

MOBILITY NEWSLETTER

Research and reporting from California, the U.S.,
and around the world.

March 26, 2024



Marketing Transit:

How agencies effectively communicate fare changes to riders



Communicating with riders effectively, especially about fares, is essential for transit operators.

Agencies communicated with riders across many channels, including websites, press releases, social media, apps, push notifications, and more. While **branding and language should be consistent** across an agency's communications, each channel can tap into a **different audience**.

In addition to general promotions and service information, ensuring riders know **how and how much to pay** is essential. When transit operators make a change to either fare prices, fare products, or payment technologies, **getting the messaging right** is critical.

In this edition, we will cover the following topics with case studies from a handful of California agencies:

Communicating Fare Changes

Considerations for Multilingual Communications

Case Studies:





Capitol Corridor

Open-Loop Payments



Capitol Corridor, the intercity passenger rail line managed by Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) and operated by Amtrak began piloting open-loop payment acceptance of debit and credit cards in 2023. **Recruitment for initial 300 Tap2Ride pilot participants*** was conducted across the below channels, all pointing to capitolcorridor.org/tap2ride registration form and customer education on how and where to Tap On and Tap Off to pay onboard:

- **Press release cross-posted on website blog**
- **Twitter and Facebook posts**
- **Instagram and YouTube videos**, like [this one](#)
- **Newsletters and recruitment emails** sent to customer base
- **Passenger Information Display System (PIDS)** message boards at train stations
- **Coming Soon stickers with Tap2Ride website QR code**, posted above newly installed contactless payment readers

Photo courtesy of CCJPA

*Why a pilot with registered cards?

- To prove that contactless payments could work on rail;
- To verify that riders like to tap to pay-as-you-go instead of purchasing a ticket before boarding;
- To learn about the necessary internal processes to operate a revenue collection system (as Amtrak had been sole Capitol Corridor ticket seller before Tap2Ride) in a low-risk environment.





Capitol Corridor

Open-Loop Payments



Pilot participant feedback—gathered via focus groups, comment forms, and surveys—has been largely positive, so CCJPA is currently installing readers on all train cars with the goal of opening Tap2Ride to all riders.



Commuter between multiple stations

The benefit for me using Tap2Ride is that while I frequently use Capitol Corridor, I am often not going to the same destinations. The 10-ride ticket is limiting as I really need to solidify being between two cities in a more commuter-oriented approach. For example, my commuting standard would be Richmond to Sacramento, but I sometimes head to Davis or Martinez. **Tap2Ride has allowed me to maximize the use of Capitol Corridor** without wasting my 10-ride ticket.



Ditching the car to run errands:

Biking to the train station and hopping on board the next Capitol Corridor has become second nature to me thanks to tapping. I check the schedule and to see which train is going to work best, then pedal over to grocery shop, run errands, and meet friends and family all over the East Bay.

It really is astonishing how easy the whole experience is and how quick and hassle-free it is compared to driving.



Cycling between transit and train:

As a semi-frequent rider of Capitol Corridor, I want to voice my support for Tap2Ride. This pilot has been a very cool way to experience Capitol Corridor and **adds flexibility to where I want to get off**—which is important for me, as I'm often transferring to other transit services.

The easiest example of this is the BART transfer at Richmond, which on weekends is very difficult to time to where you're not spending 20 to 30 minutes waiting for the next BART out. Since I bring my bike, I can also choose to get off at the Emeryville station and connect to West Oakland BART if I'm going to San Francisco, or Jack London to Lake Merritt if I'm going to South East Bay. Tap2Ride gives me the ability to make this decision last second.



Typically a solo rider:

We have taken the train once as a family and I was reminded of the **extreme convenience of tapping compared to my wife's ticketing ordeal**: having to go online and buy a ticket, get an email, find her ticket on her phone, call it up, etc.



California Secretary of Transportation Toks Omishakin taps to ride aboard Capitol Corridor.



LA Metro

Fare Capping

LA Metro began implementing fare capping in 2023. Key messages are targeted across various audience groups.

LA Metro's core strategies:

- 1. Relatable Messaging:** Targeted messaging for various rider segments: Regular, Senior, Student and low income
- 2. Fare capping status made accessible:** Customers can view their fare capping status a number of ways: taptogo.net, TAP vending machines (located at all rail stations), bus farebox and rail gate validator screens, on the back of receipts via QR code, or by calling 866.TAPTOGO
- 3. Minimal Change:** Customers did not have to obtain a new card or do anything different to participate in fare capping. Customers simply purchase Stored Value (money on a TAP card) to pay per ride, rather than paying for a pass upfront.



Photo courtesy of LA Metro



LA Metro

Fare Capping

Metro sees success during the first 6 months of fare capping implementation.

1,278,251
riders

- Number of riders participating in fare capping between July 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023.

1.5 million
free rides

- Number of free rides earned by meeting 1-day and 7-day fare caps in the first 6 months
- Equivalent of \$1.27 million worth of free rides

Saving 69%
on fares

- Riders who participate in the Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) Program are saving on average 69% on fares by using their 20 free rides per month, coupled with fare capping
- This represents a reduction from \$17.48 spent on fares per month to \$5.34

Across all agencies, effective multilingual communications require unique tools and needs.

In 2021, the US Census Bureau reported that nearly 1 in 2 Californians speak a language other than English at home.

Here are common tools and methods used when providing multilingual communications:

Translations

Transit agencies frequently take materials prepared in English and translate to the target language with the help of technologies and professionals.

- It's common for agencies to offer **translation widgets** within their websites (i.e. Google Translate).
- Although helpful, those **widgets don't always allow content to be searchable** in other languages.
- Agencies should rely on ongoing research and partnerships to ensure translations are effective.

Signage/Announcements

Both signage and announcements are important tools for riders to find their way. As such, these should be made as accessible as possible, offering both in at least two languages.

- One tool is **to leverage symbols and infographics** to reduce the need for translated written materials
- Mexico City's Metro is famous for using **pictograms** to differentiate stations. A tool that was necessary when literacy rates were low, over 50 years ago ([S](#))

Local Media

It's important to understand the information touch-points of target riders, especially for non-English speakers as these points may differ.

- Local media that is **already familiar** to priority populations can offer a trusted point of contact for transit agencies.
- Local media also offers the benefit of allowing for **more in-depth engagement** like demonstrations, hosting discussions, and more.

Transit agencies can also incorporate non-traditional methods to increase the impact of multilingual communications.

Engaging with mono-lingual riders may require extra support that is trustworthy.

Non-traditional partners

- These may include spaces these folks are already familiar with such as schools, financial institutions, community-based organizations, health centers, employers, and more.
- Transit providers in Oregon conducted research and implementation of the [Drive Less Connect \(DLC\) Spanish Language Marketing Pilot Project](#). Evaluation of their outreach efforts led them to conclude that **"messaging should come directly from Latino audiences**, such as a champion in the community or an organization that is trusted among Latinos."

Culturally Informed Materials

- These are materials that are developed with **cultural nuances built-in from the beginning**, making for more user-friendly resources.
- This includes everything from tailored ad campaigns to designated web pages and more.



VCTC

Culturally Informed Materials

In 2022, Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) worked with Celtis Ventures to develop a **unique, multi-channel ongoing campaign** based on a card game popular amongst Spanish-speaking folks called Loteria.

“[Our] goal was to create a campaign that connected with people not only through language but also through culture” – VCTC representative

Loteria Cards:



Photo by [Irvin Macfarland](#) on [Unsplash](#)

VCTC's Visuals:



Photo courtesy of VCTC



VCTC

Culturally Informed materials

VCTC's campaign saw a significant increase in customer interactions in the first six months that indicated widespread positive response among target communities.

Utilized Channels:

- Social Media ads
- Q&A's
- Posters with QR codes
- Local media ad buys

Key Outcomes:

+217%

Spanish-language
web users

100s

Facebook interactions
after the live Q&A

Significant increase

Customer service calls
from Spanish-speakers



LA Metro

Culturally Informed Materials

LA Metro operates a **Spanish-language version of Metro's blog**, the Source. The blog communicates information about Metro projects, policies, and people.

Articles published in this blog, including fare capping, have helped Metro get coverage in Spanish-language media outlets such as Univision, Telemundo, Estrella Tv, Vision Latina, La Opinion, Excelsior California.

Metro's website, metro.net, is able to communicate key messages about new fares and benefits in several languages: English, Spanish, Armenian, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian and Korean

This work is also supplemented by multi-lingual **community outreach**. For example, TAP communicated fare capping and its benefits via formal presentations, community fairs and townhall meetings to increase understanding and adoption.



ELpasajero NOVEDADES DE TRANSPORTE

Acerca de El Pasajero Política de privacidad Metro.net

Tarifas nuevas y más simples comienzan este sábado 1 de julio

BY LA METRO, JUNE 27, 2023

A partir del sábado 1 de julio, Metro presenta el límite de tarifa (Fare Capping) que es un nuevo sistema en el costo de los pasajes lo que hará que [continue reading]

Categoría de pasajero y producto de tarifa	Tarifas actuales	Tarifas a partir del 1 de julio
Tarifa regular		
Tarifa base	\$1.75	\$1.75
Recargo	75¢	GRATIS
Pase diario o límite diario	\$7	\$5
Pase de 7 días o límite semanal	\$25	\$18
Pase de 30 días	\$100	No disponible
Pase de 30 días - Zona 1	\$122	No disponible
Personas mayores y personas con discapacidades		
Tarifa base	75¢ / 35¢	75¢ / 35¢
Recargo	60¢	GRATIS
Pase diario o límite diario	\$2.50	\$2.50
Pase de 7 días o límite semanal	No disponible	\$5
Pase de 30 días	\$20	No disponible
Estudiantes de K-12, universitarios o de programas vocacionales		
Tarifa base para estudiantes de K-12	\$1	75¢
Recargo	60¢	GRATIS



Metro Conducir Tarifas Proyectos Carreras Acerca de Metro Traducir

[Inicio](#) > [Sobre Metro](#) > **Nuevas tarifas en Metro**

Nuevas tarifas en Metro

Metro ha simplificado la forma de pagar la tarifa en autobús y tren. Se llama limitación de tarifas. Lo que significa que cuanto más conduzcas, más ahorrarás. Estos cambios facilitan que todos los que pagan con TAP obtengan viajes gratis.

Photos courtesy of LA Metro

Recap: **Effective communication strategies** create informed, confident riders

Leveraging Communications Channels

- **Multiple** communications channels are important in reaching more riders
- New technologies should have **dedicated space on the website** to clearly describe offerings – especially when an agency intends for the technology to be a primary fare payment method
- **Social media** is a good tool that uses imagery to create branding and promote norms (like using your transit card instead of cash when paying)

Multi-lingual Communications

- Google translate is **not adequate** in providing help in other languages as many nuances can be missed and it is the least user-friendly format in this overview
- **Simple visuals** are an option that can disseminate information quickly to the most people, regardless of their preferred language
- Materials developed specifically for certain speakers and that are **culturally informed** are a standout opportunity
 - Local media and community partners are paramount here

