

Review Of Neighborhood Ride Service By Taxicab (NRS) Pilot Program

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Why did we select this article?

This article provides a review of a neighborhood ride service implemented by the city of Washington in the summer of 2016. The service was considered to be successful by users, and opportunities for improvement were identified.

Key findings

Taxicab van services differ from traditional taxicabs in that they carry multiple passengers at separate fares, and may be tailored to demand. Such a service may be called “micro-transit” in that it effectively provides an intermediate service between traditional taxicabs and small bus services and has similarities to both. This report assesses the effectiveness of a range of shuttle routes and service patterns⁵, concluding that city-center taxicab shuttles operating to and from Union Station are likely to operate commercially without significant subvention in the long run.

There are also social benefits that accrue from the shuttle service, as each provide an increase in the level of mobility and access of their users – above the commercial benefit realized by the operator. This report concludes that NRS routes less likely to achieve break-even are those which appear complex and convoluted, and those which operate circuits or serve differing roads on the outward trip compared to the return trip. Further, routes shorter than three miles in each direction appear more likely to break even, with short city-center routes able to break even the quickest.

In light of the review in this report, it has been concluded that the following factors should be considered in developing future taxicab shuttle routes:

- Routes should generally be limited in length to three miles in each direction;
- Wherever possible, shuttles should avoid circuitous routes and those that serve different streets in each direction;
- Some flexibility of fare should be reserved to operators, to allow for higher fares where necessary to support the viability of the service;
- Stops and termini should be recognizable and include street furniture (signs and poles);
- Each stop or terminus should provide customers with sufficient information on how to use the service


