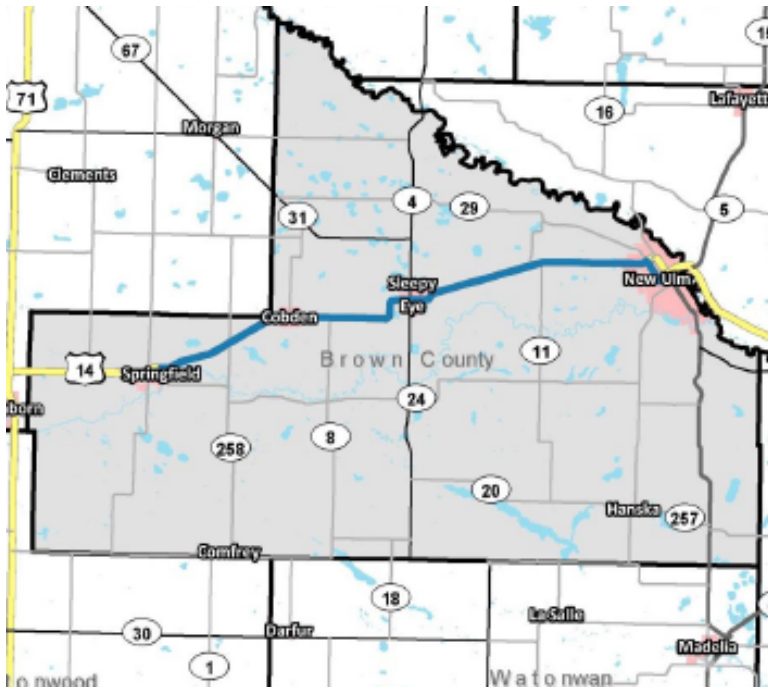


Brown County Heartland Express

Brown County Heartland Express operates demand response service throughout Brown County, and morning and afternoon deviated route transit service between New Ulm and Springfield. Brown County itself is located in the southwestern area of the state. The remote community of Comfrey is served based on demand, but Brown County Heartland Express has indicated that it is a challenge to do so. They also attempt to serve the community of Hanska bi-weekly. Brown County Heartland Express was established over 40 years ago as a volunteer driver organization in the Brown County Human Services Department. As the transit need grew and changed over time, Brown County Heartland Express secured funding from various sources for its first fleet of buses in 1993.



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Legislative District: 16B
Congressional District: 1

Volunteer Drivers

A volunteer driver program made up of 8 to 10 senior citizens is mainly used for out-of-county medical trips. Volunteer drivers have donated an estimated 970 annual hours, completing 1,574 trips and 18,978 miles driven.

Hours of Operation

Operations

Monday – Friday: 6:15 am – 5:45 pm

Saturday: No Service

Sunday: 8:00 am - 12:00 pm (City of New Ulm only)

Brown County Heartland Express currently has eight active buses in its fleet, all of which are ADA accessible and outfitted with cameras. The vehicle fleet is comprised entirely of class 400 light-duty mid-sized buses, with vehicle years spanning from 2009 to 2018. Seven of the buses are stored in the Brown County Bus Barn located in New Ulm, and one bus is stored outside a private business in Sleepy Eye. Five of the eight existing buses will need to be replaced between 2020 and 2025, and one additional bus will need to be purchased.

Brown County Heartland Express uses both RouteMatch and radios to dispatch its services from its office in New Ulm. Buses are equipped with RouteMatch software, which collects ridership information.

Ridership

As the Brown County Heartland Express system has slowly grown, ridership and service hours have also slowly increased, while operating costs have fluctuated. Although ridership is relatively flat, the total system-wide passenger trips have generally increased since 2013 and decreased slightly in 2016. Between 2013 and 2017, the agency had a net gain in ridership of about 1% (i.e., 395 passenger trips).

Brown County Heartland Express serves passengers of all ages and abilities. About 42% of passenger trips are made by passengers with a disability. While the number of passengers with disabilities served has decreased over time, there is expected to be a slight increase in passengers with disabilities served in the future.

By age group, most passengers are elderly or adults, each making up about 44% of all passenger trips, followed by students and children. The number of elderly and adult passengers has declined over time, while the number of student passengers has increased. Based on the provider's 2018 projections, the number of children riding the bus has increased by nearly 1,000 over three years.

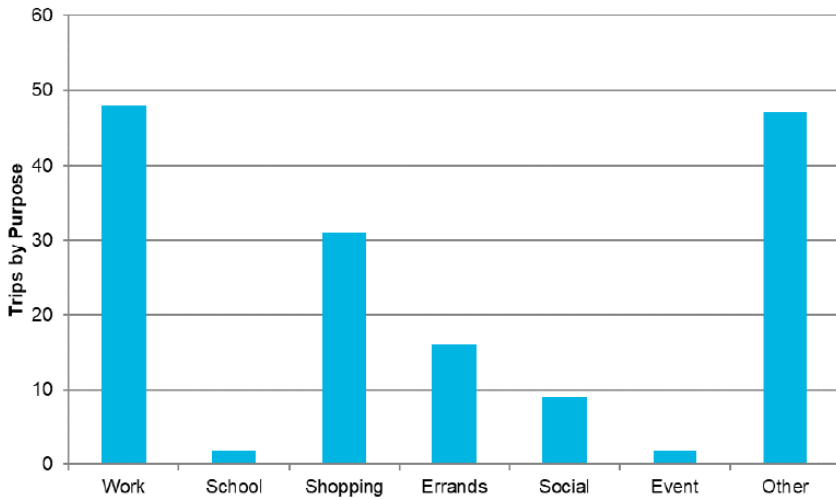


Figure 17: 2016 Trip Purposes

Budget

In 2019, Brown County Heartland Express had an operating budget of \$779,000

Federal Revenue Share	\$163,170
State Revenue Share	\$498,980
Local Revenue Share	\$116,850

Costs to maintain current service, planned service expansion costs, and other needs are expected to increase steadily each year, with the implementation of a marketing and outreach position in 2020. Extended weekday service hours in New Ulm and throughout Brown County will be implemented in 2020, a new deviated fixed route in New Ulm in 2021, and weekend service in New Ulm and extended service hours for another weekday throughout Brown County will be implemented in 2022. Vehicle expansion, facility improvements, and technology improvements in 2020 and 2022 will increase capital costs relative to other years. Brown County Heartland Express has capital needs of \$977,707 between 2020 and 2025. A new facility adds \$103,000 to the capital budget. To maintain current service, Brown County Heartland Express's operating budget will need to increase to \$916,471 by 2025. To meet all of the unconstrained needs, the budget would need to increase to \$1.3 million.

High and Medium Priority Unconstrained Needs List for Brown County Heartland Express

- New Ulm & Brown County Demand Response Additional Hours
- System Rebranding
- Marketing/Outreach Position
- Additional Advertising Budget
- Replacement and Expansion Vehicles
- Radio System Replacement
- Facility Construction