Item 24-1240: Ridership Report
Item 24-1241: Staffing Update
Item 24-1242: Valley Transit Evening & Saturday Service Modifications Update
Fox Cities Transit Commission
Tues, Sep 24, 2024 2:50PM

George Dearborn (Chairman) 05:26
Next item, Deb, is the ridership report, if you could please.

Deb Ebben (Assistant General Manager - Valley Transit) 05:32
So, our August fixed route ridership was down 21%. That's approximately 11,500 rides when you look, when you compare it to last year. This year's our August ridership is definitely reflective of the service changes we made in July. The ADA and ancillary services and second page, decreased 8% in July, or approximately 700 rides when you compared to last year. I'm sorry, in August, not July. The decrease can be seen in basically all of the services—the ADA services, elderly, Sunday, and the northern Winnebago dial a ride. And as expected, you can see that the connector is showing an increase of approximately 800 rides.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 06:22
Questions, not seeing any. Okay, thank you. And move on to staffing updates. And Ron go through that, please.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 06:34
Sure, just to give you an update of where we're at. So previously we had our table of organization was 36 full time drivers. Currently we have about 24 full time drivers. 21 of 24 are scheduled daily. We have three of them who are still in training; that will give us about 120 hours additional driving time as soon as they're done. I would expect they should be done within the next month or so and ready to go to work.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 07:03
On the part time side, we have seven positions right now. Five of seven of those individuals are scheduled on a regular basis. We have one that's in training, and then we have another one that's been out on long term medical leave, and the last I heard would be coming back, hopefully in the next couple of weeks. So, we're still—we could still use a couple more part time drivers, but we're positioned a lot better than we were.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 07:31
Good. Any questions?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 07:35
Any questions on that?

George Dearborn (Chairman) 07:38
Guess not.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 07:40
Next, move on to Ron the transit evening and Saturday and service modifications update.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 07:47
Sure. So, the services is working pretty much like we anticipated it would. By the way, I did pass out just a copy of what the program is for the VT Connector, so everybody has it for reference. This is actually a copy of what's on our web page.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 08:08
One of the ways that we follow what's happening on the street is by following the number of complaints that come in—complaints, comments, suggestions, etc. If I go back to and look in July, when the service changes were made, the number of complaints in 2023 we had nine of them in July for the connector, and in 2024 we had eight. In August. In 2023 we had 14 complaints. In 2024 we had three. In September of 23 we had 19. Through today, we have seven in September. So, what we're seeing is a downward trajectory on our number of complaints coming in, which is a good thing.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 08:58
We talked about this. We you know, we thought by making this big a change we'd see some complaints coming in, and we certainly saw a small handful of them. But I think with the complaints going down, that's a good indication that things are working reasonably well for the people that are using it. Of the seven complaints that we received this month, six of seven were people that were not happy with the driver in some fashion. One of seven the bus or the van showed up either late or early. I didn't dig into the details of it, but it was either late or early, and then they complained about that. So, with that, we've had seven complaints this month so far.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 09:39
To talk about the number of rides being connected, I just went back the last handful of days, and this is pretty typical of what it's been. Yesterday we had 81 connector trips. Saturday, we had 59. Friday, we had 66. And Thursday, we had 102. So, it's—it's about what I expected it to be. I expect it will continue to grow as people get used to it, but that's pretty much consistent with what it's been. It moves anywhere between 60 and 100 is pretty much depending on any given day. Some of it depends on the number of group trips by different agencies. As an example, there's one agency in town; they take a group trip probably once a month, and they—whole bunch of them get together and go meet somewhere, so the rides actually, you know, shoot up. So, but all in all, it's doing what we expected it to do, and the people have an option for transportation, and it's not perfect, but it's an option for them. So, I guess with that, I'll open it up to any questions. Was brought up last month to bring it up so we could talk through it. So.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 11:01
Yes.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 11:01
I found it a little confusing what number to call. Like on the bus stops, it all says the other—the transit number. Is there a link if you call that number right now can they get to this or not?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 11:14
I believe so.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 11:15
Someone should put a sticker on there, and say "During these hours call this," or something. That's would be one thing I've been thinking about, because I just feel like when, even when you look up the transit you get the other number first. So, it'd be kind of nice.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 11:27
And the other thought I had could be simple enough, is on the app that probably just sits blank anyway. But there was an app of **[indecipherable]**, I mean, literally, if it was just the phone number itself, people could click that and just, you know, call the call transit. And it probably would be the easiest thing to do, or something like that. You know, I don't know.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 11:45
I believe there's a message on the voicemail if they—if somebody doesn't answer our phone, I believe there's a message that they can connect directly to VT II. I'll have to verify that, but I believe that was put into place. Sarah, if you've seen that?

[Sarah responds off microphone.]

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 12:08
So, if you call the main number you could get—

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 12:10
You should be able to get through to VTII. When we're operating, somebody will answer the phone and they can transfer you, and then they give you the number as well, but they'll transfer you.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 12:20
Yeah, I just have one more question about, you know, all the data in the system. I mean, so every time someone calls from a new location, they basically have to enter, like, a new location that's just, and that just kind of develop the routes, or?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 12:35
Well, sure, they have to put the data in the system, and we have to have the data to track it. So, when you when you're getting federal money, you have to track a lot of different things. And so, we track the customers. Most of the customers using the system are already in it. If it's a first-time ride, it takes a little bit longer, but once we have all your information in there—

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 12:58
So, they someone got a ride from my place at the Vaudette and so now I'm in the system, right? So, anybody else would call wouldn't have to go through that. Is that accurate to say?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 13:10
Yes, your address would be in the system. The Vaudette would be in the system. It would be. So, what happens in the database—first of all, customer calls in, they're gonna ask what their name is. They're going to start typing their name. Either it's going to pre populate and show up that, boom, they're here, or they're not. So, then they'll put the information in the contact information for the individual, address, phone number, etc., and then point of origin, point of destination. So yes, if it's in the system—most of the widely used things are in the database already. If it's somebody going to a location that's new, like the Vaudette, for instance, then they would put that in there, and that would stand the database for anybody to get to. So, it just pre populates and shows up. So, they type, start typing in Vaudette and it should pop up. Anybody else have any questions?

George Dearborn (Chairman) 14:06
Seeing none.