

**BUREAU OF
RESEARCH, INNOVATION
& INFORMATION TRANSFER**

**Best Practices in Customer Satisfaction Surveys
FINAL REPORT**

December 2025

Submitted by

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In cooperation with

New Jersey
Department of Transportation
Bureau of Research
And
U. S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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TECHNICAL REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report No. FHWA-NJ-2025-003	2. Government Accession No.	3. Recipient's Catalog No.	
4. Title and Subtitle FINAL REPORT Best Practices in Customer Satisfaction Surveys		5. Report Date October 15, 2025	
		6. Performing Organization Code 0	
7. Author(s) Miriam Salerno, Rutgers University; Jim Redeker, IMEG Corp., Cate Heady, Rutgers University.		8. Performing Organization Report No. Enter any/all unique alphanumeric report numbers assigned by the performing organization, if applicable.	
9. Performing Organization Name and Address Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center Rutgers University		10. Work Unit No.	
		11. Contract or Grant No. 23-60189	
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address Federal Highway Administration (SPR) 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE Washington, DC 20590 New Jersey Department of Transportation (SPR) 1035 Parkway Avenue, P.O. Box 600 Trenton, NJ 08625.0600		13. Type of Report and Period Covered Final Report, May 2024 – October 2025	
		14. Sponsoring Agency Code FHWA, NJDOT	
15. Supplementary Notes Conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Please provide Transportation Research Center information and volume information (subtitles, volume #, etc.), if applicable.			
16. Abstract This report examines best practices for transit agencies conducting customer satisfaction surveys. The research methodology included extensive peer research with transit agencies from around the United States, subject matter expert interviews, and original User Testing research conducted on the NJ TRANSIT Customer Satisfaction Survey. The results of this research are applicable to any agency conducting customer satisfaction surveys and research.			
17. Key Words Transit agency, customer satisfaction surveys, user testing		18. Distribution Statement No restrictions.	
19. Security Classif. (of this report) Unclassified	20. Security Classif. (of this page) Unclassified	21. No. of Pages #181	22. Price

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author(s) wish to acknowledge the customer(s), Devyn Cordero, Susan O'Donnell, John Dean, Marina Hofbauer, and Simon Chorowski, without whom this project would not have been possible.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Objectives

This research provides insights into best practices in the conduct and application of customer satisfaction surveys in the transit industry. In addition, a special focus offers recommendations for NJ TRANSIT (NJT) consideration as it continues to survey customers and seek improvements to their survey methodology and implementation of the findings to improve their customers' experience. The goal of this research project is to identify effective models and best practices in transit customer satisfaction surveys that successfully capture customer feedback and provide actionable results for agencies in their data collection, public engagement, and decision-making processes.

The research objectives included the following:

- Identify and analyze various aspects of customer satisfaction surveys, including newer tools and methodologies like transactional surveys.
- Explore effective methods for collecting and integrating this data with other customer satisfaction efforts and incorporate the “voice” of the customer data.
- Develop an interview guide and select a diverse sample of transit agencies similar to NJ TRANSIT to include in interviews about best practices, challenges and opportunities in conducting customer satisfaction surveys.
- Conduct in-depth interviews with key staff members at other transit agencies and document the findings regarding lessons learned in all aspects of customer satisfaction surveys.
- Identify opportunities for improving the customer satisfaction survey process for practitioners, ranging from survey design, pilot testing, sampling, data collection, analysis, and reporting, to change implementation and survey evaluation.
- Discover ways to enhance survey accessibility to increase participation and engagement for vulnerable and underserved groups.
- Enhance the NJ TRANSIT customer satisfaction survey process to gain a better understanding of how to serve marginalized communities while considering their unique needs.
- Develop recommendations for best practices in customer satisfaction surveys that prioritize accessibility and accurately reflect the feedback from all customers.

Customer satisfaction survey programs were studied for sixteen peer transit organizations, interviews were conducted with three industry subject matter experts, and three focus groups and six one-on-one interviews were conducted about NJ TRANSIT's customer satisfaction questionnaires. In addition, original user research was conducted with NJT riders to get specific feedback on the questionnaire and areas for improvement.

The NJ TRANSIT recommendations span a wide range of suggestions from short-term minor changes to specific questions to potentially significant changes related to the survey design and methodology as well as embracing an enhanced customer experience program and organizational culture.

Key Themes and Findings

Purpose and Role of Customer Satisfaction Research

Agencies with robust Customer Experience (CX) programs use surveys and other tools to drive improvements and measure impact. CX surveys should capture the full journey, including aspects beyond operations. Participation in standardized surveys (e.g., Transit App's Rider Happiness Score) enables benchmarking and promotes agency performance. A multi-method approach—surveys, focus groups, mystery riders—provides richer insights. Effective CX programs require cross-departmental collaboration and transparent communication of results and actions.

Survey Methodology

Diverse recruitment methods (online, in-person, mobile apps, phone) yield more representative samples. Social media outreach is effective but should avoid incentives to reduce fraudulent responses. Incentives are appreciated but may not significantly boost participation; clear communication of survey impact is more motivating. Survey length and frequency affect participation—shorter surveys and annual administration are preferred. Open-ended questions are less effective; closed-ended formats with optional comments are recommended.

Augmenting Customer Satisfaction Research

Focused surveys are more effective than those with broad or unrelated topics. Supplementing surveys with focus groups and mystery rider programs uncovers deeper insights. Integrating all customer feedback sources enhances understanding of performance drivers.

Analysis and Trends

Identifying key satisfaction drivers using quadrant analysis helps prioritize actions. Tracking trends over time reveals the effectiveness of initiatives; frequent surveys may hinder this.

NJ TRANSIT: Considerations For Improvement

Survey Design

Simplify and shorten the survey to focus on customer experience. Remove redundant and open-ended questions; use a 5-point Likert scale. Include a progress bar and prioritize high-impact questions.

Survey Distribution and Promotion

Broaden the promotion of the NJT Customer Satisfaction Survey to include distribution on transit modes. Diversify distribution: add in-person and phone surveys and carefully deploy paid social media. Consider eliminating incentives; instead, communicate how survey results lead to improvements. Improve visibility and usability of online dashboards and reports.

Survey Analysis

Reduce survey frequency to annual or biennial to allow time for analysis and implementation. Consider participating in a crowd-sourced survey platform that allows for peer comparisons on customer satisfaction. Ensure demographic and mode-share representation by using weighing techniques. Supplement the Customer Satisfaction Survey with other forms of customer research.

Organizational Changes

Coordinate customer feedback across departments (Customer Advocate, Service, Experience, Marketing). Share findings with frontline staff and involve them in solution development. Present results and action plans to the Executive Team and Board regularly. Explore the transition from customer satisfaction to customer experience (CX).

INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) sponsored this research project entitled "Best Practices in Customer Satisfaction Surveys." The research offers insights into best practices and lessons learned from customer satisfaction surveys, as well as their application in the transit industry and similar transportation services. The primary focus of the research was to investigate and provide recommendations for NJ TRANSIT's customer satisfaction survey program. NJ TRANSIT administers an online customer satisfaction survey twice a year for its bus, rail, light rail, and Access Link (paratransit) customers. This investigation provides industry best practices and specific, actionable recommendations for consideration by NJ TRANSIT to enhance customer satisfaction practices.

The areas of investigation included the following key survey topics:

- Purpose
- Instrument/approach
- Methodology
- Accessibility
- Frequency
- Length/time to complete
- Incentives
- Responses/response rate
- Analysis tools
- Organization design
- Presentation of findings
- Implementation of findings
- Customer satisfaction research augmentation

The research team studied customer satisfaction survey programs and created profiles for 16 peer transit organizations:

- Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)
- Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Agency (LA Metro)
- Maryland Transit Authority (MTA)
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority (NYMTA)
- New Jersey Transit (NJ TRANSIT)
- Regie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP)
- San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)
- Société de transport de Montréal (STM)
- Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)
- TransLink (Montreal)
- Transport for London

Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

The transit agency profiles are found in Appendix A. The profiles include a summary of online research along with links to key information about customer satisfaction practices. Additionally, virtual meetings were held with six organizations to gain a deeper understanding of their customer satisfaction practices.

A significant portion of the research initiative involved analyzing NJ TRANSIT's current customer satisfaction questionnaire. The research team conducted three focus groups and six one-on-one use testing sessions with NJ TRANSIT customers through a facilitated, question-by-question review, which provided key insights into the purpose, design, understanding, and overall impressions of the customer satisfaction survey. In addition, the project team conducted interviews with three industry experts: Aaron Weinstein from Transit CX, Jon Canapary from Corey Canapary & Galanis, and Dimitri Coll of Airports Council International (ACI)—the findings from these three interviews aligned with best practices gathered from peer agency research. These are crucial to overall best practices, particularly in the airline industry model.

FINDINGS FROM PEER AGENCY RESEARCH

Organizational Assessment

Customer satisfaction survey programs vary significantly in the transit industry, ranging from the institutional location of the programs to the purpose of the surveys and the application and implementation of results in the strategy and decision-making of the organizations. The location of the customer satisfaction function varies widely across organizations. However, there is a strong correlation between the impact of customer satisfaction survey findings and the design and implementation of action items that impact customers' experience.

The ultimate impact of customer satisfaction survey data is a function of the transit agency's values and priorities. The most robust customer satisfaction survey programs are those that are integral to a customer experience practice and a leadership commitment to operationalizing actions to improve customer satisfaction.

Situations where the results of customer satisfaction surveys are not reported directly to executive leadership or incorporated into a robust customer experience action program may lead to frustration on the part of research professionals. A transit agency can spend significant effort and resources collecting, analyzing, and reporting satisfaction survey data. However, if there is no clear linkage between strategies and actions to improve customer experience, survey professionals cannot provide value that they believe will benefit riders and ultimately the agency's reputation.

In addition, customer satisfaction data is not only collected through customer satisfaction surveys. Agencies collect data through multiple streams of information, including

customer comments and complaints (email, mail, phone, customer service offices), station condition assessments, special purpose surveys, origin/destination surveys, product and service testing, "push" attitudinal surveys, or interactions in the field with customer service staff or a customer advocate. These input streams are most effective when collected and analyzed through a centralized, coordinated process that minimizes duplication and overlap, providing the most efficient and cost-effective method for measuring and applying customer satisfaction data. LA Metro, Maryland MTA, and TransLink are three transit agencies that are leaders in the collection, assembly, analysis, and application of customer data across various sources of customer input. For example, the Maryland MTA developed its 2025 Customer Experience Action Plan based on more than 4,000 customer satisfaction surveys, 120,000 customer comments or complaints, 1,300 one-on-one rider conversations, and eight workshops with rider advocacy groups.

Transit Agency Survey Practices

Survey Purpose

All 16 transit agencies represented in the peer research conduct customer satisfaction surveys to track satisfaction over time and identify customer ratings of key service and system attributes. Nine of these agencies integrate the survey findings into a Customer Experience (CX) plan or program, where they use the data to develop action plans for improving customer service. Some examples of agencies that do this include CTDOT, LA Metro, and Translink. The agency profiles in Appendix A contain links to the CX programs. These surveys primarily focus on mapping customer journeys and rating key aspects of the travel experience.

Seven of the agencies also participate in benchmarking and peer comparisons to understand their relative performance in the industry. The most common tool for benchmarking is the Transit App, which features a Rider Happiness Benchmarking program. The App uses this information to generate a Net Promoter Score for subscribing agencies. Other information includes customer satisfaction questions, travel behavior, and demographics. The survey is conducted and reported quarterly, with data collected from hundreds of agencies across the United States and Canada. A summary of the Transit App application is found along with the peer agency profiles in Appendix A.

Additionally, a transit agency can use customer satisfaction data to support requests for state and regional funding by demonstrating high levels of rider satisfaction with transit services. Notably, the Chicago RTA and Transport for London identified "advocacy for funding" as one of the key purposes of customer satisfaction surveys. For example, the Chicago RTA was anticipating significant budget challenges and used this feedback to offset potential anecdotal or unsubstantiated criticism regarding system performance.

In addition to measuring customer satisfaction metrics, several of the organizations also collect extensive travel diary-type information, including trip origin and destination, transfers, trip purpose, time of day of travel, and a range of demographic data.

Finally, some organizations also have special-purpose questions related to key issues, including trends in work-from-home arrangements, post-COVID travel behavior, or specific proposed system or service changes or improvements.

Survey Instrument/Approach

Most peer transit organizations use legacy customer satisfaction surveys to enable time series tracking or to evaluate the impact of actions and programs. In many cases, the basic framework remains constant, but the agency adds special-purpose questions to address pressing customer service issues.

Three agencies (CTDOT, LA Metro, and Maryland MTA) utilize survey instruments specifically designed to gain insights into key points of the customer experience journey. Typical journey elements include service reliability, safety, accessibility, navigation, experience with mobile apps, communication in the event of disruptions, cleanliness and comfort, fares, and rider engagement. These typically do not include content related to travel patterns, behaviors, or special interest questions. See Appendix A for specific agency examples and links for these three agencies.

In addition to the customer satisfaction survey methods, four agencies (CTDOT, SFMTA, STM, and TTC) subscribe to Transit App and request that their customers participate in the survey.

Survey Promotion and Methodology

Except for WMATA, all agencies use some form of electronic promotion (such as emails and social media) to encourage customers to participate in online customer satisfaction surveys. WMATA mails invitations using address-based sampling with survey links to the online survey to households in its service area.

Five agencies (Chicago, STM, SEPTA, Transport for London, and WMATA) use fare or other mobile apps to promote customer satisfaction participation. Only two (CTDOT and NYMTA) use social media to encourage participation and direct customers to online surveys. In addition to their own social media, CTDOT successfully implemented paid social media to supplement survey responses in typically hard-to-reach communities. In addition to online surveys, five agencies (Chicago, CTDOT, LA Metro, MARTA, and RATP) also provide onboard or paper surveys as options for customers. In-person surveys, onboard, or at stations and stops, as well as targeted telephone interviews, are effective means of reaching broad participation, particularly for hard-to-reach customers. These are more costly than just electronic surveys, but response rates can be extremely high. Notably, LA Metro only uses onboard paper surveys for customer satisfaction surveys. The Chicago RTA agencies and CTDOT also deploy teams with tablets at stations or stops to collect customer satisfaction surveys. Two agencies, Montreal and TransLink, use telephone interviews to conduct their surveys.

Accessibility Options

All the transit agencies conduct their surveys in English along with other language options tailored to particular customer needs or their organization's language policy requirements. Several agencies employ unique approaches for reaching non-English speaking customers:

- Chicago posts 5% of its car cards in Spanish and oversamples to compensate for low response rates in certain areas.
- CTDOT provides surveys in both English and Spanish, with Google Translate available for all other languages.
- LA Metro provides surveys in seven to nine different languages, with Spanish-speaking interviews used for onboard surveys, since 25% of their customers prefer Spanish. Asking riders their language preference is unique to LA Metro, based on this research.
- The Maryland MTA intentionally posts signs along bus routes to increase participation in areas with low response rates. They also employ community advocacy groups to reach unhoused, lower-income, racial or ethnic backgrounds, and persons with disabilities.
- SEPTA ensures representation by weighting survey results using American Community Survey (ACS) demographic data.
- NJ TRANSIT provides surveys in English and Spanish.

Frequency of Survey

Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted periodically by transit agencies. Most agencies survey their customers annually or every two to five years. The NYMTA and NJ TRANSIT administer surveys twice a year. The remaining organizations conduct more frequent surveys using survey sampling methods, collecting data over time to represent the total system ridership. The MBTA recruits a panel and asks a select set of questions every month. SEPTA conducts a quarterly survey called PULSE. It is distributed to approximately 3,400 customers using emails collected from other surveys. The survey takes five to seven minutes to complete. The PULSE survey replaced a customer satisfaction survey conducted every two years. The PULSE survey contains essentially the same questions as the previous customer satisfaction survey. WMATA conducts bi-weekly random sample surveys of one in ten households in its service area.

Length of Questionnaire/Time to Complete

Survey efficiency, which refers to the number of questions and the time it takes to complete a survey, is crucial for boosting response rates and preventing survey fatigue or dropouts. The number of questions can vary depending on the complexity and the number of open-ended questions. Most of the customer satisfaction surveys in this research take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete, with the number of questions varying significantly. The PULSE electronic survey from SEPTA contains 88 questions and takes 17 minutes to complete. The telephone survey from TransLink also takes approximately 17 minutes to administer when conducted over the phone. NJ TRANSIT's customer satisfaction survey consists of 78 questions and takes approximately 14 minutes to complete. The survey includes both simple rating questions and numerous open-ended questions. The number of questions varies by mode, and not all questions need to be answered by all customers.

Incentives

The use of incentives varied among the agencies investigated. About half of the agencies

profiled do not offer any incentives to encourage participation. Those that do have incentives, which range from a drawing for a single gift card to a drawing for multiple gift cards, include amounts ranging from \$25 to \$500. The Maryland MTA offers only non-monetary gifts, such as pens and notepads, as the agency is prohibited from offering cash incentives. WMATA offers a unique incentive program that provides higher incentives to residents in lower-income areas. Because it sends the survey through the mail, WMATA can determine the value of the incentive based on the customer's home location and the median income of that area (WMATA provides survey takers with a unique link on the mailer). Their incentives include a \$100 raffle for lower-income customers and a \$50 raffle for higher-income customers.

Among those that do not offer incentives at all is SEPTA, which indicated that it decided not to offer incentives when it switched to the PULSE survey methodology, as it had not offered incentives with the prior customer satisfaction surveys. The use of incentives appears to be related to prior practices rather than an investigation into their value or impact on customer participation in surveys. The investigation contained herein was unable to identify any correlation between incentives and response rates for many of the agencies investigated in this study. It is essential to note that offering monetary incentives for online surveys can lead to an increase in "bot" or fraudulent responses.

Responses/Response Rates

The research was only able to collect response rates for four of the 16 transit agencies. The highest response rate was at LA Metro, with 12,239 responses and a 63% response rate from riders intercepted on the vehicles. To achieve this high response rate, LA Metro deploys interviewers to intercept passengers as they ride the bus, train, and other modes of transportation during weekday morning and evening peak times, weekends, and at night. LA Metro reports achieving an extremely high response rate for these onboard personal interviews due to the personal interaction. At the same time, it also results in a highly representative sample of riders.

CTDOT conducts customer satisfaction surveys online, at transit stations and stops, and in person. The resulting response rate was 44%, the second-highest rate among the agencies analyzed. SEPTA reported the lowest response rate, at 1%, but stated that they were pleased with these results since responses are factored by mode and demographics using farebox ridership data and ACS data. The NYMTA collects approximately 96,000 surveys, the largest number among the agencies analyzed, with almost three billion annual unlinked passenger trips. However, this sample represents a response rate of less than 2%.

During the Spring 2025 survey cycle, NJ TRANSIT collected 29,056 surveys, which were reviewed for completeness, representing an overall response rate of 8% – 19% for rail, 4% for bus, 3% for light rail, and 16% for Access Link.

Analysis Software

The research was only able to determine which specific software was used by four transit agencies included in the study. The CTDOT analyzes its survey using Survey Sparrow, with supplemental analysis conducted in Excel. The MBTA uses Qualtrics and analyzes the information using R. SEPTA uses SPSS and Tableau to analyze its surveys. NJ TRANSIT uses Power BI. Five transit agencies (CTA, Maryland MTA, NYMTA, SFMTA, and TransLink) subcontract for customer satisfaction survey processing and analysis but did not provide further details.

Organization Design

The organizational placement of the customer satisfaction survey function does not necessarily impact the actualization of measurable results. However, this research indicates a strong correlation between the impact of customer satisfaction survey findings and the design and implementation of action items. Four organizations profiled have demonstrated a commitment to focusing on customer experience through the implementation of action plans generated from customer satisfaction surveys, as well as other integrated sources of customer feedback. These include CTDOT, LA Metro, Maryland MTA, and Transport for London.

At CTDOT, the Customer Satisfaction Survey is the responsibility of the Customer Experience Manager in the Bureau of Public Transportation. The bureau is responsible for coordinating and funding transit operations provided by many external transit operators. The Customer Experience Manager contacted and encouraged all transit operators to participate in the design and implementation of the survey, as well as the subsequent development of a Customer Experience Action Plan.

At LA Metro, the Operations Committee leads the Customer Experience Survey and Plan. Embedding customer research into the operations function ensures ownership of the findings, identifies customer strategies, and facilitates their implementation. At Maryland MTA, this function reports to the Office of Customer Experience, which in turn reports directly to the Chief of Staff and the Chief Executive Officer. The Office of Customer Experience has utilized customer journey feedback from surveys to develop key customer service actions as part of a newly initiated Customer Experience Program. At Transport for London, customer satisfaction research reports to the Chief Customer and Strategy Officer, who reports to the Commissioner.

Several other transit agencies interviewed expressed frustration related to the organizational appreciation and ownership of customer satisfaction data, including the Chicago RTA, MBTA, and SEPTA, where survey data were not being used to develop customer satisfaction action plans. Customer satisfaction surveys at NJ TRANSIT are the responsibility of the Business Analysis and Research unit, which reports to the Senior Vice President for Real Estate Development and Planning.

Presentation of Findings

Almost universally, transit agencies post the results of customer satisfaction surveys on

their websites. The presentations demonstrate a wide variety of presentation formats, ranging from basic statistical tables to infographics. The agency profiles in Appendix A include links to the online platforms. CTDOT, LA Metro, Maryland MTA, MBTA, NYMTA, SEPTA, Transport for London, Toronto Transit Commission, WMATA, and NJ TRANSIT all routinely make presentations to the executive staff. CTDOT, LA Metro, Maryland, SEPTA, Translink, and Toronto Transit Commission also report Key Performance Indicators as part of their Customer Experience plans or overall strategic plans.

Implementation of Findings

Transit agency implementation practices vary significantly, ranging from serving as a barometer of an organization's public perception to developing and implementing comprehensive customer experience action plans with dedicated staff and financial resources.

Customer Experience Plans

Several agencies have utilized customer research to identify key drivers of low satisfaction, develop actions to address these issues, and measure or plan to measure the impact of these changes on satisfaction.

- CTDOT partnered with all transit operators across the state, from the development of the customer survey to the identification of 26 actions in their Customer Experience (CX) Action Plan, which aim to improve service, make the system easier to use, and enhance accessibility and comfort. The plan is posted on the CTDOT website and updated annually with information on the progress of the initiatives stemming from the plan.
- LA Metro survey data and focus groups inform their annual CX Plan, which includes projects and initiatives with input from across the organization, targeting areas with low customer satisfaction scores (additional information on supplemental focus groups can be found in the next section). The CX Plan specifies due dates and responsibilities for each action item. There are fifty-six action items targeting safety, cleanliness, comfort, reliability, and ease of use. Accountability is maintained by collecting quarterly updates from each project manager and reporting them to the Board.
- MARTA utilized customer satisfaction results to develop eight projects aimed at enhancing customer experience. The plan is published in a Customer Charter to communicate the actions and provide public accountability.
- Through its *Muni Forward initiative*, an ongoing program focused on upgrading infrastructure and technology to make transit faster and more reliable, SFMTA developed programs that prioritize reliability, arrival times, frequency, and trip times, and reported key results. According to their 2024 Report, *Fast Forward: 10 Years of Muni Forward*, on-time performance ratings jumped from 47% to 60%, accurate arrival times improved from 49% to 64%, satisfaction with frequency increased from 51% to 63%, and trip time satisfaction improved from 65% to 69%.
- SEPTA identified safety and cleanliness as critical areas for improvement. SEPTA hired additional police to address security and safety concerns, as well as 100 new

maintenance personnel. Both actions resulted in improved customer satisfaction. SEPTA has a new Customer Experience program.

- TransLink is a leader in Customer Experience surveys and plans. They developed thirty-seven initiatives across five priority areas over the next five years to improve customer experience – more personalized, easier to use, timely and reliable, safe and pleasant, a better reason to ride.

Customer Satisfaction Initiatives

Several agencies report customer satisfaction scores and develop initiatives to address poorly performing service features.

- The NYMTA identifies key drivers of customer satisfaction and gathers feedback on service, staff, cleanliness, security, and other aspects. The agency reviews the results as one input for deciding how to allocate resources to make the most significant improvements to the system.
- The Chicago RTA funds a common customer satisfaction survey for the CTA, Metra, and Pace. There are no consistent or mandated applications of the data across the operating entities. However, the CTA introduced programs focused on personal security and service reliability. Metra used the data as input to their 2024 Fare Restructure program.

Programs in Development

Two organizations indicated plans for upgrading their programs to provide more precise data and links to action plans.

- The MBTA currently uses customer satisfaction survey data as a barometer of the organization's overall public perception and for communicating its performance story. They indicated a desire for more formal links from the survey data to customer service action planning.
- When initially interviewed, the Maryland MTA had not formally connected satisfaction findings with the initiation of customer experience action plans. However, since that interview, they have launched the 2025 Customer Experience Action Plan, which provides an excellent case study in a comprehensive approach to engaging customers, identifying key pain points in their journey, and creating targeted improvements.

Customer Satisfaction Research Augmentation

Customer satisfaction surveys are not the only way transit agencies collect input from riders or employees. Three of the organizations analyzed employed all three research methods listed below to augment their customer satisfaction programs: CTDOT, LA Metro, and Transport for London. The results provided a more robust understanding of customer satisfaction and responsiveness to planned actions.

Focus Groups

Transit agencies often conduct focus groups when a key driver of satisfaction is identified. These discussion-based groups provide qualitative information about customers' experiences, which can help an agency identify the root causes of dissatisfaction and test potential strategies with customers before implementing them. The following agencies conduct focus groups as part of their customer initiatives: Chicago RTA, CTDOT, LA Metro, Maryland MTA, MBTA, TransLink, Transport for London, and WMATA.

Targeted Surveys

Many agencies also use supplementary surveys that target specific issues that drive customer satisfaction. For example, if a transit agency identifies cleanliness as a key point of dissatisfaction for bus riders on a particular route, they may conduct a targeted survey for those customers aimed at gathering additional information about specific aspects of cleanliness that need improvement. These questions help narrow down areas for improvement and target resources to areas that will benefit the customers the most. The following organizations employed targeted special surveys to supplement the customer satisfaction surveys: CTDOT, LA Metro, MBTA, NYMTC, and Transport for London.

Mystery Rider Programs

Mystery rider programs are another tool for gauging performance and customer satisfaction. Mystery rider programs deploy undercover evaluators to ride transit and report on the quality of service from the customer's experience. They may evaluate aspects such as cleanliness, customer service, and timeliness of service. These mystery riders are known to be used by the following organizations: CTDOT, LA Metro, MBTA, NJ TRANSIT, and Transport for London.

FINDINGS FROM INDUSTRY SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

The findings from the three subject matter expert interviews aligned with best practices gathered from peer agency research. Those subject matter experts are:

- Aaron Weinstein of Transit CX, a consulting firm that aids transit agencies in developing customer experience programs,
- Jon Canapary, CEO of a full-service research firm that plans, implements, and analyzes customer satisfaction research surveys for transportation agencies, primarily in the Bay Area of California, and
- Dimitri Coll, Senior Vice President Airport Experience & Training at Airports Council International (ACI). This company serves 2000 airports globally through its customer experience program.

All experts emphasized the importance of keeping surveys short—ideally between 7 and 12 minutes—and using simple, accessible language. Accessibility in design and language, including multilingual options, was also highlighted as essential for inclusivity.

Surveys should be topically focused, with core quantitative questions separated from more detailed inquiries, which can be addressed through supplemental or pulse surveys, or other data collection methods, such as focus groups or panels.

The experts also discussed the importance of having a system in place to not only collect data but also process it and translate it into actions to improve customer experience. Data should also be made available to customers.

Aaron Weinstein of Transit CX

Mr. Weinstein provided the following insights:

- Survey design and survey questions: Mr. Weinstein discussed the importance of keeping the customer satisfaction survey short and accessible. The questions should be clear and focused, created with the understanding that the customer may not be familiar with formal vocabulary or jargon used to describe elements of the transit system. In terms of survey length, Mr. Weinstein measured the survey through the size of paper used for printed copies; he recommends a survey fit on one, double-sided sheet of paper. He recommends NJ TRANSIT assess its current survey to streamline content and improve clarity.
- Creating a survey system for implementing actions: Mr. Weinstein stressed the need for a structured survey system that includes a core satisfaction survey with basic, quantitative questions used to identify issues for further research. He also emphasized the importance of translating survey insights into actionable steps.
- Collecting data through additional methods: As stated above, Mr. Weinstein suggests a simple, core satisfaction survey to identify important topics or pain points for further exploration. If there is a need to collect information beyond the scope of the core survey, then an additional topic-focused survey or other data collection method should be implemented to collect this information from customers. An example is sending short, email-based surveys to customers following a service disruption for specific incidents. He also advocated for using qualitative research and third-party apps to supplement traditional survey methods. For example, [transit agencies](#) throughout the country use The Transit App to both provide real-time travel information to customers and collect feedback from riders on their trips.

Jon Canapary of Corey Canapary & Galanis

Mr. Canapary focused on survey methodology and implementation, providing the following insights.

Survey methods: Mr. Canapary recommended onboard surveying as a method to reach a broader customer base, rather than relying solely on email. However, in areas of high transit usage, phone and online surveying can be used to collect data at a lower price point. Paper surveys (versus using tablets) allow customers to gauge the length of the survey; meanwhile, tablets do not provide a clear expectation for the time needed to complete the survey.

- In terms of length, he suggests that shorter surveys are better to hold customer

attention, and he recommends surveys should take about 8 minutes to complete; however, this time can be influenced by mode (such as commuter rail, where surveys tend to be longer) or by language (non-English surveys take longer to complete). In addition, online surveys can hold focus for longer than 8 minutes but should ideally be around 8 minutes if possible. Qualitative survey questions and ranking questions take longer to complete. If the agency desires more data on a specific topic, they should use a different/supplemental survey (not the customer satisfaction survey) to address that topic.

- Language and design are important in the development of the survey; the design should be simple, and the survey should be available in multiple languages. In addition, the survey should be available in a hybrid format (both online and on paper), allowing customers multiple access points.
- Mr. Canapary says a good survey will represent a cross-section of users. The survey may be delivered based on geographic area or route. When sampling a specific geographic area, an agency should survey multiple routes within the area to provide a representative sample of the geography. Furthermore, conduct surveys at various time periods, including weekends, and on different routes to reflect the diverse uses of transit.

Survey implementation: In terms of survey frequency, Mr. Canapary suggests that annual surveys are preferred, but twice-yearly surveys are also a viable approach. He argues that annual data will better align with other work within the agency and can be used for agency planning (if the survey has a champion to promote its worth).

- Mr. Canapary utilizes trained survey workers to conduct onboard surveys, thereby enhancing the value of the data. Workers are trained on how to approach customers and ensure their comfort while taking the survey. Each survey has a unique number, used to identify where and when a survey was taken and prevent fraud. Regarding incentives, he typically does not include an incentive for an onboard survey. He does not recommend incentives such as raffles, as requesting personal information can discourage participation. However, for longer, qualitative surveys, incentives do encourage participation.

Sharing and using survey results: Survey results can inform further qualitative research that an agency should conduct. Canapary also advises sharing survey results beyond agency websites to effectively reach customers. Posting results on the agency website is the minimum an agency can do to share with customers. He recommends sharing beyond the website; for example, Capitol Corridor posts survey information on trains to reach the customer.

Dimitri Coll of ACI

Dimitri Coll of ACI provided insights from the airport sector, where surveys are standardized across clients to allow benchmarking. He provided the following insights on design and implementation, data presentation, and utilizing the survey to inform agency actions.

Survey design and implementation: Mr. Coll suggested a survey length of 7 minutes, with a maximum of 12 minutes. On his surveys, there are generally 35 questions, with no demographic or social questions included. For question types, his company primarily uses a ranking scale of 1 to 5 to identify what is most important to customers and their experience. If questions need to be modified, they are updated gradually over time to preserve historical information. If a client requests additional questions or topics, they will be added; however, they will not be benchmarked against other agencies.

- ACI's surveys are conducted on tablets, allowing participants to self-select the language. Trained employees of ACI who conduct the surveys, aware of the number of participants and diversity of customer types (for example, those alone versus those with families). Surveys are ongoing and begin quarterly.

Data and data presentation: Data is represented every quarter, and Power BI is used for analysis. Agencies can create dashboards and select the KPIs that are summarized and presented clearly and concisely. The data can also be compared to other agencies.

Agency actions: Mr. Coll suggests that agencies can also use data to improve something that the agency is doing well, especially if it is important to customers, rather than investing in lost ground. He has clients who base their strategic plans on customer satisfaction; they can also use data to provide insights for further research topics, which can be supplemented with other research tools, such as journey mapping.

INDUSTRY-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

The peer agency and subject matter expert research on customer satisfaction survey practices provides insights into best practices and lessons learned across the transit industry, focusing on two overarching topics: the purpose and role of customer satisfaction surveys, and the detailed methodologies used to collect customer data. Targeted recommendations for NJ TRANSIT are found in Section 5.

Customer Experience Plans and Program

Transit agencies with CX plans and programs have demonstrated the power of engaging customers through surveys, focus groups, and other input to develop, implement, and track customer-facing improvements and their ultimate impact on customer satisfaction and the perception of agency performance. Because CX surveys provide insights into the entire trip experience, from planning to full trip completion, they can provide insights into experiences outside the control of operations departments, which may offer agencies important data on the most critical drivers of satisfaction.

Furthermore, meaningful development and implementation of CX action plans requires full organizational participation and commitment to the customer. This level of commitment often involves engaging key service delivery functions in the development of survey questions, reviewing findings and key satisfaction drivers, identifying actions and programs to address low-performing service attributes, committing to continuous improvement and performance measurement, and transparently communicating results,

actions, and implementation progress.

Assessing Performance and Identifying Trends

Transit agencies can assess their performance compared to peers by participating in Transit App surveys. The Rider Happiness Score in relation to other agencies can provide important positioning data and often offers data to promote the agency and its positive performance. The Transit App survey also provides a standardized set of questions and is relatively short, which is a positive way to encourage customer participation.

Trends in customer satisfaction ratings over time are key indicators of actions taken by an organization in direct response to problematic performance. An organization's commitment to identifying key causes of negative ratings, developing remedial actions, tracking their impact over time, and reporting the results to riders directly impact overall satisfaction. The more extensive programs use quadrant analysis for analysis and recommendations for action.

Survey Recruitment and Promotion

Recruiting customers to participate in customer satisfaction surveys is most effective when multiple techniques are used to engage diverse users and demographics.

- In addition to online promotion, tablets at stations and stops, onboard electronic or paper forms, telephone, and mobile applications, when used collectively, provide the broadest possible opportunities for engagement.
- Free and paid social media recruiting provides highly effective target outreach to underrepresented customer populations, ensuring effective inclusion of respondents. However, promoting the use of incentives for surveys will likely result in a high number of "bot" or fraudulent survey responses. Social media is most effective when no incentives are provided or when information about incentives is not included in the social media post.
- The use of incentives for participation varies widely by agency. While there is evidence that customers appreciate them, many agencies do not see the value in offering incentives. Adding or removing incentives may impact the consistency of results over time.
- Onboard surveying allows for a highly randomized and representative response when compared to repeatedly distributing emails to the same customer base.

Response Rates

Several factors influence response rates to these surveys. Offering accessibility alternatives, such as language translation, onboard interviewers, or telephone interviews in different languages, can increase participation. The length of the survey, along with question type, also appears to be directly related to participation, with shorter surveys and closed-ended questions being more likely to be completed by participants. Focusing solely on customer satisfaction questions enables shorter, more purpose-driven surveys

compared to surveys that include special topics, such as pre- and post-COVID travel, travel diaries, or detailed origin/destination information.

Further, the frequency of surveying can also affect participation. Most agencies conduct surveys no more frequently than annually, with some only every two to three years. This less frequent schedule has the additional benefit of allowing time for actions to be fully implemented and measured, rather than conducting more frequent surveys that may not capture long-term program changes. Little or no change in overall ratings between survey periods can result from surveys being conducted too frequently, allowing too little time to implement actions.

Augmenting Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Obtaining an in-depth understanding of customer satisfaction can be challenging solely from customer satisfaction surveys. Focus groups, targeted surveys, and mystery rider programs provide additional insights into the root cause of poor satisfaction ratings. Transit agencies that employ multiple research tools – including customer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, targeted surveys, mystery rider observations, and customer service input – have a rich resource to guide and inform programs aimed at improving customer satisfaction. In addition, integrating all customer contacts for the development of reports and customer-facing actions expands understanding of key performance drivers. That includes customer complaints/commendations, marketing surveys, and special topical surveys.

USER RESEARCH ON NJ TRANSIT CUSTOMER SATISFACTION PROGRAM

Survey Description

NJ TRANSIT has a comprehensive and complex survey tool. Customer satisfaction ratings are supplemented with detailed travel diary questions, demographics, post-COVID work and travel questions, and special-purpose questions to address emerging or challenging issues. NJ TRANSIT's method is not narrowly focused on the customer travel journey experiences, nor does NJ TRANSIT participate in peer or benchmarking survey tools.

NJ TRANSIT conducts its Customer Satisfaction survey primarily online; however, individuals can call a telephone number if they prefer to complete the survey but require assistance.

- There are separate surveys by mode and customers. If they choose, they can complete a survey for each mode they use. Each survey is nearly identical but incorporates specifics for that mode.
- The survey is conducted twice a year.
- A survey link is emailed to over one million NJ TRANSIT customers or individuals with a connection to NJ TRANSIT.

- The survey is advertised through posters on buses and light rail (with a QR code), digital signs in stations, rotating banners on the NJ TRANSIT app, and the NJ TRANSIT website. NJ TRANSIT also advertises on My Bus and My Light Rail. Customers receive a link to the survey when requesting information about the next bus or train at a bus stop or light rail station.
- On average, it takes customers about 14 to 15 minutes to complete the survey. Not all survey takers respond to every question.
- NJ TRANSIT also employs staff as ambassadors to distribute business cards with a QR code for the survey. This practice is helpful in areas with low response rates (such as Atlantic City) or light rail markets in South Jersey.

NJ TRANSIT has a long-standing customer satisfaction survey research program. The entire program is the responsibility of the Business Analysis and Research unit, which designs, administers, collects, analyzes, and reports on the research findings. Keeping the practice consolidated in-house is an efficient and cost-effective approach to collecting customer satisfaction information. Additionally, the core questions in the recurring survey facilitate detailed historical trend analysis for each of the customer satisfaction measures.

NJ TRANSIT staff are skilled in using sophisticated software to analyze and present customer satisfaction data and findings. The use of Power BI has enhanced the ability to understand key findings and trends.

User Research Methodology

As part of the research methodology, the team conducted user research to gain a better understanding of the public's perception of NJ TRANSIT's Customer Satisfaction Survey. The user research included three group sessions and six individual one-on-one user testing sessions:

- Two of the group sessions were comprised of people who identified as taking the NJ TRANSIT survey more than once.
- One of the group sessions was comprised of individuals who had never taken the survey.
- All the one-on-one sessions were comprised of individuals who had never participated in/taken the survey. Participants were recruited via email and were carefully screened to ensure diverse representation of transit riders from across the state.

Participant Demographics

A summary of user research demographics across both group and individual sessions is presented below. Complete demographic data charts are provided in Appendix B.

- Participants were recruited from thirteen counties, with Essex, Middlesex, and Union representing the most among participants.

- Participants primarily used trains and buses; however, bus usage was slightly more prevalent.
- Income levels varied widely, but a significant portion of participants fell within the \$60,000 to \$99,999 and \$100,000 to \$149,999 brackets.
- Gender distribution skewed towards female participants, with 16 female participants, 10 male participants, and one “prefer not to answer.”
- Age groups were all well represented, with the largest participation from individuals aged 25 to 34 and 45 to 54.
- The race category included a mix of White, Black or African American, Asian, and "other" categories, reflecting a diverse sample population.

Group Sessions

The research team conducted three group sessions, each with six to ten participants. The first two sessions consisted of individuals who were already familiar with NJ TRANSIT’s Customer Satisfaction Survey, and the third group consisted of individuals who had never taken (and in some cases never heard of) the survey. The discussion groups were conducted virtually via Zoom and were led by two facilitators from the Voorhees Transportation Center.

The sessions began with a general discussion about survey-taking behavior and perceptions of the NJ TRANSIT survey, followed by a detailed examination of the survey itself. The facilitators shared a "dummy" copy of the NJ TRANSIT survey on the screen (twice using the train survey and once the bus survey). They walked participants through a hypothetical survey response, prompting discussion and questions to the group as they proceeded through the survey. After reviewing the NJ TRANSIT survey, the facilitators displayed examples from other transit agencies for comparison. These sessions lasted approximately 90 minutes.

One-on-one User Testing

The one-on-one user testing sessions, conducted by researchers at the Voorhees Transportation Center, aimed to gather feedback on general reactions to the NJ TRANSIT Customer Satisfaction Survey in real-time, as users took the survey. For these sessions, two researchers met individually with one member of the public who had never taken the NJ TRANSIT survey. For these sessions, the individual research participant shared his/her screen and took the survey (either the bus or rail survey) in real-time with the researchers. The researchers then prompted the survey-taker with questions as they went through the survey to uncover perceptions, pain points, and points of delight throughout the survey process. The team conducted six of these sessions, each taking about one hour.

Detailed summaries of the group sessions and the user testing sessions can be found in Appendix B, along with specific feedback on individual questions included in the NJ TRANSIT Customer Satisfaction Survey.

User Research Findings

There were no notable differences in findings between the survey-taker groups and the non-taker group. Additionally, the feedback from the one-on-one testing sessions was consistent across the Board and aligned with the feedback from the discussion sessions. The general findings of the group sessions are highlighted below. Detailed summaries are included in Appendix B.

Familiarity with the NJ TRANSIT Customer Satisfaction Survey

Most participants in the non-survey-taker group and the one-on-one user testing sessions had never heard of the NJ TRANSIT Customer Satisfaction Survey. They were unaware that NJ TRANSIT surveys customers at all. A few people mentioned that they may have seen advertisements for the survey or received an email. One participant mentioned that he recalled seeing emails about the survey but never took it because he felt that it might be “pointless,” implying that sharing his feedback would not result in actual improvements or positive changes.

Motivations for taking the survey

Participants in the survey-taking group session were prompted to take the survey when they received the email invitation from NJ TRANSIT; however, several participants also recalled seeing ads for the survey. Among all user groups, most participants stated that they were motivated by a desire to have their opinions heard or expressed. For the survey takers, they were particularly motivated to improve their experience on NJ TRANSIT. Some comments included:

- Wanting to share an experience to make a product or service better and affect positive change for a company or service.
- A desire to improve the quality of NJ TRANSIT services; caring about NJ TRANSIT.
- A feeling of being valued
- Desire to share a negative experience with NJ TRANSIT and the belief that the survey is the best way to have their voice heard; completing the survey gives a feeling of control.

For the non-taker user groups and participants, there was a consensus that when they do take a survey, they are primarily motivated to do so if they have had an experience that is at either end of the spectrum – either really good or really bad.

The Role of Incentives

A small number of participants in both groups noted that they were motivated to take the survey because of the incentive, even if it was small. Among participants motivated by an incentive, there was a clear preference for a smaller, more guaranteed incentive over a raffle with low odds of winning. Many participants suggested the idea of a free transit ticket as a more motivating option. Additionally, participants did not view the NJ TRANSIT rewards system as a motivator to complete the survey. Most participants did not understand how to use the points or found them to have no real value. Those who understood the rewards program did not redeem the points, as they required the participants to spend more money at a different establishment. Some indicated that they would prefer to be able to redeem points for discounts on transit rides. Instead, participants in both cohorts stated that they are motivated by the desire to see service improvements (or, conversely, not motivated to take the survey because they did not believe it would lead to improvements in service).

Time Commitment for Survey Participation

When asked specifically how long they would be willing to spend on a survey, the responses spanned a wide range; however, fifteen minutes was the maximum limit across all groups. Most participants indicated that five to 15 minutes for a survey was an appropriate range, with most people saying 10 minutes was a “happy place” or a “sweet spot” for a survey. Participants indicated that the estimated completion time provided by an organization actually matches the survey experience; many stated they get frustrated when a survey says it will be short but, in reality, takes much longer to complete. Most indicated they are likely to stop the survey midway, if that is the case.

Several participants indicated that they would prefer lower time commitments, or time commitments that are tied to specific types of incentives, including:

- Two to three minutes
- Five or fewer minutes
- Five minutes for a raffle
- Ten minutes if guaranteed an incentive and not a raffle

NJT Survey Length and Structure

Many participants found the NJ TRANSIT survey to be too long. Participants suggested asking people upfront what they are most interested in giving feedback on, and then they should answer those questions first. Many of the questions seemed redundant or repetitive. One example of a question perceived as repetitive is Question 28: “Among the attributes of NJ TRANSIT Bus service you just rated, please select up to 5 of your Top 5 MOST IMPORTANT attributes,” followed by a list of 34 options to select. Participants believed they had already expressed their opinions on the listed options. They stated that they would either skip or select five random options to proceed quickly to the end of the survey. They also believed some of the open-ended questions were addressed using the

Likert scale in earlier questions.

During the session, when conducting the survey, several participants noted points in the survey where they would have dropped out or lost interest, well before finishing the questions. These comments are discussed in more detail in Appendix B. Participants also expressed that a progress bar would be helpful, so they know their current progress in the survey. Having a progress bar may help stave off fatigue and reduce drop-off if participants know they are close to completing the survey.

Casual Riders, Multimodal Riders, and Commuters

Many participants expressed frustration with having to select a survey that reflects one mode of transit or one bus line. Participants believed that the survey, in its current form, targets a specific demographic of users, primarily commuters, and does not reflect the diverse riders of NJ TRANSIT, many of whom regularly make multimodal trips that combine bus, light rail, or regular rail, and desire a survey that can accommodate these riders. One participant noted that the survey could be “two separate surveys, one for regular commuters and one for just leisure commuters.” The level of detail requested by the survey, such as stop number and specific vehicle numbers, was difficult for casual or multimodal riders to recall. Multimodal riders were unsure which part of their trip to address in the survey, especially since the entire trip flow, including transitions between modes of transit, was important to their overall experience and satisfaction.

Unclear About What is Being Asked

It was often unclear to participants whether they should answer a question about a specific trip or their overall experience. Participants indicated they feel the survey switches back and forth, and they would favor a single perspective. For example, one participant was unsure if the survey was asking about her inbound or outbound trip. Another participant expressed confusion when asked for specific information (such as time or location of an incident) when the occurrence could have happened multiple times on his most frequent trip. Additionally, the terminology used throughout the survey is confusing. The survey should include a glossary or better definition of the terms used within the questions. Appendix B contains extensive examples, with a selection of highlights included in the table below.

Table 1: Selected Feedback on Specific Questions

Question	Summary of Feedback
<i>Question 1: Where do you typically begin your first NJ TRANSIT BUS trip of the day?</i>	Participants believe they start every trip from home, making this question confusing.
<i>Question 5: How did you get to your boarding stop/station/terminal? (Please select primary method) and Question 6: How did you get to your final destination?</i>	Both questions had the same answer choices, but not all of them were relevant.
<i>Question 9: Of the following stops/terminals, please select the one you use most frequently.</i>	Participants were unsure whether this refers to the location where they start or stop their trip, or if it refers to the stations they pass through during their entire trip.
<i>Question 10: Is the final destination of your most frequent trip any of the following?</i>	Participants found the options wordy and overwhelming; Penn Station in New York is more often referred to as "New York Penn Station," making it difficult to find the correct response.
<i>Question 11: What is the main purpose of your most frequent trip on the NJ TRANSIT Buses?</i>	There is difficulty distinguishing between some of the answer choices, especially those that are trip-chaining; the phrase "Personal business" was explicitly identified as confusing. Participants would like the option to select more than one choice.
<i>Question 14: Which of the following descriptions below, best describes your company's current office/worksite attendance policy? Please read all the options.</i>	The question was perceived as wordy and excessively detailed. They believed it was confusing or could see how it would be confusing to others. There were mixed responses about seeing the value of this question.
<i>Question 24: Please rate your satisfaction with the following Communications attributes about the NJ TRANSIT BUS you use most frequently.</i>	For many, terms including "signage," "availability of accessible services", "communications," and "My Transit" app were confusing.
<i>Question 25: Please rate your satisfaction with the following attributes about Announcements for the NJ TRANSIT BUS you use most frequently.</i>	Participants said bus stops do not have announcements, and the word "Station" is used to describe train stops, not bus stops. The follow-up question allowed participants to select one option from a closed-ended question to indicate their feedback. However, they would have liked to select more than one option because of multiple, different observations.
<i>Questions 26-27 Please rate your satisfaction with the following Overall attributes about the NJ TRANSIT BUS you use most frequently.</i>	Confusing terms include "Quality of transfer," "Accessible features," "employee performance" vs. "customer service," and "trip time."
<i>Question 31: How likely are you to recommend NJ TRANSIT to a friend or relative?</i>	The question was found to be confusing and frustrating because there are no alternative transit options.
<i>Question 43: How long have you been riding NJ TRANSIT Buses to Entertainment/Recreation?</i>	This question refers to a specific answer choice from much earlier in the survey, and does not capture the diverse uses of NJ TRANSIT.
<i>Question 44: Do you ride NJ TRANSIT Buses for trip purposes other than to Entertainment/Recreation? Please read all options and select all that apply.</i>	The terms "Company business" and "personal business" were confusing.

The 10-point Likert Scale

Most participants found NJ TRANSIT's use of the 10-point Likert scale to be excessive, which made the survey feel longer and more arduous than necessary. Participants indicated that a 5-point scale would be sufficient and easier to use. It may also be more accurate, leaving less room for personal interpretation about the level of satisfaction that the numbers represent (e.g., 3, 4, 7, 8). Researchers also noticed during the one-on-one sessions that there was significant variability in how people interpreted the numbers. For example, one participant described seven as "fine," and another described seven as "pretty good."

On Follow-up Questions

Many participants viewed open-ended, follow-up questions negatively, feeling that they were cumbersome and a disincentive to provide low ratings (for fear of being prompted for more information/making the survey longer). Participants also noted a lack of consistency in the questions that prompted open-ended feedback, closed-ended feedback, or no additional feedback. Several participants remarked that they would have liked the opportunity to provide additional information for a particular question but were not prompted to do so. For example, on Question 24, "Please rate your satisfaction with the following Communications attributes about the NJ TRANSIT BUS you use most frequently," some participants wanted to explain their answers in a follow-up question, but were not prompted to do so.

Other participants were happy to provide additional details but remarked that they would prefer closed-ended follow-up questions with the option to select choices. Those who appreciated the open-ended questions valued the opportunity to provide specifics about their experience, especially if they wanted to share something negative that had occurred or explain why they had provided critical comments/negative feedback.

Participants generally preferred closed-ended follow-up questions. They found selecting from a provided list to be much easier than writing a narrative in an open-ended box. However, many noted that they would like an option to provide an explanation or detail about their selection, as well as select multiple options from the provided choices.

Closing the Loop with Participants

Participants would like to receive more communication from NJ TRANSIT regarding the survey results. There is a general feeling/belief that the survey does not result in any actual change for NJ TRANSIT customers, which is un motivating. Participants felt as though the feedback "would just go into a void.", when there is a desire to understand how the feedback is being used and whether it results in tangible, actionable improvements. Several participants in both the group session and the one-on-one sessions noted that they would be more motivated to take the survey if they received information from NJ TRANSIT about the changes implemented as a result of the survey

data. None of the group session participants were aware that NJ TRANSIT posts the survey results on its website. Participants suggested NJ TRANSIT communicate through means such as sharing the survey results through email and communicating improvements made to address the survey results.

Question-Specific Feedback

Participants noted particular points of confusion or frustration while taking the survey, both in the group sessions and the one-on-one sessions. Feedback on those points, along with specific recommendations for improving the questions and question flow, is included in Appendix B.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

NJ TRANSIT has a rich and valuable customer satisfaction survey program, which has carried core questions about satisfaction attributes throughout its history. The survey practice has also remained relatively stable. Notably, NJ TRANSIT has robust analytical tools and expertise for processing and reporting customer satisfaction results.

Based on this research of best practices in the industry, along with original user testing, the recommendations below offer NJ TRANSIT a series of actions to implement improvements and become a leader in the industry. Full implementation of the recommendations would provide NJ TRANSIT with a unique opportunity to redesign its customer satisfaction research program, fully aligning it with the organization's key goal of improving customer experience. Creating new benchmarks and committing themselves to identifying, communicating, and implementing strong customer program actions could improve the reputation and trust in NJ TRANSIT among its customers.

Considerations for improvement have been organized into three categories:

- *Survey Distribution and Promotion* includes recommendations for increasing visibility and participation in the NJT Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- *Survey Analysis* includes recommendations on the effective collection and use of data collected from the survey.
- *Organizational changes* include actions the agency can take to facilitate meaningful collaboration on customer satisfaction.
- *Questionnaire Improvements* include specific changes to the current NJT Customer Satisfaction Survey to improve the user experience of the survey instrument.

Survey Distribution and Promotion

Broaden the Promotion of the NJT Customer Satisfaction Survey: NJ TRANSIT should consider augmenting its email strategy with onboard promotions to increase the

response rate for hard-to-reach customers, particularly bus riders who are underrepresented in the survey sample.

- **Consider advertising the survey on buses, trains, and at bus stops and stations.** User testing research participants expressed that they would have expected to see a promotion of the survey at these locations, as they provide idle time for participants to take the survey during their ride.
- **Consider and carefully test the use of targeted paid social media ads.** Social media and paid social media advertisements are an effective way to reach a target audience. Cross-marketing between NJ TRANSIT units should also be explored. Promotion on social media requires careful planning to avoid fraudulent and "bot" responses.

Consider Targeted In-Person Surveys, Particularly on Buses. Some customers may be hesitant to take the survey electronically, may not have access to technology or unlimited data plans, or may find the in-person survey experience more enjoyable. Furthermore, peer research and subject matter interviews conducted as part of this study have shown that onboard/in-person surveying, although more costly, has a significantly higher participation rate. NJT might want to consider incorporating in-person surveys along specific routes or in certain communities with a high likelihood of nonparticipation in the online survey.

Re-evaluate the Use of Incentives: NJ TRANSIT offers a drawing for a \$100 gift card or a monthly pass, along with 250 NJ TRANSIT reward points that can be used at select area businesses. The effectiveness of the incentive has not been formally analyzed; however, qualitative feedback from user testing indicates that it is not particularly effective at securing survey participants.

Improve External Communications about the Results and Impact of the Survey: Customers who participated in the user research indicated that having NJ TRANSIT report on findings, along with specific actions for improvements, would be a key motivator for completing the survey. NJ TRANSIT should consider improving communication about the impacts of survey participation by highlighting actionable steps the agency is taking to address concerns raised in the survey. In addition, consider ways to drive traffic from the public to the existing online dashboard to increase awareness of the survey results, which can lead to increased participation. Consider developing easy to read, user friendly, info graphics that explain the findings and potential action steps to address any survey findings that need to be addressed.

Survey Analysis

Reduce the Frequency of Surveys from Twice a Year to Once a Year: NJ TRANSIT administers customer satisfaction surveys twice a year, a change from its past practice of conducting quarterly surveys. However, this practice is still more frequent than in most transit agencies. Surveys taken annually or less often can provide organizations with time

to analyze the data, identify key customer satisfaction issues, develop strategies and actions to address performance gaps, implement these actions, and evaluate their effectiveness. Furthermore, user research has demonstrated that the implementation of action, as well as the communication of that action, to customers, is a significant motivator for participation and continued engagement in the survey.

Consider Participating in Peer Comparisons: NJ TRANSIT may want to consider taking part in customer satisfaction surveys that enable peer comparisons. One option may be to join Transit App and encourage their customers to participate in the Rider Happiness Benchmarking survey. Participation would provide critical insights into NJ TRANSIT's peer performance and support NJ TRANSIT's reputation and credibility in terms of customer satisfaction.

Investigate the Use of Weighing Techniques to Correct Over- and Under sampling: NJ TRANSIT's response rate is strong. However, no analysis has been performed on response rate by mode, subgroups, or demographics. There has also been no investigation into how representative the response rate is in terms of repeat survey takers compared to a randomized sample of customers. In addition to broadening the survey's distribution, NJ TRANSIT should investigate the use of weighting techniques to help ensure demographic representation. One possible option is to utilize the American Community Survey (ACS) data. Although the ACS focuses on commuters only, it contains statistically valid demographic data that can be used as a check on how well surveys reflect the population they serve.

Consider Supplementing with Other Customer Research: NJ TRANSIT should consider conducting additional forms of customer research as a means of supplementing findings from the Customer Satisfaction Survey with targeted input. Rather than relying on lengthy, open-ended questions within the Customer Satisfaction Survey, NJT can follow up with targeted focus groups to gain qualitative insights into issues raised by customers in the survey. Alternatively, NJT could consider creating and distributing targeted surveys that address specific issues or points of frustration for riders, such as station cleanliness or on-time performance. These targeted follow-up endeavors could be an efficient way to collect detailed information from a targeted subgroup of rides.

Expand Institutional Capacity for using Power BI: NJ TRANSIT recently began using Power BI, a robust analysis and data reporting tool. These dashboards enable customized analysis tailored to the needs of various departments. Currently, only staff members with the Business Analysis and Research Unit have the expertise to utilize the software to develop customized dashboards and reports for other units within the agency. This lack of capacity may be a limitation on fully realizing the use of customer satisfaction survey data throughout the agency.

Organizational Changes

One of NJ TRANSIT's top current goals is improving customer service. A valuable tool to support the development of customer strategies is the application of survey findings within

the organization. Results of the customer satisfaction surveys are presented to the Board and posted on the NJ TRANSIT website; however, there are opportunities to expand how the agency interacts with the survey, its customers, and the data it collects.

Coordinate Disparate Customer Contacts and Engagement: Currently, NJ TRANSIT collects customer feedback and data from various sources and departments, including customer service, customer advocate, customer experience field audits, and marketing. Coordinating customer data, customer complaints, surveys, research, and field observations would provide a rich source for identifying strategies and monitoring the impact on customer satisfaction.

Increase Internal Visibility of Customer Satisfaction Data: NJ TRANSIT provides customer satisfaction reports on its website, presents them to the Board of Directors' Customer Service Committee, and shares the results with operations departments. NJ TRANSIT should consider conducting workshops with the Executive Team and engaging all departments within the organization. A critical client is NJ TRANSIT's Customer Advocate, who can assist in creating an organizational culture that embraces the customer experience and takes critical actions to improve customer satisfaction.

Explore the Transition from Customer Satisfaction to Customer Experience (CX): NJ TRANSIT customer satisfaction survey results are shared with the bus, rail, and light rail, as well as Access Link operating departments. However, there is no formal interaction between the Business Research and Analysis unit and these operations departments to identify key drivers of low satisfaction or to determine actions to address them. There is also no feedback loop to evaluate initiatives after they are implemented, measuring the impact on customer satisfaction. NJ TRANSIT should build towards a NJT integrated customer experience program, to align the customer satisfaction research organization within a CX Program:

- **Lay the groundwork with practice:** As a means of building support for a customer experience approach, NJT should share customer satisfaction findings with functional departments and work collaboratively to develop and implement specific action plans. Front-line employees can also play a key role, suggesting improvements for customers based on their on-the-ground experiences.
- **Lay the groundwork with discussions:** Transitioning to an agency-wide CX program will require internal support from various departments and levels of leadership within the agency. The Business Analysis and Research Unit could work within the agency to engage in a series of departmental discussions on the practice of CX and build internal support towards launching a CX program.
- **Engaging in peer learning:** Two other state-wide agencies have recently transitioned to Customer Experience and launched comprehensive CX plans: the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Connecticut Department of Transportation. NJT transit should engage these peers in a series of peer learning conversations to hear first-hand about their transition from customer satisfaction to customer experience.
- **Securing guidance from a consultant:** NJT would benefit from working

directly with a consultant or subject-matter expert specializing in transit agency customer experience to assist and guide NJT in exploring the transition to CX.

Questionnaire Design

Based on the feedback received during the User Testing sessions, NJ TRANSIT would benefit from simplifying and shortening the customer satisfaction survey. **Appendix B** provides detailed suggestions on changes to specific questions and survey flow for the NJ TRANSIT customer satisfaction survey. Some key highlights of these suggestions include:

- **Remove as many open-ended questions as possible:** User Testing participants were rather unanimous in their dislike of open-ended follow-up questions. They found these questions to be time-consuming and frustrating. NJT should rework all follow-up questions that are currently open-ended to be closed-ended. If necessary, closed-ended follow-up questions could include an optional comment box for narrative detail, should a customer want to expand their answer.
- **Improve consistency/predictability when participants have follow-up questions.** Participants noted that there was a lack of consistency when they would be prompted to provide additional details via follow-up questions. Providing consistency and predictability will help eliminate frustration from survey takers.
- **Remove all prompts that require specific dates and times at which an incident occurred.** Participants reported that it was difficult to recall when a specific incident occurred, as a significant amount of time likely had passed between the incident and the launch of the customer satisfaction survey. Participants found the request to provide a specific date and time redundant with other mechanisms for filing customer complaints.
- **Consider removing the post-COVID travel and work schedule questions.** If there are no departments at the agency that are actively using this data, these questions should be eliminated for brevity. User testing participants found them irrelevant and overly cumbersome.
- **Add definitions or examples to confusing, unclear, or technical terms.** Several terms used in the survey were confusing to participants during user testing. Adding additional definitions or examples would be helpful. Investigate the feasibility of including a hyperlinked glossary of all terms used in the survey. Appendix B provides a list of words/phrases that were identified as confusing.
- **Reorder the survey questions to include the NJT's highest-priority questions first** or consider redesigning the survey to allow participants to prioritize questions themselves (answering the ones most important to them first). Prioritizing questions will maximize the amount of key information collected, even if participants drop out of the survey without completing it. Participants also expressed that they were more likely to rush or select random answers once they became fatigued.
- **Provide more explicit guidance on the reference point for each question.** The survey includes questions that reference a specific trip, as well as questions about a typical trip. It was not always clear to participants which frame of reference they should use when answering a specific question. More explicit instruction is needed.

Create a consistent reference point for all questions.

- **Program the survey to include a progress bar.** Participants requested that the survey include a progress bar to help them approximate the time/number of questions remaining until completion.
- **Reduce the number of demographic questions.** Participants understood the importance of asking demographic questions but found the number of questions cumbersome. NJT should include only the most helpful/informative for NJT and include “prefer not to answer” as a choice for all demographic questions.
- **Segment the survey for two user groups:** User testing participants remarked that the current NJT customer satisfaction survey seemed geared more specifically towards commuters with static trip patterns. User testing participants who considered themselves more variable users (taking multiple routes equally for different purposes) struggled at points in the survey. NJT could consider segmenting the questionnaire for commuters and variable users, with questions modified to suit those who use multiple routes equally in one day, including those trips that are multimodal and include a combination of bus, rail, and light rail.
- **Move to a 5-point Likert Scale.** User testing participants felt the 11-point Likert scale currently employed in the customer satisfaction survey to be too cumbersome. NJT could streamline the survey by transitioning to a 5-point Likert scale, thereby increasing the speed and efficiency of the user's survey experience without compromising data quality.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: PEER AGENCY PROFILES

The following tables summarize information collected in the Peer Agency Profiles included in this appendix. Full profiles follow.

Table 1: Agencies Included

Agency Abbreviations	Agency Full Name	Geographic Location
CTA	Chicago Transit Authority	Chicago, IL
CTDOT	Connecticut Department of Transportation	Connecticut (statewide)
LA METRO	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority	Los Angeles, CA
MARYLAND (MTA)	Maryland Transit Administration	Maryland (statewide)
MARTA	Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority	Atlanta, GA
MBTA	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	Boston, MA
NYMTA	New York Metropolitan Transit Authority	New York, NY metro area
RATP	Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (Parisian Autonomous Transport Administration)	Paris, France
SFMTA	San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency	San Francisco, CA
STM	Société de transport de Montréal	Montreal, QC, Canada
SEPTA	Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority	Philadelphia, PA
TRANSLINK	-	Vancouver, BC, Canada
LONDON	Transport for London	London, England
TTC	Toronto Transit Commission	Toronto, ON, Canada
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority	Washington, DC metro area
NJ TRANSIT	New Jersey Transit	New Jersey (statewide)

Table 2: Purpose and Administration of Survey

Agency	Customer Satisfaction	Customer Experience (CX)	Peer/Benchmarking	Where survey is housed organization	survey is within Contractors
CTA	X			Regional Transit Authority (RTA, oversees CTA, Metra, and Pace)	Yes, RSG
CTDOT	X	X	X	Public Transportation, led by Customer Experience Manager	Yes, FHI Studio
LA METRO	X	X		Operations Committee, merging Customer Satisfaction and Customer Experience	-
MARYLAND	X	X	X	Office of Customer Experience to Chief of Staff to CEO	Yes
MARTA	X	X		Department of Research and Analysis	-
MBTA	X	X		Office of Performance Management and Innovation, Customer Satisfaction Department	No
NYMTA	X	X		MTA Market and Customer Research	Yes, WBA
RATP	X	X	X	N/A	-
SFMTA	X		X	Communications, Marketing, and Outreach	Yes
STM	X		X	Public Participation	-
SEPTA	X			Department of Research and Analytics in the Communications Department, led by Manager of Consumer Research	No
TRANSLINK	X	X		-	Yes
LONDON	X		X	Chief Customer and Strategy Officer, direct report to Commissioner	-
TTC	X		X	Customer Service Department, led by Senior Manager Marketing, Partnerships, Digital and Social Media	-
WMATA	X	X		Customer Research and Insights, within Marketing in the Customer Experience Department	No
NJ TRANSIT	X			Senior VP Real Estate Development and Planning	No, Business Research and Analysis

Table 3: Survey Instrument/Approach

Agency	Legacy	New	CX Survey	Transit App	Token Transit App
CTA	X				
CTDOT			X	X	
LA METRO			X		
MARYLAND			X		
MARTA	X				
MBTA	X				
NYMTA	X				
RATP	X				
SFMTA	X			X	X
STM	X			X	X
SEPTA		X			
TRANSLINK	X				
LONDON	X				
TTC	X			X	X
WMATA	X				
NJ TRANSIT	X				

Table 4: Survey Promotion

Agency	Website	Email	Flyers with QR code	Letter in mail	Social Media, free or paid	Fare or Mobile Apps	Passenger Intercept
CTA		X	X			X	
CTDOT	X	X	X		X	X	
LA METRO	X	X				X	X
MARYLAND			X				
MARTA							
MBTA		X					
NYMTA	X	X			X		
RATP							
SFMTA		X					
STM						X	
SEPTA	X	X				X	
TRANSLINK							
LONDON						X	
TTC	X						
WMATA				X		X	
NJ TRANSIT		X					

Table 5: Survey Distribution

Agency	Online	Tablets at Stations or Stops	On-board or Paper survey	Telephone Calls
CTA	X	X	X	
CTDOT	X	X	X	
LA METRO	X		X	
MARYLAND	X			
MARTA	X		X	
MBTA	X			
NYMTA	X			
RATP	X		X	
SFMTA	X			
STM	X			X
SEPTA	X			
TRANSLINK	X			X
LONDON	X			
TTC	X			
WMATA	X			
NJ TRANSIT	X			

Table 6: Accessibility and Diversity of Survey

Agency	Offered in non-English language(s)	Languages offered	Efforts for hard-to-reach populations
CTA	X	Spanish	5% of car cards in Spanish, oversampling of historically low response rates
CTDOT	X	English and Spanish with Google Translate option for other languages	N/A
LA METRO	X	11 languages; in-person available in Spanish (25% of riders preferred)	Specialized surveys other than CX aimed at unhoused riders and low-income riders.
MARYLAND			Increased signs along bus routes, community advocate groups to reach unhoused, lower income, racial or ethnic backgrounds, people with disabilities.
MARTA	N/A		
MBTA	X	English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese	
NYMTA	X	Online in 9 languages	
RATP	N/A		
SFMTA	X	English, Spanish, Chinese	
STM	N/A		
SEPTA			ACS Census demographic data used to weight surveys
TRANSLINK			
LONDON			
TTC			Accessible formats available upon request
WMATA	X	Online in Spanish	Accessibility services available upon request
NJ TRANSIT	X	Spanish	

Table 7: Frequency, Length, Response Rate of Survey

Agency	Frequency	Number of questions	Time to complete (minutes)	Response Rate	Incentives
CTA	Every 5 years	37	-	9,876 responses: 12% for electronic, 11% for on-board	X
CTDOT	Every 2 years	77	10	4,300 responses: 44%	X
LA METRO	Annual	-	5	12,239 responses: 63%	X
MARYLAND	Annual	50	10	Sample goals: Bus: 5,000 Metro/Light Rail: 500 MARC/Commuter bus: 500 Mobility Services: 300	X
MARTA	Annual	-	-	5,100 responses	
MBTA	Monthly	-	5-7	903 panel responses	X
NYMTA	Bi-annual	-	-	Subway: 43,000 Bus: 16,000 Access-A-Ride: 5,000 LIRR: 17,170 MetroNorth: 14,810	X
RATP	Annual	-	-	14,240 residents surveyed, including 68,832 regular riders	
SFMTA	Annual	30	-	553 surveys in 2024 with error rate of 4.1%	
STM	Continuous	-	5	Continuous – 75 per week, 4,500 per year	-
SEPTA	Quarterly	-	17	3354 responses per quarter, 1% of riders	X
TRANSLINK	Quarterly	-	17	-	
LONDON	N/A	-	-	Approximately 1000 responses per quarter	-
TTC	Unfixed schedule; avg. every 2 to 3 years	-	3-5	-	
WMATA	Bi-weekly	-	-	700-900 responses per module per quarter	X
NJ TRANSIT	Bi-annual	78	14	36,757 responses -- 7% overall, not calculated by mode	X

Table 8: Collection and Analysis Tools and Presentation of Results

Agency	Analysis tool	Results posted on agency website	Other presentations of results
CTA	-	X	Results posted on RTA website as well as CTA, Metra, and Pace Websites. PowerPoint presentation to Board, Planning and Transportation departments.
CTDOT	Survey sparrow, Excel	X	Presented to/owned by Commissioner
LA METRO	Quadrant analysis	X	Customer Experience Hub on website
MARYLAND	(Subcontractor)		PowerPoint presentation to executive staff annually
MARTA	-		Presentation to Riders' Advisory Council
MBTA	Qualtrics, analyzed in R.	X	May be shared at board meetings. Monthly reports shared with senior leadership and public facing teams.
NYMTA	(Subcontractor)	X	Provided to operations for each mode
RATP	-		
SFMTA	(Subcontractor)	X	
STM	-	X	
SEPTA	SPSS and Tableau		Published on SEPTA Strategy Plan KPIs. Presented to General Manager and Executive Team quarterly and at the Chief of Operations meeting. Meetings are also held with the Assistant General Managers of Bus and Rail operations and with specific departments such as Stations.
TRANSLINK	(Subcontractor)	X	
LONDON	-		Quarterly Customer Report to Customer Service and Operating Performance Panel
TTC	-	X	CEO KPI reports to the Board
WMATA	SPSS, occasionally R or Excel	X	Survey data is shared with the C-suite and marketing team, who determine how to distribute the findings. It is also presented in meetings, including with the Planning staff. Board reports combine satisfaction data with other resources and is then made public on the website.
NJ TRANSIT	PowerBI	X	Presentation to Board of Customer Service

Table 9: Customer Satisfaction Research Augmentation

Agency	Customer Panels/Advisory Groups	Focus groups	Targeted surveys	Mystery rider	Other
CTA	X	X	X		Non-rider/lapsed rider survey
CTDOT		X	X	X	
LA METRO	X	X	X	X	Journey mapping
MARYLAND		X			
MARTA	X				
MBTA		X	X	X	
NYMTA			X		
RATP					
SFMTA					
STM	X		X		
SEPTA		X	X		Customer Experience Unit
TRANSLINK					
LONDON			X	X	
TTC					
WMATA		X	X		Comprehensive rider population survey every 5 years
NJ TRANSIT				X	

Implementation of findings

- CTA
 - Each entity (CTA, Metra, Pace) receives data from the RTA-funded customer satisfaction surveys. There are no consistent applications across the operating entities.
 - CTA introduced programs focused on personal security and service reliability based on survey findings.
 - Metra used the data as part of the 2024 Fare Restructure.
- CTDOT
 - CTDOT shared the survey data with rail, bus and paratransit operators. CTDOT convened a working group of all bus and paratransit operators.
 - A CX Action plan was completed and endorsed. Several actions are being implemented, and progress is reported annually. <https://www.transitcx.com>
- LA Metro
 - CX survey data and focus groups drive an annual CX Plan with projects and initiatives with input across the organization targeted at low satisfaction scores. <https://www.metro.net/about/cxplans/>
 - The CX Plan specifies due dates and responsibilities for each project and initiative. Accountability is maintained by collecting quarterly updates from each project manager and reporting to the Board.
- MARYLAND
 - The department is challenged with connecting the findings with instigating change. Work is underway to aggregate surveys and other feedback to create strong cases for improvement.
 - There are plans to involve operations and planning in the development of surveys. There are challenges using the customer satisfaction data to instigate change in transit operations.
 - Data aggregation and consolidation are being used to create a stronger case for improvements.
- MARTA
 - The customer satisfaction results were used to develop 8 projects aimed at improving customer service and experience. This is published in a Customer Charter to communicate the actions and provide public accountability.
- MBTA
 - Most data are used as a barometer for overall public perception and not to identify specific issues. Overall customer satisfaction scores have been useful for storytelling.
- NYMTA
 - Surveys have identified key drivers for customer satisfaction and feedback on service, staff, cleanliness, security, and more.
 - The results are reviewed as part of identifying where to direct future resources for greatest improvement in the transit system.
- RATP
 - No specific evidence.
- SFMTA

- Programs focused on reliability, arrival times, frequency, and trip time have key results: On-time performance jumped from 47% to 60%, Accurate arrival times improved from 49% to 64%, satisfaction with frequency is up from 51% to 63%, and trip time satisfaction is up from 65% to 69%.
- STM
 - No specific evidence.
- SEPTA
 - SEPTA identified areas for improvement from the surveys related to cleanliness and safety. SEPTA hired 100 new maintainers, resulting in an improvement of cleanliness ratings. SEPTA also hired additional police to address security concerns.
- TRANSLINK
 - Translink is a leader in Customer Experience. They have an updated CX plan. <https://www.translink.ca/about-us/customer-service/customer-experience-action-plan> It includes:
 - **Customer Promise** To always put you first — your safety, your time, and your connection to the people and places that matter the most.
 - **Customer Experience Updates from CEO Kevin Quinn**
 - **Action Plan Highlights**
 - With market research, engagement with customers and employees, and a review of the best customer practices of other sectors they have identified five types of customers who use transit for different reasons. They tailored improvements based on these customer types to meet each of their needs. Building on customer research and a best practice review of trends across industries, we have developed five priority areas for the next five years to improve customer experience.
- LONDON
 - No specific evidence.
- TTC
 - No specific evidence
- WMATA
 - An example of using data to implement changes at WMATA are recent safety improvements. A spike in safety concern ratings led to focus groups. This resulted in increased presence and stricter laws, which improved satisfaction.
 - Other examples of policies impacted by survey data include COVID cleanliness policies and improved wait times for service.
- **NJ TRANSIT**
 - Customer Satisfaction survey results presented publicly and shared with Operations.
 - There is no feedback loop to evaluate actions and their impact on customer satisfaction scores.
 - NJ TRANSIT does not employ focus groups to investigate rider insights to key satisfaction drivers.

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Region Served: City of Chicago and 35 surrounding suburbs



Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include Regional Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace (bus and rail)

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 3,224,925

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 279,146,501

Operating Expenses: \$1,696,315,817

Effort #1: CTA 2022 Customer Satisfaction Survey

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process: CTA 2022 Customer Satisfaction Survey (rtachicago.org)

<https://www.rtachicago.org/uploads/files/general/Region/CTA-CSS-2022-Final-Report.pdf>

Organizational structure (where the program is housed): Regional Transit Authority is responsible for the survey of CTA, Metra, and Pace customers. The RTA centralized the surveys to achieve uniformity and cost-effectiveness.

Consultant Support: RSG Inc.

Frequency: According to the CTA 2022 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report, the last survey was conducted in 2016. The next survey is scheduled for the Spring of 2025. The surveys are typically conducted every five years.

Survey questions: Total of 37 questions organized across 10 service attributes, totaling over 80 separate inquiries. The on-line survey is customized to prevent survey fatigue. The goal of the 2025 survey is to shorten the questionnaire significantly to increase the response rates.

Incentives: One \$250 prize drawing and twenty \$50 prize drawings

Promotion of the survey: Ventra app users, email, car card ads with a link and flyers; car card ads posted on 30% of rail cars and buses

Forms of Survey: Email; flyers with a unique survey link distributed at select locations; 2022 version provided on-board paper surveys; 2025 survey will focus on Ventra customers, and also feature tablets in stations as well as on-board survey agents with QR badges so customers do not need to fill out paper surveys.

Accessibility Options: 5% of car cards ads in Spanish; oversampling in areas of historically low response rates.

Presentation of Data: Results posted on the RTA website as well as on CTA, Metra, and Pace websites. Bar charts comparing frequent vs. infrequent riders and most recent results compared to older survey results. Quadrant analysis of derived importance is a key product. A dashboard, located on the Transit Chicago website includes a customer satisfaction section: [Performance metrics & dashboard - CTA \(transitchicago.com\)](https://www.transitchicago.com/performance-metrics-and-dashboard)

Consequences of the program/efforts as a result of the program? The agency identifies focus areas each quarter. For example, for Q1 2023 the focus area was personal security and service reliability. The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) has made several improvements to customer experience, including:

- **Increased satisfaction:** In 2023, 59% of CTA customer survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the CTA overall. This is up from 69% in 2018, before the pandemic.
- **Improved service reliability:** Rail and bus service has become more consistent, with fewer long waits.
- **Reduced crime:** Crime decreased in 2023, with an overall 5% drop compared to 2022.
- **Chatbot:** The CTA launched a chatbot in April 2024 to help customers provide feedback and report issues in real-time.
- **Optimized schedules:** New rail schedules were implemented in 2024 to better reflect staffing levels.

Is there a separate Customer Experience Program? No

General Overview: Collected data on mode share, trip purpose, frequent vs infrequent riders' satisfaction. The frequency of the survey allows the agency to try out ways to improve customer satisfaction.

Most recent example:
https://www.transitchicago.com/assets/1/6/2023_Q1_Customer_Survey_Results.pdf

Number of Responses for the Survey: for 2022 -- 75,525 emails sent; 9,876 responses gathered in total from emails and on-board Responses for 2022 Customer Satisfaction Survey:

TABLE 1: SURVEY COMPLETES BY RECRUITMENT AND COMPLETION METHOD

RECRUITMENT METHOD	PAPER COMPLETES	WEB COMPLETES	TOTAL
Email	--	8,788	8,788
On-board	975	113	1,088
Total	975	8,901	9,876

Response rates:

12% for electronic surveys

11% for on-board paper surveys (goal was 25% on-board)

Statistical accuracy: 95% +/- 5%

All past survey results: <https://www.transitchicago.com/performance/>

Effort #2: Longitudinal customer panel surveys

RTA contacts about 2000 Ventra customers each quarter with a short survey of 5-10 questions that vary in terms of focus and topics such as safety/security and intent to return to work rather than working from home.

Effort #3: Non-rider/lapsed rider survey 2020/2024

RTA conducted a regional cross-sectional survey of travel that included CTA, Metra, and Pace riders. It was conducted in November 2020 and again in January 2021 to gain an understanding of post-Covid travel. Surveys were emailed to 60,000 transit customers in each wave of the survey. Web and social media were used to promote the survey. The surveys found increased importance on transit system speed, reliability, and connections.

Effort #4: Meeting the Moment

The Meeting the Moment Action Plan was created as an action plan for the CTA post-Covid. Key focus areas include: reliable and consistent service, enhanced safety and security, improved customer experience at all CTA facilities, upgraded digital tools to improve customer communication, and investing in employees. Scorecards outlining progress on attributes are available for months from September 2022 to June 2023. A commitment to customer satisfaction surveys is integral to the program.

Sharing the Results

RTA provides customized reports to CTA, Metra, and Pace. RTA will be providing contacts within those organizations for possible in-depth discussions about their individual deployment and use of the survey results.

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: CONNECTICUT DOT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX) ACTION PLAN

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Region Served: State of Connecticut

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: Rail, Bus, Paratransit/CTtransit, 12 Transit Districts, 6 Rail lines

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 3.65 million

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 50 million

Operating Expenses: \$505.8 million FY25



The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) Customer Experience (CX) Action Plan was developed using an online survey to gather feedback from public transportation riders on their experiences using public transportation in Connecticut. Survey results were used to identify pain points in a customer’s journey and support the development of the CX Action Plan. (https://portal.ct.gov/dot/publictrans/bureau-of-public-transportation/customerexperience?language=en_US).

The survey was made up of a series of modules representing different aspects of the transit customer journey, including trip planning, fares, stations and stops, schedule and frequency, boarding and exiting, on-board, and reliability.

Survey

The survey consisted of seven modules plus a demographics section. The modules included key journey points – trip planning, fares, schedule/frequency, rail station or bus stop, boarding and exiting the vehicle, on-board the vehicle, and reliability. Module order was randomized for each user as to not bias response rates for one module. Each module represented an aspect of the customer journey and had a series of multiple choice and “agree” or “disagree” questions. In addition, every module had an open field for respondents to share comments.

Before respondents answered module questions, they completed an introductory section that asked them for their primary transit mode (bus, rail, or ADA Paratransit/Dial-A-Ride), their overall rating of their transit experiences in Connecticut, their zip code, and contact information.

Format

The survey was developed on a custom-built platform that was accessible via desktop, laptop, tablet, or smart phone. Paper surveys with self-addressed stamped envelopes were available at pop-up events and could be requested via phone/email. The survey was offered in six languages that represent the top six languages spoken in Connecticut according to the 2020 Census: English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Polish, and Portuguese.

Responses

The survey received over 9,800 unique page visits, and respondent demographics were consistent with Connecticut Census data regarding age, race, and income. Paid social media was employed to increase participation and representation where initial responses were low.

- Over 4,300 responses were recorded.
- Over 4,000 respondents answered at least half of the survey questions.
- Over 1,700 unique respondents submitted over 3,100 comments.

Demographics Summary

The survey collected demographic information on respondents including age, community type, home ownership or rental, gender, Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin, ethnicity, number of people in household, household income, vehicle ownership, and primary language spoken at home. All demographic questions were voluntary, and about 3,000 respondents chose to share their information.

Comments

Over 4,000 comments from 1,700 unique respondents were collected as part of the survey. Each complete comment was “tagged” to identify what module or aspect of the customer journey the comment was about.

Survey Outreach and Promotion

The survey was promoted using various methods from May to September of 2022. Those methods are noted below.

Display Materials

The project team developed posters and flyers in English and Spanish that were displayed at rail stations, bus stops, and on-board vehicles. Respondents were encouraged to complete the survey, with a chance to win a \$75 gift card if they participated.

CX Action Plan Website

The link to the survey was posted prominently on the home page of the project website (<https://www.transitcx.com/>) and on the “Outreach” page. During this time, members of the public were also able to share general comments via the “Contact Us” page comment field.

Project Email List

An e-blast with a link to the survey was sent to a total of 1,300 recipients including project contacts, service provider partners, stakeholders, the CTDOT’s lists of Community and Faith Based organizations, and respondents who had signed up for updates on the project website.

Pop-up Events

At pop-up events, project team members completed the “Introduction” module with members of the public and encouraged them to complete the full survey on their own. Bookmarks and

business cards with the project website address were handed to participants to promote participation.

Pop-up locations included Union Station in Hartford, Stamford Transportation Center, Meriden Train Station, Bridgeport Farmers Market, Central Connecticut State University Student Center, and many more rail stations, bus stops, and community events across the state.

Social Media

A social media campaign was executed to promote the survey. CTDOT posted regularly on their social media accounts, including Facebook and Instagram, about the survey (sample Facebook post to the right). A paid social media campaign was implemented to target certain demographic groups, including younger respondents and respondents who live in zip codes that were under-represented in survey completions received up to that point. As a result, survey responses were received from nearly all zip codes across the state, with a higher concentration of respondents seen along transit routes.



Summary Visualizations of Survey Responses

To analyze survey responses, visualizations were generated for each mode, and all modes combined show the respondent satisfaction by question and the average respondent satisfaction by module. Using the systemwide satisfaction rating of 7.5 as a benchmark, questions where respondents were less than 75% satisfied were identified as pain points.

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AGENCY



Region Served: Los Angeles County

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include Metro Bus, Metro Rail, Metro Bike Share, Metro Micro (Watts/Compton, LAX/Inglewood, North Hollywood/Burbank, El Monte, Highland Park/Eagle Rock/Glendale, Altadena/Pasadena/Sierra Madre, Northwest San Fernando Valley, UCLA/Westwood/VA Medical Center), Vanpool, Express lanes

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 10,347,626

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 276,302,447

Operating Expenses: \$2,196,624,387

Effort 1: Metro Customer Experience Survey 2022

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process: Metro Customer Experience Survey 2022 <https://www.metro.net/about/survey-results/>

Organizational structure (where the program is housed): Originally created in response to Board Motion 38.1 and spearheaded by an ad hoc Customer Experience Committee and then transferred over to the Operations Committee.

Frequency: Annual, but did not conduct any throughout Covid until 2022

Incentives: N/A

Promotion of the survey: Interviewers “intercept passengers” riding the bus, train, and micro modes to collect a random sample. This is done on all bus and rail lines during weekday am and pm peak times, weekends, and nights

Forms of Survey: On-board survey (Metro buses, trains, and Metro Micro vehicles)

Accessibility Options: 11 languages offered

Presentation of Data: LA Metro hosts a Customer Experience Hub on their website where visitors can learn more about the survey results as well as the efforts being put in place to address any issues. This easy to interact with tool makes it engaging and simple to learn more about how survey responses matter to the agency.

<https://thesourcearchives.metro.net/2022/10/27/results-of-our-2022-customer-experience-survey/>

<https://www.metro.net/about/customer-experience-hub/>

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program? LA Metro staff use the results to develop a Customer Experience Plan that prioritizes projects and related budgets to provide good customer experience. Based on the results from the survey, the Customer Experience Plan in 2022 focused on cleanliness, security, and customer care.

2022 Customer Experience Plan Action Items In Progress

CX Plan Area	Action	Measured Impact
Vinyl Seats Transition	The transition from cloth to easier-to-keep-clean vinyl seats has made significant progress. As of August, 49% of buses and 89% of rail cars have been installed with vinyl seats.	100% of all Bus and Rail seats to be updated to vinyl which will be easier to clean and maintain for rider use.
Cleaning Surge (end of line, midday bus, trackway, and escalators)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Midday bus interior cleaning was expanded to three layover locations, reaching over 1,600 buses in the month of July. 2. Trackway debris removal is occurring bi-weekly at seven (7) high priority stations, with other Red/Purple line station trackways being cleaned at least once a month. 3. Escalator step cleaning was increased to four times per year effective July 2021 and has been maintained at that frequency. 	Helps address a top concern of riders around cleanliness. These efforts have improved the sense of cleanliness on the system for riders to take advantage of.
Metro Ambassadors Program	The Metro Ambassadors Program achieved two significant milestones. In June, the Board approved the award of \$12.2 million to enlist two vendors, Strive Well-Being and RMI International, Inc to provide Transit Ambassador program services. In September, Metro developed and directed a comprehensive two-week pre-deployment training on customer service, public safety awareness, de-escalation, trauma informed response, emergency preparedness, and transit operations for the first group of Ambassadors.	Improved customer experience for all Metro riders use while navigating the system.
Accessible Navigation Applications	A comprehensive project scope is being put together by the Office of Civil Rights staff that includes investing in an accessible mobile wayfinding application pilot, tactile markers at bus stops, and tactile guidance at selected light rail stations.	Successful use and application across the system by dependent riders.
Institutionalizing CX	Metro Art Division successfully launched three (3) Metro Art Buses in July. It is an immersive art experience showcasing the We Are...Portraits of Metro Riders by Local Artists exhibition. The buses are distributed across three different divisions and assigned to different routes daily.	Bringing Art awareness to Metro riders that represents our local communities.



Is there a separate Customer Experience Program? Yes

General Overview: Collected demographic data, such as gender, income, and race/ethnicity, and used that to provide more detailed context for improvements -- for example: The top five improvements female rail riders want to see are: safety from crime, sexual harassment, or racial/ethnic harassment; cleaner trains; homelessness reduction on trains; cleaner stations; and timely dependability.

Most recent example: This page show 2023 Priority Action Items that are being tracked: <https://www.metro.net/about/action-items/>

Number of Responses: 12,239 (63% response rate)

Effort 2: Mystery Rider Program

There is a Mystery rider program through which secret surveyors (often using a wheelchair or requiring a language other than English) will call or ride on a bus and report on their findings afterward.

Effort 3: Focus Groups

The agency runs focus groups as a supplement to provide more in-depth information about specific topics (for example, redesigning ticket vending machines) as needed.

Effort 4: Metro Ambassadors

The Metro Ambassadors are part of our Customer Experience department – and part of LA Metro’s multi-layered plan to reimagine public safety with Transit Security Officers, law enforcement, improved cameras and lighting, more frequent cleaning, as well as homeless

outreach and crisis intervention teams. [Meet the newest members of our team, the Metro Ambassadors! | The Source](#)

Sharing Results: CX Plan

- The first was made December 3rd, 2020
- Information that went in to making the first plan includes: Vision 2028 Strategic Plan, NextGen Bus Plan etc.
- Their definition of Customer Experience: sum of total experiences customers have at every point in their journey
- Metro's goal: reduce pain points, maximize smooth events, opportunities for occasional surprise and delight
- Data collection includes:
 - riders (surveys, social media, complaints and community meetings)
 - board members
 - bus operators
- The recommendations outline the responsible departments and deadlines- Agency-wide recommendations puts responsibility on the Metro's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Executive Officer for CX to ensure "responsible departments incorporate all 2020 Customer Experience Plan recommendations into the FY22 Comprehensive Agency-wide Performance Evaluations (CAPE) system- report progress quarterly
 - Human Capital & Development- work with EO for CX to ensure all recommendations are incorporated into FY22 Individual Performance Plans (IPPs)
- They also are hoping to do Journey Mapping of several specific types of customers including (Frequent riders, women and girls, people who experience homelessness, LGBTQ+ riders, people needing bicycle accommodation)
- Established an interdepartmental task force- (hiring, training, coaching, recognition, listening to employees, modeling of customer experience attitudes by Metro leadership, riding the system to see what customers see, role mapping to ensure all employees understand how their job impacts the customer, bring in outside experts to talk about Customer Experience, and establish forums to connect with customer-focused employees, share tips and support each other)

Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)

Region Served: Primarily Baltimore, with commuter bus connections to D.C. metro area, Kent Island, southern and western Maryland.

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: Local buses (CityLink & LocalLink), Commuter buses, Light Rail, Metro subway, Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train, MobilityLink paratransit. Also manages the Taxi Access system

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 7,811,145

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 50,205,947

Operating Expenses FY 2022: \$866,270,026

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process

The goal of MTA's Office of Customer Experience is to improve how riders experience transit services at each stage of their trip. The office will utilize performance data and rider experiences to make improvements. The Office of Customer Experience reports to the chief of staff who then reports directly to the CEO, the administrator of the agency. The Office of Performance Management is one of three departments housed within the Office of Customer Experience. The Customer Experience department was created in late 2023 and is in the process of three CX specific efforts.

Other departments that contribute or interact with the Customer Experience efforts include the Communications team, Marketing team and on the Operations side, the commuter modes and mobility modes.

Number of Responses:

- Annual survey goals: 2500 for local bus, 500 for metro and light rail, 500 for MARC and commuter bus, and 300 mobility.
- Statewide 2020 Plan Survey received 514 responses.
- MARC Growth 2023 received 4,691 responses.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The MTA conducts its customer satisfaction survey on an annual basis, and includes all modes of transit: bus, metro, light rail, and mobility services. The survey is distributed during the same period every year to maintain consistency, enabling the agency to track trends and compare results over time. MTA aims for a geographically diverse sample of respondents. At the beginning of the survey, respondents are asked to provide information about their route, the station they boarded, and the direction they are traveling. The agency also makes an effort to sample from different commuter modes, ensuring that responses are diverse and cover various service types. Each mode has its own respective sampling criteria. Customer Satisfaction survey sampling goals include the following:

- Bus: 2,500 respondents
- Metro/Light Rail: 500 respondents
- MARC/Commuter Bus: 500 respondents
- Mobility Services: 300 respondents

Promotion of the survey: Promotion of the survey varies based on the modes. Commuting modes (MARC and Commuter Bus) are advertised through email distribution lists. The survey is also marketed on the website and social media pages. More recently, the MTA has purchased banner ads through the Transit App in Baltimore. They prefer not to purchase targeted social media ads and have done so only as a method to supplement or meet the sampling criteria. Often this supplemental effort will be a reaction to a low response rate on bus surveys. More recently, the survey is advertised to bus riders through digital signage with a QR code for riders to respond from their phones. For the mobility / paratransit survey, personnel hands out paper forms to passengers directly as they get on board.

Survey format: The customer satisfaction survey can be completed online, or through paper forms. Approximately 70% of responses are submitted online and about 30% of overall responses come from paper surveys, especially from users of mobility services, where 90% of respondents prefer paper forms.

Accessibility: The survey is available in both digital and physical paper formats, ensuring that riders with varying levels of access to technology can still participate. Additionally, the survey is available in Spanish, both in print and digital formats, to ensure inclusivity for Spanish-speaking riders.

Use of Incentives: To encourage survey participation, the MTA has provided non-financial incentives, such as pens and notepads. Financial incentives have been prohibited by the Maryland Secretary of Transportation, who has stated that monetary rewards cannot be used to incentivize survey completion.

Survey Methodology and Format: The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete, with a total of 50 questions covering various aspects of rider satisfaction. The questions are designed to capture feedback on the overall transit experience, accessibility, and specific service features. The survey utilizes a variety of question formats. These include yes/no questions, Likert scales, and other question types that allow for nuanced responses. The survey also includes demographic questions.

Data Analysis: Data received from the customer satisfaction survey is analyzed by a subcontractor. Data is compiled and written into a PowerPoint presentation report. Raw data is also given to the department from the Maryland Marketing Source. The reports are kept internal and are often presented to the executive staff annually.

OTHER EFFORTS

Citizens Advisory Council:

The MTA's Office of Community and Customer Relations runs a Citizens Advisory Council that is open to the public. Individuals can apply to be part of the council for a one- or two-year term, with monthly meetings held to discuss issues related to transit services. These meetings are an opportunity for riders to engage with the MTA directly and voice concerns or suggestions. Additionally, the MTA has a Citizens Advisory Council for individuals with disabilities, to provide input on service accessibility and related matters.

Rider/Talkers Program:

The Rider/Talkers Program is an initiative from the Customer Experience department aimed at engaging with riders through open-ended conversations. The program deploys riders, who conduct informal interviews with passengers to collect feedback. These riders record qualitative data on riders' experiences, which is then input into a Google form on a weekly basis. This program operates across various times of day, locations, stops, and transit modes, providing a rich dataset that supplements the quantitative survey data. Riders are deployed based on the modes, locations and routes that may be getting bad reviews, having some time performance issues or other concerns. After completing the conversation, riders will ask the passenger if they have any interest in future conversations about their experience. The hope is to create a universe of potential people that can participate in focus groups.

The MTA recently hired a bilingual Rider/Talker to increase accessibility to Spanish speakers. Each Rider/Talker is hired full-time as a consultant and provides data analysis support when not in the field.

Focus Groups:

In addition to ongoing surveys, the MTA is working on organizing focus groups to collect insights from hard-to-reach individuals who may not engage with traditional survey methods. The goal is to conduct 10 different focus groups to better understand the needs and concerns of diverse rider groups.

Youth Transit Council:

There is also a Youth Transit Council that provides a platform for younger riders to share their experiences and ideas.

Benchmarking

The MTA is currently a part of two benchmarking groups, the American Bus Benchmarking Group and GOAL (Group of American Light Rail). These groups both put out the same customer satisfaction survey to all member organizations. This type of surveying ensures consistency across the board and can help to compare multiple agencies more accurately. The MTA has been a part of these efforts for the past 3-4 years.

MTA has partnered with the Transit App to conduct a rider happiness benchmarking (RHB) program. This pulse-taking survey is included within the app and utilizes quick, happiness rating questions for riders to take while on their trip. The Transit App and the RHB program are used by transit agencies across the nation. Therefore, MTA can be informed on how their service compares to other agencies.

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: METROPOLITAN ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT AUTHORITY (MARTA)



Region Served: Atlanta metro, 13 counties + Emory and GA Tech

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: Cobb LINC, GCT (Gwinnett County), Xpress (GRTA), BUC (Buckhead), CATS (Cherokee County), Emory University Shuttles, Atlantic Station Free Ride, Tech Trolley/Stinger Shuttles (GA Tech)

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 1,742,072

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 62,093,037

Operating Expenses: \$594,097,547

Effort 1: MARTA'S VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER SURVEY

Organizational Structure: Department of Research and Analysis

General Overview: The Voice of the Customer Survey is geared towards obtaining input from MARTA users, and covers 9 categories: customer satisfaction, customer service, customer information, reliability, convenience, safety and security, comfort, cleanliness, and Title VI data. While the survey is said to be conducted annually, the website does not contain or organize the data for public consumption.

Frequency: Annual

Most recent example (add link): Not available.

Presentation of Data: This brief presentation created in February of 2022 appears to be a presentation given to the Riders' Advisory council. It gives an overview of the Department of Research and Analysis, presents on WeatherSTEM technology and presents a bar chart outlining the % of satisfied or very satisfied MARTA riders for each year from FY96 to FY22. The presentation also instructs the audience to consider if they would take the VOC survey if they were waiting for a bus or train ride. The presentation is available here: [PowerPoint Presentation](#)

Figure 1: Customer Charter created from the results of the 'Voice of the Customer Survey'



Effort 2: MORE MARTA PROGRAM SURVEY

General overview: The More MARTA Program Survey presents several projects and areas of growth and then asks respondents which projects they are most interested in, and if these projects will help their transportation experience.

Frequency: three rounds of public engagement between 2016-2018

Program Survey results from June- August 2018:

[More MARTA Atlanta Program Survey - Analyze V4.pdf](#)

Public engagement:

https://itsmarta.com/uploadedFiles/MARTA_101/Why_MARTA/MoreMARTA_Public%20Engagement%20Summary_v2.pdf

Presentation of data: posted online; simple bar charts and answer counts

https://itsmarta.com/uploadedFiles/MARTA_101/Why_MARTA/More%20MARTA%20Atlanta%20Program%20Survey%20-%20Analyze_V4.pdf

Number of Responses for the More MARTA Program Survey 2018: 7,024

Effort 3: MARTA'S RIDERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process: There is also a MARTA Riders' Advisory Council which includes 30 volunteers who serve two-year terms and work on improving customer experience for transit users in the Atlanta region. The group meets once a month and hears from operations about current conditions, proposed improvements etc. for more information, see: [MARTA \(itsmarta.com\)](http://MARTA.itsmarta.com)

Organizational structure: Customer Experience

Who is the Council? MARTA employees, contractors, and elected officials are not allowed to serve on the council; it is all volunteers

Frequency: meets once a month

Incentives: none; volunteer-basis

Promotion of the survey: posted online that you can email rac@itsmarta.com to become a member

Forms of Survey: participants use a dedicated crowdsourcing portal to submit ideas

Accessibility Options: unknown

Presentation of Data (if applicable): meeting summaries and RAC presentations posted online

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program? The public engages with MARTA staff and contractors to exchange information and ideas regarding finance, transit planning, bus and rail projects, arts and cultural initiatives, transit-oriented development, etc.
Effort 4: ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION: REGIONAL COMMUTER SURVEY (Metropolitan Planning Organization)

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process (add link here): Regional On-Board Transit Survey conducted with the assistance of the Atlantic Regional Commission:
<https://atlantaregional.org/what-we-do/transportation-planning/modeling/regional-board-transit-survey/>

Agency: Atlanta Regional Commission

Area: 19- county Atlanta Metro region

General Overview: Documents commuter trends, examines commuter awareness of travel options, and collects opinions on travel issues

Frequency: Every three to four years (2007, 2010, 2014, 2019)

Presentation of results: Written up online and published in report
<https://atlantaregional.org/what-we-do/mobility-services/regional-commuter-survey/> and
<https://cdn.atlantaregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2019-rcs-public-report-final.pdf>

Technical Report: <https://cdn.atlantaregional.org/wp-content/uploads/regionalcommutersurvey-technical-report-020620-final.pdf>

Promotion of the survey: no information available; interviewees randomly selected – if 20 passengers boarded a bus, then the first 6 passengers to board were assigned a number 1-6 in order of boarding. A random number generator produced a number 1-6 and that is how the interviewee was selected.

Forms of Survey: in-person on bus and rail; interviewees recorded responses to questions on tablets

Accessibility Options: bilingual interviewers on-site or telephone number provided for interviewees to call to reach a bilingual interviewer; if an interview was incomplete by the end of the passenger's ride, then the passenger would give their phone number or email to the interviewer to finish the survey by phone or email at a later time. Tablets utilized geocoding to record respondents' locations

Presentation of Data (if applicable): final report published on ARC website

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program? This was not really a customer satisfaction survey, but it provided details on demographics, trip origin and destination, mode, etc. that could inform increasing usage for other populations and increasing

accessibility, etc.

Number of Responses for the ARC Regional On-Board Transit Survey 2019: 43,398

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Region Served: Boston; eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island.



Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: Commuter rail (130 stops in Massachusetts and Rhode Island), Subway, Bus (serving Greater Boston and covers Bedford to Medford and Saugus and Salem), Ferry (serving North and South Shore, Boston Harbor, Winthrop/Quincy, East Boston, Salem, Charlestown, and Hingham/Hull), The Ride (paratransit service)

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 3,109,308

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 234,975,556

Operating Expenses: \$1,890,926,712

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process (add link here): Customer Opinion Panel <https://www.mbta.com/rider-opinion-panel>

Organizational structure (where the program is housed): Office of Performance Management and Innovation, Customer Satisfaction Department.

General Overview: Originally, the monthly survey was structured like a panel and was more selective with who received the survey; now sent to everyone who has opted to join the panel monthly. But now they are transitioning back to selective panel model. Anyone can sign up to join the panel.

The survey asks customers to rate both individual aspects of their trip, and their overall experience. Reported metrics include satisfaction with the MBTA overall, with the MBTA's communication, with reliability, and with a respondent's most recent trip. Read more about these metrics in the "How We Measure Customer Satisfaction."

Frequency: Monthly

Incentives: prize award (drawing for a \$100 Amazon e-gift card)

Promotion of the survey: There is an annual recruitment effort to join the panel. Recruitment targets bus riders (traditionally there is demographic underrepresentation of bus riders) using 7 different languages across key bus routes.

Sign-up required to join the panel and there is a screener survey.

(https://mbta.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4lto81oz7WKgpYa).

An email is sent to those who have opted to join the panel to take the month's survey.

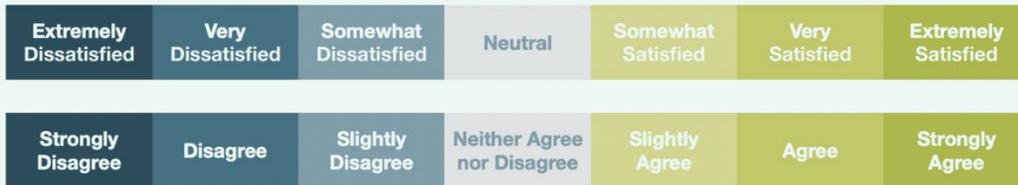
Forms of Survey: Google Forms for monthly survey; Qualtrics for screener

Accessibility Options: Languages: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese

Presentation of Data (if applicable): To the public, select data is present on a dashboard on website: <https://www.mbta.com/performance-metrics/customer-satisfaction>

- 1 How satisfied are you with the MBTA's communication overall?
- 2 How would you rate the MBTA overall?
- 3 How would you rate your most recent trip?
- 4 How much do you agree with the statement:
The MBTA provides reliable public transportation services.

Survey responses are recorded on a 7-point scale. Possible responses range from extremely negative ("Extremely Dissatisfied" or "Strongly Disagree") to extremely positive ("Extremely Satisfied" or "Strongly Agree.")



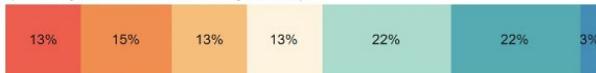
Overall rating for April 2024



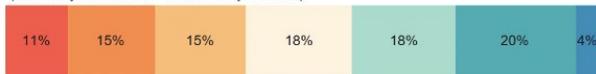
Overall rating prior 24 months



How would you rate the MBTA overall?
(Extremely dissatisfied ---> Extremely satisfied)



How satisfied are you with the MBTA's communication overall?
(Extremely dissatisfied ---> Extremely satisfied)



In addition, data may be shared at board meetings. In addition, the research team creates modules to address specific topics covered in the survey. These modules are shared internally and occasionally with the panel.

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program? The research teams prepares a report each month with satisfaction data and shares the report across departments; in addition, they regularly create and share modules. It is a small lift to collect opinions from

customers and can impact agency decision-making. It also provides a historic view of customer satisfaction, tracking shifts across time.

Is there a separate Customer Experience Program? Yes, this is a separate department, the Customer and Employee Experience Department. This team provides both external and internal communications. They created a Customer Experience Strategy in 2016.

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: SOCIETE DE TRANSPORT DE MONTREAL



Region Served: Island of Montreal, islands of Bizard, des Soeurs, Notre Dame and Sainte-Helene

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: four subway lines, 212 bus routes and paratransit

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 4.3 million

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 288 million

Operating Expenses: \$1.8 billion

Name of Customer Satisfaction Programs: STM Customer Satisfaction Survey, Community of Metros- Customer Satisfaction Survey- STM, and My Voice My STM

General Overview: STM aims to improve customer experience by focusing on safety, conduct, and community. STM uses several tools to measure and track customer satisfaction as well as gaining input on key projects, trial initiatives, and customer service.

Effort 1: 2024 Community of Metros- Customer Satisfaction Survey

This benchmarking survey is part of an international survey carried out with the Imperial College of London. The group consists of 45 transit systems from 42 countries. Data is used to compare participating transit authorities and work together to improve services. There are two surveys – one for bus and one for the metro. The surveys take 5 minutes to complete.

[Customer Satisfaction Survey | Société de transport de Montréal \(stm.info\)](#) (The link to the surveys is no longer available.)

For more information on the Community of Metros Benchmarking Group: [Community of Metros Benchmarking Group](#)

Effort #2: My Voice my STM

This panel includes over 30,000 customers who are surveyed on major projects, trial initiatives and service quality. Topics of recent surveys include crowding on vehicles, service reliability, safety, cleanliness, and employee interactions. For example, last year they conducted an in-person survey that asked individuals on their arrival at a bus stop about their satisfaction and their expected time of departure. When the bus arrived, surveyors asked those waiting about their new level of satisfaction. With the results, STM learned that real-time delays can be helpful to reduce dissatisfaction. Surveys may be conducted in person on a vehicle or stop, or on-line.

Incentives: A chance to win one of two quarterly \$300 prizes

Frequency: Panelists are invited to complete eight surveys a year. The number of surveys is a function of the key actions STM is considering improving customer satisfaction.

Presentation of Data (if applicable): Raw data is not presented, but some key findings are outlined on the website, along with any new improvements STM has made as a result.

Effort #3: Telephone surveys

To measure the satisfaction of customers, STM mandates an outside firm to conduct a telephone survey among users. The firm uses a random sampling method, and results are then weighted according to the actual makeup of STM's customer base to ensure the data is representative.

Frequency: Since 2010, this type of survey has been carried out continuously throughout the year, with nearly 75 surveys a week, for a total of 4,500 respondents a year. People surveyed are customers who use STM at least four times a month.

Results: Customer satisfaction overall was last at 88%, only one point lower than this historic level of 89% set in 2011.

Presentation of the data

STM maintains updates on customer surveys as well as customer experience actions on its website and social media. As part of the reporting on their Organizational Strategic Plan 2030, there are monthly reports on key performance indicators. One of the primary indicators is "Enriching the customer experience before, during, and after their travels." Specific measures include overall customer experience index, feeling of security index, and peak crowding rates.

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (GREATER NY AREA)



Region Served: New York City greater metropolitan area, 12 counties in downstate NY, two counties in southwestern CT

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: MTA Commuter Bus, MTA Access-a-Ride, MTA Rail, MTA Bus, MTA Bus Rapid Transit, Metro-North Commuter Rail, Metro-North Commuter Ferry, Metro-North Commuter Rail, MTA Bus Company Bus

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 33,638,674

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 2,902,055,829

Operating Expenses: \$14,789,170,076 (fourteen billion for 2022; not including operating costs for bridges and tunnels)

General Overview: The goal of the program is to identify changes in customer satisfaction levels, understand key drivers for CS and feedback on service, staff, cleanliness, security, and more. The results are used to understand "where to direct future resources for the greatest improvement in the transit system".

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process: MTA Customers Count [MTA Customers Count Survey](#)

Organizational structure (where the program is housed): For the Customers Count research program, MTA works with a research vendor, WBA, who provides field and tab services for the project. The questionnaire design and all reporting is done in-house by the MTA market Research team.

Frequency: Biannual (Fall and Spring) collecting surveys for 2-3 weeks every wave.

Incentives: Customers who complete the survey are entered into a random drawing to win a \$50.00 OMNY gift card, or a \$50 gift card for AAR customers.



Promotion of the survey: The Customers Count survey is advertised during field periods on all MTA owned apps (e.g. MTA app, TrainTime), Outfront screens in subway, bus screens, through social media, paid media, announcements on subway and railroad stations. MTA also maintains an email list of customers who have opted to take surveys in the past, and these customers get email invites to take the survey each wave.

Forms of Survey: online (with a phone option for those who want it)

Accessibility Options: offered online in 9 languages, and in English and Spanish over the

phone

Presentation of Data (if applicable): Available on the MTA website- general findings are available per study wave in both presentation form and in a summarized paragraph.

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program?

MTA measures changes in the satisfaction levels for each study wave by mode, and by specific lines/branches/bus depots within each mode. The program has identified important drivers of Customer Satisfaction by mode, allowing agencies to double down on improvements that matter the most, such as safety for Subways and wait times for Bus. The program is also able to measure effectiveness of pilot programs in subway stations, such as whether renovating a station has an effect on safety perceptions.

Is there a separate Customer Experience Program? There is a supplementary Customer Satisfaction program for NYC Transit only (Subway, Bus (Ex, Local, SBS) and AAR) consisting of short online “Pulse” surveys that are fielded 10 months out of the year and focus on customers’ last trip.

Most recent example: MTA Customers Count Survey for Spring 2024: [PowerPoint Presentation \(mta.info\)](#)

Number of Respondents for the MTA Customers Count Survey Spring 2024:

- Subways: 43,000 customers
- Bus route: 16,000 customers
- Access-A-Ride: 5,000 customers
- LIRR: 17,179
- Metro-North: 14,810
- Customers could take the survey for up to 2 modes.

**PEER AGENCY PROFILE : REGIE AUTONOME DES
TRANSPORTS PARISIENS (RATP) / PARIS AUTONOMOUS
TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION**



Region Served: Paris region and ile de France. Some operations exist outside of Paris and France.

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: Paris Metro (141 mi and 16 lines), Orlyval (automated shuttle serving Orly Airport), RER (regional express rail network lines A and B, 71 miles), Paris Tram System (9 lines, 68 miles), Paris city bus system (2400 miles, 351 lines), two bus rapid transit lines, and the Montmartre funicular.

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 7,811,145

Number of Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2018: 3.39 billion trips¹ (1.5 billion passengers²)

Operating Expenses FY 2021: 4,905,000,000 Euros³ (~\$5.3 billion)

Effort 1: Annual Perception Survey (2023)

<https://www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/enquete-perception-2023-ratp-sncf>

- Every year, Ile-de-France mobilites gives passengers a voice during a major survey on the perceptions of the Île-de-France public transport network.
- 142,240 were interviewed, including 68,832 regular RATP riders.
- People are surveyed face to face, typically at station stops.
- All lines are surveyed, each bus line at at least two bus stops, and each metro line at at least 10 stations.
- 4 modes surveyed: Metro, RER, Tram, and Bus
- 2024 results were just released: <https://www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/decouvrir/enquete-voyageur-perception-transport-en-commun>

Effort 2: WELCOME Program

“Program to achieve excellence in customer satisfaction”

In 2021, they launched a new initiative as part of the WELCOME programme: “Voice of the Customer” to get unfiltered and immediate feedback from their passenger customers so that they can quickly implement actions to improve their operational excellence. R ATP Client Experience Program: <https://www.ratpdev.com/en/solutions/customer-experience-welcome-our-client-experience-program>

Organizational structure (where the program is housed):

C-Sat: Ile de France Mobilites – not actually a part of the RATP, IDF Mobilites is the governmental authority that controls and coordinates the different companies operating the Paris-area public transport network in the rest of the Ile-de-France region.

CX: RATP Dev

Frequency:

- C-Sat survey is annual.

¹ <https://www.leparisien.fr/info-paris-ile-de-france-oise/transport/ile-de-france-toujours-plus-de-voyageurs-dans-les-metros-rer-trams-et-bus-de-la-ratp-31-03-2019-8043447.php>

² <https://www.ratpdev.com/en/group#block-groupechiffrescles>

³ <https://www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/decouvrir/financements>

- CX is ongoing.

Incentives: None, or unclear if there are some.

Promotion of the survey: In person, face-to-face

Forms of Survey: In person.

Accessibility Options: Unclear if offered in other languages.

Presentation of Data (if applicable):

- 2024: <https://www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/decouvrir/enquete-voyageur-perception-transports-en-commun>
- 2023: <https://www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/enquete-perception-2023-ratp-sncf>
- 2024 Entire presentation (5 page pdf – in French only): https://portail-idfm.cdn.prismic.io/portail-idfm/Z7Rodp7c43Q3f5_Z_Infographies_EnquetePerception-2024_RATP.pdf

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program?

Unclear, but the RATP makes continuous improvements to its services and experience.

Is there a separate Customer Experience Program?

Yes, the two appear separately and under two different entities.

General Overview:

The goal of MTA's Office of Customer Experience is to improve how riders experience transit services at each stage of their trip. The office will utilize performance data and rider experiences to make improvements.

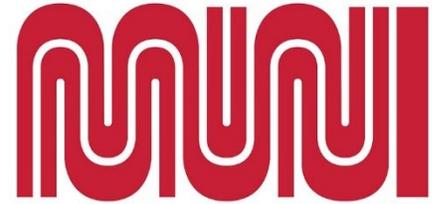
Most recent example (add link):

- 2024: <https://www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/decouvrir/enquete-voyageur-perception-transports-en-commun>
- 2023: <https://www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/enquete-perception-2023-ratp-sncf>

Number of Responses:

Annual survey: nearly 70,000 people in 2024.

**PEER AGENCY PROFILE: SF MUNICIPAL
TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**



Region Served: San Francisco

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: Municipal Railway (MUNI) public transit, bicycling, paratransit, parking, traffic, walking, and taxis

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 884,000

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 142 million

Operating Expenses: \$1.2 billion

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process (add link here): Ridership Survey 2024

<https://www.sfmta.com/media/40063/download?inline>

Organizational structure: Communications, Marketing, and Outreach

General Overview: SFMTA uses customer satisfaction surveys to improve service based on customer feedback.

Effort 1: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Ridership Survey

Goal: The goals of the customer satisfaction surveys are: Assess usage of SFMTA service, track trends in customer satisfaction, better understand key issues that drive overall customer satisfaction, and identify barriers to using Muni.

Frequency: annually since 2005 (but not conducted in 2020 or 2023)

Survey Questions: There is a total of 30 questions. They include questions about frequency and purpose of SFMTA trips, overall rating of the service, evaluation of eight journey characteristics, accessibility, and safety and security. In addition, there are questions about SFMTA as an organization.

Incentives: None

Promotion of the survey: Unknown

Conduct of the survey: The survey fielded and the results were compiled by a consulting firm: Corey, Cnanapary & Galanis Research.

Forms of Survey: The 2024 survey used a hybrid approach, blending telephone interviews and online surveys to collect feedback from adult San Francisco residents.

Accessibility options: The interviews were conducted in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

Survey response: A total of 553 interviews were conducted between February 12, 2024, and April 2, 2024. The margin of error was 4.1%.

Presentation of Data: SFMTA publishes the customer satisfaction survey online. The report is comprehensive, incorporating graphs, charts, tables, and narratives. Satisfaction is reported

by user frequency, trip purpose, geography, and demographics. Analysis of key drivers of satisfaction employs attribute quadrant chart with four dimensions: Low rating/High impact; High rating/High impact; Low rating/low impact; and High rating/low impact. Data on travel modes other than SFMTA as well as factors that would influence shifting to SFMTA were collected.

<https://www.sfmta.com/media/40063/download?inline>

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program

SFMTA widely publicizes the results of the customer satisfaction survey.

Highlights provided by SFMTA:

- Received the highest satisfaction rating since we began surveying riders more than 20 years ago.
- Riders have noticed the work we are doing to make Muni fast, frequent, and reliable.
- Rider satisfaction has improved most in the Downtown and Chinatown areas.

More People are Satisfied

- 72% of riders surveyed this year rate Muni as "excellent" or "good."
- That's the highest rating since we began surveying riders in 2001.
- It's also improvement from 2022, when 66% of riders rated Muni "excellent" or "good."

Based on prior surveys, SFMTA implemented programs focused on reliability, arrival times, frequency, and trip time.

- On-time performance has jumped from 47% to 60%.
- Accurate arrival times have improved from 49% to 64%.
- Muni also runs more often. Satisfaction with frequent service is up from 51% to 63%.
- Trip time satisfaction is up from 65% to 69%.

Effort 2: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority Token Transit App

Goal: Token Transit administers a quarterly survey of transit customers across North America. This is another source of information that SFMTA uses to compare their performance with other transit agencies. Each year, Token Transit selects top performing agencies for Transit Rider Choice Awards.

Frequency: The survey is conducted quarterly.

Incentives: None

Promotion of the Survey: Availability of the survey is published on the website and noticed by Token Transit in the app. Participation is voluntary for customers who use the Token Transit app.

Consequences of the Program:

In 2024, SMTA was honored in several categories of the 2024 Transit Rider Choice Awards,

which are based on feedback from more than 100,000 Transit app users across North America. Here are the results for SMTA:

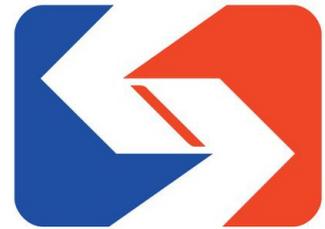
- **Social Butterflies Champion:** Ranked #1 for social and recreational transit use. This showcases our essential role in connecting people to San Francisco's vibrant cultural life.
- **Car-Free Lifestyle Leader:** Secured the top position among agencies whose riders are least likely to purchase a car. This demonstrates our success in providing reliable car-free transportation options.
- **Most Improved Agency:** Recognized as the most improved agency in the "Most Popular" category. We work hard to deliver quality service and make Muni more reliable and frequent for riders.
- **Social Transit Network:** Strong performance in social transportation. This highlights Muni's integral role in San Francisco's community connectivity.

Summary

SFMTA has a well-established annual customer satisfaction survey program. It is unique as it is a relatively small number of participants and uses a hybrid methodology of interviews and on-line surveys. The ability to conduct in-person interviews results in high statistical accuracy and demographic representation.

Is there a separate Customer Experience Program? There is no dedicated Customer Experience Program. However, the customer satisfaction survey is structured to reflect the key elements of a customer journey.

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY



Region Served: 5 counties in Greater Philly area and connected to transit in NJ and Delaware

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: regional rail, buses, trolleys, subways, and high-speed line

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 3,475,337

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 197,264,920

Operating Expenses: \$1,442,624,575

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process: Pulse Survey, Customer Satisfaction Survey, and Customer Attitude Score

General Overview: SEPTA has a set of organization-wide key performance indicators (KPIs) that are aligned with the goals and strategic priorities established in the Strategic Plan. These KPIs not only provide transparency to the public, but they are also used as an important internal resource for benchmarking, goal setting, and arriving at insights that push our industry forward. SEPTA uses these to quickly identify and react to trends, problems, and changing rider needs.

SEPTA deploys two surveys to provide input into assessing their goal of “Providing an Intuitive Experience,” a Customer Satisfaction Survey and a PULSE survey. In Fall of 2022, SEPTA launched the Pulse survey to offer riders the opportunity to provide more immediate and regular feedback. The Pulse Survey is similar to SEPTA’s Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) but is shorter, more frequent and set up to reach a broader audience, including non-English speaking communities. Riders are asked to evaluate SEPTA’s service across the whole range of their travel experience from trip planning to alighting at their final destination. Customer Experience questions on this survey ask riders about their overall satisfaction with SEPTA and helps to identify the biggest obstacles in their journey. Customer Effort questions ask riders about the ease of traveling on SEPTA and helps to identify what stages in the trip process are most difficult for customers.

Listening to how customers feel about SEPTA as a brand helps them understand where they excel and where they can improve. Analyzing social media posts to and about SEPTA lets them respond to what customers are thinking and feeling in real-time, including those who they might not hear from otherwise. Using social listening technology, they categorize social media posts to and about SEPTA as positive, negative, or neutral. These capture high-level insights into how customers feel about SEPTA that we can use to improve how they communicate with and serve them.

Effort 1: Pulse Survey

General Overview: The goal of the Pulse Survey is to help SEPTA understand travel patterns and track travel experience over time.

Mentioned here: <https://www.septa.org/tracking-progress/> under Goal 2 --> Customer

Experience Score and Customer Effort Score

Frequency: Quarterly

Incentives: unknown

Promotion of the survey: Transit app, email, website

Forms of Survey: unknown

Accessibility Options: “non-English”

Presentation of Data: Posted on SEPTA website Strategic Plan KPIs

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program: Purpose is to receive frequent and immediate feedback

General Overview: launched in 2022; designed to be more frequent and shorter than the Customer Satisfaction Survey; intended purpose is to “track authority performance over time” (p. 13 <https://www.septa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SEPTA-CSS-2022-Website-Report-Final.pdf>)

Number of Responses: unknown

Effort 2: Customer Satisfaction Survey

General overview: *The* purpose of the customer satisfaction survey is to collect service attribute ratings across all modes and track trends over time.

Most recent report: <https://www.septa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SEPTA-CSS-2022-Website-Report-Final.pdf>

Frequency: every 2 years

Forms of the survey: online or by telephone

Presentation of data: slide show with charts and bullet points

Consequences of the program/efforts as a result of the program: Identified areas for improvement: safety and cleanliness on the subway and EL, service disruption communication on bus, and frequency of service on regional rail. SEPTA management is responding by investing significant resources to address rider concerns about subway/elevated service. To address cleanliness issues, SEPTA has increased headcount for cleaning staff by over one-third. To free up police resources and address the growth in the population of people experiencing homelessness on the system, SEPTA is filling 145 new safety and outreach contractor roles such as Outreach Specialists & Health Navigators as part of the SCOPE (Safety, Cleaning, Ownership, Partnership and Engagement) program to address these issues – increasing security budget by 50% and hiring more Transit Police and hired more cleaning staff. To address security concerns, SEPTA is:

- Increasing its security budget by 50% to \$53 million and is hiring more SEPTA Police
- New SEPTA Transit Police hiring initiative with 2,500 applicants
- 22 new new recruits in January’s academy class, the largest class in over 20 years!
- Adjusting SEPTA Transit Police on board deployment on Market-Frankford trains
- Established the creation of a Virtual Patrol Center to monitor cameras
- Upgrading station lighting, ADA accessibility, emergency call boxes, station cameras
- Piloting “Zero Eyes” artificial intelligence-enabled crime prevention technology
- Increasing awareness of the SEPTA Transit Watch app

General Overview: Collected data on rider satisfaction; reported overall decline in rider satisfaction since 2018

Promotion of the survey: riders invited to participate through staff passing out post cards to fill out contact info at stations, stops, and on-board vehicles

Number of responses: 16,824 intercept interviews and 9,462 rider contacts collected; 1,482 completed the survey; 2,478 Rider Mode Ratings.

Survey weighting: the survey is weighted by mode to ensure it is representative of the population

Effort 3: Customer Attitude Score

General Overview: The purpose of the score is to capture high-level insights into how customers feel about SEPTA that they can use to improve how we communicate with and serve them.

Mentioned here: <https://www.septa.org/tracking-progress/> under Goal 2, Customer Attitude Score

Frequency: Quarterly

Source of data: Social media posts about SEPTA

Presentation of Data: Posted on SEPTA website Strategic Plan KPIs

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program: Purpose is to receive more frequent and immediate feedback

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION (TTC)



Region Served: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include:

Subway, streetcar, bus, wheel-Trans (paratransit)

Service Area Population (Federal Transit

Administration): Approximately 3 million

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2023: Approximately 561 million

Operating Expenses: Approximately \$1.8 billion

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program: TTC Service Quality

General Overview: TTC uses customer satisfaction surveys to improve service quality and customer experience. The surveys collect information from subway and streetcar customers on key measures such as reliability, accessibility, and security. TTC conducts their own systemwide surveys but also participates in the international transit survey conducted across North America using the Token Transit app. Topics covered in that survey include availability, accessibility, Ease of use, Information prior to travel, information during travel, Reliability, Customer Care, Comfort, and Security.

Effort 1: TTC Customer Satisfaction Survey

Goal: The goal of the customer satisfaction surveys is to collect information from customers about their satisfaction with elements of their travel journey, evaluation of TTC as an organization, and suggestions for service improvements.

Links to 2023 Customer Satisfaction Surveys

The TTC promotes the availability of customer satisfaction on their website with links to either the subway or streetcar surveys. (Note: these links are no longer live.) Customers are encouraged to complete the surveys, which take between 3 and 5 minutes to complete.

[Subway Survey: 2023 Community of Metros - Customer Satisfaction Survey - TTC \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk)

[Streetcar Customer Satisfaction Survey: 2023 GOAL Customer Satisfaction Survey - TTC \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk)

Frequency: No fixed schedule. Surveys were conducted in 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2023.

Survey Questions: No information available.

Incentives: None

Promotion of the survey: Both surveys are available on the TTC website

Forms of Survey: Both surveys are available in an online or physical format

Accessibility Options: The surveys may be available in accessible formats upon request, to enable all riders to provide their feedback.

Effort #2: Annual Token Transit Survey

Goal: The annual Token Transit Survey provides an opportunity to compare TTC customer satisfaction with participating agencies across North America.

Frequency: The survey is conducted quarterly.

Incentives: None

Promotion of the Survey: Availability of the survey is published on the website and noticed by Token Transit in the app. Participation is voluntary for customers who use the Token Transit app.

Effort #3: Monthly Overall Customer Satisfaction and Net Promoter Score Surveys

Each month, TTC surveys 500 customers who are asked, “How satisfied are you overall with the quality of the TTC’s service on the last trip you took?” Customers are also asked how likely they are to recommend the TTC to a friend, family member, or colleague.

Summary

Presentation of Data: Customer satisfaction survey results are presented in the CEO reports to the Board which contain Key Performance Indicators focusing on the customer experience. These KPIs are presented with supporting narrative, charts, and graphs and can be found on the website: <https://www.ttc.ca/transparency-and-accountability/CEOs-Report>.

Survey findings are presented through charts, graphs, tables, and written text. Link to latest report (April 2023-May 2023): https://pw.ttc.ca/-/media/Project/TTC/DevProto/Documents/Home/About-the-TTC/5_year_plan_10_year_outlook/2023/2024-ASP-5YSP-and-CXAP-Round-One-Survey-Summary.pdf

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program?

Changes in service frequency and routes based on rider feedback led to improved satisfaction with transit options. There was also an increased focus on maintaining cleanliness in vehicles and stations, as well as enhancing safety measures for passengers. Additionally, programs were developed to improve overall customer experience, such as better communication and real-time information services.

Is there a separate Customer Experience Program?

There is no separate Customer Experience Program. However, there are three main KPIs used by TTC to support the organization’s mission, vision, and values: Ridership and Financial, Customer Experience, and Safety and Security. Customer Experience measures include Customer Satisfaction, Net Promoter Score, Customer Service Communications, On-Time Performance, and Elevator and Escalator Accessibility.

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: TRANSLINK



Region Served: Vancouver region in British Columbia, Canada

Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: Bus, SeaBus, SkyTrain, West Coast Express, HandyDART

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): Approximately 2.7 million

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2023: Approximately 233 million

Operating Expenses: Approximately \$2.2 billion

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process: Customer Satisfaction Survey

Organizational structure: TransLink Customer Service Department

General Overview: TransLink has a commitment to a 5-year Customer Experience Action Plan. That plan reimagines the customer journey and outlines a roadmap forward that delivers transit that is faster and more reliable, easier to use, more personalized, safer and more comfortable, and helps make communities better. The Translink customer promise is “To always put you first – your safety, your time, and your connection to the people and places that matter the most.” TransLink customer research has four key elements:

- Existing research
 - Compass data and existing customer research
 - Compass segmentation, existing customer surveys, and research documents
- Qualitative research
 - Customer experiences and anecdotes
 - In-depth 90-minute customer interviews
- Quantitative research
- 3000+ riders and non-rider surveys
- Organizational insights
 - Leaders in the business
 - Sessions with TransLink, the Board, and the Mayors’ Council

Effort #1: Customer Satisfaction Survey

TransLink performs quarterly land line and cell phone customer satisfaction tracking surveys. These are conducted by a consultant, Ipsos, based on a standardized set of questions that have been relatively constant for many years. The survey takes about 17 minutes to complete. Participants are from the general public but screened for TransLink use. The surveys are carefully weighted to be representative of the TransLink customer base. The Customer Action Plan as well as the customer satisfaction methodology and findings are detailed in the following document:

https://www.translink.ca/-/media/translink/documents/about-translink/customer-service/customer-service-performance-reports/bus_seabus_skytrain/2024/csp_q2_2024_report.pdf

Frequency: Quarterly

Incentives: No

Promotion of the survey: None.

Presentation of Data: Customer satisfaction data is presented on the website. There are interactive graphs to understand customer satisfaction data. The information that is shown includes, customer satisfaction by service type, and customer complaints (annually and monthly), HandyDART customer complaints (annual and monthly) (<https://www.translink.ca/plans-and-projects/data-and-information/accountability-centre/customer-satisfaction>).

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program?

Feedback gathered from riders has informed enhancements in service frequency, routes, and overall operations, ensuring that the transit offerings better meet the needs of the community. Additionally, insights from the surveys have prompted increased focus on maintaining cleanliness and safety within vehicles and stations, contributing to a more pleasant riding experience. The program has also influenced targeted staff training, improving customer interactions and service quality.

Is there a separate Customer Experience Program?

TransLink is a leader in the transit industry with an extensive Customer Experience Action Plan. The focus on every element of a customer journey is informed by the engagement of customers that informs key initiatives. Those initiatives are reported and tracked publicly.

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: TRANSPORT FOR LONDON



Region Served: City of London

Sub-Agencies/Different Modes: Bus, London Underground, Docklands Light Railway, London Overground, Elizabeth Line, London Trams, Roads, Piers, London Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station, Cycling and Walking, Cable Car, Taxis and Private Hire,

Service Area Population: 8.4 million

Unlinked Passenger Trips: 3.6 billion

Operating Expenses: 7.86 billion Euros

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/Process: TfL Customer Satisfaction

Organizational Structure: Chief Customer and Strategy Officer, Direct Report to Commissioner

Contact Information: Alex Williams alexwilliams@tfl.gov.uk

General Overview:

Transport for London (TfL) operates most of London's public transportation services, including the London Underground, London Buses, the DLR, London Overground, Elizabeth Line, London Trams, London River Services, London Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station, Santander Cycles, and the IFS Cloud Cable Car. TfL also manages the city's red route strategic roads and traffic signals across the capitol.

TfL engages with both London residents and Transport for London customers. There are several mechanisms for obtaining input about the performance of TfL:

Effort 1: TfL Customer Satisfaction Survey

TfL Customer Satisfaction Survey – a monthly online survey (formerly conducted in person) including the following key questions:

- a. TfL cares about its customers
- b. TfL is an organization I can trust
- c. TfL supports customer when things go wrong
- d. TfL is investing to improve my journeys
- e. TfL communicates openly and honestly
- f. TfL has helpful and friendly staff
- g. Overall Customer Satisfaction Score
- h. Passengers are asked to consider various aspects of their journey: Information at stop/shelter, Cleanliness, Reliability, Staff, Information on the vehicle, Cleanliness, Condition of vehicle.

Effort 2: Have Your Say

Have your say – a digital engagement platform for consulting about policies, changes to transit service, relocation of bus stops and shelters, design and management of London roads, and

major transportation projects.

Effort 3: London Travel Demand Survey

An annual randomly selected sample of 8,000 households in London regarding travel habits.

Effort 4: Travelcard Survey

A survey of Travelcard customers regarding their travel journeys.

Effort 5: Focus Groups

TfL holds focus groups to understand key drivers of customer satisfaction and to identify actions to improve the overall customer experience. The team held focus groups on selected topics and also provided opportunities for users and non-users of public transit to participate through non-digital means. The goal of the focus groups was to gain a better understanding of some of the potential drivers for how to improve the experience for end-to-end journeys.

Sharing Results

TfL reports on key customer measures and presents a quarterly Customer Report to the Customer Service and Operating Performance Panel. <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/customer-service-op-performance>

A primary emphasis of TfL is its Care metric, which focuses on customer experience, value, progress, listening, and responding to feedback. In a recent quarter, the digital survey included 1027 respondents. Survey results were used in conjunction with other customer insight information such as mystery shopper feedback to identify trends. TfL reports strong links between the Care score, ridership, and revenue, and that positive care scores also help gain stakeholder support for government funding.

TfL also engaged in benchmarking with other transit systems with a focus on net-promoter scores which measure customer loyalty and satisfaction. Net-promoter is a key indicator in the Transit App survey.

**PEER AGENCY PROFILE: WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA
TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA)**



Region Served: Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia, and parts of Maryland
Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: Metrorail, Metrobus, MetroAccess (paratransit)
Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 4,645,915
Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2022: 231,023,784
Operating Expenses: \$2,630,013,552

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process:

Metrorail and Metrobus Customer Satisfaction Survey: Customers are given one survey, and they are sent to different modules depending on which mode they took. If the customer has taken both rail and bus, they are sent to the bus module. MetroAccess Customers receive a different survey

Organizational structure (where the program is housed): WMATA Customer Experience Department

Frequency:

- The survey is ongoing.
- Biweekly push via letter in the mail to one of ten households in the service area (selection of households is random).

Incentives:

- Incentives are a drawing for a Smartcard, Amazon gift card, or Target gift card. The amount of the gift card is determined by the income level of the recipient - \$100 for lower income customer or \$50 for higher income customer.
- There is also an incentive for MetroAccess Customer Survey, but this incentive is unknown.

Promotion of the survey:

- Biweekly mailings to random households in the service area. No other promotion occurs.

Forms of Survey:

- The survey is only online. The letter sent to the household contains a code to access the survey.

Accessibility Options:

- The survey is available online in both English and Spanish.
- If individuals require specific accommodation or have questions regarding accessibility options for the surveys, WMATA encourages them to contact their customer service or accessibility services directly.

Presentation of Data (if applicable):

- Quarterly internal report
- The performance team shares public information at board meetings.

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program?

- Customer Satisfaction Survey with Metrorail and Metrobus Modules. This is the primary customer satisfaction survey effort.
 - Metrorail Customer Satisfaction Survey Module: Metrorail service has been increased 11 times since July 2022, adding 73% more train trips each day and achieving 90% customer on-time performance. Staff from across Metro are collaborating to advance efforts to return to Automatic Train Operation. Finally, Metro staff and contractors completed multiple major projects to keep the system in a state of good repair and service is reliable for customers.
 - Metrobus Customer Satisfaction Survey Module: The Bus Network Redesign was launched, and the timeline for implementation was accelerated by two years. Service on 68 Metrobus routes was expanded and adjusted, exceeding pre-pandemic levels by 4%. Additionally, a curtesy stop can be requested between 9am and 5pm. Charging ports are beneath every seat. Clear Lanes technology has been implemented by installing cameras on 140 buses that service 31 routes. The program is expected to improve service for more than 60% of DC bus customers.
- Additional customer satisfaction information may be pulled from the Transit App “rate my ride” responses (not used often) and ad hoc surveys for specific projects.

Is there a separate Customer Experience Program?

- Customer Satisfaction surveying is a part of the Customer Experience team. This team is responsible for usability studies, for both digital apps and usability of the metro system, ad research, public relations, and customer service.

General Overview:

- The goal of WMATA’s Customer Satisfaction Program is to monitor changes in customer satisfaction, identifying the key drivers such as service reliability, staff performance, cleanliness, and security. The feedback gathered through surveys helps WMATA understand rider concerns and inform decisions on where to allocate resources for improvements.

Number of Responses:

- There are about 700-900 responses per module per quarter.

PEER AGENCY PROFILE: NJ TRANSIT

Region Served: State of New Jersey, Metropolitan New York City, Philadelphia



Sub-Agencies/ Different Modes include: Bus, Rail, Light Rail, Access Link

Service Area Population (Federal Transit Administration): 10,594,013

Unlinked Passenger Trips FY 2024: 222,500,000

Operating Expenses FY 2024: Approximately \$2.9 billion

Name of Customer Satisfaction Program/ Process: Customer Satisfaction Survey

Organizational structure: Business Research and Analysis Unit, Planning Department

General Overview: NJ TRANSIT has a long-standing Customer Satisfaction Survey program which is currently conducted twice a year with customers from all transit modes. The survey is structured to enable time-series comparisons of individual service attribute ratings as well as overall customer satisfaction. The survey has retained the basic set of questions but has incorporated special purpose questions including the impact of COVID on the location of work and travel in addition to questions specifically tailored to address safety and security issues. The survey also collects trip characteristics and demographic data.

Other sources of customer information at NJ TRANSIT include:

- Customer service input – calls, letters, emails, customer service centers/offices
- “Contact Us” form in the NJ TRANSIT App
- Customer Experience Unit – field surveys of system condition
- Marketing department – “pulse” surveys on unique issues
- Customer Advocate – direct interaction with customers

The Customer Satisfaction Survey is the most comprehensive source of system ratings. It is currently not linked to data from these other programs or sources of customer information.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

NJ TRANSIT performs the Customer Satisfaction Survey twice a year. It is an electronic survey which is announced primarily through the use of customer email contacts, supplemented by website postings, posters behind driver on buses, postings on the NJ TRANSIT App, bus and light rail links related to “where’s my vehicle,” and NJ TRANSIT social media. The survey is developed, administered, and analyzed by NJ TRANSIT staff. The survey contains over 70 questions, some of which are connected to a mode or to key topics, so customers do not necessarily have to complete all the questions. The questions are primarily geared to evaluate system attributes that can be controlled or influenced by Operations. That excludes some attributes of customer journeys that may be important to customers such as satisfaction with parking or fares. There are several open-ended questions designed to obtain experience at the end of the survey are categorized by topic, summarized in a dashboard, and shared internally. For questions where low scores are selected by customers, there are follow-up questions which are summarized and presented in a dashboard. These include topics such as cleanliness, safety, and security. The survey is

estimated to take about 14 minutes to complete.

The surveys are cleaned to ensure a level of completion. A recent survey collected about 40,000 responses which resulted in 36,700 cleaned and useable responses. The calculated response rate is about 7%.

NJ TRANSIT provides surveys in both English and Spanish. NJ TRANSIT has not performed an evaluation of the overall representation achieved with the surveys. There has not been an analysis of bias or demographic participation. NJ TRANSIT posts the Customer Satisfaction Survey results on their website:

<https://www.njtransit.com/surveyresults>

Frequency: Twice a year

Incentives: Yes. Drawings for a \$100 gift card, monthly pass, or 250 NJ TRANSIT rewards points

Promotion of the survey: Email to customers. NJ TRANSIT has begun promoting the survey using social media.

Presentation of Data: Customer satisfaction data is presented on the website. There are graphs to understand customer satisfaction data. The information shown includes, customer satisfaction by mode, market, year, and season.

Consequences of the program/ efforts as a result of the program?

Feedback gathered from riders is presented publicly and shared internally with Operations. However, there is no formal interaction with Operations to identify key drivers of satisfaction, recommendations for improvement, or the development of key actions to influence improved customer satisfaction. While the results are published on the website, there is no direct feedback to the customers who take the survey.

Is there a separate Customer Experience Program?

NJ TRANSIT does not have a formal Customer Experience Program. There is a Customer Experience Unit that performs evaluation of system conditions to identify needed remedial actions. The NJ TRANSIT Board of Directors also recently hired a new Customer Advocate as part of their commitment to delivering a positive customer experience.

APPENDIX B: USER TESTING SUMMARY

APPENDIX B: USER RESEARCH SUMMARY AND INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

As part of the research methodology for the NJDOT funding project, *"Best Practices in Customer Satisfaction Surveys for Transit Agencies,"* the research team conducted user research to gain a better understanding of the public's perception of the New Jersey Transit Customer Satisfaction Survey, which is distributed twice a year. The user research included three group sessions and six individual one-on-one user testing sessions.

Two of the group sessions were comprised of people who identified as taking the NJ Transit survey more than once. One of the group sessions was comprised of individuals who had never taken the survey. All the one-on-one sessions were comprised of individuals who had never taken the survey. Participants were recruited via email and were carefully screened to ensure diverse representation of transit riders from across the State of New Jersey.

Participant demographics

Participants were recruited from thirteen counties, with Essex, Middlesex, and Union having the largest number of participants. The train and bus are the primary modes of transit, with bus usage being slightly more prevalent. Income levels varied widely, but a significant portion falls within the \$60,000 to \$99,999 and \$100,000 to \$149,999 brackets. Gender distribution skewed towards female participants, with sixteen female participants, ten male participants, and one "prefer not to say." Age groups were all well represented, with the largest participation from individuals aged 25 to 34 and 45 to 54. The race category included a mix of White, Black or African American, Asian, and "other" categories, reflecting a diverse sample population. Complete demographic data charts are provided as an attachment to this report.

Group Sessions

The research team conducted three group sessions, each with six to ten participants. The first two sessions consisted of individuals who were already familiar with NJT's Customer Satisfaction Survey, and the third group consisted of individuals who had never taken (and in some cases never heard of) the survey. The discussion groups were conducted virtually via Zoom and were led by two facilitators from the Voorhees Transportation Center. The groups began with a general discussion about survey-taking behavior and perceptions of the NJT survey, which was followed by a detailed examination of the NJT survey. The facilitators shared a "dummy" copy of the NJT survey on the screen (twice using the train survey and once the bus survey). They walked participants through a hypothetical survey response, prompting discussion and questions to the group as they proceeded through the survey. After walking through the NJT survey, the facilitators displayed examples from other transit agencies for comparison. These sessions were approximately ninety minutes long. Summaries of these sessions are attached.

One-on-one User Testing

The one-on-one sessions were also conducted by researchers at the Voorhees Transportation Center. For these sessions, two researchers met individually with one member of the general public who had never taken the NJT survey before. For these sessions, the individual research participants shared their screen and took the survey in real-time during the session with the researchers. Participants were asked to choose whether they preferred to conduct the session

with the bus survey or the train survey. The majority of the participants chose the bus survey. The researchers then prompted the survey-taker with questions as they went through the survey to uncover perceptions, pain points, and points of delight throughout the survey process. The team conducted six of these sessions, each lasting approximately one hour. Individual summaries for these sessions, as well as a combined summary, are attached.

FINDINGS

There were no notable differences in findings between the survey-taker groups and the non-taker group. Additionally, the feedback from the one-on-one testing sessions was consistent across the board and aligned with the feedback from the discussion sessions. Individual summaries from these sessions are provided in the appendix to this report. Where discrepancies were found in the findings among participants, they will be noted in the sections below.

The findings are categorized into two sections: General Findings, which include findings about survey-taking behavior and perceptions of the overall structure of the NJT survey and the survey approach by NJT, and Survey Instrument-Specific Findings, which include feedback about specific questions or content in the survey instrument, where applicable screenshots from the specific question being referenced are provided.

General Findings

Familiarity with the NJT Customer Satisfaction Survey

Most participants in the non-survey-taker group and the one-on-one user testing sessions had never heard of the NJT Customer Satisfaction Survey. They were unaware that NJT surveys customers at all. A few people mentioned that they had seen advertisements for the survey or had gotten an email. One participant mentioned that he recalls seeing emails about the survey but never took it because he felt that it might be "pointless," implying that sharing his feedback would not result in actual improvements or positive changes.

Participants in the survey-taking group session were prompted to take the survey when they received the email invitation from NJT, though a couple of them recalled seeing ads for the survey as well.

- *Recommendation: NJT should consider broader promotion of the customer satisfaction survey to reach new targets. Participants would like to see more advertisements on buses and trains.*

Motivations for taking surveys

Across all user groups, most participants reported being motivated by a desire to have their opinions heard or expressed. For the survey takers, they were particularly motivated to improve their experience on NJT. Some comments included:

- Wanting to share an experience to make a product or service better, and effect positive change for a company or service.
- A desire to improve the quality of NJ TRANSIT services; caring about NJ TRANSIT.
- A feeling of being valued

- Desire to share a negative experience with NJ TRANSIT and the belief that the survey is the best way to have their voice heard; Filling out the survey gives a feeling of control.

For non-taker user groups and participants, there was a consensus that when they do take a survey, they are primarily motivated to do so if they have had an experience that falls at either end of the spectrum – either really good or really bad.

Closing the Loop with participants

Participants would like to receive more communication from NJT regarding the survey results. There is a general feeling that the survey does not result in any actual change for NJT customers, which is unmotivating. They feel like the feedback "would just go into a void." They want to see that their input results in tangible improvements. Several participants in both the group session and the one-on-one session noted that they would be more motivated to take the survey if they received information from NJT about what changes had been implemented as a result of the survey data. They wanted to see actionable results from the survey to motivate their participation. No one in any of the groups knew that NJT posts the survey results on their website.

- *Recommendation: Although NJT posts the survey results on their website, the information is not reaching their riders. NJT should share more specific updates on the survey findings via social media or other direct channels, connecting those findings to the positive changes underway. NJT should allow people to opt-in to receive email updates on the survey findings.*

The role of incentives

A few participants in both groups noted that they were motivated by receiving an incentive, even a small one. There was a clear consensus that a smaller, more guaranteed incentive was preferable to a raffle with low odds of winning. In addition, only one participant viewed the NJT "point" system favorably (though she admitted that she had never used it). Most participants did not understand how to use the points or did not find any real value in them. NJT points were not seen as a motivation to complete the survey. However, as stated above, most participants in both cohorts were motivated by the desire to see service improvements (or conversely, not motivated to take the survey because they did not believe it would lead to service improvements)

- *Recommendation: A concrete incentive, if possible, such as a small discount on a future ticket, would be more valuable to customers. Better communication about the real impacts of survey participation would be the most motivating.*

Time commitment for survey participation

When asked specifically how long they would be willing to spend on a survey, the responses ranged, but fifteen minutes was the maximum amount of time across all groups. Most participants reported a survey duration of 5-15 minutes, with the majority indicating that 10 minutes was a "happy place" or a "sweet spot" for a survey. It was also important that the time estimates matched the experience in reality. Participants mentioned that it is frustrating when a survey claims to be short but actually takes much longer in reality. They are likely to stop taking it midway, if that is the case. Many responses were lower time commitments, or were tied to specific types of incentives, including:

- Two to three minutes
- Five or fewer minutes

- Five minutes for a raffle.
- Ten minutes if you are guaranteed an incentive and not a raffle.

Many participants found the NJT survey to be too long. Participants suggested asking people upfront what they are most interested in giving feedback on, and then they should answer those questions first. Many of the questions seemed redundant or repetitive. During the session, when conducting the survey, several participants noted points in the survey where they would have dropped out or lost interest, well before finishing the questions. This is discussed in more detail below. Participants also expressed that a progress bar would be helpful, so they know where they are in the survey. Having a progress bar may help stave off fatigue if users know they are close to completion, which in turn can reduce drop-off.

- *Recommendation: NJT should shorten the survey to no more than ten minutes; include a progress bar. Also, consider providing a way to prioritize question topics by interest.*

Better accommodation for casual riders or multimodal riders

Many participants expressed frustration with having to select one mode of transit or one bus line. Many people take multimodal trips that combine bus, light rail, or regular rail services. NJT should consider developing a survey that can accommodate these riders. One participant noted that the survey could be "two separate surveys, one for regular commuters and one for just leisure commuters.

Clearer expectations about what is being asked

It is unclear whether one should be answering about a specific trip or about their experience overall. The survey seems to switch back and forth, and a single perspective would be easier for participants. Additionally, the terminology used throughout the survey is confusing. The survey should include a glossary or better definitions of the terms used within the questions.

Survey Specific Feedback

Section 1: Ridership Habits

Participants were not surprised to be asked about ridership patterns. They assumed NJT used this information to help with planning/identifying problems or issues. However, a few participants noted that the questions seem more geared towards regular commuters rather than casual transit riders who might take multiple different routes/modes. There was a sense from these participants that this survey was not really designed with their type of use in mind.

- *Recommendation: Consider segmenting the survey into two groups: those with static routes (daily commuters) and those with variable trip patterns (infrequent users or users who use multiple routes in a day).*

* 1. Where do you typically begin your first NJ TRANSIT BUS trip of the day?

- Home School
 Work Other

* 2. What is the zip code of that location?

Feedback Summary:

- Several people in the group session of people who had not taken the survey found this first question confusing. It was unclear what was meant by where the trip started.
- *“It is kind of odd. It doesn't make any sense to me. Where do I begin your first New Jersey Transit and begin everything at home, right? I mean, that's that's what...I start my day at home.”*
- *It seems like a little strange, I mean. I think it's hard too because I don't get the train outside of my home. I drive to the train station.*

Recommendation: Clarify the language in this question.

* 3. What is the **bus route number** of the bus you ride most frequently?

4. What is the **bus stop number** for the stop where you first board a NJ TRANSIT bus? *The bus stop number is a five digit number and can be found on the bus stop sign as shown in the photo below circled in red. Leave blank if you do not know the bus stop number.*

Feedback Summary:

- Most participants were unaware of the bus stop number. Only one of the one-on-one session users knew their stop number off the top of their head. Most people said they would not be motivated to look up the bus stop number when taking the survey.
- Participants said that they use multiple routes/buses equally for different purposes, and choosing just one is hard.

Recommendation:

- Although the bus stop number is optional, it was not immediately apparent. Make

it clearer that this can easily be skipped.

- Allow participants to share multiple routes.

*** 5. How did you get to your boarding stop/station/terminal? (Please select the primary method)**

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Walk | <input type="radio"/> Car drop off | <input type="radio"/> SEPTA |
| <input type="radio"/> Bicycle (your bicycle) | <input type="radio"/> Bus/Shuttle | <input type="radio"/> PATH |
| <input type="radio"/> Bike share (Citi Bike, Veo, Bird, Lime, LINK, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> Dinky/Princeton Shuttle | <input type="radio"/> NYC Subway |
| <input type="radio"/> Scooter (your scooter) | <input type="radio"/> Light Rail | <input type="radio"/> NYC Bus |
| <input type="radio"/> Scooter share (Veo, Bird, Lime, LINK, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> NJ TRANSIT Rail | <input type="radio"/> Ferry |
| <input type="radio"/> Drove alone and parked | <input type="radio"/> Long Island Rail Road | <input type="radio"/> Taxi |
| <input type="radio"/> Carpool and parked | <input type="radio"/> Amtrak | <input type="radio"/> Uber/Lyft/Via or other app-based service |
| <input type="radio"/> Passenger in carpool | <input type="radio"/> PATCO | <input type="radio"/> Other |

*** 6. How did you get to your final destination? (Please select the primary method)**

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Walk | <input type="radio"/> Car picked up | <input type="radio"/> SEPTA |
| <input type="radio"/> Bicycle (your bicycle) | <input type="radio"/> Bus/Shuttle | <input type="radio"/> PATH |
| <input type="radio"/> Bike share (Citi Bike, Veo, Bird, Lime, LINK, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> Dinky/Princeton Shuttle | <input type="radio"/> NYC Subway |
| <input type="radio"/> Scooter (your scooter) | <input type="radio"/> Light Rail | <input type="radio"/> NYC Bus |
| <input type="radio"/> Scooter share (Veo, Bird, Lime, LINK, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> NJ TRANSIT Rail | <input type="radio"/> Ferry |
| <input type="radio"/> Drove alone and parked | <input type="radio"/> Long Island Rail Road | <input type="radio"/> Taxi |
| <input type="radio"/> Carpool and parked | <input type="radio"/> Amtrak | <input type="radio"/> Uber/Lyft/Via or other app-based service |
| <input type="radio"/> Passenger in carpool | <input type="radio"/> PATCO | <input type="radio"/> Other |

Feedback Summary

- Participants who use more than one method to get to and from their stops/stations found this question frustrating.
- Participants also found the number of answer choices overwhelming and questioned why NJT needed this level of specificity. For example, what is the difference between "carpool and parked" and "passenger in a carpool" and "scooter (your scooter)" versus "scooter share," and why is "bus" a choice to get to the bus stop?
- Participants also found it confusing that these two questions had the same answer choices, even though many of the options did not seem relevant to "how you get to your final destination," such as "drove along and parked."
- *I think the only thing that threw me off a little is here, where it's like, how did I get to my arrival? [referring to the "final destination"] I guess my assumption is that this is the first stop, like to take the bus.*

**One participant noted they would have dropped out at this point.*

Recommendation: Clarify this question. Limit the number of answer choices, remove unnecessary ones, and provide an option for selecting multiple answers.

*** 7. When do you typically travel on NJ TRANSIT BUSES?**

- Weekdays Peak (6 AM – 10 AM & 4 PM – 7 PM)
- Weekdays Off-peak (All other times)
- Weekends

8. What is the scheduled departure time of the Weekday 6 AM - 10 AM Peak Bus you typically take?

Date / Time

Time AM/PM

hh	:	mm	-	AM/PM
----	---	----	---	-------

Feedback Summary

- Once again, participants whose travel patterns were variable noted that they would have liked to be able to pick multiple options for this question.

Recommendation:

- Allow multiple answers or restructure the question for participants who indicate they are variable users of public transportation.

* 9. Of the following stops/terminals, please select the one you use most frequently.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Atlantic City Bus Terminal | <input type="radio"/> Journal Square Bus Terminal, Jersey City |
| <input type="radio"/> George Washington Bridge Bus Station | <input type="radio"/> Newark Penn Bus Lanes |
| <input type="radio"/> Market Street/Greyhound Terminal, PA | <input type="radio"/> Port Authority Bus Terminal |
| <input type="radio"/> Hackensack Bus Terminal | <input type="radio"/> Walter Rand Transportation Center |
| <input type="radio"/> Hoboken Bus Terminal | <input type="radio"/> Trenton Transit Center |
| <input type="radio"/> Irvington Bus Terminal | <input type="radio"/> None of the above |

* 10. Is the final destination of your most frequent trip at any of the following locations?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Upper Manhattan (<i>Above 60th Street</i>) | <input type="radio"/> Paterson |
| <input type="radio"/> Midtown Manhattan (<i>Between 14th and 60th Street</i>) | <input type="radio"/> Hackensack |
| <input type="radio"/> Lower Manhattan (<i>Below 14th Street</i>) | <input type="radio"/> Atlantic City |
| <input type="radio"/> Center City Philadelphia | <input type="radio"/> New Brunswick |
| <input type="radio"/> Jersey City | <input type="radio"/> Camden |
| <input type="radio"/> Newark (City) | <input type="radio"/> Trenton |
| <input type="radio"/> Newark International Airport | <input type="radio"/> Meadowlands Sports Complex |
| <input type="radio"/> Elizabeth | <input type="radio"/> Hoboken |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify) | |

Feedback Summary:

- Question 9 was confusing to some. It was unclear if it was supposed to be only about where you start or stop, or the stations that you pass through.
- Question 10 was found to be wordy and complicated. Participants recommended a drop-down menu for this one, so it seems less overwhelming. (Note: Drop-downs are incompatible with screen readers that people with low vision use)
- For the Train Survey, participants noted that most people refer to the station as New York Penn Station, rather than Penn Station New York, which may make it difficult for them to select the correct answer choice.

Recommendations:

- Clarify the language in the question.
- For the train survey, list 'New York Penn' with an alternative of 'Penn Station New York'.

*** 11. What is the main purpose of your most frequent trip on NJ TRANSIT Buses?**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Work | <input type="radio"/> Entertainment/Recreation |
| <input type="radio"/> Company business (not commuting) | <input type="radio"/> Medical |
| <input type="radio"/> School | <input type="radio"/> Social/Visit Family or Friends |
| <input type="radio"/> Shopping | <input type="radio"/> Personal business |

Feedback Summary:

- Participants found this question confusing because it is hard to distinguish between the answer choices, and several mentioned that they would like to be able to choose more than one.
- The term "Personal business" was confusing for many participants.

Recommendation:

- More clearly define answer choices, especially "personal business."
- Allow multiple answer choices.

14. Which of the following descriptions below, best describes your company's current office/worksite attendance policy? Please read all the options.

- STRUCTURED HYBRID: Minimum Days** – Companies that set a minimum number of days employees must work from the office/worksite each week (e.g., two days per week).
- STRUCTURED HYBRID: Specific Days** – Companies that set specific days of the week employees must work from the office/worksite (e.g., Tues/Thurs).
- STRUCTURED HYBRID: Minimum & Specific Days** – Companies that set minimum and specific days per week employees must work from the office/worksite. (e.g., either two days in the office AND they are specified Tues/Thurs or you have a set number of day in the office AND there is specific criteria around how those set days are selected).
- STRUCTURED HYBRID: Minimum Percentage of Time** – Companies that set a minimum percentage of time employees must work from the office/worksite (e.g., 40 %).
- FULL TIME IN OFFICE/WORKSITE:** Companies that require employees to work from the office/worksite full time.
- FULLY FLEXIBLE: Fully Remote** – Companies that do not have a physical office/worksite space. All employees work remotely.
- FULLY FLEXIBLE: Employee's Choice** – Employees can choose when or if they work from an office/worksite.

Feedback Summary:

Across the board, participants felt this question was wordy and excessively detailed. Even those who were not confused by it themselves thought that it could be unclear to others and suggested simplifying it. There were also mixed opinions as to why NJT needed this information. Some understood that it could be useful for planning purposes, but others felt it was too much information to ask for.

Recommendation:

- Consider whether this question is still relevant for planning purposes. If not, consider removing it. If necessary, simplify the answer choices—suggestion: Full-time office, fully remote, or Hybrid.

Ticketing

* 16. What type of ticket/payment method do you use for this trip? *Bus*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Bus Monthly Pass | <input type="radio"/> College Student Monthly Pass |
| <input type="radio"/> Rail Monthly Pass | <input type="radio"/> Student Ticket (one-way and transfers) |
| <input type="radio"/> Ten-Trip | <input type="radio"/> Reduced Fares for Senior Citizens & Customers with Disabilities |
| <input type="radio"/> One-way/Cash Fare/Transfer | <input type="radio"/> Other |

* 17. Where do you usually buy your ticket or monthly pass?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Onboard | <input type="radio"/> Ticket Vending Machine |
| <input type="radio"/> NJ TRANSIT Mobile App | <input type="radio"/> Independent Ticket Agent (e.g., newsstand) |
| <input type="radio"/> NJ TRANSIT Ticket Agent | |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 18. Do you typically pay for your ticket or pass using . . . ?

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Cash | <input type="radio"/> Check |
| <input type="radio"/> Cash from MyTransit Wallet | <input type="radio"/> Apple Pay |
| <input type="radio"/> Credit Card | <input type="radio"/> Google Pay |
| <input type="radio"/> Debit Card | <input type="radio"/> PayPal |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify) | |

Feedback Summary

There were a few confusing elements to this question for participants, including.

- A couple of participants looked for subsidized transit cards here (not realizing it is asked in a later question).
- Apple Pay and credit/debit cards felt redundant to participants as most of the time, Apple Pay is used as a way to pay with a credit or debit card, rather than a separate form of payment. Again, participants wondered why this level of detail was useful to NJT.
- Participants also wanted to select multiple forms of payment here.
- Some participants remarked that NJT should have this data from other sources, such as app data or machine data for ticket purchases, and felt that these questions were unnecessary.

Recommendations:

- Remove Apple Pay and Google Pay as answer choices. If collecting this information is necessary, consider asking separately whether they use an in-app credit card function, such as Apple Pay or Google Pay, or if they select a debit or credit card.

- Include subsidized transit cards as an option if that is not ideal for this question; at least reference that it will be covered in subsequent questions about transit benefits.
- If this information is available through other data sources, consider removing this question for brevity.

Section 2: Satisfaction Questions

10-point Likert Scale

Unacceptable					Acceptable					Excellent		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
<input type="radio"/>												
<input type="radio"/>												
<input type="radio"/>												
<input type="radio"/>												

The majority of participants found the 10-point Likert scale to be excessive and caused the survey to feel longer and more arduous than it needed to be (a couple pointed out that it is actually an 11-point scale, including the zero). Most felt that a 5-point scale would be sufficient and easier to use. There was also a sense that it was difficult to understand what the difference was between numbers like 3 and 4 or 7 and 8. Participants felt that a 5-point scale could actually be more accurate and leave less room for personal interpretation about the level of satisfaction that the numbers represented. Researchers also noticed during the one-on-one session that there was significant variability in how people interpreted the numbers. For example, one woman described seven as "fine," and another described seven as "pretty good."

Recommendation: Consider moving to a 5-point Likert scale.

Please continue the survey. It is VERY important to complete this section!

Most participants found it unnecessary or annoying. One person noted that a percentage complete would be more helpful.

Recommendation: Include a progress bar to indicate the participants' progress through the survey.

PARKING FACILITIES:

* 17. Please rate your satisfaction with the following **Parking Facility** attributes of the NJ TRANSIT BUS service you use most frequently.

	Unacceptable				Acceptable						Excellent		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
Boarding Stop Parking Availability	<input type="radio"/>												
Boarding Stop Parking Fee	<input type="radio"/>												
Parking Lot-Ease of Entry/Exit	<input type="radio"/>												
Parking Lot-SAFETY (e.g. physical injury--trips, falls, etc.; physical condition of surroundings--pavement, lighting, snow removal, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>												
Parking Lot-SECURITY (e.g. criminal activity, suspicious behavior, disorderly conduct, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>												

Feedback Summary:

- Participants appreciated that SAFETY and SECURITY were defined clearly.

Recommendation

- Consider providing similar definitions for all terms or providing a hyperlink to a glossary (or pop-up definitions if the platform allows).
- Some examples of confusing terms from User Testing Sessions:
 - “scheduling attributes”
 - “employee performance” vs. “customer service”
 - “quality of transfer”
 - “accessibility features”
 - “personal business”
 - “company business”
 - “signage”
 - “trip time”
 - “stop” vs. “facility”
 - “availability of accessible services”

FACILITIES:

*** 19. Please rate your satisfaction with the following Facility attributes of the NJ TRANSIT BUS service you use most frequently.**

	Unacceptable				Acceptable						Excellent		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
Boarding Stop Condition	<input type="radio"/>												
Boarding Stop Cleanliness	<input type="radio"/>												
Arrival Stop Condition	<input type="radio"/>												
Arrival Stop Cleanliness	<input type="radio"/>												

Feedback Summary:

Several participants were confused about the terms used in this question. For example:

- One participant was not entirely sure what was meant by 'facilities' and whether it included stops that were enclosures or also stops that just had a sign.
- The participant is confused as to whether she should answer the questions generally about all NJT facilities along a bus route or just the site she uses most often.
- A participant was also confused about what they meant by "the condition."
- Another participant noted that it is not clear what exactly the survey is referring to when using the word "stop." Moreover, it was difficult to determine what they were referring to as a "facility."

Recommendation

- Provide more precise definitions of terms used in this question.

SCHEDULING:

* 20. Please rate your satisfaction with the following **Scheduling** attributes of the NJ TRANSIT BUS service you use most frequently.

	Unacceptable				Acceptable				Excellent		N/A	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Weekday AM Peak Schedule (6AM to 10AM)	<input type="radio"/>											
Weekday Midday Schedule (10AM to 4PM)	<input type="radio"/>											
Weekday PM Peak Schedule (4PM to 7PM)	<input type="radio"/>											
Weekday Evening/Night Schedule (after 7PM)	<input type="radio"/>											
Weekend/Holiday Schedule	<input type="radio"/>											

Feedback Summary

- There was much confusion about what "scheduling attributes" meant.
- There was confusion about how to judge whether a schedule was acceptable or not.

Recommendation

- Provide definitions of terms and consider providing more explicit instructions about how to define "acceptable" in this case.

ONBOARD THE BUS:

*** 22. Please rate your satisfaction with the following attributes about conditions **Onboard the NJ TRANSIT BUS** you use most frequently.**

	Unacceptable				Acceptable						Excellent		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
Seating Availability	<input type="radio"/>												
Comfort Onboard	<input type="radio"/>												
Cleanliness Onboard	<input type="radio"/>												
Vehicle Interior (Floors, walls, windows, seats) other than cleanliness	<input type="radio"/>												

Summary of Feedback “On Board the Bus”

- The participant found it difficult to rate "seating availability" on the bus because there is a lot of variability and numerous factors that impact whether a seat is available.
- One participant expected to see something about buses breaking down in this section.

Summary of Feedback “On Board the Train”

- Participants also noted that the conditions on board the train vary at different times of day and on different days of the week. There was not enough information to answer this question accurately because it was not specific to the time of travel. They were unsure whether to answer this question in relation to your most frequent trip or to answer it more generally.

Recommendation:

- There were times throughout the survey when participants were unsure whether they should reference a specific trip (such as the last trip they took) or provide overall feedback based on a typical or average trip. Consider providing some more guidance to survey takers on the preferred frame of reference for these questions.

COMMUNICATIONS:

*** 24. Please rate your satisfaction with the following Communications attributes about the NJ TRANSIT BUS you use most frequently.**

	Unacceptable				Acceptable				Excellent				
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
Availability of NJ TRANSIT Info	<input type="radio"/>												
Signage/Information Availability	<input type="radio"/>												
Availability of Accessible Services Info	<input type="radio"/>												
NJ TRANSIT Mobile App	<input type="radio"/>												
My Transit (NJ TRANSIT's Email and Text Alert System)	<input type="radio"/>												
MyBus (A Tool to Find Out When the Next Bus is Arriving at your Stop)	<input type="radio"/>												

Summary of Feedback:

There were several terms in this question that were confusing for participants:

- Multiple people were unsure of what "signage" the question was referring to.
- Multiple people were confused by "availability of accessible services."
- Participants were also confused by "communications" and "My Transit" app.
- A few participants wanted to explain their low ratings on "signage/information" but were not prompted for a follow-up.

*At this point in the survey, group participants began remarking that they were fatigued and losing patience. They also did not know where they were in the survey and how much longer it would be.

Recommendations:

- Provide definitions for all terms. Consider a hyperlinked glossary.
- Provide optional follow-up opportunities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

*** 25. Please rate your satisfaction with the following attributes about Announcements for the NJ TRANSIT BUS you use most frequently.**

	Unacceptable				Acceptable						Excellent		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
STATION Announcements	<input type="radio"/>												
ONBOARD Announcements	<input type="radio"/>												
Service Disruption Announcements/Info	<input type="radio"/>												

Summary of Feedback.

- Bus riders were particularly confused by this because most stops do not have station announcements. Participants were unsure how to answer this question. “Station” is more commonly used for the trains, according to participants.
- Two participants who rated announcements low were prompted to answer a closed-ended follow-up question, and both wanted to be able to select multiple options because they had observed multiple issues.

Recommendations

- For the bus survey, consider providing examples for “station announcements” as it is confusing – STATION Announcements (if you do not travel through a station, select N/A).
- Allow multiple selections for the closed-ended follow-up question.

*** 26. Please rate your satisfaction with the following Overall attributes about the NJ TRANSIT BUS you use most frequently.**

	Unacceptable				Acceptable				Excellent				
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
On Time Performance - Boarding Stop	<input type="radio"/>												
On Time Performance - Arrival Stop	<input type="radio"/>												
Trip Time	<input type="radio"/>												
Handling of Service Disruptions	<input type="radio"/>												
Employee Performance	<input type="radio"/>												
Customer Service	<input type="radio"/>												

*** 27. Please rate your satisfaction with the following Overall attributes about the NJ TRANSIT BUS you use most frequently.**

	Unacceptable				Acceptable				Excellent				
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A	
Safety (e.g. physical injury--trips, falls, etc.; physical condition of surroundings--pavement, lighting, snow removal, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>												
Security (e.g. criminal activity, suspicious behavior, disorderly conduct, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>												
Quality of Transfer	<input type="radio"/>												
Reliability of Accessible Features	<input type="radio"/>												
Payment Options	<input type="radio"/>												
Overall Value for your Money	<input type="radio"/>												

Summary of Feedback:

- Several participants expressed fatigue with the survey at this point. They noted that they would have dropped out by now or would have begun answering questions without thinking (i.e., choosing something and moving on).

- A few of the terms used in these questions were confusing for participants, including:
 - Quality of Transfer (several found this confusing)
 - Accessible features
 - The difference between employee performance and customer service
 - Trip time
- Participants thought that this question was one of the most important in the survey and should have been asked earlier, before they became fatigued. However, they reiterated that the 10-point Likert scale was too much, and a 5-point scale would be easier.

Recommendations:

- Consider including definitions of terms or a link to a glossary
- Consider moving this question earlier in the survey
- Consider moving to a 5-point Likert scale.

* 22. You rated **MyBus** low (A tool to find out when the next bus is arriving at your stop). Please provide a detailed reason for your rating and include examples of issues you have had along with the bus stop number, bus departure time, and date, if possible, so we can make improvements to MyBus.

23. Please list the bus stop number, if you know it.

24. Please list the bus departure time and date this issue occurred.

Date / Time

Date	Time	AM/PM
<input type="text" value="MM/DD/YYYY"/> 	<input type="text" value="hh"/> : <input type="text" value="mm"/>	<input type="text" value="-"/> 

Summary of Feedback on open-ended questions:

- The majority of participants viewed open-ended follow-up questions negatively,

feeling that they were cumbersome and a disincentive to provide low ratings (for fear of being prompted for more information/making the survey longer).

- Participants also noted a lack of consistency in the type of feedback provided, with some questions prompting open-ended feedback, others closed-ended feedback, and others receiving no additional feedback. A couple of participants remarked that they would have liked to provide additional information but were not given the opportunity for a particular question.
- Other participants were happy to provide additional details but remarked that they would prefer a closed-ended follow-up with the option to select from multiple choices.
- Those who appreciated the open-ended questions valued the opportunity to provide specifics about their experiences, especially if they wanted to share something negative that had occurred or explain why they were criticizing something.

•

On being asked to recall a specific day/time that an incident occurred:

- Participants did not like being asked to specify a date. It was difficult to recall dates; participants may have been thinking about multiple occurrences, or it felt like they were being asked to provide "proof."
- Participants noted that the questions seemed more generic and not specific to a particular day. Therefore, when the survey asked them to recall a day and time when an incident occurred, they found it difficult at that moment.
- Participants also noted that this seemed redundant with the complaint line and that there is already a way to report specific incidents when they occur. For the survey, they are more likely to guess or make something up that is an estimate.

Recommendations:

- Consider using closed-ended follow-up questions with an option to provide additional details in a comment box.
- Provide consistency/predictability through follow-up questions, so that participants know what to expect during the survey.
- Remove the prompt for a specific day and time and include an option to provide details on when an event occurred in the comment box.

21. You rated cleanliness onboard the bus low. Please tell us what area or areas of the Bus were not clean? (Select all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Windows | <input type="checkbox"/> Floors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Walls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seats | <input type="checkbox"/> Stairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

Summary of feedback on closed-ended follow-up:

- Participants generally preferred closed-ended follow-up questions. They found

selecting from a provided list to be much easier than writing a narrative in an open-ended box. However, many noted that they would like an option to provide an explanation or detail about their selection, as well as select multiple options from the choices provided.

Recommendations:

- Allow multiple selections from closed-ended follow-up questions
- Provide an optional comment box to add more detail or explanation
- **Provide one consistent format for all follow-up questions that includes pre-populated answer choices and an optional comment box.**

* 28. Among the attributes of NJ TRANSIT Bus service you just rated, please select up to 5 of your Top 5 MOST IMPORTANT attributes.

Please select no more than 5 total attributes.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities - Boarding Stop Condition | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications - NJ TRANSIT Mobile App |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities - Boarding Stop Cleanliness | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications - My Transit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities - Arrival Stop Condition | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications - MyBus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities - Arrival Stop Cleanliness | <input type="checkbox"/> Announcements - STATION Announcements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling - Weekday AM Peak Schedule (6am-10am) | <input type="checkbox"/> Announcements - ONBOARD Announcements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling - Weekday Midday Schedule (10 AM - 4 PM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Announcements - Service Disruption Announcements/Info |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling - Weekday PM Peak Schedule (4 PM - 7 PM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - On Time Performance - Boarding Stop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling - Weekday Evening/Night Schedule (Weekdays after 7 PM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - On Time Performance - Arrival Stop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling - Weekend/Holiday Schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - Trip Time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Onboard the Bus - Seating Availability | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - Handling of Service Disruptions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Onboard the Bus - Comfort Onboard | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - Employee Performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Onboard the Bus - Cleanliness Onboard | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - Customer Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Onboard the Bus - Vehicle Interior | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications - Availability of NJ TRANSIT Info | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications - Signage/Information Availability | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - Quality of Transfer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications - Availability of Accessible Services Info | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - Reliability of Accessible Features |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications - NJ TRANSIT Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall - Payment Options |

Summary of Feedback:

- Many participants found this question challenging to answer for several reasons. They found the long list overwhelming and that it would be hard to pick only five; some wanted to pick all that were important to them. Some participants found this question repetitive in comparison to the previous questions, as they felt they had already expressed opinions about each of these things. Some stated that they would either skip it or just pick five to complete the survey by this point.
- Participants noted that the color-coding of the categories was helpful. However, some thought they were required to pick one from each category.
- Many participants noted that they were feeling very fatigued from the survey at

this point.

Recommendations:

- Consider removing this question, as it may be overwhelming and redundant. Alternatively, consider moving this question to an earlier part of the survey and have satisfaction questions follow in priority order based on the responses.

*** 29. Please rank the service attributes you selected in the previous question from most important to least important where the most important attribute is at the top and the least important is at the bottom of the list.**

To move the service attributes to your preferred order, either drag and drop them or use the up and down arrows to rank them from most important (1) to least important (up to 5).

☰	⬆	Scheduling - Weekday AM Peak Schedule (6am-10am)
☰	⬆	Onboard the Bus - Seating Availability
☰	⬆	Overall - On Time Performance - Boarding Stop
☰	⬆	Overall - Handling of Service Disruptions
☰	⬆	Overall - Safety

Summary of Feedback:

- Participants were very fatigued by this point in the survey, and many of them were frustrated by this question. They did not like being asked to rank the top five after having selected them from the previous question. It seemed onerous and redundant. Several remarked that they would drop out of the survey at this point.
- A couple of participants suggested that the selection and the ranking could be combined into one single question.

Recommendation

- Remove this question or combine a ranking feature with selection in the previous question.

necessary or were hesitant to provide personal information, especially if they had given NJT negative feedback.

- Regardless of how participants felt about these questions in general, there was an overall sense that they were very fatigued by this point and were surprised/frustrated by being asked more questions.
- The only question that seemed strange to a few participants was about English language proficiency, as they felt that if they had progressed this far in the survey, they must speak English well.
- Several participants noted that it was essential to make it clear that these questions were optional and that each one should include a "prefer not to answer" option as a response choice.

Recommendations

- Make sure it is clear that they are optional and include "prefer not to answer."
- Limit the number of questions to those that are most helpful/informative to NJT.

Number of Years Riding NJ TRANSIT

43. How long have you been riding NJ TRANSIT Buses to Entertainment/Recreation?

1st time customer Less than 1 year 1 to 2 years 3 to 5 years 6 to 10 years 11 to 19 years 20 years or more

Summary of Feedback

- By this point in the survey, the participants were extremely fatigued, and most were surprised to find that the survey was not over after the demographic questions.
- This question was also confusing because it asked for a specific choice from very early on in the survey, rather than asking generally how long they had been riding NJT. For example, a few participants noted that they had only been taking NJT for work for a few years but had been taking NJT for other reasons for many years.

Recommendations

- Consider rewording for clarity or removing for brevity.

NJ TRANSIT BUS Trip Purposes

44. Do you ride NJ TRANSIT Buses for trip purposes other than to Entertainment/Recreation? *Please read all options and select all that apply.*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do not ride NJ TRANSIT buses for any other trip purpose | <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Company business (not commuting) | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Visit Family or Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal business |

Summary of Feedback:

- The terms “company business” and “personal business” were confusing.

Recommendation:

- Provide a definition of terms
- Consider removing this question for brevity

Work Industry

45. Which of the following industry groupings includes the primary industry of the company/organization where you currently work?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Accommodation and Food Services | <input type="radio"/> Finance and Insurance | <input type="radio"/> Real Estate and Rental and Leasing |
| <input type="radio"/> Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | <input type="radio"/> Health Care and Social Assistance | <input type="radio"/> Retail Trade |
| <input type="radio"/> Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | <input type="radio"/> Information | <input type="radio"/> Transportation and Warehousing |
| <input type="radio"/> Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | <input type="radio"/> Management of Companies and Enterprises | <input type="radio"/> Utilities |
| <input type="radio"/> Construction | <input type="radio"/> Manufacturing | <input type="radio"/> Wholesale Trade |
| <input type="radio"/> Educational Services | <input type="radio"/> Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | <input type="radio"/> I'm a student |
| <input type="radio"/> Federal, State, and Local Government | <input type="radio"/> Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | <input type="radio"/> I'm not employed or I'm retired |

Summary of Feedback:

- Participants were frustrated by this question and did not understand why it was relevant. Many also had a hard time identifying their jobs in this list of industries and commented that it seemed out of place for New Jersey: "How many mining jobs are there?"

Recommendation:

- Consider removing for brevity

Final Questions

Your answers to these final questions will help inform us on how to improve your experience.

47. Thinking back to a recent trip on NJ TRANSIT, what is one thing that we could do to improve your travel experience?

48. Thinking back to a recent trip on NJ TRANSIT, what is one thing that you liked about your trip?

49. What are the actions we could take to encourage you to travel by NJ TRANSIT more frequently?

Summary of Feedback:

- Participants expressed fatigue at this point, but many noted that these questions were fundamental and should be placed earlier in the survey before participants are tired. Many participants remarked that these questions were the core of the survey and were glad to have had the opportunity to express any thoughts that were not already covered freely.
- Some participants remarked that all three questions are not needed and could be combined into one or two.
- Participants did not like the language of “one thing” and would prefer to be free to discuss multiple things; responses should not be limited to just one thing per question or restricted to the last trip made.

Recommendations:

- **Consider placing these questions earlier in the survey.**

Thank you for participating in the survey!

50. If you would like to enter the drawing to win either a monthly pass or a \$100 gift card, please provide your name, address, phone number and email address.

To earn 250 NJT rewards points, enter the email address that you used to sign up for NJT Rewards points.

If you are not registered for NJT Rewards points, list your email address below and use the same email address to register at NJT Rewards (njtrewards.com). Register by Friday December 6, 2024 to be eligible.

NJT Rewards points will be added to your account by December 31, 2024.

Summary of feedback:

- Participants preferred guaranteed incentives over raffles or NJT points, which many participants found unappealing or “useless.” Many participants doubted their chances of winning and felt it was not a strong motivator to take the survey.
- Some participants were hesitant to share personal information, citing privacy concerns or joking about potential misuse. Participants suggested that NJT clarify that providing contact information is optional and that the data will not be sold or shared.
- Participants suggested that alternative incentives, such as free rides, bus passes, or discounts, would be perceived as more valuable and relevant.
- NJT points were largely unused and not well understood; participants were unsure of how or where to redeem them.
- Participants noted that the length of the survey influenced participation—shorter surveys were more acceptable without incentives, while longer ones required better rewards.
- Some participants would take the survey without incentives, driven by a desire to

improve NJT services through feedback.

Recommendation:

- Consider a smaller, guaranteed incentive for participating in the survey.

GROUP USER SESSION #1 AND #2 – SURVEY TAKERS

Facilitators: Miriam Salerno and Cate Heady

Dates: April 3, 2025 and April 5, 2025

Part 1: Survey Taking and Behavior

Generally speaking, what prompts you to take a survey?

- Most participants were motivated by a desire to have their opinions heard or expressed. Some comments included:
 - Wanting to share an experience to make a product or service better or effect positive change for a company or service.
 - A desire to hopefully improve the quality of NJ TRANSIT services; caring about NJ TRANSIT.
 - A feeling of being valued
 - Desire to share a negative experience with NJ TRANSIT and the belief that the survey is the best way to have their voice heard; Filling out the survey gives a feeling of control.
- A couple of participants noted that they were primarily motivated by receiving an incentive, even a small one.

How did you hear about the NJ TRANSIT survey?

- Most participants noted that they are prompted to take the survey when they receive the email from NJ TRANSIT. One participant noted that getting the personalized email from NJ TRANSIT makes it feel more formal, more serious. Several noted that an email invitation to the survey is better than a text message. Text messages often feel like “junk.”
- One participant noted that she is more likely to take a survey if she has signed up to be part of a panel.
- A couple of participants noted seeing ads for the survey or receiving a push notification from the NJT app.

How much does the incentive influence your motivation to take the survey?

- Most participants noted that they are not motivated by the NJT lottery incentive. They would prefer a guaranteed incentive (“concrete” or “usable”), even if it is a small one. No one who participated in either session had won the gift card lottery or thought it was realistic that they would win it.
- Participants mentioned other incentives that would be more appealing, such as a free bus pass, discounts on rides or free rides,
- One participant mentioned that they appreciated the NJT points for taking the survey. Most participants mentioned that the account points were not that useful or that appealing – “I don’t know what to do with those” “Points that you have to spend somewhere else for discounts on things you don’t need.” They would prefer to use the point for a free ride on NJT.

- Participants noted that the length of the survey matters when deciding whether to take it, especially if it is less than ten minutes; For longer surveys there is a desire for a more guaranteed incentive.
- A few participants said they would take the NJT survey event without the incentive.

Preferred format/time to take the survey:

- Participants were evenly split on whether they preferred to take the survey on a mobile phone or on a computer. Most noted that it depended on where they were at the time, at home or in transit.
- If they took the survey on the train or walking to/from the train or bus, they took it on their phones. If they took the survey at home, it was more likely on a computer.
- A few participants noted that they usually take the survey while commuting or waiting for the train. A couple of participants noted that if they took the survey on the train/bus they were usually motivated to do that by a recent negative experience.
- There were a variety of responses on the time of day that people take the survey. Many said morning, when they first see the email (especially if they are commuting at the time). Some said afternoon or evening when they check personal emails or they are commuting home. One participant said lunch hour is when he would normally do a survey like that.

How much time are you willing to spend on a survey:

There were a variety of responses to this question, but only one person said they would be willing to spend more than 10 minutes on a survey. Other responses were:

- Two to three minutes
- Five or less minutes
- Five minutes for a raffle.
- Ten minutes if guaranteed an incentive and not a raffle.

A couple of participants mentioned that they will stop taking a survey if the timing is misleading. Others said they would stop taking a survey if it took longer than expected, especially if the instructions say it will only take a few minutes, and it takes longer, or if the questions are repetitive (asking the same thing in different ways). Another reason to stop is if it is badly formatted and the questions aren't relevant, or there is no N/A option. Also, if there are too many follow-up questions. No one indicated that if they stopped taking a survey, they would return to finish it.

For NJT specifically one participant noted, "I go into the survey knowing how long it is going to take and if it takes a little longer it is not a big deal."

How often do you think NJT sends out the customer satisfaction survey:

Responses included all of the following:

- Once or twice a year
- Twice a year
- Once a month
- Once a week
- Every month or every other month

- Based on activity level
- Four times a year

General thoughts and impressions from each participant about the NJT customer satisfaction survey (only asked on April 8, asked prior to screenshare of the survey):

- I feel like it doesn't do anything; No one is reading or reacting to it and it is a waste of time
- Long and boring and sometimes I have something to say, and I can't find the right place to do that.
- Sometimes they give points to their point system, but the point seems useless and frustrating. Also don't feel like anyone is listening.
- It feels like it would just go into a void.
- They are putting out the survey just to appease people.
- The survey is really long and I'm not sure where my feedback goes.
- The survey is repetitive and long, it feels kind of pointless, and we don't see any tangible improvements.
- I feel like the survey is pointless.

What would make you feel like your time taking the survey is worthwhile (only asked on April 8)

- A few participants reiterated here that they would like a more guaranteed incentive or a more sizable incentive, such as a weekly or monthly pass.
- Several participants noted that they would appreciate NJ TRANSIT sending the survey results to everyone that took the survey. Sharing the results as well as what actions they are taking based on feedback to show that they are listening.
- One participant noted that you can get a response to the complaint line – they respond, and it feels that you were heard. They don't give you much detail, but they apologize.

Part 2: NJT Customer Satisfaction Survey

Questions about ridership, travel times and travel patterns:

Participants were not surprised to be asked about ridership patterns. They assumed NJT used this information to help with planning/identifying problems or issues. However, a few noted that the questions seem more geared towards regular commuters and that if you are a casual transit rider who takes multiple different routes/modes, this section might be frustrating. "I take multiple buses equally and have to try to decide which one to use for the survey."

- One participant also noted that she regularly takes multi-modal trips, and there is no way to answer the survey from that perspective since you have to choose bus or rail.
- One participant suggested that the survey should be segmented by commuter or non-commuter and have different questions for the noncommuter.
- A few participants noted that it would be difficult to remember the bus stop number.

Question about worksite attendance

Reactions to this question included:

- I'm kind of taken aback. It is difficult to parse through all these options, and this is difficult to answer.

- This seems really detailed. It would be better to just have three options: sometimes, all the time, etc.
- The question could be simple, how many days of the week do you commute and a choice of 1 to 5.
- Too many options. I would answer if there were less options, but I'd be tempted to skip this.
- I would just pick one and not really care. "That's good enough" approach.

Reflections/reaction to ten-point scale:

- A couple of participants remarked that it is strange that the ten-point scale starts at zero, so it is really 11 and not 10.
- A few thought that 1 to 5 would be adequate or even easier to answer.
- Many were entirely neutral on this and didn't care one way or another.

Reactions/thoughts on the "Please continue..." text on each page of the survey:

- Most participants found it unnecessary or kind of annoying. A few mentioned that they thought it was strange or glossed right over it. One person noted that a percentage complete would be more helpful.
- One participant noted that if the survey is engaging, there should be no need to add this language to each page. "If you make it engaging, I'll keep going."

Opinions about open-ended questions:

Opinions on open-ended follow-up questions were mixed. Some participants noted that they felt like they already answered the question with the Likert scale and found it cumbersome to be asked to provide details, especially because it is a required question. Some mentioned that they don't like having to type and prefer just multiple choices. "We want short, easy questions." One person noted that it is a disincentive to be honest and give low scores because you'll be prompted to answer more open-ended questions, and that is a lot of work.

Those that liked the open-ended questions valued the opportunity to give specifics about their experiences, especially if they want to share something negative that occurred or explain why they are criticizing something. One person noted that they fill out the open-ended but often just do a few words because it takes too long.

On being asked to recall a specific day/time that an incident occurred:

- Many participants found this level of specificity very difficult, especially if there were multiple occurrences on different days. It seemed impossible to answer about a particular day, especially for a survey only offered twice a year.
- Participants noted that the previous questions were more generic and not about any particular day and so when the survey then asks you to recall a specific day and time when an incident occurred, and that is kind of difficult in that moment.
- One participant noted that this seemed redundant with the complaint line and that if there is a specific incident, there is already a way to report it. For the survey, they are more likely to just guess or make something up that is an estimate.
- Another participant noted that if something goes wrong, they want to immediately say something and not wait for the survey. They might forget by the time the survey opens again.

Choose the top five that are most important:

Many participants found this question difficult to answer for a few reasons. They found the long list overwhelming and that it would be hard to pick only five – some wanted to pick all that were important to them. Some participants found this question repetitive with the previous questions, that they felt like they had already expressed opinions about each of these things. Some stated that they either would skip it or just pick five to be done with the survey by this point. A couple of participants noted that it wasn't clear what the purpose of this question was or if it was worth their time to answer it thoughtfully. Other observations included:

- A preference to pick a top choice from each of the categories, rather than five attributes overall.
- An observation that “overall” is not an attribute and it's confusing language
- A recommendation to put this question at the beginning of the survey when participants are more engaged.
- The list mixes “need to haves” with “nice to haves” - some of the items are intrinsically more important than others to get from point A to point B and some just make the experience more enjoyable.
- Opinions on the follow-up question on ranking were mixed. Some participants found it easy or found the toggling to be enjoyable. Some participants thought it was redundant to prioritize further the top choices. One participant recommended that the two questions be blended into one – pick and rank 5 in one question.
- One participant said she was hesitant about this question for fear of being prompted to do more open-ended responses.

Question about overall satisfaction with NJT

- Most participants were ready to “be done by now” by the time we got to this question. This question seemed to frustrate participants at this point in the survey and many said they would stop the survey at this point.
- One participant noted that for this question to be useful there should be an open-ended comment box.

Demographic Questions:

- Most participants said that if they got to this point in the survey, they would complete the demographic questions and had no problems with this section.
- One participant noted the importance of having a “prefer not to answer” option.

One thing to do better and one thing that you liked:

Most of these participants liked these two questions and would answer them. One noted that she would probably only answer them if there was something she wanted to say that wasn't already covered in the other questions. A couple of participants noted that these were the most important questions and that they should be earlier in the survey, if not first. One participant went so far as to say that the entire survey could be covered by these two questions.

Sharing information for incentive/raffle:

Most participants said that they would fill out their information for the raffle but that they had no expectation of ever winning the raffle. One participant said she would not provide any personal information.

Wrap up questions/closing thoughts on NJT survey:

Participants were invited to share any closing thoughts or recommendation for NJT about the customer satisfaction survey after walking through it with the facilitator:

- Some participants suggested that NJT have more frequent but shorter customer satisfaction surveys while others like the less frequent, longer surveys.
- A few participants suggested that the survey should close with information or a reminder about who/where you can contact for an immediate resolution to an issue or a problem.
- Many participants reiterated that smaller, guaranteed incentives would be more effective than the raffle. Participants also wanted better, more “concrete” incentives like a free ticket.
- Many of the participants wanted more information from NJT about the results of the customer satisfaction survey. There were several requests for NJT to email out the survey results to anyone who had taken the survey and provide regular updates on what NJT is doing with the information/what improvements are being made. Participants noted that they would be more motivated to continue providing feedback if NJT was in more regular communication about the impact of the survey data on service improvements. They would like “proof” that NJT is actually looking at the results and that their time was well-spent filling out the survey.
- Many participants also commented on the length of the survey, saying that it was too long and asked too many questions. They felt the survey could be condensed and simplified and still be effective.
- One participant reiterated the need to have a survey format that could accommodate users to take multiple modes in one trip.

Part 3: Other Customer Satisfaction Examples

Participants were shown three examples of other surveys/feedback mechanisms for other transit agencies and services – LA Metro, Marland Transit Administration, and the Transit App. Materials shown to participants are provided in the figures below.

LA Metro (see Figure 1 below):

- Participants liked the \$500 incentive and thought that was more motivating to fill it out.
- There were mixed feelings on the condensed one-page format. Some thought it was too crowded and others like that it was all in one place and easy to get through. At first glance it looked overwhelming, but then participants noted that it was actually shorter than the NJT survey.
- Participants did not like the idea of filling out a paper survey on transit. The facilitator noted that NJT does not do on board surveying for customer satisfaction surveys, but that this was just an example for the survey format.
- Participants were mixed on the question format. Many like that there was only multiple choice but some said they would like at least one open-ended option to leave comments.
- One participant noted that the question order for the LA Metro survey seemed to have the most important attributes asked about first.

Maryland Transit Administration’s Rate My Ride (can be found at www.rateyourride.org)

- Participants remarked that this web-based survey was very basic and simple, but some thought it was too brief, noting that it was probably mostly for complaints and that it didn't seem "serious." It seemed unreliable because anyone could fill it out at any time, as many times as they would like.
- This seemed more like a place to log complaints.
- Others thought the simplicity and ease of use was a good thing. They liked that it was easy, but you could also be specific with your comments. They liked the immediateness of this website, as opposed to waiting for the NJT survey twice a year.
- This seems more geared toward daily occurrences whereas NJT survey seems more towards longer term issues.

My Transit App interactive features (see Figure 2 below):

- Some participants thought that this app's use of quick pulse questions with emojis was fun and interactive. They thought it was fresh and felt like "fun for the new generation."
- Others thought it would be annoying or did not want to download any other apps onto their phone but thought that if NJT had pop up pulse questions in their app they would take them.

Figure 1: LA Metro Bus Survey as shared with participants



Metro

Separator Only:
 1. Bus Route: _____ Run: _____ Block: _____
 2. Time: 6-9a 9a-1p 1-4p 4-7p After 7p
 3. Day of the Week: M T W TH F Sat Sun
 4. Date of Trip: _____ every/ly

Chance to win \$500!

As a thank you for **fully completing** this survey, your name will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win one (1) \$500 Visa Cash Card.

2022 Metro Bus Customer Survey

5. Would you like to be entered into the drawing for one (1) \$500 Visa Cash Card?
Your contact information will be kept confidential.

Yes *(please provide your contact information)*
 No

Sa. First Name: _____
 Email: _____
 Phone: _____ Home Zip Code: _____
 Sb. Can we invite you to participate in occasional Metro surveys?
 Yes No

About You

10. Do you have regular access to a car?
 Yes No

11. How often do you ride Metro Bus? Select one

Less than once a month
 1-3 days a month
 1-2 days a week
 3-4 days a week
 5 or more days a week

12. How long have you been riding Metro Bus? Select one

Less than 1 year
 1-2 years
 3-4 years
 5 or more years
 Today is my first time

13. Do you have a smartphone and connection to access apps when waiting at bus stops?
 Yes No

14. How did you pay your fare for this trip?

TAP Card
 TAP App on phone
 Cash

15. What type of fare was it?

30-Day Pass
 7-Day Pass
 Day Pass
 1 trip fare
 Other: _____

16. Did you receive a discount on your fare?
 Yes No

16a. If yes, what discount?

Student (K-12)
 Student (College)
 LIFE
 Senior/Disabled/Medicare

9. Which elements listed in the shaded section do you most want Metro to improve? Write the number that corresponds to your top 3 choices. Example: If "bus covers on time" is your first choice, then write "1" in the "1st" blank space provided below.

1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____

Satisfaction with Metro Bus

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Select one per row

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>			<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I would recommend riding Metro Bus to a friend or co-worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metro Bus works hard to improve the experience of its riders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I hear people criticize Metro Bus, I want to defend it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metro Bus provides a good value for the money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Thinking about your experiences during your entire journey door to door and all your interactions with Metro Bus, how satisfied are you with Metro Bus?

Not Satisfied at All *Neutral* *Very Satisfied*

8. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of Metro Bus:

<i>the least</i>						<i>the highest</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>						

1. How frequently buses run

2. How long it takes to get where I am going

3. Bus comes on time

4. Connecting to another bus or train

5. Availability of accurate bus arrival time info

6. Bus stop seating

7. Cleanliness of bus stop area

8. Shade at bus stop

9. Enough room on the bus

10. Comfort of bus seats (if used)

11. Cleanliness inside the bus

12. How well Metro addresses homelessness on buses

13. Safety from harassment based on my race or ethnicity

14. Safety from sexual harassment

15. Safety from crime

16. Buses and stops kept free of graffiti

17. Enforcement of Metro Bus rules

18. Courtesy of Metro bus operators

19. Wi-Fi availability and quality on the bus

20. Accurate and timely info about delays

21. Ease of fare payment

22. Availability of accurate info to plan my trips

23. Bus stop lighting (if you ride at night)

24. Transit Smartphone app

25. Metro.net website

Demographics

The following information will be kept confidential and used only to confirm our survey sample is reflective of the diverse county in which we serve.

17. What is your age?

Under 18 45 - 64
 18 - 24 65+
 25 - 44

18. What is your race or ethnic identification? (select all that apply)

Latino/Hispanic
 Black/African American
 White/Caucasian
 Asian/Pacific Islander
 Native American
 Other

19. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

20. What languages do you speak at home? (select all that apply)

English Korean
 Spanish Armenian
 Chinese Other: _____
 Tagalog

21. How well do you speak English?

Very well or well
 Not well or not at all

22. What is your household's total annual earnings? Select one

Under \$15,000
 \$15,000 - \$24,999
 \$25,000 - \$49,999
 \$50,000 - \$99,999
 \$100,000+

23. What is your gender identity?

Male Non-Binary
 Female Other: _____

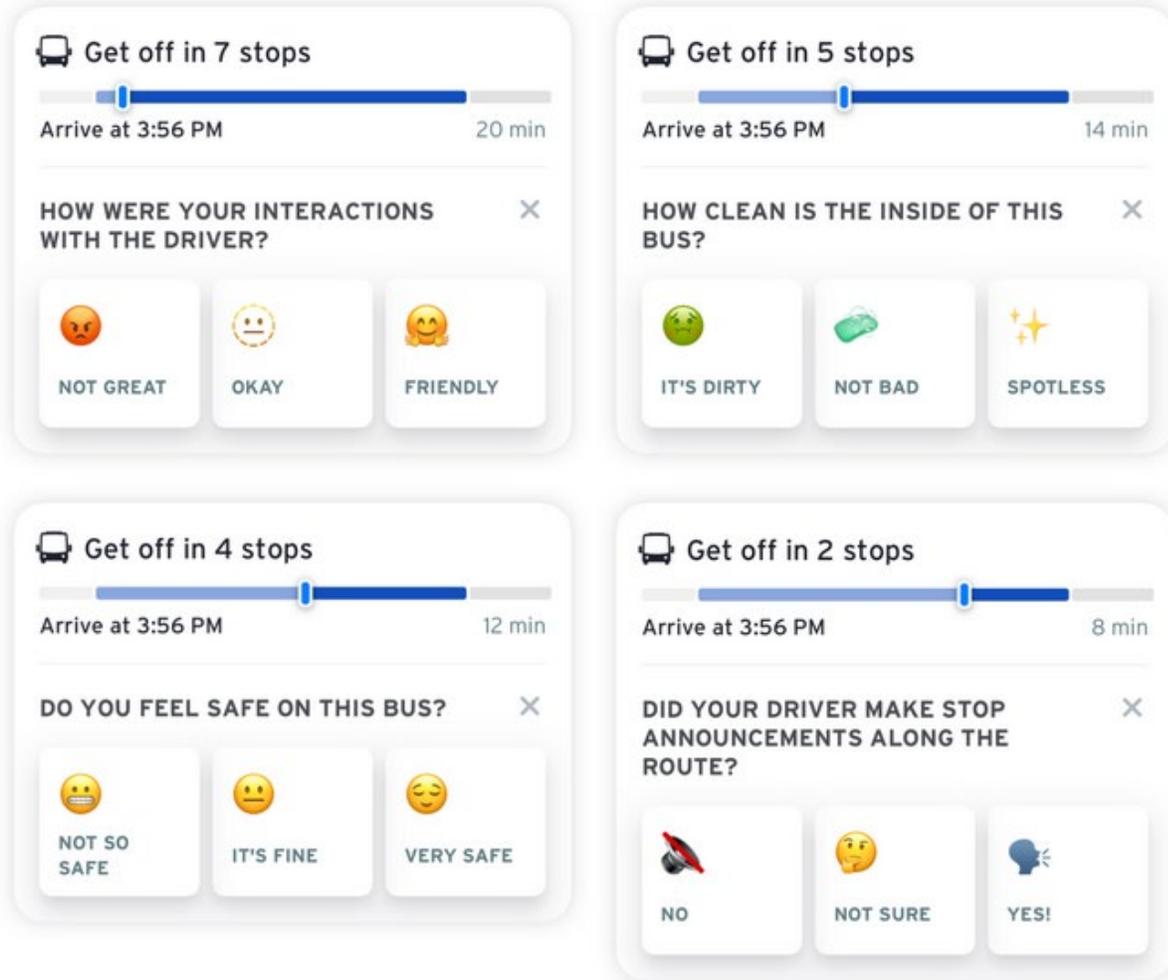
24. Do you have any disabilities?
 Yes No

24a. What type of disability do you have? (select all that apply)

Low vision
 Blindness
 Deaf/hard-of-hearing
 Mobility - use wheelchair
 Mobility - do not use wheelchair
 Mental or cognitive
 Other: _____

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Figure 2: Screenshots of MyTransit App as shared with participants



USER LISTENING SESSION: NON-SURVEY-TAKERS

Facilitators: Miriam Salerno and Cate Heady

Date: May 5, 2025

Section 1: Introductory Questions

Are you familiar with the NJT Customer Satisfaction Survey?

Most of the participants had never heard of the NJ TRANSIT Customer Satisfaction Survey. One participant thought that perhaps she had seen an advertisement for it on the bus; another had a vague recollection of maybe seeing something in an email or on the app but was not sure.

- *I've never seen it. I've never heard of it.*
- *There is sign for it on the back of the this clear see-through panel, behind the bus driver. I always think, oh, I should take that. But I always forget. It goes out of my mind.*
- *Yeah, wondering how they communicate that there's a survey I might have seen it in e-mail. I'm not sure.*
- *I never heard the New Jersey Transit having a survey, so it's news to me.*

Have you taken another Customer Satisfaction survey and if so, what prompted you to take one in the past?

There was a consensus among a few of the participants that they are mostly motivated to complete a survey if they have an experience that is at either end of the spectrum – either really good or really bad. In addition, there is a motivation to complete the survey if doing so will improve a service that is important to them, if the feedback will be put to good use. Some sources of motivation include:

- A few participants indicated that they were motivated to get something in return, like opportunity to win free tickets to a future event or motivated to win money towards a free cup of coffee.
- But even if there is no incentive, many were motivated by either really good service or a really bad experience.
 - Motivated because the service was excellent or horrible but not motivated if service was “typical” or “standard.”
 - If the survey asks about a particular person who provided a service so they can make sure to get good reviews.
 - *I complete them because they ask about the persons who has Serve me and I want to make sure that they get good reviews.*
- One participant noted that he was motivated to respond because they recognize that surveys provide important data, so try to respond to be helpful.
- A few participants noted that the time element is important. They would be motivated to complete a survey if it gives a time estimate or if a survey is “short and sweet”.
- More likely to be motivated if it is a direct request, the more personal it is the more likely to respond.
 - *I think also, you know who's sending out the survey? Like, if it's a mass e-mail versus like focused group of e-mail or you know, or text message where it is very direct to me and I know like someone's caring about my opinion more directly.*

How much time are you willing to spend on a survey?

The responses ranged, but fifteen minutes was the maximum amount of time from the group. Most participants were in the range of 5-15 minutes for a survey, with most people saying 10 minutes was a “happy place” or a “sweet spot” for a survey. It was also important that the time estimates matched the experience in reality. Participants mentioned survey saying they’d be short but taking much longer and that was frustrating.

- *If they state more than 15 minutes of you've already lost me.*
- *I do like it when in the beginning it tells me what the time is and the time that the times that I get really annoyed is if they tell me it's a small amount of minutes and I do it and I'm in the middle and I'm only halfway done and they've to me and then I get angry.*
- *Yeah, 10 minutes is my sweet spot as well. I think 5 minutes sometimes seems too short.*
- *I would say 10 minutes is probably my happy place.*
- *10 minutes is OK.*

Section 2: NJT Customer Satisfaction Survey

On the opening page the group had a discussion about the NJT reward points and the consensus was that no one used the points, and they were not much of an incentive.

Where do you typically begin your first NJ TRANSIT TRAIN trip of the day?

Many people found this first question confusing. It was unclear what was meant by where the trip started.

- *I gotta say that this first question is, it's...I don't quite understand it. Where do you typically begin your first New Jersey train trip of the day? Is it supposed to be from home or going home or work? It seems like a little strange, I mean. I think it's hard too because I don't get the train outside of my home. I drive to the train station.*
- *It is kind of odd. It doesn't make any sense to me. Where do I begin your first New Jersey Transit and begin everything at home, right? I mean, that's that's what...I start my day at home.*
- *Yeah, I mean, it feels like if you're going to ask that question, maybe you just put the ZIP code in. . And and that's the place where you're starting, right? So it seems like a strange question.*

How did you get to your boarding station? (Please select the primary method)

One participant was confused about the carpool answer choices, wondering why NJT cares if you are the passenger in the carpool or you arrived in a carpool and parked. It seemed confusing and too much detail. They also felt that there were too many answer choices (“Yeah, scooter. Really”) and that it would be hard for some people to select the primary method because they use multiple methods, “how do you know what’s the primary?”

- *So the carpool. I'm curious about why it matters if you're a passenger in a carpool or whether you carpooled and parked... does seem like they should be potentially the same. Is there a reason why there's there are two different carpool answers?*

One participant noted that they would have dropped out by now.

- *Quite frankly, they would have kind of lost me at this point.*

How did you get to your final destination? (Please select the primary method)

The participants found it confusing that question 5 and 6 had the same answer choices because many of them did not make sense when thinking about getting to a final destination. One participant specifically asked if we could give this feedback back to NJT so they can change the question.

- *Are you taking this questionnaire and going back to the person who wrote it and have them change it?*

What is your most frequent DESTINATION Station for the first trip of your day?

The participants found this question to be wordy and complicated, and it should be a dropdown menu to make it easier to read. One participant noted that the list is alphabetical and therefore not hard to find what you are looking for. Some other comments included:

- *It's it's very complicated.*
- *Horrible.*
- *Shouldn't it correlate to the train line that she took when she got on the train?*

Which of the following descriptions below best describe your company's current office/worksite attendance policy? Please read all the options.

Opinions on this question were mixed. Some thought that it was not NJT business to know this level of detail of the customers' schedule. Others understood that this information makes a difference in terms of how people commute, but that the way it was worded felt like too much detail.

- *It feels like too much detail, right? I mean, if you already have, if you already answered a question about how many times you trip, you take this trip per week or per month. It feels like it's this has feels like it's overkill.*
- *Yes, I can understand why they want to know though.*
- *It would help them with figuring out how many cars to add or subtract from a line on a certain day of the week. It makes sense to me anyway.*
- *I think the number of days is more important than what the hybrid schedule is, so simplify it.*

Section on Ticketing (Questions 26-28)

The participants remarked that NJT should have this data from other methods, like app data or machines for ticket purchases. They felt that these questions were unnecessary. However, one participant noted that NJT might need this information in the survey in order to correlate the responses to other questions.

Satisfaction Questions

When asked about the zero to ten Likert Scale, the participants were generally fine with the way the question was set up.

Scheduling

The participants were not sure what was meant by the term "scheduling attributes." Participants also noted that the trains have different schedules at different times, there are some local trains and some express trains.

- *Well, you know what I'm not sure what they mean by scheduling attributes.*
- *I'm not sure. I don't know what scheduling attributes means.*
- *What are the attributes?*
- *Does it pertain to having enough trains at the time you want?*
- *Or does it mean the trains have enough cars at the time you take them.*

One participant expected the blue text to be a hyperlink that provided definitions or more information.

- *Is the blue highlighting like? Does that give more information? No, no. OK.*

On board the train

Participants also noted that the conditions on board the train will vary with different times of day and different days of the week. There was not enough information to answer this question accurately because it was not specific to the time of travel. They were not sure if they should be answering this question relating to your most frequent tip or if you should be answering it more generally.

- *So if I get on board the train in Manhattan on a Sunday at 4:00 in the afternoon, it's seating availability is going to be unacceptable. The comfort on board is probably going to be less than acceptable. So it really depends on the train and where you're going and what time, right*

Communications

At this point in the survey, the participants began remarking that they were fatigued and losing patience. They also did not know where they were in the survey and how much longer it would be. One participant noted that the survey could be “two separate surveys, one for regular commuters and one for just leisure commuters.”

- *I have a concern, though. We're already at question #23 and usually when I take surveys it tells you you're midway there. We're not. There's no mention of it anywhere so far, and we're already at question #23.*
- *At this point, if the survey not knowing how much longer it is, you lose my interest.*
- *I would be getting impatient.*
- *I would have been done by now.*
- *It's starting to feel too long.*

Another participant remarked that they were looking for a place to give specific feedback but haven't yet had that opportunity.

- *I'm hoping that somewhere, maybe toward the end, there is a place where a commuter could refer to a specific trip that might be the reason that they're doing the survey in the 1st place.*
- *Yes, if someone has a very bad experience. Like there needs to be a place for them to to enter that information also.*

In addition, one participant remarked here that he felt that the ten-point scale was a lot and that a five-point scale would be easier and other participants agreed.

- *I also think that 10-point scale is a lot to like. You know, it takes a little bit more thinking to kind of do like later on this 10-point scale versus like a five-point scale.*

- *I think it's easier if it's five. Yep.*

When rated MyTrasit App low, the group was prompted with a follow up

The participants had mixed opinions about being asked for more detail on the low ratings. Some felt very negatively towards it; one even noted that it seemed confrontational to be asked to provide “proof.” One participant responded that they would want to provide the details if they were dissatisfied.

- *Yeah, this question really would **** me off because it's asking me to do too much. I would give up at this point.*
- *Include examples of emails and texts if possible... I think that's too much.*
- *Asking it like this is almost inviting people not to respond. But it's also a little confrontational. Not only do we want to hear what you have to say, but we need proof.*

Overall

Opinions on this section were also mixed. A couple of participants liked the overall category, saying it was “good” and “alright.” One participant noted that he would have expected these questions earlier in the survey since this is “the primary purpose of the survey.” A couple of participants thought there were “too many choices” again, referring to the one to ten Likert scale.

- *One to 10 is just too many. It's an acceptable, unacceptable or excellent. What is 8? What's the difference between 8 and 9? What's the difference between 2 and 3?*

Some of the terms were also confusing for participants:

- *I'm also not sure what the difference is between employee performance and customer service.*
- *I don't know what quality of transfer means.*
- *Reliability of accessible features. What is that?*

Participants were also asked at this point about their level of fatigue and their interest in continuing the survey past this point. One participant said that they would not continue further, and others agreed.

- *I'd have been gone. I I would have been gone.*

Top Five selection and ranking

Participants felt this question was too complicated, and the complexity of the question was frustrating. One participant noted that it felt like NJT is being “lazy” and just getting you to give them answers to things that they should know. One participant wanted to know where they could complain about noisy passengers.

- *I don't see an option to complain about a noisy fellow passengers.*
- *I got to say it feels like a little bit like NJ transits being lazy and they're just trying to get you to give them answers to things that they should already know.*

When asked to rank the top five, one participant was so frustrated that he remarked, “Jesus” with a groan. He then stated that these two questions could be combined into one, and you could select and rank in one question rather than having to ask a second question. The consensus was that the rankings were not as important as the initial selection of the top five.

- *Pick your top five things and rank them.*

At this point when asked who would drop out of the survey, most people said they would finish at this point, but they were getting frustrated with the length. One person said he would be “long gone.”

Would you recommend NJ TRANSIT

Most participants found this question confusing or frustrating, wondering why the survey asks this question when many people take NJT because they have to or because there isn't another way to get into New York City. There was confusion about what information this question gives to NJT that is useful, though one participant thought perhaps it was a way of encouraging people that they SHOULD recommend NJ TRANSIT more often.

Demographics

The group jokes about the survey not being over, “Wait there's more!” but no one really had a problem with the demographic questions being asked. One remarked that he doesn't like to provide income information. The only question that seemed strange to the group was about English language proficiency since they felt that if they got this far in the survey, they must speak English well. Also, language proficiency is subjective, and one might think they speak or understand well, but do not.

The group did not like the questions regarding the number of years riding transit (“Why do they care”) and thought the answer choices for the industry list were very odd.

- *I mean, how many mining and oil and gas extraction employees do you get traveling on NJ Transit? It feels like the categories are a little super specific and then maybe way too general.*

Final questions

The group liked the final question. One remarked “Here it is.” and another “That's a good question.” There was a consensus that these are the most important questions in the survey, and that responses shouldn't be limited to just one answer per question. Another participant remarked that these questions should be broader and more general, like what is one thing you like about your regular trips, not just your last trip. Though, he sees how both questions are valuable.

- *I do like the idea about, you know, one thing you liked about your trip, but one thing I love about all my trips is that it's super easy to use the app and the guy comes by or the lady comes by and it's done. I mean, so again, it's not necessarily about one trip, it's about kind of making it more general.*

Participants also discussed the need to have an option for quick, easy feedback about a particular trip versus a survey that is more generally about overall feedback for NJT. They discussed how this would enhance their experience, especially if there was a way for NJT to follow up with them.

- *If the survey, if the survey is really about customer service, that would be a a really wonderful thing to do would be to give people the option to take the survey and then to have a follow up...it gives people that sense of connection again which I think would be really I think would be a a great.*

- *I could see a standalone survey on the app or even like attached to a ticket. Like when your ticket expires, you get like a little prompt about like, how was your trip today? Thumbs up, thumbs down like, you know, 3 questions about your ride.*

Incentives

Most respondents said that they would fill out the information for the incentive if they “had gotten this far.” There was a sense that most people wouldn’t have finished the survey. One participant said that he would fill it out as long as there was a clear disclaimer that NJT would not sell his information.

One piece of advice for NJT on the survey

The overwhelming advice to NJT would be to make the survey shorter and simpler.

- *Cut it in half.*
- *Make it shorter. A lot shorter, like 10 questions.*
- *I agree it should be shorter.*
- *People made suggestions before about the the range of satisfied to unsatisfied, whereas 0 to 5 would have been sufficient and that would have cut back on the time spent on that also.*
- *some questions just had weird answers that they could get rid of because they didn't seem to make any sense*
- *I think that maybe more than one survey would be helpful to break it up.*
- *I felt like they were asking too many questions that they should. They should already have the answers to.*
- *It should be short and sweet like this is too long.*

COMPILED COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK: USER TESTING ONE-ON-ONE SESSIONS

Participants:

- B
- F
- K
- M
- MM
- Z

Part 1: Trip/OD Questions

Opening thoughts

- The participant said that he thinks he recalls seeing emails from NJT about the survey, but he does not take it because he feels that might be “pointless” and the incentive is not enough to compensate for his time. M
- When asked if it would help if NJT communicated back to participants about the survey, he said it would help a bit. He said that he would want to feel like NJT is actually doing something with his information to make it worth the time. M
- The participant's initial reaction when she saw the screen was to wonder what it would look like on a phone, since she most often does this type of thing on her phone. F

Bus Stop/Route questions

- The participant had to look up the route number, but looked up the bus stop number in the app. Mentioned that she appreciates the app. But did not know the bus stop number. B
- This participant was the first one to know the bus stop number off the top of her head. At first, she tried to include multiple routes in the survey because she said she used many routes equally. However, was able to narrow it down to one when she had to.
- He doesn't know the bus stop number off the top of his head but said he could look it up via Google. When prompted, he said he might be likely to skip this question, unless he had the time to look it up... it would depend on how rushed he felt. M
- It was difficult being asked to recall the bus stop number. He said he would not be motivated to look it up.
- Some confusion around the inclusion of “Bus” as an option for how she got to the bus stop. She wasn't sure if that was referring to buses outside of the NJT system.
- The participant noted that he uses more than one method to get to his stop, so this question wasn't exactly relevant to him. But he selected walking because that is probably what he uses most often. M
- The participant was confused about what the boarding stop is versus the arrival destination.

- “Stops/terminals most frequently” is confusing because it’s not clear if it is supposed to be only about where you start or stop or where you pass through. It is easy for her because her frequent stop is there, but she suggested that it could be confusing for other people.

Variability in trip times/purpose/etc.

- She found it difficult to pick a time because she commutes at different times. F
- The participant wanted to pick multiple time slots here because he uses transit more than just for commuting and found it frustrating to just be limited to one choice. M
- The participant doesn’t feel like his experience really fits into any of the answers. The question is geared more towards commuters who take a regular trip. He uses NJT in a variety of different ways. His experience doesn’t fit into these choices. M
- The participant doesn’t really have a specific bus. There are several that he could take depending on where he is going and what time. This question makes more sense for people who are regularly traveling the same route. M
- She understands why NJT is asking the questions and that she has to travel at random times and so she wants NJT to make improvements when she needs the bus. K
- He noted that his departure times vary but he was able to give an approximate time. MM
- The participant does not know the difference between the different neighborhoods listed for final destinations in NYC and she said she would just guess. F
- When asked about her travel compared to May 2024 she said, “What is the point of this question?” F
- When asked about stops, he was not sure whether the question was referring to the terminal that he uses leaving or the terminal that he uses coming. MM

New York Penn

- The participant noted that most people refer to the station as New York Penn Station, not Penn Station New York, so it might be hard for people to find the right answer. M
- The only items that she notes is that she has trouble finding “New York Penn Station” because it is listed as “Penn Station New York,” and she requests clarification on what “final destination” refers to. Z

Trip purpose

- The participant found this confusing because it is hard to distinguish between the answer choices and he would also like to be able to choose more than one. M
- “Personal business” is confusing for him, what does that mean? M

Worksite/Hybrid Question

- The participant felt this question was very wordy, and she had to think about it for a second. She liked that it is bold so she can just skim and try to figure it out but wonders if they ask this because they are trying to figure out when they need more staff or more bus drivers or trying to figure out changes in timing/routes. It feels reasonable, but she doesn’t think they are going to actually do anything with this information. B

- When asked about her work arrangements in Question 14, she paused to review the options carefully. She understood the options but noted that other people might find it confusing. F

Ticket Type and Paying for Ticket

- Looked for the subsidized card for this question. She doesn't know what my transit wallet is. She selected "other." B
- The participant buys the light rail monthly and uses it on both the bus and the light rail and was not able to find that option in the choices. M
- The participant noted that debit card and apple pay can be redundant or confusing. Some people link their debit card to apple pay and might click debit card instead of apple pay. It's not clear. F
- When asked about the main purpose of his trip, his ticketing method, and his payment method, he wanted to pick two options, but each time could only pick one, so he selected "other" to give an explanation. MM

Part 2: Satisfaction questions

Parking

- When answering these questions, she was worried that if she rated the parking facility that she used too low for safety or other attributes that NJT would "take it away." She didn't want to give information about it being unacceptable for fear it would no longer be in use, so she contemplated rating it higher than she actually felt for fear that it would negatively affect her commute. B

Comments re: 10-Point Scale

- She noted that a five-point scale would be a lot faster and would probably prevent her from overthinking so much. She also wondered why NJT even needs such a broad 10-point scale B
- The participant was asked how she felt about the 1-10 scale. She indicated that she felt like it was too much and that 1-5 would be enough. She also said that having a 10-point scale gives too much variability in terms of how people interpret the numbers. F
- When asked about the scale, she said she liked the choices of zero to ten. And she specifically likes having zero as the worst option, rather than one. When asked, she said that zero to five would be equally easy to use. K
- The participant noted that the 10-point scale was too much, and a 5-point scale would be easier to use. The choices would feel more clear-cut with a five point scale. M
- She found the 1-10 scale perfectly acceptable.

Reactions to open-ended follow-up

- When prompted to the open ended she said "Oh no" because now she has to write more. If she knew it would prompt open ended, she wouldn't have rated it low. B

- When asked if she felt that she had enough opportunities to explain her answers she noted that there were some things that that she thought she'd be asked to give more information one but wasn't asked, like scheduling. B
- Rated bus stop conditions "low" and was not prompted with an open-ended follow-up, but she expected to get one and would have provided more detail. K
- When prompted with an open-ended follow-up box for this [recommend NJT] question, the participant noted that she would prefer closed-ended and have multiple choices to select. Depending on her mood, she might skip an open-ended question at this point. F
- For additional questions, he did not like being prompted with an open-ended question when rating something low. Preferred the "closed-ended" follow-up question that gave him choices. Also, he found it difficult to respond with specifics because he was thinking generally about his experiences overall. M
- The participant was surprised that he didn't get prompted for more information when he rated service disruptions low. M
- When he was prompted for more information, he gladly shared additional details. He was happy to have the opportunity to provide additional details on his scores. MM
- However, when prompted to specify a date, he found it difficult because he was thinking about multiple occurrences.
- She said she didn't have any issues with giving more details and thinks it will be important for NJT to know the specifics Z

Reactions to closed-ended follow up

- When prompted with a closed ended follow up, she was only able to select one response but would have liked to select multiple because she has observed multiple issues. F
- When prompted with follow-up questions about cleanliness (closed-ended), she was conflicted about how much detail to give but eventually used the "other" field to provide some detail for her feedback and scoring. K
- This participant likes being able to give follow up to talk about specifics with the closed-ended follow-up questions. M
- He was given items to select from for follow-up. He preferred this to the open-ended follow-up. He likes having the option of choices to select from for the follow up questions, not just open-ended. Wants to give people choice. Suggested that NJT give an option to elaborate more if someone wants. M
- When prompted with a follow-up question for rating station announcements low, he chose to use the "other" answer so that he could provide more information about his rating. MM
- The participant felt that she didn't have enough space to really express her concerns about the conditions onboard the train. She preferred the open-ended style follow-up question so that she could detail her concerns about the windows. Z
- She liked the follow-up questions but wanted to be able to select multiple options, especially if your answers are more general and not related to a specific trip. Z

Facilities

- She wasn't entirely sure what was meant by facilities and if it included stops that were enclosures or also stops that just had a sign. B
- When she looks at this section of the survey, she has an immediate reaction that it is wordy and confusing. "*I see word vomit,*" But she does like the header language in pink. F
- The participant is confused as to whether she should answer the questions generally about NJT or specific to a site that she uses. K
- She was also confused about what they mean by "the condition" – the condition of the bus when it arrives or the condition of the site? K
- The participant noted that it is not clear what exactly the survey is referring to when using the word "stop." And it was hard to figure out what they are referring to as a "facility." M

Scheduling

- She doesn't really know how to judge this and if it is really acceptable or not. She starts thinking from the perspective of NJT and whether or not it would be realistic to hire more bus drivers to improve the schedule.
- The participant paused because she was not sure what "scheduling attributes" meant.

On Board the Bus

- The participant found it hard to rate "seating availability" on the bus because she noted that it was not the drivers' fault or NJT fault that there were a lot of people and the bus was full. K
- The participant expected to see something about buses breaking down in this section. K

Communications

- Doesn't understand what signage they are referring to and would like to have more explanation for these terms. B
- The participant was confused about what was meant by "signage" and would like more explanation. K
- For this section, the participant referenced that there might be some confusion with what is meant by "communications" and repeated that the 10-point scale is too much. M
- The participant was unfamiliar with a few of the attributes listed under this category. He did not understand what "availability of accessible services" meant. He did not know what the My Transit app was. MM
- Would have liked to have an opportunity to explain the low rating for signage but did not have any space to explain her issues. Z

Announcements

- She doesn't know where the station announcement would be unless it refers to Port Authority because there is nothing at the bus stop. Doesn't understand how to answer these questions.
- She also reiterates issues with the 10-point scale. B
- The participant didn't know that they did station announcements, so she rated it as "NA" F

- She does not like the on-board announcements. She initially rated it as 0 but then changed it to 2 after considering how she interprets the numbers. F
 - When prompted with a closed ended follow up, she was only able to select one response but would have liked to select multiple because she has observed multiple issues. F
- The participant doesn't think there really are announcements at bus stops/stations.
- The language is also confusing because no one refers to it as a bus station, even at Penn Station Newark. M
- At this point he isn't sure which station he should be thinking about when answering this question. MM
- When asked how he liked the survey at this point. He said, "I'm glad you're asking these questions" and that he was happy with the number and type of questions so far. MM
- The participant rated all of them unacceptable. She liked the follow-up questions but wanted to be able to select multiple options, especially if your answers are more general and not related to a specific trip. Z

Overall

- By the time she gets to these questions, she notes that she is feeling fatigued and finds some of the questions repetitive with what was covered before. She is tired because she feels like she is thinking too much, so she considers just choosing something to move faster and get to the end.
- At this point in the survey, the participant notes that she is feeling fatigued. K
 - The participant is not sure what is meant by trip time. K
 - She rated the safety very low but gave it a 3 only because "I'm understanding." K
 - She had no idea what "Quality of transfer" means. K
- At this point in the session when asked how he was feeling, the participant stated that he was fine because he was used to working with numbers, but he could see how other people might be getting "antsy." MM
- The participant was glad to see that there were descriptions for the attributes "safety" and "security" but still did not know what "accessible features" the survey was referring to and could have used a description. Wasn't exactly sure what "quality of transfer" meant.

Choose Top Five

- Her first reaction to this question was that it was very crowded on the screen and it would be difficult to answer this question on her phone. She noted that it feels overwhelming and here she would rather have a box to just write what is most important to her.
- The participant noted that the instructions for this question should be in a different color to draw your attention to the new question format. F
- Finds the categories helpful but mentions that there is a lot of read through. K
- The participant is feeling very fatigued from the survey at this point. K
- The participant interpreted the question as "what are the things that need the most attention from NJT" not what is most important to me. M

- The participant liked that the choices were grouped by different colors. He interpreted the instructions to mean that he should choose one from each grouping.
- The participant found this question a little confusing but was able to answer it. She noted that it took some time to read through all of the choices before answering. Z

Ranking Top Five

- The participant took the time to think about how to rank the top five, but noted that she was quite fatigued at this point. K
- He understood the task but had trouble with the sliding and the ranking, getting them into the order that he wanted. M

Overall Satisfaction/Recommending NJT

- By the time she got to these questions, she was “basically done with the survey mentally” and was pretty sure she was close to the end. She thought it was strange to be asked about recommending NJT because there are really no other options. She was aggravated to be asked for follow-up open-ended information here and audibly groaned. B
- The participant noted that if she were taking the survey on her own time that she would be feeling fatigued by this point. She reiterated that a five-point scale would help reduce fatigue in the survey overall. F
- When prompted with an open-ended follow-up box for this question, the participant noted that she would prefer closed-ended and have multiple choices to select. Depending on her mood, she might skip an open-ended question at this point. F
- The participant thinks that being asked this is a little strange because NJT and trains are part of the infrastructure and it’s a necessity not a choice for many people. M
- When asked, he states that he thinks he is just about done with the survey and hopes it is not much longer. MM

Part 3: Demographics

- This participant was unhappy with the demographic questions and didn’t understand why NJT needed this information. When prompted with a question about whether knowing why they ask it would help her feel better providing that information, she said yes. But she said she was wary of providing personal information to NJT. B
- The participant noted that she would have expected to be asked the demographic question at the beginning of the survey. F
- She also thought they provided a “nice break” since these questions were information that everyone knows off the top of their heads. F
- She stated that she would be likely to complete them because she was motivated to complete the survey, but it feels like a lot. K
- The participant had no problem answering demographic questions. Found it odd that “prefer not to answer” was not a choice for all the questions, just gender. Found male/man a strong way to describe gender and thought the question about how well you speak English to be odd given that the survey is in English. M

- He said he would rather exit the survey than answer these questions. If the questions are required, he would quit. MM
- The participant had no issues with filling out demographic questions, and she understood the value of these questions for NJT. Z

Number of years using NJT

- By this point in the survey the participant was extremely fatigued.
- The participant found it a bit difficult to answer additional questions about ridership after the demographic questions. It was forcing him to think back to how he answered early questions. M
- The participant noted that his question is confusing because it is limited to the purpose he selected in the beginning and not generally how long he has been riding NJT. MM
- At his point in the survey, he states that he is a “6 out of 10” on fatigue. MM
- She expected the demographic questions to be the last questions and was surprised there were more after. Z

Part 4: Final Questions

- The participant again expressed fatigue at this point and noted that these questions might have been better placed earlier in the survey when she was not so fatigued. But she did like having the opportunity to add a comment about something that was not already covered.
- The participant would have preferred Question 47 to be multiple choice so that she could select options, rather than have to write her answer. F
- She noted that she would probably skip these open-ended questions if she was taking the survey because they are not required. She’d be tempted to just hit “done.” F
- The participant felt that these questions were somewhat redundant with other questions earlier in the survey. K
- At this point the participant is feeling like the survey is very long and might have given up by this point if he was taking it on his own. M
- These questions would be better in the survey - these are the crux of the testimonial that I want to give. If it were earlier, he would be more likely to answer it. M
- 48 and 50 feel like the same question. M
- The participant liked the final question because he felt that they could finally “vent” and say all of the things he wanted to say. MM
- He stated that this question should be question 1 and not 49. MM
- He also stated 51 seems redundant with 49. MM
- The participant noted that it was very hard to just think of one thing that would improve the experience. Z
- She found those directions to be “very limiting” although also noted that there was “excessive space.” Z
- She also noted that there were things she wanted to express in the survey that she didn’t have ample space to express earlier and could do so here at the end of the survey. Z

Part 5: Incentive/Raffle

- When asked about incentives, he said he has never used the points and would prefer a more guaranteed incentive rather than a raffle. M
- The participant was a little reluctant to provide her contact information at this point. She jokingly expressed concern that NJT could somehow “blackmail” her if they didn’t like what she complained about.
- She also said that the NJT points were “useless” but she would value getting the \$100 gift card, so since she put the time in to complete the survey, she would fill in her information. B
- The participant said she might fill out the information to be entered into the raffle, but it would depend on her mood. She shakes her head at the unlikely outcome of the raffle because it is such a large pool of people who are entered to win. F
- The participant mentioned that incentives don’t really motivate her. She is more motivated by wanting her feedback to be heard to make the service better. K
- The participant noted that he would probably fill out the information for the incentive because he has already invested a lot of time. It would be pointless not to after answering all the other questions. M
- The participant would fill out the incentive information. But suggested that NJT make it very clear that it is not required because of people who believe in conspiracies. MM
- This participant was appreciative of the raffle and the NJT points. She said she is “thrifty” and would use them if she could use them at a store she goes to. However, she hadn’t ever used them in the past. Z

General comments

- She also commented that it is hard to track from what perspective she should be answering these questions. It seemed like she should answer from the perspective of the origin ride, but this seems more appropriate to answer for the return ride. B
 - She also mentioned that she is confused about whether the survey is asking her about her inbound or her outbound trip. The orientation is confusing. F
 - At this point he isn’t sure which station he should be thinking about when answering this question. MM
- Noted that a progress bar would be helpful. B
 - At this point when asked about her level of fatigue, she said she was fine but doesn’t know where she is in the survey. K
 - He reiterates that it would be good to know where you are in the survey. There should be a progress bar to let you know where you are. M
- He takes a lot of trips that combine light rail and bus, and he finds it frustrating to try to only think about the bus leg of his trip when doing the survey. Things not being coordinated is a big issue, and there is really no way to express that. The survey needs something to accommodate multi-modal trips. M

Need for definitions/descriptions (compiled from a various sections in the survey)

- She also noted that the descriptions don't always make sense (why are they asking about pavement on the bus, etc.).
- The participant paused because she was not sure what "scheduling attributes" meant? F
- She was also confused by the phrase "personal business." F
- She was also confused about what they mean by "the condition" – the condition of the bus when it arrives or the condition of the site? K
- The participant was confused about what was meant by "signage" and would like more explanation. K
- She had no idea what "Quality of transfer" means. K
- The participant is not sure what she meant by trip time. K
- The participant noted that It is not clear what exactly the survey is referring to when using the word "stop." And it was hard to figure out what they are referring to as a "facility" M
- The participant thinks that people might get confused what some of the terms are. Some terms are explained better than others. M
- The participant was unfamiliar with a few of the attributes listed under this category. He did not understand what "availability of accessible services" meant. He did not know what the My Transit app was. MM
- The participant was glad to see that there were descriptions for the attributes "safety" and "security" but still did not know what "accessible features" the survey was referring to and could have used a description. Wasn't exactly sure what "quality of transfer" meant.

Reflections for NJT

- The participant found the survey to be too long. B
- She also thinks the survey is long and some people might be turned off by the length. Z
- She suggested that NJT should ask people up front what they are most interested in giving feedback on and then they should answer those questions first. B
- [NJT] just doesn't communicate it to the public, and she would like more communication from NJT about the results from the survey.
- The participant stated that he would want to know what the results of the survey are and when he would expect to hear from NJT about what happens next. MM
- The participant recommended removing open-ended questions F
- Improve the look/aesthetics of the NJT emails that share information about the survey to draw more attention and look more appealing. F
- The participant reiterated that some of the questions are redundant or repetitive and at times she thought that she had already answered certain questions. K
- She also said that some of the categories or answer choices were not specific enough and needed more explanation. K
- She was frustrated that there was no space to address some of her specific concerns, and she wanted more space to explain her negative scores. Z

USER TESTING SESSION – PARTICIPANT “B”

Facilitator: Miriam Salerno

Co-facilitator: Cate Heady

Date: May 2, 2025

Trip questions

The participant had to look up the route number, but looked up the bus stop number in the app. Mentioned that she appreciates the app. But did not know the bus stop number.

- *Uh, yeah, because in the app at least, it has an app. I think. I appreciate the fact that it has an app so that I can see when it's coming, although it's not always accurate, but I guess it's.*

The participant was confused about what the boarding stop is versus the arrival destination, but it's confusing about what they are talking about. Had to think about what it means.

- *I think the only thing that threw me off a little is here, where it's like, how did I get to my arrival? I guess my assumption is that this is the first stop, like to take the bus.*
- *Assuming that they're not asking about like in between where I get dropped off from the final place to my final place, like my final bus stop to the final destination. So the language is a little bit confusing.*

“Stops/terminals most frequently” is confusing because it's not clear if it is supposed to be only about where you start or stop or where you pass through. It is easy for her because her frequent stop is there, but she suggested that it could be confusing for other people.

- *Well, yes, here again. I'm thinking I'm assuming they just mean any stop that I'm going, not the one that I'm starting at necessarily, but just if I pass by one of those terminals as well? It's not the case for me but if I wanted to go from like within New Jersey to New Jersey, I might not pass any of these places. But is that what you're looking for or like if I pass through this and then go somewhere else?*
- *For me, I guess it's easy because I definitely this is my stop. But I guess there is also the “none of the above.”*

How often do you make this trip

It's not clear to the participant if it is a round trip or how often you go in general. Is one day one or two trips? But looks that the max is 7 and assumes it is round trip but had to think about it.

Office/worksite question.

The participant felt this question was very wordy, and she had to think about it for a second. She liked that it is bolded so she can just skim and try to figure it out but wonders if they ask this because they are trying to figure out when they need more staff or more bus drivers or trying to figure out changes in timing/routes. It feels reasonable, but she doesn't think they are going to actually do anything with this information.

- *It's very wordy, but I like that it's bolded in certain parts, so I don't really need to read the rest.*

- *Are there days that would be less like that they wouldn't have as many people. Maybe they're thinking of how many bus drivers do we need to hire? Is it more on certain days and we need to up it on certain days when they're hiring people and then not so much on other days? Because even when I take the bus, I can tell what days are more people around the next versus the bus.*
- *But like, I don't feel like they're gonna do anything really with that information in the end.*

Pay for ticket

Looked for the subsidized card for this question. Doesn't know what my transit wallet is. She selected "other."

Satisfaction questions

Parking facilities:

When answering these questions, she was worried that if she rated the parking facility that she used too low for safety or other attributes that NJT would "take it away." She didn't want to give information about it being unacceptable for fear it would no longer be in use, so she contemplated rating it higher than she actually felt for fear that it would negatively affect her commute.

- *Like I'm a little worried only because the parking for it is not like really a lot. It's kind of just on the side of the road. They just decided to pave so I don't want them to take it away, but I do want them to make it better. I don't know if they'll just be like, oh, well, then forget it. We just won't even have one. And then you will have nothing like so. I'm debating if I should rate it higher so that it won't be a problem, but then I don't know like it. I'm like debating. Should I go lower, or should I go higher? I almost feel like I should. I think it should be lower, but then I wonder if I should rate it higher because I am worried that they might take it away.*

When asked about the 10-point Likert Scale:

She noted that a five-point scale would be a lot faster and would probably prevent her from overthinking so much. She also wondered why NJT even needs such a broad 10-point scale.

- *It is a lot of points, so maybe yeah I feel like on a 5 point scale maybe it would be a lot faster like I'm like debating between a 3, 4, or a 5, whereas I guess on a 5 point scale I probably just would have done two or three like it wouldn't have to think so much.*
- *Why do they need to know so many different points? Like what are they gonna do with that?*

When prompted with an open-ended follow-up:

When prompted to the open ended she said "Oh no" because now she has to write more. If she knew it would prompt open ended, she wouldn't have rated it low.

- *Ohh no.*
- *Because now I have to write so much more about why I rated the way that I rated it, and if I rated it higher, I wouldn't have had to.*

Facilities

She wasn't entirely sure what was meant by facilities and if it included stops that were enclosures or also stops that just had a sign. She also reiterated that the ten-point scale was too many points for this.

- *One stop is just a sign. It's on the side of the road. So I'm like, well, I don't know. How do I answer that?*
- *Again, too many points I guess for this.*

Scheduling

She doesn't really know how to judge this and if it is really acceptable or not. She starts thinking from the perspective of NJT and whether or not it would be realistic to hire more bus drivers to improve the schedule.

- *Well, I don't even know what my thoughts are. It's more of like, is it really acceptable? I'm just thinking about, I would like it to be more, but I guess theoretically they're not going to be able to hire any more bus drivers than they do now. And the ones that show up now don't even necessarily show up.*

On board the bus

- No comments

Communications

Doesn't understand what signage they are referring to and would like to have more explanation for these terms.

- *I'm wondering what signage they're even referring to, if it's even available. Do they mean like where the bus is? Do they mean Bus stop? Like I I'm struggling with what exactly are they asking me?*

Announcements

She doesn't know where the station announcement would be unless it refers to Port Authority because there is nothing at the bus stop. Doesn't understand how to answer these questions. She also commented that it is hard to track from what perspective she should be answering these questions. It seemed like she should answer from the perspective of the origin ride, but this seems more appropriate to answer for the return ride. She also reiterates issues with the 10-point scale.

- *I'm just thinking, where would the station announcement be? Unless I was at Port Authority? Where is it broadcasting? There's not anything at the bus stop.*
- *Throughout the survey, it almost sounds like you're thinking from the point. Origin bus stop is but then suddenly here this is my destination like when I get to Port Authority I don't care about the station announcement at that point. It's when I'm taking the bus back that I would then this would be relevant.*
- *Well, I don't know. Again this 10-point scale I guess is just too many options, but if it was like on a 5-point scale, I probably would have just done 4.*

Overall

By the time she gets to these questions, she notes that she is feeling fatigued and finds some of the questions repetitive with what was covered before. She is tired because she feels like she is thinking too much so she considers just choosing something to move faster and get to the end.

She also noted that the descriptions don't always make sense (why are they asking about pavement on the bus, etc.). She also continued to try to think about what is reasonable for NJT to address rather than focusing on her experience alone and noted that a **progress bar** would be helpful.

- *Oh, I'm hoping that we're almost done, but I can't tell where we're at. I'm hoping at this point after this I'm done, but I guess we're not. I like some surveys have like a percentage of how much you're done, and you can kind of do, I actually want to continue or should I just stop?*
- *Like I guess I'm kind of tired cause there's so many things that I've already thought of and considered, but I also over think a lot of these questions. So, then I'm like maybe I should stop thinking so much and then just choose something just to get to the end is kind of what I'm thinking now.*
- *Like am I tripping on the bus? Like, why is there pavement? I guess that that might be at like the bus stop in that. But you see, yeah, we did the bus stop already. So then when I see this, I'm like, well, I'm reading just what this says, but it's confusing.*

Explanations

When asked if she felt that she had enough opportunities to explain her answers she noted that there were some things that that she thought she'd be asked to give more information one but wasn't asked, like scheduling.

Choose Top Five

Her first reaction to this question was that it was very crowded on the screen and it would be difficult to answer this question on her phone. She noted that it feels overwhelming and here she would rather have a box to just write what is most important to her.

- *So many things. If I was doing this on my phone I would be really annoyed. Because I'm on a computer, it's easier. But if I had to do this on my phone it's too much on the screen.*
- *It feels overwhelming.*
- *I would have just rather hey here's a box and you just write what you wanna say. But I get why they do this so that they can at least categorize it.*

Overall Satisfaction

By the time she got to these questions, she was "basically done with the survey mentally" and was pretty sure she was close to the end. She thought it was strange to be asked about recommending NJT because there are really no other options. She was aggravated to be asked for follow-up open-ended information here and audibly groaned.

- *I'm not happy with it, but we're also tied to. There's not many options. So they might be like, oh, well, people would recommend us. We're fine. But I'm not happy with them. But I don't have options.*

Demographics

This participant was unhappy with the demographic questions and didn't understand why NJT needed this information. When prompted with a question about whether knowing why they ask it would help her feel better providing that information, she said yes. But she said she was wary of providing personal information to NJT.

- *I feel like it doesn't matter who I am. Why do you need to know that? To fix certain things? Is it because you think I'm a certain type of person that then you feel like I you need to fix it? Or are you discounting certain people because they're like, oh, well, "whatever this is so and so type of people" or like, I don't know why that matters, whether I'm 17, whether I'm 60.*
- *What does that have to do with anything? With the survey? How many people in my house doesn't mean that they're all taking the bus?*
- *If there was like an explanation that told you why they needed these, like why this information would be helpful, then depending on what I feel about that, then maybe I might.*
- *If I didn't speak English well at all, how would I even fill this out?*

Number of years using NJT

By this point in the survey the participant was extremely fatigued.

- *Man, I'm tired. Why are there more questions?*
- *Uh, OK, at this point, I'm like, what did I do this? But I already invested so much time should I finish it."*

Final questions

The participant again expressed fatigue at this point and noted that these questions might have been better placed earlier in the survey when she was not so fatigued. But she did like having the opportunity to add a comment about something that was not already covered.

- *I'm like, man, if you had maybe asked earlier when I was more open to the survey, but now I'm like tired and now you want more information.*
- *I probably would have just not written that much unless I'm really upset.*

Incentive

The participant was a little reluctant to provide her contact information at this point. She jokingly expressed concern that NJT could somehow "blackmail" her if they didn't like what she complained about. She also said that the NJT points were "useless", but she would value getting the \$100 gift card, so since she put the time in to complete the survey, she would fill in her information.

- *They want to give me these dumb reward points that don't do anything for me.*

- *I would love to have \$100.00 gift card for NJ Transit.*
- *And maybe they might try to find me. I don't know. They just now know how I feel. And what are they gonna do? Blacklist me from going on the bus? Like this person has so many problems with us that no, you can't. Like I don't. So I guess I'm fine with it.*

Final thoughts for NJT

The participant found the survey to be too long and suggested that NJT should ask people up front what they are most interested in giving feedback on and then they should answer those questions first. That way people can talk about what is most important to them up front before they get too tired.

- *It's too long.*
- *I think if they did something where they just asked a certain area of where you either had an issue and then clicking on that. Like if it was like a parking thing is your biggest issue with it, then in the beginning if you just selected, issue with parking. And then it asks you specific questions about parking. It would be a lot better then they would get more people to actually fill it out and maybe write what their actual thoughts are.*
- *If they actually want people to fill it out and they want us to get real feedback, then they should do it. They have to shorten the survey and then beginning just have them select what they actually want to talk about.*

When asked where she thought the information goes, she was not sure because she doesn't see improvements. She then said maybe they are working on it but just don't communicate it to the public and she would like more communication from NJT about the results from the survey.

- *I almost feel like it goes nowhere Because there have been no improvements, but I wonder if it's because maybe people never got to the end, or maybe they are working on something, but they just haven't said. I think it would be better if they, at least they said, hey, we're working on this due to whatever survey results or whatever that you can see. But it almost feels like nothing's happening. It's nothing's getting better.*
- *And when to expect something so that it's not just words that don't mean anything. Because, like, why else would I want to invest my time into something where you're not going to do anything with it anyway, and I've just wasted like half an hour or 45 minutes of my time and I I don't even know if it's going to the right place. If the right people are reading it and if there are any changes that will be made from it, then what was that for?*

USER TESTING SESSION – PARTICIPANT “F”

Facilitator: Miriam Salerno

Date: May 9, 2025

Trip Questions

The participant's initial reaction when she saw the screen was to wonder what it would look like on a phone, since she most often does this type of thing on her phone.

- *UM, it looks fine. I'd be curious to see how it looks on the phone. UM, just because I tend to when I'm filling out service, I think I use my phone OK. It just comes in like on my e-mail, so I just open it on my phone, yeah.*

She found it difficult to pick a time because she commutes at different times.

- *I have like multiple. So before I would go into the office early in the Morning to study. I would depart at like 5:45 so I could get in by 7:00 so I could stay for two hours, but now that I'm kind of done with my exams, I will be arriving to the office at 9, maybe even later.*

The participant does not know the difference between the different neighborhoods listed for final destinations in NYC, and she said she would just guess.

When asked about her travel compared to May 2024 she said “What is the point of this question?”

- *I'm not a fan of the wording. I guess it makes sense, but usually I'm speeding through surveys so I don't. I don't know if I want to take the time to understand what's being asked.*

Facilities

When she looks at this section of the survey she has an immediate reaction that it is wordy and confusing. But she does like the header language in pink.

- *I see word vomit, OK.*
- *I feel like this [gesturing to the explanatory text] could be unneeded since like each one is explained and then there's the scale right here, so it's kind of intuitive, so this may not need to be there.*

She also mentioned that she is confused about whether the survey is asking her about her inbound or her outbound trip. The orientation is confusing.

- *But I think, depending on if it's like you're inbound or you're outbound. I think there should be clarification on that. Because I was thinking of my outbound so like from Port Authority to home, not from home to Port Authority. So, it's kind of confusing about what your orientation with direction.*

Scheduling

The participant paused because she was not sure what “scheduling attributes” meant?

- *Scheduling attributes. What does that mean, like whether they come on time?*

On Board

- No comments

Announcements

The participant didn't know that they did station announcements, so she rated it as "NA" but she does not like the on-board announcements. She initially rated it as 0 but then changed it to 2 after considering how she interpreted the numbers.

- *I feel like 0 to me means completely unacceptable or doesn't really exist. It currently exists actually. Maybe let me move it to 2 because it exists but I'm just not a fan of it.*

When prompted with a closed ended follow up, she was only able to select one response but would have liked to select multiple because she has observed multiple issues.

- *Because there are like multiple. Like, it could be many things, especially if you take multiple buses.*

Overall

During this section, the participant was asked how she felt about the 1-10 scale. She indicated that she felt like it was too much and that 1-5 would be enough. She also said that having a 10-point scale gives too much variability in terms of how people interpret the numbers.

- *I kind of think it's too much. I think 1 to 5 will do the trick.*
- *It's too much. There's like, too many choices... And depending like and, there's more variability...The 10 leaves open a lot of personal interpretation of what the numbers mean.*

Pick the top 5

The participant noted that the instructions for this question should be in a different color to draw your attention to the new question format. But otherwise found this question easy and straightforward to answer.

Ranking

The participant had no difficulty with this question. However, she expected the placement of the choices to move when she changed the number.

Overall satisfaction

The participant noted that if she were taking the survey on her own time that she would be feeling fatigued by this point. She reiterated that a five-point scale would help reduce fatigue in the survey overall.

- *I think I would be fatigued. But I think reducing the scale to maybe 5. Would help them. There are too many choices, so you start to like..like you may answer as actively as possible in the beginning, but then you start to like, get tired of it, so you might just hit acceptable, acceptable.*

Would you recommend NJT

When prompted with an open-ended follow-up box for this question, the participant noted that she would prefer closed-ended and have multiple choices to select. Depending on her mood, she might skip an open-ended question at this point.

- *I would prefer to select an answer and I feel like with a survey like this it might be even more productive to have options.*

- *It depends on my mood. I have skipped open-ended questions. If the reason comes to mind very quickly, I would respond.*

Demographics

The participant noted that she would have expected to be asked the demographic question in the beginning of the survey. She also thought they provided a “nice break” since these questions were information that everyone knows off the top of their heads. She was also confused by the phrase “personal business.”

- *I don't what..what is personal business?*
- *I think the demographic questions were a nice break.*

Final Questions

The participant would have preferred Question 47 to be multiple choice so that she could select options, rather than have to write her answer. She remarked that NJT could probably give categories as choices based on what they frequently hear as complaints. She noted that she would probably skip these open-ended questions if she was taking the survey because they are not required. She'd be tempted to just hit “done.”

- *I feel like I would [skip the questions], especially if I look down and I see the done button. And especially since the question doesn't have like the asterisks that indicate required, I look for that sometimes, then I might just hit the done button.*

Incentives

The participant said she might fill out the information to be entered into the raffle, but it would depend on her mood. She shakes her head at the unlikely outcome of the raffle because the it is such a large pool of people who are entered to win.

Final thoughts/advice to NJT

The participant recommended removing open-ended questions and improving the look/aesthetics of the NJT emails that share information about the survey to draw more attention and look more appealing.

- *I would say to probably take out the open-ended response, maybe only have one at the end for like additional comments and have it be optional and just use more multiple choice and select all that apply.*
- *Also, I feel like their emails the way it's just set up. It can look like a scam. I don't know. It's just not very...like I'm not used to like unappealing emails. I wouldn't call it unprofessional because there's nothing unprofessional about it, but it's just not formatted like I would take it seriously.*

USER TESTING SESSION – PARTICIPANT “K”

Facilitator: Miriam Salerno

Date: May 7, 2025

Ridership Questions

This participant was the first one to know the bus stop number off the top of her head. At first she tried to include multiple routes in the survey because she said she used many routes equally. However, she was able to narrow it down to one when she had to.

She had an easy time getting through most of the ridership questions and noted that she understood the importance of these questions for NJT. There were a couple of short hesitations, including some confusion around the inclusion of “Bus” as an option for how she got to the bus stop. She wasn’t sure if that was referring to buses outside of the NJT system. In addition, her most frequent stop, the Maplewood garage, was not listed.

- *I'm trying to figure out how often because I do use all three, I'm mostly walk to the bus stop. Yeah, I was trying to find which one I should pick.*
- *Now when we say bus on this, are we talking about transit bus? And so I wasn't sure if they make me another bus shuttle company or we're just talking about transit. so I'm wondering if the bus is another form of bus or we're just or is it excluding new jersey transit bus in the question.*
- *I actually catch the bus like, right at the Maplewood garage So then I guess none of the above.*

When asked about her work arrangements in Question 14, she paused to review the options carefully. She understood the options but noted that other people might find it confusing.

- *I mostly work hybrid work from home, but it would be a confusing question if somebody didn't understand other people's like works work like structures, but honestly I understand it.*

She understands why NJT is asking the questions and that she has to travel at random times and so she wants NJT to make improvements when she needs the bus.

- *I do understand why the questions are being asked for the structure, so just get more, gather more data around how to make it more. I guess to make it I guess in terms of scheduling the bus routes more easily accessible or what? Or I guess this also could be to see.*

Facilities

The participant is confused as to whether she should answer the questions generally about NJT or specific to a site that she uses. She chooses to answer them generally.

- *So in my now here's what the confusing part comes in. Am I doing it generally during transit bus service and generally or am I specifically thinking about like specific a specific site where I go? So I'm gonna do generally only because I actually I've traveled all over the state, New Jersey with transit.*

She was also confused about what they mean by “the condition” – the condition of the bus when it arrives or the condition of the site?

- *Now what's that's that's kind of confusing, “arrival stop condition”. Like the condition of the stop. When the bus arrives? Or are they asking about the condition of the site for all like throughout the day when buses pull up? I'm really confused about this.*

** Rated bus stop conditions low and was not prompted with an open-ended follow-up but she expected to get one and would have provided more detail.

- *So that's why I was also confused because I thought maybe if that with that question, would there be more questions after that. That's why I was a little confused with that rating.*

Scheduling

The participant rated scheduling high, noting that she appreciates NJT after living in other states where there was a real lack of public transit.

- *Compared to a lot of other places, actually really good. You have that perspective having been other places where things were worse, so you're able to compare. In the state of Vermont, it's just a cow bus. Like a bus is like a shape of a cow. Like, I'm not kidding. And it was like, so slow. And it came like, once a day.*

Onboard the bus

The participant found it hard to rate “seating availability” on the bus because she noted that it was not the drivers fault or NJT fault that there were a lot of people and the bus was full.

- *OK, now here is where it gets a little bit tricky with what it is hard to rate. This is hard to rate as a customer. Because sometimes sitting availability is really not necessarily the fault of the bus drivers. Sometimes they have like 20 people at that stop and the bus before it had a full bus. And then the next bus after that also has a full bus.*
- *I would rather say bus availability than seat availability.*

The participant relates “comfort” to “cleanliness” and rates them low. Poor cleanliness is why she is uncomfortable. She rates it as a 4 because she recognizes that they get cleaned and serviced every night.

- *Comfort on, I mean, I'm having to go lower with the comfort on board simply because the cleanliness is a part of the reason why I'm uncomfortable.*
- *They clean those buses every night. They clean those they every morning they get maintenance necessarily. How they start off in the morning might not be how they be by the time 1:00. Two o'clock public. However, it does. It does bother me. So I'm still leave it at a 4. That's fair.*

The participant expected to see something about buses breaking down in this section.

- *So one thing though going back is that it's confusing because if we're going to rate the conditions of the bus, is one thing as a customer that we think about a lot, that's not actually being brought up in here is how often does the buses break down.*

When prompted with follow-up questions about cleanliness, she was conflicted about how much detail to give but eventually used the “other” field to provide some detail for her feedback and scoring.

- I don't really want to give a reason why a part of me does, because I'm one of those people. I write emails to companies. So I do want to give a reason around it.

Communications

The participant feels NJT is good at providing information, so she scored a 10. When asked about the scale, she said she like the choices of zero to ten. And she specifically likes having zero as the worst option, rather than one. When asked, she said that zero to five would be equally easy to use.

- I think I like that scale actually because I feel like 0 is like sometimes when 1 is like, 1 is like OK, it's on the scale but some things are not on the scale. Sometimes it's really is unacceptable. So I actually appreciate the zero.
- Five would be good, it would. It would still, honestly, it would still hold the same weight as zero to 10, but zero to five would be good too as well. I think if I was saw this from zero to five, I would still be reading it in the same kind of manner, instead of it being the 10 will probably be a 5.
-

The participant was confused about what was meant by “signage” and would like more explanation.

- *Can I ask signage/information available, are we talking about like signs and making things like available for customers like this is accessible? Or this is where this bus is coming arrival that's what they mean by signage availability?*

At this point when asked about her level of fatigue, she said she was fine but doesn't know where she is in the survey.

- At this point of the survey, I.A decent survey. For me, for me. I think it's a decent survey, but is this the middle point or? Or is this the like the way at the beginning so that I don't know, I would have to tell you when I when once I reach the end.

Announcements

- No comment

Overall

The participant is not sure what she meant by trip time. She rated the safety very low but gave it a 3 only because “I'm understanding.” She had no idea what “Quality of transfer” means.

- *the bus safety now I gotta read the safety. This is real low simply because the the things that people do and I understand bus shop. We gotta get places, but sometimes I'll be like OK, we drive on this bus, he can make one wrong move. Everybody going up in the hospital.*

- *Only because because it's like maybe I'm giving 3 because I'm understanding, but it it really is unacceptable*
- *Quality of transfer. What? I have no idea if I'm being honest.*

At this point in the survey the participant notes that she is feeling fatigued.

- *Alright, so now I'm getting a little bit "alright we gotta wrap this up."*
- *And now you're being asked for more detail?*

Five most important

The participant takes time to think about this question, finds the categories helpful but mentions that there is a lot of read through.

- *It is a little odd. It's a good it's a it's not a hard question. It's just the I'm trying to find...I like the way that you guys broke it down. But for me, it's a lot to sift through.*

And she is feeling very fatigued from the survey.

- *All right, so now I'm at the point. I'm like, OK, Dang. I got more questions.*

Ranking the top five

The participant took the time to think about how to rank the top five, but noted that she was quite fatigued at this point.

- *And now I'm thinking I think we're almost at the end. I hope we're there.*

How likely are you to recommend NJT

The participant really liked this question and noted that she is grateful for the transit system in New Jersey.

- *I like this question because it also it will help you capitalize what what other people will find most important and most useful about transit*
- *But also the convenience. You can really get anywhere. Transportation to get all over your state and it's accessible and reliable. Other states don't have that.*

Demographics

The participant did not mind these questions. She stated that she would be likely to complete them because she was motivated to complete the survey, but it feels like a lot.

- *Might as well finish it. That's how I feel. This is how I am as. A person, but I'm like, is it like? Alright, this is. Wow. Yeah. A lot of question.*
- *But for a survey, I guess... to receive the kind of information you're trying to get from other people, I do understand the length of it. Maybe the structure of the questions that make you feel like. But I also I don't have a problem with the way it's structured. Maybe it's just needs to be broken down to pieces. Two parts, I'm not sure.*

Final questions

The participant felt that these questions were somewhat redundant with other questions earlier in the survey.

- *Some of these questions could actually be the same question. Like going back to when we had when the questions we were in, like the 20s where they were like asking about if this is like...Some of these could be some of those questions would be the same questions, like if they're asking about trip, accessibility, arrival time.*
- *It's feeling a little redundant.*
- *You can tell that these two questions right here, 51 and 52, they're kind of like the same.*

Incentives

The participant mentioned that incentives don't really motivate her. She is more motivated by wanting her feedback to be heard to make the service better.

- *When I like a service or when I do something often and also it's like if I take it if I use it a lot it wouldn't matter if I if I get paid for it or not. I already pay money towards this company anyway, so I would like I would rather my feedback to be heard.*

Suggestions for NJT

The participant reiterated that some of the questions are redundant or repetitive and at times she thought that she had already answered certain questions. She also said that some of the categories or answer choices were not specific enough and needed more explanation. She appreciates that NJT is asking questions about things that she wants to share with them.

- *Like I told you before, some of the questions would be that they were they kind of redundant.*
- *And I'm sometimes it gets confusing when you ask the question over again and have me going back and forth and think "wait didn't I answer that before?" Make sure you're not make feel like deja vu has taken actually taken.*
- *Sometimes the categories they're asking about were not specific enough. Like what does that mean or what does that?*
- *You're asking questions that can address the things that as a customer that I want to share that's the part that I like about the survey.*

USER TESTING SESSION – PARTICIPANT “M”

Facilitator: Miriam Salerno

Co-facilitator: Cate Heady

Date: April 30, 2025

Opening discussion about the survey

The participant said that that the thinks he recalls seeing emails from NJT about the survey, but the does not take it because he feels that is might be “pointless” and the incentive is not enough to compensate for his time.

- *I would do it if I felt like it would actually get something done right. And I think there's a reason why this is how I feel about it. But like I know everyone else shares this feeling, yeah.*
- *I would love to share my thoughts, complain, point out things that I think could be better, but there is a creeping sense to me that like this seems to be pointless and like obviously you also try to incentivize it like I think there's sometimes gift cards that are given out.*
- *Like is like are my odds of getting this gift card like big enough for me to like actually participate and feel that I'm also getting something immediate in return, but the biggest thing for me is just like also sense of like is this futile. Does this actually lead to change?*

When asked if it would help if NJT communicated back to participants about the survey he said it would help a bit. He said that he would want to feel like NJT is actually doing something with his information to make it worth the time.

- *I think it would help. Yeah. I mean, it would like it would definitely make me go like, especially if it were very precise, right. Because you guys did the survey, we realized that Penn Station needs to be open longer, whatever it is. Right. Like. Yeah, it like. That's why we do these. That would help. The irony is like, I wonder if that even helps better than the monetary reward. Like in the sense that like you actually feel like you're doing something and in the way that you're like voting or something like that, right? Yeah. Because that it that that directly impacts you and you feel like, OK, this is going to change my life even better than maybe 100-dollar gift card.*

When ask about incentives he said he has never used the points and would prefer a more guaranteed incentive rather than a raffle.

- *And speak of the reward points. It's something, I mean, I've been a pass holder for the light rail on the one zone bus for four years now. I don't think I've ever used the rewards.*
- *You know, maybe a dollar might be a little bit low, but like a like a free like up to \$5 like you're getting into Manhattan, for example, something that could really like get people going, right, like a \$5 credit or something.*

Trip and Travel Pattern Questions

Question #1

The participant doesn't feel like his experience really fits into any of the answers. The question is geared more towards commuters who take a regular trip. He uses NJT in a variety of different ways. His experience doesn't fit into these choices.

- *Feels like it doesn't really apply. My use of NJ Transit is not mediated by like whether I'm starting at home or using it for work. So I understand the question. It's just like it's I'm tempted to click other because it's like uh like I use it for all my transportation or near all. Not technically all but like near. All right, so if I'm using if I'm not walking.*
- *I mean, I I'm not working at the moment, but like I lived across street from my work, so I'd be walking there, but I would use the light rail to go to the iron. I live in Newark. Just Full disclosure, I would use it to go the ironbound or to where I grew up in North Newark. So. So, it's one of things we're like, it doesn't fit into.*
- *Tempted to pick other. And like, it feels like it's an all all-encompassing answer, but I'm not sure if it is, yeah.*

Bus Line/Bus Number

The participant doesn't really have a specific bus. There are several that he could take depending on where he is going and what time. This question makes more sense for people who are regularly traveling the same route. He doesn't know the bus stop number off the top of his head but said he could look it up via Google. When prompted he said he might be likely to skip this question, unless he had the time to look it up... it would depend on how rushed he felt.

- *I actually don't know which one is the most frequent. I'm just taking whatever one is there and it's going east or going South depending on how I'm trying to get so I would just like pick one and throw it in there.*

How do you get to your stop/departure destination?

The participant noted that he uses more than one method to get to his stop, so this question wasn't exactly relevant to him. But he selected walking because that is probably what he uses most often.

When do you travel?

The participant wanted to pick multiple time slots here because he uses transit more than just for commuting and found it frustrating to just be limited to one choice.

- *Would like to pick multiple because I don't use it for commuting*
- *I guess I would say weekdays off peak or week. Yeah, we all if I were forced to just pick one, maybe weekdays off peak.*

Destinations

The participant noted that most people refer to the station as New York Penn Station, not Penn Station New York so it might be hard for people to find the right answer choice.

- *You might just small thing. I think it's fine for maybe "Penn Station" just in case some people might get confused. Listed as New York Penn Station?*

Trip purpose

The participant found this is confusing because it is hard to distinguish the answer choices and also he would like to be able to choose more than one. "Personal business" is confusing for him, what does that mean?

- *It's like it's both work, but it's also like entertainment and the other problem is like I don't know what the distinction between these two are - personal business and entertainment, OK. Yeah, in the sense of like, what if it's not shopping, it's not entertainment or social. Then what is personal? Personal business feels like a catch-all for the others.*

What kind of ticket

The participant buys the light rail monthly and uses it on both the bus and the light rail and was not able to find that option in the choices.

- *I buy the light rail monthly which I know is also a one zone (and can be used for the bus as well), but I don't think that's on here. So, I would click I I maybe I should click "other". But I think bus monthly is what you guys would want me to click for this.*
- *That's a long response to saying that you might get some people like might click other if they're doing what I'm doing.*

Do you typically pay for...

The participant noted that debit card and apple pay can be redundant or confusing. Some people link their debit card to apple pay and might click debit card instead of apple pay. It's not clear.

- *A debit card or ohh wait a minute, no, it's Apple Pay. That's interesting. I understand the distinction, but my Apple Pay is my debit card. This might confuse some people, but I guess I would click Apple Pay.*

Section 2: Satisfaction

Please rate your satisfaction with boarding stop

The participant noted that It is not clear what exactly the survey is referring to when using the word "stop." And it was hard to figure out what they are referring to as a "facility"

- *This is interesting, is that the stop itself or is it just bigger things like Penn Station?*
- *I guess the way I would read that is like, bigger actual brick and mortar and not necessarily those enclosures that if they're having named the bus, the bus stop. Yeah, the bus stop shelters. Thank you.*
- *So I would read that as Penn Station person, I don't know anyone else would think that, but that's how I would read it.*
- *Yeah, it's interesting. So like, do I think of my light rail stop as a facility?*

Regarding the 10-point Likert scale (he brought it up unprompted):

The participant noted that the 10-point scale was too much, and a 5-point scale would be easier to use. The choices would feel more clear-cut with a five point scale.

- *Yeah. I wonder if at that point scale maybe too much. Maybe a 5 point?*

- *I am trying to figure my head like what? Where to put it? I know it's below acceptable, maybe unacceptable too far. So, I find myself kind of stuck between 1, 2, 3 and four for these. I don't really know the difference.*
- *The gradation [gesturing to the 10-point scale] this is where it's like it's really hard to explain. Like is it like slightly acceptable, you know, or just acceptable. But it's like, I don't. I don't know how to grade that.*

How do you feel about being prompted for this kind of specific follow up?

This participant likes being able to give follow up to talk about specifics with the closed-ended follow up questions.

- *I think it's fine. I like it. I've seen this in surveys before, so I understand that. Like sometimes when you click on something that like triggers like you know, cause you said it was really bad. I think I do appreciate that they want to know a little more.*
- *I like to explain what it is because it does feel like you're referencing the entire bus, but maybe you're just really concerned with the window. And I want to express how frustrated I am with the windows being cloudy. So I think this is a fine and it makes, and it makes sense to me.*

Communications

For this section the participant referenced that there might be some confusion with what is meant by “communications” and repeated that the 10-point scale is too much.

- *So, with communications, I know what that is. I mean, young professional, I can imagine a lot of people might not quite understand that you're referring to.*
- *Again the 10-point scale is too much.*

When prompted to an open-ended question after rating low:

For additional questions he did not like being prompted with an open-ended question when rating something low. Preferred the “closed-ended” follow up question that gave him choices. Also found it difficult to respond with specifics because he was thinking generally about his experiences overall.

- *Can I go back and change my answer if I see this prompt? I don't want to do extra work. Feels like a lot more work. Sometimes I just put a couple letters in to let me move on. Try to skip through it.*
- *Maybe also have a drop-down menu of follow up options. Open-ended is great but sometimes people don't want to answer it.*
- *It is weird because it's like it was asking my general experience and I wasn't necessarily talking about a specific incident.*

Announcements

The participant doesn't think there are really announcements at bus stops/stations. The language is also confusing because no one refers to it as a bus station, even at Penn Station.

- *This seems like a train question, not a bus question, because you don't, I mean you said called a bus station. I think people use stop.*

- *Right, like, and even if you're a Penn Station, you consider it a stop and not a station.*

When rated the announcements low, he was given items to select from for follow-up. He preferred this to the open-ended follow-up. Likes having the option of choices to select from for the follow up questions, not just open-ended. Wants to give people choice. Suggested that NJT give option to elaborate more if someone wants.

- *I see the choice "didn't speak clearly". That's what I was getting that from that one. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So that's great. It actually had exactly what I was going to say.*
- *I like both, if that makes any sense. It's like, like, why limit yourself? Because it is good Intel to have, but like not force people have to write open-ended. But I feel like the survey is getting too long. I might get frustrated with that, but this is kind of perfect and maybe just keeping a like if you want to elaborate more feel free to, but this is this is a good example of it preempting exactly what it what it's going to say.*

The participant was surprised that he didn't get prompt for more information when he rated service disruptions low.

- *I didn't get that for service disruption and I kind of wanted to explain that like I ride the bus and you just don't get. service disruption announcements, which has led to a lot of particular frustration with me with the 76 in particular.*
- *And I I guess I'm just surprised that it asked me for one of the things, but not the other specifically.*
- *Not that it matters that much because yeah, it it does make you feel like, oh, that's kind of weird, that they, I read one thing low and it followed up. But then I read this other thing low and it doesn't follow up. So maybe consistency could be useful.*

Top Five Things

The participant interpreted the question as "what are the things that need the most attention from NJT" not what is most important to me.

- *UM, so these are top five most important things. And the way I'm reading that, just to be fully clear is like things that need action on them, not necessarily are the the best. That's how I'm reading it. Things that require the most attention, though. I think for me, that's how I'm interpreting important, not necessarily are they the most reliable parts of the system that are still important, but rather **these things that I want to raise to your attention**. I think how I would interpret it. And I think, yeah.*
- *Is just the buses, not my experience on the light rail per se.*

He takes a lot of trips that combine light rail and bus and he finds it frustrating to try to only think about the bus leg of his trip when doing the survey. Things not being coordinated is a big issue and there is really no way to express that. Need something to acknowledge that.

- *Yeah, it's kind of weird. Like I like, I get both ways. I understand keeping them separate because they are separate systems, but like I wouldn't be surprised both in Newark and in Jersey City. I can't speak to. I know there's another one down South, but I do use the Jersey City one sometimes and I think people there too, especially live in the heights.*

*You, you, you might switch a Hoboken and take one of the buses up that way. **Just me thinking out loud that you may see it as an integrated system.***

- *Like, I mean it is in the sense of the same ownership, but it's not like a like people's experience are often not piece meal. But like you think of these things holistically and either like I think I'm fine doing 2 service just like a making it extra clear that this is solely about buses, but also maybe allowing a little bit of space or a question.*
- *In my case it's the light rail to another bus that would help make that understand that engagement in the system, because that may explain a lot of stuff of like why I'm always especially with weekend scheduling, it's actually an issue about the light rail specifically and not the not the bus per se.*
- *I think I'm able to compartmentalize those. I don't even trust myself on compartmentalize because you could see how I already clicked weekend holiday schedule, and that's honestly a bus thing specifically. But that's actually like. That's an overall thing. Yeah. Well, that's hard because the scheduling, the schedules have to align for it to. Right. This is about you guys, not the Port Authority, because I would definitely yell it in the sense of like, no things not being coordinated is an issue.*
- *it is an integrated system. It's not this piece meal thing that I'm using one aspect of solely and so. That might help. I don't. It would be here. I don't know where to put in the in the survey, but like something that acknowledges that, like and maybe that's what's getting at quality of transfer. But it's also an intra bus. The problem with the transfer, it's like I have the pass, so I just flash, I'm not worried about getting that yellow, that yellow thing. Maybe a little bit of graduation of that kind, so.*
- *Already a long list, but like some things like I don't think of as like as separate. I'm trying to find a good example where it's just like I don't. I don't even distinguish between two aspects of it. Maybe employee performance, customer service maybe no, I actually understand what customer service is getting out there.*

The participant thinks that people might get confused what some of the terms are. Some terms are explained better than others.

- *Well, safety and security. I understand, I know the difference because I know what safety is getting at, like, like, whether things going to fall on you and security is about like whether going to be attacked. I could see people reading safety as being confused. Yeah. Whereas like quality of transfer like that.*
- *Quality of transfer - So much is buried into that, whether it's transferring to another bus or or or entry, transit train or or within the bus system itself. Yeah. So it's, I know it's a mouthful, but that's how like, that's how.*
- *And so like, if I were to do that, it would be like I said, cleanliness. Ohh I guess employee performance would be up there and then?*

Ranking the Top Five -

He understood the task but had trouble with the sliding and the ranking, getting them into the order that he wanted.

- *Ohh and then you get to rank them once you pick the five. OK. Alright. One being most important. OK so.*
- *I I maybe would have figured that out. I'm young and hip and I get these things. I don't know if your older users might be able to figure this out.*
- *I don't want to project for that. I think you probably better off asking someone who's not as tech savvy.*

When asked “would you recommend NJT to a friend”.

The participant thinks that being asked this is a little strange because NJT and trains are part of the infrastructure and it's a necessity not a choice for many people. We all should take NJT not because it's great but because the system depends on people taking it.

- *I get that this is like standard but I never cared for it much. I'm not here to endorse it. It's like it's infrastructure. What does it mean to recommend? It's like you should take it. I mean again in a sense, maybe I would. I often try to tell people like you should use public transit. We should all be riding it not just for like climate change reasons, but like because the system needs it and for us to all like. Is that recommending it? I don't know. **It's such a weird question.***
- *Like a little perturbed like, uh, like I don't. I I like like recommend such like a hard word. And I'm like it's not about recommend it's like what does it mean to recommend*

Demographic questions

The participant had no problem answering demographic questions. Found it odd that “prefer not to answer” was not a choice for all the questions, just gender. Found male/man a strong way to describe gender and thought the question about how well you speak English to be odd given that the survey is in English.

- *Yeah. You know what's funny is I think I'm fine answering this. I think a lot of, like, privacy stuff is overblown. You might get people like.*
- *I think this is fine. I'm not as worried about these kind of answers, but I understand people might get a little perturbed with these kind of questions. Given where we are now, I guess you'd prefer not to answer.*
- *“Prefer not to answer” - Yeah, actually maybe that is a good option to have. Would I have clicked it? I think age I feel fine. Age feels despite not wanting to get older like it doesn't feel as loaded. I just like it's so I know this is not point. I know we want to get past this but this is like*
- *it is such a weird moment for all these kind of questions right now, especially this one and I get why, but at the same time it's like it's public transit. Unless you're trying to find out about like, are you getting representative sample size, which I understand cause I understand stats but like.*

- *It is weird though. Like I understand why you also asked that too, but it's like we are taking the quiz in English survey in English. It's an interesting question.*

Demographic ridership questions

The participant found it a bit difficult to answer additional questions about ridership after the demographic questions. It was forcing him to think back to how he answered early questions. Also found it difficult to answer because he uses transit equally for many purposes.

- *This is kind of from that earlier question. So it's been so long since that earlier question.*
- *So yeah, so are you surprised to get this question now in the surveyed scenes?*
- *A little bit. Yeah. I had forgotten about that. I had clicked that earlier and then to reiterate, I think it's worth reiterating, it's just like. It's a service that I use for multiple reasons, so it's not just about like personal. It's also because I'm getting to work, I'm going to school, I'm going to to my home using it and hanging out with friends.*
- *But to be honest, that is confusing. Yeah.*
- *I think what you want right here is to work, because this would ladder up into that. Yeah. So meaning like you're going to. So maybe we're commuting company business, not commuting in the past. I don't do that anymore, but that was in the past. Shopping, entertainment. I guess medical too. And yeah, all those.*
- *This is like you're asking for right now. Like currently, yeah, you might want to emphasize currently because in the past I used to get my transit paid for.*

Wrap up questions

At this point the participant is feeling like the survey is very long and might have given up by this point if he was taking it on his own. He would want to answer these questions but he might be too tired by this point to answer these questions in prose. These questions would better earlier in the survey - these are the crux of the information he wants to provide. If it were earlier, he would be more likely to answer it. He would be more likely to answer 48 than 49. 48 and 50 feel like the same question. He reiterates that it would be good to know where you are in the survey. There should be a progress bar to let you know where you are.

- *I think, yeah, I think it's an important question. It is question #48. So it is feeling a little bit like a marathon. Granted, I'm taking this much longer. This this survey then I would probably because I'm here talking with both of you.*
- *Would I give up at this point? I might. I mean, it depends on how I'm feeling. It's obviously situational. When you're getting me. To ask this now, it's like I would maybe want to answer this. Would I like if I'm feeling tired?*
- *And everybody filled out all those I I putting those buns before. Am I gonna sit here and do something in pros? I don't know.*
- *I think earlier I think if we were front loaded, this almost certainly would answer it, which I know it's hard because you've already you've already asked all those other questions. But for me it's like this could be the crux of like where I give that testimonial that I want to give.*

- *And if this were like earlier. I'd be more likely to answer this, I think so. Yeah, I think I could say that because it's like. I knew going into this that it would take an hour, so I'm like, I'm in that mental space right now, but clicking on that quiz.*
- *If I got it unprompted, I wouldn't even like. I wouldn't know how long it is, right? And you see us now with a lot of surveys that they'll have the progress bar.*
- *Progress bar rates that helps a little bit, you know where you're going with this one. It's like I I only got here, I don't even know how much further I'm going. Ohh, just say it does say final questions, but like you don't know if that's actually final if there might be more after this.*
- *I may answer 48 but not answer 49 even if I am going to be in that space to answer.*
- *I feel like 48 and 50 from the way I'm reading are asking the same thing, but slightly different. That's how I would read it. It's it's and it is a little frustrating. I always feel like I'm being asked. Same question over and over again.*

Reward/Incentive

The participant noted that he would probably fill out the information for the incentive because he has already invested a lot of time. It would be pointless not to after answering all the other questions.

- *I think at this point, especially for such a survey of this length, I probably would write this out because like if the reason why I clicked on this is not only to share my experience, but to at least have a chance of getting this gift card... but it would feel a little little pointless not to fill this out if you've gone all this way.*

USER TESTING SESSION – PARTICIPANT “MM”

Facilitator: Miriam Salerno

Co-facilitator: Cate Heady

Date: May 5, 2025

General Travel Information

The participant generally had an easy time with these questions. A few things to note:

- Had difficulty being asked to recall the bus stop number. He said he would not be motivated to look it up.
- He noted that his departure times vary but he was able to give an approximate time.
- When asked about stops, he was not sure whether the question was referring to the terminal that he uses leaving or the terminal that he uses coming.
- When asked about the main purpose of his trip, his ticketing method, and his payment method, he wanted to pick two options, but each time could only pick one so he selected “other” to give an explanation.

-

Facilities

- No issues/comments

Scheduling

- No issues/comments

Onboard the bus

- No issues/comments

Communications

The participant was unfamiliar with a few of the attributes listed under this category. He did not understand what “availability of accessible services” meant. He did not know what the My Transit app was. He rated signage a “3” and defined 3 as “awful.”

- *Availability of accessible service is I don't know what that means. I don't know what that means and I hate to say unacceptable because this could mean handicapped ADA compliance and you do have that there.*

When he was prompted for more information, he gladly shared additional details. He was happy to have the opportunity to provide additional details on his scores. However, when prompted to specify a date, he found it difficult because he was thinking about multiple occurrences.

- *I love it because it gives me a chance to tell, be more specific. Because there's nothing worse than when you're trying to find customers. Feedback and you get the wrong information. That's just as bad as not doing anything, OK?*
- *Oh, wait a second. You're asking me for a day. Ohh it it varies every month, but I can give you the last time I went I used.*

Announcements

The participant rated station announcements low and said they are “nonexistent” in Toms River but very clear in Atlantic City. At this point he isn’t sure which station he should be thinking about when answering this question. When asked how he liked the survey at this point. He said, “I’m glad you’re asking these questions” and that he was happy with the number and type of questions so far.

- *The announcements at Toms River are nonexistent. The ones in Atlantic City are very clear. OK. So then do you think they're talking about when you get on or when you get off? I can only assume when I get on because it seems that those are most of the questions I've gotten so far.*

When prompted with a follow-up question for rating station announcements low, he chose to use the “other” answer so that he could provide more information about his rating.

Overall

At this point in the session when asked how he was feeling, the participant stated that he was fine because he was used to working with numbers but he could see how other people might be getting “antsy.”

- *I'm fine. I'm. I'm used to working with numbers and on laptops so but other people, by this time they might be getting a little bit antsy, but tl'm fine, yeah.*

The participant was glad to see that there were descriptions for the attributes “safety” and “security” but still did not know what “accessible features” the survey was referring to and could have used a description. Wasn’t exactly sure what “quality of transfer” meant.

- *I assume quality means everything's on time.... Yeah. I would just say that, yeah, I would just say the timing.*
- *But again, accessible features. I don't know what that means.*

Most important

The participant like that the choices were grouped by different colors. He interpreted the instructions to mean that he should choose one from each grouping.

- *OK, so I'm going to what I'm going to do is I'm going to select one from each category. Yeah, I would think that's what.*
- *Well, color coding it into groups made it a lot easier for me, OK.*

The participant had no issues with the ranking and easily moved through that step in the question.

Would you Recommend NJT

The participant answers that he is highly likely to recommend NJ T. When asked, he states that he thinks he is just about done with the survey and hopes it is not much longer.

- *I wouldn't go much longer, OK? Alright. I mean, that's 34 questions, that's a lot.*

Demographics

The participant noted that when asked demographic questions he always answers “prefer not to

answer.” He said he would rather exit the survey than answer these questions. If the questions are required, he would quit.

- *I always prefer not to answer. I will not do it. OK, deal breaker. Would rather just Quit now than have than provide any of this information. Yes, I I've done that countless times.*

Number of years riding NJT

The participant noted that his question is confusing because it is limited to the purpose he selected in the beginning and not generally how long he has been riding NJT. At his point in the survey he states that he is a “6 out of 10” on fatigue.

- Out of 10, I would say about a six.

Final questions

The participant liked the final question because he felt that he could finally “vent” and say all of the things he wanted to say. He stated that this question should be question 1 and not 49. He also stated the 51 seems redundant with 49.

- *I can finally tell you what the problem is. This is the place. 49 to your magic number. If you if you throw all the other pages out. I can finally vent if that makes sense. his is your vent page. We should put this in Page 1.*
- *I would have liked to see this much earlier. I look at this question and the first thing that comes to my mind is seriously you, you just we went through 50 questions and now you're asking me.*
- *[regarding question 51] Yes, it's uh, I would write. Please see above. Please see #49.*

Incentive

The participant would fill out the incentive information. But suggested that NJT make it very clear that it is not required because of people who believe in conspiracies.

- *That's why the only thing I would say is maybe in parentheses not required. You know something like that. Because you know, there are conspiratorial folks out there, you're going to, you're going to give this to the IRS, blah, blah, blah.*

Overall thoughts

Participant stated that he would want to know what the results of the survey are and when he would expect to hear from NJT about what happens next.

- *I was extremely happy to see that y'all are Making an effort to send me a survey. And now that you're following through, it makes me even happier. So Step 3 would be. Now what happens? Am I going to hear back? Am I going to hear what? I would just like to know what the results were.*

USER TESTING SESSION – PARTICIPANT “Z”

Facilitator: Miriam Salerno
co-facilitator: Cate Heady
Date: May 1, 2025

Travel patterns and trip behavior:

The participant goes through the first few questions with no issues and easily speeds through all of the questions about her trip information and NJT travel habits. The only items that she notes is that she has trouble finding “New York Penn Sation” because it is listed as “Penn Station New York,” and she requests clarification on what “final destination” refers to.

- *Now I'm looking for the New York Penn Station. But I see Newark Penn Station.*
- *And when it says the final destination, meaning where the train goes or where we go to.*

Satisfaction questions

Facilities

The participant was prompted to provide more information when rating parking security low. She said she didn't have any issues with giving more details and thinks it will be important for NJT to know the specifics. She found the 1-10 scale perfectly acceptable.

- *Cate: So do you like being asked like having the opportunity to to kind of explain your answer?*
- *Speaker 3: Yeah, particularly if somebody is really looking at and considering what people say in their survey.*

Onboard the Train

The participant felt that she didn't have enough space to really express her concerns about the conditions onboard the train. She preferred the open-ended style follow up question so that she could detail her concerns about the windows.

- *It just has you rate the condition, cleanliness and condition. But it does not give you an opportunity to fill in why.*
- *How can they understand the rating and what it is based on if they want to know why? If they have a real interest in it, then they need to have space so that the writer who gives it, you know, a lower rating can explain in detail why it is that they feel that way. Otherwise, this has no value.*

-

Communications

The participant rated signage low, noting that because of the condition of the windows you cannot see the signage outside and it is difficult, especially at night to know where you are. Would have liked to have an opportunity to explain the low rating for signage but did not have any space to explain her issues.

- *This is a dilemma because they're asking you to rate signage, information availability. But if I can't see out the window, the signage might be perfectly clear on the platform, but if I can't see out the window, it doesn't matter how good that signage is. And so, this question*

doesn't really give you a chance to explain that.

Announcements

The participant rated all of them unacceptable. She liked the follow-up questions but wanted to be able to select multiple options, especially if your answers are more general and not relating to a specific trip.

- *No, you should be able to check multiple; If you're talking about one particular trip, then you have a certain set of answers. But if you're just generally answering, I would check [multiple].*

What are the most important

The participant found this question a little confusing but was able to answer it. She noted that it took some time to read through all of the choices before answering. She found the ranking to be fairly easy as well.

- *Yeah, it's a little confusing, but they're looking for what are the five most important attributes?*
- *Well, you have to read every one before you can choose. So, there's a lot to choose from.*

Demographics questions

The participant had no issues with filling out demographic questions and she understood the value of these questions for NJT. But she expected them to be the last questions and was surprised there were more after.

- *That doesn't offend me. I mean if it has value New Jersey Transit, that doesn't bother me.*

Final questions

The participant noted that it was very hard to just think of one thing that would improve the experience. She found those directions to be “very limiting” although also noted that there was “excessive space.” She also noted that there were things she wanted to express in the survey that she didn’t have ample space to express earlier and could do so here at the end of the survey.

Raffle/Incentive

This participant was appreciative of the raffle and the NJT points. She said she is “thrifty” and would use them if she could use them at a store she goes to. However, she hadn’t ever used them in the past.

Final thoughts for NJ Transit

The participant stated that she hopes there is a committee that reviews the survey results and takes them seriously. She was frustrated that there was no space to address some of her specific concerns and she wanted more space to explain her negative scores. She also thinks the survey is long and some people might be turned off by the length.

APPENDIX C: SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT INTERVIEW SUMMARY

APPENDIX C: SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Key Findings from All Interviews

Keep it short and simple. All interviewees agreed that a survey should fall between 7 and 12 minutes. The design should be simple and easy to follow, and the language should be accessible.

Create multiple surveys. Customer satisfaction surveys should be focused, and primarily quantitative. Further information should be collected in supplemental surveys or pulse surveys, or through other means such as focus groups or panels.

Identify actionable items from data. Create a process for collecting data and translating survey data into actions.

Share data. Survey results should be made available to the customer.

Interview Details: Aaron Weinstein, Transit CX

Rutgers and FHI Studio conducted an informational meeting with **Aaron Weinstein** of Transit CX, a consulting firm that aids transit agencies in developing customer experience programs.

Key Takeaways

- Keep surveys short and linguistically accessible. Include the most important topics to customer satisfaction.
- Create a system to collect customer satisfaction data, supplementary data, and a process for translating survey insights into actions.
- Next steps for NJT are to assess the current survey, find ways to make the survey shorter and more focused and identify questions that can instead be included on supplemental surveys.

Summary by Topic

Survey Design and Questions

Topics of survey – Understand what topics need to be included and what should be moved to a different survey; keep the customer satisfaction survey to customer satisfaction questions.

Length of survey – Suggests a double-sided rule; in other words, try to keep the survey to one double-sided sheet of paper. While he will go over if needed, or use a larger sheet of paper, a survey should not have multiple sheets of paper.

Accessibility of Questions - Make sure wording used and attributes included are easily understood by customers. In other words, a customer may interpret a word, phrase, or jargon in a way unintended by the survey designer.

Creating a Survey System

Survey System/Research System – Design not just a survey but an overall system; the survey can be a part of a larger process of research that can address more topics than just core satisfaction questions.

Create multiple surveys – a “core survey” is basic quantitative survey that measures satisfaction at a high level. This survey should be used for sorting out and identifying important topics and pain points for the customer. Subsequent, focused surveys on different topics can allow a deeper look at these topics or pain points. In the case of a specific incident, like a service disruption, create pulse surveys: short, quick, email-based surveys for moment-in-time insights

Implementing action – develop a process for translating survey insights to actions. LA Metro is an example of an agency that has formalized this process.

Additional Research

Qualitative research – use surveys to develop panels on specific topics of interest to further investigate the topic through other qualitative research.

Transit App – participation in Transit App’s services can be used as a supplement to regular surveying

Next Steps for NJ TRANSIT

Assess current NJ TRANSIT Survey – Go through the current customer satisfaction survey and see which questions should stay in baseline or core survey, and which questions should be moved to subsequent, focused surveys or pulse surveys.

Interview Details: Jon Canapary, Corey Canapary & Galanis

Rutgers and FHI Studio conducted an information interview with subject matter expert **Jon Canapary**, CEO of a full-service research firm, Corey Canapary & Galanis. His firm plans, implements, and analyzes customer satisfaction research surveys for transportation agencies, primarily in the Bay Area of California.

Key Takeaways

- Surveys should be short in length and accessible in language. If more information is desired than basic, quantitative customer satisfaction data, a separate survey should be developed.
- On-board surveying can be a method to reach a broader customer base than recruitment through email. On-board survey takers should be well trained to encourage the collection of useful data.
- The survey should represent a good cross section of users; implement surveys in targeted geographies or routes and on weekends to represent diverse ridership.
- Sharing results on the agency’s website is the bare minimum; sometimes to reach customers, the information should be shared beyond the website.

Summary by Topic

Survey Methods

On-board surveying – used to reach a broader customer base than recruiting participation by email. In an area of high transit usage, phone and online surveying can be beneficial by collecting data at a lower price point than on-board surveys.

Survey Length – shorter surveys are better to hold customer focus. A survey should be about 8 minutes, but can depend on mode (for example, commuter rail surveys may be closer to 10 minutes) and language (non-English surveys may take longer). Online surveys can also be longer, but people will lose focus; the length also depends on if it's a qualitative or quantitative survey (qualitative takes longer) - still 8 minutes is the recommended length of time.

Create a second survey – if transit agencies also want more involved surveys with more questions, they should create a different survey to address that topic.

Question Types – Open-ended questions and ranking questions take longer for the customer to answer. The use of open-ended questions depends on mode; for example, use 1 or 2 for buses and 3 on trains. Ranking questions can take longer, especially on buses; instead of ranking, ask for the top three. But ranking easier for online surveys.

Accessibility and design – Simple design and language is important, as well as making surveys available in multiple languages. Hybrid surveys can be accessible, making surveys available through multiple access points. Paper surveys are preferred, because customers can see the length of the survey; providing a tablet does not give people the ability to set an expectation.

Survey Implementation

Frequencies of surveys – This interviewee's approach is primarily point-in-time surveying. Indicates there is no downside to ongoing surveys, just the higher cost of implementation. Annual surveying is preferred, twice a year is good. Annual data can be tied to other work in the agency and have more value; it can be used for agency planning, especially if the agency has a champion for the work.

Survey workers – Use experienced, trained workers to implement on-board surveys. This increases the value of the data collected, making for better analysis. Workers are trained in connecting with people in the right way and understanding who they might encounter on the bus; they are instructed to approach the person who looks like they will take the survey to encourage others. Don't speak too much and keep people comfortable.

Incentives – usually, an on-board survey will not have an incentive. Occasionally, there is a raffle, but asking for contact information may discourage participation. Over the past ten years, the use of raffles has decreased. On longer, qualitative surveys, an incentive encourages participation.

Preventing fraud – in the field, controls include using unique numbers on each survey. This provides information about where and when the survey was taken, and it can be used to track how many they have distributed.

Representation and Sampling

Representation – a good satisfaction survey will have a cross section of users. The survey may be

implemented based on geographic areas or routes. If using geographic areas, collecting data from multiple routes within a geographic area; not all routes will be sampled equally, but provides a representative geography. By commute routes or local routes, collecting data from routes in a certain segment or quadrant from the route.

Timing – Sample different time periods and different routes; include weekend ridership to reflect diverse transit users and uses.

Survey Results

Sharing results – having surveys available on the agency website is the minimum an agency can do. Some agencies, such as Capitol Corridor have information posted on websites and on trains. Sometimes results need to be shared beyond the website to actually reach customers.

Using results – survey responses can be used to inform more qualitative research for the agencies.

Interview Details: Dimitri Cool, ACI

Rutgers and FHI interviewed **Dimitri Coll**, Senior Vice President Airport Experience & Training at Airports Council International (ACI). This company serves 2000 airports globally through their customer experience program. They have a survey that is used at different airports, creating a benchmark that can be used by their clients.

Key Takeaways

- Surveys should be short in length and topically focused.
- Questions can be changed, but should be done over a time period, not all at once.
- Survey workers should be trained in the methodology utilized by the survey designer for consistency in data.
- Data should be translated into something that is actionable.

Summary by Topic

Survey Design and Implementation

Survey length – a survey should take 7-12 minutes maximum. The interviewee surveys are generally 35 questions, and do not include many demographic or social questions.

Question types – ACI primarily uses ranking on a scale of 1 to 5. The goal is to find from the customer what is most important to their experience. Questions may change over time, but not all at once to keep some historical information. Clients can add optional questions to the questionnaire (though this is not benchmarked).

Language – survey is present on a tablet allowing participants to self-select their language.

Timing – Ongoing surveying from the beginning of each quarter

Surveyors – Surveys are implemented by workers employed by the airport and trained by ACI. There is a designated number of survey participants per flight. Survey workers are at departure gates, meeting with different types of travelers (such as those traveling alone, those with children, etc.).

Presentation of data

Data analysis – Questionnaire designed to be representative of the quarter. Power BI is used for analysis.

Presentation – The client can create dashboards, selecting important KPIs that are summarized. Clients can customize their report to compare analytics to other airports

Actionable

Derived data – the interviewee suggests investing in and improving something that a client is already doing well and is important to the customer, not investing in lost ground. Airports focus on ambiance and sense of place – something that might not be assumed to be important but is important to the customer.

Using data – some clients base their strategic plan on customer satisfaction data. Survey data can provide insights for further research using other tools, such as journey mapping, to supplement survey data.

APPENDIX D: NJT IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Category	Action Step	Timeline
Survey Distribution and Promotion	Increase the visibility of the NJ TRANSIT customer satisfaction survey by broadening promotion, including onboard buses, trains and bus stops and stations.	Short term
Survey Distribution and Promotion	Consider and carefully test the use of targeted paid social media ads to increase visibility but avoid “bot” and fraudulent responses.	Medium term
Survey Distribution and Promotion	Consider the use of supplemental survey collection methods as a means of expanding survey participation from hard-to-reach customers, such as on-board surveying or telephone surveys.	Medium term
Survey Distribution and Promotion	Consider further testing or evaluating the efficacy of using raffles and NJT points as incentives for survey completion; Investigate the feasibility of offering incentives directly related to reducing the cost of travel (such as points towards a discounted ticket) or eliminating incentives altogether.	Medium term
Survey Distribution and Promotion	<p>Improve external communications about the results and impact of the survey by sharing actionable results and steps towards improvements that the agency is undertaking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider ways to drive traffic from the public to the online dashboard to increase awareness of the survey results, which can lead to increased participation. - Provide easy to read, user-friendly, info graphics that explain the findings and potential action steps to address any survey findings that need to be addressed. 	Medium term
Survey Analysis	Reduce the frequency of surveys from twice yearly to annually to provide additional time for processing/analyzing the results and implementation of any changes resulting from survey feedback.	Medium term

Category	Action Step	Timeline
Survey Analysis	Consider participating in a crowd-sourced survey platform that allows for peer comparisons on customer satisfaction, such as the Transit App, as a supplement to the NJT standalone Customer Satisfaction Survey.	Medium term
Survey Analysis	Consider supplementing the Customer Satisfaction Survey with other forms of customer research, such as focus groups, customer interviews, or targeted topic-specific surveys to address attributes that receive a low score on the survey.	
Survey Analysis	Investigate using weighing techniques, such as using American Community Survey (ACS) data, to ensure demographic representation of survey findings; Investigate methods used by SEPTA through peer exchange.	Medium term
Survey Analysis	Continue to build institutional capacity with Power BI for staff outside of the Business Analysis and Research Unit to fully utilize data collected from the Customer Satisfaction Survey.	Long term
Organizational changes	Increase internal visibility of customer satisfaction data by expanding avenues for reporting findings and results from The Customer Satisfaction Survey. Consider a series of annual internal briefings or workshops for all other departments within the agency.	Medium term
Organizational changes	Consider centralizing the collection and analysis of all customer feedback data coming into the agency from various customer touchpoints, including customer complaints, marketing “push” surveys, and customer satisfaction surveys, to ensure data is complete and recommendation are consistent across all findings.	Long term
Organizational changes	Continue to build institutional capacity with Power BI for staff outside of the Business Analysis and Research Unit to fully utilize data collected from the Customer Satisfaction Survey.	Long term
Organizational changes	Build towards a NJT integrated customer experience program by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging in departmental discussions to 	Long term

Category	Action Step	Timeline
	build internal support for launching a CX program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging in a peer learning exchange with the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Connecticut Department of Transportation to learn from their experiences in transitioning from customer satisfaction to customer experience. - Securing guidance from a consultant specializing in transit agency customer experience to assist and guide NJT in exploration of the transition. 	
Questionnaire Improvements	See Appendix B for additional question-specific recommendations to improve clarity, brevity, and flow of existing survey questions.	Short term
Questionnaire Improvements	Remove as many open-ended questions as possible; Rework questions that are currently open-ended to be closed-ended; Closed-ended follow-up questions could include an optional comment box for narrative detail.	Short term
Questionnaire Improvements	Remove all prompts that require specific dates and times an incident occurred.	Short term
Questionnaire Improvements	Consider removing the post-COVID travel and work schedule questions, if there are no departments at the agency that are actively using this data.	Short term
Questionnaire Improvements	Add definitions or examples to confusing, unclear, or technical terms used in the survey (see appendix B for list of words/phrases that were identified as confusing).	Short term
Questionnaire Improvements	Reorder the survey questions to include the NJT's highest-priority questions first or consider redesigning the survey to allow participants to prioritize questions themselves (answering the ones most important to them first).	Short term
Questionnaire Improvements	Provide clearer guidance on the reference point for each question; i.e. is the question referring to a specific trip (such as the last trip they took) or a more generic typical trip. If possible, create a	Short term

Category	Action Step	Timeline
	consistent reference point for all questions.	
Questionnaire Improvements	Program the survey to include a progress bar to assist survey takers in approximating the time/number of questions remaining until completion.	Medium term
Questionnaire Improvements	Investigate the feasibility of including a hyperlinked glossary of all terms used in the survey.	Medium term
Questionnaire Improvements	Improve consistency/predictability about when participants will have follow-up questions based on specific answers.	Medium term
Questionnaire Improvements	Reduce the number of demographic questions and include only the ones most helpful/informative for NJT; Include “prefer not to answer” as a choice for all demographic questions.	Medium term
Questionnaire Improvements	Segment the survey for two user groups: those with static routes (daily commuters) and those with variable trip patterns (infrequent users or users who use multiple routes in one day); Modify questions to better suit those with variable trip patterns.	Long term
Questionnaire Improvements	Move to a 5-point Likert Scale throughout the survey to increase the speed and efficiency of the users’ survey experience.	Long term