

A White Paper for Jefferson County Human Services Transportation

Prepared by the Jefferson County Local Coordinating Council (LCC)

This White Paper is to inform you about an oncoming dilemma and solicit your support for the transportation needs of our vulnerable county residents; particularly those who are elderly, living with disabilities or who are low income.

Why Transportation? Safe, reliable, affordable and convenient transportation is necessary for every Jeffco resident's quality of life. Transportation enables people to maintain their connections with friends and family, access necessary services such as health care, and remain productively employed. Dependable, accessible transportation is necessary for a vital economy and integral to an engaged community. However, the resources required to ensure this access are diminishing and fragmented while the needs are growing. Sustainable future funding for the next three decades (at minimum) will be required to address these projected needs!

What Does the LCC Do? The mission of your Jeffco LCC is to help coordinate transportation resources in order to make the most effective and efficient use of what is available. Local providers such as the Seniors' Resource Center, Lakewood Rides, DDRC, and others cannot meet current demand let alone future projections. Current community transportation needs are going unmet and federal funding to address those needs is at best flat or in some cases diminishing. Strong local support is important and essential to meet the growing range of mobility needs for Jeffco's residents.

The function of your LCC is to respond to existing community transportation needs and anticipate future demands in order to best serve Jeffco residents. Currently, there is comprehensive information on the senior population. Here is what we know today:

- Jefferson County is projected to have the largest population of seniors in the state.
 - Numbers presented in the Denver Regional Council Of Government's (DRCOG) four year plan tell us in 2010 there were 149,926 Jeffco residents over 55 years old.
 - By 2015 this will jump to 181,291. A 17.3 percent increase in just five years!
 - By the year 2030, the number of seniors, 60 or over, in Jefferson County is projected to double.
- Persons over the age of 85 will be the fastest growing older population and have been shown to have the greatest mobility needs.
- Today's seniors may need to continue working well past retirement age.
- Low income households (many seniors in Jeffco) can spend as much on transportation per month as they do on housing: as much as one third of their income!

Strategic Plan. The growing senior population prompted Jeffco to develop the *Strategic Plan for Aging Well* in 2010. The Transportation & Mobility element addresses the challenges faced by seniors, persons with disabilities, and those with low incomes. While the plan is focused primarily on seniors, it is widely known that what is good for seniors is good for everyone else. The plan includes five transportation strategies which guide the work of the LCC:

- Construct physical improvements that will allow seniors and others to continue to drive, walk, and use assisted devices in a safe manner throughout the county.
- Expand specialized transportation services to address the county's projected increase in mobility needs.

- Ensure convenient access to the RTD system by persons with disabilities and older county residents.
- Coordinate human services transportation resources for effectiveness and efficiency.
- Advocate strongly for the resources essential to meet Jeffco's transportation needs.

Coordination Efforts. In addition to the functional strategic plan, your JEFFCO LCC is engaged in the following activities to help meet the county's projected mobility needs:

- Expanding the transportation needs assessment to include persons with disabilities and low income residents;
- Establishing working agreements with partner agencies (such as SRC and Lakewood Rides) to secure and increase transportation resources throughout the county;
- Identifying barriers to and best practices for human services transportation;
- Educating decision makers and the community at large on the importance of universal and smart designs that support independent living and aging in place;
- Advocating for policies that support multiple transportation modes and livability principles.

Partner Agencies. There are a variety of transportation agencies and services meeting a range of needs in the community. Partnerships are key in coordinating services and leveraging available resources. To date, your Jeffco LCC has enlisted the participation of the following agencies:



How You Can Help? In order to meet the projected mobility needs and allow residents to live an engaged, independent life in Jefferson County, we need your support. To help your Jeffco LCC meet its goals, please consider:

- Joining the LCC if you are a transportation service agency or your clients use public systems;
- Advocating for increased transportation funding;
- Supporting safe, affordable options for those who don't drive themselves.

Think about what you would do if you weren't able to drive