



RAPID CITY AREA

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Coordinated Public Transit

# Human Services Transportation Plan

March 2019





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

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## COORDINATED PLANNING

Presidential Executive Order 13330 on the Coordination of Human Service Programs issued by the president on February 24, 2004, created an interdepartmental Federal Council on Access and Mobility to undertake collective and individual departmental actions to reduce duplication among federally funded human service transportation services, increase the efficient delivery of such services, and expand transportation access for older individuals, people with disabilities, people with low income, children, and other disadvantaged populations within their own communities.



In 2006, the Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) established an executive order stating that agencies involved in the coordination or delivery of transportation services are required to produce a coordinated public transit human service plan. That executive order was carried over to the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21) in 2012, and subsequently the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act in 2015. Additionally, federal transit law requires that projects selected to receive funding under the Enhanced Mobility for Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) Program are "included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan," and that the plan be "developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of the public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human service providers and other members of the public" utilizing transportation services.

## PLAN DESCRIPTION

The Rapid City Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (RCAMPO) is the lead agency for the region's Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan ("Coordinated Plan"). The plan is a unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of marginalized and special needs populations, lays out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizes services for these target populations.

Every five years, RCAMPO is required to prepare an updated Coordinated Plan to meet federal requirements for documenting approaches and funding coordinated services to address transportation barriers specific to populations of concern: those of limited income status, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.

### Plan Objectives

Part of the obligation of RCAMPO in preparing a Coordinated Plan is to ensure that projects funded through the Section 5310 Formula Program are derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. In accordance with federal requirements, the Coordinated Plan serves as a "unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery" that identifies the transportation needs of the target populations, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing service solutions.

Updating the Coordinated Plan also provides an opportunity to envision how the strengths of existing transportation providers can be coordinated to build a more efficient regional network of services that work together to provide effective mobility options to the residents, employers, medical providers, and human service agencies.

Funds are relatively limited for public transportation in general; therefore it is always important for public transit providers and their partners to make strategic, targeted investments that address critical needs. The intent of the Coordinated Plan is for it to be a living document identifying needs and investment priorities. Transit providers in the Rapid City region will use the plan to allocate funding and, along with local partners, will use the plan to develop and enhance transit services.

### Plan Process

The coordinated planning process, while prescriptive, does allow room for each individual region to determine strategies, or recommendations, that are best suited to improving overall coordination in the respective region. In general, however, the coordinated planning process consists of the following steps:

- **Assessment of transportation needs** for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited income
- **Inventory of available services** that identifies areas of redundant service and gaps in service
- **Strategies** to address identified gaps in service
- Identification of **coordination actions to eliminate or reduce duplication** in services and strategies for more efficient utilization of resources
- **Prioritization** of implementation strategies

## BACKGROUND

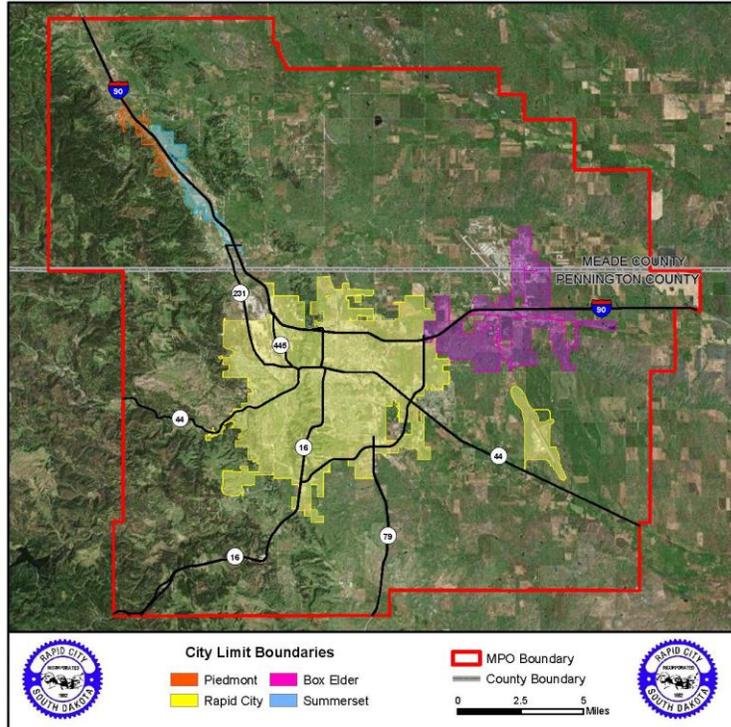
### About the Rapid City Region

The Rapid City Area MPO is located in Meade and Pennington Counties, and includes the City of Rapid City, as well as the smaller cities of Box Elder, Piedmont, and Summerset. The U.S. Census estimates the current population of Rapid City is approximately 74,000, with the full population of Meade County at 27,700 and Pennington County at 109,000.

Nearly 10% of Meade County's and 15% of Pennington County's residents are living in poverty based on U.S. Census data, suggesting a sizeable population may be reliant on transportation services provided by public and human service providers.

Approximately 15% of Meade County residents are age 65 or older (in 2015), and this number is expected to increase to 24% by 2030, according to the South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation; Pennington County's population of residents 65 and older is expected to increase from 16% to 23% by 2030.

Because the focus of the Coordinated Plan also includes people with disabilities, estimated at 10,600 in the Rapid City Area, demographic changes alone suggest there will be a critical need for additional transportation services. A shift in medical services, new employment centers, new technologies, and future developments also will likely impact how people demand transportation.



## 2 TRANSIT FUNDING IN RAPID CITY

The 2015 update to the Rapid City Long Range Transportation Plan provides an analysis of the financial conditions of the transportation system, as well as its review of potential funding sources and opportunities for transportation projects in the region. Secured and anticipated financial resources for public transit operations and capital expenditures are estimated to total nearly \$75 million between 2016 and 2040. This includes estimates of over \$18 million for operations expenditures and over \$7 million for capital expenditures between 2016 and 2025. A full breakdown of estimated financial resources can be found in Figure 2-1. A list of identified federal, state, and local funding programs that are or can be used to fund transportation projects in the area is found in Figure 2-2.

**Figure 2-1 Public Transit Resources**

Program/Source	2016–2020	2021–2025	2026–2030	2031–2035	2036–2040	Total
<b>Operations</b>						
<b>FTA Funds</b>	\$4,620,000	\$5,106,000	\$5,643,000	\$6,237,000	\$6,893,000	\$28,499,000
<b>State Funds</b>	\$147,000	\$163,000	\$180,000	\$199,000	\$220,000	\$909,000
<b>Local Funds</b>	\$3,958,000	\$4,374,000	\$4,834,000	\$5,343,000	\$5,905,000	\$24,414,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,725,000</b>	<b>\$9,643,000</b>	<b>\$10,657,000</b>	<b>\$11,779,000</b>	<b>\$13,018,000</b>	<b>\$53,822,000</b>
<b>Capital</b>						
<b>FTA Funds</b>	\$3,048,000	\$3,375,000	\$3,731,000	\$4,122,000	\$4,556,000	\$18,832,000
<b>State Funds</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Local Funds</b>	\$457,000	\$505,000	\$559,000	\$617,000	\$682,000	\$2,820,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,505,000</b>	<b>\$3,880,000</b>	<b>\$4,290,000</b>	<b>\$4,739,000</b>	<b>\$5,238,000</b>	<b>\$21,652,000</b>

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**Figure 2-2 Funding Programs and Descriptions**

Type	Program
<b>Programs Receiving FHWA and/or State Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interstate Highway</li> <li>▪ State Highway System</li> <li>▪ Railroad Crossing Improvements</li> <li>▪ Pavement Preservation</li> <li>▪ National Highway Performance Program</li> <li>▪ Program Surface Transportation Program</li> <li>▪ Highway Safety Program</li> <li>▪ Performance Program</li> <li>▪ Transportation Alternative Program</li> </ul>
<b>Programs Receiving FHWA and/or State Funding (Member Agencies)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ STBGP Exchange</li> <li>▪ Bridge Improvement Grant Program</li> <li>▪ Transportation Alternatives Program</li> <li>▪ Highway Safety Improvement Program</li> <li>▪ Railroad Crossing Improvements</li> </ul>
<b>Local Funding Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rapid City Capital Improvement Program</li> <li>▪ Box Elder Capital Improvement Program</li> <li>▪ Pennington County Road and Bridge</li> <li>▪ Meade County Road and Bridge</li> </ul>
<b>Federal Transit Administration (FTA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ FTA 5307</li> <li>▪ FTA 5310</li> <li>▪ FTA 5311</li> <li>▪ FTA 5339</li> </ul>

## FEDERAL FUNDS FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT

Federal funding for public transit comes primarily through the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT). Funding for the U.S. DOT is authorized by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the first federal transportation authorization in over a decade to fund federal surface transportation programs through 2020. The FAST Act was signed into law in December 2015, and provides \$305 billion in funding over fiscal years 2016 through 2020



for the U.S. DOT and its subsidiary agencies, including the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The following discussion of funding for public transit is based on the provisions of the FAST Act effective through September 2020. The FTA allocates funding for transit systems in urbanized and rural areas and for programs for older adults and individuals with disabilities. The FTA allocates funds based on formulas or discretionary awards. Ten FTA funding programs are apportioned to urbanized areas or states by specific formula. Eight FTA programs are based on discretionary funding. In addition to FTA grant programs, the FHWA administers programs that provide the flexibility to transfer funds to the FTA for transit projects.

### FTA Formula Funds

Of the ten FTA funding programs that are allocated by formula, the FTA allocates funds to nine programs based on formulas that include population and land area as criteria.<sup>1</sup> The FTA allocates formula funds according to classification of an area as rural or urbanized.

All areas are defined as either urbanized or non-urbanized based on population and population density. The Census Bureau designates urbanized areas based on the most recent decennial census. While the U.S. DOT has no direct role in the designation of these areas, they are critical to the administration of FTA and FHWA transportation programs. Urbanized Areas (UZAs) are important to the designation of a metropolitan planning organization and application of metropolitan planning requirements, designation of transportation management areas, application of air quality conformity requirements, and allocation of funding.

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<sup>1</sup> The formula program that does not use population or land area as criteria is Section 5309 Fixed Guideway Modernization.

Under current definitions, the Census Bureau delineates UZAs according to population densities of census blocks and block groups and their proximity to an urban core – with the sum of the population for these geographic units equaling 50,000 people or more. Similarly, urban areas of less than 50,000 people are designated as urban clusters (UCs). For the purposes of transit funding, all UZAs are considered “urbanized” while all areas outside of UZAs (including UCs) are considered “non-urbanized.” For FTA funding allocations, the FTA designates UZAs further in three groups according to population: small urban areas with population 50,000 to 199,999, large urban areas with population 200,000 to 999,999, and very large urban areas with a population 1 million and over. Funding formula allocation and restrictions on the use of funds differ by the size of the UZA according to these three groups.

The following list of sections from the FAST Act identifies the formula funding category and the basis for formula apportionments.

### **Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program**

The largest FTA funding program is the Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program. Section 5307 authorizes federal, capital and, in some cases, operating assistance for transit in UZAs. The FTA apportions Section 5307 funds based on legislative formulas. Different formulas apply to UZAs with a population of less than 200,000 (small UZA or small urban area) and to UZAs with a population of 200,000 or more (large UZA or large urban area). The FTA allocates to UZAs with a population 1 million or more (very large UZA or very large urban area) based on the same formula as large UZAs.

For the small UZAs with a population less than 200,000, the FTA bases the formula solely on population and population density. The FTA sets aside 1% of Section 5307 funds for Small Transit Intensive Cities. The FTA apportions these funds to UZAs with a population less than 200,000 that operate at a level of service equal to or above the industry average level of service for all UZAs with a population of at least 200,000 but not more than 999,999. The FTA allocates the funds based on level of service and performance in one or more of six categories: passenger miles per vehicle revenue mile, passenger miles per vehicle revenue hour, vehicle revenue miles per capita, vehicle revenue hours per capita, passenger miles per capita, and passenger trips per capita.

For UZAs with a population less than 200,000, the FTA apportions Section 5307 funds to the governor of each state for distribution. The governor or designee may determine the suballocation of funds among the small UZAs or elect to obligate the funds in the amounts based on the legislative formula.

Eligible purposes for use of Section 5307 funds include planning, engineering design, and evaluation of transit projects and other technical transportation-related studies; capital investments in bus and bus-related activities such as replacement of buses, overhaul of buses, rebuilding of buses, crime prevention and security equipment, and construction of maintenance and passenger facilities; and capital investments in new and existing fixed guideway systems including rolling stock, overhaul and rebuilding of vehicles, track, signals, communications, and computer hardware and software. All preventive maintenance and

some Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit service costs qualify as capital costs. For most projects, up to 80% of project cost may use federal funds. The federal contribution may be 90% for some projects that support the ADA or the Clean Air Act.

Small UZAs with a population of less than 200,000 may also use Section 5307 funds for operating assistance up to 50% of the operating deficit (operating expenses less fare revenue). For UZAs with populations of 200,000 or more, operating assistance is not an eligible expense. The FTA provides UZAs that reach or exceed the 200,000 population threshold for the first time after the most recent decennial census a transition period of several years to eliminate the use of Section 5307 funds for operating assistance.

In urban areas with a population 200,000 or more, at least 1% of the funding apportioned to each area must be used for transit enhancement activities such as historic preservation, landscaping, public art, pedestrian access, bicycle access, and enhanced access for people with disabilities.

### **Section 5309 Capital Program – Fixed Guideway Modernization**

Funds for the Capital Investment Program – Fixed Guideway Modernization must be used for capital projects to maintain, modernize, or improve fixed guideway systems. A “fixed guideway” refers to any transit service that uses exclusive or controlled rights-of-way or rails, entirely or in part. The term includes heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, monorail, trolleybus, aerial tramway, inclined plane, cable car, automated guideway transit, ferryboats, that portion of motor bus service operated on exclusive or controlled rights-of-way, and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. Eligible UZAs are those with a population of 200,000 or more with fixed guideway systems that are at least seven years old. There is a threshold requirement for a minimum of one mile of fixed guideway. Eligible applicants are the public transit agencies in those urbanized areas to which the funds are allocated.

Funds are allocated by a statutory formula to UZAs with fixed guideway systems that have been in operation for at least seven years. The formula for allocating funds for this program contains seven tiers. The apportionment of funding for certain areas is specified in law. For other urbanized areas, funding is apportioned based on the latest available data on route miles and revenue vehicle miles on fixed guideway segments at least seven years old.

### **Section 5340 Growing States and High-Density States Formula Program**

The FTA also apportions funds based upon Section 5340 Growing States and High-Density States formula factors. Under the Section 5340 formula, the FTA makes available half of the funds under the Growing States factors and apportions based on state population forecasts for 15 years beyond the most recent decennial census. The FTA then allocates amounts apportioned for each state to urbanized and rural areas based on the state’s urban/rural population ratio. The High-Density States factors distribute the other half of the funds to states with population densities greater than 370 people per square mile. The FTA apportions these funds only to UZAs within those states.

### **Section 5311 Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program**

The Section 5311 Non-Urbanized Area (rural) program provides formula funding to states for the purpose of supporting public transit in rural areas with a population of less than 50,000. The FTA bases 80% of the statutory formula on the rural population of the states and 20% of the formula on land area. No state may receive more than 5% of the amount apportioned for land area. In addition, the FTA adds amounts apportioned according to the Growing States formula factors to rural areas. Each state prepares an annual program of projects, which must provide for fair and equitable distribution of funds within the state and must provide for maximum feasible coordination with transportation services assisted by other federal sources.

Funds may be used for capital, operating, and administrative assistance to state agencies, local public bodies, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transit services. The maximum federal share for capital and project administration is 80%. Projects to meet the requirements of the ADA, the Clean Air Act, or bicycle access projects may be funded at 90% federal contribution. The maximum FTA contribution for operating assistance is 50% of the net operating costs. State or local funding sources may provide the local share.

The FTA makes available 15% of the Section 5311 funds in each state for improvement of intercity bus services, also known as the Section 5311(f) program. The funds are to be used for planning, infrastructure, and operating needs related to the linkage of cities through intercity bus carriers unless the chief executive officer of the state certifies that the intercity bus service needs of the state are being met adequately. If all funds are not obligated to intercity bus improvements, the funds may revert to the general Section 5311 program for public transit in rural areas.

### **Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program**

Section 5310 provides formula funding to states for the purpose of meeting the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. The FTA apportions \$125,000 to each state and then apportions the balance based on each state's share of population for these groups of people.

Capital projects are eligible for funding. Most funds are used to purchase vehicles or to provide preventive maintenance for transit fleets; but acquisition of transportation services under contract, lease, or other arrangements, and state program administration are also eligible expenses. The maximum federal share is 80%. State or local funding sources may provide the local share.

### **Section 5303 Metropolitan Transportation Planning**

Congress appropriates federal funding to support a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive planning program for transportation investment decision making at the metropolitan area level. State departments of transportation are direct recipients of funds, which are then allocated by formula for planning activities.

The FTA allocates 80% of funds to states as a basic allocation according to each state's UZA population for the most recent decennial census. The FTA provides the remaining 20% to states as a supplemental allocation based on an FTA administrative formula to address planning needs in the larger, more complex UZAs. Generally, funds require a 20% local match, although FTA planning funds can be awarded as a consolidated planning grant with the FHWA, which permits a 10% local match. South Dakota does transfer 5303 funding to FHWA to create a consolidated grant. The sliding scale used to determine allocation is 81.95 Federal; 18.05 local match.

### Section 5304 Statewide Transportation Planning

The Section 5304 program provides financial assistance to states for statewide transportation planning and other technical assistance activities (including supplementing the technical assistance program provided through the Section 5303 Metropolitan Transportation Planning program). The FTA apportions the funds to states by a statutory formula that is based on each state's UZA population as compared to the UZA population of all states according to the most recent decennial census.

### Section 5311(b) (3) Rural Transit Assistance Program

The Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) provides funding to assist in the design and implementation of training and technical assistance projects, research, and other support services tailored to meet the needs of transit operators in non-urbanized areas. The FTA allocates \$65,000 to each state and then allocates the balance of funds to each state based on an administrative formula using the non-urbanized population according to the most recent decennial census.

## FTA DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

### Section 5309 Capital Program – Bus and Bus Facility

Funds for the Capital Investment Program (49 U.S.C. 5309) – Bus and Bus Facilities provides capital assistance for new and replacement buses and related equipment and facilities. Eligible capital projects include the purchase of buses for fleet and service expansion, bus maintenance and administrative facilities, transfer facilities, bus malls, transportation centers, intermodal terminals, park-and-ride stations, acquisition of



replacement vehicles, bus rebuilds, bus preventive maintenance, passenger amenities such as passenger shelters and bus stop signs, and accessory and miscellaneous equipment such as

mobile radio units, supervisory vehicles, fare boxes, computers and shop and garage equipment.

Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facility funds are allocated on a discretionary basis. Eligible recipients for capital investment funds are public bodies and agencies (transit authorities and other state and local public bodies and agencies thereof) including states, municipalities, other political subdivisions of states; public agencies and agencies comprised of one or more states; and certain public corporations, boards, and commissions established under state law. Prior to SAFETEA-LU, private nonprofit entities could receive FTA funds only if they were selected by a public authority through a competitive process, and private operators were not eligible sub-recipients. Under the FAST Act, private companies engaged in public transportation and private nonprofit organizations are eligible sub-recipients of FTA grants.

Private operators may now receive FTA funds as a pass-through without competition if they are included in a program of projects submitted by the designated public authority acting as the direct recipient of a grant.

The FTA has the discretion to allocate funds, although Congress often fully earmarks all available funding. The maximum federal share for a discretionary grant is 80%, although recent FTA practice is to award funds that represent a lower federal share and higher state and local contribution.

### Clean Fuels Grant Program

In 1998, TEA-21 established the Clean Fuels Grant Program. The program was developed to assist non- attainment and maintenance areas in achieving or maintaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone and carbon monoxide (CO). Additionally, the program supports emerging clean fuel and advanced propulsion technologies for transit buses and markets for those technologies.



Although the program was authorized as a formula grant program from its inception, Congress did not fund the program in annual appropriations. SAFETEA-LU changed the grant program from a formula-based program to a discretionary grant program (49 U.S.C. 5308). The program, however, retains its initial purpose.

The Clean Fuels Grant Program is available to an entity designated to receive federal urbanized formula funds under Section 5307, in accordance with the applicable metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes. SAFETEA-LU amended the term "recipient" to

now include smaller urbanized areas with populations of less than 200,000. All recipients must meet one of the following criteria: (1) be designated as an ozone or CO non-attainment area or (2) be designated as a maintenance area for ozone or CO.

Eligible activities include purchasing or leasing clean fuel buses and constructing new or improving existing facilities to accommodate clean fuel buses. The federal share for eligible activities undertaken for the purpose of complying with or maintaining compliance with the Clean Air Act under this program is limited to 90% of the net (incremental) cost of the activity. The FTA administrator may exercise discretion and determine the percent of the federal share for eligible activities to be less than 90%. Funding for clean diesel buses is limited to not more than 25% of the amount made available each fiscal year to carry out the program.

### **5320 Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands**

The Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands program is administered by the FTA in partnership with the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. The program funds capital and planning expenses for alternative transportation systems such as buses and trams in federally managed parks and public lands.

### **5339 Alternatives Analysis**

The Alternatives Analysis Program provides grants to states, authorities of states, MPOs, and local government authorities to develop studies as part of the transportation planning process. These studies include assessments of a wide range of public transportation alternatives designed to address a transportation problem in a corridor or subarea. The federal share may not exceed 80% of the cost of the activity.

### **5311(c) (1) Public Transportation on Indian Reservation Program**

The FTA refers to 5311(c) (1) as the Tribal Transit Program. The funds are drawn from the Section 5311 Non-urbanized Area Program. The funds are to be apportioned for grants to Indian tribes for any purpose eligible under Section 5311, which includes capital, operating, planning, and administrative assistance for rural public transit services and rural intercity bus service. The funds are not meant to replace or reduce funds that Indian tribes receive through the Section 5311 program but are to be used to enhance public transportation on Indian reservations and transit serving tribal communities.

### **Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility Program**

The Over-the-Road Bus (OTRB) Accessibility Program was authorized under TEA-21 and amended by SAFETEA-LU. OTRBs are used in intercity fixed-route service as well as other services, such as commuter, charter, and tour bus services. The OTRB Accessibility Program is intended to assist OTRB operators in complying with the OTRB accessibility regulation, "Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities" (49 CFR Part 37, Subpart H).

Capital projects eligible for funding include adding lifts and other accessibility components to new vehicle purchases and purchasing lifts and associated components to retrofit existing

vehicles. Eligible training costs include developing training materials or providing training for local providers of over-the-road bus services. This funding is provided on a national competitive basis. The federal share is 90%, and the local share is 10%. Funding is available to private operators of over-the-road buses.

## FTA Competitive Funds

### Access and Mobility Partnership Grants

In September 2018, the FTA announced the availability of \$6.3 million in grant funding for capital projects that enhance mobility and access for coordinated transportation projects that improve access to healthcare opportunities; the purpose of the funding being to bridge the gap for individuals with limited transportation options and to spur further coordination between transportation and healthcare providers. Under the initiative,



there are two funding opportunities for 2018, including the Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM) Pilot Program, and the Human Services Coordination Research (HSCR) grants. The ICAM Pilot Program is designed with a maximum federal funding share of 80%, with 20% of funds from local match. Competitive projects under the HSCR program have a maximum federal share of capital costs at 80% and 50% of operating costs, with the remainder being local match.

Eligible activities under the ICAM Pilot Program include capital projects that improve the coordination of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) services. Activities under HSCR include innovative strategies to provide more effective and efficient transportation services for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and those with low incomes.

### Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Grants Program (formerly TIGER)

The BUILD grants program is the U.S. DOT's answer to what was formerly known as TIGER grants, established by The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018. The Act appropriated \$1.5 billion for BUILD transportation grants, with any one maximum award being \$25 million for a single project. There is a \$5 million minimum for urban projects, and a \$1 million minimum for rural projects. The BUILD program funds investments in transportation infrastructure, including transit, that contribute to America's energy independence. The FTA is the administering agency for BUILD projects that directly impact public transportation.

### Low- or No-Emission Vehicle Program (5339)c

The Low- or No-Emission program (also known as Lo/No) provides funding for the purchase or lease of low- and zero-emission transit vehicles for state and local government authorities. Funding is also available for the acquisition, construction, and leasing of facilities needed to support the vehicles. Through the FAST Act, \$55 million per year is available through 2020.

### Public Transportation on Indian Reservations Program; Tribal Transit Program 5311(j)

The Tribal Transit Program (TTP) continues to be a set-aside from the FTA's Formula Grants for Rural Areas program, but currently consists of \$30 million in formula grants and \$5 million in competitive grants. A 10% local match is still required under the formula program. The TTP grants are funded through Section 5311(j) of the FAST Act, authorizing public transportation on Indian Reservations for fiscal years 2016-2020. Tribes that are federally recognized may apply for the funding, which can be used for capital, operating, planning, and administrative expenses related to public transit projects that meet the needs of rural tribal communities.

## OTHER MAJOR SOURCES OF FEDERAL FUNDING FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT

In addition to FTA grant programs, there are other sources of funding for transit from a variety of federal agencies. In most cases other sources of funding for transit are available only to the extent that transportation is supportive of the primary purpose of the federal agency. However, the FHWA does administer programs that provide the flexibility to transfer funds to the FTA for transit projects. Two programs are highlighted below.



### Surface Transportation Block Grant Program

The Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) provides the greatest flexibility in the use of funds. These funds may be used (as capital funding) for public transit capital improvements, carpool and vanpool projects, fringe and corridor parking facilities, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and intercity or intracity bus terminals and bus facilities. As funding for planning, these funds can be used for surface transportation planning activities, wetland mitigation, transit research and development, and environmental analysis. Other eligible projects under STBG include transit safety improvements and most transportation control measures.

STBG funds are distributed among various population and programmatic categories within a state. Some program funds are made available to metropolitan planning areas containing urbanized areas over 200,000 population; STBGP funds are also set aside to areas with a

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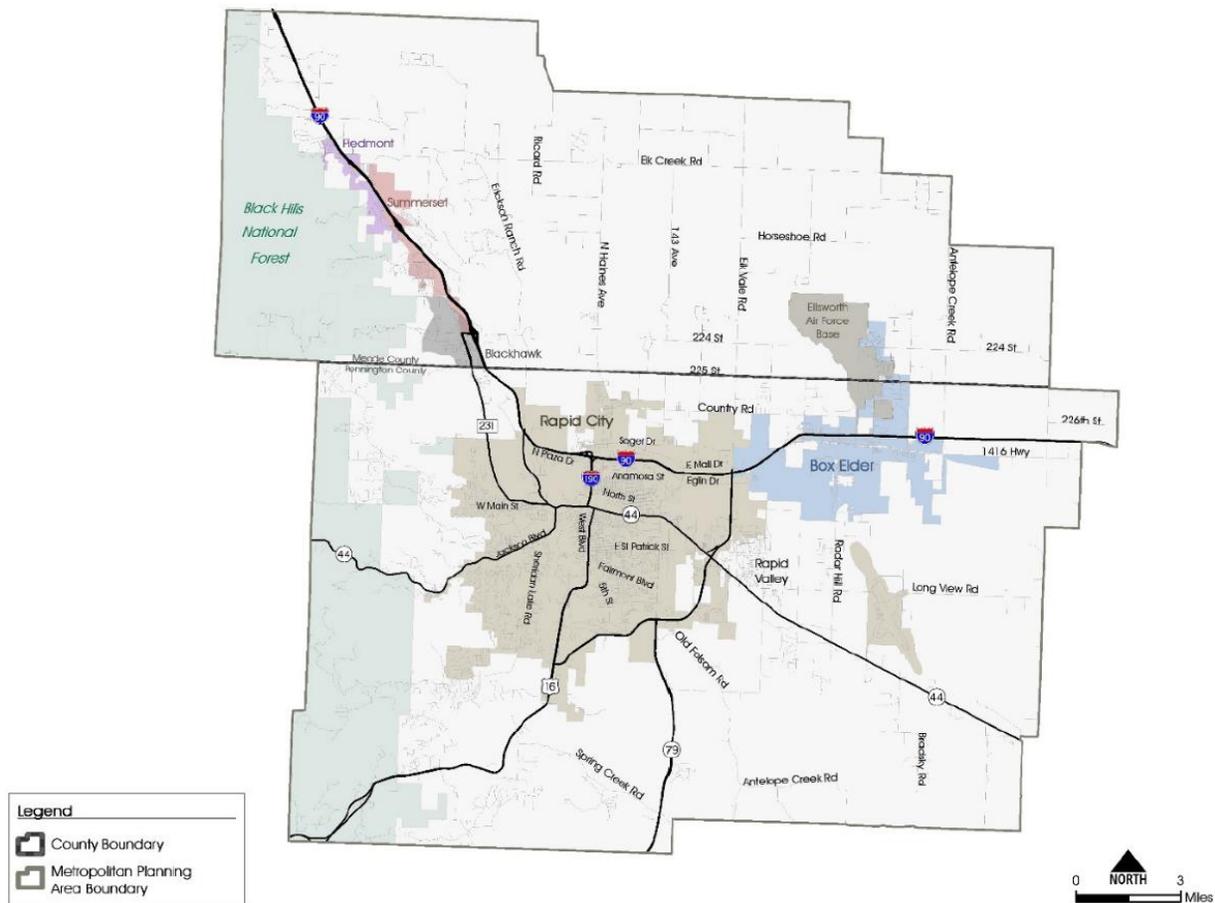
population under 200,000 (small urban areas) and under 50,000 (rural). STBG funds are programmed typically by the local MPO.

# 3 EXISTING TRANSIT CONDITIONS, GAPS, AND NEEDS

## PLAN REVIEW

This report describes the findings from a thorough review of nine planning documents that have implications for transit and coordinated human services within the coverage area (Figure 3-1) of the Rapid City Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (RCAMPO). These documents include plans from the counties and municipalities within the coverage area, the South Dakota Department of Transportation, and RCAMPO itself. Each plan relates to different components of the overall transportation network, in different planning jurisdictions, and in different planning horizon timeframes. Collectively, the backgrounds and key findings from these plans create the regional and local context of transit and coordinated human services development in the area.

Figure 3-1 RCAMPO Coverage Area



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The transportation planning products reviewed for this study, and detailed in the sections that follow, include:

- 2013-2017 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan, RCAMPO, 2013
- Transit Feasibility Study, RCAMPO, 2017
- Rapid City Area MPO Operations Plan, RCAMPO, 2016
- RAPIDTRIP Long Range Transportation Plan, RCAMPO
  - RAPIDTRIP 2035 – Long Range Transportation Plan, RCAMPO, 2010
  - RAPIDTRIP 2040 – Long Range Transportation Plan Update, RCAMPO, 2015
- Box Elder Strategic Transportation Plan, City of Box Elder, 2014
- Pennington County Master Transportation Plan, Pennington County Highway Department, 2012
- Rapid City Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, City of Rapid City, 2011
- Rapid City Transit Development Plan 2009-2013, City of Rapid City, 2008
- Meade Moving Forward 2040 Transportation Plan

## PLAN SUMMARY

### 2013-2017 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan RCAMPO, 2013

The 2013-2017 revision of the RCAMPO Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan is the most recent iteration of the plan. Desired outcomes of the plan include:

- increased awareness of existing transportation options
- a cost-effective system where agencies share resources and costs
- improved access to services and destinations throughout the RCAMPO region
- a reduction in duplicated transportation services

A review of the existing conditions and feedback from stakeholders revealed gaps and needs facing users in the coverage area. These gaps and needs are found in Figure 3-2.

**Figure 3-2 Transit Gaps and Needs**

Gaps	Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transit service is limited. Service is needed later at night, on Sundays, and to areas outside of the city limits, such as Rapid Valley and Box Elder.</li> <li>▪ Transit information can be difficult to understand.</li> <li>▪ Transit service is too expensive for many people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a need for more bus stops, especially ones that are accessible for individuals with disabilities.</li> <li>▪ Need qualified, pre-approved volunteer drivers.</li> <li>▪ Need to learn more about the liability issues related to the use of volunteers.</li> <li>▪ Need access to locations not on the transit routes, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles, Feeding South Dakota Food Bank, Western Dakota Tech, and medical facilities located throughout town.</li> </ul>

Strategies developed to address gaps and needs, were identified as short-term or long-term priorities (see Figure 3-3). Communication among human service agencies, transportation providers, and the public is noted as crucial for implementation irrespective of priority level.

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 Rapid City Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Figure 3-3 Strategies and Priorities**

	<b>Short Term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Long Term (2+ years)</b>
<b>System Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ increase transit education and awareness</li> <li>▪ review the need for additional transit service (evenings, on Sundays, in neighboring communities, etc.)</li> <li>▪ create a day pass with unlimited trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ increase the number of bus shelters</li> <li>▪ increase the number of ADA accessible bus stops</li> <li>▪ increase the frequency of buses</li> </ul>
<b>Service Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ use new technology, websites, social media, to help make transportation information and services more accessible for a greater number of people and agencies</li> <li>▪ identify funding options to help pay volunteer drivers</li> <li>▪ research and discuss coordination efforts with agencies that have had success</li> <li>▪ schedule a meeting with insurance agents to learn more about liability issues when using volunteer drivers</li> <li>▪ schedule monthly or quarterly meetings to discuss coordination efforts and issues among participating agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ hire a mobility manager to help coordinate services</li> <li>▪ recruit and manage volunteers, oversee compensation for drivers, and schedule rides</li> <li>▪ create a database of volunteers, who have been prescreened prior to volunteering</li> </ul>
<b>Network Gaps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rapid Transit System to continue to review existing routes to see if destinations offering medical, educational, and other necessary services are located near or on the bus routes</li> <li>▪ create a localized volunteer system where volunteers provide rides to residents living in the same neighborhood</li> <li>▪ create a senior volunteer system where seniors provide transportation or transit education to other seniors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ form partnerships among agencies to provide service to destinations not currently served by public transit</li> <li>▪ provide low-income families without access to a vehicle with free or low-cost transportation to school, daycare, or work</li> </ul>

## **Transit Feasibility Study RCAMPO, 2017**

### **Existing Conditions**

Existing transportation providers identified as operating in the RCAMPO coverage area (and the service characteristics of these providers) are shown in Figure 3-4. The providers currently operating services in the area include two public transit providers and six private nonprofit human service providers.

**Figure 3-4 Transportation Providers**

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Primary Users</b>
<b>Public Transit Providers</b>			
<b>Rapid Transit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fixed route (RapidRide)</li> <li>▪ Demand response (Dial-A-Ride)</li> <li>▪ Trolley (City View)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City of Rapid City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open to all riders</li> <li>▪ Commuters</li> <li>▪ People with disabilities</li> <li>▪ Students</li> <li>▪ Visitors</li> </ul>
<b>Prairie Hills Transit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hybrid deviated fixed route/ demand response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Service in Meade County (from Sturgis and Piedmont to Rapid City; in Sturgis to Ft. Meade)</li> <li>▪ Service in Pennington County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open to all riders</li> <li>▪ Primarily used by people with disabilities and the aging population</li> </ul>
<b>Private Nonprofit Human Service Providers</b>			
<b>Black Hills Works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program-specific transportation</li> <li>▪ Service to support agency and clientele</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not specific</li> <li>▪ Transportation to group activities, medical appointments, employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adults with disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>Chair Lift</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demand response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rapid City, Piedmont, Summerset, Black Hawk, and Box Elder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open to anyone</li> <li>▪ Adults with disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>The Club for Boys</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program-specific transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ From Rapid City schools to club (Horace Mann, Rapid Valley, Valley View, Robbinsdale, East Middle, North Middle, South Middle)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elementary and middle school boys, primarily from lower- income families</li> </ul>
<b>YMCA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program-specific transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To and from some Rapid City schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students in grades K–5</li> </ul>
<b>Youth and Family Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program-specific transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ From schools and homes of program participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children; low- income families</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Companions (Good Samaritan)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demand response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not specific</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aging population</li> <li>▪ Open to anyone age 55 or older needing assistance</li> </ul>

### **Alternatives**

Key feedback from stakeholders and public outreach activities include a significant need for services to support the aging and disabled populations, and a need for new services or programs to be as flexible and on-demand as possible. Recommended service alternatives for addressing these issues (Figure 3-5) include:

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- Voucher programs
- Special group trips
- Lifeline services
- Demand-response service

**Figure 3-5 Summary of Alternatives Applicability**

	Near Term Applicability (1-3 Years)	Long Term Applicability (4+ Years)	Key Implementation Considerations
<b>Voucher Programs</b>	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ideally requires well-managed providers, taxi companies, and ride-hailing services.</li> <li>▪ Lack of available taxi service or ride-hailing service impacts program effectiveness.</li> <li>▪ Lack of accessible vehicles precludes some users, necessitating an accessible alternative.</li> <li>▪ Requires a lead agency to assume responsibility for day-to-day administration and payments.</li> <li>▪ Requires consideration of measures to prevent fraud.</li> <li>▪ Drivers have been reluctant to accept the scrip or vouchers.</li> </ul>
<b>Special Group Trips</b>	Moderate	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offers a narrow focus of service and thus targets a specific market.</li> <li>▪ If necessary, individuals can be preregistered for this service.</li> <li>▪ May allow the use of vehicles during off-peak times, maximizing operations of existing vehicles.</li> </ul>
<b>Lifeline Service</b>	Moderate	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May allow the operation of underused vehicles during off-peak times, when errands and appointments can be made.</li> <li>▪ Funds must be secured for capital, administrative, and operating expenses.</li> <li>▪ Success will somewhat depend on the effectiveness of implementation and marketing plans.</li> <li>▪ Implementation approach may require reservations or allow people to board at scheduled stops, which could result in capacity constraints.</li> </ul>
<b>Demand-Response Service</b>	Low	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trips are expensive services to provide, especially in terms of cost per trip, and the high costs may eventually require managing demand. Local dial-a-ride service in Rapid City was about \$14 per trip in 2014.</li> <li>▪ Demand-response services generally do not meet the needs of regular commute trips.</li> <li>▪ If local circulation is provided in individual communities, it would be appropriate to consider a funding formula to share in the cost of the service.</li> <li>▪ Services may require investment in technologies and communications equipment for reservations and trip scheduling.</li> <li>▪ Capital funds may be required to pay for investments (e.g., vehicles, support equipment)</li> <li>▪ Services could be implemented in combination with commuter express bus routes to provide local circulation only, not traveling all the way to Rapid City.</li> </ul>

## **Rapid City Area MPO Operations Plan RCAMPO, 2016**

The RCAMPO Operations Plan defines the roles and responsibilities of RCAMPO and its member agencies for developing the Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan for the RCAMPO coverage area. Agencies providing transportation services to seniors and people with disabilities must also participate in the planning process in order to be eligible for FTA Section 5310 funding opportunities.

The RCAMPO coverage area includes the cities of Rapid City, Box Elder, Summerset, and Piedmont, as well as Ellsworth Air Force Base, the unincorporated areas of Black Hawk, and the developing areas of Pennington County and Meade County. Participating agencies of RCAMPO are found in Figure 3-6.

**Figure 3-6 Rapid City Area MPO Participating Agencies**

<b>Primary Participating Agencies</b>	<b>Other Participating Agencies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rapid City Long Range Planning Division</li> <li>▪ City of Rapid City</li> <li>▪ City of Box Elder</li> <li>▪ City of Summerset</li> <li>▪ City of Piedmont</li> <li>▪ Pennington County</li> <li>▪ Meade County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ South Dakota Department of Transportation</li> <li>▪ Federal Highway Administration</li> <li>▪ Federal Transit Administration</li> <li>▪ Ellsworth Air Force Base</li> <li>▪ Rapid City Area School District 54-1, Meade School District 46-1, and Douglas School District 51-1</li> </ul>

The process through which the Rapid City Area MPO completes all transportation products and plans includes participation and review by the MPO's three committees:

- Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)
- Executive Policy Committee (EPC)

The EPC has final review and approval of all products and plans.

## **RAPIDTRIP Long Range Transportation Plan RCAMPO**

### RAPIDTRIP 2040 – Long Range Transportation Plan Update, RCAMPO, 2015

The RAPIDTRIP 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan was created to guide regionally focused long-term transportation planning strategies through both the developed portions of the RCAMPO coverage area and the portions that are expected to be developed by 2040. The stated goals of the plan are as follows:

- Develop and maintain a transportation system that is coordinated with land use patterns and incorporates all available modes of transportation into a safe, efficient, and effective system
- Enhance the economic stability of the community by improving the area's overall accessibility
- Identify and preserve the environmental, social, and cultural resources of the community
- Actively seek input from the community and utilize that input in the transportation planning process

### **Needs Plan**

The 2015 plan update provided a thorough breakdown of transportation project/program needs based on a review of local and regional planning documents. In total, over 150 bicycle project needs, about 30 pedestrian project needs, and over 20 transit-related projects or programs were identified. Transit needs that directly relate to, or would directly affect, coordinated human service planning in the area are shown in Figure 3-7.

**Figure 3-7 Coordinated Human Service Related Projects/Programs in the Transit Needs Plan**

2040 Plan ID	Name	Category	Location / Description
<b>T-18</b>	Hire Mobility Manager	Operation Improvements	Hire a Mobility Manager for the region
<b>T-19</b>	Bus Purchase	Capital Improvement	Purchase four buses each year for use by eligible senior and disabled service agencies

### **Box Elder Strategic Transportation Plan** ***City of Box Elder, 2014***

Among its many objectives, the Box Elder Strategic Transportation Plan intends to:

- Address how the transportation system can enhance livability within the Box Elder community, particularly emphasizing multimodal connectivity among neighborhoods, schools, and business districts
- Coordinate transportation planning efforts across multiple jurisdictions, including the City of Box Elder, Pennington and Meade counties, Rapid City, and the SDDOT
- Identify priorities among future transportation improvement projects

Currently, there are limited bicycle facilities in the city, and sidewalks exist in some residential areas and along roadways near the school area but are inconsistent otherwise. The plan's long-range master plan and implementation guidance identifies nearly 20 bicycle and pedestrian projects of varying priorities to address these gaps in the city's networks.

### **Pennington County Master Transportation Plan** ***Pennington County Highway Department, 2012***

Through the public and stakeholder outreach process of the Pennington County Master Plan, it was found that call-and-ride services are used primarily for medical and shopping trips. Other key transportation issues for Pennington County stakeholders and community members identified in the plan include:

- Transit funding is dependent upon a local match for federally provided dollars, and transit operations are limited by limited funding
- The community needs to be better educated about available transit services
- A collaborative approach among service providers needs to be developed
- Service between Ellsworth Air Force Base and Rapid City needs to be improved

Recommendations in the plan include an annual allocation of \$3,000 to transit in the county; initially to be provided to River Cities Transit (RCT) to help increase RCT's federal matching grant amount.

## **Rapid City Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, City of Rapid City, 2011**

The Rapid City Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan envisions that Rapid City will enhance transportation choices by developing a network of on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities that provide connections to destinations throughout the city. The goals outlined in the plan include:

- Support bicycling and walking as viable transportation modes in Rapid City
- Promote bicycling and walking in the Rapid City area by improving awareness of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and opportunities
- Integrate bicycle and pedestrian planning into Rapid City's Planning Processes

According to the plan, all RapidRide buses are equipped with bike racks, however the dial-a-ride paratransit service does not provide bicycle accommodation.

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations for walking and bicycling facilities include detailed lists of projects intended to close gaps in the existing network. Recommendations for general transit-supportive facilities at transit stops include:

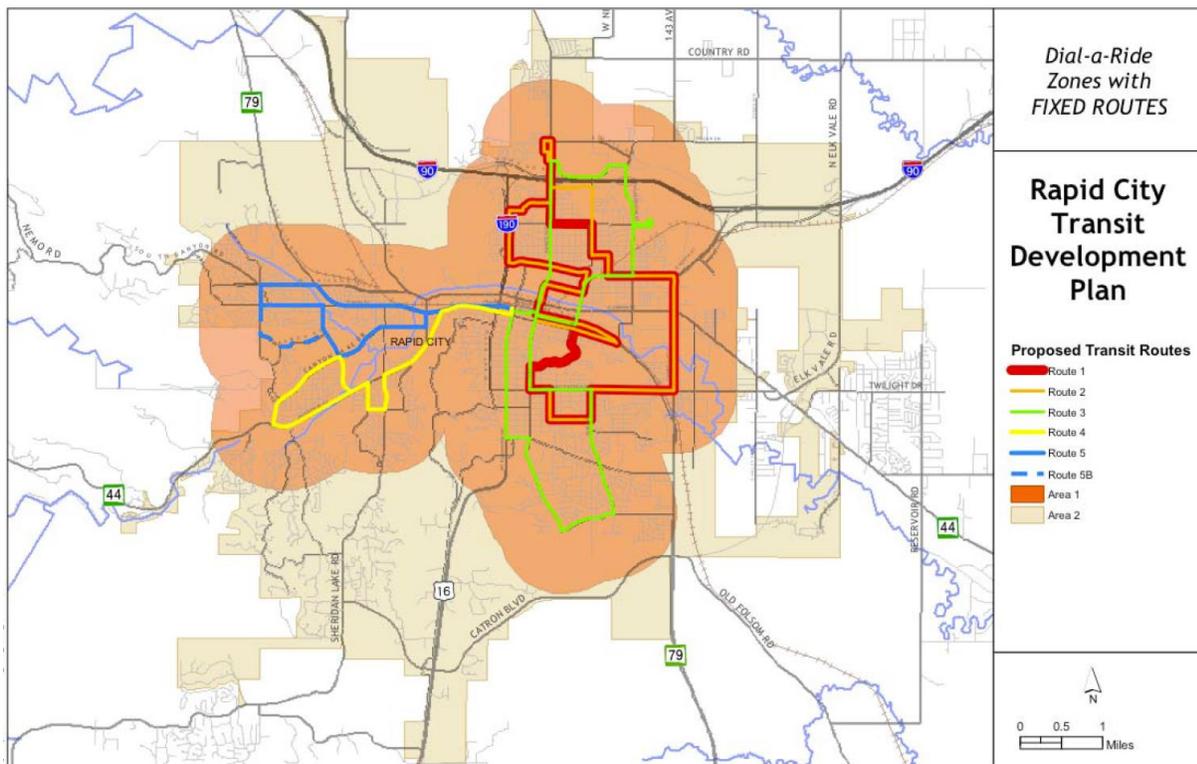
- Benches or seats adjacent to the transit stop post
- Provision of dedicated shelters, especially at higher volume stops
- Trip information at every stop including route and stop numbers, maps and timetables
- Bicycle parking
- Pedestrian-scale lighting to increase security and visibility for both users and operators
- Trash/recycling receptacles

The plan does not include in its recommendations any provisions specifically related to paratransit services.

## Rapid City Transit Development Plan 2009-2013 City of Rapid City, 2008

The Rapid City Transit Development Plan introduced a proposed fare structure change (Fare Alternative 1) that would split the fare structure of dial-a-ride into two service zones. In Fare Alternative 1, the Zone 1 boundary would be defined as the outside edge, three-quarters of a mile from fixed routes, and the Zone 2 boundary would be defined as the edge of the community. Fees for trips in Zone 1 would be \$2.50 in 2009 and graduate to \$3 in 2011; fares in Zone 2 would be \$3 in 2009 and graduate to \$3.50 in 2011. See Figure 3-8 for a map of the proposed fare zones.

**Figure 3-8 Proposed Dial-a-Ride Zones**



Further recommendations for improving transit service that relate to improvements to the dial-a-ride service or improving accessibility for people with disabilities included the following:

- Implement Fare Alternative 1 (including graduated implementation of zone fare structure) by 2009
- Build ADA wheelchair loading pads at all stops with shelters (minimum) and benches (desirable)
- Conduct regular monthly driver route checks on dial-a-ride services to ensure directness of service meets expectations
- Expand utilization of dial-a-ride scheduling software data reports
- Review dial-a-ride client certifications to ensure compliance with current eligibility standards

- Promote shifting some dial-a-ride trips to the regular route system where appropriate
- Consider expanded weekday RapidRide and dial-a-ride service on a trial basis (6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.)
- Consider Saturday RapidRide and dial-a-ride service on a trial basis (9 a.m.- 6 p.m.)

The plan also identified performance measures for dial-a-ride services, which can be seen in Figure 3-9.

**Figure 3-9 Performance Measures for Dial-a-Ride Services**

Performance Indicator	Metrics
<b>Subsidy per trip</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ System level: identify trends</li> <li>▪ Compare to fixed route and peers</li> </ul>
<b>Boarding per hour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ System level, by month and year, including illustration of trends</li> </ul>
<b>Total ridership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ System level, by month and year, including trends</li> </ul>
<b>Road Failures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two per month or less</li> </ul>
<b>Customer complaints</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Numbers and trend</li> </ul>
<b>No-shows</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Percentage – system level, by month and year, including trends</li> </ul>

## Meade Moving Forward 2040 Transportation Plan

Portions of Meade County are served by Prairie Hills Transit, the demand response system. Services are provided to individuals of any age and disability for any trip purpose. The County does not currently provide services at a countywide level. Additionally, the county does not contribute towards local match for funding for PHT.

## PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Nelson\Nygaard developed surveys for Rapid City area residents to evaluate their transportation behaviors and needs. The survey asked residents about their travel behavior and use of public transit and paratransit services. The survey was published on Survey Monkey, and responses were collected between mid-September and late October 2018. The survey was made accessible via web link, mobile app, or QR code. A total of 268 responses were collected.



### Key Findings

- Responses paint a picture of a region with a diverse range of travel needs – commuting, medical appointments, school, shopping, recreation, and social connections, to name a few – that the current transportation network incompletely accommodates.
- For residents who do not have access to a personal car, many common trip purposes and connections are challenging to make, and these challenges may place a significant burden on residents' daily life.
- Most Rapid City area residents typically travel by driving alone (56% of respondents) or by carpooling with friends or family (17% of respondents), as shown in Figure 3-11.
- About 15% of residents get around by fixed-route transit, dial-a-ride, or taxi/Lyft (Figure 3-11). While this overall share is small, the share of regional respondents who use transit, dial-a-ride, or taxi/Lyft is at least occasionally is much larger, about 30% (shown in Figure 3-12).
- Rapid City area residents are most likely to require transportation services in traveling to shop/buy groceries (32%), get to work or school (23%), or access to medical services (16%), as shown in Figure 3-13. As a result of these dominant trip purposes, residents are most likely to require transportation services during morning and afternoon peak hours, 6-9 a.m. and 3-6 p.m. on weekdays (Figure 3-14).
- Demand for transportation services is more evenly distributed throughout the day on Saturdays and Sundays. A substantial minority of residents (23%) require some type of mobility assistance while they travel, which could range from help unloading packages/groceries, to wheelchair lifts or door-to-door service (Figure 3-15).
- For many respondents, the coverage or availability of fixed-route transit is inadequate.
  - Key destinations, such as Rapid City Regional Airport or Western Dakota Tech, are not covered by Rapid Transit System (RTS) service.
  - Smaller communities in the area such as Rapid Valley, Black Hawk, Summerset, or Box Elder are also without fixed-route transit service.
- Another common challenge residents highlighted is that RTS' low frequency of service (typically 35 minutes) and its limited hours of operation, between 6:20 a.m. and 5:50 p.m.

on weekdays and 9:50 a.m. and 4:40 p.m. on Saturdays, makes completing many types of trips difficult or impossible.

- Common trip types that are difficult or impossible to make within RTS' existing span of service include late-shift work trips, child-care pickups for parents, social trips to restaurants and bars, and after-school activities or evening classes for students. This is an especially significant challenge for lower-income people.
- Effectively, the Rapid City area transportation system compels older adults, people with disabilities, and lower-income people to make a series of difficult choices: either redesign their personal schedules around the RTS system's infrequent and limited service – not a viable option for most – or somehow shoulder the high costs of car ownership – about \$9,000 per year on average.<sup>2</sup>
- Other significant transportation challenges residents reported include difficulty accessing bus stops due to their wide spacing (a particular issue during winter months), being unable to afford transit or dial-a-ride fares, accessibility challenges while riding on transit, and the lack of cold weather shelters at bus stops.
- Residents strongly prefer expanding fixed-route bus service to new destinations. The most popular destinations respondents indicated are broad categories of places that lacked specific addresses, such as doctors' offices (14 respondents), supermarkets (13 respondents), and schools (11 respondents).
- The most popular specific locations indicated are Regional Health Rapid City Hospital (10 responses), Walmart (either of its two Rapid City locations, eight responses), Rapid City Regional Airport (seven responses), the Rushmore Crossing Mall (seven responses), Downtown Rapid City (five responses), and the Main Street bar/restaurant district (five responses).

Overall, the existing Rapid City area transportation system does not adequately meet many of the transportation needs of its residents, particularly older adults, people with disabilities, lower-income people, and people without access to a personal vehicle. For many of these residents, common trip types and connections that drivers take for granted are difficult or impossible to make, and these challenges have significant negative impacts on their lives. The survey findings highlight the need for broader regional fixed-route transit service coverage to smaller communities in the Rapid City region. There is also a strong need for transit service that extends later into the evenings and Saturdays, as well as Sunday service, so that a much broader range of trip types are viable on transit. More frequent service to key destinations, such as hospitals/clinics, schools, and shopping centers is also desired. As many lower-income people have difficulty affording transit or dial-a-ride fares, more affordable fares should also be considered to improve mobility outcomes.

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<sup>2</sup> AAA. 2018, September 13. "Your Driving Costs." <https://newsroom.aaa.com/auto/your-driving-costs/>

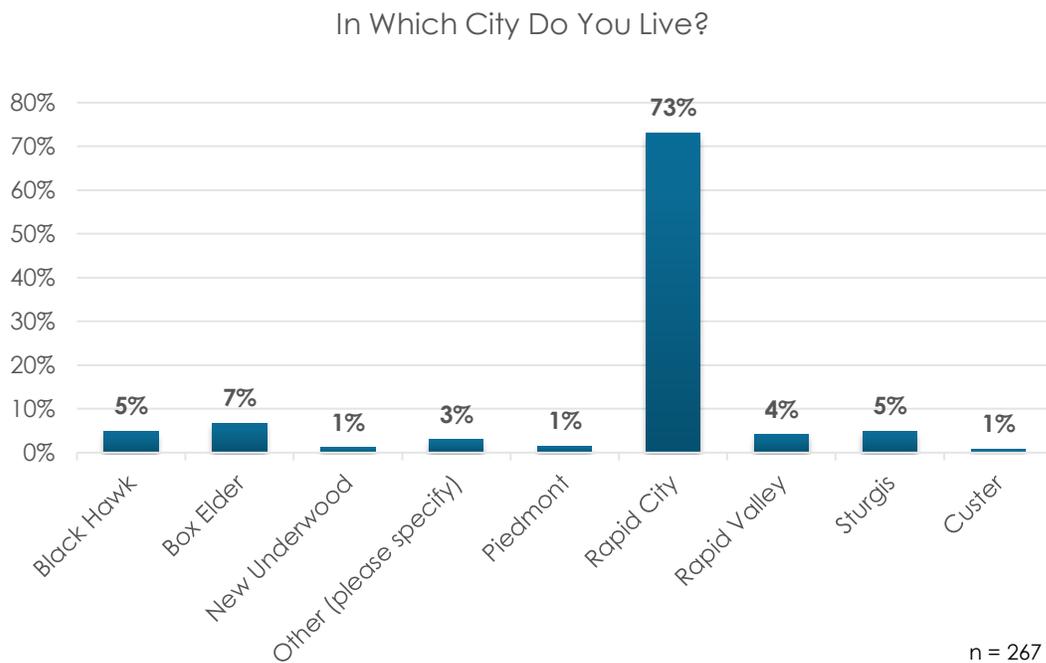
## Detailed Findings

The following section of this report summarizes resident responses to individual survey questions.

### Community of Residence

The vast majority of respondents live in Rapid City (73%). The remainder live in smaller communities such as Box Elder (7%), Black Hawk (5%), Sturgis (5%), and Rapid Valley (4%), among others, as shown in Figure 3-10. Most of the Rapid City area's fixed-route transit service is available in Rapid City, while smaller communities are more reliant on paratransit.

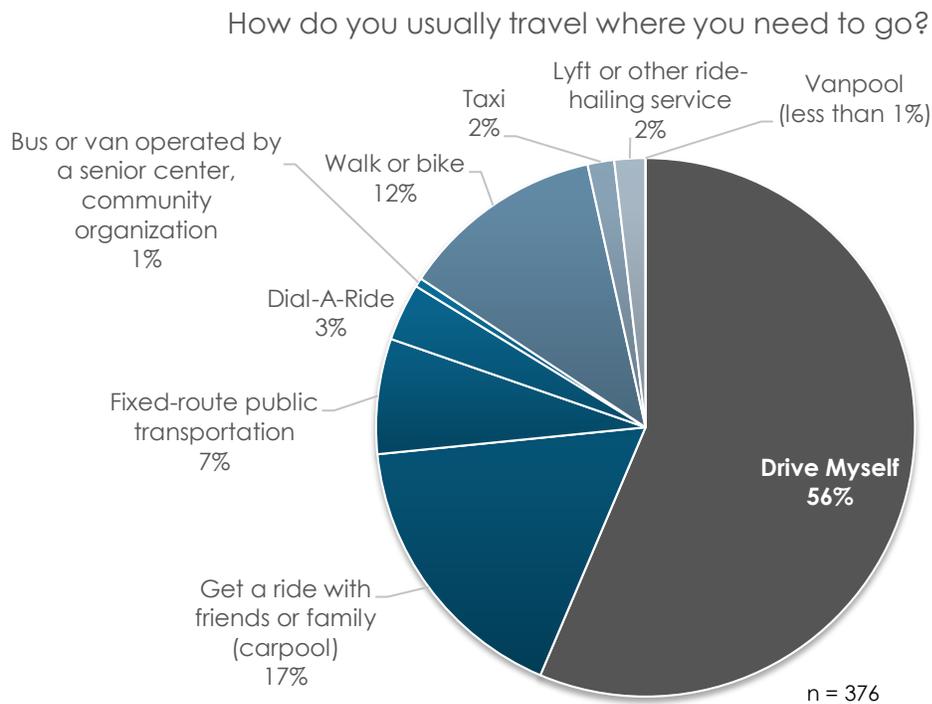
**Figure 3-10 Community of Residence**



### Typical Travel Mode

Most Rapid City area residents get around by driving alone to go most places (56%), as shown in Figure 3-11. Other common modes include carpooling with friends or family (17%) and walking or biking (12%). A small minority of residents, about 11%, typically ride transit or paratransit for most of their trips. Of this share, 7% of respondents selected fixed-route transit (e.g., Rapid Transit System), 3% selected dial-a-ride paratransit, and 1% selected human services transportation such as that offered by senior centers or other community organizations.

**Figure 3-11 Typical Travel Mode**

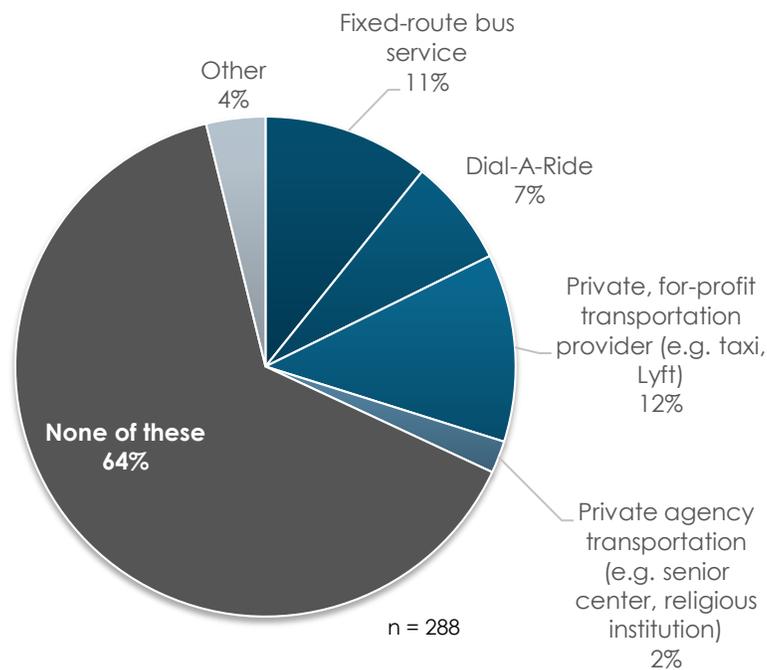


### Use of Transportation Services

Residents were asked if they use any of the transportation services available in the Rapid City area from public agencies, private companies, or nonprofits. This definition of transportation services excludes driving alone and carpooling. A solid majority of respondents do not use these transportation services (Figure 3-12), and this group likely overlaps with the majority of respondents who travel by driving alone, shown in Figure 3-12. However, these results show that a considerable segment of residents use fixed-route public transit (e.g., RTS) and dial-a-ride at least occasionally, if not for most trips. Comparing the 11% of respondents who take public transit, below, with the 7% of respondents who take transit for most trips, indicates that more than one-third of transit riders are occasional riders, rather than regular riders. Likewise, comparing the 7% of respondents who use dial-a-ride with the 3% of riders who use dial-a-ride for most trips indicates that more than half of dial-a-ride users rely on the service to meet most of their travel needs.

**Figure 3-12 Use of Transportation Services**

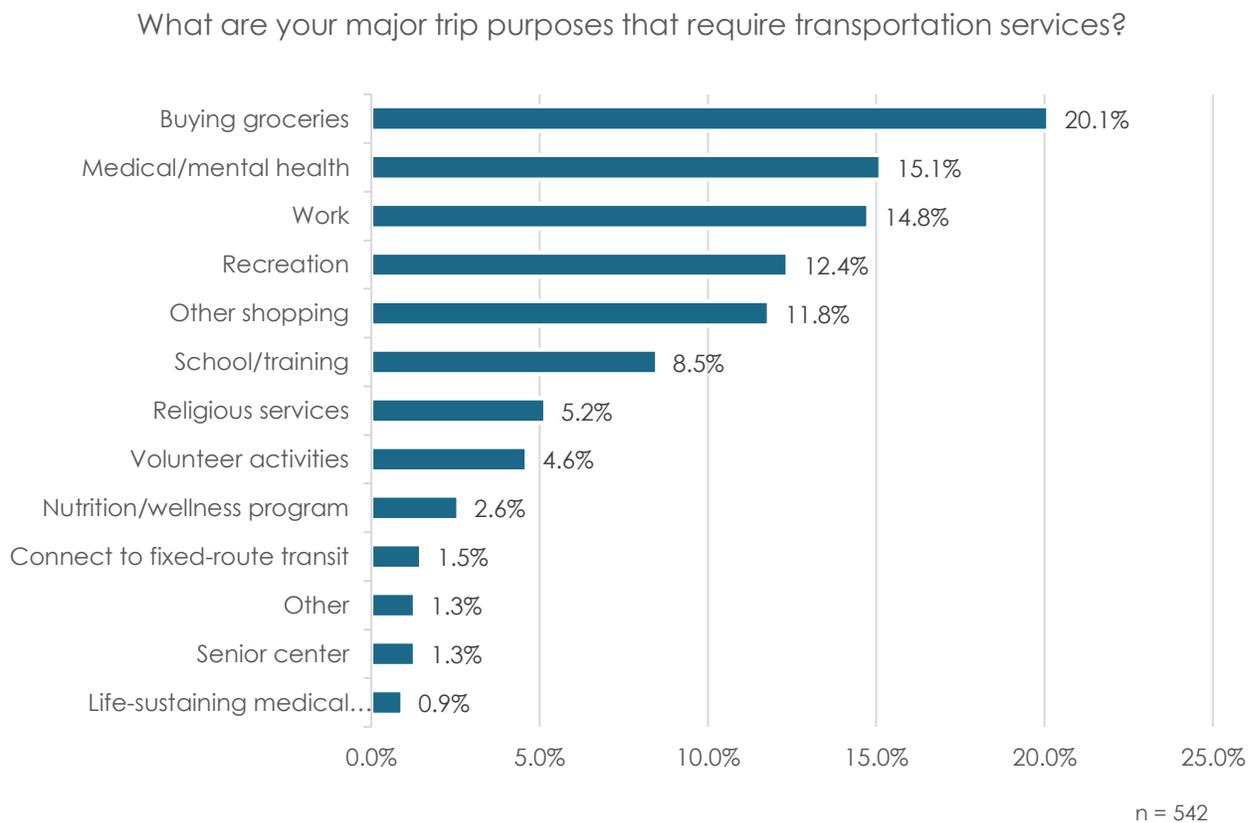
Do you use any of the following transportation services?



### Transportation Needs by Trip Purpose

This survey question asked residents to select the types of trips, or trip purposes, for which they required transportation services, if any. This definition of transportation services excludes driving alone and carpooling. This question allowed multiple selections, and respondents who do not require transportation services for any trip purpose left the question blank. The results point to the trip purposes for which residents are most likely to depend on transportation services that cannot be met by driving alone or carpooling with friends or family. Rapid City area residents are most likely to need assistance in traveling to shop/buy groceries (32%), get to work or school (23%), or make doctor's appointments (16%), as shown in Figure 3-13. Other commonly-selected trip types that require transportation services include recreation (12%), religious services (5%), volunteer activities (5%), nutrition/wellness programs (3%), and senior centers (1%). These results suggest that policies and programs that improve transportation access to schools, employment, shopping centers, and hospitals/clinics are most likely to fill under-served transportation needs in the region.

**Figure 3-13 Needs for Transportation Services by Trip Purpose**

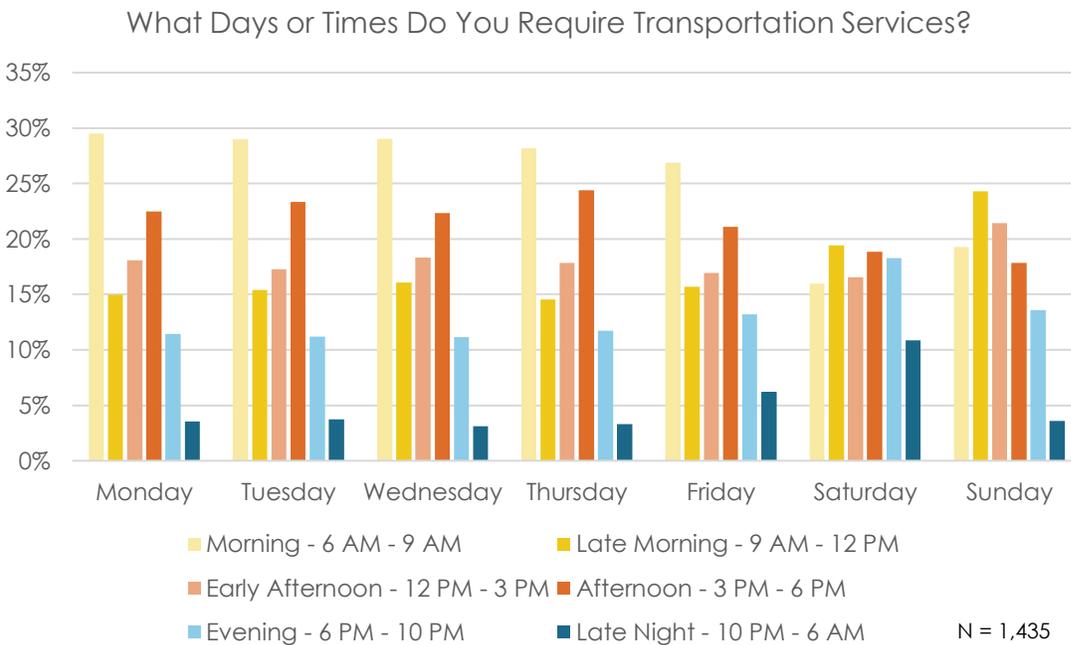


### Transportation Needs by Time of Day

This survey question asked residents to select the time(s) of day for which they required transportation services, if any. This definition of transportation services excludes driving alone and carpooling. This question allowed multiple selections, and respondents who do not require transportation services for any time of day left the question blank. The results indicate the times of day for which residents are most likely to depend on transportation services that cannot be met by driving alone or carpooling with friends or family.

Rapid City area residents are most likely to need assistance during weekday morning and afternoon peak commute hours, from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., respectively (shown in Figure 3-14). Between 27% and 30% of responses indicated the morning peak, and between 21% and 24% of responses indicated the afternoon peak. Significant portions of respondents also need transportation services on Saturdays and Sundays, though these needs are more evenly distributed throughout the day. These results suggest that policies and programs that improve transportation access during peak commute hours and on Saturdays and Sundays are most likely to meet the transportation needs of residents in the region.

**Figure 3-14 Needs for Transportation Services by Time of Day**

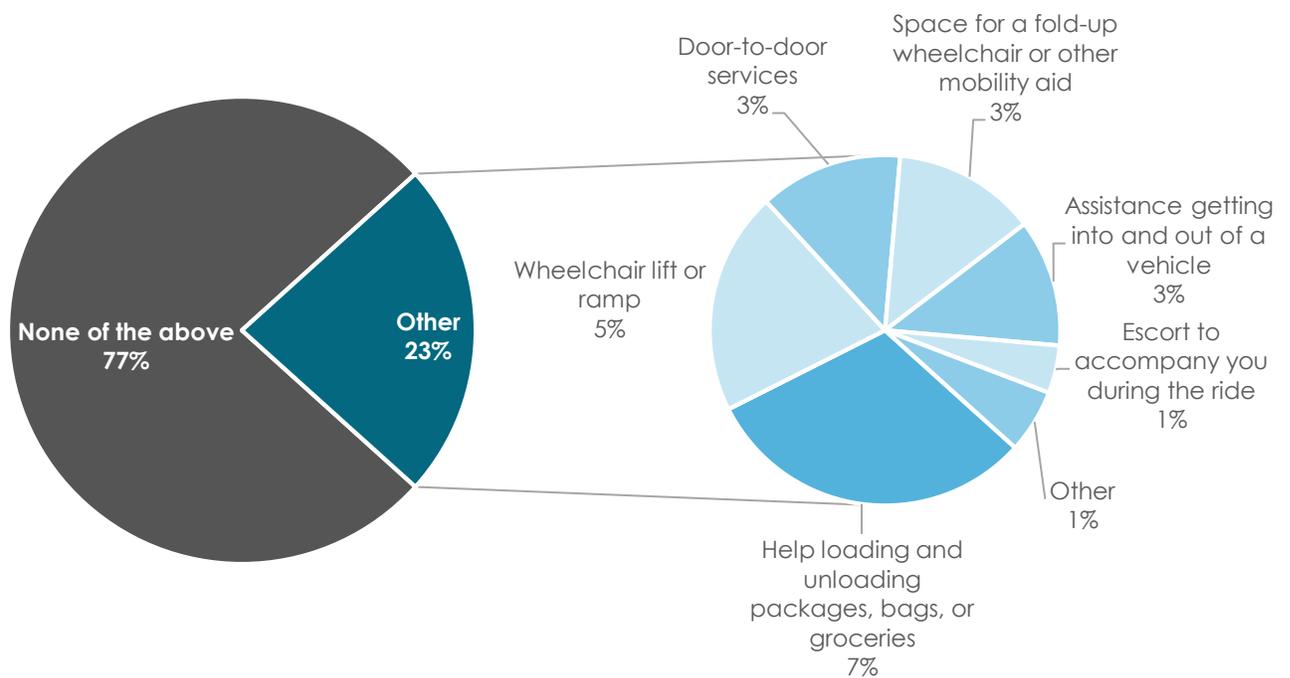


### Mobility Assistance Needs

Residents were asked which types of mobility assistance they need while traveling, if any. Mobility assistance may include help loading and unloading packages, bags or groceries; assistance getting into or out of vehicles; an escort to accompany them on the ride; space for a fold-up wheelchair or other mobility aid; wheelchair lifts or ramps; or door-to-door assistance. A substantial minority of residents (23%) report they need some form of mobility assistance, while the other 77% of residents do not need assistance (shown in Figure 3-15). Within this group, about half of respondents who need mobility assistance need help with loading/unloading bags or groceries (7%) or a wheelchair lift or ramp (5%), while other types of mobility assistance were less commonly needed.

**Figure 3-15 Mobility Assistance Needs**

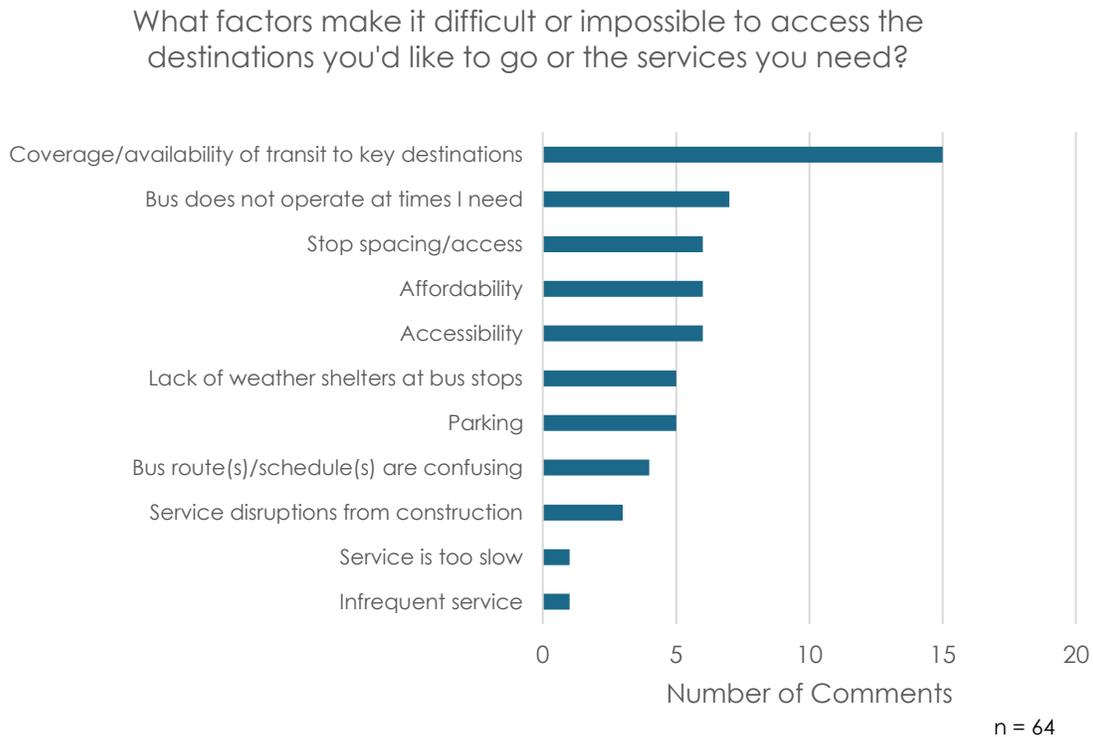
Do you need any of the following kinds of mobility assistance when you travel locally?



## Top Transportation Issues

Respondents were asked to provide open-ended statements of their most significant transportation challenges that make it “difficult or impossible to get around.” The survey received 64 open-ended responses to this question. Most factors that make it difficult or impossible for residents to access destinations or services, according to respondents, relate directly to important aspects of the service policies and station/stop infrastructure of fixed-route transit systems such as RTS (see Figure 3-16).

**Figure 3-16 Top Transportation Challenges**



The most common type of transportation challenge residents expressed relates to inadequate coverage or availability of fixed-route transit service at key destinations, which 15 respondents mentioned in their statements. Some highlights of resident responses related to this theme of inadequate transit coverage include:

- “The routes don’t go to the places that many of the people need to go”
- “Transit service doesn’t come to Corral Drive [in southwest Rapid City]”
- “Routes not covering the designated area”
- “No bus available”
- “Not on the bus scheduled route”
- “No buses run to Summerset”
- “If I was to need to ride the bus I can’t because it does not come to Blackhawk”
- “Some of the places that families without transportation need to go there is no bus service to that area (i.e., Feeding South Dakota)” [note: this destination is served by the

RTS Coolidge Route, but service has a limited span (6:20 a.m. – 4:50 p.m.) and is infrequent, with headways of 70 minutes].

- “I live in Rapid Valley and getting to the food bank is impossible. I have to walk or find a ride into town before I can get on public transportation.”
- “I would like to see the RapidRide go out to Western Dakota Tech for students who do not have a vehicle.”
- “For families I work with, the bus system does not go to all the areas of town they need to go.”
- “Sheridan Lake Road or Castle Heights are not served by transit.”
- “Availability”

The second-most common transportation challenge that residents expressed relates to the low service frequency and short span of service of public transit in the Rapid City area. Several residents feel that the hours and schedules of transit are inadequate, as expressed in seven responses. Highlights of respondents’ transportation challenges with respect to the span of transit service include:

- “Bus does not operate at times I need.”
- “It’s nearly impossible to work a 9-5 job and be able to get home at night. Those that work in the evenings and/or weekends, after 4 or on Sundays must walk or find other transportation.”
- “Limited access, 1 hour and 10 minutes between buses.”
- “Need extended hours and to include rural areas where businesses are and Box Elder. Extended areas also please for weekends and nights for work, church, and recreation, and to see friends.”
- “No rapid transit on Sundays.”
- “Not enough buses on Saturdays. Hard to schedule in the morning. No buses on Sundays.”
- “The buses stop running at 5:30-6 p.m.. They need to run till at least 10-11 p.m. to get [service-sector workers] home from work.”

Wide stop spacing, which requires riders to walk long distances to access bus stops, is a particular issue for families with children, older adults, and people with disabilities, who may be unable to access the stops. Long walking distances between stops are a particularly strong disincentive to use transit during winter months, when inclement weather makes walking unpleasant. Wide bus stop spacing was mentioned in six respondent comments. Highlights of comments regarding stop spacing and bus stop access include:

- “For a single, pregnant mom with 3 little kids to be able to walk to the bus stop is pretty difficult, especially in the cold weather.”
- “Bus stops are widely spaced out and especially hard to get to in poor weather.”
- “Families have a hard time getting to bus stops due to the walk to the bus stop along with little children, trying to get them all ready and walking to the stop.”

Another frequently mentioned theme in respondent comments is fare affordability, mentioned in six respondent comments. Many transit-dependent people in the Rapid City area have low incomes, and transit or paratransit fares may represent an insurmountable burden for some low-income riders. Highlights of comments related to fare affordability include:

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- “Those with the least amount of money are the ones who are dealing with this every day. How can they ever get out of poverty?”
- “Finances, lack of extra income.”
- “Expensive to use dial-a-ride”
- “Bus rides are not affordable for folks in poverty.”
- “Most families do not have the money to afford public transportation.”

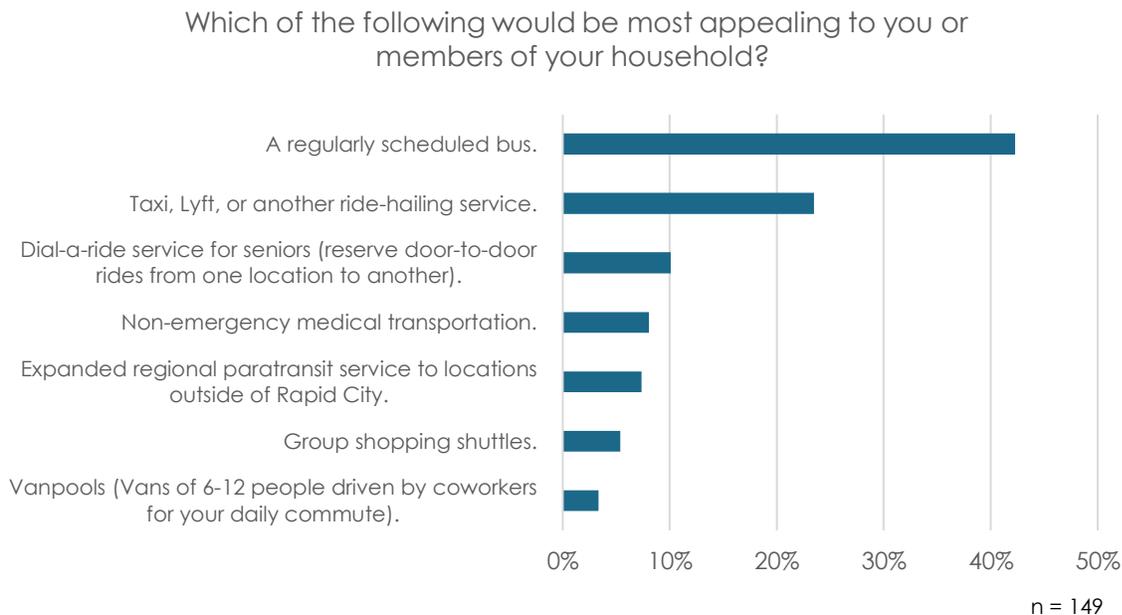
Other, less commonly-selected factors that present significant transportation challenges to residents include personal accessibility challenges that make driving or taking fixed-route transit difficult (six responses); the lack of weather shelters at many bus stops (five responses); lack of parking at/near destinations, particularly in downtown Rapid City (five responses); confusing bus routes and timetables (four responses); service disruptions due to roadway construction (three responses); and slow service (one response).

### Preferred Transportation Options

Respondents were asked to select from a list of proposed transportation options that they, and members of their household, would find most appealing. A follow-up question asked respondents to identify destination(s) they would like their preferred transportation option to serve. The results of these questions are shown in Figure 3-17 and Figure 3-18. Regularly scheduled buses are the most popular transportation improvements, with 42% of respondents selecting this option. This reflects the fact that many Rapid City residents are transit-dependent and either cannot afford, or have challenges accessing, other options.

Ride-hailing (Lyft) and taxi services are the second-most popular transportation improvement, with 23% of respondents selecting this option. This mode's popularity is likely due to its flexibility, the significant and well-publicized growth of ride-hailing in recent years, and their unique, smartphone-enabled on-demand service offerings that have significantly altered rider expectations of their mobility options. The remaining selections represent more conventional options for rural transit and paratransit, including vanpools, group shopping shuttles, paratransit, and non-emergency medical transportation. Each of these options is a viable transportation choice for limited trip purposes or rider groups and, as a result, each is less broadly popular as a potential transportation option. Fewer than 10% of respondents selected these options as their preferred transportation improvements.

**Figure 3-17 Preferred Transportation Options**



Area residents expressed a broad range of destinations they wished to see connected by the transportation options indicated above. Numbers in Figure 20 indicate the number of respondents who preferred that destinations be served by any of the proposed transportation options. The mode/destination pairs with the highest number of responses are shown in dark green. The most popular destinations respondents indicated are broad categories of places that lacked specific addresses, such as doctors' offices (14 respondents), supermarkets (13 respondents), and schools (11 respondents). The most popular specific locations indicated are

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Regional Health Rapid City Hospital (10 responses), Walmart (either of its two Rapid City locations, eight responses), Rapid City Regional Airport (seven responses), the Rushmore Crossing Mall (seven responses), downtown Rapid City (five responses), and the Main Street bar/restaurant district (five responses). Of these destinations, only the Rapid City Regional Airport lacks fixed-route transit service from RTS altogether. The remaining destinations are served by RTS routes, though this service is infrequent and has limited hours of operation.

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**Figure 3-18 Preferred Destinations for Transportation Improvements**

Destination	A regularly scheduled bus	Taxi, Lyft, or another ride-hailing service	Dial-a-ride service for seniors	Non-emergency medical transportation	Expanded regional paratransit service to locations outside of Rapid City	Group shopping shuttles	Vanpools	Total Responses
Aspen Dental Clinic	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Bars	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	5
Black Hills Orthopedic & Spine	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	2
Blackhawk	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Box Elder	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	2
Church	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	3
Corral Drive Elementary School	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Custer	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Department of Social Services	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	2
DMV	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Doctors	5	1	1	4	1	—	2	14
Downtown Rapid City	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	5
Family Fare Supermarket (multiple locations)	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	4
Food bank (Feeding South Dakota)	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Hill City	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Hwy 16 & Catron Blvd	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Jackson Boulevard	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Knollwood Elementary School	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Mt Rushmore Road	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Pine Ridge	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Rapid City Public Library	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Rapid City Regional Airport	2	4	—	—	—	1	—	7

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Destination	A regularly scheduled bus	Taxi, Lyft, or another ride-hailing service	Dial-a-ride service for seniors	Non-emergency medical transportation	Expanded regional paratransit service to locations outside of Rapid City	Group shopping shuttles	Vanpools	Total Responses
Rapid City Regional Hospital	4	2	2	1	1	—	—	10
Rapid Valley	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	3
Rushmore Crossing Mall	2	—	2	—	1	2	—	7
Safeway (multiple locations)	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Schools	6	3	—	—	1	—	1	11
Seger Drive	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Senior Center	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Sheridan Lake Road	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Sioux San Hospital	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	3
South Dakota School of Mines	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Spearfish	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Summerset	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Supermarkets	5	3	1	—	1	1	2	13
Timmons Market	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
VA Hospital in Sturgis	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Walmart (multiple locations)	4	1	—	—	—	2	1	8
West side of Rapid City	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1

## Miscellaneous Comments

The survey's final question asked respondents to provide any additional, open-ended comments or ideas about transportation they may have, and the survey recorded 34 unique comments. These responses closely mirror the open-ended comments expressed about their most significant transportation-related challenges.

A plurality of the closing comments provided (13 responses) relate to the need to expand coverage of the RTS system to new areas of the region. As one comment puts it, "People enjoy the fact that Rapid City is growing, but no support in expanding services. [More services needed] from Box Elder to Rapid City, Summerset and Black Hawk to Rapid City." The second-most common theme of these comments related to expanding the span of service of RTS routes. Seven comments in this section relate to this theme. As one resident described, "The buses in Rapid City need to run for longer hours, allowing people who work to use the bus system. It's crazy that the city public transport system only runs 6:20 a.m. – 5:50 p.m. Mon-Fri and 9:50 a.m. – 4:40 p.m. on Saturdays." Another common theme relates to the importance of RTS in providing school transportation. As one respondent wrote, "Keep free busing for students!"

Other comments highlighted unmet transportation needs, such as the need for more frequent service to shopping centers and the Feeding South Dakota food bank; more weather shelters at bus stops, and non-emergency medical transportation to hospitals and clinics. A small number of respondents urged RTS to consider new partnerships with ride-hailing companies like Lyft, to provide more cost-effective subsidized service during off-hours, and with multi-family developers to offer subsidized transit passes to their tenants.

## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

### Stakeholder Involvement

A diverse range of stakeholders with a common interest in human service transportation was included in the planning process to provide insight into how best to provide transportation services for targeted populations. Stakeholders from cities, agencies, and providers in the Rapid City region were surveyed to identify service gaps and/or barriers, strategize solutions most appropriate to meet these needs based on local circumstances, and prioritize these needs for inclusion in this plan.

Nelson\Nygaard developed surveys for Rapid City area stakeholders to enumerate the transportation services they provide and their challenges and opportunities in providing transportation to the region. The survey asks stakeholders about the communities they serve, operational details about the transportation services they offer, and their perceptions of both successes and challenges they have experienced in providing transportation in the Rapid City area. The survey was published on Survey Monkey, and responses were collected between mid-September and late December 2018. The survey was made accessible via web link, mobile app, or QR code. A total of 19 unique responses were collected. Following are key findings of the stakeholder survey.

### Key Findings

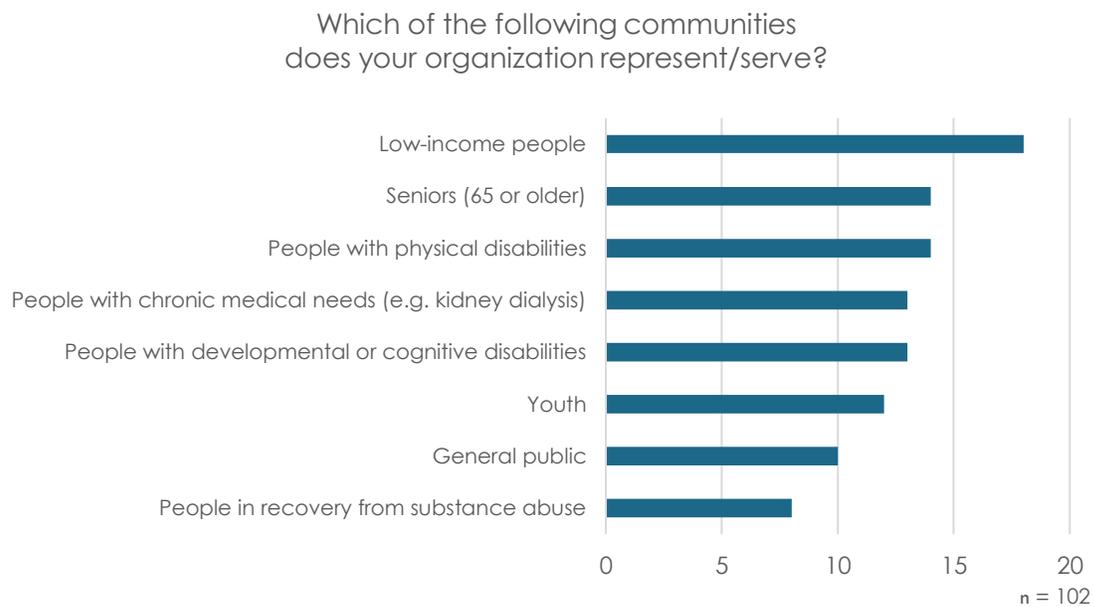
- There are broad definitions of the geographic area served relative to Rapid City. Over half of stakeholders serve the “Black Hills Region” or “Western South Dakota” while fewer are specifically tailored to Rapid City or Pennington County.
- Federal funds are the most commonly utilized funding source, followed by private donations, state funds, fares, city funds, and county funds.
- Stakeholders combine to offer a fleet of at least 94 buses and 72 vans.
- The most common federal funding sources are Section 5310 and Section 5339, though individual stakeholders report using Sections 5337, 5311, 5307.
- With one notable exception (Rapid Transit System), stakeholders that provide weekend services do so on both Saturday and Sunday.
- Resources for programs including senior transit, volunteer drivers, and travel training are all perceived by stakeholders as very limited. Wait lists are long and ride requests may not be quickly fulfilled.

## Detailed Findings

### Communities Served

Rapid City area stakeholders serve a wide range of communities that typically require paratransit or human services transportation, as shown in Figure 3-19. Most stakeholder organizations serve multiple communities, the most common being low-income people, seniors, and people with physical disabilities. This pattern indicates some level of redundancy in services offered, such that even the least commonly-served community of concern – people in recovery from substance abuse – can turn to multiple providers for transportation assistance.

**Figure 3-19 Communities Served**

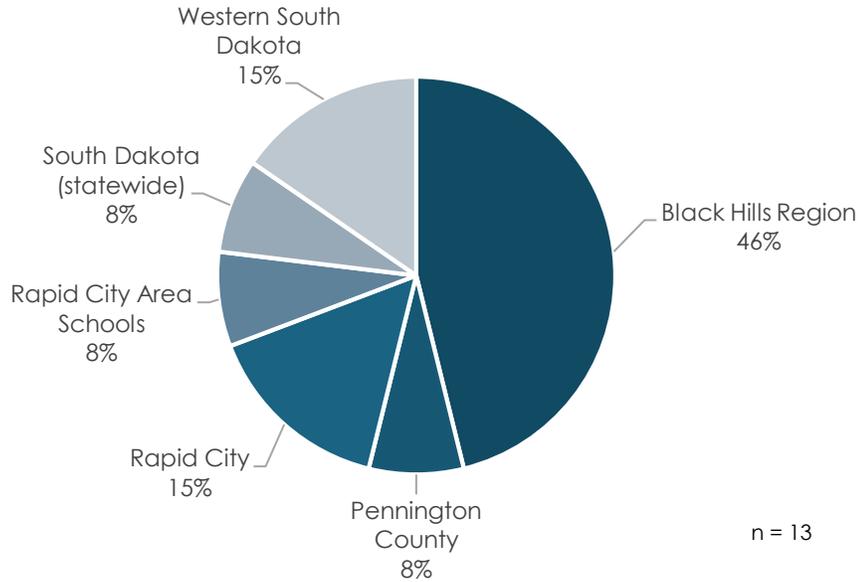


### Geographic Area of Service

Most stakeholders reported that they serve the greater Black Hills region (6 of 13 respondents), as shown in Figure 3-20. Others reported serving broader areas, such as the entire state of South Dakota or western South Dakota, while others provide service more narrowly to Rapid City only.

**Figure 3-20 Geographic Area of Service**

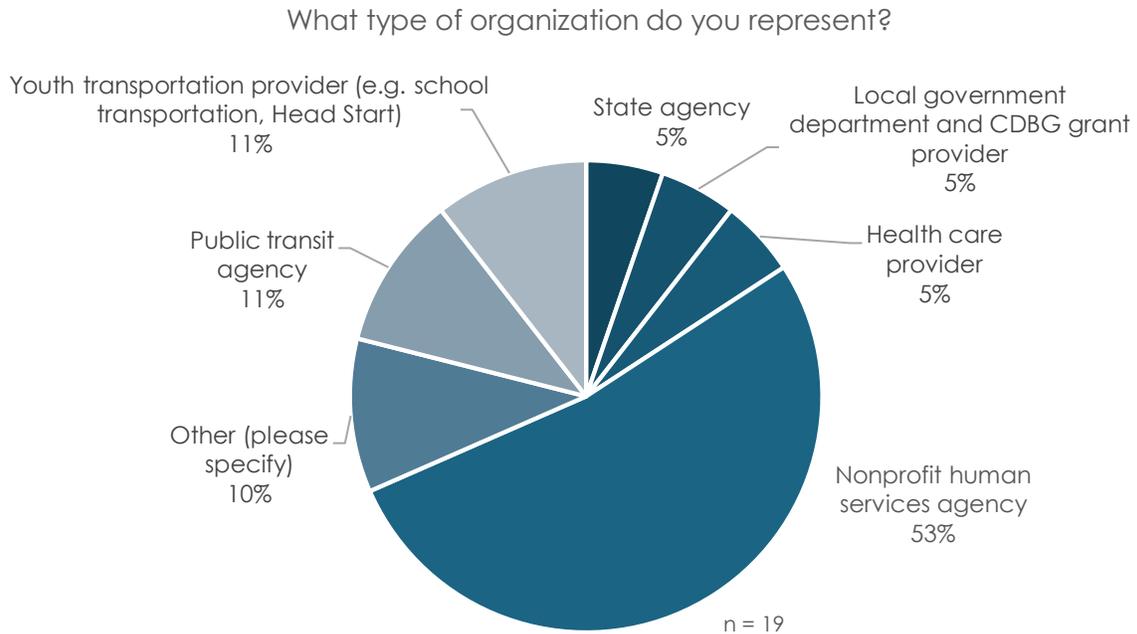
What geographic area does your organization serve?



### Type of Organization

A majority (52%) of the stakeholders reported that they are nonprofit human services organizations, as shown in Figure 3-21. The remaining stakeholders ranged from healthcare providers to youth transportation providers, state and local government agencies, and public transit agencies.

**Figure 3-21 Use of Transportation Services**

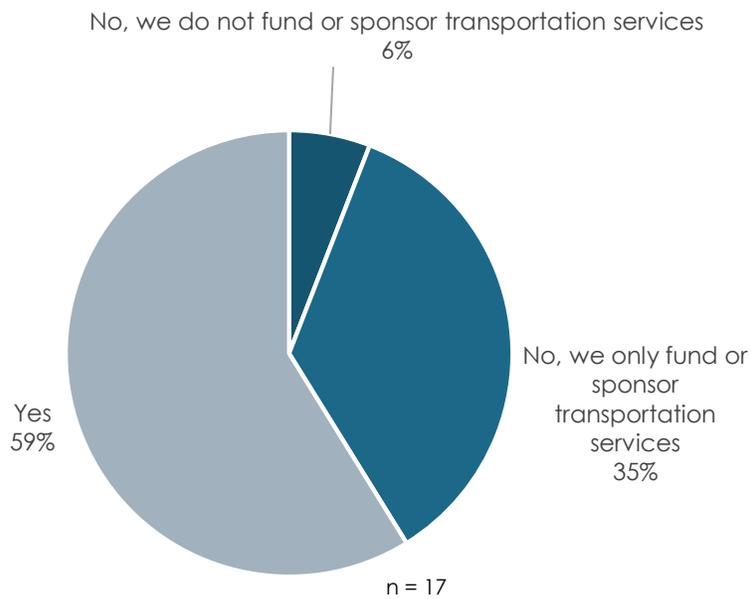


### Provision of Transportation Services

This survey question asked stakeholders whether they provide transportation services directly or sponsor transportation services of a third party. Most stakeholders (58%) report that they provide transportation services directly, while 35% sponsor transportation services provided by a third party, as shown in Figure 3-22. A single stakeholder, the Pennington County Housing and Redevelopment Commission, reported that they neither provide nor sponsor transportation services.

**Figure 3-22 Needs for Transportation Services by Trip Purpose**

Does your organization directly provide these transportation services?



## Fleet Inventory

Stakeholders were asked to provide the total number of various types of vehicles they own and maintain (see Figure 3-23). This question pertained only to the 10 of 17 total stakeholders who reported that they directly provide transportation services, as indicated in Figure 3-22; other stakeholders skipped this question. Buses are the most common vehicle type in stakeholder fleets, with 94 buses among the nine stakeholder respondents, followed by vans (72 vehicles), cars (71 vehicles), and trucks (two vehicles). Stakeholders with the largest bus fleets include, unsurprisingly, the public transit agencies RTS and Prairie Hills Transit, along with Black Hills Works and Youth & Family Services. Black Hills Works also features the largest van inventory among the stakeholders, with 52 of 72 vans. Youth & Family Services has the largest car fleet, with 55 of 71 cars between the stakeholders.

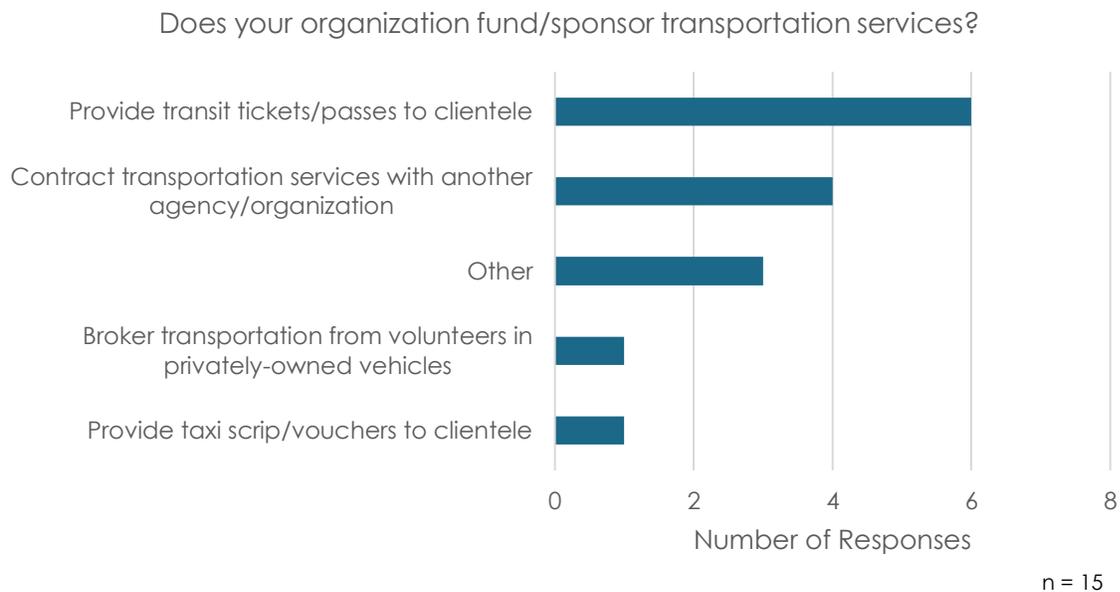
**Figure 3-23 Stakeholder Fleet Inventory**

Organization Name	Car	Truck	Van	Bus
Black Hills Works, Inc.	12	2	52	14
Meals on Wheels Western South Dakota	500	5		
Prairie Hills Transit	2		8	34
The Club for Boys	1		3	5
YMCA			4	4
Shirley's Adult Day Center			3	1
Youth & Family Services	55	0	2	17
Rapid City Area Schools McKinney-Vento	1			
Rapid Transit System				19
<b>TOTAL (not including Meals on Wheels)</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>94</b>

### Service Allocation

Stakeholders were asked whether they sponsor transportation services offered by third parties by any of several service delivery approaches (see Figure 3-24). The most common service delivery approach is to provide public transit tickets or passes (e.g., RTS, Prairie Hills Transit) to clientele, reported by six of 15 stakeholders. The second-most common approach is to contract transportation services with other providers, reported by four of 15 stakeholders. Individual stakeholders also reported other service delivery methods such as brokering transportation from volunteers in privately-owned vehicles, providing taxi scrip/vouchers to clientele, offering Lyft rides to clientele, or mileage reimbursement for clientele. Each of these approaches were reported by a single stakeholder.

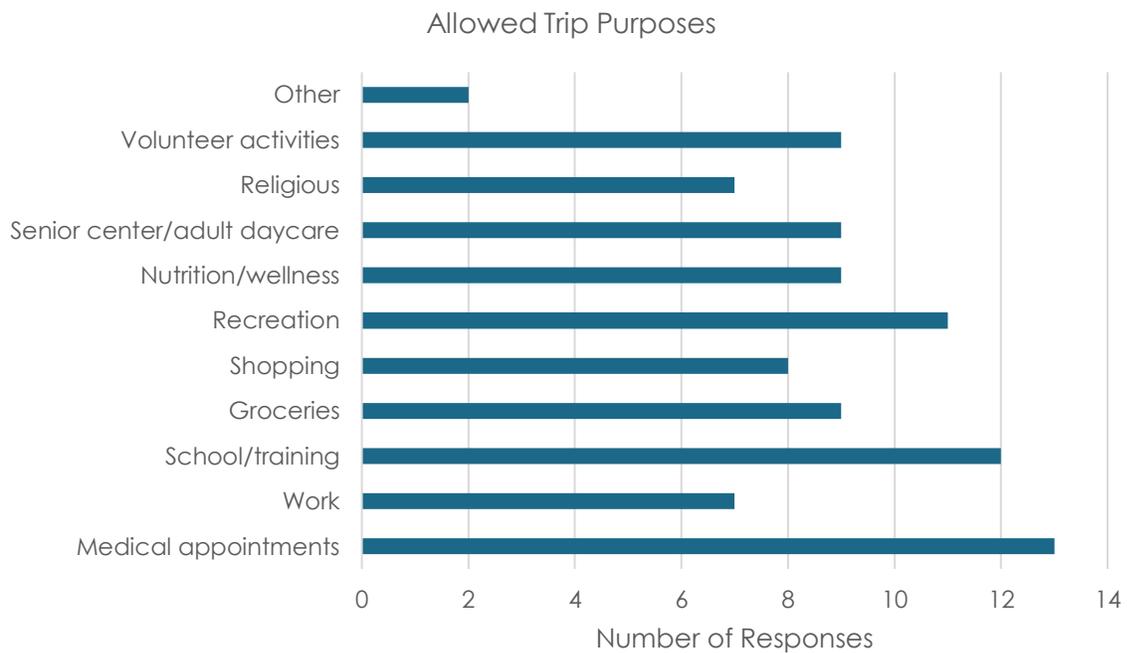
**Figure 3-24 Service Allocation**



### Eligible Trip Purposes

Most stakeholders' transportation services only support a limited range of trip purposes (see Figure 3-25). The most commonly supported trip purposes are medical appointments, school/training, and recreation. Grocery shopping, volunteer activities, senior centers, and nutrition/wellness appointments are also typically eligible. Several stakeholders also support non-grocery shopping trips, work trips, and trips to religious institutions. However, trips to visit family or friends or other social trips are generally not supported. Only a single stakeholder supports human services appointments (e.g. Social Services) or youth programs, respectively.

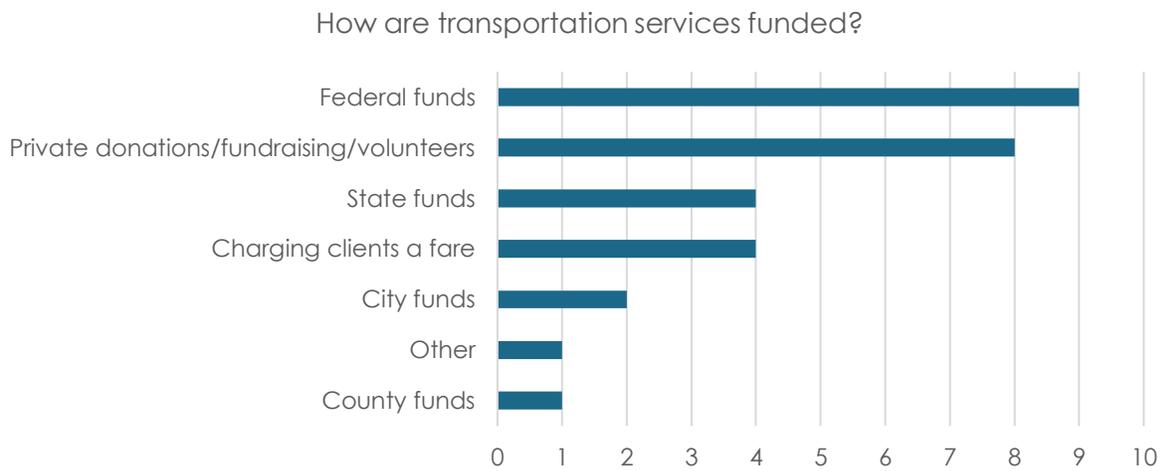
**Figure 3-25 Allowed Trip Purposes**



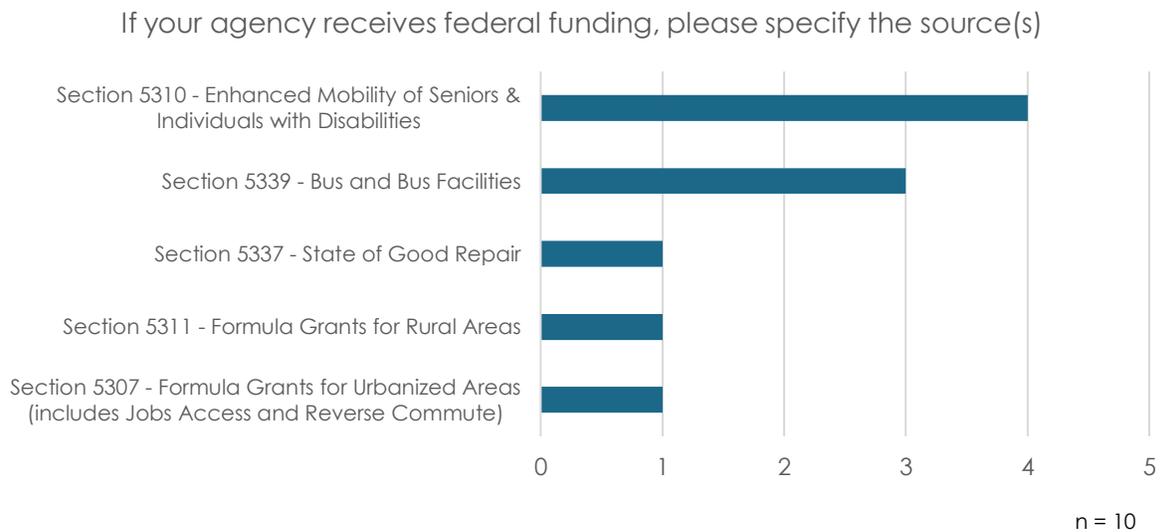
**Funding**

Stakeholders use a variety of local, state, and federal funding sources to operate and/or sponsor transportation services in the Rapid City area. Federal funds are the most commonly utilized funding source, followed by private donations, state funds, fares, city funds, and county funds. These responses are shown in Figure 3-26. Most stakeholders, 10 out of 15 respondents, report that they receive either federal or state funding. The most common federal funding sources are Section 5310 and Section 5339, though individual stakeholders report using Sections 5337, 5311, 5307. Other reported funding sources include AmeriCorps/SeniorCorps, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants, HeadStart, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funding, and McKinney-Vento grants (see Figure 3-27).

**Figure 3-26 General Funding Sources**



**Figure 3-27 Federal Funding Source**



## Service Operations

All stakeholders reported that they offer service Monday thru Friday, while five organizations offer Saturday service and four offer Sunday service (see Figure 3-28). Self-reported weekday, Saturday, and Sunday ridership volumes are shown in Figure 3-29. These totals are notable because they show that some human service nonprofit organizations, such as Black Hills Works, serve ridership comparable to that of public transit services like RTS and Prairie Hills Transit.

**Figure 3-28 Days of Service**

Organization	M	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
Black Hills Works, Inc.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Community Health Center of the Black Hills	■	■	■	■	■		
Hope Center	■	■	■	■	■		
Meals on Wheels Western South Dakota	■	■	■	■	■		
Prairie Hills Transit	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
The Club for Boys	■	■	■	■	■		
Shirley's Adult Day Center	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Senior Companions of South Dakota	■	■	■	■	■		
Youth & Family Services	■	■	■	■	■		
Rapid City Area Schools McKinney-Vento	■	■	■	■	■		
SDDOT Office of Air, Rail and Transit	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Rapid Transit System	■	■	■	■	■	■	

**Figure 3-29 Average Ridership**

Organization Name	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Black Hills Works, Inc.	545	400	300
Community Health Center of the Black Hills	1	0	0
Hope Center	10		
Meals on Wheels Western South Dakota	25	0	0
Prairie Hills Transit	700	30	25
The Club for Boys	150	0	0
Shirley's Adult Day Center	20	1	10
Senior Companions of South Dakota	10	0	0
Youth & Family Services	200	0	0
Rapid City Area Schools McKinney-Vento	3	0	0
Rapid Transit System	1,600	700	0

## Rider Preferences and Challenges

The survey asked stakeholders to report their riders' most common destinations on transportation services they provide. Stakeholders were asked to rank up to five top destinations, where a ranking of "1" indicates the highest priority for riders and a ranking of "5" indicates the lowest priority for riders. The most common destinations include a mix of medical destinations (e.g. doctor's appointments, various clinics, and Regional Health Rapid City Hospital), schools and employment sites, and shopping centers (e.g. Walmart). Detailed results are shown in Figure 3-30.

Stakeholders were also asked to describe up to five of the most significant transportation challenges their clientele face. The greatest reported challenge is that important destinations are not accessible via public transit, reflecting the limited coverage of transit agencies such as RTS and Prairie Hills Transit. The second-most common challenge reported is that bus stops are not close enough to homes and/or destinations. Long distances between stops near certain destinations or in certain neighborhoods may be to blame. Another key challenge is that public transit service does not operate late enough into the evening, one of the greatest challenges in the public survey. Weekday service hours end at 5:50 p.m., while Saturday service hours end at 4:40 p.m.. Other commonly reported challenges are shown in Figure 3-31.

**Figure 3-30 Top Rider Destinations, Ranked**

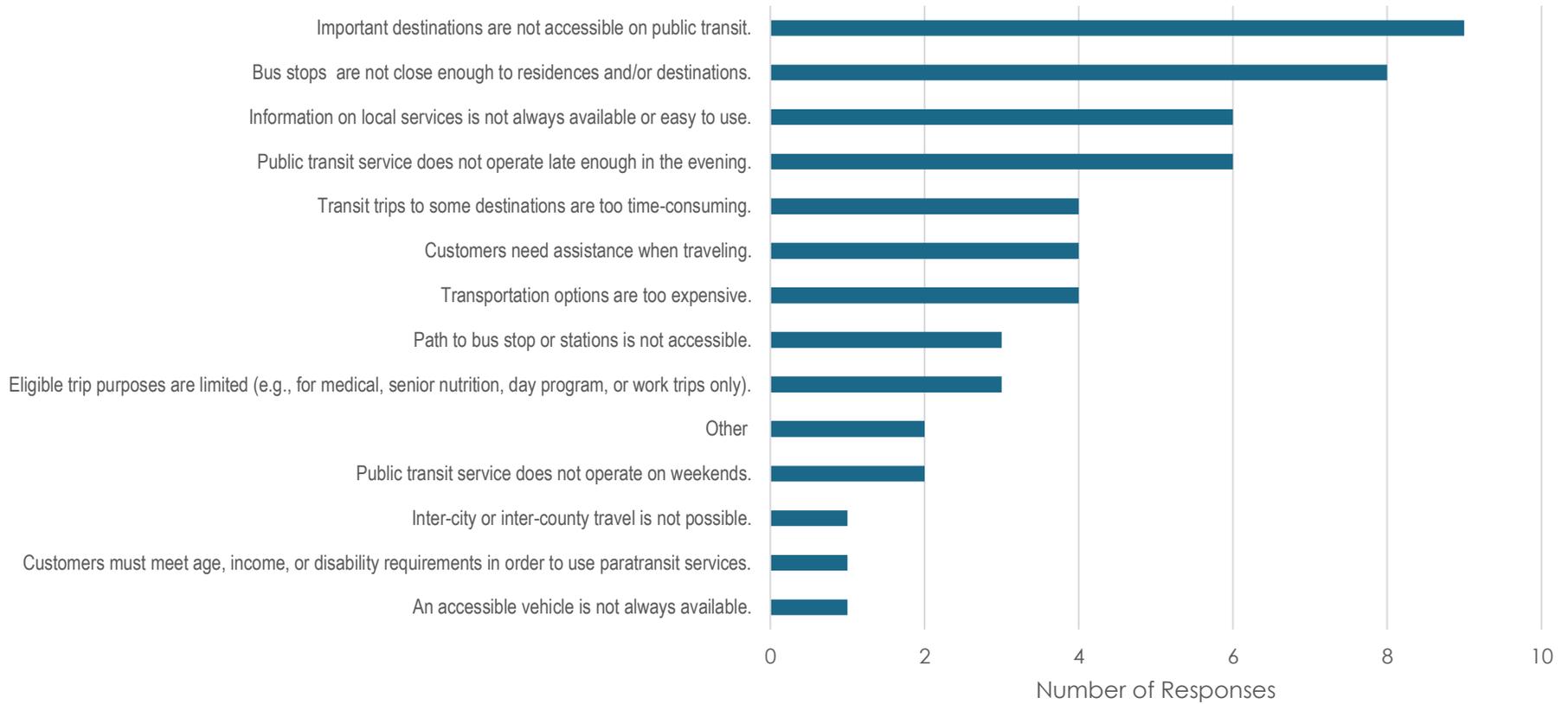
Destination	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total Rankings
Doctors' offices/Medical Clinics	2	1	1	1		5
Homes/Rapid City area	2	1				3
Rapid City Regional Hospital	1		2			3
Schools		2	1			3
Walmart/Rapid City	1	1		1		3
Head Start Centers	1	1				2
Employment					2	2
Various grocery stores in Rapid City				1	1	2
Regional Medical Clinic, Aspen Center	1					1
Banks - any and all of these too				1		1
Black Hills Works locations					1	1
Black Hawk Elementary				1		1
Center (CDC and GI programs)				1		1
Community Health Center of the Black Hills	1					1
Dialysis			1			1
Department of Social Services, Rapid City			1			1
East Middle School	1					1
Elementary schools	1					1
Ellsworth Air Force Base			1			1

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Destination	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total Rankings
Learning Center - 3603 Range Road		1				1
Meadowbrook Elementary			1			1
Middle Schools		1				1
Minneluzahan Senior Center		1				1
Nursing homes in Pennington County, SD					1	1
Outdoor campus west			1			1
Pharmacy - any and all of them		1				1
Pizza Ranch				1		1
Plant St Learning Center - 2828 Plant St	1					1
Public Schools (CDC and GI programs)			1			1
Rapid Valley Elementary					1	1
Shopping				1		1
Sioux San Hospital, Rapid City		1				1
Swing bed transfers			1			1
Valley View Elementary		1				1

Figure 3-31 Top Transportation Challenges

Top Challenges Faced by Customers/Clients



n = 54

## Miscellaneous Comments

The survey's closing section asked stakeholders to describe success stories with any transportation policies, programs, or services. An overarching theme several stakeholders expressed is that the most successful transportation programs have sufficient infrastructure and resources to serve broader ranges of people. The Youth Ride Free program with RTS has been viewed as a success. While one respondent mentioned the program is underutilized, another mentioned it grew 93% between October 2016 and October 2018.

Another respondent mentioned the benefit of having more of their clientele travel by public transportation. They want to be able to operate more efficiently by focusing on assisting those unable to use public transportation. This stakeholder reported that some of their clients have been able to get around on their own using transit because RTS has a travel training program to help people become more comfortable taking the bus. This stakeholder noted:

*"Those who are able utilize public transit which in turn allows us to better serve those who cannot use public transit. Working with public transit to help train riders on their routes giving them the freedom to travel on their own."*

However, other respondents noted that travel training programs are often under-resourced. The Senior Companion Program is not always able to accommodate everyone who reaches out to them, and RTS services are often unable to complete many longer trips outside of Rapid City. Likewise, dial-a-ride can be inconvenient, inflexible, and expensive to provide. Riders who need it must reserve trips by 3:30 p.m. the day prior (for next day service) and often face long travel times compared to fixed-route services. This stakeholder commented:

*"These service providers fill in a gap in Rapid City's transportation system, providing more accessible and convenient options for people to get to where they need to go. Without some of these options, people may need to depend on more expensive or inconvenient alternatives to get around. Some may elect not to make their trips in the first place."*

Three respondents mentioned the success of the Youth Ride Free program, and another program highlighted the work they do around getting students to Head Start, public schools and, occasionally, their families to medical appointments. This is notable because it identifies a clear need for these services, as some students may not be served by school bus routes.

Although these programs fill in gaps in service, many of their customers probably continue to have limited means of getting where they would like to go when they would like to get there. These programs do not support all trips and may have limited times of service.

One respondent pointed out that more preparation, time, and money were needed to get their clients in more rural areas to some of the places they need to go. This respondent suggested their program does not have the resources to always make these kinds of trips, adding:

*"One problem with my program is that the client is restricted to their own community. In Rapid City it isn't much of a problem, but when a Belle Fourche client needs to go to the Eye Institute in Rapid, the volunteer has to call me to authorize the 100-120 mile round trip. Volunteers are reimbursed for mileage, but the program does have limited funds."*

Two other stakeholders echoed this theme, commenting:

*"And one thing we are not is a taxi service. Yes, we take individuals here and there, but first they have to become clients, similar to an application process. Another hindrance is a Wait List. In Rapid City right now I have 30 people on the Wait List and am projecting people that call today may get served 12-18 months from now, or longer. What do I*

*think would work? Unfortunately there isn't a "one size fits all" solution. A volunteer driver program might work, but it would have to be funded, not only for mileage reimbursement, but for vehicle maintenance, etc."*

*"My program matches a volunteer with each client. That volunteer may have anywhere from 3-6 clients, usually on a fixed day of the week. Ideally clients arrange their need for rides to fit into 3-4 hours one day a week. Realistically the volunteer juggles her schedule around to fit in the many different doctor/clinic appointments that 3-6 clients have in a week, as well as their need to go here and there."*

A challenge for some could be that to participate in these programs, there may be a process/paperwork to be filled out, a time-consuming step that would exclude any riders who need same-day or even next-day transportation. For some people, this may be a barrier to entry. Others may find the RTS dial-a-ride option too expensive relative to their income, with a one-way fare of \$3.00. One respondent commented:

*"When the Senior Companion Program can't accommodate a clients' request, I direct them to Dial-a-Ride. It can be made to work, but the clients resist because of several things. One, they have to fill out an "application". (They may need the ride tomorrow.) Two, they may have to be picked up early for their appointment and taken home an hour or more after the appointment. Three, the cost is too high for people living on a fixed income. Or grocery shopping is difficult because of the number of bags they may have."*

## NEEDS BY POPULATION

### Older Adults

By 2040, one in five of all Americans will be 65 or older; this is an increase from today's rate of one in seven people.<sup>3</sup> While many older adults continue to drive as they age, adults are more likely to reduce or stop driving as they age. Others may adjust their driving according to the time of day and season; reports suggest many older adults do not drive after dark or during the winter months when weather may be bad.

Consistent with the population overall, older adults have many and varied transportation needs, including trips to shopping, appointments, social activities, and recreation. Non-medical trips are just as important to older adults as are recurring medical appointments; older people (a sizeable proportion of which live alone) do not wish to be isolated. However, as put by the AARP Public Policy Institute, "in areas far from transit, areas with few community features and services nearby and areas with poor transit service, losing mobility can mean losing independence."<sup>4</sup>



Photo by Zac Ong on Unsplash

### Youths / Millennials

Rapid City youth are beneficiaries to free transit passes on RapidRide. The program is well-received and has been continuing for at least the past three years. The challenge going forward is ensuring youths are not only fully aware of this unique program, but also knowledgeable about how to ride the bus and where to pick up the bus. Service design, information, and outreach efforts should be tailored to meet youth and school-aged needs. The times in which students are required to pick up a transit pass (a policy as of 2019) are an opportunity to educate youth on how to ride the bus, expand word of mouth, and receive feedback for future improvements from students.

The continued need for regularly scheduled bus service for youths was paramount in public survey responses; more than any other destination type, schools had the highest number of responses in support of becoming a "preferred destination for transportation improvements."



Photo by Zac Ong on Unsplash

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/politics-society/history/info-2018/older-population-increase-new-report.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/documents-2014/Livability%20Fact%20Sheets/AARP-Livability-Fact-Sheets-080615l.pdf>

As the first generation to be raised in the age of smartphones, youths (and younger members of the “millennial” generation) are also more inclined to use the Internet and mobile apps to communicate and request services, including transportation. New mobile apps remove many day-to-day barriers that dissuade casual transit riders by providing easy trip planning tools and real-time information. Transit systems that allow them to stay connected while they travel are highly valued.<sup>5</sup>

During public outreach, a disabled millennial felt that the existing method of signing up and requesting a dial-a-ride trip by telephoning a dispatcher was an act that felt complicated and inconvenient. The person preferred to be driven by a friend to a fixed-route bus stop than have to make a phone call for service.

## People with Disabilities

In Rapid City, the proportion of people under the age of 65 with a disability is 10%, greater than South Dakota and the entire country<sup>6</sup>. Although there are people with disabilities who are able to drive a personal vehicle, there are also people with disabilities who rely on public transportation and depend on the flexibility and freedom it provides to engage in the same activities as the rest of the general population (such as shopping, social activities, and recreation). Individuals with disabilities who rely on public transportation are also in need of reliable transportation to critical and recurring non-emergency medical appointments. People with disabilities also need to get to their jobs and/or job training.

Many people with disabilities can use fixed-route transit, but an ADA-accessible vehicle is critical. For those with certain physical or cognitive limitations, demand-response transportation may be required.



Photo by Josh Appel on Unsplash

## Households in Poverty / Households without Vehicles

As income decreases, the cost of owning and using a private vehicle becomes a greater burden. As a result, people who live in poverty are generally less likely to own a private vehicle, and will thus depend on rides from other people, including friends, family, and public transportation.

The needs of people in poverty and without a vehicle may be exacerbated by the cost of transportation itself. At \$3, the dial-a-ride one-way fare is twice the fare for fixed-route service on RapidRide. This expense for dial-a-ride was singled out in responses to the public survey, including a statement that “bus rides are not affordable for folks in poverty.”

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<sup>5</sup> <http://uspirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/A%20New%20Direction%20vUS.pdf>. In a survey administered by Zipcar, 25% of those 18 to 34 reported that mobile transportation apps (such as taxi apps, real-time transit information, and car sharing) had reduced their driving frequency, compared with only 9% of those 55 and older.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US,sd,rapidcitycitysouthdakota/PST045218>

## NEEDS BY SERVICE

For people who do not have access to a personal vehicle, the absence of transit service to certain areas and at certain times means that key destinations may be effectively out of reach. In this way, lack of transit service coverage can trigger broader injustices that have broader negative impacts throughout the lives of transit-dependent people who are unable to access workplaces, childcare centers, food banks, clinics, and shopping centers, among other destinations.

### Rapid Transit Service on Sundays

Of the five responding stakeholders who provide transportation service on weekends, Rapid Transit System is the only to not provide service on Sunday. Prairie Hills Transit, on the contrary, does provide discretionary demand-response service to Spearfish residents on Sunday based on how many requests are made on the preceding Friday.

This need for Sunday service was echoed in the public survey; more people responding required transportation services on Sundays from 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. than the number of people who did during the same timespan on Saturday. Almost 25% of responses specifically needed service on Sunday morning from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

### Rapid Transit Service on Evenings

Compared to more highly urbanized areas, the spans of service of many Rapid Transit System routes are relatively narrow. Routes operate between 6:20 a.m. and 5:50 p.m. on weekdays and 9:50 a.m. and 4:40 p.m. on Saturdays, typically at 35-minute service frequencies. No Sunday service is provided. Even the City View Trolley, which is designed to serve popular attractions, ends its runs at 5:00 p.m.

These narrow spans of service, and infrequent service, make completing many types of trips by transit challenging, if not impossible. Common trip types that are difficult or impossible to make within the existing span of service include late-shift work trips, child-care evening pickups for families, social trips to restaurants and bars, and after-school activities or evening classes for students.

This lack of service was a common concern voiced by the public. A notable response in the public survey stated how “those that work in the evenings and/or weekends, after 4 or on Sundays must walk or find other transportation.” Additional concerns included the fact that people who go out drinking in the evenings lack safe transportation options, which in turn increases the risk for all people on the roads.

### Service to Box Elder and Ellsworth Air Force Base

Providing service to Box Elder was a gap identified in the 2013-2017 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan. Since then, fixed-route transit service remains absent in Box Elder. From 2015 to 2017, approximately one of out every five new housing units built in the RCAMPO area



was located in Box Elder or neighboring Ellsworth Air Force Base (a major employment center). The need to provide transit service to this part of the region remains.<sup>7</sup>

### **Service to Additional Locations**

The following locations are also in need of additional transportation services (covered by either expanding the fixed-route network or the dial-a-ride service area). It is important to note that dial-a-ride operates within the city's corporate limits, so service is not offered to Rapid Valley; however, service is offered to the airport and Mount Rushmore Road, and areas of Rapid Valley:

- Rapid Valley
- Green Valley
- Rapid City Regional Airport
- Black Hawk
- Mount Rushmore Road south of existing service

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.rapidcityareampo.org/application/files/2915/2397/6830/Socio\\_Combined.pdf](http://www.rapidcityareampo.org/application/files/2915/2397/6830/Socio_Combined.pdf)

## 4 COORDINATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### PURPOSE OF STRATEGY IDENTIFICATION

As with any coordinated plan, it is critical to outline goals and objectives for the region. Goals and objectives are statements that describe what the coordinated plan will accomplish as well as the overall value the plan contributes to the community and to public transit in the region. Goals are an essential component to any coordinated plan, providing an overall context for what the plan is working to accomplish. Variations in goals are a product of the different plans as much as they are a product of agency resources (limited or otherwise). Additionally, the goals vary based on accessibility, customer service, and sustainability.



The South Dakota Department of Transportation released goals and objectives for the state strategic plan through mid-2019. The strategic objectives for the DOT plan include the following:

- Improve customer and stakeholder service
- Sustain and grow a high-quality workforce
- Improve the efficiency, quality, and timeliness of department services
- Improve public and workforce safety
- Sustain and manage the state transportation system and assets

Goals for regional coordinated plans should point back to state and national goals for coordination and transportation planning. While all of the goals for any given plan may not necessarily align exactly with statewide goals, some thought should be given to designing goals that reflect state and national initiatives. As such, the overarching goals and objectives for the 2019-2024 coordinated human service transportation plan include:

- Education, Marketing, and Awareness
  - Increase awareness of current available services
  - Creation of educational campaigns
  - Service directory

- Mobility management for the region
- Financial Sustainability and Fiscal Responsibility
  - Sustainable funding support
  - Funding awarded solely to projects that promote coordination
  - Financial education and incentive(s) to participate in coordination
- Service Availability and Accessibility
  - Supplemental services to support public transit system
  - Safety and accessibility at transit stops
  - Additional service
- Promote Regional Coordination
  - Development of coordination committee
  - Grant opportunities for coordinated projects
  - Non-traditional coordination opportunities
  - Finding a local champion(s)
- Embrace New Technologies in Transportation Provision and Coordination
  - Consider the use of technologies for improved service

Transportation gaps and solutions identified in this plan become eligible to be funded through federal funds distributed by RCAMPO to regional partners. These eligible solutions are referred to as *projects*, and are outlined later in this chapter. Projects are concrete solutions—new vehicles, improved sidewalk infrastructure or accessible bus stops, and software systems are examples.

*Recommendations*—highlighted in the below table—are bigger picture initiatives that stakeholders and RCAMPO can implement or facilitate. These strategies grow directly from feedback received from stakeholder groups, public surveys, advocates for special populations, and existing local providers of transportation and human services. They are bounded by regional policies and the powers that RCAMPO and transit agencies, cities, nonprofits, providers, and other stakeholders have to fund and implement initiatives. For the purposes of simplicity, the recommendations are categorically organized by which goal they fall under: Education, Finance, Service, Coordination, and Technology.

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**Figure 4-1 Summary of Recommendations**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Implementing Party</b>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	Marketing campaign, including guide, to increase awareness of current services offered	Short-Mid-Term	RCAMPO/Future Regional Coordination Committee (RCC)
	Specific marketing for populations that are marginalized, and do not use technology	Short-Term	All
	Creation of a Mobility Manager position for the region	Mid-Term	All
	Advertise one-on-one travel training program for seniors, and a "how-to ride" program for school-age students	Short-Term	All
<b>FINANCE</b>	Create funding matrix to bring awareness to available funds and upcoming deadlines for grant funding	Short-Term	RCAMPO
	Develop internal educational campaign for providers who would otherwise use grants, including 5310 funding on timelines and how funding works	Mid-Term	RCAMPO
	Create committee to decide on 5310 and other coordinated funding awards	Mid-Term	RCC or RCAMPO
<b>SERVICE</b>	Determine "hubs" or consistent destinations that are in need of service and add regular fixed routes	Mid-term	RCAMPO & RTS
	Conduct stop safety & accessibility analysis to determine potential improvements	Short-term	RTS
	Systematically add service early mornings and evenings	Short-Mid-Term	RTS
	Plan on adding service in areas of highest transit need on Sundays	Mid-Term	RTS
	Add demand-response/flexible service to underserved communities and neighborhoods	Mid-Term	RTS
	Work with the city and developers early to plan for transit in new communities	Short-Term	RCAMPO & RTS
	Examine the use of low-income reduced fares	Mid-Term	RCAMPO & RTS
<b>COORDINATION</b>	Develop regional coordination committee (RCC)	Short-Term	RCAMPO
	Coordination with major employers, local colleges, and tribal nations	Long-Term	RCC
	Establish a local champion(s) for coordinated transportation	Mid-Term	RCC

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Category	Recommendation	Time Frame	Implementing Party
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	Explore the use of emerging mobility options, such as Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), to supplement paratransit services	Long-Term	RCC
	Consider the implementation of senior transportation services, and other app-based services, such as GoGo Grandparent for older adult populations	Long-Term	RCC
	Provide search engines, web developers, and the public domain with General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data to ensure fixed-route public transit schedules and stop locations are easily accessible to the public by multiple means	Mid-Term	RTC & RCAMPO

## DESCRIPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### Education Recommendations

#### Marketing Campaign

The development of a regional transportation marketing campaign would inform current and potential riders (and human service agency personnel) about the services available to them and make the services easier to understand and use. Increasing the visibility of transit, paratransit, and other transportation services within local communities would also help to garner funding support.

#### Ride Guide and How to Ride

The marketing campaign may be all-encompassing, but should definitely include a ride guide targeted to senior adults who do not use technology for transportation services, and a “how-to ride” for school-aged customers.

The ride guide should be produced in large-print format in English and possibly Spanish. The ride guide should be widely distributed to senior and retirement centers, as well as to other medical and health facilities that cater to older adults.

Additionally, travel training can fall under the marketing campaign. RTS currently provides travel training services; however, those services are not advertised, and individuals who need the service may not know where or how to access them. A travel training campaign would help to advertise the availability of these services.

#### Regional Mobility Manager

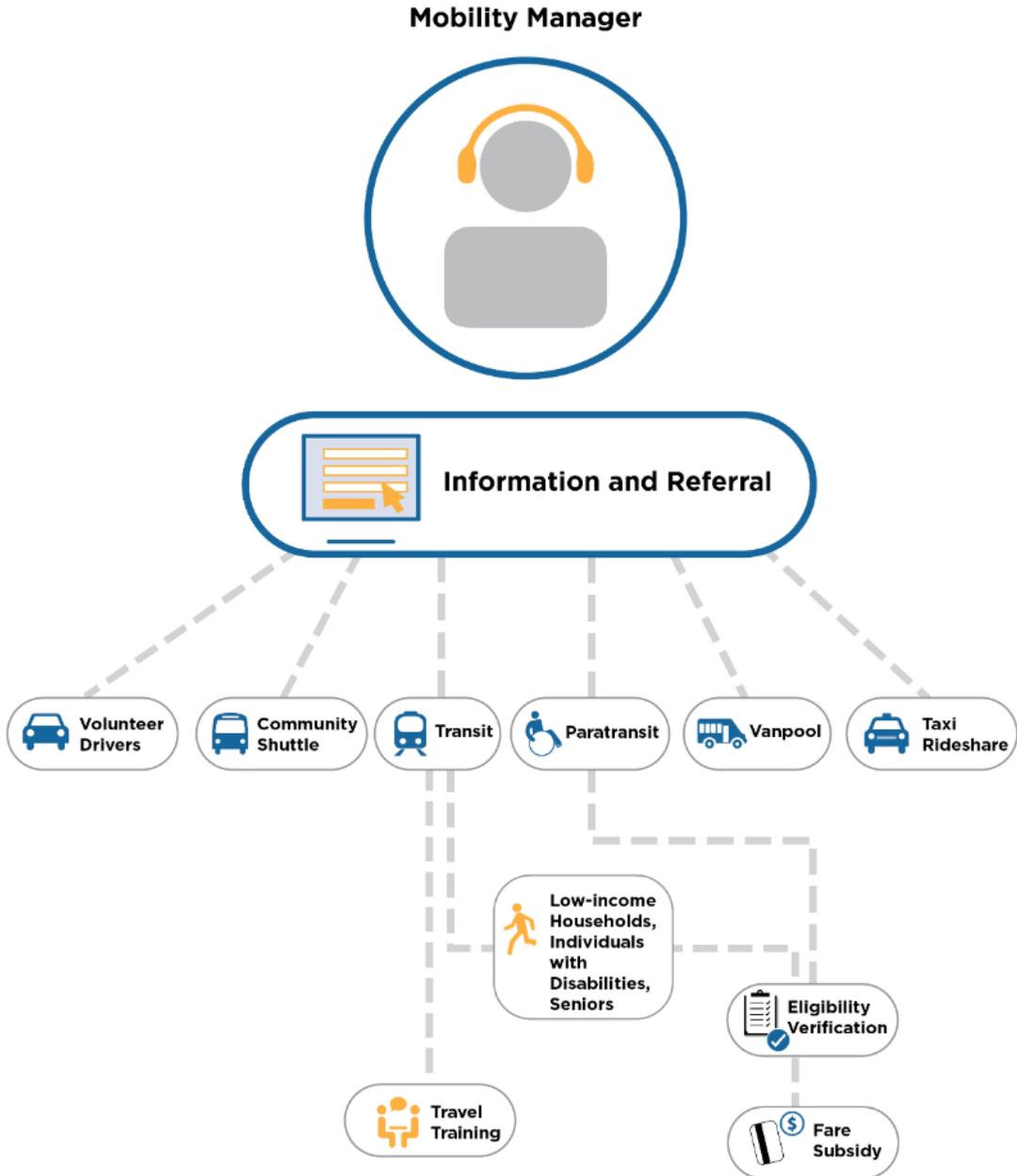
Securing a dedicated Mobility Manager for the region is another key element to advancing paratransit coordination. Part of the organization process is to identify the appropriate location, reporting structure, and responsibilities for a dedicated regional Mobility Manager.

Ultimately, it is recommended that the Mobility Manager will be housed at the lead agency and will report to the Board of Directors at the lead agency; the details of this will largely depend on the type of agency that is the lead and what their agency structure is.

Mobility Management is an eligible capital activity under the FTA Section 5310 Program. If Section 5310 funding is applied to this purpose, up to 80% of Mobility Management costs could be federally funded and a 20% local match would be required. Local match for the Mobility Manager services should be derived from local key stakeholder organizations that collectively provide funding. Mobility management is also an administrative function. The lead agency may also tap into a 10% draw-down of FTA Section 5300 funding for the purposes of mobility management without the need for a local match.

One of the responsibilities of the Mobility Manager will be to inform and lead a transportation advisory group comprised of key stakeholder organizations that are financially (cash or in-kind) contributing to the local match for Mobility Management services.

Figure 6-3 Potential Mobility Management Services



MTC Coordinated Plan

Source:

## Finance Recommendations

### Funding Matrix

It is recommended that RCAMPO develop, in conjunction with RTS, a funding matrix that describes funding streams, sources, grant dates, and how to use the funding. This will help all of the agencies involved in coordinated planning to better understand available funds and how to access the funds. The federal formula funding write up in Chapter 2 of this report may be used to contribute to the overall matrix. The purpose of a quick, easy-to-read and understand matrix is to be prepared with “shovel-ready” projects at any time funds are made available. This strategy also works hand-in-hand with the internal education strategy for 5310 funding. Helping organizations who provide transportation services better understand funding for transportation and timelines will assist in gathering more applications for federal funding and better motivate agencies to participate in a regionally coordinated plan.

### Committee for Funding Distribution

It is strongly recommended that RCAMPO put together a committee for the selection of recipients and distribution of federal, state, and local funding for coordinated projects. A committee of peers with a structured selection and voting process will help to ensure that funding isn't just offered to any given transportation project.

## Service Recommendations

### Transportation Deserts

Transportation (or transit) deserts are areas within a region that are considered “urbanized” but are not served by any form of transportation service. Transit deserts occur in a variety of ways; sometimes through regional growth—an area is no longer able to be served by rural services, because it is newly urbanized. In other instances, an area may be within the urbanized area, but was previously vacant and now has new development or neighborhoods. Agencies should work together to determine “hubs” or consistent destinations that are not currently served by any type of transportation service and systematically add in service, whether flexible routes, demand-response, or fixed-route service.

### Stop Safety and Accessibility Analysis

Safety and accessibility are paramount to increased usage of transportation services, but when an individual is an older adult or has a disability, safety and accessibility are critical. RTS and RCAMPO should work together to conduct a full inventory of all stops in the region to determine level of accessibility (sidewalks, ramps, size of bus pad), as well as safety features (lighting, inclement weather shelters, etc.) in order to develop a plan for systematic improvements to the stop. Additionally, the agencies should work with the city and county to determine if additional improvements to sidewalks or roads should be made to assist with stop accessibility.

### Increase Service Levels

One of the things commonly heard in public and stakeholder outreach is the need for more transit service in the early morning and evening hours as well as on Sundays. Additionally, this request has existed since the previous coordinated plan. It is recommended that RTS consider a

comprehensive operations analysis, or COA, that would allow the agency to make decisions related to service planning that will allow for removal or reduction of ineffective services in order to allocate funding for service changes that are necessary for the region.

### **Flexible Transit Services**

Fixed-route transportation can be costly and may not be the best solution in areas with lower population density. The use of community transit or contract service operators to operate smaller, right-sized fixed-schedule services may be a means to free up operating funding to provide additional services in low density areas of the county with demand for fixed-schedule service but not enough density to support traditional bus transit.

A review of the cost and productivity of existing bus routes may suggest routes that would be candidates for operation at a lower cost scale as route-deviation services. Such a change would also enable more direct service to apartment complexes, medical plazas, and shopping centers. This may also enable older adults and people with disabilities to use lower cost fixed-schedule services that can provide more of a curb-to-curb ride than traditional bus service.

Route-deviation services typically operate with fixed stops and timepoints, which enable individuals to request an off-route deviation, within a certain distance, for a pickup or dropoff at their home or destination. The vehicle then returns to the route or next timepoint. Deviations are requested in advance and may be available to all riders or limited to people with disabilities.

A deviated route pilot might focus on parts of the service area where fixed routes do not exist because population densities make fixed-route service cost prohibitive, yet there is a concentration of trip generators. A deviated route is often an incremental step between demand-response service and fixed-route service because passengers have the option of scheduling a deviation or walking to a bus stop. Often, as ridership increases, the deviated route transitions into a productive fixed route.

### **Transit in New Communities**

Often, new communities, developments, and neighborhoods get built quickly without much consideration for the need for transit services, how transit will access the developments, and how individuals will access transit. It is recommended that RTS and RCAMPO work with the City and developers early in the planning process so that plans may be made for future transit services in the area.

### **Reduced Fares**

Many agencies offer reduced fare programs for individuals with low incomes and agencies that serve those individuals. Often eligible human service agencies can apply to receive discounted, or subsidized, passes for the individuals they serve. An example of a program from South Placer County is outlined as follows:

Interested agencies may submit an application. The application must include how the agency will distribute tickets to clients and how this program will expand their current services. Once accepted, participating agencies will enter into an agreement with WPCTSA and become eligible to purchase a defined number of daily passes each month or as-needed based on the estimated number of users. Agencies may purchase transit day passes for fixed-route buses only, directly from any of the three transit providers serving South Placer County (Auburn Transit, Placer County Transit, and Roseville Transit). Agencies may then distribute tickets to their clients based

on the description provided in their application packet. Monthly, or less often at the agency's discretion, agencies will submit an invoice to WPCTSA for reimbursement of 75% of the cost of passes that have been purchased.

This approach works better and faster than interviewing would be customers one by one and asking for their income information. It allows the human service agencies to do the "leg-work" so to speak, and simplifies the process through contracts between agencies.

## **COORDINATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Develop Regional Coordination Committee (RCC)**

As the RTS and various organizations that are providing transportation (either directly operating service or funding service) work to implement the transportation improvement strategies, it will be important for all stakeholders involved in the planning process to continue to stay aware of the successes and failures of each program so others can learn and make progress toward addressing needs. It is suggested that a new committee is formed. The Regional Coordination Committee (RCC) should have representation from several organizations, balancing the need to have broad representation from community stakeholders, and the need to keep the committee from becoming too large. Possible representation may include the following organizations or organization types:

- Rapid Transit System (RTS)
- Nonprofit Transportation Providers
- Municipality(ies)
- The County
- Representatives from Nonprofit Agencies
- Representatives from Health and Medical Community
- Representatives from Veteran and Military Communities
- Representatives from Workforce and/or Major Employers
- Representatives from Education/Schools/Higher Education Institutions
- Representation from Transportation Network Companies

The RCC will coordinate with local transportation planning partners by acting as an advisory board for transportation planning decisions as the strategies contained in this plan are implemented. Working groups may be formed outside of the committee to inform on various project strategies; for example, working groups to focus on late night transportation, first mile/last mile connections, and regional marketing, to name a few.

### **Coordination with Major Employers, Colleges, and Tribal Nations**

As the coordinated plan rolls out, it is important for the RCC and planning partners to foster coordination efforts with major employers in the region (such as the air force base), with institutions of higher learning, and with representatives from the Native American community. Fostering these relationships allows for open discussions regarding transportation needs the specific organizations have, and allows for the potential to jointly apply for transportation funds. It is recommended that each of these entities have a designated representative on the RCC.

## Local Champions for Transit

Establishing a local champion(s) for public transit can be a great start in moving multiple initiatives forward for the region. Often the “champion” is a recognizable individual in the community; the champion could be a city mayor or councilmember, a well-known public figure or even a “change-maker” in the city. A champion for transit not only promotes and supports the coordinated efforts, but also occasionally uses the services to gain a better understanding of the system(s).

## TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Emerging Mobility and Supplemental Options

Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) are a new variation on an old idea. TNCs are for-hire vehicles that can be hailed via a smartphone. As a method of expanding mobility in the Rapid City region, a publicly sponsored and subsidized option to use TNCs and taxis is proposed. Public-private partnerships with a TNC or a taxi operator can be a cost-effective way to enhance transportation and meet needs. A sponsor agency (usually a transit agency or municipality) contracts with a taxi company or TNC, such as Uber or Lyft, to provide supplemental, subsidized, paratransit service for eligible customers. Customers place real-time trip requests, usually through a smartphone app. Drivers respond in their own vehicles or a vehicle owned by the taxi company.

Payment is made by credit card through the same app. Fares may change throughout the day in response to supply and demand. Shared-ride fares may be offered. Alternate arrangements for reserving trips by phone, paying with cash, or riding in an accessible vehicle could be available through the transportation provider or a third party. TNCs have established these alternative payment and trip reservations options in numerous communities nationwide where they are partnering with public transit providers.

The taxis and some TNCs offer wheelchair accessible vehicles. Certain TNCs offer Passenger Service and Safety (PASS) trained drivers with the requisite skills to secure passengers that use mobility devices.

Typical goals of transit agencies or municipalities that collaborate with TNC providers include reducing the cost of providing service and/or offering a more flexible, spontaneous service for customers. TNC and taxi providers can establish parameters of the program based on the needs of the community: parameters such as limited hours/days of operation, limited eligibility, geofencing to limit the size of the service area, and other key factors.

### Senior Transportation Services in Emerging Mobility

There are a few options in emerging mobility and technology for senior adults.

GoGoGrandparent is a phone-based app that assists senior citizens and those without a smartphone to take on-demand ride-share services. The app is similar to calling a taxi dispatcher; for a small fee, a client can call the GoGoGrandparent hotline and reserve a Lyft or Uber ride 24 hours a day. The app charges a 13% commission on each ride and a \$1.80 fee to

cover operational costs. While the cost to use the service is more than a standard Lyft or Uber fare, it's a small price to pay for mobility.<sup>8</sup>

In northern New Jersey, GoGoGrandparent has partnered with the local transit agency to give older adults more independence; riders pay between \$3 and \$5 per ride while the remainder is subsidized by a local public-private consortium.<sup>9</sup> In Lafayette, California, a former resident endowed a pilot program paying for 50% of a rider's cost, up to \$50 per month.<sup>10</sup>

### Google Transit

An additional recommendation for the region is to ensure that all routes and services are updated in Google Transit Feed Specification (GTFS). While the initial process is somewhat cumbersome, once the routes are in the system, updates are fairly easy. Ensuring transit routes, demand-response services, and stop conditions are in Google Maps will help instill confidence in using the public transit system and allow for live updates should there be any temporary (or permanent) system changes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The coordination strategies outlined in the document are designed to work in tandem to improve overall transportation options, mobility, and connectivity in the Rapid City region. Not all strategies may be implemented immediately, as sustainable funding sources should be further explored, especially for larger-scale and long-term recommendations. It is important to note that a champion, and/or lead agency, should be appointed to help bolster support for the implementation of projects; however, the strategies will require the support of multiple agencies, as well as community support, for continued success. Stakeholders and the community should have buy-in to the selected strategies to take ownership of the projects and make them successful. Additionally, the order in which the recommendations are implemented depends on support of the public and stakeholders, as well as a strategy champion to support the work, or begin the "heavy lifting," to promote the recommendation(s) prior to implementation.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://techcrunch.com/2016/08/02/gogograndparent-lets-people-without-smartphones-use-on-demand-services-like-uber/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://blog.gogograndparent.com/gogograndparent-announces-public-private-partnership-to-transport-new-jersey-seniors-34862af5c89>

<sup>10</sup> East Bay Times (2017). *Senior Transportation in East Bay on 'GoGo' thanks to Pilot Program*. Retrieved from <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2017/08/08/senior-transportation-in-east-bay-on-gogo-thanks-to-public-private-partnership/>