



VTA TRANSFORMS PARATRANSIT OPERATIONS CAUSING ONE PASSENGER TO SHOUT 'HOORAY'. FIND OUT WHY.

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority



7,000
active, registered
paratransit customers



2,200
paratransit trips daily

Industry

Paratransit

Products

Trapeze PASS with EZ Wallet

An efficient online booking and payment system has transformed Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority paratransit operations and supercharged rider satisfaction. Read on to discover why one paratransit passenger is shouting “hooray” for the benefits it provides.

Background: For Aaron Vogel, Regional Transportation Services Manager at Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), rider experience is a top priority. It’s also a life-changer for the approximately 7,000 active, registered customers who depend on the agency’s paratransit fleet to get to work, appointments and wherever they need to be. VTA’s paratransit service makes about 2,200 trips daily.

When Vogel received letters from riders about the cumbersome paratransit payment and booking process, he knew he needed to make improvements. VTA had moved to a cashless system for paratransit riders in 1993, which meant riders were required to have money in their account before they could book their ride on the system. They would, for example, send a check in the mail, wait for the check to arrive and be processed, and then book their ride. Alternatively, they could pay by credit card over the phone or visit the one retail center available.

Challenges: Payment processing only took place Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The system was only available to book rides from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week, so if a customer’s plans changed or they wanted to book a ride on the weekend and had no funds in their account, they simply couldn’t do it.

To offset the inconvenience, VTA used an honor system where customers would book rides before the agency had received the money. Not ideal. This had put VTA about \$30,000 in negative balances.

“Our passengers were looking for a solution outside of the 8 to 5 restriction,” Vogel said.

“They wanted their agency to be more customer-focused and at the forefront of innovation, understandably. And they didn’t feel they always got treated with innovations like the rest of society.” He wanted to change that perception, and offer a solution that would serve these customers in real-time, 24/7, with a self-serve online portal.



“I could kiss you guys. After years I can book and cancel trips online 24/7. Hooray!”

AS ONE RIDER PUT IT

“Hearing that feedback and considering the number of people who use the internet, we knew we wanted to make a global change, rolling out a system for anybody and everybody,” he said.

VTA also was adamant about getting rid of the honor system that had them writing off as much as \$10,000 a year, and finding a more efficient way to manage manual transactions. Essentially, they wanted a system that would improve rider access and experience, and put their books in the black.

Solutions: VTA implemented Trapeze Group’s PASS-WEB system for booking trips and pre-paying fares online through any device with an internet connection, anytime, anywhere. This new system includes Trapeze Group’s EZ Wallet software that acts as a virtual account for passengers to pre-pay their fares at the time of booking through a secure web portal with credit/debit cards and e-checks.

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Results:



DELIVER TIME AND COST SAVINGS
Call Center operations have been streamlined with increased online capabilities



BOOK AND CANCEL TRIPS ONLINE 24/7



PASSENGERS RECEIVE email notifications to validate transactions

+ FULL ACCESS TO THEIR TRIP HISTORY ONLINE



+ ABILITY TO REPLENISH THEIR EZ WALLET ACCOUNT DEBIT, CREDIT AND E-CHECKS

In addition, DriverMate connects drivers and vehicles with the back office for efficient real-time information exchange. TripBroker ensures that no paratransit passenger is left behind by partnering with taxis. These solutions are integrated to enable customers to track their vehicle locations online.

In August 2017, VTA launched a pilot of the new PASS-WEB system (web-based automated scheduling and dispatch) for one year, ending on July 31, 2018. On August 1, it was released to the public and, Vogel says, it was a highly successful launch. Then, in October 2018, a soft launch of EZ Wallet was initiated, with its full implementation taking effect with the general public in December 2018.

“It really took off immediately. People were using it independently without us even knowing, without us even talking to them. It was that simple and straightforward.”

Now riders can use debit, credit, and e-checks to replenish their EZ Wallet accounts, review their account balances, and get EZ Wallet transaction statements.

Another bonus is passengers receive email notifications to validate transactions, and can independently manage their passwords for improved security.

Results: VTA now has a more seamless paratransit operation, delivering time and cost savings along with highly rated customer satisfaction. Call center response times have improved, and paratransit administration is much faster.

The transaction history report is also an important advantage, Vogel said. “Consumers can get a trip history report to allow them to get reimbursed for other services in the community.” Vogel went on to say that their “customer-focused approach is scoring positive feedback and great reviews.”

As one rider put it, “I could kiss you guys. After years I can book and cancel trips online 24/7. Hooray!”