



August 2, 2017

To: TAMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
From: Lisa Rheinheimer, MST Director of Planning and Marketing
Subject: MST RealTime Advertising Campaign

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive presentation on MST's RealTime advertising campaign.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The RealTime advertising campaign has a budget of \$45,000.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

MST's menu of tactics under Strategic Goal #2 (Provide Quality Transit and Mobility Management Services) adopted by the MST Board in June of 2016 includes the following: "Upgrade and enhance technologies to enhance customer experience." In addition, the FY 2017 MST Action Plan, also adopted by the MST Board, includes installation of an interactive voice response telephone system, which is an integral part of the MST RealTime customer information package.

DISCUSSION:

People hate waiting for things, whether at the grocery checkout line or at the bus stop. At least at the checkout line, people can visually see their ultimate goal – the checkout process. Studies have shown that waiting for the bus, on the other hand, is particularly frustrating because a passenger cannot see where the bus is located until it's within sight. This wait anxiety is now something of the past with new technologies which provide immediate information in real-time about when the next bus will arrive.

In fact, a study from the University of Washington showed people's perception of their wait time for the next bus was 50 percent longer than what it actually was. Once technology was introduced which provided real-time bus arrival information, people

perceived their wait time closer to reality, and, it is hoped, much more satisfied with the bus service provided.

Over the last several years, MST has been working on bringing instant bus arrival information to our passengers to help ease the stress of waiting for the bus. The first such external deployment was the electronic passenger information signs at the various JAZZ Bus Rapid Transit stops on the Peninsula. The new technologies to be more widely deployed will allow virtually all MST passengers to receive GPS-based bus arrival information at their fingertips no matter which bus line they are waiting for. Branded together as a package, staff has named these technologies “MST RealTime.” Whether by text, phone, app, or Google maps, MST RealTime is real easy.

There are 4 different ways to receive RealTime information: text message, phone call, smart phone application, and Google Maps.

By text, a passenger can send MST a text message by sending the word “Next” with their 4-digit bus stop number to 25370. Within 30 seconds, MST will automatically send the passenger estimated or scheduled bus arrival times.

By phone, a passenger can call MST at 1-888-MST-BUS1 and provide a 4-digit bus stop number to hear voice automated estimated or scheduled arrival times for that bus stop.

By smart phone application, a passenger can install the Transit App for free and receive information about bus routes and times near them.

By Google Maps, individuals can use their desktop or use the Google Maps app on their smart phone for up-to-date arrival information.

How it works: Installed on all MST vehicles is an Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) which communicates location information to MST Communications Center through a program called TransitMaster. TransitMaster is used by the Communication Center to monitor all buses in service.

This vehicle location information is used to send predicted bus arrival information for our passengers by text, phone, app, or Google Maps. The information is refreshed and updated every 30 seconds, so the accuracy of bus arrival information is exceptional.

Now that these technologies are ready and in use, MST will be launching an advertising campaign to bring awareness to the options available for bus arrival information. A number of ads have been created including a TV spot with 60 second, 30 second, and 15 second versions. A brochure was created and printed. The MST website will be updated to include a new RealTime page centered on how to use the four different technologies for bus arrival information.

The launch of the ad campaign will be timed with the August back-to-school season including colleges and universities. Advertising will include the following:

- Interior and exterior bus ads
- Brochures on all buses, at transit centers, and at local businesses/organizations
- Rider's Guide full page spread for September 2nd edition
- MST website – includes brochure and TV ad
- Monterey County Weekly full page ad
- Pop-up booths at customer service locations upon launch
- Paid social media ads
- Paid TV ads
- Press release

In developing the RealTime materials and advertising methods, staff referred to the 2016 Rider and Community Surveys Final Report to ensure that the marketing materials match how our passengers learn about MST services. In this regard, riders hear about MST services through these forms of media:

- Onboard the bus from drivers or written notices - 43.2%
- Signs at transit centers or bus stops – 10.3%
- MST Rider's Guide – 21.4%
- MST website – 7.5%
- Local newspaper – 2.2%
- Google Transit – 8.6%
- MST customer service phone line - .9%
- Social media – 1.4%
- Family/friends – 1.0%
- Other – 3.4%

After the marketing campaign is complete, staff anticipates a reduction in the number of calls received about when the next bus will arrive. And, while not entirely predictable, greater customer satisfaction as well as potential increases in ridership and the fare revenue and associated grant funding levels would be additional positive outcomes for the agency and its annual operating budget.