

Improving Transit in Wichita: Marrying the Old and the New

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PURPOSE

The transportation system in Wichita has served a diverse customer base over the years with its traditional system of large buses on fixed routes and smaller buses for specialized transportation (such as for the physically challenged, or elderly). Shrinking state revenues, increases in population and a more diverse set of needs necessitated a push to find creative solutions to transit service delivery. Advances in technology have brought about variety and technology-enabled services which has increased choice in urban transit. Ride-sharing firms like Uber and Lyft employ a business model that combines personal services with technology. This business model fits the competitive opportunities of today's market place and dovetails seamlessly with the larger dynamics shaping tomorrow's market place. In my research, I examine the informal transportation system with its rich mix of services, the use of technology based transportation in the United States and the transportation sector in Wichita, Kansas.

METHODS

In my research, a combination of the case study method, participant observation and empirical data is used.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Findings from my studies show that people want more options in the transit system; more frequent service, longer hours of operations, fewer transfers, shorter travel time, comfort and affordability. These results will inform decision makers as they seek solutions to improve transit in the Wichita Area.