



ITEM ID: 2023-296-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: September 15, 2023

MEETING DATE: September 22, 2023

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lisa Bahr, Chief Customer Experience Officer

SUBJECT: Customer Experience Quarterly Update for Q4 FY2022-23

Issue

Staff is updating the Committee on Customer Experience campaigns and activities for the fourth quarter of FY 2022-23 (April 1 – June 30, 2023). These updates are provided each quarter.

Recommendation

Receive and file.

Strategic Commitment

This report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitment of:

- **Customers Are Our Business:** We respect and value our customers, putting them at the heart of all we do, and work hard to attract and retain new customers by understanding their needs and finding new and innovative ways to delight them.

Background

The Customer Experience team's FY2022-23 goals are to provide the most exceptional experience in public transportation, help regain and grow ridership, and reposition and elevate the value of the Metrolink brand.

This report is an overview of how the Customer Experience team worked to achieve those objectives during the fourth quarter of FY2022-23, ending June 30, 2023.

Discussion

Regain and Grow Ridership

Ridership and Ticket Sales

Ridership during the three months ending June 2023 reached 1,316,421 boardings, an increase of 13.1% over the same period from 2022. It reflects a 17.1% increase in weekday boardings and 12.5% fewer weekend boardings, primarily due to the San Clemente track closures.

In May 2023, Metrolink again launched the \$15 Summer Day Pass. Sales exceeded last year's numbers for May and June by 69%.

See attachment "Number of Metrolink Passes and Tickets Sold Per Month Q4 FY22 vs FY23" for additional details.

Potential Rider Study

Staff completed a study of potential riders, which identified barriers to ridership. The study used a quantitative online survey of potential riders near Metrolink stations to collect demographic, behavioral, and psychographic data. This was followed by a series of focus group discussions with respondents for a deep dive into the issues identified. The study found that concerns about crime are the main barrier that keeps non-riders from taking the train and that initiatives to remove the obstacles to ridership must be accompanied by efforts to influence potential riders' perceptions of Metrolink.

Earth Day

In April, staff launched the annual Earth Day campaign, promoting free rides on April 22 to encourage new riders to try Metrolink. The campaign focused on leisure travel since Earth Day was on a Saturday. As part of the promotion, riders could participate in a photo contest to share their Metrolink experience. Staff also partnered with Yelp LA to create an exclusive promotion for members to explore the Metrolink system and share their experiences.

The Earth Day campaign was deployed in English and Spanish, resulting in new post-pandemic record ridership with 20,846 boardings. 393 photo submissions from our riders and Yelp members rated the Metrolink Experience a 4.5 out of 5. Additional results included:

	Impressions	Engagement
Website	33,903 (page views)	25,928 (users)
Social Media	191,751	10,861
Paid Advertising	1,767,342	21,716 clicks
Earned Media	5,233,698 (total audience)	62 mentions; \$245,267 ad value

Summer Travel

Metrolink's Summer Travel campaign began on May 2 with a celebration of National Bike

Month and free fare for riders who boarded trains with their bicycles during Bike to Work Week, May 15-19. Metrolink partnered with BikeLA for their series of tutorials at LA Union Station to walk participants through how to travel on transit with a bike. Metrolink also participated in a station activation on Bike to Work Day, in partnership with the Burbank Transportation Management Organization (BTMO), to greet riders and distribute Metrolink swag. Our Bike Month activities highlighted the ability to bring bikes on board the train – as a “last mile” solution or just for fun. Bike to Work Week 2023 ridership reached a post-pandemic high for this campaign.

Bike to Work Week Total Ridership	Week Over Week Change	Year Over Year Change
5,050	+40%	+11%

The lines with the strongest ridership were San Bernardino (1,643), Orange County (797) and Antelope Valley (588). Arrow service had 151 riders board with bicycles.

Metrolink distributed a press release on May 10, 2023 announcing the free rides during Bike to Work Week, which resulted in 11 earned mentions (six online/print, four television, one radio) with an audience of 4,968,065 and an equivalent ad value of \$181,343.

LA County Fair (LACF)

Metrolink partnered with the LA County Fair by offering a special stop at the Pomona Fairplex. The stops were available on San Bernardino Line during weekends between May 13 - 29 and on Memorial Day, May 30, with a free shuttle from the train platform and the fair entrance. In addition to the regular train schedule, a special late-night train departed from the fairgrounds at 10:10 pm, headed towards Los Angeles. CRRs assisted passengers at the special Fairplex platform station stop for the duration of the LA County Fair.

A total of 1,967 riders took advantage of the special stop, a 6.7% increase from the previous year.

Metrolink issued a pair of press releases regarding the special train service to and from the Los Angeles County Fair, the first on May 9 to announce the service and another on May 24 alerting riders of the upcoming final weekend. The effort resulted in 24 earned mentions (seven online/print, eleven television, six radio) with an audience of 2,568,157 and an equivalent ad value of \$139,222.

\$15 Summer Day Pass

Metrolink's \$15 Summer Day Pass campaign was launched for the second time this past summer. The fare promotion is designed to increase ridership during the traditionally slower summer months and was available between May 30 and Sept. 1, 2023. The campaign, which allowed riders to experience unlimited travel throughout Metrolink's system for just \$15 per day, successfully increased ridership during the promotional period. This campaign was promoted extensively via multiple channels, including social media, email marketing, website, and station signage.

The preliminary rider feedback regarding the campaign has been highly positive. The \$15 Summer Day Pass campaign has successfully elevated ridership levels and sustained

financial viability, reinforcing Metrolink's reputation as an accessible and reliable means of transportation. Again, the campaign successfully attracted new riders to Metrolink: One in three customers buying the \$15 Summer Day Pass was new to Metrolink.

Metrolink shared a press release on May 25, 2023 announcing the \$15 Summer Day Pass, which resulted in 45 earned mentions (32 online/print, nine television, four radio) with an audience of 18,847,501 and an equivalent ad value of \$304,419.

Sales Channel	Tickets Sold 2022	Tickets Sold 2023	% Change	2022 Revenue May 30 – July 12	2023 Revenue May 29 – July 12	% Change
Ticket Windows	NA	58	NA	NA	\$870.00	NA
Ticket Machines	NA	2,331	NA	NA	\$34,965	NA
Mobile	6,510	7,330	+12.6%	\$97,650	\$109,950	+12.6%
Total	6,510	9,719	+49.3%	\$97,650	\$145,785	+49.3%

Improve the Customer Experience

The Customer Experience team collaborates with other Metrolink departments daily to improve our customers' experience. Key initiatives are highlighted here.

Customer Service Programs

To better communicate with student/youth groups using Metrolink, Customer Relations implemented a procedure documenting the primary language of group trips booked with Metrolink. Staff will use existing language translation tools, including the Jeenie app or the call center's universal language line, to better support groups, particularly during a service disruption.

In June, the Amtrak Redcap Amendment was approved by the Board, continuing Redcap cart service to Metrolink passengers needing assistance at LA Union Station. The agreement is valid for two years through FY25.

Metrolink's Quality Service Pledge (QSP) was informally expanded to include Amtrak codeshare trains on the Ventura County Line. Metrolink ticket and pass holders who experience one-time extensive delays of 60 minutes or more while using a codeshare train are eligible for compensation and alternate transportation reimbursement. Codeshare trains were also added to the customer web forms (comments, refunds, and QSPs) to simplify the process for riders seeking compensation. Additionally, Customer Relations Representatives (CRRs) implemented a process of creating QR codes out of the Uber voucher link issued by Communications Coordinators. CRRs display the QR code on their Metrolink-issued mobile phones for customers to easily scan and go directly to the voucher, reducing the time it takes to help a customer delayed by service disruptions.

