

# 2024 Customer Satisfaction and Key Findings

Citizens Advisory Committee  
January 15, 2025  
Agenda Item 9



# Executive Summary

- Overall satisfaction rating: 4.02 out of 5.00 (consistent with 2023)
- Safety at the station and safety onboard the train earned among the highest ratings (4.17 and 4.33 respectively)
- Station satisfaction improved from 4.00 (2023) to 4.07 (2024)
- Onboard satisfaction increased slightly from 4.05 (2023) to 4.08 (2024)
- Key area for improvement: communicating train delays at stations (3.56) and onboard (3.72)
- This survey is the last to poll participants using the diesel fleet



# Methodology

## Survey Dates

July 10 - August 6, 2024

## Participants

2,574 respondents, margin of error +/-1.95%

## Method

Onboard intercept and online surveys in English, Spanish and Chinese during weekdays and weekends

## Scale

Satisfaction rated 1-5 (1=Very Dissatisfied, 5=Very Satisfied)



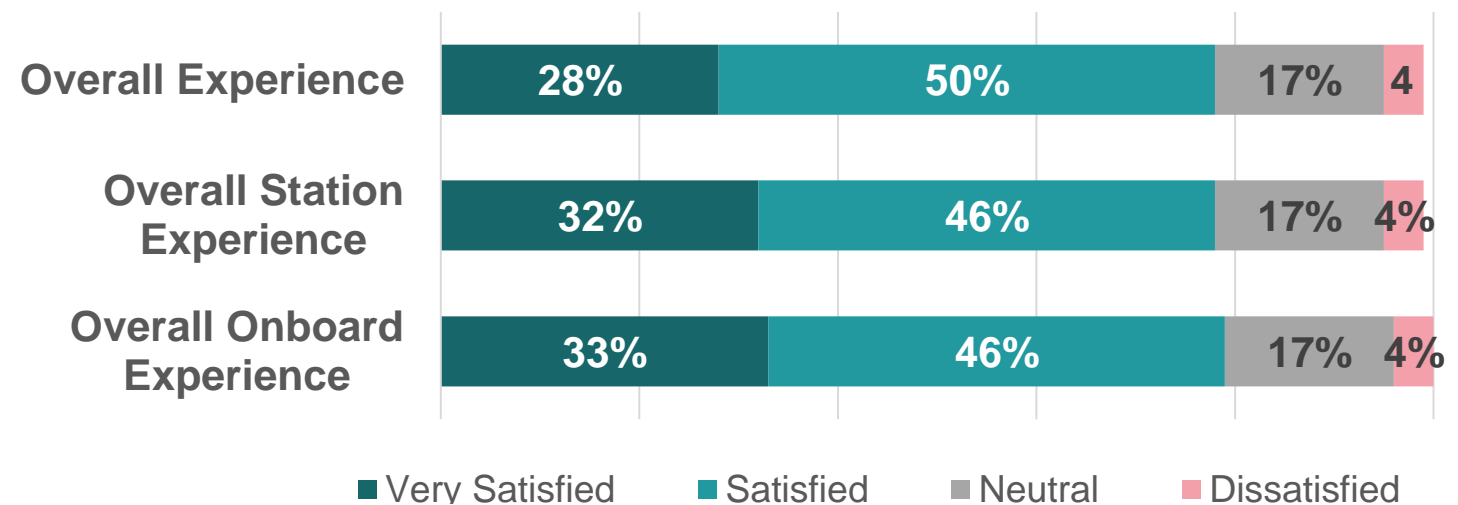
# Overall Satisfaction

## Data

- 78% of riders satisfied with overall experience (unchanged from 2023)
- Station safety scored (4.17)

## Key Insight

Satisfaction levels remained stable; new EMUs and electrified schedule present significant opportunities for growth in overall customer satisfaction.



# Ridership Trends & Findings

## Highlights

- 68% use Clipper; 15% use a paper ticket
- 18% use bike/scooter; majority bring onboard
- 39% are new Caltrain riders (less than one year)
- The average rider has been using Caltrain for about four years
- 42% of youth riders using non-\$1 Youth Fare media (\$1 Youth Fare successful and growing)

## Opportunity

- Leverage new electric trains to inspire interest among new riders.
- Continue marketing \$1 Youth Fare to build customer loyalty and increase round-trip rides among young people.

Type of Rider	Avg. Ridership Trends (Days / Week)
Weekday Peak Rider	3
Weekday Off-Peak Rider	2
Weekend Rider	1



# Ridership Trends & Findings

- New riders are Caltrain's largest customer segment at 39%; up from 37% (2022) and 31% (2019\*).
- New riders are Caltrain's most intensive riders who use Caltrain five or more times per week.

Time as a Caltrain Rider	Overall	5+ Days Per Week	3-4 Days Per Week	1-2 Days Per Weeks	Less than 1 Day Per Week
Less than 1 Year	39%	39%	33%	38%	43%
1-4 Years	26%	28%	34%	28%	18%
More than 4 Years	35%	32%	34%	33%	39%



\*New ridership comparison made with 2022 and 2019 Triennial Customer Surveys

# Top Station Findings: Upward Trends

## **Cleanliness:**

Station cleanliness improvements contributed to overall satisfaction score.

- *Data Point: Cleanliness at your boarding station (3.97).*
- *Why it Matters: Clean environments create positive customer perception.*

## **Safety:**

Lighting and security measures responsible for high station safety customer satisfaction score.

- *Data Point: Safety getting into and around boarding station (4.18).*
- *Why it Matters: Safety is a top Caltrain core value and improves customer retention, especially for those traveling during non-peak hours.*

# Top Station Findings: Concerns

## Delay Information

Customers consistently feel they do not receive timely information about >10-minute delays.

- *Data Point:* Being informed of delays that exceed 10 minutes (3.56)
- *Why it Matters:* Poor communication about delays affects trust in the system and perceived reliability.

## Posted Information Clarity

Customers feel electronic platform signs do not provide timely information and clear instructions.

- *Data Point:* “Posted Information on Signs” ranked among the bottom attributes (3.88).
- *Why it Matters:* Confusing or outdated signage undermines confidence in the system, especially for new riders.



# Addressing Station Concerns

## Recent Projects

- New electronic platform signs installed at all stations
- Automated Caltrain Alerts (launched July 2024) provide customer opt-in text and email system notifications; continuous improvement and refinement underway
- Grade crossing safety enhancements (Broadway, Churchill)
- CCTV repairs/replacements within Caltrain right of way
- “Bikes Board Here” wayfinding pilot program on platforms
- “How to Buy” decals installed on ticket machines

## Recommendations

- Support Predictive Arrival/Departure System (PADS) modernization
- Promote station activation: draft busking policy to create local partnerships with vendors



# Top Onboard Findings: Upward Trends

## Cleanliness of Train Interiors

Statistically significant increase from 2023 in cleanliness ratings.

- *Data Point:* Cleanliness of interiors (3.82 in 2024, up from 3.76 in 2023).
- *Why it Matters:* Clean environments improve customer satisfaction.

## Conductor Announcements

Frequency of announcements rating increased year-over-year.

- *Data Point:* Frequency of conductor announcements (4.12 in 2024, up from 3.97 in 2023).
- *Why it Matters:* Updates from conductors reassure riders during unexpected disruptions.

## Safety on Trains

Safety on trains was among the highest-rated onboard attribute.

- *Data Point:* Your sense of safety on the train (4.33 in 2024, up from 4.26 in 2023).
- *Why it Matters:* Caltrain core value; critical for retention, evening and solo travelers.



# Top Onboard Findings: Concerns

## Delay Information

Onboard communication about system delays remains a top frustration point; rated among lowest onboard attributes.

- *Data Point:* Being informed of delays that exceed 10 minutes (3.72)
- *Why it Matters:* Frustration with delays affects loyalty and word-of-mouth recommendations.

## Printed Materials

Availability of printed schedules and materials scored a *relatively* low rating.

- *Data Point:* Availability of printed materials (3.92)
- *Why it Matters:* Some riders prefer printed schedules and “take-one” materials. Riders without access to mobile apps rely on physical resources; this creates an equity issue.

# Addressing Onboard Concerns

## Recent Projects:

- New electric trains and technology address the following rider priorities:
  - Onboard cleanliness
  - Onboard communications (digital displays, automated announcements)
  - Caltrain Alerts provide automated text and email system updates
  - New schedule with faster, more frequent service

## Recommendations

- Improve wayfinding onboard the train (restrooms, bike storage, quiet zones)
- Replenish and organize onboard printed materials more frequently (SOP underway)

# Opportunities and Analysis

**Summer 2024 survey provides a baseline for measuring improved customer sentiment toward the new electrified fleet.**

**The 5-day commuter was not our primary customer in summer 2024.**

This creates opportunities to explore new fare structures and marketing campaigns that cater to riders who have a 3-day (or less) in-office work week. Continue to monitor traffic shifts and in-office trends.

**New Passenger Information Displays inside electrified trains will help.**

The new screens provide passengers with helpful information to address onboard concerns.

**Support for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Implementation**

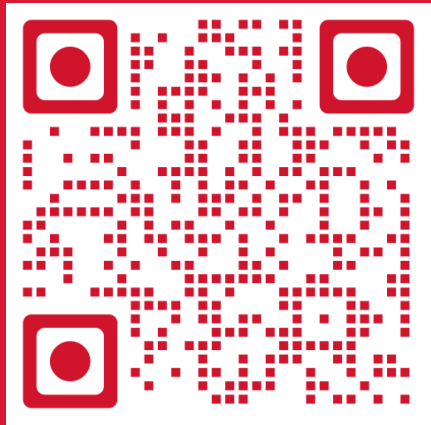
CRM implementation will vastly improve self-help options for customers onboard and in stations, offering faster and more accurate customer service response.



# Comments, questions?

Julian Jest, Manager | Market Research | [jestj@samtrans.com](mailto:jestj@samtrans.com)

Taylor Huckaby, Deputy Chief | Communications | [huckabyt@samtrans.com](mailto:huckabyt@samtrans.com)



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