V. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS UNMET NEEDS

This Coordination Plan presents two types of strategies for Milwaukee 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 Milwaukee 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 Milwaukee County.

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

1. Create new or expand upon existing partnerships with municipal governments and human services providers to provide more transit options to currently underserved areas in the County.
2. Pursue dedicated and sustainable sources of funding for public transportation services from all levels of government. Promote increases for public transportation services to make improvements to service availability, convenience, safety, and lower fares. Continue to develop strategies to obtain funding for projects that would improve or increase the transportation services available in the County.
3. Improve access to information on the available transportation services. Some ways to improve the dissemination of information and determination of eligibility requirements include:
    a. Support and expand travel training programs for potential users of transportation services relating to available services and information on free or reduced fares.
    b. Develop a coordinated call center that provides information on all transportation services within the County. This centralized source for information could also include 211 community information or 511 traveler information services.
    c. Create an online directory of transportation providers.

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

4. Pursue a greater reimbursement rate for medical transportation services from State and Federal governments.
5. Support community planning by local governments within the County that integrates public transit routes and stops into new residential and commercial developments.
6. Improve the availability, convenience, safety, and security of transportation services. Some of the improvements that were identified include:
   a. Extend the service area and days and hours of operation for transportation services.
   b. Provide more frequent service on MCTS bus routes.
   c. Provide customer service training to bus drivers, human services providers, and taxi cab drivers to better meet the needs of users of these services.
   d. Improve the accessibility of transportation services to seniors and people with disabilities by using more accessible vehicles, removing physical barriers that impede access to transportation, and making accessibility improvements at bus stops.
   e. Support bus rapid transit and other express transit services that reduce transit travel time.

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

f. Improve snow removal at bus stops and at nearby sidewalks and pedestrian crossings. Establish 'adopt-a-stop' programs for maintenance and snow removal at bus stops.

g. Support the implementation of 'complete streets' concepts into road design and construction related to infrastructure that provides safe and convenient travel for all roadway users, including transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

h. Support and maintain an automated bus stop announcement system.

i. Include signage in braille at bus stops for travel information and passenger announcements.

7. Analyze transit routes to identify current gaps in transit service and areas not served by public bus routes. Transit agencies should implement new routes or modify existing routes to address these gaps and underserved areas. Transit agencies should also identify changes to routes that would improve connections for seniors and other transit users to medical facilities, jobs, and other essential services.

8. Prioritize investment in new or expanded routes and in service improvements to provide seniors, people with disabilities, and low-

income residents of the County with better access to employment opportunities, medical facilities, and social activities.

9. Expand reverse commute bus services for connecting low-income people within the County to jobs in other counties.
10. Continue to fund a mobility manager position with MCTS or 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.
11. Engage local businesses to develop funding partnerships for transit services.
12. Support auto purchase and repair programs and driver's license recovery programs directed at low-income workers who cannot use public transportation to get to jobs.
13. Provide transportation services for low-income and disabled job seekers enrolled in job skills training or transitional jobs programs.
14. Promote and expand childcare transportation services within the County to enable parents in low-income families to obtain and retain employment.

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 Milwaukee County participants identified are listed below.

Milwaukee County

- Milwaukee County would be responsible for improving the availability, convenience, safety, and security of the fixed-route and paratransit services offered by MCTS or the services provided by the Department on Aging.
- Milwaukee County would implement new routes or modify existing

routes to address gaps in transit service and areas not served by transit.

- A transportation coordinating committee could be established to guide the implementation of the proposed coordination strategies.

Mobility Managers

- The County's mobility managers could facilitate the communication and coordination necessary to consider how transportation providers and agencies in Milwaukee County and the Region might share resources.
- The County's mobility managers would coordinate with the community and other MCTS staff to identify changes to bus routes that address existing gaps in service.
- The County's mobility managers would help develop a common eligibility determination for services or reciprocity agreement for transportation services both within Milwaukee County and between the County and surrounding counties.
- The County's mobility managers would improve access to information on the available transportation services and continue work on a travel training program.

All Transportation Providers

- Transportation providers would improve access to information on the transportation services provided.
- Transportation providers would work to create new or expand upon partnerships that provide more transit options to underserved areas.

All Parties

- All interested parties, including the County and its municipalities, should advocate for increased transit funding, including additional State funding and the establishment of dedicated local funding for public transportation.