Identified Issues Report

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Prepared for: City of Mankato — Leading the way...

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Introduction

In the spring and summer of 2017, the Mankato Transit Development Plan (TDP) team actively engaged the public, community stakeholders and decision-makers, and technical experts to provide feedback and recommendations regarding the Greater Mankato Transit System (GMTS). Information was gathered through pop-up events at Project Community Connect and at Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU-Mankato), rider and non-rider surveys, focus groups with universities and non-profits, operator interviews/surveys, data collection and analysis, community meetings, and the satisfaction surveys from Mankato and North Mankato.

The purpose of this report is to document the issues that were identified through these engagement efforts. The issues identified will guide the development of the plan's recommendations.

While the issues described herein represent service and operational issues identified from public and stakeholder input, many positive comments were received including the following most cited positive comments:

- Friendly drivers
- Students have good relationships with drivers and drivers know many riders' names
- Buses are clean and well-kept

The following report is a summary of the most commonly identified issues, which fall within one of the following six categories:

- Transit Service
- Reliability and On-Time Performance
- Route Directness and Simplicity
- Infrastructure
- Safety
- Marketing and Communications

The report also contains an Issues and Recommendations Matrix, which can be used as a tool to share how public and stakeholder feedback was incorporated into the planning process.

Transit Service

Transit Service generally refers to service availability and cost. Issues related to where bus service is provided throughout the city, how often it serves these areas, the days and times the service is available, how much passengers pay for service, and the methods of payment available were among the most cited issues.

Frequency and Overloads

Frequency of service is the primary source of public and stakeholder dissatisfaction. The desire for improved frequency of the existing service was cited more than any other issue. The performance issues that accompany less frequent service, such as long overall trip durations, long transfers, and overcrowded buses were also frequently identified.

Overcrowding and overloading can be measured by passenger loads. Passenger loads measure the comfortability and safety a system provides on each individual trip. This metric is used to measure the maximum number of people at any given point on a vehicle along a route and compares that load to the

vehicle capacity. High passenger loads result in overcrowded conditions, which may require additional service to address the issue. The GMTS University Zone (U-Zone) routes have the highest trip loads, with Routes 1A-North, 1B-South, 6 and 8, all having trips with more than 50 passengers on the bus. Routes 1A-North, 1B-North, 1B-South, 2, 6, and 8 all exceed the load standard set in this TDP. **Table 1** describes GMTS's load standard, the maximum number of persons that should be on a bus at a given time, and observed maximum load (observed May 2017), which is highlighted in **red** if it exceeds the load standard, by route.

Table 1 | Max Passenger Load by Route

ROUTE	MAXIMUM LOAD	SEATED CAPACITY	LOAD STANDARD	MAXIMUM CAPACITY
Route 1A North	**80**	32	1.2	38
Route 1A South	32	32	1.2	38
Route 1B North	**40**	32	1.2	38
Route 1B South	**58**	32	1.2	38
Route 2	**43**	32	1.2	38
Route 3	17	16	1.2	19
Route 4	2	19	1.2	22
Route 5	9	19	1.2	22
Route 6	**65**	32	1.2	38
Route 7	3	16	1.2	19
Route 8	**67**	32	1.2	38
Route 9	12	32	1.2	38
Route 10	21	32	1.2	38
Route 11	18	32	1.2	38
Route 12	11	32	1.2	38
Route 13	3	16	1.2	19
Campus Express	38	38	1.2	45
Stomper Express	30	38	1.2	45

Service Area

Equitable access to Mankato bus service was identified as another major public and stakeholder concern. While specific, identified needs for service area changes varied, several areas were identified more frequently and are considered areas of greater need. A service gap analysis was also completed for the

fixed route and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services to further identify potential service expansion areas.

Public and Stakeholder Service Area Concerns

The public and stakeholders provided comments on service area expansion and right-sizing needs. In terms of expansion, lack of both bus and ADA complementary paratransit service in North Mankato was identified as the greatest service area issue, which includes the Colony Apartment complex and South Central College. Downtown Mankato/Riverfront Drive and the residential areas of West Mankato were also frequently cited. General access to employment and residential neighborhoods (apartment complexes, senior living, affordable housing) were also frequently mentioned.

Other potential expansion areas indicated by the public and stakeholders included:

- Eagle Lake
- Schools
- Mobile home parks
- St. Peter
- Sibley Park
- Restaurants
- Shopping centers
- Le Hillier
- South Bend Township

Stakeholders and the public also identified potential to right-size bus service in some parts of the 2017 service area where bus service reductions could be made without negatively impacting Greater Mankato Transit System ridership and customer experience. Stakeholders and the public identified parking lot stops at specific buildings as potential service reduction areas, due to the time the stop adds to the routes without serving many passengers.

Service Gap Analysis

FIXED ROUTE

GMTS currently serves areas within the Mankato/North Mankato Urbanized Area (UZA) with the highest population density and most areas that have higher employment densities. However, the transit propensity analysis suggests that there are parts of the UZA that are in need of increased or new service.

North Mankato is currently served on weekdays by Route 4 and Route 5, each of which has two trips during the morning peak, a midday trip, and three trips during the afternoon peak. There is no evening or weekend service in North Mankato, despite being the home to both South Central College and the Taylor Corporation's world headquarters[1]. In addition, the North Mankato Comprehensive Plan includes plans for new residential units, some of which have already been constructed as well as new commercial and industrial development in the coming years. North Mankato has high scores on the Commuter Index, Employment Index, and All-Day Transit Index, indicating that this area could support an increased level of service (see the Existing Services, Ridership and Standards Report for more information on these indices).

Although Taylor Corporation and its subsidiaries are served by Route 5, other major employers in the Mankato area are not directly served by the existing transit network. Most notably, the Walmart Distribution Center[2], which employs more than 500 people and is over one-half mile from the nearest bus route.

[1] Taylor Corporation operates a three-shift schedule, which requires employees to travel during the evening hours

[2] The Walmart Distribution Center operates a three-shift schedule, which requires employees to travel during the evening hours

While GMTS serves both Mankato East and Mankato West High Schools, there are several area schools that are not currently served, including Mankato East Junior High School, Prairie Winds Middle School, and Loyola Catholic School. Although these schools are within one-half mile of an existing service, the pedestrian environment between the schools and the route often involve difficult street crossings and/or circuitous routing.

The transit propensity analysis indicates that there may be sufficient demand to expand transit service to Eagle Lake. Because the population densities in east Mankato are low, these areas may be better suited for flexible alternative services rather than fixed-route service. There are several apartment complexes and trailer parks that would also benefit from these flexible services.

ADA COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT

GMTS currently provides ADA complementary paratransit service to qualified residents within the city limits of Mankato and North Mankato. The hours of operation are aligned with the regular fixed-route services provided within the individual city limits because the ADA requires transportation services to be available for individuals with disabilities unable to use fixed route services. The Paratransit service must be comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities. Paratransit service must be provided ¾-mile from the fixed bus routes.

Mankato ADA service is available on weekdays from 6:35 AM to 6:00 PM and on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM. These hours of service provide consistent ADA complementary paratransit service coverage to people with disabilities within the Mankato city limits, especially to the higher density disabled populations in downtown Mankato and close to the hospital.

In North Mankato, the hours of operation are limited to the service hours of Routes 4 and 5 (Monday through Friday: 6:35 AM to 8:35 AM, 11:35 AM to 12:35 PM, and 2:35 PM to 5:35 PM). North Mankato currently accounts for approximately 10 percent of the ADA complementary paratransit ridership and has high densities of disabled populations south of Monroe Avenue and west of Lake Street as well as moderately high densities of people with disabilities near South Central College.

There are also some additional significant densities of people with disabilities in both the Skyline and Eagle Lake areas. Skyline and Eagle Lake should be considered for expanded ADA complementary paratransit service.

Schedules

The span of bus service (i.e. the hours per day, days of the week, and days of the year) was identified as one of the most limiting factors to passenger access. The desire for later evening routes was the second highest ranked improvement noted by the public, after service frequency. Although the route may exist, if the hours of operation do not align with when a trip needs to be taken, transit is not a viable option.

Service span issues identified include:

- Lack of early morning routes
- Limited Saturday service, especially early morning service
- Lack of Sunday service (bus and Mobility Bus)
- Lack of service for 2nd shift workers
- Lack of year-round service (for routes that service the MSU-Mankato area)
- Limited Mobility Bus nighttime service
- Lack of year-round Mobility Bus service

Fare Structure

The current standard bus fare ($1.50 per ride) is considered too expensive for many people in the Greater Mankato area who are transit-dependent. High school students, people with low-incomes, and senior citizen passengers all indicated that the current fare inhibits transit access. The Mobility Bus fare ($3 one way) was also identified as too high for many passengers with disabilities.

The customer affordability perspective needs to be balanced with the perspective of policy-makers who noted and value the historically sound financial plan for the GMTS. Transit systems need to balance affordability to both customers and funders.

Payment Methods

Fare options and payment flexibility were often cited as a barrier to riding GMTS. The lack of fare options for those other than MSU-Mankato students (i.e., a public Mav Card, senior pass card, or prepay card) was often cited as an issue. The lack of farebox flexibility (i.e., payment via a smartphone) was also noted as an issue.

Reliability and On-Time Performance

Reliability and on-time performance are operational factors that assure passengers that schedules can be utilized and trusted to plan their trips. Consistently poor on-time performance reduces the attractiveness and accessibility of any transit system. Reliability is also related to GMTS's ADA complementary paratransit accessibility in terms of wait time and availability.

Schedule Performance

The dependability of the Mankato bus service was identified as an issue among the public and stakeholders, who shared that buses frequently run ahead of schedule and leave stops early. GMTS defines "on-time" as a bus arriving anywhere from on-time to 5 minutes late at a time point. Based on arrival and departure data collected through the May 2017 ride-checks for this planning process, GMTS systemwide average on-time performance was 69 percent, which is below the agency's target of 90 percent. Two of the GMTS routes met the OTP standard, the Campus Express and Route 9. Route 8, a U-Zone service, performed the worst with only 40 percent of on-time trips; most of the trips (59 percent) on this route were early. Routes 1A-North, 4, 8, and 12 also noted a considerable number of early trips (over 30 percent). **Figure 1** provides an overview of on-time performance by route[3].

ADA Complementary Paratransit Accessibility

Several issues were identified for the Mobility Bus service. These included:

- Getting a ride with the service due to capacity issues
- Limited service to North Mankato
- Difficult eligibility paperwork

It was also noted that there are many people who do not qualify for Mobility Bus services but still have mobility-related challenges that result in a difficult time accessing fixed-route services.

[3] No data was collected on the Late-Night Express. The study team collected ridership and on-time performance data on each route and each trip on one weekday and one Saturday in May 2017. As of May 2018, GMTS does not have the technological capability to routinely collect trip- and stop-level transit data.

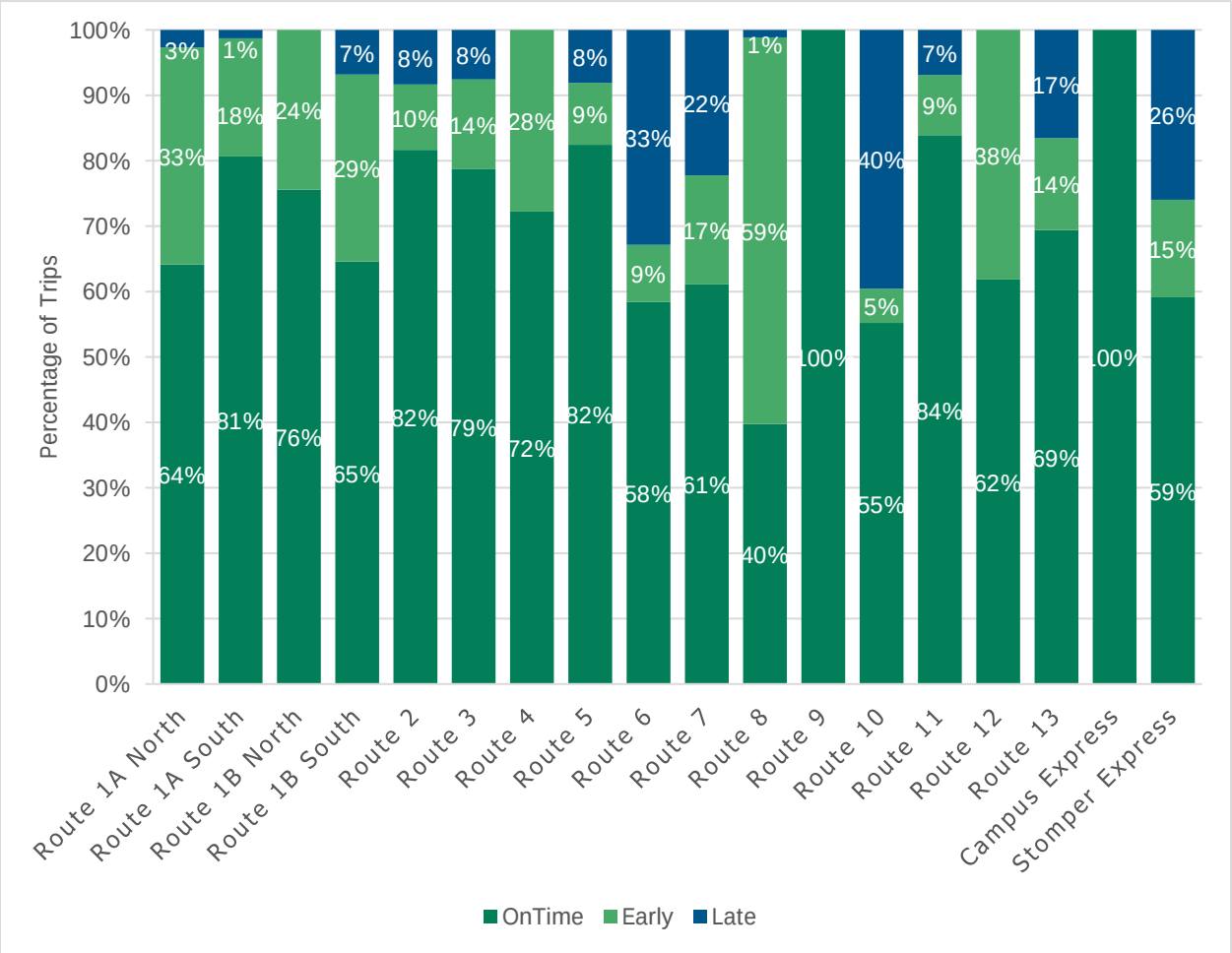

Figure 1 | On-Time Performance by Route

Route Directness and Simplicity

Route directness and simplicity refer to the straightness of the route alignment and how easy it is to understand. These two concepts working in conjunction help to address system coordination, coherence, and accessibility. A system designed in this manner can serve as a mechanism for increasing transit ridership and providing a more efficient, reliable transit system. Circuitous routes and inordinately long trip travel times discourage transit use.

Route directness is impacted by the number of deviations between route end points which ultimately impacts travel time. Route simplicity is affected by several factors including complexity (number and duration of route deviations), transfers required, and the number and placement of designated stops.

Directness

Route directness is the ratio of the actual route path distance to the straight-line mileage between route timepoints. The distance from one timepoint to the other should be no more than 100 percent greater than the straight-line distance between them. The design guideline for route directness is presented in Table 2.

Routes with ratios that exceed 2.00 present a cause for examination and modification, if practical. For example, a route that exhibits a ratio of 2.00 may be used to serve too many destinations. This can be resolved in two ways: 1) elimination of service to certain locations; or 2) the development of a new route or realignment of another existing route. The tradeoff requires weighing the costs of the new route versus the expected ridership gain from offering a more direct route.

Table 2 | Directness Design Guideline[4]

ROUTE TYPE	DIRECTNESS RATIO
Local	< 2.00
Shuttle	< 1.75
Express	1.00

GMTS Routes all meet the directness standards. Routes 10 and 11 have the highest ratio, a result of their loop design. Route 7 is the most direct route in the system, connecting MSU-Mankato campus with downtown Mankato during peak hours. **Table 3** provides an overview of each route's directness ratio.

While all GMTS routes currently meet the standard, issues related to directness were identified by stakeholders. The public indicated that the travel times on some routes were too long, indicating potentially indirect or circuitous routes. For example, routes around the MSU-Mankato campus were identified as being too indirect to major destinations.

Complexity

Complexity analyzes the route structure in terms of route variations, the number of branches off of the main route. A route structure which is too complex or has several variations for each bus route is confusing to existing riders and can serve as a deterrent to attract new riders. The stop patterns on a route should remain the same throughout the service day with little to no variation. The suggested standard is to limit route variations to no more than two for each route and preferably no variations. This guideline will reinforce for passengers that the bus service is simple and easy to use.

GMTS's routes have one variation, except for Route 6 which has a route variation serving the Justice Center before 4:00 PM.

Transfers

The long duration of transfers (30 minutes to an hour in some cases) was identified as an issue by the public and stakeholders. This issue can indicate a few issues: 1) timing of connections are not well-coordinated to allow reasonable transfer times; or 2) the frequencies of connections are low.

Designated stops

The lack of designated stops was identified as an issue. Flag stop operations, specifically, presented concerns:

- Confusion on how the operation works, preference for establishing designated stops
- Safety concerns regarding sudden and/or mid-block stops
- Reliability of service (early or late bus arrivals, number of overall stops)

Drivers reported no issues related to schedule timing and flag stops on their routes.

[4] https://www.nctr.usf.edu/pdf/77720.pdf, page 65

For fixed route stops that drive through residential neighborhoods and apartment complexes with no stops, additional stops were requested.

Table 3 | Directness Ratio by Route

ROUTE	ROUTE TYPE	ROUTE LENGTH (MILES)	STRAIGHT LINE DISTANCE (MILES)	DIRECTNESS RATIO
1A-North	Shuttle	3.57	2.54	1.41
1A-South	Shuttle	4.76	2.75	1.71
1B-North	Shuttle	4.66	2.83	1.50
1B-South	Shuttle	6.10	4.01	1.61
2	Local	6.09	3.83	1.72
3	Local	13.71	9.53	1.45
4	Local	3.95	2.55	1.63
5	Local	12.49	8.57	1.47
6	Local	11.34	7.65	1.51
7	Local	6.39	5.15	1.33
8	Local	2.36	1.56	1.53
9	Local	2.96	1.85	1.66
10	Local	13.79	8.00	1.79
11	Local	13.84	8.54	1.73
12	Local	5.31	3.74	1.47
13	Local	13.98	9.37	1.46
Campus Express	Shuttle	4.80	3.35	1.48
Stomper Express	Shuttle	15.38	9.64	1.51
			System Average	**1.55**

Infrastructure

Infrastructure can impact accessibility to GMTS as well as the attractiveness of the waiting and riding environments. For the purposes of this report, infrastructure refers to the physical GMTS capital resources, including bus stop amenities and signage, and vehicles.

Bus Stop Amenities

GMTS has 86 official bus stops. Outside of these locations, passengers can flag down routes and board the vehicles at any point along the route. Across the system, the average distance between bus stops on any given route is 0.6 miles or just about two bus stops per mile. Due to the flag stop nature of the system, bus stop spacing most likely is not having an adverse effect on existing ridership, but it could be a deterrent for new riders who are unfamiliar with flagging down a vehicle. **Table 4** details bus stop spacing by route.

Table 4 | Bus Stop Spacing by Route

ROUTE	ROUTE LENGTH	NUMBER OF STOPS	AVERAGE DISTANCE BETWEEN BUS STOPS
1A-North	3.57	14	0.3
1A-South	4.76	13	0.4
1B-North	4.66	8	0.6
1B-South	6.10	12	0.5
2	6.09	15	0.4
3	13.71	13	1.1
4	3.95	5	0.8
5	12.49	13	1.0
6	11.34	19	0.6
7	6.39	8	0.8
8	2.36	12	0.2
9	2.96	8	0.4
10	13.79	34	0.4
11	13.84	36	0.4
12	5.31	13	0.4
13	13.98	14	1.0
Campus Express	4.80	15	0.3
Stomper Express	15.38	20	0.8

The primary bus stop inadequacies identified were related to information dissemination and wayfinding. According to the public and stakeholders, GMTS bus stops are generally deficient in providing adequate route information, real-time arrival information, and directional/destination information.

Less frequently identified bus stop issues include unclear bus signage, lack of benches and shelters, and unappealing shelters. The signage issue indicates a need for uniformly styled bus stop signs which include, at a minimum, common elements such as the GMTS logo and a web page address and informational phone number. This can also indicate a need for clearly indicated route numbers for the routes that stop at that location. The number of benches currently available is also a barrier for senior citizens who might otherwise use the service if it weren't for a lack of somewhere to sit while waiting for the bus.

Disability access

Disability access at bus stops was cited as a concern, such as the lack of landing pad space to accommodate extendable/retractable bus ramps. This does not just imply the lack of a connection sidewalk. For example, a comment received by a Route 3 operator cited the need for ADA accessible stops to eliminate the need to "stop in an intersection or in the middle of the street almost, to allow the ramp to come out". Sidewalks exist along much of Route 3, but these sidewalks are at times set far back from the road or located sparsely along one side of the street. The flag stop system along such segments may be an issue for ADA access. Vehicles flagged down in a location the ramp cannot deploy can limit accessibility.

Other identified issues that impact disability access include lack of shelters or benches, lighting, and clear signage. To accommodate ADA requirements, GMTS should prioritize providing accessible bus stops. This can be accomplished by moving away from the flag down policy towards fixed-stop service.

Vehicles

Issues that were identified related to the physical buses were primarily concerned with disability access. The public and stakeholders also identified issues pertaining to the vehicles' condition and features.

Disability access

The current vehicle configuration (vehicle height and steps), which is difficult to navigate under normal circumstances, is further complicated by adverse weather conditions. Furthermore, the use of the wheelchair securement restraints available on GMTS buses can be challenging. Lack of restraints for passengers with walkers was also noted as an issue.

Vehicle condition

The most cited vehicle feature and condition issues that were identified include unattractive bus exteriors, bland interiors, and the lack of Wi-Fi available on buses. Public and stakeholder comments generally cited clean and well-kept bus interiors. One exception identified was the need for updated seats in some buses that currently have worn and soiled textile-covered seats.

Safety

Issues pertaining to the real or perceived safety and security of the passengers, vehicle drivers, and general public impact both the public image of GMTS as well as overall service performance. The primary safety issues identified were insufficient lighting, unsafe crossings, and loitering.

Lighting

Lack of lighting at bus stops was cited as an issue by the public and stakeholders. Lack of lighting can be a safety issue (dark bus stops in the evenings and winter months can create an unsafe environment for waiting passengers) as well as a performance issue (drivers noted the difficulty of seeing passengers waiting at dark stops).

Unsafe crossings

Unsafe pedestrian crossings were cited as a safety issue, primarily by bus operators observing passengers crossing the street directly in front of buses at locales without proper crosswalks.

Loitering

Loitering was identified as an issue by operators who observe passengers loitering on buses (remaining on the bus for two or more trips). While loitering impacts seat availability, it can also impact the feeling of safety and security for drivers and passengers. The identification of loitering as an issue on buses may indicate the need for increased or enhanced security and lighting on buses and at bus stops.

Marketing and Communications

Transit marketing and communications efforts need to be developed and maintained so that information is widely current and accessible. Communication elements such as maps, schedules, and route nomenclature convey critical information to existing passengers, while marketing elements educate the public about using transit.

Maps and Schedules

The existing maps and schedules have been identified as insufficient for wayfinding and trip planning tools. The following issues were also identified:

- The online schedule does not include all bus routes
- Route maps difficult to locate online/no “Maps” link
- Route maps are not interactive
- Unclear route transfer points and terminals
- Bus schedules don’t list stops
- Lack of a systemwide map showing all routes together
- Lack of visuals in bus interiors

Related to accessible maps and schedules is the potential need for an interactive app. An app that provides access to dynamic maps and schedules that are designed to be viewed on smartphones for real-time trip planning was identified as a need by the public and stakeholders. An app should supplement the more traditional means of communication to the public, since communicating services to senior citizens was also identified as an issue. A balance of technology and education is needed to communicate with the public.

Route Names and Numbers

The routes are named and numbered in ways that were identified as confusing to the public. Some routes are associated with a text name, some are associated with a number, and number are associated with a number, a letter, and a direction. More consistency across route nomenclature would be beneficial to public understanding.

Public Information

The public and stakeholders identified a need for additional transit information, transit education, and marketing. A group largely affected by this lack of public information is students. MSU-Mankato students have indicated that the transit system is not well advertised on campus and many students do not know how to ride the bus or where it goes. Area middle and high school students have indicated that they also do not know how to ride the bus. This may stem from GTMS’s lack of online presence and a lack of available education materials (videos, brochures, interactive “how to ride the bus” days, etc.).

Another group affected by lack of public information is non-English speakers. Informational materials are not available in multiple languages and the transit system environment is generally not perceived as welcoming to non-English speaking passengers.

Marketing that considers senior citizens and local businesses was also identified as lacking. A need was identified to improve the marketing to seniors, especially as the population continues to age in the Greater Mankato area.

Public and stakeholders commented that GMTS could do more to promote the bus service. Comments cited a lack of resources aimed at encouraging and supporting initial and continued ridership. Examples of resources given included a disability fare, bus ambassadors, and free first-trips.

Finally, the need for more customer feedback options was identified. These options could include providing a space online (city's website), on an app or interactive map, or permanent driver logs for service requests.

Issues and Recommendations Matrix

The matrix in Table 5 was developed to connect the identified issues to the recommendations made in the project technical memos.

Table 5 | Issues and Recommendations Matrix

CATEGORY	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
Transit Service	Buses do not operate frequently enough, which causes long transfer waits, long travel times, and overcrowding on buses. This comment came from both riders and potential riders who see frequency as a barrier to using service.	In the Expansion Scenario, frequency is improved on Route 7. In the Illustrative Scenario, frequency is improved on Routes 2, 5, 6, 7, and 1B North.
Transit Service	Overcrowding and overloading: Routes 1A-North, 1B-South, 6, and 8 have the worst overloading issues. This issue was identified through project data collection as well as through feedback from focus groups with the universities and during community meetings.	In the Expansion Scenario, frequency is improved on Route 7. In the Illustrative Scenario, frequency is improved on Routes 2, 5, 6, 7, and 1B North.
Transit Service	There is not enough service to: ◆ North Mankato ◆ MSU-Mankato Innovation Center ◆ West Mankato ◆ Mobile Home Parks ◆ High schools ◆ Sibley Park ◆ Old Town ◆ 3rd Avenue ◆ North End This feedback came from both riders and non-riders through pop-ups, interviews, community meetings, and surveys.	In the Expansion Scenario, the Route 7 is extended to serve the MSU-Mankato Innovation Center and flex zones are added to serve North Mankato, West Mankato, mobile home parks, high schools Sibley Park, Old Town, 3rd Avenue, and the North End. In addition to the improvements in the Expansion Scenario, in the Illustrative Scenario Route 21 is proposed to serve Sibley Park and West Mankato, Route 22 is proposed to serve 3rd Avenue, and Route 23 is proposed to serve Mankato East High School
Transit Service	Service does not operate late enough, particularly on routes serving MSU-Mankato. This feedback came from nearly all engagement activities.	Later service is proposed on Route 7 in the Expansion Scenario and on Routes 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 on weekdays in the Illustrative Scenario.

CATEGORY	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
Transit Service	Service currently does not operate early enough. This feedback came from community meetings, rider surveys, and transit operator interviews.	A partnership with transportation network companies is being explored.
Transit Service	There is not enough service operating on Saturdays. This feedback came from nearly all engagement activities.	In the Illustrative Scenario, Saturday service is proposed on Routes 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7.
Transit Service	There is not currently transit service on Sundays. This feedback came from nearly all engagement activities.	Sunday service is introduced on Route 26 in the Expansion Scenario, and on Routes 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 in the Illustrative Scenario.
Transit Service	Second shift workers cannot get home from work on transit. This feedback came from community meetings, pop-ups, and non-profits focus group.	A partnership with transportation network companies is being explored.
Transit Service	Service reductions while MSU-Mankato is not in session are an issue, including for paratransit riders that have reduced service available. This feedback came from pop-ups, interviews with New Americans, and community meetings.	Comment shared with funding partners.
Transit Service	There is not enough paratransit service available to North Mankato. This feedback came from community meetings, non-profit focus group and from Mobility Bus rider interviews.	Additional Mobility Bus and flex route service are being added to North Mankato in the Expansion and Illustrative Scenarios.
Reliability and On-Time Performance	Many routes depart stops earlier than scheduled.	The Greater Mankato Transit System is working to implement routine evaluation of on-time performance.
Route Directness and Simplicity	Riders, potential riders, and transit operators find flag stops confusing to use or unsafe. This feedback came from transit operator interviews, non-rider surveys, and during community meetings.	Bus stops will be introduced throughout the Greater Mankato Transit System.
Infrastructure	Riders and potential riders do not think that there is enough information provided at bus stops. This comment came up during community meetings and the non-profit focus group.	Bus stops with signage will be introduced throughout the Greater Mankato Transit System.

CATEGORY	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
Infrastructure	Riders or potential riders do not think there are enough bus stop signs throughout the system and the existing signs are unclear. This feedback came from community meetings and non-profit focus group as well as in both rider and non-rider surveys.	Bus stops with signage will be introduced throughout the Greater Mankato Transit System.
Infrastructure	Benches are not currently available at all the locations at which they are needed, which makes it challenging for some people to wait for the bus. This feedback came from both riders and non-riders across nearly all engagement events and surveys.	Additional benches are proposed based on the proposed Title VI standards.
Infrastructure	Many bus stops currently lack landing pads to accommodate the deployment of ramps. This feedback came from both riders and non-riders at focus groups and community meetings as well as from system operators.	Bus stops will be introduced throughout the Greater Mankato Transit System, and bus stops will each have landing pads to accommodate the deployment of ramps.
Infrastructure	People find the exterior and interior of buses bland or unattractive. This feedback came from both riders and non-riders at community meetings, focus groups, and pop-ups.	Comment noted.
Infrastructure	There is a desire for Wi-Fi on buses. This feedback came from both riders and non-riders at community meetings and the university pop-up.	Comment noted.
Infrastructure	Riders mentioned that the seats on the white buses are worn, soiled, and uncomfortable. This feedback came from riders at community meetings, focus groups, and pop-ups.	Comment noted.
Infrastructure	Only MSU-Mankato students are currently able to pay their bus fares with a card, and the general public would like to use a fare card as well. This feedback came from riders at pop-ups and focus groups.	A fare card is recommended for the Greater Mankato Transit System.

CATEGORY	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
Safety	Riders or potential riders do not feel safe due to the limited quantity of shelters and lights, and operators have difficulty seeing waiting passengers at night due to the lack of lighting. This feedback came through at nearly all engagement events.	Additional shelters and lighting are proposed based on the proposed Title VI standards.
Safety	Operators, riders, and potential riders expressed concern about the need for people to cross the street at non-crosswalk locations due to the distance between crosswalks along routes. This feedback came through at nearly all engagement events.	GMTS staff will work with Mankato and North Mankato Public Works Departments to evaluate and improve pedestrian crossing facilities.
Safety	Some operators reported feeling unsafe due to passengers loitering on the buses. This feedback came from our transit operator interviews.	Comment noted.
Marketing and Communications	Riders and non-riders currently find it challenging to understand the route schedules and maps, including the following issues: ◆ The online schedule does not include all bus routes ◆ Route maps are difficult to locate online ◆ Route maps are not interactive ◆ It is unclear where transfer points are located ◆ Bus schedules don't list stops ◆ Lack of a systemwide map showing all routes together ◆ Lack of maps/visuals in bus interiors This feedback came through at nearly all engagement events.	The TDP recommends the following: ◆ Create a static systemwide map ◆ Use consistent, differentiated colors for each of the routes ◆ Align information on route materials with landmarks and geographic areas that they serve ◆ Create an interactive, web-based map that matches the colors and design of the static system map ◆ Provide all route and scheduling information on the website without requiring users to click into a PDF

CATEGORY	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
Marketing and Communications	The transit system currently does not have an app to provide dynamic maps and schedules, pay fares, or find real-time bus information. This feedback came from riders and potential riders during nearly all engagement activities.	The TDP recommends GMTS: ◆ Collect GPS data to better understand system function and also provide live detour and system status maps to the public ◆ Implement a trip planning tool ◆ Work with MSU-Mankato students to assess system needs for a mobile-friendly data-driven GMTS web application ◆ Develop or adapt an existing application to incorporate dynamic web-based map, live route updates, and trip planning in one place
Marketing and Communications	Riders and potential riders find the existing route numbering and naming confusing. This feedback came from community meetings and surveys.	The TDP recommends ◆ Content and format of all print and web materials should be consistent ◆ Ensure that naming, numbering, and colors of routes is consistent across all print and web materials

CATEGORY	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
Marketing and Communications	There is not currently enough transit information, educational materials, and marketing materials available to the public. This feedback came from both riders and non-riders at community meetings.	The TDP recommends: ◆ Provide specialized brochures for various service areas to meet the needs of targeted user groups ◆ PDF content should be prepared so that they display and print correctly on standard sizes of paper, and - also meet accessibility standards including alternate text for images, defined content headings, and page structure/navigation as well as necessary document metadata (title, author, etc.) ◆ Create additional website content that provides history of the system to show growth, testimonials, “How to Ride” videos, infographics, and other compelling content ◆ Develop an umbrella website to cover both GMTS and MSU-Mankato transit information, and allow for greater consistency of information as the system expands to serve additional communities ◆ Consider serving as an “official transportation partner” for local events or promoting special services to and from festivals to advertise service ◆ Host “How to Ride” events with high schools, non-profit groups, and mobile home parks to promote the benefits of the system
Marketing and Communications	Transit information is currently only available in English. This feedback came from community meetings, non-profit focus group, and interviews with New Americans.	The TDP recommends GMTS provides materials in languages other than English: e.g., Spanish, Korean, and African languages

CATEGORY	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
Marketing and Communications	The methods for providing customer feedback are currently too limited and riders desire additional options. This feedback came from community meetings.	The TDP recommends GMTS: ◆ Create a generalized email address (e.g., comments@mankatomn.gov or RIDE@mankatomn.gov) that is easier to share ◆ Provide an online comment form on every GMTS webpage ◆ Request removal, or delete any social media accounts using the GMTS name or logo that is not actively monitored by GMTS staff ◆ Invest in YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook accounts to receive feedback and provide instructional video content