

# Connect Transit

## Final Draft Strategic Plan for 2021

### Connect Transit Description

*Connect Transit is the Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System, formed in 1972 to provide transportation services within the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal, Illinois. It is governed by a 7-member Board of Trustees appointed by the City and Town, and staffed by approximately 140 dedicated employees.*

### Mission Statement

*The expression of mission, or purpose, is Connect Transit's fundamental reason for being, and that for which all commitments and resources are in service.*

Connect Transit provides safe, reliable transportation and access to opportunity to strengthen and enrich individual lives, our community, the economy and the environment.

### Core Values

*These core values guide our conduct and behavior and apply to everyone without exception.*

At Connect Transit, we are

- Respectful of all persons and perspectives
- Customer and safety focused
- Dedicated to public service
- Accountable stewards of public resources
- Trusting and trustworthy
- Open-minded and eager to learn
- Positive in attitude
- Focused on the good of the whole

## Vision for 2021

*Our Vision for 2021 inspires us, and sets the trajectory for our bold, clear and compelling future.*

Connect Transit is a robust system of undeniable social, economic and environmental value to its stakeholders and the community.

## High-Level Goals

*These five Goals establish the Strategic Plan framework. Each one pertains to a distinct component of Connect Transit's effectiveness and accountability. Achievement of these Goals facilitates attainment of our Vision for 2021. No prioritization is implied by the order in which they are listed.*

1. Sustainable, High-Performing System	Define, design and fund a sustainable transit system tailored to optimally serve the Bloomington-Normal community.
2. Quality Customer Experience	Provide reliable, easy to use transportation services and quality, user-friendly amenities.
3. Operational Excellence	Exemplify sound governance, superior operations, a culture of safety and a model workplace.
4. Undeniable Value	Become the mobility provider of choice and be valued as an essential public service.
5. Innovative Leadership	Facilitate our community's mobility evolution with innovation, future focus and collaborative leadership.

## Strategic Action Plan

*The Action Plan describes strategies and actions to achieve each of the five High-Level Goals.*

**Goal 1: Sustainable, High-Performing System: Define, design and fund a sustainable transit system tailored to optimally serve the Bloomington-Normal community.**

**Strategy 1 – Defined Service: Establish the system’s balance of coverage, ridership, connectivity and frequency to attain the community’s transit objectives.**

Action 1. Clearly establish community transit objectives and review them periodically.

Action 2. Discern and select Connect Transit’s sustainable service profile to achieve transit objectives.

**Strategy 2 – System Design: Design and implement routes that efficiently attain transit objectives, balancing system performance with customer needs and preferences.**

Action 1. Design or adjust proposed system routes to ensure alignment with and performance toward transit objectives.

Action 2. Utilize design principles that ensure system integrity and consistency.

Action 3. Implement route adjustments using widespread public information and customer training campaigns.

Action 4. Build and maintain transfer stations that facilitate connectivity and system performance.

**Strategy 3 – Fleet: Ensure a reliable, quality fleet capable of meeting current service level needs, with an eye toward the community’s evolving mobility objectives.**

Action 1. Upgrade the existing fleet and continue to procure needed, quality rolling stock.

Action 2. Keep the fleet in good repair, and responsibly manage transit assets.

Action 3. Embrace use of alternative fuels and emerging energy solutions.

**Strategy 4 – Funding: Establish ample, accountable transit funding.**

Action 1. Examine all existing revenue sources for stability and growth potential, and research new/alternative revenue streams for operations and capital.

Action 2. Evaluate and expand partners for universal access, such as government agencies, nonprofit agencies and businesses.

Action 3. Explore fare restructuring.

Action 4. Grow advertising revenue.

Action 5. Explore increased local funding support with local governments.

Action 6. Research and pursue grant opportunities.

Action 7. Consider establishing a transit taxing district.

**Goal 2: Quality Customer Experience: Provide reliable, easy-to-use transportation services and quality, user-friendly amenities.**

**Strategy 1 – Infrastructure/Amenities: Implement amenities as a fundamental component of transit value and safety.**

- Action 1. Build a downtown transfer center.
- Action 2. Adopt a Bus Stop/Shelter Design Plan to be used as the Connect Transit standard.
- Action 3. Install transit amenities, such as shelters and lighting, and ensure maintenance and cleanliness at transfer stations, hubs and bus stops.
- Action 4. Partner with the City and Town for sidewalks, shelters and lighting at bus stops.
- Action 5. Secure private sector sponsors or partners to fund bus stops/shelters.

**Strategy 2 – Customer Service: Uphold a standard of customer courtesy and appreciation.**

- Action 1. Infuse every interaction with a customer service orientation.
- Action 2. Provide ongoing employee education and increased instruction in customer relations.
- Action 3. Enlist customer service champions to model kind, helpful conduct and behavior.
- Action 4. Provide employee education on route planning and use of various planning aids.
- Action 5. Conduct periodic customer surveys, interviews or focus groups, to obtain suggestions and feedback, and gauge satisfaction.

**Strategy 3 – Access/Social Relevancy: Provide a mobility option, independent of personal vehicle use, to link people, communities, commerce, services, employment and entertainment.**

- Action 1. Maintain a high level of on-time performance.
- Action 2. Provide additional service and greater frequency as budgets permit.
- Action 3. Remain sensitive to service affordability for all riders.
- Action 4. Ensure all riders are aware of the freedom and flexibility afforded by the fixed route system.

**Strategy 4 – Ease of Use: Produce intuitive information guides, signage and communications.**

- Action 1. Enhance high and standard technology rider information sources, such as more ETA displays, Wifi capability, smart phone app, social media and others for superior customer awareness.
- Action 2. Provide customer education on the use of various route planning aids, including improved rider guides.

**Goal 3: Operational Excellence: Exemplify sound governance, superior operations, a culture of safety and a model workplace.**

**Strategy 1 – Governance: Exhibit wise, effective governance through clarity of purpose and focused, strategic alignment with Connect Transit’s Vision and Goals.**

Action 1. Maintain momentum toward Vision achievement, report on Strategic Plan performance and schedule timely Plan updates.

Action 2. Make time for dialogue and discernment of complex policy choices.

Action 3. Utilize clear, fair decision making processes and anticipate dissent as a natural function of diverse perspective.

Action 4. Champion the agency’s Vision and Goals with stakeholders, and act in the interest of the community.

**Strategy 2 – Superior Operations: Demonstrate transparency and accountability, and utilize best practices toward achievement of comprehensive operational excellence.**

Action 1. Formalize routine data analysis, reporting and metrics to monitor and evaluate system performance.

Action 2. Research and apply best practices to all facets of operations.

Action 3. Periodically review operational policies and practices.

**Strategy 3 – Safety: Ensure a culture of safety.**

Action 1. Integrate safety as the core component of all operations and every aspect of the agency.

Action 2. Demonstrate bus riding as one of the safest transportation options.

Action 3. Enhance safety communications both internally and externally.

**Strategy 4 – Model Workplace: Rank among the region’s best employers.**

Action 1. Develop and maintain camaraderie across all functions and levels of the organization.

Action 2. Recruit personnel that exhibit Connect Transit values, and invest in employee development to ensure growth and productivity of the workforce.

Action 3. Use effective communication vehicles and approaches that enhance multidirectional information sharing.

Action 4. Possess a positive, can do attitude.

**Goal 4: Undeniable Value: Become the mobility provider of choice, and be valued as an essential public service.**

**Strategy 1 – Community Engagement: Establish trust and rapport with stakeholders to understand needs and values, obtain advice and feedback, share information and advance transit objectives.**

Action 1. Cultivate the Connect Transit Advisory Committee (CTAC) to be a key communication conduit with Connect Transit customers and stakeholders.

Action 2. Have a presence at community events to dialogue with individuals and make presentations to community groups.

Action 3. Utilize innovative engagement tools to connect with and cultivate specific target markets.

**Strategy 2 – Partnership and Collaboration: Generate new potentials through symbiotic relationships with key collaborators.**

Action 1. Captivate and inspire executives and legislators at every level of government with Connect Transit’s vision and plan, outlining its contribution to our shared vision for a thriving region.

Action 2. Identify and engage current and potential partners and collaborators, such as education, library, airport and other transportation modes, City and Town, McLean County, businesses and nonprofit institutions and organizations, and co-design collaboration agreements that serve both parties.

Action 3. Identify private sector benefactors and public sector partners for amenities, universal access and marketing collaboration.

**Strategy 3 – Marketing and Communications: Feature Connect Transit as a community asset and an essential public service.**

Action 1. Create a marketing and communications plan that amplifies the value of the transit system to the general public, and demonstrates its return on investment in social, economic and environmental terms.

Action 2. Tell the new story of a connected community, pulsing with vitality and ease of movement for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Action 3. Portray the riding experience as enjoyable, smart, and for everyone.

**Goal 5: Innovative Leadership: Facilitate our community’s mobility evolution with innovation, future focus and collaborative leadership.**

**Strategy 1 – Future Focus: Become poised to integrate and give leadership to emerging transportation technologies.**

Action 1. Serve as a model public agency in the community and a sought-after expert in transportation solutions.

Action 2. Explore innovative approaches to service delivery.

Action 3. Position Connect Transit for the arrival and use of autonomous vehicles in our market, and define our participation and leadership.

**Strategy 2 – Economic Influence: Exercise Connect Transit’s influence as an economic driver for the region.**

Action 1. Feature the region’s multimodal strength and the key role played by transit as an asset to business, students and residents.

Action 2. Vividly portray the way transit benefits sales and commerce, transports our workforces, facilitates individuals’ livelihoods and can diversify the region’s employer/employee base.

Action 3. Integrate the “transit asset” into the economic development conversation and equation at the municipal and county levels.

**Strategy 3 – Regional Planning Influence: Elevate awareness and advance land use policy principles that optimize land resources, facilitate mobility and steward the environment.**

Action 1. Take an active role in the local and regional land use policy conversation.

Action 2. Emphasize the value of transit accessibility in land use development.

Action 3. Articulate and advocate for the benefits of transit oriented development (TOD) toward achievement of environmental and quality of life objectives.

Action 4. Heighten awareness about placement of land uses requiring high levels of service, the necessity of mobility options, and the value of sidewalks, shelters and other amenities.