



Transit Profiles from the Field

Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) | September 2018

CTAA Communications Specialist Taylor McGinley visited PRTC's offices in Woodbridge, Va. on Sept. 12, 2018 – along with CTAA Assistant Director Amy Conrick and Program Associate Andrew Carpenter – and filed this report from their visit.

The [Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission](#) (PRTC) has grown into a home to innovative, dedicated and passionate employees. Spanning 348 square miles between the I-95 and I-66 corridors, PRTC offers transit services throughout Prince William, Stafford and Spotsylvania counties and the cities of Manassas, Manassas Park and Fredericksburg, as well as to Washington, D.C. Their express commuter bus service, along with free ridesharing services, have long been popular with northern Virginians.

Since its inception in 1986, PRTC has actively worked within their communities to identify what customers want and need. Its customers have found themselves struggling with increased challenges, namely, ongoing construction on highways and growing congestion.

In order to combat congestion and provide more premium transit services, PRTC hopes to introduce two innovative programs: flexible vanpooling and options for microtransit.

In 2014, PRTC partnered with the [Northern Virginia Transportation Commission](#), [GWRideConnect](#) and the [Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation](#) to create the [Vanpool Alliance](#). Vanpool Alliance connects more than 50 vanpool providers with commuters across northern Virginia. Commuters can roster themselves to a vanpool that works best for them, pay a set fee and receive guaranteed service to their pre-determined destination. In an effort to move away from the standard 15-passenger van model, Vanpool Alliance has increased their SUV and mini-van fleet to attract new riders. This enhanced set of vehicles continues to allow vanpool providers to meet the 3 passenger HOV requirement on I-95 and the 2 passenger HOV requirement on I-65.

PRTC is also working to introduce flexible vanpooling. This innovative model would provide repeat customers the opportunity to switch

between vanpool groups through an app (or other piece of software), as well as encourage more first-time, single-ride customers. One challenge PRTC anticipates with this program is obtaining universal vendor agreement. Due to the fact that Vanpool Alliance operates with more than 50 vendors, it will be critical for all involved parties to reach a mutual understanding regarding payment and roster switches (both within and between vanpools).

Along with flexible vanpooling, PRTC is looking to integrate microtransit into their provided services. As construction continues along the I-66 corridor, commuter parking lots have become completely filled. The Virginia Department of Transportation is currently in the process of building three additional parking lots; providing more than 1,000 more parking spots. However, these parking lots will most likely not be finished until winter 2019. In an effort to connect more residents with their transit services, PRTC is looking at ways microtransit could bring riders within a radius of six to eight miles to their nearest transit stop. As of now, this service is looking similar to that of on-demand services.

As PRTC continues to grow and diversify their ridership base, they are constantly innovating and finding ways they can be increasingly flexible. Their passion for their customers, dedication to offering premium service and “won't take no for an answer” attitude is how their organization defines success.

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