Time has proven that we made the best choice for our particular needs. RouteMatch has definitely increased the efficiency of our service.

Kim Thomas, Driver Supervisor, Washington County Transit

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**Washington County Transit**

**Headquarters:**
Hagerstown, Maryland

**Solutions:**
RouteMatch Paratransit

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**Challenges:**

- Sought to move to an automated system to accommodate their increase in ridership
- Sought ability to decrease level of denials and more effectively handle rider requests, standing trip orders and fill-in the gaps in schedules
- Needed greater insight into driver downtime and overall driver and vehicle data

**Solution:**

- Procurement of RouteMatch Software’s Paratransit Software

**Results:**

- 39% increase in ridership
- Almost 100% reduction in denials and 100% reduction in driver complaints
- Performs up to 75-90 trips a day; up from average of 59 per day

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**Washington County Transit – County Commuter Increases Ridership and Reduces Denials with RouteMatch Automated Scheduling and Reporting**

Washington County Transit Department – County Commuter, based in Hagerstown, Maryland, is a public demand-response transportation agency operating both paratransit services, as well as eight urban fixed routes. Since using RouteMatch’s computerized dispatch and scheduling system, Washington County Transit has increased ridership by 39% and has significantly reduced denials – from 100-125 per month, down to 20 a month. Furthermore, the agency has been able to essentially double their number of trips, using more or less the same size staff and existing resources as before.

**Tackling Denials and Driver Downtime to Support a Growing Ridership**

Washington County Transit provides transportation for the elderly and persons with disabilities through a contracted ride assist voucher program, which is funded by the Statewide Special Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP). ADA Complementary Paratransit Service for individuals with disabilities who cannot access fixed-route service, along with a Job Access program operated in cooperation with the Washington County Department of Social Services, are also provided by the transit system. Overall, the agency serves approximately 420,000 riders annually. A few years ago, Washington County Transit realized it was unable to keep up with its increase in passengers and this was resulting in a rising number of denials and overall inefficiencies. The agency decided to begin the search for a software vendor that could help them move away from their manual system, close operational gaps caused by driver downtime, and deliver better service to their riders.

Washington County Transit’s manual scheduling and dispatching process, overseen by a staff of three, involved computers, phones and two-way radios, with requests for service taken by phone at least 24 hours ahead of pick-up.
The scheduler would then organize each ride by day, locations and time and manually prepare the manifest and assign trips to maximize available drivers.

“We decided to really begin our search for software when we realized our gaps in between trips were growing. We operate a jobs and daycare program, along with a paratransit service, which has rider needs all day long,” explains Kim Thomas, Washington County Transit’s Driver Supervisor. “We were trying to manage more rider requests and having to issue more denials.”

The agency went to obtain funding for new intelligent transportation systems (ITS) software, and also consulted with other agencies. Ultimately, Washington County Transit chose RouteMatch. “Time has proven that we made the best choice for our particular needs,” says Kim. “RouteMatch has definitely increased the efficiency of our service.”

Closing Gaps and Optimizing Schedules & Reporting to Top Agency’s Prior Performance

Since the agency implemented RouteMatch’s automated scheduling, dispatching and reporting software, they have performed between 75 to 90 trips a day – up from an average of 59 trips a day. Most exciting to the agency, is that they are now able to accommodate last minute requests and “fill in the gaps” of service. “We are able to tweak schedules to fit in last minute trips. RouteMatch has found open slots in the scheduling manifest that we never knew existed,” says Kim. “I always say, ‘If RouteMatch can’t find a slot, then it doesn’t exist!’”.

Improved scheduling features include use of the “standing order” functionality. Previously, Washington County Transit utilized master schedules for advanced bookings. Now, schedulers can automatically plug-in dates assigned to customers, thereby eliminating the weekly call-in requests from riders. The schedulers also make heavy use of RouteMatch’s “favorite trips” feature, which saves frequently used trips and makes for overall easier and speedier scheduling.

Another key area where the agency was able to eliminate inefficiencies was driver downtime. With RouteMatch’s geocoding reporting function in place, the agency is able to gain more insight into drivers and vehicles. For example, Washington County Transit can now capture driver details including insight into breaks, mileage, pick-ups, and drop-offs, and whether or not the driver is on time, late or early. Previously, the agency was unable to track driver downtime, and relied on the driver logbook, odometer tracking and readings for the other data. With this new insight, the agency now has assigned specific driver layover locations, and in effect, this has reduced mileage and fuel usage of their vehicles.

Perhaps most important and satisfying for Washington County Transit’s customers, is the ability to have their rider requests met.

“Prior to RouteMatch, by far the biggest complaint we had was about denials. People were – understandably – frustrated that they couldn’t get their rides,” Kim explains. “We have since had an almost 100% reduction in complaints about denials.”

Ongoing Training and Learning Opportunities Benefit Agency Staff

Washington County Transit’s measurable improvements in service and ridership were apparent after the first six months of using RouteMatch. The agency’s adept use of new technologies came about after dedicated investment by their staff and their willingness to embrace training and ongoing education from RouteMatch. “The webinars and training sessions are wonderful and we really try to take advantage of those,” says Kim. “Just when you think you’ve learned all you could about RouteMatch, you end up finding something new.”