



Memorandum

Date: 04.05.17 **RE:** Board
April 11, 2017

To: Transportation Authority Board: Commissioners Peskin (Chair), Tang (Vice Chair), Breed, Cohen, Farrell, Fewer, Kim, Ronen, Safai, Sheehy and Yee

From: Jeff Hobson – Deputy Director for Planning *JA*

Through: Tilly Chang – Executive Director *TCC*

Subject: **INFORMATION** – BART Perks Preliminary Results

Summary

BART Perks, a six-month test incentive program offered by BART and the Transportation Authority, concluded on February 28 and preliminary results reveal that incentives can successfully shift the travel behavior of BART riders. During the trial period, an average of 250 Perks participants shifted their ride either before or after the peak morning rush hour each weekday. About 2,600 Perks participants traveled during the peak hour each day before the program, meaning about two full BART cars or 10% of these riders targeted by the program shifted. The program complemented BART's long-term efforts to reduce crowding and congestion on trains and in stations, which includes redesigning cars to increase capacity and running additional ten car trains with the arrival of the Fleet of the Future and a new train control system. A full evaluation of the program will be completed by Fall 2017.

BACKGROUND

Perks was a six-month test program managed by the Transportation Authority and Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART). The primary goal of the program was to test whether crowding can be reduced by offering riders incentives for traveling outside of the morning peak hour.

Beginning in August 2016, participants could sign up for Perks at BARTperks.com using their email address and Clipper Card number. Perks offered riders points for all travel on BART, and up to six times as many points by starting their trip during Bonus Hours, either 6:30 to 7:30 a.m. or 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Points could be exchanged for small cash rewards or used to play the "Spin to Win" game for the chance to pick up additional points or random cash rewards from \$1 to \$100. The first program of its kind in North America, Perks was modeled after successful international transit rewards programs.

The program was funded primarily through a Federal Highway Administration grant program that supports innovative approaches to reducing congestion through pricing and incentives. Funding was also provided by BART and Prop K funds.

DISCUSSION

Exceeding expectations for 10,000 sign-ups, almost 18,000 BART riders participated in the Perks program. The Perks program incentivized riders to shift travel times away from the peak morning hour of 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. to reduce crowding. During the six-month trial period, an average of 250 Perks

participants shifted their ride to the hour either before or after the peak morning rush hour each weekday. That amounts to the equivalent of two full BART cars being freed up each weekday during BART's busiest hour. About 2,600 Perks participants traveled during the peak hour each day before the program, meaning about 10% of these riders targeted by the program did in fact shift.

BART and the Transportation Authority measured the effects of the Perks program by comparing the percentage of rush hour trips participants made on an average weekday morning before the program to their behavior during the program. Based on BART's overall ridership data, staff performed this same calculation for the commute pattern of non-participants in order to understand whether there were other factors that could have caused the shift in rider behavior. While the program was of too small a scale to result in noticeable crowding reduction on BART, initial results reveal the program did successfully reduce peak hour travel among participants. To achieve even greater levels of rider shifting, future travel incentives programs for BART would need to be designed to better target individuals who are frequent riders during the busiest periods on the transit system.

Each month Perks awarded an average of \$35,000 to all program participants, and roughly \$230,000 was awarded over the entirety of the program. On average, participants earned close to \$3/month, with about 10 different participants per month being paid \$100 or more based on their participation in the "Spin to Win" game. Each month, rewards were transferred to participants' PayPal accounts.

In addition to testing whether crowding can be reduced through rider incentives, Perks also aimed to increase customer satisfaction among BART riders. In December 2016, BART and the Transportation Authority surveyed Perks participants, and results showed that 67% reported being satisfied with the program.

Perks included an employer partnership program in order to increase employer support for greater adoption of flexible work schedules. A total of 15 employers signed up as BART Perks Partners and were committed to promoting the program among their employees, including UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, Alliant International University, CRI, and Integral Group.

The Transportation Authority and BART are in the process of a full evaluation of the program's results which is expected to be completed by fall 2017. Based on the findings, the agencies will consider how to proceed with further strategies to reduce rush hour crowding.

ALTERNATIVES

None. This is an information item.

CAC POSITION

None. This is an information item.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

None. This is an information item.

RECOMMENDATION

None. This is an information item.