

Dakota County Transit Workshop Update: Proposed Vision and Work Plan

Vision Statement:

Transit and Transportation Services in Dakota County:

- Are safe, reliable, and accessible;
- Provide access to destinations such as jobs, education, daily services, and special events;
- Are guided by performance standards that are applied consistently across the region yet recognize differences in service types and modes;
- Are funded transparently and equitably between regions, systems, and operators;
- Meet the needs of residents who cannot or choose not to drive in all areas of the County.

Priorities:

- Primary: Ensuring people, especially those who cannot drive or do not have access to personal vehicles, can access daily needs.
- Secondary: Improving transit quality and access for all to ensure transit is a viable alternative to driving.

Work Plan:

Staff propose to use the Work Plan to guide future work beginning in 2025. Staff will provide regular updates to the County Board on progress toward these initiatives. Items requiring County Board action will be brought forward for consideration at appropriate Board and Committee meetings.

Proposed Action	Intended Outcomes	Proposed Timeline
Rejoin the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) Board	Improve communication and engagement between Dakota County and transit service providers.	Quarter (Q)1 2025 Board action March/April 2025
Support eligible Community Services Transportation programs with Transportation funding sources such as Sales and Use Tax transit set aside and/or Transportation Advancement Account funds.	Provide a stable and ongoing funding source for Jail Transportation Program. Provide improved/expanded services for residents facing the greatest barriers to transportation.	Begin Q1 2025 Potential Board action Spring 2025
Work with cities of Hastings and Farmington to identify transit needs and potential solutions. Coordinate with potential providers on pilot services.	Improve rural transit options and test potential models and solutions.	Begin Q2 2025
Work with staff from Metro Transit and the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) to identify solutions for connecting the two service areas. Identify origins and destinations across the two service areas that are priorities for serving with transit.	Identify solutions and needed next steps to addressing the current gap between service provider areas.	Begin Q2 2025
Develop strategies and identify projects that will be competitive for future Metropolitan Council Regional Solicitation and Active Transportation applications based on revised application guidelines and structure (currently under development).	Improve success of receiving external federal and regional funding for transit and transportation projects in Dakota County.	Begin Q3 2025 as additional details are available regarding Regional Solicitation application guidelines
Identify potential funding partnerships and pilot projects with transit providers to improve transit within Dakota County for consideration in the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Consider County funding partnerships utilizing SUT and/or TAA funds.	Improve and support transit services within the County in partnership with transit providers and operators. Test potential models and solutions.	Begin Q3 2025 Integrate with CIP development

Convene stakeholders including cities, chambers of commerce, businesses, and social service providers to gather information on transit needs and gaps within the County	Develop a high-level transit needs assessment to inform future transit priorities and initiatives.	Begin Q4 2025
Coordinate with other metro counties with rural/exurban communities that are not served by fixed route transit to discuss best practices, challenges, and shared goals.	Identify opportunities to improve rural and suburban transit utilizing regional sales tax funds.	Begin Q4 2025
Identify pedestrian and bicycle facility needs, gaps, and safety concerns around transit stops located adjacent to County Highways. Program capital improvement projects that address pedestrian and bicycle access and safety issues.	Improve access and safety on the County highway system for those walking and biking to transit stops and stations.	Begin Q1 2026
Coordinate with cities and transit agencies regarding future land use, growth, development, and transit needs.	Improved planning and coordination for future growth that can support transit. Improved information sharing regarding future transit needs and service areas.	Q1 2026 and in conjunction with City Comprehensive Plan updates