













Itasca Transportation Solutions

Draft Recommendations

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|------|---|--|---|---------|
| Key: |  | Benefits low income workers |  | Transit |
| |  | Benefits Seniors |  | Carpool |
| |  | Benefits students |  | Auto |
| |  | Benefits low income workers and seniors |  | Other |
| |  | Benefits students and seniors | | |
| |  | Benefits low income workers and students | | |
| |  | Benefits all three groups / general public | | |

Policy and Administrative changes: In general, these changes are relatively easy and low-cost to implement. They often involve a policy or administrative decision and no capital investment.

 1. *Coordinate housing policies and transportation investments*

Description: A cross-sectoral partnership among local government agencies that promote integrated housing and transportation policies with specific aims to improve access to affordable housing and achieve the jobs/housing balance.

Rationale: Spatial analysis has shown that, while the majority of low-wage jobs cluster in Grand Rapids, low income workers in Itasca are sparsely distributed in the county and adjacent counties. This spatial mismatch phenomenon may not occur by choice. Compared to rural housing, housing price is less affordable in Grand Rapids and areas close to the city. Securing and sustaining affordable housing in the city could provide low-income workers more housing choices and ultimately help them to live closer to where they work.

Time to implement: An inter-agency partnership may be formed at the end of 2009 as the Grand Rapids Comprehensive Plan is scheduled to be updated in 2009.

Lead implementing organization(s): Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, Grand Rapids City Council, and Arrowhead Transit.

Possible costs of implementation: The cost of establishing such an inter-agency partnership is relatively minimal. A small dedication of staff time and operational costs is all that would likely be necessary.

Possible Funding source(s): Existing funds.

2. *Create fare transfer policy for Arrowhead Transit*

Description: An Arrowhead Transit fare policy that states a person may board a bus and ride it any number of times within a certain amount of time (e.g. two hours), while only paying one fare.

Rationale: A number of focus group participants felt uncomfortable with what they understood to be a need to pay a fare every time they boarded a bus. This included a Senior who needed to ride only a short distance from her home to a Senior Center meeting, and a number of low-income workers who felt Transit could not work for them because they needed to drop their children at daycare. This perceived barrier led a number of these possible transit users to look to other modes. If they knew they could chain their trips on Transit, they may be more likely to use the service.

Time to implement: A policy could be implemented in less than 6 months.

Lead implementing organization: Arrowhead Transit

Possible costs of implementation: Such a change would likely impact the fare revenue of Arrowhead Transit. However, it is not clear whether this impact would be negative (same number of riders taking more trips), or positive (the transfer policy attracts enough new riders to offset any lost fares from existing riders that take advantage of the policy).

Possible Funding source(s): If the policy does create greater costs, the additional operating costs could likely be funded through Section 5311 (Nonurbanized Area Formula Program), Section 5316 (Job Access & Reverse Commute) and Section 5317 (New Freedom) grants through MnDOT.

3. *Implement “Complete streets” for bicycles*

Description: Adopt and implement a series of design guidelines for roads that provides space and other facilities for bicycle and pedestrian use.

Rationale: A number of study participants noted that they do not feel comfortable walking or biking around Itasca County due to wide highways with fast-travelling vehicles. MnDOT has developed a Complete Streets draft program that could be used to make these roads more attractive to alternative modes with minimal hindrance to motor vehicles

Time to implement: Can be adopted in less than a year. Widespread implementation will take several years as projects are funded and completed.

Lead implementing organization: City or local governments, such as the City of Grand Rapids, which could include this policy as part of their current comprehensive planning process. Interested citizen groups, such as Get Fit Itasca, and MnDOT would be useful partners.

Possible costs of implementation: Adoption and promotion only have minimal costs for printing and other promotional and educational materials. Inclusion in construction projects varies by project.

*Possible Funding source(s):*MnDOT may have recommendations for funding sources.

Communications, Outreach and Education changes: These actions are intended to increase awareness of available services, promote the use of transit/ride-share services, and maintain contact with current and potential stakeholders to listen to their concerns and educate them about the transportation topics and services.

- ▲ 1. *Print “bikes welcome, and/or “go to www.northlandrides.com or call 211 for information” on Arrowhead Transit buses*

Description: Some additional information about how to use Arrowhead transit, placed right on the buses, stating “bikes welcome,” and/or “go to <http://www.northlandrides.com/> or call 211 for information on how to ride.”

Rationale: Over the course of this study we learned that potential users of Arrowhead Transit did not know that they could bring their bicycles aboard the bus, nor did they know how to contact Arrowhead Transit. Regarding the latter, it was suggested that the Arrowhead Transit phone number be posted on the side of the bus, but we learned this is not feasible due to the multiple phone numbers Arrowhead Transit uses to cover its service area. However, we also learned that information about obtaining a ride is easily found at <http://www.northlandrides.com/>, and that many people are able to obtain information about Arrowhead Transit services by calling United Way 211. This could be an opportunity to cross-promote each other’s services, at least until Arrowhead Transit is able consolidate its phone system (discussed in a later recommendation).

A related idea is to provide more information about how parents may ride with their kids. A number of focus group participants stated they believed they could not ride Arrowhead Transit buses with their kids, or at least that they needed to provide car seats.

Time to implement: These messages could be added as buses are brought in for maintenance.

Lead implementing organization: Arrowhead Transit

Possible costs of implementation: Possibly less than \$100 per bus, which may be included as part of regular operating and maintenance costs

Possible Funding source(s): Existing funds

- ▲ 2. *Publish information about how to access Duluth airport, including DTA transfer information*

Description: A short, detailed description of the steps one needs to take from boarding the Arrowhead Transit bus at Grand Rapids to arriving at the Duluth airport. This should include information on Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) bus routes to transfer to, and

frequency of service. This information should be available in paper and on-line formats. The latter could include links to the DTA website, including route maps and schedules.

Rationale: The senior citizens that participated in this study noted the lack of inter-city transportation available for trips out of Itasca County. Arrowhead Transit does provide weekly service to Duluth, a service we understand is well utilized, but participants did not seem to know how to maximize this opportunity. Their understanding, as we heard it, is that this trip terminates at a shopping mall in Duluth. However, we have since learned that this run not only includes stops at the mall, but also at Downtown Medical Facilities, the downtown transfer center, the Greyhound station, and the airport. In addition, we learned that the DTA runs Route 5 directly to the airport from this mall at least once an hour and Route 10 to the transfer point 2 or 3 times per hour.

If riders are aware of these additional stops and transfer opportunities, they should be able to plan connections to flights, intercity bus service and other intercity travel opportunities.

We also note that Duluth is in the process of planning a major multi-modal transportation depot. Should this come to fruition, information about how to take advantage of this service should obviously be developed.

Time to implement: A paper version of this brochure could be produced in a matter of weeks. An on-line version would ideally coincide with the upgrade of the Arrowhead Transit website we understand is underway.

Lead implementing organization: Arrowhead Transit. Coordination and assistance from DTA and MnDOT to ensure accuracy of this information would be beneficial.

Possible costs of implementation: Relatively minimal. A small dedication of staff time and costs for publishing the material is all that would likely be necessary.

Possible Funding source(s): Existing funds. Enhancements to this service would likely qualify for Section 5311 funds.

3. *Promote Transit as safe, comfortable, economical and “green.”*

Description: Arrowhead Transit develops a new marketing message, printed on all materials that promotes its advantages over other modes, including improved safety, comfort, money savings and reduced pollution.

Rationale: Several participants stated a belief that Arrowhead Transit was only for Seniors or those with disabilities, while others, even though they knew they could use it, were reluctant to because of the stigma of using a service that others perceived as only being for those with special needs

Time to implement: Can begin immediately, but may take years to change perceptions.

Lead implementing organization: Arrowhead Transit

Possible costs of implementation: Minimal – mostly to obtain agreement on how to state the new message.

Possible Funding source(s): Existing operational budget.

▲4. Consolidate Arrowhead Transit 1-800 numbers and place on buses

Description: Upgrade Arrowhead Transit’s reservation / dispatching telecommunications infrastructure such that it is served by a single 1-800 number, with calls being routed to the proper location (county) either automatically, based upon geographical data generated by location of the call, or selected manually by the caller.

Rationale: In the focus groups, it was suggested that possible users would be more likely to pick up the phone and learn about Arrowhead Transit services if the reservation number was listed on the sides of the buses. However, we learned that the reason this is not done is that the Arrowhead Transit service area is covered by 4 different reservation numbers, and that the buses are used throughout the area.

One method for addressing the problem is the location -specific information provided through northlandrides.com, which we find to be an outstanding tool. However, it remains only available to those with internet access. Consequently, in addition to our recommending placement of “northlandrides.com” on the sides of buses as a method of publicizing the availability of this information, we recommend creation of a single 1-800 number that would cover the entire Arrowhead Transit service area. This would allow the placement of the number on sides of busses for everyone to see.

Time to implement: Up to 2 years, to secure funding, purchase hardware and software, and publicize the change.

Lead implementing organization: Arrowhead Transit

Possible costs of implementation: at least \$10,000, and possibly much more.

Possible Funding source(s): MnDOT’s Capital Facility Grant Program seems to be the most likely candidate. Funding sources for these grants include the State General Fund, State Bond Funds, and FTA Section 5309 Capital Program Funds.

Opportunities for Coordination and Cooperation: In a large and low-density area such as Itasca County, it is very difficult for any one entity to satisfy the transportation needs of the community. Fortunately, many public and private entities exist that are engaged in providing or improving transportation services to specific segments of the population. This category encourages the formation of partnerships to share ideas, people, vehicles and funds to increase the effectiveness of the resources each brings to the table.

▲ 1. *Create Transit working group – possibly through existing Chamber of Commerce transportation committee.*

Description: A multi-jurisdictional committee or working group that would include representation of employers, Arrowhead Transit, local government officials and other interested parties, with a mission of working together to identify and implement opportunities that benefit both employers and employees. The Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce already has a Transportation Committee with a mission of “serving as an active voice in transportation issues on behalf of the Grand Rapids area.” While the current membership and action plans appear to focus on improving transportation for commerce, this group may be a logical base for creating a subcommittee or working group focused on transit, and/or other employee transportation solutions.
(<http://www.grandmn.com/services/committees.html>)

Rationale: We were impressed at the information exchange that occurred during the September listening session, where employers and local officials offered to assist in making transit work, and Arrowhead Transit representatives noted tax and other advantages may be available to employers that take advantage of transit programs for their employees. This recommendation seeks to take advantage of that apparent willingness to work together to find mutually beneficial solutions. It is possible that these solutions could also benefit all transit users.

Such cross-sector collaborations have worked in the past: e.g. “Team Transit” in the Twin Cities, which led to the creation of park-and-rides, bus-only shoulders and other innovative, low-cost projects that could be implemented quickly.

Time to implement: 2- 6 months to get started, depending on how easily the major stakeholders can be brought together. We note the Chamber transportation committee has another meeting scheduled on November 17th 2009 at 12:00 noon in Chamber Conference Room.

Lead implementing organization: Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce. Other local officials could also serve to convene this group, but leadership by the private sector could send a tremendous message to the community about commitment to discern and implement new, innovative programs.

Possible costs of implementation: Minimal for convening the meetings of the working group. Costs for projects moving forward should be quite small as well, or even

negative, given the ideas discussed at the listening session (e.g. tax breaks to employers, providing information about transit to employees or the public through existing venues)

Possible Funding source(s): Initial funding could likely come from existing budgets of the partners. More capital intensive programs could likely be funded in the long term by MnDOT grants (<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/grantapplications/grantapindex.html>), or leadership grants from private organizations.

▲ 2. *Periodically disseminate transit information with water bills or similar broadcast methods*

Description: Several cities in the area also run municipal utilities. They could occasionally include general information about Transit in their bills, which reach nearly every household. This information could include a statement that transit is available to everyone, provides benefits, and that information can be obtained at the reservation number or at northlandrides.com

Rationale: This was suggested by one of the local officials attending the listening session. It provides a low-cost direct marketing opportunity to put information about the benefits and opportunities provided by transit in the hands of Itasca County residents.

Time to implement: Up to 6 months to create material and coordinate with billing efforts.

Lead implementing organization: Local governments and Arrowhead Transit.

Possible costs of implementation: Cost of creating and printing material.

Possible Funding source(s): Might work best as a joint venture between Arrowhead Transit and local utilities or governments.

■ 3. *Create a Shared Rides program*

Description: A program that enables community members to provide rides to Seniors who no longer drive, while investing in their own long-term mobility. This program should utilize, or be modeled after the Independent Transportation Network (ITN), which allows older people to trade their own cars to pay for rides, and enables volunteer drivers to store transportation credits for their own future transportation needs. ITN's Road Scholarship Program converts volunteer credits into a fund for low-income riders, and the gift certificate program helps adult children support their parents' transportation needs from across the street or across the nation. (<http://itnamerica.org/content/Overview.php>)

Rationale: Several seniors we talked with discussed considering a need to move from Itasca County once they gave up their car. A community-based ride-sharing system could allow them to continue to live at home.

Time to Implement: ITN America is considering how their model could work in a rural community. It appears, however, that they would be willing to discuss options with someone with the ability to call and begin making changes.
(<http://itnamerica.org/content/StartingAnITNAffiliate.php>)

Lead implementing organization: United Way is identified as a likely partner, although local government could also serve as a sponsor.

Possible costs of implementation: Training and creation of a program. ITN is not clear about the costs of using their model.

Possible Funding source(s): Local government or private foundation for start up. It appears to be self-sustaining after start up.

4. *Work with employers to create Vanpools, publicize Rural Rides*

Description: A program that supplies vehicles and reimbursement to drivers as incentive for employees and other groups to organize themselves into groups that share rides to common destinations. It creates opportunities for workers in areas with little or no transit service to have a ride to work exactly when they need it.

A similar, existing, program that could also be publicized as part of this effort is Rural Rides (http://www.aeo.org/info_resources/arrowhead_transit/Virginia%20Brochure.pdf)

Rationale: This is a program that has worked in other areas around the country that could work in Itasca County.

Time to implement: 1 – 2 years to develop program, purchase vehicles and organize drivers and riders.

Lead implementing organization: These are often organized by rural transit agencies, although non-profits also perform this service. Consequently, Arrowhead Transit or the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency appear to be well-placed to lead this effort.

Possible costs of implementation: Initial investment costs for purchase and maintenance of vehicles and driver training are likely to approach or exceed \$50,000. However, as noted below, user fares can cover operational costs, and may even amortize the initial investment costs.

Possible Funding source(s): Vanpools are usually paid for through a variety of methods. Grants often are needed for start up and capital costs, while user fares cover maintenance and other operational costs.

■ 5. *Create safe, visible and accessible carpool park and ride locations*

Description: Designated parking lots, or designated spaces in existing parking lots, that visibly encourage people to convene at that point and form carpools.

Rationale: In a sparsely populated county like Itasca County, it may not be practical for all members of a carpool or van pool to meet at the origin of the trip. Rather, it may make more sense from them to meet at a common point along the route, and then continue the journey in a single vehicle. However, such meeting locations are not obvious, and often may lead to leaving a vehicle in a store parking lot, where it may not be welcome, or on the street, which an owner may not feel is the safest option. Designating places where such meetings are allowed can address this issue.

Time to implement: Less than one year to choose location and publicize.

Lead implementing organization: This would be an ideal opportunity for the Chamber of Commerce group recommended above. Zip ride or Zimride, and Northlandrides.com could be used to publicize the locations, as could cities and counties through municipal utility bills and similar efforts.

Possible costs of implementation: Costs for signage and publicity would likely total less than ten thousand dollars.

Possible Funding source(s): Businesses to help provide and publicize locations.

◆ 6. *Include bicycle parking facilities in park and rides*

Description: Include bicycle racks or lockers as part of the park and ride locations described above

Rationale: Including a safe place for a person to leave their bike means that those who would rather not, or cannot, drive have an option for making part of their trip by bicycle, and completing it by vehicle, thus extending the possible trips they could make while minimizing inconvenience to those providing the ride.

Time to implement: Concurrent with creation of park and rides

Lead implementing organization: Those creating and providing park and ride locations.

Possible costs of implementation: bike racks (parks two bikes) can cost \$150 to 300 each to purchase and install. Purchase and installation of Bike lockers can cost \$1000 to \$4000 each (parks two bikes). (<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/engineering/parking.cfm>)

Possible Funding source(s): Private funds could be raised through advertising, sponsorships, or bicycling organizations.

Operations, Maintenance and/or Service Improvements: These recommendations attempt to fill some of the service and program gaps identified. However, compared to the preceding categories, they require greater capital resources to develop and implement.

■ 1. *City (county?)-wide ride-matching on-line.*

Description: An on-line tool that allows people to post when they have an extra space in their car for a rider to use, and for other to post when they need a ride. Two popular examples are Zimride (<http://www.zimride.com/>) and Zip Ride (<http://www.zipride.com/>). The former has partnerships with Facebook and ZipCar, a national carsharing service. Opportunities for carsharing are discussed elsewhere.

Rationale: While we heard many stories of people already ridesharing (carpooling) with family and friends when a car was not available. However, they felt uncomfortable always asking the same people for rides. These services take advantage of the Internet to create a virtual community where many more possible drivers and riders can find common trips.

Time to implement: Up to one year to effectively market and create a “critical mass” of users.

Lead implementing organization: This kind of program would likely find initial success at educational institutions, where students have varying schedules, fewer available cars, but several origins and destinations in common. Consequently, Itasca Community College would be a likely candidate. Indeed, Zip Ride and Zimride have developed specific programs for colleges and universities. However, it does appear this kind of program could also work for high schools looking to coordinate rides to and from after school activities.

Possible costs of implementation: ZimRide charges an annual fee of \$5000 - \$10,000 per year. Zimride’s Facebook service apparently is cheapest. We were unable to obtain a cost estimate for Zip Ride.

As Zip Ride notes on their website, “The best ridesharing site is of no use if no one knows about it.” The annual fee likely pays for this marketing and coordination cost.

Possible Funding source(s): Initial funding would likely come from local private sources.

▲ 2. *Add “Arrowhead Transit Stop” signs, and even benches, at key locations*

Description: Knowledge of Arrowhead Transit services could be enhanced by increasing the visibility of locations it serves. This could be done by placing signs that convey the message that “Arrowhead Transit Stops Here” at some of the more highly trafficked areas. The signs could also include the reservation number and/or “northlandrides.com”

URL. Benches that could also display advertisements for sponsors could further enhance this amenity.

Rationale: Many of the people we contacted in this study were not aware of the services provided by Arrowhead Transit. By providing some visibility at common origins and destinations, new users might be compelled to look into whether the service could work for them. Since these signs (and possibly benches) are location-based, the existing reservation line phone number could be displayed, while also providing another opportunity to publicize the northlandrides.com website.

Time to implement: Up to one year to design, create and post. Possibly longer if sponsored benches are to be offered and sold.

Lead implementing organization: Arrowhead Transit, perhaps in coordination with the Chamber of Commerce.

Possible costs of implementation: These signs and benches could few thousand dollars each for high quality for design and production.

Possible Funding source(s): Advertising sponsorships

3. After School “circulator” service

Description: A free or low-cost circulator van or small bus service traveling established routes that connect children and youth to after school and summer learning opportunities such as camps and tutoring programs.

Rationale: While schools provide transportation between home and school for classes, and to and from school for school-related activities, various restrictions leave students responsible for their own transportation between school and home outside of regular school hours and for non-school related activities. An example of a transportation service that allows children to access these activities was recently started in St. Paul: http://blog.lib.umn.edu/cdc/bythepeople/2008/09/post_15.php, and we understand a similar service has run in the Deer River district.

Time to implement: Up to 1 or 2 years, to obtain buy-in from all key stakeholders.

Lead implementing organization: We understand Itasca Networks for Youth is an existing organization well positioned to lead this kind of effort.

Possible costs of implementation: Equipment and operations may cost \$50,000 or more each year.

Possible Funding source(s): Other examples of this kind of service have obtained grants from private foundations, local and state government.

▲4. *Regular, scheduled bus routes*

Description: Buses that run regular routes at specific times

Rationale: Most transit users in our study spoke of a desire to have a transit system where they knew a bus would be at a certain place at a certain time. This was listed as a critical need in the United Way “What Matters” study.

Time to implement: At least one year to plan and implement.

Lead implementing organization: Arrowhead Transit

Possible costs of implementation: Planning, perhaps purchase of route planning software, additional buses to handle route, operating costs. This could at least double or triple Arrowhead Transit’s existing budget for operating in the area.

Possible Funding source(s): We were unable to find a funding source that would provide the necessary on-going subsidy.

▲5. *Create a commuter rail service connecting communities along the Range*

Description: A commuter rail passenger train providing intercity service, probably to Duluth, at a time that allows workers to use this as their journey-to-work mode.

Rationale: Rail tracks already connect many communities along the range. A rapid, convenient and comfortable passenger train service between these communities could increase the mobility of workers, allowing them to access job opportunities throughout the range.

Time to implement: At least 5 years, if not more.

Lead implementing organization: MnDOT. Private freight railroads would have to be cooperative partners.

Possible costs of implementation: Significant investments in locomotives and cars, and possibly also in upgrades to rail, right of way and signaling. This can easily exceed several hundred thousand dollars per mile.

Possible Funding source(s): Would require significant government funding from a new source.

Cost Sharing or Saving Opportunities: These recommendations require higher capital investments but have the potential for high effectiveness in satisfying segments of the population whose transportation needs are otherwise difficult to serve.

● 1. *Discounted Car Maintenance Program*

Description: A program that allows those with demonstrated need to bring their cars to a specific site or sites where they can have routine maintenance or repairs done to their car at a steeply discounted rate. Or, a program that provides reimbursement for routine car services and repairs for those with demonstrated need. Similar programs have been developed through churches elsewhere, and we note our low-income focus group was held in conjunction with a program focused on meeting the needs of low-income workers, which was located at a church. Perhaps car repairs could be completed during these meetings.

We have also learned of these programs being administered and funded through non-profit organizations, such as Communities Investing in Families, which provides grants for both car purchases and maintenance in other northeast MN counties. (<http://www.investinfamilies.org/brochure-wtw.shtml>), and the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation (grants for maintenance to other non-profits).

Rationale: While Arrowhead Transit provides very good service to the area, one must recognize that on 1% of all work trips are made on transit, and probably an even lower percentage for non-work trips among those that are able to drive. Consequently, the best way to provide mobility to those that can drive is to provide them access to reliable automobiles. Purchasing costs and maintenance costs are the major financial barriers to car ownerships for those that are able to drive. This program would help address the latter situation.

Time to implement: Up to one year to assemble funding and publicize.

Lead implementing organization: KOOTASCA Community Action, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, the Itasca County Health & Human Services or similar organizations could take the lead in organizing this effort. Similar efforts in the Twin Cities were initiated by the United Way. Cooperation of local mechanics is, obviously, also critical.

Once the program is running, the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency could publicize it through Northlandrides.com.

Possible costs of implementation: This type of program, if it proves popular, could have significant costs. Programs we found had annual budgets greater than \$10,000 per year.

Possible Funding source(s): Itasca County Sharing Fund provides grants up to \$500 from the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation to non-profit agencies. Private

foundations, perhaps in cooperation with local financial institutions to assist in determining need, would be the most likely sources of initial funding. This type of effort may also be eligible for Federal Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316) funds.

● 2. *Subsidized car purchasing program*

Description: This program complements the Discounted Car Maintenance Program described above, providing subsidized loans or grants to those with demonstrated need to purchase reliable auto transportation. Cars could be obtained through private donations, lease returns, or fix-ups of individual donations.

Rationale: Similar to the Discounted Car Maintenance Program Rationale. The fastest way to have the greatest impact in meeting the transportation needs of those that are able to drive is to assist them in obtaining a safe and reliable vehicle.

Time to implement: One year or more to assemble funding and publicize.

Lead implementing organization: Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, the Itasca County Health & Human Services or similar organizations could take the lead in organizing this effort. The best example we found was the Communities Investing in Families program (<http://www.investinfamilies.org/brochure-wtw.shtml>), which appeared to coordinate several key partners, including banks, mechanics and other stakeholders.

Once the program is running, the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency could publicize it through Northlandrides.com.

Possible costs of implementation: If popular, this program could have costs greater than \$10,000 per year. However, if set up as subsidized loan program, some of the funds could “revolve,” significantly reducing the annual budget needed to support the program.

Possible Funding source(s): Private foundations, perhaps in cooperation with local financial institutions to assist in determining need, would be the most likely sources of initial funding. This type of effort may also be eligible for Federal Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316) funds.

● 3. *Small Carsharing program (perhaps located at ICC?)*

Description: A program allows a number of people to “share” access to a car. The car is owned by a separate organization, which handles the car purchase, insurance, maintenance and gas costs. Individuals join the organization to have access to the car, and pay an hourly and/or mileage-based fee to cover the costs.

To succeed, the car needs to be located where most members can walk or bike to it, and roughly 20 members are needed to produce enough revenue for the car to cover its costs,

without creating too many time conflicts between members. Consequently, Itasca Community College may be the best location for at least the first car, given that it is a walkable campus with a large number of people convening each day.

Rationale: Itasca Community College (ICC) has a concentration of students that have difficulty affording the purchase and maintenance costs of an automobile. While ICC is served by Arrowhead Transit, sometimes the bus schedule does not coincide with class or work schedules of students. If enough of these students signed up, it could be cost-effective to provide a vehicle they could use and pay for on an as-needed basis. This arrangement could allow students and ICC staff to take transit or carpool to and from campus without compromising their mobility during the day.

Time to implement: Given the small and low-density population of Itasca County, an existing Carsharing organization is unlikely to set up a branch operation. Consequently an organization would need to be set up, which could take 6 months to 2 or 3 years.

Lead implementing organization: A separate non-profit would likely need to be set up, unless Itasca Community College is willing to house the organization, at least initially.

Possible costs of implementation: Purchase costs of the car, reservation software and access hardware can be significant – probably around \$30,000 for a reliable car that can handle multiple trips and drivers each day. Insurance and gas costs could be up to an additional \$10,000 per year.

Possible Funding source(s): Most carsharing organizations hope to eventually cover their costs through member charges. However, start-up costs need to be raised initially. Some have been raised through private foundations while others have been able to secure government start-up funding. However, we are not aware of a car sharing service being attempted, let alone succeeding, in a setting similar to Itasca County.