

**CONNECT TRANSIT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
STRATEGIC PLAN WORK SESSION PROCEEDINGS OF NOVEMBER 7, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held at the Connect Transit Board Room #135, 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, Illinois 61761 on November 7, 2015 at 8:00 a.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:            Bill Wilson, Chairman  
                                 Mike McCurdy, Vice-Chairman  
                                 Ryan Whitehouse, Secretary  
                                 Jennifer McDade  
                                 Judy Buchanan  
                                 John Thomas

TRUSTEES ABSENT:            John Bowman

STAFF PRESENT:            Andrew Johnson, General Manager  
                                 Isaac Thorne, Chief Operating Officer  
                                 Patrick Kuebrich, Finance Director  
                                 Jenifer Clark, Human Resources Director  
                                 Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 8:15 a.m. Roll call was taken.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager opened the session and stated the Strategic Plan Work Session included both the Board and Connect Transit's staff. He invited staff members to provide input during the meeting. The Board had requested that staff provide them with information regarding Connect Transit's financials and practices. Connect Transit would begin the Work Session with a brief *Finance 101* presentation. He requested that Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director provide the presentation.

Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director addressed the Board. He provided a Power Point presentation.

(Power Point Presentation on file at Connect Transit)

Trustee Jennifer McDade stated it might be helpful and educational for the public to have a streamlined overview of the funding streams and expenditures associated with operating Connect Transit. She suggested that same be put on Connect Transit's website.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager agreed and responded it would be possible for staff to create an annual report that shows the basics and a graphical representation of funding streams and expenditures. He noted his appreciation for feedback from the Board so staff is better able to provide information that is most helpful to them and to the public.

Mr. Johnson stressed the Board did not need to wait for a meeting to ask questions regarding Connect Transit's budget, operations or finances. They were welcome to contact Connect Transit directly at any time.

Trustee John Bowman arrived at 8:25 a.m.

Mr. Johnson stated he made copies of the Strategic Plan available for those who did not already have a copy with them. The day's focus would be to review the Strategic Plan beginning with the mission and vision statements.

No one believed that any changes were needed to the mission and vision statements.

Mr. Johnson noted the next items on the Strategic Plan document were goals and bullet points under each goal heading. Regarding the Funding Goal, he noted that Connect Transit is close to securing local funding. Trustee Judy Buchanan stated in regard to the Key Relationships/Partnerships Goal, Connect Transit has done a very good job advocating to local elected officials.

Additional Funding Goal discussion centered on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and other fuel efficient vehicles that could potentially save Connect Transit operational dollars. Trustee Jennifer McDade stated this discussion could fall under the Funding Goal; however, the word sustainable has different meanings to different people. Environmentally Sustainable and Sustainable Funding Development are both listed under the Funding Goal. Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy questioned the need to add an additional Goal to the Strategic Plan.

Chairman Bill Wilson requested clarification on the focus for the day's overview of the Strategic Plan. He questioned if each item would be considered at length. Andrew Johnson, General Manager replied that the focus was to consider updating the document as a whole after reviewing the growth and changing needs of the system since the original Plan's creation in 2013. Chairman Wilson agreed, noting his desire to not get stuck on any one item on the plan and then rush through the other items.

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse stated his belief that items on the Strategic Plan should be implemented. If goals were to be added or updated, information should be provided to the Board for consideration prior to the change. Vice Chairman McCurdy understood Trustee Whitehouse's comments, stating he found value in adding bullets to the Strategic Plan's goals if necessary. He stated the group would review the entire Strategic Plan, make notes and allow staff to come back to the Board with suggested changes. This would help keep the group on task while reviewing the document as a whole. Trustee John Thomas agreed and provided the example of more frequent service. This item could be deleted once more frequent services are provided.

Chairman Bill Wilson stated the group would continue through the remaining portions of the Strategic Plan. Andrew Johnson, General Manager responded he would begin by addressing the remaining bullet items under the Funding goal heading. Staff is currently reviewing fare structure and changes to fare collection will be implemented in 2016. He stated planning for improvements is a constant and ongoing process for staff. Improvements could include such things as new buses and transfer centers. A combination of Capital and Operating funding is needed to implement many of the aspired improvements.

The next item on the Strategic Plan is Expanded Services.

Trustee Jennifer McDade stated that a new focus should be on growing new ridership. Secretary Ryan Whitehouse agreed, and reminded the group that the existing goals were formed prior to many improvements and changes. Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated that the document should also remain aspirational, even though *Park and ride/regional potential* may not be feasible in the next 18 months, it should remain on the plan.

Vice Chairman McCurdy suggested that Connect Transit consider collaborating with a *Bike Share* program. Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that Connect Transit is interested in collaborating in a *Bike Share* program and had recently met with the Town of Normal Manager, Mark Peterson to discuss such a program.

Trustee Jennifer McDade suggested that Connect Transit add a bullet under *Expanded Services* to include "Multi-modal Focus".

The next item on the Strategic Plan is Awareness and Education.

Mr. Johnson stated Connect Transit continues to strive to improve its digital presence. The website has been updated. Connect Transit is active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Connect Transit has increased its community outreach significantly. Trustee Judy Buchanan agreed, Connect Transit has also increased its community engagement. Trustee Jennifer McDade noted that Connect Transit has created a community dialogue about public transportation.

Vice Chairman McCurdy questioned if Connect Transit was receiving any analytics from the new website, mobile application and social media. Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager responded she had just recently been tasked with collecting and evaluating same. Mr. Johnson questioned if Ms. Chrisman wanted to provide any additional comments regarding Awareness and Education. Ms. Chrisman replied Connect Transit would continue to move in the same direction as it has been regarding community outreach and market research. Her focus would be on advance planning of outreach in the upcoming year. Andrew Johnson, General Manager added an additional outreach focus will be on the business community.

Next the Strategic Plan is Key Relationships/Partnerships.

Jenifer Clark, Human Resources Director stated partnership with the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 752 (ATU) should be added to this list. The ATU and management staff have been meeting on a regular basis to continue forging and fostering a good working relationship, communication and collaboration.

Additional Key Relationships/Partnerships conversation centered on public presence within the community. Andrew Johnson, General Manager noted that as Connect Transit has increased its community outreach, a marked public presence within the community has resulted. Chairman Bill Wilson agreed and reminded the group of past commercial developments that did not consider public transportation during the planning stages. Those developments are inaccessible to public transportation. The experience and afterthought has caused change; more commercial

developments are taking access to public transportation into consideration during the design process.

Vice Chairman McCurdy stated that he had previously brought the question of adopting a statement regarding non-discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. He questioned if such a statement belonged in the Key Relationships/Partnerships category. He believed Connect Transit should adopt a statement of non-discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity as part of the Equal Opportunity Statement (EEO). He noted that the Town of Normal and the City of Bloomington both have adopted similar statements. He requested that staff come back to the Board with a statement to consider adopting.

Jenifer Clark, Human Resources Director noted Connect Transit's EEO Statement includes generalized language, but no specific policy addressing sexual orientation and gender identity. Currently staff is working on implementing dignity and respect training and Connect Transit also has a Diversity Council. She stated a non-discrimination statement regarding sexual orientation and gender identity could be an initiative for the Diversity Council.

Isaac Thorne, Chief Operating Officer noted Connect Transit is required to have and has adopted an EEO Statement as part of receiving Federal Title VI funding. The Connect Transit EEO Statement follows federal guidelines.

Trustee Judy Buchanan stated the additional wording could be added to the existing EEO Statement and brought before the Board for adoption in the future. Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated staff would bring a revision to the EEO Statement for approval at a future Board meeting.

Trustee John Bowman questioned the bullet point *Partnerships with other transportation providers* under the Key Relationships/Partnerships goal. He questioned what if any strides had been made in this area. Mr. Johnson stated that Connect Transit has had conversations with UBER however, none recently. There are opportunities to attract choice riders from both the Central Illinois Regional Airport (CIRA) as well as the Amtrak Station.

Mr. Johnson stated the group had covered all of the goals on the Strategic Plan. He noted that an additional environmental bullet would be added to the Funding goal. The Board agreed. Mr. Johnson stated staff would add the bullet and would present the changes to the Board.

The Strategic Plan portion of the meeting concluded.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, seconded by Trustee John Thomas to adjourn to Executive Session.

Time: 10:15 a.m.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan to return to Regular Session.

Time: 12:45 p.m.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

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Ryan Whitehouse, Secretary