

S T A F F R E P O R T

SUBJECT: Fixed Route Passenger Satisfaction Survey 2023

FROM: Mike Tobin, Director of Operations
Cyrus Sheik, Senior Transit Planner

DATE: September 25, 2023

Action Requested

Staff recommends the Projects and Services Committee consider and approve the forwarding of the findings of LAVTA’s 2023 Customer Satisfaction Survey to the Board for their review and approval.

Background

LAVTA conducts an annual on-board survey to assess passenger satisfaction with respect to soft-product delivery in areas such as bus cleanliness and driver courtesy. Specifically, the results of the surveys are used to calculate service quality standard indicators upon which the operations contractor’s annual incentives are based. Both fixed route as well as paratransit riders are surveyed; this report discusses the results from the fixed route survey.

Methodology

This year’s survey was conducted during the months of May and June 2023, and was undertaken by the agency’s own customer service staff as well as operations contractor staff. The surveyors rode various routes and asked each boarding passenger if they would like to complete a Wheels customer satisfaction survey. Surveyed trips were focused on the trunk routes #10 and #30, but also included surveying the shorter local routes. A limited number of school tripper routes were also included in the surveying roster. A total of 301 completed surveys were received for LAVTA’s mainline service.

The survey questionnaire (Attachment 1) was based on the standard customer service survey LAVTA uses each year, and was provided to passengers in both English and Spanish.

Survey Results

The full tally of the 2023 survey results is shown in Attachment 2. The core component in the survey is a series of quality-of-service aspects that respondents are asked to grade on a scale of 1-5, such as schedule adherence, cleanliness of buses, and driver courtesy. The remainder of questions addresses rider profile, such as age and household income. The areas where respondents were asked to grade the service on a scale have been constant for many years, so changes in trends can be tracked. Some of the demographic questions did change this year, however, compared to the 2019 and earlier surveys.

Quality of service: As in recent years past, respondents this year gave the Wheels service fairly high marks on quality-of-service aspects, as indicated by their scoring on a 1-5 scale where 1 is the worst and 5 is the best. From the total set, the service quality aspects were given a 3-point grading or better by 96% of the respondents, a 4-point grading or better by 87%, and a 5-point grading by 65% or better of those surveyed.

These results appear to be indicative of a high degree of customer satisfaction with the Wheels soft product overall. The average rating across all quality-of-service scorings was 4.47; which was comparable to the average score of the last survey conducted in 2019. The areas that were rated the highest was feeling safe when riding the bus, friendliness of customer service staff, and buses being clean and well maintained. The lowest (4.2) rating was for bus stops being clean and well maintained. The average scores within the nine individual quality areas probed in the survey saw little trend change from last year, where out of nine aspects probed, three were up, two were down, and four were the same compared with last year.

As in all years that the current survey format has been used, all quality rating areas continued to receive scores equaling or exceeding the agency-adopted goal of 4.0. The table below summarizes the quality-of-service scores given by passengers in this year’s survey about Wheels.

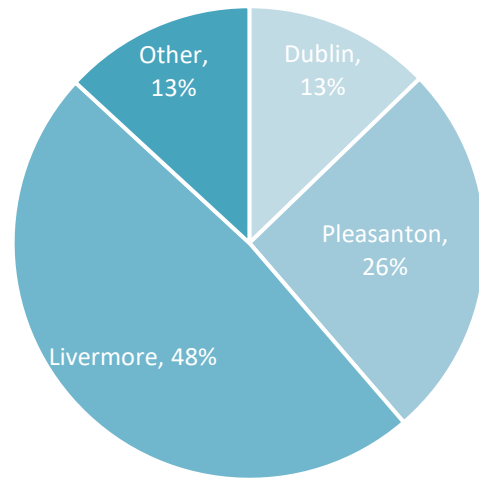
Score	1	2	3	4	5	Avg Score	2019
Service operates on time	2%	2%	10%	31%	55%	4.3	4.2
Feel safe when riding the bus	2%	0%	5%	17%	76%	4.6	4.7
Drivers are helpful and friendly	1%	1%	6%	22%	70%	4.6	4.4
Route / service information easy to use	3%	3%	10%	17%	67%	4.4	4.5
Buses are clean and well maintained	1%	1%	6%	21%	70%	4.6	4.5
Transit Center is safe and secure	2%	4%	12%	16%	67%	4.4	4.4
Bus stops clean and well maintained	2%	7%	16%	24%	52%	4.2	4.2
Customer service staff friendly and helpful	2%	2%	8%	17%	71%	4.5	4.5
Overall opinion of Wheels service	2%	1%	4%	32%	62%	4.5	4.5
				Total		4.47	4.44

Respondents’ General Profile

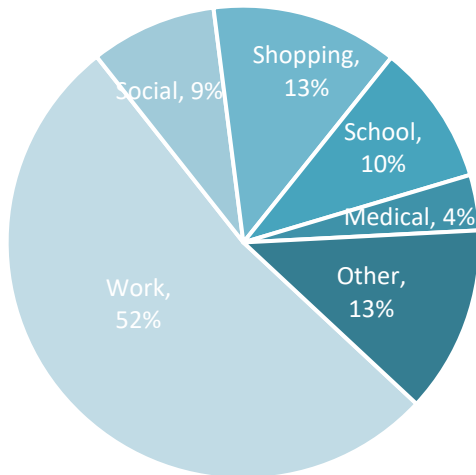
As previously indicated, the main purpose of the survey is to obtain passengers’ grading of the quality aspects indicated above. However, the survey also asks a few basic supplemental questions related to rider profile, such as age, trip purpose, and ride frequency – keeping in mind that the trips that were surveyed were not technically drawn from a statistically valid random sample of all Wheels riders; some of these questions have changed since the last survey in 2019.

Area of residence: 87% of survey respondents stated that they live in the Wheels service area. The distribution by city here likely is a reflection of the routes that had a lot of surveys done on them, including routes 10, 30, especially in Livermore: the latter city was stated by 48% of respondents as their residence, while 26% and 13% stated living in Pleasanton and Dublin, respectively.

Area of Residence



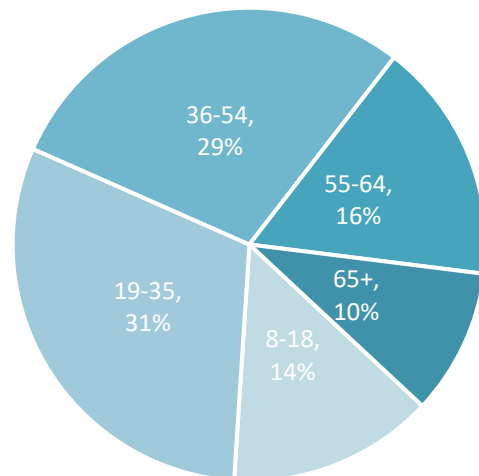
Trip Purpose

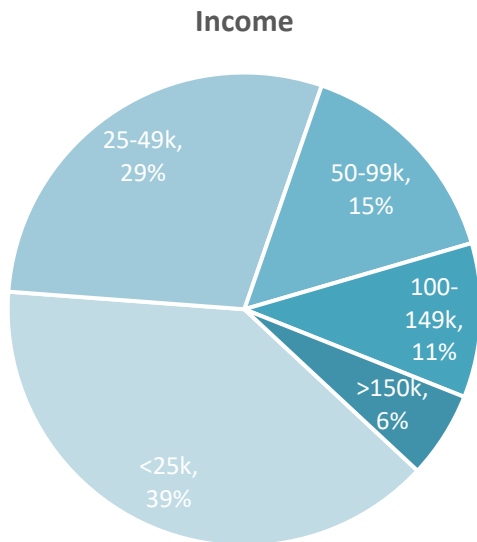


Trip purpose: Of the 290 responses to this question, over half of the respondents on the mainline service indicated that that they were traveling to or from work, while 10% stated “school” as the purpose for their current bus trip. 13% of respondents stated that they were using the bus to go shopping, which is higher than in previous years, and 13% indicated “Other”. This result is an indication that the Wheels service overall is primarily used for to commute to work - a trend that was reinforced further this year over previous years’ results.

Age: For LAVTA’s mainline service, 74% of the respondents were aged 54 or less, with 59% of respondents being between the ages of 19 – 54. Consistently with what has been observed in prior surveys, senior riders have a modest presence; this year alone only 16% percent of respondents stated their age as 55 or older.

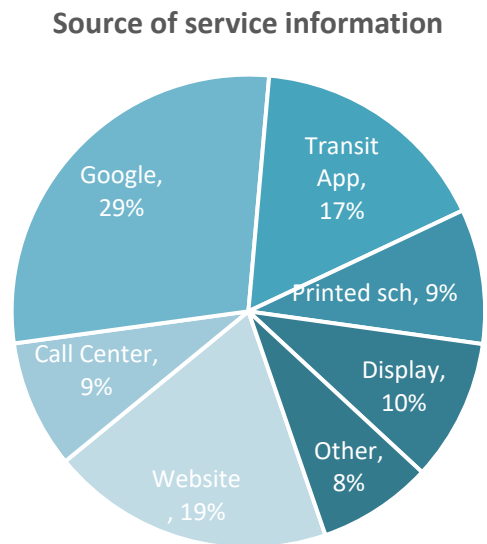
Age





Household income: When asked about annual Income, an overwhelming majority (68%) of riders indicated household earnings of less than \$50,000 per year, which is much higher than in previous years. 15% of respondents reported making between \$50,000 and \$100,000 a year, and the remaining 16% of respondents reported making at least \$100,000.

Source of service information: The purpose of this question was to understand the different ways in which customers are accessing information regarding Wheels service. For the mainline service, 65% of respondents indicated that they are accessing information digitally, i.e., through the Wheels website, Google, or the Transit App. The rest of respondents are accessing information either by calling customer service, looking at printed schedules, bus stop displays or Other.



Discussion

As the results described above show, the Wheels fixed route service delivery is continuing to receive nominally high remarks in all quality-of-service aspects that are probed in the annual on-board passenger survey, and the average respondent this year scored the service quality very similarly across the board compared with the previous survey that was conducted in 2019.

On the latter, staff notes that the nominal improvement in the agency’s on-time performance (OTP) metric appears to have moved the dial up only slightly in terms of passengers’ perception of the service’s timeliness.

The Wheels ridership base continues to a significant extent to be from low-income households, although not on the school-focused routes. Also, as the responses to the trip without-Wheels question indicate, most riders stated that they would have had alternative means of getting to their destination and thus are not captive to Wheels service.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Projects and Services Committee consider and approve the forwarding of the findings of LAVTA’s 2023 Customer Satisfaction Survey to the Board for their review and approval.

Attachments:

1. Survey form (English version)
2. Detailed summary of results
3. Open-ended comments

WHEELS PASSENGER SURVEY RESULTS 2023 - TOTAL RESULTS MAINLINE

1. Area of Residence	<u>Dublin</u>	<u>Pleasanton</u>	<u>Livermore</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Tot resp</u>			
	35	71	132	36	274			
	13%	26%	48%	13%				
2. Quality Rating							<u>Total Responses Received</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>Avg Score</u>	
Service operates on time	7	5	28	91	160		4.3	291
Feel safe when riding the bus	5	1	14	48	214		4.6	282
Drivers are helpful and friendly	2	3	18	62	196		4.6	281
Route / service information easy to use	7	9	29	47	185		4.4	277
Buses are clean and well maintained	4	3	17	59	198		4.6	281
Transit Center is safe and secure	5	10	31	42	180		4.4	268
Bus stops clean and well maintained	5	19	45	67	145		4.2	281
Customer service staff friendly and helpful	5	4	22	45	185		4.5	261
Overall opinion of Wheels service	4	2	11	83	162		4.5	262
Quality rating from above as percentages:								
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Avg Score</u>	<u>2019</u>	
Service operates on time	2%	2%	10%	31%	55%	4.3	4.2	291
Feel safe when riding the bus	2%	0%	5%	17%	76%	4.6	4.7	282
Drivers are helpful and friendly	1%	1%	6%	22%	70%	4.6	4.4	281
Route / service information easy to use	3%	3%	10%	17%	67%	4.4	4.5	277
Buses are clean and well maintained	1%	1%	6%	21%	70%	4.6	4.5	281
Transit Center is safe and secure	2%	4%	12%	16%	67%	4.4	4.4	268
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Overall opinion of Wheels service	2%	1%	4%	32%	62%	4.5	4.5	262
						4.47	4.44	
3. Trip Purpose	<u>Work</u>	<u>Social</u>	<u>Shopping</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Medical</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Tot resp</u>	
	152	25	37	28	11	37	290	
	52%	9%	13%	10%	4%	13%		
4. Age	<u>8-18</u>	<u>19-35</u>	<u>36-54</u>	<u>55-64</u>	<u>65+</u>	<u>Tot resp</u>		
	41	89	84	48	29	291		
	14%	31%	29%	16%	10%			
5. Household Size	<u>1 ppl</u>	<u>2 ppl</u>	<u>3 ppl</u>	<u>4 ppl</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	<u>Tot resp</u>		
	92	47	25	44	46	254		
	36%	19%	10%	17%	18%			
6. Income	<u><25k</u>	<u>25-49k</u>	<u>50-99k</u>	<u>100-149k</u>	<u>>150k</u>	<u>Tot resp</u>		
	93	69	36	25	14	237		
	39%	29%	15%	11%	6%			
7. Frequency of Wheels rides	<u>Daily</u>	<u>Almost Daily</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Tot resp</u>				
	161	85	27	273				
	59%	31%	10%					
8. Use of Onboard WiFi	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Tot resp</u>					
	50	154	204					
	25%	75%						
9. Length of Wheels patronage	<u>Average (yrs)</u>							
	TBD							
10. Source of service information	<u>Website</u>	<u>Call Center</u>	<u>Google</u>	<u>Transit App</u>	<u>Printed sch</u>	<u>Display</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Tot resp</u>
	42	19	62	36	20	21	17	217
	19%	9%	29%	17%	9%	10%	8%	
11. Trip without Wheels?	<u>Walk</u>	<u>Drive</u>	<u>Taxi</u>	<u>Bike</u>	<u>Get Ride</u>	<u>No Trip</u>	<u>Ride-hailing</u>	<u>Tot resp</u>
	52	23	16	42	40	29	65	267
	19%	9%	6%	16%	15%	11%	24%	

Total mainline surveys received = 301

1. Which general area do you live in? Check ONE.

Pleasanton Dublin Livermore Other (specify) : _____

2. Please rate the Wheels service using a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the worst (strongly disagree) and 5 being the best (strongly agree).

Question	Score (1-5)
Transit services operate on-time	
I feel safe when riding the bus	
Drivers are helpful and friendly	
Schedule and map information is easy to understand	
Buses are clean and well-maintained	
Transit Center is safe and secure	
Bus Stops are clean and well maintained	
Transit Center (& Telephone) staff are friendly and helpful	
Overall opinion of Wheels service	

3. What was the main purpose in making your trip today? Check ONE.

_____ Work _____ School _____ Shopping
 _____ Social Visit _____ Medical _____ Other (specify): _____

4. What is your age?

_____ 8-18 _____ 55-64
 _____ 19-35 _____ 65+
 _____ 36-54

5. What is the size of your household?

_____ Just me (one)
 _____ 2 persons _____ 4 persons
 _____ 3 persons _____ 5 or more

6. Your annual household income?

_____ Under \$25,000
 _____ \$25,000-\$49,999
 _____ \$50,000-\$99,999
 _____ \$100,000-\$149,999
 _____ \$150,000+

7. How often do you ride with Wheels?

_____ Daily or almost daily
 _____ A couple of days per week
 _____ Occasionally/seldom or only today

8. I use the onboard Wi-Fi: ___ Yes ___ No

9. I have been riding Wheels for (indicate number of mo/yr): ___ months ___ years

10. I get bus route and schedule information from (for example: the Wheels website, Wheels call center, Google, mobile app (specify), printed schedules, bus stop display) : _____

11. How would you have made your current trip without the bus? Check ONE.

_____ Walk _____ Get a ride _____ Use Wheels Dial-a-Ride service
 _____ Bike _____ Take a taxi _____ I would not have made this trip
 _____ Drive myself _____ Use Über or Lyft

Please provide Wheels Management with your thoughts on how our service works for you and/or how we may improve our service.

General Comments
Helps me get to school every day.
Bus stop will need more maintenance.
All excellent
There isn't really much. It is a fine system as it is. Really helpful.
All good
I think [not translateable]
Helps me get to work and back home.
No comments. Thank You
Coverage of Pleasanton is limited, I often have to walk 15 minutes when I get off the bus.
Good service.
Thank you for your service *heart emoji*
It works well but one day the handler just saw me and it happened, the handlers should be more friendly
It's good service. It doesn't need to improve anything.
Service is good & I don't think it needs improvement.
Very good
Be in Tbriq pine to be yin ned. To understand the weather not just waiting at the stop especially at night time. Add more service on the route #14. Male living in shelter on Owens/Rosewood near Walmart.
The service works good for me. I just use it for work.
teach the routes well to new staff, improve schedules a little
For me, it is fine, it is the transportation I use to get to work when there is no one to take me (thank you)
Only, sometimes more preasition y all bus stops.
Increase the frequency of 30R service.
I am commuting taking public transit this summer to work. Good so far.
It seems to be very convenient. Thank you!
It gets me to where I need to go. Earlier service would be nice.
More frequent trips on Route 1 to sync with BART.
All good service.
It is a great service for the community.
Works great for me, can go wherever I want.
Please arrive on time and leave on time.
I get to and from work on time. Bring back the 9:30 AM 8 route from Pleasanton BART.
Good service.
Have more bus hours for the #8 route.
I don't think anyone right now. They are good.
The service is useful but sometimes there are doctors with bad service. (try to improve on that).
Everything is good, great service.
Service is good overall.
More runs on weekends in the morning and afternoon.
Excellent.
Easy, quick, and clean
Only some drivers are very crazy when driving.
kept doing job driver skills
More stops close by instead of stopping BART station to transfer.
Please make weekend have bus come every 15 minutes.
Great Service
Great Service
Improve frequency on Route 30R & 10R. Bring back Route 11/Vasco Rd.
Pretty good, some bus station stops' benches could use some cleaning, polishing, or laquering.
Bus ride is kind of jerky to ride.
Some of your drivers don't say hello. They could be more friendly.
Set bus schedules to support passengers connections to all buses to where we don't have to wait an hour at BART station for #14.
Don't meet 30R schedule most time.
Extend your hours and better training.
The drivers are courteous and friendly. Perhaps adding more route will help. Thanks.
The bus I transfer to always leaves a stop RIGHT before the bus I transfer from gets there (e.g. 10R-30R @ transit station).
More accurate timing.
I could not tell.
Try to time the buses together in order to catch the next bus.
Good.
Dependability is a must. If bus breaks down, please provide replacement. Homeless riders unsafe. Urine smell on buses. Bus stops occupied by homeless.
It's ok.
30R closer stop to Dublin Blvd/Safeway more lighting at the bus stop.
Great and I think everything is perfect :)
The 10R service on weekends will take the 8 route - because it doesn't pass through downtown Pleasanton and I have to walk quite a bit.
It's a good transportation service, but some of the drivers aren't that helpful.
I think it's great. I use it for school & personal outings. Overall it's clean on buses, but just not at bus stops.
Lower fare.
30R only runs until 10 and I have to pay for Uber. Would like it to run more at night.
Wheels bus needs bus pass covers to keep Clipper card inside bus pass covers. Thanks!

On Saturdays the bus runs up to every hour 30R.
Later schedule 1-2:30 am. Sprone a both at Alameda District County! How much tod caleated collected on the bus. (*Merlin)
IDK Free
It's perfectly fine!
I like the bus. I think they should have a radio on the bus.
Go to Wheels office - nonstop 10R to BART and bus to mall from Livermore.
Courtesy of drivers is wonderful -- Promptness of schedule is impressive.
Good.
Fine, I use it for getting to BART.
Kind thanks.
Sure to get to work on time and to visit cities. Thank you.
So good.
"Thank you"
Mostly the bus has been great for me. I like all the bus drivers; they know me.
For 30R, can you add a stop near Outlets Premium?
Add more stops to the area to 20X bus stop.
100% well hospitality + nice person. Thank you.
Service is pretty good!
None :) Maybe make bus station more clean.
On the weekend when I took the bus more frequently.
Excellent service.
Excellent.
Works very good.
Service works well.
I am happy.
Overall very pleasant.
Good service.
Todo bien.
Better time schedule for bus connections.
All good. Only sometimes vases don't wait for people.
All good.
I think it's going well. Some driver leaves earlier than scheduled causing the wait for another bus for an hour.
10R is good but the Route 14/other routes don't have chargers on buses which would be helpful.
More clean buses and on time, besides that it's very good service.
I love it.
Having better call center support.
Service is good but sometimes not on time.
I am contented with your service a little more improvement.
Looks good to me.
It run more often.
The stops are very clean.
Improvement on friendly drivers.
Allows me to go places easily and efficiently.
Good service.
I think the overall service is fine. It doesn't need much improvement.
On Valley & Pleasanton Ave needs another bus stop (please) & more garbage cans, especially on First & Neal going on 8 Route.
Thanks :)
Everything's fine. The service is almost perfect.
Today they have improved the services much better than before.
I get scared of the weird people who go on here.
I enjoy the service itself and its availability. No suggestions.
Overall Wheels has been the best transit service I've used.
Excellent service.
The service is good, very punctual with schedules. I would like more hours on Saturday and Sunday.
It is disappointing that routes, route service hours, and bus frequency all keep getting reduced. Wheels bus service ends before BART service ends, so late-night BART passengers have no Wheels ride.
Good.
Good. Satisfied.
For me it would be better if it came out every half hour and earlier or every day.
Doing well, just improve on scheduling/timing.
I commute to Ross for work & would appreciate if the Route 1 came more frequently since I transfer from BART.
The service is very good + senior fare is excellent!
Stops are too far apart.
Please be grateful that when a passenger gets on board, your accessory will be bad, as my mother had an accident when the schedule went up in a basic time to transfer seo for more time x bass.
I have a temporary handicap, cannot drive.
Wheels enables me to be able to go anywhere and I couldn't be a happier passenger.
Great.
My thoughts on Wheels are that I think it's awesome and the fares are reasonable.
Service is good.
It is competent and I like the drivers. Wish the stops could be cleaner.
Everything is okay, but I hope the bus stops could stay more clean.
Shorter hours.

On the signs that are posted when the streets are closed, there are times when they don't pass or they don't want to stop. Thank you.
What is needed most is the kindness of the drivers and patience to ensure a happy trip.
Great service.
Repair display panels @ TC (real-time displays)
More ample time with BART connections. Improve bus connections. Improve frequency on weekends (Route 10).
Most, many (?) of Wheels drivers are scared to be around people. On cold freezing days, the buses tend to be colder. Why? A driver was scared of someone's cough, look on back he drove in the transit center. Parked at the edge, making us walk way up to our next stops. He didn't park correctly to me.
You're great. Awesome thanks. Keep up the good work.
No comment! You're doing just great!
App works.
I like it . . .
The Wheels bus service helps me get to work as well as going around to grocery stores and fulfill other necessities.
Comments on website seem to ask lots of personal info -- so I no longer use it.
It perfect.
As of now I am satisfied with your service especially the newly introduced 15 min schedule during the week. Include all bus stops with timers showing estimates of bus arrival time.
I would like the schedules to be more punctual.
That there were more early-night hours :)
Introduce customer & say hello and bye. And some drivers drive crazily, just need to slow down.
Nothing to improve. Just wish to prove another way I'm a student.
All good.
Please don't diuret the uue, it is very painful in winter if you can do it.
Give us monthly pass.
I am grateful to have transportation. This is a really good help to people without cars.
Need routes to Ruby Hill Country Club area or at least Holmes and Concannon. Buses need more USB ports. Some bus stops are clean and well-maintained, and others less so. <3 you guys.
I like the routes it covers. Few more routes could be added going across Pleasanton & Dublin without having to transfer at BART Station every time.
Service is great and easy.
More routes in Dublin!
Wheels is the best!
Open ramp for wheelchairs.
Early hours I need earlier 30R.
On the weekend, 15 takes off quickly.
Pry tour bist!
The best :)
It would be great considering BART timings like by the time I get off the bus, BART leaves. So 2-3 min earlier would be great.
10 and 30R do not connect on holidays.
Please make more routes more coherent.
Timings, security, friendly service are keys for any success.
Works good.
On weekends dispatch does not speak Spanish. Need to add someone who speaks Spanish to hold bus.
It's good, maybe when you transfer to another bus you miss it by just seconds or a minute.
Excellent service keep it up.
Everything is fine except when the bus passes BEFORE the scheduled time.
That the buses were more on time.
I like the service.