APTA/Industry Leaders Address COVID-19 Challenges, Need for More Funding

DURING A PRESS CALL
May 12, APTA and public transportation industry leaders underscored the crucial need for an additional $23.8 billion in emergency funding to offset the staggering direct costs and revenue losses the industry is suffering in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This new funding would allow public transit agencies to continue to provide essential services and support the economic recovery of communities across the country. A recent, independent analysis conducted by EBP, US Inc., determined a $23.8 billion shortfall through the end of 2021, in addition to the $25 billion provided in the CARES Act.

Also, on May 12, Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY), chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, introduced H.R. 6800, the HEROES Act, a fourth package of coronavirus response emergency funding. The bill includes $15.75 billion in emergency funding for public transportation. APTA expressed appreciation for the introduction of the bill but said that the amount falls short of that needed. View APTA’s May 7 letter to congressional leaders at https://bit.ly/2YZIKBb.

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APTA members on the call expressed concerns over the enormous financial losses they are seeing due to significant drops in ridership and costs related to sanitization of vehicles and facilities. They stressed the need to keep employees and riders safe while learning to be resilient as they adapt to a new normal that will dramatically reshape the industry.

APTA Chair Nuria I. Fernandez, general manager and CEO of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), San Jose, CA, said her agency serves a population of approximately 2 million people in the heart of Silicon Valley. Before the pandemic, VTA provided more than 115,000 trips on light rail and buses every weekday. But, she said, ridership is down 80 percent since mid-March, when the shelter in place order was given for her county.

Fernandez said. “As an industry, we are preparing for a safer, brighter and more-dynamic future. Recovery will be a dynamic process. But I am confident that if our industry has the resources it needs, we will recover and become even more essential to America’s mobility network,” Fernandez said.

“It is imperative that agencies receive federal support so that they can survive and help our nation recover from the economic fallout of the pandemic,” said APTA President and CEO Paul P. Skoutelas. “Without significant additional emergency funding, we will not be able to serve our essential riders, as well as help our communities recover both economically and socially.”

Jeffrey A. Nelson, APTA vice chair and general manager of the Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLink), said, “It’s difficult to predict how or when our communities will recover from this particular crisis. With no clear end point in sight, we have to prepare for what the ‘new normal’ may be. Transit is a resilient industry, and I am confident we can take on that challenge. This pandemic has changed how people perceive their world, and we will adapt and find new ways to provide a critical public transit service to our community.”

Nelson said ridership at his agency is not as dramatically reduced as his colleagues, attributing the still-significant 40 percent decrease to the fact that

LEADERSHIP PRESS CALL
CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Exploring the Changing Face Of Public Transit

FOLLOWING THE CANCELLATION OF APTA’S 2020 MOBILITY Conference and Bus Roadeo due to the coronavirus pandemic, Passenger Transport invited a cross section of public transit professionals to discuss some of the priorities and opportunities facing bus and paratransit systems and the changing environment in which they operate. Beginning on page 5, explore how autonomous vehicles, mobility hubs, multimodal trip planning and more continue to impact public transit and the ways in which it serves a critical function in communities across the country.

In Memoriam

Paul Jablonski

PAUL JABLONSKI, CEO of the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), died suddenly on May 10. He was 67.

Jablonski’s career spanned more than 40 years in transit-related positions, including 16 years at the MTS. Deputy CEO Sharon Cooney will serve as the agency’s interim CEO.

Jablonski began his career in public transportation as a bus operator in Amherst, MA. He held management roles at the Merrimack Valley Regional Transportation Authority, the Saudi Arabian Public Transport Co., and the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority.

He served on APTA’s Executive Committee and Board of Directors, was vice chair of the Public Transportation CEO Coordinating Council, and numerous committees includ- ing Finance, Legislative Steering, Mobility Management, Research and Technology, and Rail Transit.

MTS was named by APTA as Most Outstanding Transit Agency of the year in 2008 and Jablonski was recognized by APTA as Outstanding Transportation Manager of the Year in 2014.

Jablonski was chair of the Transit Cooperative Research Program’s Oversight and Project Selection Commission and a member of the California Transit Association’s Executive Committee.

APTA Chair Nuria I. Fernandez, general manager and CEO, Santa Clara

IN MEMORIAM: PAUL JABLONSKI
CONTINUED ON PAGE 4
COMMENTARY

BY PAUL J. BALLARD
Chief Executive Officer and General Manager
Regional Transportation District
Denver, CO

Working Together to Plan for A New Normal

Where were each of you a year ago? Here in Denver, my colleagues at the Regional Transportation District (RTD) were celebrating the first few weeks of service on a new commuter rail line to the western suburbs, extending existing light rail lines farther south and embarking on a world-first mobile ticketing collaboration with Uber and Masabi. The pace was frenetic, we said then, and our capable team aby kept up with the challenges.

T hose days now feel long behind us, with the pandemic having broken the world open to reveal challenges and considerations that would have been hard to contemplate just weeks ago. When wholly affecting events like these happen, our industry does what it has always done well: It shares ideas, insights and approaches. We all want to understand what we’re seeing, how we’re responding and how we’re serving those who continue to patronize our service. I’m sure you have seen the same information I have, emerging from cities and academic institutions all over the world that are doing their best to synthesize information that can change by the day. COVID-19 has laid bare the reality that many questions cannot yet be answered, and much uncertainty remains.

We might not yet know the right metrics to consult— or they may not exist.

These are heavy thoughts to consider, against the already weighty questions of how public transit will use us back, how our systems can be kept at the forefront of policy conversations, and how we can serve a public that remains apprehensive about hopping onto our vehicles (according to the latest national polls). Indeed, crowded buses and rail cars may be an experience of the past, with our financial and operational realities reflecting an indefinite need to space people farther apart on our systems.

Running a public transit system right now in many ways feels like walking around in the dark with a headlamp on, with our gaze fixed just a bit in front of us. We use the data we have to make the best decisions for service delivery today and in the weeks ahead. Thousands of people continue to board our vehicles to make connections, including healthcare employees, first responders and others whose work is essential to pandemic response.

And yet, the dark also provides opportunity for reflection. At RTD, this includes rethinking the way we deliver transit, acknowledging that our systems as we have known them may be different going forward, and that we need to think about new, innovative ways to bring people aboard. I am not saying that we dispense with the old standards, but I also believe we can create new standards. We do this by working with all who we serve—first and foremost, our riders. This worldwide public health emergency that no one asked for allows transit professionals to think about all our riders. This worldwide public health emergency that no one asked for allows transit professionals to think about all our riders. This worldwide public health emergency that no one asked for allows transit professionals to think about all our riders. This worldwide public health emergency that no one asked for allows transit professionals to think about all our riders.

One fundamental question that COVID-19 has accelerated is at the heart of our agency’s Reimagine RTD initiative, a two-year effort to evaluate and forecast the changing transportation needs of the region and involve the public in the conversation. That question is: What services is RTD uniquely qualified to provide, now and in the future, and which are better suited for others to deliver? In the coming months, we will be better equipped to respond as we see where people return to our system, where more walking and bike riding is occurring and how many businesses introduce shifts to telecommuting. The pandemic has changed the tone and context of the project since it began last fall, but our agency will continue to learn from the data being gathered here in our region and from peer agencies across the country. And while the outreach methods we employ may change to maintain social distancing, that work will remain strong.

One advantage to having Reimagine RTD under way right now is that we remain cognizant of many of the issues our stakeholders bring up, including climate change, air quality and congestion. We continue to consider what our agency’s role is in addressing these topics. We are seeing, as the rest of the world is, what changes are resulting from more people staying home, at least for now. These cause-and-effect correlations can be invaluable for our planning.

Other fundamental questions worth asking include: Are all divisions of our organizations working together as best we can? With this pandemic affecting every aspect of our work, the approaches we may have taken prior to COVID-19 may no longer fit. Further, are we demonstrating with our words and actions whom we value? Right now, we cannot communicate enough with all the constituent groups we serve.

With this pandemic affecting every aspect of our work, the approaches we may have taken prior to COVID-19 may no longer fit. Further, are we demonstrating with our words and actions whom we value? Right now, we cannot communicate enough with all the constituent groups we serve.
Public Transit Agencies Provide Staff Health And Wellness Resources

As public transit employees tirelessly serve on the frontlines to keep the country running during the COVID-19 pandemic, agencies are taking steps to ensure both the physical and the mental health and wellbeing of their employees.

Taking Care of the Mind
The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in Washington, DC, has created a video blog (vlog) series called Metro Voices. The vlog recently featured a special edition on health and wellness (https://bit.ly/2Lm1HGj), which is the third episode in the series. The series has been well received, with each episode attracting several hundred to several thousand viewers.

Hosted by Barbara Moulton, WMATA senior director of customer care, the special health and wellness episode discussed resources available to WMATA staff, how to access them, and practical tips to stay healthy—both mentally and physically. “While WMATA has produced podcasts to keep employees informed about important matters for more than a year, the pandemic increased the need to deliver information to our workforce in real time, featuring leaders who are making decisions to protect them from virus exposure, as well as service changes during these challenging times,” said Linda Bowersox, WMATA assistant general manager, customer service and communications.

The Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA), TX, has also implemented a number of initiatives to keep employees and the public informed and to keep spirits high. One initiative is the creation of a new community education webpage (www.dcta.net/community-involve/community-education) of online resources for parents and children to use while at home. The webpage includes transit-related informational activities, videos and links to support at home or group educational needs.

“During this unprecedented time, we took a comprehensive look at our current marketing, communications and outreach strategy,” said Adrienne Hamilton, DCTA senior marketing and communications manager. “We made an essential and creative pivot to provide our passengers and community at large with resources that reinforce positivity during COVID-19 and beyond.”

DCTA’s blog, Hop on Board, now includes a new blog series called Five Good Things This Week (https://hoponboardblog.com/?s=five+good+things+this+week). To give its customers a break from COVID-19 news, the series provides a list of good things happening in DCTA’s local community and across the country. The agency has also produced staff appreciation materials to highlight positive rider feedback given to DCTA employees, which is shared with staff weekly.

The Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority (The COMET) in Columbia, SC, has kept lines of communication open with staff about safety precautions and how to stay healthy during the pandemic through virtual meetings and posters.

During normal operations, The COMET would hold monthly staff outings where they would meet and enjoy a team-building activity. In lieu of in-person team building, the agency is in talks with Re-Source Solutions to build a customized, interactive webinar series for staff.

“Securing My Own Mask First: Self-Care in Challenging Times,” will focus on the complexities and dynamics of navigating the rapid changes and uncertainties associated with the pandemic. The session will teach staff strategies for maximizing accurate thinking, practicing emotional agility, managing what is consumed and staying connected in the midst of social distancing.

Taking Care of the Body
One important aspect of staff wellness is ensuring access to healthcare, and a number of systems are taking significant steps to make sure their staff have access to COVID-19 testing.

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has partnered with Northwell Health-GoHealth Urgent Care to provide prioritized COVID-19 testing to symptomatic frontline MTA employees at its urgent care facilities throughout the New York metro region, at no cost to employees. The partnership expands the range of options available to MTA employees, who are also able to go to their primary care physician or other medical provider at no cost.

“We remain relentlessly committed to doing everything we possibly can to keep our frontline workers safe,” said MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye. “We will continue working to identify any and all solutions we can deploy to help protect our employees. The region simply cannot function without the essential and heroic workers of this pandemic.”

Similarly, NJ Transit has entered an agreement with Agile Urgent Care and Accurate Diagnostics Lab to provide a place for employees to be tested at a site in East Rutherford, NJ. The agency is also working to expand access to similar testing sites in central and south Jersey. NJ Transit hopes that the ability to facilitate access to testing for employees will lead to quick identification of cases, quicker treatment for those testing positive and immediate isolation to prevent spread.

“There has been no higher priority at NJ Transit than the health and safety of our incredibly dedicated employees. Providing access to a dedicated COVID-19 testing site is just another layer of protection we’re adding to the many proactive measures we’ve taken since the onset of this pandemic,” said NJ Transit President and CEO Kevin Corbett. “Our employees have continued to operate on the frontlines of this crisis in order to keep essential personnel moving through the region, and we’re pleased to be able to facilitate access to testing that will ultimately lead to quicker treatment and slowing the spread of the virus.”

The COMET has partnered with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) to secure PPE for its operators and hand sanitizer for buses/passengers.

Also, one COMET employee is making custom face masks with the agency’s logo and colors. “When the pandemic started, I was unable to get any of the vendors due to them being already out of stock,” said parts clerk Sindi Williams. “So, I watched a YouTube video and practiced how to make masks. I made them for friends and family first, then was asked if I could make them for my COMET family. ‘Safety first’ is what I have been taught since I started here in 2008—safety for the employees and for their families and the passengers.”

Sindi Williams makes homemade masks for her fellow employees at The COMET.
Ben Franklin Transit and Via Launch On-Demand Service

**BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT (BFT)** has launched a new, on-demand service in Franklin County, WA, powered by Via. The service was originally intended as a first-/last-mile service but has been rapidly transformed to support residents and essential workers during the coronavirus pandemic.

“We have been planning for many months to introduce this exciting new on-demand option in our service area,” said BFT General Manager Gloria Boyce. “And though we initially delayed it due to the pandemic declaration, we have realized bringing it online now represents a value-added community service during this time of emergency and hardship for so many.”

Via technology directs passengers to a nearby corner for pickup for trips to or from designated transit connections within the same zone. Under normal operations, these connections will include major bus stops and public transit centers. During the pandemic, select essential service locations including pharmacies, grocery stores and health clinics will be included, with front door drop-off and pickup.

No fares will be collected for this service during the pandemic, in accordance with BFT’s ongoing safety measures. Once normal fare collection resumes, fares will be collected for the service through the Via app, cash or BFT tickets and passes.

APTA Survey Emphasizes Importance of Public Transit During Pandemic

**IN LATE APRIL, APTA SURVEYED** its public transit agency members on the impacts of COVID-19 and how they are adapting their operations to respond to the pandemic and beyond. One hundred and twenty-one agencies, representing 76 percent of national ridership, responded to the survey. A summary of the survey results is available at https://bit.ly/3IMSwS5.

Results show that public transportation continues to be an essential frontline service, particularly during the pandemic, providing a critical lifeline to communities nationwide. Even during these challenging times, the workforce continues to show up; the average absentee rate due to COVID-19 was only 18 percent across all responding agencies. Nationally, systems are running more than one-half of their services and, on busy routes, adding services to ensure social distancing. Seventeen percent of agencies are providing 75 percent of their previous service.

More than one-half of agencies have developed a restoration or recovery plan that includes new safety precautions for riders and the workforce. The overwhelming majority of agencies (83 percent) are using CARES Act funds to sustain their workforce and avoid layoffs. Agencies are increasing the cleaning of vehicles and facilities, the purchase of personal protective equipment, and are eliminating or not enforcing fare collection. Sixty percent of responding agencies reported offering fare-free service or had announced they would be fare-free soon; 28 percent report ceasing fare enforcement.

As public transit agencies adapt to the changes brought on by COVID-19, protecting their workforce and riders continues to be of the utmost importance. This crisis has demonstrated how public transportation is essential in keeping society moving and working, and the indispensable role it will play in the social and economic recovery of the nation.

APTA Award Nominations Extended to May 29

**THE APTA AWARDS DEADLINE HAS been extended to May 29. APTA understands the challenges its members are facing during these unprecedented times. We hope this extension provides the time necessary to complete your submission(s). The association truly appreciates all you are doing to keep essential workers and your communities moving.**

APTA Award winners are outstanding role models of excellence, leadership and innovation whose accomplishments have greatly advanced public transportation. Any individual employed by an APTA member in good standing can submit nominations.

**NEW THIS YEAR: The criteria for the APTA Awards program related to diversity, inclusion and equity have been strengthened. For the Outstanding System Award, the qualitative criteria for Women and Minority Advancement has been renamed Diversity, Inclusion and Equity. It showcases the mission, strategies, policies and practices used to attract and support a diverse workforce; promote an inclusion- and equity-focused culture internally; and in vendor, customer and community engagement. For Individual Awards (Business Member, Transit Manager (head of system), Transit Board Member and Hall of Fame) it demonstrates a sustained commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion through leadership practices and policies.**

For more information and to nominate, visit https://tinyurl.com/uc7wghc.

In Memoriam

**JIM CAPOZZI,** one of the leading experts in automated fare collection systems in the U.S., died May 9 in New York. He was 67.

Over the course of a career that spanned three decades, Capozzi installed, operated and maintained revenue collection systems throughout North America and established and built CAPTech, Inc. into one of the nation’s most respected technical services companies. For the past three years, he worked for WSP advising clients throughout the U.S.

Capozzi served as Chair of APTA’s Fare Collection Systems Committee from 2014 to 2018.

APTA President and CEO Paul P. Skoutelas said, “Jim was committed to the advancement of public transit systems nationwide. He was known as a calm and steady leader. He will be missed.”

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In Memoriam: Paul Jablonski

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

Valley Transportation Authority, San Jose, CA, said, “Paul was a principled professional and tenacious advocate for public transportation. I served on many industry committees with Paul and always appreciated his dedication and passion for the job. My condolences to his family, his MTS team and industry friends.”

APTA President and CEO Paul S. Skoutelas said, “Paul’s passing is a great loss for our industry. He was passionate about his work and was a tireless advocate for public transportation. He was also a dear friend. Paul leaves behind a tremendous legacy. We will miss him.”

Sharon Cooney said, “Paul is sorely missed by everyone at MTS, but his loss will also be felt throughout our region, the state and the country. He cared deeply about public transportation and worked 24/7 to make it better. He was a force in San Diego to elevate the operation and perception of public transportation. MTS has never been stronger thanks to Paul. He leaves us in a strong position to weather the current crisis. It is gratifying to know that so many leaders here and throughout the country recognize his incredible contributions.”


MTS has set up a webpage for people to share stories and memories of Jablonski, www.scdmts.com/paul-jablonski-memories.
Integrating Autonomous Vehicles with Public Transit, Now and in the Future

BY TONY PINO
Executive Vice President-Americas Bestmile

SHARED, ELECTRIC, autonomous vehicles, integrated with public transit, have the potential to transform cities with flexible last-mile solutions that move more people or goods with fewer vehicles and make access to mass transit simple, fast and easy. The goal is to make services so clean and convenient that people won’t need or want to use private autos.

In the state of Fribourg, Switzerland, the Marly Innovation Center (MIC) is a bustling 370,000 square meter (nearly 4 million square feet) campus with 150 companies that employ 500 commuters. The center’s 1.3 km (1 mile) journey from public transportation made it inconvenient for employees, which was a barrier to attracting new businesses. Fribourg’s public transport agency, TPF, in collaboration with the MIC and local and state agencies decided to use autonomous shuttles to connect the center to the Fribourg public transit network. As a result, TPF was able to connect the business park to public transit with less infrastructure and lower costs than a traditional bus line. Fleet orchestration technology was used to configure the service—defining the fleet size, stops, frequencies and schedule—and provides daily fleet supervision, monitoring and reporting.

The key to the success of this kind of integration at scale is the orchestration of autonomous fleets—the design of the service, the automation of dispatching, ride matching, routing, and the ability to rebalance fleet locations and assignments based on real-time and predicted demand. Being able to efficiently pool travelers and to define and meet service levels such as wait times and vehicle utilization are critical to meeting passenger and operator requirements.

Cities that are seeing traffic disappear due to COVID-19 lockdowns are starting to look at permanently closing some streets to traffic and redesigning them for walking and biking. It is possible that social distancing has so changed travelers’ behaviors and preferences that car-free living will be more attractive and accessible. This opens the door to robotaxi or shuttle services at low speeds within and around these areas to get people to and from public transit hubs.

It is also well known that simply replacing private vehicles with autonomous electric ones will do little to reduce congestion. In fact, it is likely to get worse under such a scenario, according to multiple studies, because driving will be cheaper than parking. Traffic could easily double with autonomous pods taking a passenger to work, returning home and hitting the road again to pick up the passenger.

Shared, autonomous and orchestrated fleets, integrated with public transit networks, can enhance the clean, quiet environment that cities want to preserve.

LEADERSHIP PRESS CALL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

many factories in his region have remained open and essential employees are using transit to get to work. Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) President Dorval R. Carter Jr., who serves as chair of APTA's Legislative Committee, noting that his system is the second largest in the nation behind New York, said that he has seen ridership drop from 1.5 million trips per day to approximately 300,000 since the pandemic hit. CTA has been losing $1 million a day in farebox revenues, alone, and will continue to see an increase in expenses. He estimated that cleaning and sanitizing efforts have cost $25 million, and that this was a conservative estimate.

From day one of the crisis, he said, “public transit was deemed an essential service, and CTA has worked extremely hard to provide service for essential workers—like the heroic doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, working each day—and for essential travel. We echo and support APTA’s call to congressional leaders to provide additional funding for public transit agencies across the country as we prepare a versatile, strategic framework to meet the demands of the ‘new normal.’”

Janno Lieber, president of MTA Construction & Development, said that MTA is “hemorrhaging money” with a financial impact of approximately $800 million per month. “Thanks to our heroic workforce, the MTA has continued to provide robust service to move our essential workers and make sure New York can survive the COVID crisis. Washington must recognize the huge financial impacts this has had and provide additional funding for transit agencies to replace revenue streams decimated by the current crisis. This is a national crisis that calls out for national response.”

Therese W. McMillan, executive director, Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments, said that her agency is looking to establish a task force to address the needs of the 26 Bay Area agencies who have experienced declines in ridership and revenue. “Public transportation must grasp the opportunity to emerge from this crisis stronger, more resilient and more creative to serve the mobility needs of our future communities,” she said.
BY CARINA FORTUNA
Senior Project Manager
CALSTART

A NEW WAVE OF INNOVATIVE transportation (e.g. micromobility and shared mobility) offers promise to complement existing public transit services with low-carbon alternatives to private car ownership to solve last-mile issues. Cities can help to accelerate the adoption of these innovative mobility solutions through the implementation of mobility hubs.

Mobility hubs are points in the transportation network where riders can access a variety of innovative mobility devices to complete their trips. These hubs reduce dependence on private vehicle ownership and limit single-occupancy-vehicle trips (SOV). There are a wide variety of available mobility options (e.g. scooter/bikesharing, car-sharing and microtransit), which allow cities to customize mobility hub offerings to best serve the community.

COVID-19
COVID-19 has made access to innovative mobility options even more critical for essential workers (e.g. NYC subway shutdown).

As commuters are returning to work, they are seeking safe options that minimize exposure to others. Bikeshare has seen an increase in ridership post-COVID.

1. Shanghai-based HelloBike saw the number of e-bike riders rise tenfold after shelter in place orders were lifted.
2. China’s Didi’s bikeshare rebounded back to approximately 80 percent of pre-virus, while public transit usage lagged.
3. In Paris, 650 kilometers of cycleways, including a number of pop-up “corona cycleways”, were set to be ready May 11 to coincide with lockdown easing.

Innovative mobility can be a powerful tool, enabling social distance during travel as well as a sustainable alternative to SOV trips.

More with Less
Locations at public transit stops are valuable connection points that can provide first/last mile solutions. Space to connect these networks requires minimal resources to launch and maintain, while maximizing convenience and accessibility.

A pilot, prioritizing cost efficiency and minimizing risk, may include a scooter and bike coral designated by street paint and signage. Advanced iterations may include charging infrastructure for cars and micromobility, high-capacity scooter/bike docks and integrating Mobility as a Service (MaaS).

Designing a Successful Mobility Hub

1. Assessment
Conduct a community needs assessment to contextualize quantitative data (i.e. public transit and ridership numbers). Identify anchor community-based organizations and partners to conduct focused outreach. Use this opportunity to learn where mobility can be enhanced, which modes are in demand and where first/last mile solutions are most needed.

Identify hub locations in a way that reflects policy priorities: for example, rededicating space in the public right-of-way from private car storage and reactivating underutilized land for the purpose of supporting shared-use mobility services.

2. Partnerships
Public-private partnerships are essential. Incorporating community feedback from the needs assessment, evaluate which modes will be supported and which providers are the best fit. Collaboratively discuss responsibility for operational considerations like space maintenance, data collection and fleet balancing.

3. Infrastructure
Charging infrastructure is critical to support electrically powered vehicles and devices.

Integrating digital architecture to tie all physical assets together in one app will further simplify the trip process. MaaS provides an enhanced user experience—the ability to access real-time trip planning information, including public transit schedules, to start and pay for the trip in one app.

4. Marketing
Education and awareness are imperative for ongoing success. A launch campaign led by the city will underscore its commitment to enhancing public transit and serve as an educational tool, highlighting why these options are preferable to private car ownership.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on companies worldwide, including those within the transportation industry. Organizations, including Complete Coach Works (CCW), must implement steps to minimize the pandemic’s impact on the health and safety of their employees and the workplace as a whole.

CCW's human resources department has been very proactive, encouraging all to incorporate more-frequent handwashing, as well as upgrading face masks to be worn at all times. It has also been recommended that employees practice social distancing by avoiding gathering in areas such as pantries, kitchens and copier rooms. Finally, cleaning supplies are provided for employees to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

CCW has existing procedures in place to address emergency scenarios, but as more is learned every day about COVID-19 from state and county officials, new procedures must be developed. Thus, frequently changing procedures has become a challenge. But CCW continues to adjust quickly and develop protocols necessary to ensure the safety of employees as they work to exceed clients’ expectations during the pandemic.

The pandemic has led CCW to create and implement new processes that ultimately improve workflow and the ability to service clients. CCW has seamlessly integrated alternative forms of communication that allow its teams to remain productive while unable to meet in person.

Increased reliance on video conferencing, chat and instant messaging at the center of this new approach. CCW remains cognizant of opportunities to further its organizational goals while navigating this new reality.

Mobility Hubs: The Next Wave for Public Transit
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CIOM | 45’ COACH
CIOMS | 45’ DOUBLE DECKER

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What is your committee’s role for APTA and the industry as a whole?
The Mobility Management Committee encourages collaboration and implementation of mobility options and programs within the public transportation industry as well as other organizations. Our role is to challenge the industry to view public transportation beyond more than bus service, for example, by refocusing the industry on mobility and identifying the successful attributes of partnerships that positively impact available mobility options.

Mobility is a personal and essential need. Our focus is on mobility outcomes versus the tools we use to transport people.

What are the committee’s top priorities for the year?
The committee’s priorities include creating educational opportunities for members, highlighting and documenting successful collaborations that result in improved mobility options, and providing input that positively impacts the regulatory framework that support mobility.

How does the committee engage members in these priorities?
We use a steering committee to assist in creating, assessing and measuring our workplan. It’s important that we are focusing on areas that are relevant to transportation systems, but more importantly are customer centric.

We hold committee meetings at conferences and via webinars. Additionally, we held our first joint workshop with the Access Committee at APTA’s Annual Meeting in New York last year. It was well-received, and we are planning to hold another.

APTA’s committees play an important role in fulfilling the association’s commitment to developing industry leaders, especially young professionals. Please share how your committee encourages young professionals to participate in its work.

Our committee is comprised of leaders from across the industry. Each member is encouraged to tap into the thoughts of rising leaders. We see young professionals as the future of the public transportation industry.

Please share how an individual’s service on this committee can add value to his or her career.
This is an outstanding committee. If you’re interested in looking around the corner of the industry’s future, then this is the one. Each of APTA’s committees, and the work they do, benefit the industry. However, with emerging consumer views on transportation, in light of increasing on-demand service access via mobile technologies, this committee provides the opportunity to reassess, rethink and potentially re-engineer how we do business.

What is the committee doing to advance the goals in APTA’s strategic plan?
The committee’s workplans are always aligned with APTA’s Strategic Plan. APTA will proactively support members in anticipating, shaping and harnessing change, and work with technology companies, practitioners and decision makers to enhance public transportation’s ability to connect and strengthen communities equitably and efficiently.

The Mobility Management Committee directly advances these goals by convening some of the best and brightest mobility thinkers throughout the industry and centering on the advancement of public transit.

The MaaS Moment: Five Steps to Making Mobility as a Service Work after COVID-19

BY BRIAN STEIN  
Vice President and Fare Collection Practice Leader  
Intueor Consulting

THOMAS DAY  
Senior Consultant  
Intueor Consulting

THE COVID-19 CRISIS HAS eliminated as much as 90 percent of American public transit ridership. Uber and Lyft aren’t faring much better. Both public transit and the Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) are in the business of transporting consumers who are far more concerned about germs than they were months ago. Coronavirus has left both in a moment of crisis.

As this crisis recedes, city governments and public transit agencies should step forward and figure out how to work with, and not against, TNCs. That would mean working with one another with a unified Mobility as a Service (MaaS) platform, providing commuters with an app that offers the ability to plan a multi-modal trip. For example, a trip could include an Uber ride from your home to the nearest train stop and the train ride to your office—and the ability to pay for it in one transaction.

Here’s how MaaS can become reality:
1. Rebuild customers’ trust and confidence. The first step in bringing back passengers and commuters is assuring them that public transit is safe. Transit agencies should be taking more aggressive measures to clean and disinfect stations and vehicles.

Even as ridership decreases across the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our nation’s essential workers rely on public transportation to safely get them to work and ensure mission critical services remain available. As public transit agencies around the globe implement new standards and practices for protecting bus operators and passengers, Luminator Technology Group (Luminator) is supporting this effort to help communicate changes in operation, both on- and off-board, in a way that is efficient and protective of transit employees.

While public transit systems are adapting to operational changes, such as safety protocols and route changes, Luminator is helping share messages with both on-board and off-board passengers. Luminator’s software and fleet-wide connectivity allows agencies to communicate this vital information in real-time, as well as bus and train station displays. By providing software and fleet-wide connectivity that enable remote updates, agencies can communicate this vital information without boarding a vehicle, traveling or being in contact with a stationary display, thus providing extra protection for agency employees.

To assist customers in updating alerts for stationary displays at stops and platforms and for on-board displays, Luminator is hosting educational webinars and posting online training resources. Luminator realizes that the tools needed to update messages may go unused on a regular basis and that utilizing new messages or updating a pre-existing library may require a quick refresh. Such communication tools are critical to maintaining public health and safety as public transit agencies continue to navigate this pandemic and develop new standards for operations in preparation for a return to business and commutes in the future.

The Luminator team would like to extend its thanks to public transit employees serving as essential workers during this challenging time and specifically to those operators that ensure transit service remains a critical link in connecting community members with their essential duties.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12
Uniquely positioned to deliver a full range of hardware and software, as well as integration and support services, Luminator provides tangible benefits to transportation operators and passengers:

- By delivering meaningful real-time information to transit agencies and riders – providing the intelligence needed to make informed decisions
- Enhancing safety with comprehensive security, lighting and accessibility options
- Ensuring on-going efficiency with solutions that are easy to maintain, update and operate

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Go to www.futureoftransit.com/davos for more about Luminator’s contribution to the World Economic Forum and technology that drives smart cities.
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Improving Mobility for Paratransit Riders with On-Demand Service

BY BONNIE EPSTEIN
Senior Planner
Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority

THE PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT Authority (PSTA), FL, provides paratransit services that transport Pinellas residents with disabilities to work, school, doctors’ appointments and other key destinations.

Before January 2019, users called to schedule trips by 5 p.m. the day before, limiting their ability to take last-minute shifts at work, seek medical care when not feeling well or take a spontaneous trip to the movies. PSTA’s paratransit services comprised nearly 10 percent of its operating budget but provided only 2 percent of its ridership.

To help address these issues, PSTA was awarded an FTA Mobility on Demand (MoD) Sandbox grant with the goal of demonstrating and measuring the effectiveness of an innovative approach to paratransit by using new mobility integration technologies that connect TNCs, wheelchair-accessible vehicle companies and taxi companies to provide on-demand services to qualified riders.

PSTA’s Mobility on Demand (MoD) Program, launched in January 2019, allows PSTA’s paratransit riders to call the same day to get a ride on demand. Participants call PSTA and have a ride sent to them by one of the partners, including Lyft and local ride providers. The rides are dispatched through Goin, an integrated technology platform that matches the closest vehicle to the rider based on their mobility needs. Since the program’s launch, it has grown to include more than 500 paratransit riders, with total program trips growing significantly each month.

The primary goals of the program are to improve the mobility of paratransit customers and their overall access to the community, and to demonstrate that cost-effective, on-demand trips can be provided efficiently. As the demonstration period for this program wraps up and transitions into a permanent PSTA service, some changes will be made to the service to make it sustainable with PSTA funding. This is based on analysis of the latent demand offered by increased service for paratransit users, diversity of trip types and customer satisfaction.

Currently, any eligible PSTA paratransit rider can join the MoD program. After riders are set up, they can call PSTA between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday to take rides at $4.50 per trip (the same cost as rides on regular ADA paratransit). As trip volumes have increased, PSTA has added staff and technology resources to the program. In January and February 2020, the program had just under 4,000 trips per month, with more than 400 individual riders and average cost per trip just above $14.

PSTA is working on a new eligibility process that will require all ADA paratransit applicants to attend an in-person consultation to determine the options to meet their needs, ultimately on a trip-by-trip basis. The coronavirus pandemic has significantly decreased ridership on both the MoD and regular ADA paratransit programs, and has also led to the delay of the new eligibility process, but PSTA has taken steps to educate more paratransit riders about the program through informational phone calls, taking advantage of lower call volume to sign up additional riders for the program.

COVID-19 has had an extraordinary impact on virtually every market, most certainly in the public transit industry. It has fundamentally changed the way we all do business and even communicate, making these uncertain times even more uncertain. For that reason, Thermo King wants you to know our dealer organization continues to remain open to provide service, warranty, and parts needs to support local transits.

Thermo King’s corporate sales, service and engineering staffs are available to support public transit agencies and bus OEMs as all work through the many operational challenges brought on by COVID-19.

Being a supporting member of the public transit community, Thermo King would like to extend our appreciation and admiration to all transit agencies that are on the front line of the pandemic. We are here to support you in any way we can.
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MAKING MaaS WORK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

vehicles. Airlines regularly “fog” vehicles with disinfectant spray; transit agencies should consider doing the same to buses and train vehicles in response to the outbreak. Transit agencies should also build an infrastructure to support cleanliness, including on-site hand sanitizers, and publicly communicate their efforts.

2. Aggressively learn from customers. Understand how the transportation market has changed. Transit agencies should be in close communication with riders to understand how preferences might have changed during and after the crisis. Looking beyond the next six months leads to a discussion of transit’s fundamental business model, supporting cooperation between stakeholders and producing a MaaS product to unify modes of transportation.

3. Reach out to peer cities to collaborate in providing MaaS service. If Uber and Lyft can create MaaS capabilities that can be seamlessly used across cities, they will be able to dictate the terms of the local transportation market to an uncomfortable degree. Cities must first be united at the bargaining table to support a mutually beneficial MaaS market. If transit agencies can identify what they require from TNCs and what they will be willing to share, they would block Uber and Lyft from playing Dallas against Houston, New York against Philadelphia, and so forth.

4. Establish city governments as referees between transportation market participants. One idea that warrants consideration is to create public mobility commissions to provide critical oversight for private transit operators and ride-hailing companies. These commissions would be charged with protecting market competition and preventing pricing excesses and exploitation of consumers, while maintaining respect for individual choice and preferences.

5. Lead. The new transportation market will come only after public transit agencies and TNCs fit incentives together like a jigsaw puzzle. There is little doubt that public transit is at an inflection point. So too are Uber and Lyft. This moment, right now, calls for leadership from city governments and transit agencies to define how residents will get from “A to anywhere” after the COVID-19 crisis ends.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

From Multimodal Trip Planning to Account-Based Ticketing

Creating a Seamless Journey for Tomorrow’s Passengers

BY FRANK KOPAS
Vice President of Worldwide Sales
MOOVIT

THE MOBILE REVOLUTION IS STILL ongoing, and as people increasingly “tap to pay” throughout their daily lives, they want the ability to do so everywhere—including paying for public transit. Combining account-based ticketing (ABT) with advanced multimodal trip planning capabilities is one of the best ways to meet the growing expectations of citizens.

ABT is just one part of a bigger mobility ecosystem. Integrating ticketing and payment solutions into a multimodal trip planner app enables users to plan their journey, click to pay and start their trip. This combination creates a truly seamless travel experience, helping bridge first/last-mile gaps and offering easier access to alternative modes of transportation.

Riders pay for their complete trip with a single click, without needing to worry about buying tickets, topping up travel cards or paying for individual tickets at the counter or kiosk. When combined with a trip planner app, users can also plan trips and pay and ride public transportation the same way they do for ride-hailing services.

Moovit’s urban mobility app has been integrated with fare payment systems all over the world, enabling cities and public transit agencies to reduce costs and increase operational efficiency while offering commuters the seamless customer experience that increases revenue, ridership and loyalty.

ABT also enables public transit agencies and operators to cut costs related to cash processing and smartcard system operation, reduce the time that buses wait at bus stops to collect fares.

ACCOUNT-BASED TICKETING CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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Tech Strategies Key to Public Transit Industry Transformation

BY EDWARD BALDZICKI
Principal, Public Transportation Industry
DXC Technology

LAST FALL, WHILE ATTENDING APTA’s Annual Meeting—and then earlier this year at APTA’s Business Member Board of Governors Meeting—I had the opportunity to interact with some of our leading GMs, CEOs and CIOs to discuss how they were managing everything from public opinion and funding to politics and the execution of key projects. I was amazed at how they must balance a wide range of complex and critical issues affecting public transit—and how they pointed to technology as the primary means to a solution for these issues.

Just a few months later, the world is a very different place, with new challenges. Nevertheless, technology will remain central to all new transportation projects. In fact, my industry interactions indicate key technology strategies that have emerged as vital enablers of business agility:

CIOs tell us that riders are increasingly looking for a single app they can use on a mobile phone to plan and pay for all modes of transportation. Many people make separate transactions for an Uber or Lyft ride to a train station and then a train ride into the city and a final subway or bus ride to get to their destination. In many cities, micro-mobility solutions abound in the form of scooters and bikes to address first/last mile.

Integration is happening, and public transit agencies must now view themselves as part of the traveler or smart city ecosystem, not just a bus or subway ride.

Public transit leaders understand that leveraging the cloud helps address the need to integrate their organization with other modes of transportation. By using open application program interfaces, transit travelers can more easily plan complete trips that may only use public transportation for part of their trip. The integration also supports providing more accurate real-time vehicle information on the agency’s website, smartphone or signage.

Additionally, an open architecture can support integration with local businesses—offering coupons, for example, to encourage and reward travelers’ use of public transportation. This trend will expand to be a part of smart city initiatives and eco-friendly decisions.

The cloud offers a more efficient option for making frequent upgrades and keeping up to date with the latest features and solutions from partners and IT service providers. Plus, cloud-based solutions are an appealing alternative to the high cost of maintaining current server systems.

IT security is also at the forefront of nearly every conversation as public transit authorities work to upgrade and integrate their systems to meet customers’ demands. Data breaches, cyber-attacks and ransomware have hit agencies from coast to coast in recent years. As agencies develop new projects and deploy electronic payment and fare collection systems, both security and data privacy must be built in from the start.

As our more populated regions grow increasingly crowded, bringing public transit into the 21st century has become more important than ever. Transit CIOs understand their organizations are a component and contributor to a larger ecosystem. They must remain informed and savvy about how this develops while investing in technology to address consumer expectations and improve operations.

LTK Engineering Services understands that COVID-19 poses unique challenges for public transit authorities across the country who must run service for essential personnel to get to and from their jobs while protecting them and agency workers from the virus.

Agencies and operators need new cleaning, disinfecting and anti-microbial application processes and procedures. They might also need new cleaning contractors who are certified to handle the different chemicals required. It means a review of the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) of each product for its effect on the materials in the vehicle or station (some are very caustic) and comparison with the EPA’s list of disinfectants approved for use against the SARS-CoV-2 virus. A full, testable process includes 5 steps:

1. Swab areas for a baseline test,
2. Clean as thoroughly as possible,
3. Disinfect with chemical fog,
4. Apply an anti-microbial solution to all surfaces,
5. Swab and test again.

LTK has created a sample Scope of Work document that agencies can use to hire outside contractors to do this work. It can be adapted for maintenance/cleaning procedures for in-house staff.

We also can automate tracking and reporting of asset cleaning using our Assurall™ software. Assurall provides an intuitive tablet application that digitizes the inspection forms and processes using mobile technology. Users can see the inspection progress as it happens because of the companion back-office application that communicates wirelessly with the tablets. Assurall can be customized for the inspection of a wide variety of a public transit agency’s assets.

UV lights are another disinfecting technology LTK has explored, and on which we can provide advice.

For more information, contact LTK at: covid19help@ltk.com.

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PUBLIC TRANSIT AGENCIES across the U.S. are purchasing battery electric buses to reduce emissions and create a better experience for their passengers. When introducing electric buses, there are many challenges to consider, including infrastructure improvements, charging management and complex operations. However, many agencies do not fully appreciate the need to develop thorough contingency plans for when the power goes out.

Resiliency is becoming increasingly important due to climate change events such as hurricanes and wildfires, as well as natural disasters including earthquakes. Electric buses may be more vulnerable to disruptions to operations due to these types of events because buses charged overnight may take several hours to charge, while a diesel or CNG bus can be refueled in less than 20 minutes. Furthermore, it may be easier to gain access to other sources of diesel or CNG than it is to find a charger for an electric bus if the power is down at a bus facility.

In order to determine best practices, 18 transit agencies of different sizes, in all parts of the country, rural and urban, in different stages of electric bus adoption were interviewed (see Table 1). The first major takeaway from these interviews was that the reliability of the electrical grid varies dramatically by region. Although most of the agencies had very few power outages, several in California expressed more concerns about the reliability of their electricity grid. Along with current risk, it is important for agencies to understand future risk as well. As more of the transportation sector transitions to electric vehicles (increasing loads on the grid) and as electricity generation shifts to renewable sources, there may be more challenges with reliability.

Approximately 25 percent of agencies interviewed indicated that they relied on a diversified fleet to cover for electric buses in case of a power outage. However, this solution only works for smaller fleets of electric buses. Another potential solution implemented by several agencies is the use of a diesel or natural gas generator as a backup power source for the chargers. In addition, about a third of the agencies have established multiple connections to the grid to provide redundancy in case a portion of the grid is down. Another solution being implemented is energy storage systems. Some agencies interviewed are in the process ofprocuring battery storage, solar arrays and/or fast chargers to create a type of microgrid system. One agency received funds from the FTA Low or No Emissions Grant Program to purchase battery storage that draws energy from solar power and the grid. Their fleet of electric buses will then draw energy from this system through fast chargers.

Public transit agencies need to develop resilience strategies that are unique for battery electric buses. Although power outages may be rare and the risk of operational impacts due to power outages may be low for many transit agencies, it is important for each agency to evaluate their current and future risk. By reaching out to public transit agency peers, systems can work together to discover solutions to challenges presented by this new vehicle technology and increase adoption of zero-emission vehicles across the industry.

This research was conducted as part of a team project for the APTA Emerging Leaders Program. The team included Carly Macias, senior transportation planner at Regional Transportation District, Denver; John Blair, operations manager at Roaring Fork Transportation Authority, Aspen; Carl Atencio, chief mechanical officer at Denver Transit Operators; and Justin Henderson, government relations coordinator at Capital Metro, Austin.

**Table 1 – Public Transit Agencies Interviewed To Develop Best Practices**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>City/State</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Agency Size</th>
<th>Bus Fleet Size</th>
<th>Electric Buses in Operation*</th>
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<td>West</td>
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1. Based on 2018 data from the National Transit Database (NTD)
2. Based on the 2019 APTA Public Transportation Vehicle Database and supplemented with updates from recent news articles. These numbers may be slightly outdated.
Measuring Improvements In Access to Opportunities
Case Study of the Los Angeles County MoD Pilot

BY NICK HART
Transit Data Analyst
IBI Group

MODERN TRANSIT PLANNING tools and datasets are providing cities and public transit agencies new ways to measure and communicate the benefits of their services. Many agencies are now employing tools that assess service based on the opportunities they enable customers to reach.

Access to opportunities can be measured through a number of indicators, such as the number of jobs reachable within a journey time. By using accessibility indicators, planners can assess mobility as means to an end, which is important because people generally travel to access opportunities, rather than for the sake of travel itself.

Leading accessibility tools properly account for connections between low-frequency schedule-based routes, high-frequency transit corridors and on-demand service, as well as network-based walking legs interactions with the wider land-use system. Such tools can help public transit agencies rapidly assess and communicate benefits of Mobility on Demand (MoD) partnerships that traditional measures may fail to capture.

MoD services are a byproduct of new mobility concepts and solutions that use technological advances to provide more flexible and convenient transportation options. MoD services are often viewed as disruptive substitutes to the traditional transit market. However, recent initiatives have sought to utilize the flexibility of MoD services to complement existing fixed-route service, as evidenced through FTA’s MoD Sandbox Demonstration Program. The following example illustrates how accessibility indicators can be used to evaluate MoD initiatives, using a study of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) first/last mile pilot partnership with Via.

The partnership offers on-demand rides to select public transit stations within three service zones: North Hollywood, El Monte and Compton. Customers in these areas can book a shared vehicle to or from Metro and Metrolink stations with a free transfer by using the Via app or calling the call center. These rides provide faster connections, allowing customers to travel further across the system within a given amount of time.

Using GTFS and OpenStreetMap files, open-source software published by Conveyal can automatically build a full regional multi-modal network, incorporating service from Metro, Metrolink and public transit operators. Changes in the number of jobs accessible can also be measured for millions of origins throughout the region in a matter of minutes, using a web-based user interface and cloud computation.

Accessibility-based analyses have also been effective for other purposes, such as planning new or rerouted fixed-route services, comparing network redesign alternatives, assessing the impact of service frequency adjustments and identifying areas for multimodal network improvements. Next steps will evaluate direct point-to-point services to accommodate essential trips during COVID-19.

The motorcoach and bus industry has been devastated by the effects of COVID-19 on the traveling public. The American Bus Association (ABA) is fighting for the private motorcoach and bus industry to receive funding to help keep this industry moving. The industry will come back. It is time to plan for a new reality in travel and transportation. ABA is working and planning to help bring back this once-vibrant industry. Join the American Bus Association as we bring the international Busworld exhibit show to Baltimore, MD, in January 2021. Busworld North America will bring together manufacturers and suppliers from across the globe to display their products and serve as a reputed industry platform for industry leaders to network, expand their business and navigate the ever-evolving market landscape.

Be a part of the revolution as the industry rebuilds. Busworld North America is where you need to be to kick off 2021 and build your future. Visit www.busworldnorthamerica.org for more information.
TCRP Publishes New Reports

SPONSORED BY FTA, THE TRANSIT Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) serves as a means for the public transportation industry to develop innovative near-term solutions to demands. TCRP reports and other tools help public transportation practitioners solve problems and inform decision makers. Read the following recently released reports:

TCRP Synthesis 144: Multimodal Fare Payment Integration documents current practices and experiences of public transit agencies dealing with the complexities of multimodal fare payment convergence. www.trb.org/publications/blurbs/180363.aspx.

TCRP Synthesis 146: Transit Security Preparedness identifies current practices public transit systems can use to enhance their security measures and to identify opportunities to apply security technology applications used in other industries. www.trb.org/publications/blurbs/180477.aspx.


TCRP Research Report 210: Development of Transactional Data Specifications for Demand-Responsive Transportation presents a transactional data specification for DRT to facilitate interactions among the software systems that manage these services. www.trb.org/main/blurbs/180593.aspx.


TCRP Accepting Problem Statements For FY 2021 Program

THE TRANSIT COOPERATIVE Research Program (TCRP) is accepting problem statements identifying research needs for its Fiscal Year 2021 program. Program statements should be submitted at www.surveygizmo.com/s3/4197466/TCRP-Problem-Statement-Submission-FY-2020 by June 19. Previously submitted research problem statements will be considered.

The TCRP Oversight and Project Selection Committee will select the research problem statements for the FY 2021 program in the fall of 2020. For those problems selected by the committee, requests for proposals will be issued, and contractors will be selected through a competitive proposal process. More information is available at http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/FY2021revisedolicitation.pdf.

ACCOUNT-BASED TICKETING Continued from Page 12

and, perhaps most importantly, gain invaluable data insights on customer travel behavior for further development and innovation. With actionable data, optimizing fares and payment schemes, schedules, routes and overall rider experience will allow agencies to more rapidly deploy innovation.

ABT can open up more mobility “doors” for riders, without putting the burden on the operator to manage the other services. Your chosen solution should allow seamless payments for public transit as well as third-party services like bikes, scooters or car sharing, without having to manage the services independently. This includes the available methods of payment, including digital wallets, debit and credit cards and bank accounts, as well as the available subscription models. With the integration of other mobility services, you will be able to offer packages that can extend to other services for a more attractive offering.

ABT and multimodal trip planners are two pieces of the broader Mobility as a Service (MaaS) ecosystem. MaaS is the perfect solution to public transit agencies’ and operators’ increasingly complex, multimodal networks, and by implementing ABT within a trip planner, we are one step closer to the future of urban mobility.
PHOENIX, AZ—Valley Metro has hired Thomas Young as its manager of accessible transit services. Young is tasked with providing passengers safe, convenient and comfortable service that is accessible to and usable by all. He brings more than 35 years of management experience in public transportation and social services. Young comes to Valley Metro from Atlanta, where he was interim assistant general manager of bus operations at Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority. He also previously served as port commissioner for the Port of Hoodsport in Washington.

CALIFORNIA—The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB), governing body of Caltrain, welcomes new Board Member Steve Heminger. Heminger represents the City and County of San Francisco and was appointed by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). He is a member of APTA’s Legislative Committee. Heminger also serves on the Board of Directors of SFMTA, and recently retired from his position as the executive director of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL—Genfare announced the hiring of its new sales and marketing leader, Daria van Engelen. Tasked as Genfare’s chief revenue officer, van Engelen is a seasoned transit professional. Prior to joining Genfare, she served as a business development senior director at Cubic Transportation Systems, a principal at North Highland Company and a business development director of surface transportation at Serco Inc. She is also a certified Lean Green Belt professional, having received the designation in 2018.

MISSOULA, MT—The Missoula Urban Transportation District has appointed Shanti Johnson as its new communications and outreach marketing specialist for Mountain Line. Johnson has an extensive background in community education, outreach and marketing. Prior to joining Mountain Line, Johnson worked for Mike-based marketing agency, PartnersCreative, as well as the University of Montana’s Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center. At the center, she helped coordinate U.S. State Department-funded programs on environment and civil society development while collaborating with fellows from around the world on a shared vision for healthier, more connected communities.

SAN BERNARDINO, CA—Omnitrans named Jerome Rogers as director of safety and security. Rogers will immediately begin work on the agency response team handling the COVID-19 health crisis and will lead implementation of Omnitrans’ Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan as well as ongoing efforts to maintain the agency’s safety and security programs. Rogers has 15 years of experience in the safety field. Most recently, he served as regional safety director with Transdev. He serves on the Board of the American Society of Safety Professionals.

NEW YORK, NY—AECOM announces the addition of two transportation executives to the company’s New York City-based leadership team. Tom Prendergast, with more than 25 years of experience with the MTA, including as chairman and CEO, assumes a national role as head of Transit within the Design and Consulting Services Americas (DCSA). In addition, Denise Berger, whose 32 years with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey culminated in serving as COO with the authority’s Engineering Department, joins as COO of AECOM’s Northeast Region, which includes Metro New York. Both roles are responsible for driving growth and strategy, with Prendergast focused on AECOM’s transit market across the Americas, and Berger focused on the Northeast Region.

SAN DIEGO, CA—Cubic Corporation appointed Min Wei as senior vice president and chief customer officer. Wei will be responsible for leading a new customer experience function that combines Cubic’s global quality, configuration management, logistics support and customer experience. Wei joined Cubic in 2009 and has held various leadership positions at Cubic Transportation Systems (CTS). Most recently, Wei served as the senior vice president of operations, where he oversaw the business’ worldwide transformative initiatives for services, operations and quality.

ARLINGTON, VA—Sean Libberton joined HNTB as a national transit practice consultant and vice president. Based in the firm’s Arlington office, Libberton provides strategic advisory services for transit clients nationwide, focusing on navigating the FTA’s Capital Investment Grant program, transit corridor planning/alternatives analysis, project evaluation, and US DOT discretionary grants. Libberton brings 27 years of experience to HNTB, including more than 20 years at FTA.

Mountain Line Resolves To Eliminate Tailpipe Emissions by 2035

THE MISSOULA VALLEY AIRSHED will be cleaner in the coming years, thanks to a resolution approved recently by Mountain Line’s (Montana) governing board, the Missoula Urban Transportation District (MUTD). The resolution commits Mountain Line to the goal of eliminating all tailpipe emissions from its fleet by 2035.

“Clean air is important to the health of everyone in our community, whether you frequently ride the bus or not,” said Jesse Dodson, MUTD board chair. “Cleaner air means healthier lungs. Healthier lungs mean healthier people and a stronger, healthier community.”

“Despite improvements over the past decade, air quality remains a serious issue in Missoula, especially during winter inversions and summer wildfire season,” said Amy Cilimburg, MUTD board member and executive director of Climate Smart Missoula. “Breathing challenges can have far greater implications than we ever imagined, as we’ve seen firsthand with the spread of COVID-19 around the world.”

This resolution formalized Mountain Line’s longstanding commitment to clean air, public health and its support of Missoula County’s goal of carbon neutrality for all government operations by 2035. Mountain Line intends to meet its own 2035 zero-tailpipe-emissions goal, in part, by continuing to invest in electric buses and other emerging sustainable technology. Mountain Line added the first six electric buses to its fleet last year, after successfully securing a federal Low-No grant intended to reduce vehicle emissions and air pollution.

“Our commitment to a zero-tailpipe-emissions fleet creates opportunities for innovation and collaboration,” said Dodson. “We’re committed to moving Missoula forward sustainably, factoring in public health, clean air and our carbon footprint. That’s something to make everyone feel proud.”

Metra Electric Service Increasing to Complete PTC Implementation

METRA IN CHICAGO IS DUE TO add service on the Metra Electric Line May 18 to complete Positive Train Control (PTC) implementation on the line. The fuller schedule will enable the agency to test all equipment under normal operating conditions, troubleshoot any issues and train engineers and other personnel.

“We can’t wait for ridership to return to normal because we don’t know when that will happen and we don’t want to cut it too close to our end-of-the-year deadline,” said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “Getting PTC implemented in full on the Metra Electric as soon as possible will enable us to then move on to the last two lines running without it, the two Milwaukee District lines, and complete those lines by the end of 2020.”

The schedule to be implemented May 18 will represent approximately 74 percent of the full new schedule. The remaining 26 percent of trains will also operate on some days for testing purposes, although they will not pick up passengers.

MAY 18, 2020 | 17
On-Demand Service Supplements Paratransit With Positive Rider Feedback

BY ANDI BAILEY
Sr. Customer Success Manager
Uber Transit

TRADITIONAL ADA PARATRANSLIT provides a critical service for people with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route public transit. This service generally requires a minimum reservation lead time of 24 hours, operates with a 30-minute arrival window and incurs a high cost per trip for transit agencies, leading to a level of dissatisfaction for both the service provider and riders.

To address these issues, in September of 2016 the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) opened up a supplementary paratransit pilot program, allowing an initial group of 400 riders to enroll with TNCs for subsidized on-demand rides. The program allowed riders who were eligible for MBTA’s The Ride program to pay $1 or $2 upfront for shared and personal sedan trips, respectively, and receive up to $13 off on Uber or Lyft trips.

The goal was to provide customer flexibility by offering a true on-demand option while also decreasing costs by moving ambulatory riders off The RIDE’s scheduled paratransit vehicle routes. It was a pilot program in every sense, and there were certainly skeptics. TNCs had few WAV vehicles on offer, and many riders weren’t as familiar with the concept of ridesharing and faced technological hurdles associated with smartphone fluency.

“The initial goals of this pilot with Uber and Lyft were to improve transportation options for RIDE customers while also reducing our paratransit operation costs,” said Ben Schutzman, MBTA’s director of transportation technologies and operations. “We have been lucky to be able to work with companies like Uber, Lyft and Curb who have been flexible and agile enough from the beginning to help us achieve and understand these goals.”

More than three years later, the pilot program has nearly 5,000 participants, and many adjustments have been made along the way in response to customer feedback and analyses of program performance.

The program is immensely popular with riders, rated 6.3 out of 7, compared to a 4.2 rating for The RIDE generally. However, MBTA saw that in some cases, riders who hadn’t relied on The RIDE previously were suddenly taking a high number of TNC trips. They then put in place a system of graduated trip caps, providing new enrollees in MBTA’s paratransit program with two trips per month, and allowing up to 40 trips per month for those who had an established history of relying on the traditional paratransit service. Riders who hit their cap on the pilot are free to call The RIDE call center to access traditional ADA paratransit trips.

The MBTA also found that by encouraging longer TNC trips, it could achieve better efficiency for shorter trips on its own vehicles. In response, the agency increased the per trip subsidy from $13 to $40 per trip. The average per trip cost has remained around $17, but riders who require a longer trip don’t have to worry about hitting their trip cap.

Uber and Lyft for their part have made a concerted effort to increase WAV availability, partnering with more traditional service providers to provide thousands of WAV service hours per week.

Whether it is simply rider preference, a lack of awareness, access to technology or other reasons, 85 percent of trips are still taken on the traditional RIDE program despite the on-demand nature of TNC paratransit, and the lower per trip costs to MBTA. However, given the benefits of the program and popularity among riders, MBTA is seeking to turn this pilot into a formal program, leveraging what it has learned to create a permanent, complementary TNC offering.

The agency released an RFP in March to kick off that process.

Tolar Bus Shelters for Torrance, CA, RAPID

TOLAR MANUFACTURING Company, in partnership with AP Construction, Inc., is designing and building bus shelters for the city of Torrance, CA. The project is focused on improving amenities and accessibility along the city’s RAPID route 3, including the design and fabrication of two, 30-foot, high-capacity shelters at the key public transit hub at Del Amo Fashion Center, used by the center’s large employee base and thousands of daily visitors.

The shelters for the center include high-visibility branding, plentiful seating, low-draw LED illuminated media display kiosks, under-roof LED security lighting and real-time information signs. “Del Amo Fashion Center is accentuated with modern architecture and natural lighting,” said Patrick Merrick, Tolar executive vice president. “Our modern shelter design with its perforated walls allows natural light and air flow to accent these elements.”

In addition to the Del Amo shelters, Tolar has fabricated 27 smaller shelters to be installed along the RAPID route, which include ultra-efficient, solar-powered, real-time digital passenger information smart signage. Some of the shelters will also include a back-lit media display kiosk for advertising.

SacRT to Purchase New Siemens Low-Floor Light Rail Vehicles

THE SACRAMENTO REGIONAL Transit District (SacRT) is to proceed on the purchase of 20 S700 low-floor light rail vehicles from local manufacturer, Siemens Mobility, Inc. This is the first time in 20 years that SacRT has purchased new light rail vehicles.

“We are committed to providing innovative mobility solutions in our region, and these new low-floor light rail vehicles are one step forward,” said SacRT General Manager/CEO Henry Li. “The purchase of these new vehicles is long overdue and will begin the transition to a modern, low-floor fleet.”

The purchase of the new vehicles is part of SacRT’s overall light rail modernization plan, which also includes converting light rail stations to accommodate the new low-floor design and adding a passing track at two locations to provide 15-minute frequency to Folsom stations.

The 20 new trains will be manufactured at Siemens’ Sacramento facility and the first vehicles are expected to be delivered in 2022. The contract, including the 20 trains, spare parts and tools is approximately $100 million. The contract also includes the option to purchase up to 76 light rail vehicles.

The S700 light rail trains feature spacious seating design and larger windows for better light and a better view. The vehicles feature improved ADA-accessibility with wider aisles, as well as built-in storage for luggage and bicycles. The electric powered vehicles are emissions-free.

Miami-Dade Transit Orders 140 CNG Buses From New Flyer

Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) has awarded a contract to New Flyer for 140 Xcelsior compressed natural gas (CNG) forty-foot, heavy-duty buses. The buses will replace older, end-of-life diesel vehicles. Since 1994, New Flyer, alongside sister companies MCI and ARBOC, has delivered more than 1,350 buses to MDT, including more than 300 CNG buses over the past two years.

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“The additional 140 buses from New Flyer of America will bring the total number of CNG vehicles in our Metrobus fleet to 560 new buses, which is approximately three quarters of the entire fleet. This means that more and more Metromobus customers are getting to enjoy a comfortable, quiet and reliable ride on the brand-new fleet of CNG buses,” said Alice N. Bravo, P.E., director of transportation and public works for Miami-Dade County.

The project is expected to be completed in 2022, providing more Metrobus customers are getting to enjoy a comfortable, quiet and reliable ride on the brand-new fleet of CNG buses. The project is expected to be completed in 2022, providing more than 300 CNG buses over the past two years.

“The addition of new light rail vehicles to the SacRT fleet will enhance accessibility and mobility options for riders using the RAPID system.”

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