Charlottesville Area Transit

321 stops

165,000 riders/month (average)

12 routes

36 buses
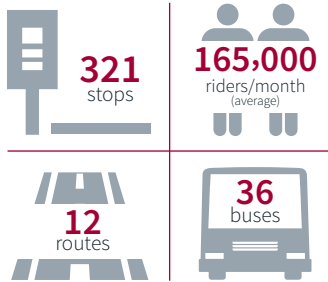
Industry
Fixed Route

Products
Automated Fare Collection

Results

Total Riders
May 2016: 165,000

26,000 smart cards

31,165 student IDs

30,836 day passes **with bar codes**
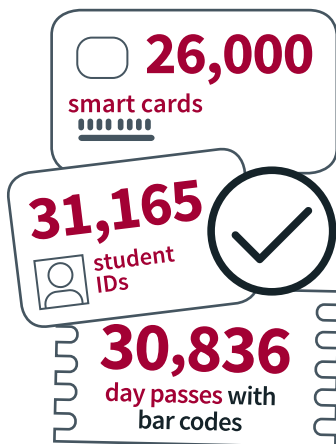
CAT drastically improved customer experience, decreased costs and fraud, and increased ridership, after transitioning to a new Automated Fare Collection (AFC) provider.

Background: CAT wanted to change their dated fareboxes into an advanced system that would improve the customer experience, reduce counterfeits and fraud, accept smart technology, track their university IDs and improve reporting.

Challenges: One of CAT's biggest challenges was improving their customer experience and eliminating fraud from counterfeit day passes.

"Before, we would have to search various suppliers for odd colored paper not available in the mainstream to print the day passes on. We had to order day passes three months in advance. Imagine printing 2,000 passes and having 1,400 go unused because of a slow day," said John Jones, Transit Manager, CAT.

CAT also needed more accurate ridership data for better planning and scheduling. As well, based on physical counts on vehicles, CAT realized their drivers were missing payments from five to eight percent of boardings, on average.

Solutions: CAT implemented EZFare in the summer of 2015.

They can now accept cash payments on the bus and generate a barcoded day pass from the farebox. CAT passengers now have multiple methods of payment including smart media (processed in the form of monthly passes) and barcoded IDs for university students, staff and faculty (processed by scanning the barcode already on the back of their ID). The EZFare system allows CAT to add other barcoded passes to the system for future business partners.

This has drastically reduced fraud and cash handling costs; helped with monitoring detailed transaction records; and increased ridership by improving the customer experience.

Although it took some time to get the fareboxes up and running on every bus, Jones is now pleased with the results they've had to date.

> **On average we scan 64,000 university IDs per month and have about four failures."**
>
> *John Jones, Transit Manager, CAT*

Results: Since switching to EZFare, customer satisfaction has increased since they're now offering longer-term passes in addition to day passes. "We've increased convenience for the customer and we've heard a lot of positive feedback," he said.

The day passes are now printed automatically from the farebox, which has reduced fraud, made it easier for the passengers, and has reduced clutter near the driver's area.

They're also collecting data that they couldn't before.

"The data has helped us improve planning and scheduling," said Jones. "With the old farebox, we just had route-level data; now, we have stop-level data by time of day," he said. "We've been able to look at eliminating stops that have zero ridership. Prior to EZFare, we had 400 stops. Now, we have 321 stops because the data told us no one was getting on at those stops."

Their new system easily processes barcoded IDs to streamline boarding. They've also reduced the cost of counting cash. Prior, they had two full time employees spending three hours a day to count cash. Now, they have one employee spending one hour a day doing the same.

"The feedback has been really positive. With the more accurate data and the convenience of the farebox, we are able to do a much better job of putting service where it needs to be," said Jones.

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