

*****ATTACHMENTS*****

Microtransit Feasibility Report: Improving Transit Solutions for all Customers



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 **SHORELINE METRO**

Using Microtransit to Improve Transit Options

Post pandemic, transit solutions are more important than ever. Shoreline Metro looks to expand its service solutions with a third option called Microtransit.

The buzz about microtransit began in 2015 as transit systems sought to provide more efficient services in light of ongoing budget cuts, decreased funding and more recently, a change in behavior due to the COVID-19 health pandemic.

So, what makes this transit solution so unique? Why the buzz all of a sudden? Let's take a look into the history and industry comments of microtransit and how such service could be a benefit to Shoreline Metro and the Sheboygan Urbanized Area.



***“It doesn’t matter where you go in life,
as long as you get there.”***

What is Microtransit?

By definition, it's a form of demand-responsive transportation with highly flexible routing and scheduling utilizing vehicles shared with other customers. This form of transportation is technology-enabled maximizing efficiency and offering a cost-effective solution to customers of all abilities. The use of real-time scheduling and booking of trips, geofenced service areas, shared vehicles and cost-sharing are all characteristics of microtransit.

For Shoreline Metro, this means offering a service that complements fixed route operations and expands on the use of already employed demand-responsive services to provide a more comprehensive and robust public transit system for communities and customers.

Examples of microtransit solutions include:

- Last mile transportation to/from a fixed route
- Small-scale, on-demand service to/from a specific service area or geofenced area (not serviced by a fixed route)
- On-demand, accessible service in place of fixed route

What is the Industry Saying about Microtransit?

According to Via (ridewithvia.com), "one reason the term "microtransit" gets confusing is because it's a category that's seen a warp-speed evolution in the past five or so years, with new players arriving on the scene all the time. Those dockless e-scooters? Rent-a-mopeds? Bike shares? They're not exactly microtransit but instead micromobility, a close (and even more micro) relative. Those old clunky dial-a-ride services? Yep, they're an early demand-responsive iteration of a larger category we now call microtransit, albeit without any of the technology that makes today's microtransit efficient and easy to use for riders. Microtransit is also sometimes difficult to define because it can look very different from city to city — from first-and-last mile rides that make public transit more accessible to operations that feature larger vehicles."

A simple way to think of microtransit would be using an app to book your trip – kind of like UberPOOL or Lyft Line, but for buses. Using a dedicated app, online

booking tool, or by calling in, riders can request a pickup anywhere in a given service area, or only at existing bus stops (depending on the agency's setup). The designated vehicle may be an existing fixed route bus, paratransit vehicle, or dedicated vehicle, allowing agencies to maximize the use of their fleet. (TripSpark, tripspark.com)

Transdev (transdevna.com) says as an outgrowth of the pandemic, some transit agencies are using their existing paratransit infrastructure to offer a form of Microtransit to non-ADA riders by opening up their paratransit service to the general public. Sometimes they open service broadly and sometimes to people over 60.

What are the Benefits of Microtransit?

There are many advantages of microtransit versus other service models for both customers and the agency:

- *Cost-Effective: Adding additional fixed routes is expensive with often low performance during off peak service times. Providing service on a "as needed" basis cuts costs while maintaining reliable and dependable service.*
- *Increase Service Area: Allows the ability to add service to areas with lower ridership, especially areas fixed routes cannot accommodate, without having to provide regular or routine routes.*
- *Flexible: Accommodates customer needs during a particular service window or area at times that are more convenient.*
- *Economical: Share vehicles across multiple service modes by grouping paratransit, demand response and conventional customers together.*
- *Efficient: Only provide service to areas when customers need the service including utilizing common locations and stops and reducing travel times.*

What are the Current Issues Facing Shoreline Metro?

Like many public transit agencies across the nation, budgets and funding remain important concerns lingering in the balances over Shoreline Metro. Here's a summary of current items posing risk to public transit operations at Shoreline Metro:

- **Funding:** Federal and state mass transit aids have been declining over the past decade with public transit agencies receiving almost 5% less in aids in 2021 from 2010. This particularly holds true for Shoreline Metro which is scheduled to receive 52.92% in combined federal and state aids towards eligible expenses.
- **Budgets:** Agencies are receiving less aids and some agencies are receiving less local support or the loss of aids puts more pressure on local support funds. In some cases, the increased pressure on budgets have resulted in service cuts. Shoreline Metro has maintained a relatively consistent budget due to the removal of a fixed route and the implementation of new dispatching software for demand response services in 2016. Service cuts funded the reduction in transit aids.
- **Labor:** The current employment economy has all sectors of business scrapping for employees. Many industries such as retail, restaurant and hospitality have reduced hours or days of service due to the shortage. Shoreline Metro must maintain current staffing levels just to ensure public transit services are provided at approved levels. The only way to defeat a labor shortage is to provide more efficient service (because self-driving buses isn't going to be a thing for a very long time).
- **Customers:** Transit services would not be needed (or required) without the demand. And demand wouldn't exist without customers and the need to go places for work, school, employment and socializing. Pre-pandemic, Shoreline Metro grew ridership to a near 20-year high which means the demand for service has and is growing. Post-pandemic, Shoreline Metro needs to respond with services that customers demand.
- **Growth:** With communities continuing to expand and grow, in particular, in areas currently not serviced or underserved by public transit, it puts more pressure on public transit to keep up with the changes and growth. Shoreline

Metro has seen surrounding areas grow including new or expanded industrial parks in Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls, outlying hospitality locations in Kohler, and new apartments off route in Sheboygan Falls and the Town of Sheboygan (currently not serviced). This growth puts pressure on Shoreline Metro to keep up with the growing needs of customers.

Shoreline Metro has overcome several issues in recent years including capital needs (buses) and local community support. In 2019 and 2020, Shoreline Metro received six new fixed route buses funded through the Congestion, Mitigation, Air Quality Control grant and the Volkswagen Mitigation State of Wisconsin Capital Bus Replacement Program. In 2022, Shoreline Metro will receive an additional ten buses funded through these programs.

Local support for public transit seems to be at its highest in recent memory. Ridership increases of over 54 percent the last eight years is proof of support.

What does Microtransit mean for Shoreline Metro and its Transit Solutions?

Public transit services are currently two-dimensional. It's either fixed route for conventional users or paratransit for individuals unable to use the fixed route. That's it. Either Shoreline Metro infuses more fixed routes into service (which may include the need for additional paratransit service) or areas go unserved.

However, there is a practical and complimentary option that could make Shoreline Metro three dimensional called microtransit. Let me explain how microtransit can actually improve Shoreline Metro in the short and long-term.

- **Reduce Inefficiency:** Several areas currently serviced through regular fixed routes could be considered inefficient based on the number of customers boarding and alighting per revenue hour. For example, the South Pier district receives service every half-hour on weekdays from 5:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. and then hourly in the evenings until 8:45 p.m. However, customer trips to and from this geographic area are significantly low with Trips per Revenue Hour (TRH) being less than one for the service day. An area such as South Pier could be

removed from a fixed route and serviced “as needed” through a microtransit solution by geofencing this area and allowing customers to schedule a trip to and from this area when it’s convenient for them. Other focus areas may include service to Sheboygan Falls and Kohler, service on weekday evenings and service on Saturdays where TRH are also very low.

- **Increase Service Area:** With the growing need for transit solutions in expanding or growing areas within the communities serviced by Shoreline Metro, it’s necessary to be able to expand and grow with these communities. Unfortunately, with decreasing funding and budgets under extreme pressure, adding fixed route service is no longer the simple and easy solution. These new or growing service areas are also unproven meaning it’s simply impossible to know the true demand prior to implementing a solution. Putting a fixed route in place is expensive and may prove to be highly inefficient. However, adding an on-demand solution based on customer preferences and behavior allows the customer to use the service when it’s convenient for them. No more unneeded or empty buses servicing an area regularly for unregular customers. Adding this microtransit solution to these areas would compliment fixed route service and allow for a cost-effective and efficient expansion of service to the industrial parks in Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls and to the outlying Kohler hospitality destinations in rural Sheboygan County. Microtransit could be the starting point in solving employment transportation in the Sheboygan Urbanized Area (and beyond).
- **Reduce Costs:** Mass transit funding has been decreasing and budgets have been extremely tight in recent years. Raising fares and increasing revenues is often counterproductive and considered a double-edged sword. The emphasis has been on cutting expenses, becoming more efficient, and reducing “waste”. Shoreline Metro has been focused on increasing efficiency (decreasing expenses) through the employment of technology, updated policies and procedures and evaluating service(s). However, in order to even maintain services, Shoreline Metro must reduce costs (or raise revenues) and continue recruiting and employing safe and reliable team members. Unfortunately, when faced with reducing costs, the only unexplored area is to cut service. Microtransit could be the solution to reducing costs (and reducing the labor footprint) during

underutilized or low ridership periods on the fixed route while maintaining reliable, safe and affordable transit solutions for customers.

- **Address the Labor Pool:** Hiring and retaining safe, reliable and dependable team members such as drivers is a critical part of any organization, in particular, public transit agencies. Many current economic forces are working in favor of the labor pool including unemployment benefits, high starting wages, and excellent incentives. The labor pool has shrunk in most sectors making recruitment of new team members nearly impossible (consider the requirement for a CDL and the labor pool shrinks even more for public transit agencies). Shoreline Metro has an excellent team of drivers, maintenance personnel and administration and has been fortunate to maintain adequate staffing in recent years. However, recruitment of new team members is eminent and critical, short-term and long-term, as team members retire. It is possible that with microtransit, the labor footprint could be reduced, especially as existing fixed route service on weekday evenings and Saturdays is evaluated and potentially converted to a microtransit service.

Shoreline Metro and Microtransit

Transportation is expensive. This is not a secret. From maintaining a car or personal vehicle or maintaining a fleet, vehicles and transportation is expensive. More importantly is that perhaps transportation is generally inefficient from personal cars or SUVs capable of carrying 5-7 passengers often with only one passenger in the car to buses and conveyances under capacity. The goal with microtransit is to right-size the vehicle to match the demand of the customer(s).

Fixed route buses and service are appropriate when customer boardings and alightings are continual along a route or when service demands often require larger vehicles to meet capacity constraints. This service is ideal in urban city centers, shopping districts, low-income housing neighborhoods, industrial parks and places of employment, and schools where customers are regular on board or there are periods of peak service often exceeding capacity.

Microtransit can complement and is ideal in areas with traditionally lower ridership and demand such as rural areas, suburbs, adjacent communities or outlining areas of a municipality. This level of service focuses on making transportation available to a handful of customers that need service but do not require it regularly throughout the day on a cycle, such as a fixed route.

Shoreline Metro has identified several key areas within the current authorized service area that are underserved or unserved due to financial constraints and resources:

- South Pointe Business Park (Sheboygan)
- Sheboygan Industrial Park on Behrens Parkway (Sheboygan)
- Black Wolf Run and Whistling Straits (Kohler and Mosel)
- Kohler Generator Plant (Mosel)
- Industrial Park and Bemis Manufacturing (Sheboygan Falls)
- Deer Trace Shopping Center (Kohler)

Shoreline Metro has identified several current service characteristics that may be over served by existing resources:

- South Pier (Sheboygan) with half hour weekday fixed route service (3S)
- UWGB (Sheboygan) with half hour weekday fixed route service (3S)
- Fixed route service weekdays from 5:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.
- Fixed route service Saturdays from 7:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.
- Fixed route service to Sheboygan Falls and Kohler (weekdays and Saturdays)

Microtransit included into the mix of transit solutions offered by Shoreline Metro could service the areas identified above without service or limited service with reliable, accessible and affordable transportation for customers whenever they demand it. Microtransit could also be included in the mix of transit solutions in the areas identified above that may be over serviced by substituting or replacing current service to on-demand.

Microtransit enables Shoreline Metro to offer a third transit solution to partnering municipalities as well. Currently, Shoreline Metro partners with Sheboygan Falls and Kohler to provide fixed route and paratransit solutions and with Sheboygan County to provide elderly and disabled transportation (85.21 funds) to identified areas of Sheboygan County.

Shoreline Metro could, in future phases, provide microtransit-level service to other potential partnering communities including Town of Sheboygan, Plymouth or Howards Grove. This service level allows for flexible growth opportunities now and in the future.

What Steps need to be taken to Implement Microtransit Solutions into Shoreline Metro?

Like with any implementation strategy, many steps need to be taken to ensure implementation is appropriate, adequate, well-thought-out, flexible, reliable and sustainable. Shoreline Metro has considered the following as part of its approach and implementation:

- 1) Evaluate existing transit solutions for efficiency, productivity, and sustainability.
 - a. Fixed Route service during weekday evenings and Saturdays is considered inefficient due to actual ridership in particular since COVID-19 (customer ridership counts back up this data).
 - b. Fixed Route service during weekdays is appropriate considering peak demand and even off-peak demand (customer ridership counts back up this data).
 - c. Current Shoreline Metro fleet is aging but the infusion of brand-new buses in the next year increases the efficiency and reliability of vehicles in the fleet.

- 2) Evaluate new transit opportunities such as service area, service times, service days and service solutions.
 - a. Creation of an On-Demand service could address several items including labor shortage, more efficient operations and allow for cost-effective expansion of service.
 - i. Saturday driver requirement could go from the current 7 drivers down to 3.
 - b. Several currently underserved (or no service) areas have been identified where fixed route service isn't appropriate and would be expensive.
 - c. Service times seem adequate however customers continue to request additional weekday evening hours and weekend hours particularly on Sundays.

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- d. On-Demand service allows Shoreline Metro the opportunity to expand service and offer a new product to partners looking to provide public transit.
 - e. Technology is playing a factor in customer decisions and has recently impacted public transit with demand for things such as GPS, mobile payments and route planning leading a new wave of users.

3) Evaluate labor needs and address labor shortage in the current workplace.

- a. Current staffing is inadequate and below a healthy level to continue service "status quo".
 - i. Currently less than 30 drivers are on staff and available for assignments (actual need is 35-40)
- b. The current economic conditions have severely hindered new applications and individuals applying for positions with Shoreline Metro.
 - i. Eight (8) applications received for driver positions in the last five months (well below normal expectations)
- c. Forecasted retirements in the next 3-5 years at Shoreline Metro means the organization must act now to address labor issues.
 - i. Includes drivers and administrative staff.

4) Evaluate long-term needs and forecast long-term issues and concerns and create solutions to address the long-term sustainability of the operations.

- a. Funding for transit operations has decreased the last decade and is forecasted to continue to decrease in future years.
- b. Expenses continue to rise annually with labor costs, benefits, etc leading to the most significant increases to costs.
- c. Revenue is down in particular due to COVID-19 and must be addressed (if not recouped) in the near future.

5) Evaluate the full impact of COVID-19 on services.

- a. Shoreline Metro has fortunately received federal CARES Act and ARPA funds to sustain operations and address revenue shortages in the short-term.

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- b. COVID-19 has changed the behavior of transit customers impacting ridership (decrease) and revenue (decrease) while leaving the market damaged with employees and applicants.
 - c. Customer behavior suggests on-demand services may be the wave of the future personalizing transit solutions for the individual customer (as proven by Uber and Lyft).

A 3-Phase Plan

Based on Shoreline Metro's review of its organization, its services and its customer needs, a solution including a three-phase plan has been constructed. This plan includes the implementation of a third service type, microtransit, in the greater Sheboygan area.

Phase 1 – Right-Size Current Service

In this phase, Shoreline Metro would introduce On-Demand (microtransit) service during periods of significantly decreased ridership including weekday evenings and Saturdays. The following details of Phase 1 are a result of recommendations on rightsized service levels that are efficient, reliable and provide dependable, sustainable long-term solutions for customers.

Details of Phase 1

- Half-hour service from 5:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. on weekdays (NO CHANGE)
 - 5:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. goes to "On-Demand" (**CHANGE**)
 - Reservations for service either in advance or same day "real-time"
 - Fares for "On-Demand" customers will be same as fixed route (for the time being)
 - Service area will follow paratransit area (3/4 mile from the fixed routes)
- North/South shuttles at 5:15 a.m. (NO CHANGE)
- Two (2) AM Trippers / Two (2) PM Trippers (NO CHANGE)
- Two (2) Peak AM Shuttles / Two (2) Peak PM Shuttles (NO CHANGE)
- Kohler Special 6:45 a.m. (NO CHANGE)
- Route 20 same runs MINUS 5:45 p.m. and 7:45 p.m. (**CHANGE**)

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- "On-Demand" starting at 4:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.
 - Saturday fixed route is all "On-Demand" **(CHANGE)**
 - 7:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. (first pickup at 7:30 a.m. and last pickup at 5:30 p.m.)
 - Reservations for service either in advance or same day "real-time"
 - Fares for "On-Demand" customers will be same as fixed route (for the time being)
 - Service area will follow paratransit area (3/4 mile from the fixed routes)
 - All service on Saturdays will be "On-Demand" (no paratransit service as defined by the ADA and FTA)
 - No changes to paratransit service area, times, fares, etc.
 - Service remains available to all current customers from 5:45 a.m. to 8:45 p.m.
 - Reservations for service either in advance or same day "real-time"
 - Fares for "On-Demand" customers will be same as fixed route (for the time being)
 - Service area will follow paratransit area (3/4 mile from the fixed routes)
 - Door-to-door service for all customers (if required)

Shoreline Metro has also purchased a customized customer App for scheduling and paying for on-demand and paratransit trips as part of this implementation. The App will assist in reducing the number of phone reservations while increasing customer independence in scheduling their trips (and making easy payments for their trips). Ecolane is the current provider of such scheduling and dispatching software used by Shoreline Metro and Metro Connection.

The timeline for implementation is as follows:

- **September 2021**
 - 8th – Meeting with City of Sheboygan officials
 - 14th – Shoreline Metro Leadership Meeting
 - 16th – Meeting with FTA Program Manager

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- 20th – Meeting with City of Sheboygan Falls officials
 - 21st – Team meeting with Shoreline Metro employees
 - 21st – Meeting with Village of Kohler officials
 - 28th – Transit Commission meeting

- **October 2021**

- 1st-31st – Public comment period
- October 4th - I
- TBD – Training sessions for customers
- TBD – Training for employees (supervisors, drivers, support staff)

- **November 2021**

- 1st – Implementation of microtransit on-demand service and reduction of fixed route service

Phase 2 – Expand Service to Underserved Locations

In this phase, Shoreline Metro could expand available service in coordination with its funding partners. These areas have been identified on page 10 and include several outlying areas including industrial parks and major employers. Also, in this phase includes enhancing current software to include a real-time app for customers. The app would allow customers to reserve trips on their mobile phone or smart device.

Details of Phase 2

Shoreline Metro is proposing the addition of several “geofenced” service areas that will be available to all customers through the service day. Trips to and from these locations will be provided On-Demand with service directly to and from these locations (no transfer locations from one service to another). Additionally:

- Service available weekdays from 5:45 a.m. to 8:45 p.m.
- Services available Saturday 7:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. (first pickup at 7:30 a.m. and last pickup at 5:30 p.m.)
- Reservations for service either in advance or same day “real-time”
- Fares for “On-Demand” customers will be same as fixed route (for the time being)
- Door-to-door service for all customers (if required)

The five “geofenced” zones (referred to as On-Demand Zones) are:

- Zone 1 – Sheboygan Industrial Park (Behrens Parkway/Taylor Drive);
- Zone 2 – South Pointe Enterprise Campus (New Industrial Park);
- Zone 3 – Whistling Straits/Kohler Power Systems (Kohler);
- Zone 4 – Blackwolf Run Golf Course (Kohler); and
- Zone 5 – Sheboygan Falls Industrial Park (Hwy TT and PP);

There is no exact timeline for implementation on Phase 2 but it is forecasted for 2022. Additional locations could also be considered upon implementation.

Phase 3 – Expand Service

In this phase, Shoreline Metro looks to expand service to new municipal partners in Sheboygan County including Town of Sheboygan, City of Plymouth and major employers along Hwy 23. Additional areas may include Elkhart Lake, Howards Grove, Lakeland University and Johnsonville. These locations are contingent upon funding including local tax levy and grants.

Shoreline Metro Director, Derek Muench, is currently actively involved with Sheboygan County’s Transportation Taskforce assembled to further understand the true transportation gaps and needs throughout the county. This taskforce can help identify areas of improvement and create solutions for underserved communities.

Details of Phase 3

None at this time. There is no timeline for implementation on Phase 3 at this time.

Cost Analysis

There is a cost to providing transportation, no matter the mode or how many people are riding. Shoreline Metro’s cost is roughly \$90 an hour (on average) to deliver public transit service for its customers. Here are some facts about current expenses (based on 2019 data):

Shoreline Metro	2019	2020*
• Revenue Miles:	537,066	476,794
• Revenue Hours:	37,847	36,986
• Ridership:	679,263	373,021
• Cost per Trip:	\$4.48	\$8.14
• Cost per Hour:	\$80.40	\$82.08
• Cost per Mile:	\$5.67	\$6.37

Metro Connection	2019	2020*
• Revenue Miles:	161,684	98,040
• Revenue Hours:	12,521	8,272
• Ridership:	33,314	18,564
• Cost per Trip:	\$21.78	\$33.67
• Cost per Hour:	\$57.94	\$92.69
• Cost per Mile:	\$4.49	\$7.82



**Costs per trip, hour and mile are using revenue hours but due to the pandemic and ensuring all drivers receive a base minimum of hours (COVID pay, cleaning and performing other duties), these calculations do not accurately portray the true costs. Driver pay hours are not broken out by duties in the payroll system. Therefore, true costs are inflated and caution should be used when comparing data.*

Shoreline Metro and Metro Connection have opportunities to increase efficiency during hours of operation (both services offer empty seats during hours of operation that have opportunity for customers). In 2020 during the pandemic year, ridership on both services decreased by 45 percent.

However, due to the decreased demand, Metro Connection revenue miles and hours reduced to meet demand. Revenue miles and hours continue to be below pandemic levels in September 2021. Shoreline Metro has resumed almost all regular service despite ridership continuing to be well below pre-pandemic levels. The cost to operating Shoreline Metro and Metro Connection significantly increased in 2020 (based on the footnote to the charts on the previous page).

When comparing the data from 2019, it is more efficient and less expensive to provide on-demand service based on average per hour and per mile costs. Further:

- Increasing revenue trips per hour will make this service more efficient.

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- Matching driver pay hours with actual demand makes this service much more flexible and cost-effective.
 - On-demand microtransit can be efficiently and effectively integrated with current demand responsive programs already provided by Metro Connection.
 - On-demand service can deliver the same transit dependability but with increased reliability.
 - Infrastructure is already in place (software, vehicles, drivers) further making integration efficient and effective.

In Transition

Shoreline Metro in working with its internal leadership team has identified a few minor issues with incorporating microtransit into its service schedule. While these issues are workable and pose no issue to the plan, they are worth documenting and itemizing as part of this report.

First, wages for drivers are set based on the type of service they operate. Paratransit drivers are compensated at \$16.50-\$17.50 per hour while fixed route drivers are compensated at \$23.25-\$25.33 per hour. With the new daily pick assignments, full-time fixed route drivers will be required to perform on-demand service in the evenings and Saturdays.

Second, fixed route drivers that currently only operate as fixed route drivers will be required to perform on-demand and paratransit duties. While these additional tasks can easily be performed by any driver, it is still something new that requires training and patience.

Lastly, the wage difference could pose disagreements amongst drivers that are paid less for doing the same tasks. Shoreline Metro and union leadership assure that this issue is only short-term and temporary. However, salary comparison is inevitable and likely to cause alarm to some drivers.

Shoreline Metro and union leadership has agreed to the following terms during the transition of service from fixed route to microtransit:

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- Full-time fixed route drivers that are assigned on-demand and paratransit service duties in the evenings and Saturdays will be compensated at their fixed route wage.
 - The goal is to retain these positions and not cause undue hardship on employees.
 - As full-time drivers vacate these positions, a new blended wage will be offered and paid to team members filling these positions.
 - Blended wage (currently \$20.20 per hour) is already offered to drivers that operate both services and is on the wage table approved in the labor agreement.
 - Part-time fixed route drivers will continue to be compensated at their respective wages when performing fixed route and on-demand/paratransit service.
 - The goal is to retain these positions and not cause undue hardship on employees.
 - Blended wage (currently \$20.20 per hour) is already offered to drivers that operate both services and is on the wage table approved in the labor agreement.
 - Part-time drivers have the option to be in this classification
 - An opportunity to create more full-time positions utilizing the blended wage may exist. Shoreline Metro intends to maximize the number of full-time positions available.
 - Full-time and part-time paratransit drivers (now referred to as On-Demand) will continue to be compensated at the restructured wage schedule.

Shoreline Metro would increase (1) net fixed route full-time positions with this plan (transition). However, several blended (utility) full-time positions could be created as a result (in the future). Shoreline Metro staff will continue to work through these items especially after the plan is implemented in November 2021.

It should be noted that along with more efficient use of resources (labor) and an inadvertent decrease in expenses from the plan, these “savings” will go to sustain operations in future years (especially post-COVID-19).

Metro Connection Rebranded

Shoreline Metro intends to use its current demand response service, Metro Connection, to provide microtransit services. Metro Connection is the division of Shoreline Metro that currently provides paratransit service for elderly and disabled customers. The current stigma of Metro Connection is that it's for elderly and disabled customers exclusively. However, the actual intent of Metro Connection is to provide a link, or connection, for customers unable to use the fixed route bus service, including areas that are underserved or in some cases unserved.

Metro Connection will be rebranded to be more inclusive of all customers, not just a focus or exclusivity on elderly and disabled.

Redesigned Logo



Trip Comparisons

The following table identified examples of trip scenarios before and after the changes to service. These scenarios are the steps a customer would take to make the trip using fixed route and/or on-demand.

Each scenario represents real-life trips currently taken by fixed route and paratransit customers. In almost all scenarios involving on-demand service in place of fixed route, the customer will save time and, in some cases, (especially paratransit customers), money as well.

The only forecasted hardship for fixed route customers is the scheduling of a trip either in advance or in real-time. However, a reduction in fares, transfers and time and an increase in accessibility with same-day trips, the positives exceed the negatives.

During Shoreline Metro's COVID-19 service in 2020-2021, on-demand service was provided on Saturdays for roughly fifteen of the past eighteen months.

Table 1 – Comparable Trips

Example Trip	Trip Description	Proposed Route	Fare/Travel Time
<p>Example 1: N 15th Street to Walmart</p> <hr/> <p>Impact: Travel time is reduced; requirement to reserve trip either in advance or in real-time using phone, app or computer.</p>	<p>A customer lives on N 15th Street and wants to travel to Walmart for work at 7:00 p.m. on weeknights.</p>	<p>Current: Customer boards at their corner on N 15th Street (3N) at 5:55 p.m. then transfers to Route 10S at the Transfer Station; arriving at Walmart at 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Proposed: Customer schedules a trip using Metro Connection On-Demand at least 30-minutes prior to requested pick-up time; can arrive at Walmart 6:45-7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Current: Customer’s travel time will be 35-minutes and require one (1) transfer. Cost is no more than \$3.00 with All Day Pass (or \$1.75 for the one-way cash fare).</p> <p>Proposed: Customer’s travel time would be 20-minutes (estimated) and require no transfers. Cost remains the same as current schedule/fares.</p>
<p>Example 2: Sheboygan to Sheboygan Falls</p> <hr/> <p>Impact: Travel time is significantly reduced; more convenient; requirement to reserve trip either in advance or in real-time using phone, app or computer.</p>	<p>A customer lives in Sheboygan and needs to be in Sheboygan Falls on weeknights by 6:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Current: Customer boards at his/her location in Sheboygan between 3:15 and 3:45 p.m. then transfers to Route 20S at the Transfer Station; arriving in Sheboygan Falls between 4:05 p.m. and 4:25 p.m.</p> <p>Proposed: Customer schedules a trip using Metro Connection On-Demand at least 30-minutes prior to requested pick-up time; can arrive in Sheboygan Falls by 5:45-6:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Current: Customer’s travel time will be 30-60 minutes and require one (1) transfer. Cost is no more than \$3.00 with All Day Pass (or \$1.75 for the one-way cash fare).</p> <p>Proposed: Customer’s travel time would be 20-minutes (estimated) and require no transfers. Cost remains the same as current schedule/fares.</p>

Example Trip	Trip Description	Proposed Route	Fare/Travel Time
<p>Example 3: Paratransit Customer Riding on Saturdays</p> <hr/> <p>Impact: Proposed will save customer money with option to schedule same-day trip.</p>	<p>A customer lives on N 12th Street and wants to travel to Walmart to shop at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday.</p>	<p>Current: Customer calls to make reservation at least 24-hours in advance; then boards at their home on N 12th Street on Saturday around 10:15-10:30 a.m.; arriving at Walmart at around 10:45-10:50 a.m.</p> <p>Proposed: Customer schedules a trip using Metro Connection On-Demand at least 30-minutes prior to requested pick-up time; can arrive at Walmart 10:45-10:50 a.m.</p>	<p>Current: Customer’s travel time will be 15-minutes and require a “ready” time of 15-additional minutes. Cost is no more than \$3.00 with All Day Pass (or \$1.75 for the one-way cash fare).</p> <p>Proposed: Customer’s travel time would be 15-minutes (estimated). Cost remains at least the same as current schedule/fares with customer able to pay ½ fare of \$0.85 for trip.</p>
<p>Example 4: Customer using Fixed Route to Destination and On-Demand back Home</p> <hr/> <p>Impact: Proposed will save customer time on return trip. Cost would remain about the same.</p>	<p>A northside customer living in Sheboygan wants to go to Walmart around 6:30 p.m. The customer then wants to return home around 8:00 p.m. to his/her residence.</p>	<p>Current: Customer boards at his/her location in Sheboygan between 5:45 p.m. and 6:15 p.m. then transfers to Route 10S at the Transfer Station; arriving at Walmart at 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Customer boards at Walmart around 7:30 p.m. (10S) then transfers to northside route at Transfer Station; arriving home between 7:45-8:15p.m.</p> <p>Proposed: Same “to” trip as current. Customer then schedules a return trip using Metro Connection On-Demand at least 30-minutes prior to requested pick-up time; can arrive home around 8:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Current: Customer’s travel time to Walmart will be 30-45 minutes and require one (1) transfer. Cost is no more than \$3.00 with All Day Pass (or \$1.75 for the one-way cash fare).</p> <p>Customer’s travel time home would be 30-45-minutes (estimated) and require one (1) transfer. Cost is no more than \$3.00 with All Day Pass (or \$1.75 for the one-way cash fare).</p> <p>Proposed: Customer’s travel time to Walmart remains the same. Return trip would be 20-minutes (estimated) and require no transfers. Cost remains the same as current schedule/fares.</p>

All customers were required to schedule their trips by at least Friday at 3:00 p.m. (day before). Customers were pleased to have service; however, several customers did not like the day before reservation requirement. They stated that they enjoyed the flexibility of traveling spur of the moment rather than making reservations the day prior.

Service on weekday evenings was also on-demand for a period of time (April through June) in 2020. Again, like Saturdays, customers were pleased to have service. They stated that they enjoyed the flexibility of traveling spur of the moment rather than making reservations the day prior.

Shoreline Metro's On-Demand service removes those advance reservation barriers and encourages customers to use the service by making it more convenient.

In Closing & Summary

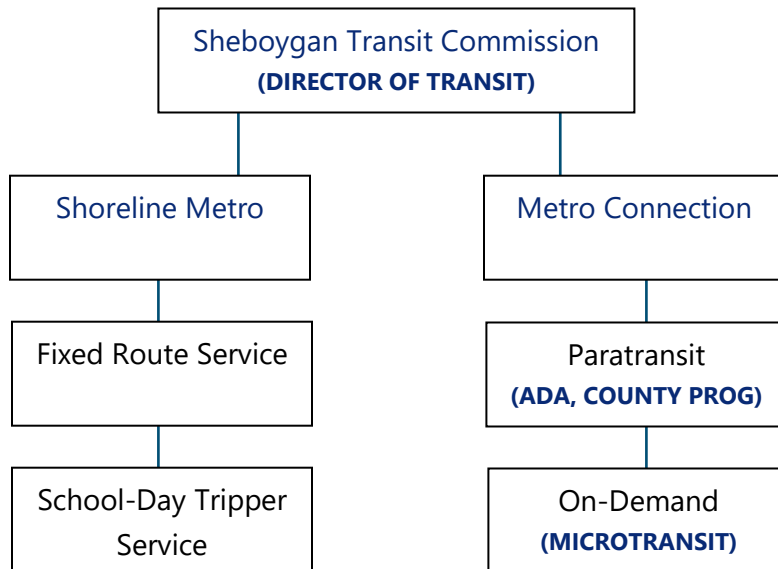
Shoreline Metro has invested many hours into the creation of this plan including time spent evaluating the current service schedule and resources required to deliver this level of service. Shoreline Metro staff has invested hours brainstorming solutions that would have minimal impact on customers and current employees. Time has been thoughtfully spent on using current resources to implement a strategy that can be sustained by Shoreline Metro. Financial resources have also been allocated for the purchases of new technology to assist in the delivery of on-demand service. In conclusion, Shoreline Metro has put in the time to carefully craft a solution that is believed to not only address issues but create viable long-term solutions.

It must also be noted that there is no reduction in available service to customers with the implementation of this plan. In fact, when fully implemented, there will be an expansion of service including service area for all customers (assuming no significant changes to funding sources).

Shoreline Metro will monitor this new service and evaluate its success daily, weekly and monthly for:

- Productivity or Passengers per Revenue Hour;
 - Goal of at least 2.5 passengers per hour;
- Response Times or Average Customer Wait Time and On-Time Performance;
 - Normal - Twenty minutes or less wait period
 - Unacceptable – Thirty minutes or longer wait period
- Expansion Opportunities based on performance of service;
- Customer Complaints / Complaints about Service

Table 2 – Department Table of Organization



The following key personnel have been critical in the development of this program:

- Roland Knorr, Operations Supervisor
- Bruce Felten, Operations Supervisor
- James Schramm, Union Steward
- Scott Navis, Union Representative
- Jack Sowinski, Safety & Training Supervisor
- Derek Muench, Transit Director

Shoreline Metro would also like to recognize and appreciate the following individuals and organizations for their roles in supporting the development of this program:

- City of Sheboygan
- City of Sheboygan Falls
- Village of Kohler
- Sheboygan County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- City of Sheboygan Transit Commission
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Green Bay Metro
- Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission
- The Team at Shoreline Metro
- Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 998

Approvals

The following individuals have reviewed this plan and have approved its contents for implementation in accordance with the timeline and objectives set forth within the plan.

Shoreline Metro Leadership Team • September 2021

City of Sheboygan Falls • September 2021

Village of Kohler • September 2021

Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 998 • September 2021

Sheboygan Transit Commission • September 2021

**as of publication date*

CITY OF SHEBOYGAN

REQUEST FOR TRANSIT COMMISSION CONSIDERATION

ITEM DESCRIPTION: 3.1 Proposed Plan and Implementation of On-Demand Service

REPORT PREPARED BY: Derek Muench, Director of Transit & Parking

REPORT DATE: 9/22/21

MEETING DATE: 9/28/21

FISCAL SUMMARY:

STATUTORY REFERENCE:

Budget Line Item: N/A
Budget Summary: N/A
Budgeted Expenditure: N/A
Budgeted Revenue: N/A

Wisconsin Statutes: N/A
Municipal Code: N/A

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

Please see the attached Microtransit Feasibility Report for On-Demand Service by Shoreline Metro. An earlier draft of this report was presented on August 17, 2021 to the Transit Commission for consideration. Shoreline Metro has revised this report and created a proposal and plan for implementation of On-Demand service.

STAFF COMMENTS:

As the report outlines, several important factors are impacting and impairing Shoreline Metro’s ability to provide service at the current levels including labor and funding in the long-term especially post-COVID-19. Staff recommends the support and approval of this new service level and allowing the Director to implement the plan and service accordingly (in conjunction with the plan and as-needed in the day-to-day operations).

ACTION REQUESTED:

- Staff recommends the approval and filing of the Microtransit Feasibility Report for Shoreline Metro and place on file.
- Staff recommends the approval to move forward with the plan and implementation of On-Demand service provided by Shoreline Metro and Metro Connection as outlined in the report.
- Staff recommends the approval of the necessary budget adjustments to the 2022 Transit Budget not to exceed the original approved expense total of \$4,157,491 and submitting the adjusted budget numbers to the City Administrator to be included in the 2022 City of Sheboygan Executive Budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

- I. Microtransit Feasibility Report for Shoreline Metro;