- Lack of regional partnerships among healthcare providers to reduce fares for rides to medical facilities in the Region.
- Lack of transit services during evening and weekend hours.
- Need for all transportation services, including Uber and Lyft, to be accessible to people with disabilities.

- Additional Needs
  - There is a need to broaden the categories of individuals who are eligible to use human services transportation.
  - There is a need to remove stipulations that make it difficult for transit providers to obtain liability insurance for trips that cross county borders.

V. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS UNMET NEEDS

This Coordination Plan presents two types of strategies for Walworth County to consider in addressing the identified transportation needs in the County. The first section is a list of Federal and State funding programs that support public transportation services. The second section includes strategies that were identified by participants at the meeting for the development of the Coordination Plan.

Financial Strategies: Federal and State Funding Programs
Descriptions of the Federal and State programs that provide financial assistance for public transportation services and which could be used in Walworth County are illustrated in Tables 3 and 4. More information on Federal and State funding programs can be found on WisDOT's website (http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/transit/default.aspx). In addition to the Federal and State programs shown in Tables 3 and 4, which are aimed primarily at providing transportation services, various human-service funding programs and block grant programs can be used for transportation services.

Prioritized Strategies to Address Unmet Needs
Attendees of the Coordination Planning meeting were asked to develop strategies to address the unmet needs that they had already identified. At the meeting, Commission staff provided information on strategies proposed in the 2012 Coordination Plans to illustrate potential strategies to improve transportation service.

The small groups of participants from within the same county were asked to follow up their identification of unmet needs with a list of strategies to address those needs. That discussion resulted in the following prioritized list of strategies that the participants believed were appropriate for Walworth County.

<u>Strategies for Addressing Unmet Travel Needs within Walworth County</u>

1. Continue to fund a mobility manager position for the County whose duties could include, but would not be limited to:
   a. Assisting in coordinating transportation services.
   b. Promoting the availability of transportation services.
   c. Gathering and analyzing data to evaluate a variety of transportation options for seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income residents.

Table 3
Federal Transit Administration Funding Programs Administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Which Could Be Used in Walworth County

Program	Type	Target rider	Eligible Applicants	Local Share (approx.)	Statewide Funding Level (approx.)	Application Cycle	Notes
Section 5307	Operating & Capital	Public in urbanized areas (>50,000)	Local public bodies	20% for capital projects 50% of deficit for operating projects	$49.3 million	Annual (application released in summer)	Combined with State aid (s. 85.20) to cover approximately 55% of operating expenses in urbanized areas. Job Access and Reverse Commute activities are eligible projects.
Section 5309	Capital	Public	Local public bodies with Urban Public Transit Systems	20% of total costs	N/A	Capital requests are competitively granted by the FTA	For fixed guideway transit capital investments
Section 5310	Capital	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Primarily non-profits, but can be local public bodies, if non-profit is not readily available	20% for capital projects 50% of deficit for operating projects	$4.7 million	Annual (application released in summer)	Combined with State funds (s.85.22). Expanded to include non-traditional projects such as mobility management, operating, and non-vehicle capital previously authorized under the Section 5317 New Freedom program.
Section 5311	Operating & Capital	Public in areas <50,000 in population	Local public bodies	Operating – 50% of project deficit Capital - 20% of total costs	$16.0 million	Annual (application released in early fall)	Combined with State aid (s. 85.20), to cover approximately 60% of operating expenses in non-urbanized areas. Job Access and Reverse Commute activities are eligible projects.
Section 5337	Capital	Public	Local Public Bodies	20% of total costs	$1.4 million	Annual (application released in early fall)	Capital funds for the maintenance of fixed guideway transit and transit that operates in HOV lanes
Section 5339	Capital	Public	Local Public Bodies	20% of total costs	$6.3 million	Annual (application released in early fall)	Capital funds for the replacement and repair of buses and bus facilities

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation and SEWRPC

d. Developing strategies to obtain funding for projects that would improve or increase the transportation services available in the County.

e. Working with the Transportation Coordinating Committee to improve transportation services in the County.

f. Studying opportunities for implementing a voucher program for low-income residents.

2. Improve the convenience of using transportation services within Walworth County and between Walworth County and adjacent counties. For example, the shared-ride taxi serving the City of Whitewater could expand the days and hours of its transportation services.

3. Study ways to expand the eligibility of the County Health and Human Services Department's transportation services to serve more residents and trip purposes.

4. Purchase new vehicles to accommodate the demand for transportation services and maintain or improve the level of service offered.

5. Establish automobile purchase and repair programs directed at low-income workers who cannot use public transportation to get to jobs.

Table 4
State of Wisconsin Funding Programs Administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Program	Type	Target rider	Eligible Applicants	Local Share (approx.)	Annual Statewide Funding Level (approx.)	Application Cycle	Notes
§.85.20	Operating	Public in areas with at least 2,500 in population	Local public bodies	Rural 35% of total cost Urban 42% of total cost	$113.5 million	Annual (application due in fall)	Combined with Federal transit operating assistance funds (5311 & 5307)
§.85.205	Operating	People with Disabilities	Local public bodies	Varies (no explicit matching requirement)	$2.75 million	Annual	Provided as supplement to §.85.20 urban mass transit aids for systems that provide paratransit service
§.85.21	Operating & Capital	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Counties	20% of project costs	$13.8 million	Annual (application released in fall)	Can be used as match for Federal programs
§.85.22	Capital	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Primarily non-profits, but can be local public bodies	20% of total costs	$0.9 million	Annual (application released in summer)	Blended with Federal Section 5310 funds
TEAM (Trans. Employment and Mobility)	Operating & Capital	Low-income workers	Local public bodies, non-profits, metropolitan planning organizations	25% of project costs under WETAP	$333,000 (WisDOT)	Annual (WETAP application released in early fall)	Combined with ETA (State) under the WETAP program
ETA (Employment Transit Aids)	Operating & Capital	Low-income workers	Local public bodies, non-profits, metropolitan planning organizations	25% of project costs under WETAP	$465,000 (WisDOT and DWD)	Annual (WETAP application released in early fall)	Combined with TEAM (State) under the WETAP program

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation and SEWRPC

The small groups with participants from multiple counties were asked to use their previously created list of unmet transportation needs for the Region to guide the development of regional strategies, and then each group informed the remainder of the participants at the meeting of their suggested strategies. As each group presented, other participants were asked to indicate if their group had also identified that strategy by a show of hands. The following prioritized list of strategies summarizes the preferred strategies to address the Region's unmet transportation needs.

<u>Strategies for Addressing Unmet Travel Needs between Counties</u>

1. Establish a regional transit authority with a dedicated funding source.
2. Encourage transit agencies to create memorandums of agreement or understanding that create transit connections between counties and establish procedures for funding these services. These agreements could also encourage municipalities not involved in providing transit to participate in these services and could create a coalition or task force that implements a partnership plan among transit providers. Local municipalities should research additional funding opportunities, such as private funding options, to increase transportation options for employment and medical trips.

3. Create a staffed call center for information about all public transit and human services transportation in the Region. This call center could be built from the existing Southeast Wisconsin Transit Systems marketing partnership. The call center could coordinate either a one-call, one-click service or a shared transportation website that would work in cooperation with the statewide 211 service to increase public awareness of these services. This call center could also provide a shared regional transportation database of available transportation options in which each county is responsible for maintaining and updating its information and for compiling data regarding transportation use and needs.
4. Until a regional transit authority is established, improve and strengthen services that cross county lines to increase transportation access to jobs, medical facilities, and other social and recreational activities. Develop new inter-county services connecting areas of high unemployment to large companies within the Region who are unable to meet their workforce needs. Encourage employers to offer transit passes or other benefits to their employees as an incentive for taking the inter-county transit services. Consider subsidizing extended service hours on existing taxi services to provide employment and medical trips. Encourage coordination between large employers and medical providers to better assess transportation needs of employees and patients. Encourage transit providers to serve more senior centers and nursing homes.
5. Purchase new accessible vehicles, vans, and buses for all transportation services, including Uber and Lyft.
6. In lieu of a regional transit authority, the State should develop rules, policies, and procedures to guide the development and operation of local transit systems. Legislation by the State should also encourage transit systems that serve multiple counties to collaborate on the identification and achievement of shared goals.
7. Increase funding for mobility managers to assist them in coordinating transportation services across county lines. Funded activities conducted by mobility managers could include coordinating community engagement in the transportation planning process, dispersing information on transit services to the public, and coordinating with local non-profit agencies to increase the number of volunteer driver programs in the Region. A liaison responsible for coordinating with all mobility managers in the Region should also be considered.
8. Establish consistent fare structures, eligibility requirements, and service hours for similar types of service in all counties. A standard fee structure should be considered for travel between counties. A regionally recognized transportation pass for transit dependent populations should be considered that is accepted by all transit providers. Consistent service hours should be established for transit providers that cross county lines. These efforts will increase clarity and understanding by the public concerning services and how to use them.
9. Increase non-urgent medical transportation options for individuals not eligible for Medicaid.
10. Increase the availability of demand response services outside of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Washington Counties.

VI. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Attendees of the Coordination Planning meeting were also asked to consider who should be responsible for implementing each of the identified strategies. Some of the potential responsible parties that the Walworth County participants identified are listed below.

Walworth County

- Walworth County would consolidate and share transportation resources.
- Walworth County would be responsible for studying ways to expand transportation services, including the County Department of Health and Human Services transportation services to serve more residents and trip purposes.
- Walworth County would improve the convenience of transportation services for travel both within and outside the County.
- Walworth County would continue working with the transportation coordinating committee to implement the identified coordination strategies and recommend actions to County officials.

Mobility Manager

- The County's mobility manager would be responsible for promoting increases in local, State, and Federal funding levels for transportation programs and better coordination of program eligibility and reporting requirements to improve service availability and convenience.
- The County's mobility manager would be responsible for developing strategies to obtain funding for projects that would improve or increase the transportation services available in the County.
- With the authorization of the County Board, the County's mobility manager would continue staffing a transportation coordinating committee for the County, which would be responsible for pursuing the fulfillment of the unmet needs and associated strategies listed earlier in this Plan.

All Transportation Providers

- Transportation providers would study ways to increase transportation options that are available during evenings and weekends.
- Transportation providers would consolidate and share transportation resources.