Five-Year Transit System Plan

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Chapter 1. Executive Summary

Overview

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) completed the Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan (GMTIP) in May 2017. The GMTIP set forth a framework to expand transit service to meet critical unmet mobility needs. As part of this strategic effort, MnDOT is funding the development of short-range Five-Year Transit System Plans (FYTSP) for rural transit systems across the state. Three Rivers Community Action's Hiawathaland Transit is one of the rural transit providers in the southeast region with a multi-county service area. The broad goals of this FYTSP include:

- Understand the system's strengths and weaknesses
- Identify unmet needs and future transit service changes
- Develop a financial plan that is adaptable to changing environments

The FYTSP will provide Hiawathaland Transit with a fiscally responsible framework to work with local government officials, local planning agencies, board members and other stakeholders to build local support for improving their transit system.

Summary of Major Components

The FYTSP includes a description of the governance structure, operating environment, and current services of Hiawathaland Transit, as well as a summary of capital and operating costs. Projected future capital and operating expenses for the years 2020 to 2025 are estimated based on recommended service expansion concepts.

Recommendations are organized by the following categories: **Service, Staffing, Facilities/Fleet, Technology, and Marketing**, and are summarized into an Action Plan beginning on page 624.

Summary of Technical Memoranda

Previous technical memoranda included a description of existing conditions in the Hiawathaland Transit service area, as well as a summary of public engagement efforts. Major findings from the both documents are included in this report.

Needs Assessment

Consultants conducted a performance review of Hiawathaland services to identify where service is being operated efficiently and where improvements can be made to increase ridership while enhancing cost effectiveness and efficiency. Hiawathaland Transit operates the following services:

- Two deviated fixed routes and Dial-A-Ride service on weekdays in the city of Faribault.
- Three deviated fixed routes and dial-a-ride service in the city of Northfield with service every weekday and limited service on weekends.
- Three deviated fixed routes on weekdays and a daily dial-a-ride service in the city of Red Wing.
- Weekday Dial-A-Ride services in Cannon Falls/Randolph, Kenyon/Wanamingo, Lake City/ Frontenac, Lonsdale, Pine Island, Plainview/Elgin, Wabasha/Kellogg, and Zumbrota/Mazeppa.

Consultants facilitated a series of on-site interviews with Hiawathaland staff and surveys with stakeholders identified by Hiawathaland staff to learn how well service is meeting needs and identify gaps in service as well as capital and operational needs. Through this engagement, the following potential areas for improvement were identified: transit service information, marketing, on-time performance, storage facilities, service area, regular scheduled regional service, and driver recruitment.

Recommendations

This report identifies short- and long-term recommendations for Hiawathaland to better serve its current and future users. The following improvements are recommended for the short term:

- Examine the deviated fixed route networks in Faribault, Northfield, and Red Wing to identify opportunities for streamlining and expanding service.
- Add regularly scheduled regional service with one route serving Northfield, Cannon Falls, and Red Wing, and a second route serving Faribault and Northfield.
- Recruit and retain additional bus drivers.
- Hire a bilingual, Spanish-speaking travel trainer to increase access to transit and information.
- Recruit additional volunteer drivers.
- Evaluate deviated routes in Faribault, Northfield, and Red Wing to identify ways to improve service or, if appropriate, eliminate service.
- Study fare structure and fare media in anticipation of new fare system.

Long-term recommendations will likely focus on service expansion with changes such as including evening service on the deviated fixed routes and increasing frequency of service.

Chapter 2. Why a Five-Year Capital and Operational Plan?

Transit systems in Greater Minnesota operate in a rapidly changing environment with new policies, funding situations, system mergers and increased demands for services.

To address the growing need for transit service in a way that is integrated and embraced by the community, a vision for each transit system is critical. Without a plan, systems are put in the position of having to react in the moment to new circumstances. They may operate on a year to year basis without a long-term vision to guide budgets and decision making.

A five-year plan for each transit system will provide a framework for connecting with local government officials, local planning agencies, board members, and other stakeholders to build support for improving their transit system. The FYTSP will provide each system, MnDOT and the Minnesota Public Transit Association with a clear definition of transit needs and a basis from which to request long-term commitment of local funds and leverage state and federal funding.

Transit providers and MnDOT agree that individual five-year plans will help identify system-specific priorities based on themes from the Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan. Five-year plans will help systems deliver service more successfully, and work toward overall goals such as:

- Improving coordination of services to meet transportation needs
- Increasing ridership/usage across the network
- Ensuring fiscal responsibility as a transit funding agency
- Anticipating and planning for future funding levels to achieve service expansion
- Articulating and communicating a vision for the transit system and the benefits it provides to the community

MnDOT is committed to funding consultant support for each transit provider to develop a five-year plan that is designed to meet the needs of each unique system and community. The process for developing the five-year plans is guided by a project manager (DRB), the Office of Transit and Active Transportation at MnDOT, and the Minnesota Public Transit Association. A Project Advisory Committee consisting of transit directors, staff from metropolitan planning organizations and regional development organizations, local government officials, service organization representatives, and staff from MPTA and MnDOT is providing input and identifying key issues to be addressed by the plans.

Larger transit systems routinely develop and update five-year plans, as do local governments. The Greater Minnesota transit system five-year plans will allow all transit service to be incorporated into the larger vision for communities as they plan for new economic development and a future with an aging population.

Policies, including the Olmstead Plan and Americans With Disabilities requirements, are leading communities to explore ways to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. A statutory goal of meeting 90 percent of the need for transit service by 2025 in Greater Minnesota is focusing more attention on how to expand service around the state.

With a well-defined five-year plan, goals and ideas for improving transit service can be put into action with a blueprint for routes to add or expand, specific hours of service to adjust, and funding to cover additional operating and capital expenses. The plans will also facilitate communication with the public, raising awareness of how and where transit service is provided.

These five-year plans are designed to be updated annually by the service providers to meet changing needs and circumstances.

Transit service improves the livability and prosperity of communities across Greater Minnesota. The five-year transit system plans will bring stakeholders together to develop a vision that will guide the decisions made today and in the future.

Chapter 3. Agency Overview

Background

In 1997, Three Rivers Community Action wrote its first grant to the Minnesota Department of Transportation and Hiawathaland Transit was born! Starting service in January of 1998 using a school bus and school bus contractor, Three Rivers provided public transit rides to the citizens of Lake City. Anyone was, and still is, allowed to ride the bus for any reason. In the first year of service, Hiawathaland transported riders to medical appointments, grocery stores, pre-school, and social visits for a total of 7,051 rides using a single dial-a-ride bus that provided curb-to-curb service.

Interest from communities to add rural public transit systems was initially met with hesitation. However, in the years following the inception of Hiawathaland Transit, additional single bus, dial-a-ride public transit services began in the communities of Plainview, Elgin, Wabasha, Kellogg and Cannon Falls.

In 2005, Three Rivers became a key player in the successful development of regional transit systems in Minnesota. The following is a timeline of the growth of the Hiawathaland regional transit system.

- 2005 -- Consolidated the City of Red Wing Transit system into Hiawathaland Transit
- 2005 – Purchased the Hiawathaland Transit Facility in Plainview
- 2006 – Transitioned from private contractors to direct services in-house
- 2007 – Combined Head Start transportation with Hiawathaland Transit
- 2008 – Started dial-a-ride services in Zumbrota and Mazeppa
- 2010 -- Began operating the City of Winona Transit Services
- 2011 – Restructured and revived the HART/Volunteer Transportation Program
- 2012 – Consolidated the City of Faribault Transit System into Hiawathaland Transit
- 2012 – Consolidated the City of Northfield Transit System into Hiawathaland Transit
- 2013 – Designed and constructed the Red Wing Transit Hub and Park and Ride
- 2014 – Began providing transit connections between communities
- 2015 – Started dial-a-ride service in Pine Island
- 2017 – Started dial-a-ride service in Kenyon/Wanamingo and Lonsdale
- 2017 – Added a Travel Trainer to work with the Somali Community in Faribault

In 2006, Hiawathaland Transit transitioned from using third party operators for direct service to bringing the daily operations in-house. All drivers, dispatchers, and transit staff became employees of Three Rivers. This change increased efficiency by allowing riders to have access through a single dispatch center with one toll free number to call in and schedule rides. It also streamlined program management, consolidated training and oversight to ensure consistency from community to community, and created opportunities for cohesive marketing.

In conjunction with adding communities into the Hiawathaland Transit system, Three Rivers also started adding types of transportation services beyond its traditional dial-a-ride service. Deviated

route systems, route guarantee services, subscription or work trip services, Head Start transportation, and HART/Volunteer transportation services were added to meet the region's growing demands.

As the system grew, the capital needs grew as well. Buses became larger to accommodate more passengers. The first bus purchased held 13 passengers and didn't required a commercial driver's license (CDL) to operate. Today, all vehicles require CDLs and can seat as many as 32 passengers. The transit system also has additional capital investments in the form of bus route signs, bus shelters, dispatching software with computer aided tablets for drivers, digital radios, four facilities and a public park and ride.

What started as a department with one bus and one employee now boasts more than 100 employees, 50 buses, and provides over 700,000 rides department wide annually. Hiawathaland Transit has a webpage, Facebook page, and offers passengers regular tweets via its Twitter, @HiawathalandBus.

Mission

Three Rivers Community Action's mission is, "to work with community partners to address basic human needs of people in our service area, thereby improving the quality of life of the individual, family and community."

The Office of Transit and Active Transportation's mission is, "Provide our partners and communities with leadership, tools, and resources that support access to high-quality biking, walking, and transit options that enable people to live independently, engaged, and connected."

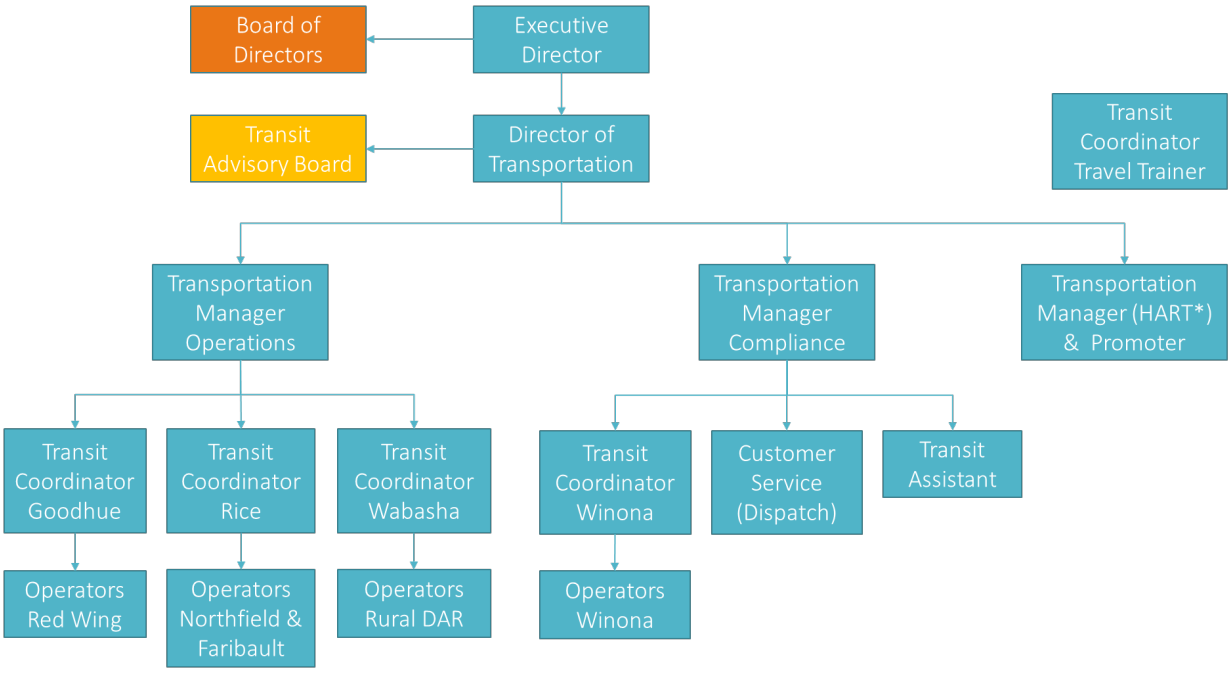
Vision

Hiawathaland Transit's vision is, "Connecting Minnesota one ride, stride, and pedal at a time."

Governance

The organizational structure for Three Rivers – Hiawathaland Transit is outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Organizational Structure for Three Rivers – Hiawathaland Transit



Transit Advisory Committee

The agency also seeks guidance from a Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) that meets quarterly to discuss any proposed changes, present concerns and recommendations, and compile notes in published TAC meeting minutes. The purpose of the TAC is to provide an opportunity to engage with persons who use the service, citizen advocates, and business owners, and to bring together key stakeholders who are able to develop successful initiatives, resolve emerging issues/problems, and provide ongoing dialogue. TAC members include those who have an interest in transit services, city government, persons/representatives/providers for those with disabilities and the elderly, and other required stakeholders as recommended by MnDOT.

For current TAC membership, see Table 1.

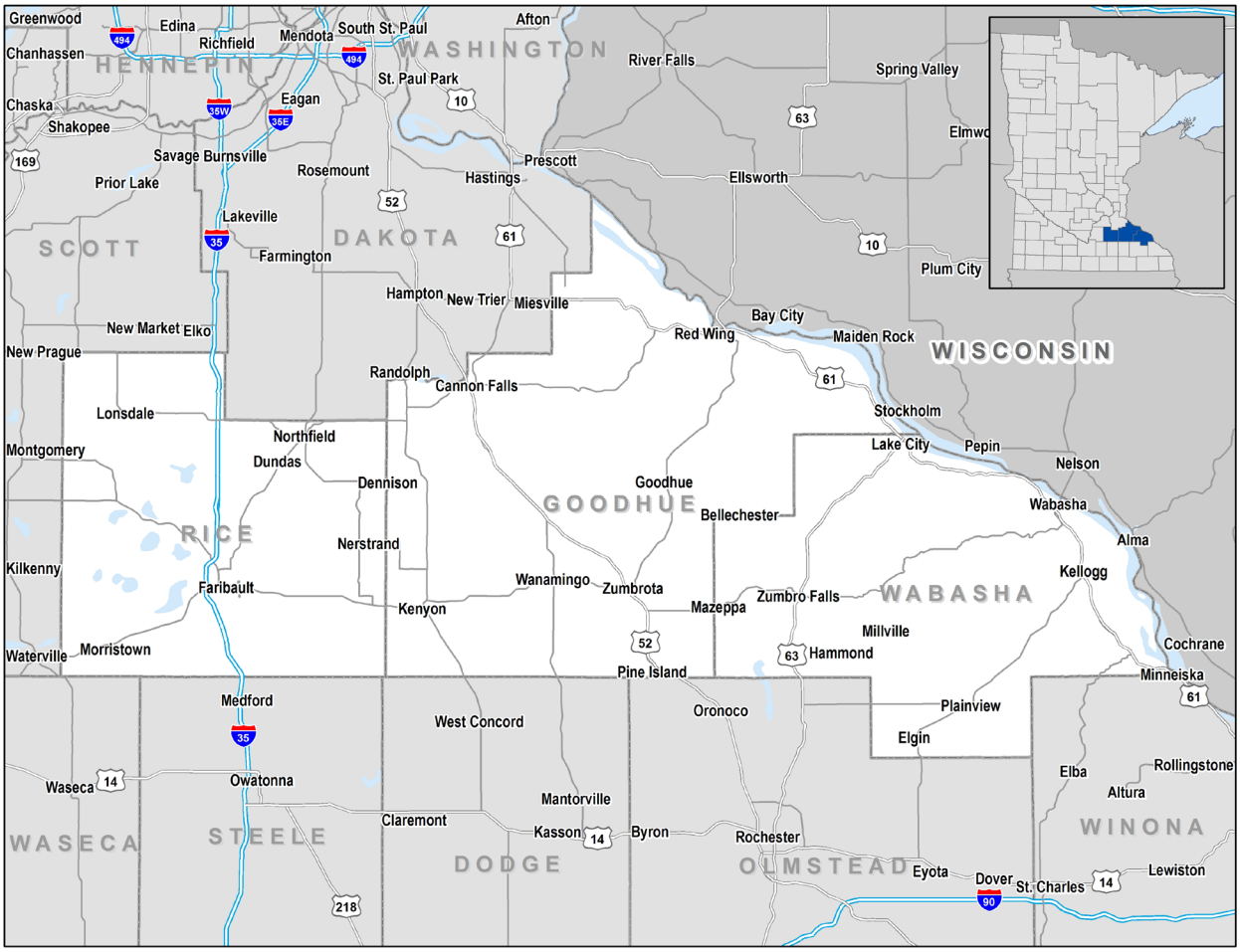
Table 1. 2018 Three Rivers – Hiawathaland Transit TAC Committee Members

TAC Committee Member	Organization	Title	Transit Area Affiliation
Kelly Barker	Pine Island Public Schools	Community Ed Director	Pine Island
David Bennett	City of Northfield	Public Works Director	Northfield
Michael Boulton	City of Wanamingo	City Administrator	Wanamingo
Sonji Davis	Workforce Development	Area Manager	Faribault
Sean Dowse	City of Red Wing	Mayor	Red Wing
Joel Erickson	City of Lonsdale	City Administrator	Lonsdale
Neil Jensen	City of Zumbrota	City Administrator	Zumbrota
Morris Mattson	City of Cannon Falls	Council Member	Cannon Falls
Jean Meyer	MnDOT		MnDOT Rep
Tim Murray	City of Faribault	City Administrator	Faribault
Suzie Nakasian	City of Northfield	Council Member	Northfield
Chad Springer	City of Wabasha	City Administrator	Wabasha
Julie Steberg	Three Rivers Community Action	Board Liaison	Goodhue County
Mark Vahlsing	City of Kenyon	City Administrator	Kenyon
Dave Windhorst	Three Rivers Community Action	Board Liaison	Wabasha County
Mike Wobbe	Wabasha County	Commissioner	Wabasha County
Roger Ziebell	City of Plainview	Mayor	Plainview

Service Area Overview

The Hiawathaland Transit service area includes 17 different communities sprawled across three counties (Goodhue, Rice, and Wabasha) in the southeastern region of Minnesota (see Figure 2). Deviated fixed route service is provided in Faribault, Northfield and Red Wing. Dial-A-Ride service is provided in all 17 communities including Cannon Falls, Elgin, Faribault, Frontenac, Kellogg, Kenyon, Lake City, Lonsdale, Mazeppa, Northfield, Pine Island, Plainview, Randolph, Red Wing, Wabasha, Wanamingo, and Zumbrota. Regional trips are provided across the service area as demand arises and resources become available. Hiawathaland Transit is also the contract service provider for the Winona Transit while the City of Winona provides administrative oversight.

Figure 2. Hiawathaland Transit Service Area



Community Profiles

Demographics

To better understand the existing socioeconomic characteristics of the region, which may influence an individual's propensity toward transit use, the following transit dependency index and economic health index were reviewed.

Transit Dependency Index

MnDOT developed the transit dependency index to highlight communities that have higher demand for transit services based on several data attributes that are associated with dependency on public transit (see Figure 3). The color-based legend is based on standard deviations and is relative to the region. Communities labeled "very high" indicate a much higher than average need for transit services. A very high vulnerability score indicates a notably large combination of barriers to independent rural transportation, such as low incomes, zero vehicle households, language fluency issues, or various income levels. The database attributes in the index include:

Population percent disabled: The percentage of the population who identifies as disabled, with high percentages signaling community transit needs (American Community Survey 5-year estimates)

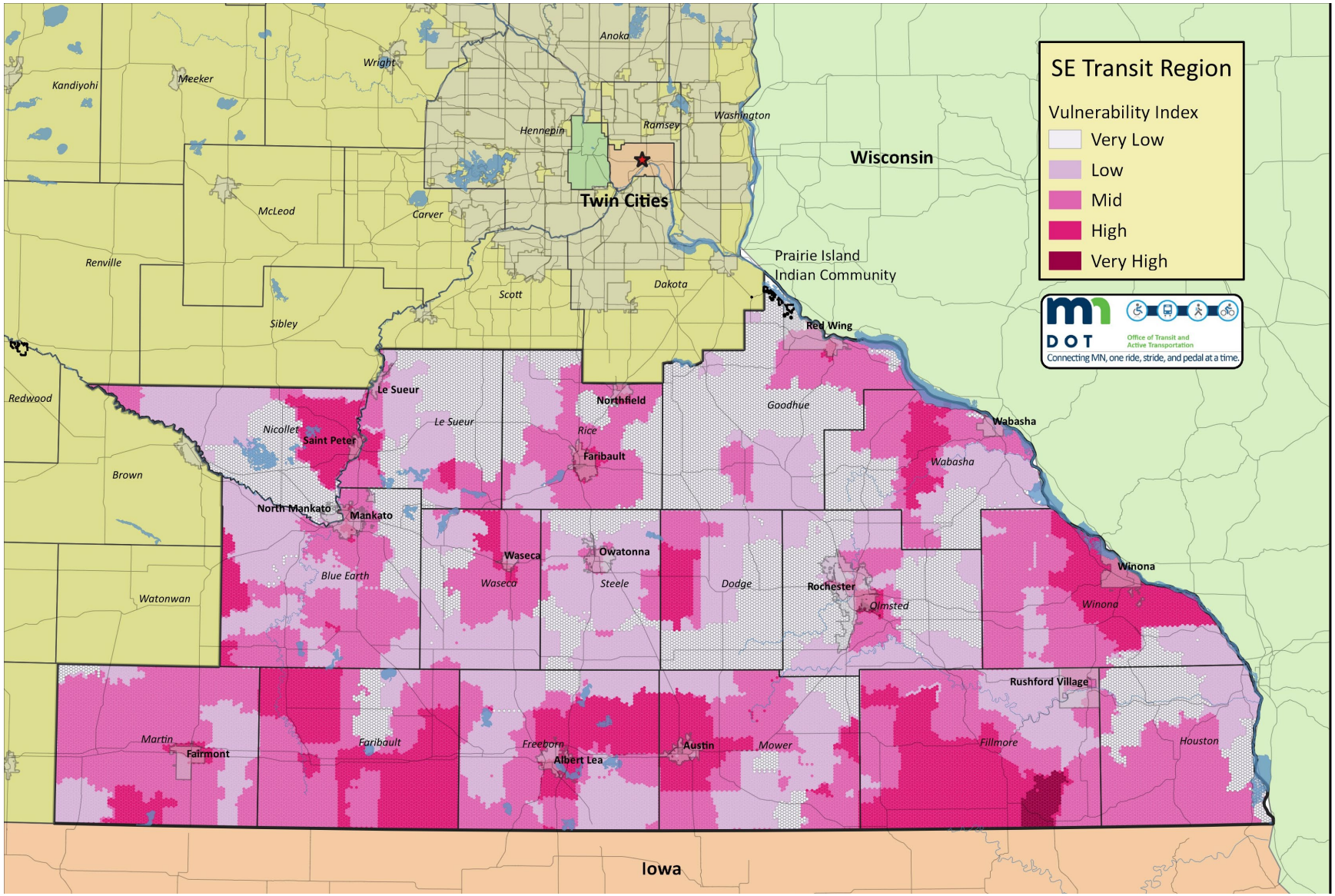
Zero vehicle households: The percentages of households with zero vehicles available, signaling unmet transit needs (American Community Survey 5-year estimates)

Limited English proficiency: The percentage of households with limited English spoken within, identifying areas with unmet transit needs (American Community Survey 5-year estimates)

Median household income: which was the one dummy variable that was subtracted as a factor in the index (American Community Survey 5-year estimates)

Within the Hiawathaland Transit service area there are three areas that show a concentrated high transit vulnerability index: the Faribault area, the central portion of Wabasha County, and the general area surrounding the City of Winona. Areas that earned a mid-vulnerability ranking include a large portion of Rice County (including the Northfield service area), the area in and around Wanamingo, and most of the land bordering the Mississippi River (including the Frontenac, Lake City, Red Wing, and Wabasha service areas).

Figure 3. Southeast Transit Region MnDOT Vulnerability Index



Economic Health Index

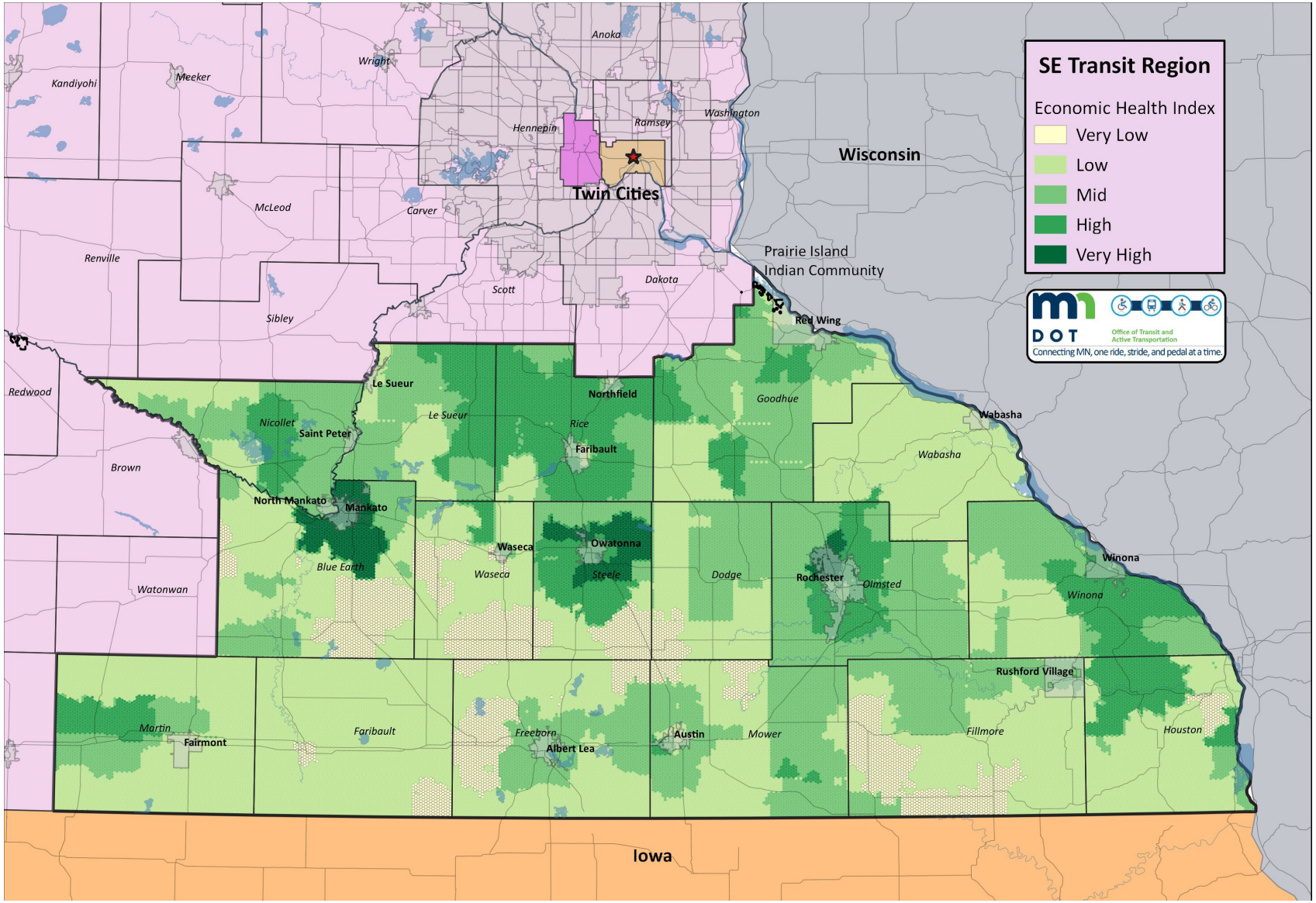
Economic health can be measured using many types of information. The Minnesota Department of Transportation developed an index using four different database attributes to develop one map that shows economic health in southeast Minnesota (see Figure 4).

Darker color areas with "very high" or "high" indicate that the health of the local economy is robust and healthy relative to the region. The database attributes in the index include:

1. *Average number of employers: 2011-2015* as a way to measure employment density (zip code tabulation area from County Business Patterns dataset).
2. *Projected Business Growth:* Metric of increasing or decreasing business projections to assess where the number of jobs of the near future are forecasted.
3. *Labor participation:* Percentage of residents actively participating in the labor force as a sign of economic vitality (Census tract level data from 2016 ACS 5-year Estimates).
4. *Population change:* Percent change of population in areas by comparing 2010 Census data with values from 2016 ACS Estimates; population growth was considered a sign of economic health.

Within the Hiawathaland Transit service area, Rice County has the highest overall health index, notably concentrated along the Interstate 35 corridor including Faribault and Northfield. Goodhue County also shows high index levels in and around Wanamingo and surrounding Red Wing. All of Wabasha County, except Elgin, rated low in the economic health index.

Figure 4. Southeast Transit Region MnDOT Economic Health Index



Population Changes

The region's population has been growing as a whole since the 2000 Census. Shown in Table 2, the region experienced a nine percent growth in population from 2000 to 2010. Some communities out-performed others, including Lonsdale (146% growth rate), Randolph (37%), and Elgin (32%). In more recent years, the population growth has slowed to a combined two percent service for the entire service area.

Table 2. Recent Population Changes

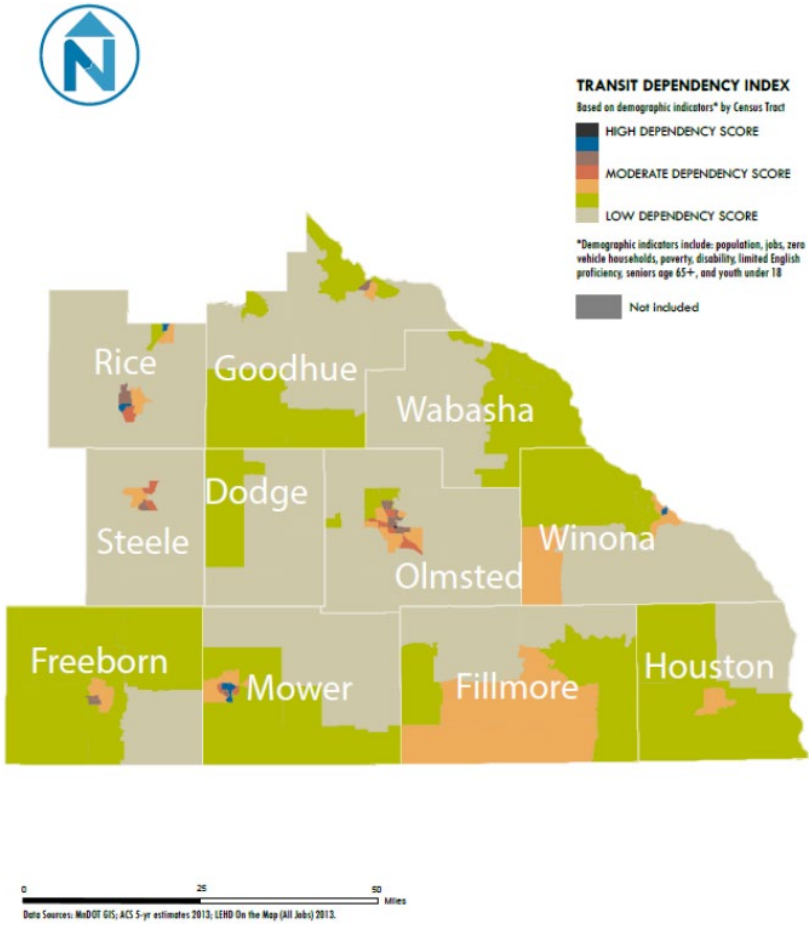
Community	County	2000 Population	2010 Population	2016 Est. Population	2000 to 2010 Percent Increase	2010 to 2016 Percent Increase
Cannon Falls	Goodhue	3,795	4,083	4,106	8%	1%
Elgin	Wabasha	826	1,089	1,073	32%	-1%
Faribault	Rice	20,818	23,352	23,662	12%	1%
Frontenac	Goodhue	282	282	305	0%	8%
Kellogg	Wabasha	439	456	442	4%	-3%
Kenyon	Goodhue	1,661	1,815	1,828	9%	1%
Lake City	Wabasha	4,950	5,063	5,042	2%	0%
Lonsdale	Rice	1,491	3,674	3,896	146%	6%
Mazeppa	Wabasha	778	842	828	8%	-2%
Northfield	Rice/Dakota	17,147	20,007	20,445	17%	2%
Pine Island	Goodhue	2,337	3,263	3,360	40%	3%
Plainview	Wabasha	3,190	3,340	3,239	5%	-3%
Randolph	Dakota	318	436	447	37%	3%
Red Wing	Goodhue	16,116	15,459	16,526	-4%	7%
Wabasha	Wabasha	2,599	2,521	2,453	-3%	-3%
Wanamingo	Goodhue	1,007	1,086	1,092	8%	1%
Winona	Winona	27,069	27,592	27,478	2%	0%
Zumbrota	Goodhue	2,789	3,252	3,409	17%	5%
Total Service Area	–	**107,612**	**117,612**	**119,631**	**9%**	**2%**

Transit Dependency

MnDOT has developed a transit dependency index to highlight areas with concentrated populations that may use transit. Factors considered in this analysis include the following: population and employment density, youth (under 18), older adults (age 65+), households without a vehicle, persons with a disability, LEP populations, and low-income households.

Figure 3 illustrates transit dependency by census tract within Southeast Minnesota as calculated for the Region 10 Local Human Service Public Transit Coordination Plan (2017).

Figure 5. Transit Dependency Index



Source: Region 10 Local Human Service Public Transit Coordination Plan (2017)

Chapter 4. Agency Transit Services

General Overview

Hiawathaland Transit provides public transportation in 18 communities across five counties in southeast Minnesota: Dakota, Goodhue, Rice, Wabasha, and Winona. The 18 communities have a combined population of approximately 120,000.

This section reviews the existing public transit service by service area, first focusing on deviated fixed routes and then outlining the dial-a-ride service across the region. The following terms have been provided in order to provide a guide to what these services are:

Deviated Fixed Routes: a hybrid of conventional fixed route service, which operates along a set route following to a fixed schedule, and demand response service. Deviated fixed routes essentially provide both services where the bus traveling the set route may deviate from that route to facilitate passenger pick-ups or drop-offs, typically within three-quarters of a mile to the route. Following each deviation, the bus continues along its route, serving the next scheduled stop in the route's sequence. Passengers may call in advance for route deviation or may access the system at predetermined route stops.

Dial-A-Ride: Transportation services where drivers pick up and drop off passengers at any point in the service area. These trips could be shared to provide greater efficiency, which means one passenger's trip will likely not be direct. These types of trips typically require advanced notice due to scheduling. As trip requests are received, a scheduler combines short-term requests, reservations, and subscription service for the most efficient use of each driver's time.

The services operated by Hiawathaland Transit are described in the following sections.

City of Faribault

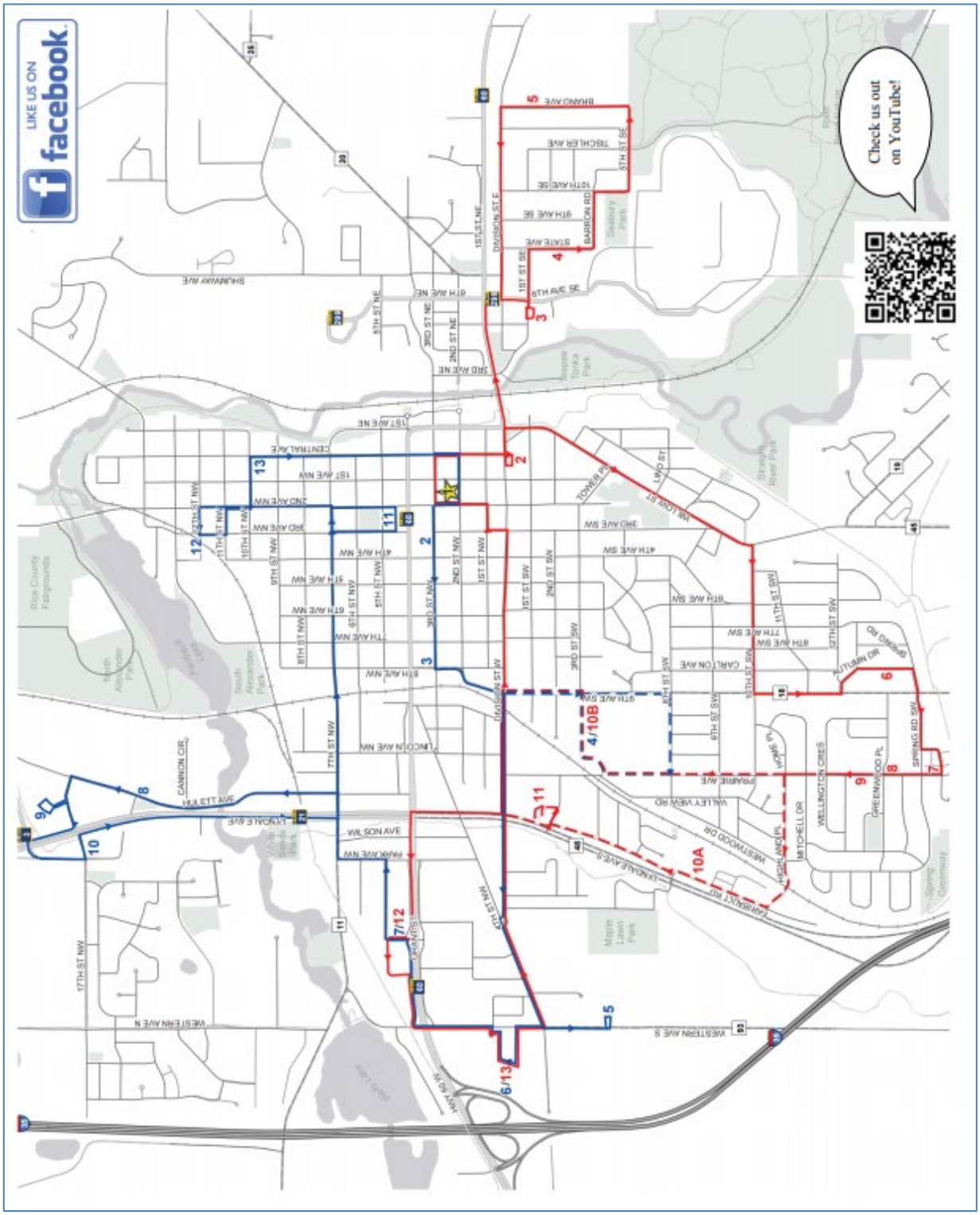
Hiawathaland Transit operates two deviated fixed routes and Dial-A-Ride service in the city of Faribault (see Table 3). Both services run Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The two routes provide a northern and southern loop through the city with timed transfers at the city hall (see Figure 5).

Table 3. City of Faribault Service Characteristics

Service	Service Days/Hours	Service Description
Faribault Blue Route (Deviated Fixed Route)	Monday – Friday 6:00am to 6:00pm	Service to Rice County Government Offices, Faribault High School, Walmart, HyVee, Cannon River Mobile Homes, and Village at Park Avenue Apartment, etc.
Faribault Red Route (Deviated Fixed Route)	Monday – Friday 6:00am to 6:00pm	Service to Library, District One Hospital, Pleasant View Estates, Robinwood, Faribault Senior Living, Town Square, Walmart, HyVee, etc.
Dial-A-Ride	Monday – Friday 6:00am to 6:00pm	Connects residents outside of existing fixed route deviation zone. Also provides transportation for young students.

Source: Three Rivers – Hiawathaland Transit

Figure 6. City of Faribault Route Map



City of Northfield

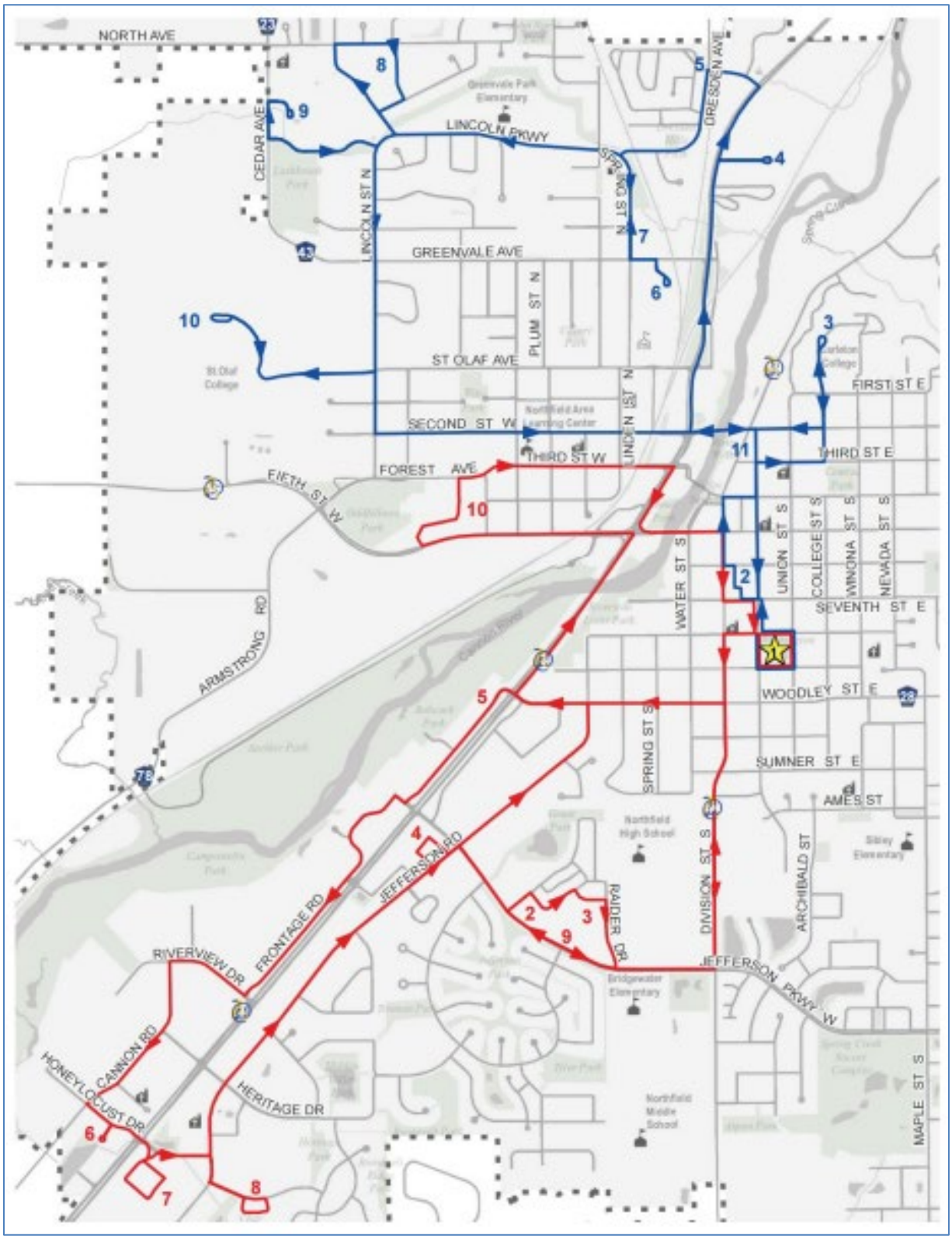
Hiawathaland operates three deviated fixed routes and dial-a-ride service in the city of Northfield (see Table 4). The two main routes, Blue and Route, operate on 45-minute headways in two large loops within the city with a timed transfer at the city hall. These two routes operate on weekdays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The dial-a-ride service mirrors the Blue and Red Route's hours of operation and also provides service on Saturdays from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Northfield service also includes the Northfield Express Route which largely caters to students from St. Olaf and Carleton Colleges, providing service in the evenings and nights Monday through Saturday and limited day service on Sunday.

Table 4. City of Northfield Service Characteristics

Service	Service Days/Hours	Service Description
Northfield Blue Route (Deviated Fixed Route)	Monday – Friday 6:00am to 6:00pm	Connects housing complexes, Carleton College, St. Olaf College, and the library.
Northfield Red Route(Deviated Fixed Route)	Monday – Friday 6:00am to 6:00pm	Largely serves major shopping destinations, the YMCA, senior center, and Allina Clinic.
Northfield Express Route (Deviated Fixed Route)	Monday – Saturday 4:00pm to 11:00pm Sunday 3:00pm to 6:00pm *Available only during the St. Olaf and Carleton College school year*	Connects St. Olaf and Carleton Colleges with shopping opportunities and evening activities within Northfield.
Dial-A-Ride	Monday – Friday 6:00am to 9:00pm Saturday 7:00am to 5:00pm	Connects residents outside of existing fixed route deviation zone and provides service on Saturdays. Also provides transportation for young students.

Source: Three Rivers – Hiawathaland Transit

Figure 7. City of Northfield Route Map



City of Red Wing

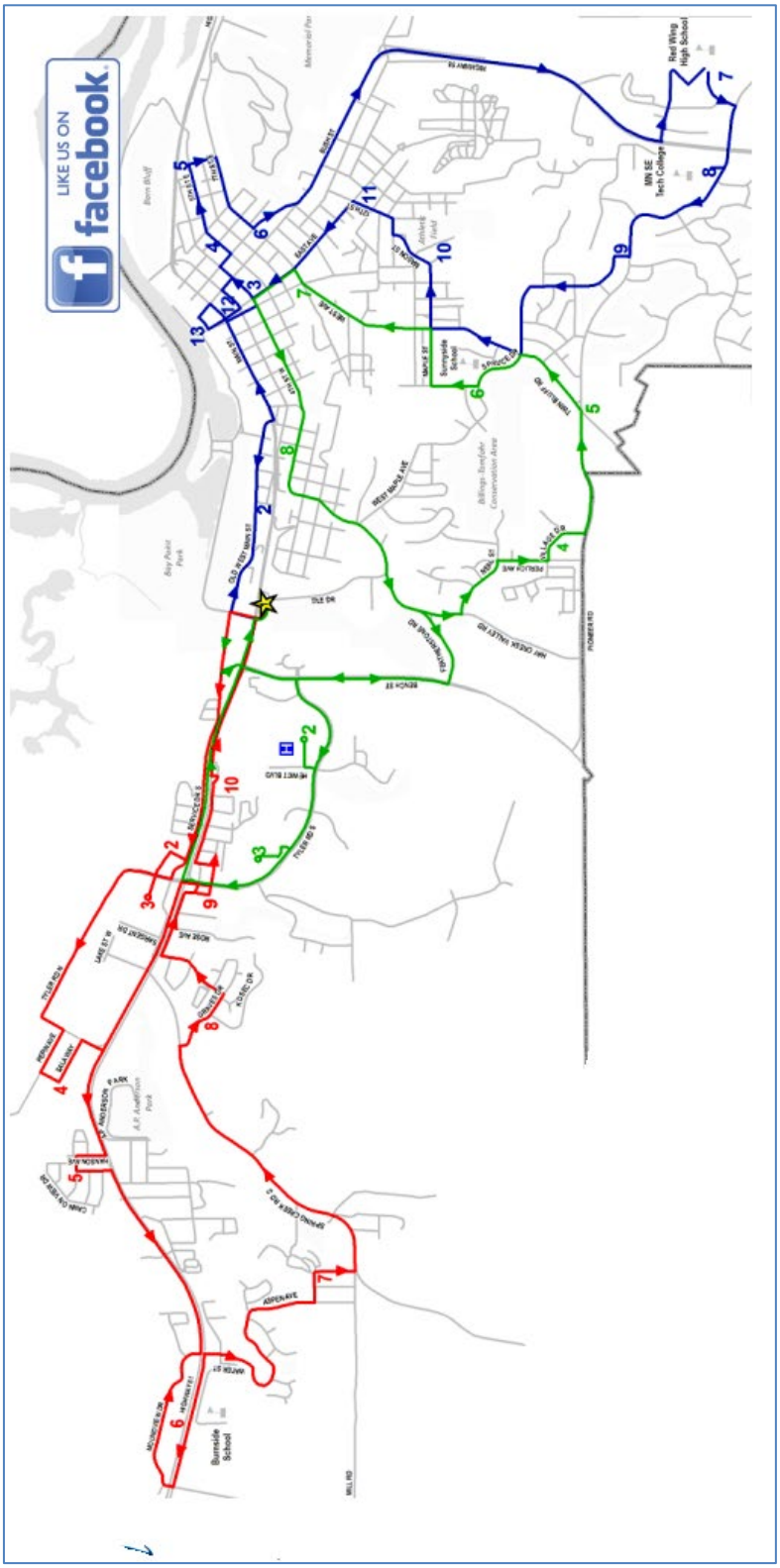
Hiawathaland Transit operates three deviated fixed routes and a dial-a-ride service in the city of Red Wing (see Table 5). The three routes provide loop service in the western, central, and eastern portions of Red Wing with a central timed transfer point at a dedicated transfer facility and park and ride (see Figure 7).

Table 5. City of Red Wing Service Characteristics

Service	Service Days/Hours	Service Description
Red Wing Blue Route (Deviated Fixed Route)	Monday – Friday 6:00am to 6:00pm	Serves the eastern portion of Red Wing connecting senior housing complexes, the library, High School, Tech College, and downtown areas.
Red Wing Green Route (Deviated Fixed Route)	Monday – Friday 6:00am to 6:00pm	Serves the central portion of Red Wing with stops at Walmart, RWHC, and clinic.
Red Wing Red Route (Deviated Fixed Route)	Monday – Friday 6:00am to 6:00pm	Serves the western portion of Red Wing connecting many of the major shopping destinations including Target and JC Penny.
Dial-A-Ride	Monday – Friday 4:30am to 9:00pm Saturday – Sunday 7:00am to 5:00pm	Connects residents outside of existing fixed route deviation zone and provides evening and weekend service. Also provides transportation for young students.

Source: Three Rivers – Hiawathaland Transit

Figure 8. City of Red Wing Route Map



Dial-A-Ride Service Areas

In addition to the dial-a-ride offered in Faribault, Northfield, Red Wing, and Winona, Hiawathaland Transit also provides dial-a-ride service in 14 other communities. See Table 6 for more details on service areas and spans.

Table 6. Dial-A-Ride Service Characteristics

Service	Service Days/Hours
Cannon Falls/Randolph	Monday – Friday 7:00am to 5:00pm
Kenyon/Wanamingo	Monday – Friday 7:30am to 4:30pm
Lake City/Frontenac	Monday – Friday 7:00am to 4:30pm Saturday 7:30am to 4:30pm
Lonsdale	Monday – Friday 7:00am to 4:30pm
Pine Island	Monday – Friday 7:00am to 5:00pm
Plainview/Elgin	Monday – Friday 7:30am to 4:30pm
Wabasha/Kellogg	Monday – Friday 7:00am to 3:30pm Saturday 7:30am to 4:30pm
Zumbrota/Mazeppa	Monday – Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm

Source: Three Rivers – Hiawathaland Transit

Service Contracts

Outside of its general public services, Hiawathaland Transit contracts with human services agencies, including EPIC Enterprise, Inc. in Northfield, ProACT, Inc. in Red Wing, and the Developmental Achievement Centers in Wabasha and Winona Counties. Hiawathaland Transit is also the contract service provider for the city of Winona, operating four routes and dial-a-ride service.

Service Guidelines

Deviated Fixed Routes

While specific service guidelines may slightly differ between services areas, any rider may board or alight the bus at any designated stop included in the service schedule. The bus will provide route deviations upon request; 24-hours advanced notice is recommended for any rider needing the use of the lift. Deviation requests must either be phoned into dispatch or, for riders onboard the bus, immediately communicated to the driver.

Dial-A-Ride Service

Reservations are first come, first served and trips may be reserved up to six days in advance, although a minimum of 24-hours is recommended to guarantee a ride. Same-day reservations are accepted but transportation is not guaranteed. Transportation is curb-to-curb, drivers will not assist passengers into residences or businesses and buses will not enter mobile home parks or apartment complexes.

Fare Structure

Hiawathaland Transit charges several different fare types depending on the service and location. The fares, shown in Table 6, are consistent across the service area with the exception of the city of Winona (see Table 7).

Table 7. Hiawathaland Transit Fares

Fare Type	Route Service	Dial-A-Ride
Single Ride	$1.25	$1.75
Monthly Pass	$38.00 *(Youth/Seniors 55+ $31.00)*	-
Monthly Student Pass *(Only to and from school)*	$10.00	-
Children (2 years and younger with a paying adult)	Free	-
Route Transfers (immediate transfers only)	Free	-

Source: Three Rivers – Hiawathaland Transit

Fares are paid to the bus driver at the time of boarding. Fares can be paid in cash, but 10-punch passes and tokens are encouraged as bus drivers are unable to provide change for cash fares. Punch passes and tokens are available for purchased at the following locations:

- **Cannon Falls**
  - Merchants Bank, 300 W Main Street
  - City Hall of Cannon Falls, 918 River Road
- **Faribault (Monthly Route Passes Also Available)**
  - City Hall of Faribault, 208 1st Avenue NW
  - Faribault High School, 330 9th Ave SW
  - Three Rivers, Faribo Town Square, 201 South Lyndale Avenue
- **Kenyon**
  - City Hall of Kenyon, 709 2nd Street
- **Lake City**
  - City Hall of Lake City, 205 W Center Street
- **Lonsdale**
  - City Hall of Lonsdale, 415 W Central Street
- **Northfield (Monthly Route Passes Also Available)**
  - City Hall of Northfield, 801 Washington Street
  - Cub Foods, 2423 Highway 3 South
  - Just Foods Co-op, 516 Water Street South

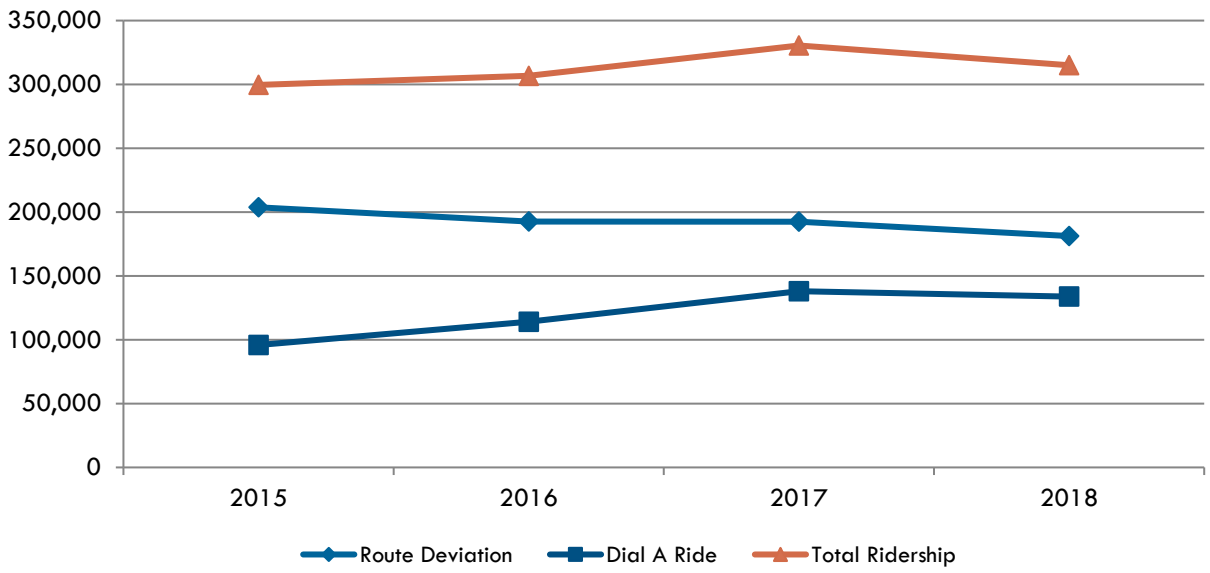
- **Pine Island**
    - City Hall of Pine Island
- **Plainview/Elgin**
    - City Hall of Plainview, 241 West Broadway
- **Red Wing (Monthly Route Passes Also Available)**
    - Walmart, 295 Tyler Road South
    - Public Works Building, 229 Tyler Road North
    - Community Development Building, 419 Bush Street
- **Wabasha/Kellogg**
    - City Hall of Wabasha, 900 Hiawatha Drive East
- **Zumbrota**
    - City Hall of Zumbrota, 175 West Avenue
    - Three Rivers, 1414 N Star Drive

Ridership

In 2018, Hiawathaland Transit provided 315,050 one-way trips. The total represents a ridership decline of approximately 5% from the previous year. The largest percentage of ridership is seen in the Red Wing service area with approximately 95,261 deviated fixed routes and 16,772 dial-a-ride trips in 2018 (roughly 36% of total ridership combined). The Northfield Express Route is the single busiest route in the system with a total of 35,052 trips in 2018. The Express Route is tailored for students of St. Olaf and Carleton College and only provides service during the school year. The highest ridership for a dial-a-ride service area is Northfield with a total of 22,610 trips in 2018.

Despite the recent downturn, ridership has steadily increased over the past decade (see Figure 9). This continual ridership expansion is largely due to service expansions, in terms of both service area and span of service.

Figure 9. Hiawathaland Transit Passenger Trips by Year



Source: Hiawathaland Transit

System Rider Characteristics

Profile

Rider demographics are tracked by drivers and entered into onboard TripSpark tablets. Rider characteristics for 2018 are provided in Table 8.

Table 8. Hiawathaland Transit Rider Characteristics

Service Area	Disabled	Elderly	Adult	Student	Children	Total	Percent of Total
Cannon Falls	894	796	3,217	5,168	447	10,522	3%
Elgin/Plainview	1,430	782	675	4,156	8,614	15,657	5%
Faribault	4,791	4,591	13,886	13,710	4,521	41,499	13%
Lake City	3,869	1,645	1,950	227	4,159	11,850	4%
Lonsdale	4,835	126	936	767	1,552	8,185	3%
Northfield	5,229	6,846	59,733	4,582	2,920	79,310	25%
Pine Island	161	128	477	1,176	4,022	5,964	2%
Red Wing	42,820	6,850	47,998	9,048	5,267	111,953	36%
Wabasha/Kellogg	4,597	1,241	2,687	3,126	1,612	13,263	4%
Wanamingo/Kenyon	3,710	226	1,439	211	1,952	7,538	2%
Zumbrota	2,237	150	786	122	6,014	9,309	3%
Total	74,573	23,381	133,784	42,293	41,080	315,050	-
Percent of Total	24%	7%	42%	13%	13%	-	-

Source: Hiawathaland Transit

Hiawathaland Transit Rider Survey

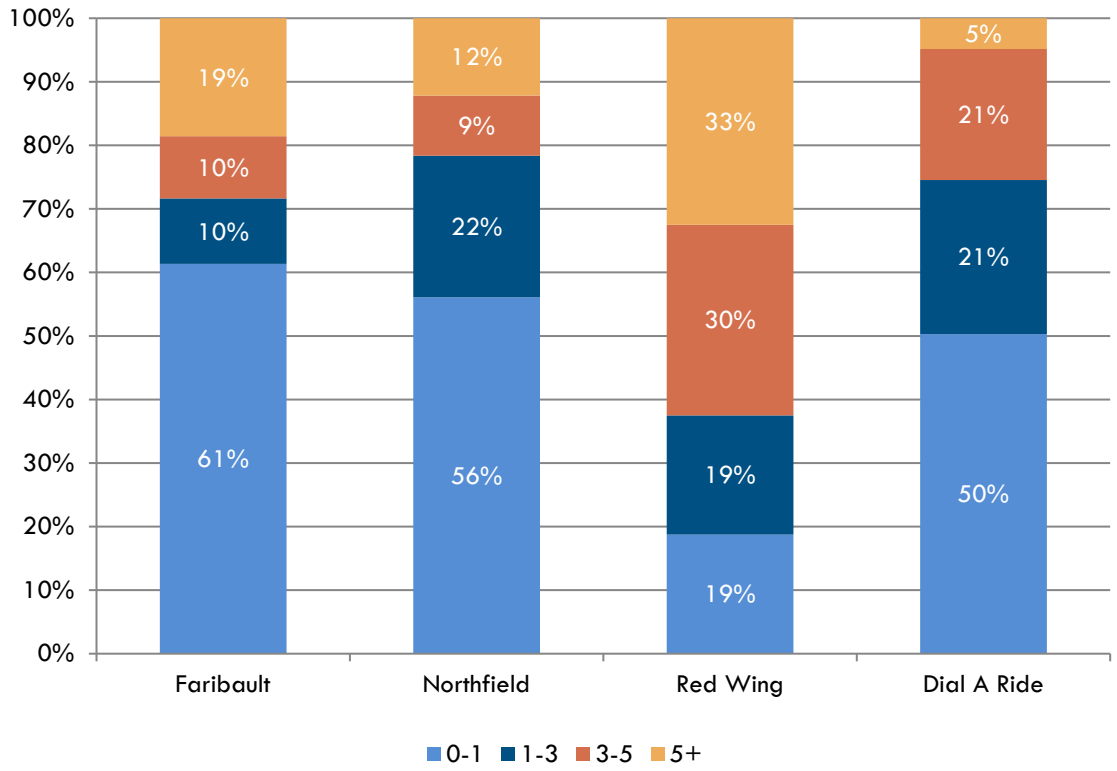
Hiawathaland Transit administered a rider survey during March and April 2019. The survey was conducted to determine the existing service standards and areas of opportunity in Rice, Goodhue, and Wabasha Counties. A total of 718 responses were collected: 243 in Faribault, 187 in Northfield, 93 in Red Wing, and 195 from Dial A Ride.

Behaviors

The following Figures 10 and 11 show the results of the survey, including questions about trip frequency and trip purpose.

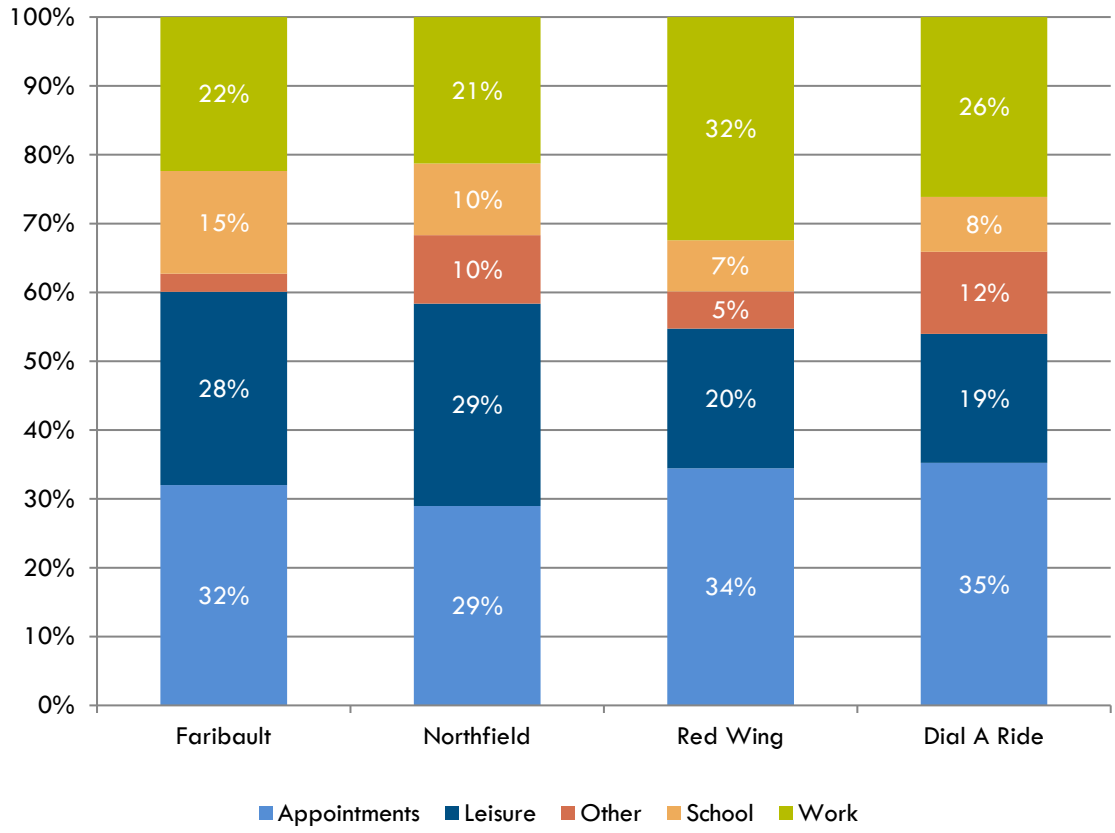
In total, most respondents utilize Hiawathaland Transit's services once a week. The Red Wing service area had the largest percentage of frequent riders with over half of the survey respondents indicating they regularly travel via Hiawathaland Transit (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. How Often Per Week Riders Typically Ride Hiawathaland Transit



The survey also provided information on the rider's trip purpose or primary reason they were using transit services. The primary trip purpose for each service was "appointments," followed by a mix of leisure and work trips.

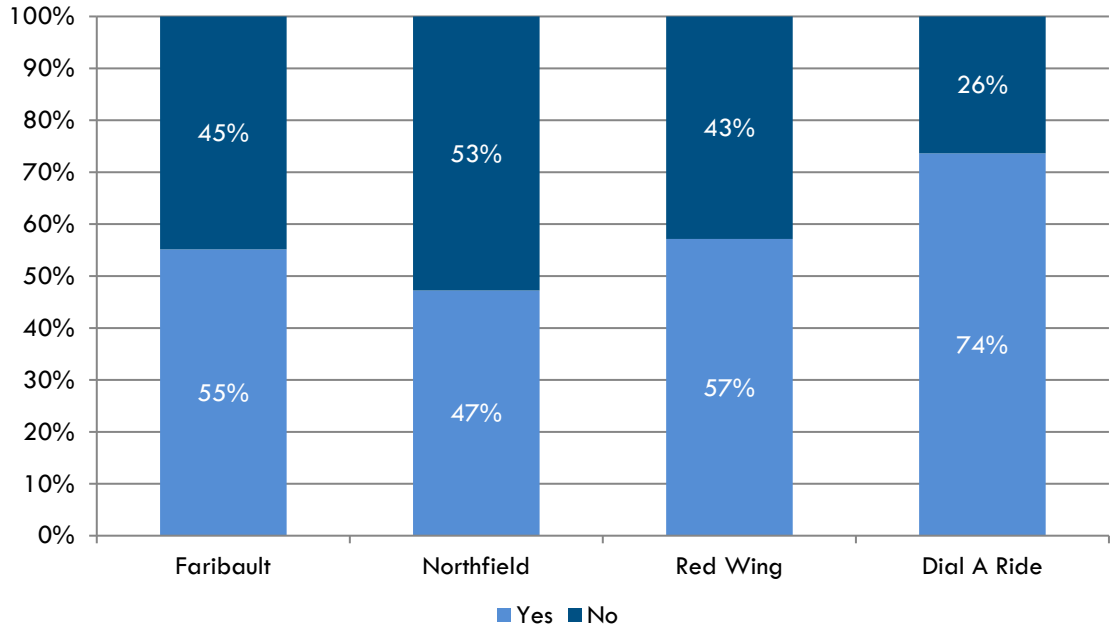
Figure 11. Trip Purpose



Attitudes and Opinions

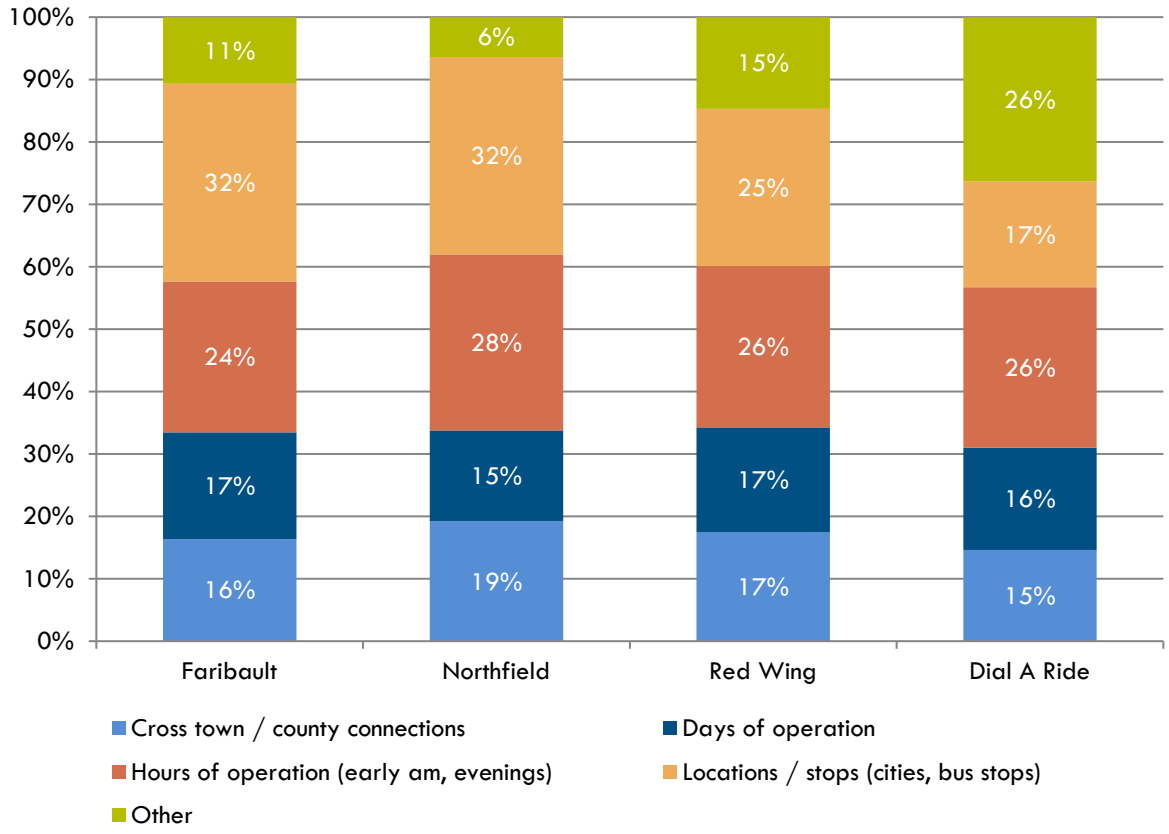
Survey respondents were asked if they believe the service provided by Hiawathaland Transit is adequate (Figure 12). The Northfield survey shows that over half (53%) of respondents did not believe the service was adequate. The Dial-A-Ride service had the highest percentage of respondents that were pleased with the service.

Figure 12. Is Hiawathaland Transit's Service Adequate?



Survey respondents were asked what improvements would make it most likely that they would ride the bus more frequently (Figure 13). The most sought-after improvements were expanding the hours of operation and locations/stops.

Figure 13.Desired Service Improvements that would Encourage More Frequent Ridership



Modes of Transportation

As noted in "Current Transit Services Provided," Hiawathaland Transit provides general demand-response service as well as deviated fixed routes.

Unmet Service Needs and Gaps

As part of the FYTSP, consultants conducted an inclusive public engagement effort to understand the perception of Hiawathaland Transit service and the demands for transit across the region. Public engagement associated with the FYTSP included engagement with prominent local and regional stakeholders, meetings with oversight groups, and Hiawathaland Transit staff.

The stakeholder engagement conducted in October 2018 included representatives from the city of Red Wing, city of Winona and Hiawathaland Transit staff and customers. The interviews were informal, with questions intended to foster discussion. The question topics included:

- Experience with Hiawathaland Transit
- Current transit service meeting the needs
- Use of transit or other transportation services
- Important current and future destinations in the region
- Elements of a convenient transportation service
- Attracting potential riders
- Ensuring success of a new or expanded transit service

After the interviews, general themes were extracted from answers including: customer service, transit information or awareness, transit perception, governance, potential destinations, system capacity and state assistance.

Customer Service

Customers of Three Rivers Transit services are satisfied with the service. It is acknowledged to fulfill a great need in the region. Many users are regular customers who depend on the service, including transportation to assisted living facilities and places of employment. There are differences in the transit products delivered across communities within the service area, which sometimes leads to confusion for customers about the extent of the service area. In Red Wing, deviated fixed route and dial-a-ride services serve many school-aged children, while seniors are the main customers in Faribault, Northfield, and rural communities.

Regular customers have good relationships with the bus drivers and enjoy the ability to socialize on the bus and shop in their local communities. Seniors use the service mainly for health care appointments.

Information / Awareness

Three Rivers Transit has extensive outreach efforts in the communities it serves. It provides travel training to potential new riders and puts in additional efforts to reach the east-African population. Advertisement and outreach efforts will continue to grow Three Rivers' ridership.

The agency contracts with human services providers in Red Wing, Wabasha County, and the city of Winona. In Red Wing, the city provides additional tokens for reduced transit fares. Drivers use tablets to keep track of rides and for updates from dispatch.

Perception of Three Rivers Hiawathaland Transit

Those without access to cars have the greatest mobility challenges, and many in the region believe that transportation is perhaps the foremost issue affecting employment, health, and overall well-being, particularly for senior citizens and youth in the service area. Making transit safe, accessible and easy to use will help these populations.

Regular customers have good experiences with the service, and the travel training programs are very successful. Dial-a-ride services may be difficult to navigate initially and are an important part of future outreach efforts to potential customers. While the service is well received, more work can be done to improve on time performance for its fixed route network.

Governance

In Red Wing, funding for transit is part of the annual capital improvement planning process. Three Rivers uses city buildings for storage, but both the city and Three Rivers are experiencing storage shortage. The city would like to build a new garage, but would need state funding to do so. In the past, the city had bad experiences trying to receive federal funding for capital projects.

Three Rivers provides updates to the Red Wing city council and there is a good working relationship between the city and the transit agency. Occasionally, the transit agency vehicles are used by the city to provide tours. The city is very interested in this planning process and hopes to share the final report with the city council this spring.

Three Rivers participates in the regional transit advisory committee meetings. These meetings offer an opportunity to discuss other transportation systems and compare Three Rivers services to other area providers. The agency hopes to look into performance measures in the future, such as passengers per revenue hour in order to best allocate its resources.

Destinations

Destinations in Faribault include Walmart, Hy-Vee, downtown (city hall), clinics, and the middle school. In Northfield, destinations include Target and colleges. For Red Wing, they include PROACT, Walmart, clinics, some factory places, and Jordan towers assisted living center. A transfer location is set up at the Red Wing Perkins Restaurant.

The service area of Three Rivers covers Goodhue, Rice, and Wabasha counties, but the agency itself acknowledges it is vague, due to the different service products offered in the region. It hopes this process will lead to service standards and a defined service area.

In Red Wing, the topography can be rough to cover in winter, while diagonal parking downtown may cause cars to back up into the street without seeing the transit vehicles. There may be opportunities to expand transit to the casino north of Red Wing, which currently uses its own transportation service. In Faribault, new developments on the edge of the city are difficult to cover. The agency hopes to add regular scheduled regional service to Rochester.

Capacity

Bus capacity has been increased over recent years and currently the agency does not experience any vehicle capacity issues. There is an interest in adding an additional vehicle in Faribault, where ridership is steadily increasing and service needs to expand to new areas.

Currently there is a vehicle storage shortage in Red Wing. The City of Red Wing and Hiwathaland may consider sharing a mechanic in the future. The agency has difficulties finding mechanics who can fix the transit vehicles. There is also a need for additional vehicle storage in Zumbrota.

The city of Northfield is interested in relocating the existing transit center (located at city hall) to the historic train depot. Capital funding for necessary improvements was applied for but denied. The city is moving forward with a bonding bill to secure the necessary funds to improve the depot and relocate the transfer center.

The main issue facing the transit agency currently is the driver shortage. The shortage required suspension of afternoon dial-a-ride services and a regular route to Rochester. The agency is considering switching early morning fixed route service in Red Wing to dial-a-ride service. The agency recently increased driver compensation by $2.50 per hour, but there is still a shortage. An expansion of the volunteer driver transportation program for regional trips may be considered. Three Rivers hopes to add a training coordinator in the future as well.

Chapter 5. Capital

Background

Fleet Characteristics

Hiawathaland Transit utilizes a fleet of approximately 30 vehicles that are stored across the large service area. The fleet includes twenty-four Class 400 vehicles and six Class 500 vehicles. A full inventory is provided in Table 10.

Figure 14. Hiawathaland Transit Vehicle in Red Wing

Table 9. Hiawathaland Transit Fleet Inventory

Agency ID	Status	VIN	Year	Class	Mileage	Utilization
323	Backup	1GBE5V1207F405646	2007	500	343,501	Rice Backup
324	Backup	1GBG5V1909F412346	2009	500	263,120	Plainview
327	Active	1GBC5V1967F421629	2007	500	154,023	River Run
578	Backup	1FDFE45P09DA80961	2009	400	126,459	Rice Backup
11G	Backup	1FDFE45S29DA42202	2009	400	162,054	Goodhue Backup
12G	Active	1FDFE4FS8BDB26934	2011	400	192,902	Wabasha
13G	Active	1FDFE4FSXBDB26935	2011	400	128,032	Lake City Backup
14G	Active	1FDFE4FS1BDB26936	2011	400	225,004	Red Wing Backup
15G	Backup	1FD4E45S28DB15106	2008	400	168,901	Northfield Backup
16G	Active	1GB6G5BG9B1110902	2011	400	176,402	Northfield Backup
17G	Active	1FDFE4FS5CDB21904	2012	400	110,147	Lonsdale
18G	Active	1FDFE4FS5CDB38184	2013	400	149,015	Zumbrota
19G	Active	1FDFE4FS5CDB38185	2013	400	154,902	Kenyon/Wanamingo
20G	Active	1FDFE4FS2DDB09680	2013	400	140,111	Faribault
21G	Active	1FDFE4FS5DDB30829	2013	400	109,463	Cannon Falls
22G	Active	1FDFE4FS1EDA05697	2014	400	123,380	Northfield Route
23G	Active	1FDGF5GY8EEB03596	2014	500	145,689	Red Wing Route
24G	Active	1FDFE4FS6FDA03090	2014	400	99,891	Northfield Route
25G	Active	1FDFE4FSXEDA99143	2015	400	75,088	Rice Backup
26G	Active	1FDFE4FSXFDA03989	2014	400	107,399	Red Wing Route
27G	Active	1FDFE4F56GDC05315	2016	400	70,398	Faribault Route
28G	Active	1FDFE4FS6GDC05316	2016	400	95,595	Red Wing Route
29G	Active	1FDFE4FS8GDC05317	2016	400	68,425	Plainview
30G	Active	1FDFE4FSXGDC49190	2016	400	30,045	Faribault Route
31G	Active	1FDFE4FS1GDC49191	2016	400	25,608	Plainview
32G	Active	1FDGF5GY8GEB88586	2016	500	23,724	Red Wing Route
33G	Active	1FDGF5GY0GEB88596	2016	500	18,704	Northfield Express
34G	Active	1FDFE4FS2JDC06423	2017	400	22,755	Red Wing DAR
35G	Active	1FDFE4FS2JDC06424	2017	400	14,693	Northfield DAR
7G	Backup	1FDWE35L17DB47667	2007	400	191,008	Plainview

Maintenance Costs

Vehicle maintenance costs have risen over the past few years but are beginning to find stability, averaging roughly $200,000 per year since 2017. The slower growth in maintenance costs correlates with an investment in preventative maintenance and a decline in corrective maintenance. Nearly all vehicle maintenance is contracted out to local automotive repair shops.

Facilities and Assets

Hiawathaland Transit rents its facilities in every community except Plainview, where it owns a garage located at 55049 241st Avenue. Rented vehicle storage and offices facilities are located in Cannon Falls, Faribault, Lake City, Northfield, Red Wing, and Zumbrota. There is also a small transfer station and park and ride facility in Red Wing which the agency uses as a central transfer location (see Figure 16).

Figure 15. Hiawathaland Transit Station in Red Wing

Capital Plan

Hiawathaland Transit's vehicle capital replacement plan is shown in Table 12. According to staff, the main capital priority is keeping up with the vehicle replacement plan.

Table 10. Capital Replacement Plan

Agency Id	Class	Projected Replacement Year	Projected Replacement Mileage	Projected Disposition Year	Projected Disposition Mileage
12G	Class 400	2018	231,902	2020	309,902
13G	Class 400	2018	160,532	2020	225,532
14G	Class 400	2018	238,004	2020	264,004
16G	Class 400	2018	188,102	2020	211,502
17G	Class 400	2019	162,147	2021	214,147
18G	Class 400	2019	214,015	2021	279,015
19G	Class 400	2019	232,902	2021	310,902
20G	Class 400	2020	268,031	2022	353,311
21G	Class 400	2020	226,463	2022	304,463
22G	Class 400	2020	241,160	2022	319,680
23G	Class 500	2020	293,889	2022	392,689
24G	Class 400	2021	239,251	2023	308,931
25G	Class 400	2021	231,088	2023	309,088
26G	Class 400	2021	337,239	2023	452,159
27G	Class 400	2022	260,198	2024	336,118
28G	Class 400	2022	225,595	2024	277,595
29G	Class 400	2022	263,425	2024	341,425
30G	Class 400	2023	257,805	2025	333,725
31G	Class 400	2023	181,608	2025	233,608
32G	Class 500	2023	302,964	2025	396,044
33G	Class 500	2023	174,704	2025	226,704
34G	Class 400	2024	204,755	2026	256,755
35G	Class 400	2024	287,693	2025	365,693

Five-Year Capital Plan

The Five-Year Capital Plan described in this section provides an overview of capital expenses and projected needs to support Hiawathaland Transit service through 2025. The capital program includes vehicles, facilities, and enhancements to support agency operations. The Hiawathaland Transit capital plan is funded through a combination of local, federal and state funding sources; funding levels were identified by agency staff. The capital plan is included as a working Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and is summarized in Table 10 below.

Table 11. Summary of Five-Year Capital Needs

Category	2020-2025 Needs
Facilities	$87,418 (Improved Maintenance Capabilities – Mobile Light Maintenance)
Fleet	2020: $309,000 (4 vehicles) 2021: $239,704 (3 vehicles) 2022: $334,210 (3 vehicles) 2023: $371,420 (4 vehicles) 2024: $260,838 (3 vehicles)
Technology	2020: $236,900 (Dispatching software and hardware) 2021: $159,135 (Onboard video system) 2022: $4,371 (bus simulator-driver training) 2023-2024: $292,632 (electronic fare system & mobile booking platform)

Chapter 6. 2020-2025 Annual Needs

As stated in Chapter 2, the five goals of this transit service plan are as follows:

- Improve coordination of services to meet transportation needs.
- Increase ridership/usage across the network.
- Promote fiscal responsibility as a transit funding agency.
- Anticipate and plan for future funding levels to achieve service expansion.
- Articulating and communicating a vision for the transit system and the benefits it provides to the community.

The five key components needed for Hiawathaland Transit to achieve these goals are facilities, fleet, staffing, technology, and marketing. These categories were used to identify specific short-term and long-term needs for Hiawathaland Transit, as described in the following sections.

Facilities

Hiawathaland Transit primarily rents administrative and vehicle storage facilities; funding is allocated through the annual operating budget. The system does own a garage in Plainview, although the existing facility is expected to meet demand for the foreseeable future. As a contract provider, Hiawathaland does not install or maintain bus stop and passenger amenities.

Given the large and diverse service area, in-house vehicle maintenance capabilities vary between facilities, and finding service garages can be difficult. To improve vehicle performance and reliability, Hiawathaland Transit would like to implement a mobile maintenance program with a traveling technician that can perform basic repairs and write work orders. This need is noted in the five-year capital plan as improved maintenance capabilities and will likely require a dedicated maintenance vehicle and general equipment.

Fleet

Replacement and Reliability

The FYTSP for Hiawathaland Transit includes the routine replacement of 17 vehicles; this amounts to nearly two-thirds of the existing fleet of 30 vehicles. A projected capital replacement plan is shown in Table 1. Hiawathaland Transit also requested three replacement vehicles in 2019. The estimated capital cost is $75,000 for Class 400 vehicles and $90,000 for Class 500 vehicles.

Expansion

One (1) expansion vehicle is included in Hiawathaland's FYTSP. According to transit staff, there is a need for an additional bus in Faribault to serve better serve growing areas. There have been many requests for service expansions in Faribault. Through a planning analysis, Hiawathaland Transit would like to evaluate the feasibility of expanding service. Beyond this potential need, no other foreseeable fleet expansions will be required. The primary priority with the fleet is keeping up with the current vehicle replacement plan.

These needs are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Fleet Needs (2020-2024)

Year	Vehicles needed	Price per unit	Total cost
2020	3 - 400 Series Cutaway 1 - 500 Series Cutaway	$75,000 $90,000	$315,000
2021	3 - 400 Series Cutaway	$75,000	$225,000
2022	3 - 400 Series Cutaway 1 - 500 Series Cutaway	$75,000 $90,000	$315,000
2023	2 - 400 Series Cutaway 2 - 500 Series Cutaway	$75,000 $90,000	$330,000
2024	3 - 400 Series Cutaway	$75,000	$225,000
Total	14 - 400 Series Cutaway 3 - 500 Series Cutaway	–	**$1,410,000**

Technology

Through enhanced technology, Hiawathaland Transit seeks to make transit service more convenient and reliable. The most pressing need is for a new dispatch system. Hiawathaland currently uses TripSpark, but their needs have outpaced the existing program. It should be noted that there are a large range of products, types of technologies, and prices for this type of project.

Hiawathaland Transit is also planning to upgrade onboard video systems and procure a bus simulator to assist with driver training over the next five years.

An electronic fare payment system is also being considered within the next five years. The system will include passes, multiple fare payment methods, and onboard electronic fareboxes. This upgrade is proposed for the fourth and fifth year of the plan as other capital needs currently take precedence. The fare system will require an upfront investment to design a payment platform with the installation of electronic fareboxes taking place over a two-year period.

Chapter 7. System Performance

Historical and Projected

This chapter explores the ridership, productivity and financial performance goals of the Hiawathaland Transit system.

Performance Measures and Indicators

The Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan (GMTIP) provided the following System Performance Standard to evaluate the productivity and efficiency of services provided. To be responsible and dynamic, a transit system must consistently measure and adjust service accordingly. These standards serve as indicators of route performance and call attention to routes that may need adjustment. The use of multiple performance standards provides better insight into the operational and financial performance of services, and allows transit providers to balance the cost and ridership of each route in the system's service network. The examples below, passengers per hour, passengers per trip, cost per passenger and cost recovery, describe the basic concept and why the information is valuable to collect.

Productivity: Passengers per Hour and Passengers Per Trip

Productivity is measured as the number of passengers per hour. Productivity is calculated by the total number of passengers carried divided by the total service hours. A high number of passengers per hour show a route is serving more people. The passengers per hour metric is calculated at both the route and trip level but can be also viewed on a per bus basis to establish a minimum standard of route performance. Table 13 shows the minimum passengers per hour. Passenger per hour is applicable for all service types and in all communities.

Table 13. Productivity Measure: Passengers per Service Hour

Service Type	Route Average*
Fixed Route	15
Commuter Bus	15
Route Deviation (Urban/Community)	8
Route Deviation (Rural)	5
Dial A Ride (Urban/Community)	3
Dial A Ride (Rural)	2

Source: GMTIP (2017)

*Route Average represents the average passengers per service hour over the entire day. Individual hours may fall below the standard. Also, service hours defined as one bus operating for one service hour.

Cost Effectiveness: Cost per Passenger

Effectiveness is measured by the cost required to deliver service on a per passenger basis. This standard identifies the possible cost ranges when comparing overall system averages and focuses on corrective action for those services falling below average. Table 14 shows the cost per passenger thresholds and possible corrective action. Routes and services should be assessed after being in operation for one year.

Table 14. Cost Effectiveness Measure: Cost per Passenger

Cost per Passenger	Monitoring Goal	Possible Action
20 to 35 percent over system average	For quick review	Minor modification to route
35 to 60 percent over system average	For intense review	Major changes to route
Greater than 60 percent over system average	For significant change	Restructure or eliminate route

Source: GMTIP (2017)

Cost Effectiveness: Cost Recovery

The percentage cost recovery for a route is the revenue divided by its expense. Cost recovery calculates the amount of revenue generated by a service to cover the operating expense. Revenue typically includes fares, contract revenue, local contributions or local tax subsidy.

MnDOT recommends transit systems generate a minimum of five percent excess revenue on their services (20 percent rural/25 percent urbanized). By increasing the revenue beyond the amount needed to pay the local share for the service (15 percent rural/20 percent urbanized), the excess revenue is available for capital match or match on service expansions that do not have a revenue source for the local share.

Baseline Service Improvement Indicator

To address the transit needs in Greater Minnesota, MnDOT established a service plan to identify a baseline span of service for municipalities based on their population. Table 15 shows the baseline span of service improvement goals by community size.

Table 15. Baseline Service Improvements by 2025

Baseline Service Improvements	Description	Annual Hours
Urban Areas Weekday	20 hrs./day	54,700
Urban Areas Saturday Service	12 hrs./day	5,000
Urban Areas Sunday Service*	9 hrs./day	13,500
Small Urban 2,500-50,000 Weekday	12 hrs./day (7,000-49,999); 9 hrs./day (2,500-6,999)	126,500

Small Urban 2,500-50,000 Saturday Service	9 hrs./day	40,200
Small Urban 7,000-50,000 Sunday Service*	9 hrs./day	18,200
Rural, County Seat Towns < 2,500*	8 hrs./day; 3 days per week	19,200
Total Baseline		277,300

*As demand warrants based on individual system performance policies.

Historical Performance

The route level productivity and performance statistics are included in Table 17. The operating cost per trip is higher than the system average for six routes: Faribault (Blue and Red), Northfield (Blue and Red), Red Wing (Green and River Run). In addition, these routes also exhibited below average passengers per hour when compared to the system-wide average.

Peer Performance Comparison

To provide additional context on the agency's performance, a peer analysis was conducted to compare Hiawathaland Transit to other Midwest transit agencies with similar service. Six peer agencies were selected, including three systems in Minnesota (Rolling Hills Transit, Tri-County Action Program, and Brown County Family Services), as well as three outside Minnesota: Delaware, Dubuque & Jackson County Regional Transit (Dubuque, IA), Region Six Planning Commission/ PeopleRides (Marshalltown, IA), and West River Transit (Bismarck, ND).

Hiawathaland is similar to peer systems on a number of metrics, including hourly operating cost and annual operating cost. The operating cost per trip is the lowest of the peers and productivity (passengers per hour) is on the higher end of the spectrum. A summary of key statistics for Hiawathaland Transit and peer agencies is shown in Table 19.

Table 16. Productivity and Performance Statistics for 2017 Deviated Fixed Routes

Route Name	Passenger Trips (one-way)	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours	Annual Operating Cost	Trips per Hour	Cost per Trip	Span of Service (hours - weekday service only)
Faribault - Blue Route	7,274	37,586	3,036	$195,678	2.4	$26.90	12
Faribault - Red Route	14,194	42,071	3,036	$195,678	4.7	$13.79	12
Northfield - Blue Route	12,340	34,552	3,036	$195,678	4.1	$15.86	12
Northfield - Red Route	10,439	38,836	3,036	$195,678	3.4	$18.74	12
Northfield - Express Route	49,885	26,595	1644	$124,847	30.3	$2.50	7
Red Wing - Blue Route	37,343	47,086	3,194	$220,138	11.7	$5.90	12
Red Wing - Green Route	21,016	59,713	3,194	$220,138	6.6	$10.47	12
Red Wing - Red Route	25,685	50,663	3,194	$220,138	8.0	$8.57	12
Red Wing - River Run	14,278	43,131	2,480	$163,065	5.8	$11.42	-
Overall	**192,454**	**380,233**	**25,849**	**1,731,038**	**7.4**	**$8.99**	**-**

Table 17. Productivity and Performance Statistics for 2017 Dial-A-Ride

Route Name	Passenger Trips (one-way)	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours	Annual Operating Cost	Passengers per Hour	Cost per Trip	Span of Service
Cannon Falls	9,542	29,895	2,530	$163,065	3.8	$17.09	12
Elgin/Plainview	14,959	31,397	2,385	$154,912	6.3	$10.36	9
Faribault	10,366	35,230	3,036	$195,678	3.4	$18.88	12
Kenyon/Wanamingo	4,872	27,030	2,088	$146,759	2.3	$30.12	9
Lake City	11,668	24,213	2,277	$146,759	5.1	$12.58	9.5
Lake City - Saturday	145	886	198	$29,810	0.7	$205.59	9.5
Lonsdale	5,949	17,128	2,097	$146,759	2.8	$24.67	9
Northfield	26,535	33,791	3,474	$228,801	7.6	$8.62	12
Northfield - Evening Hours	962	1,510	315	$48,920	3.1	$50.85	3
Pine Island	6,704	39,309	2,520	$163,065	2.7	$24.32	10
Red Wing - Weekday	13,990	26,719	3,228	$195,678	4.3	$13.99	12
Red Wing - Evening	3,450	11,185	759	$48,920	4.5	$14.18	3
Red Wing - Saturday	3,374	10,923	520	$33,123	6.5	$9.82	10
Red Wing - Sunday	1013	2,879	215	$30,575	4.7	$30.18	10
Wabasha	11,413	31,782	2,404	$154,912	4.7	$13.57	8
Wabasha - Saturday	177	960	198	$29,810	0.9	$168.42	9
Zumbrota/Mazeppa	11,942	28,450	2,000	$130,452	6.0	$10.92	8
Overall	**137,061**	**353,287**	**30,243**	**2,047,998**	**4.5**	**$14.94**	-

Table 18. Productivity and Performance Statistics for Hiawathaland and Peer Systems (2017)

Peer System	Vehicles Operated in Max. Service	Annual Passenger Trips	Annual Revenue miles	Annual Revenue Hours	Annual Operating Cost	Passengers per Hour	Operating Cost per Hour	Operating Cost per Trip
Delaware, Dubuque & Jackson County Regional Transit (Dubuque, IA)	19	146,807	418,848	29,523	$2,135,855	5.0	$72.35	$14.55
Region Six Planning Commission/ PeopleRides (Marshalltown, IA)	12	49,042	303,666	21,019	$830,260	2.3	$39.50	$16.93
Rolling Hills Transit (Rushford, MN)	11	56,495	234,652	19,274	$1,022,718	2.9	$53.06	$18.10
Tri-County Action Program, Inc. (Waite Park, MN)	16	66,623	193,935	16,961	$1,209,394	3.9	$71.30	$18.15
West River Transit (Bismarck, ND)	20	28,380	218,931	16,919	$760,051	1.7	$44.92	$26.78
Brown County Family Services (New Ulm, MN)	14	53,827	180,269	12,879	$710,755	4.2	$55.19	$13.20
PEER SYSTEM AVERAGE	17	78,631	280,623	20,813	$1,123,765	3.6	$53.84	$16.37
HIAWATHALAND TOTAL / AVERAGE	21	127,107	368,089	27,575	$1,096,272	4.6	$39.76	$8.62

Source: National Transit Database, 2017.

Peer systems were selected from among Midwest rural transit providers with between 5 and 25 vehicles in maximum service, and between 10,000 and 30,000 annual revenue hours.

Agencies are listed in order of annual revenue hours.

Chapter 8. Operations

Historical and Projected Annual Summary

Historical

Operating across three cities, Hiawathaland Transit's deviated fixed routes are as unique as the communities that they serve. In recent years, productivity has remained stable with incremental increases in ridership across the system. In terms of service performance, in 2017 all deviated fixed routes averaged 7.4 passenger trips per service hour and an average operating cost of $8.99 per trip. Northfield's Express Route, primarily serving college students, is the agency's most productive route with 30.3 trips per hour and an average cost of $2.50 per trip. Of the three cities, Red Wing has above average productivity ranging from 6.6 to 11.7 trips per service hour. Faribault and Northfield's community focused routes exhibit similar performance characteristics with an average of approximately four trips per service hour. The MnDOT standards for deviated fixed routes are five passenger trips per revenue hour for rural systems and eight passenger trips per revenue hour for urban/community systems.

Dial-A-Ride service is provided in over a dozen communities and overall averaged 4.5 passenger trips per service hour and an operating cost of $14.94 per trip in 2017. These services perform very well with four of the communities showing six or more trips per hour. The MnDOT standards for dial-a-ride service are two passenger trips per revenue hour for rural systems and three passenger trips per revenue hour for urban/community systems.

Projected

The deviated fixed routes in Faribault and Northfield currently perform under MnDOT's standard of five passenger trips per revenue hour. Hiawathaland Transit has received service requests and unmet need has been documented to show that there is additional demand for service in these two communities. To improve transit service performance and meet the unmet demand, Hiawathaland is planning to seek technical assistance for a route level planning analysis. An enhanced system will improve passenger convenience which will likely attract additional ridership.

The dial-a-ride service should continue to be monitored for performance. Currently, only Saturday specific services are operating below the MnDOT standards.

Background

This section includes information on Hiawathaland Transit's most recent operating budget, as well as technology improvements that are currently underway.

Operating Budget

Table 21 shows a summary of the 2018 operating budget for the agency. The largest investment of the agency is in its personnel, followed by administrative costs and vehicles. A large portion of the operating funding comes through state and federal grants (not included in the table), while farebox revenue covers six percent and system revenue 12 percent.

Table 19. Hiawathaland Operating Budget Summary for 2018

Item	Balance	Percentage
Personnel	$2,785,809	75%
Administrative	$158,563	4%
Vehicles	$541,609	15%
Operations	$165,550	4%
Insurance	$59,588	2%
Taxes and Fees	$1,117	0.03%
Operating Expenses	**$3,712,236**	
Farebox	$218,653	6%
System Revenue	$448,571	12%
Fuel Refund	$40,026	1%
Operating Revenue	**$707,250**	

Software and Technology

The agency currently uses TripSpark software for reservations, scheduling, and dispatching. TripSpark tablets are onboard each vehicle allowing for trip scheduling on the fly and tracking performance data.

Hiawathaland Transit is in the process of planning a new solicitation for a software platform that allows for electronic fare payment on-board the vehicle. Using the software, riders will be able to purchase and load monetary value on an electronic fare card at multiple locations in the service area.

Five-Year Operating Plan

The Five-Year Operating Plan for Hiawathaland Transit calls for a phased expansion focused on extending the span of service on weekdays, improving coordination with other service providers, and introducing Saturday service on top-performing routes. A new expansion route would be implemented to serve Winona, Rochester, and communities in between.

These recommendations are summarized in Table 23 below.

Table 20. Five-Year Operating Plan Summary

1-Year Plan (2020)	5-Year Plan (2022)
Monitoring: Continue monitoring ridership, productivity, and vehicle capacity	**Route Overhaul:** Based on community needs and resources, improve deviated fixed route services
Planning: Conduct route analysis in Faribault, Northfield, and Red Wing to study existing needs and improve low-productivity services	**Service Expansion:** (1) Regular weekday route between Faribault and Northfield (2) Rice/Goodhue County Connection – weekday route between Northfield, Canon Falls, and Red Wing
Staff: Recruit a Spanish speaking Travel Trainer to better engage the community	**Staff:** Mobile maintenance technician for simple vehicle repairs and preventative maintenance
Marketing: Launch a marketing campaign to promote service, recruit drivers and volunteers, and potential rebranding.	**Marketing:** Continue the marketing campaign and investigate methods to better reach the general public
Total Revenue Hours: 56,902 (Same as 2019) **Additional FTEs Required**: +1	**Total Revenue Hours**: 62,228 (+6,136) **Additional FTEs Required**: +4.1

Chapter 9. Financial

Background

This chapter looks at current and future projected revenue sources, and the ability to enhance revenue streams for expanded service. While federal and state funding sources may increase in the future, additional service expansions proposed in this plan will require an increase in the local match funding beyond the current farebox revenue.

History

The agency provides its local match funding share through grant revenue, farebox revenues and through contracts for services.

Projected Needs and Revenues

The five-year operating and financial plan for Hiawathaland Transit is summarized in Table 3. The projected cost per revenue hour and operating costs to maintain the current level of service between 2020 and 2024 assume a three percent annual inflation rate. It is understood that neither MnDOT, nor the local jurisdictions are committing to these funding levels, but that they are planning estimates. Specific funding amounts for each year will be determined during the annual grant application and budget cycle for the MnDOT and the agency.

Table 21. Hiawathaland Transit Five-Year Operations Plan

Projects	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Current Transit Services – Rev. Hrs.	56,092	56,092	56,092	56,092	56,092
Route Overhaul – Additional Rev. Hrs.	3,036	3,036	3,036	3,036	3,036
Community Connections – Rev. Hrs.		3,100	3,100	3,100	3,100
Total Annual Revenue Hours	**59,128**	**62,228**	**62,228**	**62,228**	**62,228**
Current Transit Services	$3,892,409	$4,009,181	$4,129,457	$4,253,341	$4,380,941
Cost Per Revenue Hour	$69.39	$71.48	$73.62	$75.83	$78.10
Route Overhaul	$210,678	$216,998	$223,508	$230,214	$237,120
Community Connections		$221,573	$228,220	$235,067	$242,119
Marketing Campaign	$10,000	$10,300	$10,609	$10,927	$11,255
Spanish Speaking Travel Trainer		$47,741	$49,173	$50,648	$52,167
Planning	$25,750		$27,318		
Total Annual Operating Expenses	**$4,128,837**	**$4,495,493**	**$4,657,676**	**$4,769,269**	**$4,912,347**
Federal Funds	$722,546	$786,711	$815,093	$834,622	$859,661
State Funds	$2,105,707	$2,292,701	$2,375,415	$2,432,327	$2,505,297
Local Contribution	$1,300,584	$1,416,080	$1,467,168	$1,502,320	$1,547,389

(1) Implementation years are estimated. Implementation will be based on funding availability.

(2) Based initially on 2018 cost per hour; then assumes a 3% annual inflation rate.

Chapter 10. Agency Strategic Direction

The five-year planning process included all of the rural transit service providers (FTA Section 5311) in Greater Minnesota. The process of developing the five-year transit system plans was the first for 5311 providers in Greater Minnesota. The Plan identifies and quantifies the transit services being operated around the state, which varies greatly, and identifies potential areas for improvement, expansion, and regional transit and mobility coordination. Transit services are subject to many federal and state guidelines, which may impact how improvements, expansion, and coordination is implemented. This section describes these federal and state requirements, followed by the recommendations for the five-year plan.

State and Federal Requirements

The provision of transit service is subject to many local, state and federal guidelines.

Federal Transit Authority (FTA)

FTA Section 5311 provides formula-based grants to support rural areas for transit capital, planning, and operating assistance.[1] Guidance on the grant, requirements, compliance and the application process is available online[2] and through MnDOT Office of Transit and Active Transportation (OTAT).[3]

The FTA is one of the funders for rural transit service in Greater Minnesota. MnDOT operates as the primary recipient of FTA Section 5311 funds. As such, all Greater Minnesota transit service providers (sub recipients) receiving FTA Section 5311 funds, is facilitated through MnDOT as the recipient. MnDOT assists in compliance to FTA regulations. FTA regulations such as: training, safety, maintenance, service, and procurement. Any contracted service by transit agencies, including taxi services, must also comply with FTA requirements.

FTA also requires compliance with the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA), Olmstead Plan, and Title VI, described in more detail below.

Olmstead Plan

In 1999, the Supreme Court affirmed that mental illness is a type of disability, that individuals with disabilities, including those with mental illness, have a right to live in their communities as opposed

[1] https://www.transit.dot.gov/rural-formula-grants-5311
[2] https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/fta-circulars/formula-grants-rural-areas-program-guidance-and-application
[3] https://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/

to forcing institutionalization, and are covered by the Americans Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) in *Olmstead vs. L.C and E.W.*[4] The State of Minnesota is one of the more progressive states in instituting a specific Olmstead Plan. Minnesota's Olmstead Plan was updated most recently in March 2018.[5]

For transit providers in Greater Minnesota, the Olmstead Plan requires that people with disabilities, including those with mental illness, are covered by the same requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (discussed in Section 10.1.4). It means that the level of transit service available to the general public (the span of service, frequency of service, and service area coverage) is also available to people with disabilities, including mental illness. It also means that social and human service agencies and public transit agencies should coordinate as much as possible to provide service to individuals with disabilities.

Title VI

FTA requires all recipients and sub recipients to comply with U.S. Department of Transportation Title VI regulations, based on the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI requirements for transit services are generally related to supplying language access to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).[6] In Greater Minnesota, MnDOT is the primary recipient of FTA funds, so all the Section 5311 transit service providers are sub recipients. Thus, MnDOT has the primary responsibility for Title VI compliance. MnDOT may request information related to Title VI compliance, including language assistance plans or activities, public participation plans or activities including language access, etc., from the transit service providers as needed.

In Greater Minnesota, with primarily deviated fixed route and demand response service, Title VI responsibilities pertain to identifying communities with limited English proficiency and providing materials and outreach in appropriate languages.

For reference go to MnDOT's Web site https://www.dot.state.mn.us/civilrights/titlevi.html

ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is designed to prohibit discrimination based on disability. In terms of FTA and the provision of transit service, the ADA is structured to ensure equal opportunity and access for persons with disabilities.[7] ADA requirements apply to facilities, vehicles, equipment, bus stops, level of service, fares, and provision of service.

In Greater Minnesota, with most service provided via deviated fixed route or demand response, most service-related requirements (i.e. complementary paratransit service associated with fixed route

[4] https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/527/581/
[5] https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/olmstead/
[6] https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FTA_Title_VI_FINAL.pdf
[7] https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/Final_FTA_ADA_Circular_C_4710.1.pdf

service) are inherently met by mode. Any contracted service by transit agencies, including taxi services, must also comply with FTA and ADA requirements.

MnDOT defines the types of vehicles that are available for service provision in Greater Minnesota. All of the vehicles on the list are ADA compliant. Any new facilities or bus stops must be constructed to be ADA compliant. All transit service providers must complete required training.

Service provision-related equivalencies include the following for demand response service:

The response time, fares, geographic area of service, hours and days of service, trip purpose restrictions, and availability of information and reservations capability must be the same for all riders, including those with disabilities.

With regard to capacity denials (denials within the existing service parameters in the above bullet); denials are allowed for demand response service, as long as the frequency of denials is the same as the frequency for riders without disabilities.

Any priority given to persons with disabilities or higher levels of service is a local decision.

Requirements for demand response service are different than those required for ADA complementary paratransit associated with fixed route service.

Service provision-related practices include the following for deviated fixed route service:

Route deviation policies, including distance and availability, must be advertised.

Establish a reasonable service area in which deviations are permitted (e.g. ¾ mile).

Establish reasonable limits on numbers of deviations per trip to ensure that the fixed route portion of the service is able to operate on-time.

Apply reasonable surcharges for deviations (e.g. deviation surcharges no more than twice the base fare).

Agency

MnDOT is responsible for making sure each provider (sub recipient) complies with FTA Section 5311 requirements. MnDOT also has additional requirements to support the transit service providers.

Data Tracking

Service data for National Transit Database (NTD)

Monthly and annually

By mode

Grant management

Fleet inventory / Facility inventory

Denials

Capacity

Unmet Need

On-Time Performance (pickup window)

Percent of communities with baseline span of service

Performance metrics (required, but not tracked)

Passengers per hour

Cost per service hour

Cost per trip

Others (at the discretion of Hiawathaland Transit)

MnDOT reports annual NTD statistics and also created and maintains the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan for all FTA Section 5311 transit service providers, which can be found here: http://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/reports/transit-report/pdf/OTAT%20TAM%20Plan%2010-1-18.pdf.

Fiscally-Constrained, Near-Term Service Recommendations

Route Overhaul

Hiawathaland Transit would like to examine the deviated fixed route networks in Faribault, Northfield, and Red Wing to identify opportunities for efficiencies and expansions. Ideally, the route overhauls would provide improved service with direct trips, faster travel times, and expansions to key destinations.

Any financial estimates would be preliminary and dependent upon a future routing evaluation; therefore, it is generally expected that an overhaul would use the same number of operating hours as current services. However, initial estimates by Hiawathaland staff anticipate the need for an additional or extended route in Faribault to serve new growth areas in the northern section of the city. This would address multiple requests for service and expand transit coverage. While preliminary

in nature, providing regularly scheduled transit service with the addition of a new route would require an additional 3,036 annual operating hours or approximately $344,000. This amount is included in the five-year operating plan as a place holder until future analysis can be completed.

Scheduled Regional Service

Hiawathaland Transit serves a large three-county region, providing reliable transportation across the service area is a top priority. Currently regional transportation is provided on an as-needed basis when extra resources are available. Through customer input and rider surveys, Hiawathaland has identified the need for regularly schedule weekday service between Faribault and Northfield. The two communities, approximately 14-miles from each other, complement each other in terms of shopping, medical facilities, and other services. Hiawathaland has also identified the need for a weekday regional shuttle connecting Northfield, Cannon Falls, and Red Wing. This service would be phased in, initially launching with one daily round-trip. If rider demand is consistent, additional round-trips could be added.

If 12 revenue service hours were provided each weekday (8 hours for Faribault to Northfield and 4 hours for Northfield to Red Wing), the annual revenue service hours would total about 3,100. Using Hiawathaland Transit's operating cost per hour, the annual operating expenses would be about $362,000. A planning estimate for annual ridership is 12,400, which is based on productivity of four passenger trips per revenue hour. This project is tentatively scheduled for implementation in 2021 and will likely require additional operational planning efforts to establish schedules and service areas.

Recruit New Drivers

Hiawathaland Transit has indicated that it has been difficult to hire and retain an adequate number of drivers who have the required license to operate a transit vehicle. This a common problem across Minnesota and many parts of the nation. This issue could be addressed through partnering with local and regional job centers or increasing incentives for new and existing drivers. Financial and/or training assistance for new drivers that do not possess a CDL license could provide an incentive for aspiring drivers.

Spanish Speaking Travel Trainer

Hiawathaland Transit serves a diverse population. To better engage the Spanish speaking population groups, the agency would like to hire a Spanish speaking travel trainer. The travel trainer would assist with community outreach efforts, educate the Spanish speaking population on how to use the bus, and provide translation assistance. It is estimate that the position and fringe benefits would likely require a $45,000 annual budget.

Grow the HART Volunteer Program

The HART Volunteer Program is critical for residents that require transportation outside of Hiawathaland Transit's normal services. The program provides inexpensive transit to those in need

and long-distance trips that supplement existing transit options. Typically, one-on-one, informal methods are the most productive way to recruit volunteer drivers but community outreach can also be effective. Some of the best recruitment methods are presentations to church groups, service organizations, and other non-profits. General marketing approaches may also prove useful, including: newsletters, internet/radio/newspaper advertisements, and informational booths at fairs.

Planning

Two planning efforts are included in the five-year plan for Hiawathaland Transit. These are:

- A service evaluation study for the deviated fixed routes in Faribault, Northfield, and Red Wing; looking at ways to either increase ridership or eliminate the service;
- A study of the fare structure and fare media options in anticipation of the implementation of an electronic fare system.

A budget of $25,000 each for these studies has been assigned as a preliminary estimate.

The service evaluation of the deviated fixed routes should be accomplished in the short-term to better meet MnDOT's service performance standards as well as plan for implementing service changes and/or expansions.

The study of fares and fare media is tentatively scheduled for 2022 in preparation for the solicitation and implementation of electronic fare media.

Long-Term Service Recommendations

Long-term service recommendations (outside of the five-year plan) are likely to include evening service on the deviated fixed routes (pending the success of the initial dial-a-ride evening service introduction) and increased frequency of service. Larger vehicles may also be needed for the university-oriented routes that sometimes have capacity issues.

Opportunities

Hiawathaland Transit's opportunities over the next several years include the following:

- New leadership has the desire to redevelop and reorganize the agency to work as a streamlined machine. This includes ensuring adequate staffing, standardizing protocols, transitioning out-sourced vehicle maintenance in-house through a mobile maintenance tech, and looking for additional efficiencies.
- Technical assistance for evaluating and planning route re-structuring, which will expand service and provide more efficient trips for current riders.

- Improving outreach to ethnically diverse populations will improve ridership in existing areas. Through existing outreach to the Eastern African community and focusing on the Spanish speaking population through an additional travel trainer, Hiawathaland Transit will better serve their communities and improve the ridership base.

Risks & Challenges

The risks and challenges that face Hiawathaland Transit are similar to those faced by transit programs across the country, including a shortage of drivers and flat funding. Improving the service through a service evaluation study and emerging technologies will help Hiawathaland manage these challenges.

Chapter 11. Increasing Transit Use for Agency

Marketing

This chapter discusses marketing strategies to increase ridership and highlight the importance of transit to the communities served by Hiawathaland Transit.

Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan

One of the goals of the Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan was to increase transit usage across the transportation network. The plan encourages coordinated efforts among agencies and MnDOT to promote service and highlight the role and importance of transit in the local communities. Agencies are to invest in marketing campaigns, technology, smartphone applications, provide commuter services, and develop partnerships with private providers (taxis and health care) to meet customer needs.

Marketing materials should use appropriate, accessible and easy to understand information for their websites and all written materials. The materials should be distributed using platforms such as smart-phone travel apps, social media, and print materials. Travel training and outreach efforts should be used to promote the service, but also to inform the public about fare changes, large capital projects and service planning changes. For potential customers struggling with the English language, multi-lingual marketing materials should be provided. Utilizing local cultural community groups to help translate and distribute materials will build bridges and will make the community more aware of the service.

Marketing Preferences

In the Greater Minnesota Transit Survey (2015), Hiawathaland Transit customers were asked about their preferred method of receiving transit information. These results are shown in Table 26 on the following page. The responses indicate that current riders prefer print marketing materials, though electronic marketing is likely gaining in popularity.

Table 22. Marketing Preferences of Hiawathaland Transit Customers (2015)

Flyer/Newsletter	49%
Newspaper	23%
Radio	10%
Television	11%
Email	22%
Text Message	12%
Facebook/Twitter	11%
Transit Website	12%
Other	10% (Landline phone call, transit app, word-of-mouth)

Action Plan

Once this draft plan has been reviewed by Hiawathaland Transit and MnDOT a final version will be prepared, incorporating any needed adjustments. It is envisioned that this plan will provide a framework for implementing transit improvements over the five-year period.

This section includes the list of planned improvements by year. It should be noted that planned service changes for Hiawathaland Transit will need to be vetted through the typical public improvement process and through coordination with local jurisdictions prior to implementation. The vetting and budget process may change the details of the improvements or the planned implementation years.

2020

- Purchase four (4) replacement vehicles.
- Purchase a new dispatching system.
- Hire a Spanish speaking travel trainer.
- Conduct a service evaluation of all deviated fixed route services.

2021

- Purchase three (3) replacement vehicles.
- Purchase upgraded onboard video camera system.

2022

- Purchase three (3) replacement vehicles.
- Purchase one (1) expansion vehicle.
- Purchase a mobile maintenance vehicle and equipment.
- Purchase a bus simulator for driver training.

2023

- Purchase four (4) replacement vehicles.
- Implement the use of an electronic fare system with mobile booking capabilities.
- Purchase eight (8) electronic fareboxes for deviated fixed route vehicles.

2024

- Purchase three (3) replacement vehicles.
- Purchase 12 electronic fareboxes for Dial-A-Ride vehicles.

Plan Approval

The Hiawathaland Transit Five-Year Transit System Plan recommends future service improvements that reflect local priorities and advance MnDOT's vision for Greater Minnesota transit. As an indication of local support, the following Hiawathaland Transit staff member(s) have signed below:

Signature	Name (Print)	Role	Date