

## Customer Service Technologies



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Thank you. It is a pleasure to be participating in this conference. It was just about a year ago that the planning group first met at TRB to start organizing the conference. I would like to recognize Campbell Graeub of the TRB staff for his able assistance in this effort and the great support of all the TRB staff members.

I think the workshops you will have the opportunity to attend over the next three days are outstanding. I hope you will attend and participate in the sessions focusing on the areas of most interest to you. In addition, the technical tours on Tuesday afternoon provide a further opportunity to see many of the innovative transit approaches being implemented in the San Francisco Bay Area.

I would like to provide you with an overview of the workshops focusing on customer service technologies. One of the major elements of discussion at the Advanced Public Transportation Systems (APTS) Committee meeting yesterday afternoon concerned customer information

and customer services. A major challenge facing the transit industry is to learn the information needs of customers and then to provide the information in a way that meets these needs. Information on transit alternatives must be provided in a timely and easily accessible manner. Too many times we are not meeting the full needs of riders and potential customers.

There are four excellent sessions at the conference focusing on this cycle for customer information and customer interface. The first session, which starts later this morning, examines approaches for providing dynamic ride-matching services. The second workshop, Session 5 this afternoon, focuses on responsive traveler systems. Presentations in this workshop address the provision of real-time traffic and transit information to travelers; improving their ability to make informed, or smart, travel decisions.

The Tuesday morning workshop, Session 8, focuses on recent innovations in fare collection techniques and technologies. This will include examples of removing exact fare barriers, coordinating fare collection among different providers in the same geographical areas, and the use of electronic fare collection and smart card technologies to simplify fare payment. The final workshop on Wednesday morning will address advanced customer information systems. The focus of this session is on the application of advanced technologies to improve and expand customer information services.

The presentations in these workshops will provide you with an overview of the status of many activities around the country. Further, they should stimulate your thinking on other creative approaches that can be taken to improve public transportation through the application of advanced technologies. I would like to challenge each of you to think about how these ideas may be used in your community to encourage greater use of transit and to enhance your system. Thank you.