

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 10/27/2021

Staff Report No. 21-462

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: All Door Boarding Pilot Update

BRIEFING ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving a report on the performance of the All-door Boarding Pilot on Lines 6 and 51B as well as the final results of the bus operator and customer surveys conducted in the spring and summer.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

This pilot program was launched to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks associated with all-door boarding. At other agencies, all-door boarding has led to reduced interactions with the operator, faster boarding, and more reliable service. Staff has been gathering data and this report includes updates to the initial assessment of the program presented to the Board in May.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no budgetary impact associated with this report as it is an update on the performance of the pilot program.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

AC Transit launched its All-door Boarding Pilot on March 1, 2021, on Lines 6 and 51B. Numerous agencies have piloted or implemented all-door boarding on some or all their fleet including San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency. All-door boarding on AC Transit service allows customers with Clipper Cards to board through the rear door and tag a Clipper Card reader to pay their fare. The pilot required the installation of readers on the rear doors of all 25 vehicles participating in the pilot.

All-door boarding can be beneficial to AC Transit in several ways. In the current COVID-19 environment, there have been many requests by customers, staff, and Board members to incorporate rear-door boarding into the District's fare payment policies and procedures. This pilot project allows the District to reduce the number of customer interactions with operators as well as reduce dwell time at the individual passenger level. This reduction in dwell time leads to quantifiable improvements in speed and reliability for lines and stops where all-door boarding is in place. Finally, these improvements in operational performance translate directly to

tangible improvements in the customer experience. Customers can board more quickly, and the buses will get them to their destinations faster and more reliably.

Should the all-door boarding pilot yield sufficient safety, dwell, and travel-time improvements, the District may be able to reduce runtime in existing schedules and either save resources or re-invest the resources into higher frequency or longer layovers to improve reliability.

Rear-door boarding will potentially increase reliance on contactless payment methods like the Clipper Card system, and possibly result in increased Clipper adoption among cash carrying riders. Moreover, as a result of AC Transit staff negotiations with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Clipper 2 project team, additional funding has been approved for rear-door Clipper Card reader equipment and installation services. The Clipper 2 project funding will enable the AC Transit fleet to be fully equipped, all-doors, with the next generation devices, improving data security, processing and transmission time.

This staff report represents the second check-in with the program's performance. Staff collected data from March 1 to September 17 to gauge compliance with the District's own Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the program as well as the performance of the lines with respect to dwell, reliability, and ridership. In addition, this report includes the results from the surveys of bus operators and customers collected between March and August. At the time of this report's development, Clipper data on rear-door tags to understand fare revenue impacts were not available.

Attachment 1 includes detailed analysis of the program's performance across the following metrics:

- 1) Compliance with Procedures
- 2) Ridership and Revenue
- 3) Reliability and Dwell

The program has made substantial progress since the initial performance report in May 2021. Compliance has improved significantly, both in vehicle assignment and door opening. Unfortunately, new interlining done in August 2021 to match service to operator count made it more challenging to assign the correct vehicles to all of the correct trips, but this will be corrected in December 2021.

With respect to reliability and dwell, the data revealed significant improvements in dwell time per passenger and while on-time performance declined, it did so at a less drastic rate than the system as a whole, which may be attributable to all-door boarding. Staff expects to see continued improvement in speed, dwell, and reliability as the region continues to recover.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

This report is informational only and there are no advantages or disadvantages with receiving it.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

There are no alternatives associated with this performance report.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

Staff Report 20-320 All-Door Boarding Pilot

Staff Report 20-320a All-Door Boarding Pilot Update

ATTACHMENTS:

1. All-door Boarding Performance Report
2. Survey Analysis

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