

RIVERSIDE TRANSIT AGENCY
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July 28, 2005

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS
THRU: Larry Rubio, Chief Executive Officer *Larry*
FROM: Scott Richardson, Director of Marketing *SR*
SUBJECT: Route 202 and Wi-Fi/Satellite TV Report

Summary:

At the January 27, 2005, meeting, staff provided the Board with a report on Route 202 ridership during which staff was asked to conduct research on Route 202 to gather information on rider demographics and satisfaction with service. In addition, at the February 24, 2005, meeting, staff was asked by the Board to provide a usage and satisfaction analysis of the free wireless Internet (Wi-Fi) service and satellite TV that was installed on all Route 202 buses and began service on May 16, 2005.

Staff conducted two surveys on Route 202: one in March to measure rider demographics and service satisfaction and one in June to measure usage of and satisfaction with the Wi-Fi and satellite TV.

Following is a summary of the survey findings:

- Rider satisfaction is very high.
- 100 percent of the passengers plan on continuing riding as long as the route meets their needs.
- Riders who began riding after installation of Wi-Fi and satellite TV are clearly motivated to ride because of those amenities.
- The percentage of riders using the Wi-Fi service is higher among riders who began riding after that amenity was introduced.
- Currently, 23 percent of the riders use the Wi-Fi service.
- 86 percent watch the satellite TV sometimes, often or all of the time.
- Satisfaction was very good to excellent for both amenities.

Following are the detailed results from each survey:

March Rider Demographics and Service Satisfaction Survey Results

This on-board written survey was conducted during March with an estimated 85 percent response rate (23 responses.)

Following are the data received from the March survey:

1. Most riders (65 percent) began riding after the fares were lowered to \$1.00 in June 2004. On April 3rd, fares were raised to \$2.25 for the general cash fare, which does not appear to have had a negative effect on ridership. Ridership figures show the following:

January	962
February	927
March	1282 (this is traditionally the highest ridership month)
April	1027
May	1024

The average April/May ridership figures show a 9 percent increase over the average January/February ridership figures. March was excluded from the averages because it is always an abnormally high ridership month. The other CommuterLink routes showed similar increases.

2. The vast majority (91 percent) of the Route 202 riders are choice riders who choose to ride rather than drive. Following are the reasons they ride:

- 61 percent Savings over driving,
- 30 percent Less stressful than driving
- 9 percent No other transportation available
- 0 percent Time savings over driving

3. 100 percent of the respondents said that they will continue to ride the route as long as it meets their transportation needs. The other potential choices that no respondent chose were buying a car and finding another form of transportation/carpool. This contrasts with findings of previous surveys that a significant number of riders on RTA's urbanized routes plan to discontinue riding when they can purchase a vehicle.

4. The profile of Route 202 riders is as follows:

- 91 percent Adult fare

- 9 percent Senior fare

5. Fares were paid in following manner:

- 57 percent RTA 31-day pass
- 38 percent Cash
- 5 percent Metrolink pass

A breakdown of fare payment by fare category shows the following:

Adults: 32 percent Cash, 63 percent 31-Day Pass, 5 percent Metrolink Pass

Seniors: 100 percent Cash

6. For promoting the route, no single media came out as the clear best. Following are the top four ways where riders first heard about the route:

- 27 percent Friend/relative/co-worker/employee
- 22 percent Article in *The Californian*
- 18 percent The RTA website
- 14 percent Ad in the *Press Enterprise*

7. The survey asked opinions of several aspects of the service and all were rated extremely high:

Scale of 1 to 5 with 1=poor and 5=excellent

- Cleanliness of buses- Average 4.8
- Friendliness of bus drivers- Average 4.8
- On-time performance- Average 4.5
- Location of stops- Average 4.2
- Comfort of seats- Average 4.2

8. Computer usage on the bus prior to the Wi-Fi launch showed the following:

- 83 percent Never use a laptop on the bus
- 13 percent Use a laptop on the bus 1 to 2 days a week
- 4 percent Use a laptop on the bus 5 days a week

9. Usage of the 12-volt power socket mirrored computer usage. When people use their laptops, they plug them into the 12-volt socket (17 percent used the 12-volt sockets). The usage numbers indicate that they are used solely for that purpose.

10. In looking at their purpose for riding the route, nearly all were commuting to work:

- 95 percent Rode to commute to work.
- 5 percent Rode for pleasure (shopping, visit other, recreation, etc.).

11. Overall, the survey showed that the Route 202 riders ride an average of four times a week. However, following is a breakdown of the number days per week they ride:

- 52 percent Ride five days per week
- 24 percent Ride four days per week
- 0 percent Ride three days per week
- 19 percent Ride two days per week
- 5 percent Ride one day per week

12. The method of traveling to the bus stop to begin the trip was almost evenly split between driving and receiving a ride from someone else:

- 52 percent Drove their car
- 48 percent Received a ride from someone else

13. Most riders begin their trip at the Promenade mall in Temecula:

- 67 percent Began their trip at the Promenade mall
- 29 percent Began their trip at the Murrieta Wall-Mart
- 5 percent Began their trip at the Park & Ride at I-15 & Hwy. 76

14. Following is a breakdown of the riders' final destinations. It is interesting to note that two riders traveled to Oceanside and then traveled north to Orange County (Irvine and Tustin):

- 38 percent San Diego
- 38 percent Oceanside
- 10 percent Sorrento Valley
- 5 percent El Cajon
- 5 percent Irvine
- 5 percent Tustin

15. After arriving in Oceanside, riders used the following methods to travel to their final destination:

- 66 percent Commuter rail
- 19 percent Other bus
- 10 percent Walk
- 5 percent Car left parked in Oceanside

16. Riders also provided comments on the service with many compliments and several requests for an earlier bus departing Oceanside in the afternoon. Currently, the first afternoon bus departing Oceanside leaves at 5:27 pm. This will be examined for the September service change.

June Wi-Fi/Satellite TV Survey Results

In June, staff conducted an on-board survey to measure usage of and satisfaction with the Wi-Fi service and the satellite TV on the Route 202 buses. Response rate to this survey is estimated at nearly 100 percent (29 respondents).

Following are the data received from the survey:

1. 23 percent currently use a laptop and utilize the Wi-Fi connection while riding Route 202. This is up from 17 percent before Wi-Fi was introduced.

2. Of those who use the Wi-Fi connection, following is their frequency of use:

- 50 percent 1-2 days a week
- 50 percent 3-4 days a week
- 0 percent 5 days a week

3. The survey asked opinions of several aspects of the Wi-Fi service. Following are the average ratings of those who use the Wi-Fi service:

Scale of 1 to 5 with 1=poor and 5=excellent

- Overall satisfaction- Average 4.3
- Connection speed- Average 4.2
- Service interruptions- Average 3.6

4. The survey asked about usage and quality opinions of the satellite TV. Viewership is very high: 86 percent indicated they watch it sometimes, often or all the time. Following is a breakdown of usage statistics:

- 4 percent Never watch it
- 10 percent Rarely watch it
- 41 percent Sometimes watch it
- 17 percent Often watch it
- 28 percent Watch it all the time or nearly all the time

5. Satisfaction with all aspects of the satellite TV is very good:

Scale of 1 to 5 with 1=poor and 5=excellent

- Overall satisfaction- Average 3.7
- TV signal reception- Average 3.5
- TV screen visibility- Average 3.9
- Sound quality/volume- Average 3.2
- Tuned to FOX News- Average 3.5

6. Following is a breakdown of ridership trends according to when they began riding, which shows a significant increase in ridership after the new amenities were installed:

- 76 percent began riding before Wi-Fi and satellite TV were introduced
- 24 percent began riding after they were introduced

Because Route 202 ridership is up a total of 9 percent since Wi-Fi and satellite TV were introduced, a portion of the new riders have replaced prior riders. However, all CommuterLink routes, including Route 202, are experiencing similar ridership increases.

7. The new amenities as incentives are further verified by the fact that new passengers who started riding after the Wi-Fi was installed are nearly twice as likely to use a computer on-board as riders who began before it was installed:

- 43 percent of the post Wi-Fi introduction riders use computers while on board
- 23 percent of the pre Wi-Fi introduction riders use computers while on board

8. New passengers who started riding after the satellite TV was introduced are exactly as likely to watch it as riders who began before it was installed (86 percent watch it sometimes, often or all the time).

9. Overall, riders continue to clearly rate cost savings and stress reduction as the most important reasons for riding Route 202:

Scale of 1 to 5 with 1=unimportant and 5=very important

- Cost savings- Average 4.9
- Less stress- Average 4.8
- Time savings- Average 3.9
- Satellite TV- Average 3.1
- Wi-Fi access- Average 2.8

If the above motivations are broken down by people who began riding before the amenities were installed and those who began riding after installation, the cost and stress averages continue to remain the highest factor for both groups, but there is a significant shift in the importance of satellite and Wi-Fi access:

Satellite TV

- Pre-installation riders- Average 2.8
- Post-installation riders- Average 4.1

Wi-Fi Access

- Pre-installation riders- Average 2.4
- Post-installation riders- Average 4.0

In addition, a survey question asking rider perception of the importance of the new amenities as incentives to ride showed a very significant difference between riders who began riding before the amenities were added and those who began after they were added:

Question: Please rate how much you agree or disagree with this statement: "The satellite TV and Wi-Fi are effective incentives for people to ride Route 202."

Scale of 1 to 5 with 1=disagree 5=agree

- Began riding before amenities- Average 2.7
- Began riding after amenities- Average 4.4

Post-installation riders clearly find the amenities are motivations for them to ride the route.

10. Exactly as in the March survey, 100 percent indicated that they will continue to ride Route 202 as long as it meets their transportation needs.

11. The most common additional comment was to request an earlier bus out of Oceanside in the afternoon.

Fiscal Impact:

None

Committee Recommendation:

This item was discussed at the Board Budget and Finance, Board Operations, and Board Administrative Committee meetings of July 6th and July 13th, respectively. The Committees' members unanimously approved recommending this item to the full Board of Directors for their consideration.

Recommendation:

Receive and File.