



# Southeast Minnesota TMO Study

## Appendix G: Implementation Plan Draft



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## Introduction

This implementation plan outlines an operational pathway for launching and sustaining a Transportation Management Organization (TMO) in Southeast Minnesota. Building on the Southeast Minnesota TMO Feasibility Study findings, it provides a structured guide to help stakeholders move from concept to action. It details the organizational structure and governance framework necessary to establish the TMO and translates service priorities into a work plan that aligns with the region’s mobility needs.

The work plan guides the TMO’s preliminary operations from an organizational, funding, and staffing standpoint. It outlines organizational and funding recommendations and summarizes priority initiatives, followed by a detailed TMO Work Plan that breaks down specific actions, timing, and budget needs across a three-year period.

## Organizational Structure and Funding

The SE MN TMO feasibility study recommends that Southeast Service Cooperative (SCC) will be the host agency providing administrative support to the TMO. SCC is a nonprofit agency that serves public and private school districts, cities, counties, and other organizations in the 11-county southeast region of Minnesota. An Executive Committee will be the TMO’s decision-making body, aided by an Advisory Board, that will provide guidance. The TMO will set up subject-specific working groups to facilitate collaboration and coordination of work plan items.

The study identified potential sources for start-up and ongoing TMO funding, including a grant by the Greater Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordinating Council and a request for funding support to the State Legislature. SE MN Together already requested permission from the Legislature to use surplus funds designated to the TMO Study for start-up activities.

## Proposed TMO Services

This SE MN TMO Feasibility Study identified two priority initiatives as essential for the TMO’s early success. This implementation plan adds a priority initiative containing essential TMO administration and governance activities. Each initiative includes a set of foundational activities and supporting strategies that will guide the TMO’s operations and partnerships during this startup phase.

The recommended priority initiatives are:

1. **TMO Administration and Governance:** These activities create the foundation for launching and administering the TMO, including securing broad support and funding, hiring staff, and forming committees, boards, and working groups.
2. **Improving transit through regional collaboration:** These efforts strengthen collaboration among transit providers, improve service delivery, and unify regional transit messaging and advocacy. From schedule alignment to shared data systems, this work creates the foundation for a more seamless, efficient, and rider-focused transit network.
3. **Communicating travel options:** These initiatives build public awareness, rider confidence, and employer engagement through inclusive outreach and education. They focus on closing the information gap around available transportation services—especially essential workers and underserved populations—and helping employers support workforce commuting needs.

## 1. TMO Administration and Governance

Before the TMO can coordinate services or promote transportation options, it must first build the organizational foundation needed to operate effectively. This priority focuses on the critical early work of establishing the TMO: securing funding, hiring staff, forming leadership committees, and developing governance structures that reflect regional representation and support. These efforts will ensure the TMO launches with the institutional capacity and stakeholder backing necessary to carry out its mission.

- A. Organizational Set-Up and Staffing
  - Secure operational funding from regional partners, grants, or a host organization to support initial staffing and overhead.
  - Identify and confirm a host organization to provide administrative support.
  - Hire TMO staff, beginning with a dedicated TMO manager to oversee daily operations, partnerships, and implementation activities.
  - Establish internal organizational policies and procedures, including protocols for budget management, reporting, and performance tracking.
- B. Governance and Partner Engagement
  - Form an Executive Committee and an Advisory Board that includes representatives from key stakeholder groups across the 11-county region.
  - Convene working groups, such as a Transit Coordination Working Group, to provide technical guidance and stakeholder input.
  - Refine governance structures over time to ensure they support regional representation and long-term organizational sustainability.
- C. Branding, Communications, and Visibility
  - Develop the TMO's brand identity and core communication materials to support outreach, establish credibility, and engage stakeholders.
  - Create tools and platforms for ongoing partner communication and public engagement.
- D. Performance Tracking and Strategic Planning
  - Develop and implement performance-tracking tools to measure outcomes and inform strategic decisions.
  - Perform strategic planning to inform future work plans.
- E. Financial Sustainability
  - Explore and pursue diversified funding strategies, including local match funding, member contributions, and service-based revenue.

## 2. Improving Transit Through Regional Collaboration

A central role of the TMO will be to unify and elevate Southeast Minnesota's transit landscape by improving coordination, simplifying access to information, and increasing public and political support for transit. This strategic priority includes three interrelated focus areas: forming a regional transit coordinating working group, developing a centralized transportation information platform, and leading a unified transit advocacy campaign. Together, these initiatives aim to improve service delivery, connect users to available options, and establish transit as a vital component of the region's infrastructure and economy.

- A. **Transit Coordinating Working Group:** Provide strategic leadership in forming and sustaining a regional transportation coordinating working group composed of transit providers, local governments, employers, workforce development partners, human service agencies, Region 10 Quality Council, and regional planners. This cross-sector body will serve as a forum for collaboration, resource sharing, and systems-level problem-solving to improve transit coordination and performance throughout Southeast Minnesota. Through this initiative, the TMO will:
- Convene transit agencies regularly to review operational alignment, identify transfer points, and improve service integration.
  - Facilitate cross-agency collaboration to reduce duplication and increase efficiency. This may include exploring mutual aid agreements for trips across agency boundaries.
  - Engage employers to co-develop workforce transportation strategies tailored to regional labor markets.
  - Share replicable models and case studies that demonstrate successful service innovations.
  - Coordinate specialized services such as non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT), ensuring continuity of service and closing critical access gaps.
- B. **Regional Transportation Tool/Website + Resource Development.** The TMO will develop and maintain a centralized, user-friendly digital platform that consolidates transportation information, trip-planning functionality, and educational resources into one accessible location for Southeast Minnesota. By combining provider information with practical education and offline outreach resources, the platform will provide a single, comprehensive entry point for riders and partners to access, promote, and support the region's full range of transportation options. Examples of online tools that allow potential riders of all abilities to find transportation providers to match their needs include:
- Arrowhead RTCC: <https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/filter>
  - Gohio Mobility: <https://gohiocommute.com/#/mobility>

Key features may include:

- A simple, easy-to-navigate interface that brings together information from multiple transit providers.
- Complete coverage of multimodal options, including fixed-route, demand-response, vanpool, Park & Ride, and specialized services.
- ADA-compliant, mobile-responsive design with multilingual translation to serve a wide range of users.
- Built-in trip-planning functionality, with integration of provider data and potential connections to third-party mobility apps (e.g. Transit App) to support real-time trip planning, fare payment, and service notifications.
- Rider guides, employer toolkits, and educational materials that help individuals and organizations understand and use available transportation services.
- Print-ready materials that can be easily shared by providers, employers, workforce agencies, and human service organizations.

- Regularly updated service alerts, schedule changes, and announcements to keep users informed.

In addition, the TMO will work to enhance digital accessibility by integrating regional transit data into widely used platforms such as the Transit App and other third-party mobility tools.

- C. **Create a Unified Transit Voice.** The TMO will take the lead in amplifying Southeast Minnesota's transit story with a cohesive advocacy strategy that elevates the visibility, value, and impact of transit. The TMO will be a convener, messenger, and policy influencer to drive investment and support for a more connected regional system. Through this initiative, the TMO will:
- Develop compelling, data-backed messaging that positions transit as essential to economic competitiveness, health equity, and regional resilience.
  - Coordinate legislative engagement and advocacy efforts to ensure the region's voice is heard at the Capitol and beyond.
  - Deploy regional campaigns and roadshows that align stakeholders on shared priorities and increase public understanding.
  - Equip providers with branded toolkits and unified messaging, enabling them to speak with one voice.
  - Influence funding decisions and policy conversations by ensuring transit is always part of the regional planning agenda.
  - Identify and participate in state, regional, and local planning processes to advance transit.

### 3. Communicating Travel Options

A critical early role of the TMO will be to close the information gap around available transportation services—particularly for essential workers, underserved populations, and employers navigating workforce mobility challenges. This strategic priority focuses on building public awareness, boosting transit confidence, and empowering people to make informed travel choices. Through targeted outreach, employer engagement, and hands-on education efforts, the TMO will promote available options, foster behavior change, and build the partnerships necessary to support long-term mode shift across Southeast Minnesota.

- A. **Outreach and User Education:** The TMO will build a comprehensive, region-wide outreach and employer engagement program designed to directly tackle workforce commute barriers, boost transit awareness, and drive long-term shifts in how people access jobs and services. This initiative will serve as a cornerstone of the TMO's impact—building trust with the public, forging strategic partnerships with employers, and expanding access to reliable, affordable transportation. Through this initiative, the TMO will:
- Launch an outreach campaign that builds public understanding of transit and alternative commute options through multilingual materials, on-the-ground education, and digital outreach.
  - Support travel training and rider education workshops for new or returning riders, seniors, youth, and individuals with disabilities.
  - Partner with employers—starting with those in manufacturing, healthcare, and food processing—to deliver customized, on-site programming including commute workshops,

ride-matching support, employee travel surveys, and “Try Transit” campaigns to engage workers and gather actionable insights.

- Use employer and commuter feedback to co-design service improvements, such as new routes, flexible modes, or expanded shift-time coverage.

**B. Develop a Try Transit Campaign.** The TMO will lead a coordinated "Try Transit" campaign with local transit providers to encourage new and returning ridership. The initiative will offer free transit passes or a designated week of no-cost rides, providing residents and workers with a low-barrier opportunity to experience the region's transportation services. The campaign will be promoted widely through employer networks, local governments, chambers of commerce, community organizations, and social media to ensure broad regional reach and visibility. This effort will serve as both a promotional tool and a data-gathering opportunity—helping to raise awareness of available services while capturing insights from new riders to inform future outreach and service planning. Key tasks will include:

- Securing commitments from transit providers to allocate free ride opportunities during the campaign period.
- Developing branded materials and messaging to support outreach across employer and community partner channels.
- Maximizing visibility through multiple platforms, including digital marketing, public events, and targeted outreach to underserved communities.

## Initiatives for Future Consideration

As the Southeast Minnesota TMO matures, it will be well-positioned to expand its impact and take on a broader set of responsibilities that respond to evolving mobility needs. While not part of the initial three-year implementation timeline, the following initiatives represent high-value opportunities that the TMO could pursue as resources grow, and partnerships deepen. These future strategies build on early priorities and are designed to enhance regional coordination, support service innovation, and expand outreach to ensure that all residents and workers can access reliable, efficient, and inclusive transportation options.

### *Improving Transit Through Regional Coordination*

- **Driver Recruitment and Retention.** Assist with driver recruitment and retention, including working with workforce development agencies and community colleges on driver training programs. Seek grant funding to cover tuition for driver training. Advertise for drivers on a regional website. Discuss how transit agencies can share or make driver applications easier (one application, driver sharing agreements, coordinated shifts, etc.).
- **Service Integration and Expansion Planning.** Identify intercity and rural transit service gaps, recommend route adjustments, and support new service planning.
- **Support Intercity and First/Last-Mile Solutions.** Help transit agencies collaborate with local jurisdictions and employers to develop micro transit, demand-response services, and park-and-ride connections.
- **Grant and Funding Support.** Assist transit providers in identifying and applying for state, federal, and private funding to expand services.

- **Performance Tracking & Data Sharing.** Establish data-sharing agreements to improve regional ridership analysis and inform decision-making.
- **Fare and Payment Coordination.** Explore options for regional fare integration or a unified payment system across providers. Leverage third-party apps, such as Transit App, to streamline the purchase of transit fares across providers.
- **Policy Support.** Advocate for supportive policies and reducing regulatory barriers to transit expansion.
- **Pilot Programs.** Test new mobility solutions such as microtransit, commuter shuttles, and vanpool initiatives.

### ***Communicating Travel Options***

- **Real-Time Service Updates.** Work with providers to share alerts on delays, schedule changes, and disruptions through digital platforms and signage. This could include leveraging third-party apps such as Transit App to streamline service updates.
- **Expansion on Outreach and User Education.** Building on this strategy could be a series of events. This will require more staffing over time. Strategies could include:
  - Provide handouts on regional transit information to local governments and community groups, and when appropriate, participate in public events, community festivals, and local meetings to meet people where they are.
  - Engage with local chambers of commerce, workforce development partners, and economic development agencies to integrate commute support into services offered.
  - Use local media, social platforms, and partner networks to regularly share service updates and support the delivery of commute campaigns.
- **Service Awareness Campaigns.** Promote transit options through targeted outreach, focusing on underserved areas and communities beyond Rochester. Campaigns can also support public awareness and navigation during Link BRT construction in downtown Rochester.

## TMO Work Plan

While the previous section outlined three strategic priority areas for the Southeast Minnesota TMO, this section translates those strategic directions into a time-bound, actionable implementation roadmap. It is organized chronologically, beginning with pre-launch activities and progressing through each phase of implementation. Each quarter includes detailed actions under key focus areas aligned with the strategic priorities. A draft budget to support the work plan activities can be found in [Appendix A](#).

The timeline chart below summarizes the schedule of the priority services and their key supporting activities.

	Pre-Launch	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3+
<b>1. TMO Governance &amp; Administration</b>				
Organizational Set-Up and Staffing				
Governance and Partner Engagement				
Branding, Communications, and Visibility				
Financial Sustainability and Long-Term Positioning				
Performance Tracking and Strategic Planning				
<b>2. Improving Transit Through Regional Collaboration</b>				
Transit Coordination Work Group				
Regional Transportation Tool/Website + Resource Development				
Create a Unified Transit Voice				
<b>3. Communicating Travel Options</b>				
Outreach and User Education				
Develop a Try Transit Campaign				
Travel Training				

## Pre-Launch Activities

This phase focuses entirely on foundational steps to advance the **TMO Administration and Governance** priority, including securing funding, formalizing partnerships, and laying the groundwork for staffing, leadership, and early support structures.

### ***TMO Administration and Governance***

#### *Organizational Set-Up and Staffing*

- Finalize the **TMO Manager job description** in [Appendix B](#) of the SE MN TMO Feasibility Study and hire a TMO Manager to lead the work plan activities.

#### *Governance and Partner Engagement*

- **Continue engaging with interested steering committee members** to maintain momentum and leverage their collective knowledge and expertise. Steering committee members can help facilitate the next steps to gain support for a TMO, assist with advocacy and funding applications, and further guide TMO service priorities.
  - Schedule quarterly meetings and maintain ongoing communications.
  - Recruit steering committee members to serve on the TMO's Executive Committee or Advisory Board and actively engage in future Working Groups. The Executive Committee will be the TMO decision-making body while the Advisory Board will be a larger group of individuals representing local, regional, and state government, transit agencies, employers, human services organizations, and other stakeholders who will guide TMO staff and the Executive Committee.
- **Create resolutions to obtain commitments from transit agencies, municipal partners, and other stakeholders.**
  - Create resolutions formalizing an organization's commitment to supporting a regional TMO. Sample language is available in [Appendix C](#).
- Develop a **hosting services agreement** with Southeast Service Cooperative to formalize the partnership.

#### *Branding, Communications, and Visibility*

- **Develop and launch a compelling roadshow presenting study findings.** This study confirmed what many stakeholders in the region intuitively knew: there is a great need and opportunity to create an organization that will improve transit and other transportation options in the region.
  - Create materials, recruit and train partners to help with roadshow presentations, and schedule presentations at existing meetings of city councils, regional governmental and nonprofit organizations, MnDOT representatives, and employers to share study findings and gain support.

#### *Financial Sustainability and Long-Term Positioning*

- **Develop funding requests and applications.**
  - Create a funding request to the state legislature based on the work plan developed as part of this study to fund employer/commuter-focused work.

- Apply for 5310 funding in early 2026 to support work plan items serving seniors and people with disabilities. Based on the 2025 schedule, the application deadline is expected to be in April 2026 with funding awards made available for July 1, 2027.
- Explore other possible funding sources, including federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding.

## **Year One: Launch and Initial Implementation**

The first year of implementation focuses on standing up the TMO as a functional, credible organization and launching early programmatic activities. This includes establishing governance structures, initiating priority work in transit coordination and user education, and laying the groundwork for key tools such as the regional website. Activities are organized by quarter to reflect the evolving readiness of the TMO and its partners throughout the first 12 months.

### **Quarter 1: TMO Stand-Up and Board/Committee Recruitment**

#### ***TMO Administration and Governance***

##### *Governance and Partner Engagement*

- Continue Recruiting Executive Committee and Advisory Board members. It is anticipated that some SE MN Together members and participants of the study's Steering Committee will be early recruits to these committees and boards. Use relationships developed during the roadshow to recruit additional members with the goal of achieving representation across the region and stakeholder types.

##### *Financial Sustainability and Long-Term Positioning*

- Refine the work plan, budget, and schedule.

##### *Branding, Communications, and Visibility*

- Begin developing a logo and brand identity

##### *Performance Tracking and Strategic Planning*

- Set up performance measures and reporting structures to comply with funding requirements.

#### ***Improving Transit Through Regional Collaboration***

##### *Transit Coordination Working Group*

- Recruit initial Working Group members (transit providers, local governments, workforce partners, human services, employers, MnDOT).

##### *Regional Transportation Tool/Website + Resource Development*

- Update transportation provider inventory

#### ***Communicating Travel Options***

##### *Outreach and User Education*

- Reach out to employers who were involved in the study to introduce the TMO and continue conversations around transportation needs and potential solutions.
- Identify priority geographies/industries for employer and workforce engagement based on study findings and early outreach.

## **Quarter 2: Official Kick-Off and Program Development**

### ***TMO Administration and Governance***

#### *Governance and Partner Engagement*

- Convene the Executive Committee and Advisory Board to formally launch TMO operations. These kick-off meetings will be used to confirm TMO goals, clarify roles and responsibilities, review Year 1 priorities and work plan, determine logistics, such as meeting schedules, file sharing, and communication protocols, and discuss the organization's brand identity.
- Start building and enhancing relationships with transit providers, employers, workforce agencies, human service organizations, MnDOT, local governments, and chambers.
- Develop a contact database and subscribe to an email platform, such as Constant Contact or Mailchimp.

#### *Financial Sustainability and Long-Term Positioning*

- Start exploring additional funding opportunities, based on pre-launch findings.

#### *Branding, Communications, and Visibility*

- Develop a logo and brand identity.

### ***Improving Transit Through Regional Collaboration***

#### *Transit Coordination Working Group*

- Hold kickoff meeting to establish purpose, roles, and meeting schedule, and facilitate initial conversations around service gaps, redundancies, unified messaging/advocacy, and early pilot ideas.
- Conduct individual stakeholder meetings to gather input on early coordination opportunities.
- Compile baseline inventory of transit services: routes, schedules, fares, transfer points, and specialized services.

#### *Regional Transportation Tool/Website + Resource Development*

- Draft functional goals for the online platform (including data needs, accessibility requirements, and integration needs)
- Research funding opportunities to support implementation
- Conduct a preliminary scan of comparable platforms or vendor solutions, identifying potential vendor options and procurement pathways.

#### *Unified Transit Voice*

- Develop a calendar for upcoming state, regional, and local transportation planning processes and engagement opportunities.

### ***Communicating Travel Options***

#### *Outreach and User Education*

- Develop outreach strategy for employer engagement, workforce partners, and community-based organizations.
- Create initial outreach collateral templates for employer meetings, community presentations, and human service partners.
- Travel Training

- Identify initial partner organizations (e.g. senior centers, disability service providers, human service agencies, and transit providers) interested in supporting travel training activities.

### **Quarter 3: Program Rollout**

#### ***TMO Administration and Governance***

##### *Governance and Partner Engagement*

- Plan and conduct recurring Executive Committee and Advisory Board meetings

##### *Financial Sustainability and Long-Term Positioning*

- Continue exploring funding opportunities

#### ***Improving Transit Through Regional Collaboration***

##### *Transit Coordination Working Group*

- Complete first regional coordination assessment and identify short-term pilot opportunities.
- Facilitate second Working Group meeting to review assessment findings and prioritize pilot concepts.
- Start outlining operational details for Year 2 coordination pilot(s) (schedules, joint marketing, transfer points, Park & Ride, shared resources).
- Begin seeking funding to support potential pilot(s)

##### *Regional Transportation Tool/Website and Resource Development*

- Draft and release RFP/detailed scope of work for vendor solicitation (functional specs, data integration needs, resource library features, accessibility needs, trip-planning options, etc.).
- Conduct a full audit of existing printed and digital transit materials from providers.
- Begin developing content outlines and templates for key resources including rider guides and employer toolkits.
- Initiate data-sharing agreements between providers for ongoing service planning and website integration.

##### *Unified Transit Voice*

- Identify key stakeholders and existing advocacy groups to engage and create the basis for an Advocacy Working Group.
- Discuss unified messaging with the Transit Coordination Working Group.

#### ***Communicating Travel Options***

##### *Outreach and User Education*

- Begin employer and workforce engagement with priority geographies/industries.
- Conduct employee commute surveys with the pilot employer workforce.
- Begin developing modules for community presentations, workforce development partners, and other relevant stakeholders/partners.
- *Travel Training*
  - Develop curriculum and materials for introductory travel training sessions targeted to seniors, individuals with disabilities, and case managers.

- Coordinate with human service organizations to identify target audiences for the travel training pilot.
- *Try Transit Campaign*
  - Begin internal planning for the Year 2 Try Transit campaign. Coordinate with transit providers, secure fare commitments, and draft branding concepts.

## **Quarter 4: Full Implementation**

### ***TMO Administration and Governance***

#### *Governance and Partner Engagement*

- Plan and conduct recurring Executive Committee and Advisory Board meetings

#### *Performance Tracking and Strategic Planning*

- Prepare Year 1 annual assessment and report
- Draft Year 2 work plan, budget, and schedule

### ***Improving Transit Through Regional Collaboration***

#### *Transit Coordination Working Group*

- Finalize operational plans for Year 2 service coordination pilot(s).
- Draft Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or other relevant agreements for shared coordination efforts where applicable.
- Identify external funding sources to support Year 2 pilot implementation where needed.

#### *Regional Transportation Tool/Website + Resource Development*

- Facilitate vendor Q&A, proposal reviews, and evaluation process.
- Select vendor partner, finalize contract, and begin platform development.
- Providers begin sharing data and materials needed for a regional platform (service information, routes, schedules, resource content, etc.).
- Provide oversight, content coordination, and data verification to support vendor work.
- Finalize draft and design for the first set of print and digital resources, including rider guides and employer toolkits.
- Begin translation and ADA formatting for all materials.

#### *Unified Transit Voice*

- Bring together an extended group of stakeholders to inform the development of a Unified Transit Voice. This may form an Advocacy Working Group.
- Draft core Unified Transit Voice framework: purpose, messaging goals, target audiences.
- Outline key state/local policy priorities that may shape initial messaging.

### ***Communicating Travel Options***

#### *Outreach and User Education*

- Begin on-site educational events, travel trainings, and commute workshops with pilot employers.
- Broaden distribution of educational materials through human services, workforce boards, and local government partners.

- Conduct Year 1 evaluation to assess outreach reach, partner engagement, employer participation, and coordination progress.
- *Travel Training*
  - Conduct first pilot travel training sessions with human service organization partners.
- *Try Transit Campaign*
  - Finalize full design and branding package for Year 2 Try Transit campaign.
  - Confirm participating providers, partner commitments, and campaign structure for Year 2 Try Transit campaign.

## **Year Two: Scaling Up and First Campaign Launch**

With foundational structures in place, the second year shifts the TMO into full-scale program delivery. This phase emphasizes expanding partnerships, launching the region’s first “Try Transit” campaign, piloting transit coordination projects, and building capacity through a train-the-trainer model and platform development. The TMO also begins asserting its voice in legislative and policy arenas, using insights from Year One to refine messaging and advocacy strategies. Year Two is about building momentum—translating planning into visible, impactful action.

### ***TMO Administration and Governance***

#### *Governance and Partner Engagement*

- Plan and conduct recurring Executive Committee and Advisory Board meetings.
- Hire part-time staff or interns to assist with program implementation.

#### *Financial Sustainability and Long-Term Positioning*

- Continue exploring funding opportunities.

#### *Performance Tracking and Strategic Planning*

- Continue to track performance measures and perform required reporting.

### ***Improving Transit Through Regional Collaboration***

#### *Transit Coordination Working Group*

- Launch first coordination pilots (e.g. schedule alignments, transfer point coordination, Park & Ride pilots, shared staffing opportunities).
- Formalize interagency agreements (MOUs) to support ongoing coordination activities.
- Facilitate quarterly Transportation Coordinating Working Group meetings to monitor pilots, troubleshoot issues, and identify additional coordination opportunities.
- Support participating providers in identifying and pursuing external grant funding for service expansion, pilot continuation, or operational efficiencies.
- Expand collaborative service planning to address additional rural, intercity, or underserved areas identified in Year 1.

#### *Regional Transportation Tool/Website and Resource Development*

- Vendor begins platform development.

- TMO provides oversight, content coordination, and data verification to support vendor work.
- Complete initial platform backend and functionality for soft launch testing.
- Conduct internal testing: trip-planning tools, navigation, accessibility features, and mobile compatibility.
- Prepare first run of print-ready materials for distribution.
- Update website content to reflect additional providers, expanded resources, and schedule updates.
- Continue expanding resource library based on employer and partner feedback.

#### *Unified Transit Voice*

- Finalize initial regional transit messaging framework with the Advocacy Working Group.
- Develop shared talking points and policy briefs.
- Plan schedule for upcoming legislative sessions, regional planning efforts, and policy conversations.
- Launch first public awareness messaging campaign aligned with regional transit priorities.
- Prepare and train partners for upcoming legislative and advocacy opportunities.
- Refine messaging based on early feedback and policy developments.

#### **Communicating Travel Options**

##### *Outreach and User Education*

- Expand employer engagement beyond the initial pilot employer.
- Expand employer engagement to additional industries, geographies, and new HR partners.
- Deliver ongoing outreach, commute workshops, and travel trainings for both employer audiences and human service agency partners.
- *Travel Training*
  - Develop train-the-trainer materials for workforce agencies, human services staff, and partner organizations that will help sustain ongoing travel training delivery.
  - Conduct follow-up travel training sessions and build organizational capacity to scale travel training in Year 2.

##### *Try Transit Campaign*

- Confirm participating providers, partner commitments, and campaign structure for Year 2 Try Transit campaign.
- Launch the first Try Transit campaign with broad regional promotion across employer networks, workforce partners, and community channels.

### **Year Three and Beyond: Ongoing Growth and Establishment**

By Year Three, the Southeast Minnesota TMO will have transitioned from a start-up organization to an established regional entity with active programs, partnerships, and a growing presence. This phase focuses on expanding the TMO's impact, institutionalizing coordination efforts, and embedding its services and advocacy into long-term regional systems. Building on the foundation laid in Years One and Two, the TMO will deepen relationships, scale pilot programs, formalize governance structures, and broaden public engagement to ensure long-term sustainability and relevance. Key efforts during this phase include

expanding service planning collaboration, launching recurring campaigns, scaling training efforts, and advancing a unified regional transit voice.

### ***TMO Administration and Governance***

#### *Organizational Set-Up and Staffing*

- Expand staffing or volunteer leadership as needed to scale programs, maintain quality, and deepen partnerships.

#### *Governance and Partner Engagement*

- Continue planning and conducting recurring Executive Committee and Advisory Board meetings to ensure regular governance, oversight, and decision-making.

#### *Financial Sustainability and Long-Term Positioning*

- Pursue multi-year funding commitments from local, state, and federal sources to ensure long-term sustainability.

#### *Performance Tracking and Strategic Planning*

- Refine and update the TMO Work Plan and performance measures based on progress to date and evolving needs.
- Conduct a strategic planning process to revisit and refine the TMO's mission, vision, and long-term goals, incorporating lessons learned from the first two years.

### ***Improving Transit Through Regional Collaboration***

#### *Transit Coordination Working Group*

- Expand regional coordination work into new service planning (rural access, intercity connections, shared NEMT services, driver recruitment support, etc.).
- Fully formalize interagency coordination structures as ongoing governance functions.

#### *Regional Transportation Tool/Website and Resource Development*

- Continue website expansion: real-time updates, service alerts, additional providers, trip-planning tools, and third-party app integration.

#### *Unified Transit Voice*

- Expand Unified Transit Voice to serve as a permanent regional coalition for transit investment and policy coordination.

### ***Communicating Travel Options***

#### *Outreach and User Education*

- Build out year-round outreach and education calendar (employer events, travel trainings, community events, seasonal promotions).

#### *Try Transit Campaign*

- Establish an annual Try Transit campaign as a recurring regional promotion.

#### *Travel Training*

- Scale train-the-trainer programs to expand travel training capacity through partner organizations.

## Appendix A: Draft Budget

	<i>TMO Manager Salary (1 FTE)</i>	<i>Benefits (Healthcare, Retirement, Legally Required)</i>	<i>Part-Time Staff</i>	<i>SCC Admin</i>	<i>Marketing + Incentives</i>	<i>Operations</i>	<i>Regional Transportation Tool Development</i>	<i>Total Budget</i>
<i>Notes</i>	Assumes 3% growth year over year	Assumes 35% of salary with 3% growth annually	Hourly	5%	Increase of \$5,000 per year	Office equipment/software, printing, transportation	\$40,000 for building the tool and \$20,000 per year for maintenance and service fees.	
<b>Year 1: Foundation Building and Launching TMO Services</b>	\$ 100,000	\$ 35,000	\$ -	\$ 10,975	\$ 35,000	\$ 9,500	\$ 40,000	\$ 230,475
<b>Q1 January - March</b>	\$ 25,000	\$ 8,750	\$ -	\$ 2,188	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 45,938
<i>TMO Administration &amp; Governance</i>	\$ 2,000							
<i>Transportation Coordinating Working Group</i>	\$ 8,000							
<i>Unified Transit Voice</i>	\$ 3,000							
<i>Regional Tool + Website Development</i>	\$ 8,000							
<i>Outreach &amp; User Education, Try Transit, Travel Training</i>	\$ 4,000				\$ 10,000			
<i>Try Transit</i>	\$ -							
<b>Q2 April - June</b>	\$ 25,000	\$ 8,750	\$ -	\$ 2,763	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 10,000	\$ 58,013
<i>Transportation Coordinating Working Group</i>	\$ 5,000							
<i>Unified Transit Voice</i>	\$ 3,000							
<i>Regional Tool + Website Development</i>	\$ 10,000						\$ 10,000	
<i>Outreach &amp; User Education, Try Transit, Travel Training</i>	\$ 7,000				\$ 10,000			
<b>Q3 July - September</b>	\$ 25,000	\$ 8,750	\$ -	\$ 3,263	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 20,000	\$ 68,513
<i>Transportation Coordinating Working Group</i>	\$ 5,000							
<i>Unified Transit Voice</i>	\$ 4,000							
<i>Regional Tool + Website Development</i>	\$ 6,000						\$ 20,000	
<i>Outreach &amp; User Education, Try Transit, Travel Training</i>	\$ 10,000				\$ 5,000			
<b>Q4 October - December</b>	\$ 25,000	\$ 8,750	\$ -	\$ 2,763	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 10,000	\$ 58,013
<i>Transportation Coordinating Working Group</i>	\$ 6,000							
<i>Unified Transit Voice</i>	\$ 2,000							
<i>Regional Tool + Website Development</i>	\$ 5,000						\$ 10,000	
<i>Outreach &amp; User Education, Try Transit, Travel Training</i>	\$ 12,000				\$ 5,000			
<b>Year 2: Scaling and Long-Term Growth</b>	\$ 103,000	\$ 36,050	\$ 60,000	\$ 13,053	\$ 35,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 274,103
<b>Q1 January - March</b>	\$ 25,750	\$ 9,013	\$ 15,000	\$ 3,988	\$ 7,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 20,000	\$ 83,751
<b>Q2 April - June</b>	\$ 25,750	\$ 9,013	\$ 15,000	\$ 3,063	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ 64,326
<b>Q3 July - September</b>	\$ 25,750	\$ 9,013	\$ 15,000	\$ 3,063	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ 64,326
<b>Q4 October - December</b>	\$ 25,750	\$ 9,013	\$ 15,000	\$ 2,938	\$ 7,500	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ 61,701
<b>Year 3: Scaling and Long-Term Growth</b>	\$ 106,090	\$ 37,132	\$ 74,263	\$ 14,224	\$ 40,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 298,709
<b>Q1 January - March</b>	\$ 26,523	\$ 9,283	\$ 18,566	\$ 4,344	\$ 10,000	\$ 2,500	\$ 20,000	\$ 91,215
<b>Q2 April - June</b>	\$ 26,523	\$ 9,283	\$ 18,566	\$ 3,294	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ 69,165
<b>Q3 July - September</b>	\$ 26,523	\$ 9,283	\$ 18,566	\$ 3,294	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ 69,165
<b>Q4 October - December</b>	\$ 26,523	\$ 9,283	\$ 18,566	\$ 3,294	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ 69,165
<b>3-Year Total</b>	<b>\$309,090</b>	<b>\$108,182</b>	<b>\$134,263</b>	<b>\$38,252</b>	<b>\$110,000</b>	<b>\$23,500</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	<b>\$803,286</b>

***Budget Assumptions***

- SCC Administrative Fee is an estimate and will need to be confirmed as part of the hosting agreement.
- Marketing and Travel Incentives refers to a variety of marketing expenses and incentives used during the promotion of transit and other alternative modes, including Try Transit and Travel Training. Incentives could include free transit passes, gift cards for prize drawings, giveaways, and similar expenses. Marketing expenses include assistance with logo development and branding and could include paid targeted social media posts, billboards, and any expenses related to events.
- Regional Transportation Tool Development includes outsourced web development and the potential for subscribing to a third-party tool trip planning and ridematching tool to create this resource.

## Appendix B: TMO Manager Job Description

The TMO Program Manager will lead the day-to-day operations of a newly formed Southeast Minnesota TMO. This dynamic role is central to coordinating and advancing the TMO's priority initiatives to Improving Transit Through Regional Coordination and facilitating Communication Around Travel Options in the Region. The Manager will execute and evolve the TMO workplan while fostering strong relationships with partners, employers, communities, and stakeholders.

This role includes overseeing programs and initiatives that promote transit and other transportation options, building awareness and behavior change among residents and workers, and ensuring financial and organizational sustainability through strategic outreach, partnerships, and funding development.

### **Key Responsibilities**

#### *Program Leadership and Implementation*

Design and deliver the services of the TMO, including supporting a regional working group of transit agencies and other transportation operators, developing, and maintaining a regional transportation tool/website, coordinating unified transit advocacy for the region, creating travel options resources, and coordinating with employers to help deliver employer programs and facilitate commuter engagement.

#### *Partner and Employer Engagement*

Serve as the primary point of contact for employers, board members, and community partners. Facilitate outreach activities such as presentations, tabling events, and one-on-one support to promote commuting alternatives and access to services and education. Facilitate partnerships with educational institutions to expand staff capacity. This could include internships, class projects, competitions, or similar collaborations.

#### *Organizational and Funding Development*

Develop and execute strategies for long-term sustainability of the TMO through diversified funding (grants, sponsorships, memberships), including grant proposals, execution, and reporting. Support and collaborate with the Executive Committee and the Advisory Board and to align on priorities and impact. Hire vendors and support staff as needed to complete the work plan.

#### *Data-Informed Strategy*

Collect, analyze, and report data to assess the performance and impact of programs. Use data insights to drive decision-making and guide continuous improvement.

#### *Regional Collaboration*

Coordinate with transportation agencies, local governments, health systems, educational institutions, and regional employers to align strategies and support broader mobility and access goals.

#### *Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities*

##### Strategic Leadership & Program Management

- Strong organizational and project management skills; ability to balance multiple priorities and initiatives.
- Experience designing and executing outreach and engagement programs.
- Ability to develop and lead workplans, manage timelines, and measure outcomes.

- Experience hiring and managing vendors and staff.

#### Relationship-Building & Communication

- Excellent verbal and written communication, with the ability to tailor messages to a variety of audiences.
- Ability to engage, support, and collaborate with a diverse set of stakeholders, including employers, government officials, service providers, educational institutions, and commuters.
- Comfortable facilitating meetings, presentations, and public-facing events.

#### Analytical Thinking & Adaptability

- Proficiency in interpreting data and applying insights to improve programs.
- Problem-solving mindset with the ability to navigate challenges with flexibility and creativity.
- Commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusivity in transportation services and community outreach.

#### Technical & Digital Literacy

- Comfortable using project management tools and communication platforms.
- Working knowledge of data sources, software, or systems relevant to transportation or community development is a plus.

This position plays a critical role in shaping Southeast Minnesota's approach to sustainable and equitable mobility. From working with employers to supporting active transportation to maintaining organizational health, the TMO Manager will have a direct hand in improving transportation outcomes for communities across the region.

## Appendix C: Sample Resolution

### Resolution in Support of Establishing a Transportation Management Organization (TMO) to Serve the Eleven-County Region of Southeast Minnesota

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Legislature has invested in a comprehensive study to evaluate the feasibility and benefits of establishing a Transportation Management Organization (TMO) to serve the eleven-county region of Southeast Minnesota, encompassing Houston, Fillmore, Mower, Freeborn, Steele, Dodge, Olmsted, Winona, Wabasha, Goodhue, and Rice Counties; and

**WHEREAS**, the findings of this study clearly demonstrate that a regional TMO would significantly strengthen transportation and transit systems across Southeast Minnesota by:

1. **Responding to regional needs** expressed by employers, schools, healthcare providers, transit agencies, social services, older adults, and individuals with disabilities;
2. **Building upon national success stories**, where TMOs have proven effective in improving transit services, even in rural areas;
3. **Leveraging existing leadership and support** and the readiness of trusted organizations to host and implement a regional TMO;
4. **Fostering community-driven solutions**, by creating a platform where residents, businesses, and public agencies can collaboratively identify transportation gaps and develop shared solutions;
5. **Driving regional economic growth**, by increasing access to reliable transportation, which helps workers maintain employment, supports businesses in retaining talent, and stabilizes the regional labor market;
6. **Improving quality of life**, by offering residents greater freedom in choosing where to live and work, while also promoting economic sustainability, better health, access to education and services, and reducing environmental impacts across all communities;

**WHEREAS**, the anticipated benefits of a Southeast Minnesota TMO are significant and far-reaching, including:

- **Expanded access to transportation, employment, and services**
- **Stronger regional workforce and economic competitiveness**
- **More coordinated and efficient mobility solutions**
- **Improved health, education, and equity outcomes**
- **Increased eligibility for grants and funding**
- **Greater environmental sustainability**

**WHEREAS**, the real-life impact of a TMO would be seen and felt in communities across the region:

- **Residents** would gain better access to work, healthcare, education, and daily necessities;
- **Employers** would benefit by accessing a broader and more diverse workforce, as improved transportation options expand the geographic reach of potential employees;
- **Workers** would benefit from more affordable and reliable transportation, reducing commuting costs and increasing access to job opportunities across the region;
- **Local businesses** would be better positioned to stay, expand, and attract new investment, as improved mobility makes the region more attractive for both workers and entrepreneurs;

- **Older adults and people with disabilities** would enjoy increased independence and community participation;
- **Transit providers** would operate more efficiently through regional coordination;
- **Cities and counties** would become more livable and resilient;

**WHEREAS**, [Insert Organization Name] recognizes and strongly supports the transformative potential of a TMO in advancing equitable, efficient, and sustainable transportation solutions for all people in the eleven-county region;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that [Insert Organization Name] expresses its full and enthusiastic support for the establishment of a **Transportation Management Organization** to coordinate, enhance, and expand transit and transportation services across Southeast Minnesota—for the benefit of current and future generations.