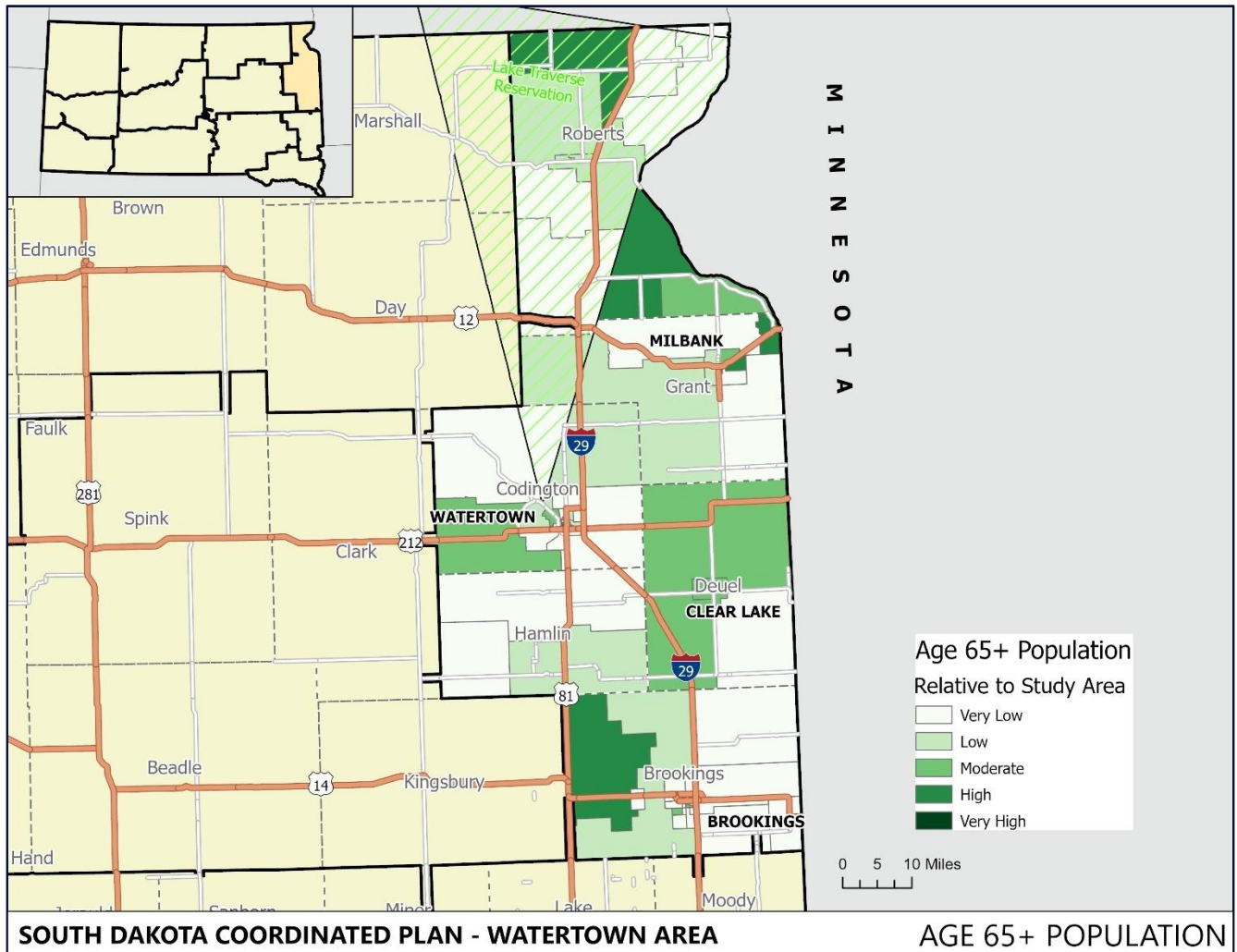
Figure 4-9: Watertown Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Watertown Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 12.9%. Figure 4-9 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty level are located in Milbank, Codington, Hamlin, and Brookings Counties and across much of the Lake Traverse Reservation in Roberts County.

Low Income Population
Relative to Study Area
- Below Average
- Above Average

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - WATERTOWN AREA   LOW INCOME POPULATION
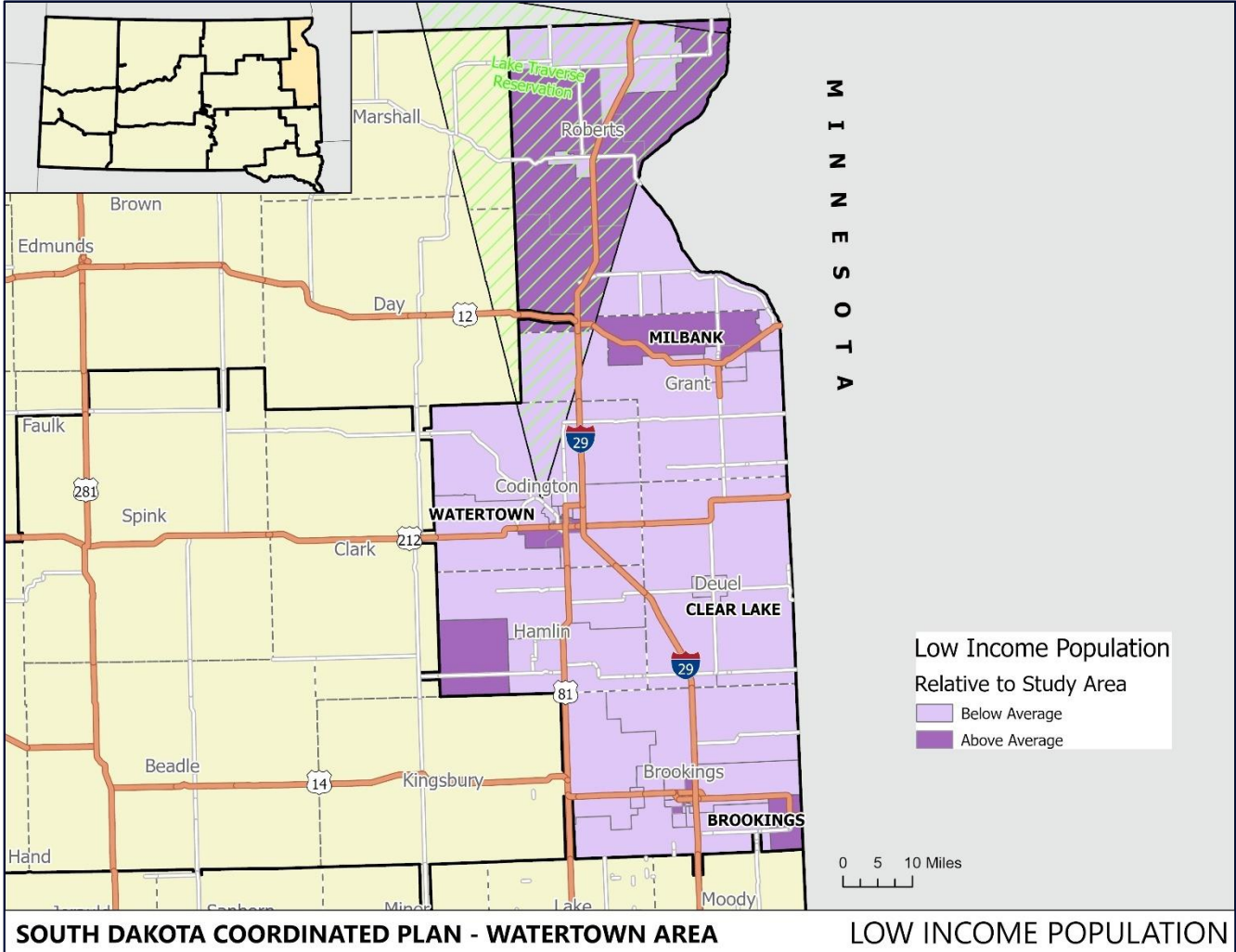
Mitchell Region

Mitchell Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Expanded Service Options** – A few stakeholders mentioned that limited space on the buses for groceries or bags per rider continues to be an issue, especially for trips to the food pantry. However, there is a limit on how many bags passengers are allowed to bring onto the vehicles because the items must be secured. Therefore, it could be beneficial to run a program specifically for trips to the food pantry or grocery store. Along with expanded trips specifically for grocery shopping, stakeholders suggested creating an escort service for grocery or medical trips. There is also a need for a shuttle service to and from parking areas during the State Fair. However, agencies will need to adhere to federal regulations when using FTA funded vehicles. One federal exception includes a petition through an administrator for events of regional significance.

- **Expanded Service Area** – Expand service area, especially into rural and outlying areas to reach more ridership. Stakeholders also mentioned a need for service to employment sites for shift workers with later evening hours.

- **Expanded Service Hours** – Stakeholders also mentioned a need for increased frequency and service hours, especially evening and weekend hours. There is a need for service options for employees who work shift hours.

Coordination

- **Coordination** – Stakeholders also mentioned a need to coordination with multiple stakeholders and transportation agencies to better understand the abilities of each stakeholder, as well as possible funding opportunities.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Challenges with Recruiting and Retaining Drivers** – Stakeholders mentioned utilizing job fairs to recruit new staff, including drivers.

Funding

- **Fare Assistance** – A few stakeholders mentioned finding partners that will help subsidize costs for riders, especially for low-income riders. Costs can get hard for many riders, especially when grants and funds run low and there is no family to assist with the costs.

- **Funding for Fleet Maintenance** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for increased funding for maintenance of the current fleet. There is also a need for funding to replace current vehicles with wheelchair lift equipped vehicles.

Operational Challenges

- **Challenges with Recruiting and Retaining Drivers –** Stakeholders mentioned the need for part-time and especially full-time drivers. Currently, staffing drivers is an obstacle due to the lack of full-time drivers. Agencies are staffing part-time drivers with limited availability. Another obstacle to staffing drivers is the lack of experience with riders with certain medical conditions.

- **Technology** – Stakeholders discussed the need to update software to make services more accessible to the riders, including scheduling.

- **Fleet** – Stakeholders also mentioned that there is a need to replace, as well as maintain the current fleet and equipment.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-10: Mitchell Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-10 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Mitchell Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. Areas with "Moderate" need can be found in Brule County and Davidson County. There are no areas categorized as "Very High" need. The area average for individuals with disabilities is 12.2%.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - MITCHELL AREA   INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
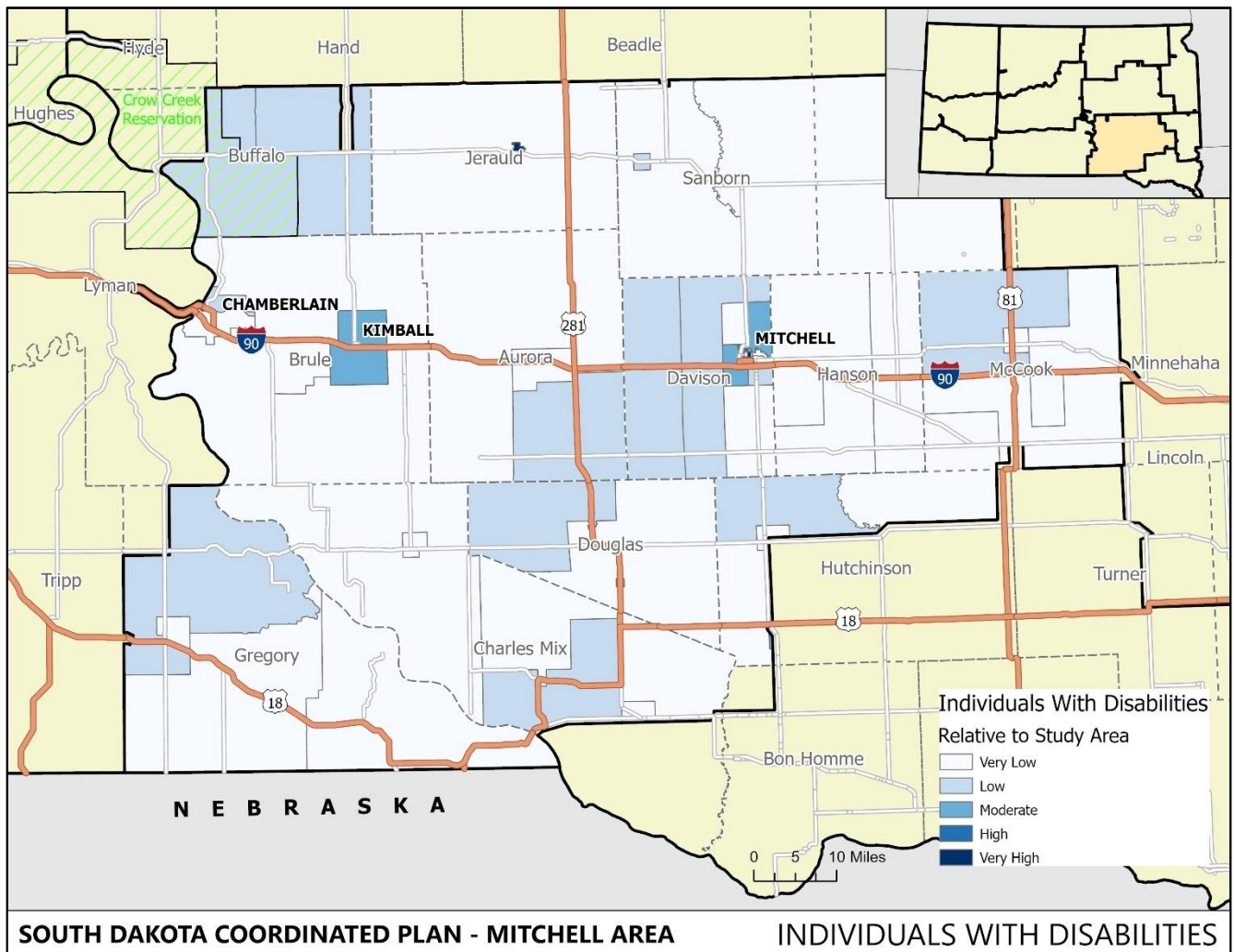
Figure 4-11: Mitchell Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-11 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Mitchell Area. Areas with "Very High" needs within the senior population can be found in Jerauld County.
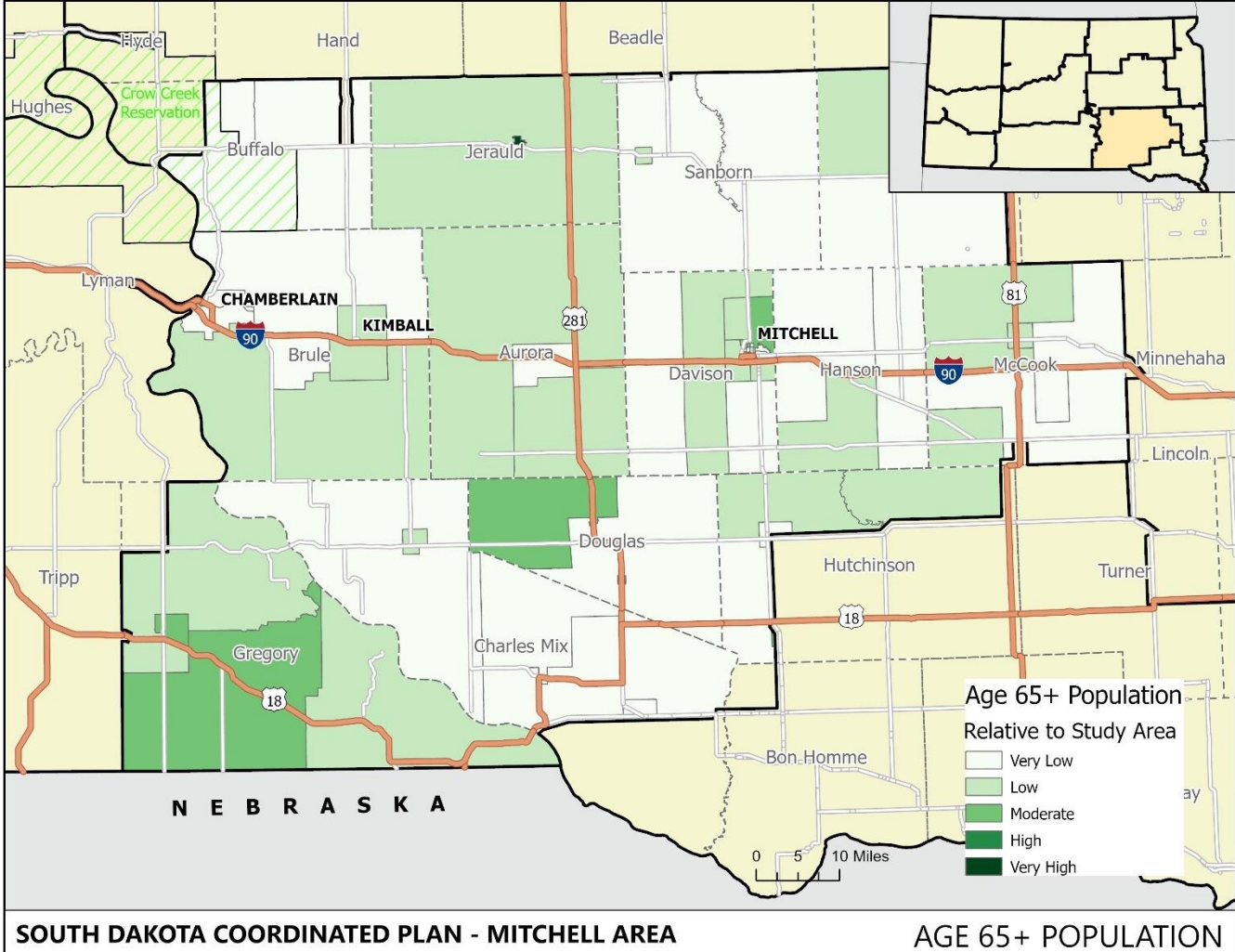
Figure 4-12: Mitchell Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Mitchell Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 13.5%. Figure 4-12 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty levels are located in Buffalo, Brule, Gregory, Douglas, Davison, Hanson, McCook, and Sanborn Counties.
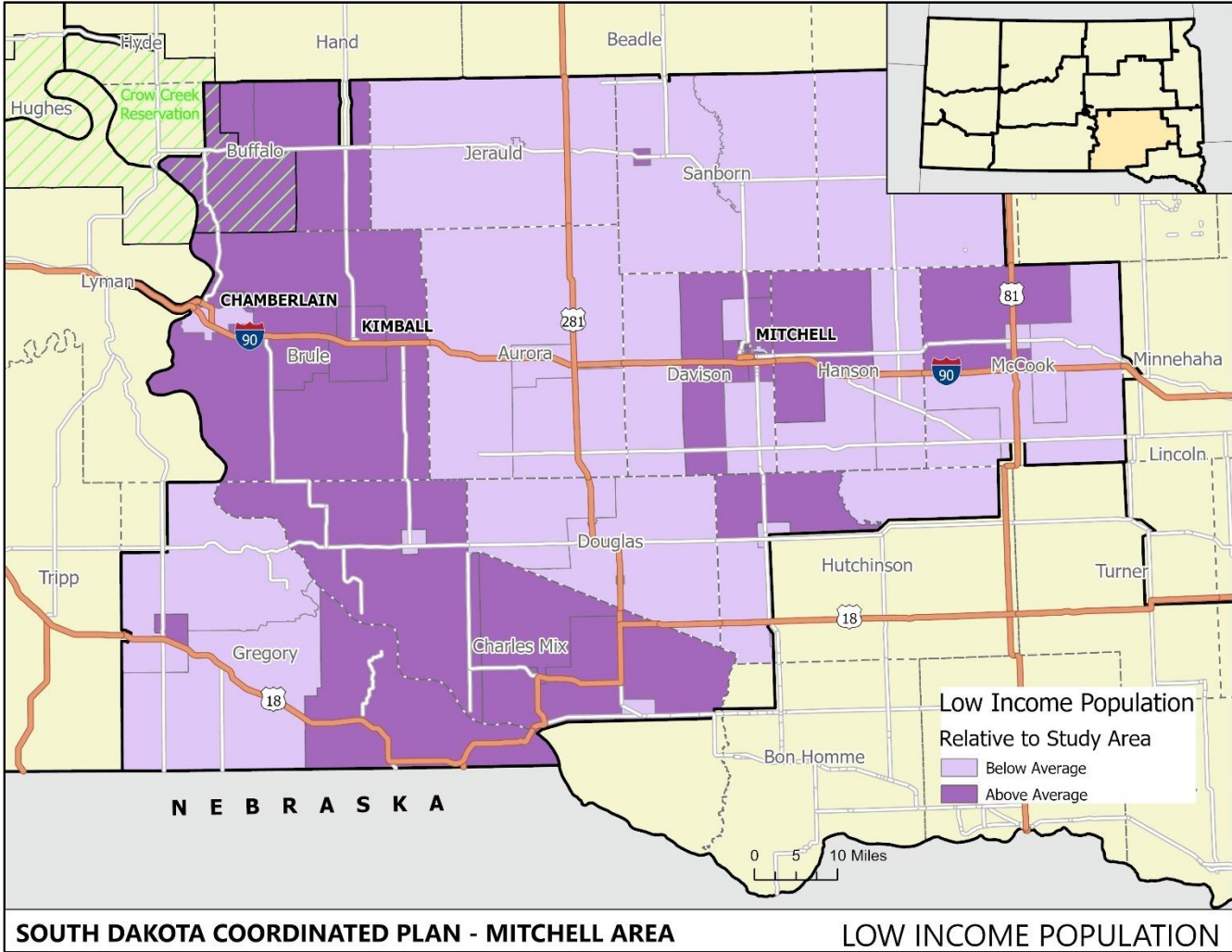
Sioux Falls Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Expanded Service Hours** – A few stakeholders also mentioned the need for increased frequency and service hours. There are few transportation options that will get riders from point A to point B in a timely manner.

- **Expanded Service Area** – Increasing service options on the Southeast side of town within the Sioux Falls area would benefit many riders and increase ridership. There is also a need for increasing service options into rural areas through Sioux Falls.

Coordination

- **Expand Coordination Opportunities**– Stakeholders discussed a need for stronger coordination between transit agencies and local human service transportation providers.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Staff Training** – Some stakeholders mentioned the need for staff to be trained in greater awareness and sensitivity when interacting with people with disabilities.

Funding

- **Funding for Fleet** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for increased funding for maintenance of the current fleet. There is also a need for funding to replace current vehicles with wheelchair lift equipped vehicles.

Operational Challenges

- **Bus Stops and Shelters** – Stakeholders mentioned that the current proximity and placement of certain bus stops and sidewalks pose a challenge for riders, especially those who are disabled. There is also a need to increase bus shelters at all bus stops because currently, not every bus stop has a bus shelter.

- **Language Barriers** – Stakeholders mentioned there is a need to update technology to increase both communication and marketing in multiple languages, such as Spanish, Nepali, Swahili, Arabic, Amharic, and Kunama.

- **Fare Structure Review –** Many stakeholders mentioned that current fare costs are too high for many low-income riders and therefore, a lower fare or funding sources to assist with fare costs would be beneficial.

- **Challenges with Recruiting and Retaining Drivers** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to hire part-time drivers to increase availability of services.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-13: Sioux Falls Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-13 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Sioux Falls Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. Areas with "Very High" need can be found in Lake, Minnehaha, and Lincoln Counties. The area average for individuals with disabilities is 9.9%.
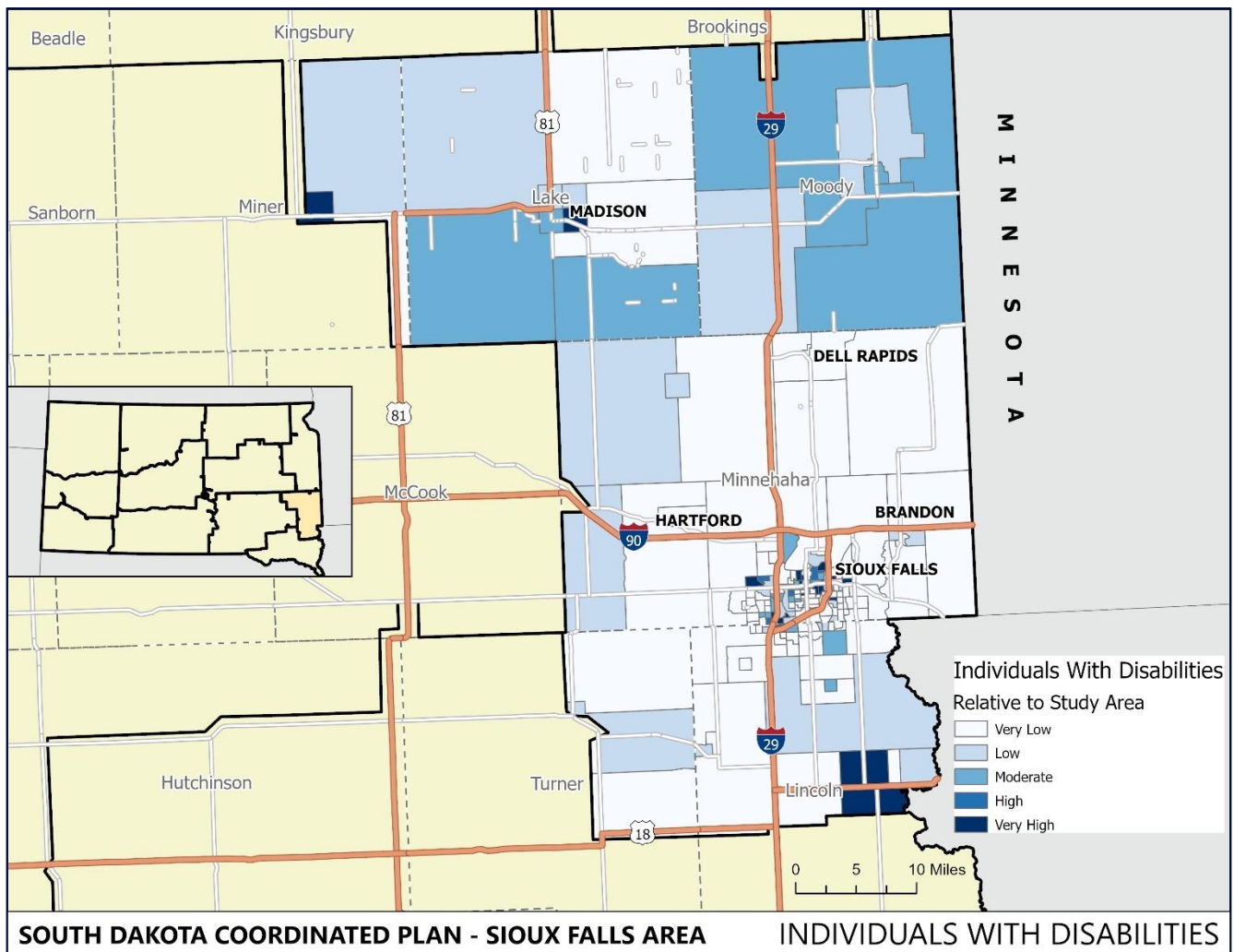
Figure 4-14: Sioux Falls Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-14 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Sioux Falls Area. Areas with "Very High" needs within the senior population can be found in Lake and Minnehaha Counties.
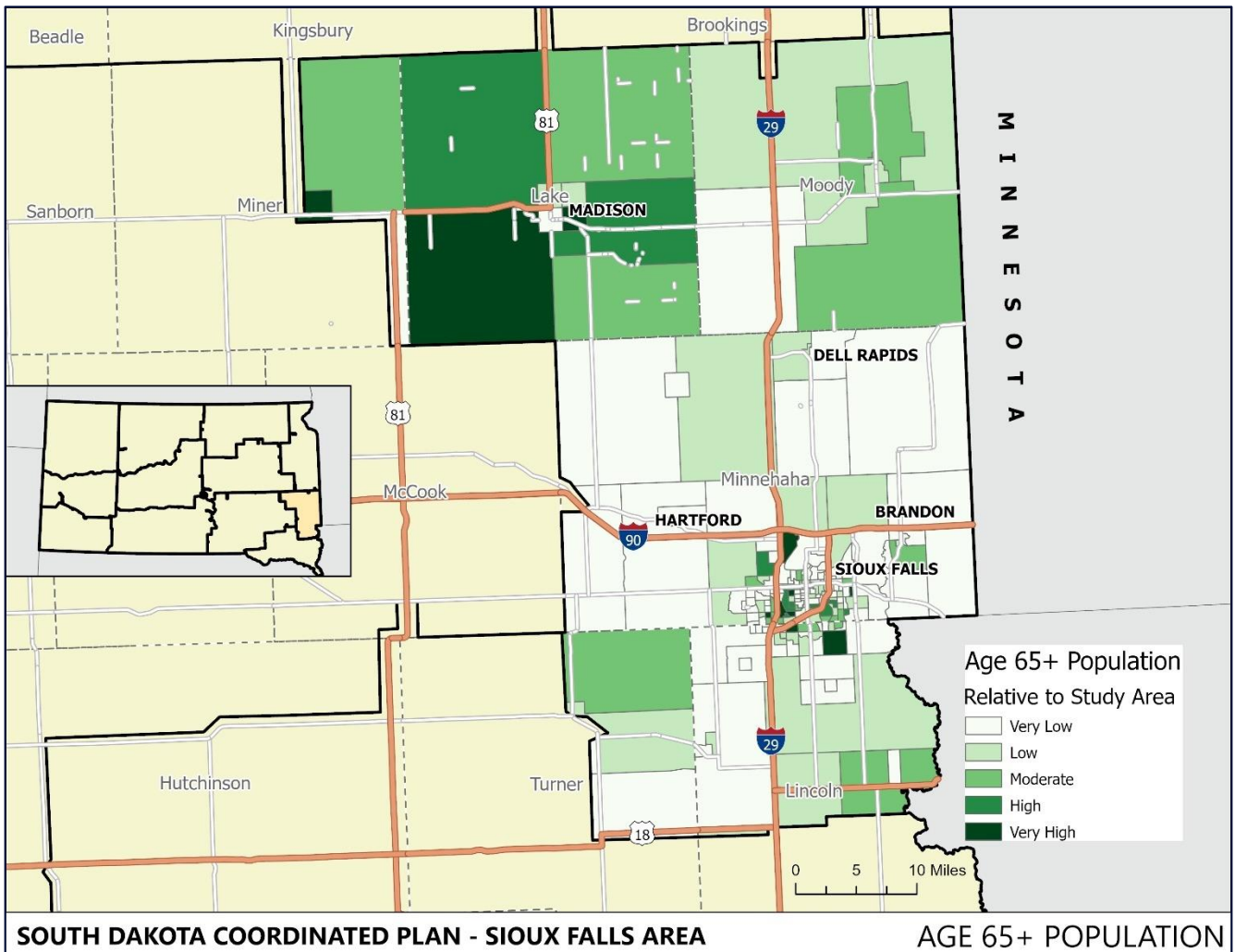
Figure 4-15: Sioux Falls Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Sioux Falls Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 8.5%. Figure 4-15 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty levels are located in Lake, Moody, Minnehaha, and Lincoln Counties.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - SIOUX FALLS AREA — LOW INCOME POPULATION
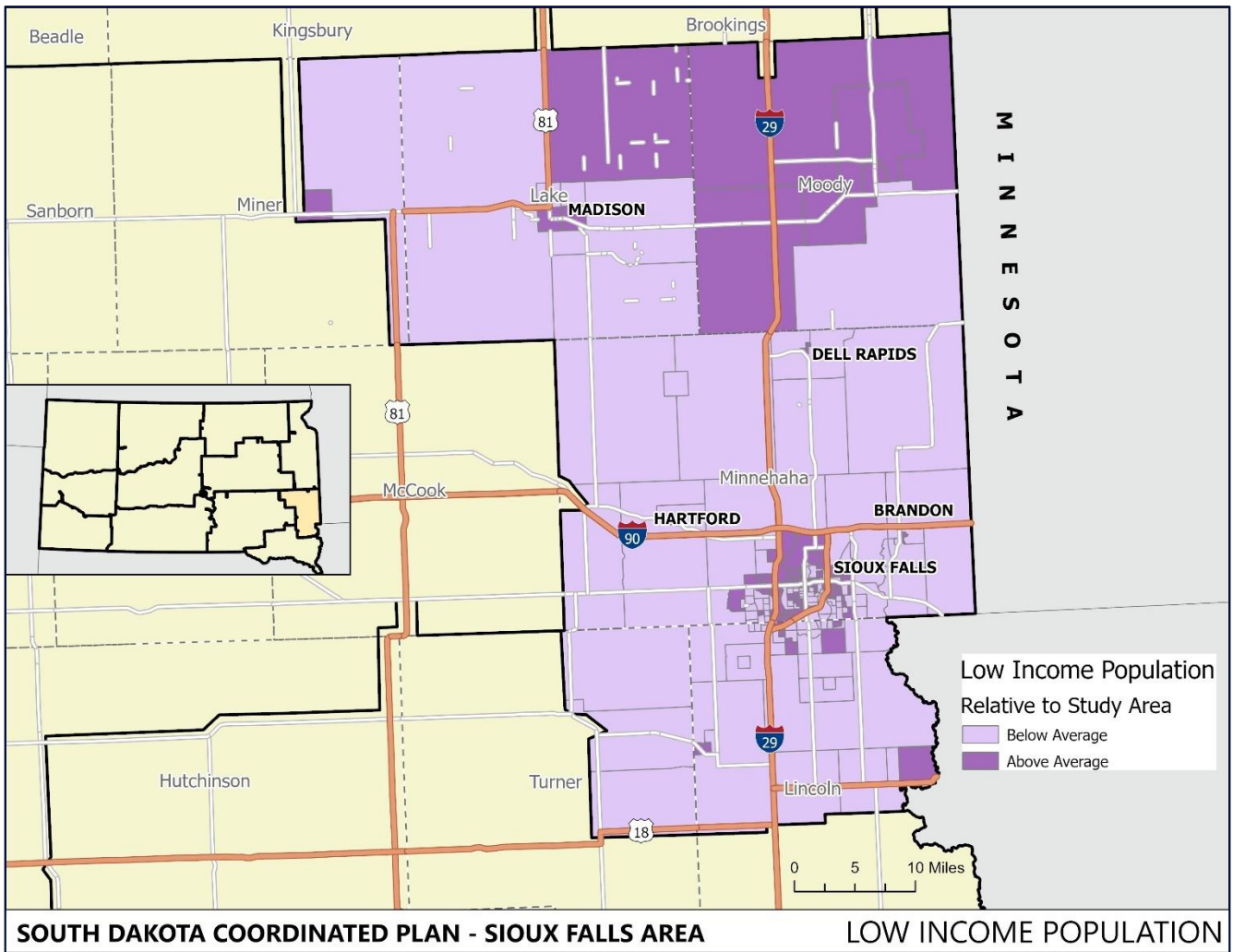
Yankton Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Expanded Service Hours** – A few stakeholders also mentioned the need for increased frequency and service hours. There are few transportation options that will get riders from point A to point B in a timely manner.

- **Employment Transportation Options** – Stakeholders discussed a need for employment transportation options, especially for second and third shift work.

- **Increased Services** – Stakeholders mentioned the need for increased services for lower income families and riders. This need includes lowering financial costs for these populations.

Coordination

- **Vanpool Options** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for employment transportation options, including a vanpool program. Currently, Siouxland Regional Transit Systems is collaborating on a vanpool program.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Improved Marketing of General Public Transportation Services** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for increased marketing and outreach strategies to maintain and to continue improving the image of public transit services.

Funding

- **Expanded Funding Sources** – Find new funding sources for public transportation services, which can include a new fundraising strategy to obtain additional funding.

Operational Challenges

- **Trip Time** – A few stakeholders mentioned a need to address downtime between trips, especially for medical trips. Currently, drivers must wait at a medical location for a couple of hours when other trips could be fulfilled.

- **Challenges with Recruiting and Retaining Drivers** – Stakeholders mentioned the need for part-time and especially full-time drivers. Currently, staffing drivers is an obstacle due to the lack of full-time drivers.

- **Bus Stops and Shelters** – Stakeholders mentioned that the current proximity and placement of certain bus stops and sidewalks pose a challenge for riders, especially people with disabilities, especially in the North Sioux City area.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-16: Yankton Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-16 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Yankton Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. Areas with "High" need can be found in Clay, Turner, and Hutchinson Counties. The area average for individuals with disabilities is 11.6%.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - YANKTON AREA   INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
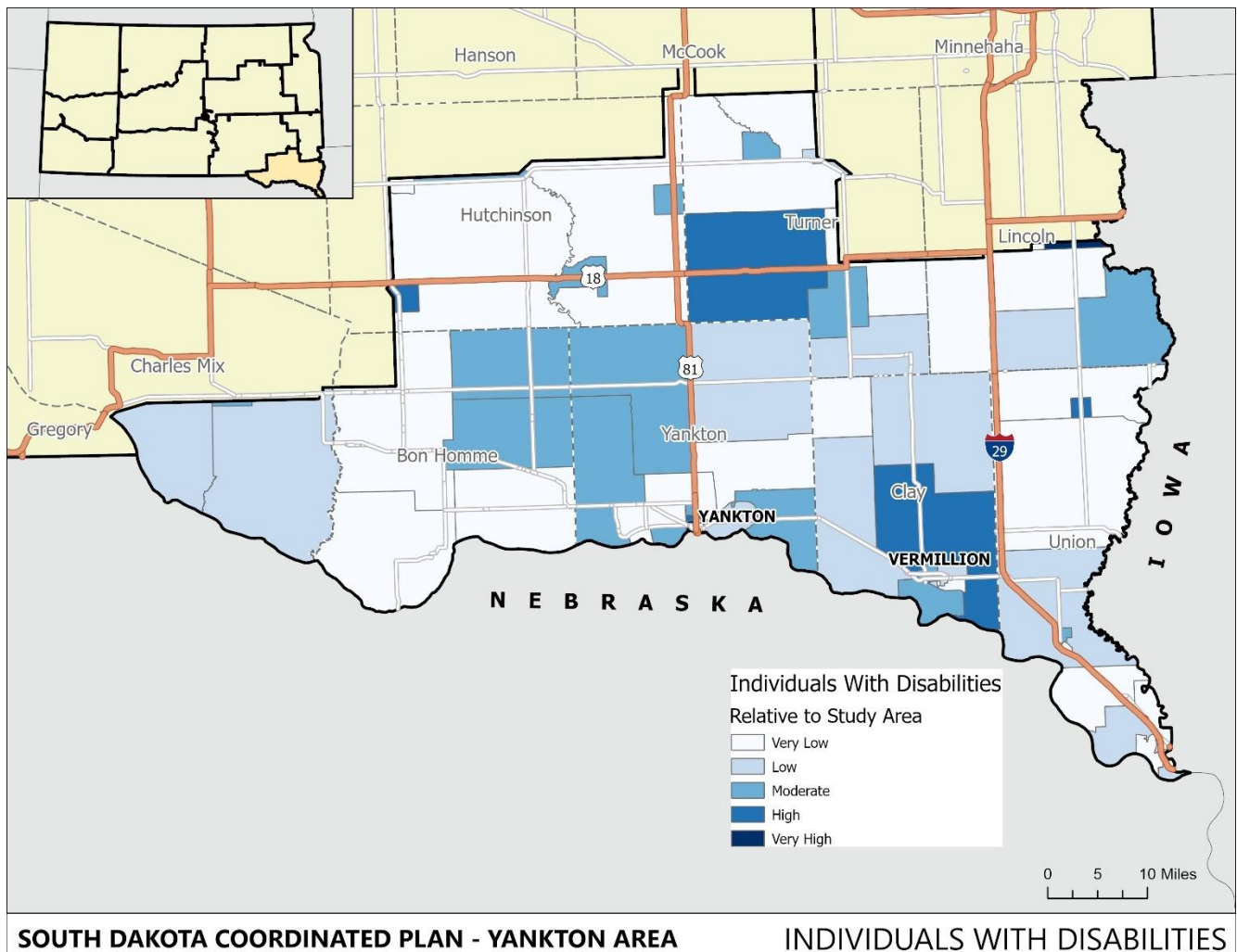
Figure 4-17: Yankton Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-17 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Yankton Area. Much of the eastern half of the Area has at least Moderate concentrations of the senior population with Very High concentrations found in Turner and Union Counties.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - YANKTON AREA   AGE 65+ POPULATION
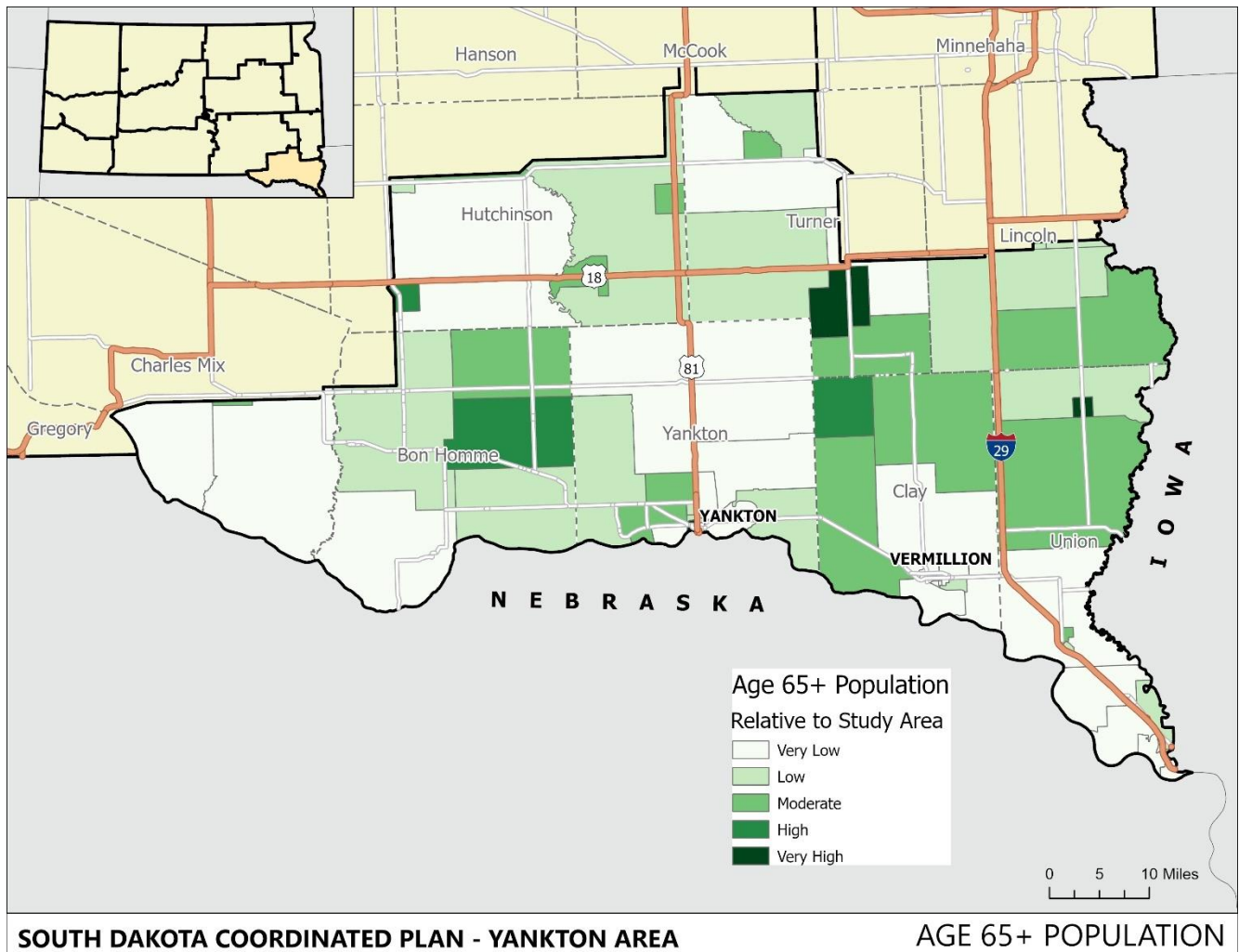
Figure 4-18: Yankton Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Yankton Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 10.1%. Figure 4-18 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty level are found in all counties except for Lincoln County.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - YANKTON AREA   LOW INCOME POPULATION
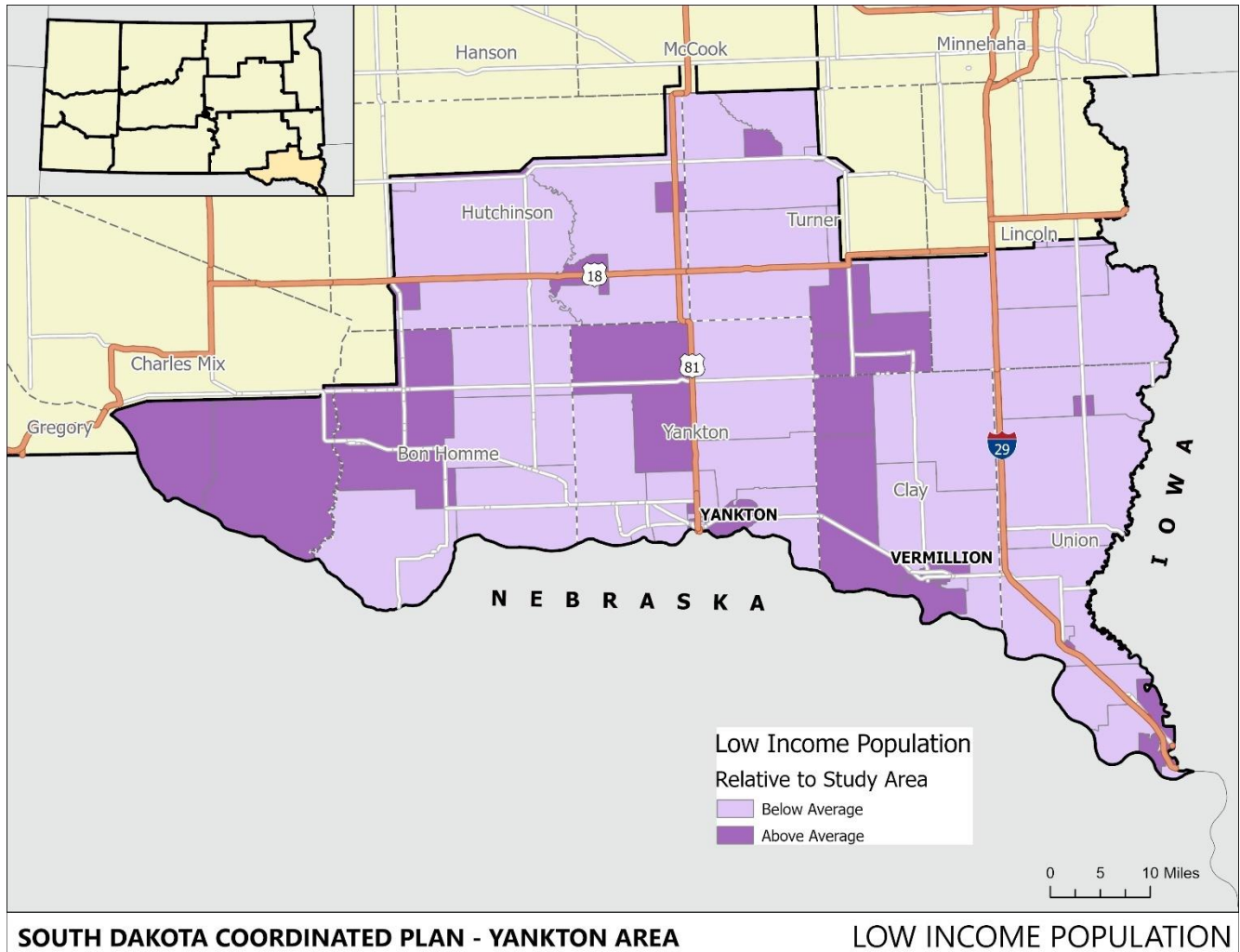
Pierre Region

Mobridge Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Employment Transportation Options** – Stakeholders discussed a need for greater employment transportation options, including for visually impaired employees from home to work.

- **Medical Transportation Options** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for rides from healthcare from rural cities to urban amenities. Another need is more service options to and from Aberdeen hospitals because there are currently a large number of riders with this specific need. A third need includes weekend services, especially when it comes to medical trips.

- **Same Day Booking** – A current need is the ability to book rides the day of rather than the day before.

- **Expanded Service Options** – Stakeholders discussed a need to expand services, especially from senior centers in Mobridge to Pierre. Another need included increasing access to child-care facilities.

- **Expanded Service Hours** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase service hours, including evening services and weekends.

- **On-demand Service** – A need for on-demand routes to increase access to other areas was noted by some stakeholders.

Coordination

- **Expanded Coordination Opportunities** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to coordinate contracts with other states, including North Dakota, for transportation opportunities crossing borders. Stakeholders also discussed a need for greater coordination with educational entities, employers, and medical facilities.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Improved Marketing of General Public Transportation Services** – While services designed to meet the needs of older adults and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to better communicate with the general public on available transportation resource to residents and riders.

- **Customer Orientation** – Stakeholders discussed the need for customer-based training, especially on how to utilize current service options.

Funding

- **Local Match** – Stakeholders discussed the need for increasing local support, as currently there is a struggle to meet funding program matching requirements.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-19: Mobridge Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-19 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Mobridge Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. The only block group with Very High concentration of individuals with disabilities is in the city of Mobridge. The area average for individuals with disabilities is 10.3%.
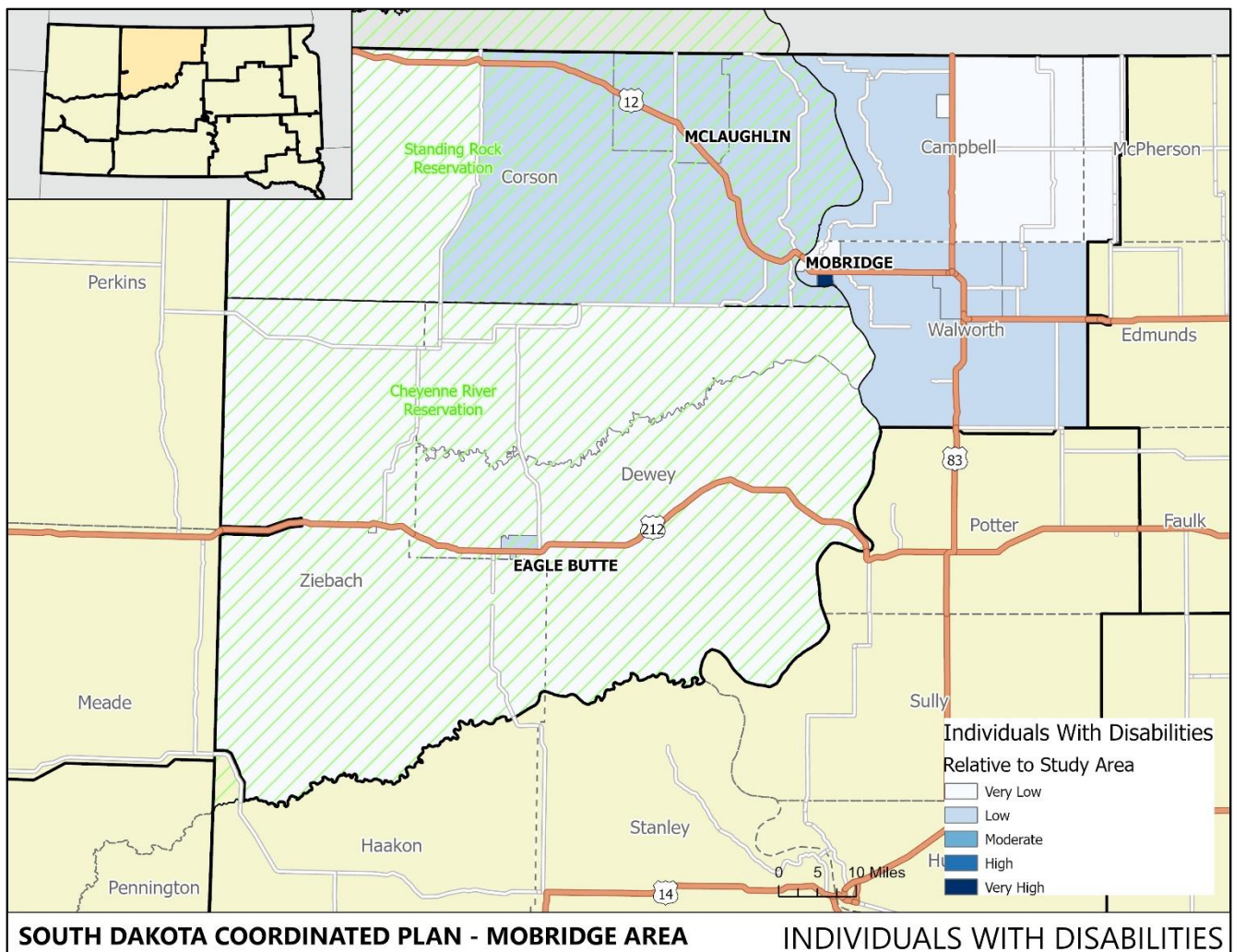
Figure 4-20: Mobridge Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-20 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Mobridge Area. Areas with "Very High" needs within the senior population can be found in Campbell and Walworth Counties.
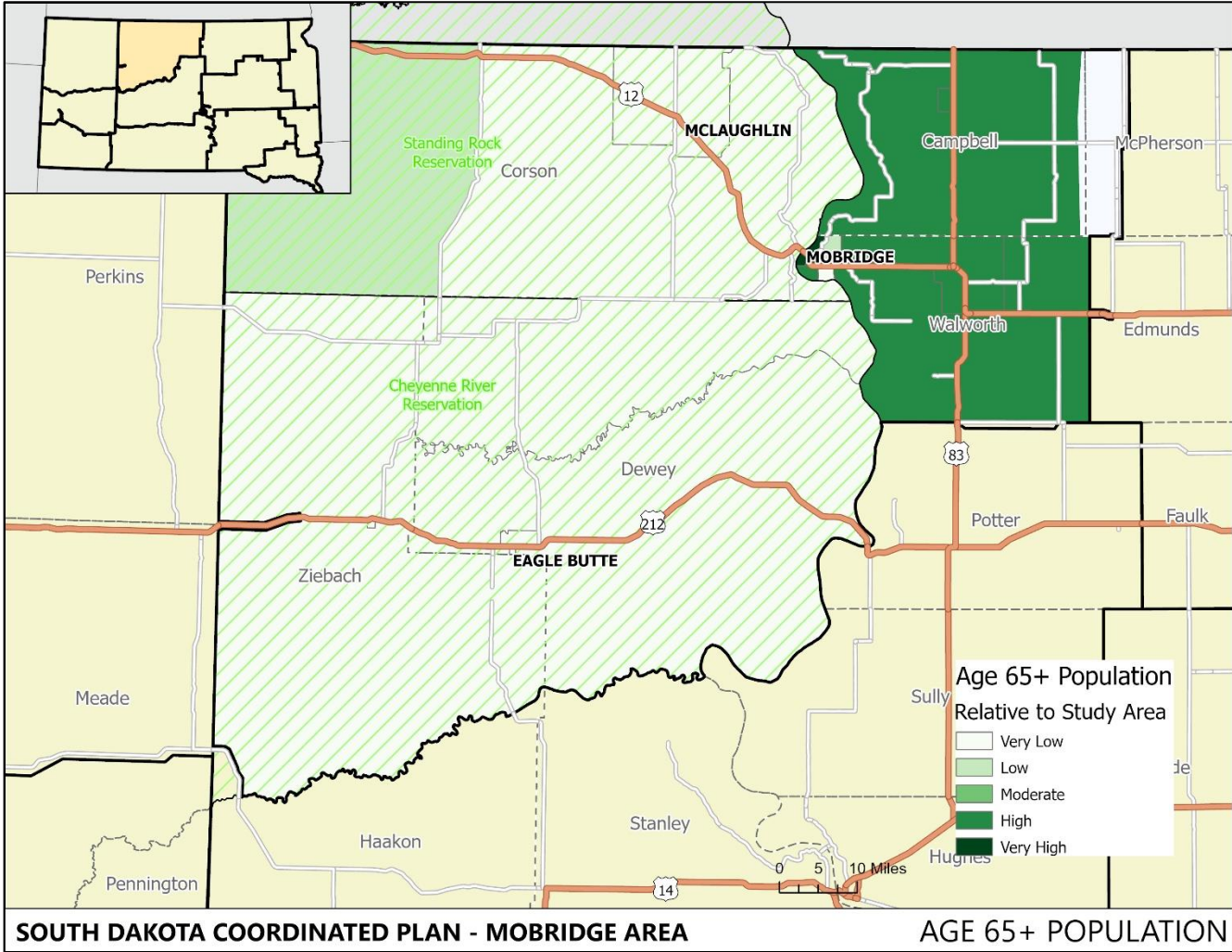
Figure 4-21: Mobridge Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Mobridge Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 27.0%. Figure 4-21 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty levels are located in Corson, Campbell, Dewey, and Ziebach Counties.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - MOBRIDGE AREA — LOW INCOME POPULATION
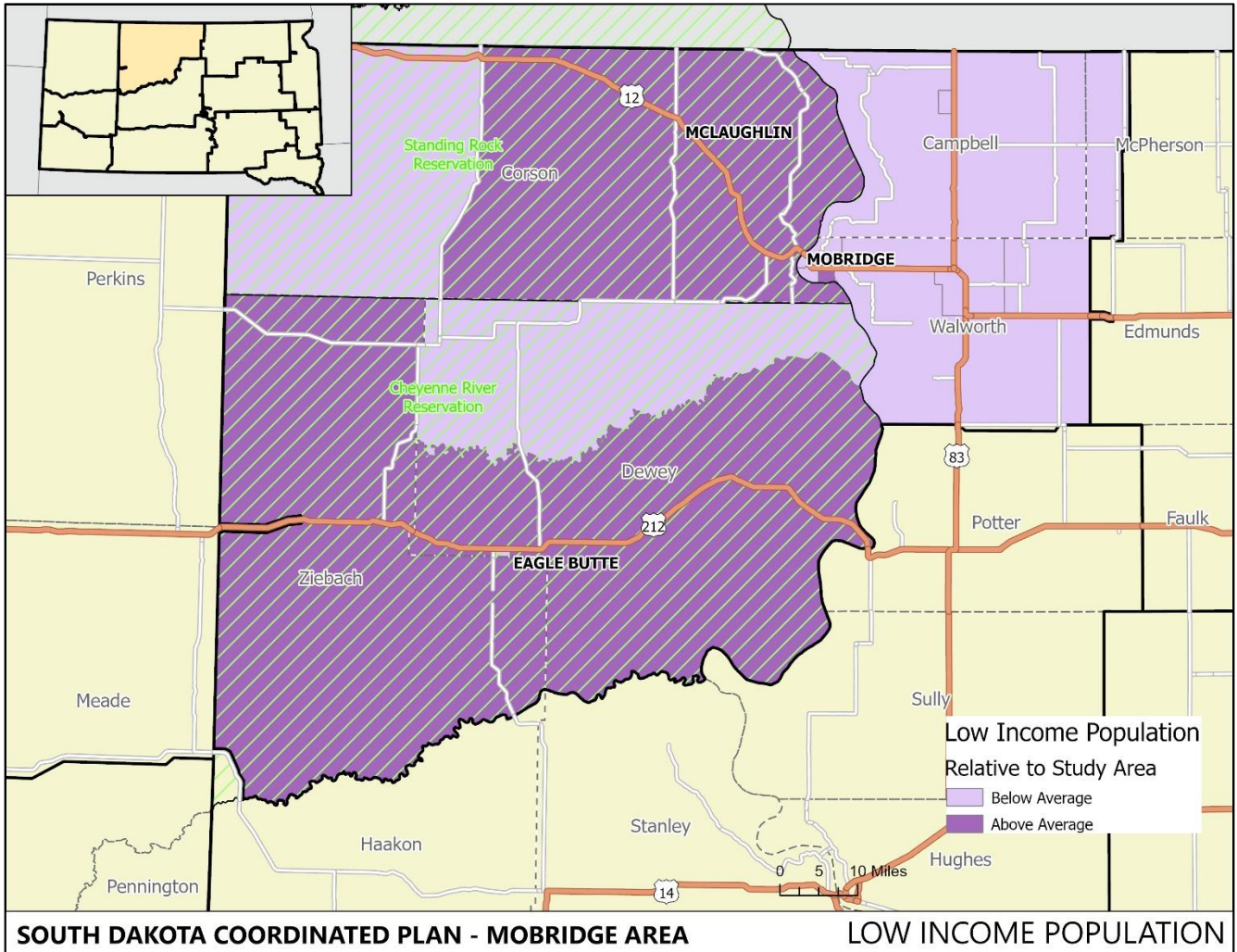
Pierre Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Expanded Service Options** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for expanded transportation options, including hospital transportation. Another need noted was increased transportation service options for veterans and for people with disabilities.

- **Updated Rider Technology** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to upgrade technology that will text alert or call riders when vehicles have arrived.

- **Meal Services** – Stakeholders discussed a need for transportation services to access congregate and other meal services.

- **Expanded Service Hours** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase service hours, including evening services, weekends, and shift hours.

Coordination

- **Coordination with DAV** – Stakeholders discussed a need for escorts on rides for the DAV and increased partnership with public transit.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Improved Marketing of General Public Transportation Services** – While services designed to meet the needs of older adults and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to better communicate with the general public on available transportation resource to residents and riders.

Operational Challenges

- **Accessible Vehicles** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase wheelchair friendly vehicles.

- **Language Barriers** – Stakeholders mentioned there is a need to update technology to increase both communication and marketing in other languages. Another need noted was for interpretation services.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-22: Pierre Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-22 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Pierre Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. Areas of Moderate and High concentrations relative to the Area average of 11.7% are found in and around the City of Pierre.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - PIERRE AREA   **INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**
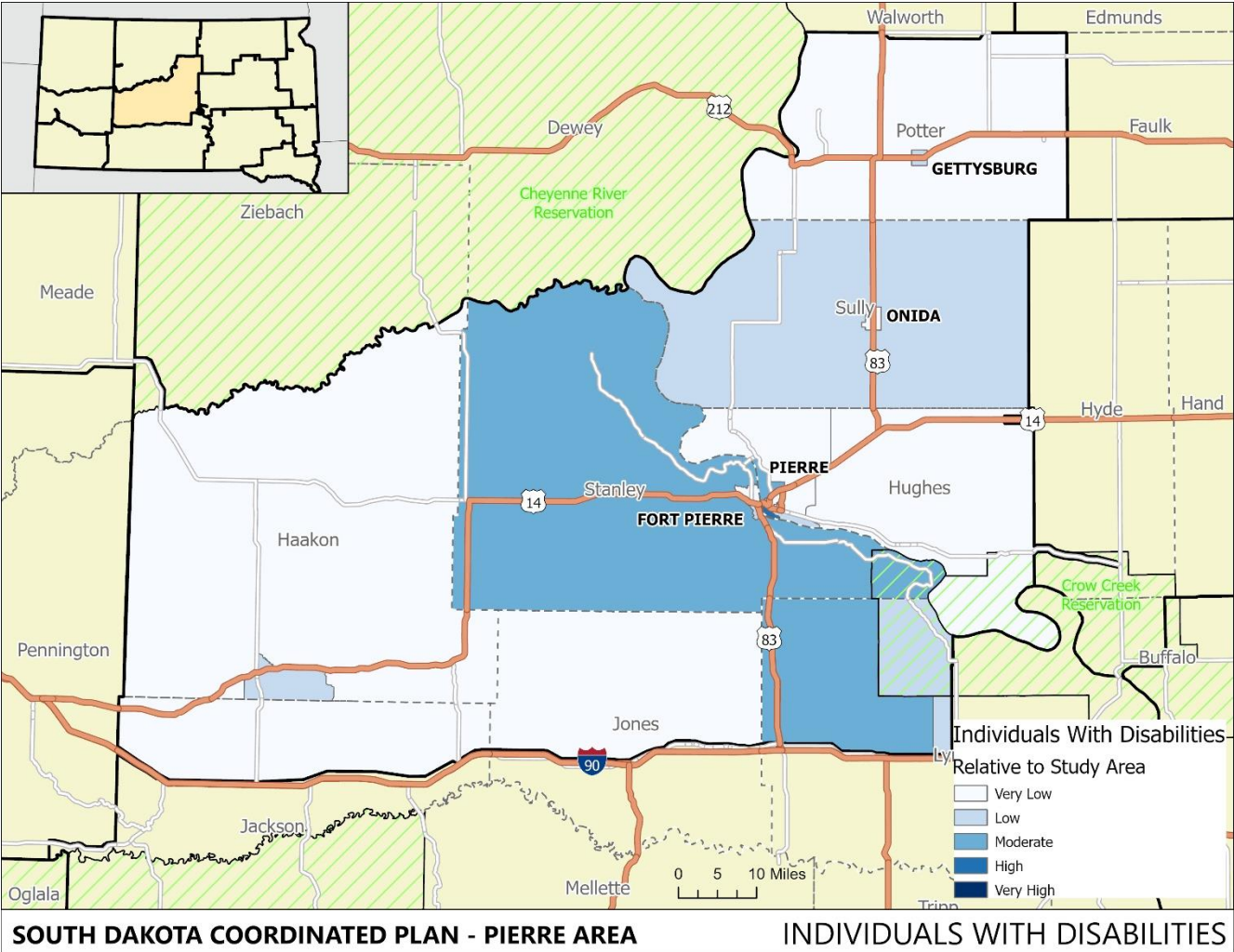
Figure 4-23: Pierre Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-23 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Pierre Area. Areas with "Very High" needs within the senior population can be found throughout Potter and Sully Counties and in Haakon County.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - PIERRE AREA   AGE 65+ POPULATION
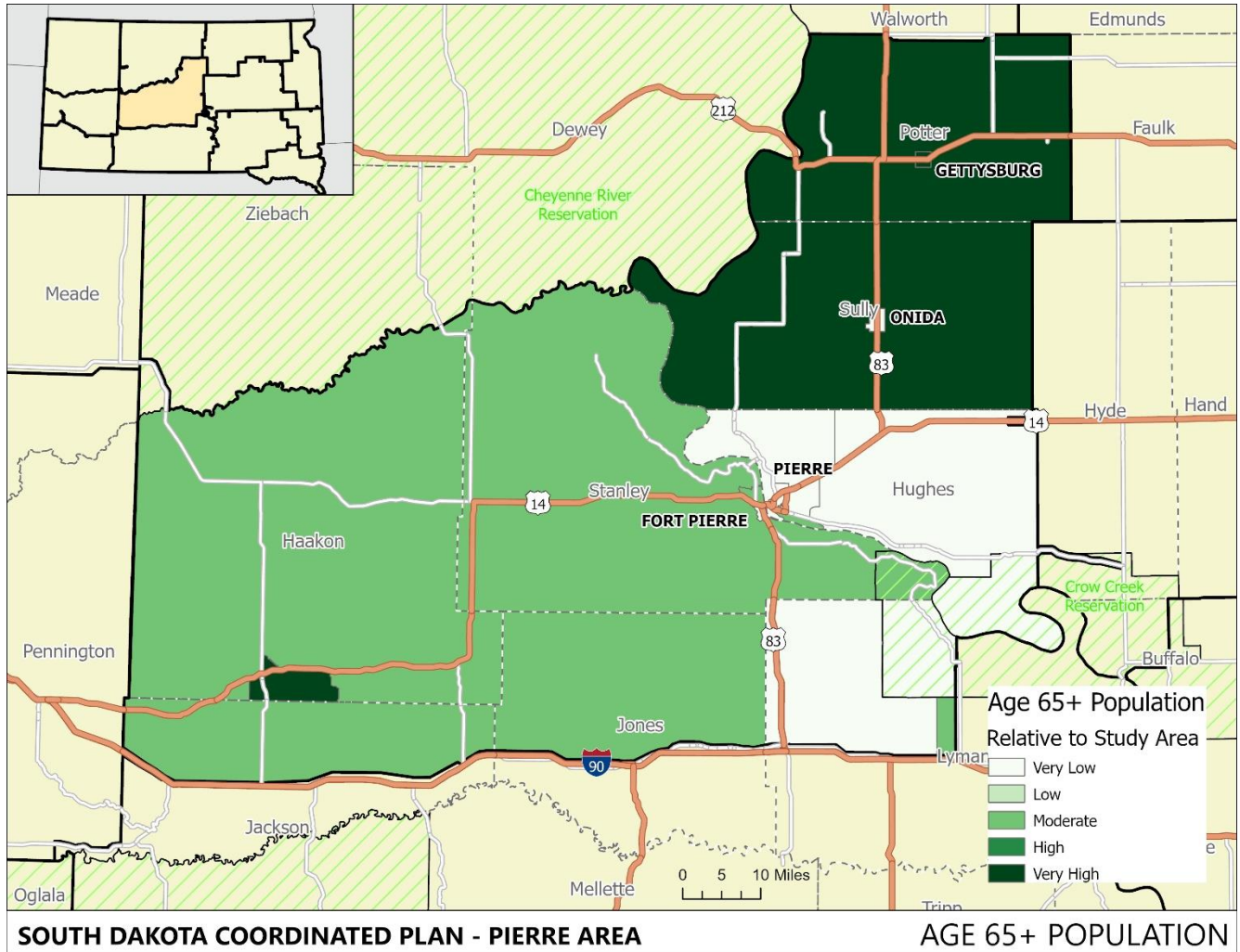
Figure 4-24: Pierre Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Pierre Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 12.8%. Figure 4-24 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty levels are located in Lyman and Jackson Counties and in Pierre.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - PIERRE AREA   LOW INCOME POPULATION
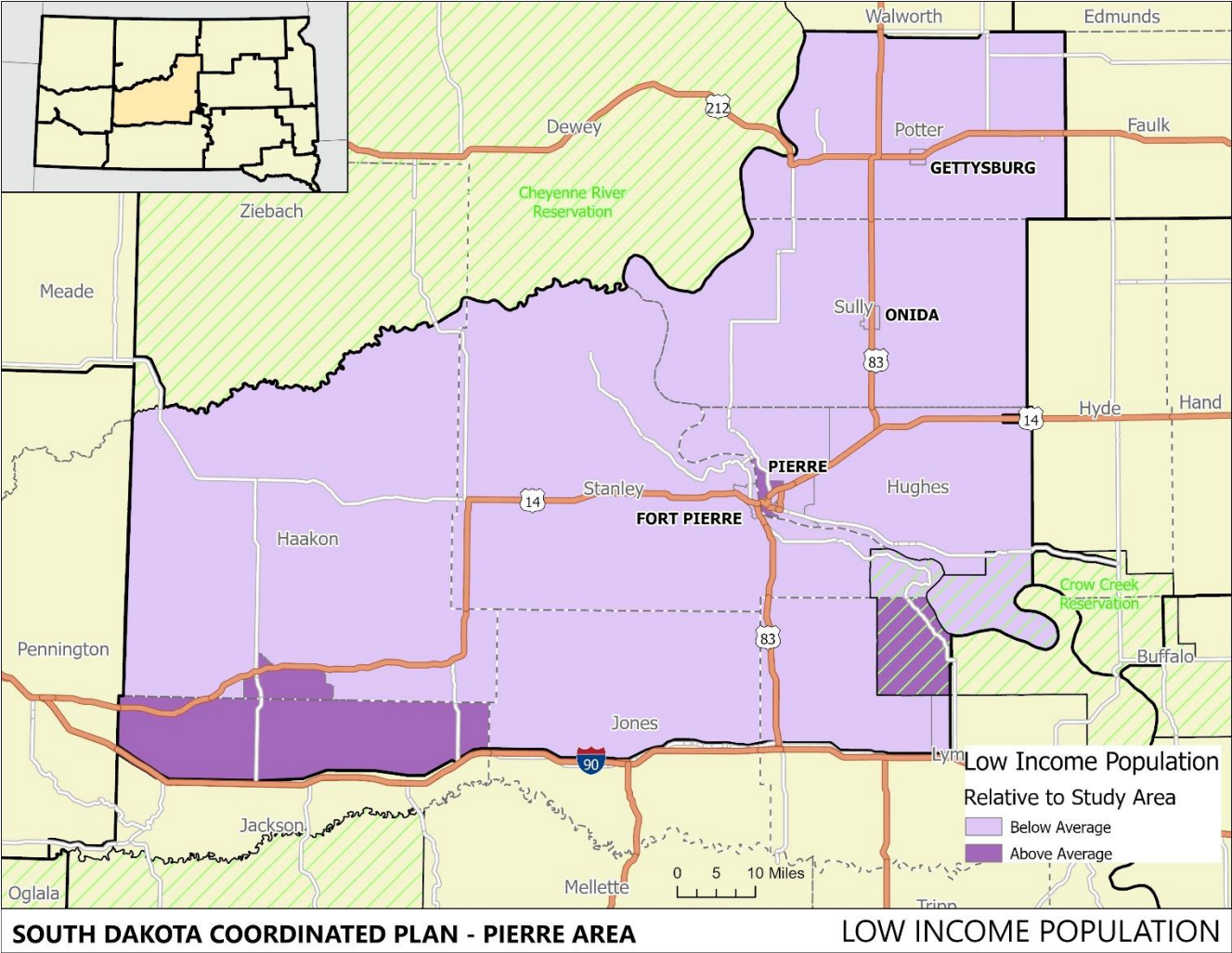
Winner Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Expanded Service Hours** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase service hours, including evening services and weekends.

- **Expanded Service Area** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase service area, especially in the rural areas that currently lack a lot of service options.

- **Fares** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for more affordable transportation, including fare costs.

Coordination

- **Opportunities for Tribal Coordination** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for coordination with the tribes in the Rural Office of Community Services service area.

Funding

- **Funding for Vehicles** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for funding to upkeep maintenance of vehicles, as well as purchasing wheelchair lift equipped vehicles.

Operational Challenges

- **Challenges with Recruiting and Retaining Drivers** – Stakeholders mentioned the need for part-time and especially full-time drivers.

- **Accessible Vehicles** – Stakeholders discussed the need to purchase new, wheelchair friendly vehicles.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-25: Winner Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-25 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Winner Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. Areas with "High" or "Very High" needs are found in Lyman and Bennett Counties. The area average for individuals with disabilities is 8.5%.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - WINNER AREA   INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
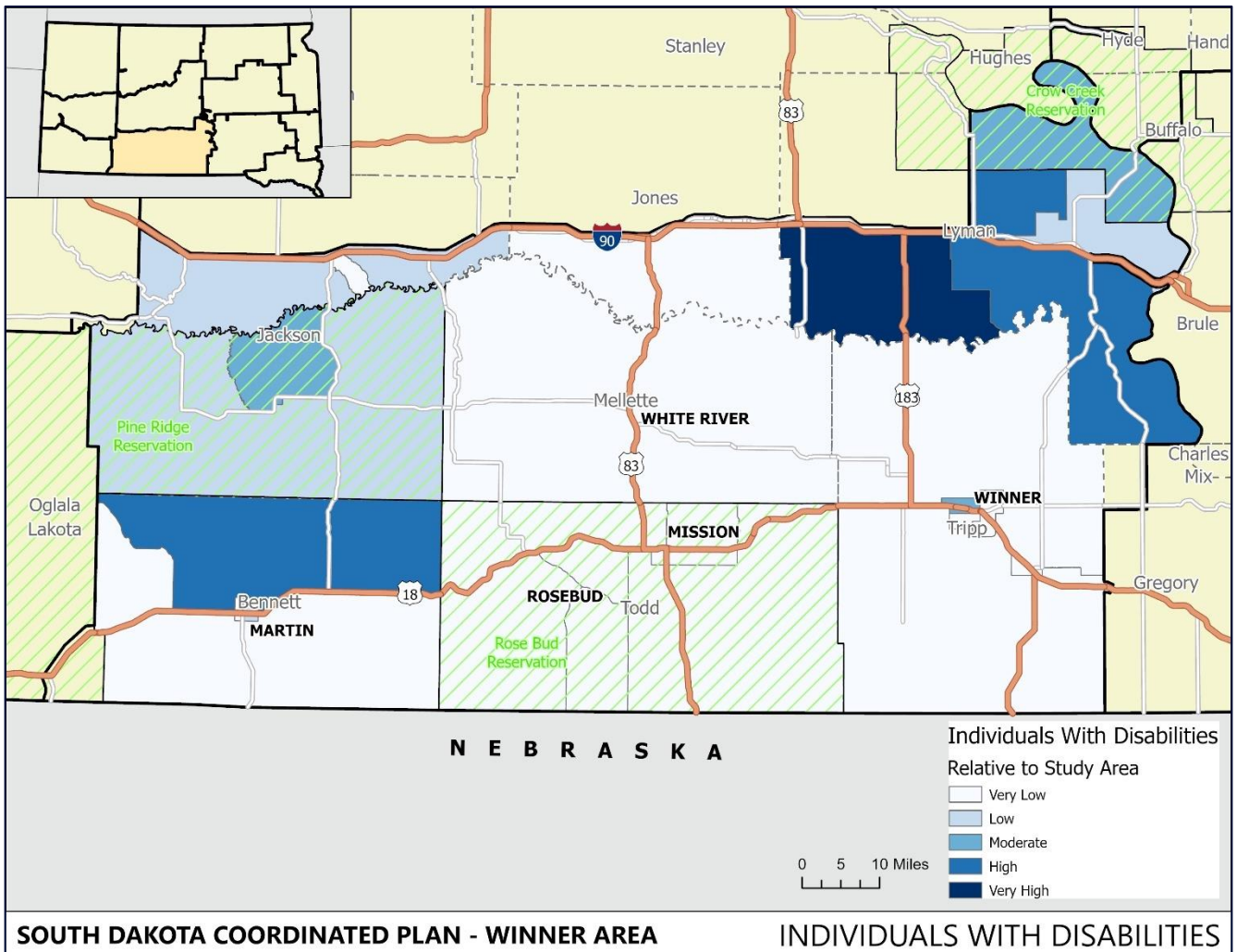
Figure 4-26: Winner Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-26 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Winner Area. Areas with "Very High" needs within the senior population can be found in Lyman County.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - WINNER AREA

AGE 65+ POPULATION
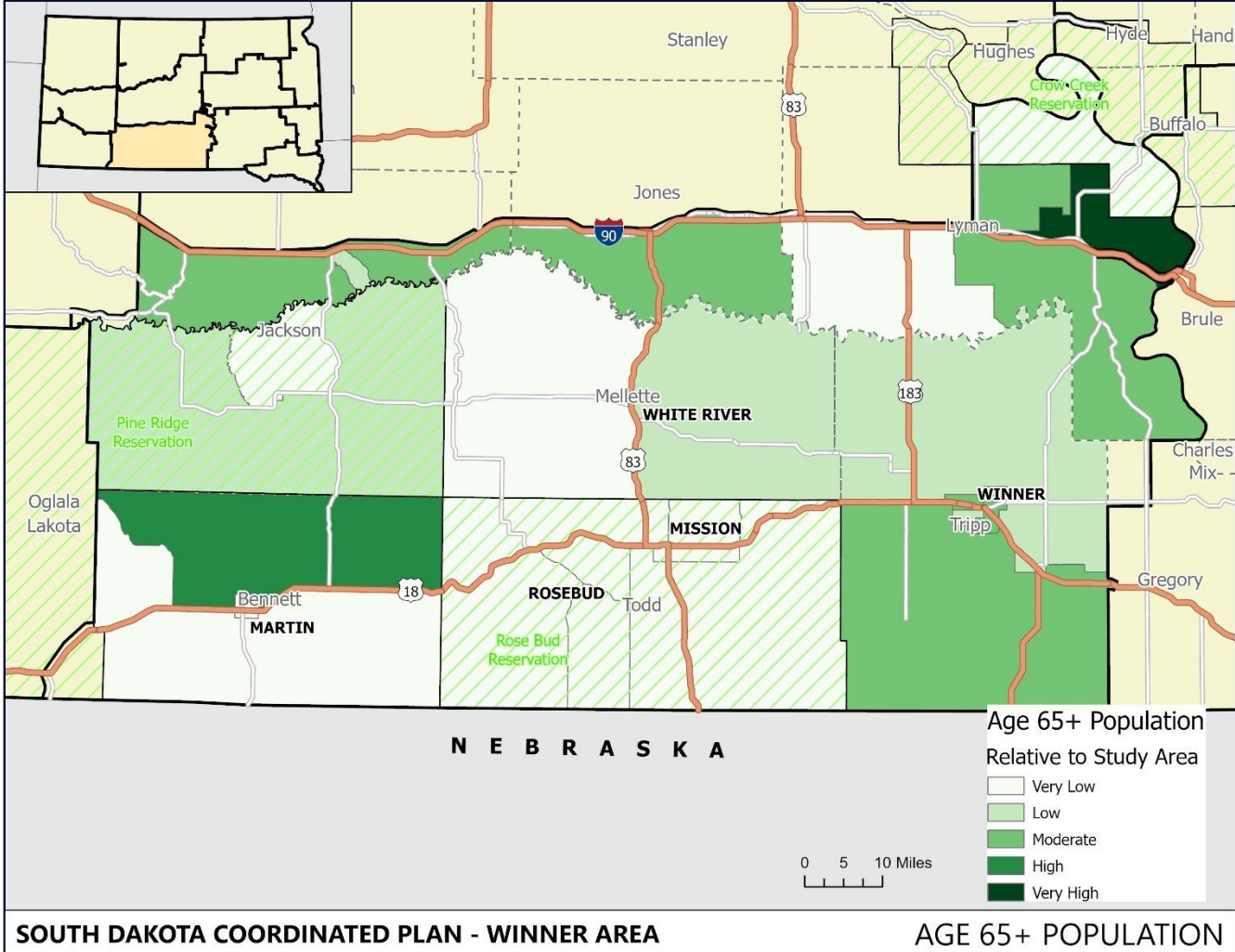
Figure 4-27: Winner Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Winner Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 35.4%. Figure 4-27 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty levels are located throughout the area with concentrations in Lyman, Tripp, Todd, Bennett, Melette, and Jackson Counties.
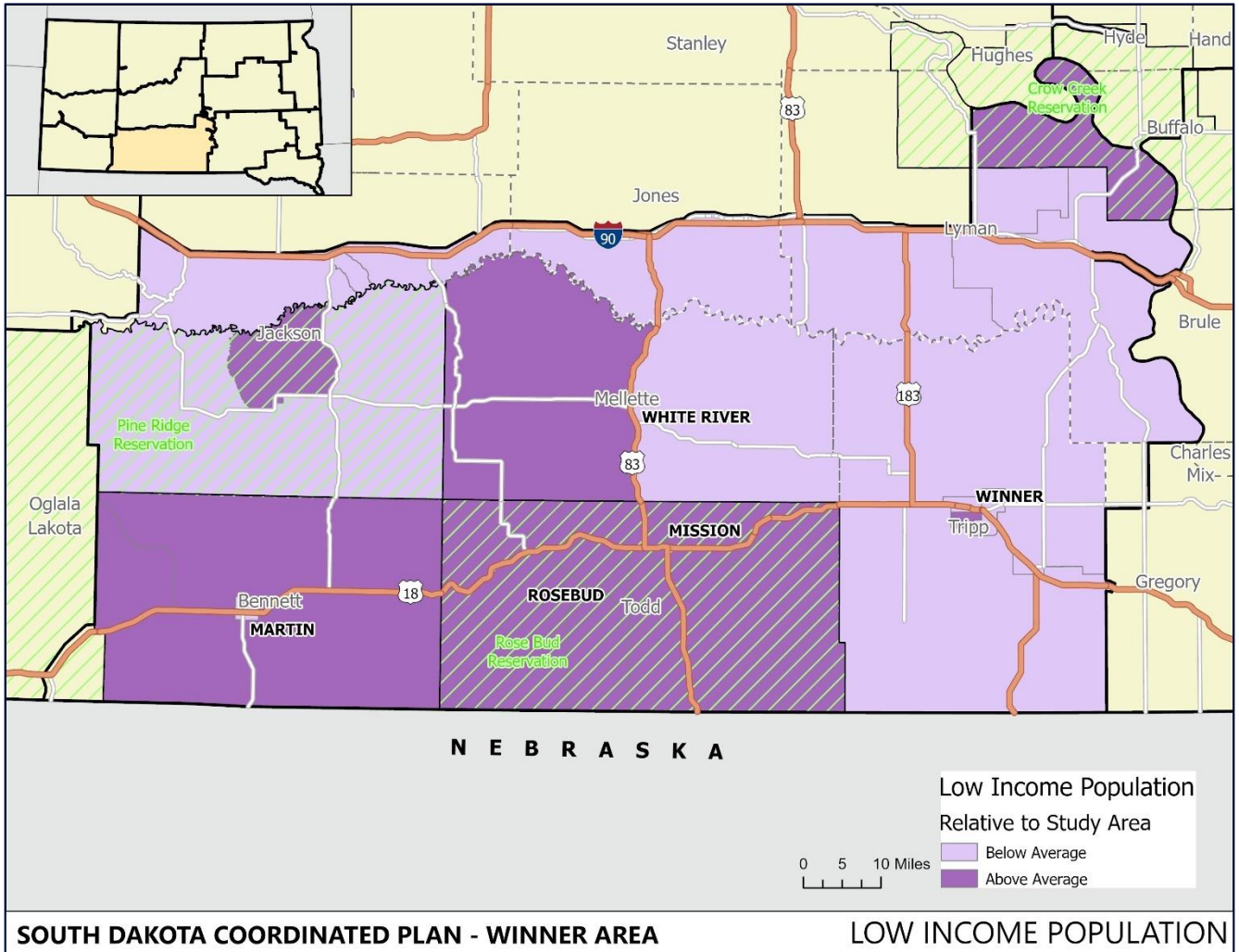
Rapid City Region

Belle Fourche Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Employment Transportation Options** – Stakeholders discussed a need for employment transportation options, especially for shift work and weekend employment. Another need is for opportunities to provide services to students or other riders. The future Air Force Base will need employment transportation options in the future.

- **Expanded Service Hours** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase service hours, including evening services and weekends. Increased hours of operations are needed for medical appointments and needs. A third need is for evening services for social events.

- **Intercity Options** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for affordable intercity transportation options for the workforce population, including service industry workers.

Coordination

- **Caregiver Transportation Coordination** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for caregivers to get rides to and from adult daycare centers and to coordinate with public transit on a potential local match partnership.

- **Opportunities for Tribal Coordination** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for coordination with the reservations, especially for more focused trips to medical appointments.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Improved Marketing of General Public Transportation Services** – While services designed to meet the needs of older adults and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to better communicate with the general public on available transportation resource to residents and riders. The stakeholders mentioned a need for increased marketing through both radio and newspaper outlets for current service options and hours.

Funding

- **Funding Sources** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for increased funding for public transit services.

Operational Challenges

- **Medicare/Medicaid Trips** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for greater support to Medicare/Medicaid eligible individuals with costs for their trips.

- **Volunteer Drivers** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase volunteer drivers to Community Health Representative for the Tribe for dialysis appointments.

- **Accessible Vehicles** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for more wheelchair lift equipped and accessible vehicles.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-28: Belle Fourche Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-28 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Belle Fourche Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. There are no areas categorized as "Very High" or "High" need. The area average for individuals with disabilities is 12.3%.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - BELLE FOURCHE AREA   INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
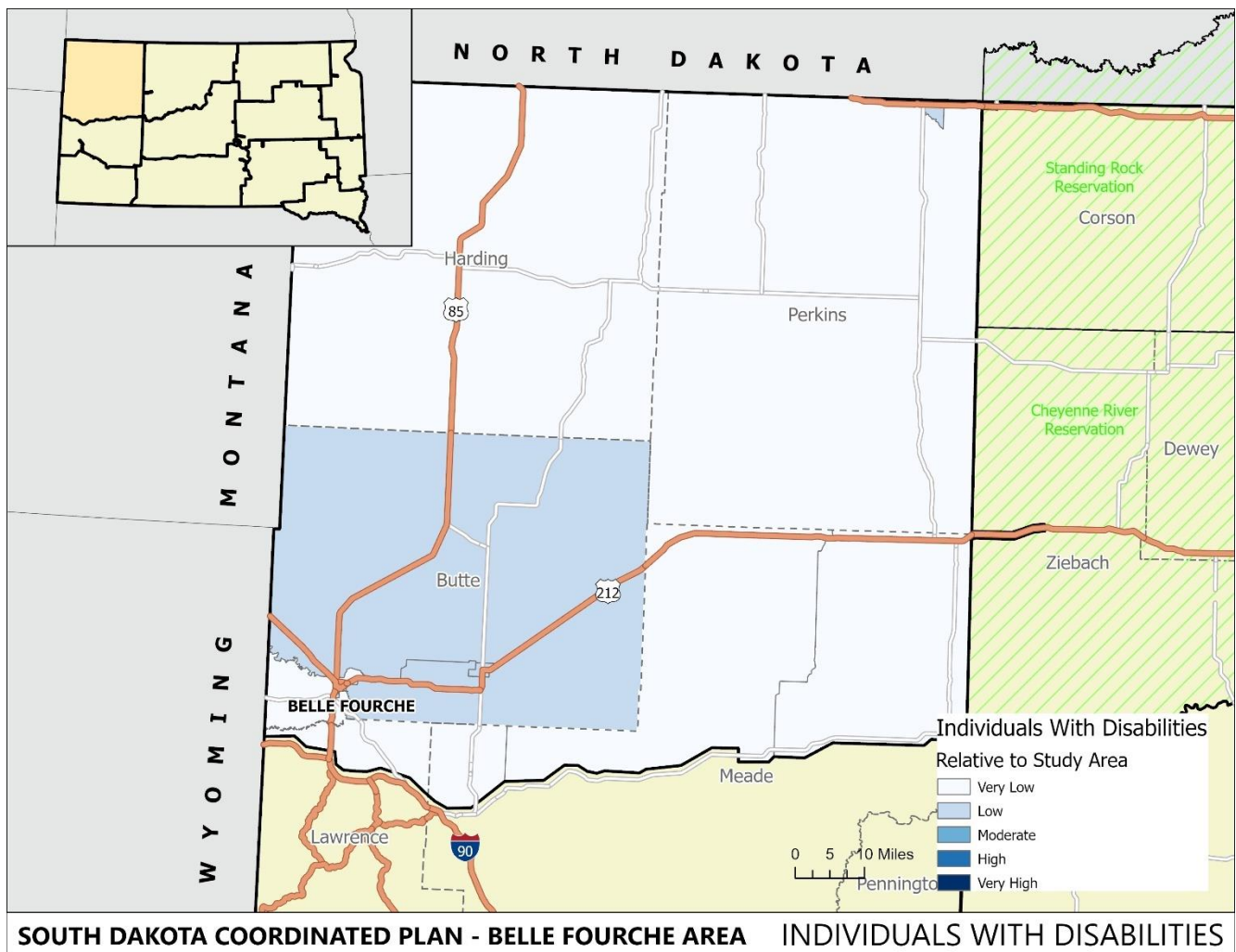
Figure 4-29: Belle Fourche Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-29 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Belle Fourche Area. Areas with "Very High" needs within the senior population can be found in Perkins and Lawrence Counties.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - BELLE FOURCHE AREA   AGE 65+ POPULATION
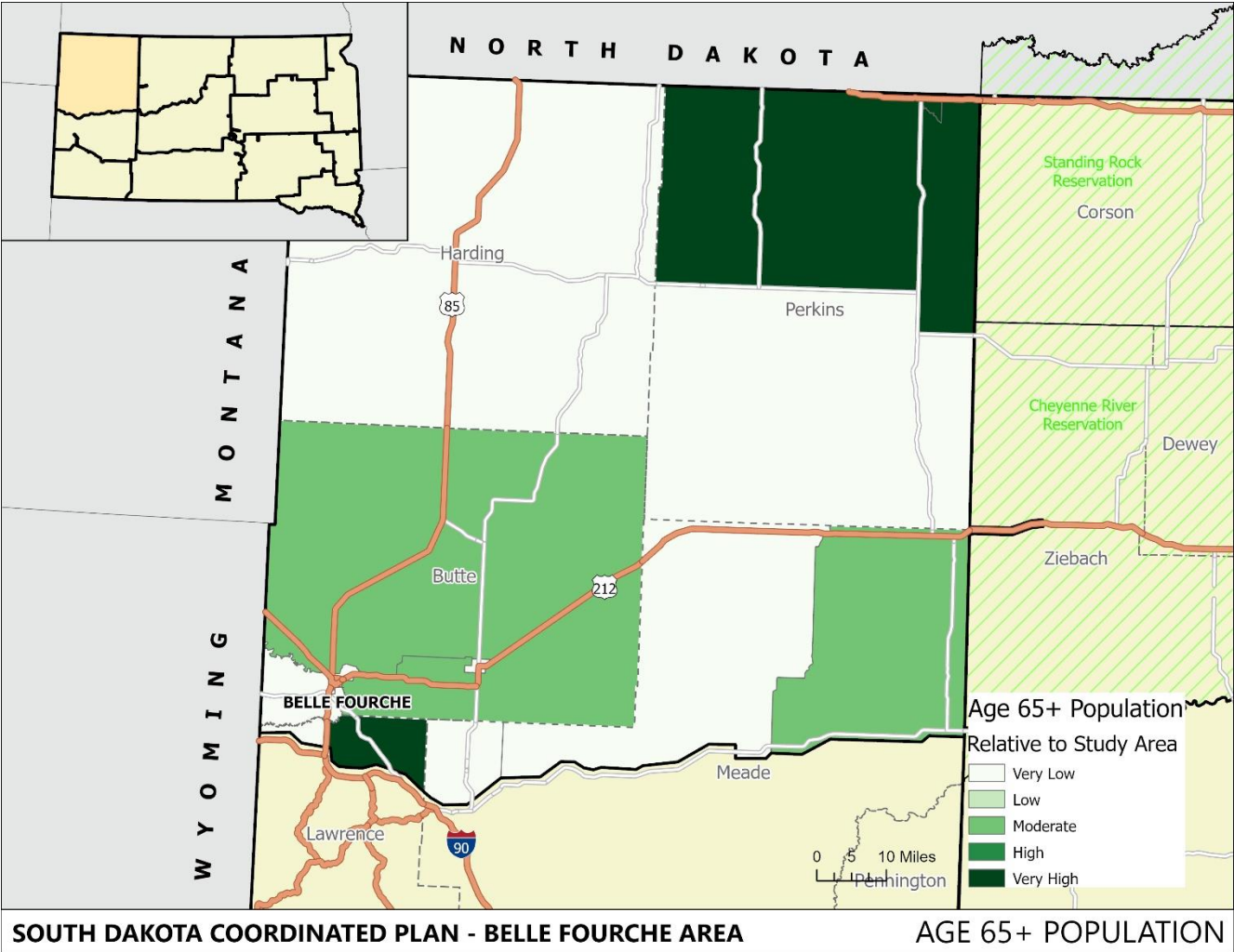
Figure 4-30: Belle Fourche Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Belle Fourche Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 10.7%. Figure 4-30 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty levels are located in Butte and Meade Counties.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - BELLE FOURCHE AREA — LOW INCOME POPULATION
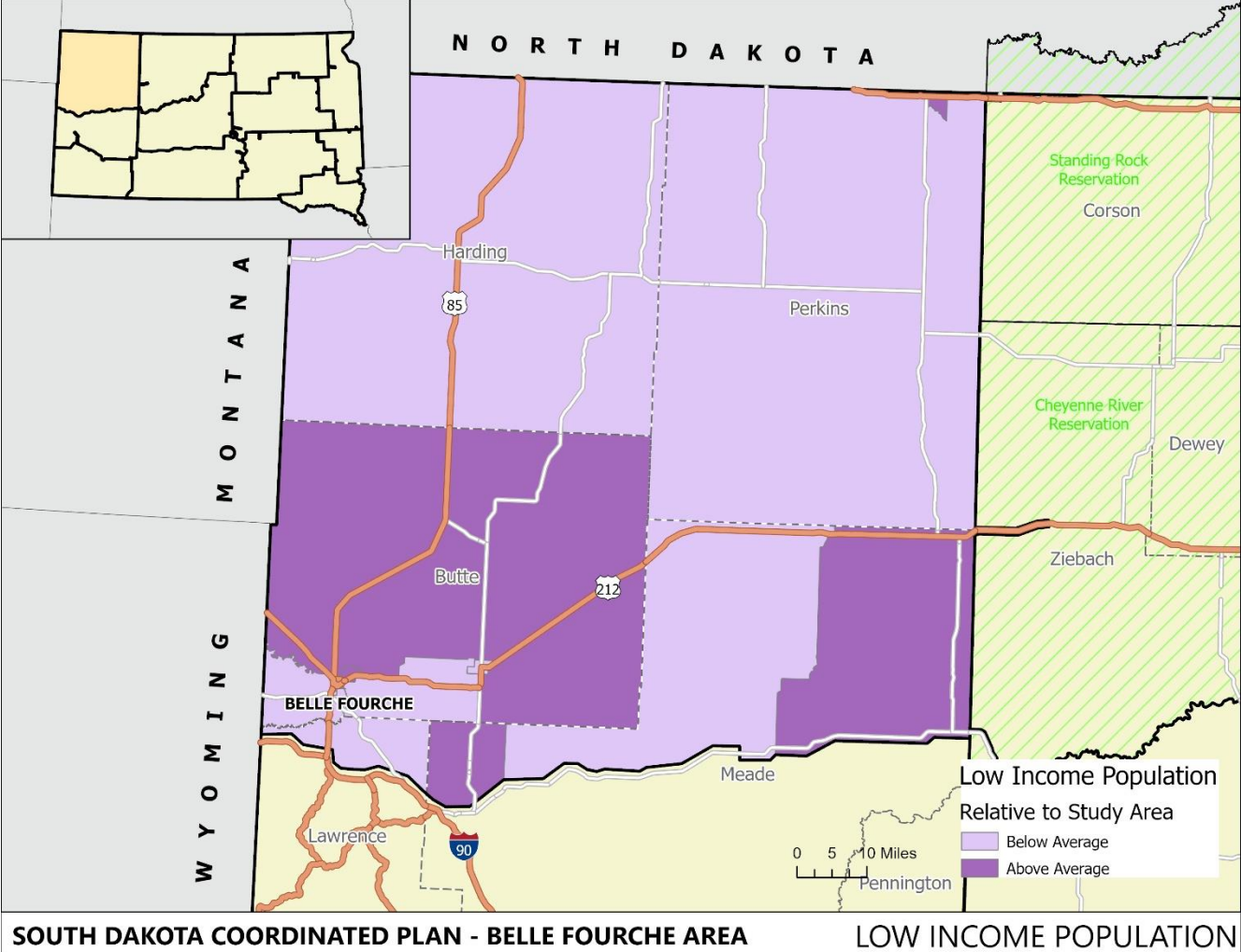
Custer Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Expanded Service Options** – Stakeholders mentioned that during the summer, there is an influx of ridership and needs, especially for children with afterschool activities and summer programs. Another need is for more trips to Rapid City. A third need includes transportation options for medical appointments.

- **Expanded Service Hours** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase service hours, including evening services and weekends. Church service is especially important on Sundays even if just once a month. Another stakeholder mentioned a need to extend service hours in Sturgis, as there is a higher demand in that town.

- **Expanded Service Area** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase service area, especially to locations such as the Department of Motor Vehicles, Feed South Dakota Food Bank, etc.

Coordination

- **Opportunities for Tribal Coordination** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for coordination with the reservations, especially for more focused trips to medical appointments.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Improved Marketing of General Public Transportation Services** – While services designed to meet the needs of older adults and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to better communicate with the general public on available transportation resource to residents and riders. The stakeholders mentioned a need for increased marketing through both radio and newspaper outlets for current service options and hours.

- **Customer Training** – Stakeholders discussed the need for customer-based training, especially on how to utilize current service options.

Operational Challenges

- **Challenges with Recruiting and Retaining Drivers** – Stakeholders mentioned the need for part-time, especially with Prairie Hills Transit.

- **Accessible Vehicles** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for more wheelchair lift equipped and accessible vehicles.

- **Volunteer Drivers** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase volunteer drivers to Community Health Representative for the Tribe for dialysis appointments.

Demographic Analysis

Figure 4-31: Custer Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-31 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Custer Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. Areas with "High" or "Very High" needs are found in Custer, Fall River, and Oglala Lakota Counties. The area average for individuals with disabilities is 14.7%.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - CUSTER AREA — INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
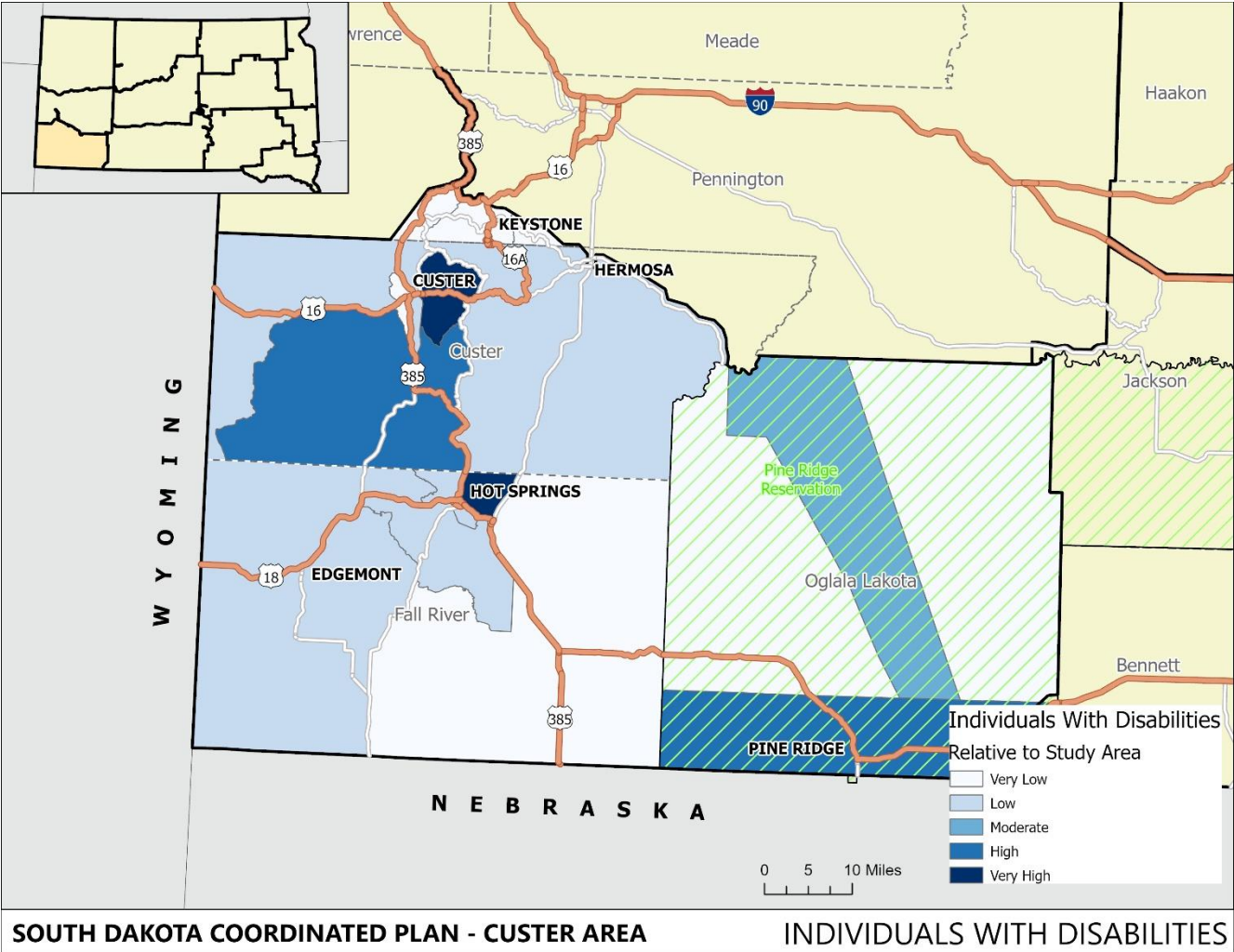
Figure 4-32: Custer Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-32 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Custer Area. With an average concentration of 27.6%, transit needs for the senior population are high throughout the Area. Areas with "Very High" needs within the senior population can be found in Fall River County.
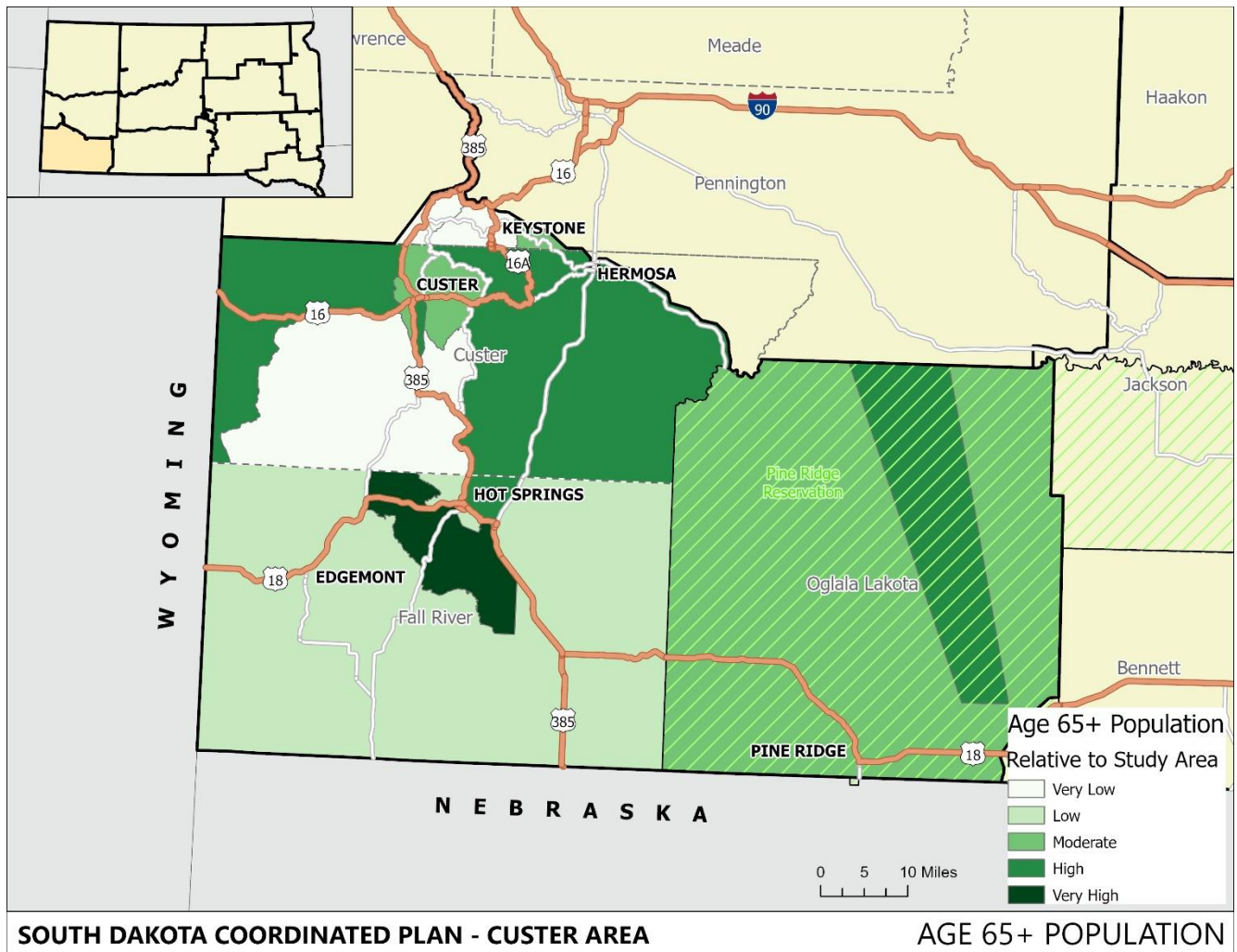
Figure 4-33: Custer Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Custer Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 11.0%. Figure 4-33 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty levels are found in all counties within the Area, but particularly within Oglala Lakota County on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - CUSTER AREA
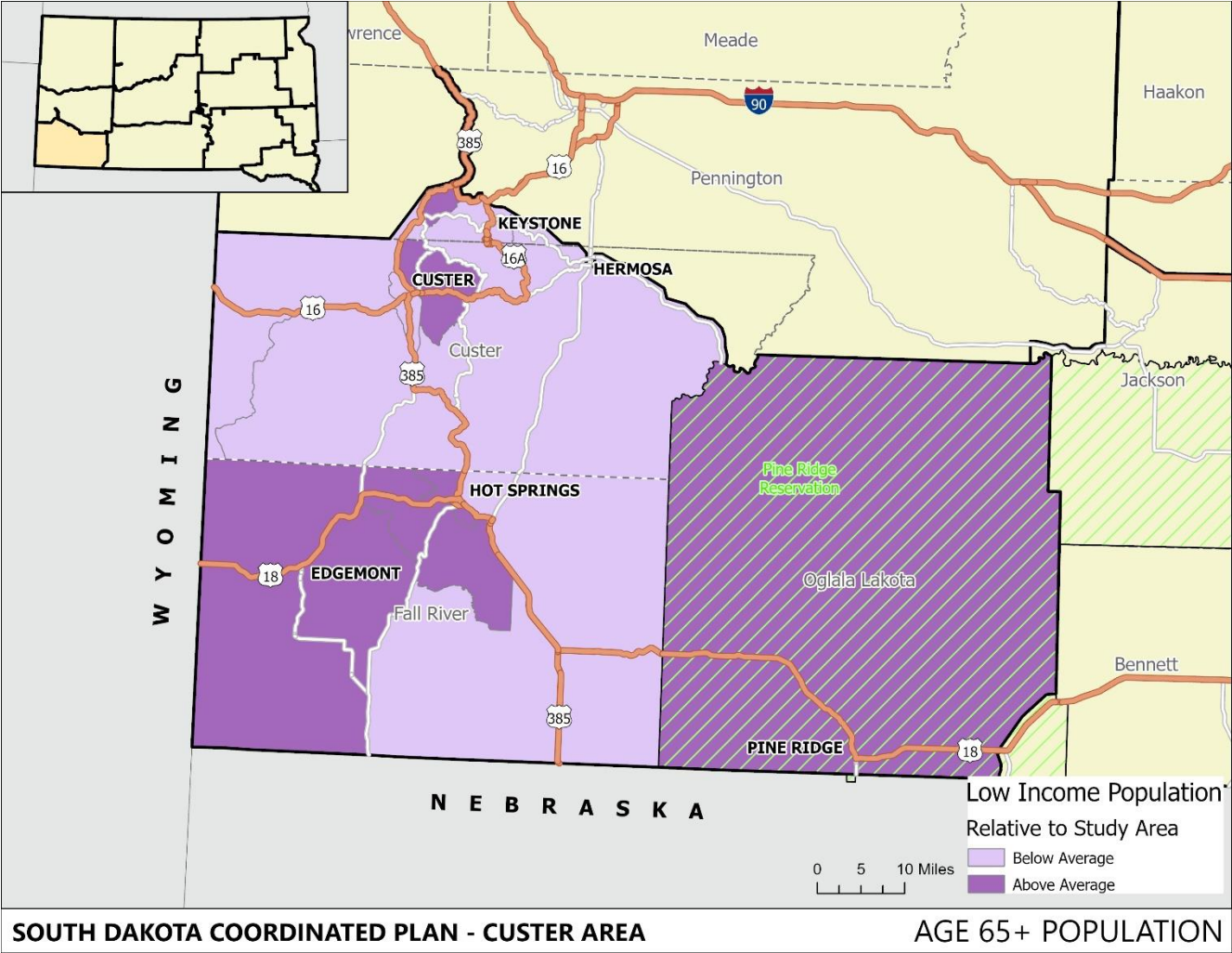
Rapid City Area

Expanded or Improved Transportation Services

- **Expanded Service Hours** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase service hours, including evening services and weekends, especially for shopping and social events.

- **Medical Transportation Options** – Stakeholders discussed the need for increased service options for Medicaid Transportation, especially to doctors or dentists' appointments.

- **Senior Services** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities, similar to dial-a-ride services.

- **Transfer System** – Stakeholders discussed the need for a transfer system in order to remove the location barriers and allow for increased access.

Outreach, Marketing, and Education

- **Improved Marketing of General Public Transportation Services** – While services designed to meet the needs of older adults and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to better communicate with the general public on available transportation resource to residents and riders. The stakeholders mentioned a need for increased marketing through both radio and newspaper outlets for current service options and hours.

Operational Challenges

- **Accessible Vehicles** – Stakeholders mentioned a need for more wheelchair lift equipped and accessible vehicles.

- **Volunteer Drivers** – Stakeholders mentioned a need to increase volunteer drivers to Community Health Representative for the Tribe for dialysis appointments.

- **Vehicle Maintenance** – It was mentioned in a previous coordinated plan to create a new maintenance shop in Hot Springs that would benefit Prairie Hills Transit and other agencies.

Demographic Analysis

### Figure 4-34: Rapid City Area Individuals With Disabilities

Figure 4-34 illustrates the population of individuals with disabilities in the Rapid City Area. The American Community Survey's 2016-2021 estimates was used to obtain this data. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. Areas with "high" needs are in Pennington and Meade Counties. The area average for individuals with disabilities is 13.4%.
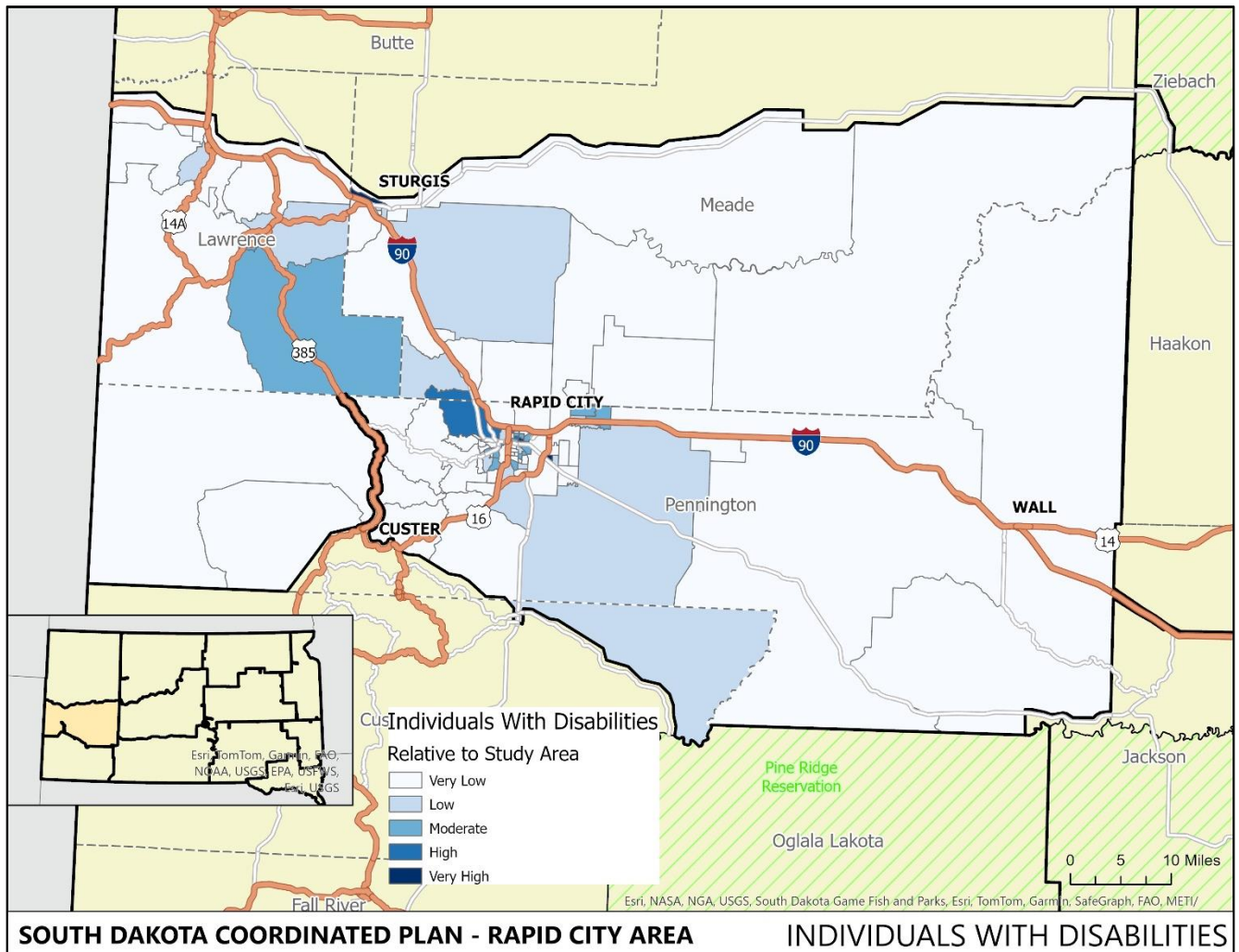
Figure 4-35: Rapid City Area Age 65+ Population

The senior adult population, which includes individuals 65 years and older, was used to highlight the age group that may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more on public transit. Figure 4-35 shows the relative distribution of seniors in the Rapid City Area. Areas with "Very High" needs within the senior population can be found in Pennington County.
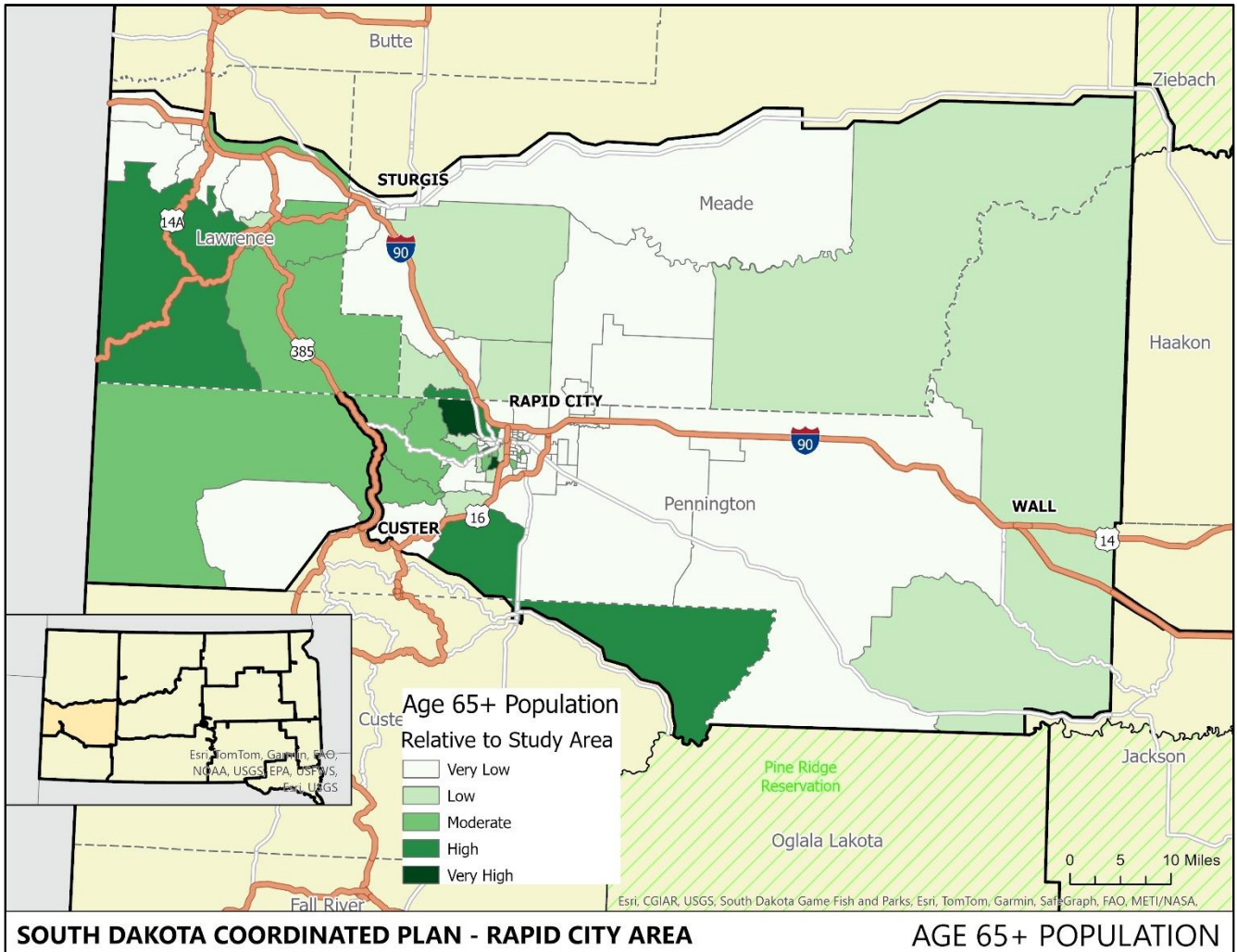
Figure 4-36: Rapid City Area Low Income Population

The low-income population, those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level, may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Thus, they must rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. In the Rapid City Area, the average percentage of those living below the federal poverty level is 12.8%. Figure 4-36 depicts the concentration of population above or below the average relative to the study area. Areas above the average poverty level are located in Lawrence, Meade, and Pennington Counties.

SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED PLAN - RAPID CITY AREA   LOW INCOME POPULATION
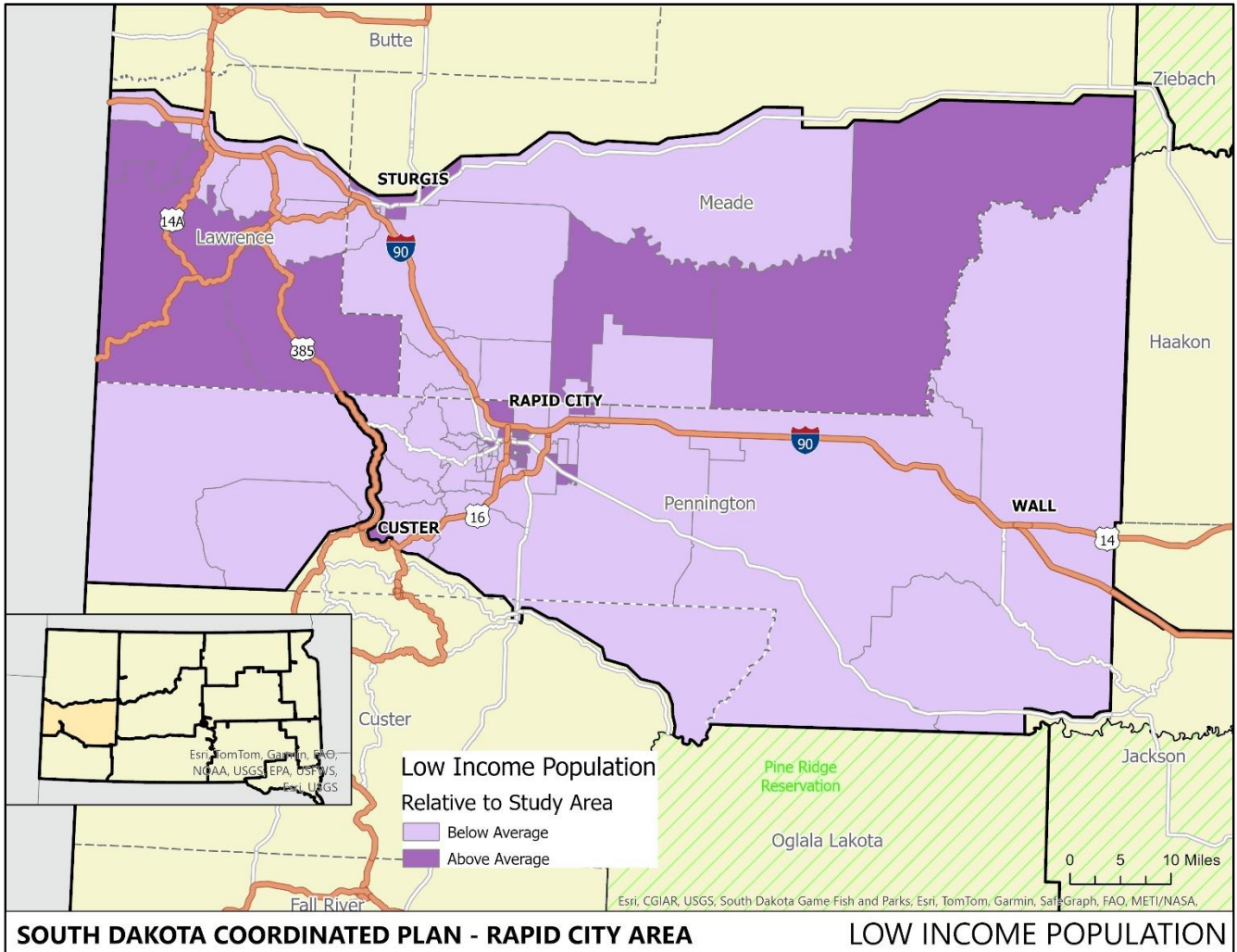
Trip Generators

Associated with the demographic analysis presented in this chapter is identifying trip generators that serve to complement that analysis by indicating where transportation services may be most needed. Trip generators attract public transit and human services transportation demand and include common origins and destinations. Examples include higher medical facilities, educational facilities, and major employers. Figure 4-37 provides a statewide map of these trip generators, and they will be detailed by area along with other key locations in the individual area plans.

In a state as sparsely populated as South Dakota is, trip generators are concentrated in major population centers. Most notably, these population centers include Sioux Falls and Rapid City with smaller concentrations of trip generators in Pierre, Aberdeen, Watertown, and Brookings. Most major employers, universities, and airports are found in these places. Military sites, correctional facilities, and medical centers are less tied to major population centers and serve as major trip generators in more rural reaches of the state. See Table 4-1 for a complete list of trip generators in the state. Some Areas including Belle Fourche, Mobridge, and Huron contain no major population centers and few regional trip generators, presenting a challenge to transit providers as far as how to best serve the residents in these remote regions of the state.

Figure 4-37: South Dakota Trip Generators
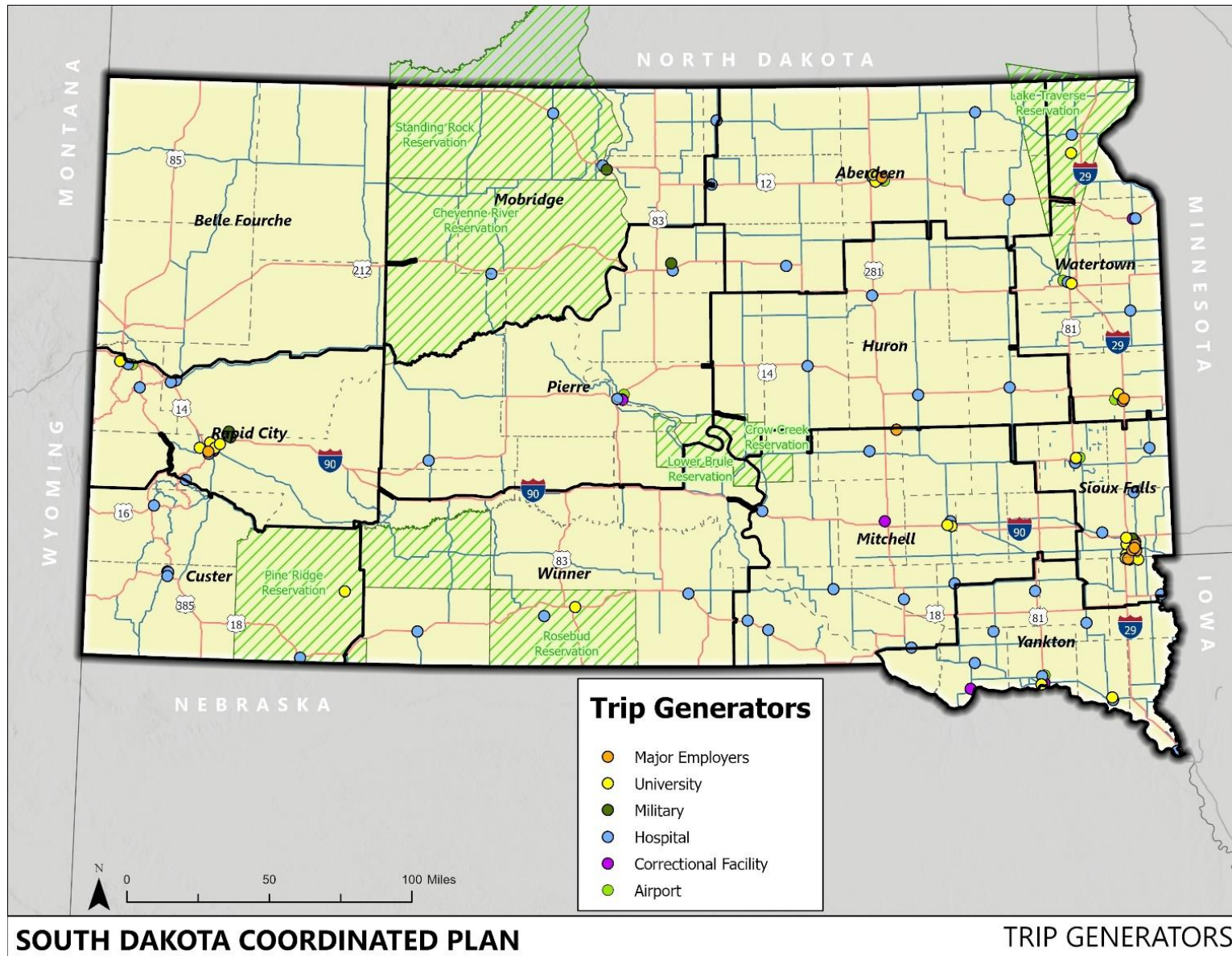
Table 4-1: South Dakota Trip Generators

Category	City	Name
Major Employer	Sioux Falls	Avera Health
Major Employer	Sioux Falls	Avera McKennan Hospital
Major Employer	Brookings	3M
Major Employer	Brookings	Daktronics Inc.
Major Employer	Alpena	Link Snacks
Major Employer	Rapid City	Monument Health Rapid City Hospital
Major Employer	Aberdeen	3M
Major Employer	Sioux Falls	Smithfield Packaged Meats
Major Employer	Sioux Falls	Sanford Clinic
Major Employer	Sioux Falls	Wells Fargo Bank
University	Spearfish	Black Hills State University
University	Rapid City	John Witherspoon College
University	Brookings	South Dakota State University
University	Mission	Sinte Gleska University
University	Mitchell	Mitchell Technical Institute
University	Rapid City	South Dakota Mines
University	Vermillion	University of South Dakota
University	Madison	Dakota State University
University	Watertown	Lake Area Technical Institute
University	Sioux Falls	Augustana University
University	Mitchell	Dakota Wesleyan University
University	Sioux Falls	University of Sioux Falls - Main Campus
University	Aberdeen	Northern State University
University	Yankton	Mount Marty College
University	Aberdeen	Presentation College
University	Sioux Falls	Globe University
University	Yankton	Mount Marty College
University	Sioux Falls	National American University
University	Sioux Falls	Kilian Community College
University	Sioux Falls	Southeast Technical Institute
University	Sioux Falls	University of Sioux Falls - Sanford Sports Complex
University	Agency Village	Sisseton Wahpeton College

Category	City	Name
University	Kyle	Oglala Lakota College
University	Rapid City	Western Dakota Technical College
University	Box Elder	Black Hills State University - Rapid City
Military	Box Elder	Ellsworth Air Force Base
Military	Rapid City	South Dakota Army National Guard
Military	Sioux Falls	SDARNG Range Training Facility
Military	Gettysburg	Gettysburg Air Force Station
Military	Mobridge	National Guard
Hospital	Spearfish	Spearfish Regional Hospital
Hospital	Sioux Falls	Avera McKennan Hospital and University Health Center
Hospital	Sioux Falls	Sioux Falls Specialty Hospital
Hospital	Madison	Madison Regional Health System
Hospital	Dell Rapids	Avera Dells Area Hospital
Hospital	Aberdeen	Sanford Aberdeen Medical Center
Hospital	Sisseton	Coteau des Prairies Health Care System Hospital
Hospital	Chamberlain	Sanford Health Chamberlain Medical Center
Hospital	Rapid City	Same Day Surgery Center
Hospital	Vermillion	Sanford Vermillion Medical Center
Hospital	Hot Springs	VA Black Hills Health Care System
Hospital	Canton	Sanford Canton-Inwood Medical Center
Hospital	Fort Meade	VA Black Hills Health Care System
Hospital	Sioux Falls	Sanford USD Medical Center
Hospital	Martin	Bennett County Hospital
Hospital	Wessington Springs	Avera Weskota Memorial Medical Center
Hospital	Mitchell	Avera Queen of Peace Hospital
Hospital	Freeman	Freeman Regional Health Services
Hospital	Milbank	Milbank Area Hospital Avera
Hospital	Mobridge	Mobridge Regional Hospital
Hospital	Aberdeen	Avera Saint Lukes Hospital
Hospital	Britton	Marshall County Healthcare Center Avera
Hospital	Watertown	Prairie Lakes Hospital
Hospital	Huron	Huron Regional Medical Center
Hospital	De Smet	Avera De Smet Memorial Hospital
Hospital	Brookings	Brookings Health System

Category	City	Name
Hospital	Sioux Falls	Avera Heart Hospital
Hospital	Pierre	Avera Saint Mary's Hospital
Hospital	Rapid City	Monument Health Rapid City Hospital
Hospital	Eagle Butte	Cheyenne River Health Center
Hospital	Rosebud	Rosebud Hospital
Hospital	Dakota Dunes	Dunes Surgical Hospital
Hospital	Rapid City	Black Hills Surgical Hospital
Hospital	Faulkton	Faulkton Area Medical Center
Hospital	Gettysburg	Avera Gettysburg Hospital
Hospital	Armour	Douglas County Memorial Hospital
Hospital	Platte	Platte Health Center Avera
Hospital	Clear Lake	Sanford Clear Lake Medical Center
Hospital	Eureka	Eureka Community Health Services Avera
Hospital	Burke	Community Memorial Hospital
Hospital	Flandreau	Avera Flandreau Hospital
Hospital	Webster	Sanford Webster Medical Center
Hospital	Wagner	Wagner Community Memorial Hospital Avera
Hospital	Redfield	Community Memorial Hospital
Hospital	Scotland	Landmann-Jungman Memorial Hospital Avera
Hospital	Bowdle	Bowdle Hospital
Hospital	Philip	Hans P. Peterson Memorial Hospital
Hospital	Deadwood	Regional Health Lead-Deadwood Hospital
Hospital	Sturgis	Monument Health Sturgis Hospital
Hospital	Hot Springs	Fall River Hospital
Hospital	Custer	Regional Health Custer Hospital
Hospital	Tyndall	Saint Michael's Hospital Avera
Hospital	Viborg	Pioneer Memorial Hospital
Hospital	Parkston	Avera Saint Benedict Health Center
Hospital	Winner	Winner Regional Healthcare Center
Hospital	Miller	Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital
Hospital	Gregory	Avera Gregory Hospital
Hospital	Pine Ridge	Pine Ridge Hospital
Hospital	Yankton	Avera Sacred Heart Hospital
Hospital	Sioux Falls	Avera on Louise Health Campus

Category	City	Name
Hospital	Sioux Falls	Summit Oaks Center
Hospital	Yankton	Human Services Center
Hospital	Hartford	Sanford Clinic-Hartford
Hospital	Aberdeen	Sanford Aberdeen Medical Center
Hospital	Sioux Falls	LifeScape Children's Specialty Hospital
Hospital	Spearfish	Canyon Hills Center
Hospital	Mclaughlin	Mclaughlin Public Health Service Indian Health Center
Hospital	Aberdeen	Dakota Plains Surgical Center
Hospital	Rapid City	Black Hills Children's Home
Hospital	Sioux Falls	Royal C. Johnson Veterans' Memorial Hospital
Correctional Facility	Sioux Falls	G. Norton Jameson Annex
Correctional Facility	Sioux Falls	South Dakota State Training School
Correctional Facility	Rapid City	Pennington County Jail
Correctional Facility	Sioux Falls	South Dakota State Penitentiary
Correctional Facility	Pierre	South Dakota Women's Prison
Correctional Facility	Springfield	Mike Durfee State Prison
Correctional Facility	Rapid City	Rapid City Community Work Center
Correctional Facility	Hot Springs	Fall River County Jail
Correctional Facility	Yankton	Federal Prison Camp Yankton
Correctional Facility	Yankton	Grant County Jail
Airport	Spearfish	Clyde Ice Field
Airport	Box Elder	Ellsworth Air Force Base
Airport	Yankton	Chan Gurney Municipal Airport
Airport	Madison	Madison Municipal Airport
Airport	Brookings	Brookings Regional Airport
Airport	Sioux Falls	Joe Foss Field
Airport	Aberdeen	Aberdeen Regional Airport
Airport	Pierre	Pierre Regional Airport
Airport	Watertown	Watertown Regional Airport

Chapter 5
Implementation Strategy

Vision and 5-Year Goals

Human services transportation encompasses a broad range of services designed to meet the mobility needs of population groups who need options beyond a personal automobile, particularly older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes. These individuals have transportation needs that may require a variety of mobility options depending on their abilities, their environment, and the transportation services available in their community.

Coordination of public transit service and human services transportation is critical in meeting the current mobility needs of these population groups, and particularly as the demand for transportation services grows at a higher rate than funding sources. The basic premise of coordination efforts is to better fill gaps in transportation by fully utilizing existing programs, resources, and community coordination for the delivery of more effective and efficient services. In South Dakota much of this coordination occurs naturally, as transit systems are typically regional in nature and meet many human service transportation needs, and are often providing the more personal or specialized services that some people need to travel. This is vital, as often the best way to coordinate human services transportation is to provide quality public transportation, and to see public transit planning and coordination activities as one -- and not as separate and exclusive from one another.

However, taking into account current conditions and assessing coordination activities in other states, there are potential opportunities to build upon these efforts to develop a vision and short-term goals for coordination in South Dakota. When finalized this vision and these goals can serve as a foundation for future coordination efforts.

Vision: Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Coordination

While there are renewed coordination efforts at the federal level on these programs, much of the work to coordinate funds and to fully utilize resources through these programs occurs at the state, regional, and local levels. It requires cooperation and coordination support between key agency decision makers, community leaders, and stakeholders to discuss how current funding and resources can be used most effectively to meet mobility needs and to identify possible new sources that would support additional transportation services.

It is recommended that the vision for coordination in South Dakota follow efforts similar of CCAM at the federal level, and involve:

- Multiple entities working together to deliver one or more components of a transportation service so they can increase their capacity to provide trips.

- Sharing of passenger trips and vehicles and co-location of facilities, programs, or services as appropriate and feasible.

- Collaborating on grant applications, state/local plans, training, vehicle purchasing or maintenance.

Similar to federal efforts, public transit and human services coordination in South Dakota would support and promote:

- Increased availability and accessibility of transportation, providing more options for end users and serving more people through streamlined policies that encourage collaboration.

- Increased efficiency by allowing local communities and other funding recipients to share resources, save funds, and reduce redundancy within the Federal and State programs that can fund public transit and human services transportation.

- Innovation by developing and implementing future transportation models such as microtransit, may lead to improved customer service.

5-Year Goals

The following initial goals for transportation coordination efforts in South Dakota are proposed, and can be considered to support and encourage the most effective use of public transit and human services transportation resources. Potential strategies associated with each of these goals are also provided:

Goal: Use Federal and State Funds and Overall Resources More Effectively

Like other states, in South Dakota federal funds that support public transportation and human services transportation flow to different state agencies, and who are then involved in the administration and oversight of these funding programs. Some coordination occurs at the regional local levels since the same agency receives funding from different state agencies. However, through this goal potential greater coordination activities can be considered to confirm the most efficient use of critical federal and state funding.

Potential Strategies:

- Reassess the administration of federal and state programs that fund human services transportation or could potentially be used as matching funds for certain programs. This would include the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Travel (NEMT) programs administered by the South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS), as well as programs for older adults and people with disabilities administered by the South Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) and workforce development programs overseen by the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR).

- Identify opportunities to seek additional funding to support public transportation and human services transportation. While an ongoing effort, Chapter 1 discussed several considerations that include Federal competitive or discretionary programs or opportunities through national technical assistance centers.

- Identify opportunities to use the coordinated public transit - human services transportation plans more effectively. The statewide and area plan can serve as the foundation for ongoing dialogue at the state and local levels, and the transportation needs, resources, and strategies updated accordingly.

Goal: Improve Communications and Coordination at State, Regional, and Local levels

Communication and coordination between agencies at the state, regional, and local levels is obviously essential in efforts to effectively use current resources and to identify opportunities to expand transportation services. Later in this document potential state-level and regional structures to help facilitate these efforts are presented. They incorporate mobility management activities, an approach for managing and delivering coordinated transportation services that embraces a "full family" of transportation services, emphasizes movement of people through a wide range of providers and services, and makes more efficient use of transportation resources. Mobility management provides the opportunity to unite a broad collaborative of transportation providers, health and human service agencies, customers, and stakeholders to support the design of statewide, regional, and local solutions.

Despite coordinated marketing efforts at the regional and state levels, and outreach by local public transit systems and human service transportation providers, through the statewide outreach process stakeholders reported that often people with transportation challenges are unaware of their mobility options. This goal also responds to the need for expanded efforts so that customers, family members, and human service agency staff gain information on available transportation services.

Potential Strategies:

- Improve coordination of services among providers through support of mobility management efforts. Possible funding opportunities to support mobility management are included in the recommendations provided later in this document.

- Reassess opportunities for state agencies to meet and discuss coordination efforts, and implement appropriate structure to support these efforts. The phased implementation strategy discusses this recommended structure.

- Expand outreach and information on available transportation options. There is an ongoing need for education so that potential customers are aware of their mobility options and public transit services are open to everyone in the community.

- Provide local public transit and human service transportation providers with greater guidance, supports, and technical assistance. SDDOT and other state agencies can continuously assess opportunities to support local providers and agencies.

- Expand coordination efforts through greater use of regional structures. The phased implementation strategy discusses this recommended structure.

Goal: Support Efforts to Improve and Expand Mobility Options across South Dakota

While the efficient use of available funding and resources is critical, this goal responds to the need for greater funding to support a variety of transportation services. The demand for public transit continues to grow daily. There are always opportunities for greater multi-agency involvement in the planning of these services, and expanded support for service recommendations that result from individual transit plans.

While local human service providers are often involved in their respective transit planning processes, non-DOT State agencies that fund these agencies could further encourage their participation in the planning process and involvement on advisory committees that guide development of a local or regional transit plan. Support for this coordination from the state level can help to ensure service improvements that can fill many human service needs through increased frequency of existing services, service expansions, and regional connectivity to other services. This also helps to ensure a more holistic needs assessment, broader consensus on potential service improvements, and important funding and partnerships being initiated or strengthened. In addition, human service agencies can become more aware of the functions and capabilities within local transit systems through the planning process, and opportunities for coordination may surface.

Potential Strategies:

- Support efforts to expand regional transportation services.
- Support efforts to expand public transit services.

Support for these strategies would involve providing additional technical assistance with the planning and implementation of these services; helping to identify new funding sources to support expanded services; discussions between state agencies to identify potential funding partnerships; and advocating for additional state funding to support new and expanded transportation services.

Methodology to Monitor Identified Measurable Results as Defined in the FTA 5310 Circular

As discussed in Chapter 1, FTA guidance for the Section 5310 Program includes the following program measures.

Traditional Section 5310 Projects:

(1) Gaps in Service Filled: Provision of transportation options that would not otherwise be available for seniors and individuals with disabilities, measured in numbers of seniors and individuals with disabilities afforded mobility they would not have without program support as a result of traditional Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

(2) Ridership: Actual or estimated number of rides (as measured by one-way trips) provided annually for seniors or individuals with disabilities on Section 5310 supported vehicles and services as a result of traditional Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

Other Section 5310 Projects:

(1) Service Improvements: related to geographic coverage, service quality, and/or service times that impact availability of transportation services for seniors and individuals
with disabilities as a result of other Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year

(2) Physical Improvements: Additions or changes to environmental infrastructure (e.g., transportation facilities, sidewalks, etc.), technology, and vehicles that impact availability of transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities as a result of other section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

(3) Ridership: Actual or estimated number of rides (as measured by one-way trips) provided annually for seniors or individuals with disabilities on Section 5310 supported vehicles and services as a result of other Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

Looking at broader coordination efforts, and considering performance measures for assessing state-level coordination activities, the following methods are recommended to monitor results:

- Meetings conducted between state agencies funding transportation services or providing human services to discuss coordination opportunities.

- Development of established and specific roles and responsibilities for participating agencies.

- Level of guidance developed and distributed to regional and local transportation and human service providers on best practices and other technical assistance with coordination efforts.

- Development of an annual report that documents coordination activities and responsible agencies, and is used to assess progress in meeting established benchmarks.

Additional program monitoring methodology is discussed later in this document.

Phased Implementation Strategy

While the Section 5310 Program requires that projects funded through the program are identified in a coordinated public-transit plan, broader coordination efforts are not required. Instead, through CCAM and national technical assistance centers funded by FTA, transportation coordination is recommended, and various resources are provided to assist with these efforts.

Taking this into account, along with what was learned through the coordinated transportation planning process and also efforts in other states, the following potential phased implementation strategy was developed to support the proposed vision and 5-year goals. Consistent with the coordinated transportation requirements the actual timing and implementation of these efforts would be based on resources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified to enhance coordination. However, for planning purposes the implementation strategy is organized into three potential phases: short-term (years 1-2), mid-term (years 3-4), and long-term (year 5 and over).

It should be noted that many efforts to support the proposed vision and the 5-year goals will be ongoing throughout the timeframe, and include:

- Providing local public transit and human service transportation providers with guidance, supports, and technical assistance.

- Identifying opportunities to seek additional funding to support public transportation and human services transportation.

- Identifying opportunities to more effectively use the statewide and area coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans.

Short-Term

Formalize State-Level Structure

State-level coordination structures vary greatly across the country. The most formalized effort is in Florida, where legislation has been in place since 1989 and is overseen by a state-level board responsible for the oversight of coordinated transportation services in the state. Most other state models are more informal, with specific facets that include coordination policies, strategies, executive orders, legislation, procedural processes, standing committees, advisory groups, and program coordination incentives. As noted earlier, the process for establishing state-level coordination efforts can be lengthy one, and a

complicated one due to the many state agencies and stakeholders that have interest or a stake in the coordination activities. Nonetheless, the phased approach can include the following:

- Appointment of staff with appropriate decision-making abilities (or those with direct links to decision makers) to serve on a state-level committee or council.

- SDDOT serving as the lead agency for this committee/council to coordinate public transit and human services transportation, working with other state agencies that fund social service programs or human services transportation. SDDOT would monitor regional coordination activities as outlined later in this section.

- The committee/council would be charged with oversight of the recommended phased implementation strategy and coordination activities and efforts, and production of an annual report that documents current public transit and human service transportation services, funding levels, and policy constraints affecting the provision of such services. In these efforts it is anticipated that an initial task will be to reassess the administration of state programs that fund human services transportation or could potentially be used as matching funds for certain programs.

- The committee/council would serve as a clearinghouse for transportation coordination issues throughout the State, identify local and statewide issues, transportation resources and cost savings measures, investigate the need for standards for vehicles and drivers and examine other appropriate areas that facilitate the development of a quality human services transportation system.

- The committee/council would identify and promulgate best practices and uniform methods for examining the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of public transit and human service transportation services, including developing and conducting appropriate training with regional and local transportation providers and planning agencies to improve provision of coordinated services.

- The committee/council would assess staffing needs at the state level to support coordination efforts, including a possible statewide mobility management position similar to ones in Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Ohio.

Develop Statewide Marketing Program

A common theme throughout the coordinated transportation planning process was the need for expanded marketing. A statewide transit marketing program can be developed to support a variety of efforts to increase awareness of current transportation services and to dispel any misconceptions of public transit services.

Monitor Federal Coordination Activities and Support Programs

The CCAM Strategic Plan notes that by 2026 the program will convene at least four State roundtables (one each year) with State-level CCAM grantees (e.g., State Agency on Aging, State DOT, State Offices

of Rural Health, etc.). South Dakota should monitor these efforts and other opportunities, and apply as appropriate. Other discretionary federal grant programs can also be monitored.

Mid-Term

Implement Local Mobility Management Pilot Program

Through the coordinated transportation planning workshops there was active participation from a variety of transportation providers, human service agencies, and other key stakeholders. It was evident that the public transit providers across the state are highly engaged with their communities, and are involved in various coordination activities.

However, it was also evident that in some areas of the state the workshops provided a unique opportunity for the various agencies to meet and to discuss mobility needs, potential transportation improvements, and possible coordination efforts. Therefore, a proposed strategy included in the area plans was the formation of a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs. While it was ranked as a medium or low priority in some areas, stakeholders in the Sioux Falls and Custer areas identified this committee structure as a high priority.

Building upon the potential state-level mobility manager, regional positions could be considered that would serve as an ongoing local and areas structure to serve as the foundation for future coordinated transportation planning efforts. One SDDOT region or area could serve as a pilot program (potentially Sioux Falls or Custer areas), and as an important foundation for formalization of regional coordination structures across the state.

While it is recommended that the responsibilities for the regional mobility manager positions would be developed locally to meet specific needs of the regions, potential functions could include:

- Establishing a single point of contact for obtaining information on existing transportation options.

- Maximizing use of the various federal and state funding programs that fund public and human service transportation.

- Exploring opportunities for coordinating the use of Medicaid transportation funding.

- Increasing efficiencies and improving service quality, including use of centralized trip scheduling, and making use of all available vehicles.

- Supporting emergency preparedness for potential assistance in evacuation or meeting other emergencies.

- Leading updates of the coordinated public transit – human services transportation plan for the area or region.

- Working with the statewide committee/council on lessons learned and to determine best course of action in other areas or regions.

Plan and Implement State-Funded Programs

Some states have developed state funding programs, particularly to address the need for more additional specialized transportation services for older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes. More details on this potential financing model are provided in the next section of this chapter.

Long-Term

Update Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

While ideally the coordinated public transit - human services transportation plans will be used on an ongoing basis, both at the state and area levels, the plan will need to be formally updated to meet current federal planning guidance.

Recommendations

The development of recommendations for improving the coordination of public transit and human services transportation at the state level is often a lengthy one that involves a variety of stakeholders, and needs to have the support of key decision makers who have been gradually briefed on potential options. Initial steps that can be taken to begin this process and establish the statewide and regional structure outlined earlier in this chapter:

- Based on initial SDDOT staff review, update and refine this chapter to serve as briefing paper to inform upper management of possible coordination strategies.

- Taking into account upper management input, produce potential action plan that could be provided to appropriate state agencies for their review and considerations.

- Depending on the outcomes from these efforts, work to the establishment of the state-level committee/council discussed earlier that would include appropriate agency decision makers and other key stakeholders. This committee could begin on ad-hoc basis, but ideally would be formalized through a Governor's Executive Order or legislation.

- This committee/council would then begin work on the items listed earlier under the proposed state-level structure.

The following section responds to specific areas in the scope of work to address enhanced coordination.

Capital and Operational Investments

Maintaining Existing Services

In regard to these investments, recommendations focus on the estimated needed operating and capital-to maintain existing services:

- In FY 2023, the SDDOT Public Transit-Coordinated Transportation system required $13,471,765 in funds to operate, an increase of 9% over FY 2022. It should be noted that Section 5310 funds were used for traditional projects including vehicle capital, and therefore are not included in that operating total.

- Annual capital needs for vehicle replacement for the Section 5310 specialized transportation vehicle fleet are estimated to be approximately $1,315,000 at 2024 prices. The basis for this estimate is provided later in this section, in conjunction with other projected and potential capital and operational investments.

- For FY 2024 FTA allocations for Section 5311 are $9,707,091, and for Section 5310 are $712,886 for the three urban areas (Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Sioux City), and $480,004 for the non-urbanized areas of the state.

- For FY 2023, the program used $9,158,511 in Section 5311 funds, while the state match amount increased to $994,971 and the local match amount increased to $2,958,624 from $1,329,416 in FY 2022.

Expansion Strategies to Meet Transportation Needs

Additional operating and capital funding are needed to address several of the strategies developed at both the area and statewide levels, and presented in Technical Memorandum #2, and which has implications for both capital costs and on-going operating costs. A variety of strategies for expansion were included in the area plans (which would need state support to implement statewide), including:

- Expanded service hours on public transit, with more evening and weekend service,
- Regional transit services,
- Microtransit (real-time demand-response service summoned by mobile phone) zones
- Vanpools for work trips.

Typically, a local or regional transit planning effort identifies the particular needs and the local priorities for service delivery methods to expand services, which leads to the identification of potential costs. To illustrate some possible costs at the statewide level, planning-level cost estimates were developed for several of the strategies discussed by stakeholders during area workshops.

Table: 4-1: Potential Capital and Operational Investments for Expansion Strategies

Expansion Strategy	Annual Service Hours Per Vehicle	Estimated Operating Cost ($70/Hr)	Estimated Capital Cost	Statewide Implementation	
				Operating	Capital
Limited Expansion of Service Hours - 3 Additional Hours per Weekday - 8 Hours per Weekend	1,196	$83,720	*Cost Neutral*	$4,353,440	*Cost Neutral*
Regional Routes - 10 Hours/Day & 6 Days/Week	3,120	$218,400	$140,000 (Medium Duty Bus)	$2,839,200	$1,820,000
Microtransit Zones - 12 Hours/Day & 6 Days/Week - First and Last Mile Connections	3,744	$262,080	$75,000 (Mini-bus/Van)	$9,172,800	$2,625,000
Vanpools - Capital Cost for Vehicles	Associated Administration Costs of Program		$75,000 (Mini-bus/Van)	$100,000	$750,000

- **Limited Expansion of Service Hours**, as an example, expanding service with an additional three hours per weekday and one weekend day of eight hours, at $70 per service hour, would be approximately $84,000 in annual operating costs per vehicle. At the statewide level, expanded hours on four vehicles per system would be approximately $4,350,000 statewide (could be operated with existing fleet, no capital expansion costs). (Note some systems are already operating services at this level, this would allow them additional expansion).

- **Regional Routes**, connecting cities and towns, are a core need for access to medical and other essential services. One regional route operated six days per week for ten hours, at $70 per service hour, has an estimated annual operating cost of $218,000. If each transit system in the state added one additional regional route that would total $2,839,000. Plus, expansion vehicles – medium-size medium-duty small buses at $140,000 each would require $1,820,000 in capital funding (total).

- **Microtransit Zones**, providing first and last mile access to existing transit services, could be implemented in several locations with frequent transit service. Assuming five microtransit zones across the state with seven vehicles operating 12 hours per day, six days per week, at $70 per service hour would cost $9,172,800 per year to operate and would require 35 vehicles at $75,000 each or $2,625,000 in capital.

- **Vanpools** may require only capital to support the costs of the vehicle, with the operation of the vehicle paid for from user fees, though in some cases the operating costs may be subsidized. Vanpool programs can require some staff and administrative support in addition. Assuming ten rural regional vanpools are operated statewide, requiring ten vans at $75,000 each for a total of $750,000 in capital, plus $100,000 per year in support for marketing, ride-matching and administration of user fees and costs.

All of these estimates are well beyond the funding available from the FTA programs, and all would require local match to obtain any available federal funding, but they provide some basis for considering what statewide initiatives in response to the identified strategies might cost to implement.

An issue has been the need to replace the $3,646,591 of ARPA and CARES Act funding used to support the coordinated system in FY 2022. Given inflation, maintaining the program requires essentially all the available Section 5311 funds, and an increasing amount of local funding. Potentially using the Section 5310 funding to contract for services (from the public transportation provider) could expand the available operations funding to help maintain existing services.

Capital needs are primarily related to the need to maintain the vehicle fleet that has been funded through the Section 5310 Program. Currently there are 68 active vehicles on the SDDOT list of Section 5310 vehicles. The majority of them are classified (under FTA guidelines) as either light-duty vehicles such as minivans, vans or sedans (20 vehicles), or medium-size, medium duty cutaway type vehicles of various sizes (47 vehicles),

Under SDDOT guidelines for useful life of transit vehicles, the light-duty vehicles are eligible for replacement after four years or 100,000 miles, and the medium-size, medium-duty buses after seven years or 200,000 miles.

However, these vehicles providing specialized service are used much less intensively.   Of the light-duty vehicles, 17 of them exceed the age guidelines, and of the medium-duty fleet 40 of the 47 exceed the age guidelines. Only one also exceeds the mileage guidelines. Many have low mileages, and are likely to be operational for some time, in fact two of the vehicles are 1995 models. For that reason strict application of the SDDOT guidelines is not appropriate, as many of these vehicles are likely to be serviceable for many years, with replacement required in response to the condition of the individual vehicle.

In a general sense, given this fleet mix and the overall fleet size, SDDOT could expect to need to replace five light-duty vehicles and 7 medium-size medium-duty buses in a given year.   Because the cost per vehicle will vary with the particular specifications in terms of size, number of wheelchair placements, etc., approximate estimated costs are based on current SDDOT prices, with an accessible light-duty vehicle on average priced at $75,000 and the medium-size medium-duty bus at $140,000, resulting in an overall annual vehicle capital need of $1,315,000 to maintain the fleet used for specialized transportation. As this exceeds the total FY 2024 statewide Section 5310 Program funding allocation, replacement of Section 5310 vehicles could require use of Section 5339 funding (discussed in the next section). The low utilization of many of the vehicles also suggests that strategies involving contracting for service from transit providers may be appropriate in some situations.

Business and Financing Models

Use of Section 5310 Program Funding for Mobility Management

Section 5310 recipients such as SDDOT must use at least 55% of their apportionment on traditional program projects that involve public transportation capital projects. Currently SDDOT uses all of their apportionment on traditional Section 5310 capital projects, and specifically for vehicles.

A recommendation moving forward is to consider using Section 5339 funds to replace existing Section 5310 vehicles as they age out and use Section 5310 traditional program funding to support the mobility management pilot projects discussed earlier under the 5-year goals, as mobility management projects that support coordination activities are an eligible capital expense through the program apportionment.

Another Section 5310 Program consideration is to use funding for grants to contract for services. North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) administers their program in this way. Nonprofit human service agencies that receive Section 5310 funding contract with local transit providers to provide transportation for the people they serve.

Develop State Funding Program for Expanded Transportation Services for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

Some states have developed funding programs that support expanded transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities. South Dakota can consider these models:

- Maryland's Statewide Specialized Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP), providing funding to the transit systems to provide services to the elderly and persons with disabilities beyond what is possible with the available transit and agency funding

- Maryland also developed a Senior Rides Program, with the primary focus to encourage and facilitate the development of volunteer and/or paid transportation services for low-income to moderate-income seniors.

- North Carolina developed as the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (E&DTAP), which has now been consolidated into an overall Rural Operating Assistance Program.

Develop a Funding Program for Expanding Employment Transportation

A common theme through the coordinated transportation planning process was the need for expanded transportation services that provide access to jobs, particularly those that require early morning, evening, and weekend The following models in other states can be used to develop a program specific to South Dakota. While each has unique aspects, a common element is the provision of operating

expenses for new or expanded service designed to fill transportation gaps for low-income workers, and to include:

- Expansion of current public transit services to include:

    o Extended morning or evening hours
    o New or extended weekend hours
    o More frequent services
    o Expanded geographic coverage for unserved or underserved areas

- New or expanded demand-response, deviated fixed route services, or scheduled services.

- Reverse commute service between more populated areas with suburban and rural employment locations

- Pilot programs that show innovation and creative ways of providing transportation within rural communities, and particularly those that partner with local employment centers and businesses.

- New vanpool programs

- Microtransit programs
- Fare subsidy programs

- Voucher programs for low-income individuals to purchase trips provided by taxis, TNCs (i.e., Uber or Lyft), or human service agencies

- The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) is currently developing a Job Access program, modeled after the previous federal Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program. The goal of this program is to improve access to transportation services to employment and employment related activities for low-income individuals, with a particular focus is on the needs of Areas of Persistent Poverty. Coordination with current transportation services and other funding programs is highly encouraged in order to make the most efficient use of existing resources. Public transit providers currently receiving FTA 5307 or 5311 program funds are eligible. Department of Labor manages the JARC funds. Priority may be given to rural transit systems that serve Persistent Poverty Areas.

- During the 2018 session the Maryland General Assembly enacted legislation that established the Maryland Job Access and Reverse Commute Program. Administered by the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA), the program is modeled after the previous FTA JARC Program. The program notes that a primary purpose is to design transportation services to connect targeted populations with employment areas that have experienced significant growth. The original legislation included a funding limit that could be provided by the Governor in the annual state budget for the program, though this was repealed through recent 2023 legislation. Now the Governor must provide funding for the program in the state budget, and no specific funding mandates are established.

- In conjunction with other federal and state programs administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Office of Passenger Transportation, the Michigan JARC program provides funds to support operating and capital projects. Eligible JARC activities are intended to address innovative and flexible transportation to employment needs of individuals with limited incomes, as well as provide transportation to employment opportunities from urban and rural areas to suburban areas for individuals of all income levels.

- In 2014 NJ TRANSIT responded to the discontinuation of the FTA JARC Program with the creation of a new program, NJ-Job Access and Reverse Commute (NJ-JARC), using state funding. NJ-JARC provides operating assistance to localities for the development of transportation shuttle services to connect low-income persons to jobs and other employment related services. Eligible services include shuttles and connector services to public transit or warehouse locations.

- The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) administers this Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WETAP) that integrates state and federal funding sources into one coordinated program to help local areas assess and address transportation needs for low-income workers. Through an annual competitive grant process, the program encourages long-term solutions by providing funding for demonstration grants to cover the expenses of early start-up and development stages of a transportation project.

Enhanced Statewide Transit Marketing

Another common theme through the coordinated transportation planning process, and a high priority strategy in many of the area plans, was the need for expanded marketing so that potential customers are aware of their mobility options. While local outreach and education marketing is always important, a statewide transit marketing program can be developed to support a variety of efforts such as improving websites to facilitate user ability to find services and providing funds to assist local transit, intercity bus, and specialized transportation providers to support their efforts. For example, a program of $300,000 provided over three years could serve as a pool for local applicants and help them jump start their marketing campaigns.

Seek Discretionary Grants

SDDOT can continue to monitor federal discretionary grants as they become available and apply for those that support implementation of improved technology for statewide user information, building upon the existing SDDOT interactive data portal, including development of statewide capability for coordination of long-distance trips (Medicaid, VA, intercity bus) and similar to Virginia Navigator and or other state efforts. Estimated cost in the neighborhood of $500,000 to $750,000 over at least two years to be funded 80% with federal grants, with a 20% local match ($100,000 to $150,000).

Public Agency Policies, Strategies, and Practices

These areas have been covered in previous sections of the chapter, and primarily involve support for the state-level and area coordination and mobility management structure discussed earlier. It would also involve support for the recommended financing models that would provide operating funding for services, particularly for older adults and people with disabilities.

Recommended Evaluation Methodology

There is language in the FTA guidance for the Section 5310 program that addresses the need for an evaluation methodology, and to ensure conformance with the FTA requirements that is the basis for the recommended evaluation methodology, with some additions and modifications reflecting this program. There are two aspects to this evaluation, and both are related to the recommendation for a state coordinating council. One is related to the collection and reporting of data, and the other is to the collection and evaluation of information on the progress of strategy implementation.

The ongoing program evaluation is fundamentally the responsibility of the SDDOT transit program staff but should be a primary function of the recommended state level coordination council of state agencies involved in specialized transportation. The following methods are recommended to monitor results:

- Meetings conducted between state agencies funding transportation services or providing human services to discuss coordination opportunities.

- Development of established and specific roles and responsibilities for participating agencies.

- Level of guidance developed and distributed to regional and local transportation and human service providers on best practices and other technical assistance with coordination efforts.

- Development of an annual report (discussed below) that documents ridership, coordination activities and responsible agencies, and is used to assess progress in meeting established benchmarks.

The agencies should be providing data, and the evaluation of progress could be provided to them in periodic reports, or in an annual report. This could be included in the SDDOT Transit Statistical Report as a section or be a separate similar report.

Data Collection and Analysis: Periodic and Annual Reports

FTA guidance calls for collecting and reporting data on the ridership (usage) of the specialized services that would not be provided without these programs. SDDOT already does this by collecting Section 5310 ridership information on one trip and unduplicated clients for the specialized providers (which is reported to FTA), in addition to the detailed ridership by vehicle collected from the transit providers. In

addition to the reporting to FTA, this information is included in SDDOT's annual Transit Statistical report, including data on ridership for each of these groups:

- Elderly
- Disabled
- Youth, and
- Public

A key evaluation factor for this program is the level of ridership on these coordinated systems by persons who are the focus of the program: the elderly and persons with disabilities—SDDOT already has this data, and an annual report. Missing is any information or data from other state or local agencies that may be funding client transportation with non-transit funds.

For other types of Section 5310 projects, or projects that serve Section 5310 target populations, the report should document specific projects that have been implemented to improve coverage, quality, span of service or other changes. This would be based on information from the providers on changes in services. It should also document any issues related to the impacts of service cuts, training needs, etc. to document issues that need to be addressed with program changes or funding. This information should also include any changes in the physical facilities that have resulted from Section 5310 funded projects, but also to the extent possible improvements funded with other transit or transportation funds—it would be good to note if a town had installed sidewalks with curb cuts, or an accessible bus depot opens. If specific ridership data can be attributed to any such changes in service that should be documented as well.

Analyzing this data and presenting it to the state level coordinating committee could serve three purposes -- it would meet the FTA guidance for evaluation; it would provide an ongoing status report that could support any needs for change; and it could provide the basis for the required five-year update of the coordinated transportation plan. This plan could build upon and incorporate strategies from the statewide and area coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans that are resulting from the current project, and the results in terms of ridership, project improvements, etc. State agencies that fund human services transportation could use the plan when reviewing funding requests to ensure consistency with identified needs and service improvements and could ensure that coordinated transportation plans are appropriately referenced and incorporated in studies that focus on seniors, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes.

Evaluation of Progress on Coordinated Strategies

The committee/council would also conduct an annual update to assess progress in meeting established goals and objectives. It is anticipated that as the lead for the committee/council SDDOT would have the most active role in reassessing gaps and needs in coordination statewide, and in gauging progress with implementation of greater coordination efforts.

At the more local level, the coordinated transportation plans can be used as the basis for the regional structure discussed earlier, and to serve as a blueprint for future discussions and efforts in each region

to improve mobility, especially for older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes. These plans could be used more extensively to encourage and facilitate coordination efforts, and beyond the annual updates used on a more regular basis to ensure the inventory of services is current and strategies to improve mobility are appropriate.

As noted earlier, the proposed state-level committee/council would be charged with oversight of coordination activities and responsible agencies, building upon and incorporating strategies from the statewide and area coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans that are resulting from the current project. State agencies that fund human services transportation could use the plan when reviewing funding requests to ensure consistency with identified needs and service improvements and could ensure that coordinated transportation plans are appropriately referenced and incorporated in studies that focus on seniors, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes.

The committee/council would also conduct an annual update to assess progress in meeting established goals and objectives. It is anticipated that as the lead for the committee/council SDDOT would have the most active role in reassessing gaps and needs in coordination statewide, and in gauging progress with implementation of greater coordination efforts.

At the more local level, the coordinated transportation plans can be used as the basis for the regional structure discussed earlier, and to serve as a blueprint for future discussions and efforts in each region to improve mobility, especially for older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes. These plans could be used more extensively to encourage and facilitate coordination efforts, and beyond the annual updates used on a more regular basis to ensure the inventory of services is current and strategies to improve mobility are appropriate.

Chapter 6
Strategies, Activities, and/or Projects

A key element required in the coordinated transportation plan involves identifying strategies, activities, and/or projects that address gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery. Through the coordinated transportation planning process, a focus was placed on strategies that could involve a variety of activities and projects, and ones that would be effective, but also broad enough to not restrict potential applications for Section 5310 program funding – as often the details on specific Section 5310 activities or projects are typically provided through these applications.

Based on input received through area workshops and other outreach efforts (detailed in Chapter 3), this section presents:

- Common themes across the state and high priority state-level strategies that were identified through the stakeholder input.

- Strategies specific to each area of the state, also based on stakeholder input along with previous coordinated transportation plans for the respective areas.

Statewide Themes and State-level Strategies

Based on the stakeholder input on local strategies, common high priority statewide strategies were identified. This section discusses these strategies that are very interrelated and are primarily focused on maintaining current services and infrastructure; improving the marketing of current services; identifying additional funding opportunities; and implementing expanded transportation services.

Maintain current transportation services and vehicle fleets.

While much of the discussion through the outreach process was on the need to expand transportation options, maintaining current services and capital infrastructure is vital in meeting community basic transportation needs. This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities.

There are several state-level considerations related to this strategy:

- Continuing to provide local transit agencies and human service transportation providers with technical assistance, and identifying opportunities for additional statewide trainings that would help to support their efforts.

- Establishing performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency of current services.

- Encouraging (or possibly requiring) transit agencies funded SDDOT administered programs to have formal planning or assessment processes in place to monitor current services and to make modifications.

Improve and expand outreach, marketing, and education.

While transit systems across the state employ various marketing efforts, there is always an ongoing need for outreach and education so that potential customers are aware of their mobility options. A lack of awareness of available transportation services was noted by area stakeholders, and particularly that these services – while often designed to meet the transportation needs of older adults, people with disabilities – are open to the general public. This strategy involves continued and expanded support for marketing of transportation services to counter any perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community, and to ensure people across South Dakota are more fully aware of their available options.

Identify additional funding opportunities.

Through the statewide outreach efforts stakeholders often mentioned the need for additional funding to support efforts to expand transportation services. While maintaining current services and marketing these services is critical, there is still a significant need for more funding resources to meet demands.

State-level considerations related to this strategy include:

- Encouraging partnerships between transportation providers, human service agencies, employers, planners, and other key stakeholders to identify possible fund braiding or other ways to work together to seek additional funding opportunities. This includes partnering among the state agencies that provide for client transportation (as is already done for the Title III-B) to understand the funding programs, amounts and flow of funding. Typically, Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation funding is the most well-funded transportation program in rural states. In South Dakota the providers have provided this service and utilized the funds for transit match, but partnering at the state level to make sure that these programs are fully supportive of each other is a good model.

A model that takes this approach as part of a legislated coordination process is the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, created by the Florida Legislature is to "ensure the availability of efficient, effective, and quality transportation for transportation disadvantaged persons", defined in legislation as those persons who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities. A key responsibility of the Commission is to administer the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund (TDTF) that provides funding to fulfill the statutory responsibilities of the Commission, including coordinated transportation through qualified community transportation coordinators.

While the Florida model includes oversight of state funding for operation of transportation services for the disabled, the function is also important in cases where there is limited state funding, as the limited resources need to be fully coordinated.

- Developing advocacy campaigns that help to educate funding decision makers on the economic and community impacts of public transportation and human services transportation and help to ensure a unified message to potential funders. Providing this kind of information, and the strategies and techniques to do this are particularly needed to help the local providers obtain and maintain local funding that is critical for local match.

- Exploring and supporting additional public/private partnerships. While many of South Dakota's providers work with local agencies regarding client transportation, there may be opportunities to obtain support from local businesses that have customers who use transportation, or who want to show their community spirit as a form of marketing. Examples elsewhere include hospitals, shopping centers or other retail, and major employers—in addition to other possibilities such as selling advertising on vehicles (wrapping a vehicle, for example).

The concept of Mobility Management has been developed and applied in many localities and states to provide for staffing that can address some of the needs for information, coordination of agencies, increasing community awareness of available resources, and assisting individuals and organizations to actually find a ride. Some states have taken this on as a state program function, for example Ohio.

The purpose of the Ohio Mobility Management Program includes increasing access to mobility by increasing the understanding and awareness of transportation needs, coordinating transportation options to meet these needs, and integrating transportation into planning and other programs. The Ohio Mobility Management Program supports 28 local and regional mobility managers, primarily funded through the Section 5310 Program. Mobility managers are housed within different agencies that have taken the lead on coordination efforts, and whose responsibilities include updating the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for their area. The program is overseen by a Statewide Mobility Coordinator position located in the Office of Transit.

Expand transportation services.

Through the statewide outreach there was an overriding need for additional public transportation services that allow access to employment, human services, medical facilities, and other key destinations. While these improvements need to be designed and implement at the local level, this state-level strategy supports these efforts, and can involve:

- Providing additional technical assistance with the planning and implementation of these services.

- Helping to identify new funding sources to support expanded services.

- Working with other state agencies that administer human services programs identify potential funding partnerships.

- Advocating for state funding to support new and expanded transportation services.

Strategies by Area

While there were common themes across the state, strategies were developed for each area based on feedback from local stakeholders. These strategies were then provided to them for their consideration and additional input, and while many of the strategies to improve mobility are interrelated, they were categorized by:

- **Organizational and Coordination Strategies** – It is critical that residents are aware of the transportation services and mobility options that are available to them. It is also important that existing resources are coordinated to reduce any duplication. These strategies support maintaining and expanding coordination activities, to help ensure services are marketed effectively, and that stakeholders have a forum to identify opportunities to connect services and share information.

- **Operating Strategies** – These strategies are focused on efforts to increase mobility options, and include efforts to improve public transit services, expand regional connectivity, build upon current human services transportation, and plan and implement on-demand microtransit services.

- **Sustainability and Financial Strategies** – While many strategies involve efforts to expand mobility, it is vital that current transportation services that are meeting needs are maintained. This includes operating funds to support existing services, as well as capital funding to replace vehicles beyond their useful life. These potential strategies support efforts to seek ongoing and additional funding to maintain and expand transportation services. These strategies also include improvements to the current infrastructure to allow greater access to existing services.

Aberdeen Area

Table 6-1: Aberdeen Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs. • Expand outreach efforts to provide information on available transportation options, particularly public transit services that are open to the general public. • Administer trainings for human service agency staff, medical facility personnel, and others in the availability of transportation services. • Identify opportunities to utilize emerging technologies to improve customer information and with requesting services, while maintaining convenient access for people who would prefer other methods. • Expand partnerships with shuttle and taxis services in the area.
Operating Strategies	• Identify a process for planning and implementing new regional services to fill current gaps in transportation. • Support recommendations to improve public transportation identified through transit plans conducted in the region. • Identify opportunities to expand scheduled services where feasible that can be marketed to local communities. • Assess opportunities to implement on-demand microtransit services in the region, especially for employers and seniors. • Consider greater use of vanpool and other employment-related transportation services.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region. • Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need. • Where appropriate, identify opportunities to improve bus stop amenities and infrastructure and implement improvements. • Develop additional partnerships to identify new funding opportunities. • Advocate for continued and expanded funding for public transportation services in the region. • Assess opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of vehicle operators.

Huron Area

Table 6-2: Huron Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs. • Develop and implement expanded marketing efforts and a broader public relations campaign. • Consider monthly flat fee options. • Continue contracts for coordination with other transit agencies and services. • Continue open dialogue with several community organizations. • Update technology that allows for real-time fleet tracking.
Operating Strategies	• Continue contracts for coordination with other transit agencies and services. • Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs. • Develop and implement an expanded public relations campaign and marketing efforts. • Continue open dialogue with several community organizations. • Reduce CDL required fleet, increasing applicant pool.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region. • Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need. • Develop additional partnerships to identify new funding opportunities. • Advocate for continued and expanded funding for public transportation services in the region. • Assess opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of vehicle operators. • Assess current fare structures. • Where appropriate, identify opportunities to improve bus stop amenities and infrastructure and implement improvements.

Watertown Area

Table 6-3: Watertown Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs. • Expand marketing efforts, including using language translation technology to reach a wider customer base. • Administer trainings for human service agency staff, medical facility personnel, and others in the availability of transportation services. • Continue contracts for coordination with other transit agencies and services.
Operating Strategies	• Develop and implement an expanded public relations, public information, and marketing efforts. • Increase weekend and evening hours as needed by the public. • Continue open dialogue with several community organizations. • Update fleet of vehicles.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region. • Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain and expand existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need. • Develop additional partnerships to identify new funding opportunities. • Advocate for continued and expanded funding for public transportation services in the region. • Assess opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of vehicle operators.

Mitchell Area

Table 6-4: Mitchell Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Improve public information on how to use transit services. • Develop and implement an expanded public relation, public information, and marketing efforts • Continue contracts for coordination with other transit agencies and services. • Continue open dialogue with several community organizations. • Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs. • Recruit new staff through High School career fairs. • Implement travel training programs to help educate potential customers in the use of available public transportation services in the area. • Consider on-going forums in the Mitchell area between state and local agencies. • Increase coordination between all agencies to increase awareness about what other agencies are doing and what services are available to increase ridership. • Create and use an app for all agencies/services in Mitchell to utilize, almost like an Uber or rideshare app.
Operating Strategies	• Improve or expand transportation services for shift work hours. • Provide better connections to key destinations. • Implement monthly flat fee for payment options.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region. • Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need. • Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region. • Continue to support capital needs and update the fleet to maintain existing service and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the needs. • Improve resources for vehicles, drivers, and training for small non-profit human service agencies. • Provide comprehensive training for provider and contractor staff. • Increase state funding options to assist with covering costs.

Sioux Falls Area

Table 6-5: Sioux Falls Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Improve public information on how to use transit services.
	• Develop and implement an expanded public relation, public information, and marketing efforts.
	• Continue contracts for coordination with other transit agencies and services.
	• Continue open dialogue with several community organizations.
	• Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs.
	• Include public transit in employee benefits package – could hold tax benefits.
	• Engage downtown businesses/housing adjacent to bus routes to require providing bus passes to employees and residents.
Operating Strategies	• Provide better connections to key destinations.
	• Improve or expand service for shift work hours.
	• Increase on-demand rides in the evening with smaller buses – within existing hours.
	• Include monthly flat fee for payment options.
	• Increase bus shelters at bus stops.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.
	• Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.
	• Improve resources for vehicles, drivers, and training for small non-profit human service agencies.
	• Provide comprehensive training for provider and contactor staff.

Yankton Area

Table 6-6: Yankton Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Expand coordination between different public transit providers in the region. • Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs. • Work with health care providers to support medical trips. • Create a call center for coordination between services. • Include a Mobility Manager to assist with regional strategies.
Operating Strategies	• Increase the hours of operation. • Improve dispatch services with technology.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region. • Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need. • Identify other funding sources. • Secure funding necessary to maintain core services. • Maintain use of Section 5310 funds used for vehicle maintenance. • Maintain vehicles in state of good repair.

Mobridge Area

Table 6-7: Mobridge Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize connectivity needs. • Create a public campaign to increase awareness of services and options. • Increase partnerships with outside entities, such as major employers. • Form a central call and dispatch center for regional use.
Operating Strategies	• Improve efficiency of services. • Improve service options that provide access to jobs. • Decrease unserved trips, such as no-shows or cancellations. • Update technology at all locations. • Update fleet of vehicles.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region. • Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need. • Establish a program to provide financial assistance for rides.

Pierre Area

Table 6-8: Pierre Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs.
	• Increase partnerships with outside entities.
	• Increase access through coordination.
	• Increase mobility services and options and utilization of mobility services.
	• Increase marketing towards the public to increase applicant pool.
	• Increase wage options to gain and maintain employees.
Operating Strategies	• Decrease unserved trips, including no-shows and cancellations.
	• Encourage riders to have an attendant join the trip for medical appointments.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.
	• Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.
	• Establish a program to provide financial assistance for rides.

Winner Area

Table 6-9: Winner Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Increase partnerships with outside entities. • Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs. • Increase access through coordination. • Increase utilization of mobility services. • Increase mobility services and options. • Increase marketing towards the public to increase applicant pool and increase employees. • Increase wage options to gain and maintain employees.
Operating Strategies	• Decrease unserved trips, including no-shows and cancellations. • Encourage riders to have an attendant join the trip for medical appointments.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region. • Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need. • Establish a program to provide financial assistance for rides.

Belle Fourche Area

Table 6-10: Belle Fourche Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs.
	• Increase marketing efforts to ensure the community is aware of available services, with targeted outreach to students.
	• Conduct a survey process to obtain feedback from potential riders on their employment and other transportation needs.
Operating Strategies	• Identify the potential costs and funding sources for increasing weekend hours on public transit services.
	• Assess current fare structures and make modifications as needed to provide customers with more convenient methods to pay.
	• Assess technology improvements that will provide customers with the ability to book trips online.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.
	• Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.
	• Work with local leaders to identify additional funding sources to support increasing expenses and enable transportation providers to maintain and expand mobility options in the area.

Custer Area

Table 6-11: Custer Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs. • Improve marketing of public transit services.
Operating Strategies	• Identify the potential costs and funding sources for increasing weekend hours on public transit services. • Assess current fare structures and make modifications as needed to provide customers with more convenient methods of pay. • Increase weekend services.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region. • Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need. • Work with local leaders to identify additional funding sources to support increasing expenses and enable transportation providers to maintain and expand mobility options in the area. • Capitalize on community support to develop additional partnerships and identify possible new funding opportunities.

Rapid City Area

Table 6-12: Rapid City Area Strategies

Categories	Potential Strategies
Organizational and Coordination Strategies	• Expand transportation coordination efforts with local human service providers and medical facilities. • Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs. • Build upon current meetings with communities to maintain forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize mobility needs in the area.
Operating Strategies	• Identify the potential costs and funding sources for increasing weekend hours on public transit services. • Assess current fare structures, and make modifications as needed to provide customers with more convenient payment methods. • Utilize veteran grant programs to provide free transportation services to veterans.
Sustainability and Financial Strategies	• Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region. • Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need. • Work with local elected officials to discuss opportunities to expand mobility options in the area.

Priorities for Implementation

While all the strategies discussed by stakeholders through outreach efforts are important and would support efforts to expand mobility in their respective areas or regions, a major step in the coordinated transportation planning process and one of the required elements of the plan is priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities.

To summarize, the process for the development of prioritized strategies for each area involves:

- Identification of potential strategies -- to help to address the identified gaps between current transportation services and unmet needs and achieve greater efficiencies in service delivery -- through the area workshops and recommendations included in recent plans and studies.

- Prioritization of potential strategies through an on-line survey. At the March/April 2024 workshops participants agreed to this process, and that the results would be used to develop a list that grouped strategies that were higher priority, ones that were a medium priority, and strategies that were a lower priority.

The following section provides the prioritized strategies by area. Further details on each will be included in the area plans.

Aberdeen Region

Aberdeen Area

High Priorities

Develop additional partnerships to identify new funding opportunities.

This strategy involves identifying partnership opportunities to leverage additional funding to support public transit and other mobility options. It would include meeting multiple unmet needs and issues by tackling non-traditional sources of funding. Hospitals, supermarkets, and retailers who want the business of the region's riders may be willing to pay for part of the cost of transporting those riders to their sites. This approach is applicable to both medical and retail establishments already served, as well as to new businesses. While this plan helps to document the need for these additional services, some may need to be further quantified. It might also be necessary to document unmet needs and gaps in service as part of educating potential funders and sponsors.

Local funding has often been an issue for rural and small urban transit systems. However, transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue. Many systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising.

Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, transit systems in the region can explore the selling of sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program can help expand the service.

Advocate for continued and expanded funding for public transportation services in the region.

Coupled with the need to develop additional partnerships is a stronger advocacy campaign that highlights the impact public transportation has on residents of the region, and how they are vital components of the community transportation infrastructure. Regional stakeholders noted that ongoing educational efforts are needed to ensure local leaders and decision makers are aware of the impact of community transportation services and overall buy-in for the needs for these services.

This strategy involves a regional and unified effort to inform elected officials, local and national decision makers, and the general public of the need for additional funding to support current services. This advocacy campaign could be part of a national movement to stress the importance of community and public transit. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) have developed a variety of resources that can be used in advocacy efforts with local offices of House and Senate members, local media and state and local elected officials.

There can be specific advocacy to support service recommendations included in transit plans conducted in the area and region, noted in a later high priority strategy. While this coordinated transportation plan takes a broader review of mobility needs and options, a planning process conducted by transit systems is more detailed, and assesses current services, identifies unmet transit needs, and identifies specific service improvements and potential expansions.

Identify a process for planning and implementing new regional services to fill current gaps in transportation.

Through the coordinated transportation planning process stakeholders highlighted the need for transportation services to fill current gaps, and that greater regional transportation services are needed. This strategy supports a more formal process for planning and implementing new regional services that would help to fill gaps. There are a variety of considerations involved in the development of regional services that need to be taken into account, and that include:

- Prioritizing regional service corridors.

- Balancing commuter needs to larger employment centers with medical transportation and other needs.

- Identifying preferred mode of transportation, i.e., public transit, private transportation, vanpools, etc.

- Determining agency or organization that will operate services.

- Identifying funding sources and formalizing agreements on a cost sharing plan for regional services that would cross jurisdictional boundaries and serve multiple communities.

Support recommendations to improve public transportation identified through transit plans conducted in the region.

While this coordinated transportation plan can serve as an important planning tool for area and regional efforts to expand mobility, as noted earlier local transit plans typically serve as the basis for more specific service improvements. These short-range plans are often conducted by transit systems and are designed to formulate goals and objectives for transit; review and assess current transit services; identify unmet transit needs; and develop an appropriate course of action to address needs, typically a five-year horizon. These transit plans can then serve as a guide for public transportation, providing a roadmap for implementing service and/or organizational changes, improvements and/or potential expansions. Often the process is guided by an advisory committee comprised of local stakeholders who are acutely aware of transit needs and can offer input on potential service improvements.

This strategy supports recommendations included in current or future transit plans, as these recommendations will typically respond to a variety of the transportation needs expressed by area stakeholders through the coordinated transportation planning process. The individual transit plans typically include projected costs and a proposed timeline for implementing service improvements that may involve:

- Rural service expansion
- Increased frequency of existing services
- Extended evening hours
- Weekend service expansions

Other studies and plans may include assessments that highlight the need for expanded transportation services to access medical appointments, jobs, school, shopping, and other key destinations. This strategy also supports findings and recommendations from these studies and plans.

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most proposed strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Maintaining these services are vital to ensuring basic mobility in the region, though existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Agencies that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

Assess opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of vehicle operators.

In order to safely operate service levels to meet community needs, transit agencies must have an adequate number of qualified operators. Many transportation providers across the state and nation have been faced with a significant shortage of operators, even prior to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The job of a professional transit operator is an essential worker with specialized skills, who faces daily challenges with potentially challenging passengers, pressure to keep on schedule with challenging driving conditions, long periods of time sitting, and safely assisting individuals with disabilities, all while ideally being the professional, courteous public face of the organization. Being a transit operator is a difficult job. Ideally, their pay should reflect this.

If a transit agency cannot attract quality candidates to apply and continue working, the quality of the services the organization provides will suffer. Without enough employees (high quality or otherwise), service levels cannot be maintained, and some members of the community will lose their ride to work, school, the doctor, and other essential destinations. Each time a transit organization must fill a vacant position, there is a cost to the organization to hire and train a new employee. Paying overtime to current employees can be a short-term solution but is not a sustainable strategy. Not only is a high rate of

overtime utilization costly to the agency in terms of payroll (because the overtime pay rate is typically 150% of the regular pay rate), but frequent overtime can also lead to safety risks due to operator fatigue and employee burnout, leading to yet more vacancies.

Therefore, this strategy recommends the assessment of opportunities to improve driver recruitment and retention, considering national research and analysis of operator vacancy rates that shows:

- Higher pay leads to lower vacancies – Systems with higher minimum and maximum pay rates have lower vacancy rates on average.

- Reliable hours and pay attracts workers – Systems with a higher percentage of full-time drivers and with more generous overtime levels have lower vacancy rates.

- Workers want training, health benefits, and a quality work environment – Systems that offer healthcare benefits, offer CDL training, and that foster a quality working environment have lower vacancy rates.

Additional considerations to support driver recruitment include:

- If they are to restore and maintain staffing levels, transit agencies will need to provide competitive wages and benefits that are commensurate with the levels of risk, pressures, and responsibilities that come with the operator position. The compensation will need to be higher than that offered by low-risk, low-challenge jobs in their area, and competitive with other types of driving jobs such as school bus operators.

- To compete with other employers in the area in today's employment environment, transit agencies may need to offer hiring bonuses. Hiring bonuses could be paid in installments over the course of the first year to encourage continued employment. Bonuses for referrals from current employees should also be considered.

- In addition to offering competitive, higher entry-level wages, transit agencies need to offer regular cost of living increases so that operators can continue to earn a living wage, and periodic longevity increases and/or bonuses, rewarding operators for their years of service will help retain operators and reward them for continuing to work for the organization.

- Transit agencies with vehicles that require the operator to have a CDL can seriously consider providing paid training to prepare new hires to obtain their CDL. Offering a competitive wage as well as a meaningful sign-up bonus contingent upon a minimum period of employment can help prevent new CDL operators from taking a higher-paying job as soon as they have earned their CDL.

- Transit agencies offer an advantage over transportation network companies (such as Lyft or Uber) not only with benefits but also by being a trusted employer. Transit agencies can have an advantage in recruiting efforts by emphasizing the agency's mission and the importance of the job to the community. However, adequate pay is needed for the job to be attractive. Transit agencies with full-time operator positions (at least 35 hours per week) are likely to have lower operator vacancy rates.

A possible resource to assist with recruiting and retaining vehicle operators is the Transit Workforce Development Technical Assistance Center (TWC). A program of FTA, the TWC provides a variety of publications, trainings, webinars, and materials to assist with these efforts. The Center can be access at https://www.transitworkforce.org.

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Medium Priorities

Identify opportunities to expand scheduled services where feasible that can be marketed to local communities.

Stakeholders noted the need to assess current services and consider different modes that may be more effective in meeting mobility needs in the region. While demand response services are essential to provide mobility in rural areas, this strategy supports an assessment of these services operated to determine if additional scheduled services are feasible. These schedules can be set up based on historical travel patterns and typical ridership patterns, and potentially implemented for different times and perhaps different days. The frequency of the service will be determined by existing and potential ridership, though the overall objective is to group trips that can reduce costs as opposed to constant one-on-one set of trips that is very expensive to operate.

One of the important considerations related to this strategy is that these services must be heavily promoted, and a clear schedule developed so that they are fully marketed, and information posted throughout each community/county. Fixed schedule service has proven to be far more productive and less expensive than other services by generating more trips with existing resources, and with the promotion of the scheduled services those interested in traveling in the region can be more aware of their travel options, ridership can increase, and productivity of these services improved.

Assess opportunities to implement on-demand microtransit services.

One of the recent changes in planning transit services is the introduction of microtransit services. A growing number of public transportation providers have begun operating this service that features an on-demand, e-hailing component. These services use mobile technology to provide dynamic routing through which customers use a smartphone application (app) to schedule and/or pay for a ride within a specific geofenced zone. On-demand services can provide more flexibility to customers than traditional demand response services. Riders can individualize service by selecting both their pick-up and drop-off locations, while dynamic routing capabilities allow drivers to quickly adjust pick-up locations to provide more efficient service. This strategy supports the planning and implementation of on-demand microtransit services as appropriate.

A variety of different needs and mobility challenges can be met through microtransit services. These included service industry workers who work second and third shift jobs and have mobility needs that are unable to be met during normal transit operational hours; and jobs outside of the current transit service areas that are therefore challenging to access. While once designed for larger urban areas, on-demand services are now expanding to small urban and rural communities. On-demand services can be designed to make local service easier, and instead of customers having to call the day before the trip they can access the service in as little as one hour or less. There are also operational advantages to on-demand microtransit services, as these services may make better use of the existing vehicles and often require almost no interaction with the dispatcher, reducing the demands on that position.

There are a variety of new microtransit services across the country that can be used as possible models in the planning and design of on-demand options in the region. While each project is unique, the following step-by-step planning process provides a possible guide for implementation:

- **Microtransit Zones** – Locations are identified as prime candidates for services based on the assessment of existing transit services, demographic, and other key factors.

- **Service Plan** - Various operational considerations for potential services are developed, including service days and hours, pickup and drop off locations, and the type of vehicles to be used in the delivery of services.

- **Capital and Technology Considerations** – These areas are assessed based on preferred service delivery and other service components.

- **Funding and Budget Considerations** – Potential costs and revenue sources for the microtransit service are identified.

- **Outreach Considerations** – Various opportunities to obtain community input on potential microtransit services are developed.

- **Procurement and RFP Considerations** – Process for obtaining a vendor to provide microtransit software and/or operate services is developed.

- **Service Evaluation Considerations** – Methods for measuring and assessing the efficacy and efficiency of microtransit services after implementation are identified.

Administer trainings for human service agency staff, medical facility personnel, and others in the availability of transportation services.

Through the needs assessment it was noted that often staff at different human service agencies and medical facilities were unaware of the transportation services available to their clients. In addition to expanding transportation options in the region, it is vital that customers, caseworkers, agency staff and medical facility personnel that work with people with disabilities, older adults, and others are familiar with available transportation services.

While possibly a component of the broader marketing efforts discussed in the preceding strategy, this strategy is segmented to highlight the support for the implementation and administration of transportation trainings for these employees. These educational opportunities are particularly important for coordinating scheduling medical and other appointments with available transportation options, as transportation providers in the region have limitations on service hours and days.

These trainings could be especially helpful as marketing, outreach, and education tools with healthcare and social service providers. People who consistently rely on social programs and/or need regular medical care are likely to rely on public or human service transportation. If providers of these services are not well educated on the variety of transportation options in the region, it can be difficult to see their clients. Hosting trainings or information sessions for these individuals, as well as the general public, can increase the community's awareness of these services.

Expand partnerships with shuttle and taxis services in the area.

While much of the discussion on coordination efforts focuses on those between public transit and human service agencies, it is important that this work also involves private transportation providers. Stakeholders expressed the need for greater transportation options that allow for unplanned and impromptu trips, and for these trips private transportation services may be the best options for area residents.

This strategy encourages greater access to taxi and other private transportation services and could include voucher programs that help offset user costs while helping to ensure profitability for the private operators. It may also promote community partnerships, especially between the disability community and private taxi operators, that are especially essential in the effort to increase the availability of accessible vehicles. These partnerships can help to assess anticipated demand and business potential, to confirm marketing and outreach efforts, and most importantly to identify potential funding and subsidy opportunities.

Lower Priorities

Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs.

Area stakeholders noted that there is an opportunity to create better coordination and connectivity between the various transportation providers in the area. This strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility. A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to regional transportation services.

- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Identify opportunities to utilize emerging technologies to improve customer information and with requesting services, while maintaining convenient access for people who would prefer other methods.

Stakeholders noted the need for technology advancements, though they also expressed that these advancements may be a significant cost barrier for agencies and organizations who lack the funding to acquire technology that may allow them to provide more efficient, effective, and coordinated services.

At the same time, it was mentioned that any technological advancements need to be considered by the user and that requiring them to utilize technology may be a weakness. For instance, it was noted that some older adults may prefer a call center structure over the use of an app or software platform.

This strategy supports efforts to more fully determine how emerging technologies can be used to improve customer information and how customers access this information. Technologies that can help to coordinate services and trips between different transportation providers can also be a component of this strategy.

Where appropriate identify opportunities to improve bus stop amenities and infrastructure and implement improvements.

Stakeholders noted that in some parts of the area there are opportunities to improve bus stop amenities and infrastructure, and these efforts would help to improve access to available transportation services. This strategy supports an assessment of these opportunities and to identify and implement improvements. Potential components of this strategy include:

- Consider a bus stop accessibility assessment for public transit services throughout the region.

- Continue and expand the presence of bus stop signs and customer amenities at local stops to encourage use of public transit services and to facilitate transfers between systems.

- Ensure transit services are under consideration during the initial planning stages of new area developments, including passenger amenities such as bus stops and shelters.

- Support the continued prioritization of the "Complete Streets Program" to improve first and last mile connections by creating new bike and pedestrian connectivity.

- Improve connectivity between land use planning and the location of community services that will need to be accessed by people who rely on public transit and human services transportation.

Expand outreach efforts to provide information on available transportation options, particularly public transit services that are open to the general public.

The lack of awareness of available transportation services was noted by area stakeholders, particularly services that are open to the general public. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to offset the perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. This strategy involves increased marketing of transportation services and options to counter any perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community.

Consider greater use of vanpool and other employment-related transportation services.

Regional stakeholders expressed the need for expanded employment transportation services, especially for workers needing to access jobs that require second and third shifts. Where feasible vanpool programs can be used and serve as a low-cost way to meet commuter demand. Several states and various communities have developed successful partnerships with private vanpool companies, and this strategy supports consideration of these services in the area.

Huron Area

High Priorities

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Maintaining these services are vital to ensuring basic mobility in the region, though existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Agencies that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

This strategy also supports continued coordination on contracts between public transit and human service agencies in the area.

Develop additional partnerships to identify new funding opportunities.

This strategy involves identifying partnership opportunities to leverage additional funding to support public transit and other mobility options, and as noted through stakeholder input the need to continue an open dialogue between public transit and community organizations that work with older adults and people with disabilities. There may also be opportunities to meet unmet needs and issues by tackling non-traditional sources of funding. Hospitals, supermarkets, and retailers who want the business of the region's riders may be willing to pay for part of the cost of transporting those riders to their sites. This approach is applicable to both medical and retail establishments already served, as well as to new businesses. While this plan helps to document the need for these additional services, some may need to be further quantified. It might also be necessary to document unmet needs and gaps in service as part of educating potential funders and sponsors.

Local funding has often been an issue for rural and small urban transit systems. However, transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue. Many systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, transit systems in the region can explore the selling of sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program can help expand the service.

Advocate for continued and expanded funding for public transportation services in the region.

Coupled with the need to develop additional partnerships is a stronger advocacy campaign that highlights the impact public transportation has on residents of the region, and how they are vital components of the community transportation infrastructure. Regional stakeholders noted that ongoing educational efforts are needed to ensure local leaders and decision makers are aware of the impact of community transportation services and overall buy-in for the needs for these services.

This strategy involves a regional and unified effort to inform elected officials, local and national decision makers, and the general public of the need for additional funding to support current services. This advocacy campaign could be part of a national movement to stress the importance of community and public transit. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) have developed a variety of resources that can be used in advocacy efforts with local offices of House and Senate members, local media and state and local elected officials.

There can be specific advocacy to support service recommendations included in transit plans conducted in the area and region, noted in a later high priority strategy. While this coordinated transportation plan takes a broader review of mobility needs and options, a planning process conducted by transit systems is more detailed, and assesses current services, identifies unmet transit needs, and identifies specific service improvements and potential expansions.

Assess opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of vehicle operators.

In order to safely operate service levels to meet community needs, transit agencies must have an adequate number of qualified operators. Many transportation providers across the state and nation have been faced with a significant shortage of operators, even prior to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The job of a professional transit operator is an essential worker with specialized skills, who faces daily challenges with potentially challenging passengers, pressure to keep on schedule with challenging driving conditions, long periods of time sitting, and safely assisting individuals with disabilities, all while ideally being the professional, courteous public face of the organization. Being a transit operator is a difficult job. Ideally, their pay should reflect this.

If a transit agency cannot attract quality candidates to apply and continue working, the quality of the services the organization provides will suffer. Without enough employees (high quality or otherwise), service levels cannot be maintained, and some members of the community will lose their ride to work, school, the doctor, and other essential destinations. Each time a transit organization must fill a vacant position, there is a cost to the organization to hire and train a new employee. Paying overtime to current employees can be a short-term solution but is not a sustainable strategy. Not only is a high rate of overtime utilization costly to the agency in terms of payroll (because the overtime pay rate is typically 150% of the regular pay rate), but frequent overtime can also lead to safety risks due to operator fatigue and employee burnout, leading to yet more vacancies.

Therefore, this strategy recommends the assessment of opportunities to improve driver recruitment and retention, considering national research and analysis of operator vacancy rates that shows:

- Higher pay leads to lower vacancies – Systems with higher minimum and maximum pay rates have lower vacancy rates on average.

- Reliable hours and pay attracts workers – Systems with a higher percentage of full-time drivers and with more generous overtime levels have lower vacancy rates.

- Workers want training, health benefits, and a quality work environment – Systems that offer healthcare benefits, offer CDL training, and that foster a quality working environment have lower vacancy rates.

Additional considerations to support driver recruitment include:

- If they are to restore and maintain staffing levels, transit agencies will need to provide competitive wages and benefits that are commensurate with the levels of risk, pressures, and responsibilities that come with the operator position. The compensation will need to be higher than that offered by low-risk, low-challenge jobs in their area, and competitive with other types of driving jobs such as school bus operators.

- To compete with other employers in the area in today's employment environment, transit agencies may need to offer hiring bonuses. Hiring bonuses could be paid in installments over the course of the first year to encourage continued employment. Bonuses for referrals from current employees should also be considered.

- In addition to offering competitive, higher entry-level wages, transit agencies need to offer regular cost of living increases so that operators can continue to earn a living wage, and periodic longevity increases and/or bonuses, rewarding operators for their years of service will help retain operators and reward them for continuing to work for the organization.

- Transit agencies with vehicles that require the operator to have a CDL can seriously consider providing paid training to prepare new hires to obtain their CDL. Offering a competitive wage as well as a meaningful sign-up bonus contingent upon a minimum period of employment can help prevent new CDL operators from taking a higher-paying job as soon as they have earned their CDL. Conversely, as noted by area stakeholders there may be a need to acquire smaller vehicles, reducing the need for drivers with a CDL and possibly increasing the driver applicant pool.

- Transit agencies offer an advantage over transportation network companies (such as Lyft or Uber) not only with benefits but also by being a trusted employer. Transit agencies can have an advantage in recruiting efforts by emphasizing the agency's mission and the importance of the job to the community. However, adequate pay is needed for the job to be attractive. Transit agencies with full-time operator positions (at least 35 hours per week) are likely to have lower operator vacancy rates.

A possible resource to assist with recruiting and retaining vehicle operators is the Transit Workforce Development Technical Assistance Center (TWC). A program of FTA, the TWC provides a variety of publications, trainings, webinars, and materials to assist with these efforts. The Center can be access at https://www.transitworkforce.org.

Medium Priorities

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Develop and implement expanded marketing efforts and a broader public relations campaign.

The lack of awareness of available transportation services was noted by area stakeholders, particularly services that are open to the general public. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to offset the perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. This strategy involves increased marketing of transportation services and options to counter any perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community.

Identify opportunities to utilize emerging technologies.

Stakeholders noted the need for technological improvements, including the use of real-time fleet tracking. While these advancements may be a significant cost barrier for some agencies and organizations who lack the funding to acquire technology, they may allow them to provide more efficient, effective, and coordinated services.

At the same time any technological advancements need to be considered by the user and requiring them to utilize technology may be a weakness. For instance, some older adults may prefer a call center structure over the use of an app or software platform.

This strategy supports efforts to determine how emerging technologies more fully can be used to improve customer information and how customers access this information. Technologies that can help to coordinate services and trips between different transportation providers can also be a component of this strategy.

Support recommendations to improve public transportation identified through transit plans conducted in the region.

While this coordinated transportation plan can serve as an important planning tool for area and regional efforts to expand mobility, as noted earlier local transit plans typically serve as the basis for more specific service improvements. These short-range plans are often conducted by transit systems and are designed to formulate goals and objectives for transit; review and assess current transit services; identify unmet transit needs; and develop an appropriate course of action to address needs, typically a five-year horizon. These transit plans can then serve as a guide for public transportation, providing a roadmap for implementing service and/or organizational changes, improvements and/or potential expansions. Often the process is guided by an advisory committee comprised of local stakeholders who are acutely aware of transit needs and can offer input on potential service improvements.

This strategy supports recommendations included in current or future transit plans, as these recommendations will typically respond to a variety of the transportation needs expressed by area stakeholders through the coordinated transportation planning process.

The individual transit plans typically include projected costs and a proposed timeline for implementing service improvements that may involve:

- Rural service expansion
- Increased frequency of existing services
- Extended evening hours
- Weekend service expansions

Other studies and plans may include assessments that highlight the need for expanded transportation services to access medical appointments, jobs, school, shopping, and other key destinations. This strategy also supports findings and recommendations from these studies and plans.

Where appropriate identify opportunities to improve bus stop amenities and infrastructure and implement improvements.

Stakeholders noted that in some parts of the area there are opportunities to improve bus stop amenities and infrastructure, and these efforts would help to improve access to available transportation services. This strategy supports an assessment of these opportunities and to identify and implement improvements. Potential components of this strategy include:

- Consider a bus stop accessibility assessment for public transit services throughout the region.

- Continue and expand the presence of bus stop signs and customer amenities at local stops to encourage use of public transit services and to facilitate transfers between systems.

- Ensure transit services are under consideration during the initial planning stages of new area developments, including passenger amenities such as bus stops and shelters.

- Support the continued prioritization of the "Complete Streets Program" to improve first and last mile connections by creating new bike and pedestrian connectivity.

- Improve connectivity between land use planning and the location of community services that will need to be accessed by people who rely on public transit and human services transportation.

Lower Priorities

Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs.

Area stakeholders noted that there is an opportunity to create better coordination and connectivity between the various transportation providers in the area. This strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility.

A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.
- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.
- Assess and reduce barriers to regional transportation services.
- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.
- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.
- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Assess current fare structures.

Some stakeholders mentioned a need for more affordable fares, particularly for people with lower incomes or living on a fixed income. Transit systems are typically reassessing their fare structure on an ongoing basis, and this strategy supports these efforts.

Several transit agencies across the country have recently implemented low and reduced fare programs for low-income residents as well as student-focused programs. Other transit providers work with human service agencies to provide benefits to individuals on supplemental or temporary assistance programs. Inter-agency coordination can also assist with developing an eligibility process for such programs.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, transit systems across the country decided to go fare free, and some have maintained that policy. Transit agencies considering a fare free approach should reference the Transit Cooperative Research Program's Report 237: Fare-Free Transit Evaluation Framework. This report provides a roadmap for evaluating fare-free alternatives and impacts.

Watertown Area

High Priorities

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Maintaining these services are vital to ensuring basic mobility in the region, though existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Agencies that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

This strategy also supports continued coordination on contracts between public transit and human service agencies in the areas.

Assess opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of vehicle operators.

In order to safely operate service levels to meet community needs, transit agencies must have an adequate number of qualified operators. Many transportation providers across the state and nation have been faced with a significant shortage of operators, even prior to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The job of a professional transit operator is an essential worker with specialized skills, who faces daily challenges with potentially challenging passengers, pressure to keep on schedule with challenging driving conditions, long periods of time sitting, and safely assisting individuals with disabilities, all while ideally being the professional, courteous public face of the organization. Being a transit operator is a difficult job. Ideally, their pay should reflect this.

If a transit agency cannot attract quality candidates to apply and continue working, the quality of the services the organization provides will suffer. Without enough employees (high quality or otherwise), service levels cannot be maintained, and some members of the community will lose their ride to work, school, the doctor, and other essential destinations. Each time a transit organization must fill a vacant position, there is a cost to the organization to hire and train a new employee. Paying overtime to current employees can be a short-term solution but is not a sustainable strategy. Not only is a high rate of overtime utilization costly to the agency in terms of payroll (because the overtime pay rate is typically 150% of the regular pay rate), but frequent overtime can also lead to safety risks due to operator fatigue and employee burnout, leading to yet more vacancies.

Therefore, this strategy recommends the assessment of opportunities to improve driver recruitment and retention, considering national research and analysis of operator vacancy rates that shows:

- Higher pay leads to lower vacancies – Systems with higher minimum and maximum pay rates have lower vacancy rates on average.

- Reliable hours and pay attracts workers – Systems with a higher percentage of full-time drivers and with more generous overtime levels have lower vacancy rates.

- Workers want training, health benefits, and a quality work environment – Systems that offer healthcare benefits, offer CDL training, and that foster a quality working environment have lower vacancy rates.

Additional considerations to support driver recruitment include:

- If they are to restore and maintain staffing levels, transit agencies will need to provide competitive wages and benefits that are commensurate with the levels of risk, pressures, and responsibilities that come with the operator's position. The compensation will need to be higher than that offered by low-risk, low-challenge jobs in their area, and competitive with other types of driving jobs such as school bus operators.

- To compete with other employers in the area in today's employment environment, transit agencies may need to offer hiring bonuses. Hiring bonuses could be paid in installments over the course of the first year to encourage continued employment. Bonuses for referrals from current employees should also be considered.

- In addition to offering competitive, higher entry-level wages, transit agencies need to offer regular cost of living increases so that operators can continue to earn a living wage, and periodic longevity increases and/or bonuses, rewarding operators for their years of service will help retain operators and reward them for continuing to work for the organization.

- Transit agencies with vehicles that require the operator to have a CDL can seriously consider providing paid training to prepare new hires to obtain their CDL. Offering a competitive wage as well as a meaningful sign-up bonus contingent upon a minimum period of employment can help prevent new CDL operators from taking a higher-paying job as soon as they have earned their CDL. Conversely, as noted by area stakeholders there may be a need to acquire smaller vehicles, reducing the need for drivers with a CDL and possibly increasing the driver applicant pool.

- Transit agencies offer an advantage over transportation network companies (such as Lyft or Uber) not only with benefits but also by being a trusted employer. Transit agencies can have an advantage in recruiting efforts by emphasizing the agency's mission and the importance of the job to the community. However, adequate pay is needed for the job to be attractive. Transit agencies with full-time operator positions (at least 35 hours per week) are likely to have lower operator vacancy rates.

A possible resource to assist with recruiting and retaining vehicle operators is the Transit Workforce Development Technical Assistance Center (TWC). A program of FTA, the TWC provides a variety of publications, trainings, webinars, and materials to assist with these efforts. The Center can be access at https://www.transitworkforce.org.

Expand marketing efforts, including using language translation technology to reach a wider customer base.

Marketing available transportation services is an ongoing effort, and the lack of awareness of available mobility options was noted by area stakeholders. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to offset the perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. In addition, stakeholders mentioned that language translation technology efforts are needed to ensure people with limited English proficiency are aware of available transportation services. This strategy involves increased marketing to counter any perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations, and to ensure all community residents are aware of these services.

Develop additional partnerships to identify new funding opportunities.

This strategy involves identifying partnership opportunities to leverage additional funding to support public transit and other mobility options, and as noted through stakeholder input the need to continue an open dialogue between public transit and community organizations that work with older adults and people with disabilities. There may also be opportunities to meet unmet needs and issues by tackling non-traditional sources of funding. Hospitals, supermarkets, and retailers who want the business of the region's riders may be willing to pay for part of the cost of transporting those riders to their sites. This approach is applicable to both medical and retail establishments already served, as well as to new businesses. While this plan helps to document the need for these additional services, some may need to be further quantified. It might also be necessary to document unmet needs and gaps in service as part of educating potential funders and sponsors.

Local funding has often been an issue for rural and small urban transit systems. However, transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue. Many systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, transit systems in the region can explore the selling of sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program can help expand the service.

Advocate for continued and expanded funding for public transportation services in the region.

Coupled with the need to develop additional partnerships is a stronger advocacy campaign that highlights the impact public transportation has on residents of the region, and how they are vital components of the community transportation infrastructure. Regional stakeholders noted that ongoing educational efforts are needed to ensure local leaders and decision makers are aware of the impact of community transportation services and overall buy-in for the needs for these services.

This strategy involves a regional and unified effort to inform elected officials, local and national decision makers, and the general public of the need for additional funding to support current services. This advocacy campaign could be part of a national movement to stress the importance of community and public transit. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) have developed a variety of resources that can be used in advocacy efforts with local offices of House and Senate members, local media and state and local elected officials.

There can be specific advocacy to support service recommendations included in transit plans conducted in the area and region, noted in a later high priority strategy. While this coordinated transportation plan takes a broader review of mobility needs and options, a planning process conducted by transit systems is more detailed, and assesses current services, identifies unmet transit needs, and identifies specific service improvements and potential expansions.

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain and expand services, and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services. Stakeholders noted the need to update existing vehicle fleets.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Medium Priorities

Identify a process for planning and implementing new regional services.

Through the coordinated transportation planning process stakeholders highlighted the need for services with expanded geographic coverage and that operate across different jurisdictional boundaries. This strategy supports a more formal process for planning and implementing new regional services that would help to fill gaps. There are a variety of considerations involved in the development of regional services that need to be taken into account, and that include:

- Prioritizing regional service corridors.

- Balancing commuter needs to larger employment centers with medical transportation and other needs.

- Identifying preferred mode of transportation, i.e., public transit, private transportation, vanpools, etc.

- Determining agency or organization that will operate services.

- Identifying funding sources and formalizing agreements on a cost sharing plan for regional services that would cross jurisdictional boundaries and serve multiple communities.

Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs.

Stakeholders noted that there is an opportunity to build upon current coordination and connectivity efforts between the various transportation providers in the area. They noted the need to continue contracts for coordination between transit and human service agencies and schools.

This strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility. A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Identify opportunities to address same day transportation needs.

- Assess and reduce barriers to regional transportation services.

- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Administer trainings for human service agency staff, medical facility personnel, and others in the availability of transportation services.

Through the needs assessment it was noted that often staff at different human service agencies and medical facilities were unaware of the transportation services available to their clients. In addition to expanding transportation options in the region, it is vital that customers, caseworkers, agency staff and medical facility personnel that work with people with disabilities, older adults, and others are familiar with available transportation services.

While possibly a component of the broader marketing efforts discussed in an earlier strategy, this strategy is segmented to highlight the support for the implementation and administration of transportation trainings for these employees. These educational opportunities are particularly important for coordinating scheduling medical and other appointments with available transportation options, as transportation providers in the region have limitations on service hours and days.

These trainings could be especially helpful as marketing, outreach, and education tools with healthcare and social service providers. People who consistently rely on social programs and/or need regular medical care are likely to rely on public or human service transportation. If providers of these services are not well educated on the variety of transportation options in the region, it can be difficult to see their clients. Hosting trainings or information sessions for these individuals, as well as the general public, can increase the community's awareness of these services.

Lower Priority

Increase weekend and evening service hours.

Stakeholders noted the need for expanded public transit services, including weekend and evening hours. While through the stakeholder survey process it was rated slightly lower than other priorities, it highlights the importance of assessing current services, obtaining ongoing community input, and planning and implementing expended services when funding is available. This strategy supports any future recommendations that result from this process or any transit planning efforts and respond to these or any service improvements expressed by area stakeholders in the future.

Other studies and plans should also be considered and may include assessments that highlight the need for expanded transportation services to access medical appointments, jobs, school, shopping, and other key destinations. This strategy also supports findings and recommendations from these studies and plans.

Mitchell Region

Mitchell Area

High Priorities

Develop additional partnerships to identify new funding opportunities.

This strategy involves identifying partnership opportunities to leverage additional funding to support public transit and other mobility options, and as noted through stakeholder input the need to continue an open dialogue between public transit and community organizations that work with older adults and people with disabilities. There may also be opportunities to meet unmet needs and issues by tackling non-traditional sources of funding. Hospitals, supermarkets, and retailers who want the business of the region's riders may be willing to pay for part of the cost of transporting those riders to their sites. This approach is applicable to both medical and retail establishments already served, as well as to new businesses. While this plan helps to document the need for these additional services, some may need to be further quantified. It might also be necessary to document unmet needs and gaps in service as part of educating potential funders and sponsors.

Local funding has often been an issue for rural and small urban transit systems. However, transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue. Many systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, transit systems in the region can explore the selling of sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program can help expand the service.

Increase agency collaboration to ensure knowledge of available services and to support coordination efforts.

Area stakeholders noted that there is a need to improve coordination between agencies to ensure awareness of what other organizations are doing, and what services are available so to increase ridership. They also mentioned the need to continue contracts for coordination between transit providers, human service agencies, and schools. It was also mentioned that there is a need to consider on-going opportunities in the Mitchell area for discussions between state and local agencies.

This strategy supports a more formalized process for these discussions to ensure available resources are used efficiently. An ongoing forum, possibly through an area coordinating committee, would provide the opportunity to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to regional transportation services.

- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most proposed strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Maintaining these services are vital to ensuring basic mobility in the region, though existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Stakeholders noted the need to improve resources for small non-profit human service agencies. Those agencies that would like to evaluate their

transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

Improve or expand transportation services for shift workers.

Many stakeholders mentioned a need for greater service to employment sites for shift workers with jobs that require evening and weekend hours. This strategy supports efforts to expand services to meet these needs and could include extension of existing public transit service hours or consideration of microtransit services. These efforts could be a component of a broader transit planning process that evaluates current services and specific needs in more detail.

Medium Priorities

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Expand outreach efforts to provide information on available transportation options.

The lack of awareness of available transportation services was noted by area stakeholders, particularly services that are open to the general public. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to offset the perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. This strategy involves increased marketing of transportation services and options to counter any perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community.

Identify a process for planning and implementing new regional services to fill current gaps in transportation.

Through the coordinated transportation planning process stakeholders highlighted the need for better connections to key destinations in the area. This strategy supports a more formal process for planning and implementing new regional services that would help to fill gaps. There are a variety of considerations involved in the development of regional services that need to be taken into account, and that include:

- Prioritizing regional service corridors.

- Balancing commuter needs to larger employment centers with medical transportation and other needs.

- Identifying preferred mode of transportation, i.e., public transit, private transportation, vanpools, etc.

- Determining agency or organization that will operate services.

- Identifying funding sources and formalizing agreements on a cost sharing plan for regional services that would cross jurisdictional boundaries and serve multiple communities.

Advocate for continued and expanded funding for public transportation services in the region.

Area stakeholders noted the need to increase state funding options to assist with covering rising operational costs. Coupled with efforts to develop additional partnerships is a possible advocacy campaign that highlights the impact public transportation has on residents of the area, and how they are vital components of the community transportation infrastructure. Ongoing educational efforts can be conducted to help ensure decision makers are aware of the impact of community transportation services and overall buy-in for the needs for these services.

This strategy can involve a regional and unified effort to inform elected officials, local and national decision makers, and the general public of the need for additional funding to support current services. This advocacy campaign could be part of a national movement to stress the importance of community and public transit. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) have developed a variety of resources that can be used in advocacy efforts with local offices of House and Senate members, local media and state and local elected officials.

Assess opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of vehicle operators.

In order to safely operate service levels to meet community needs, transit agencies must have an adequate number of qualified operators. Many transportation providers across the state and nation have been faced with a significant shortage of operators, even prior to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The job of a professional transit operator is an essential worker with specialized skills, who faces daily challenges with potentially challenging passengers, pressure to keep on schedule with

challenging driving conditions, long periods of time sitting, and safely assisting individuals with disabilities, all while ideally being the professional, courteous public face of the organization. Being a transit operator is a difficult job. Ideally, their pay should reflect this.

If a transit agency cannot attract quality candidates to apply and continue working, the quality of the services the organization provides will suffer. Without enough employees (high quality or otherwise), service levels cannot be maintained, and some members of the community will lose their ride to work, school, the doctor, and other essential destinations. Each time a transit organization must fill a vacant position, there is a cost to the organization to hire and train a new employee. Paying overtime to current employees can be a short-term solution but is not a sustainable strategy. Not only is a high rate of overtime utilization costly to the agency in terms of payroll (because the overtime pay rate is typically 150% of the regular pay rate), but frequent overtime can also lead to safety risks due to operator fatigue and employee burnout, leading to yet more vacancies.

Therefore, this strategy recommends the assessment of opportunities to improve driver recruitment and retention, considering national research and analysis of operator vacancy rates that shows:

- Higher pay leads to lower vacancies – Systems with higher minimum and maximum pay rates have lower vacancy rates on average.

- Reliable hours and pay attracts workers – Systems with a higher percentage of full-time drivers and with more generous overtime levels have lower vacancy rates.

- Workers want training, health benefits, and a quality work environment – Systems that offer healthcare benefits, offer CDL training, and that foster a quality working environment have lower vacancy rates.

Additional considerations to support driver recruitment include:

- If they are to restore and maintain staffing levels, transit agencies will need to provide competitive wages and benefits that are commensurate with the levels of risk, pressures, and responsibilities that come with the operator's position. The compensation will need to be higher than that offered by low-risk, low-challenge jobs in their area, and competitive with other types of driving jobs such as school bus operators.

- To compete with other employers in the area in today's employment environment, transit agencies may need to offer hiring bonuses. Hiring bonuses could be paid in installments over the course of the first year to encourage continued employment. Bonuses for referrals from current employees should also be considered.

- In addition to offering competitive, higher entry-level wages, transit agencies need to offer regular cost of living increases so that operators can continue to earn a living wage, and periodic longevity increases and/or bonuses, rewarding operators for their years of service will help retain operators and reward them for continuing to work for the organization.

- Transit agencies with vehicles that require the operator to have a CDL can seriously consider providing paid training to prepare new hires to obtain their CDL. Offering a competitive wage as well as a meaningful sign-up bonus contingent upon a minimum period of employment can help prevent new CDL operators from taking a higher-paying job as soon as they have earned their CDL.

- Transit agencies offer an advantage over transportation network companies (such as Lyft or Uber) not only with benefits but also by being a trusted employer. Transit agencies can have an advantage in recruiting efforts by emphasizing the agency's mission and the importance of the job to the community. However, adequate pay is needed for the job to be attractive. Transit agencies with full-time operator positions (at least 35 hours per week) are likely to have lower operator vacancy rates.

- Stakeholders noted that career fairs in the area may provide opportunities to recruit for driver positions.

A possible resource to assist with recruiting and retaining vehicle operators is the Transit Workforce Development Technical Assistance Center (TWC). A program of FTA, the TWC provides a variety of publications, trainings, webinars, and materials to assist with these efforts. The Center can be access at https://www.transitworkforce.org.

Lower Priorities

Administer trainings for human service agency staff, medical facility personnel, and others in the availability of transportation services.

Through the needs assessment it was noted that often staff at different human service agencies and medical facilities were unaware of the transportation services available to their clients. In addition to expanding transportation options in the region, it is vital that customers, caseworkers, agency staff and medical facility personnel that work with people with disabilities, older adults, and others are familiar with available transportation services.

While possibly a component of the broader marketing efforts discussed in the preceding strategy, this strategy is segmented to highlight the support for the implementation and administration of transportation trainings for these employees. These educational opportunities are particularly important for coordinating scheduling medical and other appointments with available transportation options, as transportation providers in the region have limitations on service hours and days.

These trainings could be especially helpful as marketing, outreach, and education tools with healthcare and social service providers. People who consistently rely on social programs and/or need regular medical care are likely to rely on public or human service transportation. If providers of these services are not well educated on the variety of transportation options in the region, it can be difficult to see their clients. Hosting trainings or information sessions for these individuals, as well as the general public, can increase the community's awareness of these services.

Assess opportunities to implement on-demand microtransit services.

One of the recent changes in planning transit services is the introduction of microtransit services. A growing number of public transportation providers have begun operating this service that features an on-demand, e-hailing component. These services use mobile technology to provide dynamic routing through which customers use a smartphone application (app) to schedule and/or pay for a ride within a specific geofenced zone. On-demand services can provide more flexibility to customers than traditional demand response services. Riders can individualize service by selecting both their pick-up and drop-off locations, while dynamic routing capabilities allow drivers to quickly adjust pick-up locations to provide more efficient service. This strategy supports the planning and implementation of on-demand microtransit services as appropriate.

A variety of different needs and mobility challenges can be met through microtransit services. These included service industry workers who work second and third shift jobs and have mobility needs that are unable to be met during normal transit operational hours; and jobs outside of the current transit service areas that are therefore challenging to access. While once designed for larger urban areas, on-demand services are now expanding to small urban and rural communities. On-demand services can be designed to make local service easier, and instead of customers having to call the day before the trip they can access the service in as little as one hour or less. There are also operational advantages to on-demand microtransit services, as these services may make better use of the existing vehicles and often require almost no interaction with the dispatcher, reducing the demands on that position.

There are a variety of new microtransit services across the country that can be used as possible models in the planning and design of on-demand options in the region. While each project is unique, the following step-by-step planning process provides a possible guide for implementation:

- **Microtransit Zones** – Locations are identified as prime candidates for services based on the assessment of existing transit services, demographic, and other key factors.

- **Service Plan** - Various operational considerations for potential services are developed, including service days and hours, pickup and drop off locations, and the type of vehicles to be used in the delivery of services.

- **Capital and Technology Considerations** – These areas are assessed based on preferred service delivery and other service components.

- **Funding and Budget Considerations** – Potential costs and revenue sources for the microtransit service are identified.

- **Outreach Considerations** – Various opportunities to obtain community input on potential microtransit services are developed.

- **Procurement and RFP Considerations** – Process for obtaining a vendor to provide microtransit software and/or operate services is developed.

- **Service Evaluation Considerations** – Methods for measuring and assessing the efficacy and efficiency of microtransit services after implementation are identified.

Assess current fare structures.

Some stakeholders mentioned the need for a monthly flat fare or other options for people with lower incomes or living on a fixed income. Transit systems are typically reassessing their fare structure on an ongoing basis, and this strategy supports these efforts.

Several transit agencies across the country have recently implemented low and reduced fare programs for low-income residents as well as student-focused programs. Other transit providers work with human service agencies to provide benefits to individuals on supplemental or temporary assistance programs. Inter-agency coordination can also assist with developing an eligibility process for such programs.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, transit systems across the country decided to go fare free, and some have maintained that policy. Transit agencies considering a fare free approach should reference the Transit Cooperative Research Program's Report 237: Fare-Free Transit Evaluation Framework. This report provides a roadmap for evaluating fare-free alternatives and impacts.

Sioux Falls Area

High Priorities

Support recommendations to improve transportation identified through transit plans and other studies conducted in the region.

Stakeholders identified a variety of needed transportation services, including better connections to key destinations and expanded services to meet shift work hours. While this coordinated transportation plan can serve as an important planning tool for area and regional efforts to expand mobility, local transit planning efforts typically serve as the foundation for specific transit service improvements. Short-range plans are designed to formulate goals and objectives for transit; review and assess current transit services; identify unmet transit needs; and develop an appropriate course of action to address needs, typically a five-year horizon. These transit plans can then serve as a guide for public transportation, providing a roadmap for implementing service and/or organizational changes, improvements and/or potential expansions.

This strategy supports recommendations identified through current or future transit planning efforts, as these recommendations will typically respond to a variety of the transportation needs expressed by area stakeholders through the coordinated transportation planning process. Through this process projected costs and a proposed timeline for implementing service improvements can be developed, and that may involve:

- Increased frequency of existing services

- Extended evening hours

- Weekend service expansions

- Use of on-demand services using smaller vehicles. Other studies may include assessments that highlight the need for expanded transportation services to access medical appointments, jobs, school, shopping, and other key destinations. This strategy also supports findings and recommendations from these studies.

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Maintaining these services are vital to ensuring basic mobility in the region, though existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Stakeholders noted the need to improve resources for small non-profit human service agencies. Organizations that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily

identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

Another component of maintaining services is the need to retain and recruit drivers. Area stakeholders noted the particular need for part-time drivers. Therefore, this strategy also recommends the assessment of opportunities to improve driver recruitment and retention, considering national research and analysis of operator vacancy rates that shows:

- Higher pay leads to lower vacancies – Systems with higher minimum and maximum pay rates have lower vacancy rates on average.

- Reliable hours and pay attracts workers – Systems with a higher percentage of full-time drivers and with more generous overtime levels have lower vacancy rates.

- Workers want training, health benefits, and a quality work environment – Systems that offer healthcare benefits, offer CDL training, and that foster a quality working environment have lower vacancy rates.

A possible resource to assist with recruiting and retaining vehicle operators is the Transit Workforce Development Technical Assistance Center (TWC). A program of FTA, the TWC provides a variety of publications, trainings, webinars, and materials to assist with these efforts. The Center can be access at https://www.transitworkforce.org.

Form a committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities.

Stakeholders noted the need to continue coordination on contracts between various public and human service agencies in the area. There is always an ongoing opportunity to build upon coordination efforts, and therefore this strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility. A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to regional transportation services.

- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Develop additional partnerships.

Area stakeholders discussed a variety of public transit partnership opportunities, including with employers on commuter tax benefit programs and with downtown businesses and residential locations. This strategy supports these efforts, as well as those that involve identifying partnership opportunities to leverage additional funding to support public transit and other mobility options. There may also be opportunities to meet unmet needs and issues by tackling non-traditional sources of funding. Hospitals, supermarkets, and retailers who want the business of the region's riders may be willing to pay for part of the cost of transporting those riders to their sites. This approach is applicable to both medical and retail establishments already served, as well as to new businesses. While this plan helps to document the need for these additional services, some may need to be further quantified. It might also be necessary to document unmet needs and gaps in service as part of educating potential funders and sponsors.

Local funding has often been an issue for transit systems. However, the industry has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue. Many systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, transit systems in the region can explore the selling of sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program can help expand the service.

Medium Priorities

Develop and implement improved public information on how to use available transit services.

The lack of awareness of available transportation services was noted by area stakeholders, particularly services that are open to the general public. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to help educate potential customers on how to use services and to offset any perception that public

transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. This strategy supports expanded marketing and public outreach efforts identified by area providers that will help ensure local residents are fully aware of their mobility options and to offset any misperceptions.

This potential public information campaign can also respond to the need mentioned by area stakeholders to update technology to increase both communication and marketing in multiple languages.

Where appropriate identify opportunities to improve bus stop amenities and infrastructure, and implement improvements.

Stakeholders noted that in some parts of the area there are opportunities to improve bus stop amenities and infrastructure, and these efforts would help to improve access to available transportation services. This strategy supports an assessment of these opportunities and to identify and implement improvements. Potential components of this strategy include:

- Consider a bus stop accessibility assessment for public transit services throughout the region

- Continue and expand the presence of bus stop signs and customer amenities at local stops to encourage use of public transit services and to facilitate transfers between systems.

- Ensure transit services are under consideration during the initial planning stages of new area developments, including passenger amenities such as bus stops and shelters.

- Support the continued prioritization of the "Complete Streets Program" to improve first and last mile connections by creating new bike and pedestrian connectivity.

- Improve connectivity between land use planning and the location of community services that will need to be accessed by people who rely on public transit and human services transportation.

Advocate for continued and expanded funding for public transportation services in the region.

Coupled with the need to develop additional partnerships is a stronger advocacy campaign that highlights the impact public transportation has on residents of the region, and how they are vital components of the community transportation infrastructure. Regional stakeholders noted that ongoing educational efforts are needed to ensure local leaders and decision makers are aware of the impact of community transportation services and overall buy-in for the needs for these services.

This strategy involves a regional and unified effort to inform elected officials, local and national decision makers, and the general public of the need for additional funding to support current services. This advocacy campaign could be part of a national movement to stress the importance of community and public transit. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the American Public

Transportation Association (APTA) have developed a variety of resources that can be used in advocacy efforts with local offices of House and Senate members, local media and state and local elected officials. There can be specific advocacy to support service recommendations included in transit plans conducted in the area and region, noted in a later high priority strategy. While this coordinated transportation plan takes a broader review of mobility needs and options, a planning process conducted by transit systems is more detailed, and assesses current services, identifies unmet transit needs, and identifies specific service improvements and potential expansions.

Lower Priority

Assess current fare structures.

Some stakeholders noted the need for a monthly pass and more affordable fares, particularly for people with lower incomes or living on a fixed income. Transit systems are typically reassessing their fare structure on an ongoing basis, and this strategy supports these efforts.

Several transit agencies across the country have recently implemented low and reduced fare programs for low-income residents as well as student-focused programs. Other transit providers work with human service agencies to provide benefits to individuals on supplemental or temporary assistance programs. Inter-agency coordination can also assist with developing an eligibility process for such programs.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, transit systems across the country decided to go fare free, and some have maintained that policy. Transit agencies considering a fare free approach should reference the Transit Cooperative Research Program's Report 237: Fare-Free Transit Evaluation Framework. This report provides a roadmap for evaluating fare-free alternatives and impacts.

Yankton Area

High Priorities

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most proposed strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Securing funding necessary to maintain these core services is a high priority, as maintaining these services is vital to ensuring basic mobility in the area. Existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Those agencies that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

Identify new funding sources.

This strategy involves identifying partnership opportunities to leverage additional funding to support public transit and other mobility options, and as noted through stakeholder input the need to continue an open dialogue between public transit and community organizations that work with older adults and people with disabilities. There may also be opportunities to meet unmet needs and issues by tackling non-traditional sources of funding. Hospitals, supermarkets, and retailers who want the business of the region's riders may be willing to pay for part of the cost of transporting those riders to their sites. This approach is applicable to both medical and retail establishments already served, as well as to new businesses. While this plan helps to document the need for these additional services, some may need to be further quantified. It might also be necessary to document unmet needs and gaps in service as part of educating potential funders and sponsors.

Local funding has often been an issue for rural and small urban transit systems. However, transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue. Many systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, transit systems in the region can explore the selling of sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program can help expand the service.

Identify opportunities to utilize emerging technologies to improve services and customer information.

Stakeholders noted the need for technological advancements, including for improved dispatching capabilities, that would allow for more efficient, effective, and coordinated services. At the same time, any technological advancements need to be considered by the user and requiring them to utilize technology may be a weakness. For instance, it was noted that some older adults may prefer a call center structure over the use of an app or software platform.

This strategy supports efforts to determine how emerging technologies more fully can be used to improve transportation services and customer information, and how customers access this information. Technologies that can help to coordinate services and trips between different transportation providers can also be a component of this strategy.

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining vehicles in good repair and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Medium Priorities

Expand coordination between different public transit systems in the region.

Area stakeholders noted that there is a need to improve coordination between public transit agencies. This strategy supports a more formalized process for these discussions, and broader coordination efforts to ensure available resources are used efficiently.

An ongoing forum, possibly through an area coordinating committee, would provide the opportunity to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, healthcare providers, and other human service agencies in the area.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to regional transportation services.

- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Expand outreach efforts to provide information on available transportation options.

The lack of awareness of available transportation services was noted by area stakeholders, particularly services that are open to the general public. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to offset the perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. This strategy involves increased marketing of transportation services and options to counter any perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community.

Advocate for continued and expanded funding for public transportation services in the region.

Area stakeholders noted the need to increase state funding options to assist with covering rising operational costs. Coupled with efforts to develop additional partnerships is a possible advocacy campaign that highlights the impact public transportation has on residents of the area, and how they are vital components of the community transportation infrastructure. Ongoing educational efforts can be conducted to help ensure decision makers are aware of the impact of community transportation services and overall buy-in for the needs for these services.

This strategy can involve a regional and unified effort to inform elected officials, local and national decision makers, and the general public of the need for additional funding to support current services. This advocacy campaign could be part of a national movement to stress the importance of community and public transit. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) have developed a variety of resources that can be used in advocacy efforts with local offices of House and Senate members, local media and state and local elected officials.

Assess opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of vehicle operators.

In order to safely operate service levels to meet community needs, transit agencies must have an adequate number of qualified operators. Many transportation providers across the state and nation have been faced with a significant shortage of operators, even prior to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The job of a professional transit operator is an essential worker with specialized skills, who faces daily challenges with potentially challenging passengers, pressure to keep on schedule with challenging driving conditions, long periods of time sitting, and safely assisting individuals with disabilities, all while ideally being the professional, courteous public face of the organization. Being a transit operator is a difficult job. Ideally, their pay should reflect this.

If a transit agency cannot attract quality candidates to apply and continue working, the quality of the services the organization provides will suffer. Without enough employees (high quality or otherwise), service levels cannot be maintained, and some members of the community will lose their ride to work, school, the doctor, and other essential destinations. Each time a transit organization must fill a vacant position, there is a cost to the organization to hire and train a new employee. Paying overtime to current employees can be a short-term solution but is not a sustainable strategy. Not only is a high rate of overtime utilization costly to the agency in terms of payroll (because the overtime pay rate is typically 150% of the regular pay rate), but frequent overtime can also lead to safety risks due to operator fatigue and employee burnout, leading to yet more vacancies.

Therefore, this strategy recommends the assessment of opportunities to improve driver recruitment and retention, considering national research and analysis of operator vacancy rates that shows:

- Higher pay leads to lower vacancies – Systems with higher minimum and maximum pay rates have lower vacancy rates on average.

- Reliable hours and pay attracts workers – Systems with a higher percentage of full-time drivers and with more generous overtime levels have lower vacancy rates.

- Workers want training, health benefits, and a quality work environment – Systems that offer healthcare benefits, offer CDL training, and that foster a quality working environment have lower vacancy rates.

Additional considerations to support driver recruitment include:

- If they are to restore and maintain staffing levels, transit agencies will need to provide competitive wages and benefits that are commensurate with the levels of risk, pressures, and responsibilities that come with the operator position. The compensation will need to be higher than that offered by low-risk, low-challenge jobs in their area, and competitive with other types of driving jobs such as school bus operators.

- To compete with other employers in the area in today's employment environment, transit agencies may need to offer hiring bonuses. Hiring bonuses could be paid in installments over the course of the first year to encourage continued employment. Bonuses for referrals from current employees should also be considered.

- In addition to offering competitive, higher entry-level wages, transit agencies need to offer regular cost of living increases so that operators can continue to earn a living wage, and periodic longevity increases and/or bonuses, rewarding operators for their years of service will help retain operators and reward them for continuing to work for the organization.

- Transit agencies with vehicles that require the operator to have a CDL can seriously consider providing paid training to prepare new hires to obtain their CDL. Offering a competitive wage as well as a meaningful sign-up bonus contingent upon a minimum period of employment can help prevent new CDL operators from taking a higher-paying job as soon as they have earned their CDL.

- Transit agencies offer an advantage over transportation network companies (such as Lyft or Uber) not only with benefits but also by being a trusted employer. Transit agencies can have an advantage in recruiting efforts by emphasizing the agency's mission and the importance of the job to the community. However, adequate pay is needed for the job to be attractive. Transit agencies with full-time operator positions (at least 35 hours per week) are likely to have lower operator vacancy rates.

- Stakeholders noted that career fairs in the area may provide opportunities to recruit for driver positions.

A possible resource to assist with recruiting and retaining vehicle operators is the Transit Workforce Development Technical Assistance Center (TWC). A program of FTA, the TWC provides a variety of publications, trainings, webinars, and materials to assist with these efforts. The Center can be access at https://www.transitworkforce.org.

Consider greater use of vanpool and other employment-related transportation services.

Area stakeholders mentioned the need to expand employment transportation services and noted current collaboration on vanpool services. Where feasible vanpool programs can be used and serve as a low-cost way to meet commuter demand. Several states and various communities have developed successful partnerships with private vanpool companies, and this strategy supports consideration of these services in the area.

Lower Priorities

Increase weekend and evening services.

Stakeholders noted the need for expanded public transit services, including weekend and evening hours. They also noted the need for greater options for greater employment transportation options. While through the stakeholder survey process it was rated slightly lower than other priorities, it highlights the importance of assessing current services, obtaining ongoing community input, and planning and implementing expended services when funding is available. This strategy supports any future recommendations that result from this process or any transit planning efforts and respond to these or any service improvements expressed by area stakeholders in the future.

Other studies and plans should also be considered and may include assessments that highlight the need for expanded transportation services to access medical appointments, jobs, school, shopping, and other key destinations. This strategy also supports findings and recommendations from these studies and plans.

Administer trainings for human service agency staff, medical facility personnel, and others in the availability of transportation services.

Through the needs assessment it was noted that often staff at different human service agencies and medical facilities were unaware of the transportation services available to their clients. In addition to expanding transportation options in the region, it is vital that customers, caseworkers, agency staff and medical facility personnel that work with people with disabilities, older adults, and others are familiar with available transportation services.

While possibly a component of the broader marketing efforts discussed in the preceding strategy, this strategy is segmented to highlight the support for the implementation and administration of transportation trainings for these employees. These educational opportunities are particularly important for coordinating scheduling medical and other appointments with available transportation options, as transportation providers in the region have limitations on service hours and days.

These trainings could be especially helpful as marketing, outreach, and education tools with healthcare and social service providers. People who consistently rely on social programs and/or need regular medical care are likely to rely on public or human service transportation. If providers of these services are not well educated on the variety of transportation options in the region, it can be difficult to see their clients. Hosting trainings or information sessions for these individuals, as well as the general public, can increase the community's awareness of these services.

Consider Mobility Management Efforts

Mobility management is a term that has come to represent a formal definition of a transportation strategy that focuses more on the customer and their needs, and the meeting of these needs through the coordinated use of a variety of providers. Mobility management is an evolving concept that aims to improve specialized transportation, particularly for older adults, people with disabilities, veterans, and individuals with lower incomes through a range of activities. These activities look beyond a single transportation service or solution to a "family of services" philosophy that can offer a wide range of services and options to meet an equally wide array of community demographics and needs.

The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) notes that mobility management:

- Encourages innovation and flexibility to reach the "right fit" solution for customers

- Plans for sustainability

- Strives for easy information and referral to assist customers in learning about and using services

- Continually incorporates customer feedback as services are evaluated and adjusted

This strategy supports mobility management efforts in the region that could take on a variety of coordination and marketing needs noted by area stakeholders. A mobility manager role would help to improve access to available services in the region, and could help to maintain coordination between transportation providers, human service agencies, and others in the region. Mobility management efforts have the capability of greatly improving access to transportation services in the area, particularly for residents with limited mobility options or access to a personal vehicle.

Pierre Region

Mobridge Area

High Priorities

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most proposed strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Securing funding necessary to maintain these core services is a high priority, as maintaining these services is vital to ensuring basic mobility in the area. Existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Those agencies that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining vehicles in good repair and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Create a public campaign to increase awareness of services and options.

Area stakeholders discussed the need to increase marketing and outreach to the public, noting that currently there is a lack of understanding of available transportation services. They mentioned the need for customer-based training, especially on how to utilize current service options. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there may also be the need for effective marketing efforts to offset the perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. This strategy involves increased marketing of transportation services and options to ensure area residents are more fully aware of their mobility options and the availability of public transit in their community.

Increase weekend and evening services.

Stakeholders noted the need for expanded public transit services, including weekend and evening hours. They also noted the need for greater options for greater employment transportation options. This highlights the importance of assessing current services, obtaining ongoing community input, and planning and implementing expended services when funding is available. This strategy supports any future recommendations that result from this process or any transit planning efforts and respond to these or any service improvements expressed by area stakeholders in the future.

Other studies and plans should also be considered and may include assessments that highlight the need for expanded transportation services to access medical appointments, jobs, school, shopping, and other key destinations. This strategy also supports findings and recommendations from these studies and plans.

Identify opportunities to utilize emerging technologies to improve services and customer information.

Stakeholders noted the need for technological advancements, including for improved dispatching capabilities, that would allow for more efficient, effective, and coordinated services. At the same time, any technological advancements need to be considered by the user and requiring them to utilize technology may be a weakness. For instance, it was noted that some older adults may prefer a call center structure over the use of an app or software platform.

This strategy supports efforts to determine how emerging technologies more fully can be used to improve transportation services and customer information, and how customers access this information. Technologies that can help to coordinate services and trips between different transportation providers can also be a component of this strategy.

Medium Priorities

Develop additional partnerships to identify new funding opportunities.

This strategy involves identifying partnership opportunities to leverage additional funding to support public transit and other mobility options. In particular, area stakeholders noted opportunities for increased partnerships with major employers. This strategy could meet multiple unmet needs and issues by identifying non-traditional sources of funding. Hospitals, supermarkets, and retailers who want the business of the region's riders may be willing to pay for part of the cost of transporting those riders to their sites. This approach is applicable to both medical and retail establishments already served, as well as to new businesses. While this plan helps to document the need for these additional services, some may need to be further quantified. It might also be necessary to document unmet needs and gaps in service as part of educating potential funders and sponsors.

Local funding has often been an issue for rural and small urban transit systems. However, transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue. Many systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, transit systems in the region can explore the selling of sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program can help expand the service.

Advocate for continued and expanded funding for public transportation services in the area.

Area stakeholders noted the need for increased local support to meet grant matching requirements. Coupled with efforts to develop additional partnerships is a possible advocacy campaign that highlights the impact public transportation has on residents of the area, and how they are vital components of the community transportation infrastructure. Ongoing educational efforts can be conducted to help ensure decision makers are aware of the impact of community transportation services and overall buy-in for the needs for these services.

This strategy can involve a regional and unified effort to inform elected officials, local and national decision makers, and the general public of the need for additional funding to support current services. This advocacy campaign could be part of a national movement to stress the importance of community and public transit. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) have developed a variety of resources that can be used in advocacy efforts with local offices of House and Senate members, local media and state and local elected officials.

Identify a process for planning and implementing new regional services to fill current gaps in transportation.

Through the coordinated transportation planning process stakeholders highlighted the need for transportation services to fill current gaps, and that greater regional transportation services are needed for medical and other trips. This strategy supports a more formal process for planning and implementing new regional services that would help to fill gaps. There are a variety of considerations involved in the development of regional services that need to be taken into account, and that include:

- Prioritizing regional service corridors.

- Balancing commuter needs to larger employment centers with medical transportation and other needs.

- Identifying preferred mode of transportation, i.e., public transit, private transportation, vanpools, etc.

- Determining agency or organization that will operate services.

- Identifying funding sources and formalizing agreements on a cost sharing plan for regional services that would cross jurisdictional boundaries and serve multiple communities.

Assess opportunities to implement on-demand microtransit services.

Area stakeholders noted the need for on-demand services as one option to expand mobility. One of the recent changes in planning transit services is the introduction of microtransit services. A growing number of public transportation providers have begun operating this service that features an on-demand, e-hailing component. These services use mobile technology to provide dynamic routing through which customers use a smartphone application (app) to schedule and/or pay for a ride within a specific geofenced zone. On-demand services can provide more flexibility to customers than

traditional demand response services. Riders can individualize service by selecting both their pick-up and drop-off locations, while dynamic routing capabilities allow drivers to quickly adjust pick-up locations to provide more efficient service. This strategy supports the planning and implementation of on-demand microtransit services as appropriate.

A variety of different needs and mobility challenges can be met through microtransit services. These included service industry workers who work second and third shift jobs and have mobility needs that are unable to be met during normal transit operational hours; and jobs outside of the current transit service areas that are therefore challenging to access. While once designed for larger urban areas, on-demand services are now expanding to small urban and rural communities. On-demand services can be designed to make local service easier, and instead of customers having to call the day before the trip they can access the service in as little as one hour or less. There are also operational advantages to on-demand microtransit services, as these services may make better use of the existing vehicles and often require almost no interaction with the dispatcher, reducing the demands on that position.

Consider greater use of vanpool and other employment-related transportation services.

Area stakeholders mentioned the need for expanded access to jobs. Where feasible, vanpool programs can be used and serve as a low-cost way to meet commuter demand. Several states and various communities have developed successful partnerships with private vanpool companies, and this strategy supports consideration of these services in the area.

Lower Priority

Consider a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs.

Area stakeholders noted a variety of opportunities to better coordination and connect existing transportation services. This strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility. A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to regional transportation services.

- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Pierre Area

High Priorities

Decrease unserved trips, including no-shows and cancellations.

The stakeholders discussed an opportunity to decrease unserved trips, including no-shows and cancellations. No-shows and cancellations cause disruptions in scheduling and trips, as well as causing possibilities for the drivers to be late to other pick-ups or drop-offs. Therefore, no-shows and cancellations can adversely affect the efficiency and effectiveness of service and significantly add to the cost of providing services. Not only do no-shows take a possible trip from another rider, but it also wastes money and resources.

Some of the strategies to tackle this issue include upgrading dispatching and scheduling software. The upgraded technology will allow for more streamlined scheduling. Other solutions include incentives, clearer rules, possible penalties, and even incident analysis systems to address the key reasons for no shows. Another opportunity is to utilize upgraded technology to analyze top reasons for no-shows or cancellations, which will allow for enhanced rules.

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most proposed strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Securing funding necessary to maintain these core services is a high priority, as maintaining these services is vital to ensuring basic mobility in the area. Existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Those agencies that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

Increase wage options to recruit and retain employees.

Throughout the US, labor shortages continue to threaten public transit systems, especially against other employment options that provide higher wage options for their employees. In order to continue being competitive with other employment options, transit agencies need to increase wage options. Increased wage options will also help agencies maintain employees. Wage options could include increased wage, bonuses, qualified transportation fringe benefit program, etc. Increased wage options and comprehensive benefits will also attract more employees, which will allow agencies to compete and win at retaining and hiring qualified workers. It will also present the agency as a proactive and innovative workplace that supports work-life balance.

Expand mobility services and options for community members.

Area stakeholders noted that there is a need for expanded mobility services and options for community members. This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to expand upon existing public transit services and human services transportation that may not fully be meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Expanding these services is vital to ensuring basic mobility in the region, though existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Agencies that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at
https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

Build upon current meetings with communities to maintain forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize mobility needs in the area.

Area stakeholders noted that there is an opportunity to create better coordination and connectivity between the various transportation providers in the area. This strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility. A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to transportation services, both locally and regionally.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Medium Priorities

Encourage riders to have an attendant join the trip for medical appointments.

In order to keep trips on time, it would be beneficial for riders to have an attendant who is trained in helping those with disabilities or mobility issues join the trip for medical appointments. Not all systems train drivers to assist these populations to and from medical appointments. Many systems allow attendants to ride free. It would be beneficial for transit agencies to utilize funding sources that would allow for attendants on staff that can accompany riders for medical trips.

Assess opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of vehicle operators.

In order to safely operate service levels to meet community needs, transit agencies must have an adequate number of qualified operators. Many transportation providers across the state and nation have been faced with a significant shortage of operators, even prior to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The job of a professional transit operator is an essential worker with specialized skills, who faces daily challenges with potentially challenging passengers, pressure to keep on schedule with challenging driving conditions, long periods of time sitting, and safely assisting individuals with disabilities, all while ideally being the professional, courteous public face of the organization. Being a transit operator is a difficult job. Ideally, their pay should reflect this.

If a transit agency cannot attract quality candidates to apply and continue working, the quality of the services the organization provides will suffer. Without enough employees (high quality or otherwise), service levels cannot be maintained, and some members of the community will lose their ride to work, school, the doctor, and other essential destinations. Each time a transit organization must fill a vacant position, there is a cost to the organization to hire and train a new employee. Paying overtime to current employees can be a short-term solution but is not a sustainable strategy. Not only is a high rate of overtime utilization costly to the agency in terms of payroll (because the overtime pay rate is typically 150% of the regular pay rate), but frequent overtime can also lead to safety risks due to operator fatigue and employee burnout, leading to yet more vacancies.

Therefore, this strategy recommends the assessment of opportunities to improve driver recruitment and retention, considering national research and analysis of operator vacancy rates that shows:

- Higher pay leads to lower vacancies – Systems with higher minimum and maximum pay rates have lower vacancy rates on average.

- Reliable hours and pay attracts workers – Systems with a higher percentage of full-time drivers and with more generous overtime levels have lower vacancy rates.

- Workers want training, health benefits, and a quality work environment – Systems that offer healthcare benefits, offer CDL training, and that foster a quality working environment have lower vacancy rates.

Additional considerations to support driver recruitment include:

- If they are to restore and maintain staffing levels, transit agencies will need to provide competitive wages and benefits that are commensurate with the levels of risk, pressures, and responsibilities that come with the operator's position. The compensation will need to be higher than that offered by low-risk, low-challenge jobs in their area, and competitive with other types of driving jobs such as school bus operators.

- To compete with other employers in the area in today's employment environment, transit agencies may need to offer hiring bonuses. Hiring bonuses could be paid in installments over the course of the first year to encourage continued employment. Bonuses for referrals from current employees should also be considered.

- In addition to offering competitive, higher entry-level wages, transit agencies need to offer regular cost of living increases so that operators can continue to earn a living wage, and periodic longevity increases and/or bonuses, rewarding operators for their years of service will help retain operators and reward them for continuing to work for the organization.

- Transit agencies with vehicles that require the operator to have a CDL can seriously consider providing paid training to prepare new hires to obtain their CDL. Offering a competitive wage as well as a meaningful sign-up bonus contingent upon a minimum period of employment can help prevent new CDL operators from taking a higher-paying job as soon as they have earned their CDL. Conversely, as noted by area stakeholders there may be a need to acquire smaller vehicles, reducing the need for drivers with a CDL and possibly increasing the driver applicant pool.

- Transit agencies offer an advantage over transportation network companies (such as Lyft or Uber) not only with benefits but also by being a trusted employer. Transit agencies can have an advantage in recruiting efforts by emphasizing the agency's mission and the importance of the job to the community. However, adequate pay is needed for the job to be attractive. Transit agencies with full-time operator positions (at least 35 hours per week) are likely to have lower operator vacancy rates.

A possible resource to assist with recruiting and retaining vehicle operators is the Transit Workforce Development Technical Assistance Center (TWC). A program of FTA, the TWC provides a variety of publications, trainings, webinars, and materials to assist with these efforts. The Center can be access at https://www.transitworkforce.org.

Lower Priority

Establish a program to provide financial assistance for rides.

Stakeholders notes that there is a need to establish a program that will provide financial assistance for rides, especially with current fares as the current costs could be a deterrent for certain populations. For many populations, transportation may be a significant hurdle in finding gainful employment or moving forward towards financial independence. Finding a funding source that will allow for an established financial assistance program for rides will allow the agencies to reach more riders and possibly those with lower incomes.

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Expand outreach efforts and marketing to provide information on available transportation options, particularly public transit services that are open to the general public.

The lack of awareness of available transportation services was noted by area stakeholders, particularly services that are open to the general public. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to offset the perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. This strategy involves increased marketing of transportation services and options to counter any perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community.

Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs.

Area stakeholders noted that there is an opportunity to create better coordination and connectivity between the various transportation providers in the area. This strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility. A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to regional transportation services.

- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Develop additional partnerships to identify new funding opportunities.

This strategy involves identifying partnership opportunities to leverage additional funding to support public transit and other mobility options. It would include meeting multiple unmet needs and issues by tackling non-traditional sources of funding. Hospitals, supermarkets, and retailers who want the business of the region's riders may be willing to pay for part of the cost of transporting those riders to

their sites. This approach is applicable to both medical and retail establishments already served, as well as to new businesses. While this plan helps to document the need for these additional services, some may need to be further quantified. It might also be necessary to document unmet needs and gaps in service as part of educating potential funders and sponsors.

Local funding has often been an issue for rural and small urban transit systems. However, transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue. Many systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, transit systems in the region can explore the selling of sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program can help expand the service.

Winner Area

High Priorities

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most proposed strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Maintaining these services are vital to ensuring basic mobility in the region, though existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Agencies that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

Continued agency coordination for regional connectivity.

Area stakeholders noted that there is an opportunity to create better coordination and connectivity between the various transportation providers in the area, as well as continue current agency coordination. This strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility. A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to regional transportation services.

- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Medium Priorities

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing services and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable. Decrease unserved trips, including no-shows and cancellations.

The stakeholders discussed an opportunity to decrease unserved trips, including no-shows and cancellations. No-shows and cancellations cause disruptions in scheduling and trips, as well as causing possibilities for the drivers to be late to other pick-ups or drop-offs. Therefore, no-shows and cancellations can adversely affect the efficiency and effectiveness of service and significantly add to the cost of providing services. Not only do no-shows take a possible trip from another rider, but it also wastes money and resources.

Some of the strategies to tackle this issue include upgrading dispatching and scheduling software. The upgraded technology will allow for more streamlined scheduling. Other solutions include incentives, clearer rules, obvious penalties, and even incident analysis systems to address the key reasons for no shows. Another opportunity is to utilize upgraded technology to analyze top reasons for no-shows or cancellations, which will allow for enhanced rules.

Outreach and education from transit agencies to other community organizations.

Area stakeholders noted that there is a need to improve coordination between agencies and community organizations to ensure awareness of what other organizations are doing, and what services are available so to increase ridership. It was also noted that there is a need to continue education on current service options available to community organizations that will benefit their community. Therefore, there is a need for area transit agencies to enhance their coordination with community organizations, as well as educate their employees and community members on the current service options available to them and how to use the systems.

Lower Priorities

Establish a program to provide financial assistance for rides.

Stakeholders notes that there is a need to establish a program that will provide financial assistance for rides, especially with current fares as the current costs could be a deterrent for certain populations. For many populations, transportation may be a significant hurdle in finding gainful employment or moving forward towards financial independence. Finding a funding source that will allow for an established financial assistance program for rides will allow the agencies to reach more riders and possibly those with lower incomes.

Rapid City Region

Belle Fourche Area

High Priorities

Identify the potential costs and funding sources for increasing weekend hours on public transit services.

Many stakeholders noted a need for extended service hours, especially on weekends for both shopping and social events. In order to extend the service hours on the weekends, there is a need to identify the potential costs and funding sources. Extended services on the weekends means extra fuel for vehicles on the road, extra staff, etc. Therefore, some potential costs would include paying drivers for the new hours, running vehicles on another day, fuel, etc. While many agencies around the US are struggling with funding sources covering current costs and routes, there is a need for more funding or new funding to be able to extend hours on the weekends.

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most proposed strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Maintaining these services are vital to ensuring basic mobility in the region, though existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Agencies that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

Medium Priorities

Increase marketing efforts to ensure the community is aware of available services, with targeted outreach to students.

Throughout the coordinated transportation planning process, it was noted that there is a need for increased marketing efforts, especially for students. There may be a lack of awareness of available transportation services that are open to the general public, as well as to students. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to offset the perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. This strategy involves increased marketing of transportation services and options to counter any perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. Increased marketing to students includes utilizing brochures in schools, afterschool programs, libraries, etc., to better extend the knowledge of current transportation services available to them.

Conduct a survey process to obtain feedback from potential riders on their employment and other transportation needs.

Although it is important to continue to gain feedback from current riders, it is also imperative that agencies and local providers conduct a survey to obtain feedback from potential riders. Therefore, a routine survey should be conducted that can be provided to major employers, housing, etc. to obtain feedback from potential riders on their transportation needs. This survey process will allow agencies to better understand the future market and how to expand services or market current services to fit the needs of a larger population. Employment centers are a major area for this type of survey because it allows for future employment transportation needs, such as the use of a vanpool, microtransit, etc.

Lower Priorities

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing service and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Assess technology improvements that will provide customers with the ability to book trips online.

A major need that was identified by stakeholders was a need for upgraded scheduling technology for the customers. Therefore, there is a need to assess different types of technological improvements that could provide customers with the ability to book online, as well as over the phone. In order to do so, agencies may want to create a study to research a multitude of newer scheduling technology, such as though used by Uber/Lyft type providers.

This type of technological improvement will allow riders more convenience when utilizing current services. It also will reach a wider selection of riders, such as the younger generations, who may not desire calling in for a ride. Lastly, the technological scheduling upgrades will allow for easier transition for some types of services, such as microtransit programs.

Assess current fare structures and make modifications as needed to provide customers with more convenient methods to pay.

Stakeholders noted that there is a need to assess current fare structures, and therefore make modifications as needed to provide customers with more convenient methods of paying the fares. Although there will always be a requirement to maintain payment methods that fulfill ADA requirements, many younger riders would utilize newer technology payment options. New convenient methods could include an app that allows for credit cards, such as an Uber/Lyft app.

Each agency and local providers will need to assess their own current fare structures or create a forum that assesses all fare structures and determine whether there are any new payment methods that could create more convenience for their riders. However, it is imperative that the user be kept in mind, considering some new technological payment methods may be a weakness for certain populations.

Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize regional connectivity needs.

Area stakeholders noted that there is an opportunity to create better coordination and connectivity between the various transportation providers in the area. This strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility. A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to regional transportation services.

- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Work with local leaders to identify additional funding sources to support increasing expenses and enable transportation providers to maintain and expand mobility options in the area.

Coupled with the need to develop additional partnerships is a stronger advocacy campaign that highlights the impact public transportation has on residents of the region, and how they are vital components of the community transportation infrastructure. Regional stakeholders noted that ongoing educational efforts are needed to ensure local leaders and decision makers are aware of the impact of community transportation services and overall buy-in for the needs for these services.

This strategy involves a regional and unified effort to inform elected officials, local and national decision makers, and the general public of the need for additional funding to support current services. This advocacy campaign could be part of a national movement to stress the importance of community and public transit. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) have developed a variety of resources that can be used in advocacy efforts with local offices of House and Senate members, local media and state and local elected officials.

There can be specific advocacy to support service recommendations included in transit plans conducted in the area and region, noted in a later high priority strategy. While this coordinated transportation plan takes a broader review of mobility needs and options, a planning process conducted by transit systems is more detailed, and assesses current services, identifies unmet transit needs, and identifies specific service improvements and potential expansions. Therefore, there is an opportunity to work with local elected officials to discuss future transit options that will expand the mobility options in the area. This could include the use of a regional mobility manager, new funding sources, or increased transportation options.

Custer Area

High Priorities

Work with local leaders to identify additional funding sources to support increasing expenses and enable transportation providers to maintain and expand mobility options in the area.

Coupled with the need to develop additional partnerships is a stronger advocacy campaign that highlights the impact public transportation has on residents of the region, and how they are vital components of the community transportation infrastructure. Regional stakeholders noted that ongoing educational efforts are needed to ensure local leaders and decision makers are aware of the impact of community transportation services and overall buy-in for the needs for these services.

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Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing service and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most proposed strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Maintaining these services are vital to ensuring basic mobility in the region, though existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

- Operating Cost Per Hour
- Operating Cost Per Mile
- Operating Cost Per Passenger Trip
- Farebox Recovery
- Passenger Trips Per Mile
- Passenger Trips Per Hour

Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

Transportation provided through human service agencies is more specialized and therefore is not monitored through these performance measures. Agencies that would like to evaluate their transportation programs to ensure that financial resources are being used effectively can utilize *Transportation by the Numbers*, a resource available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). This tool provides human service organizations with ways to more easily identify expenses, revenues, and performance outcomes so that they can make more informed decisions about their future in the transportation business. This tool is available through the NADTC website at https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/transportation-by-the-numbers/.

Identify the potential costs and funding sources for increasing weekend hours on public transit services.

Many stakeholders noted a need for extended service hours, especially on weekends for both shopping and social events. In order to extend the service hours on the weekends, there is a need to identify the potential costs and funding sources. Extended services on the weekends means extra fuel for vehicles on the road, extra staff, etc. Therefore, some potential costs would include paying drivers for the new hours, running vehicles on another day, fuel, etc. While many agencies around the country are struggling with funding sources covering current costs and routes, there is a need for more funding or new funding to be able to extend hours on the weekends.

Form a regional coordinating committee to serve as an ongoing forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize area mobility needs.

Area stakeholders noted that there is an opportunity to create better coordination and connectivity between the various transportation providers in the area. This strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility. A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to transportation services, both locally and regionally.

- Review and discuss strategies for coordinating transportation services with adjacent regions.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Expand outreach efforts and marketing to provide information on available transportation options, particularly public transit services that are open to the general public.

The lack of awareness of available transportation services was noted by area stakeholders, particularly services that are open to the general public. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to offset the perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. This strategy involves increased marketing of transportation services and options to counter any perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community.

Medium Priorities

Capitalize on community support to develop additional partnerships and identify possible new funding opportunities.

This strategy involves identifying partnership opportunities to leverage additional funding to support public transit and other mobility options. It would include meeting multiple unmet needs and issues by tackling non-traditional sources of funding. Hospitals, supermarkets, and retailers who want the business of the region's riders may be willing to pay for part of the cost of transporting those riders to their sites. This approach is applicable to both medical and retail establishments already served, as well as to new businesses. While this plan helps to document the need for these additional services, some may need to be further quantified. It might also be necessary to document unmet needs and gaps in service as part of educating potential funders and sponsors.

Local funding has often been an issue for rural and small urban transit systems. However, transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue. Many systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, transit systems in the region can explore the selling of sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program can help expand the service.

Increase weekend services.

The stakeholders discussed the need to increase service hours, especially on the weekends. Church service is especially important on Sundays even if just once a month. Therefore, increasing or adding Sunday transportation services that would benefit this population would increase mobility within the area. Another stakeholder mentioned a need to extend service hours in Sturgess, as there is a higher demand in that town. Therefore, there is a need to increase weekend services and hours for a multitude of reasons, such as social events, faith-based events, shopping, medical appointments, etc.

Lower Priority

Assess current fare structures and make modifications as needed to provide customers with more convenient methods of pay.

Stakeholders noted that there is a need to assess current fare structures, and therefore make modifications as needed to provide customers with more convenient methods of paying the fares. Although there will always be a requirement to maintain payment methods that fulfill ADA requirements, many younger riders would utilize newer technology payment options. New convenient methods could include an app that allows for credit cards, such as an Uber/Lyft app.

Each agency and local provider will need to assess their own current fare structures or create a forum that assesses all fare structures and determine whether there are any new payment methods that could create more convenience for their riders. However, it is imperative that the user be kept in mind, considering some new technological payment methods may be a weakness for certain populations.

Rapid City Area

High Priorities

Expand transportation coordination efforts with local human services providers and medical facilities.

Stakeholders noted that there is a need for increased service options for medical transportation. This strategy involves identifying partnership opportunities with both local human services providers and medical facilities to build upon current coordination and connectivity efforts. It would include meeting multiple unmet needs and issues through coordination.

This strategy would support a more formalized communication between the local human service providers and medical facilities to better assist riders in reaching their medical appointments. Coordination between these providers could include fare assistance, schedule coordination, etc. Another opportunity would be to set aside specific hours for medical appointments, which would allow local human service providers to couple rides together for their patients.

Work with local elected officials to discuss opportunities to expand mobility options in the area.

Stakeholders noted that there is a need to expand transportation options for seniors and people with disabilities. It was also mentioned that there is a need for a transfer system that would remove the location barriers and allow for increased access to current transportation services. Therefore, there is an opportunity to work with local elected officials to discuss future transit options that will expand the mobility options in the area. This could include the use of a regional mobility manager, new funding sources, or increased transportation options.

Continue to support capital needs that help to maintain existing service and ensure vehicles are safe and appropriate for the need.

Maintaining and building upon current capital infrastructure is crucial to continuing or expanding mobility options, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Before the area can consider efforts for improving mobility for these population groups it is critical to ensure that the current foundation of services remains in place through a sufficient capital network. An aging vehicle fleet can be a potential barrier to improving transportation services.

This strategy involves the acquisition of replacement buses or vans, vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul, and other appropriate vehicle equipment improvements that support the current capital infrastructure in the region, especially for non-profit organizations that provide human services transportation. It is essential that current vehicles are maintained and remain safe and operable.

Identify the potential costs and funding sources for increasing weekend hours on public transit services.

Many stakeholders noted a need for extended service hours, especially on weekends for both shopping and social events. In order to extend the service hours on the weekends, there is a need to identify the potential costs and funding sources. Extended services on the weekends means extra fuel for vehicles on the road, extra staff, etc. Therefore, some potential costs would include paying drivers for the new hours, running vehicles on another day, fuel, etc. While many agencies around the US are struggling with funding sources covering current costs and routes, there is a need for more funding or new funding to be able to extend hours on the weekends.

Medium Priorities

Maintain services that are effectively meeting identified transportation needs in the region.

While most proposed strategies are designed to improve and expand mobility options in the area and region, it is vital to maintain services and infrastructure that are currently meeting transportation needs. Maintaining existing capital infrastructure is vital to meeting community transportation needs. Financial resources are also needed to operate vehicles and continue current services. There is also a need to continuously reassess existing services for efficiency and effectiveness, and operators must ensure their services continue to meet the region's mobility needs.

This strategy involves providing capital and operating funds to support existing public transit services and human services transportation that are effectively meeting mobility needs, especially those serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. Maintaining these services are vital to ensuring basic mobility in the region, though existing services can be monitored on an ongoing basis using typical industry performance standards that can serve as a tool to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, and include:

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Through this strategy, there would be continued support for public transit services operated in the region that are meeting these standards. It also allows for opportunities to identify existing services that are important to the community, but that could be improved through modifications or technical assistance. This strategy would also enable regional stakeholders to establish baselines to help determine if additional funding is warranted, and to consider modifications to previous industry metrics for measuring transit's full value in the region.

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Build upon current meetings with communities to maintain forum for discussions on coordination opportunities and to identify and prioritize mobility needs in the area.

Area stakeholders noted that there is an opportunity to create better coordination and connectivity between the various transportation providers in the area. This strategy supports a more formalized structure for these discussions to ensure a broad group of representatives are involved in discussions to improve and expand mobility. A potential coordinating committee would provide an ongoing forum for members to:

- Explore opportunities to improve coordination between public transit, private transportation, non-emergency medical transportation, and other human service transportation in the region.

- Discuss improved connections between existing transit providers.

- Assess and reduce barriers to transportation services, both locally and regionally.

- Explore new and ongoing funding opportunities.

- Facilitate updates of the coordinated transportation plan for the area.

Lower Priorities

Utilize veteran grant programs to provide free transportation services to Veterans.

Through the coordinated transportation planning process, stakeholders highlighted the need for better utilization of veteran grant programs in order to provide free transportation services to Veterans. There are a multitude of types of trips that Veterans need transportation services for, such as medical, social, etc. This strategy would require transit agencies and local providers to work together on possessing and utilizing the veteran grant programs to create a free transportation service for Veterans.

Assess current fare structures and make modifications as needed to provide customers with more convenient methods of paying.

Stakeholders noted that there is a need to assess current fare structures, and therefore make modifications as needed to provide customers with more convenient methods of paying the fares. Although there will always be a requirement to maintain payment methods that fulfill ADA requirements, many younger riders would utilize newer technology payment options. New convenient methods could include an app that allows for credit cards, such as an Uber/Lyft app.

Each agency and local provider will need to assess their own current fare structures or create a forum that assesses all fare structures and determine whether there are any new payment methods that could create more convenience for their riders. However, it is imperative that the user be kept in mind, considering some new technological payment methods may be a weakness for certain populations.

Increase marketing efforts, including outreach to students.

Throughout the coordinated transportation planning process, it was noted that there is a need for increased marketing efforts, especially for students. There may be a lack of awareness of available transportation services that are open to the general public, as well as to students. While services designed to meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes are essential, there is a need for effective marketing efforts to offset the perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. This strategy involves increased marketing of transportation services and options to counter any perception that public transit services are only available for specific populations and not open to everyone in the community. Increased marketing to students includes utilizing brochures in schools, afterschool programs, libraries, etc. to better extend the knowledge of current transportation services available to them.

Chapter 7
Adoption Process

As discussed in the Background section, this statewide coordinated transportation plan is designed to meet federal coordinated transportation planning requirements. The guidelines in these requirements state that the lead agency in consultation with planning participants should identify the process for approving and adopting the plan.

Stakeholders at the state and local levels who participated in the development of this plan had the opportunity to:

- Provide their input on transportation needs in the area, particularly for older adults and people with disabilities.

- Identify potential strategies, activities, and projects address gaps between current services and needs.

- Prioritize strategies identified as the most appropriate for improving mobility in the area.

Through the next phase of the planning process, the technical oversight panel will have the opportunity to review and comment on this statewide plan. Their input will be incorporated into a version to be presented to the South Dakota Transportation Commission.

Appendix A
Area Workshop Presentation
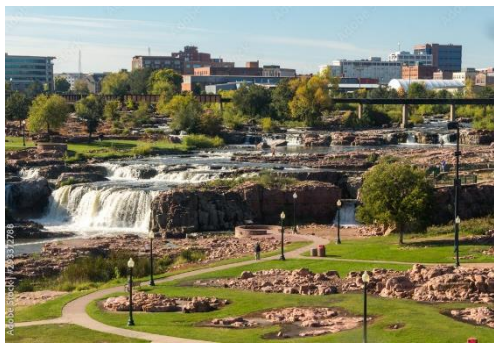
South Dakota Statewide Coordinated Public Transit – Human Service Transportation Plan

KFH Group, Inc.
And
Olsson

Welcome!

- South Dakota Department of Transportation

- Corinne Donahue, Olsson

- KFH Group

Some Housekeeping

- **Thank you for taking the time to attend today's workshop!**
- For online participants:
  - Please mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
  - Use the "Camera" button if you would like us to see you.
  - While we'll provide an opportunity for everyone to participate, raise your hand or use the chat box to be recognized.
  - Today's focus group will be recorded to help with note taking and documenting results from our discussion.

SD
DOT

Agenda

- Introductions
  - Agency/Organization you represent?
  - Interest/Connection to Transportation?
  - How do your clients use public or specialized transit?

- Why do the Plan?
  - Required for Funding
  - Understand Needs, Available Services – Gaps/Barriers
  - Opportunity to learn about services and communicate

- Discuss next steps.

Why do the Coordinated Transportation Plan

- Required for funding through the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program administered by SDDOT.

- Required elements:
  - Assess available current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit).
  - Assess transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and older adults.
 - Identify Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the gaps
  - Discuss Priorities for implementation based on resources.

Planning Process

- Incorporate and build upon previous coordinated plans that were based on transit service areas.

- Develop regional/area plans that encompass all of South Dakota.

- Opportunity for regional stakeholders to work together on mobility issues and potential improvements, and to look beyond coordinated planning requirements.

SDDOT Regions and Areas
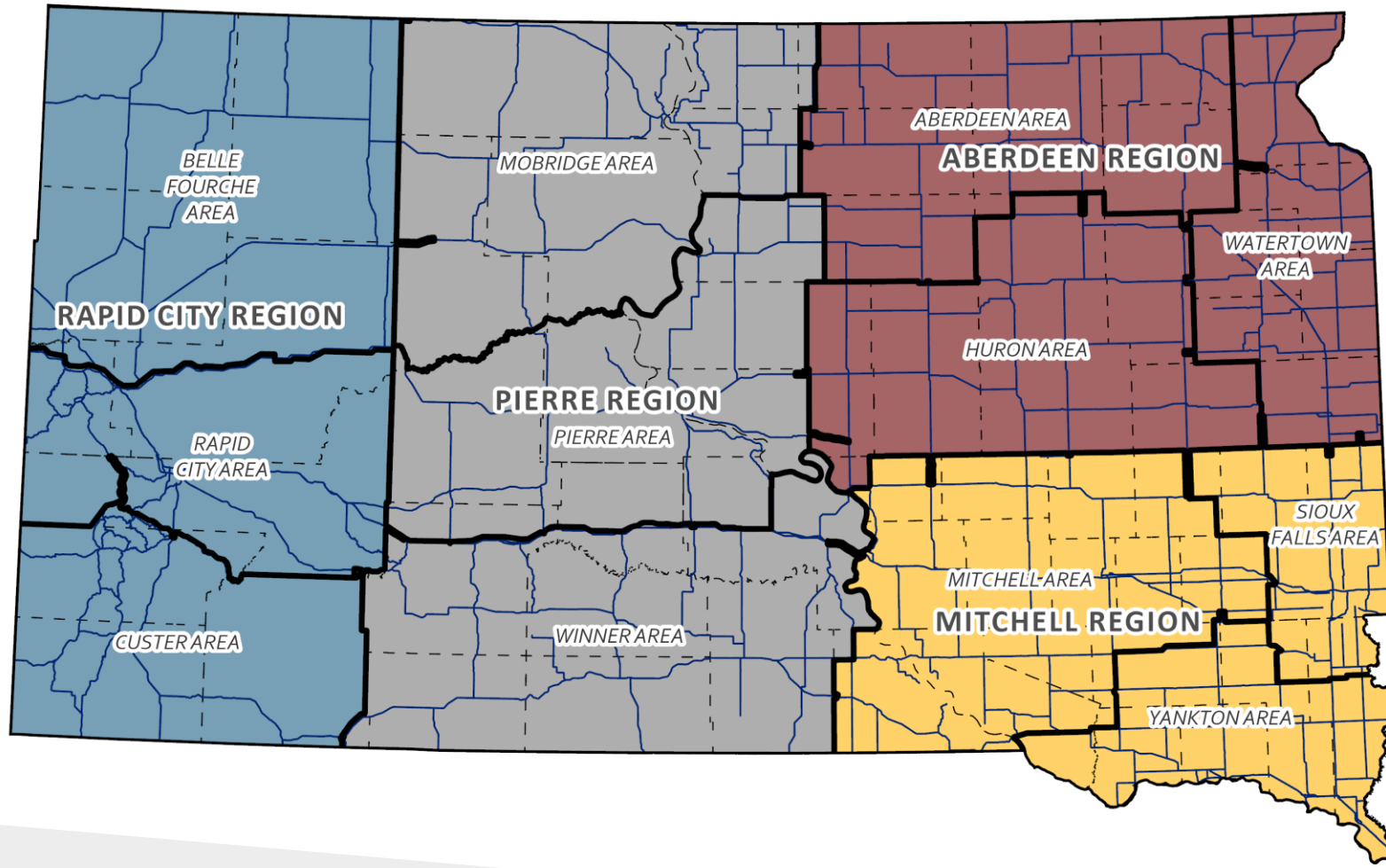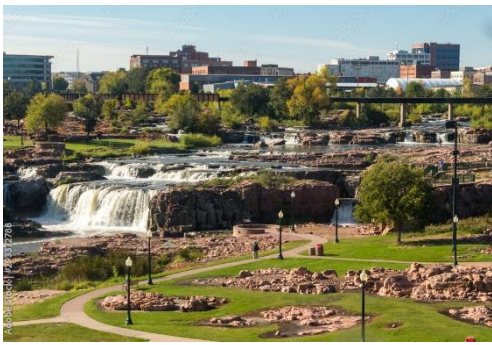
Transportation Needs and Challenges

SD DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Yankton Transit Plan - Needs

- Limited funding for public transit and social services.
- Need a fundraising strategy to obtain additional funds.
- Driver shortage.
- Expanded service hours.
- Employment transportation.
- Continue to improve the image of Yankton Transit.

Vermillion Transit Plan - Needs

- Transportation for employment and shopping.

- Service for lower income families.

- Lower financial costs.

ROCS Transit Plan - Needs

- Lack of funds for vehicle maintenance.

- Lack of vehicles equipped with wheelchair lifts.

- Finding part-time drivers.

- Lack of service in rural areas.

- Lack of affordable transportation.

- Coordination with tribes in the ROCS service area.

Additional Needs or Issues

- Expanded or improved transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities?

- Regional transportation gaps?

- Greater coordination opportunities?

- Other operational challenges?

- Other funding opportunities?

- Others?
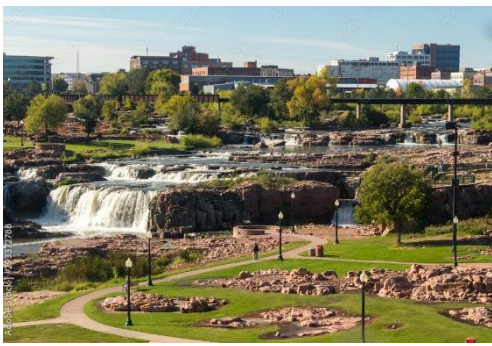
Transportation Resources
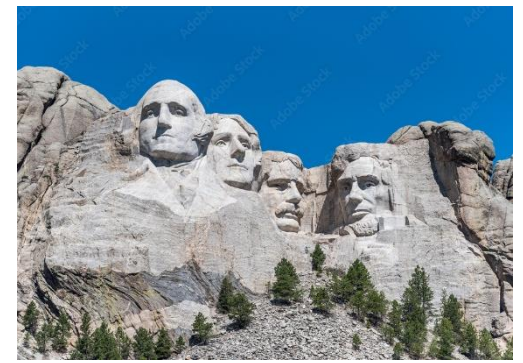
Yankton Transit Plan - Resources

- Yankton Transit
- Ability Building Services (Yankton Transit)
- Autumn Winds Nursing Home
- Avera Sacred Heart's Majestic Bluffs
- Lewis and Clark Behavioral Health Services
- South Dakota Head Start Association
- The Center – Yankton Area Senior Citizens Center

Vermillion Transit Plan - Resources

- Vermillion Public Transit

- Jefferson Bus Lines

- Vermillion School District

- Julie E. Nylen Cancer Center

- Sanford Care Center

- SESDAC,Inc.

- Head Start
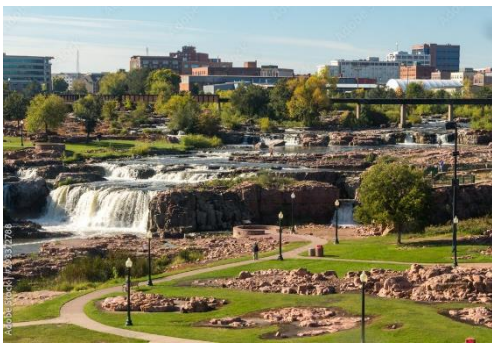
- Clay County Veterans Resource

ROCS Transit Plan - Resources

- ROCS Transit

- Bon Homme County: B-J School Buses, Incorporated

- Charles Mix County: Yankton Sioux Tribe Transit
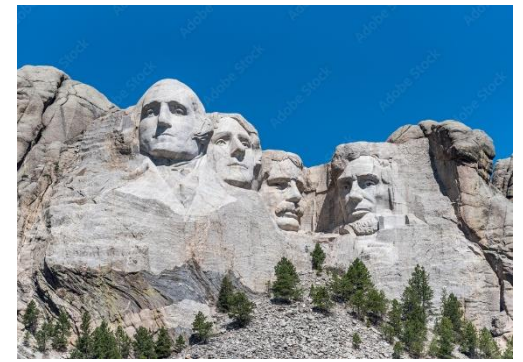
- Veterans Resource

Who are we Missing - Transportation Resources

- Other human services transportation providers?

- Additional private providers?

- Volunteer driver programs?

Potential Strategies, Activities, and/or Projects

Yankton Transit Plan - Strategies

- Secure funding necessary to maintain core services.

- Maintain use of Section 5310 funds used for vehicle maintenance.

- Identify other funding sources.

- Improve coordination of services.

- Expand hours of operation.

- Others? Particularly any beyond public transit services?

Vermillion Transit Plan - Strategies

- Maintain current level of service.

- Keep vehicles in state of good repair.

- Diversify VPT funding streams.

- Work with Horizon Health Care to support medical trips.

- Increase coordination with Yankton Transit.

- Improve dispatch services.

- Others? Particularly any beyond public transit services?

ROCS Transit Plan - Strategies

- Sustain mobility services.

- Increase access through coordination.

- Increase utilization of mobility services.

- Increase mobility services.

- Others? Particularly any beyond public transit services?
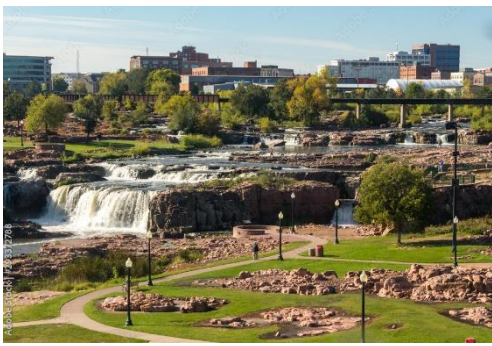
Wrap Up
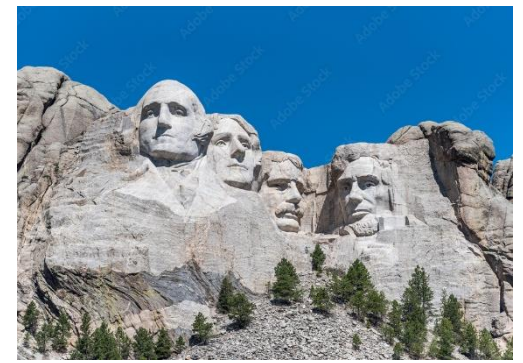
Next Steps

- Your input will be incorporated into appropriate plan sections.

- We'll provide you with opportunity to provide your thoughts on priorities through a survey process.

- Ultimately, you'll have the opportunity to review and provide comments on a draft plan for the region.

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Thank YOU!