

Transit Planning 2 – Implementation

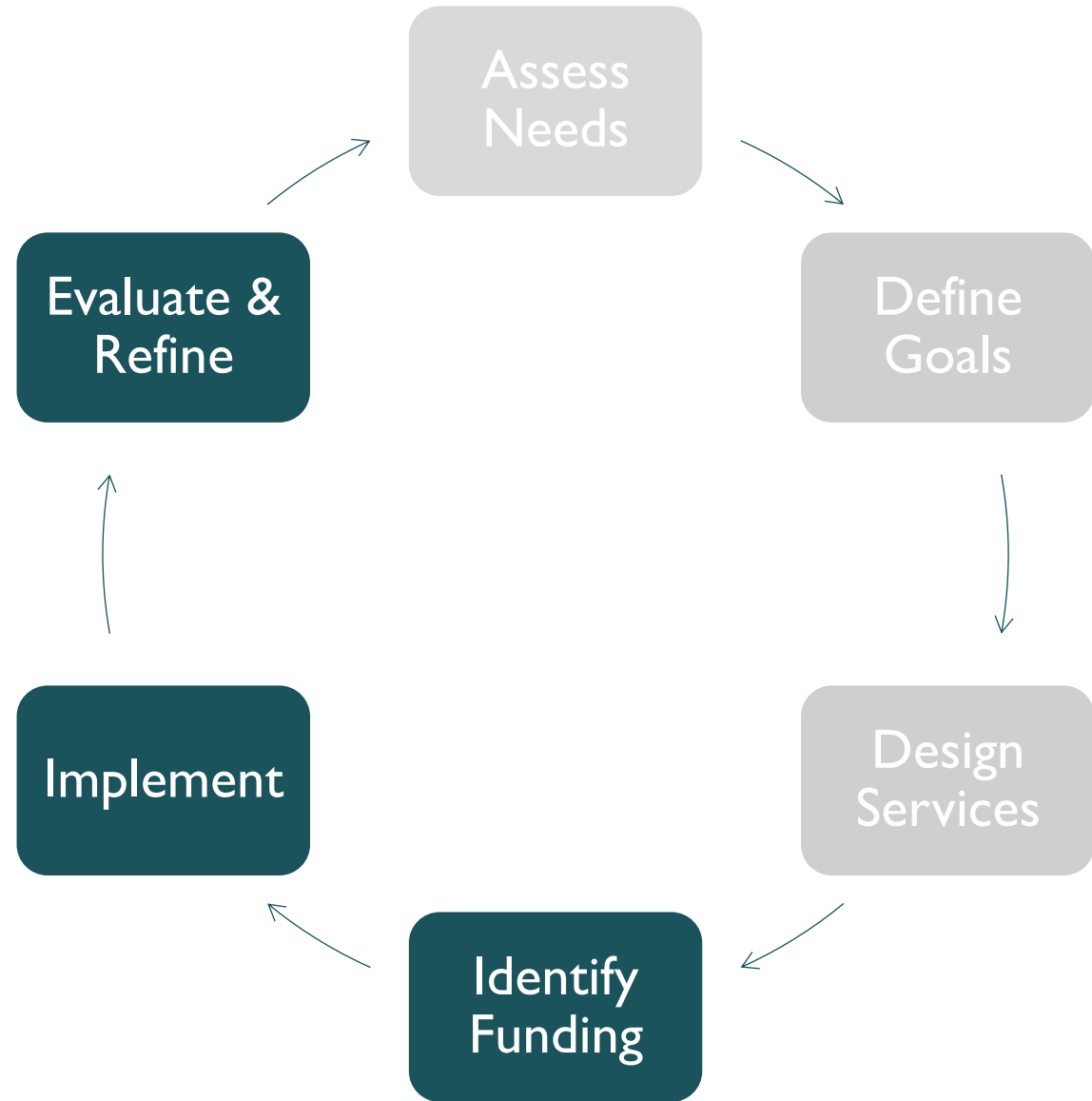
Conducted for: The National RTAP
Tribal & Rural Transit Mini-Conference,
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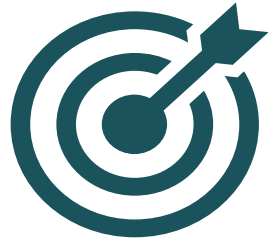
Objectives

- Apply steps to implement a transit plan effectively
- Develop strategies to sustain and evaluate service performance
- Share implementation experiences and lessons from peers.

The Six-Step Planning Cycle



From Plan to Action - Overview



Translate goals into measurable activities.



Develop implementation matrix:

task,
lead,
timeframe,
resources

Step 4 & 5 Funding & Implementation Example

- Goal: Improve access to dialysis appointments
- Action: Add Wednesday shuttle service to clinic
- Lead: Transit Director
- Timeframe: 3 months
- Resource: 5311(c) funding +



Step 4: Securing Funding Streams

- FTA 5311(c) Tribal Transit / State administered 5311
- Coordination with health, education, and workforce partners
- Leverage in-kind support and braided funding



Case Example - Prairie Sky Transit: Leveraging Partnerships for Extended Service Hours

Prairie Sky Transit (fictitious) is a Tribal operated rural transit system serving a large, sparsely populated reservation and surrounding rural counties.

The service area is about 2,000 square miles

Fleet = 6 vehicles (5 cutaways + one van)

Core service: weekday demand-response trips for medical, employment, and education

Challenge: **limited evening and weekend coverage** – elders and shift workers were unable to access key destinations outside standard hours.

The Challenge

- The program was **operating at full capacity** under its 5311(c) funding allocation.
- Budget constraints made it difficult to extend service hours or hire additional drivers.
- Community feedback repeatedly cited *lack of after-hours service* as the top need in listening sessions and survey results.



The Solution: Braided Funding and In-Kind Support

Instead of relying solely on FTA funds, the agency pursued **small, flexible partnerships** to create a sustainable pilot extension.

First, Build Partnerships that Share Your Vision (Identify Aligned Partners)

Tribal Health Department: Needed reliable evening transport for patients attending dialysis and late medical appointments.

Workforce Development Office: Wanted to support after-hours access to job sites and training programs.

Community College Extension: Had adult education classes running until 8 PM.

Second, Design a Shared Investment Model (Build Cost-Sharing Agreements)

Tribal Health contributed **\$22,000 annually** for evening trips to medical facilities.

Workforce Development funded **driver hours equivalent to one FTE** as an *in-kind match*.

The college provided **free vehicle storage and shared fueling access** at its facility.

Key Elements of a Coordination Agreement

- Purpose and Scope
- Parties involved
- Service areas
- Shared costs
- Reporting
- Duration and Renewal
- Contacts



Element	Description	Example
Purpose and Scope	Defines what the agreement covers and its objectives.	“To improve mobility between the XYZ Reservation and nearby workforce centers.”
Parties Involved	List all participating agencies and their roles.	Tribal Transit, County Human Services, Regional Workforce Office.
Service Areas and Routes	Specific routes, stops, or areas served jointly.	Shared route between Tribal Center and Regional Hospital.
Resources Shared	Identifies vehicles, facilities, staff time, or funds shared.	Shared maintenance facility and dispatch coordination.
Cost-sharing and Funding	Details financial contributions or in-kind arrangements.	County contributes \$10,000; Tribe provides drivers and vehicles.
Reporting and Communication	Describe how partners will share ridership or performance data and meet for coordination reviews.	Monthly coordination call and quarterly performance report.
Contact Points	List designated points of contact for each partner.	Program Manager – Tribal Transit Director – Human Services.
Duration and Renewal	States agreement length and renewal procedure.	One-year pilot with option to renew annually.
Signatures and Approvals	Confirm leadership authorization	Signed by Tribal Chairperson and County Administrator.

What coordination relationships already exist in your area?

Are they formal or informal?

Have you documented them in writing, or are they handshake agreements?

What's one area where a written agreement could make collaboration smoother?

Name one partner you could formalize an agreement with (e.g., health, school district, neighboring transit system, etc.)

Prairie Sky Transit – Funding Mix (FY2025 Example)

Funding Source	Description / Example Programs	FY2025 Contribution	% of Total Operating Budget
Federal (FTA 5311(c))	Tribal Transit Program funds used for core operations (driver wages, fuel, admin).	\$225,000	55 %
State 5311 (Pass-through)	State DOT support for coordinated rural routes and data reporting.	\$60,000	15 %
Tribal / Local Contribution	Tribal Council allocation for vehicle insurance, dispatch staff, and match funds.	\$40,000	10 %
Fare Revenue	Fares from riders (\$1–\$3 per trip, cash or tokens).	\$15,000	4 %
Health & Workforce Partnerships (Other)	Contributions from Tribal Health (\$22 k) and Workforce Office (in-kind driver hours ≈ \$20 k value).	\$40,000	10 %
Education Partnership	Community College provides fueling and storage (in-kind, est. \$10 k).	\$10,000	2 %
Total Annual Operating Budget	—	\$390,000	100 %

Budget Management Essentials

Track costs per vehicle revenue hour, per trip, and subsidy per passenger

Monitor fuel and maintenance trends monthly.

Prairie Sky Transit managed their budget when they extended evening service.

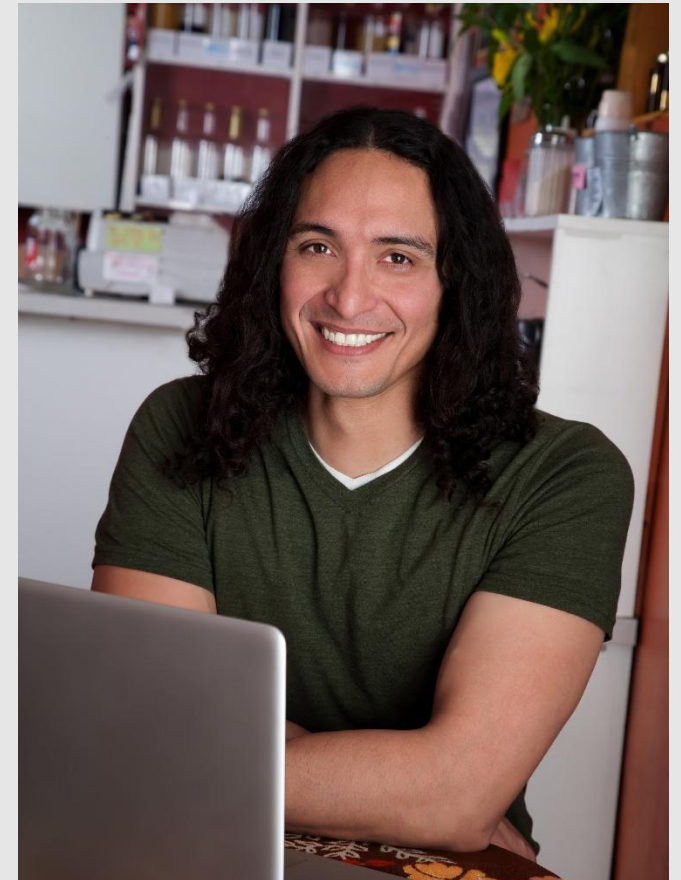
During the pilot, they tracked cost per trip, cost per revenue hour, and partner contribution, etc.

They noticed that adding later trips increased fuel use only 8% while productivity (trips per hour) rose 14%. That data helped justify continuing the service after the pilot.

The key lesson is to use your cost metrics to tell the story back to funders. When Prairie Sky reported that their cost per passenger fell from \$41 to \$36, both partners renewed their commitments for the next fiscal year.

Staffing and Training

- Recruitment in rural / Tribal contexts
- Retention: mentorship, recognition, flexible hours
- Training: customer service, safety, reporting
- Prairie Sky faced a driver shortage when adding evening hours. Instead of hiring entirely new staff, they used a **cross-training strategy**.
- Two daytime drivers were trained to rotate into evening shifts; the Tribal Health Department provided one certified driver through an in-kind contribution.



Service Launch Checklist



- Vehicle readiness and inspection
- Public outreach campaign
- Soft launch phase before full rollout

Service Launch Checklist – Prairie Sky

- **Vehicle readiness:** They inspected all vehicles and confirmed insurance and communications equipment.
- **Staff readiness:** Drivers completed short orientation sessions on new routes and evening safety procedures.
- **Public awareness:** Flyers went out through the Tribal clinic social media, and the community college two weeks before the launch.
- **Soft launch: For the first week, dispatchers monitored every trip and made nightly adjustments.**

*Within 30 days, evening ridership stabilized and calls to dispatch dropped 40%.

Third, Test and Refine the Service Model (Launch a 6-month Pilot)

Service extended 3 hours later (to 9:00 PM) three nights per week.

Priority trips included medical, employment, and education destinations.

Marketing targeted health clinics, job centers, and schools.

Results – After 6 Months

Ridership increased 14% overall (with strong evening utilization)

Cost per passenger decreased from \$41 to \$36 due to higher productivity.

Partners reported improved outcomes (e.g., better dialysis attendance and job retention).

The pilot was made permanent in the next fiscal year.

Lessons Learned

1

SMALL PARTNERSHIPS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE. EVEN MODEST CONTRIBUTIONS ALLOWED SERVICE EXPANSION.

2

DEFINE CLEAR PARTNER BENEFITS. EACH PARTNER SAW DIRECT RETURNS – HEALTH ACCESS, EMPLOYMENT STABILITY, EDUCATION RETENTION.

3

START SMALL AND PROVE SUCCESS. THE PILOT APPROACH BUILT CONFIDENCE AND DATA TO JUSTIFY CONTINUATION.

4

TRACK AND SHARE DATA. REPORTING BACK TO PARTNERS (“YOU FUNDED X, WHICH RESULTED IN Y NEW RIDES”) REINFORCED ACCOUNTABILITY.

Practical Tips



Start simple: a one-page Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is often enough for pilots or limited partnerships.



Use templates: many state DOTs and Tribal programs have adaptable coordination MOU templates.



Keep agreements flexible: Avoid rigid language that locks in specific routes or funding amounts – focus on shared intent and collaboration principles.



Revisit annually: Schedule yearly reviews to renew or revise agreements based on new funding, service changes, or partner needs.

Step 6: Evaluate and Refine



Performance Measurement Overview: Turning Data into Decisions

Why Measure Performance?

- Shows progress toward goals
- Builds accountability with partners and funders
- Supports data-driven decisions
- Identifies when adjustments are needed



Core Categories of Metrics

Category	What It Tells You	Example Metrics
Service Efficiency	How well resources are used	Trips per vehicle revenue hour, cost per revenue hour
Service Effectiveness	Whether service meets community needs	On-time performance, trip denials, coverage area
Financial Sustainability	Cost control and value	Cost per trip, subsidy per passenger, farebox recovery ratio
Customer Experience	Rider satisfaction and access	Survey scores, complaints, new riders per month
Safety and Reliability	Service dependability	Accidents, road calls, vehicle availability

Tracking and Using the Data

- Keep metrics simple, consistent, and comparable over time.
- Use monthly or quarterly tracking sheets or dashboards.
- Review results with your team and partners.
- Highlight key changes – green (improving), yellow (stable), red (declining).
- Use findings to inform schedule adjustments, driver training, or outreach.

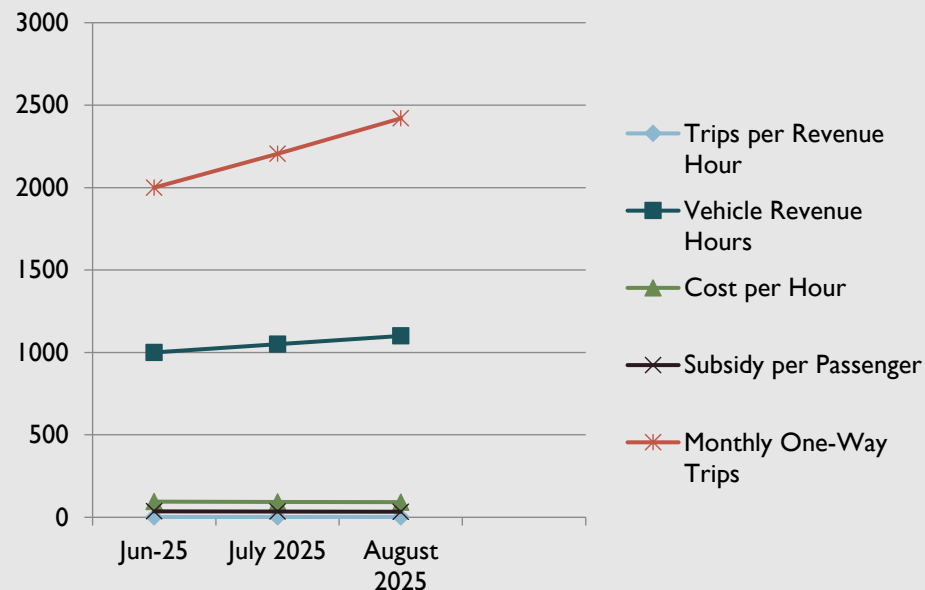
Sample KPI Dashboard

Agency Name: Prairie Sky Transit	Month August	Point of Contact: First: Elena Last: Whitefeather-Greyhawk Email: Elena.whitefeather@whitefeathernation.gov Phone:
Project Name/Number: Evening Service Hours	Submission Date:	

Vehicle Revenue Hours	Trips per Revenue Hour	Comments and Feedback
One-Way Trips	Cost per One-Way Trip	
One-Way Trips per Revenue Hour	Subsidy per Passenger	
Cost per Rev Hour		
Denial of trip requests per month	Total Vehicle Hours	
0	Total Cost per Hour (Overall)	
Federal funds (5311(c))	Total Funding	
State 5311	Federal Percentage	
Tribal Local	Tribal Local Percentage	
Fares	Other Percentage	

Quarterly KPIs

Prairie Sky Transit	Jun-25	July 2025	August 2025
Trips per Revenue Hour	2	2.1	2.2
Vehicle Revenue Hours	1,000	1,050	1,100
Cost per Hour	95	93	92
Subsidy per Passenger	36	34.5	33.75
Monthly One-Way Trips	2,000	2,205	2,420



Trend Highlights

Trips per Revenue Hour: Improved from 2.0 to 2.2

Vehicle Revenue Hours: Grew by 10% (1,000 to 1,100) due to extended evening service

Cost per Hour: Decreased slightly (\$95 to \$92) through better fuel management and driver cross-training

Subsidy per Passenger: Fell by 6% (\$36 to \$33.75) as productivity and fare recovery improved.

Monthly One-Way Trips: Increased 21% (2,000 to 2,420) over three months, showing strong response to the expanded service.



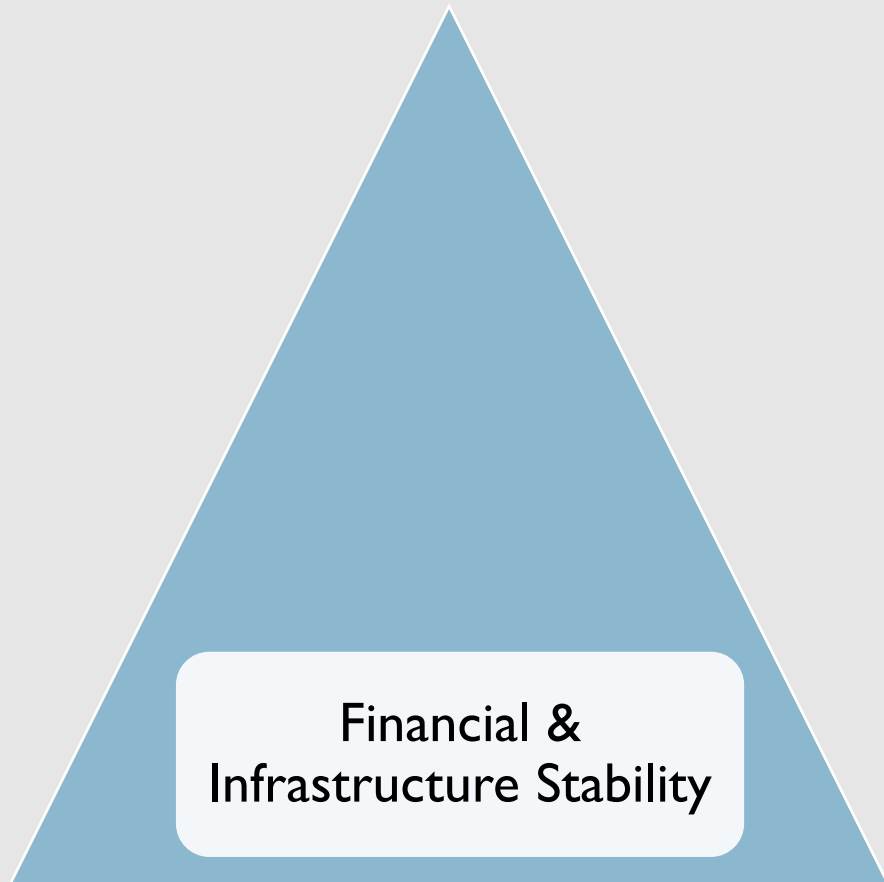
Who currently sees
your performance
data?

- Just the manager?
- Partners?
- The whole community?
- Do you want to make your results more visible?

Sustainability and Long-Term Planning



Financial & Infrastructure Stability



- **Financial Sustainability:**
 - Diversify funding: blend 5311(c), Medicaid, workforce, and education funds.
 - Develop reserve funds for fleet replacement or emergencies.
 - Track match sources and ensure documentation for audits.
- **Fleet and Infrastructure Planning:**
 - Maintain a **vehicle replacement schedule** — plan 5–7 years out.
 - Coordinate with procurement officers and DOT reps early for lead times.
 - Consider multi-purpose facilities (e.g., shared maintenance bays or fueling).

Workforce & Operational Capacity



Staff Succession Planning:

- Identify emerging leaders within your organization.
- Cross-train key staff so no single person holds all operational knowledge.
- Encourage professional development — RTAP trainings, state conferences, mentorship.

Community and Cultural Continuity



Community and
Cultural Continuity

Community and Cultural Continuity:

- Ensure service aligns with evolving community needs (e.g., youth programs, healthcare shifts).
- Preserve the cultural identity of the system — signage, outreach, and service naming can all reflect Tribal heritage.

Partnership Renewal:

- Revisit coordination agreements annually to reaffirm roles and keep momentum.
- Update MOUs and funding MOAs proactively, not reactively.

Exercise – Implementation Scenario

- Work in small groups: develop an action plan for adding a new route or service.
- Who would be the partners?
- Funding?
- Performance measures?
- Sustainability?

Closing & Thank You

Questions before we adjourn?

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