

To: Marketing, Planning, & Legislative Committee

Date: 10/29/2024

From: Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing & Communications

Reviewed by: AMS

SUBJECT: Mobile Lobby Report

Background:

During the pandemic, County Connection’s front lobby closed to the public due to the risk factors of being in an indoor and enclosed space. In 2021, and as social distancing restrictions began to lift for outdoor activities, staff launched a pilot “mobile lobby” to provide customer service at various locations around the county, including transit hubs, senior centers, and Farmers’ Markets.

Since its inception, customers who visit the Mobile Lobby can get information on Clipper, bus schedules, trip planning, paratransit, and have their questions answered in-person at a convenient location nearer to them than at the County Connection offices. In June of 2022, staff took the Mobile Lobby on bus routes, having customer service reps ride designated routes with a bag full of brochures, bus schedules, etc. Though this seemed to reach fewer people than at transit centers such as BART or Amtrak stations, having staff ride our routes allowed for more targeted engagement. This was particularly true when there was an upcoming service change on a line and staff could speak directly with passengers who may be impacted.

In its first year, the Mobile Lobby reached close to 5,000 individuals, and this increased to over 5,800 in fiscal year (FY) 2023. In FY 2024 staff saw a decrease in customer engagement, with just under 3,000 visitors at the Mobile Lobby (see table below).

Fiscal Year	Total Visitors	Clipper Cards Sold	Schedule Info Provided	Average Visitors Per Month
FY 2021-22	4,916	768	1,423	410
FY 2022-23	5,847	627	2,220	487
FY 2023-24	2,963	460	1,232	238

The decrease in visitors is in part due to staff participating in fewer weekend events, which had been factored into previous counts. As well, staff believes that as we get further away from the pandemic and transit schedules and patterns become more predictable, passengers are not seeking out information in the same way as they did when County Connection was making large shifts in response to quickly changing commute patterns. However, staff still finds the Mobile Lobby model to be a unique way to not only extend our customer service efforts, but to be out in the community and connect more people with the services we offer.

Given the decrease in visitor count, one strategy staff has begun testing is to schedule fewer “general” Mobile Lobbies, and instead planning more targeted ones. For example, in June 2024, staff teamed up with the Monument Crisis Center to hold a monthly Mobile Lobby on the second Monday of each month, during one of the organization’s weekly food distribution events. This allows staff to connect directly with communities who may benefit from Clipper START and Youth Clipper, two programs that offer reduced fares for transit riders.

As a second example of a targeted Mobile Lobby, at the start of the current school year, staff attended area Back-to-School and Registration events to speak with attendees about reduced-cost transit passes that are available for students, such as Pass2Class and Youth Clipper. The goal of scheduling a more strategic Mobile Lobby calendar is that staff can work with community entities such as schools, senior care facilities, and human services agencies to engage with audiences more attuned to the services and programs we provide. While a general approach of engaging with passengers at transit hubs is valuable, the hope is that staff can have even more impact by meeting targeted communities where they are, thereby compounding our efforts with other community resources, and ensuring the efficient use of our limited resources.

Financial Implications:

Any costs associated with the Mobile Lobby are included in the Promotions budget.

Recommendation:

None, for information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.

Attachments:

None.