



September 2022

PEOPLE. COMMUNITY. ECONOMY. ENVIRONMENT.

## Connect Transit Board of Trustees

Representing  
Bloomington:

- Ryan Whitehouse
- Judy Buchanan
- Linda Foster
- Barbara Singer

Representing  
Normal:

- Julie Hile
- Tim McCue
- Mandava Rao

Ex-Oficio Members:

- Billy Tyus
- Pam Reece

To contact our  
Trustees, please  
email [trustees@  
connect-transit.com](mailto:trustees@connect-transit.com).

## *GM Fiscal Year End Review with David Braun*

Connect Transit's (CT) fiscal year ends on June 30, so it seems like a good time to reflect on the past year.

During my first year as the General Manager of CT, we've had many successes and challenges. I first need to thank the CT staff for their acceptance of the "new guy" and their hard work in handling the challenges professionally, and the successes with grace.



Our Board of Trustees updated their Strategic Plan which allows us to establish priorities, plans and goals for the next 3-5 years. Their leadership and vision for CT's future is exciting and motivating as we move forward to take CT to a higher level of service and community support.

The Board's vision prompted us to propose new services that will be implemented during this new fiscal year, including a new route that will serve Rivian and other businesses west of Wylie Drive; a coordinated vanpool program to provide a reliable and low-cost way for people who live outside of the area to travel to B-N for employment opportunities; and a demand response service called Microtransit to begin in spring 2023 that will allow people to use an app to hail a vehicle and provide better access to underserved or hard to serve areas in their neighborhood, which will connect them to our regular routes or destination if it is within a specified zone. The service will be available to everyone and fully ADA accessible.

Our Leadership Team continued to work collaboratively to improve our service by improving communications, training, and involvement. We initiated regular Labor/Management meetings and expanded our "Town Hall" meeting times for all employees to discuss issues before they became problems and clarify questions before they became rumors. Our meetings and the communication helped us reach agreement on a three-year Collective Bargaining Agreement that took effect on July 1.

Continued inside...

Here's what's  
inside!

- Procurement Department Highlight
- Connect in the Community
- CT Technology

## How We Spend Our Funds

Connect Transit is a direct recipient of Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 funds and Illinois Department of Transportation Downstate Operating Assistance Program funds, most of which are used to support the operations of the Agency to purchase various supplies such as office equipment, maintenance and repair parts, and fuel. Occasionally, these funds are matched with competitive federal and state grant funds to complete capital projects.

The primary role of the Procurement Department is to be sure that all public funds are spent appropriately and in compliance with regulations statutorily mandated by each funding source. This means that every purchase, no matter how large or small, is reviewed for compliance of all procurement regulations, including our internal Procurement Policy, which restricts purchases more than federal and state requirements.

All purchases are evaluated based on the anticipated annual expense. Any purchase between \$10,000 and \$50,000 requires at least 3 competitive quotes from qualified vendors. A formally advertised procurement process takes place above the threshold of \$50,000, required by our Procurement Policy. This is significantly lower than the \$250,000 federal requirement. Generally, there are 3 types of procurements: Invitation for Bid (IFB), Request for Proposal (RFP), and Request for Qualifications (RFQ). An IFB is utilized when a product or service can be narrowly defined and the only differentiating factor is the price. An RFP, on the other hand, is a process in which more than price alone can be considered as means to award a contract. For example, when a project requires evaluation of qualitative aspects, such as how a contractor may approach a project, qualifications and capabilities of the contractor's staff, or proposed project timeline, an RFP is preferred. An RFQ is used for projects such as engineering and design where the qualifications of the firm are the most important evaluation criteria. After the most qualified firm is chosen by an evaluation process, we begin price and contract negotiations with the chosen firm. If an agreement cannot be reached, negotiations begin with the next most qualified proposer.

As a direct recipient of federal funding, we are required to implement a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program to help create employment and growth opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Our Procurement Department actively seeks DBE participation by identifying the types of upcoming projects and matching potential DBE contractors that are registered with the State of Illinois.



## Connect in the Community

Want to see us in the community? Join us for our upcoming events!

Here's where we'll be the next few months:

- 🕒 Festival ISU: September 1, 10am - 2pm
- 🕒 IWU RSO Fair: September 1, 4pm - 6pm
- 🕒 Day of the Dozer: September 10, 9am - 4pm
- 🕒 Miller Park Spooktacular: October 22 and 23
- 🕒 BACC Career Expo: October 26, 9am - 2pm



Marc First Disability Parade - July 25

## GM Fiscal Year End Review with David Braun

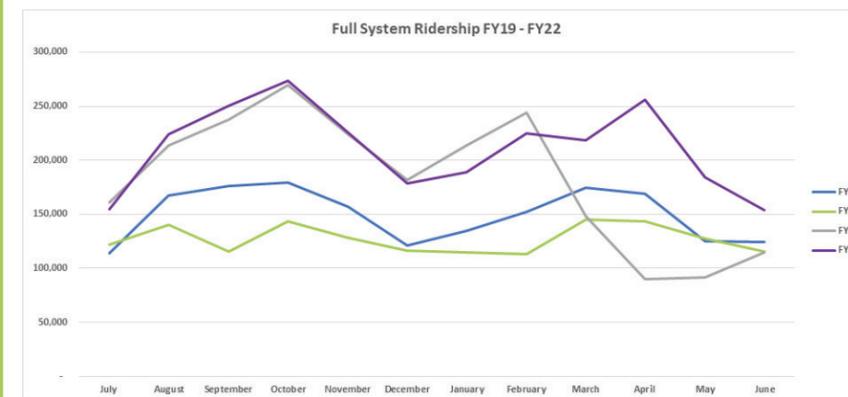
...Continued from cover

We buzzed with electricity as our first 4 electric vehicles arrived and our solar panel project was commissioned. We plan to add eighteen more electric buses and 5 to 7 smaller passenger vans to our fleet by 2024, making over 50% of our zero-emission.

We continued our valuable community partnerships, including our Stuff the Bus event for Children's Home and Aid; donating vehicles to the Boys and Girls Club of B-N; engaging LIFE CIL to provide sensitivity training to better serve people with disabilities; and participating in the airport's mass casualty training event.

Our challenges were the same as many employers in the community in dealing with COVID and challenges attracting staff, forcing us to reduce some service frequency; requiring masks by federal edict long after most business stopped requiring them; supply chain issues that kept buses parked for rudimentary parts; and of course, our unprecedented two-day service suspension after major snowstorms.

All in all, our performance continued to impress, and we are getting back to pre-COVID numbers, as shown.



For more information, please contact:  
astaton@connect-transit.com

## CT Tech Corner

To determine its ridership total, Connect Transit uses a system of Automated Passenger Counters (APCs). Prior to 2012, Connect Transit determined its ridership by having its drivers manually count passengers as they boarded the bus, which was a bit distracting!

Connect's main APC is a simple infrared (IR) beam system, similar to the safety beams used on modern garage doors. 2 IR beams are placed at each door just a few inches behind the other. The system looks for a break in the beams and determines the direction of passenger travel based on the sequence that the beams are broken in. If the outermost beam is broken first followed by the inner beam, the passenger on count is increased by one. If the inner beam is broken followed by the outer beam, then the passenger off count increases by one.

APCs use an electronic counting mechanism to record ridership data digitally. While some agencies have APCs on only a portion of their fleet, Connect Transit's fleet is 100% equipped. Agencies who use APC systems are also required by the National Transit Database (NTD) to undergo a validation process on the NTD system to ensure its accuracy. Validation is performed and submitted every 3 years for evaluation and approval. Validation checks are performed by counting passengers on a specific trip and comparing that to APC data. The NTD requires less than 5% variance.

Using this final data file, we are able to determine on and off counts at each stop, the passenger load at any given time, the direction the bus is travelling, the speed of the bus, its route, if it's running late, on time or early, average passenger miles, average passenger trip length, and much more.

Join us on our socials!

[www.facebook.com/ConnectTransit](http://www.facebook.com/ConnectTransit)  
[www.instagram.com/ConnectTransit](http://www.instagram.com/ConnectTransit)  
[www.twitter.com/ConnectTransit](http://www.twitter.com/ConnectTransit)  
[www.tiktok.com/ConnectTransitLL](http://www.tiktok.com/ConnectTransitLL)

Interested in advertising with Connect Transit? Email Lucas at [lucas@houckads.com](mailto:lucas@houckads.com) to get started!

Scan to apply for Connect Jobs!



Dear Connect Abby,

I'm having a hard time coming up with exactly \$1.25 in cash every time I ride the bus. What can I do?

Sincerely,  
ShortChange

Dear ShortChange,

Don't worry - we've got you covered! If you're worried about exact change, you should check out our monthly pass options. A 30-day pass is \$40 and get you unlimited rides for the month. You can download our app or check out our vendors at <https://www.connect-transit.com/fares/where-to-buy> to purchase a pass. You should also check with your employer to see if they're interested in buying passes in bulk or doing a Universal Access Agreement for all employees!

Hope this helps! See you on the bus!

*Connect Abby*



Pride Fest - August 13



Back to School Alliance - August 11



Destination Uptown - August 18

351 Wylie Drive  
Normal, IL 61761

[www.connect-transit.com](http://www.connect-transit.com)

309.828.9833

