



# Marketing Workshop #6: Improving the Transit Passenger Experience

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June 28, 2022, 2:00-3:30 PM ET

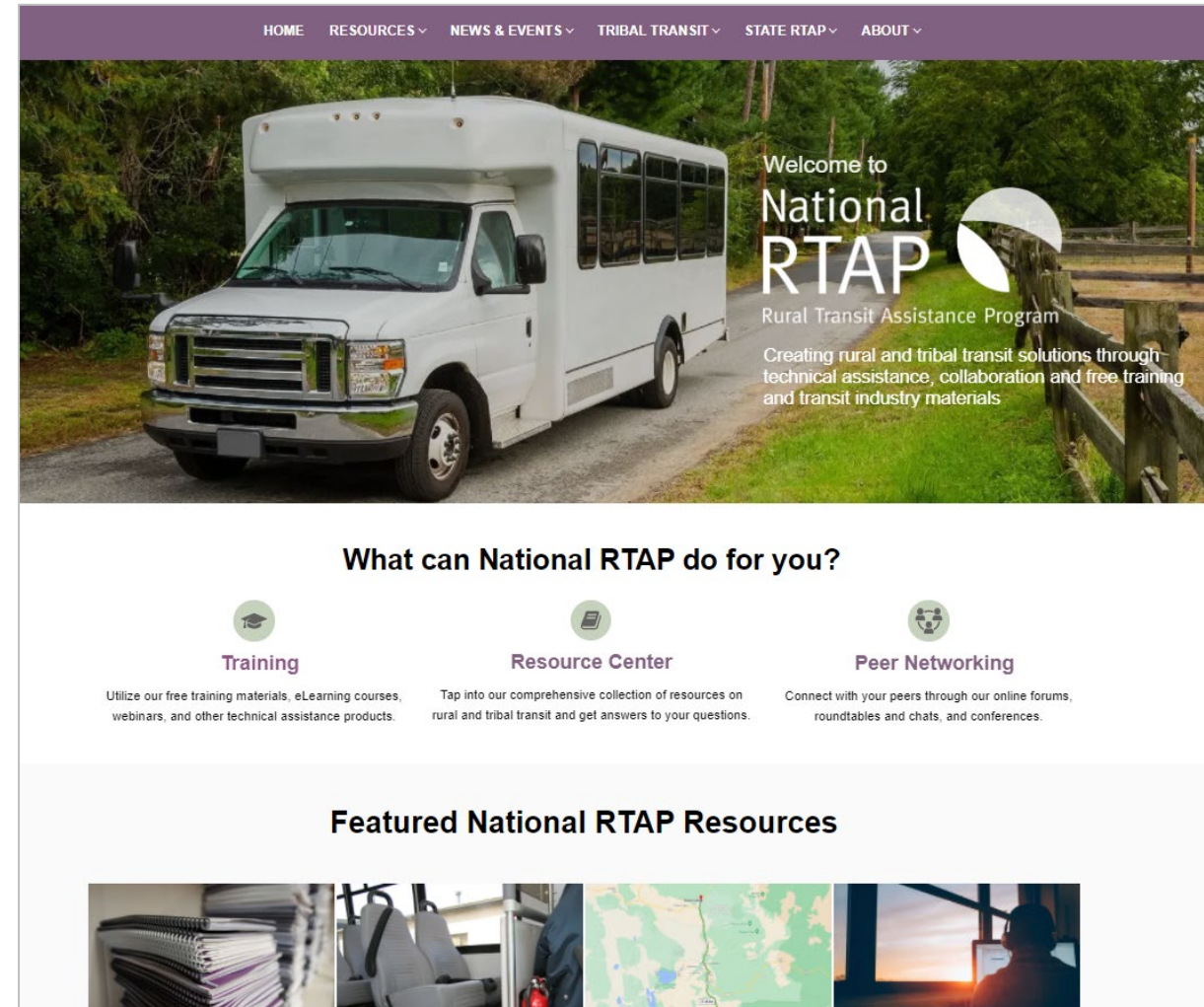


# National Rural Transit Assistance Program

- Technical assistance center funded by FTA through Section 5311 since 1987

**Vision:** Safe, compliant, efficient and effective rural and tribal transit that reflects the needs and values of communities across the country.

- Based in Boston, MA & Washington, DC
- Guided by a Review Board – *solicitation for new members closes Thursday*
- Learn more at [nationalrtap.org](https://nationalrtap.org)



# Speaker Introduction



## **Selena Barlow**

### **Owner, Transit Marketing LLC**

- More than 25 years of experience marketing public transportation services throughout the U.S.
- Areas of expertise include marketing plan development, market research, community outreach, and creation of marketing tools and campaigns.
- Much of her work has focused on rural and small urban communities where marketing can have the greatest impact on ridership.
- She holds an MBA, with focus on marketing, from the University of Arizona, and a BS in Advertising from the University of Florida.

# Public Transit Marketing

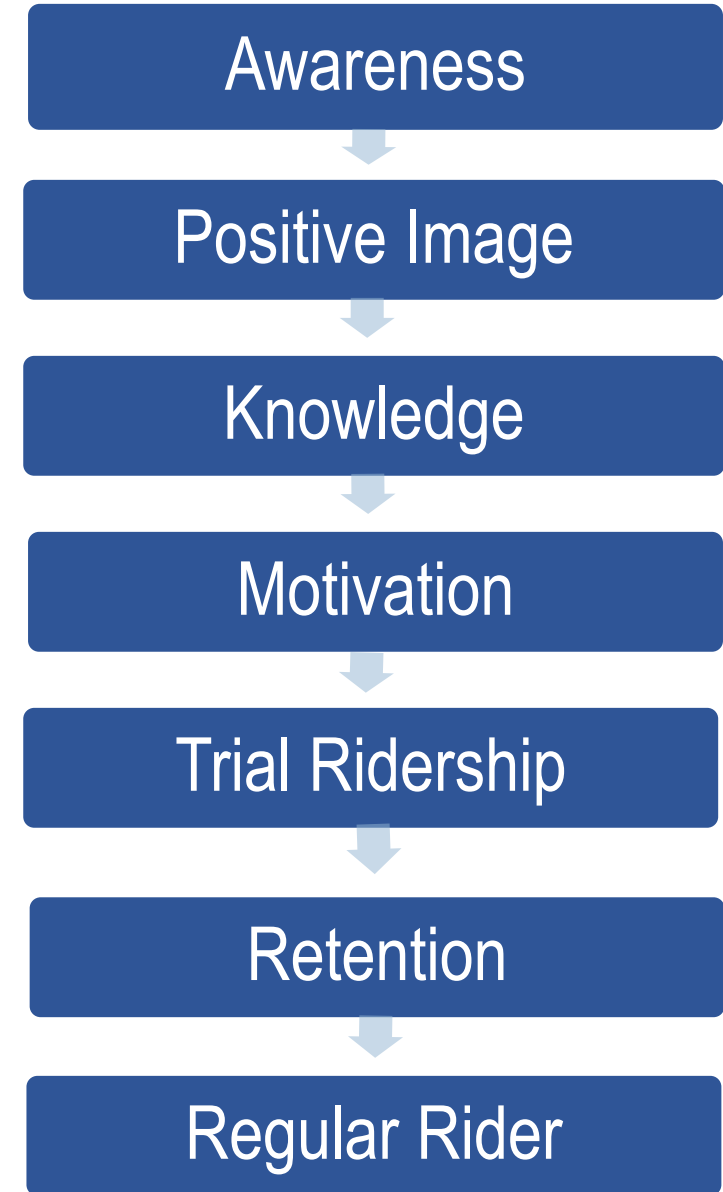


## Improving the Passenger Experience



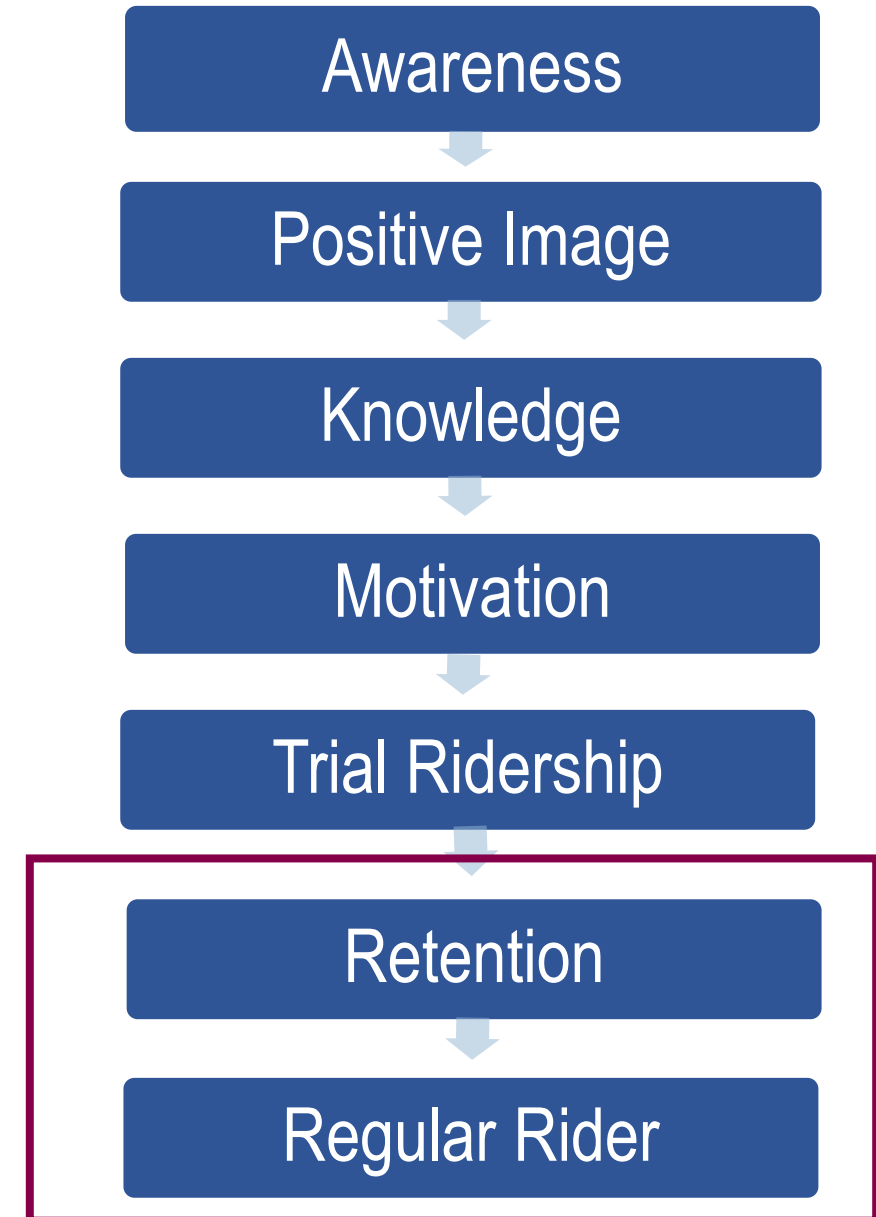
# Six Class Series

- Awareness Building
- Customer Focused Websites
- More Passenger Information Tools
- Community Based Marketing
- Transit Passenger Research
- Improving the Passenger Experience



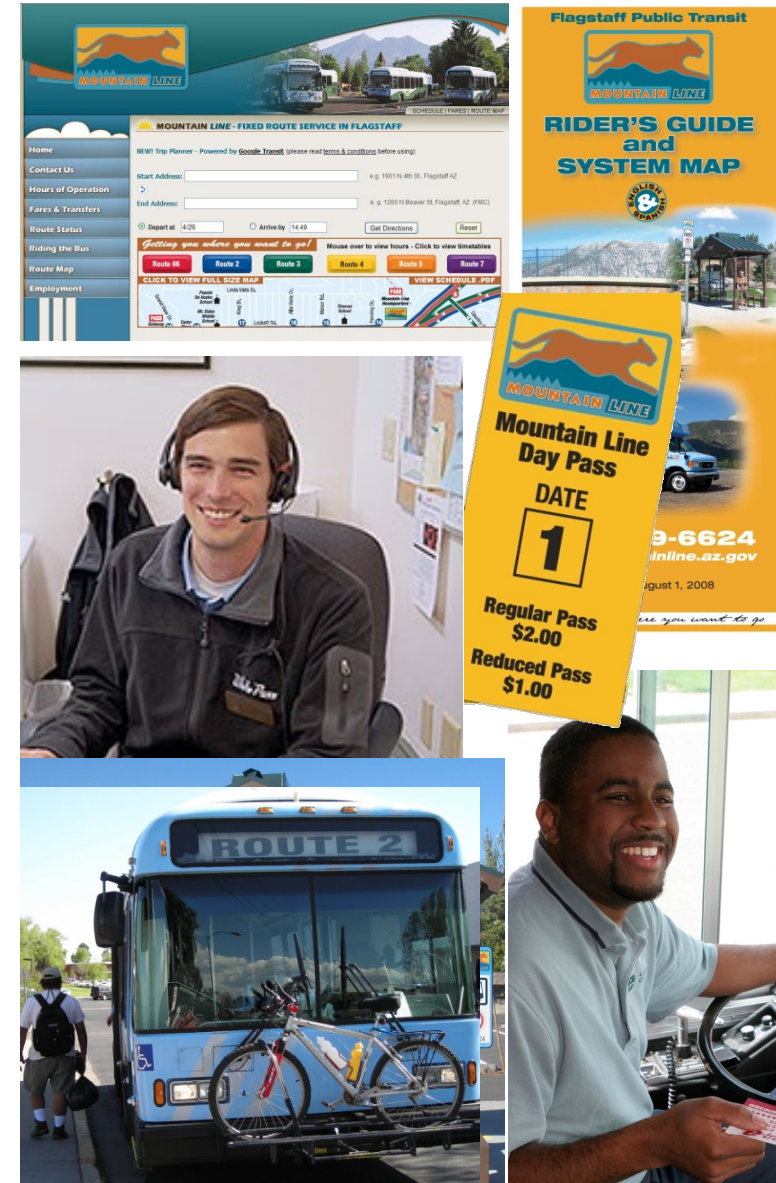
# Six Class Series

- Awareness Building
- Customer Focused Websites
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- **Improving the Passenger Experience**



# What is the Passenger Experience?

Everything a passenger experiences when they use or try to use your service.



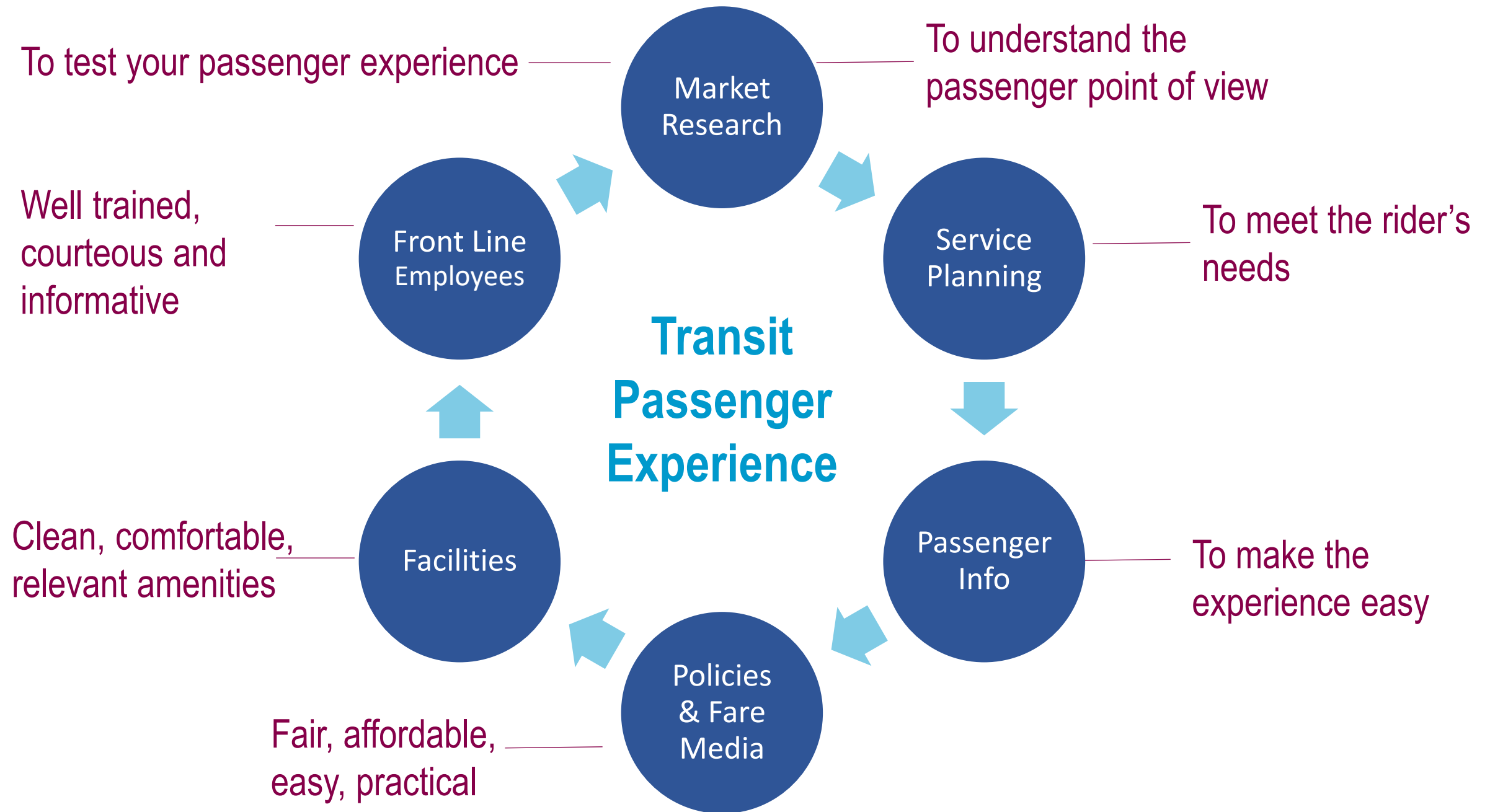
# How do you create a better passenger experience?

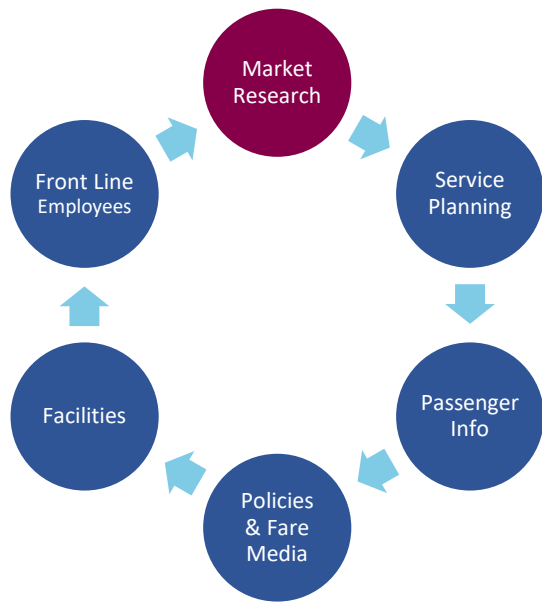




Make decisions from  
the passenger's  
point of view.







# Market Research

To understand the passenger point of view and inform your decisions.



# Conduct Passenger Surveys & Focus Groups

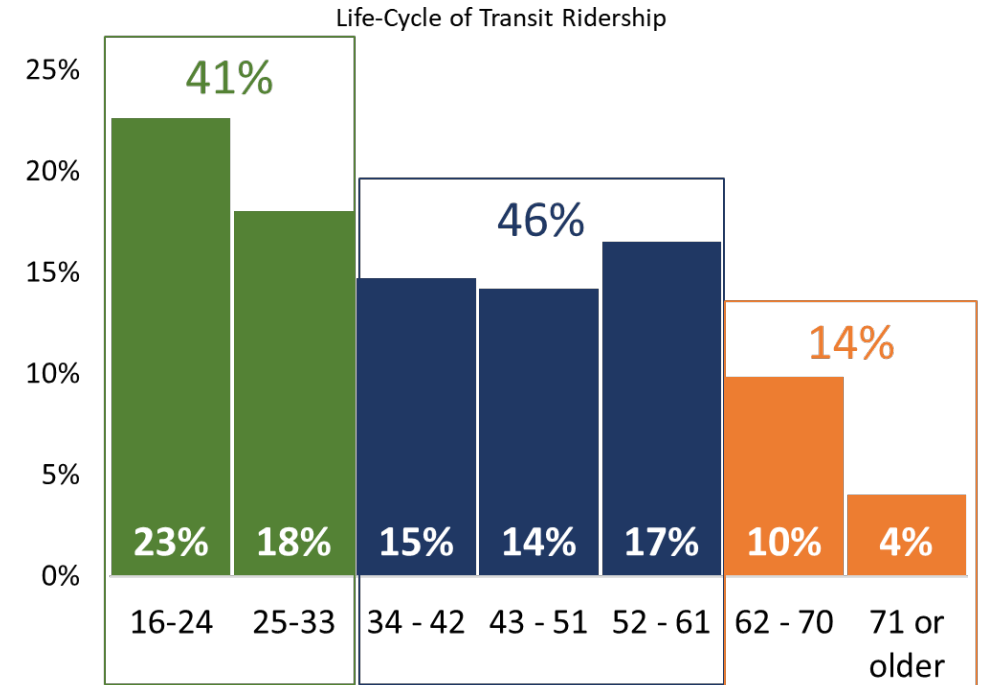
- Know who your passengers are.
- Understand how and why they use your services.
- Determine what elements of service they need and value most.
- Learn how they get transit information and pay their fare
- Find out what they do and don't like about your system.
- Ask them how you can make their transit experience better.





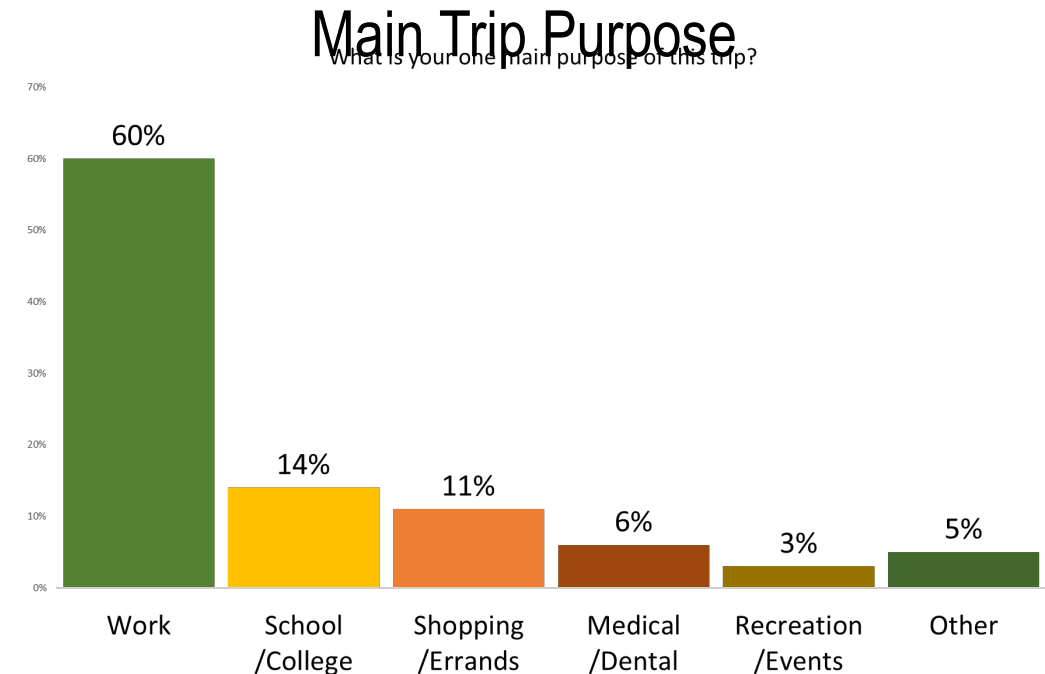
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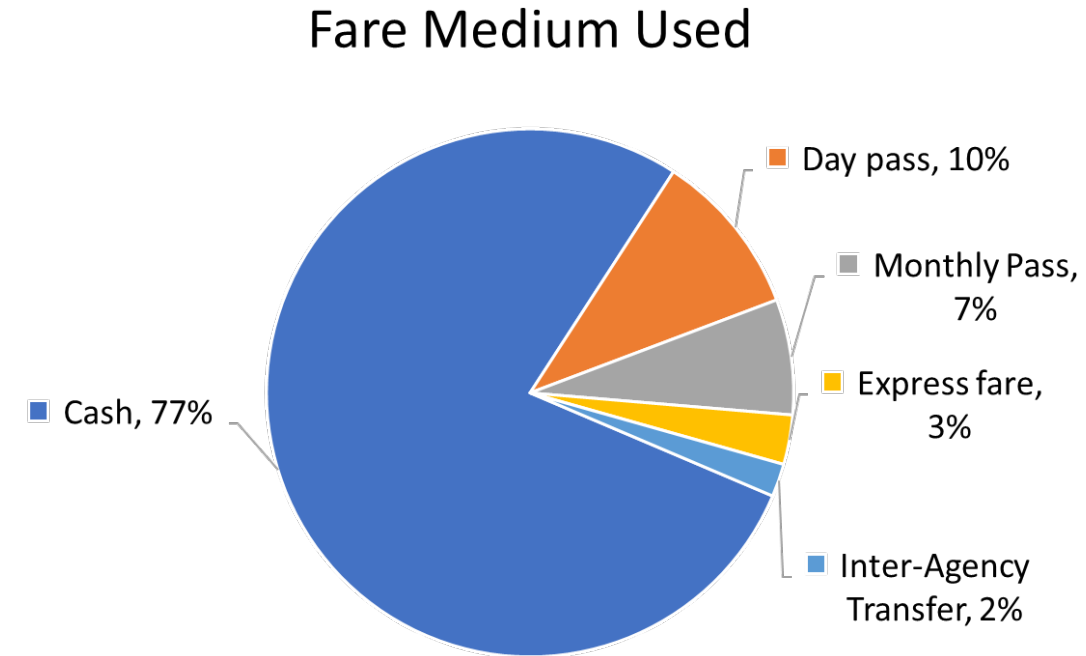
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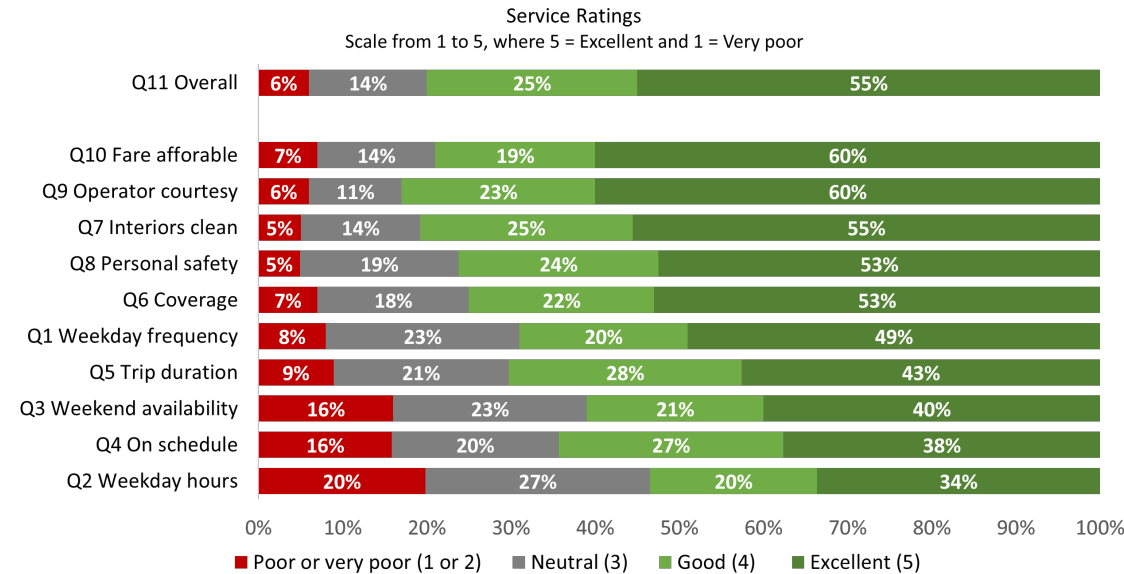
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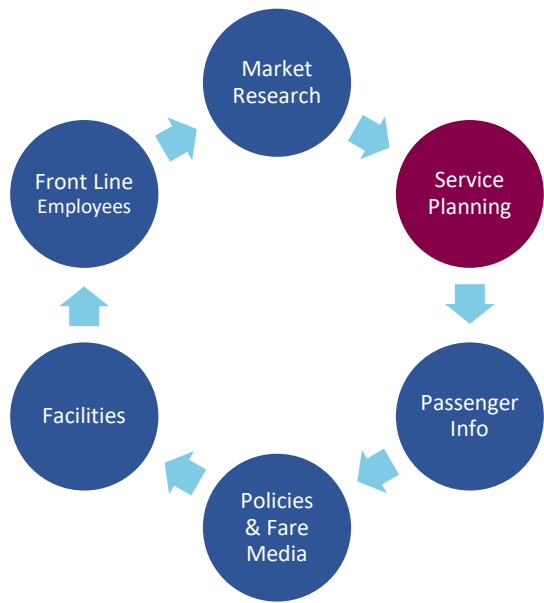




# Be a Passenger

- Use your own services
- Use transit when you travel or visit neighboring communities
- Learn to think like a passenger by being a passenger





# Service Planning

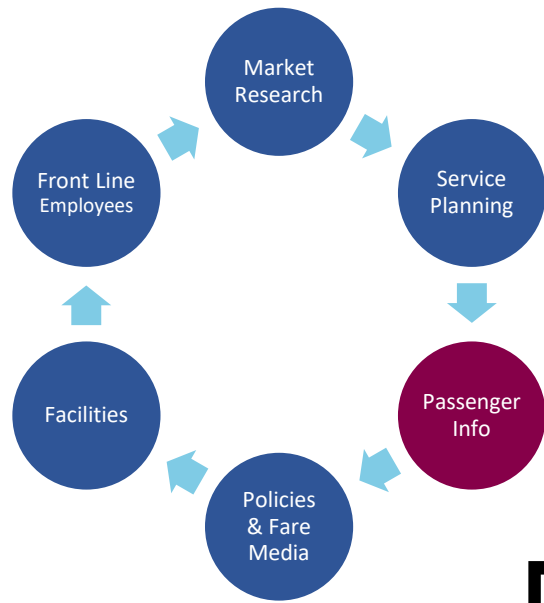
A good passenger experience begins with service that meets the rider's needs.



# Driven by Market Research & Outreach

- Use market research and outreach findings to advocate for passengers.
- Maximize customer convenience and value within your available resources
- Make service decisions based on what is good for the rider, not what is easiest for operations





# Passenger Information



Make using your service easy for first time riders,  
as well as long term customers.





# Passenger Information

- The first component of the passenger experience for many riders
- The “Directions” for using public transit
- A core element of your service



# Answer Rider's Questions at Each Step in the Trip

- Where can I go on public transit?
- How do I get from here to there?
- When/how often does it run?
- How do I make a reservation?
- Where do I catch the bus?
- How much does it cost?
- How do I pay?
- Am I in the right place?
- When will it come?
- Is it on time?



# New Riders

- Inform/Educate
- Reduce Confusion/Uncertainty
- Make it easy to take the first ride





# New Riders

The first “experience” for many new riders.

## ■ Website

- Trip Planner
- Maps and Schedules
- How to Ride/Fare Info

## ■ Trip Planning Apps

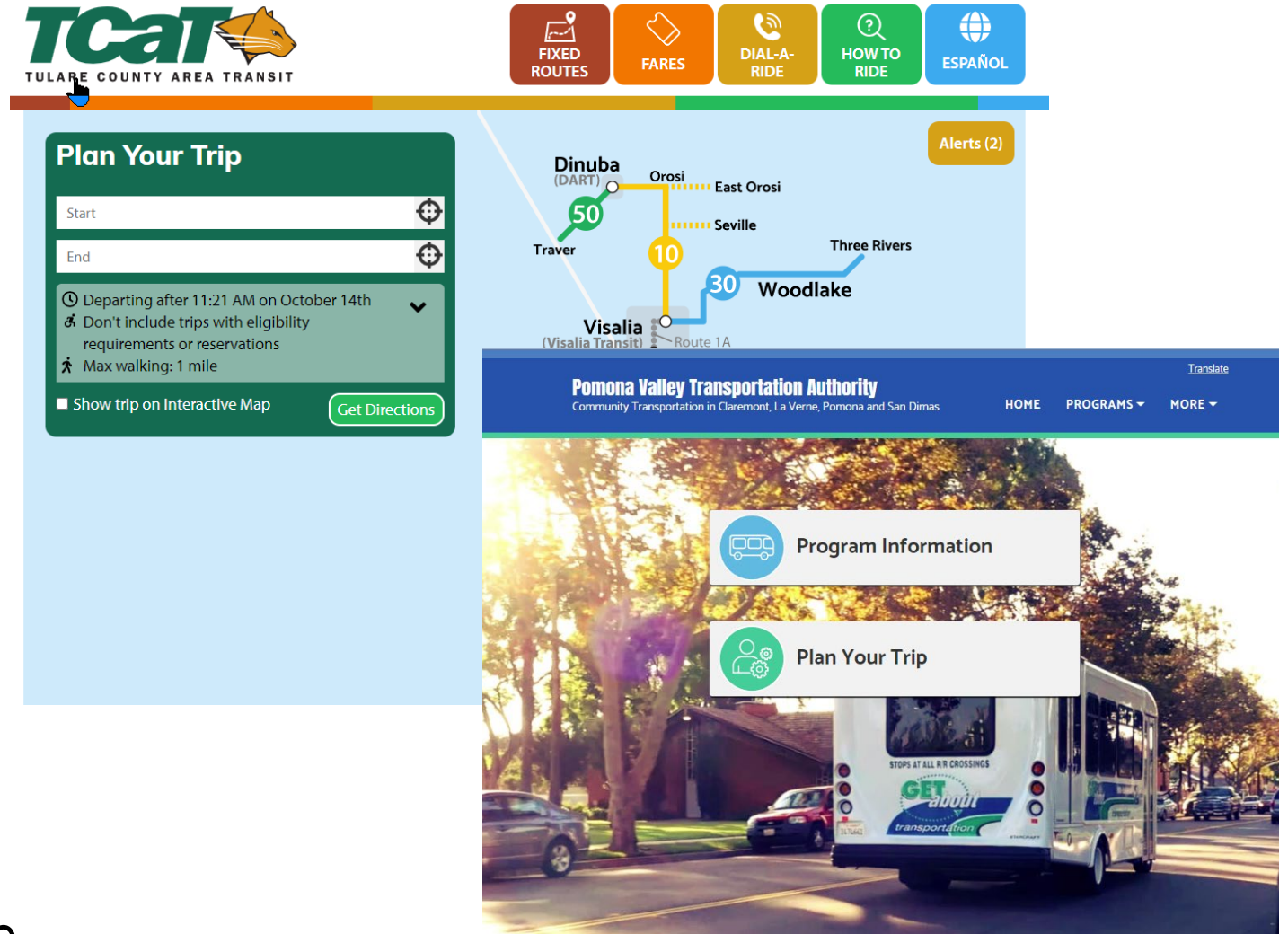
- Google Maps - familiar

## ■ Printed Guide

- Key info without overwhelming

## ■ At the Stop

- Bus Stop Sign
- Info Panel
- Phone number / URL / QR Code




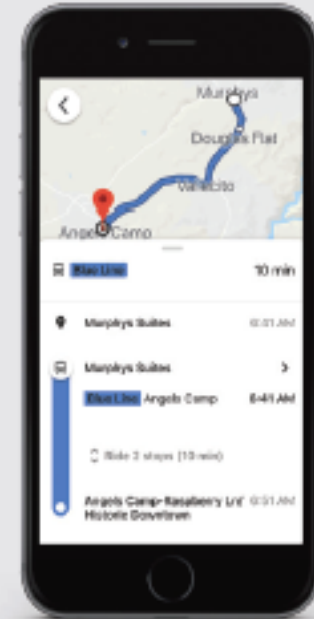


# New Riders

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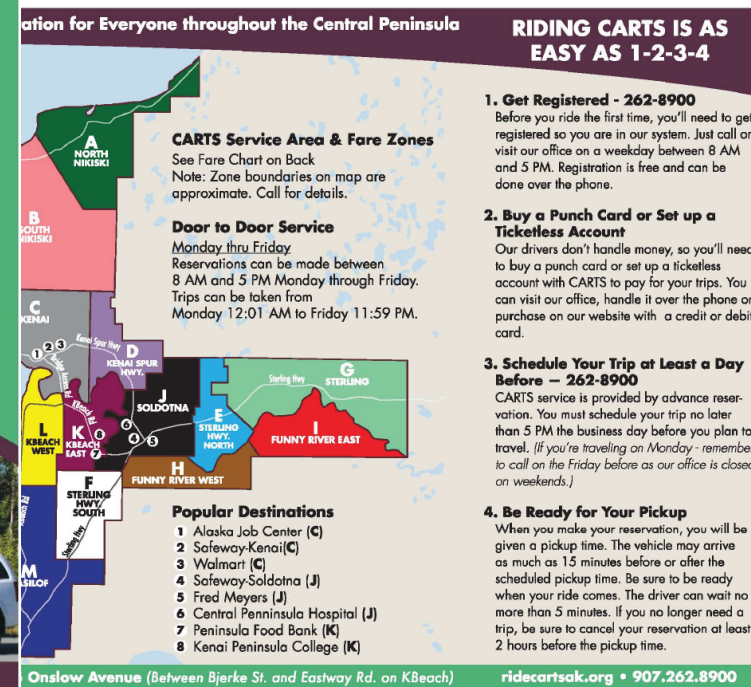
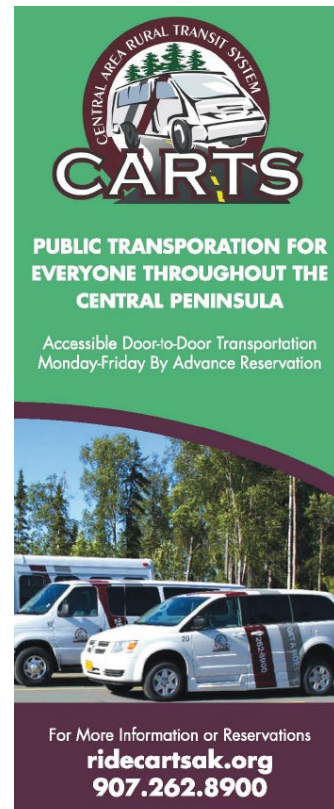
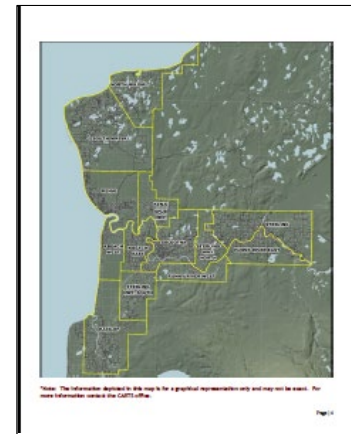
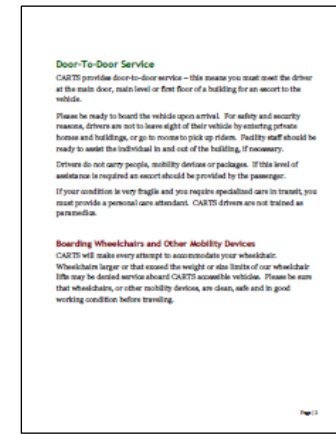
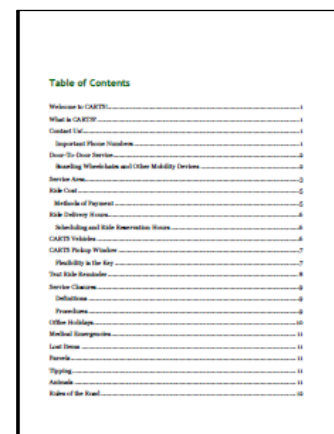
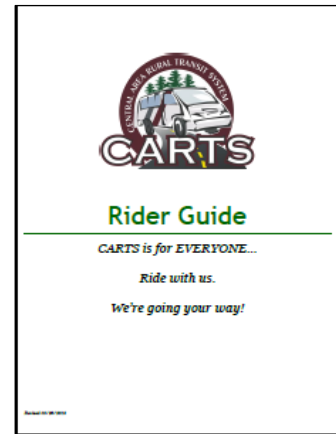
## Use Google Maps to plan your trip on a smartphone or computer

Once you put in your starting point and destination, just click the transit icon  instead of the car. Google Maps will give you detailed bus route and schedule information, including connections to Amador and Tuolumne County transit systems.



# New Riders

- Website
  - Trip Planner
  - Maps and Schedules
  - How to Ride/Fare Info
- Trip Planning Apps
  - Google Maps - familiar
- Printed Guide
  - Key info without overwhelming
- At the Stop
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From a Rider Guide that was 32 8.5x11" pages to a simple 1-page folded brochure



# New Riders

- Website
  - Trip Planner
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# Regular Riders

- Provide quick access to tools that make riding easy
- Provide alerts and updates when things change





# Regular Riders

- Website
  - Accessible
  - Mobile Responsive
  - Printable PDFs
- Real-time Info and Reservation Apps
- Alerts

The screenshot displays the NWCONNECTOR website, which provides public transit information across Northwest Oregon. The header features the NWCONNECTOR logo and navigation links for SCHEDULES, ROUTES, FARES, and MORE. A map of the region is shown, highlighting various transit routes and locations including Astoria, Seaside, Cannon Beach, Manzanita, Clatskanie, Rainier, Kelso, Vernonia, St. Helens, and Elsie. A 'PLAN YOUR TRIP' section includes input fields for 'Starting Location' and 'Destination', a 'Depart at' dropdown menu, and a 'PLAN TRIP' button. Below the map, a list of transit services is provided, categorized by county: Tillamook County Transportation District, Sunset Empire Transportation District, Lincoln County Transit, Columbia County Rider, and Benton County Transportation. Each category lists specific routes and services, such as the Tillamook Town Loop, Seaside Streetcar, Lincoln City Loop, Downtown Portland, and Corvallis to Amtrak Connector. The website also features a section for 'IDEAS' and a 'GET YOUR PASS' button.

**nwCONNECTOR**  
PUBLIC TRANSIT ACROSS NW OREGON

SCHEDULES, ROUTES, FARES MORE

**PLAN YOUR TRIP**

Starting Location  
Destination

Depart at  
8/2019

PLAN TRIP

**nwCONNECTOR**  
PUBLIC TRANSIT ACROSS NW OREGON

SCHEDULES, ROUTES, FARES MORE

**Tillamook County Transportation District**

- 1 Tillamook Town Loop
- 2 Tillamook – Oceanside – Netarts
- 3 Tillamook – Manzanita – Cannon Beach
- 4 Tillamook – Lincoln City
- 5 Tillamook – Portland
- 60X Lincoln City – Salem
- 70X Salem – Grand Ronde

**Sunset Empire Transportation District**

- Seaside Streetcar
- 10 Astoria – Hammond – Warrenton
- 101 Astoria – Seaside
- 13 East Astoria Weekend
- 15 Astoria – Warrenton – Hammond
- 17 Cannon Beach Weekdays
- 20 Cannon Beach – Seaside
- 21 Cannon Beach (Seaside on weekends)
- CC Lower Columbia Connector
- PC Pacific Connector

**Lincoln County Transit**

- Lincoln City Loop
- Newport City Loop
- Coast to Valley Express
- North County
- South County
- East County

**Columbia County Rider**

- 1 Downtown Portland
- 2 PCC Rock Creek
- 3 South County Flex
- 5 North County
- 6 Vernonia

**Benton County Transportation**

- Corvallis to Amtrak Connector
- 99 Express
- Coast to Valley Express

Interactive Map

Other Services

you-can-ride passes are your ticket to your

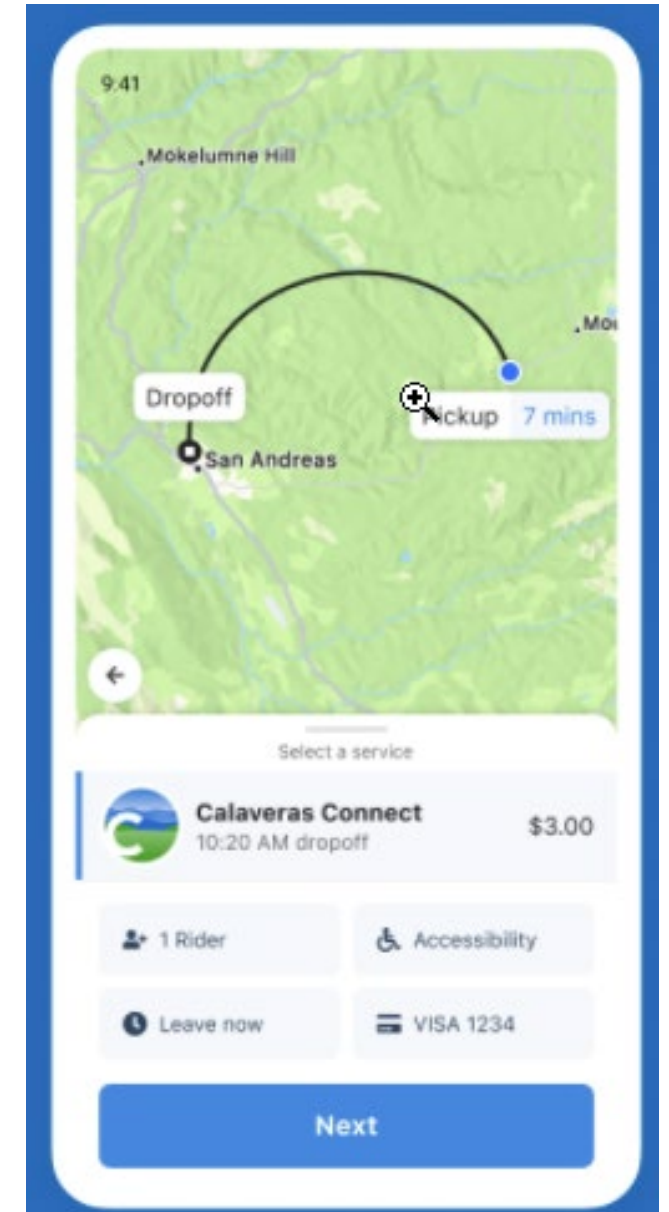
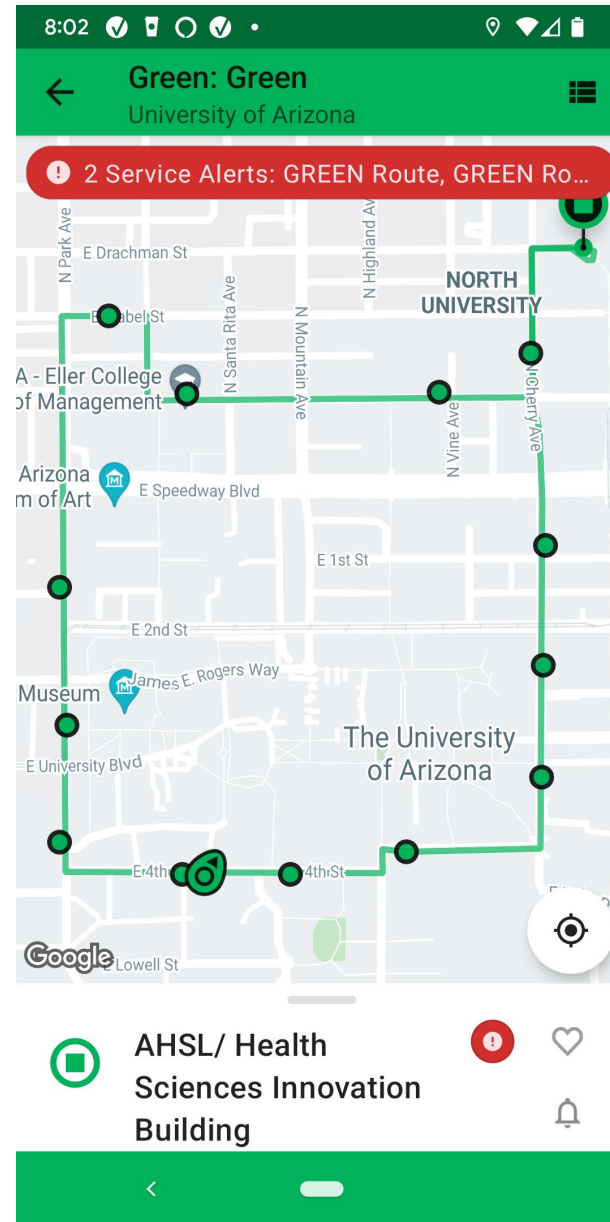
GET YOUR PASS

IDEAS



# Regular Riders

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# Regular Riders

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Sign up for Service Alerts

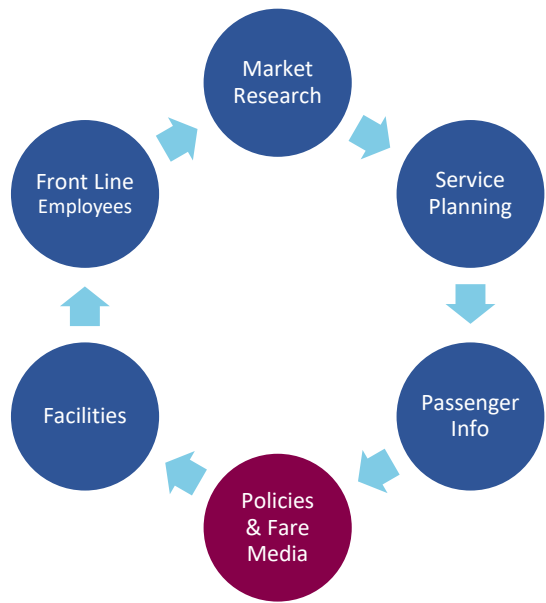
Subscribe



GET REAL-TIME UPDATES WITH  RouteShout

SIGN UP FOR RIDER ALERTS





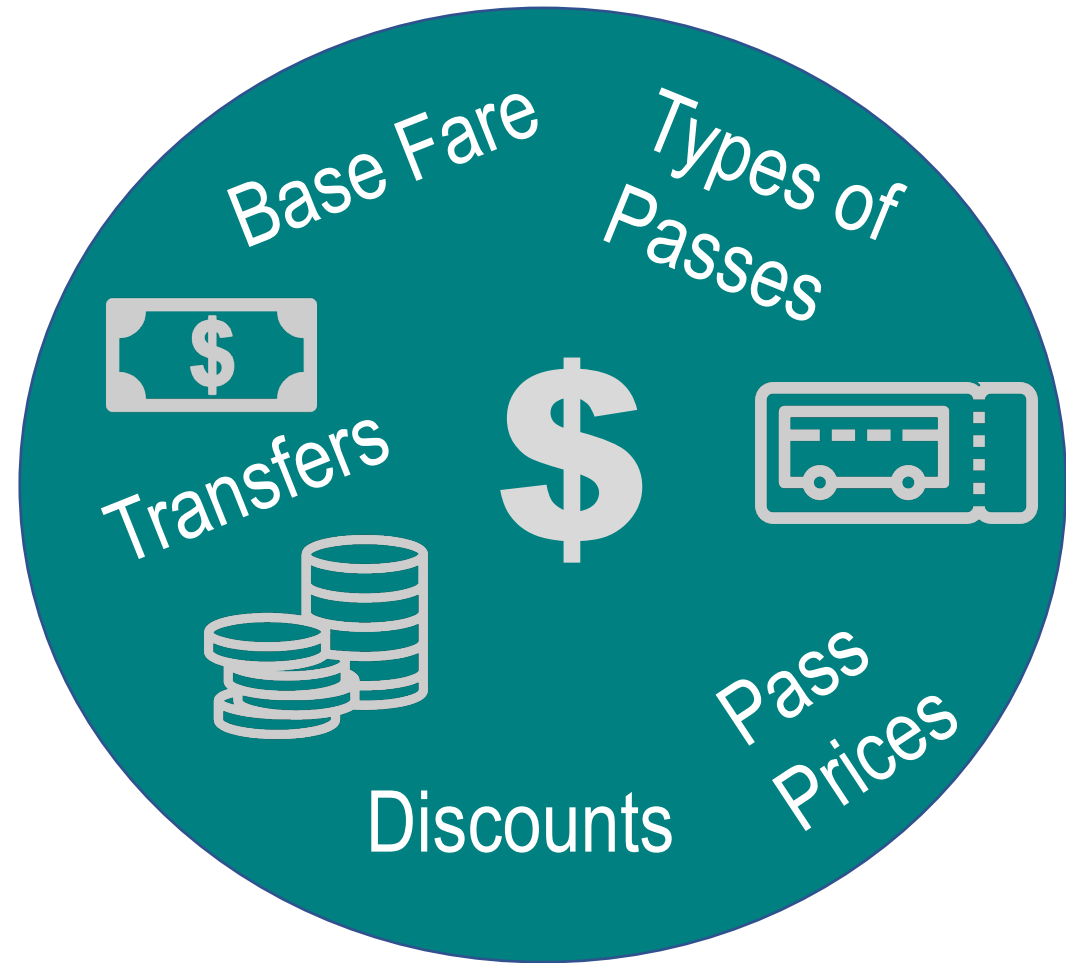
# Fares and Fare Media

Think as if you were paying the fare.



# Fare Policy Decisions

- Fairness
  - Trip length/duration vs fare
- Affordability
  - Up-front cost of passes
- Ease
  - Convenient sales options
- Practicality
  - For rider and driver



# Fare Media

- Match to rider needs & incomes
- Reward regular ridership
  - Greater discounts for most frequent usage (on fixed route)
- Special fare media for specific target groups
  - Senior/Disabled Discounts
  - Summer Youth Fares
  - Prepaid Programs

## \$1 SUMMER YOUTH FARE

JUNE THRU JULY

Riders 18 and under pay just \$1 one way during June and July. Go to the pool or the park, the mall or the movies. Get on board and go play, for just a dollar each way.



## Monthly Pass

### SEP '20

**\$60** Valid for unlimited rides during the calendar month indicated

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

209-754-4450  
calaverasconnect.org



### BIG BEAR Fixed Route Weekly Pass

Regular \$20.00

2014 2015 2016

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31					

### RIM Local Day Pass

REGULAR \$5.00

2014

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31					



### RIM Dial-a-Ride 20-Punch Ticket

Senior/Disabled \$18.00

2014 2015 2016

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20



# Fare Media Sales

- Sell at places riders already go
- Sell on-line
- Accept of credit/debit cards on bus or at station
- Reloadable fare cards
- Mobile Fare Apps
  - Avoid “exact change” issue
  - Increase convenience for riders and sponsors
  - Allow for “fare capping”



[Store homepage](#) | [HTA homepage](#)



Welcome to the Humboldt Transit Marketplace. Below are tickets available for purchase online.  
See links to complete fare information:  
• [fare information for Redwood Transit, Willow Creek, and Southern Humboldt services.](#)  
• [fare information for Eureka Transit Service](#)

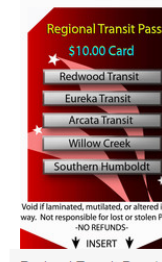
Shop by categories



Dial-A-Ride  
1 item



Monthly Passes  
8 items



Regional Transit Pass/  
Multi-Ride Pass  
2 items



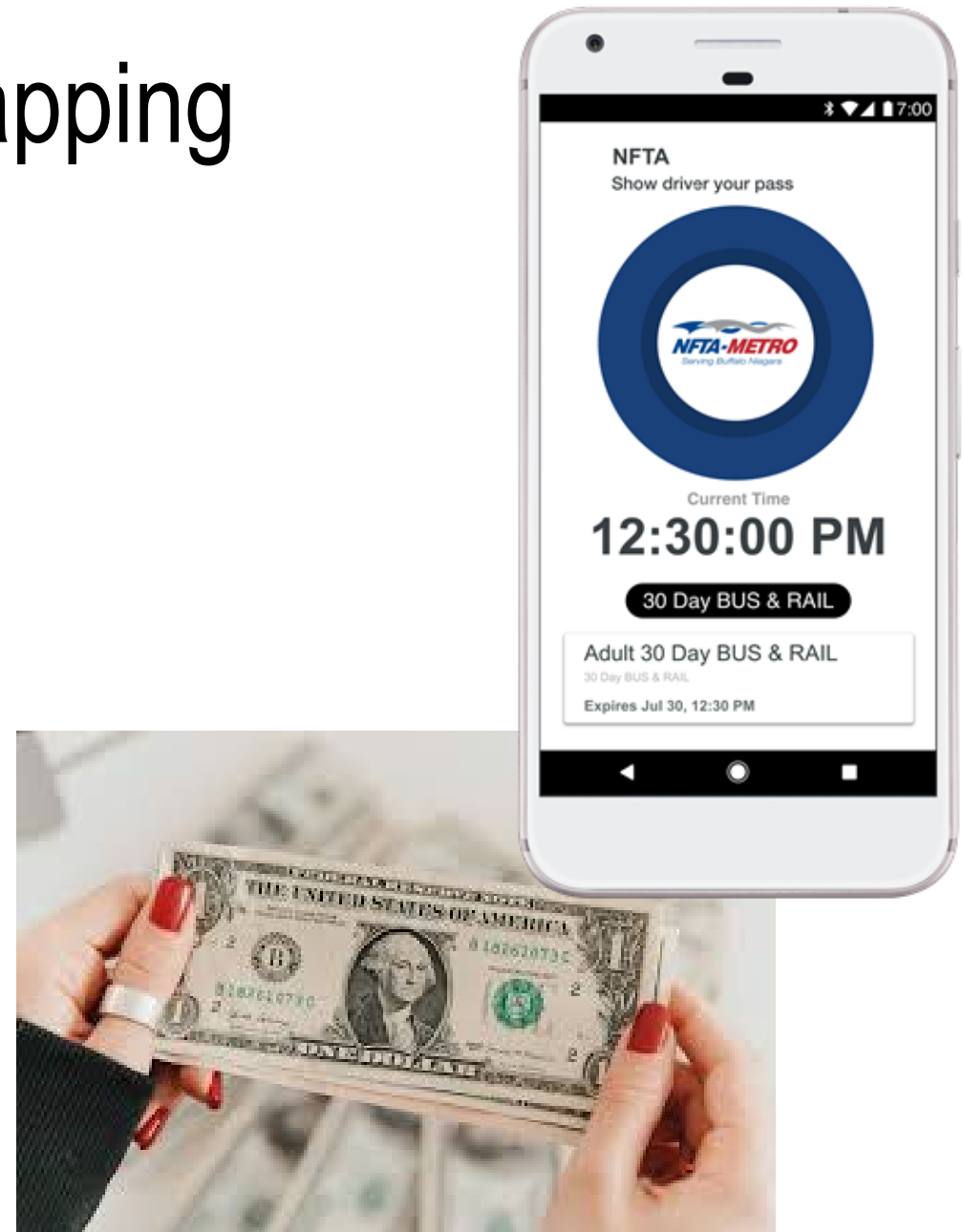
Week Passes  
2 items

**Grocery Stores**  
**Convenience Stores**  
**Schools**  
**Social Service**  
**Offices**



# Mobile Fare Payment & Fare Capping

- Long known truth:
  - The lowest income transit riders pay the most, because they pay one ride at a time.
- Mobile fare payment platforms make “fare capping” possible.
  - Converts discrete payments to a time-based pass when they reach a threshold.
  - The passenger rides “free” for the remainder of the time period.
- Fare Capping is offered by Token Transit, Masabi and other fare payment apps.

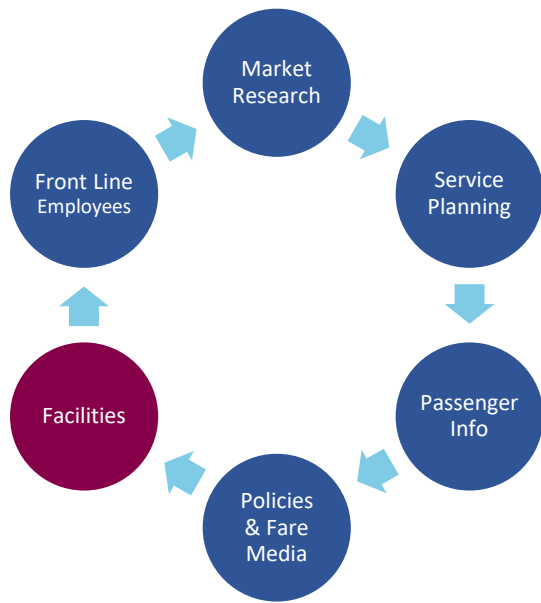




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- Trimet (Portland, OR)
  - SolTrans (Vallejo/Benicia, CA)
  - Champaign-Urbana MTD (Champaign-Urbana, IL)
  - TransIT (Frederick, MD)
  - RTC Washoe (Reno, NV)
  - Chatham Area Transit (Savannah, GA)
  - Modesto Area Express (CA)
  - Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority (OH)





# Facilities

The bus stop or transfer center where a rider catches the bus is as much a part of your brand and the passenger's experience as the bus itself.



# Facilities

- Bus Stops
- Shelters
- Transfer Centers
- Vehicles



# What will improve the passenger experience?

## ■ Branding/Identification

- Bus stops
- Vehicles

## ■ Cleanliness

- Bus stops
- Vehicles

## ■ Amenities at Stop

- Shelter
- Bench
- Trash
- Route/schedule information

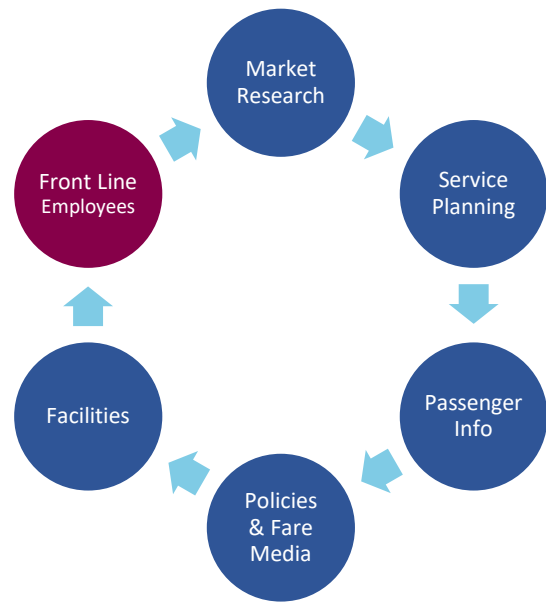
“Improvement” most  
desired by riders and  
potential riders

## ■ Amenities on Bus

- AC/Heat
- Bike racks
- Space for grocery bags or luggage
- WiFi or power outlets







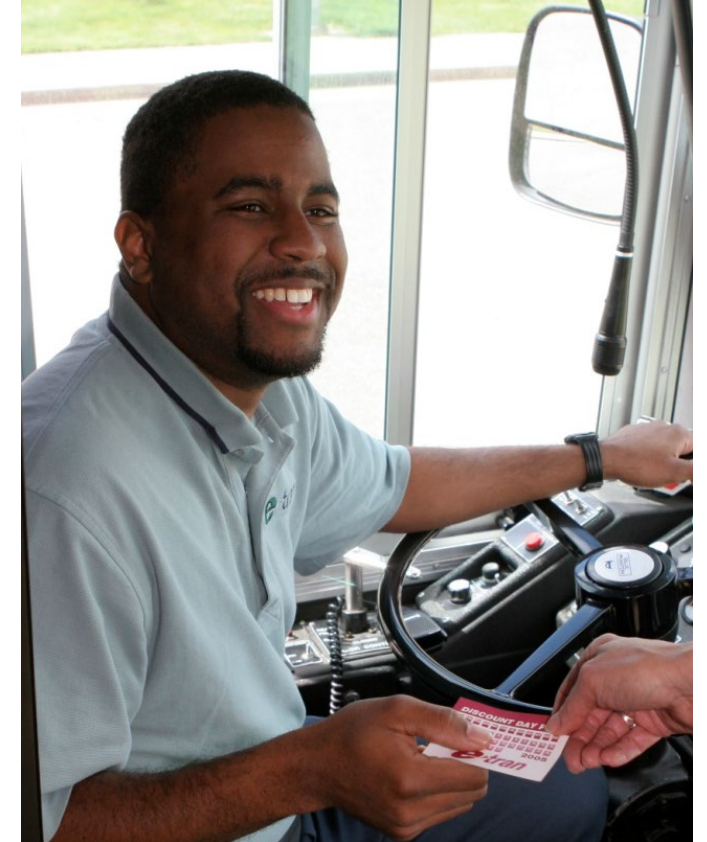
# Front Line Employees

The secret ingredient to a great passenger experience.



# Drivers

- Drivers are a key source of info for many riders.
  - Make sure they know it is an important part of their job
- Provide customer relations training as part of driver training
  - Basic courtesy and engagement
  - Recognize role as an information source
  - Strategies for dealing with conflict
  - Training specific to target ridership group
    - Persons with disabilities – physical or cognitive
    - Non-English-speaking passengers
    - Youth

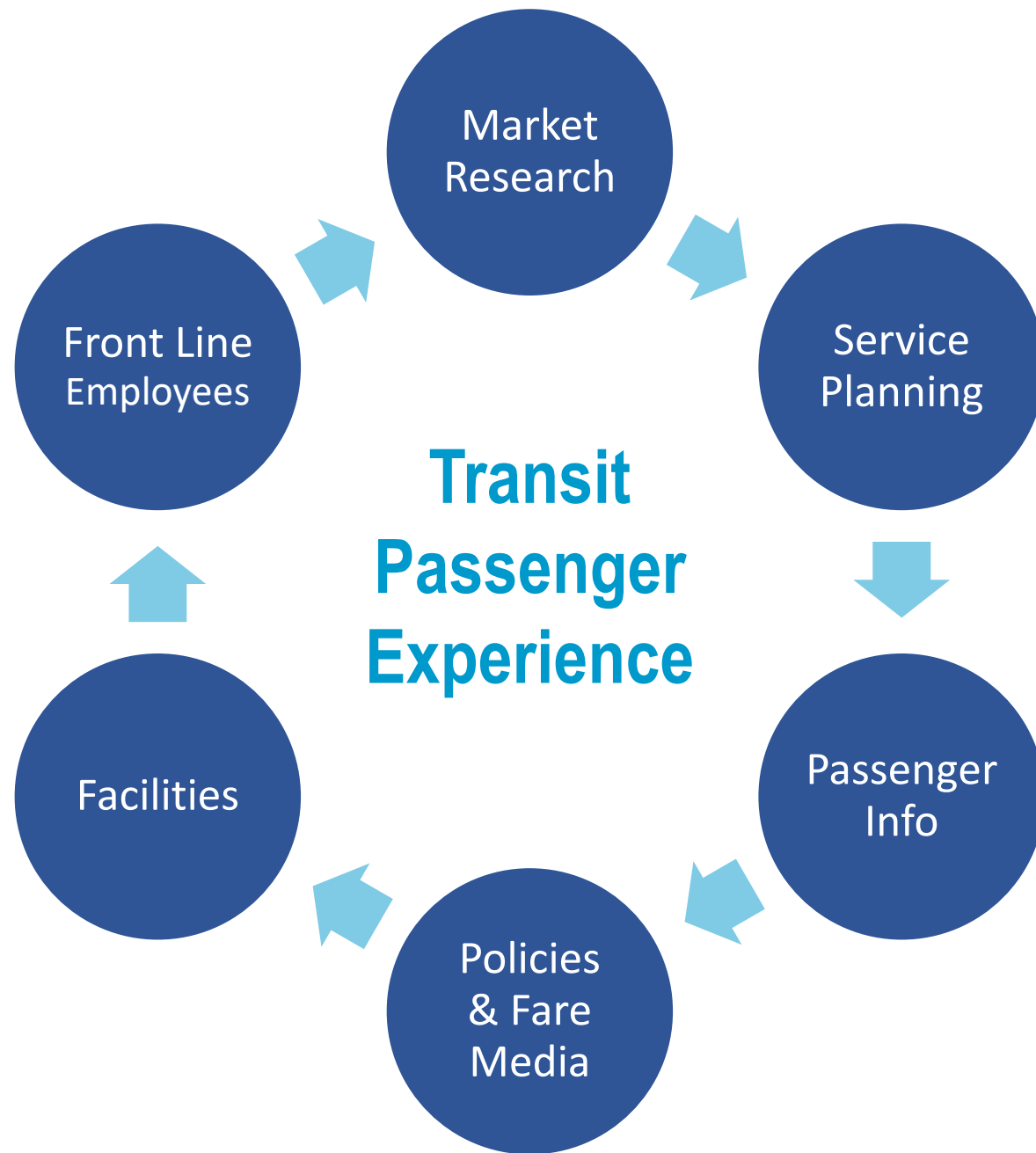




# All Front-Line Employees

- Hire people with the right attitude (easier said than done these days 😊)
- Model courtesy and respect within your agency
- Make customer relations part of every job
- Provide customer service training (and re-training as needed)
- Reward good customer service
  - Employee of the moment or month
  - Publicize compliments
  - Say thanks
- Include customer feedback in employee evaluations





# Four Key Steps to Improve Passenger Experience

1. Test your passenger experience
2. Think like a passenger when making decisions about services, facilities and policies
3. Make customer service and information part of every employee's job
4. Recognize that every department plays a role in the passenger experience:
  - Planning
  - Marketing and IT - Passenger Info
  - Facilities/Maintenance
  - Operations
  - Customer Service





Selena Barlow

Transit Marketing<sup>LLC</sup>

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520.322.9607



# Upcoming Events



**Rural Transit Day is July 16th!**

Twitter Chat on July 15, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

[Nationalrtap.org/News/Rural-Transit-Day](https://nationalrtap.org/News/Rural-Transit-Day)

**State RTAP Manager Peer Roundtable**

July 14, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

[Nationalrtap.org/Peer-Roundtables-and-Chats](https://nationalrtap.org/Peer-Roundtables-and-Chats)



# 2022 Photo Contest: The Bus Stops Here



Photos that showcase bus stops, shelters, or transit hubs,  
as well as all the great places buses take their riders

**Deadline: August 20, 2022**

# Recorded Virtual Trainings on Zoom Events



## Transit Knowledge Sharing Retreat, Erie, PA, June 15-16, 2022

**Procurement Best Practices & Hot Topics** (4 hours) – Richard Garrity, RLS & Associates  
**Capital Project Initiation & Scoping** (90 min) – Michia Casebier, M.G. Tech-Writing LLC  
**Project Funding and Grant Writing** (90 min) – Michia Casebier, M.G. Tech-Writing LLC  
**All Things National RTAP** (75 min) – Liz Taylor and Scott Zadakis, National RTAP

Available at: [Nationalrtap.org/News/Conference](https://Nationalrtap.org/News/Conference) or [TransitRetreat.org](https://TransitRetreat.org)

# Thank You!



## National Rural Transit Assistance Program

888-589-6821 | [nationalrtap.org](http://nationalrtap.org) | [info@nationalrtap.org](mailto:info@nationalrtap.org)

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