



connect TRANSIT

Connect Transit Study Group 2012-2013

Goal:

1. Overall goal of the study group: To review current funding of the transit system and look at all options, focusing on local options, to continue service excellence in the event of any significant shift of current funding sources.

Charge of the Study Group by the Connect Transit Board of Directors:

1. What might the system do to achieve financial stability
2. How does the transit system affect the core constituency group I represent or work with
3. What recommendations can I make that would assist the board and my core group to provide the best transit system available while working within the financial resources available..

Organization:

1. The study group selected a chair to coordinate meetings and facilitate discussion on the charge from the board
2. The study group organized into three separate task forces for brainstorming
3. The three study groups are focused on: Framework of system, Financials/Funding, and Stakeholder Impact/Contribution

Transit Funding Study Group Task Force:

Overall goal of the study group: To review current funding of the transit system and look at all options, focusing on local options, to continue service excellence in the event of any significant shift of current funding sources.

The following questions have been posed by the Board of Directors to the Study Group. Finding answers and data on these questions is the Charge of the Study group as a whole:

- a. What might the system do to achieve financial stability
- b. How does the transit system affect the core constituency group I represent or work with
- c. What recommendations can I make that would assist the board and my core group to provide the best transit system available while working within the financial resources available.

In order to achieve the Charge of the group, the following Task Forces have been formed to gather specific information so the group may effectively answer the Charge from the board:

- a. Framework: review the macro points that will affect the ability to reach financial sustainability-items like the public mission statement-macro look at where the routes could go and how often they run
- b. Finance/Funding: review items like Sales Tax, Transit District, Local Funding, Grants, Advertising etc.
- c. Stakeholders Impact/Contribution: review who the riders are, how we work with and impact the board, employees, students, courts etc.

The specific Charters of each of the groups is as follows:

Framework: To achieve the goal of the study group by reviewing the current Vision, Mission and Strategy statements ensuring their relevance relative to funding goals of the system, their impact on community perception and overall relevance in an ever changing society. This should include, but not be limited to, any adjustments to the service area (macro look), adjustments to service delivery methods (bus, van, car, shared rides) and any other macro items that would affect the transit system as a whole.

Finance/Funding: To achieve the goal of the study group by reviewing the current funding sources and make suggestions that would shift funding in the event of significant changes to the current sources. The group should, at least, address new funding sources from or through taxing bodies (includes inter-governmental agreements), specific contracts with stakeholders to provide comprehensive and specific funding for service, advertising partnerships, increased fare box, private sector grants and any other sources the task force deems appropriate.

Stakeholder Impact/Contribution: To achieve the goal of the study by developing a current list of transit stakeholders (Riders, Employers, Students, Schools, Court System, Economic Development) and determine their current needs and contribution while keeping an eye on the future to define previously unidentified stakeholders and the needs those group may have.

Study Group Task Forces are being assigned as follows: Additional members may be added to these task forces as needed to achieve the charter of the task force.

Framework

Mike-Fitzgerald, Community Leader
Ruth Ann Fraker, YWCA
Jennifer Sicks, Regional Planning

Finance

Julie Dobski, McDonalds/Little Jewels
Mike Matejka, Laborers Council
Barry Reilly, Dist 87
David Seizer, Community Health Charities
Matt Sorenson, McLean County

Stakeholder

Jenny Greminger, State Farm Insurance
Christina Schulz, Hife Group
Melissa Libert, Country Insurance
Julie North, ISU
Sally Pyne, Lincoln College
Janet Hood, BroMenn

Timeline:

1. The group had its original meeting in July of 2012
2. The group formed task forces in January of 2013
3. Task Force meeting scheduled during February and March of 2013
4. Study Group Meeting to vote on reports April 2013
5. Report forwarded to the Transit Board of Directors May 2013

Results:

Overall we feel that to accomplish any goal of creating/increasing local financial contribution we need to ensure:

1. Routes and schedules must adapt to meet needs of key stakeholders and their perspective riders
2. Impact. We must show our stakeholders the quantifiable impact that transit has on our community and their business/organization

To accomplish our goals of financial sustainability we feel that focus and resolution needs to be on:

1. Local revenue enhancements
 - a. Increased Ridership (See Stakeholder Contracts)
 - b. Vehicle sticker revenue directed to transit
 - c. Transit District establishment
 - d. Local share sales tax
 - e. Review possibility of a transit fee to apartments and businesses requesting parking variations.
 - f. Other local fees or revenues
2. Stakeholder contracts
 - a. Corporate
 - b. Organizations
 - c. Schools at all levels (K-16)
3. Communications and Education
 - a. Speakers/Advocacy Bureau
 - b. Bus rider education
 - c. Media schedule-stories of caring etc.

We recognize the amount of work this plan would create and suggest the formation of a development/advocacy committee that could assist the staff with many of the outreach functions.

We suggest exploring the utilization of groups such as Deb Halperin's services from IWU, Leadership McLean County and the Multi Cultural Leadership Program. These groups and others could be a considerable asset as we look at how we quantify the Impact transit has to our community.

We also suggest that once the final report is considered by the transit board that we convene a meeting of all the taxing body officials in Bloomington/Normal and present the premise and finding of the task force and solicit additional feedback from these stakeholders as many of them are looking at their current and future revenue streams.