

SAMTRANS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY JUNE 2017

SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared by

COREY, CANAPARY & GALANIS RESEARCH
447 Sutter Street – Penthouse North
San Francisco, CA 94108

INTRODUCTION

This report details the findings of an onboard survey of SamTrans riders for the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey. The fieldwork on this study was conducted in June 2017. In total, 2,964 surveys were distributed, and 2,351 surveys were conducted and completed. Of the 2,351 completed surveys, 1,959 were English language surveys and 392 were Spanish language surveys. Of the 4,377 total passengers approached, 210 resulted in a language barrier (as they did not understand the survey questionnaire in either English or Spanish).

Key objectives of the survey include:

-) Reporting trip characteristics, such as peak/off-peak/weekend use, as well as rider longevity/frequency.
-) Ratings of 13 various aspects of SamTrans service; and
-) Five attitudinal questions, evaluating riders' feelings about eliminating paper schedules, an annual pass, and reasons for choosing SamTrans

All regular SamTrans routes were surveyed as part of this effort. Those routes are: 17, 110, 112, 118, 120, 121, 122, 130, 131, 133, 140, 141, 250, 251, 252, 256, 260, 261, 270, 273, 274, 275, 276, 278, 280, 281, 286, 292, 294, 295, 296, 398, ECR, FLXP, and KX.

This report includes the following key sections: Executive Overview, Charts/Key Findings and Detailed Results. The Appendix of this report includes a copy of the questionnaire, and interviewer training instructions.

Questions regarding this project may be directed to: Julian Jest, SamTrans 650-508-6245.

Methodology and Response Rate

The survey was conducted as an onboard self-administered questionnaire distributed to SamTrans riders. Surveyors boarded pre-selected routes, and attempted to distribute questionnaires to all passengers on a pre-selected bus of the assigned route. Completed surveys were collected by these surveyors who stayed onboard during the bus route.

Specific steps were taken to ensure the highest possible response rate. This included using professional, experienced onboard surveyors on the project, making the questionnaire available in English and Spanish, and providing a business reply mail-back option for persons who did not have time to complete the survey onboard. Among the 2,351 completed surveys, 2,297 (98%) were completed and returned onboard, while 54 (2%) were mailed in at a later time.

The overall response rate (60.1%) was calculated by dividing the total number of completes (2,351) by all eligible passengers riding on the sampled buses (3,911).

Notes:

- *“All eligible passengers” includes everyone except: children age 13 and younger, riders who had already participated, and passengers who identified themselves as employees of SamTrans.*
- *Please see the appendix for additional details on distribution procedures and response rate information.*

Field interviewing on this project was conducted from Thursday, June 1, 2017 to Friday, June 30, 2017. The weekday shifts were allocated to allow for surveying during morning and afternoon peak periods, as well as off-peak periods. Saturday and Sunday buses were also surveyed at various times of the day.

Surveyors returned completed questionnaires to Corey, Canapary & Galanis’ office following the completion of the fieldwork. Data entry, editing, and coding were done in-house by Corey, Canapary & Galanis, once the questionnaires were returned.

Sampling

In total, 2,351 completed surveys were conducted. This total equates to a system-wide margin of error of +/- 2.01% (at the 95% confidence level).

The bulk of the surveying was conducted between the hours of 5:30 am and 10 pm. Shifts were allocated to allow for surveying during morning and afternoon peak periods, as well as off-peak periods. Specific routes were selected for each surveyor to ensure that interviewing on specific routes was conducted during different times of the day.

Each shift was assigned to allow a surveyor to cover multiple scheduled runs on selected routes. Depending on the route, two to ten full runs were covered in each allocated shift. On longer routes, such as the ECR, fewer runs were covered in a single shift because the surveyor remained on the bus for the full length of the bus route. In total, approximately 421 individual survey runs were completed on these sampled routes.

Selection of routes was achieved by establishing a protocol which grouped routes by ridership: a) highly traveled routes, b) moderately traveled routes, and c) lightly traveled routes. In addition to ridership volume, geographic location of routes was also taken into account as a secondary consideration when determining which routes to sample. Consideration was given to ensuring that a diverse and well represented selection of routes from the Coastside, Northern, Central, and Southern regions of San Mateo County. About 85% of the shifts were assigned to weekday routes, and 15% to weekend routes.

Segmentation groupings are shown below.

WEEKDAY (All Weekday: 84%)

Route Type	Average Weekday Ridership	# of Routes	Approximate Shift
			Allocation (%)
Highly traveled routes	1,000+ Passengers	8	35%-45%
Moderately traveled routes	200-999 Passengers	13	23%-28%
Lightly traveled routes	Fewer than 200 Passengers	12	15%-20%

WEEKEND (All Weekend: 16%-9% Saturday, 7% Sunday)

Route Type	Average Daily Weekend Ridership	# of Routes	Approximate Shift
			Allocation (%)
Highly traveled routes	1,000+ Passengers	4	7%-10%
Moderately traveled routes	200-999 Passengers	10	4%-7%
Lightly traveled routes	Fewer than 200 Passengers	9	2%-5%

The segments above are based on the daily ridership figures that were provided by SamTrans. A complete list of the specific SamTrans routes surveyed is included in the Appendix of this report.

Note that in selecting routes to sample, an active selection protocol was used rather than a random selection process. The active selection protocol allows for a diverse selection of routes from different geographic regions to be represented. This framework provides the ability to comprehensively survey both mainline and local routes from nearly all regions of San Mateo County. A random selection process can result in unpredictable, non-diversified, selection of routes. For example, a random selection process could potentially result in an entire geographic region being excluded from the survey if no routes in that region are included through random selection.

Weighting

The number of surveys completed was compared, by route, to SamTrans ridership. Data was weighted by route based on average weekly ridership and the number of actual responses received.

Statistical Significance

As was mentioned previously, for the total number of respondents (n = 2,351) who participated in the survey, the margin of error is +/- 2.01% at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error for some other key sub-groups which are shown in this report:

- Weekday peak (n = 970). +/-3.14% at the 95% confidence level;
- Weekday off-peak (n = 709). +/-3.67% at the 95% confidence level;
- Weekend (n = 672). +/-3.77% at the 95% confidence level.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall Satisfaction

- J Overall, 81% of SamTrans riders are satisfied with their experience on the system.
- J Weekday Peak (4.21) and Weekend (4.23) riders have slightly higher overall mean scores than Weekday Off-Peak riders (4.16).
- J By route geography, riders of Northern routes appear most satisfied (4.31), riders of Southern routes the least (4.05).

Ratings of Specific Attributes

Overall, riders rated the cleanliness of bus exteriors most highly, at 4.32, followed by courtesy of bus operators at 4.27 and feeling of personal security on the bus, at 4.21.

Attribute	Overall Mean Rating
Cleanliness of Bus Exteriors	4.32
Courtesy of Bus Operators	4.27
Feeling of Personal Security on Bus	4.21
Availability of Information on Buses	4.20
Cleanliness of Bus Interiors	4.18
Convenience of Routes	4.17
Helpfulness/Courtesy of Customer Service	4.16
Value for the Money	4.10
Communication of Bus Changes	3.94
Real-Time Departure Prediction	3.86
On-Time Performance	3.85
Frequency (how often buses run)	3.83

Attitudinal Statements

Overall, respondents agreed most strongly with, “If SamTrans offered a deep discounted annual pass, I would purchase it,” with 52% of respondents saying they strongly agreed with this statement, for an average rating of 4.22 (out of 5.00).

Respondents disagreed most with the discontinuance of paper schedules and timetables, with 35% disagreeing with this statement, and only 31% agreeing with the statement, for an average rating of 2.77 (out of 5.00).

Rider Characteristics

- J More than half of SamTrans riders have been using the system less than 3 years. While 25% of riders have been using SamTrans for less than one year, another 28% have been using it 1 to 3 years.
- J More than half of riders (54%) used only one bus for the surveyed trip, while roughly one-third (34%) used two buses.
- J Most riders (82%) did not use any non-SamTrans buses on the surveyed trip.
- J More than half of respondents (55%) have a typical bus trip of 30 minutes or less. Only 10% have a bus trip which lasts longer than 1 hour.

Favorite Activity on the Bus

- J Nearly half of all respondents (45%) said they like to listen to music, a podcast, or audiobook on the bus, while 26% like to read and 14% like to sleep.
- J The most commonly added response was to pray/meditate, look out the window, or just think or people watch, provided by 7% of respondents.