

Mobility Management Matters Twitter Chat January 19, 2022

Summary

National RTAP held a [#MobilityManagementMatters](#) Twitter Chat on January 19, 2022, which was moderated by Danny Schnathorst, Mobility Outreach Coordinator, HIRTA Public Transit and Cara Marcus, Resource Center Manager, National RTAP. The chat focused on engaging your communities, what mobility management looks like post-COVID, and more.

There were over 4,794 impressions just from National RTAP and HIRTA tweets. Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Community Action Agency of Columbiana County, Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), Flint Hills Region, Fort Bend Transit, HIRTA Public Transit, Lexpress, Massachusetts Office on Disability, MassMobility, Mattapan Food and Fitness, National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC), National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM), Panhandle Trails, Ross County Health District, Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation, Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance (SEEA), Texas Transportation Research, and University of Florida were among the many organizations and individuals who participated in the chat.

Of course, mobility managers and their advocates are creative folks, and the chat included many fun moments. Justin Brightharp of the Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance (SEEA) exclaimed that he was “excited to be joining another famous National RTAP twitter chat!” and Matt Crespi of the Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation pointed out that the #MobilityManagementMatters hashtag that works as a noun as well as a sentence.

Visit the [chat transcript](#) for questions asked during the chat and attendees’ replies.

Question 1: What does Mobility Management mean to you?

Answers:

- Mobility management means something to every person and every agency – and that’s the beauty of it! To Danny, mobility management means creating an inclusive experience for their riders and communities.

- From National RTAP Executive Director Robin Phillips - Mobility management happens at multiple levels: In your agency, at the state level and in your travel shed.
- National RTAP likes NCMM's overarching [definition](#), "Mobility management is an approach to designing and delivering transportation services that starts and ends with the customer."
- From NADTC - Understanding and addressing the unique transportation needs of older adults, people with disabilities, veterans, transitioning youth, low-income individuals, and other vulnerable populations.
- Mobility management is a strategy to help older adults, people with disabilities, and anyone else navigate available transportation options to find a ride that works well for them, according to MassMobility.
- In Columbiana County, mobility management means being an advocate for the public they serve and to find and resolve transportation barriers that affect so many.
- Mobility Manager = Barrier Reduction Specialist (while this was a funny answer – it makes sense!)

Question 2: What are some of your responsibilities as a Mobility Manager? And what's your favorite part of the job?

Answers:

- Robin explained, "Mobility managers imagine mobility and see opportunities for building access. Translating need into numbers and pictures to help people see both need and opportunity. Helping people apply for grants, making supply and demand partners visible to each other and to potential riders."
- To Matt, Mobility Management is fundamentally about enabling connections and opportunity. They connect geography, people, infrastructure, and resources, juggling constraints of people, technology, geography, and budgets.
- The favorite part of the Flint Hill Region's Mobility Manager's job is helping people and every day brings something different.
- Danny handles all things media, website, marketing, and outreach. He frequently spends the day riding HIRTA talking to our riders to gain feedback, give away items, and connecting with the community. "We're in the people business so get out with the public!" he shared.
- Becky Kleinknecht, the Columbiana County Mobility Manager, feels that it's about building positive relationships with stakeholders and the riding public. Advocating to local community leaders about the importance of public transportation as well as making myself and my office known in the community. Favorite - problem solving!
- "Learning about transportation options, sharing information about transportation options and building coalitions to increase mobility," answered MassMobility.
- The National RTAP [Transit Manager's Toolkit](#) includes examples of this important role: Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG) and Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit, Inc. (Ithaca, NY) mobility managers can wear: Coach, Mentor, Champion, Technical Advisor, Planner, Facilitator & more.
- Mobility Managers are true leaders in problem solving for their communities.

Question 3: How do you gather rider feedback?

Answers:

- One agency that worked with National RTAP did a survey at a fair and asked kids. You don't need to drive to know where you get your groceries. And kids love giveaways.
- TRB had an equity in transit data session. One outcome with an interest by a professor to help National RTAP build a rider survey template.
- Surveys are a great way to gather feedback! Anytime we can use data to inform services - the better! NCMM has developed various helpful [survey tools](#). NADTC conducted a [survey](#) of older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers to assess their transportation behaviors, needs, and preferences.
- HIRTA collects rider feedback through surveys, social media, riding the bus, their website, and just by listening to what they have to say. There is a page on their website dedicated to compliments and complaints plus a section to Thank a HIRTA Hero.
- Encourage organizations to engage riders in planning, implementing, and decision-making through Inclusive Transportation Planning. [Transit Planning 4 All](#) is a great resource.
- National RTAP recently added a new section to their Transit Manager's Toolkit on [Communicating with the Public](#) that includes outreach and public and stakeholder meetings.
- At the Monroe County Fair, Buckeye Hills Regional Council community members were invited to stop by an [info table](#) to say hello to the Monroe County Mobility Manager and take the mobility survey.
- Matt is a big fan of an "all of the above" strategy. Interviews and social listening give you depth and help you figure out what kinds of things to ask about in more representative focus groups and surveys. Also important: getting some feedback from NON-riders. Cara answered, "That's the way to turn non-riders into riders!"
- That's easy, RIDE THE BUS and ask them. Ask your riders where they want to go. Video testimonials are the best!

Question 4: How do you ensure Mobility Management is sustainable for your transit system?

Answers:

- It is important to build dimensions that influence sustainability into the design of the service or mobility management network. NCMM is adapting the FHWA Capability Maturity Framework to measure sustainability.
- HIRTA feels that the best advice is to have a dedicated Mobility Manager if you can. It's easy for projects to fall through the cracks so having someone stay on top of things is very helpful. Also seeking grants to fund Mobility Management projects is important!
- Kansas Mobility Managers work hard every day to prove that Mobility Management Matters and the program is worth every penny. Be seen, make a difference, create change.
- The Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation feels that the best way to ensure sustainability is realizing that no static plan is actually sustainable. Organizationally and operationally,

continued success will depend on understanding the evolving needs of people and evolving constraints (2020-2021 was a great example).

- MassMobility feels that you should share the tools and resources widely with aging and disability services agencies so they can also help riders connect to mobility options.
- Read AARP's [Why Mobility Managers Can Be Transportation Game Changers](#) for an inspiring view from the field from a mobility manager who has made it his life's work.

Question 5: Advocating for public transit is important for Mobility Management. How are you making sure transit has a seat at the table?

Answers:

- As a newbie mobility management, Becky is currently working on building relationships with social services agencies. They are one of the greatest tools, outside of the riding public, to learn barriers and have legitimate documentation to take to the table!
- The Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation tries to [send transit to the table](#) with better info that planners can use to identify and address problems. It's hard to hit targets you can't see, and we're having success by making targets more visible.
- To make certain transit is at the "table," the Flint Hills Region needs to be heavily involved with everything in our communities from social services to the chamber of commerce.
- Danny explained that knowing the difference between advocating, lobbying, and educating is very important. If you aren't sure which you can and cannot do, ask! Work with facilities, coalitions, groups, etc., to make sure transportation is a forethought.
- Building relationships and coalitions among aging and disability services agencies, transportation providers, planners and other stakeholders helps facilitate collaboration and coordination was MassMobility's answer.
- Taking opportunities to speak at various community events about the services public transit offers. Learn more great [advocacy tips](#) from NCMM. National RTAP has an [Advocating for Your Transit System](#) tech brief that they updated with NCMM that can also help.

Question 6: What is one piece of advice for someone new to Mobility Management?

Answers:

- To quote the 1986 Legend of Zelda, Matt said, "It is dangerous to go alone." Mobility policy is so much more than transportation, he continued. It's health, environment, economic development, and more. The best outcomes are achieved through coordination and collaboration.
- From MassMobility - *Welcome!* It's a friendly field. Listen closely and ask questions. Ride the services you're connecting people to.
- Flint Hills Mobility Manager Michael Wilson of said, "The Best Advice I've ever gotten was to 'be seen'." To which Cara answered, "And Twitter Chats are a great way to be seen."
- NADTC offered the following advice: Get to know your local transportation programs in your area, other mobility managers, and connect with information and referral (I&R) services.

- Danny advised, “Learn as much as you can. Take all of the trainings. Learn all of the acronyms (there’s a lot!) Listen to all of the advice. And most importantly, lean on your colleagues. We’re all working towards a common goal so work together!”
- A researcher added – Cities are a result of choices. Make right choices.
- Whether you're a newbie or a seasoned mobility manager, relationships with community organizations are key to successful mobility and transportation coordination efforts.
- Missouri Rural Health Association offers a [Mobility Management Certification Program](#) to educate trainees beyond the basics of rural transportation efforts.
- The Ohio Mobility Managers of the Ohio DOT began a new series [highlighting Ohio Mobility Managers](#) who have been new to their positions within the last 18 months.
- And if you're looking for excellent resources about transportation coordination, look no further than the [Transportation Technical Assistance Coordination Library \(TACL\)](#)

Question 7: Are you a part of any Mobility Management groups or networks?

Answers:

- AASHTO MTAP and the FTA TA Center group are always looking for new ways to bring partners to the table. Robin participates to learn what is going on and to cheer for it.
- Webinars from national organizations like NCMM, NADTC, CTAA, National RTAP, etc., are great opportunities to learn, ask questions, and even network.
- MassMobility facilitates peer networks for Volunteer Driver Programs & Travel Trainers across Massachusetts - practitioners have a lot of expertise to share with each other!
- National RTAP offers a secure [Rural Transit Manager’s Forum](#) where mobility managers (and other managers) can ask questions and share best practices with their peers.
- NCMM has groups and provides a ton of great information. States have Mobility Manager groups, too. “Take advantage of these groups to learn from each other,” advised Danny.

Question 8: What are some of the tools you use to engage your communities?

Answers:

- Social media is an effective tool for spreading the word about the great work mobility managers do and an amazing tool to reach the public and inform them of what mobility management is all about. The Community Action Agency of Columbiana County Mobility Manager is currently working on building their social media presence. They have an amazing graphic and slogan – [Yes You Can!](#) They also show how a [picture’s worth a thousand words](#).
- Your partners can be your strongest allies. Ross County Health District gave a [shout out](#) to their local Mobility Manager who works to get community members where they need to go.
- Tourism, Bike and pedestrian advocacy, the public health department in your area, grocery stores, health clinics, and workforce development. Sometimes it is the intercity bus or the senior center. You don't know who will step up. Bring your partners to the table to support mobility outreach and access to the whole community. Also leverage conference calls, visits, and 1:1 discussion about needs and ideas, shared Robin.

- MassMobility uses [Transportation-Talks](#) from Mattapan Food and Fitness – a great example of transportation community engagement. Read more about the T-Talks in their [June 2021 newsletter](#).
- National RTAP is holding a [Marketing Workshop series](#) that can help social media newbies (and even experts). Check out our webinars page for the latest recordings and upcoming offerings.

Question 9: What does mobility management look like post-COVID?

Answers:

- Danny said, “I think we’re still figuring that out. Having the capability to do certain things virtually is a great option. We are so happy and grateful for our communities for their understanding, patience, and cooperation throughout the pandemic.”
- Matt explained how COVID is a mass-disabling event with a variety of severities and symptoms. Accessibility needs will skyrocket. We don't yet know what percentage of Long COVID cases are months or years or permanent. The sooner we start planning for this the better.
- Post-COVID mobility management has enlightened NCMM about [incidental use](#). Transit agencies have really stepped up to deliver meals, support essential workers etc. These practices are continuing!
- Find resources that need on the National RTAP [COVID-19 information page](#). And if you are taking a leadership role in incidental use, [let us know](#).
- Listening to riders' safety concerns and helping them navigate their options to find a solution that works well for them, shared Mass Mobility. Transportation is one strategy, but the real goal is access: Is telehealth an option? Delivery? Transportation may not be the only answer.
- TRBs [TRANSED Conference](#) in September 2022 in Seattle, Washington may be a great place to find out.
- We're all working together and in this together.

Question 10: It’s your turn! Now is your chance to show off some of the work you and your transit agency has done in the past year to advance mobility management!

Answers:

- The Snoqualmie Valley Mobility Coalition [launched a Coordinated Awareness Campaign](#) to help those without a car or those looking to drive less, connecting them to the various options for transportation.
- [MassMobility](#) shares information about community transportation and tools for mobility management in Massachusetts. MassMobility also [partners](#) with Mass DOT to promote best practices for 5310 grantee projects in Massachusetts.
- The Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation shared a super sophisticated [sample design schematic](#) they built (digitally rendered using Microsoft Paint) at highlighting how to arrange public infrastructure (in this case, community colleges) to maximize accessibility.
- HIRTA invited participants to check out some of the great work they've been busy with recently! [Travel training](#), [Beyond the Bus](#), [Volunteers](#), and [Do you Have Transportation](#).

- Wave Transit made some great new friends during their [travel training trips](#).
- A visitor to our chat from Germany shared a brand-new video with members of the chat: [Energiewende – einfach machen?](#) Which translates to: Energy transition – just do it!