

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 7/24/2024

Staff Report No. 24-379

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

ACTION ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST:

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving an update on FY 2023-24 4th Quarter Customer Services Metrics.

Staff Contact:
Nichele Laynes, Director of Marketing, Communications & Customer Services

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 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 Customer Service Center also assists District employees with Dependent and Pensioner ID cards.

In Q4, fare revenue saw a substantial increase of 27% compared to Q3. This growth was primarily driven by a significant rise in walk-in traffic and bulk orders, with April being the highest grossing month of the quarter. The end of the fiscal year for schools played a crucial role in this increase, as they allocated their remaining

funds. The total revenue for the fiscal year was 19% higher than the previous year, with bulk orders playing a large role in the increase. In August, for example, Bay Area Community Services placed one order for \$157,500.

The sale of 31-day Youth and Adult Passes, as well as Youth and Adult Day Passes saw increases over the previous quarter, causing overall growth in revenue. The increase in bulk orders also led to a higher rate of fare media sold. Specifically, Oakland Unified School District Transportation, Superior Court and Office of Education for Alameda County purchased large amounts of high value tickets.

The Customer Service Center processed a total of 546 Regional Transit Connection (RTC) applications for the 4th quarter of FY 2024, marking a 17% increase in application processing from Q3. The Customer Services team held an outreach event at the California School for the Deaf, Fremont on April 24th, which collected 34 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 is 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 95% of all CusRel tickets, a significant increase from the 82% of the last quarter. District-wide, the number was 89%, another significant increase from the last quarter of 74%. Customer Service continues to work with the Director of Transportation and recently appointed Division staff to ensure staff are in compliance with Board Policy 421.

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

Customer Feedback - From April through June of 2024, Customer Service received 2,027 unique customer contacts, approximately 22% more than the previous year's same quarter (1,665 contacts). The Fiscal Year 23-24 trended relatively flat in the number of contacts that were received each month, with an average of 630 contacts per month.

Top Five Feedback Categories (Reasons)- From April through June of this year, the top five reasons for customer feedback were split between operator-related issues (pass-up, operator misconduct, hazardous operation) and service issues (no-show, late).

No-Shows - No-Shows were the most reported incident type for this quarter, representing 13% of all feedback. Each of these complaints was sent to a Division Superintendent for investigation. This quarter, there were eight lines that received more than ten no-show complaints.

Commendations - Division 2 received the most commendations from riders, who specifically called out operators on the 12-line on ten different occasions. Below is a selection of reported commendations:

“The driver of this bus is very accommodating, very courteous, and very polite, described as a “people person” and a great driver for AC Transit.”

“Caller says he uses his scooter to get around. Caller says the sidewalk had a hump, where he needed help to get over it. The driver got out the bus and was headed his way to help, but he was able to get over the hump. Caller says the driver was polite and told him not to rush. Caller wants to speak with a supervisor about his action.”

“I just wanted to give thanks to the driver for going above and beyond making sure that all passengers on the bus boarded and deboarded safely and for communicating so kindly and respectfully with everyone on the bus. His positive attitude and care for his passengers was a bright spot of my day and I wanted to make sure he knows how much it was appreciated. Thanks.”

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.

Surveys sent in Q4: 329

Survey response rate: 27% (percentage of surveys completed)

Overall rating to date: 4.85 (out of 5)

Clipper-based Institutional Pass Programs (Attachment 3)

The institutional pass programs (EasyPass, Student Transit Pass Program (STPP), BayPass Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Regional Pilot, City of Alameda Senior and Person of Disability Free Pass Program) enrolled 5,127 new participants this quarter, bringing the total number of eligible participants to an impressive 100,706 marking a 26% increase compared to Q4 of last year.

As the student population makes up most of the institutional programs, the number of users often correlates with the academic calendar. This correlation is as expected for the Student Transit Pass Program, showing that new enrollments and ridership have reduced significantly compared to the previous quarter (Q3 2023-24) as summer break approaches. However, the UC Berkeley EasyPass program deviates from this trend. Due to the influx of new students for the summer semester, the UC Berkeley user number increased in June rather than decreased.

Clipper card ridership increased by 21% compared to Q4 2022-23. There was, however, a 14% decrease compared to the previous quarter (Q3 2023-24). This decrease is expected as the summer break starts in May for both STPP and College student programs, leading to a decrease in regular rides.

As the 2023-2024 fiscal year ended, the institutional pass programs experienced overall growth in users. Ridership within the programs displayed typical seasonal fluctuations. Increasing ridership remains the primary objective of the programs, and ongoing efforts will be made to sustain and enhance the current

positive trends.

In June, Staff presented an EasyPass update via staff report 24-252. Moving forward, staff will present an annual June EasyPass program update to the Board, including an annualized roll-up of the quarterly ridership numbers.

Clipper Usage

MTC provides monthly Clipper data to examine trends in Clipper boardings and mobile card usage. Clipper boardings in April were the highest of the quarter, with April also having the highest number of trips made using mobile cards.

MTC and Clipper also share monthly data on the Clipper START program. Clipper START application submissions remained flat, averaging around 2,300 for the quarter. Overall, Clipper START applications have trended at a higher rate during Q3 and Q4, likely due to the 50% discount on all transit fares that was implemented in January 2024.

AC Transit marketing staff has been promoting the Clipper START program and the 50% discount. Marketing tactics that have been utilized include bus exterior ads, interior bus ad cards, digital advertising, social media, bus stop digital signage, and website updates. Additionally, marketing and legislative affairs staff have been promoting Clipper START through Community-Based Organization (CBO) events, as well as other community events, throughout the East Bay to encourage sign-ups and educate riders about the program. A comprehensive staff report on Clipper START will be presented to the Board.

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 Q4 FY24
2. Customer Relations Metrics Q4 FY24
3. Clipper Usage and Institutional Pass Programs Q4 FY24

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