

## STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Dial-A-Ride Passenger Survey of 2017

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DATE: February 5, 2018

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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 2017 annual Dial-A-Ride customer satisfaction survey were conducted in December 2017 and early January 2018. This year, the methodology for the customer satisfaction survey changed; staff incorporated both telephone surveys as well as offered an online survey. Previously, only a telephone survey was conducted.

The participants surveyed via telephone by were randomly selected, and the online survey was sent to the LAVTA paratransit database of email addresses. The survey was administered by a third party surveyor, and a total of 257 Dial-A-Ride surveys were completed, which included 206 phone surveys and 51 online surveys. The results are statistically reliable at 95% confidence interval  $\pm$  6 point margin of error.

New in this 2017 survey when comparing it to the surveys in prior years:

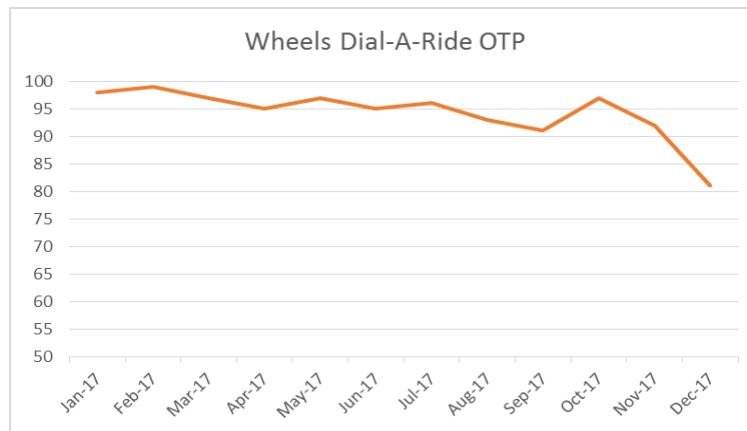
- Adding online surveys in addition to the phone surveys
- Lower margins of error as larger number of total surveys was conducted (from 150 people surveyed in 2016 to 257 people surveyed in 2017 – 71% increase)
- Raffle of four prizes of \$25 was offered to participants
- Adding a question on whether the respondents is the Rider or Caregiver

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**

The Dial-A-Ride service has been experiencing serious challenges in the last couple of months, particularly in December, 2017 when the OTP, due to the extreme driver shortage,

fell sharply. It is important to note that this customer satisfaction survey was also conducted in December 2017, which cannot be ignored when it comes analyzing the survey results. The following chart presents OTP, month by month, for the last 12 months:



Additionally, over the last year, customers have expressed dissatisfaction at both the trip time negotiating and the requirement for an in-person assessment, which may have led to the lower customer satisfaction scores.

When comparing this survey to the survey conducted a year ago the satisfaction scores have decreased in nearly all aspects of the Dial-A-Ride service as shown in the table below:

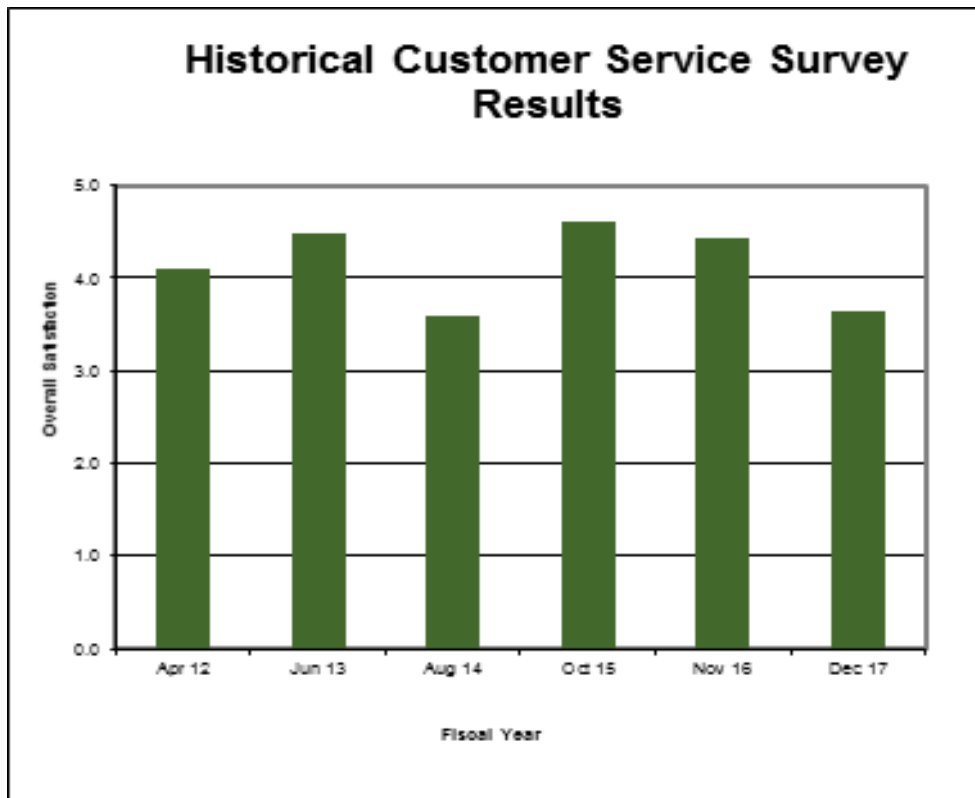
<b>Satisfaction with Service Aspects on a 1-5 Point Scale</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017 v. 2016</b>
Overall experience	3.65	4.43	4.61	-0.78
Overall high level of satisfaction with pickup experience	3.81	4.36	4.45	-0.55
Driver on time	3.47	4.00	4.05	-0.53
Able to reach customer service quickly	3.79	4.21	4.40	-0.42
Easy to make arrangements for transportation on phone	3.85	4.22	4.45	-0.37
Driver dropped me off on time/in correct place	3.96	4.32	4.30	-0.36
Overall high level of satisfaction with ride experience	4.03	4.37	4.38	-0.34
Overall high level of satisfaction with drop off experience	4.09	4.42	4.37	-0.33
Person on phone able to arrange request for transportation	3.87	4.16	4.50	-0.29
Driver arrived correct address/pickup spot	4.09	4.38	4.48	-0.29
Driver operated vehicle safely/followed traffic laws	4.20	4.49	4.55	-0.29
Driver courteous and helpful	4.29	4.57	4.41	-0.28
Person on phone courteous	4.14	4.40	4.47	-0.26
Person on phone knowledgeable	3.86	4.09	4.31	-0.23
Hold times not an issue	3.73	3.92	4.26	-0.19
Driver dressed appropriately/clean	4.30	4.46	4.47	-0.16
Vehicle/shuttle was in working order	4.17	4.30	4.34	-0.13
Driver offered me help during drop off	4.08	4.21	4.35	-0.13

Satisfaction with Service Aspects on a 1-5 Point Scale	2017	2016	2015	2017 v. 2016
Vehicle/shuttle was clean	4.21	4.32	4.39	-0.11
No problems with phone menu	4.08	4.07	4.23	0.01
Prefer use of smaller vehicles	3.69	3.61	3.86	0.08

Summary of Findings:

- The overall experience rating is not directly comparable since the wording was worded slightly differently in 2017, but the drop of .78 in the mean ratings is a clear sign of dissatisfaction compared to previous years.
- Overall level of experience with the pickup dropped .55.
- The rating of the timeliness of the driver (-.53) dropped nearly as much (-.53). Ratings on the ability to reach customer service quickly dropped as well (.42).
- There were two areas in which the satisfaction scores increased from last year to this year, and these included “no problems with phone menu” and “prefer use of smaller vehicles”.
- The overall results are still in the positive, and some overwhelmingly so.

The table below shows the historic trend over the last six years (based on the ratings in the “overall” satisfaction category):



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

staff to follow-up on their concern(s). Out of the 257 respondents, 50 asked for a follow-up phone call and LAVTA staff is currently following up with these riders.

**Next Steps**

LAVTA is working with the contractor to take immediate steps to not only address the staffing issues but also to communicate with riders that we are aware of the issues and are taking specific steps to fix them. LAVTA will look to re-administer the survey in six-months instead of a year. The Mobility Forward study recommendations coming this spring will be another touch-point opportunity to communicate with paratransit users about the state of the system.

**Recommendation**

None – Information only.

*Approved:* \_\_\_\_\_