

# **Transit and “Complete Streets” in Central Minnesota**

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# Overview

- “Context” of Central Minnesota
- Lessons for Rural Areas and Smaller Towns
  - Itasca County Case study
  - National Examples
- Specific Opportunities
  - Auto-based
  - Transit-based
  - Telework?
  - Complete Streets
- Final Thoughts and Suggestions

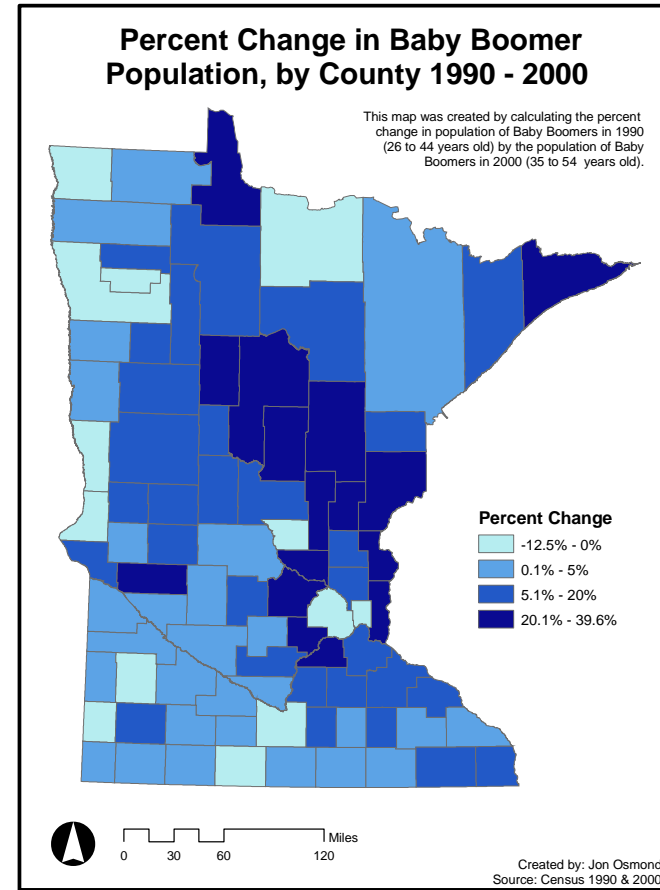
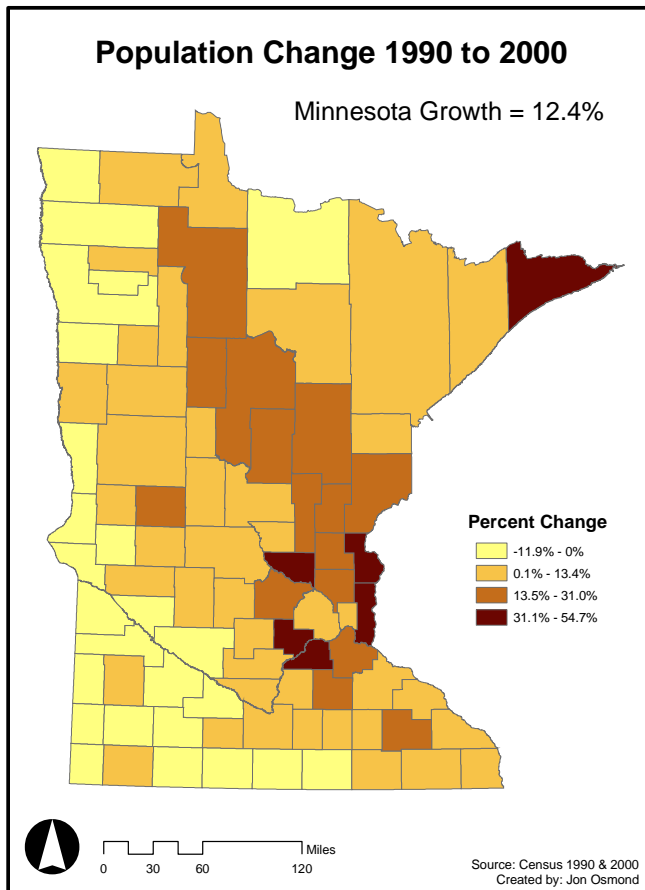
# “Context” for Central Minnesota

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# Population Growing, but Aging



# Cass County



- Principal city: Walker (pop. 941)
- Population: 28,567
- Total Area
  - 2414 sq mi (6253 km<sup>2</sup>)
- Density: 14/sq mi (5/km<sup>2</sup>)

# Crow Wing County



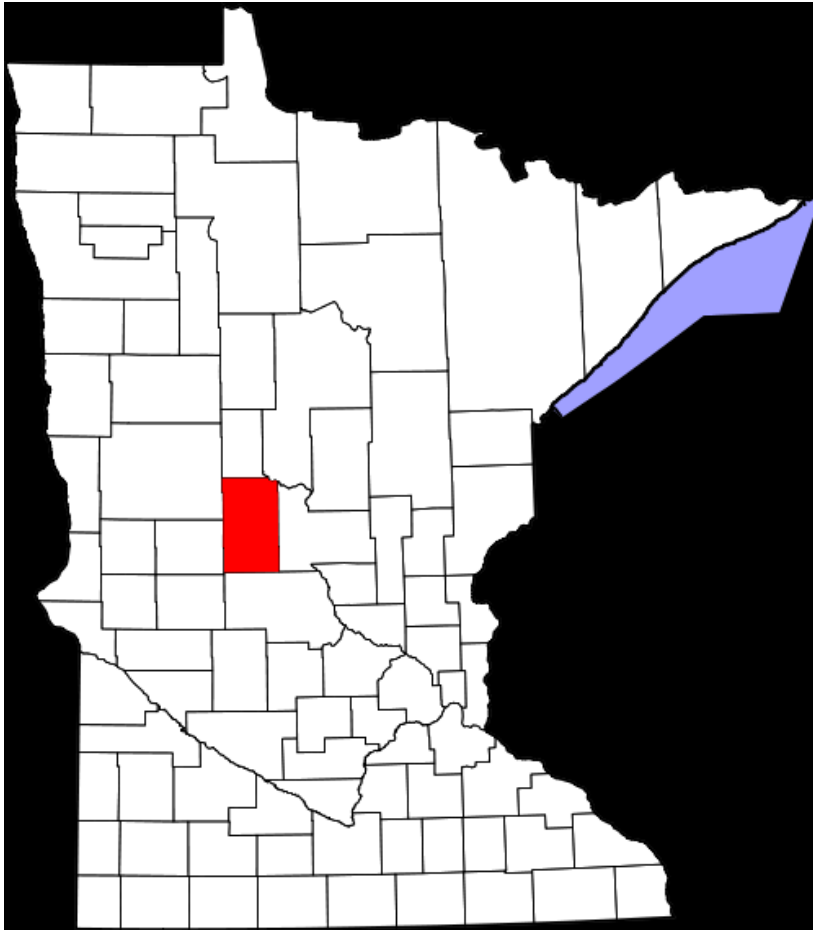
- Principal city: Brainerd (pop. 13,590)
- Population: 62,500
- Total Area
  - 1156 sq mi (2995 km<sup>2</sup>)
- Density: 55/sq mi (21/km<sup>2</sup>)

# Morrison County



- Principal city: Little Falls (pop. 8343)
- Population: 33,198
- Total Area
  - 1153 sq mi (2987 km<sup>2</sup>)
- Density: 28/sq mi (11/km<sup>2</sup>)

# Todd County



- Principal city: Long Prairie (pop. 3458)
- Population: 24,895
- Total Area
  - 979 sq mi (2536 km<sup>2</sup>)
- Density: 26/sq mi (10/km<sup>2</sup>)

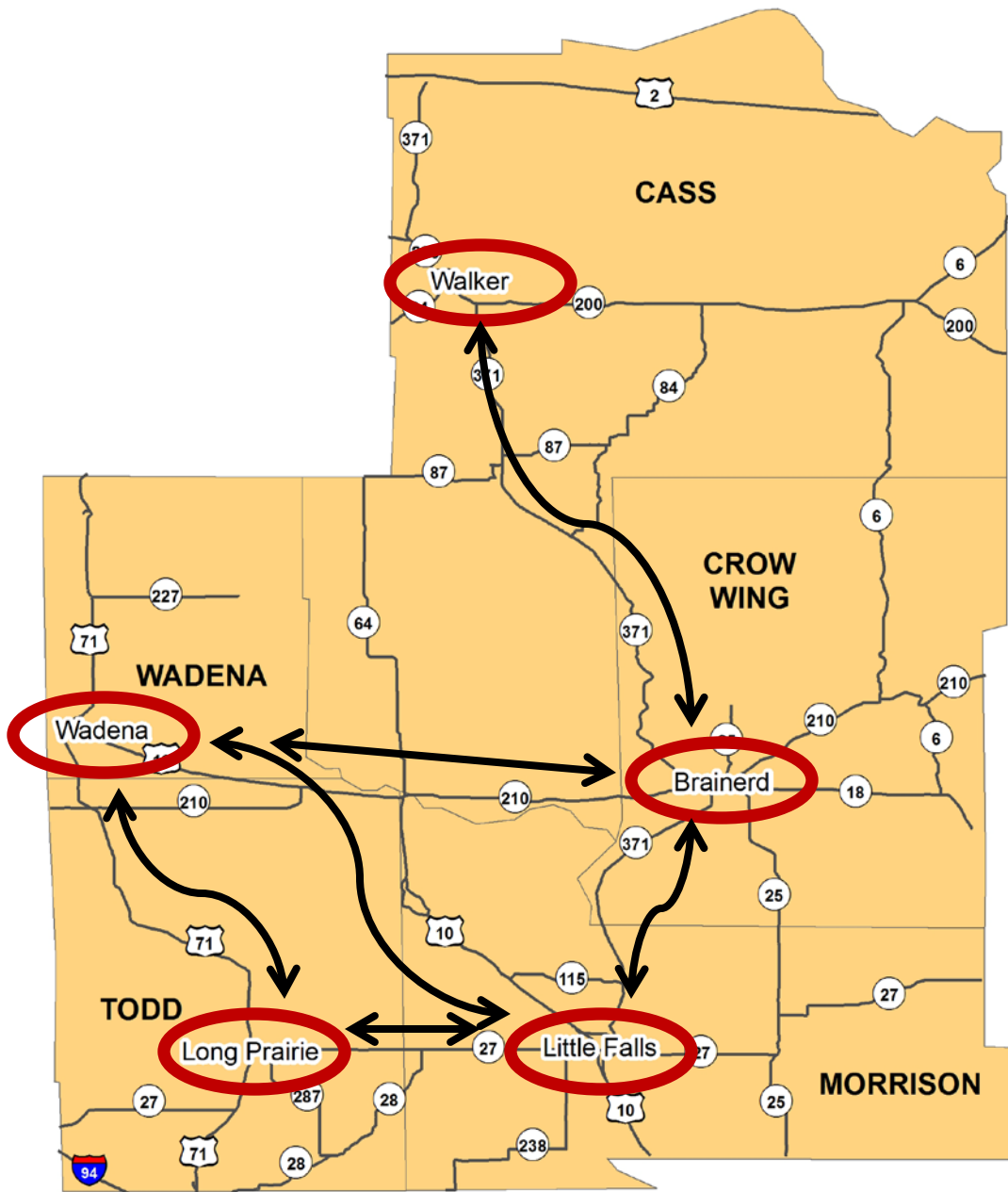
# Wadena County



- Principal city: Wadena (pop. 4088)
- Population: 13,843
- Total Area
  - 543 sq mi (1406 km<sup>2</sup>)
- Density: 26/sq mi (10/km<sup>2</sup>)

# 5 County Area Summary

- Total land area: 6245 sq. mi
- Total Population: 163,003
- Population Density: 26 / sq. mi
  
- Contrast: Hennepin County
  - 606 sq mi, 1,152,425 people, 2048 / sq mi



# So why worry?

- Automobile not available to everyone
  - Senior
  - Students
  - Poor
- Environmental and Health benefits
- Reduced expenditures for roadway maintenance and expansion

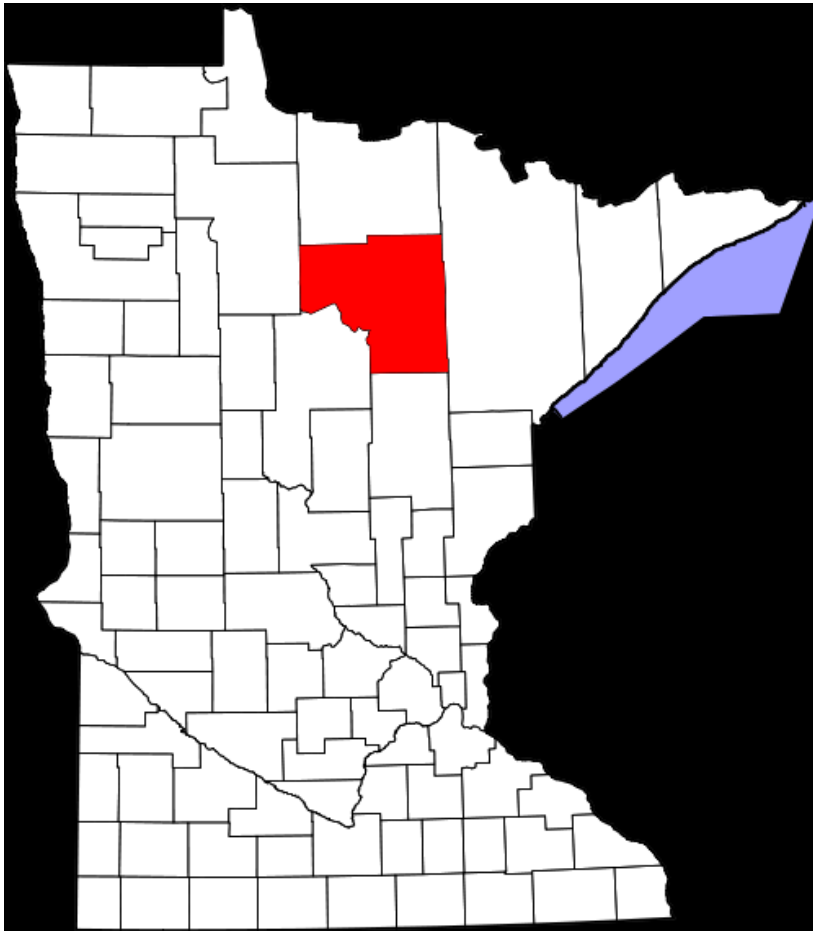
# Lessons for Rural Areas and Smaller Towns: Itasca County Case Study

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# Itasca County



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_Minnesota\\_highlighting\\_Itasca\\_County.svg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Minnesota_highlighting_Itasca_County.svg)

- Largest city: Grand Rapids (pop. 7800)
- Population: 44,792
  - 2006 estimate
- Total Area
  - 2,928 sq mi (7,583 km<sup>2</sup>)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> largest in MN
- Density: 16/sq mi (6/km<sup>2</sup>)

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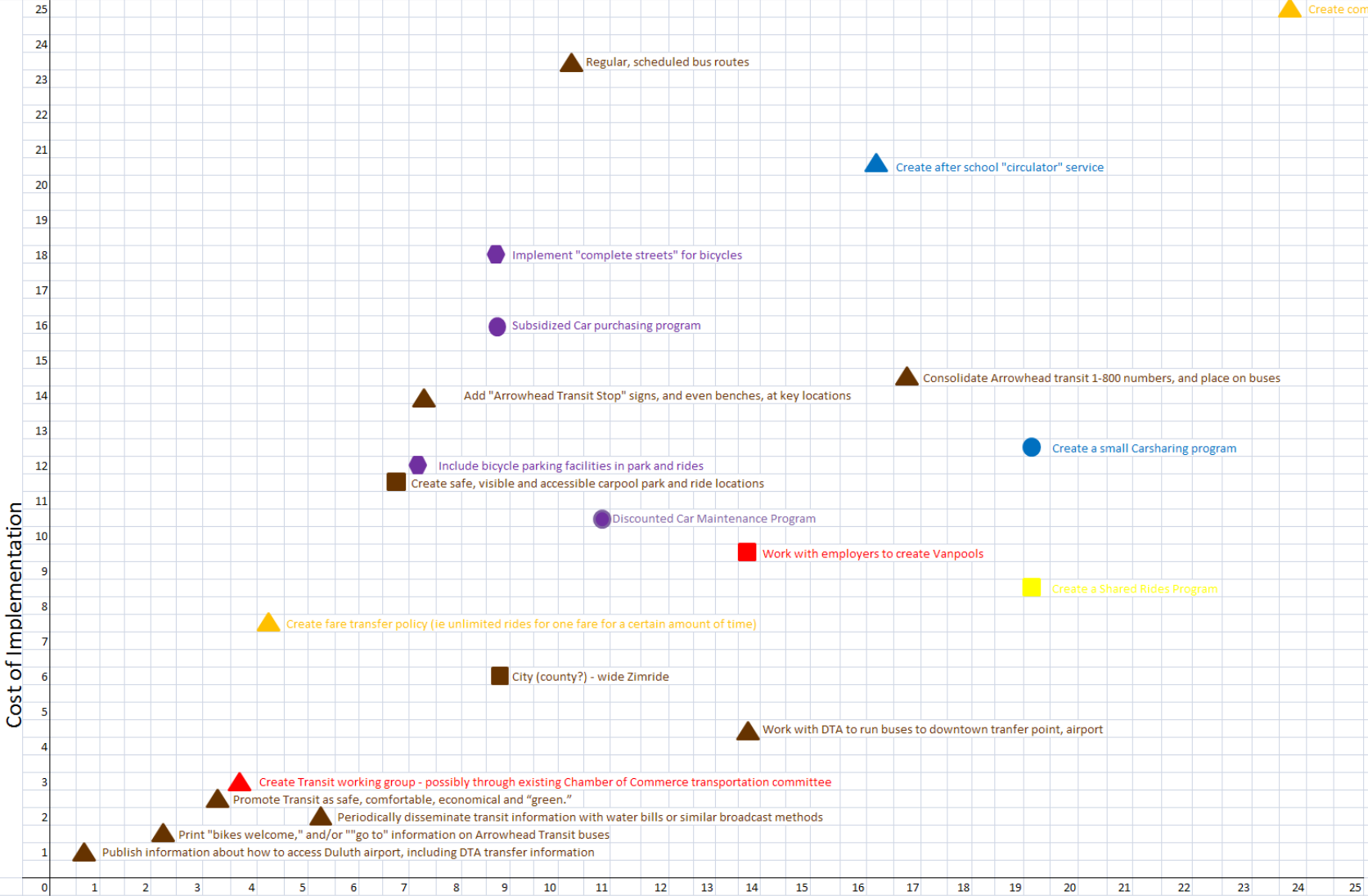
# “Auto-challenged” Populations

- 23% aged 60 or older (2006)
  - 1/3 of county households
  - Cohort expected to grow through 2025
  - Poverty rate decreasing (due to in migration?)
- 21% are children age 17 and younger
- 11.8% live below poverty line (2005)
  - MN average: 9.2%
  - Child poverty rate of 17%

# Itasca Transit Compared with Peers

County Name	State	Population	Pop. Density (persons per sqml)	Area Size (sqml)	Percentage of Population Commuting to Work by Public Transportation (workers 16 and older)
Itasca	Minnesota	43,992	15	2928.4	1.00%
<b>Counties with +/- 10% Population and +/- 10% Area Size of Itasca</b>					
Beltrami	Minnesota	39,650	13	3055.4	1.90%
Garfield	Colorado	43,791	14.8	2955.8	3%
<b>Counties with +/- 20% Population and +/- 20% Area Size of Itasca</b>					
Ravalli	Montana	36,070	15	2400.3	0%
Val Verde	Texas	44,856	13.9	3232.4	0.40%
Stevens	Washington	40,066	15.8	2540.7	0%
<b>Counties with +/- 25% Population and +/- 25% Area Size of Itasca</b>					
Tuolumne	California	54,501	24	2275.2	0.70%
Montrose	Colorado	33,432	14.9	2242.8	0.80%
Washington	Maine	33,941	12.4	2744.1	0.30%
Lincoln	Nebraska	34,632	13.4	2575.1	0.20%
Osage	Oklahoma	44,437	19.3	2303.8	0.20%
Iron	Utah	33,779	10.2	3301.9	0%
Kittitas	Washington	33,362	14.3	2333.6	0.10%

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**Key:**

<span style="color: red;">■</span> Benefits low income workers	<span style="color: black;">▲</span> Transit
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Benefits Seniors	<span style="color: black;">■</span> Carpool
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Benefits students	<span style="color: black;">●</span> Auto
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> Benefits low income workers and seniors	<span style="color: black;">◆</span> other
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Benefits students and seniors	
<span style="color: purple;">■</span> Benefits low income workers and students	
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> Benefits all three groups / general public	

# Lessons for Rural Areas and Smaller Towns: National Examples

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# National Best Practices: Personal Vehicles

- Carpooling and Carsharing
  - On-line carpool matching (e.g. Zimride)
  - Carsharing (e.g. Zipcar or local cooperative)
- Assistance in vehicle purchase and maintenance
  - Communities Investing in Families
    - Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Pine counties
  - Free To Be, Inc.
    - Anoka county

# National Best Practices - Transit

- Flexible and non-traditional funding sources
  - York County Community Action Corp (ME)
  - Coordinates billing and service provision for several clients (medical, adult day care, etc.)
- Promoting rural transit
  - Idaho, Kansas, California
  - Increase awareness among general public, cooperation with taxi services, support for organizing vanpools

# Specific Opportunities



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# Specific Opportunities: Autos

- Costs can be shared
  - Programs can be created that help with purchase and ownership costs
- Rides can be shared
  - Park and Ride facilities
  - Vanpools
  - Communities can organize to share rides
- Cars can be shared

# Specific Opportunities: Transit

- Create Transit working group – perhaps through Chamber of Commerce committee
- Work with employers to create Vanpools
- Periodically disseminate transit information in utility bills or similar broadcast methods
- Create a community shared rides program
- Create carpool park and rides
- Include bicycle parking at park and rides

# Specific Opportunities: Telework

- Telework can be performed on a full or part-time basis and is often complemented with flexible scheduling
- Seamless and transparent way of doing business with customers and coworkers
- ROWE: No schedules. People make choices about where and when work is done.

# Can it work in Rural Communities?

- **Collar Counties**

- Keep commuters home
- Keep communities vibrant during days

- **Rural Counties**

- Recruit from larger areas
- Location does not matter

# Specific Opportunities: “Complete Streets”

Information from MnDOT  
October 2010

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# Complete Streets: Legislation

- Defines Complete Streets
- Directs general Mn/DOT implementation
- Clarifies local encouragement, but no mandate
- Directs some tweaks to the State Aid variance process

# Definition

Complete Streets are designed and operated to provide safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street.

# Definition

It does not mean “all modes on all roads”

# Goal

1. Develop a balanced transportation **system** that integrates all modes via planning.
2. Include users of all types, ages and abilities.

## Example: Incomplete Street



## Example: Complete Street



## Understanding Complete Streets



Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable **safe access for all users** ... motorists, transit users, pedestrians and bicyclists **of all ages and abilities** are able to move safely along and across complete streets.

# Complete Streets Come In Many Forms



## Complete Streets = Rural Design Challenges



**Not a Complete Street**



**More of a Complete Street**

# Complete Streets = Operational Challenges Particularly in Northern Climates

Complete Street in Summer



How About in Winter?



Multimodal Operations & Maintenance Needs Year-Round

# Final Thoughts and Suggestions

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# Realize Context

- Central Minnesota is not the Twin Cities
- Has Unique Strengths
  - Strong economic base
  - Vibrant population
- With Its Own Challenges
  - Low population density
  - Unclear benefits

# Solutions Need Not Be:

- Conventional
  - Technological and Innovative twists
- Expensive
  - Cooperation is as important as cost
- Based Upon Government Action
  - Government can be guide or resource

# Solutions Should Be

- Innovative
  - Tailored to strengths and interests of constituencies and providers
- Broad-based
  - Should come from, have the support of, and benefit as many parties as possible
- Realistic
  - Build momentum with small-scale “early wins”

# Thank You!

- Frank Douma (612-626-9946), [fdouma@umn.edu](mailto:fdouma@umn.edu)
- Itasca County study
  - [http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/slp/reports/itasca\\_county\\_area\\_transportation\\_study.pdf](http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/slp/reports/itasca_county_area_transportation_study.pdf)
  - [http://www.blandinfoundation.org/\\_uls/resources/TranspStudyFinalDec16\\_09\\_09.pdf](http://www.blandinfoundation.org/_uls/resources/TranspStudyFinalDec16_09_09.pdf)
- Minnesota Complete Streets
  - <http://www.mncompletestreets.org/>
  - <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/>