



Let Them Use Apps!

A Revolution in the Business
of Moving People



Meadowlands Transportation Brokerage Corporation, D/B/A Meadowlink

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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Implement transportation programs and services that enhance the quality of life, regional mobility, and economic opportunity for people while reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality.

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To the Trustees, leaders, staff and friends of Meadowlink

The transportation experience has not changed much in 30+ years and now we are in the midst of a transportation revolution. This is our current obsession: How does a small and local transportation provider like Meadowlink with limited resources stay relevant in a fast-changing arena where the rules are being rewritten by technology companies like Uber, Lyft, RelayRides and Sidecar? These companies don't even own any vehicles yet have global reach. The writing is on the wall when you see more computer programmers than transportation planners on the podium at a

valuation of \$41 billion and is sounding the likely demise of the traditional taxi industry. Other start-ups with names like VIA, RIDEPAL, WAZE, HITCH and BRIDJ are also upstaging the traditional transit services offering upscale services like WI-FI and TV. These applications provide automatic and real-time mobility. They enhance the user experience by providing a sense of control and reliability and most importantly, they are less expensive than most traditional transportation services

As quoted in The Economist "This emerging (transportation) model is now big and disruptive enough for regulators and companies to have woken up to it. That is a sign of its immense potential. It is time to start caring about sharing."

At Meadowlink, we are upgrading our scheduling and dispatching software so we will have one technology platform for all our services including shuttles, senior and special transportation. Now, a customer can track the location of our vehicles in real time and get a phone reminder about his or her upcoming ride.

We have replaced the mobile data terminals on all our mini-buses, vans and sedans with Samsung Tablets that will better synchronize with our scheduling and dispatching software. The 50+ tablets as well as 50 cell phones were secured at no cost to Meadowlink.

transportation conference. That was the case at the 2014 Mobility Conference in Washington.

The most important transportation innovation of the decade is the smartphone. The new entrants in the transportation business have leveraged the use of the smartphone and built a logistics platform which provides a marketplace for the transportation provider and the rider.

The dramatic reduction in transaction costs has led to explosive growth of companies like Uber which has a market

Additionally, this will result in significant savings in our phone bill.

We are working on replacing our aging analog phone system with IP phones and IP PBX software. This will integrate the phone system at all three offices and route calls directly to the appropriate staff person without the need for a receptionist. In case of an emergency, calls can be routed directly to cell phones to ensure uninterrupted service. Calls can also be monitored for training and quality control purposes.

At the bricks and mortar level, we have outgrown our current office space and with the growth in the size of our fleet are in desperate need of additional parking. Ideally, we would need about two acres of land with about 10,000 square feet of office space and are working with real estate brokers to identify our options.

Peering into the future, it is clear that our success and maybe even our survival will depend on the Rider Experience primarily of the two largest demographic groups, the Boomers and the Millennials who together will account for 50 percent of the population by 2020. For the Millennials who live in a hyper-connected world, access is more important than ownership which augurs well for our transportation programs and services. Marketing will be super important.

The growing popularity of smartphones and inexpensive data packages has resulted in consumers accessing the web using their phones; the days of building websites solely for the desktop are over. The use of smartphones offers new features such as clicking on a hyperlink on the website to call a phone number, or adding contacts' details to an address book. Our website will have to be redesigned to better serve the smart phone user.

This report documents some of our transportation activities during 2014. I hope it is informative for you and look forward to your help and support in implementing the ideas in this report. I would like to congratulate the staff for their achievements and thank our trustees for their leadership and support. Additionally, I would like to thank several new partners, Pro Bono Partnership, Alliance of Nonprofits for Insurance (ANI), and Unemployment Services Trust (UST) for assisting us on a wide range of legal and insurance issues.

Thank you for a wonderful year. Here's to 2015.

Respectfully,



Perry Frenzel,
Chairman, March 30, 2015

We have
outgrown
our current
office space
...and will
need about
2 acres
of land with
about 10,000
square feet
of office
space...

MESSAGE FROM PERRY FRENZEL
CHAIRMAN OF MEADOWLINK, 1998-2014





Accessing Transit: Shuttles to the Rescue

Meadowlink started its first EZ Ride shuttle service in 2004 using a few Sprinter vans in partnership with Trans Ware, Inc. Today we operate a fleet of about 30 mini-buses. Revenue from shuttles has jumped from less than \$1 million in 2004 to more than \$4 million and passenger trips from less than 100,000 to almost 500,000 in 2014. Shuttles are clearly a growth area for us and we are constantly looking for ways to improve and expand.

Halfway into the second decade of the 21st century, the dizzying technological changes that have revolutionized access to information, shopping, telecommunications and many other fields have come to transportation. Uber, Bluetooth telephony, driverless cars and even space tourism are concepts that were unthinkable not that long ago. Today they are just the tip of the iceberg.

Most of our competition for shuttles comes from the for-profit private sector as we remain one

of the few non-profit operators in the shuttle business. As a result, innovation is critical for us to survive and thrive.

Although shuttle services may seem low-tech to the uninitiated, technology has been a key part of EZ Ride shuttles right from the beginning and has contributed to the efficiency and safety that are a hallmark of our service. Right now all of our shuttles are equipped with tablet computers to keep track of reservations, GPS units to pinpoint their location and Drive Cams to document any driving-related incidents. We are looking at newer technologies to help us grow, from app-based and automated telephone reservation systems to the "Where's My Ride?" app that tells riders when to expect their minibus to arrive.

We have piloted "Where's My Ride?" in Monmouth County and are planning to expand it to all of our shuttles in 2015. In the not too distant future, a rider who lives at Osprey Cove in Secaucus will be able to check her

smartphone while eating breakfast to see when her shuttle to the train station will arrive. On the way home, as she gets off the train, she can check her phone to confirm the arrival of the next shuttle.

On a typical day Meadowlink provides about 2,000 shuttle rides, making it one of the largest shuttle service providers in New Jersey. Our fleet of about 30 minibuses operates 24/7 and fulfills the transportation needs of our commuting passengers by connecting them with a dozen major transit hubs including Secaucus Junction, Newark Penn Station and the PATH station at Journal Square in Jersey City.

According to the Center for Housing Policy, a Washington, D.C.-based research organization, "the idea that housing and transportation costs need to be examined together has gained considerable traction." Many real-estate developers and policymakers take this into consideration when planning new housing or maintaining and upgrading the existing housing stock. As a result, according to the Center, there is a renewed emphasis on locating housing "near existing and planned transit stations, job centers, and other

places where transportation costs are low and to include affordable housing within new development in these areas." These concepts overlap almost perfectly with the services that Meadowlink has been providing for many years.

A New Trend— Residential Shuttles

About three years ago, in partnership with Hudson County, we launched our first EZ Ride residential shuttle from North Arlington to the PATH station at Harrison. Several recent trends have contributed to the popularity of residential shuttles, including a reduced interest in car ownership and a preference for public transit among Millennials (people born between 1983 and 2001) and increased demand from residents of Meadowlands communities.

Today we serve several high-density rental developments in the Meadowlands, including Avalon, The Station and Vermella in Lyndhurst and Osprey Cove in Secaucus. The shuttles for these communities are efficient links to public transit. High-frequency shuttle services take residents to bus and rail services at major hubs like Secaucus, Harrison, Rutherford, and Lyndhurst. In many cases, these residential developments

Shuttles are clearly a growth area for us and **we are constantly looking for ways to improve and expand.**

We anticipate adding two to four residential shuttles annually for the foreseeable future.

are located near corporate parks that we already serve. Adding an additional stop or two is cost-effective and the savings are much appreciated by our clients.

Shuttles of this type have huge growth potential for Meadowlink and we are pursuing many opportunities to expand this service. We are in advanced discussions with the BNE Management Group for shuttle options for two of its new luxury housing developments. A shuttle linking The Monarch in East Rutherford with Secaucus Junction will likely commence in November 2014. Similarly, BNE has requested a proposal for a new shuttle service during peak commuting hours connecting Water's Edge in Harrison with the PATH station in that town.

We anticipate adding two to four new residential shuttles annually for the foreseeable future.

Shuttles to Transit Hubs—a “Must-Have” Amenity for the Local and Global Businesses

Shuttle services are one of the most talked-about amenities in the real estate community. While property owners can't pick up their buildings and move them next to train or bus stations, they can provide shuttle access to these transit hubs. For a large building or office park, it is cost effective and can be included in the building's

operating expenses. A number of our corporate partners like Barnes & Noble, Hartz Mountain, Vitamin Shoppe and municipalities like the City of Long Branch have contracted with us for shuttle services to public transit hubs.

Our corporate shuttles bring more than 700 commuters daily to and from the Secaucus Junction train station; 11 of the 13 NJ Transit train routes run through this bustling terminal. A fleet of 12 minibuses links businesses and residential neighborhoods in Harmon Cove, Harmon Meadow, Rutherford, North Bergen, Carlstadt/Moonachie, and Ridgefield Park with Secaucus Junction.

Providing the missing transit link between workplaces and public transportation is a signature service of the EZ Ride shuttles. Our Rutherford Shuttle is a prime example; two minibuses run between the Meadowlands Corporate Center and the Rutherford and Kingsland train stations. Not only do those two busy stations serve two train lines, but they are also the terminal for high-frequency bus service to New York City. Residents of New Jersey and New York City use this essential service to get to and from work.

The North Bergen Shuttle provides access to local businesses, a PATH train station and a Hudson-Bergen Light Rail stop. The mini-bus runs

along JFK Blvd. from North Bergen to Jersey City. Key stops are the Tonnelle Ave., Light Rail station and the Journal Square PATH station. We are considering a proposal to extend the service to Secaucus Junction.

Corporate clients are an important part of our revenue stream and therefore are a key target of our sales and marketing efforts. We are in discussion with several potential new clients seeking shuttle services to Secaucus. We believe that these new shuttle services will require additional capacity at Secaucus Junction; if these projects come to fruition, we would have shuttles running every two to five minutes at peak hours. The proposed new bus terminal for the station could help us operate with greater efficiency and ease for our passengers. Beyond the Meadowlands Monmouth County could provide a growth opportunity for us as businesses relocate to the former Fort Monmouth military base.

Providing Affordable Transportation for Lower Income Commuters

Transportation is the second largest expense for American households after housing. For the typical moderate-income renter in 25 metropolitan areas studied by the Center for Housing Policy, housing and transportation costs combined consume an

average of 55 percent of income, with 26 percent allocated for transportation. Moderate-income homeowners carrying a mortgage, however, face average costs of nearly 72 percent of income for housing and transport; 29 percent is devoted to transportation. The Center estimates that for lower-income households the percentage of income devoted to transportation is even greater.

Access to affordable and efficient public transportation often determines a person's ability to take advantage of job opportunities, especially in lower-income neighborhoods. Our shuttles are designed to bridge gaps between transit hubs and a commuter's home or work location. The cost of the service for lower-income commuters is usually paid for by county government and subsidized by New Jersey Transit using Federal dollars. More than 1,000 lower-income residents in Essex County take advantage of our shuttle services every day.

Our most popular service, the WAVE Shuttle (Workforce Accessibility Vehicles of Essex County) truly showcases the mission of the EZ Ride shuttle programs. Funded by Essex County, this shuttle serves about 400 lower-income riders each weekday along four routes in the Greater Newark Area. By providing free transportation to jobs, training and employment centers in the county,

Access to affordable and efficient public transportation often determines a person's ability to take advantage of job opportunities...

The Essex Night Owl Shuttle is one of our most innovative services in that it serves night-shift workers, an often neglected group of commuters.

the WAVE Shuttle makes a huge difference in its riders' quality of life.

The Essex Night Owl Shuttle is one of our most innovative services in that it serves night-shift workers, an often neglected group of commuters. This was recognized a few years ago by President Barack Obama in a passage about transportation services in the annual budget. One of our riders was quoted in the budget narrative: "I need to work," she said. "I am a single mom. Working these hours and having direct transportation is a real benefit to me because I am home for my kids."

The Essex Night Owl moves commuters between their homes and Newark Penn Station, one of the largest transit hubs in the region; ridership has grown from 40 per day at its inception in 2002 to the current 250 riders every night. The service operates seven days a week from 1:00 A.M. until 5:00 A.M. and fills a critical need for night-shift workers who need a link to public transportation. The shuttle picks up riders in front of their homes in Newark, Orange, East Orange and Irvington and brings them to Newark Penn Station, where they can catch various trains or buses.

Many Night Owl riders work at Newark Liberty International Airport and use this service to connect to the NJ Transit bus

#62 that runs all night from Penn Station to the airport. The Night Owl drivers are extremely knowledgeable about the neighborhoods they serve. As riders board the bus at Penn Station and tell the driver their destination, the driver must devise the most efficient route to drop them off, pick up other riders at their homes and still get back to the station every hour.

Similarly, the EZ Ride Elizabeth Shuttle runs from 2:15 A.M. to 5:15 A.M. seven days a week and serves 50 night shift workers with transportation from their homes in that city to their jobs at Newark Airport.

Essex County also funds shuttle services along Route 10 and Route 46, two key employment corridors. The Route 10 Shuttle runs during the weekday morning and evening commuting hours and provides a link from a NJ Transit bus stop in East Hanover to many workplaces. Further east, Passaic County funds a similar service along Route 46 that starts at the Wayne Willowbrook Mall.

These and other EZ Ride shuttles for lower-income people provide critical assistance for their journey out of poverty. Free transportation to a job enables these residents to maintain a steady income, and spend money on other essentials or even allow them to save money for the purchase of a car.

Look at the Numbers

Revenue: The annual revenue for the shuttle program in 2014 was just over \$4.2 million. The public sector contributed 69 percent or \$2.9 million and the private sector accounted for the remaining 31 percent or \$1.3 million.

Fuel: Over the year, our fleet of about 30 minibuses traveled more than 900,000 miles for an average of just under 30,000 miles per vehicle. We consumed 134,000 gallons of fuel at an average cost of \$3.56 per gallon for a total of \$476,000.

Ridership: Since commuters are our primary patrons, 96 percent of our trips this year were taken on weekdays. These trips were up six percent from last year to more than 472,000. Weekend trips, by contrast, held steady at about 20,600. The cost per trip this year was \$7.86—up two percent from last year. The cost per revenue hour, however, dropped slightly to \$72.34. Our ratio of passenger trips to revenue hours suggests 9.21 trips per revenue hour.

What's Next?

New Markets—Shuttles thrive in areas with good public transit. Almost all of our shuttles originate or terminate at bus stops or rail stations. We believe that public transit in New Jersey will continue to evolve into a network of primary and secondary

transit hubs, connected by high-speed transit services. Concurrently, transit service on local roads will decrease, in turn increasing the demand for shuttle services between transit hubs and workplaces, commercial centers and residential locations. Businesses that provide shuttle services to the transit hubs will have a distinct advantage in attracting and retaining employees as well as new tenants.

The high density of public transit along the Hudson River waterfront in both Bergen and Hudson counties offers opportunities to provide shuttle services that could link both residential and corporate communities with public transit. This will be our primary area of focus for expanding our shuttle services.

Weekend Services—We continue to explore providing transportation services during weekends to optimize use of our resources. If we were to provide the same level of service on all weekends as weekdays, ridership and revenues could increase by 40 percent. In reality, most of the demand for weekend service is only during the summer season when people tend to host weddings, conferences and other events. The demand is sporadic and forms a very small part of our services. Even a major event like the Super Bowl offers limited potential for shuttle services.

We believe that public transit in New Jersey will continue to evolve into a network of primary and secondary transit hubs, connected by high-speed transit services.

In the near future, the role of driverless cars will have a significant effect on the industry and could be the next reality we will have to contend with.

Lower Costs—As awareness in the business community about the need to provide shuttles increases, the real issue is our ability to provide services at significantly lower costs. In some instances, we have been able to get federal subsidies to lower costs by about 50% for a limited period of time. In the long run, the best option is to encourage multiple businesses to share the service and reduce the cost to each individual business. This has worked well in areas where there is a high concentration of businesses; as a result we have more extensive shuttle coverage in high-density areas like Secaucus, Rutherford and Lyndhurst. By the same token, it is a challenge to offer lower shuttle costs in areas with fewer businesses and limited shuttle coverage.

Services at More Distant Locations—Traditionally, transportation has been a local business. Most of our shuttles operate within a 20-mile radius of our Wood-Ridge office. As we seek to expand our service, we

have to grapple with the challenge of providing shuttle services at distant locations that significantly increase costs as vehicles have to travel long distances to provide shuttle services. Alternately, we could station the vehicles permanently at these distant locations which would reduce our ability to monitor the program on a regular basis. Neither of the two options is desirable. A third option could be some form of a franchise model that needs to be explored further.

Shortage of Drivers—The transportation industry faces an acute shortage of drivers and we are no exception. Relatively lower wages and the lack of a career path result in high turnover. Recruitment is an on-going permanent effort. In the near future, the role of driverless cars will have a significant effect on the industry and could be the next reality that we will have to contend with. It could solve most of our current problems, of course, at a price.

volunteer driver independence

custom transit



A Driving Force: Community Cars Foster Senior Independence

As is well known, the percentage of Americans over the age of 65 will continue to grow as the Baby Boom demographic bulge enters its golden years. The first Boomer turned 65 on January 1, 2011, the last one will reach that age on December 31, 2029 and the last of them will turn 100 in 2064. Clearly the largest generation of Americans ever will be here for a long time to come.

The generation before the Boomers is now aged roughly from 69 to 89. Advances in medicine have led to an unprecedented increase in the average life expectancy; it is currently 78.74 up from 66.9 fifty years ago. People older than 65 make up 14 percent of the U.S. population and by 2030 that is expected to grow to 20 percent. Not only are people living longer, but they are living healthier. The concept of what is "old" is changing radically; lifestyle guru Martha Stewart says that "Seventy is the new fifty."

Government and industry have strategic plans to meet the needs of an aging America. A Google search on "American business targets seniors" returns 19,200,000 results. While the Boomers may prove to be the most affluent group of senior citizens in our history, not all of them are playing golf at their condos in Boca Raton. There is an increasing need for affordable transportation for many of New Jersey's older citizens, who will number 1.5 million in 2020.

In our state the problem is exacerbated by the sharp decline in casino revenue, which for more than 30 years helped fund senior and disabled transportation programs with eight percent of gaming revenue. Funding in 2012 was \$248 million, half as much as the \$502 million in the peak year of 2006. Considering the sorry state of New Jersey's casinos, the odds favor continued revenue declines.

The casino funds go to each county, which mostly run

With seniors already a key constituency, by introducing services tailored to their lifestyle, we can grow while serving an important social need.

minibus shuttle services. Since other federal, state and local government funding sources are also under pressure, the question faced by New Jersey's counties is how to serve a growing population using dwindling funds.

Mission-Driven Initiative

Providing affordable transportation alternatives for seniors is a clear fulfillment of Meadowlink's mission. With seniors already a key constituency, by introducing services tailored to their lifestyle, we can grow while serving an important social need. It is in this spirit that Meadowlink pioneered the Community Cars concept in 2008.

In essence, Community Cars works like a volunteer-driven car service, but at a much lower cost. To become a Community Cars client requires a \$15 membership fee. Each ride costs \$2.50 plus fifty-seven cents a mile; a seven mile ride costs \$6.50. Riders must schedule a car at least 24 hours in advance.

We use Honda Accords and each car is fitted with the same technology as our shuttles: tablet computers to track reservations, GPS to pinpoint the location of each car, and DriveCams to document driving-related incidents. In addition, some of the cars are equipped with Smart Card technology; a special card is

required to unlock and drive the cars.

For the most part the cars are dispatched from Meadowlink offices at Wood-Ridge, Newark and Eatontown. However, the Smart Card technology allows us to place cars at other locations if there are sufficient drivers and riders. For example, we have a Community Car located in New Providence quite a distance from our prime coverage area of southern Bergen County.

This pilot program has great potential. Picture a large community center with a constituency that includes quite a few people with no reliable way to get there. We could locate a car at the community center and as long as the center can guarantee 10 trips per day and enough drivers to serve the needs of the members, we will have provided it with a solution to a problem that will only grow over time. They can even use the service to attract new members.

Aging's Impact

Many studies have documented the social isolation and depression that results when seniors lose the ability to drive or otherwise get around under their own steam. An affordable service like Community Cars is tailor-made to relieve the burden often placed on family and friends and enables

seniors to get to not only the medical appointments, but also to visit friends, shop, and go to the movies and other social events.

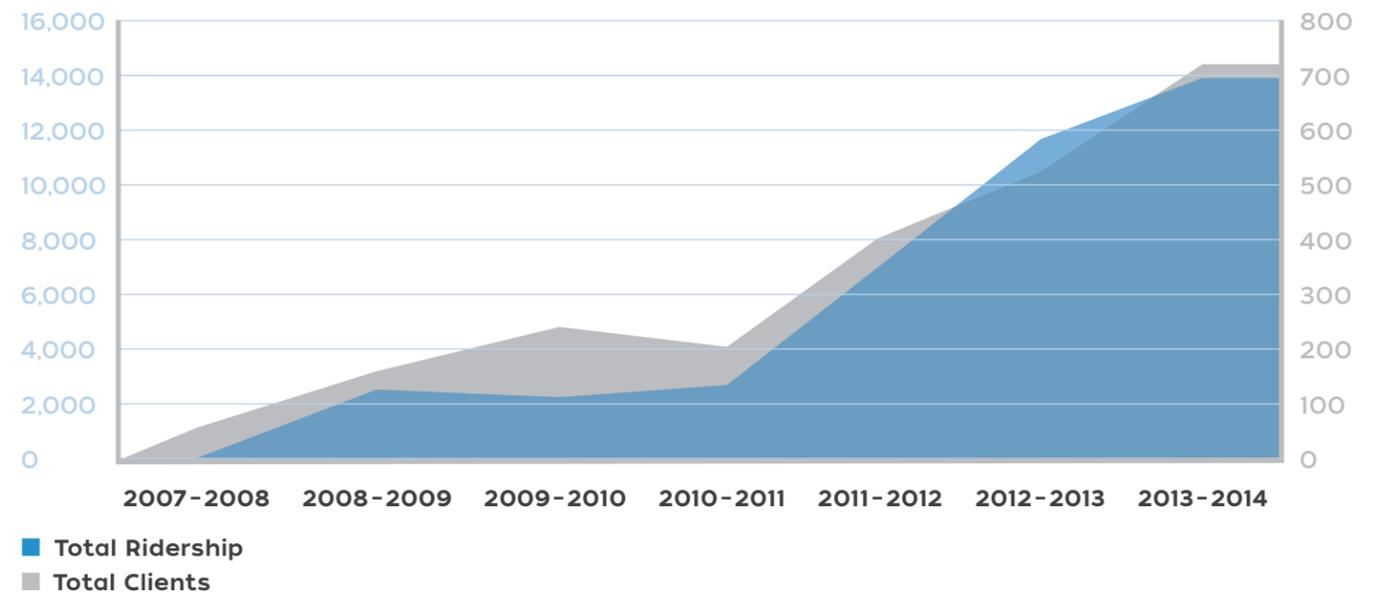
We hear from our riders all the time how useful the service is and what a positive impact it has on their lives. The data backs this up: from a recent survey we know that 37 percent of our riders use Community Cars exclusively for all their transportation needs up from 29 percent the year before. While about half of our clients have a driver's license, only one-third own a car, and only a third of those continue to drive. The typical Community Cars client is in his or her early 80s. They first heard about the program through a doctor or senior group. They also use county-sponsored transit but rely more often on rides

from family and friends for their transportation needs.

As shown in the Figure 1 below, in our first year of operation, we provided 200 rides; by 2014 the number stands at an impressive 14,000. The ridership is directly correlated to the number of clients that we register for the program. In the last few years, about 200 new clients joined the program annually and on average each client requests about 20 rides per year. Actual usage varies and about 20 percent of the clients account for 80 percent of the rides.

In addition to Bergen, Essex, Passaic and Union, the program has been introduced in Monmouth County with promising results. In order to keep up with additional capacity, we are expanding our

Figure 1. Total Ridership and Clients by Year from 2007-14



The future financial viability of the program will depend on our ability to tap funding from the private sector...

dispatch and scheduling personnel so we can increase the number of drivers that the office can coordinate.

Our Volunteers—The Heart of the Matter

Economics are a key factor for the sustainability of the Community Cars program. Right now about 70 percent of the cost is covered by ride revenue and membership fees, however the cost would skyrocket without our volunteer drivers, who saved us \$68,000 in salary expenses alone. When you consider that the entire program costs about \$120,000, the extraordinary contribution of our volunteer drivers comes into focus.

The volunteer drivers are the heart and soul of Community Cars and their service exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism at its best. Many of our drivers are “younger” seniors themselves and their commitment comes from a deep-felt desire to help others. They have to meet the same strict standards as our paid drivers; that includes a clean driving record and a background check.

As a result, the success of our program hinges on volunteer recruitment and we have turned up the volume on our outreach efforts. Several local radio stations run our Public Service Announcements; we also play them as on-hold messages over

our phone system. We have distributed fliers and brochures widely and made presentations at community groups. The volunteer application form has been simplified and posted on our website. Our new recruitment video is on our website and YouTube. These efforts are paying off: we now have 34 drivers, almost double from before the marketing campaign.

What's Next?

At this time, we have a well-tested program that could be scaled up for optimal impact. Three major areas of concern need to be addressed.

Funding—While the cost of staff time for managing the program is largely covered by federal funds administered by NJTPA, the funding for operations is limited to the fares collected from the riders which covers only about half of our vehicle operating costs.

Meadowlink does not receive vehicles from any state or federal agency to provide transportation services for seniors. In any case, the vehicles, if provided, are usually mini-buses that cannot be used by our aging riders because of their inability to climb up the steps. The preferred vehicle of choice is a sedan, currently we use Honda Accords.

Meadowlink received initial seed-funding to launch this program



in 2008 from the National Center for Senior Transportation. Today, we use our own resources to fund the deficit. Federal regulations do not permit the use of the fare-box revenue as a local match to access federal funds. This requirement effectively locks us out of any federal funding programs. The future financial viability of the program will depend on our ability to tap funding from the private sector especially some of the foundations working with senior programs.

Volunteer recruitment—We estimate that in Bergen County

alone we need about 30 more vehicles and about 120 volunteer drivers. At a minimum we need a dedicated Volunteer Recruiter who could expand our recruitment activities in the coming year - more recruitment presentations, more community outreach efforts, and optimization of our advertising distribution. We're also going to add public relations to our marketing mix. We have had success with outreach to geriatric medical practices and will continue those efforts. Patients of these offices represent a market perfectly suited to, and in need of, our service.

Photo, above. Our generous volunteer drivers who donate their time to drive seniors to various appointments, with Chairman Perry Frenzel, (top left).

Success of the program... depends on our ability to access affordable and reliable technology...

We have also partnered with the Henry & Marilyn Taub Foundation who have provided us a \$50,000 grant to market the program. FMC Media, a non-profit organization, will assist us in our outreach efforts.

Technology - Success of the program in locations where we do not have a physical presence depends on our ability to access affordable and reliable technology for keyless entry into our vehicles. Additionally, the different technologies - tablets, cameras and the keyless entry system are all dependent on the car battery. In winter this equipment takes a toll on the batteries sometimes leading to vehicles that won't start and technology systems that don't work.

We have introduced tablets to replace an older GPS system and on an experimental basis have installed a second battery in one of our cars. We are also working with new vendors and exploring possible options to reduce the cost of the technology and also make it more reliable.

To improve communications between our drivers and dispatchers, we will conduct a pilot program exploring the use of our tablet-based communication systems. In addition, we plan to link the in-car GPS systems to the office computer network. This can be used to locate our drivers in real-time and streamline determining ETAs and availability without having to contact the driver. We are also implementing a smartphone app like "Where's My Ride?" which allows riders to know precisely when their car will arrive.

Many clients have asked about scheduling rides on shorter notice. Allowing reservation just a few hours before a ride would probably increase our total ridership. We are analyzing our scheduling and dispatching process to determine if this is feasible. In addition, we're expanding our scheduling staff and also exploring ways to increase the efficiency of the service.

challenges trained drivers reduced mobility



Making a Difference: Flex-T Services for the Disabled

Meadowlink's transportation service dedicated to helping people with reduced mobility to get where they need to go started in Monmouth County in November 2009 in response to numerous requests. At that point, we were very focused on carpools and vanpools, but neither was a good solution to the transportation challenges faced by those with mental and physical constraints. Carpooling requires at least one of the riders to provide a car and both carpooling and vanpooling require one of the riders to drive the vehicle. Neither owning a car nor driving it is an option with this population.

Among the many issues faced by people with reduced mobility, employment and transportation are critical ones and are often closely linked. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2013 the unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 13.2 percent compared to 7.1 percent for those with no disability. "Transportation services are often not accessible

to individuals with disabilities as policies are not implemented and adequate funding is not provided," according to The Arc, a prominent national advocacy group for the disabled. Clearly, to those who have impaired mobility, transportation can represent a huge obstacle to finding and obtaining employment. While there are provisions for transportation in the Americans with Disabilities Act and other legislation and there are some good services available, not all those who need reliable transportation can get access to it.

Need Drives the Service

Because the number of requests for transportation from people with reduced mobility was growing, especially in Monmouth County, Meadowlink developed a concept and was able to get seed funding from the Kessler Foundation to implement it. The concept is Flex-T Mobility Partner ("Flex-T") and it relies on modest fares paid by the riders and funding by government agencies and foundations.

...we would like to add some vehicles that are **specially outfitted to handle wheelchairs, so we can serve an even broader population.**

The initial Kessler grant got Flex-T off the ground and gave us two years to implement and fine tune the program.

Flex-T has proven to be quite popular. In 2010 we provided about 600 rides and this has jumped to more than 9,000 for the 2014 fiscal year, although growth has flattened. On average, our riders each took 128 rides in 2014; this number correlates with anecdotal information that most of our clients use the service to get to jobs. Additionally, the large number of rides per client shows how essential Flex-T is to their lives.

Flex-T: Making a Difference in People's Lives

Behind these faceless statistics lies the simple rationale for Flex-T: making a difference in the lives of our riders by enabling them to have regular and reliable transportation to their place of employment. Our services can have deep and positive impact on the lives of our riders. In many cases, they wouldn't be able to maintain employment because of the uncertainty of their commute. In addition, the social isolation and other problems associated with their mental or physical constraints can be mitigated to a great extent by providing access to affordable transportation with compassionate drivers attuned to their special needs.

When the program started, we used volunteer drivers; however we quickly discovered that the needs of our riders were difficult to handle for untrained personnel. Also, it proved extremely difficult to find enough volunteers to meet the needs of our fledgling program. Starting in 2012, we switched to paid drivers who can be trained in transporting this special population. To help meet the needs of our riders, we select our most caring, capable, and responsible drivers and employ vehicles with improved accessibility features. These valued Meadowlink employees receive periodic training for this essential service.

Flex-T, in essence, is a minivan service that requires reservations at least 24 hours in advance. The riders pay \$2.50 per ride plus fifty-seven cents per mile and an annual \$15 membership fee.

Eighty-two percent of rides in 2014 came from Monmouth County, the heart of Flex-T; Essex, Union, Bergen and Hudson Counties delivered the other eighteen percent.

New Vehicles Will Expand Flex-T to Wheelchair-Based Clients

We mostly use Honda Odyssey minivans and they serve our riders well. However, we would like to add some vehicles that are specially outfitted to handle

wheelchairs, so we can serve an even broader population.

As part of a federal program, NJ Transit provides state-of-the-art fully-accessible vehicles to non-profit organizations like Meadowlink that provide transportation for seniors and the disabled. We have filed an application with NJ Transit requesting three vehicles. NJ Transit will retain ownership of these vehicles and Meadowlink will be responsible for insurance, maintenance and all operating costs.

The vehicles are called the MV-1 and are designed to meet or exceed ADA guidelines. According to Metro, a prominent magazine covering public transportation, "MV-1 is the first factory-built mobility vehicle designed from the ground up to provide accessible transportation to individuals with mobility challenges." In addition, the manufacturer, AM General says that the MV-1 is more durable and cost effective to own and operate than a traditional retrofitted van or bus.

Making Flex-T Sustainable

While the nominal fares and contributions from organizations like the Arc of Monmouth help defray the cost, the major source of funding for the program is a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's "New Freedom Program" that covers about half

the total operating costs.

The Flex-T program, while a success with its users, has not proven to be financially self-sufficient. We constantly need to seek out new sources of funding as most contributors do not provide long term support beyond one year. We are facing this challenge with an aggressive campaign to find funding and put Flex-T on a firm footing for the future. We are looking into more outside sources of funding, especially from the private sector.

A key target for us is other non-profit organizations like the various county Arcs and the Urban Leagues that serve the same constituencies. Whether it would be transporting people to the organization's center for various programs or helping their employed members with their commutes, this is a fertile area for a mutually beneficial relationship. We plan to meet with many organizations next year to pursue these opportunities.

To truly grow the Flex-T program and ensure that our clients have access to it for years to come requires big ideas and outside-the-box-thinking. Next year we will be analyzing the feasibility of merging the Flex-T and senior transportation programs, and assessing the impact of starting a pilot program in Monmouth County. Important factors that we

To truly grow the Flex-T program and ensure that our clients have access to it for years to come **requires big ideas and outside the box thinking.**

One way we are looking to expand our ridership is to become a “Qualified Provider” for the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities.

will be exploring include savings that can be realized from such a merger and the impact of using paid drivers for our senior transportation program.

Additionally, we are looking into tapping three entities that could give us access to new clients: the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities, the state’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Logisticare, the state’s Medicaid transportation broker.

One way we are looking to expand our ridership is to become a “Qualified Provider” for the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities. As a Qualified Provider, Meadowlink will be able to provide transportation services to support New Jersey residents with developmental disabilities. We have completed the application process and expect to be approved in 2015. This designation will give us access to a large pool of potential riders and we look forward to serving numerous new clients next year.

The New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NJDVRS) provides services that enable individuals with disabilities to find jobs or keep their existing jobs. Among these services is transportation. In 2012, the NJDVRS Vocational Rehabilitation counseling staff placed 3,744 individuals in full or part-time

employment. We are exploring the process to become a certified transportation provider for NJDVRS.

Another key target to expand our ridership is Logisticare, a company that became the state’s medical transportation broker in July 2009 and is now responsible for arranging transportation through its provider network for several modes of transportation for Medicaid recipients in all counties including “livery service.” Flex-T would be a natural fit to provide this service. We will be opening a dialogue with Logisticare about how to become one of its transportation providers.

Ultimately, we have to develop a new financial model for the program that could include raising prices for our services while offering subsidies for those who cannot afford the increases. While the challenges are many, we firmly believe that Flex-T is a sustainable program and these pending developments will allow us to expand our ridership while continuing to provide a much needed service. As in much of the transportation world that is undergoing significant upheaval, we need to look at unconventional solutions. If we do this, while maintaining the quality and integrity of the service, we truly believe that the future belongs to Flex-T.

driver profile
rideshare
ridematch



Sharing the Burden: Carpool into the Future

From Patriotism to Economics

Carpooling first became popular in the U.S during World War II as a way to conserve gasoline for military uses. This was part of an overall effort to ration critical goods during the war that appealed to people’s patriotism. It was revived during the 1970s as a response to high energy prices caused by the 1973 oil crisis and the 1979 energy crisis. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 20 percent of American commuters carpoled from 1970 to 1980 but carpooling has been dropping steadily since then; in 2011 it was just 9.7 percent.

The carpooling program has been a mainstay of New Jersey’s Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) since they were created in the 1980s. The TMAs are the backbone the state’s official “Ridesharing” program. But like carpooling in the rest of the country, participation in our state has dropped significantly since 1980.

In addition to benefits like driving less and social interaction, the biggest influence on whether people join carpoles is cost and the price of gasoline predominates; economic incentives are powerful. The growth we saw in Meadowlink carpoles in the last decade was due almost directly to New Jersey’s gas card program.

In the years when the state offered carpoolers gas cards worth from \$100 to \$200 we saw participation spike dramatically. From 2007 to 2010 the number of carpoles in our program grew a very impressive six-fold from about 1,400 to more than 9,000 carpoles. When the program ended new carpoolers dwindled. Additionally, although Ridesharing is a state program, New Jersey does not spend much promoting the concept and it is beyond Meadowlink’s ability to spend sufficient resources on marketing to make a difference in participation.

Meadowlink continues to enroll new carpoolers and the number

...available technology could be used to create and maintain carpools.

of people participating rose five percent; in 2014 we had 13,731 carpools. However, it was one of the smallest increases both by percent and actual numbers in the history of the program. Similarly, we documented about 34,000 New Jerseyans using our carpools, up just over six percent. We continued to hold transportation fairs, which were at an all-time high of 139 up from 113 the year before. College students, at 20 percent of our applicants, continue to be interested in carpooling. We would like to see the trend moving up again, but that will require some re-thinking of the status quo.

Technology's Promise

Like it has done with so many other aspects of our lives since the late 20th Century, Internet technology has the potential to revolutionize carpooling. As New Jersey's Ridesharing program chugs along with a legacy system, entrepreneurs are changing the way many people think about carpools and ridesharing. New concepts are encouraging more people to try it and new businesses are out to capture as big a market share as they can.

In 2013, about 360,000 people or eight percent of New Jersey workers used carpools.¹ Yet the database for the state's

¹ (US Census data: <http://1.usa.gov/1JnpA62> for percent; NJ DOL for total civilian labor force workers: <http://bit.ly/1CV1b5R>)

Ridesharing program has just under 80,000 carpool participants. That means that 280,000 carpoolers came together outside the state system. Add in the fact that there is no broad-based marketing campaign to encourage carpooling and it's clear there is plenty of room for growth.

Right now a New Jersey resident interested in joining Ridesharing has to call a toll-free number that connects to a person at the TMA that covers the county in which they live; they can also fill out a form online and that also goes to a TMA staff member. The TMA then enters the person's data into the Ridesharing software and emails the resident information about potential carpool opportunities; this can take several days to a week. An arms-length distance from the data like this is at odds with current trends.

The Rideshare process has not kept pace with technology. Today most people, especially younger people, demand instant results when they shop, order takeout food, arrange for an Uber car or engage in any of a myriad of other online transactions. It takes only a slight stretch of the imagination to realize that available technology could be used to create and maintain carpools. In fact, smartphone-based start-ups like Carpooling.com and Zimride are already doing it.

Uber has shown that familiar transport services like taxis and car services, which have changed little in decades and are inefficient (try hailing a cab in Manhattan at 4 p.m. when it's raining) can be radically improved by technology. With many people, especially Millennials thinking "green," the idea of single-occupancy vehicles being the main mode of transport is being seriously challenged.

Carpooling: A Fragmented and Inefficient Market Ready for Disruption

At Meadowlink, we are tracking the trends that are causing an upheaval in the once static transportation arena and we want to make sure that as the world starts to shift in a new direction that we are not left behind. Here are a few recent developments; consider it food for thought.

Carpooling.com

Carpooling is an app-driven service started more than 10 years ago by three German college students. They claim to be the number one ridesharing service in Germany and that they have six million registered users generating more than 3.5 million ridesharing offers every day. The service seems to be used more for one-time long-distance sharing, like a weekend trip from New York City to Boston, although the technology could easily be used to set up a regular

repeating commute. Drivers and passengers create profiles and a rating system is incorporated into the app. This makes it more comfortable for people to ride with someone they don't know. Carpooling.com has just recently arrived in the U.S., so only time will tell if they will succeed. Carmaker Daimler of Mercedes Benz fame has invested in Carpooling.com.

Zimride

Zimride works similarly to Carpooling and is also focused on longer rides, however you can use its website or the smartphone app; Carpooling is app only. Its positioning emphasizes social networks; potential riders and drivers are connected using data from their Facebook profiles so they can compare their compatibility. Zimride says "In seconds you can set up a profile, book a ride in your area, or post a ride of your own. With Zimride profiles, you can check out interests, music tastes, and feedback before you share a ride." The service focuses on universities and corporations and payments are handled through PayPal. Once you enter your location and destination, you get a list of choices; if nothing matches exactly they give you rides based on proximity. For example, if you enter Trenton to Chicago and there's no match, you might get Philadelphia to Chicago and it will

...we want to make sure that as the world starts to shift in a new direction that we are not left behind.

Meadowlink believes...
that collaboration with one of the leaders of online ridesharing is something worth considering.

give you the distance from Trenton to Philly.

Carma

Carma is one of the few of the new tech-driven services that focus on a modern approach to the classic carpool: several people who share the driving and costs of commuting five days a week. Carma CEO Sean O'Sullivan said his app, available on iOS and Android, solves a different problem than services like Uber, Lyft, and Sidecar. Carma focuses on reducing the number of cars on the road during rush hour. The app connects drivers heading to work with commuters on their way to the same area, or thereabouts. In June 2014, Carma announced a contest with two \$1 million grand prizes. One prize is for a tech developer who can build an application using Carma's tech platform that results in 10,000 daily user trips over a 90-day period. In addition, the company is offering \$1 million to a Carma employee who creates a feature that results in 1,000 additional daily trips in a single metropolitan area.

Ride

Ride says that it is "Reinventing the Commute." This service depends on companies signing up. Once on board, Ride helps the company with education, recruitment, matching drivers and riders and billing. We know from our experience that dealing

with the financial aspect of carpooling can be uncomfortable for some people, so by handling that aspect of the experience Ride removes an impediment to carpooling. It's easy to sign up, the initial web application form takes about a minute to complete. All transactions from communication to "boarding passes" and billing are handled electronically. Ride also handles subsidies, tax incentives, and green credits. They can provide incentives for "smart commuting" with referral and bonus programs.

Building Better Carpools

The potential for quickly matching people up to form carpools through the Internet has great potential. If joining or forming a carpool becomes as easy as ordering a book from Amazon, the popularity of sharing a ride with like-minded people could go up even as gas prices go down. Even cheap gas costs something and splitting the cost of a car ride with two or three other people will always be attractive to some consumers.

Since this is an emerging market, startups are flooding in; there will eventually be a shakeout. These companies may or may not succeed - who remembers Atari or Compaq today? But video games and personal computers are firmly entrenched in our culture. The concept will succeed, thrive and

evolve. As the concern for our environment continues to grow and solutions like carpooling and ridesharing are a few taps on a smartphone away, the time may be coming when carpooling breaks out bigtime.

The future of carpooling almost certainly lies with a tech solution. Technology is breathing life into areas that were previously thought to be mature, stable and not open to innovation. One good example is diapers.com; what product would seem more immune to a tech solution than diapers? Yet, diapers.com, started in Montclair, New Jersey in 2005 is now the largest online specialty retailer for baby products.

Meadowlink believes in order not to get left behind in the scramble to revolutionize multi-passenger commuting that collaboration with one of the leaders in online ridesharing is something worth serious consideration. Combining our long experience in ridesharing

with the fresh thinking of an outfit like Carma could create a potent powerhouse with the potential to make a real impact in the daily commute of thousands of New Jerseyans.

At a minimum this would require us to provide real-time carpooling services on a smart phone. Meadowlink's strength lies in its ability to offer a range of transportation choices to the rider - carpool, vanpool, shuttle, bikeshare or carshare. Not all choices are available at all times. The future lies in positioning Meadowlink as the one-stop shop for all transportation services including public transit.

To this end, in 2015, we plan to conduct a thorough analysis of several of the tech-oriented ridesharing startups and explore the feasibility of collaboration. It is the least we can do to ensure our continued relevance and to maintain the integrity of our stated mission.

The future of carpooling almost certainly lies with a tech solution.



Breathing New Life: Reviving the Vanpool

Vanpools would seem to have great appeal to commuters. You don't have to use your own vehicle like a carpool, you can get a discount on car insurance if you don't use your car for commuting, it's the cheapest way to commute - about six dollars per day per person, you can ride in the HOV lanes to avoid traffic and there are often financial incentives from employers and government agencies.

Vanpool Participation Drops Despite Benefits

Despite these benefits, the number of Meadowlink vanpools in 2014 was 40, down by almost half since 2010, our best year, when we ran 78 vanpools, as shown in Figure 2. We can specifically pinpoint our downturn to the consolidation resulting from Merck's acquisition of Schering Plough and the closure of the Ft. Monmouth Army base. However, statewide there are only 197 vanpools, so the lack of popularity goes beyond our personal experience.

The downsides include a perception that it is complicated; the vanpool driver/organizer has to collect fees from the members, pay costs and arrange for vehicle maintenance. Also, the government subsidies have declined over the years and fewer employers are encouraging their workers to consider vanpooling. Employer encouragement is a key factor in the popularity of vanpools. Thirty-two of our 40 vanpools are run by employees of Merck and PSE&G; if a company doesn't actively support vanpooling and doesn't make it a part of its culture, it is generally nonexistent among its workers.

Other factors in the decline of vanpools are related to the economic downturn of the last several years. Workforce expansion, operational shifts and corporate relocation are reliable drivers of vanpool formation and we have yet to see a significant increase in these indicators of economic growth. In addition, vanpools work better for longer commutes, longer than the average worker drives.

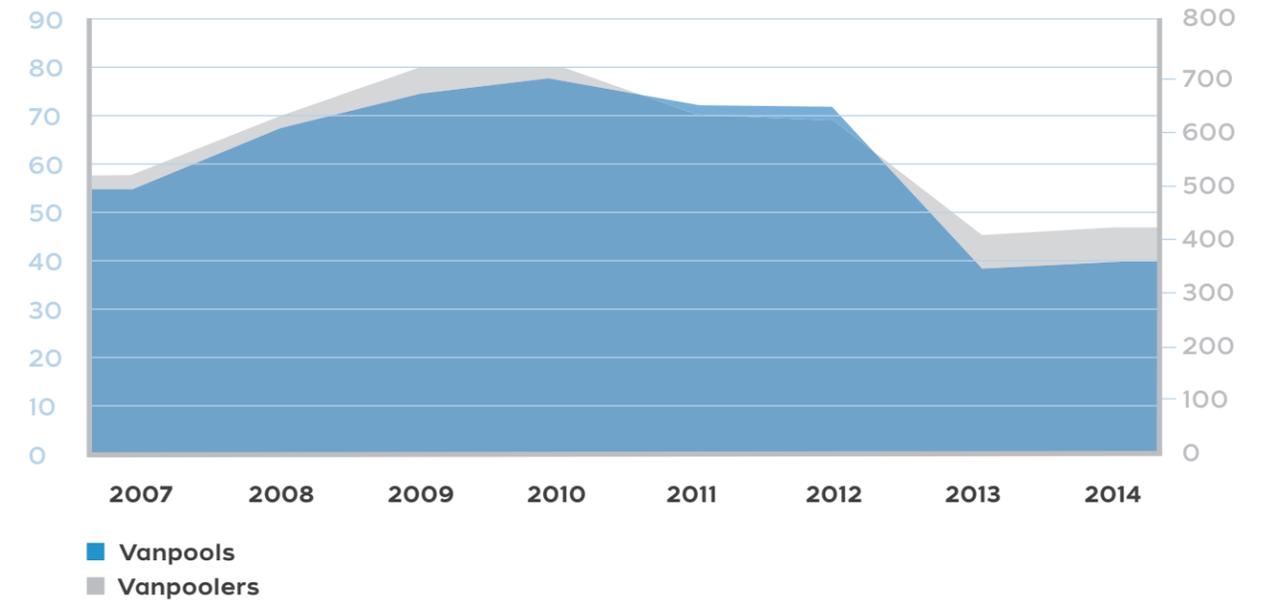


Figure 2.
Total Meadowlink
Vanpools and
Participants by Year
from 2007-2014

So where is vanpooling going? Is there a future? Or are vanpools the dinosaurs of alternative commuting?

Re-imagining Vanpools

Because of these downward trends, we believe it is time to re-imagine the vanpool. We need to discover why vanpools are declining in popularity. What hurdles are there to being a vanpool coordinator or passenger? How do we surmount these hurdles? How do we make vanpooling desirable, or even cool?

There are models of successful vanpool programs. What can we learn from CalVans, the California Vanpool Authority, that started with one van in 2001 and has grown to about 400? CalVans has sought out and serves niche markets like farm workers, teachers and people who visit

loved ones in prison. Serving micro-markets like that is one way to ensure the vitality of vanpooling.

Can we make being a vanpool coordinator even easier? Right now the coordinator is responsible for collecting money from passengers and paying for all the van-related expenses. The coordinator also has to deal with vehicle maintenance, parking the van when it's not being used, and making sure there are passengers for the van. In return, the coordinator gets a free commute and can drive the van 200 miles per month for personal use.

What if we could make it even more attractive to be a vanpool coordinator? What if all the financial arrangements were handled by Meadowlink? What if we increased the personal

Perhaps there is room for a **new mode of transportation that is a hybrid of a vanpool and a shuttle.**

miles allowed? What if we made it easier to keep the van full? What if, in addition to regular commuters, we allow passengers to join a vanpool ad hoc, for a day or a few weeks? Can we offer Wi-Fi service on the vans?

Is Technology the Answer?

While we should be cautious about seeing technology as a panacea, it's hard to avoid thinking that if forming a vanpool was a couple of mouse-clicks or smartphone taps away, that we could see a vanpool revival. What can we learn from a service like Bridj of Boston, the so-called "pop-up" bus service that uses data to predict areas of peak commuter demand and provides transportation to them based on their location, schedule and destination?

In order to get Meadowlink to the next level in vanpooling, we are going to go back to basics. We are going to find out what makes vanpooling attractive and enhance that while removing some of the obstacles. We intend to do a deep data dive into the RidePro database, which currently has 16,000 people looking to rideshare. Where do these people want to go? Where do they live?

Every time we hold a Commute Fair at a college, we sign up dozens of students, yet we have only one vanpool that goes to a college campus. Why is this?

If Not Vanpools, Then What?

Right now, the main alternatives for commutes of more than 40 miles round trip, when there is no public transit option, is either carpooling or vanpooling. By definition, both of those modes require volunteer drivers. But many people are reluctant to drive a van with 8-12 passengers as their daily commute, especially if they are used to single-car commuting. They just want to get to work; they don't want to feel like a bus driver.

But what if all the members were riders and a professional did the driving? It is no longer a vanpool, but with a trip of 40, 60, 80 or more miles, it's not a shuttle either. Perhaps there is room for a new mode of transportation that is a hybrid of a vanpool and a shuttle.

With a target price of \$15 each way, this becomes an attractive alternative as long as the vehicle made two round trips daily. This could be achieved if there was a network of routes and a certain critical mass is reached. A pilot program could focus on Somerset County where there are a number of large employers with a high percentage of commuters driving 40 miles or more each way, many from Pennsylvania.

Maybe the vanpool needs to evolve to survive.

What's Next?

Yes, we have a lot of questions, but asking them is the first step to creating excitement around the concept of vanpooling. We intend to get answers to all of these questions and from those answers we will begin to reinvigorate vanpooling in New Jersey. It's the least we can do before allowing the vanpool to go the way of the horse and buggy.

Our action plan includes:

- Focus groups with vanpool coordinators and passengers
- Using the RidePro database to foster the creation of new vanpools
- Start a focused effort to create vanpools for college students
- Pilot a vanpool/shuttle hybrid network

We intend to get answers to all of these questions and **from those answers we will begin to reinvigorate vanpooling in New Jersey.**

safe walking routes bike lockers healthier kids



Get Moving: Walking and Cycling to Health

It seems that if only we could get more people to move under their own steam like walking or riding bicycles instead of driving or sitting on their couches or at their computers, then we could solve a bunch of societal ills like obesity and other health issues, congested roads, air pollution, you name it. Is this a pipedream? Can we really make a difference in New Jersey, the most densely populated state with roads that are not just unfriendly, but downright hostile to any activity besides driving? Of course we can!

Cities like Portland, Oregon and Berkeley, California have adapted to being more bicycle and walker friendly and we can do it too. Yes, those places are radically different from most of New Jersey, so we have to find solutions that work here, for New Jerseyans. Our focus has been on three areas: bike lockers, the national program for schoolchildren, Safe Routes to School and coming soon, urban bike sharing. We will continue this important work

and look for additional ways to get people moving.

Bike Lockers

Most train commuters either drive to the station and park or get dropped off and picked up. So, even though they use public transportation, the so-called "last mile" is often a car trip, which adds to traffic congestion around train stations in the morning and evening and contributes harmful emissions to the air from car exhaust. New Jersey's Transit Village Initiative is attempting to address this issue by creating incentives for transit-oriented development. The Initiative aims to help "municipalities create attractive, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods where people can live, shop, work and play without relying on automobiles." This is a very constructive program that we support: Hamilton Township, Mercer County and Somerville have already seen its positive impact.

However, there will always be commuters who live too far to walk to the station, but are in a zone where bicycling is an attractive alternative. To encourage this trend, Meadowlink, for 12 years, has managed bike lockers at several New Jersey train stations. Bike lockers provide better security than traditional bike locks and keep bicycles dry during inclement weather. We currently maintain 70 lockers at train stations in Cranford, Rahway, Roselle Park, Maplewood, Summit and Westfield. In most towns the lockers are either 100 percent rented or close to it, except for Rahway, where only one locker is in use. We are looking into the feasibility of moving the lockers to another town where cycling to the train station is more popular

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national program to encourage K-8 schoolchildren to walk and bike safely to school. Since 2011, Meadowlink has worked on SRTS with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers. Two key benefits of the program are healthier kids and less congestion around schools at

the start and end of the school day. SRTS program funding comes from the federal government and is disbursed by NJDOT. We also partner with a number of community organizations; in 2014 some of these were Children's Aid Society, Boys & Girls Club, La Casa de Don Pedro and Urban League of Essex County.

There are more than 850 schools in the Meadowlink service area of Bergen, Essex, Union, Passaic and Monmouth counties. Our primary focus is the 200 schools in 23 disadvantaged communities in these counties. In 2014, more than 11,000 students participated in SRTS programs and 52 schools received the New Jersey Safe Routes to School recognition award for their efforts.

Every community that we work with faces the challenges of safety and security posed by children walking and cycling to school. However, the solutions we offer to each community are in tune with their specific needs. For example, East Orange faced the discontinuation of courtesy bus service for students and Linden requested a program in response to recommendations from a traffic study.

Can we really
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Paterson, NJ—Safe Routes to School’s Pedestrian Safety Presentations, engage kids while teaching them the rules of the road and how to be a safe pedestrian.

Two communities in which we executed successful programs in 2014 are Newark and Paterson. The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life and education of students in the Paterson schools. The Foundation granted Meadowlink \$20,000 to set up at least one school as a pilot project for a more comprehensive safety initiative than the standard SRTS program. This school could serve as a model for urban schools across the region.

The program was a success. More than 2,000 children participated and five Paterson schools have incorporated Walking School

Buses and/or Walking School Days into their overall safety programs. Each school will focus on its specific needs pertaining to student health, safety and attendance while building and strengthening relationships with the greater community.

Meadowlink has created an ongoing relationship with the Newark School District and several influential community groups. Working as a team, Meadowlink, the school district and three non-profits developed SRTS programs in six public schools. With these schools as a foundation, Meadowlink plans to reach out to the rest of the K-8 schools in

Newark to set up Safe Routes to School programs. Each of the six schools has a complete School Travel Plan that emphasizes safety, security and student health.

What’s Next? Bike Sharing in Newark

The first bike sharing program started in Amsterdam in 1965 and while it is considered a noble and pioneering effort most historical accounts deem it not that successful. But it provided a foundation for the concept and as the sharing processes and technology have advanced so has the popularity of bike sharing.

Bike sharing programs aim to provide affordable, non-motorized transportation for trips ranging from a half mile to perhaps four miles. The bikes can be used for shopping, visits to friends or to fill the so-called last mile between public transit and a person’s home or workplace.

Bike sharing programs are increasing in popularity in the 21st Century. Having a bike sharing program is fast becoming an emblem of a community’s commitment to alternative transportation solutions. By 2012, 40 U.S. communities had implemented or were planning bike sharing programs including Washington, D.C., Denver and Minneapolis. In 2013, our neighbor New York City started the

successful Citi Bike program encompassing thousands of bikes at hundreds of stations across the city.

While there are numerous factors that go into planning and implementing a successful bike sharing program, of paramount importance are ease-of-use, safety and security. A rider has to be able to quickly and easily take and return a bike, the bikes need to be safe from theft and the community has to have an infrastructure that is bicycle-friendly.

The technology used in bike sharing is another key success factor. The current state of the art is bike sharing kiosks where the bikes are picked up and returned. The technology to release and return the bikes and handle payment is shared between the bike and the kiosk. These systems work very well, but a drawback is that the kiosks take up a lot of room and are expensive to purchase and install.

The next generation of technology is sometimes called “station-less” bike sharing. These systems rely on the technology being contained in an electronic locking system. The entire security and checkout infrastructure is located on each bicycle, eliminating the need for kiosks or special docking stations. The bikes can still be taken and received from designated locations, but these can be more

While there are numerous factors that go into planning and implementing a successful bike sharing program, of **paramount importance** are **ease-of-use, safety and security.**

This is an
**exciting new
venture for
us, the city
of Newark
and all of our
partners and
collaborators.**

like traditional bike racks, reducing the physical profile and also the capital expense by as much as fifty percent.

As part of our commitment to alternative modes of transportation, Meadowlink has long been interested in bike sharing and has been closely watching the developments in the field. We are content to have other communities work out the kinks, so that when we enter the market, we will have the benefit of all the lessons learned.

To this end, we have been working for the last few years with the city of Newark to create and implement a pilot program in the vicinity of the Rutgers-Newark campus. Meadowlink will operate the system in close partnership with

the city government and various state and local agencies. Most of the funding will be provided by North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and supplemented by private funds.

The program envisions five to ten bike stations and will use the latest technology. In early 2015, Meadowlink will distribute a request for proposal for a provider of the technology and the bikes. Ideally, the program will kick off in fall 2015.

This is an exciting new venture for us, the city of Newark and all of our partners and collaborators. We are looking forward to a successful roll out and we know that other communities in the state will be watching and wondering if a similar venture is right for them.

MEADOWLANDS TRANSPORTATION BROKERAGE CORPORATION
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