

**Board of Trustees
Illinois State University
Authorization for Two-Year Agreement with Connect Transit Services**

Background

Illinois State University and Connect Transit have maintained a longstanding partnership. Formalized in 1998, the partnership initially provided a safe, after-hours transportation alternative for students. Since then, the partnership has expanded to give students, faculty, and staff access to fixed route, regularly published public transportation service throughout the Bloomington-Normal community, including the University campus.

The Redbird Express route provides transportation around the Illinois State University campus from 7 a.m. to 12 a.m. Sunday through Thursday, and from 7 a.m. to 3 a.m. on Friday and Saturday during fall and spring semesters on all regularly scheduled class days. There are 15 campus stops on the Redbird Express.

The University, through the Parking and Transportation Office, makes monthly payments to Connect Transit for the transportation services provided to students, faculty, and staff. The current total annual base cost for these services is \$595,677.84 based on 9500 unique riders across the system and 6130 hours Redbird Express service. Actual costs were \$520,848.56 in FY23, \$613,506.34 in FY 24, and estimated to be \$615,500 for FY25 (final unique rider and hourly operating costs calculated at the end of the fiscal year). FY26 base cost is expected to be \$646,345.50 and will be adjusted annually for actual ridership and operating cost.

The University and Connect Transit have negotiated terms for a new multi-year agreement to continue to provide transportation services to students, faculty and staff. Under this agreement terms of service and calculation methods for amount owed remain the same as the previous agreement. Amounts owed will be based on usage of the system and service provided, utilizing historical ridership and published operating cost data related to operating Redbird Express.

The term of the agreement would be July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2027, and will have an annual renewal based on actual performance metric updates agreed to by both the University and Connect Transit on July 1, 2026. The total funding over this two-year agreement is projected not to exceed \$1,500,000.

The agreement with Connect Transit supports the campus Master Plan 2010-2030: Looking to the Future as well as the University's strategic plan, Excellence by Design: 2024-2029, by providing a sustainable transportation option to enhance the quality of life as well as address the economic, social, and environmental needs of Illinois State University students, faculty, and staff. This agreement is a tangible demonstration of the University's commitment to sustainable initiatives. The strategic external partnership between Illinois State University and Connect Transit is mutually beneficial.

Source of Funding: Student Fee Revenues