

SUMMER 2024



KANSAS TRANSIT REPORTER

The Newsletter for Kansas Rural and Specialized Transportation Providers • University of Kansas Transportation Center

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By Kara Cox, Kansa RTAP



We are not cooling down over here! This summer has been busy gearing up for some fun announcements! In May, we said goodbye to our graduate research assistant, Payton Smith, but we also welcomed Beth Peterson to that role. Beth dove into the RTAP GRA position and has been doing incredible work. Be sure to check out the article later in this newsletter to learn more about Beth!

We are excited to announce that we will be launching a photo library housed on the KS RTAP website soon. This library will be a collection of donated photos from around Kansas that everyone can access and use for free. Be on the lookout for a call for photos in September. We will be asking agencies and people around Kansas to share photos that others may be interested in using. This could include all forms of public transportation, bus stops, agencies, examples of ADA compliances, and so much more! A photo release form will be required for us to use your submitted photos. More details will be included in the call for photos in September!

Working with KDOT, we will be launching a virtual option for Transit Manager Training. This training will cover topics found in the Transit Manager Handbook and have some expanded segments, such as a more in-depth look at BlackCat. This training will be accessible 24/7 on the KS RTAP learning management system and can be completed at the user's own pace. We expect to start unrolling this training on the website in the next few weeks.

We have added an Agency Information Update Request Form to our website. This form can be completed at any time to request changes to the information found in the Kansas Transit Directory. The form can be found at the bottom of the [Kansas Transit Provider Directory Map webpage](#).

As always, please reach out if you need any assistance from KS RTAP! You can reach me at kara.cox@ku.edu or on Slack!

INTRODUCTION TO RTAP'S NEW GRA: BETH PETERSON

By Megan Hazelwood, KS RTAP

Kansas RTAP would like to introduce our new Graduate Research Assistant, Beth Peterson. Beth graduated from Topeka High in 2020. Growing up so close to the University of Kansas, it only seemed natural to attend KU for her undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Beth was accepted into the honors college at KU. She graduated in May of 2024 with her bachelor's degree in environmental studies with a minor in sociology.



With her undergraduate degree, Beth realized, “how impactful transportation is on the environment, and I wanted to make transportation more sustainable and environmentally friendly.”

Beth is now getting her master's degree in urban planning. With this degree, Beth hopes to continue working in the transportation field.

“I want to work in the transportation field. I'd love to focus on active forms of transportation such as walking and biking, as well as public transportation,” said Beth.

Working for Kansas RTAP is the perfect place to put Beth's passions into action. Beth hopes to improve the

road experience for people using other forms of transportation other than just a car. She looks forward to continuing making connections with people in the field during her time with Kansas RTAP. The Kansas RTAP audience can expect to hear more from Beth as she gets settled into her new role.

When Beth isn't working, she likes to watch TV and movies, hang out with friends, go on walks and hikes, play with her cat, and go thrift shopping.

Please give a warm welcome to Beth as she learns about the resources and information that drives the transportation field.

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORK BREAKS

By Nikhila Gunda & Beth Peterson, KS RTAP

Complex work situations, like those that transit workers (especially bus drivers) face daily, create stress. Stress is linked to many physical and medical issues including chronic diseases, sleep deprivation, tiredness, and impatience, among others. These temporary and permanent conditions can reduce worker productivity and may require them to take additional time off. The mental and physical wellbeing of transit employees can greatly impact their job performance. Research shows that better employee health leads to lower health care costs, less absenteeism, lower risk of injury, and better overall performance. This article's goal is to outline the benefits of short breaks and how to best use them for transit staff, including drivers, supervisors, managers, maintenance workers and dispatchers. In addition, the article also highlights some considerations for breaks, especially during summer.

Issues of high demand, a low feeling of control, and limited support can all contribute to the physical and mental stress of transit employees. One of the most cost-effective ways to reduce this stress is by taking occasional five- or ten-minute breaks, along with lunch breaks. This helps restore your workers' energy levels, reduces their stress, and helps them avoid physical



injury and muscle strain. Breaks also reduce the occurrence of fatigue-related accidents, which can hurt people, damage equipment, and throw work goals off track. Ultimately, breaks benefit all transit employees and workers.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

WHY WORK BREAKS?

For many of us, being productive means spending more time working. However, humans weren't made to work an eight-hour day or longer without a break. Studies reveal that short breaks help everyone be better prepared to concentrate on their tasks and work for long periods at a time. For those whose jobs need creativity and problem-solving—such as schedulers and dispatchers—a quick walk or conversation with a colleague can help the brain function better. Also, simply thinking or talking about something else can give workers a newfound perspective on a tricky problem. Quick breaks are a question of safety for long-distance drivers and operators of heavy machinery, including maintenance personnel. To effectively perform their jobs, transit employees who engage with consumers all day—such as bus drivers, and dispatchers—also need time away from these responsibilities. Pausing work throughout the day can improve well-being as well as productivity.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE YOUR AGENCY AND EMPLOYEES TO TAKE BREAKS?

A 2014 survey by Staples found that 20 percent of workers feel guilty taking breaks during the day beyond their lunch break (Agarwal, 2014). However, when it is emphasized that breaks are an important part of the workday and they are clearly scheduled, employees are more inclined to take them. Below are some of the considerations and best practices for informing workers on how important breaks are and ensuring that they feel comfortable taking their breaks.

- Share how important taking breaks is and schedule them into your workers' days.
- Break requirements should be clarified during the onboarding of all new employees and readdressed with existing employees.
- If possible, provide a comfortable break or lunchroom on site so employees have a designated place that removes them from their immediate work environment.
- Use work meetings, office posters, and newsletters to educate your agency and workers about what makes a good break.
- Workers in physical jobs should be encouraged to sit for a while or stretch gently to give their joints and muscles a much-needed rest.

SAFETY TIPS FOR WORKING IN THE HEAT

During the peak summer months, many workers throughout the country, especially those who work outside or in non-air-conditioned spaces, are exposed to extreme heat and/or humidity that can easily lead to heat stress and exhaustion, heat stroke and other health issues. With proper preventative steps, these conditions can be avoided. Below are some of the common practices to avoid heat-related problems.

- **Drink more water:** Drink plenty of water and fluids during an outdoor shift. Employees should consume small amounts of water throughout the day before thirst sets in. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends that even in moderately hot conditions with a medium level of exertion, workers should drink one cup of water every fifteen to twenty minutes (Protect your Workers from Heat Stress, 2018).
- **Wear appropriate clothing:** To stay cool in the hot summer weather, workers should dress in breathable, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing made of materials such as cotton or linen. If feasible, they should wear wide-brimmed hats to shield part of the sun's rays from their heads and faces. Keep in mind that wearing protective gear or using personal protective equipment may raise the risk of heat stress. However, be mindful that heat stress can affect workers within buildings where ambient outside temperatures and humidity may be present or even higher than outside (Heat and Summer Safety Tips).
- **Take frequent breaks:** Provide a plan for work and rest that enables employees to take frequent breaks. For these breaks, provide cool, covered, or air-conditioned spaces. In order to restore any electrolytes lost through sweating during their shift, workers should also be mandated to take a meal break.
- **Check in on employees:** Supervisors and managers should keep an eye on their employees to quickly recognize when/if any individuals are experiencing symptoms of heat-related illnesses. It is good practice to monitor the weather daily and reschedule any strenuous outdoor tasks to times of the day when heat and humidity are not at their peak. Strenuous work creates internal heat from muscular contractions, which may lead to heat stress. Keep assessing work procedures to reduce the amount of effort and heat stress that employees are subjected to.

CONCLUSION

The best breaks take employees away from the work they were doing physically and mentally. A lunch break taken while an employee checks email at their computer is not restorative. However, engaging in conversation with colleagues in an inviting break room or taking a brief stroll in the open air can revitalize their engagement, creativity, and focus. It requires some effort to encourage your employees to take breaks and that they are beneficial; however, it is possible to foster a break-positive environment and inform your employees about the significance of mental and physical rest. By taking breaks yourself, you can alleviate some of the concerns of your employees and colleagues, allowing them to experience a break that is restful, rejuvenating, and enjoyable.

RESOURCES

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POLICY SPOTLIGHT: HANDLING VERBALLY & PHYSICALLY ABUSIVE RIDERS

By Anne Lowder, KS RTAP



Being physically or verbally assaulted is unacceptable in any situation, but what can be done about these actions when they take place on a transit vehicle? A [video](#) reported by KSHB 41 shows a Kansas City bus driver being punched in the face, and KCTV channel five in Kansas City, MO reported June 25, 2023, that “bus drivers are complaining that their safety is at risk” and “have been putting their lives on the line after experiencing one too many acts of violence while out on the job.”

Kansas House Bill 2808 sponsored by The Committee on Federal and State Affairs was designed to establish consequences for “the crimes of causing harm to a public transportation employee,” but, unfortunately, died on April 30, 2024. This article will look at considerations

for establishing a policy for handling verbally and physically abusive riders and what agencies around Kansas have already put into place.

DEFINITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) defines a “reportable assault on transit work as an event resulting in a fatality or injury requiring medical transport.”

CONSIDERATIONS

Crimes are being committed against transit operators. The Urban Institute reported data from the National Transit Database as increasing “between 2008 and 2022, from 168 to 492 annual events nationwide.” Urban Institute believes that these reported numbers undermined what is happening to transit workers. Instances such as “being robbed, having things thrown at them, being doused with urine and hot beverages, being threatened at gunpoint” does not meet the FTA’s definition of an assault on a transit worker. Deasiray Bush, Director of the Transportation Department for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas (RideKC regional brand) stated, “The daily assaults that bus operators endure include verbal attacks or spit on. Many of our operators do not report these ‘smaller’ incidents, which may make it difficult to provide precise data, but the more severe and hazardous forms of assault, such as being threatened with a weapon, being sprayed with mace, or getting punched/hit, are incidents that are always reported.”

CONSIDERATIONS

Transportation Department for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas (RideKC regional brand)

Deasiray Bush, Director of the Transportation Department for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas (RideKC regional brand) stated in HB 2808 testimony:

“Ride KC has a ridership Code of Conduct ([ridership-code-of-conduct-policy.pdf \(wycokck.org\)](#)) to protect the health, safety, and welfare of passengers and drivers but it is not enough to ensure safety of our workers. If an assault takes place, depending on the type of assault, it will lead to criminal charges, mostly, a misdemeanor. The daily assaults that bus operators endure include verbal attacks or getting spat on... to the more severe and hazardous forms of assault, such as being threatened with a weapon, being sprayed with mace, or getting punched/hit.”

aTa Bus Manhattan KS

aTa Bus Manhattan KS Rider Information Handbook [056f4d_cf2478962cce4781bb0ef38911b169b0.pdf \(fhata.org\)](#).

ATA Bus rider handbook states: “Workplace Violence Zero Tolerance Threats of violence, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against any employees or other individuals are prohibited. The Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency has a “zero tolerance” policy for such conduct. It will not be tolerated, and it is the duty of all employees to report such conduct. Any person who threatens violence, displays threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts in FHATA offices or in or around FHATA vehicles will be removed from the area or vehicle as soon as safety allows. Said person shall be prohibited from entering FHATA offices or riding or driving FHATA vehicles until an investigation of the conduct in question has been completed. Should the investigation establish a violation of this policy, FHATA will take action up to and including termination of any business relationship, suspension, or termination of employment, and civil or criminal prosecution. No weapon, including firearms concealed or not, other instrument intended for use as a weapon, or any object capable of inflicting serious bodily injury upon another person or property may be carried in or on any vehicle of aTa Bus, even if a person has a permit to carry a concealed weapon, except for law enforcement personnel.”

Topeka Metro

[Rider Guidelines-Topeka Metro](#)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The Topeka Metro riders guide states the listed bullets as being “prohibited.”

- Unconcealed firearms or other weapons of any kind.
- Disorderly, abusive, dangerous, obscene, or threatening behavior or language.
- Physical or verbal abuse of the operator, another passenger, or any other transit employee.
- Unruly behavior, profanity, fighting, spitting, feet on the seats, littering, urinating, or defecating in public.
- Operating, kicking, hitting, or tampering with the vehicle and/or equipment.
- Distracting or inappropriate conversation with the bus operator or other passengers.
- Dangerous or large items, such as TV’s, computer monitors, moving boxes, car batteries, explosives, fireworks, furniture, trees, large tools, panes of glass, etc.
- Indecent exposure (i.e., must have a shirt, pants, and shoes).

The Bus Operator always has the reasonable authority to refuse service or ask for a passenger’s justified removal. For the safety of our passengers, employees, vehicles, and general public, Topeka Metro utilizes surveillance in its vehicles and facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Urban Institute [Assaults on Transit Workers Have Tripled in the Past 15 Years. Income Inequality and Societal Tensions Have Contributed.](#) | Urban Institute

Recommends the following:

- Transit operators should not oversee collecting fares or removing unruly passengers as this may “trigger attacks.”
- “Compartment redesign that completely physically separates drivers from passengers on buses.”
- Increasing consequences for assaults. In more than 30 states, assaulting a transit worker is classified as a special category of misdemeanor associated with greater punitive measures, including jail time, fines up to \$215,000, and permanent banishment from transit. (Recommended in testimony on HB 2808 by Tuck Duncan, Director of Kansas Public Transit Association).
- Compensating and training workers for the conditions they presently face.

RESOURCES

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Codes & Ordinances. – Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City. (n.d.). <https://www.wycokck.org/Departments/Neighborhood-Resource-Center/Divisions/Building-Inspection/Codes-and-Ordinances>

Assaults on transit workers have tripled in the past 15 years. income inequality and societal tensions have contributed. Urban Institute. (2023, November 28). <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/assaults-transit-workers-have-tripled-past-15-years-income-inequality-and-societal>

ATA BUS: Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency: Kansas. Flint Hills ATA Bus. (n.d.). <https://www.fhata.org/>

Rider guidelines-Topeka metro. Topeka Metro-Transportation Solution Provider. (n.d.). <https://www.topekametro.org/about-metro/how-to-ride/rider-guidelines>

KANSAS MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

By Nikhila Gunda & Beth Peterson, KS RTAP

In addition to Sections 5311 and 5310, several other programs help fund rural transportation services. Efforts to coordinate the various human services transportation choices available through these programs have been ongoing. Addressing challenges and improving coordination between federal, state, municipal, and other transportation resources is critical for providing reliable and efficient transportation services. In recent years, coordination efforts have been focused on mobility management, which reflects a transportation strategy that is focused on consumers and their needs, as well as addressing these needs through the coordinated use of a range of providers. This article will define mobility management, explain its purpose and benefits, and introduce Kansas Mobility Managers.

According to the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM), mobility management involves creating and delivering transportation services that prioritize the customer's needs. It begins with a community vision in which the entire transportation network—public transit, human service organizations, private operators, volunteer drivers, and others—work together with customers, planners, and stakeholders to deliver the transportation options that best fulfill the necessities of the community (Coordination and Mobility Management, 2024).

Given the unique approach to mobility management, no two programs are identical, and many agencies, including rural public transit providers, can serve as mobility managers in a community. However, some components are common in various mobility management programs, including, but not limited to (Coordination and Mobility Management, 2024):

- Partnerships between multiple agencies and organizations.
- A customer-driven, market-based approach that provides customers with a variety of transportation options through individualized trip planning.
- One-stop travel information and trip planning centers that provide information on available transportation options and coordinate requests for transportation services. This may include the operation of a central call center for customers to gain information on available transportation options and to schedule trips.

Many communities across the country are seeking ideas for mobility management strategies and practices that provide creative approaches to delivering coordinated transportation services, especially for older citizens, people with disabilities, veterans, and low-income residents. In rural areas, enabling mobility for the population is extremely difficult because trips may be long and may span several jurisdictional boundaries. The focus of mobility management on addressing specific customer needs through a variety of transportation services is critical as communities balance growing needs with limited budgets and resources.

What is Mobility Management?

- Encourages innovation and flexibility to reach the "right fit" solution for customers
- Plans for sustainability
- Strives for easy access to information and referral to assist customers in learning about and using services
- Continually incorporates customer feedback as services are evaluated and adjusted

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT IN KANSAS

Public transportation, in its different forms, is fundamentally concerned with transporting people to their intended destinations in a safe, accessible, and efficient manner. Mobility Management is a public transportation strategy that focuses on the customer's needs for transportation and develops a strategy to meet them through the coordinated use of a range of providers

(Expanding Access to Our Communities, 2018). Innovation and flexibility are encouraged in problem-solving situations, allowing for strategies that are tailored to the riders' specific needs. Thus, the exact duties and responsibilities that individual mobility managers perform can vary greatly while maintaining the objective to improve coordination among existing public transportation providers and other transportation service providers, resulting in expanding the availability of service (FTA Circular 9040.1G, 2016).

In Kansas, Mobility Managers are an important resource in a statewide network of Coordinated Transport Districts (CTDs) for recognizing needs and designing and facilitating coordination solutions that benefit riders and transit providers. Working regionally, mobility managers can serve as a single point of contact for those who need to schedule cross-jurisdictional rides. Mobility Managers that work collaboratively within a CTD can administer an online repository for transit agencies' documentation, other resources, and topics for discussion. Locally, Mobility Managers help transit agencies with outreach and communications, saving staff both time and money. Additionally, they can serve as non-officer Ex-Officio CTD members and/or assist with meeting facilitation as required by the CTD.

RESOURCES

- To know more about mobility management and mobility managers in Kansas, visit <https://ksrides.org/kansas-mobility-management/>
- Kansas Mobility Manager Policy Guide can be found at [Mobility Management Policy Guide \(ksdot.gov\)](https://ksdot.gov/mobility-management-policy-guide/)

RESOURCES

What is Mobility Management?. National Center for Mobility Management. (n.d.). <https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/for-mobility-managers/>

Coordination and Mobility Management. National RTAP. (2024, March). <https://www.nationalrtap.org/Toolkits/Transit-Managers-Toolkit/Operations-and-Planning/Coordination-and-Mobility-Management#WhatIsMobilityManagement>

Expanding Access to Our Communities: A Guide to Successful Mobility Management Practices in Small Urban and Rural Areas. Transportation Research Board. (2018, January). [https://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/docs/NCHRP20-65\(68\)_FR.pdf](https://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/docs/NCHRP20-65(68)_FR.pdf)

FTA Circular 9040.1G - Formula Grants for Rural Areas: Program Guidance and Application Instructions. Federal Transit Administration. (2016, March 1). <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/fta-circular-90401g-formula-grants-rural-areas-program-guidance-and>

KANSAS MOBILITY MANAGER MOMENT



Mobility Manager, Michelle, worked with Emily on learning the CityGo route to get from her home to Kenwood Cove and back. They looked at routes, practiced walking and using crosswalks, waiting for the bus, talking the driver and paying fares. Emily is excited to use the bus to get to the pool independently.



TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT: VRUSA TOOL

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Calvin Reed, Secretary of Transportation

Laura Kelly, Governor

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 16, 2024

For more information:

Ingrid Vandervort, ingrid.vandervort@ks.gov

Online tool supports local public agencies in addressing pedestrian and cyclist safety

The Kansas Department of Transportation released a new online tool to help local public agencies learn about corridors where pedestrians and cyclists may be present and possible safety risks they could face.

The Kansas Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment Tool includes a StoryMap, which explains how the data can be interpreted, and an interactive mapping and data visualization tool. Data gathered from the tool can assist agencies to understand safety concerns for these local travelers. The tool helps support safety-conscious decision making, including investments in infrastructure, education, enforcement or emergency services.

“Pedestrians and cyclists are some of our most vulnerable road users,” said Transportation Safety Bureau Chief Vanessa Spartan. “Understanding where they’re traveling and risk factors on those routes are important steps to addressing potential safety needs. We often find that investments in the safety of pedestrians and cyclists also benefits other road users.”

The assessment plan, which was published in November 2023, is part of the Kansas Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The safety plan aims to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes on all state and local roads in Kansas.

The tool and safety assessment are on the Bureau of Transportation Safety’s website at <https://www.ksdot.gov/bureaus/burTrafficSaf/default.asp>.

###

This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request.
For information about obtaining an alternative format, contact the KDOT Division of Communications,
700 SW Harrison St., 2nd Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3745 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired – 711.

Click below to connect to KDOT’s Social Networks:



MEMO



DATE: May 16, 2024
TO: KDOT Local Agency Partners
FROM: Vanessa Spartan, Chief of Transportation Safety
CC: Max Wilcox, Transportation Safety Planner
Matt Messina, Chief of Multimodal Transportation
Todd Salfrank, Chief of Local Projects
RE: *Kansas Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment Tool*

Eisenhower State Office Building
700 S.W. Harrison Street
Topeka, KS 66603-3745
kdot#publicinfo@ks.gov
<https://www.ksdot.gov>

PURPOSE: The *Kansas Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment Tool* is now available for public use. The tool summarizes results of the Kansas Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment which identified high injury locations and common risk factors associated with those locations. The tool helps local public agencies learn about corridors where pedestrians and cyclists may be present and possible safety risks.

CONTEXT: The tool displays the results of the Kansas Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, which the Kansas Department of Transportation finalized in November 2023 and is an addendum to the Kansas Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The tool includes a StoryMap, which explains how the data can be interpreted, and an interactive mapping and data visualization tool. Data gathered from the tool can aid agencies' understanding of safety concerns for these local travelers. The tool can support safety-conscious decision-making including investments in infrastructure, education, enforcement, or emergency services. The safety assessment and tool are available on the Bureau of Transportation Safety's website at <https://www.ksdot.gov/transportationsafety.asp>.

USE: To identify and implement strategies to increase vulnerable road user safety on the prioritized corridors, local public agencies are encouraged to consider local, state, and federal funding sources to support education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency response solutions. The tool provides valuable information that may support the development of local agency applications for project funding. Available state and federal funding sources are listed in Section 5 of the safety assessment.

CONTACT:

If you have any questions about the assessment or use of the tool, please contact Max Wilcox, Transportation Safety Planner, at max.wilcox@ks.gov.

If you have questions about funding and additional resources for non-motorized road users, please contact the Bureau of Multimodal Transportation, at kate@ks.gov.



COMMUNITY CORNER - SRC FOR DOUGLAS COUNTY

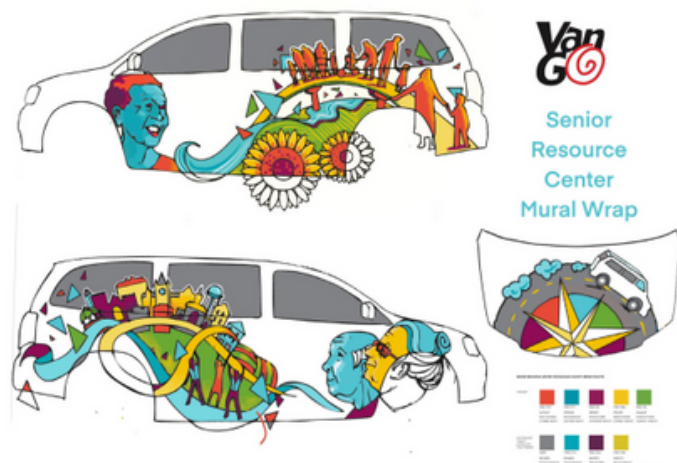
By Kara Cox, KS RTAP

The Senior Resource Center (SRC) in Douglas County is proudly showcasing a new, vibrant look for its Senior Wheels Van #12, thanks to a collaborative project with Van Go Mobile Arts. This initiative highlights the center's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for local seniors.

The Senior Resource Center, known for its essential role in providing transportation and support services to older adults, partnered with Van Go, an arts-based social service agency. Founded in 1997, Van Go works with youth aged 14-24 to create impactful art, and recently, their JAMS program took on a special project: designing a new wrap for SRC's Senior Wheels van.

SRC's Executive Director, Megan Poindexter, and Van Go's Art Director, Rick Wright, were eager to collaborate on this unique project. With a grant secured by Rick and the van provided by SRC, the project began with a meaningful engagement between JAMS participants, SRC staff, and Senior Wheels riders.

Nineteen JAMS students met with Megan, SRC's Director of Transportation Heidi Briery, and a few regular riders to learn about the importance of transportation for seniors. They explored how the Senior Wheels service impacts lives, the challenges of aging, and what seniors look forward to.



Inspired by these conversations, the youth created a series of designs that reflect the essence of the Senior Wheels service and its riders. The resulting van wrap features:

- A bridge over the Kaw River symbolizing life's transitions and the connection between seniors and their communities.
- Iconic Douglas County landmarks, such as the South Park Gazebo and Frazier Hall, representing local pride.
- A ribbon connecting community support efforts, with figures holding it up, including those in light blue vests akin to the ones worn by SRC's drivers.
- Colorful, diverse depictions of seniors, radiating enthusiasm and a positive outlook on their lives.

The newly adorned van has been unveiled and is now a colorful presence on local streets, bringing a bright touch to the daily lives of those who use the Senior Wheels service. This collaboration not only beautifies the van but also underscores SRC's dedication to fostering a vibrant and supportive community for seniors.



RESOURCES

That's a Wrap. (2024). Better Senior Living. https://yoursrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Better_Senior_Living_June-2024_Web.pdf

PUBLIC TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY IN KANSAS

By Nikhila Gunda, KS RTAP

Public transportation is an essential component of urban and rural infrastructure, providing efficient mobility options for millions of people around the world. Emerging technologies have significantly improved public transportation systems recently, by improving their overall user experience, accessibility, and efficiency. This article will outline the current use and state of transit technology in Kansas.

As technology continues to evolve, public transportation can potentially become a more appealing option, encouraging individuals to leave their cars at home and opt for the convenience and environmental benefits of public transit. Though urban and large transit providers are willing to adopt and implement these new technologies with available resources, it is not the same for rural transportation providers due to many reasons such as lack of awareness, staff, need and use. Technology is vital for public transportation providers' ability to operate effectively and efficiently. It can additionally improve riders' ability to plan and schedule trips. Every agency is different in how it uses technology and how ready it is to adopt new ones.

The Kansas Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) conducted a first round of survey in early 2024 to gather basic information from Kansas' transportation providers and assess their current technological needs, interests and challenges that can improve their service in the future while also understanding the agencies' attitudes, perceptions, knowledge and readiness regarding the implementation of transit technology. It is critical to understand the current state and interest of the providers to set a shared vision and goals in adopting and implementing of new technologies that can improve transit service in rural and urban areas across the Kansas state.

Among 150 Kansas transportation providers, twenty-five agencies responded to the survey developed and administered by the Kansas RTAP between March 05 and April 05 via SurveyMonkey platform.

Below is the summary of the survey results received.

- 20 agencies provide only demand-response service while five other agencies provide both demand-response and fixed route services.
- Scheduling, dispatching, fare collection and marketing were ranked high among the most used transit technology tools that are believed to have the greatest impact on their agencies' operations. Other listed technologies included better infrastructure amenities (internet, user app, live tracking), microtransit, electric vehicles and driverless or autonomous vehicles.
- Among various available dispatching and scheduling tools, paper, phone/tablets, MS Outlook, MS Excel, Google Calendar, and some types of third-party software are most used. Graph 1 below shows a breakdown of the number of agencies and their associated tools usage.

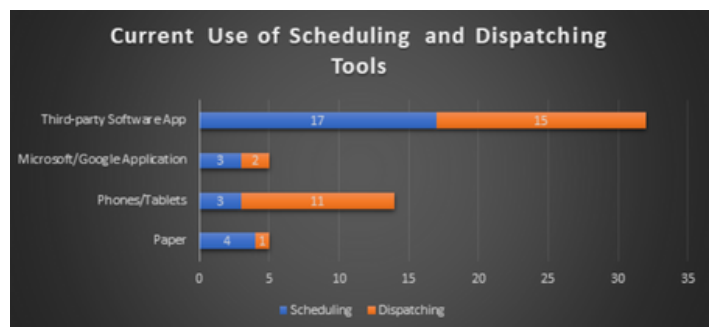


Figure 1 - Scheduling and Dispatching Tools Usage by Kansas Agencies

- and the rest either take cash/check and fareboxes.
- For marketing purposes, 15 agencies use local advertising, 13 agencies use internet/social media, three use posters/handouts and one agency uses radio.
- The current top challenge for most agencies is funding, followed by driver shortages, maintenance, procurement issues, low ridership, and marketing.



Figure 2 - Comfort with Technology by User Type

- Figure 2 provides a snapshot of how respondents rated their comfort with technology and that of their agencies and riders.
- About half of the agencies who responded believe that ridership can be increased with the adoption of more technology. Though 25% of the respondents are not sure while the other 25% say there would be no impact on the ridership.
- The most important technology qualities expected by the respondents are cost-effective, easy-to-use, efficient and effective in everyday operations and management.
- Cost followed by adaptation time, lack of trained staff and knowledge of technology are found to be the barriers or challenges in adopting and implementing new technologies.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Kansas RTAP will be conducting a second round of data collection to obtain extensive information about the agency's current technological needs, interests, perceptions, and readiness to improve service and provide more safe, reliable, and mobility options for future travel. We strongly encourage Kansas transportation providers to contribute to this research, as it is critical to plan and make informed decisions based on the information you provide. Stay tuned for RTAP communications with the next round of Kansas Transit Technology Assessment survey which is set to release in early September 2024.

We appreciate your great work and efforts in Kansas!

KANSAS RTAP TRAINING, TRAINING RESOURCES AND CONFERENCES

By Anne Lowder, KS RTAP

Below are training courses available from Kansas RTAP and other sources through November of this year. If you are interested in hosting a training class, I am scheduling dates for 2024. Please contact Anne Lowder at alowder@ku.edu if you would like to host a training course at your agency.

KANSAS RTAP TRAINING

2024 KANSAS RTAP TRAINING DEFENSIVE DRIVING AND PASSENGER ASSISTANCE/WHEELCHAIR SECUREMENT

https://www.events-kutc.ku.edu/assnfe/CourseView.asp_MODE=VIEW&cID=591

September 11 | Garden City, KS

September 12 | Dodge City, KS

September 18 | Wichita, KS

September 19 | Wellington, KS

September 26 | Chanute, KS

October 3 | Hartford, KS

October 9 | Lawrence, KS

October 31 | Fort Scott, KS

November 13 | Chanute, KS

November 14 | Chanute, KS

KANSAS RTAP TRAINING

2024 KANSAS RTAP TRAINING DEFENSIVE DRIVING AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

<https://www.events-kutc.ku.edu/assnfe/CourseView.asp?MODE=VIEW&clCourseID=580>

September 5 | Columbus, KS
September 25 | Fort Scott, KS
October 2 | Hays, KS
October 3 | Fort Scott, KS
October 3 | Pittsburg, KS
October 23 Smith Center, KS
October 24 | Hutchinson, KS
October 24 | Junction City, KS
October 30 | Chanute, KS

RESOURCES FOR TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES

EasterSeals Project Action Consulting

<https://www.projectaction.com/>

Easterseals Project Action Consulting provides instruction in a variety of formats to meet your community's needs and budgets.

National RTAP eLearning Transit Resources

<https://www.nationalrtap.org/>

- Training Modules
- eLearning Courses
- Technology Tolls
- Webinars
- Toolkits
- Topic Guides
- Technical Briefs
- Spotlight Articles

National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM)

<https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/>

Promoting Customer-Centered Mobility strategies that advance good health, economic vitality, self-sufficiency, and community.

National Center for Applied Technology

<https://n-catt.org/>

Providing small-urban, rural, and tribal transit agencies with practical resources for replicable technological solutions and innovations. The site shares case studies, research, technologies, and provides information on technologies that enable solutions that solve problems and enable goals to be reached.

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Resources

- Legislative and Federal Policy priorities
- Crime and Human Trafficking Prevention
- Census Issues 2020 Urban Area Determinations
- CT Reader Regular Updates
- Training Calendar

U.S Department of Transportation

['Back to Basics' for Service Agents | US Department of Transportation](#)

The Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance (ODAPC) is introducing a short series of reminders called "Back to Basics" for service agents (e.g., collectors, Medical Review Officers, etc).

Federal Transit Association

[De-Escalation Training Resource Directory | FTA \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fta.dot.gov)

De-Escalation Training Resource Directory
De-escalation training is one component of a multi-faceted Safety Management System (SMS) that can also include other measures such as mirrors, signage, security cameras, and working with law enforcement.

National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (nadt)

[National Aging and Disability Transportation Center \(nadtc.org\)](https://www.nadtc.org)

Resources that include Driver Training Videos and Transportation Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA initiative).

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If you know individuals who would like to receive our newsletter, please have them go to: www.ksrtap.org and sign up for the Kansas RTAP email list. There is a box to check to request electronic notification of each new issue of the TransReporter. Back issues are available at our website in the newsletter archives section.

 **KANSAS
RTAP TRANSIT REPORTER**

The Kansas Transit Reporter is an educational and technology transfer newsletter published quarterly by the University of Kansas Transportation Center (KUTC). The newsletter is free to rural and specialized transit providers and others with an interest in rural and specialized service.

The Kansas Transit Reporter is co-sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration under its Rural Transportation Assistance Program (rtap) and the Kansas Department of Transportation. The purposes of the RTAP program are to:

- 1) educate transit operators about the latest technologies in rural and specialized transit; 2) encourage their translation into practical application; and 3) to share information among operators.

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