



COMPASS
COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION
of Southwest Idaho



Facilitating Sharing of Community Vehicles

"Community vehicles," as the term is used here, refer to vans and similar vehicles that are owned/operated by a specific entity, such as a senior center, church, or daycare to transport that entity's clientele.

Community vehicles provide a transportation service for specific clientele that is more formal than a carpool, but more personal than a fixed route bus service. However, these vehicles have the potential to provide a much broader service and become an important part of a community's transportation system as a whole.

Sharing or expanding service may be a valuable opportunity for the owners of these vehicles, as well as the community at large. Three types of "sharing" are discussed below: expanding service beyond the target clientele, sharing costs and services (multiple agencies jointly own/use one vehicle), and sharing (leasing) the vehicle to a different group at times when the vehicle would normally stand idle. This page also contains tips for facilitating expanded community vehicle services in your community.

Expanding Service

Community vehicles often do not run at capacity. One way to improve the efficiency of those vehicles, and the transportation system as a whole, is to open those vehicles to individuals who are not target clientele. For example, if a senior center runs a van to a hospital or makes weekly trips into a larger town for its residents, but the van does not run full, the service could be expanded to offer rides to others. These "other" clients could be charged a nominal fee (even if the service is free for target clientele), which would help offset costs. This would provide a valuable service to area residents as well as provide income for the agency/business who owns and operates the vehicle. Ideas and resources to help market this expanded service are available on the "Promoting Community Vehicles" page. Additional information on options for rural communities can be found in *Transportation Management Organizations, Options for Rural Areas* at www.compassidaho.org/documents/prodserve/reports/RuralTMOReportJuly2010.pdf.

Sharing Costs/Services for Community Vehicles

In many instances, multiple organizations offer similar services for their clients. For example, several churches may each own a vehicle and pick up parishioners before morning services, or several senior centers in one town may each own their own van to transport their residents to shopping and medical services.

Each of these organizations could, rather than duplicating services, share their funding and consolidate the services. For example, the senior centers could jointly buy one van which would provide service to each of the centers. This can save a significant amount of money for each agency and makes efficient use of limited resources. Each organization would pay a share of ongoing costs (gas, maintenance, insurance, etc.) based upon its level of use.



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Sharing (Leasing) Community Vehicles

Many organizations that own and operate community vehicles only operate their vehicles during limited hours of the day or certain days of the week. These vehicles often sit idle part of the time and could be leased to other organizations.

Agencies interested in sharing resources should identify compatible uses for shared vehicles. For example, compatible uses may be a daycare van that operates on weekdays paired with a van that transports parishioners to church on weekends.

This vehicle resource sharing could create additional revenue for the vehicle owner to support more transportation services and alleviate the need for the renter to purchase its own vehicle. A formal lease/rental contract should be signed by both parties and clearly delineate issues such as who is responsible for providing a driver (the owner or the renter), who is allowed to drive (employees only or volunteers), specific qualifications/endorsements needed for the driver(s), and who pays for costs incurred (such as expanded insurance coverage and additional fuel and maintenance expenses), and how that payment will be assessed ([template lease agreement attached](#)).

Getting Started

Depending on your role in transportation services in your community, you will play a different role regarding community vehicles as well. If you own or operate a community vehicle, you may be looking for potential partners or looking to expand your client base. If you have clients who need transportation, you may be looking for a vehicle to share or lease or a partner who will share their services. Or, if you represent a city or county, you may be looking for ways to encourage or facilitate owners/operators of community vehicles to expand their services or clientele within your community.

Regardless of your role, the first step in facilitating or encouraging broader use of community vehicles is to develop an inventory of existing services and a general idea of whether the operators of those services are interested in expanding or sharing their service/vehicle. When developing an inventory of existing services, questions to ask of each provide include:

- Who owns the vehicles?
- Who drives the vehicles (volunteers? staff?)
- Where are the vehicles housed?
- When are they used? (e.g., church vans might only be used on weekends, while day care vans might only be used on weekdays)
- Who is the target clientele?
- Does the agency charge its clientele for rides?
- Do the vehicles typically run full?
- Do the vehicles only run within town, or do they take riders to other towns?
- Are vehicle owners and current passengers receptive to others riding in their vehicles, provided they participate in the regular service (e.g., the vehicle is not asked to make special trips or stops)?
- Are vehicle owners receptive to expanding their service (e.g., adding new trips or stops) to encourage or accommodate others?
- Are vehicle owners receptive to allowing others to use (and drive) their vehicles during times when the vehicles are typically not in use (e.g., weekdays for a church van)?
- Are vehicle owners receptive to sharing vehicles with other organizations (e.g., several senior centers jointly operate one van instead of each owning/operating its own)?

Answers to these questions will help you identify if the potential exists for expanding or sharing community vehicles in your area. The next step is to contact potential partners and work with them to develop a sharing or rental/lease agreement and/or to market expanded community vehicle service in your area. More information on marketing can be found on the "Promoting Use of Community Vehicles" page.

