On-Demand Transit in the Tri Cities

A “many-to-few” service model giving broad access to users as a means to overcome “motordom” land use and street design…
NETWORK CONCEPT
a work in progress

EXPRESS regional travel
faster but less frequent

METRO 12-15 minute routes
core network between hubs

LOCAL 20-30 minute routes
higher demand areas to hubs/centers

CONNECT on-demand
low demand areas to hubs/centers

More Transit Hubs
connections in destinations/centers
KEY SERVICE PARAMETERS

Transit Hubs and Centers *near activities/destinations*
  *priority* ACTIVE METRO LOCAL CONNECT EXPRESS

Park-and-Ride Lots *catching commuters, including trail network*
  *priority* EXPRESS METRO CONNECT LOCAL ACTIVE

CONNECT
  15 minutes before first bus to 15 minutes after last bus
  Maximum 15-minute wait (aligns to METRO connections)
  Universal access (WAVs, to include future bike access)
RATIONALE FOR BFT’S CONNECT APPROACH

PLANNING AND DESIGN OBSTACLES

• Low density land use (areas with low ridership waste fixed-route resources)
• Poor site design from bus stop to door (sometimes we serve the front door)
• Disconnected streets (access where bus route design is a geometric puzzle)
• Inaccessible and uncrossable streets
• Natural and manmade barriers
• Dangerous infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists (traffic speed and volume)
• Missing infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists (just cannot cross the gap)

EQUITY PROBLEMS

• Are everywhere: Low income and minority populations still need access to jobs, shopping, medical services, etc. which are typically in other parts of the city or region.
• Affect all abilities: Not everyone with a mobility limitation is ADA-eligible, but they still need a ride.
• Are not ours to determine: Broad service model means we do not pick the winners and losers; everyone has access. But when we see a gap, we address it.
EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

OBSTACLES

- Service planning and delivery are constrained by software limitations. Needs a fix; flexibility is key.
- Implementation of antiquated non-tech fare collection and transfer process

CONCERNS

- “Anywhere to transit hubs” offers trip redundancy… a “backup plan”… but this need is not well-understood by many who work in transit.
  
  User-friendly: Missed bus? catch CONNECT.
  Versus “unserved area to nearest bus stop” which is not technically practical or desirable… increases empty vehicle time/emissions between trips and reduces possibility of aggregated shared rides.

ISSUES

- We didn’t plan for every detail.
- We did not consider the possibility of rider “coercion” for non-designated destinations.
  Solutions in progress
- We didn’t expect weird events.
  One-off events that are so unique that ongoing “lessons” are not really applicable.
Hours of Operations

Service hours are designed to make sure riders can get to the first bus in the morning and from the last bus at night.

- Monday – Friday: 5:45 a.m. – 10:15 p.m.
- Saturdays: 6:45 a.m. – 10:15 p.m.
- Sundays: 7:45 a.m. – 6:45 p.m.

*CONNECT follows the same holiday schedule as BFT’s bus service.

*In poor weather and unsafe road conditions, CONNECT service may be restricted. For the most up-to-date service information, please check the Via app or call 509.204.4189.

How much does CONNECT Cost?

- CONNECT costs the same as BFT bus fares. Payment is made via the app or in person with exact cash: $1.50 per ride or UNLIMITED rides with a monthly pass!
## Performance at a Glance

Average data since reinstating intra-zonal service design (January 17 - April 10, 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rider Growth</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>298 active riders/month</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.8/5 ride rating</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.1 utilization (average)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑9% from 1/10 week to 4/4 week</td>
<td>Consistent across Jan - Mar</td>
<td>↑11% from 1/10 week to 4/4 week</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1,769 rides/month</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.9 min wait time</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.2 utilization (peak)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑38% from 1/10 week to 4/4 week</td>
<td>↓26% from 1/10 week to 4/4 week</td>
<td>↑39% from 1/10 week to 4/4 week</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2,758 requests/month</strong></td>
<td><strong>83% ride acceptance rate</strong></td>
<td><strong>20% shared-ride rate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑34% from 1/10 week to 4/4 week</td>
<td>↑2% from 1/10 week to 4/4 week</td>
<td>↑18% from 1/10 week to 4/4 week</td>
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Ridership has steadily grown since launch two years ago.
WHO’S RIDING?

*Based on January - March 2022 ridership data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zone Size (square miles)</td>
<td>122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population (residents)</td>
<td>218,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of People in Poverty</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of People Who Are Non-White</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Rides/Week*</td>
<td>1,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rides Per 1,000 Residents</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on 1/17 - 4/10/2022 ridership data
QUESTIONS?