



NEWS

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POLL OF 35,000 METRO BUS RIDERS FINDS IT IS GETTING BETTER ON THE BUS

It is getting better on the bus. A recent survey of 35,000 Metro Bus riders in Los Angeles County found that 7 out of 10 customers (69 percent) agree Metro Bus service is improving on a variety of fronts.

Between June and December of last year, MTA conducted the largest customer satisfaction survey in its history. Besides the 35,000 Metro Bus riders, 15,000 Metro Rail riders were polled along with 7,000 people who rode buses operated by municipal bus operators in Los Angeles County such as the Big Blue Bus in Santa Monica and Foothill Transit. Passengers were surveyed on board buses and trains, and there also were follow-up telephone interviews.

Overall, 88 percent of Metro Bus riders rated Metro Bus service as fair or better with 56 percent saying service is good or very good. Metro scored good or very good for bus safety (66 percent), route convenience (67 percent), travel time (54 percent), driver courtesy (58 percent), operator knowledge of routes (81 percent), and other measures.

"We're encouraged that our customers are responding positively to the massive bus improvements MTA has delivered in the past six years, but we clearly have areas where we need to improve," said MTA CEO Roger Snoble.

"The expansion of Metro Rapid, the purchase of high capacity buses and construction of new busways, coupled with better supervision of operators on the street, should boost Metro Bus performance where customers are telling us we still need improvement."

Snoble noted bus on time performance scored 75 percent fair or better with 43 percent of those surveyed saying Metro rated good or very good in this category. Frequency of service scored 76 percent fair or better (43 percent good or very good). Seat availability

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was rated 78 percent fair or better (48 percent good or very good), while cleanliness scored 78 percent fair or better (48 percent good or very good).

Metro Rail riders almost universally expressed satisfaction with the Metro Red, Blue and Green Lines. Overall, 96 percent rated the service as fair or better with 78 percent saying the service is good or very good. Among categories receiving good or very good marks were safety (82 percent), travel time (76 percent), cleanliness (70 percent), cost of fare (67 percent) and seat/space availability (61 percent).

Ability to hear the train operator announce stops on the public address system is an area where riders see need for improvement (76 percent rated it fair or better with 49.5 percent saying it was good or very good).

Ease in purchasing Metro tokens and passes and access to customer information are two areas where both Metro Bus and Metro Rail scored uniformly high marks. Customers cited easy access to Metro information through the 1-800 COMMUTE phone line, Metro Customer Service Centers and the MTA's interactive trip planner on the Internet.

A surprising number of Metro customers have access to the Internet: 44 percent of Metro Bus riders (up from 12 percent in 1996) and 63 percent of Metro Rail riders.

Metro Bus and Metro Rail share other characteristics. According to the survey, riders on both Metro Bus and Metro Rail are predominantly low-income and minority persons with Latinos making up the largest ethnic group.

The extensive customer survey data will be used to help MTA better plan and schedule service, help train operators, for marketing and other purposes. The results also will help create a customer profile of who uses public transit regularly in Los Angeles County.

Note to editors: To view or download MTA's customer survey data charts, go to www.MTA.net and click on Pressroom.

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