

GRAND FORKS - EAST GRAND FORKS *Transit Development Plan*

Appendix 5: Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

September 2022





Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

INTENT

The Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP) looks at specific needs and opportunities to improve the transportation options for low income, senior and disabled individuals. This CHSTP also outlines the framework for the funding of specialized transportation systems, which aim to improve mobility for the special needs population within the larger community.

In keeping with Executive Order 13330, the CHSTP will address the following goals:

- > Promote interagency cooperation and the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to minimize duplication and overlap of Federal programs and services so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to more transportation services.
- > Facilitate access to the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources.
- > Encourage enhanced customer access to the variety of transportation and resources available.
- > Formulate and implement administrative, policy, and procedural mechanisms that enhance transportation services at all levels.

The CHSTP is developed as a framework approach to addressing mobility management and as a guidebook for initiatives and strategies to improve transportation options through outreach with and coordination of the network of community groups and agencies in the larger community. This approach is catered specifically to the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks metropolitan area.

TARGET POPULATIONS AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

The CHSTP as a subset of the overall TDP focuses on addressing transportation needs for three specific target groups: elderly, low-income and minority and individuals with disabilities. The demographic and geographic context of these populations was discussed in depth in the Existing Systems Analysis.

A key feature of the CHSTP is a refined assessment of key transportation destinations for these target populations. The Existing Systems Analysis established the location of Social Service agencies, large employers and major community destinations and in relation to the current CAT Fixed Route services. The CHSTP aims to distill these larger needs into a more refined assessment of need. Areas of need include the area around UND, which stands out in terms of low-vehicle access, low-income households; East Grand Forks, which has a higher percentage of households with disabled people; and portions of south Grand Forks, where there are higher rates of low-income households and clusters of low-wage jobs. Currently these areas are generally well served by Fixed Route operations provide by CAT. *Table 1* is a list of major regional employers and an assessment of fixed route access.

Table 1. Top Ten Employers in the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Metro Area (Data source: grandforks.org)

Employer	Industry	Number of Employees	Fixed Route Access
Altru Health System	Healthcare	3950	Yes (although varies on location)
University of North Dakota	Education	3464	Yes
Grand Forks Air Force Base	Government	1643	No
Grand Forks Public Schools	Education	1100	Yes
LM Wind Power	Manufacturing	1000	No



Valley Memorial Homes	Healthcare	801	Yes
City of Grand Forks	Government	518	Yes (although varies on location)
Development Homes	Healthcare	500	Yes
Hugo's	Retail/Food	450	Yes (all locations)
J.R. Simplot	Food Processing	440	No

EXISTING PROVIDERS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Assembling a mobility management framework starts first with a documentation of current transportation assets in the community. To a large degree, these are providers of more specialized services and, in many cases, transportation provided by these groups is available only for clients specific to a facility or organization. *Table 2* shows the current system of other significant transportation providers serving the Grand Forks-East Grands MPO area.

Table 2. Transportation Providers in the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks MPO Area

Public	General Public	Clients Only	Promotes CAT Programs	Intra City	Inter City	Major Demand Response Generator
Tri-Valley	X				X	
City of East Grand Forks Senior Center			X		X	
Pembina County	X				X	
Walsh County	X				X	
Polk County Social Services		X*			X	
Nelson County	X				X	
Private						
Jefferson Lines	X				X	
Dietrich Bus Service	X**					
Grand Forks Taxi & Nodak Cab	X				X	
City Cab Taxi	X					
Hengwa Taxi	X					
S & S Taxi	X			X		
Agency Services						
Development Homes		X		X		X
Grand Forks YMCA Family Center		X**		X		X



Disabled American Veterans		X			X	
Northlands Rescue Mission		X		X		
L.I.S.T.E.N. Center		X		X		X
REM North Dakota		X			X	
North Dakota Association for the Disabled	X			X		
Valley Memorial Homes		X			X	
Polk County DAC		X		X		
Parkwood Place		X		X		X
Altru		X		X		X
Success Unlimited			X		X	
Grand Forks Senior Center			X		X	X
Good Sam – Heritage Grove		X			X	
St. Anne’s Guest House		X		X		X
The Salvation Army of Grand Forks		X***		X		
Red River Valley Community Action		X			X	
Valley Senior Living	X				X	X
Jobs Service North Dakota		X	X		X	
University of North Dakota		X	X	X		

*Promotes use of Tri-Valley Heartland Express

**Mainly child-care or school bus services

***Gas assistance program

Public Providers

- > Tri-Valley Heartland Express is a curb-to-curb service and provides public transportation services to the general public in eight Minnesota counties: Polk, Red Lake, Norman, Marshall, Kittson, Pennington, Mahnommen and Clearwater.
- > City of East Grand Forks Senior Center promotes CAT services as a means of transportation.
- > Pembina County operates demand-response transportation services in Pembina County and to Grand Forks.
- > Walsh County Public Transit operates demand-response transportation services in Walsh County and to Grand Forks, Grafton, and Fargo.
- > Polk County Social Services promotes use of the Tri-Valley Heartland Express.



- > Nelson County is served by the South-Central Transit Network, a demand-response transportation system that serves the county, Grand Forks, Devils Lake, and Fargo. Free rides are offered through Social Services.

Private Providers

- > Jefferson Lines provides regional bus service from Grand Forks to points in Minnesota, west as far as Missoula, Montana, east to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and south to the Texas-Oklahoma border.
- > Dietrich Bus provides contract bus service to the Grand Forks School District for school busing and provides service to other clients as needed.
- > Taxi Service (Grand Forks Taxi & Nodak Cab Co.; S & S Taxi) are typical traditional taxicab services in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks with fleets ranging from one to 10 vehicles and providing service in the city and to the airport.

Agency Providers

- > Development Homes provides service to their clients to-and-from Development Homes properties.
- > Grand Forks YMCA Family Center provides transportation services and assistance mainly for their child-care programs.
- > Disabled American Veterans provides weekly transportation for DAV members to the VA Medical Center in Fargo.
- > Northlands Rescue Mission provides transportation to residents for medical appointments and jobs.
- > L.I.S.T.E.N Center provides transportation for clients to medical, community, and social appointments as part of their residential services.
- > North Dakota Association for the Disabled, in cooperation with Altru Alliance, provides transportation assistance for residents of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks for in-town medical travel.
- > REM North Dakota provides service to REM home residents and clients.
- > Valley Memorial Homes has shuttle service for residents for medical, social and recreational visits.
- > Polk County DAC provides rides to-and-from home and the DAC and from the DAC to jobs for program clients.
- > Parkwood Place has fixed schedule transportation for medical appointments.
- > Altru provides transport to Altru Rehab within Grand Forks and East Grand Forks.
- > Grand Forks Senior Center promotes the use of CAT "Senior Rider" program as a means of transportation.
- > Success Unlimited promotes the use of CAT services as a means of transportation.
- > Good Sam - Heritage Grove provides transportation for residents.
- > St. Anne's Guest House provides transportation for clients to medical appointments.
- > The Salvation Army of Grand Forks maintains a gas assistance program for clients.
- > Red River Valley Community Action provides transportation services for clients under their Supportive Services for Veteran Families program.
- > Valley Senior Living provides service to residents of Trail and Steele counties and some rural residents of Grand Forks County on a fixed route.
- > Jobs Service North Dakota promotes the use of CAT services as a means of transportation. Financial assistance programs are available for bus passes and gas.
- > University of North Dakota runs on-campus shuttle service, operated by CAT, and shuttle service to airport for aviation students.

No Longer Providing Services

Since 2017 TDP

- > Red White & Blue Taxi
- > Yellow Cab Company



DEMAND RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS

There were over 65,000 rides given on the Demand Response system in 2019 (Table 6-2). Ridership fell for the first time in 2020 when only 38,000 rides were provided. About sixty percent of Demand Response trips were paratransit and forty percent were senior rides. Paratransit had a 6% decline in ridership and senior riders had an 11% growth rate from 2013-2020. Thus, senior rider service is growing while paratransit service is declining. *Table 3* shows the demand response system usage by rider type.

Table 3. 2013 to 2020 Demand Response System Usage

		2013		2014		2015		2016	
Type	Total	% Total	Total	% Total	Total	% Total	Total	% Total	
Senior	19,485	37.1	19,733	36.3	19,195	35.1	16,026	33.1	
Paratransit	33,041	62.9	34,602	63.7	35,553	64.9	32,337	66.9	
Total	52,526		54,335		54,748		48,363		
		2017		2018		2019		2020	
Type	Total	% Total	Total	% Total	Total	% Total	Total	% Total	
Senior	19,828	37.5	22,837	36.3	22,965	35.2	15,413	41.1	
Paratransit	33,079	62.5	40,056	63.7	42,218	64.8	22,129	58.9	
Total	52,907		62,893		65,183		37,542		



Paratransit “Dial-A-ride” Riders

To understand demand for paratransit riders on the Demand Response system, major ridership generators were reduced to the top 15 combined origin-destination points, as shown in [Table 4](#). The top fifteen paratransit generators are 79.9 percent of the total paratransit system, and just over half of the total Demand Response system. [Table 4](#) shows the major paratransit generators in the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Metro.

Table 4. Major Paratransit Generators (2019)

Rank	Service	Destination Address	Destination Name	Annual Ride
1	Paratransit	2016 S Washington Street	Anne Carlson Center	6,061
2	Paratransit	1407 24 th Ave S	L.I.S.T.E.N. Services	5,460
3	Paratransit	3880 S Columbia Rd	Development Homes	3,745
4	Paratransit	2105 Gateway Dr	Agassiz Enterprises	3,475
5	Paratransit	1211 10 th Ave S	N/A	1,707
6	Paratransit	1405 Library Cir	Community Options North Dakota	1,539
7	Paratransit	2463 S 42 nd St	Linden Place Apartments	1,437
8	Paratransit	2720 S 17 th Street	N/A	1,401
9	Paratransit	101 Chestnut Street	N/A	1,372
10	Paratransit	1639 24 th Ave S	Homestead Place	1,351
11	Paratransit	802 N 4 th Street	Development Homes	1,291
12	Paratransit	1200 S Columbia Rd	Altru Hospital	1,260
13	Paratransit	1551 24 th Ave S	N/A	1,243
14	Paratransit	615 Sherlock Pkwy	Sunshine Terrace Apartments	1,200
15	Paratransit	2401 36 th Ave S	Ashland Apartment Complex	1,179
Total Paratransit Trips (2019)				42,218
% of Total Paratransit System				79.9%
% of Total Demand Response System (both Senior Rider and Paratransit)				51.7%



Senior Riders

Table 5 demonstrates the overall major origin-destination points for Senior Rider trips on the Demand Response system. The top 15 generators make up 62 percent of the total Senior Rider system and 21.8 percent of the total Demand Response system. The YMCA (number 6) and University Children’s Center (number 10) are related almost exclusively to the Foster Grandparents Program. Figure 1 shows the major Senior Rider generators within the study area in relation to the existing CAT Fixed Route system. All but two major Senior Rider generators are adjacent to the current CAT Fixed Route system.

Table 5. Major Senior Ride Generators (2019)

Rank	Service	Destination Address	Destintation Name	Annual Ride
1	Senior	1451 44 th Ave S	Altru South/Stadter Center	1,453
2	Senior	1200 S Columbia Road	Altru Hospital	1,367
3	Senior	620 4 th Ave S	Grand Forks Senior Center	1,346
4	Senior	1224 Walnut St	Alcott Manor Apartments	1,104
5	Senior	3350 Cherry St	Valley Memorial Homes – Tufte Manor	1,087
6	Senior	215 N 7 th Street	YMCA	1,003
7	Senior	1300 S Columbia Road	Altru Rehab	975
8	Senior	4440 S Washington Street	Altru South/Stadter Center	911
9	Senior	2551 32 nd Ave S	Walmart Supercenter	874
10	Senior	525 Stanford Rd	University Children’s Center/Housing Office	824
11	Senior	749 S 30 th St	Edgewood Healthcare – Parkwood Center	749
12	Senior	2800 S Columbia Rd	Columbia Mall	684
13	Senior	524 N 17 th Street	St. Anne’s Guest Home	642
14	Senior	813 Lewis Blvd	Riverside Manor	618
15	Senior	5755 Gateway Dr	Walmart Supercenter	600
Total Senior Trips (2019)				22,965
% of Total Senior System				62%
% of Total Demand Response System (both Senior Rider and Paratransit)				21.8%

Grand Forks - East Grand Forks TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

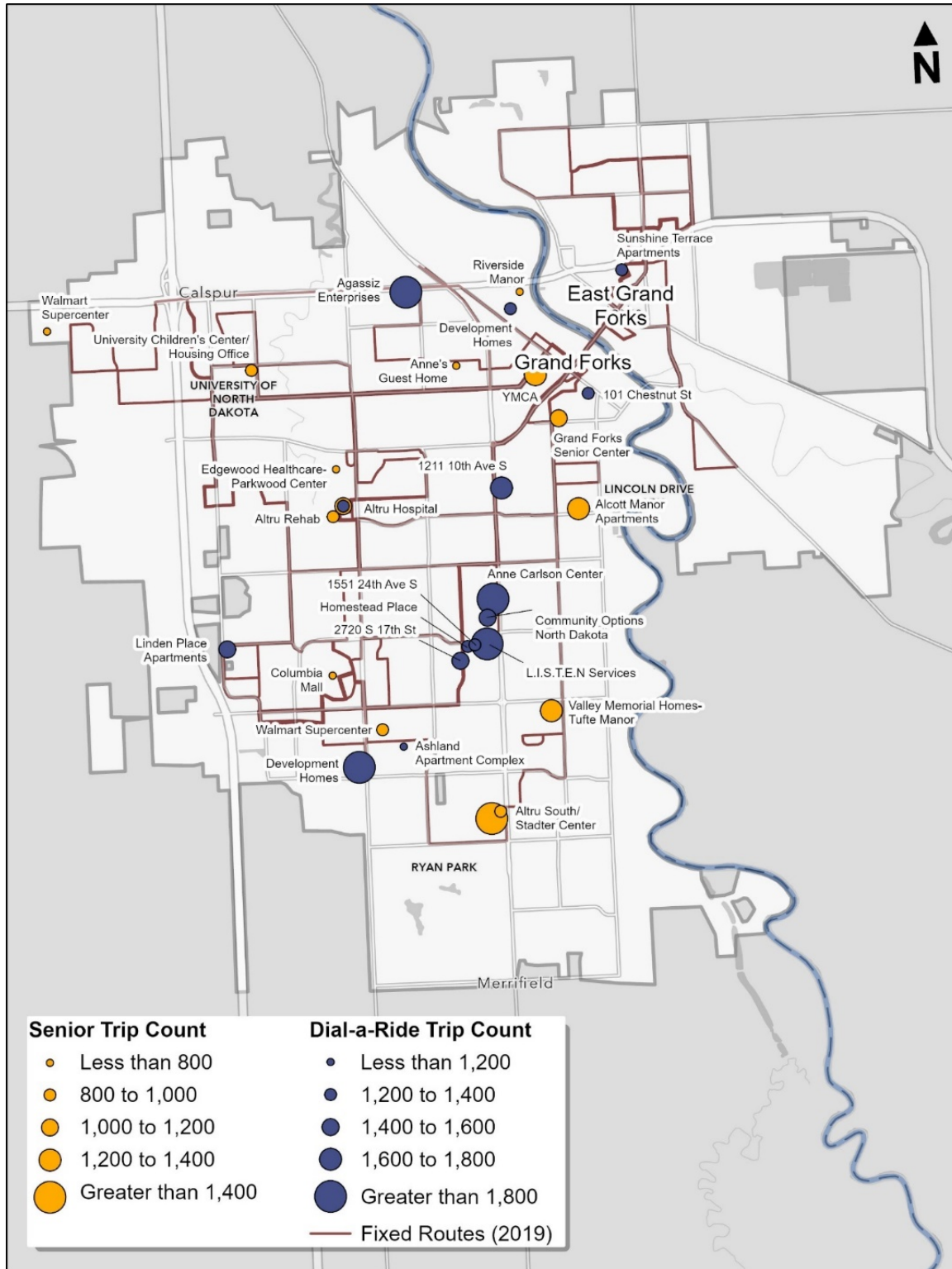


Figure 1. Major Demand Response Generators and the existing Fixed Route System



SYSTEM NEEDS AND ISSUES

Human Services Barriers

Previously Identified Barriers (2012 and 2017 CHSTP) and System Changes

As part of the public input process, the base set of transportation barriers from the 2012 and 2017 CHSTP were discussed and evaluated. Based on the input received from key stakeholders, including CAT and the MPO, those barriers were evaluated for development of an updated framework.

- > **Information Gap:** A common barrier to accessing public transit is a simple lack of information about services provided. Many potential riders don't know where to get on the bus, how much it costs, etc.
- > **Accessibility of Fixed Routes:** ADA requires accessibility to routes. Some routes and bus stops present difficulties to segments of the population who cannot overcome some physical barriers which are worsened during cold weather months.
- > **Coverage Area:** A Fixed Route system necessarily has limited coverage capacity. Some areas of Grand Forks/East Grand Forks remain underserved.
- > **Frequency of Service:** Frequency has a great impact on riders' lives. Waiting for a bus on a 30- or 60-minute headway can eat up significant portions of time and require users to schedule their lives around bus service.
- > **Hours of Operation:** Current CAT Fixed Route service runs day routes from roughly 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. and night routes 3, 6 and 13 until 10 P.M. Saturday service is from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M., with night routes running until 10PM; there is no Sunday service. These hours present significant difficulties to potential users who work outside of traditional nine to five hours or have Sunday transportation needs.
- > **Route Indirectness:** Related to coverage area, route indirectness creates barriers to riders who must sit through winding bus routes to reach their destinations.
- > **Cost of Service:** Paying full cost will be perceived as too high for most users. Although fares are subsidized, many target users may still see fare prices as prohibitive.
- > **System Interface (Marketing & Outreach):** The single most significant opportunity within the context of the CHSTP is the need to greatly improve outreach and marketing to targeted populations.
- > **System Effectiveness:** An effective public transit system is critical to the quality of the transit dependent populations including the targeted populations.
- > **System Performance & Operations:** For those most dependent on public transit systems, a well performing and operating public transportation system is the key to access employment, education and quality of life opportunities.
- > **UND Coordination:** UND is a major transit generator, significant employer and the region's premier educational institution. Improved coordination and service options between CAT and UND can only serve to improve the overall mobility needs of targeted populations.
- > **Capital Needs:** A critical need facing CAT will be sustaining capital inputs to support existing and potentially expanded service levels. Related to the targeted populations, the need to identify potential capital assets may also serve to improve mobility of these populations and also reduce demand on the Demand Response system.
- > **Balancing System Needs:** Needs to grow the CAT system cover the full spectrum, including frequency of service, hours of service, days of service, etc. While investment in all these areas is not possible, thoughtful deliberation is needed to understand which of these investments may best serve the needs of the targeted populations.
- > **Community Support:** As noted in early chapters, there has been an uptick in support for public transit in the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks area. The targeted populations, including those agencies and organizations who represent them, should be considered critical champions for increased support and investment in the public transit infrastructure.

System Changes Since the last CHSTP



Several changes were made since the last CHSTP was included in the 2017 Transit Development plan. These system changes are highlighted below and sought to address some of the issues listed previously.

- > **Systemwide route changes (July 2018):** Adjustments were made to the fixed route service to improve connectivity to and address issues with coverage, frequency, and route indirectness. Some peak-hour frequencies were increased to better serve riders on the most popular routes. These changes to peak-hour service did not yield higher ridership for the system and were discontinued.
- > **Relocation of the central transit hub from downtown to Grand Cities Mall:** This change addressed some missing capital needs and improved bus travel times and reliability.
- > **Incorporation of UND campus bus services:** UND campus bus service is now operated by CAT and have improved coordination between the two entities, allowing for students and university employees to be better served by the entire system, and the general public to have better access to UND and their routes.
- > **Integration of on-demand transit service in East Grand Forks:** This service was brought into the CAT system. Additionally, when the Route 12 saw a significant decline in ridership during the pandemic.

New Transit System Issues

As part of the engagement process, a focus group was held with agency and human services providers in which the following issues were highlighted as new or additional concerns regarding coordination of services. Insight was also gathered from project staff and the TDP Steering Committee. These issues are summarized below.

- > **Existing Application Process:** The application process for people with disabilities to secure transportation is complicated and inaccessible. There are too many steps, the processing time is too long, and mailing-in an application is inconvenient.
- > **Ride Scheduling:** The day-before schedule-ahead requirement is not feasible for many clients. A client may not know they need a ride until day-of (i.e., a client wakes up feeling unwell and needs to travel to a medical facility).
- > **Technology Access:** Clients may not have phone and/or internet access, making the process to secure transportation difficult. An app is not always intuitive for clients, especially seniors, either.
- > **Funding Coordination:** Many human services agencies have transportation assistance programs that reduce fares or provide bus passes for clients. However, these programs vary greatly, complicating funding coordination, and may not be the most financially sustainable for agencies.
- > **Discussions About Transportation:** Transportation is not something human services agencies often consider when coordinating their services. Many have existing programs, but there is little transportation coordination with other agencies or with transportation agencies.
- > **Agency Responsibilities:** Coordinating transportation services can be time-consuming for human services agency staff, and many have responsibilities outside of organizing transportation. This often results in transportation being a smaller priority for agencies.
- > **Connections Beyond Grand Forks-East Grand Forks:** Human services agencies located outside of Grand Forks-East Grand Forks have a difficult time coordinating transportation to and from the cities. Additionally, Dial-A-Ride service is only provided for rides within the city limits of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks.



PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Having considered the range of most significant transit system issues and human service barriers, the following set of programmatic strategies that would serve to improve the overall transportation options for targeted populations. Further, these efforts would improve the dialogue among human service agencies and significant transportation providers in the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks area.

System Route Improvements

As CAT seeks to improve the fixed route system, the areas of frequency, service span, Sunday service, service area, and route connectivity were all considered. More detail will be provided in the recommendations section of the TDP. [Figure 2](#) shows how route changes could improve connection to frequently visited on-demand destinations. More information is provided in the Service Recommendations section of the TDP.

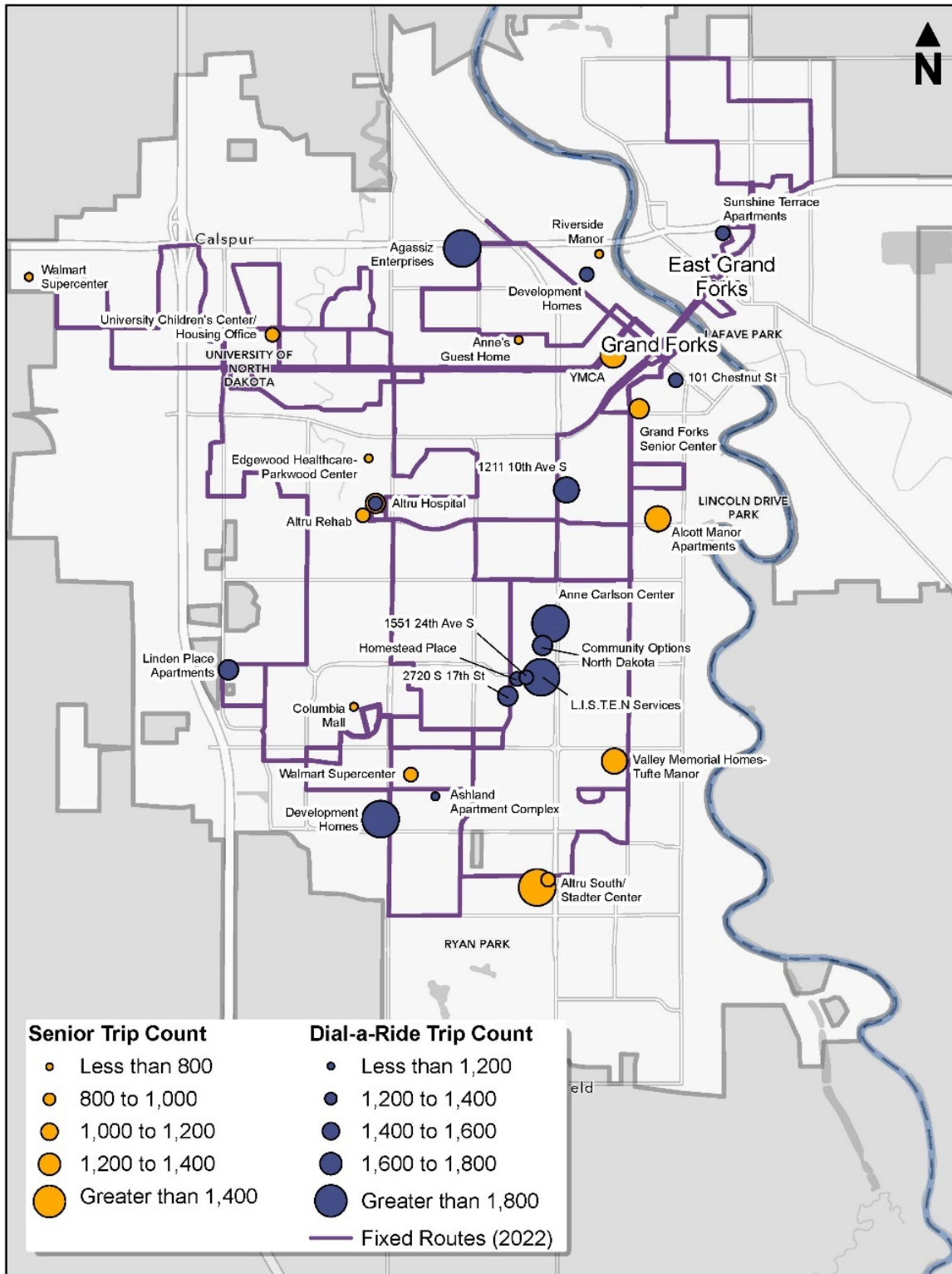


Figure 2. Major Demand Response Generators Ridership and Fixed-Route Changes



Microtransit Implementation

Implementation of microtransit could provide more cost-efficient service than the current demand response service by limiting unnecessary miles from the fixed route system. While less customized than curb-to-curb service that senior riders currently qualify for, it may still provide an appealing alternative that will provide service area coverage that is not currently possible with the current fixed routes. Since it would be offered to the general public, this service would eliminate the barrier of eligibility and the application process in cases of emergent needs for seniors and paratransit users. This service will continue to be studied by CAT and may have benefits for human services mobility and cost efficiencies for the system.

System Coordination

A major overall issue identified is the system coordination. A number of initiatives should be explored to improve outreach and marketing to disadvantaged populations within the larger community.

Establish Dedicated Senior/Paratransit Coordinator Role

To support coordination and the recommendations of this plan, a dedicated staff person should be assigned as a coordinator. A coordinator would be an employee of CAT who could serve as a contact person and liaison between the government entities and social service agencies. This role would help fill some of the coordination and staffing needs identified in the strategies listed below. They could work on continuous improvement of the system and monitoring progress of the recommendations of this plan. Given the existing staffing constraints, this role should be filled by existing staff with a plan to increase responsibility as staffing levels increase. Establishing a tiered plan for implementation is part of the prioritization section of this plan and could support the staff person in this role.

Annual “Major Users” Meetings

CAT should meet annually with the significant users of the Demand Response system, specifically those agencies and entities discussed earlier. These regular meetings provide for valuable information exchange on transportation needs and opportunities within the targeted populations in the larger community. Annual meetings would strike the right balance of serving the need to communicate across agencies while using time effectively for all.

Community Agency Networking Association

CAT should look to build upon the Community Agency Networking Association (CANA) to improve outreach and marketing to key agency representatives from critical user groups from the larger community. CANA is a consortium of local service agencies and organizations and provides a direct network of information sharing and resource coordination. These venues offer CAT and participating agencies an opportunity to review system operations and discuss efforts to better coordinate and streamline services to targeted populations.

Interagency Forum

Attend the regular monthly meetings of the Interagency Forum (IAF). The IAF is a consortium of local human and social service agencies from around the community. The venue is a great outreach opportunity, but also an opportunity to build consensus among key agencies on potential new strategies to improve and enhance all elements of CAT, specifically Demand Response.

Rural Transportation Collaborative

The Rural Transportation Collaborative (RTC) is a volunteer driver program focused on transporting rural residents to urban settings. CAT or MPO staff should increase coordination with the RTC operated by the Tri-Valley Opportunity Council and continue to attend regular meetings of the RTC.

Northwest Regional Transportation Coordination Council

The Northwest Regional Transportation Coordination Council works with transportation providers, human services, and the private sector to identify transportation barriers and solutions in northwestern Minnesota counties, including Polk



County. Project staff attended a meeting of the council to update them on this plan and should continue to coordinate with them as the plan is implemented.

Intercity Service Coordination

Triangle Coach Service and Jefferson Lines provide significant intercity bus services to-and-from East Grand Forks. Increased coordination with both entities is important to ensuring a match between transfers and to maximize the ability of CAT to integrate with both.

Targeted Marketing Materials and Communications

Directory of Transportation Services (Annual Update) - Print + Web

CAT and the MPO should develop a Directory of Specialized Transportation Services. The Directory would serve to provide a one stop reference of available transportation providers in the larger community. The Directory should be published in print and be made available online. This should be updated annually and could be reviewed at the annual “Major Users” meeting.

Senior and Paratransit Ride Guides

Provide updated ride guides and route information on the CAT System to key user groups such as senior citizens. Existing ride guides include a one-pager with general information and a comprehensive document for paratransit. A one-pager should be developed for paratransit and other senior transportation needs, which are typically focused on quality-of-life trips such a shopping, medical and social destinations. This guide could provide information on how to leverage the fixed route service to reach frequently visited destinations (*Figure 1*).

How to Ride Seminars

CAT should hold quarterly rider orientation meetings to assist agency clientele in learning about the CAT system. These “how to ride” seminars would be helpful in improving both case worker and client’s familiarity with the public transit system. In some cases, these seminars would be helpful in communicating the variation in eligibility requirements for access to the Demand Response system and demonstrate how Fixed Route options may be more convenient for certain rider types. The seminar should be live-streamed, recorded and available online with an ADA accessible format, so it is available at any time.

Online Comment and Question Portal

Currently riders can communicate with CAT staff via email and phone in order to ask questions or provide feedback on the system. An online form should be established on CAT’s website that could provide an opportunity for riders to provide questions, comments or concerns about the system. An online form would have the benefit of having an anonymous option and could also facilitate the organization and tracking of comments. These should be reviewed and if required, responded to regularly at an interval that is explicit on the website and manageable with current staffing levels (i.e., responses within one week of submission).

Eligibility and Screening

Eligible User Lists



CAT should incrementally review and recertify current registered paratransit users. Part of this effort would relate to the development of an expanded and more robust eligibility screening process to ensure those who need paratransit services are provided mobility options they require. At the same, an emphasis on certifications allows an opportunity for CAT to manage demand between Senior Ride, paratransit and the Fixed Route system more efficiently. These eligibility reviews need to be closely coupled with the previously mentioned marketing and outreach efforts to key agencies and constituents. Many specialized users such as seniors migrate immediately to the Senior Rider program without adequate consultation and consideration of the Fixed Route options that may better serve their needs. Increased education and awareness of Fixed Route options will assist in easing negative responses from potentially effected clients and agencies if more consistency and thoughtful eligibility certifications are implemented and communicated broadly. Providing riders with the correct eligibility also may help with funding and reimbursement.

Applications and Initial Screening

Public engagement revealed a concern from some organizations that the initial screening process was too complicated, time-intensive and prohibitive for emergent needs. The following are some improvements that could be made to the application process:

- > Online form: CAT should create a form embedded on the website that will allow for easier digital access. While not all applicants will be able to complete an online form, this would make the process easier for staff that may provide assistance.
- > Form questions: CAT should review the form and verify whether all information is explicitly needed for eligibility.
- > Review process: CAT should audit the review process to identify if there are critical path steps that disproportionately slow the process.
- > Emergent needs: CAT should consider options to provide rides prior to eligibility verification, by providing a temporary pass while the forms are processed. This solution should be costed out to determine what percentage of rides would then not be covered by funding and further funding will have to be sought outside of the existing areas.

Service and Program Development Coordination

Assuring the best use of funding and the balance of funding options is critical to this plan. Through the communications strategies listed above, CAT and the MPO can collaborate with area providers to support the allocation of funding in the best ways possible. These areas of funding include:

Capital and Operating Needs (Agencies)

CAT and the MPO should look to develop capital and operational support to improve service delivery systems for special needs populations. Several agencies within the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks area may benefit from access to funding to assist with both operational and capital funding. Funding for these programs could be sought through the FTA Section 5310 programs administered by both the NDDOT and the MnDOT. Additional options exist through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program administered by the City of Grand Forks.

Community Capital Assistance Program

A Community Capital Assistance Program (CCAP) could be developed to provide capital funding to agencies with a proven ability to improve mobility options for targeted populations. Additionally, the CCAP would be structured to support capital programs to benefit service providers who demonstrate an ability to reduce demand on Demand Response.

Coordinated Service Delivery Initiative

Like the CCAP, the Coordinated Service Delivery Initiative (CSDI) would look to allocate federal, state or local resources to provide coordinated transportation programs and services. Programs would be developed through existing or new provider consortiums aimed at developing more coordinated service delivery concepts. Prioritization would be given to



programs that serve to coordinate existing duplicated service or service initiatives which could reduce demand on the Demand Response system through more cost effectiveness delivery methods to key generators. Related to the current Tripper system, coordinating among potential benefiting agencies on a similar service either between CAT and related agencies or between related agencies would meet the intent of the CSDI.



Full Cost Allocation

The CHSTP is focused on outlining system improvements which will generally improve mobility options for the targeted populations discussed previously. Specifically, the framework focuses on understanding system alternatives to better maximize investments in the CAT Demand Response system. CAT is currently investing nearly a third of its resources into this system. To manage existing resources and to grow the overall CAT system, cost allocation strategies have been developed to capture new potential revenue from agencies who are currently utilizing CAT at a disproportionately high level.

Full cost allocation models look to partner with agencies who receive the benefit of CAT services for their clients but are not currently sharing in the cost of those services. As demonstrated earlier, a very small number of agencies are putting about 25 percent of the total demand for paratransit related usage of Demand Response. Additionally, programs such as Foster Grandparents (operated by Grand Forks County) place a measurable demand on the Senior Rider component of the CAT system. While full cost allocation options could be considered for medical related trips for certain skilled nursing facilities, those issues do not appear to be prevalent in the existing condition.

Agency Rates

Special focus for increased financial coordination and cooperative partnership should be aimed at agencies involved in Day Training & Habilitation (DT&H) related programs. As noted earlier, a large portion of the paratransit trip generation relates specifically back to DT&H provider transportation. Implementing a cost allocation model to the paratransit system could develop a two-tiered approach.

- > Tier I of this effort would be to explore funding or financial partnerships with these agencies to assist in offsetting the cost of paratransit. When presented with the financial and operating limitations of CAT, agencies may be willing to look for funding cooperation more progressively. Further, this level of discussion between CAT and local agencies may reveal other options to cooperatively streamline service delivery methods and approach to reduce cost to CAT while maintaining acceptable levels of service to agencies and their clients.
- > Tier II options would relate to the development of an Agency Rate for these organizations. Typically, agency rates are applied to agencies' transportation for individuals who otherwise qualify for human service or transportation-related programs or services due to disability, income or advanced aged coordination, consistent with Executive Order 13330, referenced earlier.

Pricing for agency rates can range anywhere from a full cost allocation of the ride to a price brokered between CAT and affected agencies. To effectively implement an agency rate, the following considerations should be closely reviewed:

- > USC 49 Part 37.131 (c) – Agency fares are permissible, however must be tied to an agreement in which the transit agency is guaranteeing a certain number of rides at a certain rate.
- > DT&H providers in North Dakota are not always provided transportation costs through the state, who administers Medicaid funding.
- > North Dakota-based DT&H providers are not currently required to provide transportation to their clients. Therefore, North Dakota-based DT&H agencies may be hesitant, if not hostile, to the suggestion of an agency rate.
- > Given Medicaid funding rules in Minnesota related to DT&H, Minnesota-based agencies may be more open to agency rates.



PROJECT PROGRAMMING AND PRIORITIZATION

Funding to Support the Mobility Management Framework

The following section of CHSTP provides an overview of the project programming and prioritization process for implementation of this element of the Transit Development: Section 5310, Section 5539, Section 5309, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Community Service Block Grant (CSBG). These will be discussed in more detail in the financial plan section of this TDP

Project Prioritization

The following table (

Table 6) shows prioritization of the strategies listed above based on goals established for the CHSTP federally. The Top Priority Strategies are strategies that could be the first step, shorter-term actions (1-2 years). Secondary Priority Strategies include policies and programs that may require initial steps or more input from policymakers and could fit in a medium-term timeline (3-5 years).

Table 6. Strategy Prioritization

CHSTP Goals	Top Priority Strategies	Secondary Priority Strategies
Promote interagency cooperation and the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to minimize duplication and overlap of Federal programs and services so that transportation-disadvantaged persons have access to more transportation services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Dedicated Senior/Paratransit Coordinator Role > Annual “Major Users” Meetings > Capital and Operating Needs (Agencies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Interagency Forum > Rural Transportation Collaborative
Facilitate access to the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Directory of Transportation Services (Annual Update) - Print + Web > Senior and Paratransit Ride Guides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Coordinated Service Delivery Initiative
Encourage enhanced customer access to the variety of transportation and resources available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > How to Ride Seminars > Online Comment and Question Portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Intercity Service Coordination
Formulate and implement administrative, policy, and procedural mechanisms that enhance transportation services at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Eligible User Lists > Applications and Initial Screening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Community Capital Assistance Program

Grand Forks - East Grand Forks TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

