

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 3/27/2024

Staff Report No. 24-135

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

BRIEFING ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST:

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report of findings from AC Transit's first customer satisfaction survey.

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

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Strong Public and Policymaker Support
Initiative - Service Quality

Customer satisfaction is vital for attracting and retaining ridership. Customer satisfaction surveys provide valuable feedback about rider perceptions, offering insight into where the District excels and what areas need improvement to ensure high levels of customer satisfaction.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate budgetary impact associated with this briefing item.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction is crucial for AC Transit's continued success and for retaining valued ridership. Customer satisfaction surveys play a vital role in measuring rider contentment with AC Transit's products and services, distinct from rider profile surveys that primarily collect demographic and behavioral data.

While traditional in-person intercept surveys with random sampling are considered the "gold standard" for statistical generalizability, they prove labor-intensive, costly, and exhibit significant reporting delays. After evaluating surveying techniques, AC Transit staff recommended a diverse survey approach, integrating methods to optimize effectiveness while minimizing costs.

In Spring 2023, the District initiated its first customer satisfaction survey, gathering feedback from 1,101 riders through a blend of in-person intercept surveys and online methods. Four focus groups were initially conducted

to supplement insights, considering potential biases toward higher-income demographics. Following review of survey data, two more focus groups were added to ensure representation of underrepresented demographics and gather further insights.

The data obtained provides valuable insights into customer satisfaction across AC Transit services, creating a flexible framework for ongoing measurement. Regular tracking of customer satisfaction levels will allow the District to promptly identify and address areas for improvement, ensuring alignment with rider expectations.

Key Satisfaction Metrics:

The survey explored critical metrics, revealing a 64% overall satisfaction rate with AC Transit. Particularly, promoters (satisfied riders) exceeded detractors by 13%, emphasizing a positive sentiment overall. However, lower satisfaction ratings were observed for reliability (48%) and timeliness (45%). Additional metrics examined satisfaction levels with various aspects of buses, stops, shelters, payment methods, and communication tools.

Focus Group Insights:

Complementing survey findings, insights from focus groups added depth to rider sentiments, especially among service industry employees, riders of color, 'passive' riders, 18-44-year-old riders, Spanish-speaking riders, and Chinese-speaking riders. Focus group participants expressed some concern around safety and cleanliness on buses and at bus stops.

AC Transit's Proactive Initiatives:

The highlighted concerns underscore AC Transit's dedication to initiatives that are already in progress, including:

- **Bus Shelter Improvements:** Assuming control of the Bus Shelter program in 2023, enhancements through advertising and maintenance contracts are underway, with ongoing stakeholder advocacy for improvements in city-contracted bus shelters.
- **Reliability Initiatives:**
 - The Realign Initiative which fundamentally reshapes the future of our transit network based on the three guiding principles of Equity, Reliability, and Frequency.
 - GM-Led Reliability Improvement Taskforce introduced schedule changes effective August 2023 to improve reliability, ensuring a more punctual and dependable experience for our riders.
 - The initiation of a Service Reliability Task Force, that will examine runs, schedule adherence, restroom access, and layovers, ensuring comprehensive improvements for a more reliable transit system.
- **Communication Initiatives:** Implementing an Email Acquisition campaign to broaden communication reach.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

There are no advantages or disadvantages in receiving this briefing.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

There are no alternatives.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Customer Satisfaction Survey Presentation

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