

2019

Northwest Regional Development  
Commission  
Regional Transportation  
Coordinating Council

Operational Plan

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## Introduction

### About Northwest Regional Development Commission

The Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC) is a regional planning and development organization that serves seven counties in Northwest Minnesota. Counties served include; Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Polk, and Norman. The NWRDC's goal is to supplement efforts by local units of government to maintain our economic strength and improve the quality of life in Northwest Minnesota.

The NWRDC has a strong relationship with the transit providers within the region and feels our leadership in the transportation sector will help in developing coordinated transportation services for all the users in the NWRDC Region .

### Project Background

The Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, worked with the Metropolitan Council and other local governments and organizations to create regional transportation coordinating councils as appropriate throughout Minnesota. Coordination between transportation providers and service agencies has been a goal and strategy to fill transportation gaps, provide more service with the same or fewer resources, streamline access to transportation and provide customers more options of where and when to travel.

The state agencies provide support for creating a statewide framework of 8-10 Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils throughout Minnesota in order to break down transportation barriers and offer a seamless system of transportation services. The Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils will be responsible for coordinating transportation services through a network of existing public, private and non-profit transportation providers.

MnDOT solicited a RFP for RTCC Organizational Grants in the fall 2017, and the NWRDC was awarded the grant for fiscal year 2019. This RTCC organizational development plan coverage area includes all seven counties within the NWRDC Region.

### What is a RTCC

Minnesota Department of Transportation describes RTCCs as consisting of stakeholders interested in improving mobility for “transportation disadvantaged” – older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals with low incomes, and/or military veterans. The most successful RTCC will include representatives from a wide range of agencies and interests.

RTCC board membership will be diverse and as comprehensive as possible, and include representatives from the region's county department of social services, county commissioners from each of the 7-counties, Minnesota Area Agencies on Aging, Workforce Development, transportation providers, human services agencies, transportation and human services advocates, veteran service organizations, health care providers, private employment firms, Centers for Independent Living and public and private funders of transportation services. RTCC's use *Mobility Management* to promote transportation and provide services to members and population.

## What Is Coordination?

According to the Federal Transit Agency, 80 programs fund transportation services for specific populations, including disadvantaged people. Coordinating individual human service transportation programs makes the most efficient use of transportation resources by avoiding duplication of program efforts and encouraging the use and sharing of existing community resources. In communities where coordination is made a priority, citizens benefit from more extensive service, lower costs and easier access to transportation. Mobility managers lead coordination efforts with their extensive knowledge in regional transportation.

## Mobility Management

Mobility Management is managing and delivering coordinated transportation services to the public by meeting the needs of the individual using a wide range of transportation options and service providers. Mobility managers function as policy coordinators, operation service brokers, and customer travel navigators. Unlike transportation service managers, mobility management focuses on individual needs instead of system improvements. The best term to describe mobility management is being a “one-stop shop” or “one call” system to obtain and coordinate transportation options.

## Goal & Objectives

### Goals:

- Expand transportation options for underserved populations
- Develop better collaboration between transportation providers within the region
- Be a central source of public transportation information
- Provide planning and strategic expertise to transportation providers
- Arrange personalized transportation request that cross multi-jurisdictional boundaries

### Objectives:

- Understand current services and the gaps in service that would help meet transportation needs.
- Maintain transportation barriers through creative partnerships
- Create the most effective organizational structure needed to have a positive impact on transportation access
- Become a primary transportation resource for the region
- Leverage technology to increase availability and effectiveness of transportation options.

## Membership

The Northwest Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (NWRTPCC) will serve as an advising and technical committee to the Northwest Regional Development Commission. The NWRTPCC is comprised of 29 members, of which 17 are voting members. The voting membership consists of one county commissioner from each of the NWRDC Counties, social services, transit providers, health care provider, veteran

services, business sector, RDC board member. The by-laws of the NWRTPCC are available in Appendix A of this document.

## Vision

The vision of the RTCC is to provide affordable efficient, and seamless transit services regionwide. Transit services will focus on elderly, persons with disabilities, low income, and veterans.

## Goals & Strategies of RTCC

### Goals

**Goal 1: develop coordination between human service agencies, providers, and the public to provide efficient movement of passengers**

#### Strategies:

- 1.1 Formation of the RTCC that will meet quarterly to discuss ways to better coordinate services
- 1.2 Continue to improve coordination between agencies and providers
- 1.3 Work with transportation service providers and others to serve currently unmet transportation needs.

**Goal 2: Increase the efficiency of transportation services for public and human service clients**

#### Strategies:

- 2.1 Work with transportation service providers and others to develop processes to allow grouping of trips funded by multiple agencies or programs.
- 2.2 Work with transportation providers to identify operational and business functions of services that can be coordinated across agencies.
- 2.3 Work with transportation service providers and governmental agencies to develop intermodal facilities that allow for seamless transfers between transportation modes.
- 2.4 Advocate for public and private sector agencies to make land use planning and facility location decisions based on availability and location of public transportation.

**Goal 3: Expand transportation options for underserved populations**

#### Strategies:

- 3.1 Increase availability of non-public transportation options
- 3.2 Expand volunteer driver programs

- 3.3 Work with non-transportation organizations to improve services
- 3.4 Continually identify transportation barriers and solutions

**Goal 4: Be a central source of public transportation information**

**Strategies:**

- 4.1 Maintain a database of public & private transportation providers
- 4.2 Provide public transportation outreach
- 4.3 Answer request for transportation information

**Goal 5: Provide planning and strategic expertise to transportation providers**

**Strategies:**

- 5.1 Be an advocate for public transportation & mobility disadvantaged individuals
- 5.2 Apply for grants on behalf of the RTCC that assist in providing efficient transportation within the service area
- 5.3 Assist local transportation providers in grant research, funding, & writing
- 5.4 Stay updated on MnDOT, FTA, and other transportation agency regulations
- 5.5 Research transportation best practices

**Goal 6: Arrange personalized transportation request that cross multi-jurisdictional boundaries.**

**Strategies:**

- 6.1 Work with other RTCC's and non-regional transportation providers
- 6.2 Identify out of network transport options
- 6.3 Track & document unique transportation requests

## Identified Regional Transportation Gaps/Needs

The 2017 Local Human Service Public Transit Coordination Plan identified transit service gaps and needs both locally and region-wide

### Region Wide

- No transit services for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> work shifts in several cities.
- No transit service available from hospital after hour visits
- Lack of qualified bus drivers
- Lack of volunteers
- Need for heated shop
- Centralized contact for transit services
- Mobility Manager was needed
- Lack of vehicles
- Limited English Proficiency

- Marketing
- Flexibility in service hours
- Lack of service
- Develop phone App
- After-hours public transportation options
- Information on available providers
- Provider insurance requirements
- Improved access to communities/medical sites

## Multi-Year Work plan

The transportation gaps and needs in the NWR TCC region is varied and will require time and resources to develop sustainable solutions. The following work plan will change and develop as needed transit services are identified to provide the most effective use of transit services for the public.

### Year 1

- Identify inventory and shareability assets
- Create a database of public, private, and non-profit transportation providers
- Design and publish a regional transportation guide
- Increase volunteer driver availability
- Increase transportation options to reach community meal sites
- Work on the coordination of clinic visits with community trips

### Year 2

- Develop a regional wide travel trainer program
- Provide access to more vehicles
- Increase the number of accessible vans for remote pick-up
- Create an online, publically available map for trip planning
- Create a vehicle share network between non-profit organizations
- Increase available of “after hours” transportation for home bound individuals
- Implement a community-wide religious based transportation service

### Years 3+

- Develop a mobile transportation-based application
- Coordinate transit exchanges from one provider to another
- Secure long-term funding for RTCC program, including supplemental services
- Implement GPS Tracking system

## Duties of Mobility Manager

The RTCC will be led by a mobility manager who will provide operational and administrative support to the organization. This person in this position will serve as the

primary contact between transportation providers and the NWRRTCC. Other duties of the mobility manager include but are not limited to the following:

- Identify local mobility needs and create partnerships to fill gaps in service.
- Promote local mobility and transportation improvements to service providers, planning staff, and local/state officials.
- Assist in individual trip planning for car-free transportation outside local transit and the NWRRTCC service area.
- Cultivate direct working relationships, partnerships and coordination with local service providers, local elected officials, and public entities
- Enhance communication between local transportation providers, social service networks, and the general public
- Provide technical support and guidance to local transportation providers in promoting new routes, system improvements, or other service enhancements
- Participate in mobility management and transportation related meetings
- Develop and distribute materials, such as maps and reports, and organize events and activities about mobility and transportation to service providers, local officials, agencies, and the general public
- Advocate and assist local entities with the development of funding resources.
- Coordinate local/regional planning with an understanding of community players, and transportation and land use resources.
- Offer training to local transportation providers and potential network users
- Update local mobility plans in accordance with FTA and MnDOT guidelines;
- Communicate best practices within the NWRRTCC region and encourage statewide improvement processes
- Assists local service providers to better understand rules, regulations and guidelines

## Meeting Schedule

The NWRRTCC will meet at a minimum four times per year, preferably once every quarter. Additional meetings maybe called/scheduled as needed. All meetings will be open to the public as required by Minnesota statute. Additional information about meetings and public participation can be found in the Public Participation Plan.

## Organizational Resources for Implementation

The NWRRTCC will use a variety of resources and funds to operate a successful regional coordination system. Staff will continually identify best practices, seek funding opportunities for both the RTCC and transportation organizations, and provide technical support to local providers. Some examples include but are not limited to the following:

### Federal

United We Ride Initiative

FTA Coordinating Council on Access Mobility

FTA Funding Sources



## State

Minnesota Council on Transportation Access

MnDOT Office of Transit

MnDOT RTCC Database

University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies

## Local

Local Government Funds

Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan

Local Transit Providers Service Plans

NWRDC Funding and Staffing

## Other

Other Non-Profit Foundations

Supplemental Funding

# Public & Stakeholder Engagement

## Ongoing Process

The NWRRTCC will hold a minimum of two meetings per year to discuss transportation barriers, issues, and solutions within the region from the public at large. The NWRRTCC will make attempts to solicit input from community members while participating in events or other projects around the region. Stakeholders will be encouraged to inform the NWRRTCC of issues facing their customers or community. The NWRRTCC also share best practices with stakeholders to promote efficiency and effective transportation strategies.

## Public Participation Plan

NWRRTCC has created a Public Participation Plan to provide guidance on obtaining public and stakeholder engagement. NWRRTCC strongly believes quality public and stakeholder engagement is required for successful coordination activities. Detailed information about the Plan can be found in Appendix C of this document.

# Appendix A: By-Laws

(BYLAWS)  
OF THE NORTHWEST REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION  
COUNCIL ADVISORY BOARD

## ARTICLE I

### Offices/Jurisdiction/Location

The registered offices shall be in the Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC) headquartered in the City of Warren, County of Marshall, State of Minnesota. The jurisdiction or geographic boundary for which the NWRDC Advisory Board shall function, and shall consist of are the counties of Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Polk, and Norman. These are all located in the NWRDC 7-County Region identified by the State of Minnesota. Mailing address of this registered office is 109 South Minnesota St., Warren, MN 56762.

## ARTICLE II

### Purpose

“To promote the transit coordination services within and amongst the transit providers in the NWRDC 7-county service area. Maintain an integrated transit network in Region One which helps to identify unmet personal mobility needs of the 7-county NWRDC Region residents, facilitate coordination between providers or transit services, increase access to services and commerce centers, remedy the lack of availability of transportation alternatives, help to facilitate public awareness of available transportation options available within the region, advise the NWRDC on planning, policy, and other matters related to the provision of transit services.

## Article III

### Role

Provide local input into the service availability of the regional transit providers. Develop recommended operating procedures to best serve the public with limited vehicles and funds serving Region One.

Identify any transportation issues where joint planning between transit providers, local units of government and the state could substantially improve transportation services.

Identify transportation issues where coordination between transit providers and local units of government could improve transportation services.

Assist local units of government, the state, and transit providers to address identified transit issues and concerns.

#### **ARTICLE IV**

##### **Appointing Authority**

The Northwest Regional Development Commission established the NW Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (NWRDC) on (April 2, 2019)

#### **ARTICLE V**

##### **Membership**

The committee membership shall be comprised of a county commissioner from each of the NWRDC seven counties, region transit providers, veteran service organizations, county social services, area agency on aging, disability service providers, medical services representative, workforce development, and NWRDC board member(s). Each member may select an alternate member to serve as proxy in case a regular member cannot attend. The alternate will have voting status. The NWRDC Board may appoint other members as appropriate, they may also eliminate positions if deemed that board is too large.

The process for appointment to the committee will be as follows:

The respective governing body shall make a recommendation to the NWRDC Board of Directors for appointment to the NWRDC Advisory Board.

For all other positions on the advisory board, the board will review and make recommendations to the NWRDC Board of Directors for their appointment.

The committee may invite persons having expertise in transit to serve as non-voting ex-officio members (i.e. industry liaisons).

A member may terminate his/her membership on the committee by submitting a letter of resignation to the chairperson of the committee.

Any member who is absent from three consecutive meetings of the committee shall be contacted to determine if the individual wishes to continue serving on the committee. Unless there is a strong interest the member should be replaced. The board he/she represents will also be notified. If a satisfactory explanation of the absence is provided, and the chairperson so notes it on the records of the board, the person may continue to serve. Lacking such an explanation, the position shall be considered vacant and filled by contacting that respective governing body.

Members are entitled to reimbursements for all reasonable travel and related expense incurred in attendance at meetings if not reimbursed by representing agency, and in the performance of duties on behalf of the board. Schedules of reimbursable expenses shall be prescribed by the policies of the NWRDC. Members are only reimbursable by one governing entity.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Officers**

The officers of the advisory board shall be a chairperson and a vice-chairperson. The advisory board may also elect to have a secretary, who does not need to be a member of the membership.

The advisory board chairperson and vice-chairperson shall be elected on a 3-year basis, by a majority of the voting membership of the committee. The chairperson and vice-chairperson shall be voting members. Half of the advisory board will be elected to 2-year terms, the other half will be voted into 3-year terms.

The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the members and shall be in charge of the day-to-day operations of the advisory board.

The vice-chairperson shall exercise the functions of the chairperson during the absence or disability of the chairperson. Should the chairperson, for any reason, leave office prior to the expiration of his/her term, the vice-chairman shall assume the position of the chairperson, for the unexpired term.

In the case of absence or inability to act of any officer of the committee and of any persons herein authorized to act in his place, the committee may from time-to-time delegate the powers or duties of such member to any other officer, or other person whom it may select.

The advisory board at any regular or special meeting may fill vacancies in any office arising from any cause.

The committee may appoint such other officers, as it may deem necessary to expedite. Said officers shall hold their offices for such terms and shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as shall be determined from time-to-time by the advisory board.

The secretary or NWRDC staff person shall issue notice for all meetings, shall keep minutes of all meetings, shall make such reports and perform such other duties as are incident to his/her office, or are properly required of him/her by the advisory board.

A complete list of the voting membership shall be prepared by the secretary or staff person, such list shall be available in the office where the election or meeting is held and shall, at all times, be open to examination by the members.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Meetings**

The meetings may be held at the Tri-Valley Bus facility located at 524 Barzan Avenue, Thief River Falls, MN. Public meetings will be held throughout the region at times that best fit the public.

The committee shall meet Quarterly on the first Wednesday of the respective month. July, October, January, and April.

Written notices of the time and place of the meeting of members shall be given at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

Special meetings may be called as needed by the chairperson, subject to three-calendar day notice of meeting time and place to each member.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Voting and Quorum**

The voting at all meetings of the membership may be by voice vote, but any qualified voter may demand a written ballot, whereupon such vote may be taken. At any meeting of the members, each member shall be entitled to one vote. There shall be proxy votes.

Presence at any meeting in person of fifty-one (51) percent of the total-voting members shall constitute a quorum for all transaction of business. For meetings lacking a quorum, business can be conducted; however, all actions must be approved at the next regular meeting having a quorum present. Vacant positions on the committee will not be considered in determining a quorum.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Sub-Committees**

The committee may establish a sub-committee to deal with general or specific areas of concern. Members of such sub-committees shall be volunteers or appointed by the chairperson and approved by the membership of the advisory board.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Conflict of Interest**

The conflict of interest policy for the committee shall be as follows:

No committee member shall participate or vote in a deliberation relating to issues or proposals in which he/she has a conflict of interest.

Conflict of interest is defined as a vote upon any questions or action which would result in a direct or indirect benefit to said person.

Direct or indirect benefit shall include but is not limited to any action or decision which results in a personal financial gain to said individual or to his or her spouse or minor children. It shall also include any action or decision which could result in a benefit to any governmental unit, agency, private or non-profit organization which employs said individual in a capacity as a regular or temporary employee or as a consultant.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Agency Authority**

No action by this advisory board shall bind or alter the power or authority of the NWRDC.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **Amendments**

Amendments to these procedures, which relate to items within the jurisdiction of the advisory board, may be enacted upon majority vote of the membership.

Notice of any alteration or amendment to these procedures shall be given in writing to each member at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting at which the proposed change shall be considered. In addition, the NWRDC board of directors, at the next regularly scheduled meeting, must approve changes which are not within the jurisdiction of the advisory board.

## **ARTICLE XIII OFFICERS**

Election and Term of Office. The Advisory Board shall elect the Officers from among themselves annually. Officers shall hold office until his/her successor shall have been duly elected.

Resignation. Any Officer may resign at any time by delivering to the resident or the Secretary a written resignation. Acceptance of any such resignation, unless required by the terms thereof, shall not be necessary to make the same effective.

Removal. Any Officer elected or appointed by the Advisory Board may be removed either with or without cause by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Advisory Board at a regular or special meeting of the Board whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Advisory Board would be best served thereby.

Vacancies. A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, may be filled by the Advisory Board for the unexpired portion of the term of the member being removed.

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Advisory Board and shall have such other powers and duties not inconsistent with these Bylaws as may be assigned to such person from time to time by the NWRDC Board of Directors and as provided by applicable law.

Vice Chair. The Vice Chair shall preside at all meeting in the absence of the Chair and shall have such other powers and duties not inconsistent with these Bylaws as may be assigned to such person from time to time by the NWRDC Board of Directors.

Secretary. The Secretary shall be custodian of all records and documents of the Advisory Board, shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the Advisory Board, and in general, shall perform all other duties not inconsistent with these Bylaws as are incidental to the office of Secretary, or as may from time to time be determined by the NWRDC Board of Directors.

Other Officers. This Advisory Board may have such other Officers and agents as may be deemed necessary by the NWRDC Board of Directors, who shall be appointed in such manner, have such duties, and hold their offices for such terms as may be determined by resolution of the NWRDC Board of Directors.

Compensation. The Officers and Directors of this Advisory Board may be paid such reasonable compensation for their services rendered to this Advisory Board in such capacities and be reimbursed for such reasonable expenses necessarily incurred by them in rendering such services as the NWRDC Board of Directors may from time to time determine to be directly in furtherance of the purpose of, and in the best interests of, this Organization.

## **ARTICLE LX CONTRACTS, CHECKS, DEPOSITS AND GIFTS**

Contracts. The Advisory Board may recommend to the NWRDC Board of Directors to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the NWRDC in furtherance of the objectives of the RTCC.

Funds. All funds designated in support of the RTCC shall be deposited in such banks or trust companies as the NWRDC Board of Directors shall designate, and shall be accounted for in a manner consistent with NWRDC financial



management protocols. Disbursements, as recommended by the RTCC and approved by the NWRDC Board of Directors, shall be withdrawn upon the order of the NWRDC Executive Director.

Gifts. The NWRDC Board of Directors may accept on behalf of the Advisory Board, at its discretion, any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for any purpose of the RTCC.

#### **ARTICLE XV BOOKS AND RECORDS**

The NWRDC shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its Advisory Board, and shall keep at the principal office a record giving the names and addresses of the members entitled to vote. All books and records of the Advisory Board may be inspected by any member, or any member's agent or attorney, for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

#### **ARTICLE XVI FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the Organization shall be July 1 through June 30.

#### **ARTICLE XVII WAIVER OF NOTICE**

Whenever any notice whatsoever is required to be given by these Bylaws or any of the corporate laws of the State of Minnesota, such notice may be waived in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before, at, or after the time stated therein or before, at or after the meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XVIII AMENDMENTS**

Amendments, additions, or repeal of the Bylaws shall require the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the full Advisory Board at a duly convened Board meeting and subsequent approval by the NWRDC Board of Directors. All Advisory Board members must receive two (2) weeks' notice of such meeting, specifying the changes being considered and the date, time, and place of the meeting. Any amendments, additions, or repeals of the Bylaws by the Board of Directors must be approved by the Northwest Regional Development Commission Board.

**CERTIFICATE**

The undersigned Secretary of the above Organization hereby certifies that the Bylaws set forth above are the Bylaws of the Organization in full force and effect as of July 1, 2019, as ratified by the Northwest Regional Development Commission.

Advisory Board Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NWRDC Board Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: NW Regional Transportation Coordinating Council Advisory Board (NWRCCAB)

Sharon Bring	Marshall County Commissioner
Chuck Flage	Red Lake County Commissioner
Don Jensen	Pennington County Commissioner
Leon Olson, <b>VICE CHAIR</b>	Kittson County Commissioner
Lezlie Grubich	Paul Bunyan Transit
Jerry Jacobson, <b>CHAIR</b>	Polk County Commissioner, NWRDC Commissioner
Kim Johnson	NWRDC Board of Directors
Glenda Phillipe	Roseau County
Marvin Gunderson	Norman County Commissioner
Brett Brandon	Marshall Co Veterans Services
Cassie Heidi	Fosston Transit
Cindy Pic, <b>SECRETARY</b>	Tri-Valley Transit
Ken Yutrzenka	Pennington Co Social Services
Nancy Ellis	East Grand Forks Transit
Rudy Finseth	R&L Ride Service McIntosh
Brian Carlson	Sanford Health
Rick Trontvet	Digi-Key

### **NON VOTING MEMBERS BELOW:**

Marcia Haglund	Tri-Valley Transit
Kristi Nelson	Red Lake Co Social Services
Tammy Haugen	DAC Thief River Falls
Tori Peterson	ODC Thief River Falls
Terri Koba	MPO East Grand Forks
Louis McLean	Thief River Falls/rider
Martin Howes	Roseau Co Veterans Services
David Bergin	Thief River Falls/rider
Darla Waldner	AAA NWRDC
Danica Robson	AAA NWRDC
Kent Ehrenstrom	MnDOT Office of Transit
Cindy Gjerswold	Tri-Valley Transit

## Appendix C: Public Participation Plan

### **WHY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The Northwest Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (NWRTPCC) believes public engagement encourages open communication between the council and community. It also allows for and encourages public feedback in the decision-making process. This document details the NWRTPCC's public engagement policy

### **WHO IT INVOLVES**

Procedures and policies under this document applies to any NWRTPCC regular or special meeting and informational sessions. All coordinating council members and mobility managers follow the public engagement plan.

### **WHEN TO APPLY PROCESS**

The NWRTPCC will provide a 30-day public notice for any regular scheduled meetings. Reasonable public notice will be given for any special meetings.

Extensive public engagement will be required before any meeting that is anticipated to have a quorum of voting members or when discussion will involve significantly impact a special population. Special populations include low income, disabled, elderly, minorities, and students.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Members of the public will be encouraged to provide feedback at all NWRTPCC gatherings. Plenty of time will be allowed at advertised meetings for public participation. Additionally, any external communication will provide contact information to reach the coordination council should the public have any questions, concerns, or comments.

### **LOCATION REQUIREMENTS**

The default location for NWRTPCC meetings will be at the Pennington County Joint Use Facility in Thief River Falls. However, attempts will be made to rotate scheduled meetings periodically to other locations within the NWRTPCC service area. Every site shall be easily reachable by the public during meeting time and will be handicap accessible.

### **OUTREACH EFFORTS**

Regular meetings of the NWRTPCC will be broadly promoted utilizing a variety of media. NWRTPCC will maintain a list of interested persons and electronically notify those persons about all upcoming meetings and updates. If available, any meetings will be posted on the NWRDC website, social media accounts, or other electronic communications. When deemed appropriate, the NWRTPCC will submit press releases about the organization's activities.

If any meeting or proposed activity will have a significant impact on a special population, every effort will be made to contact representative organizations of the affected group.

Every NWRRTCC meeting will require staff and visitors to document their attendance on a sign-in sheet. Basic information will include name and contact information. This information will be kept on file for a minimum of one year.

The NWRRTCC will keep a log of any complaints regarding the public engagement process which will be available for public review. Complaints will be investigated within a timely manner by the NWRRTCC and if necessary other agencies. The NWRRTCC will provide information to the complainant on the investigation and corrective actions.

### **REVISIONS TO THE PLAN**

Any amendments to this policy will require a majority vote of the NWRDC Board following recommendation from the NWRRTCC Advisory Board. This policy will be reviewed and if necessary, revised every 3-years. Any proposed changes to the public engagement process must be presented to the general population a minimum of 30 days before board approval.

## Appendix D: Limited English Proficiency Plan

### Plan Statement

The Northwest Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (NWRRTCC) will use this plan as a guide to provide meaningful access to transportation providers and customers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). In accordance with federal and state guidelines, the NWRRTCC will make reasonable efforts to provide or arrange free language assistance for its LEP clients when needed.

### Who Has Access to Assistance

A person who does not speak English as their primary language and/or who has limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English is considered a LEP individual and is entitled to language assistance with respect to the Northwest Regional Transportation Coordinating Council.

### Local Limited English Proficiency Demographics

According to the 2017 American Community Survey, less than 1% of people in NWRRTCC's service area is considered to have Limited English Proficiency. The two most common non-English languages in the region are Spanish and Hmong. The map below documents locations within the region which has the largest numbers of non-English speakers. However, LEP peoples also includes those that read and/or comprehend the English language at or below a fifth-grade level and not displayed on the included map.

### Meaningful Access

If a client asks for language assistance, and NWRRTCC determines the client is an LEP person and language assistance is necessary, the agency will make reasonable efforts to provide free assistance. Reasonable steps may cease to be reasonable if costs imposed substantially exceed benefits.

## Interpretation Process

Language assistance includes **interpretation** (oral or spoken transfer of a message from one language to another) and **translation** (written transfer of a message from one language to another). Options to obtain LEP assistance includes the following:

- 1) Calling language line services at 1-866-874-3972
- 2) Staff From Local Human Service Agencies
- 3) Editing Documents To A Standard 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Level

## The LEP Plan will be:

1. Part of the Northwest Regional Transportation Coordinating Council Operating Plan.
2. Available upon request from the Northwest Regional Development Commission office.
3. Reviewed and updated as needed by the NWRTPCC

