

BUILDING INNOVATION CAPACITY

Impacts of an Innovation Team Approach



AUGUST 2020



CITY OF
SIOUX FALLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To tackle Sioux Falls' public transit challenges, the Office of Innovation partnered with Planning and Development services to launch an Innovation Team, or a cross-functional group of internal and external stakeholders that collaborate to solve a challenges by applying innovation methods such as co-creation.

By applying the Innovation Team approach to public transportation the Office of Innovation not only discovered an effective problem-solving method, but more importantly discovered a strategy to strengthen the City of Sioux Falls' environment for innovation.

What is Co-Creation?

Collaborating with the end user to understand the heart of the problem and develop solutions

- Public sector innovation isn't new. Innovation, or the process of generating and implementing ideas that create value for our community, is at the heart of our work as public servants. As one of the City of Sioux Falls' core values, our teams innovate every day to effectively address Sioux Falls' greatest challenges.
- If we innovate successfully, we will achieve the four values of innovation: greater results, increased productivity, enhanced democracy, and a better customer experience.
- This report will cover:
 - ▶ Building Innovation Capacity
 - ▶ The Innovation Team Approach
 - ▶ Impacts of Innovation Teams



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“Everyone who has ever taken a shower has had an idea. It’s the person who gets out of the shower, dries off, and does something about it that makes a difference.”

NOLAN BUSHNELL



STRENGTHENING OUR ENVIRONMENT TO INNOVATE

Our potential to innovative lies within the strength of our environment and each individuals' own capacity to innovate.

Our mission at the Office of Innovation is to ignite and sustain meaningful change by strengthening our environment for innovation. Four factors contribute to strengthening our environment for innovation:

- **Consciousness:** Shared language around innovation, awareness of key elements
- **Capacity:** Organizational structure and context to effectively innovate
- **Co-Creation:** Understanding, application of resident-involvement processes
- **Courage:** Culture that supports divergent thinking, leadership at all levels



Innovation Ecosystem: *Strengthening Our Environment to Innovate*

CO-CREATION
(Process)

CAPACITY
(Structure)

COURAGE
(Leadership)

CONSCIOUSNESS
(Awareness)





THE INNOVATION TEAM APPROACH



Innovation Teams in Action: Transit Core Team

THE INNOVATION TEAM APPROACH

One approach to strengthening our environment for innovation is Innovation Teams. An Innovation Team is a small group of people working together to tackle a real-world challenge by learning and applying innovation principles. Ideally, these teams include both internal and external stakeholders, and focus on challenges that are cross-department and cross-sector.

“Successful innovative teams are created from diverse expertise.”

**-AMY RICHARDSON,
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Facilitated by the Office of Innovation, target outcomes of an Innovation Team include:

- Build consciousness
- Gain understanding of co-creation
- Apply and inspire others to apply new skills
- Create valuable project outcomes for community

CASE STUDY: TRANSIT INNOVATION TEAM

In 2018, the Office of Innovation assembled the first Innovation Team, focusing on public transportation.

In partnership with the Harvard Bloomberg City Leadership Initiative, the Office of Innovation led the Innovation Team through a 12-month innovation curriculum. The group of 14 City employees from across nine divisions worked together to engage residents and prototype solutions to approach transit in new ways.

Developing Innovative Solutions using Co-Creation

Public Transit is a lifeline in Sioux Falls for the 88% of current bus users do not have a car (SAM 2018 Sioux Falls Area Metro Passenger Survey). Vital resources like mental health care and food pantries are outside the service area of existing service and inaccessible to many current bus users.

In an effort to approach public transportation from a new perspective, the Transit Innovation Team applied an innovation process called co-creation, or collaborating with the end user to understand the heart of the problem and develop solutions.

Engaging with a variety of stakeholders throughout the program, including bus riders, car lovers, employers, and nonprofits, was critical not only to gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges but also in developing new solutions.

“[Engaging with the end-users] really opens your eyes to the challenges people face riding the bus,” Smothers said. “If you just sat in your office, you wouldn’t know it because you would not be experiencing it.”

**-SKY SMOTHERS,
PARKS**







IMPACTS OF THE TRANSIT INNOVATION TEAM

IMPACTS OF THE TRANSIT INNOVATION TEAM

Applying classroom learnings to a real-life challenge enabled Transit Innovation Team members to strengthen their individual innovation skills while creating tangible, valuable outcomes for the community.

Increased Innovation Capacity

Since the conclusion of the Innovation Team, capacity for individual innovation has increased among members. Each of these individuals is a leader in our organization and community, spreading innovation even farther.

After increasing their consciousness and capacity for innovation, Innovation Team members are scaling these new skills across the organization. To understand how developing new innovation skills has influenced day-to-day operations, the Office of Innovation surveyed members. Responses reflect work outside of the transit project.

Transit Innovation Team Member Outcomes— July 2020 Survey

- Increased Productivity*:** As public servants, being productive is about spending our resource of time on the right projects. Maximizing productivity requires taking a step back and asking: what problem does this project solve? Is it the right problem to solve for the end user?



Since the conclusion of the program, Innovation Team members have shifted the scope of a project at least five times. If each shift in

project scope represents 50 hours of saved

time, Innovation Team members **saved at least 250 hours of time, or more than six weeks**, by ensuring our teams invest time in projects that solve the heart of a problem.

“[I learned] the importance of not bringing a blind solution to the table. Our users and community have the experience, and the feedback.”
-DAN NEEVES,
LIBRARY

- Increased Collaboration*:**

Collaboration is essential to innovation. Greater collaboration, whether internal or external, breaks down silos, reduces duplication, creates holistic solutions, and results in different and better ideas.

Throughout the transit project, members collaborated with residents, non-profit leaders, and employers through in-person interviews. By meeting stakeholders where they are (i.e. on the bus itself).

Since the conclusion of the program, Innovation Team members have collaborated with people, including the public, on at least 13 projects. If each project represents interacting with at least eight people, Innovation Team members have



collaborated with at least 100 people.

The diversity of this engagement is especially valuable. In 2018, there were 103 unique residents that spoke at City Council meetings**. Seeking collaboration in new ways ensures input from a more diverse population.

*According to “Core Teams - Outcomes Survey – July 2020”

**According to “Copy of Speakers by Year (002)”, there were 103 total speakers at City Council meetings in 2018



Increased Value for the Community

In addition to increasing our individual team members' capacity to innovate, the Transit Innovation Team also generated tangible, valuable recommendations with potential to add value to the community.

- Increased Engagement, Better Insights:** Engaging with a variety of stakeholders throughout the program, including bus riders, car lovers, employers, and nonprofits, was critical not only to gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges but also in developing new solutions. After engaging more than 50 people from these various community groups these key insights emerged as priorities for public transit:

“[I learned that] utilizing a holistic approach and diverse team is imperative when tackling the community’s most pressing challenges.”

**-ADAM ROACH,
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

- ▶ Hours of Operation: How might we support residents to get to jobs outside of normal operational hours?
- ▶ Extended Service Area: How might we expand transit coverage to residents?
- ▶ Payment and Fares: How might we bring more flexibility into how tickets are purchased for the bus?
- ▶ Accessible routes: How might we bring bus stops closer to homes and destinations?
- ▶ Efficiency: How might we bring more efficiency in getting from point A to point B in transit system by utilizing technology and education
- ▶ Partnerships: How might we leverage public/private partnerships to plug the gaps in current system



These qualitative insights support quantitative data from the 2018 Sioux Area Metro Ridership survey of current riders including:

- ▶ Highest priorities for improvement are:
 - Weekend service (38.6% of respondents)
 - Evening service (24.7% of respondents)
- ▶ Highest ranked services that would increase use are:
 - Passenger alerts (56% of respondents)
 - Real-time info (42% of respondents)
 - Free wifi (49% of respondents)

Engaging a variety of stakeholders empowered the Transit Innovation Team to more clearly define the core problem to increase the economic benefit of public transit to residents and the City.

- **Redesigning the Service Experience:**

During the process of co-creation, a few solutions rose to the top as having the highest potential for impact. These solutions are either in the process of being implemented today or highly recommended to move forward.



- ▶ On-Demand Transit Pilot (Pilot to begin Fall 2020)
- ▶ Real-Time GPS Tracking
- ▶ Wifi on Buses and Transit Depot

- **Future Innovation Roadmap (Results):**

In addition to the short-term service redesign initiatives, the co-creation process resulted in the creation of future potential innovations. These ideas will help guide



future planning initiatives by the Public Transit Advisory Board (PTAB), and evaluated in support of existing and updated plans such as the Long Range Transportation Plan, Transit Development Plan and Transit Marketing Plan.

- ▶ Mobile ticketing
- ▶ Enhance data collection and analysis of the transit system
- ▶ Autonomous vehicle pilot project
- ▶ Public/private partnerships, including Guaranteed Ride Home program
- ▶ Incentive programs to recruit new riders
- ▶ Consolidate all non-public transportation services into one non-profit organization
- ▶ Eliminate fares by increasing sponsorships and advertising
- ▶ Electric Buses

THE FUTURE OF INNOVATION TEAMS

The Innovation Team approach successfully strengthened the City of Sioux Falls' environment for innovation by targeting the whole innovation ecosystem. By applying classroom learnings (consciousness, capacity)

to a real-world challenge (co-creation, courage), team members learned how to use innovation resulting in greater productivity and collaboration.

The Office of Innovation will continue to use the Innovation Team approach to ignite and sustain meaningful change across our organization.

The success of an Innovation Team depends on the members of the team, and the type of challenge or opportunity. To maximize impact, future Innovation Teams would ideally:

- ▶ Include both internal and external stakeholders
- ▶ Focus on a challenge or opportunity that intersects multiple departments or sectors
- ▶ Begin without an end in mind
- ▶ Support a larger organizational initiative (i.e. ISF framework, BHAG, rock)





CITY OF
SIOUX FALLS

TAKING CARE OF TODAY FOR
A BETTER TOMORROW