

Valley Transit Strategic Plan

Task 2

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis

Mission, Vision, and Values

Draft

Valley Transit



July 2014

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Valley Transit SWOT Analysis

Introduction

Valley Transit provides transit service to the Fox Cities area, including the City of Appleton, City of Kaukauna, City of Menasha, City of Neenah, Town of Buchanan, Town of Grand Chute, Village and Town of Harrison, Town of Menasha, Village of Kimberly, Village of Little Chute, Calumet County, Outagamie County, and Winnebago County. The service area covers 117 square miles on the north end of Lake Winnebago and serves a population of roughly 216,000.

Valley Transit is in the process of developing a Transit Strategic Plan. A key step in development of the plan is to understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the transit system.

During the month of May 2014, the consultant team conducted meetings with Valley Transit management and staff; key community leaders; transit riders and the general public to conduct a SWOT analysis. These meetings allowed participants to freely offer their thoughts on the current system. Participants were also encouraged to think about factors that could impact the system in the future. On May 7, 2014 the consultant team held four meetings with Valley Transit staff: one meeting with Valley Transit administrative and supervisory staff, two meetings with Valley Transit operations staff (bus operators, communications technicians, and maintenance personnel), and one meeting with the Valley Transit general manager. Additionally on May 7, 2014, the consultant team and Valley Transit staff held a public meeting in an open house format where community members participated in SWOT exercises and responded to survey questions that assessed existing conditions and themes. On May 8, 2014 a large SWOT work session was held with strategic plan steering committee members, Fox Cities Transit Commission members and key community and business leaders from the Valley Transit service area. This group included representatives and elected officials from municipalities in the Fox Cities, as well as representatives of various community stakeholder groups, including:

- Local advocacy organizations
- Appleton Area School District
- Various chambers of commerce, business improvement, and economic development associations
- East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
- Institutions of higher education (Lawrence University, Fox Valley Technical College, UW Fox Valley)
- Various human service agencies

- Major retailers and property owners

In the large SWOT meeting, participants were also asked to identify the top three factors in each SWOT area to provide a weighting system for the factors.

From these meetings a number of key themes on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats emerged. These themes are summarized in this memorandum.

Strengths

The great news is that Valley Transit has a lot of strengths in the eyes of this diverse group of participants. The strengths can be loosely summarized into six factors:

Personnel/Community Perception of Valley Transit; Scope of Services; Community Support of Public Transit; Valley Transit Service Delivery; Technology and Partnerships. This gives the organization a very strong base to build on as it moves forward.

Personnel/Community Perception of Valley Transit

Valley Transit is perceived very positively by the community. From the General Manager to the bus operators, the organization is largely seen as positive. Valley Transit management and staff are viewed as technically capable, personable and responsive to customers. The organization looks for opportunities to reach out to other entities; is open to suggestions; and willing to collaborate with others. Respondents mentioned that the management and staff are a part of and respected by the community. The community also responds positively to Valley Transit as an organization. Comments indicated that Valley Transit is seen as responsive to community needs and suggestions; open to change and collaborative.

Valley Transit drivers are also seen very positively by passengers and the community. They are perceived as helpful and friendly, providing information and assisting in connections. There is also a perception within the organization that people generally work together to help each other and to ensure that customers are well served.

Scope of Services

Participants believed a major strength is that Valley Transit services go beyond the City of Appleton to serve several communities. This is seen as very important for the system to effectively meet the transportation needs of the community. Valley Transit's variety of services is also seen as important. It is recognized that the regular fixed- route services, the Trolley, paratransit services, the Connector, Rack n' Roll and accessibility features on the buses, provide a variety of ways to meet the needs of the community appropriately.

Community Support of Public Transportation

Many people in the community understand that transit is important for the disabled, elderly, those without other mobility options. There is also an acknowledgement that Valley Transit supports businesses and to a somewhat lesser degree, overall economic development. There is a feeling that these are legitimate and important aspects of what makes the Fox Cities a good community and that it is important that they continue to be provided.

Valley Transit Service Delivery

Valley Transit service generally operates well. It is perceived as being on-time, clean and generally safe. Employees also pointed out Valley Transit's excellent safety record. Drivers are friendly and helpful. Valley Transit facilities (transit center) and vehicles are generally perceived as attractive, clean and well maintained.

Good Base of Technology

It was generally felt that Valley Transit has a good base of technology. Staff mentioned the automatic vehicle location (AVL) system and "Google Transit" for trip planning, as well as other web based resources for transit. These represent a strong base of technology for a small urban system.

Partnerships

Valley Transit has a number of strong partnerships in place with the communities that it serves; with Appleton schools; with some businesses and non-profits. These partnerships reflect positively on the organization and participants saw them as a real advantage. Expanding this base of partnerships is also seen as an important opportunity for the system.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses were heavily clustered into three main areas: Service Limitations; Negative Perceptions; and Lack of Funding. Other issues can be categorized into three smaller areas: Lack of "Choice" Riders; Disability Service Issues; and Culture.

An interesting observation is that "scope of services" was one of the top positives, while "service limitations" was also the top negative. The group values the variety and inclusive nature of the services while acknowledging that the overall level of those services definitely limits their attractiveness. Funding level also plays a key role in this situation.

While there are some negative perceptions about transit services and those who use them, they are balanced by a fairly strong positive overall impression of the system, its personnel, and the importance of the service to the community.

Service Limitations

The overall level of transit services limits their attractiveness; particularly to those who have other mobility options. Some of the key deficiencies highlighted by the participants are listed below:

- Lack of service frequency (hour headways)
- No evening/Sunday/Holiday service
- Limited route structure – key unserved destinations both within the current communities and beyond them
- Spoke and hub system of routes (have to go downtown to get anywhere else)
- Commute time/travel time compared to the auto

These service limitations make transit an unattractive option for individuals that have other options.

Negative Perceptions

The most commonly heard negative perceptions from the participants were:

- 1) Buses are for other people, not me;
- 2) The bus/transit center may not be safe; and
- 3) Why are those buses running around empty?

These perceptions are not unusual in an auto-oriented community with limited transit service availability. If people have an automobile available in their household, transit may not be a convenient transportation alternative, especially given the lack of traffic congestion in the Fox Cities.

The third perception relates to the fact that people often see buses near the end of the line or at other points of low ridership. There is a sense of “wasted” taxpayer resources unless the buses are full at all times. Also, other parts of the region’s transportation infrastructure are not subject to the same scrutiny of “usage” that transit is. Roads, trails, and waterways are built to sustain a peak capacity and transit is developed much in the same way, but one rarely hears complaints about roads with too few cars on them given the amount of lanes.

Inadequate/Unstable Funding

Many of the participants acknowledge and understand that transit funding is limited and unstable. Transit’s ability to expand and improve is limited by this lack of funding and the cumbersome funding arrangements which currently support the system. The issue of the lack of capital funding and the aging Valley Transit bus fleet was also raised. Several participants also cited legislation at the State level that limits local options for funding public transportation.

Transit Needs to Attract More Riders Who Have Other Options

Comments by the participants indicate that transit is seen as being used largely by riders who have other no other mobility options. This was perceived as a weakness of the system. In particular, attracting more work related trips was seen as important. Participants felt that transit needs to attract more “choice” riders, yet it is limited in its ability to do so by the limited service and the poor comparison between public transportation and the private automobile.

Services to Individuals with Disabilities

Participants felt that there were opportunities to improve service to those with disabilities. Some of the issues discussed included: providing more training for bus operators; providing more convenient stops and the inability of paratransit services to cross community boundaries. At least one participant felt very strongly that paratransit services would be

improved by bringing them “in-house” rather than contracting them out to a private provider.

Culture

Participants felt that the perception in the community is that riding the bus is not seen as a positive. The auto-oriented nature of the community makes it difficult for transit to survive. These issues are really more threats than weaknesses of the system itself. They are discussed more fully in the following sections under both Threats and Opportunities.

Opportunities

Given the fact that service limitations were seen as the top weakness, it is not surprising that service improvements and expansion are seen as the top area of opportunity for the system. Opportunities for the system to improve ridership and community support were also heavily clustered around suggestions to improve perceptions and marketing of the system. A number of interesting ideas were generated in this area that could be explored further. The group also identified regional transit authorities (RTA) and stable funding as key opportunities for the system. Other identified opportunities included changing demographics and behavioral trends, collaborating with additional funding partners; and re-defining the role of Valley Transit.

Service Improvements and Expansion

Most of the participants identified service improvements and expansion as being a top opportunity. They view service improvement as essential both for making the service more effective for current riders and making it attractive for those who have other transportation options. Suggestions for service improvements and expansion closely followed the “service limitations” listed in the Weaknesses section.

Key opportunities identified for service improvement include the following:

- Improve service levels. Provide more frequent service. Reduce transit travel times.
- Provide service later on weekday evenings/Sundays/holidays
- Expand downtown trolley service
- Serve additional destinations within the current communities that are part of Valley Transit’s service area
- Provide service to areas beyond those communities – rural service, outside employers, etc.
- Expand to other transportation modes – bikes, taxi’s, vans, car-sharing
- Provide regional service – rail or bus service from Green Bay to Chicago

Perceptions/Marketing

Participants had a number of suggestions about ways that Valley Transit could market itself more attractively. One suggestion was as the “community connector.” This could refer to the fact the service connects various municipalities (communities). It also can refer to the sense of community on the bus and among those who use the services.

Another concept was as “the alternative for active living” focusing on both the mobility that bus service provides and the walking that is associated with riding the bus. Instead of getting caught in trying to compete with the car, it was also suggested that Valley Transit could define itself as “the car/care free” alternative.

It was also suggested that perhaps Valley Transit could lead the conversation around “green living” and sustainability, stressing the environmentally friendly aspects of choosing public transportation. Consideration could also be given to purchasing alternative fuel vehicles to further the positives of this choice.

A number of participants stressed that Valley Transit could gain more community support by doing analyses that prove transit’s financial worth and publicizing that information. These would stress that transit is a good investment, for the community and for the individual. The analyses could focus on how transit saves individuals money over driving. It could also show how transit attracts jobs; allow individuals to be productive members of the community by accessing jobs; or reduces the cost of care for individuals who are elderly or disabled by allowing them to remain independent.

Improved Funding/RTA

Many of the participants in the SWOT exercises were aware of the funding challenges facing the system. There is an acknowledgement that the system needs a better, more stable funding source to allow for reasonable service improvement and expansion. The elimination of cumbersome funding mechanisms with each community would also make service expansion more rational and more able to adapt quickly to changing development patterns. Many identified the need for an RTA to address these issues.

Changing Valley Transit’s Role as a Transportation Provider

Participants suggested that Valley Transit could potentially attract more riders by focusing on providing total mobility solutions rather than just “bus service.” Valley Transit could look at ways to provide a total package of door-to-door ease, comfort and convenience.

Participants also mentioned that Valley Transit could define itself as everything that is not the private automobile, rather than just a bus service provider. It could potentially collaborate with others to be a clearing house of transportation information and a broker of transportation options. It could also partner with organizations that encourage walking and biking.

Changing Demographics and Behavioral Trends

Changing demographics were identified as having the potential to provide an opportunity for transit. Most frequently mentioned was the aging population and their desire to remain healthy and active. In addition, the ability to attract millennials, especially with the green/active living aspects of transit was seen as a potential opportunity. Finally, getting younger riders in the habit of using transit, through school based passes and other programs, was identified as having potential to build a habit of transit usage that could carry over into adulthood.

Partnerships

Participants felt that Valley Transit could pursue more collaborations and partnerships to increase ridership. The bus pass program with the Appleton public schools was seen as a model that could potentially be expanded to colleges or to other communities. Pursuing more partnerships with businesses was also seen as an opportunity. These partnerships could have multiple benefits, including: increasing transit ridership; spreading the base of funding for services; and fostering a sense of community ownership of transit.

Threats

Funding was seen as the top threat to the future of the transit system. It was followed closely by various negative perceptions of transit as well as service limitations.

Inadequate/ Unstable Funding

The lack of stable funding is seen as the top threat to the system. While it was acknowledged that Valley Transit has a good structure for regional funding, the need for more funding to improve and grow the system was identified. The main message was that the system may not be able to survive in the long-term unless action is taken in this area.

Perceptions/Attitudes

Participants identified community perception and attitude as a threat to the success of the system. As mentioned previously, the perception that “buses are for others, not me” hurts the success of the system. In addition it was mentioned that there is somewhat of a stigma to riding transit and that it is not perceived as “cool.” Concerns about personal safety also are a potential deterrent to ridership. These negative impressions are a threat to the system.

It was also mentioned that the desire to expand transit service is complicated by attitudes that taxes are too high and tax dollars are not always spent efficiently. In addition there was the sense that employers, elected leadership and the public do not always understand the value (monetary and other wise) of transit.

Community Characteristics

Participants pointed out that the Fox Cities is a low density small urban area. Development is sprawled and high levels of auto ownership are the norm. In this environment it is very difficult for public transportation to remain a viable and attractive alternative.

Transit Service Related Issues

Unless transit can deliver high quality, frequent service, in a relatively seamless manner, it is difficult for it to be a viable alternative for individuals who have other mobility alternatives. People have a high level of expectations for their transportation and service at that high level is expensive to deliver. This is further complicated because of the difficulty for the system to adapt quickly to changing conditions.

Additional Key Themes from Operations Staff

Many of the factors raised by the operations and management staff are supported by and incorporated into the overall themes identified in this memorandum. Following are some unique themes that were raised by management and/or operational staff that did not emerge in the discussions with the other groups.

Weaknesses

Operational Issues

Staff raised a number of operational issues that impact the ability of the system to perform well. Some of these issues related to route structures that were potentially confusing for customers, impacted travel speed or that made it difficult to operate on-time.

Interestingly, on-time performance came up in a number of different areas, as both as negative and a positive of the system. If Valley Transit has performance statistics in this area, they should be reviewed to determine whether or not this is an issue and what the underlying causes of poor on-time performance might be.

Fare Related/Promotional Issues

Staff also mentioned that not having a youth fare makes the bus costly for families to use. They also noted that many of the “employee benefit” programs that businesses offer to encourage employee transit ridership are underutilized.

Opportunities

Additional opportunities identified by the staff fall into a number of categories:

Service Revisions: Route restructuring (shorten routes, make system more of a grid; pair areas with service overlap) may offer some opportunities to deliver service more effectively. There are also areas of parking congestion in Appleton that might provide opportunities for service – festivals; farmer’s market, Mile of Music, etc. In addition, highlighting accessibility features of the system might make it more attractive to seniors or those with mobility issues.

Fare Structure and Payment Enhancements: Mileage- or zone-based fares and bringing back a discounted youth fare or family pass were identified as potential opportunities for the system. In addition, staff identified “improved technology for fare collection” (including charge cards and other prepaid forms of payment) as an option that might make the system more user friendly and attractive.

Marketing: Ideas generated included working with developers to offer free rides to help attract people as long-term riders; travel training with seniors/others to reduce anxiety about taking the bus; and provide a “guarantee ride home” program.

Other: Staff felt that broader participation by Valley Transit in community development discussions and long-range planning activities might be productive for overall transit inclusion in the Fox Cities.

Threats

Staff raised concerns that the aging fleet, equipment and technology of the system threatened Valley Transit's ability to move into the future. As mentioned in the overall summary comments, this is particularly crucial because of the lack of funding options for capital items.

Valley Transit Strategic Plan: Vision Statement and Values

Vision:

A vision statement reflects what an organization believes are the ideal conditions for a community, and how things would work if the issues important to the community were completely addressed. Vision statements also speak to the overall goals of the agency. Even though present day values and strategies can change, the vision remains timeless. Here is a proposed vision statement for Valley Transit:

“Valley Transit will provide the leadership to connect the communities of the Fox Cities through creative, efficient and coordinated transportation options.”

Mission:

The mission statement of an organization serves as its statement of purpose. Mission statements are similar to vision statements, in that they, too, look at the big picture. However, they are more "action-oriented" than vision statements. For a transit agency the mission statement identifies the target market for services, the core product, and how the delivery of services is meaningful. A proposed mission statement for Valley Transit is as follows:

“Through the strength of our people and partners, Valley Transit will provide safe, effective, customer-focused transportation solutions that link our communities and enhance the quality of life and economy of the Fox Cities.”

Values:

Values are set as the guiding principles at the core of an organization. When carrying out transit projects and building partnerships in the Fox Cities, Valley Transit refers to each of these in its decision making process. The intent of establishing organizational values is that they are core principles that are not to be compromised. Valley Transit holds the following six values up as guiding principles to achieve its future vision:

Integrity

Valley Transit holds a position of respect among the communities it serves. Valley Transit has earned this position through its transparent processes, and the productive relationship it maintains with regional partners. Valley Transit is charged with the stewardship of public resources and provides a quality transportation service for those that rely on it for mobility. Additionally, Valley Transit’s values are consistent with those in the Fox Cities region,

promoting a good quality of life and supporting the regional economy. Valley Transit welcomes communication from all interested parties, and is respectful and professional in its communications and conduct.

Goal Statement #1:

Valley Transit is a fiscally responsible organization that is accessible and supports a high quality of life in the Fox Cities.

Customer Service

At its core, Valley Transit provides a critical service to passengers, human service agencies, and businesses whose employees and customers rely on transit for mobility. Valley Transit pledges to carry out its operations while meeting or exceeding customer expectations. All front line staff will engage the customers of Valley Transit politely, and in a manner that is considerate of customers' special needs. Customer service training is required for all staff associated with the agency.

On a regular basis Valley Transit will measure customer satisfaction and assess the perception of its products from the view of the community. If Valley Transit is notified that customer expectations are not being met, or if poor customer service is observed, Valley Transit staff is proactive in responding to these issues.

Goal Statement #2:

Excellence in customer service is a central value of Valley Transit, and the organization continuously monitors and exceeds customer expectations.

Convenience

All of the services provided by Valley Transit will be useful and convenient for the transit passenger. Valley Transit will work to minimize travel time and operate programs in places where there is demand for transit. Additionally, Valley Transit will operate its scheduled services on-time. Valley Transit will use available technology to its fullest potential to communicate information to transit users, and make the use of transit as simple as possible.

Goal Statement #3:

Transit Services in the Fox Cities will be direct, on-time, and easy-to-use.

Multimodal Infrastructure

The fixed route network operated by Valley Transit is the backbone of transit in the Fox Cities. This network is supplemented by other transportation modes that enhance the regional system. All transit trips begin or end with a pedestrian link, and Valley Transit customers benefit from investments in the pedestrian environment. Bicycle connections can

extend a fixed bus route, and aide in providing a “last mile” connection to transit. Additionally, the bicycle is an affordable mode of transportation that has a low impact on the environment. Automobile connections also offer benefits to transit through ridesharing, park-and-rides, and the management of parking pricing and travel demand. Roads can also be constructed to incorporate transit advantages.

Valley Transit also integrates its fixed route service with other specialized transit modes, such as demand response, vanpools, taxis, and human service transportation providers.

Goal Statement #4:

Transportation infrastructure in the Fox Cities will embrace many modes of transportation, and offer seamless connections for all people traveling to, from, or within the region.

Efficiency

As a steward of public investments, Valley Transit operates in an efficient manner. Staffing levels will be maintained appropriately, and service will continually be evaluated to assure a meaningful return on investment. Valley Transit will measure, improve, and be accountable for environmental, financial and social results.

Transit agencies must constantly balance the need to provide geographic access to communities, while maintaining a transit service that is convenient for its users. This means that running times of routes should be reasonable, routes should be direct with minimal deviations, and travel times should be competitive with other modes. Not all environments can sustain public transit service, and the focus of Valley Transit’s core operations should be in areas where a sustainable market can be built.

Efficiency goes beyond performance measures like subsidy per capita. Continuous market research should drive service development decisions. Valley Transit takes a balanced approach to serving the region by covering areas of high productivity, along with areas where people have critical mobility needs. Building on the value of multimodal connections, it is acknowledged that fixed route transit is not necessarily the most appropriate resource for all markets, but all modes in the Fox Cities should coordinate with or connect to Valley Transit’s fixed route bus, as it presents a comparatively low cost per rider.

Goal Statement #5:

Transit needs in the Fox Cities will be met efficiently, and in a manner that is consistent with its mission.

Resilience

As Valley Transit develops it must do so in a manner that keeps resilience as a core principle. Resilience is an organization's capacity to anticipate disruptions, adapt to events, and create lasting value. Currently Valley Transit's structure of funding is reliant on large blocks of funding from federal, state, and local sources. Volatility in any of these sources can lead to instability for the entire system. Valley Transit will evolve its funding plan to minimize reliance on any single funding source, and position itself for local control over transit service. Furthermore, as the Fox Cities grow and change, Valley Transit must adapt to a shifting market. As such, Valley Transit will have systems in place to continually evaluate existing conditions of the transit market and adjust its service to effectively meet those needs as they arise.

Goal Statement #6:

Valley Transit is funded in a manner that promotes stability and resilience, and is flexible to accommodate a growing region.

Appendix A

On May 8, 2014 a group of key stakeholders that serve on a Steering Committee for the Valley Transit Strategic Plan met to review the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in relation to the services currently provided by Valley Transit.

After each of the groups had brainstormed about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the individuals were asked to list their top 3 factors in each area. The following factors were listed as top SWOT issues by the Steering Committee participants. The frequency that each factor was selected is indicated by the number in parenthesis following the statement. If there is no number following the statement it was chosen once.

Strengths

- Scope of Services (total – 27)
 - In general (4)
 - Regional/crosses municipal and county boundaries (11)
 - Variety of service options – Link, Trolley, the Connector (12 - of those 4 specifically mentioned the Connector)
- Valley Transit Management/leadership (23)
- Community supports Valley Transit – positive perception in the community – high profile/known commodity (15)
- Responsive to changing community needs and customers and suggestions (11)
- Serves people with real needs – disabled, elderly, those without other options (9)
- Valley Transit is collaborative – willing to partner (9)
- School pass (8)
- Serves businesses –connects people to employment – responsive to/accommodates employer needs (5)
- Valley Transit personnel (in general) are helpful, responsive (5)
- Vehicles are nice (5)
- Drivers are friendly and helpful (4)
- Buses are safe (3)
- Name is known – branding is good (2)
- Mayoral support (2)
- Good awareness for those who rely on it (2)
- Accessibility features – Rack N Roll (2)
- Technology is good – google transit (2)
- Community understands the importance of providing this service
- Solid infrastructure – buses, routes
- Schedules are good
- Fares are reasonable

Weaknesses

- Lack of service frequency (19)
- No evening/Holiday service (12)
- Limited route structure (12)
- Spoke and hub system of routes (12)
- Limited funding (12)
- Commute time/travel time (11)
- Competition (auto) is tough to beat – Not convenient (10)
- Perception that “those people” use the bus (8)
- Lack of community value for public transportation (4)
- Buses are empty – no one rides them (4)
- Perception that the bus is not safe(4)
- Not attract ting enough full fare/choice riders (4)
- On-time performance (4) – not sure everyone understood the standard definition of this term – were they actually referring to how long it take to get places on the bus
- Weak relationship with employers – lack of incentives to get employees to use transit (3)
- Fear (3)
- Lack of capital funding – aging fleet (3)
- High fares (2)
- How do I use the bus? Will it get me where I want to go? (2)
- Drivers need additional training in helping persons with disabilities (2)
- Stops are not always convenient for people with disabilities (2)
- Perception that transit center is not safe (2)
- Subcontracting of paratransit services – not handled well
- Perception that transit is not “cool”
- No culture of riding
- Lack of brand identity – unclear what the system offers
- Public apathy – culture
- Low density of area
- Legislative limitations on what can be done to fund transit
- Lack of options to cross community boundaries w/ paratransit

Opportunities

- RTA – (15)
- Public/private partnerships- more funding from businesses – employer engagement – (8)
- Educate public to get the right perception – the bus is cool – test marketing – emphasis the “community” of ridership – (7)

- Greater regional service – rail from Green Bay to Chicago – bus to FDL/GB- (6)
- Expansion to other transit modes – bikes, taxi's, car-sharing, vans, etc. –(6)
- Better intermodal connections – enhance mobility between modes – cleanly solve the rider's problem rather than offering “features” - be a broker of transportation options/connections – (5)
- Reduce service to outer areas and improve service in higher density areas
- Expand service area – esp. to outside employers – (5)
- Market to choice riders – (5)
- Calculate cost and ROI of various transportation modes –cost of car - ownership – (3)
- Lead the conversation around sustainability and “green”- (3)
- Create a more enjoyable experience – Wi-Fi etc. – (3)
- Partner with other school districts for free rides – (3)
- Airport service – (3)
- Educate public in how to use the bus and how easy it is to use – (3)
- More collaboration with other communities – (2)
- Move “stuff” as well as people – (2)
- Diversity training –(2)
- Get young riders in the habit of riding –(2)
- Promote transit benefits – health, less traffic, etc. –(2)
- Customize bus size and type by demand – smaller vehicles – (2)
- Make buses eco-friendly – sustainable fuel sources – (2)
- Millennials – (2)
- More frequent service – (2)
- Enhance mobility options – (2)
- Rural transportation – Calumet County (rural?) – (2)
- Think beyond the bus
- Stronger Lawrence relationship
- Learn from like-sized communities
- Expand downtown trolley service
- Promote active lifestyle
- New generation of Wisconsinites
- Bus to ATW
- Reduce travel time
- Build on idea of broad community ownership
- Demographic changes
- Create customized solutions for high frequency users
- Be responsive to needs
- Accommodate non-traditional schedules
- Ability to serve new demographics
- Operate own paratransit system – additional employment opportunities
- Relate funding to job growth/employment
- Educate parents to get kids out of cars and on bus

- Service/servant leadership
- Better, more sustainable funding model

Threats

- Lack of funding/ Unstable future funding – (29)
- Urban sprawl/ low density development – (9)
- Auto oriented community- (8)
- People see empty buses and believe that transit is not needed- wasted resources (7)
- Employers/elected leadership/public do not understand the “ value” (monetary and other wise) of transit – (7)
- Buses are for other people/stigma of transit/riding is not cool – (6)
- Non regional thinking/parochialism – (5)
- Perception of lack of safety –(5)
- Overall perception of transit – (4)
- An essential service is one that I need- unessential is anything anyone else needs – (2)
- Inability to meet needs of the aging population – (3)
- Community apathy –(2)
- Perception of costs/taxes – (2)
- Culture of convenience/ lack of convenience of using bus –(2)
- System’s inability to rapidly adjust to changing conditions
- Competition
- Lack of shared vision
- Parents are not having kids use the bus
- Wisconsin politicians
- Late routes and driving time lacking
- Technology/Media not being used to raise public awareness
- Lack of marketing
- Local economy/lost jobs
- Dependence on government resources
- People misusing transit center (spending time, staying warm etc.)
- Continuing on same path
- Legislative limitations on funding options
- Staying on top of the route and schedule needs
- Expectations for high quality frequent service