

Use of Vans in Non-Traditional Programs

Information compiled February 11, 2005

The Question: Do you use vans for any non-traditional programs? A non-traditional program is something outside of the regular vanpool definition of commuting to work and school. If so, can you give a brief definition of this use?

The following document was compiled by Kim Cederstrom from Whatcom Transit on non-traditional van programs. Thank you to Kim for making this information available to everyone!

“OTHER USE” VANS MEETING

June 18, 2004

Attending:

Ben Franklin Transit, Dave Rodrick
Community Transit, Dawn Kirsch
Intercity Transit, Carolyn Newsome
Island Transit, Mary Bryson & Gina Sibley
Pierce Transit, Daphne Tackett
Whatcom Transit, Kim Cederstrom
Yakima Transit, Karen Allen

The purpose of this meeting was to have transit agencies around the state discuss how vans are used in providing unique transportation solutions. Conversation covered such topics as whether children are allowed to ride (this varies by transit agency), what inspired these unique services (generally as a result of reduced traditional transit service or in response to public requests), and whether unions or private providers objected to transit agencies providing this type of transportation (no objections to date).

Below are highlights from each of the transit agencies' programs.

BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT has no policy on children in vans since they do not allow children on vans. BFT used to operate vans for Head Start programs, but Head Start terminated the contract with BFT because of increasing regulatory restrictions. Across the country, Head Start is now using a yellow school bus or require parents to drop kids off at the school. These vans, when they were in service, made multiple trips per day.

ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens) highlights:

- 14 vans in this program
- 9 accessible vans but with vanpool logo
- Pay 2¢ mile more than vanpool fares
- Dial-A-Ride and ARC contract- ARC pays \$7 per ride



Shared Ride Conveyance:

- Taxi service evenings & Sundays in rural areas in lieu of fixed route or Dial-A-Ride service
- Evening service until 2:30 a.m.
- May take indirect route to rider's destination
- Riders may "carpool" to their destinations
- BFT pays \$19.95 to taxi company
- Rider pays regular bus fare
- Union hours reallocated when service introduced
- Service existed prior to I-695
- Service comparison: BFT averages 10,000 daily riders and 184 evening and 235 Sunday taxi rides
- Average evening ride lasts 14 minutes

Dave suggests working with institutions if other transit agencies wish to get into special use vans. This allows more control over drivers.

COMMUNITY TRANSIT: No "Other use" vans at this time, but they may introduce vanshare, where vans reside at transit centers and commuters take the vans after deboarding from buses or trains. Vanshare groups are usually charged around \$50 per month and travel minimal miles.

Daphne will follow up with details, agreements, and contracts of vanshare.

Highlights of vanshare program:

- Vans generally travel <20 miles/day
- Most funded by employers
- "Sign up" or "show up" policy
- Surplus vans used (no Rideshare license)
- About 60 in use around King County

For the past two summers, CT has had some "Special Use" vans. The program will not be renewed this year. Highlights from this program are:

- Ten vans used for a summer day camp (ages 9-14)
- 15 & 12 passenger vans
- 100 miles daily round trip
- Employees of camp paid to drive
- Drivers approved¹ by CT

INTERCITY TRANSIT: After I-695, IT's PTBA was reduced. IT no longer provides rural service but have **Community Use** vans instead. Highlights:

- Two CU vans for short term lease
- 51¢ mile charge, but fuel provided
- Agency is invoiced once per month
- Retired vanpool vehicles with magnetic Community Use van signs
- Drivers approved by IT
- Vehicle reservation required, minimum three days notice
- So far, used mostly by YMCA and Behavioral Resources
- No complaints from private sector



¹ "Approved" throughout this memo means that drivers must meet the transit agency driver requirements before being allowed to drive

Grant vehicles: Vanpool vehicles still have some value after their “useful life”, and to avoid a conflict with the “gift of public funds” issue if a van is given away, the recipient under this grant program provides “in-kind” service. Highlights:

- Four retired vanpool vehicles, 12 & 8 passenger only
- Recipient uses for any transportation needs
- Transit agency identification removed
- Typical monthly reports submitted
- No lift equipped vans
- Recipient provides insurance, maintenance, & fuel
- Passengers not charged for rides
- After two years, recipient receives title to van
- Vehicles did not reduce IT union hours

Carolyn will email contracts on Community Use and Grant vehicles.

Waldorf van:

- Van used to transport children to a school
- Parents drive the van
- Drivers approved by IT
- Van no longer in service

ISLAND TRANSIT has no special use vans at this time but they are discussing “out of the box” ideas for alternative or expanded use of vanpool vans.

PIERCE TRANSIT: Loop service is couple years old, now recognized as **Bus Plus**. Highlights:

- Contractor used for paratransit services
- Serves rural areas only, three routes
- Vehicle painted with Bus Plus identification
- Seen as precursor to fixed route

PT also had two **Day Care School** vans. This program has also not been renewed. Some highlights of this program are:

- Vans used are >3 years old
- Two round trips per day
- <20 miles traveled per day

ESD/JARC van highlights:

- Started as “feeder” service but proved unsuccessful
- JARC recipients allowed transportation for 90 days
- Drivers driver 20 hours/week for 6 months
- PT now gives \$70,000 to ESD, who operates the service
- PT administers contract
- ESD provides all insurance, maintenance, and fuel and driver training

Special Use/Business Use van highlights:

- Purpose is to meet transportation needs at local businesses
- Pay \$370 month and 30¢ mile except service miles



- These are not vanpool vans sitting at worksites
- Vehicles have vanpool logos
- No children <18 years old permitted
- Separate agreements for businesses or social agencies who generally can't provide insurance
- Business Use vans are similar to Special Use vans but are vanpool vehicles which sit idle during the day.

Special Use Shuttle by Acres Landing:

- Primarily ADA clients
- If >500 trips made during month, PT pays Acres Landing \$500
- PT provides insurance, maintenance, & fuel
- Acres Landing pays drivers

Workfirst grant Van:

- Community Jobs hires van drivers through TANFF grant
- Now handled through Workfirst at Community College
- Drivers get credits and job training

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PIERCE TRANSIT PROGRAMS, [CLICK HERE](#).

JEFFERSON TRANSIT: (From Curtis Stacey)

We have a Community Van Program that allows non-profit and social service agencies to borrow, for a low per mile charge, a 15 passenger van. The user group has to have a driver who has jumped Jefferson Transit's driver eligibility hoops. Vans are allowed for a wide variety of uses. The program has helped us to provide a benefit in return for tax support to many, many more people than ever board a fixed route bus, bolstering support for transit in general within our community.

We also are involved in using vans in a jobs access program. This is a JARC grant funded program that places participants onboard regular fixed route buses when they serve the participant but provides a van ride door to door during off hours or to areas not served by fixed route.

WHATCOM TRANSIT: WTA has two non-traditional van use programs.

Commuter Connection program highlights:

- Introduced in lieu of fixed route service in rural areas
- Riders must buy monthly bus pass (\$15)
- Driver paid to drive (through Manpower-type firm)
- Driver approved by WTA
- Minimum six riders required (but not enforced)
- Riders agree to ride 4 days/week (but not enforced)
- Riders "subscribe"
- Pick up only in rural but incorporated areas
- Drop off only at transit center in town only or along set route (but not enforced)
- Monthly reports submitted
- CC van program will end March 1, 2005



Community Use:

- Original intent was to satisfy group disaffected when fixed route service eliminated
- Now used at discretion of WTA Board/staff
- Given to an organization/entity with contractual capability
- No charge to organization—all costs covered by WTA with exception of drivers
- Volunteer drivers or drivers paid by organization
- Riders ride free
- Drivers approved by WTA through WSTIP standards
- Monthly reports submitted (same as vanpool)
- Currently used by a Developmentally Disabled residential center, the community of Point Roberts, and soon by the Lummi Nation
- Travel areas depend on contract-some may travel anywhere WTA goes, some only in designated areas.

Additional information on programs is below:

Ben Franklin says ... a copy of the ARC contract is by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Clallam Transit says ... they have no no-traditional van programs.

Grant Transit says ... they have no non-traditional or traditional van programs.

Grays Harbor says ... they have no non-traditional van programs. They are considering starting a vanpool program.

Kitsap Transit says ... they have a VanLink program. The VanLink program is designed to provide local social agencies with vans to transport their clients. This program gives the agencies the ability to schedule client outings, work programs, daycare and training as their schedule dictates. VanLink gives agencies more control over scheduling client outings or work programs. [CLICK HERE FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION](#).

Intercity Transit ... [CLICK HERE FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION](#).

Link Transit says ... they have a “loan a bus” program. They provide an ADA van to the hospital to provide trips to guests that would normally be served by paratransit services. The hospital can use the van for other trips too as long as they are also providing the paratransit services. This reduces the number of trips required by Link’s paratransit vans significantly holding down costs. The contract is available for review. [CLICK HERE FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION](#).

Mason Transit says ... they have no non-traditional van programs at this time.

Pullman Transit says ... they have no traditional or non-traditional van programs.

Skagit Transit says ... they have no non-traditional van programs.



Spokane Transit says ... they have two non-traditional van programs. The first is called "Rural feeder service." There are five vans that transport riders from their home to another pickup point where they catch a traditional vanpool. The second program is ADA vans at group homes. This is done by contract. There are currently three vans in service. [CLICK HERE FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION.](#)

Twin Transit says ... they have no traditional or non-traditional van programs.

Valley Transit says ... they have no traditional or non-traditional van programs.

Whatcom Transit ... [CLICK HERE FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION.](#)

