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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Robert A. Nugent entitled "An analysis of existing reverse commute programs in the United States." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Planning.

James Spencer, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

David Johnson, Theodore Newsom

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Robert A. Nugent entitled "An Analysis of Existing Reverse Commute Programs in the United States." I have examined the final copy of this thesis and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Planning.

James A. Spencer
Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Kenneth B. Kenney

David A. Johnson

Accepted for the Council:

Lew Minkel
Vice Provost and Dean of
the Graduate School

AN ANALYSIS OF EXISTING REVERSE COMMUTE PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science in Planning

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Robert A. Nugent

May 1991

I would like to dedicate this to my wife Lisa, whose love and understanding has given me the strength to pursue what I once believed to be unobtainable.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to express his appreciation to Dr. Theodore Newsom, Dr. David Johnson, and Professor James Spencer for their assistance in the preparation of this thesis. With their encouragement and understanding I was able to achieve what seemed to be the impossible.

ABSTRACT

Residential migration, coupled with shifts of employment to suburban locations, has modified the nature of urban travel patterns. Today, lateral commuting (commuting from one suburb to another) and reverse commuting (living in the central city and commuting to the suburbs) has replaced the traditional suburb-to-city commute. With the continued change in travel patterns many communities and organizations are in the process of compiling information on existing commute programs. The purpose of this study was to document existing information on reverse commuting operations.

The programs studied were derived from a list of programs compiled by the Urban Mass Trasit Administration's Entrepreneurial Services Challenge Grant Program (ESP). Implementation, organization, operation, ridership, funding and financing were the areas studied.

The study found that the characteristics of the reverse commute progams include implementation to provide transportation services to suburban work centers, resident management and non-profit organizational framework, and funding through the Urban Mass Transit Administration.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

As we enter the 1990s, we can look back at recent history and recognize the importance of the 1960s and 1970s as a significant period of change for American cities. It was during this time that the traditional metropolis, primarily composed of a strong central city, began to surrender its dominance over the regional economy to suburbia.

> Regional [shopping] centers have turned into minicities....The result has been a little-remarked but momentous change in urban geography. The economic magnetism of [these] great centers has split asunder the functions of most large cities.....Instead of a single nucleus there are several: the old downtown and a band of satellite centers on the periphery.[1]

The functions and activities that were once part of the central city are now found in the suburbs. Suburban shopping malls perform many of the functions that were once a part of the central business district. Industry has gradually

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[1] Gurney Breckenfeld, "'Downtown' Has Fled to the Suburbs," Fortune, (October 1972), pp.80-87, 156, 158, 162.

moved out of the central city into suburbia, pursuing better access and cheaper land. Office parks have become more commonplace as a way for companies to offer special amenities to their employees. As a result of these changes, the suburbs are beginning to lose their traditional stereotype as sterile, culturally deprived bedroom communities.

> Today, there is scarcely an urban function that cannot be found in suburbia. What was once the traditional downtown facilities have shed their past and have followed the population to the suburbs. In the words of one observer: "Suburbs are no longer a monolith but rather a kaleidoscope."[2]

Hidden within this suburbanization movement is the irony that the nation's poor and minorities, who migrated to the cities at a time of plentiful job opportunities, have once again found themselves threatened by the same forces they initially fled (poverty, unemployment, and underemployment). For these unskilled and blue collar residents of the central city, there is a continuing reduction in the number of jobs due to the suburbanization movement. As an example, from 1967 to 1982 the six largest

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[2] Lawrence D. Maloney, "America's Suburbs Still Alive and Doing Fine", U.S. News and World Report (March 12, 1984) p. 61.

SMSA's in the north and east regions of the United States[3] have witnessed a 23 percent decrease in the combined number of manufacturing, retail, wholesale, and selected service jobs in their central cities. These SMSAs experienced a 49 percent increase in the same job classifications for those areas outside of the central city.[4]

Traditional Euclidean zoning which promotes segregated land uses remains firmly entrenched in suburbia. There has been continual resistance among developers, public officials, and even residential neighborhoods in siting homes and workplaces side by side in suburban areas. The bottom line is that most of the developers in these suburban areas are simply not in the low-cost housing business. This has resulted in an extreme undersupply of housing available for low and moderate income families due to high rents and housing costs.

Transportation to and from suburban locations also inhibits access to employment opportunities for inner city residents. Since the incomes of the central city population are modest, many job seekers cannot afford to purchase

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[3] Corresponds to Northeast and Midwest census regions plus Maryland and Washington, D.C. The specific cities are New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Boston, and Washington, D.C.

[4] James Heilbrun, Urban Economics and Public Policy, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) pp. 42

automobiles or simply cannot afford the cost associated with traveling the distances needed to obtain employment at these suburban locations. In addition, the public transit systems in most cities usually have limited services in these suburban areas.

At the present time, there are a number of programs under way in urban areas aimed at alleviating these problems: office-park designs with emphasis on alternatives in modal choice, more stringent developmental review, the integration of workplaces and homes, in-house day care facilities, the promotion of ridesharing, and the most recent, reverse commute programs which are transportation services designed to transport job-seeking inner-city residents to suburban employment opportunities.

The Purpose of the Study

Residential migration, coupled with massive shifts of employment to suburban locations, has modified the nature of urban travel patterns. Today, lateral commuting (commuting from one suburb to another) is the most commonly found commuting practice while reverse commuting (living in the central city and commuting to the suburbs for employment) is becoming increasingly more common as residential migration and employment shifts continues. The purpose of this study is to examine reverse commuting as a way of bridging the gap

between residential locations in the central city and employment locations in the suburbs.

Although the concept of reverse commuting can be found as early as 1915[5], the realization of the problems associated with such commuting patterns have only surfaced in the last twenty years. The nation's transportation disadvantaged (e.g., persons without access to an automobile or public transportation, physically disadvantaged, or persons unable to drive) have been the most affected by this change in commuting patterns. For the transportation disadvantaged, the geographic disparity between housing and employment within metropolitan areas has reached epic proportions.[6] Quite often, there are no reverse-direction or cross-town transit runs connecting core neighborhoods with outlying business parks and office centers during peak hours.[7]

> The availability of the labor force is directly tied to the quality of our transportation systems. Economic development

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[5] ...the onset of urban manufacturing decentralization has given rise to both "reverse (city-to-suburb) commuting and a growing number of satellite industrial mill towns. Graham R. Taylor, Satellite Cities: A Study of Industrial Suburbs, (New York: D. Appleton Company, 1915; reprinted by Arno Press, 1970)

[6] For a discussion of this issue, see Gold, 1972; Cox, 1973; Masotti and Hadden, 1974; Christian, 1975; Cervero, 1989.

[7] Robert Cervero, Suburban Gridlock, (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Public Research, 1986) pp. 220

> will grind to a halt and our urban areas will decay if we fail to connect workers with work. (Gilbert Wertzel, Executive Director, Greater Philadelphia Economic Development Coalition).[8]

As a result of these inequities in transit services, concerned organizations (child placement, community groups, employers, etc.) have initiated reverse commute programs.

> Increasing the opportunities for the nation's poor and disadvantaged to access burgeoning suburban employment and commercial centers deserves priority attention at all levels of government.[9]

Reverse commute programs have found their way through the maze of problems associated with starting reverse commute programs by persistence, patience, luck, and skill. And, at the present time, numerous communities and organizations are in the process of compiling information to ascertain the viability of reverse commute programs for their areas. The purpose of this study was to document existing information on reverse commuting operations that may be of some significance to future and/or current operations. The documentation and analysis of this information will serve as a guide for communities and/or

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[8] American Public Transit Association, Transit 2000, Executive Summary of the Public Transit Association's Transit 2000 Task Force, Final Report, (Washington, D.C.: American Public Transit Association, 1989) pp. 3.

[9] Robert Cervero, Suburban Gridlock, (New Brunswick, NJ. : Center for Public Research, 1986) pp. 221

organizations choosing to implement specific elements of reverse commute operations and tailoring these elements to each unique situation. The study results also provide valuable information supporting the use of reverse commute programs to enhance employment opportunities for inner-city job seekers.

The major objectives of the study were to 1) examine and document the characteristics of reverse commute programs currently operating in the United States, 2) examine and document the differences and/or similarities of the programs, 3) examine and document the concerns of those operating reverse commute programs.

Methodology

A case study analysis of selected reverse commute programs was the basic methodology incorporated in the present study. The programs chosen for analysis in this study were derived from a list of programs compiled by the Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA). To promote market-driven transportation services, UMTA initiated the Entrepreneurial Services Challenge Grant Program (ESP) some years ago in order to aid in the start-up of private sector services. Prerequisites for receiving such grants include meeting customer demands, being financially self-sufficient, support of local government, helping solve mobility and/or

congestion problems, promotion of small/disadvantaged business, and meeting transportation needs that are currently not being satisfied. As a result, UMTA has been able to a compile a list of representative progams funded through ESP. In addition, other programs were identified through information provided in transportation publications and through contacts with transportation professionals. The reverse commute programs selected for analysis in this study include:

- Corridor Transportation Association (Laurel, Maryland);
- Employee Transportation Assistance (Washington, D.C.);
- Excel Transportation (Chicago, Illinois);
- Employment Transportation Services (Hartford, Connecticut);
- Independent Transportation Management Services (Minneapolis, Minnesota);
- Job-Ride (Wisconsin Department of Transportation);
- JobTRANS (Knoxville, Tennessee);
- Kenilworth-Parkside Resident Management Corporation (Washington, D.C.); and
- Lakeview Transportation Services (Cleveland, Ohio).

Although this list is not all inclusive of the programs in the United States, it is representative of typical reverse commute programs currently in operation. Personal interviews were conducted by telephone with representatives of current and proposed reverse commute operations, and with professionals in both the private and public sectors in order to obtain information and viewpoints about selected programs. This information was analyzed to gain an understanding of the characteristics, differences, similarities and common concerns of reverse commute programs.

Organization of Study Report

The organization of this study report begins with Chapter 2, an historical overview of the environment for reverse commuting programs. Chapter 3 provides a description of the reverse commute programs selected for analysis. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the programs and discusses implementation, organization, operation, funding and financing. Chapter 5 states concerns, recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER II

THE ENVIRONMENT FOR REVERSE COMMUTE PROGRAMS

Introduction

During the last twenty years many cities have undergone radical changes in employment, population, and transportation. While most of these cities have witnessed losses of jobs within the city, the surrounding suburbs have witnessed rapid increases. The population has also shifted to the suburbs with the exception of the low and moderate income. The result of these changes has been new travel demands throughout the city.

Among these new demands is the need for the reverse commute from the inner-city to suburban work centers. In order to understand why these needs have become increasingly common, it is necessary to understand the changes that have promoted them and the environment in which they exist.

This chapter examines the various aspects that have led to this need. These aspects include the changing nature of the city, changes in transportation, and the economic trends that have played a part in creating the current environment in which reverse commuting exists.

Evolution of Urban Areas

The Industrial Period

The most significant urbanization occurred with the rise of the Industrial Revolution. The job and the home were irrevocably split and the "journey to work" was to take its place in the universal urban pattern.[10]

New and more efficient sources of power brought rise to work locations outside of the traditional areas. The invention of mass production machinery began to make handicraft industries unprofitable. [11]

In time, urban economic development began to be underwritten by financiers, bankers, and investment organizations. As more money was needed for the operation of these enterprises cooperative capital in the form of stock began to be offered.

As technology and development continued, distinct class structures began to develop and spatial divisions began to appear. Commercial and administration, specialized retail, industry, various classifications of residential districts,

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[10] Kate Liepmann, The Journey to Work, (New YOrk: Oxford University Press, 1944).

[11] Janet Roebuck, The Shaping of Urban Society, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), pp. 107-139.

recreation, and gambling and prostitution areas all found distinct areas and districts.[12]

One of the most noticeable changes in the urban environment has been that individuals and families are continuing to arrive from the cities, small towns, and rural areas in record numbers. From 1950 to 1980, the population of America's suburbs nearly tripled, from 35.2 million to 101.5 million, representing about 45 percent of the nation's total population. During the same period, central cities grew only modestly, from about 50 million to 68 million, or 39 percent of the total United States' population.[13]

Suburbia

Contrary to popular beliefs, the history of suburban settlements finds its genesis much earlier than the automobile age. Preserved views of suburban villas and houses have been found in the artifacts of both ancient Egypt and Rome. Even in medieval times there were spill-overs of housing beyond the castle walls.

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[12] Janet Roebuck, The Shaping of Urban Society, (New York: Charles Scibner's Sons, 1974), pp. 140-170.

[13] James Heilbrun, Urban Economics and Public Policy, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) pp. 21-61.

In the United States the suburban movement has been a continuous part of our history dating as far back as the seventeenth century. The most significant suburbanization began in the mid-nineteenth century as a result of railroad extensions into areas outside of the central city. Around these extensions, residences began to be developed primarily by the economically privileged.

> The early suburbanite usually spent only the summer months in the country, the more wealthy in their country houses and their less affluent friends in various popular boarding houses. With the improvement of the rail service in the last few decades of the nineteenth century, large suburban developments were built, and many families remained the year round.[14]

As steam locomotives were replaced by streetcars, the number of houses along these lines rapidly increased. The population in suburban areas significantly increased as a result of these changes. As an example, between 1850 and 1900, the population of Boston suburbs increased from 60,000 to about 227,000. As a result, the pedestrian characteristics of many cities began to disappear.

By 1910 ownership of automobiles was becoming more and more frequent. This aided the decentralization which was

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[14] Digby E. Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1958) p. 197.

occurring by allowing access to previously unaccessible areas. The paving of roads soon followed as a way of aiding and promoting this new mobility of the population. With the start of World War II, new road and highway construction came to a virtual standstill.

Although the pre-war suburban movement was thought to be rapid, in fact it was moderate when compared to the post war "suburban fever". The Great Depression and the war had hindered the rate at which the suburban movement progressed. With the post war baby-boom and the increased buying power of the middle class, vigor was once again restored to the suburban movement.

As the population of the cities began to leave, so did many retail establishments. As an example, in 1946 there were only eight suburban shopping centers in operation in the United States. By 1960 the number had increased to almost 4,000.[15]

Today the results of continued suburbanization since World War II show that suburban areas have been growing at a rate five times faster than their central city rivals. Office, industrial, cultural, commercial, and retail functions have been gradually moving out of the central city

[15] Samuel Feinberg, What Makes Shopping Centers Tick, (New York: Fairchild Publications, Inc., 1960), pp. 3.

and into the suburbs. Suburbs are beginning to shatter their traditional stereotype as sterile, culturally deprived bedroom communities. Today there is scarcely an urban function that cannot be found in suburbia. What was once the traditional downtown facilities have shed their past and followed the population to the suburbs.

As a matter of fact, attitudinal changes of suburbanites are beginning to show little dependence of suburbia on its older and larger neighbor, the central city.

> ... the residents of the [suburban] ring around New York City, once regarded simply as a bedroom for commuters, no longer feel themselves subordinate to New York. The suburbs have become a multi-centered urban chain with surprisingly limited ties to the metropolitan core....Suburban residents have established their own institutions and go about their lives in an increasingly separate world. They see their future even further from the [central] city, rather than closer to it.[16]

Transportation

One function of transportation is to bring people, products, and activities together so that organized social activity can take place. Cities were not possible until transportation allowed these necessary movements.[17] The

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[16] James Feron, et al., "Findings and Analysis of The New York Times Suburban Poll", The New York Times, (November 14, 1978) B-3.

[17] E.O. Pederson, Transportation in Cities, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), pp. 1.

physical city has always been the result of transportation. The various modes have determined not only the physical form but our sense of society and economy.[18]

The Evolution of Urban Transportation

Throughout history cities have evolved directly as a result of transportation changes. As the modes of transportation changed from walking to horse and buggy to rail to the automobile, the land uses within and around cities have also changed. As these land uses changed, so did the amount of traffic and congestion. In return, this traffic and congestion had an impact on the land use of the area. Documents from ancient Rome make mention of many of these problems.

> Congestion, noise, dirt, and odors were problems associated with transportation, and the city authorities attempted to mitigate them by banning wheeled traffic from some streets and from the entire city during the busiest times of the day. This was necessary so that city residents could get to work and do their shopping. Besides there were not enough parking places for the oxen![19]

The early cities were densely populated out of necessity. Without transportation, proximity was extremely

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[18] Eric H. Monkkonen, America Becomes Urban, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1988) pp. 158-159.

[19] E.O. Pederson, Transportation in Cities, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980) pp. 1.

important and land uses tended to be much more mixed within these types of cities.

> "Half the workmen ... of the Strand ... walked two miles to their work." This same Strand, a main thoroughfare which gives strangers an imposing idea of the wealth of London, may serve as an example of the packing together of human beings in that town. In one of these parishes, the Office of Health reckoned 581 persons per acre, although half the width of the Thames was reckoned in.[20]

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, rail transportation began to give residents of the city the freedom to live in one area and work in another, but because of the cost, this innovation was limited to the wealthy. The first major suburbanization movement was a consequence of this new innovation.

> The [Paris] railways emanated from termini within the 1841 fortifications and were essentially designed to link the Capital with the Provinces. The suburbs thus followed the railways rather than the railways being planned to serve the suburbs.[21]

By far, the most dramatic impact upon urban areas has been the development of the automobile as the prime source of transportation. The United States has been preoccupied

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[20] Karl Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, trans. Friedrich Engels (London: Swan Sonnenchein,Lowrey and Co., 1877) vol. 1, p. 618.

[21] Ian B. Thompson, The Paris Basin, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 21.

with the automobile since World War II and the evidence of this can by seen via the amount of federal funding and development. An important provision was through the 1956 Federal Aid Highway Act which designated that federal revenues would provide 90 percent of highway construction costs, and operational costs would be provided by taxation of gasoline and oil. Realizing the possible impact of this act, Lewis Mumford said:

> ...the most charitable thing to assume about this is that they hadn't the faintest notion of what they were doing....Within the next fifteen years they will doubtless find out; but by that time it will be too late to correct all the damage to our cities and our countryside, to say nothing of all the inefficient organization of industry and transportation, that this ill-conceived and absurdly unbalanced program will have wrought.[22]

Indeed, the federal emphasis toward the automobile had a tremendous impact upon the American city, so much so that cities developed primarily after the 1956 act had dramatically less centralized areas than were traditionally found in the older cities. The younger American city is typically less dense and more suburban than older American or European cities.

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[22] Lewis Mumford, The Highway and the City, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), p. 234.

The Decline of Public Transportation

The increasingly mobile lifestyle of our society is the result of government housing policies, highway development, and the dependence of the American population on the automobile. The public transit industry has been unable to keep pace with the changes of modern society.

The low density development and decentralization that has characterized our country has caused new travel demands and these demands have not been met by the transit industry. Public transit has failed to compete in the urban transportation market, especially as mass-produced private vehicles became available. As the travel market of public transit dwindled, conservative approaches to innovation and limited promotional campaigns hurried the decline.[23]

With the start of World War II, the transit industry began to gain riders, but this increased ridership was no more than the result of wartime shortages and rationing. As the war came to an end, the industry was once again caught in plummeting ridership levels.

Automobile ownership continued to increase and weekend transit ridership fell as the work week was shortened. The

[23] Arthur Saltzman, "The Decline of Transit", Public Transportation: Planning, Operations,and Management, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979) pp. 22-39.

response to these declines in ridership levels was a transition from private to public ownership and government subsidization of transportation.

Although a few cities have been successful at retaining high levels of ridership, these are the exceptions and not the rule. Most cities, because of decentralization, do not have the population densities to make these services financially self-sufficient and will continue to need assistance from public funds.

The public transit industry has evolved into a service primarily for the transit-dependent population. As travel patterns continue to change and the density levels lower in various areas of the cities, the idea of public transit is somewhat undermined. Ridership levels are continuing to drop while the number of total urban trips supported by public transit decreases. With escalating costs and limited public funds, the future of public transit will depend on its ability to attract new passengers.[24]

Current State of Transportation in Urban Areas

The average population density per square mile in urbanized areas has dropped 22 percent between 1970 and 1980. The use of the automobile by the American society has

[24] Harbridge House, The Future of the Automobile in City Transportation, (Washington, D.C.: Allright Auto Parks, Inc., 1980) pp. 79-81.

promoted low density development in both residential and business areas. This trend makes it extremely difficult to maintain public transit systems such as buses and rail service. This has put a tremendous amount of pressure on existing roads and highways. These changes can be seen in places like Atlanta where between 1960 and 1980 city-to-suburb commutes increased 170 percent, suburb-to-suburb commutes increased 264 percent, and suburb-to-city commutes increased 116 percent.[25]

The increased use of the automobile can also be viewed in vehicle miles traveled. Table 2.1 shows that there has been a 324 percent increase in vehicle miles traveled between 1950 and 1984. In the same time period, there has been a 53 percent decrease in transit passenger rides. Although these trends seem to be lessening, there remains a tremendous gap between these modes of transportation. It should be kept in mind that as the economy changes, there will be a greater demand for access into low density areas. At the present time, existing transit services are not prepared to deliver such services because of cost considerations and the limits of existing infrastructure.

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[25] Highway Users Federation for Safety and Mobility, "Getting Around Town: Strategies for Urban Mobility" in Institute of Transportation Engineers, Urban Traffic Congestion: What Does the Future Hold?, (Washington D.C.: Institute of transportation Engineers, 1986), pp. 1-32.

Table 2.1 TRENDS IN URBAN TRANSPORTATION

Year	Billions	Percentage Change
Passenger Cars (Vehicle Miles)		
1950	182.5	--
1960	284.8	+56
1972	567.2	+99
1984	773.6	+36
		Total +324
Transit (Passenger Rides)		
1950	17.246	--
1960	9.395	-45
1972	6.567	-30
1984	8.030	+22
		Total -53

Source: Federal Highway Administration, Highway Statistics, various years; American Public Transit Association, Transit Fact Book, 1985, and unpublished APTA data.

Transportation professionals generally agree that traffic congestion is one of the most serious problems they will have to face in the future.

> You may even think that if we can make it through all the construction that lies ahead for the greater Seattle area, we'll be pretty well off by 1990. Well, think again. Even the smoothest streets won't get you where you want to go if there are too many vehicles sharing a finite amount of road space. The term "rush hour" will become an anomaly. Commuting will take far longer than an hour and no one will be rushing.
>
> --- Wes Frysztacki, Director of Transportation, Puget Sound Seattle) Council of Governments[26]

Although traffic conditions are generally worse in large cities, small cities perceive that they also, have congestion problems. Because of this, small cities have begun to administer measures such as flexible work hours, transportation demand management legislation, and mixed use development to alleviate traffic congestion problems.

Economic Trends

Transportation and economic development influence each other in a cycle. As development occurs, methods of moving from one place to another are provided and as this occurs, development is encouraged. So, in order to understand the

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[26] The Capsule, (Seattle Metro), Vol. 4, No. 3, 1984.

environment of reverse commute programs, economic trends must be examined as well as the changes in transportation.

Economic Growth in Urban Areas

Over the past thirty years, office-based occupations have been the fastest growing employment sectors in the United States. Nationally, the share of jobs in manufacturing has fallen from 32 percent after the end of World War II to 24 percent in the early 1980's. The service sector, including jobs in office, retail, government, education, and entertainment, grew from 49 to 66 percent of the employment over the same period.[27]

As the types of jobs have changed, so have the locations. As can be seen in Table 2.2, the percentage of jobs in the suburbs has steadily increased since 1948. This is evident in virtually every sector of our economy. This trend has also been experienced in every major metropolitan area in the United States.

An excellent indicator of the rapid growth in the suburbs is the proportion of the total number of jobs relative to the number in the central city. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of suburban jobs between

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[27] Robert Cervero, Suburban Gridlock, (New Brunswick, NJ.: Center for Public Research, 1986) p. 8.

Table 2.2 DECENTRALIZATION OF JOBS IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

DISTRIBUTION OF JOBS (%)	1948	1967	1982
Six Largest SMSA's in North and East[a]			
Manufacturing			
Central City	72	55	41
Outside Central City	28	45	59
Retail			
Central City	77	55	36
Outside Central City	23	45	64
Wholesale			
Central City	92	71	45
Outside Central City	8	29	55
Selected Services			
Central City	87	74	52
Outside Central City	13	26	48
Total, Four Industries			
Central City	77	60	43
Outside Central City	23	40	57
Six Largest SMSA's in South and West[b]			
Manufacturing			
Central City	61	48	45
Outside Central City	39	52	55
Retail			
Central City	71	55	44
Outside Central City	29	45	56
Wholesale			
Central city	87	55	46
Outside Central City	13	35	54
Selected Services			
Central City	77	68	56
Outside Central City	23	32	44
Total, Four Industries			
Central City	69	55	48
Outside Central City	31	45	52

[a]Corresponds to Northeast and Midwest census regions plus Maryland and Washington, D.C.

[b]Corresponds to South and West census regions less Maryland and Washington, D.C.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Economic Censuses and Census of Population, various dates.

1970 and this seems to be a national trend.[28] The employment increased in the suburbs because a near total range of economic activities are now locating in suburbia. For the unskilled and blue collar residents of the central city, there is a depreciating supply of job opportunities. Service and manufacturing jobs are locating in suburban areas, but the central city population remains unable to take advantage of the available jobs due to transportation limitations.

Housing

Housing is important to economic development because it encourages economic expansion within a region: employers are attracted to the labor force living there. Any shortage of housing will, conversely, push up housing prices, reduce the availability of labor, and create traffic congestion by workers who live in the area. All of these conditions are economic disadvantages.

Minorities have suffered the most from the disadvantages attributed to housing. It is an irony that the nation's poor and minorities migrated to the cities at the time when job opportunities were beginning to be threatened by the forces of decentralization. Unfortunately, while metropolitan

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[28] Christopher H. Exline, Gary L. Peters, and Robert P. Larkin., The City, Patterns and Processes in the Urban Ecosystem, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982) pp. 220- 222.

jobs have been moving farther away from the inner city population, the population itself has remained highly concentrated within these central city areas.

The forces that account for the concentration of poor and minorities in central cities are numerous; the most important being housing availability. In most cities, the central city has the largest supply of low-income housing and the suburbs typically have the lowest supply of low-income housing.

Suburban land use has been generally controlled by its worth. The bottom line is to get the largest return on an investment. Therefore, the "best use" scenario has guided the development of these areas and the need for low cost housing has been overlooked. This trend has continued to exclude certain groups of people from residing in the suburbs, namely, minorities.

This trend continues because of continual resistance among developers, public officials, and even residential neighborhoods in siting homes and workplaces side by side. Because of profit motives and existing land use controls, most developers in these suburban areas have simply not been involved in the housing business. Specifically, the provision of affordable housing has been neglected because

of increasing costs of land in the central city. This, in turn, has promoted suburban areas as either work centers or affluent bedroom communities as the result of cheaper land values. [29]

These ongoing processes have led to disparities in income levels and racial composition between the central cities and the suburbs. This imbalance raises serious questions of both equity and efficiency in federal, state, and local public financing.[30] The decrease in affordable housing stock along with the decentralization of jobs, have placed central city residents at a disadvantage in their struggle to improve their economic condition.[31]

Employment/Unemployment

Higher rates of unemployment, lower participation rates in the labor market, and lower earnings are typical among minorities that reside in the central city areas. Using Blacks as a surrogate of the minority population, Table 2.3 shows that in 1970 the unemployment rate for both Blacks and Whites was higher in the central cities than in those areas outside of the CBD. Upon examining the unemployment rates by area and race it

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[29] Robert Cervero, Suburban Gridlock, (New Brunswick, NJ.: Center for Public Research, 1986) pp. 13-14.

[30] James Heilbrun, Urban Economics and Public Policy, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) pp. 423-479.

[31] James Heilbrun, Urban Economics and Public Policy, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) pp. 287-298.

Table 2.3 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES AND NONPARTICIPATION RATES: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CENTRAL CITIES OF SMSA's

	Insides Central Cities		Outside Central Cities	
	1970	1980	1970	1980
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE				
All Races, both sexes[a]	4.7	7.3	3.9	5.7
White, both sexes	4.1	5.7	3.7	5.4
Male	3.8	5.9	3.2	5.3
Female	4.4	5.4	4.5	5.4
Black, both sexes	6.9	12.8	6.4	9.6
Male	6.7	13.9	5.8	9.7
Female	7.3	11.7	7.2	9.4
NONPARTICIPATION RATE IN LABOR FORCE, WORKERS AGED 25-64[b]				
All Races, both sexes[a]	30.0	26.6	30.8	25.6
White, both sexes	29.6	25.6	30.8	25.7
Male	8.6	11.6	6.0	8.9
Female	49.0	39.0	54.5	41.9
Black, both sexes	30.0	28.9	29.4	23.6
Male	14.3	20.2	15.7	16.3
Female	42.9	35.7	41.8	30.2

[a] "All races" include white, black, and other not shown separately.

[b] Rate of nonparticipation equals the number of persons not in the labor force divided by the total population for the designated group.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics, 1970, tables 107,112,124, and 126; 1980, table 144.

the CBD. Upon examining the unemployment rates by area and race it is apparent that the most rapid increase in unemployment occurred for the Black population between 1970-1980. The rise in the central city unemployment rates do not illustrate the entire problem. Some potential workers have become discouraged and have withdrawn from the labor force entirely. Table 2.3 also shows that nonparticipation rates for central city Blacks are higher than central city Whites. [32]

The result of the disparity upon central city residents is reflected in their earnings. In Table 2.4, the median family income among Black families living in the suburbs is 39 percent higher than those living in the central city. It also indicates that there has been a disadvantage for Blacks in suburban areas since 1969.

The estimated "income penalty" suffered by those who reside in the central city is 9.4 percent. This means that those residing in the central city average 9.4 percent less income than their suburban counterparts. Although this seems high, the income penalty suffered by racial discrimination is considerably higher at 35 percent.[33]

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[32] John D. Karsada, "Urban Change and Minority Opportunities" in Paul E. Peterson, ed., The Urban Reality (Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institute, 1985) p. 58.

[33] Richard Price and Edwin Mills, "Race and Residence in 5) p. 12-13.

Table 2.4 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE CENTRAL CITIES OF SMSA's

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME[a] (1985 Dollars)	1959	1969	1979	1985
CENTRAL CITIES				
All Races[b]	21,752	27,515	26,801	25,337
White	23,112	29,472	29,560	28,001
Black	14,193	19.245	17,183	16,187
OUTSIDE CENTRAL CITIES				
All Races[b]	24,490	32,417	33,992	32,724
White	24,886	32,895	34,556	33,285
Black	12,853	20,298	22,294	22,452

[a] Income in the year shown for families by place of residence in the following year.

[b] Includes other races not seperately.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, series P-23, no. 37. June 24, 1971, table 7; series P-23, no. 75, November 1978, table 17; and unpublished Census Bureau tabulations from the Current Population Survey.

CHAPTER III

REVERSE COMMUTE PROGRAMS

Introduction

As can be seen from the discussion in the previous chapter, the transportation needs of central city residents require public transportation services which are different than the services that are generally provided by public transportation systems in urban areas. In order to provide the needed services, federal, state, and local governments, as well as private entrepreneurs, have initiated programs that respond to those needs.

Insights into important aspects of reverse commute programs can be gained by examining their differing characteristics and qualities. This chapter gives a brief summary of nine programs that are either in operation or are in the process of initiating such a program. The programs are:

- Corridor Transportation Association (Laurel, Maryland);
- Employee Transportation Assistance (Washington, D.C.);
- Excel Transportation (Chicago, Illinois);

- Employment Transportation Services (Hartford, Connecticut);
- Independent Transportation Management Services (Minneapolis, Minnesota);
- Job-Ride (Wisconsin Department of Transportation);
- JobTRANS (Knoxville, Tennessee);
- Kenilworth-Parkside Resident Management Corporation (Washington, D.C.); and
- Lakeveiw Transportation Services (Cleveland, Ohio).

The emphasis in this chapter is placed on highlighting the various approaches used to provide reverse commute transportation services. The discussion of each program focuses on areas such as implementation, organization, operations, funding, and ridership.

The procedure used to gather information consisted of 1) initial contacts and discussions with program representatives (Appendix A) in order to solicit participation in the study, 2) the mailing of sample questions (Appendix D) to each representative to introduce them to the topic of interest and 3) conducting a formal telephone survey (Appendix E) with program representatives that agreed to participate in the study. Participant release forms were used to approve the use of information provided

by the program representatives. The survey questions covered topics in the area of implementation, organization, operation, ridership, funding and finacing.

The information that follows is based on factual data and on opinions and impressions offered by the representative interviewed in telephone surveys (Appendix E), along with the documentation supplied by their offices.

Corridor Transportation Association (Laurel, Maryland.)

The Corridor Transportation Corporation (CTC), a non-profit corporation formed for the purpose of providing transportation to the Prince George County area of Maryland, initiated a public bus system called Connect-A-Ride in May 1989. This service is unique in the aspect of being funded both publicly and privately.[34]

The corridor between Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, D.C. has experienced substantial economic growth in recent years. Previous studies of this corridor led the local public transportation providers to conclude that service could not be initiated due to associated costs and low projected ridership levels. There were, however, some

[34] Corridor Transportation Corporation, "Connect-A-Ride", Laurel, Maryland: 1989, (mimeographed) and interview with Ray Ambrose, Project Manager Corridor Transportation Corporation, 11 June 1990.

indications that the possible ridership, although small, would be a significant benefit to the businesses of this area. These businesses also indicated that they had an ongoing problem filling positions because of the lack of service. As a result, the business and core leaders came to the conclusion that a bus program would respond to the labor shortage. The groups being targeted for using this service were the general public and the employers of the Laurel area.[35]

Those involved in the preliminary studies and some of the initial phases of this program included members of the Laurel Chamber of Commerce, several local elected officials, county council members, Washington Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and The Department of Maryland Public Services.[36]

A study of the feasibility of such a route in 1986 led to the recommendation of the formation of a private non-profit group (CTC) to oversee and administer this service. This group was not to be supported by city revenue but rather by voluntary contributions. CTC is under the leadership of a board of directors representing business,

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[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

legal, education, and development professions. The board has no representatives from the public sector.[37]

Through the leadership of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), a private sector initiatives grant was received through the Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA) for vehicles and service operations. With these trends, CTC secured a three year agreement with Greyhound Bus Lines to provide equipment, maintenance, and drivers for a fixed route service in the designated corridor.[38]

Concurrent with the UMTA funding, CTC began to pursue donations and contributions from the private sector. From the initial planning stages in 1987 to the present, $65,000 has been received from private contributions. This is only a portion of the $700,000 it takes to operate the program annually. There has also been $430,000 in aid from the four local governments. Twenty percent of the actual cost of operation is recovered through fares for the service.[39]

The program is not associated with job placement agencies and the attraction of riders has been through advertisements and contacts with employers. The recruitment of employees is the sole responsibility of the employers.

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

The employers that have shown the greatest interest in participating in the program, especially in the form of contributions, have been developers.[40]

The ridership has continually exceeded the projections, and at the present time is at approximately 600, or 50 percent over the initial projections. Ridership is expected to increase by 20 percent over the next year.[41]

Employee Transportation Assistance (Washington, D.C.)

Community Family Life Services, Inc. (CFLS) has been operating in the northeast section of Washington, D.C. since 1969. Its primary role has been to provide assistance to inner-city neighborhoods. Throughout its many years of operation, the most common and persistent concern confronting CFLS is locating jobs.[42]

In September 1985, CFLS initiated a program called Employee Transportation Assistance (ETA). Its specific goal was to combine the established employment assistance programs with reliable and affordable transportation to job

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[40] Ibid

[41] Ibid.

[42] Charles River Associates Inc., "Providing Reverse Transportation to Suburban Jobs: A Case History of the Employees Transportation Assistance Program Operating in Washington, D.C.", Final Report, Boston, August 1988 (mimeographed); and personal interview with Rev. Thomas Knoll, Executive Director of Community Family Life Services, Inc., June 5, 1990.

sites not served by public transportation. The motivation for this program was the high unemployment rate in Washington, D.C. and a continuing prevalence of jobs in suburban areas.[43]

The program began by providing a shuttle service from inner-city Washington D.C. neighborhoods to Dulles International Airport, which is located on the Fairfax/Loudoun county line in Virginia. The vehicle for this service was a donated 15-passenger van. As the program grew it became necessary to contract with a local transportation company. This arrangement lasted from May 1986 to May 1987. In June 1987, CFLS received a grant from UMTA which was used for the purchase of two more 15-passenger vans. The use of multiple vans made it possible for CFLS to offer more frequent service to the Dulles International Airport. Even with the operation of three vans, CFLS still found that it could not keep up with the demand. In an attempt to meet the demand, specifically during peak morning periods, a 50-passenger bus was purchased.[44]

From the start of the program, individuals participating were required to pay at least a partial fare

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

for the transportation service. These fares became increasingly difficult to collect because of the frequency of ridership changes and problems associated with collecting deliquent fares. Starting in September 1987, employers began to include these fares in operating expenses paid directly to CFLS.[45]

The sole responsibility for the program lies with CFLS, which is a private non-profit organization. Key decisions are made through its Board of Directors and the staff management. The staff includes an executive director, an assistant director, an employment coordinator, a social worker, four program directors, and various support staff.[46]

Since its inception in 1985, there have been 978 job placements. Of these, there has been a 75 percent retention rate. Of those participating in the program, more than 95 percent are black, 90 percent are male, 75 percent are homeless, and their ages are between 30-50. The average employment duration is three months because many of the jobs are seasonal and many of the individuals leave for better paying jobs. At the present time, there are only 10 people participating in the program due to economic fluctuations in the city.[47]

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

There have been 13 companies that have participated in the program during its existence. The majority have been firms specializing in food preparation and hotel services. During this period, a number of construction firms have also participated in the program. However, the nature of work tends to be limited in length of time at one location, which makes it difficult to provide continued transportation service. Most of the jobs can be considered entry level in which no experience or training is needed. The general reason for employers participation in the program is the need for a constant supply of entry level employees. The recruitment of employers has been done through a combination of approaches. Help wanted advertisements, newspaper articles, promotional posters, and follow ups with personnel directors are used to promote the availability of the program.[48]

During the early years of the ETA program, there were three main sources of revenue: employer subsidies, employee paid fares, and donations/contributions from churches and private individuals. As mentioned earlier, in 1987 CFLS received an UMTA grant for $80,625 for the purchase of capital equipment. From this point, operating revenues have

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[48] Ibid.

been from employer subsidies and donations/contributions.[49]

Excel Transportation (Chicago, Illinois)

In October 1989, LeClair Court Resident Management Corporation (LCRMC) of Chicago began a reverse-commute program called Excel Transportation. This program was co-sponsored by UMTA and the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise. The initial funding came from UMTA's Entrepreneurial Services Challenge Grant in the amount of $90,000.[50]

The purpose of the program was to link areas of high unemployment in the inner-city with areas, such as DuPage County, that had an abundance of entry-level positions. The group targeted for this service included the residents of LeClair Court housing project. The transportation program, Excel, is a subsidiary of the LCRMC and The Clarence Darrow Community Center.[51]

At the present time, Excel's fleet consists of five vans. The number of trips made by the entire fleet totals

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[49] Ibid.

[50] William E. Schmidt, "City's Jobless Joined to Suburban Jobs", The New York Times International, 25 October 1989, A16.; Patricia M. Szymczak, "Firms Helping Poor Reach Suburban Jobs", Chicago Tribune, 5 February 1990, final, p. 6; "...Future Hope for City's Jobless", Chicago Tribune, 20 February 1989, Section 1, p. 10; and an interview with Teresa Prim, Manager Excel Transportation, 14 June 1990.

[51] Ibid.

nine trips per day. Initially, the routes were to be strictly demand responsive but, due to the density of jobs in certain areas, many of these routes have become fixed routes.[52]

Employees are recruited through personal contacts within LeClair Courts to anyone who is willing to work. Of the 81 employees taking part in the program, most work in one of seven large cities in DuPage County. The work positions are generally entry level jobs, such as in amusement parks, industrial maintenance, hotel, and nursing at an average wage of $5.00 per hour. Of those participating in the program, the majority are Black males between the ages of 18-55. As a result of this program, there have been 35 permanent job placements. It is expected that, by the end of the year, there will be another 30 people in the program, and by the end of next year, 60 more.[53]

Excel does not promote the transportation program to employers, but rather to the labor pool that is available. This is generally achieved through the referral of employees to the employers and then providing the services, such as transportation, that will help secure that position. The companies that are targeted are simply those that need

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[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

employees and are willing to pay $5.00 or more an hour to each employee.[54]

In addition to the initial funding from UMTA, Excel raised in excess of $100,000 in order to begin and maintain its operation. Sixty seven percent of the service is financed equally between employer contributions and employee fares. The remaining portion of operating cost comes from other sources, such as donations.[55]

Employment Transportation Service (Hartford, Connecticut)

Employment Transportation Service (ETS) started as a result of a lawsuit filed in 1978 by the City of Hartford against the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT). This suit claimed that CDOT was unfairly providing mass transportation services to people commuting into Hartford and were not providing an equivalent service for those commuting from Hartford to the surrounding suburbs. In order to maintain funding by UMTA, the state created ETS as a component of the Hartford Transportation Service, a city agency responsible for paratransit operations.[56]

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Mark Ellis, "Transportation Links Unemployed City Residents with training and Jobs", Community Transportation Reporter, October 1989, pp. 8-9.

ETS is specifically designed for transit dependent, unemployed residents of the city. Its purpose is to provide employment and training opportunities to suburban areas of the city. The service is initiated by job-search agencies, employers, or by ETS. Individuals participating in the program are given rides at no cost for one week to these suburban locations for interviews and testing. Once a job is acquired, or a training program is entered, the individual may arrange to use vanpool services for no longer than six months. Permanent transportation is later arranged through a ride-share company. If the individual continues to use the service, a nominal fare is charged.[57]

Besides the provision of transitional transportation, ETS periodically initiates suburban job runs for groups of not less than four employees for a period of six weeks. During this period, the employees should have the opportunity to link up with other residents working in the area and that could provide permanent transportation. ETS made approximately 24,000 trips over a one year period from June 1988 to June 1989. The riders were 88 percent minorities, 50 percent between the ages 20-30, and over 50 percent female.[58]

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[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

The majority of ETS's funding comes from one of three sources. The primary source of funding comes from UMTA through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Other sources include The Hartford Board of Education, and contributions by local businesses.[59]

The Hartford Area Training Center, Inc. (HATC) is the primary source of training for employees participating in the program. HATC offers training in the operation of precision machines, as well as various other opportunities for the participants. One of the most successful parts of the ETS service has been the Barriers Removed: Employment Assistance Collaborative (BREAC). Under BREAC, the Employment Transportation Services program provides transportation for women and their children from their home to day care facilities and then takes the mother to a place of employment. This project maintains a retention rate of 91 percent, which is the highest among participants in the program.[60]

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

Independent Transportation Management Services, Inc. (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

In the fall of 1988, Independent Transportation Management Services (ITMS) was awarded a grant from UMTA under its Entrepreneurial Services Award Program in the amount of $56,000. The purpose of the grant was to initiate a six month program to reduce suburban gridlock in the areas around Minneapolis and St. Paul. This was to be accomplished by the initiation of a reverse commute vanpool program aimed at linking job seekers, unable to find employment in the area near their residence, with employers located in heavily congested suburban work sites. This program was a result of ITMS employees realization of the lack of public or private services within the metropolitan area that were specifically aimed at accommodating the needs of both workers and employers.[61]

In ITMS's process of initiating this program, it worked with the Regional Transit Board (RTB) which acted as the "pass through" and monitoring agency for the UMTA grant. Also involved was Neighborhood Employment Network (NET), which was a program operated out of Mayor Donald Frazier's

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[61] Independent Transportation Management Services Inc., "Entrepreneurial Grant 1989, Reverse Commute Program, Minneapolis to Suburban Areas", Final Report, Minneapolis, September 1, 1989 (Mimeographed); and personal interview with Lisa Jane Raduenz, President of Independent Transportation Management Services, Inc., Edina, Minnesota, June 6, 1990.

office. This program acted as a liaison connecting ITMS with a training agency that certified employees for lower level jobs such as light industry, clerical, and factory work. Southwest Metro, a transit agency set up and run by three neighboring cities, also played a part because they were in the designated area for the service.[62]

Research efforts proved that a number of companies were searching for blue-collar employees and were finding it difficult to fill and retain available positions. The areas targeted for this program were mainly the cities of Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, and Chaska in southwestern Twin Cities.[63]

ITMS is a private firm with a president, special project manager, financial officer, and clerical staff. All decisions are made by the two controlling partners (president and financial officer). The responsibility for the program was primarily left to ITMS, although the program was to be supervised by RTB. The sole responsibility of RTB was to distribute funding and to inform UMTA about the operation of the program.[64]

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

ITMS did not operate the vehicles for this service. The service was supplied under competitive bid contracts with local transportation contractors. The contract included services, vehicles, and drivers. ITMS acted as the management agency for the operation of the service.[65]

On June 16, 1989 ITMS inaugurated a Reverse Commute Transportation Program between Pilgrim Baptist Church, which is located near downtown St. Paul, and Canterbury Downs Racetrack, which is located in a southwestern suburban city of Shakopee. The service was an express bus route sponsored in part by St. Paul Inner Youth League (SPIYL).[66]

SPIYL subsidized $2.00 per day per rider and the remaining fare was to be paid by the workers through wages earned. The cost of the vehicle per day was $140.00 or $4.66 per rider per day. The vehicle costs included the cost of the vehicle, driver, insurance, and management fees.[67]

Employers were attracted to the program primarily through contacts with the Chamber of Commerce. Promotional brochures were sent and visits were paid to the personnel

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[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

directors of each company being targeted. Local television and newspaper coverage of the service was also given.[68]

Employees were encouraged to participate through cooperation with a Chamber of Commerce group that represented the area to be covered. This group was responsible for locating and motivating the participation of young unemployed people for summer employment. Approximately 80 percent of the riders came from these Chamber of Commerce contacts while the remaining 20 percent came through referrals from Minnesota Rideshare, a regional rideshare agency in the Twin Cities. Of those participating in the program, there was an even split between male and female. Approximately 70 percent were minorities (Black, American Indian, Asian) between the ages of 18 and 24.[69]

As mentioned before, this program was only in operation for six months, but at the present time they are in the process of renewing the program. This program may be extended to include multiple stops and, possibly, various routes. The future for the program in the Twin Cities area is apparently good and a 20 percent growth rate has been estimated over the next two years.[70]

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

Job-Ride (Wisconsin Department of Transportation)

In January of 1989, the Job-Ride program began operation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This program was planned and initiated under the guidance of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT). There were two initial goals: to improve job access for low income job seekers of Milwaukee, and to test alternatives to traditional fixed-route services.[71]

There are three organizations that have received grants from WDOT for this program. They are: Milwaukee Careers Cooperative/Select Staff, Inc., Milwaukee Urban League, Inc., and Goodwill Industries, Inc. In each case, the projects are funded by WDOT and the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations (DILHR). DILHR uses funds earmarked for Aid to Dependent Children. WDOT uses "Stripper Well/ Oil Overcharge" funds. The lead administrative agency for the program is WDOT under its Bureau of Transit. Although the program responsibility lies with WDOT, they do not operate the service themselves. The services for the first year were provided by Select Staff, Milwaukee Careers Cooperative, Inc.; Goodwill Industries, Inc.; and the Milwaukee Urban League.

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[71] Bureau of Transit, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, "Job-Ride Information Packet: Preliminary Data", Madison, Wisconsin: May 1989, and interview with John Duffe, Project Manager, Job-Ride Project Staff.

Select Staff, Milwaukee Careers Cooperative, Inc.

Select Staff is a division of Milwaukee Careers Cooperative, a private nonprofit group owned by numerous religious congregations and community groups. Select Staff is a temporary employment agency with the sole purpose of creating permanent positions. Their clients are usually disadvantaged job-seekers in the Milwaukee area.[72]

Under the Job-Ride program, Select Staff has received a grant for $65,000 and has used it to purchase transportation services through Wisconsin Coach Lines, a private bus company. These buses operate in service areas that have high concentrations of Select Staff employees. Select Staff also operates a fleet of four rented vans in order to service areas that do not have high concentrations of workers.[73]

The projected number of placements as a result of this service is approximately 700, with 200 of these being permanent positions. At the present time, Select Staff transports over 200 riders per week.[74]

Select Staff has been exceeding projected miles,

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[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

vehicle hours, and one-way passenger trips while operating 11 percent under estimated costs. The estimated permanent placements have not been reached, but is expected to increase once the employees have been on the job for several months.[75]

Goodwill Industries, Inc. Goodwill Industries, Inc. used a $65,000 grant to lease two 10-passenger vans and operate a service that provides access for workers to employment sites that are not being served by the public transit operators. Goodwill has estimated that this service will support more than 70 permanent placements in the first year at a cost to the rider of $2.00 per trip. Experience to date reveals a high cost per passenger trip tends to be the result of Goodwill's higher wage per placement.[76]

Milwaukee Urban League, Inc. The Milwaukee Urban League, Inc. (MUL) is an organization serving the minority community of Milwaukee. Among its many services are employment training, social service, and job placement. MUL used the $51,000 grant to purchase a

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.

12-passenger van that is being used to access jobs in nearby Waukesha and Pewaukee counties.[77]

This program was expected to produce 150 job placements in the first year. After the first quarter of operation, they have been successful at placing 83 persons, which is double that of the preliminary estimates. The cost per passenger has been gradually decreasing but the cost per one way trip is still over the level predicted. They have had overwhelming success at finding long term (6 months) and permanent placements.[78]

Changes in the Job-Ride program for 1990 include a broader eligibility group so it could include businesses and local government agencies instead of solely non-profit agencies. A 20 percent match is now required by each agency that was not required in 1989. A limit was placed on the fare so that it would not exceed $2.00 per trip and, if a fare is charged, the employers have to pay 50 percent of the cost. The job placements must now be at a minimum of $4.00 per hour. The greatest change in the program is that funding is only available for "non-temporary employment".[79]

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[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

Employers are generally attracted to the program through publicity searches. The employers that typically participate are low-skilled manufacturing, food processing, and service sector related. Employees are recruited through active participation in the community based agencies that are supplying the service.[80]

The average cost per passenger trip at the present time is $5.65. With the changes in eligibility standards, the cost per passenger trip is expected to increase to approximately $10.00 by the end of next year. With an average trip length of 20 miles, the cost would be $0.50 per mile.[81]

Of those participating in the program, 96 percent are minority. Thirty five percent are between the ages of 24-34 and 29 percent are over the age of 34. In 1989, two thousand and five hundred people participated in the program. Of these, there were 696 permanent and 598 temporary job placements.[82]

JobTRANS (Knoxville, Tennessee)

In October 1989, the Knoxville Commuter Pool, a division of the University of Tennessee Transportation

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80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.

Center, initiated a program called JobTRANS. This program sought to address the employee/employer recruitment and retention problem in the West Knoxville area. This was the result of prior work with the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce and other local groups in trying to get a handle on the problem of employee retention in this specific area. As part of that process, transportation was found to be one of the barriers to employee recruitment and retention. The JobTRANS program was designed as a vanpool service to help alleviate these problems.[83]

The initial funding came from the City of Knoxville under a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Since this money originates out of the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), it had to be targeted toward transporting low and moderate income people to work sites. Although the focus area has been West Knoxville's employment centers, the program has also left open the opportunity to expand into other areas of the city.[84]

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[83] Theodore J. Newsom, Ph.D.,"Developing Employee Vanpool Services to Link Low and Moderate Income Persons with Employment Opportunities in the Greater Knoxville Area", Knoxville, Tennessee, 17 February 1989, (mimeographed); Theodore J. Newsom, Ph.D., "The Development of Community-Based Transportation Businesses in Low and Moderate Income Neighborhoods in Knoxville", Knoxville, Tennessee, 12 February 1990, (mimeographed); and an interview with Theodore Newsom, Ph.D., Director Knoxville Commuter Pool, Knoxville, Tennessee, 27 June 1990.

[84] IBID.

There are a variety of organizations involved in this project, including:

- Greater Knoxville Chamber of Commerce (KCC), specifically their East Area Advisory Committee which is a group of citizens and organizations located in East Knoxville that are concerned about a broad range of problems such as transportation, employment, housing, crime, etc. Also involved is a group of employers of the West Knoxville area which was formed by the KCC as a way of disseminating and gathering information.
- Mechanicsville Community Development Corporation, a community organization representing the Mechnicsville and Beaumont areas of Knoxville dealing with problems such as access.
- Knoxville Urban League, with primary interests in job placement.
- K-Trans, a local public transit provider.
- Knoxville Community Action Committee, with interests in job placement and mobility issues.
- Tennessee Employment Services.
- Private Industry Council, in particular the JTPA.
- The City of Knoxville, Knox County, and the Tennessee Department of Transportation.[85]

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[85] Ibid.

The lead agency of the project is the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Commuter Pool (KCP). Any decisions concerning the program are made in cooperation with KCP and representatives of the aforementioned organizations.[86]

The program is designed to be a vanpool service taking groups of employees from a central location or neighborhood to a centralized employment center. Start up funds for the program have been set aside to initiate vanpool services during the demonstration period. By the end of this demonstration period, the van service has to be financially self-sufficient through passenger fares, employer contributions, and donations.[87]

One van with seven riders and a voluntary driver will operate for free for the first month of service in order to define origins and destinations for that van. This also helps to recruit riders during the first month. During the second month the riders begin to pay fares. During the second, third, and forth months, KCP will donate $400 per month toward the costs of the van, which is intended to cover lost revenue from empty seats during this period.[88]

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86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.

Recruiting employees into the program is done in cooperation with the various organizations mentioned earlier that deal with jobs and job placement. KCP, Tennessee Employment Services, and the Cedar Bluff Holiday Inn also initiated a Job-Fair which invited employers of West Knoxville to participate in collecting applications for their business. As part of Job-Fair, KCP promoted the JobTRANS program, new K-Trans bus routes into West Knoxville, and other KCP services such as carpooling. Job-Trans was promoted to the employers through mailings, newspaper articles, KCP's newsletter, and television.[89]

In addition to Community Development Block Grant funding, resources to obtain vans are provided through the Tennessee Vans Program, a statewide commuter vanpool service. In-kind contributions are provided by other state and local agencies and community organizations to assist with the promotion and operation of the program.[90]

Using the figures of operation for a typical van pool, the estimated cost of operation would be between $700-800 per van per month. This figures to be a cost of between $50-60 per month for each rider or about $2.50 per day per rider.[91]

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[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

The employees targeted for this service are low and moderate income, part time or full time workers and job seekers. The types of jobs available for these workers tend to be entry-level positions such as food service, hotel/motel, and retail.[92]

Thus far, KCP has been able to design the service, promote it, and collect feedback. KCP has not been successful in establishing a vanpool to service the area of West Knoxville but it has been able to assist in job placements by acting as a broker for other transportation services that are already in existence. Part of the reason for the lack of success in forming a vanpool has been the inability to organize groups large enough to support a financially viable vanpool. At the present time, KCP has been awarded an extension on their CDBG in order to design other components to the program that will allow for service flexibility and for organizations or community groups to acquire a van and receive financial assistance to initiate worktrip transportation services.[93]

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[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

Kenilworth-Parkside Resident Management Corporation (Washington, D.C.)

Kenilworth-Parkside Management Corporation (KPRMC) was one of ten similar community groups that were chosen by the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE) as test sites for reverse commute programs. The reason they were selected is that they were already involved in the location of employment and training to the point that reverse commuting became a logical function of their program.[94]

The sole purpose of this program was to supply employment to the residents of the community in which the KPRMC managed. The labor pool to be drawn from was approximately 3000 residents of this area. The employment area targeted for this service is the rapidly developing commercial areas of nearby Fairfax, Virginia.[95]

The funding for initiation of this program was received through UMTA's Entrepreneurial Services Challenge Grant and through the city in the form of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). These funds were for the lease of vans and planning and management leading up to active operation. The day-to-day service is financed through employer

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[94] Interview with Dwayne Williams, Kenilworth-Parkside Resident Management Corporation, Washington, D.C., 6 June 1990.

[95] Ibid.

contributions. The actual cost of operation is undisclosed.[96]

KPRMC provides transportation, placement, and referral training as part of their service and they also assume total responsibility for its operation. There are coalitions with employment agencies to monitor placements and assist in positions that KPRMC cannot fill. The leadership of KPRMC is by a resident elected board.[97]

The type of service provided is basically a fixed route to specific sites, one of which is the airport. At the present time, they have three 15-passenger vans making multiple trips three times during the day. Any possible expansion to the service will be based on an adequate number of employees that would justify more routes or the purchase of more vans.[98]

There are two approaches used to attract employers to the program. The most common is cold-call marketing sales. This consists of phone calls to specific businesses and explaining the significance that the program could have to

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[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

their operation, and the other approach used is through mailing fliers and advertisements to businesses.[99]

Since most of the employees are residents of Kenilworth-Parkside, recruiting new participants is usually done in the process of rent collection and residential group meetings. The incentive for participation by the tenants is the ability to pay rent and to add to the viability of the community.[100]

The employees participating in the program are 90 percent black, 80 percent female, 20-33 years old, and with limited, if any, work experience. At the present time, there are 25 people participating in the program. Of these, 10 have been participating since its initiation.[101]

There is tremendous potential for growth in this program as long as the expansion justifies the expenditures needed for more vehicles. The management believes that the maximum number of vehicles that they will be able to support will be five, unless there is a change in the economy.[102]

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99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.

Lakeview Transportation Services, Inc. (Cleveland, Ohio.)

In March of 1989, Lakeview Terrace Residential Management Corporation (LTRMC) received an Entrepreneurial Services Challenge Grant for $100,000 from UMTA. This grant is to be used to establish a local transportation enterprise that would "increase the mobility of Lakeview Terrace residents and provide accessibility to suburban job markets."[103] Concurrent with the application for this grant, there was an aggressive campaign to acquire additional funding from other sources. To date, the funding that has been guaranteed equals $138,000 from the following organizations: The Cleveland Foundation; The Joyce Foundation; B.P. America; George Gund Foundation; and the Ohio Department of Development. The proposed date for the initiation of this service is late July or early August of 1990.[104]

The group targeted for this service is primarily public housing residents, specifically those residents of Lakeview Terrace. Other public housing residents in the vicinity of

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[103] Lakeview Terrace Resident Management Corporation, "Fixed Route Transportation Service Business Plan" (mimeographed) 1989.

[104] Lakeview Transportation Services, "A Proposal to Implement Reverse Commute Transportation Services in Cleveland, Ohio", Cleveland: 1988, (mimeographed); Multisystems, Inc., "Implementation Strategy for Lakeview Transportation Services, Inc., Alexandria, Virginia: September 21, 1989, (mimeographed); and an interview with Cornell H. Calhoun III, Transportation General Manager, Lakeview Transportation Services, Inc., 12 June, 1990.

Lakeview Terrace in the inner-city area are also targeted to add to the support and demand for the program.[105]

The management and operation of this program is the sole responsibility of LTRMC. The transportation aspect of this program is under the direction of Lakeview Transportation Services, Inc (LTS) which is a subsidiary of LTRMC. The management firm is governed by a seven member board elected every three years. The staff consists of an executive director, estate manager, finance director, security chief, director of community services, transportation manager, and a job development specialist is governed by a seven member board elected every three years. The operations of both estate and transportation is under the control of the board.[106]

The initial proposal for the UMTA grant specified that the service would be fixed route but later evaluation of the specific service area determined that a fixed route would not apply and that a demand responsive service would be more appropriate. Participation in the program is encouraged through resident council meetings, promotional fliers, and through the process of recertification interviews. The typical positions recruited at these meetings would be for

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[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

unskilled labor in manufacturing or housekeeping.[107]

Employers are not recruited by the management firm. Instead, the City of Cleveland has taken the full responsibility for locating places of employment and job development. This support was garnered by LTS because the city has numerous contacts with employment agencies and it was felt that the best support the city could give to the program was locating possible employers. The city acquires lists of positions which they release to JTPA. In turn, JTPA matches these positions with residents of Lakeview that have been screened for job placement. The area that was designated by the city as having the most potential for these types of jobs was the suburb of Solon which had experienced recent industrial growth and periodic problems with job retention and employment.[108]

Once the program is in operation, LTS hopes to receive contracts with the American Red Cross and the Society for the Blind for transportation of their clients during "down time" or periods in which the vehicles are not in service.[109]

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107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid.

The current ridership is 95 percent Black, 65 to 70 percent female and ranging in age from 18 to 35. The majority of these riders are residents of Lakeview Terrace. Of the residents of Lakeview Terrace that are eligible for work, 15 percent are participating in the program.[110]

The projected first year budget calls for $104,500 in total expenses. This includes three vans, insurance, maintenance and supplies, and wages.[111]

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110 Ibid.

111 Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

OVERVIEW OF REVERSE COMMUTE PROGRAMS

Introduction

Following is a synopsis of existing reverse commute programs based on the various characteristics discussed in the previous chapter. These characteristics include implementation, organization, operation, funding and financing, and ridership. Table 4.1 provides a summary level review of the findings from the case study evaluations. The table represents an overall matrix of characteristics which describe reverse commute programs. The purpose of this chapter is to identify and discuss the key features of reverse commute programs. Particular attention is paid to the similarities and differences among programs.

How Are Reverse Commute Programs Typically Implemented?

Ways of initiating reverse commute programs varied across the cities represented in this study. The primary reason for implementing reverse commute programs is to provide transportation services into suburban areas that are centers for entry-level employment.

TABLE 4.1 Characteristics of Reverse Commute Programs

MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS		CTC	ETA	EXCEL	ETS	ITMS	JOBRIDE	JOBTRANS	KPRMC	LTS
ORGANIZATION:	Profit									
	Non-profit	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
MANAGEMENT:	Board	●		●					●	●
	Private		●			●				
	Government				●		●	●		
TARGET GROUP:	Gen.public	●			●	●	●	●		
	Community		●						●	●
	Residents			●					●	●
JOB PLACEMENT:	In-house			●	●		●		●	
	Contracted		●				●			
	Government					●				●
VEHICLE:	Bus	●	●				●			
	Van		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Car				●					
TYPE OF ROUTE:	Fixed Route	●	●				●		●	
	Dem. resp.	●		●						
	Vanpool				●	●		●	●	●
GRANT:	UMTA	●	●	●	●	●			●	●
	State							●	●	
	Other*						●			
FUNDING:	Public	●			●		●	●		●
	Private	●	●	●		●	●		●	●

* Stripper Well/Oil Overage Funds

Although the nature of reverse commute programs vary, their goals and approaches are similar. Their goals are threefold: 1) to provide employment opportunities for unemployed, low to moderate income, and unskilled residents of the community; 2) to provide reliable and affordable transportation to suburban employment locations; and 3) to provide the target groups training opportunities to prepare them for possible placement. The underlying theme of these three goals is to link employers with employees.

Most of the programs studied aimed their service at unemployed low to moderate income persons. Also, there were some programs that added other criteria to specify their target group. For example, LTS, KPRMC, and EXCEL targeted their service at the same population with the added criteria that they had to be a resident of the community that was managed by the resident management corporation which also operated the service.

In some of these cases, the necessity of this added criteria was overlooked when specific job experience or training was involved. In this situation the placement was awarded to those best qualified whether it was someone inside their community or not. Although the prime example of this type of practice was noticed with LTS and KPRMC, it was also noticed, in lesser degrees, in other programs.

CTC was the only exception to the above mentioned target group. Their target group included anyone that wanted to participate in the program. This was because of a wider range of available jobs within the target area.

The implementation of reverse commute programs involved several organizations and agencies. The most common government agencies involved were the Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA) and the state's Department of Transportation (DOT). One of the government participants was the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, which was instrumental in the initiation of many of the programs and helped to promote them to UMTA. The Department of Industry, Labor, and Human Relations also had a major part in at least one of the operations studied.

At the local level, the most important participant was the Chamber of Commerce. This organization was important to the initial success because of local contacts and promotional services. Elected officials also can be valuable to the program and were generally found participating in all of the programs studied. Community development groups were also important in the success of these services through promotion, referral, and involvement with the community targeted for the service.

What Is the Typical Organizational Framework for Reverse Commute Programs?

The responsibility for the operation of reverse commute programs also varies. For the most part, it is not often that the responsibility lies solely within state government agencies. State governments do have limited involvement in the initial stages, because they are responsible for the distribution of federal funding (UMTA). After the program has progressed into other forms of funding, these associations with state agencies begins to fade.

City agencies are usually not involved with the operational responsibility of reverse commute programs. In many cases they have become involved in funding, especially through development grants, but operational measures and concerns have generally been left to others.

Resident management corporations and non-profit organizations that are associated with reverse commute programs are responsible for their operation. Most of this responsibility comes from the nature of the preliminary grants through UMTA's Entrepreneurial Services Challenge grant program. The purpose of making these grants available was to promote the privatization of services.

The majority of reverse commute programs are under a management structure headed by a board of directors. The members of these boards are usually elected by residents, as is the case in resident management corporations, or through representatives of the various partners responsible for the program. City and state agencies that manage reverse commute programs are usually represented by specified departments. Decisions and management in these situations then reflect the various management organizations of that agency. Privately operated programs, such as ITMS, are usually under the management structure of controlling partners and the president of the company. The most common way of providing service has been achieved through contracts with local transportation providers or through services that are within the organization.

For those organizations that have decided not to participate in the added responsibility of operating a transportation program, services have been contracted out to local firms. These contracts range from one to three years in length and typically include all of the operating expenses involved in the transportation of participants. Benefits to contracting with transportation providers include smaller operating staffs, greater involvement in job

placement and/or training, and lower long term maintenance costs for upkeep of vehicles.

For those programs that provide transportation from within their organization, the initial cost of acquiring a vehicle is usually lessened by government grants. The benefits of having full control over all aspects of the program include improved monitoring of participants through an active role by the drivers, the ability to vary routes at short notices, and the possibility of alternative routes which would aid the mobility of the participants.

How are Reverse Commute Programs Typically Operated?

The most common type of reverse commute service used is fixed route bus. This is usually the service of choice when there are numerous places of employment and the work hours at these businesses are not coordinated. This kind of service works best in areas that have highly developed corridors.

Another variation of service being used is traditional vanpooling. Although this type of service usually uses smaller vehicles its characteristics of service are very similar to the fixed route service. A typical vanpool model would carry a group of people from one general area to another general area. Therefore, unlike the fixed route

service, employment locations do not have to be centralized. The difference between vanpooling and fixed route service is that vanpools have flexible routes and a flexible schedule.

Shuttle services, or continual service back and forth between two areas, are used when there is a demand for numerous trips at varying times of the day. Demand responsive service, or service tailored to meet the individual needs (typically door-to-door), tends to be increasing as the programs mature. A number of the programs are considering the initiation of demand responsive services in the future as the need arises. There are cases, such as LTS, that started their service as fixed route and have changed to demand responsive service because of its ability to meet the needs of the designated service area.

The 10-15 passenger van is the vehicle used by most of the programs. There are three reasons for this: first, the number of riders participating in the programs is typically low and it would not generate enough revenue to pay for the cost of operating a larger vehicle such as a bus; second, vans are much more flexible than buses, especially when it comes to parking and manipulation of various traffic conditions; third, the initial cost of acquiring vans is much lower than that of a bus.

When a program has to transport large numbers of passengers over long distances, the use of large vehicles, such as buses, becomes more feasible. Bus service is found in programs such as CTC where large numbers of passengers board at a central location and are transported several miles to a centralized work area. Bus service has typically been found in the suburb-to-city commute.

The average fleet size ranged between 1-5 vehicles. The size of the fleet is determined by the number of passengers, the degree that the jobs they support are centralized, and the cost comparisons of operating numerous vehicles to that of operating few. The largest fleet size owned and operated by one of these programs consists of five vans.

Recruiting employers, for the most part, is a function of promotion. The typical approach is to target the area through market segmentation and then select employers that fit into this specific market segment. This is achieved through data base searches, contacts with the community groups, and/or contacts within the local chambers of commerce. Flyers are then sent to the various companies as an introduction to the program and follow ups are made via the telephone.

Other promotional tools that are commonly used are newspaper articles, television spots, posters, and newsletters. These tools, although generally considered too expensive for the small budget of reverse commute programs, can usually be acquired through community interest stories and public access channels.

The most successful marketing approach has been through visits to the businesses and personal contacts with personnel directors. This gives the program a personal touch and eliminates many of the unanswered questions that may cause confusion and lack of interest for the service.

There are some reverse commute programs that have waived the responsibility for recruitment of employers. In Cleveland, the city has taken the responsibility for recruitment into the LTS program because it was felt that it had better contacts through established city agencies. Attracting employees to reverse commute programs is achieved through job placement and/or training agencies. Many of the reverse commute programs have job placement and training within their program and there is generally a concerted effort to work in coordination with public and private employment services.

All of the reverse commute programs that are part of a resident management corporation have employment and job training services within their program and are very successful because of the continued contact with participants through residential council meetings, recertification interviews, rent payments, and social services. The provision of job placement and training outside of the program is either through contract or through association with government agencies. There are programs such as JOB-RIDE in Milwaukee that contract the transportation service to various organizations and are not associated with locating and/or training employees. In this situation, the responsibility of recruitment is left to the organization that is under contract to supply the transportation service.

The typical job placements in reverse commute programs are unskilled entry-level positions. Representative types of work include hotel services, construction, amusement parks, industrial maintenance, food processing, housekeeping, retail, and manufacturing. The jobs include both part time and full time with the majority being for an hourly wage at or just above the federally mandated minimum. There are programs such as ITMS that have a large number of part time employees due to jobs at seasonal entertainment facilities. Likewise EXCEL has a large number of part time employees due

to employment at seasonal employment centers such as amusement parks.

What is the Typical Financial Arrangement?

Most of the reverse commute programs initiated their service with help from UMTA. These funds were acquired, for the most part, for the initial capital investment of vehicles. Within UMTA, there are various types of funding available: Private Sector Initiatives grants, and Entrepreneurial Services Awards. Other types of funding that are used to initiate reverse commute programs are Community Development Block Grants, which are acquired through the cities.

There are various ways of recovering the operational costs of reverse commuting programs. Passenger fares, employer contributions, independent contributions, or combinations of two or more of these are sometimes used.

Many programs use passenger fares. This approach has had its successes and failures. Some programs were started with the belief that the cost of operations could be completely supported by passenger fares. The harsh reality after the first few months was that some employees failed to pay for such a service. Many fares were never collected because of frequency of turnover in the ridership and the

cost was passed on to the employers. Rates for employers had to be increased to recover the lost revenue from unpaid fares.

In some programs passenger fares have worked, usually when the fare was taken out of the employees wages as a payroll deduction. In other programs, the passenger fare was collected as part of housing costs. Of all of the approaches used, collecting fares through rent tends to be the most problematic and the most difficult to operate effectively.

Employer contributions are the easiest means of paying for the operation of reverse commute services. The only drawback is that many of the employers are reluctant to participate because of perceptions they are not being fair to other employees by only subsidizing transportation for the employees that are participating in the reverse commute program.

There are also programs that are underwriting the cost of their operation by contributions from various public and private organizations. These reverse commute programs still maintain partial fares and/or employer contributions in order to meet the operation's cost.

Most of the programs use more than one of these approaches concurrently. In order to lessen the cost to any participant, be it the employer or employee, combinations of these approaches are usually used. The most common combination is passenger fares underwritten by employer contributions. This allows the employer the opportunity to pay higher wages and lessons the perceived preferential treatment by the employer.

The programs that are successful at gaining public and/or private contributions typically use these funds to underwrite the cost of transportation for the passenger. In these programs, the passenger still pays a fare but much less than it would be if it were to be paid in full. The average fare per passenger per day is approximately $5.00.

Financing services is one of the major problems with promoting reverse commute programs. When employers are approached, their initial reaction is that the cost is too high and there has to be cheaper ways of supplying the same or equivalent service. In actuality, the cost should be considered high if the only service that was being delivered was transportation. But in reality, the programs are not only supplying a transportation service but also employment, training, and economic development by decreasing unemployment levels and increasing spendable incomes in

depressed areas. In theory, this also promotes community pride and involvement which help improve depressed areas. By taking all of these aspects into account, the cost per passenger is relatively low.

What Are the Typical Ridership Characteristics of Reverse Commute Programs?

Although there are variations from program to program, the characteristics of individuals participating in reverse commute programs are somewhat similar. In all but one program, minorities made up the majority of those participating.

In cities with high black populations, (Chicago (EXCEL), Cleveland (LTS), and Washington, D.C. (ETA, KPRMC)), the percentage of blacks participating in the programs is usually in excess of 90 percent. This high percentage is a reflection of the areas that were targeted for reverse commute services. In cities with more diverse minority populations, such as Hartford, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis/St.Paul, the percentage participating in reverse commute programs reflect the diversity and include minority groups such as American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, as well as Black.

The majority of the participants are female with a high percentage of those being single parents. There are programs such as ETA that have a 90 percent male participation. Although the demography of the majority of the target areas represent high minority and female populations, such programs as ETA do not reflect these numbers because of the direct result of the programs attempt to address problems of homelessness. Of this targeted group, there tends to be a much higher percentage of males.

The age range for participation in the programs is between 18-34. This reflects the characteristics of most entry-level unskilled positions that are typically represented by reverse commute programs. Once again, ETA is an exception because of its difference in target groups. It is represented by participants between 30-50 years of age. In the programs that are operated by resident management corporations, the ridership consists of a majority of residents from the housing complexes that are under management.

The level of participation in many of the programs has fluctuated with changes in the local and regional economies. Ridership increases would be expected as the economy improved, because of the number of jobs available, but there has been no evidence that this is true. As a matter of fact,

there have been programs that have had declining ridership as a result of an improving economy primarily because of businesses locating within high unemployment areas.

Since reverse commute programs are generally small, the number of passengers being carried is usually low. Although reverse commute programs are usually represented by these low levels of participation there are two programs that have been extremely successful at creating high ridership levels. In 1989, JOB-RIDE had 2,500 people take part in their program of which 696 became permanent employees. CTC has approximately 600 participating in their program at the current time.

The reasons for the initiation of reverse commute programs are constantly being reinforced and are adding to, what the interviewees perceive, a positive future of such programs. As a result, half of the programs studied believed they would have at least a 20 percent growth in the next year. The remaining half were also optimistic about their future but were reluctant to predict increases pending current economic changes in their city.

CHAPTER V

CONCERNS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section contains a compilation of concerns representing the overall feelings of those surveyed. These concerns are not to be considered the opinion of any specific individual. The second section gives recommendations and alternatives based on the concerns of the first section. These recommendations have been developed as a product of conversations with those interviewed and through the elaboration of ideas and positions they presented. In the conclusion, the current and future viability of reverse commute programs will be discussed as part of the urban environment.

Concerns

Public Sector Participation

One of the most important ingredients to reverse commute programs is how well it is received by the public and private sectors. Therefore, promotion plays an important role in success or failure. There are many government officials, legislators, and business people that are not informed about the various aspects of reverse commuting.

They are guided by negative misconceptions that accrue as a result. Many public officials even view reverse commute programs as future burdens to the taxpayer while employers fail to realize the benefits gained through their participation. These misconceptions limit the success and expansion of reverse commuting.

Employee Retention

Another problem perceived by the employers is the high dropout rates among employees. Employers find this aspect to be a tremendous problem and have most frequently stated this as being the reason for their discontinuation and subsequent withdrawal from participation in programs. These actions are generally taken as a direct result of the high cost associated with retraining employees on a continual basis and the loss of product and/or service as a result.

In order to understand the reasons for employees discontinuing the program it would be necessary to gather information from those that have dropped out. This is one of the more difficult situations these programs have to face. There are a number of reasons for this, but the most important is that the target population is highly transient. Many move from month to month with no forwarding address. These changes in residence can also be attributed to changes in income as a result of participation in the program. In

order to gain a better understanding of this situation, there has to be a concerted effort to acquire this information.

Of the possible employees that are approached to participate in the program, there are some that are not fully prepared to make the transition from public assistance to earning wages. As an example, families receiving benefits from such programs as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, find it extremely difficult to make the transition because the hourly wage earned will not make up for the benefits lost as a result of participation. The hourly wage needed to match the lost benefits would have to be greater than the minimum wage that typifies the positions that reverse commute programs support.

Employer Recruitment

In addition to the problems of perception and the problems of recruiting employees to participate in reverse commute programs, there are numerous problems in recruiting employers. The biggest problem is the reluctance of businesses to acquire and operate vehicles by themselves. There are two primary reasons for this. First, employers do not want the responsibility of running such programs because they have enough problems dealing with the other aspects of their business. This is specifically the case with

businesses such as "fast food" restaurants, hotels, and discount retail stores. Second, employers do not see the economic feasibility of operating such a service, especially since they do not have enough employees participating to justify an expense such as a vehicle.

Subsidized Transportation

There are a number of employers that dislike subsidizing transportation. Much of this dislike comes from the belief that it is unfair to give special benefits to a portion of their workforce with the lowest seniority. There are some employers that view this as a form of reverse discrimination, especially since many of the new employees are minorities.

Employer Responsibility

Another aspect of the reverse commute program that employers feel uncomfortable with is the paperwork. Since many of these businesses are small and have limited staffs, it is usually difficult for them to understand the process of applying for grants, dealing with subsidy programs, and initiating tax credits. For the most part, these businesses are completely unfamiliar with the procedures for initiating and operating such a program. For those that have had experience in these areas, it is still rare to find employers that have been involved with government job

placement and training agencies and understand the various aspects of such programs.

Besides having little or no experience in the various aspects of financing such a program, most of the reverse commute programs are started and operated by individuals without experience in the various aspects of transportation. As a result, a number of situations arise that the management staff are incapable of addressing such as route scheduling, maintenance procedures, and driver training.

Cost of Operation

As stated before, the cost of operation is often perceived as being high and acts to dissuade participation in some programs. This problem is the result of two factors: first, the density of employment in the areas being served is much too low and causes additional miles to be accumulated to deliver passengers to their work site; second, in areas that have been targeted for these services there has been little or no effort to coordinate work schedules between the various employers. Thus, the number of passengers per vehicle is lower and the number of miles traveled by each vehicle is high.

In an attempt to lower the perceived high cost there have been numerous approaches to increase the ridership

levels. The most common approach has been to initiate a service into an area and have each business contribute to the cost of the service. But when more than one business is contributing to the operation of a program, it is common for a concern to be raised as to the equity of the service. Keeping in mind that these businesses, especially restaurants, compete with each other, there is justification for these concerns.

Expansion of Services

This kind of program tends to limit itself to the provision of transportation specifically for work trips. Although this reflects the initial goals set by program designers, these goals have limiting effects on the expansion and variability of the service. The continued success of reverse commute programs may be based on the ability of each program to expand into other areas of transportation demands in order to increase revenues.

Funding

The primary concern about funding is the short period UMTA is willing to remain as an aid to the program. It is generally accepted that most new businesses experience little or no profits for the first year. In the typical grant, the period of support is usually for the first six

months. After this period, the operator has to reapply to be considered for further financial support.

Promotion of Decentralization

Reverse commute services may be rewarding businesses for locating in the suburbs. If so, the promotion of suburban locations for major employment centers would be counter-productive to attempts to bring employment back to the central city. It may also promote segregation by encouraging less low-income housing to be built in suburban areas.

Recommendations

Promotion to Employers

The most important aspect of the implementation of a reverse commute program is a strong promotional campaign. Before receiving contributions or funding, contacts have to be made with various organizations, agencies, and public officials that will ultimately be used as support for the program.

In order to achieve this it will be necessary to become oriented to the urban area targeted for the service. To gain this information various local publications such as newspapers and magazines should be used. Concerted efforts to inform local politicians and community representatives

should be pursued in order to inform them of the program. Active participation in community mixers, local business groups, and public forums also adds to the support of the program through dessimination of information.

The support of political figures can add credibility to reverse commute programs. With their involvement and support, the pursuit of federal, state, and local funding, as well as contributions and donations from the private sector, will be much easier to garner.

One of the problems with acquiring elected official's support results from their disinterest due to an active re-election campaign. Many public officials are often reluctant to become involved with anything that may be considered controversial and could possibly hurt their chances at acquiring a political office. The Chamber of Commerce should be considered the most important contact within the community and is not only essential to the initiation of the program but also to its well being after it becomes fully operational.

Beyond contacting politicians and community leaders it is also necessary to begin a campaign to introduce this new service to the general public. Media coverage is probably the most successful and important promotional tool that can

be used to distribute the information to a wide variety of possible participants. Although cost can be a deterrent to this campaign, in most cities it is possible to receive free coverage simply through community service and/or public interest stories which are typically used as "fillers" in many magazines, newspapers, and television programs.

The underlying theme of any promotion should be to promote the service as a human resources program. The transportation aspect should be secondary to the linking of employers with employees.

Employee Retention

One of the most disconcerting aspects of the program commonly mentioned by employers is the high turnover rate of employees. To increase the longevity of these positions, efforts have to be made by employers and employment/training agencies to prepare these employees with the ability to be upwardly mobile. Most of the positions represented by these programs are entry-level and it is perceived that there is not a need for training. Training by employers and/or training agencies would aid in the ability of companies to retain the employment of such employees.

What is being addressed is the elimination of the of a "dead-end" job. Employees need to be given the opportunity

to progress within their place of employment. Given the opportunity to train and learn other aspects of the business gives the employee an added sense of security and promotes longer terms of employment.

Another approach is in higher quality training programs prior to employment. The greater the technical ability of these employees the more capable they are at continuing employment simply because of the opportunities of being promoted within that company. This has been the approach by many of the employment training agencies. With coordinated efforts of both the agencies and the local employers, new standards of training should be developed. These standards should include the training needed for entry-level positions, and also second level or higher paying jobs within the company.

Research in Employee Retention

Much of the problem in dealing with the frequent turnover in personnel comes from the fact that little research has been done on the reasons why these employees leave the program.

The nature of the people being served, low and moderate income, complicates the problem of collecting such data due

to the frequency of residential changes. There are organizations in the position to acquire such information, but these organizations, typically resident management corporations, have limited funds and personnel to complete such a task. This seems to be a common problem and few organizations, especially those supported financially by governmental agencies, have begun to address it.

In order to gain more knowledge of the reasons for non-continuation in reverse commute programs there needs to be active communication between the various operating programs in the United States. There are frequent mobility conferences and meetings sponsored by UMTA, and this has proven to be an extremely good avenue for the exchange of ideas and concerns. But the weakness of this kind of periodic forum is the lack of statistical exchange.

UMTA is in the best position to act as a clearing house for this kind of statistical exchange and should take advantage of its ability to monitor programs that are operating under grants. It would also be to the advantage of UMTA to allow funding which could be specifically aimed at getting a better understanding of the reasons for these frequent discontinuations in the programs.

Aid Recipients

In addition to those that withdraw from the programs, there are those who choose not to participate because they are not willing to lose welfare benefits they already have. There are two approaches to this difficult situation. The first being to consider supplementation of hourly wage with benefits. The primary concern of most of these workers is not the wage, but day care, medical coverage, and housing. These are the benefits they are not prepared to surrender on behalf of having a job. In many of these situations the person would be impractical if he/she were to give up these government benefits for nothing more than an hourly wage and the responsibility to acquire these same benefits on their own. Instead of the government withdrawing these benefits when personal income exceeds a certain amount the benefits should be awarded as a function of income much like the procedure used in subsidized housing.

Many of the community management corporations have the means to supply day care through volunteer services at little or no cost to the employee. The cost of housing in these communities is usually under federal guidelines and is represented as a function of income. Reevaluation by the federal controlling bodies should also allow for other benefits to be a function of income.

Program planners need to recognize that reverse commute programs are not specifically designed to support aid recipients. The general purpose for most of reverse commute programs has been to link employees (typically unskilled) with jobs (typically entry-level). These positions are represented by wages at or just above federally mandated minimums. The people on government assistance, with a variety of support needs other than employment, cannot be expected to participate in a program that was not designed to meet their specific needs.

Transportation Management Associations

It is difficult to find companies and organizations willing to accept the responsibility of operating reverse commute services when the target employment area is dominated by a multitude of businesses with less than twenty employees. In this case, it is impractical to expect each of these small businesses to run separate services. In such a situation, the responsibility for the operation should be shifted from individual companies or organizations to groups or Transportation Management Associations (TMA). A TMA is generally defined as an organization of employers, developers, property owners and local government officials that work together to establish policies programs and

services to address local transportation problems.[112]

These TMAs would have to coordinate work hours between the various employers to be in unison with each other. In an idyllic sense, TMAs should be initiated by the transportation provider as a way of lowering the cost of delivering this service. Management should be the responsibility of either an independent firm or representative of the various businesses that make up the group. A major concern presented by those approached to participate in TMAs is the cost of membership versus the equity of benefits to all members of the TMA. In existing TMAs, the mobility needs of their members has become the prime concern and new and innovative approaches to transportation problems are actively being pursued.

Subsidized Transportation

Subsidized transportation lends itself to certain situations, especially when a company has an existing employment benefit program offering transportation allowances as inducements for participation in carpooling or vanpooling. Understandably, this is an ideal situation for a company with employee turnover problems. The subsidized

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[112] Southern California Association of Governments, TMA Handbook: A Guide to Forming Transportation Management Associations, (Springfield, Virginia: National Technical Information Service, August 1989) pp. 3.

transportation can be used as an incentive to retain current employees and to recruit new employees. These subsidies could be used to increase particition in reverse commute programs.

In other situations the costs of subsidized transportation can be passed on to the employee. In many urban places of employment, it is common practice to charge for parking and other amenities. In the same manner, the cost of transporting employees can be handled as a chargeable amenity. The only problem that this does not take into consideration is the low wage that typifies these entry-level jobs and the problems these extra costs would incur if they were passed to the employee.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance in the initiation and operation of reverse commute programs is essential, especially for management corporations which typically are more involved with placement than transportation. Planners, engineers, and other professionals are a necessity to program transportation operations. If there are no such professionals on the staff of the organization responsible for operations, arrangements should be made with public and/or private organizations for such services.

The ideal situation would include the involvement of metropolitan transportation agencies. Consulting on area transportation matters would fall within their professional jurisdiction and would be beneficial involving area mobility issues.

Expansion of Services

The cost of operation should be addressed through the expansion of services into functions other than employment. The majority of reverse commute programs have tremendous periods of down-time which serve to escalate the operational cost. The use of the vehicles during these down-times for shopping, entertainment, and convenience trips would help generate more revenue and lower the operational cost.

Planning and Design

There is a tendency to make the number of jobs available in many of these suburban areas seem greater than what actually exists. A program can be hampered by using conservative figures in the design stages. In most of the experiences mentioned previously, the program started with the minimum number of vehicles and at the smallest scale possible in order to eliminate overhead. As the programs began operation and had been accepted by the groups involved, the programs were expanded.

Many programs have recognized this as being a problem, primarily by those operations that started their service by first acquiring vehicles and then soliciting for ridership. From the start, these operations have had high operating costs and have had to labor to attain a workable operating cost.

This has also become a problem when inappropriate growth allocations were used specifically in the design aspects of the program. Some programs have advised not to start a new route or buy new vehicles until the demand for its use presents itself. In other words, if an area can support 10-15 new job placements and the operation does not have the vehicles to supply that demand, it is logical that the purchase of a new vehicle would be economically viable. Insuring the accuracy of the data used in the design of reverse commute programs therefore becomes important to its success.

Funding

Getting the initial funds to support reverse commute programs is extremely important. Since fund raising is the most difficult of processes to perform, it is best to make a concerted effort to acquire contributions and donations as early in the planning process as possible. If enough liquid

capital is produced before operation, investments and intelligent financial decisions can eliminate many of the problems that may crop up during the first year of operations. If UMTA funds are being used the recipient is required to solicit for matching funds. These funds should be at least equal to, if not exceed, the amount given by UMTA.

Summary and Conclusions

The overall objective of this report was to examine reverse commute programs and obtain a clearer understanding of their characteristics. To summarize, the major characteristics of successful reverse commute programs include the following:

- The primarily reason for implementation is to provide transportation services into suburban areas that are centers for entry level employment.
- Resident management corporations and non-profit organizations represent the typical organization framework.
- Funding for the initial capital investment is typically provided through UMTA's Private Sector Initiatives grants or Entrepreneurial Services Awards.
- The most common type of service is a fixed route bus or van.

- Minorities females between the age of 18-34 represent the majority of users of the service.

Future applications of reverse commute programs should focus on:

- The pursuit of more partnerships between public and private sectors in the provision of services;
- Using the knowledge and experiences to address other commute patterns emerging in our cities. Suburb-to-suburb, exurb-to-suburb, rural-to-suburb, and even city-to-city commute patterns are all becoming more common. With the pressures of these demands playing havoc upon the existing roadway systems, alternatives to the single occupancy automobile will undoubtedly become necessary. The lessons being learned from the reverse commute programs may aid planners, engineers, and government officials in addressing these new patterns.
- The provision of service to low and moderate income central city residents to aid their ability to traverse the job-housing gap that has been created by the dynamic nature of the city and society.
- Community based operations as a way of leading to new approaches in transportation. Albeit far from

certain, similar the services could decrease the burden on public finances especially in areas of low population densities.

Based on the research and documentation of this report it appears reasonable to conclude that reverse commute programs have been successful in addressing both the unemployment and transportation needs of central city residents. The continuation of reverse commute programs should have a significant impact on the current and future mobility problems in the urban environment.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

CONTACT FOR INTERVIEW

APPOINTMENT:
Mr./Mrs_____
please. Good morning (afternoon). My name is Robert Nugent. I am a graduate student at The University of Tennessee. I am currently in the process of writing my graduate thesis on "reverse commuting" or "joblink" programs in the United States. On a previous occasion I contacted your organization and spoke with (NAME) about your program. I have since received information by mail. The reason for this call is to set up a telephone interview to expand and clarify some of this information. The interview should take approximately 30 minutes.

Before the interview you will be receiving a sample of some of the questions that will be asked as well as a participant release form.

I look forward to our interview and hope you have a nice day, thanks.

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER FOR PARTICIPANT RELEASE

Robert A. Nugent
801 Gate Lane #408
Knoxville, Tennessee 37909

name
street
state

Dear ????????????:

As per our earlier discussion the interview to discuss the various aspects of your program is scheduled for (time) on (date). Enclosed are:

sample questions;
participant release;
and SASE.

Please return the release form as soon as possible.

Thanks again,

Robert A. Nugent

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT RELEASE

PARTICIPANT RELEASE

I _____ grant permission to Robert Nugent of The University of Tennessee to use the information provided by me in conversations and audiotape recordings regarding "reverse commute" or "joblink" programs. I further understand that these recordings provide a complete record of comments made during the interview and will only be used for later analysis and summary.

_____
Signature

_____
Date

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. What was the purpose of the program (objectives, mission, etc.)?

2. What organization has responsibility for the program?

3. What are the sources of funding (city, UMTA, DOT, in-kind)?

4. What types of service does this program provide (fixed route, door-to-door, etc.)?

5. What are the general characteristics of the employees served (black/white, male/female, income level)?

APPENDIX E

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

TELEPHONE SURVEY

DATE OF INTERVIEW_____
TIME_____

ORGANIZATION_____
TELEPHONE_____

DIRECTIONS: Please answer all of the questions of this survey as completely as possible. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to each question. What I want most of all is your honest opinion.

NAME_____
OCCUPATION_____
YEARS IN THIS OCCUPATION_____

A. IMPLEMENTATION:

1. When was the program initiated?

2. How did it begin?

3. What was the motivation?

4. Who was involved?

5. What was the purpose of the program objectives, mission)?

6. What problems do you hope to address (economic, employee retention, jobs)?

7. Is there a specific group being targeted?

8. Is there a specific area (community, neighborhood) being targeted?

B. ORGANIZATION:

1. What organization has responsibility for the program?

2. What is the management structure (Ex. Director, assistant)?

3. How are key decisions made (board, etc.)?

4. Are there any other organizations involved?

5. What is their role in the program?

6. How are the services provided (contracted out, in-house)?

C. OPERATIONS:

1. What type of service does the program provide (fixed route, door-to-door, etc.)?

2. How is the service provided (vans, buses, taxis)?

3. How are these vehicles used (multiple trips)?

4. How are employers attracted to the program?

5. What industry types (food, hotel, construction, manufacturing) are representative of the employers participating in the program?

6. How are employees encouraged to participate (OUTREACH, etc.)?

D. PROGRAM FUNDING AND FINANCING:

1. What are the sources of funding (city, UMTA, DOT, in-kind)?

2. How are the services financed (employer contributions, employee fares, job agency contributions, UMTA)?

3. How do you generally express cost of operation?

4. What is the estimated cost of operation?

5. What does this include?

E. RIDERSHIP:

1. What are the general characteristics of the employees served (black/white, male/female, age, part time, income level)?

2. What is the level of participation at the present time?

3. What is the result of this participation in the number of job placements and/or jobs retained?

4. What is the estimation of growth in the area of placements and jobs maintained?

F. OPINIONS:

1. In your opinion what essential ingredients are needed to successfully meet your goals and objectives?

2. What is your opinion on the overall potential of the program?

3. What has been the general feedback about the program from employers, employees, organizations, media, and the community?

4. In your opinion are there any factors that inhibit participation of employers and employees?

5. Do you feel the program is meeting its overall objectives?

6. What changes need to be made?

7. What lessons have been learned?

VITA

Robert A. Nugent was born in Hamilton, Ohio on May 8, 1957. He attended the Fairfield Public School system until 1975. In the fall of 1984 he entered Miami University (Oxford, Ohio), and in the summer of 1988 received a Bachelor of Art degree in Urban and Regional Planning. The fall of that same year he accepted an assistantship at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and began study toward a Master's degree. This degree was awarded in the spring of 1991.

Before completion of his Master's degree he began working for the Houston-Galveston Area Council in Houston, Texas. The author is a member of the American Planners Association and the Association for Commuter Transportation.