



Connect Transit will livestream the Board of Trustees meetings when a YouTube link is provided on the agenda. Anyone who attends the meeting or addresses a public meeting during Public Comment time will be heard and may be seen on the livestream. Any audio and video captured will be in the recording.

If you are experiencing COVID symptoms, please do not attend the meeting.

AGENDA

Connect Transit Board of Trustees, Regular Session

July 22, 2025 – 4:30 p.m.

Connect Transit Board Room, 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, IL 61761

[YouTube Link for July 22, 2025](#)

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
 - a. Attendance by Other Means/Virtual – Roll Call Vote
- C. Pledge of Allegiance and Mission Statement
- D. Public Comments
- E. Consent Agenda
 - a. Approval of Minutes for June 24, 2025 – Regular Session
 - b. ~~Approval of Financial Information for June 2025~~ – delayed due to year end closing
 - c. Monthly Statistical Reports for June 2025
 - d. Cardinal Infrastructure; Federal Report
 - e. Cornerstone; Illinois Weekly Update
- F. New Business
 - a. Recommendation for Route Modifications – Roll Call Vote
 - b. Recommendation for Via Contract Amendment – Roll Call Vote
- G. Committee Reports
- H. Chairman’s Report
- I. Managing Director’s Report
- J. Trustee Comments
- K. Executive Session
- L. Adjournment

Mission:

Connect Transit provides safe, reliable transportation and access to opportunity to strengthen and enrich individual lives, our community, the economy, and the environment.





June 2025	Current Month	Month in Prior Year	Percent Change	Year to Date	Prior Year to Date	% Change YTD
System Statistics:						
System Ridership	135,470	132,531	2.22%	2,234,215	2,302,990	-2.99%
Fixed Ridership	121,119	119,065	1.73%	2,062,754	2,135,255	-3.40%
Mobility Ridership	9,310	8,483	9.75%	113,993	113,503	0.43%
FLEX Ridership	5,041	4,983	1.16%	57,468	54,232	5.97%
System Service Hours	13,442	13,024	3.21%	168,657	173,955	-3.05%
Fixed Service Hours	8,349	8,230	1.45%	107,345	113,732	-5.62%
Mobility Service Hours	4,078	3,749	8.78%	48,952	48,317	1.31%
FLEX Service Hours	1,015	1,045	-2.87%	12,360	11,906	3.81%
System Service Miles	164,694	160,041	2.91%	2,071,527	2,076,406	-0.23%
Fixed Service Miles	101,807	100,608	1.19%	1,302,094	1,342,494	-3.01%
Mobility Service Miles	48,686	46,601	4.47%	602,735	598,695	0.67%
FLEX Service Miles	14,201	12,832	10.67%	166,698	135,217	23.28%
System Revenue Vehicles	57	60	-5.00%	64	67	-4.48%
Fixed Revenue Vehicles	32	34	-5.88%	38	40	-5.00%
Mobility Revenue Vehicles	20	21	-4.76%	21	22	-4.55%
FLEX Revenue Vehicles	5	5	0.00%	5	5	0.00%
System Miles/Revenue Vehicle	2,889	2,667	8.32%	32,368	30,991	4.44%
Fixed Miles/Revenue Vehicle	3,181	2,959	7.52%	34,266	33,562	2.10%
Mobility Miles/Revenue Vehicle	2,434	2,219	9.70%	28,702	27,213	5.47%
FLEX Miles/Revenue Vehicle	2,840	2,566	10.67%	33,340	27,043	23.28%
System Efficiencies:						
System Ridership/Service Hour	10.08	10.18	-0.96%	13.25	13.24	0.06%
Fixed Ridership/Revenue Hour	14.51	14.47	0.28%	19.22	18.77	2.35%
Mobility Ridership/Revenue Hour	2.28	2.26	0.89%	2.33	2.35	-0.87%
FLEX Ridership/Revenue Hour	4.97	4.77	4.15%	4.65	4.55	2.08%
System Percent On-Time Trips	93.53%	94.23%	-0.74%	90.76%	92.41%	-1.78%
Fixed Percent On-Time Trips	94%	95%	-1.05%	91%	92%	-1.69%
Mobility Percent On-Time Trips	98%	97%	1.03%	96%	97%	-0.85%
FLEX Percent On-Time Trips	74%	71%	4.23%	79%	85%	-7.29%
System Subsidy/Passenger	*	\$12.92	*	\$7.35	\$7.35	-0.04%
Fixed Subsidy/Passenger	*	\$10.83	*	\$5.10	\$5.96	-14.52%
Mobility Subsidy/Passenger	*	\$40.97	*	\$42.05	\$30.12	39.63%
FLEX Subsidy/Passenger	*	\$15.09	*	\$19.20	\$14.25	34.73%
Operator Pay Hours/Service Hour	1.30	1.43	-8.68%	1.32	1.31	0.72%
Vehicle Maintenance Expense/Mile	*	\$2.09	*	\$1.24	\$1.19	4.78%



600 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 250, Washington, DC 20001

Federal Update for Connect Transit
Prepared July 16th, 2025

Reconciliation Update

President Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act into law last week. Senate Republicans passed the bill on July 1 by a vote of 51-50, with Vice President JD Vance casting the tie-breaking vote after three Senate Republicans—Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Thom Tillis (R-NC), and Rand Paul (R-KY)—voted with their Democratic colleagues against the bill. The bill then went back to the House and passed on July 3rd by a final vote of 218-214. Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Thomas Massie (R-KY) were the only Republicans to vote against the bill. Members of the House Freedom Caucus initially opposed the bill for adding over \$3.9 trillion to the federal deficit but agreed to vote in favor after receiving assurances from the Trump Administration and House leadership that they would pursue additional spending cuts.

At 800 pages, the new law is sprawling. Generally, the Act's key provisions—extensions of the 2017 tax cuts and reductions to Medicaid and SNAP won't impact transit agencies directly. However, as state and local governments are expected to shoulder a much larger financial burden for social programs, budgets will be tightened, and downstream effects on local governments will become evident as those costs are realized. The bill also raises the nation's debt limit, meaning that Congress will pay for the tax cuts with future debt obligations.

The bill's impact on transportation is fairly minimal and mostly comes via clawbacks of certain energy tax credits that would have had the potential to reduce fuel costs for transit agencies. The 45V Clean Hydrogen Production Credit's expiration date has been moved from 2033 to 2028, while the 30C Alternative Fuel Vehicle Refueling Property Credit will not only be claimable for infrastructure placed into service before June 30th, 2026. The timeline for the Commercial Clean Vehicles credit was also shortened in this legislation; qualifying vehicles must be acquired before September 30th of this year to be claimed.

Appropriations Update

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development released its bill text earlier this week. This bill fully funds transit formula programs with \$14.642 billion in funding, but does not provide BUILD grant funding or any plus-ups for IJA advanced appropriations such as the bus grant programs. It is also worth noting that this bill targets three passenger rail projects by name: California High Speed Rail, Texas High Speed Rail, and the Northern Lights Express intercity passenger rail project in Minnesota. This is part of a growing trend where Congress is willing to inject itself into regional disputes on behalf of local opposition. We urge you to resolve issues locally before Congress feels the need to step in.



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Finally, it is important to remember that while the Appropriations bills are currently advancing through their respective committees via party-line votes, they will eventually need Democratic support to pass. With Democrats strongly opposed to the over \$160 billion in planned non-defense cuts, an Appropriations showdown is likely this September.

Supreme Court rules to Allow Mass Layoffs

The Supreme Court has ruled that the Trump Administration may move forward with its plans to conduct further reductions in force. The Administration's plans to slash the size of the federal workforce have been in limbo since May, when a District Judge blocked agencies from carrying out those orders while the courts assessed their legality. FTA's workforce has already been reduced between 30-40%.

DOT Sends Letter to Biden-era Grant Recipients on Climate, Diversity Provisions

The Department of Transportation shared a letter with recipients of Biden-era grants explaining that DOT will not be enforcing any requirements relating to climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, racial equity, gender identity, environmental justice, the Justice40 initiative, and diversity, equity, and inclusion that are not required by statute. The letter does not impose any new requirements on recipients; it merely states that DOT will not be enforcing these aforementioned requirements.

FTA Releases Final Notice on NTD Reporting Changes

FTA has released a [final notice](#) clarifying proposed changes to NTD reporting requirements that were first published in October of last year.

Graves Indicates Intention to Reintroduce EV and Hybrid Fees

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) has said that he will attempt to reintroduce the EV and hybrid fees that were struck from the reconciliation bill, likely in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.



CORNERSTONE

— AN EMPLOYEE-OWNED COMPANY —

TO: Connect Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Cornerstone Government Affairs – Illinois Team
SUBJECT: Legislative Update
DATE: July 22, 2025

Summary

This month, our team continued to pursue the release of the \$3 million in funding that we secured in the FY 26 budget for Connect. Additionally, we continued to work through a strategy to move eMirror legislation this fall. Our team has continued outreach to House staff to identify a shell bill where this language could be included for consideration during Veto Session this fall. We will continue to keep Connect updated as discussions progress.

Moving forward, we are continuing to monitor public transit reform discussions and other actions outside of session which may impact your work. At this time, it does not appear that there will be a special session to discuss transit reform this summer, so this issue will likely be dealt with during the fall Veto Session.

Bill Tracking

Below are bills of interest in your filed that passed this session and will now be sent to the Governor for final consideration.

[HB 1616](#)

Short Description: ORGAN DONOR LEAVE-PART-TIME

House Sponsors

Rep. [Nabeela Syed](#), [Camille Y. Lilly](#), [Katie Stuart](#), [Elizabeth "Lisa" Hernandez](#), [Joyce Mason](#), [Harry Benton](#), [Jaime M. Andrade, Jr.](#), [Barbara Hernandez](#), [Emanuel "Chris" Welch](#), [Jay Hoffman](#), [Nicolle Grasse](#), [Tracy Katz Muhl](#), [Maura Hirschauer](#), [Kevin John Olickal](#), [Bob Morgan](#), [Hoan Huynh](#), [Abdelnasser Rashid](#), [Anna Moeller](#) and [Janet Yang Rohr](#)

Senate Sponsors

(Sen. [Christopher Belt](#), [Mattie Hunter](#), [Lakesia Collins](#), [Paul Faraci](#), [Emil Jones, III](#), [Adriane Johnson](#), [Mike Simmons](#), [Michael E. Hastings](#), [Patrick J. Joyce](#), [Karina Villa](#), [Doris Turner](#) and [Mary Edly-Allen](#))

Statutes Amended In Order of Appearance

[820 ILCS 149/10](#)

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Employee Blood and Organ Donation Leave Act. Provides that a participating employee or part-time employee (rather than an employee) may use up to 10 days of leave in any 12-month period to serve as an organ donor. Provides that, for a part-time employee using leave to serve as an organ donor, the employer shall calculate the daily average pay the part-time employee received during his or her previous 2 months of employment and compensate the part-time employee in the amount of the daily average pay for the leave days used.

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
06/24/2025	House	Sent to the Governor

[HB 2978](#)

Short Description: NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE LEAVE

House Sponsors

Rep. [Laura Faver Dias](#), [Nicole La Ha](#), [Kimberly Du Buclet](#), [Mary Beth Canty](#), [Barbara Hernandez](#), [Maura Hirschauer](#), [Dagmara Avelar](#), [Maurice A. West, II](#), [Elizabeth "Lisa" Hernandez](#), [Will Guzzardi](#), [Edgar González, Jr.](#), [Kelly M. Cassidy](#), [Nicolle Grasse](#), [Nabeela Syed](#), [Abdelnasser Rashid](#), [Justin Slaughter](#), [Kevin John Olickal](#), [Sonya M. Harper](#), [Martha Deuter](#), [Diane Blair-Sherlock](#), [Jennifer Sanalidro](#), [Anna Moeller](#), [Sue Scherer](#), [Camille Y. Lilly](#) and [Hoan Huynh](#)

Senate Sponsors

(Sen. [Bill Cunningham](#), [Julie A. Morrison](#) and [Meg Loughran Cappel](#))

Statutes Amended In Order of Appearance

New Act
30 ILCS 105/5.1030 new

Synopsis As Introduced

Creates the Family Neonatal Intensive Care Leave Act. Provides that an employee of an employer with 16 or more employees and no more than 50 employees shall be entitled to use a maximum of 10 days of unpaid neonatal intensive care leave while any child of the employee is a patient in a neonatal intensive care unit. Provides that an employee of an employer with 51 or more employees shall be entitled to use 20 days of unpaid neonatal intensive care leave while a child of the employee is a patient in a neonatal intensive care unit. Provides that, upon the conclusion of leave taken under the Act, an employee shall be reinstated to his or her former position or a substantially equivalent one with no loss of benefits held or accrued prior to taking leave. Sets forth provisions concerning unlawful employer practices; Department of Labor responsibilities; and enforcement. Amends the State Finance Act to create the Neonatal Intensive Care Leave Fund.

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
06/24/2025	House	Sent to the Governor

General Legislative Updates**104th ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY:**

The Illinois General Assembly remains on summer break. The Legislature will convene for a two-week Veto Session in October.

The House Executive Committee rescheduled the subject matter hearing to discuss [HB 4017](#) (Tarver). The hearing will be held on July 31 at 10 am in the Bilandic Building in Chicago.

GOVERNOR’S HIGHLIGHTS:

Executive Order: Governor JB Pritzker issued [Executive Order 2025-03](#), which directs state agencies to evaluate the impact of tariffs on key economic sectors and the increased costs that will be passed onto working families.

As part of the Executive Order, Governor Pritzker has directed state agencies to assess the following:

- Identify Business Vulnerabilities and Workforce Disruptions
- Prepare for Medical Supply Chain Disruptions
- Stabilize Food Assistance Programs
- Protect Infrastructure Investments
- Develop a Strategy for Material Cost and Supply Chain Risks
- Strengthen Emergency Preparedness and Supply Chain Resilience

Read more [here](#).

Governor Asks for Release of Federal Education Funds: Governor JB Pritzker joined with governors from 16 states, calling upon the Secretary of Education to release approximately \$6.8 billion in federal funds that are being withheld from schools and students. Based on fiscal year 2025 grant awards, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Community College Board estimate the federal government is currently withholding \$241.8 million from Illinois schools, community colleges, adult education providers, and students. Read more [here](#).

Electric School Bus Grants Awarded: The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency awarded seven grants totaling over \$13 million for the purchase of 46 new all-electric school buses. This

funding will enable school districts and student transportation companies to retire older diesel-powered buses and provide the necessary charging infrastructure for the new electric buses. This initiative aims to improve air quality for students and the surrounding communities. Read more [here](#).

IDFPR Adds More Licenses to Online CORE System: The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation now offers licensure for 24 additional professions through its CORE online system. The latest license additions represent the completion of Phase 2.3. The final phase is expected this summer. Read more, including the professions added to CORE, [here](#).

Governor Pritzker Criticizes State Farm Insurance Rate Increase: Governor Pritzker criticized Bloomington-based insurer State Farm for announcing a 27.2% increase in homeowners' premiums, expressing concern that the hike is unfair and based on inconsistent data from the Illinois Department of Insurance. He urged the General Assembly to implement legislation during the upcoming Veto Session to prevent such excessive rate increases. In response, the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies stated that the Governor is mischaracterizing the insurance market and emphasized the need for competitive insurance products. The Illinois Insurance Association and the American Property Casualty Insurance Association also rejected the Governor's claims of arbitrary rate hikes and shifting costs onto Illinois consumers. Read the Governor's complete statement [here](#). Read more [here](#). The State Farm rate filing is [here](#). DOI's objection is [here](#).

Children's Adversity Index: The Pritzker administration launched the [Children's Adversity Index](#), a new tool designed to measure childhood trauma exposure among children aged 3 to 18 in communities throughout Illinois.

Developed by Chapin Hall and the Illinois State Board of Education, the Index was created in collaboration with eight state agencies and leading experts. It reflects the administration's commitment to fostering equitable, inclusive, and supportive environments for all children. Originating from the [2022 Whole Child Task Force Report](#), the Children's Adversity Index became a legislative mandate in 2023. This initiative represents a significant step towards identifying and addressing the systemic challenges that affect communities across the state.

2025 Prevailing Wage Rates Announced: The Illinois Department of Labor updated the prevailing wage rates for construction trades for 2025, effective July 15. This change is based on an annual survey mandated by the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act, which requires that workers on publicly funded projects be paid according to local wage standards. To view the 2025 prevailing wage rates by county and construction trade, visit [IDOL's website](#).

Tech Incubator Enhancement Grants Awarded: The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity awarded \$7 million in grants to four grantees through the Tech Incubator Enhancement Grant (TIEG) Program. This funding aims to support entrepreneurship and

innovation in key growth industries in the state and enhance the resilience of startup incubators. The TIEG Program is focused on modernizing tech incubators to serve the evolving needs of startups, promoting an ecosystem of innovation, collaboration, and resilience. Read more [here](#).

OSF Fire Station Grant Awards: The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal announced the inaugural Fire Station Construction and Rehabilitation Program awards totaling \$5 million to 16 grantees across the state. This funding will allow fire departments or fire protection districts to repair, upgrade, or construct new fire stations. A list of grant recipients is [here](#).

Measles Outbreak Update: The Illinois Department of Public Health declared the measles outbreak in Southern Illinois is over. There were a total of eight cases, with no new cases reported since May 22. Read more [here](#).

ISP Graduates New Cadet Class: The Illinois State Police graduated its largest cadet class in the last 25 years. A total of 95 new troopers from Cadet Class 150 participated in a graduation ceremony. These new troopers will be assigned to all ten ISP Troop locations throughout the state starting Sunday, July 13, 2025. Read more [here](#).

Gubernatorial Appointments: Governor Pritzker appointed the following:

- Theodore Hengesbach will continue to serve as Inspector General at the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority.
- Christopher Thor Martin will serve as Inspector General at the Illinois Department of Human Services.
- Dionne Hayden will serve as Chair for the Illinois Gaming Board.
- Michael Glaub will continue to serve as an Arbitrator on the Workers' Compensation Commission.
- William McLaughlin will continue to serve as an Arbitrator on the Workers' Compensation Commission.
- Francis Brady will continue to serve as an Arbitrator of the Workers' Compensation Commission.
- Kisa Sthankiya will serve as a Member of the Workers' Compensation Medical Fee Advisory Board.
- Ava George Stewart will continue to serve as a Member of the Guardianship and Advocacy Commission.
- Stacey Young will continue to serve as a Member of the Enterprise Zone Board.
- Alan Zais will serve as a Member of the Affordable Housing Advisory Commission.

OTHER NEWS:

Head Start Programs: The Trump administration announced that immigrants in the country illegally will be barred from enrolling in the federally funded Head Start preschool program as part of its efforts to restrict access to federal benefits for undocumented individuals. The Department of Health and Human Services stated it would classify these programs as federal public benefits, thus excluding those

without legal immigration status. Despite the change at the federal level, the Illinois Head Start Association advised its members to refrain from making policy changes due to the lack of federal guidance on implementing this ban. Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, the association's head, expressed concern that inquiring about legal status could instill fear and anxiety in the communities served by the program. Read more [here](#).

2026 Election Update: State Comptroller Susana Mendoza announced that she will not seek re-election to the post in 2026. Mendoza is widely expected to run for mayor of Chicago in 2027. Comptroller Mendoza is a former state representative and Chicago City Clerk, who was elected Comptroller in 2016 (following the death of Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka). She was elected to a full term in 2018 and re-elected in 2022.

With Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza not seeking re-election, three Democratic candidates are considering running to replace her. Lake County Treasurer Holly Kim, State Representative Margaret Croke, and State Senator Karina Villa.

Yet another candidate has jumped into the crowded Democratic primary race in the 9th Congressional District. Nick Pyati, a former teacher and federal prosecutor, said, “It’s time for a vision and a plan that expands our economy, inspires innovation, and rebuilds America – an America we are proud to leave to our kids.”

Will County Board member Julie Berkowicz will run in the Republican primary for the 21st Senate District, currently represented by Democratic Senator Laura Ellman. Berkowicz said at the county level, she advocates for lower taxes and smaller government, and has been frustrated in recent years with the increased tax levies that have been approved.

State Representative La Shawn Ford announced that he will not be seeking reelection to the 8th Representative District. Ford has held this position for the past 17 years. On May 21, he filed paperwork with the Federal Elections Commission to run for the United States Congress in Illinois’ 7th district, a seat currently occupied by Danny Davis since 1997. Ford stated that if Davis decides to run in the upcoming November election, he will not challenge him and will instead retire from politics.

John Harrell, co-founder and president of Black Men United, and a pastor at two Baptist churches, filed to run as a Democrat in Ford’s 8th House District. Harrell also serves on the Loretto Hospital Board. Republican Leslie Collazo also announced she will run to replace Ford.

Four candidates are now vying in the Democratic primary to replace Representative Hoan Huynh who is running in the crowded Democratic primary in the 9th Congressional District. Demi Palecek, a sergeant in the Army National Guard, is the president of the 46th Ward Democratic Organization, who worked at Operation Swing State as director of marketing communications. Also announcing this week is former House Democratic staffer James O’Brien. They will face Sunjay Kumar and former Statehouse lobbyist and former Executive Deputy Attorney General Adam Braun.

Senators Neil Anderson, Steve McClure, Andrew Chesney and Julie Morrison along with Representatives Bradley Fritts, Dan Swanson, Jason Bunting, Daniel Didech and Dr. Paul Jacobs announced they will seek reelection. Republican Senator Don Dewitte announced he will not seek reelection in 2026. He plans to serve out the remainder of his term, which ends in January of 2027.

Opioid Settlement: Illinois is set to receive up to \$23 million from settlements with pharmaceutical companies involved in deceptive practices that contributed to the opioid crisis. The total settlements, reached with eight companies, amount to \$720 million across nine states. Attorney General Kwame Raoul emphasized the ongoing impact of opioid addiction on families and the commitment to hold companies accountable. The settlements prohibit seven companies from marketing opioids and require monitoring systems for suspicious orders. The eighth company, Indivior, has agreed to stop manufacturing opioid products for 10 years but can still market medications for treating opioid use disorder. Read more [here](#).

Settlement Reached with Gilead Sciences: Attorney General Kwame Raoul announced a \$202 million multistate settlement with Gilead Sciences Inc. for operating an illegal kickback scheme to promote its HIV medications. The scheme involved providing incentives to healthcare providers, which led to the submission of false claims to government healthcare programs. The settlement allocates \$49 million for Medicaid nationwide, with over \$925,000 designated for Illinois. From January 2011 to November 2017, Gilead violated federal anti-kickback laws by paying healthcare providers to promote drugs like Stribild and Genvoya, covering travel expenses, and hosting lavish dinners. Read more [here](#).

Illinois Attorney General Sues Over Federal Education Grant Freeze: Attorney General Kwame Raoul, along with a coalition of 25 states, filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration for unlawfully freezing billions in funding for six education grants just before the school year begins. Raoul highlighted the negative impact on school budgets and student programs, causing stress for families reliant on these resources. The lawsuit claims the funding freeze violates several federal laws and the U.S. Constitution, seeking a court ruling to declare the freeze unlawful and to mandate the immediate release of the withheld funds. Read more [here](#).

Illinois Attorney General Sues Over Ending FEMA's BRIC Program: Attorney General Kwame Raoul and a coalition of 20 states sued the Trump administration for trying to shut down FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. For 30 years, this program has provided resources to help communities strengthen their infrastructure against natural disasters, focusing on preparedness to protect property, reduce costs, and save lives. Read more [here](#).

Transit Fiscal Cliff Update: The Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois reports that Chicago's transit fiscal cliff may be less severe than expected, thanks to increased revenue from a new e-commerce tax. The Regional Transportation Authority could gain over \$200 million annually if spending remains steady, reducing the projected \$771 million funding shortfall for the CTA, Metra, and Pace after federal pandemic relief ends next year. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).



MEMO

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Board of Trustees
From: Alex Giantamidis, Transit Planner
CC: David Braun, Managing Director
Subject: Recommendation to Modify Routes as Outlined

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board approve the replacement of the Red Express Route with a new circulator route, currently named the Mint Route and approve the restoration of peak-hour service on the Purple and Blue Routes.

Staff also withdraws their proposal to realign the Yellow/Pink Route after receiving public input that provided more information about the needs of the people using the route. We are currently reconsidering how to best serve the area and the people using the route.

Strategic Alignment:

Connect Transit's Strategic Plan Goal #4 states that Connect Transit will operate efficiently without sacrificing quality. Objective #3 states that we should "position Connect Transit to provide solutions for changing service demands", specifically by "continually analyzing service performance, ... large employer locations and work shifts, and changing demographics to identify appropriate methods to meet the various needs..."

Background:

The Red Express currently runs on weekdays, only during peak morning and afternoon hours. It serves Uptown Station, College Avenue, Landmark Drive, Walmart, OSF on Ft. Jesse Road, and Lifelong Access.

The Purple and Blue Routes are interlined, and both connect Downtown Bloomington to Target, serving areas in eastern Bloomington and Normal. These routes currently run every 60 minutes but previously operated every 30 minutes during weekday peak hours.

Peak service was discontinued in January 2024.

Discussion:

The Red Express has ongoing issues with on-time performance and overall efficiency, resulting in unreliable service. Connect Transit proposes replacing it with the Mint Route, which would improve reliability, extend service hours and days, and expand coverage to include major

employers Menard’s and Sam’s Club; multi- and single-family residential areas along Greenbriar Drive; and employers and social services, such as Goodwill Industries on Landmark Drive. The proposed Mint Route will operate every 30 minutes from approximately 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and will also operate on weekends.

The reduction in frequency of the Blue/Purple Route has led to lower ridership, longer wait times, and transfer challenges. To improve reliability and convenience, Connect Transit recommends reinstating 30-minute service during weekday peak hours on both routes.

Connect Transit held four public input sessions over two days at various times during the day and evening to give people the opportunity to attend at least one session. During the public input sessions, people were strongly in favor of the restoration of peak service on the Blue/Purple Routes. After people learned about the replacement strategy for the Red Express, they were in favor of the expansion of service to Sam’s, Menard’s and Goodwill, as well as the improved frequency, operating times and days of service on the new Mint Route.

Financial Impact – Red Express Replacement:

The table below represents the anticipated financial impact of the Red Express Replacement/Mint Route. The modification was not included in the FY26 budget; however, we are unable to begin the Connect FLEX service in the timeline anticipated due to a delay in vehicle procurement and will use the savings of not operating the FLEX to fund the Mint Route.

	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours
Red Express	27,437	2,032
Circulator	50,654	4,358
Difference	23,217	2,326

Marginal Cost per Mile: \$ 1.27
Marginal Cost per Hour: \$ 60.59

Additional Expense: \$ 170,418

Adjusted FLEX Zone Start Date - Start in April 2026

	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours
Budget	128,410	9,684
Anticipated	43,440	3,276
Difference	-84,970	-6,408

Marginal Cost per Mile: \$ 0.38
Marginal Cost per Hour: \$ 42.41

Budget Adjustment \$ (304,071)

Net Change: \$ (133,653)



Financial Impact – Blue/Purple Route Peak Restoration:

The additional hours and miles for this change were included in the FY26 budget.

	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours
Purple	26,504	1,820
Blue	13,237	1,117
TOTAL	39,741	2,936

Marginal Cost per Mile: \$ 1.27

Marginal Cost per Hour: \$ 60.59

Budgeted Expense: \$ 228,391



MEMO

Date: June 24, 2025
To: Board of Trustees
From: Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager
CC: David Braun, Managing Director
Subject: Recommendation to Amend the Contract with Via Transportation

Recommendation:

Authorize the Managing Director to amend our contract with Via Transportation to add paratransit and rural dispatch, and customer-facing software.

Strategic Alignment:

This recommendation aligns with Strategic Plan Goal #3 for improving the passenger experience; objective 2, optimizing the user experience. It also aligns with Goal #4 for operating efficiently without sacrificing quality; objective 2, regularly evaluate and utilize technology and data driven solutions for long term optimization.

Background:

We are under contract with Via Transportation to use their scheduling and dispatch software to support our Connect FLEX service. During the contracting process in 2023, Connect Transit included the option to add paratransit scheduling and dispatch software in the future. The original contract with Via was approved by the Board on February 22, 2023. In that Board recommendation, it was stated that Via's software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform could also support our paratransit services. Furthermore, the recommendation stated that upon the expiration of the contract with our current provider, if staff determines that providing consistent software for both services is advantageous for our operations and passengers, we would explore the option to add the paratransit software solution to the existing contract with Via.

Discussion:

Our contract with Ecolane expires on October 31, 2025. The current cost of Ecolane has averaged \$32,212.73 annually over the last three years. In advance of the expiration, Operations Department staff completed demonstrations and testing with the Via software to evaluate its suitability for our Connect Mobility service.

Through testing, the team determined that Via's app is more user-friendly for our riders. The app enables riders to request rides independently and track their vehicles in real-time. Our goal is to provide one app for all riders, and this transition will bring us significantly closer to achieving that goal.

The backend system used by Dispatchers is also more intuitive. Via's system allows Dispatch to optimize routes without alerting riders until their pickup window is near, allowing for smoother

and more efficient trip coordination. In addition, Via offers a more robust scheduling algorithm than our current vendor. Based on testing and user feedback, Connect Transit staff believes this transition will increase operational efficiency, allowing for additional service capacity and an improved rider experience.

The McLean County Connect GO service will also be included in this contract and paid for under a separate budget to maintain consistency between urban and rural dispatch.

Financial Impact:

The addition of the paratransit software will require a one-time implementation fee of \$25,000 and an annual service fee of \$63,600 based on anticipated utilization of 17 vehicles in maximum service. Additional vehicles, if needed, will cost \$275 per month. Annual fees will increase 4.7% each subsequent year, maxing out at \$84,077 in the seventh year.

The cost for the addition of Connect GO is allocated to the rural budget. There is a one-time implementation cost of \$5,000 and anticipated annual cost for the first year is \$10,400 based on two vehicles in service. Additional service hours are billed at the existing contracts rates. Annual fees in subsequent years are consistent with the current contract.

Paratransit Software

One-Time Implementation Cost	\$25,000
<i>Operating Expense</i>	
Annual Service Fee Current Contract Year 3	\$63,600
Annual Service Fee Current Contract Year 4	\$66,629
Annual Service Fee Current Contract Year 5	\$69,801
Annual Service Fee Option Year 1	\$73,125
Annual Service Fee Option Year 2	\$76,607
Annual Service Fee Option Year 3	\$80,255
Annual Service Fee Option Year 4	\$84,077

Connect GO Service

One-Time Implementation Cost	\$5,000
<i>Operating Expense</i>	
Annual Service Fee Current Contract Year 3	\$10,400
Annual Service Fee Current Contract Year 4	\$10,920
Annual Service Fee Current Contract Year 5	\$11,440
Annual Service Fee Option Year 1	\$11,960
Annual Service Fee Option Year 2	\$12,480
Annual Service Fee Option Year 3	\$13,000
Annual Service Fee Option Year 4	\$13,780

