

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 10/23/2024

Staff Report No. 24-451

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: FY 23-24 Annual Ridership and Route Performance Report

BRIEFING ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST:

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving the FY23-24 Annual Ridership and Route Performance Report in accordance with Board Policy 545 - Service Standards and Design Policy.

Staff Contact:
Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

The ridership report is a key metric to measure the District's improvement in service quality. Since adopting the Strategic Plan, this report has served as the baseline for measuring future improvement.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There are no budgetary/fiscal impacts associated with this report.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

The FY23-24 Annual Ridership and Route Performance Report provides a summary and assessment of the District's service performance with respect to ridership, productivity, passenger loads, frequency, and on-time performance. The detailed analysis by service type and route-level are provided in the attachments and identify post-COVID-19 pandemic impacts on ridership recovery.

Post-Pandemic Impacts

As a brief recap of COVID-19 impacts on district ridership:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced ridership in 2020 following similar trends across the transit industry. Ridership remained stagnant through FY20-21, but has since partially recovered, with a positive ridership trend in the last three fiscal years (+36% Y-Y growth in FY21-22, +20% FY22-23).
2. FY23-24 saw ridership growth of +13.5% year-over-year, contributing to the third consecutive year of positive ridership recovery and maintaining the uptrend. As of June 30, 2024, ridership has recovered

to 74% of pre-Covid (FY18-19) levels. Ridership in the first 2 months of the current FY24-25 period continue to show a steady positive ridership growth trend but the pace of growth has moderated compared to the prior year.

Ridership - Summary [Attachment 1 - Chart 1.1, 1.2]

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, system-wide ridership across all service modes totaled 39.9 million annual riders, reflecting a 13.5% year-over-year (Y-Y) increase. Fixed-route service averaged 3.3 million monthly riders, compared to 4.4 million riders per month pre-pandemic. Compared to the prior year, ridership increased across all service modes: Local (Motor Bus) service [MB] gained 13.0% Y-Y; Commuter service [CB] gained 14.8% to 537,000 annual riders; however this annual total represents only 19.2% of pre-pandemic levels due to the significant drop off in Transbay riders at the start of the pandemic; Flex service [DR-DO] remained suspended since March 31, 2020; Dumbarton [MB-PT] and Paratransit services [DR-PT] gained 18.2% and 14.5% Y-Y, respectively. TEMPO (BRT) service [RB-DO] continued to see strong ridership demand with a 16.9% growth Y-Y, contributing to 4.8 million annual riders.

Ridership - Productivity; Top 10 Routes [Attachment 1 - Chart 1.3; Attachment 4]

In line with ridership gains across service modes, productivity across service types saw similar improvements. Weekday service averaged close to 26 passengers per hour across all service types. This compares to 23 passengers per hour in the prior year. Among the Top 10 routes, TEMPO (1T) service continued to rank at the top in productivity, averaging 67 passengers per hour, and over 15,000 average weekday riders. Rounding out the top routes by productivity include lines 1T, 51B, 6, 52, 79, 51A, P, 40, 73, 36. Individual route profiles and performance statistics are provided in Attachment 4.

Bottom Quarter Performing Routes [Attachment 3]

The bottom quarter low performing routes within each service type are rank ordered and identified in the table in Attachment 3. Peak frequency, total revenue trips and revenue hours for each of these routes are provided as reference to inform on the relative productivity of these routes across the District's service. Proposed adjustments are provided, while staff are continuing to monitor and assess these routes in advance of the District's Realign Plan. The Realign Plan will thoroughly assess and update the District's entire service network to adapt and better meet the community's changing post-pandemic travel needs.

On-Time Performance (OTP) [Attachment 1, Chart 1.4]

During FY23-24, system-wide OTP averaged 74.5%, a marginal increase compared to 73.9% in the prior year, continuing to perform above the District targeted KPI level of 72%. In the scatterplot comparison, OTP is further grouped by service type to further differentiate the performance. OTP performance varied a lot more when compared at the service type level. The majority of route types saw improvements in Y-Y% OTP exceeding District target level. Early Bird service jumped from 84.5% to 90.1% OTP, though it offers limited trips during off-peak hours. Only Trunk (69.0%), Transbay (67.8%), and Supplementary service (68.2%) performed below the District's KPI target of 72%. While Supplementary service did not meet District target, it did improve from the prior of 66.3% to 68.2%. Its high variation in boardings and alightings of large numbers of passengers/students at limited stops creates longer dwell times that impact overall OTP on those lines.

Passenger Trips, Service Hours [Attachment 2 - Service Type Performance]

In FY23-24, service levels consisted of 5,496 average daily weekday trips, and 5,401 average daily revenue hours of service. This was 1.1% fewer trips and 0.9% more hours compared to the prior year, as minor service

and reliability adjustments were made across Sign-ups. Through FY23-24, service levels were maintained at approximately 85% of pre-pandemic service levels.

Passenger Loads [Attachment 1, Chart 1.5]

Overall, FY23-24 average passenger maxloads saw increases for most service types, which were in line with overall ridership gains. Across the District service types, only Early Bird service saw a decline (-8.25%) in passenger loads over the prior year. The Early Bird lines operate very limited Transbay routes during off peak hours (Lines 701, 702, 703, 706, and 707, consisting of 1-2 daily trips). On average, Early Bird passenger maxloads dropped by less than 1 passenger over the prior year. Whereas on the regular Transbay routes operating more trips spread throughout the day saw average maxloads increase by 2 passengers over the prior year.

Industry and emerging trends [Attachment 1 - Chart 1.6]

Ridership data from other transit providers were summarized to compare post COVID-19 ridership recovery trends across the transit industry. Filtering by the largest transit providers with at least 15 million annual riders in the same period, the sampled agencies collectively averaged +10.8% Y-Y increase in riders, in line with the District's +13.5% Y-Y gain. Taking the aggregate total ridership across all these agencies yielded an average 80.6% ridership recovery rate compared to pre-pandemic levels. The District's 74% recovery rate at the end of this period is slightly lower than the group average. This lower recovery rate can be attributed to significant shifts in post-COVID travel behavior, especially in the Bay Area, such as remote and hybrid work which had the largest impact on Commuter Service, where the recovery rate has stalled at less than 19.2% of pre-pandemic levels. Other shifts in travel patterns and transit demand are being assessed in the District's Realign Plan that will be key to redesigning the District's service network to better serve our existing communities and riders.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

There are no advantages or disadvantages associated with this report as it solely reports on service and route performance as required by Board Policy 545.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

There are no alternatives associated with this report.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

SR 23-452 FY22-23 Annual Ridership and Route Performance Report

ATTACHMENTS:

- Att.1 FY23-24 Ridership Performance Summary
- Att.2 Service Type Performance
- Att.3 Bottom Quarter Performing Routes
- Att.4 Route Performance (Weekday, Sat, Sun)

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