

Measuring the Economic Benefits of Rural and Small Urban Transit Service in Greater Minnesota

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

MnDOT provides the majority of financial support for 35 different rural, multi-county and community public transit systems in Greater Minnesota. The transit systems provide the critical link that enables people to live independently and be involved in their communities. The services enable access to health care, shopping, recreation, worship, family among other needs in the 80 counties outside of the metro area.

Although the state provides funding for transit, each system must have the local financial share, often provided by the counties and cities served. The transit providers struggle to secure the local share partially because the benefits of transit are not easily calculated or recognized in comparison to road surface improvements and infrastructure.

The objective of this research is to measure the economic benefit of rural public transit service. Some benefits include providing access to jobs, reducing medical cost and supporting local shopping, independence and community connections.

The purpose of this project is 1) provide data and information for the transit directors as they request and compete for local funding resources, 2) help MnDOT justify funding requests from the legislature for Greater Minnesota transit and 3) enable MnDOT to better understand the financial contributions to Greater Minnesota and our investments in supporting a transportation system that maximizes the health of the people, the environment and our economy.

Research staff from North Dakota State University will complete the study. The study will beginning in summer 2018 and completed by spring 2020.

Contact: Sara Dunlap, Principal Planner. MnDOT Office of Transit and Active Transportation.
651-366-4194 or sara.dunlap@state.mn.us