

NextMuni Departure Predictions: 311 v. 511/nextmuni.com

BACKGROUND

Currently, the 311 Customer Service Center offers Muni customers personal assistance with real-time departure predictions.

Based on call data provided by 311, we estimate that approximately 41% of all 311 call handling time is dedicated to providing NextMuni departure predictions.

Using the above estimate, **the average cost for a departure prediction call for FY10 will be \$1.96**. This works out to **approximately \$4.5 million of 311's proposed budget for FY10**.

ALTERNATIVES TO MANUAL ASSISTANCE VIA 311

Customers can access the departure prediction information provided by 311 customer service representatives through a wide range of avenues.

- Viewing **approximately 750 NextMuni departure prediction signs** deployed across the City
- Accessing the **NextMuni website** at <http://www.nextmuni.com> via either computer or web-enabled mobile device
- Sending a **text message** containing the "Stop ID" for the location in question
 - Instructions are available at <http://www.nextmuni.com/wirelessConfig/sms.jsp>
- **Calling 511 to receive automated departure predictions**
 - By selecting menu option 6, one can obtain departure predictions for Muni and BART as well.

PROPOSAL

311's current inbound caller menu (IVR) already has a branch for customers who are requesting NextMuni departure prediction assistance. Customers could be informed of available alternatives to 311 via this menu, and, it is extremely likely that customers could be automatically re-directed to 511 for assistance.

If 100% of customers were redirected to 511 or other automated information sources, this could equate to a \$4.5 million savings from the SFMTA. A reasonable percentage of this amount should be allocated to 311 to allow for customers that "break through" to 311 customer service representatives by deviating from the IVR menu option proposed.

From a customer service perspective, the SFMTA would make an investment in "stickering" existing shelters and stops with "511 Stop IDs" (and simple instructions) to facilitate the transition from 311 to 511 for departure prediction assistance. This one-time cost would be an extremely small percentage of the annual cost of departure prediction assistance via 311. Not only would this improvement ease the move to 511, it would significantly improve the level of service at a number of stops throughout the city that are not currently equipped with NextMuni display signs.