

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Clipper Card Implementation

FROM: Beverly Adamo, Director of Administrative Services

DATE: September 28, 2015

Action Requested

Information only.

Background

At the September Board meeting, staff was requested to provide the Board with information regarding the Clipper Card Implementation at LAVTA, including feedback from some of the other “small operators” that have recently implemented the electronic payment system.

Discussion

Staff spoke with the small operator group that implemented Clipper almost a year ago. Their greatest challenges and LAVTA’s staff comments are listed below.

- Making decisions for Clipper implementation as a collective.
LAVTA comments: The collective group of LAVTA, County Connection, Tri-Delta and WestCat worked well together over the last year to ensure that decisions were made timely and in consideration of each other. County Connection is currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will further ratify how the LAVTA and the other operators will work together moving forward.
- Cubic reporting of transactions were not user friendly and found to be incomplete. A contracted software solution was sought out and implemented and that is working well.
LAVTA comments: The operators in our group were aware of the issues and the software solution and are in process of procuring the software solution to ensure the financial reporting is easy to manage as possible.
- Drivers who do not sign on properly or do not sign on at all. Initially, all transactions that were not identifiable by route were attributed to a “real” route for one of the operators in the group. This led to inaccurate reporting with NTD. It took them 2-3 months to determine how to deal with the problem of financial transactions not associated with routes.
LAVTA comments: MTC learned from this lesson with the last group and now has a null route into which any unidentifiable transactions will be entered. The software will assist in then identifying to which operator the transaction belongs. Further, LAVTA

has been talking with MV staff regarding the possibility of a penalty for any drivers who do not log on properly or fail to log on.

- Marketing efforts were conducted by MTC and input from the operators was not encouraged. There were no funds available from MTC for local operator marketing.
LAVTA comments: Another lesson learned by MTC that now benefits LAVTA is that we have been involved with marketing efforts, including having the option to provide a great deal of input to the process. Additionally, MTC is spending \$60,000 in marketing efforts for the rollout of Clipper in the East Bay.
- Customer service is handled by Cubic/MTC first line. This has worked out well for them since they are small operators and do not have the staff to handle Clipper customer service complaints/issues. Most of the response from passengers was positive with respect to the Clipper implementation
LAVTA comments: For the first time, MTC is providing Clipper customer service training to all LAVTA personnel. While it is likely that the first line of support for Wheels passengers will be Cubic/MTC, staff will be trained regarding the Clipper process and how to advise users to ensure a smooth and problem-free experience when using the Clipper Card on Wheels.

With respect to the question regarding what happens when a passenger is attempting to board the bus and the Clipper Card does not function properly, staff recommends allowing passengers to ride without paying the fare (unless they have other means, i.e. cash), and refer the passenger to the customer service number to assist the passenger in determining why the Clipper Card did not function properly. This recommendation is based on past practice of not leaving passengers behind if they do not have the fare (forgot a ticket, lost the bus pass, left wallet at home, etc.) While there has been the rare passenger who attempts to ride free more than once, these issues are addressed by a supervisor. In all cases, the good will that has been generated by this practice has encouraged passengers to appreciate Wheels service even more and to continue using Wheels.

Budget Considerations

While staff does not expect a significant impact, we will be monitoring the fare transactions and keep the Board informed of any trends.

Next Steps

Additional testing of onboard Clipper equipment will occur the weeks of September 28 and October 5. Marketing materials will be produced, posted, and distributed during the month of October. Operator training on onboard equipment will occur the third week in October. A date for the soft launch is tentatively scheduled for November 1.

Recommendation

Information only.