

2024 Customer Satisfaction and Key Findings

Technology, Operations, Planning, and Safety (TOPS) Committee
January 29, 2025



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 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 all-diesel fleet.



Methodology

Survey Dates

July 10 - August 6, 2024.

Participants

2,524 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).



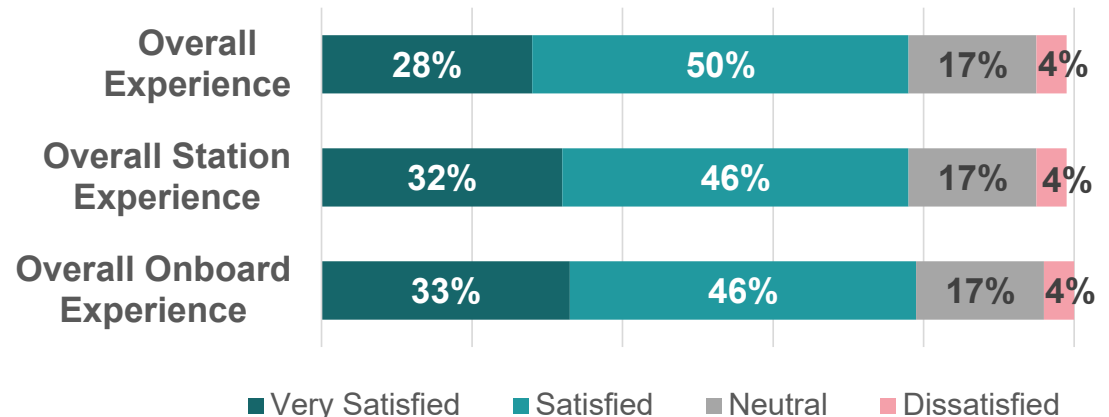
Overall Satisfaction

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

- 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.

Opportunity

- Leverage new electric trains to inspire interest among new riders.

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



Ridership Trends & Findings

Highlights

- 68% use Clipper; 15% use a paper ticket.
- 43% of youth riders using non-\$1 Youth Fare media (\$1 Youth Fare successful and growing).

Opportunity

- Continue marketing \$1 Youth Fare to build customer loyalty and increase round-trip rides among young people.

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

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.

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.



Top Station Findings: Upward Trends

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.*

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.*



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

Service Delay information

- 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.
- Support Predictive Arrival/Departure System (PADS) modernization.

Upcoming project

Safety

- Grade crossing safety enhancements (Broadway, Churchill).
- CCTV repairs/replacements within Caltrain right of way.



Addressing Station Concerns

New riders

- “Bikes Board Here” wayfinding pilot program on platforms.
- “How to Buy” decals installed on ticket machines.
- Promote station activation: draft busking policy, local partnerships with vendors.

Upcoming project

Top Onboard Findings: Upward Trends

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.

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.

Top Onboard Findings: Upward Trends

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.



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

New electric trains and technology address the following rider priorities

- Onboard cleanliness.
- Onboard communications (digital displays, automated announcements).
- New schedule with faster, more frequent service.

Service Delay information

- Caltrain Alerts provide automated text and email system updates.

New riders

Upcoming projects

- Improve wayfinding onboard the train (restrooms, bike storage).
- 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.



Opportunities and Analysis

Support for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Implementation.

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

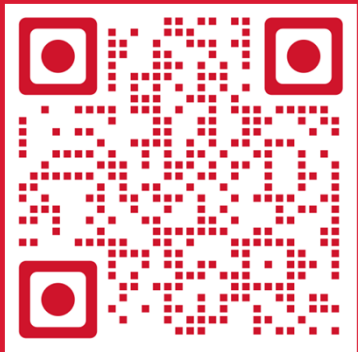
New Passenger Information Displays inside electrified trains will help.

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

Comments, questions?

Julian Jest, Manager | Market Research | jestj@samtrans.com

Taylor Huckaby, Deputy Chief | Communications | huckabyt@samtrans.com



WE'RE HIRING!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

WWW.CALTRAIN.COM

