

Just How Important are Service Design Models to ADA Paratransit? The Results of TCRP Synthesis 135



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TSS PARATRANSIT
transportation software solutions

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Why does it make sense to change a paratransit service model?

- To reduce costs while maintaining service quality and performance standards
- To achieve a better balance between service quality and cost efficiency
- To enhance control and flexibility

What Defines a Service Model?

❑ Management Structure

- Who provides 4 primary call center functions?
- In-house vs. use of contractors?
- What are the contracting relationships?
- Who provides supporting assets?

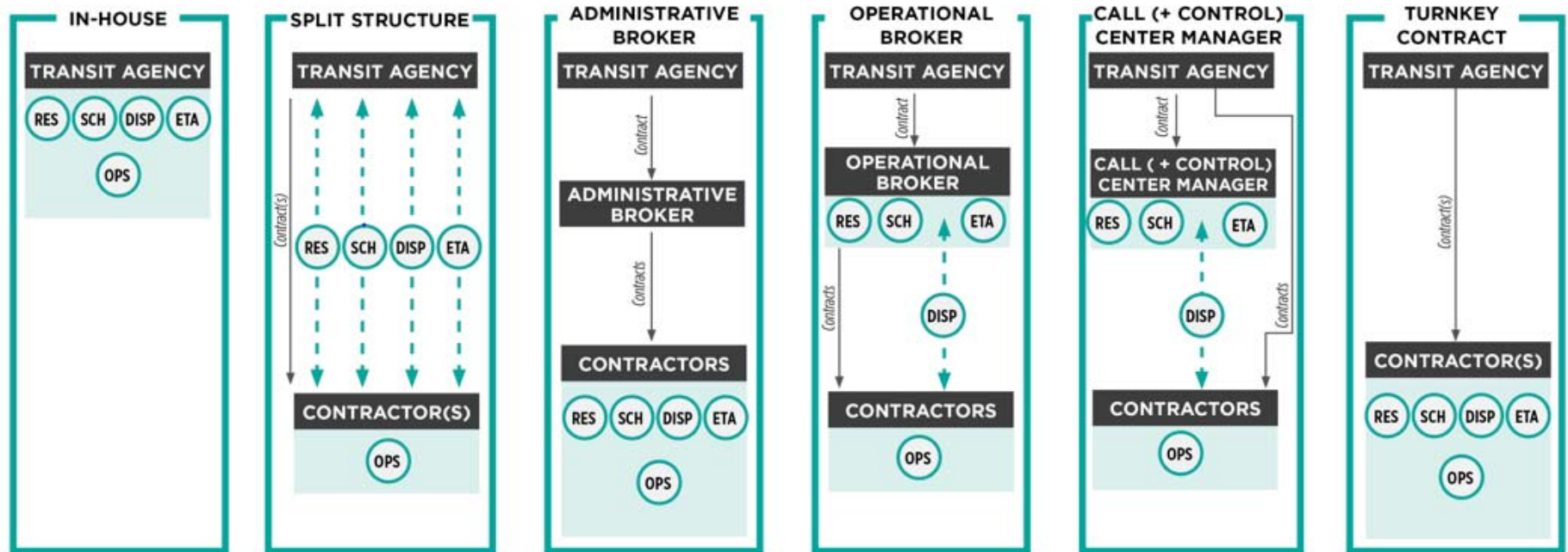
❑ Division of Work among Multiple Carriers

- How is the work organized? Zones or no zones?

❑ Service Mix

- Use of taxis / NDSPs and at what levels?

COMMON PARATRANSIT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

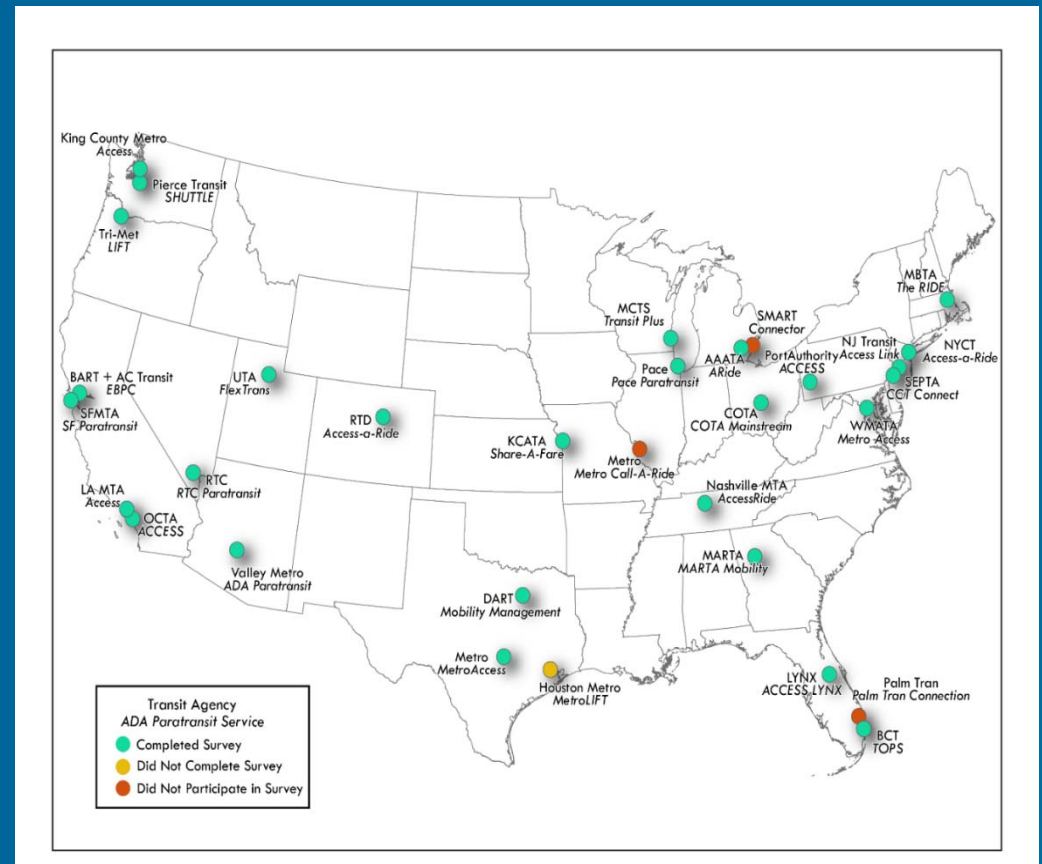


RES=Reservations | SCH=Scheduling | DISP=Dispatching | ETA=Handling ETA calls | OPS=Operations

TCRP J-07 SG-14: ADA Paratransit Service Models

Survey:

- ❑ 32 agencies invited
- ❑ Wide range of models
- ❑ Mostly larger agencies
- ❑ 29 participated
- ❑ 25 different models



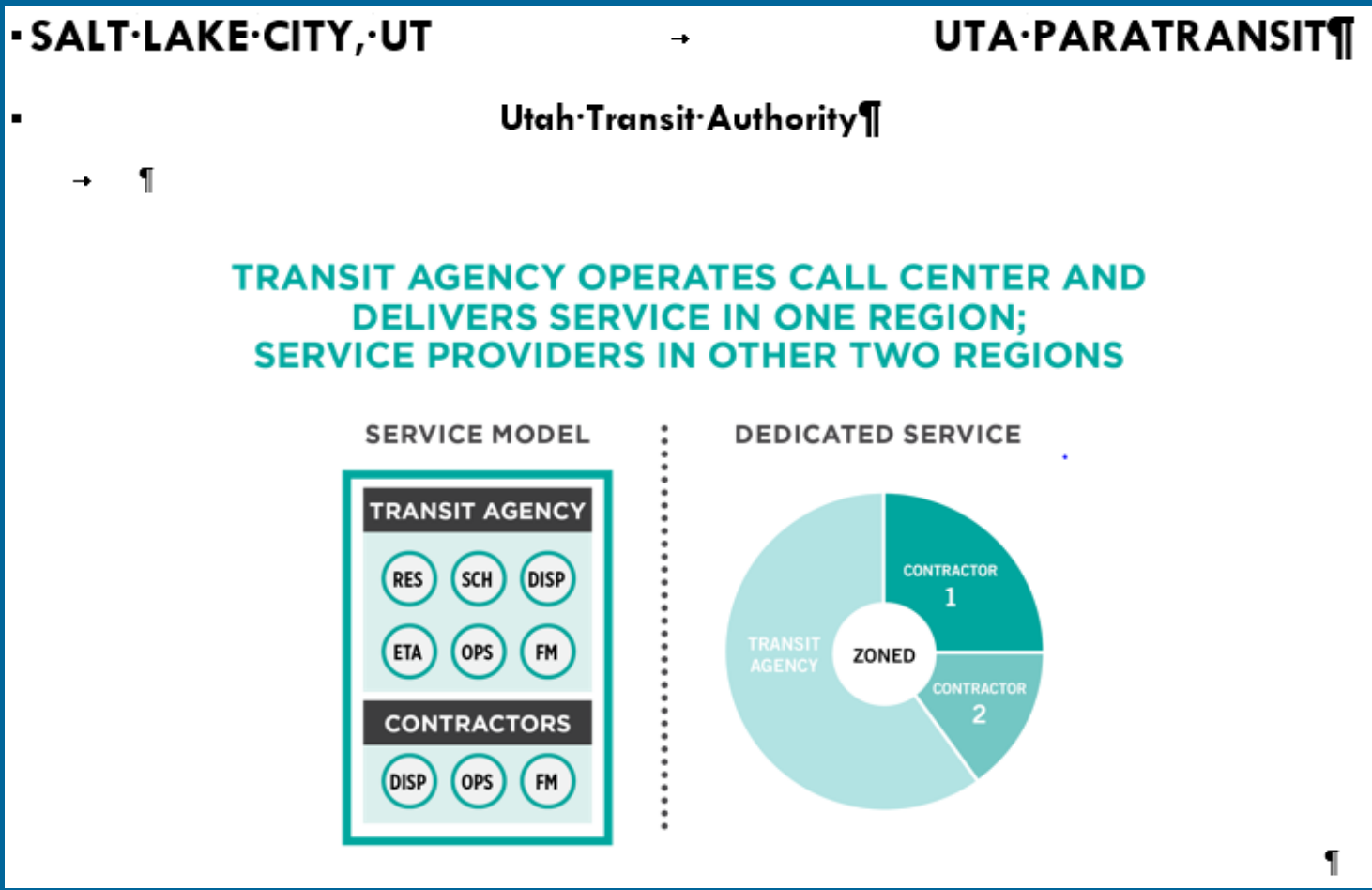
Groups and Types of Service Models

- ❑ **Group 1:** Transit agency performs one or more call center functions – 12 agencies / 12 different models
- ❑ **Group 2:** Call center manager or broker – 9 agencies / 8 different models
- ❑ **Group 3:** Dedicated service contractor(s) perform one or more call center functions – 18 agencies / 15 different models

Group 1: Transit Agency Performs One or More Call Center Functions

Model Number	Locations	Reservations	Scheduling	Dispatching	Handling Customers' ETA Calls	Operations (# of Dedicated Service Contractors)	Service Area Zones?	Integrated NDSPs (% of Total Trips)	Alternative Service Offered?	
1	Nashville	Agency						N/A	Yes (15%)	No
2	Pierce County	Agency		Agency	Agency	Agency & DS Contractor (1)	No	No	No	
3	Salt Lake City			Agency & DS Contractors		Agency & DS Contractors (2)	Yes(3)	No	No	
4	Austin	Agency				DS Contractors (2)	No	Yes (3%)	No	
5	Houston					DS Contractors (2)	No	Yes (11%)	Yes (Taxi)	
6	Philadelphia					DS Contractors (7)	Yes (5)	No	No	
7	Ann Arbor	Agency & DS Contractor		DS Contractor			No	No	No	
8	New Jersey	Agency	Agency & DS Contractors	DS Contractors	Agency	DS Contractors (6)	Yes (6)	No	No	
9	Atlanta		DS Contractor		DS Contractor	DS Contractor (1)	N/A	No	No	
10	Las Vegas				Agency & DS Contractor			No	Planned (TNC and Taxi)	
11	Kansas City	Agency & DS Contractor	Call Center Contractor			DS Contractors (2)	Yes (2)	Yes (17%)	Yes (Taxi)	
12	New York	Call Center Contractor	Agency	DS Contractors	Call Center Contractor	DS Contractors (13)	Yes (17)	Yes (30%) via 2 NDSP Brokers	Yes (TNC and Taxi)	

Group 1 Example: UTA Paratransit



Each of the 29 Service Model Profiles also include:

- Division of Responsibilities
- Base Statistics (FY 2016)
- Performance Standards
- Background
- How it works
- Contracting
- Results
- Lessons Learned

Key Findings for Agency-Led Functions

- ❑ Only 1 of the 29 provided all the call center functions and 100% of dedicated service in house
 - ❑ Of the other 11, half perform all and half perform some
 - 9 do not operate any service
 - 2 operate only a portion of the service
-

- ❑ Directly performing call center functions....
 - Provides more direct control over service quality and efficiency
 - Makes it easier to operationalize conditional eligibility
- ❑ Performing functions in house can be costly

Key Findings for Manager-Led Functions

- ❑ 8 retain a call center manager to perform all or some call center functions; only 1 retains a broker
 - ❑ Most perform all 4 call center functions
 - ❑ But splitting responsibilities among agency, call center manager/broker and contractors is becoming more common
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- ❑ Retaining call center managers /brokers...
 - Brings more objectivity to scheduling/dispatching
 - Is less costly than performing call center functions in-house
 - Is less costly than vesting these functions with multiple carriers
 - Adds a layer; effecting change can be cumbersome
 - Brokerages transfer risk away for the agency

CK1

Slide 11

CK1

Then why not more popular?

Christian Kent, 4/23/2018

Key Findings for Provider-Led Functions

- ❑ Half (9) use only one service provider contractor; of these, 7 are turn-key contractors, while 2 use taxi subcontractors
 - ❑ The other half (9) use multiple service providers; 5 zoned and 4 have service packages
-
- ❑ Retaining contractor(s) is generally less expensive because of lower wages and fringe
 - ❑ Retaining one turnkey service provider is generally less expensive because of economies of scale, but is risky
 - ❑ Retaining multiple service providers fosters more competition, and makes it easier to adjust service, but can be duplicative and can result in inconsistent service quality

Use of Taxis/NDSPs for ADA Paratransit

- ❑ 9 of 29 respondents use taxis; 1 (NYC) of 29 uses livery carriers
 - ❑ Of the 9, all but one can access accessible taxicabs
 - ❑ In 5 of the 9, taxi subcontractors are used
 - ❑ In 4 of the 9, taxis are accessed by direct contracts
 - ❑ Most of the 9 use taxis/NDSPs to serve 5% to 15% of the trips
 - ❑ NYC (30%), LA (50%), Dallas (70%), Suburban Phoenix (<100%)
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- ❑ Using taxis/NDSPs reduces overall unit costs
 - ❑ There is a difference in service quality

Slide 13

CK2

Why are 20 of them NOT using taxis? Quality? Non-dedicated service providers not parsed out or commented on.

Christian Kent, 4/23/2018

Zoned and Unzoned Service Providers

- ❑ 18 of the 29 respondents use multiple dedicated providers
- ❑ All but one use between 2 and 6 dedicated providers
- ❑ 13 of the 18 assign service providers to zones
- ❑ 5 of the 18 use service packages
- ❑ **Key statements:**
 - Using zones in a large area can make the service more manageable
 - Using zones can enhance competition at procurement time
 - Using zones can improve productivity if they reflect trip patterns
 - Using zones can deflate productivity if lots of deadheading
 - Unzoned service packages provide more flexibility, continually foster competition; easier to control service quality

Additional Findings in Synthesis 135

- Use of Taxis/TNCs for alternative services
- Contracting for dedicated service providers
- Service delivery via multiple providers
- Lack of correlation between models and organizational status of transit agency
- New paratransit glossary of terms!!!

Need for More Research

- Use of “alternative” services – new trips or replacement trips?
- Does use of alternative services really reduce overall unit costs?

TCRP

SYNTHESIS 135

ADA Paratransit Service Models



A Synthesis of Transit Practice

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Thank you!
And let us know how we can be of help!

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