

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## Purpose

With the 2005 passage of federal transportation bill (known as SAFETEA-LU) there is a requirement for the preparation of coordination plans for entities that will access Federal Transit Administration funds. A specific requirement for a coordination plan is identified for three programs:

- FTA Section 5310 – Transportation for Individuals who are Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities
- FTA Section 5316 – New Freedoms Program
- FTA Section 5317 – Job Access Reverse Commute Program

The Human Services Transportation Coordination Study and Plan, also referred to as the “Coordination Plan,” documents a study and planning process that provided an opportunity and an impetus for the region to make decisions about the next steps in coordinating transportation services. This Coordination Plan sets priorities for specialized transportation service projects and for transportation services oriented to serving employment trips. The Coordination Plan is a strategic four-year plan for coordinating services and will meet the Federal requirements for a Coordination Plan for the region.

At the Federal level there is an increased recognition of how many federal programs fund transportation services and the importance of coordinating a wide range of transportation resources as a means of creating strong and viable transportation networks in communities for all riders. The Pikes Peak Regional Coordination Plan is based upon the proposed circulars for FTA Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 programs as described in the September 6, 2006 Federal Register. These guidelines define a coordination plan as one that

- “Identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes
- Provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and
- Prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation.”

The proposed Federal guidance encourages coordination and reminds recipients of Federal Transit Administration urbanized area grants that they need to provide for the coordination of public transportation services with other US government programs that provide support for transportation services.

## A Time of Transition

The Federal and State guidelines for the development of a coordinated planning process are a work in progress. The State of Colorado (on behalf of the small urbanized areas and rural regions of Colorado) and the three large urbanized areas (including the Pikes

Peak Council of Governments) will need to transition to a coordinated transportation planning and service delivery process that represents the stakeholders, provides a mechanism for improving the efficiency of the transportation delivery system, and addresses critical transportation needs. This will require new and refined relationships among entities and decisions on how Colorado and the various large metropolitan planning organizations can best achieve the goals of the area.

The State of Colorado is beginning to address coordination in two ways. The first is that CDOT is leading an interagency coordinating council bringing together the various state departments with programs that either provide or depend on transportation services for clients. Representatives of organizations at other levels of government, including metropolitan planning organizations, cities, counties, transit providers, and consumers are also participating. It is anticipated this Statewide Coordinating Council will address issues involving funding and regulatory requirements at the state level and also how to support local efforts to increase coordination. The initial round of meetings focused on identifying issues and understanding the roles of various state agencies. The Statewide Interagency Coordinating Council has not yet tackled issues such as the structure and role of Local Coordinating Councils or the specific barriers to coordinated services that exist in Colorado.

The second role for CDOT is to integrate the new federal planning regulations into its regional planning process, fulfilling its role of representing the rural and small urbanized areas of the state. CDOT is gathering initial information in the current round of regional transportation plans to identify both transit and human service transportation needs. This effort is based on the draft regulations and reflects what they knew at the time the contracts for the regional plans were let.

Local Coordinating Councils have been proposed to provide an ongoing framework for coordinating services at the local level. These local councils have not yet been identified or integrated into the planning process. The Local Coordinating Councils are envisioned to be responsible for establishing a local process for coordinating services (including standards and evaluation criteria). They may also directly contract for services. They will also provide feedback to the Statewide Coordinating Council regarding problems that need to be addressed at the State level in order to facilitate improved coordination. One objective of this plan is to identify a local coordinating council for the Pikes Peak region.

Characteristics of this planning process are:

- The process is occurring in a time of transition at the Federal and State levels.
- The various coordination efforts are taking place simultaneously and final regulatory guidance is not yet available.
- Many entities at different levels of government will need to participate for successful coordination.
- The actions of agencies outside the region could have significant impacts on how coordination proceeds at a local level

- Coordination evolves in different communities in different ways. The way in which coordination can best benefit a particular community or region will reflect the needs of the area, services available, funding streams, interest of local entities, and the support for coordination that exists at the state level.
- Many steps are involved in coordination and there is not a linear path to coordination – or a manual that says “carry out steps 1, 2, and 3 and you will have success”. Rather, the process will need to respond to issues as they arise. Some issues will be able to be resolved at the local level. Others may need State or Federal action in order to be resolved.

## Background in the Pikes Peak Region

Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments and City of Colorado Springs have long been working toward increased coordination in the delivery of specialized transportation services. This planning process builds upon a solid level of planning work for fixed-route and specialized services in the region. There are several efforts that set the stage for this current effort. An important and recent effort is that undertaken by one of the groups of the Leadership Pikes Peak class of 2006. They have evaluated the transportation services in the community with an emphasis on improving specialized transportation services and those services most needed by individuals who do not have access to an automobile for their travel needs.

The Leadership Pikes Peak project included interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including providers and clients of various programs that depend on transportation services. The results of this survey work have been incorporated into this current effort. They developed a set of recommendations for the community to consider.

There are also a variety of planning studies carried out over the past few years that document the growth in demand for specialized services and support the information presented in this plan. This Coordination Plan summarizes information on demographic, employment and service characteristics, and provides pertinent information on providers. However, more detailed information can be found in the following documents:

- PPACG Senior Demographic and Transportation Study – February 2004
- Pikes Peak Urbanized Area Specialized Transportation Plan 2030 Update (Appendix E of the Regional Transportation Plan) – October 2004
- Public Transportation Service Plan – October 2004
- Leadership Pikes Peak Transportation Alternatives Task Force Report - June 2006

## Study Process

Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments has an active Specialized Transportation Advisory Subcommittee (STAS) that provides a forum for addressing issues related to specialized transportation. This subcommittee has been expanded to form a Working Group by adding representation from stakeholders who do not ordinarily participate but

may have an interest in this Coordination Plan and the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) element. A list of STAS Working Group members is included in Appendix A. In addition, those stakeholders specifically interested in the JARC program met as a subgroup. Information on the JARC process is included in chapter 7 of this document.

The STAS Working Group was actively involved in developing the Coordination Plan, representing a variety of viewpoints. Those representing agencies were able to keep their agencies informed of progress throughout the development of the plan.

Once completed, the STAS will recommend adoption of the Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan to the Transportation Advisory Committee of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Plan will also be adopted as a part of the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan for the region. In addition, the Job Access Reverse Commute element of the coordination plan was prepared as a free-standing document and integrated into this overall Coordination Plan.

## Report Contents

This report describes the characteristics of the region (chapter 2) and existing services (chapter 3). Chapter 4 provides an assessment of needs and identifies basic issues to consider as the region moves forward with coordination. Two chapters then address different facets of increasing coordination. Chapter 5 addresses changes in the transportation planning process. Chapter 6 focuses on alternatives to increase the coordination of specialized transportation service delivery. Activities to increase access to jobs for individuals with low incomes and criteria for evaluating projects are presented in chapter 7. Implementation activities, including a timeline and budget are presented in chapter 8.

## Chapter 2. Community Characteristics

### Introduction

This chapter describes key community characteristics that impact the need for transit services. It includes a description of the study area, key demographic characteristics, the location of activity centers, and information on the location of employment, key employers, and training facilities in the area.

### Study Area Overview

The primary study area is the Colorado Springs Urbanized Area, illustrated in Figure 2-1 as the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments MPO boundary. The focus of the work for coordination of human services transportation and for employment transportation falls within the MPO boundary.

El Paso County ranges from mountain peaks on the west side of the County to the plains on the eastern half of the County. Major roadways include Interstate 25, Highway 24 and Highway 83. Colorado Springs, located at the base of the mountains, is the largest city in the urbanized area. The communities of Manitou Springs and Palmer Lake are nestled in the foothills of the mountains. Other important communities include Fountain, south of Colorado Springs along I-25, Monument, north along I-25, and several communities on the eastern plains (Calhan, Falcon, Ellicot, and Ramah).

El Paso County also includes major military bases which cover a good deal of land area and have significant levels of population. These include Fort Carson Army Post, Peterson Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base, the Air Force Academy, and the Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, formerly known as NORAD, the North American Air Defense.

The balance of El Paso and Teller counties is recognized as an “area of influence”. One of the challenges in developing a coordination plan is to respect the varying boundaries of different organizations. The Pikes Peak Area Agency on Aging and The Resource Exchange each serve El Paso, Teller, and Park counties. Because the services operated in Park County are more discrete from those operated in El Paso and Teller counties, it was not included in the area of influence.

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**Figure 2-1 Study Area**

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## Demographic Information

### Population

El Paso County had an estimated population of approximately 565,000, according to estimates from the Colorado State Demographers office. Teller County, also within the area of influence for this study, had a population of 22,000. Woodland Park in Teller County is within the MPO boundary.

Figure 2-2 lists the population of each county and community based on July 2005 estimates. There is a significant amount of population in unincorporated areas in both counties. Some of the population lives in rural but unincorporated communities while some surrounds the metro area.

The region has experienced steady growth, as illustrated in Figure 2-3. The County population increased an average of 3% annually between 1970 and 2000. Since 2000 the growth rate has been about 2% while the national growth rate is around 1% annually.

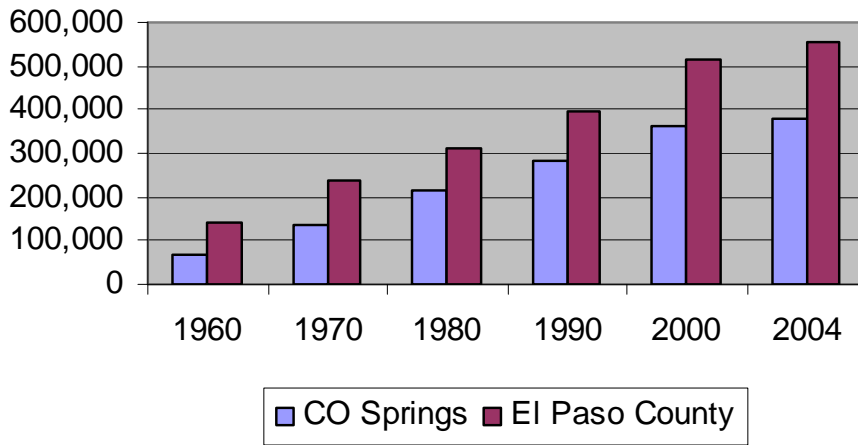
**Figure 2-2 Community Populations**

Area	2005 Population	Percent of County	Area	2005 Population	Percent of County
EL PASO COUNTY	554,585	100.0%	TELLER COUNTY	22,346	100%
Calhan	898	0.2%	Cripple Creek	1,071	4.8%
Colorado Springs	380,073	68.1%	Green Mtn Falls (partial)	49	0.2%
Fountain	18,334	3.4%	Victor	443	2.0%
Green Mtn. Falls (partial)	852	0.2%	Woodland Park	7,143	32.1%
Manitou Springs	5,225	0.9%	Unincorporated Area	13,601	60.9%
Monument	4,174	0.8%			
Palmer Lake	2,355	0.4%			
Ramah	121	0.0%			
Unincorporated Area	142,553	26.0%			

Source: CO State Demographer's Office

The density of the population is an important characteristic when considering the delivery of transit services. Density based on the PPACG 2005 Transportation Model is illustrated in Figure 2-4.

**Figure 2-3 Population Growth**



Source: CO State Demographer's Office and US Census

## **Figure 2-4 2005 Density of Population**

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## Transit Dependent Population

Several characteristics tend to identify individuals that may be dependent on public transit. Salient characteristics include families with low incomes, individuals with disabilities, and the number of individuals over age 65. Financial limitations may make it difficult to purchase and maintain an automobile. Individuals with temporary or permanent disabilities that limit their ability to drive may be served by specialized transportation services. Older adults face the decision about curtailing driving due to frailty and age related physical impediments such as reduced vision

The 2000 Census reports 7,690 families below the poverty level in El Paso County. This is nearly 5.7% of the total population, lower than either the Colorado statewide average of 6.2% or the US average of 9.2%. Figure 2-5 illustrates the density of low-income households in the study area, which has been updated based on 2005 estimates of population.

The Census also reports that 8.7% of the population (44,787 individuals in 2000) is 65 years of age or older. Colorado has an average of 8.7% of the population aged 65 and above and the US has an average of 12.4%. The aging of the population is an important concern for the region, with large increases forecast. Between 2005 and 2010, this population is projected to increase 22%; between 2010 and 2015 an increase of 29% is anticipated; and between 2015 and 2020, an increase of 26% is anticipated. The population of older adults will more than double in this time, from 50,500 in 2005 to over 100,000 in 2020 as illustrated in Figure 2-6. The density of persons aged 65 and over, from the 2000 Census, is illustrated in Figure 2-7. While the central core of Colorado Springs has the greatest density of people aged 65 and above, there are significant concentrations elsewhere, such as in the City of Fountain.

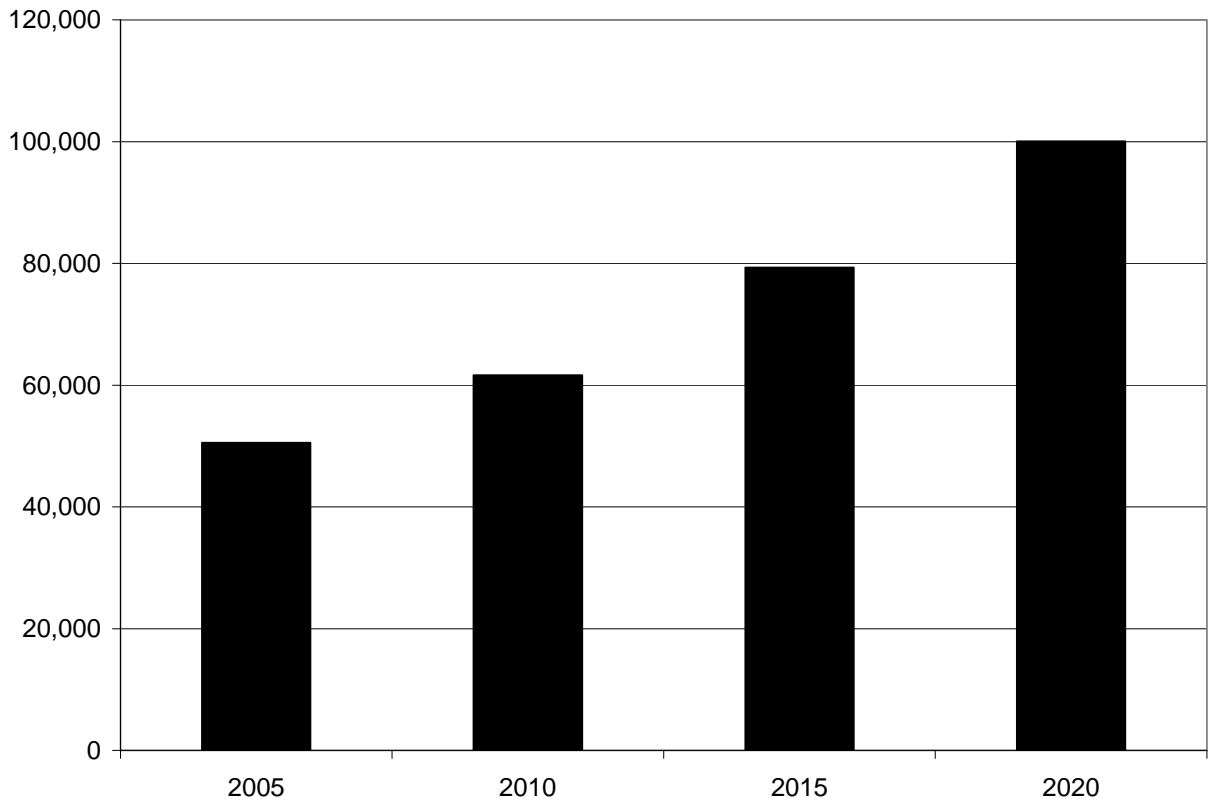
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**Figure 2-5 Density of Low-income Households – 2005**

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**Figure 2-6 Growth in Population Aged 65 and Older**



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**Figure 2-7 Density of Persons Aged 65 and Over (2000 Census)**

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The 2000 Census reported 70,710 individuals in the study area having a disability, or 15.7% of the population. It should also be noted that disabilities increase as one ages. In the Colorado Springs urbanized area, the Senior Demographic and Transportation Study reported 31% of the population aged 65 to 74 as having a disability and 53% of the population aged 75 and over has a disability. Figure 2-8 illustrates the density of people with mobility limitations, as identified in the 2000 Census.

## Activity Centers

Figure 2-9 illustrates major activity centers, including hospitals and major medical facilities, colleges and training centers, and work sites for individuals with developmental disabilities. These are common locations to which low income workers or people who use specialized transportation services may travel.

The activity centers are no longer centralized but rather stretch across the urbanized area. With the development of hospitals and medical offices in the northern part of the urbanized area, the urbanized area now includes a northern hub with a major employment base, medical facilities, colleges, and large residential base.

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## **Figure 2-8 Density of Mobility Limited Persons**

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## **Figure 2-9 Activity Centers**

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## Economic Information

As shown in Figure 2-10, employment in the region is led by the services sector, providing 31% of the jobs. The retail trade sector has 19% of the jobs and the lowest average annual wage. At an average wage of \$16,727, it is just over half of the average wage of \$30,676. Individuals working in this sector are often transit dependent, as low paying jobs often make ownership of an automobile difficult. Only the agricultural sector (with 1% of the jobs) has wages near this level.

**Figure 2-10 El Paso County Employment**

El Paso County 1999 Employment	# of Jobs	% of Jobs	Avg. Annual Wage
Agriculture	1,829	1%	\$18,810
Mining	79	0%	\$48,547
Construction	13,793	6%	\$32,810
Manufacturing	27,700	12%	\$39,827
Transportation, warehousing utilities	13,378	6%	\$43,799
Wholesale Trade	6,683	3%	\$36,574
Retail Trade	44,647	19%	\$16,727
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	13,437	6%	\$34,091
Services	71,950	31%	\$31,589
Government	36,346	16%	\$31,598
<b>Total</b>	<b>229,842</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$30,676</b>

Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Overall, there were 271,630 persons reported employed in the region in 2005 with a reported labor force of 286,984. In 2005, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs reported an unemployment rate of 5.4% for El Paso County.

Figures 2-11 and 2-12 illustrate the location of jobs in the region, for 2005 and 2030. Note that employment is dispersed throughout the urbanized area and the growth in employment is largely occurring in the northern and eastern portions of the region. These are areas where transit services are limited at present.

Additional detail on some major employers in the northern part of the study area is included in Appendix F.

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## **Figure 2-11 2005 Total Employment**

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## **Figure 2-12 2030 Total Employment**

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## Chapter 3. Existing Services

### Introduction

This chapter summarizes the range of existing transportation services available in the region. Like most areas, the region has many providers and different transportation networks serving different purposes. General information is provided on a wide range of services and programs funding transportation to provide an overview of the region's transportation networks. More detailed information is provided on the primary fixed-route transit system and specialized service providers to set the stage for coordination of these services.

The chapter begins with a description of Mountain Metropolitan Transit. As the fixed-route provider, Mountain Metropolitan Transit is the key means of connecting low-income individuals with employment. By virtue of providing ADA mandated paratransit services through Metro Mobility, the system also defines the boundaries within which specialized services are available. Rideshare and vanpool services, also important to workers, are provided through Metro Rides.

The chapter also describes the specialized service providers that meet needs for general travel and specific services for individuals who are elderly or have disabilities. Metro Mobility is the primary provider in the area served by Mountain Metropolitan Transit. Other primary specialized services meeting other travel needs of people with disabilities or aging adults include Silver Key Senior Services, The Resource Exchange, Amblicab, Fountain Valley Senior Services, and Teller County Senior Services. General information is provided in the following summaries. More detailed information on some aspects of the individual operations will be provided as part of the analysis of alternatives.

A variety of other human service and employment organizations exist with an interest in transportation, and these are described in the next section. In addition, an overview of private sector providers is described.

All agencies may potentially be part of a coordinated network of transportation services or wish to participate in the decisions about what transportation services are provided, such as the level of service and where services are operated.

## Fixed-route Transit Service

### **Mountain Metropolitan Transit**

#### **General Information**

Mountain Metropolitan Transit is the fixed-route service provider in the region. The system grew out of services originally funded by the City of Colorado Springs, but has been recently augmented with significant funding from Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority.

Mountain Metropolitan Transit operates routes throughout the urbanized area, serving the City of Colorado Springs, Manitou Springs, Fountain, Falcon, Widefield, and Security. Service operates daily, with limited service in the evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays. The system carries over 10,000 passengers on weekdays for a total of 3.3 million trips annually. A fleet of 78 fixed-route vehicles are presently operated.

#### **Characteristics**

Service frequencies vary, with major routes operating every 35 minutes in the peak period and every 70 minutes mid-day. The busiest routes operate every 35 minutes all day while those with lower ridership operate 70 minute frequencies all day. Sunday and evening service generally operates every 60 minutes, reflecting the lower level of traffic congestion.

Most routes begin between 5:00 AM and 6:00 AM on weekdays and operate until 6:00 or 7:00 PM. Those routes with evening service continue in operation until 10:30 PM. Sunday service begins at 7:30 AM and operates 60 minute frequencies.

The cash fare is \$1.25 with an \$0.85 zone fare added for all trips traveling to/from the City of Fountain. A wide range of tickets, passes and discount fares are available.

#### **Service Plan**

Mountain Metropolitan Transit is currently implementing a new service plan, reflecting the additional funds approved as part of the establishment of the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority. In November 2005, Mountain Metropolitan Transit transitioned from a hub-and-spoke system (with most routes radiating out of the downtown area) to a multi-hub system with nine transfer stations and park-and-ride facilities.

The system added additional running time to increase schedule reliability and safety of the service, with mid-day routes running a 70 minute schedule. The 70 minute headways reflect growth of the community as well as the realities of the impact of traffic congestion on schedules.

The 2007 transit service plan is illustrated in Figure 3-1 and reflects an expansion of fixed-route service with regard to coverage, frequency, and span of service. Three new “flex” or possibly “call-and-ride” routes are proposed in the Briargate, Rockrimmon, and

Stetson Hills areas. The service plan is detailed in the report “City of Colorado Springs 2007 Public Transportation Service Plan”, prepared in October 2004. Plan details continue to be monitored as the system gets closer to full implementation. When fully implemented, the system will require 83 vehicles to operate.

### **Employment Transportation**

Work and school are important destinations for Mountain Metropolitan Transit riders. In the 2005 ridership survey, 41% of riders reported work trips as a primary travel purpose and 22% of riders reported traveling to school or college as a primary trip purpose. Keeping this in perspective, the 2000 US Census reported that of the total workers in El Paso County, only 1% use transit to travel to and from work.

In the past 10–15 years, job growth has expanded most significantly in the north part of Colorado Springs and it is projected to continue. In the last ten years, the system has developed a variety of services oriented to commuters. These include express routes serving Schriever Air Force Base (two operating between the Air Force Academy and Schriever and one operating on Peterson Blvd) for a total of four peak hour trips; two routes serving Falcon (4 peak hour trips on a route operating on Highway 24 and Platte Avenue to Downtown and 4 peak hour trips on a route operating on Woodmen Road to Garden of the Gods Road and continuing on to Downtown); and the Union Town Center route with express peak hour service connecting Downtown to the north employment sites. Finally, the system is operating the Front Range Express (FREX) with 10 peak hour trips and two mid-day trips operating between Fountain and Denver, with stops in Colorado Springs, Monument and Castle Rock. Reverse commute service is provided so workers from the north can travel to Colorado Springs, although the majority of riders work in Denver.

Fixed-route services are provided throughout much of the City of Colorado Springs, connecting to other communities such as Fountain and Manitou Springs and to major military installations such as Fort Carson Army Post and Peterson Air Force Base. Express services are provided to Denver on the Front Range Express (FREX), Falcon, Schriever Air Force Base, University of Colorado and Colorado Springs, and other employment centers.

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**Figure 3-1 2007 Mountain Metropolitan Transit Service Plan**

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## **Specialized Services**

There are five primary providers of specialized services in the region: Metropolitan Transit Mobility, Silver Key Senior Services, Amblicab, The Resource Exchange, and Fountain Valley Senior Services. Each of these agencies serves a particular niche important to the overall transportation network. They may serve a specific geographic area or may provide a specific level of service for a population:

- Metropolitan Transit Mobility provides ADA mandated paratransit service in the Mountain Metropolitan Transit service area.
- Silver Key provides services to people who are elderly (but do not necessarily meet ADA requirements) and can operate outside the ADA service area.
- Amblicab provides door-through-door services to individuals and serves individuals outside the ADA paratransit service area.
- The Resource Exchange provides service to individuals with developmental disabilities who live outside the fixed-route and ADA paratransit service area.
- Fountain Valley Senior Services operates in southeast El Paso County.

A strength of the community is the unique services that each agency provides. In the Mountain Metropolitan Transit service area, a person who needs specialized transportation services will have at least one way of traveling, and many individuals will be eligible for more than one service. Another example is a person who is not eligible for ADA paratransit on Metropolitan Transit Mobility may still be able to access Silver Key Senior Services; or a person who needs a higher level of assistance than provided by Metropolitan Transit Mobility can use Amblicab or Silver Key.

This section begins with a description of the characteristics of the five primary providers and then provides summary or comparative information about all of the providers.

## **Metropolitan Transit Mobility**

### **General Information**

Metropolitan Transit Mobility ADA paratransit service began in 1993. It is currently operated by MV Transportation, Inc. under a service contract with the City of Colorado Springs Transit Services Division. It operates as a demand-response service for those individuals with mobility needs that prevent them from using the fixed-route system, meeting all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Paratransit services are provided during the same days and hours as Mountain Metropolitan Transit fixed-route service, seven days a week with various hours. The service is provided along a 1.5 mile corridor around all routes on which the fixed-route service operates. Customers of Metropolitan Transit Mobility are required to be certified as ADA paratransit eligible in order to receive this curb-to-curb service. The demand for

paratransit service has risen steadily over the years, from an average of 1,000 trips per month in 1993 to nearly 10,000 trips per month for 2005.

### Service and Financial Data

Just over 50% of the trips are subscription trips. Metropolitan Transit Mobility has an ADA policy of meeting 100% of demand, with over-flow trips carried by Yellow Cab. Because this overflow option is available, the system has some latitude with the ADA rule of limiting 50% of trips for subscription services. Passengers using wheelchair lifts (22,645) represented 19% of boardings.

<i>Metropolitan Transit Mobility Services 2006 Estimates based on 1st Quarter</i>	
Total Miles:	1,048,150
Total Service Days:	365
Total Passengers:	119,608
Total Taxi Trips:	2,228
Total Trips Provided:	117,714
Revenue Hours:	60,381
Revenue Vehicle Miles:	704,268
Total Operating Expense:	\$1,762,471
Operating Cost/Trip	\$13.29

### Vehicle Fleet / Capital Costs

As of June 30, 2006, Metropolitan Transit Mobility had a total fleet of 43 vehicles, as listed in their fleet roster in Appendix C. In the fall of 2006 there peak pull-out was 27 vehicles in the afternoon peak. MV Transportation reported that if they were able to hire enough drivers they would have 31 vehicles on the road at this time. Adding on the additional 25-30 clients that TRE is transferring to Metropolitan Transit Mobility was anticipated to result in an increase in the peak pull-out or more use of the taxi program. Steady growth in demand also means the fleet size will need to be increased. If the peak pull-out is increased to 35 vehicles, with a 20% spare ratio a fleet of 42 vehicles is needed.

An analysis of recent daily operations data for Metropolitan Transit Mobility produced from Trapeze shows that they place about 12 vehicles into service at the beginning of their operating day (5:00 am to 6:00 am) and quickly progress to approximately 24 vehicles by 7:00 am to 8:00 am. They remain at roughly that level until an early afternoon peak (1:00 pm to 3:00 pm) with 26 or 27 vehicles in operation.

### Scheduling

Scheduling and dispatch functions are performed by the subcontractor, MV Transportation Inc., at their facility in Colorado Springs. Call center staffing at MV Transportation is as follows:

- One call taker – works from 6:00 am to 5:00 pm on Mon – Thu

- One scheduler – works from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm on Sun – Thu
- Three dispatchers – schedules are arranged to provide coverage from 4:30 am to 10:30 pm on Mon–Sat, and from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm on Sunday
- One general manager

Whenever necessary to provide adequate coverage of each function, the staff is trained to cross over and do other jobs.

The City currently owns seven workstations, two servers, one laser printer, six jet printers and the Trapeze PASS (version 4.61) computer software which is used for Metropolitan Transit Mobility reservations, scheduling, dispatching and reporting. They also own the Suspension Module for PASS (tracks client no-shows and late cancellations for potential suspension of service) and the Trapeze fixed-route software package, including a Customer Service Module that allows tracking of customer complaints for both Metropolitan Transit and Metropolitan Transit Mobility. The servers and five of the workstations are retained by the City, and MV has four workstations for its use. Current maintenance costs are around \$60,000 a year.

With the 2005 expansion of the Trapeze package, the City hoped to share the software with Silver Key and Amblicab, but it turned out that the database was not partitioned correctly and could not keep the databases for each agency separate. A new module called the CT Module is now being offered by Trapeze, which is designed specifically to handle multiple agencies using PASS.

Soon vehicles will be equipped as mobile data terminals which will aid in dispatch and data collection. These are expected to cost a base rate of \$100,000 for hardware and software, plus an additional \$3,000 per vehicle for the software and installation.

## **Issues**

Service has been rapidly increasing, resulting in both increased costs and a need for more drivers and vehicles. MV Transportation is looking to hire more drivers to meet increasing demand and because they have a high turnover rate. Community growth is resulting in longer trips. One reason is that some medical facilities and doctors offices previously located in the heart of Colorado Springs have relocated to the north near new hospitals. Finding adequate revenues to pay for services to meet the increased demand is an ongoing issue.

In addition, the City is facing a major problem with regard to the facility used for Metropolitan Transit Mobility operations. The City has received an extension on its lease to no later than April 2007, and they have been actively looking for a replacement site for the past year without any success. The problem is a combination of the space requirements for vehicles and personnel, and the need to set up a new T-1 line to connect with the replacement facility. According to Jennifer Valentine from the City, there are many areas of the City where it would be very expensive to install a T-1 line.

The T-1 line is required to provide a constant communications connection between the Trapeze servers at the City transit facility and the work stations located at the Metropolitan Transit Mobility operations center. The City originally tried to use a DSL connection but found it could not assure a constant connection.

The T-1 line for Metropolitan Transit Mobility was installed in November 2005. It turned out that the existing Metropolitan Transit Mobility facility is located near a train line, and the vibrations from the trains would periodically disrupt the DSL connection. Any disruption would cause the Contractor to lose their connection to the Trapeze servers thereby bringing the trip reservation and scheduling process to a standstill until the connection could be restored.

The cost of installing a T-1 line is dependent upon the availability of an optical fiber connection running between the two locations. According to Wendy Patterson, the information systems analyst with the City, the cost of a T-1 line is approximately \$90,000 per mile when a new fiber line has to be installed. If the fiber is already available close to the site, the cost of T-1 wiring and related equipment for a facility is fairly reasonable. The cost of the T-1 installation at the existing Metropolitan Transit Mobility operations facility was \$35,000, and for a modular building located at the Metropolitan Transit facility the cost was \$15,000.

Apparently, one of the problems in finding a suitable site for Metro Mobility is the lack of fiber connections in the heavy industrial areas of the city that are most suited for vehicle operations and storage. Under such conditions, it makes sense to consider a separate call center which handles all of the reservations and scheduling functions, and which can be located in close proximity to an existing fiber line to minimize the cost of installing T-1 communications.

The location of the operations facility can then be based on consideration of operating patterns for the vehicles and the requirements for vehicle servicing and storage. It will make sense to have the dispatching function at the operations facility to facilitate communications between the dispatchers and the drivers, unless the new county-wide radio system upgrade requires that there has to be a T-1 line to support the dispatcher's base station.

According to Ms. Patterson, the City has considered and is open to the idea of separating the trip reservation and scheduling function from the vehicle operations facility. In the context of the current operating environment where the Contractor is responsible for all functions, there is some concern with regard to management and supervision of personnel at two different facilities, i.e., would the new setup require additional management or supervisory personnel. This could be addressed through a new contract arrangement for a Call Center to handle trip reservations and scheduling, and have the current Contractor continue to dispatch, operate and maintain the vehicles. The implementation of a separate Call Center for Metropolitan Transit Mobility could serve as the base for building up a Joint Call Center for all of the interested agencies.

The decision to purchase mobile data terminals (MDT) for all Metropolitan Transit Mobility vehicles (planned for 2007) will help to make the idea of a separate Call Center more feasible. The MDTs will be able to receive trip schedules and changes directly from the Call Center, and will capture and transmit driver-entered data regarding time of arrival at the pick-up point, boarding of the passenger and drop-off time. The AVL-equipped MDTs will also frequently transmit the exact location of the vehicle (latitude – longitude) and the corresponding time.

The MDTs will provide accurate data for computation of vehicle on-time performance, length of time on the vehicle for each passenger and other system performance measures. It will also make it easier to verify passenger complaints of late vehicle arrivals or claims made by passengers that the vehicle never arrived and counter claims by the driver that they were waiting at the pick-up point.

The availability of MDT data will also reduce the time and administrative expense associated with trip reconciliation – the process where the scheduled data is updated by a comparison of the marked-up driver manifest and the dispatch logs with the data in Trapeze (or missing data) and updating the records to reflect what actually happened during the operating day.

## Silver Key Senior Services

### **General Information**

Silver Key Senior Services is a non-profit agency that provides services for senior citizens in the Colorado Springs area. Silver Key provides door-to-door and door-through-door services, based on client needs. Drivers will also help by carrying groceries and other parcels for clients. Services are available Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 11 AM and 12:30 PM to 4 PM. No fares are charged for Silver Key services, although a \$3.00 donation is suggested. Silver Key has 8 full-time (40-hour) paid drivers and 58 volunteer drivers used throughout the month, with an average of 12 volunteer drivers used daily.

The Silver Key mission statement reads “Silver Key serves as the conscience of the community in partnership with all our stakeholders in the greater Colorado Springs area to find and implement ways to ensure that the elderly are aging safely with dignity and independence.” A critical component of this mission is to provide transportation services for the elderly. Transportation is one of the many services Silver Key provides.

### **Travel Patterns**

Silver Key serves El Paso County excluding the following areas: those south of the Colorado Springs City Limit, The portion of the City of Colorado Springs east of Powers, North of Drennan, and south of Highway 24, and the portion of the county south of Highway 24 and east of Powers. These outlying areas are served by Fountain Valley Senior Services; the boundaries are agreed upon by the two agencies but they will

support each other and are flexible if need be. Silver Key does not serve Monument or Palmer Lake; they opted out of the RTA tax and therefore do not get service.

Approximately 50% of trips are subscription trips. Some of these are accounted for in regularly scheduled shopping trips and field trips. Random trips are often from clients' homes to doctors' offices. The most significant proportion of homes are near downtown, in the 80909 zip code, but with the current trend of medical offices moving to the north-east area of the city near the new hospitals, it is becoming more expensive and time-consuming to transport riders to their doctor's offices.

### Service and Financial Data

The Silver Key transportation program is funded through Silver Key general revenues (\$61,000), Area Agency on Aging Title III funds (\$120,000), and funding support from the City of Colorado Springs (\$139,000) and the PPRTA (\$70,000 annually plus a one-time allocation of \$330,000 in 2006). Riders also cover 10% of costs through a suggested donation of \$3 per trip.

Silver Key provided an average of 5,015 trips per month in the first months of 2006, at an average monthly operating cost of \$66,639. Annually this amounts to approximately \$800,000. Approximately 435 trips per month were wheelchair boardings, just under 9%.

<i>Silver Key Transportation Program Annual Estimates for 2006</i>	
Passenger Trips	60,180
Passengers Using Wheelchair Lift	5,220
Total Service Days	312
Revenue Hours	25,778
Revenue Vehicle Miles	335,179
Total Operating Expense	\$799,668
Operating Cost/Trip	\$13.29

### Vehicle Fleet / Capital Costs

The Silver Key fleet consists of 27 vehicles, of which 2 are not in use and 11 require the driver to have a commercial driver's license (CDL). Because of a shortage of drivers, particularly those with CDLs, not all the vehicles are in use at all times.

### Scheduling

Scheduling is conducted manually at the Silver Key office, by one full-time scheduler, who works with a full-time dispatcher and a full-time call-taker, as well as one or two volunteers. In the scheduling office there is also a full-time secretary and the transportation department head, and the agency's CFO spends about 30% of his time on transportation-related activities. Silver Key estimates the annual savings if the scheduling function was transferred to another entity would be around \$54,000.

Scheduling is conducted 3 days ahead of service. Before this time, the call-taker enters information on a computer and prints out slips of paper to be organized into time blocks; subscription trips are already in the computer, but still must be scheduled into vehicle runs along with random trips.

Approximately three years ago, the City provided two Trapeze workstations to Silver Key to be used for scheduling (they also provided one workstation to Amblicab). The experiment lasted for about one year and was then terminated because the software was not able to accommodate multiple agencies. This failed experiment has apparently left a bad impression in some quarters that will have to be resolved as part of any effort to move forward on a joint call/scheduling center.

Silver Key recognizes the need to automate the scheduling system to increase productivity and to be able to reduce the advance reservation time from three days to one or two days. The current three day advance reservation time is necessary to allow the scheduler to prepare and refine the schedules. He noted that they are often unable to fill the gaps in the planned vehicle runs caused by cancellations resulting in a decrease in productivity.

Due to the shortage of drivers, Silver Key finds it necessary to turn down trip requests when they have reached capacity. Without more funding they are dependent upon finding more volunteer drivers.

An analysis of Silver Key trip manifest and dispatch reports shows that they typically operate 13 vehicles, and as many as 19 during peak hours, out of their total fleet of 26 vehicles. Therefore, they can easily expand the amount of service provided assuming availability of drivers and the financial resources necessary to provide the service. Alternatively, some of these vehicles could be made available for other services assuming a fair and equitable arrangement is made for such use.

If there is no immediate or near term use for these vehicles, it would be possible to take four vehicles (leaving three vehicles as spares) temporarily off the road and to make other vehicles available for back-up for other agencies on days other than Wednesday.

It should be noted that a “trip denial” as reported by Silver Key is different than the usual definition where the trip is considered to be denied if the trip request cannot be accommodated. For Silver Key a trip denial occurs when a trip has been booked and scheduled, but they are unable to deliver the trip due to an absent driver or other problem.

## **Issues**

Silver Key is continually in need of drivers. They are unable to pay drivers as well as they would like, and are limited in the number of volunteer drivers because 11 of the vehicles they own require drivers to have commercial vehicle drivers’ licenses. In the future they will purchase more vehicles that do not require this special license.

Furthermore, despite driver training, volunteers are not always comfortable loading and unloading wheelchair clients.

Silver Key has 8 full-time (40 hour) paid drivers and 58 volunteer drivers used throughout the month, with an average of 12 volunteer drivers used daily. The Transportation Manager says he could use 100 volunteer drivers if they were available. The paid drivers receive between \$8.50 to \$10.00 per hour, with full benefits.

Each volunteer driver is expected to take either a morning or afternoon shift consisting of approximately four hours. Assuming that all eight full time drivers are available for duty, they will need two volunteer drivers for each additional vehicle put into service. Therefore for 13 vehicles on the road, Silver key will need 10 volunteer drivers, and for 19 they will need 22 volunteer drivers.

With only 58 volunteer drivers and with somewhere between 10 and 22 needed every weekday, it is apparent that, on average, each volunteer will have to drive at least once a week. This is a significant commitment of time for each individual.

Since Silver Key accepts trip reservations up to 30 days in advance but no later than 3 days in advance, the scheduler will become aware of time slots and days where more vehicles/drivers are needed well in advance of the actual travel day. They will then actively solicit their volunteer driver staff to ensure that they can accommodate all of the trips that have been booked. If they cannot find a sufficient number of volunteers, Silver Key will prioritize trips to ensure that all urgent medical needs are served first.

## Pikes Peak Partnership: Amblicab

### **General Information**

Pikes Peak Partnership is a non-profit agency that receives financial support from the City of Colorado Springs and PPRTA, to operate the Amblicab service. Amblicab provides curb-to-curb, door-to-door, and door-through-door service for individuals with disabilities, on weekdays from 7:30 AM to 5 PM. Drivers are authorized to go into houses or buildings and assist passengers with entering and exiting their homes and the service vehicles. Amblicab provides service outside the Metropolitan Transit Mobility ADA service areas, for example in the Rockrimmon area or other areas in just north or east of the ADA service area.

### **Client Needs**

Pikes Peak Partnership is self described as “A family of agencies working together and sharing resources to help people with physical, mental or cognitive disabilities live as independently as possible.” Transportation services are a critical component of independent living for people with disabilities, so Amblicab provides services for people who are not adequately served by Metropolitan Transit Mobility. These people include primarily a) clients living outside of the Metropolitan Transit Mobility service area and b)

clients that require door-to-door and door-through-door service. Amblicab does not restrict trip purposes.

### Service and Financial Data

The Amblicab program is primarily funded by the City of Colorado Springs (\$199,918) and Pikes Peak RTA (\$30,000). Other minor funding sources (such as United Way) and rider fees make up the balance of funding. The following data represent 2006 estimates based on January through May 2006:

<i>Amblicab Services Annual Estimates for 2006</i>	
Total Trips Provided	8,100
Passengers Using Wheelchair Lift	4,812
Total Service Days	252
Revenue Hours	6,526
Revenue Vehicle Miles	110,150
Total Operating Expense	\$257,976
Operating Cost/Trip	\$31.85

### Vehicle Fleet / Capital Costs

Amblicab has seven vehicles including six buses (five with 4 ambulatory + 5 WC positions and one with 4 ambulatory and 3 WC positions) and a van (1 ambulatory + 2 WC positions). An analysis of the trip sheets for one week in July shows that they use at least six vehicles in their daily operations. Some days all seven vehicles are on the road at the same time. This means that they operate with one or no spare vehicles, a sure indicator for problems with service reliability.

### Scheduling

Scheduling and dispatch are conducted manually. There is a full time person who spends half-time (in the morning) taking reservation calls and cancellations and then enters the data into an Excel spreadsheet which she uses for scheduling. The balance of the time she is available to act as a back-up driver and handle other administrative duties.

When the scheduler is not on duty, callers are requested to leave a voice mail. The voice mail has two options – reservations and cancellations. The cancellations line is checked frequently to catch any late cancels or changes. All calls are documented in a log book so they have a paper trail of all communications. The reservations information is then put into their Excel spreadsheet.

# The Resource Exchange

## General Information

The Resource Exchange (TRE) provides services to persons with developmental disabilities, to help them live independently. An important component of independent living is the ability to get to and from work and other activities, so transportation is an important component of this mission. Whenever possible, TRE helps clients by purchasing service from local providers, such as the City of Colorado Springs and Amblicab. However, in some cases these services do not meet the needs of their clients, and TRE operates additional service for these clients.

## Client Needs

Customers of TRE are encouraged to be self-sufficient, using public transportation when possible; TRE purchases Mountain Metropolitan Transit and Metropolitan Transit Mobility passes for those individuals that are able to ride the fixed-route service or are eligible for the paratransit service. However, many customers of TRE live outside the Metropolitan Transit Mobility service area or have destinations not well served by public transportation.

## Travel Patterns

TRE serves El Paso, Park, and Teller Counties, although transportation is only provided in El Paso County. Some areas, such as Highway 94, Falcon, Black Forest, and Peyton, are not served by Metropolitan Transit Mobility. Clients are picked up at home and many trips are to activity centers throughout the area, such as Carmel Community Living Corporation, Community Intersections, and Goodwill enterprises. Many of these key destinations are identified on the Activity Center map in Chapter 2.

## Service and Financial Data

TRE operates service and purchases transportation through the use of state, Medicaid, and other funding. No City of Colorado Springs general funds are currently allocated for the provision of services by TRE. TRE purchases services for 170 Medicaid and 189 Supported Living Service clients through Metropolitan Transit Mobility, Mountain Metropolitan Transit, and Amblicab, broken down as follows:

Clients Transported By	Number Eligible Medicaid Clients	Number of Eligible Supported Living Service Clients	Total
Amblicab	9	5	14
Mountain Metropolitan Transit (Fixed-route)	58	101	159
Metropolitan Transit Mobility	112	88	200
Approximate Monthly Cost	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$20,000

Approximately 94 clients are transported on the 7 demand response routes operated by TRE, on a 100% subscription basis. Of these clients, only 28 can be left alone, meaning others need to be met at the curb. 35,753 one-way trips were provided in 2005 at a total cost of around \$520,000, which is billed primarily to Medicaid. Medicaid rates will be changing soon, as Colorado is behind other states in converting to Medicaid's new structure for fee-for-service transportation. This change will impact TRE's transportation program.

<i>The Resource Exchange Annual Estimates for 2006</i>	
Total Trips Provided	35,753
Revenue Hours	24,960
Total Operating Expense	\$520,000
Operating Cost/Trip	\$14.54

### **Scheduling**

The Resource Exchange services operate on a demand response subscription basis, with seven routes. There is no scheduling other than that which takes place when clients are added to or leave the program.

The vehicles are used to capacity. In an effort to keep costs down, routes have been lengthened to pick up as many clients as the vehicles will hold. While this means that the service is operated in a cost-effective manner, it also means the travel time for some clients is longer than would be desired.

TRE provided data for seven subscription routes (May 2006) which included pick-up and drop-off times for each client at their residence address. These routes are set up for maximum efficiency, resulting in one-way maximum travel times that are approximately two hours. This may be a natural consequence of the fact that TRE has to provide service to clients who are located far from their program location, but it is likely that with additional vehicles and drivers available it would be possible to construct routes that would reduce the maximum travel time significantly.

Due to budget cuts, TRE will be dropping from 7 routes to 5 routes starting in October 2006. This will mean laying off 2 drivers and sending approximately 20 clients onto the public transit buses.

### **Vehicle Fleet / Capital Costs**

The Resource Exchange operated 7 bus routes through mid-2006, each using a separate vehicle. The TRE transportation staff consisted of the following full time personnel:

- Transportation Director
- 7 drivers (though as noted above, this will soon be reduced to 5)

- 2 back-up drivers

Most transportation personnel have their CDL. All back-up drivers are cross-trained to handle other functions such as scheduling, data input and maintenance scheduling/vehicle shuttling when they are not required to be on the road.

The pay range for the drivers is approximately \$10.00 to \$14.00 per hour, and they receive full benefits. All drivers go through a comprehensive training program with 72 hours of classroom instruction and 56 hours of behind-the-wheel (BTW) training. New drivers with a CDL do not need the full 56 hours of BTW training.

The TRE vehicle fleet consists of 10 buses:

- Eight with a 14 passenger capacity (12 + 2 WC or 14)
- Two with a 21 passenger capacity (15 + 2 WC, 17 + 1 WC or 21)

The vehicle insurance liability limits are:

- \$3 million - aggregate
- \$1 million - personal injury
- \$1 million – employee using personal vehicle for TRE
- \$1 million per accident

The annual premium for this coverage is approximately \$3,300 per vehicle.

TRE had been paying approximately \$800 to \$900 per month for mobile radios used to communicate with drivers. They have just switched over to a cell phone system offered by Cingular which incorporates a direct connect (two-way radio) feature. TRE had to erect an antenna for \$2,000, but the monthly cost for 10 mobile units (2 pools of 5 phones) is only about \$200 per month. They only use the phones for the direct connect feature and do not pay for regular cell phone service.

## Fountain Valley Senior Services

### **General Information**

Fountain Valley Senior Services provides a variety of social service programs (including transportation services) to seniors over the age of sixty that are located in southeastern El Paso County. Fountain Valley Senior Services does not receive funding support from the City of Colorado Springs. Funding support, both in the form of cash and in-kind services is provided by PPACG Title III program and through El Paso County.

The transportation services provided by Fountain Valley Senior Services are based on the requirements of the Older Americans Act. Fountain Valley Senior Services coordinates with Mountain Metropolitan Transit to provide linked trip service from the

City of Fountain into the Colorado Springs Metropolitan Transit area. Transportation services are available for disabled adults as well.

A contract signed in June 2006 between the City and El Paso County provides a mechanism (Intergovernmental Agreement) under which transit services previously provided and funded by El Paso County through Fountain Valley Senior Services can be funded using PPRTA funds as a City sponsored transit activity. Funding in the amount of \$200,000 for transportation services was provided for CY 2006. This will be supplemented by approximately \$59,000 in Title III funds. The total of approximately \$259,000 represents a slight decrease from the operating expense of about \$280,000 for 2005.

### **Client Needs**

Service can be curb-to-curb, door-to-door, or door-through-door as required by the client. One of the needs that Fountain Valley Senior Services has not been able to meet fully are those of dialysis patients, which require fairly intensive and regular transportation. There is not currently a large enough staff of drivers to provide service for all the dialysis patients. They are also planning on extending services towards Falcon to meet needs in that area. Finally, our interviewee at Fountain Valley Senior Center noted that they are moving towards non-profit status.

### **Travel Patterns**

Fountain Valley Senior Services provides approximately 60% subscription trips. Of the subscription trips, many are for transporting seniors to the senior center for daily meals provided by The Golden Circle. Dialysis trips are also generally prescheduled. Other trips may go to any number of places in the Colorado Springs Area, but many are to hospitals for medical appointments. Other towns served are Calhan, Peyton, Ellicot, Rush and Yoder. Occasional special field trips to Denver and other locations are provided. There were 84,511 miles driven in 2005 on the agency-owned vehicles (and an additional 1,506 miles driven by private vehicles, usually by volunteers in their own cars).

### **Scheduling**

There are two part time employees conducting dispatch, call-taking, and scheduling; they share these tasks. A minimum 48 hour advance notice is required for non-subscription trips, and requests can be made between 8:30 AM and 2:30 PM. Scheduling is done through a Microsoft Access program designed for Fountain Valley Senior Services, which accommodates their various reporting requirements; the process is a combination of manual entry of information and the computer program. They ask for a 24 hour notice for cancellations but often receive cancellations immediately prior to pick-up times.

The two schedulers/dispatchers are part time (30 hour per week) County employees. One of the scheduler/dispatchers can also serve as a back-up driver when required.

There are seven part time drivers who are also County employees working 30 hours per week. The drivers receive \$8.00 per hour and there are no benefits.

Fountain Valley generally has 4 vehicles on the road every day with the drivers putting in up to 6 hours a day. The new contract calls for approximately 3,900 annual revenue hours. With 4 vehicles in service every day, this would work out to approximately 4 hours per day (on average) for each driver.

### **Service and Financial Data**

Fountain Valley Senior Services provided 13,144 trips in 2005 at an operating cost of \$279,185. While there is no fee for service, there is a suggested donation for service, ranging from \$2 round trip within Fountain Valley to \$10 or \$15 for special outings to Denver and beyond. The fee for trips to Colorado Springs is \$4 round trip. The total revenue from suggested donations was \$9,721 in 2005. Funding comes from El Paso County, which is funded by Title III. The County uses these funds to pay employees and cover the costs of fuel, insurance and maintenance.

### **Vehicle Fleet / Capital Costs**

Fountain Valley Senior Services has 9 vehicles, of which 2 are full sized vans, 1 is a minivan with a wheelchair lift, and the remainder are minibuses with wheelchair lifts. These vehicles were purchased using CDOT 5310 funds and CDOT holds the titles. All vehicles but one are garaged at the main office (5745 Southmoor Drive, Fountain, CO 80817) and one of the full sized vans is located at their facility in eastern Calhan. Vehicles are maintained at the El Paso DOT maintenance facility.

<i>Fountain Valley Seniors 2005 Data</i>	
Total Trips Provided	13,144
Revenue Hours	3,900
Total Operating Expense	\$279,185
Operating Cost/Trip	\$21.29

## Summary and Comparative Information

Figure 3-2 summarizes the total ridership, costs, and services provided in the region on an annual basis. At present, Metropolitan Transit Mobility is responsible for just over half of the total trips and expenses. On the basis of service miles, they provide two-thirds of the service on the street.

**Figure 3-2 Characteristics of Specialized Service Providers**

	Annual Unlinked Trips	Annual Operating Costs	Annual Revenue Hours	Annual Revenue Miles	Number of Vehicles
Metropolitan Transit Mobility	119,608	\$1,762,471	60,381	1,048,150	41
Amblicab	8,100	\$257,976	6,528	110,148	7
Fountain Valley Senior Center	13,144	\$279,185	3,900	86,017	9
Silver Key	60,180	\$799,668	25,776	335,184	26
The Resource Exchange	35,753	\$520,000	24,960	227,418	10
Total	236,785	\$3,619,300	121,545	1,493,482	93

The funding for specialized transportation services are important to understand as these can be cross-subsidized. Local tax dollars from the City of Colorado Springs and PPRTA fund Metropolitan Transit Mobility services. The City of Colorado Springs also supports Amblicab (\$200,000 in 2006) and Silver Key (\$139,000 in 2006). PPRTA also provides funding (again local tax dollars) for the specialized providers. Amblicab received \$30,000 and Silver Key received \$70,000. In addition, in 2006, Silver Key also received one-time funding of \$330,000 from PPRTA.

A portion of The Resource Exchange budget is for the purchase of tickets for riders who use Metropolitan Transit Mobility or Mountain Metropolitan Transit. They spend an estimated \$240,000 annually for passes, with half going to fixed-route service and half going to paratransit services. This money comes primarily from Medicaid.

It is also informative to look at how the whole system functions. Remember that different services operate in different ways so cannot be directly compared. However, it is useful to know the individual agency components as presented in Figure 3-3. Remember, The Resource Exchange operates demand response services on a subscription basis, traveling fairly long distances and that Amblicab transports riders who need the highest level of assistance.

Systemwide averages for cost per trip are well below the levels found in many communities, reflecting an overall system that is operating effectively. Conversely, the number of passengers carried per revenue hour is higher than in many communities.

**Figure 3-3 Productivity Measures of Specialized Service Providers**

	Cost per Trip	Passengers per Revenue Hour	Rev. Hours per Vehicle	Passenger Trips per Vehicle
Metropolitan Transit Mobility	\$14.74	2.0	1,473	2,917
Amblicab	\$31.85	1.2	933	1,157
Fountain Valley Senior Center	\$21.24	3.4	433	1,460
Silver Key	\$13.29	2.3	991	2,315
The Resource Exchange	\$15.50	1.4	3,120	4,469
<b>System Average</b>	<b>\$19.32</b>	<b>2.06</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>2,464</b>

Figure 3-4 identifies comparable costs and productivity measures for other systems in Colorado. Remember that the type of service and the geographic area covered affects overall costs and productivity, so these comparisons can give While Amblicab costs are significantly higher than other providers in the Colorado Springs area, they reflect moderate costs for the type of service provided. The relatively high costs for Amblicab and Fountain Valley Senior Services reflect the small size and specialized nature of their programs.

**Figure 3-4 Comparisons to Other Providers**

Provider	Type of Service	Cost per Hour	Cost per Trip	Passengers per Hour
RTD access-a-Ride	ADA paratransit	\$47.33	\$40.05 <sup>1</sup>	1.28
Special Transit Boulder specialized transportation svcs. (All are 2006 estimates)	Varies – includes door-to-door and door-thru-door. Access-a-Ride contract for Boulder	\$55 - \$57	\$22 to \$23 \$35 - \$39	2.3 to 2.5 1.5
TransFort Dial-a-Ride – Aug. 2006 Y-T-D	ADA paratransit	\$26.73	\$48.22	2.5
Greeley Paratransit <sup>2</sup>	ADA paratransit	\$42.08	\$19.46	2.16

An average of 1,390 hours per vehicle is the only figure that is outside the expected range, indicating potential to reduce the overall vehicle fleet size through coordination. In comparison, a vehicle operating eight hours a day, five days a week, fifty weeks a year would operate 2,000 hours, so this number indicates significant vehicle capacity.

<sup>1</sup> This includes \$1,687,422 in call center costs. Without call center costs, the cost per trip is \$36.99.

<sup>2</sup> Greeley data is for 2004 and management reports that it does not capture all labor costs as driver benefits are typically charged to their “home” program – generally fixed-route services.

## Coordination

Each specialized transportation provider was asked to identify their willingness to coordinate services and their specific concerns. Understanding the concerns of each entity is a key to building a system that effectively addresses the key concerns.

In general, all providers expressed a willingness to increase coordination. There is a general recognition that unified scheduling could have benefits for the agencies. Off-setting this were concerns about a previous effort to have all agencies use the same software for scheduling trips in which there was inadequate technical support provided.

### **City of Colorado Springs / Metropolitan Transit Mobility**

The City is very interested in seeing a higher level of coordination, particularly in regards to scheduling trips. One concern is accountability for program expenditures. The City contributes to Amblicab and Silver Key, in addition to funding Metropolitan Transit Mobility. Additional PPRTA funds increased paratransit service in 2005. The PPRTA also funds other specialized providers separately. Another important concern is that the City needs adequate monitoring of the program to assure all ADA requirements are met, while still keeping expenditures in check. This includes service standards and eligibility requirements. The City contracts for transit services and coordination will impact the existing process.

### **Silver Key**

Silver Key is willing to coordinate with other agencies but has specific concerns. The Silver Key vans serve as an important marketing tool and maintain awareness of this agency in the community. While Silver Key would be happy to share vehicles in a regional coordination effort, they would like to maintain at least 15 vehicles bearing the Silver Key logo. Another concern is that funding from AAA has very specific requirements which are not always met by agencies providing trips for disabled and low income riders. In terms of working with Metropolitan Transit Mobility, many Silver Key clients require a higher level of service, and do not necessarily reside within a ¾ mile radius of Mountain Metropolitan Transit fixed-route service. Silver Key could conceive of a combined scheduling and/or dispatch function.

### **Amblicab**

Several areas of improvement are needed at the agency. Some instances where a coordinated system might be detrimental to operations were also identified.

- Amblicab serves clients who are deemed ADA eligible by the City of Colorado Springs, but often they will be certified as requiring curb-to-curb service when their needs are greater. For example, someone might normally travel with an aid who can assist them to a curb, but would need door through door service if

traveling alone. A coordinated system would have to acknowledge that individual riders may require different levels of service on different days.

- Clients know that for existing services they are often unable to get a ride when needed. This results in either booking trips that may not be needed or having to schedule a ride first and schedule an appointment once the ride is set.
- One benefit of a small agency is that the drivers know all the clients and will sometimes call each other to make their schedules make more sense; this might be lost in a large coordinated system.
- There is a great need for clients to get temporary ADA eligibility (for example, after surgery). Currently the application process takes a long time and this process does not work if a client is incapacitated for only six weeks.
- The current scheduling function does not work effectively to maximizing Amblicab vehicle capacity. While Amblicab calls the City if they have an empty vehicle available, that capacity is never used.
- City funded services do not currently provide Medicaid billing. Staff would be needed to research this billing process.

## **Resource Exchange**

The Resource Exchange is interested in coordination and would be willing to participate in a possible brokerage, and to use their vehicles for this purpose.

- The State has changed its Medicaid policies. Effective July 1, 2006 the State began a transition to a fee-for-service arrangement for individuals with developmental disabilities. Under the new scheme, the State will make payments directly to providers based on a set fee schedule. Rates have been set for all services and the daily rate for a unit of transportation service will be \$a two-tiered rating system. The Resource Exchange costs are \$15.50 per one-way trip.
- A key requirement is that a brokerage must have the capability to bill Medicaid.
- TRE raised questions about who would hold title to the vehicles – CDOT holds the title to many vehicles at present.

## **Fountain Valley Senior Services**

Staff at Fountain Valley Senior Services are very excited about the possibility of coordination and the benefits it may bring, and would like to participate, if possible. An obstacles they have had to face is the varied reporting requirements for the different funding sources. When funding streams are mixed, tracking this becomes more of a challenge. The existing Microsoft Access software is not programmed to easily accommodate additional funding streams. They hope the coordination will involve outside computer expertise.

Other benefits they see from collaboration would be to expand the revenues available to increase the number of drivers. Currently, El Paso County pays drivers wages and will only pay for 4 part time drivers, but there is certainly greater need in the area. They have previously worked with Silver Key and have defined borders so they are not duplicating service. Silver Key will expand north while Fountain Valley Senior Services will expand east towards Falcon, if they can find a place to house a bus and additional funding for a driver. Any expansion into Colorado Springs has been with the approval of Silver Key as well.

## **Reporting Requirements**

The City of Colorado Springs requires reporting, as mandated by the Federal Transit Administration for purchased service.

Fountain Valley Senior Services reports to PPACG for Title III federal funding. This report includes the number of clients served (broken down by low income, minority, and rural) and how many service units were provided for each client. They also report to CDOT, and include the number of trips, information on revenue miles and hours, trip purpose, types of riders, cancellations and no-shows.

## **Assessment of Services**

Based on the information gathered about the specialized services operating in the region, the following assessment is offered of the existing primary providers.

### **Strengths**

- A variety of specialized transportation services operate with different geographic coverage or levels of service (curb-to-curb; door-to-door; or door-through-door)
- The volunteer driver program through Silver Key Senior Services leverages available funding and makes good use of a valuable community resource.
- Providers utilize transfer points and activity centers to pick up or drop off clients in a single location and shared-ride services provide for efficient use of vehicles and drivers.
- Programs that are driven by their missions (Silver Key Senior Services and Amblicab) provide a level of dedication to riders and advocacy for rider needs.
- There is a history of the primary providers working together and a high level of understanding among these providers about how the other services operate.
- Overall costs are low on a per trip basis.

### **Weaknesses**

- A lack of trust exists among the providers and an uncertainty that promises will be kept because of shifting politics.

- No process for joint decision-making exists. Agencies make independent decisions and the other providers respond as needed.
- Participation in the planning process is primarily limited to key providers.
- Geographic boundaries and funding sources result in areas where services are limited, inefficient scheduling of vehicles, and a system that can be difficult for consumers to navigate.
- No mechanism exists to share riders between providers.

## Other Issues

- Overall, customers are happy with the quality and availability of services. However, there is a consensus that:
  - It can be difficult to schedule trips, especially for doctor's appointments and other trips needed on short notice.
  - There is not enough service available.
  - Services have not been reliable. One outcome of this is that passengers schedule more trips than they need or with more than one provider. They then cancel once they are sure they have a trip assured.
- Duplication of trips results from multiple system eligibility and scheduling requirements, as well as multiple vehicle fleets and driver pools.
- There has been a consolidation of services. For several years, The Resource Exchange has transferred clients to Metropolitan Transit Mobility or Mountain Metropolitan Transit, depending on clients' ability to travel independently. More recently, a number of Silver Key clients have transferred to Metropolitan Transit Mobility due to an increase in the suggested donation of \$3 for a trip and due to reliability problems. The net result is that Metropolitan Transit Mobility ridership is up significantly. The positive side is that the service is scheduling a greater number of trips, allowing for greater trip sharing in each vehicle. The negative side is that costs have been shifted to the Metropolitan Transit Mobility system.

## Other Programs

A variety of other transportation services are provided in the Pikes Peak Region, generally with only one or two vehicles or serving a limited clientele. A sampling of these providers is listed below. There are also programs or agencies that have an interest in transportation issues. They may not provide service directly, but have funding available for bus passes or they may advocate for transportation services for their clients. These include: Pikes Peak Area Agency on Aging, Community Intersections, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Pikes Peak Mental Health, Pikes Peak Workforce Centers, and El Paso and Teller counties (as administrators of social service programs). Again, information is provided on some of these programs, particularly those that deal directly with clients and provide bus passes or gas vouchers.

In addition, school district transportation and Head Start transportation services are provided. Transportation services oriented to students include those provided by the school districts and Head Start programs. El Paso County has fifteen school districts and Teller County has two (Cripple Creek Victor RE-1 and Woodland Park RE-2). In addition, the Pikes Peak Board of Cooperative Educational Services provides a consolidated special education program and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind is a state-funded school located in downtown Colorado Springs with a residential program as well as outreach services to school districts across the State.

Finally, there are active private sector transportation providers in the region. These include TNM&O intercity services (operating primarily north and south on I-25), Yellow Cab, and Ramblin' Express (providing charter and casino transportation services). Yellow Cab also provides non-accessible trips for Metropolitan Transit Mobility.

The **Teller Senior Coalition** provides services to senior citizens (over 60) in Teller County, including caregiver support, material aid, daily hot meals at the center and delivered meals. With a mission of allowing seniors to live independently as long as possible, one of the most important things they do is to provide transportation services, which are also available to disabled citizens. This is especially important given the rural/isolated geography of the county and the poorly kept roads.

Until 2002 Teller County Senior Coalition used a vendor but this became too expensive and they now operate service directly, using 2 full time drivers, a full time scheduler/dispatcher, and 3 vehicles which they own: 2 Subaru Legacy Wagons and 1 14-passenger bus with two wheelchair tie-down, which was purchased with 5310 funds from CDOT. In May 2006, the agency provided 396 trips for 103 individuals at an expense of around \$9,000 (around \$23 per trip). They also reimburse volunteers for transporting clients at \$0.28 per mile. Trips are usually door-to-door, depending on the clients' needs, and drivers will carry parcels if necessary.

Services are offered 8am to 4pm Tuesday through Friday; on Monday, the drivers and vehicles are used to make deliveries such as meals or groceries to seniors in the area. There is a shopping trip in Woodland Park every Tuesday and a twice-a-month trip to Wal-Mart; otherwise most trips are random in nature. Dispatch and scheduling are carried out at a home residence in Colorado Springs. Calls are taken between 9 AM and 3 PM on weekdays. The dispatcher faxes the schedule to the Woodland Park Senior Center where vehicles are stored and where drivers report each morning. A minimum of 24 hours advance notice is needed to schedule a trip.

All clients must be residents of Teller County but trips may include doctor's visits in Colorado Springs, and occasional social trips to Denver. The only other transportation provider in the county is Teller Cab, which is an expensive alternative.

Funding comes from the PPACG Area Agency on Aging, Teller County, and through a Community Service Block Grant. Detailed reporting is required for each funding stream. In addition, a suggested donation of \$25 per month is requested of riders.

The **Colorado Springs Independence Center (CSIC)** provides bus passes to consumers for doctor appointments, employment interviews, applying for housing, emergencies and attending activities at CSIC. They also provide information regarding qualifying for ADA certification and discount bus cards for use on Mountain Metropolitan Transit for people with disabilities. The mission of CSIC is to empower people with disabilities to maximize their independence within the community and to remove barriers which prevent integration and equal opportunity. They provide advocacy, information and referral, peer support groups, housing referral, nursing home transition, home health care, and independent living skills classes. As the report shows, the largest group affected by transportation are people with disabilities. CSIC is committed to change systems, improve services and the quality of life for people with disabilities. While CSIC does own a van, they do not use this to transport clients because of high liability costs.

The **Agency Connections** bus service is provided under the auspices of Catholic Charities to help those who are homeless connect with the necessary agencies. Funded under a HUD grant for the homeless (people in transitional housing, people in shelters, and people living on the street), Agency Connections provides a single van serving approximately 45 people a day. Service is provided to/from agencies that can provide food, shelter, jobs, permanent housing, clothing, transportation connections, medical services, prescriptions, and human services.

**Community Intersections** is part of CommonWorks, a non-profit agency that provides services to people with disabilities and at-risk youth. Community Intersections provides pre-employment services and training, opportunities for community participation, and working enclaves where participants can get paid. Their focus is on helping people live independently. Transportation is a critical component for the clients of this agency, and Community Intersections directly provides a small amount of transportation service, although they primarily connect clients to The Resource Exchange services. The agency operates two lift-equipped vans to transport individuals to activity centers and is getting a third van. In 2005, Community Intersections provided 1,576 total passenger trips, mainly used to pick people up from nursing homes and bring them into the community.

The **Myron Stratton Home** is an assisted living facility with 75 residents. Fifty are independent residents whose eligibility is based on income limits (but for which there is no asset testing) and 25 residents are Medicaid eligible, individuals with low incomes and who have no measurable assets. They provide transportation to residents – both medical and non-medical trip purposes and are largely self-sufficient, providing about 95% of their transportation needs. Generally they operate between 8 AM and 5 PM using three vehicles. They also use a limited amount of Amblicab and Silver Key services if a resident needs a trip outside their operating hours. For example, one client goes early in the morning for dialysis so Amblicab transports this individual. Myron Stratton Home funds its own services through private funds, client revenues, and limited Medicaid funding.

**Walt Fortman Community Center** is part of the Pikes Peak Community Action Agency which provides services to low income people (at or below 125% of the poverty level). Transportation services include gas vouchers (if the client has a vehicle) and bus passes, which allow clients to get to jobs, doctor appointment, job interviews, or the Department of Human Services.

**Northern Churches Care (NCC)** serves people with transportation needs in the ten zip codes in the northern part of the city. NCC provides gas vouchers for local gas stations, bus passes, donated vehicles in good working order, and in 2005 contributed transportation funds to Katrina evacuees for automobile repairs and/or airline tickets. During 2005, NCC served 334 people with bus passes and gas vouchers and gave away two cars in good working order. In this period, their transportation assistance amounted to approximately \$4,000.

**Ecumenical Social Ministries** provides transportation assistance to local low income and homeless clients by offering bus passes and gas vouchers for specific purposes, such as job interviews, doctor appointments, or as a supplement until the client receives his or her first paycheck at a new job.

**Freewheel Vans** serve seniors, individuals with disabilities who are not, and their caregivers. They provide wheelchair accessible vehicles for rent and sale. They will modify vehicles by raising pedals, installing hand controls, wheelchair lifts, and ramps. They are a for-profit business with 15 rentals in their Colorado Springs fleet.

## Conclusion

The fixed-route bus service, Mountain Metropolitan Transit, is evolving to meet the needs of a rapidly growing community with several employment centers. It primarily serves people who are dependent on transit for mobility, and has a strong emphasis on work and school trips. The system implemented a multi-hub system that more closely matches local travel patterns.

The specialized service providers in the region include five primary providers (Metropolitan Transit Mobility, Silver Key Senior Services, Amblicab, The Resource Exchange, and Fountain Valley Seniors. These agencies are partly funded by the City of Colorado Springs, PPRTA, private funds, and a variety of other federal funds. In addition, there are a variety of independent and generally smaller providers offering limited services to a specific clientele or area. There is general interest in coordination and recognition that some type of joint scheduling would be beneficial for many agencies. These agencies have worked together for many years and conduct formal and informal coordination while still operating separately. A motivating factor for increasing coordination is the recognition that more services are necessary to meet the demand that exists today. In the future even more service will be needed as the population ages.

Human Services Transportation Coordination Study

PIKES PEAK AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS & CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

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## Chapter 4. Assessment of Needs

### Introduction

Different needs exist for fixed-route service and for specialized transportation services. For the purpose of coordination issues addressed in this plan, the impacts of fixed-route service on two different markets are important: people who wish to travel to work and people who could use a fixed-route bus instead of specialized services if the service was available. The City of Colorado Springs has done an extensive assessment of fixed-route service needs and this section will simply summarize key points.

For specialized transportation, the needs are quite different. This chapter draws upon stakeholder interviews and summarizes the findings of a client survey undertaken by Leadership Pikes Peak. The stakeholder interviews address a wide range of questions, including some about coordination and funding. These issues are also addressed in this section, setting the stage for coordination options.

### Fixed-route Transit Needs

The City of Colorado Springs has done extensive planning work, developing a new operational plan that responds to current travel patterns and travel needs in the community. In addition to assessments based on demographic and employment characteristics, the planning process included a rider survey and collection of data on route performance, transfer connections, and comments from drivers.

Figure 4-1 is a composite of the transit needs on El Paso County, as described in the Colorado Springs 2030 Public Transportation Plan. More detail can be found in that report. Key areas of need are at the north and south ends of Colorado Springs, along I-25, in the downtown area and west of downtown near Colorado City. There are significant needs throughout the urbanized area, particularly in the areas that have developed most recently, along with pockets of need in outlying communities.

Important needs are for:

- Additional service in the northern part of the urbanized area and other areas where service coverage is limited;
- Increased frequencies on routes, particularly in peak hours or where service is well used;
- Improved connections for more direct and timely service to important destinations; and,
- Additional service in evening, late night, and weekend periods.

Fixed-route transit service continues to primarily serve people who are dependent on transportation. At the same time, traffic congestion is a growing problem and building a system that will attract “choice” riders is an important long-term objective.

The 2007 Public Transportation Service Plan is a response to these critical needs. It identifies a switch to a multi-hub system, with improvements phased in. A longer term plan identifies other transit needs that will be addressed as revenues are available.

## Specialized Transportation Needs

Among agencies and stakeholders, several common themes emerged:

- Specialized transportation services are too limited to meet the demand for services
- Limited funding and declining reimbursement rates from Federal and State agencies are further constraining services
- While the Metro Mobility service has increased overall mobility of residents with disabilities, because it operates within the ADA requirements it cannot meet all related service needs.
- Each of the agencies brings a unique and important type of service to the community, and these varying levels of service are needed in the region. They should be preserved and expanded.
- Geographic constraints create problems for riders and result in more than one provider serving these hard to reach locations. Riders who live outside the ADA boundary, particularly in the north part of the urbanized area where services are limited, face considerable hurdles in obtaining services. Planned implementation of a flexible route service in Briargate and Rockrimmon will address some of these needs.
- There is a need to improve the quality of service, especially in terms of reliability.

## Stakeholder Views

Interviews were conducted with a wide range of stakeholders, and the findings are summarized in this section.

### **About the Stakeholders**

The agencies we spoke to work mainly with either the elderly or with disabled adults. Services provided, aside from transportation, include job placement (primarily for disabled adults), community involvement, meal provision, housekeeping services (primarily for senior citizens), education, and other activities needed to support independent living.

## **Figure 4-1 El Paso County Greatest Transit Needs**

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## **General Transportation**

### **Importance of Transportation Services**

Agencies that we spoke to strongly stressed the importance of transportation in the mission of their agencies, whether they provide it or not. The majority of the agencies we spoke to have a mission that includes keeping their clients – whether elderly, impoverished, or disabled – active in the community and functioning as independently as possible. Even agencies that do not fund or provide transportation recognize that many of their clients are unable to transport themselves, and without transportation services would be unable to get to job sites, go shopping, go to medical appointments, or participate socially in society. These individuals often have a very high use of emergency and other costly services.

### **Perceptions of Mountain Metropolitan Transit and Metro Mobility**

**Mountain Metropolitan Transit:** Mountain Metropolitan Transit was seen as providing a valuable service, but one that does not meet the extensive needs of the Colorado Springs populations. The new cross-town shuttles were seen as positive improvements, but while a few interviewees commented on the attractive new buses, others noted that Mountain Metropolitan Transit would have spent their dollars more effectively by increasing advertising and educational campaigns about their service. Several interviewees noted that service is not extensive enough and in some cases was reduced recently. A few interviewees noted that Mountain Metropolitan Transit is challenged by insufficient funding and negative perceptions of public transportation by the public.

**Metro Mobility:** Similarly to Mountain Metropolitan Transit, Metro Mobility is seen by most agencies as providing a vital service, but one that is not sufficient to meet the needs of the area. The areas that received the most attention in our interviews as needing improvement include:

- **Drivers** – Metro Mobility drivers are seen as unhelpful and unfriendly, without adequate knowledge of pick-up and drop-off locations, but also as underpaid and overworked. A few commented that Mountain Metropolitan Transit drivers were good.
- **Level of Service** – Many noted that the curb-to-curb service provided by Metro Mobility is not adequate for many seniors and disabled adults.
- **Geographical Limitations** - The geographic reach of Metro Mobility is seen as not extensive enough.
- **Customer Information** – Interviewees observed that there are many people in the area who would be eligible for Metro Mobility service but either do not realize that it is an option for them or find the long application form prohibitive.

City of Colorado Springs: In addition to commenting upon the services provided by Metro Mobility and Mountain Metropolitan Transit, some of our interviewees had apprehensions about working with the City of Colorado Springs, with the example given of the difficulty of working with the City to install Trapeze software a year or two ago. Some feel that the City's decision-making processes are not sufficiently transparent, and that the City does not always participate as fully as they ought to in addressing regional transportation issues. While some interviewees noted that the lack of sufficient service provided by Mountain Metropolitan Transit and Metro Mobility was due in part to insufficient funding, others are concerned that the City has too high a share of funding that is available in the region.

### **Perceptions of other agency and private transportation services.**

Like Metro Mobility and Mountain Metropolitan Transit, each of these agencies is seen as providing necessary service, but as not having enough funding to provide as much service as is needed.

- **Amblicab** – Amblicab is seen as the catch-all for trips that cannot be made on Metro Mobility due to location or level of service. As a mission-driven service, they inspire passenger loyalty. While they are seen as occasionally unreliable, this is largely forgiven due to lack of funding.
- **The Resource Exchange** – The Resource Exchange is seen as providing reliable, cost effective, but limited service. There is a clear understanding that TRE works to transfer as many riders as possible to the fixed-route and Metro Mobility systems. The service is also seen as over-loaded with long travel times.
- **Silver Key** – Silver Key received the most comments from our interviewees. It is seen as unreliable, both in terms of the service that is provided (due to a high level of voluntary drivers) and in terms of how it has operated historically. However, it is also recognized that Silver Key has had a change in management and funding setbacks. It is valued as a mission-driven service that provides a necessary and higher level of service to passengers than the Metro Mobility service. The passengers are very loyal to drivers.
- **Yellow Cab** – One interviewee noted that taxis, while potentially valuable for filling service gaps, require careful oversight in terms of accurately reporting trips. Another noted that since Yellow Cab no longer has wheelchair accessible vehicles, the people he advocates for are no longer able to use taxi service.

### **Coordination of Transportation Services**

Interviewees were overall very interested in coordination and believe that it will help in improving service efficiency in the region, improve reliability, and serve more people. Some potential threats from coordination include the loss of individuality among the services, and the fact that with a centralized service there is no back-up plan if something goes wrong. A few interviewees noted that for coordination to succeed, there must be strong incentive for agencies to participate fully, as there are currently many turf issues and agencies may be reluctant to relinquish autonomy.

## **Interest and Involvement in Coordination**

Amblicab, TRE, Silver Key, Fountain Valley Seniors and the City of Colorado all expressed willingness to discuss sharing their vehicles and drivers under some sort of centralized dispatch or broker service. All the above agencies would like to be involved in funding and coordination decisions. The City also noted that they may have the infrastructure to potentially take on greater dispatch and scheduling functions.

In terms of how these agencies should be involved, there was a strong sentiment among interviewees that everyone involved should have equal representation and equal voice, rather than one agency having a greater influence over decisions. Involvement is further discussed below.

Agencies that do not provide, but rely on, these transportation services also expressed interest in acting as advisors to ensure that a coordination effort meets the needs of their clients. Only two agencies – Myron Stratton Home and Teller Senior Coalition – noted that while they see how coordination would be beneficial to others in the region, they are not sure they could help or be helped by participating in the process at this point. A few comments suggested that the initial effort should be among the major providers but allowances should be made for others participating later.

## **Leadership for Transportation Coordination**

Most interviewees felt that leadership responsibility should be in the form of some sort of board or committee made up of leaders of agencies interested in being involved in coordination. Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments was mentioned by some as an agency that might lead this effort, and others mentioned the RTA as a potential lead or body in which to institutionalize this effort, although it was recognized that it may take some time before PPRTA would be ready to take on this task.

Most interviewees reiterated their previous observations that all interested parties would have to be at the table for discussions, but elaborated on this idea in different ways. Some suggested high level staff in the various organizations who had experience and knowledge of the operation of existing transportation. One interviewee stressed that representation from boards of trustees was needed since staff may have incentive to grow their own agencies or keep certain functions for themselves, and not be able to have the best interests of the community in mind. Another interviewee suggested that a distinction be made between policy decisions—which require funding agencies to be involved and agree on the purpose of the coordination—and operating decisions.

## **Paying the Cost of Transportation Services**

Interviewees recognized that fares do not cover the entire cost of the trip, but for the most part felt that those agencies whose clients need transportation, like the transportation providers themselves, are under-funded and do not have the wherewithal to cover the full costs.

Many suggested that public funding be secured and some specified means such as a general sales tax to cover parts of the costs, as the results of coordination will benefit the society. Many also saw private sector donations as an important part of the funding mix – whether through grants, volunteer support, or other donations. A few noted that once successful coordination is in place it will be easier to obtain more support in the community. Additionally, it was noted that since one of the benefits of coordination is cost efficiency, it is important to build a strong program based on existing dollars.

## **Final Observations**

One of the things that interviewees wanted to emphasize was the fact that there is currently little public awareness, let alone public support, for the needs of citizens served by specialized transportation services. One interviewee further emphasized that demand responsive transportation is inherently inefficient compared to fixed-route, and there will always be more demand and problems with service even if coordination can improve greatly on what exists.

## Coordination and Program Options

Chapters 5 and 6 examine alternatives for the two primary issues on which this Coordination Plan focuses. Each has different but related considerations.

- Establishing a planning and decision-making process that includes a wide variety of agencies interested in transportation (either as providers or funders) to serve as a foundation for ongoing coordination.
- Coordinating the existing network of specialized providers.

The alternative strategies require consideration of doing things differently than in the past and consideration of different roles and responsibilities for agencies in the region. These decisions will require consideration of the viewpoints from many stakeholders – agencies and individuals who use the services. Agencies include those advocating for services, the network of human service providers, and those agencies that fund the existing network of services.

Chapter 7 presents the issues and alternatives for the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program.

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