

# Non-Profit Focus Group

Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Intergovernmental Center, Mankato Conference Room, 12:00-1:00pm

## Issues or Challenges with Current Bus and Mobility Bus

- ◆ Lack of System Understanding
  - Some people don't understand how to ride
  - Confusion and fear over where the bus will go prevent people from riding the bus
  - There is currently not a mobile app for accessing transit information
  - Some people have language barriers, which makes riding the bus a challenge
- ◆ Scheduling or Frequency Issues
  - The route schedule and long waits to transfer buses (30 mins to 1 hour) is an issue
  - Route schedules do not accommodate people's work schedules and child care
  - The bus does not operate frequently enough
  - There is a need for Sunday service
  - The timing of the Mobility Bus is an issue in North Mankato
  - There is a need for additional Mobility Buses
  - It is an issue for people to get home from the 2<sup>nd</sup> shift on the bus
- ◆ Infrastructure
  - There are currently not enough shelters at bus stops
  - The lack of bus stop signs makes it challenging for people to know where to wait for a bus
- ◆ Stop or Service Location
  - Some people have trouble getting between their home and the bus stop
  - Mobility Bus should prioritize getting to employment
  - Access to employment in Mankato from St. Peter is a challenge
    - This impacts the local workforce and economy
  - Transit service is needed to:
    - Eagle Lake
    - LeHillier
    - SkyLine
    - East High School
    - North Mankato
    - South Bend Township
    - St. Peter
    - Madison East to Colony Court
      - Health care services are impacted and in jeopardy if transportation fails
  - Better connectivity is needed between Mankato and North Mankato
- ◆ Challenges by Age or Demographic
  - It is difficult for older adults getting to medical appointments and then to pharmacy
  - The bus is not currently youth friendly, especially not for youth riding alone
  - Bus stops are needed near public and senior housing
  - There is a need for someone to show clients how to ride the bus, especially those who don't speak English
  - The bus is not affordable for people with limited incomes
- ◆ Other Topics
  - It is a challenge for the health department and non-profits to purchase passes, because the transit agency is not a listed provider

- The convenience of cars and the availability of free parking prevent people from riding
- Some people need assistance from public transportation to private property

## Opportunities for New or Improved Transit Service

- ◆ Service to:
  - Apartment complexes in Colony Court in North Mankato, Forest Park Heights, Sibley Park
  - East High School
  - St. Peter (Maplewood Apartments and the St. Peter Hospital)
  - Sibley Parkway
  - Ethnic restaurants
  - Hallal Stores
  - Islamic Center
  - Places of worship
  - VINE Faith in Action
  - YMCA
  - DMV
  - Eagle Lake
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue
  - West Mankato
  - Lower North
  - Salvation Army
  - Mobile home parks
  - Schools
  - Lime Valley
  - Hilltop
  - South Haven, University Trailer Park
  - Franklin Park
  - South Bend Township
  - Dublin Road area
  - River Bluff/Johnson Plaza
  - Liberty and 4<sup>th</sup>
  - Partners for Affordable Housing
  - Hoffman Road Area
  - Mt. Kato
  - Homestead apartments
  - University Park
  - Upper North
  - Service agencies
- ◆ Training would be beneficial to teach people how to ride the bus
  - Including visuals, pictures, colored landmarks, videos, postcards, booklets
- ◆ Bus driver greeting helps with accessibility and comfort
- ◆ Buses provide an opportunity to accommodate the aging demographic by providing a transportation option other than driving
- ◆ Service to more apartment buildings
- ◆ A language app could be beneficial for operators to assist those that speak languages other than English
- ◆ Extra trips before and after school would be beneficial to youth
- ◆ More direct routes
- ◆ Service to areas with high concentrations of people with low-incomes and older adults