

COMMUTER CHOICE MANAGERS AND PARKING MANAGERS COORDINATION

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Shared use park and ride (P&R) represents a unique approach for addressing parking problems; it can offer substantial savings in land and developmental costs. One of the fundamental factors that determine the success of this approach is the level of coordination that exists between parking managers and transportation coordinators. The key issues arising from commuter choice managers and parking managers coordination include differing perceptions among transit agencies and P&R managers, and communication dilemmas. Commercial centers and other property managers harbor several negative perceptions about transit riders, so they have been unenthusiastic and unwilling to participate in shared use P&R. Similarly, communication has been nonexistent or limited between transit agencies and P&R managers. Despite the disinterest expressed by many property managers, some commercial centers and private properties agree to be used as P&R locations. Others are used without any consent from P&R managers. Unlike many P&R managers, transit agencies believe that there is potential for economic benefits to be derived by all involved parties when shared use P&R strategies are utilized.

OBJECTIVES

While there is need for survey research especially to include P&R user feedback, this research synthesis investigates the existence of coordination between property managers and transit agencies primarily through the review of existing literature. In addition, the study sought supplementary feedback from stakeholders through a survey questionnaire. The study documents current practices and anticipated developments in the level of coordination between P&R Managers and Commuter Choice Managers. It examines, reviews, and documents the factors that make the interaction between transit agencies and P&R managers successful. The research outlines the nature of the current relationship, and so provides valuable information to transportation officials, the engineering community, developers, shopping-center management, and government officials regarding effective practices in coordinating shared use P&R.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The literature search suggested three key themes regarding incentives:

- The majority of the concerns are related to the physical attributes of the transit vehicles and the damage that can be caused due to those attributes.
- Maintenance is one of the most important incentives to developers, and also one of the most frequently given incentives provided by transit agencies. Consequently, this should be a focus area in negotiations.

- There is need for education among the players in order to alleviate some of the misperceptions of transit services and patrons.

Feedback from transit agencies indicated the following:

- Property managers, developers, and owners are more inclined to agree to coordinate with transit agencies when they are assured of more potential customers
- There is not one single incentive that can be offered to private property developers, owners or managers (i.e., no incentive has universal value). However, the highest ranked incentives include liability insurance, installation of amenities and maintenances of bus stops on-site.
- Transit agencies may be reluctant to approach property managers due to fear that property managers will say no or renege on past agreements.

The core findings of the study revolve around conflicting perceptions of transit agencies and P&R managers. Most transit agencies perceive that businesses offering P&R opportunities gain economically from users who patronize those businesses. However, most property managers perceive that users of P&R facilities do not generally shop at their businesses and, indeed, take space that could be used by their customers, and, to some extent, may engage in criminal activity at their businesses. The study also revealed the poor communication that exists between transit agencies and P&R managers. In some cases, new management at shopping centers are not aware that their parking lot is a P&R facility, and some transit agencies feel uncomfortable highlighting such an arrangement, lest P&R managers realize the situation and opt to discontinue the arrangement.

Based upon this synthesis of conceptual information about coordination between commuter choice managers and P&R managers, researchers have drawn the following conclusions. First, the shared use P&R approach has been plagued with perceptions that, in some cases, have become accepted myths. Until private property owners and developers are presented with the facts and successful examples of collaboration, they may continue with these myths and operate at an economic disadvantage to their own goals. Secondly, responding to developers' and owners' self-interest is likely to be more effective appealing to a sense of civic responsibility. Thirdly, transit agencies need to address the concerns of the park and ride owners.

The report further suggests that the following steps be taken by transit agencies to ensure effective coordination with property managers, owners and developers:

- Transit agencies should contact the local government to explain the proposed coordination and to gain support
- Transit agencies should approach the property developer/manager/owner
- If the developer/manager/owner agrees, sign a legal enforceable agreement
- Transit agencies should meet with the developer/manager/owner to design the routes, location of stops, and possible passenger amenities

The report also recommends the following guidelines be considered when implementing shared use P&R:

- Each parking space should be usable by all parkers.
- The facility should be designed to accommodate significant inbound and outbound traffic flow at one or more periods of the day.
- Because of the variety in types of parkers, the facility must have effective signing, markings, and other communications tools.

BENEFITS

Shared use P&R engages P&R spaces for two or more individual land uses without conflict or encroachment. It is beneficial to the participants insofar as it provides parking for public transit agencies while simultaneously drawing potential clientele to private development facilities. The value of this research is that it confirms issues heretofore raised anecdotally. This project compiles the relevant issues and documents the more and less successful approaches.

This research project was conducted by Sara J. Hendricks at the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida. For more information on the project, contact Tara Bartee, Project Manager, at (850) 414-4520, tara.bartee@dot.state.fl.us.