

Ridership Experience Assessment

Governance & Audit Report No. 2023-3

Issued on July 14, 2023



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Internal Audit Work Plan approved by the Governance and Audit Committee for fiscal year 2023 included a Ridership Experience assessment.

IndyGo's mission is to "connect our community to economic and cultural opportunities through safe, reliable, and accessible mobility experiences". The Marion County Transit Plan also recognized the increased demand for frequent, reliable, and safe transit.

IndyGo provided over 5.1 million passenger trips in fiscal year 2022. To support a robust system for its riders, IndyGo maintains 211 bus shelters, 34 stations (for BRT routes), and over 2,800 bus stops.

Our assessments are performed in accordance with the professional practice standards of the Institute of Internal Auditors. This report was prepared for use by IndyGo's Board of Directors, Governance and Audit Committee, and management.

Objective and Scope

- Obtain an understanding of the programs, processes and policies related to IndyGo transit rider experience and satisfaction.
- Review any surveys or feedback tools carried out or relied upon by IndyGo.
- Assess the customer comment and complaint process.
- Assess key factors impacting transit usage and rider perception, such as safety, cleanliness, on time performance, station amenities, rider communications and route updates, and fare card usage.
- Review the adoption and usage of the MyKey and MyStop applications.
- Consider on-time performance and the impact of schedule management (skipping of stops, bus dwell time, etc.)
- Identify opportunities for process and control improvements or revenue enhancement.

Overall Report Rating & Observations (See Appendix A for definitions)						
	Report	Number of Observations by Rating				
	Rating High Medium Low					
Ridership Experience	Medium	0	4	3		

Overall Summary and Review Highlights

We observed that IndyGo has a strong focus on the riders and customer service. IndyGo offers several innovative programs to its riders and the broader Indianapolis community. These amenities include a free mobile wellness center, Adopt-A-Stop, award-winning Music in Transit concert series, Transit Ambassadors, several free fare days, and free unlimited Wi-Fi aboard the bus fleet.

Our review identified observations which may further enhance the overall rider experience, continue to attract riders, and prepare for the bus rapid transit (BRT) line expansion. Our seven observations related to the following areas:

- Ridership Survey
- Customer Comments / Complaints
- Customer Care Center Service
- Fare Card Retail Network
- Rider Satisfaction and Retention Factors
- Dashboard Performance Reporting
- Operator Training Refresh

The observations and management's responses are presented in our accompanying report. Our overall report rating for this Ridership Experience assessment is "Medium" risk.

We would like to thank IndyGo staff and all those involved in assisting us in connection with the review.

Questions should be addressed to the IndyGo Department of Governance and Audit at batkinson@indygo.net.



		issueu. July 14, 2025
1. Ridership Survey		
Observation: IndyGo surveys rider demographic information and travel patterns every five years. There is no rider satisfaction or perception survey conducted. Observation Rating: Medium IndyGo receives input and feedback about its riders and from its	Recommendation: Conduct a rider perception survey. Measure key attributes such as safety, on-time performance, comfort, amenities, courtesy, and value. Then revise programs to reflect rider initiatives. Conduct a recurring rider perception survey. Collaborate across	Management Action Plans:
 On-Board Transit Survey – Conducted every five years by a consultant. Required by FTA. Examines the demographic and travel behavior characteristics of IndyGo riders. 2,711 surveys were collected. Voice of the Customer Report – Prepared in 2021 by the Mobility Solutions group. Based upon rider comments and complaints. Summarized from the HASTUS system. Intended to identify trends and potential customer-focused projects. 5,082 comments were analyzed, from fixed route and paratransit service. Social media input and other ad-hoc methods – monitored primarily by the Public Affairs Department. Past service planning efforts have included certain perception topics. However, IndyGo does not regularly solicit feedback about rider satisfaction or perceptions, through a survey or questionnaire. Customer surveys are a common national best practice. The Transportation Secure Data Center (TSDC) provides free access to hundreds of transit systems surveys and questionnaires. See TSDC Transit Data and Surveys. 	the Public Affairs, Strategic Planning and Mobility Solutions departments. The survey could: Identify riders' needs, expectations, and delivery gaps Enhance IndyGo's relationship with the community Support service planning and route re-alignments Establish baseline program performance measures Survey instruments can take various forms, and can be administered in multiple ways. Options include: In-person or on-line (via email to MyKey account holders, social media platforms, or QR codes on buses and signs) Annual surveys with recurring questions, to allow year over year analysis "Flash" surveys for feedback on specific limited topics (such as BRT, new programs, etc.) Support from the Transit Ambassadors (after additional hiring and mentoring of more Ambassadors) The IndyGo Foundation could also support this effort: Survey a selection of the 140+ non-profit and social service agencies with which the Foundation has a relationship. Seek funding from foundations or other non-profits that may not be able to fund IndyGo directly.	Strategic Planning is actively facilitating a pilot of the perception survey with a target date of September 2023. Once complete, IndyGo staff will work to establish a quarterly rhythm for the survey. Our intent would be to share the results, both externally and internally, and then communicate different programs occurring between updates or as a result of the input derived. This process could also lead to focus groups. Or it may be the start of a broader customer satisfaction and perception effort. Responsible Parties: Manager of Special Projects and Regional Mobility Integration, in conjunction with Strategic Planning, Mobility Solutions, and Public Affairs. Due Dates: Pilot survey by end of September 2023. Full roll-out by end of December 2024. This allows us an opportunity to cycle through the full year to understand pros and cons.





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3. Customer Care Center Service		
Observation: 74% of customer comments are provided by phone. The service level for calls received by the Care Center is below IndyGo's targets.	Recommendation: Continue to enhance Customer Care Center service levels. Issue the FY 2022 Voice of the Customer report.	
Observation Rating: Medium		
Service Levels – IndyGo receives 74% of its customer comments and complaints via phone, according to the <i>Voice of the Customer</i> Report The Care Center is a key touch point with IndyGo's riders. It is staffed primarily by a contracted firm. The Care Center receives an average 76.000 total calls per month. About 25% of calls are answered by life.	t. IndyGo's riders. A high volume of calls are answered live (over 225,000 annually). The external contractor's performance has been improving.	Management Action Plans: Service Levels - G & A To Follow-up Responsible Parties: Manager — Service Quality

Call Center statistics are as follows:

Service Level	Target	Actual (1)
Calls Answered in < 20 Seconds	85%	58%
Average Wait Time	< 60 seconds	69 seconds
Abandonment Rate	< 5%	17%
Average Call Duration	3 to 5 minutes	3.2 minutes

agents, while 75% are handled by IVR (interactive voice response).

(1) Average for 12 months ended Feb 28, 2023. From Operations Reports to Board.

Voice of the Customer Report - comments were summarized and analyzed in this initial report prepared for FY 2021. The report's goal was to "identify trends and potential customer-focused projects to better understand what our customers think, feel, and expect of us".

The most common rider comments related to:

•	Schedule Adherence	24%
•	Safety Concerns	12%
•	Pass By (bus not stopping for riders)	11%

The FY 2022 report has not been issued as of the date of our review.

However, service levels do not currently meet IndyGo's targets for several key metrics. IndyGo should consider the following to enhance its service to riders:

- Determine a breakdown of reasons for live calls. About 10% are related to paratransit scheduling. The reason for the remaining live calls is not captured by the Talkdesk system.
- Develop strategies or outreach programs to help educate riders and reduce the volume of phone calls and questions.
- Encourage customers to utilize other methods of communication, such as the online Comment Form.
 Responses and follow-up should still be provided, while the burden on the Customer Care Center might be reduced.
- Consider adding internal employee resources to supplement the contracted vendor's staff.

Voice of the Customer Report – IndyGo should:

- Compile and issue the FY 2022 report.
- Analyze changes from FY 2021 and consider rider program enhancements.
- Consider adding a summary and analysis of the Customer Call Center metrics vs. IndyGo's goals, to continue to focus on improvement.

Due Dates:

TBD

Management Action Plans:

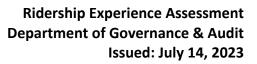
Voice of the Customer Report - G & A To Follow-up

Responsible Parties:

Manager – Service Quality

Due Dates:

TBD

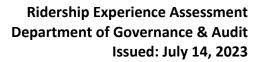




Observation: The retail card network contract was awarded over three years ago. However, no activity has begun, and the network is not operational.	Recommendation: Reexamine and restart the retail network. Amend the existing vendor contract if necessary.	
Observation Rating: Medium		
ndyGo executed a contract dated April 15, 2020 to establish a fare card retail network. The purposes were to: Expand access to fare media cards, including reloading of funds. Increase fare equity, relating to the geographic distribution of ticket vending machines (TVMs). Allow riders to utilize the updated fare policies that were approved in 2019, including free transfers, and fare capping. Integrate real-time into the Flowbird system and reporting. Dates specified in the existing vendor contract are as follows: Business Requirements completed May 15, 2020 Fare card media available in store #1 September 15, 2020 Retail network operational for card sales January 31, 2020 The contract stated that unforeseeable delays caused by any third-party vendor not directly controlled by the awarded vendor due to the COVD-19 pandemic may require a contract amendment. However, no work has begun by the vendor, and none of the stated milestones have been met. The targeted operational date was almost 2.5 years ago. No amendments have been executed with the vendor.		Management Action Plans: We have placed the retail network on hold to validate it necessity, the costs of maintaining it as an amenity, and the logistics surrounding its operation (i.e., the retailers can arbitrarily remove our cards from stock at any time they do not sell). The vendor contract ends in May 2024 As a result, Strategic Planning is performing a fare equit analysis to replace the 2017 and 2019 (updated) reports to incorporate the effects of COVID and answer the question "Do we need a retail network?" Responsible Parties: Chief Information Officer and Senior Director of Strateg Planning Due Dates: Updated equity analysis by March 31, 2024.



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5. Rider Satisfaction and Retention Factors		
Observation: Areas such as ADA compliance, on-time performance, rider applications and information screens may be enhanced for increased rider satisfaction and public perception of IndyGo.	Recommendation: Consider the cost, benefit, and timetable for enhancing the identified areas.	
Observation Rating: Medium		
Multiple factors may affect rider satisfaction and perception of the IndyGo system. We recommended that a survey be conducted to directly ascertain rider issues, and consider program initiatives and budgets to address them. (See Observation # 1). We observed areas that may be priorities with riders, including: ADA Compliance – The ADA mandates that bus boarding areas must comply with surface, dimension, connection, slope, signage, and public address requirements. IndyGo assesses its current ADA compliance at 25% of number of bus stops as of 2023. Any bus stop installed before the ADA law was passed in 1990 is considered grandfathered and can be updated as changes or improvements occur at the stop. Any new bus stop installed after 1990 must meet full ADA requirements. IndyGo's facilities are within the City of Indianapolis, Marion County and other unigov municipalities.	To help retain existing riders, and attract additional "choice" or "discretionary" riders, IndyGo should proactively address the following areas. These topics could also be measured in the recommended dashboard of performance metrics, if deemed by riders as key expectations. (See Observation #6). ADA Compliance – The cost to remedy over 80% of IndyGo's 211 bus shelters and over 2,800 bus stops is over \$40 million. To increase the ADA-mandated accessibility, IndyGo should: Establish an achievable schedule and capital budget. Collaboratively seek funding for infrastructure and signage with the City- County and other unigov municipalities.	Management Action Plans: ADA Compliance – In 2019, IndyGo completed an inventory looking at the accessibility of all bus stops. IndyGo has improved 213 bus stops to full ADA compliance since 2018 and implemented a bus stop balancing project, which removed over 500 bus stops. 60% of bus stops are now accessible via a sidewalk. There are now 251 benches, 209 shelters, and 31 bike racks at bus stops. In 2021, IndyGo created an ADA Transition Plan to prioritize improvements for future bus stop construction projects. IndyGo staff will reference this plan in future decision-making for local bus stop improvement projects. IndyGo continues to partner with the Indianapolis Department of Public Works (DPW) and developers to review proposed IndyGo bus stop construction projects and to incorporate bus stops into DPW's street
On-Time Performance – IndyGo's average OTP for FY 2022 did not meet its Board approved and publicly available <i>Service Standards</i> :	On-Time Performance – The lack of operators continues to significantly impact OTP. IndyGo should:	reconstruction and redesign projects. This allows IndyGo to extend our projects beyond our limited budget. Responsible Parties:
 Fixed route: Actual was 81%. Service standard is 85%. BRT: Actual was 64%. Service standard is 90%. Rider perception of BRT as rapid transit will be important for the planned additional two lines. 	 Continue the collaboration between the Operations and People departments to secure more drivers. Redirect operators to the BRT routes, as they generally are longer trips and have higher vehicle occupancy rates. Continue to communicate delays and detours to riders. 	The Service Planning and Infrastructure, Strategy, and Innovation Departments. Due Dates: Projects are ongoing.





Multiple Applications – IndyGo offers several mobile applications. One combined app may be more convenient to riders and visitors. Knowledgeable riders may choose between:

- MyStop Real time bus information. Powered by Avail.
- MyKey Fare stored value. Powered by Flowbird. "Plan a Trip" button for bus real time information redirects to IndyGo website.
- IndyGo Mobility For Access paratransit riders.
- IndyConnect Free micro transit pickup pilot program, for a limited service area. Trial ended May 31.

Multiple Applications – IndyGo's four apps were developed by different vendors. We did not detect major inconsistencies between the data provided to riders by the separate apps or Google Maps.

However, most agencies have a single combined fare and route application, which is supported by a single vendor. IndyGo should study the cost and benefit of having the two primary apps (MyStop and MyKey) combined or consolidated, for rider ease. Having one primary app may also encourage more riders to establish accounts and use the fare card system, vs. paying by cash.

Management Action Plans:

On-Time Performance -BRT on-time performance has improved from the 2022 percentage. Numerous system and process enhancements have been implemented to increase this metric. Currently the OTP is at 77% for the first half of 2023. Some factors that impact this include the operator shortage, leaving open routes which effect OTP, as well as extensive detours impacting the BRT corridor. Operations has worked collaboratively with the Department of People to establish more aggressive recruitment and retention methods. We are beginning to see the improvement with these efforts as evidenced by the climbing OTP. This area will continue to be monitored closely and processes and systems assessed for continued progress towards the *Service Standards*.

Responsible Parties:

Chief Operating Officer

Due Dates:

September 30, 2023.

Management Action Plans:

Multiple Applications – Operations is working collaboratively with the IT and Finance departments to determine the best methods and tools to utilize to streamline the customer experience with accessing our systems with accuracy.

Responsible Parties:

Chief Operating Officer

Due Dates:

December 31, 2023 for application assessment and recommendations.





Information Screens – Information regarding routes and schedules is presented in differing formats to riders across the IndyGo system:

- Carson Transit Center (CTC) Signs in the bus bays were not consistently working. They may crash and need to be rebooted. These screens are based upon older technology, which is nearing the end of its useful life.
- Fixed route buses External headers on the vehicles were observed to be generally functional. Internal screens display ADA stop announcements. Route data is based upon the Avail system.
- BRT vehicles Screens at BRT stations have a unique display format. They were observed to be working. Route and schedule data is fed by GPS data from combined Swiftly and Avail data. However, interior screens are turned off on all BRT vehicles.

Information Screens – To provide consistent information and "look and feel" for riders, IndyGo should:

- Complete the budget and vendor solicitation process for new screens at the Carson Transit Center.
- Consider activating the interior Luminator screens on the BRT buses. These could be used to provide passenger updates, detour or cancellation information, and advertising.

Management Action Plans:

Information Screens – IndyGo is open to technology that will enhance the customer experience. Upgrades are being made to the Luminator system which will support this effort.

Responsible Parties:

Chief Operating Officer

Due Dates:

September 30, 2023



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6. Dashboard Performance Reporting		
Observation: IndyGo Departments prepare detailed monthly Board reports. However, there is no summary dashboard or Board discussion of key operating metrics or trends related to rider perceptions or concerns.	Recommendation: Develop a summary dashboard or report that would monitor key metrics related to identified rider expectations.	
Observation Rating: Low		
The publicly available monthly Board of Director packets contain Department Reports, which summarize key measures and updates from six major departments. The comprehensive monthly information typically exceeds 45 pages. It is presented in varying formats, graphics, charts, and/or narratives. These detailed reports and metrics are not discussed during Board meetings. They also are not likely to be easily understood if viewed by members of the public. The Board does discuss and approve other critical items, such as fare changes, service equity analyses, and Bus Rapid Transit plans. There is also no summary or dashboard of the most significant metrics or trends affecting ridership. Therefore, key operating metrics, transit trends, or ridership perceptions or concerns are not discussed. Since there is no annual rider survey conducted, aggregated customer perceptions are also not able to be prioritized or assessed. Some agencies have determined key customer expectations, then measured relevant metrics to manage performance. For example, a recent Chicago Transit Authority monthly report is publicly available at CTA Performance Report March 2023.	 IndyGo should develop a summary dashboard or report of key metrics and rider-related data. This dashboard could be: A minimal number of key attributes related to customer needs and expectations. Based upon the existing measures and information, as currently provided in the monthly Board packets. Updated as an annual Rider Survey is implemented. Be sorted by potential expectations, such as: Ridership totals On-time performance Efficiency Safety Cleanliness Courteous Hiring 	Management Action Plans: IndyGo Operations leadership is open to assessing the viability of creating a summary of key performance indicato for the Board report summary, from the detail reports currently provided monthly. Responsible Parties: Chief Operating Officer Due Dates: September 30, 2023



Observation: G&A staff rode on various fixed route buses over multiple days. We noted various quality-of-ride issues, including on-board announcements, passenger fare payments and stop cleanliness.	Recommendation: Reinforce the established procedures for the observed conditions, including during the annual operator refresh training.	
Observation Rating: Low		
 During the rides on various routes, we noted that, in certain limited cases: Some on-board audio announcements of stops were not audible. Also, the operators did not announce the stops. Some riders did not have correct fare payment. Also, some operators allowed passengers to board without paying or with partial payment. Some vehicles arrive into the garage at the end of a shift with maintenance or cleanliness issues. However, operators did not consistently log all issues for Maintenance follow-up. Fare Inspector reports noted that some garbage bins were overflowing, or stations were not clean. We did not observe this on our ride along. 	Rider perceptions and system usage may be impacted by these issues, related to vehicle performance, comfort, convenience, cleanliness, or ease of fare payment. IndyGo has established procedures in place to address each of the observed conditions. IndyGo should: Ensure that daily coach logs are correctly completed by operators, to allow for follow-up. Reinforce the correct procedures and reporting of the observed conditions. Add these topics to the operators' annually required refresher training, or provide more frequent touch points to address current issues.	Management Action Plans: PA systems on the entire fleet have been assessed and repaired as needed. IndyGo will be providing additional annual refresher training for ongoing operator awareness. Responsible Parties: Director of Transportation Training Due Dates: Training will be conducted annually.



APPENDIX A – RATINGS DEFINITIONS

Observation Rating Definitions		Report Rating Definitions	
Rating	Definition	Rating	Explanation
Low	Process improvements exist but are not an immediate priority for IndyGo. Taking advantage of these opportunities would be considered best practice for IndyGo.	Low	Adequate internal controls are in place and operating effectively. Few, if any, improvements in the internal control structure are required. Observation should be limited to only low risk observations identified or moderate observations which are not pervasive in nature.
Medium	Process improvement opportunities exist to help IndyGo meet or improve its goals, meet, or improve its internal control structure, and further protect its brand or public perception. This opportunity should be considered in the near term.	Medium	 Certain internal controls are either: Not in place or are not operating effectively, which in the aggregate, represent a significant lack of control in one or more of the areas within the scope of the review. Several moderate control weaknesses in one process, or a combination of high and moderate weaknesses which collectively are not pervasive.
High	Significant process improvement opportunities exist to help IndyGo meet or improve its goals, meet, or improve its internal control structure, and further protect its brand or public perception presents. This opportunity should be addressed immediately.	High	Fundamental internal controls are not in place or operating effectively for substantial areas within the scope of the review. Systemic business risks exist which have the potential to create situations that could significantly impact the control environment. • Significant/several control weaknesses (breakdown) in the overall control environment in part of the business or the process being reviewed. • Significant non-compliance with laws and regulations. • Observations which are pervasive in nature.
Not Rated	Observation identified is not considered a control or process improvement opportunity but should be considered by management or the Board, as appropriate.	Not Rated	Adequate internal controls are in place and operating effectively. No reportable observations were identified during the review.