

Appendix A

Discussion of Day Passes

In order to achieve a desired target objective for farebox recovery, Yuba-Sutter Transit has proposed increasing fares to bolster passenger revenue. Yuba-Sutter Transit should also alter its fare collection method on local fixed route service at the same time. It is proposed that the free transfer proof of payment be replaced by a day pass. This change would benefit those passengers who take frequent trips on the local service, as well as improve service efficiency.

One of the goals for efficient operation is to reduce the handling of fare instruments by both bus operators and passengers. In a representative month of service, January 2008, bus operators recorded that 61% of passengers who made initial payment did so by presenting cash or tickets. This percentage would be higher if student passes were not subsidized at the low monthly price of \$5.00. A large majority of cash and ticket payers collect transfers to continue their one-way trips on their next route(s). These transfers need to be punched for month, day, time and originating route. When the transfers are collected on a subsequent route, they are then punched for that route and retained.

Lane Transit District in Eugene, Oregon eliminated transfers in favor of a day pass. A rider boards the first bus of the day and pays a single cash fare. Nothing is issued to the rider unless she or he wants to purchase a day pass. Since no transfers slips are issued, the rider would need to either pay cash fares on all subsequent bus trips (even in the same direction) or use a day pass for all bus trips for the rest of the day. Depending on how the day pass is priced, most riders are likely to purchase the day pass on the first trip. Cash, ticket or transfer handling is then eliminated on all subsequent trips. The day pass serves as proof of payment for the date issued.

Lane Transit District staff put forward the following reasons for eliminating transfers in favor of day passes:

- Transfers were the single biggest point of contention between drivers and customers
- Drivers made errors in punching out transfers
- It took a lot of time to validate transfers during boarding
- There were health concerns around handling transfers that had been customer's mouths, etc.
- Fare loss was higher with transfers because they were harder to validate

Yuba-Sutter employees contend with these same issues. When transfers are eliminated, customer boardings speed up, thus saving bus trip time. Fare payment becomes straightforward, leading to less fraud and customer relations issues. Bus operator health issues are alleviated.

The day pass fare procedure described above needs to be implemented carefully. It should be recognized that cash paying riders who only take a single one-way bus trip that requires a transfer would end up paying more than the current free transfer system. It is believed that this is a low number of riders, since most presumably take return trips at a later time in the day. Statistics for the number of boarding passenger trips per rider is not currently available. On the other hand, riders who make two or more one-way trips (using more than one bus) would benefit in terms of price, as well as convenience. Day passes can also encourage riders to take bus trips that they would not have taken under the current fare system, which would bolster ridership levels.

The day pass price must be set carefully to avoid passenger revenue and/or ridership loss. If it is assumed that a rider currently averages just over 2 one-way trips per day, then a day pass price could be set that would be revenue neutral and still prevent loss of ridership. The consultant makes the following assumptions in Figure x-xx for setting the day pass price:

Figure A-1

DAY PASS CALCULATION	Adult Fare	Reduced Fare
New cash fare per bus boarding	\$1.25	\$0.60
Average one-way trips per day (including the changes of buses to complete trip)	2.2	2.2
New day pass price	\$2.75	\$1.35

The new price is designed to offer a reasonable price to riders, while optimizing fare revenue. The price should also not be so attractive as to discourage the purchase of monthly passes.

Other implementation issues also need to be considered. Day passes would only be issued on a bus when exact fare is given. As a trade-off for reducing the number of punch items such as routes and times on transfers, bus operators would need to take special care to punch the date correctly. This could be alleviated by varying the style of day passes issued each day. A larger system such as Lane Transit District pre-prints its day passes with dates. This would likely be too costly and unnecessary for Yuba-Sutter, but randomly varying colors or styles by date, or even punching inside a 2 or 3 pre-printed letter matrix to reinforce validity for the date along with punched date itself would reduce fraud perpetrated by riders who try to save or steal the day passes. Bus operators should also be required to keep pads or bundles of day passes on their person when leaving a bus and to use special punches, rather than the standard round whole punches are currently prevalent on the system. Yuba-Sutter staff can consult with a variety of transit properties that are currently using a day pass / no transfer slip fare procedure.