

streetcars, or additional spending on projects such as those led by Booz-Allen to improve Muni Metro service. It may also simply be an example of the regression effect, in which particularly good and poor performers would over time tend to revert to the average. In Table 6, we list Muni's most-improved lines and the lines that have lost the most ground since 1998.

Some lines showed improvements since the first year the survey was taken, in 1997. In particular, the F-Market, 19-Polk, and 22-Fillmore lines, which scored very poorly in the 1997 survey, showed significant improvement, with the 22 most improved at 32 percentage points better. On the 22 line in particular, this may reflect the higher priority placed on the line as part of Muni's "Ambassador" program. Some lines (most notably the J-Church) showed declines in quality from 1997. However, the majority of lines covered in the 1999 survey did not have sufficient 1997 data for the comparisons to be meaningful, so these comparisons are not as useful as the ones with the 1998 results.

A table of all lines surveyed is provided below, sorted in decreasing order of percentage of riders delayed. Where sufficient data were available from our surveys in 1997 and spring and fall 1998, we are also providing the percentage of riders delayed and the differences between previous years and 1999. As noted above, slightly more lines improved over 1998, although for certain lines this comparison may be subject to some bias based on the introduction of the new methodology for multiple lines.

Line Profiles

In addition to our aggregate data described above, we have done some specific analysis on several widely used Muni lines, which are profiled here. These may be useful as representative samples of Muni's performance for the typical rider.

14-Mission (Graded F): This extremely busy trolley bus line has improved slightly from last year's survey, but still returns a miserable performance. The average time

spent waiting for a bus was 5 minutes, a 16% improvement from 1998, and not a bad-sounding number. However, the line is scheduled at approximately 5 minute intervals - a 5 minute average wait time meant that 47% of passengers were delayed, down from 51% last year. Crowding was only scored 2.59 (from 1 to 5, >3 means standing room only). This seems low for Muni's most-used line, until bunching is considered. An average wait time of 5 minutes (assuming equal intervals between buses) equals one bus every 10 minutes. Muni's fleet and operator availability, while bad, is much greater than 50%. Where do the extra buses go? They run bunched, with the lead coach fully crowded while a coach or two immediately follow with plenty of room. Muni has made very little improvement in meeting the challenges of such a long and congested route. L-Taraval (Graded C): Perhaps the pain of the "Meltdown" last August was worth the improvement for the L. The percentage of riders delayed (26%) was half that in both surveys conducted last year. Passengers waited an average of 96% of the scheduled frequency, dramatically down from a horrible 168% one year ago. However, the L was the quite crowded, ranking only behind the K-Ingleside on the Metro system and the commute-only express buses to the Richmond and Sunset districts. This suggests that while the new Alcatel train control system and the introduction of Breda streetcars have somewhat increased reliability of subway operation, the loss of two car trains has made overcrowding routine. Note that passengers could still expect to wait nearly twice the scheduled frequency for a streetcar; while improved, service on the "L-Terrible" is still not good. 22-Fillmore (Graded C): This line has received a high degree of attention in recent years, perhaps in part due to its distinction as Muni's worst line in our 1997 Riders' Survey. It was the first line selected for Muni's "Ambassador Program," in which operators and managers worked together to solve problems on the lines, additional

customer-service training was made available, and (perhaps most importantly) three new runs of service were added. In addition, this line is currently being used as the trial line for the NextBus system, which uses the global positioning system to track the location of buses and notifies users with electronic message boards. Service has definitely improved on this line; worst in the system at 55% of riders delayed in 1997, it improved to 29% in 1998 and 22% in 1999. Normalized waiting time also declined significantly, from 116% in 1997 to 108% in 1998 and 87% in 1999; indicating a significant reduction in delays. Muni would do well to replicate its experience with the 22 on other lines.

1AX - Balboa A Express (Graded B): This line provided good on-time service, with only 11% of riders delayed, an improvement over the 30% delayed in 1997. However, crowding was the worst in the system, with an average score of 4.22 and 37 percent of riders reporting a fully packed bus (5 rating). By contrast, 18% of all express riders reported completely packed buses. This is an excellent example of Muni failing to meet demand, from riders who are very likely to drive their cars to downtown if Muni is unreliable. Muni must provide sufficient service on lines like the 1AX for San Francisco to have any chance of reducing traffic downtown.

F-Market (Graded B): This line is once again one of Muni's top performers. The percentage of riders delayed (11%) improved slightly from 1998 (13%) and was much better than it was in 1997 (39%). More impressively, average waiting time was quite low at 5 minutes, generally half the posted frequency and a minute better than in 1998. Average normalized waiting time also improved, from 54% in 1998 to only 37% in 1999, indicating that riders routinely wait less than they should expect to with the system running on schedule. Perhaps as a result, however, crowding was slightly above the system average.

User Comments

As always, we received many comments on Muni service from our participants. Many comments were about late or crowded vehicles:

Rain = Muni late
Train delayed at every subway station
Train totally jammed
Waited 20 minutes, then walked
Bus never came; walked
Long wait; blinding speed
2 full buses passed me by. Waited .5 hr.
Delays!!!

Many riders commented on the courtesy, or lack thereof, of Muni personnel:

Angry driver
Driver properly called out stops
Driver reckless in the rain
Extraordinarily good driver; called out all stops

And some riders provided their own assessment of Muni reliability:

WORSE WORSE WORSE
It should always be like this. No wait.
A good Muni day!
Yes! Yes! Yes!

Of the comments we received frequently, the most common were "good ride" (22 of 1011 comments), "ok" (11), "quick" (8), "crowded" (8), and notes about the number of cars in the trains. We received many additional comments on delays, good service, and driver and passenger courtesy that we do not have space here to reprint.

Conclusion

The San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) has shown some improvement in on-time performance since our previous surveys in 1998 and 1997. Muni Metro streetcar service in particular has improved, and many bus lines have improved as well. Muni deserves some credit for improving service on these lines and systemwide, and while the Muni Metro improvement program involving Booz-Allen has its flaws, it appears to have had results. Also, Muni's significant budget increases beginning in 1997 have clearly made a difference, making it possible to add service on lines such as the 22-Fillmore.

Continued on next page

Muni Reform Initiative Campaign Update

Andrew Sullivan reports on the status of the Proposition E campaign

The Muni Reform Charter Amendment is on the ballot. On June 21, 1999, the Board of Supervisors voted 10-1 (Bierman dissenting) to put the "Municipal Transportation Agency; Charter Amendment" before the voters on November 2. This consensus initiative, Proposition E, is described in detail in the July 1999 mini-Transfer and on the RM web site.

Rescue Muni Endorses Prop E: On July 13, the assembled Rescue Muni members voted overwhelmingly (96% supporting) to endorse the consensus Charter Amendment. Other endorsers thus far include, in addition to partners SPUR and SF Environmental Organizing Committee, the Sierra Club, the Democratic Party, the Bicycle Coalition, Adopt-a-Muni, and many other

Survey Results continued from previous page
However, much more needs to be done. As in previous years, the overall survey experience was mixed; many lines graded poorly in previous years worsened or stayed the same, and the wide variation between lines we have noted in previous surveys has only narrowed slightly. Far too many important lines are still graded "D" or "F" for poor on-time performance, and unacceptable levels of crowding occur far too frequently. Muni is by no means up to world-class standards yet.

Perhaps this survey shows, more than anything else, that there are no quick fixes. Increasing Muni's budget certainly can help improve service levels, and hiring consultants or establishing special programs to focus on particular problems may achieve incremental improvements. For that matter, the kind of reorganization envisioned by the

organizations.

New Campaign Committee: The Coalition for Muni Reform, led by SPUR and the SF Environmental Organizing Committee, will be leading the campaign to get Proposition E passed this fall. The two Rescue Muni leaders who led the previous campaign committee have chosen to refocus on policy issues affecting Muni, and although Rescue Muni will not be running the campaign, we will be active volunteers.

Volunteer Opportunities: Help get Proposition E passed! The campaign needs you to walk precincts, hand out fliers, make phone calls, and so on. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Gabriel Metcalf at SPUR, at 415/781-8726. ★

charter amendment before the voters this fall will only go so far by itself. For Muni to run truly world-class service, it must do the basic things we have urged for years: publish a complete and accurate schedule, maintain its equipment properly, communicate with its customers, and hold everyone accountable for running safe and reliable service. Only if it does these things consistently and well will Muni finally live up to its potential. ★

Author's Note: Why the massive delay? Normally we publish the results of Muni surveys fairly soon after they are taken. This year, we were kept so busy by the Muni Reform Charter Amendment campaign and the associated negotiations at City Hall that we were unable to publish the survey results until now. Unfortunately, the result is that these data are now six months out of date. With our thanks to everyone who participated, many apologies

Table 7: Complete Results

| route | total resps | % late riders | grade | avg wait | %norm wait | crowd- ing | Fall 98 % late | chg 99-F98 | 1998 % late | chg 99-98 | 1997 % late | chg 99-97 |
|-------|----------------|------------------|-------|-------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 7 | 38 | 50% | F | 0:08 | 54% | 2.23 | | | 19% | 31% | | |
| 14 | 137 | 47% | F | 0:05 | 121% | 2.59 | | | 51% | -4% | | |
| 14X | 27 | 43% | F | 0:09 | 109% | 3.86 | | | 32% | 10% | | |
| 31 | 31 | 42% | F | 0:13 | 106% | 2.06 | | | 27% | 14% | | |
| 29 | 52 | 40% | F | 0:19 | 120% | 3.42 | | | | | | |
| 47 | 42 | 40% | D | 0:05 | 38% | 2.40 | | | | | | |
| 42 | 41 | 36% | D | 0:08 | 61% | 2.55 | | | 25% | 12% | | |
| 26 | 22 | 36% | D | 0:18 | 98% | 2.62 | | | | | | |
| J | 155 | 36% | D | 0:08 | 99% | 2.26 | 36% | 0% | 42% | -6% | 22% | 14% |
| 38L | 38 | 35% | D | 0:02 | 49% | 3.24 | | | 29% | 6% | | |
| 38 | 83 | 33% | D | 0:05 | 78% | 2.80 | | | 26% | 7% | 27% | 5% |
| K | 62 | 32% | D | 0:08 | 75% | 3.36 | 31% | 1% | 41% | -9% | 27% | 5% |
| 9 | 42 | 31% | D | 0:09 | 95% | 2.86 | | | 27% | 4% | | |
| 1 | 83 | 28% | C | 0:06 | 82% | 2.86 | | | 23% | 4% | 43% | -15% |
| 43 | 97 | 26% | C | 0:10 | 82% | 2.58 | | | 23% | 3% | 23% | 4% |
| 30 | 64 | 26% | C | 0:04 | 73% | 2.44 | | | 21% | 5% | 33% | -6% |
| M | 68 | 26% | C | 0:08 | 73% | 3.12 | 42% | -16% | 31% | -6% | 30% | -4% |
| L | 228 | 26% | C | 0:07 | 96% | 3.25 | 52% | -26% | 53% | -28% | 22% | 4% |
| 21 | 70 | 26% | C | 0:09 | 74% | 2.50 | | | 30% | -4% | 22% | 3% |
| 48 | 47 | 26% | C | 0:11 | 82% | 2.70 | | | 40% | -15% | | |
| 44 | 78 | 25% | C | 0:11 | 77% | 2.80 | | | 9% | 16% | 31% | -6% |
| 45 | 48 | 23% | C | 0:07 | 81% | 2.18 | | | 16% | 8% | | |
| 49 | 58 | 23% | C | 0:07 | 61% | 2.78 | | | 29% | -6% | | |
| N | 558 | 23% | C | 0:05 | 77% | 2.65 | 40% | -17% | 42% | -19% | 33% | -10% |
| 71 | 51 | 23% | C | 0:09 | 62% | 2.97 | | | 31% | -8% | 25% | -2% |
| 22 | 118 | 22% | C | 0:07 | 87% | 2.73 | | | 29% | -6% | 55% | -32% |
| KLM | 457 | 22% | C | 0:04 | 81% | 3.46 | 26% | -4% | 14% | 8% | 7% | 15% |
| 24 | 215 | 22% | C | 0:08 | 73% | 2.45 | | | 30% | -9% | 23% | -1% |
| 28 | 24 | 21% | C | 0:08 | 57% | 3.08 | | | 14% | 7% | | |
| 6 | 70 | 21% | C | 0:07 | 56% | 2.19 | | | 21% | -0% | 9% | 12% |
| JKLMN | 86 | 20% | B | 0:01 | 57% | 2.59 | 26% | -6% | | | | |
| 15 | 28 | 19% | B | 0:08 | 86% | 2.94 | | | 31% | -12% | 34% | -15% |
| 16AX | 24 | 19% | B | 0:08 | 79% | 2.80 | | | | | | |
| 2 | 26 | 19% | B | 0:05 | 34% | 2.50 | | | 9% | 9% | | |
| 16BX | 27 | 19% | B | 0:07 | 68% | 3.48 | | | | | | |
| 5 | 90 | 16% | B | 0:05 | 64% | 2.99 | | | 28% | -12% | 16% | -0% |
| 19 | 33 | 15% | B | 0:08 | 75% | 2.30 | | | 22% | -7% | 42% | -27% |
| 23 | 40 | 13% | B | 0:10 | 58% | 2.69 | | | | | | |
| 33 | 76 | 12% | B | 0:10 | 57% | 2.07 | | | | | | |
| 1AX | 27 | 11% | B | 0:03 | 32% | 4.22 | | | | | 30% | -19% |
| F | 74 | 11% | B | 0:05 | 37% | 2.88 | | | 13% | -2% | 39% | -29% |
| 18 | 29 | 10% | B | 0:08 | 52% | 2.44 | | | | | | |
| 37 | 62 | 5% | A | 0:09 | 39% | 1.79 | | | 15% | -10% | | |
| 35 | 23 | 4% | A | 0:06 | 26% | 1.78 | | | | | | |
| 27 | 53 | 2% | A | 0:04 | 31% | 2.35 | | | | | 5% | -3% |
| Total | 3995 | 24.5% | C | 0:07 | 76% | 2.78 | | | 28% | -3% | 25% | -1% |

Table 5. Performance by time of day

| time slot | % late | grade | Fall98 % late | chg 99-F98 | 1998 % late | chg 99-98 | 1997 % late | chg 99-97 | 1999 total responses |
|-----------|--------|-------|---------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|
| AM rush | 26% | C | 31% | -5% | 30% | -4% | 27% | -1% | 989 |
| midday | 24% | C | 25% | -1% | 22% | 2% | 21% | 4% | 1009 |
| PM rush | 28% | C | 39% | -11% | 38% | -10% | 29% | -1% | 572 |
| evening | 22% | C | 19% | 3% | 21% | 1% | 25% | -3% | 847 |
| weekend | 23% | C | 18% | 5% | 22% | 1% | 28% | -5% | 505 |
| holiday | 24% | C | | | | | | | 68 |
| Total | 24.5% | C | 27% | -3% | 28% | -3% | 25% | -1% | 3995 |

at large and historic streetcar service much better. The most striking improvement since last year is found in Muni Metro light rail service, in which the probability of delays declined by 11 percentage points since 1998 and 10 points since our special Fall 1998 Metro Survey. Express service showed a 7-point improvement since 1998.

Muni's performance was more consistent across different times of day, in a significant change from spring and fall 1998. As in 1998, service was worse at the rush hour than at other times, with 26% of riders delayed in the morning and 28% delayed in the evening. This was much improved from the 1998 score, particularly in the evening rush, when 38% of riders were delayed one year ago. However, when compared to the scores for 1997, rush-hour service was only one percentage point better in both cases.

Service on weekends (and the Presidents' Day holiday, first recorded this year) was not significantly different from in previous years.

Performance of Specific Lines

Improvements and declines in service quality were evenly split across the lines. Service on several of Muni's popular lines, particularly the L-Taraval and N-Judah, showed real improvement since this time last year. In addition, several of the largest peaks in poor on-time performance appear to have flattened out. However, some other lines that had less trouble in 1998, such as the 31-Balboa and the 44-O'Shaughnessy, have gotten significantly worse in the past year. This may reflect Muni's placing a higher priority on certain high-profile lines in the past year, the acquisition of a large number of new Breda

Table 6: Most and least improved lines

| route | % late | grade | Fall98 % late | chg 99-F98 | 1998 % late | chg 99-98 | 1997 % late | chg 99-97 | 1999 total responses |
|-----------------|--------|-------|---------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Most improved: | | | | | | | | | |
| L | 26% | C | 47% | -21% | 53% | -28% | 22% | 4% | 228 |
| N | 23% | C | 35% | -13% | 42% | -19% | 33% | -10% | 558 |
| 48 | 26% | C | | | 40% | -15% | | | 47 |
| 5 | 16% | B | | | 28% | -12% | 16% | -0% | 90 |
| 15 | 19% | B | | | 31% | -12% | 34% | -15% | 28 |
| Least improved: | | | | | | | | | |
| 14X | 43% | F | | | 32% | 10% | | | 27 |
| 42 | 36% | D | | | 25% | 12% | | | 41 |
| 31 | 42% | F | | | 27% | 14% | | | 31 |
| 44 | 25% | C | | | 9% | 16% | 31% | -6% | 78 |
| 7* | 50% | F | | | 19% | 31% | | | 38 |

* Data for the 7-Haight were most affected by our new method of calculating reliability for multiple routes that cover the same stops. We therefore have a lower confidence in the score for this route.

Muni's Short Range Plan

Eric Carlson comments on the railway's draft plan for the next 10 years

Muni has published a draft Short Range Transit Plan. Rescue Muni members have read the plan and offered comments to the Public Transportation Commission and Michael Burns. Muni's 10 year plan (draft) envisions the following:

Short term:

- a. discontinue 81X line (fall 1999)
- b. reroute 33-Stanyan to serve BART
- c. reroute 56-Rutland
- d. Short Run terminal of 19-Polk will be Brannan Street, not Mission Street
- e. Abandon Ferry Terminal (layover area at Steuart and Mission, use curbside areas instead, a hotel is envisioned for the site. (2000). Rescue Muni opposes this plan.
- f. Abandon and dispose of Kirkland (Fisherman's Wharf) Muni Yard. Rescue Muni opposes this plan.
- f. F-Market to Fisherman's Wharf (2000, cost: \$79M)
- g. 32-Embarcadero then discontinued
- h. 6 Parnassus reverts to its prior Transbay Terminus
- i. PacBell Park: 1. Shuttle buses from Market to Brannan Streets, 2. special trains from Castro & West Portal. Anticipated ridership: 10,000/game. (April 2000)
- j. 30 New Articulated trolley coaches arrive: considering placement: 49 / 30/45, 5 and or 22 lines (2001-2002)
- k-l. Third Street LRV opens (cost: \$290M) as POP line. 15 line discontinued.
- 9 Express buses may extend to link CCSF and Chinatown / North Beach. 54 line may be partially rerouted. (2003) 3 busses freed up: reassigned to other lines: Possible: 9 Express, 30X, 42, and Richmond Expresses.

Changes 2005-2009:

- a. Trolley Coach lines extend to Mission Bay: 22, 45 and/or 30 lines. 10 extra coaches may be needed, additional wiring.
- b. respond to future ridership changes.

Future Proposals:

- a. Central Subway under 3rd, Geary and

Stockton Streets, could link with Geary LRV spur, Planned implementation: 2015.

- b. possible additional LRV service to Mission Bay
 - c. possible extensions of 3rd Street Light Rail: Balboa Park via Geneva or Candlestick Park.
 - d. connect E line and F line: Muni able to run (historic) streetcars along entire bayfront. (actually, under construction: cost: \$8,100,000, a separate item than F Market to Fisherman's Wharf.)
 - e. Study South of Market service, considering changes in the area
 - f. Rail corridor development: These corridors have been identified for Metro / LRV service by the County Transportation Authority: Geary, North Beach, Van Ness.
 - g. Extend Trolley Coach service into Presidio National Park
 - h. and k. electrify 71 line. possibly combine 6 and 7, extend to West Portal
 - i. Cable car extend 2 blocks north to Fisherman's Wharf (cost and funding undetermined)
 - j. 33 line perhaps extended over Potrero Hill via Cesar Chavez Street.
- Other initiatives:
- NextBus, Alternative Fuels plan. Rescue Muni supported cautious use of new technology.
 - Bikes on Buses: Test not successful; no further installations planned.
 - Van service: not viable as replacement to night Muni service.
 - Handicapped access Plans.
 - Proof-of-Payment: next line will be M-Ocean View in late 1999/early 2000
 - POP to date : successful, only 1% fare evaders, plans to hire civilian inspection force to replace SFPD.
 - Smartcard Demonstration project: One card for use on various Bay Area transit systems. Test planned to start in Fall 2000.

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Central Freeway Initiatives

Vote "No Endorsement" on I and J

You will have a chance to ratify or reject the Steering Committee's vote to oppose Proposition J (Central Freeway) on September 2. Rescue Muni members Dewey Seeto and Eric Carlson (Steercom member) recommend no endorsement.

The Central Freeway rebuilding plan has been put forward by a grassroots organization and RM might alienate its supporters from this group re our November initiative and other Muni issues in the future.

The Central Freeway is a very divisive issue that would be a "no win" situation if RM took any position on it. I would say to those RM members who oppose rebuilding the Central Freeway (and there may be many) that the best way to further that cause would be to work directly for that campaign, rather than to drag RM's good name into it and thus risk diluting the future influence of RM on Muni matters. RM needs

to stay focused on Muni matter in order to be effective, and not get distracted by tangential issues that could potentially sap its public influence by alienating segments of the public who would otherwise support RM reform proposals, including its ballot initiative (Proposition E) in November.

It can be argued that the reconstruction of the Central Freeway is irrelevant to Muni's operations. It can also be argued that routing the present freeway traffic across Mission, Market and Haight streets will markedly slow Muni's 14/49/26/F, L-Owl/6/7/71/66 lines. Please vote "no endorsement" on Prop J. ★

Vote Yes on I and No on J

Andrew Sullivan urges you to ratify Steercom's vote on Prop J and to support Prop I

Ten full years after the Loma Prieta earthquake, and a year after voting to replace with Fell Street off-ramp with a new Octavia Boulebard, San Franciscans are for the third time faced with an initiative concerning the Central Freeway.

Rescue Muni's Steering Committee has voted to oppose this initiative, Proposition J, because the Boulevard Plan is better for public transit and better for the neighborhood. The Boulevard will disperse traffic to many streets in the area, instead of concen-

trating it at rush hour on Oak and Fell Streets, where Muni's 16 A/B expresses run.

In addition, we are concerned that freeway construction could interfere with Muni Metro service. Proposition J also repeals City law prohibiting reconstruction of the other Central Freeway off-ramps on Franklin and Gough.

I strongly urge the membership to ratify this decision on September 2, and also a vote to endorse Proposition I, a re-affirmation of the Boulevard Plan. The voters have decided on a great plan; it's time to get it done. ★

Table 2: Systemwide scores

| year | % riders delayed | grade | avg wait | avg norm wait | crowding | total responses |
|------|------------------|-------|----------|---------------|----------|-----------------|
| 1999 | 24.5% | C | 0:07 | 76% | 2.78 | 3995 |
| 1998 | 28% | C | 0:08 | 85% | | 3004 |
| 1997 | 25% | C | 0:08 | 80% | | 1365 |

Muni continues to deliver unreliable service on many lines, the overall level of service has improved slightly since February 1998, and since October 1998 for Muni Metro riders. As noted above, systemwide on-time performance improved by a few percentage points, with 24.5% of riders experiencing a delay, down from 28% in 1998 but less than one percentage point different from the 25% of riders delayed in 1997. Systemwide waiting time improved as well; Muni riders waited an average of 76% of the posted frequency this year, down from 85% in 1998 and 80% in 1997. (In a system running perfectly, this score would be 50%.)

We also measured systemwide crowding for the first time.

Crowding averaged 2.8 on a five point scale, with 1 as empty, 3 as standing room only, and 5 as crush-loaded; however, the frequency of each level is more interesting. Over half (52%) of all vehicles were standing room only, and 14% of vehicles were crush-loaded, which we view as unacceptably crowded except in the most ex-

Table 3: 1999 Crowding (systemwide)

| crowding level | % of total |
|------------------|------------|
| 1 (empty) | 17% |
| 2 (seats) | 31% |
| 3 (SRO) | 23% |
| 4 (crowded) | 15% |
| 5 (crush loaded) | 14% |

treme cases. This means that a rider's chance of having a comfortable ride, or even finding a seat, is even

less than his or her chance of getting to the destination on time. Since we did not measure crowding in 1998, unfortunately we cannot draw comparisons based on these data.

Put into practical terms, Muni riders still should expect to be delayed at least one time in five, and they should expect an uncomfortable ride more than one time in four. This is a high enough frequency that riders with a choice of modes of transport will frequently walk, drive a car, or ride a bicycle instead of waiting for the bus or streetcar that may or may not come in time. Their experience will vary widely depending on the lines they ride, although their

experience will be more consistent across different modes or times of day.

Performance by mode and time of day

Muni's performance varied less by mode and time of day than it has in

previous surveys. The result is that Muni riders can expect a more consistent, if mediocre, experience across all modes, with limited service worse than the pool

Table 4. Performance by mode

| mode | % late | grade | Fall98 % late | chg 99-F98 | 1998 % late | chg 99-98 | 1997 % late | chg 99-97 | 1999 total responses |
|-----------|--------|-------|---------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|
| diesel | 22% | C | | | 23% | -1% | 24% | -1% | 887 |
| electric | 27% | C | | | 27% | -0% | 26% | 1% | 1183 |
| express | 20% | C | | | 28% | -7% | 29% | -8% | 191 |
| limited | 40% | D | | | 28% | 12% | | | 41 |
| metro | 25% | C | 35% | -10% | 35% | -11% | 24% | 0% | 1614 |
| streetcar | 11% | B | | | 13% | -2% | 39% | -29% | 74 |
| Total | 24.5% | C | | | 28% | -3% | 25% | -1% | 3995 |

unacceptable service; the 14-Mission, one of Muni's most heavily traveled lines, delayed riders 47% of the time, earning a grade of F. Five lines were graded F and eight were graded D, for a total of 13 lines out of 45 that earned failing grades. We have listed the best and worst lines, along with systemwide performance, in Table 1.

Later in this article, we will discuss system performance by mode and time of day, and we will identify routes that improved and declined the most relative to last year.

Methodology

This survey attempts to measure Muni's reliability from the rider's perspective, with a methodology that has not significantly changed since we began in 1997. For the entire month of February 1999, volunteers recorded how long they waited for the buses and streetcars that they used every day, and a few watched vehicles go by and recorded the headways. We extended the survey period to get a larger sample size, and this was successful: 197 volunteers recorded 3,995 separate rides, for almost 1,000 more data points than in 1998 and our largest survey response ever.

For each ride, we calculated waiting time and compared it to the frequency advertised on Muni's street map posted at most stops. We calculated the percentage of riders delayed, the average waiting time, and the average normalized waiting time - waiting time over advertised frequency - for each line. For data collected by watching vehicles go by (277 observations, fewer than in previous surveys), we used a system of weighted averages to calculate these metrics for a hypothetical rider arriving at random.¹

This year, because both bus and streetcar riders reported their destinations, we

were able to measure trip times and draw some conclusions about the probability of delays. In addition, we were also able to assign riders to groups of lines, which more accurately reflects their experience: a rider from Union Square to Haight and Masonic, for example, has a choice of four lines (6, 7, 66, 71). For riders who could choose from groups of lines, we calculated the probability that they would have been delayed had there been only one line to choose from, based on the headways of all available lines that would have provided the same trip.²

Based on these data, we calculated results for the system as a whole and the 45 lines for which we had 20 or more data points. In addition, we calculated the results for each mode (streetcar, metro, diesel, electric) of service and for various times of day. We assigned our letter grades based on the percentage of riders delayed, and we compared these with survey results from the spring and fall of 1998 and from 1997. Since we modified our system to reflect the availability of multiple lines, we recalculated the Fall 1998 results based on the same methodology; those results are used here. (We could not recalculate previous years' results because we had not asked for users' destinations.)

We also asked riders to record their destinations and the time they arrived there, and to measure maximum crowding on their ride based on a scale of 1 (empty) to 5 (crush-loaded).

Key Findings

Systemwide Performance

Is Muni finally getting better? After three years of large budget increases and intense public scrutiny, San Franciscans have a right to expect it to. Our data show that while

RESCUE MUNI Calendar

Post this convenient schedule next to your Muni map - we know you've got one on your wall somewhere!

| date | item | location |
|-------------|--|---|
| 8/24, 5PM | Public Transportation Commission | City Hall, 1 Goodlett (Polk) St. Room 400 |
| 9/2, 6PM | RM General Membership Meeting with Muni Director Michael Burns | SPUR, 312 Sutter St. Fifth Floor |
| 9/7, 5PM | Public Transportation Commission | City Hall, Rm. 400 |
| 9/8, 6PM | RM Metro Committee | SPUR, 312 Sutter, 5th Floor |
| 9/13, 6PM | RM Executive & Steering Committees | SPUR |
| 9/21, 5PM | Public Transportation Commission | City Hall, Rm. 400 |
| TBA | RM General Membership Meeting and Mayoral Debate | TBA |
| Early 10/99 | | |
| 10/12, 5PM | Public Transportation Commission | City Hall, Rm. 400 |
| 10/13, 6PM | RM Metro Committee | SPUR |
| 10/18, 6PM | RM Executive & Steering Committees | SPUR |
| 10/26, 5PM | Public Transportation Commission | City Hall, Rm. 400 |
| 11/2 | Election Day - Don't forget to vote! | Your Polling Place |
| 11/9, 5PM | Public Transportation Commission | City Hall, Rm. 400 |
| 11/10, 6PM | RM Metro Committee | SPUR |
| 11/15, 6PM | RM Executive & Steering Committees | SPUR |
| 11/23, 5PM | Public Transportation Commission | City Hall, Rm. 400 |

Please check the web site or Hotline for announcements of special meetings and other RESCUE MUNI events - there will be many more. If you'd like to sponsor an event, please let us know as well - call us or fill out the Volunteer Form on the web. Note that most events are now at SPUR (312 Sutter) and not the Sierra Club.



Important Notice

San Franciscans not prepared with the Rescue Muni Don't Be Late t-shirt often experience longer delays in the tunnel and colder waits in the fog. Don't let this happen to you. Order now at www.rescuemuni.org.

¹ To accurately assess the probability that a rider arriving at random will be delayed, we weighted the probability that a rider would be delayed in a particular monitored interval by the length of the interval (or, more precisely, the ratio of the interval to the total time in which that bus or streetcar was monitored). This is the same method that we used in the spring and fall of 1997.

² For each rider who did not wait the full advertised headway for the line that he or she took, we calculated the probability that he or she would have been delayed by the other lines that covered the trip that the user took, and assigned this probability as the "late" score for this ride.

Rescuing Irish Public Transit

Representatives from Ireland's Parliament came to hear about public transit in the Bay Area. We gave them the real story. Daniel Murphy reports.

Rescue Muni leaders met with members of Ireland's Oireachtas (Parliament) at the Irish Consulate in San Francisco on August 2nd. Ireland's mass transit systems face many of the same issues as San Francisco's because of the recent rapid growth of the Irish economy.

Rescue Muni vice chair Daniel Murphy and treasurer Joan Downey met with six members of the Joint Committee on Transport and Public Enterprise, comprised of members from both the lower house (Dáil Éireann), and upper house (Seanad Éireann or Senate). The delegation included members of both the governing Fianna Fáil (F.F.) party and the opposition Fine Gael (F.G.) party.

The committee chaired by Seán Doherty, TD, who represents the constituency of Longford-Roscommon (members of the Dáil Éireann are called Teachta Dála or TDs), asked a wide range of questions. They were particularly interested in how to incentivize mass transit use, the pluses and minuses of regional transit governance, and problems faced by Muni, as well as Rescue Muni's proposed solutions to these problems.

Several members of the delegation remarked that they were surprised at Muni's fares, which they said were considerably lower than fares in Dublin. Rescue Muni's representatives explained that automobiles are more heavily subsidized in the U.S. than in Europe, hence the need lower fares to remain competitive with private cars.

Members of the committee also remarked that, in Dublin, a great deal of traffic congestion is caused by parents taking children to and from school, and they were particularly interested in how youth fares on Muni impacted use by school-age kids. Some members asked if Muni could operate without subsidy at some point in the future, and if any privatized mass transit existed in the Bay Area.

The meeting, arranged by Ireland's Consul General in San Francisco, Kevin Conmy, lasted over an hour and the members of the delegation asked many questions and appeared very engaged and interested in the subject; they later remarked that they found the session "most informative." In addition to committee chair Doherty, the delegation included Austin Currie, TD (F.G.-Dublin West), Liam Aylward, TD (F.F.-Carlow-Kilkenny), Martin Brady, TD (F.F.-Dublin North-East), Senator John Cregan (F.F.), and Senator Fergus O'Dowd (F.G.). ★

SRTP continued from page 11

We made these additional comments:

- Service Standards need to be included: on time performance, safety, crowding, customer satisfaction. We applaud the intention to review needs re south of Market service.
- Implementation of G Line to Golden Gate Park should be in Muni's plans.
- Real-time schedules should be posted at Muni stops as in done in numerous other cities (longstanding Rescue Muni policy).
- Ridership data needs updating on a much more regular basis.
- Managing of finances is not the rosy picture presented in Muni's Plan. H

1999 Riders' Survey Results

Andrew Sullivan reports on our survey of Muni performance, conducted in February.

Since we last did our Muni Riders' Survey in early 1998, the San Francisco Municipal Railway has come under even more scrutiny than before. Muni received one of the largest budgetary increases in its history; the Muni Metro suffered a well-publicized "meltdown" in the fall of 1998; Muni's safety record was called into question by the California Highway Patrol; and for the first time in recent memory, a private contractor (Booz-Allen) was hired to assist Muni managers in running the streetcar system. Muni's performance has already become an issue in the fall 1999 mayoral campaign, and a comprehensive reform proposal (sponsored by Rescue Muni) has been placed on the ballot for the fall election.

To see whether Muni service has improved since 1998, we conducted this Muni Riders' Survey again in February 1999. This survey is designed to measure how reliably Muni is running from the riders' perspective, and to assess whether Muni has gotten better or worse since the last time we studied it. Approximately 200 volunteers recorded how long they waited for their buses or streetcars, and how long their trips took, throughout February. Volunteers recorded 3,995 separate rides

(over 100 per day). We then compared the information provided with the frequencies posted in Muni's map and bus shelters and calculated scores for 45 separate lines.

The results of this survey were mildly encouraging. Muni showed some improvement in systemwide reliability in 1999, with particular improvements coming on several streetcar lines and in rush-hour service. Muni's total score was still a C, with 24% of our volunteers waiting more than Muni's total advertised frequency. This was an improvement of four percentage points since 1998 but only one point better than in 1997. The Muni Metro showed the most improvement, with 24% of riders delayed, down from 35% in both spring and fall 1998 (the latter score was modified to reflect a new methodology, below). This was enough to bring Metro's performance back to where it was two years ago. Express buses also fared better this year, although limited-service buses worsened in reliability.

This improvement was not across the board, however. While some lines (17) showed improvement since 1998, about the same number (15) got worse. Riders of Muni's worst lines continued to experience

Table 1: Best and worst lines; systemwide performance

| route | % late | grade | 1998 % late | change 99-98 | 1997 % late | change 99-97 | 1999 total responses |
|-------------------|--------|-------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Total | 24.5% | C | 28% | -3% | 25% | -1% | 3995 |
| Best five lines: | | | | | | | |
| 27 | 2% | A | | | 5% | -3% | 53 |
| 35 | 4% | A | | | | | 23 |
| 37 | 5% | A | 15% | -10% | | | 62 |
| 18 | 10% | B | | | | | 29 |
| F | 11% | B | 13% | -2% | 39% | -29% | 74 |
| Worst five lines: | | | | | | | |
| 29 | 40% | F | | | | | 52 |
| 31 | 42% | F | 27% | 14% | | | 31 |
| 14X | 43% | F | 32% | 10% | | | 27 |
| 14 | 47% | F | 51% | -4% | | | 137 |
| 7 | 50% | F | 19% | 31% | | | 38 |

Steering Committee Digest

Eric Carlson provides a complete update

August 16, 1999 Meeting
Present: Breckenridge, Downey, Sullivan, Murphy, Pilpel, Mlynarik, Carlson. Absent: Niemi, Strassner.
Prop E (Muni Reform): We voted to place a Rescue Muni ballot endorsement of prop E in the ballot handbook and to pay for same.
Prop I (Boulevard Plan): We voted to pass on to General membership authority to endorse or reject the Ammiano amendment re: Octavia Boulevard and the Central Freeway.
The Steering Committee had voted to endorse Prop H (Caltrain) and oppose J (Central Freeway) in July.
Other Policy Issues: We discussed and finalized Rescue Muni's comments on the Muni Short Term Plan (SRTP) which were provided to Muni at PTC on Aug. 17. (See page 11.)
Excom business: We scheduled future Executive Committee meetings

and planned two general meetings: a meeting with Michael Burns on September 2 and a Mayoral debate (probably co-presented with other groups re transit) and endorsement in late September.

We also discussed the decision by Andrew Sullivan and Daniel Murphy of Rescue Muni to withdraw from active leadership role on the Muni ballot initiative campaign, and we discussed latest news re Muni union MOU negotiations with City and work rules. ★

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Ballot Initiative Positions | | |
| Recommended by Steercom | | |
| already ratified by membership | | |
| E | Muni Reform | YES |
| subject to ratification on 9/2 | | |
| H | Caltrain Downtown | YES |
| I | Boulevard Plan | Members |
| | | decide |
| J | Central Freeway | NO |

Transfer

the newsletter of RESCUE MUNI
August 1999 - No. 10
(the mini-Transfer sent in July 1999 was No. 9)

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Designer: Andrew Sullivan
Contributing writers: Daniel Murphy, Eric Carlson, Andrew Sullivan
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RESCUE MUNI (Riders for an Efficient, Safe, Consistent, Utilized, and Expeditious Muni), founded 1996, is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit transit riders' association.

Hot line: 415-273-1558
www.rescuemuni.org
transit1@rescuemuni.org

Membership Form

We need YOU to help us Rescue Muni.
Join us by mailing this form to P.O. Box 190966, San Francisco, CA 94119-0966.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Fax: _____
Email: _____
Membership category:
 \$5 Limited Income
 \$15 Basic
 \$40 Sustaining
 \$100 Contributing
 Other: \$_____

Muni lines you ride: _____
riders in your household: _____
I would like to volunteer! Y N _____
RESCUE MUNI may from time to time publish membership lists with names only (no phone numbers or addresses). May we publish your name only as a member? Y N _____

Signature: _____

Executive Committee
Chair: Ken Niemi
Vice-Chair: Richard Mlynarik
Membership Sec'y: Daniel Murphy
Recording Sec'y: Howard Strassner
Corresponding Sec'y: Eric Carlson
Treasurer: Joan Downey
Coordinators:
Charlotte Breckenridge, David Pilpel, Andrew Sullivan

Standing Committees
Muni Metro: addresses scheduling and reliability of Muni's light rail lines. Meets second Wed. of every month, 6 p.m., at the Sierra Club, 85 Second St., 3d floor (chair: Howard Strassner, 661-8786, ruthow@juno.com)

Steering Committee
Chair: Andrew Sullivan
Vice-Chair: Daniel Murphy
Charlotte Breckenridge, Eric Carlson, Joan Downey, Richard Mlynarik, Ken Niemi, David Pilpel, Howard Strassner

Other Committees/Initiatives
Membership (chair: Daniel Murphy, 665-4074, daniel@well.com)
Surveys (chair: Andrew Sullivan, 673-0626, andrew@sulli.org)

Any member may form a committee. If it meets at least four times per year, the committee may request appointment of a representative to the Steering Committee, the policy-making body of RESCUE MUNI.

RESCUE MUNI Transfer

No. 10,
August 1999

1999 Riders' Survey Results

Is Muni getting better? We conducted our 1999 Muni Riders' Survey to find out. The bottom line: Muni showed some improvements, particularly on Metro lines and certain bus lines, but still has a long way to go. Muni was graded C again, with 24.5% of riders experiencing delays. Crowding was a major problem, particularly on express lines.

Survey Report: Page 3.

Summary Data: Page 7.

Also Inside This Issue:

Steering Committee Digest: Minutes of our board meetings and proposed positions on initiatives are on Page 2.

Muni Reform Campaign Update: Proposition E is on the ballot! A campaign update, with info on how you can volunteer, is on Page 10.

Short Range Transit Plan Analysis: Muni has published its draft 10 year plan. Read our summary and comments on Page 11.

Rescuing Irish Public Transit: Representatives from the Irish Parliament visited San Francisco to find out about our transit system. We sent a delegation to tell them the real story. Details on Page 14.

RESCUE MUNI Calendar: Transit events for the whole family. Page 13.

September 1999
General Meeting
with Muni GM Michael Burns
September 2, 6 pm
SPUR, 312 Sutter St.

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August 1999
Transfer

The Newsletter of
RESCUE MUNI

Riders' Survey Results
General Meeting 9/2
Initiative Update
Steering Committee Digest
Muni's Short Range Plan
Rescuing Irish Public Transit

Vote
YES on E
for Muni Reform
November 2

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