

SECRET

SURVEY OF
AMTRAK PASSENGERS

Southern California
Rapid Transit District

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May, 1977

Conclusions and Recommendations

The survey results indicate that AMTRAK service between Los Angeles and San Diego is used primarily for social/recreational purposes. Upon reviewing the survey results, RTD Planning Department staff state:

"To date, there is no 'San Diegan' service which arrives/departs LAUPT during weekday peak hours." "Until implementation of a commuter 'San Diegan' train, the present level of bus service could be considered adequate." (Present service consists of lines 2, 5, 92, 810, 813, 814 and 871).

It is recommended that "the lifting of boarding/alighting restrictions on certain lines to provide a local service interface with LAUPT and Civic Center/CBD ... be investigated."

Since present fiscal considerations do not allow for significantly altering RTD service, informing AMTRAK passengers of what service is available becomes of paramount importance.

It is recommended that:

1. More attractive schedule racks be used at LAUPT. Preferably free-standing racks should be used -- rather than counter top racks.
2. Better placement of the schedule racks. They should be in a very prominent location with high visibility.
 - a. Provide RTD schedules to all other stations enroute to Los Angeles from San Diego.

3. Provide large, colorful posters directing travellers to schedule racks or RTD information numbers. These should be placed in the passenger terminals at both Los Angeles and San Diego. (AMTRAK has agreed to provide free space for such posters).
4. Provide supplies of "20 Self Guided Tours" to San Diego ticket clerks to give to passengers buying tickets to Los Angeles.

If agreement between RTD and AMTRAK can be reached, the following recommendations, if adopted, would be helpful:

1. Have station announcer on board the train announce to passengers arriving at LAUPT that RTD buses are available and direct them to the schedule racks.
2. Provide small wall racks on board the trains with schedules and information brochures. (These would need to be stocked by AMTRAK).
3. Provide large wall maps of the CBD (laminated for durability) close to the schedule racks, showing bus stops close to LAUPT.

Introduction

The San Diegan Service, operated by Amtrak, consists of four round trips per day between Los Angeles and San Diego. On an average weekday, some 900 passengers travel through Union Station (Los Angeles) in connection with this service. This number more than doubles over the weekend when nearly 2,000 persons travel between Los Angeles and San Diego. Interest has been expressed by Amtrak personnel in Los Angeles, as well as some RTD staff, in providing connecting bus service to Union Station.

At present, routing of RTD buses and minibuses is not convenient for passengers. The minibus stop is about two blocks west of the station on a small hill. Inbound busway lines have a stop on the southside of the station, but do not go past the station when outbound. There is a bus stop on the north side of the station which is quite a walk from the entrance.

Inside Union Station the only RTD information consisted of an inconspicuously placed schedule rack containing time tables for about two dozen lines.

Purpose and Method

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the need for bus connections at Union Station. Therefore, the study was designed to determine the characteristics of the passengers on the San Diegan, their origin/destination in the Los Angeles area and their mode of transportation to/from Union Station. For this purpose, a self-administered questionnaire was designed and distributed on board the train.

Two RTD staff members distributed questionnaires on the 8:30 a.m. trip out of Los Angeles and the 1:00 p.m. trip out of San Diego on Thursday, January 20, 1977.

Preliminary analysis of these results indicated that there was a very small proportion of commuters on these trips. It was recommended that the 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. from San Diego and the 4:10 p.m. from Los Angeles, which were thought to be the "commuter runs," be surveyed. As a result, the two afternoon trips (i.e. the 4:30 from San Diego and the 4:10 from Los Angeles) were surveyed on Tuesday, February 1, 1977.

While nearly everyone who was given a questionnaire responded, there were a substantial number who were excluded from the sample. These were children travelling in groups or with parents, and a very small proportion of adults who did not know English.

A total of 184 valid responses were received from both days of the study. Nearly an equal number of responses were received from passengers outbound from Los Angeles and those arriving at Los Angeles (94 and 90 respectively).

Findings

Passenger Characteristics

The average (median) age of the passengers was 33. The largest single age group was the 20 - 29 category.

Travellers were nearly equally divided between males and females. Overall, nearly one half of the passengers were not in the labor force - i.e. retired, housewife, student. Three out of ten were in professional or managerial positions, with smaller proportions in clerical/sales jobs or skilled/semi-skilled jobs.

<u>Sex:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Male	50%
Female	46
No answer	<u>4</u>
	100%
Base	(184)

<u>Age:</u>	
Under 20	16%
20 - 29	26
30 - 39	17
40 - 49	11
50 - 61	13
62 & over	15
No answer	<u>2</u>
	100%
Base	(184)

<u>Occupation:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Housewife	11%
Retired	11
Student	24
Professional	14
Managerial	16
Skilled/Semi-skilled	3
Clerical/sales	5
Domestic	1
Military	2
Miscellaneous	9
No answer	<u>4</u>
	100%
Base	(184)

Travel Patterns

For more than half the passengers surveyed, this was their first time on the San Diegan. More than one in seven (15%) use this service one or more times a week. Fifty three percent of those travelling were making the trip alone.

While nearly a third of the passengers were travelling for work or business related reasons, the majority (61%) were travelling for social/recreational purposes. This finding casts very real doubts on the assertion that the San Diegan is basically a commuter service.

One of the core questions of the study asked respondents how they came to Union Station. (Those travelling to Los Angeles were asked how they would get from Union Station to their final destination.) More than half the respondents were driven (or picked up) from the station by someone else. One in ten had their own car at the station while 16% had arrived (or planned to leave) at the station on an RTD bus.

<u>Frequency of Using Service:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Three or more times	5%
Two times/week	5
Once/week	5
Less than once	29
This is first time	<u>56</u>
	100%
Base	(184)

<u>Mode to/from Union Station:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Drive	10%
Driven	55
Walk	1
Bus	16
Taxi	6
Minibus	4
Other	7
No answer	<u>1</u>
	100%
Base	(142)

<u>Primary Purpose of Trip:</u>	
Work	10%
Business	21
Social/recreational	61
Other	<u>8</u>
	100%
Base	(142)

Those who were destined for Los Angeles, or were boarding the train at Los Angeles, were asked to answer additional questions dealing with their origin/destination in the Los Angeles area.

The Los Angeles CBD and the near vicinity were named as the origin point by 30% of those departing from Union Station. Various communities in the San Gabriel Valley were the origin points for nearly half of this group.

Among passengers arriving at Union Station, the San Fernando Valley and out of state locations received equal mentions as the destination point.

Voluntary Comments and Observations

In addition to filling out the questionnaire, many respondents wrote in comments or suggestions. While most of these were comments concerning Amtrak service, there were several comments written in about bus service in Los Angeles. Additionally, conversations held with respondents after collecting questionnaires added more insight about people's travel patterns and needs. The comments written by the respondents appears at the end of the report.

The following were observations made in talking to people. The major problem, or deterrent to using buses to or from the station, was the lack of knowledge concerning the availability of bus service. Incoming passengers, especially, are at a total loss about availability of bus transportation in Los Angeles. Several passengers asked how to get to the Greyhound Station and LAX. One young salesman was all set to take a taxi to the airport. (He was told how to go about catching an RTD Airport Express from one of the downtown hotels.) There were several disgruntled passengers on board who had run into many problems trying to take an RTD bus to Union Station.

Comments

Make available RTD services known to public.

How do you get from Santa Ana to Laguna Beach by public transit? Why isn't there a commuter train that is scheduled to arrive in L.A. and depart L.A. at appropriate times.

I would like bus service between the San Fernando Valley and Pasadena, direct.

The bus driver on #5 - very uncooperative when asked where to get off at station.

I use Amtrak to commute to and from work each day. Once or twice a week I use RTD bus to reach the train station. However, the return schedule at night (arrival from Fullerton at Union Station at 7:05 p.m.) required that someone drive me home because (1) the RTD buses run infrequently to So. Pasadena at that time of night. (2) The location of the bus stop is not safe after dark. I suggest that if RTD wishes to improve service to train passengers the following steps be taken.

1. Central bus stop close to Union Station for connections to all lines - bus stop should be well lighted and prominently marked - the existing bus stop near Terminal Annex is difficult to find.
2. Coordinated train and bus schedules for evening arrivals.
3. Publicity about the ease of using RTD to reach Amtrak.

I have also used the minibus to connect with downtown destinations and found it very satisfactory. Again though, it does not run at the time of arrival of the evening train.

I would use the bus system, but have had difficulty getting information.

Terrible connections to the train. Took us 2½ hours from Winnetka Ave. & Roscoe to get to train station for 10:30 a.m. train to San Diego (left at 8:00 a.m.). Had to run to make the train. Not very gracious bus drivers - hardly could get any information.

Should be possible to receive courteous detailed information on time schedule for connecting buses - other than "they run often". Also it seems there could be a direct express bus from West Valley to L.A. It took 2½ hours to get to R.R. station from Winnetka & Parthenia.

Better bus service to and from train.

I didn't know there is an RTD bus. My office is on Hill at 6th Street. Where could I get the RTD bus? I have been using the minibus, boarding at Hill & 7th. I use train because that gives me two hours for uninterrupted work.

Problems with using RTD:

1. Takes too long to get anywhere.
2. Riding through certain portions of L.A. is unsafe. Need some type of security aboard buses.
3. Greater L.A. area needs some sort of above ground mass transit rail system for general intercity movement and frequent running buses or "people movers" intracity. A good example would be the minibus used in downtown L.A.

Have more or all buses use bus circle at LAUPT (from train employee).

<u>Home Community:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Out of State/Country	26%
Los Angeles County	30
Orange County	12
San Diego County	29
Other	2
No answer	<u>1</u>
	100%
Base	(184)

Origin or Destination:

San Gabriel Valley	19%
Glendale/LaCrescenta	12
CBD & surrounding	20
North/West Los Angeles	8
Hollywood & vicinity	9
San Fernando Valley	11
All other	5
Out-of-State	7
Don't know/No answer	<u>9</u>
	100%
Base	(138)

<u>Travelling:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Alone	53%
With Spouse	9
With Others	36
No Answer	<u>2</u>
	100%
Base	(184)

<u>Luggage?:</u>	
Yes	55%
No	43
No Answer	<u>2</u>
	100%
Base	(184)