

AGENDA
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING
December 21, 2011
5:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

- | | | |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| 1) | APPROVAL OF AGENDA | 1 min. |
| 2) | PUBLIC COMMENT
<i>Public Comment Note: This is the place on the agenda where the public is invited to address the Authority on any issue. The person speaking is requested to sign-in on the General Public Comment Form for submittal to the Clerk of the Board. When your name is called, step up to the podium and give your name and address for the audio record. If you are unable to utilize the podium, you will be provided a microphone at your seat. Citizens testifying are asked to limit testimony to three minutes.</i> | 10 min. |
| 3) | INTRODUCTIONS & RECOGNITIONS -
A. Farewell to Citizen Representative Eve Johnson <i>(Chair Romero)</i> | 15 min. |
| 4) | APPROVAL OF DISCOUNTED BUS PASS PROGRAM <i>(Mike Harbour)</i> | 5 min. |
| 5) | APPOINTMENT OF A CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVE <i>(Rhodetta Seward)</i> | 5 min. |
| 6) | LEADERSHIP APTA PROJECT PRESENTATION <i>(Meg Kester)</i> | 25 min. |
| 7) | AUTHORITY ISSUES | 10 min. |
| 8) | MEETING EVALUATION | 5 min. |

ADJOURNMENT

**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
SPECIAL PROGRAM
AGENDA ITEM NO. 4
MEETING DATE: December 21, 2011**

FOR: Intercity Transit Authority

FROM: Mike Harbour, ext. 5855

SUBJECT: Proposed Grants For Award for the Discounted Bus Pass Program

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- 1) **The Issue:** To approve the award of grants under the Discounted Bus Pass Program.
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- 2) **Recommended Action:** Approve grant awards to applicants who met award criteria. Staff will provide a list of proposed awards prior to the December 21, 2011, meeting.
-
- 3) **Policy Analysis:** The Discounted Bus Pass Program is a relatively new program approved by the Authority in December 2010. The Authority approved the second year of the program at its November 2011 Authority meeting. It is the Authority's role to approve the award of any grants under this program.
-
- 4) **Background:** The Authority approved a pilot Discounted Bus Pass Program in December 2010. The program allocated up to \$200,000 in monthly bus passes for distribution to non-profit and government agencies in our community serving low-income persons. Monthly passes are available to these agencies at 50% of the regular cost through this program. Approximately \$105,000 worth of passes was made available in 2011 and actual usage is projected to be slightly less than this. A progress report was provided to the Authority which included a survey of participating agencies. The program was judged to be very effective and all agencies expressed appreciation for the program.

Twelve organizations applied for the program for 2011. Applications were due to Intercity Transit by 4:00 p.m. on December 13. It is expected the level of requests will be similar to the 2010 level.

-
- 5) **Alternatives:**
- A. Approve grant awards to applicants who met award criteria.
 - B. Approve grant awards to selected agencies.
 - C. Delay award to a later date.
-

6) **Budget Notes:** The proposed grant award is estimated to have a maximum financial loss for Intercity Transit of no more than \$60,000. This assumes all monthly passes provided through this program would be purchased at full price without this program. The program will not increase operating costs but could reduce revenue by the above amount.

7) **Goal Reference:** This agenda item addresses two goals of the Authority. Goal 1: *"Assess the transportation needs of our community."* Goal 4: *"Provide responsive transportation options."*

8) **References:** Staff will provide a list of recommended awards to the Authority prior to the December 21 meeting and the list will also be available at the meeting.

**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA ITEM NO. 5
MEETING DATE: December 21, 2011**

FOR: Intercity Transit Authority
FROM: Rhodetta Seward, 705-5856
SUBJECT: Citizen Representative Appointment

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- 1) **The Issue:** Make appointment to the Intercity Transit Authority for a Citizen Representative position, for a term to begin January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2014.
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- 2) **Recommended Action:** Appoint a person to be named at the December 21, 2011, meeting to the Citizen Representative position, for a term to begin January 1, 2012, ending December 31, 2014.
-
- 3) **Policy Analysis:** The Authority, per their bylaws, Article IV, Section 4.3 Selection – Citizen Representatives, “shall be appointed by a majority vote of the Authority for a term of three calendar years”” Upon a vacancy in a position by death, resignation or other cause, a new member will be appointed for the unexpired portion of the term, upon a majority vote of the Authority. Upon the expiration of either a partial term or the first full term of a citizen representative position, the Authority may, by a majority vote, reappoint the citizen representative for a full three-year term, provided that a citizen representative shall not be appointed to more than three consecutive full three-year terms.
-
- 4) **Background:** Citizen Representative Eve Johnson is leaving the Authority after serving three years. Her term ends December 31, 2011.

The Authority directed staff to complete a recruitment, with applications due on November 18, 2011. At the December 7, 2011, meeting, the Authority selected six applicants to be interviewed December 19. All six applicants accepted the invitation for interview.

A discussion by the Authority members will follow the interview process, and they will agree to make an appointment at the December 21, 2011, meeting. The name will be brought to the Authority for appointment.

Upon appointment, a member of the Authority will contact all applicants interviewed by December 22, 2011. Each applicant will also receive a letter signed by Chair Romero.

5) Alternatives:

- A. Appoint a person to be named at the December 21, 2011, meeting to the Authority to a term beginning January 1, 2012, ending December 31, 2014.
 - B. Appoint a different applicant to the Citizen Representative position.
 - C. Delay appointment. The Authority would function with one less member until such time as an appointment is made. This may impact quorum needs.
-

6) Budget Notes: N/A

7) Goal References: The annual appointment of a citizen representative is required per the bylaws of the Intercity Transit Authority. This does support Goal #1: *"Assess the transportation needs of our community."*

8) References: N/A

**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA ITEM NO. 6
MEETING DATE: December 21, 2011**

FOR: Intercity Transit Authority

FROM: Meg Kester, Marketing & Communications Manager, 705-5842

SUBJECT: Leadership APTA Project Presentation

1) **The Issue:** Staff will share the findings of a recent Leadership APTA project entitled *Sustaining Public Transportation: Making it Relevant for Today's Communities*.

2) **Recommended Action:** For Information.

3) **Policy Analysis:** Findings from this project research is relevant to the work of the Authority, CAC, and Intercity Transit staff as well as transit systems across the nation.

4) **Background:** The American Public Transportation Association's Leadership APTA program is a year-long intensive professional development program that includes training sessions, site visits, industry networking and a group research project related to best practices within the public transportation industry.

This research project was a 5-month effort completed in September 2011 and presented at the APTA Annual Meeting in October. Project objectives included:

- Identifying innovative and strategic approaches of leading transit systems
- Documenting why communities embrace and support transit
- Identifying universal lessons of success, and
- Summarizing and sharing key industry findings

Twenty-five transit systems were identified as model systems and selected for the diversity of services, geographic location, community size and type. The project team researched each system and then interviewed a key leader of the selected system. This included General Managers, CEOs, board members or other transit leaders. Intercity Transit was one of the 25 agencies selected.

The research question was: How have transit leaders sustained transit service and made public transportation a relevant, valued and supported asset for today's communities?

Findings from this work were shared at the APTA Annual Meeting, the APTA Marketing & Communications Committee, the Washington State Transit Association's Clerks Committee and the Washington State Transportation Symposium. The report is also posted on APTA's website.

Three Intercity Transit employees graduated from this national program.

5) **Alternatives:** N/A

6) **Budget Notes:** N/A

7) **Goal Reference:** This project meets all five agency goals.

8) **References:** Leadership APTA Report: *"Sustaining Public Transportation: Making it Relevant for Today's Communities."*



LEADERSHIP APTA CLASS OF 2011

SUSTAINING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

Making it Relevant for Today's Communities

RON DOWNING

Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District

MEG KESTER

Intercity Transit

SCOTT MILLER

HDR Engineering

BRIAN TYNAN

American Public Transportation Association





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I. INTRODUCTION

Public transportation is a major influence in how our nation's communities function today and how they will function in the future. The public transportation industry is facing tremendous economic, financial and political challenges that have broad and significant impacts on the delivery of its services to our nation's communities. But do these challenges also provide great opportunity? If so, how might industry leaders leverage the challenges of today to sustain robust transit systems of tomorrow?

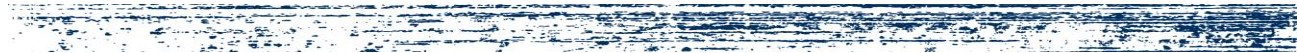
Many transit agencies have seen their funding from sales tax revenues or other state or local sources decrease to unprecedented levels, due to the prolonged economic downturn known as "The Great Recession". Many systems across the United States have had to resort to drastic actions that have included raising fares, cutting service, or both. As transit systems are "doing more with less" their experiences can provide insight regarding operational efficiencies innovative service restructuring and the leveraging resources. Transit systems are tasked to provide an adequate level of service to those individuals who depend on it for their basic mobility, while also attracting individuals who use transit by choice. There are many real and significant needs in our communities for public transportation. Communities throughout the nation are trying to address a variety of needs through public transportation. These needs include:

1. Population growth has put pressure on communities to meet an increasing need for public transportation.
2. To sustain or improve a community's quality of life, public transportation is being applied as a tool to increase economic development opportunities.
3. Public transportation is seen as an essential tool in providing access to jobs for a community's work force.
4. Communities are looking for ways to provide for the mobility needs of all citizens, including seniors, persons with disabilities and community members with limited transportation options.
5. Rising energy costs and increasing community desire to become more sustainable in the use and stewardship of resources is increasing the demand for public transportation.

Though progress in increasing the level of public transportation services and the types of services offered has been made in many communities throughout the U.S., the challenges facing the industry and the needs of our communities today is significant.

II. PROJECT PREMISE

With the many aforementioned challenges and needs faced by public transportation providers today, is there a silver lining? Can public transportation providers find success in good times and in bad; if so, how have they to leveraged opportunities and innovation? The research conducted for this study focuses on examples in small to medium sized transit systems, with some investigation into larger transit systems, of how transit leaders have sustained transit



services in their communities and made it an accepted, valued and supported resource. The research question for this study can simply be stated as: “What succeeds in today’s public transportation industry, perhaps in spite of difficult economic, financial and political challenges?”

Do today’s transit challenges offer a silver lining?

How have transit systems leveraged opportunities and innovation?

The objectives of this research project are to:

1. Identify innovative and strategic approaches used by public transportation leaders and other industry stakeholders that increase the visibility and viability of transit in their community.
2. Document where and why communities embrace, support and even elevate the value of well functioning, high quality public transportation systems.
3. Determine what can be learned from the successes and innovations of leadership within our industry that have strengthened transit systems despite the financial, political and operational challenges of today.
4. Identify what strategies and resources have been used to effectively build this support in communities and have proven to help sustain a system’s success over time.

Key questions addressed in this project are:

1. Why does transit succeed in some communities to a greater degree than in others?
2. What are the common threads and key findings transferrable to other systems and their communities?

The research project focused on high level leadership initiatives with community partners, business leaders, transit advocates, universities, and the community at large. Examples of innovative techniques investigated include successful funding measures, partnerships with a diversity of institutions, community outreach and marketing programs that increase the visibility and viability of transit among both users and non-users.

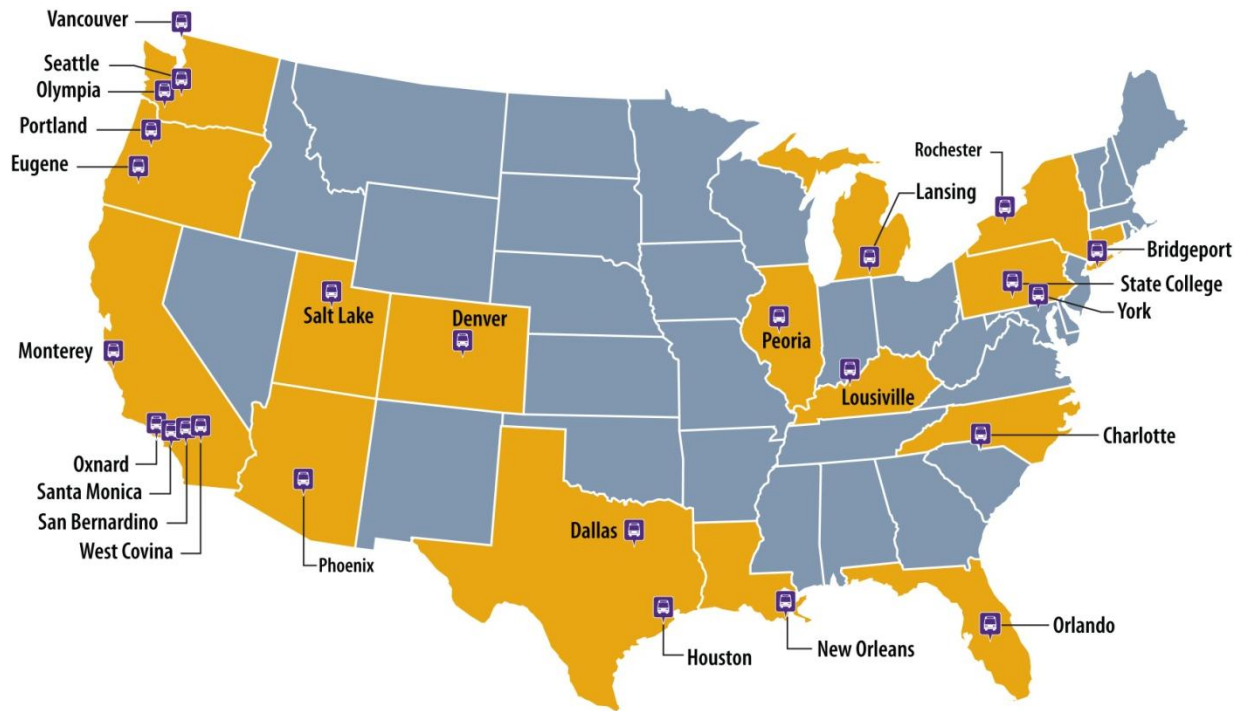
III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To identify and learn more about successful initiatives that have built and sustained public transportation within communities, the project team conducted a three-phase research process that consisted of a series of literature searches, industry studies, and one-on-one interviews with public transportation industry leaders. The industry leader interviews, which consisted of 25 public transportation system general managers and chief executives or board members, served as the primary source of research data and information. The purpose of the interviews was to gain insight into the leadership choices, effective strategies, and innovative applications successfully in practice today in a diverse cross section of communities. A key element of the research was to identify successful public transportation methods, techniques, and concepts that could potentially be transferred to other communities throughout the United States and Canada.



The selection of public transportation systems across the nation was based on a number of factors. This included: a diversity of agency sizes, some small, many mid-sized, and a few large; geographic location; diversity of services and program reputation. Figure 1 illustrates the geographic diversity of the public transportation agencies researched. A table with information on each agency profiled can be found in the appendix of this report.

Figure 1 – Map of Transit Agency Locations of Public Transportation Leaders Interviewed



IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

The insights gained through the agency research and public transportation leader interviews pointed to eight themes identified as key factors in helping public transportation systems build and maintain community support. Each of these elements, to varying degrees, was seen as important to nearly all of the 25 leaders interviewed, based on the characteristics of their respective communities and leadership philosophy. The eight key elements are identified below, with a detailed description following:

- People
- Public Outreach
- Perception
- Partnerships
- Performance
- Politics
- Projects
- Promotion



People

Relationships are key - Among the top factors identified by successful leaders in the transit industry were relationships with people. The talent of individuals, their skills sets, experience and abilities, and how they affect the work of transit, was a common theme. Relationships between the transit leader and his or her staff and board, as well as those with the myriad of other external stakeholders was identified as central to transit success - or lack thereof - in a given community.

Be visible and engaged - Included in this list of external stakeholders were community and business leaders, local and state elected officials, and federal and state legislators, union leadership and transit vendors and consultants. However, the importance of relationships does not stop inside the perimeters of the public transportation industry. Getting outside and beyond the more obvious and traditional connections was identified as a necessary and often effective means of broadening understanding and support of public transportation. Being visible and engaged in one's community by participating in membership organizations, civic clubs, community groups, and educational institutions has proven useful to many of the leaders we interviewed. And nothing is more effective than in-person exchanges, literally putting a face on transit and the agency the leader represents. Numerous General Managers (GMs) and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) indicated that this face time is priceless. Being out and about publicly was also acknowledged as an effective way to educate and engage people while nurturing or deepening useful relationships.


Successful transit agencies earn their credibility by acting as good public stewards and being accountable to the communities they operate in. This requires a two way exchange, transit to the community and the community to transit.

Board leadership sets the tone - In addition, critical to the success of a transit leader are relations with his or her agency board. Astute leaders indicated the direct correlation between successful transit agencies and having boards that work well together. Transit authorities who understand their role as policy-making entities tend to serve their respective agencies and their communities better. Numerous GMs and CEOs pointed to the value of one-on-one relationship building between themselves and board members, and how this can help address issues and enhance the staff-board and board-to-board member interface.

Invest in staff - And finally, the interviews consistently identified the need to invest in the best and brightest staff. Our team was told repeatedly that people are a primary and fundamental asset to the successful agency and its leadership.

Public Outreach

Public trust is essential - Complementing the success of relationships is a successful transit system's essential practice of public outreach. Virtually every leader interviewed indicated that acting with integrity and transparency is a key to developing the understanding, respect and support of their community. Stakeholder and public trust was viewed as critical to a community's acceptance and even advocacy for transit service, investments and programs.



Successful agencies earn their credibility by acting as good public stewards and being accountable to the communities they operate in. This requires a two way exchange; transit agency to the community and the community to the transit agency. **Steve Brown, General Manager of Gold Coast Transit in Oxnard, California** captured the sentiments of a number of leaders when he said: “Listen to your community and take their input to heart.”

The level of awareness and understanding a community has for its transit system can be much greater when the transit leader, board members and other agency personnel are regularly visible within the community and represent the agency in a positive manner. An example of this proactive approach towards public outreach can be found in the North-South light rail line to the Rose Quarter in Portland, OR. The service was originally proposed along the I-5 corridor to serve the Albina district in north Portland. The project was eventually built in a different way than engineers initially conceived it due to significant public input and engagement. This engagement involved discussions with contractors and local community groups in the affected neighborhoods. This effort included TriMet staff attending meetings and presenting information at neighborhood churches, among other locations, over a four month period. The result was a “happy solution” for various parties/interests.

Carry the right message - Ensuring that board and committee members and transit employees project the correct message is part of effective public outreach. Successful systems keep their own staff and leadership informed in areas such as Board actions, issue positions, or emerging agency and transit industry news. Thus, employees and Board members can then carry the correct message and not misinformation to the community (i.e. to riders, taxpayers, news media, community groups). This helps minimize public confusion and encourages public understanding of transit issues. Of course, transit actions must mirror its words. **John Lewis, Chief Executive Officer of LYNX, in Orlando, Florida** noted that “maintaining community support requires an extremely dedicated workforce of leaders serving the community.”

Ongoing communications is important - Successful and ongoing communications, in its many forms, was pointed to as being essential to effective community outreach. Numerous leaders noted that by developing and maintaining a presence in the community can lead to greater awareness of transit and the often complex issues surrounding its operation. Greater awareness and community education can lead to community trust and support. Examples include:



Celia Kupersmith, Deputy CEO of Sound Transit in Seattle, Washington and a former Leadership APTA chair, told us “Get out there in the community. Talk to them, get to know them, develop trust. Those who would never support transit might just like you and respect what you are doing.” She pointed to Sound Transit’s CEO Report which has been distributed weekly to stakeholders since 2002 as an example of using regular outreach and communications to engage Sound Transit’s public and rebuild the agency’s credibility which had been tarnished due to a lack of public confidence in Sound Transit’s ability to deliver capital projects on time and on-budget during the early 2000s.

Mike Harbour, General Manager of Intercity Transit in Olympia, Washington, spoke of the agency’s significant efforts to overhaul the agency’s image, rebuild the public’s trust and restore agency services following a series of devastating operational and political events in the late 1990’s. Through a significant communications program, public involvement, rebranding, and community partnerships, the agency has won two transit tax votes, rebuilt its system, witnessed numerous years of record ridership, implemented several new niche transportation programs and was recognized by APTA in 2009 as the nation’s best mid-size public transportation system.

Perception

The adage ‘perception becomes reality’ has direct application to the transit industry. Agencies that are perceived to be clean, well-run, reliable, trustworthy and caring have a high correlation of with operational success, financial support, and effective partnerships.

Reframe the way communities view public transportation - Numerous leaders indicated that an ongoing challenge is to shift the paradigm toward the view that public transportation is an essential part of our 21st century world. This 21st century paradigm includes the recognition and belief that transit is an integral part of the economic, social, and environmental fabric of our communities and that it is an important part of the working infrastructure in our

*21st Century Paradigm:
Transit is an integral part of the economic, social and environmental fabric of our communities. It is an important part of the working infrastructure in our communities.*



South Corridor study update

Planning for projects in the South Corridor, in light of the severe economic recession, has been ongoing for several months. On Thursday, the Sound Transit Board heard a staff briefing on the initial results of a three-phase South Corridor re-alignment study. First a little background. You know that because of the recession our Sound Transit revenue is down \$3.9 billion, or 25 percent lower than the 15-year financial forecast for the 2008 voter-approved ST2 plan. The downturn hit our South King County Subarea hardest, with its revenues now projected to be down \$851 million, or nearly 31 percent below estimates.

So, what are we doing about it?

The Board late last year instructed staff to evaluate the South Corridor (which includes the Pierce County Subarea) and develop a work plan of projects and services that reflects the new revenue reality. The plan includes re-evaluating projects and looking at how far light rail can extend with current revenues.

The first phase of that study found that:

- Not all South Corridor projects are affordable by 2023.
- If Link extends from Sea-Tac Airport only to South 200th Street, (instead of South 272nd) all the other non-light rail projects are affordable in the 2023 timeframe.
- Extending Link from the Airport to Highline Community College is affordable by 2023 if a few other projects are postponed beyond 2023.
- The southernmost extension of Link all the way to South 272nd Street remains unaffordable by 2023.
- The entire ST2 re-aligned program in Pierce County remains affordable by 2023.

The Board took no action on Thursday. Decisions on final design and construction are not needed for a year

IN THIS ISSUE
South Corridor study update
Sound Transit buys key Bellevue property
Bike to Work month
New Citizen Oversight Panel member

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Photo of the Week

communities. Nurturing this paradigm is done by ongoing communications and consistent messaging, effective branding, maintaining a positive image and the public trust, and providing quality transit services.

Quality is more important than the quantity of service - Our interviewees told us repeatedly, it is far better to have a high quality of service over a broad quantity of service. In other words, putting resources into delivering the best - albeit more limited - service possible will carry greater transit benefits than operating more, but mediocre, service.

Everyone likes a winner - When transit operates well, looks good and delivers on community priorities, it is perceived in a positive light and is far more apt to receive community interest, use and support.

Branding is critical - Branding, used effectively by the private sector for decades, was pointed to often by the transit leaders we spoke with. Branding was more than an agency's bus colors and logo, it is about the personality of transit, and when done effectively is both bold and subtle and always strategic. Examples of successful branding include Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus and New Orleans Lil' Easy.

Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus, known for its strong and recognizable brand. This brand works very well in the hip, progressive community of Santa Monica. Other systems profiled through this research recognized for their strong and effective branding include Rabbit Transit, Tri Met, Sound Transit, Monterey-Salinas Transit, LYNX, and Gold Coast Transit.



The Lil' Easy service operated by Veolia and New Orleans RTA is a deviated fixed-route service put into operation following Hurricane Katrina. The community needed transportation badly and the existing fixed-route service could not

function following the severe devastation to the region. The New Orleans community became engaged in many aspects of this new service, including the naming, design and brand of the service, which led to the community owning and embracing it. This is an example of transit service being viewed as important, valued and relevant to many.



Expand Beyond Traditional Roles - Especially during these challenging economic times, transit leaders must go beyond just running a transit system. Whether being a mobility manager or seeking out partnerships within a community in the broader field of transportation, transit must seek out a broader audience. Among multiple examples of expanding beyond traditional roles, two are presented below:

Carl Sedoryk, Chief Executive Officer of Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) in California has developed a wide range of partnerships that include Jazz Festival shuttle service, express service to Department of Defense installations at the Presidio of Monterey and from Salinas to



Monterey-Salinas Transit

Fort Hunter Liggett near Paso Robles, California. Additionally, Carl has established a partnership with Amtrak California to operate buses that connect with Amtrak trains from Monterey to San Jose. This partnership has gone well beyond the traditional role of limiting operations to local fixed route service in a small urban area. These efforts have expanded the visibility of MST in new ways throughout its service area. Most importantly, these partnership services have brought

new revenues to the system at a time when local and state revenue sources have been declining and thus have helped buoy MST during tough economic times.

Rich Farr, Executive Director of Rabbit Transit in York, Pennsylvania informed the study team about Rabbit Transit's "Rabbit Express" service. The "Rabbit Express" provides commuter trips to employment centers as far away as the Baltimore suburbs, approximately 44 miles. Rabbit Transit operates a traditional fixed route system in a




small urban area that carries mostly transit dependent community. By offering high-quality commuter service to employment destinations, Rabbit Transit has cultivated a new group of constituents who benefit from the service that it provides and who can help advocate for the system. In summary, transit leaders should seek out new services to markets that are outside of the ones they traditionally serve. These new markets, particularly for commuter service can help build support for a system during difficult economic times.

Partnerships

Partnerships are proven mechanisms that leverage the resources of multiple organizations to meet both the needs of the community and the needs or interest of transit. They can dramatically contribute to ridership, operational funding, capital projects, and more. And, partnerships often enable transit to become relevant to segments of the population that otherwise would not have reason to connect with transit.

Transit advocates are often found through partnerships and are usually far more credible in endorsing transit than the transit agency itself.

Expand transit's 'circle of influence' - Many of the leaders we spoke with talked about the importance of expanding their agency's 'circle of influence' through both traditional and non-traditional alliances. Transit CEOs and GMS also indicated they are always looking for ways to develop advocates and ambassadors. Advocates are often found or developed through partnerships and are usually far more credible in their endorsement of transit than the agency itself could be.



Leverage resources to meet needs - Our research found multiple examples of significant transit support due to the engagement of transit in particular alliances that resulted in a win-win scenario. Examples of leveraging resources include:

Carl Sedoryk of MST was instrumental in developing important partnerships that brought both new resources to and increased visibility for that system. The significant partnership between the Monterey-Salinas system and the Department of Defense centered on a plan to build a large parking garage at the Presidio of Monterey. Persuaded by an opportune and astute transit leader to invest in transit service, instead, transit is now serving a new and sizable population. Another partnership with Amtrak California restored a link between Monterey and rail service in San Jose. Both partnerships increased MST's visibility among a public that might not have used the regular local fixed route service. The result is approximately \$400,000 annually in new financial resources to the system and additional support for the system in that community.

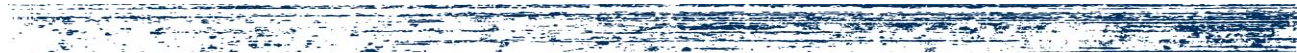
Debra Alexander, Assistant Executive Director of Capital Area Transportation Authority in Lansing, Michigan, noted CATA's highly successful transit program with Michigan State University. Transit ridership on CATA was 950,000 in 1999, the first year of the service. In 2010, ridership on campus had almost quadrupled to 3.5 million trips and provides a win-win arrangement for everyone.

Milo Victoria, General Manager of OMNITRANS in San Bernardino, California, noted the inter-jurisdictional group, the San Bernardino Association of Governments, as being key to successfully implementing some of the agency's significant projects and addressing the needs of its 15 jurisdictions. OMNITRANS efforts include starting a 10-corridor BRT system, providing a popular College Free Pass program, running a successful job training program for at-risk youth, and working with jurisdictions to build a major new multi-modal center.

Thomas Lucek, Vice President First Transit and General Manager of CityLink in Peoria, Illinois explained that partnerships are a means of drawing in non-riders. Because the citizens of Peoria, IL provide support to CityLink through the local property tax, the agency looks for ways for the non-rider to benefit. They work to connect with the community through support for the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure (Susan was from Peoria), providing free service to support the thousands of people who participate in the race for the cure. The free service is the commitment (cost is \$9,000 to provide the service). CityLink provides similar service for the Easter Seals Polo match, and the regional Symphony and Historical Society. These activities demonstrate the agency's commitment to the community and, in turn, are leading to community support for the agency. By getting non-riders onto the system for special events, they become trial riders, learn to appreciate the service, and to see the added benefits that accrue from the investment of their tax dollars.

Performance

In many respects, the importance of certain concepts explored in this project may seem obvious. But in management and leadership, even the most obvious principles must be reemphasized and not taken for granted. It was repeatedly emphasized by leaders such as **Gary**



Thomas, President and Executive Director of Dallas Area Regional Transit (DART) in Dallas, Texas that “there are certain basic tenets to what we do.” Providing clean, safe, reliable quality transportation service is the basic transit mission. When this is done well, the community responds positively.

Service operations shapes everything - Repeated throughout the interviews, General Managers and CEOs stressed that clean, safe and reliable service will always shape the level of support you have in the community. It is very important to not lose sight of this. An agency’s performance is without question a significant factor that drives ridership. People gravitate to quality and they are much more likely to accept some of the basic inconveniences of public transportation if it is clean, safe and reliably on time. But, more than for just the transit rider, performance also shapes the perception of the non-rider stakeholders in the community. The performance is often closely monitored by the media, particularly in larger metropolitan areas. It can also shape the views of the business community which is often critical in advancing agency projects and funding initiatives. And agency performance can impact the confidence of policymakers and federal and state oversight agency personnel, impacting future funding decisions in their spheres of influence.

Market research is invaluable - Numerous transit leaders indicated the importance of understanding who is using their services, how the community interacts with their system, to what degree people may be aware of existing services and what the key transportation issues are within the community. Solid market research is a strategic tool that can be very valuable in helping to define market potential, budgetary applications, work force training and organizational priorities. It is another means of hearing from the customer and measuring the community’s attitude toward transit.

Work for today but plan for the future - Today’s operations are critical, but long term planning centered on the needs of the community is also important to sustaining the agency in the future. Planning future operations – quality operations – factors into how the agency will effectively serve the community in the future. Multiple transit leaders pointed to the need for transit agencies to have visionaries.

One example of this is apparent in British Columbia, Canada. Thinking strategically and with a long term plan, TransLink, in Vancouver, stabilized its operation and offset volatile funding levels by fighting for funding diversification. The funding TransLink receives today is derived equally from property tax, sales tax and one-third from provincial and federal sources.

Focus on moving from an operating culture to a customer experience culture.

Doug Kelsey Chief Operating Officer, Trans Link, Vancouver, BC

Numerous transit leaders cautioned on rapid growth. An agency must grow to meet the needs of a growing community, but growth that occurs at a pace faster than the agency can manage will lead to performance failures and potentially have negative impacts on the confidence of the community and community leaders.

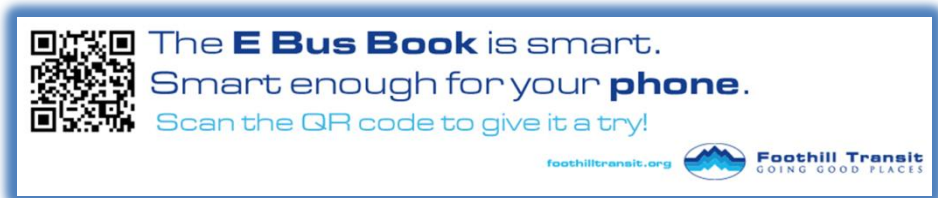


Build from the basics - Growth must be managed thoughtfully and effectively, but a transit leader must consider more than agency expansion. Innovation can also be an element of performance. Leading systems are able to move into innovative programs and services if they first take care of the basics.

This implies the need to invest in 'smart' assets, which can include everything from employees experience, skills and training, to the use of emerging technology to administer and improve service and enhance the user experience. This is where performance becomes more than just the clean, safe and reliable aspect. It is also about how transit integrates into the community and into the lifestyles of the customers.

The approach needs to be pervasive throughout all aspects of the operation with which customers come into contact – including elements like electronic applications and fare media – those can just as easily make the connection between the transit agency and the customer's community.

At Foothill Transit, West Covina, California, they are utilizing web ads with QR (Quick Response)




codes that link to their "E Bus Book", providing riders with quick, easy, and accessible bus route information – making the agency more of a connection to the riders' community.

Transit might not be "sexy", but it does need to be attractive to draw people in. Success in this area can also be a solid - and sometimes even surprising - indicator of how closely connected the agency is to the community. In State College, Pennsylvania, when the Center Area Transportation Authority (CATA) first implemented an "app" for the iPhone®, they had 5,000 downloads in the first month. Recently, they exceeded 15,000 downloads, a significant number for a community of approximately 100,000 in population – one in seven members of this relatively small central Pennsylvania community decided to put CATA on their iPhone. This is agency performance connecting to the community at its finest.

Politics

Agency creation, structure and visionary leadership - Politics is not an appealing concept given the state of affairs in Washington today. Public confidence in Congress, the President, and elected officials in general is currently at an all-time low (September 2011). However, the place of politics in the development of the transit agency/community relationship is unavoidable. The importance of the political concept is embodied in several different considerations. In some cases, G-s cited their "creation" and structural makeup as being fundamental to their identity, and in turn, to how their community viewed them and the level of support they had. In the early 1980s, when Dallas approved a 1 percent sales tax, the vision and courage of their Board was critical to push the effort through. The resulting revenue contributed to the ability of DART to purchase 250 miles of right of way in the 1980s. This in turn would lead to the



opening of their first light rail line in 1996. Although support of the community did not exist at first, once that first line opened the support of the community blossomed.

For Foothill Transit, the agency was created to be responsive to the participating cities following a specific decision to carve the service area out of the larger network. **Doran Barnes, Vice President Veolia Transit and Executive Director Foothill Transit, in West Covina, California** emphasized that their community relations approach is deeply tied to the creation of the agency and essentially built into its origins. For other agencies, such as the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) there may have been more of a key point in the history that defined the agency's persona more than the creation or structural decision. NORTA's decision to resist the move to rubber wheel vehicles is seen as the defining point that made New Orleans the oldest continuing rail system in the U.S., and contributed to the streetcar embodying the fabric of culture in New Orleans. In Louisville, Kentucky, the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) Board chose to adopt a mission statement 16 years ago that identified "transportation opportunities that enhance the social, economic and environmental well-being of the greater Louisville community" as its primary purpose. Not the common view of the political concept, but in many ways, these defining decisions are very political.

Defining points in time are elements that shape community support, but over which the typical general manager has little control. They contribute to a 'how did we get here' type of understanding and also reflect the visionary leadership of the individuals and Boards who created the systems. And that vision leads to the need to fight for investment in infrastructure. Willingness to fight contributes to relevancy. But that willingness to fight also ties into strategic long-term thinking – where planning for the future of the community – is a fundamental, and often political – undertaking.

Relationships - Even if not all relationships are political, they are nonetheless important in the apolitical arena. They can involve the relationships built with riders and members of the general public, to the relationships that a transit leader nurtures within government agencies and among elected officials. As **Justin Augustine, Vice President of Veolia and Chief Executive Officer of NORTA, in New Orleans, Louisiana** explained, "Running a public authority you need to have a good connection to the political structure (whether the city council, city agencies, or both)." This can often seem daunting for the manager of a public authority. Ethics responsibilities may seem to naturally conflict with the unsavory side of politics. But in order to consistently build new relationships it is important to get out and schmooze. It's important to reach out beyond the typical transit/transportation comfort zone, and "get to other people's cocktail parties," as urged by **Greg Evans, Board Member of Lane Transit District, in Eugene, Oregon**. This is where you will make many of the relationships that lead to innovative opportunities and partnerships.

This interaction does not suggest stepping beyond existing legal or ethical boundaries, but is about participating in more than just the formal community meetings and industry events. It is about face time – before Chambers of Commerce and Rotaries, but also unexpected groups – those completely unrelated to transportation. At Foothill Transit, the involvement of senior

staff on the foundation board for a local community college led to later discussions about a student pass program. As APTA's 2010 General Manager of the Year, **Hugh Mose of CATA in State College, Pennsylvania** explained that "it doesn't take much money, but you must invest the time."

Projects

Leverage the opportunity for community engagement and 'buy in' - Community engagement is not the primary purpose for pursuing a new light rail or bus rapid transit line, but projects are opportunities to address the community's needs and engage them to get the buy in and the ownership. They are also an opportunity for the community to recognize and advocate for their own needs – bringing out advocates who champion transit's relevance. Further, focusing on and emphasizing the economic development role of the agency, its service and its projects, allows the community to see the value from a different angle. This is true for both large and small agencies.

Major transit projects provide an opportunity to focus on economic development and community benefit.

Many systems are seeing consistent community interest, attention, and even pressure coming at them over the next project, whether it is a new station, intermodal center, or rail line. In Dallas, it was the success of the initial rail expansion that contributed to community support – providing something tangible for the people to experience and better understand. Today, the priority for the cities in the region is development around DART stations, so the agency focuses its efforts on economic development, working hard to promote TOD with the cities, developers and the communities. Additionally, in post-Katrina New Orleans, transportation was seen as more than just mobility, but largely looked at for redevelopment and revitalization of the business, political and neighborhood structures. Projects such as the Loyola Corridor promised \$1.1 billion in new development, including improvements in particularly transit dependent neighborhoods. In Louisville, TARC is looking at BRT development in its long range planning in order to address community needs resulting from decades of unfocused development.



Even smaller projects like a transportation/multimodal center can help shape and redefine a community's center, like a transit hub in Peoria. The Peoria Chamber of Commerce stated that, "Visible evidence of...growth [is] the long-awaited transit hub...just completed in downtown Peoria across from the Peoria Civic Center. Peoria can't be beat when it comes to meeting the modern transportation needs of our residents and visitors, combining creativity and solution-based innovation."

In this case, the Chamber of Commerce has taken ownership of the benefit of the project, and used it to further sell the strength of the community for business growth. When community groups and leaders buy into the benefits, they help to promote transit.

Promotion

Tell the transit story - The last of the eight keys to success defined by our research is promotion of the transit system. Telling transit's story has certainly been a recent focus for the industry. Attention in this area was emphasized by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) for the simple reason that often individuals and organizations hesitate to 'self-promote' and yet promotion of service and benefits is critical to making connections with the community



and advancing the interests of public transportation generally. It is important to continually promote multiple benefits of transit (environmental, social, economic benefits; special events, role as emergency responders, etc.) lest the public forget. Repetition in communications and marketing is paramount to effective message delivery and good marketing and communications is essential.

While it is important to promote the benefits of and successes of transit, it can also be equally important to tell the story when it is bad news. For example, APTA has asked agencies to tell the story of what a 30 percent cut to federal funding will mean to their services. Many agencies have worked to tell that story in a positive light, emphasizing the benefits that will be forgone without the continued level of support from the federal program. In contrast, not telling your transit story provides an opening for someone else to do so, such as the news media or editorial boards, transit critics, community members or customers. The danger is that the story someone else puts out may not be accurate and can be harmful to the transit system.

Transit is beholden to a broad and diverse audience - It is important to recognize that transit is 'owned' by its communities, not just beholden to existing riders. Our research found a wide spectrum of community support groups. In Peoria, it is the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and supporters of the Peoria Symphony Orchestra. In Dallas, the business community provides support for transit, while in State College support comes from the University of Pennsylvania. In other cities, support for transit comes directly from a community's grass roots; in New Orleans it is the recovering neighborhoods that have become key transit supporters, while in Portland, transit is an essential part of the city's reputation for quality of life. Attention to these types of broader audiences can reap tremendous benefits. Public outreach, relationship building and the forging of partnerships are all critical and effective methods of promotion. When the broader community has a stake in the transit system, it is much more inclined to support the needs of the agency in fulfilling its core transportation mission. In conclusion, agencies must be

It is important to recognize that transit is 'owned' by its communities, not just beholden to existing riders.

aggressive in getting out into the community and building relationships. Telling transit's story and highlighting major accomplishments as well as community benefits is essential in helping transit become part of the fabric of the community.

V. SUMMARY

Through system research and interviews with key industry leaders in the spring of 2010, eight key themes emerged that demonstrate how transit systems effectively connect with their communities and how they can sustain themselves, and perhaps even thrive, in difficult times. The eight key themes are: the People inside and outside the transit agency that impact it; transit's interface with its community or Public Outreach; the way transit is viewed, Perception; how transit Partnerships work within communities; the Performance of transit; the Politics of transit; and transit Projects and Promotion.

Each of these themes has been explored across a wide range of geographic areas, among systems of different sizes, and various modes and operating environments. Even amid the diversity of systems and the ways in which those systems were delivering transportation services to their respective communities, these common themes emerged. We believe many of these themes and the findings of this report have universal applicability and therefore are largely transferrable to other systems throughout the U.S. and Canada. Our research found where communities see their public transportation system as relevant and meaningful, transit is usually successful and better able to sustain an effective operation, even through difficult times. Successful transit leaders have made public transportation a part of the fabric of their communities through various practices. The good news is that much of these practices are readily transferrable to other systems.

People - Nearly all the transit leaders who were interviewed indicated that the CEO or General Manager's ability to lead people and motivate people is key to an organization's success. Relationships are key. They are central to transit success – or failure. Relationships are what give a leader – and more importantly his or her agency – stature (or not). Stakeholders, the 'stockholders' of transit are a diverse group. They are an agency's employees and board membership, community and business leaders, city managers and jurisdictional staff, community groups, schools, human service organizations, elected officials and legislators, unions, vendors and more.



The executive's relationship to the governing board is vital to an agency's ability to succeed in a community because a well-functioning board and executive leadership that achieve results will resonate with the community it serves. Our team also learned that employees are key to an organization's success. "Bring in the brightest and best employees and then leverage their

talent” was addressed by many of the industry leaders we spoke with **Carolyn Flowers, Chief Executive Officer of Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) in South Carolina** had a complementary perspective: “Stay connected everywhere to your governing body and your employees. My success is their success.” **Phillip Washington, Chief Executive Officer of the Denver Regional Transit District (RTD) in Colorado** noted “People are your most important resource. Take care of them.”

Expand Beyond Traditional Roles - Transit leaders have told us that you must start beyond the traditional role of just operating a transit system in order to seek out a broader audience. **Carl Sedoryk of MST** has developed a partnership shuttle and express services, bringing new revenues to the system. Similarly, **Rich Farr of Rabbit Transit** has developed express service to regional employment centers to capture new choice riders, further expanding support for transit in that community.

Opportunities and Partnerships - Successful systems look for ways to expand their ‘circle of influence’. This is done in part through traditional and non-traditional partnerships (such as colleges, community events, major employers human service agencies and unlikely alliances). It is the notion of transit identifying and meeting community needs and by doing so, becoming relevant to segments of the population that otherwise would not have a reason to connect with transit. Working partnerships often benefit transit not only by raising awareness or public opinion of transit services but by increasing ridership and encouraging new funding sources. Finding the “win-win” is of strategic and operational value.

Ron Kilcoyne, former Chief Executive Officer of Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority (GBTA) in Connecticut said “don’t be afraid to be innovative and entrepreneurial.” One of GBTA’s most successful and visible services is a service called the “Coastal Link” that stretches from Milford to Norwalk, a distance of 23 miles. The service is jointly operated by the transit agencies in Bridgeport, Norwalk, and Milford and provides service as frequently as every 20 minutes during peak times.

Networking - The importance of networking was emphasized repeatedly during our interviews. Ron Kilcoyne said “Be out there. Get to know as many of your stakeholders in the community on their turf. Show interest in their issues, attend their meetings and volunteer to serve on task forces.” **Rich Farr of Rabbit Transit** echoed that sentiment, noting that “You have to be at the table. Go to the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization.” **Celia Kupersmith of Sound**



Transit summed it up by stating that “In addition to providing service, it is imperative to “get out there in the community---talk to them, get to know them, develop trust. Those who would never support transit might just like you and respect what you are doing.” The philosophies of these transit leaders and many others confirm that the perception of transit as an integral part

of the community goes beyond just putting service on the street. It is also about connecting with the community, not only the people who use the service on a regular basis, but also developing a sense of relevancy and support among those who are likely not to directly interface with it but for whom are transit stakeholders just the same.

Transit leadership can also be a lonely endeavor, especially when hard decisions must be made. Several of the executives interviewed spoke to the value of maintaining a broad network of colleagues inside the transportation industry and the value of having a diversity of perspectives available to help an executive address an issue. One GM noted “Challenge is your friend,” indicating that out of challenging situations often come constructive action.


Communications - Most if not all of the executives we interviewed consistently pointed to the importance of communications. We heard it was imperative to be consistent with one’s message and that the actions of the agency and its people must fit with its words. Consistency of message will help build public trust; inconsistency or schizophrenic action can destroy it. Communication takes many forms, from publications and reports, media coverage, rider communications, web and social media, face-to-face interactions, etc. Critical to effective and consistent communications is nurturing an agency culture where its employees and agency leadership understand and embrace the agency’s mission and where they are constantly informed about and empowered to deliver on the priorities of the agency.

Service Quality - Service quality was uniformly described as critical component of transit service is acceptance and support-- by the community. **Tom Lucek of CitiLink** told us “Position your agency to be a positive connection to the community’s way of life, ensure that your buses and facilities are clean and service is on time, and the community will respond.” **Carolyn Flowers of CATS** indicated in the case of Charlotte Area Transit, “Service quality is key to ridership. You can only sell what you are delivering.” **Mike Harbour of Intercity Transit** made similar comments emphasizing the need to deliver the basic transit service extremely well. These findings confirm that it is better to operate a smaller amount of quality service and deliver it well than to provide more but mediocre service. Our finding is that clean, safe and reliable quality service will always shape the level of support you have in a community.

Technology - Technology presents the opportunity to improve the customer experience while introducing efficiencies. While some transit riders are the “early adapters” who will eagerly embrace each new technology that a transit system introduces, a different subset of riders can be extremely uncomfortable with being required to transition from what they have been



accustomed to a new method. According to **Justin Augustine of New Orleans RTA**, some of the success in the community with that agency’s introduction of an electronic fare card was helped by naming it the “Jazzy Card.” All transit agencies are embracing technology to one extent or another and key to that success is remembering that the customer’s experience with that technology is key to how the community perceives the transit system.



Identity - Those transit systems that have eye-catching graphics, attractive fleet vehicles, logos and other effective brand applications have generally a higher level of community awareness and support. However, it is more than the snappy graphics or bold marketing that draw people to and make systems successful. It is the system's ability to fulfill its brand image and the community's trust that the system will deliver on its brand promise. Branding has worked effectively for many decades in the private sector; it is now also being done effectively in the public sector. Some well-recognized transit brand examples include the aforementioned City of Santa Monica's "Big Blue Bus" and New Orleans's "Lil' Easy" systems. Having a brand that the community likes and can identify with can increase the visibility and influence of transit in the community among non-riders.


Integrity - Transit leaders were uniform in their insights that acting with integrity is perhaps that most important principle in establishing community support for a transit system. **Philip Washington of Denver Regional Transit District (RTD) in Denver, CO** noted that it is important to "Be very transparent." In moving forward plans to expand Denver's rail system, the public endorsed a very ambitious plan that proved not sustainable under changing economic conditions. Rather than tell the public that they would get the full rail system at some to-be-determined time, Philip Washington communicated with the community that a smaller plan was more financially feasible at this time, given funding constraints. While the public may have been disappointed that the full plan would not be built in the near-term, they appreciated the candor and level of communication presented by RTD staff that allowed the public to understand the specifics of where funding for transit capital improvements comes from, what the constraints are on those funds and what is realistically attainable at this time. Similarly, **Gary Thomas President and Executive Director of Dallas Area Regional Transit (DART) in Dallas, TX** highlighted the importance of their 20 year financial plan as providing transparency that provided the added benefit of building trust and confidence within the Dallas business community. **Ron Kilkoyn of GBTA** noted that it is "Important to be open and honest. If not, it will catch up with you" and "If there is a problem, let the Board know immediately. Don't be defensive, but be matter-of-fact and open."

Conclusion

Our team found that there is indeed a silver lining in how public transportation leaders have been able to navigate challenging economic times while building support for transit in their communities. Eight concepts consistently emerged from our team's interviews with public transportation leaders:

- **People** – Leverage the relationships, talents and interests of your employees governing board and community members.
- **Expand beyond traditional roles** – Go beyond operation of a traditional transit.
- **Opportunities for partnerships** – Don't be afraid to be innovative.
- **Networking** – Be at the table and get to know as many stakeholders as possible on their turf.
- **Communications** – Consistency of message will build public trust.



- 
- **Service quality** – Do your core service well and focus on the complete trip and customer experience.
 - **Technology** – Introduce efficiencies while improving the customer interface.
 - **Identity** – Have a relatable image that the community identifies with.
 - **Integrity** – Be open and honest and act as a good public steward. If not, it will catch up with you.

Successful transit leaders have made transit a part of the fabric of their communities. The application of the key concepts for building and maintaining support for public transportation vary among transit systems; however, the study team found numerous practices that are indeed transferrable to other public transportation systems.

In summary, the key takeaways of our research are:

- Transit succeeds through innovative and strategic approaches
- Transit is embraced when communities are engaged
- Transit is relevant when relationships and partnerships are formed
- Transit's success in the identified communities is transferable to other systems



APPENDIX



Three elements are included in this appendix to provide additional details about the research and interviews conducted as part of this study. These elements include an agency profile matrix of each public transportation leader interviewed, a list of the standardized questionnaire used for each interview and a summary of all 25 interviews conducted.

Agency Profile Matrix

Table 1 identifies the public transportation leaders interviewed as part of this research project.

Table 1 – Public Transportation Industry Leaders Interviewed

Name	Transit Agency, City, State	Annual Ridership (000s)*	Bus	Rail
Mark Aesch Chief Executive Officer	Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA) – Rochester, NY	17,099.80	x	
Mike Alegria Chief Executive Officer	Utah Transit Authority (UTA) – Salt Lake City, UT	37,219.00	x	x
Debra Alexander Assistant Executive Director	Capital Area Trans. Authority (CATA) – Lansing, MI	11,373.80	x	
Justin Augustine Chief Executive Officer; Vice President Veolia	New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) – New Orleans, LA	15,468.60	x	x
J. Barry Barker Executive Director	Transit Authority of River City (TARC) - Louisville, KY	15,916.10	x	
Doran Barnes Exec. Dir; Veolia VP Transit Mgmt.	Foothill Transit – West Covina, CA	14,284.00	x	
Steven P. Brown General Manager	Gold Coast Transit (GCT) – Oxnard, CA	3,509.40	x	
Ken Driggs former Chief Executive Officer	Valley Metro – Phoenix, AZ	21,461.80	x	x
Greg Evans Board Member	Lane Transit District (LTD) – Eugene, OR	11,924.00	x	
Rich Farr Executive Director	Rabbit Transit – York, PA	1,622.40	x	
Carolyn Flowers Chief Executive Officer	Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) – Charlotte, NC	25,650.30	x	x
George Grenias Chief Executive Officer	Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) – Houston, TX	88,510.70	x	x
Fred Hansen former General Manager	Tri Met – Portland, OR	108,551.80	x	x
Michael S. Harbour General Manager	Intercity Transit – Olympia, WA	5,127.30	x	
Doug Kelsey Chief Operating Officer	TransLink – Vancouver, BC Canada	313,289.60 ^A	x	x
Ron Kilcoyne Chief Executive Officer	Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority (GBTA) – Bridgeport, CT	5,390.80	x	

Name	Transit Agency, City, State	Annual Ridership (000s)*	Bus	Rail
Celia Kupersmith Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Sound Transit – Seattle, WA	19,667.90	x	x
John Lewis Chief Executive Officer	LYNX – Orlando, FL	24,616.00	x	x
Thomas N. Lucek, P.E. General Manager; VP First Transit	CityLink, Greater Peoria Mass Transit District- Peoria, IL	2,785.60	x	
Hugh Mose General Manager	Center Area Transportation Authority (CATA) – State College, PA	7,098.60	x	
Stefanie Negriff Director of Transit Services	Santa Monica’s Big Blue Bus – CA	20,207.60	x	
Carl Sedoryk General Manager, Chief Executive Officer	Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) – Monterey, CA	15,010.30	x	
Gary Thomas President/Executive Director	Dallas Area Regional Transit (DART) – Dallas, TX	65,009.10	x	x
Milo Victoria General Manager	OMNITRANS – San Bernardino, CA	15,452.80	x	
Phillip A. Washington General Manager	Denver Regional Transit District (RTD) – Denver, CO	98,205.20	x	x

*Source: 2009 National Transit Database


^ASource: <http://www.translink.ca/en/About-TransLink/Media/2011/February/TransLink-2010-Ridership.aspx>


Standardized Interview Questionnaire

The interviews were conducted by the four project team members individually. To ensure consistency between interviews, a standardized questionnaire was developed. The interview questions are provided below, while a summary of the results from the interviews are provided in the final section of this Appendix.

1. Briefly, what sets your system apart? (Looking for general observations and softball ‘icebreaker’ question)

2. What are the key accomplishments your agency has seen that you think most impact community engagement with your system (open comment plus check off all areas that apply – ask as open question, but probe based on some of the items in the list if necessary)
 - a. Strong ridership
 - b. Support via taxes or other funding
 - c. Active partnerships
 - d. Engaged board/leadership
 - e. Excellent employees
 - f. Strong public involvement (i.e. public processes, active in comment events)
 - g. Open comment:

- 
3. How would you characterize the level of support that exists for transit in your community? (scale of 1-10, 1 being non-supportive and 10 being rock solid support)
 4. What has significantly changed or improved in your agency's history that has led to enhance your relationship with the community? (Check all that apply plus open comment?)
 - a. Better service/facilities
 - b. Improved public opinion
 - c. Better news media coverage/media relations
 - d. Involvement with business community
 - e. Involvement with educational institutions
 - f. Use of technology
 - g. Open comment:
 5. Were there challenges your agency (or your community - depends who we are talking with) turned into opportunities that helped strengthen the role of public transportation in your region?
 - a. If yes, tell me about the challenge and what opportunity came from it.
 - b. No.
 6. Please describe innovative programs, services, partnerships, or financial initiatives that contributed to the viability or visibility of public transportation in your community? Have you or your agency established any partnerships with community groups or local businesses that have led (even indirectly) to ridership sustainment/enhancement?
 7. What kinds of relationships have you or your agency established that have led directly to more generated revenues? What direct financial arrangements might you have with community partners? How was the relationship established? Who initiated first contact? If it was the agency/executive, what was the inspiration?
 8. Over your career in the public transportation industry, are there key themes you've found essential to agency success or key to effective leadership? (Check all that apply plus open comment)
 - a. Good mentor
 - b. Ability to think strategically
 - c. Talented people (employees and board members)
 - d. Good network (inside and/or outside community, industry)
 - e. Strong character/Act with integrity
 - f. Skill Set (i.e. adaptability, objectivity, clarity of vision, ability to change)
 - g. Open Comment:
 9. What is the most important advice regarding building and sustaining support for public transit that you would pass along to emerging leaders within this industry?

- 
10. What key areas or departments within your agency have contributed to your ability to build and sustain community support for public transit? (Check all that apply plus open comment)
- a. Marketing
 - b. Communications
 - c. Operations
 - d. Customer Service
 - e. Board leadership
 - f. Senior Management Team
 - g. Other likely responses??
 - h. Open Comment:
11. What are the “takeaways” you see as transferable from your system to other systems in growing and sustaining community support? Are there any universal truths in developing and enhancing community engagement? (Check all that apply plus open comment)
- a. Understanding the Community
 - b. Good service design
 - c. Good communications (internal, external or both)
 - d. Effective board leadership
 - e. Effective employees (senior management team, frontline employees, all)
 - f. Open Comment:

Public Transportation Leader Interview Summaries

Interviewing public transportation leaders provided invaluable insight into the methods, techniques and policies that leaders have found successful in developing and maintaining community support for public transportation. In addition, the interviews were essential in identifying key leadership qualities and industry lessons.





Mark Aesch

Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA) – Rochester, NY
Chief Executive Officer

RGRTA has been able to sustain and build support for public transportation by employing an overarching philosophy of providing a public service as a private sector mindset. RGRTA is run differently than any other transit agency. RGRTA has cut fares, run surpluses, and reduced tax payer reliance. These achievements have been accomplished through developing strong partnerships and entrepreneurial relationships with local public schools, colleges, and businesses as well as being proactive with community and organization outreach. RGRTA's entrepreneurial approach is exemplified by the 60 business partnerships established with malls, nursing homes, and retail outlets (Verizon for example) that help underwrite the cost of providing transit service.

An effective leader should have the ability to develop and execute a plan. Mark Aesch has identified the following elements that a leader should employ in executing a plan:

1. Prepare a very clear strategy...have a clear vision;
2. Develop a clear measurement system; and,
3. Have the courage to make the right decisions...follow the data.

Key Quotes

- On key accomplishments that have the greatest impact on community engagement—*“Leaders and agencies must connect with the community.”*
- On keys to building community support – *“A leader must build a high quality team to support the agency's vision, processes and philosophy.”*
- On keys to effective leadership – *“Have a very clear strategy and vision and have the courage to make the right decisions.”*





Debra Alexander

Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) – Lansing MI
Assistant Executive Director

CATA leadership operates from the perspective that when people thrive, communities thrive. To that end, the agency operates a diversity of services to meet the broad needs of its citizens throughout a 559-square-mile service area. This includes fixed-route, commuter express, small-bus connector, and trolley service, as well as curb-to-curb rural reservation service, phone-ahead weekend and evening services, among other services.

The agency, known for its strong community connections and public image, has a less traditional organizational structure similar to an inverted pyramid: front line employees are at the wide top, and board members support the CATA operation from the narrow base. The system has received numerous awards over the years including APTA's "outstanding public transportation system" award in 1991 and again in 2007.

Keys to Success

- Having the ability to think strategically.
- Quality is key.
- Operating with honesty and transparency.
- Respecting your customers and your taxpayers. Treat them like they own the company (because they do).

Key Quotes

- On performance and trust - *"It is better to show than to tell."*





Mike Allegra

Utah Transit Authority - Salt Lake City, UT
Chief Executive Officer

UTA has been able to build and maintain local support for public transportation by consistently meeting the agency's objectives. UTA has built and operated projects under budget and ahead of schedule that have also met ridership expectations. This success has been accomplished in large part by being proactive in buying their own ROW and negotiating interagency agreements ahead of time. In addition, the UTA has been effective in:

1. Enlisting support of local government agencies including the MPO. UTA does not have to “push” transit alone, the agency is part of a regional effort;
2. Building a transit system and program development approach that has led to the business community demanding more transit. The business community understands that "even if you don't use transit [individually], you use transit [collective benefits]"; and,
3. Embracing the region’s strong interest in planning for the future. Planning for UTA’s first LRT line began in 1983, even though it didn't open until the 2000's.

Lessons for future leaders include:

1. Start small and build upon a solid foundation;
2. Continually collaborate and build partnerships;
3. Strive and achieve operational excellence (70% of UTA riders are choice riders);
4. Try to be superior to the automobile by providing a better environment (i.e. provide passengers amenities like wi-fi, and fast transportation); and,
5. Identify how your agency can do everything it does better than what it is doing today.

Key Quotes

- On keys to building community support - *“Start small and build upon a solid foundation.”*
- On sustaining community support – Ask yourself *“how can transit agencies do everything better than what they are doing today?”*





Justine T. Augustine, III

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) – New Orleans, LA
Chief Executive Officer; Vice President Veolia

Decision to resist the move to rubber wheel vehicles is what made New Orleans the oldest continuing rail system in the U.S., and contributed to the streetcar embodying the fabric of culture in New Orleans.

Cleaned up financial situation of agency and improved public outreach and transparent financial management, which in turn led to the restoration of NORTA Bond Ratings (Top rated Moody's Aa3; S&P AAA) to be superior to the credit rating of the State of Louisiana – which in turn led to stronger relationship with the federal government and a greatly improved relationship/partnership with Wall Street, ultimately supporting the agency's project and economic development goals.

In response to the devastation of Katrina, NORTA and Veolia created the Lil' Easy service, a deviated fixed-route service put into operation following Hurricane Katrina. The community needed transportation badly and the existing fixed-route service could not function following the severe devastation to the region. The New Orleans community became engaged in many aspects of this new service – specifically naming, designing and branding the Lil' Easy service – which led to the community owning and embracing this service.

In post-Katrina New Orleans, transportation was seen as more than just mobility, but largely looked at for redevelopment and revitalization of the business, political and neighborhood structures (Loyola Corridor has already seen \$1.1 billion in new development.)

Key Quotes

- *“Running a public authority you need to have a good connection to the political structure (city council, city agencies).”*
- *“Be creative – forget the traditional thought processes.”*





J. Barry Barker

Transit Authority of River City (TARC) – Louisville, KY
Executive Director

The Transit Authority of River City (TARC) Board chose to adopt a mission statement 16 years ago that identified “transportation opportunities that enhance the social, economic and environmental well-being of the greater Louisville community” as its primary purpose.

Partnerships and engagement present opportunities to grow broad support throughout the community. Planning, Marketing, and Communications staff have been essential in reaching out to community members, groups, and organizations. Day after day, agency willingness to be transparent and communicate is the most effective approach to positively impact community perceptions.

Success factors include Finances and Fiscal Management, Effective Team, Visionary Leadership, Dedicated Focus on Customer Needs, Strategic Management, and a Focus on Safety.

Key Quotes

- *“What I like about working at the scale I do, is that you can reach out and touch someone.”*
- *“Don’t allow yourself to be the best; hire folks brighter and smarter than you.”*

Doran Barnes

Foothill Transit – West Covina, CA
Executive Director; Vice President Transit Management, Veolia Transportation

Foothill Transit was created to be responsive to the participating cities following a specific decision to carve the service area out of the larger network. Barnes emphasized that their community relations approach is deeply tied to the creation of the agency and essentially built into its DNA. Management staff strongly encouraged to engage with community in official and non-official capacities. There must be a consistent and constant focus on community networking through multiple touch-points.

Payoff is having support from the broader community, stakeholders and leaders, as well as service users (riders). Strong community connections translates to support for mission to support riders -- so while it is not as simple as having a direct quantifiable impact – the efforts do translate into support from the taxpayer.

Key Quotes

- *“The bigger you get the harder it is to maintain the community connection.”*
- *“You must work toward long developed relationships before you need anything – like putting money in the bank.”*





Steve Brown

Gold Coast Transit (GCT) – Oxnard, CA
General Manager

Engaging the public in meaningful outreach and forming strong relationships with community partners including local municipalities has increased Gold Coast Transit’s visibility and helped build support for the agency’s mission. Effective community outreach requires a proactive agency coupled with sincere leadership (agency staff and board members). A capable and sincere leader should have the ability to think strategically, always act with integrity, and be adaptable (willingness to change and learn). All divisions of GCT’s agency have contributed to their ability to build and sustain community support for public transportation. Examples include:

1. Planning, Marketing, and Communications staff have been essential in reaching out to community members, groups, and organizations;
2. The Maintenance Department’s effort to ensure a high level of vehicle cleanliness is noticed and valued by the community.

Key Quotes

- On key themes found essential to effective leadership – *“Effective leadership has been learned by examples, both positive and negative, set by other leaders.”*
- On sustaining community support – *“Leaders need to be visible and accessible.”*

Ken Driggs

Valley Metro – Phoenix, AZ
Retired Executive Director

The “seeds of strength” for the Phoenix region’s transit system is grounded in the philosophy that local transit services and decisions are not imposed on local jurisdictions, rather, the regional governance structure provides for the regional decision making process to be based on local control. In a region that is largely known as having an automobile-biased culture, selling transit was difficult. However, by generating success through developing high quality transit services, like the Phoenix region’s first light rail line, the community is beginning to embrace public transportation more than and ever.

Key Quotes

- On keys to building community transit – *“Success breeds success...the community will demand transit if it sees success.”*
- On keys to building community support – *“Reach out to others early.”*
- On keys to building community support – *“A leader should not rely on their authority and power, but should use it to draw people in for support.”*



Greg Evans

Lane Transit District (LTD) – Eugene OR
Board Member

LTD has a reputation for being innovative and an early leader in industry, especially as a mid-sized system. Innovations included accessible services in early 80s before ADA law and a BRT development, notable in part because of the relatively smaller size of the community. The agency is nationally recognized for its bike/pedestrian work and brokering of transportation for human service organizations.

BRT (EmX) has had an interesting and challenging history in LTD's recent history. First two BRT lines had ridership levels 80-90% above projections. Although the first two BRT lines were received well and had minimal impact disrupting area businesses, the third line has become extremely controversial due to a well-organized, well-financed opposition campaign operating over the past several years (2009-11).

Lousy timing seems to play a part: just as the second EmX line opened, the economy tanked and LTD began reductions in service. However at this same time, LTD also was in the early stages of developing the 3rd EmX line, which is funded through federal dollars rather than local payroll tax. People did not understand this important funding distinction.

Evans indicates the transit industry's funding structure and political realities limit the ability for public transportation to be more successful. He indicates transit often “works in silos” and that industry leaders must hone a better political radar. Evans sites examples of countries embracing infrastructure advances in public transportation and acknowledged the benefits this effort provides in China, India, Spain and Europe.

Keys to Success

- Public image, rebranding, and the messaging are essential. He states that transit needs “sex appeal.” The industry narrative should be that public transportation is the solution, creating jobs, creating robust economies, and creating wealth (financially and quality of life).
- Expanding relationships outside of traditional transit partnerships. The industry must break out of its traditional silos and leverage new non-traditional partnerships (i.e. public-private partnerships, alliances with other transportation sectors).
- Developing a K-20 strategy of working with young people to educate, expose, and develop them as the riders, workers, voters, and leaders of the future.

Key Quotes

- On reframing the transit narrative - *“Transit is about the fabric of daily living. It is about creating jobs, creating wealth and robust economies.”*
- On relationship building - transit leaders should *“Go to other people’s cocktail parties”* and get outside of traditional transit silos.



Rich Farr

Rabbit Transit – York, PA
Executive Director

Rabbit Transit has been able to build community support through branding and partnerships with various community stakeholders. The strong branding of “Rabbit Transit resonates with the community, even if they don’t use the service. That branding has been further enhanced by the institution of “Rabbit Express” commuter service to the Baltimore suburbs, which attracts a more affluent group of people, further diversifying community support for the agency. Partnerships with local charter schools came as a result of state funding cutbacks for schools and allowed Rabbit Transit to carry more passengers on some routes. Another partnership with a local healthcare provider during a construction project exposed people to transit who had never got on a bus when they had to by using a temporary park & ride service.

Key Quotes

- On keys to building community support - *“Don’t be afraid to take risks” and “Sometimes opportunities come out of nowhere. Be open to them”.*
- On building a strong leadership team - *“How can I help you with that and how can I help you succeed” and “Make sure the agency comes out on top”.*





Carolyn Flowers

Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) – Charlotte, NC
Chief Executive Officer

Charlotte Area Transit System enjoys a wide base of community support including not only the riders of the system but the business community and other key stakeholders. A recent reaffirmation of a dedicated sales tax for transit was approved by 70% of the voters. Service must be the highest quality that can be delivered. CATS staff have regular “rap sessions” to talk about what is going on with service and operations. Ms. Flowers believes that having the right attitude among the agency’s workforce is a cornerstone of sustaining transit in Charlotte.

Key Quotes

- On keys to building community support - *“Stay connected everywhere: the community, your governing body, and your employees. Be open and honest. The community will respect you for that”.*
- On providing quality service: - *“Do everything you can to retain your ‘backbone’ bus services that are the most used” and “Service quality is key—you can only sell what you are delivering”*
- On connecting with your workforce - *“My success is their success” and “Show support for the front line personnel who deal with the public day-in and day-out (drivers, customer service staff, road supervisors)”*
- On building a strong leadership team - *“Bring in the right talent with new people and give opportunities to all of your workforce” and*
- Transferrable keys to success - *“Turn challenges into opportunities” and “Spend good face time with members of the community that you don’t usually see”.*





George Grenias

Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) – Houston, TX
Chief Executive Officer

A major key to success for METRO in the last year is the transition into becoming more publicly transparent. METRO has focussed on customer service with its operators and concentrated on building alliances with community and neighborhood groups in and outside of the agency's transit service area. Another key to the agency's success is strong support from the board and the retention of very talented and dedicated staff.

Leadership requires having the confidence to pull together strong people to move an agency in a positive direction and the courage to move forward with new ideas.

Key Quotes

- On keys to building community support - *"It takes a long time to turn around the community's perception of an agency."*
- On keys to building community support – *"First class service, first class facilities, and build trusted community partners."*
- On sustaining community support – *"Customer driven model is core to building support, staff need to accept and live by this approach."*



Fred Hansen

Tri Met – Portland, OR

Former General Manager - *Retired 2010*

The success of Tri Met, a system recognized internationally for its innovation and integration in their three-county greater Portland community is summed up by the system's "Total Transit Experience" philosophy. Its MAX light rail, bus, streetcar, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and transit oriented development all contribute directly to the culture of the city. All elements of its operation – technological applications, infrastructure, branding, public art, rider information, partnerships, etc., tie into the idea that the work of Tri Met is far more than about simply moving people; it is about a "transformational infrastructure" that is integrated deeply within the community it serves.

Over many years, Tri Met has engaged in a level of public involvement higher than most communities experience or find necessary. The agency's leadership believes that the public involvement process consistently results in better product and better outcomes by getting "buy in." He states this is achieved by recognizing the priorities of the community and engaging on that level. Public outreach in non-traditional ways has proven effective and very constructive. Likewise, keeping the bigger picture is imperative - that the role of public transportation is about the community, not just about Tri Met or a more limited perspective.

Keys to Success

- Hansen believes the role of good leaders is to expand horizons and encourage others to understand and support a broader perspective. He stated that executives get hired into "positional authority" but notes that a good leader earns, and can be far more effective, with "personal authority."
- Getting the 'buy in' of differing groups and perspectives pays strong dividends.
- Having the right board members is essential to setting broad policies, not managing the organization.
- Hiring great personnel. The hiring decision should be made on who has the greatest potential, which applicant can best 'stretch' and learn. Having a strong senior management team that has the knowledge and ability to establish a framework to address an issue or implement a policy is also very important.
- Enthusiasm and connection. The greatest leadership tool is energy, enthusiasm and the ability to make connection with people.

Key Quotes

- On the role of public transportation - *"Transit is not just about moving people. Its role is to create community integration,"* and *"Transit provides not just a service but a community."*



Mike Harbour

Intercity Transit, Olympia WA
General Manager

Located in the capitol city of Olympia, Intercity Transit has developed a reputation as an innovative small city system delivering a diversity and volume of services unique for an agency of its size. The system has reinvented itself over the past decade following a series of devastating financial and operational set-backs. Major changes required the agency to recalibrate its operation to address a 40% service reduction, implement a 4-phase, 6-year service plan involving significant public outreach, pass two successful transit tax ballot measures, begin new niche transportation programs to address unmet community needs, expand partnerships, and become a leader in sustainability. The agency now reports very high levels of customer satisfaction and community support and has received numerous awards including APTA's "outstanding public transportation system" award in 2009.

Keys to Success

- Community engagement correlates with effective and diverse partnerships. Partner organizations see Intercity Transit's success as important to them and, conversely, their success important to Intercity Transit. Agency partnerships include: the State of Washington, area jurisdictions and Amtrak; all three regional colleges and four school districts; social service agencies and many area employers.
- Being flexible and strategic. Intercity Transit's ability to be adaptable and nimble to its operating environment and community needs has proven very useful to building transit success. The agency has demonstrated a capability to respond to near-term needs while being smart about long-term strategies.
- Board member engagement is essential. Boards that understand their role as a policy-making body tend to service their agency, and community, better. Intercity Transit's Authority members regularly report on Intercity Transit governance at their respective councils and committees and help keep transit on the radar of local jurisdictions and key stakeholder groups. Good staff-board and board-to-board relationships are important to moving the work of transit forward.
- Strong communications and public involvement programs build public trust. Be up front with challenges, operating issues, finances. Operate with transparency and earn the public's trusts. "Walking the talk" and acting as a good public steward result in higher credibility and support.
- Paying attention to the basics. Getting the basics right is paramount. The service provided must be attractive, clean, and reliable.
- Avoid stretching resources too far. Budgeting conservatively and not spending all of a system's available revenue is wise.

Key Quotes

- On community engagement - *"Face time is key."*
- On partnerships - *"Find the win-win."*

Doug Kelsey

TransLink – Vancouver BC, CA
Chief Operating Officer

Vancouver is considered one of the most sustainable cities in the world. It is a highly desirable – as well as expensive - place to live. TransLink is a very large, multimodal system of buses, trains, sky trams, water shuttles, roads, bridges and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure. On any given day, the system carries at least 12% of the entire market share of the metropolitan Vancouver area. It has made huge capital investments and more broadly engages the private sector in service development and operation than the typical U.S. system. Kelsey has years of experience working in the private sector for large multi-national corporations.

TransLink has strong linkages to alliances including roads, ports, trucking, airports, tourism, the special needs community, environmental groups, etc. A key accomplishment was the mounting and running of the transportation system for the recent Winter Olympics. Another accomplishment is launching the first driverless train system - a \$2.2 billion public-private partnership project involving the airport, state government, regional transportation authority, private sector. Up front capital costs are huge, but the payoff is in much lower payroll costs over time for many years into the future.

Keys to Success

- Developing and maintaining a ‘customer experience culture’. To be effective, Kelsey indicates the transit agency must consider all aspects of its operation where customers interface with it. This philosophy has led to a “Lifestyle” smart card currently in development for which people will use for both transit and non-transit services (i.e. to ride the rail/bus/skytram, pay for parking, rent a bicycle, buy a latte, check out stuff at the neighborhood library, etc.).
- Employing a business development philosophy. Leverage "the power of the marketplace" and incorporating aggressive business development into transit programs and services.
- Leaders must think big. Public Transportation exists in silos that limit its effectiveness, relevance and success. There is a big difference between managing and maintaining programs and leading which requires taking risks, creating change and taking on big battles.
- Transit must support innovation, "hire in" talent, and "accelerate up" its workforce diversity. Kelsey indicates that there is a "gap in the next generation of leader readiness" and that the emerging next generation of industry leaders need to have profound and diverse experience and unique areas of expertise. They need to be groomed, trained, exposed to innovation and be able to “work inside and outside the box.”

Key Quotes

- On failure - *“Where leaders fail is from a lack of courage.”*
- On personnel - Encourage experience both inside and outside the transit industry, then *“hire in”* and *“accelerate up.”*
- On transit as a lifestyle choice - *“Focus moving from an operating culture to a customer experience culture.”*

Ron Kilcoyne

Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority (GBTA) – Bridgeport, CT
Chief Executive Officer

A major key to success for GBTA has been to be more entrepreneurial with the community through initiatives ranging from getting more passengers to use passes and finding ways to work with local cities to improve traffic operations, and in turn transit reliability. The agency has also actively developed partnerships such as the City of Bridgeport's Mayor's Sustainability Task Force, and jointly operated services with adjoining transit districts. Better facilities including a new downtown transportation center has helped to improve public opinion.

Key Quotes

- On keys to building community support - *"Be out there. Get to know as many stakeholders in the community on their turf" and "Be part of the community. Go above just running a bus system"*
- On keys to effective leadership - *"Act with integrity and strong character. If not, it will catch up with you." and "Be honest with your Board. If there's a problem, let them know as soon as possible. But don't be defensive about it." And "Build trust by not being arrogant".*

Celia Kupersmith

Sound Transit – Seattle, WA
Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Building community support for public transportation in Seattle was a product of Sound Transit's "Dark Days" from around 2000. At that time, projects could not be delivered on time and on budget. Community support and confidence in Sound Transit was seriously eroded. There were clear lessons learned from this period and Sound Transit began a deliberate effort to increase credibility in the community. Staff was directed to develop key communication methods and a corporate look and feel for Sound Transit was developed. Having excellent communications skills is imperative, as well as operating with absolute transparency.

Key Quotes

- On transferrable practices – *"Sound Transit has a diversity program that develops contacts with small local businesses. Through these contacts, these firms are encouraged to either bid on projects themselves or team with other firms to submit bids. It really reinforces our commitment to be part of the community"*
- On sustaining community support – *"Pay attention to your community" and "Get out there in the community---Talk to them, get to know them, develop trust. Those who would never support transit might just like you and respect what you are doing. Communicate regularly with newsletters, weekly in the case of Sound Transit"*



John Lewis

LYNX – Orlando, FL

Chief Executive Officer

Building community support for public transportation in Orlando, FL has been accomplished by having a highly dedicated public agency staff and implementing and operating services that the community can be proud of. Implementing the LYMMO service, the first fully dedicated lane Bus Rapid Transit urban circulator in the country is seen by the community as a model for the future. LYNX is building on this success by planning for four additional routes\corridors.

For keys to building and sustaining support for public transportation there is no magic bullet as every community has their own set of values; however, a leader should embody the following:

1. Add value to the community;
2. Be a community focused provider;
3. Design service to meet customer service needs; and,
4. Provide what the customer is looking for.

Key Quotes

- On transferrable practices – *“There is no magic bullet; every community is different. However, a good transit leader/transit system should add value to the community and be community focused.”*
- On sustaining community support – *“Maintaining community support requires an extremely dedicated workforce of leaders serving the community.”*





Thomas N. Lucek, P.E.

CityLink, Greater Peoria Mass Transit District – Peoria, IL
General Manager First Transit

Non-revenue generating relationships/partnerships can contribute to overall community appreciation and support for a transit agency and its service. Partnerships are a means of drawing in non-riders (or those that typically do not use the system. They work to connect with the community through support for the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure (Susan was from Peoria), providing free service to support the thousands of people who participate in the race for the cure. CityLink provides similar service for the Easter Seals Polo match, and the regional Symphony and Historical Society. These activities demonstrate the agency's commitment to the community, in turn leading to community support for the agency. By getting the traditional non-riders onto the system for special events, they learn to appreciate the service, and to see the added benefits that accrue from the investment of their tax dollars.

- Projects such as a Downtown Transit Center can assist with overall management of service and improve community connections.
- Important to stay involved in the industry – APTA and State Associations are key to success of individual agencies and transit leaders – key to learning and growing as a transit leader – technical experience and best practices – awareness of industry resources – peer-to-peer training and learning.
- Board Leadership very important as they are volunteers contributing time – connected to the community.
- Management Team is the “Face of Transit

Key Quotes

- *“We are the community’s transportation provider.”*
- *“Position your agency to be a positive connection to the community’s way of life, and if your buses and facilities are clean and service is on time, the community will respond.”*





Hugh Mose

Center Area Transportation Authority (CATA) – State College, PA
General Manager

Decision to switch fleet to natural gas—extremely popular within the community – environmental and energy interest (huge natural gas development area in PA) – affected how the community perceived the agency. This decision also contributed to the ability of the agency to improve a degraded fleet.

Integration with Penn State community has been critical to the success of the agency and its service. Service like the football shuttle translate into support from a-typical transit riders—more people who say they don't ride the bus say “except the football shuttle – I love the football shuttle.” Hard work and determination over many years to foster the relationship with Penn State University (PSU) has yielded major dividends and substantially shaped the agency. In this community, without the relationship with PSU, so much would be different – ridership would be a quarter of what it is – a matter of life and death.

Reminding people in the community about the benefits to non-riders is built into CATA leadership messaging on all aspects of the benefits of transit and the importance to the community.

Despite limited resources, recent adoption of new technologies (iPhone application; GPS) has led to surprising results that have helped further the connection to the community.

Key Takeaways

- Starts at the top – you have to have a board or convince your board that this is important
- You have to invest the time to make the community relationship really blossom
- Not just one person, but everyone on the staff who is outwardly focused should be engaged
- Does not require a lot of money, just time to cultivate the relationships and respond to the community
- “Schmooze” – you need to be a good schmoozer





Stephanie Negriff

Big Blue Bus – Santa Monica, CA

Former Director of Transit Services - *Retired 2011*

Key values for Santa Monica's transit system are: team work, innovation, integrity, community service, continuous improvement and accountability. These values are reflected in Santa Monica's Strategic Plan. The agency has a focus on community connections and enjoys strong policy support from the City Council, its governing board. Agency employees have great pride in their system and act as ambassadors of the solid reputation the Big Blue Bus (BBB) is known for.

Keys to Success –

- Attending to credibility and accountability. This includes ongoing, sincere and transparent public outreach, consistent communications and 'walking the talk'. Negriff encourages leaders avoid transit ease (transit speak) which can make people suspicious.
- Branding. Who doesn't know the Big Blue Bus? This branding was a very dramatic makeover for the system and plays out in the look of all fleet vehicles, the system's facilities, rider information and community publications, etc. The BBB brand gives not only a personality to the transit system but, more importantly, a way in which the community can relate to its transit system.
- Cutting edge public information materials. This includes progressive use of the Web and social media applications.
- Having the ability to grow service. Santa Monica's transit system has a history of administering service from both a business and social service perspective. This ability has enabled the system to identify community demand and grow its role in the community.
- Acknowledging that transit cannot always make everyone happy. Transit must be prudent with the public dollar and tax revenue. This requires priorities. Transit cannot necessarily serve all the people all of the time.

Key Quotes

- *"Transit is as much an art as a science."* Negriff believes good transit leadership is about statistics and performance measures and a successful business model while also being about humanity and compassion.
- Working as a leader in the industry is a *"continual learning process."* Negriff observes that no two systems are alike, much as no two communities are alike, so there is a great need to truly understand the community in which transit serves.





Carl Sedoryk

Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) – Monterey, CA
Chief Executive Officer

Monterey-Salinas Transit has done better than most systems in California and has managed to avoid service cuts until this year. By using Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funds expeditiously and through developing service partnerships with major Department of Defense facilities, the system has brought in new funding sources to replace lost state funds. These new funding sources stabilized the system and helped avoid major service cuts.

Key Quotes

- On keys to building community support – *“Show support for community events” and “Focus on people: Use images of friends and neighbors in the community in your ads and promotions”*
- On providing quality service - *“Do your core service well and run on time”*
- On keys to develop the transit agency’s Board – *“Take the Board through ‘Transit 101’. Explain to them as a CEO, ‘this is what I do’ “.*
- On building a strong leadership team - *“Promote effectiveness and creativity” and “Have the right operations staff”.*
- Transferrable keys to success - *“Turn challenges into opportunities” and “Spend good face time with members of the community that you don’t usually see”.*





Gary Thomas

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) – Dallas, TX
President/Executive Director

“Board Vision” critical to their ability to buy right of way in the 80’s, which led to the opening of their first line in 1996 – support of the community did not exist at first, but once that first line opened, so did the support of the community. The growth and speed with which they have grown the system, has translated into strong community support, but growth, if not managed properly, can also negatively impact community support.

Primary focus for DART is economic development as the chief interest among the regions cities is development around DART stations. DART views the economic development outreach as extremely important to their support in the community.

Believe in community engagement through the community involvement process (system planning). Approach this through presentation of a 20 year financial plan. This approach of full disclosure and complete transparency – goes into understanding their state of good repair program and service capacity – facilitates an understanding and discussion of cleanliness, safety, and state of good repair, which in turn brings acceptance and buy-in from the business community.

Key Quotes

- *“For transit, we have to be seen as safe and clean, or else the business community will react, the media will react, the politicians will react, and the people will react.”*
- *“There are certain basic tenets of what we do – clean, safe, quality service.”*



Milo Victoria

OMNITRANS – San Bernardino CA

Chief Operating Officer/General Manager

OMNITRANS serves 15 jurisdictions in the southwest section of San Bernardino County. Customers give OMNITRANS a 92 percent satisfaction rating. Non-riders and members of general public have a high level of awareness of the system. The agency also has a green focus and has received recognition for its environmental stewardship.

Innovative programs include the agency's college free pass program, a job training program for at-risk youth, OMNI GO service and inter-jurisdictional collaborations. OMNITRANS works closely with SANBAG (San Bernardino Association of Governments) and leverages resources that positively impact transit success and benefit of the broader community.

Keys to Success

- Sharing the agency vision with representatives of area jurisdictions, board members, employees, partners, etc.
- Listening and addressing customer needs. The bottom line is to attend to the riding customer.
- Good relationships are essential. This includes how the transit board works together as a working unit and how its individual members interact with other board members and staff. It also includes an executive's relationships with agency employees, community leaders, elected officials, and others.
- Operators are transit's most important ambassadors. Operators must be selected based on their customer service perspective, not simply because they have a CDL. They must be people oriented, first and foremost.
- Marketing and Media Relations impact agency success. Not attending to these areas can have a significant negative impact on a transit agency.

Key Quotes

- On the tough nature of leadership - *"Sometimes you have to break a few eggs to make an omlette."*
- On the value of personnel - *"Get the right people for the job,"* and *"We are all transit ambassadors."*





Phillip Washington

Regional Transportation District (RTD) – Denver, CO
Chief Executive Officer

RTD has succeeded in connecting with the community by being very transparent.

Key Quotes

- On transferrable practices – *“Tell the public exactly what is going on, even if it’s not good news. While the public originally wanted a more extensive light rail network sooner rather than later, RTD’s communication with the community helped them understand that the downturn in the economy would not allow that full build-out. While this wasn’t what the community desired, they understood the economic impacts and were able to support a shorter initial operating segment ” and “RTD learned more from the community by waiting to decide whether to pursue a 2011 ballot initiative until we got more feedback from the community. In the end, we decided not to pursue the ballot initiative.” And “Be very transparent. Educate the public that transit is subsidized and ask for their ideas how to fix things.”*
- On keys to effective leadership – *“Learn everything that you can within an agency” and “People are your most important resource; Take care of them and don’t forget professional development opportunities” and “Don’t be afraid to initiate cultural change”.*

