

Health and Human Services Committee

Thursday, August 5, 2010

9:30 a.m.

Roughrider Room, State Capitol

Dave Leftwich, Director of the Office of Transportation Programs
North Dakota Department of Transportation

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I'm Dave Leftwich with the North Dakota Department of Transportation. Today, I am going to update you on the status of two public transit pilot projects.

Public Transit Regional Coordination Pilot Projects:

North Dakota's 2009 Legislature enacted Senate Bill 2223 which directed the Department to initiate two regional transit coordination projects. The legislation provides that one of the projects be in a region with no city with a population over 35,000 and one in a region with a city over 35,000.

The Department subsequently contracted with the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center (SURTC) to conduct corresponding studies and to provide related findings and recommendations by December 2010. The Department will use these findings and recommendations as the basis for submitting a report to the 2011 Legislature.

The Department and the projects' Technical Steering Committee have identified the two regions that will be the focus of these coordination efforts. The regional centers for the chosen regions are Jamestown (South Central Region) and Bismarck (West Central Region). A Regional Steering Committee has been established for each region and public input meetings were held in July 2010. The meetings provided the public with information and solicited input on a number of issues related to transit coordination.

SURTC is currently analyzing the information that has been collected and will be working on developing regional coordination alternatives. An interim report will be presented to the Department in December. This report will be used to prepare an overview for the 2011 Legislature.

A website has also been established to provide information on the project. The site includes background information and postings on the governing legislation, Regional Steering Committee members and meeting minutes, and public input meetings. Information will be added as the project progresses. The site's address is www.surtc.org/regionalcoordination.

Along with the study SURTC is doing, NDDOT has a contract with Ulteig Engineering to do a "Rural Public Transit Needs Assessment." The Needs Assessment will cover the following needs:

- Task 1: Profile Existing Services and Service Levels
- Task 2: Develop SocEcon Profiles
- Task 3: Interview Expert Panel Members
- Task 4: Complete Transit Needs Survey
- Task 5: Evaluate Quality of Life Impacts
- Task 6: Develop Economic Model and Assumptions
- Task 7: Final Report Development

The study will help the Department determine if there are unmet transit needs and the cost to meet these needs. A final draft report is due in September.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. This concludes my update on the two regional coordination pilot projects.