

DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
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COUNCIL REPORT

Date:	September 27, 2017
From:	Gareth Rowlands, Transit Manager
Subject:	TransLink Customer Service Performance Report for Quarter 2, 2017
File:	3205-03

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report dated September 27, 2017 from the Transit Manager titled, "TransLink Customer Service Performance Report for Quarter 2, 2017" be received for information.

1.0 Purpose

To provide Council with the results of TransLink's Customer Service Performance survey conducted by Ipsos for Quarter 2, 2017.

2.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

There is no current applicable legislation.

3.0 Background

3.1 Previous Decisions

There are no previous decisions.

3.2 History

As the District holds an 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.

Briefly, WVT's performance is summarized as follows with percentage of good to excellent ratings in brackets:

- a drop from highest to fifth place performance service rating for service overall (55%), a significant downward shift from last quarter;
- a drop from highest to sixth place performance rating for on-time reliable service (40%), a significant downward shift from last quarter;
- a drop from highest to sixth place performance rating for frequency of bus service (29%), a significant downward shift from last quarter;
- a drop from highest to second place performance rating for having courteous bus operators (77%);
- a drop from highest to sixth place performance rating for trip duration (63%), a significant downward shift from last quarter;
- a drop from a third to sixth place performance for buses not being overcrowded (43%);
- maintaining a second place tie for having a safe and professional operator (85%);
- maintaining the highest place performance rating for bus riders feeling safe from crime on board the bus (88%);
- a drop from highest to third place performance rating for having a direct route (75%), a significant downward shift from last quarter;
- a drop from highest to fourth place performance rating for bus riders feeling safe from crime at the bus stop (80%); and
- maintaining a tie for highest place performance rating for having clean and graffiti-free buses (81%).

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

- least positive rating from residents for service overall (39%);
- most positive rating from residents on having value for money (79%); and
- most positive rating from residents for having enough shelters at bus stops throughout the region (60%);

Staff have discussed WVT's performance in detail with TransLink. Indeed, resource constraints and fleet maintenance issues have been experienced, which has resulted in cancelled trips, particularly during the afternoon peak. While relative to the total number of trips made during a day, the number of trips cancelled may be only be between 1% to 2%, this service disruption affects overall service performance, on-time reliable service, frequency of bus service, and overcrowding on remaining trips not cancelled. Staff are continuing efforts to address maintenance issues.

Beyond acknowledged operational challenges, the Quarter 2 survey occurred during the time period prior to full implementation of additional service hours allocated in Phase 1 of the Mayors' 10 year Investment Plan, which were directly aimed at addressing frequency and overcrowding concerns on some routes.

Further, with respect to on-time reliable service and trip duration, the drop in ratings can be understood, given bus delays caused by traffic congestion due to construction projects (for example, along the Georgia Street corridor in Vancouver in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery public square and at the Trump Tower, Keith Road in North Vancouver, and on Marine Drive due to the Grosvenor construction).

Other ratings are puzzling. For example, a significant drop in performance rating for having a direct route was found, even though no changes to bus routes were made in this quarter. West Vancouver residents showed the least positive rating for the overall transit system, yet responded as being the most positive with respect to value for money. It is possible that the small sample size of WVT respondents (114, of a total of 1,885) may have affected the drop in ratings. As the surveys are conducted monthly and collated into a quarterly report, TransLink staff are cautiously optimistic that the Quarter 2 ratings for WVT are an anomaly, as limited data showed a rebound to higher ratings in the month of July.

3.3 Sustainability

The District's Strategic Transportation Plan reflects a hierarchy that places the needs of pedestrians and transit users above those of the single occupant vehicle. Therefore, customer satisfaction with the transit service is critical to reducing auto dependency and achieving the District's sustainability goals.

3.4 Public Engagement and Outreach

The TransLink Customer Satisfaction Tracking Survey began in October 2002. Specific methodology is used to collect and weight the data, as well as the sampling errors associated with the survey results. The sampling population for this survey is all individuals who are 16 years of age or older who live in a household within the GVRD, have used the Bus, SkyTrain, or SeaBus within the past 30 days, and are not employed by TransLink, one of its subsidiaries or a marketing research firm.

3.5 Other Communication, Consultation, and Research

TransLink shares the Customer Satisfaction Performance Survey with the District on a quarterly basis.

4.0 Options

4.1 Recommended Option

Receive the report for information.

4.2 Considered Options

No other options were considered.

5.0 Conclusion

West Vancouver Blue Bus strives to provide high quality transit services to the public, and notwithstanding an anomaly in the performance ratings, will take the Quarter 2 survey results into consideration to improve the services delivered.

Author:


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Appendices:

Appendix 1 TransLink Customer Service Performance, Quarter 2, 2017,
Section 1, Highlights



Customer Service Performance Quarter 2 2017

Bus
SeaBus
SkyTrain



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The Customer Service Performance study tracks performance on service attributes that are most strongly related to overall transit service ratings from customers.

Trends in the percentage of good-to-excellent scores (8, 9, 10 out of 10) 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.



Highlights

Overview

- The proportion of transit riders who give a score of 8, 9 or 10 out of 10 to the Overall Transit Service has been trending up from 57% in Q4 2016 to 63% this period, returning to the high levels observed in early 2016. The average score remains stable at 7.6 out of 10. In particular, riders who reside in the Northeast region give the highest top ratings compared to those from other regions, and their scores have improved significantly from Q4 2016 (66% versus 52%). These positive changes could be due to the service improvements associated with the opening of the Millennium Line Evergreen Extension in Fall 2016.
- Similar to historical trends, the only transit system attribute that is not meeting the 7.0 threshold for positive performance is Having Enough Shelters at Stops (6.8 out of 10). However, its good-to excellent ratings have improved over last quarter (36%, up from 33%).
- The only other attribute that has shown significant changes this quarter is Having Adequate Information on SkyTrain (63%, up from 58% a year ago).



Overall Bus Service is rated highly by 63% of bus riders, which is similar to last quarter but directionally down from a year ago. The average score is stable at 7.8 out of 10.

- All bus service attributes continue to meet the 7.0 positive-performance threshold.
- Having a Courteous Bus Operator (76%) remains as the highest-rated top key driver for Overall Bus Service.
- Similar to previous quarters, the other three key drivers earn relatively lower ratings, including Providing On-Time, Reliable Service (56%), Not Being Overcrowded (51%) and Frequency of Service (48%).
- For this period, #240 bus tends to rank the highest across different measures, while #410 bus generally shows relatively weaker performance.
- WVT depot has shown some significant decreases this quarter, and it is particularly noticeable for Overall Bus Service, On-Time Reliable Service and Frequency of Service.



Over three-quarters of SkyTrain riders (77%) award top scores to the Overall SkyTrain Service, which is marginally up from last quarter and in-line with a year ago. The average score is at 8.3 out of 10, making this the strongest-performing mode for this period.

- Service improvements related to the opening of the Evergreen Extension appear to have increased the ratings for Not Being Overcrowded (51%, up from 47% a year ago).
- The one attribute that continues to perform below the positive-performance threshold is Delays are Announced and Explained (6.4 out of 10).
- Generally, Canada Line's performance is stronger than BCRTC's. The only exception is Staff Availability, where the scores for Canada Line have been trending down over the past year from 43% to 30% this period.

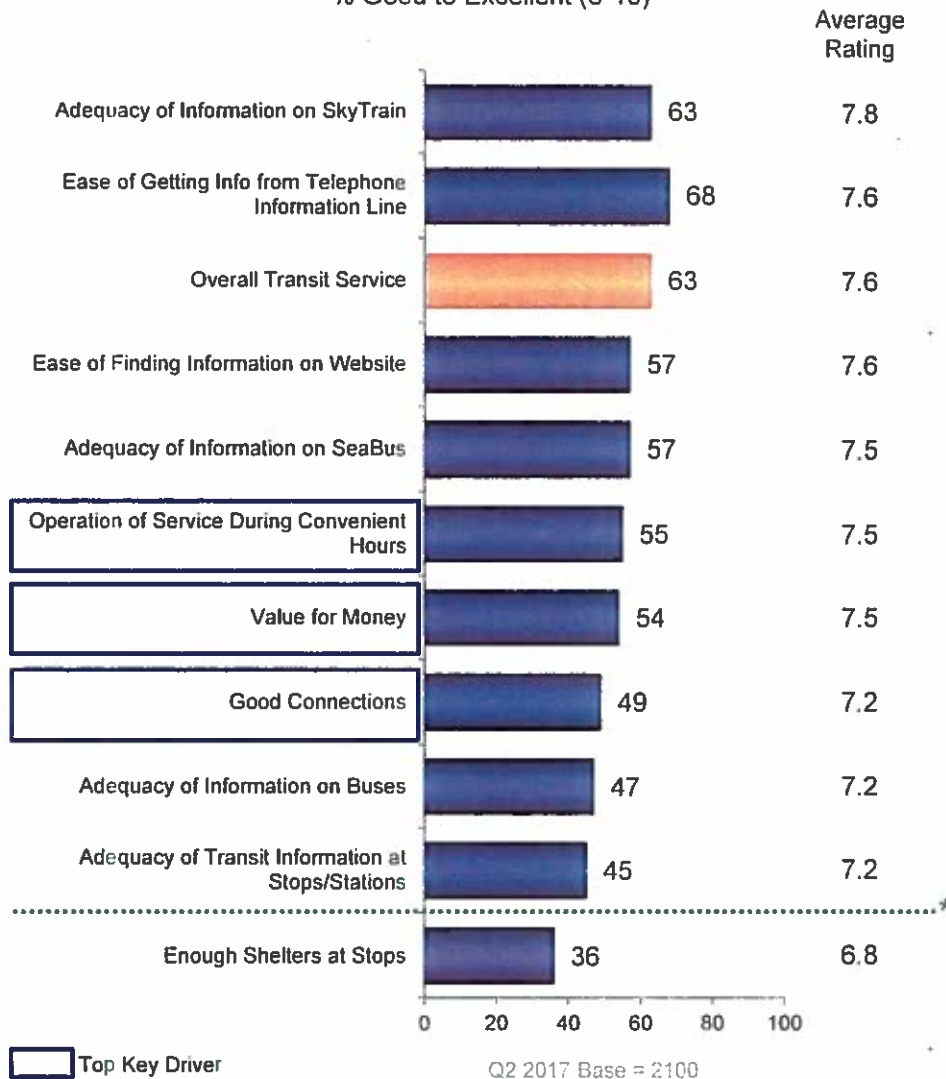


SeaBus's Overall Service has dropped from a year ago (73%, down from 82%), but its average score is holding stable at 8.2 out of 10.

- This period, ratings for Providing On-Time Reliable Service (89%) and Trip Duration (78%) have decreased significantly from last quarter and/or the same quarter last year. Both of these attributes are top key drivers for Overall SeaBus Service.
- Nonetheless, all SeaBus service attributes continue to perform above the positive-performance threshold of 7.0.

Performance on Transit System Attributes

% Good to Excellent (8-10)



Transit System

- Performance of Overall Transit Service (63%) has trended up over the last two quarters but remains in-line with a year ago. The average score is consistent at 7.6 out of 10.
- All the service attributes show stable performances this period, except for Having Enough Shelters at Stops (36%, up from 33% last quarter) and Adequate Information on SkyTrain (63%, up from a year ago).
- However, even with the improvements observed, Having Enough Shelters at Stops remains as the only attribute that is sitting below the positive-performance threshold, earning an average score of 6.8 out of 10.

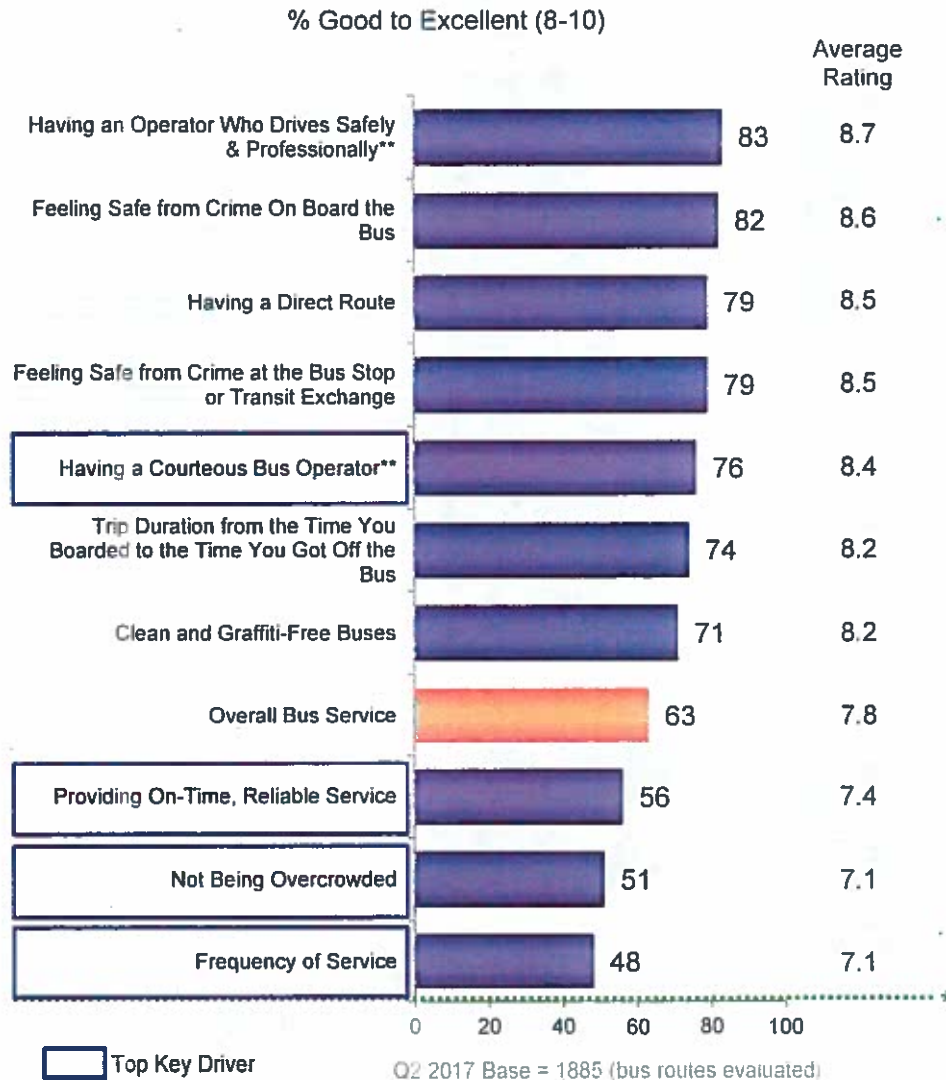
Performance on Top Key Drivers of Transit Overall Service

Key Drivers with Positive Performance*

- Operation of Service During Convenient Hours
 - Trending up over the last three quarters but consistent with a year ago, Convenient Hours receives top scores from over one-half of riders (55%).
- Value for Money
 - 54% of riders award high scores to Value for Money, which has been slowly trending up since Q4 2015.
- Good Connections
 - Scores for Good Connections (49%) have also trended up over the last two quarters. The performance of this attribute is slightly behind the other two top key drivers, but its average score continues to meet the 7.0 positive-performance threshold.

* 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.

Performance on Bus System Attributes



* 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.

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

Bus System

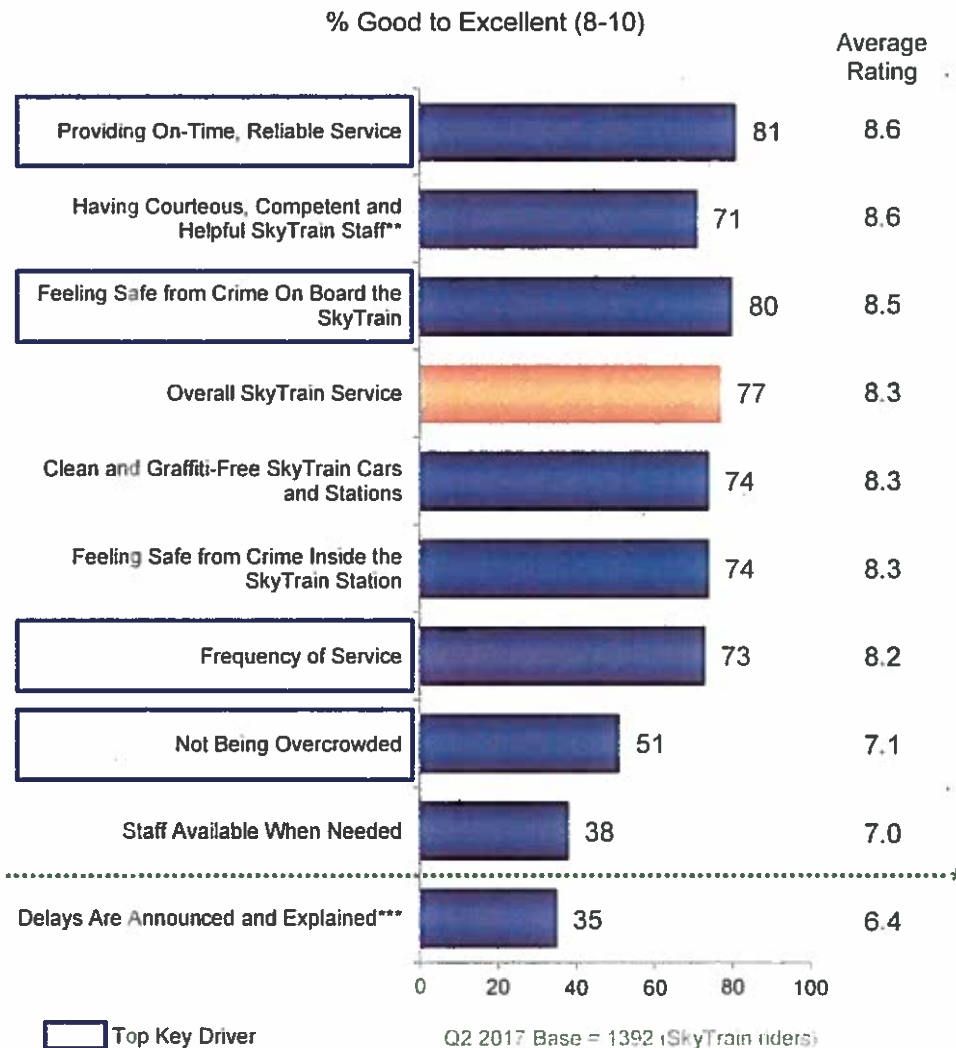
- Six-in-ten bus riders (63%) award good-to-excellent scores to the Overall Bus Service, which is directionally down from a year ago but consistent with last quarter. The average score is holding stable at 7.8 out of 10. However, WVT's performance has slipped during this period.
- The only attribute that has shown significant changes is Clean and Graffiti-Free Buses (71%), which is down from a year ago.
- Compared to other attributes, three of the four top key drivers of Overall Bus Service continue to show a relatively weaker performance, namely Providing On-Time, Reliable Service, Not Being Overcrowded and Frequency of Service. However, all bus service attributes perform above the 7.0 threshold this period.

Performance on Top Key Drivers of Overall Bus Service

Key Drivers with Positive Performance*

- Courteous Bus Operator
 - Courteous Bus Operator continues to be the highest-rated top key driver for Overall Bus Service, earning top ratings from three-quarters of riders (76%).
- On-Time Reliable Service
 - Ratings for On-Time Reliable Service (56%) are in-line with previous quarters. However, scores for WVT have significantly dropped from last quarter and the same period last year.
- Not Being Overcrowded
 - Similar to historical trends, one-half of bus riders (51%) award high scores to Not Being Overcrowded. Specifically, RTC and BTC have shown significant improvements over the last quarter and/or a year ago, while ratings for STC have slipped from the previous quarter.
- Frequency of Service
 - 48% of bus riders give a score of 8 to 10 to Frequency of Service, which is consistent with last quarter and a year ago. Again, scores for WVT have dropped significantly in Q2 2017.

Performance on SkyTrain Attributes



* 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.

** Caution: Small base size – only among SkyTrain riders who spoke with staff (n=84)

*** Caution: Only among those who experienced delays (n=439)

SkyTrain System

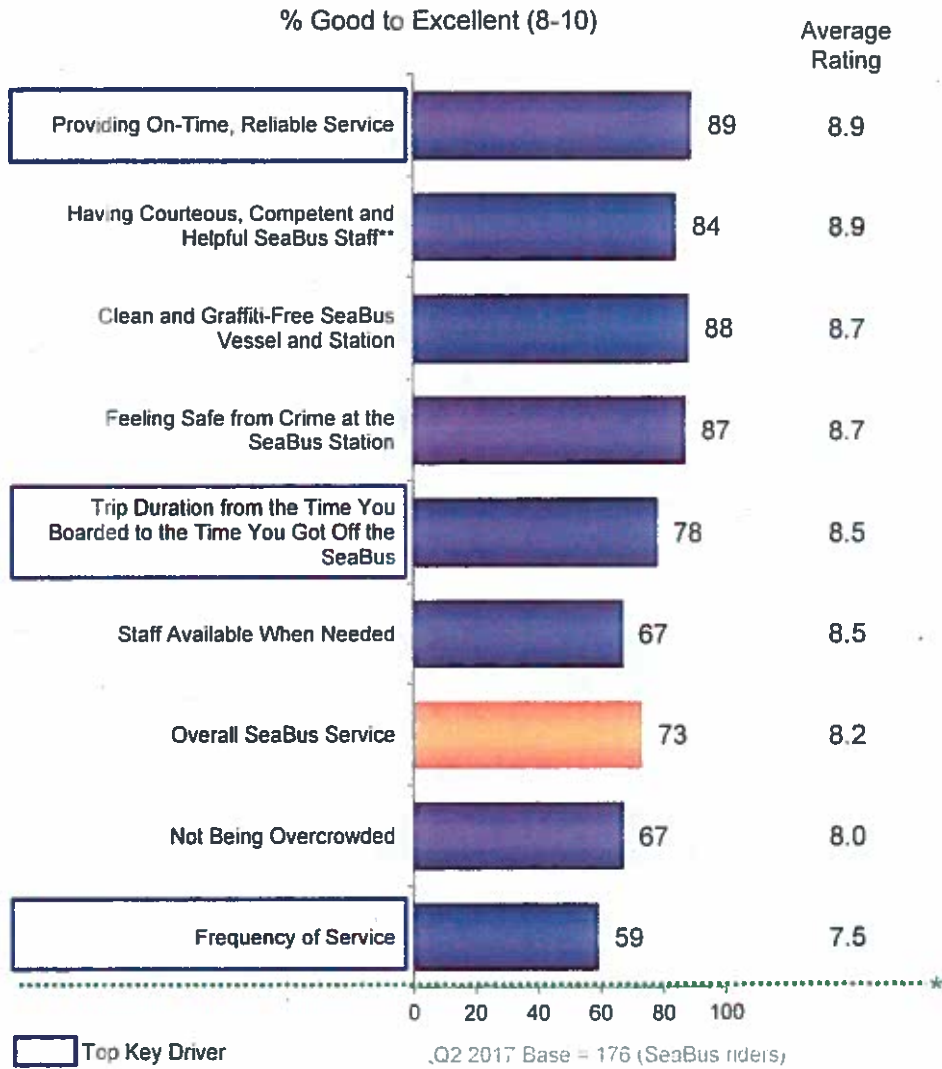
- Over three-quarters of SkyTrain riders (77%) award high ratings to the Overall SkyTrain Service, which is marginally up from last quarter and in-line with a year ago. The average score remains stable at 8.3 out of 10.
- All the attributes perform fairly stable this quarter, with Not Being Overcrowded (51%) being the only exception, where it shows significant improvements from a year ago.
- Delays are Announced and Explained continues to receive an average score that is below the threshold for positive performance (6.4).

Performance on Top Key Drivers of SkyTrain Overall Service

Key Drivers with Positive Performance*

- On-Time, Reliable Service
 - This is the highest-rated top key driver for Overall SkyTrain Service, earning top scores from 81% of SkyTrain riders.
- Feeling Safe from Crime On Board the SkyTrain
 - Unchanged from historical trends, eight-in-ten SkyTrain riders (80%) give high ratings to Feeling Safe from Crime On Board the SkyTrain.
- Frequency of Service
 - This quarter, ratings for Frequency of Service continue to be stable at 73%.
- Not Being Overcrowded
 - Trending up over the last three quarters and up from a year ago, Not Being Overcrowded is rated highly by 51% of SkyTrain riders this period, which could be due to the operational changes that were made in 2016 when the Millennium Line Evergreen Extension was opened.
 - Specifically, scores for BCRTC have improved from the same quarter last year, while Canada Line's performance remains consistent.

Performance on SeaBus Attributes



SeaBus

- This quarter, ratings for Overall SeaBus Service (73%) are directionally down from last quarter and have dropped from a year ago. Still, the average score is holding stable at 8.2 out of 10.
- The two attributes that have shown a significant drop in their performances are Providing On-Time, Reliable Service (89%, down from last quarter) and Trip Duration (78%, down from both last quarter and a year ago).
- All attributes continue to earn an average score that is above the 7.0 positive-performance threshold.

Performance on Top Key Drivers of SeaBus Overall Service

- On-Time, Reliable Service
 - Although this is still the highest-rated SeaBus service attribute, as mentioned earlier, a lower proportion of SeaBus riders (89%) awards top scores to this area compared to the previous quarter.
- Trip Duration
 - Scores for Trip Duration have significantly decreased by over 10 percentage points when compared to Q1 2017 and Q2 2016.
- Frequency of Service
 - Frequency of Service is still the lowest-rated SeaBus service attribute, but its performance remains consistent at 59%.

* 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.

** Caution: Very small base size – only among SeaBus riders who spoke with staff (n=25)

Transit Riders



- Similar to previous quarters, eight-in-ten transit riders (80%) report owning a smartphone, of which 79% have a data plan.
- Generally, transit riders have similar demographic characteristics to the broader adult population of Metro Vancouver. Notable exceptions observed this quarter include the following:
 - Transit riders tend to be younger, aged 16 to 24 years old (28% versus 13%)
 - They are less likely to be working full-time (42% versus 51%)
 - They are more likely to be a student (18% versus 6%)
 - They are less likely to fall into the higher household income bracket of \$65,000 or more (41% versus 54%)

Trip Purpose



- Going to or from work continues to be the most popular reason why transit users take public transit (44%).
- Other commonly mentioned reasons include entertainment/social purposes (40%) and going to or from shopping (32%, up from a year ago).

Choice versus Captive



- The proportion of Choice riders, or those who have regular vehicle access, has dropped from last quarter to 68%, while the proportion of Captive riders (no vehicle access), has increased to 31%.
- Compared to Captive riders, Choice riders tend to make a higher income (\$75K or more), older (aged 35+), work full-time and hold a university degree.
- On the contrary, Captive riders are more likely to make an income of under \$35K, younger (16-34 years old), work part-time, use a Compass Card, take the Bus and live in Vancouver.

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