Coordinated Rural Transit Service

RTM 1

Photo: Courtesy of Menominee Regional Public Transit

Description: Coordinated rural transit service works to link separate services or to overcome service gaps. In terms of linking separate services, it may be that a rural transit system in one county has the opportunity to connect with a rural transit provider in an adjoining county. This linkage may be desirable if, for example, some health services are only available in one county rather than both. Service gaps may occur if a scheduled on-demand drop-off and pick-up must be modified as a result of appointment overruns or other challenges.

Rural Transportation Critical Needs

- ☐ Crash Countermeasures
- ☐ Emergency Services
- ☐ Operations & Maintenance
- ☑ Rural Transit & Mobility
- ☐ Surface Transportation & Weather
- ☐ Tourism & Travel Information
- ☐ Traffic Management

Issues Addressed

- ☑ Rural Transit Service Response Time
- ☑ Rural Transit Wait Time
- ☐ Rural Transit Traveler Information
- ☑ Rural Transit Availability
- ☐ Resource Mapping & Monitoring
- ☐ Fleet Management

Strategies Achieved

- ☑ Road User
- ☐ Road
- ☐ Vehicle
- ☐ Safety Culture
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Emergency Response
- ☐ Enforcement
- ☑ Education

Applicability	Partnerships	Key Components
•A coordinated rural transit service assists with integrating neighboring rural transit services that are currently operating independently, thereby leveraging economies of scale. The coordination of such services can help to ensure that rural residents can access critical services in adjoining communities or counties (such as doctor appointments) without the challenges of using multiple, disparate services. By considering the integration of a range of rural transit service providers, it expands the range of services available to users and distributes the investment in coordination among providers.	•Applications benefit from collaboration among numerous agencies, which may include: •Departments of transportation (local, state, federal) •Tribal governments •Health and Human Service Agencies •Intercity bus companies •Private entities (i.e. Liberty)	•Existing rural bus service •Coordinated user interface •Agreements between multiple rural transit providers

Examples of Implementation

- **Liberty**

Liberty, an Uber-like company for rural users, is proposing to fill service gaps for the Scottsbluff Public Transportation system for rural users.

- **Via and RTD (Colorado)**

The Via and RTD (Colorado) currently operate a pilot program. Mobile electronic manifests and communication technology are used to coordinate independently run demand response service in Longmont, Colorado.

- **Menominee Regional Public Transit**

Menominee Regional Public Transit was started by the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. It grew from a small local service to a large regional service by coordinating services with a variety of agencies and governments.

- **Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS)**

Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS) provides transit services to nine counties in rural Texas.

- **Lower Savannah Aging, Disability & Transportation Resource Center (Aiken, South Carolina)**

Technology was employed to enhance human services transportation and its coordination among the five transportation providers.

Implementation Considerations (Pro)	Implementation Considerations (Con)

•Coordination can help to address service gaps.
•It addresses the user experience.
•It makes more efficient use of limited resources.
•Coordination can increase the number of individual trips and service availability.
•It increases ridership while reducing service costs.
	•Some users (often vulnerable users) may view coordination as a reduction in level of service.
	•Users may need to transfer between transit service providers.
	•There may be challenges to coordinating across entities, including:
	  •Scheduling software is not uniform across entities,
	  •Taxes,
	  •Value, and
	  •Clan (e.g. inter-tribal).

Opportunities for Future Expansion

- With Vehicle to Infrastructure (V2I) technologies, a transit provider could reschedule a pick-up time if a health facility sent information to the transit provider via V2I that an appointment was running late.

Additional Resources

- *Toolkit for Rural Community Coordinated Transportation Services*, found here: http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/154971.aspx
- *How an Uber Copycat Can Fill the Transit Gap in Rural Nebraska*, found here: http://www.citylab.com/navigator/2016/07/how-an-uber-copycat-can-fill-the-transportation-gap-in-rural-nebraska/490769/
- *Rural Transit ITS Best Practices*, found here: https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/3854
- New York State Department of Transportation, *Rural ITS Toolbox and Deployment Plan for Regions 2, 6, 7, and 9. ITS Toolbox for Rural and Small Urban Areas*, found here. https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/2962
- *National Center for Mobility Management*, found here: https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/by-topic/coordination/
- *Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook Final Report*, found here: https://westerntransportationinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/426305_Final_Report.pdf
- *Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook Supplemental Update*, found here: https://westerntransportationinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/4W1555_Supplement_Update.pdf

Useful Tip

Proving information to riders on how to use nearby transit systems along with potential destinations and schedules is a relatively low-cost way to enhance service options for riders (compared to adding new service).

Cost Range

(Cost/financial information, where noted, is based on 2016 dollars (unless otherwise specified). Cost/financial information is estimated, and will vary based on size and scope of project, number of units, etc. In general, capital costs include initial purchase costs of hardware, software, and other required equipment. Maintenance and operations costs include staff time to operate, monitor and maintain systems; data collection; system upgrades; evaluation; etc.)

Capital Costs: The total capital costs for this tool are higher (above $250,000). There may be costs associated with coordinating software programs so they integrate with adjoining systems, especially if systems use different platforms. Costs could also include the creation of a software program that would allow respondents from various counties to call or use a single on-line interface that allows them to access and plan trips with multiple rural transit service providers. Even if providers have systems that operate separately, the end user sees it as one system. For example, the Client Referral, Ridership, and Financial Tracking (CRRAFT) program in New Mexico cost approximately $1.3 million to implement[1].

Operations Costs: The total operations and maintenance costs for this tool range from high ($100,000 to $250,000) to higher (above $250,000). For example, the CRRAFT system in New Mexico was created to integrate multiple rural transit agencies with an annual operating cost of $117,500[1]. The total funding for the Via/RTD coordination in Colorado was $213,491[1].

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