

Transit Manager Peer Roundtable Summary

February 6, 2020

There were approximately 48 participants. Here are notes from the roundtable and links that may be useful to attendees and others.

Electronic Fare Payment Systems

- Tim Geibel, Crawford Area Transportation Authority (CATA), Meadville, PA and a member of the National RTAP Review Board shared his experience using technology for fare payment
- CATA has 70 vehicles, running fixed route and demand response services
- Cash management an issue, because they have vehicles parked in three different areas – collecting and depositing money securely is challenging
- Purchased off the shelf technology
 - Fixed Route Fares
 - [TokenTransit.com](https://tokentransit.com), here's the CATA Token Transit page tokentransit.com/agency/crawfordpa
 - Smart phone-based app, people pay for fares/passes with a credit card and then display it on their phone
 - Easy to set up and activate the program for your system
 - Some coordination required between admin and drivers about what to look for on the passes
 - Diverted \$1,200 per month out of farebox cash
 - Very happy with it
 - [Square.com](https://square.com), here's the CATA Square site: crawford-area-transportation-authority.square.site
 - Credit card payment online/website fare
 - Passes can be picked up at the CATA office or mailed
 - Diverted \$1,100 per month out of farebox cash
 - Is often used to buy passes for elderly riders
 - Costs CATA \$3.50 a day to run both apps, plus some staff time. Otherwise, no start-up costs.
 - Diverts about \$2,000 a month out of fare box cash

- Also contract with the nearby metro system which has their own system
 - Can tie into their system
- They also work with local employers
- Nebraska
 - Has a statewide vanpool program; Kari Ruse at Nebraska DOT would be willing to talk to someone if interested
- Montana
 - An agency has a vanpool program, started using 5339 funds, but were told that if the vanpool is only for a single employer, and they're not advertising it publicly, then it is not public transit

Planning – what do you do for planning at your agency and what are the benefits?

- Tim Geibel, CATA
 - Shared that they are fortunate to have two staff dedicated to planning (Planning Manager and Data Analyst) and utilize the great data they have from their PennDOT maintenance and grant management/finance software as well as their Ecolane scheduling and dispatching software
 - They are utilizing [Unified Planning Work Program \(UPWP\)](#) funds for a human resources strategic plan
 - They're also involved in the NW Commission Regional Planning Organization (RPO) regional planning and the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan
 - He recommends being involved locally with as many agencies as possible, and getting to the table, to have your projects included in plans
- Tim also shared that they use Google Suite for various purposes, including the following, and that it's been very helpful and is totally free
 - Driver scheduling
 - Compliant forms – data collected in a spreadsheet sent to agency

New CDL training requirements and other CDL issues

- Information about the new regulations available at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/commercial-drivers-license/eldt – see especially the FAQ pages and the Related Links.
- Agencies have a challenge keeping CDL drivers (and all drivers)
 - CDL drivers can get better wages elsewhere, so transit can't compete
 - Challenge with even regular drivers finding those who can get a medical card and pass the background checks, given the very low unemployment rate
 - One agency/tribe's DOT provides access to CDL training, but people are not able to pass the MnDOT tests
- Solutions
 - Buy smaller buses to avoid having to hire CDL drivers
 - Many agencies on the call said they were doing this
 - Hire people with good customer service and train them to drive, vs. hiring professional drivers

Mobility Management - funding programs or other options for non-medical trips outside of transit agency service area

- Voucher programs are an option, like this case study in Deep East Texas that Western Transportation Institute did: https://westerntransportationinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/4W6998_DETCOG-Trans-Voucher_Final-Report_FINAL_Jan2019_wcover_2.pdf. Takeaways from that program:
 - Seniors don't like to ask for a ride, but if they can offer some amount of money to their family member or friend in exchange for the ride, they are more apt to ask
 - Riders could reimburse people at Federal Rate per mile
 - They got funding for this through the Older Americans Act funding through the local Council of Governments
- Volunteer programs
 - A new volunteer program started in the Nebraska panhandle, which has been successful so far
 - Biggest barrier is finding drivers
 - Need is significant
 - Good start, and people are very happy to find out about it, but it's a challenge
 - Another participant said they recently started a rider companion program. It's based off of volunteers that are willing to ride with people who need a little more attention and help. They offer light-duty, non-medical assistance.
 - Here are some resources for Volunteer Driver Programs:
 - National RTAP Find Anything Toolkit, Hot Topics, Volunteer Drivers: <http://www.nationalrtap.org/Toolkits/Find-Anything-Toolkit/Free-And-Low-Cost-Resources/Hot-Topics#Volunteers>
 - CTAA National Volunteer Transportation Center <https://ctaa.org/national-volunteer-transportation-center/>

Passengers without a PCA, but should have one

- One agency's policy is that drivers are not caretakers; they can offer light assistance getting passengers door to door, but the passengers have to be able to travel on their own. It is detrimental to their safety not to have a PCA with them.
 - Drivers are encouraged to call in issues like these. If there is an issue, the transit agency staff calls the passenger's case manager or caretaker. Or if that's not possible, they would call the Aging Resources Agency or similar, if it is an elderly person living at home, and have someone do an evaluation.
 - The agency has to deny people rides if they don't have a PCA with them and need more assistance than the driver can provide, per the policy. Unfortunately, that sometimes means that that person will not get a ride where they need to go.
- One agency mentioned volunteer programs for people who only need a little help

Electric Bus Implementation

- Curious to see how the implementation in Duluth, MN goes, because in cold areas electric buses won't run for long periods of time

NTD – experience of those agencies that report directly to FTA/NTD vs. to the state

- Those agencies who have to report directly say it is difficult and very time consuming
- CTAA is trying to right-size this, no relief expected soon

National RTAP Requests – you can still email responses to etaylor@nationalrtap.org

- Collecting Scheduling and Dispatching related photos for new manual and eLearning course – email to etaylor@nationalrtap.org and we will send a photo release form
- Does anyone offer active shooter or sexual harassment training for their staff and if so, do you have recommendations for trainers or training programs?
 - One participant said Sheriff departments in our Oklahoma counties have provide active shooter training as lunch and learn topics for businesses, chamber members, groups in communities...potentially a free resource
 - Another participant said TSA does their Active Shooter Training
 - One participant said they would be interested in a new active shooter training
- How do you collect/track the data for NTD?
- What else can National RTAP do for you?
 - One participant said they need more in-depth training for TrAMS