



## How Demand Response Software Improved Vehicle Utilization Ratio



**WHITEHORSE TRANSIT:**  
City-based demand response system



**CHALLENGE:**

- Inefficient routing
- Too much for a dispatcher to handle



**SOLUTION:**

- Automated scheduling software
- Performance & overview reports



**RESULT:**  
Increased efficiency in client and time management

### About Whitehorse Transit (WT)

The history of Whitehorse, Yukon is a history of transit itself. From its very beginnings, Whitehorse was a thoroughfare for fishermen, portage trail travelers, gold and copper prospectors and even an outlaw or two. In recent years, the public transportation system has grown to accommodate the 26,000+ population of the Yukon Territory's largest city. The Handy-Bus system is the department's demand response service provider. It is jointly funded by the City and the Government of the Yukon Territory.

They are proud to offer the Handy-Bus as a safe and secure form of transportation to person who, for a variety of reasons, have difficulty using the regular transit service. If you've ever experienced a winter up north, you may understand the challenges that riders can face. In general, WT operates only a single vehicle, which provides around 25-35 per day. But despite the size of their operation, their customers greatly depend upon them. And of course, WT is dedicated to the people they serve, which is why improving service was so important.

### The Problem/Challenge

The City of Whitehorse actually already used software to manage and schedule. The problem was, however, that because the software was developed in-house, it simply didn't have the power nor provide a full range of features. What developed was a schedule where buses were under-used and the whole system was suffering under the weight of inefficiency. For example, operating hours were divided into blocks of 15 minutes, which were then assigned to individual clients. Drivers then received a printout of their daily manifest (hard copy) containing pickup times and client's names and addresses. This daisy-chain method for enabling trips meant that drivers found themselves oftentimes transporting only a single rider: an inefficient method. As well, Handy-Bus employees had to count ridership and other performance indicator by hand and then manually input those numbers into spreadsheets: another inefficient method.

Their software simply couldn't provide the ability to schedule multiple pickups. And as a result, clients felt that the service was unreliable and slow. Dealing

## Small Agency Demand Response Software Whitehorse Transit

with these many complaints became a job unto itself. Dispatchers and other Management staff spent a great deal of time and resources managing customer service.

### Demand Response Software Solution

Enter more powerful software. Flexibility was the major issue that WT faced. The harsh environment and last-second issues that can pop up needed to be addressed by dispatchers quickly and efficiently. With TripSpark's powerful demand response software engine, multiple pickups and optimal routing became manageable and easy to do. In-the-moment changes to the schedule were far easier to achieve. And with very little set-up and training, their dispatchers and schedulers were able to get the system up and running – and optimizing in no time. From call taking to dispatching, TripSpark's browser-based solution turned out to be the exact remedy for WT's ills.

***“TripSpark has established smoother processes”***

In addition to scheduling better routes, the reporting feature of demand response software make it easier for Transit Managers to produce and monitor performance and overview reports. This has a direct impact on the service they offer and the manner in which they deal with customer complaints. As well, automated ridership data collection means that managers and dispatchers are able see the quality of service they are delivering, in real time.

### Results

The most observable result of the implementation of a demand response software solution has been an overall increase in service. Because dispatching demand response trips is entirely automated now, routes are perfectly designed around the timely needs of their riders. In other words: no more single-rider bus trips. This has also placed a lot less stress on drivers, who are no longer tasked with the job of selecting the most direct driving routes. The software does that for them.

***“Efficiencies provided by the system have greatly improved our time management”***

If a weather problem develops (like those that can develop on a typical mid-winter afternoon) dispatchers can change routes on the fly, all with an eye towards maintaining a dedication to on-time service. Because schedule creation and aspects of dispatching are automated, more time can be dedicated to addressing customers' complaints. The reporting capabilities have enabled Transit Managers to better track the status and history of each complaint until they are resolved.

***“[We] save approximately one hour of scheduling and report time each day”***



***TripSpark's Demand Response Software solution helped to increase the efficiency of their vehicles on the road. In the end, customers are happier, which in turn, makes Whitehorse Transit happier.***

### MOVING >> << TOGETHER

TripSpark Technologies is a community transportation technology company focused on helping mid-sized transit agencies and private operators increase rider satisfaction, drive revenue, and address specific operational needs. TripSpark makes this possible by nurturing strong partnerships with our customers, offering the latest technologies and providing exceptional support.

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