

Riverside Transit Agency's

Fiscal Year 2017

Annual Report



2019 APTA AdWheel Awards

Category: Best Marketing and Communications
Educational Effort: Print Media

COMPANY SUMMARY

The Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) provides public transportation for Western Riverside County, operating 38 fixed routes, nine express routes and Dial-A-Ride service. RTA's service area spans 2,500 square miles, among the largest in the nation. During Fiscal Year 2018, RTA buses had 8.5 million boardings, operated over 871,000 revenue hours and 16.6 million revenue miles under an annual operating budget of \$87 million. RTA employs a total of 900 employees including administrative, maintenance, operational and contracted operations staff. A total of 224 vehicles compose the fixed-route fleet with another 110 dedicated to paratransit services.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Hundreds of people are getting an intimate look at RTA's latest accomplishments, its newest services and positive financial standings thanks to the Agency's Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Report, which published in December 2017. More than 500 copies of the report were printed and distributed to city officials, regional and state lawmakers, chambers of commerce, schools, members of congress, libraries, media outlets, other Southern California and national transit agencies. The report's main objective was to provide an easy-to-read, comprehensive and entertaining document that highlighted successes, popular programs and statistical information related to RTA.

STATEMENT OF NEED/OPPORTUNITY

The 2017 Annual Report provided RTA with the opportunity to spotlight significant accomplishments during an exciting 12-month period. Fiscal Year 2017

was a great time to be a bus rider. RTA made major strides in customer service by launching RapidLink, a limited-stop service between Riverside and Corona. We upgraded dozens of bus shelters in downtown Riverside, expanded free Wi-Fi to all our buses, and forged partnerships with area universities and colleges so thousands of students could get unlimited bus rides. The year also gave us other reasons to smile. We celebrated the news that we were chosen to host the California Transit Association's fall conference; laid the groundwork for long-awaited mobility hubs in Hemet, Temecula and University of California, Riverside; and got a thumbs-up from a major independent audit that showed us continuing to perform at an elite level and making good use of taxpayer dollars. The year also marked RTA's 40th birthday, and we were proud to remain the premier public transportation provider in Riverside County, a friend to people on the move, and a driving force for prosperity in this great region. The annual report serves an important role in RTA's communications efforts and informs individuals who might not otherwise know about the Agency's progress over the year. Showcasing our many successes provides us with credibility as a public agency and keeps us visible to funding agencies and lawmakers who provide financial support for our operating and capital needs.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Create a professional, accurate and informative report
- Inform our riders, members of the public and stakeholder about RTA's accomplishments

Targeted Audience

- Members of RTA's Board of Directors



- Local, regional, state and national lawmakers
- Various chambers of commerce
- Institutes of higher learning, including area colleges and universities
- Libraries served by our transit system
- Media outlets, including the Press-Enterprise and Los Angeles Times
- Other Southern California transit agencies

SOLUTION/PROJECT SUMMARY

Before work began on the report, we developed an idea of utilizing eye-catching yellows and swaths of blue colors throughout the document, resulting in a

professional and visually appealing product. We also organized a major photo shoot to include new images of our vehicle fleet, employees and the customers whom we pledge to serve. We wanted the report to be focused and organized. That's why we divided it into various sections. The first few pages of the report contain a welcome from RTA's Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board, an introduction to our 22-member Board of Directors and RTA's mission statement. The rest of the report focuses on our growing ridership, technology, community, involvement, milestones and special recognition, financials and a look ahead. Perhaps what sets the document apart is its aesthetic element.

The annual report is a 28-page, saddle-stitched, 8.5 X 8.5 inches document printed on velvet cover and velvet book paper stock. The graphic design utilized patterns of yellow and blue colors and spot varnish was applied on document photos, resulting in a product that was crisp and artistic. The cover photos included RTA's coach operator of the year as he glimpses into a future so bright, he needs to wear shades. The back cover included an image of our oldest bus and newest bus.

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Part of the challenge of creating such a comprehensive document was to make it reader-friendly. That meant keeping the text brief and easy to understand, including compelling photographs of all types of customers --- senior citizens, students and veterans --- and utilizing vivid colors and velvet paper to enhance the report's aesthetic element.

Evaluating Success/Lessons Learned

Because image is one of our core values, RTA is focuses on delivering a product that is not only informative but also spotlights our accomplishments and strengthens our image in the community. The ultimate success of the annual report usually comes from members of the governing board, who see the final product before anyone else. In this case, members applauded the report for its professionalism, appearance and positive tone. We also received positive feedback from city and school officials, representatives from other transit agencies, members of the media, and community leaders. The feedback indicated that the annual report was getting positive attention, boosting our company image and promoting our successes to a spectrum of individuals and businesses.

WORK WRAPS UP ON STOP IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Getting around downtown Riverside got easier, faster and just plain better during the year. On January 8, 2017, RTA changed the way it delivered service to downtown Riverside by shutting down its outdated bus terminal and spreading service throughout the downtown core, enhancing bus stops and shelters to encourage on-street transfers and boardings. The Downtown Riverside Stop Improvement Project represented the most significant change to public transit in downtown Riverside in decades. Although the existing transit center at the corner of University Avenue and Fairmont Street had served the community well for more than 30 years, it couldn't support RTA's expansion plans. That's why RTA closed the terminal the night of January 7 in order to shift service to new and upgraded bus stops throughout the downtown area. Thanks to public feedback on the

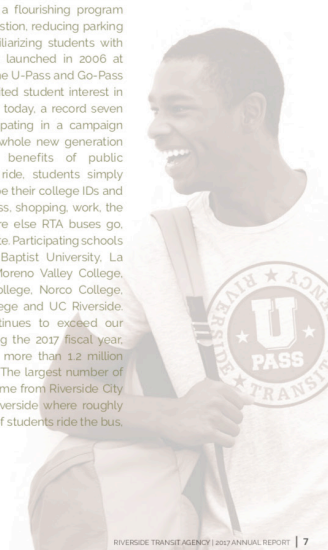
RTA INSTALLED AND UPGRADED BUS STOPS AT MORE THAN 20 LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN RIVERSIDE. MANY OF THE IMPROVED BUS STOPS INCLUDE SHELTERS, BENCHES AND OTHER AMENITIES.

project, RTA installed and upgraded bus stops at more than 20 locations throughout downtown Riverside. Many of the improved bus stops include shelters, benches, trash receptacles and other amenities such as solar lighting and improved route and schedule information. RTA also created a new layover location on Vine Street near the Riverside-Downtown Metrolink Station.



COLLEGE STUDENTS ENJOY UNLIMITED RIDES

Thousands of college students are riding the bus thanks to a flourishing program that's easing congestion, reducing parking problems and familiarizing students with public transit. First launched in 2006 at just one campus, the U-Pass and Go-Pass programs have ignited student interest in riding the bus, and today, a record seven schools are participating in a campaign that is teaching a whole new generation of students the benefits of public transportation. To ride, students simply board the bus, swipe their college IDs and enjoy the lift to class, shopping, work, the movies or anywhere else RTA buses go, anytime they operate. Participating schools include California Baptist University, La Sierra University, Moreno Valley College, Mt. San Jacinto College, Norco College, Riverside City College and UC Riverside. The program continues to exceed our expectations. During the 2017 fiscal year, RTA buses carried more than 12 million student boardings. The largest number of those boardings came from Riverside City College and UC Riverside where roughly 20 and 25 percent of students ride the bus, respectively.



TECHNOLOGY

Technology has always played a vital role in how we operate our fleet and serve our customers. From free Wi-Fi service aboard our buses to real-time arrival times sent to smartphones, RTA is pushing the limits of technology and taking our service to an unprecedented level.

RTA DEBUTS FIRST NEAR-ZERO EMISSION ENGINE

The Agency's latest push for cleaner air resulted in a near-zero engine aboard a 40-foot bus. On the outside, the 40-foot bus looks similar to others in the fleet. It has the same 280-horsepower and runs on compressed natural gas. But what sets this bus apart is its souped-up engine which takes thinking green to a whole new level. The ISL G280 NZ engine was installed in December 2016 and has a 90 percent reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions and 15 percent reduction in greenhouse gases, compared to RTA's already clean-burning engines. RTA is proud to be a long-time advocate of cleaner, greener technologies. This is another example of how we are exploring new and innovative ways to travel. The 1,625-pound super engine, made by Vancouver-based Cummins Westport Inc., was made possible by a \$10,000 grant from the South Coast Air Quality Management District.



WI-FI AND CHARGING PORTS ON ALL RTA BUSES

Today's world demands connectivity, and we're meeting that challenge with state-of-the-art buses equipped with free wireless Internet access and USB charging ports. During the year, customers got some good news when RTA expanded its free Wi-Fi service to all fixed-route buses. Until this year, the service was only available on CommuterLink express buses and a handful of large buses. Now, the service is standard on RTA's entire fleet of fixed-route buses. So whether customers want to check the latest sports scores, do a little shopping or get some work done, RTA has them covered.

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NEED A LIFT TO THE FAIR?

The Southern California Fair returned to Perris in October and there was no better way to get there than aboard an RTA bus. During the fair, RTA offered daily service to the Perris Fairgrounds so hundreds of fair-goers could take in the exhibits, entertainment, carnival rides and delicious food without the hassle of driving.

THE BEACH BUS REMAINED POPULAR WITH MORE THAN 9,400 BOARDINGS DURING ITS THREE-MONTH PERIOD. THAT'S A 30 PERCENT INCREASE COMPARED TO THE YEAR BEFORE!

BEACH BUS RIDERSHIP INCREASES

For the 10th-straight year, the Beach Bus provided much-needed relief from the hot summer sun and judging by the amount of riders it's as popular as ever. CommuterLink Route 202 operated extended seven-day-a-week service, picking up flip-flopped beach-goers in Murrieta and Temecula before heading to the surf at Oceanside. The \$6 round-trip service was a bargain for riders looking for a convenient and stress-free trip to the beach. The Beach Bus remained popular with more than 9,400 boardings during its three-month period. That's a 30 percent increase compared to the year before! To sweeten the deal, we gave away a free Bluetooth speaker to one lucky rider.

MORE BUSINESSES FEELING THE POWER

A growing number of RTA customers qualified for discounts at more cafes, restaurants and retail outlets thanks to the flourishing Power Pass program, which grew during the year to include more than 120 businesses. As part of the program, RTA customers flash their valid 7-Day or 30-Day bus pass to qualify for exclusive discounts. Now in its 13th year, the program continues to showcase RTA's multi-day passes while giving area businesses the exposure they need to thrive.



TRANSPORTATION NOW PROPELS TRANSIT ADVOCACY

There's no doubt that RTA's success would not have been possible without the contributions of Transportation NOW, a remarkable group dedicated to promoting public transportation in Riverside County and beyond. Membership grew during FY17, giving more people than ever the opportunity to be part of the movement. The groups promoted pro-transit videos, education campaigns for seniors and students, and wrote letters to lawmakers to protect much-needed transit funding. The group is comprised of more than one hundred members who meet in chapters representing Greater Riverside, Hemet/San Jacinto Area, Moreno Valley/Perris, Northwest, San Geronimo Pass and Southwest.

RTA BUS SERVES AS COOL CENTER

Who says buses are only good for travel? During the sweltering summer of 2016, two RTA buses were converted into cool centers for County Office of Emergency Services employees who vacated their Banning offices due to a maintenance issue. With temperatures soaring above 102 degrees, dozens of employees had a safe, cool, comfortable place to rest and surf the Internet with free Wi-Fi until their building re-opened.

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IN THE COMMUNITY

Community involvement is crucial for an Agency that relies on customer service for its success. RTA routinely participates in parades and visits senior centers, schools and community groups to discuss ways to meet riders' changing needs. Advocacy groups such as Transportation NOW allow residents to work at a grassroots level to improve public transit. During FY17, RTA was committed to making a positive difference in the communities we serve by helping low-income families, giving away retired vehicles to charity and teaming up with neighborhood groups to promote public transit.

RTA ENCOURAGES CUSTOMERS TO DUMP THE PUMP

During the year, RTA partnered with other transit agencies across the nation to celebrate Dump the Pump Day and Earth Day. As part of our efforts to bring more exposure to the benefits of public transportation, RTA gave away prizes and free bus passes to customers at select locations. The events allowed customers to take a stand against the high cost of driving by leaving their car at home at least one day that week and riding public transportation. Riding the bus is a great way to save money and help the environment. In fact, one RTA bus is capable of taking more than 40 cars and their harmful emissions off the road.



WILDOMAR LIBRARY GETS NEW SHELTER

Getting to and from the library has never been so good. That's because in May of 2017 RTA unveiled a new bus shelter at the Wildomar Mission Trail Community Library. Before now, the bus stop consisted of a simple bench that could seat up to three people. The new shelter has a sleeker look, provides shade, route information, a trash receptacle, and, in keeping with the times, comes equipped with solar-powered lighting. The shelter is part of a larger effort to upgrade bus service across the region. During the year, RTA installed more than 50 of these new shelters systemwide. And more are on the way.



A SAFE PLACE FOR RUNAWAY TEENS

With thousands of runaways each year in Riverside County, RTA continued its valuable partnership with Riverside's non-profit Operation SafeHouse to help runaway and homeless children. Each of RTA's fixed-route vehicles displays a yellow "Safe Place" sign that enabled children to get transportation to the shelter without question and free of charge. RTA has worked with Operation SafeHouse since 1997.

WHAT'S NEXT?

After more than four decades of service, RTA remains the number-one travel choice for a growing number of Riverside County residents. With our region's population expected to grow over the next decade, we are focused on providing a service that competes with the automobile and exceeds our customers' expectations day after day.

In order to make public transit a viable option for our customers, we must continue to evolve with their changing needs. That's why we have some big things on the horizon. We are eyeing new mobility hubs in Hemet, UC Riverside, Riverside and Temecula, as well as a second RapidLink line that would connect the cities of Moreno Valley and Perris. These future projects will give our growing number of customers — as well as potential new customers — another reason to ride.

As a group, we must continue to be powered by experience, energized by our customers and driven to push the limits of what's possible in public transportation. Here's to working together to provide an exceptional service that our customers can be proud of, a service that meets their changing needs, and most of all, gives them a reason to ride.

BY THE NUMBERS

Fleet	
Fixed-Route Buses.....	224
Dial-A-Ride Vehicles.....	110
Trolleys.....	10
Bus Routes	
Fixed Routes.....	37
CommuterLink Express Routes.....	8
System Ridership	
FY17 Annual Boardings.....	8.7 million
FY17 Average Weekday Boardings.....	29,000
FY17 Average Weekend Day Boardings.....	12,000
Bus Service Hours	
FY17 Annual Revenue Hours.....	833,000
Bus Mileage	
FY17 Annual Miles Traveled.....	16 million
Employees	
Coach Operators.....	286
Maintenance Employees.....	64
Administrative Staff.....	118
Contract Employees.....	437
Total.....	905