



Customer & Community Satisfaction Survey

Prepared for Golden Empire Transit District
Prepared by Stantec

Date: June 10, 2019



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Prepared for:

Golden Empire Transit District
Bakersfield, California

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Golden Empire Transit District (GET), along with Stantec, conducted a customer satisfaction survey for conventional fixed-route and paratransit services (GET-A-Lift) in spring 2019. GET periodically surveys its riders to provide them with the opportunity to provide input and rate their service, identifying which service factors riders and community members value most as well as current service strengths and areas of opportunity. Additionally, these surveys also provide GET with rider demographic information required for the preparation of Title VI and other required reporting.

Overarching goals of the project included assessing satisfaction with current GET services, identifying areas of improvement, and capturing community opinions and perceptions of GET and public transit in Bakersfield. In addition to on-board rider surveys that took place on buses, Stantec complemented this effort with online rider and community surveys, two GET-A-Lift open houses, and two focus groups (one comprised of riders and one of non-riders).

On-board and rider survey of GET conventional services

Stantec developed a plan to survey all routes over multiple days and times of day to capture both weekend and weekday riders, as well as riders in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Surveys were administered both as paper on-board intercept surveys and online through SurveyMonkey. Surveyors boarded buses and approached riders with the survey, and also provided bilingual leaflets advertising the online survey. 1,347 rider surveys were completed either online or on-board GET buses.

- 88-percent of riders are either satisfied or extremely satisfied with current fixed-route service, a 7-percent increase since 2017. Riders are most satisfied with the fare they paid, and least satisfied with hours of service. 48-percent of respondents believe that service has improved over the past year, also a 7-percent increase from 2017.
- Consistent with 2017 findings, the proportion of riders who have been using the system for five or more years decreased again in 2019. As noted in 2017, this drop in long-term riders is consistent with national transit trends, but is a cause for concern and should be explored in further detail to ascertain the root cause.
- Most GET riders (49.7-percent) use the system at least five days a week, showing that riders depend on GET as their primary mode of transportation.
- The majority of GET riders have a positive image of GET (82-percent), would recommend GET to family and friends (85-percent), and believe public transit is an important public service (96-percent).
- 26-percent of riders are choice riders, and 74-percent are captive riders, meaning they do not possess another reliable mode of transportation and depend on GET as their primary transportation option. Both captive and choice riders voiced a desire for extended hours of service, especially on the weekends, as well as concerns over safety and security on the bus and at stops and major transit centers.

- Overall, GET is providing service that largely satisfies current riders, but together with first-hand discussions with riders and findings below, GET, like most transit agencies across Southern California, needs to work on improving:
 - Service availability, that is, service span
 - Service reliability, meaning improving on-time performance to maintain published headways and ensure customers can expect a consistent travel time
 - Travel times, which largely dictates competitiveness with personal vehicles, by having frequent service on key routes and providing transit priority when and where necessary

Community survey

In addition to onboard rider surveys, a community survey was developed to gain a wider understanding of travel modes and preferences in the Bakersfield area. The community survey was administered in English and Spanish online through SurveyMonkey throughout the month of March 2019. A total of 324 community surveys were completed, an increase of 89 from 2017 community survey results.

- Unsurprisingly, the majority of community respondents do not identify as riders, and 42-percent have access to a personal vehicle. Of the respondents who have used GET in the past 90 days, 71-percent reported the service as good or excellent, with 29-percent reporting as poor, subpar, or indifferent. However, these results are slightly lower than 2017 satisfaction ratings as well as 2019 rider responses, showing that overall, community members are less satisfied with GET than riders who completed the on-board survey and are less satisfied in 2019 than 2017.
- When compared to riders, non-rider results display a demographic spread that is slightly older than riders with higher average household incomes, and a larger proportion of respondents who are employed full or part time.
- 68.2-percent of respondents travel average distances less than ten miles in length, a quite feasible distance to travel via transit.
- Out of the community respondents who reported that they typically use transit, biking, or carpooling to reach their destination, 46-percent did so to save money and 39-percent did so out of convenience.
- While overall community satisfaction with GET has decreased, perception of public transit has increased since 2017, including possessing a positive image of GET, knowing where their nearest GET bus stop is, supporting a sales tax dedicated to improving transit in Bakersfield, and believing that public transit plays an important role in their community's quality of life.
- The most common reasons for community members not using transit include the need to visit multiple destinations before returning home (22-percent of respondents), and the belief that transit is inconvenient or takes too much time (21-percent). 42-percent of respondents reported that they would use GET more often if there were a bus stop closer to their house or destination, or if service was more frequent. While 16-percent reported there is nothing that can be done to persuade them to use GET more frequently, 14-percent would if they received help on planning their trip. This displays an opportunity to provide travel training to capture more potential riders.

- 46-percent of respondents reported that they would rely on GET services if their normal mode of travel was unavailable, which can be categorized as easy-to-persuade potential users. 30-percent of respondents would use GET more often than they currently do, but it would not be their primary mode of travel. These respondents can be categorized as more-difficult-to-persuade potential users. 22-percent of respondents, categorized as unwilling to use GET bus, would find another mode of transportation to rely on if their normal mode of travel was unavailable.
- Overall, the largest deterrents to attracting more riders from the community at large include:
 - The public image of GET, including perception of safety, security, and cleanliness
 - A perceived inability to trip chain using GET
 - The perception by community members that GET is inconvenient, takes too long, and hours of service are not sufficient for their travel purposes
 - A low level of confidence among community members on how to plan a trip on GET and how to use the system

Recommendations for conventional transit services

1. Standardize transfer policy.

To address the current issues riders have with transfers, and the perception among non-riders that GET is not a viable option for visiting multiple locations, GET can explore way to standardize their transfer policy. One potential option is to improve the visibility and marketing of the day pass that allows for unlimited trips throughout the day for the cost of about two single fare passes, or modify current single ride policy to include one free transfer within two hours of the start of a trip.

2. Route review and service design.

A review of current routes and service design should be considered, specifically including a focus on frequency, not coverage. The creation of more direct routes may create more transfers, but more frequent service in conjunction with a standardized fare policy, transfer times can be minimized. Improving the frequency on key routes throughout the midday, especially on weekends, is likely to increase rider satisfaction as well. In addition, both riders and non-riders were strong in their belief that GET should focus its services on where they would meet the greatest need.

3. Focus GET marketing on social media.

Riders and non-riders alike regularly use smartphones and are social media users, but only 12-percent of riders are aware of GET's social media accounts. As social media is an effective and low-cost way to provide riders with real-time information, it is common sense that more of GET's marketing should be focused on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, and getting more riders aware of and engaged in GET's social media presence.

4. Assess fare programs for special populations.

A common comment seen from riders was a desire for fare discounts for students, especially with the high proportion of riders who are students and a major transit center located at Bakersfield College. Relatively

discounted fares for current students would likely increase satisfaction among this population, and may motivate them to use transit more often than they currently do. Additionally, many non-riders noted that they do not use GET because they need to transport children to and from school or daycare. Expanding the discounted child fare to encompass children up to 12 years of age could bring new riders with this concern onto the system. GET should review its current fare structure accordingly, as many North American agencies are investigating fares commensurate with a rider's ability to pay.

5. Bus shelters.

GET's investment in bus shelters would greatly improve the concerns about safety while waiting for the bus. Having shelters across the city would also increase the loyalty of those who ride today, as comments regarding a lack of shade while waiting for the bus or safety concerns at bus stops were prevalent among current riders comments, as well as being noted by non-riders as a barrier to using GET. Investing in bus shelters also presents an opportunity to increase the visibility of the GET brand.

6. Promote GET technology.

The agency's two technology demonstrations, Token Transit and the Transit App, are the types of advances that would incite potential riders to try GET. The agency should actively promote both applications using social media and through in-app advertising.

7. Ryde program.

Following the launch of the Ryde program in April 2019, GET now provides on-demand microtransit in a portion of their service area. As the most common comments among riders and non-riders was a wish for longer service hours (especially on weekends) and shorter hours limit people's ability to travel, the feasibility of providing this through Ryde should be assessed, subject to the success of the pilot program. GET should also consider administering its next rider satisfaction survey to Ryde customers as well.

8. Launch a transit benefit program.

There was ample interest in both groups about transit benefit programs and the tax benefits to employers and employees. GET should consider developing a program in partnership with the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce.

9. Travel training.

A considerable proportion of non-riders (14-percent) would be persuaded to use GET if they were more confident in how to use the service. By providing travel training, including educating riders on the GET technology available to assist them with their trip, new riders can be confident in using GET to reach their destination. Travel training can be especially effective when combined with investments in improving the public image and perception of GET, to encourage even more non-riders to try GET.

10. Partner with employment agencies and job training programs to promote GET.

Based upon the large number of trips being taken on GET buses currently to 'gig' or part time jobs, job interviews, and job training, Gobis suggests that GET partner with employment agencies like Aerotek, Labor

Finders, Apple One, Rand, and others to get more of their clients onto GET buses. GET could apply for an Access and Mobility Partnership Grant to 'seed' this concept with free fare media to prove the concept of the partnership with the end goal of making the program self-sufficient with funding from employment agencies, job training programs, state grants, and employer transit programs.

11. Spotlight GET bus operators in GET advertising.

GET bus operators have earned the respect of both riders and non-riders as being employees that go 'above and beyond' to improve the quality of life in Bakersfield. Featuring these professionals will be one of the steps in changing non-rider public perceptions of the safety and convenience of GET services. GET should begin this effort using YouTube, its own website, and social media.

12. Sensitivity training for bus operators.

Mixed feedback was received on bus operator behavior and attitude. It was a common complaint among surveyed riders that bus operators passed by passengers waiting at stops, especially those with mobility devices, and this was corroborated with firsthand comments heard by Stantec staff in the field during survey administration. Indeed, rider satisfaction with bus operator behavior and attitude fell from 4.21/5 in 2017 to 4.03/5 in 2019. Providing supplemental sensitivity training for bus operators will increase satisfaction among current riders, and help to create a fleet of bus operators that are well-educated on how to treat all passengers with respect.

13. Ride alongs.

The concept forwarded by one non-rider to have City Manager Al Tandy and other community leaders ride the bus on a regular basis would begin to bridge the 'cultural gap' discussed in the non-riders focus group. Having Manager Tandy suggest to City of Bakersfield employees that they ride at least once a month would be a great step in changing people's perception of GET.

14. Educate the public on the mission and purpose of GET.

Awareness of the GET organization is very low, even among frequent and long-time riders. If GET is to garner support for increasing local funding for the agency, it cannot be in the shadows. Gobis recommends that at a minimum, the agency publish some form of annual report to the people that educates the public on the essential services that the agency provides. Pierce Transit's Annual Report is an example of the type of communication that is recommended (<https://www.piercetransit.org/2017-annual-report/>).

GET-A-Lift open house and rider survey

Two open houses were hosted for users of GET-A-Lift, GET's paratransit service for those unable to use conventional fixed route service. A total of 27 GET-A-Lift users attended the open houses, where they had an opportunity to express their opinions on what they like and dislike about the service, as well as how the service can be improved. An exit survey was administered to all open house participants, and an additional 14 surveys were collected via telephone interviews.

- The majority of respondents (67-percent) have been using GET-A-Lift for 1-5 years, a sharp increase from 2017, where only 36-percent of users reported this length of time. No respondents have used the service for ten or more years, compared to 16-percent of respondents in 2017 who had used the service for ten or more years.
- GET-A-Lift users are overall very satisfied with service across a span of different service factors. However, 2019 overall rider satisfaction (4.22/5) is lower than 2017 results (4.53/5). 2019 respondents agree with 2017 results, where users are least satisfied with the ease of reaching customer service representatives and the on-time performance of the ride. Survey results and open house comments also noted frustrations with reserving rides at desired times and the length of the ride pick-up window.
- An increasing proportion of users are interested in booking trips online in 2019 (26-percent) as compared to 2017 (17-percent). As seniors are increasingly becoming tech-savvy, GET should consider creating an app or online platform where GET-A-Lift users are able to book trips online.
- While the vast majority (95-percent) of users know conventional GET buses are accessible to customers with mobility challenges, over half (53-percent) of respondents are not interested in receiving travel training on fixed-route service or using conventional service more. However, 18-percent of respondents are interested in receiving travel training, an increase from the 7-percent of respondents seen in 2017.
- Overall, GET-A-Lift customers surveyed during open house and via the telephone are very satisfied with current service, including the eligibility assessment process, ride reservation process, and ride quality. However, areas of improvement for service include:
 - Implementing travel training to help curb growing demand for GET-A-Lift and encourage more riders to use conventional fixed-route service
 - Consider strategies for minimizing the time windows for reserving trips and ride pick-ups
 - Focus on communication with riders on late arrivals (such as a text message or call when their rides are running late) and explanations for why they cannot reserve trips at their desired times

GET-A-Lift recommendations for improvement

1. Assess strategies for improving the reservation system.

GET-A-Lift users are increasingly becoming more tech-savvy and embracing technology, and this trend is only set to continue to increase in the future. Further, an increasing proportion of users have a desire to book trips online (from 17-percent in 2017 to over 25-percent in 2019). The viability of creating a web-based or mobile app platform for reserving rides should be assessed, as well as strategies that minimizes the reservation window from the current requirement of booking rides two weeks in advance. Many open house participants noted that this is difficult to accommodate, as they often do not know what their schedules will be or where they need to go this far in advance. The reservation system could also be improved, and satisfaction increased, if riders were provided with reasons and justifications for why they are unable to reserve trips at their desired times.

2. Leverage technology to improve service.

Another common complaint among GET-A-Lift users is a lack of clear communication concerning issues such as late arrivals and large windows for pick-ups. As the majority of open house participants have smartphones, implementing services that will inform users of when their ride will arrive or if the ride is running late through a text message or phone call, which will help to increase user satisfaction of current services.

3. Assess feasibility of extending hours of service.

Extending hours of service, especially later into the evenings and on weekends and past normal operating hours for major destinations (such as shopping centers or entertainment destinations), would help GET-A-Lift riders have more freedom and mobility with their current transportation options. Reviewing the opportunity to extend service hours to determine whether a business case exists would help to further increase customer satisfaction.

4. Travel training.

GET should improve current travel training programs and work with the City of Bakersfield to improve the accessibility of fixed-route services and infrastructure, as many users noted that they would like to use fixed-route service, but are unable to because it is too far to their nearest stop, curb cuts are not accommodating to users with mobility devices, or they are unsure of how to use conventional service. Especially as current users are more willing to undergo travel training and use conventional service (18-percent in 2019 compared to 7-percent in 2017), travel training and transitioning trips from GET-A-Lift to conventional service is vital to accommodate growing demand for GET-A-Lift. Additionally, most GET-A-Lift users likely qualify for reduced fares on fixed routes, a further incentive to try GET's conventional services.

5. Sensitivity training for operators.

As with riders of GET's conventional fixed-route service, GET-A-Lift operators would benefit from additional sensitivity training to ensure that all operators can empathize with riders with disabilities and ensure that the high levels of satisfaction GET-A-Lift users display for operators continue to increase. Additionally, operators should be commended for the high satisfaction levels currently seen, and the many compliments heard at the open houses.

6. Consider a Family of Services (FOS) concept and circulator routes.

As suggested in 2017, current GET-A-Lift service could benefit from the implementation of a FOS approach in conjunction with the development of circulator routes to common destinations. As many GET-A-Lift riders are going to common destinations, the development of community circulators to destinations such as shopping centers, healthcare facilities, social services centers, and major transit centers would help to provide GET-A-Lift riders with more options to reduce the burden on conventional GET-A-Lift service, and help to solve "first last mile" challenges associated with using GET's fixed-route system while promoting a FOS concept by proving to riders they can use the fixed-route system. Integrating or supplementing GET-A-Lift with Ryde service should also be explored when and where possible to maximize the productivity of both services.

7. Update client database.

During telephone GET-A-Lift surveys, it was noted that many of the entries are out of date or incorrect. Specifically, 26-percent of the 137 calls made were either incorrect numbers or disconnected numbers. Updating the GET-A-Lift client database will not only ensure GET has an accurate client list and knows who is using their services, but also will make contacting users for future surveys easier.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Golden Empire Transit District (GET) periodically surveys its customers to provide them with the opportunity to rate their service, including identifying the characteristics of service that riders value most, such as on-time performance, hours of service, and vehicle cleanliness. GET also surveys the broader Bakersfield community to understand the visibility of its brand, the perception of services, and how to possibly attract new riders to GET services. These surveys are also integral to providing GET with demographic information necessary for the preparation of Title VI and other required reporting.

In 2017, Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (Stantec) was first retained by GET to complete surveys and focus groups of GET-A-Lift riders and transit operators. In 2019, Stantec returned to execute quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups of GET riders, non-riders, and GET-A-Lift riders. Results between the 2017 and 2019 data collected are compared where possible and appropriate. Stantec also reviewed previous onboard surveys and recommended changes to the sampling plan and survey questionnaire to provide GET with more specific service recommendations that could improve design and delivery of service while retaining current ridership loyalty.

Stantec staff, in collaboration with GET staff, developed the survey instruments, sampling plans, and promotional materials.

3.0 GET RIDER SATISFACTION SURVEY

One of the main goals of this project was to gain a clearer understanding of the satisfaction levels of current riders of the GET conventional fixed-route service. Below is a description of the rider survey that was conducted onboard GET's conventional routes as well as an online survey of transit riders.

3.1 METHODOLOGY

Sampling Plan

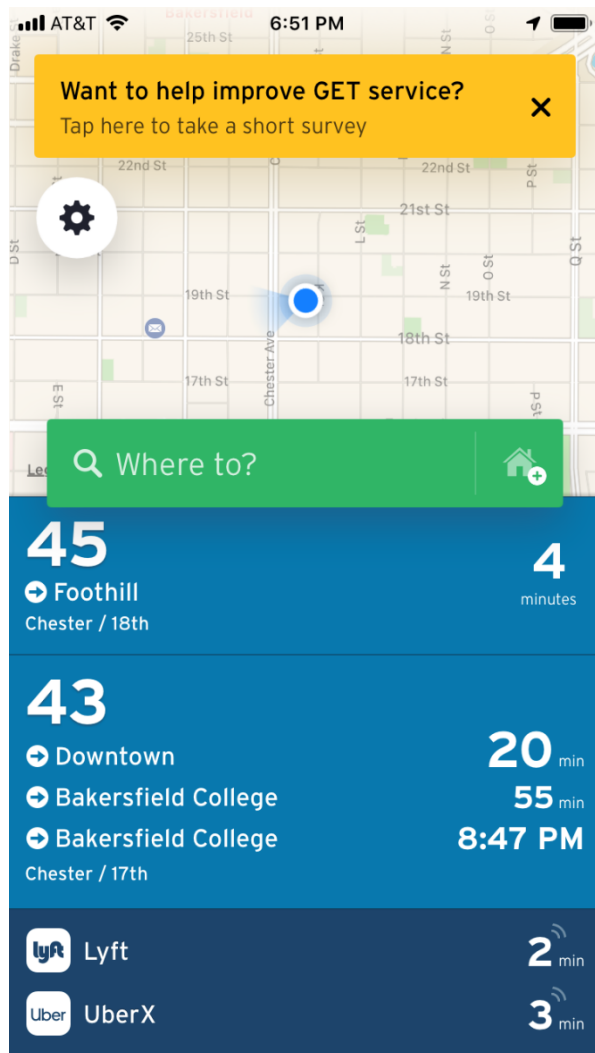
Stantec developed a sampling plan to sample all routes on both a weekend (Saturday) and at least one weekday (Monday or Tuesday) during a week in late March 2019. Additionally, routes were sampled throughout the day (morning peak, midday, afternoon peak, etc.) to ensure that a sample of all trips was captured.

Based on GET's most recent NTD data of over 17,000 unlinked trips per day and lessons learned from the 2017 survey regarding the number of unique system riders, Stantec obtained a statically significant survey sample of 1,347 (an increase of 191 from 2017) surveys through its onboard and online surveying efforts, with a corresponding response rate of approximately 46-percent (higher than the 2017 response rate of 41-percent).¹ As with the 2017 survey, Stantec staff and surveyors observed regular riders who had already completed surveys at a previous time during the surveying period.

¹ With a sample size of 1,347 surveys and a theoretical population of 17,000 unlinked trips on a typical weekday, at a 95% confidence level, this translates to a confidence interval of ± 2.6 , well within the desired 95% $\pm 5\%$ confidence interval (also known as margin of error) typical of customer surveys.

Survey Instrument

The rider survey was developed through an iterative process with feedback from GET and based on adjustments from the 2017 survey. Thus, the survey is largely the same in content and layout as the one distributed in 2017 with a few changes, such as the inclusion of “Uber/Lyft” as a response to the question regarding how passengers would make their trip if GET were not available, as well as specific question regarding fare type use to address Title VI requirements. Again, after approval, the survey was translated into conversational Spanish. A total of 24 questions (including a general comments/suggestions question) were developed and queried a number of topics including satisfaction with current service, opinion of public transit, perception of service quality over time, and demographics. The complete survey can be found in Appendix 1. Hard copy surveys were printed on 65-lb card stock (tabloid, 11” x 17”), which negated the need to provide surveyors with clipboards. Surveys were printed double-sided, with English on one side and Spanish on the other. Additionally, an online survey was developed and hosted on SurveyMonkey, which was advertised for via printed handouts distributed by surveyors, on the GET website, and on the Transit app.



The surveying efforts were also advertised throughout the preceding week and during the surveying week through:

- Inline advertisements aboard buses
- Local news stories about the surveying
- Press release about the various surveys disseminated to local media, colleges and other large institutions

Survey Administration

Stantec recruited surveyors through various methods, including:

- Informing bus operators about the surveying (via postings in driver training and break rooms) who then told family and friends
- Advertisements on local college job boards
- Outreach to at least four local social service agencies
- Through family and friends of Stantec employees

Recruitment details

A training session was held on a Friday afternoon, prior to the first Saturday morning surveying session. All surveyors were provided with surveying materials, which included surveys, control sheets, pencils, envelopes, ID badges, and schedules. We trained and employed 35 local residents for fieldwork. In fact, many surveyors were current GET riders and as both riders and more broadly as members of the Bakersfield community, rapport with bus operators and customers benefitted the surveying efforts. Having local knowledge of the people and the community translated into a larger return in completed surveys in a short span of time.

Stantec staff acted as in-field supervisors for the survey team, providing a training session where the project's goals were described, survey materials explained, schedules were distributed, and surveys administered. Stantec staff was present at various transit hubs throughout the entirety of the surveying process, providing in-field supervision, fielding surveys, and distributing promotional materials.



Data Collection

Surveys were administered both as in-board intercept surveys and online, through a link promoted on GET's website, the Transit app, on GET buses, and at transit centers. Stantec stationed staff at the major transit centers including Downtown and Bakersfield College. Surveyors boarded buses and approached riders with surveys and pencils, in addition to passing out bilingual flyers advertising the online survey link. Surveyors tracked survey responses and refusals on control sheets to track refusal rates and route and time-of-day sampling. Surveyors collected completed surveys and returned all materials to Stantec staff at the end of their shifts.

Surveying took place on Saturday, March 16, Monday, March 18, and Tuesday, March 19. Shifts were broken into morning and midday/evening shifts to ensure all routes were surveyed both on different days and multiple times throughout the day. Stantec and GET also collaborated for customer appreciation events on Monday and Tuesday at various locations; these events provided a great opportunity to discuss with customers about GET service, have them complete surveys about their recent trip, as well as expand the visibility of the GET brand.

A total of 1,347 print and online rider surveys were collected. The online survey was active through the month of March 2019.



Data Processing

The following section describes the data processing used to prepare and analyze data from all surveys. It is presented once here for ease of reference but applies to GET-A-Lift and community surveys as well.

Data Entry and Cleaning

Prior to analyzing survey data, it was first necessary to compile all hard copy and online results from each of the three surveys. An Excel template was created for paratransit surveys, whereby the survey questions formed the columns and responses were entered as rows. Using this template, data entry was completed for the hard copy GET-A-Lift surveys collected during the Open Houses, as well as from responses collected from phone surveying. For all multiple-choice questions, survey data was coded using numbers, allowing for efficient analysis of the data. For example, responses of “extremely satisfied” were recorded as “5”, with responses of “satisfied”, “no opinion”, “dissatisfied”, and “extremely dissatisfied” recorded as “4”, “3”, “2”, and “1”. English and Spanish surveys were recorded in the same template, allowing for data analysis of the full data set of survey results.

To expedite the data analysis process for hard copy rider surveys, paper survey responses were entered into the online SurveyMonkey survey platform. A unique portal for each day of data entry was created to maintain data integrity and the day data was collected regardless of when it was manually entered. Upon completing the data entry, survey results were downloaded into Excel from SurveyMonkey and reformatted as needed. The manually-entered rider surveys were downloaded along with the online community surveys, resulting in a complete picture of all survey responses (online and hard copy). As with the GET-A-Lift surveys, responses were coded using numbers when necessary. The last step before beginning data analysis was to clean the data. For example, surveys that were started but contained no actual questions answered were removed from the template so as not to skew the final counts of the number of surveys completed.

Data Analysis

To obtain a full understanding of the survey results, two methods of data analysis were undertaken: descriptive analysis and segmentation. As with the 2017 survey results, Excel was used to generate summary statistics for each survey question, creating graphs and tables showing the distribution of responses. When appropriate, cross tabulations and correlation matrices were generated to explore potential correlations between questions, as well as comparisons to the 2017 survey findings. For the GET onboard and community surveys, segmentation techniques were used to isolate specific user groups based on their survey responses.

3.2 GET RIDER SURVEY ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The following analysis is based on survey responses from the 1,347 completed onboard and online surveys from GET riders. The results are first analyzed question-by-question based on the format of 2017 findings to allow for a more direct comparison of results. The summary statistics displayed below demonstrate the distribution of survey responses. Additionally, a user profile analysis is presented, which categorizes users based on their loyalty and dependency to GET, and accordingly identifies their relative needs, again in comparison to applicable 2017 results. This analysis further isolates the relative importance of various service characteristics for riders as well as identifying service improvement strategies that will encourage future transit use.

3.2.1 Summary of Results

- 88-percent of riders are either satisfied or extremely satisfied with current fixed-route service, a 7-percent increase since 2017. Riders are most satisfied with the fare they paid, and least satisfied with hours of service. 48-percent of respondents believe that service has improved over the past year, also a 7-percent increase from 2017.
- Consistent with 2017 findings, the proportion of riders who have been using the system for five or more years decreased again in 2019. As noted in 2017, this drop in long-term riders is consistent with national transit trends, but is a cause for concern and should be explored in further detail to ascertain the root cause.
- Most GET riders (49.7-percent) use the system at least five days a week, showing that riders depend on GET as their primary mode of transportation.
- The majority of GET riders have a positive image of GET (82-percent), would recommend GET to family and friends (85-percent), and believe public transit is an important public service (96-percent).
- 26-percent of riders are choice riders, and 74-percent are captive riders, meaning they do not possess another reliable mode of transportation and depend on GET as their primary transportation option. Both captive and choice riders voiced a desire for extended hours of service, especially on the weekends, as well as concerns over safety and security on the bus and at stops and major transit centers.
- Overall, GET is providing service that largely satisfies current riders, but together with first-hand discussions with riders and findings below, GET, like most transit agencies across Southern California, needs to work on improving:
 - Service availability, that is, service span
 - Service reliability, meaning improving on-time performance to maintain published headways and ensure customers can expect a consistent travel time
 - Travel times, which largely dictates competitiveness with personal vehicles, by having frequent service on key routes and providing transit priority when and where necessary

3.2.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 below shows that 48-percent of surveyed GET users have a household income of \$20,000 or less, and 74-percent lack access to a personal vehicle. Both of these numbers are lower than the responses collected during the 2017 survey, where 54-percent of respondents reported household incomes of \$20,000 or less and 76-percent lacked personal vehicle access. Further, only 15-percent of 2017 riders reported incomes above \$20,000, compared with 25-percent of 2019 riders. This could show that GET riders are earning more, but as a significant portion lack access to a personal vehicle, it is still imperative for GET to provide a broad network of routes and service hours to accommodate the needs of riders who have limited mode choice and depend on GET for transportation.

As seen in 2017, the spread of GET rider ages is broad; while 49-percent of riders are under 35, the average rider age is 37. The surveyed rider population is slightly older than what was recorded in 2017, where the average age was

35. Specifically, the portion of system users between 35 and 44 rose from 14-percent in 2017 to 22-percent in 2019. Unlike 2017 survey results, where students represented the largest employment category, unemployed or retired individuals now representing this category, at 34-percent of respondents. Table 2 shows that rider responses came from a wide range of zip codes throughout Bakersfield, but predominately in the 93304, 93305, 93307, 93308, and 93309 areas, as well as a small proportion of people who live outside the city.

Table 1: Demographics of survey respondents

Variable		All Users
Car access	Yes	26%
	No	74%
Age	Under 18	4%
	18-24	24%
	25-34	20%
	35-44	22%
	45-54	11%
	55-64	10%
	65+	8%
Gender	Male	50%
	Female	49%
	Other	1%
Ethnicity	White	34%
	Latino	34%
	Black/African American	21%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	2%
	American Indian	4%
	Other	5%
Household Income	\$20,000 or less	48%
	\$20,001 to \$35,000	15%
	\$35,001 to \$50,000	6%
	\$50,001 to \$75,000	3%
	\$75,001 or more	3%
	Don't know	26%
Employment	Full-time	24%
	Part-time	19%
	Student	24%
	Unemployed or retired	34%

Table 2: Residency zip code of survey respondents

Zip Code	All Responses	
	Number	Percentage
93301	64	7.1%
93302	1	0.1%
93303	3	0.3%
93304	148	16.5%
93305	116	12.9%
93306	88	9.8%
93307	121	13.5%
93308	132	14.7%
93309	124	13.8%
93311	14	1.6%
93312	20	2.2%
93313	33	3.7%
93314	7	0.8%
93385	1	0.1%
Outside of Bakersfield	24	2.7%

3.2.3 Route-Level Satisfaction

Question: What is the route number of the bus you are currently riding or describing? N=1,304

**N refers to the number of responses used in the analysis of each question. For this question, 1,304 riders were included. Throughout this report, the number of responses per question varies as not all participants responded to each question.*

Of the routes surveyed, route 22, which travels between Oildale and California State University Bakersfield (CSUB) and provides connections at the Downtown and Southwest transit centers was the most heavily used bus route (Figure 1). This reflects 2017 results, where route 22 represented 17-percent of survey answers. Other high-usage routes provide service to the transit hubs of Bakersfield College in addition to the Southwest and Downtown transit centers, showing that frequency of usage is consistent with observed route frequency seen in 2017 and 2015. One

exception is route 21, traveling between CSUB and Bakersfield College, which was recorded by nearly 16-percent of 2017 riders but only 5.4-percent of riders in 2019.

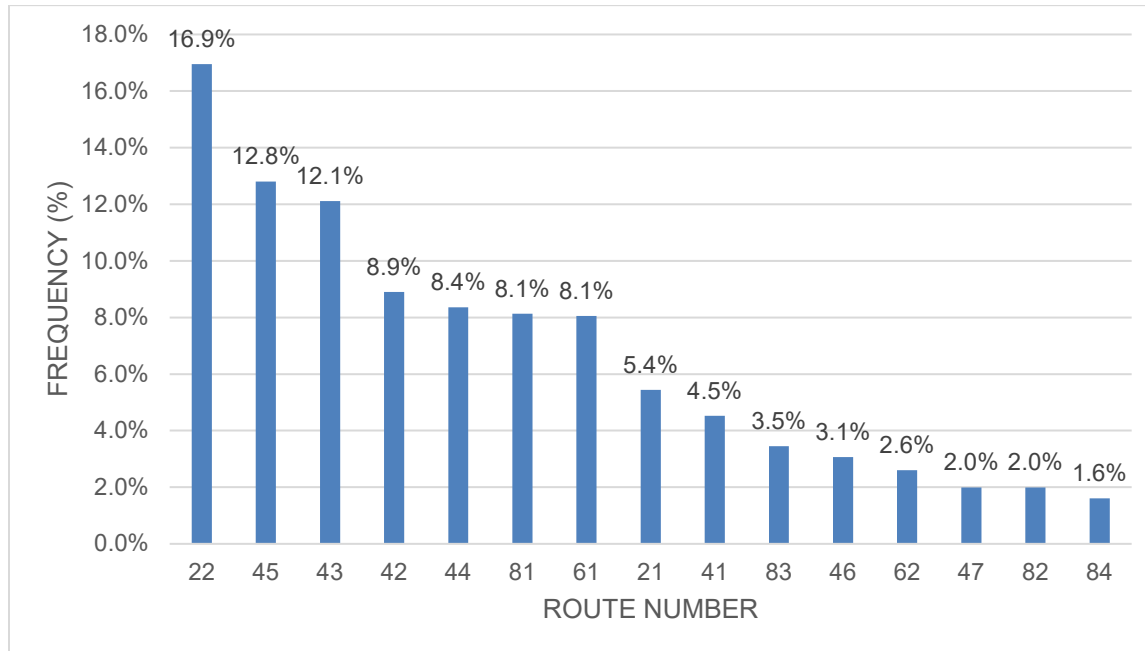


Figure 1: Route Usage

Figure 2 reveals that routes 61, 46, and 44 have the highest average customer satisfaction rates across the GET network, while routes 46, 83, and 84 display lowest levels of respondents being extremely satisfied with service. Specifically, 16-percent of respondents on route 85 were either dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied with service. Route 46, which was flagged as having high customer satisfaction rates in 2017, continues to perform well, displaying no riders who gave a rating of “extremely dissatisfied” during this round of surveys.

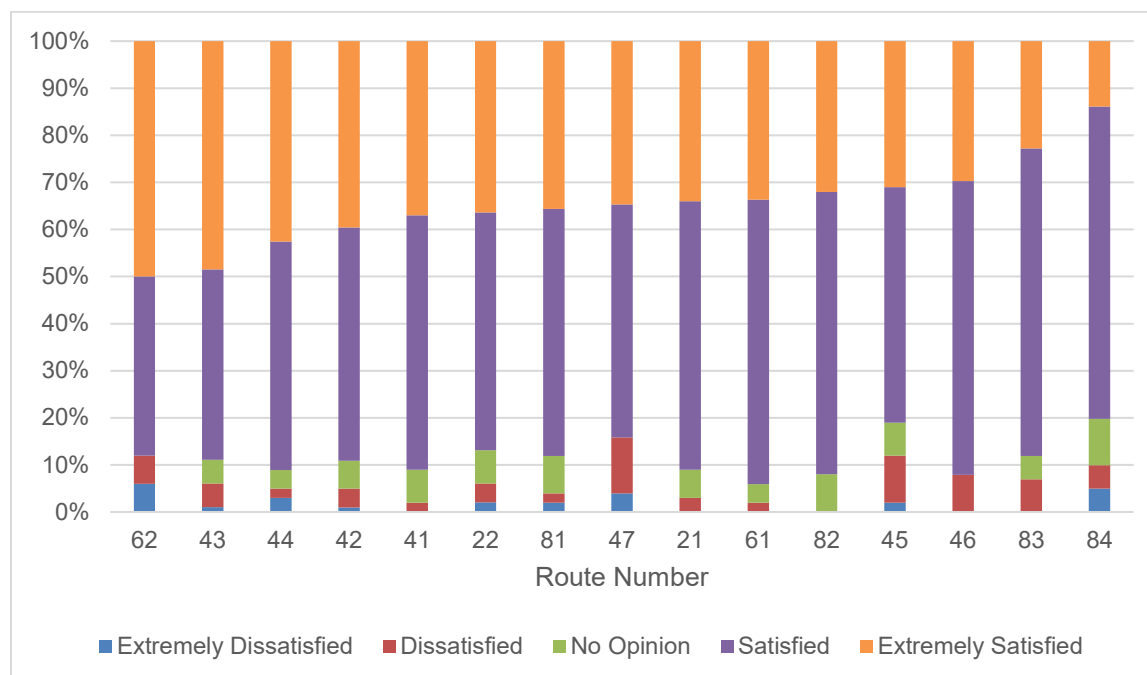


Figure 2: Satisfaction by route

3.2.4 Perceptions of GET Service Changes

Question: In the past year, would you say that GET service has improved, stayed the same, or worsened? N=1,275

Forty-eight-percent of riders believe service has improved over the past year, an increase from 41-percent in 2017 (Figure 3). Reinforcing this, only 9-percent of riders reported service has worsened over the past year, a decrease from the 12-percent seen in the 2017 survey. As noted in the 2017 report, further investigation is warranted to better understand which specific service factors have improved or worsened and which factors are the most important to riders.

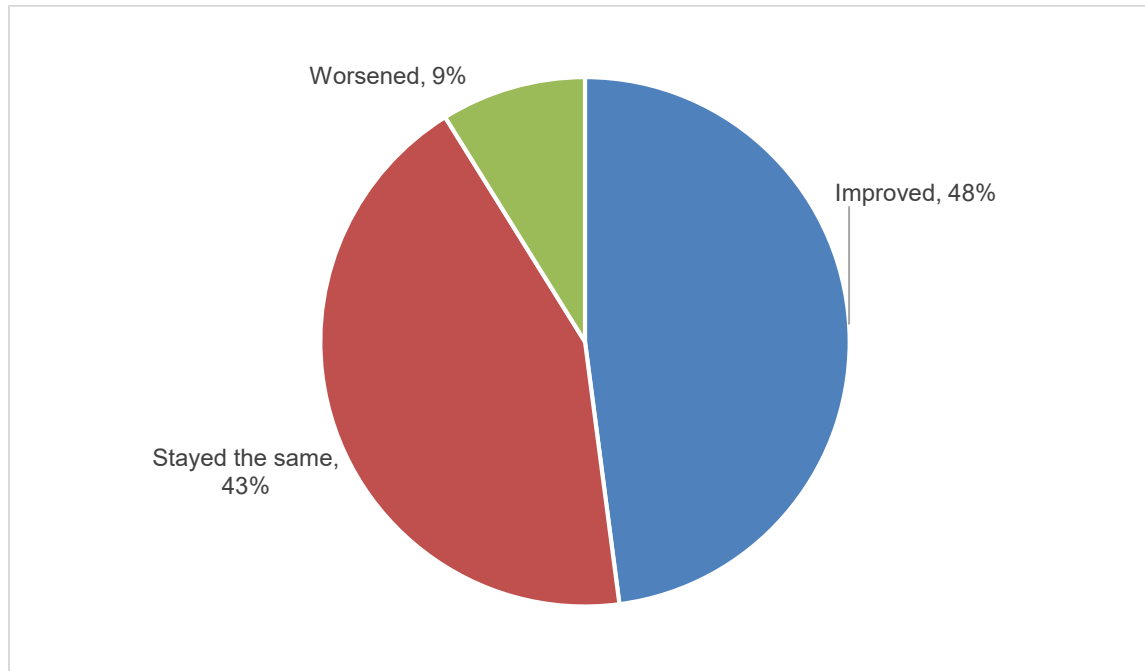


Figure 3: Perceptions of GET service change in previous year

Below, Figure 4 shows satisfaction rates across a variety of different service factors, comparing responses of all users with users who say service has worsened over the past year. Echoing 2017 results, these **dissatisfied customers have the largest concern with issues of efficiency, specifically service hours, reliability of buses being on-time, and the ability to transfer to other routes**. Indeed, inadequate service hours was a common complaint heard during the surveying process and displays the overall lowest satisfaction rating among all users as well as dissatisfied riders. Additionally, reliability, on-time performance, and the ability or ease of transferring were flagged as major concerns of dissatisfied riders in 2017, but overall received higher scores during this round of surveys. This could show that the **changes GET made to address on-time performance and timing of transfers is being positively received by riders, and that these initiatives should be continued to further increase overall customer satisfaction and minimize the number of dissatisfied riders**.

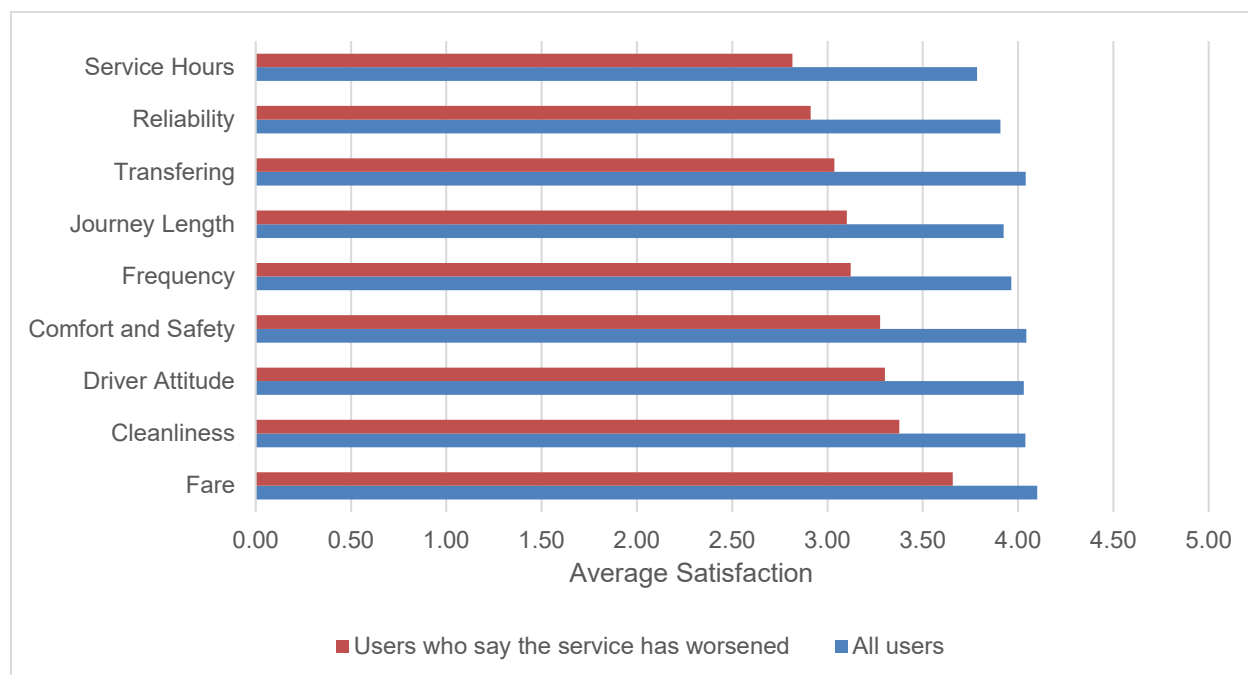


Figure 4: Concerns of dissatisfied riders

Question: Thinking about your experience on this bus route in the last 30 days, how satisfied were you with the overall quality of service? N=1,299

As can be seen in Figure 5, 88-percent of riders are either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the current overall quality of service. Further, the percentage of extremely satisfied riders increased 5-percent compared with 2017 results. Riders who are dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied decreased to 6-percent of 2019 respondents, compared with 9-percent of respondents to the 2017 survey. **This all suggests that GET is making service changes over time that riders are increasingly satisfied with.**

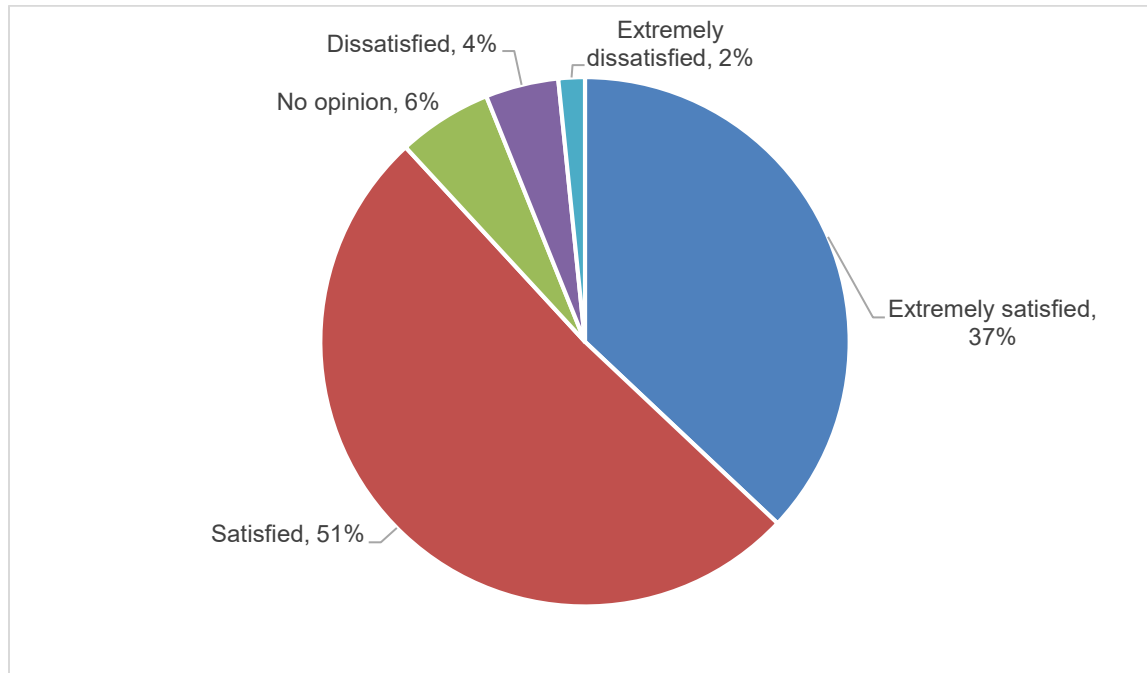


Figure 5: Satisfaction with overall quality of service

3.2.5 Satisfaction with Service Attributes

Measures of Transit Service Quality

Survey respondents were asked to evaluate their satisfaction across nine different measures of transit service quality. While not identical to the thirteen measures displayed in the 2017 survey, some measures were consolidated and service quality factors are classified into the following three service categories: Ride Quality and Bus Stop Experience, Efficiency of Service, and Monetary Value (Table 3).²

² Some elements were eliminated and/or consolidated on the 2019 survey to reduce the amount of time needed to complete the survey and reduce the burden on the respondent.

Question: Thinking about your experiences on this bus route in the last 30 days, how satisfied were you with the following:

Table 3: Factors of satisfaction with GET

Ride Quality and Bus Stop Experience	Efficiency of Service	Monetary Value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Driver's behavior and attitude Personal safety on bus and at stop Cleanliness of bus, stop, or shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to transfer to other routes Reliability of buses being on time Frequency of service Hours of service Length of time your journey took 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fare paid

Mean Ratings of Transit Service Quality

As in the 2017 survey, survey responses were coded per the following table to calculate mean satisfaction rates. The average ratings of these measures of transit service quality help to identify areas with low customer satisfaction.

Table 4: Coding of satisfaction ratings

Extremely dissatisfied	1
Dissatisfied	2
No opinion	3
Satisfied	4
Extremely satisfied	5

Following the methodology utilized in the 2017 report, the average satisfaction for each service quality measure is compared in Figure 6 to the average overall satisfaction of riders. Service quality factors in Figure 6 are separated into the categories described in Table 3 above (ride quality and bus stop experience, efficiency of service, and monetary value), with average satisfaction shown in vertical bars. Mean overall satisfaction is shown separately using a horizontal dotted line, as the satisfaction levels within specific factors is being compared to the overall mean satisfaction rate. The legend in Table 5 explains the colors used for ease of interpretation:

Table 5: Interpretation of mean satisfaction figures

	Ride quality and bus stop experience factor
	Efficiency of service factor
	Monetary value factor

In cases where satisfaction with a service factor is greater than the mean overall satisfaction level, riders are generally very satisfied with this factor. And when satisfaction levels fall below the mean overall satisfaction, this is an area to investigate more closely, as riders are not as satisfied with these service factors. Service factors at or very near the mean satisfaction are also areas of opportunity to increase satisfaction in the future.

As seen in Figure 6 below and evidenced in previous research, as well as the 2017 report, transit service satisfaction levels across North America are approximately 4/5. **In 2017, the mean overall satisfaction was 4.01, but 2019 respondents display a slightly lower mean satisfaction rate of 3.98, slightly below the aforementioned averages.** This is somewhat contradictory with other data, including *overall* satisfaction levels with overall quality of service and perception of GET service changes over the past year, both of which showed a higher proportion of satisfied customers than 2017 respondents. Further investigation is required to ascertain the specific reasons for this.

However, some service factors, such as the ability or ease of transferring, driver behavior and attitude, fare paid, and cleanliness of the bus, stop, or shelter, are above the average overall satisfaction and therefore a sign that riders are satisfied in these areas. **Service factors that fall below the average satisfaction level, such as hours of service, journey length, frequency, and reliability show a cause for concern and require further attention.** Indeed, the three main qualities of service that strongly influence ridership are: service frequency, service span, and travel time.



Figure 6: Mean satisfaction ratings, all categories (mean overall satisfaction 3.98)

Ride Quality and Bus Stop Experience

All three specific factors within ride quality and bus stop experience display mean satisfaction levels above the overall average. However, driver behavior and attitude and comfort and safety both show lower average satisfaction levels than 2017 results. Specifically, driver behavior and attitude satisfaction levels fell significantly, from 4.21 in 2017 to 4.03 in 2019. One rider states *"Bus drivers leave people at stops because they say the bus is full. Bus drivers are*

rude." Further investigation is needed to ascertain the specific reasons behind the decreased bus operator satisfaction levels, and GET should consider reviewing existing operator training programs and encouraging strong customer service among frontline staff to help return, or exceed, satisfaction to 2017 levels.

Cleanliness of the bus, bus stop, or bus shelter was broken down into two questions in the 2017 survey: one for the bus itself and one specifically regarding the bus stop experience. The mean satisfaction of the two 2017 responses, 4.0, is lower than 2019 satisfaction levels, showing that 2019 riders are slightly more satisfied with bus system cleanliness.

While riders are overall satisfied with these service characteristics, their satisfaction levels are lower than the riders of 2017, suggesting that there is room for improvement in these areas of GET service. **Service improvements to address driver attitude and behavior, cleanliness, and rider comfort and safety are likely to positively influence ride quality and bus stop experience, ultimately resulting in higher satisfaction levels.**

Efficiency of Service

Efficiency of service covers a wide range of key service factors, including reliability, ability to transfer to other routes, frequency, hours of service, and journey length. Of these factors, **riders are the most satisfied with their ability to transfer to other routes.** With an average satisfaction level of 4.04, this is the only factor in the category with satisfaction higher than the overall average. Specifically, only 5-percent of respondents reported that they were either dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied with their ability to transfer to other routes.

Rider comments mentioned that the largest factor negatively influencing their transfer experience was the reliability and on-time performance of the buses, causing riders to miss their transfers. Consistently late buses and missed transfers obviously contribute to lower levels of satisfaction, and this is a cause for concern that should be looked at more closely by GET to ensure that they do not lose riders because of these issues.

Reliability and on-time performance, while still below the overall average satisfaction levels, rose from 3.85 in 2017 to 3.91 in 2019. Based on survey comments and qualitative feedback collected by Stantec from frontline employees and riders, **many riders have experienced buses not arriving at their scheduled time. According to one rider "It's really frustrating when you are late to work every day because of the GET Bus transportation we rely on."**

Service frequency lies just under the overall average satisfaction level, with only one survey respondent reporting satisfaction as "extremely dissatisfied", and 22-percent of respondents are extremely satisfied with service frequency. However, 10-percent of respondents are dissatisfied with service frequency, citing requests for more frequent service during low-demand hours, such as late nights or on weekends.

Hours of service is by far the lowest-performing service factor, well below the overall average satisfaction level. Specifically, **riders mentioned a desire for longer night hours and extended service hours on weekends.** However, it is likely extending service hours will not meet ridership and productivity thresholds, and it is recommended GET look at strategies to improve satisfaction in other areas of service that will improve overall satisfaction levels, or develop new means of providing service during times of low demand, such as the Ryde service GET was preparing to launch during the surveying effort.

Monetary Value

Riders displayed significantly higher satisfaction levels regarding the fare they paid, indicating that the **majority of survey respondents believe the service is a good value for the money paid**. This is a stark departure from 2017 results, where riders displayed an average satisfaction of 3.97, far below the average satisfaction of 4.10 shown in 2019 results. **Comments on fare included requests for lower 31- and 15-day passes, and the consideration of implementing a special student fare for college students.**

3.2.6 GET Riders and Technology

Question: Do you own or regularly use a...? N=1,208

As can be seen in Figure 7 below, and as seen in 2017 survey results, many GET riders are tech-savvy, with over 75-percent of riders who own or regularly use a smartphone, and 17-percent of riders reported not using technology on a regular basis. When compared with technology use reported in the 2017 results, smartphone and computer use are virtually the same, whereas tablet use decreased slightly. Interestingly, the proportion of riders who reported neither owning nor regularly using technology increased, from 14.8-percent in 2017 to 17-percent in 2019. This could be due to the fact that the survey respondents tended to be older than respondents surveyed in 2017, but may require more investigation to ascertain. **Regardless, 83-percent of respondents still regularly use and have access to technology, so GET should further pursue distributing information through electronic and mobile platforms. However, to accommodate the needs of the 17-percent of riders who do not have reliable access to technology, minimal and strategic printed schedules, postings, and alerts should still be maintained, such as at transit hubs and onboard vehicles.**

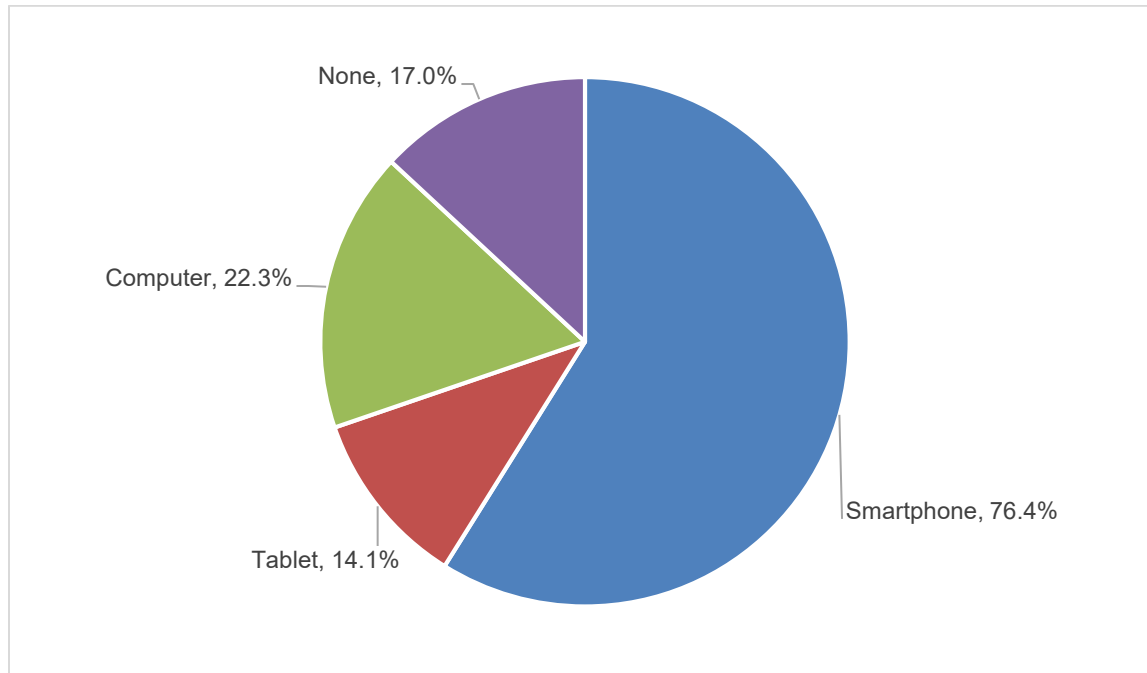


Figure 7: Technology used regularly by riders

3.2.7 Fare Payment

Question: How did you pay your fare? N=1,294

Reflecting similar fare payment behavior as seen in the 2017 report, **40-percent of respondents utilize a 31-day pass, and 38.5-percent use cash** (Figure 8). A smaller portion of riders purchase day passes, and an even smaller amount of riders utilize the 15-day fare. The proportion of riders who purchase 15-day passes showed a slight decrease from 2017 survey respondents, which further questions the value of maintaining it as a fare option.

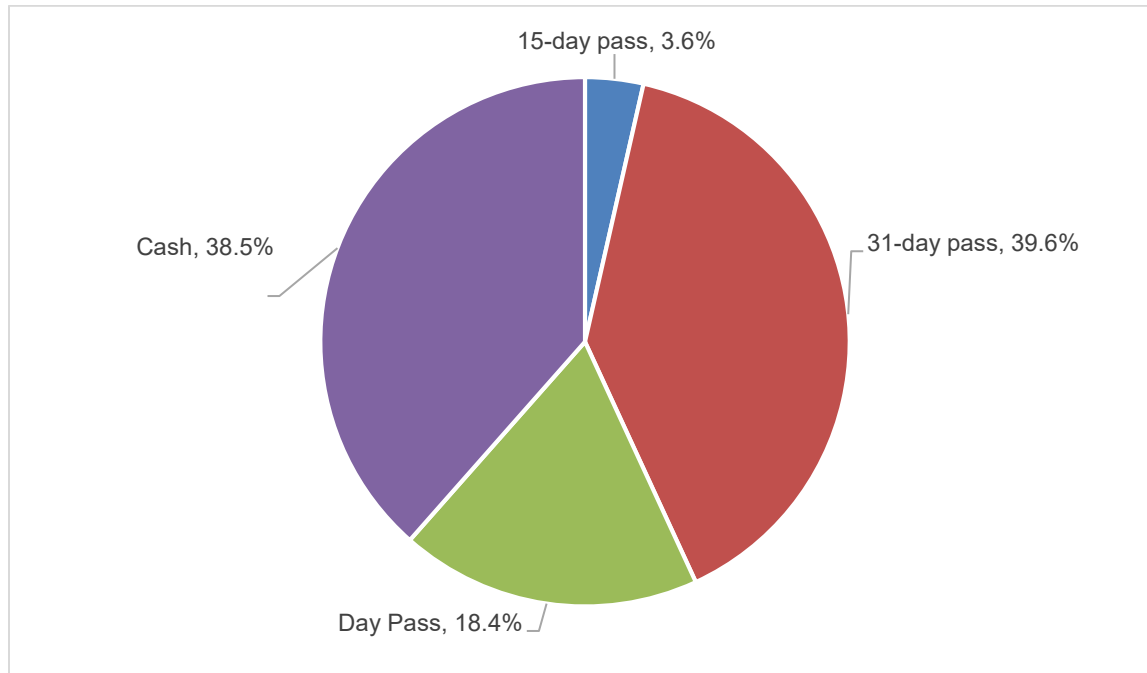


Figure 8: Fare payment type

Low-income riders are most likely to use cash to pay their fare (40-percent of respondents), closely followed by 31-day passes (39-percent of respondents). A similar pattern is seen in incomes up to \$50,000 (Figure 9). After this income bracket, riders utilize the 15-day pass less than lower income riders, and 31-day passes are most commonly used among wealthy riders.

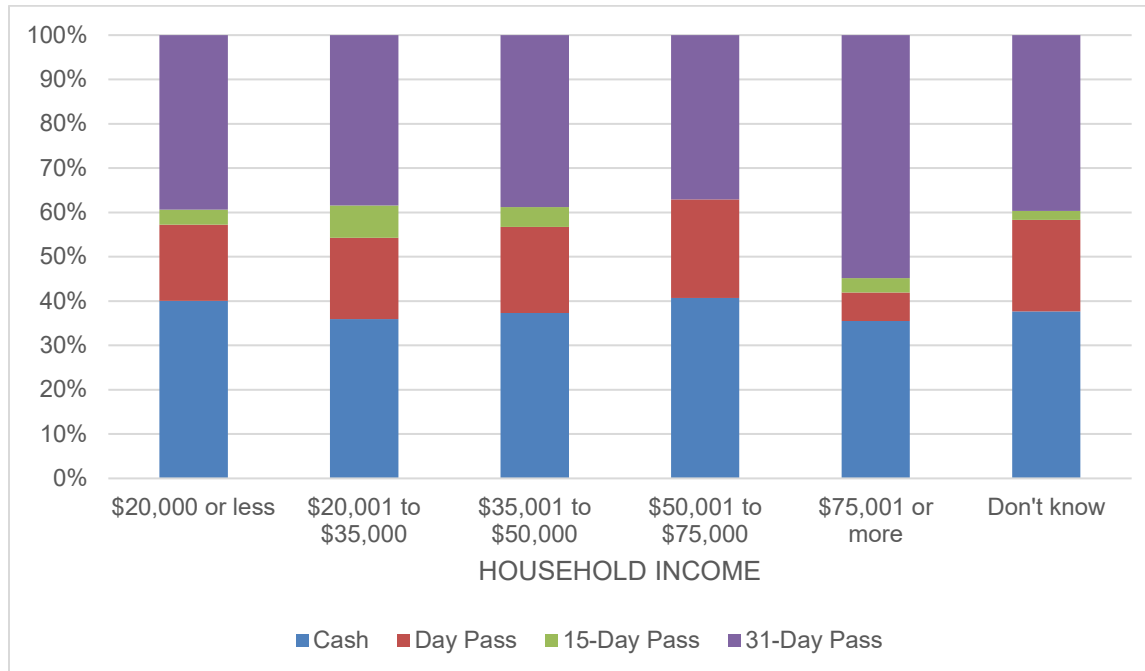


Figure 9: Fare payment method and annual household income

Question: Which fare category applies to you? N=1,295

GET provides four fare category options: regular, senior, disabled, and Medicare/discounted. Senior passes are available to any rider 65 years of age or older, and it is interesting to note that 11-percent of respondents reported using senior fares, but only 8-percent of respondents appear to be within the age category to qualify for this fare category. As with most transit agencies, GET also offers reduced fare to those with disabilities and Medicare cardholders. As GET does not offer a low-income reduced fare program, the majority (73.2-percent) fall into the “regular” fare category (Figure 10).

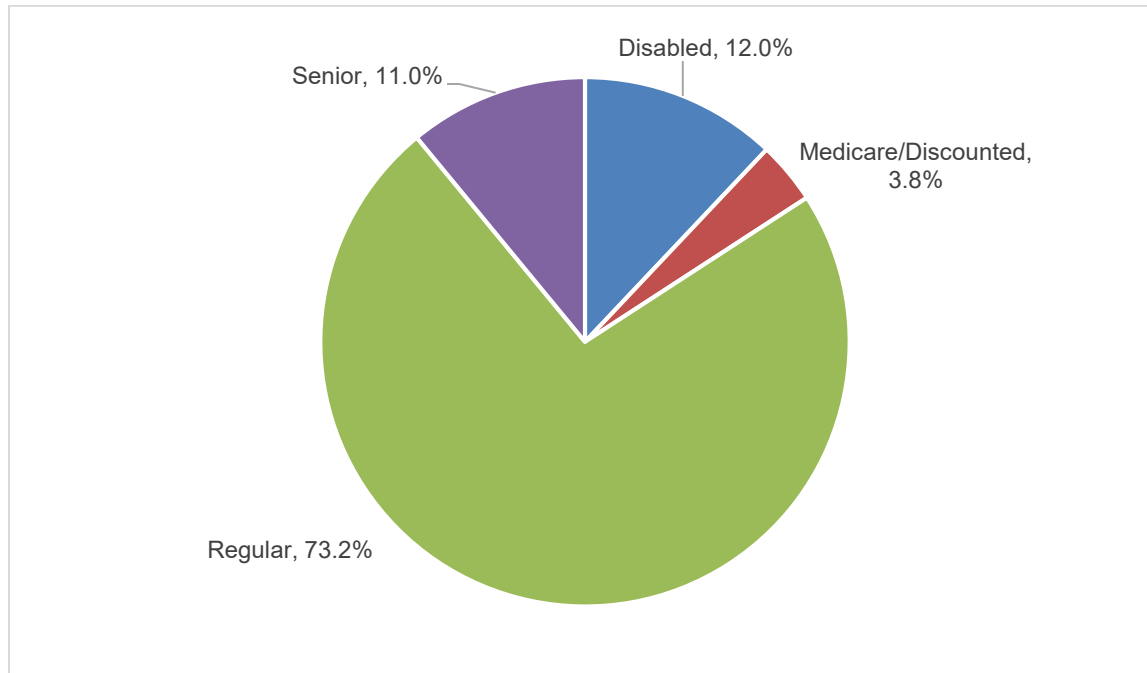


Figure 10: Fare category type

3.2.8 Trip Purpose

Question: What is the main purpose of your trip today? N=1,274

Work, personal business, and traveling to and from school are the three most common trips taken using GET (Figure 11). These were the three most common trip purposes reported by 2017 riders. In fact, the order of most to least common trip purpose in 2017 and 2019 are identical, though the specific percentages of riders are different. This shows that there is consistency in what riders utilize GET services for over time. This information can be used to further increase rider satisfaction by considering how to satisfy trip-chaining or multi-purpose trips within the current fixed route system and for designing service accordingly.

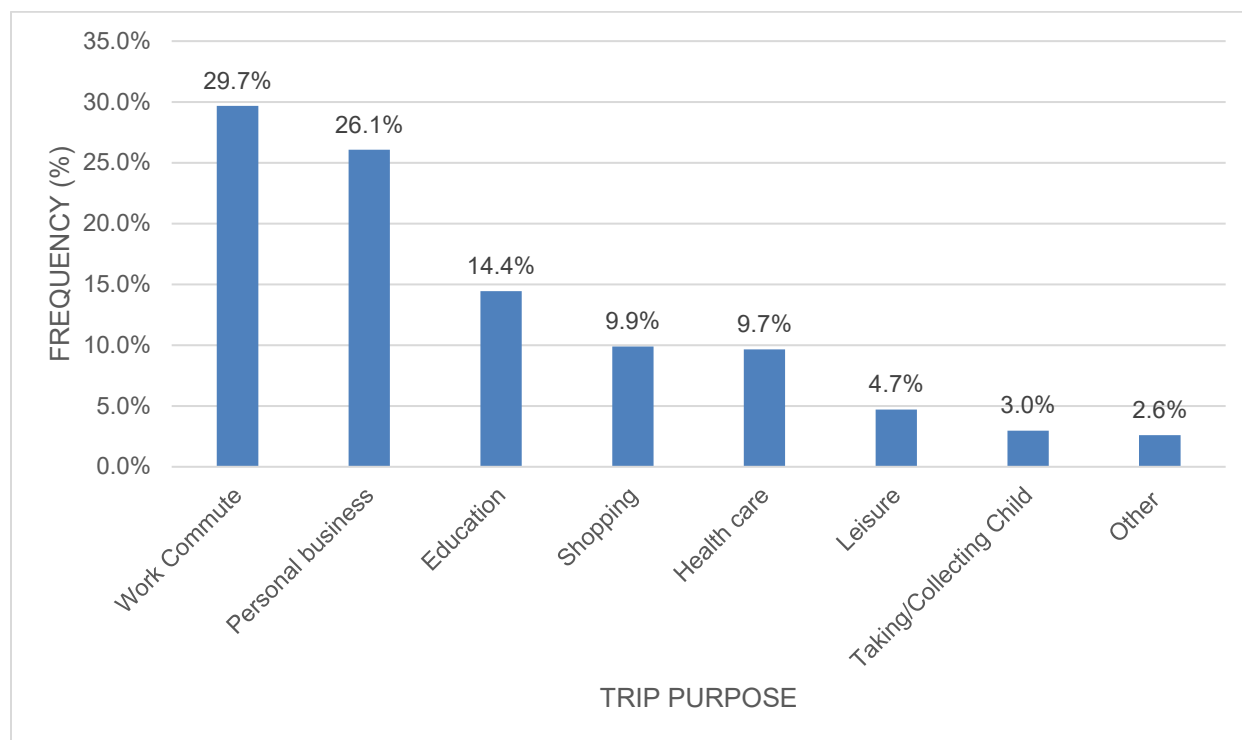


Figure 11: Primary purpose of trip

3.2.9 Frequency of Use

Question: How long have you been riding GET buses? N=1,293

Overall, rider responses for how long they have been using GET very closely reflect results seen by 2017 riders (Figure 12). Thirty-nine-percent of riders have been using the system for five or more years, a slight increase from 38.6-percent of respondents in 2017. However, it should be noted that this is still far below levels seen in 2015, 2013, and 2009, where this figure exceeded 50-percent of all riders. This slight increase may be indicative of riders now returning to the system, after many mentioned in past surveys that they were dissatisfied with service.

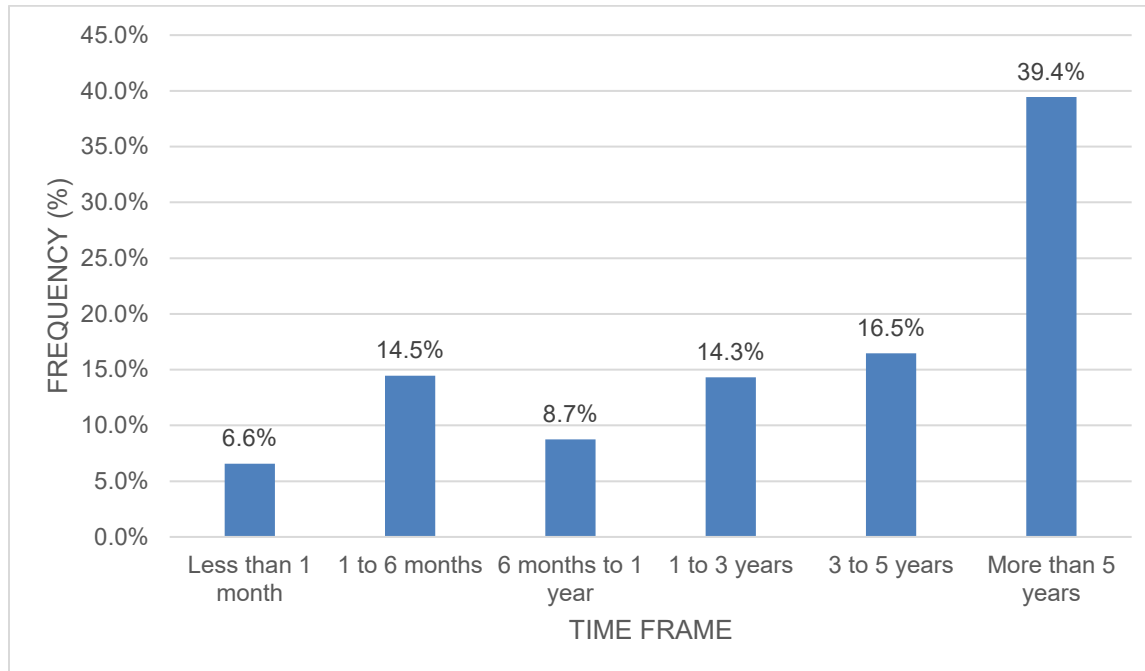


Figure 12: Length of time using GET

Question: On average, how often have you used any GET bus in the last 3 months? N=1,287

The majority (78-percent) of GET riders use the system at least three days a week, which is interestingly the exact same percentage of riders in these two categories in the 2017 survey (Figure 13). The entire spread of frequency of use very closely aligns with results presented in the 2017 report, reinforcing the ideas that GET is providing a service that can and is being accessed regularly, and riders rely on GET multiple times a week, showing the potential for satisfied, regular riders to be loyal to the service.

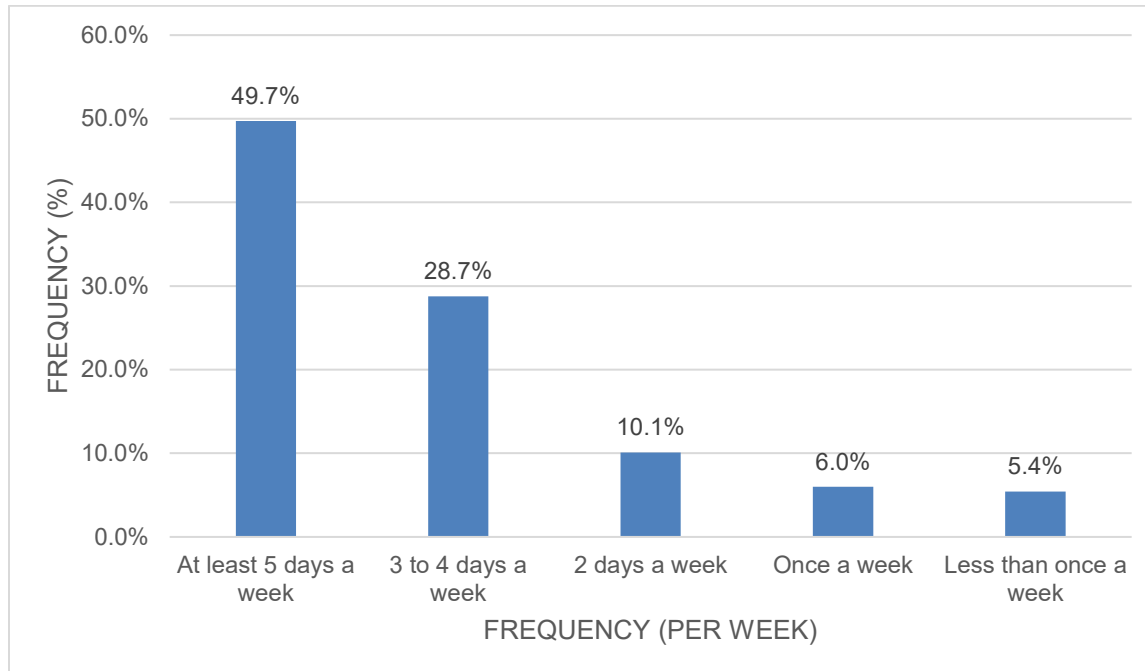


Figure 13: Frequency of GET use

3.2.10 Transportation Mode Options

Question: How would you make this trip if GET were not available? N=1,251

At 27.5-percent, walking is the most popular alternate mode if GET were not available, echoing results from the 2017 report (Figure 14). **It is also important to note that over 11-percent of riders would not make the trip without GET, suggesting that they are dependent on GET for transportation. However, a significant portion of respondents (20-percent) noted the use of Uber or Lyft if GET were not available.** As transit agencies grapple with the impact that transportation network companies are having on transit ridership, it is important to maintain high customer satisfaction and service quality so that riders do not replace potential GET trips with Uber or Lyft in the future.

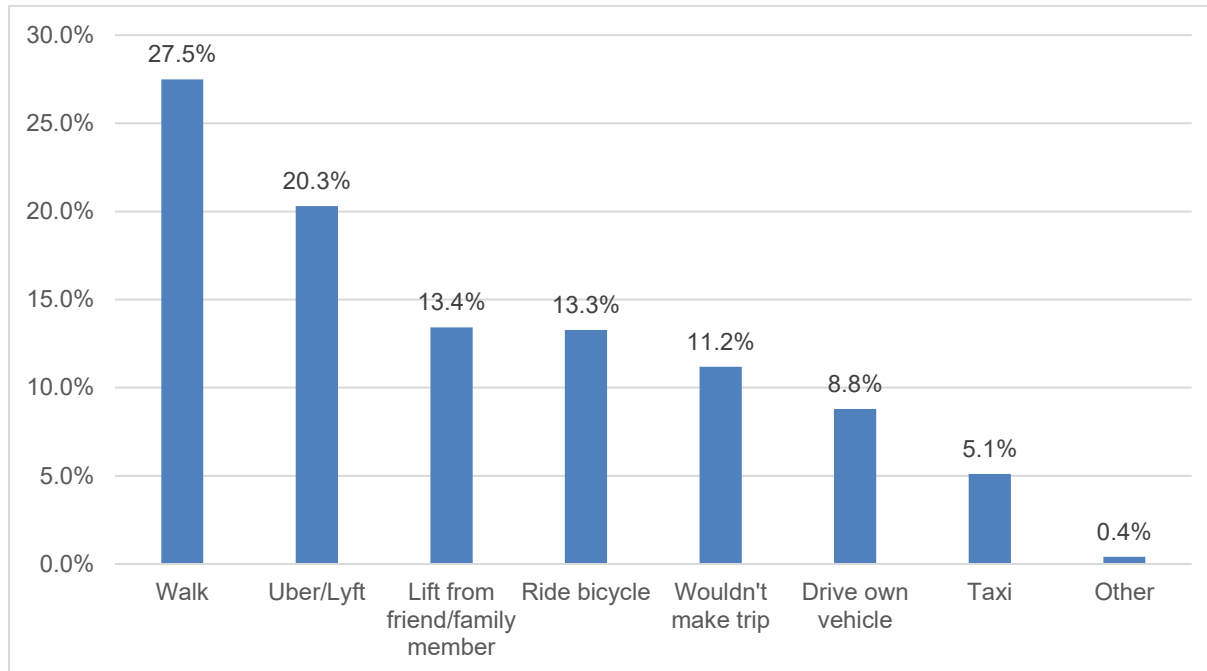


Figure 14: Alternate mode choice if GET was not available

Question: How did you get to the bus stop? N=1,268

The vast majority of survey respondents (81.5-percent) walk to the bus stop, followed by 10-percent of riders who transferred from another GET bus (Figure 15). A much smaller portion of respondents either got a ride or drove themselves to the bus stop, likely a result of the lack of park-and-ride facilities at bus stations and the low proportion of riders who own a car. Additionally, few riders (2.4-percent) rode a bicycle to their bus stop, despite the fact that GET's Bikes on Buses program implemented bike racks to the front of every fixed route GET bus. The lack of bicycle infrastructure throughout Bakersfield likely contributes to this low proportion as well.

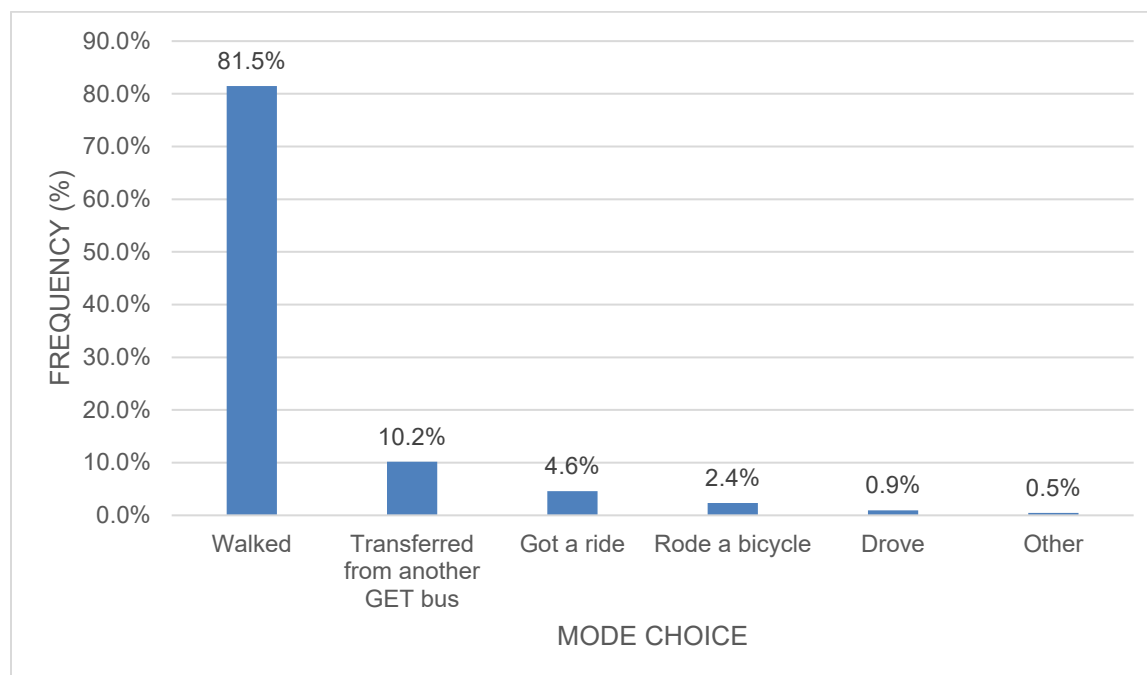


Figure 15: Mode choice to reach GET stop

3.2.11 Opinion of GET and Public Transit

Riders were asked to rate their perception of GET as well as public transit in general by answering the following question:

Question: Do you agree with the following statements?

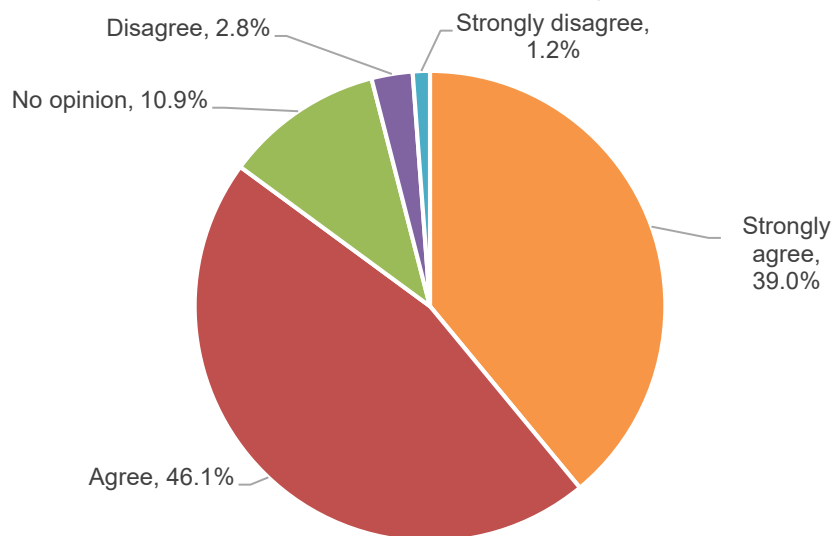
I would recommend GET to family and friends N=1,274

I have a positive image of GET N=1,259

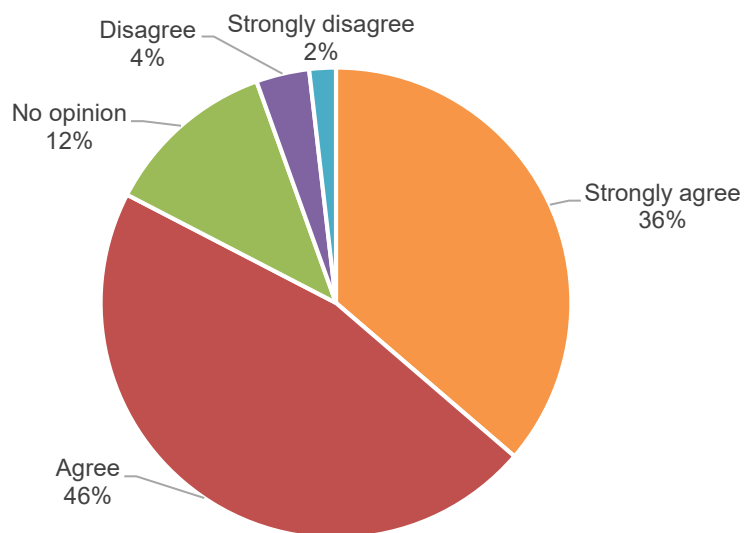
Public transit is an important public service N=1,240

Most (85-percent) of riders would recommend GET to their friends and family, indicating that they are satisfied with the service (Figure 16). Over 82-percent of riders have a positive image of GET, and 96-percent of rider believe that public transit is an important service, further corroborating that survey respondents are satisfied with the service. As this is a survey of bus users, some degree of bias may be involved in these responses. Regardless, GET should be commended for providing a service that is generally well-received by its users, is viewed as an important public service, and whose riders would recommend to others.

I would recommend GET to family and friends



I have a positive image of GET



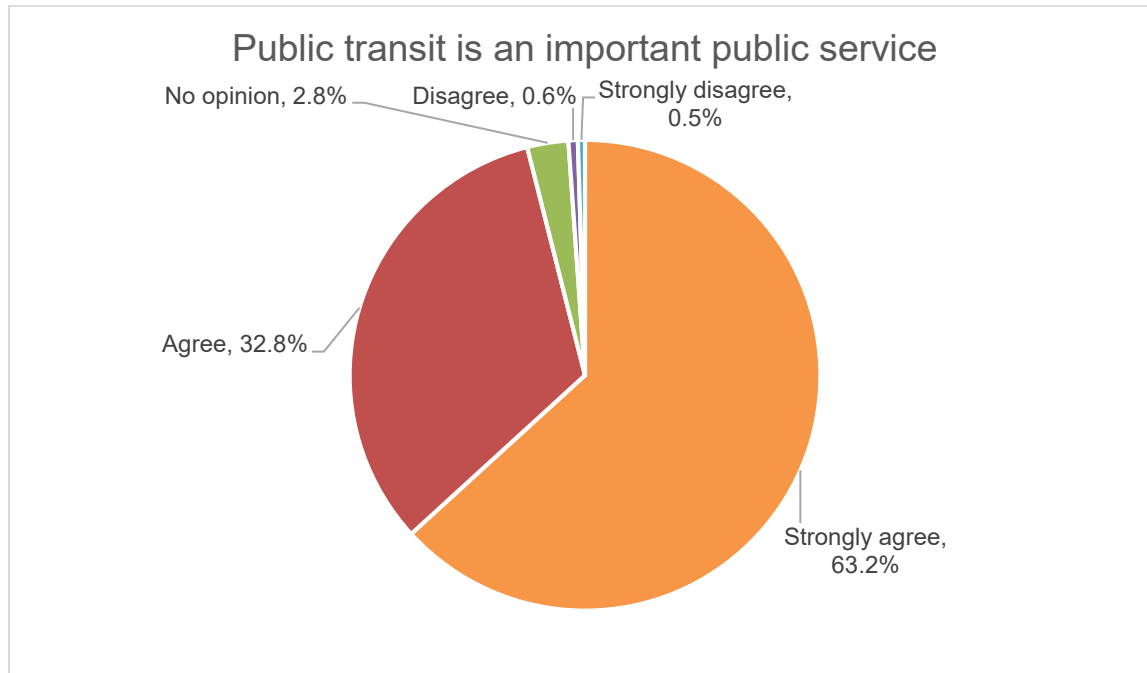


Figure 16: Image of GET and public transit

3.2.12 GET Brand and Advertising

Question: Aside from seeing GET buses on the streets, where have you come across the GET brand in the last three months? N=1,286

As seen in Figure 17, among riders, the most common occurrence of seeing the GET brand in the past three months is on the get bus schedules (33-percent of respondents), followed by on the GET website (16-percent) and GET posters, brochures, and magazines ads (14-percent). **As only 9-percent of riders reported seeing the GET brand across GET social media accounts, this might be an area of opportunity to expand the reach of GET in the community, both among riders and non-riders.** Social media also provides an opportunity to provide real-time service announcements, which are far more effective if a larger proportion of riders are aware of the service. **An additional area of concern is that 12-percent of riders have not seen the GET brand anywhere in the past three months. Especially as GET is trying to advertise for new services such as the Ryde on-demand transit program, it is important that GET customers are aware of the GET brand and advertising to stay informed of new programs.**

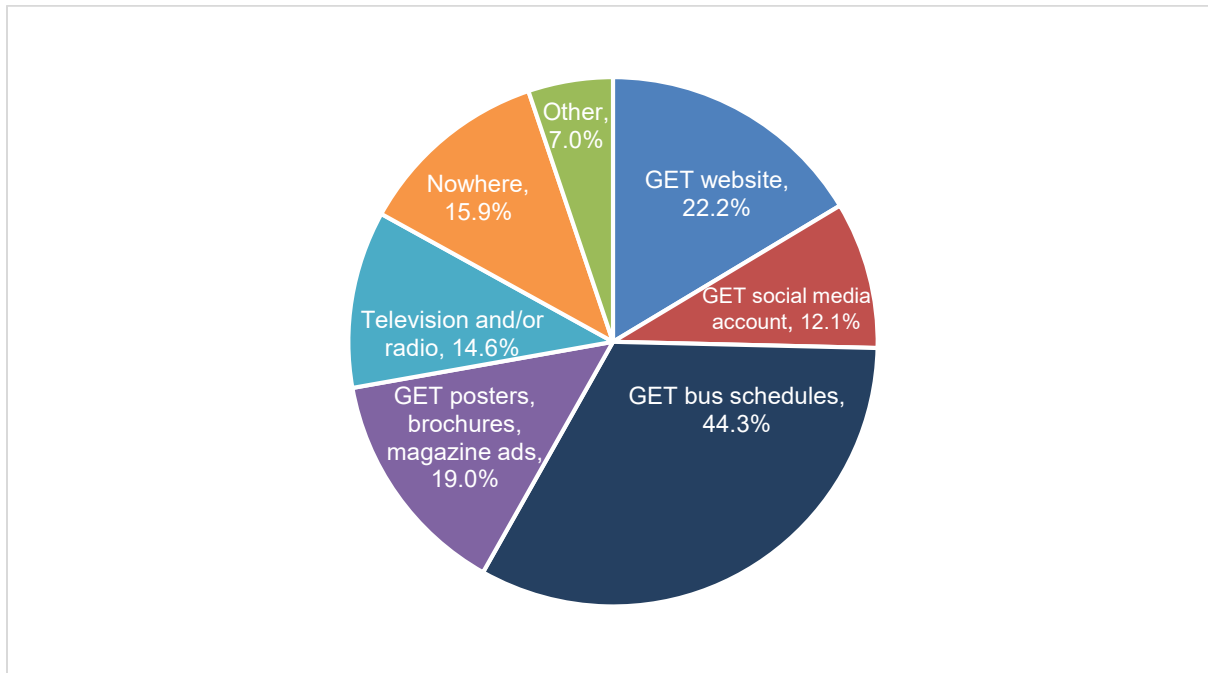


Figure 17: GET brand and advertising

3.2.13 Influence to Try GET

Question: Who or what influenced you to try GET bus service? Check all that apply. N=1,139

As seen in Figure 18, **the most common mechanism to get people to try GET is through a friend, family member, or neighbor (42-percent).** This reinforces the fact that **current riders are a valuable asset for outreach and promoting the agency through word of mouth in their local community.** A smaller, but still significant proportion (23-percent) reported the cost of owning a vehicle was a major factor in choosing to use GET, followed by an employer or school at 19-percent of respondents, and 14-percent of respondents chose to use the service as a result of a move. 9-percent of respondents reported another reason. These included responses such as a change in income and a desire to “go green,” but by far the most common response in this category was “myself,” showing that many riders chose to ride as an independent decision, not influenced by any external force.

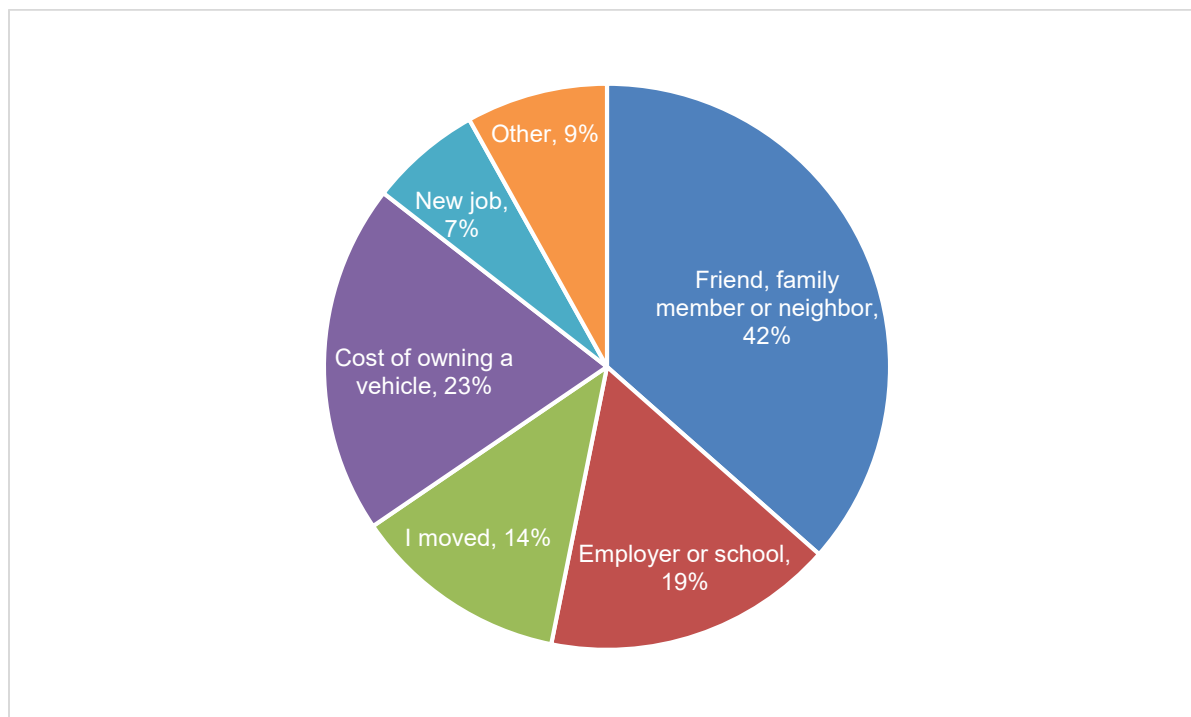


Figure 18: Who/what influenced you to try GET

3.2.14 Captive and Choice Riders

In previous sections, all riders were analyzed together regardless of the type of rider they are. Two of the most important distinctions to make between different kinds of riders is whether they are captive or choice riders: **captive riders are those who must take transit because they do not have access to a car, whereas choice riders are transit users who take transit even though they have regular and reliable access to a car.** The characteristics and opinions of the different user groups represented in this survey are presented below.

An emerging methodology to assess the “overall health” of a transit agency is to calculate the proportion of choice or discretionary users. It is generally acknowledged that the number of choice riders who are regular users of a transit agency is a sign that the agency provides high-quality service with users who display high levels of satisfaction with the service as well. The table below demonstrates the socioeconomic information for Bakersfield's captive and choice conventional riders (Table 6).

Table 6: Profile of captive and choice GET riders

Variable		Captive Riders N=899, 74%	Choice Riders N=315, 26%
Car access	Yes	0%	100%
	No	100%	0%
Average Age		37	35
Gender	Male	48%	57%
	Female	50%	42%
	Other	1%	1%
Ethnicity	White	39%	25%
	Latino	31%	39%
	Black/African American	19%	26%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	1%
	American Indian	4%	3%
	Other	5%	5%
Household Income	\$20,000 or less	53%	33%
	\$20,001 to \$35,000	14%	16%
	\$35,001 to \$50,000	5%	10%
	\$50,001 to \$75,000	1%	7%
	\$75,001 or more	2%	6%
	Don't know	25%	28%
Employment	Full-time	20%	33%
	Part-time	22%	9%
	Student	21%	31%
	Unemployed or retired	36%	27%

In Bakersfield, **choice riders who choose to use transit despite having access to a car make up 26-percent of all riders, a slight increase from the 2017 survey, wherein 24-percent of riders reported as choice riders.**

These users tend to have higher incomes, are more likely to be male, and are more likely to be employed full-time or in school than captive riders. Mirroring the demographics of the entire sampling group, most choice riders identify as Latino or Hispanic, and it is interesting to note that this ethnicity is overrepresented within the choice riders group. This suggests that, compared to other ethnicities, this group is more likely to choose transit even though they have reliable vehicle access and do not have significantly lower incomes than other ethnic groups.

Captive riders, dependent on GET as they do not have access to a vehicle, represent 74-percent of all surveyed riders. These users tend to be slightly older than choice riders, are more likely to be unemployed or retired, and have lower incomes (53-percent of captive riders make \$20,000 or less annually).

Figure 19 breaks down alternative mode usage if GET were not available between captive and choice riders. It is not surprising that the most popular alternate mode among choice riders is to drive their own vehicle (29-percent of choice riders), but a significant portion of choice riders would also walk (13-percent), take an Uber/Lyft (23-percent), or get a lift from a friend or family member (16-percent). Only 5-percent of choice riders would not make the trip if GET were not available.

Alternately, **captive riders are most likely to walk if GET were not available (32-percent of respondents).** Similar proportions of respondents would receive a lift from a friend or family member or take an Uber/Lyft

as choice riders. Captive riders are also much more likely to not make the trip at all, at 13-percent of captive riders compared with 5-percent of choice riders.

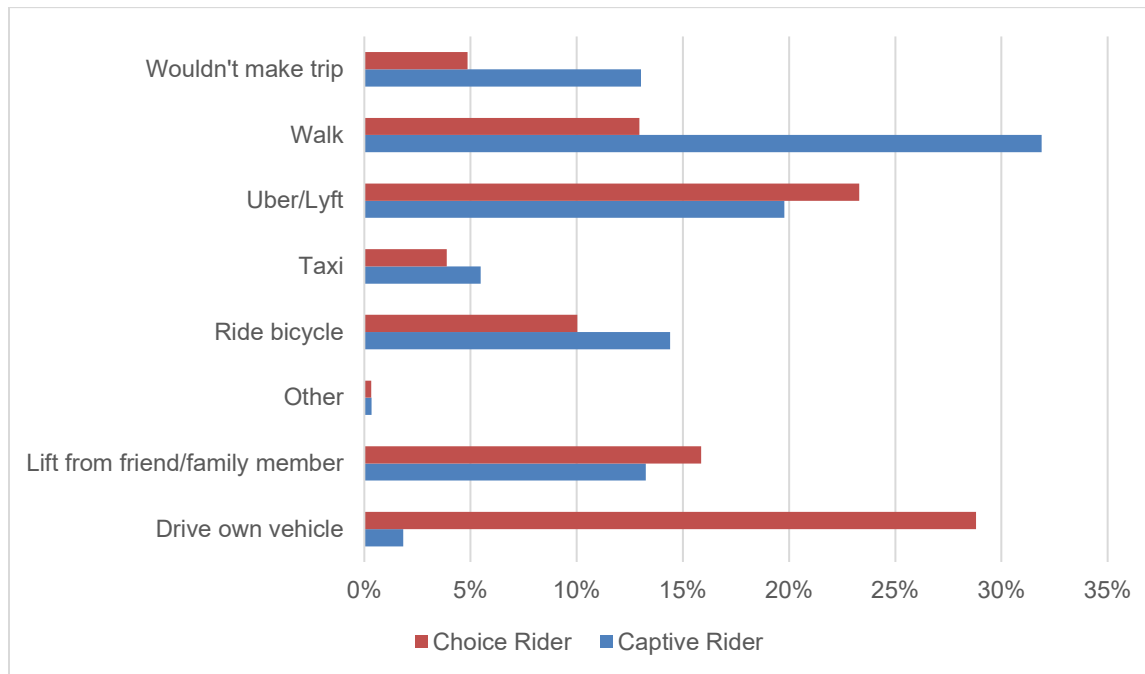
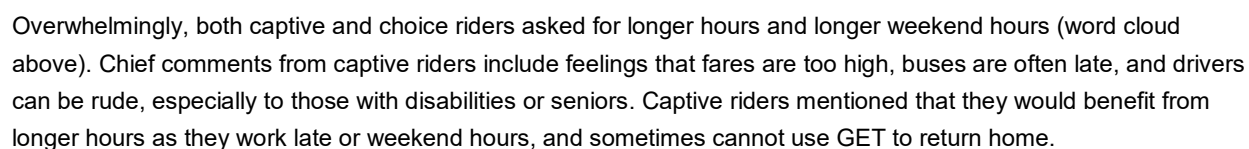


Figure 19: Alternate mode to GET (captive vs. choice riders)



3.2.15 Loyal and Disloyal Riders

34

service that they enjoy, they would recommend the service to a friend or family member, and they have a positive image of the system and agency. on the other hand, disloyal riders do not have a positive image of the system and would not recommend it to others. Currently in Bakersfield, **25.1-percent of riders are defined as loyal while only 1.1-percent of riders are disloyal**, based on the analysis criteria outlined below.

Table 7: Definition of loyal and disloyal transit user

A loyal user is defined as someone who is:	A disloyal user is defined as someone who is:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfied overall (5/5) Would recommend the service to a family member or friend (5/5) Has a positive image of public transit (5/5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not satisfied overall ($\leq 3/5$) Would not recommend the service to a family member or friend ($\leq 3/5$) Does not have a positive image of public transit ($\leq 3/5$)

It is important for GET to increase and maintain satisfaction among loyal riders, as these riders are more likely to use the system for different trip purposes and are more inclined to continue using the system through different stages of life, such as when their home or work location changes or they experience an increase in income. Additionally, loyal customers help the transit agency by promoting it to others in their community. As these riders are valuable assets, it is important for GET to maintain high satisfaction rates among their loyal riders while also working to increase loyalty among their overall rider base.

The proportion of riders categorized as “loyal” increased from 17.5-percent of riders in 2017 to 25.1-percent in 2019. Additionally, the proportion of disloyal riders fell significantly, from 8.4-percent in 2017 to 1.1-percent in 2019. Indeed, the number of riders who reported low satisfaction rates among all of the aforementioned criteria was very low. This shows that GET is working to increase satisfaction among their riders as well as retaining loyal riders over time, and GET should be commended for this and continue to focus on this in the future. However, this still means that 73.8-percent of all riders are neither loyal or disloyal, which presents an opportunity to convert more riders into loyal riders.

To further increase loyalty among GET riders, it is important to first understand what service factors currently loyal riders are most satisfied with. Figure 20 shows how both loyal and disloyal riders are satisfied across a range of service attributes. It is not surprising that loyal riders show overall much higher satisfaction levels across all service attributes, but are especially pleased with driver attitude, reliability, and frequency of service, **while disloyal riders are least satisfied with service frequency, length of journey, and ability to transfer to other routes.**

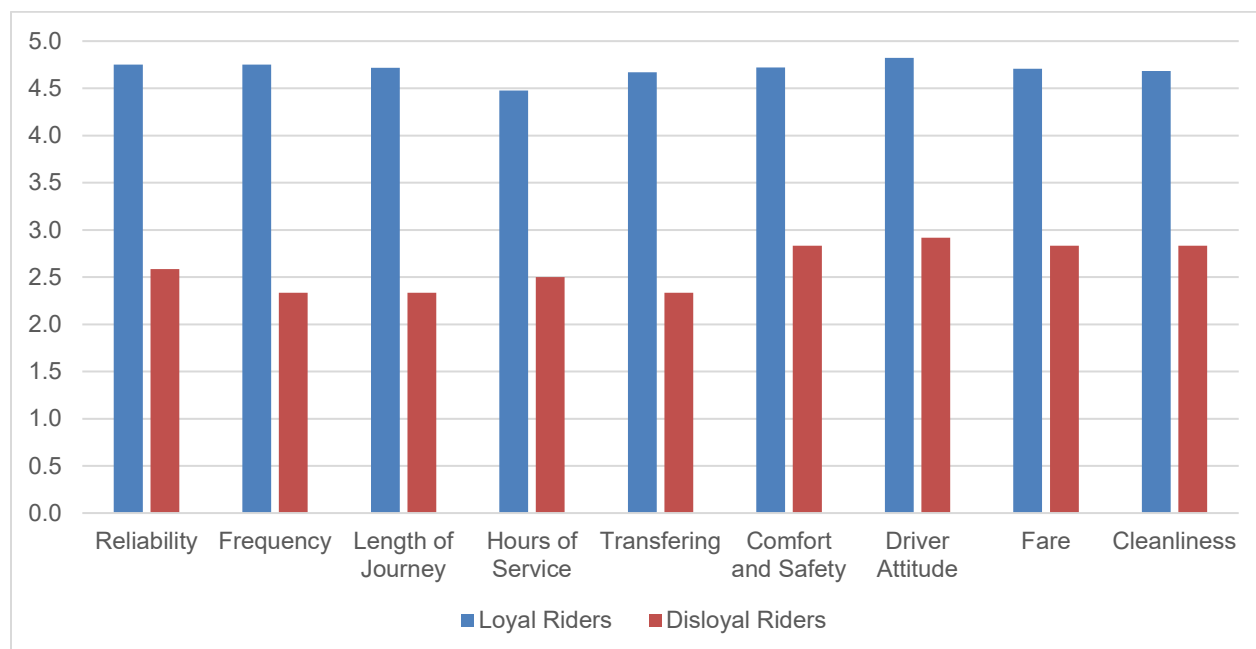


Figure 20: Relative importance of service factors for loyal and disloyal GET riders

3.2.16 Peer Agency Comparison

Comparing customer and community satisfaction rates with other transit agencies in the region is an important aspect of understanding GET's strengths and areas of opportunity. To attempt to compare to more recent data, GET rider survey results were analyzed and compared to results from the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) 2017 On-Board Transit Passenger Survey as well as the San Diego North County Transit District (NCTD) BREEZE Bus 2015 On-Board Transit Passenger Survey. However, it should be noted that these are not perfect comparisons, as each agency has demographic differences among their riders, and survey instruments and methodology differ across the agencies as well.

Nevertheless, these agencies are used as comparisons because they operate in a similar geographic context to GET, but it is important to note that both VTA and NCTD serve larger and wealthier populations (average income \$75,095 and \$93,500 respectively), and VTA operates light rail in addition to bus services at a broader geographic scale than Bakersfield. However, VTA's 2013 survey was used as a peer agency comparison in 2017, so it will be important to compare satisfaction over time between VTA and GET.

In 2015, NCTD asked its riders *"How do you rate public transit service in your area?"* with available responses of Good, Average, and Poor.

In 2017, VTA asked its riders *"Please rate VTA on overall transit experience"* with answers on a scale of 1-5, with 1 representing Poor and 5 representing Excellent.

In the current GET rider survey, riders were asked “*Thinking about your experience on this bus route in the last 30 days, how satisfied were you with the overall quality of bus service?*” with response options of Extremely satisfied, Satisfied, No opinion, Dissatisfied, and Extremely dissatisfied.

In terms of satisfaction, **GET results showed higher overall satisfaction levels than NCTD results: 88-percent of GET riders are either extremely satisfied or satisfied with current service, while 67.5-percent of NCTD bus riders rated their overall transit service as good**, with 28.4-percent of respondents rating service as average and 4.2-percent as poor.

VTA’s 2017 results more closely align with GET satisfaction ratings, with 77-percent of respondents reporting their overall satisfaction levels of 4 or 5. It is important to note that while overall satisfaction levels among GET riders increased (from 81-percent in 2017 to 88-percent in 2019), satisfaction among VTA riders between 2013 and 2017 decreased slightly, from 79- to 77-percent.

NCTD’s survey received 2,951 responses, but it should be noted that it is part of a larger Transit Passenger Survey for the entire San Diego Association of Governments. This survey portion represents responses only from the NCTD fixed route bus service, of which the entire surveying took place between February and December 2015. VTA also received a higher number of survey responses than GET: 9,963 responses were collected between December 2016 and July 2017.

4.0 COMMUNITY SURVEY

In addition to current GET riders, non-riders were also surveyed to more fully understand Bakersfield travel behaviors and perceptions of GET. This section presents findings from the community non-riders survey.

4.1 METHODOLOGY

In addition to interrogating satisfaction levels and areas of opportunity among current GET riders, a further goal of the project is to understand non-riders’ and the Bakersfield community’s perception of GET and transit in general, as well as a deeper understanding of Bakersfield residents’ motivations behind their transportation choices and barriers to wider transit use. As in 2017, a community survey was developed, and, after GET staff approval, translated to Spanish. The community survey is slightly shorter than the rider survey, containing 21 questions (including a general comments/suggestion question). Questions asked for insights such as typical transportation modes, trip purpose, and demographics. The complete survey can be found in Appendix 2.

The community survey was only available online through SurveyMonkey, and was promoted in the same manner as the online rider survey. Differentiation was obtained through the first question, where respondents were asked whether they heard about the survey onboard a GET bus or in the community. Responding with the latter prompted the community survey, the results of which are detailed below. As with the online rider survey, the community survey was available throughout the month of March 2019. Along with promotion on the GET website, leaflets with a link to the online survey were distributed at transit centers and on GET buses. **A total of 324 community surveys were completed, 89 more community surveys than collected in 2017.**

4.2 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The Bakersfield community survey was created to capture travel habits and perspectives of travelers within the community. Of the 324 respondents, 27-percent have used GET within the past 90 days, while 73-percent are non-riders. This differs from the 2017 community survey, where 48-percent of respondents were GET users. Further, this low number of riders is somewhat surprising as leaflets were mainly distributed on or near GET buses. However, **the high number of non-rider responses is useful in obtaining a fuller understanding of why they make the travel decisions that they do, identifying barriers to wider GET usage, and perceptions of public transit.**

4.2.1 Summary of Results

- Unsurprisingly, the majority of community respondents do not identify as riders, and 42-percent have access to a personal vehicle. Of the respondents who have used GET in the past 90 days, 71-percent reported the service as good or excellent, with 29-percent reporting as poor, subpar, or indifferent. However, these results are slightly lower than 2017 satisfaction ratings as well as 2019 rider responses, showing that overall, community members are less satisfied with GET than riders who completed the on-board survey and are less satisfied in 2019 than 2017.
- When compared to riders, non-rider results display a demographic spread that is slightly older than riders with higher average household incomes, and a larger proportion of respondents who are employed full or part time.
- 68.2-percent of respondents travel average distances less than ten miles in length, a quite feasible distance to travel via transit.
- Out of the community respondents who reported that they typically use transit, biking, or carpooling to reach their destination, 46-percent did so to save money and 39-percent did so out of convenience.
- While overall community satisfaction with GET has decreased, perception of public transit has increased since 2017, including possessing a positive image of GET, knowing where their nearest GET bus stop is, supporting a sales tax dedicated to improving transit in Bakersfield, and believing that public transit plays an important role in their community's quality of life.
- The most common reasons for community members not using transit include the need to visit multiple destinations before returning home (22-percent of respondents), and the belief that transit is inconvenient or takes too much time (21-percent). 42-percent of respondents reported that they would use GET more often if there were a bus stop closer to their house or destination, or if service was more frequent. While 16-percent reported there is nothing that can be done to persuade them to use GET more frequently, 14-percent would if they received help on planning their trip. This displays an opportunity to provide travel training to capture more potential riders.
- 46-percent of respondents reported that they would rely on GET services if their normal mode of travel was unavailable, which can be categorized as easy-to-persuade potential users. 30-percent of respondents would use GET more often than they currently do, but it would not be their primary mode of travel. These respondents can be categorized as more-difficult-to-persuade potential users. 22-percent of respondents,

categorized as unwilling to use GET bus, would find another mode of transportation to rely on if their normal mode of travel was unavailable.

- Overall, the largest deterrents to attracting more riders from the community at large include:
 - The public image of GET, including perception of safety, security, and cleanliness
 - A perceived inability to trip chain using GET
 - The perception by community members that GET is inconvenient, takes too long, and hours of service are not sufficient for their travel purposes
 - A low level of confidence among community members on how to plan a trip on GET and how to use the system

4.2.2 Demographic Profile of All Respondents

Most respondents are of working age (18-64) and most are students or employed full-time (59-percent), with 15-percent of respondents unemployed or not working at the time of taking the survey (Table 8). The majority of respondents were female (63-percent); while this is not reflective of the Bakersfield community, this could be the result of a personal willingness to take the survey. While the majority of respondents possess a driver's license (73-percent), one-third of respondents also display an annual income of \$20,000 or less, which may impact their ability to own and maintain a personal vehicle. Use of GET could serve as a viable option for these respondents. Table 9 shows the geographic spread of community respondents. The zip codes with the highest proportion of respondents include 93306, 93307, and 93308.

Table 8: Demographic profile of community survey respondents

Variable		All Users
Driver's License	Yes	73%
	No	27%
Age	Under 18	0%
	18-24	16%
	25-34	37%
	35-44	27%
	45-54	10%
	55-64	7%
	65+	2%
Gender	Male	37%
	Female	63%
	Other	0%
Ethnicity	White	39%
	Latino	48%
	Black/African American	9%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	1%
	American Indian	1%
	Other	2%

Variable		All Users
Household Income	\$20,000 or less	33%
	\$20,001 to \$35,000	18%
	\$35,001 to \$50,000	12%
	\$50,001 to \$75,000	10%
	\$75,001 or more	16%
	Don't know	10%
Employment	Full-time	49%
	Part-time	22%
	Student	10%
	Unemployed or retired	19%

Table 9: Residency zip code of survey respondents

Zip Code	All Responses	
	Number	Percentage
93301	12	4.3%
93304	28	10.0%
93305	20	7.1%
93306	43	15.4%
93307	34	12.1%
93308	32	11.4%
93309	30	10.7%
93311	14	5.0%
93312	21	7.5%
93313	22	7.9%
93314	7	2.5%
Outside of Bakersfield	17	6%

4.2.3 Use of GET Services

Question: If you have used GET bus in the last 90 days, on a five-point scale where one is “poor” and five is “excellent”, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with GET services? N=278

It is important to note that while 73-percent of respondents reported that they are non-users, 52.2-percent of respondents self-reported as non-users in this question. This could be due to the smaller sample size represented in

this question (only 278 of the 324 surveys received responded to this specific question) or differences in how people identify as either riders or non-riders. **Of the respondents who have used GET within the past 90 days, 71-percent rated service as excellent or good, with 29-percent giving ratings of poor, subpar, or indifferent** (Figure 21). These results differ from overall rider survey satisfaction, where 88-percent of respondents were either extremely satisfied or satisfied with GET service. These higher dissatisfaction levels may help explain why these respondents use GET less often. Another area of distinction lies in that riders were asked to comment on one trip, whereas community surveys asked to comment on satisfaction as a whole. This may contribute to lower overall satisfaction ratings, as a rider may have had overall positive experiences on GET, but one negative trip may be a larger influence on their overall satisfaction and perception of GET.

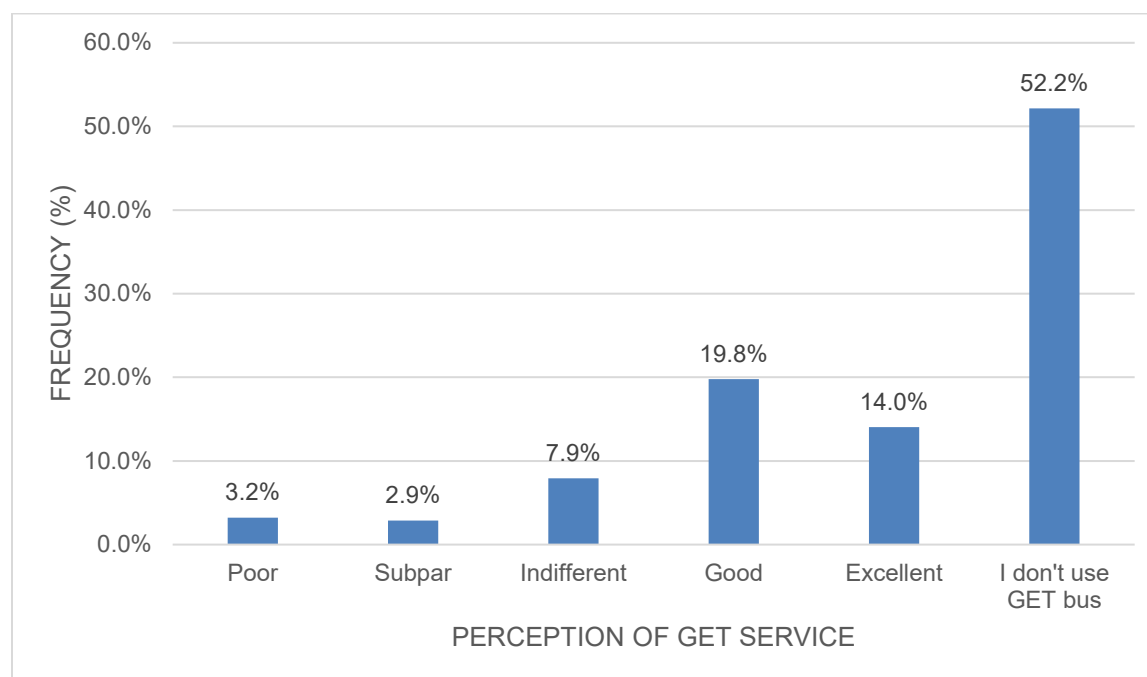


Figure 21: Overall satisfaction with GET

Question: In the last 90 days, have you ridden either GET's fixed-route bus service or the GET-A-Lift paratransit service? N=283

Overall, 26.9-percent of community respondents have used GET services in the past 90 days (Figure 22).

Unsurprisingly, most respondents have not used GET as they have access to a personal vehicle (42-percent of respondents). Smaller proportions of community members cited other reasons, such as the trip would take too long (7.4-percent), the bus does not run where the respondent is going (7.1-percent), or the respondent does not know how to use GET (6-percent). 8.1-percent of respondents reported that they did not use GET for a reason not listed. **Other reasons provided by respondents include using Uber/Lyft, the respondent neither drives nor uses GET, or did not know GET existed.** GET can work to address concerns of trip length or frequency by **improving service quality**, and the 6-percent of respondents who do not know how to use GET presents an opportunity to provide transit training to current non-riders who, if they were confident in how the system worked, would be more willing to ride more often.

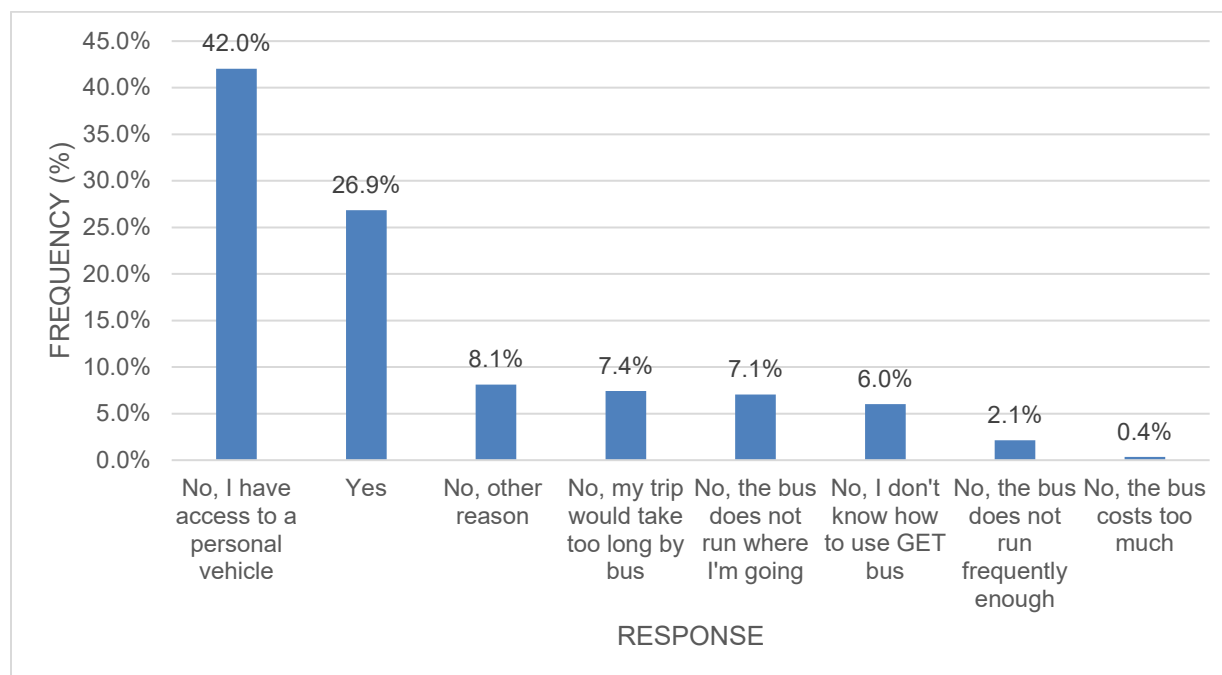


Figure 22: Use of conventional GET service in the last 90 days

Question: How long is your average trip, in miles? N=283

Most trips made by community respondents are within a distance that can be covered by using public transit (Figure 23). Specifically, 68.2-percent of trips are within one to 10 miles in length, which are feasible trip lengths to take via transit. For the 29-percent of community respondents with average trip lengths greater than 10 miles, driving a personal vehicle may be more convenient depending on the direction of travel, time of travel, travel destination, and viable public transit options. A much smaller proportion (2.8-percent) of community members' average trip length is less than one mile. For trips of this short distance, it is often easier and faster to walk or choose a form of active transportation over public transit or private vehicle use.

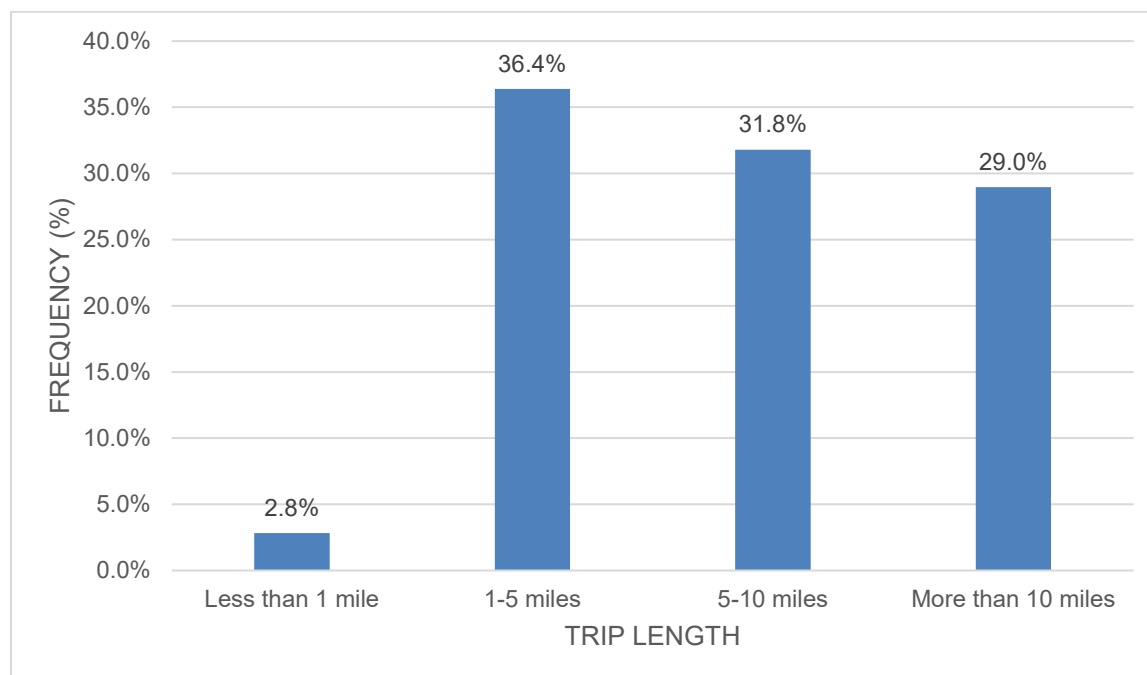


Figure 23: Average trip length

Question: Aside from seeing GET buses on the streets, where else have you come across the GET brand in the last 90 days? (check all that apply) N=262

Most community respondents reported seeing the GET brand on GET bus posters, brochures, or billboards (43.9-percent), which is followed by GET social media accounts (37.4-percent) and TV commercials (37-percent), as can be seen in Figure 24. It is interesting to note that only 9-percent of respondents to the rider survey reported seeing the GET brand through GET social media accounts, compared to the much higher percentage of community respondents. The specific reasons for this warrant further investigation, but presents **an opportunity to use social media to encourage the community, who is more aware of GET's social media presence than their riders, to use the service more often.**

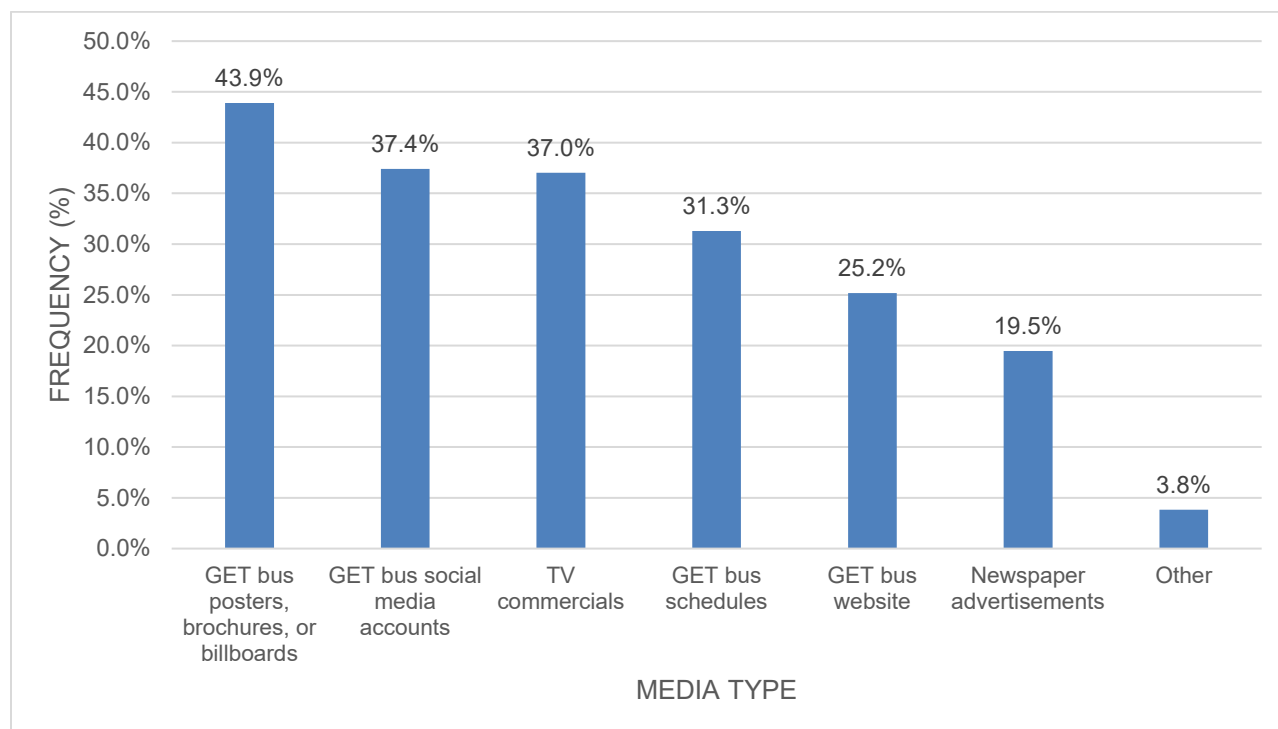


Figure 24: GET branding

Question: If you typically use transit, bicycle, walk, or carpool, what motivates you to do so? Choose all that apply.
N=233

It should be noted that when respondents were asked to identify their typical mode of travel in a previous survey question, 77-percent identified driving alone, but 233 community members responded to this question that is specifically regarding people who typically use a mode of transportation other than a private vehicle. This could be a result of survey respondents being confused with the wording of the question, or respondents interpreting questions differently (for instance, a survey respondent occasionally bikes or carpools to work and answered this question even though it is not their primary mode of travel).

Regardless, **the most common response, at 46-percent, was to save money, closely followed by convenience, at 39-percent of respondents** (Figure 25). Smaller proportions of respondents reported car-related reasons: lack of access to a car (28-percent) or parking issues (25-percent). A minority of respondents reported non-vehicle related motivators, such as a desire to be environmentally conscious or health benefits. The 3-percent of respondents who reported “other” noted reasons such as a physical inability to drive and employer rideshare incentives.

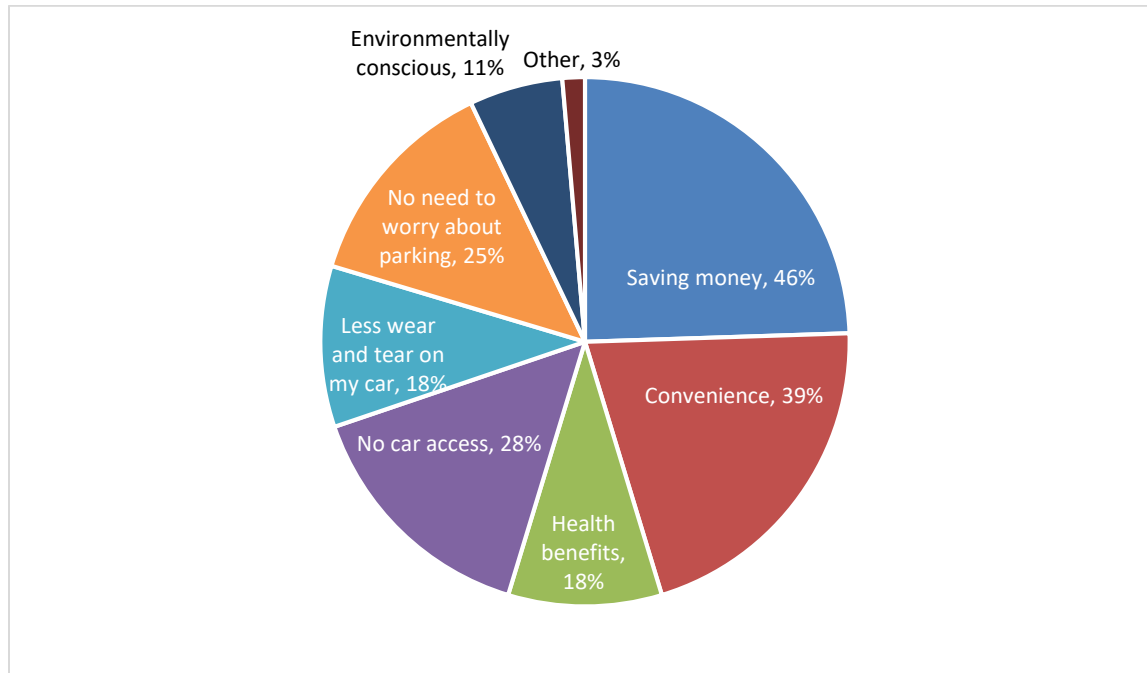


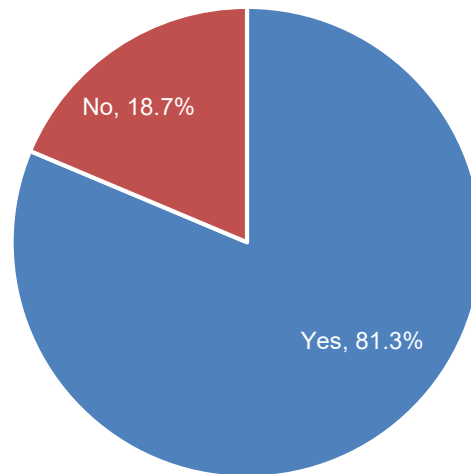
Figure 25: Motivation to use transit, bike, or carpool

4.2.4 Perception of Public Transit

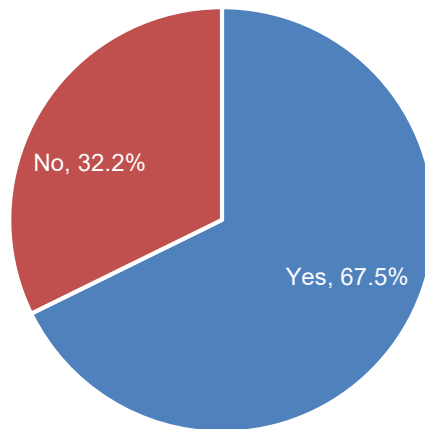
Overall, the Bakersfield community recognizes the important role public transit plays in an area's quality of life, and have a positive image of their local transit system (Figure 26). Specifically, **a considerable majority, 67.5-percent, would support a sales tax to improve service in the Bakersfield Metropolitan area. This is also a large increase from the 2017 community responses, where 56.6-percent of respondents noted they would support a sales tax.**

Compared to the 2017 community survey results, community public image of GET and public transit has improved in all areas surveyed, with the exception of closest bus stop location. In 2017, 88.7-percent of respondents noted that they knew the location of their closest bus stop, compared to 78.2-percent in 2019. As locating your nearest bus stop is an initial hurdle to using transit, increasing the visibility of bus stops, shelters, and GET branding can improve the knowledge of the nearest bus stop and route.

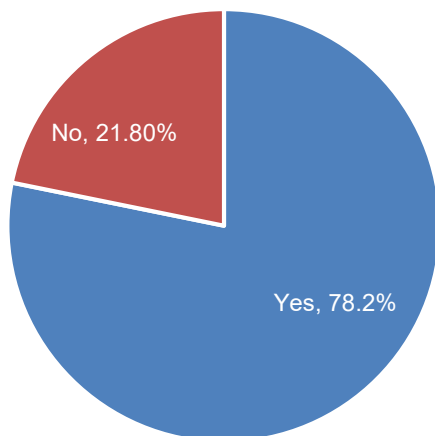
Do you have a positive image of GET?



Would you support a dedicated sales tax supporting improving public transit in the Bakersfield Metropolitan area?



Do you know the location of the GET bus stop nearest your home?



Do you believe public transit plays an important role in your community's quality of life?

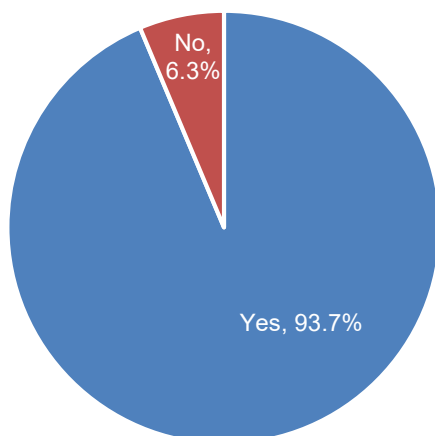


Figure 26: Value of GET and public transit

4.2.5 Non-Riders Survey Results

Table 10: Demographic profile of GET bus riders (from onboard surveys) and non-riders

Variable		Riders N=1195	Non-Riders N=282
Car access	Yes	26%	
	No	74%	
Driver's license	Yes		73%
	No		27%
Average Age		35.3	36.9
Gender	Male	48%	37%
	Female	47%	63%
	Other	1%	0%
Ethnicity	White	33%	39%
	Latino	32%	48%
	Black/African American	20%	9%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	1%
	American Indian	4%	1%
	Other	5%	2%
Household income	\$20,000 or less	46%	33%
	\$20,001 to \$35,000	14%	18%
	\$35,001 to \$50,000	6%	12%
	\$50,001 to \$75,000	2%	10%
	\$75,001 or more	3%	16%
	Don't know	25%	10%
Employment	Full-time	23%	49%
	Part-time	18%	22%
	Student	22%	10%
	Unemployed or retired	32%	19%

Question: How do you typically get to where you need to go? N=213

Echoing the results of the 2017 survey, most community respondents drive alone to get to where they need to go (Figure 27). However, a larger proportion of 2019 respondents reported driving alone (77-percent) than in 2017 (less than 60-percent). **Fewer 2019 respondents reported other modes of travel than 2017 respondents, potentially indicating that more community members in Bakersfield are choosing to drive alone than in 2017 and are relying more heavily on private vehicle usage to reach their destinations.** These findings align with a recent study of declining transit ridership in Southern California that found that increased prevalence of affordable car loans has increased the access to vehicles, particularly among traditional transit ridership (recent immigrants, low-income groups, and visible minorities).

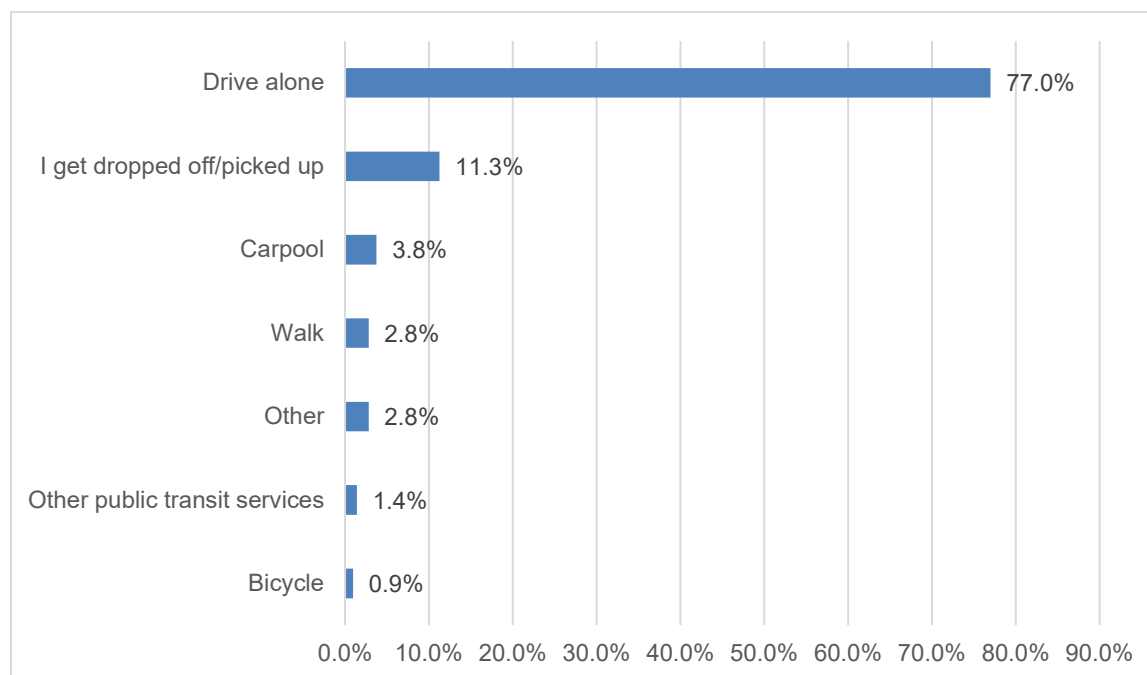


Figure 27: Typical mode of travel

Question: If you typically drive alone, why do you choose to do so? (check all that apply) N=213

To understand how to grow ridership in the community, it is important to ascertain the reasons why people in Bakersfield choose to drive alone. As seen in Figure 28, **most respondents reported that they need to visit multiple locations before returning home (22-percent) or transit is too inconvenient/takes too much time (21-percent)**. This is similar to the results seen in 2017, where these were the top two answers as well. The 6-percent of respondents who chose “Other” predominately noted issues of safety and cleanliness, or service does not run in their area or where they need to go. A significant proportion of respondents reported issues related to childcare needs (17-percent), a stark increase from the 9-percent of respondents who noted that in the 2017 report. **As stated in the 2017 report, expanding the discounted child fare to encompass children over five years of age could bring new riders with this concern onto the system. Addressing perceptions of service related to inconvenience, safety, cleanliness, or trip length also presents an opportunity for GET to acquire new riders.** To address the need to visit multiple locations but keep transit fares affordable, **GET could modify its policy for a single ride to include one free transfer within 2 hours of the start of a trip.** Alternatively, **GET could more heavily advertise the all-day fare that can provide unlimited trips for the cost of about two single cash fares.**

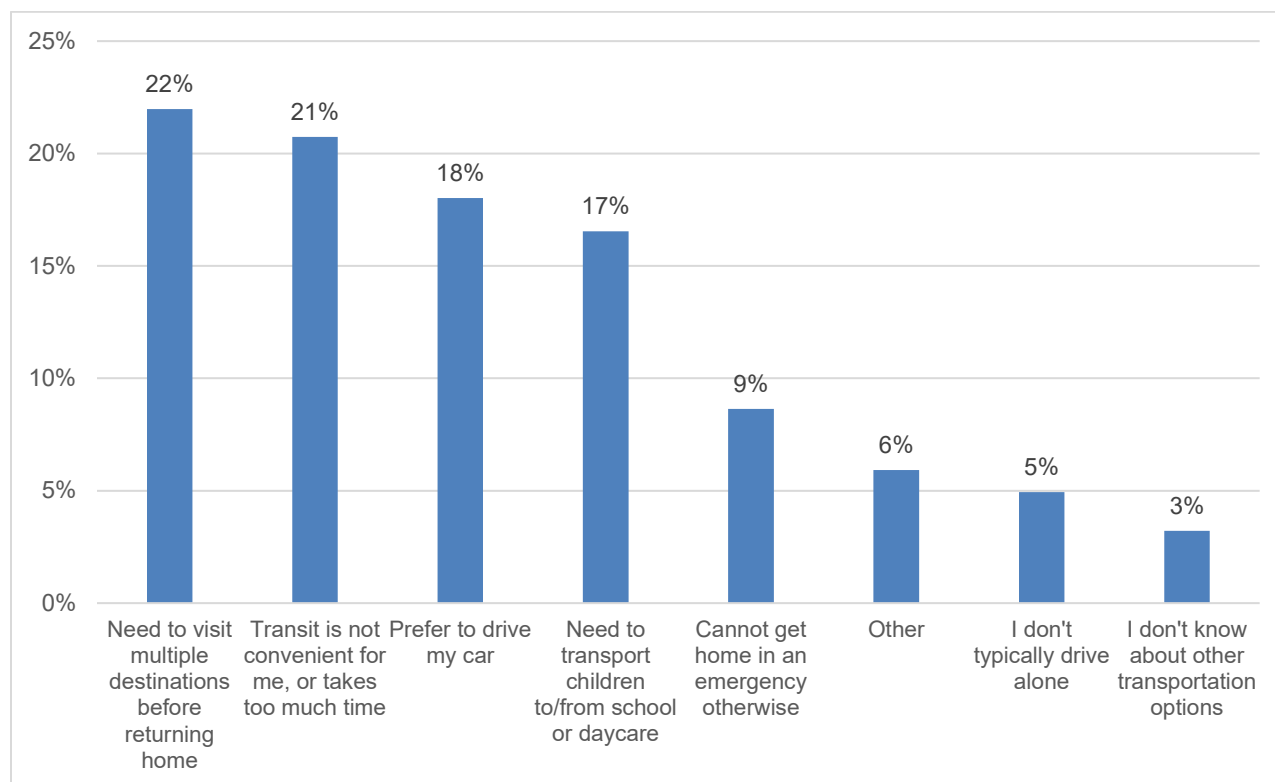


Figure 28: Reasons why respondents drive alone

Question: What change, if any, could cause you to ride GET bus services more often than today? N=208

As seen in Figure 29, most community members would be willing to use GET if there were a bus stop nearer to their house/destination or if there were more frequent bus service. Again, this is similar to the 2017 results, where these were the top two responses as well. The 9-percent of respondents who reported “Other” noted that if bus stops were safer or buses were cleaner, they would be more inclined to use GET. A significant proportion, 14-percent, report they would use GET more often if they had assistance on trip planning. To capture some of these potential riders, **GET should educate potential riders on how to use the system, as well as how it can be a convenient and attractive alternative to car use.**

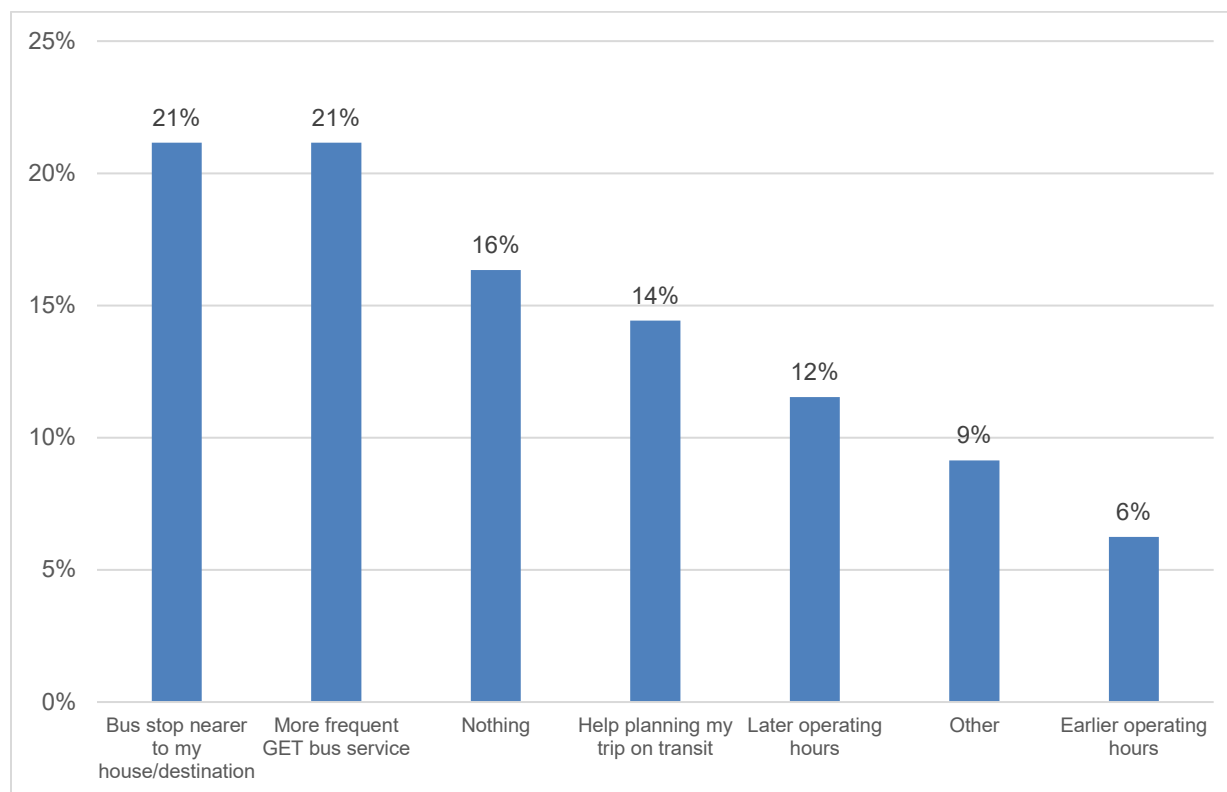


Figure 29: Change that could cause more GET usage

Question: If your typical/normal method of travel was not available, would you ride GET bus service? N=210

Again, closely mirroring 2017 results, when non-riders were asked if they would use GET if their typical mode of travel was unavailable, a significant portion of respondents noted they would rely on GET services (Figure 30). While 2017 and 2019 results are very similar, 2019 respondents are slightly less willing to use GET, as 48-percent of 2017 respondents reported they would rely on GET compared to the 46-percent presented below. 30-percent of respondents reported they would use GET more often without making it their primary travel mode, and 22-percent would find other alternative transportation options, suggesting these community members are unwilling to use GET regardless of circumstance.

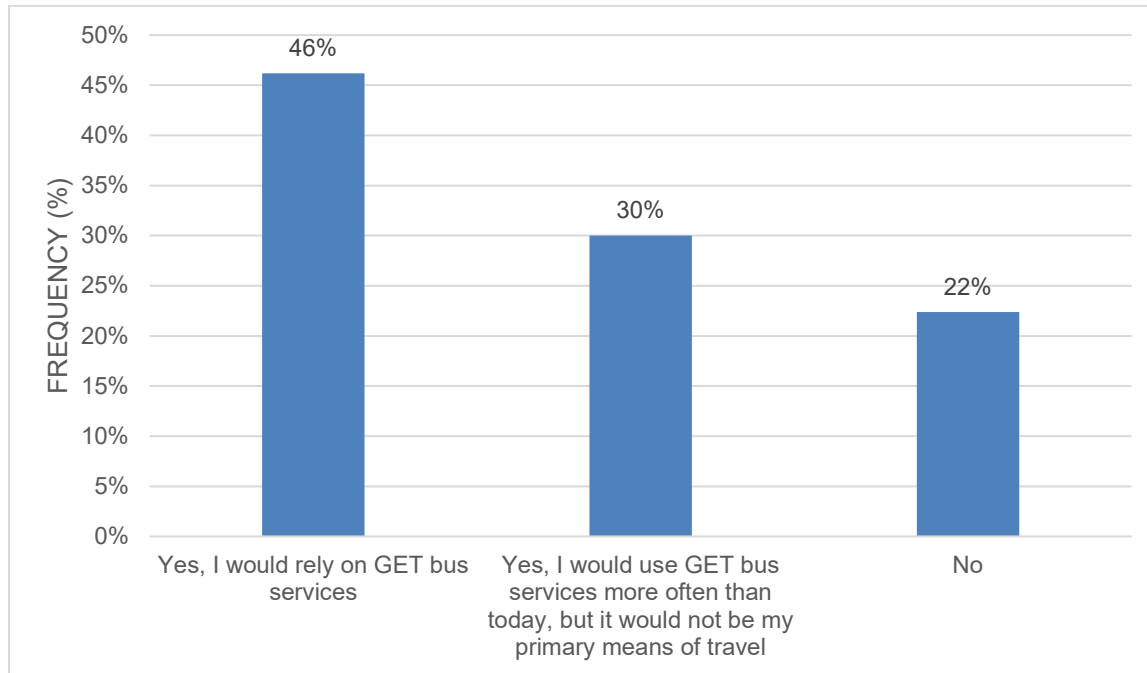
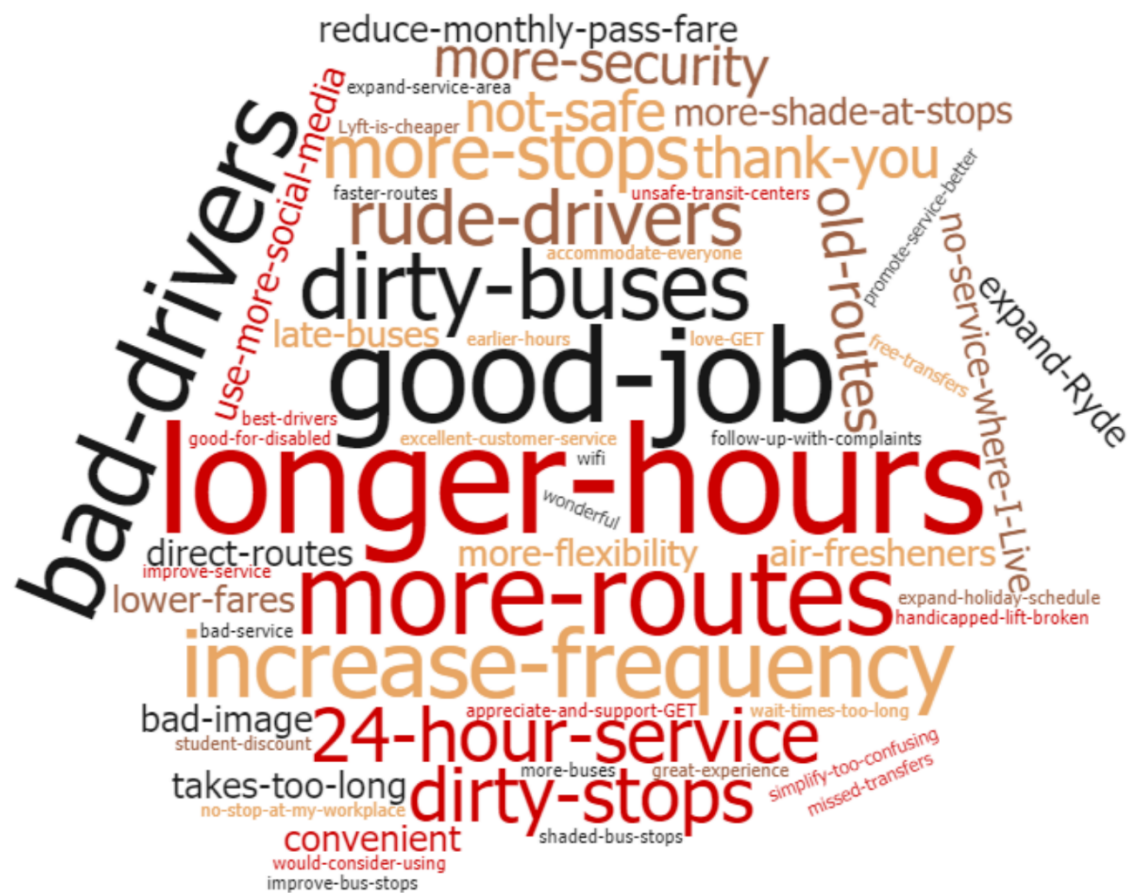


Figure 30: GET usage if normal mode of travel was unavailable



However, many comments also regarded the perception of GET and that many people are unwilling to ride because they do not think it is safe. One community member stated, “A lot more people would ride it...a lot of people around town would rather take a taxi or an Uber because they feel safer.” **Working to improve the public image and perception of GET, especially in regards to safety and security, is one way that GET can potentially get some of these riders to use the system.** Additional comments include community members who would be willing or want to use the bus, but cannot because it does not provide service to their home or destination, which was a common comment seen among 2017 non-riders as well.

5.0 GET RIDER AND NON-RIDER FOCUS GROUPS

5.1 METHODOLOGY

Focus groups provide participants with a venue to explore attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and experiences. Focus groups are not staged to be projectable across a population, but they do reveal attitudes, experiences, and perceptions that are present in the community. We used focus groups to dive deeper into issues that were raised in both customer and non-rider surveys.

The focus group participants were recruited using a screener to be demographically and geographically representative of the Bakersfield population. The participants ranged in age from 18 to over 60 and were slightly more female than male. Employees of GET and their families were excluded from participation. Nine participants participated in each session.

Participants in the rider focus group were both frequent and infrequent riders who had used GET for a little as several months to more than five years. That focus group dealt with characteristics of service, user information, and other rider issues that could increase rider use and loyalty.

Luring new riders to transit was the focus of the non-rider focus group. This session determined how Bakersfield residents get around the city today, how long their average trips took, whether they thought that roads in the city had gotten more congested and whether they were sensitive to the cost of commuting. The discussion gauged the awareness of GET service among non-riders as well as identifying what it would take to change their commuting habits. As GET is an essential public service, non-riders provided important opinions regarding continued funding support for transit.

The rider focus group was held on Monday, March 18 and the non-rider group was held on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at the Kern County Council of Governments in Downtown Bakersfield. The location was chosen because it was accessible for bus riders and offered free parking for those who were non-riders. Participants were paid a \$75 stipend for their participation and were fed a light meal and refreshments.

5.2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES

Stantec developed discussion guides for the two sessions based upon a review of the operating data of GET, a review of local news media coverage of GET and a discussion with senior GET management about major issues and challenges facing the agency were incorporated into the discussion guides.

The guides allowed the moderator to identify the purpose of the group, to establish protocols on how participants should answer questions, allowing others to complete their answers, enticing all participants to participate equally in the discussion, and encouraging the participants to respond to the moderator's questions in an open and frank manner.

The discussion guides are attached to this report as Appendices 3 and 4.



5.3 FOCUS GROUPS DISCUSSION NARRATIVE AND FINDINGS

5.3.1 Riders

Primary Trip Purpose

The primary trip purpose of GET riders is work or seeking employment. As the GET service area has a high unemployment rate and a significant portion of its population living at or below the poverty rate, many riders participating in the focus group use GET to get to their jobs, job training, or to job interviews. School and shopping trips were the next most common trip purposes.

Frequency of Use

The majority of GET riders participating in the focus groups use the service five days out of the week, however, their use of the service is not limited to the traditional two trips each day as participants said that they use the bus as much as four to five times each day.

Decision to Ride GET

The decision to ride GET was made by the majority of the riders in the group because they did not have access to a vehicle for travel or there was only one car in the household. Because of Bakersfield's favorable climate, many of the participants said they walk to many destinations. Although the majority did not have a vehicle to make the trip, this does not diminish riders' appreciation for the service that GET provides even among those who were required to make multiple transfers to get to their final destinations. Despite their concerns about the span and frequency of service, GET riders are still the best ambassadors for the service.

Most Important Characteristics of Service

GET riders believe that the most important characteristics of services are frequency and directness of service. In the words of one rider, it does not make sense to have routes go "around the world." Rather, all rider said GET should focus its services where and when people need them the most. The older riders in the group referenced the directness of GET service prior to the last two service changes. One of the older group participants said that the old route structure, "got you where you wanted to go, without the need to transfer." Safety on the bus and at bus stops was also an important concern of riders, as was the cleanliness of buses and the span of service.

Service Frequency/Coverage

Riders were asked the direct question as to whether they preferred having routes that provided coverage over the region or whether they would want more frequent service on the routes which they rode today. Overwhelmingly, the participants called for increased frequency on the existing routes. This question led to a lengthy discussion of the current route structure and the riders' desire to go back to the former route structure that they deemed to be more direct.

Transfers

All the riders in the session said they have to transfer at least once to get to their final destinations using GET. Not one stated they had direct service to their final destinations. Several of the riders stated they make two or more transfers to get to their final destination on GET. As expected, riders said they would prefer to have more direct service, however, they believe that a single transfer is acceptable.

Riders were both complimentary and critical of GET's practice of holding buses at transfer points. When the protocol works, drivers call ahead, and buses can hold for several minutes to accommodate transfers. Not all GET drivers exercise that protocol, so riders suggest that GET standardize its policy.

Fares

Riders thought that GET fares were priced correctly, although some voiced concern that passes are too expensive in relation to the base fare. Riders were aware of the Transit Token mobile payment application and although just two riders used the payment application, the riders suggested that over time mobile fare payment would be the preferred form of fare payment.

Safety and Security

Riders raised concerns about their safety both while on the bus as well as waiting for the bus. Several riders spoke of being uneasy while riding on GET buses because of the behavior of other riders. At stops, riders suggested that GET install shelters or, at a minimum, bus benches at major bus stops to heighten the perception of security. Other suggestions to improve safety and security were to add cameras at major boarding points and lighting. Riders also suggested cleaner buses, as one ride stated that he had seen “needles and syringes” on the floor of buses.

GET Frontline Personnel

GET’s frontline received high marks from riders. In addition to helping riders transfer, the bus operators were important sources of information about GET service for riders and non-riders alike. One rider suggested that bus operators could play a greater role of helping to improve the safety of riders on board buses by being more active and educating riders to be more aware of their surroundings while on the bus.

Primary Source of Information/GET Bus Application/User Information Functionality

Riders depend predominately on bus operators and other passengers about information regarding GET service. Riders were aware of GET’s mobile application and the majority of those participating in the focus group have used the application. GET’s Bus Book is used but it is quickly becoming the second choice of route and schedule information after the application. Riders believe the information in the Bus Book is more comprehensive, but it is not as convenient as the application. Riders wanted the GET application to have more functionality in displaying route information.

Awareness of GET Marketing

Riders have seen GET marketing campaigns on buses and in social media. In the future, riders suggested that GET prioritize the use of social media as that was thought to be the most effective marketing that GET produces.

Prioritized Service Improvements

The improvement priorities of riders were as follows:

- Increase service frequency
- Make routes more direct, including trying to place the entire system on a grid
- Make riding GET safer by adding shelters and lighting and getting bus operators more involved in improving decorum onboard buses
- Improve the experience for those riders having to transfer by establishing a definite protocol to handle transfer and provide more direct service

Rating of GET Service

The moderator asked riders if they had ever been passed by while waiting for a GET bus. All the participants raised their hands. The moderator asked riders what that thought the on-time performance was for the buses they rode. The average of the participants' response was 85%. Almost half of the riders said they had to transfer twice to get to their final destinations. Despite the factors which usually result in riders rating their service low, GET riders participating in the focus group rated their service as 4 out of 5.

Awareness and Understanding of the GET Organization

The majority of participants ride GET five days a week, and some have ridden GET for more than half a decade. Despite the frequency with GET, the riders of the system know little about the agency which they depend upon for travel. Some thought that GET was a private company, and one participant thought it was owned by one person. The lack of understanding of the mission and purpose of GET among its most loyal customers need to be changed as GET riders can be the most effective ambassadors for the agency and its services.

5.3.2 Non-Riders

Travel Habits/Mode of Choice

The majority of non-riders drive their own cars. In answering the question several said that if they did not have their cars, GET would be a travel option. Non-riders said they enjoyed the convenience of getting into their vehicles and going where they need to go, and not being dependent on someone else's schedule. There were two former GET riders in this group who stated that their decision to change their commuting habits were a result of a job change. However, they would consider returning to GET if the need arises.

Commute Time/Congestion

Non-riders said that commuting times had increased over the past few years in Bakersfield, but not significant enough to make non-riders reconsider their current travel habits. The non-riders all agreed that as the Bakersfield region grows, there will be a need for alternative transportation options.

Experience with Public Transit

All of the non-riders had used public transit service in other cities. Two of the non-rider participants were former GET riders and both shared their experiences. One had a very favorable experience while the other did not. The non-rider with the bad experience based her opinion on riding in and out of the Downtown Bakersfield Transit Center and the inhospitable attitude that customer service representatives presented to the former rider.

Perceptions of Transit

When asked to agree or disagree with the question; “People like me ride GET?” there were mixed answers. Some of the non-riders agreed that GET riders were regular people. Others had widely differing opinions that bus riders were “wild people” who were “rude” and did not behave well.

When probed by the moderator, most of these observations were obtained from non-riders observing bus stops along their journeys through Bakersfield. When asked if they could remember a story in the news media about problems with GET riders, none could recollect seeing any negative stories about GET.

Discussion revealed that one of the participants suggested that there exists a “cultural gap” in Bakersfield because people don’t understand that transit is an essential service that a percentage of the population depends upon. All non-riders in the group agreed that perceptions of transit need to and will change but GET has to encourage that change.

What Circumstances Would Make You Try Transit?

The non-riders were asked if the price of gasoline would inspire them to try transit. One participant said that gasoline would have to cost \$10 a gallon for her to change her commuting habits. The non-riders were unanimous that the GET single ride fare of \$1.55 was a ‘bargain’ and that the Day Pass, priced at \$3.30 was about the current price of one gallon of gas; GET fares were considered low but no so low as to entice them away from their vehicles.

Non-riders were cautious about GET service because of their perceptions of the service. One non-rider said that service would have to be “more convenient, because waiting more than an hour between buses is unattractive, even for someone without a car.”

When transit benefit programs were mentioned that would offer subsidized transit fares as well as tax benefits, the non-rider agreed that such programs would make them consider riding transit if their employer offered these programs.

Most Important Characteristic of Transit

The majority of non-riders said that convenience was the most important characteristic of service. If there was a bus stop close to their house, and that bus took them directly to their destination, their opinion of transit would be more favorable. Their safety while waiting for the bus and onboard the bus came in a close second, followed by the friendliness of the bus operators.

Where Would You Get Your Information About GET

Non-riders were asked where they would go to get information about GET. Most said they would go online. Two knew about GET's mobile application and the availability of a mobile application as well as a mobile payment application. These were applauded by the non-riders as "very good" things that would cause more people to ride GET.

Awareness of GET

Much like the riders of GET, non-riders knew even less about what GET is and who controls its activities. One non-rider said, "I know some people own it" while another thought that it was a private company.

What is Your Principal Source of Information?

Non-riders were more likely to use mobile devices (phones and tablets) than riders, so their primary source of information is online. Participants did volunteer that they had seen GET bus advertising in applications and on the side of buses. More than one had also seen GET social media communications, which they suggested was the best method of communication and outreach to get more people to ride and to overcome the previously discussed cultural gap.

Opinion of Transit and GET

GET bus service was considered an essential service by non-riders, even though many of them would never ride the bus. One non-rider said, "People obviously depend on it, so the community needs it." That same rider went back to the issue of the cultural gap that exists in Bakersfield about GET and public transit, offering these suggestions to bridge that gap:

- Have the City Manager ride the bus one day a week
- Require all City of Bakersfield employees to take the bus at least one day a week
- Create a GET security or police force to change the perceptions that riding the bus is unsafe

Would You Support Increasing Your Taxes to Increase Transit?

The non-riders were unanimous in agreeing that transit service should be increased through increases in taxes similar to other public services offered by the City of Bakersfield.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONVENTIONAL TRANSIT SERVICES

1. Standardize transfer policy.

To address the current issues riders have with transfers, and the perception among non-riders that GET is not a viable option for visiting multiple locations, GET can explore way to standardize their transfer policy. One potential option is to improve the visibility and marketing of the day pass that allows for unlimited trips throughout the day for the cost of about two single fare passes, or modify current single ride policy to include one free transfer within two hours of the start of a trip.

2. Route review and service design.

A review of current routes and service design should be considered, specifically including a focus on frequency, not coverage. The creation of more direct routes may create more transfers, but more frequent service in conjunction with a standardized fare policy, transfer times can be minimized. Improving the frequency on key routes throughout the midday, especially on weekends, is likely to increase rider satisfaction as well. In addition, both riders and non-riders were strong in their belief that GET should focus its services on where they would meet the greatest need.

3. Focus GET marketing on social media.

Riders and non-riders alike regularly use smartphones and are social media users, but only 12-percent of riders are aware of GET's social media accounts. As social media is an effective and low-cost way to provide riders with real-time information, it is common sense that more of GET's marketing should be focused on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, and getting more riders aware of and engaged in GET's social media presence.

4. Assess fare programs for special populations.

A common comment seen from riders was a desire for fare discounts for students, especially with the high proportion of riders who are students and a major transit center located at Bakersfield College. Relatively discounted fares for current students would likely increase satisfaction among this population, and may motivate them to use transit more often than they currently do. Additionally, many non-riders noted that they do not use GET because they need to transport children to and from school or daycare. Expanding the discounted child fare to encompass children up to 12 years of age could bring new riders with this concern onto the system. GET should review its current fare structure accordingly, as many North American agencies are investigating fares commensurate with a rider's ability to pay.

5. Bus shelters.

GET's investment in bus shelters would greatly improve the concerns about safety while waiting for the bus. Having shelters across the city would also increase the loyalty of those who ride today, as comments regarding a lack of shade while waiting for the bus or safety concerns at bus stops were prevalent among

current riders comments, as well as being noted by non-riders as a barrier to using GET. Investing in bus shelters also presents an opportunity to increase the visibility of the GET brand.

6. Promote GET technology.

The agency's two technology demonstrations, Token Transit and the Transit App, are the types of advances that would incite potential riders to try GET. The agency should actively promote both applications using social media and through in-app advertising.

7. Ryde program.

Following the launch of the Ryde program in April 2019, GET now provides on-demand microtransit in a portion of their service area. As the most common comments among riders and non-riders was a wish for longer service hours (especially on weekends) and shorter hours limit people's ability to travel, the feasibility of providing this through Ryde should be assessed, subject to the success of the pilot program. GET should also consider administering its next rider satisfaction survey to Ryde customers as well.

8. Launch a transit benefit program.

There was ample interest in both groups about transit benefit programs and the tax benefits to employers and employees. GET should consider developing a program in partnership with the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce.

9. Travel training.

A considerable proportion of non-riders (14-percent) would be persuaded to use GET if they were more confident in how to use the service. By providing travel training, including educating riders on the GET technology available to assist them with their trip, new riders can be confident in using GET to reach their destination. Travel training can be especially effective when combined with investments in improving the public image and perception of GET, to encourage even more non-riders to try GET.

10. Partner with employment agencies and job training programs to promote GET.

Based upon the large number of trips being taken on GET buses currently to 'gig' or part time jobs, job interviews, and job training, Gobis suggests that GET partner with employment agencies like Aerotek, Labor Finders, Apple One, Rand, and others to get more of their clients onto GET buses. GET could apply for an Access and Mobility Partnership Grant to 'seed' this concept with free fare media to prove the concept of the partnership with the end goal of making the program self-sufficient with funding from employment agencies, job training programs, state grants, and employer transit programs.

11. Spotlight GET bus operators in GET advertising.

GET bus operators have earned the respect of both riders and non-riders as being employees that go 'above and beyond' to improve the quality of life in Bakersfield. Featuring these professionals will be one of the steps in changing non-rider public perceptions of the safety and convenience of GET services. GET should begin this effort using YouTube, its own website, and social media.

12. Sensitivity training for bus operators.

Mixed feedback was received on bus operator behavior and attitude. It was a common complaint among surveyed riders that bus operators passed by passengers waiting at stops, especially those with mobility devices, and this was corroborated with firsthand comments heard by Stantec staff in the field during survey administration. Indeed, rider satisfaction with bus operator behavior and attitude fell from 4.21/5 in 2017 to 4.03/5 in 2019. Providing supplemental sensitivity training for bus operators will increase satisfaction among current riders, and help to create a fleet of bus operators that are well-educated on how to treat all passengers with respect.

13. Ride alongs.

The concept forwarded by one non-rider to have City Manager Al Tandy and other community leaders ride the bus on a regular basis would begin to bridge the 'cultural gap' discussed in the non-riders focus group. Having Manager Tandy suggest to City of Bakersfield employees that they ride at least once a month would be a great step in changing people's perception of GET.

14. Educate the public on the mission and purpose of GET.

Awareness of the GET organization is very low, even among frequent and long-time riders. If GET is to garner support for increasing local funding for the agency, it cannot be in the shadows. Gobis recommends that at a minimum, the agency publish some form of annual report to the people that educates the public on the essential services that the agency provides. Pierce Transit's Annual Report is an example of the type of communication that is recommended (<https://www.piercetransit.org/2017-annual-report/>).

7.0 GET-A-LIFT OPEN HOUSE AND RIDER SURVEY

Following the success of the previous qualitative research effort that Stantec staged with riders of GET's Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant service for seniors and the disabled, Stantec held two open house events to obtain the opinions of those who ride GET-A-Lift Service to complement the onboard and online surveys for riders of the conventional service and the general public.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990, establishing standards for public services and access to ensure that those with disabilities would have equal access to these services. As a result, public transit agencies developed services like GET-A-Lift that would meet the travel needs of those who are unable to ride conventional transit service. ADA requires transit agencies to provide service that is comparable to the level of service provided to those without disabilities with similar fares.

As GET regularly engages riders of its conventional services to determine their satisfaction with service, the agency has conducted qualitative research to gain GET-A-Lift user opinions. It is challenging for seniors and the disabled to complete traditional forms of research such as self-administered, telephone or online surveys, thus, the open house forum allows for an atmosphere that encourages riders to provide their opinions of service. Additionally, we phoned current GET-A-Lift registrants to expand the sample size of the survey, described below.

7.1 METHODOLOGY

Stantec staged the open houses with GET-A-Lift riders on March 18 and 19, 2019 at the GET headquarters in Bakersfield. Riders voluntarily agreed to participate in the open houses, and were compensated with free transportation to and from the event, as well as refreshments. A total of 27 GET-A-Lift riders chose to participate in the sessions. Those participating in the open houses had a variety of mobility challenges: some used motorized wheelchairs, others walkers, while some were ambulatory. The age of the participants was reflective of the population of all GET-A-Lift users. Although voluntary, the group was representative of the demographic profile of the Bakersfield community.

A Discussion Guide was updated since the most recent GET-A-Lift Open Houses in 2017 to include recent issues with the program identified by the agency. The Discussion Guide is attached with this report as Appendix 5.

The discussion dealt with the following:

- Overall satisfaction with GET-A-Lift
- The assessment process to qualify for the service
- Those characteristics of the service most important to riders
- Familiarity with conventional service and the willingness to ride that service
- Use of other transportation services
- Use of smartphones and technology
- How to improve GET-A-Lift service

Following the moderated portion of the session, each participant was asked to complete an exit survey. The results of the exit survey are included in this report following the findings of the open house sessions. The survey was also administered to 14 GET-A-Lift registrants via phone calls in April 2019.



7.2 GET-A-LIFT RIDER OPEN HOUSE

7.2.1 General Findings

Overall, GET-A-Lift users are very satisfied with the service. However, there are problems with the service that have increased since that last open house sessions in 2017:

- Booking trips: the majority of riders said they are experiencing more problems getting the times they want for trips as the popularity of GET-A-Lift increases. Booking trips as much as two weeks in advance is restricting, and some of the participants stated that they had reduced their travel because of the lack of service.
- Last-minute cancellations of booked trips: while not a very common occurrence, when this does take place, GET-A-Lift riders have extraordinarily long waits.
- Lateness: all of the participants in the open houses had experienced late pick-ups, however, most attributed the lateness to worsening traffic conditions in Bakersfield.
- Bus operators: the key strength for GET-A-Lift is the program's bus operators, who received consistently high marks during both Open Houses.

With the aging of the Bakersfield population and a steady population of disabled people who cannot use conventional transit service, demand for GET-A-Lift will continue to increase. GET needs to take measures now to control demand for the service while introducing more technology to make the service more productive.

Use of Technology

The majority of open house participants had a smartphone. The riders encouraged GET to consider greater use of technology to respond to some of the problems that riders have with GET-A-Lift services, such as sending text messages to riders when their pickups are late.

Fares

Most riders that came to the open house thought that the GET-A-Lift fare was reasonable, although some on fixed incomes had to depend on their families to pay the fare. Most said they would ride GET-A-Lift more if they could afford to do so.

Use of Conventional Service

A significant number of participants already use conventional service as well as GET-A-Lift service. These were predominantly ambulatory riders. The proximity of bus stops to their house or destination was an important factor in whether or not one would use conventional bus service. Some of the riders were open to taking travel training to increase their confidence in taking conventional service, but most participants using mobility devices were not.

Taxis and Uber

A considerable number of the GET-A-Lift riders in the sessions had used Uber, particularly if their trip purpose was outside the service area and especially if their insurance paid for the trip. Taxis, on the other hand, were not well rated by the participants. Most said they were too expensive, and service was poor.

7.2.2 Participant Status

Determining a rider's eligibility to use GET-A-Lift service is key to controlling demand. When riders are assessed for their eligibility for the program, they are granted one of three types of eligibility status based upon their inability to use conventional service:

- Unconditional: for those with the greatest levels of physical or cognitive disability who could never ride a regular bus.
- Conditional: for those unable to board a bus for some trips because of the distance to a bus stop, weather conditions, travel obstacle, or health conditions. Riders with conditional eligibility are generally required to use conditional transit service for some trips.
- Temporary: for people with disabilities that prevent them from using the fixed route system for a limited period of time.

The participants in the Open House were riding predominantly on unconditional or conditional. A significant number of riders at the Open House did not know their status in the program at all.

The level of unconditional and conditional status among open house participants was a concern as their standing in the program means that they will be users for long periods of time, ultimately meaning that demand for GET-A-Lift will begin to outdistance the resources GET has dedicated to providing the service.

7.2.3 Application Process/Eligibility Assessment

Rider opinion of the application and assessment process to enter the GET-A-Lift program was split along ethnic lines. Caucasians thought the process was easy, while minorities found it difficult. GET should take extra consideration to make the application process fair and understandable for all populations.

7.2.4 Traveling with a Mobility Device

A significant number, but not a majority, of the participants require the use of a mobility device. One participant had a walker that sometimes does not fit. One wheelchair user had reoccurring problems with the lift and entering onto the lift.

7.2.5 Most Common Trip Purpose

The majority of GET-A-Lift rides are to healthcare appointments, with shopping, recreation and school/education as the other trip purposes. The predominance of health-related trips confirms the importance of GET-A-Lift service to the populations it serves.

7.2.6 Frequency of Use

Slightly more than one-third of the open house participants use GET ten or more times per month. It was common to have riders say they use the service two to three times every week. One participant stated she used the service every day. This level of use demonstrates the need for GET to reconsider how it assesses applicants and the levels of eligibility the agency concurs on riders.

7.2.7 Service Ranking

Despite the concerns that the open house participants raised, 15 out of the 27 participants rated the service as excellent. Only one participant said the service was poor, with the rest rating it as good.

7.2.8 Bus Operators

GET-A-Lift operators were the most appreciated characteristic of the program, according to the open house participants. Riders said their operators were very helpful, very generous, and very caring of their riders.

7.2.9 Issues with GET-A-Lift Service

In order of participant identification, the major issues with GET-A-Lift are as follows:

1. Booking trips/service unavailable
2. Vehicle lateness/pickup window
3. GET-A-Lift customer service: wait time, language availability, responsiveness to rider needs, “elevator music” when on hold was not positively received
4. Vans rattle, and ramps are too long and difficult to bring bags on during shopping trips
5. Curb cuts: the City of Bakersfield has not built enough curb cuts to allow GET-A-Lift users more mobility, especially if they decided to use conventional service.

7.3 GET-A-LIFT RIDER SURVEY

The following presents responses from 41 GET-A-Lift users, surveyed at both the open house (27) and via telephone (14). The results are analyzed question-by-question, and summary statistics demonstrate the distribution of survey responses. Based on these responses, a series of recommendations for improving GET-A-Lift customer satisfaction are presented. This analysis focuses on improving GET-A-Lift as a standalone service, as well as its integration within GET’s conventional transit service.

It should be noted that, while only 41 survey responses were collected, 137 telephone calls were attempted with a very low response rate³. Surveyors noted many of the listed phone numbers of GET-A-Lift users were either disconnected or an incorrect number. Due to the consistency of responses among the survey results obtained, it was determined that 41 responses were a sufficient number to understand average satisfaction levels of GET-A-Lift service among users. The complete survey can be found in Appendix 6.

7.3.1 Summary of Results

- The majority of respondents (67-percent) have been using GET-A-Lift for 1-5 years, a sharp increase from 2017, where only 36-percent of users reported this length of time. No respondents have used the service for ten or more years, compared to 16-percent of respondents in 2017 who had used the service for ten or more years.
- GET-A-Lift users are overall very satisfied with service across a span of different service factors. However, 2019 overall rider satisfaction (4.22/5) is lower than 2017 results (4.53/5). 2019 respondents agree with 2017 results, where users are least satisfied with the ease of reaching customer service representatives and

³ Of the 137 telephone calls made, 33-percent of clients answered, but only 31-percent of those who answered participated in the survey. 44-percent of those who answered refused because they did not have time or did not want to participate (the remaining 24-percent of those who answered were an incorrect number). Additionally, 18-percent of numbers called were disconnected, and 8-percent were incorrect numbers. Overall, the phone surveys yielded a 10-percent response rate and 14 completed surveys.

the on-time performance of the ride. Survey results and open house comments also noted frustrations with reserving rides at desired times and the length of the ride pick-up window.

- An increasing proportion of users are interested in booking trips online (26-percent) in 2019 as compared to 2017 (17-percent). As seniors are increasingly becoming tech-savvy, GET should consider creating an app or online platform where GET-A-Lift users are able to book trips online.
- While the vast majority (95-percent) of users know conventional GET buses are accessible to customers with mobility challenges, over half (53-percent) of respondents are not interested in receiving travel training on fixed-route service or using conventional service more. However, 18-percent of respondents are interested in receiving travel training, an increase from the 7-percent of respondents seen in 2017.
- Overall, GET-A-Lift customers surveyed during open house and via the telephone are very satisfied with current service, including the eligibility assessment process, ride reservation process, and ride quality. However, areas of improvement for service include:
 - Implementing travel training to help curb growing demand for GET-A-Lift and encourage more riders to use conventional fixed-route service
 - Consider strategies for minimizing the time windows for reserving trips and ride pick-ups
 - Focus on communication with riders on late arrivals (such as a text message or call when their rides are running late) and explanations for why they cannot reserve trips at their desired times

7.3.2 Respondent Profile

Question: How long have you been using GET-A-Lift services? N=39

As seen in the 2017 profile of GET-A-Lift survey respondents, the largest proportion of users have been using the service for one to five years (Figure 31). While 25.6-percent of users have joined the service in the past 12 months, a much smaller portion have been using the system for five to ten years (7.7-percent), and no respondents reported using the service for ten or more years.

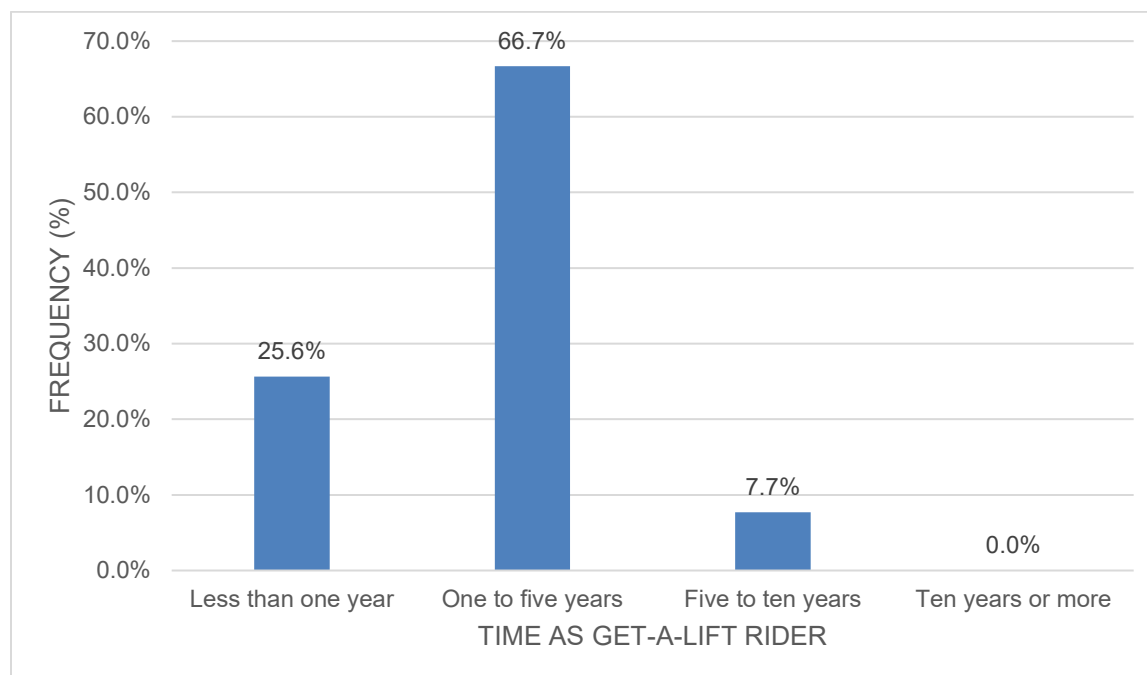


Figure 31: Length of time using GET-A-Lift

7.3.3 Satisfaction with GET-A-Lift

Survey respondents were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction across fifteen service aspects grouped into three overarching categories: eligibility assessment, ride reservation, and ride quality. Specific areas where respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction are outlined below.

Table 11: Factors of satisfaction with GET-A-Lift

Please state your level of agreement with the following statements:

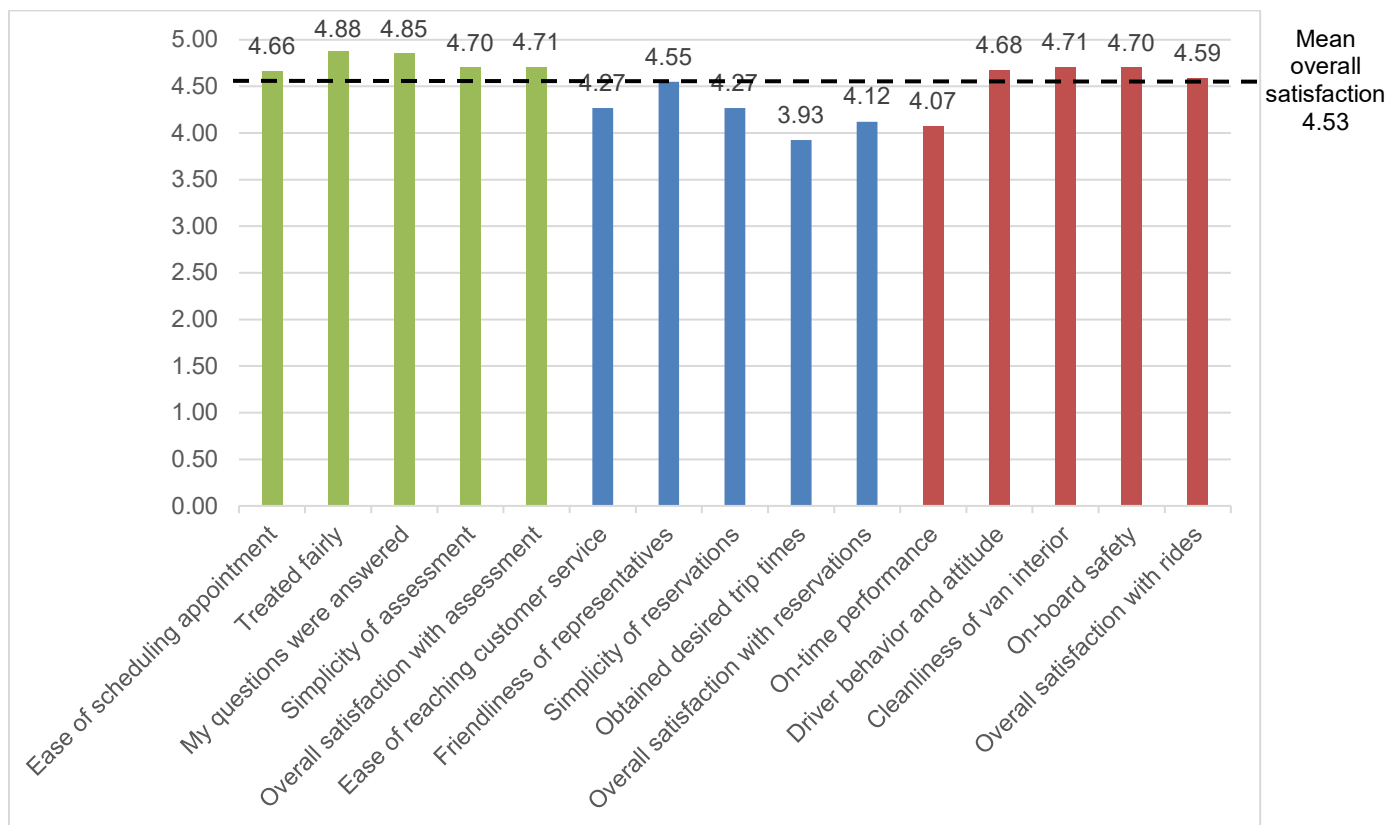
Eligibility Assessment	Ride Reservation Process	Ride Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to schedule an appointment • Was treated fairly • My questions were answered • Process was simple • Overall, I am satisfied with the eligibility assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to reach a customer representative when I call • Customer representative is polite/friendly • Reservation process is simple and easy • Generally, I am able to get the desired travel times • Overall, I am satisfied with the reservation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vans arrive on time • Van drivers are courteous/helpful • Van interiors are clean • I feel safe while onboard the vans • Overall, I am satisfied with the ride

As with the on-board rider satisfaction analysis, results were coded using the following matrix, with 1 representing a low level of satisfaction (extremely dissatisfied) and 5 representing high levels of satisfaction (extremely satisfied).

Table 12: Coding of satisfaction ratings

Extremely dissatisfied	1
Dissatisfied	2
No opinion	3
Satisfied	4
Extremely satisfied	5

While overall rider satisfaction is very high (4.22/5), it is lower than 2017 results, where overall satisfaction was 4.53/5. It is interesting to note that while 2019 overall satisfaction is lower, detailed satisfaction of specific service factors tends to be higher than 2017 results. However, 2017 and 2019 users agree that they are least satisfied with the ease of reaching customer service representatives and on-time performance of the ride. A detailed overview of mean satisfaction across a range of service factors is shown in Figure 32.


Figure 32: Mean satisfaction ratings, all categories (mean overall satisfaction 4.53)

Eligibility Assessment

Overall, riders are very satisfied with the eligibility assessment process, and reported higher levels of satisfaction across all factors than in 2017. Specifically, satisfaction with scheduling the appointment increased from 3.96 in 2017 to 4.66 in 2019, and similar increases are seen across the remainder of the service factors as well. **GET should be commended for its high levels of customer service during the eligibility assessment process and consider expanding the customer service strategies employed during the eligibility assessment process to other areas of service as well.** However, as noted during the open house, GET should take extra care to make sure the eligibility process is accessible to all populations.

Ride Reservation Process

While overall still quite satisfied with the ride reservation process, the ride reservation process received the lowest average satisfaction when compared with the eligibility assessment process and ride quality. GET-A-Lift users reported the lowest levels of satisfaction with obtaining desired trip times, at 3.93. This was consistent with feedback heard during the open houses, where the majority of complaints were related to the ride reservation process, stating that two weeks in advance is too far out to book many trips, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to get desired reservation times. Specifically, one survey respondent stated “I have not used the service because the scheduling window is too broad. Needs tighter availability.”

As with the eligibility assessment results, 2019 respondents were more satisfied with the reservation process than 2017 respondents. Specifically, 2019 users reported it is much easier to reach customer service representatives (satisfaction of 4.27) than in 2017, where satisfaction was 3.74 for this service factor. The factor that saw the smallest increase from 2017 to 2019 was the ability to obtain desired trip times, which saw a smaller increase from 3.85 to 3.93. GET should continue to improve their ride reservation process for GET-A-Lift so that upward trend continues, as well as explore ways to reduce the time window for reserving rides.

Question: Would you like to be able to book trips online? N=39

While a large portion of riders are not interested in booking trips online (43.6-percent), more are interested currently than displayed in the 2017 report, where only 17-percent of respondents said they would like to book trips online and 66-percent were not interested at all (Figure 33). This is logical, as we know seniors are becoming more tech-savvy, and this is only expected to increase over time. As time goes on and this trend continues, it might make sense to create an online platform or mobile app for users to book rides through, in conjunction with training on how to use the new technology.

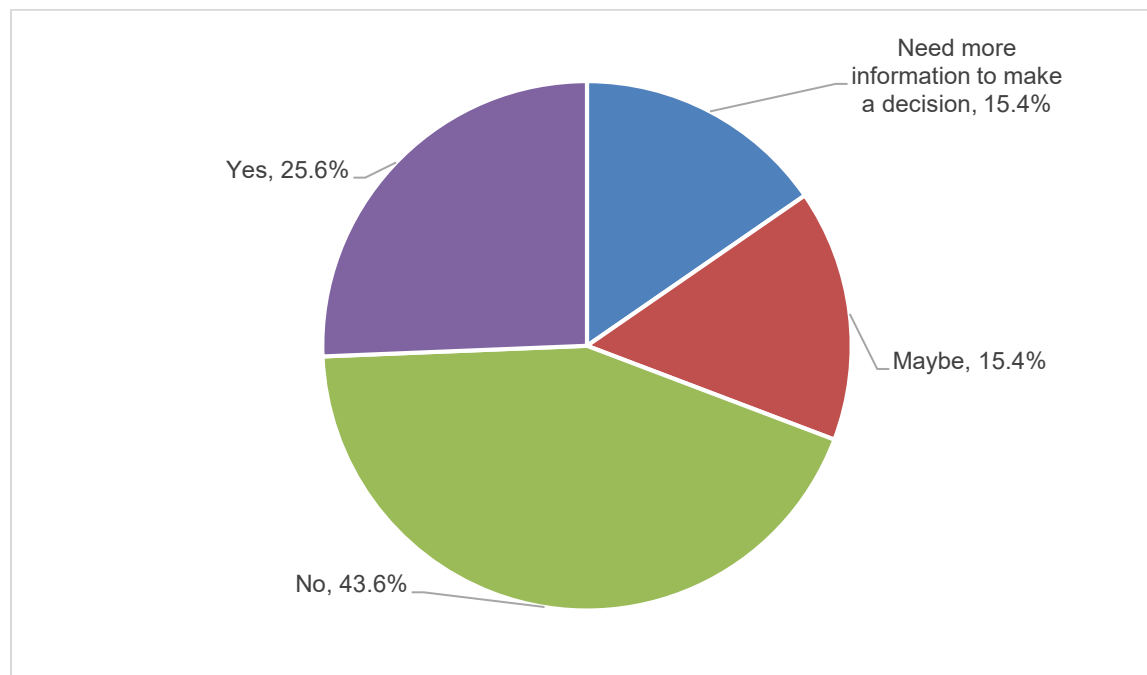


Figure 33: Would you like to be able to book trips online?

Ride Quality

As seen across other GET-A-Lift service factors, users are very satisfied with the ride itself. Respondents noted the highest levels of satisfaction with the cleanliness of the van interior (4.71) and their onboard safety (4.70), both of which displayed increased satisfaction levels compared to 2017 results. Consistent with respondents of the 2017 survey, riders are least satisfied with on-time performance, but at 4.07, 2019 results are still higher than in 2017, where satisfaction was 3.73. This was echoed during the open houses, where multiple riders commented on personal experiences of late pick-ups.

Very high levels of satisfaction are also seen with driver behavior and attitude, which was also mentioned during the open houses. One survey respondent commented, “Drivers are all courteous, friendly, professional, and make me feel safe.” GET should be commended for the excellent customer service their drivers are providing to GET-A-Lift users.

7.3.4 Integration with Conventional GET Transit

Question: Did you know that all GET bus conventional transit vehicles are accessible to customers with mobility challenges? N=39

A much larger proportion of 2019 respondents reported that they do know all conventional GET buses are accessible to those with mobility challenges (94.9-percent) than 2017 respondents, where only 63-percent of respondents were aware of this (Figure 34). Thus, GET should be commended on its communication of its commitment to accessible

conventional transit use among its GET-A-Lift riders. GET should continue this momentum into encouraging more GET-A-Lift riders to use conventional service, which can decrease pressure on GET-A-Lift dispatch, scheduling, and cost.

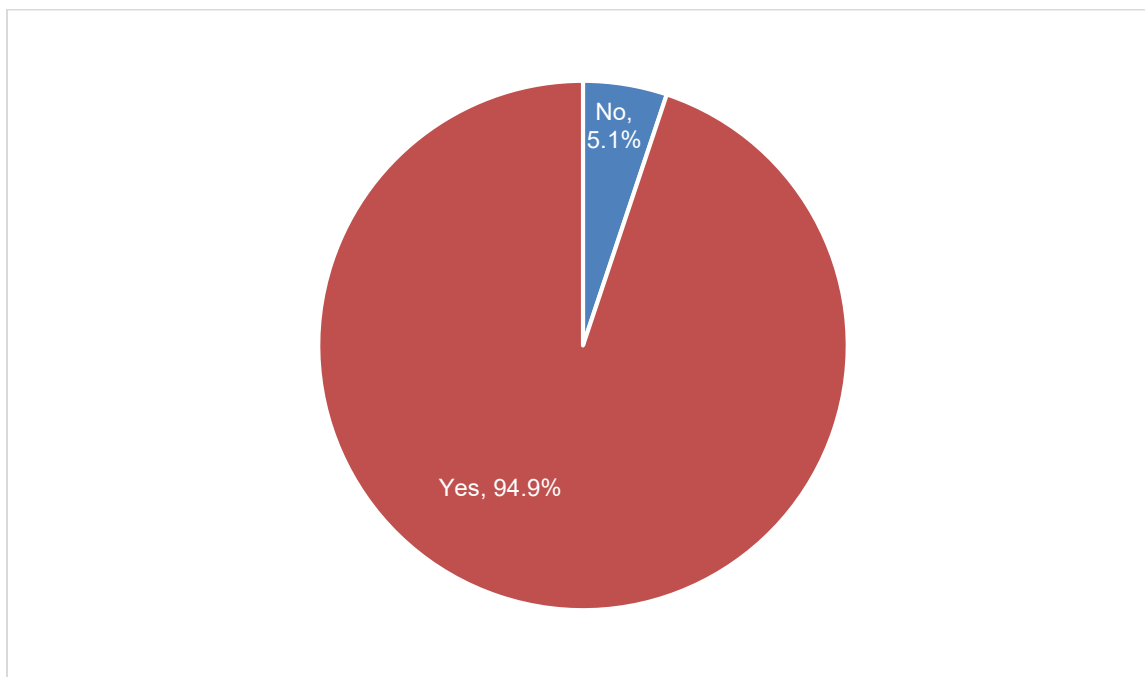


Figure 34: Knowledge of conventional GET bus accessibility

Question: If you had the opportunity to receive training on how to use conventional fixed route transit, would you consider using conventional service more often? N=38

While the majority of respondents are not interested in using conventional fixed route service (52.6-percent), a much higher proportion of 2019 respondents reported that they would consider using conventional service more (18.4-percent) as compared to 2017, where only 7-percent of respondents would consider more use of conventional service (Figure 35). This presents an opportunity to provide travel training to GET-A-Lift users on using the conventional service more and integrating more conventional fixed route service into their paratransit use.

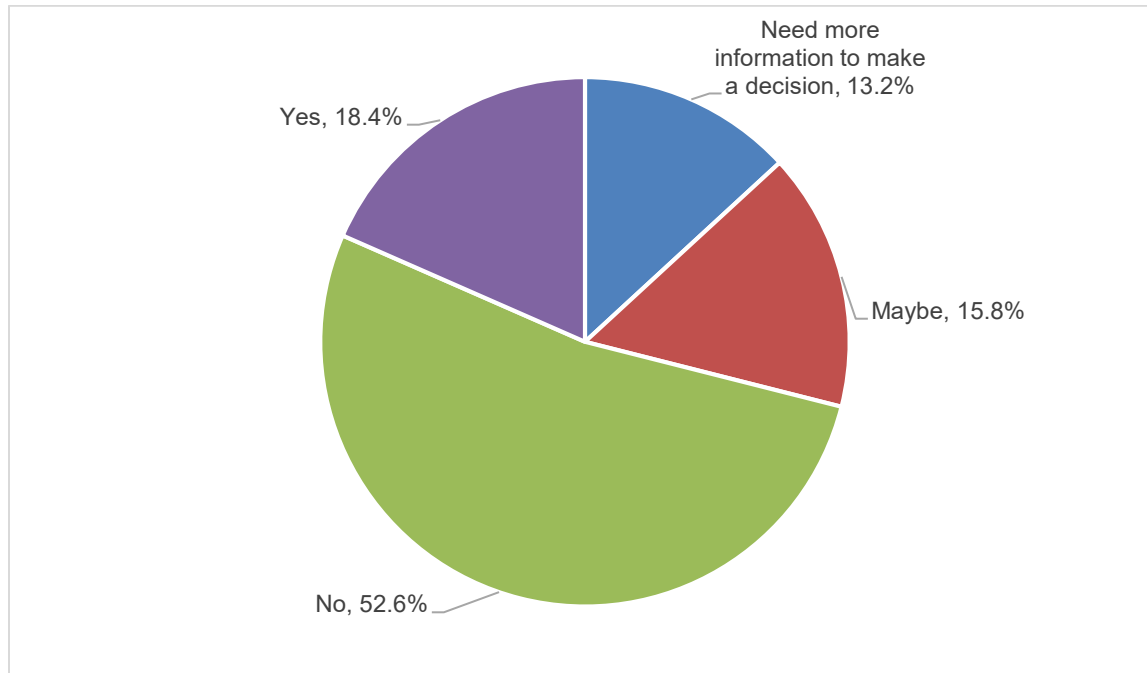


Figure 35: Willingness to receive training on conventional transit

Question: Have you ever used a GET conventional bus instead of GET-A-Lift to travel? N=40

The proportion of 2019 respondents who have and have not used conventional GET services in the past in 2019 is nearly identical to results presented in 2017. Sixty-two-percent of users have not used conventional fixed-route service before, while 37.5-percent have (Figure 36). There are many reasons that could be attributed to these numbers: GET-A-Lift users may not be comfortable with using the service, may feel overwhelmed attempting to use this service, may not know enough to confidently use it, or it may be inconvenient to access based on their home or destination. In fact, one respondent commented, “If GET buses had stops closer to [my] house [I] would love to use more often.”

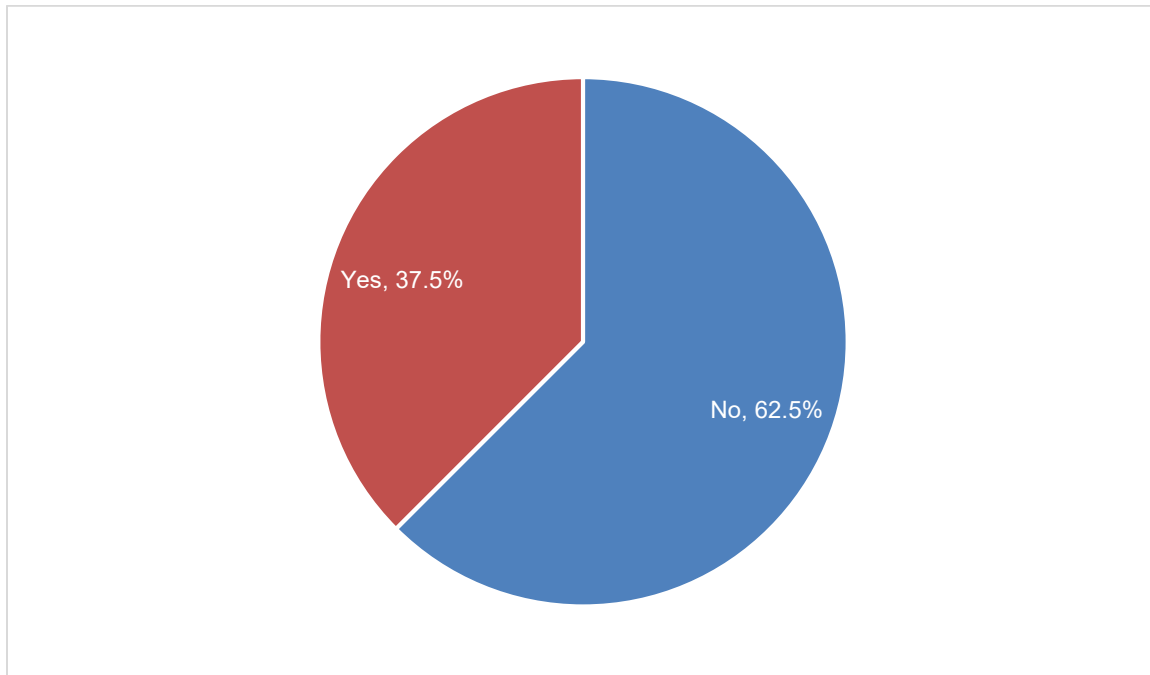


Figure 36: Use of GET conventional bus instead of GET-A-Lift

Finally, common themes raised by GET-A-Lift users were analyzed through the word cloud analysis below.



Like in 2017, GET-A-Lift users are overall satisfied and very grateful for the paratransit service, and there were multiple comments and compliments about the operators and service overall. Other comments focused predominately on scheduling and pick-up windows and hours of service, which was echoed in the open houses as well.

8.0 GET-A-LIFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Assess strategies for improving the reservation system.

GET-A-Lift users are increasingly becoming more tech-savvy and embracing technology, and this trend is only set to continue to increase in the future. Further, an increasing proportion of users have a desire to book trips online (from 17-percent in 2017 to over 25-percent in 2019). The viability of creating a web-based or mobile app platform for reserving rides should be assessed, as well as strategies that minimizes the reservation window from the current requirement of booking rides two weeks in advance. Many open house participants noted that this is difficult to accommodate, as they often do not know what their schedules will be or where they need to go this far in advance. The reservation system could also be improved, and satisfaction increased, if riders were provided with reasons and justifications for why they are unable to reserve trips at their desired times.

2. Leverage technology to improve service.

Another common complaint among GET-A-Lift users is a lack of clear communication concerning issues such as late arrivals and large windows for pick-ups. As the majority of open house participants have smartphones, implementing services that will inform users of when their ride will arrive or if the ride is running late through a text message or phone call, which will help to increase user satisfaction of current services.

3. Assess feasibility of extending hours of service.

Extending hours of service, especially later into the evenings and on weekends and past normal operating hours for major destinations (such as shopping centers or entertainment destinations), would help GET-A-Lift riders have more freedom and mobility with their current transportation options. Reviewing the opportunity to extend service hours to determine whether a business case exists would help to further increase customer satisfaction.

4. Travel training.

GET should improve current travel training programs and work with the City of Bakersfield to improve the accessibility of fixed-route services and infrastructure, as many users noted that they would like to use fixed-route service, but are unable to because it is too far to their nearest stop, curb cuts are not accommodating to users with mobility devices, or they are unsure of how to use conventional service. Especially as current users are more willing to undergo travel training and use conventional service (18-percent in 2019 compared to 7-percent in 2017), travel training and transitioning trips from GET-A-Lift to conventional service is vital to accommodate growing demand for GET-A-Lift. Additionally, most GET-A-Lift users likely qualify for reduced fares on fixed routes, a further incentive to try GET's conventional services.

5. Sensitivity training for operators.

As with riders of GET's conventional fixed-route service, GET-A-Lift operators would benefit from additional sensitivity training to ensure that all operators can empathize with riders with disabilities and ensure that the

high levels of satisfaction GET-A-Lift users display for operators continue to increase. Additionally, operators should be commended for the high satisfaction levels currently seen, and the many compliments heard at the open houses.

6. Consider a Family of Services (FOS) concept and circulator routes.

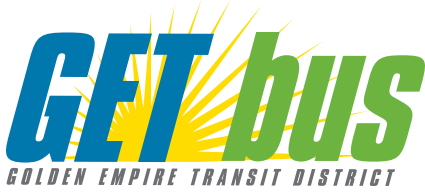
As suggested in 2017, current GET-A-Lift service could benefit from the implementation of a FOS approach in conjunction with the development of circulator routes to common destinations. As many GET-A-Lift riders are going to common destinations, the development of community circulators to destinations such as shopping centers, healthcare facilities, social services centers, and major transit centers would help to provide GET-A-Lift riders with more options to reduce the burden on conventional GET-A-Lift service, and help to solve “first last mile” challenges associated with using GET’s fixed-route system while promoting a FOS concept by proving to riders they can use the fixed-route system. Integrating or supplementing GET-A-Lift with Ryde service should also be explored when and where possible to maximize the productivity of both services.

7. Update client database.

During telephone GET-A-Lift surveys, it was noted that many of the entries are out of date or incorrect. Specifically, 26-percent of the 137 calls made were either incorrect numbers or disconnected numbers. Updating the GET-A-Lift client database will not only ensure GET has an accurate client list and knows who is using their services, but also will make contacting users for future surveys easier.

APPENDICES

- I. GET Rider Survey
- II. Community Survey
- III. GET Rider Focus Group Discussion Guide
- IV. Non-Rider Focus Group Discussion Guide
- V. GET-A-Lift Open House Discussion Guide
- VI. GET-A-Lift User Survey



ESPAÑOL AL REVÉS

Golden Empire Transit (GET) District is interested in knowing your thoughts on how we’re doing and how we can improve. Your opinions are valuable to us and will help us improve your bus service. All surveys will be kept confidential. Please do not take the survey more than once. This survey is also available at bit.ly/getbus-survey or by scanning the code. Thank you for your feedback!



1

What is the ROUTE NUMBER of the bus you are currently riding?

Route: _____

2

What time did you start this journey?

Time: ____ : ____ a.m. or p.m. (please circle one)

3

Thinking about your experience on this bus route in the last 30 days, how SATISFIED were you with the OVERALL QUALITY OF BUS SERVICE?

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

No opinion

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

4

In the past year, would you say that GET service has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

Improved

Stayed the same

Worsened

5

Thinking about your experiences ON THIS BUS ROUTE IN THE LAST 30 DAYS, how SATISFIED were you with:

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

No opinion

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Reliability of buses being on time?

Frequency of the service?

The length of time your bus journey took?

Hours of service?

Ability to transfer to other routes?

Your comfort and safety on the bus and at your stop?

Driver’s behavior and attitude toward you?

The fare you paid?

Cleanliness of the bus, bus stop or bus shelter?

6

How did you pay your fare?

Cash

Day pass

15-day pass

31-day pass

7

Which fare category applies to you?

Regular

Senior

Disabled

Medicare/ Discounted

8

Do you own or regularly use a ...? Check all that apply.

Smartphone

Tablet

Computer

None

9

What is the MAIN PURPOSE of your trip today? Please choose ONE.

Commuting to/from work

Taking/collecting child

Personal business

Health care

Shopping

Education

Leisure

Other

10

How long you have been riding GET buses? Please choose ONE.

Less than 1 month

1 to 6 months

Up to 1 year

1 to 2 years

3 to 5 years

More than 5 years

11

On average, how often have you used ANY GET bus in the last 3 months? Please choose ONE.

At least 5 days a week

3 to 4 days a week

2 days a week

Once a week

Less than once a week

12

How did you get to the bus stop? Please choose ONE.

Walked

Transferred from another GET bus

Got a ride

Rode a bicycle

Drove

Other

13

Do you AGREE with the following statements?

Strongly agree

Agree

No opinion

Disagree

Strongly disagree

I would recommend GET to family and friends.

I have a positive image of GET.

Public transit is an important public service.

14

Aside from seeing GET buses on the streets, where have you come across the GET brand in the last 3 months? Check all that apply.

GET Website

GET Social Media account

GET bus schedules

GET posters, brochures, magazine ads

Television and/or radio

Nowhere

Other

15

Do you own or have access to a car?

Yes

No

16

How would you make this trip if GET were not available? Please choose ONE.

Drive own vehicle

Ride bicycle

Taxi

Uber/Lyft

Walk

Wouldn't make trip

Lift from friend/ family member

Other

17

Who or what influenced you to try GET bus service? Check all that apply.

Friend, family member or neighbor

Employer or school

I moved

Cost of own- ing a vehicle

I got a new job

Other

18

What is your home address or ZIP code?

19

Age?

_____ years old

20

Are you?

Male

Female

Other

21

Do you consider yourself ...?

Black/African American

White

American Indian

Latino

Asian/ Pacific Islander

Other

22

You are:

Clerical/ Professional (non-manual)

Retired

Manual laborer

Unemployed/ Not working

Self- employed

Employed casually or part-time

In school

23

What was the TOTAL COMBINED income of every person living in your household over the past year?

Less than \$20,000

\$20,001 to \$35,000

\$35,001 to \$50,000

\$50,001 to \$75,000

\$75,001 and above

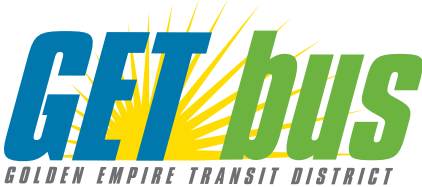
Don't know

24

Do you have any suggestions or other comments for GET?

GET may wish to contact you to gather further information about this particular survey. You would, of course, have the opportunity to agree or decline at the time. Is it OK to re-contact you? Phone or email address: _____

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEY TO THE SURVEYOR OR LEAVE IT ON YOUR SEAT. THANK YOU!



ENGLISH ON REVERSE

Golden Empire Transit (GET) Distrito está interesado en conocer tu opinión sobre nuestro servicio y cómo podemos mejorar. Tus opiniones son valiosas para nosotros y nos ayudarán a mejorar tu servicio de autobús. **Todas las encuestas serán confidenciales.** Por favor no llenes la encuesta más de una vez. Esta encuesta también está disponible en línea en bit.ly/getbus-survey o puedes escanear aquí. ¡Gracias por tus comentarios!



1

¿Cuál es el número de la RUTA del autobús en que estas MONTANDO ACTUALMENTE?

Ruta: _____

2

¿A qué hora empezaste este viaje?

Hora: ____ : ____ a.m. o p.m. (por favor marque uno)

3

Basado en tu experiencia en este ruta de auto-
bús en los últi mos 30 días, ¿Cuál es tu nivel de
satisfacción con la calidad del servicio?

Extremadamente
satisfecho

Satisfecho

Neutral

Insatisfecho

Extremadamente
insatisfecho

4

En el último año, ¿dirías que el servicio GET ha
mejorado, se ha mantenido igual o ha empeorado?

Mejorado

Mantenido igual

Empeorado

5

Basado en tu experiencia en ESTE RUTA DE AU-
TOBÚS EN LOS ÚLTIMOS 30 DÍAS, ¿Cuál es tu NIVEL
DE SATISFACCIÓN con estos aspectos el servicio:

Extremadamente
satisfecho

Satisfecho

Neutral

Insatisfecho

Extremadamente
insatisfecho

La confianza de que el autobús llegue a tiempo

La frecuencia del servicio

La duración de tu viaje en autobús

Las horas de servicio

La posibilidad de transferir a otras rutas de tránsito

Tu comodidad y seguridad en la parada y a bordo
del autobús

La conducta y actitud del conductor hacia usted

La tarifa que pagaste

La limpieza del autobús, la parada del autobús o el
albergue

6

¿Cómo pagaste tu tarifa?

Efectivo

Pase diario

Pase de 15 días

Pase de 31 días

7

¿Qué categoría de pago te corresponde?

Estándar

Persona adulta/
Anciano

Persona con
discapacidad

Medicare/
Tarifa reducida

8

¿Tienes o utilizas frecuentemente...? Selecciona
todos las que apliquen.

Smartphone/
Teléfono inteligente

Tablet/
Tableta

Computador

Ninguno

9

¿Cuál fue el MOVITO PRINCIPAL de tu viaje hoy?
Por favor elige UNO.

Viaje de ida y
vuelta al trabajo

Llevar o recoger
a un niño/a

Negocios
personales

Cuidado
de la salud

Compras

Educación

Tiempo libre

Otro

10

¿Hace cuánto tiempo llevas usando los
autobuses GET? Por favor escorge UNO.

Menos de
1 mes

1 a 6
meses

De 6 meses
a 1 año

1 a 2 años

3 a 5 años

Más de
5 años

11

En promedio, ¿con qué frecuencia has utilizado
CUALQUIER autobús GET en los últimos 3 meses?
Por favor escoge UNO.

Por lo menos
5 días a la
semana

3 a 4 días a
la semana

2 días a la
semana

Una vez por
semana

Menos que
una vez a la
semana

12

¿Cómo llegaste a la parada de autobús?
Por favor escoge UNO.

Caminé

Transferí de otro
autobús GET

Me dejaron
aquí

Llegué en
bicicleta

Manejé

Otro

13

¿Estás DE ACUERDO con las siguientes
declaraciones?

Totalmente
de acuerdo

Acuerdo

Sin opinión

No estoy de
acuerdo

Muy en
desacuerdo

Yo recomendaría GET a familiares y amigos.

Tengo una imagen positiva de GET.

El transporte público es un servicio público
importante.

14

Aparte de ver GET autobuses en las calles, ¿en
dónde más has visto el logo de GET en los últimos
3 meses? Selecciona todos las que apliquen.

Página web
de GET

Redes
sociales de
GET

Horarios de
autobús de
GET

Avisos de GET
en posters, fol-
letos, o revistas

Televisión
y/o radio

En ningún
lugar

Otro

15

¿Tienes un vehículo o tienes acceso a uno?

Sí

No

16

¿Cómo viajarías si GET no estuviera disponible?
Por favor elige UNO.

Manejar vehí-
culo propio

Montar en
bicicleta

Taxi

Uber/
Lyft

Caminaría

No haría el
viaje

Me llevaría un amigo
o algún miembro de
mi familia

Otro

Amigo, rela-
tivo familiar,
o vecino

Empleador o
colegio

Me mude

El costo de
tener un
vehículo

Debido a un
nuevo trabajo

Otro

17

¿Quién o qué motivo te incentivó para empezar
a utilizar el servicio de autobús GET? Selecciona
todos las que apliquen.

Amigo, rela-
tivo familiar,
o vecino

Empleador o
colegio

Me mude

El costo de
tener un
vehículo

Debido a un
nuevo trabajo

Otro

18

¿Cuál es tu dirección de casa o tu código postal
(ZIP code)?

19

¿Edad?

Años de edad

20

¿Eres tú?

Masculino

Hembra

Otro

21

Te identificas como...

Negro /
afroamericano

Blanco

Nativo
americano

Latino

Asia / De
islas del
Pacífico

Otro

22

Tu eres:

Administrativo/
Profesional

Retirado

Trabajador
manual

Desempleado /
no trabajando

Trabajadores
por cuenta
propia

Empleado ca-
sualmente oa
tiempo parcial

Estudiante
de colegio

23

¿Cuál fue el INGRESO COMBINADO TOTAL de
cada persona que ha vivido en tu hogar durante
el año pasado?

Menos de
\$ 20,000

\$ 20,001 a
\$ 35,000

\$ 35,001 a
\$ 50,000

\$ 50,001 a
\$ 75,000

\$ 75,001
y más

No sé

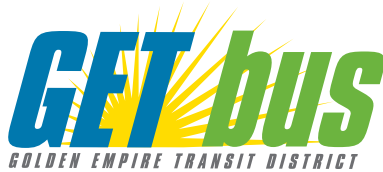
24

¿Tienes alguna sugerencia u otros comentarios para GET?

GET puede estar interesados en volverse a ponerse en contacto contigo para obtener más información sobre esta encuesta. Tu tendrías, claro está, la oportunidad de aceptar o rechazar en ese momento. ¿Podríamos contactarte en el futuro?

Teléfono o dirección de correo electrónico: _____

POR FAVOR, DEVUELVE LA ENCUESTA COMPLETADA AL ENCUESTADOR O DÉJELA EN SU ASIENTO. ¡GRACIAS!



ESPAÑOL AL REVÉS

Golden Empire Transit (GET) District is interested in understanding your travel patterns so we can ensure our services are catered to community needs. Your opinions are valuable to us and will help us improve our service. All surveys will be kept confidential. Please do not fill out the survey more than once. This survey is also available at bit.ly/getbus-survey or by scanning the QR code. **Thank you for your feedback!**



1 How do you typically get to where you need to go? Please choose ONE.

Drive alone ☐ GET bus ☐ Other transit (Kern County, etc.) ☐ I get dropped off/picked up ☐
Carpool ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walk ☐ Other

2 If you typically drive alone, why do you choose to do so? Please choose all that apply.

Need to visit multiple destinations before returning home ☐ Need to transport children to/from school or daycare ☐
Cannot get home in an emergency otherwise ☐ Transit is not convenient for me, or takes too much time ☐ Prefer to drive ☐
I don't know about other transportation options ☐ N.A. ☐ Other

3 If your typical/normal method of travel was not available, would you ride GET bus services? Please choose ONE.

Yes, I would rely on GET bus services ☐ Yes, I would use GET bus services more often than today, but it would not be my primary means of travel ☐
No ☐ GET bus already is my typical/normal method of travel ☐

4 In the last 90 days, have you ridden either GET's fixed-route bus service or the GET-A-Lift paratransit service? Please choose ONE.

Yes ☐ No, I have access to a personal vehicle ☐ No, the bus does not run where I'm going ☐
No, my trip would take too long by bus ☐ No, the bus does not run frequently enough ☐ No, the bus costs too much ☐
No, I don't know how to use GET ☐ No (please specify)

5 On a five-point scale, where one is "poor" and five is "excellent", how would you rate your overall satisfaction with GET services?

5 ☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ N.A. ☐

6 If you typically use transit, bicycle, walk, or carpool, what motivates you to do so? Please choose all that apply.

Saving money ☐ Convenience ☐ Health benefits ☐ No access to a car ☐
Less wear and tear on my car ☐ No need to worry about parking ☐ I am environmentally conscious ☐
N.A. ☐ Other (please describe)

7 What change, if any, could cause you to ride GET bus services more often than today? Please choose ONE.

More frequent GET bus service ☐ A bus stop nearer to my house/destination ☐ Earlier operating service hours ☐
Later operating service hours ☐ Help planning my trip on transit ☐ Nothing ☐
Other (please describe)

8 Do you know the location of the GET bus stop nearest to your home?

Yes ☐ No ☐

9 Do you believe public transit plays an important role in your community's quality of life?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10 Aside from seeing GET buses on the streets, where have you come across the GET brand in the last 90 days? Please check all that apply.

GET website ☐ GET social media accounts ☐ GET bus schedules ☐ GET posters, brochures, or billboards ☐
TV commercials ☐ Newspaper ads ☐ Other

11 Do you have a positive image of GET?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12 Would you support a dedicated sales tax supporting increased and/or improved public bus service throughout the Bakersfield Metropolitan area?

Yes ☐ No ☐

13 How long is your average trip, in miles?

Less than 1 mile ☐ 1 to 5 miles ☐ 5 to 10 miles ☐ More than 10 miles ☐

14 Do you have a valid driver's license?

Yes ☐ No ☐

15 What is your home address or ZIP code?

16 Age?

17 Are you?

Male ☐ Female ☐

18 Do you consider yourself ...?

White ☐ Latino ☐ Black/African American ☐

Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ Native American ☐ Other

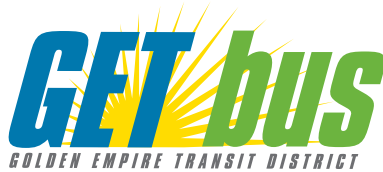
19 You are:

Clerical/Professional ☐ Manual laborer ☐ Self-employed ☐ In school ☐
Retired ☐ Unemployed/Not working ☐ Employed casually or part-time ☐

20 What is the TOTAL COMBINED income of every person living in your household over the past year?

Less than \$20,000 ☐ \$20,001 to \$35,000 ☐ \$35,001 to \$50,000 ☐ \$50,001 to \$75,000 ☐ \$75,001 or more ☐ Don't know ☐

21 Do you have any suggestions or other comments for GET?



ENGLISH ON REVERSE

Golden Empire Transit (GET) está interesado en conocer tu opinión sobre cómo estamos funcionando y cómo podemos mejorar. Tus opiniones son valiosas para nosotros y nos ayudarán a mejorar nuestro servicio. Todas las encuestas serán confidenciales. Por favor no lles la encuesta más de una vez. Esta encuesta también está disponible en línea en bit.ly/getbus-survey o puedes escanear aquí. ¡Gracias por tus comentarios!



- 1 ¿Generalmente, cómo consigues llegar a donde tienes que ir?
Por favor elige UNO.

Yo manejo solo ☐ Servicios de autobús GET ☐ Otros servicios de transporte público (Kern County, etc.) ☐ Un familiar o amigo me deja o me recoge ☐
Aventón ☐ Monto bicicleta ☐ Camino ☐ Otro

- 2 Si normalmente manejas solo, ¿por qué eliges hacerlo? Marca todo lo que corresponde.

Necesito visitar varios destinos antes de volver a casa ☐ Necesito transportar a los niños a/de la escuela o a/de la guardería ☐
No puedo volver a casa en una emergencia si no ☐ El transporte público no es conveniente para mí, o toma demasiado tiempo ☐ Prefiero manejar mi coche ☐
No conozco otras opciones de transporte ☐ N.A. ☐ Otro

- 3 Si tu método normal de viaje no estaba disponible, ¿viajarías en los servicios de autobús GET? Por favor elige UNO.

Sí, yo viajaría en los servicios de autobús GET ☐ Sí, yo viajaría en los servicios de autobús GET más a menudo que hoy, pero no sería mi principal medio de transporte ☐
No ☐ Los servicios de autobús GET ya son mi método normal de viaje ☐

- 4 En los últimos 90 días, ¿te has montado ya sea en los servicios de autobús GET o en los servicios de transporte alternativo GET-A-Lift? Por favor elige UNO.

Sí ☐ No, tengo acceso a un coche o vehículo personal ☐ No, el autobús no sale a donde voy ☐
No, mi viaje tardaría demasiado tiempo en autobús ☐ No, el autobús no funciona con suficiente frecuencia ☐ No, el autobús cuesta demasiado ☐
No, no sé cómo usar los servicios de autobús GET ☐ No (por favor especifica)

- 5 En una escala de cinco puntos, donde uno es "pobre" y cinco es "excelente", ¿cómo calificarías tu satisfacción general con los servicios de autobús GET?

5 ☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ No aplica ☐

- 6 Si generalmente usas transporte público, montas bicicleta, caminas, o te dan aventón, ¿qué te motiva hacerlo? Marca todo lo que corresponde.

Ahorrar dinero ☐ Conveniencia ☐ Beneficios de la salud ☐ No tengo acceso a un coche ☐
Menos desgaste en mi coche ☐ No tengo que estacionarme ☐ Soy consciente del medio ambiente ☐
Nada ☐ Otro (por favor especifica)

- 7 ¿Que cambio, si alguno, podría hacer que uses los servicios de autobús GET más a menudo que hoy? Por favor elige UNO.

Servicio más frecuente ☐ Una parada de autobús más cerca a mi casa/destino ☐ Más temprano operando/horas de funcionamiento más tempranas ☐
Más tarde operando/horas de funcionamiento más tarde ☐ Ayuda a planificar mi viaje ☐ Nada ☐
Otro (por favor especifica)

- 8 ¿Sabes dónde queda la parada de autobús GET más cercana a su hogar?

Sí ☐ No ☐

- 9 ¿Crees que el transporte público juega un papel importante en la calidad de vida de su comunidad?

Sí ☐ No ☐

- 10 Aparte de ver los autobuses GET en las calles, ¿dónde has encontrado la marca GET en los últimos 90 días? Marca todo lo que corresponde.

Sitio web GET ☐ Cuentas de redes sociales GET ☐ Horarios de autobuses GET ☐ Carteles, folletos, o vallas publicitarias ☐
Anuncios de televisión ☐ Anuncios de periódico ☐ Otro

- 11 ¿Tienes una imagen positiva de GET?

Sí ☐ No ☐

- 12 ¿Apoyarías un impuesto de ventas dedicado a mejorar o a aumentar el servicio de transporte público en el área metropolitana de Bakersfield?

Sí ☐ No ☐

- 13 ¿Qué tan lejos es tu viaje promedio, en millas?

Menos de 1 milla ☐ 1-5 millas ☐ 5-10 millas ☐ Más de 10 millas ☐

- 14 ¿Tienes una licencia de conducir válida?

Sí ☐ No ☐

- 15 ¿Cuál es tu dirección de casa o código postal?

- 16 ¿Años?

- 17 ¿Eres tú?

Masculino ☐ Hembra ☐

- 18 Te consideras...

Blanco ☐ Latino ☐ Negro/afroamericano ☐

Asia/ Islas del Pacífico ☐ Nativo americano ☐ Otro

- 19 Tu eres:

Administrativo/profesional ☐ Trabajador manual ☐ Trabajador por cuenta propia ☐ Estudiante de colegio ☐

Retirado ☐ Desempleado/no trabando ☐ Empleado casualmente oa tiempo parcial ☐

- 20 ¿Cuál fue el ingreso combinado total de cada personal que vivía en tu hogar durante el año pasado?

Menos de \$ 20,000 ☐ \$ 20,001 a \$ 35,000 ☐ \$ 35,001 a \$ 50,000 ☐ \$ 50,001 a \$ 75,000 ☐ \$ 75,001 y más ☐ No sé ☐

- 21 ¿Tienes alguna sugerencia u otros comentarios para GET?

GET Rider Discussion Guide

Introduction by Facilitator

Facilitator thanks everyone for coming. He states that this focus group is sponsored by Golden Empire Transit as part of a broader research project that includes onboard surveys, meetings and open houses.

The overall goal of the session is to better understand how GET riders feel about their transit service, the most important characteristics of GET service; what they know about the new Microtransit Service called RYDE that will begin next month; if they are aware that GET now offers a simpler way to pay their fares using their smart phones and to identify issues that riders may identify with the existing way GET services are designed and delivered.

The facilitator explains how a focus group works:

- Facilitator will ask questions
- Participants are encouraged to give their opinions
- There are no right or wrong answers

The three basic ground rules of the session

- Don't interrupt the speakers

- No side conversations
- Facilitator may need to cut off discussion at different points in order to cover all the topics.

At the end of the focus group, each participant will receive his/her payment

Participants are told that this meeting is being audiotaped, so that a summary can be written. There will be no attribution of any of the comments to a specific person and nowhere in the summary will the names of the participants appear.

2. Introduction of the Participants

Participants are asked to introduce themselves, telling us:

- – First Name
- – Where they live-Neighborhoods
- _ Primary Purpose of their trip-Work, school, shopping, medical, recreation
- – Origin and destination points
- – Time of day they travel
- _ What GET services and route they use
- – What their most typical trip is like
- Do other family members or co-workers use GET service?
- – How many times per week they travel on GET and if they use other means?
- _ How long have they used GET service?

What made you decide to ride GET?

How about the characteristics of GET service-which do you consider to be the most important to you?

- Travel time

- Fare

- Arriving on Time

- Ability to Transfer to Other Service

- Distance to the Bus Stop

- Driver Courtesy

- Directness of Routing

- Vehicle, Stop and Facility Cleanliness

- Safety on the Bus, at Bus Stops and in

Facilities

- Distance to the Bus Stop

- Other

Would it make you ride more if GET improved its performance in all of these service characteristics?

We talked about the characteristics of the service earlier. I want now to explore where and when the services operate.

Do GET services operate frequently enough? GET services operate approximately every 20 to 30

minutes on weekday and about every half hour or hour on weekends and holidays

How about coverage-that is where the service goes. Are there areas that currently have no service and should have service; conversely are there areas that have service but no one rides the service in those areas?

Is transferring between GET services convenient or inconvenient?

How many of you have to transfer to get to your final location?

Do any of you ride a bike to get to your GET bus?

Let's talk about your safety and security. Do you feel safe when riding GET?

How about when you are waiting for a bus?

Have any of you registered complaints with GET? If so what was your experience

How would you rate the GET frontline personnel you come into contact with-such as bus drivers and street supervisors or the customer service reps that you speak with?

What is your primary source of GET information?

GET's Bus Book

Website

GET's Mobile App

Telephone

Bus Driver

Fellow riders

How many of you have downloaded the GET mobile application that provides you with real time information about your bus service?

If yes, do you find the application to be dependable and accurate/

GET publishes a Bus Book every quarter. Do you use this book currently to understand where your route goes and its schedule?

Some agencies publish individual schedules. Would that be more convenient for you?

Have you seen any GET marketing recently? Like newspaper, television or radio advertising?

What improvements would you like to see in the immediate future to GET service:

More frequency

More coverage

Other fare options

How would you rate the GET's services?

What is your opinion of the GET organization?

What is your impression of the service? Does it deliver convenient, consistent and faster service?

If No what issues have you had with the service?

GET will be introducing its RYDE service next month.

Golden Empire Transit District will launch a six-month pilot project called “RYDE” offering on-demand/microtransit service to better match GET services with the changing ways passengers want to travel. The launch date is Sunday, April 7, 2019. Passengers will be able to request a ride on-demand through a mobile app or by calling 661- 869-6380 in southwest Bakersfield (Highway 99, Panama Lane, Old River Road and Rosedale Highway).

The shuttles, much smaller than a typical 40-foot bus, will take passengers curb-to-curb within the designated zone.

How many of you will change your commuting habits to ride this service?

Let's move our discussion to fares

How about the fare you pay-Do you consider it reasonable?

How do you pay your fare? Do you pay cash? Do you use a pass? If so which one? Do you use tickets? If so, which tickets do you use?

Why do you use cash?

Why do you use passes?

Why do you use tickets?

Are you aware that GET now allows you to pay your fares on your phone by downloading a mobile phone payment application that allows you to pay your fares with a credit or debit card?

First let's talk about local bus service which the majority of you ride. We talked about the characteristics of the service earlier. I want now to explore where and when the services operate.

Do GET services operate frequently enough? GET services operate approximately every 10 to 25 minutes on weekday and about every half hour on weekends and holidays

How about coverage-that is where the service goes. Are there areas that currently have no service and should have service; conversely are there areas that have service but no one rides the service in those areas?

Is transferring between GET services convenient or inconvenient?

How many of you have to transfer to get to your final location?

Let's talk about your safety and security. Do you feel safe when riding GET?

How about when you are waiting for a bus?

Have any of you registered complaints with GET? If so what was your experience

How would you rate the GET frontline personnel you come into contact with-such as bus drivers and street supervisors or the customer service reps that you speak with?

What is your primary source of GET information?

Website

App

Telephone

Bus Driver

Fellow riders

Have you seen any GET marketing recently? Like newspaper, television or radio advertising?

What improvements would you like to see in the immediate future to GET service:

More frequency
More coverage
Other fare options

How would you rate the GET's services?

What is your opinion of the GET organization?

GET Focus Group Discussion Guide

Thank you for coming tonight. My name is John and I will moderate tonight's discussion.

I will lead you through a series of questions about how you travel and transportation. There are no right or wrong answers to my questions so feel free to speak your mind.

There are a couple of ground rules for tonight's conversation. Allow the other participants to finish their answers before you respond. I must take notes of what is being said and I can't do that if I can't hear what is being said. Secondly, I don't have any answers to your questions, I am only here to ask questions.

Let's start by going around the table and identifying yourself. Please give me your name, and the city in which you live.

Let's begin our discussion about your daily travel.

1. On a normal day where do you normally travel? Is it local, is it places like Downtown Bakersfield, one of the Malls or is it just to the local grocery store?
2. How many days of the week do you make that trip?

3. How do you travel most days? Do you drive a car? Ride with a friend? Take the bus? Call a taxi? Ride UBER or LYFT? Maybe ride your bike or walk?

4. What is the reason you choose to travel by car, or one of the other means of travel?

5. How long does it take you today to get to your destination?

Is that longer than it was a year ago?

6. Is traffic congestion bad in Bakersfield?

7. Have any of you rode public transit either here in Bakersfield or elsewhere?

8. What was your experience?

Was the bus on time?

Was the bus clean?

Was the bus driver friendly?

Do you feel safe on the bus and waiting for the bus?

How about the fare? Do you consider it a value or did it cost too much for the value you received?

If you rode GET bus, what was your experience?

9. Do any of your family members or friends or neighbors or co-workers ride GET?
10. You don't ride public transit now, what would make you try riding transit? Is there some circumstance that would make you change the way you travel?

What characteristics of riding transit would be most important to you if you rode the bus?

Schedule

Where the service operates

The need to transfer to get to your destination

The fare you have to pay

How long it takes you to get to where you must go

11. Let's change our discussion for a second-If you decided to ride transit where would you go to get the information you need to ride?

Call the bus company

Go on line

Use a smartphone application

12. Have you ever seen any information about GET Bus Service? Like advertising or information on TV, radio or in the newspaper

If so where?

13. Where do you get your general information?

Television

Radio

Internet

Family

Friends

Neighbors

Co Workers

14. What is the best method for GET to market itself to lure more riders to its services?

15. What is your opinion of public transit overall?

16. Would you support an increase in local taxes to increase the types and level of transit service in Bakersfield?

What is your current status in the Get A Lift Program?

How many of you have unconditional eligibility?

How many of you have conditional eligibility?

How many of you have temporary eligibility?

Do you consider the certification/assessment process to be convenient?

Did any of you have problems with eligibility?

How many of you regularly use a mobility device such as a wheelchair or walker?

What is your most common trip purpose-in other words where is the most common place you go when you ride Get A Lift?

On average, how many trips do you take each month?

Do any of you ride the regular GET bus?

Let's switch to what you think of the quality of Get A Lift service

How would you rate the service?

Let's do a show of hands

Poor

Fair

Good

Very Good

Excellent

What types of problems have occurred when riding Get A Lift

Van Did Not Show

Van Showed Up Late

Driver drove erratic

Did not show up on time

Trip showed up late

Other

How would you improve GET A Lift service?

How many of you have internet access or communicate using your smartphone or tablets?

Have any of you tried UBER or Lyft?

Have you heard about GET's Ryde Service Demonstration?

Describe service

Would any of you consider riding this service?

GET-A-LIFT – RIDER SURVEY



TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

- Are you a GET-A-Lift ☐Rider ☐Rider Family Member ☐Healthcare Provider
☐Social Service Agency Representative ☐Other, please specify _____
- How long have you been riding on GET-A-Lift?
☐Less than one year ☐One to five years ☐Five to ten years ☐Ten years or more

HOW ARE WE DOING?

- Tell us about the eligibility assessment process:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Easy to schedule appointment</i>					
<i>Was treated fairly</i>					
<i>My questions were answered</i>					
<i>Process was not complicated</i>					
<i>Overall, I am satisfied with the eligibility assessment</i>					

- Tell us about the ride reservation process:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Able to reach a customer representative when I call</i>					
<i>Customer representative is polite/friendly</i>					
<i>Reservation process is not complicated</i>					
<i>Generally, I am able to get the desired trip times</i>					
<i>Overall, I am satisfied with the reservation process</i>					

- Tell us about the ride:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Vans arrive on the time</i>					
<i>Van drivers are courteous/helpful</i>					
<i>Van interiors are clean</i>					
<i>I feel safe while onboard the vans</i>					
<i>My drivers generally take the shortest routes</i>					
<i>Overall, I am satisfied with the ride</i>					

- Please tell us how satisfied you are with GET-A-Lift's service as it is today:

☐Totally satisfied ☐Satisfied ☐Somewhat satisfied ☐Somewhat dissatisfied
☐Dissatisfied ☐Totally dissatisfied

GET-A-LIFT – OPEN HOUSE EXIT SURVEY



7. Did you know that all GET bus conventional transit vehicles are accessible to customers with mobility challenges? (i.e. they are low-floor with ramps)

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Have you ever used a GET bus conventional bus instead of GET-A-Lift to travel?

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. If yes, which GET Bus route(s) do you typically use? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Route 21 – CSUB/Bakersfield College
- ☐ Route 22 – CSUB / Oil
- ☐ Route 41 – Valley Plaza/Cottonwood/Bakersfield College
- ☐ Route 42 – Panama Lane/Westchester
- ☐ Route 43 – Truxtun/Bakersfield College
- ☐ Route 44 – White Lane / Bakersfield College
- ☐ Route 45 – Oildale/Foothill
- ☐ Route 46 – Stockdale / Foothill
- ☐ Route 47 – Panama Lane / Truxtun
- ☐ Route 61 – Panama Lane/Bakersfield College
- ☐ Route 62 – Ridgeview/Greenfield/Valley Plaza
- ☐ Route 81 – Valley Plaza/Downtown/Bakersfield College
- ☐ Route 82 – CSUB/Rosedale
- ☐ Route 83 – Half Moon / S. Union
- ☐ Route 84 – Northwest / Downtown
- ☐ Route 92 – Tejon Ranch / Commerce Center Express

10. If you had the opportunity to receive training on how to use conventional fixed route transit, would you consider using conventional service more often?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐ I need more information to make a decision

11. If GET Bus offered a lower fare to ride conventional transit instead of GET-A-Lift, would you take advantage of that opportunity?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐ I need more information to make a decision

12. Would you like to be able to schedule GET-A-Lift trips online?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐ I need more information to make a decision

13. Please share with us any additional ideas or comments you have: _____

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

14. What is the best method to communicate with you about the GET-A-Lift Program in the future?

- ☐ Telephone ☐ Mail ☐ Email ☐ Facebook ☐ Twitter ☐ An additional Open House
☐ Other, please describe _____

15. If you would like someone to contact you about Travel Training, please provide your contact information: _____

Thank you for your time! Please feel free to contact us about how we can assist you with your transportation needs and improve our services:

Email: webcontact@getbus.org

Telephone: 661-869-2GET (2438)