Greater Minnesota Transit Technology Plan

2021-03-04 Steering Committee Agenda, Materials, Meeting Notes

Present	First	Last	Role	Organization
	Donna	Anderson	Operations Manager	Central Community Transit
x	Kirby	Becker	Unit Supervisor	MnDOT
x	Michael	Boll	Technology Director	Rainbow Rider
	Brenda	Brittin	Transit Director	Rainbow Rider
x	Tiffany	Collins	Transit Director	Central Community Transit
x	Ramona	Desjarlait	Transit Director	Red Lake Nation Transit
	Melinda	Estey	Transit Project Manager	MnDOT
	John	Groothuis	Transit Project Manager	MnDOT
x	Aleda	Johnson	Director of Technology	Duluth Transit Authority
	Matt	Kallroos	Planner	Region Five Development Commission
x	Jack	Larson	Transit Director	Arrowhead Area Transit
x	Gary	Ludwig	Transit Director	Trailblazer
	Elliot	McFadden	Shared Mobility Coordinator	MnDOT
x	Heather	Molesworth	Family Services Director	West Central MN Community Action
x	Chuck	Morris	Technology Coordinator and MnDOT project manager	MnDOT
x	Victoria	Nill	Office Director	MnDOT
	Lisa	Raduenz	Planner	MnDOT
	Donna	Wittner	Transit Manager	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe - Tribal Transit
x	Ia	Xiong	Director of Transit	City of Rochester
x	Anne	Carroll		TransitPlus consulting team
x	Kevin	Chambers		TransitPlus consulting team
x	Charlotte	Frei		TransitPlus consulting team
x	Erica	Hamilton		TransitPlus consulting team
x	Suzanne	O'Neill	Consulting team project manager	TransitPlus consulting team

Reference:

- **Prep materials**
- **SC presentation**
- **(Also see SC compact and group norms below)**

1. Introduction

- Welcome and Project Updates -- Chuck Morris
- Agenda
- Recording, group norms, attendance
- Project status + website resource: greatermntransittech.com

2. Strategy Map -- Anne Carroll

3. Baseline Technology Reference Chart -- Erica Hamilton

Notes/SC contributions:

Scheduling, trip planning

- Question/comment: Why organizing this by size? Operating budget or similar may be as or more useful
  - Response: Tying it to the baseline technology chart and transit stack
- Comment: 250 rides/day is too low for "large" systems
  - Response: We'll take another look at the ridership levels
  - Response: It gets complicated in the middle range because the systems vary a lot
- Comment: Understand how you're distinguishing between demand-response and fixed route, it may be challenging when we're talking with federal people about our work. Follow on: Should we add route deviation as another column?
  - Response: From a technology standpoint, we know that complementary paratransit and deviated route services function more like demand-response
  - Response: We'll be sure to stress these issues around what they are called and how they function, and how technology supports them

Comms, etc.

- Comment: GTFS real time should apply to demand-response and flex routes
  - Response: Agreed, but it doesn't yet -- but some people are working on this
- Comment: Deviated fixed route still has to report all the same data as Fixed Route, fares, passenger counts, etc.
- IVR: we do not use reminder calls, but is it a must have versus a maybe? Follow on: Duluth does not have it but has budgeted for the IVR project, our dispatchers are excited for it in hopes it saves on cancel at door or no-show. Also, the efficiency improvement.
  - Response: Some agencies do automated calls through AVR, which significantly reduces cancellation rate; for a mid-sized agency that's very cost-effective. For a small system it depends on how useful that is for them.
  - Response: Some systems might also coordinate with each other on technologies, making them available to smaller systems
- Comment: I think APC requirement should be YES for the large fleet fixed route due to certification and reporting.
  - Response: This technology reference chart assembles information the consultants have gleaned from around the country and is intended to provide *guidance* not direction or requirements
  - Response: We can update the table re: APC for large systems

Fare, service
- Comment: Fare payment may be required for agencies with higher trips per day vs. "size"
  - Response: Chart looks at cost-effectiveness; also look at fare payment resource guide
- Comment: What we've learned during COVID is that employees and riders are looking for contactless payments, so perhaps everyone should do this
  - Response: We'll look at that. Another thing to consider is fare-less systems, which addresses everything including equity; some have gone to donations and other approaches

General comments about size-based structure *and* how might you use it?
- Comment: may need to split demand-response and fixed-route, and within each split by size + perhaps both DR and FR. Generally, how do we deal with nuance and variation within and between providers
- Comment: Perhaps split sizes into 4 vs. 3 categories
- Comment: Needs to be some differentiation between the *types* of service and the balance *within* an agency
- Comment: i think the top 5 transits are going to need a different category of technology needs than the rest of the large providers
- Comment: The chart could be useful to explain technology decisions to stakeholders -- justifying investments
- Comment: We'll use this to think about what might be useful or relevant for us, and to examine what capabilities various software systems provide

4. **Transit Stacks -- Charlotte Frei**

Notes/SC contributions:
- Comment: Our use/value of this is tied to reporting requirements (small staff); right now we just get standard reports that aren't helpful. This helps us look at that differently.
- Question to group: Are any of you required by vendors to diagram your systems, and do these stacks help with that? Group responses: We have a technology plan that incorporates our timeline for technology, not really a diagram BUT a timeline. / Yes. / My staff did that (yes/no) on the Baseline Technology Chart
- Clarifications from team: Baseline chart is more of a Y/N approach, while this is relational, looking at things relative to each other. This is a new way of thinking for agencies and the state...
- Comment: We struggle with sole source; we want data to be integrated; when you invest all your money into one company we can't get all the information we need. Follow-on: I had the same thought on the reporting to BlackCat too.
  - Response: Reflects importance of standards at a broader level -- integration, reporting, data, etc. -- and further create pressure on vendors about better integration

5. **Supports for Technology -- Kevin Chambers**

Notes/SC contributions:
- Preface: Many technology implementations don't work the way we expect or need them to, so this conversation is about how we might collectively steer things toward greater success
- Comment: Should PCI compliance be on this list? Or is this incorporated into the cybersecurity portion?
  - Response: In cyber security and perhaps in access to domain experts
- Comment: I feel that you need green boxes for DEVELOPMENT and TESTING. These are separate from design and planning
  - Response: Will explore that

- Questions: In what ways does this help you determine how to improve your supports? How can you imagine using this? What questions do you have about the nodes or elements? What are your questions or suggestions to make this better?
    - Comment: Would like to incorporate planning and grants into this, as well as building in efficiencies; I spend so much time trying to streamline that process before I can even get to the technology acquisition itself! / I agree with that.
    - Response: Included in system design and planning, but hear that it needs to be called out
    - Comment: Would help if funders read this to better understand how this all works for agencies
    - Comment: Regarding procurement, it would help a lot to understand in more detail what vendors are offering so we can do better cost estimates, procurement
    - Comment: Material is highly beneficial from my perspective. / I think it is very helpful / This is helpful for our agency
    - Comment: Really like this and want to share with stakeholders so they understand what we do; these are hard projects with lots of different angles that they need to understand
    - Comment: For the most part this is already taking place for us here
    - Comment: We really work/think like this but most of it isn't documented -- and should be
    - Comment: I think that it helps bring all the pieces and steps together and organizes it.
    - Coimment: I believe that you should build on the topics that Kevin introduced about why technology projects often fail. Should be a cornerstone of the plan.

6. Next Steps/Close -- Erica Hamilton
- Next SC meeting April 22, 2021

Steering Committee Compact

Agreed by Steering Committee and MnDOT August 13, 2020

1. **Charge:** The Steering Committee (SC) for the Greater Minnesota transit technology planning project provides guidance to the MnDOT project manager and consulting team to support stakeholder engagement and the plan-development process. The SC does not represent all stakeholders, but rather works to ensure all perspectives and voices are heard.

2. **Membership:**
   a. Steering Committee members are project stakeholders from rural, Tribal, and small urban transit providers, and MnDOT
   b. Members are appointed by MnDOT; if an SC member is unable to attend a meeting, the member may send a substitute and are responsible for providing that person with the information they need to participate meaningfully
   c. The anticipated SC membership term is through April 30, 2021
   d. MnDOT makes any additional or replacement appointments as needed

3. **Convenings**: SC meetings, workshops, and similar activities will be virtual to support full participation from members throughout the state

4. **Responsibilities**:
   a. Prepare for SC activities, such as reviewing materials provided in advance
   b. Actively participate in SC activities, or provide notification if unable to attend
   c. Adhere to norms established by the group

5. **Organization**:
   a. SC meetings convened by MnDOT project manager or designee
   b. Content and contributions provided by consulting team and SC members

Steering Committee Group Norms: Details from 8/13/20 exercise

*Summary group norms in **bold** are for review and adoption at 9/29/20 SC meeting.*

Be prepared, responsible

- Be prepared; come to meetings prepared; read materials in advance
- Start and end meetings on time; be on time
- Be responsible
- Ensure committee gets materials well in advance so they have time to prepare

Be open minded and willing to learn, change

- Open to ideas; openness to new ideas; be open to new ideas
- Be open minded; open mindedness
- Be open to change
- No idea is a bad idea
- Research and learn

Be engaged; contribute

- Do your best to be fully present; don't multitask during meetings (to extent possible)
- Stay actively engaged; lean toward engagement
- Actively participate; 100% participate
- Speak up; speak honestly; don't be shy -- share
- Share unique perspectives
- Give thoughtful feedback

Be respectful, encouraging, and supportive

- Encourage others
- Be supportive
- Be respectful
- Respect other's point of view and experience; don't belittle others' ideas; no judgements
- Respect others and their thoughts/ideas; respect all ideas; all ideas are valid
- Let everyone's voice be heard; don't interrupt; one person speaks and others listen

Be positive, creative, curious

- Be positive; be excited; allow for positive intent; positivity; smile!
- Be creative
- Be curious

Be inclusive

- Ensure inclusion
- Gather feedback
- Collective solutions/progress
- Respect the process
- Use common technology vocabulary