



# **Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan**

*Prepared by the South Eastern Council of Governments  
with the cooperation of Brandon City Transit  
September 4, 2019*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	1
Primary Funding Sources for Public Transportation .....	3
Plan Objectives.....	6
Brandon City Transit .....	7
Service Area .....	7
Demographics .....	7
Trip Generators.....	10
Available services.....	11
System Needs Assessment.....	14
Current Status .....	14
SWOT Analysis .....	16
Brandon City Transit Goals and Strategies.....	19
Goal Statements.....	19
Conclusion.....	20

## Executive Summary

The Brandon Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to improve the coordination and cooperation of transportation providers in the Brandon area, and to also identify and overcome barriers that cause gaps in access to services for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes. This plan will look at transportation needs and develop strategies to meet those needs in Brandon.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law August 2005 and guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation. Under SAFETEA-LU, all grantees receiving Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, Section 5316: Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), and Section 5317: New Freedom were required to participate in a locally developed coordinated public transit human service transportation plan to be eligible for transportation funding for federal fiscal year 2007 and beyond.

In 2012, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21) introduced changes to the planning process included in SAFETEA-LU. In MAP-21 the basic requirements of coordinated planning still exist, though the applicable programs have been consolidated. Projects that were eligible under the New Freedom Program have been moved to the public transit or new Section 5310 Program and JARC eligible projects have been redirected to public transit formula programs. All human services programs funded through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that support transportation services for people with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes (Section 5310) have coordinated planning requirements under MAP-21. Local agencies applying for such funding must include projects that are part of a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and members of the public.

Section 1 includes a demographic analysis of the Brandon area. Demographic information regarding population, age, race, disability, veteran status, the economic environment, and vehicle ownership is discussed.

Section 2 includes an analysis of needs in Brandon and gaps in existing service delivery. Needs and gaps were identified with the assistance of stakeholders in the community and various studies.

Section 3 concludes with a presentation of community goals and coordination strategies. Strategies to bridge gaps in service and potential coordination initiatives are enumerated along with guidance for the growth of Brandon City Transit.

## Primary Funding Sources for Public Transportation

### Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP – 21)

MAP – 21 was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012 replacing the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The law took effect October 1, 2012 and was set to expire on September 30, 2014; however, extensions were passed by Congress and signed by the President to extend the law until December 4, 2015. This law provides funding for highway infrastructure and public transportation projects and reaffirmed the stature mandating local coordination of transportation services. A few SAFETEA-LU programs were repealed in MAP-21; JARC funding was absorbed into Section 5307: Formula Grants for Urbanized Area and Section 5311: Formula Grants for Other than Urbanized Areas. The New Freedom funding was rolled into Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities.

### Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)

FAST Act, the first federal law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation programs, is a five-year, \$305 billion transportation bill signed into law December 4, 2015 by President Obama. Replacing MAP-21, the FAST Act maintains a focus on safety, keeps intact the established structure of the various highway-related programs, continues efforts to streamline project delivery, and, for the first time, provides a dedicated source of federal dollars for freight projects. It also revives Section 5339: Bus and Bus Facilities Program, available to urban (5307) and rural (5311) public transportation providers. FAST Act also continues the requirement for coordination of transportation services.

### Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

The Section 5310 program is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services. Eligible recipients of this funding are nonprofit agencies serving older individuals and persons with disabilities, public bodies approved by the South Dakota Department of Transportation to coordinate transportation services for older individuals and persons with disabilities, and public bodies that provide public and specialized transit services. At least 55 percent of program allocations must be used on public transportation capital projects that are planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable. The remaining 45 percent of program allocations may be used for public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of ADA, public transit projects that improve access to fixed route transit services, decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on complementary

paratransit, and other alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities.

### Section 5311: Public Transportation Assistance for Rural Areas

The Section 5311 program authorizes capital, administrative, operating assistance, and training grants to state agencies, local governments, Indian tribes, and nonprofit organizations providing rural public transportation services. All projects must benefit residents in non-urbanized areas (areas with a population less than 50,000) of South Dakota. Section 5311 provides up to 80 percent federal share of the costs for administrative expenses, up to 80 percent for capital costs, and up to 50 percent of the net operating deficit for rural transit operations. The South Dakota Department of Transportation has oversight authority of this funding program and manages the solicitation process for South Dakota Section 5311 recipients. The Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) is a subset of Section 5311 funding that provides grants for training and technical assistance as 100 percent federal share. Additionally, 15 percent of Section 5311 funding (allocated as Section 5311(f)) must be set aside to support intercity bus service unless the State of South Dakota can certify that all intercity bus needs are met. The City of Brandon is a current recipient of Section 5311 funding.

### Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) is a passenger transportation benefit of the Medicaid program. States are required in their Title XIX State Plans to ensure necessary transportation of Medicaid beneficiaries to and from health care providers. Expenditures for transportation may be claimed as administrative costs of the State plan. Or the state may elect to include transportation as medical assistance under its State Medicaid plan, but use a direct vendor payment system consistent with applicable regulations. There are various ways in which a State can construct the network by which these rides are provided to the users. Statewide, regional, or local provider networks are all typical models.

### Older Americans Act

Various programs through the Older Americans Act support transportation of seniors. Grants can be made to social service agencies and transit providers to ensure that older adults can reach necessary services such as nutrition, adult day services, and civil services such as government benefits, legal aid, and regular tasks that require presence at public agencies. Older Americans Act funds are administered by the South Dakota Department of Social Services Division of Long-Term Services. Older Americans Act funding covers fare subsidy on behalf of the passenger if program funds are used to provide a transportation benefit. Individuals 60 years of age and older may benefit from the subsidy and may ride the transit system for a suggested donation.

## Veteran's Transportation Programs

The Veteran's Administration (VA) contracts for services with medical and paratransit providers to deliver transportation for veterans who need access to health care. The primary destination for these services is the VA facility in Sioux Falls. In addition to medical transportation, Disabled American Veterans provides volunteer operated rides when available to the VA Medical Center in Sioux Falls.

## Plan Objectives

*To give an accurate description of current demographics* – Statistical information distributed by the U.S. Census Bureau provides a snapshot of the characteristics of the population of Brandon. Statistical information from the U.S. Census Bureau may be especially beneficial when applying for transportation grants.

*To identify gaps in the service* – Through the use of maps, studies, and interviews; gaps in service and service needs are identified. Solutions are given to address the gaps and needs. Much like the description of area demographics, this information will help make a case when applying for grants.

*To identify the key stakeholders in the delivery of transportation services* – Without the support of transportation stakeholders, plans and strategies identified in this plan are unattainable.

*To provide an inventory of services in the region* – When agencies coordinate their services, more effective transportation methods can be discovered. Coordination reduces the inefficiencies in current services provided. This plan outlines several of the services that are currently available and the methods by which to coordinate the services.

*To provide a snapshot of the transportation services that exist* – Transit systems and human service agencies throughout the region pursue numerous transportation activities. This plan shows the services that are offered as well as transportation activities that various organizations wish to pursue.

*To provide transit system an opportunity to see what other organizations are doing with respect to transportation and coordination.* Information sharing is a means by which positive activities can be highlighted and replicated where possible.



## **Brandon City Transit**

Brandon City Transit provides demand-response transit service within the City of Brandon. Also, Brandon City Transit specifically provides rides for residents of Bethany Meadows Assisted Living and Helping Hands Assisted Living. The largest customer base of Brandon City Transit is youth who are being transported to and from daycare facilities. Brandon City Transit is managed and operated by the Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership (ICAP) and funded by the City of Brandon, the Federal Transit Administration, the SDDOT, and passenger fares.

### **Service Area**

Brandon, South Dakota is located in Minnehaha County, eight miles northeast of Sioux Falls, and has an estimated 2018 population of 10,094 persons. The city covers approximately 5.4 square miles and has a population density of 1,869 people per square mile. Brandon City Transit's service area is contained within the current corporate limits of the city.

The business district in Brandon is home to several retail and commercial establishments and Brandon Valley High School. Rovang Industrial Park is home to multiple industrial businesses and lies north of Interstate 90. Hospital facilities are located in nearby Sioux Falls.

Brandon has several institutions of primary and secondary education. The Brandon Valley School District offers public education at levels K-12 with two elementary schools, one intermediate school, one middle school, and one high school located in Brandon.

### **Demographics**

#### **General Demographics**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau population of Brandon was 8,785 in 2010 and 10,094 in 2018. This was an increase of 1,309 people over eight years or an average annual growth rate of nearly 2%. The average age in Brandon has been slowly increasing since 2000. According to the 2000 U.S. Census the median age was 31.3 years, and this increased to 33.3 years in 2017. This is supported by looking at Brandon's age cohorts which show that the percent of those under 18 has decreased over time while those over 65 have increased.

Median income in Brandon is quite high and has only risen over time. The high median income in Brandon makes it unsurprising that local poverty rates are below average in the city.

2000: \$58,421  
2010: \$64,325  
2017: \$80,272

## Transit Propensity

There are economic and demographic cohorts that are shown to be more likely to utilize public transportation services. Citizens who fall under any of the transit-dependent target populations rely on public transportation to continue an independent lifestyle. Additionally, residents may represent more than one of these categories, solidifying their need for public transit. These target groups include:

- Older adults (65+)
- Persons younger than driving age (below 14 years of age)
- Persons with disabilities
- Persons and families with low-income
- Zero-Vehicle households

## Brandon Transit Propensity Indicators

	Year	City of Brandon	Minnehaha County	State of South Dakota
Population over 65	2010	689	18,843	116,581
		7.80%	11.10%	14.30%
	2017	947	22,304	132,118
		9.7%	12.1%	15.4%
Population over 85	2010	75	2,966	19,226
		0.90%	1.80%	2.40%
	2017	101	3,361	19,822
		1.0%	1.8%	2.3%
Population under 18	2010	2,913	42,563	202,797
		33.20%	25.10%	24.90%
	2017	3,155	46,365	210,961
		32.4%	25.2%	24.7%
Individuals with a disability	2012*	533	14,938	91,484
		6.0%	8.90%	11.50%
	2017	875	18,881	101,568
		9.0%	10.4%	12.1%
Persons in poverty	2012*	545	17,690	108,319
		6.2%	10.7%	13.8%
	2017	494	19,599	114,885
		5.1%	11.0%	13.9%
Zero vehicle household	2010	73	3,587	17,042
		2.5%	5.5%	5.4%
	2017	99	4,035	17,503
		2.8%	5.5%	5.2%
Single vehicle household	2010	569	19,987	87,636
		19.4%	30.5%	27.8%
	2017	700	23,519	96,591
		20.1%	31.9%	28.5%

Data from the 2010 Decennial Census, the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, and the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

\*Earliest available data

**Older Adults (65+):** Older adults may have difficulties driving themselves due to limited physical capabilities, such as troubles seeing and hearing, stiff joints and muscles, slower reaction times, and dementia, among other challenges. Elderly individuals also face poverty at higher levels. According to the National Council on Aging, one in every three older adults are economically insecure. In addition, 21% of married Social Security recipients and 43% of single recipients aged 65+ depend on Social Security for 90% or more of their income. This leaves elderly individuals with very little disposable income for transportation. The elderly population is quite small in Brandon; however, it is estimated to have increased between 2010 and 2017.

**Youth:** People under the age of 14 cannot have driver's licenses to transport themselves and some youth decide not to get their license right away. Many young people also do not have the funds for their own transportation because they attend school full-time, limiting their potential work hours. Parents do not always have time to transport a young person when they need to go somewhere because the parents work. Brandon is a youthful with 32% of the population being under the age of 18 which is a higher percentage than both the County and the State.

**Persons with disabilities:** Many individuals with disabilities battle physical handicaps that prevent them from driving. Disabilities can range from impediments of vision, movement, thinking, and hearing, along with other handicaps. The number of persons with disabilities in Brandon increased by three percent between 2012 and 2017.

**Persons below poverty line:** The Department of Health and Human Services set the 2019 Poverty Guidelines at an annual income of \$12,490 for one person. A low-income individual is defined as an individual whose family income is at or below 150% of the poverty line. Low-income individuals struggle with providing basic needs for themselves and their families, which leaves little to no funds for personal transportation. Public transportation provides low-income individuals the ability to be transported to locations where they may otherwise not be able to work. Those living below the poverty line is decreasing in the City of Brandon.

**Zero or one vehicle households:** Households with zero or one vehicle depend on public transit to get to destinations that they could not otherwise reach on foot or bike. Zero and one-vehicle households are on the rise in Brandon, however, the rate is still much below that of the County and the State.

The transit propensity indicators show that the need may be less in Brandon than the State for older adults, persons with disabilities, low income households, and zero or one-vehicle households. The only target group with a higher percent than the County or State is the population under the age of 18. This coincides with the ridership statistics that show that youth account for the largest, by far, ridership cohort that utilizes Brandon City Transit.

## **Trip Generators**

Though Brandon is less than 10 miles away from Sioux Falls, the city still has many amenities to meet the daily needs of its residents. Brandon Transit tracks the rides they provide by the following types:

- Medical
- Employment
- Nutrition
- Social
- Education
- Shopping
- Other

### **Medical**

Brandon is home to both Sanford and Avera Health Systems clinics for regular doctors' appointments, as well as multiple optometry, dental, chiropractic, and counseling offices. There is a wide range of medical services available in the City with the notable exception of a full-service hospital or emergency room.

### **Employment**

Manufacturing is the largest employment industry in Brandon which is of little surprise as there are large business/industrial parks on both sides of Interstate 90 with the park to the north recently expanding its boundaries. Educational Services are the second largest employer and Transportation and Warehousing rounds out the top 3.

### **Nutrition**

There are several fast-food and sit-down restaurants available in Brandon which are open during the hours of operation of the Transit System.

The Brandon Area Food Pantry is in downtown and is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00pm to 6:00pm. Those needing transport to the Food Pantry need to find alternate arrangements as the Transit System does not operate during the hours that the Food Pantry is open.

### **Social**

Brandon is home to several social and civil organizations that cater to a variety of age ranges. The American Legion, Lions Club, Boys and Girls Club, Optimist Club, various sports associations, and many more are active in the community.

The Brandon Branch of the Siouxland Library system offers a variety of materials including books, magazines, newspapers, audiobooks, and DVDs. The library also offers a variety of programs and services to Brandon residents.

The Brandon Municipal Pool is an outdoor facility that offers swimming lessons as well as open swim sessions. The swimming pool season tends to run from early June to mid-August, but the dates vary annually.

## **Education**

There are around 4,100 students enrolled in the Brandon-Valley School district which makes it the fifth largest district in South Dakota. More than 1,800 students are bussed daily to and from the seven school facilities that make up the district. The district has its own bussing system; however, it has utilized the services of Brandon Transit for wheelchair bound students enrolled in afterschool activities.

There are three pre-school centers in the city that provide education and care for children under kindergarten age. These facilities rely heavily on Brandon City Transit to provide transport of the children to and from home as well as to some special activities throughout the year.

## **Shopping**

Brandon has shopping opportunities to meet the daily needs of its residents. Sunshine Foods is a full-service grocery store, Lewis Drug is available for its pharmacy and health and beauty goods, and ACE Hardware offers a full range of hardware and home repair items and seasonal offerings for home and garden needs. There are also several locally owned specialty shops and boutiques for individual needs.

## **Available Services**

The transportation network in Brandon is comprised of public and private agencies with various missions and client bases. Brandon City Transit is the backbone of the transit network, providing “open door” public transit service during normal business hours.

### **Brandon City Transit**

Brandon City Transit provides demand-response transit service within the City of Brandon. Brandon City Transit specifically provides rides for residents of Bethany Meadows Assisted Living and Helping Hands Assisted Living; both facilities are located in Brandon. In addition to serving older adults, Brandon City Transit provides service to multiple child-care centers in the city. Brandon City Transit is managed and operated by the Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership (ICAP) and funded by the City of Brandon, the Federal Transit Administration, the SDDOT, and passenger fares.

All Brandon City Transit trips must be scheduled on the day prior to the trip and requests are made by telephone. It is requested that riders over the age of 60 make a donation for the ride and those under 60 are charged a fee. Fares can be paid in cash. The current fare is \$1.50 per one-way trip. The system operates Monday through Friday from 8:00am – 3:45pm. Brandon City Transit’s fleet includes two wheel-chair accessible buses and a van. There are plans in place to purchase an additional wheel-chair accessible bus in the near future. The service provides an average of 53 one-way trips each day.

## **Jefferson Lines**

Jefferson Lines operates intercity, over-the-road coach bus, passenger service between Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Fargo, North Dakota once a day in each direction along the Interstate 29 (I-29) corridor on Monday through Friday. The trip stops in South Dakota are: Sioux Falls, Flandreau, Brookings, Watertown, just outside the City of Summit, and Sisseton. The fleet requirements for these services are two dedicated motor coach buses. Passengers can make connections in Fargo and Sioux Falls to the rest of Jefferson Lines' national passenger network.

## **Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership (ICAP)**

ICAP is a community based non-profit organization that provides demand-response transit services to many locations within its 14-county service area. ICAP also manages the following transit services: East Dakota Transit, Dell Rapids City Transit, and Brandon City Transit. Due its scale, ICAP already demonstrates intra-agency coordination that positions it well for future human service and public transportation coordination efforts recommended in the later sections of this plan. Administrative and overhead activities across three community-based transit agencies, and ICAP's self-operated services in Miner and Moody Counties are shared. This includes key tasks such as grants management and accounting, driver training, regulatory oversight, and the sharing of vehicles facilities. For example, if demand is sufficient or if a vehicle must go out of service, ICAP has the flexibility to dispatch buses from other transit systems. They also provide transportation services that are outside of public transit, such as Head-Start, and have the ability to share workforces.

## **Disabled American Veterans (DAV)**

DAV is a nonprofit charity that provides a lifetime of support for veterans of all generations and their families, helping more than 1 million veterans in positive, life-changing ways each year. Annually, the organization provides more than 600,000 rides to veterans attending medical appointments and assists veterans with well over 200,000 benefit claims. In 2018, DAV helped veterans receive more than \$20 billion in earned benefits. DAV's services are offered at no cost to all generations of veterans, their families and survivors. The local DAV chapter is based out of Sioux Falls but serves the City of Brandon as well. The DAV serves the region with 28 vans.

## **MED-Star Transit**

Med-Star Transit is a privately owned and operated paramedic ambulance service based out of Brandon. In addition to advances life support emergency service, they also provide non-emergency transport to people with disabilities and those with mobility difficulties. A major portion of the non-emergency portion of their operation is transporting patients from the hospital to recovery facilities after surgery, though they can transport for any purpose. Med-Star provides their non-emergency transportation via a fleet of eight ADA accessible vans that can accommodate a wheelchair or stretcher.

## **Sioux Falls Wheelchair Transit Plus+**

Sioux Falls Wheelchair Transit Plus is a privately-owned company that provides wheelchair and stretcher transportation to the elder and those needing special assistance due to mobility issues. They provide door to door pick-up and drop-off for both medical and social occasions. Sioux Falls Wheelchair Transit Plus provides their transit service via a fleet of ten ADA accessible vans that can accommodate a wheelchair or stretcher.

### **Siouxland Paratransit Services**

Siouxland Paratransit is a private transit provider that can provide rides for those in wheelchairs or who are otherwise mobility impaired to attend medical appointments. The service is provided via one minivan equipped with a wheelchair ramp.

### **Wheelchair Express**

Wheelchair Express is a privately-owned company that provides transit for people with disabilities. They primarily provide service to and from medical appointments, however, their services may be utilized for any type of trip. Their vehicle fleet consists of 12 vans, some equipped with ramps and some with lifts.

### **Ride-hailing Services**

Private ride-hailing services such as Lyft and Uber operate in the City of Brandon. These services use the internet, typically through a smartphone app to connect a rider with a driver. The drivers in the service provide rides using their own private vehicles. Due to the nature of this service it is unknown how many drivers operate in Brandon at any given time. There are certain limitations in these services. Since the vehicle belongs to the driver it is not likely that many wheelchair accessible vehicles operate through these services. The use of these services usually require the rider to be able to operate the smart phone app and to connect a credit card to the app for payment, both of which can be difficult or frightening for older adults.

## System Needs Assessment

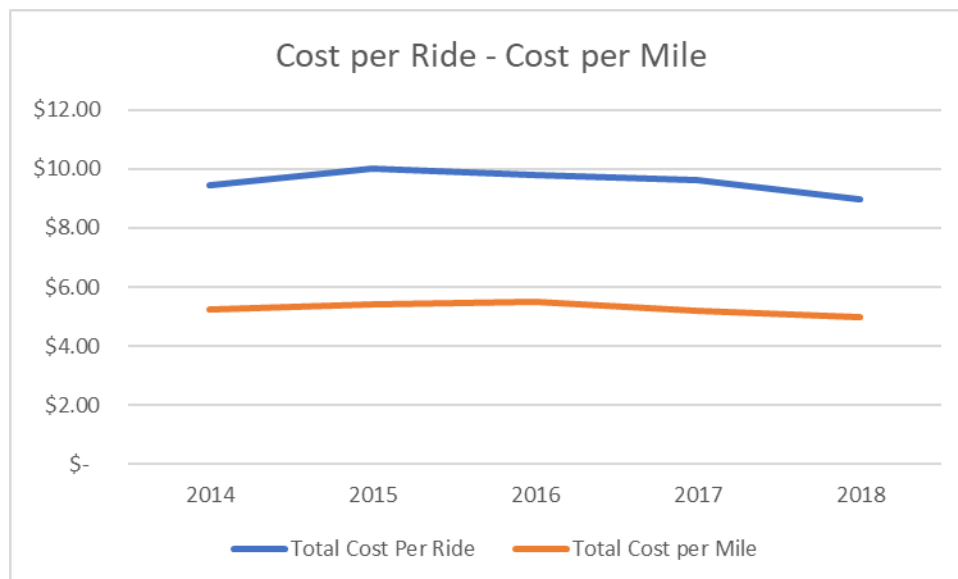
A public and stakeholder meeting was held in the Brandon City Council Chambers on July 23, 2019. The meeting organizers extended an invitation to relevant organizations located in Brandon, or with a vested interest in Brandon Transit, as well a flyer notifying the general public via public postings boards. Invitations were extended to:

- City of Brandon Staff and Elected Officials
- Brandon Chamber of Commerce
- Brandon Development Foundation
- Brandon-Valley School District
- Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership
- Brandon City Transit
- Home Day-Care Providers and Pre-School Centers
- Bethany Meadows
- Helping Hands
- South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Disabled Veterans of America
- South Dakota Department of Transportation

Representation from the City of Brandon, ICAP, Brandon Transit, local day cares and pre-schools, Brandon-Valley School District, Brandon Chamber of Commerce, and the public engaged in the risk assessment and goal setting session. The meeting began with a presentation of the current status and recent trends in the ridership of the transit service.

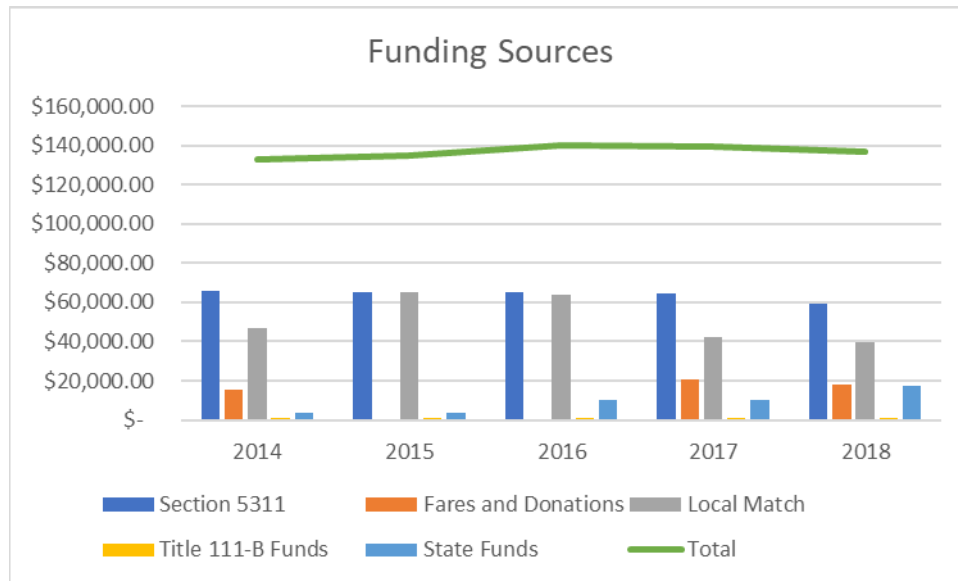
### Current Status

Brandon Transit has discovered some efficiencies over the five-year analysis period. After a spike in 2015 cost per ride and the cost per mile have dropped by a total of about \$0.50 and \$0.25 respectively.



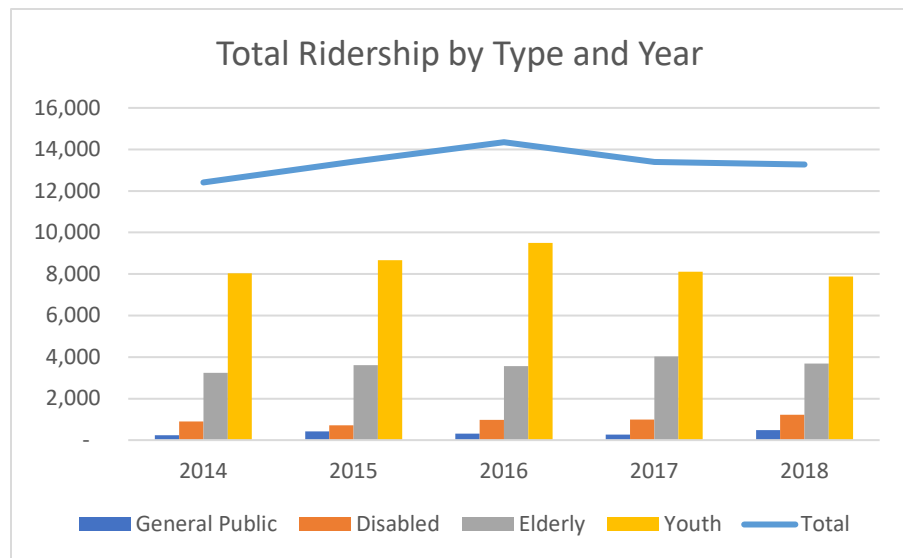


Funding has remained consistent over the last five years.

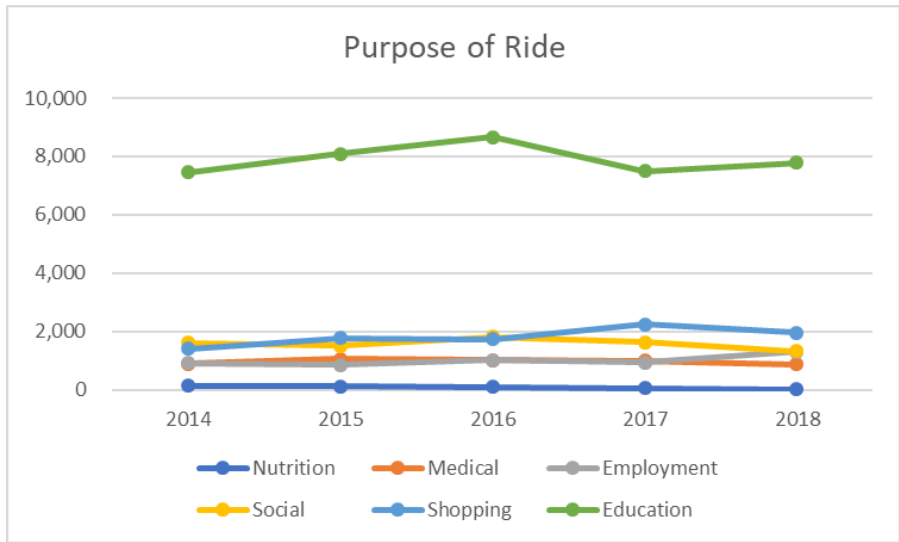


Overall ridership stayed relatively stable between 2014 and 2018, the years since the last Transit Plan was completed. There was a minor bump in 2016 but annual ridership has stayed around 13,000. The consistency in ridership is unsurprising as Brandon Transit has changed little in the last five years. The acquisition of an additional wheel-chair accessible bus in 2019 may help to increase ridership numbers in the future.

All riders of Brandon Transit are recorded and placed in one of four categories: General Public, Disabled, Elderly, and Youth. Youth makes up the largest ridership cohort of the Brandon Transit system with Elderly being second largest with about half as many total riders as the Youth category. As can be seen in the above chart, the increase in ridership numbers correlates with increased Youth riders in 2016. Though the total ridership numbers are small, the number of Disabled riders has steadily increased since 2015. Again, the addition of a third ADA accessible bus should only help to increase the ridership in this category.



Though the total ridership numbers are small, the number of Disabled riders has steadily increased since 2015. Again, the addition of a third ADA accessible bus should only help to increase the ridership in this category.



The purpose of each ride is also recorded by Brandon Transit. There are six categories that a ride can be placed into: Nutrition, Medical, Employment, Social, Shopping, and Education. The largest category for the purpose of transit trips is Education which is unsurprising given that the largest number of riders are Youths. The next most popular purpose for a trip is for shopping, primarily grocery shopping

according to the Brandon Transit dispatcher. The purpose of rides has stayed constant over the years with a little variation in rides for Education. Rides for the purpose of Nutrition have almost bottomed out with only 24 rides in 2018 being for this purpose. There are no centralized senior meal services during the hours of operation of the transit system and Meals on Wheels is a door to door service alternative.

ICAP Conducts an annual rides satisfaction survey of Brandon Transit riders. Overall the feedback is positive with the only area that is noticeably rated lower is the ability of the bus to run on time.



**SWOT Analysis**

Upon completing the review of the current status of the Brandon Transit system the group began discussing the systems strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Below is an overview of the specific subjects discussed.

### **Strengths**

What strengths in our system should be developed to improve transportation delivery?

- Great communication through direct contact with regular riders and ride destinations.
- A growing fleet of vehicles that allows for easier substitution should one of the busses be out-of-service.
- Formation of personal relationships between riders, drivers, and system dispatcher. Dedicated drivers and staff that fill positions for the long term. Low driver turn-over.
- A heated bus garage which means increased longevity and dependability of fleet vehicles. Current site allows room for growth on existing property.
- Brandon Transit is well supported by City Staff, City Council, and local maintenance and mechanical professionals.
- Door to door service is safer and allows the development of stronger community relationships than fixed route service.
- Dedicated dispatcher as a point of contact for both the internal providers as well as the external users of the system.

### **Weaknesses**

What barriers exist in the transit system that may hamper progress in achieving our goals?

- Community growth, while is welcome in the city for many reasons can make public transit more difficult as the service area expands and there is more demand on the existing system.
- Service is limited to current city limits since Brandon Transit is supported in part by residents paying City taxes. Extending service outside of those limits would require longer hours, more drivers, and more busses, all of which is currently unable to be supported by the system at this time.
- Busses tend to reach capacity at peak times and are not able to accommodate all the demand.
- Dispatcher is a part-time position whose hours do not fully overlap with the bussing operation schedule.
- The hours of operation do not cover all the time frames that potential riders may desire. Service ends before many co-curricular activities, or typical work schedules do. The current hours of operation also do not extend to cover the times that the Food Pantry is operating.

### **Opportunities**

What opportunities should we pursue to achieve our goals?

- Increase public outreach. Develop a public awareness campaign to advertise the current transit service in all local newspapers, through signage at typical transit destinations, and by increasing the systems visibility on the City website.
- Increase collaboration with health-car and assisted-living facilities to schedule appointments during off-peak times.
- Increase coordination with other local services to attempt to avoid having school busses running in the same areas at the same time.

### **Threats**

What outside threats could keep us from achieving our goals?

- Misinformation about the system being shared in the public, especially through social media.
- Inclement weather that can slow the service of the system as well as increase the dangers of traveling for both drivers and riders.
- State and Federal funding sources can't always keep up with growing systems. Also, as more systems come online through-out the State the total funding pool does not increase, the same amount of money is spread across more users.
- It is challenging to find good, quality drivers who are willing to work the part-time schedule of the Brandon Transit system.

## Brandon City Transit Goals and Strategies

In diagnosing some of the barriers and gaps associated with efficient coordinated transportation and service coverage, the following five goals statements can be made to address these perceived deficiencies. Clear opportunities for achieving these goals were evident at the public and stakeholder meeting.

### Goal Statements

**Goal #1:** Offer affordable transportation that can meet a variety of demands including repeating rides, select on demand trips, and rides for those that require accessible vehicle accommodations.

**Goal #2:** Provide adequate information to inform the public about all public transportation options and how to access them.

**Goal #3:** Provide a public transit service with a span of service and capacity that meets user needs.

**Goal #4:** Locally coordinate transit service so that it minimizes geographic gaps in coverage and duplication of service.

**Goal #5:** The available modes of transportation should grow with the community and be appropriate given demand.

There are several strategies, long-term activities and short-term tactics, that became evident through the public and stakeholder meeting that could help the system achieve the stated goals. Short-term tactics are designed to be implemented with-in a three-year time frame while long-term activities will take place either further out that three years or are ongoing strategies that are continuous in nature.

<i>Goal:</i>	<i>Offer affordable transportation that can meet a variety of demands including repeating rides, select on demand trips, and rides for those that require accessible vehicle accommodations.</i>	
Strategy:	Target senior citizen-centric activities to promote the availability of public transit.	Short-term
Strategy:	Actively communicate with elder care facilities, schools, and day cares to receive input to ensure that current service models are meeting their client's needs.	Short-term
Strategy:	Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the impact of expanding service hours.	Long-term
<i>Goal:</i>	<i>Provide adequate information to inform the public about all public transportation options and how to access them.</i>	
Strategy:	Increase public outreach through creating a stronger on-line and print presence by highlighting the system on the City website, through City newspapers, and by targeting typical destinations to post information about the transit system.	Short-term

Strategy:	Create a forum through which current and potential riders can start a dialog with the transit system to offer ideas for improvements and explain their needs.	Long-term
<i>Goal: Provide a public transit service with a span of service and capacity that meets user needs.</i>		
Strategy:	Explore the feasibility of expanding service hours.	Long-term
Strategy:	Explore the feasibility of expanding the fleet with larger busses to meet needs during peak times. This would also require an analysis of the system’s ability to find and train drivers that can fulfil all the licensing requirements that come with operating a larger vehicle.	Long-term
Strategy:	Explore the feasibility of moving the position of dispatcher from part-time to full-time.	Long-term
<i>Goal: Locally coordinate transit service so that it minimizes geographic gaps in coverage and duplication of service.</i>		
Strategy:	Map out daily rides to create the most efficient route between destinations. Attempt to avoid routes that double back or excessively retread the same locations.	Short-term
Strategy:	Coordinate between transit dispatch and city hall to know when road closures or maintenance are planned that may affect the transit schedule or routes.	Short-term
<i>Goal: The available modes of transportation should grow with the community and be appropriate given demand.</i>		
Strategy:	Explore the feasibility of expanding the fleet with larger busses to meet needs during peak times. This would also require an analysis of the system’s ability to find and train drivers that can fulfil all the requirements that come with operating a larger vehicle.	Long-term
Strategy:	Explore the potential of expanding the bus barn to be able to continue to store entire fleet indoors.	Long-term

**Conclusion**

The fundamental purpose of a locally developed public transit human service transportation coordination plan is to identify transportation needs within a community and connect them with strategies to improve service. In addition, transit stakeholders in the city of Brandon can refer to these strategies when applying for FTA or other federal funds to support public and specialized transit projects.