Getting on the Bus: Marketing San Luis Obispo's Regional Transit Authority

A Professional Project

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ABSTRACT

Getting on the Bus: Marketing San Luis Obispo's Regional Transit Authority Jenna Higgins

A new trend is emerging, seeking to recognize the benefits of and encourage the use of public transportation. In the past, public transit agencies have not directed much energy or focus at marketing, seeking to use limited funds elsewhere. "The common perception is that money spent on marketing would be better spent on transit systems themselves...over time, a sustained investment in marketing increases the number of people who use transit. Increased ridership leads to increased revenue, and ideally, an increase in service to match the new demand" (Arpi, 2009).

Even as marketing gains importance in the public transit world, questions remain as to how to make effective marketing choices for the public transit market. This report explores public transit marketing, and its application to the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority. The San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (RTA) provides regional public transportation service throughout San Luis Obispo County.

Case study interviews, conversations with RTA, and review of academic and professional sources have supplied information and guidance on these questions. An interview with RTA was conducted to establish goals and guiding research questions for the exploration of marketing. A literature review provided a context of the field, through professional, academic, news, and media pieces. The research questions were explored through case study examples, in the form of interviews with Intercity Transit (Olympia, WA) and Orange County Transportation Authority (Orange County, CA). Further analysis of 2011 ridership survey data provided an additional level of information to consider. The research methods resulted in a range of findings that are applicable to RTA. The report concludes with the following recommendations for marketing RTA:

1. Focus on consistent branding.
2. Establish a system of more detailed ridership information.
3. Identify segments and direct messages.
4. Further develop new technology and social media tools.

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All opinions and mistakes are my own.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Transportation agencies are seeking ways to encourage more riders to use alternative transportation systems. In a time where the car dominates the transportation scene, this is certainly a challenge. As Nordahl (2008) writes,

The arguments are strong in support of public transit: it reduces our reliance on non-renewable fossil fuels, relieves traffic congestion, improves air quality, and helps with our home economics... In spite of these benefits, Americans still seem reluctant to ride transit when given the choice. (p.3).

For the planning field, it is key to not only encourage the development of strong public transit systems, but also to promote use of these systems.

Planners are instrumental in building transit systems, and can use marketing information to construct better systems and improve services. The information gained through marketing, outreach, and programming helps planners understand more about the population trying to be served. In turn, more information can mean better transit systems and more appropriate service.

Marketing is one approach to encourage riders to choose alternative transportation modes. This project seeks to identify effective public transit marketing approaches, and provide recommendations for San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (RTA). RTA operates a mid-size transit agency in

San Luis Obispo County, providing service for a range of groups, including commuters, students, seniors, and more.

Public transit can be an effective alternative, when it provides a pleasant and efficient service. “If the transit car – a public space and thus, a setting for public life – can provide a rewarding passenger experience, it can more effectively compete against the private automobile for ridership” (Nordahl, 2008, p.153). Good service, combined with successful marketing may be a solution to increasing public transit ridership.

Academic and professional sources support a new trend in investing more in public transit marketing (Cape Cod Transit Task Force, 2002, Cronin & Hightower, 2004). The emergence of public transit marketing suggests some level of effectiveness, but more thorough research is needed to make further conclusions. Through research and case study interviews, this project identifies ways to make smart choices in terms of public transit marketing, and specifically, how these apply to RTA. Case studies provide examples of how other agencies have implemented marketing approaches. Utilization of questions asked on a Route 10 on-board survey provides detailed ridership information and a perspective on marketing from the bus rider’s point of view. When synthesized with professional research and interviews, this information informs RTA about advantageous marketing choices. The goals of this endeavor are:

- To provide RTA with information necessary to market public transit as the preferred way to travel in the San Luis Obispo area.
- To understand local ridership and apply national knowledge on marketing to this specific area
- To understand marketing approaches to public transit and their effectiveness.
- To provide RTA with a set of recommendations for improving marketing and public relations

The exploration of public transit begins with foundational information on RTA. RTA is discussed to provide context and background information, as well as a basis on ridership through the 2011 Route 10 onboard passenger survey. Through interviews, information on RTA's existing marketing programs was gathered, and explored. Then a literature review of public transit marketing sources offers a professional context for the current state of the field. Case study agency examples (Intercity Transit and OCTA) provide real life samples of effective marketing choices. Additional analysis of RTA passenger survey results offers a supplementary level of information. This paper concludes with a summary of recommendations, gathered from the research explorations.

II. SAN LUIS OBISPO REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (RTA)

CONTEXT

The San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (RTA) provides public transportation service throughout San Luis Obispo County, extending into Northern Santa Barbara County. Formed in 1989, the agency manages regional transit services. RTA maintains a mission statement to “provide safe, reliable transportation to improve the quality of life for SLO county residents” (RTA Strategic Business Plan). Figure 1 shows the general area of San Luis Obispo County and Northern Santa Barbara County that RTA covers.

Figure 1: Map of Central Coast of California. RTA service extends from San Miguel to the North to Santa Maria to the South. Source: Google Maps.

RTA provides both fixed route transit lines and complementary paratransit services. RTA's ADA paratransit service is provided through the Runabout system, which primarily serves eligible certified ADA customers within ¾ mile corridors of all fixed route bus lines in the region. RTA connects the region through bus routes that include stops in: Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Los Osos, Morro Bay, Nipomo, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Maria. RTA also oversees the services of South County Area Transit (SCAT), which provides additional service in the Five Cities area.

RTA's fixed route service consists of four routes, which cover North County, South County and Santa Maria, and coastal areas. Figure 1 above shows the region covered by RTA service. The service area is based around three corridors: the North County corridor, the South County corridor, and the North Coast corridor. The routes are as follows:

Route 9: North County hourly, local and express service, plus limited Saturday and Sunday local service. Runs via Highway 101, between San Luis Obispo, Cal Poly, Santa Margarita, Atascadero, Templeton, Paso Robles and San Miguel. Operates seven days a week with less frequency on Saturdays and Sundays.

Route 10: South County weekday local and express service. Runs via Highway 101, between San Luis Obispo, Cal Poly, Shell Beach, Pismo Beach, Grover Beach, Arroyo Grande, Nipomo and Santa Maria.

Operates seven days a week with less frequency on Saturdays and Sundays.

Routes 11, 12, 13, 14: North Coast weekday local and commute-time express service between Los Osos/Baywood Park/Morro Bay and Cal Poly/San Luis Obispo.

Route 15: North Coast provides limited weekday service to Cayucos, San Simeon Acres and Hearst Castle. On Saturdays and Sundays, Route 15 provides service along the North Coast between SLO and Hearst Castle including service to Los Osos, San Luis Obispo, Cuesta College and Morro Bay.

(Source: RTA)

Throughout this project, particular emphasis is given to Route 10, the fixed route between San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria. In Fall 2011, an onboard passenger survey was conducted, establishing a recent foundation of Route 10 ridership information. This information allowed for additional analysis for this route in particular, and is one element of an overall study into marketing approaches for RTA. While the survey results only provide data on Route 10 riders, the results do depict a significant portion of RTA's riders. The survey information can be considered as one element of the larger marketing analysis.

ENVIRONMENT

The San Luis Obispo County area of California is located on the Central Coast, midway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The county is bordered to the west by the Pacific Ocean, to the north by Monterey County, to the east by Kern County, and to the South by Santa Barbara County. This region is shown in the map, Figure 1 (page 4). The area is known for its picturesque landscape and Mediterranean climate.

San Luis Obispo is home to California Polytechnic State University, which is a major draw for students and a significant employer, employing 2,800 workers (Pacific Coast Business Times, 2011). The County of San Luis Obispo also employs a large number of workers, with 2,573 employees (Pacific Coast Business Times, 2011). Santa Maria is located at the other end of Route 10. Santa Maria is a medium sized city, with a population of 99,553 (US Census, 2010). The area is home to Marian Medical Center, Alan Hancock College, and Vandenberg Air Force Base. The region as a whole has large employment sectors in service, government, and tourism.

Agriculture plays a large role in the environment and economy of the Central Coast region. The region experiences a moderate coastal climate year round, making it a productive part of California. The area is home to a significant number of vineyards and wineries, from Santa Maria in the South to Paso Robles in the North. The agriculture, tourism, and hospitality industry contribute to this.

DEMOGRAPHICS

RTA serves the Central Coast region of California; an area that is composed of small to medium sized towns. The primary service area is San Luis Obispo County, which has a total population of 269,637 (US Census, 2010). The median household income for SLO County was \$56,967 in 2010 (US Census, ACS 3-year Estimates). Identification of local populations and characteristics is important in identifying marketing approaches.

Table 1 provides basic demographic information for some of the cities and Census Designated Places in the area. The region's population is primarily white, with an average 82.21% white for the selected cities in the table. A few notable differences emerge from the basic data below. Santa Maria is 70.40% Hispanic and Nipomo is 39.80% Hispanic, while San Luis Obispo is 14.70% Hispanic. These cities are part of the region that is serviced by Route 10. Paso Robles is 34.5% Hispanic. San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria both have much lower median ages than other cities in the region, 26.5 and 28.6, respectively.

TABLE 1: Basic Demographics of RTA Service Area

	Total Population	Median Age	% White Alone	% Black Alone	% American Indian	% Asian	% Native Hawaiian	% Other Race	% Hispanic (any race)	% Owner Occupied Housing
Arroyo Grande	17,252	45.4	85.30%	0.90%	0.70%	3.40%	0.10%	5.00%	15.70%	66.10%
Atascadero	28,310	41.0	86.40%	2.10%	1.00%	2.40%	0.20%	4.30%	15.60%	63.60%
Cayucos	2,592	53	91.30%	0.20%	0.50%	2.10%	0.30%	2.20%	8.00%	59.40%
Los Osos CDP	14,276	47.2	86.20%	0.60%	0.70%	5.20%	0.10%	3.90%	13.80%	67.70%
Morro Bay	10,234	48.9	87.10%	0.40%	0.90%	2.50%	0.10%	6.00%	14.90%	53.30%
Nipomo	16,714	35.7	73.50%	1.10%	1.20%	2.50%	0.20%	16.90%	39.80%	71.20%
Paso Robles	29,793	35.3	77.70%	2.10%	1.00%	2.00%	0.20%	13.10%	34.50%	59.20%
Pismo Beach	7,655	51.8	91.10%	0.70%	0.50%	2.70%	0.10%	2.20%	9.30%	60.90%
San Luis Obispo	45,119	26.5	84.50%	1.20%	0.60%	5.20%	0.10%	4.40%	14.70%	39.30%
Santa Maria	99,553	28.6	56.20%	1.70%	1.80%	5.10%	0.20%	30.00%	70.40%	51.60%
Templeton	7,674	40.8	89.00%	0.80%	1.00%	1.60%	0.10%	4.40%	15.30%	70.70%
Average	-	45.42	90.83%	1.18%	0.99%	3.47%	0.17%	9.24%	25.20%	66.30%
SLO County	269,637	39.4	82.60%	2.10%	0.90%	3.20%	0.10%	7.30%	20.80%	59.70%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census of Population and Housing, Table DP-1; generated by Jenna Higgins; using American FactFinder;
 <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?_ft=table>; (15 April 2012).

2011 ROUTE 10 ONBOARD PASSENGER SURVEY

This project focuses on Route 10, because of recent data collection efforts. In 2008, an on-board passenger survey was conducted on multiple RTA routes to develop ridership profiles and understand customer satisfaction on board buses. In Fall 2011, an onboard passenger survey was conducted on Route 10, in order to update this information and better understand the ridership of this specific route. Route 10 serves riders throughout the Central Coast area, providing a link between SLO and Santa Maria. This route is especially

popular among working commuters and students. Onboard surveying allows passengers an opportunity to respond to questions and offer comments.

Construction impacts from the Santa Maria River Bridge project may affect Route 10, so more up-to-date customer information was desired to be used as a resource for addressing any additional transit needs. RTA, the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, and the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments are using the findings of the passenger survey to understand the route's specific ridership and improve service along the route. In addition to this original use, the Route 10 survey provides an additional opportunity for analysis in terms of marketing related questions, for this project.

The survey only provides information on Route 10 ridership, and thus does not capture information on the entire RTA ridership. Analysis of Route 10 riders provides some information on travel patterns, customer preferences, and demographics, but is not an exhaustive survey of all RTA riders, so it cannot be extended to capture the entire population. Route 10 does provide information on a significant number of riders however, and thus can be analyzed to a certain extent. This section summarizes the findings and highlights some of the key results.

Survey Findings

This survey effort gives information on travel patterns, customer satisfaction,

and demographics. Riders were also encouraged to leave comments. Where possible, the 2011 survey results were compared to 2008 numbers. The following points highlight the information gathered.

Travel Patterns:

- 80% of respondents traveled roundtrip with RTA.
- Figure 2 shows the trip purpose of survey respondents. Almost 47% of riders are commuters, using RTA to access work. 24% of respondents use RTA to commute to school. Between the 2008 survey results and the 2011 results, there has been a decrease in full time employment and an increase of students in RTA Route 10 ridership.
- Popular bus stops include: Downtown Transit Center, Nipomo, Arroyo Grande, and the Santa Maria Transit Center.

Figure 2: Route 10 Trip Purpose

- 55.56% of respondents walked from the bus to reach their final destination.
- The majority of respondents only rode Route 10 during their trip.

Figure 3 displays this information. A number of riders do transfer.

Common transfers include 9.38% to SCAT (21, 23, 24), 7.51% to RTA Routes 12/14. About equal shares of survey respondents transfer to/from SMAT (4.29%) or to/from SLO Transit (4.02%).

Figure 3: Route 10 Transfers

Customer Satisfaction:

- In 2008 and in 2011, survey results showed that customers were most satisfied with safety onboard vehicles and at stops, and with the courtesy and competency of drivers.
- The aspects that ranked the lowest in customer satisfaction were crowding onboard buses and time service ends in the evening.

Demographics:

- Nearly 56% of Route 10 respondents have been riding RTA for more than one year.
- More than 60% ride it four or more times per week.
- 22.16% of respondents came from Nipomo and 20.45% of respondents came from a Santa Maria zip code. These numbers show an increase from the 2008 survey, where 17.7% came from Nipomo and 9.1% came from Santa Maria. See Figure 4 for this information.

Figure 4: Route 10 Home Cities

The Route 10 survey provides information on who is using the service and reveals some about rider preferences. The general conclusions are that many Route 10 riders are commuters, using transit to access work or school, with the majority of riders traveling roundtrip. Route 10 riders mostly originate from Southern cities, primarily Nipomo, Santa Maria, and Arroyo Grande. Survey respondents show that riders are consistent; many have been riding RTA for

more than one year, and a majority ride RTA four or more times per week.

Route 10 riders are consistent commuters, looking for reliability, regular service, and quick, comfortable trips. This survey information lets RTA and SLOCOG know a bit more about riders, and encourages service to better fit their needs.

The Route 10 survey provides useful information for assessing ridership of the route and addressing necessary improvements. This information only offers a look at a portion of RTA users, but can be extended to draw some conclusions about RTA as a whole. The above information offers more information on RTA users (specifically Route 10). Using this ridership information, we can attempt to find appropriate marketing approaches.

RIDERSHIP

RTA ridership is tracked monthly onboard all routes, through farebox data.

This information provides a snapshot of ridership across time periods. Table 2 shows the ridership numbers for all RTA routes from 2009-2011. This table shows an overall increase in ridership over the past few years. Between 2010 and 2011 there was a notable increase of 13%. Effective marketing seeks to maintain and increase ridership.

TABLE 2: RTA All Routes Ridership (Routes 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 + Runabout)

	Total		
	2009	2010	2011
January	45,233	43,857	51,384
February	45,303	48,993	51,422
March	50,618	55,682	60,209
April	47,424	49,844	55,854
May	44,484	48,292	56,052
June	42,041	41,008	51,452
July	43,978	41,472	46,309
August	47,431	50,106	60,472
September	48,237	56,580	64,091
October	52,797	55,172	60,837
November	46,274	50,390	56,037
December	39,912	42,659	46,070
TOTAL ANNUAL	553,732	584,055	660,189

Percent Change
from Year Before - 5% 13%

Source: RTA Ridership by Fiscal Year
(Tania Arnold)

Table 3 provides a detailed look at Route 10 ridership from 2009-2011. This ridership data shows significant increases between 2010 and 2011, especially on Sundays. These numbers indicate a growing ridership base in the area, and the increasing importance of RTA, and of Route 10.

TABLE 3: Route 10 Ridership

	Weekday			Saturday			Sunday			Total		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
January	12,633	11,524	13,949	693	829	745	303	455	510	13,629	12,808	15,204
February	12,751	13,484	14,433	566	636	773	315	393	434	13,632	14,513	15,640
March	14,351	15,573	16,985	658	673	635	447	298	379	15,456	16,544	17,999
April	13,414	14,439	16,158	658	665	1,062	288	240	449	14,360	15,344	17,669
May	12,473	13,655	16,610	724	990	853	420	512	588	13,617	15,157	18,051
June	12,707	12,970	16,399	516	704	744	329	382	430	13,552	14,056	17,573
July	13,757	13,012	15,166	456	982	661	364	344	965	14,577	14,338	16,792
August	12,042	14,001	18,373	1,233	682	829	895	584	534	14,170	15,267	19,736
September	13,894	17,064	18,254	635	763	813	346	408	522	14,875	18,235	19,589
October	15,162	16,282	18,106	1,000	688	1,123	405	464	590	16,567	17,434	19,819
November	12,647	14,060	16,562	625	558	717	475	424	553	13,747	15,042	17,832
December	11,556	12,456	13,724	559	313	612	341	341	683	12,456	13,110	15,019
TOTAL ANNUAL	157,387	168,520	194,719	8,323	8,483	9,567	4,928	4,845	6,637	170,638	181,848	210,923
Percent Change from Year Before	-	7%	16%	-	2%	13%	-	-2%	37%	-	7%	16%

Source: RTA Ridership by Fiscal Year (Tania Arnold)

RTA MARKETING APPROACHES AND GOALS

The San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (RTA) provides intercommunity public transportation throughout San Luis Obispo County, extending into Northern Santa Barbara County. The agency's mission is to provide safe, reliable transportation to improve the quality of life for SLO county residents. As an agency in a moderate sized area, RTA's budget and marketing plans may be more modest than those of larger city agencies. Further, the economic downturn affected the spending and marketing tasks for the organization. Five years ago the agency allotted marketing a budget of \$240,000. In the toughest part of the recession, the budget was eliminated completely and marketing position was left vacant. Now, the marketing position has been filled, and has a budget of \$80,000, which is still a fairly modest amount for the agency's overall \$8 million budget (A. Wyatt, personal communication, April 17, 2012).

According to RTA, this budget is currently an appropriate level of spending for existing marketing plans and programs. Current approaches to marketing include devoting \$15,000-\$20,000 on media buys, like a Charter TV ad and Spanish Radio ad (A. Wyatt, personal communication, April 17, 2012). Other expenditures focus on signage, scheduling and other service-related materials. RTA values a quality website, and has considered exploring other technological options. RTA recognizes that the effective communication is

necessary, and has worked to create user-friendly graphics and a more consistent brand.

A basic goal for transit agencies embarking on a marketing plan would be to focus on increasing ridership and revenue (Weber, 2011). This overall goal would be similar to marketing for many products – marketing expenditures should increase revenue from the product. However, it's necessary to focus on more specific, measurable goals. Identification of specific goals is important in implementing specific marketing plans and techniques.

RTA's marketing manager, Aimee Wyatt, has identified a few of these specific goals as follows:

- 1. Increase Youth Ridership.** Specific promotions, like “Summer Youth Ride Free” encourages an increase in youth riders, with expected longer-term benefits after trial and repeat use. It's possible to track the number of summer free youth riders, and then compare that to overall ridership to learn the total percentage of youth ridership.
- 2. Increase Senior Ridership and Awareness of Programs.** Work with Rideshare to promote senior training programs and senior VIP passes, in order to encourage increased accessibility.
- 3. Better monitoring of ridership trends.** General ridership numbers are recorded monthly on all routes, but more specific information would be helpful in understanding riders, and achieving additional

goals. Technological improvements onboard buses can aid in this collection of information.

4. More effective communication. While hard to quantify, it's important (and easy to recognize) when marketing and service materials look good. Consistency and ease of reading is highly valued.

5. Better understanding of customer perceptions. Asking customers specifically about how they perceive communications and RTA is helpful in learning what the customers want.

The goals described led to the following questions regarding public transit marketing:

- How can marketing reach and increase ridership in the youth and senior population segments?
- What methods provide best observation of ridership trends?
- How can marketing programs be designed to most effectively communicate with customers?
- What marketing approaches ensure better understanding of customer perceptions, satisfaction, and desires?

This project seeks answers to these questions through marketing literature review and research on case study agencies.

III. MARKETING PUBLIC TRANSIT

Academic and professional sources support a new trend in investing more in public transit marketing (Arpi, 2009, Cronin & Hightower, 2004, Harnack, 2006). Interest in advertisement and marketing for public transportation represents a new attitude, to treat public transit as a marketable good, just like many products. News pieces, professional articles, and academic sources offer a dialogue on the trends and changes in marketing public transit.

MOVE TO MARKETING

Marketing as an important component of public transit systems has emerged more prominently in recent years. “Public transit organizations have belatedly recognized the importance of marketing after enhancing the operational efficiency of their systems. The strategic importance of the marketing function has received increasing attention of public transit managers...” (Cronin & Hightower, 2004, p.18).

As Skyer, Chance, and Broughton (2011) explain, it’s important to market because of multiple reasons: customers remember past experiences, they have high expectations, and you need to be able to let customers know about new changes. To make smart marketing choices, agencies need to decide on what to market, to whom, when, and why. Then, they must decide on how to

deliver the message, using all the tools available and targeting them toward the right audiences. Smart marketing creates a culture of communication through frequent sharing of information, cumulative marketing lists, and high service level expectations.

Agencies must promote public transit as a competitive and desirable alternative. The change in attitude comes in tough economic times, and as organizations realize that “selling the concept of transit is as important as selling the transit itself” (Harnack, 2006, p. 64). As Harnack writes, transit agencies need to present a positive image to complement effective service in order to attract riders. Harnack discusses agency case studies, and finds a few key techniques. These success stories include quality website design to improve communication, creative approaches to deliver messages, cohesive branding, and smart programming to increase ridership and improve image.

EMBARQ’s 2011 guide to public transit marketing highlights the need for improved marketing efforts, and offers effective techniques to implement such plans. As Weber (2011) writes, “marketing is a core investment. A better public image attracts riders, leading to higher revenue and greater demand for transit services” (p.4). The Cape Cod Transit Task Force further urges this point stating that, “there is measurable and tangible value to a sustained marketing effort” (2002, p.5-2). As agencies realize the substantial values of

marketing public transportation systems, a need to create strategic marketing plans will be important.

AGENCY EXAMPLES

Arpi's (2009) discussion of LA Metro's investment in marketing reveals the benefits of the agency's significant campaign to improve the perception of the system and make Metro "cool". The pharmaceutical industry spends over 33% of its revenue on marketing. The automotive industry spends \$21 billion on marketing cars. So, why aren't more transit agencies investing in marketing? (Arpi, 2009). "The common perception is that money spent on marketing would be better spent on transit systems themselves...over time, a sustained investment in marketing increases the number of people who use transit. Increased ridership leads to increased revenue, and ideally, an increase in service to match the new demand" (Arpi, 2009, p.2). The key is effective marketing choices in a time where every dollar counts. As Belynda Johnson of Majic Consulting writes, "with restricted budgets and limited manpower, most transit agencies cannot afford to waste marketing dollars" (n.d., p.1).

Other agencies are also finding value in notable marketing campaigns. WAVE Transit, in Wilmington, NC employed a rebranding scheme in 2003 in order to simplify the system and make things easier for riders to understand (Fennell, 2003). Richmond, VA's 2009 campaign sought to drive home the reasons that the region needs mass transit, "from reducing pollution and traffic congestion

to attracting business, giving people an affordable way to work and saving money when every penny counts” (Martz, 2009, p.1). The Richmond campaign was implemented by the area’s leaders, and sought to use creative outreach methods to share their messages. The campaign used multimedia solutions to promote transit options. It seeks to answer the important question of, “how does public transit affect me, or more bluntly, why should I care?” (Martz, 2009, p.2).

IDENTIFYING SEGMENTS

Multiple sources reinforce the same idea – that knowing whom you serve is key to serving them better and reaching new customers. “At the regional level, good information on transit markets can help operating agencies better conduct strategic planning and marketing efforts” (Chu, 2012, p.3). Chu’s study examined a range of public transit markets in Florida, to better understand the characteristics of different transit markets. The study considers the following socio-demographic and travel characteristics: driver status, immigration status, existence of medical conditions, household income, vehicle availability, race and ethnicity, monthly frequency of transit use, and the purpose of person-trips. These characteristics are used to determine transit markets, and are often studied in relation to transit travel.

Understanding varying travel market segments is helpful in understanding the needs of riders. As Chu (2012) states, “for operating agencies, the ultimate goal is to increase ridership with a given operating budget. For them, the

objective of defining market segments is to reach a point where the responses of one segment differ from those of other segments to certain marketing campaigns or service changes” (p.9). This study reinforces that certain targeted campaigns should be considered and can be successful.

Agencies are actively pursuing specific services for transit segments. “Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has a history both of providing extensive transit services for the general population, and of striving to meet the special needs of seniors and persons with disabilities” (AMMA, 2008, p.iv). In the Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan for Orange County, segments are identified and planned for. Current public and human services transportation provides more than 70 million trips per year. “These services are heavily used by the three target populations: 80% of fixed route riders are low income, while ACCESS paratransit and senior mobility services are used by thousands of persons with disabilities, including seniors” (AMMA, 2008, p. iv).

CREATIVE APPROACHES

In order to develop and implement a successful marketing campaign, agencies must know their riders, and know what riders want. “Travelers’ perception of public transport systems must be thoroughly comprehended by marketing concepts and strategies so that a newly built public transport system...can be successful” (Weber, 2011, p.29). Once the audiences are

identified, messages can be adapted for those groups. Figure 5 shows a visual of this audience identification, and ideal messages to emphasize. Utilizing creative approaches to marketing, and appropriately integrating new technologies can be an effective way of reaching audiences.

Once you know your audiences, you can begin tailoring your messages to them.

MESSAGES

- Jump on, jump off! It's the quickest commute.
- Worried about parking? Avoid the hassle.
- The city's economic lifeline.
- Accessible to all!
- The best spot to live is near the station.
- Your ticket to the hottest acts in town.

Figure 5: Audiences and Messages Source: Weber, 2011, p.30

AC Transit, which operates in the San Francisco Bay Area, has implemented rider friendly technology and targeted visual marketing campaigns. Through an online marketing campaign, the agency was able to describe the benefits of choosing public transportation. The campaign effectively illustrates “why AC Transit should be an integral part of your life by sharing a creative range of content—from user-generated videos, to a travel savings calculator, to a discussion of community and environment benefits, and the exciting future of transit” (Barrett, 2010, p.1). For this organization, these techniques have been quite effective.

Now, AC Transit is expanding their use of technology to better serve riders and increase their ridership base. AC Transit began use of NextBus, a system that tells riders exactly when the next bus will arrive, and can even send alerts so passengers are sure to never miss their bus. Through marketing at bus stops, the organization has reached out to users who may not understand the system—to get the message out that it’s easy and helpful to know more about riding the bus. “AC Transit helps current riders to improve their bus riding experience while providing an easy-to-understand marketing message for folks who may be just beginning to think about taking the bus on a regular basis” (Barrett, 2010, p.1).

Other recent studies have further confirmed the benefits of integrating

technological advances in public transit marketing and communications. A National Center for Transit Research Study suggests, “social media afford low cost, high impact techniques that can be easily and quickly employed to reach target markets and audiences” (2010, p.iii). Effective use of these creative approaches can be useful and noticeable for specific audiences. Social media approaches offer a range of applications and can include blogs, social networking sites, podcasts, wikis, video sharing, and more.

Stephens (2008) argues that it’s hard for transit agencies to attract discretionary riders. He suggests that more creative marketing methods should be utilized, like coffee coupons or iPhone apps. This discussion of new technologies as a marketing technique indicates a need to keep up with current trends.

EVALUATION

When marketing budgets and resources are stressed to the limit, the added step of evaluation can be forgotten or given low priority. “A well-planned evaluation can help you accomplish three important ends: measure program success, determine if the campaign was implemented as planned, and test or improve the efficacy or efficiency of campaign elements” (Johnson, n.d., p.1). Consideration of an evaluation program can make marketing dollars work. “By continuously monitoring the results of your marketing efforts, you can improve its effectiveness of every marketing dollar” (Johnson, n.d., p.3).

Customer perception and evaluation offers ongoing feedback on services and promotion techniques. “In Mexico City, Metrobus surveys riders every six months to measure user perception and determine if it needs to make any changes. Bogota’s TransMilenio surveys its riders on a monthly basis to track customer satisfaction as well” (Weber, 2011, p.42). Evaluation through surveying allows agencies to determine customer satisfaction and any necessary changes.

In addition to the research questions raised by the interview with RTA, the literature review highlights an additional research question:

- How can social media and new technology play a role in effective marketing programs?

IV. METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methods and phasing employed to meet the goals of this marketing research project. The research questions that arose from RTA goals and review of literature were answered through various phases of the methodology.

Phase 1: Survey (Conducted Fall 2011)

The Route 10 Survey was developed and conducted in Fall 2011. The survey instrument was developed, and the runs to be surveyed were scheduled on weekdays over a two-week period. The 2011 Onboard Passenger Survey was conducted on RTA Route 10 between Friday, October 28th and Thursday November 10th. Runs were surveyed during morning commute, midday, evening commute, and later evening times. A second surveyor provided support and conducted additional surveying. Surveys were conducted during weekday trips only. Surveys were distributed to all boarding passengers, and collected as passengers exited the bus. The survey instrument was available in both Spanish and English. The survey was divided into three sections:

- 1. Please Tell Us About Your Trip Today – Travel Patterns
- 2. Please Tell Us About Our Service – Customer Satisfaction
- 3. Please Tell Us About You – Demographics

In addition to distributing and collecting surveys, the surveyors also counted all passengers on board between each stop, and the total run time of each

run. Counts and times were recorded onto log sheets that correspond with the surveys taken that run.

The survey data was tabulated, analyzed, and compared to 2008 survey results. This information established general ridership information for the route. The report was prepared (key findings, graphs, selected cross tabulations), and provided to SLOCOG, RTA, and SBCAG.

Phase 2: Background Research

First, it was necessary to research information on the general context and description of Route 10, RTA, and the surrounding environment. This information included basic demographic information from the Census and research on services and context from RTA. From here, the interview with Aimee Wyatt, Marketing Manager at RTA was conducted, to discuss current marketing practices, constraints, challenges, and activities. This information provided background on RTA, and prepared a context for RTA's marketing goals.

The literature review on public transit marketing made up an important part of the background research. To compile this information on marketing, a variety of sources were surveyed:

- Academic articles that relate to public transit marketing
- Professional discussions on public transit marketing

- Looking at other agencies' methods
- Websites, blogs, and other online discussions of related topics.

Based on this research and the RTA conversation, research questions were identified and will be considered throughout the course of this project.

- How can marketing reach and increase ridership in the youth and senior population segments?
- What methods provide best observation of ridership trends?
- How can marketing programs be designed to most effectively communicate with customers?
- What marketing approaches ensure better understanding of customer perceptions, satisfaction, and desires?
- How can social media and new technology play a role in effective marketing programs?

Phase 3: Interviews with Case Studies

A matrix was constructed to identify potential case study agencies. Criteria considered included their current approaches, similarities or differences with RTA, and the lessons that could be learned. The matrix compiled facts about a range of transit agencies, and offered a systematic approach to selecting case study examples. This matrix can be found in Appendix A.

The questions from the RTA interview and the marketing literature review led to criteria to assess each case study, and their applicability to the marketing goals of RTA. Table 4 shows how the case study agencies fit these criteria.

TABLE 4: Comparison of Case Study Agencies and RTA Marketing Goals						
	Focus on increasing youth ridership	Focus on increasing senior ridership	Seeks understanding of customer perceptions	Use of new technologies	Monitoring and Evaluation	Identification of effective communication approaches
Intercity Transit <i>Olympia, WA</i>	X	X	X	X	X	
OCTA <i>Orange County, CA</i>	X	X		X	X	X

A set of interview questions for each of the case study agencies was developed based on research and discussions with Aimee Wyatt, at RTA. Questions were specific to each agency, and reflected changes in marketing plans and actions. The two case study interviews were conducted via phone and email. These examples shed light on how marketing works at other agencies. Through these interviews we discussed agency approaches to marketing, lessons learned, what has worked and what hasn't, challenges faced when implementing new marketing programs, public response, budgeting, and more.

Phase 4: Further Analysis

After background research and interviews, Route 10 survey results were further analyzed. The additional analysis and cross tabulation was specifically

focused on Route 10 survey questions 19, 20, and 26 to deduce more about rider views on RTA's public relations and marketing.

- Question 19: How did you first find out about RTA?
- Question 20: How do you get most of your information about RTA?
- Question 26: What is the best way for RTA to tell people about its services?

Phase 5: Recommendations

Further analysis and findings both supported the recommendations for RTA marketing. After the research phases, marketing recommendations are developed based on case studies, interviews, and research. These results led to a set of recommendations that lead to more effective marketing choices.

V. CASE STUDIES

To understand marketing public transit from a real world context, a few sample agencies were used as case studies. The case studies were selected using a matrix, and compared to a variety of agencies. This matrix can be found in Appendix A. The case studies were researched and interviewed, in order to understand the approaches, lessons learned, and marketing methodology employed by each agency. These agency examples provide a more detailed level of analysis for understanding marketing techniques. The following discussion of the case study agencies represents the results of research and interviews. To gain a broader perspective on transit marketing, both a peer agency and a larger agency were studied. Analysis of both reveals practices done by a similar agency, and those of an agency with more money and time to devote to marketing.

CASE STUDY AGENCY OVERVIEW

Intercity Transit

Intercity Transit serves the region surrounding the capital city of Olympia, Washington. This area includes Olympia, and neighboring communities of Lacey, Yelm, and Tumwater. Intercity Transit was chosen as a case study for this project, based on similarities of the service area to the San Luis Obispo region. Olympia is a government center, providing a regional job attraction. The agency operates a small urban system, with high ridership and service

levels. In 2011, Intercity Transit provided about 5.3 million rides, via fixed route, paratransit, and vanpool services (Intercity Transit Fact Sheet, 2012). Intercity Transit lines connect with four other regional transportation systems.

Intercity Transit's mission is to provide and promote public transportation choices that support an accessible, sustainable, livable, healthy, prosperous community. Overall agency methods, including marketing and communications efforts, align with this mission. With a strong foundation of products and services, the marketing and communications of Intercity Transit are effective and fitting.

OCTA

Orange County Transportation Authority is a multi-modal agency serving the area of Orange County, California. The agency was formed in 1991, combining a number of agencies. OCTA operates bus and paratransit service, Metrolink rail service, a toll facility, freeway, and street and road improvement projects. OCTA operates in a 798 square mile area, serving more than 3 million residents in 34 cities and unincorporated areas.

OCTA's mission is to develop and deliver transportation solutions to enhance quality of life and keep Orange County moving. OCTA is a suitable case study because it is a large agency, well known for service and ridership. OCTA invests in marketing and has made notable advances in recent years.

MARKETING GOALS AND TARGET GROUPS

Key marketing goals for Intercity Transit are to maintain and increase ridership for all services, and to increase the awareness of the value and importance of public transit in the Olympia community. In the past 12 years the marketing and communications work of the agency has changed dramatically. The agency has “developed a robust communications program, stepped up our public and media relations efforts, increased our community partnerships significantly, developed a youth education and bike/pedestrian program, and become more sophisticated with our marketing initiatives”.

Intercity Transit focuses on understanding their service population segments.

These groups include:

- Commuters/Choice Riders
- Students (aged 14 through college)
- Seniors

For OCTA, the focus of any marketing program starts with branding. The goal is to create a positive and relevant brand to heighten awareness for the public. With the range of services provided by OCTA, it is key to brand all of the products and services in a consistent manner. OCTA also uses strategic partnerships to add value and increase ridership. Successful partnerships have been developed with Angels baseball, University of California Irvine, California State University Fullerton, and other employers and schools.

In the past ten years OCTA has really developed its programs for marketing and communication. Now, it operates its own department of 25 people. They have expanded programs to do more than just advertising. OCTA's marketing department focuses on looking forward, and being ready to change.

OCTA's service area is composed of a large population, across a very diverse spectrum. The agency works to understand these groups, and prioritizes based on resources. Marketing efforts are focused on the groups that have potential to grow ridership. Bus customer surveys help identify important population segments, such as seniors, youth, commuters, and employer groups. Based on survey findings, targeted marketing is implemented. As such, youth and elderly are a focus of outreach efforts. For example, seniors are given an opportunity to learn and practice riding the bus through events at local senior centers.

BUDGETS AND VALUE OF MARKETING

About 1% of Intercity Transit's operating budget is devoted to marketing and communications. The 2012 budget is \$430,900, plus \$459,124 for personnel costs. The agency's marketing and communications staff totals 4.5 FTE plus a temporary grant position and a shared administrative assistant. The governing board of Intercity Transit, along with the General Manager and the Marketing and Communications Manager all support aggressive marketing,

community relations, outreach, and communication. The organization believes in investing in strong programs, services, and well-trained personnel.

The amount of energy and money devoted to marketing at OCTA depends, based on the current Executive Director, CEO, and board. Depending on the vision of these leaders, marketing importance varies. Currently, marketing has more resources because of pro-marketing leadership.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is helpful for Intercity Transit's programs, and utilizes both quantitative and qualitative measurements. These measurements mean examining ridership growth, use levels by service, and ongoing feedback. Market research provides ongoing information for the agency, as well. These efforts include a customer satisfaction rider survey, a market segmentation survey, and a worksite commuter survey. The numbers indicate high levels of customer satisfaction and retention, good awareness of services, high market penetration, and strong levels of support for public transportation.

For every marketing program, OCTA starts with a marketing plan. These plans define: goals, objectives, targets, budgets, timelines, etc. After implementation, these plans allow for evaluation on whether the plan's goals were met. To evaluate, OCTA looks at ROI (return on investment), revenue, and ridership trends. For OCTA, it is important to have quantitative metrics.

This analysis allows OCTA to develop a quarterly metrics report, in an effort to compare trends, and make better future recommendations.

NEW TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Intercity Transit began utilizing social media and other technological approaches about two years ago. Because the cost is minimal, the investment required is primarily in dedicating staff time. The current efforts include Facebook, blogs, Twitter, and an extensive website, with online trip planning, real time bus arrival information, and other key user information.

New media approaches have emerged as an important part of OCTA's techniques. OCTA uses Text for Next, which allows riders to get next bus arrival times. Facebook pages and the OCTA website are also important tools. Social media has been a promising effort for OCTA, so one staff member is dedicated to maintaining those outlets. When integrated with other techniques, social media and technology can be valuable tools.

Future OCTA plans include a new program, called iRide OCTA. This new concept uses input from the bus customer survey and targets marketing toward specific population segments. The new concept creates a consistent brand, and shares testimonial messages with potential customers. By reaching out to separate groups of customers OCTA hopes to increase ridership and share positive messages about riding OCTA.

VI. ADDITIONAL SURVEY ANALYSIS

In addition to understanding ridership through the information in Chapter 2, the 2011 Onboard Passenger Survey section, this section analyzes a few of the survey questions to a further extent. Additional analysis of the three marketing related questions (Question 19: How did you first find out about RTA?, Question 20: How do you get most of your information about RTA?, Question 26: What is the best way for RTA to tell people about its services?) seeks to further understand preferences and impressions of Route 10 riders. This examination of data further emphasizes the desire to have current and useful information about the users of the transit system.

FINDINGS

The findings of this additional cross-tabulation show some differences, but do not make any significant conclusions. This exercise reveals the need to gather more information, including more specific marketing information. Overall, analysis of the marketing related questions cross-tabulated with ridership information, like age, income, employment, did not show dramatic differences from the results of all survey respondents combined. Some of the results include:

- Out of survey respondents overall, 25% thought that radio and TV ads are the best way for RTA to get its message out. Of respondents ages 25 to 64, 22% thought the best way for RTA to share information was

through radio and TV ads. 26% of respondents 17 to 25 thought that radio and TV are the best method. Cross-tabulation of the best method of RTA communicating with customers shows little variation among age groups. 25% of respondents with a combined household income of less than \$20,000 think the best way to get information about RTA is through radio and TV. Cross tabulation with income groups also shows little variation for how survey respondents think RTA should communicate its messages.

- 39% of all survey respondents first found out about RTA from seeing the buses and stops. 42% of respondents with a combined household income of less than \$20,000 first found out about RTA by seeing the buses and stops. 36% of respondents with an income between \$30,000 and \$50,000 first found out about RTA by seeing stops and buses, while 42% found out from family and friends.
- 52% of all riders get information about RTA on the bus, and 22% get their information from the RTA website. 48% of those survey respondents that are employed full time get most of their information about RTA on the bus, and 32% get most information from the website. 67% of respondents who are not employed or retired get information from the bus, and only 7% get most of their information from the website. This analysis reveals some differences in how users get information about RTA.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Research questions, based on goals provided by RTA, were used to guide the research process of this project.

- How can marketing reach and increase ridership in the youth and senior population segments?
- What methods provide best observation of ridership trends?
- How can marketing programs be designed to most effectively communicate with customers?
- What marketing approaches ensure better understanding of customer perceptions, satisfaction, and desires?
- How can social media and new technology play a role in effective marketing programs?

These questions guided the research, and now inform the recommendations for RTA's public transit marketing. Through case studies, literature review, and survey analysis, the research questions were addressed and recommendations were formed. The following recommendations are a summary of the findings gathered throughout this process:

1. **Focus on consistent branding.** "Most public transport systems strive for a brand that clearly presents their services as modern, efficient, rapid, reliable, convenient, comfortable, and safe" (Weber, 2011, p.7). As emphasized in the OCTA case study, consistent branding is key to all of their successful, integrated programs. A clear brand, supported and shared throughout every aspect of the

system establishes the transit system and communicates the values of the service. Consistent branding means a clear concept for customers to understand, making the service visible and more easily understood. This branding can be applied to everything from network maps to bus driver uniforms to advertisements. In implementation, RTA should focus on applying consistent logos and branding to all aspects of the system. Since survey results pointed that the majority of riders get their information from the bus, the buses and all materials onboard should certainly be a focus of this effort.

2. Establish a system of more detailed ridership information.

Currently ridership numbers are tracked, but knowing more about riders (profile, satisfaction, preferences, etc.) is key to providing service and targeted marketing. Chu (2012) states that more information on riders is key to developing effective strategies. Customer surveys and more detailed ridership counts are useful in better understanding service populations, and allow for two-way communication. As Weber (2011) suggests, “without effective methods to communicate feedback, both positive and negative, riders can feel unimportant” (p.41). Even though resources are constrained, this information is helpful, and could provide opportunities for low cost improvements as well. Surveys and opportunities for feedback should be developed and conducted

frequently. Survey results, like the 2011 Route 10 On-board Passenger Survey, help RTA understand who's on the bus, and what they value in the service. Through survey information, RTA and passengers can establish an avenue of two-way communication to benefit both parties and to encourage evaluation opportunities. An additional element of surveying should be directed toward potential customers. In order to increase ridership, RTA needs to identify the needs and constraints of people not already on the bus. RTA can consider surveying large employers and agencies, to gather information about non-bus riders, and consider potential partnerships and service improvements. OCTA mentioned partnerships as a key technique—RTA is encouraged to do the same.

3. **Identify segments and direct messages.** After gathering detailed ridership information, it's easier to identify population segments you seek to target. RTA has identified youth and seniors as populations of interest. Further surveying and ridership information will identify other segments to target. In this case, developing comprehensive user education programs targeting youth and seniors can be part of the effort to increase ridership among these groups. Agency examples, like OCTA's outreach with seniors, provide ideas for specialized programs. Visiting senior centers and providing a bus to practice on can encourage senior ridership and

reduce barriers to entry. RTA is doing a summer youth ride free program, which is right on track with this recommendation.

Continuing to develop programming and direct messages is key to marketing success.

4. **Further develop new technology and information tools.** Social media communication is a popular and growing approach to delivering marketing messages. Usable websites, informative mobile apps, and social networking all can “make public transport more user-friendly, reliable and accessible, increasing the chance that discretionary riders become loyal customers” (Weber, 2011, p.45). Currently, RTA recognizes the value of a high functioning website, but has not fully embraced and employed other technological options. While the majority of survey respondents got most of their information from the bus, a significant group mentioned getting information via the website. Further, multiple respondents wrote in “online, email, internet” etc. as how they would prefer to get information. RTA should consider expanding their online and social media presence to meet the growing need for technological options. Mobile phone apps could be one potential opportunity as well. OCTA uses Text for Next and AC Transit uses NextBus—both are great ways to make it easier for riders to use transit.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The previous research and discussion sought to understand the issues and approaches to marketing public transit. The marketing literature review, paired with the interviews and analysis of case study agencies, provided a route to meet the goals of this project. The goals of this marketing research endeavor, and their results are as follows:

- *To provide RTA with information necessary to market public transit as the preferred way to travel in the San Luis Obispo area.* Through professional sources (Stephens, 2008, NCTR, 2010), we learned of creative approaches to spread positive public transit messages, like social media and voucher programs.
- *To understand local ridership and apply national knowledge on marketing to this specific area.* Through the 2011 Route 10 Onboard Passenger Survey, RTA and SLOCOG were able to get a better sense of a portion of the local ridership. Through literature review and case study conversations it became clear that understanding ridership and segmentation is key to composing effective marketing campaigns.
- *To understand marketing approaches to public transit and their effectiveness.* Both literature review and case study examples provided resources for understanding public transit marketing approaches. For example, the OCTA case study provided good discussion on effective marketing approaches that are built around a

consistent brand, targeted toward specific populations, and evaluated to ensure effectiveness.

- *To provide RTA with a set of recommendations for improving marketing and public relations.* Chapter 7 offers a list of recommendations for RTA.

In order to implement the recommendations suggested, RTA should develop specific marketing plans. Consistent branding should be an underlying theme of all marketing approaches. Surveying tools can be developed, and conducted on a regular basis, targeted both to bus riders and potential bus riders at certain sites (i.e. Alan Hancock College, Marian Medical Center, etc.). Programming and messages should be developed and targeted toward transit segments, with specific plans for youth and seniors. Finally, using information gathered from surveys and outreach, RTA should consider expanding its technological and social media presence through Facebook, Twitter, mobile phone apps, and more.

Marketing is a key component of a successful public transit system. Through research and understanding of local ridership, paired with application of professional trends and techniques, RTA can better reach their target audiences. This research paper offers a variety of approaches to consider, through literature sources and case study applications. Case studies and literature both support a move toward incorporating marketing and creative approaches, to make transit the preferred choice of travel.

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X: APPENDICES

A: CASE STUDY MATRIX

Name	Location	Approximate Population (2010 Census)	Similarities to RTA/Route 10 or Notable Marketing Efforts	Marketing Contact Info.
Regional Transit Authority	San Luis Obispo, CA	161,227 (Santa Maria) 44,075 (San Luis Obispo) 269,000 (SLO County)	N/A	Aimee Wyatt, awyatt@slorta.org, (805) 788-2706
Inter-City Transit	Olympia, WA - Thurston County	252,000 (Thurston County)	similar sized base city, government center for lots of jobs, academic institutions	Contact: Meg Kester, Marketing & Communications Manager mkester@intercitytransit.com 360-705-5842
Whatcom Transportation Authority	Bellingham, WA	81,000 (Bellingham) 201,000 (Whatcom County)	small-ish city, large university in town, surrounded by rural areas	General Inquiries: (360) 676-7433 or (360) 676-6844 (TTY) General Email Inquiries: comment@ridewta.com
Orange County Transportation Authority	Orange County, CA	3 Million (Orange County)	Has made marketing changes in the recent years. Human Services - Transportation Coordination Plan. Large scale, well recognized agency.	Stella Lin (714) 560-5342
Skagit Transit	Burlington, WA	9,000 (Burlington base)	some rural areas, commuters to Bellingham and Everett	Skagit Transit Customer Service Skagit County (360) 757-4433 Toll-free (877) 584-7528

Wave Transit (Wilmington Transit Authority)	Wilmington, NC	104,000 (Wilmington)	Has made significant marketing changes since 2002, might be a good place to interview about the effects of marketing.	Unsure who does marketing, contact Kathy Williams, Customer Relations, kwilliams@wavetransit.com
Community Transit	Everett, WA	103,000 (Everett) 33,000 (Lynnwood) 53,000 (Shoreline) 713,000 (Snohomish County)	suburban area, many commuters	Marketing, Operations, and Maintenance Committee, Kim Conway, (425) 348-7186 Administrative Assistant II (425) 353-RIDE (7433) (800) 562-1375 TTY Relay: Dial 711 riders@commtrans.org
DC Streetcar (DDOT)	Washington DC		Rebranded streetcar system, new programs	Phone Number 855-413-2954 Email dcstreetcar@dc.gov
LA Metro	Los Angeles, CA	Creative advertising approaches, noted as one of the first to creatively market public transportation	Matt Raymond Chief Communications Officer 213.922.7355 raymondm@metro.net Marc Littman Deputy Executive Officer - Public Relations 213.922.4609 littmanm@metro.net	

B: RTA ROUTE 10 SURVEY REPORT

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Fall | 2011

RTA ROUTE 10 ON BOARD PASSENGER SURVEY

Prepared by: Jenna Higgins, SLOCOG Transit Planning Intern

FINAL DRAFT

1/31/12

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RTA ROUTE 10

ONBOARD PASSENGER SURVEY FALL 2011

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The 2011 Onboard Passenger Survey was conducted on RTA Route 10 between Friday October 28th and Thursday November 10th. Runs were surveyed during morning commute, midday, evening commute, and later evening times. Surveys were conducted during weekday trips only. Surveys were distributed to all boarding passengers, and collected as passengers exited the bus.

The survey instrument was available in both Spanish and English. The survey was divided into three sections:

1. *Please Tell Us About Your Trip Today* – Travel Patterns
2. *Please Tell Us About Our Service* – Customer Satisfaction
3. *Please Tell Us About You* – Demographics

In addition to distributing and collecting surveys, the surveyors also counted all passengers on board between each stop, and the total run time of each run. Counts and times were recorded onto log sheets that correspond with the surveys taken that run.

The stops recorded on the surveys were:

- Cal Poly Campus
- Downtown Transit Center (SLO Government Center)
- Santa Barbara Street (Amtrak)
- South Street
- South Higuera Street
- Pismo Beach Premium Outlets
- Arroyo Grande
- Nipomo
- Alan Hancock College
- Marian Medical Center
- Santa Maria Amtrak
- Santa Maria Transit Center

A total of 397 surveys were returned. Of these surveys, 96% were returned in English and 4% were returned in Spanish. The survey instrument can be found in Appendix A.

Throughout this report, select comparisons to 2008 survey data are made where available.

SURVEY RESULTS

TRAVEL PATTERNS

Summary

- 80% of respondents traveled roundtrip with RTA.
- 47% of riders are commuters, using RTA to access work. 24% of respondents use RTA to commute to school.
- 37% of respondents walked to bus stops, though a good number of respondents (about 18% each) were dropped off or transferred from another bus.
- 55.56% of respondents walked from the bus to reach their final destination.
- Most respondents used a 31-day pass (52.54%) or cash (33.05%) to pay for their bus fare.
- Popular bus stops include: Downtown Transit Center, Nipomo, Arroyo Grande, and the Santa Maria Transit Center.
- Additional cross tabulation analysis can be found in appendix B.

One way vs. Round trip

Most riders (80%) were traveling roundtrip with RTA. The rest of the respondents were split fairly evenly among not returning that day, returning another way, and not returning. In 2008, 78.9% of riders were traveling roundtrip.

Travel Mode To/From Stop

The majority of respondents walked to and from the bus stop. 18.25% of respondents said they were dropped off, while only 10.58% said they would be picked up. Walking had a higher percentage from the bus than to the bus. Transferring is slightly more common to get to Route 10 (17.74%), than from Route 10 to complete the trip (12.70%). In 2008, riders had similar travel patterns, with 41.4% walking either to or from the bus stop.

Origin and Destination Bus Stops

Combining the responses for Question 3 (origin) and Question 9 (destination) provides a clearer picture of highly utilized bus stops. The most often cited responses were: Downtown Transit Center, Nipomo, Arroyo Grande, Santa Maria Transit Center, and Pismo Beach Premium Outlets. In 2008, these were also the most common stops. Cal Poly is only serviced on express runs, which were surveyed twice.

The following bus stop pairs were marked more than 15 times:

- Downtown Transit Center/Pismo Beach Premium Outlets
- Downtown Transit Center/Arroyo Grande
- Arroyo Grande/Nipomo
- Arroyo Grande/Alan Hancock College
- Downtown Transit Center/Nipomo
- Nipomo/Alan Hancock College
- Nipomo/Santa Maria Transit Center

Access Time and Egress Time

Responses for Question 4, time to get to the bus stop, varied among the possible answers. Allowing 10 minutes to get to the bus stop was most common (30%). It took 44.5% of respondents 20 minutes or more to reach their final destination once they got off the bus. Since more people walked once they got off the bus, this longer time is most likely related to longer walking times. This was a new question on the 2011 survey, so no comparison is available to 2008 information.

Purpose of Trip

46.49% of respondents were traveling for work, and 24.16% were traveling for school. 10.13% of riders used RTA for personal business. In 2008, 48.9% were traveling for work, and 25.6% were traveling for school. 9.6% were traveling for personal business in 2008.

Fare Payment

More than half of respondents (52.54%) used a 31-day pass to pay for their fare. This indicates a large number of regular commute riders. 33.05% used cash. No comparison to 2008 data is available for this question.

Alternative Travel Mode

32.20% of respondents would drive themselves if RTA was not available, indicating a large number of choice riders. 28.80% of respondents would not make the trip without RTA, also indicating a large number of riders who are dependent on RTA's services. 24.87% of respondents would ask a family member or friend for a ride. In 2008, 36.4% of riders said they would drive themselves if RTA was not available and 30.8% would have not made the trip.

Transfers

The majority of respondents only rode Route 10 during their trip. A number of riders do transfer. Common transfers include 9.38% to SCAT (21, 23, 24), 7.51% to RTA Routes 12/14. About equal shares of survey respondents transfer to/from SMAT (4.29%) or to/from SLO Transit (4.02%). In 2008, 64.1% rode only Route 10.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Question 12: Rate the aspects of RTA service

Survey takers were asked to rate a list of aspects related to riding RTA from 1 – 4, with 1 meaning poor and 4 meaning excellent.

The aspects with the highest average scores were:

- Safety onboard vehicles and at stops. Average = 3.59. This high rating indicates that the majority of riders are satisfied with passenger safety on Route 10.
- Courtesy and competency of drivers. Average = 3.58. A high score for drivers suggests that respondents appreciate the quality of RTA bus drivers.
- Time service begins in the morning. Average = 3.41. This score indicates that overall riders are quite satisfied with the time that bus service begins.
- In 2008, the aspects with the highest average scores were: safety onboard buses, courtesy of drivers, and cost to ride.

The aspects with the lowest average scores were:

- Crowding on board buses. Average = 2.98. The lowest score, crowding on board buses, indicates some unhappiness with the current levels of crowding. Wording of the question makes it somewhat tricky to distinguish, however.
- Time service ends in the evening. Average = 2.99. This score suggests that some riders would prefer later evening service.
- Closeness of bus stops to home. Average = 3.05. This score indicates that while some people are happy with the closeness of stops to home, a number of other riders would prefer stops closer to their homes.
- In 2008, the aspects with the lowest average scores were: reliability/on-time performance, crowding onboard buses, and time service ends in the evening.

Question 13: Rank the reasons you ride RTA

Survey takers were asked to rank their reasons for riding RTA from 1 – 4, with 1 as irrelevant, 2 as consideration, 3 as important, and 4 as most important.

- Low Cost was cited as the most important reason, with an average score of 3.22. This response suggests that riders are dependent on the low cost and affordability of RTA. In 2008, low cost, followed by environment and convenience, were also the highest ranked reasons for riding RTA.
- Do not have a valid driver's license was marked as the most irrelevant reason, with an average score of 2.18. This answer suggests that riders choose to ride RTA for other reasons besides being transit dependent.

Question 14: Rank the service attributes that are most important

Survey takers were asked to rank the service attributes that are most important to them from 1 – 4, with 1 as irrelevant, 2 as consideration, 3 as important, and 4 as most important.

- Reliability/On time performance was considered the most important attribute, with an average score of 3.62. This high score indicates that riders highly value on time bus performance. In 2008, reliability was also cited as the most important attribute.
- Time Service begins/ends was considered important as well, with an average score of 3.53. This suggests that scheduling and bus availability is important to riders.
- Closeness of stops to home/destination was ranked the least important, indicating that riders are willing to travel a bit to access the bus.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Summary

- Nearly 56% of Route 10 respondents have been riding RTA for more than one year.
- More than 60% ride it four or more times per week.
- Respondents were almost evenly split male and female, and 57.07% fell in the 25 to 64 year age range. These numbers are very similar to 2008 numbers, when both genders were fairly equally represented and 61.2% of riders were 25 to 64.
- 22.16% of respondents came from Nipomo and 20.45% of respondents came from a Santa Maria zip code.
- 86.40% of riders are employed part time or full time, or are students.

Transit Dependency

Q15: Did you have a car available for this trip?

Q16: Do you have a valid driver's license?

The majority of respondents, 62.99% did not have a car available for the trip, while in 2008 54.8% of respondents did not have a car available. 57.52% of respondents did have a valid driver’s license, and in 2008, 57.7% had a valid driver’s license, showing little change.

Ridership: Length of Use

55.82% of respondents have been riding RTA for more than 1 year. In 2008, 49.1% had been riding RTA for more than 1 year, showing a slight increase in length of use. 20.37% have been riding RTA for less than six months and 20.11% have been riding RTA for 6 months to 1 year. 3.70% of respondents marked that this was their first time riding RTA.

Ridership: Frequency of Use

62.43% of respondents ride RTA four or more times per week. This indicates a majority of regular commute riders. 15.61% of respondents ride RTA less than three times per month. In 2008, 71.8% of riders rode RTA four or more times per week, slightly more than are currently riding that often.

Initial Information Source

38.36% of respondents found out about RTA by seeing the buses and bus stops. 30.95% learned about RTA from their family and/or friends. In 2008, these reasons were also the most common sources of initial information.

Usual Information Source

51.97% of respondents marked that they get most of their information on the bus. The RTA website is the next most common source. These sources were also the two most common responses in 2008.

Desired Information Source

When asked where they would like to get information from, many answers were selected. Radio/TV was marked as the number one source by 25.34%. Radio/TV was also the number one response in 2008. 21.29% of respondents marked more than one answer. Of those who marked other, half of them wrote in internet, online, or email.

Gender

Both genders were nearly equally represented, with slightly more males than females. 53% of respondents were male, and 47% of respondents were female. In 2008, both genders were also nearly equally represented.

Age

The most common age range of respondents was 25 to 64 years old with 57.07%. 34.03% of respondents marked that they were in the 17 to 25 year age range. In 2008, 61.2% of respondents were 25 to 64 years old.

Home Cities

Respondents listed a total of 24 different zip codes as home zip codes. The most common cities were: Nipomo (93444), Santa Maria (93454, 93455, 93458), and Arroyo Grande (93420, 93421). In 2008, 17.7% of riders were from Nipomo, 9.1% were from Santa Maria, and 16.8% were from Arroyo Grande. This shows a sizable increase in riders from Nipomo and Santa Maria.

Income

49.43% of respondents reported a total household income of less than \$20,000 per year. Greater than \$50,000 a year was the next most common category, with 19.43% of respondents. In 2008, 42.2% of respondents had combined household incomes of less than \$20,000 and 24% had an income of greater than \$50,000, showing an overall decrease in combined household income in the 3-year period.

36.53% of respondents were employed full time, while 32.53% were students. This majority of full time work and students fits with the most common trip purposes of going to work or school. 86.40% of respondents work full time, work part time, or go to school. In the 2008 survey results, 47.2% of respondents worked full time, and 24.3% were students. There has been a decrease in full time employment and an increase of students in RTA Route 10 ridership.

HIGHLIGHTS ON SANTA MARIA AND NIPOMO RIDERS

Santa Maria:

- Riders from Santa Maria have a higher household income. 32% have a combined household income of less than \$20,000, while 49% of all riders have a combined household income of less than \$20,000.
- 28% of riders from Santa Maria were dropped off at the bus stop, compared to 18% of all riders.
- 56% of riders from Santa Maria were traveling for work. 46.5% of all respondents were traveling for work.
- Riders from Santa Maria are more likely to be choice riders. 49% of respondents from Santa Maria had a car available, compared to 37% of all riders.

Nipomo:

- A higher percentage of riders from Nipomo walk to and from bus stops. 47% of riders from Nipomo walk to the bus (37% of all riders) and 70% walk from the bus stop to their final destination (56% of all riders).
- Riders from Nipomo tended to be younger. 39% of riders from Nipomo were 17 to 25 years old, while 34% of all riders fell in that age range.
- 67% of riders from Nipomo get on the bus in Nipomo.
- 86% of riders from Nipomo are only riding route 10, compared to 69% of all riders.
- 43% of respondents were employed full time, while 37% of all respondents marked full time employment.

SELECT RIDERS – SANTA MARIA RIVER BRIDGE

Survey respondents were asked to consider their one way trip, and mark their origin and destination stop. A number of respondents considered their entire round trip for the day, however, and marked the same origin and destination stop. This may affect the overall results.

Santa Maria Zip Codes:

- 72 respondents marked Santa Maria as their home zip code. These riders account for 20.45% of all respondents.
- 17 respondents with a home zip code in Santa Maria traveled Southbound over the SM River Bridge. They marked that they began at a stop between Downtown Transit Center and Nipomo, and that their destination was a stop in Santa Maria.
- 35 respondents with a home zip code in Santa Maria traveled northbound over the SM River Bridge. These riders marked that they began at stops within Santa Maria, and that their destination was at a stop between Nipomo and Downtown Transit Center.

San Luis Obispo County Zip Codes:

- 265 respondents marked their home zip code as within SLO County. These riders account for 75.28% of respondents.
- 50 respondents with a home zip code in SLO County traveled Southbound over the SM River Bridge. These riders marked that they got on at a stop between Downtown Transit Center and Nipomo, and got off at a stop within Santa Maria.
- 25 respondents with a home zip code in SLO County traveled Northbound over the SM River Bridge. These riders got on at a stop in Santa Maria, and got off at a stop between Nipomo and Downtown Transit Center.

SURVEY COMMENTS

The comments below were replicated from the comments section available at the bottom of the survey. The comments are reproduced as written.

- Really glad bus transportation like this exists. Please do continue
- Make SB and NB more obvious, accidentally took the wrong bus once. In Nipomo, all stops are at the bottom of the hill and I am too sick to walk up. We need a stop near Vons.
- Have buses run later
- 95% of drivers are pleasant and pleasure to ride with. 5% are not. P.r. people shouldn't be working. Do not wait for elderly. SLO buses only. Not RTA.
- Good service thanks.
- When working in Nipomo, AG, and Grover, caught the bus 3 times weekly. Now catch it if I'm able to visit. I like the bus.
- My biggest issues are the lack of cleanliness, the fact that I cannot drink water on the bus even though I get easily dehydrated, poor reliability, limited amount of times to catch it. Route 9 is especially worse in reliability when I need to transfer.
- If there was no route 10, I couldn't get to work or school.
- Shell beach access to bus is poor. It takes me 60 minutes to get to SLO and is a major deterrent to riding the bus more. (2 hours per round trip).
- The newer buses have fewer seats and always leave many people standing, plus they are very uncomfortable on the hour trip on rte 10.
- Been riding the bus for about 8 years. Very pleased with the service for the most part.
- New buses are uncomfortable for long ride (1 hr). This route almost always leaves SLO GC late because of waiting for route 9 which is always late. Arrival in Santa Maria is anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes late.
- Route 10 leaving government center at 4:30 be changed to an express please.
- Express route 10 needs to leave from Cal Poly PAC shortly after 4pm and 5:15. Also, don't make the 4:30 route 10 WAIT EVERY DAY for the route 9 that is late every day. The people on our route 10 always miss connections.
- Thank you! I love RTA, great service. My only complaint is that some drivers don't enforce the foul language use or loud earplugs (music). Also, rt 9 sb at the 3-4pm hour is consistently running very late and it causes many of us to miss our 10 sb connections at 4:33pm :(
- Twice going home, one of your drivers took off fast before I could sit down. I hurt my arm and could not even lower it. Called RTA and emailed to suggest driver be more careful. No response. I later found out this was the driver who got DUI. Wish drivers would enforce no music from phones or ipods.
- Do not use smaller (generally new) busses on the route 10 sb at 4:30pm. We are generally standing room only and sometimes have turn away people with bikes.
- Good bus drivers are nice
- Rides are too long. 3 hours from Oceano to Los Osos for 5.00 isn't fair. 3.00 is. Thank you. R Lemus 235-4806
- I save cash on this bus!
- More room for bicycles. More frequent am rides. Racks and bus gets full. Increase route frequency during AHC/NHS school season and reduce during summer vacation.

- I live in Grover Beach near oak park and grand. A closer stop would be nice. I would take the bus for evening socializing if the service ran later.
- Very pleased with the service but 7:06 SB tends to get very crowded and uncomfortable
- Love Jay and Dale, others not as considerate
- Even when buses leave on time, by the time it gets to Allan Hancock it is usually 10 to 20 min behind schedule. One time it was 23 min behind.
- They have a very excellent service
- While I have time and enjoy walking to the bus from home, more Nipomo stops would be nice
- I do not like the new bus on route 10.
- Not enough bike space, maybe more frequent buses would relieve that
- Everything is good, but I don't like that people do drugs because I ride the bus.
- thank you and god bless you. Please keep serving my stops and please don't raise the cost of regional 31 day pass for disabled. I'm too poor.
- very good job
- the busses are kind of smelly
- good buses
- good services
- Please don't stop RTA
- Sunday service sucks
- Bus driver Dale is polite, on time, respectful and just all around the best driver you have. Just awesome.
- Thank you
- wish ya had more on weekends.
- Need bus stop on willow & pomeroy. Need to add a stop in nipomo on pomeroy and willow. Takes too long to walk to bus stops. Also la placita market needs bus stop.
- I would love twice as many buses, so trips would be every thirty min rather than 60 min. thank you for this service.
- Lady in front talks too much and too loud
- Add maps to more stops
- Fix your website, have live person answer the phone.
- Without this bus I would not be able to get to school or work.
- Dale is the best driver on route 10.
- 12 to 10 evening connecting times are awful.
- Need better lighting for park & ride area @ pismo outlets.
- Drivers Dale and Roy are excellent :) Please let drivers stop on street with sidewalk in the morning express.
- Thank you. Roy in the am and Dale in pm, as well as other drivers if I'm later, are all great.
- I have been riding since 2005. I appreciate the service. Currently am riding 5 days a week to Cal Poly.
- The bus drivers are great. Thank you for the 10 express options.
- Consider more stops @ Cal Poly throughout the day, rather than 7:30am and 5:15 pm.
- Too long between transfers 10 to 14/12 at transit center/government center.
- It would be nice if there was a stop on the arroyo grande/nipomo mesa.

- Would like more stops on weekends, possibly start/end longer.
- I like RTA. All day Sat and Sun, nice people needed. Thanks.
- Overall great service, just wish it ran later (night classes at AHC).
- Buses need to run later!
- I ride from Cuesta College on weekends. It is sometimes difficult to get a bus to stop, even after calling ahead.
- Q2 - I would ride bike if I could store safely @ Nipomo. Q12 is M-F only, not for weekends. Would ride more on sat/sun if service increased.
- The 4:33pm SB 10 is consistently 15-20 min late arriving to the SM Transit Center when Tracy is driving. She is very nice but drives very slow. Always late. New buses too small.
- I believe a 31 regional pass should work for all busses - N & S county & Transfers.
- Need a bus stop in Nipomo on Pomeroy and Willow. Also at La Placita.
- Thank you! :)
- Weekend service must be more frequent.
- Highly disappointed today as driver passed the bus stop going very fast and did not even slow down at 5:45pm @ Margarita so I waited and caught the 6:45 @ Suburban.
- Would like night service later.
- Crowding is terrible from Cal Poly - inhumane.
- RTA buses are convenient and reliable but the seats are not very comfortable
- 10 Local A.M should leave at 6:00 A.M. earlier bus for people that work at 7:00 A.M.
- I need Route 10 every 2 hours on weekends. Very Important
- I have been injured by the RTA 2 times. The drivers need to pay closer attention
- I am frustrated by the drivers rudeness not announcing stops and bypassing stops where people are waiting. Schedule are inaccurate. Let people drink water. It is ridiculous not to. Drivers should not be on cell phone while driving
- The buses need someone to clean them, most importantly the seats and side or walls. They are not sanitary at all and people are always getting off and on usually with kids and this mess or dirty seats are not safe for kids.
- Bus drivers deserves a raise
- RTA should run more buses on Route 10 during school term. Fewer buses are needed when school is out.
- It would be nice if there were larger or more bicycle racks so everyone with a bike can ride and not get left behind
- Need more bike racks on Route 10 South Bound in the morning
- Need more bike racks on Route 10 South Bound in the morning
- I feel that all my drivers are very hard works. Please post a billing with exact location to buy 31-day pass.
- We need 7:33PM Route at SIO Transit Center
- Need to extend service time. RTA need to cover more holidays for service
- Need to get better at getting to Government Center for transfer.
- Overall very happy. Would love an earlier route. Northbound 10 in the morning
- Excellent service. Earlier NB would be nice –Thanks

- Clean Windows
- Weekend service is not good. The service stop early in Santa Maria, so I can't get home after
- I try the bus due to "Free Tuesday" in October. Will ride more- surprised at how easy it was.
- I only wish it was 24 hour and went closer to Pismo in Nipomo(without the little bus)
- I have just moved to SLO a few weeks ago due a job offer in AG, so taking the bus suits perfectly. The Passengers on the bus seemed to know each other. Have a bus community party.
- lower price would be helpful
- Thank you
- The starting time is ok on weekday but not good on weekends. Same with ending time. I live in Nipomo and work in Pismo. My husband has to drive me to work on Saturday and Sunday. I have to arrive to work late because he has to work too.
- The fact that it takes me 45 minutes to get to work and one hour to get back is kind of a drag. But can't complain because I should get a car if it is that big of a problem. Running every 1/2 hour will be helpful, but I know costs would be ridiculous, so I get it. Otherwise awesome.
- Faster service. For example: buses come every thirty minutes instead of one hour
- I thank you this is a great way of transportation
- Would appreciate later hours for those who take night classes at Hancock.
- I met my wife on a Sacramento RTA bus
- Very pleased and grateful. How can I help?
- More room for bikes
- I love riding the city buses, especially RTA. Thank you
- Stop using the new little bus in the morning. No one enjoys squished and they are uncomfortable. People always end up standing up. Stop it.

MAXIMUM LOAD AND ON TIME PERFORMANCE

Appendix C and Appendix D offer detailed charts of the maximum load segment and on time performance of each run surveyed. See these appendices for detailed data.

Maximum Load Segments Southbound: At all times of day, San Luis Obispo to Pismo was one of the most traveled segments (South Higuera to Pismo and Downtown Transit Center to Pismo). Another highly traveled segment was Nipomo to Alan Hancock College. The highest recorded passenger loads were: 38 on the 5:15pm Express from Downtown Transit Center to Pismo, 37 on the 4:33pm from South Higuera to Pismo, and 31 on the 6:33am from Arroyo Grande to Nipomo.

Maximum Load Segments Northbound: In the morning the most traveled segments included the stops from Nipomo to San Luis Obispo. In the afternoon, Alan Hancock College and Marian Medical Center to Nipomo (and some further) was most highly traveled. The highest recorded passenger levels were: 31 on the 7:14am between Pismo and Downtown Transit Center, 28 on the 8:14am from Pismo to South Street, and 24 on the 6:14am from Nipomo to Pismo.

On Time Performance Southbound: According to RTA, late is considered more than six minutes later than the scheduled departure or arrival time. The tables in Appendix D supply the recorded data for the on time performance of the surveyed routes. Of the southbound runs recorded, 6 out of 14 arrived late. An additional 3 runs were 6 minutes late, just barely considered on time. Waiting for transfers was noted as one reason for lateness. Buses tended to leave a few minutes late from San Luis Obispo, leading to lateness at Santa Maria arrivals.

On Time Performance Northbound: Buses traveling Northbound tended to arrive closer to their scheduled arrival time than buses traveling Southbound. Out of the northbound runs recorded, 4 of 14 arrived late. 2 additional runs were 6 minutes late, barely considered on time. Traffic delays were noted as one reason for lateness. Of the runs noted as arriving late, 3 of these were evening runs: 5:24pm, 6:24pm, and 7:24pm.

APPENDIX A: ONBOARD PASSENGER SURVEY

Dear Rider:

San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (RTA) requests your assistance in compiling information about its services. Completing this short survey will help us better understand the travel needs of our riders and improve our service. Please return the completed survey to the survey taker or driver before you leave the bus today.

If you have already completed a survey, please do not complete another one. Thank you.

Please Tell Us About Your Trip Today

1. Will you be traveling roundtrip on RTA today?
☐ Yes, return today₁ ☐ No, return by another way₃
☐ No, return another day₂ ☐ No, not returning₄

2. How did you get to the bus stop where you caught this bus?
☐ Walk₁ ☐ Dropped off₃ ☐ Transfer from another bus₅
☐ Drive & Park₂ ☐ Bicycle₄ ☐ Other₆

3. Where did you catch this bus today? (indicate nearest stop)
☐ Cal Poly Campus₁ ☐ South St. ₄ ☐ Alan Hancock College₉
☐ Downtown Transit Ctr (SLO Govt. Center)₂ ☐ S. Higuera St. ₅ ☐ Marian Medical Ctr ₁₀
☐ Pismo Beach Premium Outlets₆ ☐ Sta. Maria Amtrak Station₁₁
☐ Santa Barbara St. (Amtrak)₃ ☐ Arroyo Grande₇ ☐ Sta. Maria Transit Center₁₂
☐ Nipomo₈

4. How long do you allow to reach this bus stop? (minutes)
☐ Less than 5₁ ☐ 10₂ ☐ 15₃ ☐ 20 or more₄

5. What is the purpose of your trip today?
☐ Work₁ ☐ Recreation/Social/Visiting₄
☐ School₂ ☐ Medical/Dental/Social Svcs₅
☐ Shopping₃ ☐ Personal Business/Other₆

6. How did you pay for your fare today?
☐ Cash₁ ☐ Regional Day Pass₂ ☐ 31 Day Pass₃ ☐ Other₄

7. How would you make this trip if RTA was not available?
☐ Drive self₁ ☐ Bicycle₃ ☐ Friend/Family₅
☐ Walk₂ ☐ Taxi₄ ☐ Would not make trip ₆

8. How will you reach your destination when you get off this bus?
☐ Walk₁ ☐ Be Picked up₃ ☐ Transfer to another bus₅
☐ Drive ₂ ☐ Bicycle₄ ☐ Other₆

9. What is the closest bus stop to where you will get off this bus?
☐ Cal Poly Campus₁ ☐ South St. ₄ ☐ Alan Hancock College₉
☐ Downtown Transit Ctr (SLO Govt. Center)₂ ☐ S. Higuera St. ₅ ☐ Marian Medical Ctr ₁₀
☐ Pismo Beach Premium Outlets₆ ☐ Sta. Maria Amtrak Station₁₁
☐ Santa Barbara St. (Amtrak)₃ ☐ Arroyo Grande₇ ☐ Sta. Maria Transit Center₁₂
☐ Nipomo₈

10. How long will it take to reach your final destination from this bus stop? (minutes)
☐ Less than 5₁ ☐ 10₂ ☐ 15₃ ☐ 20 or more₄

11. Will you transfer from or to another bus on this trip?
☐ No, only riding Rt. 10₁ ☐ RTA-SCAT (Rts. 21, 23, or 24)₅
☐ RTA Rt. 9₂ ☐ Atascadero Transit₆
☐ RTA Rt. 12/14₃ ☐ SMAT (Santa Maria)₇
☐ SLO Transit (SLO City bus)₄ ☐ Nipomo DAR₈

Please Tell Us About Our Service

12. Please rate the following aspects of RTA by circling the number that best describes your experience?
(1 = poor, 4 = excellent)

poor → excellent

a) Time service begins in the morning

1

2

3

4

b) Time service ends in the evening

1

2

3

4

c) Frequency of service

1

2

3

4

d) On-time performance/Reliability

1

2

3

4

e) Trip duration (time to get to destination)

1

2

3

4

f) Closeness of bus stops to home

1

2

3

4

g) Closeness of bus stops to destinations

1

2

3

4

h) Cost to ride RTA (fares)

1

2

3

4

i) Crowding onboard buses

1

2

3

4

j) Cleanliness onboard buses

1

2

3

4

k) Courtesy and competency of drivers

1

2

3

4

l) Safety onboard the vehicles and at stops

1

2

3

4

m) Convenience of transfers

1

2

3

4

13. Please rank the reasons you ride RTA?
(1= irrelevant, 2= consideration, 3=important, 4=most important)

a) No car available

1

2

3

4

b) Do not have a valid driver's license

1

2

3

4

c) Convenience

1

2

3

4

d) Low cost

1

2

3

4

e) Good for the environment

1

2

3

4

f) Independence (do not have to ask others)

1

2

3

4

g) Relaxing/less stress

1

2

3

4

h) Can sleep, read, catch up on work

1

2

3

4

14. Please rank the service attributes that are most important to you? (1=irrelevant, 2=consideration, 3=important, 4=most important)

a) Time service begins/ends

1

2

3

4

b) Frequency of service

1

2

3

4

c) Reliability/on-time performance

1

2

3

4

d) Cost to ride

1

2

3

4

e) Trip duration (time to get to destination)

1

2

3

4

f) Closeness of stops to home/destination

1

2

3

4

Please Tell Us About You

15. Did you have a car available for this trip?
☐ Yes₁ ☐ No₂

16. Do you have a valid driver's license?
☐ Yes₁ ☐ No₂

17. How long have you been riding RTA?
☐ First time₁ ☐ 6 months to 1 year₃
☐ Less than 6 months₂ ☐ More than 1 year₄

18. How often do you ride RTA?
☐ Less than once per month₁ ☐ 1 to 3 times per week₃
☐ 1 to 3 times per month₂ ☐ 4 or more times per week₄

19. How did you first find out about RTA?
☐ Newspaper₁ ☐ Family/Friends₄
☐ School/Employer₂ ☐ Received info in mail₅
☐ Saw buses/bus stops₃ ☐ Other₆

20. How do you get most of your information about RTA?
☐ On the bus ₁ ☐ RTA customer svc phone line₃
☐ RTA website₂ ☐ RTA Newsletter/flyers₄
☐ Other ₅

21. What is your gender?
☐ Female₁ ☐ Male₂

22. What is your home zip code?

23. What is your age?
☐ 16 years or younger₁ ☐ 25 to 64 years₃
☐ 17 to 25 years₂ ☐ 65 years or older₄

24. What is your combined total household annual income?
☐ less than \$20,000₁ ☐ \$30,000 to \$50,000₃
☐ \$20,000 to 30,000₂ ☐ greater than \$50,000₄

25. Which of the following best describes your work?
☐ Employed full time₁ ☐ Retired₄
☐ Employed part time₂ ☐ Student₅
☐ Homemaker₃ ☐ Not currently employed₆

26. What is best way for RTA to tell people about its services?
☐ Newspaper₁ ☐ Send info to homes₃
☐ Radio/TV₂ ☐ Posters/flyers in stores₄
☐ Other ₅

Comments:

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APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

The following analysis is based on cross tabulation of more than one question from the route 10 survey. This method of analysis offers a more specific look at specific travel pattern inquiry.

The majority of riders who use RTA four or more times per week use it for work. (Questions 5 and 18).

Most respondents who use RTA for work have been using it for more than one year. Almost an equal number of those who use it for work and those who use it for school have been using it for less than six months. (Questions 5 and 17).

When the data from Question 15 and Question 7 is cross-tabulated, more information about travel patterns can be found. Of those without a car available, most would either not make the trip or ask a friend or family member for a ride.

The majority of bus riders that do have a valid driver's license would drive themselves if RTA were not available. Of those riders without a valid driver's license, many would ask a family member or friend, or not make the trip. (Questions 7 and 16).

Of riders in the 25 to 64 age group, the majority use RTA Route 10 for work. Of riders in the 17 to 25 age group, most use RTA for school. (Questions 5 and 23).

Most riders who were employed full or part time were traveling on RTA that day for work. Most students were traveling for school. Of those riders who are not employed, most were traveling for personal business or for medical purposes.

Most respondents walked to reach the bus stop. Of those who allowed 20 minutes to reach the bus stop, most were walking, with bus transferring second most common. Of those who allowed ten minutes to reach the bus stop, walking was most common, with being dropped off second. (Questions 2 and 4).

Most respondents walked to reach their final destination. According to Questions 8 and 10, of those who said it would take twenty minutes or more to reach their final destination, the majority were walking. Transferring buses also made up a large portion of those who said it would take twenty minutes or more.

For riders who were traveling for work, the most popular bus stops of origin were: Downtown Transit Center, Santa Maria Transit Center, and Nipomo. Arroyo Grande and Pismo Beach Premium Outlets also were commonly used.

For riders who were traveling for work, the most common destination bus stops were: Downtown Transit Center, Arroyo Grande, Pismo Beach Premium Outlets, and Nipomo. South Higuera Street and Santa Maria Transit Center were also cited multiple times.

APPENDIX C: MAXIMUM LOAD POINT CHARTS

Southbound		Maximum Passenger Load Segment
Run Time	Location	# of Passengers on Board
6:33 AM	Arroyo Grande - Nipomo	31
	Nipomo - Alan Hancock College	24
7:33 AM	Arroyo Grande - Nipomo - Alan Hancock College	11-13
8:33 AM	Nipomo - Arroyo Grande	12
8:33 AM	Downtown Transit Center - Pismo	8-9
	Nipomo - Alan Hancock College	9
9:33 AM	Nipomo - Alan Hancock College	14
9:33 AM	Downtown Transit Center - Pismo	15-16
	Nipomo - Alan Hancock College	12
10:33 AM	Arroyo Grande - Nipomo	12
11:33 AM	South Higuera - Pismo	14
12:33 PM	South Higuera - Pismo	20
1:33 PM	Downtown Transit Center - Pismo	15-16
3:33 PM	South Higuera - Pismo - Arroyo Grande	19-20
	Nipomo - Alan Hancock College	20
4:33 PM	South Higuera - Pismo	37
	Arroyo Grande - Nipomo	32
5:15 PM	Downtown Transit Center - Pismo	38
6:33 PM	South Higuera - Pismo - Arroyo Grande	18-19

Northbound		Maximum Passenger Load Segment
Run Time	Location	# of Passengers on Board
6:14 AM	Nipomo - Arroyo Grande - Pismo	21-24
6:25 AM	Nipomo - Downtown Transit Center	24
7:14 AM	Pismo - Downtown Transit Center	27-31
8:14 AM	Arroyo Grande - Pismo	23
	Pismo - South Higuera - South Street	25-28
9:14 AM	Nipomo - Arroyo Grande - Pismo	11
11:14 AM	Pismo - Downtown Transit Center	12-16
12:14 PM	Nipomo - Arroyo Grande - Pismo	10-14
1:14 PM	Marian Medical - Downtown Transit Center	10-12
2:14 PM	Pismo - Downtown Transit Center	15-17
3:14 PM	Marian Medical Center - Nipomo	16
3:14 PM	Marian Medical Center - Nipomo - Arroyo Grande	15-19
4:14 PM	Alan Hancock College - Nipomo	17
5:14 PM	Nipomo - Arroyo Grande - Pismo	17-18
5:14 PM	Alan Hancock College - Marian Medical Center - Nipomo	9-10

APPENDIX D: ON TIME PERFORMANCE

Southbound										
Date	Day of the week	Scheduled Departure Time	Actual Departure Time	Difference	RTA Standard	Scheduled Arrival Time	Actual Arrival Time	Difference	RTA Standard	Notes
10/28/11	Friday	3:33 PM	3:35 PM	2 min. late	On Time	4:43 PM	4:57 PM	14 min. late	Late	
10/28/11	Friday	11:33 AM	11:34 AM	1 min. late	On Time	12:43 PM	12:49 PM	6 min. late	On Time	
10/31/11	Monday	8:33 AM	8:34 AM	1 min. late	On Time	9:43 AM	9:46 AM	3 min. late	On Time	
11/1/11	Tuesday	4:33 PM	4:38 PM	5 min. late	On Time	5:43 PM	6:10 PM	27 min. late	Late	Waited at Downtown Transit Center for Bus # 9
11/2/11	Wednesday	9:33 AM	9:37 AM	4 min. late	On Time	10:43 AM	10:50 AM	7 min. late	Late	Traffic at Arroyo Grande
11/3/11	Thursday	6:33 AM	6:33 AM	on time	On Time	7:43 AM	7:57 AM	14 min. late	Late	
11/3/11	Thursday	1:33 PM	1:34 PM	1 min. late	On Time	2:43 PM	2:51 PM	8 min. late	Late	
11/4/11	Friday	7:33 AM	7:36 AM	3 min. late	On Time	8:43 AM	8:49 AM	6 min. late	On Time	
11/4/11	Friday	10:33 AM	10:33 AM	on time	On Time	11:43 AM	11:46 AM	3 min. late	On Time	
11/7/11	Monday	9:33 AM	9:34 AM	1 min. late	On Time	10:43 AM	10:41 AM	2 min. early	On Time	
11/8/11	Tuesday	5:15 PM	5:15 PM	on time	On Time	6:12 PM	6:18 PM	6 min. late	On Time	Express
11/9/11	Wednesday	8:33 AM	8:33 AM	on time	On Time	9:43 AM	9:47 AM	3 min. late	On Time	
11/10/11	Thursday	12:33 PM	12:33 PM	on time	On Time	1:43 PM	1:45 PM	2 min. late	On Time	
11/10/11	Thursday	6:33 PM	6:36 PM	3 min. late	On Time	7:43 PM	7:52 PM	9 min. late	Late	Many transfers at Pismo to Route 21

Northbound										
Date	Day of the week	Scheduled Departure Time	Actual Departure Time	Difference	RTA Standard	Scheduled Arrival Time	Actual Arrival Time	Difference	RTA Standard	Notes
10/28/11	Friday	5:14 PM	5:15 PM	1 min. late	On Time	6:24 PM	6:34 PM	10 min. late	Late	Traffic Delays
10/28/11	Friday	1:14 PM	1:14 PM	on time	On Time	2:24 PM	2:25 PM	1 min. late	On Time	
10/31/11	Monday	6:14 AM	6:18 AM	4 min. late	On Time	7:24 AM	7:27 AM	3 min. late	On Time	
11/1/11	Tuesday	6:14 PM	6:17 PM	3 min. late	On Time	7:24 PM	7:35 PM	11 min. late	Late	
11/2/11	Wednesday	7:14 AM	7:14 AM	on time	On Time	8:24 AM	8:30 AM	6 min. late	On Time	Traffic in Nipomo
11/3/11	Thursday	8:14 AM	8:14 AM	on time	On Time	9:24 AM	9:28 AM	4 min. late	On Time	
11/3/11	Thursday	3:14 PM	3:14 PM	on time	On Time	4:24 PM	4:30 PM	6 min. late	On Time	Waited for transfer bus
11/4/11	Friday	9:14 AM	9:17 AM	3 min. late	On Time	10:24 AM	10:22 AM	2 min. early	On Time	
11/4/11	Friday	12:14 PM	12:18 PM	4 min. late	On Time	1:24 PM	1:30 PM	6 min. late	Late	Loaded a wheelchair
11/7/11	Monday	11:14 AM	11:15 AM	1 min. late	On Time	12:24 PM	12:26 PM	2 min. late	On Time	
11/8/11	Tuesday	3:14 PM	3:14 PM	on time	On Time	4:24 PM	4:26 PM	2 min. late	On Time	
11/9/11	Wednesday	6:25 AM	6:25 AM	on time	On Time	7:23 AM	7:19 AM	4 min. early	On Time	Express
11/10/11	Thursday	2:14 PM	2:14 PM	on time	On Time	3:24 PM	3:28 PM	4 min. late	On Time	
11/10/11	Thursday	4:14 PM	4:14 PM	on time	On Time	5:24 PM	5:32 PM	8 min. late	Late	

APPENDIX E: RESULTS ON SANTA MARIA RIDERS

Santa Maria: 93454, 93455, 93458 Questions 1-11, 15-26

Q1: Will you be traveling roundtrip on RTA today?

Count of Q1	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Yes	21	16	20	57
No return another day	1	2	2	5
No Return another way	5		2	7
No not returning	2		1	3
Grand Total	29	18	25	72

79% of those riders from Santa Maria were traveling roundtrip on RTA

Q2: How did you get to the bus stop where you caught this bus?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Walk	10	1	6	17
Drive and Park	7	5	3	15
Dropped Off	6	7	7	20
Bicycle	1	2	3	6
Transfer from bus	4	3	3	10
Other			2	2
Multiple Answers			1	1
Grand Total	28	18	25	71

28% of riders from Santa Maria were dropped off

24% of riders from Santa Maria walked to the bus stop

21% of riders from Santa Maria drove and parked

Q3: Where did you catch this bus today?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Cal Poly	1	1	3	5
DT Transit Ctr	4	1	1	6
South St	1			1
S Higuera	2			2
Arroyo Grande			1	1
Nipomo	3	1	1	5
Alan Hancock		3		3
Marian Med	3		2	5
Sta Maria Amtrak	5	2	1	8
Sta Maria Transit	8	9	16	33
Grand Total	27	17	25	69

48% of riders from Santa Maria got on at the Santa Maria Transit Center

Q4: How long do you allow to reach this bus stop? (minutes)

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Less than 5 min	11		5	16
10 min	9	4	8	21
15 min	4	6	6	16
20 min	3	8	6	17
Grand Total	27	18	25	70

30% of respondents from Santa Maria allowed 10 minutes to get to the bus stop

24% of respondents from Santa Maria allowed 20 minutes or more to get to the bus stop

Q5: What is the purpose of your trip today?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Work	16	10	12	38
School	5	4	6	15
Shopping			1	1
Recreation	2	2	2	6
Personal	3	1	4	8
Grand Total	26	17	25	68

22% of riders from Santa Maria were traveling for school

56% of riders from Santa Maria were traveling for work

Q6: How did you pay for your fare today?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Cash	10	5	8	23
Regional Day Pass	4	2		6
31 Day Pass	14	7	15	36
Other		1		1
Grand Total	28	15	23	66

55% of riders from Santa Maria used a 31 day pass

35% of riders from Santa Maria used cash

Q7: How would you make the trip if RTA was not available?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Drive Self	12	8	6	26
Walk	2		1	3
Friend/Family	7	3	3	13
Would not make trip	6	4	11	21
Multiple	1	2	3	6
Grand Total	28	17	24	69

38% of riders from Santa Maria would drive themselves in RTA was not available

30% of riders from Santa Maria would not make the trip if RTA was not available

Q8: How will you reach your destination when you get off the bus?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Walk	19	6	5	30
Drive	4	1	2	7
Be picked up	4	6	8	18
Bicycle	1	2	4	7
Transfer	1	3	4	8
Grand Total	29	18	23	70

43% of riders from Santa Maria will reach their final destination by walking

26% of riders from Santa Maria will reach their final destination by being picked up

Q9: What is the closest bus stop where you will get off this bus?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Cal Poly	1	2		3
DT transit Ctr	4	3	2	9
S Higuera	6		2	8
Pismo Outlets	1	2	1	4
Arroyo Grande	5	3	5	13
Nipomo		1	2	3
Alan Hancock	1			1
Marian Medical	2			2
Sta Maria Amtrak			1	1
Sta Maria Transit Ctr	9	7	11	27
Grand Total	29	18	24	71

38% of riders from Santa Maria will get off the bus at Santa Maria Transit Center

18% of riders from Santa Maria will get off the bus at Arroyo Grande

Q10: How long will it take to reach your final destination from this bus stop?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Less than 5	12	1	4	17
10 min	4	2	3	9
15 min	5	3	2	10
20 min or more	8	12	13	33
Grand Total	29	18	22	69

48% of riders from Santa Maria allow 20 min or more to reach their final destination

25% of riders from Santa Maria allow less than 5 min to reach their final destination

Q11: Will you transfer from or to another bus on this trip?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
No only RT 10	24	13	16	53
RTA Rt 9	2	1		3
RTA rt 12/14	1		2	3
SLO City bus			1	1
RTA SCAT (21,23,24)	1	1	2	4
Atascadero Transit			1	1
SMAT	1	2	2	5
Multiple Transfers		1		1
Grand Total	29	18	24	71

75% of riders from Santa Maria are only riding RT 10

Q15: Did you have a car available for this trip?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Yes	14	9	11	34
No	15	9	12	36
Grand Total	29	18	23	70

51% of respondents from Santa Maria did not have a car available

49% of respondents from Santa Maria did have a car available

Q16: Do you have a valid driver's license?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Yes	15	14	13	42
No	13	4	11	28
Grand Total	28	18	24	70

60% of riders from Santa Maria did have a valid drivers license

40% of riders from Santa Maria did not have a valid drivers license

Q17: How long have you been riding RTA?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
First Time	1		1	2
Less than 6 months	5	6	6	17
6 months to 1 year	4	3	3	10
More than 1 year	18	8	14	40
Grand Total	28	17	24	69

58% of riders from Santa Maria have been riding RTA longer than 1 year.

Q18: How often do you ride RTA?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Less than 1/month	1	1	2	4
1 to 3 times/month	4	1	3	8
1 to 3 times/week	4	5	4	13
4 or more times/week	19	10	15	44
Grand Total	28	17	24	69

64% of respondents from Santa Maria ride RTA 4 or more times per week.

Q19: How did you first find out about RTA?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
School/Employer	4	3	3	10
Saw buses/stops	10	6	9	25
Family/Friends	10	3	8	21
Other	3	4	3	10
Multiple Answers	2	2	1	5
Grand Total	29	18	24	71

35% of riders from Santa Maria found out about RTA by seeing the stops/buses

30% of riders from Santa Maria found out about RTA from family/friends

Q20: How do you get most of your information about RTA?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
On the bus	15	11	14	40
RTA website	7	4	3	14
RTA phone line	1	3	2	6
RTA newsletters	4		1	5
Other	1			1
Multiple Answers	1		4	5
Grand Total	29	18	24	71

56% of riders from Santa Maria get most of their information about RTA on the bus

Q21: What is your gender?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Female	14	8	10	32
Male	15	10	15	40
Grand Total	29	18	25	72

56% of respondents from Santa Maria are male.

44% of respondents from Santa Maria are female.

Q23: What is your age?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
16 years or younger	3	1	2	6
17 to 25 years	5	5	9	19
25 to 64 years	21	12	13	46
Grand Total	29	18	24	71

65% of riders from Santa Maria are 25 to 64 years old.

27% of riders from Santa Maria are 17 to 25 years old.

Q24: What is your combined total household income?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Less than \$20,000	7	4	9	20
\$20,000 to \$30,000	3	3	4	10
\$30,000 to \$50,000	7	4	5	16
greater than \$50,000	7	6	3	16
Grand Total	24	17	21	62

32% of respondents from Santa Maria have a household income of less than \$20,000

Q25: Which of the following best describes your work?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Employed full time	13	10	8	31
Employed part time	4	3	6	13
Retired	2			2
Student	9	4	8	21
Not Currently Employed		1	2	3
Grand Total	28	18	24	70

44% of respondents from Santa Maria are employed full time

30% of respondents from Santa Maria are students

Q26: What is the best way for RTA to tell people about its services?

Count of Q22	Column Labels			
Row Labels	93454	93455	93458	Grand Total
Newspaper	1	1	2	4
Radio/TV	8	5	9	22
Send info to homes	5	6	1	12
Posters in stores	6		5	11
All	4		1	5
Multiple Answers	3	6	4	13
5, online	1			1
Grand Total	28	18	22	68

32% of respondents from Santa Maria think radio/tv is the best way for RTA to tell people about its services

APPENDIX F: RESULTS ON NIPOMO RIDERS

Nipomo: 93444 Questions 1-11, 15-26

Q1: Will you be traveling roundtrip on RTA today?

Count of Q1	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Yes	61	61
No return another day	4	4
No Return another way	6	6
No not returning	5	5
Grand Total	76	76

80% of riders from Nipomo were traveling roundtrip with RTA

Q2: How did you get to the bus stop where you caught this bus?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Walk	36	36
Drive and Park	12	12
Dropped Off	15	15
Bicycle	5	5
Transfer from bus	7	7
Other	1	1
Grand Total	76	76

47% of riders from Nipomo walked to the bus stop

20% of riders from Nipomo were dropped off at the bus stop.

Q3: Where did you catch this bus today?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Cal Poly	2	2
DT Transit Ctr	5	5
South St	2	2
S Higuera	4	4
Arroyo Grande	2	2
Nipomo	52	52
Alan Hancock	2	2
Marian Med	1	1
Sta Maria Amtrak	1	1
Sta Maria Transit	7	7
Grand Total	78	78

67% of riders from Nipomo got on the bus at Nipomo

Q4: How long do you allow to reach this bus stop? (minutes)

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Less than 5 min	17	17
10 min	23	23
15 min	17	17
20 min	18	18
Grand Total	75	75

31% of riders from Nipomo allowed 10 min to reach the bus stop

Q5: What is the purpose of your trip today?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Work	38	38
School	18	18
Shopping	4	4
Recreation	4	4
Medical/Dental	4	4
Personal	5	5
Multiple	5	5
Grand Total	78	78

49% of riders from Nipomo were traveling for work

23% of riders from Nipomo were traveling for school.

Q6: How did you pay for your fare today?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Cash	23	23
Regional Day Pass	8	8
31 Day Pass	37	37
Other	4	4
Grand Total	72	72

51% of riders from Nipomo used a 31 day pass to pay for their fare

32% of riders from Nipomo used cash to pay for their fare

Q7: How would you make the trip if RTA was not available?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Drive Self	24	24
Walk	4	4
Bicycle	1	1
Taxi	1	1
Friend/Family	24	24
Would not make trip	16	16
Multiple	5	5
Grand Total	75	75

32% of riders would have friend or family give them a ride if RTA were not available

32% of riders would drive self if RTA were not available

Q8: How will you reach your destination when you get off the bus?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Walk	50	50
Drive	7	7
Be picked up	4	4
Bicycle	3	3
Transfer	3	3
Multiple	4	4
Grand Total	71	71

70% of riders from Nipomo will reach their final destination by walking.

Q9: What is the closest bus stop where you will get off this bus?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Cal Poly	3	3
DT transit Ctr	8	8
South St	4	4
S Higuera	2	2
Pismo Outlets	2	2
Arroyo Grande	3	3
Nipomo	31	31
Alan Hancock	12	12
Sta Maria Amtrak	1	1
Sta Maria Transit Ctr	7	7
Grand Total	73	73

42% of riders from Nipomo will get off the bus in Nipomo

16% of riders from Nipomo will get off the bus at Alan Hancock College.

Q10: How long will it take to reach your final destination from this bus stop?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Less than 5	18	18
10 min	14	14
15 min	16	16
20 min or more	25	25
Grand Total	73	73

34% of riders from Nipomo allow 20 min or more to reach their final destination.

Q11: Will you transfer from or to another bus on this trip?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
No only RT 10	61	61
RTA Rt 9	1	1
RTA rt 12/14	1	1
SLO City bus	1	1
RTA SCAT (21,23,24)	2	2
SMAT	4	4
Multiple Transfers	1	1
Grand Total	71	71

86% of riders from Nipomo are only riding RTA rt 10.

Q15: Did you have a car available for this trip?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Yes	24	24
No	51	51
Grand Total	75	75

68% of riders from Nipomo did not have a car available

32% of riders from Nipomo did have a car available

Q16: Do you have a valid driver's license?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Yes	38	38
No	35	35
Grand Total	73	73

52% of riders from Nipomo did have a valid driver's license

48% of riders from Nipomo did not have a valid driver's license

Q17: How long have you been riding RTA?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
First Time	1	1
Less than 6 months	10	10
6 months to 1 year	18	18
More than 1 year	45	45
Grand Total	74	74

61% of riders from Nipomo have been riding RTA longer than 1 year.

Q18: How often do you ride RTA?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Less than 1/month	3	3
1 to 3 times/month	6	6
1 to 3 times/week	15	15
4 or more times/week	50	50
Grand Total	74	74

68% of riders from Nipomo ride RTA 4 or more times per week.

Q19: How did you first find out about RTA?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
School/Employer	5	5
Saw buses/stops	29	29
Family/Friends	26	26
Other	11	11
Multiple Answers	5	5
Grand Total	76	76

38% of riders from Nipomo found out about RTA from seeing the buses/stops

34% of riders from Nipomo found out about RTA from family/friends

Q20: How do you get most of your information about RTA?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
On the bus	38	38
RTA website	15	15
RTA phone line	4	4
RTA Newsletters	1	1
Other	1	1
All	13	13
5, family	1	1
5, friend	1	1
5, people on the rta	1	1
Grand Total	75	75

51% of riders from Nipomo get most of their information about RTA on the bus

20% of riders from Nipomo get most of their information about RTA on the RTA website

Q21: What is your gender?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Female	44	44
Male	34	34
Grand Total	78	78

56% of riders from Nipomo are female

44% of riders from Nipomo are male

Q23: What is your age?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
16 years or younger	1	1
17 to 25 years	30	30
25 to 64 years	43	43
65 years or older	2	2
Grand Total	76	76

57% of riders from Nipomo are 25 to 64 years old.

39% of riders from Nipomo are 17 to 25 years old.

Q24: What is your combined total household income?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Less than \$20,000	34	34
\$20,000 to \$30,000	10	10
\$30,000 to \$50,000	13	13
greater than \$50,000	13	13
Grand Total	70	70

49% of riders from Nipomo have a combined household income of less than \$20,000.\

Q25: Which of the following best describes your work?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Employed full time	32	32
Employed part time	15	15
Homemaker	2	2
Retired	1	1
Student	20	20
Not Currently Employed	5	5
Grand Total	75	75

43% of respondents from Nipomo are employed full time

27% of respondents from Nipomo are students

Q26: What is the best way for RTA to tell people about its services?

Count of Q22	Column Labels	
Row Labels	93444	Grand Total
Newspaper	3	3
Radio/TV	25	25
Send info to homes	10	10
Posters in stores	5	5
Other	1	1
All	1	1
Multiple Answers	24	24
5, coworkers and friends	1	1
5, co-workers, friends	1	1
5, email	1	1
5, internet	1	1
5, myself	1	1
5, websites	1	1
Grand Total	75	75

33% of respondents from Nipomo think that radio/tv is the best way for RTA to tell people about its services

32% of respondents from Nipomo think that there are multiple best ways for RTA to tell people about its services

Q22	(Multiple Items)					
Count of Q22	Column Labels					
Row Labels	Alan Hancock	Marian Medical	Sta Maria Amtrak	Sta Maria Transit	Grand Total	
DT Transit	3				3	
Santa Barbara St	1				1	
South St	1				1	
S Higuera St	2				2	
Pismo Beach	5			1	6	
Arroyo Grande	11	2	1	3	17	
Nipomo	13			6	19	
(blank)	1				1	
Grand Total	37	2	1	10	50	
50 respondents with a home zip code in SLO traveled Southbound over the SM River Bridge. Got on at stops 1-8, and got off at stops 9-12.						

Q22	(Multiple Items)					
Count of Q22	Column Labels					
Row Labels	DT Transit	Santa Barbara St	Pismo Beach	Arroyo Grande	Nipomo	Grand Total
Alan Hancock	1	1	3	3	2	10
Marian Medical					1	1
Sta Maria Amtrak					1	1
Sta Maria Transit	3		2	2	4	11
Grand Total	4	1	5	5	8	23
25 respondents with a home zip code in SLO traveled Northbound over the SM River Bridge. These riders got on at stops 9-12, and got off at stops 1-8.						