

SMART RURAL Mobility Seminars



THE
PLUM
CATALYST



Building *Smarter RURAL* communities where transportation is safe, seamless, and equitable

FIVE (5) - two (2) day information sharing seminars to be held during the second half of the AV shuttle pilot project.

At least ONE (1) of the seminars will be targeted specifically toward technology company attendees and growing the Arrowhead region's *Innovation Ecosystem*

TIMELINE

24 months (9/1/2021-8/31/2023)

Planning, outreach, research and content creation starting Sept 2021

Seminars to take place January-August 2023

SUMMARY

The SMART RURAL Mobility Outreach Seminars will showcase what the Grand Rapids community is doing to help move the community toward a safer, seamless, and equitable mobility system for all of the residents. The SMART RURAL seminars will build a forum to help empower community members to share their stories and experience the technology, and it will empower other regional, state and national rural community leaders and government agencies by allowing them to experience, and learn the example stories to bring back to their own rural communities.

At least one of the five planned seminars will be specifically targeted toward growing the technology partnerships and innovation ecosystem for the region through outreach and specific content targeted toward mobility technology partners; allowing the future mobility technology ecosystem to experience the exciting mobility pilot, meet and hear from the community members first hand, and truly experience the mobility living lab setting in the vibrant rural community.

DESCRIPTION

As the first rural on-demand autonomous shuttle pilot in the country, The Grand Iron Range CAV Initiative includes one of the most diverse public/private partnership teams in the industry. It's a collaborative of public stakeholders, private sector partners and community members, all targeted at a deep community engagement initiative: intending to truly understand and measure the impacts that a new technology introduction can make in empowering and transforming people's lives in a rural community.

Through previous research in the Grand Rapids community (see TPEC briefs 2017 and 2018), it was discovered that transportation and basic mobility is a critical gap in improving the day to day lives, especially for those community members who thus far haven't felt they've had a voice around their mobility needs. The autonomous shuttle technology introduced in the pilot is all about improving mobility for all of the residents and meeting a real transportation need in the community; targeting overall community accessibility and equity. As a part of the project, and one of the first winter rural pilots in the country, it is important to understand and share best practices of community engagement with the rest of the region,

country and industry in order to help empower other community leaders to understand how to improve lives in their own rural communities. It's also important for the technology companies to understand the diverse sets of community members who can benefit (or suffer) from new technology introductions. The Smart Rural Mobility Outreach seminars will be about 1. Lifting up the voices of community members by enabling them to tell their own stories about how the shuttle technology has impacted their own daily lives - making sure to recruit and document the diverse set of story-tellers using an equity lense with specific targets around those members in underserved and underrepresented populations and 2. Sharing these real impacts through their own stories, and using powerful storytelling methods to help empower the community leaders and technology companies to bring back these learnings to their own rural community. The additional benefit will include empowering and lifing up those community members who otherwise haven't felt heard to be able to share their stories locally, regionally and even nationally to the seminar attendees and through possible future publications and videos.

The project's public, private, and research partners will have the ability to showcase the technology while sharing best practices from the perspective of the community members to whom it serves. The exciting SMART Rural Mobility Outreach Seminars will provide a forum for empowering multiple groups: first the community members where the project will including helping them tell their stories, second empowering the rural community leaders who will be able to experience the innovative technology and hear first hand how it has impacted daily lives, and finally, empowering the technology companies to able to hear from and understand the impacts their technology has has on real people.

Allowing for the information exchange between community leaders, community members and technology companies will empower all parties to better understand how to improve the lives for all.

GOALS

1. Personal story sharing and community engagement centered around options for new mobility technology recruiting community member by using an equity lens including: older adults, people with sensory and/or cognitive disabilities, single-parent households, tribal communities, differently abled, and others as identified through the project team
2. Outreach, best practice, and lesson learned sharing with community leaders, nonprofits and advocacy groups - building the Smart Rural Mobility Coalition
3. Begin to build an Iron Range and Arrowhead regional technology innovation ecosystem focused around improving rural mobility through the use of technology
4. Promote Grand Rapids and the Arrowhead Region for tourism and team building opportunities for the up in coming industry members and regional leaders
5. Make everything transparent, fun and engaging

TARGET INVITEES/ATTENDEES

Outreach will be to organizations focused on helping community leaders, nonprofits and advocacy groups. The project team will be especially targeting organizations with vested interest in understanding how to build and sustain a smart rural community and those with interests related to equitable rural transportation in the future:

- Example agency groups for outreach include: MAASTO (Mid-America Association of State Transportation Officials), AASHTO, Minnesota I-CAV (Interagency CAV), League of Cities, Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities
- Example advocacy groups for outreach include: ITN America/ITN Country, 100 Rural Women, 4H
- Example technology companies for outreach: TBD (Discuss with May)

OUTREACH AND STORY SHARING EFFORTS

Outreach and sharing of the community members stories will include fun and interactive approaches for drawing in the diverse sets of voices to include at the table. The more we can draw in specialty groups to speak out, like our disabled vets, differently abled youth of all modalities and the elderly who want to increase the quality of life after retirement and beyond, the larger (and better) the message will become.

Methods of outreach will include:

- The use of local Public Television, ICTV, and Two Rivers Video
- Social campaigns to recruit and share the community members stories through podcasts, images and videos, etc
- Presentations and active recruiting with the invitee and attendee groups as outlined above

CONTENT AND AGENDA

Possible content for the seminar includes:

- Story sharing around needs from local community stakeholder groups (example community groups will include: Elder Circle, Mobility Mania, Arts & Cultures Commission, Local schools/students, and many others: see Task 2.1)
- Technology overviews of the shuttle project including live demonstrations
- Technology overviews and demonstrations of other related technologies on the road interacting with the shuttle (micromobility, smart street lighting, etc)
- Local and Federal rural policy considerations including funding model options
- Shuttle project research overviews and status updates
- Preparing local rural talent for the new future overviews (IASC, ICC, Iron Range Engineering)
- Fun *Visit Grand Rapids* excursion option add-ons (for teambuilding, etc)

DATES - TBD (target 5 seminars - 2 days max per seminar + optional excursion/teambuilding)

DETAILED PROJECT WORK PLAN

Task 1	Formalize and manage the SMART Rural Mobility Seminar planning (target dates, content outline, pipeline of speakers, venue(s), sponsorship options, invitee/outreach planning, excursions, advertising, team set-up)
	1.1 PLUM Catalyst Planning & Program Management Labor
	1.2 City Labor
	1.3 Mobility Mania Labor
	1.4 MnDOT Labor
	1.5 VisitGrandRapids Labor

	1.7 May Mobility Labor
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Task 2	Story building, story sharing and community engagement through an equity lense
	2.1 Define and recruit diverse set of community members for story building specifically incorporating inclusive and culturally sensitive practices and goals: underserved populations including differently abled/accessibility focused, veterans, older adults, people with sensory and/or cognitive disabilities, single parent households and tribal communities
	2.2 Work with community members to write and practice the method for communicating their stories
	2.3 Document community stories before, during and after shuttle project

Task 3	Outreach and advertising of seminars - create advertising and outreach materials/content/website, build list of invitees and outreach plan, execute communications/advertising/email lists
	3.1 Create Website and Advertising Strategy
	3.2 Domain/Hosting and website building
	3.3 Build/Record Content for advertising including capturing the stories of some of the community members
	3.4 Outreach to invitees (emails, panel advertising, social campaigns, local tv, podcasts)

Task 4	Venue / Events - venue for seminars, food, logistics
	4.1 Venue location fee (5 - 2 day seminars)
	4.2 Food costs
	4.3 Other materials and logistics (hotel transfers, etc)

Task 5	Execute minimum of 5 total - mix of technology and rural community leader seminars/content
	5.1 PLUM Catalyst time (2 days of seminar time + 1 day set-up/take down per seminar)
	5.2 May Mobility time
	5.3 MnDOT time
	5.4 City time

PROJECT TEAM

- The PLUM Catalyst (Project Manager, Tammy Meehan Russell)
- City of Grand Rapids (Director of Community Development, Rob Mattei and City Administrator/Project Champion, Tom Pagel)
- Mobility Mania (Co-founders, Myrna Peterson and Lisa Arnold)
- May Mobility (Field Autonomy Engineer, Tanim Islam)
- MnDOT (Executive Director, MnDOT CAV-X, Kristin White)
- University of Minnesota, Humphrey School of Policy (Frank Douma, Researcher)
- Visit Grand Rapids (Megan Christianson)
- The team is currently seeking additional representation from veterans, local tribal communities, and other under-represented community members such as single parent households, people with sensory and/or cognitive disabilities, other differently abled community members (see Advancing Equity Research document)

PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET

\$213,185 total cost, including \$50,000 AIR grant funding request

Cash/in kind from various project partners:

- MnDOT \$94,000 cash and in-kind labor pending contracting
- PLUM Catalyst \$17,000 cash and in-kind labor committed
- City of Grand Rapids \$28,300 in-kind venue and labor committed
- May Mobility \$17,500 labor committed
- Others (Mobility Mania, Visit Grand Rapids) \$6385 in-kind labor committed