

Mankato Transit Development Plan Executive Summary Report

June 2018



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- Goals, Objectives, and Transit System Design Guidelines Report
- Existing Services, Ridership, and Standards Report
- Stakeholder and Community Engagement Results Report
- Identified Issues Report
- Service Recommendation Plan
- Marketing and Communications Report
- Transit Asset Management Plan
- Transit Capital Improvement Plan
- Financial Plan
- Organizational and Staffing Framework
- Title VI Analysis Report



Mankato Transit Development Plan (TDP)

Executive Summary Report

Introduction

In 2012, the Mankato area embarked on an ambitious restructuring of the bus system, and since then the number of people riding transit has more than doubled. The Mankato TDP represents the region's efforts to explore the full operational impact of this ridership growth and identify additional opportunities for improvement in service and operations. The Mankato TDP was developed using a community-based approach to identify transit customer needs in the area, leveraging an extensive stakeholder and public engagement process through community meetings, pop-up meetings, focus group meetings, surveys, press, and social media.

Goals, Objectives, and Transit System Design Guidelines

The goals for the Mankato TDP reflect the community's vision for a future transit system and align with the goals and planning factors from the Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization (MAPO) Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan, peer transit agencies, and Title VI requirements for transit providers. The goals and objectives included for each goal outline strategies that guide the TDP process.



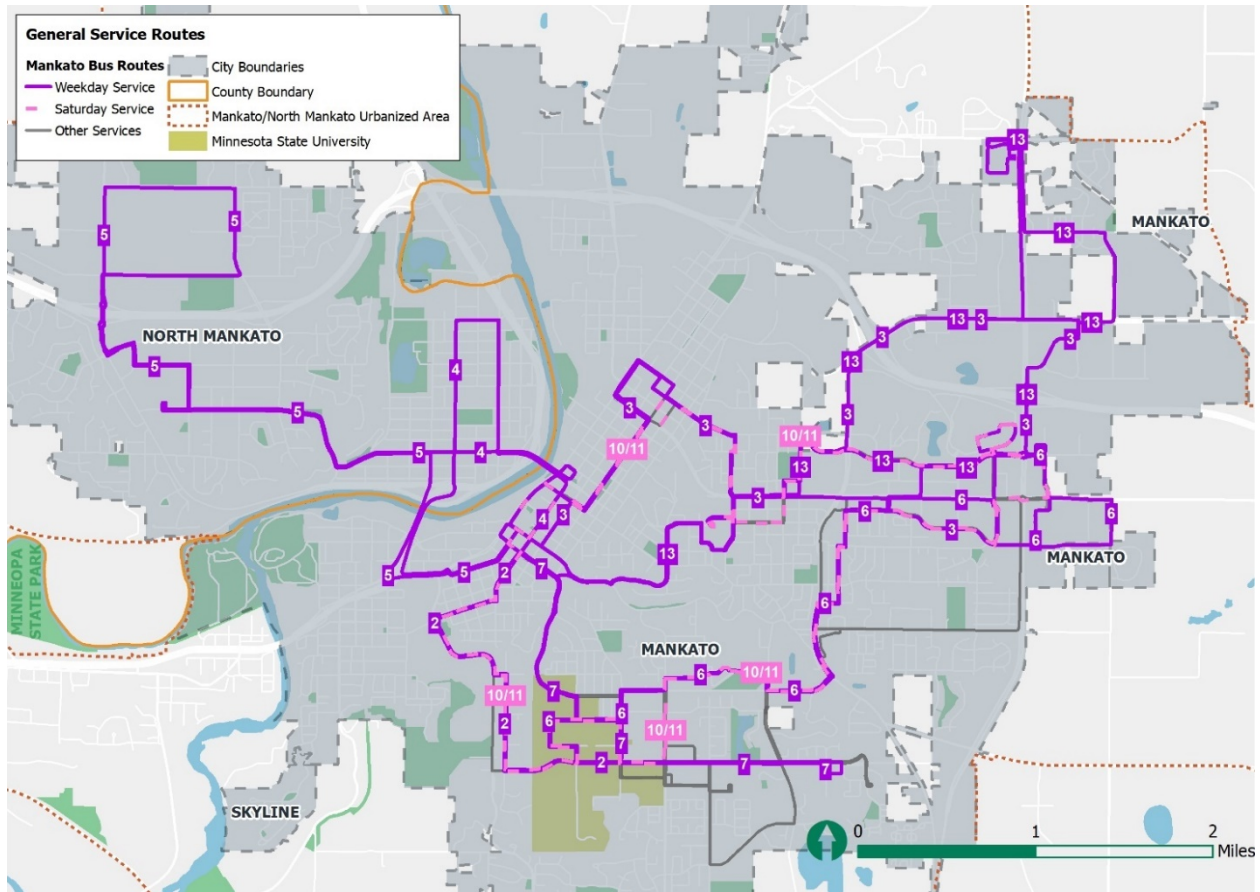
System Area Profile

The Greater Mankato Transit System (GMTS) serves 24 square miles in Mankato and North Mankato. The area includes major activity and employment centers, including the Taylor Corporation, the Mayo Clinic, and the Minnesota State University, Mankato campus (MSU-Mankato). In May 2018, GMTS operated 19 fixed route bus lines and paratransit service.

GMTS provides two types of fixed route bus service: city-wide service and university service. City-wide service operates in Mankato and North Mankato throughout the calendar year, and is funded by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the cities of Mankato and North Mankato. City-wide service includes nine bus routes. University service operates in Mankato during the traditional academic year only (September through May) and is funded through various programs at MSU-Mankato.



The University service includes 10 routes centered on bringing students, faculty, and staff from nearby apartments and off-campus parking lots to the center of campus.



► Figure 1 | Greater Mankato Transit System, May 2018

Community Engagement

As the Mankato-North Mankato area continues to grow, the demands on the region's transit and transportation system are changing. The community engagement process for the TDP worked to provide community members an opportunity to influence decisions, ensure diverse representation from the community, create an environment that encourages informed participation, and design and facilitate successful collaboration.

Figure 2 illustrates the tools used to engage partners, stakeholders, agencies/organizations, and the public.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS



2 ROUNDS
OF COMMUNITY MEETINGS TO
GATHER FEEDBACK ON THE
TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PROJECT WEBSITE

MAINTAINED THE PROJECT WEBSITE
WWW.MANKATOTRANSITSTUDY.COM
THAT SERVED AS A CENTRAL PLACE
FOR PEOPLE TO LEARN ABOUT THE
PLAN!

POP-UP MEETINGS

4 POP-UP MEETINGS
HELD TO MEET THE PEOPLE WHERE
THEY ARE



EMAIL BLASTS



EMAIL BLASTS SENT TO
CORRIDOR STAKEHOLDERS
TO KEEP PEOPLE
UP-TO-DATE ON THE PLAN

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

- UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES
- LOCAL BUSINESSES
- NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS
- MOBILITY BUS RIDERS
- HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

PROJECT COLLATERAL



BROCHURES
BUSINESS CARDS
PROJECT FACT SHEETS

DECISION-MAKER MEETINGS

MANKATO CITY COUNCIL
MAPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MAPO POLICY BOARD



USER & NON-USER SURVEYS

TWO DIFFERENT SURVEYS
DISTRIBUTED TO ASK
TRANSIT USERS AND NON-
USERS ABOUT THE
BARRIERS THEY EXPERIENCE.



Where do you most frequently travel to?
What routes need improvement?
Where are locations that need transit service?
Do you have interest in riding transit?

► Figure 2 | Community Engagement Tools and Outcomes

System Needs and Issues

Community engagement and technical service evaluation identified several areas for improving the Greater Mankato Transit System:

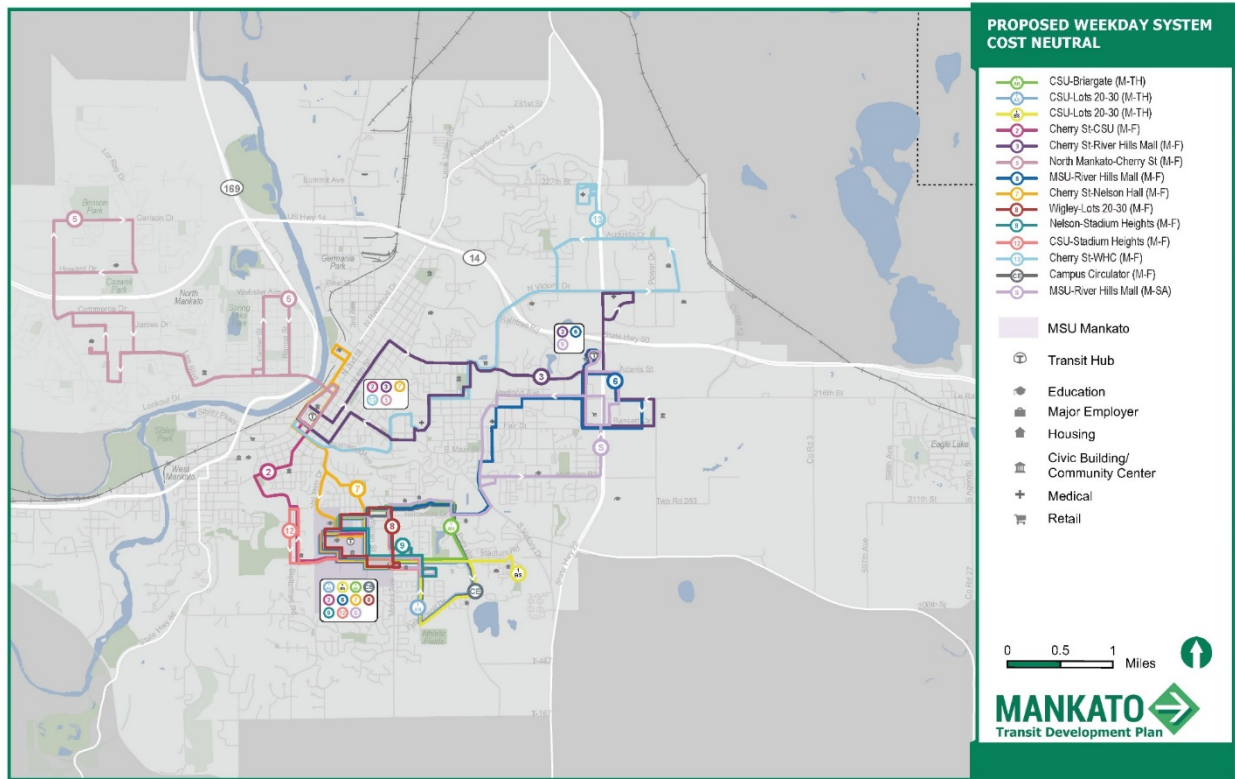
- ◆ Safety – includes pedestrian facilities for crossing streets and highways near bus stops, and lighting at bus stops
- ◆ Accessibility – includes flag-down bus stop system, and cost of service to the customer
- ◆ Availability – includes on-time performance, and availability of service by location, time-of-day, day of week, and month of year
- ◆ Customer communication – includes route directness and simplicity, customer information, system branding, fare types and payment media

The technical evaluation was based in metrics identified in the TDP Goals, Objectives, and Transit System Design Guidelines: ridership, service effectiveness, cost efficiency, and service quality.

Service Recommendations

The planning process identified three service recommendation scenarios. The recommendation scenarios give GMTS flexibility to begin addressing deficiencies in the existing system as funding becomes available.

- ◆ Cost Neutral Scenario (Figure 3) maintains 2017 funding levels
- ◆ New Service Expansion Scenario (Figure 4) adds service funded by MnDOT grants
- ◆ Illustrative Scenario (Figure 5) includes recommendations that address community feedback but are not yet funded

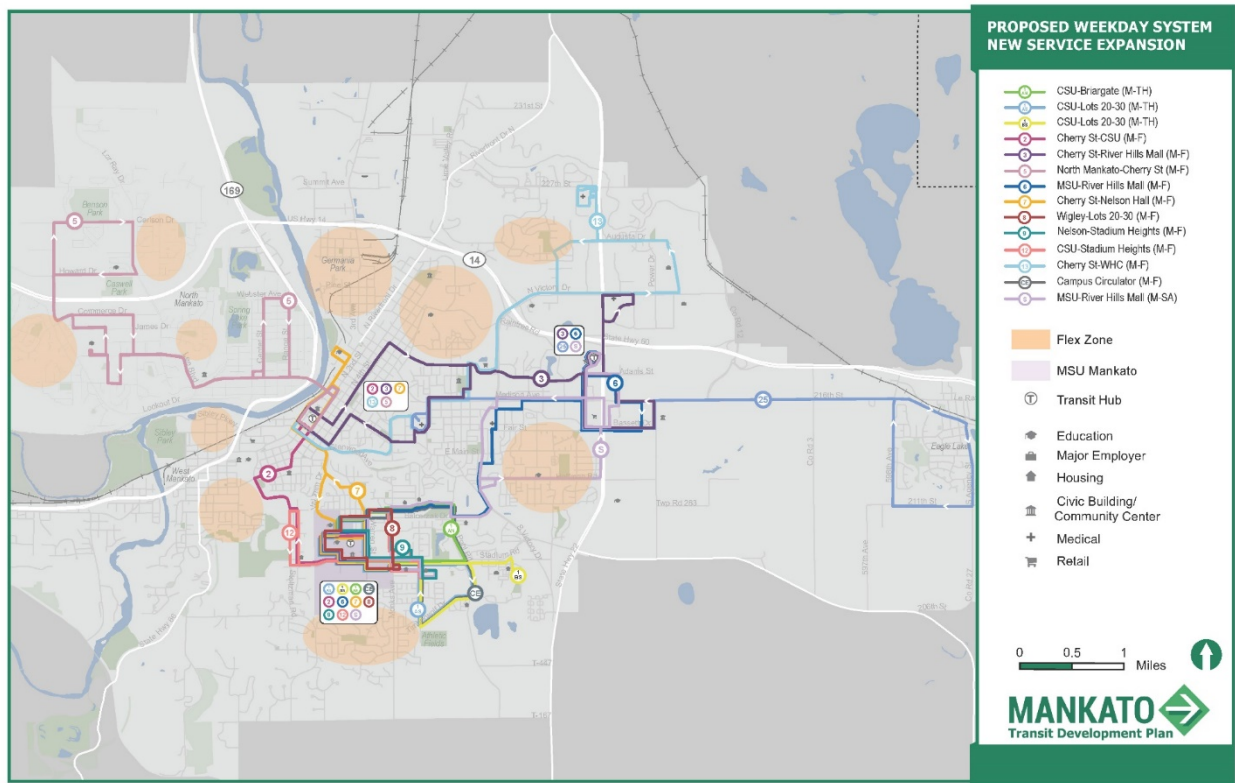


► Figure 3 | Cost Neutral Scenario Proposed Weekday System

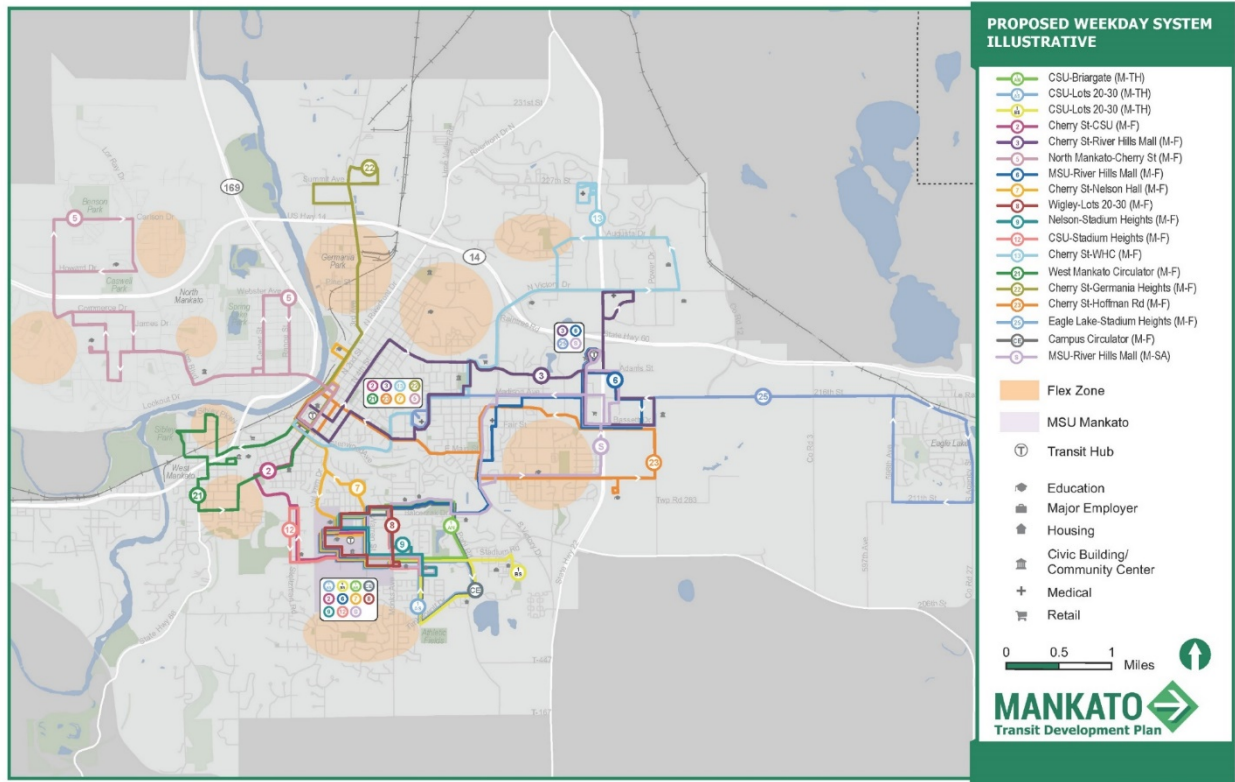
The New Service Expansion and Illustrative service scenarios result in significant benefits to transit customers, as summarized in Table 1.

► Table 1 | New Service Expansion and Illustrative Plan Benefits

BENEFIT	NEW SERVICE EXPANSION SCENARIO	ILLUSTRATIVE SCENARIO
More days of the week	Eagle Lake and Mobility Bus Sunday Service	Add Service on Routes: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
More trips per hour	Increased Frequency on Route 7	Increase Frequency on Routes: 2, 6, 1B-North; Flex Zone
More hours per day	Longer Service Span on Routes 7; Route 5; Mobility Bus	Longer Service Span on Routes: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, Mobility Bus
More places	Eagle Lake; Flex Route (Old Town, Sibley Park, East Mankato, West Mankato, North Mankato, Germania Park, Tourtelloutte Park, south of MSU-Mankato); Mobility Bus	Circulator services to West Mankato, Germania Park and Mankato East Senior High School
More population access	6,300 (+19%)	8,400 (+25%)
More job access	2,700 (+9%)	5,100 (+17%)



► Figure 4 | New Service Expansion Scenario Proposed Weekday System



► Figure 5 | Illustrative Scenario Proposed Weekday System

Transit Marketing and Communications

Transit customer marketing and communications play a crucial role in better connecting with riders and the Greater Mankato Transit System. The marketing and communications evaluation identified ways to strengthen the connection between GMTS, the greater Mankato area, and MSU-Mankato. The recommendations focused in five areas: system branding, map and schedule materials, online materials, communication and feedback channels, and new media and technologies. These recommendations offer GMTS a toolbox of materials that, when implemented to different GMTS elements, create an easily identifiable GMTS brand. These recommendations can be used on any GMTS element, from bus route maps to social media alerts about the effects of road construction.

Capital Assets

The TDP acknowledges that transit is part of a broader multimodal travel network in the Mankato area based on capital assets that must be reliably operated and maintained. The capital asset evaluation confirmed that GMTS is facing a bus shortage and requires additional capital assets to accommodate growing ridership and more service. The Capital Plan includes a blueprint for maintaining a reliable bus, paratransit, and support vehicle fleet and supporting facilities. It also identifies bus stops as well as potential sites for new transit centers to complement the three bus service investment scenarios. Potential areas for a new or enhanced transit center include the River Hills Mall and City Center areas, complementing the transit center at MSU-Mankato.

Financial Plan

The Mankato TDP Financial Plan helps GMTS and its funding partners, the cities of Mankato, North Mankato, MSU-Mankato, and MnDOT, forecast revenue sources and amounts, and identify any capital or operating funding gaps in the three service scenarios. The Financial Plan is for ten years, 2018 to 2027.

► Table 1 – Baseline Operating Cost and Net Revenue (\$ thousands)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Operating Expenses (Baseline)										
Existing Fixed-Route Service	\$2,886	\$2,973	\$3,062	\$3,154	\$3,248	\$3,346	\$3,446	\$3,550	\$3,656	\$3,766
Paratransit	\$320	\$330	\$340	\$350	\$360	\$371	\$382	\$394	\$406	\$418
Expenses Total	\$3,206	\$3,303	\$3,402	\$3,504	\$3,609	\$3,717	\$3,829	\$3,944	\$4,062	\$4,184
Operating Revenue (Baseline)										
FTA Funding	Carryover Balance	\$676	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	New Funding (Operations)	\$871	\$889	\$907	\$925	\$943	\$962	\$981	\$1,001	\$1,021
MnDOT	Fixed Route - Existing	\$1,700	\$1,751	\$1,874	\$1,930	\$1,988	\$2,048	\$2,109	\$2,172	\$2,238
	Fixed Route - Expansion		\$498	\$970	\$800	\$824	\$848	\$874	\$900	\$927
	Paratransit	\$222	\$228	\$239	\$246	\$254	\$261	\$269	\$277	\$286
Local Funding	City of Mankato	\$160	\$165	\$170	\$175	\$180	\$185	\$191	\$197	\$203
	City of North Mankato	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$11	\$11	\$12
Fare and MSU-MANKATO Contributions	MSU	\$45	\$46	\$48	\$49	\$51	\$52	\$54	\$55	\$57
	Farebox Revenue	\$556	\$573	\$486	\$501	\$516	\$532	\$548	\$564	\$581
Non-Farebox Revenue	\$33	\$33	\$33	\$33	\$33	\$33	\$33	\$33	\$33	\$33
Revenue Total	\$4,769	\$4,664	\$4,565	\$4,692	\$4,823	\$4,957	\$5,095	\$5,237	\$5,384	\$5,534
Capital (Baseline)										
State of Good Repair Expenses	\$223	\$554	\$646	\$312	\$1,027	\$384	\$1,155	\$1,074	\$1,167	\$883
MNDOT Capital Funding	\$1,801	\$443	\$517	\$249	\$821	\$307	\$924	\$859	\$934	\$706
Baseline Surplus Available for Capital and New Service Expansion	\$3,141	\$1,251	\$1,035	\$1,126	\$1,009	\$1,163	\$1,036	\$1,079	\$1,088	\$1,174

► Table 2 – Costs and Revenue Balance for Expansion and Illustrative Scenarios (\$ thousands)

Expansion Scenario		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
New Expenses	Net Capital	\$1,006	\$352	\$0	\$157	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$135	\$305
	Net Operating	\$906	\$933	\$961	\$990	\$1,020	\$1,051	\$1,082	\$1,115	\$1,148	\$1,182
Revenue	Baseline Surplus	\$3,141	\$1,251	\$1,035	\$1,126	\$1,009	\$1,163	\$1,036	\$1,079	\$1,088	\$1,174
	MnDOT Capital Match	\$0	\$282	\$0	\$125	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$108	\$244
Expansion Scenario Balance*		\$1,229	\$247	\$73	\$105	-\$11	\$113	-\$47	-\$35	-\$87	-\$70
<i>*Positive balance may be subject to repayment to MnDOT</i>											
Illustrative Scenario		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
New Expenses	Net Capital	\$2,353	\$681	\$0	\$157	\$82	\$0	\$26	\$1,251	\$493	\$305
	Net Operating	\$3,466	\$3,570	\$3,677	\$3,787	\$3,901	\$4,018	\$4,139	\$4,263	\$4,391	\$4,522
Revenue	Baseline Surplus	\$3,141	\$1,251	\$1,035	\$1,126	\$1,009	\$1,163	\$1,036	\$1,079	\$1,088	\$1,174
	MnDOT Capital Match	\$0	\$545	\$0	\$126	\$65	\$0	\$21	\$1,001	\$395	\$244
Illustrative Scenario Balance		-\$2,679	-\$2,456	-\$2,643	-\$2,693	-\$2,909	-\$2,855	-\$3,108	-\$3,434	-\$3,401	-\$3,410

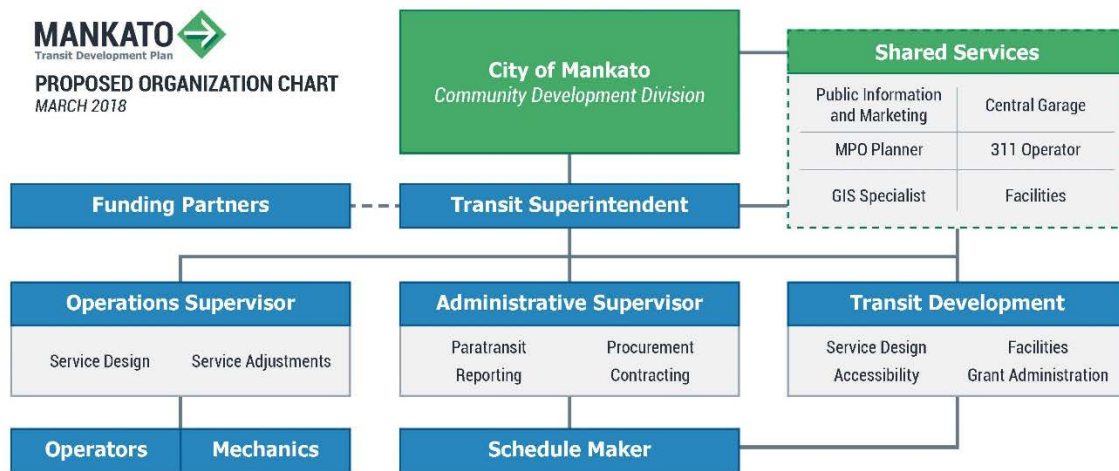


Organizational and Staffing Framework

Beyond planning for capital and operating needs, the organizational and staffing framework will help GMTS identify and retain the staff needed to safely and reliably operate and maintain the transit system. The organizational and staffing evaluation recommends:

- Add a staff person dedicated to transit service development. Activities include bus route and service design; facilities development; Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance; and grant administration
- Add up to six mechanics and mechanic support staff dedicated to bus and support vehicle operations and maintenance
- Shift operator positions from part-time to full-time, as full-time operators become available
- Empower the existing public information and marketing shared resources to cover public engagement and communication processes, graphic design, and actively support other transit communication duties
- Partner with Mankato, MSU-Mankato, and/or Blue Earth County Public Works to identify several civil engineers for whom transit infrastructure development and operations is part of their job description
- Maintain the internally-contracted, shared-services model that Mankato uses to provide support functions such as customer communications, supplemental mechanic services, and facilities maintenance and operation

► Figure 6. Recommended GMTS Organizational and Staffing Framework



Next Steps and Timeline

Next steps for GMTS include the following action items:

- ◆ Implement New Service Expansion Plan – 2018, Quarter 3
- ◆ Update the TAM – every 4 years (next adoption by 2022, June)
- ◆ Update the TDP – every 5 years (next adoption by 2023, June)