



McHenry County Transit Plan
College Students Focus Group
June 28, 2018
Summary

The McHenry County Transit Plan Update college student focus group was held on June 28, 2018 at the McHenry County Administration Building, 667 Ware Road, Woodstock, Illinois from 9:15 AM to 10:40 AM. The meeting was attended by **17 participants** (sign-in sheets attached) and was conducted in a round table discussion format. Project team members also in attendance included Scott Hennings and Susan Borucki (McHenry County); and Janet Henderson (Images, Inc.). Exhibit boards were displayed of the current transit system and information regarding the transit survey.

The group was prompted with questions to keep the conversation moving. Big ideas for transit solutions and innovations were written down and posted to a display wall. The students were very engaged and the following details the topics of conversation and comments received.

- Do you use transit and if so, why?
 - Use in Chicago
 - Because of parking availability, too expensive
 - Transit is free for students at school with college ID
 - Because do not have car on campus, parking pass is expensive
- Do you use transit in McHenry County?
 - We have transit here? (Most did not know about MC transit services.)
 - Misperception that Pace bus is only for seniors and individuals with disabilities
 - Did not know who rides transit in MC
- Would like to see hybrid buses used in the county
 - Clean air buses like Chicago
 - Bus stops everywhere
- Subsidize Uber trips
- Need to develop an app
 - People don't want to call
 - Live bus tracker
 - May be valuable for age groups other than just millennials
 - Front end cost for app development, but would save money in the end
 - Talk to MCC college students for app designer, cash prize (contest)



- Still need live people, can't get rid of all human interaction (some will still need)
- At least cut down staffing cost
- May need a walk through seminar to teach how to use the app
- People don't know what transit options there are – really need education to the public
- How do they pay currently when using transit?
 - Free transit with ID/badge
 - Tap the ID/badge when board the bus at school
- City of McHenry needs better (more frequent) Metra access. There is good Metra service from Harvard.
- Convert freight lines to passenger service, since the rail is already there, it would provide more inclusive coverage
- Prefer to use transit for long or short trips?
 - Longer trips
 - Compare costs, depends on what's cheaper
 - Need to pair up transit systems (bus-train)
 - Accessibility of stops / routes needed for them to use for short trips
- Suggested that the County operates the bus program then, no need to deal with Pace
 - School buses, retrofit: many districts change out buses regularly and County could buy these
- Have surge routes; focused these on schools, jobs, etc. (high demand times)
- Not environmentally friendly
- Wouldn't currently use buses as they are because stops are too far apart
- Would prefer circulating buses: shorter times between buses
- Some limitations to using Uber for subsidized trips
 - County could serve as the middle men to book Uber for seniors/people without a phone
 - Currently, Uber in county is expensive and rare (not many drivers)
 - Possibly subsidize just trips to designated locations, not all
 - Liability on Uber may be an issue
 - Zipcar:
 - Can choose to have electric cars
 - Have stations throughout the county
- Bike share – positive feedback
- Marketing is needed, ideas are:



- Better Pace signage (signs should show routes, stops, number in colors like it is in Chicago)
- Facebook, Snapchat ads
- Bulletin Boards
- GeoTag
- Radio (105.5)
- NW Herald
- Large employers (hospitals)
- County website
- Signs in court house
- In Metra stations / on trains (if allowed)
- Other things needed
 - Clean and safe (perception)? Don't know enough to say if it is clean or safe
 - Fair for all – shouldn't be focused just on some groups
 - Night time safety system needed
 - Special routes for big events (weekends)
 - Partner with other county transportation systems
 - No cash –prefer card/phone app
 - Amenities desired: WiFi, bus tracker/timing
 - Weekend service
- What would bring you to live in McHenry County
 - Lower property taxes
 - Don't generally like Illinois
 - Young people go where jobs are
- Get ahead of the development – be proactive
 - Better connections to interstate
 - Get large "events" to locate in McHenry County
 - Get members from cities/tourism to make sure we are reaching events/tourism/etc.
 - Use school buses for events – are there political lines in doing this?
 - Use NW Herald to really promote positives – **transparency**
 - Free bike week/rentals (free trials)
 - Will people be riding bikeshare be ticketed for riding on sidewalk, if there is not alternative, safe infrastructure?