Appendix B
Transit Agency TDM success stories

One component of the Regional Activity Center Demonstration Program was an investigation into the relative usefulness of TDM strategies in improving transit ridership or the quality of transit service in a given activity center. TDM strategies are flexible tools that can be employed in a range of circumstances. For the purpose of this study, those strategies that could be implemented by a transit agency were given a detailed analysis. Some of those strategies were suggested for each center. In addition, the Washington region has long been an originator or early implementer of such programs, and they have allowed WMATA and other Washington area transit operations to offer better and more efficient services. A number of such programs, including WMATA's transit check program and universal fare media, have been successfully implemented. The following is a sampling of examples of such programs that have been successful at other transit agencies.

Electronic Fare Media
In the 1990s, most transit agencies embraced technological changes that allowed for a wider variety of fare media and fare policies. These technologies, including stored-value cards and electronically read passes and transfers, also prevented fare evasion and fraud. The use of electronic fare media allowed for a wider variety of types of tickets and passes, and encouraged changes to the fare structure including deep discounts and fare media targeted to certain types of riders, including commuters, tourists and students. In one study, the majority of transit agencies surveyed identified changes to fare media and policies as the most important element of their ridership increases in the 1990s.[1]

Fare Partnerships with Employers and Institutions
A number of transit agencies have experienced large increases in ridership by entering into partnerships with employers, schools, universities, government or social service agencies, and/or community groups. These partnerships can include customizing service to better serve the employees, students, or community members; using employers or other institutions as mechanisms to reach people with advertising or marketing materials; or to enter into arrangements whereby the institutions help distribute or even purchase fare media.

One particularly successful example of such a program are universal fare coverage arrangements with employers or schools. In a universal fare coverage program, local public transit systems provide fare-free transit service for all members of a particular group, such as employees of a business or students of a local university or school. The partnering agency or institution typically pays the transit agency an annual lump sum based on expected ridership, and riders either receive free or heavily-discounted

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[1] Taylor, Brian, Peter Haas and Brent Boyd, Daniel Baldwin Hess, Hiroyuki Iseki and Allison Yoh, "Increasing Transit Ridership: Lessons from the Most Successful Transit Systems in the 1990s," The Mineta Transportation Institute, San José State University, June 2002, p. 100.

transit passes, or show their business or school identification as fare payment.[2] A number of mid-sized and smaller US cities, including Nashville, Tennesee; Rochester, Minnesota; Bloomington, Indiana, and Lansing, Michigan, and Albany, New York, have seen success with this program. Most agencies that have successfully implemented such programs have seen large ridership increases among the target population. Programs in which university students and/or staff are involved, particularly those in which students or staff are provided with free passes, bought at a discount by the university, have been particularly successful. A recent study of agencies posting large ridership increases noted that half of the 18 agencies surveyed, half were in university communities and cited service to or on campuses as a major reason for ridership growth.[3] One study of such programs targeted to university students indicated that student transit ridership increased by anywhere from 71 percent and 200 percent during the first year of universal fare coverage, with continued growth of 2 to 10 percent per year in subsequent years.[4] Of fifteen agencies that implemented such programs during the 1990s, 13 reported ridership increases attributable to the program.[5]

Niche Marketing of Services
Many transit agencies have seen success by developing specialized services targeted to certain niche markets and then targeting advertising and marketing activities to those groups using market segmentation techniques. A number of suburban bus operators, including Lake County (suburban Cleveland) Ohio, and Snohomish County (suburban Seattle), Washington, have seen success in aggressively marketing their services to commuters to their respective downtown areas.[6] Upstate Transit in New York publishes a newsletter tailored to suburban commuter bus users.[7] Other agencies have found success targeting populations that are transit dependent or are likely to have need for transit, including persons with disabilities, welfare recipients, and low income workers.[8] Targeted marketing efforts include a variety of marketing and advertising activities, including direct mail.[9]

Passenger Information and ITS Improvements
Many transit agencies have implemented intelligent transportation system (ITS) improvements on bus routes in many cities. Some examples of ITS improvements oriented to providing improved information to passengers include "talking bus" technology, which calls stops; displays that inform passengers of upcoming stops, and real-time announcements of vehicle arrivals and departures at major bus stops, and satellite-based computer tracking systems which locate the vehicles along their routes and drive real-time information systems. These real time systems allow passengers

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[2]Ibid., p. 63.

[3] Stanley and Hyman, p. 16.

[4] Taylor, Haas, Boyd, Baldwin Hess, Iseki and Yoh, p. 63.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p. 66.

[7] New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), *Guidebook on "Best Practices" in Public Transportation.*

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., p. 96.

waiting at a bus stop, or checking the internet via a personal communications device, to know exactly how when their bus or train will arrive.[10]

There are indications that improved passenger information systems generate increased transit ridership, particularly among "choice" riders, commuters and tourists. In one survey of northern California residents in the mid-1990s, 38 percent indicated they would consider using transit if more information were available.[11] One study indicated that information as simple as posting schedules at bus stops can be an important amenity for increasing ridership.[12] Another study indicated that posting schedules and maps at bus stops, shelters and information kiosks is an important amenity, but that transit agencies typically have not researched its impact on ridership.[13]

Amenities at Stations and Bus Stops
Agencies generally see an increase in ridership when passenger amenities are improved at bus stops, transit stations and other passenger facilities. Bus shelters, benches, and improved bus stops signs have been found by many agencies to increase ridership at locations where they have been installed.[14] One Australian study ranked shelters as the most important amenity.[15] Improvements in safety and cleanliness, at stops and shelters, in stations, and on buses, have also proven to be successful at increasing ridership.[16] Improving safety and security at transit facilities, with actions ranging from the presence of security personnel to improved lighting, to simply providing better maintenance and improved cleanliness, encourages ridership by improving the impression of the facility as a safe environment.[17] Improving the pedestrian environment also can be helpful to transit patrons and can result in improved ridership. Between 1991 and 1993, Metro Dade Transit in Miami reported a 9.6% increase in ridership, which it attributed to a number of factors centered around increasing "customer service orientation." This included improving walkways and shelters, benches, and improvements to pedestrian access. MDT also provided mini-buses, limited stops services, services to special events, and improved bus rail transfers and feeders to its rail services.[18] Community partnerships can be used to improve facilities, with many transit agencies creating "adopt-a-shelter" programs to

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[10]Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP), Report 46, *The Role of Transit Amenities and Vehicle Characteristics in Building Transit Ridership: Amenities for Transit Handbook and The Transit Design Game Workbook,* Project for Public Spaces, Inc. and Multisystems, Inc., 1999, p. 13.

[11] Abdel-Aty, Mohamed A., and Paul P. Jovanis, "The Effect of ITS on Transit Ridership." ITS Quarterly, Fall 1995, p. 21-25.

[12]TCRP Report 46, p. 22.

[13] Transit Cooperative Research Program, Report 23, *Building Transit Ridership: An Exploration of Transit's Market Share and the Public Policies that Influence It,* Charles River Associates Incorporated, 1997, p. 43.

[14] Abdel-Aty and Jovanis, p. 69.

[15] TCRP Report 46, p. 22.

[16] Abdel-Aty and Jovanis., p. 70.

[17] TCRP Report 46, p. 22, 23.

[18] TCRP Report 46, p. 20.

encourage employers and community groups to assist in the maintenance of transit facilities in their communities.[19]

Transit Centers
Bus transfer or intermodal transit centers improve the experience of transit riders in a number of ways, offering a clean, comfortable and safe place to wait while transferring between bus routes or between bus and rail services. Transit centers can make it easier and more pleasant for riders to transfer between routes, making transfer activity more likely. Studies have indicated that the development of transit centers can result in significant increases in transit ridership.[20]

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[19] Ibid., p. 41.

[20] Abdel-Aty and Jovanis, p. 70.