

Board of Trustees

Regular Session

September 24, 2024



Agenda

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
 - Attendance by Other Means/Virtual – Roll Call Vote
- Pledge of Allegiance and Mission Statement
 - Connect Transit provides safe, reliable transportation and access to opportunity to strengthen and enrich individual lives, our community, the economy, and the environment.
- Public Comments

Consent Agenda

- Approval of Regular Session Minutes for August 27, 2024
- Approval of Board Workshop Minutes for August 27, 2024
- Approval of Financial Information for July 2024
- ~~Approval of Financial Information for August 2024~~ – *delayed due to year end closing*
- Monthly Statistical Reports for August 2024
- Cardinal Infrastructure: Federal Reports
- Cornerstone; Illinois Weekly Updates
- Roll Call Vote

Committee Reports

Finance Committee:

Trustee Singer
Vice Chair Hile

Operations & Planning

Committee:

Trustee Foster
Trustee Rao

Marketing & Communications

Committee:

Trustee Buchanan
Mark Huffman

New Business

- Recommendation for Avail Software Contract Extension – Roll Call Vote
- Recommendation for Purchase of a Maintenance Service Truck – Roll Call Vote

Chairman's Report

Managing Director's Report

Welcome Aboard!

- Mark Huffman, Marketing Manager
 - 25+ Years Experience as Creative Director
 - Former Owner, Mark Huffman Creative
 - ISU Graduate – Art/Graphic Design
 - Portfolio at: www.iamacreativethinker.com



Strategic Plan Scorecard

X

Activities	Timeline	Status	Notes
Goal 1: Gain Public and Political Support.			
Objective 1: Create and Define a Community Wide Communications Plan.			
Develop a messaging plan with themes that can be used to encourage support of transit among multiple groups of constituents.	January 2024 – March 2024	Complete	* Presented to and approved by Board, February 2024
Develop a marketing plan with campaign target, campaign purpose, communications strategies (media, events, etc.) to be used, and campaign timeline.	March 2024 – June 2024	Partially Complete	* Presented to Board in July 2024
Implement marketing plan.	July 2024 – June 2026	Pending	* New Marketing Manager hired/started 9/19/2024
Objective 2: Expand the Board’s Role to Advocate on Behalf of Connect Transit.			
Establish committee structure.	January 2024 – March 2024	Complete	* Presented to and approved by Board, February 2024
Codify strategic goals.	Mar-24	Complete	* Presented to and approved by Board, March 2024
Develop Board Handbook to provide a central location for Board information.	Jul-24	Complete	* Draft to Board in May * 1:1 Meetings * Presented to Board in June
Communicate “talking points” to the Board concerning Connect Transit services and issues facing Connect.	Monthly and as needed.	In process	* August workshop for Communication Protocols
Develop “speakers bureau” to speak to groups (philanthropic, neighborhood, business, non-profit) in our service area and to communicate a consistent message.	July 2024 – June 2027	Pending	
Objective 3: Develop and Expand Community Partnerships.			
Identify opportunities or partnerships that benefit Connect Transit, partners, and our community.	May 2024 – June 2025	In process	* EDC One Voice trip in 2024 * Veteran's Parkway Evaluation * Next Move Illinois (State Public Transportation Plan) participation * Town of Normal Sustainability Plan participation * Salvation Army Good Cities program participation * Chamber InterCity Leadership Visit to Grand Rapids * Table Captain for Chamber's RAMP Event.
Conduct “summit” meetings to gather partners with similar interests together (business, education, non-profits, medical community, ADA community, transportation providers, arts community, etc.) to identify opportunities and methods to meet need, if any. Develop on-going relationship with community partners.	May 2024 – June 2025 and on-going as needed.	In process	* Convened meeting with Normal Township, Agency on Aging, VA and others to discuss need for adult day programming with potential of using downtown lease space. * Facilitating meeting with Salvation Army, Lifelong Access and Chestnut to identify service needs in Downtown. * EV Industry Collaborative and Open House - Speaker and tour of CT
Objective 4: Expand Opportunities for the Community to Engage			
Continue attempts to develop “Ambassadors” and ad-hoc focus groups to provide insight into issues faced by the transit system (route changes, fares, campaigns, transit centers).	July 2024 – December 2024	Pending	* Developing plan for ad-hoc groups of students needing public service hours to assist with outreach events.
Conduct transit center outreach.	July 2024 – December 2026	Pending	

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Goal 2: Ensure Long-Term Financial Sustainability.			
Objective 1: Continue to Secure Federal, State, and Local Dollars.			
Participate in structured legislative groups and trips to Washington, DC, and Springfield.	When legislatures are in session 2024 – 2027	In process	*Attended IPTA "Transit Day" at the State Legislature * APTA Legislative Conference * EDC One Voice trip in 2024 *Active on IPTA Legislative Committee
Provide elected officials with opportunities for tours, speaking engagements, ribbon cuttings, ground breakings, etc.	2024 – 2027	In process	* Congressman Sorenson visit in January 2024 * Senator Durbin quote in press release 5/2024 * FLEX Celebration with Congressman Sorenson, Mayor.
Aggressively pursue funding opportunities from federal, state, and local funding agencies, as well as non-traditional sources.	2024 – 2027	In process	* RAISE Grant was unsuccessful * Bus and Bus Facilities Grant was unsuccessful * Earmark requests was included in Federal FY25 Budget * Seeking available sources for state funding for solar microgrid
Use federal and state funds to provide a broader benefit to more constituents.	As grants are prepared and awarded: 2024 – 2027.	In process	* Actively pursuing project with Heartland CC and IDOT to extend storage and training center grants. * Earmark request was included in Federal FY25 Budget for solar battery
Objective 2: Diversify Revenue Streams.			
Identify non-traditional methods to increase local operating revenues without adding burden to the City and Town.	FY25 – FY27	In process	* Developing solar microgrid plans, and other non-governmental sources of funding
Objective 3: Continuously Evaluate Cost Management Strategies.			
Identify methods to reduce operating costs without having an impact on our ability to serve the needs of passengers and the community.	FY25 – FY27	In process	* Developing solar microgrid plans * Transferred funds into interest bearing Illinois Funds account.
Objective 4: Regularly Evaluate Fare Structure for Long-Term Sustainability.			
Evaluate subsidy per passenger against other revenue streams.	Annually at the beginning of each fiscal year	Pending	
Consider the effect of fare and fare collection changes on ridership and revenue.	Annually at the beginning of each fiscal year	Pending	

	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Notes</i>
	Goal 3: Leverage Projects and Initiatives for a Positive Customer Experience.			
	Objective 1: Complete a State-of-the-Art Downtown Bloomington Transit Center With Modern Facilities			
X	Select A&E with transit experience that understands the needs of transit operations and has experience with transit facilities in an urban environment.	May-24	Complete	* A&E contract recommended for award, and approved by Board 8/8/2024 and IDOT * Kick-off meeting held 9/18-19/2024
	Establish a Downtown Transit Center Steering Committee with whom to share thoughts and ideas for feedback relating to business, social service, customer amenities, and vehicle movements.	July 2024 – June 2026	Pending	* Sent invitations to participate in Stakeholder Group
	Objective 2: Optimize the User Experience.			
	Investigate and pursue ways to make riding easier, more convenient, and more understandable.	FY25 – FY27	In process	* RFP for fare collection system prepared and distributed.
	Goal 4: Operate Efficiently Without Sacrificing Service Quality.			
	Objective 1: Maintain a Positive Culture of Safety.			
	Develop and implement initiatives that maintain safety at the “top of mind”.	FY24 – FY27	In process	
	Objective 2: Regularly Evaluate and Utilize Technology and Data Driven Solutions for Long-Term Optimization.			
	Create a technology policy and plan that documents the age of hardware and software, defines a process of documenting and resolving technology issues, and evaluating the effectiveness of the technology based on frequency of failure/downtime, vendor support, and impact on passengers and employees.	FY25 – FY27	Pending	* Consultant analysis of radio system for assistance with RFP (Durbin earmark funds)
	Objective 3: Position Connect Transit to Provide Solutions for Changing Service Demands.			
	Continually analyze service performance, City and Town growth plans, large employer locations and work shifts, and changing demographics to identify appropriate methods to meet various needs, as necessary and practical.	FY24 – FY27	In Process	* Communications with Rivian employees concerning service and shift times. * Proposal to modify FLEX service to reduce short trips.

Community

- **Outreach:**

- HCC Welcome Fair
- ATU Labor Day Parade
- St. Jude Walk/Run
- Home School Field Trip Tour
- Center for Youth and Family Solutions Safety Fair
- ISU CommU



- **Employee Morale:**

- September employee birthdays & work anniversary celebrations
- Employee Awards Banquet (FY24)



Professional Development

- 2024 IPTA Fall Conference:
 - Moline, IL; September 4 – 6, 2024
 - Attended by:
 - Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director
 - Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
 - Charlie Busse, Maintenance Manager
 - Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager
 - Jon Spratt, Data Management Specialist
 - Chris Fuller, Operations Supervisor
 - Alex Giantamidis, Transit Planner
 - Janice Crago, Executive Assistant



Professional Development



- There's a lot more we can do for our community than just provide transportation. We are the center of the community and a way to get people the help they may need. We have the opportunity and the responsibility to coordinate and cooperate with other organizations to help better our community.
- Developing AI technology is making its way into a lot of transit specific equipment. AI assisted camera's, route planning software, etc.
- Everything in transit is moving or has moved to the cloud. Cloud services take what has traditionally been a capital expense and transforms it into an operating expense.
- A group called Building Support for Transit program offered *TransitIsTheAnswer.org* to educate legislators about our funding issues. Transit helps facilitate all other social service activities. We need to tell real people's stories of how transit improves their lives.
- Updates from FTA included new oversight tracking system for Triennial Reviews, and grant/funding platform closing dates.
- Updates from IDOT included state paratransit vehicle purchase updates, funding contracts and new forms
- Recognition that many of our issues are experienced by other transit systems as well, specifically manpower shortages.

Professional Development

- Staff attended job specific workshops, including procurement and planning.
- Newer staff networked with their peers at other transit systems in the state to be able to share experiences and knowledge.
- We are already doing good things to build DEI, but there may be more things we can do and possibly grants to help fund them.
- Unused ad space on buses can be used to advertise cultural holidays, welcome all walks of people.
- Ideas for Downtown Transit Center concerning the unhoused, displays and passenger communications.



Recruiting

- Positions Open
 - Bus Operator (10)
 - Dispatcher (2)
 - Maintenance Supervisor (1)
 - Mechanic (1)
 - Scheduler (1)
 - Service Technician (2)
 - Technology Support Specialist (1)



Recruiting

- Positions Filled
 - AP/AR Clerk (1)
 - Bus Operators (10)
 - Dispatcher (1)
 - Marketing Manager (1)

**WELCOME
ABOARD**

Reminders

- Updated/New Board Photos
 - Please set up an appointment with Board Clerk

Agenda

- Trustee Comments
- Executive Session – N/A

Agenda

- Adjournment
 - Roll Call Vote
- Next Meeting: October 22, 2024