Feasibility of Commuter Bus Service Between Wahpeton-Breckenridge and Fargo-Moorhead

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Objectives

- Determine the number of regular commuters between the Wahpeton-Breckenridge and Fargo-Moorhead metro areas,
- Make commuters aware of the cost of driving their personal automobile and compare that cost to that of using commuter bus service,
- Discover the willingness of commuters to utilize commuter bus service,
- Determine what commuter bus service features were of utmost importance to travelers, and
- Gauge the awareness of local commuters to commuter bus service and its features.
Current and Proposed Routes
Clay County Rural Transit’s (CCRT) Current Routes

- Detroit Lakes to Fargo-Moorhead
  - Serves six communities
  - Morning service: (6:20-7:20am)
  - Return service: (4:45-6:00 pm)

- Barnesville to Fargo-Moorhead
  - Serves four communities
  - Morning service: (6:15-7:00am)
  - Return service: (4:30-5:45pm)
### Ridership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005 Passengers</th>
<th></th>
<th>2005 Mileage</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detroit Lakes</td>
<td>Barnesville</td>
<td>Detroit Lakes</td>
<td>Barnesville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>4565</td>
<td>2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>4344</td>
<td>2762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>4934</td>
<td>3223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>4476</td>
<td>2652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>4561</td>
<td>2968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>4499</td>
<td>2606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4201</td>
<td>2425</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clay County Rural Transit’s (CCRT) Proposed Route

- Wahpeton-Breckenridge to Fargo-Moorhead
  - Serves four communities
  - Morning service: (6:30-7:30am)
  - Return service: (4:45-6:00pm)

- 3-month trial basis (Oct.-Dec. 2005)
  - Rate $30/hr
  - 4hr day, $120/day
  - Roughly $8000 for three month trial
Clay County Rural Transit’s (CCRT) Proposed Route

Funding Sources

- Passenger Monthly Passes $140
- Passenger Daily Passes $10 Roundtrip
- Contributions from the cities of Wahpeton, Breckenridge, Wilkin, and Richland Counties, at $750 each. Totaling $3000 dollars for the 3 month trial.
- The Fargo-Moorhead Council of Governments (the metropolitan planning organization for the Fargo-Moorhead area) would match the $3,000 local contribution with Job Access Reverse Commute funding (JARC).
Clay County Rural Transit’s (CCRT) Proposed Route

- **Target Ridership for Trial Period**
  (12-15 daily passengers)

- **12 month funding sources**
  - Annual Passenger Fares $15,840
    (12 passengers per month)
  - Subsidy from Local Jurisdictions 7,920
  - (JARC) Grant Match 7,920
  - **Total Cost for 12 Months** $31,680
Clay County Rural Transit’s (CCRT) Proposed Route

- Marketing
  - Inserts in Utility Bills
  - Local Chamber of Commerce
  - Local Church bulletins
  - North Dakota State College of Science (Wahpeton)
  - City and County Websites
  - Public Access Television
Clay County Rural Transit’s (CCRT) Proposed Route

Advantages

- Affordable option for Wahpeton-Breckenridge area residents who are commuting to Fargo-Moorhead
- Transportation options for residents that would just like to go to Fargo-Moorhead for one day (Medical, Visiting, Shopping)
- Commuters using the service will see it as a value to living in Wahpeton-Breckenridge.
- Potential to add Fargo-Moorhead residents to Wahpeton-Breckenridge. The empty backhaul trips that the commuter bus would take could possibly be used for Fargo Moorhead residents that work in Wahpeton Breckenridge.
- The JARC grant that can match the local jurisdictions contributions provides a unique opportunity to try the service at a lower cost to the jurisdictions.
- This route would offer transportation to individuals in Wilkin County, an area that currently does not have any public transportation.
- Service compliments rural transit in Richland County.
Survey

- 16 questions focusing on travel behaviors and demographic characteristics

- Major employers contacted to distribute the survey included:
  - Blue Cross Blue Shield,
  - Meritcare,
  - Cass County,
  - City of Fargo,
  - Fargo’s Downtown Community Partnership,
  - North Dakota State University,
  - Minnesota State University (Moorhead), and
  - Concordia College.
## Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medium Car (Cavalier LS)</th>
<th>Large Car (Taurus SE)</th>
<th>SUV (Blazer)</th>
<th>Van (Caravan SE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gas &amp; oil</strong></td>
<td>6.1¢</td>
<td>7.1¢</td>
<td>7.9¢</td>
<td>7.1¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintenance</strong></td>
<td>3.9¢</td>
<td>4.1¢</td>
<td>4.1¢</td>
<td>3.9¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tires</strong></td>
<td>1.5¢</td>
<td>1.8¢</td>
<td>1.5¢</td>
<td>1.6¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating costs/mile</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.5¢</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.0¢</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.5¢</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.6¢</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insurance</strong></td>
<td>$811</td>
<td>$1075</td>
<td>$950</td>
<td>$873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>License &amp; registration</strong></td>
<td>$167</td>
<td>$206</td>
<td>$289</td>
<td>$259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Depreciation</strong></td>
<td>$3,051</td>
<td>$3,693</td>
<td>$4,286</td>
<td>$3,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financing</strong></td>
<td>$554</td>
<td>$751</td>
<td>$867</td>
<td>$755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ownership cost/year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,583</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,725</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,392</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,659</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total cost for 12,500 annual miles</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,021</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,350</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,080</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,234</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average cost/mile</strong></td>
<td><strong>$0.48</strong></td>
<td><strong>$0.59</strong></td>
<td><strong>$0.65</strong></td>
<td><strong>$0.58</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Energy Information Association, 2005)
Survey

- Willingness to Ride

![Bar chart showing willingness to ride by age group.](chart.png)
Survey

- Reasons for travel between W-B & F-M

- Employment: 80%
- Shopping: 40%
- Other: 20%
- Attend College: 0%
Survey

- Location of Employment / School

- Breckenridge
- Wahpeton
- West Fargo
- Moorhead
- Other
- South Fargo
- North Fargo

Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents from each location.
### Survey

- Willingness to use Service with Guaranteed Ride

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Need More Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey

- Reasons for not Using Service

- Does not fit my schedule
- Inconvenient
- Too Costly
- Bus Transfers
- Prefer to drive myself
Why Low Ridership?

- Many potential W-B riders work at either Blue Cross/Blue Shield Insurance or the Veteran’s Hospital
- F-M fixed routes do not run past Blue Cross/Blue Shield
- F-M fixed routes run to Veteran’s Hospital once every hour
- Gas Prices Decreased from $2.75/gallon to $2.00/gallon during three month trial period
Door-to-Door Service

- Dropped on Oct. 1st
  - Ridership has increased on established routes
  - Not enough time to drop off everyone at their place of employment
  - Money no longer available to provide such a service
  - Lost riders due to policy
  - Gained some as well who work downtown (F-M fixed route transfer center)