SouthWest Transit (SWT) Overview

- Public transit provider for Eden Prairie, Chaska, Chanhassen, as well as Carver and Victoria (contracts).
- Governed by a commission consisting of six individuals appointed by the member cities and one rider representative.
- Suburban provider established by State Legislative action in 1983 due to the fact that the existing structure was not responsive or meeting the needs of the growing suburbs.
- SWT was formed in 1986.
- Pre-COVID: Operated over approximately 160 trips per day with 75 buses.
- Major routes bring commuters to Downtown Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota.
- National leader in innovation, technology, and transit-oriented development.
- Introduced one of the nation's first microtransit operations - SW Prime.
- Provider of choice to many special events.
- Has over $60 million in assets.
- Pre-COVID: Annually provided over 1.2 million rides.
COVID-19 Impacts

- Transit as an industry hit hard by the impact of COVID-19.
  - SWT hit harder than most do the makeup of our customer base - “Choice Riders.”

Impacts/Actions

- Initially lost over 90% of our riders and a similar percentage of farebox revenue.
- Furloughed or eliminated over 50% of our workforce.
- Reduced service by over 60%.
- Received two rounds of Federal Stimulus Funding.
- Took numerous safety measures to increase customer and employee confidence (mask mandate, passenger/driver separators, air purification systems, etc.).
Continuing Plan to Address COVID-19

- Continue reduced service with the plan to add back trips to meet any increased demand as we come out of the pandemic.
  - Targeting Labor Day for substantial service increases.
- Continue high level cleaning/disinfecting vehicles and facilities.
- Swapping out vehicles multiple times per day.
- Maintain daily employee health screening.
- Continue to make the wearing of masks mandatory in our facilities and on our vehicles.
  - This is a Federal mandate in effect until mid-September.
- Self-perform versus contract (keep as many employed as possible).

Goal: To give the agency the opportunity to meet all challenges and be financially solvent once we are able to put the coronavirus behind us.
What’s Next After COVID?

- Build back express operations as Downtown/U of M reopens
  - U of M back on campus in the Fall
  - Downtown employers starting to return in Summer/Fall

- Explore new markets.
  - Suburb-to-Suburb Services - Shakopee expansion completed
  - 494/MOA/Airport - Service started April 2021

- Opportunity to build back services smarter
  - Create more efficient and attractive service schedules
  - Better leverage microtransit capabilities - First Mile/Last Mile
What’s Next After COVID Cont.? 

▶ Resume Special Event services
  ▶ Trips will require reservations to start
  ▶ State Fair - Planning for full service
▶ Sporting Events
  ▶ Twins Express resuming June 8th
▶ Concerts
▶ Pilot evolving technologies
  ▶ Mobility as a Service (MaaS)
  ▶ Electric Vehicles
  ▶ Autonomous Vehicles
What’s Next? - SW Prime/Prime MD Expansion

- Expanded SW Prime and SW Prime MD services.
  - Expanded SW Prime hours of service
    - June 7th - Service to start earlier (5:30am)
    - Service into evening hours being planned
  - Expansion into Shakopee (up and running)
    - Canterbury Park, Valleyfair, Mystic Lake
    - MVTA service connections
- Expansion of SW Prime MD Locations Serviced
  - Methodist Hospital
  - Park Nicollet Clinics in St. Louis Park
- 494 Corridor Expansion
  - MSP Airport
  - Mall of America
  - Entire corridor between Eden Prairie and MOA
What’s Next? - 494 Service

- Regional Solicitation grant awarded in 2016 for 3-year demonstration service.
- Provides for service between SouthWest Station and Mall of America.
  - Award amended in 2020 to include service to MSP Airport.
- Service scheduled to start in 2022.
  - Limited on-demand service already in operation.
- Primary Service Locations: SouthWest Station, Mall of America, MSP Airport, Normandale Community College, Orange Line BRT, France Ave, Lyndale Ave, and others.
- Weekdays and Saturdays.
SWLRT & SouthWest Transit

- 3.5-year negotiation process.
- Final agreement adopted in December of 2017.
- Results of the agreement met the needs of both SWT and the Met Council.
- SouthWest Station site is being redesigned to support existing SWT bus operations and LRT.
- Ultimately, the LRT operations will open up new service opportunities for SWT.
  - Improve service efficiencies for mid-day, evening, weekend, and special event services.
  - Improved first mile/last mile connections via SW Prime.
What’s Next? - SouthWest Station Mobility Hub

- Regional Solicitation Grant awarded in 2018 for 3-year demonstration service.
- Planned Implementation: 2024 to coincide with SWLRT start of operations.
- Focuses on providing a high level of first mile/last mile multi-modal connectivity centered around the SouthWest Station SWLRT station.
- Consists of:
  - Additional SW Prime microtransit service.
  - Providing eBike and/or eScooter sharing.
  - 5 Carsharing vehicles.
  - Other mobility solutions as they evolve.
What’s Next? - Golden Triangle Autonomous Demonstration

- Eden Prairie’s Golden Triangle Area (GTA)
  - Largest Suburban Business Park in the Twin Cities Metro Area
    - 20,000+ Jobs
    - 9.8 million sqft. of office, commercial, and industrial property.
    - Accounts for 9% of all office/industrial space in the Twin Cities
    - Increased employment density anticipated with SWLRT
  - Large Employers: Optum, 3M, Starkey Labs, iMedia, Cigna, Lifetouch Studios
  - Majority of jobs outside of ¼-mile buffer of planned SWLRT stations
- Currently in discussions with multiple AV vendors/MnDOT/FTA about possible pilots.
What’s Next? - Electric Vehicles & Autonomous SW Prime
Contact Us

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Employer Resources

• Receive email updates about Southwest LRT from Commuter Services
• Return to Work guidance
• Bus pass programs – Metropass
• Telework resources and training
• Preferential carpool / vanpool parking management
• Free outdoor bike rack
• New hire packets, e-blasts, newsletter articles
Commuter Services

Commuter Resources

- Customized transit itinerary + free ride passes
- Transit Assistance Program (TAP)
- Carpool, vanpool matching and tips
- Bike-to-work materials and trail construction updates
- Try It Campaigns
- Sign up for monthly commuter newsletter
- Guaranteed Ride Home
NEW Twin Cities Telework website!

www.tctelework.com

Free resources for employers and teleworkers
Contact Us

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QUESTIONS