

# ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



## STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** 3/8/2023

**Staff Report No.** 23-191

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

### BRIEFING ITEM

**AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST:**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):**

Consider receiving the Quarterly Customer Services Update.

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

**STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:**

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service  
Initiative - Service Quality

The Customer Services team provides quarterly updates that provide a high-level overview of the proactive and responsive service provided to riders and other customers. Staff leverages in-person interaction and proven technologies, much of which are available 24/7 across diversified, user-friendly, and accessible platforms, and staff continuously looks for ways to employ new channels and methods that enhance the customer's experience with AC Transit.

**BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no budgetary or fiscal impact associated with this report.

**BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:**

The Customer Services unit plans, directs, and monitors all aspects of the District's customer service functions. It is comprised of the Customer Service Center (CSC), Customer Relations, Institutional Pass Program production and supervises the outsourced Call Center.

**Customer Service Center (Attachment 1)**

The Customer Service Center (CSC) (Clipper Customer Service Center), handles all Clipper-related requests, sells AC Transit and other fare media a variety of fare media and services, such as BART senior and disabled ticket, paratransit tickets, and Bike Link tickets; provides bus schedules and maps; handles Regional Transit Connection (RTC) Discount ID Card requests; and manages Lost and Found. The CSC also assists internal

customers (District employees) with Dependent and Pensioner ID cards.

Fare sales revenue saw a slight increase from Q1 2023 to Q2 2023, \$1,394.08 dollar increase. With the school year started and the world adjusting to the pandemic, more field trips are being planned. Schools and other organizations are requesting large bulk orders for AC Transit tickets. Revenue decreased during December due to the holidays.

For the Regional Transit Connection (RTC) card, a total of 441 RTC applications were processed during the first quarter of FY2023 - 5% decrease (28 applications) processed in comparison to last quarter, but saw a significant increase in August as seen in Attachment 1(C) due to the additional 36 RTC applications received after visiting the Youth Adult Program in Oakland on August 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Customer Relations (Attachment 2)**

Customer Relations manages the District's complaint resolution process. Staff monitors all incoming feedback, 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. During Service Planning & Operations Committee (SPOC) meetings, staff provides data and statistics to identify trends in order to determine areas needing service quality improvements.

#### *Customer Response Times - Top 5 Departments\* Productivity*

Compared to the same quarter last year, Division staff showed a decline in meeting the five-day response time goal. As a group, the rate dropped from 97% to 92% of customers receiving a response within five days. District-wide, the number was 84%.

#### *Customer Feedback*

From October through December of 2022, Customer Service received 1,883 unique customer contacts, essentially the same number (1,851) as the previous year's same quarter. Historically, the number of complaints taper-off heading into the end of the calendar year; this year was no different with a downtrend from October through December, as shown in Attachment 2(C).

#### *Reasons*

From October to December, No-Show complaints accounted for the largest share of all feedback both this year and last. Pass-Up complaints were 16% of the total, down from 17% for the same period last year. In general, the distribution of comments across all Reason Codes was very similar to the previous year's.

#### *Pass-Ups*

Division 2 received the most Pass-Up complaints both in sheer number (122), and in terms of percentage of all Pass-up complaints (41%). Elsewhere, customers reported 33 instances of being passed-up on the combined 72/72M/72R-lines, while the 57-line had the most of any single line, with 21 for the quarter. Among other lines, pass-up complaints were dispersed, without concentration in any one area.

#### *No-Shows*

The percentage of no-show complaints were similar for Divisions 3, 4 and 6; each with a rate of around 30% of their total complaints. Division 2 saw far fewer: only 18% of their complaints were about no-shows. The

individual 21 and NL lines (both D4) had the most reported no-shows at 19 and 18, respectively.

### Commendations

Division 2 again received the most commendations from riders, who specifically called out operators on the 18, 12, and 57 lines, among others. And the 200-line out of Division 6 received eight reports of great operators.

*“This bus driver has the patient of a saint. I've ridden with her a few times, and she has many senior students on the bus route and a number of people with walkers, chairs, and electric mobility devices. She always is friendly, gives clear direction and is very patient with everyone who boards the bus. She's even polite with the obnoxious people. This driver is an outstanding employee and representative of AC Transit. I ride the 18 bus and/or BART daily at least once each way if not more and this is the best bus driver I've ever seen and I'm 66 years old!”*

*“Operator (on the 12-line) was very nice and responsive to passengers. Due to the downtown closure by OPD, (he) asked every passenger where they were going to make sure they wouldn't miss their stop. I'd love for him to receive a commendation for his great work in being so responsive to all riders!”*

### Contact Sources (Attachment 2(G) and (H))

Due to an unusual spike in feedback received via telephone during the month of October, the AC Transit official mobile app fell to second place this quarter, with just 44% of the total.

### **Institutional Programs (Attachment 3)**

Institutional Pass Programs administers the Clipper card production aspect of the EasyPass program and manages Student Transit Pass Program, funded by Alameda County Transportation Commission via Measure BB, where qualified students in Alameda County can obtain a Clipper card with a pass allowing them to ride local AC Transit lines for free.

The AC Transit institutional programs enrolled 3,839 new participants this quarter, bringing the total participant number to 73,037. As the student population makes up most of the institutional programs, the number of users often correlates with the academic calendar. As expected, the new enrollment decreased by 81% compared to Q1. Although the ridership dipped slightly during November and December due to the holiday breaks, it is a 32% increase compared to Q1.

The residential and employer program's user numbers hold steady throughout the year, where participant turnover is low. Residents and Employees typically stay put for a couple of years, if not longer. The programs rely on the site admins to provide an update on departures. A slope in decrease happens when reconciliation takes place. The September data reflected a reduction in users due to a recent reconciliation. As for the academic programs, there is fluctuation for this quarter, with a large addition, but decrease in overall users. The reason for this is a transition period with college programs, generally in July and August, where the user numbers present the students from the previous and upcoming school year. The user number dropped in September when the students of the prior school year were deactivated, showing the actual number of students for the current school year. This number will slowly climb until the next cycle. For the Student Transit Pass program as well, about 6,000 students departed from the program as they graduated from high school

and were no longer eligible. However, in contrast, we see that ridership continues to climb. It can be seen as a sign that users actively use the passes.

#### **Call Center (Attachment 4)**

Call center services are essential to providing a means for individualized and personal customer service for travel, trip planning as well as to provide essential feedback to the District. It requires understanding, learning and researching the District's operations and by using other transit assistance websites (e.g., Google maps), site navigation assistance and knowledge of the District's policies, services, and fares.

The call center experienced a steady decrease in call volumes during the last quarter of 2023 (Attachment 4 (A)). After a spike in call volumes at the start of the school year in August, we saw a downward trend in call volumes that continued through the end of the calendar year.

The top five call dispositions (aka categories) represented in Attachment 4(B) have been consistent in each quarter where the majority of calls request for general travel information. This category is not specific to planning a trip, but information requests such as "Where's My Bus", which makes up about 70% of calls.

The call center aims to provide service levels that meet or exceed:

- 85% of calls answered within 20 seconds
- 98% of calls answered with 3 minutes
- Average response time under 20 seconds
- Call abandoned rate less than 4% of calls

Decreased call volumes and recent workforce additions have improved service levels over the previous quarter. As reflected in Attachment 4(C), in this first quarter, :20 service levels averaged 82% with an abandoned rate of just 2.6%.

#### **ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:**

There are no advantages or disadvantages associated with this report.

#### **ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:**

This report does not recommend an action, therefore, there is no alternative analysis.

#### **PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:**

Board Policy 421

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Customer Services Center
2. Customer Relations
3. Institutional Pass Programs
4. Call Center

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