

To: Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

Date: 04/17/2018

From: Ruby Horta, Director of Planning & Marketing

Reviewed by: WC.

SUBJECT: Call Center Days of Operation

Background:

Over the years, County Connection's customer service role has evolved to address changing demands. In 2009, County Connection closed the Transportation Center at the Walnut Creek BART station to address economic pressures. This required reassignment of duties. At that time, the call center and front desk remained. Currently, the call center is open Monday – Friday from 6:30AM – 6:30PM and on Saturday from 8:00AM – 4:30PM. The front desk is open Monday – Friday, from 8am-5pm.

With the deployment of the TransitApp and Bus Tracker, as well as the availability of transit information on Google and County Connection's website, customer service calls have significantly decreased over the last several years. Calls totaled close to 78,000 in FY 2013. In FY 2017 calls had decreased to 55,000. This drop in call volume has allowed customer service staff to cover a wide array of other duties including staffing the call center and front desk, managing lost and found, processing Regional Transit Connection (RTC) cards, delivering schedules and transit passes to our partners, and addressing customer complaints.

The call center experiences a significant drop in call volume on Saturday, compared to weekdays. In order to accommodate required breaks, County Connection must schedule two customer service representatives each Saturday. Total calls received on Saturday average 35-70, which translates to a maximum of 35 calls per representative. The weekday call volume ranges between 130-200+ calls. The need to provide coverage on Saturday limits customer service staff availability during the week.

Recently, the customer service department lost two representatives due to attrition. Staff has considered hiring additional customer service representatives to avoid missing coverage during the week, however, closing the call center on Saturday would be a more cost effective solution and would provide flexibility in staffing weekend outreach events with existing staff.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the MP&L consider closing the call center on Saturday. This will eliminate the need to hire additional customer service representatives to ensure complete coverage of both the front desk and the call center and would allow customer service staff to attend community events, thus enhancing County Connection's presence in the communities we serve.

Action Requested:

Staff recommends the MP&L Committee forward the request to close the call center on Saturday for Board approval at the May Board meeting. If approved, the call center will open Monday – Friday starting June 2018.

Financial Implications:

Reduce the need for additional staff. Current customer service staff hours will be adjusted to provide full coverage during the week and attend community outreach events, as needed.