

THE RIDE ALLIANCE

Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing
Transportation (SMART) Program: FY 2023

October 10, 2023



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1 Project Overview & Description

Project Description

The [Denver Regional Council of Governments \(DRCOG\)](#) requests \$975,485.70 from the SMART grant program to further develop the RideAlliance Human Services Trip Exchange (RideAlliance or the Project) by upgrading, enhancing, integrating and piloting the Trip Exchange Hub (the Hub). Once completed, the RideAlliance project will coordinate and integrate demand response transportation (DRT) resources among passengers, multiple service providers and sponsors in the Denver metro area with the goal of reducing trip denials, streamlining client intake, coordinating service, optimizing funding, eliminating duplicative reporting requirements, and improving mobility for the region's most vulnerable residents. The Hub uses data exchange technology to share trip requests, rider demographic, and provider profile data among providers, those seeking transportation, program funders and data-collecting agencies.

Transportation Challenges

DRT provides curb-to-curb or door-to-door pickups and drop-offs upon customers' request. Clients typically schedule trips in advance. DRT serves primarily older adults and individuals with disabilities. Vehicles are often wheelchair equipped and drivers are trained to accommodate passengers with physical or cognitive challenges. DRT also serves low-income populations living in areas with limited or no fixed route services.

According to [DRCOG planning documents](#), the demand for DRT services in the Denver metro region is increasing rapidly. According to the American Community Survey, the number of adults aged 75 and older (those most likely to need Transportation services) is projected to increase by over 200% from 2018 to 2050 to over 500,000 individuals. Similarly, some 290,000 residents in the Denver metro region live with a disability, which could increase to over 490,000 people by 2050.

DRT providers are unable to keep pace with trip demand. Trip denials are increasing, meaning transportation-challenged individuals are unable to access the critical services necessary for health, independence, and quality of life. Providers deny trips for many reasons, including jurisdictional restrictions, prioritization of medical trips over other quality of life trips, and funding source restrictions.

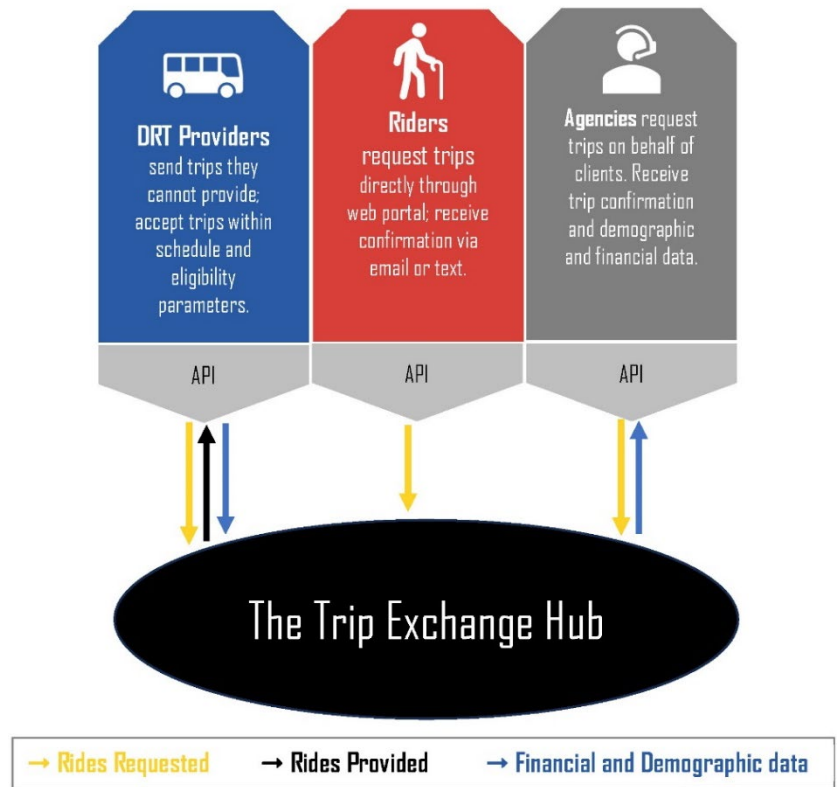
The current system is inefficient and results in a lack of access to essential services. Individuals seeking trips may contact multiple providers before securing transportation, with each interaction requiring the exchange of demographic and trip information to determine eligibility. Finally, providers must submit data on trips provided to multiple

platforms, including specific funders and the Colorado State Unit on Aging (SUA), resulting in duplicative reporting, wasted staff time, and inconsistent data.

Proposed Solution

RideAlliance seeks to address these significant barriers to mobility for vulnerable and underserved populations by furthering the proof-of-concept Hub technology to improve coordination and efficiency throughout the DRCOG region. It builds on DRCOG-led work originally funded through an FTA Veterans Transportation & Community Living Initiative grant to pioneer the framework of a multi-provider trip exchange hub. SMART grant Stage 1 funds will cover software development and facilitation to help build out this framework and proof-

Figure 1. Hub Design



of-concept (**Figure 1**). Desired outcomes include securing MOUs from participating agencies, implementing platform upgrades and improvements, facilitating integration with other systems using **Application Programming Interface (API)** technology, implementing a pilot program, and measuring, collecting, validating and analyzing data.

Desired outcomes for **Stage 2** include developing APIs for additional DRT providers, requestors and sponsors; expand access to the web-based user interface; and deploy the Hub region-wide. More providers and more participants involved in the program will increase the transportation system’s effectiveness and efficiency.

Program Goals

RideAlliance will improve on the current status quo of uncoordinated transportation resources and system inefficiency. The project meets the SMART program priorities of improved safety and reliability by reducing the number of trip denials; improved resiliency by providing for transportation system and service redundancy; improved equity by improving mobility for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations; and finally improved integration by encouraging regional partnerships and facilitating service coordination throughout the Denver metro region.

2 Project Location

RideAlliance will improve transportation services for the entire Denver metro region, a diverse region of 3.4 million with 52 distinct municipalities, counties and jurisdictions (Figure 2). According to the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#) 102 census tracts are identified as disadvantaged ([view linked map](#)). DRCOG conducts an [Environmental justice and equity analysis](#) as part of its Regional Transportation Process, which identified more than half the region as having a concentrated vulnerable population. This project will benefit all areas within the DRCOG metropolitan planning boundary.

3 Community Impact

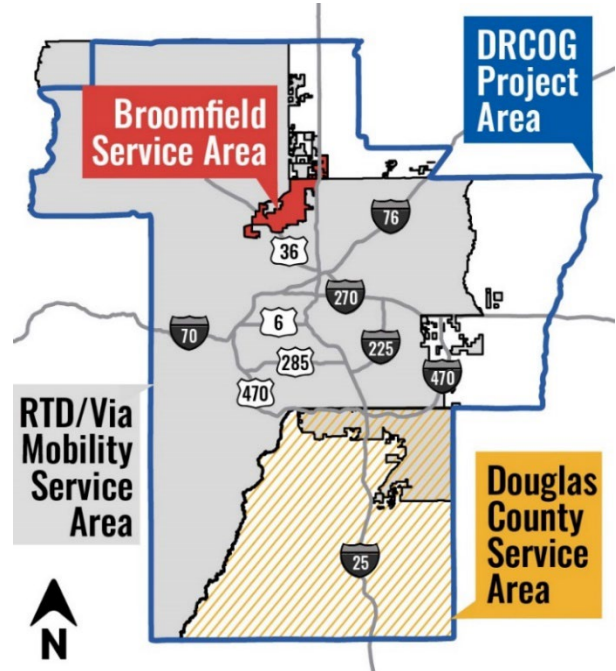
The Hub will accrue significant value to Historically Disadvantaged Communities by providing essential transportation trips that would otherwise have gone unserved. Residents of Historically Disadvantaged Communities have limited transportation options, have to travel farther to obtain medical care and access other essential services, and may be older adults and/or living with a disability. [DRCOG-sponsored research](#) indicates that trip coordination such as that envisioned by RideAlliance can reduce trip denials and increase access to critical and quality of life sustaining services. As the project seeks only to reallocate and maximize existing transportation service resources, no negative externalities are anticipated.

4 Technical Merit Overview

Criterion #1. Identification and Understanding of the Problem to Be Solved

There is a mismatch in the need for and the availability of DRT services in the Denver metro area. Funding for trips often determines availability. Although we know from DRT agencies, human service agencies and riders themselves that critical, quality-of-life trips are being denied due to lack of capacity, there is no central data repository that measures the scope and nature of the problem. The Project will collect data on the trips needed and provided, rider demographics and funding sources to 1) align needed trips with excess capacity and 2) better allocate resources to the areas and people who need

Figure 2. Project Location



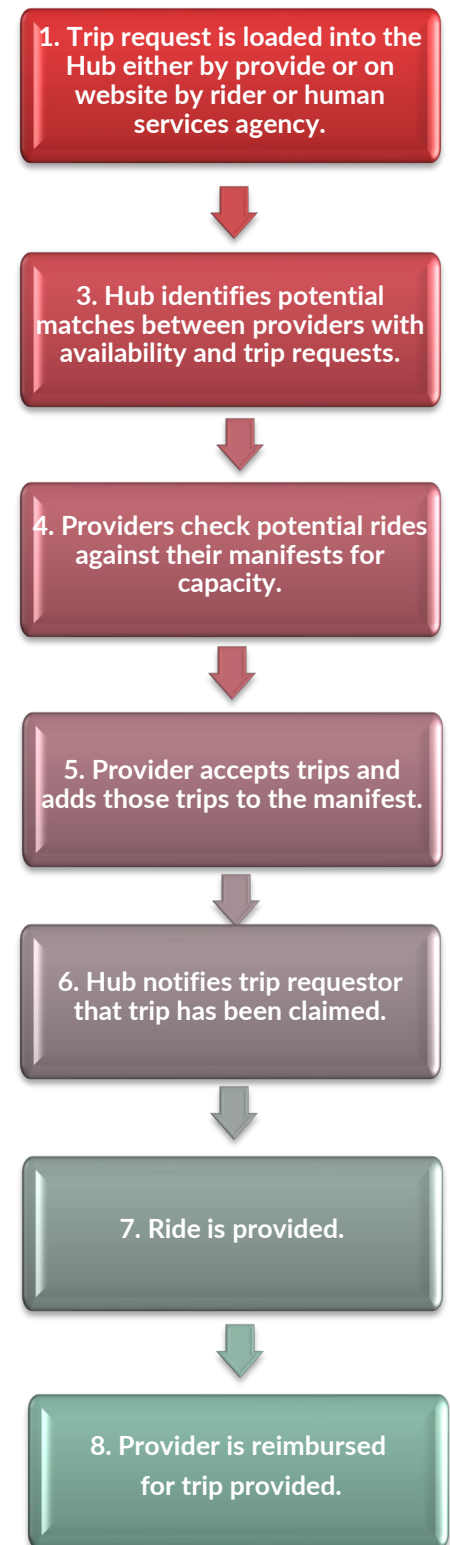
them the most. Current data collection is duplicative, uncoordinated, and lacks agreed upon data definitions and reporting standards.

Criterion #2. Appropriateness of Proposed Solution

The Project builds on the previously-developed proof of concept and improves Hub functionality. **Figure 3** illustrates the envisioned workflow of a trip request through the Hub. Stage 1 outcomes are:

- 1) Secure a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** between DRT providers, requestors and program sponsors that includes commitments to develop agency-specific Application Programming Interface (API), adopt agreed-upon data definitions and collection standards, integrate funding sources and share trip capacity.
- 2) Implement **software platform upgrades**:
 - ♦ Industry-accepted Transactional Data Specifications (TDS).
 - ♦ Enhanced reporting capabilities to ensure data is only entered once.
 - ♦ Re-designed user interface for both the user experience and workflow elements.
 - ♦ Direct trip booking capability for clients, human service agencies, medical providers, or family members to request rides.
- 3) **Integration with other systems** using APIs to facilitate the exchange of trips between scheduling platforms and the central data collection repository using a standardized set of messages with defined data elements. The Hub will also be evaluated for integration with the Colorado State Unit on Aging, the FTA TRAMS, and other organizations.
- 4) Initiate and implement **pilot program** with at least one DRT provider.
- 5) **Measure, validate and collect** data to measure efficiency and effectiveness, including: trip profile (origin and destination, length, driver training required, vehicle type); rider demographics (location, age, gender, race, disability, and mobility needs) and the cost of providing the trip.

Figure 3. Envisioned trip request workflow through the Hub



These improvements will help solve the complex and complicated challenge of allocating DRT services across multiple platforms, with multiple providers and for a variety of populations and transportation needs for populations that are far-flung, low-income, are aging or live with a disability. By implementing these improvements, the Hub will be scalable to metro-wide deployment in Stage 2, and be transferrable to other regions.

Criterion #3: Expected Benefits

Stage 1 funding will be used to deploy the Hub technology with one DRT provider and the DRCOG client-tracking software system to test the system's ability to match rides, correctly assign trip availability, and record data. The pilot program will also test the web-based user interface, financial component and direct trip booking functionality. RideAlliance meets the USDOT Strategic Goals and Innovation Principles and the SMART program goals with the following benefits:

- 1) Protects the **privacy** and **safety** of individuals using transportation services by exchanging the minimum necessary information to determine eligibility and meet reporting requirements.
- 2) Fosters **economic strength** by maximizing available funds through trip coordination, expanding services.
- 3) Improves **reliability** and **increases** equity by reducing trip denials, adding capacity for difficult to serve trips and individuals historically underserved.
- 4) Promotes a **healthy climate and sustainability** by coordinating trips and maximizing route efficiency. More passengers per vehicles will decrease vehicle miles traveled and the associated pollution.
- 5) Brings transportation services into the future by incorporating **innovative** technologies and improving the user interface.
- 6) Fosters **resiliency** through transportation system redundancy by matching agencies with capacity with requested DRT trips.
- 7) Fosters **partnerships** and **integration** by building coordination between transit providers, human service agencies, and riders.
- 8) The Project is appropriate for the size and density of the Denver metropolitan region and will be a replicable model for metropolitan regions.

Data Collection, Validation and Analysis

A core tenet of the Hub technology is the ability to to **measure, validate and collect** data so that DRCOG and its partners will then analyze these metrics to ascertain system efficiency, identify chronic gaps in service, and ultimately provide more quality of life enhancing trips for Denver metro residents.

5 Project Readiness Overview

Building on previously completed proof-of-concept project development, the Hub platform is poised for additional enhancements with key project stakeholders, transit providers, and human service agencies eager to partner on the next phase.

Criterion #1. Feasibility of Workplan

Stage 1 will conduct a pilot project to implement the Hub improvements with one DRT provider and, potentially, one trip type. Standard data reporting mechanisms will generate reports to monitor efficiency, community impact, cost savings, and the reduction in trip denials. Stage 1 will include refining the existing training tools and processes for staff and the public to monitor or access the Hub platform. As this is primarily a technology project, no legal, policy, or regulatory requirements requiring exemptions, waivers, permits or other special permissions are anticipated. **Figure 4** demonstrates the proposed project timeline to develop, implement and pilot the project.

Figure 4. Stage 1 Proposed Project Timeline

		2024												2025					
Month/Task*		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
1.	Secure MOUs with RideAlliance partners	■	■	■															
2.	Enhance Hub functionality		■	■	■														
3.	Integration with DRT providers and human service agencies				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
4.	Initiate and implementation pilot program														■	■	■	■	
5.	Data collection and analysis																■	■	■

*Assuming December 2023 contract signing

Criterion #2. Community Engagement and Partnerships

Since the initiation of this project, DRCOG has leveraged its unique position as a regional collaborator to work directly with each organization involved in the RideAlliance initiative. The result has demonstrated an approach that collaborates with private sector providers while simultaneously connecting with community members through coordinating organizations. To exemplify this ongoing engagement and partnership effort, DRCOG has worked closely with the following partners, who have committed to continuing their work through this SMART grant, as evidenced by the **Letters of Commitment** in Appendix III.

Transportation Providers

[RTD-Denver](#) serves the Denver metro area with 170 bus routes, 12 rail lines, and DRT services.

[Via Mobility Services](#) is a non-profit organization in Boulder, CO that provides accessible transportation in the City of Boulder, Boulder County and under contract with RTD-Denver to the greater Denver metropolitan area.

[Broomfield Easy Ride Transportation](#) provides transportation to Broomfield residents aged 60+ and individuals with disabilities.

Ride Requesting/Coordinating Organizations

[Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council \(DRMAC\)](#) ensures people with mobility challenges have access to transportation.

[Douglas County](#) is a large southern county that lies largely outside the RTD-Denver boundary that seeks to coordinate with DRT providers for aging and disabled residents.

Technology Partners

Transit Plus, a transportation consulting firm, was engaged in developing and implementing the initial Hub platform through previous federal grant programs.

[DemandTrans Solutions](#) is a software development company that specializes in Demand-Responsive Technology and developed the initial Hub platform.

Criterion #3. Leadership and Qualifications

DRCOG is the ideal organization to champion RideAlliance because of its unique role as a federally recognized regional entity responsible for transportation planning and aging services. DRCOG has led the stakeholders in the region through the FTA VTCLI grant that created RideAlliance and laid the groundwork for this project.

The Project team has a long history of working together successfully, solving complex problems, and establishing the appropriate relationships with critical agencies and stakeholders. **Cole Neder**, DRCOG Senior Transit Planner, program manager for the SMART Stage I project, brings more than 5 years experience in project management and regional transportation coordination. **Travis Noon**, DRCOG Program Manager, served as Project Manager on previous project phases and will provide institutional knowledge. **Alvan-Bidal Sanchez**, DRCOG Program Manager, will provide management oversight.

In addition to the DRCOG staff, previous work on the RideAlliance project was completed by TransitPlus and DemandTrans who have agreed to participate in the competitive bid process in keeping with DRCOG policies and procedures. If selected, TransitPlus would facilitate the MOU development process and coordinate amongst and between the DRT providers and human service organizations. DemandTrans would provide software development and technical advice to the RideAlliance project.

THE RIDE ALLIANCE

Appendix I: Resumes



Appendix I: Team Member Resumes



COLE NEDER | SENIOR TRANSIT PLANNER, DRCOG

PROJECT ROLE: PROJECT MANAGER

Leads DRCOG transit activities, including development and maintenance of the Coordinated Transit Plan. Assists in the administration of DRCOG’s Human Services Transportation Set-Aside, including DRCOG’s Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, and is participating in the implementation of a Regional BRT Partnership. Prior experience includes providing technical assistance for Northeastern Illinois communities for capital planning, transportation planning, economic development incentives use, grant writing, permitting process improvements, and community engagement. **Relevant Expertise:** Transit planning, project management, plan implementation, local government technical assistance

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 5

EDUCATION:

BA, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES, AUGUSTANA COLLEGE

MPA AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING, DEPAUL UNIVERSITY



TRAVIS NOON | PROGRAM MANAGER, DRCOG

PROJECT ROLE: SENIOR TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Travis has worked for DRCOG for the last 4 years and is currently overseeing grant compliance for DRCOG’s Area Agency on Aging. This includes the administration of DRCOG’s Older Americans Act grant, the Federal Transit Administration section 5310 program for the Denver-Aurora Urbanized area, and DRCOG’s Human Services Transportation set aside from its Transportation Improvement Program. Mr. Noon has also received specialized training from Management Concepts in grant management for pass-through entities. **Relevant Expertise:** Overseeing compliance with various programs within state and local governments

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 7

EDUCATION:

BA IN PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER

MBA, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, GLOBAL CAMPUS



ALVAN-BIDAL SANCHEZ, AICP | PROGRAM MANAGER, DRCOG

PROJECT ROLE: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Currently serves as program manager and leads the Regional Transportation Planning team in developing and maintaining the Regional Transportation Plan and additional multimodal plans and tasks related to Vision Zero, human services transportation, and freight. Led and managed cross-divisional projects, including developing DRCOG's first equity index. **Relevant Expertise:** Project management, metropolitan transportation planning, local government coordination, community and stakeholder engagement

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 6.5

EDUCATION:

BS IN DESIGN, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

MSCRP AND MPAFF, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN



MALORIE MILLER | PROGRAM MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, DRCOG

PROJECT ROLE: TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Experienced in advocating for and coordinating services to older adults and adults with disabilities. Worked to increase opportunities and improve outcomes for older adults in affordable housing, senior living facilities, hospitals and community-based settings. Understands issues impacting older adults. Previously served as a community resource specialist at DRCOG Area Agency on Aging. "Understands issues impacting older adults. Previously served as community resource specialist at DRCOG Area Agency on Aging. Completed EasterSeals Certified Travel Training Instructor course and Colorado Association of Transit Agencies LEAD Academy. Selected as an Emerging Leader in Transit. **Relevant Expertise:** Familiarity with vulnerable populations and transportation challenges, and DRCOG client-based AAA programs.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 6

EDUCATION:

BA IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH & PSYCHOLOGY - UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA-TWIN CITIES

In addition to the DRCOG Staff, and following the competitive bid process in keeping with DRCOG policies and procedures, the following team members would provide technical assistance and development work for the Project

<p>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 40+</p> <p>EDUCATION:</p> <p>BA IN SOCIAL ECOLOGY - UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE CAMPUS. EMPHASIS IN PLANNING AND PUBLIC POLICY</p>	<p>SUZANNE O'NEILL, PRINCIPAL, TRANSITPLUS, INC</p> <p>PROJECT ROLE: PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT</p> <p>Ten years' experience in mobility management and transit technology. Managed small, fixed-route transit systems. Provided consulting support. Skilled in project management, strategic planning, and stakeholder engagement. Served on panels for <i>TCRP Project G-1</i> which developed transactional data standards to enable data to be seamlessly shared. and for <i>TCRP Report: Web Document 62</i> which developed data Standards for Mobility Management. Led project in collaboration with Roger Teal. Relevant Expertise: Technology consulting, transit planning, project management.</p>
<p>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 20</p> <p>EDUCATION:</p> <p>BA IN PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER</p>	<p>ERICA HAMILTON TRANSIT PLANNER, TRANSITPLUS</p> <p>PROJECT ROLE: SENIOR PLANNER</p> <p>Provides consultation in technology and coordination projects. Served as Manager of the City and County of Broomfield Senior Services. Oversaw 20 staff members, 150 volunteers and four main program areas: transportation services with 22,500 trips annually, nutrition services, community resources. Served as Supervisor for the City of Thornton Senior Center. Designed and coordinated senior programs, significantly increasing program participation. Relevant Expertise: Technology coordination, specialized transportation services.</p>
<p>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: 25</p> <p>EDUCATION:</p> <p>BS, CIVIL ENGINEERING, MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY</p> <p>UC BERKELEY, MS, CIVIL ENGINEERING</p> <p>PHD, POLITICAL SCIENCE, TUFTS UNIVERSITY</p>	<p>ROGER TEAL FOUNDER, DEMANDTRANS SOLUTIONS</p> <p>PROJECT ROLE: TECHNICAL ADVISOR</p> <p>World-renowned expert in Demand Responsive Technology for public transit systems and founder DemandTrans Solutions. Information technology professional with extensive entrepreneurial, research and consulting experience. Former tenured university professor with over 35 years of project management experience, Dr. Teal has developed numerous industry leading scheduling, optimization and automated dispatching solutions for public transit. Relevant Expertise: Software development, integration platforms, public agency scheduling software systems.</p>

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Appendix II – Summary Budget Narrative



Appendix II: Summary Budget Narrative

Total Project Budget

The total project cost for the Stage 1 work is anticipated to be \$975,485.70 (Table 1)

Table 1. RideAlliance Project Budget

Task	1	2	3	4	5	SMART Request
	Securing MOUs	Enhance Trip Exchange functionality	Integration with other applications	Initiate and implement pilot program	Project management	
1 Personnel	\$ 15,582	\$ 89,224	\$ 37,458	\$ 37,458	\$ 29,408	\$ 209,130
2 Fringe Benefits	\$ 6,232.8	\$ 35,689	\$ 14,983	\$ 14,983	\$ 11,763.2	\$ 83,652
3 Travel					\$ 9,280	\$ 9,280
4 Equipment	<i>Not applicable</i>					
5 Supplies	<i>Not applicable</i>					
6 Contractual	\$ 40,500	\$ 146,900	\$ 241,400	\$ 78,000	\$ 39,150	\$ 545,950
7 Construction	<i>Not applicable</i>					
8 Administration						\$ 25,000
9 Indirect Costs	\$ 7,635.18	\$ 43,719.76	\$ 18,354.42	\$ 18,354.42	\$ 14,409.92	\$ 102,473.7
					Total	\$ 975,485.7

Personnel

DRCOG proposes hiring a full-time staff member dedicated to the development of the implementation plan. Other DRCOG staff will participate as subject matter experts. DRCOG has successfully used this model for other federal grants, including an ongoing National Highway Traffic Safety Administration “405c” grant.

Additional staff resources are proposed to provide technical advise, oversee the program, and provide project administration. This also includes provided the requisite data and progress reports in keeping with the grant program requirements (Table 2 on page 2)

Table 2. DRCOG Staffing Model and Budget

Task/Staff	Hourly Rate	1. Secure MOUs	2. Build Functionality	3. Integration	4. Pilot program	5. Project management	Total Hours
SMART Program Manager (new position)	\$ 41	240	1140	600	600	540	3120
Project Manager Neder	\$ 41	40	240	100	100	44	524
Snr Technical Advisor Noon	\$ 67	40	210	50	50	44	394
Technical Advisor Miller	\$ 35	0	218	32	32	16	298
Senior Technical Advisor MacKinnon	\$ 67	2	48	4	4	4	62
Project Administrator Riger	\$ 61	8	48	20	20	8	104
Program Administrator Sanchez	\$ 50	16	96	56	56	24	248
Total		\$ 15,582	\$ 89,224	\$ 37,458	\$ 37,458	\$ 29,408	\$209,130

Fringe Benefits

DRCOG's fringe benefits include employee selection in health insurance and dental insurance, retirement, life insurance, short term and long-term disability, workers compensation, and paid time off. As benefit selections are unique to each employee and change overtime, DRCOG uses an average of 40% of salary per employee for budgeting.

Travel

Budget total of \$9,280 for 2 trips to Washington DC for 4 people as requested by the program. This includes airfare (\$600 each for 8 tickets), lodging (\$200 per night for 16 nights) and per diem (\$80 per day for 16 days). No additional travel costs are anticipated.

Equipment

No equipment costs anticipated for Stage 1 of the RideAlliance project.

Supplies

No supply costs anticipated for Stage 1 of the RideAlliance project.

Contractual

DRCOG proposes to contract with technical consultants for the development of the Hub platform and integration (Table 3).

Table 3. Contractual Budget

Hourly Rate		1. Secure MOUs	2. Build Functionality	3. Integration	4. Pilot program	5. Project management*	Total Hours
<i>TransitPlus</i>							
Senior Planner	\$215	20	190	130	100	60	500
Planner II	\$190	20	195	130	100	50	495
Total		\$ 8,100	\$77,900	\$52,650	\$ 40,500	\$ 22,400	\$ 201,550
<i>DemandTrans</i>							
Principal Planner	\$250	0	390	255	80	0	725
Planner	\$150	0	0	0	50	110	160
Total			\$ 97,500	\$ 63,750	\$27,500	\$ 16,500	\$ 205,250
<i>Third Party Contractor</i>							
Total			\$ 12,000	\$ 150,000	\$0	\$0	\$ 162,000
Total Cost		\$ 8,100	\$ 87,400	\$ 266,400	\$ 68,000	\$ 38,900	\$ 568,800

Construction

No Construction costs anticipated for Stage 1 of the RideAlliance project.

Other

Description of any costs listed as "other." Could include training or other expenses that the applicant wishes to include separately.

Indirect Charges

Each year, upon completion of DRCOG's single audit, independent auditors CliftonLarsonAllen prepare the indirect cost allocation plan and recommend a new indirect rate. This rate, reviewed and approved by the Federal Transit Administration, is charged as a percentage of all direct personnel costs (including fringe benefits) and is applied to all DRCOG programs equally. DRCOG's FY 23/24 rate is in the process of review at the time of this application. An average of 35% is being used for budgeting purposes.

Other sources of funding

No other federal funds will be used for the implementation of Stage 1 of this project.

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Appendix III - Letters of Commitment



Appendix III: Letters of Commitment

DRT Providers

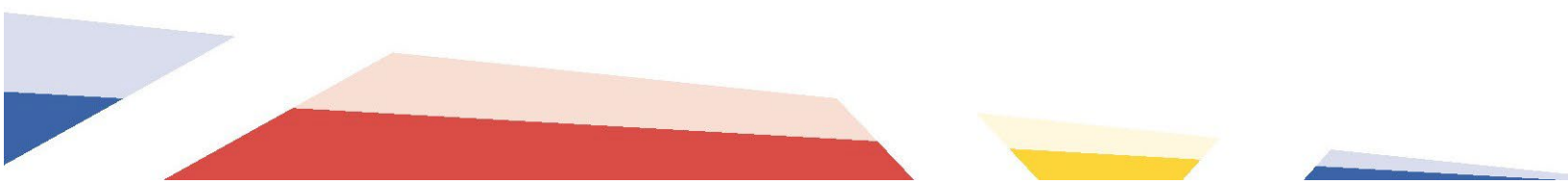
RTD-Denver
Via Mobility Services
Broomfield Easy Ride Transportation

Ride Requesting/Coordinating Organizations

Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC)
Douglas County (provided to DRCOG but not included due to NOFO page limit)

Technology Partners

Transit Plus
DemandTrans Solutions





DRCOG Ride Alliance: Letter of Commitment

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing on behalf of the Regional Transportation District (RTD), which is the primary public transportation provider in the Denver region. To further accessibility outcomes for disadvantaged populations, our organization is providing this Letter of Commitment (LOC) as a formal commitment to supporting both this SMART grant application and, if awarded, the DRCOG Ride Alliance project.

The Ride Alliance project is intended to increase coordination among human service transportation providers to increase efficiency and urgent demand needs across the region. This project, if funded, will build out the Denver Trip Exchange technology platform and will bring technology-enabled transportation service coordination that benefits the most vulnerable populations living in the Denver region.

To support the project and its partners if SMART funding is awarded, RTD commits specifically to assist with staff capacity, knowledge-building, training programs, or any other technical work needed by the project team.

Each organization plays a unique role as a committed partner to the Ride Alliance project. As a partner our commitment is unique, since we are the primary public transportation provider in the Denver region. We commit to knowledge-sharing and creating momentum for the project as it moves forward. In addition, our commitment furthers the goals and desired outcomes of the Ride Alliance project through our direct assistance with implementation activities.

RTD is a committed partner with DRCOG on the Ride Alliance project, and fully committed to continued work with DRCOG and all other key stakeholders on this proposed grant project.

Sincerely,

Welch, Brian
- 20014

Digitally signed by Welch,
Brian - 20014
Date: 2023.10.10
10:43:28 -06'00'

Brian Welch
Acting Assistant General Manager, Planning
Regional Transportation District



DENVER REGIONAL
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



Frank Bruno
CEO, Via Mobility Services
2855 63rd St
Boulder, CO, 80301

DRCOG Ride Alliance: Letter of Commitment

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing on behalf of Via Mobility Services, a nonprofit transportation provider that serves older adults and individuals with disabilities who have difficulty accessing public transportation in the Denver Metro Region. To further accessibility outcomes for disadvantaged populations, our organization is providing this Letter of Commitment (LOC) as a formal commitment to supporting both this SMART grant application and, if awarded, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Ride Alliance project.

The Ride Alliance project is intended to increase coordination among human service transportation providers to increase efficiency and urgent demand needs across the region. This project, if funded, will build out the Denver Trip Exchange technology platform and will bring technology-enabled transportation service coordination that benefits the most vulnerable populations living in the Denver region.

To support the project and its partners if SMART funding is awarded, Via Mobility Services commits specifically to the following:

- Coordinating with software providers and transportation partners to establish an efficient and effective trip exchange platform
- Piloting programs, validating data, and sharing results
- Implementing the project and collaborating with partners to improve services through innovation
- Policy Assistance and making recommendations on financial and reporting components, implementation standards, and training requirements



Each organization plays a unique role as a committed partner to the Ride Alliance project. Our commitment as a partner is unique, specific, and measurable in the following ways:

- We have been involved in the project since developing the proof of concept in 2015 while leading discussion and collaboration
- As a local nonprofit organization, we value community feedback and commit to engaging in public participation through survey and discussion
- We commit to full public transparency and maintaining an open and equitable dialogue throughout the project

In addition, our commitment furthers the goals and desired outcomes of the Ride Alliance project through our direct assistance with implementation activities. We have provided community-based transportation services for disadvantaged and vulnerable populations for 45 years. We have never seen the need and demand for accessible and affordable transportation as high as it is today. We firmly believe this project will alleviate transportation barriers in the following ways:

- Reducing the overall cost of service, which is at an all-time high, by allowing providers to bid on, negotiate, and exchange trips
- Providing more options for community members without the stress and anxiety of calling multiple providers—each provider can send a trip to the Trip Exchange
- Filling gaps in the transportation system, benefiting the most historically disadvantaged populations
- Supporting a network of innovative transportation providers by fostering government, nonprofit, and private partnerships for the benefit of our local communities

Via Mobility Services is a committed partner with DRCOG on the Ride Alliance project, and fully committed to continued work with DRCOG and all other key stakeholders on this proposed grant project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank W. Bruno".

Frank Bruno
CEO, Via Mobility Services
10/5/2023





October 10, 2023

Donald Davis
Deputy City and County Manager
City and County of Broomfield
1 Des Combs Drive
Broomfield, CO 80020

DRCOG Ride Alliance: Letter of Commitment

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing on behalf of the City and County of Broomfield Easyride Transportation program, which primarily transports Broomfield residents a minimum of sixty years of age (60+) helping them to independently meet their nutritional, medical, social, and personal needs. Easy Ride is important for those seniors who are low income or have disabilities. To further accessibility outcomes for disadvantaged populations, our organization is providing this Letter of Commitment (LOC) as a formal commitment to supporting both this SMART grant application and, if awarded, the DRCOG Ride Alliance project.

The Ride Alliance project is intended to increase coordination among human service transportation providers to increase efficiency and urgent demand needs across the region. This project, if funded, will build out the Denver Trip Exchange technology platform and will bring technology-enabled transportation service coordination that benefits the most vulnerable populations living in the Denver region.

To support the project and its partners if SMART funding is awarded, Easyride Transportation commits specifically to the following:

- City and County of Broomfield Easyride will commit to having the Program Supervisor attend meetings and provide input on feasibility of program implementation.
- Easyride Program Supervisor will train staff on attaining the knowledge to work with Ride Alliance and interacting with the program(s) required to provide transportation.
- The City and County of Broomfield Easyride Program Supervisor will assist with policy-writing, collaborative research, policy recommendations, and implementation of processes and procedures, as needed to ensure the success of the Ride Alliance project.

Each organization plays a unique role as a committed partner to the Ride Alliance project. As a partner our commitment is unique, specific, and measurable in the following ways:

- City and County of Broomfield Easyride Transportation has been involved with the Ride Alliance since its inception when it was part of the VTCLI grant in 2017. We have been

involved in discussions to standardize addresses, establish the difference between cost of a trip versus fee for a trip.


- Accessible Transportation is vital in allowing older adults to age successfully by remaining healthy and independent. Broomfield has long embraced its older adult population. Currently, adults over 60 make up seventeen percent (17%) of Broomfield's total population. Broomfield's Successful Aging Study lists transportation as a vital service for maintaining independence and quality of life. This aligns with the Ride Alliance purpose.

In addition, our commitment furthers the goals and desired outcomes of the Ride Alliance project through our direct assistance with implementation activities. Our commitment includes the following actions:

- We will participate in providing rides as allowable based on our annual approved budget including working with other agencies to establish safe transfer areas to allow access to areas outside current provider boundaries.
- We will promote the Ride Alliance project through our outreach programs that are conducted throughout the Broomfield area by:
 - Placing flyers on our vehicles
 - Including the Ride Alliance information in our flyers.

The City and County of Broomfield, Easyride Program is a committed partner with DRCOG on the Ride Alliance project, and fully committed to continued work with DRCOG and all other key stakeholders on this proposed grant project.

Sincerely,



Donald Davis

Cc:

Clay Shuck, Director of Operations



Coleen Samuels
Executive Director, Denver Regional Mobility & Access Council (DRMAC)
PO Box 7172
Denver, Colorado 80207

DRCOG Ride Alliance: Letter of Commitment

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing on behalf of the Denver Regional Mobility & Access Council (DRMAC) which helps to ensure people with mobility challenges and marginalized populations, particularly older adults and people with disabilities have access to the community by increasing, enhancing, sharing, and coordinating regional transportation services and resources.

To further accessibility outcomes for disadvantaged populations, our organization is providing this Letter of Commitment (LOC) as a formal commitment to supporting both this SMART grant application and, if awarded, the DRCOG Ride Alliance project.

The Ride Alliance project is intended to increase coordination among human service transportation provides to increase efficiency and urgent demand needs across the region. This project, if funded, will build out the Denver Trip Exchange technology platform and will bring technology-enabled transportation service coordination that benefits the most vulnerable populations living in the Denver region.

To support the project and its partners if SMART funding is awarded, DRMAC commits specifically to the following:

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: DRMAC will assist with technical assistance by testing and implementing the Denver Trip Exchange technology platform that will better enhance our Information & Assistance Call Center with the combined goal of being able to help more people effectively and efficiently.

POLICY ASSISTANCE: DRMAC operates as a convener of transportation and aging focused groups among the broader Denver Metro area. As the Regional Coordinating Council, we oversee and organize seven county local coordinating councils, which operate as an alliance among community partners who identify and fulfill transportation needs of the population with a focus on older adults, people with disabilities and low-income citizens. We are committed to working collaboration with DRCOG to:

- Continuing to advocate for older adults with mobility barriers to provide more transportation options.
- Continuing to participate in conversations regarding funding opportunities for various mobility options.





Each organization plays a unique role as a committed partner to the Ride Alliance project. As a partner our commitment is unique, specific, and measurable in the following ways:

- **Inform and Empower**-DRMAC provides the older adult community with the best options for their transportation needs. This is done through information channels by providing the Information & Assistance Call Center referral line, Getting There Travel Training, Getting There Travel Guide, and Getting There paratransit app and outreach.
- **Coordinate and Collaborate**-Improve access to transportation through coordination with community members, stakeholders, and mobility providers. Collaborate with stakeholders and mobility providers to improve equity and remove transportation barriers.
- **Inform and Advocate**-Education efforts help key influencers understand the gap in transportation needs.

In addition, our commitment furthers the goals and desired outcomes of the Ride Alliance project through our direct assistance with implementation activities. Our commitment includes the following actions:

- Outreach, collaboration and education to increase community comfort levels in using alternative modes of transportation.
- Increasing the quality of life for older adult communities by catalyzing connections, access to opportunities and decreasing isolation. Especially when driving privileges have been suspended.
- We will continue to measure the number of successful transportation referrals by monitoring the process from the initial call to end of trip.

DRMAC is a committed partner with DRCOG on the Ride Alliance project, and fully committed to continued work with DRCOG and all other key stakeholders on this proposed grant project.

Sincerely,

Coleen Samuels

Coleen Samuels, Executive Director

09/09/23





Suzanne O'Neill
President, TransitPlus, Inc.
2800 East Ridge Road
Elizabeth, CO 80107

DRCOG Ride Alliance: Letter of Commitment

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing on behalf of TransitPlus, Inc., (TransitPlus) which is a consulting firm with extensive experience in transit technology and a firm handle on both transit operations and human service programs. To further accessibility outcomes for disadvantaged populations, our organization is providing this Letter of Commitment as a formal commitment to supporting both this SMART grant application and, if awarded, the DRCOG Ride Alliance project.

The Ride Alliance project is intended to increase coordination among human service transportation providers to increase efficiency and urgent demand needs across the region. This project, if funded, will build out the Denver Trip Exchange technology platform and will bring technology-enabled transportation service coordination that benefits the most vulnerable populations living in the Denver region.

To support the project and its partners if SMART funding is awarded, TransitPlus, Inc. commits specifically to the following:

- TransitPlus will lead stakeholder groups, bridging between the technical, human service programs, and providers involved in this project.
 - We will work to make sure the voices and needs of all parties are heard and factored into the final product.
 - We will make sure all groups have a clear understanding of the project and how the program will impact their programs as well as the potential to better serve their populations.
- TransitPlus will lead the development of the technical business rules needed to build out the Trip Exchange for the Ride Alliance project.

Each organization plays a unique role as a committed partner to the Ride Alliance project. As a partner our commitment is unique, specific, and measurable in the following ways:





- TransitPlus has extensive development in the Ride Alliance Project, the Trip Exchange data exchange hub, and the development of Transactional Data Specifications (TDS). Our firm, in conjunction with DemandTrans, led the prior Ride Alliance Project. We made sure the Ride Alliance software platform worked as required for all parties.
 - TransitPlus served as project manager for the MSAA project in Northwest Denver, working closely with DemandTrans, in which the Trip Exchange data exchange hub was developed. Our role was to assure that the software met the needs of the participants, to oversee all documentation of the project, and to manage all the participants.
 - Suzanne O'Neill served on the project panel for the TCRP project G-16 that resulted in the first draft of the Transactional Data Standards.
 - TransitPlus, with Erica Hamilton leading the project, is working with three software vendors to adapt their scheduling software (used in over 400 volunteer driver programs) to use TDS. In the process, we are extending the TDS and documenting this development so others may build upon this project.
- TransitPlus works with all regional providers to make sure that they understand how the project works and the implications for their system, that their needs are met, and that they have a voice in the project.
- TransitPlus is involved in the group supporting the development of Transactional Data Specifications for demand response transit. Through this forum we will ensure that the outcomes are shared nationally so that other projects can readily build on the results.

Our commitment furthers the goals and desired outcomes of the Ride Alliance project through our direct assistance with implementation activities. Our commitment includes the following actions:

- TransitPlus will be involved with testing of all aspects of the software, from trip scheduling to reporting, to assure the platform works as intended.
- The public will benefit from our commitment to the success of this project.
 - Providers will be able to better use their resources, particularly in providing long-distance or hard-to serve trips. This can be measured through increased trips per hour or reduced costs per trip.
 - Funders will see their investments provide more trips to vulnerable populations.
 - Riders will be able to more easily schedule trips, especially long-distance trips.

TransitPlus, Inc. is a committed partner with DRCOG on the Ride Alliance project, and fully committed to continued work with DRCOG and all other key stakeholders on this proposed grant project.

Sincerely,

Suzanne O'Neill, President
October 9, 2023





September 25, 2023

Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing on behalf of DemandTrans Solutions, Inc., a Chicago-based transit technology company founded in 1994, that has developed and implemented technology solutions for demand responsive transit/microtransit services for the past 15 years. DemandTrans technology platform for managing demand responsive transit for the public has been used by the Denver Regional Transportation District for the past 13 years to manage its FlexRide services, with 23 service zones the second largest DRT operation in the USA. DemandTrans developed, over the course of two FTA-funded projects in the Denver region (an MSAA grant in 2015-2017 and a VTCLI project in 2019-2020), the technology platform for the Ride Alliance Trip Exchange which is the focus of this proposed SMART grant project.

The purpose of this letter is to communicate to DRCOG a formal commitment from DemandTrans Solutions to work with DRCOG and other professional resources on the SMART grant project if DRCOG is awarded this grant by USDOT. This proposed project, to further develop the Ride Alliance Trip Exchange technology platform and to fully implement it in the region for human service transportation purposes—including appropriate integration with the regional public transportation agency as well—will bring to fruition a decade long undertaking to implement technology-enabled human service transportation coordination in the Denver region. DemandTrans has been involved in these efforts from their inception, working with DRCOG, human service transportation organizations, and Denver Regional Transit District (RTD) to implement both organizationally agreeable approaches and the actual technology platform for this purpose. We are fully committed to working with DRCOG and key stakeholders on a project which represents the final step needed to operationalize platform-based transportation service coordination in the Denver region. Once operational, this project will serve as a national model.

As part of our commitment to this SMART grant project, DemandTrans will provide any professional services that we are selected to perform at a 20% discount from our normal billing rates. We have made such commitments in prior federally funded projects for the Trip Exchange. The purpose of this action is to enable the grant funds to stretch further.

In addition, DemandTrans will continue to work closely with the partner agencies—DRCOG, human service transportation agency providers such as Via Mobility Services in Boulder, and those human service agencies that need transportation for their clients but do not provide such services directly—to provide leadership in crafting the most cost-effective transportation strategies for the agencies and their clientele. This will continue the role that DemandTrans played in the prior projects in the region that developed the current Trip Exchange platform.

As the technology provider for the region's prior development and pilot project implementation of the Trip Exchange, DemandTrans strongly supports this project, which will be of national significance as the first major technology-enabled regional transportation coordination system. The Denver region is uniquely capable of bringing this system into full production operation because of its prior work to advance both the technology and agency collaboration that makes such sharing of transportation resources feasible, organizationally friendly, and cost-effective. USDOT will be gaining the advantage of these foundational elements for a successful outcome by funding this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger F. Teal', written in a cursive style.

Roger F. Teal, Ph.D.
President