

**Helena Area Inclusive Transit Planning (HITP) Project Round 3
Capital Transit Coalition – Commuter Employment Routes & Transit Improvement Authority
Questions for One-on-One Interviews (45 minutes)**

We are interviewing key community members so we may provide meaningful input for the Helena Area Transit System's Inclusive Planning Round 3 activities. Your business/organization may or may not have participated in past interviews for HATS 5 Yr Transit Development Plan and/or Round 1 and 2 of the planning process. One purpose of this interview is to finalize a plan for an Employment Commuter Route System that would add value to the improved fixed route system set to being in fall 2016. The other purpose is to discuss the future of transit authority for the Helena region, understand transit stakeholder concerns, and collect input to present recommendations to a City/County Joint Work Session on May 5th, 2016.

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

Describe your business /organization's role in working with seniors, low-income people, and/or people with disabilities.

Have you or your organization participated in providing feedback about Helena's Transit System in the past? If yes, in what way?

EMPLOYMENT COMMUTER ROUTE

Review and Refinements

Now that you've had time to review our fact sheet and corresponding maps related to the Employment Commuter Route, do you have any improvements you'd suggest?

Are you convinced our city's employers and their employees need a commuter transit service now and in the future? Why/Why not?

Funding Ideas

What are commitments you could make toward funding this Employment Commuter Transit Service?

Service Agreements

Would you and/or your organization/company be interested in a service agreement with the city whereby your clients/employees ride for free?

[We'll provide an existing example of service agreement]

Employee Incentives to ride

Would you be willing to use incentives to encourage your clients/employees to use public transit?

[We'll provide an existing list of incentives provided by employers to encourage transit]

TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY (TIA)

Overview of Authority Models and TIA Draft for Helena Area Transit Improvement Authority (HATIA)

Upon hearing about the Authority Models and the pros/cons of each, are you convinced that a TIA is the direction we need to take to improve transit outside Helena City Limits now and in the future? Why/Why not?

Would you support a gas tax in Lewis and Clark County providing funding to public transit within the county? Why/Why not?

Involvement

Are you or your organization interested in attending

- A May City/County Joint Work Session, where you could share you view on a regional commuter route/Transit Improvement Authority?

Or being involved:

- In brainstorming funding mechanisms for HATS improvements?
- As members of an Advocacy Coalition that works on strategic planning in partnership with the TAC?

Closing Thoughts?

Thank you!

What is an MOU?

In a well-coordinated public transit system, all community members can receive services that meet their needs. MOU's are a key tool to that end. MOU is short for "Memorandum of Understanding." With regards to transportation, and MOU is a formal agreement (sometimes called a service contract) between a lead public transportation agency in a service area and any entity that needs or wants to transport community members like clients, employees or customers.

Successful MOU's result from a mutual understanding that coordination is in the best interest of the whole community. In exchange for transporting clients, employees or customers, the entity gives the lead public transportation agency resources they would normally use for transportation. This may be vehicles, staff, and/or money.

Community entities enter into MOU's for different reasons. Perhaps they started their transportation program because their clients had no other options to get around and now they find that they can no longer afford to provide transportation due to the costs of fuel, vehicle maintenance, driver and administrative salaries and/or insurance. Some entities may currently be purchasing passes and tokens from a lead transportation agency on an as needed basis. By entering into an MOU with a lead agency, an entity is, instead, purchasing a specified quantity of transportation for a period of time.

- **Functions of a Service Contract:**
 - Shows explicit agreement by an agency/organization/employer to use the lead public transportation entity for transportation services.
 - Income from the contract represents local match requirement for receiving additional federal transit funding through the state as long as agreement not based on number of rides.
- **Characteristics of a Service Contract:**
 - No contract is too small! \$100 contracts are valued as much as \$150,000 contracts.
 - The public transportation operator reserves the right to mix clients.
 - No single client group has the exclusive use of the bus while it is providing service.
- **Financial Structure of a Service Contract may Vary from Contract to Contract**

What entities can participate in this opportunity?

An MOU can be negotiated with a wide variety of entities including:

- Educational Institutions (high schools, community colleges, trade or vocational schools)
- Housing Authorities
- Agencies who work with individuals with special needs
- Employment Centers
- Senior Living Facilities
- Medical Facilities
- Civic Organizations
- Major Employers
- Homeowners Associations