
Year One Final Report

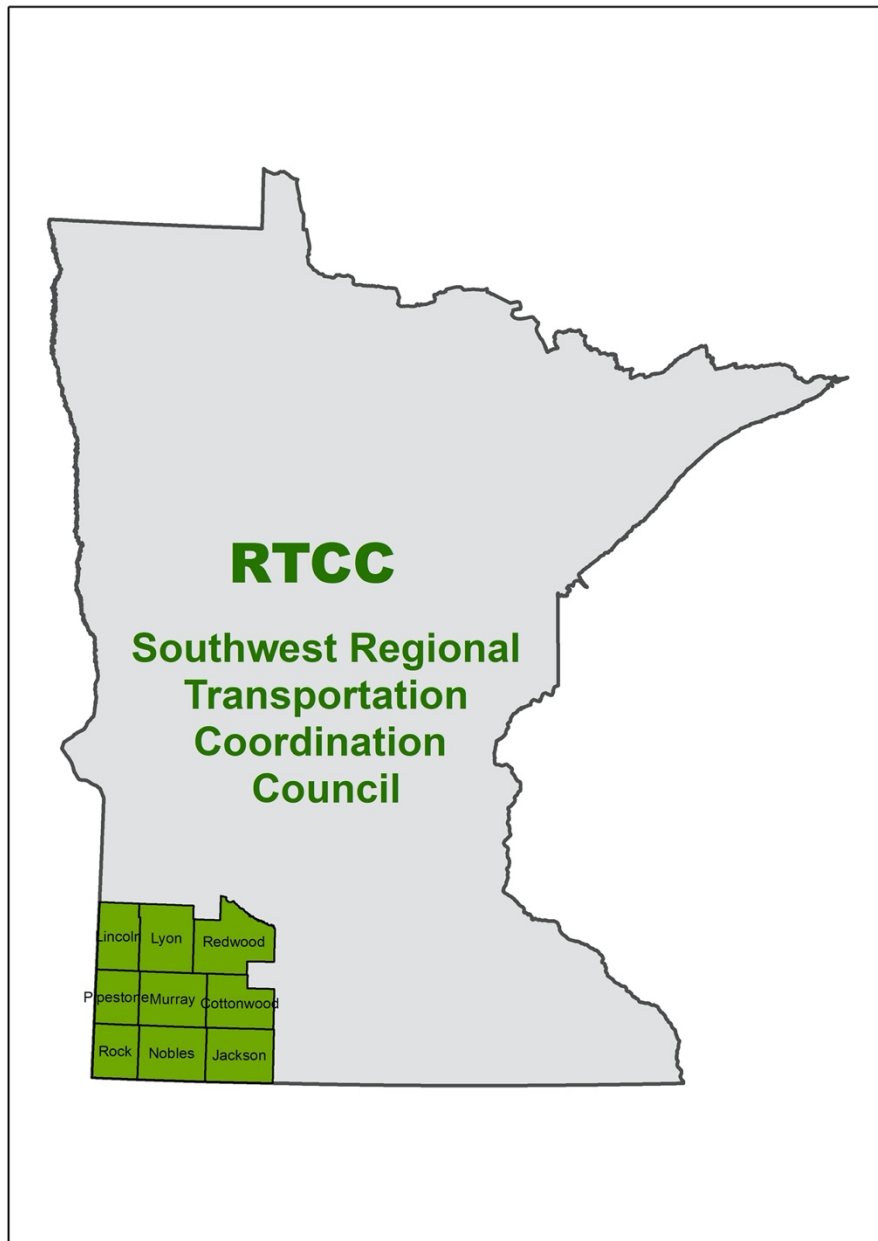


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Introduction

The coordination of transportation services has long been held as the best way to increase available options without increasing resources. In 2018, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) began exploring the creation of Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCC). Information on the vision for RTCCs can be found in the [RTCC MNDOT One Pager \(Appendix I\)](#).

United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) is a Community Action agency dedicated to helping people meet their basic needs. It hosts an eight-county public transit program as well as several other transportation programs that are geared toward meeting more of the transportation needs of all people throughout our region. RTCCs are the perfect extension of the long-held value in UCAP's transportation department that when more transportation needs are met everybody benefits, no matter what transportation service is used.

UCAP responded to a grant opportunity to begin the planning phase of a RTCC in Southwest Minnesota. The application was successful, and planning funds were awarded beginning July 1, 2019 and extending to June 30, 2020. This report outlines the final outcomes of planning and the first steps for moving into implementation.

The grant year began with the search for a consultant to guide UCAP staff through the planning process and assist with the creation of required grant outcomes. A consultant was hired, and the Southwest Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordinating Council planning committee held its first meeting on November 6, 2019.

Meetings began by focusing on what resources and strengths the region has, what it needs, how an RTCC can help, and who needs to be involved. Throughout the first year, the planning committee identified:

- Council service area
- Council membership
- Organizational structure
- Council bylaws
- Public engagement strategies
- A two-year operational implementation plan

Council Coverage Area

The RTCC planning committee decided the Council should serve nine counties in Southwest Minnesota: **Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone Redwood and Rock.**

There are already many partnerships within these counties. So, the stakeholders believe the large service area is appropriate. Stakeholders also noted that establishing the nine-county region is good, but it is also important to include other counties as may be necessary or beneficial for advancing to goals of the Council in the future.

Council Membership

Southwest Minnesota RTCC planning meetings included participation from the following:

- Public, private and emergency transportation providers
- County commissioners and city administrators
- Hospitals
- Disability service providers

- Human Service agencies
- Aging service providers
- Veterans service providers
- Managed care providers

The planning committee discussed what organizations need to be involved in the formal Council. It was agreed that those involved in the planning also need to be part of the Council. However, a gap exists in two general areas. Recruitment prior to the first organizational meeting must include a special focus on these gap areas:

- Riders
- Economic development or private industry

UCAP and the Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council (SMOC) were both involved in the planning committee. Through these agencies, the entire nine-county RTCC area is served. Since both agencies also host public transit, and both have county commissioners on their Boards, the planning committee felt that each agency should be asked to appoint someone to the Council representing their counties of service.

Organizational Structure

The planning committee determined that the RTCC would consist of thirteen members. They felt a larger group would become too cumbersome to be effective. Advisory groups were added to the RTCC structure to ensure that the RTCC is properly supported when addressing a need, and all necessary voices hold positions of influence. Advisory groups will be comprised of RTCC members and others in four interest areas:

- Users
- Service providers
- Communication and outreach
- Transportation providers

The work of bringing formal RTCC membership and advisory groups together will be done by planning committee members with the support of one UCAP's Mobility Administrator, hired to lead the RTCC efforts.

Many different organizational structures were considered, including a Joint Powers Board and various types of stand-alone, non-profit structures. The planning committee did not feel that creating a new non-profit organization was the right step. They also did not think the region would support a Joint Powers structure.

These options were set aside:

First, because creating a governmental organization limits potential reach since members of a Joint Powers Board can only be pulled from units of government.

Second, because there are already many committees and Boards that elected officials and organizational leaders are obligated to be a part of. In our rural area, this means that people can be stretched thin. Creating another entity would likely mean that they would be spread even thinner, and potentially, less committed to RTCC success.

Third, because the funding streams available to governmental entities are limited.

Therefore, committee members favored to look, instead, at using an established non-profit organization to host the RTCC.

UCAP has been working on building relationships and partnerships with all area transportation and service providers for many years. Because the agency hosts a public transit system, they have established connections with county commissioners and service providers who serve on their Transit Advisory Committees (TAC) in many counties. Planning committee members agreed that finding a way to fit the RTCC under UCAP was the best solution. Using the existing TACs as a starting point for the RTCC is one potential way to allow many important players to help with the work of the RTCC without adding another meeting to everyone's calendar.

Considering the approach thoroughly, and working directly with the UCAP Board, it was decided that the best way to move forward with the creation of the Southwest Minnesota RTCC was as an ad hoc committee of the UCAP Board. It closely resembles other ad hoc committees the UCAP Board already hosts, and therefore does not require any lengthy considerations or legal changes before gaining Board approval. Bylaws were created for the RTCC to reflect this structure. Bylaws and an organizational chart are included as [Appendix II](#) and [Appendix III](#) to this document.

Planning committee members and UCAP staff moved confidently in this direction as a first step, knowing that future growth may require changes to the organizational structure. They are ready and willing to tackle those when it becomes necessary.

Identifying Priorities

Throughout the year of planning, discussions frequently centered around the region's biggest transportation needs. This helped guide ideas about how the RTCC should function, and what tasks it could take on now and in the future. The top needs that surfaced are:

- Transportation after normal transit hours
- Transportation across provider lines/long-distance transportation
- Volunteer and hired drivers
- Affordability of transportation
- Ability to easily create partnerships between providers

The projects or functions, ranging from small to very big, that came forward included:

- I. Be the hub for collection of obstacles
- II. Brainstorm ideas for solutions
- III. Present to appropriate agency/regulatory body for legislative changes
- IV. Collaborate with counties and agencies to have one-person support all of them in grant writing
- V. Centralize the responsibility of vehicle maintenance and driver training
- VI. Negotiate region-wide rates with agencies providing funding
- VII. Be a policy body that consists of public, private, and non-profit transportation providers in order to facilitate a seamless system of transportation services
- VIII. Be a conduit allowing more providers to have access to more funds
- IX. Facilitate the resolution of issues and barriers to the provision of transportation on rides in southwest Minnesota
- X. Create a website of providers for a central dispatch to provide consistency of service
- XI. *Coordinate all transportation*

XII. Plan for unmet needs and how to meet those needs

XIII. Spread understanding of what is available and measure what is not

Operational Implementation Plan

The committee took all of the ideas about form and function and began to identify the best approach to the first two years of RTCC implementation. The Southwest Minnesota RTCC Operational Implementation Plan was developed by taking the projects and functions suggested by the planning committee and considering them alongside the current direction from the State. MNDOT identified three emphasis areas for RTCCs to pursue.

- Transportation Management Coordination Centers (TMCC)
- Volunteer driver program committees
- Vehicle sharing

In addition to MNDOT's emphasis areas, the update of the Region 8 Local Human Service Public Transit Coordination Plan will be necessary in 2021. The RTCC will be an integral part of that update. So, the planning committee also had to take that into account when developing a two-year plan.

The projects for the first two years of implementation were chosen because they are necessary steps to make the RTCC a reality, they meet a goal or priority brought forth by the planning committee, they help fulfill a priority in the Plan or an RTCC statewide emphasis area or, at times, they advance multiple goals. They include:

- Gather the formal council membership
- Create and maintain a searchable region-wide database of transportation options
- Create and carry out comprehensive multi-provider travel training
- Make connection with regional interpreter services
- Convene the Service Providers Advisory Group
- Identify a pilot project to enhance vehicle sharing, and take the steps to get it off the ground
- Work on the 2021 Region 8 Local Human Service Public Transit Coordination Plan, which will be completed in 2022

Further details on any project can be found in the Operational Implementation Plan, [Appendix IV](#).

Next Step

The most crucial step in every project is the first step. For the Southwest Minnesota RTCC, that means finding the right people to serve as members of the RTCC or advisory groups. Outreach through the planning committee members has begun. More information on the RTCC strategies for communication and public engagement are included as [Appendix V](#).

The Southwest RTCC organizational meeting is targeted for September 2020.

Get Involved

The Southwest RTCC needs people committed to advancing transportation in southwest Minnesota to serve on the Council or an advisory group.

Since finances are often the thing that prevents projects from getting started. RTCC members must have some understanding of how funding flows to, and through, the entity or group they represent.

Advisory members must understand the issues related to transportation and transportation coordination that affect the people they represent.

Both RTCC members and advisory groups are the listening ears to the public and the voice of the RTCC. The people who will fill these positions must be dedicated to improving transportation throughout Southwest Minnesota, understanding that the barriers are often big, and progress may be slow. Unconventional thinkers are welcome!

If you know anyone who can help in these efforts, please share this information with them. If you might be interested in becoming a part of Southwest Minnesota's transportation future, contact the Southwest RTCC lead staff, Shelly Pflaum: 507-537-3861 or <mailto:shelly.pflaum@unitedcapmn.org>.

Appendices

APPENDIX I

MNDOT One Pager - Regional Transportation Coordination Councils of Minnesota

Regional Transportation Coordination Councils of Minnesota

The Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, are working with the Metropolitan Council and other local governments and organizations to create regional transportation coordination councils as appropriate throughout Minnesota. Coordination between transportation providers and service agencies has been a goal and strategy to fill transportation gaps, provide more service with the same or fewer resources, streamline access to transportation and provide customers more options of where and when to travel.

Goal for Regional Transportation Coordination Councils

The state agencies would provide support for creating a statewide framework of 8-10 Regional Transportation Coordination Councils throughout Minnesota in order to break down transportation barriers and offer a seamless system of transportation services. The Regional Transportation Coordination Councils would be responsible for coordinating transportation services through a network of existing public, private and non-profit transportation providers.

Regional Transportation Coordination Councils will be developed in Greater Minnesota after consultation with stakeholders through a webinar and regional stakeholder meetings. Development of a structure for coordination in the seven-county Metropolitan Area will be guided by feedback received through the Twin Cities stakeholder meeting.

Potential Tasks of the Regional Transportation Coordination Councils

- Lead activities to and advance coordination throughout region.
- Exercise the authority to make change based on a formal governing framework.
- Employ dedicated staff to implement change.
- Provide technical assistance to facilitate human service program vehicle sharing.
- Establish transportation provider performance standards for service, vehicles, and personnel.
- Actively participate in and/or lead the FTA required local transportation coordination plan process.
- Utilize a cost accounting system to accurately reflect the full costs of providing transportation services.
- Share quality assurance data and uniform reporting among stakeholders.
- Develop or promote existing van pool or rideshare services.
- Oversee volunteer driver programs or coordination of volunteer programs.
- Establish or promote existing travel training programs.
- Provide feedback to the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) as to what is working and where state level assistance may be needed.

Regional Transportation Coordination Council Benefits

- Increase efficiencies that may be achieved through more grouping of individuals traveling to the same destination or reduced duplication of services and/or vehicles.
- Enhanced access to social and health services, education and employment.
- Improved use of resources: For example, if the same services can be provided with fewer vehicles, then funds spent on insurance and capital is reduced. Other resources that could be shared include staff training, computer software, or call center staff.
- Coordination and collaboration can result in providing transportation in ways that contribute to livable communities and a vital economy.



Appendix II

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COUNCIL BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - NAME:

The name of this organization shall be “**Southwest Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC)**” operating as an ad hoc Committee of United Community Action Partnership (UCAP).

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE AND FUNCTION:

The purpose of the Southwest Regional Transportation Coordinating Council is to advocate for transportation services which are safe, effective, reliable and responsive to consumer needs, with an emphasis on affordability, for low income and diverse populations throughout the counties of Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood and Rock in Southwest Minnesota. The Southwest RTCC will use existing regional transportation planning models to inform their decisions and prioritize the implementation of existing plans.

Through improved communication, coordination and collaboration, the Southwest RTCC will facilitate and support:

- Identifying unmet personal mobility needs and facilitating the development of services responsive to those needs;
- Prioritizing programming;
- Identifying and understanding all available transportation options in the region;
- Increasing access to services, education and centers of commerce;
- Increasing coordination between transportation service providers;
- Advocating for high quality transportation services which are safe, effective, reliable and responsive to consumer needs, with special emphasis on affordability and low income and minority populations

- Increasing available transportation services within the region;
- Identifying, supporting and expanding best practices;
- Directing the allocation of resources as appropriate.

The Southwest RTCC may seek funding to support achieving its stated purpose.

Regular and accurate information will be provided by the RTCC to the UCAP Board for the purposes of review, approval or disapproval. This may include:

- Monthly financial statements
- Monthly program information summaries
- An annual self-assessment
- Community-wide strategic planning and needs assessment, including any updates

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP:

The business and affairs of the Southwest RTCC shall be managed by the RTCC members with the support of UCAP staff. Duties and responsibilities may be modified from time to time by the RTCC. The membership of the Southwest RTCC will consist of thirteen (13) individuals representing (but not limited to) the following sectors or agencies:

1. A representative from the Service Provider sub-committee.
2. A representative from the User sub-committee.
3. A Public Transportation Provider from the Transportation Provider sub-committee.
4. A Private Transportation Provider from the Transportation Provider sub-committee.
5. A County Health and Human Services Representative.
6. A representative from Private Employers whose workers use transit.

7. A representative from the Southwest Center for Independent Living, (SWCIL).
8. A healthcare provider representative.
9. A representative from PrimeWest Health.
10. A representative from the Board of United Community Action Partnership, (UCAP).
11. A representative from the Board of the Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council, (SMOC).
12. A representative from the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, (MNRAAA).
13. A representative from Regional Economic Development.

Other representatives may be added to support achieving the intended purpose of the RTCC. Consideration of geographic representation will be a factor in determining membership.

RTCC members are expected to serve as a conduit for information between the RTCC and the constituency and/or geographic area they represent. A member may designate a substitute to attend any RTCC meeting and the agency, organization or constituency represented will be counted as present for that meeting. If a voting member is not in attendance for three consecutive meetings without providing a substitute representative, or demonstrates a pattern of absenteeism, they may be asked to resign and have another representative appointed to take their place.

Initial appointments shall begin on the date of the first organizational meeting and end in December 2022. Members in good standing (based upon participation and meeting attendance) will be eligible for re-appointment to subsequent 2-year terms. There is no limit to the number of two-year terms which can be served by members in good standing, providing there is adequate geographic and organizational/sector representation. Vacancies that occur prior to the end of a term in office shall be filled by a majority vote of the members present at a duly called Southwest RTCC meeting. The member elected to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the original term of office.

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS AND VOTING:

- **Organizational Meeting.** An initial organizational meeting will be held by the RTCC within the first three months of incorporation. At that time, officers will be elected and individual memberships to the RTCC confirmed. The RTCC Planning Group will send out invitations for appointments to the relevant groups as defined in the membership section prior to the initial meeting. Committee representatives will initially be appointed by the RTCC, the Committees will select their own representatives prior to the initial Annual Meeting. Thereafter the RTCC will follow the organizational and meeting structure as outlined below.

- **Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting of the RTCC shall be held in January of each year at the principle office of the RTCC or at such other location as the RTCC shall determine and shall be specified in the notice of meeting hereinafter mentioned.

- **Regular Meetings.** The Southwest RTCC shall meet at least four (4) times in each calendar year, with meetings scheduled as necessary.

- **Special Meetings.** Special meetings can be convened by the chairperson or at the request of seven (7) RTCC members.

- **Notice of Meeting.** RTCC staff shall provide written notice of each regular meeting at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting date. Written notices may be sent electronically. In the event a special meeting is called, RTCC staff shall give written and verbal notice to all Council members at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Members may attend meetings either in person or via telepresence (telephone or video if available).

- **Minutes.** RTCC staff shall take, distribute and maintain copies of the minutes of all RTCC meetings. Minutes will be available upon request by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and will also be available on the Southwest RTCC webpage.

- **Quorum.** A quorum will consist of 50 percent of RTCC members, including alternatives/substitutes present at a meeting.

- **Voting.** Voting will be done by voice or show of hands. A roll-call vote or written ballot vote may be requested by any member. Voting by alternates and voting electronically via email is permitted. Transaction of any official business will be carried upon a majority vote of members present at any given meeting. Transaction of official business via email voting will be carried upon a majority vote of the RTCC. For meetings lacking a quorum, business can be conducted, however all actions must be approved by a quorum either through electronic (email) voting or at the next regular meeting where a quorum is present.

- **Orderly Meetings.** All meetings will be conducted by the Chairperson in an orderly manner.

ARTICLE V – ADVISORY GROUPS:

The Southwest RTCC will hereby establish up to four (4) advisory groups to represent specific interests and act in an advisory capacity to the RTCC. If an advisory group cannot be supported for any reason, the RTCC may be established and operate with fewer than four advisory groups. Outreach activities will be ongoing until all advisory groups are functioning.

1. Service Providers
2. Users
3. Transportation Providers
4. Communication/Outreach

Individuals will be appointed to serve in this capacity at the organizational meeting. Before the first annual meeting, the RTCC will develop the roster and hold advisory group meetings. Prior to the first Annual Meeting, the advisory groups will select a representative to the RTCC to begin serving at the Annual Meeting. Advisory groups may include Southwest RTCC members as well as stakeholders and individuals outside of the RTCC structure. A Council member will chair each advisory group.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS:

- The Southwest RTCC shall elect a chairperson and a vice-chairperson each year at the Annual Meeting.

- All officers shall be voting members of the RTCC. An individual receiving a majority of the votes shall be deemed elected and shall assume office immediately. In the event that no person receives a majority of the votes cast, votes shall be re-cast for the top two vote recipients.

- The chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Southwest RTCC, appoint standing committees as appropriate, and shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.

- The vice chairperson shall assist the chairperson in the execution of that office and shall preside at meetings in the event of the absence of the chairperson.

ARTICLE VII – CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

- No member shall vote upon any questions or any action which shall result in a direct or indirect benefit to said person.

- A direct or indirect benefit shall include but not be limited to any action or decision which results in a specific personal financial gain to said individual or to his or her spouse or children. It shall also include any action or decision which would result in a specific benefit to any governmental unit, governmental agency, company or other organization which employs said individual in any capacity as a regular or temporary employee or as a consultant.

- A conflict of interest shall not exist, however, where the action taken is by a publicly elected official in his or her representative capacity or by the senior administrative official holding a management position in a local unit of government. In case any benefit which might result in favor of the governmental unit to which said individual is elected or serves and the fact that said individual may receive compensation or

financial reimbursement for his or her services shall not be considered in determining the existence of possible conflict of interest.

- Before taking an action or making a decision which could substantially affect a member's or a staff member's financial interest or those of an organization with which the member or staff member is associated, the member or staff member must declare the potential conflict of interest.

- The disclosure of a potential conflict of interest must be made at the beginning of the discussion in which an action or decision is being considered. All disclosures of potential conflicts of interest must be entered into the minutes of the meeting at which disclosure of potential conflict of interest was declared. A member who has a potential conflict of interest shall not attempt to influence any matter related to the action or decision in question and shall not take part in the action or decision.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS:

These bylaws may be amended or repealed, in whole or in part, by a majority vote of the Southwest RTCC at any duly called meeting where a quorum is present. A copy of these bylaws and all subsequent amendments shall be available for review upon request by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and on the RTCC webpage.

ARTICLE IX - INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

United Community Action Partnership RTCC Internal Dispute Resolution/Impasse Policy

Should there be a disagreement between the RTCC and the UCAP Board of Directors, this process will be used in the following order:

Informal Steps:

- 1) Designated members of the RTCC will meet with the UCAP Executive

Director to discuss the disagreement and resolve it.

- 2) The UCAP Executive Director will meet with the whole RTCC to discuss the disagreement and resolve it.
- 3) Designated members of the RTCC and the UCAP Board of Directors will meet to resolve the disagreement.

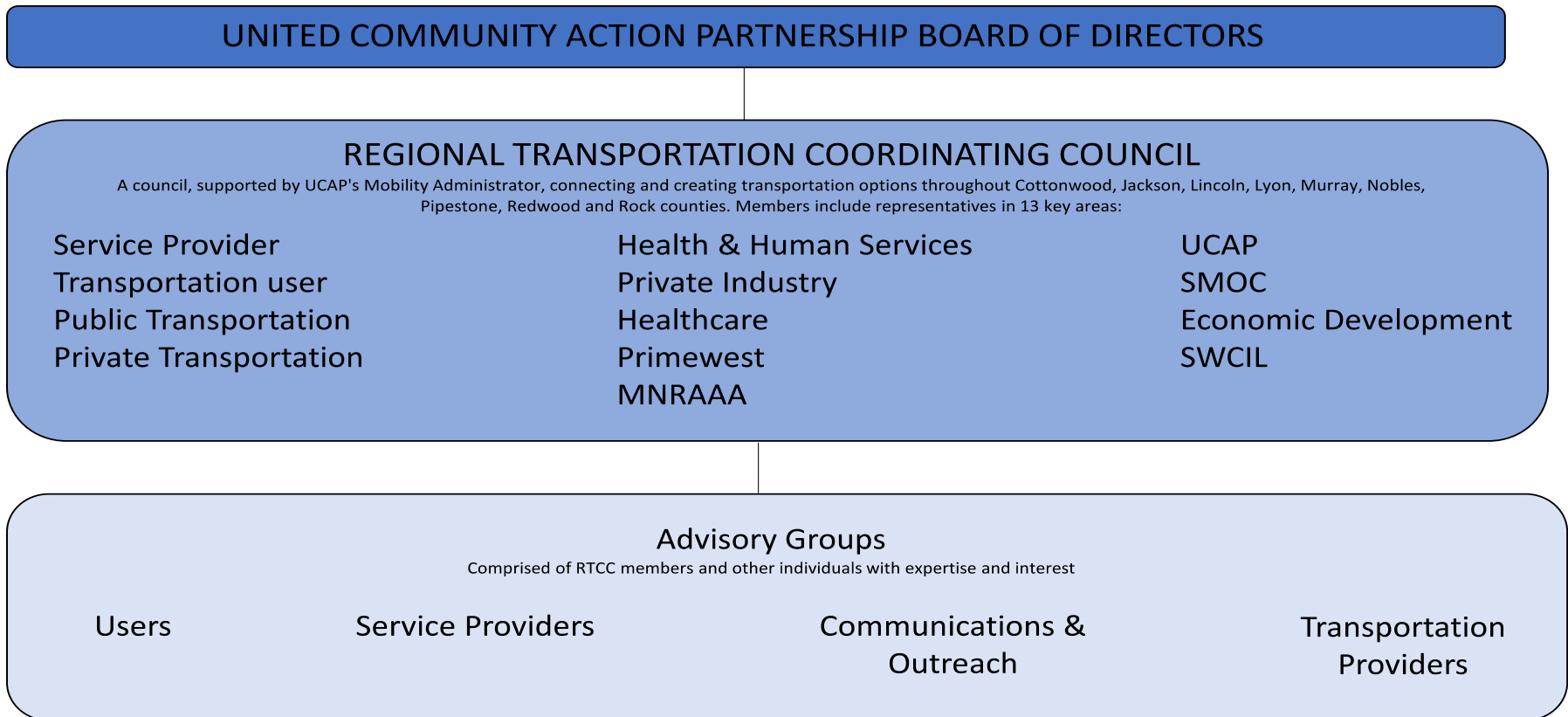
If these informal steps do not resolve the disagreement, then the following formal process will be used.

Formal Steps:

- 1) The Executive Director and the RTCC will identify an independent third party to facilitate a discussion and the problem-solving process.
- 2) The RTCC, designated UCAP Board members, RTCC staff, and Executive Director will meet with the third party to identify the areas of dispute, problem-solve around the areas of dispute, and resolve the situation.
- 3) Any resolutions of the areas of dispute should be approved by the RTCC, and the UCAP Board of Directors if it is appropriate.

Appendix III

Southwest Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordinating Council Organizational Structure



Questions about the work of the RTCC or how to get involved can be directed to Shelly Pflaum, 507-537-3861 or shelly.pflaum@unitedcapmn.org.

Operational Implementation Plan

Southwest Regional Transportation
Coordinating Council



RTCC Overview

In 2017, United Community Action Partnership, (UCAP) and the Southwest Regional Development Commission, (SRDC) began meeting with stakeholders from throughout the nine counties of southwest Minnesota in response to action from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN/DOT) calling for the development of Regional Coordinating Councils to Coordinate transportation/transit efforts statewide. These stakeholder meetings resulted in an application to MN/DOT from UCAP for planning funding for the southwest. This application was not approved as it sought to develop an organizational structure in conjunction with an existing entity in the region. After review with MN/DOT and stakeholders, particularly county representatives, UCAP applied for and was granted planning dollars in the second round of funding provided that a stand-alone RTCC was created. UCAP and the SRDC reconvened the RTCC stakeholder group and began working on implementing the proposal. During these stakeholder meetings, in response to numerous inquiries from the counties, MN/DOT decided to allow the development of the RTCC as a partnership with an existing entity. Due to the vast transit experience of UCAP, the stakeholder group asked UCAP if they would be the governing agency and UCAP agreed.

In early 2020, UCAP and SRDC staff began working with the stakeholder group to get specific about organizational structure, by-laws and plans for implementing the RTCC. This plan details the result of that work, and puts forth a plan for the accomplishment of the implementation phase of the project.

Structure

The business and affairs of the Southwest RTCC shall be managed by the RTCC members with staff support from UCAP. Duties and responsibilities may be modified from time to time by the RTCC. The RTCC may operate at less than full membership. The membership of the Southwest RTCC will consist of thirteen (13) individuals representing (but not limited to) the following sectors or agencies:

1. A representative from the Service Provider sub-committee.
2. A representative from the User sub-committee.
3. A Public Transportation Provider from the Transportation Provider sub-committee.
4. A Private Transportation Provider from the Transportation provider sub-committee.
5. A County Health and Human Services Representative.
6. A representative from Private Employers whose workers use transit.
7. A representative from the Southwest Center for Independent Living, (SWCIL).
8. A healthcare provider representative.
9. A representative from PrimeWest Health.
10. A representative from the Board of United Community Action Partnership, (UCAP).
11. A representative from the Board of the Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council, (SMOC).
12. A representative from the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, (MNRAAA).

13. A representative from Regional Economic Development.

Other representatives may be added to support achieving the intended purpose of the RTCC. Consideration of geographic representation will be a factor in determining membership.

Staffing

The RTCC will be staffed by the UCAP Mobility Administrator with support from the Transportation Director and UCAP supporting staff as necessary.

Bylaws

Bylaws were developed by UCAP and SRDC staff on the recommendations of the stakeholder committee. The Bylaws are formatted to fit under the UCAP committee structure, and are included as Attachment A.

Local Human Services Coordination Plan

The SRDC has partnered with UCAP to perform the requirements of the Human Services Transportation Plan. As part of the ongoing implementation phase of the RTCC project, the Human Services transportation Plan will be updated through the lens of the information provided during the project phases as described below. The goal of the updated Human Services Transportation Plan is to not only incorporate those public transit systems and private transportation providers as has been the case in the past, but to also create multi-provider comprehensive travel training as well as transportation coordination.

Implementation Plan – Year One

Project 1: Convene the Southwest Minnesota RTCC

Responsible Parties: Designated RTCC Staff

Timeline for Completion: within the first three months of grant funding

The 2016 Region 8 Local Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan (the Plan) found that, “regional connectivity, longer service hours, language access, and more accessible vehicles are desired in the Region” (pg. 1). To accomplish this work, United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) is implementing the Southwest Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC). UCAP has one full-time staff member dedicated to the work of the RTCC who will lead the effort to convene the

Southwest Minnesota RTCC according to the criteria established in the planning phase of this project.

Project steps:

1. Reach out to all entities that were identified as necessary members of the RTCC and request their formal involvement.
2. Answer questions to make sure all potential members have a clear understanding of the RTCC and why their involvement is critical.
3. Formally appoint members.

Influencing factors:

Some of the entities identified in the planning phase of the RTCC will easily be brought into the formal RTCC structure because the right people (i.e. agency leaders or decision makers) have been involved in the planning process. Others have not been involved at all. Getting involvement from those previously disengaged will take considerable effort. RTCC staff will use the network of stakeholders involved in the planning process and other regional resources to find appropriate representation in all necessary areas.

Project 2: Create a searchable database of transportation options

Emphasis Area Addressed: Transportation Coordination Management Center

Plan Area(s) Addressed: Strategy #3, Strategy #8 *

Responsible Parties: RTCC members, staff, SRDC

Timeline for Completion: by the end of the grant period

Once formal membership is established, the RTCC members will begin laying the foundations for a Transportation Management Coordination Center (TMCC).

The beginning of effective transportation coordination is making sure everyone knows what transportation options are available. In fact, improving public awareness of transportation options was identified as a critical need in the Plan (pg. 1). In addition, an updated inventory addresses Strategy # 8 on page 71 of the Plan. So, the first steps our RTCC will take toward a fully functioning TMCC will be; 1.) Creating an updated and redesigned regional transportation inventory and; 2.) Begin creating a formal source of information and referral about all regional transportation options.

RTCC members, staff and the SRDC begin by creating an inventory in our region that is useful and accessible to anyone who needs to know what transportation options are available for any transportation need. The inventory will be planned for completion by the end of the grant period.

This project will be broken into the following steps. Steps may be added or changed to ensure the end product is truly useful.

1. The full RTCC will review the inventory list in the 2016 Local Human Service Public Transit Coordination plan and any other lists that people are aware of (within 4 months of the grant period).
2. The full RTCC or a designated group of selected members will outline both short-term and long-term uses for the inventory to ensure that it will not need to be reinvented as coordination efforts grow (within 6 months of the grant award).
3. The full RTCC or a designated group of selected members will determine what information needs to be included in the inventory and how it should be formatted to make it useful to end users (within 6 months of the grant award).
4. Staff, and partners will reach out to all known providers to get current service and fleet information, remove any providers that are no longer providing service in the region, add any new providers that are available, and compile an updated list, which will be presented to the full RTCC for final review and edits (within 9 months of the grant award).
5. The RTCC or a designated group of selected members will create action steps to ensure that the inventory stays current, accessible and useful to the region (by the end of the grant period).
6. The inventory will be made available to the public in electronic form and printed form, as determined by the RTCC (by the end of the grant period).

When completed the inventory will include a contact phone number and email address for people who would like more information. The decision about what number to include in the guide for information and referral will rest primarily with the providers listed in the guide. Allowing another agency to be listed on any media as a source of information about their services may be very difficult for some providers, but it is a small step toward relationship and future coordination.

Influencing Factors:

The primary vehicle for accessing the inventory will be the internet. RTCC staff will work with MCOTA, which will host our RTCC website, to determine if the inventory can also be housed there or if other website options need to be explored. If other options need to be explored, the final distribution of the inventory may take longer than anticipated. It is critical that the content is easily accessible on the internet because properly formatted website content can easily be translated into any language. This is essential because it is a first step toward including additional languages in transportation provider marketing materials as outlined in the Plan (pg.1).

* The completion of an updated regional transportation inventory is also be an important step in updating the Plan, which the RTCC will need to take a leadership role in. The Plan update, which happens every five years, will begin in 2021.

Project 3: Make connection with regional interpreters

Plan Area(s) Addressed: Strategy #3

Responsible Parties: RTCC members, staff

Timeline for Completion: by the end of the grant period

In conjunction with the creation of the easy-to-use provider inventory, RTCC staff will do research and make connections with interpreters throughout the region. When the members of the public or the RTCC the request that printed inventories be made available in specific communities—for example, assisted living facilities or minority churches—an interpreter will be contracted to translate the material in languages that are appropriate for that area or community. This project accomplishes the goal to, “Identify local area translators for marketing purposes” outlined in the Plan (pg. 66). Additionally, because the inventory will include all types of providers, it advances strategy #3 on page 67 of the Plan, “Increase/improve public relations as part of public and private transportation services marketing.”

Once a connection is made with regional interpreters, RTCC staff will also share that information with providers to encourage that more area resources are available in necessary languages.

Project 4: Convene a Service Providers Advisory group within the RTCC structure

Emphasis Area Addressed: Vehicle Sharing

Plan Area(s) Addressed: Strategy #4, Strategy #5

Responsible Parties: RTCC members, staff, SRDC

Timeline for Completion: within six months of grant award

Another area that stakeholders identified as a priority in the planning process for the RTCC is enhancing the ability to share vehicles and rides among multiple providers. This idea aligns with strategies on pages 68 and 69 of the Plan. Action 1 identified in strategy #4 specifically focuses on increasing collaboration between providers and identifying pilot projects to advance coordination. Strategy #5 focuses on increasing or maintaining the small to medium-sized vehicles in the region.

In the first year of RTCC implementation, a Service Providers Advisory group will be established under the RTCC, and the group begin meeting on at least a quarterly basis and discuss potential collaboration efforts, barriers and impacts.

The following steps would be taken to ensure these goals are met:

1. RTCC staff will call together the full RTCC, and request one of the members who provides transportation to Chair the Service Providers Advisory group (at the end of the first quarter of the grant period).
2. The Chair and RTCC staff will work together to reach out to other potential members from within the RTCC and outside the RTCC and seek participation. Provide potential members with all the information they need or request to make sure they have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities (4-6 months after grant award).
3. Begin conducting meetings with a formal group of Advisory members (within 6 months of grant award).

Once convened, members of the advisory group will be asked to identify one pilot project they would like to explore further in the second year of implementation, as well as the specific barriers that currently prevent it, by the end of the grant period.

Increasing the collaboration between providers, in effect, will increase the number of available vehicles. The increased use of vehicles will also increase the likelihood of consideration for additional vehicles when grants become available. Convening this group is a very small first step in accomplishing much larger, and much more difficult, goals.

Additional Considerations:

The items addressed in this plan are the top priority areas identified by stakeholders during the planning phase in relation to increasing transportation coordination. They do not eliminate the potential for the Southwest Minnesota RTCC to contribute to statewide efforts related to growing and protecting volunteer driver pools or any other priorities that arise in our changing times.

Implementation Plan – Year Two

Project 1: Maintain searchable database of transportation options

Emphasis Area Addressed: Transportation Coordination Management Center

Plan Area(s) Addressed: Strategy #3, Strategy #8 *

Responsible Parties: RTCC members, staff

Timeline for Completion: ongoing

For the Transportation Management Coordination Center (TMCC), to be successful, maintenance of the searchable database must remain a priority in the second year of the implementation plan and beyond. Ongoing maintenance is necessary if the database is going to be useful.

RTCC members and staff will gather and update the inventory in our region and assure that it is useful and accessible to anyone who needs to know what transportation options are available for any transportation need.

The full RTCC and RTCC staff will review the inventory list established in the first year of this plan and add any further information that they become aware of.

Other Identified Ongoing Efforts

1. Human Services Transportation Plan. Work will commence in 2021 on this plan that is required to be revised every five years. The existing plan will be analyzed in light of the development of the RTCC and the TMCC. It is anticipated that plan approval may extend into 2022.
2. Vehicle Sharing. The RTCC's work around vehicle sharing will need to be continued as well. Year two will find the group established in the first year of the implementation plan beginning one of the pilot projects identified during that process. As the process of identifying partners and possible pilot projects is to be completed in the first year of the implementation plan, as yet there are no details on the specifics of such a project. Vehicle sharing was identified as a priority by the RTCC stakeholder group, concentrating on what the issues are preventing the utilization of all available resources.
3. Multi-provider Comprehensive Travel Training. Once the inventory and availability of services is developed, it will be necessary to provide training not only to various system providers, but also to the users of the various transportation systems. Training is often approached merely from a transit perspective. It is the intention of the Southwest RTCC that the training encompass all forms of possible transportation. Coordination between providers and riders will be much easier to accomplish if all groups share a common understanding of the availability of the

different provider services, what services they offer and what service might be best able to meet the needs of any given event.

Staffing and Organizational Resources for Plan Implementation

Project Team

Contingent upon Phase 2 implementation funds being awarded, the following UCAP staff will be assisting the RTCC to achieve its goals:

Cathleen Amick, Transportation Director. Cathleen will oversee the implementation of the RTCC and provide supervision of RTCC staff on behalf of the RTCC and UCAP. Cathleen has extensive experience as Director of UCAP's public transit service.

Shelly Pflaum, Mobility Administrator. Shelly will be the primary staff to the RTCC, acting as a liaison between the RTCC and the UCAP Board, and performing the day to day operational functions of the RTCC. Shelly is the long-time Mobility Administrator for UCAP, and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in service provision to her role.

UCAP General Support Functions. UCAP will also provide the services of Human Resources, Fiscal, IT and Maintenance staff in support of the functions of the RTCC.

Contract Staff - SRDC

Jay Trusty, Executive Director. Jay will assist the RTCC on organizational issues and coordinate between UCAP and the SRDC when necessary. Jay has been the Director of the SRDC since 2001 having come to the job from the public health world and is extremely knowledgeable in organizational and administrative requirements.

Rosemary Bruce-White, Transportation Planner. Rosemary will provide ongoing planning support for RTCC staff. As the SRDC's Transportation Planner, Rosemary provides staffing to the Area Transportation Partnerships and will assist on essential planning efforts of the RTCC.

Budget

The following is a synopsis of the budget as presented in the application for RTCC implementation funding:

Administration, Management and Supervisory Salaries	\$144,000	
General Office Support Wages	3,000	
Fringe Benefits	<u>29,400</u>	
Total Personnel Expenses		\$176,400
Advertising, Marketing, & Promotional Charges	1,000	
Auditing and Other Professional Services		4,600
Staff Development	200	
General Supplies	400	
Office Space/Equipment	5,000	
Utilities	3,440	
Insurance	300	
Other Direct Administrative Charges	<u>3,000</u>	
Total Administrative Expenses		<u>17,940</u>
Total Expenses		<u>\$194,340</u>

APPENDIX V

The Southwest Minnesota RTCC Communication & Public Engagement Strategies

The key to successful transportation coordination is effective communication with the right people at the right time, and continued engagement of the necessary stakeholders. This document provides a breakdown of the most important communication goals of the Southwest Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC), the audiences that will be targeted and the basic methods of communication.

Communication Goals

- ⇒ Introduce people to the Southwest Minnesota RTCC, what it does and why it does it.
- ⇒ Engage people in work of the Southwest Minnesota RTCC so they can help provide input, direction and funding to advance transportation coordination.
- ⇒ Tell people about RTCC meetings and give information about how to participate.

Target Audiences

- ⇒ Transportation and service providers
- ⇒ Legislators and other decision makers
- ⇒ Potential funders
- ⇒ Transportation users, particularly those representing the aging, veterans, people with disabilities, minority populations, people with low income and their employers

Basic Strategies

- ⇒ RTCC meetings
- ⇒ Print media: newspaper, newsletters, brochures, flyers, etc.
- ⇒ Electronic media: Social media, video production, local access television, email communications, etc.
- ⇒ Speaking and outreach events
- ⇒ Southwest Minnesota RTCC website hosted by MCOTA

This is not an exhaustive plan. Because communication is so critical, RTCC staff will send out communications in some form at least 6 times per year. When a formal message goes out to the public, it will first be presented to the full RTCC so they will be

prepared to respond to any comments or questions. RTCC staff and members will also take every opportunity to tell others about the important work of the Council at community meetings and events.

<i>Before RTCC Meetings – quarterly or as special projects require</i>		
<u>Potential Medium</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Audience</u>
Radio/Local Access TV	request public input and participation	members of the public (particularly in target populations)
Flyers	request public input and participation	members of the public (particularly in target populations)
Newspapers	request public input and participation	members of the public (particularly in target populations)
Social Media	request public input and participation	members of the public
Website (MCOTA)	request public input and participation	members of the public
Email (material can also be printed and mailed)	provide background needed	RTCC members and others who RSVP

<i>RTCC Meetings – quarterly or as special projects require</i>		
<u>Potential Medium</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Audience</u>
Face-to-face, Web conferencing	seek input from members and stakeholders on the transportation needs of the region and potential projects; provide people with updates on the work	members, interested public

<i>After RTCC Meetings – quarterly or as special projects require</i>		
<u>Potential Medium</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Audience</u>
Email (material can also be printed and mailed)	provide meeting follow-up and next steps	all those who attended
Website (MCOTA)	provide details about what was covered, seek input on items for next meeting	members of the public

<i>For Public Education and Outreach – as needed</i>		
<u>Potential Medium</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Audience</u>
Social Media	inform, seek feedback	members of the public
Brochures	inform of the work of the RTCC	members of the public, decision makers, RTCC members, potential members
Flyers	advertise outreach events	members of the public
Public Speaking/Outreach Presentations	provide information about RTCC and projects	members of the public, funders, decision makers

Media may also be created for purposes not listed here at the direction of RTCC members.