



ITEM ID: 2023-380-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: December 1, 2023

MEETING DATE: December 8, 2023

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lisa Bahr, Chief Customer Experience Officer

SUBJECT: Customer Experience Update for July through October (FY2023-24)

Issue

Staff is updating the Committee on Customer Experience campaigns and activities for the July 1 through October 31, 2023 (FY 2023-24).

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 FY2023-24 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 the ways the Customer Experience group worked to achieve those objectives during the first quarter of FY2023-24, ending October 31, 2023.

Discussion

Regain and Grow Ridership

Ridership and Ticket Sales

Ridership for the period July 1, 2023 to September 30, 2023, reached 1,422,433 boardings, an increase of 12.1% over the same period from 2022. It reflects an 11.5% increase in weekday boardings. Weekend boardings also increased by 15.7% as ridership recovered following the opening of the tracks in San Clemente.

Monthly Pass sales increased 8.8% from a year ago. Sales of 7-Day Passes declined by 14.5%, but that decline was partially offset by strong sales of 10-Day Flex Passes, up 47.8% from a year ago. Strong sales were also reported for Metrolink's \$15 Summer Day Pass, up 52.5% from a year ago. October ridership is still being evaluated.

Number of Passes and Tickets sold per month (July to September) FY24 vs FY23

TICKET TYPE	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	FY23Q1	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	FY24Q1
Monthly Pass	3,281	3,510	3,862	10,653	3,603	3,810	4,175	11,588
7-Day Pass	2,162	2,935	2,445	7,542	1,979	2,226	2,241	6,446
10-Day Flex Pass	578	838	727	2,143	914	1,130	1,124	3,168
5-Day Flex Pass	1,801	2,249	2,334	6,384	1,792	2,175	2,387	6,354
Round-Trip Ticket	29,700	33,598	34,354	97,652	31,319	36,318	39,291	106,928
One-Way Ticket	134,527	141,281	143,246	419,054	148,091	162,512	170,997	481,600
\$15 Summer Day Pass	6,070	7,114	491	13,675	9,087	11,464	303	20,854
\$10 Weekend Day Pass	18,155	11,797	9,361	39,313	12,668	10,877	14,289	37,834

\$15 Summer Day Pass

Metrolink's \$15 Summer Day Pass campaign was launched for the second year in a row this past summer. The Summer Day Pass 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.

The \$15 Summer Day Pass campaign successfully elevated ridership levels and sustained financial viability, reinforcing Metrolink's reputation as an accessible and reliable means of transportation. The preliminary rider feedback regarding the campaign was highly positive. Again in 2023, the campaign successfully attracted new riders to Metrolink with one in three

riders buying the \$15 Summer Day Pass being new to Metrolink.

Sales Channel	Tickets Sold 2022	Tickets Sold 2023	% Change	2022 Revenue	2023 Revenue	% Change
				May 30 – Sept. 2	May 29 – Sept. 1	
TICKET WINDOWS	NA	273	NA	NA	\$4,095	NA
TICKET MACHINES	NA	6,620	NA	NA	\$99,300	NA
MOBILE	18,059	21,401	+18.5%	\$270,885	\$321,015	+18.5%
TOTAL	18,059	28,294	+56.7%	\$270,885	\$424,410	+56.7%

Insomniac Special Trains

Metrolink operated two special late-night train services to support Insomniac festival events, including Hard Summer (August 5-7) and Escape Halloween (October 27-29). Metrolink’s Insomniac Hard Summer special trains sold 724 tickets with \$14,480 in revenue, while Insomniac Escape Halloween sold 1,116 tickets and earned \$27,951 in revenue.

Ventura County Weekend Service

For the first time in Metrolink history, the Ventura County Line now operates seven days a week. On July 1, Sunday service was added to complement the Saturday service, first added in May 2021.

Following the addition of this service, weekend boardings increased by 267%, and revenue totaled \$97,322 through October 31, 2023 (up 51% from the previous year).

Mobility-4-All

Metrolink’s low-income discount program was relaunched on August 7, 2023, as the Mobility-4-All program. The renaming enables the agency to reaffirm our commitment to make public transportation more equitable, without reference to socioeconomic status. Metrolink passengers with a California Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card are eligible for a 50% discount on all Metrolink tickets and passes. Riders can use their EBT card at any Metrolink station ticket machine to validate and unlock the discount.

The relaunch campaign utilized social media (paid and organic), email, earned media and outreach to community leaders and food pantries. Since the relaunch, ticket sales increased +13.8% in August and +21.2% in September compared to July 2023 sales.

California Clean Air Day

On October 4, California Clean Air Day, Metrolink offered free fares to highlight the benefits of public transportation, including reducing air pollution, saving money, and relieving stress. The campaign also empowered customers to make a big impact on air quality in the region by making one small change: leaving their cars at home.

The CX team collaborated with the University of California Riverside to create a community mural painting event using smog-eating paint. The event drew enthusiastic participation, with 58 sign-ups from community members and UCR students. The event garnered extensive earned media coverage by the ABC affiliate station and numerous other media outlets, reaching a staggering audience of 2,899,106 individuals.

The overall campaign results were very strong, resulting in a new post-pandemic ridership record of 26,077 riders on a single day – a 30% increase over average weekday ridership figures.

Student Adventure Pass

On Monday, October 9, Metrolink launched the Student Adventure Pass, a new LCTOP grant-funded, pilot program that enables students to ride Metrolink for free. The Student Adventure Pass was launched on both the Metrolink mobile app and ticket machines.

Metrolink partnered with over 35 colleges, universities, schools, and school districts to promote the program to students. The CX team assembled a new street team to boost its on-campus presence, engage with students to promote the program and help students receive their mobile Student Adventure Pass. The street team attended 20 campuses throughout October.

During the first three weeks of the campaign, 16,942 new student mobile app accounts were created, compared to 946 new student accounts that were created during the same period in 2022. The response on social media has been positive and more than 22% of engagements were from new audience members.

The team continues to gather additional data and will share future updates as the pilot program continues.

Next Steps

Staff will present its next update to the Executive Committee in March 2024.

Prepared by: Sabrina Davis, Director of Marketing & Partnerships

Approved by: Lisa Bahr, Chief Customer Experience Officer

Attachment(s)

[Presentation - CX Update July to Oct 2023](#)