iConnect Transit Project

Executive Summary:

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) has community initiative is to make Bloomington/Normal a destination of "place making." This is a way of defining places that are memorable, unique and enticing to come back to.

This project has an initiative with iConnect Transit to create locations, in particular the bus shelters, that meet the criteria of being a "place marker." How can we create bus stops that encourage community members to utilize the public transportation system in which people want to come back and tell others about their experience? What can everything a bus shelter become? Can we create modular components so that pieces can be added on little by little when funds or grants become available?

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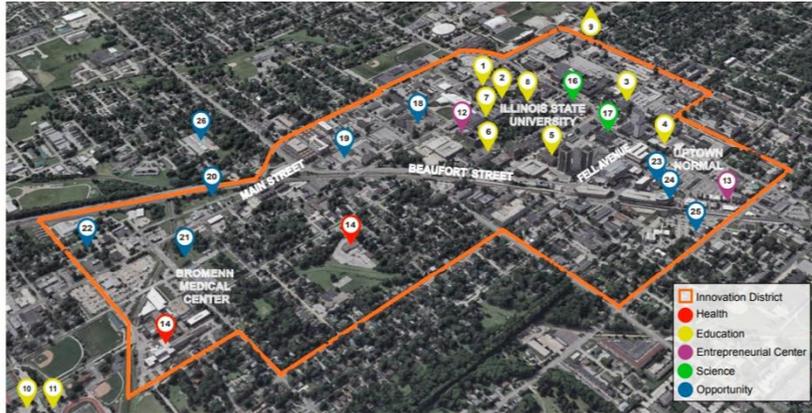## Scopes of Work/Potential Components

For each one of these sections, we need to outline what this means and what a project would entail

I. **Locations**
    a. **Objective:** Identify locations that would most benefit from a bus location within the given perimeter below
        i. Perimeter:

    b. Considerations:
        i. Most foot traffic
        ii. Identify demographics using those locations
            1. This type of data could help influence the type of marketing advertised at locations
        iii. Current location obstructions to other pedestrians (i.e. students waiting at bus sign and blocking the sidewalk from other pedestrians)

II. **Design**
    a. **Objective**: There are multiple components of design, keeping in mind that we want to create memorable "place markers." The goal is to create modular components that can be added on independently to bus stations. It's encouraged that those who work on the deign get involved with local artist community for ideas.

    b. Bus Shelter Design with Modular Components:
        i. Must be aesthetically pleasing
        ii. Self Sufficient with power
        iii. Edible Gardens with self-sufficiency/zero maintenance
        iv. Comfort seating
        v. Temperature control also self sufficient
        vi. Charging stations
        vii. Technology
            1. Free Wifi
                a. Would local ISPs be willing to partner to connect the transit system?
            2. Include waterproof TV monitors connected to WiFi
        ii. Small vending kiosks
            1. Can the bus stations sell small products like what we see in airports?
        iii. Garbage, recycle, compost

III. **Community Engagement**
   a. **Objective:** To identify local community businesses in different sectors to brainstorm ideas on how they can integrate their mission into the bus station design. Can these professions come up with ideas on a small scale that can be integrated into the bus shelters?
   b. Community Sectors to solicit and engage
      i. Child/adolescent engagement/development
      ii. Health
      iii. Environmental Groups
      iv. Educators
      v. Local Artists
      vi. Interesting facts
      vii. Positivity messages
      viii. Raising awareness

IV. **Identifying investor/partnerships/revenue generation**
   a. **Objective:** Identify local business to gauge interest in their involvement with bus shelters. How can Connect Transit generate revenue.
   b. Questions to include:
      i. How can the bus shelters help local businesses? Job Advertising? Local specials? Etc.
      ii. What other types of things could companies advertise?
      iii. What would businesses expect in return?
      iv. What other ways can revenue be generated/

V. **Advertising Marketing**
   a. **Objective:** To increase the use of both community members and college students utilizing bus transportation and create more awareness of amenities the transit system has to offers.
   b. Suggestions:
      i. Include freebies, coupons, discounts from local businesses, etc. Identify other options to include.
      ii. How can the local government help push awareness? How?
      iii. How can ISU help increase awareness online or on campus?
      iv. How can the student housing companies help with advertising?
      v. Create special gameday bus routes that pick up people from bars or other locations where students are and then drop students off in front of stadium
   c. Create community movement to begin shifting culture

Testimonials: Reasons Students Get Involved

Sal, Physics 207 Student with Professor David Marx (dtmarx@ilstu.edu)

The reason I choose to be a part of this project was the reality of how we could make an impact in our local community. It would be an honor to be a part of a placemaking project. As a business management major, it's a great experience to be a part of.

Kelsey Angel, Physics 207 Student with Professor David Marx (dtmarx@ilstu.edu)

I've lived in Champaign, IL for over 10 years now and I have seen how a community is changed by the public transportation system. I know quite a few people who don't have multiple cars in their household because they use the bus system. By using the bus, it leaves the families with significantly more money every month to do other things. The Champaign community also has a high international population and so the city doesn't have much of a choice but to have a system in place that these students can utilize. In the recent years, I've watched the community make changes to the infrastructure to include to pull off locations to pick up and drop off students, upgraded shelters with screens that show adverting and current bus times, etc. It's beautiful, inviting and comfortable. I believe that Bloomington/Normal can do the same thing by creating memorable places that make others want to use the bus system. I grew up in Bloomington and It's my first home. I'd love to see the community continue to strive to be a place that others want to return to.

Marni Sheil, Physics 207 Student with Professor David Marx (dtmarx@ilstu.edu)

I have been going to Illinois State for 3 years now and have only used the bus a couple times here. I don't know much about it and do not think it is valued nor used as much as it should be. I am interested in this project because I want to improve the system in ways to make people more aware of it and have them want to ride the bus. This project has so much potential to attract people into riding the bus and finding it memorable experience.

Alex Rappe, Physics 207 Student with Professor David Marx (dtmarx@ilstu.edu)

I am from the Bloomington Normal area and have lived here my entire life. Growing up I had never used the bus other than a few times in large cities like Chicago and Washington D.C. Last year I started using the bus system to take me from the dorms to my classes and I realized how easy it is to use and I started recognizing how many people use the public transit system. I am interested in this project because I feel that I can truly help the community that I have lived in my entire life.

Resources:

- McLean County Regional Planning Commission community and public spaces initiative documents:
  - http://mcplan.org/department/division.php?structureid=24
  - http://www.mcplan.org/egov/documents/1513026252_70975.pdf
- Connect Transit Website
  - https://www.connect-transit.com/
- Federal Transit Administration Research
  - This is a research article we found by the Federal Transit Administration that had good information in it where
  - https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/tcrp_report_19.pdf