Best Practices for Addressing Youth Employment and Training Transportation

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ABOUT THE COUNCIL

The Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) serves as a clearinghouse to address transportation coordination topics from a statewide perspective. The Minnesota State Legislature established the group in 2010 (MN Statute 2010 174.285). The group includes member representatives from thirteen agencies. MCOTA's work focuses on increasing capacity to serve unmet transportation needs, improving quality of transit service, improving understanding and access to these services by the public, and achieving more cost-effective service delivery. In addition, fostering communication and cooperation between transportation agencies and social service organizations leads to the creation of new ideas and innovative strategies for transportation coordination and funding.

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BEST PRACTICES FOR ADDRESSING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING TRANSPORTATION

FINAL REPORT

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The State and Local Policy Program at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs aimed to fulfill the reports' goals by first understanding the current landscape of youth employment transportation issues. To this end, a survey was sent to youth in various employment and training programs throughout Minnesota. This report first provides a background of the issues and then analyzes the survey data. Then, recommendations are offered to address the issues identified in the analysis. Finally, relevant case studies are presented as working examples of the recommendations.

The survey, which only contained voluntary questions, captured information on respondent employment type, location, transportation mode, transportation issues, and demographic information. The analysis of the survey data showed that youth throughout the state are likely to face transportation issues. Employed and unemployed youth were roughly as likely to encounter transportation issues. The same occurred with disability status. However, breaking the data into regions – urban, rural, and suburban – showed marked difference. A much smaller proportion of respondents in urban areas reported transportation issues than the other two regions. It was then shown that unemployed youth with disabilities, particularly in suburban and rural areas, were most likely to face transportation issues. Viewing the transportation modes of each region, it is clear that areas where commuting by car, whether driving alone or carpooling, is associated with a higher likelihood of facing transportation issues. The report then offers recommendations tailored to the issues identified, highlighting the importance of transit and walking in areas with enough population density to support it, providing individualized rides to youth in less dense areas, and supporting transportation coordinating councils to ensure the transportation needs of youth throughout the state are met. The recommendations are further divided into manageable short, medium, and long-term goals. Finally, national, state, and local example transportation programs that align with the recommendations are listed.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) sponsored a study of youth employment transportation issues beginning in the Spring of 2018. The council required the report detail state and national examples of inventive programs that facilitate youth accessing jobs.

The State and Local Policy Program at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs aimed to fulfill the reports' goals by first understanding the current landscape of youth employment transportation issues. To this end, a survey was sent to youth in various employment and training programs throughout Minnesota. This report first provides a background of the issues and then analyzes the survey data. Then, recommendations are offered to address the issues identified in the analysis. Finally, relevant case studies are presented as working examples of the recommendations.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ACCESSIBILITY IN MINNESOTA

MCOTA identified transportation as the largest barrier youth in Minnesota face when seeking employment and training. Past surveys from youth have demonstrated this, especially in industries like construction and agriculture, which often require a mobile workforce. Other common difficulties arise in retail and service jobs, which often have start and end times beyond regular business hours, when riding transit and carpooling is most reliable.

Programs that effectively provide transportation for youth to access jobs are needed. There is no one-size-fits-all transportation policy, though. Transportation problems for youth living and working in urban areas are different from those living in an urban area and working in a suburban one, and vice versa. Youth wholly living and working in suburban and rural areas experience different challenges as well. Public transit may fulfill transportation needs within an urban area, but jobs in areas lacking the population density to support transit, even if the youth lives in the city, can seriously hamper their employment prospects. Some youth with disabilities face other challenges, such as requiring specialized vehicles to get around. A nuanced approach with multiple types of programs is needed to enable youth to reach their full potential.

Any policy, however, must fit in with the current policy framework in the state of Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has embarked upon a Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan (GMTIP). This initiative is part of the Olmstead Plan, enacted in 2013 to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities receive adequate services.[1] GMTIP's goal is to meet "at least 90 percent of total transit service needs in Greater Minnesota by July 1, 2025."[2] To this end, MnDOT is committing to

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[1] Minnesota Department of Human Services. "Putting the Promise of Olmstead into Practice: Minnesota's 2013 Olmstead Plan." November 1, 2013. Page 7.
<https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/olmstead/documents/pub/dhs16_180147.pdf>.
[2] Dunlap, Sara. "Greater MN Transit Investment Plan: Service Plan." *Presentation to the Greater MN Transit Providers*. January 23rd, 2017.

providing quality public transit in every town with a population greater than 2,500 people (this also excludes unincorporated areas). This includes expanding service to run on weekends and evenings, which is non-existent in many towns. To draw federal funding, though, transit operations must be ADA-compliant. Cities can fund their own individualized transit, such as paying for Lyft or Uber, but since these services are not ADA-compliant, they are ineligible for further enhanced funding.

MnDOT also uses the Section 5310 program for Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & People with Disabilities, a Federal Transit Authority discretionary capital assistance program.[3] 5310 disburses funds to non-profits to help the elderly and people with disabilities get around. The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), which was in place to help low-income people get transportation to jobs, was merged into 5310.[4] A crucial distinction between the two programs is how their funds can be spent in the state of Minnesota. Under JARC, funding could be used to purchase vehicles, cover their operation, and more broadly purchase transportation. Per MnDOT policy, 5310 funds, though, are only allowed to be spent on purchasing vehicles, not on maintenance or purchasing transportation.

Given that youth living in different places encounter different transportation issues and that programs to address these issues operate under a specific framework, opportunities for new and innovative policies exist. An assiduous evaluation could help best practices be carried out, and the lives of youth made better.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THIS STUDY

In study after study on the barriers youth face to be economically and socially self-sufficient, one challenge constantly emerges: the lack of adequate transportation. Employers are often willing to provide initial job opportunities and training to youth. However, these youth must arrive at the job on time and, depending on the type of employment, are required to be flexible about reporting to different job sites. This requirement usually necessitates getting around in a car. Public transportation often lacks the flexibility, both in time and route, to meet the needs of the youth and the employer. If youth and their families cannot acquire a vehicle because of poor health or finances, they lose access to opportunities. These youth are trapped in an unfortunate cycle: they cannot afford a car to get to work, and because they cannot work, they cannot earn enough money for a car. However, programs illustrated in this report display how the challenge of lack of personal transportation can be met effectively and efficiently. Replicating these models could result in youth entering the workforce, contributing to the economic vitality of their communities and bettering themselves.

MCOTA commissioned this study to investigate solutions to the problems youth in Minnesota have with transportation to employment. That goal is achieved as follows: First, a survey of youth regarding their

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[3] Minnesota Department of Transportation. "Transit in Minnesota – Section 5310."
<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/grants/5310/index.html>.
[4] Federal Transit Administration. "Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (5316)."
<https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/grant-programs/job-access-and-reverse-commute-program-5316>.

employment and transportation issues is described, and its results discussed. Based on those results, recommendations to maintain and improve policies are given. Finally, policies and programs already in place nationally and in Minnesota are detailed to provide specific references to aid the implementation of the recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

This study conducted a survey of youth to better understand the issues, or lack of issues, they encounter when seeking transportation to work. Recommendations to address the issues identified were then posited. Finally, case studies of programs in Minnesota and the nation that align with the recommendations were researched. The following section describes this survey.

2.1 SURVEY

Given the survey was created to understand which, if any, transportation issues youth in the state of Minnesota face, the survey was crafted to get data on employment status, age, gender, race, disability status, and type of transportation issues. Location and travel mode information was also collected. For age, respondents were asked which age range they belonged to: 14 – 15, 16 – 17, 18 – 20, or 21 – 24. These correspond with life events that can change their transportation position: being able to drive, being able to live on their own, and coming more fully into adulthood. For employed youth, location was their actual city/neighborhood of employment and how they commute. For unemployed respondents, we collected where they would like to work, and how they would realistically get to work if they did have a job. Transportation issues ranged from getting to/from work, transportation costs, having no transportation issues, or typing out a unique response.

All this data allows for specific conclusions to be drawn about the nature of transportation issues for specific groups of youth. However, to keep respondents engaged so all questions would be filled in, the survey was kept to 12 – 14 questions, depending on the respondent's answers (e.g., if they answered "yes" to identifying with a disability, they were also asked about the nature of that disability, whereas those who answered "no" were not shown that question). All this was managed with Qualtrics, an online survey application made available by the University of Minnesota.

To maintain confidentiality and to pass the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board, each question was voluntary and additionally displayed a "Prefer not to answer" option. No personal information was requested and only summary statistics are presented in this report to further preserve the anonymity of respondents. The survey was also compliant to the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The survey could only be completed in a web browser, which did not present any challenges or elicit complaints from respondents or program councilors. The full survey is displayed in Appendix A.

The survey was distributed through the project's advisory group, which consisted of representatives from the Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). These representatives distributed the survey to youth employment and training program counselors, who then asked youth in their programs to complete it. To ensure robust data from youth with disabilities, the Statewide Independent Living Council and Minnesota Association of Centers for Independent Living were contacted to conduct the same procedure as well.

CHAPTER 3: SURVEY RESULTS

Respondents completed the survey between March 8th and April 26th, 2018. In total, 181 youth at least partially completed the survey. It is important to note that since each question was voluntary, not every total for each category (employment status, location, gender, etc.) sums to 181. The number of survey respondents per county is displayed in Figure 1.
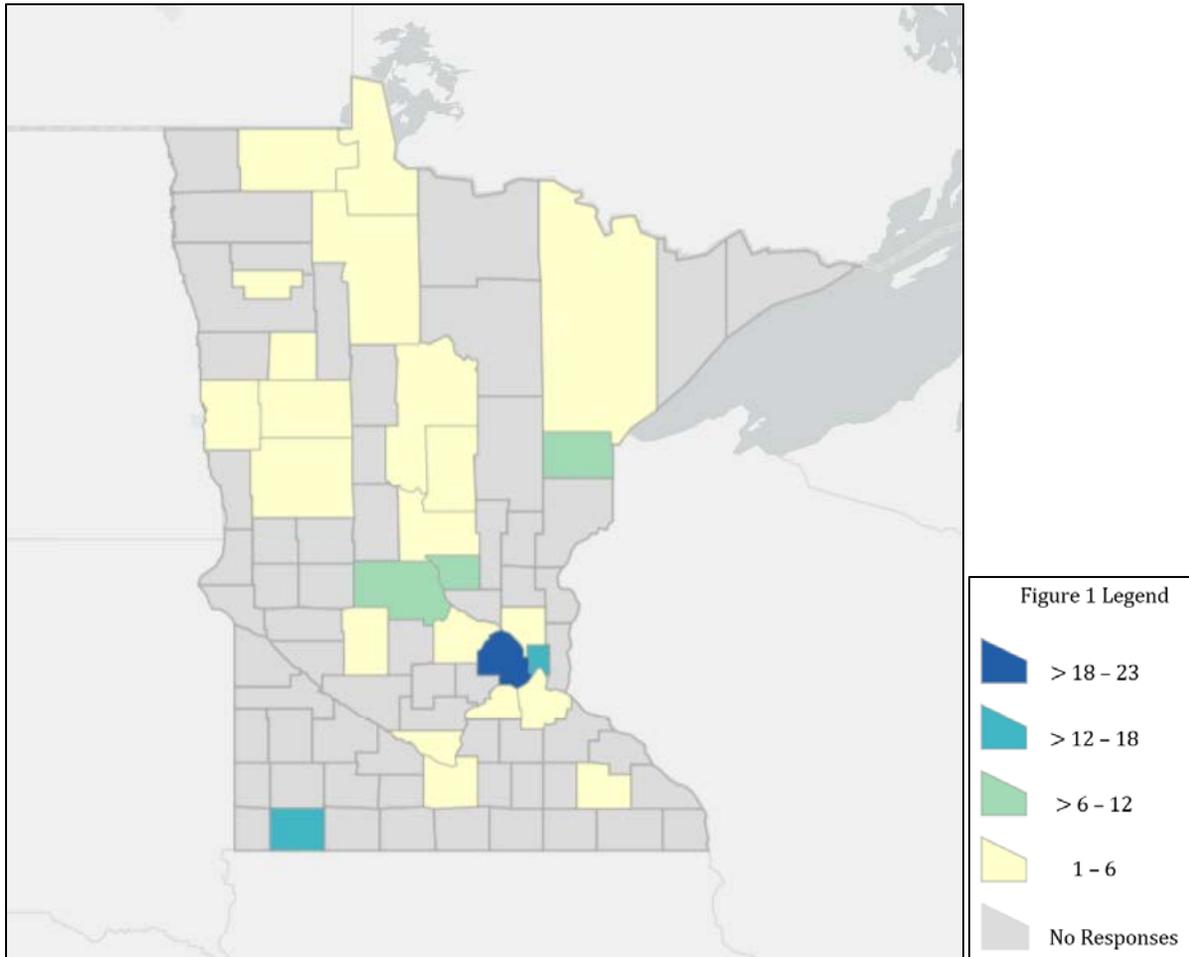
Figure 1. Survey respondents per county

A plurality of respondents worked, or would like to work, in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan region. That said, response totals from across the state were robust. To better identify transportation issues related to specific environments, respondent location was associated with one of three regions: urban, suburban, and rural. The urban area designation aligns with the Census Bureau's Metropolitan Statistical Area's (MSA) principal city. In Minnesota, this comprises of Duluth, Mankato, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Rochester. St. Cloud is included in the Minneapolis-St. Paul MSA, but was used as its own principal city in this report. Working, or wanting to work, in any of the towns surrounding Minneapolis or St. Paul placed the respondent in the suburban region. All other respondents listing their location were listed as rural. In all, the survey captured 47 urban, 17 suburban, and 67 rural respondents. For

those that listed their employment status, 96 stated they were employed, while 74 were unemployed. The employed-unemployed proportion was roughly the same across regions. Of respondents who responded to if they identify with a disability, 50 did, while 82 did not. This, too, was roughly the same proportion in each region. These statistics are displays in tables 1 – 3, which include the number of participants and that group's percentage of the population in parentheses.

Table 1. Number of Respondents by Location

	Number of Respondents
Urban	47 (36)
Suburban	17 (13)
Rural	67 (51)
Total	131 (100)

Table 2. Number of Respondents by Employment Status

	Number of Respondents
Employed	96 (56)
Unemployed	74 (44)
Total	170 (100)

Table 3. Number of Respondents by Disability Status

	Number of Respondents
Disability	50 (38)
No Disability	82 (62)
Total	132 (100)

Some of the programs identified included Access North, Compass, Tree Trust, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Tables 4 – 5 display the percentage of travel modes used each region (the number of respondents for each travel mode is in parentheses).

Table 4. Percent of Travel Modes, Urban

	Employed	Unemployed
Bus or Train	30.43 (7)	50.00 (12)
Carpool	13.04 (3)	4.17 (1)
Drive alone	13.04 (3)	4.17 (1)
Metro Mobility or other disability transportation	4.35 (1)	12.50 (3)
Other	17.39 (4)	4.17(1)
Vanpool	4.35 (1)	0.00 (0)
Walk	17.39 (4)	25.00 (6)
Total	100.00 (23)	100.00 (24)

Table 5. Percent of Travel Modes, Suburban

	Employed	Unemployed
Bus or Train	14.29 (2)	66.67 (2)
Carpool	7.14 (1)	0.00 (0)
Drive alone	35.71 (5)	0.00 (0)
Metro Mobility or other disability transportation	7.14 (1)	0.00 (0)
Other	14.29 (2)	0.00 (0)
Vanpool	21.43 (3)	0.00 (0)
Walk	0.00 (0)	33.33 (1)
Total	100.00 (14)	100.00 (3)

Table 6. Percent of Travel Modes, Rural

	Employed	Unemployed
Bike	7.14 (3)	12.50 (3)
Bus or Train	4.76 (2)	4.17 (1)
Carpool	4.76 (2)	8.33 (2)
Drive alone	50.00 (21)	20.83 (5)
Other	23.81 (10)	29.17 (7)
Uber/Lyft/Taxi	0.00 (0)	12.50 (3)
Walk	9.52 (4)	12.50 (3)
Total	100.00 (42)	100.00 (24)

Virtually all "Other" responses were a free-form version of carpooling, e.g., "Parents," "be driven by a parent or friend," or "Family transportation." Reviewing each table, it is clear transit is heavily depended upon by both employed and unemployed urban respondents, making up 30 percent, 43 percent and 50 percent of each group, respectively. In suburban and rural areas transit is not used nearly as much. Walking is also a transportation mode for both employed and unemployed urban youth, with 17.39 percent and 25 percent of each group using their feet to get around. In rural and suburban settings, cars are the principal mode of transportation. In these areas, a majority of both employed and unemployed youth use, or would use, a car themselves, or get dropped off and picked up in one. 50 percent of employed rural youth drive alone, with an additional 29 percent sharing rides, while 20.83 percent of unemployed rural youth would drive alone and a further 37 percent would share rides. Only 21 percent of suburban employed youth used some form of public transit to get to work. Since only three unemployed suburban youth reported their projected mode of transportation, we are unable to confidently report the travel modes of this group.

Table 7. Percent Facing Transportation Issues

Employed	Unemployed	No Disability	Disability	Urban	Suburban	Rural
60.76	67.8	60.98	72.00	56.82	81.25	62.7

All sub-groups of youth surveyed had high numbers of respondents dealing with transportation issues. Table 7 shows this, displaying the percentage of respondents in various sub-groups that deal with transportation issues of any kind. Employed respondents reported slightly fewer transportation issues than unemployed (60.76 percent compared to 67.8 percent). The same is true for no disability compared to disability (60.98 percent to 72.00 percent). However, there is much more variation across regions, with over half of urban respondents, nearly two-thirds of rural, and four-fifths of suburban respondents stating they face transportation issues. Breaking these numbers down further creates a clearer picture of the current state of youth employment transportation issues in Minnesota. Tables 8 – 10 display this information: the percent of respondents in a category reporting no transportation issues (and the actual number in parentheses).

Table 8. Percent No Transportation Issues, Urban

	Employed	Unemployed
No Disability	58.33 (7)	41.67 (5)
Disability	57.14 (4)	28.57 (2)

Table 9. Percent No Transportation Issues, Suburban

	Employed	Unemployed
No Disability	14.29 (1)	0.00 (0)
Disability	20.00 (1)	0.00 (0)

Table 10. Percent No Transportation Issues, Rural

	Employed	Unemployed
No Disability	39.13 (9)	38.89 (7)
Disability	31.25 (5)	16.67 (1)

Youth in urban areas with jobs and no disabilities report the least transportation issues, with 58.33 percent of the population stating no issues. Compare this to unemployed youth with disabilities – only 16.67 percent of that population reports no transportation issues. It is clear employed youth without disabilities are less likely to report transportation issues. It is also important to understand how driving a car to work is associated with employment status in each region. Cars have long been viewed as the key to getting a job, and the data presented in tables 11 – 13 support this claim. In all regions, youth with cars were more likely to be employed, with 75 percent of urban, 100 percent of suburban, and 80.77 percent of rural drive-alone respondents being employed.

Table 11. Percent Employed/Unemployed for Car/No Car, Urban

	Employed	Unemployed
Drive alone	75.00 (3)	25.00 (1)
No Car	46.51 (20)	53.49 (23)

Table 12. Percent Employed/Unemployed for Car/No Car, Suburban

	Employed	Unemployed
Drive alone	100.00 (5)	0 .00 (0)
No Car	75.00 (9)	25.00 (3)

Table 13. Percent Employed/Unemployed for Car/No Car, Rural

	Employed	Unemployed
Drive alone	80.77 (21)	19.23 (5)
No Car	51.22 (21)	48.78 (20)

Although employed youth are less likely to face transportation issues, and youth who drive alone are more likely to be employed, it was important to delve deeper to answer a crux question: Are youth with cars less likely to experience transportation issues than their car-less peers? Tables 14 and 15 display this information for employed and unemployed respondents.

Table 14. Percent with No Transportation Issues, Employed

Travel Mode	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Drive alone	100.00 (2)	0.00 (0)	42.86 (9)
No Car	50.00 (9)	37.50 (3)	38.10 (8)
Total	55.00 (11)	23.08 (3)	40.48 (17)

Table 15. Percent with No Transportation Issues, Unemployed

Travel Mode	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Drive alone	100.00 (1)	N/A	40.00 (2)
No Car	30.43 (7)	0.00 (0)	30.00 (6)
Total	33.33 (8)	0.00 (0)	32.00 (8)

These tables show that just because a youth has a car and a job, it does not mean they do not face transportation issues. Only 42.85 percent of employed rural respondents with cars reported they experience no transportation issues, meaning 57.15 percent of this group still deal with transportation issues. Importantly, urban respondents, who are least likely to depend upon cars, are the least likely to encounter transportation issues, with 55 percent of employed and 33.33 percent of unemployed respondents saying they face no transportation issues.

Observers could be led to believe youth ages 14 – 15 commanded the lion's share of respondents reporting transportation issues. However, the opposite was true: 51.61 percent of this cohort reported having no transportation issues. Only 23 percent to 33 percent of respondents in other age ranges reported no transportation issues.

Overall, the survey presented three main findings. First, walking, and public transit in particular are important to youth in urban areas for both the employed and unemployed. 47.82 percent of employed urban respondents and 75 percent of unemployed urban respondents used these modes of transportation. Second, while disabilities do not in and of themselves indicate youth deal with transportation issues, the combination of having a disability in a rural area significantly increases their likelihood of transportation issues, moving from 57.14 percent to 72.73 percent of respondents. Third, just because youth have cars does not mean they do not face transportation issues; 57.14 percent of employed rural youth with cars still are confronted with them.

CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the survey and current transportation landscape in the state of Minnesota, the report now presents recommendations to maintain and improve employment transportation for youth. While these survey results and consequent recommendations do not vary from what was largely observed and expected, the articulation here with specific examples provided later will help advance reforms in this direction: policies to maintain and improve transit, walking, and biking should all be pursued in urban areas. All youth in these areas rely upon this infrastructure if it is of high quality. In suburban and rural areas, individualized rides, whether carpooling, paratransit, or individual vehicles, are needed, as high-quality fixed-route transit is unviable in areas with such low population density.

> *"policies to maintain and improve transit, walking, and biking should all be pursued in urban areas … In suburban and rural areas, individualized rides, whether carpooling, paratransit, or individual vehicles, are needed"*

In all regions, efforts to provide transportation to youth with disabilities are hampered by the federal Section 5310 program funding requirements, which are limited to procuring and maintaining vehicles and purchasing transportation in general. The previous Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program funds provided transit providers with more flexibility for innovative programs to improve employment transportation. Either bringing back a funding program such as JARC or increasing the flexibility of federal 5310 funding would enhance providers' ability to give youth with disabilities the mobility they need.

While the survey results show that transit in non-urban areas is less effective we do not intend to state there is no benefit to having transit in these areas. Indeed, enhancing transit as MnDOT articulates in their Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan could make it even more useful for youth living in non-urban areas. By allowing Section 5310 funds to support operations, transit departments servicing small towns can adapt their available services to deliver what local residents need: shared ride demand response service in addition to only fixed-route service.

To make the recommendations more actionable, they can be broken into short, medium, and long-term suggestions, which range from 0 to 5, 5 to 20, and over 20 years, respectively. Table 16 displays these recommendations, which are discussed in greater detail below.

Table 16. Recommendations by Time of Implementation

Short-Term	Transit and walking should be maintained in areas with enough population density to support it. Other areas should provide individualized rides (e.g., carpooling, ride-shares, car-shares, Lyft, and Uber) or vehicles. Youth with disabilities are also more dependent on carpooling, so promoting this transportation mode is crucial for this population.
Medium-Term	Continue to improve urban transit and walking. Develop innovative programs for the way transit and other single-occupant vehicle alternatives are offered in suburban and rural areas so youth no longer feel that they must rely on their own cars. Transportation Coordinating Councils, which already exist in Minnesota, should be invested in.
Long-Term	In all regions, restructure the relationship between transportation and land use to better capture the benefits offered by autonomous vehicles and similar innovative options.

4.1 SHORT-TERM

In the short term, transit should continue to build upon its strengths in areas with enough population density to support it, with potential improvements including increased market research regarding what youth actually want out of transit and other measures that demonstrate recognition of youth as potential life-long customers, not just users of a social service. For other areas, provide individualized rides, whether that is carpooling, ride-shares, car-shares, transportation network companies (e.g., Lyft and Uber), or individual vehicles. Youth with disabilities are also more dependent on carpooling, so promoting this transportation mode is crucial for this population. Employer-sponsored transportation, where a company provides transportation for its employees, could also be encouraged. However, as this is not a service for public use, it should not be publicly-funded, other than perhaps exploring potential tax incentives.

4.2 MEDIUM-TERM

In the medium-term, the state should develop innovative options for the way transit and other single-occupant vehicle alternatives are offered in suburban and rural areas. Youth in these areas would then no longer feel that they must rely on their own cars. Funding in this time-frame should continue to enhance and improve urban transit. Councils responsible for coordinating transportation efforts to help youth reach jobs should also be given attention during this time frame. Youth in different areas require different transportation programs, which sometimes need different funding sources. Sorting out the disparate nature of transportation to employment programs for youth is so critical, so any council, whether local, regional, or at the state level, should be given the authority to help guide policy in this realm. An ideal coordinating body would bring together public, private, nonprofit, faith, and philanthropic partners. It would also work with the 16 local Workforce Investment Boards throughout

the state. Fortunately, as of January 2012, 27 such organizations existed in the state, which are "responsible for creating an inventory of services, conducting needs assessments and determining how gaps should be filled. The state councils bring together the key players to consider and recommend how state policies should be revised to enhance coordination at the local level."[5]

"An ideal coordinating body would bring together public, private, nonprofit, faith, and philanthropic partners. It would also work with the 16 local Workforce Investment Boards throughout the state. Fortunately, similar programs already exist in Minnesota."

4.3 LONG-TERM

In the long-term, the state should strive to restructure the relationship between transportation and land use to better capture the benefits offered by autonomous vehicles and similar innovative options. This can be applied in all regions.

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[5] Minnesota Council on Transportation Access 2013 Annual Report. Page 12.
<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/govrel/reports/2013/mcotareport.pdf>.

CHAPTER 5: MODEL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

After synthesizing the survey results into practical recommendations, this report now delves further, offering examples of programs in Minnesota and the country that carry out the before-mentioned suggestions.

5.1 PORTLAND YOUTH OUTREACH STUDY

Savvy marketing is needed to broadcast any product or program. Making sure youth understand the benefits of public transit is no different. An ongoing study for the Transportation Research Board by Hau Hagedorn, the Associate Director of the Transportation Research and Education Center at Portland State University, examines the Portland Bureau of Transportation's efforts to reach out to youth about public transit.[6] Hagedorn identifies three strategies to effectively engage with youth: Call attention to increased independence from parents, how much safer transit is than driving, and the cost savings, which can be transferred to things like clothing and video games. As of 2015, 68 percent of 13 – 14 year olds had a smart phone. Accordingly, targeting youth through smart phones is needed for any successful marketing campaign. This report's survey has demonstrated public transit is a vital mode of transportation for urban youth. MnDOT could help more youth capitalize on this service by educating them on the benefits of public transit.

5.2 BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT

Even with better messaging, transit operators must provide a variety of services that fit the needs of everyone they serve. Ben Franklin Transit (BFT), an operator in southeastern Washington, does this well. BFT operates in the Tri-Cities area of Washington, which is comprised of three towns, each with populations between 48,000 and 74,000 people. The area is surrounded by agriculture, which survives in the desert due to irrigation from the Columbia River. BFT offers regular, dial-a-ride (DAR), vanpool, and other services. Its website, displayed in Figure 2, is clean and easy to navigate, which helps riders determine which service best fits their needs.[7] As the survey results demonstrated, youth with disabilities, particularly in rural places like BFT's service area, rely upon paratransit services like BFT's DAR. Transit operators in Minnesota could emulate BFT by identifying which services their customers need and providing them in a manner that is easy to understand.

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[6] Hagedorn, Hau. "Engaging Youth to Increase their Transportation System Support, Understanding, and Use." *Transportation Research Board*. Expected Completion: August 1, 2018. <https://trid.trb.org/view/1426174>.
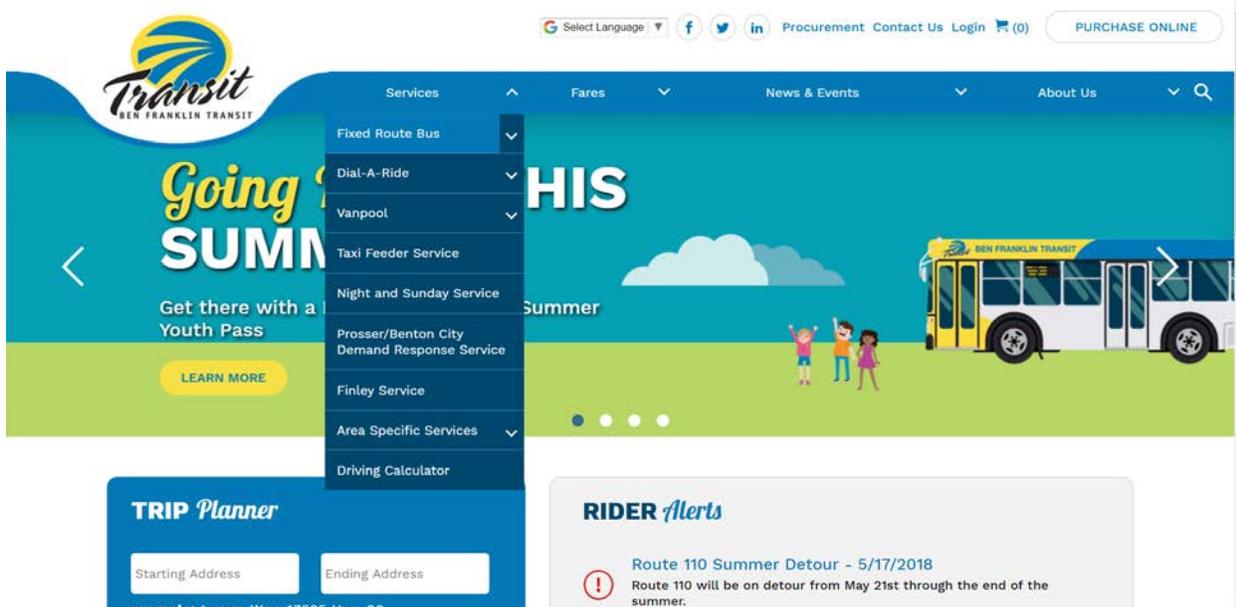[7] Ben Franklin Transit. <https://www.bft.org/>.

Figure 2. Ben Franklin Transit website

5.3 TENNESSEE VANS

While not a public transit service, Tennessee Vans (TV), operated by the University of Tennessee's Center for Transportation Research, responds to the needs of residents throughout Tennessee who need a way to get to work. Since 1990 TV has leased and sold vans for non-profits, employees, and employers through its "Agency Purchase Program." TV helps "over 100 program participants use a fleet of 200 vehicles to provide approximately 1.2 million trips per year for more than 2,500 people."[8] TV's focus on funding is seen as key to its longevity. Local governments provide the initial funding for the program with the expectation that Tennessee Vans will recover its expenses to the highest degree possible.[9] MnDOT could replicate this service, or aspects of it, in a program throughout Minnesota to help all youth get to work. Legislators could be more willing to fund a program that focuses on recovering costs.

5.4 ITHACA CARSHARE

Transit and ride-sharing are certainly important modes of transportation. However, in suburban and rural areas many youth drive alone, especially when they are employed. Ithaca Carshare, a non-profit,

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[8] University of Tennessee. "Tennessee Vans Program." <https://tnvans.utk.edu/>.
[9] Newsom, Theodore J; Meyers, Danielle F. "Tennessee Vans: A User-Based and Financially-Sustainable Approach to Develop Community Mobility Resources." *Transportation Research Board*. March 2013. <https://trid.trb.org/view/1117481>.

gives members access to cars without requiring full ownership.[10] Members can reserve a car online or by calling. The car must be returned to the same location they picked it up. Gas, maintenance, and insurance costs are all rolled-in to the membership fees. According to the American Automobile Association, in 2017 the average cost of owning a car was $8,469.[11] Program members spend roughly $1,000 a year, making this car-sharing service more accessible for people with lower incomes. Members end up saving money so long as they drive less than 10,000 miles a year. Besides very long-distance commuting, this service would make sense for people needing to get to work. MnDOT could implement, or sponsor, a similar program to help youth access jobs. However, car-sharing programs present two age-related obstacles for youth. Youth under the age of 16 can obviously not use any car-share program. Ithaca Carshare is also currently only available to people over the age of 18 due to insurance costs. Furthermore, members are charged extra for insurance until they are 21 years of age. To successfully implement a car-share program youth can actually use, program administrators must work with insurance companies to lower rates.

5.5 GETTING TO WORK PROGRAM

In 2017, the Minnesota legislature created the Getting to Work program, which appropriates $100,000 each year to pilot transportation programs throughout the state to "provide, repair, or maintain motor vehicles to assist individuals to obtain or maintain employment."[12] Eligible programs must also offer an educational service, such as financial literacy education, credit counseling, or vehicle maintenance repair. Pilot program participants must also be over the age of 22 and have a valid driver's license and insurance. Six organizations were selected for fiscal year 2018-2019, including "Community Care Auto Repair," which created a community car repair garage partnered with the UMD Center for Economic Development, and "Helping People to Get There," a car donation program in Willmar partnered with local auto dealers and repair shops. The Getting to Work program offers a chance for innovative individualized driving programs to be put into practice. As the survey demonstrated, driving alone is often how youth in rural and suburban areas commute, but still poses transportation issues. To help unemployed youth access jobs, and to alleviate the transportation issues employed youth face, this program should continue if its initiatives are found to be productive. In this event, funding should be increased as well. Furthermore, this program should be integrated with transportation coordinating councils, possibly working with regional Workforce Investment Boards to support shared ride demand response services. However, to actually serve the full driving-age population of youth, the program should be augmented to let younger people participate.

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[10] Ithaca Carshare. <http://www.ithacacarshare.org/>.
[11] Step, Erin. "Your Driving Costs." *American Automobile Association*. August 23, 2017. <https://newsroom.aaa.com/auto/your-driving-costs/>.
[12] 2017 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 94, Section 2, Subdivision 3 (j).

Providing youth with their own cars to drive can run into issues with insurance and age restrictions. These difficulties should be investigated to ensure programs benefit the youth they are meant to serve.

5.6 INITIATIVES IN DAKOTA COUNTY

Another exemplary program in Minnesota is the GoDakota initiative in Dakota County, formerly named the Dakota County Transportation Coordinating Collaborative. GoDakota's purpose is to achieve a fully coordinated transportation system providing continuous transportation access for Dakota County residents. One of GoDakota's main projects is Travel Training, which currently has a specific focus on transition youth. Similar to Portland's youth outreach efforts, Travel Training helps familiarize youth with local transportation options. Dakota County has also partnered with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (MNHS) to create the Lyft project, which uses current funding streams to pay for Lyft rides for people with disabilities who are accessing employment. While not designed only for youth, Dakota County's Lyft project also has partnered with the Hastings school district to ensure youth with disabilities are able to benefit from the individualized rides offered. The survey results indicated that youth, especially youth with disabilities, were likely to face transportation issues in suburban areas. Dakota County's emphasis on individualized rides, which are needed in suburban areas, is what makes this a model program. If found to be successful, it should be continued in Dakota County and possibly expanded in other suburban areas.

5.7 INITIATIVES IN CARVER AND SCOTT COUNTIES

Carver and Scott counties provide another example of suburban programs in Minnesota. In 2016 Scott County distributed a survey on the transportation needs of its residents and found that expanding their DAR service would be the best program to meet their needs. Accordingly, in 2017 the Scott County board extended its DAR program to run during evenings and weekends. It also created a volunteer driver program in 2016, which supplements the DAR service. If the DAR service is fully booked, operators call upon volunteer drivers to fulfill the ride. This cuts down on DAR costs and provides residents with more responsive service. These programs are also not siloed in any way – people with disabilities, elderly, youth, and everyone else share the same vehicles to reach destinations. Breaking down these silos involved working around Metropolitan Council and MnDOT funding requirements, which call for DAR services to be separated by populations. Carver and Scott counties also have a shared vehicle program and a travel-training program. On top of this, they are exploring a non-governmental transportation service program, partnering with faith organizations, businesses, and nonprofits to meet

the transportation needs of residents, including youth. Like BFT, the variety of innovative services and funding work-arounds, especially in a setting where fixed route transit is not viable, makes these programs in Carver and Scott counties worth investigating and possibly emulating.

5.8 TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COUNCILS

As mentioned earlier, transportation coordinating councils are needed in the state of Minnesota. Go Dakota and Scott and Carver county initiatives are model councils. MnDOT and MNHS are also in the process of creating statewide coordinating councils. The state should also consider how innovative programs like Getting to Work could be expanded to support the initiatives of the councils, or vice versa. Effective councils are ones that investigate breaking down silos to create synergies between organizations and programs.

5.9 WALKING IN URBAN AREAS

In urban areas, the survey showed that walking was how many respondents got to work. Numerous programs throughout the country are funding pedestrian improvement initiatives, which make walking routes to employment centers safer and more attractive. Places such as Minneapolis, New York City, and Edmonton have Vision Zero initiatives, which seeks to re-engineer the built environment to prevent crashes.[13,14,15] These programs not only benefit people who walk, but also have been shown to boost local economies. A 2011 study by the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, found that on average, for every $1 million spent on pedestrian infrastructure in cities, 9.91 jobs were created. This was higher than infrastructure dedicated to solely cars, which was estimated to yield only 7.75 jobs per $1 million.[16] Places where walking is viable throughout Minnesota should create better pedestrian infrastructure to ensure the safety of those that already walk and encourage others to join them.

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[13] Minneapolis Public Works. "Vision Zero Minneapolis." <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/TransportationPlanning/visionzero>. Last Updated June 14, 2018.
[14] City of New York. "Vision Zero." <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/visionzero/index.page>.
[15] Islam, Tazul. "Pedestrian Safety Improvement Initiatives – City of Edmonton." *9th Annual (Edmonton) International Conference on Urban Traffic Safety*. August 8, 2018. <https://www.urbantrafficsafetyconference.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Tazul-Islam-Pedestrian-Safety-Edmonton.pdf>.
[16] Garrett-Peltier, Heidi. "Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts." Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. 2011. Page 11. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.362.5819&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

> *"[F]or every $1 million spent on pedestrian infrastructure in cities, 9.91 jobs were created. This was higher than infrastructure dedicated to solely cars, which was estimated to yield only 7.75 jobs per $1 million."*

5.10 P3S: RIGHT RIDE LLC

Public-Private Partnerships (P3) have been touted as free-market solutions to societal problems, including transportation. Right Ride LLC is a P3 operating in 18 cities and 12 states in all regions of the country, such as Austin, Texas and Hamilton County, Ohio. Since 2009, it has operated paratransit, medical, student, fixed route, shuttle, and mobility management services. It is mostly geared towards serving people with disabilities.[17] Even if a P3 is not expressly for people with disabilities, by law they must be ADA-compliant. In the event MnDOT does not pursue a P3, it could still use practices from organizations such as Right Ride to lower costs on its paratransit services, which, as the survey demonstrated, are in high demand from youth with disabilities.

5.11 MODEL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM CONCLUSIONS

Overall, there are many programs that carry out the recommendations outlined in the previous section. Insightful marketing campaigns can help youth in urban areas access available public transit. Public transit should also provide a variety of services, especially for youth working non-business hours or if they have disabilities. Vanpool services, where non-profits, employees, or employers rent or purchase a van, can offer inexpensive, reliable transportation directly to and from work. To offer even more individualized transportation, car-sharing programs could be implemented. However, due to insurance costs, this may not be a viable option for youth. Minnesota's Getting to Work program is an example of a small-scale innovation that should be expanded and allow youth to participate, depending on its success. Dakota, Scott, and Carver Counties all have innovative programs that address suburban transportation issues. These types of programs should operate in tandem with transportation coordinating councils, which are already in place in many areas. Programs to enhance walkability should also be pursued in areas where walking already takes place. Public-private partnerships could also be pursued for paratransit, as a variety of states have done. It should be noted, though, that some of these programs do not clearly articulate actual cost savings, accessibility for people with disabilities,

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[17] Right Ride LLC. <https://www.ride-right.net/>.

compliance with regulations, or protections of civil rights. Accordingly, when implementing similar projects, a greater understanding of these areas is needed.

CHAPTER 6: NEXT STEPS

This study could be expanded upon by conducting interviews with youth to ascertain better information about where they live and where jobs are. Better identifying the home-job spatial mismatch could allow more precise problems, and solutions, to be discerned. Concentrating a following study on a specific area could yield different results than this statewide report as well. Future report authors could also work with the Governor's Workforce Development Board, which sets statewide workforce development policy, and possibly other local, state, and federal organizations.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Youth in the state of Minnesota are confronted with challenges accessing transportation to employment. Studies have shown this, and consequently MCOTA commissioned this report to better understand the subject. After conducting a survey polling youth in various employment and training programs, transportation issues were found to affect a large portion of the 181 respondents. However, variation among sub-groups was apparent. Urban youth generally were less likely to report transportation issues compared to their rural and suburban peers. The group with the most transportation issues were unemployed youth with disabilities. Even if youth in rural and suburban areas had cars and jobs they still were likely to encounter transportation issues. Recommendations to maintain transportation programs such as public transit in urban areas, improve individualized rides in suburban and rural areas, and support transportation coordinating councils were proffered. Finally, case studies that provide in-use examples of the recommendations are described. Taking the full report into account, the members of MCOTA should have a better understanding of the transportation issues youth face, and best practices to mitigate them.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY CONTENT

The content of the full survey is listed below. Each response option is listed, along with qualifiers for each question (e.g., the questions "If you do NOT have a job" only appear to respondents who previously answered they are not employed). The main questions are listed with numbers and the follow-ups with letters. Some lettered questions are followed by a question in roman numeral form. Response options with underlines following indicate additional, free-form answers can be submitted. Responding to any question is optional.

1.   Hello, and thank you for participating in this survey measuring job accessibility for youth in the state of Minnesota.

Every effort has been made to ensure your responses cannot be tracked back to you. We strive to keep any identifying information strictly confidential.

If you do not want to answer a question, simply skip, or click or write "Prefer not to answer." That said, the more accurate and thorough your responses are, the better we can understand what transportation issues youth in Minnesota face getting to work.

Click the arrow button in the lower-right corner to begin.

2.   What program are you involved with? (program name)

3.   Do you have a job? (y/n/prefer not to answer)

a.   If you do have a job, in which city and/or neighborhood is it? Try to be as specific as possible. (location)

b.   If you do have a job, how do you get to work? (single answer)

i.   Drive alone

ii.   Carpool

iii.   Uber/Lyft/Taxi

iv.   Bus or train

v.   Vanpool

vi.   Bike

vii.   Walk

viii.   Metro Mobility or other disability transportation

ix.   Prefer not to answer

x.   Other_____

c.   If you do have a job, is how you get to work your preferred way of getting there? (y/n/prefer not to answer)

i.   If you answered how you get to work is NOT your preferred way of getting there, what is your preferred way of getting to work? (single answer)

1.   Drive alone

2.   Carpool

3.   Uber/Lyft/Taxi

4.   Bus or train

5.   Vanpool

6.   Bike

7.   Walk

8.   Metro Mobility or other disability transportation

9.   Prefer not to answer

10.   Other_____

d.   If you do NOT have a job, in which city and/or neighborhood is would you like to have one? Try to be as specific as possible. (location)

e.   If you do NOT have a job, how would you get to that job? (single answer)

i.   Drive alone

ii.   Carpool

iii.   Uber/Lyft/Taxi

iv.   Bus or train

v.   Vanpool

vi.   Bike

vii.   Walk

viii.   Metro Mobility or other disability transportation

ix.   Prefer not to answer

x.   Other_____

f.	If you do NOT have a job, what would be your preferred way of getting to that job? (single answer)

i.	Drive alone

ii.	Carpool

iii.	Uber/Lyft/Taxi

iv.	Bus or train

v.	Vanpool

vi.	Bike

vii.	Walk

viii.	Metro Mobility or other disability transportation

ix.	Prefer not to answer

x.	Other_____

4.	Do you face any of the transportation issues listed below? If none, check "I do not face any transportation issues." Check all that apply. Write in the text boxes to add comments. (multiple choice)

a.	Getting to/from work_____

b.	Saving time in the day_____

c.	Getting to/from appointments_____

d.	Getting to/from school_____

e.	Transportation costs_____

f.	I do not face any transportation issues

g.	Prefer not to answer

h.	Other _____

5.	If you have any additional comments, please write them here. (open-ended)

6.	The next questions will help us better understand the demographics of youth employment accessibility in the state of Minnesota.

None of the questions will ask personal information such as your name or address.

7.   Which age range do you fall under? (single answer)

a.   14-15

b.   16-17

c.   18-20

d.   21-24

e.   Prefer not to answer

8.   What is your gender? (single answer)

a.   Female

b.   Male

c.   Other Identification_____

d.   Prefer not to answer

9.   What is your ethnic origin? (single answer)

a.   Hispanic/Latino

b.   Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino

c.   Prefer not to answer

10.   What is your race? Check all that apply. (multiple choice)

a.   White

b.   Black or African American

c.   American Indian or Alaska Native

d.   Asian

e.   Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

f.   Other_____

g.   Prefer not to answer

11.   Do you identify as a person with a disability? (y/n/Prefer not to answer)

a.   If yes, what is the nature of the disability? (open-ended)

12.   This is the end of the survey.

To re-write any of your responses, click the arrow in the bottom-left corner to return to the questions.

To finish the survey, click the arrow in the bottom-right corner.

Thank you for participating!