



PVRTA's Red 44 begins another run to Florence Heights from Northampton's Academy of Music bus stop.

PVRTA Onboard Customer Survey

Northern Service Region

December 15, 2009

Prepared under the direction of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Funding assistance from the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration

This page is intentionally blank

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	iii
I. Introduction	1
II. Survey Method	3
III. Findings	4
A. Trip Characteristics	4
Question 1: How long did it take you to get to the bus stop?.....	4
Question 2: How long will it take you to get to your destination once you leave the bus?	5
Question 3: How did you get to the bus?	5
Question 4: Does your trip today involve a transfer to another bus route?	6
Question 5: What is the main purpose of your trip?	6
b. Customer Characteristics	7
Question 6: How often do you ride the bus?	7
Question 7: What is the main reason you ride the bus?	7
Question 8: Did you have another way to make this trip?	8
Question 9: How many cars are available for your use in your household?	8
Question 10: Do you have a physical disability that prevents you from driving?	9
Question 11: What is your race or national origin?	9
Question 12: What language or languages do you speak at home?.....	11
Question 12a: What are the other languages spoken at home?.....	11
Question 13: How do you usually pay your fare?.....	11
Question 14: How old are you?	15
Question 15: Location you usually board?	15
Question 16: Where will you get off the bus?.....	15
Question 17: What route are you riding now?	15
Question 18: Which of the following describes your situation best?	14
Question 19: Please describe your income level	15
Question 20: Are you male or female?	15
C. Customer Satisfaction Ratings	16
Question 21: Customer Satisfaction Ratings Summary	17
Fig. 21a: Driver enforces rules	18
Fig. 21b: Schedules easily obtainable.....	18
Fig. 21c: Ease of reading schedules	19
Fig. 21d: Condition of bus shelters	19
Fig. 21e: On-time performance of service	20
Fig. 21f: Bus driving safety.....	20
Fig. 21g: Frequency of service	21
Fig. 21h: Cost of service.....	21
Fig. 21i: Personal safety at stops	22
Fig. 21j: Driver courtesy.....	22
Fig. 21k: Cleanliness of buses.....	23
Fig. 21l: Total travel time	23
Fig. 21m: Service where desired.....	24
Written Comments Summary.....	24

IV. Analysis	25
A. Trip Characteristics	25
B. Customer Characteristics	26
C. Customer Satisfaction Ratings	27
V. Recommendations	29
A. Recommendation 1: Address “Priority for Improvement” items	29
B. Recommendation 2: Address “Needs Improvement” items	30
C. Recommendation 3: Review Concerns Requiring Additional Funding	30
D. Recommendation 4: Implement on-going quality monitoring and management measures	30
Appendices	32
1. List of Preparers	
2. Sample Survey Form	
3. Written Comments	

Executive Summary

To better serve its all customers, the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) regularly surveys the riders of its fixed routes bus services. In 2009, PVTA surveyed riders on the routes in Hampshire County, also known as the Northern Service Area. In FY2009, these routes carried an average 424,000 riders per month during the academic year, when demand is heaviest.

A total 1,442 bus riders completed surveys in September and October 2009. More than half (56%) said they ride PVTA to attend classes at one of the area’s academic institutions or commute to work. The other top reasons for travel were shopping (14%) and medical appointments (12%). Significantly, 3 of every 4 riders said they earn less than \$10,000 per year.

Riders rated their satisfaction with PVTA in 13 categories. **Overall customer satisfaction with PVTA in the Northern Service Area was 89.7%.** This rating was calculated by averaging the individual ratings for each of the 13 categories shown on Figure ES-2 (next page). Ratings for individual categories varied up to 9% from the overall average. Findings are summarized below.

Figure ES-1: PVTA Northern Region Bus Rider Customer Satisfaction 2009

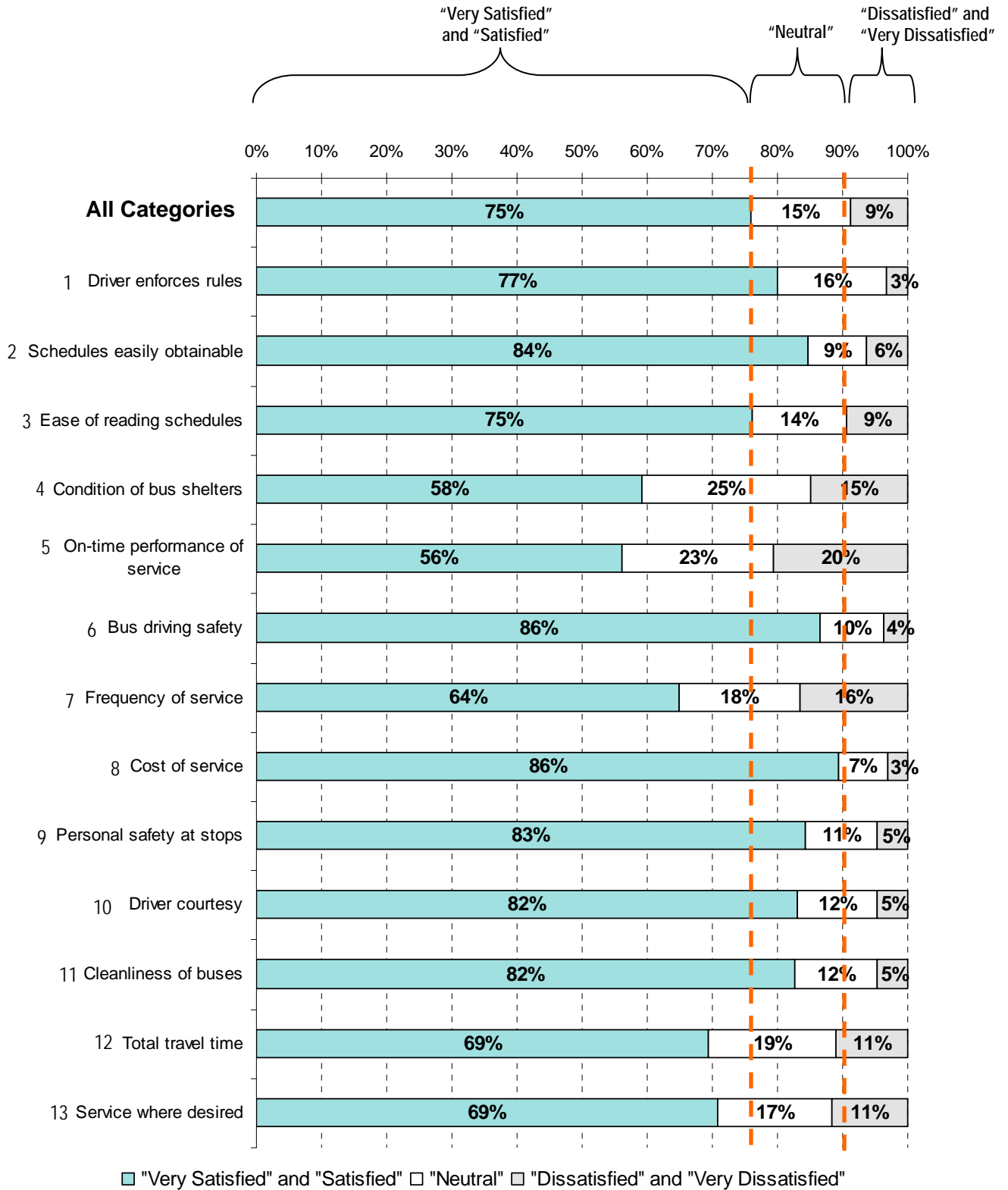
Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Priority for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus driving safety • Personal safety at bus stops • Driver courtesy • Bus cleanliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver enforces rules • Schedules easily obtainable • Cost of service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease of reading schedules • Total travel time • Service goes where desired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus shelter condition • On-time performance • Frequency of service

In summary, customers in the Northern Service area give PVTA high marks for the service categories that involve the performance of drivers, schedules and safety. Areas in which customers would like to see improvements are the frequency of service, on-time performance, and facilities (bus shelters). In fact, of the 13 categories, the condition of bus shelters was most frequently cited as an area for improvement.

After receiving preliminary survey results in November 2009, PVTA initiated repairs on the bus shelters in the Northern Service Area that have experienced the most damage or vandalism. PVTA also increased its monitoring of on-time performance throughout the system and continues to work with its contract bus operators to improve schedule adherence. PVTA is also now installing a new a GPS-based automated vehicle locator (AVL) system to be operational within two years that will provide real-time bus tracking, greatly improving schedule adherence.

Other areas cited for improvement, such as increasing service frequency and geographic areas, will require significant additional operating funds, which are not available to PVTA at this time. PVTA continues to work with stakeholders and elected officials in the region to identify new sources of funds that will allow these service improvements to go forward.

Figure ES-2: PVTA Northern Region 2009 Customer Satisfaction Results



I. Introduction

Understanding the mobility needs and preferences of bus riders is essential to providing efficient public transit. The agency responsible for public transit service in the Pioneer Valley region is the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority. The PVTA oversees the operation of 140 buses on a system that includes 40 fixed bus routes and four community shuttles. Transit customers made a total of 9.7 million trips on PVTA buses in FY2009. (PVTA also oversees an extensive paratransit, or “on-demand,” van service, which provided 330,000 trips for people with disabilities and senior citizens in FY2009.) The mobility that PVTA provides through these services is critical for the large number of people in the region who do not or cannot drive, giving them essential daily access to places of work, education and shopping.

PVTA’s 24-municipality service area is diverse in terms of land uses and demographic composition. It includes major urban centers, suburban communities and rural areas. The three general regions of PVTA’s service area are shown on the figure on the next page.

PVTA strives for 100% rider satisfaction. Surveys are essential to the task of identifying major concerns and opportunities for improvement to make progress toward this goal. This survey focuses on PVTA’s northern region. The area includes the bus routes that primarily serve Hampshire County and encompasses the urban centers of Northampton and Amherst. Adjacent PVTA communities served by these bus routes are: Belchertown, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, South Hadley, Sunderland and Williamsburg. In FY2009, these routes provided a total of 3.7 million rides—approximately one-third of all PVTA fixed-route bus trips.

Importantly, transit demand varies significantly in the northern region because many of the largest transit trip generators are the largest academic institutions. During academic months, ridership in the northern area is approximately 46% of the PVTA systemwide total; during the summer and academic calendar breaks, the northern region’s share may scale back to as little as 21% of the systemwide total. (In contrast, month-to-month ridership in PVTA’s southern [Hampshire County] region varied about 21% during FY2009.)

PVTA was created in 1974. In its first decade, the authority implemented numerous capital and service improvements, which resulted in major ridership gains; ridership reached nearly 13 million passengers in 1985. Between 1990 to 2001, ridership continued to grow, albeit at a more modest rate of 3.2%. However, in 2002 PVTA experienced budgetary shortfalls that forced bus service cuts. As a result, system ridership fell approximately 23% from 2002 to 2007.

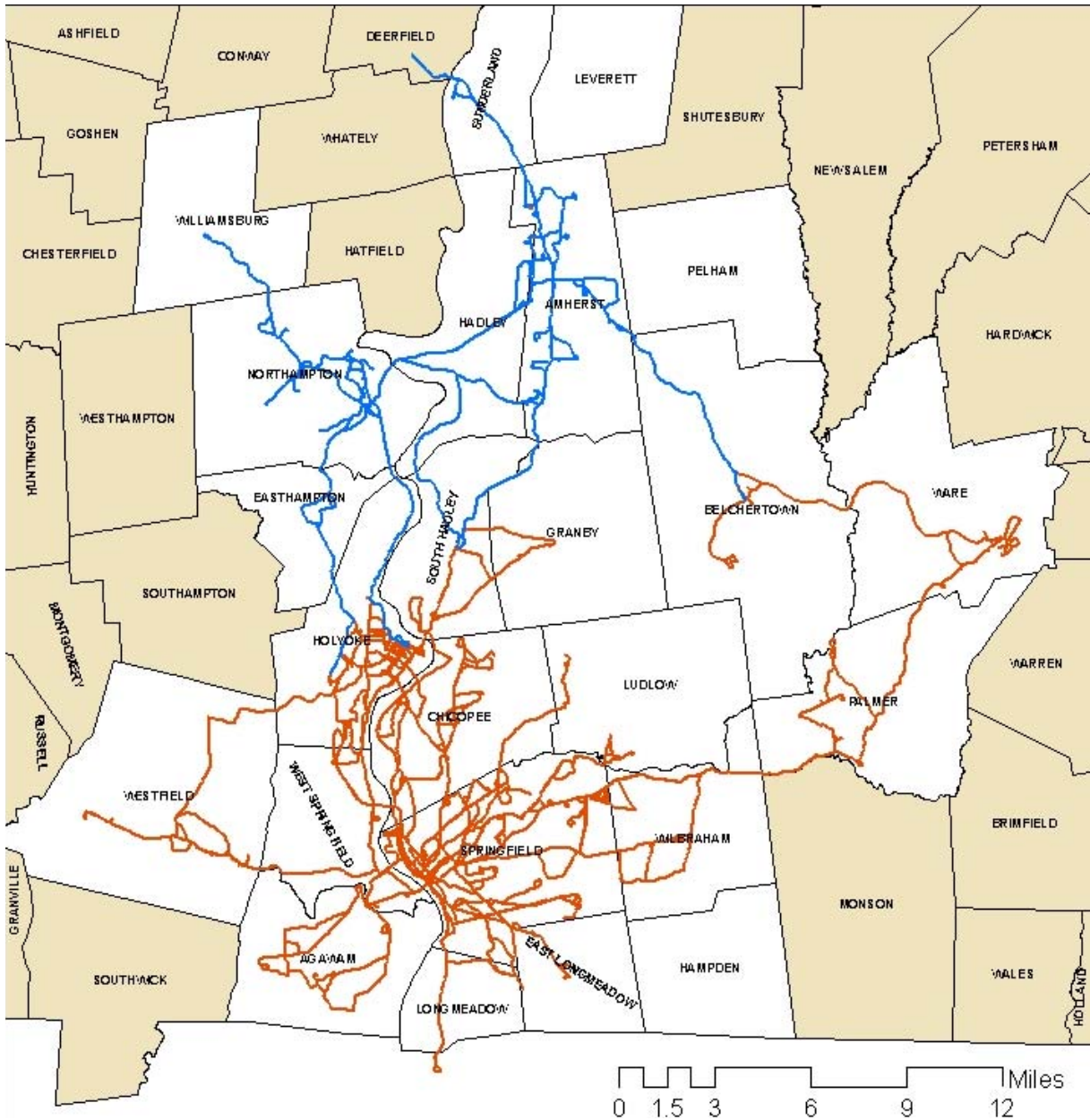
In June 2008, the PVTA Advisory Board approved a fare increase from \$1.00 per ride to \$1.25 per ride to prevent further service reductions. Nonetheless, total bus ridership rose nearly 3% during FY2008 and held steady in FY2009.

The information presented in this survey, which is the most comprehensive rider survey of the northern region undertaken by the authority since 2002, is essential to identifying measures that will help PVTA continue this upward trend and serve even more riders with greater efficiency in the years to come.

Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Transit Service



- Northern Routes surveyed
- Southern Routes and shuttles (not surveyed)



PVRTA bus routes surveyed in the northern region are shown in dark blue.

II. Survey Method

This bus rider survey was conducted during September and October 2009 on buses traveling routes in the northern region (Hampshire County) of PVTA's service area (see previous page). The necessary sample size of 1,310 to achieve a 95% confidence level was calculated using an estimated 8,250 unique customers each day (derived by using ridership during the academic months, assuming two daily trips per rider and no service on most routes on Sundays). A total of 1,442 completed surveys were collected to insure a minimum 1,310 responses to each question. The target number of surveys needed for a representative sample of each route was calculated on a proportional basis relative to the FY2009 average monthly ridership of each route during the academic months of the year (September, October, November, February, March April). These target proportions and the actual proportion of surveys collected, are shown below. The use of academic month ridership helps account for the seasonal nature of transit demand in this region, as the major trip generators in the area are colleges and UMass Amherst.

Route	Description	FY09 Academic Month Ave	% of Survey Area Total	% Returned Surveys
M40	Minuteman Express	4,545	1.1%	1.1%
R41	Northampton-Easthampton-HCC	4,265	1.0%	1.1%
R42	Northampton-Williamsburg	4,985	1.2%	1.0%
B43	Northampton-Hadley-Amherst	66,794	15.8%	24.0%
R44	Florence Heights via King St	6,431	1.5%	0.4%
B48	Northampton-Veterans Park via Holyoke Mall	7,595	1.8%	2.4%
30	North Amherst/Old Belchertown Rd	96,916	22.9%	19.3%
31	Sunderland/South Amherst	94,407	22.2%	22.4%
32	Atkins Corner/Puffers Pond	3,634	0.9%	1.6%
34	Orchard Hill/Campus Shuttle NB	26,058	6.1%	4.9%
35	Mullins Center/Campus Shuttle SB	35,883	8.5%	5.7%
36	Gatehouse Rd	538	0.1%	3.0%
37	Amity Shuttle	11,866	2.8%	6.9%
38	Mt Holyoke-Hampshire-Amherst-UMass	39,102	9.2%	3.0%
39	Smith-Hampshire-Mt Holyoke	13,629	3.2%	2.0%
45	Belchertown Center-UMass	5,768	1.4%	0.8%
46	South Deerfield-UMass	1,384	0.3%	1.1%
Totals		423,801	100.0%	100.0%

Note: The northbound and southbound segments of Routes 30 and 31 are operated as separate routes; however, for purposes of this survey, they are reported as one route, as shown above.

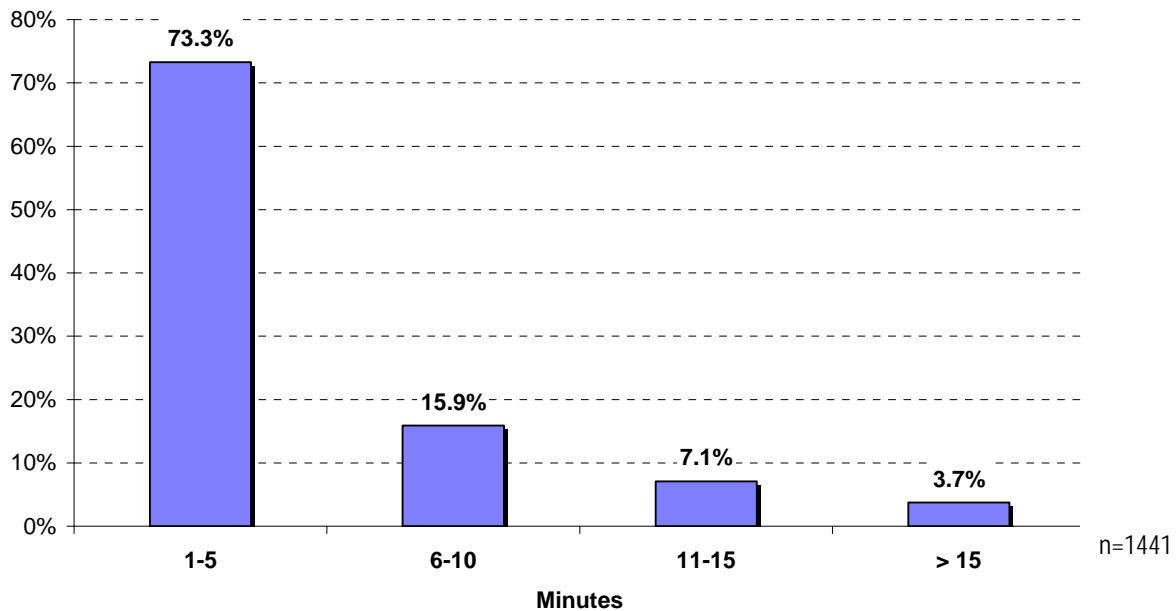
Surveyors canvassed each route for at least one full day to ensure that a minimum of 10 surveys were collected for every route. The survey instrument was a one-page patron-intercept form (Appendix 2) filled out by riders on board the buses. The survey was printed on heavy stock so respondents could write on it without a clipboard. One side was in Spanish and the other in English (respondents were asked to fill out one side only). Survey personnel offered surveys to riders as they boarded the bus and collected the surveys when complete. All persons boarding the bus were verbally offered a survey. Surveys were administered throughout all weekday and weekend mornings, afternoons and evenings to achieve representative samples of trip purposes.

III. Findings

This section reports findings in four general categories: trip characteristics, customer characteristics, system use characteristics, and customer satisfaction ratings. Note: The number of each question is shown as it appeared on the original survey. However, the results are organized by similar types of information (rather than the original sequencing) to improve the organization of the following report sections. Total responses (N) for each question are shown.

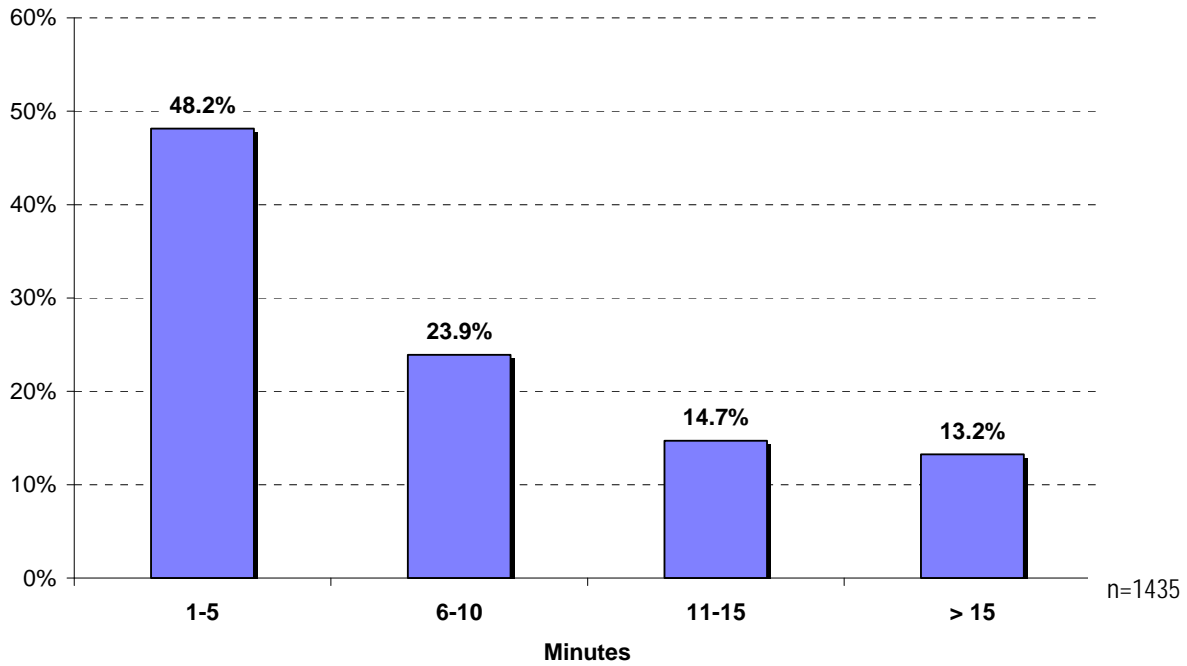
A. Trip Characteristics

Question 1: How long did it take you to get to the bus stop?



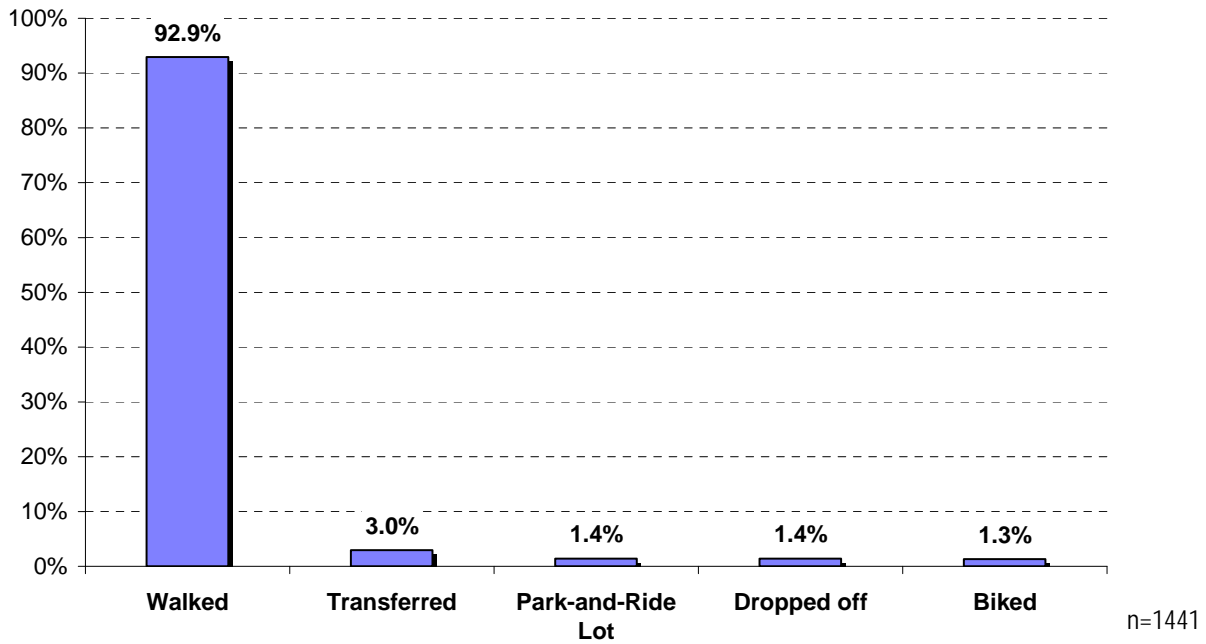
The above responses indicate that nearly 9 of every 10 riders (89.2%) were able to reach the bus stop in 10 minutes or less.

Question 2: How long will it take you to get to your destination once you leave the bus?

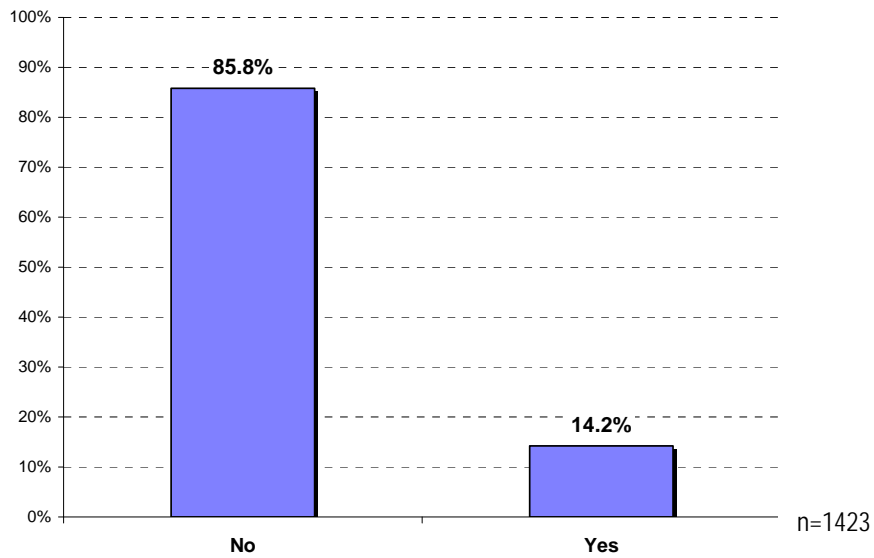


The responses above indicate that nearly 3 of every 4 riders (72.1%) will reach their destination in 10 minutes or less after leaving the bus.

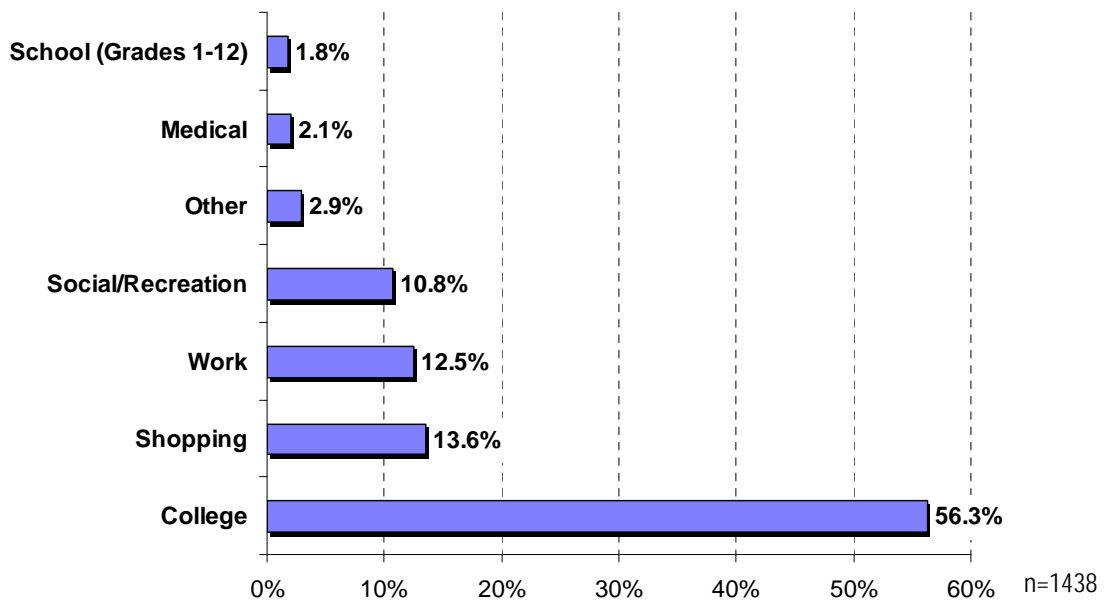
Question 3: How did you get to the bus?



Question 4: Does your trip today involve a transfer to another PVTA bus route?



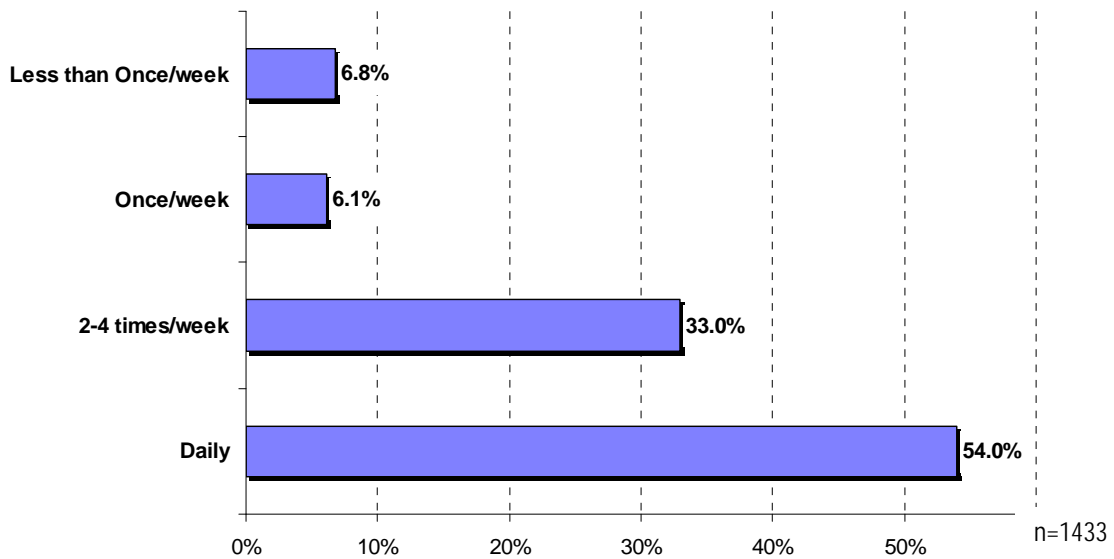
Question 5: What is the main purpose of your trip?



B. Customer Characteristics

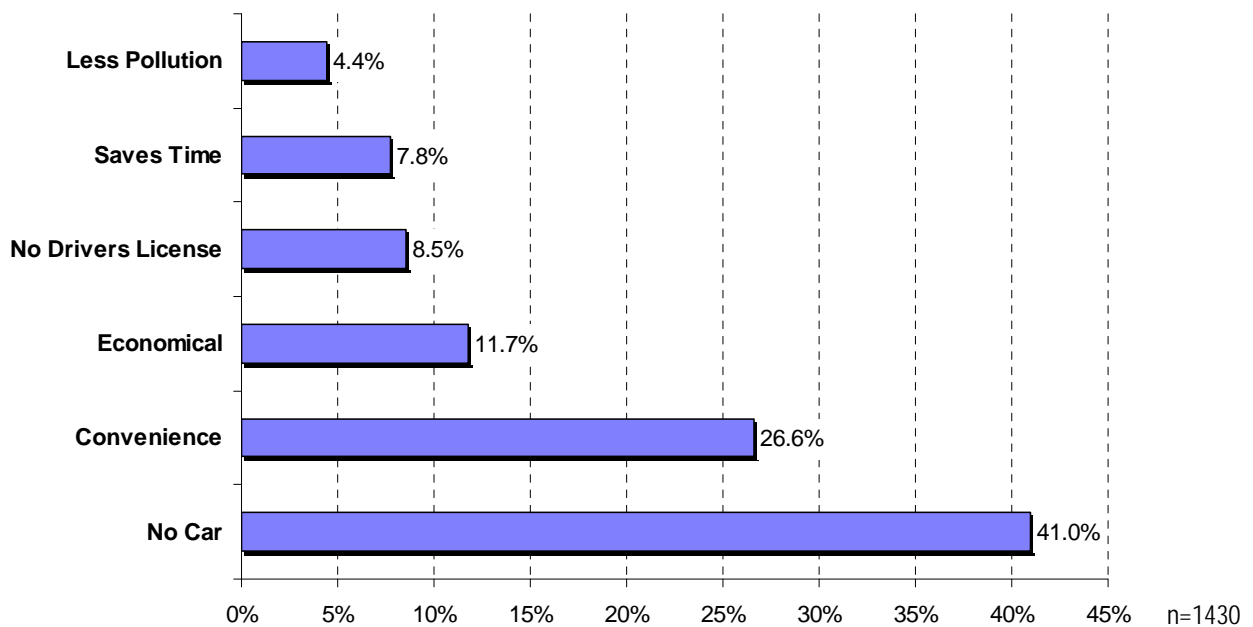
This section reports demographic and travel characteristics of PVTA customers surveyed.

Question 6: How often do you ride the bus?

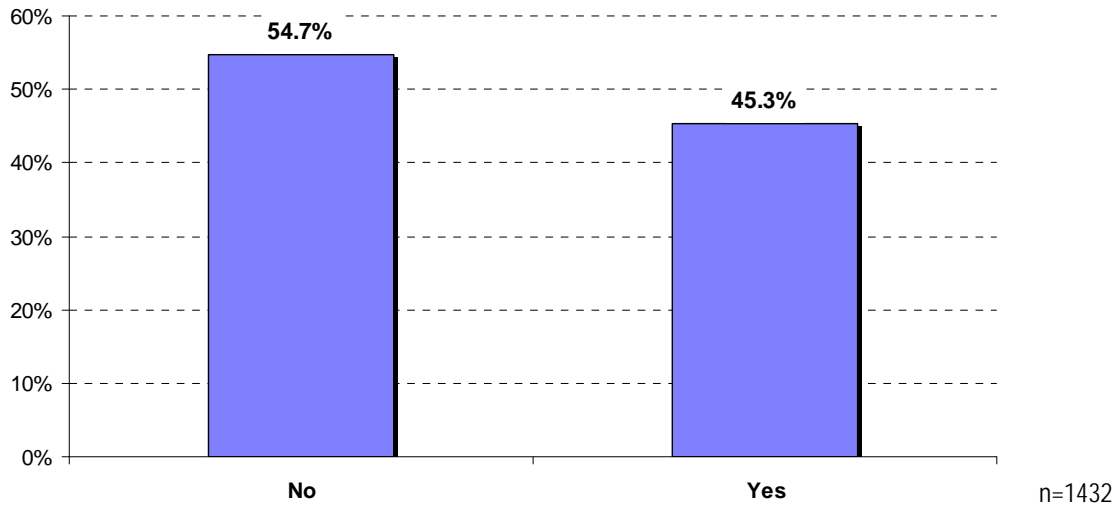


This response indicates that nearly 9 of every 10 riders (87%) use PVTA bus service more than twice a week, and more than 93% ride at least once a week.

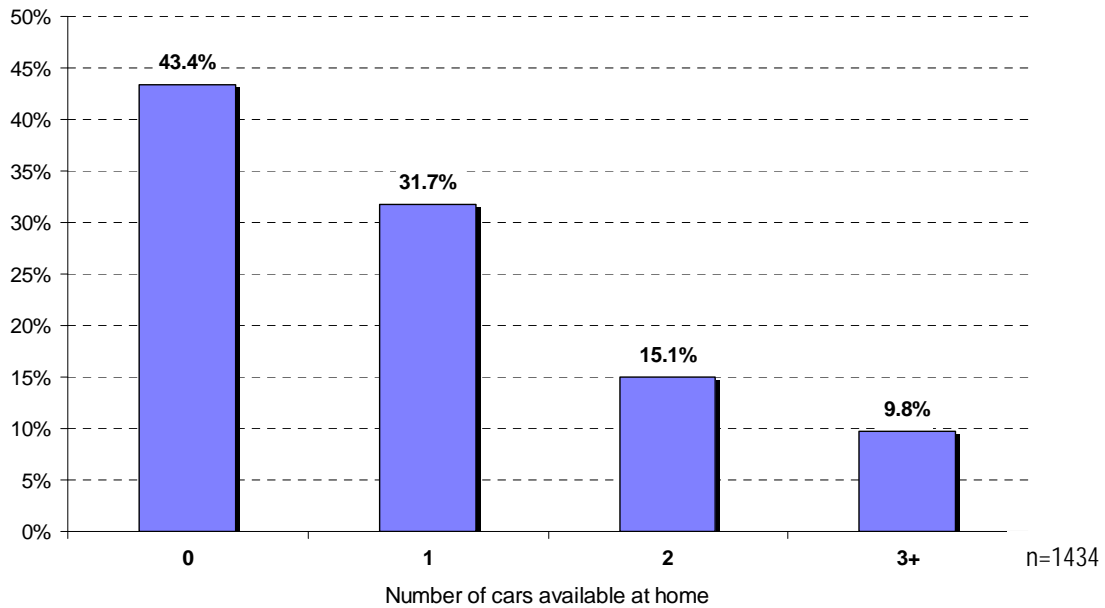
Question 7: What is the main reason you ride the bus?



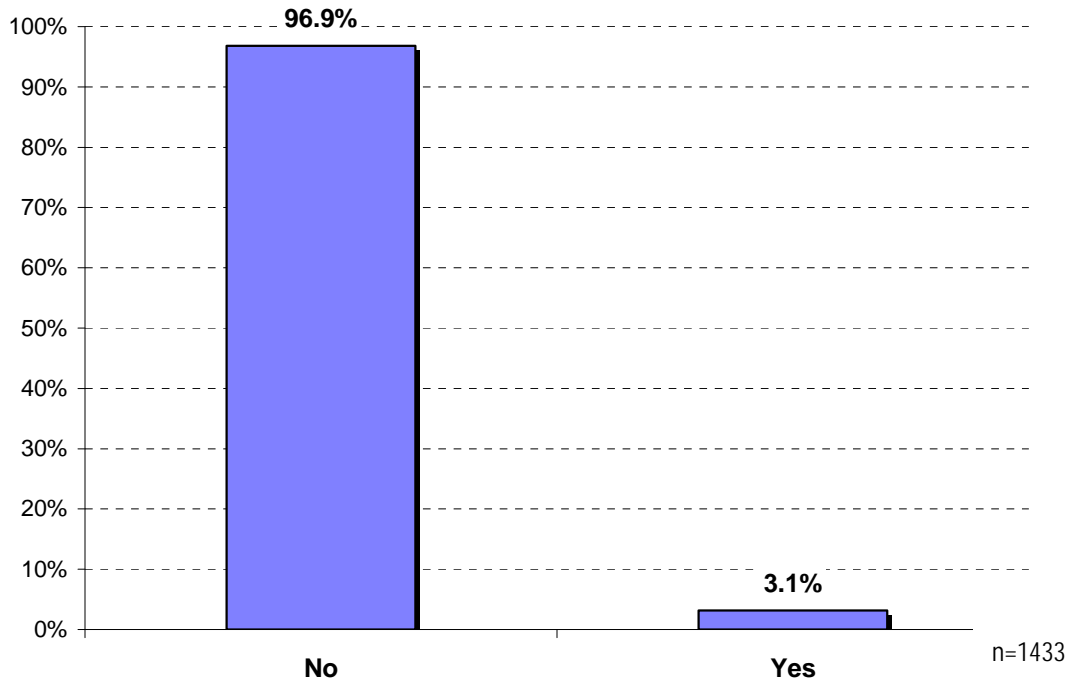
Question 8: Did you have another way to make this trip?



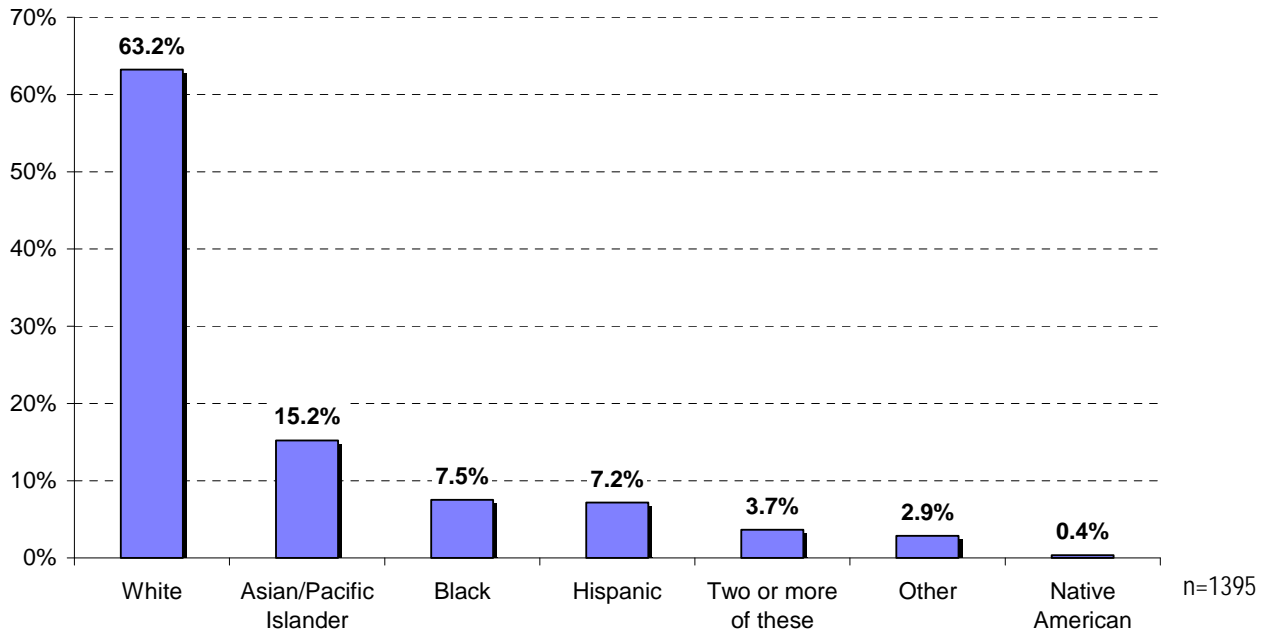
Question 9: How many cars are available for your use in your household?



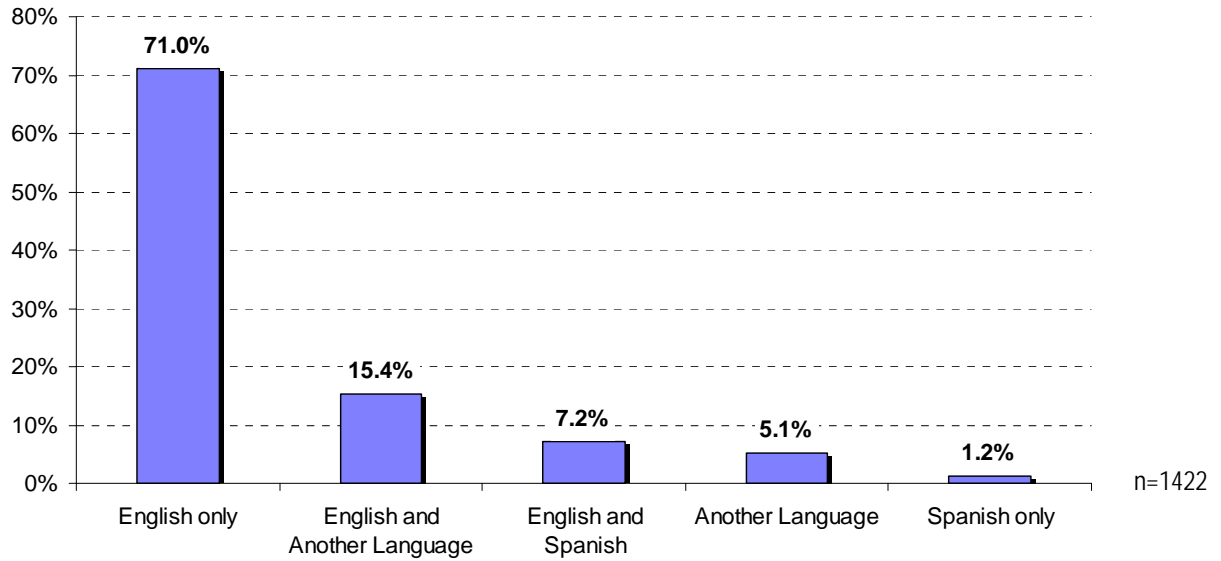
Question 10: Do you have a physical disability that prevents you from driving?



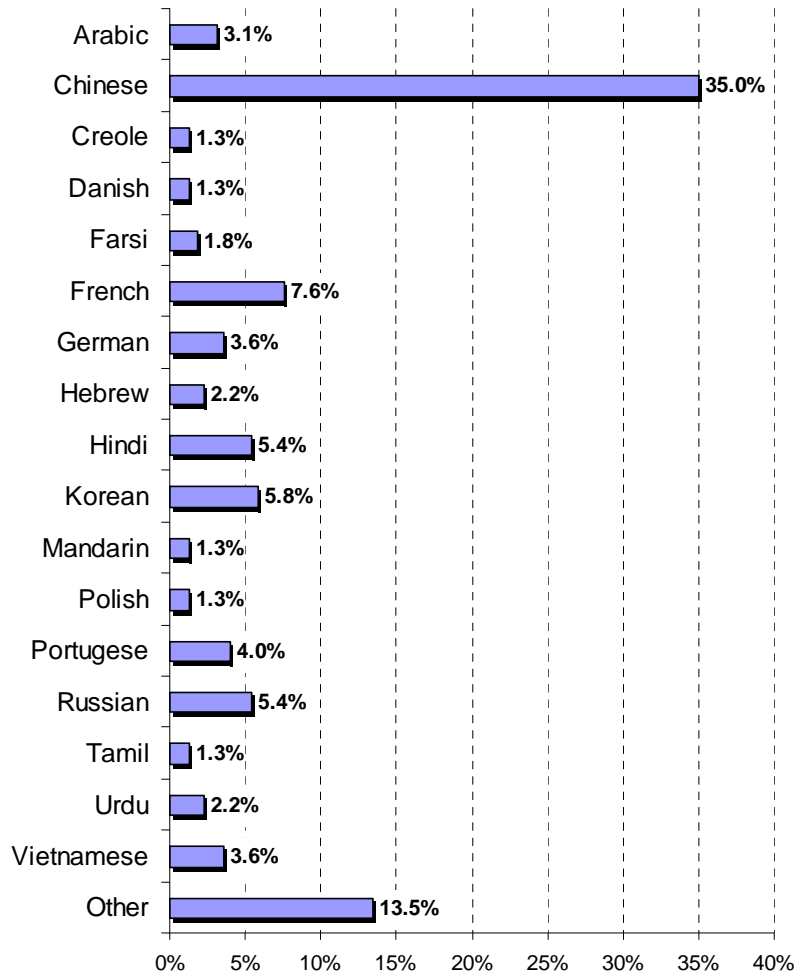
Question 11: What is your race or national origin?



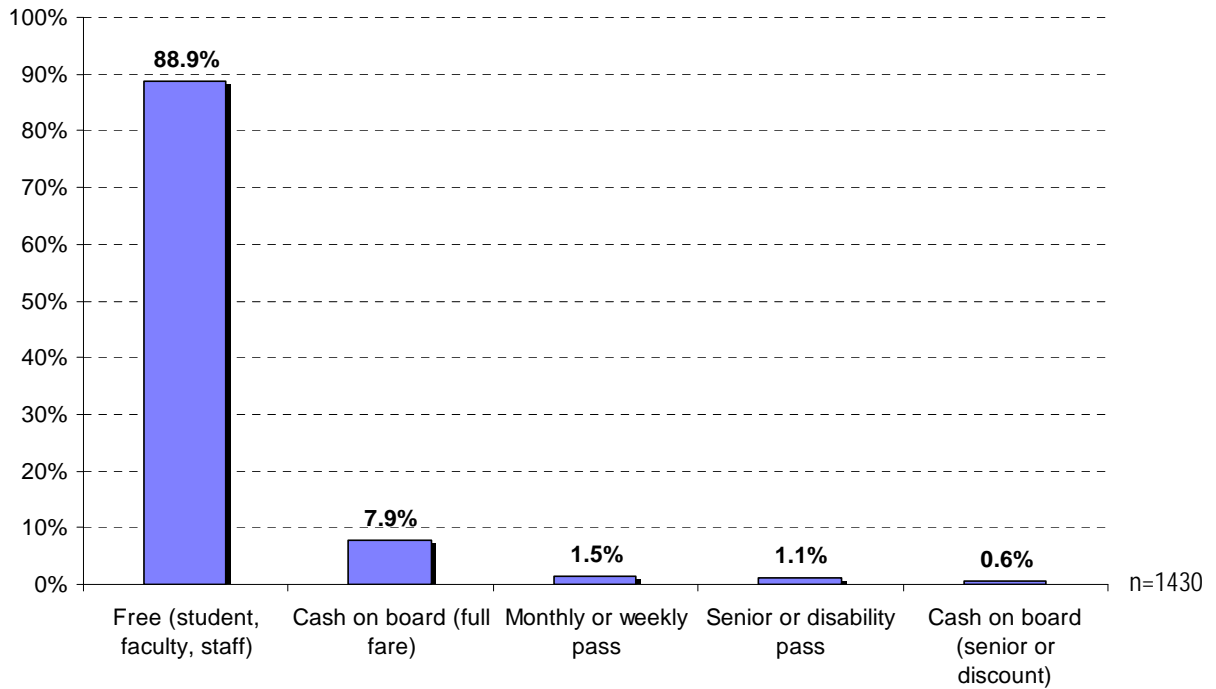
Question 12: What language or languages do you speak at home?



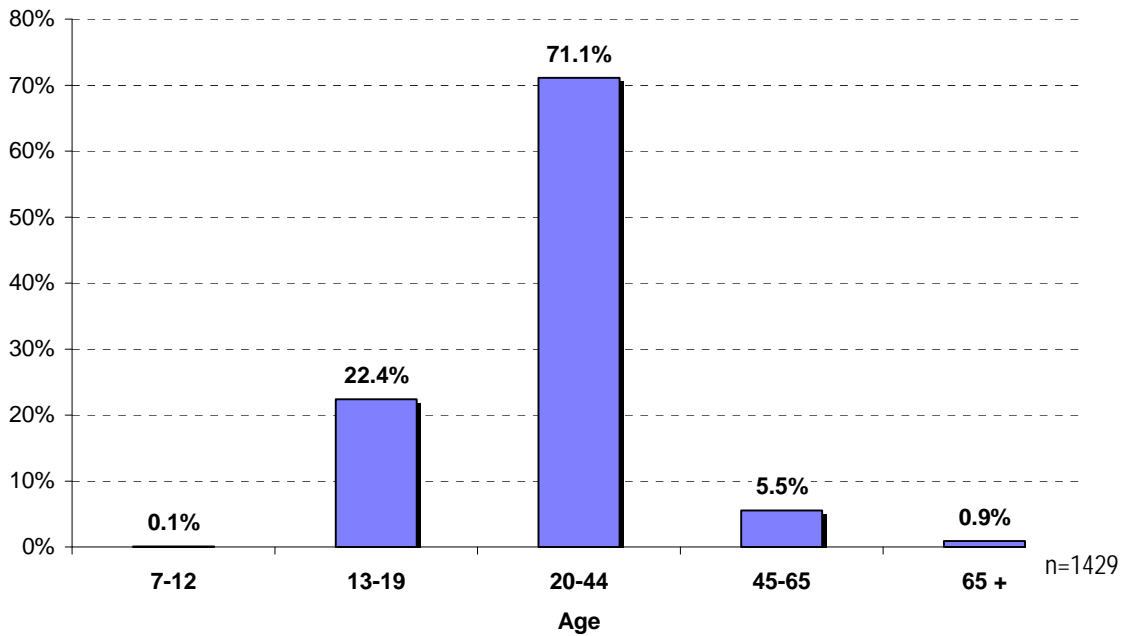
Question 12a: What is the other language (other than Spanish or English) spoken at home?



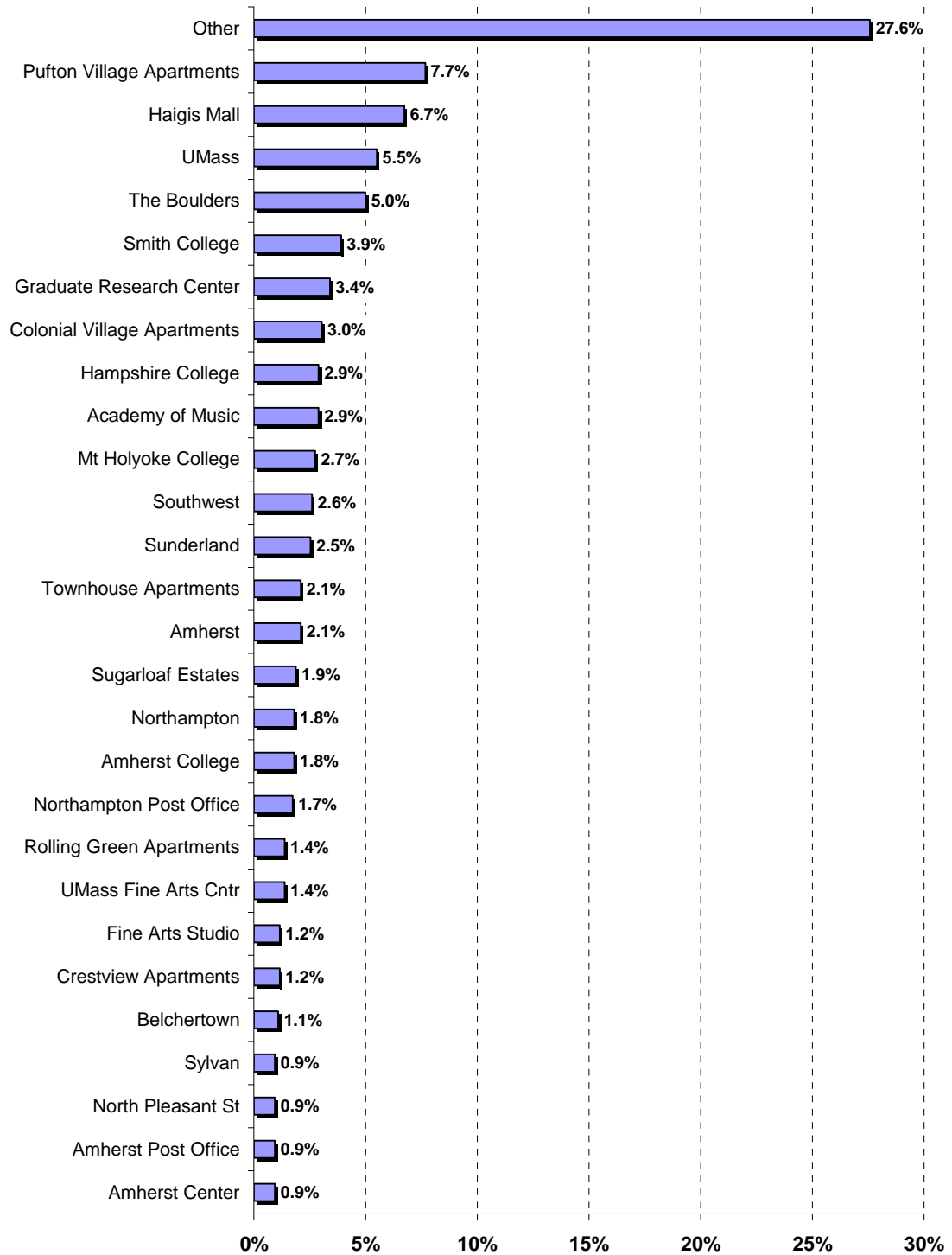
Question 13: How do you usually pay your fare?



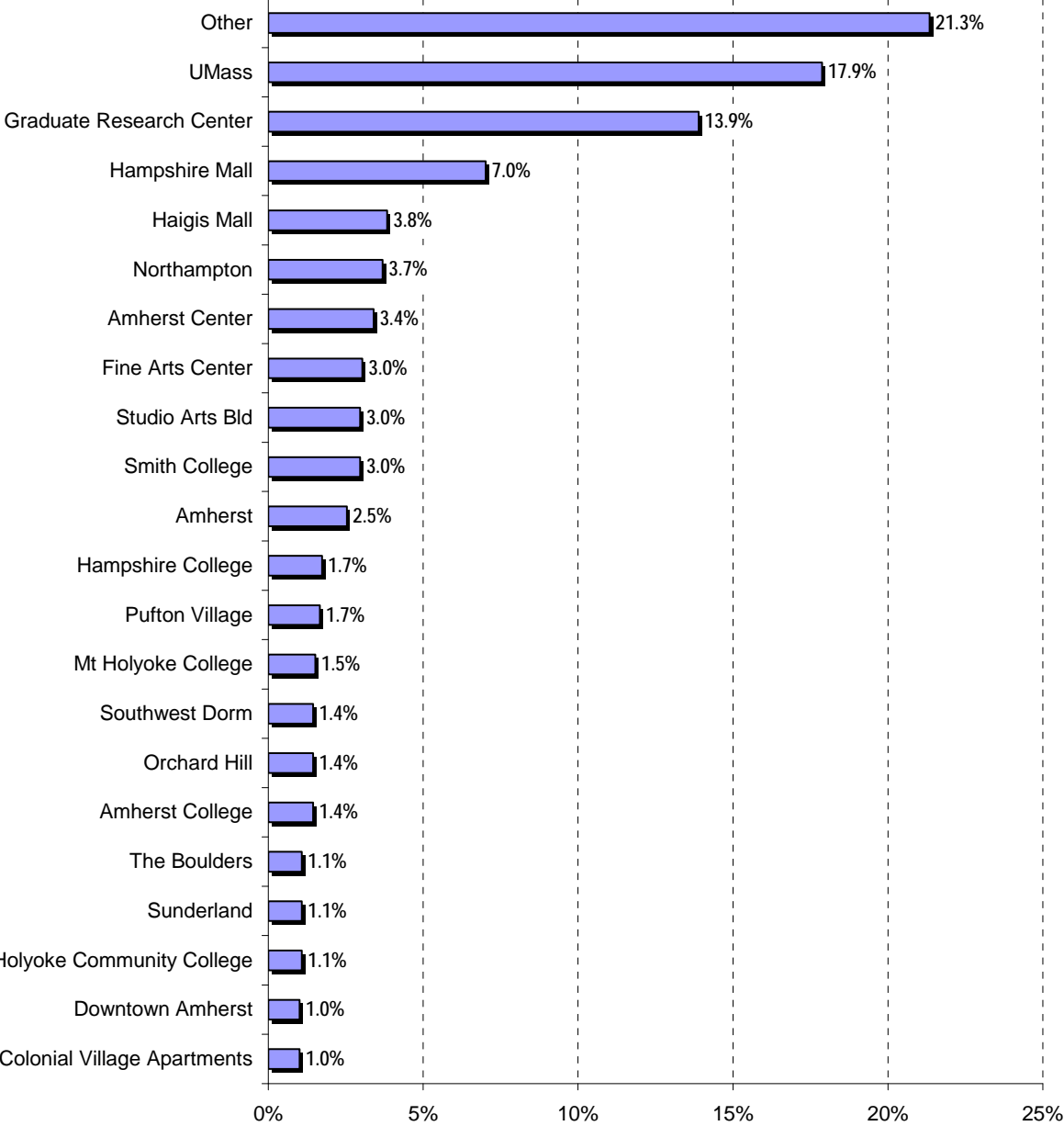
14: How old are you?



Question 15: Location you usually board?

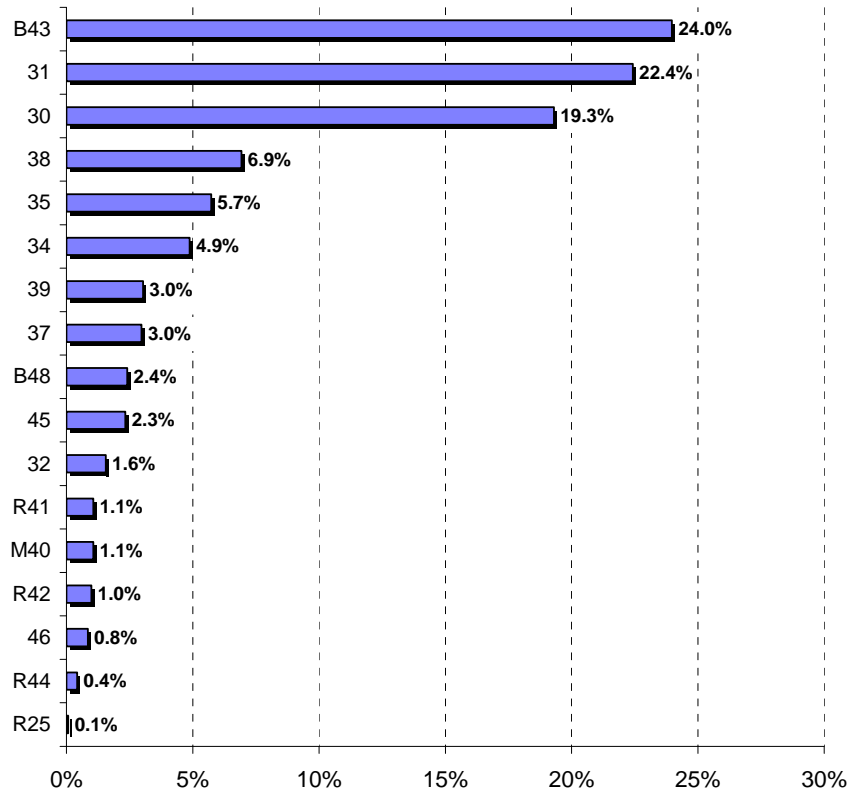


Question 16: Where will you get off the bus?

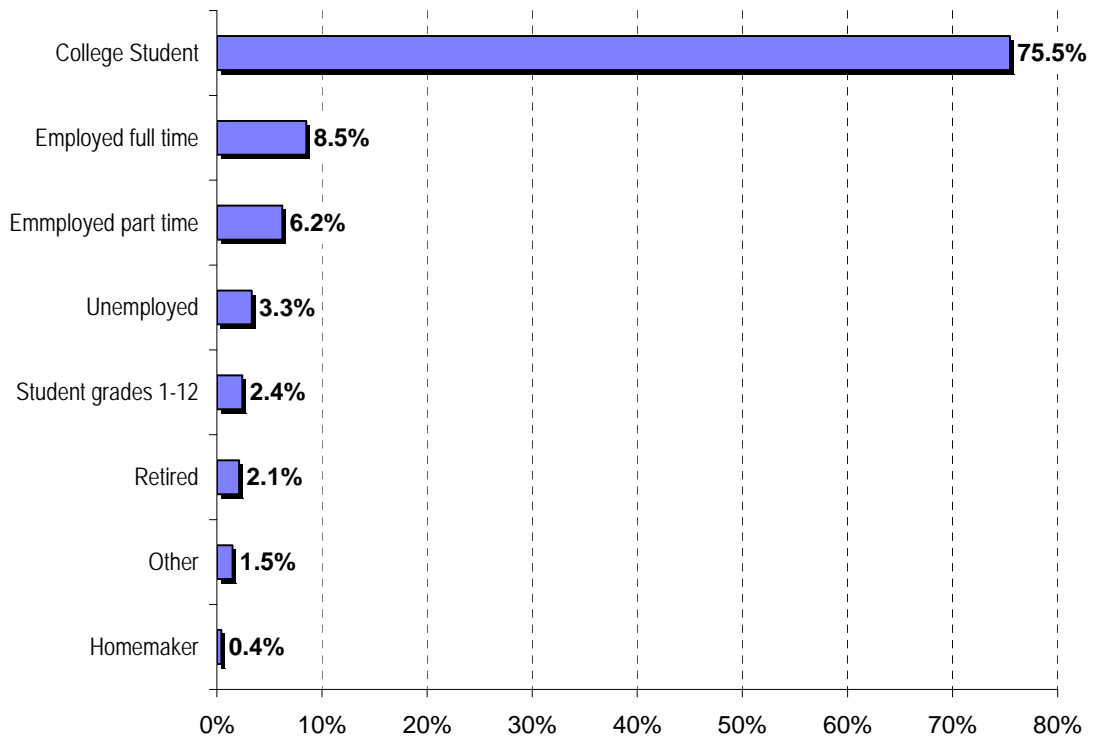


All other reported responses total less than 1%.

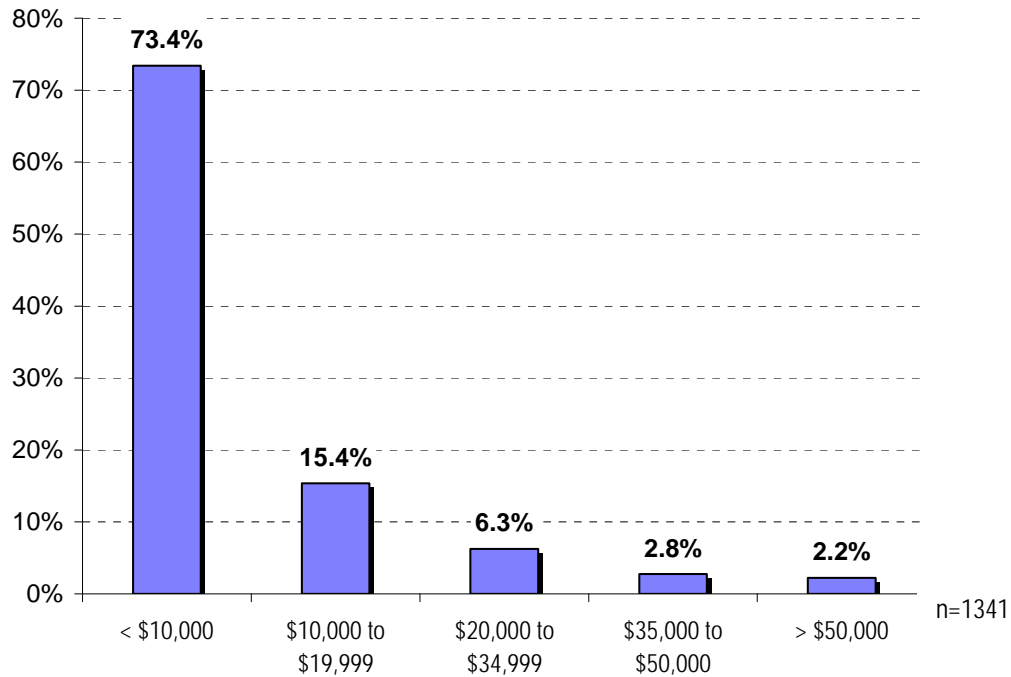
Question 17: What route are you riding now?



Question 18: Which of the following describes your situation best?

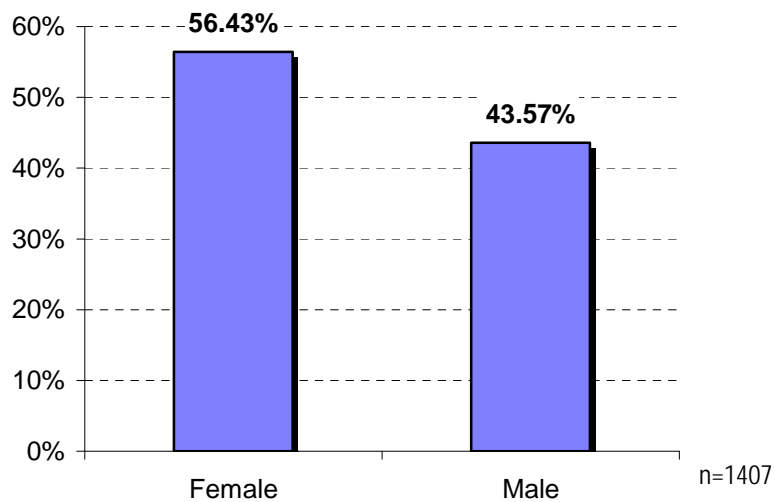


Question 19: Please describe your income level



These results show a high dependence on transit among low-income residents of the region. Nearly 9 of every 10 (88.8%) of bus riders report an annual income of less than \$20,000. Significantly, the poverty level for a family of four is \$19,307 (2004 U.S. Census), and the poverty level for a single person is \$9,645. However, the fact that a majority of PVTA riders in Hampshire County are students and/or dependents with access to family support for living expenses may affect the actual level of poverty that is present in the region.

Question 20: Are you male or female?



C. Customer Satisfaction Ratings

Riders were asked to rate their level of satisfaction (Question 21) in the following 13 categories of PVRTA bus service:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 21a Driver enforces rules | 21h Cost of service |
| 21b Schedules easily obtainable | 21i Personal safety at stops |
| 21c Ease of reading schedules | 21j Driver courtesy |
| 21d Condition of bus shelters | 21k Cleanliness of buses |
| 21e On-time performance | 21l Total travel time |
| 21f Bus driving safety | 21m Service where desired |
| 21g Frequency of service | |

Riders were asked to respond using the following five-point scale:

- 1) Very Satisfied
- 2) Satisfied
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Dissatisfied
- 5) Very Dissatisfied

A response of “Not Applicable” was also available as a sixth choice; however these responses, along with blanks, were not used in calculations.

Question 21 (next page) summarizes the responses for all 13 customer satisfaction categories. More detailed information about the responses in each category follow (Figures 21a through 21m).

Question 21: Customer Satisfaction Summary

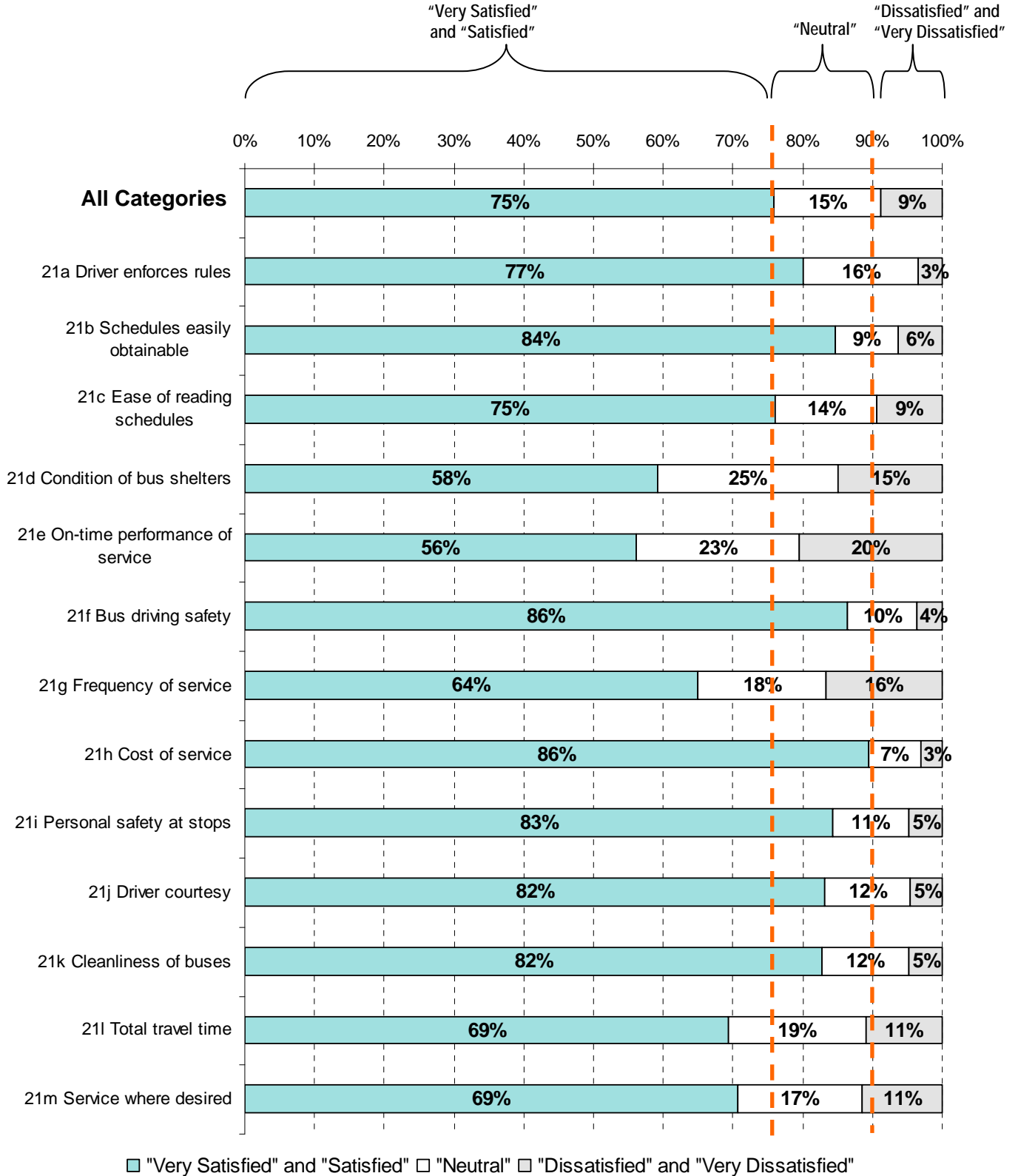


Fig. 21a: Driver enforces rules

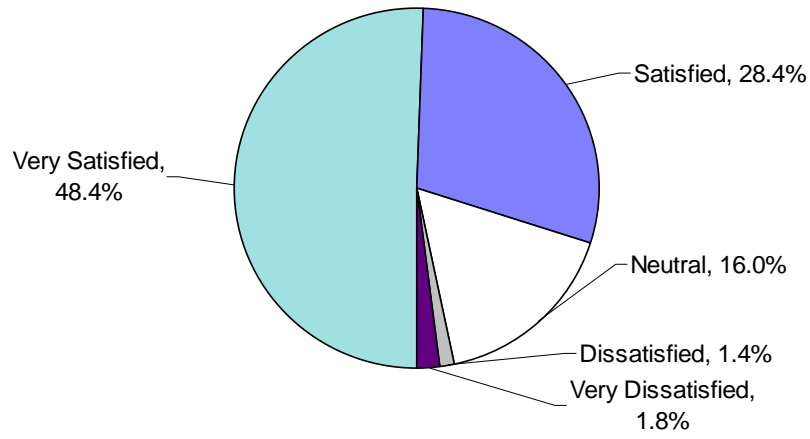


Fig. 21b: Schedules easily obtainable

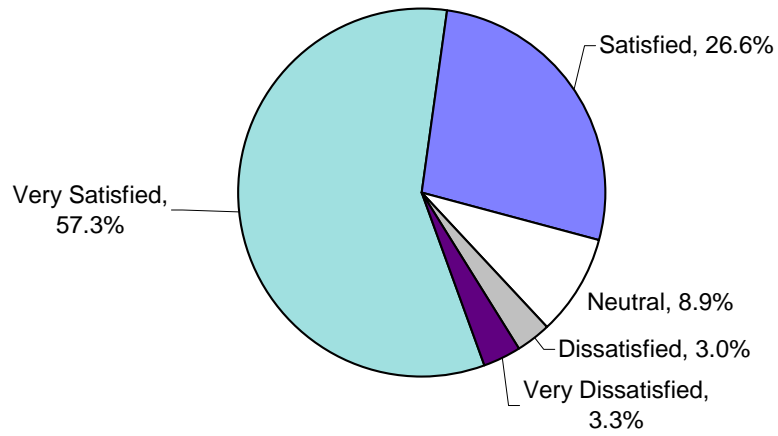


Fig. 21c: Ease of reading schedules

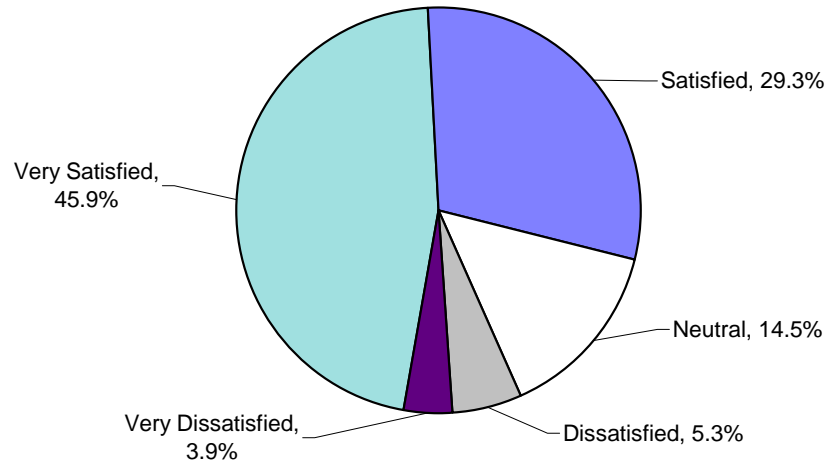


Fig. 21d: Condition of bus shelters

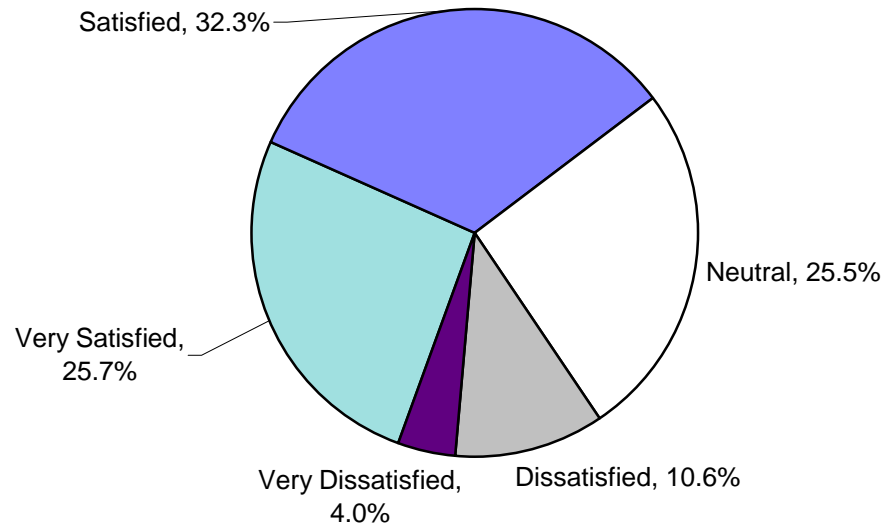


Fig. 21e: On-time performance of service

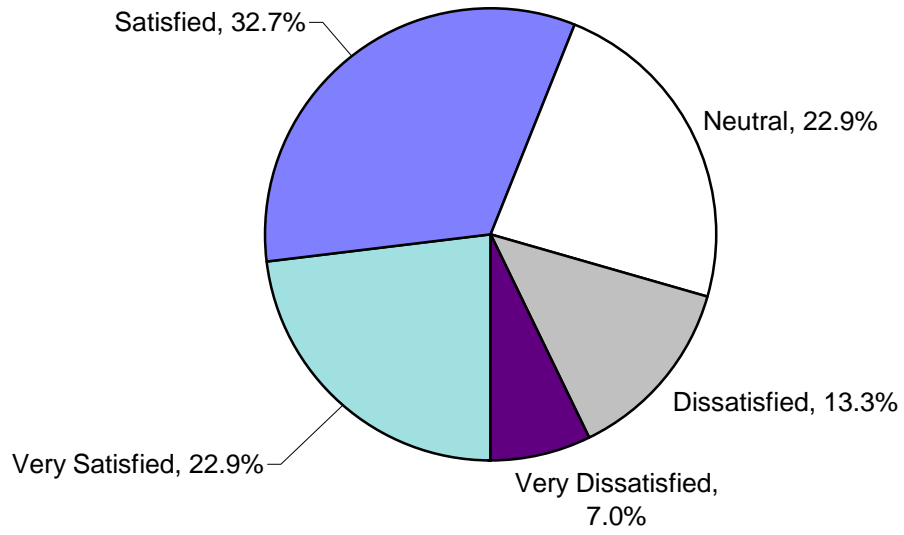


Fig. 21f: Bus driving safety

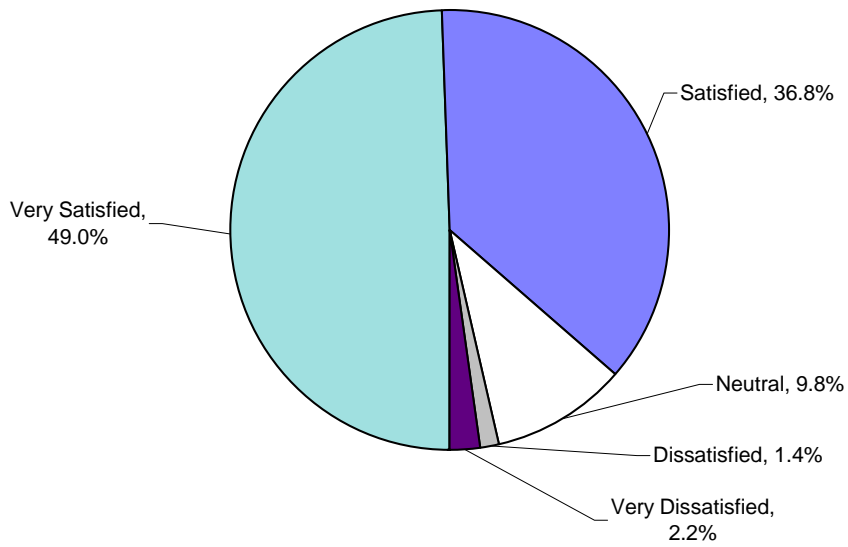


Fig. 21g: Frequency of service

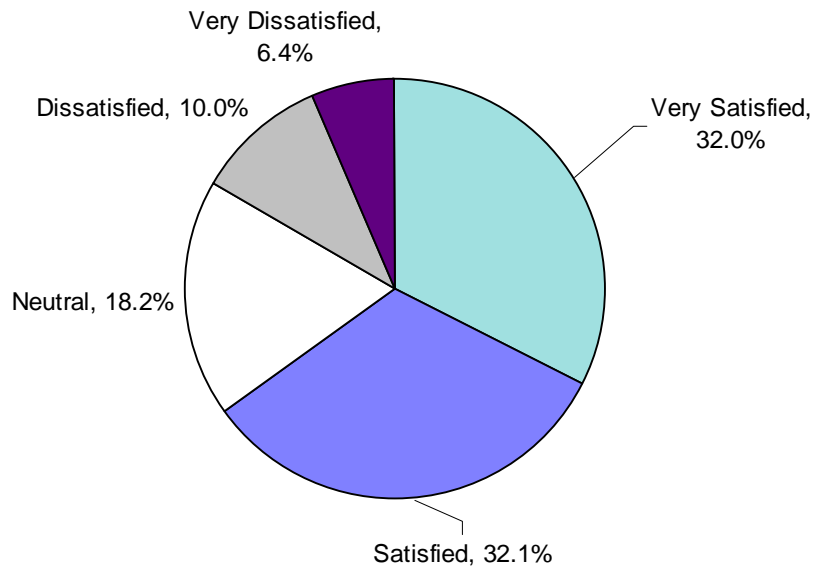


Fig. 21h: Cost of service

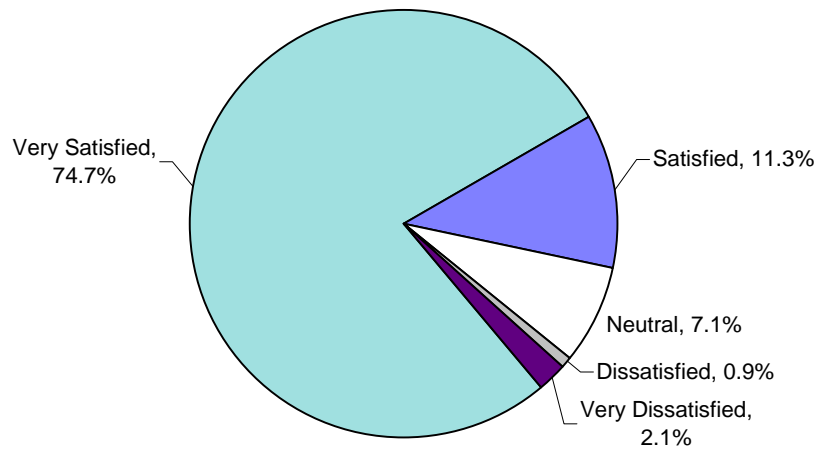


Fig. 21i: Personal safety at stops

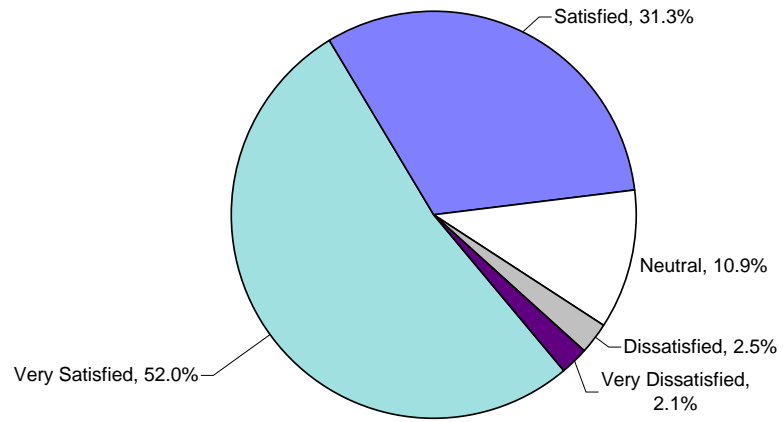


Fig. 21j: Driver courtesy

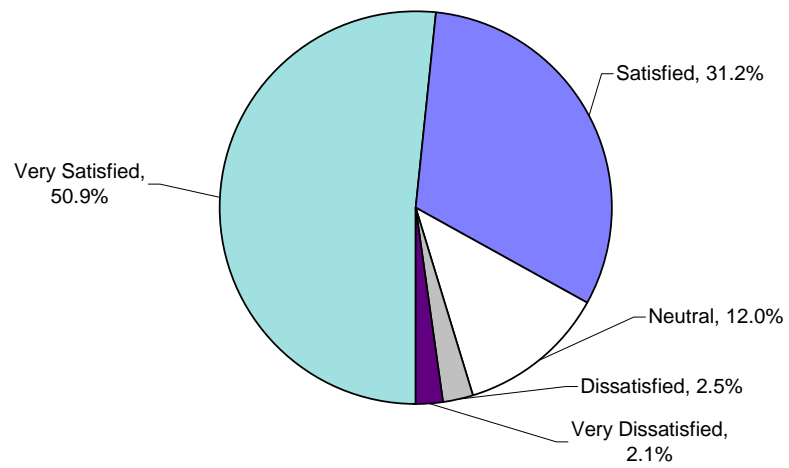


Fig. 21k: Cleanliness of buses

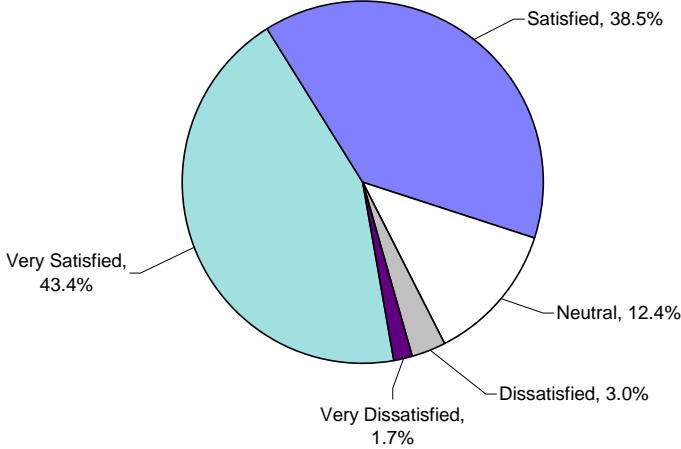


Fig. 21l: Total travel time

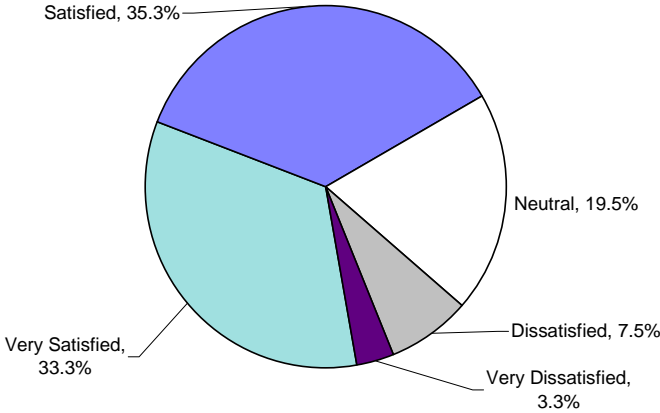
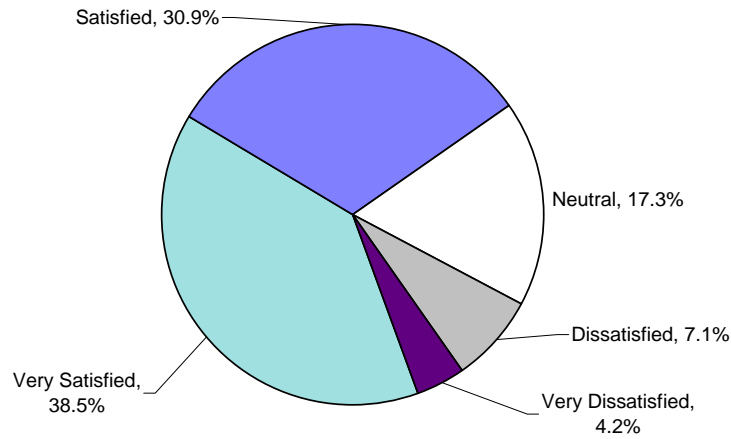
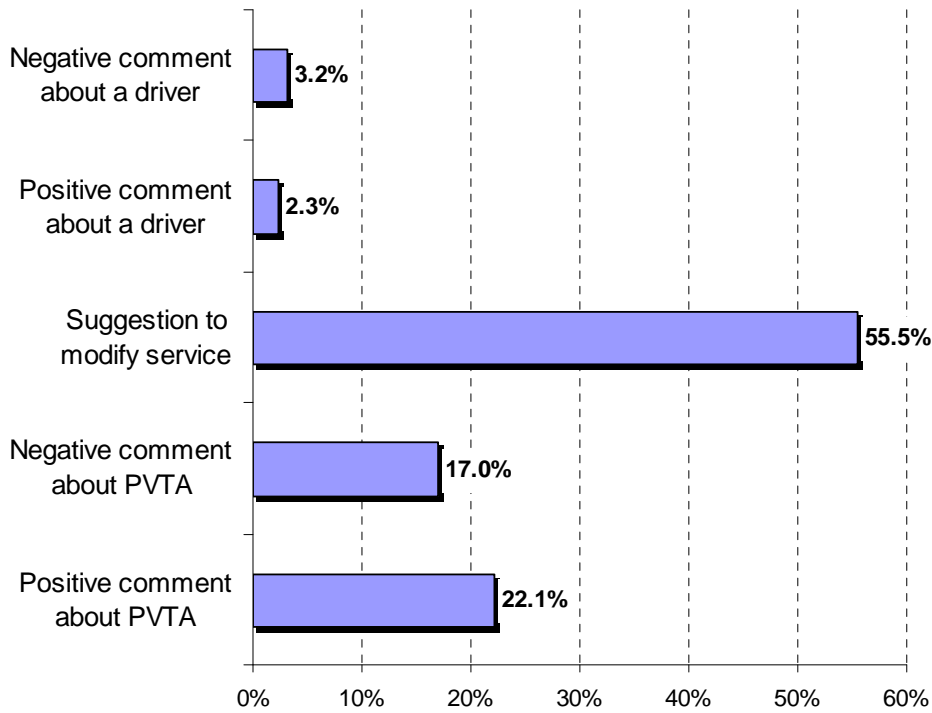


Fig. 21m: Service where desired



Written Comments Summary

Respondents were also invited to give written comments at the end of the survey. A total of 309 written comments were received. These comments were grouped into five broad categories, which are shown below, along with the proportion of comments received in each. All written comments are reproduced in Appendix 3.



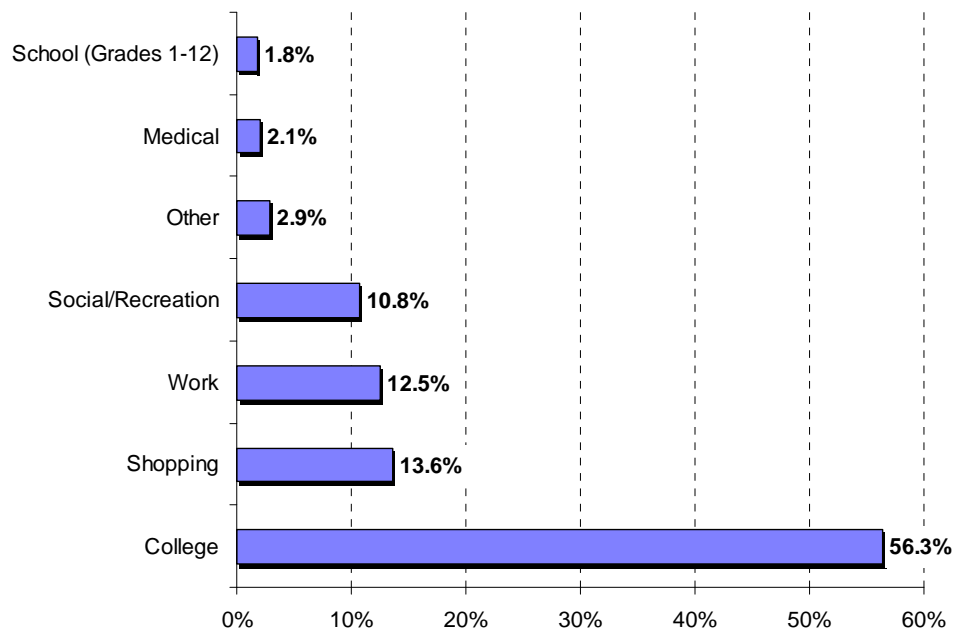
IV. Analysis

This section offers analysis of the results reported in Section III. In general, the survey finds that the PVTA is providing a vital service for people of the region—a majority of who would have no other way to get to work and conduct the daily business of their lives. Key points include:

- Riders are most satisfied with the performance of bus drivers, especially driving safety and professional courtesy.
- Riders also gave excellent marks for the cleanliness of the buses and the sense of personal safety at bus stops.
- Riders are least satisfied with the condition of bus shelters, on-time performance, and the frequency of service—issues that for the most part require additional funds to improve.
- More than half of all riders surveyed in the region (56%) use PVTA to travel to a local college or the University of Massachusetts, with shopping, commuting to work and medical appointments as the next most frequent trip reasons.
- A vast majority of riders (73.4%) earn less than \$10,000 a year, and 88.8% reported earning less than \$20,000 per year.
- Not having access to a car was the top reason (41%) for taking the bus, and nearly 44% of riders said they do not own a car at all.
- More than half of riders surveyed (54.7%) said they have no way—other than the PVTA—to make their trips.
- 1 in 4 riders said they take the bus because it is convenient.

A. Trip Characteristics

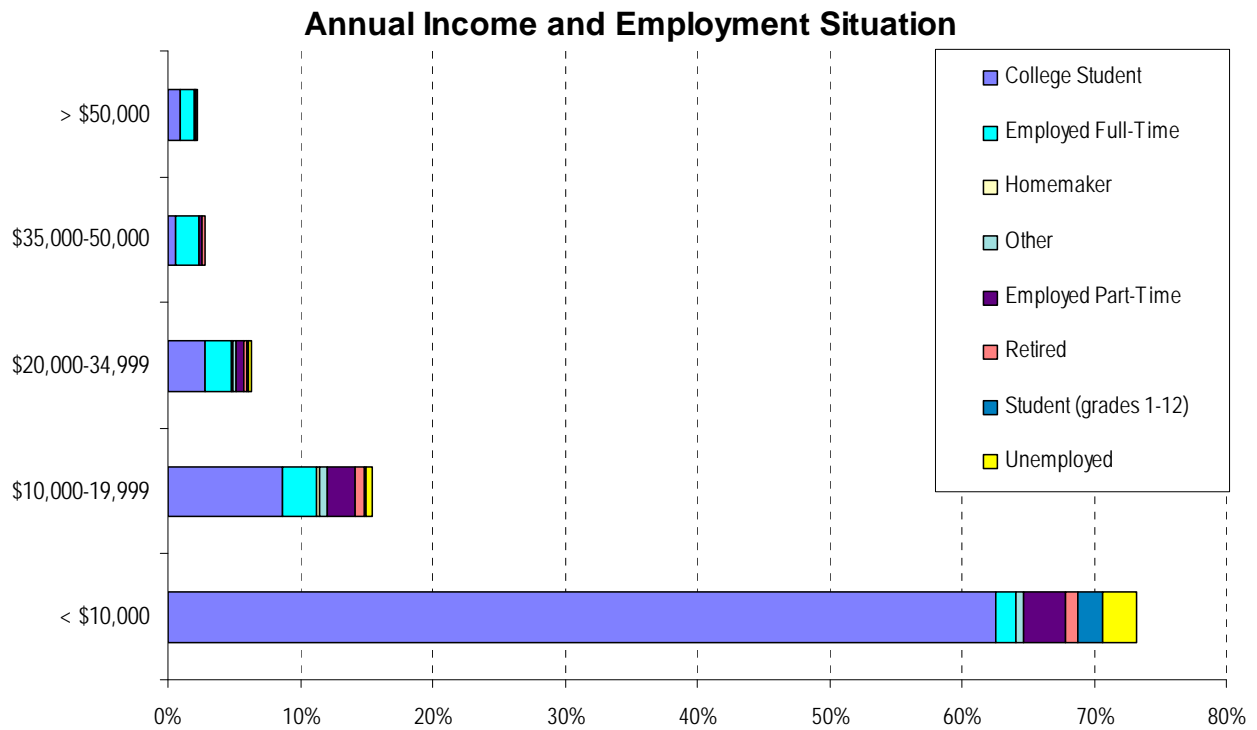
The most common trip purpose for daily PVTA riders in the northern region are daily trips to a local area college or the University of Massachusetts. More than half of all riders said they were making their bus trip to attend or work at one of these academic institutions. Reported trip purposes are summarized below.



B. Customer Characteristics

The summary chart below helps illustrate the finding that persons with lower incomes are far more likely to ride the bus than people who earn more. In the PVTA's northern service area, 9 of every 10 riders report earning less than \$20,000 a year. In contrast, less than 1 in 25 riders (about 4%) report earning \$50,000 a year or more.

The cross tabulation chart below displays the annual income and employment characteristics of PVTA riders. Nearly 74% of riders reported earning less than \$10,000 per year; of those, approximately 4 of every 5 were college students.



C. Customer Satisfaction Ratings

Analysis of the customer satisfaction ratings results was performed using an adaptation of the method described in Transit Cooperative Research Program Report No. 47 “A Handbook for Measuring Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality.” For this survey, the median and range were calculated for the combined “Very Satisfied,” “Satisfied,” and “Neutral” responses for each of the 13 categories. These three categories were summed to generate a “Combined Satisfaction and Neutral” rating upon which the grades were assigned.

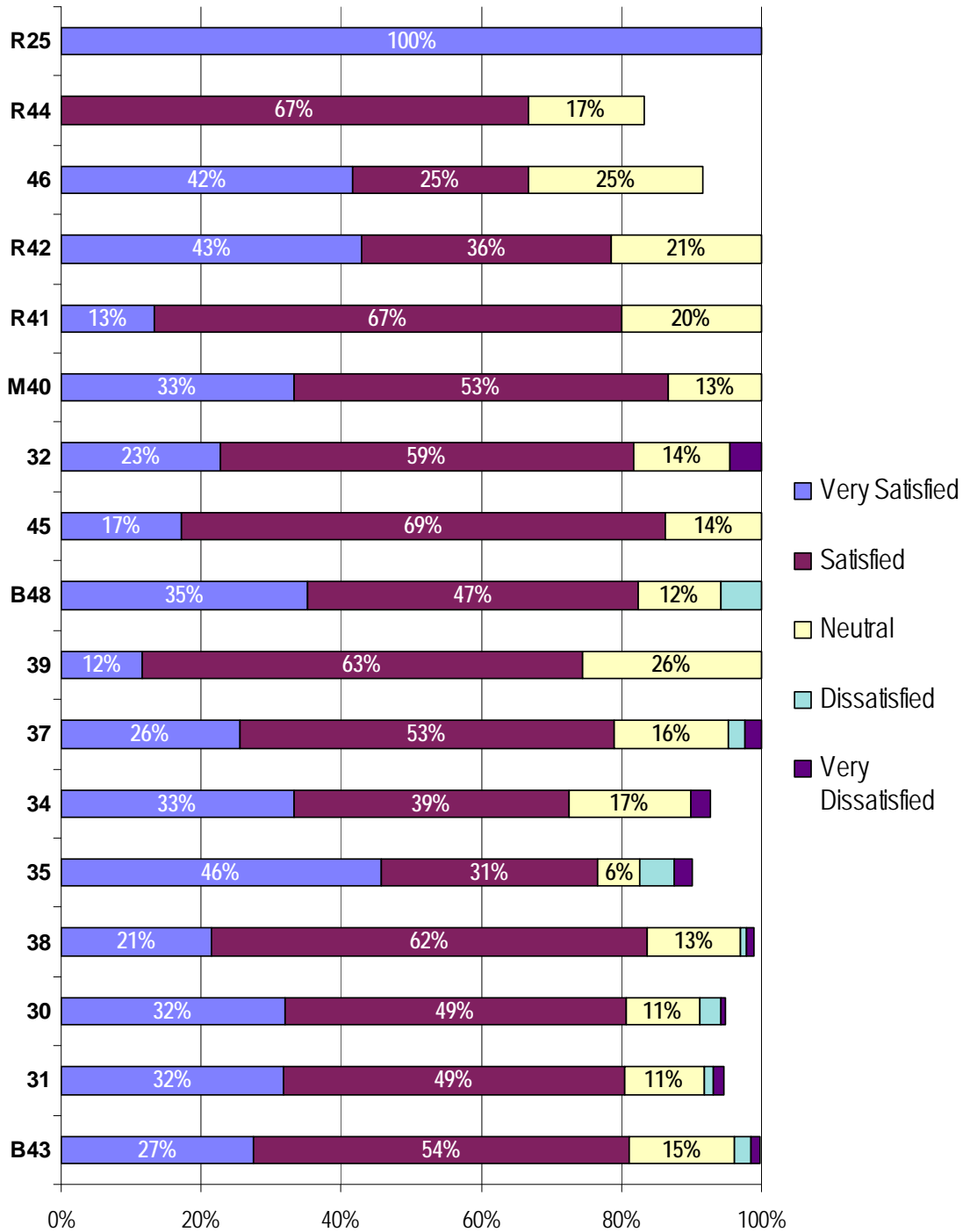
The range of responses for each of the 13 categories was 17%. A grading system using quartiles was established for all categories. Scores in the top quartile (one quarter of 17%, or 4.25%) above the median for all categories (89.67%) were rated as “Excellent”; scores between 0% and 4.25% above the median were rated as “Good”; scores between 0% and 4.25% below the median were viewed as “Needs Improvement”; and scores 4.25% and below the median were ranked as “Priority for Improvement.” Results are presented below.

Question	Category	Combined "Satisfied" and "Neutral" Ratings	Departure from Average	Grade
21a	Driver enforces rules	92.8%	2.9%	Good
21b	Schedules easily obtainable	92.7%	2.8%	Good
21c	Ease of reading schedules	89.7%	-0.2%	Needs Improvement
21d	Condition of bus shelters	83.5%	-6.4%	Priority for Improvement
21e	On-time performance	78.5%	-11.4%	Priority for Improvement
21f	Bus driving safety	95.6%	5.7%	Excellent
21g	Frequency of service	82.4%	-7.5%	Priority for Improvement
21h	Cost of service	93.1%	3.2%	Good
21i	Personal safety at stops	94.2%	4.3%	Excellent
21j	Driver courtesy	94.1%	4.2%	Excellent
21k	Cleanliness of buses	94.3%	4.4%	Excellent
21l	Total travel time	88.1%	-1.8%	Needs Improvement
21m	Service where desired	86.7%	-3.2%	Needs Improvement
21	<i>Average of All Categories</i>	89.7%		

“Satisfied” totals shown are the sum of “Very Satisfied”, “Satisfied”, and “Neutral” responses

While the above analysis identifies areas for improvement, it is also important to note the relatively small range (17%) of the responses, as well as the fact that the average for all categories is in the high-80% range. This suggests that PVRTA is performing well across a spectrum of service measures.

Overall Customer Satisfaction by Bus Route



Note: Some routes do not total 100% due to incomplete survey responses.

V. Recommendations

The analysis presented in Section IV suggests several aspects of PTVA service in the northern region are well-regarded by riders, and several aspects can be improved. Improvements that require additional financial support beyond existing resources are grouped separately. It is the general recommendation of this report that the most highly-ranked categories be viewed as benchmarks for progress toward improvement in the categories that were not ranked as highly.

Following are four general recommendations and accompanying sub-recommendations designed to address both the immediate concerns identified by this survey, as well as the longer term goal of improved monitoring of customer satisfaction.

A. Recommendation 1: Address “Priority for Improvement” concerns

The categories receiving the lowest ratings were identified as “priorities for improvement.” Following are recommendations and suggested actions that require little or no additional cost, or are already programmed in PVRTA’s budget.

Recommendation	Basis	Actions	Status
1A: Review on-time performance	On-time performance received the lowest ranking of the 13 categories of customer satisfaction. Reliable service is critical to maintaining and increasing ridership, as well as improving customer satisfaction. On-time performance is also related to customer perception and experience; waiting a short time in the cold can seem longer than waiting a longer period during pleasant conditions.	• Continue implementation Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) system.	In progress
		• Review and revise on-time performance measures and tracking.	In progress
		• Educate public and operators about what “on-time” means.	Being developed
		• Greater use of new schedule technologies (i.e., GoogleTransit, iPhone applications).	In progress
		• Unannounced ride checks to better monitor on-time performance.	Implemented 2009
1B: Improve bus shelter conditions	Bus shelter condition was the third most frequently mentioned customer concern. Bus stop amenities, especially shelters, are important measures for raising customer satisfaction and ridership. There are 128 shelters in the PVRTA system, representing about 8% of all bus stops. Vandalism is a regular problem at nearly all shelters. Snow removal at bus stops and boarding areas is also a consistent concern of bus riders; PVRTA continues to work with the property owners who have the legal responsibility to keep bus stops clear of snow and ice.	• Convene bus shelter committee	In progress
		• Inventory all bus stops and facilities	Completed 12/09
		• Identify locations for new shelters	In progress
		• Work with property owners to install additional shelters	In progress
		• Identify funds for new shelters	Pending

B. Recommendation 2: Address “Needs Improvement” items

One customer satisfaction category likely to involve minimal improvement costs—improving schedule information—received rating of “needs improvement.” Recommendations and associated actions are offered below.

Recommendation	Basis	Actions	Status
2A: Improve schedule layout and usability	The convenience and usability of bus schedule information is essential to maintaining and improving ridership. It is also critical to customer satisfaction.	• Enhance layout and availability of printed schedules.	In progress
		• Review mobile communication technologies (i.e. iPhone schedule apps) to improve the availability of schedule information.	In progress
		• Enhance web-based availability of schedule information through GoogleTransit and other opportunities.	Implemented 2008; ongoing

C. Recommendation 3: Review concerns requiring additional funding

Three categories of customer satisfaction received ratings of either “Needs improvement” or “Good” but which will require significant additional funds beyond PVRTA’s existing budget to implement. Recommendations and actions for these items are offered below.

Recommendation	Basis	Actions	Priority
3A: Increase frequency of service	Service frequency is closely related to customer satisfaction, overall convenience, and operating costs. Adding bus runs to increase frequency is a significant cost. PVRTA currently maximizes service frequency during peak hours to help serve the greatest number of customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure service frequency concerns are integrated in annual service and schedule planning. • Conduct system-wide study to review identify opportunities for increased and optimized service. • Identify funding sources for increased service frequency/operations. • Continue to advocate for more equitable distribution of state operating support. 	Med. (1-2 yrs)
3B: Reduce total travel time	Many PVRTA routes cover large geographic areas and a diversity of trip destinations. Minimizing travel time and serving as many customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure travel time reduction is a priority in the annual service and schedule planning 	Med. (1-2 yrs)

	as possible in this environment are sometimes competing priorities. In the last year, PVTA has optimized runs on Routes 42 and 44 in the northern service area, which has reduced travel times for customers on these buses. PVTA continues to seek new options to reduce travel times within the existing budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify further opportunities for optimized service • Continue implementation of Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) system • Continue coordination with MPO's Congestion Management Process (CMP) 	
3C: Improve service in areas where desired	As the population and employment distribution patterns of the region evolve, so does demand for public transit. Though this category received a "Good" rating, on-going review and planning will help better reach areas where transit service is desired.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better integrate customer comments, demographic information and economic development data in annual service planning • Perform systemwide review to better understand where riders live, work and travel to • Perform nonrider survey to identify new potential riders, trip generators 	Med. (1-2 yrs)

D. Recommendation 4: Implement continuous quality monitoring and management

The survey results and analysis suggest there may be value in pursuing on-going customer quality measures for the entire PVTA system. Several recommendations are offered below.

Recommendation	Basis	Actions	Priority
4A: Acknowledge customer quality achievements	PVTA earned high customer satisfaction ratings in several categories. It is important for personnel involved to be aware of this success, as well as the areas targeted for improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute 1-2 page Executive Summary to PVTA and operator staff • Recognize personnel responsible for service items rated highly 	High (3 mos.)
4B: Set customer satisfaction benchmarks	PVTA received high customer satisfaction in marks in several categories (i.e., driver safety, courtesy, and enforcement of on-board rules).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review survey results to identify benchmark goals for customer service 	Med. (1-2 yrs)
4C: Review survey method and frequency	Regular surveys of transit customer quality to identify successes and areas in need of improvement. On-board rider surveys provide important information; however, the cost and time to produce a survey of a large transit service area, such as PVTA's southern region, are significant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing survey methods, frequency and resources • In 2008, PVTA set a regular survey program to survey every route at least once every four years. 	High to Med. (3 mo - 2 yrs) Implemented

Appendices

1. List of Preparers

This report was prepared by the following staff members of PVTa and PVPC:

PVTa

Nicole Rohan

PVPC

David Elvin
Dave Johnson
Dana Roscoe

PVPC Onboard Survey Personnel

Audrey Schubach
Barbara Johnson
Josh Rickman

2. Survey Form

Sample attached

3. Written Comments

Attached in electronic PDF format to reduce printing cost. Print copies available upon request from PVPC. Contact David Elvin at 413-781-6045 or delvin@pvpc.org

PVRTA Northern System Onboard Rider Survey Fall 2009 – Written comments received

- | <u>#</u> | <u>Comment</u> |
|----------|--|
| 1 | It takes a very long time to get from Amherst to Holyoke because of the bus transfer and stops. |
| 2 | Express M40 should run in the afternoon. (like 1-3 pm) not enough express times |
| 3 | Esp late at night, sometimes buses just don't come or will be spaced far enough apart that it takes 2 + hours to go 5-10 miles |
| 4 | I don't like buses, they are slow. I can bike faster and there isn't enough stops. |
| 5 | I feel fortunate to live in a non-urban place where buses are an option. Thanks to all & it's easy to be car-free |
| 6 | Encountered a few rude bus drivers |
| 7 | Hope fare does not go up. Need shelter or seat by CVS Amherst also John Green Hall shelter & seats |
| 8 | Bus can be on time is the thing I appreciated. |
| 9 | on cleanliness - not drivers fault people are slobs and don't pick up after themselves |
| 10 | keep up the good work |
| 11 | Very comfortable ride |
| 12 | I would love a direct route to Northampton Ave from Mt Holyoke College |
| 13 | B48 driver during weekdays is always professional - very friendly |
| 14 | I take 6 buses per day - a bunch of transfers |
| 15 | would like to see Sunday svc to Northampton from Holyoke |
| 16 | get rid of ice in winter at stops |
| 17 | very satisfied |
| 18 | Air quality such as circulation from windows and or fan is poor on older models. Rear seating is uncomfortable as well. |
| 19 | I would suggest that the PVRTA would make a route close to my house. |
| 20 | The driver on this bus is always courteous and helpful. I enjoy riding on his bus because he is always nice. |
| 21 | Please stop the gambling on the buses (the pie game) |
| 22 | cosmopolitan |
| 23 | I have no complaints about any of the drivers. Thank you. |
| 24 | wish were more frequent and had a straight trip from Northampton to Yankee Candle and Amherst Survival |
| 25 | I love all the bus drivers except Wendy who drives R44. She is not a safe driver, rude and very forgetful. |
| 26 | Please keep 'em coming |
| 27 | Please do something strong about crazy drunken passengers |
| 28 | Live in south Deerfield buses more often would help |

- 29 More buses in morning during peak times for safety
- 30 Go Umass transit!
- 31 Drivers make personal stops for coffee during routes.
- 32 should be 24 hours on weekends
- 33 Would be nice to see svc beyond areas frequented by students. Transfer time between 31 and 37, B43 during reduced service school is a bit long.
- 34 I love PVRTA bus service. It's convenient, safe, affordable, and environmentally friendly.
- 35 More service needed at night, later routes, more routes from townhouses (Big Y, Hampshire Mall)
- 36 Keep up the great bus service!
- 37 thank you very much for this service
- 38 add bus shelter at Colonial Village. Bus is never on time. Don't go often enough in the evening especially late at night. Internet - best idea! Update bus tracker for late buses too
- 39 when buses are overloaded in the morning another one should be sent directly after. I don't want to be late for class.
- 40 would be great to have later night svc - otherwise thanks for great work!
- 41 sometimes the buses are very late. But that's my only complaint.
- 42 the bus is usually more than 5 minutes late. I am consistantly late for class and work.
- 43 when getting buses from campus to home they are usually late. Buses should run later on weekends at least 1 am - prevents drunk driving from bars
- 44 the PVRTA is a really good source the fare should go back to \$1.
- 45 Nice buses
- 46 Good!
- 47 It's wonderful keep up the good work.
- 48 Bad Sunday/holiday. Cannot go to church or Amherst events
- 49 service is slow in the Boulders.
- 50 I think the cost could be cheaper because there are single moms who can't afford it
- 51 satisfied
- 52 the last few times I've taken the bus it has been over 15 plus minutes late
- 53 on occasion the buses are a bit late. Besides that the bus is a nice experience
- 54 I've bee riding this route for years with only one incident. Am very satisfied with the level of service.
- 55 more service at night please and summer months
- 56 there should be a full route map with times for all stops online
- 57 HCC bus needs to be bigger
- 58 Wish there was svc from Northampton to Umass until 1:00 am, I'd take it every week
- 59 Travel time to Mt Holyoke and Amherst are ridiculous!

- 60 I love PVTA
- 61 I love PVTA
- 62 PVTA is by far the best public bus system I have ridden on. Keep it up. Only complaint is buses are often 10-20 minutes late but never early which is nice
- 63 great service for students
- 64 Don't like how bus schedule only shows a few stops. Should have buses running Sunday mornings.
- 65 Please build some shelters before winter - Amity St near Library
- 66 37 should service Pufton/Hobart/Crestview areas. There are a lot of people living there. As well as increase frequency of buses.
- 67 I would like it if buses left more frequently and were more convenient. I have waited over an hour for the 43 on occasion.
- 68 24 hour buses!
- 69 Veterans day and Christmas we want buses because we do not have cars
- 70 I really wish the schedules were either more accurate or the buses on time - its difficult to be on time to class if the bus is always late. Maybe a more college friendly route which skips Hampshire Mall.
- 71 Add M40 route between noon and 2 pm
- 72 during this past summer 2009 and this fall the buses were late all the time. I waited 1 hour during the first week of classes. After 4 or 5 years of riding its never been so bad.
- 73 wish it was more clear as to whether the bus coming on a specific time is going to Northampton or Amherst college for the B43
- 74 buses should run every 15 instead of 20 minutes
- 75 Line 32 could be better - more buses - schedules could be more user friendly
- 76 Rd 43 should go once between Amherst College and Umass - not twice - too long
- 77 Need more Sunday trips!
- 78 a few times the seats were wet - a few times buses change route because its late. A way to tell time bus will arrive would be helpful many other cities have this.
- 79 the buses are very slow - don't run frequently enough - bus drivers are crabby. Need more diversity.
- 80 the M40 express service is great. Would be nice if it runs longer than its allotted times.
- 81 fits my needs perfectly!
- 82 need a stop between CVS and Hampshire Mall. One for stop and shop. Bus stops are too far apart
- 83 thank you
- 84 transferring difficult - sometimes 1 hour or 1/2 hour wait
- 85 5 college buses are frequently late/do not arrive. More service times in/out of Easthampton Big Y
- 86 no bus stop signs
- 87 way to go PVTA

- 88 I could use a stop at Homestead Ave. Also during the summer I can't get home because the bus stops @ Easthampton. Also, a bus connecting South Hadley to HCC would be helpful.
- 89 we need more on hour trips to HCC. Too big of a gap - also a bigger bus is needed
- 90 some buses should run more often. Such as Florence
- 91 the R41 often overfills in the afternoon and creates safety concerns. Service every half hour from 9 am to 3 pm would be ideal
- 92 need more mid day buses at HCC
- 93 need a bigger bus for HCC students. It's too full at 3 pm. Students stand in aisle
- 94 30 is terrible this year. Always late!
- 95 more shelters at bus stops and benches in shelters would be good. Especially in winter and rain
- 96 good service in general
- 97 keep up the good work - it really helps me and other students
- 98 great service
- 99 good job
- 100 thank you
- 101 the bus is wonderful, it always gets me to both my jobs in Amherst as well as conveniently stopping at Umass for my classes
- 102 schedule should say direction of bus at specified stop
- 103 crowding of buses before classes make me take earlier buses or I won't get a spot (cliffside) 2nd major stop on Rt 31 south
- 104 there are some dirvers that will not let me on the bus. I was even in the bus stop.
- 105 I would like at least one pre-noon bus on Sundays on the 31. How about a Umass - Northampton - Holyoke - Springfield express route. Its hard to get from college to the biggest city in the region.
- 106 You guys do good work. Bus needs magazines and tv's
- 107 Yellow line rule at Cliffside causes problem in the morning
- 108 the buses do not follow schedule on weekend frequently and I'd like to connect 30 or 31 and 37 bus.
- 109 the only problem I have is drunk students on weekends. They are loud and discourteous and no one seems to care to stop this. It is extremely unpleasant for those who need the bus on weekends.
- 110 I hate how the PVTA stops running late at nite. I used to take the 2 am bus after homework but now I have to walk.
- 111 too little bus for Sylvan
- 112 more frequency during weekends, evenings would be great. Direct connections between 30/31 and mall/supermarkets
- 113 bus schedule print too small for older or visual impaired riders
- 114 buses usually do not keep the time when they should come according to schedules

- 115 on weekends there should be buses running later
- 116 buses to full in the am from Pufon! Sometimes can't get on and so I am late to class or miss connecting buses to work.
- 117 Would be better if R41 had a 2 o'clock bus from HCC to NOHO. Would be geat if there was R41 on Saturday
- 118 Recently, B43's have been very delayed, esp leaving Umass to NOHO on Fridays. Sometimes buses are full and I can't board
- 119 More buses on the weekends would make traveling more appealing and enjoyable.
- 120 Please take a look at connecting times for B43 and 38 i.e. B43 departure at Haigis Mall - too much time if miss other bus.
- 121 First time on a non-NYC bus. It was nice ride.
- 122 this is the best bus in the world. I've lived on a bus for many years and this hands down the best bus I've ever slept on
- 123 You all are wonderful. Keep the the great work!
- 124 On Saturdays/Sunday buses never come on time. We have to wait a long time
- 125 bus is consistantly late and full on Fridays. Maybe one more bus only on Fridays?
- 126 Need bus going from Mt Holyoke up 47 through Hadley and to Sunderland Center. Frank is your best driver
- 127 would love direct/express routes - Northampton to Greenfield, Northampton to Springfield
- 128 Thanks PVTA, I'm really glad to have this service in town. It makes my life much much easier
- 129 more frequent buses on some routes
- 130 One of the joys of Pioneer Valley living - the PVTA
- 131 I love the PVTA!
- 132 should come more frequently on Sundays
- 133 don't be late on weekend!
- 134 why is there a long hole in the schedule at 6pm when people want a bus available to go home?
- 135 it would be great if the seats were just plastic covered or leather or similar material instead of velvet material
- 136 posted boards, need schedules at all stops
- 137 would appreciate earlier Sunday travel possiblities
- 138 better shelter in winter would be nice. More bus in summer!
- 139 buses are very nice but sometimes very late! Sometimes hard to get stop & shop to Boulders without groceries going bad. Bus stop on Southpoint Dr leaks
- 140 another bus from boulders to the mall
- 141 I would like it if there is more frequency on weekends
- 142 No buses till 2:30 pm from Boulders on Sundays. At least one bus should be there at 10:00 am on Sundays
- 143 It would be helpful to have Sunday morning stops on the route 31 bus

- 144 great service!
- 145 there should be a bench at the Boulders bus stop (in front) also more times of buses should be listed on the schedules
- 146 It would be geat if there are more buses on weekends
- 147 first bus from Boulders on Sunday starts at 2:07 pm. This is too late. There must be at least 1 or 2 buses before that.
- 148 Easy, cheap, quick. Should be 24 hour service on weekends. Too many drunk drivers. Many schools have this why not us?
- 149 thanks for the service
- 150 stop having north Amherst and Sunderland routes with "no crestview"
- 151 I love the bus
- 152 some buses don't show up (or are running 20 + minutes late) to Colonial Village during traffic hours and buses are too full in the mornings (60 + people on bus)
- 153 I think there should be the enforced situation where people get on in front and off in back.
- 154 on the outreach route in the am, a larger bus is needed. It is standing room only less than half way through the route.
- 155 new bus shelter at aspen chase is much appreciated
- 156 PVRTA is great!
- 157 keep it up! Great job!
- 158 For some routes to Northampton It would nice if there were more times - that it was direct to Northampton from Mt Holyoke
- 159 I wish that free and frequent public transit was a more common phenomenon
- 160 It's awful in the winter when the bus is turned off doors are left open at Hampshire College. Also rt 38 should run at least a little bit in the summer
- 161 I love the bus
- 162 some stops don't have shelters, buses should run later
- 163 there should be buses to Springfield. On Sundays as well.
- 164 need better coverage at bus stops (overhead)
- 165 cold winter on the bus
- 166 new schedules not posted at shelters promptly
- 167 the 42 bus needs to run more frequently and later into the evening
- 168 won't put up small decorations for all the different holidays on bus
- 169 I love and appreciate the PVRTA since losing my car. I can get to a lot of places I need to.
- 170 run later @ nite
- 171 42 - more often between 11 am and 1 pm
- 172 more buses to sylvan

- 173 ontime would be nice - correct schedule times
- 174 weekends too crowded
- 175 more buses on weekends - benches at stops
- 176 drunk students behavior on weekd eveinings - more shuttles
- 177 more hours on sundays please
- 178 more on Sunday - I like the bus
- 179 saves a lot of money
- 180 bus services should more frequent during the weekends and holidays
- 181 the PVRTA is great!
- 182 it would be nice if there was bus to Hampshire Mall from Hampshire College
- 183 I'd like more benches at smaller stops. The schedules should be posted and given out in more places.
- 184 chairs or covering of bus stops - all! On-time - better summer schedules
- 185 route 32 convenient service - ok but more runs would help esp a later run at the end of the day
- 186 enjoy service much
- 187 32 doesn't run often enough even hourly would be great. Nothing between 830 and 1230 is really tough
- 188 more frequent service to s. deerfield would encourage more riders
- 189 I am happy with PVRTA
- 190 increase frequency of the service
- 191 I would like to see more frequent runs to Belchertown from Umass
- 192 Add another bus in the morning to and from Belchertown
- 193 sometimes the drivers will refuse to stop for passengers who are running late - a huge problem when the bus only comes 4 to 5 times a day
- 194 45 is not frequent enuf it would be great to have this service on weekends
- 195 keep up the good work
- 196 another bus is need between 800 and 100 for the 45 from Belchertown center
- 197 a midmorning run to Belchertown Center would be nice
- 198 the bus stop @ Dwight Station on the corner of North & Route 9 is in a terrible place. It should be moved to the island in front of the gas station
- 199 an earlier bus on Sunday would help many of us get to church on time
- 200 earlier bus on sundays for church
- 201 more frequency on weekends would be awsome
- 202 time for bus (#38) in particular could be more frequent instead of every 30 to 35 mins
- 203 you are doing a great job keep it up!

- 204 last Sunday the PVTA bus did not come at 4:15 as scheduled and I missed an important event. How about some seat belts.
- 205 we at Hampshire college need a bus to the Hampshire Mall!
- 206 I wish the buses ran later on the weekends
- 207 I like the PVTA
- 208 weekend schedule could be more frequent
- 209 too crowded in the mornings! Umass is forcing juniors and seniors off campus - we need more morning buses.
- 210 schedules at all stops would be good. Satisfied overall
- 211 it's a great service to have, it would be better if it was more extended coverage
- 212 the conditions of the bus are excellent
- 213 some drivers are great others don't care about passengers or people trying to get on the bus
- 214 can we get more benches in bus shelters?
- 215 some drivers seem power crazed others are perfectly nice. Buses are frequently late in the am. Buses are overcrowded in the am. I like wireless and bus tracker features.
- 216 I used to live at a stop w/no shelter and it wasn't cool. Also there should be schedules for all buses that stop there available at all bus stops
- 217 I love the campus bus line that you can call to get schedule information on!
- 218 wish B43 ran more frequently but great for day use
- 219 works for me - keep it up
- 220 morning buses frequently late - esp M40. and back seat often very hot b/c of engine
- 221 traffic never taken into consideration in bus schedules
- 222 evening buses from Umass to Noho quite unreliable - they arrive late or early and don't stay for appointed departure time.
- 223 the bus is awesome! When I took my minifridge back to Walmart the driver was very cool about it
- 224 Hooray for the PVTA!
- 225 need to go to more locations. More cleanliness, more hours operate at night
- 226 cant believe you guys feel you need to ask how we feel - everyone loves you!! Thank you
- 227 love umass buses
- 228 awesome
- 229 very good experience
- 230 You should extend the Amity shuttle to Hampshire Mall
- 231 sometimes ride bike to bus - occasionally this means I cant get on which is unpredictable and frustrating. Need a route from Hampshire College to Hampshire Mall
- 232 maybe it's construction on rt 9 but sometimes the buses are 10 to 15 min behind

- 233 there's some drivers that are rude when it comes to students not showing ID's. PVTA should put more buses on the lines.
- 234 some of the bus drivers are very nice to passengers some are not.
- 235 would like more M40 service. Bus sometimes leaves late and 43 especially summer waits too long at Hampshire mall
- 236 I have always found the svc to be prompt & frequent in the past, but lately buses have been inconsistent and late.
- 237 PVTA rocks!
- 238 MBTA is so much better
- 239 I wish it would run more often and would take less time (a little faster)
- 240 some very bad drivers influence opinion (no courtesy) most excellent.
- 241 love it
- 242 good service
- 243 the 30 is often VERY late in the mornings heading towards North Amherst
- 244 More R42 trips and later in evening would be helpful. More B43 trips during summer and winter breaks would also be helpful
- 245 would like bus from Umass to Holyoke Mall
- 246 bus is often quite late on Fridays (M40). Generally I think bus is great keep up the good work
- 247 need more M40 buses - very crowded Tue thru Thursday am
- 248 The new yellow plastic bike racks are less strong than the all metal racks
- 249 a method of informing folks of delays/accidents would really help.
- 250 need more express trips
- 251 smoother driving - more comfortable for riders and saves gas
- 252 would like more service when school is closed
- 253 Holyoke to NOHO Rt 5 more frequent runs would be great. Also later and sundays.
- 254 the bus stops running way too early especially on weekdays
- 255 summer schedule needs revamping
- 256 I live in Shutesbury and there are no buses that service the area - a limited service would be great!
- 257 have more m40 buses on the weekend
- 258 buses are consistently 5-10 mins late. But they are consistent and that whats important. Schedule times should be adjust to the pattern of the buses - give drivers more time to get to to stops
- 259 new drivers need more practice with public
- 260 the step getting on and off is too high
- 261 the Umass transit is very helpful. Also it would be great if there was a stop on the main rd from Amherst center to Hadley

- 262 bigger Amity bus
- 263 it would be great if the schedules for the B43 match 30 31 and others so people don't have to wait too long in the cold changing buses
- 264 31 and 30 are full from Townhouse stop 8 am - 9 am during school. Could there be more buses at that time. Sometimes buses leave early
- 265 the schedule is hard to read as a first year to the college - a bit confusing
- 266 I love PVRTA but I think drivers should be more flexible about letting bikes on the bus sometimes. A bus between Hampshire college and Hamp mall would be awesome.
- 267 need a bus from Hampshire college to the mall
- 268 I think there should be a bus to the Hamp mall to Hampshire college
- 269 it would be nice to have more express svc between Mt Holyoke and Smith
- 270 better summer sched - more frequent. I call PVRTA when a schedule not available and sometimes they give the wrong time - late at night
- 271 there are specific times the bus is late (830 am Smith to Hampshire college is always late)
- 272 39 bus at 1210 pm sometimes makes a really long stop to switch drivers. 39 bus at 835 is consistently late
- 273 there should be a bus from Hamp Coll to shopping plaza w/walmart and whole foods.
- 274 the buses should go to a central location where you can transfer. You can't get from a to b to c
- 275 need more buses to run more often. Always crowded
- 276 there should be a bus from Sunderland straight to Rt 9 (Hadley)
- 277 bus should run until at least 2 am on weekends
- 278 Matt Coggon is the most wonderful bus driver and he should get a fat raise.
- 279 too full
- 280 wish buses ran to Mt Holyoke in summer when I work.
- 281 should run more frequently in the am for college classes. Bus very crowded sometimes won't stop at stops
- 282 top of Colonial Village shelter is broken and bus often late
- 283 once or twice I have run for the bus, driver saw me and left anyway. Bus often late or doesn't show
- 284 awesome job keep it up
- 285 improve the bus shelter conditions would be great
- 286 they piss me off when I am driving a car - the drivers are obnoxious aggressive and without respect for other drivers
- 287 maybe more buses in the am to Puffton because always overloaded
- 288 why does 45 only run 5 or 6 times a day and hardly at all during the day. The new bike racks suck - old ones were fine
- 289 I would like to see more buses going more frequently to Florence and Williamsburg from Northampton

- 290 if it is a main stop with a time listed sometimes buses arrive early and don't wait until time on schedule to leave - this is frustrating
- 291 I want chairs
- 292 other than being late a lot recently I'm very satisfied
- 293 the bus stop at Colonial Village has a huge hole in the roof - should be fixed
- 294 the Pufon buses are overloaded 2/3 of the time in the am
- 295 all in all fairly happy with the PVTA servuces except for the reduced shedules which don't run nearly as often as they should
- 296 I would like to see more buese going more frequently to Florence and Williamsburg from Northampton
- 297 why does 45 only run 5 or 6 times a day and hardly at all during the day? The new bike racks suck (old ones were fine)
- 298 buses don't go to cmpsci
- 299 direct service from S. Amherst to Rt 9 would be great!
- 300 direct service from Boulders to Hamp Mall please
- 301 good job - friendly providers
- 302 plz make 6 to 730 pm runs 15 min go all the way to s. amherst and not just to the garage
- 303 earlier service for 31 would be nice on weekends
- 304 we need buses during holidays!
- 305 increase reduced service frequency and earlier times on weekends and later times on weekends
- 306 I came from Madison WI so I might be a bit harsh in giving evaluation to the PVTA since I have experienced a very reliable public transportation. I hope PVTA improves its service.
- 307 like to take bus in summer and winter
- 308 Rt 31 is almost always running late on weekends
- 309 we want 31 bus leaving the Boulders on Sunday mornings