

IDENTIFYING TRANSIT NEEDS IN CARVER COUNTY

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROJECT

About the Partner

Carver County is located southwest of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, with the City of Chaska as its county seat. With a population of 105,089, Carver County is the least populated county in the seven-county Twin Cities metro area and is expected to experience the highest growth rates over the next 20 years. Seventy percent of land within the County is currently used for agricultural purposes, but its eastern cities are growing quickly and expanding westward.



Project Description

Carver County community members recently identified transit as a priority issue for the County to address.

Carver County's population has increased by more than 15% since 2010 and is predicted to increase by another 50% over the next 20 years. The County is also aging. These factors will likely mean increases in the amount of traffic and the number of people who are transit dependent. Beyond these anticipated conditions, the COVID-19 pandemic means many more residents are working from home, a trend which may continue even beyond the pandemic, and unemployment rates have increased, potentially increasing the number of transit dependent residents.

Carver County's 2040 Comprehensive Plan has the goals of "creating a strong transit system, which can be an integral part of growth and development in the County" and "establishing multi-modal transportation options for Carver County residents and workers to support a high quality workforce and the needs of an aging population".

To determine county-wide needs relating to transit and begin implementing the transit goals in the comprehensive plan, Carver County will be conducting a transit study. The study will include a gap analysis to determine unmet transit demands (today and in the future), and a review of coordination among entities currently providing transit services in the county to identify areas of service overlap. The comprehensive plan includes general long-range transit service recommendations, and an integral first step in determining how and when these recommendations will best be implemented is to do a more detailed analysis of the need.

The ultimate goal with this project is to determine the unmet transit needs and demand of today and predict transit needs of the future based on the growth, demographic shifts, and commuting changes faced by the County.

Key Issues, Questions, and Ideas to Explore

1. What is the current and anticipated long term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on transit commuting needs, specifically from Carver County to downtown Minneapolis?
2. What are the unmet transit needs and demands in Carver County?
3. What can we learn from transit systems in similar geographic/demographic areas both inside and outside of Minnesota?
4. What best practices and innovative ideas meet transit needs and demands in a growing area which is partially rural and partially urban/suburban?

How Student Work Will Be Used to Build Community Resilience

- By building the County's capacity to survive economic change, as transit provides a low-cost transportation option to increase access to employment and education.
- By finding ways to increase transit usage to decrease the County's greenhouse gas emissions and make us less vulnerable to climate change.

Potential Community Partners or Stakeholders Existing Plans & Reports

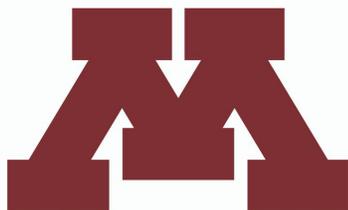
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residents of Carver County• Community groups• SouthWest Transit• SmartLink Transit• Carver County Veterans Services• Carver County Public Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carver County 2040 Comprehensive Plan• SW Transit October 2019 Rider Survey• Creating Mobility Hubs to Connect Transit Modes (RCP 2019-20)• 2015-2019 Ridership Data |
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