

## **Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) and Via to launch innovative on-demand transit program, with support from Toyota Mobility Foundation**

*The launch of “METS Micro” signifies a step forward in METS’ and Via’s shared vision to use technology to create inclusive, flexible public transit*

**November 28, 2023 (EVANSVILLE, IN)** — The Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) is proud to announce the launch of METS Micro, an on-demand, app-based public transit pilot service in partnership with Via, global leader in TransitTech, the Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization (Evansville MPO), the Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF), and Energy Systems Network (ESN).

METS Micro will officially launch on November 28 with the goal of using innovative software to expand access to transportation in Evansville. METS Micro will allow anyone within a designated service zone in southeast Evansville to book an on-demand ride through the METS Micro app (available in [Google Play](#) and [App Store](#) or by calling 812-562-5011).

Upon booking a ride, Via’s intelligent algorithms match riders headed in the same direction into one shared vehicle to create quick, efficient shared trips. This model provides a flexible transit option designed to extend the reach of METS’ existing offerings by providing coverage in areas where fixed-route buses cannot efficiently reach.

METS Micro will be available Monday to Saturday from 6:15 a.m. to 12 a.m. and on Sundays from 6:15 a.m. to 6 p.m. Rides will cost \$2. The fleet will include two wheelchair-accessible Toyota Sienna minivans.

Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke said, “The launch of METS Micro stands as a testament to the hard work, innovation, and dedication of our entire team. Collaborating with Via and benefiting from the generous support of Toyota Mobility Foundation and Energy Systems Network, we’re not just enhancing our transit system — we’re envisioning a brighter, more connected future for Evansville.”

Todd Robertson, Executive Director for the City of Evansville Transportation Services added, “With help and two years of innovative thinking, even though it’s a pilot program, I am glad to see another affordable transit opportunity in Evansville and look forward to its expansion in the future.”

METS Micro is part of Toyota Mobility Foundation’s *Together in Motion* initiative, a program established in collaboration with Energy Systems Network (ESN) and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). TMF played important roles in the planning behind METS Micro – from hosting community workshops to define local mobility needs, to providing matching funds with the City, to coordinating stakeholder engagement.

“The METS Micro pilot in Evansville exemplifies the power of collaboration between local and state public and private entities, setting the stage for achieving greater equity in transportation access,” said Ryan Klem, Director of Programs at the Toyota Mobility Foundation. “Our hope is that the learnings from this pilot can help enhance the quality of life and work for the people of Evansville and might serve as an example for other cities to emulate in the future.”

Additional key contributions came from partner ESN, who purchased two Toyota Sienna minivans for the pilot using IEDC grant funds. ESN partnered with BraunAbility and Model1 to customize them to be wheelchair accessible. ESN acquired the vehicles through another local business, Evansville-based Toyota dealer Kenny Kent.

Via's TransitTech is used by more than 650 communities globally; this includes a similar and successful on-demand transit program in Lafayette, IN in partnership with CityBus. For more information on how to ride with METS Micro, please visit: [city.ridewithvia.com/metsmicro](http://city.ridewithvia.com/metsmicro)

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### **About METS**

METS is the public transportation system of the City of Evansville. METS was established in 1971 and offers both fixed routes and paratransit services. METS operates 16 fixed routes with an annual ridership of approximately 1,000,000.

### **About Via**

Founded in 2012, Via pioneered the TransitTech category by using new technologies to develop public mobility systems — optimizing networks of buses, shuttles, wheelchair accessible vehicles, school buses, autonomous vehicles, and electric vehicles around the globe. Building the world's most efficient, equitable, and sustainable transportation network for all passengers — including those with limited mobility, those without smartphones, and unbanked populations — Via works with its partners to lower the costs of public transit while providing transportation options that rival the convenience of a personal car while reducing environmental impact. At the intersection of transportation and technology, Via is a visionary market leader that combines software innovation with sophisticated service design and operational expertise to fundamentally improve the way the world moves, providing technology in 600 communities and more than 35 countries and counting.

### **About Evansville MPO**

Established in 1969, the Evansville MPO is the federally designated agency responsible for leading the regional transportation planning process within the Evansville-Henderson urbanized area. The Evansville MPO creates and implements short- and long-range plans to advance the region's goals in transportation and is responsible for distributing certain federal transportation funds for roads, transit, trails, and other means of transportation to support regional goals.

### **About Toyota Mobility Foundation**

The Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF) was established in August 2014 by the Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) to support the development of a more mobile society in which everyone can move freely. The Foundation underscores TMC's on-going commitment to continuous improvement and respect for people. It utilizes Toyota's expertise and technologies to support strong mobility systems while eliminating disparities in mobility. TMF works in partnership with universities, governments, non-profits, research institutions and other organizations, creating programs aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address mobility issues around the world.

**About Energy Systems Network:**

Energy Systems Network (ESN) is an Indiana-based non-profit industry-driven economic organization focused on developing the energy technology “clean-tech” and alternative transportation sectors. ESN provides project development and coordination for joint ventures and cooperative partnerships between network members to bring new energy technologies to market. ESN partners include a wide range of Fortune 500 firms, emerging technology companies, and research and educational institutions with expertise in advanced technology vehicles, distributed power generation, advanced biofuels, renewable energy, and energy efficiency.