

Serving Our Communities: Accessible Public Transportation

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“Getting older is fine. There is nothing you can do to stop it so you might as well stay on the bus.”

– John Byrne

Baby Boomers Ahead!

- Thurston Regional Planning Council's age-based forecasts show 20% of Thurston County's population will be 65 and older by 2030
- This influx of non-drivers will seek out transportation options, many unfamiliar with regular bus service
- Less drivers also impact gas tax revenue, a possible perfect storm



Baby Boomers Ahead!

“...older adults do not have sufficient familiarity with, and knowledge of, public transit to successfully use it as a primary mode of transportation”

(Babka, Cooper, & Ragland, 2009).

What is Travel Training?



What is Travel Training?

- Individualized, origin to destination trip planning and training on the regular bus
- Orientation to all aspects of bus travel
- Mobility Device Training
- Creates relationships with bus riders for continued assistance as needs change

Travel Training Outreach & Referrals

- Internal Referrals
- Social Service Agencies
- School Transition Programs
- Families
- Self Referrals
- Repeat Clients
- WSTC!

Creating a Positive Experience

- Agency Policies
- Personnel Training
- Driver's Training
- Public Education
- Address Safety Concerns

Fixed Route Accessibility

- All buses have wheelchair ramps and kneel for ease of boarding
- All buses have on-bus voice and text announcements for each stop
- Passenger Service and Safety Certified operators to provide quality customer service for all
- Community Outreach

A Partnership: Bus Buddies



CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES
OF WESTERN WASHINGTON



Buddy
Up

Buddy up with a Bus Buddy
for bus travel and comfort.

INTERcity
TRANSIT

We're going your way.



- **Bus Buddy** is an experienced or trained bus rider.
- **Bus Buddy** program provides free assistance to seniors, disabled, low income and others who would like to learn how to ride a bus and feel comfortable taking public transportation.
- **Bus Buddy** program assists individuals by enhancing their mobility, increasing their independence and maintaining their independent living.
- Individuals are matched with an experienced or travel trained **Bus Buddy**.
- **Bus Buddy** travels with the individual until they are able to ride on their own.

What is ADA Paratransit?



What is ADA Paratransit?

- ADA unfunded, mandated service for people whose disabilities prevent them from riding the regular bus
- Clients apply for eligibility and recertify
- Serves $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile around bus routes
- Clients call ahead to schedule rides
- Shared Ride service

Supporting Role

“The ADA is about equality. Purposeful segregation is not equality...be it in school, on a bus, or on the job. We need to remember that ADA paratransit is available as a support system to fixed route.”

Cost Avoidance of Travel Training

- Approximately 5,308 DAL trips diverted to Fixed Route in 12 months of pilot

\$47.40	Average cost of 1-way ADA trip
<u>- \$5.00</u>	Average cost of 1-way fixed route trip
\$42.40	Cost difference between ADA & FR
\$225,059	Approximate Cost Avoidance (\$42.40 difference X 5,308 trips)

Travel Training as Investment

\$166,648 2 FTE Travel Training Cost for 1 year

÷\$42.40 Savings per trip

3,930 Converted trips/year to cover cost

5,308 Approximate trips converted at end of
pilot year

Return on investment of 2 FTE Travel
Trainers has significant potential

Sharing our Stories





Thank You!

- Dial-A-Lift Eligibility, Jerry Howell 360-705-5896
- Travel Training, Erin Pratt & Curt Daniel
360-705-5879
- Bus Buddy Program, Janina Robbins 360-688-8832