

Board of Trustees

Regular Session

November 26, 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 September 24, 2024
- Approval of Executive Session Minutes for September 24, 2024
- Approval of Financial Information for August 2024
- Approval of Financial Information for September 2024
- Approval of Financial Information for October 2024
- Corrected April 2024 – July 2024 Statistical Reports
- Monthly Statistical Reports for September 2024
- Monthly Statistical Reports for October 2024
- Cardinal Infrastructure: Federal Reports (October and November)
- Cornerstone; Illinois Weekly Updates (October and November)

- Roll Call Vote

Committee Reports

Operations & Planning Committee:

Trustee Foster
Trustee Rao

Finance Committee:

Trustee Singer
Vice Chair Hile

Marketing & Communications Committee:

Trustee Buchanan
Mark Huffman

Marketing & Communications Committee

A decorative frame surrounds the slide content. It consists of a thick blue border on the left and bottom, and a thick green border on the top and right. At each of the four corners, there is a circle: a blue circle with a white outline at the top-left and bottom-right, and a green circle with a white outline at the top-right and bottom-left.

Messaging Implementation Update

External Promotions

- Eight Shelters
 - Three Versions

To unearth the past.
To dream of the future.

To discover your love for hydrogeology, which was like unlocking a secret world, leading you to **Illinois State University's** graduate program, but then, bam! you stumbled upon their stage combat minor, mixing your fascination with Earth's waters with the thrill of theatrical duels. Now, you're turning your academic journey into an unforgettable epic adventure where science meets art in the most exciting, unexpected way.

FROM A TO BEYOND

connect TRANSIT

To start a love of animals.
To fun with family.

To discover the most amazing thing ever when you and your family walked into the Wallaby Walkabout exhibit at the **Miller Park Zoo**, because there were these little wallabies just hopping around and doing their thing, which was so cute that you immediately became a full-fledged fan of them because they made your heart feel so happy and bouncy... like a wallaby.

FROM A TO BEYOND

connect TRANSIT

To explore community.
To shop locally.

To discover the most adorable little bear cub statue at the **Bloomington Farmers' Market** carved from a sustainably sourced tree stump by your new favorite local artist, **Black Wolf Carvings** (who uses a chainsaw!), which will look perfect in the corner of your family room.

FROM A TO BEYOND

connect TRANSIT

External Promotions

- External Newsletter

04.29.24

GET CONNECTED

FROM A TO BEYOND

Connect Transit Board of Trustees

Representing Bloomington:

- Ryan Whitehouse
- Judy Buchanan
- Linda Foster
- Barbara Singer

Representing Normal:

- Julie Hile
- Tim McCue
- Mandava Rao

Ex-Officio Members:

- Tim Gleason
- Pam Reece

To contact our Trustees, please email trustees@connect-transit.com.

GM Notes ~ David Braun

I often start presentations that I make to community groups with a simple question, "Who here currently rides the bus?". Normally, I'm met with crickets. Then I ask, "Who has ridden the bus in the past?". Then, many hands are raised. Finally, I ask, "Who knows someone who rides or depends on the service?". Again, many hands are raised.

This is the premise of the messaging campaign described in this newsletter. We appreciate everyone that does ride the bus because of its convenience, to save money, or to improve the environment and reduce traffic. Although some people may not ride now, at one time public transportation was part of their lives, whether it was to get to school to further their education and get a good job and wages with which to buy a car, or to go to their first job to gain experience and get a better job and to buy a house that might not be accessible to public transit now. Maybe, a person's child needs to ride to practice, work, a movie or game when their parent isn't available to drive them; or a person's aging parent can no longer drive but needs to get to a doctor when their adult child caregiver is working.

Connect Transit does more than taking people from point A to point B. We provide opportunities for our riders to become educated, gain experience, save money, attend social events, and take care of their health. We give people the means to go shopping and purchase things that support their family, and also the economy. We allow people the freedom of mobility that many of us take for granted. We provide assurance loved ones can travel to appointments or events safely, even when we aren't available to take them ourselves.

Besides that, we are an economic driver for the community, providing over two million trips each year to school, work, shopping, recreation, and medical appointments. Although some of those trips may have been taken by other means, most of them would not. We return over \$5 for every one dollar invested in our service for everyone, not just the users of our service. Connect Transit is sometimes considered Bloomington-Normal's best kept secret but our messaging campaign intends to change that.

Here's what's inside!

- Background
- Data Collection, Perspective, & Results
- Creative Concepts
- Tell Us Your CT Stories

GET CONNECTED

FROM A TO BEYOND

Connect Transit Board of Trustees

Representing Bloomington:

- Ryan Whitehouse
- Judy Buchanan
- Linda Foster
- Barbara Singer

Representing Normal:

- Julie Hile
- Mandava Rao
- Open Position

Ex-Officio Members:

- Jeff Jurgens
- Pam Reece

To contact our Trustees, please email trustees@connect-transit.com.

GM Notes ~ David Braun

In July of 2023, we took a measured risk by implementing a service unlike any we have offered before, and for a different reason than most transit systems.

Connect FLEX is our microtransit service. Microtransit is an industry term for on-demand, passenger-controlled service using technology to "book" a ride, like Uber and Lyft. Unlike Uber and Lyft, however, Connect FLEX is a true shared-ride system, aggregating trips from a zone into one vehicle before reaching the passenger-requested destinations. Over 50% of our trips have more than one "booking", and bookings can be for one to five people.

Many systems use microtransit to serve areas that are outside of their regular service area, getting people to a rail service, or during hours when ride density is low. We took a different approach.

Connect FLEX is designed to provide access to our bus service for people who cannot access a regular fixed route bus because of topography, road conditions or man-made barriers. The most challenging man-made barrier is the design of many B-N neighborhoods, that have one entrance to a main road, and circuitous roads behind it that go on for miles. These areas can't be served by our regular fixed route service except at the entrance. People who want or need to ride the bus need to navigate these roads and walk considerable distances, just to get the bus, making transit use less likely.

Connect FLEX is our solution to get into the neighborhoods with a small, unobtrusive van, collect people from the neighborhood, and get them to their destination (if the destination is in the service zone) or to a transfer area where they can take advantage of our network of routes that serve most B-N employers, medical offices, and education or shopping centers. Our riders include students, families, employees from Ferrero, Rivian and other employers, and people who want to have a nice time at Downtown events, without the risks associated with driving and parking.

Throughout this newsletter, you will see that our launch of this service has been a success for us and the people who use it!

Here's what's inside!

- Why Microtransit?
- Future FLEX Plans
- How's Connect FLEX Doing?

External Promotions

- “Rider Story” posters for display at events.

FROM A TO BEYOND

I USED CONNECT TO GO TO AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT INTERVIEW WHEN I WASN'T ABLE TO DRIVE. I WAS ABLE TO ARRIVE EARLY AND MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION AND I GOT THE JOB! WITHOUT CONNECT I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET TO THAT INTERVIEW AND I WOULDN'T HAVE THE JOB THAT I LOVE!

MICHAEL J.

connect FLEX connect TRANSIT connect MOBILITY

This poster features a man in a dark suit with his arms crossed. The text is arranged in a white box with green and blue decorative elements. At the bottom, there are three logos for Connect Flex, Connect Transit, and Connect Mobility.

connect FLEX connect TRANSIT connect MOBILITY

IF WE DIDN'T HAVE CONNECT TRANSIT, MY MOM AND I WOULD BE MOSTLY HOMEBOUND.

JUANA L.

FROM A TO BEYOND

This poster features a woman hugging an older woman. The text is arranged in a white box with green and blue decorative elements. At the top, there are three logos for Connect Flex, Connect Transit, and Connect Mobility.

connect FLEX connect TRANSIT connect MOBILITY

WHEN MY DAUGHTER AND I MOVED INTO OUR NEW HOUSE LAST FALL, I WAS WORRIED ABOUT HOW I WOULD GET MY DAUGHTER TO SCHOOL EVERYDAY AT CEDAR RIDGE. LUCKILY CONNECT HAD JUST LAUNCHED CONNECT FLEX. AS LONG AS MY BABY GIRL DIDN'T HAVE TO WALK TOO FAR AND MADE IT TO SCHOOL ON TIME, I WAS SATISFIED. I'M NOT SURE WHAT WE WOULD HAVE DONE HAD WE NOT BEEN ABLE TO USE THE CONNECT FLEX SERVICE.

ALICE C.

FROM A TO BEYOND

This poster features a woman and a young girl walking away from the camera on a path. The text is arranged in a white box with green and blue decorative elements. At the top, there are three logos for Connect Flex, Connect Transit, and Connect Mobility.

Internal Promotion



Thank you for helping our riders get
From A to Beyond!

Because of your hard work, the members
of our community can pursue
employment opportunities.

Your Connect Transit Leadership Team

Marketing Manager Update

Marketing Assessment + Conversations

Examples

Demystify the Bus

New Business

- Recommendation for Award of Fuel Supplier Contract – Roll Call Vote
- Recommendation for Purchase of CAD/AVL Equipment – Roll Call Vote

Chairman's Report

Managing Director's Report

Strategic Plan Scorecard

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.			
X 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. * Coordinating with McLean County and IDOT to evaluate the potential of serving rural McLean County. * Participating on the Veterans Parkway Corridor Study Steering Committee * Initial meeting to plan for service to new ISU Campus on GE Road. * Initiated meeting with Rivian to discuss Universal Access Agreement for their employees to precede expansion in summer 2025.

X	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Convened meeting with Normal Township, Agency on Aging, VA and others to discuss need for adult day programing 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 * Met with Chestnut Health to support their grant to assist people at major transit stops and to educate staff on CT services. * Fare Collection summit with non-profit and social service providers scheduled
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 pubic service hours to assist with outreach events.
X	Conduct transit center outreach.	July 2024 – December 2026	Pending	* Workshops held that included community members that might be affected including: Accessibility, Stakeholders, Safety and Security
	<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.				
X	Participate in structured legislative groups and trips to Washington, DC, and Springfield.	When legislatures are in session 2024 – 2027	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Attended IPTA “Transit Day” at the State Legislature * APTA Legislative Conference * EDC One Voice trip in 2024 * Active on IPTA Legislative Committee * Testified to State Senate Transportation Committee to discuss Downstate Funding Needs. * Participated with IPTA to draft a request and provide funding options.
	Provide elected officials with opportunities for tours, speaking engagements, ribbon cuttings, ground breakings, etc.	2024 – 2027	In process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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.				
X	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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	
Activities	Timeline	Status	Notes
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			
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 * Met with Stakeholders including members of the Downtown business and social service community on 10/10
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.
Activities	Timeline	Status	Notes
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) * Evaluating technology pilot programs relating to facility security and on-board safety and security. Prepared RFP for radio system pending IDOT concurrence.
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. * Evaluating the efficiency/effectiveness of routes and services prior to FY26 Budget preparation.

X

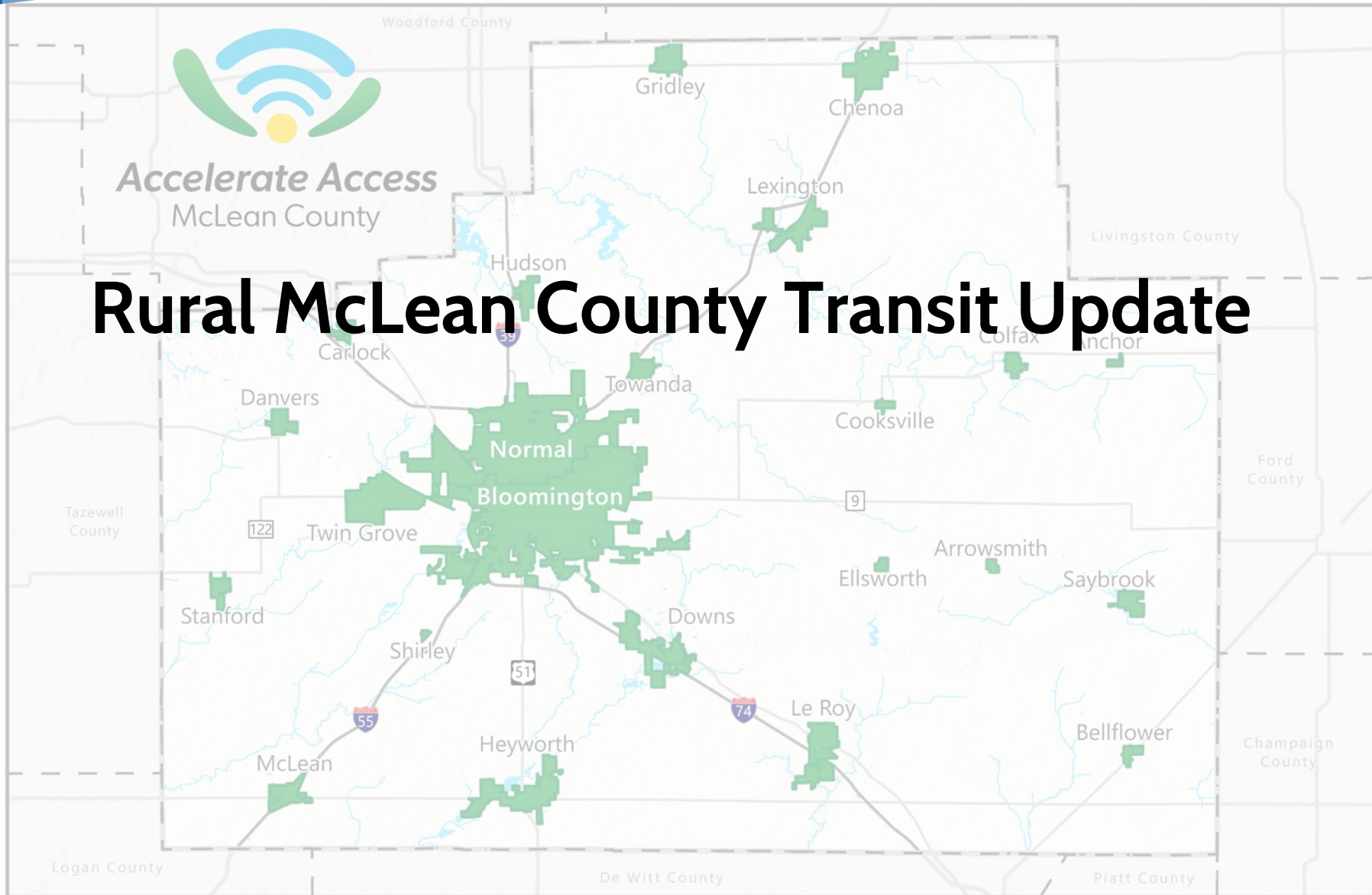
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Accelerate Access
McLean County

Rural McLean County Transit Update



Steps in Process

- **June 10, 2024:** County resolves to withdraw from six-county IGA
- **October 17, 2024:** County resolves to assign funding to Connect Transit as required by IDOT budget process.
- **December through February:** IDOT sponsored planning study to recommend service levels and types of service that can be offered within the operating funds available.
- **At conclusion of study:** Results to be presented to Board of Trustees, City, Town, and County.
- **Requirements to continue discussion:**
 - Approval of IGA amendment between City and Town allowing service in McLean County
 - Agreement of Board of Trustees to expand mission to serve McLean County
- **Key issues:**
 - Governance
 - Operational organization
 - Vehicle requirements and availability
 - Staffing requirements
 - Budget
 - Separation of urban and rural funding
 - Percent allocation of shared resources

Downtown Transit Center Update



Workshops Held

- Kick-off – 9/19/24
- Bus Layout - 9/19/24
- Parking - 9/20/24
- Project Quality Management – 10/10/24
- Alternative Delivery - 10/10/24
- Safety and Security - 10/24/24
 - Follow-up Police Substation and Technology - 11/19/24
- Accessibility - 10/24/24
 - Attended by representatives of:
 - Area on Aging
 - LIFE CIL
 - County Health Department
 - East Central Illinois Area Agency on Ageing
 - Lifelong Access
- Website Design (bi-weekly, ongoing)

Remaining Workshops

- Aesthetics Workshop #1 – 12/6/24
- Market Analysis Workshop – 12/6/24
- Sustainability Workshop - 12/19/24
- Bus Routing Workshop - 12/19/24
- Constructability Workshop
- Stakeholder Meeting #2

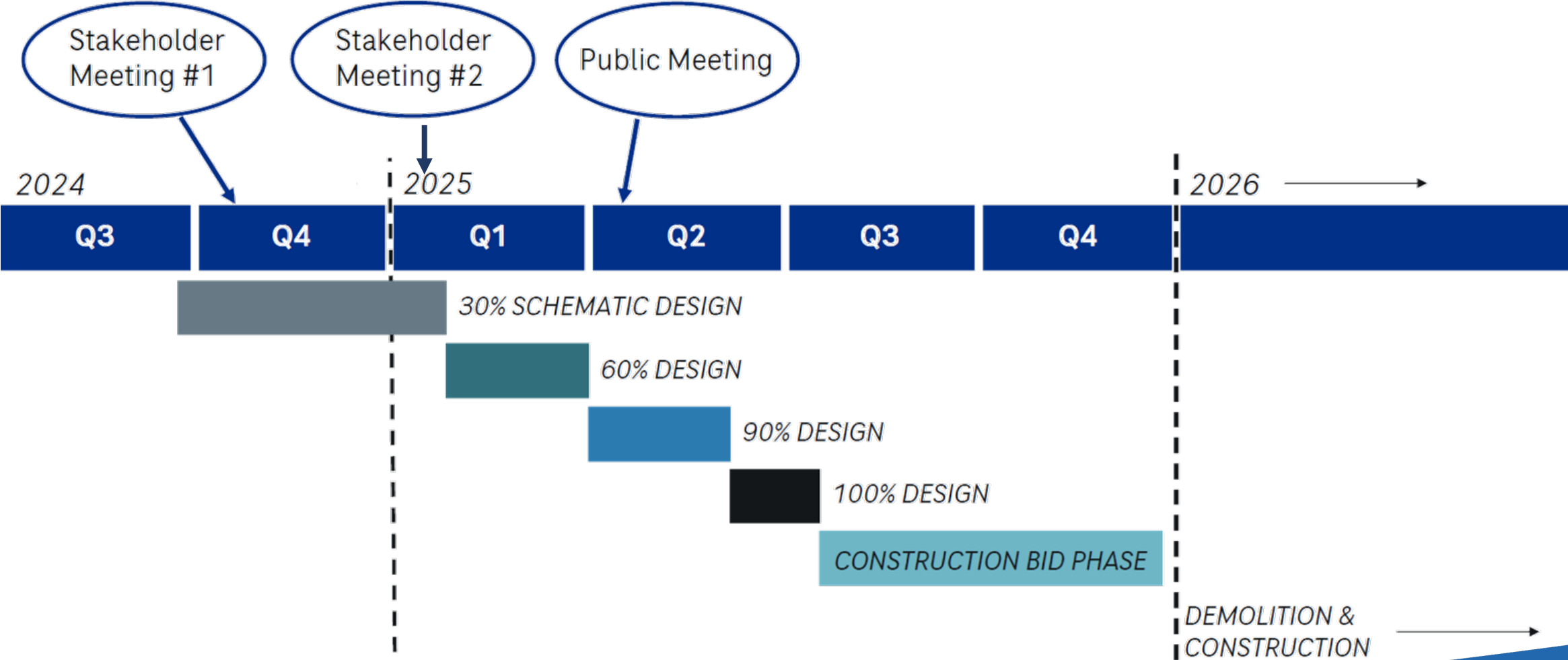
Stakeholder Committee Meeting #1

- Meeting held October 10, 2024
- Attended by representatives of:
 - Economic Development Council
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - City of Bloomington
 - Fox & Hounds Day Spa
 - Herb Eaton Studio Gallery
 - Convention and Visitors Bureau
 - Home Sweet Home Ministries
 - The Center for Human Services
 - Heritage Enterprises
- Topics included:
 - Project Overview
 - Project Elements
 - Project Scope
 - Project Schedule
 - Market Analysis Overview
 - Transit Center Design Examples

Land Acquisition

- Sent to FTA for language and requirement concurrence
 - Draft Purchase and Sale Agreement
 - To be presented to Board after FTA concurrence is received and all parties agree to draft contract language
 - Lease Agreement
 - Establishes long-term maintenance and responsibilities between the parties.
 - To be presented to Board after FTA concurrence is received and all parties agree to draft lease language

Anticipated Timeline



Community

• Outreach:

- ISU Off-site Campus Expo
- Heartland Community College WDC Ribbon Cutting
- Heartland Community College Job Fair
- WGLT Office Tour
- McLean County Chamber of Commerce Job Fair (also at Heartland Community College)
- Tentac Trunk or Treat
- Colene Hoose Trunk or Treat
- McLean County Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit Showcase
- Stuff the Bus Kickoff at Donny B's
- Bloomington Bison Kickoff Event

• Employee Morale:

- Bi-Monthly Employee Town Hall meetings
- October & November employee birthdays & work anniversary celebrations
- October Fall Cookout
- Annual Thanksgiving Employee Potluck



Professional Development

- 2024 APTA TRANSForm Conference:
 - Anaheim, CA; 9/29/24 – 10/2/24
 - Attended by:
 - David Braun, Managing Director
 - Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director
 - Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
 - Alex Giantamidis, Transit Planner



Professional Development

TRANSform

SEPT. 29-OCT. 2, 2024
ANAHEIM, CA

- There was a big emphasis on Cyber Security, and we will ensure our Cyber Insurance is sufficient.
- Considerable discussion about coalition building and building support for transit. Strategies include:
 - Simple messaging
 - Aligning transit with community goals
 - Inform and educate public
 - Demonstrate benefits to supporting transit
 - Get help from APTA's Center for Transportation Excellence (CFTE)
- The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) will be studying local and regional funding mechanisms for public transportation. Pat Kuebrich signed up to be a volunteer to help with the study.
- There are changes in the Uniform Guidance for Federal Awards that we need to follow.
- Speakers from Italy, the UK, and Canada spoke about how they are handling similar challenges to what we are facing.

Recruiting

- Positions Open
 - Bus Operator (6)
 - Customer Service Representative (2)
 - Dispatcher (2)
 - Maintenance Supervisor (1)
 - Mechanic (1)
 - Microtransit Operator (1)
 - Microtransit Operator Part Time (1)
 - Scheduler (1)
 - Service Technician (1)



Recruiting

- Positions Filled
 - Bus Operator (4)
 - Dispatcher (1)
 - Outreach Coordinator (1)
 - Safety & Training Coordinator (1)
 - Service Technician (2)
 - Technology Support Specialist (1)

**WELCOME
ABOARD**

FY25 Meeting Calendar

- Calendar invites were sent out



2025 Board of Trustees Meeting Dates

Unless otherwise stated below, the regular meeting date for the Board of Trustees is the fourth Tuesday of each month at 4:30 p.m., as stated in the by-laws.

- January 28, 2025: Regular Session
- February 25, 2025: Regular Session
- March 25, 2025: Annual Meeting at 4:20 p.m.
- March 25, 2025: Regular Session at 4:30 p.m.
- April 22, 2025: Regular Session
- May 27, 2025: Regular Session
- June 24, 2025: Regular Session
- July 22, 2025: Regular Session
- August 26, 2025: Regular Session
- September 23, 2025: Regular Session
- October 28, 2025: Regular Session
- November 25, 2025: Regular Session

Reminders

- Updated Photos
 - Will begin taking new photos for all Trustees in 2025
- OMA Trainings Due
 - Watch for emails

Agenda

- Trustee Comments
- Executive Session – (ILCS 120/2(c)(1) – Personnel Matters

**The Board of Trustees is in
Executive Session.**

Agenda

- Adjournment
 - Roll Call Vote
- Next Meeting: January 28, 2025

