

Mobility on Demand (MOD) Working Group
April 16, 2018
North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)
William J. Pitstick Executive Board Room

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1. Meeting Summary

a. Welcome

Sarah Chadderdon from NCTCOG welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. All attendees gave brief introductions as well.

b. Mobility on Demand (MOD) Program Update

Jing Xu gave a brief update on the MOD Program key components as a summary of the Shared Mobility Summit she attended in March in Chicago:

- Sandbox Program – first launched in October 2016 and DART was one of eleven recipients of federal funds to explore MOD models. A second round of funding is expected in late 2019 or 2020, but an official announcement has not yet been made.
- Innovation & Knowledge Accelerator Initiative – A partnership between FTA and the Shared Use Mobility Center (SUMC) to support successful implementation of MOD projects with a focus on the sandbox projects. They have identified two main types of projects: trip planning and service implementation. The trip planning type of the sandbox projects have been generally experiencing technical challenges and going through their API agreements with plans of beta releasing soon. The service implementation type of sandbox projects are slightly delayed in service launch timeline due to challenges during the partnership building process.
- On-Ramp Program – This is another partnership between FTA and SUMC to provide 12-month technical assistance for up to six promising, but not fully-baked MOD ideas. NCTCOG promoted the RFP to all transit providers in the region and facilitated discussion and potential cooperation at the regional level. DCTA and Trinity Metro both submitted applications.
- Foundational Research – The USDOT and FTA partner with academia and stakeholders on enabling smarter, more efficient, and safer mobility within a seamless multimodal transportation systems. Two recent publications related to MOD are list below:
 - [TCRP Report 195](#): Broadening Understanding of the Interplay Between Public Transit

- [TCRP Report 196](#): Private Transit: Existing Services and Emerging Directions
- Performance Metrics – an important tool of using industry benchmarks and performance indicators to measure the success of MOD projects. Based on FTA’s scope, the next steps include: 1) to develop a list of performance metrics for MOD project; 2) to conduct comprehensive individual evaluation of MOD sandbox projects. Researcher team at the University of California at Berkeley who partners with U.S. DOT on a relevant project suggested the MOD performance metrics should cover a broad range of topics including environmental metrics, financial metrics, legal issues, and so; and when applicable, performance metrics should be comparable to other transportation modes to make comparison across the transportation network possible.

c. Arlington/Via On Demand Transportation Partnership

Alicia Winkelblech, Assistant Director of Strategic Planning with the city of Arlington, gave an overview of their Public-Private Partnership with Via Rideshare to provide public transportation to a portion of Arlington. The city’s 1-year pilot with Via is the first of its kind and utilizes FTA funding to cover up to 65% of the capital and operating costs. This is a “turn-key” solution that included technology, vehicles, drivers, a local Via office, and a call-in number for individuals without a smartphone to schedule a ride. Wheelchair accessibility is provided by a dedicated, spare Handitran vehicle and trained driver. This service is cost effective at \$3/ride and competes well locally with Uber and Lyft. If a rider doesn’t have a credit card, cash can be used to purchase a pre-paid credit card at a local store. Lastly, this partnership includes data sharing that the city will use to inform future transit planning.

d. Mobility Challenges and Opportunity in Mesquite

Valerie Bradley, Managing Director of Community Services with the city of Mesquite, gave an overview of how the city is considering working with MOD providers. Currently, the city has partnerships with DART and STAR Transit to operate the Mesquite COMPASS and demand response service respectively. Ridership on the COMPASS has not met expectations over the last couple years. In 2017, the city worked with DART to develop a near-term and long-term public transit service plan for Mesquite. Part of the plan’s recommendations include utilizing MOD to:

- Relieve pressure form popular demand-response service
- Move residents within the city
- Contain operating costs
- Show “non-bureaucratic” thinking

Valerie identified some of the challenges for MOD in Mesquite including accommodating accessible ride requests and staffing.

e. DART MOD Sandbox Project Update

Ralph Zaragoza, Project Manager with DART, gave an update on DART’s MOD Sandbox Project. This project has three main components to its vision:

- Continuously improving the transportation experience
- Expanding the reach of public transportation

- Allowing access to all consumers

DART has completed three elements of the Sandbox project including journey planning, smart-switches to other apps (from DART GoPass to Uber), and payment API. Integrated trip planning allows riders to plan their trip and refine their search by mode. The updated GoPass app will allow riders to pay for fares with a credit card or with cash at a local convenience store. Once tickets are purchased and activated, they'll display the time remaining to use the pass.

DART's GoLink Pilot has expanded from the Legacy area in Plano to two other locations in Plano (Far North Plano, North Central Plano) and three in southern Dallas (Inland Port, Rylie, and Kleberg). This on-demand service uses the TapRide app for riders to schedule trips and request an accessible vehicle, if necessary. There is also a call-in option for riders that may not have access to smartphones. The call-in option is most popular in southern Dallas.

f. DCTA MOD Initiatives Update

Jonah Katz, Senior Planner with DCTA, gave a brief update on their MOD projects. DCTA staff recently submitted an application for the On Ramp proposal to develop a 3rd party payment system for public transit that would allow riders to travel anywhere and pay with any app. DCTA is considering using MOD to improve access to jobs from Denton neighborhoods. DCTA will be taking ideas for public comment soon. Collin County Transit Programs include the city of Frisco and the McKinney Urban Transit District (UTD). The use of autonomous vehicles are being considered as well as additional Lyft programs to extend service in Frisco. Lastly, DCTA staff is working with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute this summer to conduct an analysis on using MOD in suburban areas. This will be one of the first suburban shared mobility plans in the country.

g. Waze Carpool Program Introduction

Flavia Sasaki, Waze Carpool Business Manager for the Central Region, gave a brief overview of their new app. Waze Carpool connects drivers and riders that share a similar morning and evening commute. The app is optimized for people-first so riders can find the driver they're most comfortable with (e.g. a woman riding with another woman). Waze does not conduct background checks, rather they empower the rider to determine which driver will provide their requested ride. Waze Carpool wants to work with DFW employers to encourage ridesharing by tapping into existing platforms (like Facebook, blogs, Try Parking It, DART's vanpool, etc.). Waze Carpool has employer subsidies, incentives, and custom contests to help encourage employees to carpool.

h. Future Topics

The committee did not recommend topics for next quarter's meeting. The next meeting will focus on business/major employer's perspective, as planned.

2. Attendee List

City of Arlington: Alicia Winkelblech, Bob Johnson

City of Grand Prairie: Walter Shumac

City of McKinney: Anthony Cao

City of Mesquite: Valerie Bradley

Community Transit Services: Daniel Edwards, Sr.
Dallas Area Rapid Transit: Ralph Zaragoza
Denton County Transportation Authority: Jonah Katz, Lindsey Baker
Federal Transit Administration: Melissa Foreman
Irving Holdings: Jack Beverly
North Central Texas Council of Governments: Sarah Chadderdon, Jing Xu, Kelli Schlicher, Cody Nelson, Natalie Bettger, Tom Bamonte, Shannon Stevenson, Karina Maldonado, Travis Liska, Ying Cheng, Donald Parker, Caryn Sanders, Clint Hail
Span, Inc.: Deb Robertson
STAR Transit: Aaron Reese
Tarrant County: Russell Schaffner
Trinity Metro: Carla Forman, Phil Dupler
Uber Technologies: Leandre Johns
University of Texas at Arlington: Harya Dillon, David Weinrich
Waze Carpool: Flavia Sasaki