

Community Meeting #1 Notes

Saturday, June 24th, Verizon Center, Room 245, 10:00am-12:00pm

1. Issues or challenges with the current transit system

- ◆ The population in the Greater Mankato area is aging and needs help getting comfortable with transit
- ◆ Communication and marketing to older people is currently a challenge
- ◆ Buses currently do not have level boarding
- ◆ Winter pedestrian access to the bus is a challenge due to icy hills and slippery sidewalks
- ◆ Steps are currently a challenge for some people to board the bus
- ◆ There is currently not service to Eagle Lake
- ◆ The Greater Mankato area is currently not designed for people without cars
- ◆ Sidewalks not cleared in the winter, which makes accessing the bus a challenge
- ◆ Access to Old Town is an issue

2. Opportunities for new or improved bus routes and transit services

- ◆ Improved access to Old Town
- ◆ Hubbard Building/Innovation Center
 - 4th & Spring is the closest stop
 - No crosswalk or long access route
 - Extend service span to later in the evening (currently stops @ 5:30pm)
- ◆ Improve service to Friesen's Bakery
- ◆ Improve service to Midtown Tavern
- ◆ Helpers or ambassadors on the bus would be helpful
- ◆ Introduce a pass similar to the MavCard for the general public
- ◆ Fare Card
 - Auto-refill or annual cards
 - Senior pass card
- ◆ Increase flexibility on fareboxes, including the introduction of smart cards
- ◆ Improve access to North Mankato
 - Service improvements are especially needed for the 2nd shift
 - People need to encourage government in North Mankato for improved service
- ◆ Introduce dial-a-ride service
 - This could serve areas without fixed-route service
 - 10am-9pm would be a good dial-a-ride service span
- ◆ Increase service span
 - It is currently challenging to take the bus to go out to dinner since the service doesn't operate late enough
 - Later service is needed for the Mobility Bus
 - Increase more service to year-round
 - Sunday service was requested
 - Holiday service was requested
- ◆ Business Engagement
 - Talk to businesses regarding how transit benefits their bottom line
 - Old Town association ad revenues are a potential opportunity
- ◆ Improve access to food via transit
 - Route 3 services Walmart and Sam's Club

- Route 13 serves Hy-Vee
- Grocery carts can get in the way of the Mobility Bus
- ◆ Encourage people with disabilities to use the fixed-route bus if they are able
- ◆ Steps on the bus can be difficult for some people to navigate
- ◆ Routes that serve students can be difficult for others to use due to overloads
- ◆ Partnerships with taxis or ridesharing companies could be beneficial during off-peak time periods
- ◆ Hire excellent drivers & implement driver training
 - Operators help riders with their bags, don't rush people, and are very friendly
 - Operators help make community connections/friends
- ◆ Vehicles
 - Invest in articulated buses to manage larger loads
 - Use of restraints would be beneficial for people using walkers, especially when they are carrying groceries
- ◆ Overloads
 - 1st bus on Saturday mornings to River Hills can be overloaded, depending on the bus size
- ◆ Bikes on buses
 - Policy to allow more bikes based on driver knowledge/decision
 - No current bike sharing services
- ◆ Transit hub
 - Bridge Plaza would be a nice location
 - Post Office
 - Could be a transit-supportive multiuse space with affordable housing
 - Sibley Parkway/Children's Museum
 - A growing area with new housing
 - Include bicycle parking at the new transit hub
- ◆ Gamification riding bus
 - Could make riding the bus a game like Pokemon Go etc.

3. Transit Information Availability and Accessibility

- ◆ A mobile app for transit information would be very helpful
 - For planning trips
 - For knowing when the bus will arrive
- ◆ People appreciate speaking with operators for transit information
- ◆ Schedules & maps
 - It would be helpful to have maps and schedules on the buses and at bus stops
 - More transit information would be beneficial at the MSU student union
- ◆ People ask other riders for transit information
- ◆ Bus stop signs vs. flag down
 - Need to communicate this policy better to riders
 - Directional/destination information would be helpful for riders
- ◆ Downtown Ambassadors would be helpful, especially during big events
- ◆ Operator announcements would be beneficial for those with vision-impairments
- ◆ Should make sure to create a welcoming environment for non-English or non-Native speakers
 - Operators could learn basic words in other languages
 - Transit materials could be provided in other languages
- ◆ Customer feedback options
 - Offer an option for riders to provide feedback on the buses
 - Keep a log of service requests and report how they are utilized
 - Riders give feedback to operators

- Riders call 311 or the transit phone number to provide feedback
- Riders provide feedback on the city's website
- An interactive map could be beneficial for providing route ideas, service needs, or other feedback

4. Goals for the Transit System

- ◆ Customer experience
 - Could have public art at major transit stops, such as MSU, Cherry Street, or River Hills Mall
- ◆ Trip planning
 - Make it easy for everyone & multimodal options
- ◆ Coverage and flexibility in service models and routes
 - Assisted living
 - Senior apartments
 - Nursing homes (employees & visitors)
 - Better North Mankato bus service
- ◆ Expand service span
 - All-season options
 - Provide weekend service in North Mankato
- ◆ Increase frequency (especially in North Mankato)
- ◆ Safety and security
 - Especially important for more vulnerable populations
 - Bad weather policies and practices
 - Snow
 - Tornados/storms
- ◆ On-time performance
 - Set a standard, monitor, and report
 - Departure times from Cherry Street (no one leaves until all buses get there to facilitate transfers)
 - Policy is operators call buses to which people are transferring
 - Scheduled for 0 to 3 min layover
- ◆ Ridership
 - Create fare passes- for middle school and high school students, college student, seniors, people with disabilities
- ◆ Quality of Life
- ◆ Expand service markets