

GRTA Vanpool Public Meeting
10 June 2009

Participant Comments:

1. Susan Sisk, Van #25, from Atlanta to Conyers

The move to private sector vanpool program will have severe financial consequences to the riders. Majority of the riders did not choose to work for the Department of Driver Services in Conyers, but were told that if they wanted to keep their jobs they would have to ride the van. These are low-pay employees who have not had a pay raise in two years. Monthly cost will increase \$72-110. Some riders do not own a car.

2. Cheryl Boyd, Van #193

Gave history of vans, drivers, fuel and federal funding. Never got anything new on this van; money was not spent on vans. State employee vans were created to (be an alternative to) the private sector. State employees are facing higher insurance premiums, furloughs and have low morale. This is a life-changing experience, forcing some into early retirement. GRTA used profits from vanpool program to finance Xpress buses.

3. Jonathan Smith, Driver for Van # 13, Griffin

Cost will increase \$72-107/month. Delta workers have received 22-25% pay cuts. Need more vanpools; not fewer. There are 10 riders on this van, riding from Griffin, Ga to Delta Center. Are willing to pay a little more to keep GRTA van going. For profit van pool creates a financial strain on riders.

4. Charles Denny, Driver for Van #194, to World Congress Center from Harralson County

Has 12-14 riders paying for fuel and upkeep. Takes pride in van. Used the van for 24 years. Looks good for the state to see vanpools at the World Congress Center. Need to "go green." Can accept increase in expense.

5. Mary Ackerman, Van #36

When the program goes away, we will pay more and more people will drive to work. Many are on single-family income. It was simpler when GBA had it. Will gladly pay more. Need parking space.

6. Jim Stevenson, Driver for Van #2, Gwinnett County

I take pride in what I drive. I understand privatization and I understand costs. GRTA stands for "regional transportation authority" and I understand you are backing out. The \$600/month GRTA subsidy. If you get out of the vanpool program, we understand. Don't stop the subsidy.

7. Billy Rogers, Driver for Van #184, Cobb County

Driver for 6 years. Have passengers who cannot take Xpress because of the routing. Xpress does not help those who work at the World Congress Center. VPSI and Enterprise are not cost effective for any of our riders. Private companies subsidize their riders; the state doesn't. Beats me how Douglas County can run a program with 64 vans, but the big state of Georgia doesn't. GRTA vanpool picks up at door.

8. Dennis Cheek, Van #33, Villa Rica

We are in an awful time right now. People living in cars. This is a time we all need to come together. You all have a program here that needs to be admired. GRTA vans – we need them bad. Stopping services is a step in the wrong direction. We all have to move forward. If we drop a good program, we move backwards.

9. Theresa Jenkins, #77, Coweta County

Works for Georgia Dept. of Agriculture. It is hard to realize that van is not already paid for. We have been told we have to find other parking and come up with the gas money. You set that price. You told us what to pay. Why should we give money to a corporation headquartered outside the state? Does not understand why vans are not making money.

10. Treasury Young, Griffin Vanpool driver

Been a rider for 13 years, has driven for 12. Layoffs in Griffin. Came to work in Atlanta with the understanding that the vans are there. This will mean more cars on the road. With Xpress, it's 30 miles to work and 30 miles to catch the bus. The times do not work for me. When the vanpools were at GBA, we were told they were self-supporting. We turned over a \$2 million fund balance. We believe the vanpool program is sustainable, if you raise our rates. You can purchase 22 vans for the price of one bus.

11. Linda Whitlow, Van #188, Lithia Springs

20 years in this vanpool. Asked for a hybrid: have VPSI and Enterprise provide you with leased vans to use in the program and not have to purchase.

12. Herschel Army, Van # 30, Villa Rica

None of us likes change, but change takes place. Has ridden for 20+ years. Can privatized vanpools be subsidized? We are all hurting...we need to look at the human factor. Thinks change will be good if it doesn't create a financial burden.