CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
WORK SESSION PROCEEDINGS OF APRIL 18, 2017

The Work Session meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held at the Illinois Farm Bureau, Earl Smith Hall, 1701 Towanda Ave., Bloomington, IL 61701 on April 18, 2017 at 4:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:	Mike McCurdy, Vice-Chairman
	Ryan Whitehouse, Secretary
	John Bowman
	Judy Buchanan
	Lauren Lacey
	Jennifer McDade
TRUSTEES ABSENT:	John Thomas
CITY MANAGERS:	Mark Peterson, Town of Normal Manager
	Steve Rasmussen, City of Bloomington Assistant City Manager
STAFF PRESENT:	Isaac Thorne, Interim General Manager
	Julie Beer, Executive Assistant
	Jenifer Clark, Human Resources Director
	Jeff Douglas, Maintenance Manager
	Martin Glaze, Operations Manager
	Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
	Steve Stockton, Information Technology Manager
	Dave White, Safety and Training Director
OTHERS PRESENT:	Lynn Montei, Montei Consulting

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 4:37 p.m. Roll call was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, seconded by Trustee Lauren Lacey to allow City of Bloomington Assistant City Manager, Steve Rasmussen to participate in the Board meeting.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy opened the meeting. He stated Trustee John Thomas would be attending the meeting, however, he would be a bit late. He thanked the Trustees for attending as well as the Connect Transit management staff. This meeting is a continuation of work toward creating a new Strategic Plan for Connect Transit. He thanked Secretary Ryan Whitehouse for the opportunity to use the space at the Illinois Farm Bureau Building.

Secretary Whitehouse addressed the Board. He welcomed everyone to the Illinois Agriculture Association. He provided an overview of the organization, its family of companies, and how it is structured.

Lynn Montei, Montei Consulting, addressed the Board. She provided an overview of the evening's agenda. Everyone present introduced themselves and provided a "thanks to" statement. Ms. Montei thanked everyone for their introductions and she looked forward to the evening's work session.

Trustee John Thomas arrived at 4:50 p.m.

(Record of Planning Session #2 is attached)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, Seconded by Trustee John Bowman to adjourn.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Time: 8:23 p.m.

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Julie Beer, Executive Assistant

Connect Transit
Strategic Plan Development Process
Record of Planning Session #2 – April 18, 2017

Introduction

Connect Transit's Acting Chair Mike McCurdy welcomed participants to the evening session. All Board members, the Interim General Manager and six staff managers were present. After setting the stage for a day of interaction and dialogue, he introduced Vice Chair-elect Ryan Whitehouse, who provided some background about the IAA, our host for the meeting. Participants sat in 3 table groupings, each one comprised of a mix of roles and perspectives. The table groups were prepared with flipchart for recording information generated during the exercises.

The facilitator, Lynn Montei, provided an overview of the agenda, reviewed feedback, planning principles and the record of the first planning session in preparation for visioning and action planning to take place on this occasion.

This document is a transcription of the data generated by workshop participants and recorded on table group flipcharts or the wall mural. Again, no effort has been made to eliminate redundancy or synthesize the data at this point.

Mind Map

Participants specifically reviewed the record of purpose/mission conversations both from the last planning session and that from the staff workshop. With that freshly in mind, they created a map of all the issues, trends and forces that bear upon Connect Transit's ability to fulfill its purpose. A photo of the mind map can be found at the end of this document, and an electronic version has been distributed with these meeting notes.

- **New Technology**
  - use data to improve
  - learning curve
    - allow for those not using technology
  - ways to reach customers
  - convenience
  - autonomous cars
- **Customers**
  - demographic changes
    - need to document, numbers same as nationwide
  - ridership
    - how to increase

- COA - route restructure
- public relations/marketing
  - universities
    - public relations/marketing
  - frequent service
    - public relations/marketing
  - fares
  - continued outreach
  - safety
    - employee safety
  - community
  - millennials stay in community(?)
  - amenities (shelters)
    - downtown transfer station

- **Local Governance**
  - advocacy
  - staff leadership
  - board
    - effective
    - able to make tough decisions
    - leadership in community, relationships
- **Funding**
  - unpredictable
  - transit district?
  - state funding (uncertainty)
    - less reliance on this
  - public awareness
  - federal funding
  - political reality
  - advertising
  - rolling stock (buses)
  - sustainable local funding
    - limited local investment
      - perceived value
- **Federal Requirements**
  - SMS
  - ADA
  - procurement
  - TAM
  - DBE
  - SGR
  - environmental
- **Ideology**
  - environmental concerns (or not)
  - does transit "work" in B-N?
  - need to advertise
  - choice riders
  - vehicle dependence

- political agendas
- **Geography**
  - Downtown transfer station
  - west Bloomington (different needs)
  - suburban sprawl
    - community planning
    - general lack of trust in public systems/government
  - built environment
  - ease of commute in personal vehicle
    - Connect not convenient
- **Staff**
  - unions
  - vendors
  - partners
- **Economic Development (to diversify employer/employee base)**
- **Business Models**
  - union
- **Fear of Change**
  - squeaky wheel
  - perception vs. reality
- **Awareness (or lack of)**
  - ↓ ridership
  - clear understanding
  - marketing $
  - public support
    - unaware, unable to recognize value
- **Time**
  - planning
  - training
  - hiring
    - availability of qualified staff
  - ability to see trends and adjust more quickly

Envisioning 2021

Lynn gave an overview of the benefit of using a creative stance to envision the preferred future the group desires, rather than reacting to and trying to solve known problems. She invited participants to use a brainstorming technique in which table teams generate as many ideas as they can within the

allotted time that describes what success in Connect Transit might look like in 2021. This is not a conversation about tactics but a true expression of the vision the group holds. The following universe of vision options was generated.

- CT serves everyone in some way
- Integrate with all other forms of transportation
- Serve as models for all other transit systems
- Leadership role in creating transit-oriented development
- The bus is fun and hip way to ride!
- We are the trend setter for the community
- Transit is regarded as an essential public service (like police, fire, etc.)
- Dedicated bus lines on Veterans Parkway, Main Street, Empire and other major arterial streets
- Create new urban green space by reclaiming unused parking caused by increased ridership
- Adding fixed route (rail) to the Connect Transit system
- Transit system leading community conversation on reducing road widening/construction
- Divert resources intended for roadway expansion/construction to transit
- More than financially stable
- Community institutions come to C.T. to solve their transportation issues
- Build up infrastructures (shelters, sidewalks, transfer facilities, etc.)
- Employer of choice (low turnover, strong applicant pool, etc.)
- Buy-in from public at large
- Socially relevant
- "The buses are everywhere!" (frequent and convenient service)
- Major capital purchases not an issue
    - modern fleet
- Ridership is up ↑
- Stable funding source(s)
- Increased access
- Reduced fares/free rides
- Dependable fleet
- Much more visible in the community
- Greater diversity in the ridership (more "choice" riders), racial/ethnic diversity, socio-economic
- Numerous safety awards
- Amenities at stops
- Peers are envious – "How'd they do that?"
- Autonomous vehicles
- Greater community awareness and appreciation
- Zero-emission buses/low emission buses (Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)/electric/extended mileage electric)
- Customer training program (rider training) is successful
- High level of on-time performance
- New Front Street transfer station is seeing record numbers of customers
- Established methodology for gathering business intelligence (surveys, statistics, feedback) (internal and external); information is being used to make strategic decisions
- A recognized partner in local and regional planning
- Increased marketing and promotion
- Viewed as a partner by the business community
- 15-minute frequency across the system
- Most buses and employees ever
- A model workplace

- Transit/taxing district in place or in discussion
- Ridership higher
- High frequency routes
- Greater coverage
- Attractive transit centers (w/amenities) in downtown Bloomington
- Infrastructure improvements (shelters)
- Newer buses
- More universal agreements (ISU revenue neutral at least)
- More engaged community (in transit conversation)
- More best practices conversations
- (We know we have) the right level of coverage
- Stable funding (from state)
- We use data for everything (decision-making)
- Win another best system award
- Perfect Triennial
- Place people want to work (Chamber award)
- All people are considering using – especially young people
- Greater employer engagement (roundtables, etc.)
- Increased public engagement and understanding of transit in B-N

- Different types of development (no parking lots)
- Better community, regional planning/land use/less sprawl
- More transit-oriented development in B-N
- Transit is a <u>tool</u> for economic development (people bike, ride, walk)
- Mobility provider of choice (everyone/not connect mobility)
- More infill development
- Long-term financial plan (includes capital funding)
- More advertising revenue
- Better connectivity
- Super-reliable
- My app tells me when/where to go
- Great customer service/customer experience
- Easier than Uber (or a train)
- Break the bus stigma
- Easy to use – intuitive
- A healthier community (because people don't drive – they walk/bike)
- More local support – we can help local governments decrease their cost (road maintenance)

A Planning Framework

Each table group categorized their output and from those was created five key themes to serve as a planning framework for the action planning exercise. Lynn assured the group that there will likely be amendments to the list when the Synthesis Team takes a more deliberate look at the data.

1. **Funding/Revenue**
2. **Innovation/Community Vision**
3. **System Performance/Operations/Ridership**
4. **Customer Experience**
5. **Image/Brand/Appeal**

Action Planning

Table teams brainstormed action steps toward attainment of these 5 high-level goal categories. They began each recommended action with an active verb. A summary of the all their work is found below. There has been no attempt to eliminate redundancy for the time being. That will happen during the synthesis process.

1. Funding/Revenue

- Evaluate current funding
- Research grant
- Evaluate U/A agreements
- Engage lawmakers
- Initiate transit district vote
- Convert streets funding into transit funding
- Demonstrate community value
- Increase fares
- Reduce costs
- Increase PPP
- Sell more advertising
- Create transit taxing district
- Tie transit funding to infrastructure funding
- Expand universal access
- Create advertising revenue
- Foster community support for transit
- Create stable funding sources
- Generate more local tax dollars
- Establish relationships (UA, corporate sponsorships, etc.)
- Investigate/explore creation of a taxing district
- Show a/the return on investment
- Research alternative/new revenue streams
- Capture new marketing opportunities

2. Innovation/Community Vision

- Create autonomous vehicle task force
- Implement CNG
- Initiate meeting with Rivian
- Champion TOD
- Lead community toward wide spread active transit
- Convert parking lots to green spaces
- Corral community planning
- Evaluate how rideshare connects to transit

- Hire planning person
- Broaden the "planning" role
- Maximize current technology (AVA, Fare Box Data, etc.)
- Embrace new technology
- Improve data analysis
- Invest in new technology
- Use resources of Rivian
- Leverage co-op with other community groups

3. System Performance/Operations/Ridership

- Establish baseline metrics
- Decide/discuss coverage issue
- Establish 15 minute service system-wide
- Maximize ease of use
- Purchase necessary fleet
- Prioritize safety
- Continue as workplace of choice
- Develop performance measurements
- Maximize efficiency
- Promote safety
- Improve route design
- Increase customer satisfaction
- Evaluate system for efficiency and effectiveness
- Increase frequency, reliability and connectivity
- Improve communication of system safety
- Add amenities

4. Customer Experience

- Install customer amenities at every stop
- Install mirror disco balls
- Lead effort to complete sidewalk network
- Install more ETA displays
- Ensure cutting edge technology
- Empower drivers to provide customer service
- Build downtown transfer station
- Enhance existing amenities (shelters, bus stops, cleanliness)
- Increase partnerships with businesses and local government (cost sharing)
- Engage local police to create a partnership for public safety
- Improve marketing/promotion

- Invest in infrastructure
- Emphasize customer courtesy
- Provide good customer information
- Improve on-time performance

5. Image/Brand/Appeal

- Protect and promote image/brand
- Make riding hip and cool
- Build effective marketing/education campaigns
- Increase board advocacy
- Get a foot hold in public schools (future riders)
- Utilize video in media/social media
- Develop interactive marketing
- Maintain a modern fleet
- Implement innovative marketing strategies