Response to Questions on the 2016 LOBs

Request By: Supervisor Herrity   **Relevant LOB(s):**   LOB #384

Question: What on-time metrics are tracked?

Response:

On-time performance is important to all Fairfax Connector riders and the Fairfax Connector team. For people who depend on Fairfax Connector, late buses or missed trips can result in the loss of a job or missed appointments. Lack of reliability may also cause choice riders to return to single occupant vehicles to avoid the inconvenience of waiting and missed connections. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) takes the issue of reliability seriously and monitors on-time performance continuously. Within resource constraints, strategic buses are deployed on weekdays to maintain schedules due to traffic delays and service disruptions.

As part of the development of the 2015 Transit Development Plan (TDP), a sample of 5,451 trips, representing every scheduled trip in each scheduled period (weekday, Saturday, and Sunday), were evaluated. Overall, 83 percent of the trips departed on time in the sample (meaning no more than one minute early and no more than five minutes late), and 50 percent arrived at the end point on time. Note: many trips failed the standard because buses arrived at the end of the route early rather than arriving six or more minutes late. This is particularly true for feeder service into Metrorail stations and large transit hubs. This does not result in dissatisfaction among customers, since the preceding bus stops are served in a timely manner. These types of schedule variations are often exempted with intelligent technology systems that measure on-time performance holistically.

In addition, the Connector currently uses various manual sampling methods to obtain on-time performance information. Processes include field supervisor reporting, dispatch radio logs, information collected by ride checkers, and the trip sampling noted above. Based on these methods, the County's contractor reports on-time performance in the high 90 percent range. The one tool that can comprehensively collect all of this data is computerized automatic vehicle location (AVL) system technology. The County is in the process of deploying an AVL system with real-time bus tracking. Upon completion of the Intelligent Transportation System project, on-time performance data from the AVL system will provide a much more comprehensive and accurate data than the manual sampling/collection method.