

# *West Ouachita Public Transit*

Public Transit Marketing Plan

June 20, 2023

# Table of Contents

Summary .....	Page 3
Mission Statement .....	Page 3
Purpose of Marketing Plan .....	Page 4
Marketing Objectives .....	Page 4
Strategies to Achieve Objective.....	Page 5
Marketing Budget .....	Page 5
Plan Schedule.....	Page 6-7
Staffing and Marketing.....	Page 8
Branding.....	Page 8
Venues for Marketing .....	Page 8
Print Media.....	Page 9
Brochures.....	Page 9
Rumortis.....	Page 9
Newspaper.....	Page 9
Ouachita Citizen .....	Page 9
Flyers .....	Page 9
Stationary .....	Page 9
Advertising .....	Page 9
Internet.....	Page 10
Good Morning Ark-La Miss.....	Page 10
Internet.....	Page 10
Detailed Website.....	Page 10
Facebook .....	Page 10
Signage.....	Page 10
Signage.....	Page 11
On-site.....	Page 11
Directional Signs.....	Page 11
Name Tags.....	Page 11
Extra Advertisement .....	Page 11

Personal Contacts.....	Page 11
Co-Marketing Initiatives.....	Page 11
Email, Fax, and Voice	
Replies.....	Page 11
Speaking	
Engagements.....	Page 11
West Ouachita Parish Churches.....	Page 11
Conduct Outreach to Gatekeepers.....	Page 12
Challenges.....	Page 12
Transit Survey.....	Page 13

## **Summary**

The West Ouachita Public Transit (WOPT) began operation in 1983 providing safe, courteous, reliable, and cost-effective transportation service for the general public of western Ouachita Parish. For over 30 years, the West Ouachita Public Transit has successfully fulfilled its mission.

West Ouachita Public Transit (WOPT) provides dependable curb-to-curb service available to the general public residing in west Ouachita Parish. Transit has successfully fulfilled its mission.

The WOPT exists to provide transit to those in western Ouachita Parish who do not have the ability to drive or access services. The WOPT markets activities to enhance dignity, support independence, and encourage involvement in and with the community.

Motivated to promote itself as an optimum older adult service organization in west Ouachita Parish, the Public Transit communicates its mission and objectives primarily to the older adult population of the community, family members of older adult citizens, needy families, at risk children, and the general public.

The West Ouachita Public Transit realizes the negative stereotype associated with transit systems should be taken into consideration when developing a Marketing Plan. The Public Transit makes special efforts designed to counteract the natural bias of the general population to view the Public Transit as just another transit operation. Our marketing focus is to position the public population and the West Ouachita Public Transit to have a proactive, positive value in providing transit.

This strategic positioning will be accomplished through the following:

- Marketing programs and services that promote independence for the public through their utilization of transit support services.
- Developing a larger variety of marketing techniques that are designed to reach a broad cross section of the public population in west Ouachita Parish.
- Providing promotional materials and personal contact within the Public Transit and increasing public awareness by maintaining a year-round presence through a variety of communication strategies.

## **West Ouachita Public Transit's Mission Statement**

The West Ouachita Public Transit's Mission Statement is to act as a unified voice advocating and strengthening the role of public transportation in improving the quality of life for all West Ouachita Parish citizens. WOPT strives to provide a safe, efficient transportation system that supports economic opportunity and livable communities for Louisiana. WOPT's role in achieving the best possible transit system in Louisiana is to be an organization dedicated to achieving its goals while embracing the highest ethical standards. One of WOPT's goals is to ensure that all west Ouachita Parish residents, especially those who live in the rural areas, have access to transit to meet basic mobility needs.

## **Purpose of Marketing Plan**

The purpose of the Marketing Plan is to guide the marketing efforts and to ensure that the West Ouachita Public Transit delivers a clear, consistent message and promotes a positive understanding to transit services in west Ouachita Parish.

## **Marketing Objectives**

1. Place the West Ouachita Public Transit as:
  - An organization devoted to identifying community needs, prioritizing critical issues, and mobilizing organizations to work together to make an impact on improving the quality of life for the public population in west Ouachita parish.
  - A trusted, local transit service that is accountable to our communities.
  - The #1 choice of transit for the public within the west Ouachita Parish community.
  - Promote the benefits of transit both to the user and the community.
2. Promote the benefits of transit both to the user and the community. Increase Market share by:
  - Educating our communities on the services of the West Ouachita Public Transit and the needs that contributions help to meet.
  - Identifying, understanding, and responding to users / agencies transit needs.
  - Providing easily accessible information to riders / agencies.
3. Encourage active participation and leadership responsibility within the community.
4. Employ a variety of approaches in attempting to inform the local public and the community at large of its mission and services.
5. Build reliable and strong company characteristics by demonstrating that the West Ouachita Public Transit is:
  - Companionate – Our service is based on helping people. We undeniably care for the individuals we serve in the community. Our utmost purpose is to enhance the quality of life of those we serve.
  - Unwavering – Our organization is unchanging in its desires and efforts to act on behalf of older persons, needy families, and at-risk children in western Ouachita Parish.
  - Motivating – Our style of leadership creates an environment that encourages and stimulates input from our riders.

## **Strategies to Achieve Objectives**

1. Increase understanding and familiarity of the West Ouachita Public Transit's Mission, activities, programs, and services.
2. Use a consistent message to communicate to the community.
3. Encourage and invite involvement from the community.
4. Build on the current level of awareness to educate potential users about the transit services available and how to take advantage of them.
5. Improve the customer experience for transit users through excellent customer satisfaction and retention.
6. Communicate effectively with current riders to enhance customer satisfaction and retention.

### Marketing Budget

WOPT wishes to move towards an ongoing allocation of \$4,000 operating budget to marketing. (Budget attached)

#### **WOPT Marketing Implementation Guidelines**

Strategy		Budgeted.
Personal Marketing	Order and purchase promotional Marketing items	\$ 500.00
Stage 1	WOPT Brochures	\$ 700.00
Stage 2	Needs Assessment Surveys	Staff
Stage 3	Public PSA's	Community Partners
Stage 4	Community Transit Recognition Events	Staff
Stages	Transit Promotions	Staff
Long Term Marketing	WOPT local phone book advertisement	

### Marketing Plan and Schedule

#### **WOPT Driver Appreciation Week**

Task Description	Person Responsible	Schedule Completion Date
Initial Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Discuss team development</li><li>Review individual work schedules and workloads</li><li>Look over calendar events</li></ul>	WOPT has driver appreciation luncheons on a monthly basis along with activities for all employees.	1 <sup>st</sup> week of October
First Team Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Decide on venue and date for Appreciation Dinner</li><li>Designate responsibilities.</li></ul>		1 <sup>st</sup> week of October

Communicate with transit drivers and dispatchers- clear date of Appreciation dinner, ensure no scheduling conflicts exist.		1 <sup>st</sup> week of October
Call order in for restaurant-dinner schedule at 5:30	WOPT has rider appreciation on a weekly basis by way of playing games, giving prizes, "Name that tune", and "Trivia"	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of October
Take orders for dinner		2 <sup>nd</sup> week of October
Meeting to generate ideas for "Extra Mile Recognition"		2 <sup>nd</sup> week of October
Develop agenda for dinner		3 <sup>rd</sup> week of October
Coordinate the development of the dinner brochure		3 <sup>rd</sup> week of October
Acquire up-to-date, individual portrait photos of Transit Staff		4 <sup>th</sup> week of October
Create "Extra Mile" recognition appreciation message		4 <sup>th</sup> week of October
Coordinate development dinner brochure		4 <sup>th</sup> week of October
Finalize and approve dinner brochure		4 <sup>th</sup> week of October
Finalize and approve dinner brochure		4 <sup>th</sup> week of October
Final Meeting-rehearsal dinner agenda		4 <sup>th</sup> week of October
Visit venue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure proper set-up</li> <li>test equipment {i.e. microphone, camera, etc.}</li> </ul>		1 <sup>st</sup> week of December

## Marketing Plan and Schedule

### WOPT Rider Appreciation Week

Task Description	Person Responsible	Schedule Completion Date
------------------	--------------------	--------------------------

<p>Initial Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss team development</li> <li>• review individual work schedules and workloads</li> <li>• look over calendar events</li> </ul>		<p>3<sup>rd</sup> week of January</p>
<p>First team meeting-decide on venue and date for appreciation dinner, and designate responsibilities</p>		<p>3<sup>rd</sup> week of January</p>



**Brochures:** The West Ouachita Public Transit's brochure will be developed and maintained as the centerpiece of literature in providing an overview of our mission and programs. Visibility for the guide and the transit services it represents can be greatly increased through the purchase of plastic brochure holders with the WOPT logo, web address and phone number on the front. The brochure will serve both our members, as well as the community audiences. In addition to being available at the Public Transit, the brochure/information guide will be made available in the following venues:

- Post Offices
- Senior Centers
- Subsidized Housing Complexes
- Medical Clinics
- Social Service Offices

**Rumor 'tis:** Rumor'tis is a newsletter for the public that will be distributed quarterly. This newsletter will contain information about Public Transit's schedule for working and non-working days.

**Newspapers:** The Public Transit will maintain partnerships with the local news media companies in order to support the goals and objectives of the Public Transit. The following partnerships have been established with specific purposes in mind:

- **The News-Star:** The Public Transit is responsible for sending all press releases by fax or e-mail. Press releases will help support the Public Transit's activities and upcoming events.
- **Ouachita Citizen:** The Ouachita Citizen will support the Public Transit's publicity by attending the socialization events hosted by WOPT. The Public Transit's will send press releases and news releases weekly to the Ouachita Citizen to be printed.

**Flyers:** Small posters or flyers will be developed and used to promote specific activities. Flyers will be posted at various location throughout the community.

**Stationery:** The Public Transit will provide contact information on all outgoing faxes, letters, and envelopes. The contact information will represent the professionalism of the Public Transit and will include the address, phone number, and staff names.

**Advertising:** The Director may authorize paid advertising for special activities or events in accordance with available funds. Display advertising will normally be placed in the Yellow Pages for cost-effectiveness, although radio advertising may be utilized as well.

**Program Evaluation:** Passenger surveys are a critical source of information to guide decisions regarding transit planning, marketing, and customer service. Transit customer surveys can be conducted in several ways: at bus stops, at transit centers, or by phone. Our experience has shown that an on-board survey is generally the most effective for capturing a representative sampling of all riders

## Internet

**Detailed Website:** The City of West Monroe's city site ([www.cityofwestmonroe.com](http://www.cityofwestmonroe.com)) is a domain site on the internet that provides up to date information transit related. The site will contain photographs, a description of services, information on location, and contact information.

## Signage

**On-site;** The Public Transit will maintain a primary sign in front of the building identifying the West Ouachita Public Transit and the numbered address.

**Directional Signs:** The Public Transit will maintain, through its association with the City of West Monroe, LA, direction signs to the Public Transit at neighboring intersections in the vicinity of the Public Transit. In addition, WOPT'S public transportation bus:ls will be advertising on the passenger doors.

**Name Tags:** The Public Transit Director will provide transit staff with proper professional West Ouachita Public Transit name tags. In addition, a uniform with a logo will allow members of the community to identify the transit staff member. Riders will recognize the transit team prior to entry on the transit buses.

**Extra Advertisement:** The public transit will advertise WOPT on pens, notepads, pencils, etc these are to support our programs and are to be distributed during our special events.

## **Personal Contacts**

**Co-Marketing Initiatives:** The Public Transit will participate in co-marketing efforts with other organizations such as: The Department of Transportation, United Way, aging services partners, community nonprofit agencies, business partners, and the Chamber of Commerce. This will be done on a regular basis.

**E-mail, Fax, and Voice Replies:** The Public Transit's staff will respond to all public inquiries and contacts in a professional and timely manner by providing information on the Public Transit's mission, programs, and services.

**Speaking Engagements to Community Groups/Civic Organizations:** The Public Transit's members, staff, board members, and volunteers will be utilized in making speeches and presentations to various groups. These events will explain the Public Transit's mission, programs, and services.

**West Ouachita Parish Churches:** The Public Transit will utilize personal contacts with the public churches in the west Ouachita Parish community. The Public Transit maintains a list of churches and their personal contacts.

### **Basic Gatekeeper Network**

- Low Income Families
  - Social Service Programs
  - Health Clinics Senior Citizens
- Senior Citizens
  - Senior Centers
  - Assisted Living Facilities
  - Housing Authority
  - Nutrition Programs
  - City Hall
  - United Way 211
  - Medical Programs
  - Other Supportive Service Providers
- Persons with Disabilities
  - Service Providers
- Unemployed
  - DHS
  - Workforce Investment

## The Challenges

---

The WOPT serving the rural areas of west Ouachita faces the challenge of using very limited resources to meet the diverse transportation needs. Given the difficulty of this challenge, there is a consensus that transit's role in rural west Ouachita Parish is:

*To serve the general public, but primarily function as a safety net for those that are unable to transport themselves, such as seniors, people with disabilities, and individuals without dependable vehicles.*

WOPT providers know from experience that servicing even the limited role presents a variety of challenges. First is the fact that those with a need for public transportation tend to have broadly scattered travel needs. The initial phase of this project, which addressed how to begin coordinating services throughout the parish, was a first step in addressing this challenge.

1. The first key challenge is the fact that the service area population is not familiar with the use of public transportation nor are they aware of what services are available. It is also complicated by the constant shifting of the market with a need for public transit. While some elderly and disabled residents will be long-term users of transit, many individuals simply need transportation on a short-term basis – when they are between jobs or looking for work, when their vehicles are inoperable, when temporary injury prevents driving, or when they need to travel to a location that is out of their local area. This group is constantly changing and is very unlikely to be aware of how to access transit when a need arises.
2. The second challenge is the one that we will address in the marketing plan – how to insure what when residents of the rural west Ouachita Parish need the “safety net” of public transportation they are able to easily access it. Achieving this goal will require an on-going communications effort to build awareness among the general public and key target markets and key target markets and to ensure that, when a need arises, effective passenger information is readily available.

## Annual Transit Passenger Survey

### West Ouachita Public Transit Rider Survey Form

1. Do you own a personal vehicle? Yes No
2. Do you drive? Yes No
3. Why do you use our public transit services? (Please check all that apply)  
☐ Shopping, grocery store, bank ☐ School / educational activities  
☐ Medical/dental appointments ☐ Senior Center activities/social outings  
☐ Work ☐ Other
4. How often do you use our transit services?  
☐ Never ☐ 2-4 trips per week ☐ More than 10 times per month  
☐ Daily ☐ 1-3 days a month ☐ Less than once a month
5. Gender (Circle one) Male Female
6. Age (Circle one) 18-25 26-44 45-59 60-74 75-84 85 and over
7. Do you have physical impairments that require special equipment or assistance?  
Yes or No
8. What is your home zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are you satisfied with each of these factors when using our transit services?

Yes or No	Drivers' knowledge of transit system procedures
Yes or No	Friendly, courteous assistance and service from the drivers
Yes or No	Drivers wear professional WOPT shirt and ID tag
Yes or No	Buses are reliable and arrive as scheduled
Yes or No	Buses are clean and comfortable
Yes or No	Special needs equipment and wheelchair accessibility
Yes or NO	Ease of scheduling and availability
Yes or No	Acceptable service hours
Yes or No	Affordable fares

10. Do you feel our transit services improve your quality of life by increasing your access to vital services such as healthcare, shopping, social activities, etc.? Yes or No

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

## Building a Custom Marketing Plan Louisiana Transit Marketing Workshop

In addition to the regulatory requirements for conducting marketing, there are two major benefits to creating a formal documented marketing plan for your agency. They include: 1) it is a reference guide for your internal activities throughout the year, and 2) a formal effort can be effectively used to gain support from potential marketing partners and from local political and business leaders who can assist with your local funding efforts.

The forms provided as companion documents to the Louisiana Transit Marketing Workbook are provided as separate documents in a Forms directory and will serve as the backbone for developing your custom marketing plan.

In addition to the separate form documents, there are also samples of media advertisements, public service announcements, and surveys.

The workbook has been designed to simplify the process for each agency, while maintaining complete customization. Each form should be opened, completed and placed into a three-ring binder or similar electronic organizational tool. Forms should be completed in the following order:

### ***Section – Current Situation Analysis***

- Agency Analysis – General
- Agency Analysis – Current Marketing
- Agency Analysis – Expansion / Improvements Needs
- Rider Survey
- Other “Targets” Survey
- Competitor Analysis
- Competitor Analysis Summary
- Public Relations Survey
- Current Situation Summary

Forms are also provided for customer surveys and to survey service providers. These are optional during the initial marketing plan creation phase, but if they are employed as a marketing tool, summaries of survey results should be added to the Current Situation Analysis as they are completed.

### ***Section – Developing a Marketing Plan***

- Marketing Evaluation
- Budget Considerations
- Marketing Plan Summary and Calendar