

Northeast Region Coordination Meeting Minutes

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Name of Project: NDOT Northeast Region Coordination
Meeting Location: Conference Call
Date and Time: Thursday, July 23, 2020
Attendees: Corinne Donahue; Bonnie Buchanan; Rojene Welding; Dana George; Dani Wright; Matt Harrington; Bob Bourne; Kari Ruse; Alex Buskohl; Bill Biven; Jeff Harcum; Nikki Pinkelman; Nick Weander; Janice Johnson; Mike Piernicky; Talia Villalpando; Diane Carlin; Joy Johnson

1. Introductions: Many agencies have opened to full service, but the demand has very much decreased. Many of the agencies have increased the number of sanitations. Some have reduced passengers allowed.
2. Sanitizer saga: Requested by an agency, UNO food science building with Nebraska Ethanol board was able to provide 148 gallons were dispersed throughout the state. If you have more orders, get them in before July 31st. Please contact Bill Biven to get more!
 - a. The sanitizer is a bit waterier than what many are used to. Ponca has put it in spray bottles for use to sanitize different surfaces and areas. They recommend that you dilute with aloe if you are using it on your hands. This gives it a more gel like consistency and helps not dry skin out. Dani will send the clinic's ratio for the mixture.
 - b. 23,000 masks were received by DOT. There are quite a few still available and will be available at the Kearney transit manager's meeting. They are reusable and can be washed.
 - c. Matt would really appreciate if any agencies could show the masks and sanitizer in use via photos. You can send them to Matt (mharrington@unomaha.edu), Bill (bbiven@unomaha.edu), or to Kari (kari.ruse@nebraska.gov).
3. Vision and Goals
 - a. Our goal is to help identify metrics to help increase ridership and show growth opportunities.
 - b. Community engagement amid corona has been difficult but is always important.
 - c. Technology
 - i. The technology fair will be held August 5th.
 - ii. Many agencies have started to reach out to companies to see what the software can do for them.
 - iii. This software can save you about 50% of the time it takes to manually create a report.
 - d. Looking at the Northeast region Summary, we have heard talk of at least 6 agencies and areas that have a need for more service. The 'F' on the map shows where new expansion or facilities are in the works or have been brought up.
 - e. Regional Needs Review.

- i. We have been looking at service deserts in the region. These are defined as no grocery store, no pharmacy, and no hospital.
 - ii. We know these are untapped markets. But there are many others such as educational trips, grocery trips, K-12 with disabilities, and work trips.
 - iii. From the service desert maps, we saw 4 different possible routes.
 - iv. We wanted to connect larger communities to smaller towns along the route so that if someone wanted to go to Northeast community college from the smaller areas, they would not necessarily have to move. Same for an elderly adult who needs services in a larger town but wants to age in place.
 - v. The schedules presented are a prototype, but they were built to accommodate an early doctor's appointment or class and then to run at other common times. This could be adjusted to fit each community's need.
 - vi. The "home base" of these routes could be at either end of the route. The idea would be that a bus would pick up at a central location at the ends and perhaps deviate a few blocks if someone called in at least an hour ahead (not 24 as the bus is running on a scheduled route and the person could take the next possible bus). The towns with an agency within can supplement the routes by picking up those around town and bringing them to the intercity bus.
 - vii. The system was modeled after several other systems like Salina to Columbia and Rhinelander, WI. Salina runs 5 days a week three times a week and the other runs 3 and 2 days a week (depending on route). Ideally running 5 days a week is best, but 3 days is probably a good start up amount.
 - viii. Winnebago and Omaha tribe currently run routes in that area. Will there be coordination with them? Have we reached out to these communities before? Lyons tends to go south to Fremont versus up to South Sioux City. We currently do not have any agencies in mind, but those that are already running services and want to expand would be best to fill these needs. We are really looking at the planning and needs side of these routes and have not yet brought these ideas to the communities. This coordination meeting is the first time we have presented it. Additionally, the services currently being provided will not be replaced but instead are enhanced with the additional scheduled service. Our goal is to make it the easiest possible to use the bus so we can get the most riders. It was brought up that the routes might change once we bring them to the communities and their demand and travel patterns. It will also be very hard to find a location to pick up riders. An example is Rosalie which is off the highway. What is to stop them from getting a ride to the highway and not keep riding all the way? Bob mentioned that this was an issue in Salina. Our goal is to set it up so that regular riders know to call ahead of time. The service will not be deviating up a rural farm or ranch, this would be left up to the current service (On demand/demand response).
 - ix. It is important to keep in mind that these are just rough ideas and numbers and your input and the communities' input will help to sharpen these. Any ideas and thoughts are appreciated. You can reach out to Bob Bourne (bob@bournetransit.com) or Corinne Donahue (cdonahue@olsson.com)
4. The Technology Fair is August 5th, 2020. there will be an option to attend virtually or to attend in person. It is a unique time to compare the companies against each other and for the needs of your unique agency. This will hopefully make the coordination and future plans easier. This also will be a great option to network with managers because many have had demos already. There is even a contract with one agency already! Matt will send out the link to the Technology Fair.
 5. Next meeting will be held in October, Covid-19 permitting, we would love to have it at an agency, but it will also be available online.
 6. Thank you!