

**Coordination Assessment  
And  
Transit Development Plan  
River Cities Public Transit  
Pierre, South Dakota**

Prepared for  
**River Cities Public Transit**

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## **Disclaimer**

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# 1. Introduction

River Cities Public Transit (RCPT) provides public transit services in Pierre and Fort Pierre, South Dakota. It also provides a variety of transit services to seven of the 21 cities in the surrounding eight county region. It also serves Fort Thompson on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation.

This report analyzes the services provided by RCPT and assesses efforts that have been made to coordinate these services with other area service providers and human service agencies. Based on this assessment, the report's final chapters present recommendations and implementation strategies related to RCPT's operations, further coordination efforts, and service enhancements and expansions.

For decades, communities across the country have struggled with a lack of funding to support local transportation services. One solution that has received increasing attention is coordination. The passage of the most recent federal surface transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users) heightens the emphasis on coordination, especially as it pertains to the provision of transit services.

Two of this bill's transit programs, Job Access Reverse Commute (Section 5316) and New Freedom (Section 5317), require a coordinated community or regional transportation plan as a prerequisite for the receipt of program funds. The Federal Transit Association (FTA) has issued guidelines for developing coordinated transit plans (Federal Register Volume 71, Number 50 dated March 15, 2006). These guidelines were taken into consideration when developing this coordination assessment and transit development plan.

The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) is the designated recipient of related program funds that have been earmarked for South Dakota. River Cities Public Transit (RCPT) is planning to apply to SDDOT for these funds. RCPT submitted a request for and received a \$15,000 grant from Community Transportation Association (CTAA) to develop a coordination assessment and transit development plan for Pierre and Fort Pierre and the surrounding eight counties in central South Dakota.

Developing a coordinated transportation plan involves a process where a community focuses on a strategy of coordinating and managing community resources to provide a higher level of transportation services to area residents. This process involves community stakeholders joining together and using management, resources, cooperation, cost efficiencies and good planning to develop a more effective network of transportation services.

River Cities Public Transit has already begun a long range strategic planning process by working with the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center (SURTC) to develop a 5-year business plan. This business plan describes RCPT's current business structure, scope of operations, and geographical service area. It looks at the demographics of RCPT's

service area, RCPT's rapid growth in ridership, and the potential for further growth. In addition, the plan outlines future goals and related implementation strategies.

It is important to note, however, that the business plan focuses on RCPT and its operations, but it does not look at the impact of coordinating its services with other agencies in the region. A coordinated plan analyzes a number of segments of the community's population, estimates what their needs may be, projects how many people may need service in the future, and how the service agencies in the community can cooperatively best meet those needs. Those topics are the focus of this plan.

River Cities Public Transit is not a stranger to coordination. RCPT participated in a recent community coordination planning session sponsored by Easter Seals Project ACTION and Community Transportation Association of America. As a result of this national training experience, some local coordination efforts are already underway in the community. These efforts will be discussed in more detail later in this report.

This report is divided into seven sections. These sections include:

- ◆ River Cities Public Transit's Service Area
- ◆ Existing Means of Personal Mobility
- ◆ Trip Generators
- ◆ Population and Economic Projections
- ◆ Gap Analysis – Estimating Unmet Transit Needs
- ◆ Recommendations
- ◆ Implementation Strategies

RCPT's business plan was a primary source of information for this report. Other sources include Census data, personal interviews, RCPT's staff and board of directors, and a survey that was sent out to many agencies and businesses in the region. Members of RCPT's board of directors are identified in Appendix A.

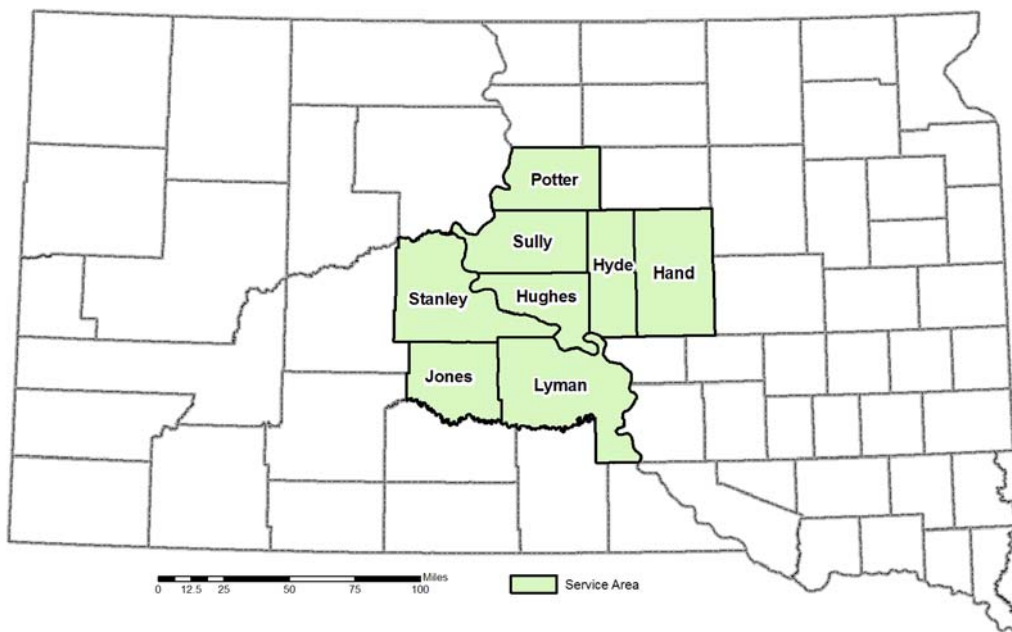
## 2. RCPT's Service Area

When assessing a transit system's service area, two factors play a very important role. These factors include the number of people that need service and geographical distances. Transit operations are typically more efficient in areas with a high population density. Conversely, serving a large geographical area with low population density increases costs because of the travel times and distances.

### 2.1. Geographical Area

River Cities Public Transit is based in Pierre, South Dakota. The surrounding eight county region, which stretches 120 miles from west to east and 100 miles from north to south, has a total population of 36,002. Of this total, 15,867 people live in Pierre (13,876) and in its sister city, Fort Pierre (1,991). Except for Hughes County, which includes the city of Pierre, all of the counties in the region all have a population density of 3.1 residents or less per square mile.

The region's eight counties are identified on the map in Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1 RCPT Service Area – Counties**



## 2.2. Demographics

As indicated earlier, RCPT provides transit services to 9 cities in the 8 county area which surrounds Pierre and Fort Pierre. This 8 county area has a total population of 36,002. As indicated in Table 2.1, only Hughes County, which includes the city of Pierre, has a population of more than 4,000. Five of the region's eight counties lost population from 1990 to 2000.

**Table 2.1 Total Country Population for RCPT Service Area**

<b>County</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% change</b>
Hand	4,272	3,741	-14.2
Hughes	14,817	16,481	10.1
Hyde	1,696	1,671	-1.5
Jones	1,324	1,193	-11.0
Lyman	3,638	3,895	6.6
Potter	3,190	2,693	-18.5
Stanley	2,453	2,772	11.5
Sully	1,589	1,556	-2.1
<b>Totals/Average</b>	<b>32,979</b>	<b>36,002</b>	<b>8.4</b>

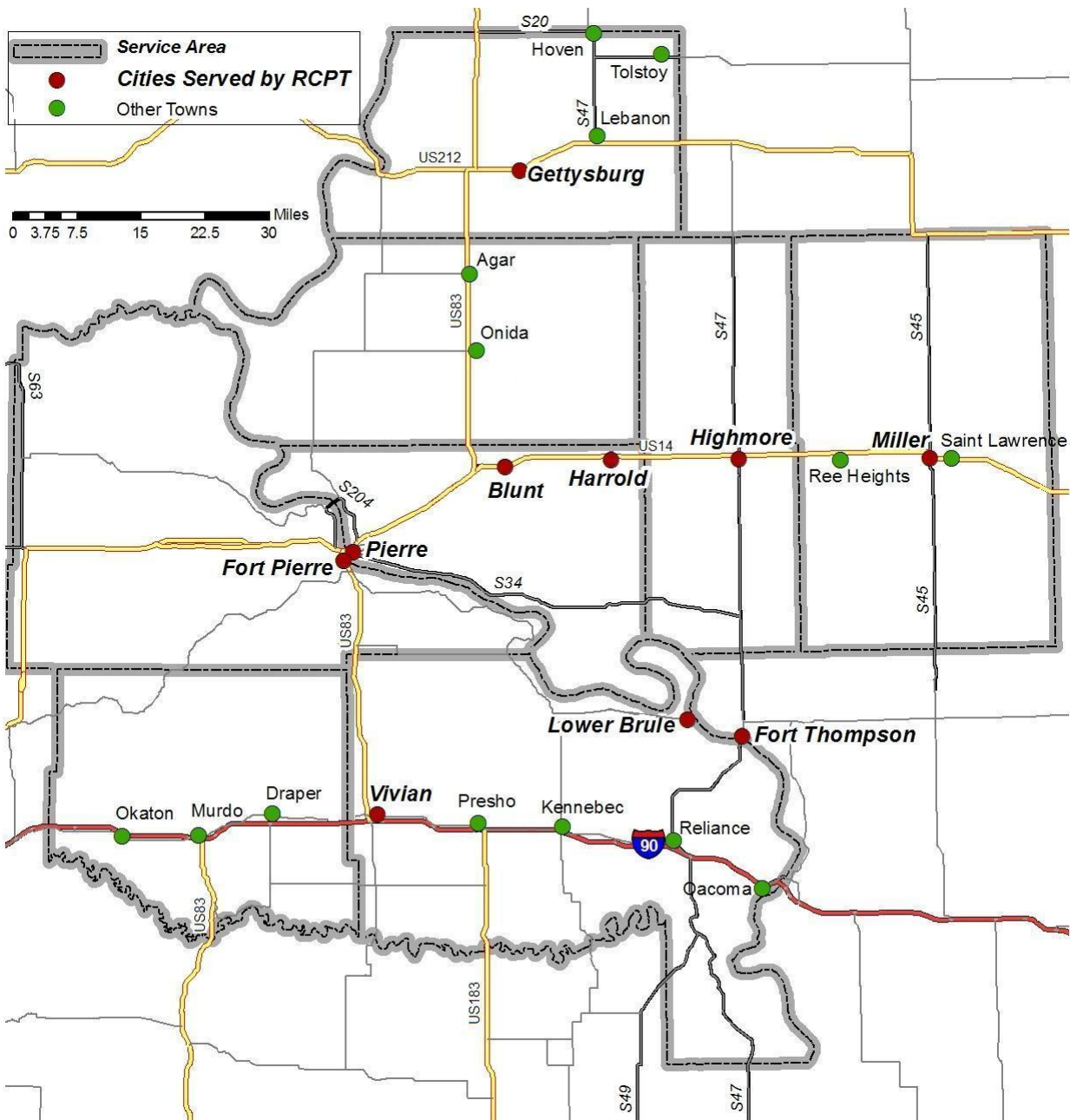
Table 2.2 identifies each of the 24 cities in the eight county region. As Table 2.2 indicates, only four of these cities have a population of more than 1,000 and only Pierre, with 13,876 residents, has a population of greater than 2,000. Table 2.2 also identifies which of the cities in the region are served by RCPT.

**Table 2.2 Regional Cities and Populations**

<b>City</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Miles to Pierre</b>
Agar	Sully	82	41
<b>Blunt</b>	<b>Hughes</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>21</b>
Draper	Jones	92	47
<b>Fort Pierre</b>	<b>Stanley</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Gettysburg</b>	<b>Potter</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Harrold</b>	<b>Hughes</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Highmore</b>	<b>Potter</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>49</b>
Hoven	Potter	511	81
Kennebec	Lyman	286	58
Lebanon	Potter	86	69
<b>Lower Brule</b>	<b>Lyman</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Miller</b>	<b>Hand</b>	<b>1530</b>	<b>72</b>
Murdo	Jones	612	55
Oacoma	Lyman	390	82
Okaton	Jones	29	64
Onida	Sully	740	33
<b>Pierre</b>	<b>Hughes</b>	<b>13,876</b>	<b>0</b>
Presho	Lyman	588	48
Ree Heights	Hand	85	61
Reliance	Lyman	206	71
Saint Lawrence	Hand	210	74
Tolstoy	Potter	64	87
<b>Vivian</b>	<b>Lyman</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>34</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Each of the cities identified in Table 2.2 is shown on the map in Figure 2.2. Those that are served by RCPT are identified in bold print. Figure 2.2 map also shows major highways that run through the region.



**Figure 2.2 RCPT Service Area with Counties & Communities**

The entire eight county region experienced a 8.4 percent gain in total population from 1990 to 2000. Pierre and Ft. Pierre, with 15,867 residents, account for 48.1 percent of the region's total population.

RCPT also provides transit services to Fort Thompson on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation. Fort Thompson is located in Buffalo County and, as illustrated by Figure 2.2, is immediately across the Missouri River from Lyman County. Fort Thompson has a population of 1,375.

It is important to identify the size of various segments of each city’s population in order to grasp the potential demand for transit services. In this regard, traditional transit-dependent segments of the population include people age 60 and older, people under 18, people with disabilities, low income families and individuals, and households without automobiles.

Corresponding transit dependent population estimates are presented in Table 2.3. While there may be obvious double or even triple counting of some individuals, this Census data does give some indication of the size of the potentially mobility impaired populations in various geographic regions within RCPT’s eight county area.

**Table 2.3 Size of the Transit-Dependent Segments of Population**

<b>Geographic Region</b>	<b>60 &amp; older</b>	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>Disabilities</b>	<b>Low income</b>	<b>H w/o V*</b>
Pierre & Fort Pierre	2,308	4,468	1,420	1,215	342
Rural Hughes and Stanley Counties**	3,655	1,695	390	464	71
Potter, Hyde, Hand, Jones, Lyman, and Sully Counties	3,376	3,530	1,125	1,999	291

\* Households without Vehicles

\*\* Excluding the communities of Pierre & Fort Pierre

As Table 2.3 indicates, almost half of the young people in the region live in Pierre and Fort Pierre, while the opposite is true for the population over 60 years of age, where the majority live in rural areas. People with disabilities and households without vehicles are just about evenly split between those residing in Pierre and Fort Pierre versus rural areas in RCPT’s eight county service territory. The region’s low income population is most heavily concentrated in rural areas outside Pierre and Fort Pierre.

Pierre is the area’s regional center and serves as the source for most medical treatment, shopping, employment, social services, and social activity. Area residents who require specialized medical treatments that are not available in Pierre typically travel to either to Rapid City (190 miles southwest) or to Sioux Falls (225 miles southeast). Pierre is the county seat of Hughes County and the capital of South Dakota. There is also a community college located in Pierre.

### **3. Existing Means of Personal Mobility**

Available means of personal mobility may be categorized as private, commercial, public, and client-specific. This chapter describes each of these sources of personal mobility and inventories related services that are available in Pierre/Fort Pierre and the surrounding eight county area.

#### **3.1. Private Transportation**

Personal automobiles are the primary source of personal mobility in the United States. According to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, approximately 92% of all U.S. households possess a motor vehicle to help satisfy their personal mobility needs. The U.S. Census Bureau indicates that in 2000, approximately 95% of the occupied households in South Dakota possessed a motor vehicle.

River Cities Public Transit's 2006 business plan indicated that only 191 of the 13,529 occupied households in Pierre/Fort Pierre and the surrounding eight county area do not have a motor vehicle. This equates to a 98.6% vehicle possession rate. Therefore, it appears that the vast majority of households in and around Pierre/Fort Pierre have access to private transportation to satisfy all or a portion of their personal mobility needs.

This fact does not, however, negate the need for other forms of personal mobility, both for households with automobiles and for those without. While the needs of families and individuals who do not have direct access to an automobile are obvious, a variety of options for personal mobility are also necessary for individuals and families that do have a personal automobile. There are, for example, numerous situations where family members go in multiple directions and have needs that cannot be satisfied with the family's personal automobile.

National and personal goals concerning energy conservation also necessitate forms of transportation other than private automobiles. In addition, automobiles are not suited to provide all forms of transportation. Typical examples include long distance trips and trips involving more than a few passengers. Therefore, while private automobiles are readily available to most area residents, other forms of personal mobility are both desirable and necessary.

#### **3.2. Commercial Transportation**

Commercial forms of transportation include airlines, trains, intercity buses, and taxis. These service providers may, to some extent, be publicly supported, but they typically operate with a profit motive. Some of these forms of transportation are local while

others are regional or interstate and are used primarily to provide access to more distant destinations.

The primary form of commercial transportation in Pierre/Fort Pierre and the surrounding eight county area is airline service. Pierre is served by Mesaba Airlines, a regional feeder for Northwest and Continental Airlines, and by Great Lakes Aviation, a regional feeder for United and Frontier Airlines. Mesaba provides twice a day service between Pierre and Minneapolis via Watertown, South Dakota. Great Lakes provides twice a day service from Pierre to Denver and Brookings, South Dakota. Minneapolis and Denver are hub airports that provide domestic and international connections to destinations across the country and around the world.

There are no passenger train services available in Pierre/Fort Pierre and the surrounding eight county area or elsewhere in South Dakota. Similarly, there are no commercial intercity bus companies operating in the immediate area. River Cities Public Transit does, however, provide connections to intercity bus services furnished by Jefferson Lines along Interstate Highway I-90. The nearest connection to this service is at Vivian, South Dakota, a city located approximately 34 miles south of Pierre. Jefferson Lines provides east-west service across South Dakota with nationwide connections to other interstate locations. In early 2006, RCPT started a northbound route that provides connections to Bismarck, North Dakota, where interstate bus connections are also available. This route is divided into two legs, RCPT provides service north to Mobridge and Standing Rock Transportation transports passengers over the remainder of the route to Bismarck.

The only other form of commercial transportation available in the immediate area is charter bus service provided by Forell Bus Service. Forell provides traditional charter services that are available to transport groups of passengers to desired destinations.

### **3.3. Public Transportation**

The only means of public transportation in Pierre/Fort Pierre and the surrounding eight county area is the transit service provided by River Cities Public Transit. RCPT operates a fleet of 32 buses and vans and provides several different types of transit services to area residents and visitors. These services, as discussed in detail in RCPT's 2006 business plan, are summarily described in the remaining paragraphs of this subsection.

The cornerstone of RCPT's system is the advanced reservation and same-day transit service that is provided in Pierre/Fort Pierre, including areas within eight miles of the cities' corporate limits. The service is available beyond the eight miles with an additional \$1.50 per mile charge. Patrons who request rides a day in advance are charged \$1.55 per one-way trip while those that request same-day demand response service are charged \$5. The senior citizen advanced reservation fare is \$1. For convenience, patrons may also purchase multiple trip tickets for 10 or 20 trips.

These services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are available for both ambulatory and non-ambulatory passengers.

This local service generated over 9,400 one-way passenger trips in January 2006, approximately 56% of all the trips provided by RCPT. Multiply that by 12 months equals approximately 112,800 one-way passenger trips per year.

Within Pierre and Fort Pierre, RCPT also provides local transportation for young people who need access to various after school activities, Head Start programs, the YMCA, etc. This service accounted for 5,604 of RCPT's 16,810 one-way passenger trips in January 2006; 33.3% of the system's total. Assuming that this service is used primarily during school months, it is estimated that this program generates over 50,400 one-way passenger trips annually.

RCPT also provides weekday shuttles between Pierre and Lower Brule Reservation, a Native American reservation with 1,353 residents which is located approximately 57 miles southeast of Pierre. RCPT also furnishes local transit service on the reservation. The fare for rides between Pierre and Lower Brule is \$5.00 per round trip. For rides within Lower Brule, the charge is \$.50 if reserved a day in advance. A \$2.00 fare is charged for same-day service. This portion of RCPT's service generated 760 one-way passenger trips in January, 2006, about 4.5% of the system's total. This monthly total equates to over 9,100 trips annually.

Another service provided by RCPT to outlying communities is weekday work-trip shuttle service between Highmore and Pierre and points in between. Cities along the route include Harrold and Blunt. The fare for this service varies between \$3.00 and \$7.00 depending on the distance involved.

Highmore is located approximately 49 miles east of Pierre. In 2000, Highmore had a population of 851. Harrold had 209 residents according to the 2000 Census, and Blunt had 370. Trips from Highmore to Pierre generated 466 one-way passenger trips in January 2006; about 2.8% of the system's total. On an annual basis, this level of ridership yields nearly 5,600 riders.

RCPT also offers weekly service from Gettysburg to Pierre/Fort Pierre. This service is used primarily by Gettysburg residents who need to get to Pierre for medical appointments, shopping, etc. The fare for this service is \$10 per round trip. Gettysburg, with a population of 1,352, is located approximately 59 miles north of Pierre. This service generated 345 one-way passenger trips in January 2007; this equates to over 4,100 riders per year.

As discussed earlier, RCPT provides daily connections from Pierre/Fort Pierre to Vivian, which is located on Interstate 90, 34 miles south of Pierre. This service connects the Pierre and Fort Pierre residents with intercity bus services on the Jefferson Lines' Rapid City – Sioux Falls route. RCPT provided 234 one-way passenger trips in January 2006, a ridership level that exceeds 2,800 per year.

RCPT also furnishes bus transportation to special events, both inside its traditional service area and to other locations. RCPT does not contract with a specific group to provide dedicated service to group members. Rather, RCPT schedules trips that are of broad interest to the community and sells trips on an individual passenger basis only.

According to information filed with the South Dakota Department of Transportation, RCPT provided 215,242 rides in 2006. RCPT estimates that approximately 44% of these trips were provided to the general public and that 36% involved youth; approximately 17% of these rides involved elderly passengers and about 3% involved disabled riders. A complete set of this data is presented in Appendix B.

RCPT also categorizes rides based on the purpose of each trip. In 2006, RCPT estimated that 35% of its passenger trips were education-related and that 21% involved employment. Medical rides accounted for over 5% of RCPT's 2006 passenger trips and shopping accounted for just under 4% of all trips; about 1.5% of all trips were nutrition-related. Nearly 34% of all trips were for miscellaneous social, recreational, and other purposes. Many of these miscellaneous trips involve evening taxi trips.

### **3.4. Client-Specific Transportation**

There are numerous entities in Pierre/Fort Pierre and the surrounding area that provide transportation services for their clients. Some of these entities are public, while others are private. Each of these entities and the transportation services that they provide are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Unlike public schools in many areas, the schools in Pierre and Fort Pierre do not provide transportation services for their students. Except for students with disabilities, transporting students is a personal responsibility. The local school districts contract with the local charter bus operator, Forell Limousine & Bus Service, to transport disabled students to and from school. Many parents utilize RCPT to transport their children to and from school.

The Fort Pierre school district maintains a bus that it uses to transport teams to nearby sporting events. In most instances, however, the school districts in both Pierre and Fort Pierre contract with charter bus operators for related transportation needs. At the present time, these services are being provided by Gray Line Bus, a national tour bus and charter service, and the local charter operator, Forell Limousine & Bus Service.

Schools in outlying communities do provide transportation services. These school districts operate morning bus routes to pick up students who live in town or on farms. These buses deliver students to school in the morning and take them home after school.

There are two transit services in RCPT's service territory that provide transportation to senior citizens. One of these services is located in Miller, about 70 miles east of Pierre, and one is based in Onida, which is about 33 miles northeast of Pierre. Miller's Wheels



& Meals program is a nutrition service that also provides transportation services to for the community's senior citizens. Its transit services are primarily local but it does provide occasional trips to Pierre. This service receives funding from the state social services program and Department of Transportation.

The Onida-based service provider is called Sully County Transit. This service does not receive any state financial support and provides mostly local services and occasional trips to Pierre/Fort Pierre.

The federal Head Start program is designed to promote social competence in children, age 5 and under, from low income families and children with disabilities. The Head Start program in Pierre/Fort Pierre previously owned its own fleet of buses and sports utility vehicles to transport program participants. However, Head Start has transferred ownership of its buses to RCPT and contracts with RCPT to provide transportation services to its students.

There are three relatively large, licensed day care facilities in Pierre/Fort Pierre that provide transportation services to their clients. Talks are currently underway between these day care facilities and RCPT considering the use of RCPT to furnish required transportation services.

The local YMCA historically ran a small fleet of vehicles to transport students primarily from school to after school activities. It has largely discontinued its transportation operations and now contract with RCPT to provide related services.

There are five churches in Pierre/Fort Pierre that have buses that are used to transport members to and from church. Given the comprehensive nature of RCPT services, some discussions have taken place concerning the use of RCPT services in place of these church-run vehicles. Since some churches have purchased vehicles within the past few years, it is anticipated that they will continue to provide rides for their church members.

There are two nursing homes in Pierre/Fort Pierre. Unlike many nursing homes, these facilities do not provide transportation services for their residents. Rather, they depend on RCPT to transport residents to medical appointments, etc. The nursing home in Highmore does own a vehicle that it uses to transport residents.

Oahe, Inc. operates a number of group homes for developmentally disabled individuals. It has a fleet of approximately 18 mini-vans that it uses to transport residents. In most instances, it uses RCPT services to transport residents to and from places of employment, but it uses its own vehicles when groups of residents are taken shopping or on recreational outings.

The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs operates the Pierre Indian Learning Center, a Native American boarding school, in Pierre. This school has approximately 200 students and three buses that are used primarily to transport large groups of students on school-related outings.

The federal Department of Veterans Affairs operates one vehicle in the Pierre area. This vehicle is used to transport eligible veterans to Sturgis (215 miles southwest of Pierre) and Sioux Falls (225 miles southeast of Pierre) for medical appointments at regional veteran medical centers.

The State of South Dakota operates a women's prison in Pierre/Fort Pierre. This prison houses 250-350 inmates, some of which are low risk and take part in transitional work activities outside the prison. RCPT provides transportation services for approximately half of these work release trips. When work activities involve a large number of inmates to a single job site, the prison routinely uses state vehicles.

As indicated earlier, there is one commercial charter bus company in the area. Forell Limousine & Bus Service provides traditional charter bus services with a fleet of four 30-passenger buses. Forell also operates two 15-passenger vans that are used to provide transportation to the local school district for students with disabilities.

Two Pierre/Fort Pierre hotels have vehicles that they use to accommodate their guests. In some cases, these entities prefer that their guests use RCPT to satisfy their local transportation needs.

Finally, there are several hunting lodges in the region that provide transportation to their clients. These trips include airport pick-ups, transportation to outlying hunting lodges and hunting sites, and occasional trips into Pierre/Fort Pierre for shopping, dining, and entertainment.

### **3.5. Coordination Accomplishments**

Coordination is the process of two more service providers working together to achieve a common transportation goal. It can also be defined as a strategy for managing transportation resources, both operating and capital.

There is only one federally subsidized public transportation organization in the cities of Pierre and Fort Pierre - River Cities Public Transit. As discussed in preceding chapters, there are numerous examples of coordination that is already taking place in Pierre and Fort Pierre. Below is a list of current coordination efforts in the area:

- ◆ Coordinating with the local Head Start program where RCPT & Head Start have purchased buses jointly and Head Start contracts with RCPT for maintenance and operation of the Head Start buses.
- ◆ Cooperating with Oahe, Inc., whereby RCPT has taken control of 12 of Oahe, Inc's 18 vehicles and RCPT provides maintenance for 100 percent of their vehicles.

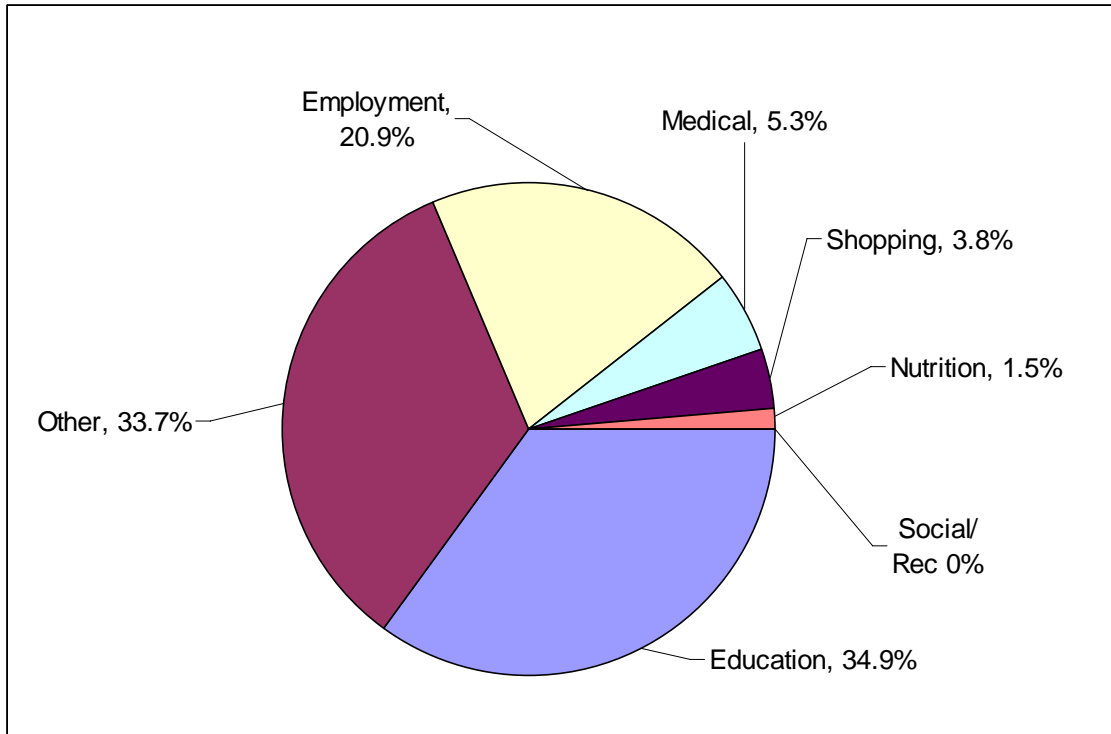
- ◆ Providing all the rides for the Agency on Aging using Older Americans Act Title III-B funds. The cost of these rides is subsidized by a program called Title III-B, RCPT gets 100 percent of the Title III-B funds for Pierre and Fort Pierre communities.
- ◆ Providing all the rides for the TANF program in Pierre and Fort Pierre through the sale of tickets books which the social service agency purchases on a monthly as needed basis.
- ◆ Providing Medicaid rides in the community. River Cities Public Transportation is the only certified Medicaid provider in the community.
- ◆ Working with the after school program and transporting students to the Boys & Girls Club as well as to the YMCA.
- ◆ Working with communities along South Dakota Highway 14 who pay a local match for employment transportation for their resident Highmore, Harrold and Blunt to go to Pierre for employment.
- ◆ Coordinating with the residents of Lower Brule and the tribe to provide transportation in their home community between the hours of 8am and 4 pm as well as transportation to Pierre.
- ◆ Working with Jefferson Bus Lines to sell tickets for a commission and delivering passengers to Vivian to interline with Jefferson Lines. RCPT also gives Jefferson passengers heading to Pierre a ride from Vivian to Pierre.
- ◆ Coordinating with Fort Yates Public Transportation to provide daily transportation from Pierre to Bismarck, North Dakota. RCPT provides the leg from Pierre to Mobridge, South Dakota.
- ◆ Coordinating with Lower Brule Indian Reservation regarding developing a grant request for the tribal funds under the SAFETEA-LU highway bill. The tribe will contract with RCPT to administer and manage the transit service to be provided by the grant.
- ◆ Working with five transit organizations in North and South Dakota to purchase and install a computerized scheduling and dispatch system. The five communities worked together for pricing, training and implementation. RCPT was the lead purchaser and all providers purchased their equipment through RCPT. RCPT personnel serve as a resource for resolving minor problems.
- ◆ Cooperating with the Pierre Area Senior Citizens Center to provide for all its transportation needs. The center sold its vehicle two years ago and now depends on RCPT for transit services.

## 4. Trip Generators

In the transit industry, a trip generator is a destination or a reason for passenger travel. This chapter discusses traditional trip generators and related travel volumes in RCPT's service area. These discussions will focus on the following trip generators:

- ◆ Education
- ◆ Employment
- ◆ Medical appointments
- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Compliance appointments
- ◆ Social/church
- ◆ Recreation

Figure 4.1 identifies the reasons for RCPT passenger travel for the year 2006. As this chart illustrates, educational trips accounted for 35 percent of all RCPT rides while employment-related trips accounted for 21 percent of all trips. As noted earlier, RCPT provides both prescheduled and demand response service 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The "Other" category is comprised primarily of night demand response rides and accounted for almost 34 percent. The balance of trips made up the remaining 10 percent of the trips. This data is taken from the SDDOT statistical page at <http://www.sddot.com/fpa/transit/forms.asp>. A copy of that report is presented in Appendix B.



**Figure 4.1 RCPT Ridership by Destination – 2006**

Each of these major trip categories will be discussed in the following remaining sections of this chapter.

### **4.1. Education Ridership**

Transporting students to and from school and after school activities is a major concern for parents of school age children. This concern is even more pronounced for parents of elementary students since these children are often unable to walk long distances and are not old enough to operate an automobile.

There are six schools in Pierre and two schools in Fort Pierre. As discussed earlier, neither school district provides bus transportation for students. The Pierre school district pays parents who live outside the city to deliver their children to and from school. Some of these parents schedule rides with RCPT to transport their children. In Fort Pierre, students must live at least four miles from Fort Pierre for parents to receive any financial reimbursement from the district for transportation.

Student populations at each of the schools in Pierre and Fort Pierre are summarized in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

**Table 4.1 Student Populations – Pierre**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
T. F. Riggs High	830
Georga Morse Middle	307
Buchanan Elementary	307
Jefferson Elementary	430
McKinley Elementary	121
Washington Elementary	260
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,561</b>

Source: T. F. Riggs High School Business Office

**Table 4.2 Student Populations – Ft. Pierre**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
Stanley County High	250
Parkview Elementary	100
Stanley Elementary	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>

Source: Kevin Merscheid, Fort Pierre School District

In addition to transporting students to and from school, RCPT also provides a significant amount of transportation to students who travel from school to after school activities. In Fort Pierre, for example, RCPT picks up children after school and delivers them to the Boys and Girls Club in Pierre. RCPT provides a similar service which transports area students to the YMCA in Pierre. In addition to providing needed transportation, these services enhance safety by reducing private automobile traffic around schools.

Another trip generator for RCPT is the Head Start program in Pierre. As discussed earlier, Head Start transferred its bus fleet to RCPT and now contracts with RCPT to provide transportation services to its preschool students.

As a part of this study effort, 150 area entities were surveyed concerning the quality and availability of local transit services. Survey responses revealed an area of potential interest in expanded education-related transportation. This response related to the Lower Brule Community College, a post-secondary educational institution on the Lower Brule Sioux Indian Reservation. A copy of the survey questionnaire and survey recipients are presented in Appendix C.

The college indicated that getting to school is a hardship for many students and that the school is experiencing a high percentage of absenteeism. This is a common complaint for post-secondary education in areas of economic distress. According to the school's spring 2007 class schedule, a majority of classes start between 4 pm and 6 pm and conclude 2 or 3 hours later. There may be an opportunity for RCPT to address these needs via expanded services in that area.

## 4.2. Employment-Related Destinations

As indicated in Figure 4.1, employment-related transportation is RCPT's second largest trip generator. This type trip accounts for 18% of RCPT's current ridership.

Table 4.1 summarizes employer, labor force, employment, and unemployment statistics for the eight county region. Transit services are important both to help employed individuals get to work and to facilitate employment opportunities for mobility disadvantaged segments of the population.

**Table 4.3 Number of Employers and Labor Force in each County**

<b>County</b>	<b># of Employers*</b>	<b>Labor Force**</b>	<b>Employed**</b>	<b>Unemployed**</b>
Hand	138	1,960	1,904	56
Hughes	1,823	10,267	9,996	270
Hyde	140	768	737	29
Jones	138	741	720	21
Lyman	264	1963	1,868	95
Potter	303	1,383	1,338	44
Stanley	359	1,954	1,905	49
Sully	190	1,026	998	27
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,355</b>	<b>20,062</b>	<b>19,466</b>	<b>591</b>

\*2002 Data from Quick Fact, U.S. Census

\*\* Averages for 2006 from SD Department of Labor

The Governor's Office of Economic Development provides county profile information related to employment in each South Dakota county (<http://www.sdreadytowork.com/CountyProfileReport/Profiles.aspx>). Table 4.3 summarizes related information regarding leading employers in each of the eight counties around Pierre and Fort Pierre. As this table illustrates, the region's largest employers are concentrated in Hughes County. For the purpose of this table, a leading employer is one that has 10 or more employees.

**Table 4.4 Leading Employers in Eight County Region**

<b>County</b>	<b>10-25 employees</b>	<b>26-50 employees</b>	<b>51-100 employees</b>	<b>Over 100 employees</b>
Hand	1	1	4	0
Hughes	5	1	3	10
Hyde	1	3	0	0
Jones	2	2	1	0
Potter	3	6	1	0
Stanley	0	1	3	2
Sully	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>

Source: Governor's Office of Economic Development

A review of Table 4.4's underlying data reveals industries involved in these places of employment. Table 4.5 identifies these industries and the jobs that they provide within the region. As was the case in Table 4.4, the information in Table 4.5 is reflective of employers with 10 or more employees.

**Table 4.5 Leading Employers by Industry**

<b>Industry</b>	<b># of Employers</b>	<b>Total Employment</b>
Government	6	2,850
Health Care	7	969
Education	9	802
Retail	6	657
Construction	6	585
Services	6	240
Farm Services	7	218
Finance	4	164
Utilities	4	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>6,593</b>

As Table 4.5 indicates, government is the leading employer in the eight county region. The vast majority of these jobs (2,300) are state positions based in Pierre, the capital of South Dakota. There are also a considerable number of federal, county, and city jobs based in Pierre.

Health care and education are the next two largest employment sectors. The majority of the region's health care jobs are based in Pierre. Education-related jobs are found throughout the region but tend to be concentrated in areas with larger populations.

A comparison of the employee counts in Tables 4.3 and 4.5 suggests that a large number of the region's workers are employed by employers with fewer than 10 employees. Providing these workers with transit services is more difficult since their destinations may be more widely dispersed than is the case when they work for major employers.



RCPT is preparing to apply for Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funding through SDDOT. JARC is designed to help address the commuting needs of low income individuals. If related funding is procured, it is expected that RCPT's employment-related ridership would increase significantly.

As Table 4.1 indicates, Hughes County has over half of the total number of employers for the eight counties and employs more than half the labor force in the region. Fort Pierre is located in Stanley County, which has the second highest number of employers and is just across the river from Pierre. These two communities have 65 percent (2182) of the employers for the entire region.

The fact that RCPT's services are concentrated in these counties facilitates the satisfaction of many of the region's employment-related transportation needs. The concentration of employers in Pierre and Fort Pierre also suggests there may be demand for more employees than exists in the two communities, transit can add to the employee base by bringing residents from neighboring counties.

### **4.3. Medical Transportation**

As indicated earlier in Figure 4.1, medical trips account for approximately 5% of RCPT's total ridership. Medical transportation trips are different than either education or employment trips because they often involve riders that are not ambulatory. Medical transportation is a more expensive type of trip because fewer passengers are transported per hour and because the passengers require more individualized attention.

There are six primary medical treatment facilities in the Pierre-Fort Pierre area:

- ◆ St. Mary's Healthcare Center
- ◆ Dakota Plains Clinic
- ◆ Medical Associates Clinic
- ◆ Linn's Clinic
- ◆ Oahe Family Valley Clinic
- ◆ Indian Urban Health Clinic

Other facilities associated with medical treatment are the nursing homes, assisted living, developmental disabilities, and mental health facilities. There are a number of doctors offices located in Pierre (dentists, optometrists, orthopedists, chiropractors, etc). All these businesses have appointments throughout the day for their patients. RCPT helps satisfy many of their patients' transportation needs.

#### **4.4. Shopping, Compliance, Entertainment, and Social**

As discussed earlier, 27% of RCPT's one-way passenger trips are categorized as "Other," many of which involve evening social outings. Shopping and nutrition-related trips account for another 5% of RCPT's ridership.

Compliance trips are presumably an important part of the "Other" category. These trips traditionally involve mandated trips related to social services, employment counseling and training, probation appointments, addiction counseling, etc. Keeping these appointments is important to the success of related programs and helping participants become a part of mainstream society. The availability of related transportation services is a direct contributor to the success of these programs.

Shopping, entertainment, and social trips are similarly important to residents of the community. Such trips help make it possible for riders to function independently within their community. These trips also contribute to the quality of life that goes along with independent living.

As indicated earlier, a considerable number of the "Other" trips provided by RCPT are evening entertainment trips. Having these individuals using public transit instead of driving in a personal vehicle may contribute to the safety of local streets in early morning hours.

The map in Figure 4.2 identifies many of RCPT's significant non-student destinations (denoted by circles) and pick up points (denoted by squares). As this map illustrates, many of RCPT's significant non-school destinations and pick-up points are clustered in the southwestern portion of Pierre. Unlike school-related transportation, these trips typically involve a low number of boardings per stop.



**Figure 4.2 Significant Destinations and Pick-ups Points – Pierre and Fort Pierre**

## **5. Population and Economic Projections**

A transit system must be designed to serve the mobility needs of the people who live in the system's service area. It is important, however, that system planners keep an eye on the future to ensure that system modifications keep pace with ongoing demographic and economic changes.

Previous chapters have discussed the demographic and economic characteristics of Pierre, Fort Pierre, and the surrounding eight county area. This chapter is devoted to discussions concerning projections for the future. Related findings will hopefully help RCPT respond to the region's evolving mobility needs.

For the purposes of this chapter, the region's eight counties are divided into two groups - one for Hughes and Stanley Counties (which include the cities of Pierre and Fort Pierre) and one for the remaining outlying counties (Hand, Hyde, Jones, Lyman and Potter). While all eight counties are relatively rural, Hughes and Stanley Counties have the largest populations and concentration of employers. The following subsections of this chapter will focus discussions on each of these county clusters and expected trends in the size of mobility impaired segments of the population.

These projections are made based on a methodology that SURTC used when it prepared its 2006 report entitled *Projecting Changes in Mobility-Challenged Populations in North Dakota: David Ripplinger, 2005-2025* (Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, 2006). Using the cohort-component method of population projection, that report projected the size of various population subgroups in five-year intervals. The same methodology was used to develop the population projections presented in the following subsections.

As was stated earlier, it is inappropriate to sum population subgroup populations since many individuals may be included in multiple subgroups. Population trend lines are, however, important since they give a good estimation of what may occur relative to the size of each subgroup over the next 20 years.

### **5.1. Population Projections – Hughes and Stanley Counties**

Using the methodology described above, Table 5.1 presents population estimates for Hughes and Stanley Counties for each five year period between 2000 and 2025. If the population projections prove to be accurate, RCPT may have to make some significant operational changes to respond to the area's changing demographic profile.

**Table 5.1 Population Projections for Hughes and Stanley Counties: 2000 to 2025**

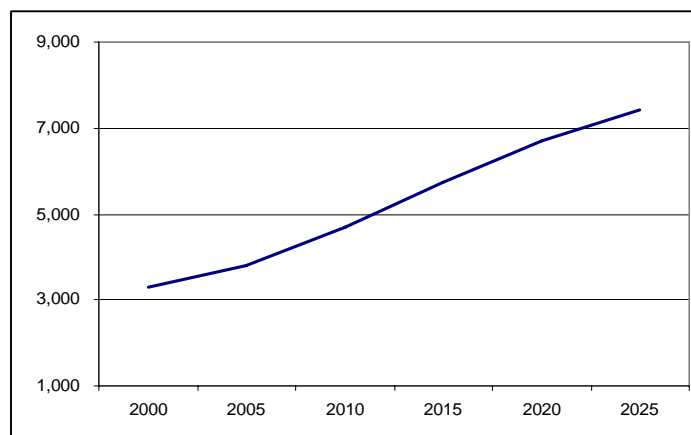
<b>Actual &amp; Projected</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
Seniors (60+)	3,296	3,806	4,697	5,737	6,711	7,427
People with Disabilities	796	856	934	1,047	1,195	1,336
Youth under 18	5,292	5,213	5,049	4,868	4,667	4,449
Households without Vehicles	396	412	425	436	444	449

As Table 5.1 suggests, Hughes and Stanley Counties may experience a modest increase in population between 2005 and 2025. Significant changes are expected, however, in two the RCPT’s major user groups. Concerning senior citizen, the two county area may see its senior population increase from 3,296 to 7,427, an increase of 125 percent. Conversely, the population of school age youth may decline from 5,292 to 4,449, a decrease of 16 percent.

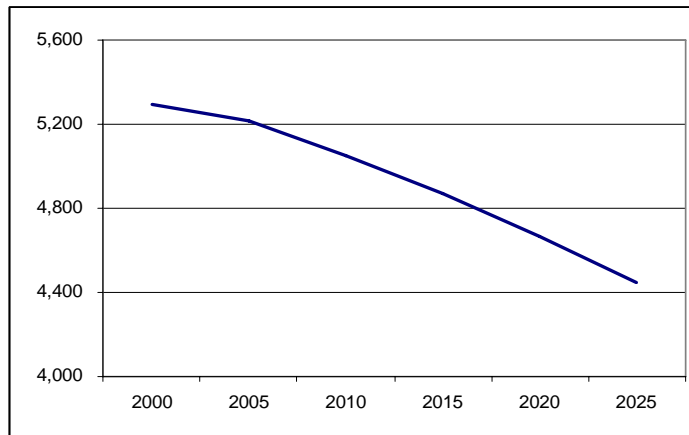
The increase in the area’s senior citizen population may create an increased demand for mid-day trips involving shopping, medical appointments, and nutrition. Conversely, a drop in school age numbers may result in a decline in education-related transportation and after school trips.

It is also expected that the area will see a rather significant percentage increase in the number of people with disabilities. As Table 5.1 suggests, the number of residents in this population category is expected to increase from 796 to 1,336. As discussed earlier, many of these riders have ambulatory difficulties and require considerable assistance from RCPT drivers. Serving this segment of the population many require a proportionally larger share of RCPT resources in future years.

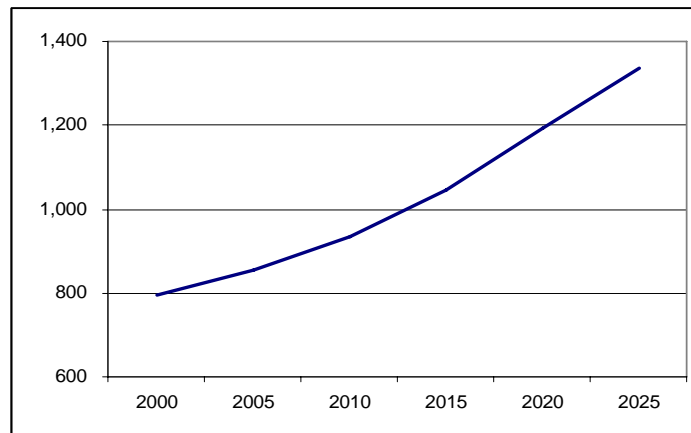
The following charts pictorially illustrate the demographic projections presented in Table 5.1.



**Figure 5.1 Actual and Projected Numbers of Seniors (60+) for Years 2000 to 2025 – Hughes and Stanley Counties**



**Figure 5.2 Actual and Projected Numbers of Youth Under 18 for Years 2000 to 2025 – Hughes and Stanley Counties**



**Figure 5.3 Actual and Projected Numbers of People with Disabilities for Years 2000 to 2025 – Hughes and Stanley Counties**

It is important to note that the trends portrayed in Table 5.1 will be gradual plus they may be reversible. Ongoing planning efforts should continue to monitor related information to help RCPT position itself to evolving demographic trends.

It should also be noted that the statistics presented in Table 5.3 are masked to the extent that it is likely that there are significantly different trends taking place in Pierre and Fort Pierre than there are in outlying areas in each county. For example, even though Table 5.3 projects a population increase for both counties, it is expected that most of this increase will be in and within a few miles of Pierre and Fort Pierre. It is expected that outlying areas will experience changes more in line with those in the region’s other six counties. These trends will be discussed in Section 5.2.

## 5.2. Population Projection - Hand, Hyde, Jones, Lyman, Potter, and Sully Counties

The region’s six outlying counties can expect significantly different demographic trends than those discussed in the preceding subsection. Whereas Hughes and Stanley Counties are expected to see population increases over the next 20 years, the region’s other six counties may see a significant decline. This trend is consistent with that projected for rural areas throughout the Great Plains.

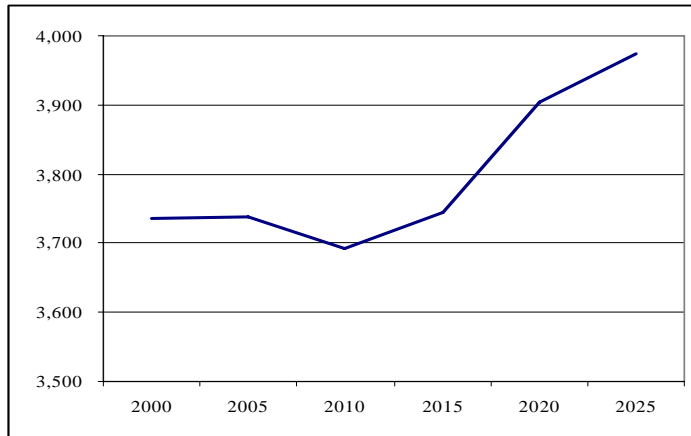
As Table 5.2 indicates, the region’s six outlying counties may see a population decline of 5,130 people between 2005 and 2025 (-34.7%). It is anticipated that this decline will be reflected in all but one of the population subgroups listed in Table 5.2. The only population subgroup that may not decline is senior citizens. It is expected that the size of that subgroup will grow slightly throughout the next 20 years.

**Table 5.2 Population Projections for Hand, Hyde, Jones, Lyman, Potter, and Sully Counties: 2000 to 2025**

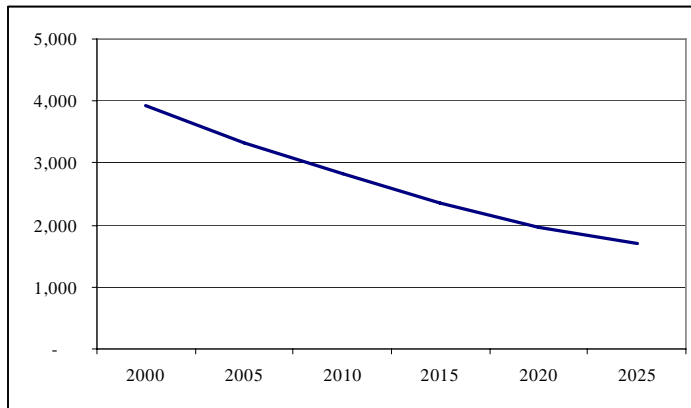
<b>Actual &amp; Projected</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
Seniors (60+)	3,735	3,738	3,691	3,744	3,904	3,974
People with disabilities	698	691	684	668	654	630
Youth (Under 18)	3,927	3,334	2,823	2,367	1,975	1,698
Households without Vehicles	318	297	274	251	228	207

Table 5.2 suggests that the largest population decline will occur in the “Youth (Under 18)” subgroup. While this decline will have a significant impact on area schools, it may have a relatively minor impact on RCPT’s operations since it is providing very little service to this population group at the present time. Conversely, should this trend lead to increased school consolidation, RCPT could be called on to transport students between more communities in outlying areas. This is a situation that warrants ongoing monitoring.

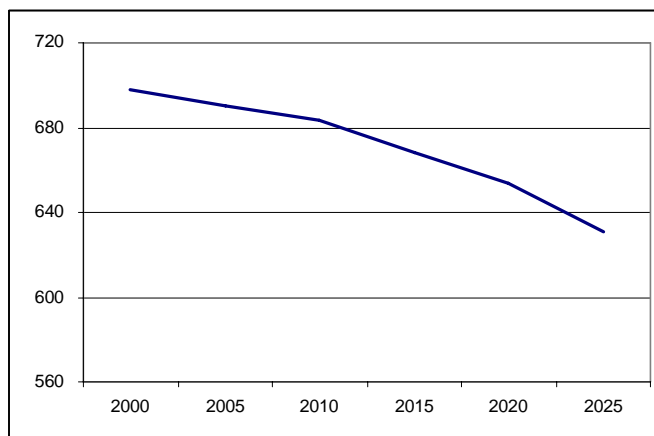
The following charts pictorially illustrate the demographic projections presented in Table 5.2.



**Figure 5.4 Actual and Projected Numbers of Seniors (60+) for Years 2000 to 2025 – Hand, Hyde, Jones, Lyman, Potter, and Sully Counties**



**Figure 5.5 Actual and Projected Numbers of Youth Under 18 for Years 2000 to 2025 – Hand, Hyde, Jones, Lyman, Potter, and Sully Counties**



**Figure 5.6 Actual and Projected Numbers of People with Disabilities for Years 2000 to 2025 – Hand, Hyde, Jones, Lyman, Potter, and Sully Counties**



### 5.3. Economic Projections

Economic projections are, by nature, imprecise. There are, however, several sources of information that may be drawn on to develop estimated trends. This is the approach that will be used here in an attempt to estimate future economic growth and employment numbers of this eight county area.

As indicated earlier, in 2006 there were an estimated 19,466 jobs in the eight county area. These job totals are restated in Table 5.3, along with estimated 2004-05 changes in jobs that are covered by workmen's compensation.

**Table 5.3 2006 Job Number and Estimated 2004 to 2005 Changes**

<b>County</b>	<b>2004 Covered Jobs*</b>	<b>2005 Covered Jobs*</b>	<b>2004 to 2005 Changes</b>	<b>2006 Total Jobs**</b>
Hand	1,178	1,195	+1.44%	1,904
Hughes	9,935	10,265	+3.32%	9,996
Hyde	588	535	-9.01%	737
Jones	505	477	-5.54%	720
Lyman	1,458	1,453	-.34%	1,868
Potter	888	884	-.45%	1,338
Stanley	990	1,047	+5.76%	1,905
Sully	447	459	+2.68%	998
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15,989</b>	<b>16,315</b>	<b>+2.04%</b>	<b>19,466</b>

\* Source: South Dakota Department of Labor

\*\* Source: South Dakota Office of Economic Development

As Table 5.3 indicates, it appears that half of the counties in the region experienced approximately zero or negative job growth from 2004 to 2005. The other four counties in the region experienced job growth ranging from 1.44 to 5.76%.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has developed long term economic projections for each state. In its most recent report, BLS projected a 14% increase in overall employment for the state of South Dakota from 2002 to 2012. This total equals an annual increase in employment of 1.4%.

Given the population projections discussed earlier, it seems unreasonable to assume that the region's six smaller counties would achieve an increase in employment despite significant declines in population. It is, therefore, assumed that overall employment in the outlying six counties will remain, at best, stable.

Conversely, it is assumed that employment numbers in Hughes and Stanley Counties will mirror those of the state as a whole. Based on a 1.4 percent rate of increase from 2006 through 2012, employment in Hughes County should increase from 9,996 jobs to 10,065. Similarly, employment in Stanley County should increase from 1,047 to 1,138.

As the proceeding paragraphs suggest, it does not appear that there will be significant changes in overall employment in the region during the next five years. Therefore, it does not appear that RCPT will need to make corresponding changes in its operations to accommodate anticipated changes in employment. It should, none the less, monitor ongoing economic developments in order to respond to unanticipated changes or sudden developments such as the opening of a new manufacturing facility or shopping center.

## **6. Gap Analysis – Estimating Unmet Transit Needs**

Previous chapters have presented background information relative to River Cities Public Transit's current services, including demographics of the geographical region, the services that RCPT is currently providing, trip generators, and projections regarding changes in populations and employment growth. This chapter discusses RCPT's strengths and identifies areas of unmet needs.

### **6.1. River Cities Public Transit Strengths**

River Cities Public Transit has been recognized for its outstanding performance as a transit operation by a number of national organizations. These awards and the organizations that sponsored them include:

- ◆ *The Rural Transit System of the Year Award* - Community Transportation of America – June 2006.
- ◆ *Administrator's Award for Outstanding Public Service in Rural Public Transportation* – Federal Transit Administration – October 2006.
- ◆ *2007 FTA Annual Award for Success in Enhancing Ridership* – Federal Transit Administration at the American Public Transit Association Legislative Conference – March 2007.

These national awards are a testament to RCPT's growth and exceptional service. These testimonials are supported by RCPT's per capita ridership achievements. As noted in its 2006 business plan, RCPT provides about 5.9 rides per capita, considerably higher than the average of other rural and small urban transit systems throughout the country.

Another testament to the strength of RCPT's service is its availability and accessibility. Most transit systems operate during normal business hours between 8 am and 5 pm. RCPT provides both prescheduled and demand response rides 24 hours per day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Almost all trips at night are same-day demand response.

RCPT's bus fleet is relatively new and in excellent condition. It has its own mechanic and can store many buses inside its garage. RCPT has two staff, inmates from the state's women's prison that participate in a work-release program, who wash the inside and outside of buses on a daily as needed basis. The attention to the care of its buses is acknowledged by the survey response, which indicated almost 90 percent of the respondents were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the "cleanliness of the vehicles." The overall appearance of the fleet is clean, sharp, and portrays a positive image in the community.

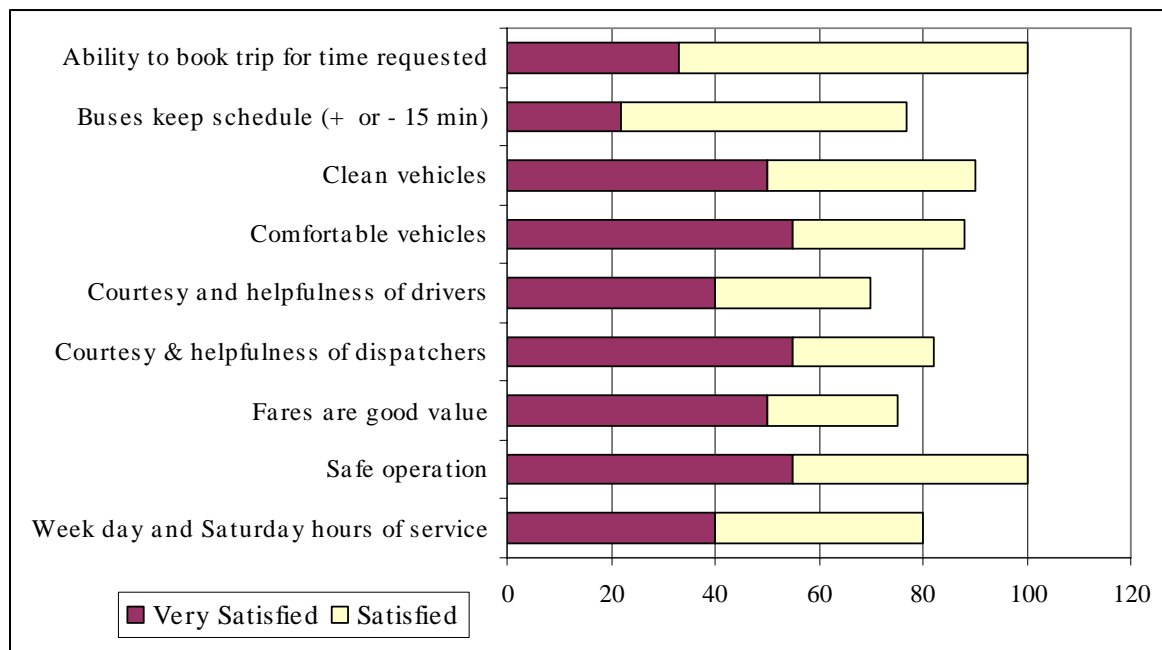
RCPT sells advertising on its vehicles to local businesses. The income generated from the advertising sales is used to help subsidize transit in the region. There may be additional opportunities for businesses to assist transit. For example, in some

communities around the country, businesses assist their employees by purchasing transit tickets or subsidizing the employee’s costs for public transit. These efforts provide a tangible benefit for the employees, help fund public transit, and may benefit employers by reducing employee absenteeism.

Survey results rating customer satisfaction for RCPT were very strong. A total of 150 questionnaires were mailed out to area agencies, schools, churches and businesses. Thirty four responded to the survey. Out of the nine behaviors measured, RCPT scored an 80 percent or higher satisfaction rating on six. For two categories, “ability to schedule for time requested” and “safe operation,” 100 percent of the respondents were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied.” As indicated earlier, a copy of the survey questionnaire and a list of recipients is presented in Appendix C.

It is important to note that over 50 percent of survey respondents are “very satisfied” with the “comfortable vehicles,” “the courtesy and helpfulness of dispatchers,” and the “safe operation.” In three additional customer service measures, “clean vehicles,” “courtesy and helpfulness of dispatchers,” and “week day and Saturday hours of service,” almost 80 percent or more of respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied.” This speaks very highly of RCPT’s commitment to quality customer service.

Related survey responses are summarized in Figure 6.1.



**Figure 6.1 Survey Results for Customer Satisfaction.**

## **6.2. Transportation Service Gaps**

Three sources were used to identify service impediments and gaps for the residents of the eight county region which RCPT serves. These three sources include a focus group meetings which was held on January 19 and March 14, 2007, the previously discuss survey, and input from RCPT's staff and management. Appendix D presents a list of entities that were invited to attend the focus group meetings and the minutes of those meetings.

### **6.2.1. Focus Group - Identified Impediments**

Members of the focus group discussed impediments to public transportation. These issues were categorized by three groups of affected individuals: senior citizens, people with disabilities, and low income individuals.

With regard to senior citizens, the group identified three concerns: navigating bus steps, feeling a loss of independence related to giving up their car, and apprehension regarding the process of scheduling a ride. RCPT could increase its ridership if more seniors in the community were able to overcome these challenges. Other organizations, such as senior citizen centers or agencies on aging, could assist RCPT with training and education to help seniors overcome these barriers.

Regarding people with disabilities, the two issues identified by the focus group were communications and a need for travel trainers. Disabilities, such as cognitive and mental retardation, and the loss of sight or hearing, affect how passengers communicate with the drivers and dispatchers. Some individuals are skeptical about using transit for the first time; special attention must be given to these passengers until they become familiar with the buses and routes in their community.

Low income individuals struggle with the fares, even if they are only \$1.55 per trip. The current minimum wage is \$5.15 per hour. For a 40-hour work week, this translates to a gross income of \$885.00 per month. Assuming an individual rides twice a day for every workday in a month, transit fares would total \$66.65. While this amount is cheaper than owning a vehicle, but it is still a significant out-of-pocket expense for minimum wage employees and other low income passengers.

In addition to work rides, low income individuals also need to make other trips. They need access to medical care, shopping for groceries and clothing, banking, attending church, etc. In rural areas, mobility problems are even more pronounced because of the geographic distances involved.

### **6.2.2. Survey Responses Regarding Customer Service**

For an agency to become the primary provider in a coordinated transit system, it must provide service that other agencies know is predictable, reliable, and accommodating. This can best be analyzed in a two step process that involves the identification of

customer service issues that are most important and a determination of how customers rate services in related areas.

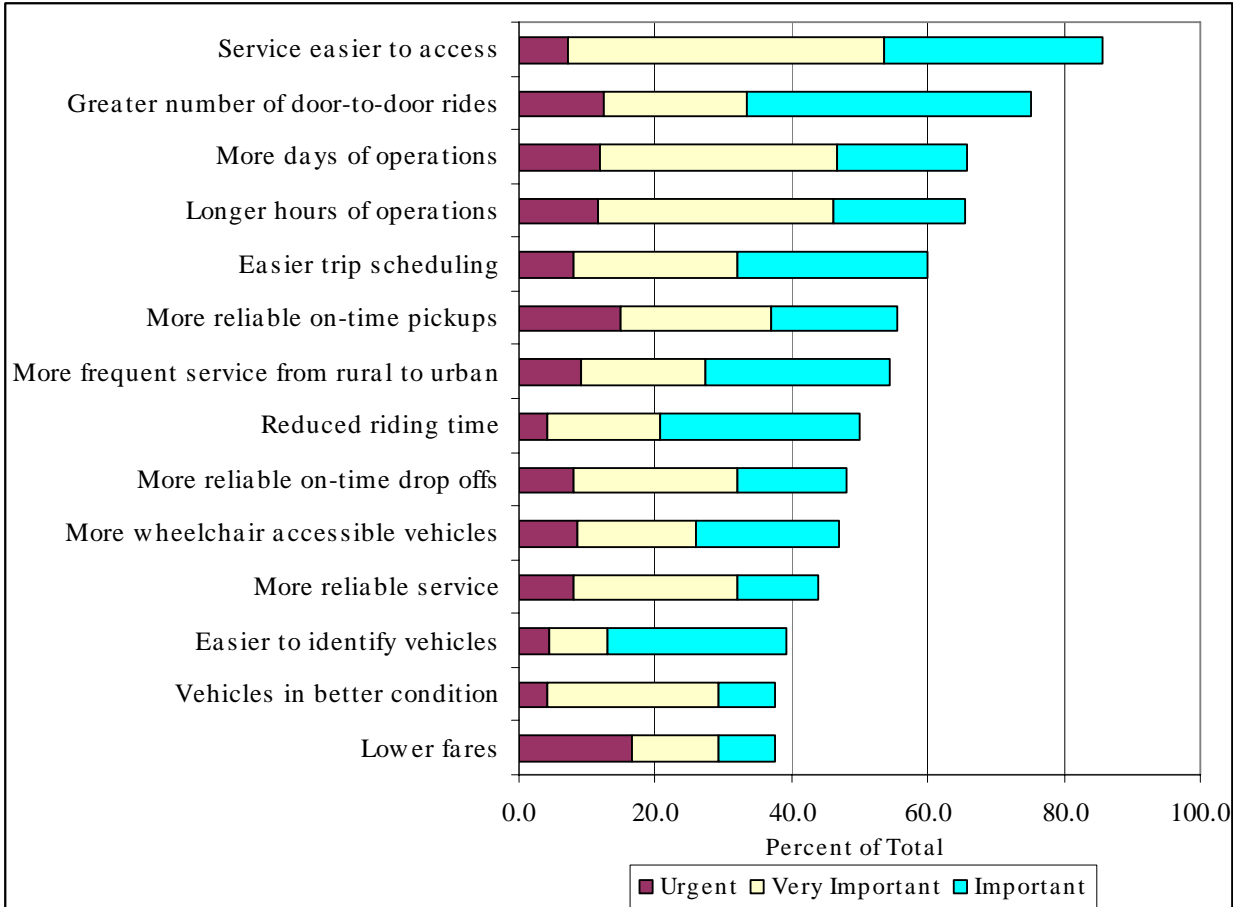
Figure 6.2 identifies issues that were rated important by RCPT users. The four categories that received “important,” “very important” and “urgent” ratings were:

- Service easier to access
- Greater number of door-to-door rides
- More days of operation
- Longer hours of operation

Considering the fact that RCPT operates 24 hours a day and seven days a week, the “more days of operation” and “longer hours of service” indicate a marketing or education problem. However, outside the area of Pierre and Fort Pierre, RCPT does not operate the 24 hours 7 days-a-week time period, and many of the agencies surveyed were outside this area. The first two, “service easier to access,” and “greater number of door-to-door rides,” may be related to prescheduled services and ADA-related or informational issues.

As indicated in Figure 6.1, the two issues that received the most “urgent” votes were “more reliable on-time pick ups” and “lower fares.”. As indicated, about 50 percent of all respondents indicated that they were “very satisfied” with the fare value. Almost 80 percent of the respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with buses keeping their schedule plus or minus 15 minutes.

Figure 6.2 provides an indication of how agencies in the service area rate various customer service issues. As this figure indicates, ease of access and door-to-door services are primary concerns of agencies with mobility-disadvantaged clients.



**Figure 6.2 Agency Customer Service Issues**

**6.2.3. RCPT Internal Service Gap Identification**

Chapter 3 inventoried transportation services that are currently available in Pierre, Fort Pierre, and the surrounding eight county area. That discussion included a complete review of the services that are currently provided by RCPT.

Despite the comprehensive nature of these services, there are situations where expanded services might be both beneficial and affordable. These areas of opportunity are discussed in the following subsections.

**Day Care Facilities**

As previously discussed, there are three large day care facilities in Pierre and Fort Pierre. One of these facilities has two older buses and one has a van that it uses occasionally. This is another group that could benefit from dependable services from RCPT. Unlike many other agencies, daycare providers are privately owned for profit businesses that struggle to raise sufficient funds for their operations. RCPT might negotiate a contract with the day care providers as a group for services. This would allow RCPT to use the

contracted funds, a more favorable source of income for RCPT than fare revenue, as match for federal dollars.

### **Medicaid and Medicare Ride**

RCPT already provides most Medicaid rides in the community, both from individual homes and nursing homes. It recently worked with Medicaid to eliminate the maximum allowable miles per trip. This will allow RCPT to travel out to rural areas in the region to transport passengers to and from Pierre.

Nursing homes have a need for transporting their residents to medical appointments. Currently, RCPT does not have an agency rate that covers the full cost of a medical trip or other human service agency required trips. At present, RCPT has contracts with the two nursing homes in the community. Under the contractual agreement, if the rider is a Medicaid recipient, RCPT is allowed to submit for and receive the Medicaid reimbursement; if not a Medicaid recipient, then the riders pays the contractual rate. However, for all other rides (non medical) the nursing home resident pays the appropriate fares based on prescheduled or same-day service.

Previously, Medicare did not pay non-emergency medical transportation, but under the new federal surface transportation bill (SAFETEA-LU), it will be required to. There will be new opportunities for RCPT to be reimbursed at the full fare rate for patients under the Medicare program. According to RCPT staff, a large number of Medicare clients are transported daily within the service area.

### **People with Disabilities**

Oahe, Inc. is the only developmental treatment organization in Pierre and Fort Pierre. It is currently coordinating with RCPT. RCPT shares ownership in 12 of Oahe, Inc. vehicles and does maintenance on all of its 18 vehicles. All of Oahe, Inc. riders are include in RCPT's ridership statistics.

Many people with disabilities living in the rural areas of RCPT's service area lack adequate transportation. There is one RCPT vehicle that is lift-equipped that goes to Gettysburg once a week. On days when RCPT provides service to Gettysburg, the bus travels to Gettysburg early in the morning, picks up passengers, and transports them to Pierre and back; then the bus travels empty again back to Pierre. Rural transit services, such as that provided by the RCPT to Gettysburg, are very important to individuals that lack mobility in these communities that lack mobility, but they are very expensive and inefficient to provide. In the case of the Gettysburg service, RCPT vehicles travel more than 60 miles each way, and incur more that 120 non-revenue miles. Because of inefficiencies inherent in service very sparsely populated rural areas, there is very little accessible transit in the outlying areas of the eight-county area.



## **Employment and Training Related Transportation**

There is critical need for transportation in the Lower Brule and Fort Thompson areas. RCPT has worked with the tribe regarding its submittal of a grant for new tribal grant program money provided for in the most recent federal highway bill, SAFTEA-LU. If funded, this application will provide the tribe the opportunity to pay for transportation services furnished by RCPT.

RCPT is already providing transit from Lower Brule and Fort Thompson to Pierre and Fort Pierre, as well as local service in the area between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm, but more service is needed for training and employment, both locally and regionally. Fort Thompson has almost no local transit service.

There is no program for providing employment rides between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. in Pierre and Fort Pierre. Wal-Mart is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and the hospital has shift employees who need night transportation. RCPT's night fare is \$5 per trip. As discussed earlier, this fare may present a financial hardship for employees who earn a minimum wage.

Pierre and Fort Pierre are regional centers for employment. The only other public transit provider in the area is Miller Meals and Wheels Corporation in Miller, South Dakota. Miller has no funds available to provide employment transportation.

At the present time, rural communities are required to pay local match for the cost of transit services provided by RCPT in their community. The route from Highmore, Harrold, and Blunt is already established. More routes are needed, especially from Lower Brule and Fort Thompson to Pierre and Fort Pierre. There is also a need for employment service between Gettysburg, Onida, and Pierre along Highway 83.

Another remote area that needs transportation assistance is Eagle Butte on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation. Funding is available, but currently there are no transportation services in that community. The reservation is located 90 miles northwest of Pierre, so geographical distance is a major barrier.

### **Area Churches**

Eight churches from the region responded to the survey. Four respondents said they supply or subsidize transportation for people who attend their church. However, none of them own vehicles. One option they have is to use volunteers to transport people to their services. There appears to be a need for transportation assistance. People with disabilities and those who require lift equipped vehicles may also be a concern for church transportation. More research is needed in order to make this determination.

## 6.2.4. Coordination

The previously discussed survey contained several questions related to coordinating transit services (For a complete survey see Appendix C). Related responses are presented in Figure 6.3. As Figure 6.3 indicates, there is strong local support for the provision of coordinated transit services in the region.

Following are the questions from the survey regarding community coordination. The two coordination efforts that received the most support were question numbers 15 and 18, “supporting coordination efforts among agencies” and “consumer education and travel training.” It’s also important to note that question number 19 is a concern that warrants the most attention, because the community feels there is a lack of funds available for coordination. The overall results indicate that a consensus is present and timing is favorable for an increase in coordination efforts that will allow RCPT to be more effective in their service delivery strategies.

15. I would support coordinating transportation services between agencies, government services and public transportation in our community as a worth while venture.

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  disagree  Strongly disagree

16. I feel my clients are well aware of their travel options in our community.

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  disagree  Strongly disagree

17. There is a framework in place that encourages or facilitates the agencies’ efforts to coordinate transportation services.

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  disagree  Strongly disagree

18. Consumer education and travel training would be very beneficial for our community.

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  disagree  Strongly disagree

19. Our community has a good inventory of funds available to support coordinated transportation services.

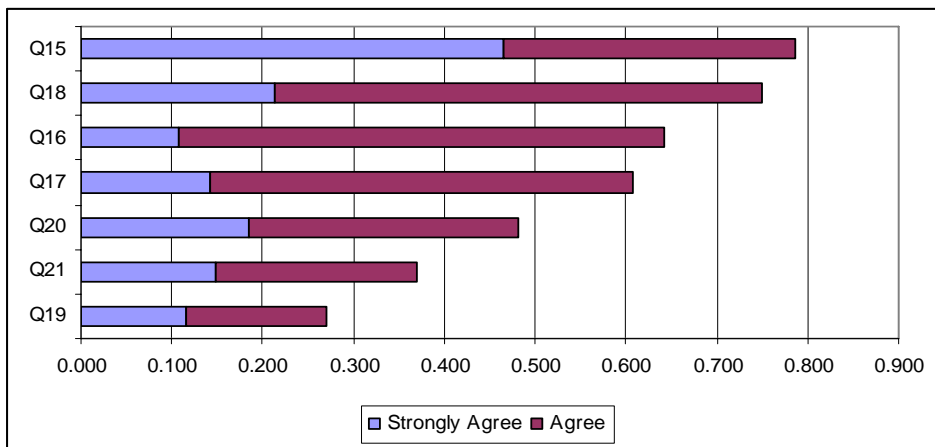
Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  disagree  Strongly disagree

20. There are sufficient payment options available to accommodate most of our clients needs.

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  disagree  Strongly disagree

21. The marketing and communication programs that are being used to build awareness and encourage use of the current transit services are adequate.

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  disagree  Strongly disagree



**Figure 6.3 Survey Responses to Coordination Questions**

### 6.3. Expansion Constraints – Budgetary Realities

Preceding sections of this report have illustrated the high levels of transit service that are available in Pierre, Fort Pierre, and the surrounding eight county area. The report has also provided numerous examples of the high degree of coordination that exists between RCPT, other area transportation providers, and entities with transit dependent clients.

Despite these service and coordination-related accomplishments, this report has also identified situations where service enhancements and increased coordination would positively impact the personal mobility of area residents. Unfortunately, many of these opportunities cannot be addressed by RCPT because of related budgetary realities.

A review of RCPT's 2006 financial data, as presented in Appendix B, indicates that RCPT provided a total of 215,242 one-way passenger trips and incurred operating expenses totaling \$1,732,967. This equates to a cost per trip of \$8.05. Conversely, the vast majority of RCPT's trips generate fares that are considerably less than the average cost per trip. In reality, virtually all of RCPT's trips are subsidized.

Therefore, it is important to note that RCPT cannot address any of the unmet personal mobility needs unless one or more of several changes occur. Necessary occurrences include:

- Incremental trips must generate fares that cover the fully allocated costs associated with those trips.
- Additional federal funds and local match monies (typically 50%) must be obtained to pay associated costs.
- RCPT enters into contracts for services which cover the costs associated with providing new or expanded services to specific user groups.

Table 6.1 shows RCPT's income sources and associated operating and capital expenses for the 2006 budget year. It also identifies which projects involved capital expenditures and how the money was matched. A comparison of total federal income and related local match requirements reveals that that RCPT has about \$15,000 available for matching purposes. RCPT management wants to maintain a 10 percent cushion on match dollars.

The following chapter presents a variety of recommendations concerning possible service enhancements and expansions. It must be noted, however, that each of these modifications generates related costs that must be financed with new or expanded revenue sources. These budgetary challenges and related implementation strategies are discussed in the final chapter of this report.

**Table 6.1 RCPT Funding Sources**

Project	Expenses		Income Sources						Totals
	Capital	Operation	Fares	Contracts	Local	State Aid	Section 5311	Section 5309	
<b>Head Start</b>		\$56,400		\$56,400					\$56,400 \$0
<b>Oahe, Inc.</b>	\$18,000	\$74,500		\$64,800 \$3,600	\$3,600		\$6,100	\$14,400	\$74,500 \$18,000
<b>After school</b>	\$12,000	\$32,100	\$3,450	\$11,250	\$2,400 \$12,000		\$15,000		\$32,100 \$12,000
<b>Jobs Trip from Highmore</b>	\$56,000	\$30,000	\$14,500		\$3,875 \$11,200	\$3,875	\$7,750	\$44,800	\$30,000 \$56,000
<b>Teachers to Lower Brule</b>		\$15,500	\$6,300			\$2,900	\$6,300		\$15,500 \$0
<b>Lower Brule Public Transit</b>		\$107,055	\$8,000	\$33,342	\$16,486		\$49,227		\$107,055 \$0
<b>Daytime Medical</b>		\$71,195	\$3,450	\$33,000	\$1,438	\$1,082	\$32,255		\$71,225 \$0
<b>RCPT 24 Hour Local Service</b>	\$222,000	\$1,346,216	\$110,250		\$578,294 \$44,400	\$48,175	\$609,497	\$177,600	\$1,346,216 \$222,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$308,000</b>	<b>\$1,732,966</b>	<b>\$145,950</b>	<b>\$202,392</b>	<b>\$673,693</b>	<b>\$56,032</b>	<b>\$726,129</b>	<b>\$236,800</b>	<b>\$2,040,996</b>

## **7. Recommendations**

This research effort has identified numerous strengths regarding RCPT's existing operations and coordination efforts. It has also identified some areas of opportunity regarding increased coordination, service enhancements, and new service offerings. These findings and related recommendations are the subject of this chapter.

This chapter is divided into three sections; the first section contains recommendations related to further efforts to coordinate RCPT services with those of other area transportation service providers and users. The second section of this chapter addresses possible enhancements and expansions to existing RCPT services. This chapter's final section looks at totally new services that might help address unmet mobility needs of area residents. This chapter will be followed by a concluding chapter presenting implementation strategies for the following recommendations.

### **7.1. Recommendations for Increased Coordination**

River Cities Public Transit has a long list of coordination successes in the Pierre and Fort Pierre area. However, even highly coordinated transit operations such as RCPT may have opportunities for increased coordination. Related recommendations regarding RCPT's operations include the following:

#### **7.1.1. Expand Coordination Committee**

RCPT has a coordination committee that addresses transit needs and opportunities for coordination in Pierre, Fort Pierre, and the immediate outlying area. This committee should be expanded to include representatives from each of the region's eight counties. The board of county commissioners in each county should be asked to make a corresponding appointment to the committee.

This committee should work with RCPT's board of directors to develop a formal job description for itself and should meet at least quarterly to discuss service and coordination issues and to draft corresponding recommendations for consideration by the board of directors.

The cost of this effort is virtually zero since it is assumed that the cost of participation would be covered by each county's appointing authority.

### **7.1.2. Coordinate with Churches**

RCPT should work with area churches to provide Sunday morning transportation services, especially to senior citizens and people with disabilities. This includes residents who live within 10 miles of Pierre and who would like to come to Pierre or Fort Pierre for church on Sunday mornings.

As indicated in Chapter 3, several area churches are currently using their own vehicles to provide transportation services to their members. Vehicle ownership and operating costs and the need for volunteer coordinators and drivers make this a time consuming and expensive service.

The projected annual cost for this service is \$20,092. This estimated is based on system average costs of \$8.05 per ride and providing an average of 8 rides per Sunday, for 6 churches, for 52 weeks/year. Charging only \$1.55 per ride would generate \$3,875 in revenue, thereby leaving a net operating deficiency of \$16,217.

RCPT should meet with area churches and attempt to enter into contracts for services to relieve these churches of related burdens. To the extent that RCPT may have excess capacity on Sunday mornings and given the fact that these services may provide sources of new revenue, this effort may be beneficial for both RCPT and the churches involved.

## **7.2. Recommended Enhancements and Expansions**

As indicated earlier, this report's second set of recommendations involves enhancements and/or expansions to some of RCPT's existing services. These recommendations are identified and discussed in the following subsections.

Each of these recommendations includes a corresponding budget. Some of these new services are projected at \$50.00 an hour. This total includes \$20 an hour for fuel, \$15 an hour for labor, and \$15 per hour for other operating costs (i.e., oil changes, insurance, maintenance, etc.). Fargo's Metropolitan Area Transit and Handi-Wheels project their costs at \$42 per hour. Using \$50 per hour is deemed reasonable for the time period between now and 2012 considering anticipated increases in the cost of fuel, insurance, etc. However, in a couple instances less than \$50 was used due to the anticipated use of smaller, more fuel efficient vehicles.

### **7.2.1. Travel Trainers**

RCPT should use volunteers and staff to help familiarize new and potential riders with RCPT scheduling and operating procedures. It was identified in both the focus group meeting and the survey that some passengers, especially seniors and those with disabilities, need help getting familiar with the transit system. Familiarizing future travelers with the transit system is called "travel training." This service would help

attract new riders to RCPT's system. Travel trainers can also serve as advocates for system users.

RCPT should consider hosting training sessions with area social service agencies and other client representatives. These individuals should be given free transportation when they subsequently travel with new riders to familiarize them with RCPT procedures, routes, etc. A similar function might be played by area service clubs, high school or college classes, etc. When necessary, RCPT staff may also be used to provide this one-on-one service.

If RCPT chooses to use a paid staff to provide this service, additional staff may be required. For the first year this would likely be a part time position.

The budget for this project is about \$47,000, assuming the use of paid staff. This budget includes \$31,000 for wages and benefits, \$8,000 for travel, \$6,000 for office equipment, and \$2,000 for advertising and promotion expenses. If this position were 2/3 time or 28 hrs per week, annual costs would approach \$34,000.

### **7.2.2. Evening, Weekend, and Low Income Employment Rides in Pierre and Fort Pierre**

Most employees who work evening hours or weekends are forced to pay higher fares than their counterparts who work daytime shifts on weekdays. Consideration should be given to establishing lower fares for workers who commute during non-typical hours.

RCPT should also consider seeking JARC funding to provide reduced fares to low income commuters. Agencies could screen low income participants to determine eligibility and make recommendations to RCPT regarding those who are eligible.

The cost of this service is estimated at about \$48,300 per year based on the assumption that the existing \$8.05 is the full allocated cost associated with providing the service. Providing this service for the reduced rate of \$1.55 would, therefore, result in an under-recovery of \$6.50 per ride. Assuming the demand for this service at 20 trips per night and 10 per weekend-day, annual ridership would total 6,000 trips. Therefore, the subsidy required to cover the cost of this service would be \$39,000 per year.

### **7.2.3. Scheduling and Dispatch Hours**

Currently, RCPT's hours for dispatch and scheduling are 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Outside that time frame, requests for service are forwarded directly to a bus driver. Callers requesting rides for the next day cannot be scheduled outside normal business hours.

Callers have expressed a need for extended scheduling hours (evenings, early mornings, weekends, etc.) It is challenging for drivers to take calls as well as drive the bus. Extending office hours to run from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. would meet the immediate demands



of RCPT's customers. This would amount to an additional 5.5 hours per day, or 27.5 hours per week.

This service expansion would have an annual cost of \$23,500. Of this amount, \$15,500 would be for wages, \$6,000 for office equipment, and \$2,000 for promotion.

#### **7.2.4. Rural Medical Travel**

RCPT should work with county commissioners, Medicaid, vocational rehabilitation, and Veteran's Administration personnel concerning the provision of expanded medical transportation services to outlying counties. This new service may qualify for funds under the federal New Freedoms grant program; related discussions should be held with SDDOT.

It is envisioned that this service could be provided once per week to the region's northern communities and on another day to southern cities. At home pick-ups could be provided within these communities and within, for example, two miles of established routes. Travelers living beyond these service limits would have to depend on other sources of transportation to travel to established pick-up points. These pick-up points could be coordinated with the Rural Health Clinics in the region.

This approach to providing scheduled medical service would increase vehicle occupancy rates and reduce per passenger operating costs. Assuming per hour operating costs at \$50 and an average of 10 hours of operating time per day, providing this service on a 2 day per week basis would cost \$52,000 per year.

RCPT's current charge for this type of individual service is \$5.00 per pickup and \$.50 per mile. Assuming 600 pick-ups and an average of 30 miles per trip, related annual revenues would total \$12,000. This new service would, therefore, require an annual subsidy of \$40,000.

#### **7.2.5. Rural Employment Travel**

RCPT should begin providing new travel options for workers who live in Pierre and Fort Pierre and commute to places of employment in outlying communities. Given the relatively small number of employees involved, these trips may be best handled via vanpool-type operations rather than traditional transit services.

As indicated in Chapter 3, RCPT provides weekday commuter services from Highmore, Harrold, and Blunt to Pierre. It also provides reverse commute services from Pierre to Lower Brule and Fort Thompson (see map in Figure 7.1). This service to Lower Brule was expanded in December 2006 when a second daily run was initiated. This second run is a vanpool-type service with driving duties being performed by one of the commuters.

There is a need for additional traditional and reverse commute services in the region. For example, it appears that there is a need for service involving a bird seed bagging

facility located at Harrold. Many of its employees commute from Pierre. Satisfying related mobility needs and promoting energy conservation may be handled most efficiently via a vanpool-type operation similar to the one the recently began running between Pierre and Lower Brule.

It also appears that there is a need of traditional commuting services from the Gettysburg and Lower Brule areas into Pierre. To minimize related costs, drivers and vehicles for these routes should be based in Gettysburg and Lower Brule. Morning runs would pick up workers along established routes and bring them to job sites in Pierre and Fort Pierre. The drivers and vehicles would then perform daytime transit services in Pierre and Fort Pierre. At the end of the day, these buses would reverse their morning routes to take commuters home. If the demand for these services proves to be insufficient to justify the provision of traditional transit services, consideration should be given to converting them to vanpool-type operations.

For budgetary purposes, it is assumed that vanpool-type services are subsidized at a level consistent with the existing Pierre to Lower Brule route. It should be noted, however, that vanpool operations in many parts of the country place monthly passenger fares at a level that covers the fully-allocated cost of operating the vanpool (<http://www.ugpti.org/pubs/html/dp-174/>).

Decisions to subsidize vanpool operations are often based on funding availability, eliminating the need for new parking lots, reducing traffic congestion and air pollution, etc. In rural areas, vanpool subsidies are sometimes provided to promote the viability to small communities by making it easier for employers to procure scarce workers. Similarly, these subsidies may also employees to continue to live in small communities even though they work in larger regional centers.

The vanpool to Lower Brule was subsidized at the cost of \$15,000; the cost to provide vanpool to Harrold would be the same. The two employment routes, one to Lower Brule and the other to Gettysburg, would run 3 hours per day and 260 days per year. Each of these routes would cost \$39,000 (\$50 per hour, 3 hours per day, 260 days per year) or a total of \$78,000. Assuming an average ridership of 15 passengers per route and average distance of 40 miles, the fare revenue would be approximately \$31,000 (the current fare is \$1.00 per 10 miles travel round trip). These routes would, therefore, require an annual subsidy of \$62,000.

#### **7.2.6. Performance Measures and Operating Cost Data**

RCPT should expand its record keeping system to facilitate the generation of performance and operating cost data of major segments of its overall operations. Particular attention should be paid to its local operations in Pierre and Fort Pierre versus those that are provided to and from outlying areas.

Several of the recommendations presented in this report involved the expansion of existing services or the initiation of new services. Each of these recommendations has a corresponding estimate of related costs.

In many instances, these budget estimates are based on RCPT's overall system-wide cost data. In actuality, however, the cost per hour and cost per mile of in-town versus rural services may differ significantly. Per hour fuel costs are, for example, significantly higher for rural services while the passengers per hour may be considerably higher for in-town services.

Using system-wide averages may mask significant operating differences in RCPT's various types of operations. Maintaining segment-specific data would be beneficial, both in terms of developing more accurate projections for future operations and for analyzing costs and benefits related to RCPT's existing services. Costs will be easier to control and project if more specific data is collected and analyzed.

At a minimum, RCPT should collect the following for each of its various service segments:

- One-way passenger trips
- Vehicle miles
- Vehicle hours
- Revenue (by source – fares, grants, tax revenues, contracts for services, etc.)

Generating this data will allow RCPT to produce related cost per hour, cost per mile, and cost per one-way passenger information. As indicated above, this information should be useful both in terms of assessing existing operations and making projections regarding future expansions and enhancements.

RCPT's recently acquired accounting software will hopefully facilitate the implementation of this recommendation.

### **7.3. Initiate New Services**

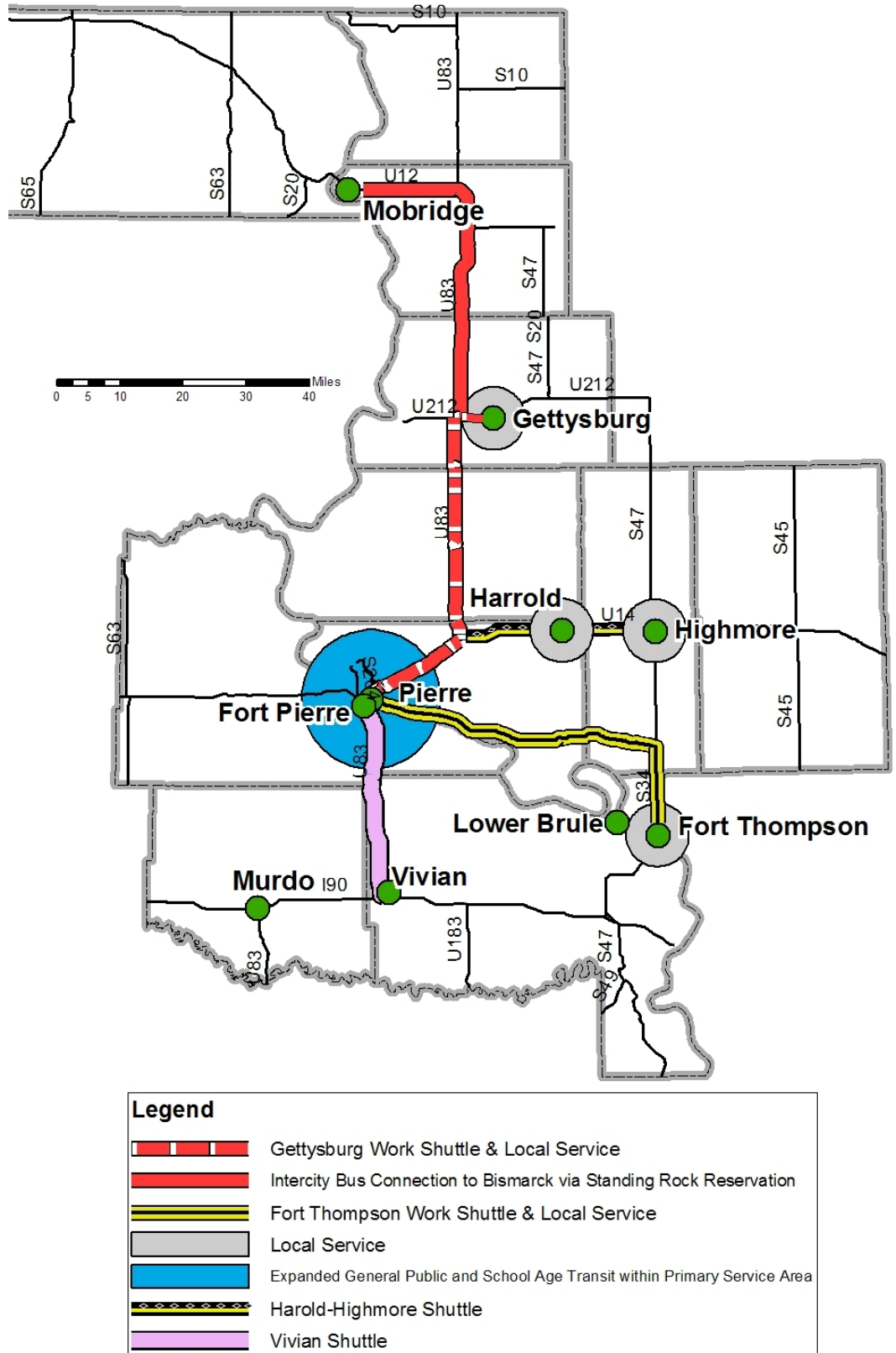
This chapter's third set of recommendations relates to the initiation of new services. While the services discussed in the following subsections are technically new, their underlying concepts are not because they mirror services that are already being provided by RCPT in other areas of the eight county region. Initiating these services would, therefore, be primarily a matter of need and budget since RCPT has already proven that it has the expertise to provide the proposed services described in the following subsections.

### **7.3.1. Intercity Service to Bismarck –Pierre to Mobridge Segment**

In cooperation with Standing Rock Public Transportation on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation (Ft. Yates, North Dakota), RCPT recently completed the planning process for passenger service from Rapid City, South Dakota, to Bismarck, North Dakota. Corresponding funding was procured and service was initiated on March 1, 2007.

RCPT is responsible for the Pierre to Mobridge segment of this route (see map in Figure 7.1). The timing will be scheduled so that passengers from Jefferson Bus Lines will be able to make the connections.

This route will run 2 days per week and will require 10 hours per day. Assuming the cost of \$35 an hour and 20 hours per week, the service costs will be \$700 per week or about \$36,400 per year. The fare recovery is \$37 for a trip from Pierre to Bismarck, \$20 from Mobridge to Bismarck, and \$17 from Mobridge to Pierre. At the end of the month, fare income will be split 50/50 between Standing Rock Public Transportation and RCPT. Assuming an average of 20 passengers per month, the service will generate \$740 a month or \$8,880 per year in fare income. Required subsidies for RCPT's portion of the route are projected at \$32,400 per year.



**Figure 7.1 Routing for Proposed Projects**

### **7.3.2. Initiate Service within Lower Brule Sioux Tribe**

RCPT has worked with the tribe at Lower Brule to submit a grant request to FTA for tribal funds under the new federal highway bill (SAFETEA-LU). This grant request was submitted in October 2006. If funded, the Lower Brule tribe will contract with RCPT to provide the transit service on its reservation.

The contracted amount for this service is \$171,990 for administrative cost and \$370,142 for operating costs. The requested duration for this contract is through 2009, the end of the current highway bill. RCPT will manage the operation, procure buses, and hire staff.

If this grant is funded, RCPT will utilize administrative and operating money for local match against new dollars that may be granted RCPT by SDDOT for the new JARC and New Freedom programs.

### **7.3.3. Initiate Service to Eagle Butte**

RCPT's board of directors should consider the possibility of reaching outside its traditional service area to provide transit services to Eagle Butte, which is located on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation approximately 90 miles northwest of Pierre. It is expected that related services would be very similar to those that are currently provided to the Lower Brule Reservation.

There are currently no public transportation services available to the residents of Eagle Butte. There is, however, a need for services, both within the community and between Eagle Butte and Pierre. An exploratory committee should be established with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe to discuss the needs, benefits, and related costs of providing transit service to their community.

The budget for this service, if initiated, is projected at about \$52,000 per year plus \$65,000 in vehicle capital costs.

### **7.3.4. Initiate a Modified Fixed Route in Pierre**

RCPT's board of directors should consider the creation of a modified fixed route to provide scheduled services between high frequency origins and destinations in Pierre. These origins and destinations were discussed earlier in Figure 4.2.

These origins and destinations are identified again in Figure 7.2 and Figure 7.3, along with a tentative route. The proposed route is "modified" because it would allow minor route deviations to accommodate passenger pick-ups and drop-offs.

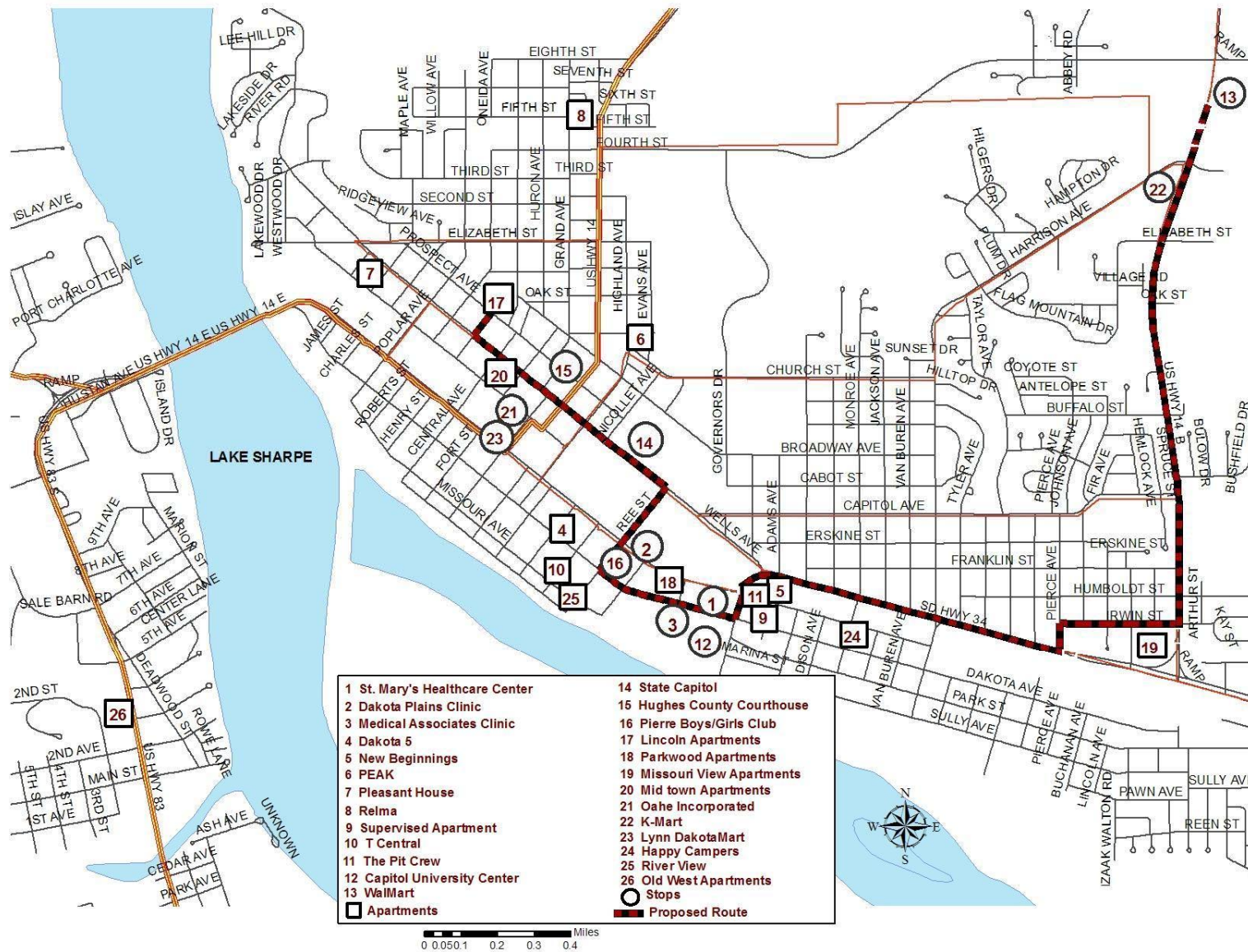
Traditional fixed route bus service has different characteristics and may be less convenient for passengers that demands services similar to those currently provided by

RCPT in Pierre and Fort Pierre. Conversely, fixed routes are typically less expensive to operate if they can achieve higher levels of utilization. These cost savings are routinely reflected in lower fares which, in turn, attract more riders.

Eagle Transit in Kalispell, Montana, operates a modified fixed route in that community. The route is circular and the bus makes the route about 5 times per day 5 days a week. Fare recovery for the service is about 10 percent. Kalispell has a population of about 14,200; slightly less than Pierre and Fort Pierre. It is recommended that service would start out operating about 4 to 6 times per day.

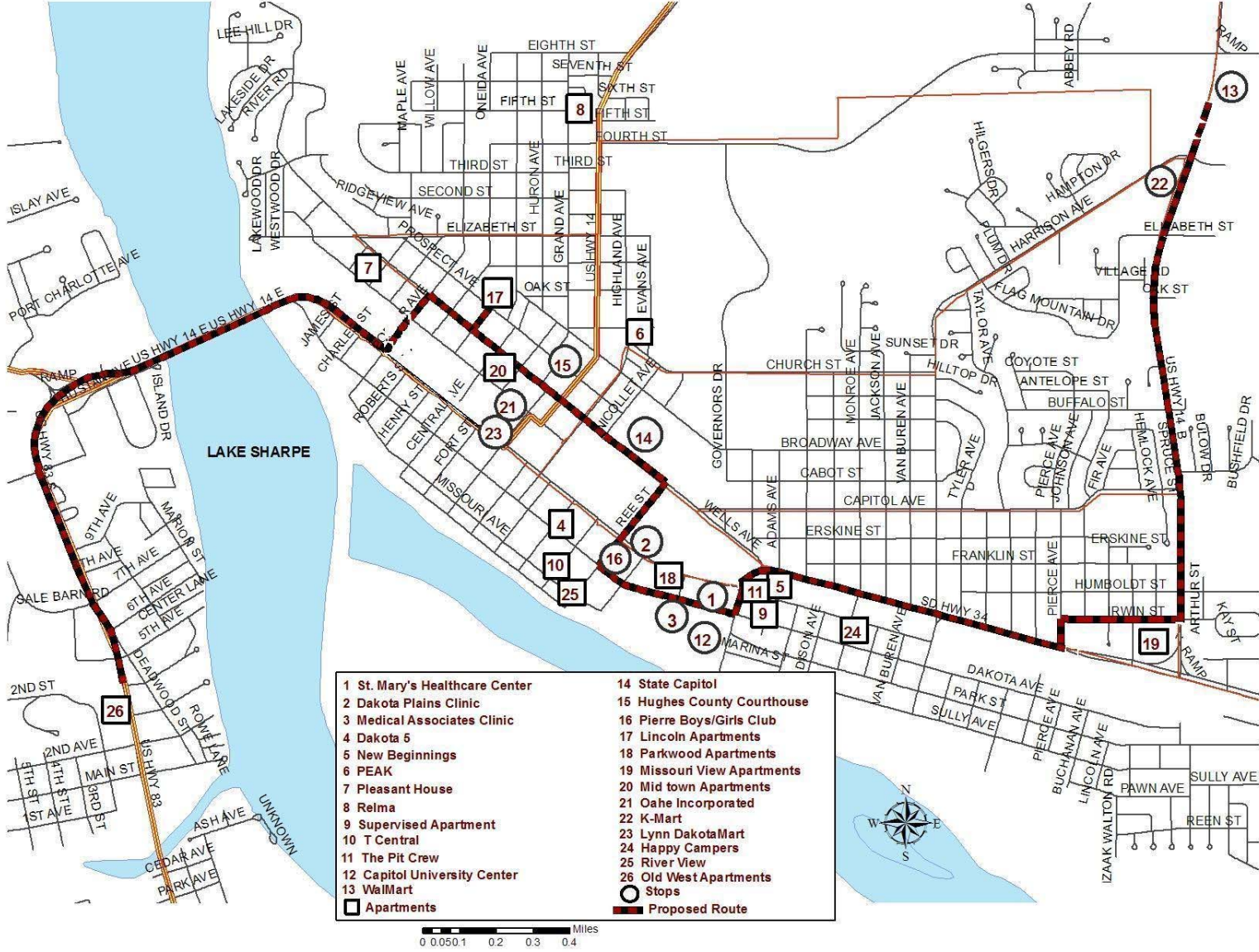
If this service is started, it should operate for at least one year so all segments of the population have an opportunity to become familiar with the service and start to utilize it for their transportation needs. This type service has the potential to significantly reduce pressure on RCPT's demand response service. This would reduce the cost per trip for all the passengers choosing to use the service.

It is anticipated that the proposed service could be provided for about \$52,000 per year ( $\$40/\text{hr} * 5\text{days}/\text{wk} * 260\text{ days}/\text{year}$ ), plus vehicle capital costs of \$16,200. Assuming the route takes one vehicle that operates 5 hours per day, 260 days per year at the rate \$40 per hour. The recommended fare of \$.50 per trip, assuming 20 riders per day the fare revenue would be approximately \$2,600. This service would need 40 riders per day to achieve a 10 percent return on operating costs.



**Figure 7.2 Proposed Modified Fixed Route for Pierre, Option 1**





**Figure 7.3 Proposed Modified Fixed Route for Pierre and Fort Pierre, Option 2**

## **7.4. Summary of Recommendations and Possible Funding Sources**

As was alluded to earlier in this report, good cost accounting at the individual project level is not available. Some examples of these cost analysis would be: the cost of medical trips during business hours between 8 am and 5 pm, the cost of employment trips outside the city limits of Pierre and Fort Pierre, the cost of same-day service between the hours of 5 pm and 8 am within the city limits of Pierre and Fort Pierre. Additional research is needed to identify these cost figures, so more accurate predictions of the costs of adding services or initiating a new service can be utilized. There are many difficult to predict variables involved when forecasting the cost of future services.

The preceding sections of this chapter have presented a wide array of recommendations concerning increased coordination efforts and new and expanded services. These projects are listed in Table 7.1, along with projected annual budgets and possible funding sources.

RCPT is already utilizing many of the funding sources identified in Table 7.1. These sources include local and state aid plus the Federal Transit Administration's Non-Urban Area Formula Program (49 U.S.C. Section 5311).

Table 7.1 also lists two new finding sources that may be used to provide some of other the proposed expansions and start-up. These new funding sources include the Job Access Reverse Commute Program (JARC - 49 U.S.C. Section 5316) and the New Freedom Program (49U.S.C. Section 5317).

As is the case with the 5311 program, both JARC and New Freedom require a 50% local match to cover program operating costs. These monies may come from traditional local and state tax support as well as sources such as contracts for services, selling advertising on buses, grants from charities such as United Way, etc. Fares may be used to cover operating costs, but they may not be used as match against federal dollars.

**Table 7.1 Total Project Costs and Possible Funding Sources**

Project	Expense Dollars \$		Possible Funding Sources				New Freedom
	Capitol	Operating	Local	State-Aid	Non-Urban	JARC	
7.1.1 Coordinating Committee	0	0					
7.1.2 Church Transportation		16,217	X	X	X		
7.2.1 Travel Trainer		34,000	X	X	X		X
7.2.2 Expanded employment	65,000	39,000	X	X	X	X	
7.2.3 Scheduling		23,500	X	X	X		X
7.3.1 Rural Medical		40,000	X	X	X		X
7.3.2 Rural Employment	59,000	62,000	X	X	X	X	
7.3.3 Intra City to Bismarck		32,400	X	X	X		
Subtotal Proposed for Federal Funding Support	<b>124,000</b>	<b>248,117</b>					
7.3.4 Service for Lower Brule		542,132	X				
7.3.5 Service to Eagle Butte	65,000	145,000	X				
7.3.6 New Modified Fixed Route	65,000	85,000	X	X	X		
Total budget for all Projects	<b>254,000</b>	<b>1,019,249</b>					

It should be noted that the funding sources for the proposed services to Lower Brule and Eagle Butte (7.3.4 and 7.3.5) are shown as “Local” in Table 7.1. These funding sources are listed as local since the services would be provided on a contractual basis to each tribe. It is anticipated that the tribes may, however, obtain their funds from the new tribal transit program created by SAFETEA-LU.

## 7.5. Public Participation in Plan Preparation

Public participation is a key element in the preparation of a coordinated public transit plan. SURTC and RCPT have solicited public participation throughout this planning process. This participation has come in three forms, each of which will be discussed in the remaining paragraphs of this subsection.

### 7.5.1. Board of Directors

The composition of RCPT’s board of directors facilitates public awareness of RCPT’s operations and future plans. As reported in its business plan, RCPT’s bylaws provide for a board of up to twelve members. The bylaws also specify that five board members must be appointed by and represent the governmental entities of Pierre, Fort Pierre, Hughes County, Stanley County, and the South Dakota Department of Transportation. In addition to these representatives, RCPT’s board of directors, as presented in Appendix A, currently includes representatives from Oahe, Inc. (Pierre), Mary House Nursing Home (Fort Pierre), Job Services, and Head Start.

The diverse nature of RCPT's board of directors and the fact that individual board members represent entities with far reaching transit interests, both public and client-specific, insures that the public is well represented in all of RCPT's activities and planning processes.

### **7.5.2. Focus Groups**

As discussed earlier, this planning process included two focus group meetings. The first of these meetings was intended to solicit input regarding RCPT operations and unmet personal mobility needs. The second meeting was designed to present participants with preliminary finds and recommendations and to solicit related input.

Entities that were invited to participate in this focus group process are listed in Appendix D, along with related meeting minutes. As Appendix D illustrates, RCPT invited 71 entities to participate in the focus group planning process. This effort is reflective of RCPT's desire to achieve broad public participation in the preparation of this report.

### **7.5.3. Survey**

This planning process included the distribution of approximately 150 questionnaires. This survey instrument, a copy of which is presented in Appendix C, was designed to solicit public input on RCPT's current operations and on possible service enhancements. As was the case with focus group input, these survey responses reflect public input into this planning process. This report's recommendations are reflective of this public participation.

The prioritization of this report's recommendations and corresponding implementation strategies are presented in the following chapter.

## 8. Implementation Strategies

This chapter is devoted to implementation strategies related to the recommendations discussed in Chapter 7. Those recommendations may be categorized into three groups: coordination, enhancement/expansion, and new services.

Coordination projects involve undertakings that focus on new, increased, or renewed efforts to coordinate RCPT's services with those of other area service providers.

Enhancement/expansion projects come in two forms - some involve services that are directly related to one or more of RCPT's existing services; others may appear to be new services but they are reported as expansions since they are very similar to other services that RCPT is already providing. New services are undertakings that are dissimilar to anything that RCPT is currently doing.

Table 8.1 lists each of Chapter 7's recommendations and places them into one of the three categories identified above. This table also prioritizes each recommendation via a Phase I, II, or III ranking. The prefix numbers associated with each recommendation correspond to Chapter 7 subsections where each recommendation was discussed in detail.

**Table 8.1 Service Type Recommendations**

	<b>Coordination</b>	<b>Enhancements/ Expansion</b>	<b>Initiating New Services</b>
<b>Phase I</b>			
7.1.1 Expand coordination committee	X		
7.1.2 Coordination with Churches	X		
7.2.6 Performance Operating Data	X		
7.3.1 Intercity service to Bismarck			X
<b>Phase II</b>			
7.2.1 Travel trainers		X	
7.2.2 Night and weekend employment		X	
7.2.3 Scheduling and dispatch		X	
7.2.4 Rural medical travel		X	
7.2.5 Rural employment		X	
<b>Phase III</b>			
7.3.2 Initiate service within Lower Brule			X
7.3.3 Initiate service to Eagle Butte			X
7.3.4 Initiate modified fixed route			X

Prior to discussing each recommendation's ranking and related implementation strategies, SURTC researchers want to emphasize that the implementation strategies presented in this chapter are conceptual and highly fluid, depending on matters such as operational realities, funding availability, and local priorities.

RCPT and its board of directors may find it necessary and prudent to modify or reposition certain proposals based upon these realities and changing priorities. These types of changes are considered normal and acceptable, as long as sound judgment is used during the process.

## **8.1. Phase I Projects**

Table 8.1 identifies four undertakings that should be considered Phase I priorities. Projects include in Phase I include:

- Expand coordination committee
- Coordinate with churches
- Expand collection of performance and operating data
- Initiate intercity service to Mobridge and Bismarck

Pursuing the coordination committee and operating data recommendations can be done with little or no additional funding. As discussed in Chapter 7, the church coordination program may result in increased costs of approximately \$20,000, depending on utilization. It is estimated that about \$4,000 of this amount might be recovered as fare income. Hopefully the remaining shortfall could be recovered via contracts for services with participating churches.

As discussed in Chapter 7, RCPT began participating in the provision of intercity bus service from Pierre to Mobridge and Bismarck in March 2007. This service has a total annual budget of \$36,400 and will require an annual subsidy of \$32,400. Ridership and available funding will determine the long-term viability of this service.

## **8.2. Phase II Projects**

Table 8.1 identifies five recommendations that should be considered Phase II projects. These initiatives include:

- Initiate travel trainer program
- Establish night and weekend employment commuting option
- Expand scheduling and dispatch hours
- Expand rural medical travel offerings
- Initiate new rural employment services

All five of these undertakings are considered enhancement/expansion projects that will benefit area residents.

These projects received Phase II rankings because they require a relatively significant infusion of operating and, in some cases, capital funds. These cost estimates were summarily presented in Table 7.1.

It is anticipated that the travel trainer and expanded office hour projects would have the lowest costs. As discussed in Chapter 7, cost estimates for the travel trainer program might be even lower than projected if it can be accomplished with participation from area social service agencies or volunteer organizations.

Table 7.1 also identified potential funding sources for each of these initiatives. Further prioritization of these Phase II projects should be based on input from RCPT's coordinating committee and its board of directors and the availability of funding.

### **8.3. Phase III Projects**

As indicated in Table 8.1, three of Chapter 7's recommendation should be considered Phase III priorities. These initiatives include:

- Initiate service within Lower Brule
- Initiate service to Eagle Butte
- Initiate modified fixed route in Pierre

As indicated in Table 7.1, these undertakings have significantly higher price tags than any of the Phase I or II initiatives. Given their magnitude and expansion beyond RCPT's established service areas, it is recommended that the Lower Brule and Eagle Butte projects be pursued only if the tribes are success in procuring new tribal transit funding and if those funds are made available in a manner that will allow RCPT to cover 100% of the fully allocated costs associated with providing related services.

The modified fixed route proposal also represents a drastic departure from RCPT's existing service modules. As identified in Chapter 7, RCPT personnel may wish to visit with the city of Kalispell, Montana, concerning its fixed route service. A similar proposal was considered by James River Senior Citizens Centers, Inc. in Jamestown, North Dakota. That operator has not moved forward to implement such a service. Discussions with James River might also be beneficial.

### **8.4. Summary**

This study fulfills two planning functions – it is an assessment of RCPT's coordination efforts and it presents a development plan for RCPT's transit system in central South Dakota. As indicated throughout this report, RCPT has accomplished a high level of coordination within its service territory and has achieved a level utilization that has received national recognition. Implementation of the recommendations presented in this report will hopefully allow RCPT to be even more responsive to the mobility needs of area residents.

As indicated in Chapter 3, the next 20 years may produce some rather significant changes in the demographics of the region. Outlying areas may see population declines and an overall aging of the population. Pierre and Fort Pierre may experience a slight increase in population but, more importantly, the senior population is expected to increase and the number of school age residents is expected to decline. Given RCPT's services to both of these population sectors, attention should be paid to ongoing trends in all of these areas.

Federal spending on transit has increased significantly in recent decades and RCPT has been aggressive in its pursuit of related funds. Its successes have allowed it to initiate services that have benefited area residents.

Recently enacted federal highway legislation (SAFETEA-LU) increased federal transit appropriations even further and created new programs that may have application to RCPT's service area. Programs worth considering may include the Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom, and tribal transit programs.

The receipt of JARC monies would present RCPT with significant opportunities. These funds must be used to provide employment and employment training transportation to low income individuals. RCPT is already providing these services to many individuals. These services are funded primarily with Non-urban Section 5311 funding. If JARC funding can be procured to provide related services, existing 5311 funding could be diverted to finance the implementation of some of this report's other recommendations.

Similarly, RCPT should seek to insure that it takes full advantage of Medicaid and Medicare funding that is available to finance medical transportation services provided to low income and senior citizens. To the extent that additional income may be generated from rides that are already being provided, existing 5311 monies could be made available for other purposes.

RCPT has aggressively expanded its service offerings, both in Pierre/Fort Pierre and in outlying areas. Opportunities exist for even further expansions, both along RCPT's traditional lines of service and in new areas. These opportunities should be pursued carefully and in a manner that does not jeopardize its ability to fulfill its mission to service its core clientele. Service enhancements may also be possible in these areas of traditional service.

This report identified a dozen recommendations related to further coordination, service expansion, and new service initiatives. These recommendations are based, in part, on input received via two focus group meetings, conversations with RCPT's board of directors and staff, and a survey that was sent out to 140 agencies in the area.

These recommendations have been prioritized and implementation may be pursued individually or collectively over the next several years. While the final decision on which recommendations should be implemented rests with RCPT's board of directors, it is recommended that low cost, high impact recommendation that can be properly funded be initiated earlier rather than later.



It is also recommended that RCPT continue its quest to coordinate its services with other area transportation services and with the needs of area human service agencies and their clientele. It should also continue its pursuit of public participation in its planning function. Related input will help RCPT remain responsive to the mobility needs of residents of Pierre, Fort Pierre, and the surrounding eight county area.

# **Appendix A**

## **River Cities Public Transit**

### **Board of Directors**

**Chuck Quinn** Chairperson  
Oahe Inc.  
1705 Flag Mountain DR  
Pierre, SD

SD Housing – Senior Program  
PO Box 1237  
Pierre, SD

**Mary Kirk** Vice Chairperson  
Head Start  
614 West Fifth St  
Pierre, SD

**Larry Zastrow**  
SD Bar Association  
314 W Elizabeth  
Pierre, SD

**Dena Gabriel** Secretary-Treasurer  
Maryhouse Nursing Home  
209 N Sixth ST  
Fort Pierre, SD

**Kevin Hipple**  
Hughes County  
104 E Capitol Ave  
Pierre, SD

**Stan Schwellenbach**  
City of Pierre  
1108 N Grand  
Pierre, SD

**Bruce Lindholm**  
South Dakota Department of  
Transportation  
1602 East Capitol Av  
Pierre, SD

**D.D. Jacobson**  
Stanley County  
111 West Park Ave  
Fort Pierre, SD

**Shannon Stewart**  
City of Fort Pierre  
PO Box 963  
Fort Pierre, SD

**Linda Taylor**

**Appendix B**  
**River Cities Public Transit**  
**2006 Operating Statistics**

## River Cities Transit - Pierre, South Dakota

Director: Ron Baumgart

River Cities Transit provides 24-hour service in Pierre, Fort Pierre and the surrounding area. Also serving Gettysburg, Lower Brule, Blunt, Harrold, Vivian and Highmore. All totals include transit programs for Pierre, Lower Brule and Gettysburg. River Cities Transit is a ticket agent and feeder service for the inter-city bus service Jefferson Lines. River Cities Transit has 32 vehicles in operation.

**Total Ridership and Miles Driven:**

		<b>Ride Type:</b>	
<b>Total Miles Driven:</b>	<b>592,170</b>	Medical:	11,440
		Employment:	44,931
		Nutrition:	3,223
		Social/Recreation:	0
		Education:	75,123
		Shopping:	8,081
		Other:	<u>72,444</u>
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>215,242</b>
<b>Ridership Characteristic:</b>			
Elderly:	36,433		
Disabled:	6,288		
Youth:	77,865		
General Public:	<u>94,656</u>		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>215,242</b>		

**Funding and Expenditures:**

Section 5311 Funds:	\$892,133.10	Total Administration Costs*:	\$ 549,914.46
Title III-B Funds:	\$ 13,348.00	Total Operating Costs:	<u>\$1,183,052.32</u>
State Funds:	<u>\$ 57,032.00</u>	<b>Total Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$1,732,966.78</b>
<b>Total State and Federal Funds:</b>	<b>\$962,513.10</b>	*Includes vehicle insurance costs.	
Local Funds**:	<u>\$770,453.68</u>	Insurance Cost:	\$72,936.16
<b>Total Funding:</b>	<b>\$1,732,966.78</b>	Insurance / Vehicle:	\$2,279.26

**\*\*Local Funds represent 44.46% of Total Funds.****Rider Fares and Bus Donations = \$150,950.00**

Total Cost per Ride:	\$8.05	State and Federal Cost per Ride:	\$4.47
Total Cost per Mile:	\$2.93	State and Federal Cost per Mile:	\$1.63

## **Appendix C**

**Survey Mailing List**

**Survey Questionnaire**

## Survey Mailing List

AAUW Preschool	Pierre	SD
Alcoholics Anonymous	Pierre	SD
Anderson Dental,	Pierre	SD
Bales Chiropractic Clinic	Pierre	SD
Bechtold, Monte DDS.	Pierre	SD
Beemer & Bartlett Eye Clinic	Pierre	SD
Beverly Healthcare	Pierre	SD
BIA	Lower Brule	SD
BIA	Ft. Thompson	SD
Blessed Kateri Church	Pierre	SD
Boy & Girls Club	Lower Brule	SD
Boys & Girl's Club	Ft. Thompson	SD
Boys & Girls Club	Pierre	SD
Brule Hills Trading Post	Lower Brule	SD
Capital University Center	Pierre	SD
Capitol Area Counseling Service	Pierre	SD
Capitol Heights Baptist Church	Pierre	SD
CCST Head Start	Ft. Thompson	SD
Cheyenne River Elderly Nutrition Services	Eagle Butte	SD
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	Eagle Butte	SD
Church Of Christ	Pierre	SD
Church Of The Nazarene	Pierre	SD
Commodity Program	Lower Brule	SD
Community Bible Church	Pierre	SD
Congregational UCC Of Pierre	Pierre	SD
Crow Creek Food Pantry	Eagle Butte	SD
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe	Ft. Thompson	SD
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe	Ft. Thompson	SD
CRST Veterans Service	Eagle Butte	SD
Dakota Plains Clinic	Pierre	SD
Dentistry At The St. Charles LLC	Pierre	SD
Dr's Rausch & Eisnach, Pierre Health Clinic	Pierre	SD
Eagle Butte Food Pantry	Eagle Butte	SD
Eastside Neighborhood Clinic	Pierre	SD
Elderly Building	Ft. Thompson	SD
Faith Lutheran Church	Pierre	SD
Finance Office	Lower Brule	SD
First Baptist Church	Pierre	SD
First Baptist Church	Pierre	SD
First United Methodist Church	Pierre	SD

Ft. Pierre City Council	Ft Pierre	SD
Ft. Pierre Community Youth Center	Ft Pierre	SD
Gettysburg City Council	Gettysburg	SD
Golden Buffalo Casino	Lower Brule	SD
Golden Buffalo Motel	Lower Brule	SD
Grand Ave. Wesleyan Church	Pierre	SD
Head Start	Ft Pierre	SD
Hermanson, Patrick DDS	Pierre	SD
Highmore City Auditor	Highmore	SD
Highmore City Council	Highmore	SD
Highmore City Schools	Highmore	SD
Highmore Healthcare Center Inc	Highmore	SD
HIS	Ft. Thompson	SD
HIS	Lower Brule	SD
Hunkpati Store	Ft. Thompson	SD
Indian Health Services	Ft. Thompson	SD
Indian Health Services	Eagle Butte	SD
Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall	Pierre	SD
JTPA	Ft. Thompson	SD
Kelly's Retirement Homes	Pierre	SD
Kuehl Chiropractic Office	Pierre	SD
Lodestar Casino,	Ft. Thompson	SD
Lodestar Motel	Ft. Thompson	SD
Lower Brule Community College	Lower Brule	SD
Lower Brule Head Start	Lower Brule	SD
Lower Brule Sioux Tribe	Lower Brule	SD
Lower Brule Sioux Tribe	Lower Brule	SD
Lutheran Memorial Church	Pierre	SD
Lynn's Dakotamart	Ft. Thompson	SD
Maher Dental DDS	Pierre	SD
Medical Associates Clinic LLP	Pierre	SD
Missouri Shores	Pierre	SD
Monroe Chiropractic	Pierre	SD
Moran Chiropractic	Pierre	SD
Morrison, Daniel DDS	Pierre	SD
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church M.S.	Pierre	SD
New Life Assembly Of God	Pierre	SD
Oahe Inc.	Pierre	SD
Oahe Presbyterian Church	Pierre	SD
Pierre Area Referral	Pierre	SD
Pierre City Commission & Auditor	Pierre	SD
Pierre City Hall	Pierre	SD

Pierre Finance Office	Pierre	SD
Pierre Indian Learning Center	Pierre	SD
Pierre Seventh-Day Adventist Elem. School	Pierre	SD
Potter County Commission & Auditor,	Gettysburg	SD
Prairie Fire Church	Pierre	SD
Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church	Pierre	SD
Resurrection Lutheran Church	Pierre	SD
Roth, Thomas DDS	Pierre	SD
S.D. Urban Indian Health	Pierre	SD
Seventh Day Adventist Liscombe Activity Center	Pierre	SD
Seventh-Day Adventist Church	Pierre	SD
Shelby's Mini Mart	Ft. Thompson	SD
Sioux Boys Mini Mart	Lower Brule	SD
Southeast United Methodist Church	Pierre	SD
St. John's Catholic Church	Pierre	SD
St. Joseph School	Pierre	SD
St. Mary's Healthcare Center	Pierre	SD
St. Peter & Paul Catholic Church	Pierre	SD
Tero	Ft. Thompson	SD
Tero	Lower Brule	SD
Tourism	Ft. Thompson	SD
Tourism,	Lower Brule	SD
Tribal Hall	Ft. Thompson	SD
Tribal Hall	Ft. Thompson	SD
Tribal Office	Lower Brule	SD
Trinity Episcopal Church	Pierre	SD
United Church Of Christ	Ft Pierre	SD
United Pentecostal Church	Pierre	SD
Veterans Affairs Dept.	Ft. Thompson	SD
WIC	Ft. Thompson	SD
WIC	Lower Brule	SD



# River Cities Transit Coordination Study

## Survey Questions

1. Your agency is a:

- Public entity**
- Church**
- Private non-profit**
- Private for-profit**
- Local Government**
- State Government**
- Other (please specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

2. What primary services does your agency provide? (Check all that apply)

- Alcohol, Tobacco or Drug Education & Treatment**
- Diagnosis and Early Evaluation**
- Education/Training**
- Employment Opportunities/Job Placement**
- Health Care**
- Housing**
- Child Care**
- Financial Support**
- Family Safety & Protection Housing**
- Nutrition**
- Life Skills Development & Assistance**
- Transportation**
- Residential Care**
- Other (Please specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

3. What ages are your agency's clients (Check all that apply)

Percent

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Under 18**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **18 to 54**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **55 to 59**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **60 to 64**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **65 to 74**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **75 and older**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Any Age**

4. Does your agency supply or subsidize any type of transportation for its participants?

- Yes, agency supplies / subsidizes transportation**
- No, agency does not supply transportation to participants (Skip to question 14)**

5. How do your clients access your agency's services?

**Percent**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Personal vehicle**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **River Cities Transit**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Agency vehicle (If checked, go to 5a)**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Bicycle**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Walking**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Provided by family, friend or neighbor**

6) 5a. Does your agency have a vehicle(s) that is used to transport clients? (If no, skip to Question 6)

**Yes**                       **No**

5b. Is your preference for your agency to continue owning a vehicle(s) ?

**Yes**                       **No**

If yes, why is owning your own vehicles important to your organization?

---

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---

6. Below is a list of methods for supplying transportation on commercial vehicles. Please estimate the total number of trips (one-way) per week provided by your agency?

_____	<b>Provide ride with agency vehicle</b>	<b># of weekly one-way rides</b>
_____	<b>Provide bus pass</b>	<b># of weekly one-way rides</b>
_____	<b>Provide cash to participants specifically for transportation</b>	<b># of weekly one-way rides</b>
_____	<b>Other (please specify)</b>	<b># of weekly one-way rides</b>
_____		

7. Does your agency charge participants for transportation services?

- Yes, participant pays a fee**
- No, client does not pay a fee**
- No, prohibited from charging for services**

8. Other than charging participants, how are the transportation services funded at your agency? (Check all that apply)

**City, county or special district (Describe)**

---

**Donations, United Way, fundraising, volunteer (Circle those that apply)**

**Federal funds (What category)**

---

**State funds (What category)**

---

8a. What is your total annual budget for supporting client transportation? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

9. Is your transportation funding limited to specific groups of participants?

**Yes**                       **No (Please skip to question 10)**

*9a. How are the funds limited? (Check all that apply)*

- People with disabilities**
  - Veterans**
  - Seniors**
  - Low income**
  - Children**
  - Students**
  - Other (please specify)**
- 

*9b. Is the limited funding an agency policy or a source restriction?*

- Agency Policy**
- Funding Source Restriction**

10. Are the transportation trips limited in any way to participants?

**Yes**                       **No (Please skip to question 10)**

*10a. How are the trips limited? (Check all that apply)*

- Emergency**
  - Job training**
  - Medical visits**
  - Low income/Means tested**
  - School**
  - Nutrition**
  - Veterans services**
  - Other (please specify)**
-

10b. Is the limited funding an agency policy or a source restriction?

- Agency Policy**
- Funding Source Restriction**

11. For those participants who have trouble using public transportation to access YOUR services, why do you think their usage is limited? (Check all that apply)

- No existing service**
  - No service to our location**
  - Service does not run during hours when rides are needed**
  - Accessing service is too difficult (waiting, reservation requirements, etc.)**
  - Do not qualify for the services available**
  - Lack of money for fares**
  - Do not know how to access the system**
  - Live too far away**
  - They have been turned away in the past and have given up asking**
  - Other factors (please explain)**
- 

12. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the level of service of River Cities Transit:

	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>Ability to book trips for the time requested</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Fares are good value</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Courtesy and helpfulness of drivers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Weekday and Saturday hours of services</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Comfortable vehicles</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Clean vehicles</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Safe operation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Buses keep schedule (15 min. before/after requested time)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Courtesy &amp; helpfulness of dispatchers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. What time(s) of day is transportation most important to the majority of your clients? (Check all that apply)

- 6 am to 9 am**
- 9 am to 12 pm**
- 12 pm to 3 pm**
- 3 pm to 6 pm**
- 6pm to 9 pm**
- 9 pm to midnight**

14. Please rate the importance of the following service improvements for public transportation to people in our community:

	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Not Needed</b>
<b>Greater number of door-to-door rides</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Service easier for seniors and people with disabilities to use</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Longer hours of operations</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>More days of operation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>More reliable service</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Vehicles in better condition</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lower fares</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Easier trip scheduling over the phone</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>More reliable on-time pickups</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>More reliable drop offs (location)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Easier to identify vehicles</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>More wheelchair accessible vehicles</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Reduced riding time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>More frequent service from rural areas to Pierre &amp; Fort Pierre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. I would support coordinating transportation services among agencies, government services and public transportation in our community as a worthwhile venture.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

16. I feel my clients are aware of their travel options in our community.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

17. There is a framework in place that encourages or facilitates agency efforts to coordinate transportation services.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

18. Consumer education and travel training would be very beneficial for our community.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

19. Our community has a good inventory of funds available to support coordinated transportation services.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

20. There are sufficient payment options (one-way tickets, weekly passes, monthly passes etc.) available to accommodate most of our clients' transportation needs.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

21. The marketing and communication programs that are being used to build awareness and encourage use of the current transit services are adequate.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

22. Please use the space below to provide any other comments or suggestions you might have.

# **Appendix D**

## **Focus Group Meetings**

- **List of Invitees**
- **Meeting Agenda**
- **Meeting Minutes**

## Focus Group Meetings - Invitees

AAUW Preschool	Pierre	SD
Alcoholics Anonymous	Pierre	SD
Anderson Dental,	Pierre	SD
Bales Chiropractic Clinic	Pierre	SD
Bechtold, Monte DDS.	Pierre	SD
Beemer & Bartlett Eye Clinic	Pierre	SD
Beverly Healthcare	Pierre	SD
Blessed Kateri Church	Pierre	SD
Boys & Girls Club	Pierre	SD
Capital University Center	Pierre	SD
Capitol Area Counseling Service	Pierre	SD
Capitol Heights Baptist Church	Pierre	SD
Church Of Christ	Pierre	SD
Church Of The Nazarene	Pierre	SD
Community Bible Church	Pierre	SD
Congregational UCC Of Pierre	Pierre	SD
Dakota Plains Clinic	Pierre	SD
Dentistry At The St. Charles LLC	Pierre	SD
Dr's Rausch & Eisnach, Pierre Health Clinic	Pierre	SD
Eastside Neighborhood Clinic	Pierre	SD
Faith Lutheran Church	Pierre	SD
First Baptist Church	Pierre	SD
First Baptist Church	Pierre	SD
First United Methodist Church	Pierre	SD
Ft. Pierre City Council	Ft Pierre	SD
Ft. Pierre Community Youth Center	Ft Pierre	SD
Gettysburg City Council	Gettysburg	SD
Grand Ave. Wesleyan Church	Pierre	SD
Head Start	Ft Pierre	SD
Hermanson, Patrick DDS	Pierre	SD
Highmore City Auditor	Highmore	SD
Highmore City Council	Highmore	SD
Highmore City Schools	Highmore	SD
Highmore Healthcare Center Inc	Highmore	SD
Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall	Pierre	SD
Kelly's Retirement Homes	Pierre	SD
Kuehl Chiropractic Office	Pierre	SD
Lower Brule Community College	Lower Brule	SD
Lutheran Memorial Church	Pierre	SD
Maher Dental DDS	Pierre	SD
Medical Associates Clinic LLP	Pierre	SD
Missouri Shores	Pierre	SD



Monroe Chiropractic	Pierre	SD
Moran Chiropractic	Pierre	SD
Morrison, Daniel DDS	Pierre	SD
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church M.S.	Pierre	SD
New Life Assembly Of God	Pierre	SD
Oahe Inc.	Pierre	SD
Oahe Presbyterian Church	Pierre	SD
Pierre Area Referral	Pierre	SD
Pierre City Commission & Auditor	Pierre	SD
Pierre City Hall	Pierre	SD
Pierre Finance Office	Pierre	SD
Pierre Indian Learning Center	Pierre	SD
Pierre Seventh-Day Adventist Elem. School	Pierre	SD
Potter County Commission & Auditor,	Gettysburg	SD
Prairie Fire Church	Pierre	SD
Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church	Pierre	SD
Resurrection Lutheran Church	Pierre	SD
Roth, Thomas DDS	Pierre	SD
S.D. Urban Indian Health	Pierre	SD
Seventh Day Adventist Liscombe Activity Center	Pierre	SD
Seventh-Day Adventist Church	Pierre	SD
Southeast United Methodist Church	Pierre	SD
St. John's Catholic Church	Pierre	SD
St. Joseph School	Pierre	SD
St. Mary's Healthcare Center	Pierre	SD
St. Peter & Paul Catholic Church	Pierre	SD
Trinity Episcopal Church	Pierre	SD
United Church Of Christ	Ft Pierre	SD
United Pentecostal Church	Pierre	SD

# SMALL URBAN & RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

430 IACC Bldg - PO Box 5074 - Fargo, ND 58105 - (701)231-7767 - www.surtc.org

SMALL URBAN &  
Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute - NDSU



## **Transportation Coordination** ***“Solutions in Transportation Issues”*** Planning meeting January 19, 2007

### **Meeting Agenda**

- 9:00 Welcome
- 9:05 Introduction of committee members
- 9:20 Introduction of SURTC
- 9:40 Presentation of the Objectives of the project.
- 10:00 Group discussion begins
- ◆ Discuss and identify all possible sources of transportation available in the two communities.
  - ◆ Identifying current transportation strengths and gaps, and which population groups are most affected.
  - ◆ Identify some potential benefits of coordination
  - ◆ Discover additional sources of funding for coordination efforts
  - ◆ Explore willingness of agencies to participate in a community wide coordinated transportation development plan
- 12:00 Meeting adjourned

## **Minutes**

### **RCPT Transportation Coordination Meeting January 19, 2007 River Cities Public Transit Pierre, South Dakota**

Those in attendance included:

Donaldson, DeWayne	YMCA
Erickson, Katie	Pierre Area Referral
Baumgart, Ron	River Cities Public Transit
Boolin, Rev. Theodora	First Baptist Church & Ministerial Association
Fayhee, Debbie	SE Methodist Church & Ministerial Association
Gabriel, Dena	Maryhouse
Hegland, Gary	Small Urban and Rural Transit Center
Kessler, Kami	Missouri Shores
Kirk, Mary	Head Start
Kuper, Nicole	River Cities Public Transit
Mattheis, Jackie	SD DOT
Neilan, Norm	Boy's & Girl's Club
Quinn, Chuck	Oahe Inc.
Rathbun, Carl	River Cities Public Transit
Severson, Jim	Social Services
Telford, Lois	Black Hills Special Services
Walter, Pat	Disabled American Veterans
Wegner, Rita	Urban Health

The purpose of this meeting was to identify all sources of transportation in Pierre, Fort Pierre and surrounding area and explore the possibilities of further opportunities for transportation coordination.

Ron Baumgart opened the meeting with a welcome and a brief statement of the purpose of the meeting and why River Cities Transit is getting more involved with coordination. The driving force behind this project is the requirement for a coordinated plan prior to applying for JARC and New Freedoms dollars from the state of South Dakota. Ron then introduced Gary Hegland who presented a Power Point presentation on the many different aspects of coordination.

The second part of the meeting was fact gathering when the attendees were asked to provide information on these subjects: identify all the sources of transportation in the local region, list the strengths of RCPT, identify the transportation gaps, and describe what they think the

coordination benefits could be in their community, and they pointed out other sources of funding and resources that could be shared in the coordination effort.

- All sources of Transportation
  - RCT – 29 buses and vans
  - Head Start – 2 buses, 11 admin vehicles
  - Oahe Inc. - 18 minivans
  - YMCA – 3 buses, 1 mini bus
  - Missouri Shores Domestic Violence Center – 1 van
  - Urban Indian Health – 1 or 2 vans
  - Disabled American Vets– 1 van
  - Churches – 5 vans
  - Daycares – maybe 10 vans
  - Nursing Homes – 5
  - Assisted Living – 3
  - Stanley County Schools – 5 vehicles
  - Forell Charter – 5?
  - SD Women’s Prison – 1 van
  - Pierre Indian Learning Center – 3 School buses
  - Hotels – 2 or 3 vans (Ramkota and Holiday Inn Exp.)
  
- Transportation Strengths
  - Service 24hrs/day 7days/ week
  - Low cost service delivery
  - Availability of service
  - Service area expanding
  - Meet training requirements
  - Stability, knowing the system will be there
  
- Transportation Gaps
  - For Elderly
    - Hardest group to get on the bus
    - Fear of steps
    - No cell phones to call for return rides
  
  - For people with disabilities
    - Communication barriers
    - Visually impaired
    - Suggestion: Travel trainers (volunteer or paid)
    - Suggestion: Out reach program to talk to people about riding bus
  
  - For low income
    - Affordability
    - Oahe valley clinic has punch tickets if passenger needs to get to medical appointments
    - Transit may deliver some medications

- For students
  - Rides to and from school
- Local Benefits of Coordination
  - Better utilization of current resources
    - More trips for same dollar expenditures
  - 24 hours / 7 days per week, dispatchers
  - Community education
  - Discount trips for 24 in advance scheduling
  - Coordination of out of town travel medical
  - Coordinate fuel, supplies, and insurance expenses
- Additional Sources of Funding
  - Job access and reverse commute
  - New freedoms
  - Social service agencies
    - Medicaid
    - TANF
    - Title III-B funds
  - Human service agencies
    - Vocational rehabilitation
    - Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI)
    - ADJ training center
    - Mental health centers
  - Medicare NEMT
  - Local government subsidies
  - Fares and donations
  - Advertisings
  - Contracts w/ different entities
  - Jefferson Bus Lines
- What resources agencies may be willing to contribute to the coordination effort.
  - Vehicles
  - Manpower
  - Financial
  - Pool of people able to drive RCT vehicles
  - RSVP for bus buddies
- Next meeting tentatively scheduled for 3rd week in February.

Following the discussion on the topics mention the meeting concluded and all were invited for lunch.

Submitted by

Nicole Kuper  
RCPT

## **Minutes**

### **RCPT Transportation Coordination Meeting March 14, 2007 River Cities Public Transit Pierre, South Dakota**

Those in attendance included:

Baumgart, Ron	Director of River Cities Transit
Gabriel, Dena	Mary House (Elderly Living)
Hegland, Gary	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center
Kuper, Nicole	River Cities Transit
Mattheis, Jackie	SD Department of Transportation
Rathbun, Carl	River Cities Transit
Telford, Louis	Black Hills Special Services
Wegner, Rita	West River Health (Rural Health)
Zastrow, Larry	SD Bar Association

A copy of the Coordinated Transit Development Plan was emailed out to all individuals invited to the meeting. The recipients were asked to review the document and bring to the meeting any questions, suggestion, or further recommendation they might have regarding this report.

The meeting started at 10:00 am with Ron Baumgart, director of RCPT introducing Gary Hegland from Small Urban & Rural Transit Center primary researcher for this report.

Gary presented the six chapters of the report that follow the introduction and asked for input regarding changes, additions, or corrections. The responses included:

- ◆ Additional coordination projects RCPT is involved with such as the Senior Citizens Center in Pierre
- ◆ Rural Health Clinic is very interested in coordinating services from the outlying clinics into Pierre and Fort Pierre.
- ◆ A question was asked about the homeless, that count is already included in the low income segment of the population.
- ◆ A new board member commented this will help him become a better board member.
- ◆ Additional research required to determine the actual demand for some of the recommendation. This additional research was not a part of the scope of this project.

- ◆ SDDOT indicated that it was unlikely that either JARC or New Freedom programs would assist financially with the travel trainer recommendation.

There were no further comments; the meeting adjourned at noon and was followed by lunch for all those in attendance.

Submitted by

Nicole Kuper  
RCPT