NCMM Peer Exchanges: Discussing Innovative Solutions to Advance Mobility Management

National Center for Mobility Management

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The National Center for Mobility Management is a national technical assistance center funded through a cooperative agreement with the Federal Transit Administration, and operated through a consortium of three national organizations—the American Public Transportation Association, the Community Transportation Association of America, and Easterseals Inc. The mission of the Center is to promote customer-centered mobility strategies that advance good health, economic vitality, self-sufficiency, and community.

Co-Directors of the National Center for Mobility Management:

- Amy Conrick, Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)
- Judy Shanley, EasterSeals
- Rich Weaver, American Public Transportation Association

Primary Authors of "NCMM Peer Exchanges: Discussing Innovative Solutions to Advance Mobility Management":

- Zach Smith, American Public Transportation Association
- Rich Weaver, American Public Transportation Association

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The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) planned, developed and implemented peer exchanges on various issues within the public transit industry such as the transition from transit agencies to mobility authorities, demonstrating a commitment to innovation through partnerships with traditional and new stakeholders, and exploring new and innovative integrated mobility models.

The peer exchanges were informal, half-day facilitated discussions with approximately thirty participants from the public transportation industry and their peers to share the challenges and opportunities that they have in advancing mobility management strategies in their communities. The peer exchanges focused on the following issues facing the industry:

- Exploring New and Institutional Governance Models;
- Partnerships;
- Curb Management; and
- Health Care Access and Mobility.

This document summarizes the key takeaways from the peer exchanges and offers a list of resources for transit agencies to implement mobility strategies in their communities.

With the rise of new technologies, transit agencies are redefining how their agencies manage mobility. In doing so, agencies are transitioning from transit authorities to mobility integrators and developing new governance and institutional models for these integrated mobility concepts. NCMM hosted peer exchanges to look at how different mobility management scenarios could evolve, identify opportunities to develop and implement concepts such as Mobility as a Service (MaaS), and identify the best practices and pilot projects for how these new mobility services models can be integrated within existing or new governance models for integrated mobility.

Peer Exchanges:

- Los Angeles, CA (September 2016)
- Washington, DC (December 2016)
- Atlanta, GA (October 2017)

Speakers:

- Robert Antoniak, Chief Operating Officer, Valley Metro, Phoenix, AZ
- Cassandra Ecker Borchers, AICP, Chief Development Officer, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, St. Petersburg, FL
- Rich Farr, Executive Director, rabbittransit, York, PA
- Erik Johanson, Director of Innovation, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), Philadelphia, PA
- Christina O'Claire, Assistant General Manager - Planning and Customer Service, King County Metro Transit Division/Department of Transportation, Seattle, WA
- Brad Thoburn, former Vice President, Long-Range Planning & System Development, Jacksonville Transportation Authority, Jacksonville, FL
- Gary Thomas, President/Executive Director, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), Dallas, TX
- Cain Williamson, Mobility Services Manager, Atlanta Regional Commission, Atlanta, GA

Key takeaways from peer exchange participants:

TRANSIT AGENCIES ARE CHANGING TO THEIR ORGANIZATIONS' STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE MODELS THAT CONSIDER NEW AND TRADITIONAL PARTNERS IN THE NEW MOBILITY ECOSYSTEM.

The various mobility services need to be organized into a network that consumers will be able to use. Public transit agencies are poised to perform the role of regional mobility manager and become the broker of trips.

This new way of thinking about providing service will need champions both internally and externally. Monterey-Salinas Transit, Monterey, CA, established a mobility management

committee of social service providers, their customers and taxicab operators to keep them engaged in their initiatives and supportive.

Having the support of the agency's board of directors is paramount. Transit agencies like Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) worked closely with their board members to adopt a mission statement that reflects the changing transit industry and establishes an internal culture for this type of thinking.

Agencies also discussed doing a "self-evaluation" of sorts to determine their strengths and weaknesses and using those results to find the tools to enhance areas where they are efficient and make improvements in the areas where they are not. Other internal changes included rewriting job descriptions to incorporate mobility management concepts and creating departments focused on innovation like the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) Office of Extraordinary Innovation.

King County Metro is also building a culture around mobility, a mobility framework, and diversifying initiatives. The agency is piloting projects and services and exhibiting a willingness to take risks. Though the agency has no dedicated office of innovation, innovation as a goal is woven throughout the agency. To build that culture around innovation and mobility, King County Metro is reorganizing less as a fixed-route provider and implementing new carpool programs and mobile applications and making sure its employees are innovative in planning

INNOVATIVE MOBILITY ACTION AGENDA FOR KING COUNTY METRO

To achieve Metro's goals in both the short and the long term, Metro will embrace innovation by pursuing the following strategies:

I. Leverage the growth of shared mobility options as a complement to Metro's services.
II. Build an internal framework to support the realization of Mobility-as-a-Service.
III. Embrace the strategic opportunities brought by electric, connected and automated vehicles.
IV. Integrate Metro's data management platforms and engage with the smart cities initiatives throughout King County.
V. Advance efforts to improve the efficiency of existing infrastructure and realize compact urban forms.
VI. Strengthen Metro's institutional capabilities to invest and nurture a culture of innovation.

and implementing new services.

Generally, the transit agencies present agreed that it was necessary to continuously educate local leaders and stakeholders by providing them any and all information about new pilots and initiatives. Not doing so, some agency staff said, could lead to distrust of new solutions to improve mobility.

Jacksonville Transportation Authority focused on recruiting more partners and conducted a scenario planning exercise to help the transit agency and its stakeholders understand the difference in how each would be affected by their partnerships in leveraging new technology.

Before entering partnerships with new and traditional mobility providers and others, it is important that agencies review their contracting policies to make sure that they are sound for negotiations with different stakeholders.

In earlier peer exchanges, many agencies admitted to partnerships with TNCs without written contracts. Oftentimes, the only written documents were non-disclosure agreements. Verbal agreements are less common today, and agencies are developing formal agreements and contracts with TNCs that address data sharing, equity, and revenue.

RESOURCES:

- Summary Notes: [Developing a Peer Exchange to Explore New Institutional and Governance Models for Integrated Mobility](). Los Angeles, CA. (September 2016)
- Summary Notes: [Exploring New Institutional and Governance Models for Integrated Mobility](). Washington, DC. (December 2016)
- Summary Notes: [Exploring New Institutional and Governance Models for Integrated Mobility](). Atlanta, GA. (October 2017)

PARTNERSHIPS

Transit agencies have partnered with private-sector transportation providers as well as local taxi companies and other mobility providers. These relationships have evolved as agencies seek to grow ridership, improve the ridership experience and leverage the growth of non-traditional, app-based transportation services.

The growth of partnerships among public transit, ride-hailing, bike-sharing and other transportation providers shows clear opportunities. In various peer exchanges, transit agencies

discussed their role in this new mobility paradigm and how they are collaborating with external partners.

Peer Exchanges:

- Washington, DC (December 2016)
- Minneapolis, MN (August 2018)
- Washington, DC (November 2018)

Speakers:

- Jameson Auten, Chief, Regional Service Delivery & Innovation, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), Kansas City, MO
- Cassandra Ecker Borchers, AICP, Chief Development Officer, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, St. Petersburg, FL
- Rich Farr, Executive Director, Central Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (rabbittransit), York, PA
- Christina O'Claire, Assistant General Manager - Planning and Customer Service, King County Metro Transit Division/Department of Transportation, Seattle, WA
- Gary Thomas, President/Executive Director, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), Dallas, TX
- Brian T. Welch, Senior Manager, Planning Technical Services, Regional Transportation District, Denver, CO
- Dr. Sherry Welsh, Senior Project Manager at Central Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (rabbittransit) and 3P Ride Inc., York, PA

Key takeaways from peer exchange participants:

TRANSIT AGENCIES ARE CRAFTING STRONG MESSAGES TO GET OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO SUPPORT THEIR INITIATIVES.

Transit agencies are partnering with both public and private entities to enhance mobility for their customers. With whom agencies choose to partner depends on the specific goals of a transit agency, but it also depends on the willingness of the other stakeholder to join them.

Around the country, transit agencies have tried different strategies to reach out to and engage new partners. However, agencies should be aware that they may have to "sell" their service to others. Oftentimes, new, or even familiar, partners may not realize the value that agencies can bring to them. Being able to communicate the benefits of working with the transit agency is paramount.

Finding partners can be a challenge for some. When this issue was discussed in the peer exchanges, agencies that have had successful partnerships addressed it with a simple suggestion: get out of the office. At an NCMM peer exchange, one participant at a local transit

agency said a mobility manager simply walked into the local health center with maps and asked, "Did you know there is a bus outside?" This brief interaction led to more conversations about helping patients access care and an improved partnership with the agency.

TRANSIT AGENCIES ARE BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEW PARTNERS WHILE MAINTAINING EXISTING ONES.

Local businesses and chambers of commerce were mentioned as an often overlooked champion for public transit. To engage these groups, agencies recommended creating strong messaging to target them and make the business case for collaborating with transit.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is often cited as a natural partner for transit agencies. However, it is an agency that is often difficult to engage.

The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) began a partnership with the Kansas City Veterans Administration and the Veterans Community Project to eliminate fares on buses for veterans. One factor that helped in the initial conversations with the Kansas City VA and the project's sponsor, a local labor union, was the release of a report on access to jobs through public transit and subsequent data on how this impacts veterans.

Improving access to essential services like healthcare, grocery stores and jobs has sparked innovation among transit agencies. The Mass Transportation Authority in Flint, MI, has more than 27 partners in both the public and private sectors that gather to provide residents with trips to grocery stores, clean water during the Flint Water Crisis, and healthcare. Rabbittransit in York, PA, also partnered with a local grocer to provide trips to the store and created 3P Ride, a non-profit, to provide trips to essential services and tap into funding sources that a traditional transit agency cannot access.

Agencies also reiterated the need to strengthen relationships with traditional partners. New technologies and private mobility providers have a huge effect on societal outcomes and their impact at the city level will be significant. To keep and attract riders, transit must be frequent, fast, and reliable and cities and Metropolitan Planning Organizations have a role in this regard. Representatives of the Mountain Line Transit Authority in Morgantown, WV, attend permitting hearings for major new developments. Staff from the agency aren't always invited to the meetings, but they make a point of being there and taking a seat at the table whenever they can.

Beyond the city level, states also play a huge role in this space in crafting regulations and a regulatory framework. Agencies and their champions should work with states to make sure that regulations will both encourage innovation and work for them in the future.

TRANSIT AGENCIES ARE LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER WHEN COLLABORATING WITH TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES AND NEW MOBILITY PROVIDERS.

In response to recent developments in technology, local public transit agencies have started to partner with private mobility companies—including carshare and bikeshare companies, taxis and transportation network companies (TNC) such as Uber and Lyft—with the aim of offering transit riders more efficient and convenient service options. Such partnerships may become more common as mobility technologies emerge, many of which are enabled by smartphone applications. For example, partnerships include arrangements where local transit agencies seek to increase public transit ridership by subsidizing TNC rides to or from bus stations, such as Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), making access more convenient.

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) tracks the partnerships between TNCs and transit agencies on the [Mobility Innovation Hub](). However, the peer exchanges offer greater insight into how those partnerships are working out:

DATA SHARING

Agencies have trouble gathering data from certain TNC partners, particularly on the exact destination and origin addresses of a customer's trips or number of miles traveled. This becomes a challenge for agencies in reporting data to the FTA for the National Transit Database (NTD).

FTA could also improve the quality of NTD data by advising transit agencies on which on-demand services qualify for NTD entry and how to accurately report about qualifying services. Without clearer instructions on whether and how data from new on-demand services should be reported into NTD, local transit agencies may remain confused, potentially resulting in inconsistent reporting.

EQUITY

Transit agencies ensure that all customers have equitable access to service, information and fare payment options. People wanting to become a mobility service provider in King County, WA, need the transit agency's permission, which has been key for the agency to protect equity and data considerations for residents. However, agencies want federal, state and local policymakers to address the equity issue so that every traveler can take advantage of all new and emerging mobility options.

STRUCTURING PARTNERSHIPS

TNCs are disruptors that decided not to work within the institutional framework as it has been. That's why they exist. As transit agencies think about how to structure deals, there is a need to understand those deals from the perspective of TNCs rather than what an agency thinks their perspective should be. Transit agencies should review template agreements between transit agencies and TNCs that NCMM and APTA have provided and share any agreements they procure.

PILOTS

Pilots allow agencies and their partners to try an idea and "fail fast." In the startup world, to "fail fast" is to test a concept and, if doesn't work, move on and use the takeaways from that project on the next. This isn't as easy to do in the public sector, but there are programs like FTA's Mobility on Demand Sandbox that allow agencies and their partners to collaborate and test ideas.

RESOURCES:

- American Public Transportation Association: The Transformation of the American Commuter (2018).
- American Public Transportation Association: Shared Mobility and Transformation of Public Transportation (2016).
- National Center for Mobility Management and the Shared Use Mobility Center: Considerations for TNC Partnerships: Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (2018).
- National Center for Mobility Management: Summary Notes: Exploring New Institutional and Governance Models for Integrated Mobility. Washington, DC (December 2016).
- National Center for Mobility Management: Summary Notes: Creating Partnerships to Improve Mobility for All Riders. Minneapolis, MN (August 2018).
- National Center for Mobility Management: Summary Notes: Lessons Learned from Mobility Summits and the Next Steps Toward Advancing Mobility Management. Washington, DC (November 2018).

CURB MANAGEMENT

Transit agencies are increasingly recognizing the value of streets/curb management as new mobility options and travel patterns lead to increased and varied demands for this space. The curbside facilitates access to essential activities such as goods, people, enhanced mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities, and increased community activation. However, there is more competition for the curb as traditional bus service competes with transportation network companies, dockless bikes and electric scooters, pedestrians and, soon, autonomous vehicles that necessitate universal design concepts and other policies that develop new and enhanced priorities for curbside use and expanded mobility hubs.

Improved curbside management and creating more mobility hubs will make it easy to access a wide range of travel options for different trip types. Considering local context, a relative prioritization of travel modes and right-of-way functions can be developed on a corridor-by-corridor or even block-by-block basis.

Participants in these peer exchanges had a conversation around solutions to important questions facing transit agencies as we consider the curbside and right-of-way.

Peer Exchange:

- Nashville, TN (September 2018)

Speakers:

- Lucy Galbraith, Director – Transit Oriented Development, Metro Transit, Minneapolis, MN
- Nadine Lee, Deputy Chief Innovation Officer, Los Angeles County Metro, Los Angeles, CA
- Catherine Prince, Mobility Project Manager, City of Fort Lauderdale, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Key takeaways from peer exchange participants

TRANSIT AGENCIES ARE TAKING PROACTIVE STEPS TO FORM AND LEAD PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR, KEY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO DETERMINE HOW BEST TO MANAGE THE CURB.

Many times, there are no clear leaders in developing partnerships with a new mobility provider. Partnerships are critical, as are having everyone understand the goal and their part in what's needed. Government is too often afraid to act, and transit agencies are afraid to fail. But it's good to fail and fail fast. One lesson the Office of Extraordinary Innovation at LA Metro has learned is that being transparent when trying new things makes people more forgiving because they were clued in and a part of the process.

Transit agencies need to monitor and stay in the conversation. If they let the market decide everything, there will be places they don't serve. When writing an RFP, the transit agency can give stakeholders incentives to achieve the outcomes they want to achieve.

Transit agencies are often used to fill a leadership void and should be the leader in mobility issues. Examples of where transit is taking the lead include:

- Salt Lake City, UT: Salt Lake City has a burgeoning bikeshare system, but the city and the agency want to see it expand in different parts of the city. The transit agency is working on an RFP for the whole bikesharing industry to include tricycles and electric bikes.
- Dallas, TX: It's important to set the rules of engagement for other mobility providers, such as giving them a permit, telling them how to operate and letting the market dictate who wins. Dallas had five bikeshare companies come to the city at the same time. The transit agency began doing MOUs with the companies to give each of them a designated space on the platforms.

- King County, WA: Any mobility provider that provides service in King County must recognize Orca Lift, the reduced transit fare program for public transit agencies in the county, because of the commitment regional leaders have made to ensure equitable access to transportation. It is the key piece of the puzzle that allows the agency to make sure that all customers are served.

Transit agencies are working with their local governments to develop flexible uses for curb space.

Transit agencies discussed that the majority of corridors in their service areas are not used at full capacity except during peak times. Outside of transit operating hours, curb space could be used for TNCs, as it is used in a pilot project in Washington, DC, on weekend nights.

Cities will need to redefine the definition of a corridor in the future. Dedicated space for transit can sometimes best be implemented by repurposing sections of curb. In Des Moines, IA, the city is redesigning streets downtown from one-way to two-way configurations. This process involves working with the bike community and the transit agency to determine the best place for each mode. To help the city and other stakeholders better understand transit's needs, the agency brought them in to drive buses in 10-foot lanes to see how difficult it is. LA Metro did a similar exercise with the transit and bike communities: bus drivers rode bikes to look at the impact of bus and bike safety on the roads.

TRANSIT AGENCIES ARE WORKING WITH THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHEN MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ARE INVOLVED.

Distribution centers provide many job opportunities. Transit is getting pressure to serve these areas, but it's hard to serve them because jobs and housing are miles away.

In Dallas, a Transportation Management Association has been established to mitigate transportation challenges to employment centers. Some major companies have been reluctant to join because they don't want to pay for it. The agency is using a combination of microtransit and app-based solutions to serve various areas. Victor Valley Transit Authority in California is using vanpool to serve workers in distribution centers.

It's important for transit agencies to be at the table when major employers are thinking of locating jobs away from transit-rich areas. Agencies also should talk to their counterparts in city government about not subsidizing companies in locations that are not located near transit.

King County is incentivizing vanpools as a way to use the Orca card to get on-demand services for first-and-last-mile connections to employment. One issue to consider is that employers don't want their employees on the same shuttle with those of other employers because of competition and not having one company poach another's employees.

- Fehr & Peers: San Francisco Curb Study (2018).
- International Transport Forum: The Shared-Use City: Managing the Curb (2017).
- National Association of City Transportation Officials: Curb Appeal: Curbside Management Strategies for Improving Transit Reliability (2017).
- National Center for Mobility Management: The Complete Trip: Helping Customers Make a Seamless Journey (2013).
- National Center for Mobility Management: Summary Notes: Peer Exchange on The Rise of the Curb: Expanding Mobility while Protecting Space. Nashville, TN (September 2018).

HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND MOBILITY

At a time when the health system is undergoing significant change and transformation, transportation remains a barrier for many people to access the breadth of services needed to be healthier and mitigate chronic conditions. Partnerships across the health and transportation sectors can achieve the goals of increased access to care, reduced healthcare costs, and improved client/patient outcomes.

NCMM hosted several peer exchanges on accessing health care and improving mobility for participants to share the opportunities and challenges that each industry faces in working together and discussed the best and most innovative practices to improve access to healthcare using transportation strategies.

Peer Exchanges:

- Baltimore, MD (April 2016)
- Charlotte, NC (May 2016)
- Minneapolis, MN (August 2018)

Speakers:

- Jameson Auten, Chief, Regional Service Delivery & Innovation, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), Kansas City, MO
- Tom Coogan, Secretary, Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council, Denver, CO
- Julia Gamble, Nurse Practitioner, Duke University Hospital Outpatient Clinic, Durham, NC
- Harmony Lloyd, Development and Planning Analyst, Mass Transportation Authority, Flint, MI
- Maria Roell, Transportation Planner, Atlanta Regional Commission, Atlanta, GA
- Dr. Sherry Welsh, Senior Project Manager at Central Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (rabbittransit) and 3P Ride Inc., York, PA
- Sally Wilson, Executive Director, Project Access of Durham, Durham, NC

Key takeaways from peer exchange participants

TRANSIT AGENCIES AND HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS ARE IDENTIFYING THE GAPS TO ACCESSING SERVICE.

Many tools and partners can help assess the difficulties patients have in accessing health care. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission has worked with agencies in their region to do technical analyses on gaps in service to health care providers.

Mobility managers are also helpful. They can ask people with disabilities where they live and where they get services. Agencies that use one-call, one-click software capture a lot of demographic and destination-origin information as well.

The Atlanta region collaboratively developed connectivity measures, which they define as key access to services. The region uses these measures to identify communities with the most needs in an "Equitable Target Area Base Map." The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) does assessments to determine if communities have high quality travel options and, if they do not, ARC works with the local transit agency on adding transit stops to improve accessibility.

The most crucial factor in getting people to essential services, beyond health care, is identifying and working with the right partners. The ARC has partnered with community leaders and non-profits around new Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority services in Clayton County to determine what the community needs. This new expanded service underscores the challenge of the agency and MPO in trying to figure out how to get people where they need to be in low-density areas.

TRANSIT AGENCIES, THE HEALTH CARE SECTOR AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AT ALL LEVELS ARE ADDRESSING VARIOUS CHALLENGES TO COORDINATION.

FUNDING

Funding silos exist, but transit agencies want government agencies to be flexible and recognize that populations served by different agencies intersect. There are low-income people who are not long-term disabled but, with a lack of resources, could become so. It would be beneficial if funding could be commingled between the transit and health care sectors.

DATA

Transit agencies need to be aware of the existing data and research when trying to form partnerships with the health care sector. During the peer exchanges, agencies mentioned the need for more data to explain to hospitals and others the benefits of better coordination.

Also, health care organizations do a good job tracking information on patients during routine visits. The ICD9 and ICD10 codes drive health systems and it is important that practitioners and others are aware of the transportation codes.

SILOS

Sometimes more than one transit agency or mobility provider operates in an area but they are serving individual clients in silos. They do this because of the fear of losing individual funding streams.

Participants also spoke about the need to embrace the Coordinated Council on Access and Mobility to ending silos among agencies at the federal level to improve coordination.

RESOURCES:

- National Center for Mobility Management: Summary Notes: Peer Exchange on Implementing Ladders of Opportunity. Baltimore, MD (April 2016).
- National Center for Mobility Management: Summary Notes: Peer Exchange on Health Care Access and Mobility. Charlotte, NC (May 2016).
- National Center for Mobility Management: Summary Notes: Creating Partnerships to Improve Mobility for All Riders. Minneapolis, MN (August 2018).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Public Transportation Association: Mobility Innovation Hub
- Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility Initiatives (CCAM)
- King County Metro Innovative Mobility Program
- Metrolinx and WSP: New Mobility Paper (2016)
- National Center for Mobility Management Website
- Presentation on Mobility as a Service: A tool for small urban and rural communities (2016)
- Video: King County Metro: A Mobility Agency (2018)