COUNCIL REPORT

Date: June 4, 2014
From: Gareth Rowlands, Transit Manager
Subject: TransLink Customer Service Performance Report, Quarter 1, 2014

RECOMMENDED THAT:


Purpose

To provide Council with the results of TransLink’s customer service performance survey conducted by Ipsos Reid for the first quarter of 2014.

1.0 Background

As the District holds an Annual Operating Agreement with South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority (TransLink) for the provision of transit services in West Vancouver, the Transit Department (Blue Bus) is considered part of the TransLink family. TransLink conducts a Customer Service Performance Report for Bus, SeaBus and SkyTrain every quarter. Metrics related to bus service comprise 11 categories, such as frequency of service, overcrowding, safe courteous operators, feeling safe from crime, etc. Each depot, six from Coast Mountain Bus Company plus West Vancouver Transit (WVT) is rated separately in these categories on a ten point scale with each quarter shown for the previous two years.

2.0 Policy

2.1 N/A

3.0 Analysis

While a full copy of the 101 page document is available for viewing in the offices of the Legislative Services Department, Section 1 – Highlights is attached as Appendix 1. Briefly, WVT’s performance is summarized as follows with percentage of good to excellent ratings in brackets:
- Maintaining the highest overall service rating for a bus trip (89%);
- Maintaining the highest rating for on-time reliable service (83%);
- A rise from second to highest for frequency of bus service (55%);
- Maintaining the highest rating for having courteous bus operators (81%);
- Maintaining the highest rating for performance for trip duration (86%);
- A drop to third from the highest rating for buses not being overcrowded (50%);
- Maintaining the highest rating for having a safe and professional operator (89%);
- Maintaining the highest rating for bus riders feeling safe from crime on board the bus (95%);
- Maintaining the highest rating for having a direct route (92%);
- Maintaining the highest rating for bus riders feeling safe from crime at the bus stop (89%); and
- Maintaining the highest rating for having clean and graffiti-free buses (95%).

WVT rated first in 10 of the 11 quality measures. The Department has maintained ground in a number of the attributes to the levels experienced prior to the 2010 Olympics. Staff have monitored the results and indicate this as a positive trend. In general, Blue Bus is experiencing very high customer usage and has been trying to keep up with an increased demand without an increase in funding from TransLink. However, service changes that came into effect on April 5, 2014, notably the 251/252 routes converting to Community Shuttle, and an increase in service hours which provide additional services from Dundarave to Vancouver have alleviated some overcrowding issues since implementation. Staff continue to provide input to TransLink to support a need for increased services in other areas.

Beyond tracking the performance of individual depots, survey results also showed the following perspectives amongst West Vancouver transit riders:

- Most positive rating from residents for overall service provided by the transit system in the Greater Vancouver Region (75%);
- Most positive rating from residents for value for money (54%)
- Most positive rating from residents for having enough shelters at bus stops throughout the region (46%);
- A negative rating from residents for providing adequate transit information at stops and stations (37%); and
- A negative rating for ease of finding info on the TransLink website (39%).
4.0 Options

1. Receive the report for information.

2. Defer consideration.

Author: 

Gareth Rowlands, Transit Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1  TransLink Customer Service Performance Report, Quarter 1, 2014
Section 1 - Highlights
The Customer Service Performance study tracks performance on service attributes that are most strongly related to positive overall transit service ratings from customers.

Trends in the percentage of good-to-excellent scores are highlighted.

The analysis in the text focuses on the top key drivers for each area of service.

Where performance is excellent or poor, but the attribute is not one of the top key drivers, the text does not comment on it; however, customer ratings on the attribute will be shown in the graphs for each section.
Overview

- Currently, six-in-ten transit riders (60%) rate the Overall Transit Service positively. While performance ratings are still slightly below the same period a year ago (63%), they have improved over last quarter's low of 56%.

- Positive assessments for specific transit system attributes have mostly recovered from the dip observed last quarter and are largely in line with the same quarter a year ago. The only exceptions are Value for Money (48% good to excellent, up 3 percentage points from a year ago) and Convenient Hours (52%, down 3 percentage points). Of note, Not Having Shelters At Stops is the only attribute not meeting the 7.0 threshold for positive performance (average score 6.7).

- SeaBus continues to be the strongest performing transit mode, with 86% of riders awarding positive ratings for the Overall SeaBus Service and an average rating of 8.8 (up from 8.4 last year and 8.5 last quarter). All specific SeaBus attributes are above the 7.0 threshold for average scores and positive ratings are either holding stable or have improved over last year and/or last quarter.

- Similar to last wave, three-quarters (74%) of riders rate Overall SkyTrain Service positively, which is down 5 percentage points compared to a year ago. Current ratings for individual attributes are broadly in line with a year ago, with the exception of Frequency of Service (70%, down 4 percentage points), On-Time, Reliable Service (79%, down 5 points) and Not Being Overcrowded (44%, down 5 points), which are all key drivers of Overall SkyTrain Service. As observed historically, Canada Line performance is generally stronger in comparison to the BCRTC lines.

- While still rated positively by most transit riders, the Bus remains the lowest performing transit mode. Currently, 64% award good-to-excellent ratings to the Overall Bus Service, which is in line with a year ago (66%) but increased over last quarter (59%). Specific performance on individual bus attributes are broadly consistent with last year, except for Trip Duration where performance has improved over both last year (78%, up from 75% last year and 72% last quarter). Improvements over last quarter are also observed for On-Time Reliable Service (59%, up 3 percentage points) and Having a Direct Route (80%, up 3 points). At the depot level, WVT continues to be the strongest performing depot on most Bus attributes.

- The recent cancellation of the Employer Pass Program probably contributed to some of the shifts in fare payment methods this quarter. Specifically:
  - FareSaver tickets (25%) and Cash (25%) remain the most popular payment methods. The proportion of paying with FareSaver tickets is slightly lower than last quarter (27%), but consistent with the same period a year ago.
  - The Monthly Pass is the next most popular payment method, with 18% of riders choosing this payment option. Monthly Pass usage has grown 4 percentage points over last quarter, but is consistent with Q1 2013.
  - Consistent with historical trends, 14% of riders currently use U-Pass BC as their fare payment method.
### Performance on Transit System Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>% Good to Excellent (8-10)</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Getting Info from Telephone Information Line</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Finding Information on Website</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Transit Service</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequacy of Information on SkyTrain</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequacy of Information on SeaBus</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation of Service During Convenient Hours</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for Money</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Connections</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequacy of Transit Information at Stops/Stations</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequacy of Information on Buses</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough Shelters at Stops</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Top Key Driver

An average rating of 7.0 or higher means an attribute’s performance is positive whereas a rating of less than 7.0 means improvements should be considered.

### Transit System
- Currently, six-in-ten transit riders award top ratings for Overall Transit Service, which is below the same period a year ago (63%) but improved over last quarter (56%). The average score is relatively unchanged at 7.6 out of 10.

### Performance on Top Key Drivers of Transit Overall Service

#### Key Drivers with Positive Performance
- Operation of Service During Convenient Hours
  - Just over half of riders (52%) award positive ratings to this attribute. While positive assessments have declined compared to a year ago, fewer riders currently give very poor-to-neutral ratings, therefore, the average score remains stable and positive at 7.4.
- Value for Money
  - Positive assessments for this attribute have trended up from a year ago (45%) and improved over last quarter (43%), reaching 48% currently. This have brought the average score up to 7.2.
- Good Connections
  - In line with past trends, 43% of riders report taking more than one bus or transit mode. Forty-six percent of these riders award top ratings for Good Connections. This is consistent with last year and directionally up from last quarter.
  - The average score is 7.2, which is higher than last quarter but in line with a year ago.

#### Key Drivers Needing Improvement
- Enough Shelters at Stops
  - Having Enough Shelters at Stops remains the lowest-rated transit performance attribute, with just over one-third of riders (35%) awarding top ratings. While scores are similar to the same period a year ago, they have improved over last quarter (up 3 percentage points).
  - While the average score has improved from last year and last quarter, reaching 6.7, it is the only attribute not currently meeting the 7.0 threshold for positive performance.
### Performance on Bus System Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute Description</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having an Operator Who Drives Safely &amp; Professionally**</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Safe from Crime On Board the Bus</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a Direct Route</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip Duration from the Time You Boarded to the Time You Got Off the Bus</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Safe from Crime at the Bus Stop or Transit Exchange</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a Courteous Bus Operator**</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean and Graffiti-Free Buses</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Bus Service</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing On-Time, Reliable Service</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Service</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Being Overcrowded</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top Key Driver**

An average rating of 7.0 or higher means an attribute’s performance is positive. A rating of less than 7.0 means improvements should be considered.

**Previously combined: ‘Having Courteous, Competent and Helpful Bus Operator’

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### Bus System

- Similar to a year ago but more positive than last quarter, 64% of riders currently give positive ratings for Overall Bus Service. The average score is 7.8. Service attributes are largely in line with last year except for Trip Duration, where performance has improved over last year.

### Performance on Top Key Drivers of Overall Bus Service

#### Key Drivers with Positive Performance

- **Courteous Bus Operator**
  - Consistent with historical trends, 74% of riders award top ratings for Having a Courteous Bus Operator. The average score is positive and stable at 8.3. VTC performance has dropped compared to the same period last year (73%, down 5 points).

- **On-Time Reliable Service**
  - Fifty-nine percent of riders rate the bus service positively for Having On-Time Reliable Service, which is unchanged from a year ago but above last quarter. The average score is 7.6.
  - WVT remains the strongest performing depot, receiving positive ratings from 83% of riders, up from a year ago (64%). Meanwhile, VTC has recovered from the continual downward trend observed last year, reaching 51% good to excellent currently.

- **Frequency of Service**
  - Though still meeting the positive performance threshold, Frequency of Service is the service attribute receiving the lowest positive ratings. This quarter, 48% of riders award positive ratings, which is consistent with past trends. The current average rating is 7.2.
  - At the depot level, VTC has recovered from the dip observed last quarter, receiving top scores from 47% of riders and is now in line with a year ago.

- **Not Being Overcrowded**
  - Just under one-half of riders (49%) award positive ratings for Not Being Overcrowded. This attribute has the lowest average score (7.0, just meeting the threshold). Performance is consistent with past trends. At the depot level, VTC scores have declined from a year ago (45%, down 7 points).
**SkyTrain System**

- Positive assessments of the overall SkyTrain System have declined compared to a year ago, with 74% of riders rating it positively (down 5 points). The average score is 8.3 out of 10.
- Evaluations of individual attributes are mostly steady, but scores for Frequency of Service, On-Time, Reliable Service and Not Being Overcrowded have fallen from Q1 of last year.

**Performance on Top Key Drivers of SkyTrain Overall Service**

**Key Drivers with Positive Performance**

- On-Time, Reliable Service
  - This attribute remains the strongest performing service attribute, receiving positive ratings from 79% of riders and an average score of 8.5. However, performance has declined compared to a year ago.
  - Canada Line scores remain stable at 92%, but BCRTC ratings are down compared to a year ago (73%, down 8 points).

- Feeling Safe from Crime On Board the SkyTrain
  - Similar to past trends, 76% of riders rate the service positively for Feeling Safe from Crime On Board. The average score is holding stable at 8.4.
  - At the line level, BCRTC scores are consistent with past trends but Canada Line scores are trending slightly lower than last quarter.

- Frequency of Service
  - Positive evaluations of Frequency of Service are down 4 points from a year ago (70%) but remain in line with last quarter. The average score is 8.1. The decline can be mostly attributed to the lower performance observed for BCRTC lines (66% currently versus 72% last year).

**Key Drivers Needing Improvement**

- Not Being Overcrowded
  - This is the only key driver of Overall SkyTrain Service that is not meeting the threshold, with 44% of riders awarding top ratings. Performance has declined from a year ago but remains stable compared to last quarter. The average score is 6.8.
  - BCRTC scores have slipped from a year ago (41%, down 5 points) while Canada Line performance is holding stable (52%).
### Performance on SeaBus Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>% Good to Excellent (8-10)</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing On-Time, Reliable Service</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip Duration from the Time You Boarded to the Time You Got Off the SeaBus</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Courteous, Competent and Helpful SeaBus Staff**</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Safe from Crime at the SeaBus Station</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean and Graffiti-Free SeaBus Vessel and Station</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall SeaBus Service</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Available When Needed</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Being Overcrowded</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Service</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SeaBus

- The majority of SeaBus riders (86%) rate the Overall SeaBus Service positively. Performance has edged up marginally from a year ago and last quarter. The average score is strong at 8.8 out of 10.
- The most notable shift in individual service attribute this quarter is for Not Being Overcrowded, which has reached a 2-year high of 74% good-to-excellent ratings.

### Performance on Top Key Drivers of SeaBus Overall Service

#### Key Drivers with Positive Performance

As seen in the past, all key drivers of SeaBus Overall Service meet the positive performance threshold this quarter.

- **On-Time, Reliable Service**
  - Consistent with historical trends, this attribute remains the strongest performing key driver, receiving 94% good-to-excellent ratings and an average score of 9.3 out of 10.
- **Trip Duration**
  - Trip Duration also receives top ratings from the majority of riders (92%) and earns an average score of 9.0. Performance has improved over last quarter and is directionally up from a year ago.
- **Frequency of Service**
  - Six-in-ten riders (60%) rate the service positively for Frequency of Service. The average score is 8.0 out of 10. Performance, although broadly in line with historical trends, is up 10 points from the two-year low seen in the same period last year (50%).
Transit Riders versus the General Population

- Transit riders are similar demographically to the Metro Vancouver general population, with the following exceptions:
  - Transit riders tend to be younger (27% are between the age of 16 to 24 versus 14% among the general public) and are more likely to be students (15% versus 7%).
  - They are less likely full-time (41% versus 50%) and more likely to be employed part-time (18% versus 13%) or unemployed (8% versus 6%).
  - They tend to have higher education levels (38% have graduated from university versus 32% in the general population).

Trip Purpose

- Commuting to/from work (43%) or travelling for entertainment/social reasons (40%) remain the primary reasons reported for taking public transit. Secondary reasons include shopping and personal reasons.

- These reported transit trip purposes are consistent with historical trends.

Choice versus Captive

- This quarter, 66% of transit users are defined as Choice riders (those who have access to a vehicle for the trips they make on transit) and 33% are Captive riders (those without vehicle access).

- Captive riders are more likely to be younger, female and working part-time or not employed compared to Choice riders. Compared to Choice riders, they are also more likely to have lower household income, lower education levels (high school or less), and live in Vancouver.

- On the other hand, Choice riders tend to be older, male, working full-time, hold a university degree and have higher household income and are more likely to reside in the region of Surrey/North Delta/White Rock/Langley.

- Captive riders are more likely than Choice riders to use the Bus, while Choice riders use the SkyTrain more frequently than their counterparts.
This quarter, the spotlight is on riders who pay for transit by the four most commonly used fare payment methods – FareSaver tickets, cash, Monthly Passes and U-Pass BC.

FareSaver Ticket Users

- One-quarter of transit riders (25%) are FareSaver ticket users who can be characterized as follows:
  - Most likely to be living in Vancouver (48% versus 37% overall).
  - The most likely of all the fare payment groups to have graduated from university (54%).
  - More likely than Monthly Pass and U-Pass BC users to be Choice riders/have vehicle access (74% compared to 49% and 50%, respectively).

- Their transit behaviour can be described as follows:
  - The majority of them are either Low Frequency or Medium Frequency riders (51% and 31%, respectively).
  - A large proportion of FareSaver ticket users take transit to commute to or from work (52%).

Cash Users

- Currently, one-quarter of transit riders (25%) use cash fare as their primary method of payment.
  - They are the most likely fare payment group to be Choice riders (80%).
  - They are more likely than other fare payment groups to be 65 years old or older (18%).

- In terms of their transit behaviour, cash users:
  - Tend to be Low Frequency riders (71% versus 43% overall).
  - Are the most likely fare payment group to use transit for entertainment or social reasons (49% versus 40% overall).
Monthly Pass Users

- Close to one-fifth of transit riders (18%) currently use the monthly pass this quarter. This group of users is:
  - The most likely fare payment group to be employed full-time (62%).
  - More likely than other fare payment groups to be living in Burnaby/New Westminster (23% versus 15% overall).

- In terms of their transit behavior, they are:
  - Most likely to be High Frequency riders, with 71% making 10 or more one-way trips in an average week (compared to 30% overall).
  - Most likely to be making work-related trips (78%) and therefore travelling during peak hours (81% during the AM peak hours and 75% during the PM peak hours).

U-Pass BC Users

- Currently, U-Pass BC users accounts for 14% of transit riders. U-Pass BC users are:
  - The youngest fare payment group with 88% between the age 16 to 24.
  - Most likely to be new transit riders (using transit on a regular basis for an average of 4.0 years compared to 10.4 years overall).

- Their transit behavior is as follows:
  - Most likely to be travelling through two zones (50%).
  - Are the most likely group to be travelling during the weekday midday period (69% during Monday to Friday between 9:30am and 3pm).
The primary objectives of this project are to:

- Evaluate the quality of service provided by Bus, SeaBus, and SkyTrain.
- Diagnose what aspects of service have the strongest impact on perceptions of service quality.
- Provide recommendations regarding what aspects of service need to be modified to increase and maintain high levels of service quality across transit modes.
- Assess customer behaviour and motivation related to the use of public transit.

The methodology used in conducting this project is included in Appendix A.