



MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

A New Role for Public Transportation



A Message from Bill Millar

Several years ago a series of studies were undertaken through the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) to identify what services future consumers of local transportation would want. TCRP's New Paradigms project, as it became known, laid out a new vision for transit operators. It identified a need for agencies to move into a broader transportation planning role in their communities—to serve as a single source for coordinating a full range of mobility options and informing customers accordingly. As I speak with and listen to transit and community leaders around the country, I find many transit agencies embracing this concept of mobility management.

Mobility management involves creating partnerships with transportation providers in a community or region to enhance travel options, and then developing means to effectively communicate those options to the public. With this approach, resources can be coordinated efficiently, customers are able to make better decisions, and the focus is on enhancing customer service. Among its benefits, mobility management:

- Complements the traditional model of moving large numbers of people with one that meets the unique set of needs of each community
- Replaces the business strategy of exclusively managing owned assets with a strategy that encompasses customer-driven partnerships and alliances among multiple transportation providers with the goal of saving costs overall
- Relies on expanded partnerships and alliances with both public and private organizations, and for-profit, not-for-profit and community service providers
- Emphasizes, above all, multimodal rather than single-mode solutions

From a business perspective, mobility management offers greater efficiency in the use of transportation resources, with potential cost savings and increased service effectiveness—a combination that can be used to reduce bottom line operating costs, or increase services, or both.

William W. Millar
President
American Public Transportation Association

Making the business case for mobility management

Denver, Colorado: RTD provides services “Closer to the Customer”

With a service area of more than 2.5 million people located in 2,327 square miles, Denver’s Regional Transportation District (RTD) has created mobility management services that are “closer to the customer” and more cost-effective than typical services. Enthusiastically embraced by the public, two of these programs—the vanpool program and the access-a-Taxi program that provides an alternative to some ADA paratransit services—are saving RTD over \$2 million per year while providing access to increased numbers of people. RTD’s other mobility management programs include call-n-Ride, bike-n-Ride and guaranteed ride home. Programs under development include additional taxi services, car sharing, feeder bus services to light rail, and transit-oriented land use developments.

Detroit, Michigan: SMART’s Community Partnership Program fits needs at local level

A model for other transit systems looking to make big changes, Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation’s (SMART) Community Partnership Program partners with 73 local communities who operate over 246 small buses. SMART redesigned its services to capitalize on the determination of its riders and partners to develop transit programs that fit the needs of residents and businesses at the local level while saving money wherever possible. These include providing links to job growth areas and creating links to every city, township and village in their district. For its part, SMART offers its partners community forums, coordinated dispatching, preventative maintenance, joint capital purchases, and travel training. Without the Community Partnership Program, services operated by SMART would cost an additional \$2.7 million.

Portland, Oregon: Ride Connection helps TriMet trim its ADA Paratransit cost

Ride Connection, a non-profit community organization operating in close collaboration with TriMet, has helped the agency trim its ADA paratransit costs by nearly \$2 million. Ride Connection provides administrative functions and volunteers as well as paid drivers, but actual trips are delivered by their collaborative partners, community agencies that provide rides for persons with disabilities and seniors without alternative transportation. These agencies provide high-quality, personal services tailored to each individual community. Another important feature: Ride Connection’s non-profit status allows them to obtain funding from foundations, corporations and individuals not available to public agencies.





MOBILITY MANAGEMENT is a strategic approach to service coordination and customer service that is becoming a worldwide trend in the public transportation sector. The expectation is that, over time, transit agencies should move beyond the traditional role as operators of fixed-route service and assume a broader role in coordinating the full range of mobility services in their communities. Following are questions and answers about the opportunities and potential advantages for transit agencies in considering development and implementation of mobility management programs.

Q *Will more innovative and efficient uses of transit resources assist agencies to move beyond establishing and operating traditional fixed-route transit systems?*

A Yes—but not just transit agencies. The role of the mobility manager will be to organize and foster a network of diverse transportation services and providers to offer a full range of travel options for individual customers. This may seem foreign to the transit manager who is accustomed to moving masses on single mode fixed routes. It will take a shift in consciousness—an entrepreneurial spirit—to champion a planned and deliberate synergy of transit services with land use, infrastructure and population. Managers will have to be trained to be advocates for flexible and creative transportation solutions based on need.

Beyond that, we have to educate the public on the need for increased mobility and how transit agencies can provide that mobility. We will work with the private sector, human service providers and non-traditional mobility providers to change institutional environments. And finally, we will need to implement transportation and land use policies that will encourage and fund all forms of mobility services.

Q *What are the components of a good mobility management program?*

A Since the mobility management model is one of customized delivery of transportation service, no two programs are alike. Each program will be designed specifically for each unique community, with innovation as the driving force. That being said, some common elements will include:

- multiagency partnerships that can reduce costs through efficient and effective coordination; potential partners might include social service agencies, senior programs, non-emergency medical providers and taxi companies
- a customer-driven, market-based approach to transportation delivery that offers a variety of individualized travel options
- greater use of information technology systems in real time
- the development and implementation of one-stop travel information and trip planning systems
- traffic management strategies and coordination of public transportation with infrastructure development and land use policies

Q *Why would transit agencies that operate large buses and railcars want to be mobility managers?*

A Transit agencies need to maintain and expand their role in communities as the “go-to” source for transportation. Their job is not to move rolling stock, but to move people effectively, efficiently and inexpensively. It makes good business and financial sense to provide better service for less money. The business world is replete with many examples of companies suffering mightily when they were late to recognize a paradigm shift. Kodak and Polaroid are just two recent examples. That’s the kind of challenge that faces us.

Q *What are some of the non-traditional transit services that might be involved in a mobility management program?*

A There are many non-traditional forms of transportation services that can be, and are, included in mobility management programs, including carpooling/vanpooling, volunteer drivers, hourly rental cars, travel training, travel vouchers for riders, and real-time demand response services that include taxis and other providers.

Q *How widespread is this coordinated approach in other industries? Within the transit industry, what are some examples of successful, viable mobility management programs?*

A An example of the concept in use is the business practice of UPS, FedEx and the US Postal Service. These companies all compete with each other, but they also share delivery resources, making the customer the primary focus. Mobility management practices among transit and transportation providers would be similar. Some good examples of mobility management practices in the U. S. include Denver, Colorado, Portland, Oregon, and South-eastern Michigan, further described in the “Business Case for Mobility Management” section.

Q *How are customers better served as a result?*

A Customers can go to a single source to learn about their travel options and understand which work best for them. Through mobility management, customers will have a wider range of travel modes and trip prices. The overall result will be

greater mobility for travelers, which in turn will stimulate increased economic activity and social interaction.

Q *How can transit systems save money and operate more efficiently as a result?*

A For transit agencies with mobility management programs, efficiencies of coordinated services result in operating budget savings. RTD in Denver reports that it saved nearly \$700,000 in its vanpool programs and \$1.5 million in taxi user-side subsidies; SMART in Southeastern Michigan saved \$2.7 million in its community programs; and Portland's TriMet reports saving nearly \$2 million through the efficiencies of coordinated service. Plus, improved customer service means additional riders and more satisfied customers.

Q *How can transit systems use new technologies to facilitate the implementation of mobility management programs?*

A Fortunately, information technology systems have advanced to the point where communities are now able to plan and match requests with real-time, state-of-the-art call center systems to facilitate mobility management.

Q *What are the institutional barriers to implementing mobility management? How can they be overcome?*

A The biggest institutional barrier is the status quo attitude, "I've always done it this way and it works, so why change?" Those of us who see the need for change must encourage others to embrace change if we are going to evolve—to provide better service more efficiently.

Q *Are there any resources and/or programs that currently support mobility management efforts?*

A Mobility management activities are now an eligible expense in FTA formula grant programs. These activities include planning, management and improved coordination of resources, as well as staffing mobility manager positions.

Q *Where can we learn more about mobility management and implementing a mobility management plan?*

A APTA has developed presentations that address mobility management issues at APTA conferences. Other resources include:

United We Ride

www.unitedweride.gov

National Transit Institute

www.ntionline.com

Project Action

www.projectaction.org

National Center on Senior Transportation

seniortransportation.easterseals.com

Community Transportation Association of America and the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination

www.ctaa.org

Agencies need to move into a broader transportation planning role in their communities, to coordinate a full range of mobility options and inform customers accordingly.

“It’s important that the transit industry look beyond the fixed route, and work to improve the operation of other transportation resources. A more recently recognized benefit is the reduction of carbon emissions through coordinated scheduling to reduce vehicle miles traveled.”

Park Woodworth
Paratransit/Rideshare Operations Manager
King County Metro Transit Division

“Louisville, like many communities, has become increasingly aware of the need for more mobility options and more efficient use of existing resources. The challenge is to meld local needs with state and federal requirements while working with community partners to utilize resources more effectively.”

J. Barry Barker
Executive Director
Transit Authority of River City (TARC)

“Mobility management is about focusing on the customer and on moving people, not just on running buses or trains. When an agency focuses on the most cost-effective ways to move people, it can look beyond the traditional models of transit service delivery and realize real cost savings by enhancing mobility in non-traditional ways.”

Bruce Abel
Assistant General Manager
Customer & Contracted Services
Regional Transportation District (Denver)

“Mobility management is about making the connection between land use and transportation since the built environment—our housing patterns and roads, the locations of businesses and services—is the single most important factor in how much we drive. Making that connection means that transit will be more successful—people will make fewer and shorter auto trips, improve the quality of their lives, and ultimately, benefit the environment.”

Fred Hansen
General Manager
TriMet (Portland, OR, Metro Region)

“Offering an inclusive one-stop shop for transportation, mobility management embraces everyone and every mode of service. Through partnerships with multiple transportation providers and stakeholders and using new and emerging technology such as intelligent transportation systems (ITS), mobility management provides community members with more information and greater choices to enhance their decision-making process.”

Mary Jo Morandini
General Manager
Beaver County Transit Authority
(Rochester, PA)



Mobility management offers greater efficiency in the use of transportation resources with substantial cost savings and increased service effectiveness.



This brochure is designed to provide an introduction to the concept of mobility management. For more information, visit www.apta.com or call Kylah Hynes at 202.496.4800.

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