

Regional Network Management Council

April 28, 2025

Agenda Item 3c

2023/2024 Regional Transit Passenger Snapshot Survey Update

Subject:

Information on the 2023/2024 Transit Passenger Snapshot Survey.

Background:

From 2013 through 2019, MTC implemented an intensive recurring transit passenger data collection program regionally codified by MTC Resolution No. 3866 (“Ongoing Survey Program”), while putting the survey program on pause during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This program surveyed all the Bay Area’s federally funded transit operators and collected detailed demographic and trip pattern data. This approach to data collection yielded a thorough and robust regional dataset but required five to six years to complete a full cycle of Bay Area data collection. In coordination with the region’s operators, MTC resumed the Ongoing Survey Program in 2024, but also pursued a simplified one-year survey (“Snapshot Survey”) in parallel. This one-time post-pandemic effort was designed to collect high-level summary data for transit operators more quickly than the Ongoing Survey Program’s multiyear timeframe.

The simplified one-year survey allowed the region to reassess its baseline understanding of post-pandemic transit rider and trip characteristics for fixed-route passengers within our nine-county region. MTC collected the Snapshot Survey using simpler data collection methods, and with a limited set of questions. The one-time Snapshot Survey required approximately \$900,000 in state funding to deliver, in contrast to the Ongoing Survey Program which relies on an average of approximately \$600,000 in FTA 5303 monies annually.

Snapshot Survey Findings:

The 2023/2024 Snapshot Survey collected data from approximately 16,500 passengers.

Summaries of key variables were performed, which are summarized below:

- **Passenger demographics (race/ethnicity, household income, vehicle availability, and disability):** In general, the transit riding public is less white and Asian than the background population, but more Black and Hispanic. Transit riders also skew lower income and are about four times more likely to be in poverty than the background

regional population. About 65 percent of passengers indicated that they did not have a vehicle to use in lieu of their transit trip. Overall, about 8 percent of transit passengers indicate having a disability that limits their ability to travel.

- **Trip purpose:** About 50 percent of passengers indicated traveling to or from work, which is down from roughly 60 percent pre-pandemic.
- **Transit riding frequency:** Nearly 3/5 (58 percent) of passengers use transit five or more days per week. Additionally, about 91 percent of riders expected to ride transit the same or more in the next year.
- **Perception of safety on transit:** About 10 percent of riders indicate feeling unsafe or very unsafe riding transit, while 58 percent of riders indicate feeling safe or very safe.
- **Desired transit improvements:** The most requested improvement was increasing transit frequency. Lower fares, reliability, and cleanliness were also highly requested.

Future Actions:

Potential next steps for the Snapshot Survey include developing comparisons of pre- and post-pandemic transit rider and trip characteristics (summer 2025) and development of interactive dashboards showing survey results (summer/fall 2025). Future data collection such as transit customer experience surveys, are being considered in conjunction with other existing survey efforts to inform the Regional Network Management Program. MTC staff will also continue working closely with Bay Area operators on onboard surveys in fiscal year 2025-26, while closely tracking any funding implications due to the dynamic federal environment.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Presentation