



McHenry County Transit Plan

Focus Group

August 7, 2018

Summary

The first McHenry County Transit Plan Update Focus Group Meeting was held on August 7, 2018 at the Harvard Public Library, 900 East McKinley Street, Harvard, Illinois from 6-7:30 PM. **Five (5) people** were in attendance at this meeting (sign-in sheet attached), which was conducted in a round table discussion style format. Project team members present included Scott Hennings and Susan Borucki (McHenry County); Gina Trimarco (TranSystems); and Janet Henderson and Victoria Watts (Images, Inc.). Exhibit boards displayed the current transit system conditions and proposed alternatives to the transit plan.

The participants were prompted with questions by the project team and remained very engaged throughout the discussion.

Below is a list of comments made throughout the Focus Group Meeting:

General Comments

- Weren't aware that MCRide existed; should publicize dial-a-ride more and advertise it is for the general public also. (The County responded that advertising is done through the partner municipalities and townships)
- Support more of MCRide dial-a-ride service rather than fixed route service because it is difficult for people to get to bus stops; either there are no sidewalks at all or the sidewalks end abruptly
- Service needs to make people feel safe and secure
- Need service in Hebron
- Support having the buses branded somehow to differentiate between fixed route and MCRide

MCRide

- The service is useful for seniors and those with disabilities but also good for the general public
- Sometimes there are unreliable pick-up times; service is later than the 15 minute window causing people to be late to school or to their jobs,
- A trip will take longer on MCRide because you share the trip with other riders



- Dispatchers and drivers need more training; often riders are helping the drivers navigate. Also sometimes the travel times are longer than necessary because the trips aren't arranged appropriately
- Support MCRide over Uber because of fares; however, Uber is more reliable, instant, don't have to prearrange, and are the only customer/person to drop off;
- A hybrid service between Uber and MCRide would be ideal
- Want to be able to either use a Ventra card, pay online or use credit card/Apple Pay/Android Pay on the bus
- MCRide needs to be prominently advertised on the County's website; it can also be advertised in a mailing called *Senior Services Newsletter*
- Prefer to be texted updates from the dispatcher rather than have to call and ask where their ride is
- Would like to be able to have access to GPS of the MCRide vehicles. This would allow riders to track their vehicles (like Uber) and would also help parents of special needs children/young adults know where they are located
- Inconvenient to have to schedule your trip so far in advance
- More technology should be used such as electronic newsletters and a service app

Fixed Routes

- Don't want fares raised to increase coverage
- Pace schedules should include cost of ride
- Willing to make a transfer in order to get where they need to go; however, they are concerned for seniors who might get lost
- Would be interested in a circulator routes
- Depending on if they were allowed in select communities to "hop-on and hop-off" several times in one day, they'd be willing to pay \$5-10 for services
- They feel a circulator route would save time as opposed to the MCRide
- Service days/hours need to be expanded
- Interested in fixed routes that go someplace besides Metra stations

Metra

No substantial concerns with Metra were mentioned except the fare structure is costly even with recent reductions in the fares for the outlying zones. The high fares cause people to drive downtown, particularly for non-work trips, especially if there is more than one person in their party.



Summary of Recommendations

- Would be interested in a service that drops a lot of people close to their destination rather than dropping everyone at their exact destination
- Need a Ventra or similar online fare app
- Need to be able to track the vehicle to see when it will arrive and for safety reasons
- Understand the importance of a mix of services- expansion of MCRide in more rural areas and expansion of fixed route services in the denser areas- potentially circulator routes and connections between towns
- Would not have an issue in transferring buses if MCRide went to a zone system but only able bodied individuals might be able to do this
- Would be willing to pay an upcharge for a more immediate service – potentially less than an Uber fare but more than the current MCRide fare
- When you look on the Pace website for service in your municipality only the fixed route services are shown; need the website to also include dial-a-ride services



Photos







Event: Transit Plan Focus Group

Location: Harvard Library

Date: 8-7-18

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