

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Dial-A-Ride Passenger Survey 2016

FROM: Kadri Külm, Paratransit Planner

DATE: January 23, 2017

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**Action Requested**

None – Information only.

**Background**

LAVTA performs annual Dial-A-Ride passenger surveys to assess passenger satisfaction in order to continually improve service.

**Methodology**

The 2016 annual Dial-A-Ride customer satisfaction survey was conducted between November 7 and December 4, 2016 via telephone by randomly calling currently active Dial-A-Ride passengers. Active riders are those who have used Dial-A-Ride at least once since July 1, 2015. The survey was administered by a third party surveyor, and a total of 150 Dial-A-Ride surveys were completed. The results are statistically reliable at 95% confidence interval  $\pm 7.8$  point margin of error.

The surveyors asked the passengers to rate Dial-A-Ride service on a 1-to-5 scale (5 being highest and 1 being lowest) on a variety of topics, including the reservation process, pick-up experience, ride experience, drop-off experience, and their overall satisfaction with the service.

**Discussion**

Overall satisfaction was very high across all stages of the rider experience. The average score for the reservation process was 4.2, pick-up experience 4.36, ride experience 4.37, drop-off experience 4.42, and the overall satisfaction score was 4.4 on the scale of 1 to 5.

Areas where scores were exceptionally high included:

- Person on the phone was courteous 4.4
- Driver was dressed appropriately and clean 4.5
- Driver operated vehicle safely and followed all traffic laws 4.5
- Driver was courteous and helpful 4.6

Areas where scores were lower than average:

- Prefer use of new smaller vehicles 3.6

- Hold times while arranging transportation 3.9
- Driver was on time for pickup 4.0
- Phone menu 4.1
- Phone rep knowledge 4.1

The key areas where riders consistently expressed the importance to them were timeliness, scheduling ease and accuracy and phone representative’s knowledge.

The following table compares the average customer satisfaction ratings of the surveys conducted in November 2016 and October 2015:

Service Aspect	Oct 2015 (n=100)		Nov 2016 (n=150)	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
<b>Reservation</b>	4.45	5	4.22	4.5
<b>Pickup</b>	4.45	5	4.36	5
<b>Ride</b>	4.38	5	4.37	5
<b>Dropoff</b>	4.37	4	4.42	5
<b>Overall rating</b>	4.61	5	4.43	5

The most recent survey surveyed 150 respondents up from 100 respondents a year ago. This was done in order to increase the statistical significance level and was a recommendation from the Wheels Accessible Advisory Committee. The surveyor noted that this time they had a more difficult time reaching the desired number of respondents requiring them to do more attempts to reach the respondents and more people were not interested in taking the survey.

While the overall satisfaction scores in 2016 were still very good, there was some satisfaction erosion in specific stages of the ridership experience. Particularly the experience around arranging transportation on the phone saw some decreases in ratings with hold times, phone menu, representative’s knowledge and representative’s ability to arrange transportation. The service aspect where riders in 2016 were slightly more satisfied than in 2015 was the drop-off experience.

Per the Wheels Accessible Advisory Committee recommendation, in cases where the respondents expressed dissatisfaction or gave negative feedback about the service, the surveyors were instructed to ask if the respondent would like a call back from LAVTA staff to follow-up on their concern(s). Out of the 150 respondents 18 asked for a follow-up phone call and LAVTA staff is currently following up with these riders. So far the staff has been able to talk to half of them, left messages for 7, 1 person hung up, and 1 had a disconnected phone number. Out of the 9 people staff was able to talk to two people mentioned that transfers to another service provider (East Bay Paratransit or County Connection LINK) were too complicated and took too long, one person said that some the drivers talk on the phone while driving, one person said he doesn’t always get a call back about the resolution of his complaints, one person said the driver was late, one said the driver arrived too early and she was too early for her appointment, one said he was once taken to a wrong address, and one

person was unhappy about the shared rides as they take too long. LAVTA staff is following up with MTM on the complaints.

**Summary**

While the average satisfaction scores in 2016 were very good, the surveyors picked up a few trends toward dissatisfaction. LAVTA will work with the contractor on improving the reservations process and will follow up on the concerns communicated to LAVTA staff during the follow-up phone calls.

**Action Requested**

None – Information only.