

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 3/13/2024

Staff Report No. 24-143

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Customer Services Quarterly Metrics

BRIEFING ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST:

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving an update on FY 2023-24 2nd Quarter Customer Services Metrics.

Staff Contact:
Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

The Customer Services unit provides a general overview of the quarter's customer service-related activity, including rider and customer feedback, summaries of recent fare media sales and institutional pass ridership and penetration. Staff leverages in-person interaction and proven technologies, many of which are available 24/7 across diversified, user-friendly, and accessible platforms. Staff continuously looks for ways to employ new channels and methods that enhance the customer's AC Transit experience.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Customer Service Center (Attachment 1)

The Customer Service Center (Clipper Customer Service Center), monitors all Clipper-related requests, sells AC Transit passes and other fare media such as BART senior and disabled tickets, paratransit tickets, and Bike Link tickets; provides bus schedules and maps; works with the Regional Transit Connection (RTC) Discount ID Card requests; and manages the Districts' Lost and Found. The CSC also assists District employees with Dependent and Pensioner ID cards.

During the holiday season spanning October through December, there was a notable trend of declining fare revenue, with a decrease of 38% compared to the previous quarter. Customer traffic as well as bulk orders

from non-profits also saw a decrease during this period.

There was a large bulk order placed by the OUSD Transportation Department in November, purchasing a substantial amount of high valued passes, including 31 Day Local Adult, Youth, and 10-ride local youth. Although December sold more total passes, November's revenue was higher as more high value passes were sold that month.

A total of 515 RTC applications were processed in the second quarter, a 29% decrease from the first quarter. Customer traffic decreased during the holidays however the RTC outreach in October and December helped keep the numbers flat. We held RTC outreach at the OUSD Young Adult Program and Career Transition Services on 10/24/2023 collecting 33 applications and at the California School of the Deaf on 12/13/2023 collecting 51 applications.

Customer Relations (Attachment 2)

Customer Relations manages the District's feedback and complaint resolution process. Staff monitors all incoming feedback through the Customer Relations (CusRel) ticket database, which are received through various communication channels, such as phone calls, emails, walk-ins, letters and social media. Customer Relations collaborates with various departments to ensure a timely response to our customers. Additionally, staff provides data and statistics to appropriate internal departments as well as external stakeholders, as part of an effort to determine areas needing service quality improvements.

Customer Response Times - Division staff met the five-day response time goal on 90% of all CusRel tickets, a slight increase from the 80% of the last quarter. District-wide, the number was 75%.

Customer Feedback - From October through December of 2023, Customer Service received 2,084 unique customer contacts, up 14% from the previous year's same quarter (1,833 contacts).

Top Five Feedback Categories (Reasons)- From October through December, Pass-Up complaints accounted for the largest share of all feedback at 17% of all comments, with Operator Misconduct complaints at 14% of the total, both rates are the same as last year.

Pass-Ups - Pass-ups were the most reported incident type for this quarter, with 17% of the total. These complaints were focused on the high-ridership lines, the 33, 12, and 72R.

No-Shows - The percentage of no-show complaints was lowest at Division 3, where 15% of their complaints were about buses that did not arrive. Division 4 had the highest percentage; 20% of their rider feedback was about no-shows.

Commendations - Division 2 once again received the most commendations from riders, who specifically called out operators on the 12 line. Selection of reported commendations:

"I got on the 12-line bus and the driver got up and asked people to move to let me on the bus since I was on a handicapped scooter. I appreciated the driver doing that he exerted himself in a positive way."

"The driver talked and greeted everyone on his bus and told them to enjoy their day and drove that bus so smoothly. I could have stayed on that bus. Please tell Miller I said thank you and he made my day."

“The 40-line driver was so friendly and personable. I love encountering chill drivers like this. He was in such a cheery mood, it’s contagious! So wholesome. It takes so much less energy to be nice and personable. He was an absolute sweetheart. I was super lucky to catch him again on my return trip home. Just a pleasure to interact with!”

“I just quickly would like to give credit where credit is due. This AC Transit (97-line) driver should set the standard for professional conduct and kindness. She went above and beyond to ensure that my family and I made it to our destination safely. Thank you. I wish all your drivers were more like her.”

Call Center Agent Feedback (End-of-Call Survey)

As a part of the department’s strategic initiatives, an end-of-call survey has been implemented as an option for AC Transit customers through American Customer Care, the District’s Call Center. In addition to positive feedback for operators, the post-call Customer Satisfaction survey gauges the caller’s experience. Customers provide a “Star Rating” (between 1 and 5) and can include comments about their interaction with the specific agent. Launched in mid-May of 2023, the survey has thus far yielded positive results. Some recent examples follow.

Surveys sent in Q2: 459

Survey response rate: 29.6% (percentage of surveys completed)

Overall rating to date: 4.9 (out of 5)

Contact Sources - AC Transit customers continued to choose the AC Transit official app as their preferred method for submitting feedback. Almost half of all customer comments were received via the app.

Clipper-based Institutional Pass Programs (Attachment 3)

The institutional pass programs (EasyPass, Student Transit Pass Program (STPP), BayPass MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) Regional Pilot, City of Alameda Senior and Person of Disability Free Pass Program) enrolled 4,812 new participants for the second quarter, bringing the total number of users to 92,848. Ridership increased by 19% compared to the last quarter (Q1 2023-24) and 72% compared to Q2 2022-23. The EasyPass college programs accounted for 43% of new enrollments, while 57% were from the STPP and City of Alameda Senior and Person of Disability Free Pass Program. Overall, the growth of the institutional program in terms of users increased by 27% compared to the same time frame last year in Q2 2022-23.

Please note that the BayPass Regional Pilot Program ridership has been added to the data provided in this report. For Q2 only UC Berkely is a BayPass and EasyPass holder, reflected independently from other agency provided BayPass holders.

Clipper Usage

MTC provides monthly Clipper data to examine trends in Clipper boardings and mobile card usage. Clipper boardings slightly decreased in December, in parallel with the decreased revenue seen in the fare revenue.

Correspondingly, the number of trips made using mobile cards decreased from October to December.

MTC and Clipper also shares monthly data on the Clipper START program which shows that AC Transit boardings remained relatively flat for Q2. Continually, regional applications were submitted and approved at steady rates with both October and December having the same number of applications submitted and around 800 applications approved. A significant increase in trips and applications is expected at the onset of Q3, as eligible AC Transit riders can receive a 50% discount on all transit fares. This change brings the discount up from 20%, the initial discount when the program was launched in 2020. AC Transit marketing staff is partnering with MTC and Clipper to promote the new discount, which include bus exterior ads, coach ad cards, social media, digital signage, and website updates.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

There are no notable advantages or disadvantages associated with this report.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

This report has no alternative analysis, as no recommended action is provided.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Customer Service Center Metrics
2. Customer Relations and Call Center Metrics
3. Clipper Usage and Institutional Pass Program Metrics

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