Routematch

Meet › The Fairbanks North Star Borough Bus System

Fairbanks North Star Borough Bus System has a fixed route ridership of 550,000 and a demand response service that provides 21,000 riders with disabilities, seniors, and veterans with transportation throughout the community. Students and faculty at the University of Alaska Fairbanks accounts for 25% of the ridership, and tourists boost the ridership in the summer.

Improving Operational Performance

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Bus System's mission is to improve overall rider experience and to make transit easier to utilize for riders. In addition, the agency is keen on promoting energy conservation as well as improving air quality. The transit agency has a fixed route ridership of 550,000 as well as 21,000 riders for their demand response service, providing seniors, riders with disabilities, and veterans with the transportation they need to travel throughout the community.

Like many small urban transit systems, Fairbanks North Star Borough experiences a 3% increase in ridership each year. With the goal of keeping riders safe and making transit easy to use, the agency sought to improve operational performance and add more frequent routes. Given the harsh climate—temperatures falling below 40 degrees Fahrenheit at times

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achieving their goal was important for the safety of their riders. Moreover, while the transit system served the intercity areas of Fairbanks, it also provided rides to rural communities. **To avoid having their riders wait for extended periods of time, the agency partnered with Routematch for its intelligent transportation systems (ITS) solution.**

Tailored for Inclusivity

"We started with Demand Response technologies and just kept adding on more and more technologies as we grew," said Adam Barth, Transportation Manager at Fairbanks North Star Borough. **"We really are proud of our system as we are using technologies that many of the larger transit systems have, and some don't have, but more tailored to our specific needs."**

The agency uses Routematch's Fixed and Demand (CAD/AVL + Demand Response) platforms for scheduling, routing, dispatching, and reporting. Mobile data devices, automated passenger counters, and automated voice annunciators are outfitted inside each vehicle. These technologies have helped relieve drivers of the task of making call outs at each stop while staying compliant with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and allowed for more accurate Federal Transit Administration reporting.

A comprehensive suite of rider engagement and convenience technologies are also heavily used: LCD displays with a dynamic map for real-time bus tracking at the transit stations; a RouteShout smartphone app for bus arrivals tracking; **notifications and automated call outs to remind demand response riders of their trips**; and a customer

Web Portal for demand response riders to book and manage their trip reservations. All of these elements are operated on Routematch's ITS platform, providing a single point of accountability and support.

Community and Agency Together

Since introducing the rider engagement technologies, students and tourists alike have adopted these tools and the agency has received ongoing positive feedback from the community. **Since RouteShout provides an open API and uses GTFS feeds, the agency has also been able to easily open up the platform for development of other transit applications.** The RouteShout bus tracker has helped riders see the exact location of their bus on a live map in real time.

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"Our riders really like to pop open the map and track their bus on their smartphones. 'Where's My Bus?' calls to our staff have also been significantly reduced, allowing our staff to allocate time to engaging riders and other strategic areas," said Barth. "Our staff has been able to **respond to calls more accurately** simply by looking at the map."

One technology that has resulted in immediate cost savings is the Notification technology. Rider no shows on the demand response side have decreased from 20% to 6.1% after deploying Routematch's Notification module which enables the agency to make automated calls the night before and 30 minutes prior to rider pick-up.

With all the data collected through combined back office operational data crunching, smart in-vehicle tracking and reporting, and rider engagement technologies, on-time performance is more easily monitored and managed, allowing the agency can make **more informed decisions** around route structures, added shelters, train drivers, and long-term plans. Reporting has also become easier as information can be pulled within minutes.

"We're very happy with the technologies right now, it's really amazing," said Barth. "It's been an exciting journey for us, and technology has evolved so much over the years. We're already looking forward to the next generation of technologies to come."

Challenges:

> Low operational performance

> Infrequent routes to rural areas

Routematch Solutions:

> Fixed

> Demand

> Mobile Data Services and Tablets

> RouteShout

> Notifications module

Results:

> Decrease in demand response no shows from 20% to 6.1%

> More engaged riders

> Efficient customer service

> Easy reporting

Connected in Transit

Routematch Case Studies:

Discover agencies like yours who have found success with Routematch