How to Supplement Traditional Paratransit Programs with Taxis: A Case Study

International Conference on Paratransit 10/31/14
SFMTA Overview

- Eighth largest transit system in United States
- 49 square miles
- 800,000 residents
- 750,000 weekday fixed route boarding's, approx. 150,000 senior/disabled
- 13,500 registered Paratransit riders (4,500 active taxi customers)
- 775,000 annual paratransit trips (260,000 trips on taxi)
SF Paratransit: A Network of Services

• SFMTA has been providing paratransit services since 1978
  – **SF Access**: pre-scheduled, shared ride van services: 33%
  – **Group Van**: groups going to a single location: 33%
  – **Taxi**: user-side subsidy: 34% of total service

• SFMTA contracts with a Paratransit Broker, Transdev (formerly Veolia Transportation), to manage SF Paratransit, provide SF Access, sub-contract with Taxi and Van companies
SF Paratransit Taxi

• Paratransit Sedan Taxi service started in 1981
  – now 1,870 medallions
• Wheelchair Accessible Ramp Taxi service started in 1994 with 6 cabs
  – Now 100 ramp taxi medallions
• Average trip cost $13.81
• Average trip distance: 3 miles
Benefits of Paratransit Taxi

- High level of customer satisfaction
  - Same day service
  - User choice of taxi company
  - Individual trips (not shared)
- Cost effective for transit agency
  - Low capital costs and cost per trip
- Integration of paratransit into an existing mode
Why Paratransit Taxi works in SF

- Longevity of program
- Dense service area
- Strong partnership with taxi industry fostered by Paratransit Broker and SFMTA
- One regulatory body which is part of SFMTA
- Strong Paratransit Coordinating Council involvement
- Debit Card fare payment system provides powerful tools to manage program and track trips
Incentives in Ramp Taxi Program

Ramp taxi incentive program implemented
- per trip incentives
- medallion “down payment” credits
- airport shorts for service to outlying areas
Challenges of Paratransit Taxi

- Difficult to start: multiple regulatory bodies and stakeholders
- TNC’s present potential new challenges and possible alternative solutions
- Service quality challenges
  - Peak time use competition
- Less control of service
  - Difficulty achieving standardized training and discipline
- May need to manage demand, fraud mitigation crucial
- Best used in conjunction with an ADA-compliant service
Primary Goals of the Debit Card System

- Simplify fare payment
- Improve trip monitoring reduce the potential for misuse and fraud
- Reduce costs associated with processing and storing scrip
- Automate the billing and reconciliation functions
Debit Card Fare Payment System

• Automates fare payment and monitoring

• Magnetic swipe debit cards serves as photo identification and electronic payment

• All SF Taxis – equipped with In Taxi Equipment

• Similar to a bank debit card, communicates wirelessly with customer accounts
Electronic Data Collection

- Trip Data
  - Date
  - Time & Location of pick up and drop off
  - Cab & Driver number
  - Customer information
  - Meter amount
  - Tip 10% of meter with a $2.00 max
Paratransit Taxi Customer Presents Debit Card and Driver Swipes
Final Swipe at End of Trip
Sample Patron Data

Card Number: [Input Field]
Patron ID: [Input Field]
Patron Name: [Input Field]
Add Value Method: [Dropdown]
Today's Date: [Today's Date]
Purchase Date: [Input Field]
Next Purchase Date: [Input Field]
Monthly Allotment: [Input Field]
Purchase Window: [Input Field]

Added during Purchase Window:
Current Card Balance:
Add Value (Cost):
Deposit:
SubTotal Patron Cost:
Preview Card Balance:
Preview Reserve Balance:
Future Value

Load From Reserve

Total Patron Cost: $0.00

Payment Type:
- [Cash]
  - Amount: $ [Input Field]
- [Check or Money Order]

Total Payment: $ [Input Field]
Change Due: $ [Input Field]

Add Value Clear
Sample Geographic Data
Dashboard: A quick look at the data

Cardholders Statistics

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Top Cardholders

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Transactions - Trend Analysis

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# Transactions Screen

**User: leeks_admin@ntrns**  
**Last Login Date: Tuesday, 13 April 2010 12:52 PM**

## Home | Patrons | Cards | Reports | Transactions | Activity Logs | Fleets | Security

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## Add New | Apply Filter | Reset Filter | Page Size: 15 | 15 |

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Debit Card Benefits

• Better monitoring and enforcement of program rules
  – Service area
  – Wait trips
  – Others not able to use debit card
  – Over-tipping eliminated
• Cost savings for SFMTA
• Administrative benefits
  – Reduction in admin costs for taxi co’s
  – Faster invoicing process
• Driver and passenger benefits – ease of use
Lessons Learned & Still Learning…

- Taxi service cost effective, customer friendly
- Popular with frail seniors
- Taxi Industry support critical to success
- Orientation and training both drivers and passengers
- Pay attention to insurance issues
- Capacity built over time adjustments need to be made
- Affects of TNC on Taxi industry and Paratransit still in flux
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