

CONNECT TO THE FUTURE WORKING GROUP

MEETING MINUTES– JUNE 29, 2019

**351 Wylie Drive – Training Room
Normal, Illinois 61761**

The initial meeting of the *Connect to the Future* Working Group was held on June 29, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. in the Training Room of Connect Transit located at 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, Illinois 61761.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Judy Buchanan – *Connect Transit Board Trustee*
Julie Hile – *Connect Transit Board Trustee*
Kimberly Klepec
Tim Bassett
Marty Eckert
Linda Foster
Dylan Hile-Broad
Steven P. Kossman
Josh W Barnett
Deb Presley

MEMBERS ABSENT: Katie Killian
Jerry James

SMART GROUP AMERICA
FACILITATOR: Jeri Mintzer (via telephone conference)

The initial meeting of the *Connect to the Future* Working Group was called to order by Chair Judy Buchanan at 9:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

NEW BUSINESS

Welcome – Connect to the Future Review – Working Group Process

Martin Glaze, Connect Transit’s Interim Chief Operating Officer, explained to the Members of the Group the Emergency Evacuation Rules, the nearest exit in the event of an emergency, and identified the location of the restrooms. In the case of an emergency, it was decided that Martin would be the designated leader of an evacuation, and he instructed the group should follow him by exiting through the front door of the building.

Member Julie Hile introduced the Facilitator, Jeri Mintzer, of *Smart Growth America*, who was joining the meeting via telephone.

Each Member of the Group then introduced themselves by sharing his or her interest in transit and one thing he or she does in their free time.

The facilitator, Jeri Mintzer, with *Smart Group America* joining the group via telephone, has been with *Smart Group America* for 8 years. Her interest in transportation comes from wanting and liking the ability to get around easily and accomplishing all her daily needs walking or riding the bus. She lives in Washington, DC and does not have a car. Something she likes to do in her spare time is going on long walks in Rock Creek Park and the National Zoo.

Kimberly Klepec stated that she is visually impaired so she mostly takes Connect Mobility but has taken the regular fixed route buses as well. She has lived in the Bloomington-Normal area since 1985 and that is approximately when she started using public transit. She and her husband like to travel.

Dylan Hile-Broad stated he has lived in the community since mid-1994 and has used the public transit service in its various iterations all of that time and using transit regularly for the past 9 years. He likes to play computer games in his spare time.

Linda Foster stated that she is a 2nd term CTAC Member and has been involved with transit since her college years and has been in the community since 1977. Her interests are her family members, friends and church members who utilize transit. She stated it is imperative and important for them to get from point A to point B in a reasonable amount of time. What she does for enjoyment is – not to have to do anything which doesn't happen very often.

Josh Barnett stated that he serves on the McLean County Board serving B-N's east side – east of Ritchie Road. He stated he is not a frequent transit user but uses Connect probably a handful of times a year but often enough that he understands how the system works. From his involvement in non-profit groups in the community and his service on the Board, he knows how important Connect Transit is to the community for everyone living in the community. He stated that hopefully he can lend his voice to help move Connect forward and make sure that everyone is being served and that Connect continues to prosper for many years to come. Outside of work and other things he does, he has a young toddler that occupies most of his free time.

Steven Kossman stated that his first job when he came home from Viet Nam, he used the *Veteran's Preference Points* and became a bus driver. That put food on the table while he was attending college and he has been interested in public transit and how it works in every community that he has been. He worked in Criminal Justice for 40 years as a practitioner and as a consultant to the American Bar Association and the American Correctional Association – training in how to deal with people who require public transit to get from point A to point B? How do you justify requiring those people to go someplace they cannot go on public transit and make that a condition of their probation? That has been something he has struggled with during his career. He is now retired and just had his ninth

grandchild. His wife is a Master Naturalist and gardener and a retired professor from ISU and he is also a retired professor from ISU. In his free time, he volunteers at the Bromenn Thrift Store on Saturday afternoons and runs the cash register. He also is on the Advisory Board at ARC. Any time he sees a need and it is pointed out to him, he tries to step in and help the victim. He was willing to say right from the beginning that he believes the people who have been Trustees have certainly gotten their money's worth from those folks. He stated that this topic is so hot and he doesn't remember any topic living here for 25 years that has gotten as much ink. He stated he is delighted to be part of trying to help.

Judy Buchanan stated that she has been part of the community longer than most of the members. She and her husband are long-time Bloomington residents, raising their three (3) children here, two (2) of whom are still in the area. She retired several years ago from Health Care Administration at Carle Clinic and was also a lobbyist for several Human Service organizations. She stated that she volunteers a lot in the community and has been through the volunteer effort through many years and has always been aware of Connect Transit and Bloomington's Public Transit System and appreciated that it was here and does a great deal for the community in addition to doing some things for specific members of our community. While she is not a frequent rider, she does appreciate and understand and is fully passionate about seeing that it continues; that it is available and continues to thrive. What she does outside of volunteering, in addition to her family, she loves to read and take care of her garden.

Marty Eckert stated that he is a bus driver with Connect filling in for other drivers who are on vacation. He likes the attitude of being on vacation even while he is at work – but he is not always certain about that. His interest in transportation is the passengers. He stated that as a driver, you see them and help them and most of the drivers develop caring relationships with their passengers. He stated as a driver, to hear complaints and sometimes not always knowing how to respond and answer, and that is his concern with transportation. He is also on the Executive Board of the ATU. He stated that he likes to travel.

Julie Hile stated that she has lived in the community for 25 years and loves the community. She is the owner of the *Hile Group* which is a small culture-change consulting group that is based in Normandy Village with the core of her professional work lying in transit and public transportation. She has for nearly 30 years watched transit agencies all over the country make transitions of various kinds. She rides transit almost exclusively when she is not in town. Here in town she tends to ride very little because of her two Golden Retrievers. Her interest in transit is long-standing and she has been talking with Mayor Koos for a long time stating that frequently consultants do not get to apply their trade at home because that is just the way the world seems to work. She stated to Mayor Koos that if he was willing to allow her to serve, she would love to bring that expertise home and apply it to the community that she loves. She stated that for fun she reads novels and non-fiction that have very short chapters.

Tim Bassett stated that he is the Vice President of *Support Ancillary Services* at *Advocate Bromenn Medical Center*. His interest in transportation primarily focuses on access to much-needed health care for the community. He stated that it is the largest health care provider in this community and access for those who need health care is critically important to the mission. He is glad to be a part of the group and cannot wait to work with everybody at the table. He and his wife both went to ISU and they

were high school sweethearts – she went to ISU and he went off to the Army – he is a veteran of the *United States Army* serving three (3) years active duty as an infantryman and spent one (1) year of service in Iraq between 2004-2005. When he left the service, engaged at the time and went to school at ISU. Both he and his wife stayed in Bloomington-Normal because they both fell in love with the community. They have three (3) daughters, 9, 5 and 3. We like to do a lot of stuff outside – bike riding recently over Father’s Day weekend we also went camping in a tent which was a big deal for the girls and they occupy our time and outside of that he likes to grill and smoke meat. He looks forward to getting to know everybody at the table.

Deb Presley stated that she is a life-long resident of Bloomington-Normal. She became interested in transportation because her son is an adult with Down Syndrome and he relies on Connect Mobility to get back and forth to work every day. She stated they have been a part of the Connect Mobility community – and there have been changes made over the last 3.5 years. Her son lost Connect Mobility transportation options back in 2016 when the fixed route to her neighborhood was eliminated. Through a process she was able to work with the General Manager and come up with the Premium Service options so that he son would continue to have mobility to his job; yet the price point for that was unaffordable and to come fast forward, the fares are increasing. Her concern is that Bloomington-Normal and individuals with disabilities do not have equal access to transportation and the community needs to look at making sure that Connect Mobility is affordable for them and is successful in our community. She stated that we are a very rich community and need to make sure that those with disabilities can fully participate – working, living, worshiping, and doing the things that we all take for granted. The other interests she has is that of an educator - all of her adult life in various venues - and right now she is employed in Unit 5 and sees families not being able to get to our schools because they rely on transportation which does not reach all of our schools. If they cannot afford transportation through private means, they are not able to come to parent-teacher conferences or come pick up a sick child and that becomes a problem. That is a secondary issue that she sees because of her job. What she likes to do for fun is spend time with her son and be out in the garden. She started her morning in the garden. She looks forward to working with the Group and has been waiting for several months for it to come to fruition and is excited to see all the community interest in transportation.

Member Julie Hile reported that she had conversations with Mayor Koos and that he and Mayor Renner had composed a message to the Working Group as it begins its work:

Thank you for volunteering your time and expertise to help make Connect Transit a more inclusive and responsive system. We asked that you take a clean slate approach to addressing this task. Do not fear to be bold. The conversation has become divisive in the community, yet clear needs for improvement have emerged. While many see your work as a task to fix things, we see this as an opportunity to identify direction to help make Connect Transit a cutting edge 21st Century transit system that serves all its users.

In a world of changing climate, rising green-house gas emissions and the rise of the use of alternative transportation, we see the role of public transit expanding and we see the definition of users expanding as well. We encourage you to look at common sense solutions to the needs of transit-dependent and mobility users as a priority, yet also give consideration to the potential expansion of choice riders.

Again, we thank you for taking on this important task. We stand by to assist you in your work going forward.

Mayor Chris Koos
Mayor Tari Renner

Chair Buchanan stated that she wanted to highlight a few things and that Steven had mentioned earlier that she, too, had not noticed as much conversation about local transportation as in recent months. The Board saw that too. Obviously, you were listening and watching and it came at a time that our Board was looking at approving the next year's budget projecting out several years and anticipating that we were going to be in trouble. Rather than wait for 2023, we said we have to start looking at how we can sustain what we have and all of the communication and awareness in the community provided us with an opportunity to say – we know we are at a juncture where we have to look at it – the community is telling us they would like us to look at it and so that really became the genesis of this *Connect to the Future* Working Group. It does mirror the *Strategic Plan* – which when you go through your notebook, you will see a copy, but as has been mentioned by so many of you and the communication from our Mayors, we want to envision together what the system is going to look like moving forward focusing on what the community wants. How do we make that happen and what kind of resources will be necessary and if we get obtain resources, can we sustain it? That encapsulates what our charge is. Recommendations are what we must get at – some very specific recommendations that we may not be thinking of right now. Will they make a difference? The expectation is out there – both City and Town Councils have told us that and the public has told us that. She believes that the representatives of the media are acknowledging that there is an expectation there will be a work produced. That will be viewed initially by the CTAC group, by our City and Town Councils, and by the Board of Trustees – everyone having some degree of input and then once it is adopted by the Board of Trustees, it is handed over to Connect Staff stating – let's make this happen. She wanted to assure the Members that we are in this for all the right reasons.

The Chair then turned the floor over to the Facilitator, Jeri Mintzer.

Ms. Mintzer stated that before she begins, she wanted to say thank you all for sharing where you are coming from and she was impressed by the Group, the commitment to the community to improving transportation and the different motivations the Group has and she appreciated all of the Members being part of this process. She stated that at *Smart Growth America* they spend a lot of their time convincing people why transportation and transportation choices are important and why it matters to a community and how it can make a community better so speaking to and working with the Group that "gets it" that transportation should be affordable and reliable, safe and comfortable, is really a treat for us. Ms. Mintzer stated that she will be part of the team that will be working with the Group over the next several months. She stated she will be joined by Beth Osborne, the *Vice President of Transportation*, Christopher Zimmerman, the *Vice President of Economic Development*, and Rayla Bellis, who is also a *Program Manager* at *Smart Growth America*. It will be a combination of us working with you across the various months. A little background about *Smart Growth America*, encouraging you to check on the website: www.smartgrowthamerica.org as there is a ton of information there so I won't go

into too much detail but we are a national non-profit and we empower communities through technical assistance; advocacy; and thought leadership to create livable places, healthy people and shared prosperity. They work with locality and teams all over the country on transportation visioning, planning initiatives, policy change, community development around transit and a variety of other topics, land use and things like that. They work with elected officials, real estate developers, practitioners, community groups and a variety of people who are all interested in smart growth and making it happen. They have run some full programs over the years, one of which is called our DOT Innovation Program, Accelerating Practical Solutions and Building Blocks for smart growth. She would be happy to share more information about those programs but they all get a piece of the work we will be doing together so she switched gears and talked about the role the team will be playing with the Group on this project. The team will be the facilitator for the Working Group over the next several months and we will have up to 6 in-person meetings and 4 virtual meetings. Next month is going to be the "true" kick-off where we will roll up our sleeves and talk about roles and setup a project coordination schedule and things like that. We will be doing a review of your existing plans and documents – pretty much everything that you have already done that is working towards this transportation vision and all of the planning you have done thus far to get a sense of what is important and what you have already articulated. We will be going to try to summarize that to build a "shared understanding" of where you all want to go and what work has been done already. Then in the early meetings we will be going to talk about the benefits of a transportation system; the best practices from other communities – again, building that shared understanding and making sure that the team understand across stakeholder groups – what the challenges are – what the opportunities are and what the priorities are. Then as we go through the meetings, we will start to synthesize recommendations, your input and feedback, on all of these things. We will start working on an outline of recommendations – a ground treading of that and flush out that outline into a fuller recommendation. We will have a Recommendation Report that sets out your input and ideas, and make sure we have summarized the themes that we feel are a consensus and then we will present a final report. She stated she was happy to answer any questions or talk about anything more specifically.

Chair Buchanan asked if the Group had any questions now? She added that on the team's agenda it mentioned "work group process" – Item D.3. – which speaks to the mission and the focus which are truly going to be the core of the beginning of the meeting in July.

Chair Buchanan reviewed the resource packet (notebooks) with the Members of the Group and stated that this will be the reading material for each of the Group Members between now and July 20th. It will give you many of the documents that Connect Transit and the Trustees operate under as guiding principles and goals. It includes the *Intergovernmental Agreement* which is referred to as the "IGA" which is the document between the two (2) municipalities which have formed our transit system.

Documents for the Group:

- 1) *Connect to the Future Overview*
- 2) *Intergovernmental Agreement*
- 3) Connect Transit Budget FY2019-2020
 - o Strategic Plan

- o Ridership Statistics
- 4) *Bloomington-Normal Comprehensive Operational Analysis ("COA")*
- 5) *Connect Transit Facility Guide – Bus Stops/Shelters Plan*
- 6) *Connect Transit Short-Range Transit Plan – (MCRPC PowerPoint)*

Chair Buchanan stated that the next item is our *Connect Transit Budget* including the *Strategic Plan* and a few of the statistics on ridership. Also, we have a copy of the *Bloomington-Normal Comprehensive Operational Analysis* – Item 4. This is a document you have probably heard about if you have attended any of the public listening sessions, you have heard reference to some of its strengths and some of its areas that may not be as relevant now as they were then, but this report was really a first-time effort and it had come to our attention that most transit systems – probably all of them – do this kind of a “deep dive” into the analysis of their operation on a regular basis – every 5-7 years. This was the first one that had been done in Bloomington-Normal. It was really monumental and it is not etched in stone but was our first effort to take that deep dive - so if there are things that were startling or people are taking exception with, we will be looking at those. Keep in mind that this was the first time this system delved into looking at how it really operated. Item 5 is a Guide to our facilities – *Bus Stops/Shelters Plan* – which we are pretty excited about. One of the things that we hear is that it is difficult getting to a bus stop; exiting the bus – maybe into the mud or a curb-cut that hasn't yet been complete. We are using this as a 3-year plan now and then there will be another 3-year plan going forward because to accomplish this, it takes a lot of money from transit as well as it takes a strong cooperation and collaboration with the two (2) municipalities. Connect does not pour sidewalks. That is not the business that we are in; however, the municipalities are and we are working together with them. Again, that is something that I have seen in my tenure on the Board which really comes into greater focus. There was a time when there wasn't the kind of communication between the municipalities and the transit system and now we are working together when it comes to streets and development. Item 6 refers to the *Connect Transit Short-Range Transit Plan*. This is a copy of a PowerPoint given by Jennifer Sicks of MCRPC and other team members from MCRPC. It is an excellent document. You will be receiving very soon a copy of the full plan. We are so excited because it does lay out some of the challenges we are talking about – but even better than that – there are statistics and well-defined facts that will help us as we move forward with some of those challenges and knowing how to confront them.

Member Julie Hile stated that there are also *Recommendations* in that document that in review struck us as quite promising.

Chair Buchanan stated the projection of certain kinds of riders in certain areas are based on research. We are in the process and have identified several subject matter experts that are really familiar with various aspects of a lot of the information we are going to need to consider and Jennifer Sicks of the *McLean County Regional Planning Commission* will be one of those experts, together with Melissa Hon – City of Bloomington Staff, Mercy Davison – Town of Normal Staff, Rickielee Benecke - LifeCil, and Carlo Robustelli – McLean County.

Member Hile asked the Chair to share a little of the background of the two (2) Members who were not in attendance. Part of what we want to be doing as we go forward is to make sure that we are feeling comfortable – that we have represented at the table the voices that we need.

Chair Buchanan stated that Katie is the *Assistant Vice President* for Student Affairs at *Illinois State University* and brings with her a representation of a very large portion of Connect's ridership and that community aspect in terms of the University. She will be with us in the future. Jerry James also has a military background, having retired, and came into the business community here in Bloomington-Normal and is engaged with a lot of the community with the NAACP. Those are two (2) individuals that will bring some rather unique perspectives – both engaged in our community as well as their professional life.

Member Linda Foster stated that in talking about resources, she asked if the Members will have information about the public comments; public opinions; and suggestions so that we can be all-inclusive of what we think and what the public has been saying so that we have a clear picture of the ideas. She believed that it was very important to show that it wasn't a waste of time at the sessions.

Chair Buchanan stated that as we get to certain areas, as usually the listening sessions and the Public Hearings were relative to a specific topic, and that would be a good time to re-introduce those. She stated that all the comments are recorded.

Member Hile thanked Member Foster for the question and there is a further answer to that question in the section of how we are going to be organized.

Chair Buchanan stated that how we are going to engage amongst ourselves and the greater world outside, the Work Group meeting frequency and length of meetings, Saturday mornings seemed to work well and we would anticipate a 2.5-3 hr. meeting for about 5-6 months. Most of us would not appreciate starting at 5pm in the afternoon and going until 8pm. The second meeting is scheduled for July 20th. Meeting on each 3rd Saturday of the month for the larger group meetings and Member Hile will be sharing with you about the smaller group discussions which will be outside of the larger group meetings.

Member Hile stated that if you imagine the simplest infographic of a flower, we represent the center of that flower and as our discussions progress, inevitably, various buckets or themes of interest will emerge. What we want to do with our facilitator's help, is dispatch ourselves into the subject areas that are of particular interest and relevant as agreed upon by the Group. That will be the time as we move into the small groups, we will as Members of this Group lead with Smart Growth's support, leading discussions of small groups who will be members of the community who expressed an interest. Getting out into the community and listening to people to get a sense and as that work comes together, we will bring it back to the large group and have the conversation. We really represent a small nucleus of what is anticipated will become transit culture, having done the homework. She stated to Member Deb Presley that she believed it would be good if her son could be in one of the smaller public groups.

Chair Buchanan said regarding emails, a couple of Members had questioned whether or not contact information is going to be available to the public, we will not be doing that. Member's contact information will only be distributed to Judy Buchanan and Jill Bower. The Group's privacy will be maintained. If we do receive questions, something you might want to think about and we can talk

about specifically to determine at the next meeting; as questions are sent to the Connect Transit via the website or other means that are questions or comments for the Board. The Group could do something like that or the Group could state that you would like the Chair and Julie Hile to monitor any emails that come in and then send it on to the Group Members, and they could send them to the Group Members or they could be collected until the next meeting. Julie Hile interjected that Smart Group America could assist us in determining the best way to handle outside public emails to the Group Members. Chair Buchanan stated to be transparent. We are cognizant of the commitment you have made with your time and your privacy. The Public Comment period will still be on the *Agenda* each meeting and the Group will be looking at past public comments as Member Foster has suggested and we will have the Facilitator help us with that at next meeting.

Member Deb Presley stated that for us to be an effective Working Group and be able to feel like we can talk to one another, we might want to explore some option with which we have a means to communicate with one another within our Group. There is a difference between our personal email and personal phone numbers going out to the Public versus going out to just the Members of this Group. It will be very hard to be an effective Working Group if we cannot contact one another.

Chair Buchanan asked if Member Presley was suggesting that you would like to have each other's contact information?

Member Presley stated just the Members of the Group.

Chair Buchanan stated that there is a list in each Notebook and I will work with Jill to get out to you the contact names and email addresses for your colleagues here within the Group. She asked if there were any other thoughts on this subject?

Member Deb Presley asked if it would be possible for the Group to get email addresses through Connect Transit as part of Connect's email structure such as "WorkingGroup.com" so that it would be only pertinent to this body and our work within this body and wouldn't spill over into our personal email. Member Presley stated - something that we could use to communicate with one another with the appropriate number of people in the communication of the Group but would not be a private email address but a working email address for the Group.

Member Hile stated that helps in keeping track of discussions, too.

Chair Buchanan stated that Meeting Notices will be emailed and wanted to give the Members a heads-up on the July 20th date and we will have a new *Agenda* and supporting information as well. She believes there will be some questions that will be given to us as a Group before that next meeting.

Member Hile stated that she alluded earlier to a wealth of resources here in the community who are very smart on transit and public transportation in general. As you read the MCRPC Plan, what you are going to see is considered thought about how our public transit system fits into the larger mobility platform – pedestrian; bicycle; vehicular; trains; etc. We really want to tap into the local resources that we have in the community. She stated that she had a conversation with General Manager Thorne, as

an example, about whether and how transit staff can help us benchmark with other communities around the nature of their funding for transit-reliant passengers and what is the nature of that funding formula and how do they get that done? In her professional network, one thing very consistent is that up to a certain size of a community beyond which public transportation is a go-to for able-bodied folks; either because they have nowhere to park; or it is too expensive to have a car – a good number of people actually at this table have experience in those systems, but up to that point, the transit-reliant demographic is far and away the largest demographic. What we are studying here is not new and there are lots of other places that have tangled with these issues and have come out with great solutions. So, as an example of a way that our staff support can help us, after my conversation with General Manager Thorne, will lead to some work with our staff. Staff is connected, as is she, with the *American Public Transportation Association*, which is the professional coalition of systems. You will also see again in the *Regional Planning Report* that team has performed some benchmarking as well. She is very mindful of the Mayor's having said to start from a blank page but she stated we don't have to reinvent where other people have already gone. She is interested in getting it right the first time and taking advantage of other's mistakes so that we can move forward in a successful manner.

Member Kimberly Klepec stated that as she was the first one to introduce herself, she didn't say very much about her interest in transportation or her own personal experience which is very similar to Member Presley's son as a Premium Rider as well. What you are talking about it made me think of the walkability scores of the cities. She would like to see a more walkable community. She believes that if we as a Group, can work closely with the City and Town and how they plan things for sidewalks, crosswalks and things like that, she believed more people would use the bus if they could get around better in general, if the city was more pedestrian-friendly. She was glad this was brought up by what other cities have done and we may be smaller than some of the other cities but we could still model what we do and it would benefit not just the demographic you were speaking of who is very much in need of public transportation. It needs to be balanced and for everyone.

Facilitator Mintzer spoke that her organization is part of the *National Complete Streets Coalition* and have a lot of guidance and case studies and data information exactly like you are talking about such as a comparison of different cities and how they go about making them more walkable and making strategic investments for planning for that walkability aspect. She was happy to connect the Group with that information.

Member Hile stated to the Facilitator that because we have a tremendous surge of public interest in the mobility platform in this community right now, the question of how those decisions have been made and rolled out into the community so that people do not feel threatened or "put-upon" but are genuinely invited into another way of looking at things. She stated the Group would be very grateful for that kind of support as well.

Facilitator Mintzer stated that in all the team's talks, we speak a lot about engagement and one that is especially important is setting expectations so it is not just hearing them but also how they can expect to be enabled and being clear about that front. Not just the information which is really important, but whether there is a timeline for which to collect information; when that is going to happen; when that is going to be used; and how it is going to be used. When there is one opportunity, multiple opportunities

or what have you, so that people do not feel like decisions are being made in back rooms or without their knowledge, things like that. That is really important and we talk about that a lot so I will be sure to share with our team that this is a big priority and something that we want to come back to often.

Chair Buchanan stated that brings us to questions and/or answers for the Facilitator, or the Chair or Julie Hile. A lot of information has been given you.

Member Hile stated that the other thing she would absolutely invite at this point would be some cross-talk in the Group. What is on your mind, what are you thinking, what are your questions for one another and let's just see if we can get the conversation going a little bit.

Chair Buchanan added that before we get to that, if any of you in the Group have time to stay after we adjourn, we can tour the facilities with you if you would like. If not, we can go on a tour at another time, but if anyone wants to take advantage of that, General Manager Thorne and Martin Glaze can do that with you. So, to the Group, what do you think – any questions, thoughts?

A Member of the Group stated that he believes we are going to be completely dependent upon the *Smart Growth* people and the kind of information they can bring to us in perhaps synthesizing looks at other systems and giving us a spreadsheet in a sense, or something like that which compares one system to another; the size of the communities they serve; what the objectives are; what kind of values are they driven by; and it seems to him that one of the things that he was hearing people in the public say during the Public Hearings, was "what are the values that drive these changes; what is the underlying or overarching value system that drives it? What is the goal of public transit for our community and how have other communities wrestled with that?" He stated he would like to see that kind of information. He has tried to look at other people's research and synthesize it himself and it is very difficult to compare one community to another because you are looking at Toronto or Portland or Denver or Ft. Collins, and those are dramatically different environments. He believes that is what he needs the most help with - what have other communities of a reasonable size compared to us - done.

Member Linda Foster added that since we will not be meeting again until July 20th, what are the things that we need to be doing now so that when we come back to the table, we are more informed and more educated and continue to move ahead versus waiting until the next meeting. What are those things?

Facilitator Mintzer stated that on the question of values, that is a great question and is challenging to find the one place where people share that kind of thing, especially for smaller communities. She pointed to one resource that is a little bit outdated at this point but believes it is still extremely still relevant. *Envision Utah* did a huge process called "values mapping" sometime in the early 2000's. They established a system of surveying the public and doing exactly what you have mentioned which was asking the question what is the goal for our community and what are the values that we want to see in the future – and literally mapped the verbiage that people used and it found that they wanted it to be sustainable; family was extremely important – this was for the Salt Lake City region. That is a great resource to read about. She will ask her colleagues what resources might be good. We have a lot of

different reports and she thought they could send over some materials ahead of the next meeting for preview to discuss later to build that knowledge base.

Member Hile added and spoke to the Facilitator and suggested that she connect with the Town of Normal Staff and perhaps the City of Bloomington Staff. In the planning and the economic development sustainability community-based projects done, consistently we have tapped into the experiences of what Secretary of Transportation then, Rayla Hood, came to call "Livable Cities" which are our sized cities. Both in terms of alignment with prior work and in terms of just a leg-up, these include places like Ann Arbor and Madison and the list goes on. We kind of know some of those cities already we haven't thought to ask them about their transportation systems. APTA can help with this too. What are the communities, who do not have light rail and which are about our size, do when there is a need to have a bus system that serves them well? How is that working and what are they doing? She also added that there is a perception which she would like to present early on – here is the golden egg in terms of this process. "We are clear as a Board of Trustees that sustainable, high quality transit, that is affordable for our transit-dependent population is a high priority." There is a perception that fixing current issues that have been very much in the public discourse, needs to happen before we can think long-range. She stated that as a team, the best way for us to honor, protect and serve that demographic is to think long-term; make certain our funding formula is right and where possible, tap into transit – the mobility platform as also an economic driver because certainly our community needs some fresh ideas. We are reforming certainly on the economic side. She stated that she knows the goal here is not economic development but also wanted to be clear that what we do might help to also support economic development, which is an extra win. She asked the Facilitator to speak to that a little bit.

Facilitator Mintzer stated Member Hile brought up a lot of interesting points but speaking to the last one first, it is interesting that you said your goal here is not economic development. She would argue that transportation and economic development go together. We don't have transportation for transportation sake. Whether it is services, health services, schools, jobs – purchasing the things you need and then that drives land-buying; drives commerce and all of the things in the community. Regardless, a good transportation system will bring economic development. That is just how these things work. As far additional research – less focused on transportation but is more about that place-making aspect; specifically, about mid-size and smaller communities – one of the reports is called "*Amazing Place*" which features Greenville, South Carolina – a smaller community that has done some amazing things on place making and economic development with their downtown. They took out an elevated highway infrastructure. On your other question about the issue of tension between thinking long-term and thinking that current issues were not being faced, one of our other team members would say that "if you are trying to fix yesterday's transportation problems, you will never be able to address tomorrow's transportation problems." We are operating in a system that was built in the 1950's and envisioning for the 1960-1980's, we are not there anymore. Transportation has changed dramatically, even in the past 5-10 years that if we are fixated on what we have right now, our problems will only get worse. We are building new lane miles without fixing the ones that we have and this is nationwide. Most communities face these challenges in different ways but nationwide - this is an issue. She believes there is a very strong argument to be made about looking forward and trying to figure out what we might need. Maybe not 50 years down the road, but maybe 10-15. We do not need to build for a

future when we do not know what it is going to be like. We didn't know 10 years ago that you would be able to summon a car with your cellphone to take you wherever you would like to go. We don't know what is going to happen 20 years from now but we do know the shift that is happening and she believes it would be a mistake to think that things are going to continue for the next 20 years just as they are or have been for the past 5 years.

Member Deb Presley stated that she would like to challenge the Group to not only think long term but to think now and current. She is not saying "yesterday" but we currently have people who are in need of services and they can't wait 10-15 years to have those services that are affordable and accessible so she believes while we do not want to go back in time, we need to look at where we are now and look at how are we going to move to where we want to go in the future. They can't wait 10 or 15 years – they need something now so it needs to be a plan that starts now and moves us forward but doesn't let them flounder for 10-15 years. We also need to make certain that as we look at this issue, that we realize that Connect Transit and Connect Mobility – the future of those systems while intertwined are also independent. They provide very different transportation needs and are very different systems and we need to not lose sight of one by looking at the other.

Member Steven Kossman stated that in his 40-year career when he retired, he had one bookcase which was nothing but 5- and 10-year plans. It had nothing but dust and no one looked after 2 years when a 10 plan was written to see what we were saying then and he stated a perfect example. One of the 10-year plans was from 1987 and they did not foresee the "crack epidemic". It completely blew away any kind of planning because we had this "explosion" in the Criminal Justice System that no one could have anticipated. He added that 20 years ago he co-chaired the *Community Assessment and Needs* here and the fastest growing population in our community at that time was the working poor. He believes that is still the case. We can look at the reality of what we have now and the needs that we have now and in a sense, let the future take care of itself and do what we can about the foreseeable future, but understand that is a real narrow window.

Facilitator Mintzer wanted to clarify that she agrees completely with the sentiments that were just shared. We want to address what we know is going on and where we know the trend is and make sure that we are flexible on what we decide now so that we can address the needs of the future, but not try and plan for an unknown future – wanting to make sure what I have said is clear on that front.

Member Marty Eckert stated that he wanted to say that we are talking about the future a lot – long term and short term – but he also thinks that it is important that we need to remember where we have been because that shows us our direction and the public perception – at least from a driver's seat – is not that things have been going well. It is a challenge for us to figure out how we do what we are going to do so that it is done right. He remembered that when he first came to Connect that there was a route restructure plan that was floated and no one had talked to anybody about anything and all of a sudden, we had a route restructure. Obviously, it got slammed because it was such a surprise for people. No one came and said that there are some problems with the systems. There was no engagement with people ahead of time to figure it out. I'm not talking about the one that was done in 2015 but earlier. We have a history of doing things and not necessarily doing them well. He believes we need to take the past seriously in terms of how we look to the future and what we need to do.

Facilitator Mintzer stated that she was very energized by the input and comments and she will share all her notes with her colleagues. The team is excited to get started with the Group.

Chair Buchanan stated what should all of us be doing prior to our July meeting? We have a lot of reading material that was distributed and we will be handing out more. What else should our Group be doing in anticipation of the team being here in July?

Facilitator Mintzer stated that the focus of the first meeting will be about priorities; giving some thoughts of challenges and priorities. We talk a lot about what are challenges and opportunities and framing things as it already might be right now; and clarifying what needs to happen in the future. Take some time to think about what isn't working and then systemically how it can be addressed and turn it into an opportunity to contribute to the recommendations that we are going to be coming up with. She will talk to her colleagues and get the Group some reading material and maybe some light homework assignments or questions to consider ahead of the next meeting. All of the team will be back in the office on July 8th so we will be sharing some things early that week to give you all enough time to consider them and be prepared. Send us your requests, questions, or just bring your ideas to the next meeting.

Member Hile stated she was glad that the Facilitator stated to the Group to bring questions. We want to get those on the table.

One of the Members stated that several things have been mentioned in this meeting that he knows he is going home and spend some time researching – *Amazing Place* – the mobility platform design – Transit reliant demographic and how is that defined and another one is “how is ridership and access measured” across systems; *Values Mapping* out of Utah and *Livable Cities*.

A Member stated that we have some of this dialog and stated another Member brought up some good points. It made him consider how much access we will have to data as these questions continue to evolve – so he assumed that if we start having specific questions as we start to do our research that Connect Staff would be able to present some of that information to us.

Member Kossman stated that he was involved in a number of forward-looking programs in Criminal Justice, the disproportionate minority contacts idea in the United States, and one of the things we learned is that most of us – our data – is something we spelunk through – it isn't really organized or constructed in a way to help us understand it – not for illumination, but for support. One of the things that we are going to struggle with is what do we think about the data because it has already been filtered and we don't know how the filter was put into place or what that filter was.

Member Hile stated that prompts a further question to the Facilitator because part of the value that *Smart Growth America* will bring is that they have done some of that normalizing of data across various communities and so on. Given our situation and some weariness about data, it would be helpful for us to see how you all are filtering and what are your processes for deciding “what is what”.

Facilitator stated that the team is cautious and judge a lot of comparing of communities directly because every situation is different. There are a lot of similarities as much as we love our own community and believe that there is no where else on planet Earth like it, there are a lot of similarities. That being said, when you get into the data and the market research and the property values and the population and all that – it gets a little trickier to compare apples to apples. We did some work on a transit line, actually several transit lines, by performing a *Technical Systems Program* with 8 communities; one of which was Richmond, Virginia, together with a real estate analysis - looking at a few last-stage narratives and the change over time. We are doing a similar project with rapid transit in various communities comparing within a quarter mile - comparing local data to local data - rather than community to community. She stated that she knows Christopher Zimmerman, who is the *Vice President of Economic Development*, will have some ideas on how you can use the data and use it well. Those are things that we need to consider.

Member Hile stated she would suggest as a process point, as we are preparing even for the next meeting, if we have questions that come up related to support that we would like from our subject matter experts of various kinds, send those to Judy Buchanan. It might well be that we would all benefit from that information and you can work it with staff.

Chair Buchanan stated that in keeping with our desire to have you on your way, we will be putting together some follow-up so she stated that you can expect several emails from us with additional information and with some of the guidelines and the thinking through with questions that the Facilitator has suggested that you use as you review the material. We have just started on something big and she appreciated the cautions and suggestions in how we make the best use of our time and material and we want to continue to step back and take another look at that.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Chair Judy Buchanan entertained a *Motion for Adjournment*.

Member Steven Kossman moved to adjourn, seconded by Member Martin Eckert.

AYE: All
NAY: None

Motion carried, and the *Connect to the Future* Working Group adjourned its initial meeting at 11:00 a.m.



Jill Bower – Clerk