

To: Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

Date: August 27, 2026

From: John Sanderson, Director of ADA & Specialized Services

Reviewed by: *Ref*

SUBJECT: LINK Paratransit Rider Satisfaction Survey Results

Background:

County Connection LINK paratransit, One-Seat Ride (OSR) service, and the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority's (LAVTA) Wheels Dial-A-Ride paratransit service are all operated and jointly administered under County Connection's paratransit operations and maintenance contract with Transdev Services, Inc. Whereas the passenger surveys conducted by County Connection have until now been limited to fixed-route bus riders, LAVTA conducts a survey of Wheels Dial-A-Ride passengers annually or bi-annually, with the most recent conducted in late 2025 with the results presented in spring 2026.

Unfortunately, the LAVTA survey revealed a significant decline in average passenger satisfaction scores from the 2023 survey to the 2025 survey, which prompted County Connection staff to seek direct feedback from LINK's own riders. In May 2026, following authorization by the Board of Directors, staff sought quotes from several potential vendors and ultimately engaged Quantum Market Research, Inc. (QMR) to design and administer the first dedicated rider satisfaction survey of LINK paratransit and One-Seat Ride customers. The LINK/OSR survey was conducted in July and August 2026, and this memo presents the preliminary results.

Survey & Scoring Methodology:

The survey questionnaire was developed jointly by the County Connection project team and QMR, and covered rider perceptions of:

- Call center performance,
- Trip scheduling process,
- Driver performance,
- Technology, and
- Overall service quality

Of LINK's 1,655 registered riders, 771 had used LINK or OSR service within the previous 12 months and were included in the sampling frame for the survey. Potential respondents were notified by postcard, reminded midway through data collection by an interactive voice response (IVR) message, and offered entry into a raffle as an incentive.

QMR completed 266 interviews of which 228 were administered by telephone interviewers and 38 completed online. 178 (67%) of survey respondents were riders and 88 (33%) were caregivers answering on behalf of riders. The survey was offered in English and Spanish, though only one interview was completed in Spanish. About 30% of survey respondents reported using wheelchairs, and 58% reported annual household incomes under \$30,000.

Respondents' answers to individual questions were ranked on a five-point scale, with the most positive responses assigned five points, and the most negative responses assigned one point. Individual responses were then aggregated to produce an overall or average score for each question. The final margin of error for the survey scores is $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% confidence level. QMR's preliminary findings are included as Attachment 1. In addition to the scored questions, the survey also included open-ended comments, a summary of which is included as Attachment 2.

Survey Results:

Consumer satisfaction with LINK and OSR was generally above average, the overall rider experience earning a mean satisfaction score of 3.95 out of 5. 68% of respondents rated their overall experience as "Great" or "Excellent," 23% "Satisfactory," and only 8% as "Poor" or "Very Poor." As well as program strengths, the survey also revealed areas for improvement, most notably related to timeliness of trips and time on board. Overall timeliness of the service received an average rating of 4.05 out of 5. Additional results are included in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Average customer satisfaction scores	
Service Attribute	Average Score (out of 5)
Overall Satisfaction	3.95
Driver Courtesy	4.44
Safe Driving Practices	4.46
Proper Wheelchair Securement	4.55
Call Center Staff Courtesy	4.45
Call Center Staff Knowledge	4.32
Ease of Booking Trips by Phone	4.3
Vehicle Cleanliness	4.46
On-Time Pickup	3.89
On-Time Drop Off	4.02
Reasonable Travel Time	4.08

Other Themes Identified:

First, awareness of some available programs is low: 41% of respondents were not aware of the My Transit Manager smartphone application, and 59% were unaware of the OSR program. Second, longer-term riders view the service's trajectory positively—of the 47% who have used LINK for five years or more, 54% said the service has improved over that period, 28% said it has stayed about the same, and 11% said it has worsened.

It should also be noted that 80% of those who use the My Transit Manager application reported that it works well for them. Additionally, although any Bay Area paratransit rider is eligible to use the OSR

program, only those traveling between the County Connection, Tri Delta Transit, LAVTA, and WestCat service areas actually do so, and because OSR is integrated seamlessly with LINK service, users may not be aware of OSR as a distinct program. Based on these findings, staff is focusing on strategies to improve service reliability by strengthening customer communication regarding service delays and other disruptions and expanding outreach about the My Transit Manager application and the OSR program.

Financial Implications:

None.

Recommendation:

None. Information only.

Action Requested:

None. Information only.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: LINK Rider Survey – Preliminary Summary of Findings

Attachment 2: LINK Rider Survey – Summary of Open-Ended Responses



County Connection LINK Ridership Satisfaction Survey

Summary of Findings

Prepared August 2026

Quantum Market Research, Inc.



Background

- Overall goal of the study is to measure rider satisfaction of the County Connection LINK paratransit service.
- This is the first rider satisfaction survey conducted for LINK riders.
- To ensure accurate representation of current riders, all respondents had to have used LINK in the previous 12 months.
- A total of 771 of the 1,655 registered users have used the service in that timeframe.



Methodology

- A total of 266 interviews were conducted – 228 administered by a QMR interviewer and 38 completed online.
- Among respondents, 178 were riders (67%) and 88 were caregivers (33%).
- Telephone surveys averaged 7-10 minutes in length.
- While the survey was available in both English and Spanish, only 1 was completed in Spanish.
- The final margin of error is $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

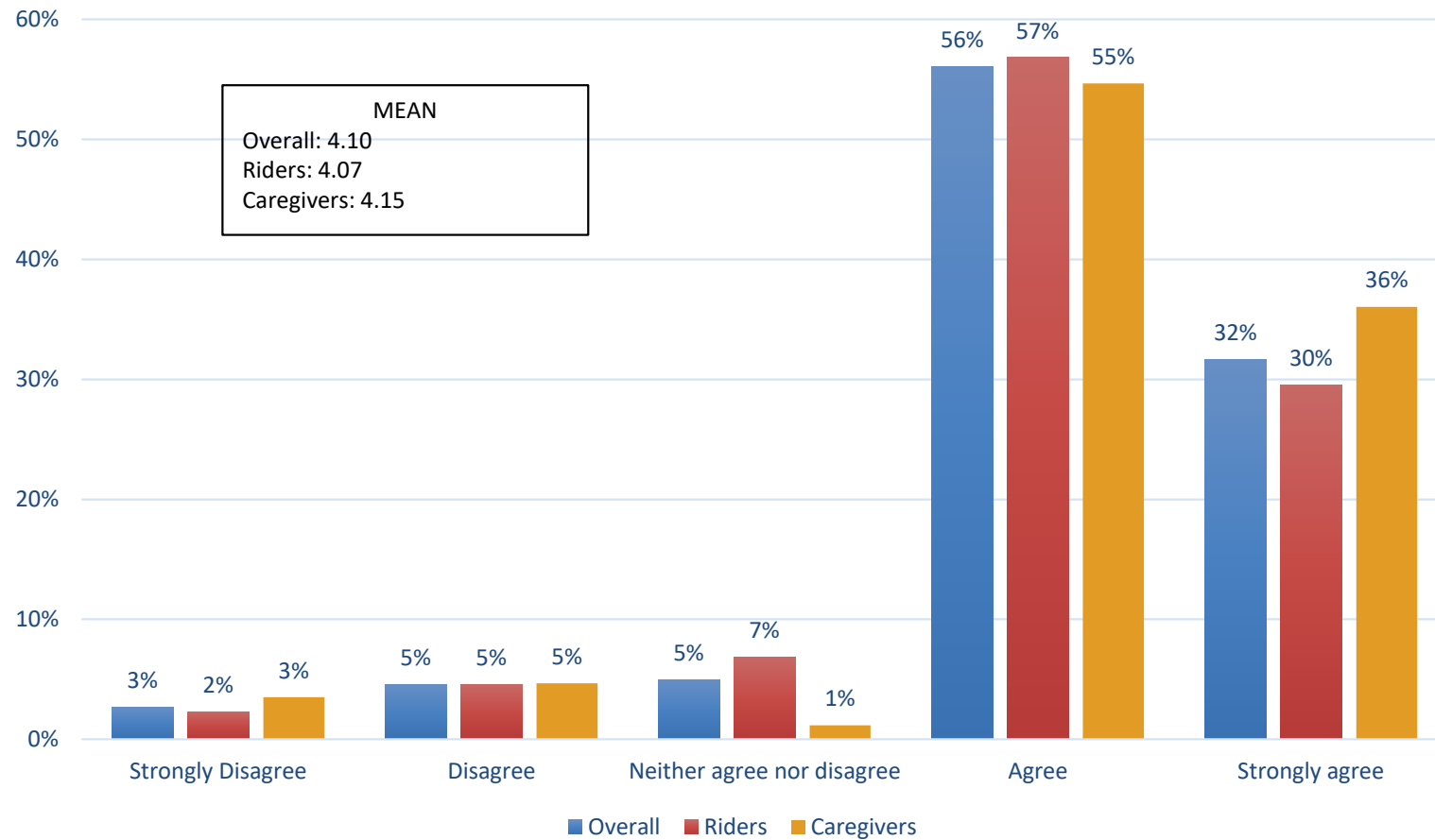


Methodology (cont'd)

- The questionnaire was designed by the County Connection project team and QMR.
- Questions focused on perceptions of telephone service, trip scheduling, ride experience, driver performance, technology, and overall service quality.
- QMR translated the survey into Spanish and programmed both English and Spanish interviews into the online survey tool, Qualtrics.
- Postcards were sent to all potential respondents alerting them to the study and asking for their participation, including the password needed to complete the survey online.
- Midway through data collection, messages were sent by County Connection via IVR to those who had not completed, inviting them to complete the survey.
- All respondents were offered the opportunity to enter into a raffle for a chance to receive one of four \$50 raffles.

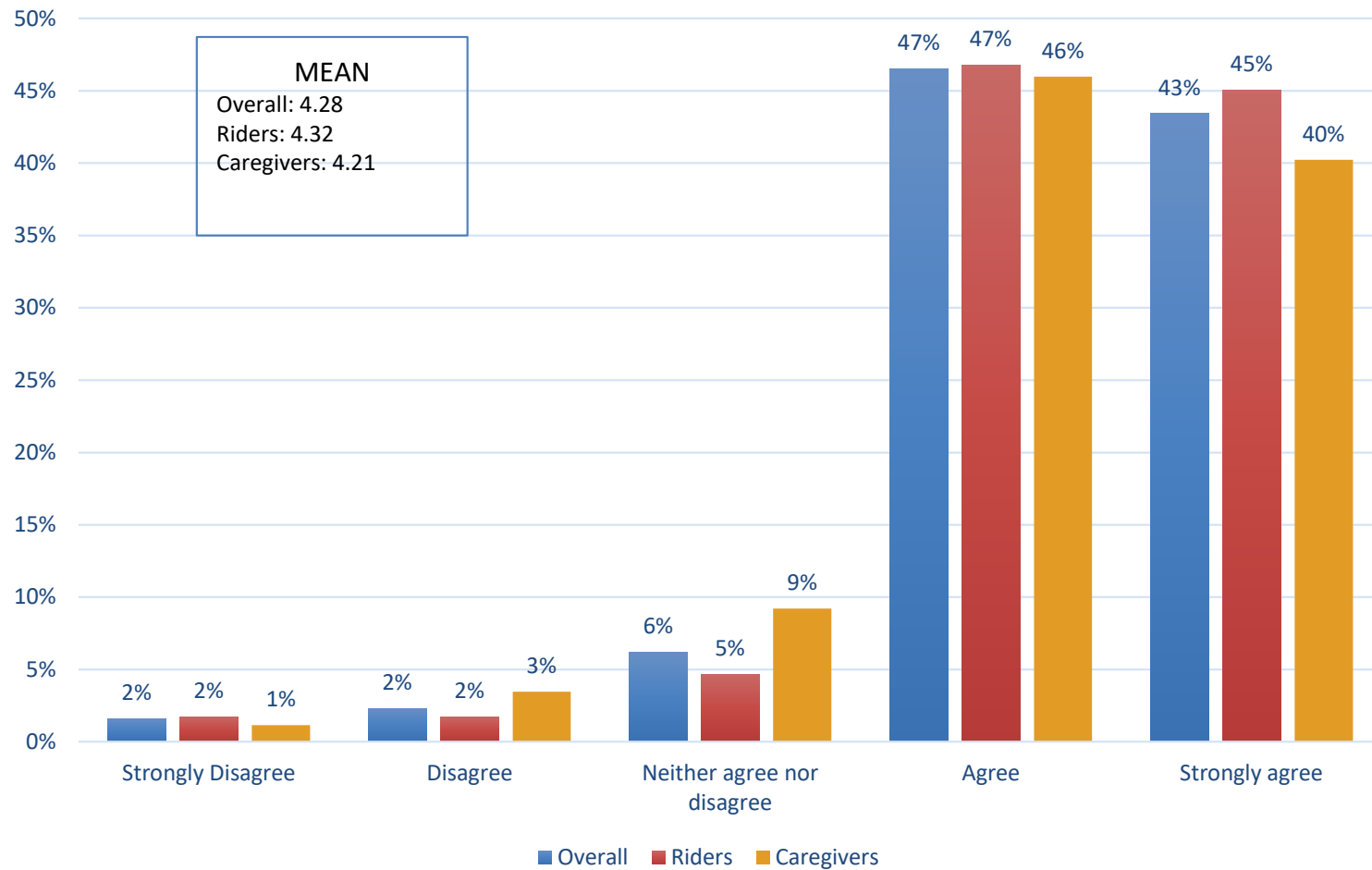


Acceptable Telephone Hold Time



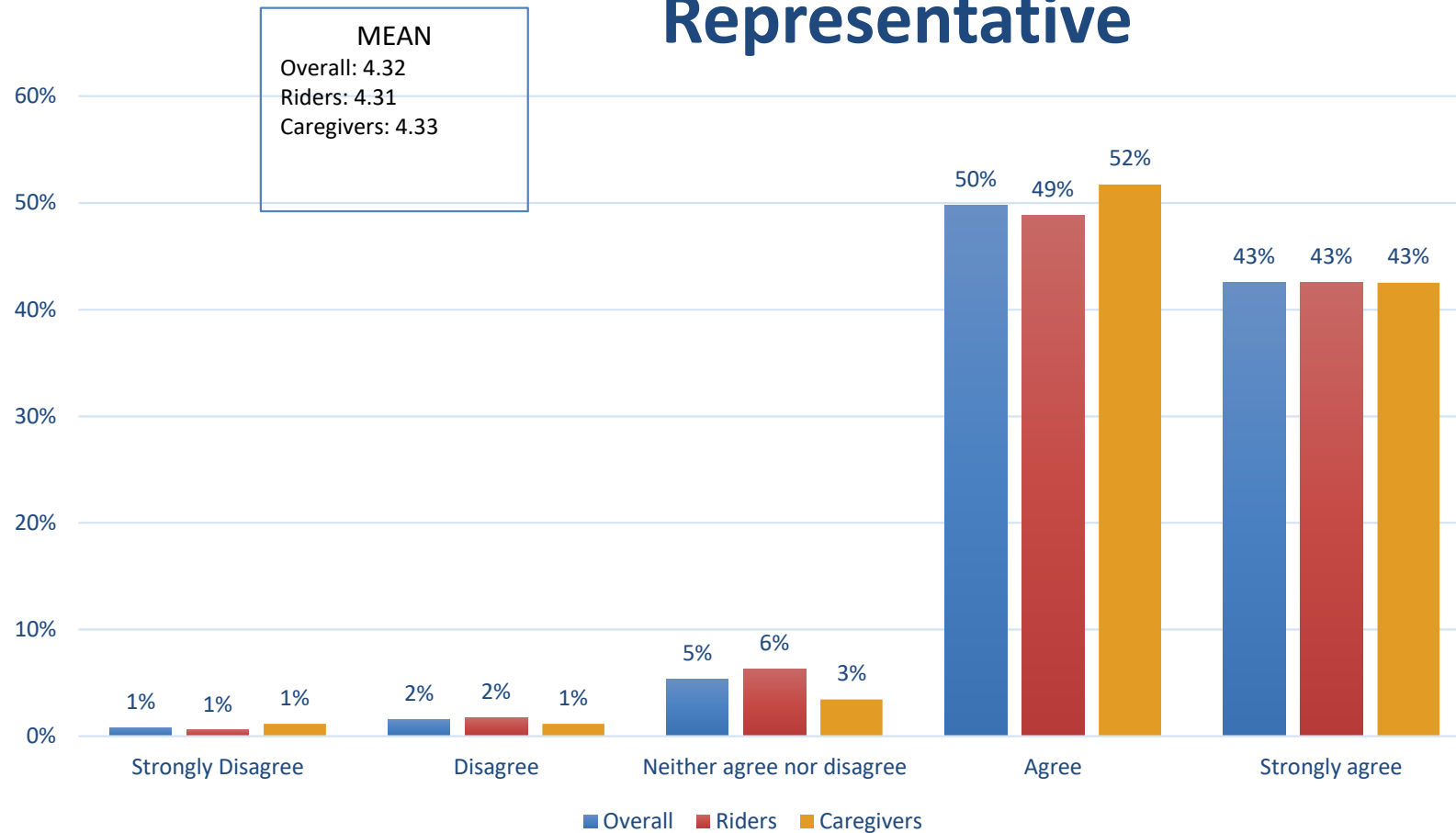


Easy to Navigate Telephone Menu



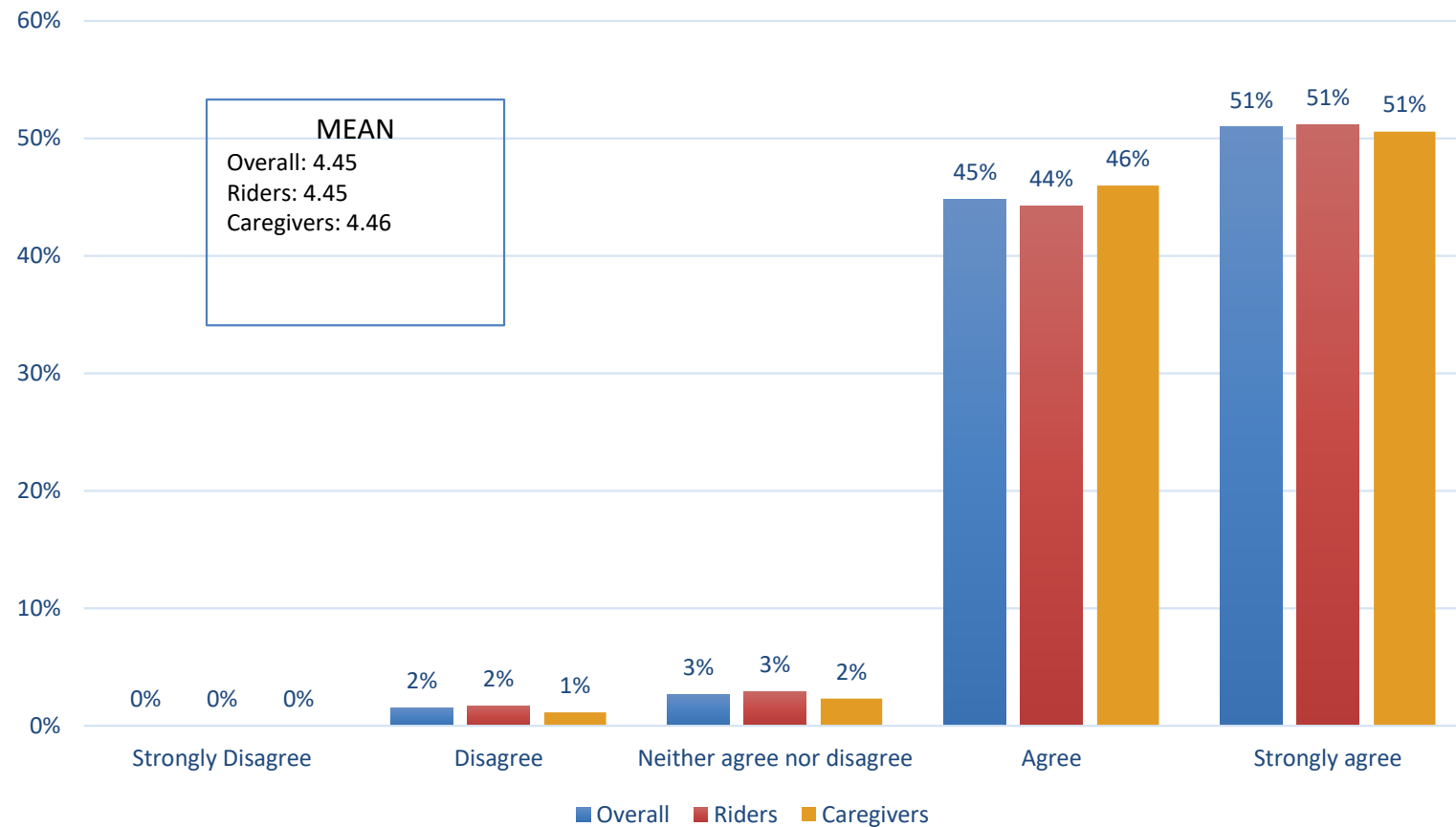


Knowledgeable Customer Service Representative



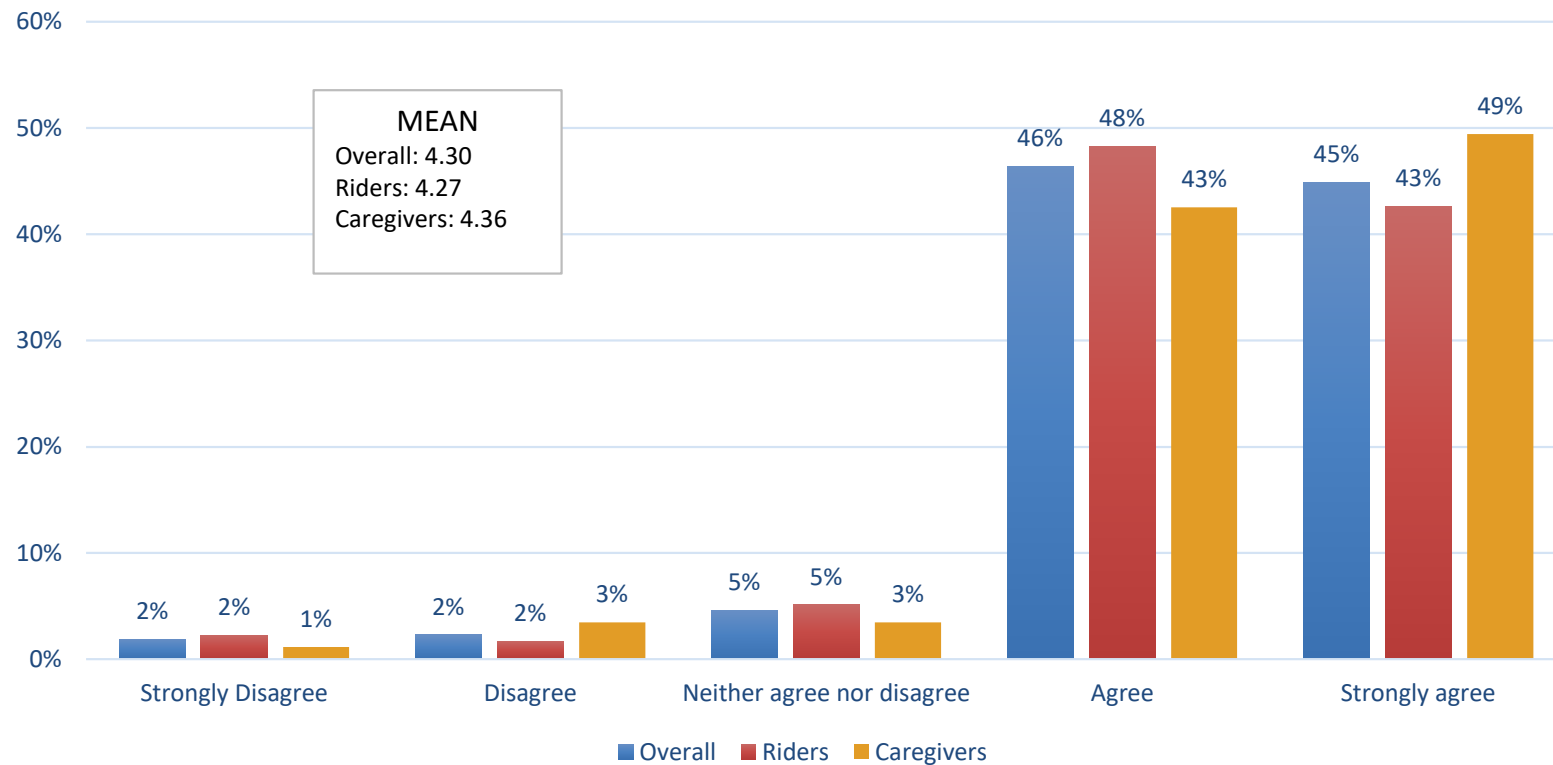


Courteous Telephone Representative



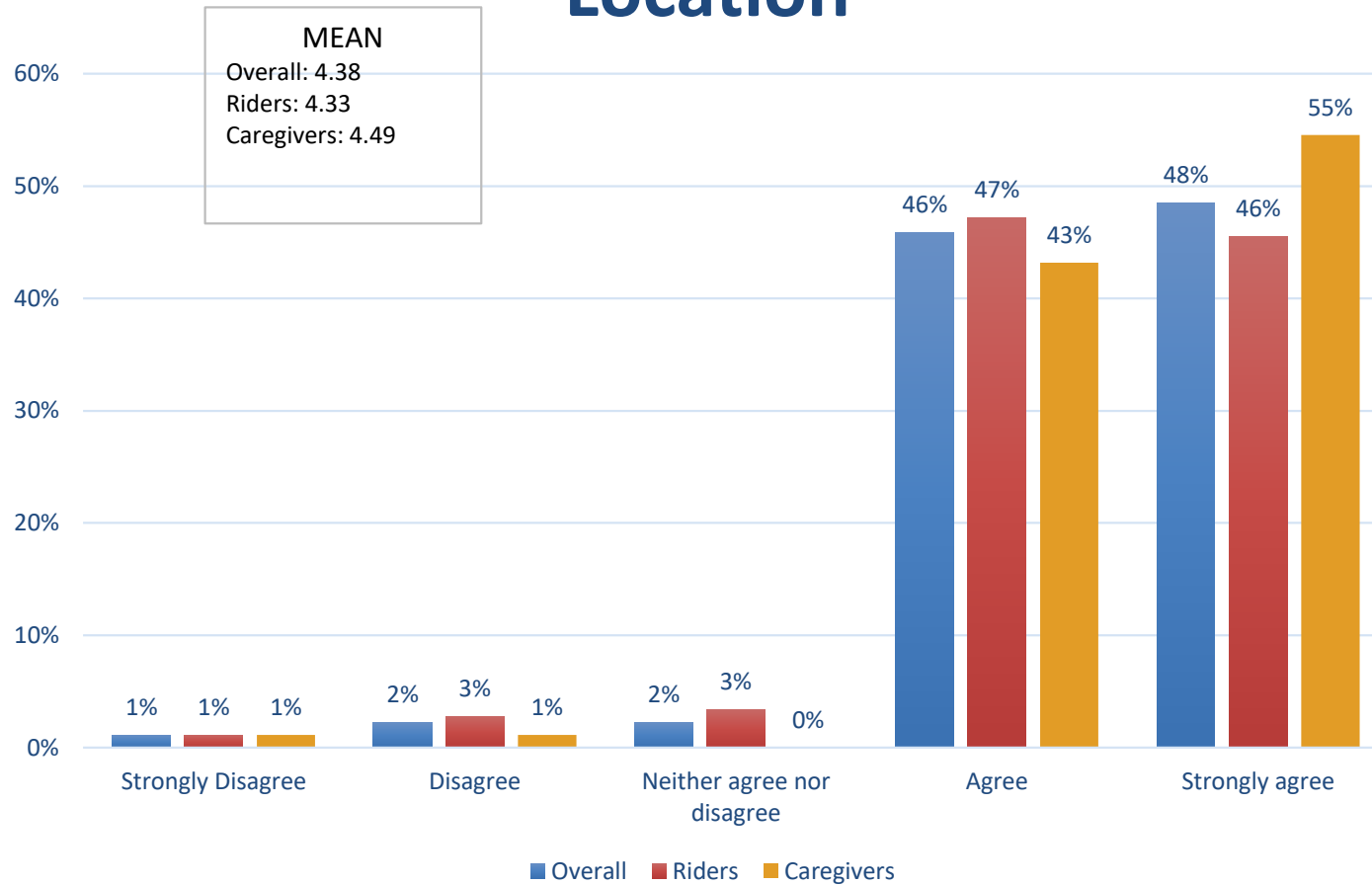


Easy to Make Transportation Arrangements by Telephone



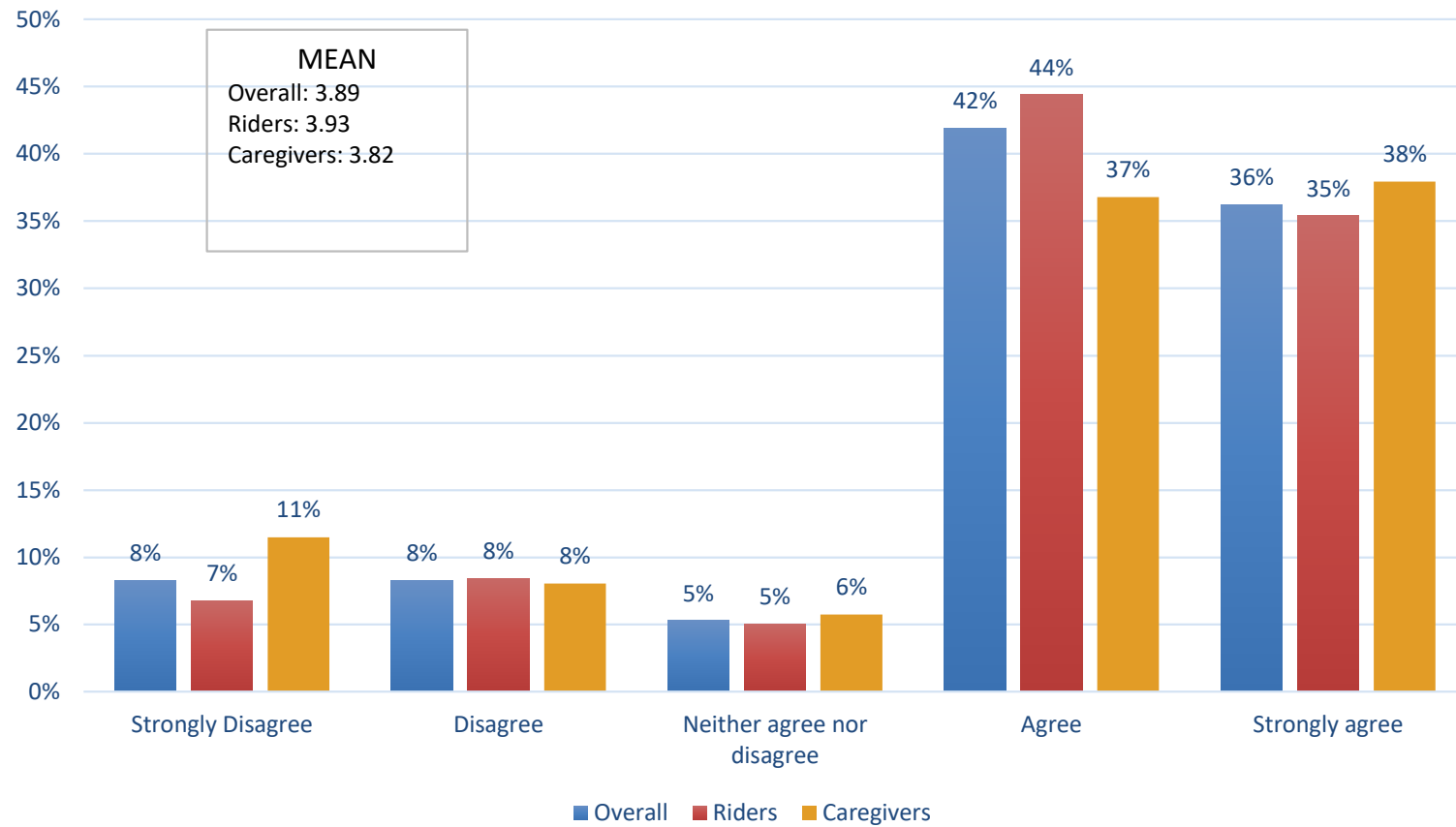


Arrived at Correct Pick-Up Location



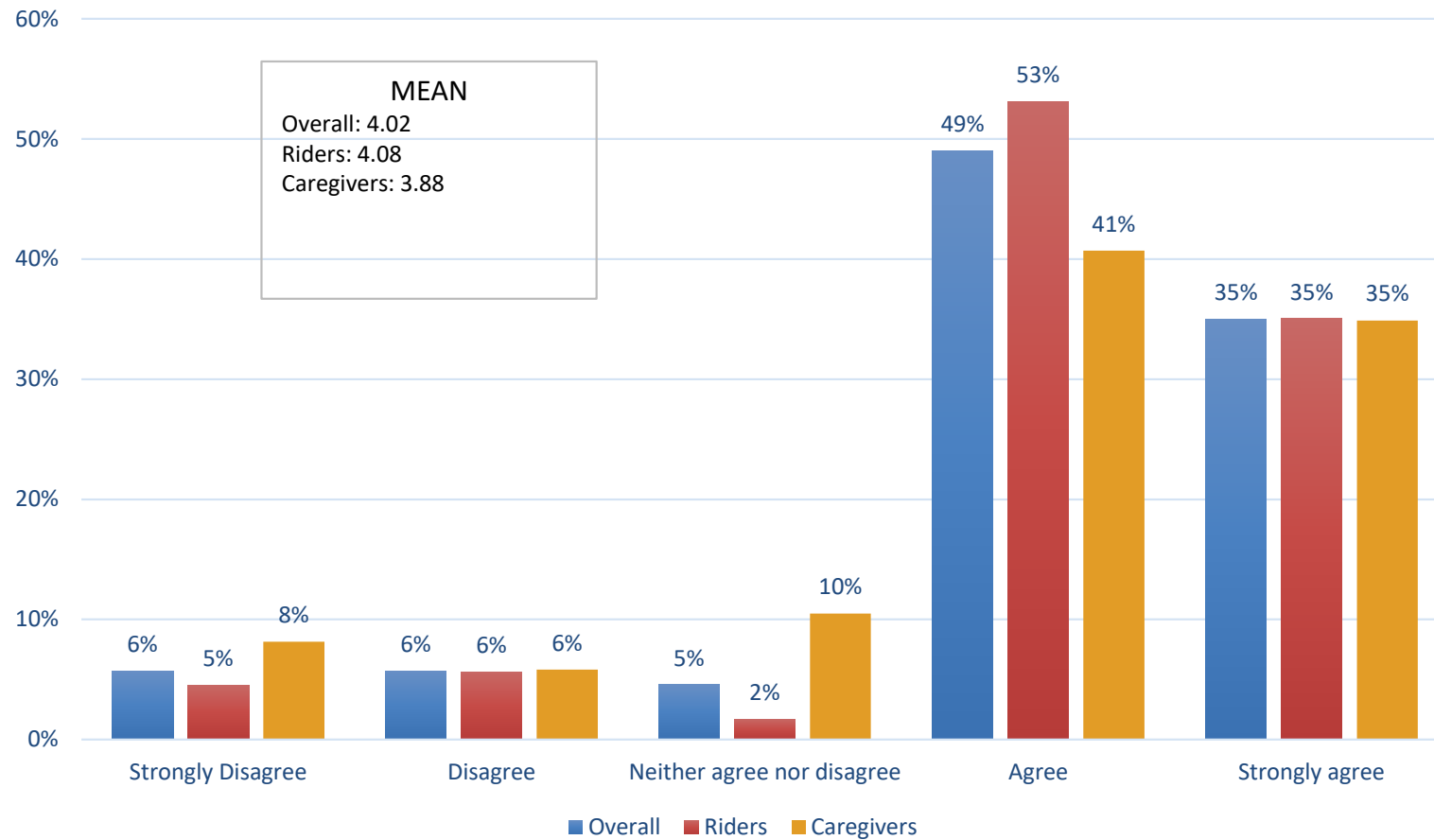


Vehicle Arrived on time for Pick Up



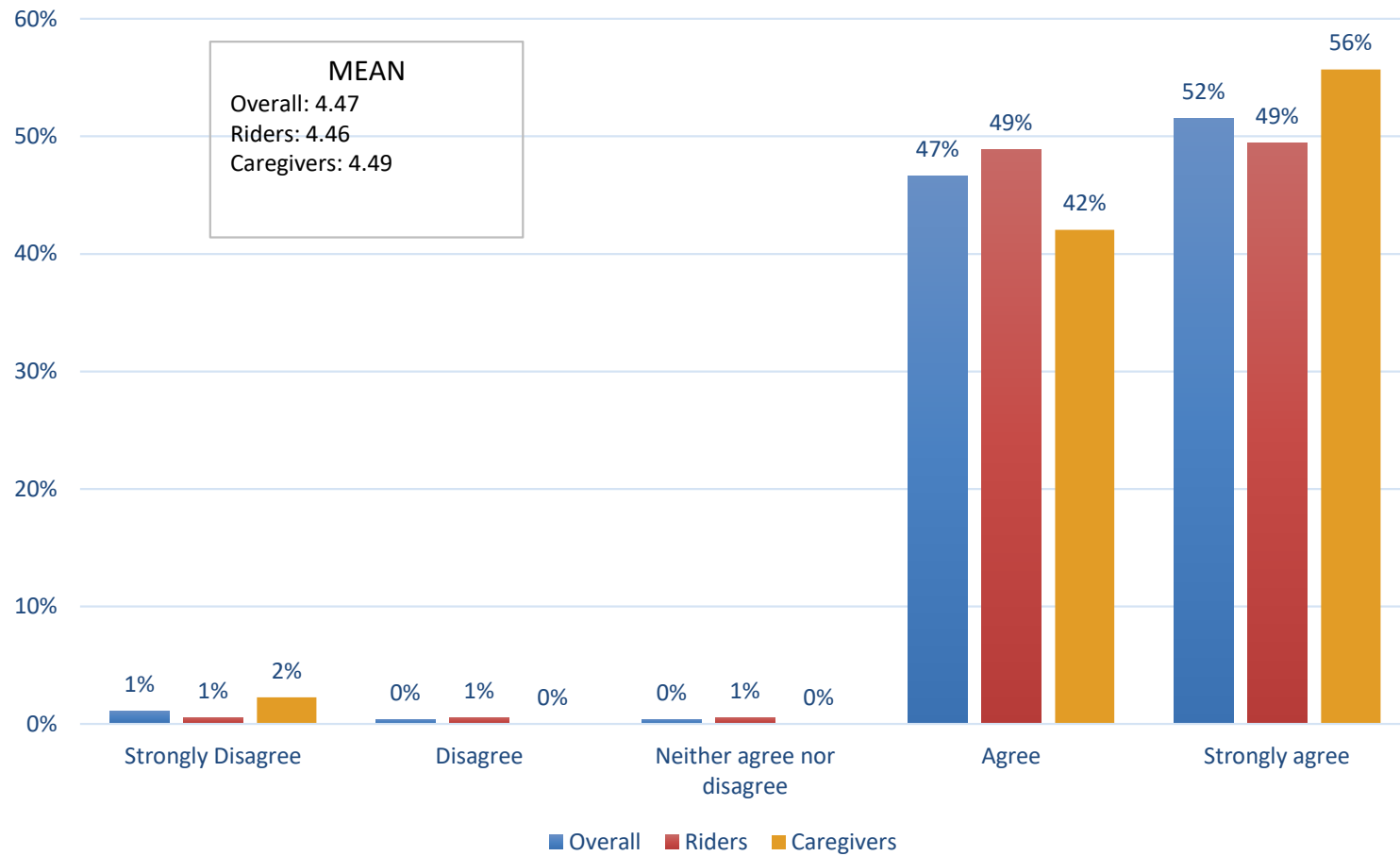


Arrived at Destination on Time



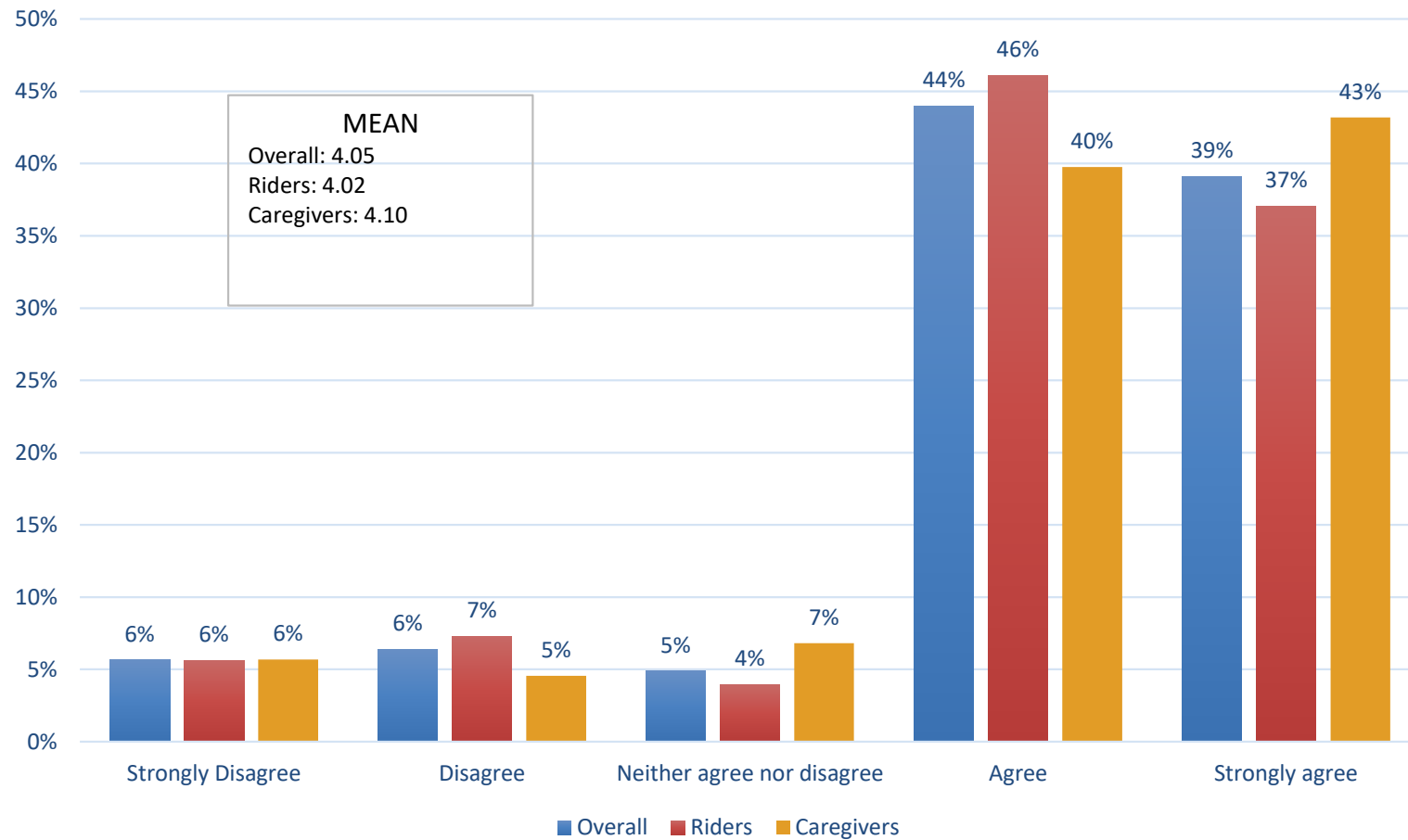


Dropped Off at Correct Location



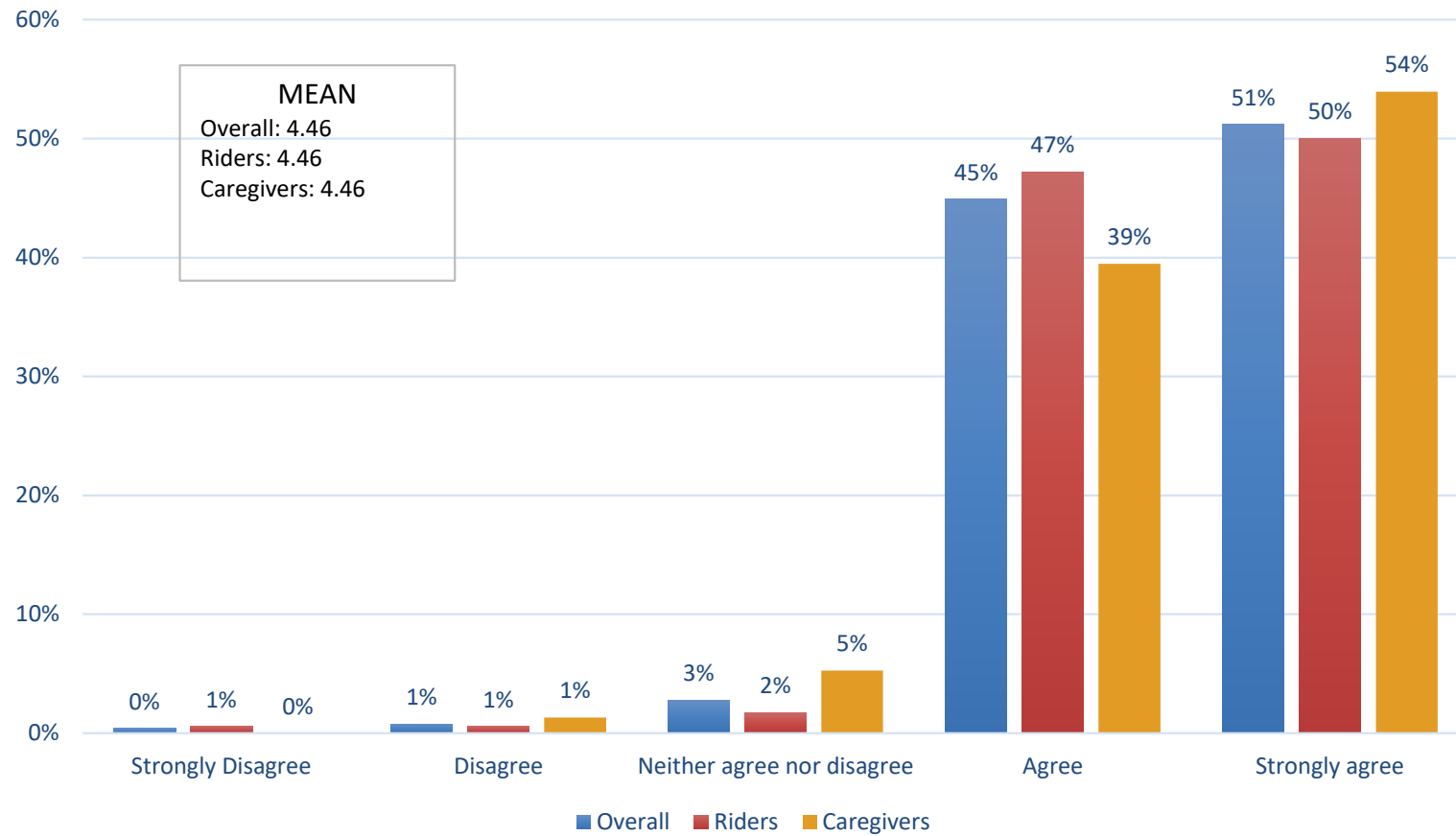


Satisfied with Trip Timeliness



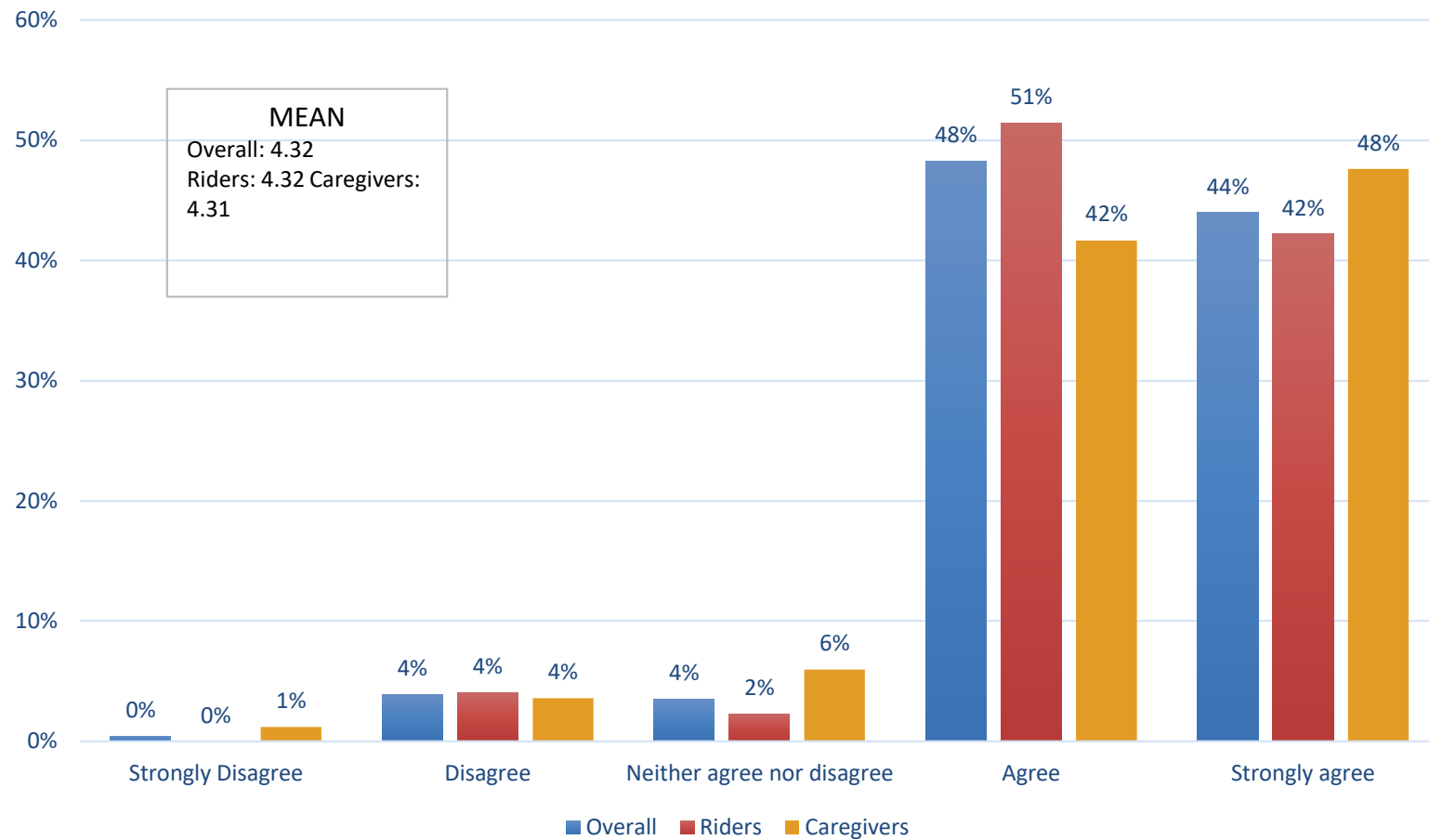


Vehicle was Clean



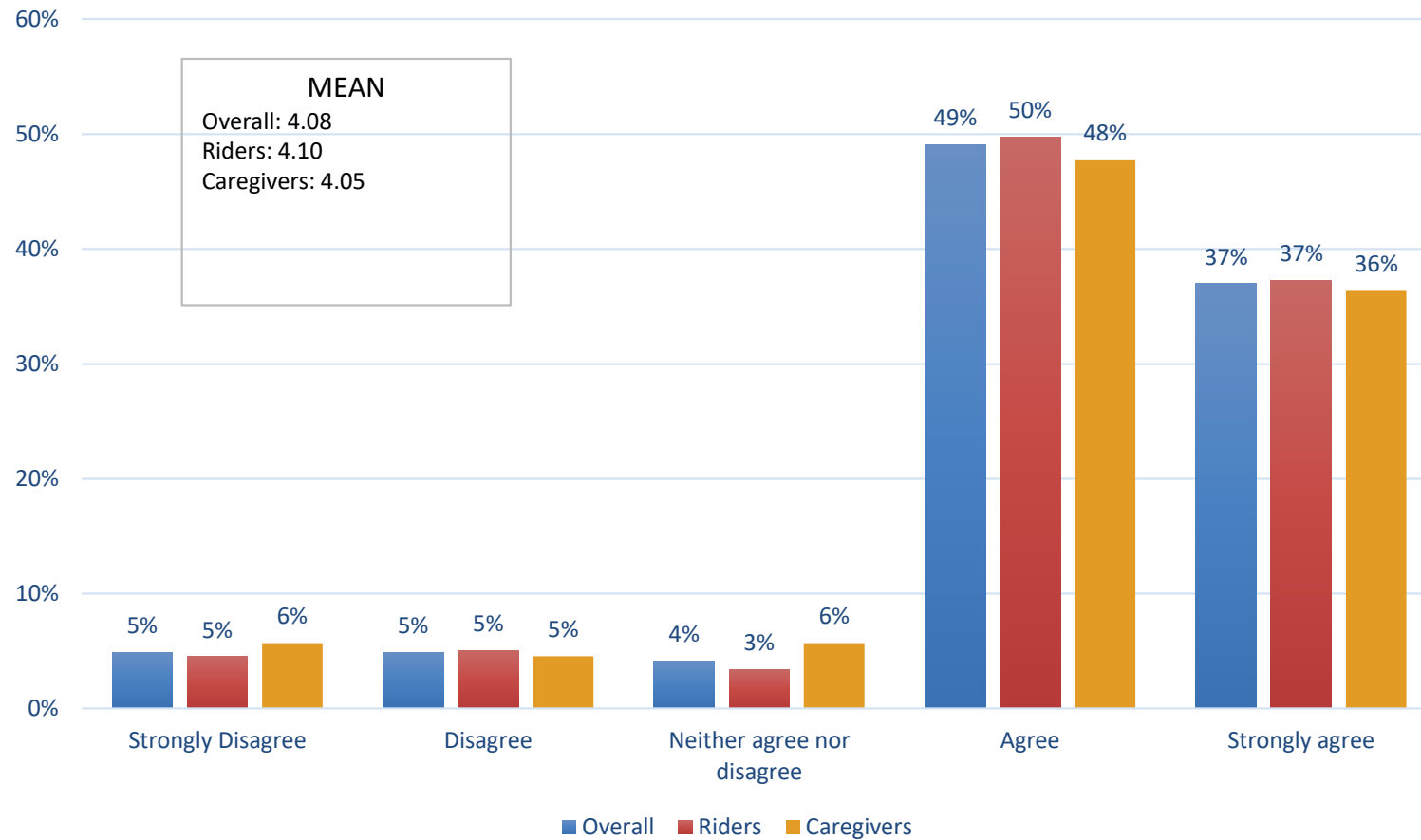


Vehicle Was Modern and in Working Order

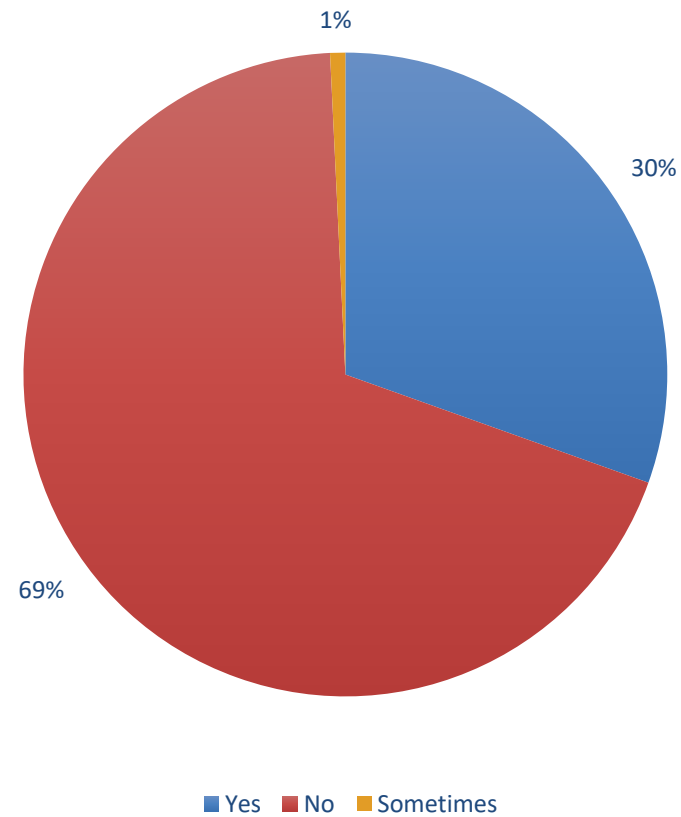




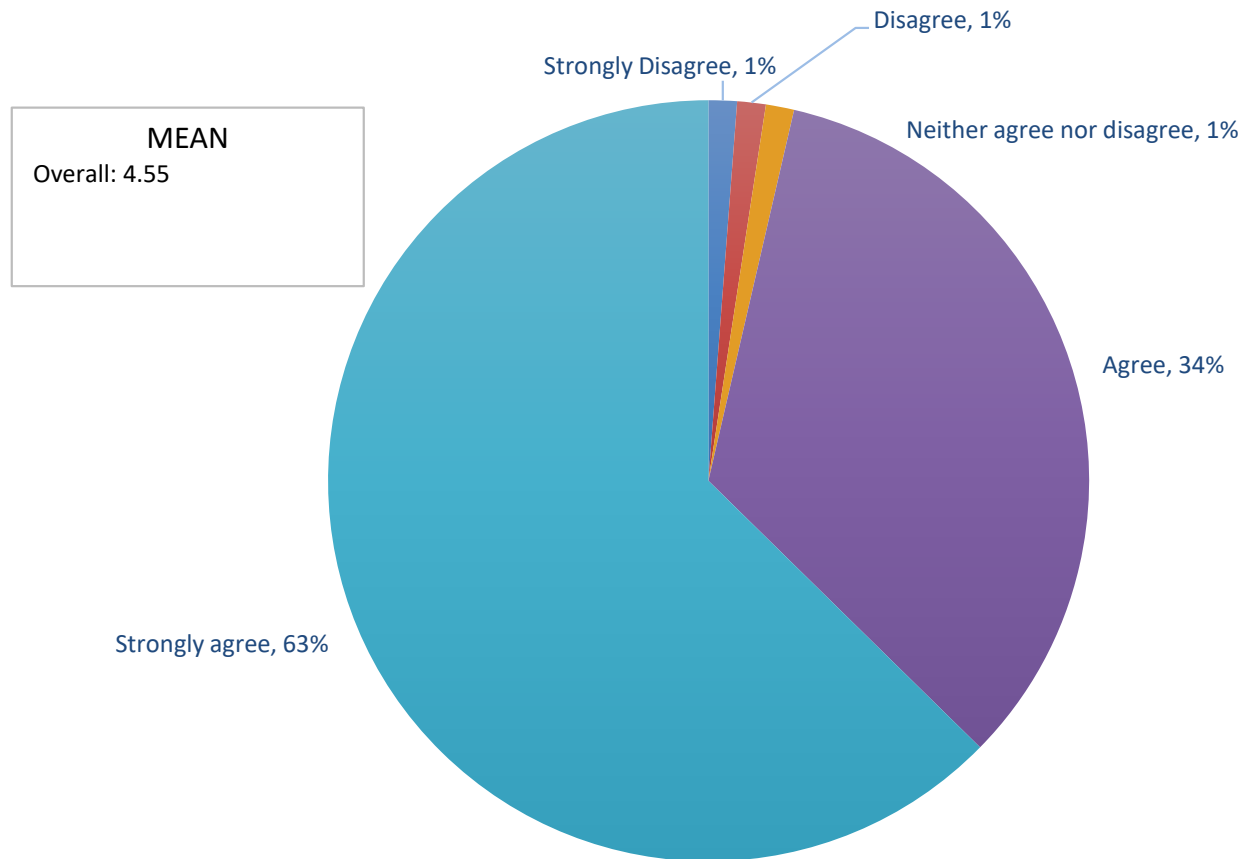
Reasonable Time to Get to Destination



Use of Wheelchair or Scooter



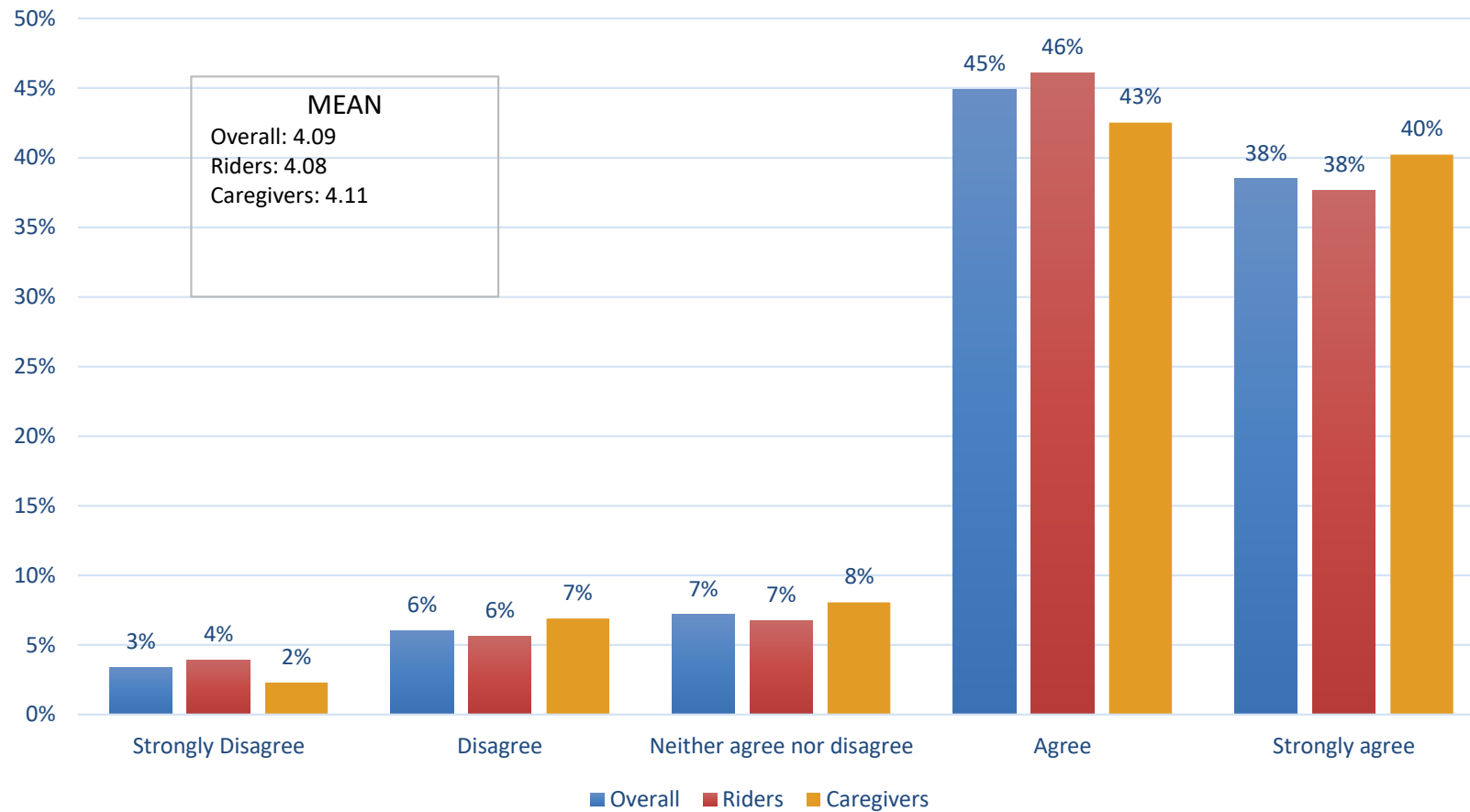
Mobility Device was Safely Secured



Note: Responses are based only on respondents who reported using a wheelchair or scooter (N=83).

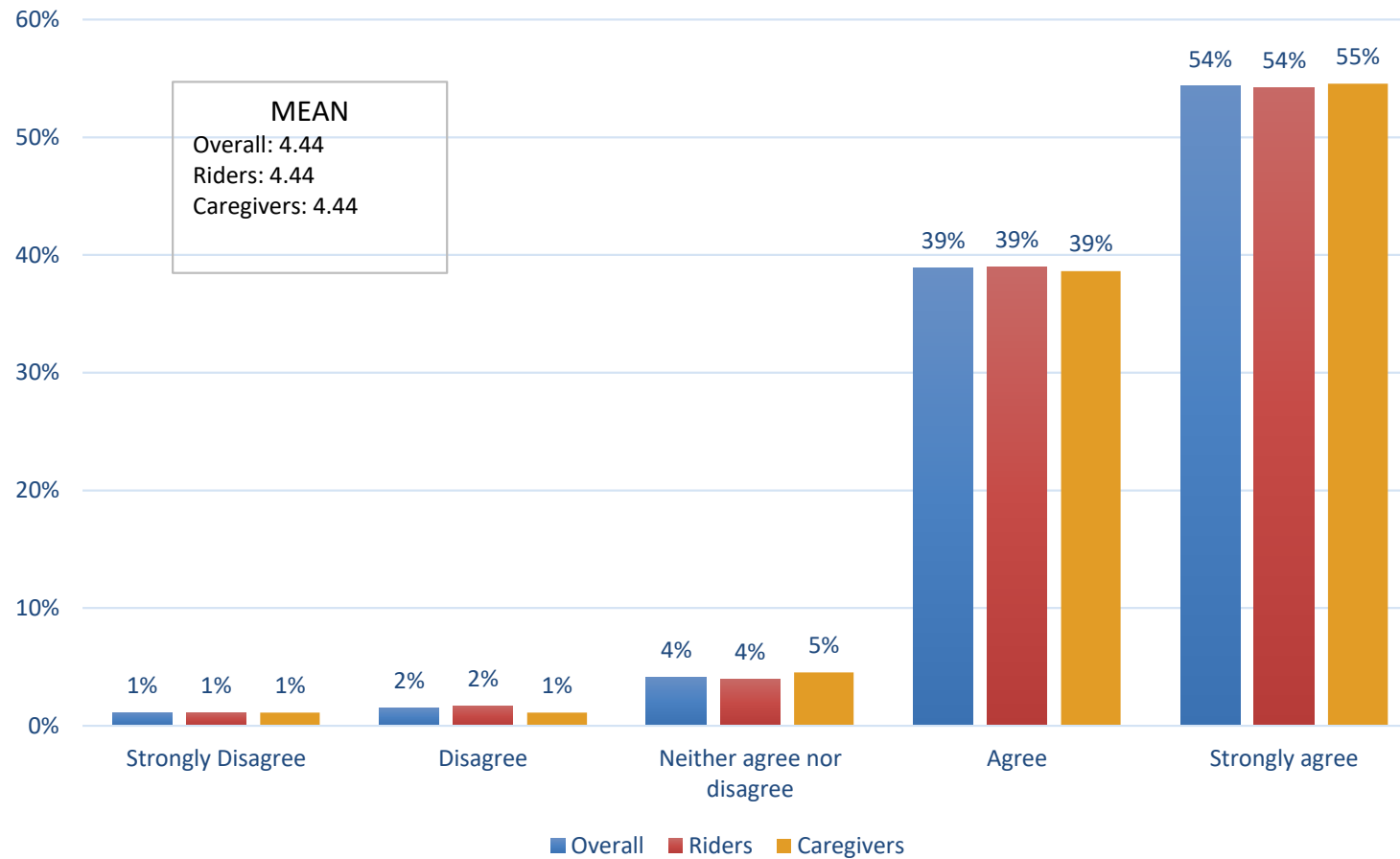


Highly Satisfied with Riding Experience



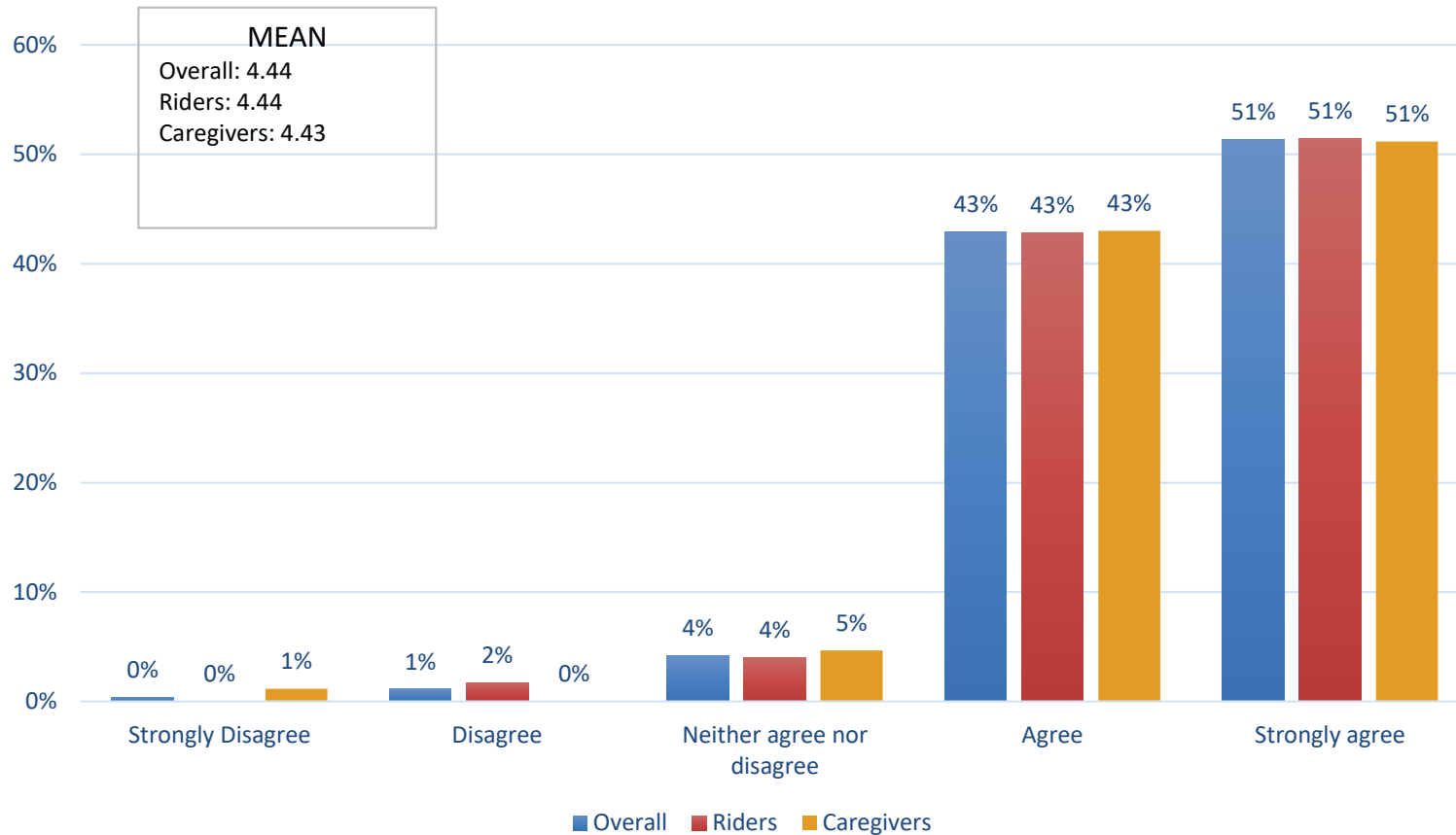


Driver was Courteous and Helpful



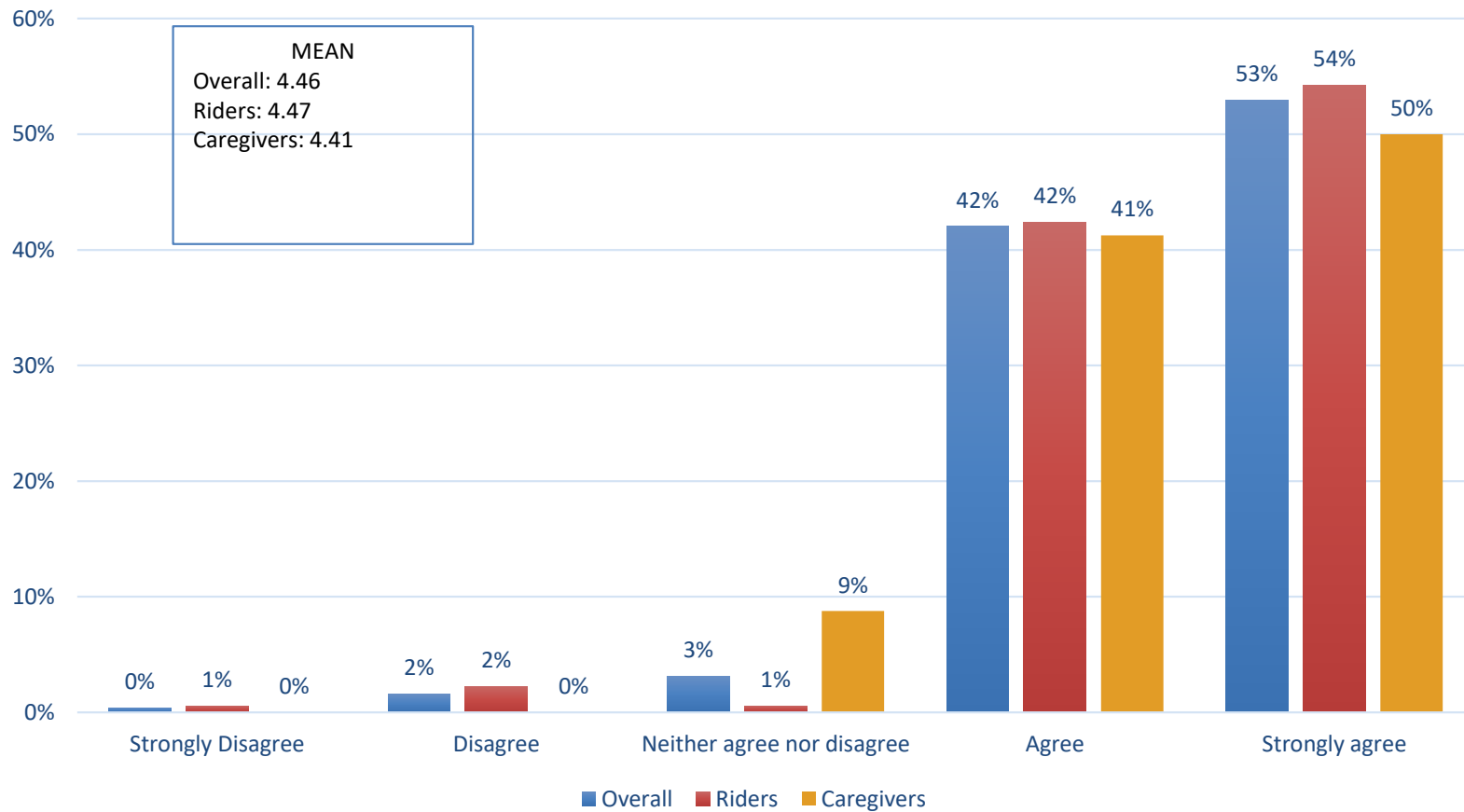


Driver was Dressed Appropriately and Clean



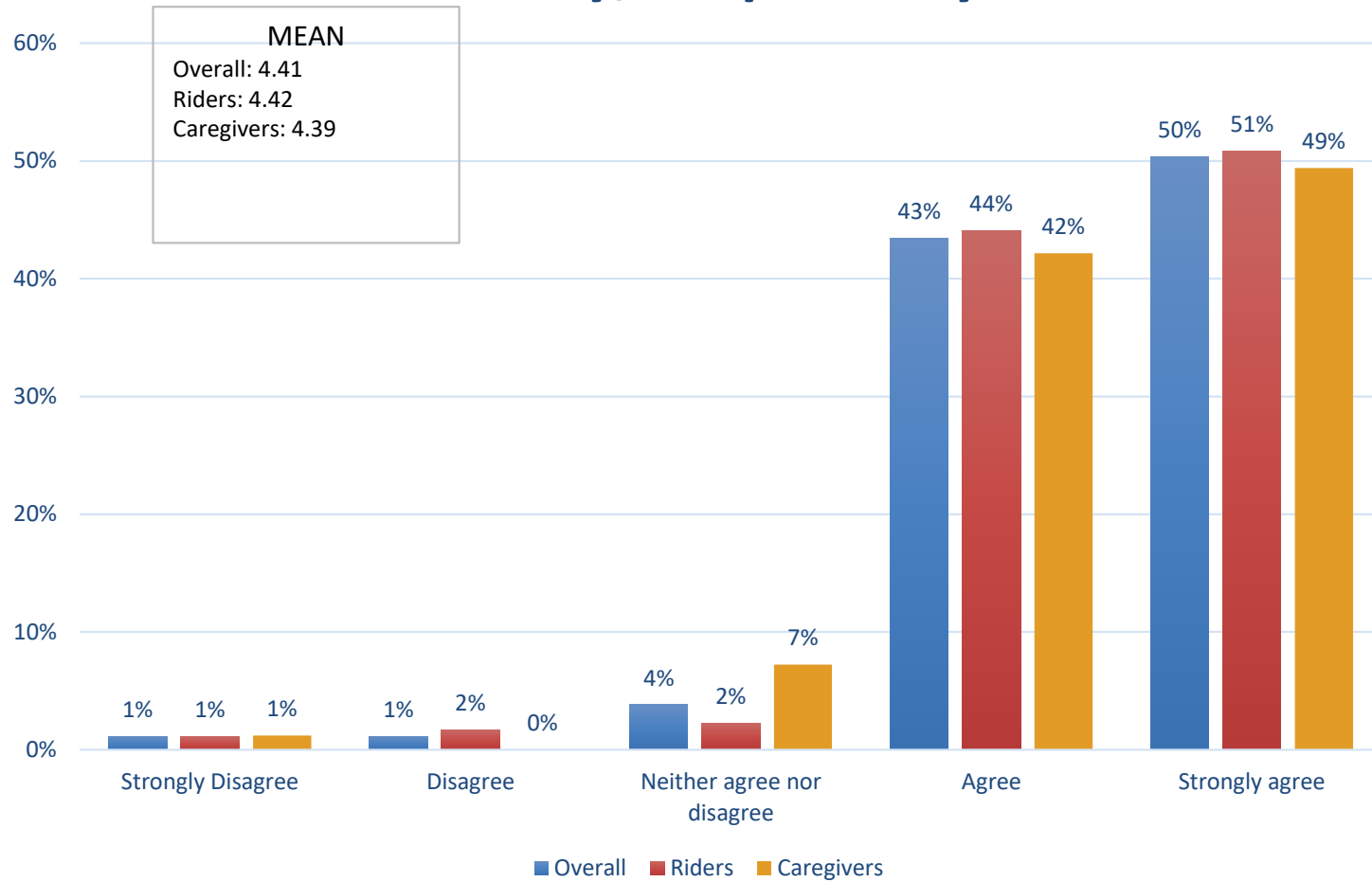


Driver Operated Vehicle Safely



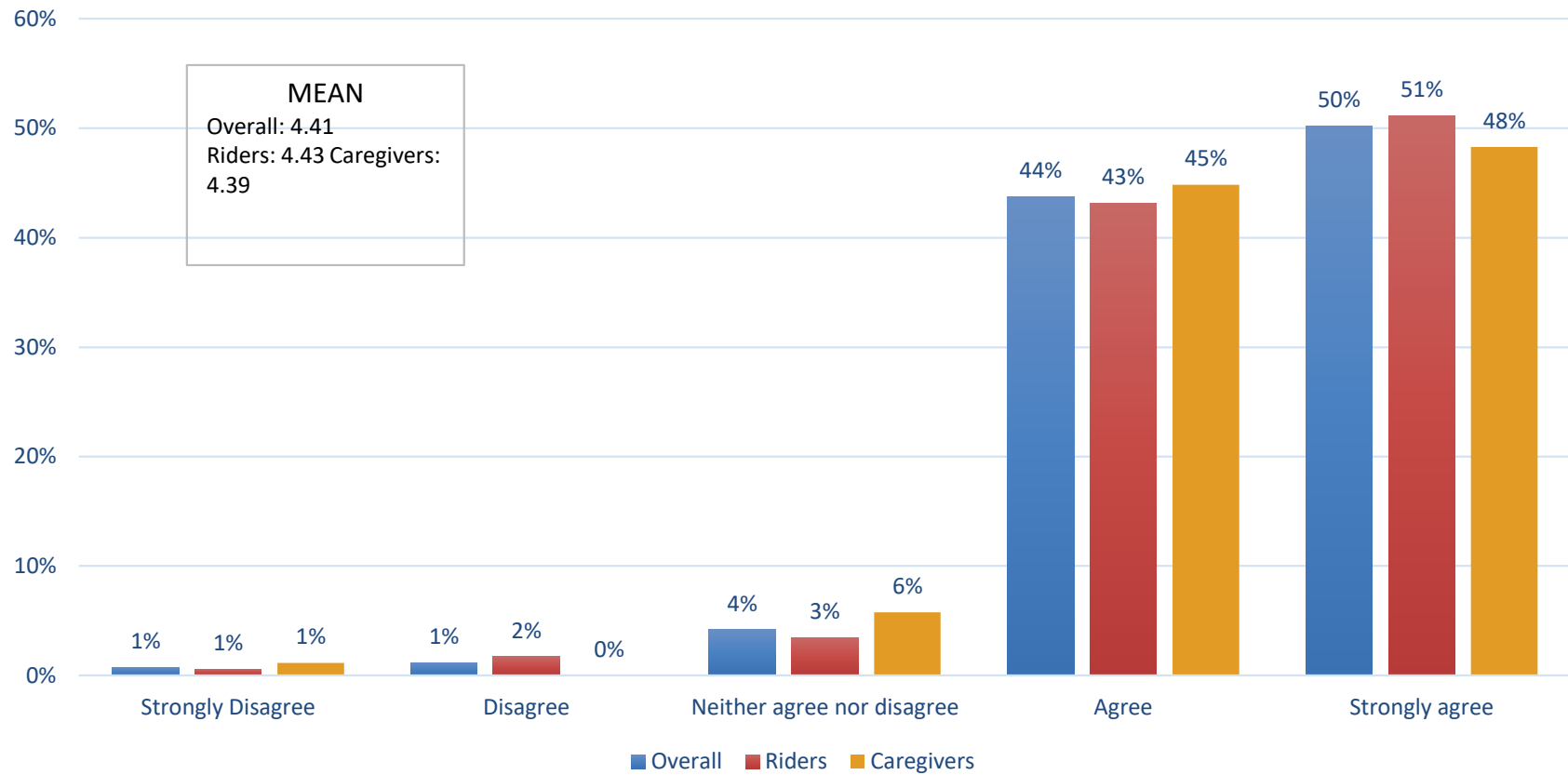


Driver Communicated Clearly/Respectfully



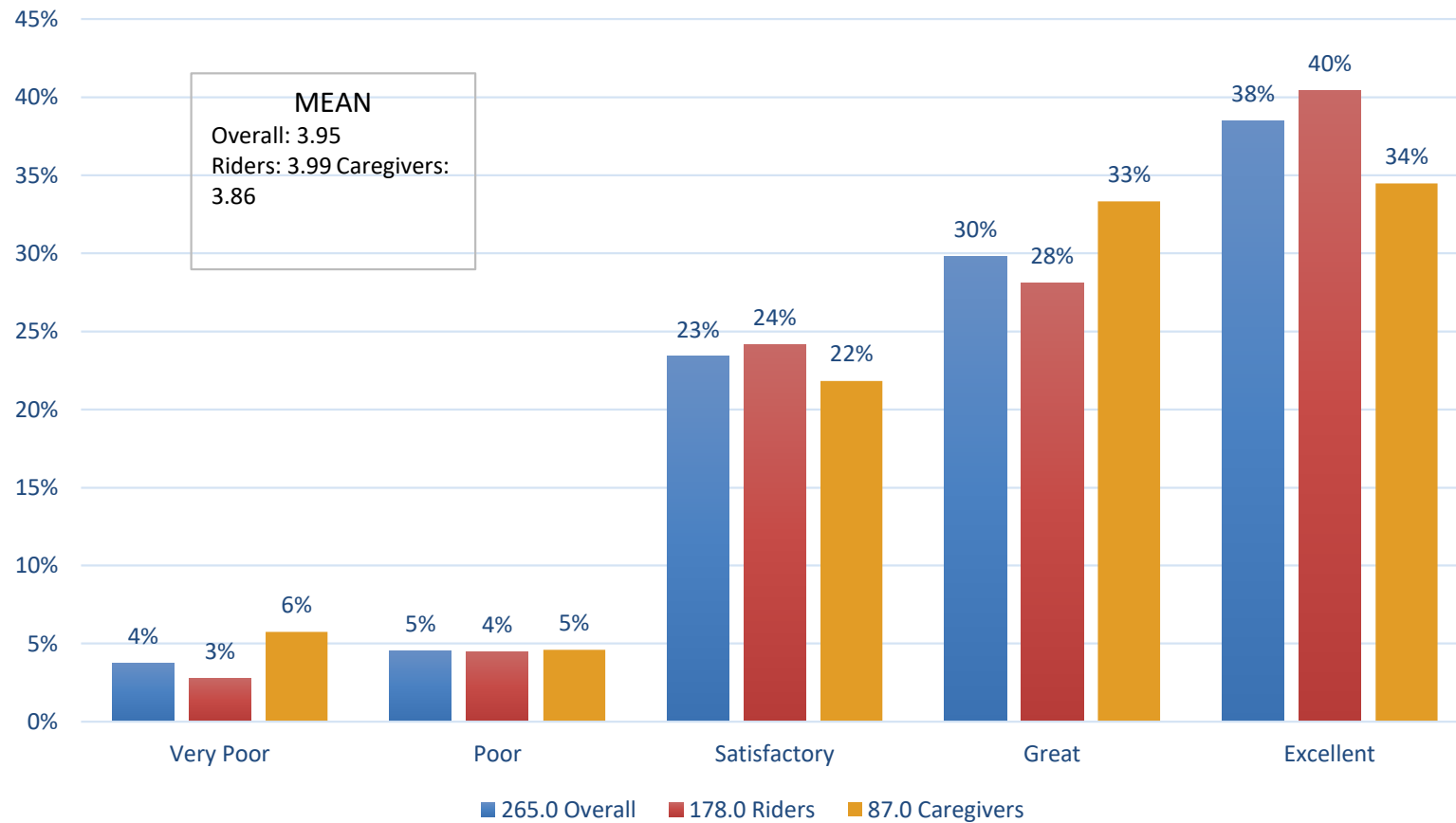


Highly Satisfied with Driver Performance



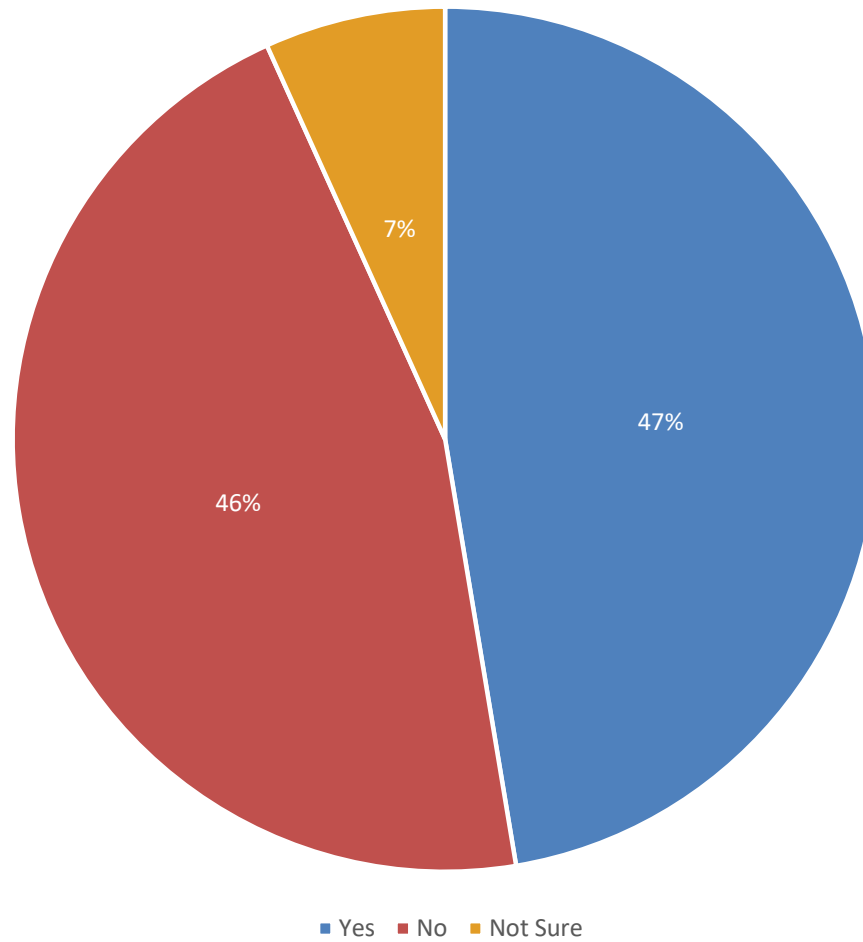


Overall Rating of LINK Paratransit Service



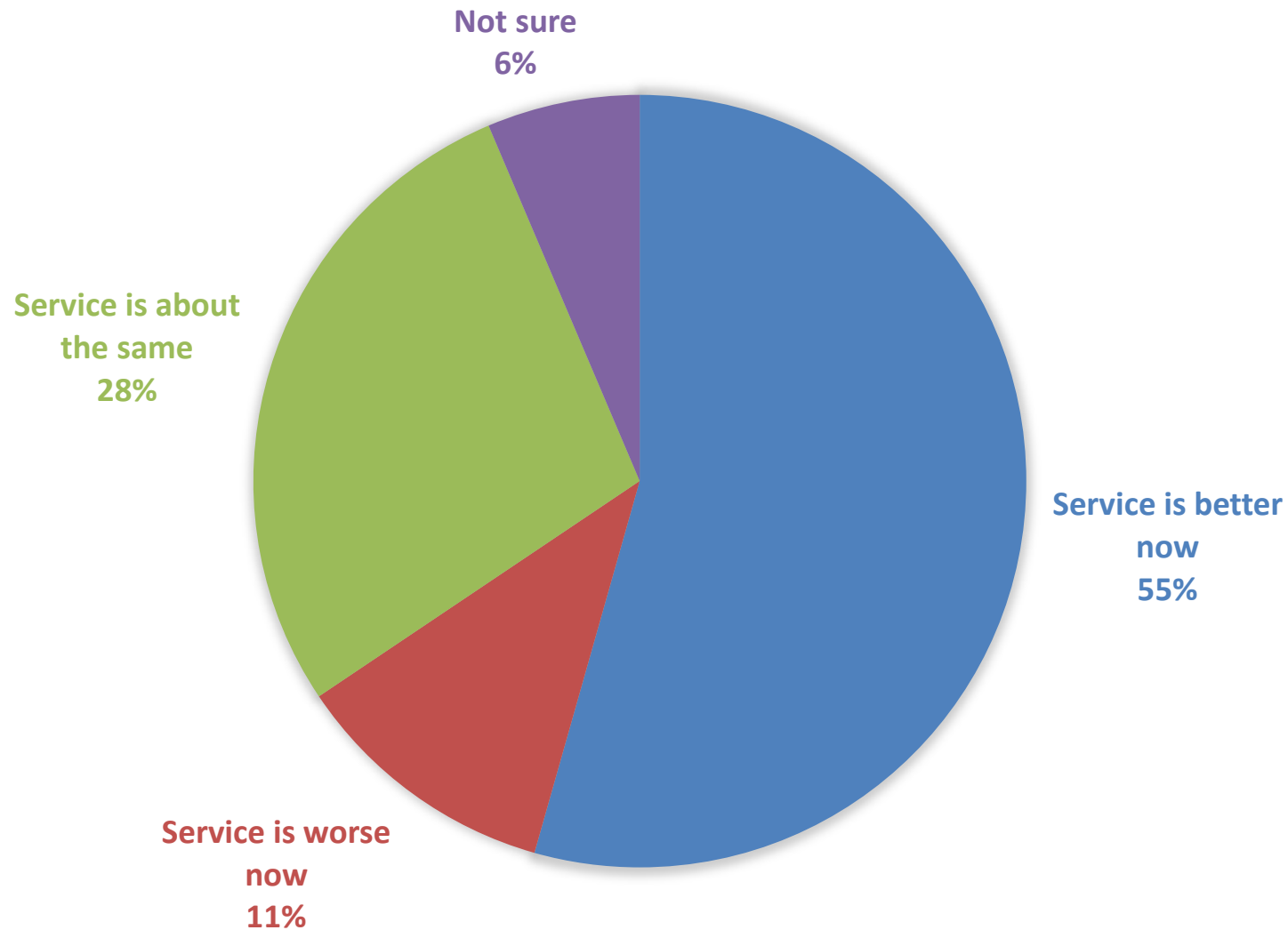


LINK Paratransit Rider for 5+ Years





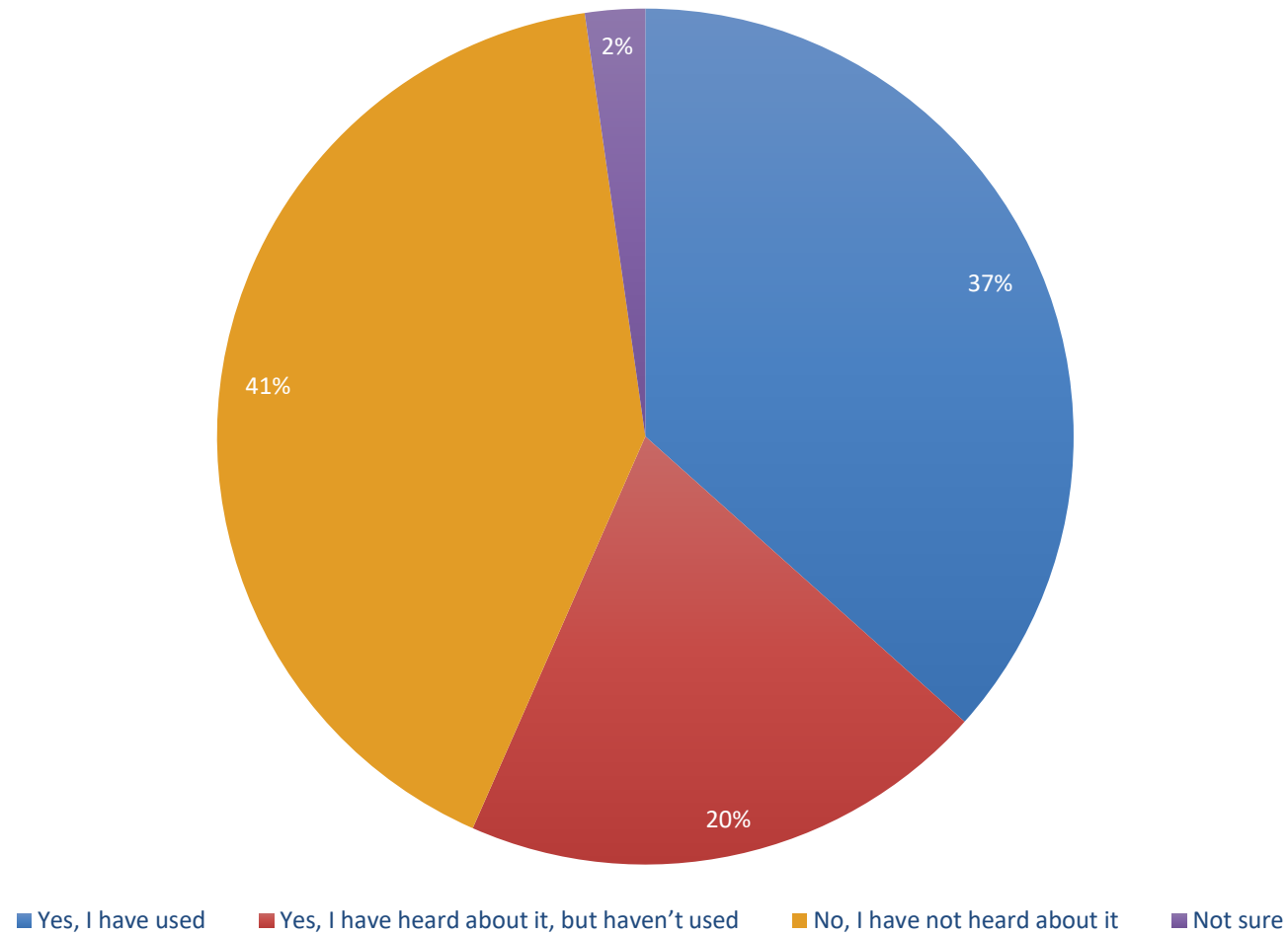
Service Changes Over The Past Five Years



Note: Responses are based only on respondents who reported being a LINK rider for 5+ years (N=125)

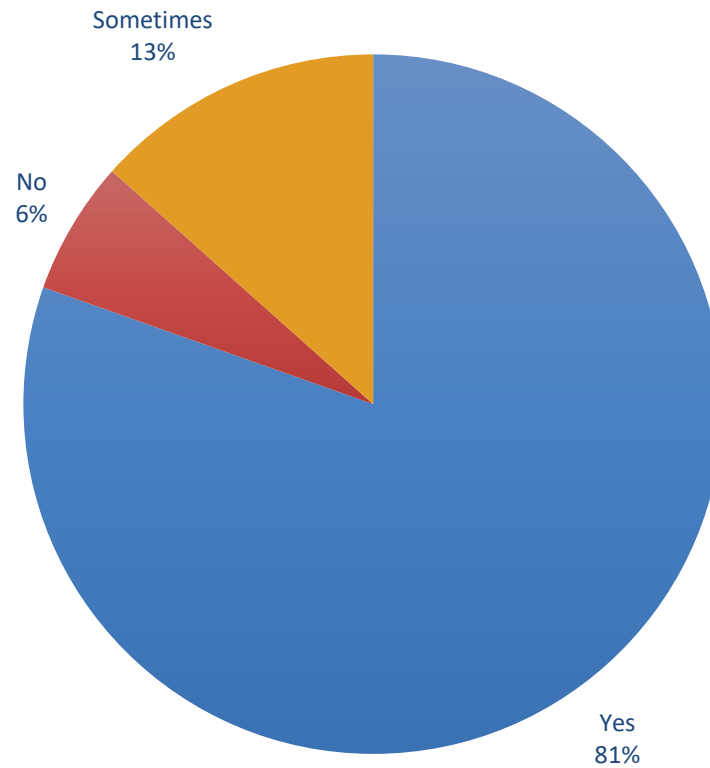


Awareness and Use of the My Transit Manager App



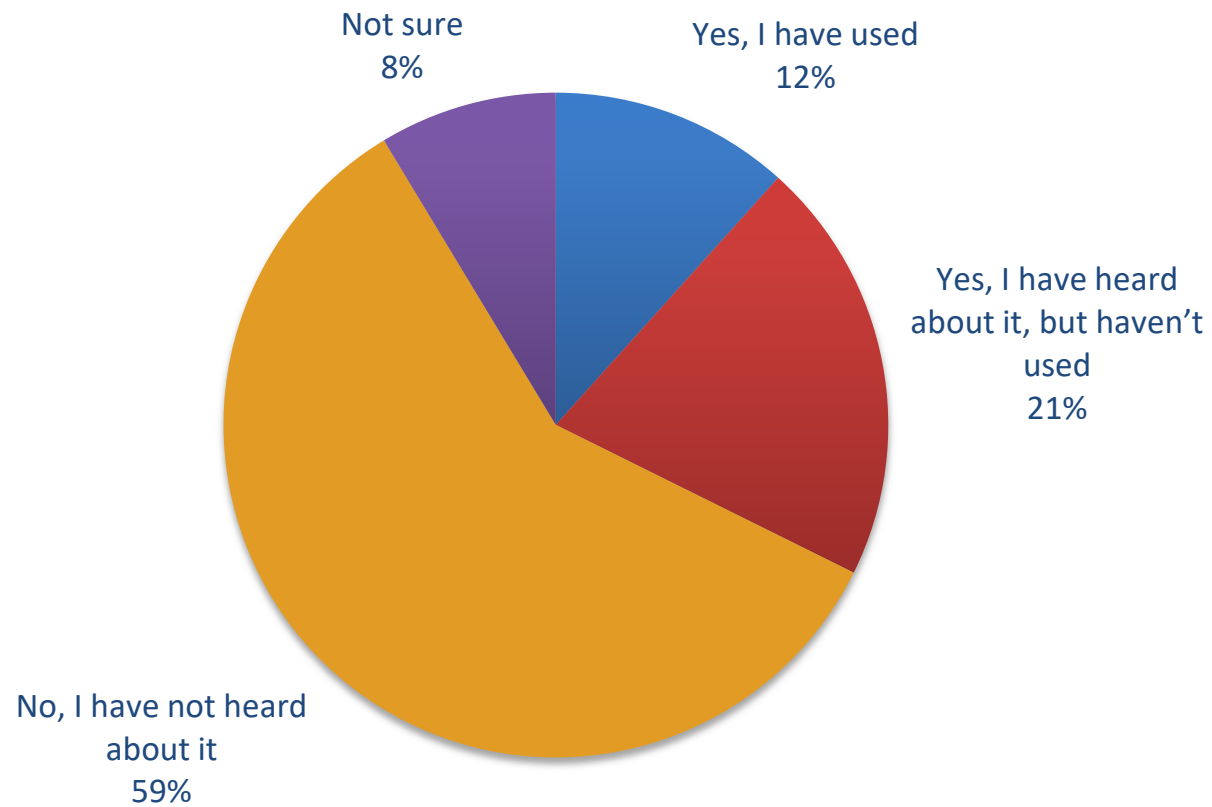


My Transit Manager App Works Well



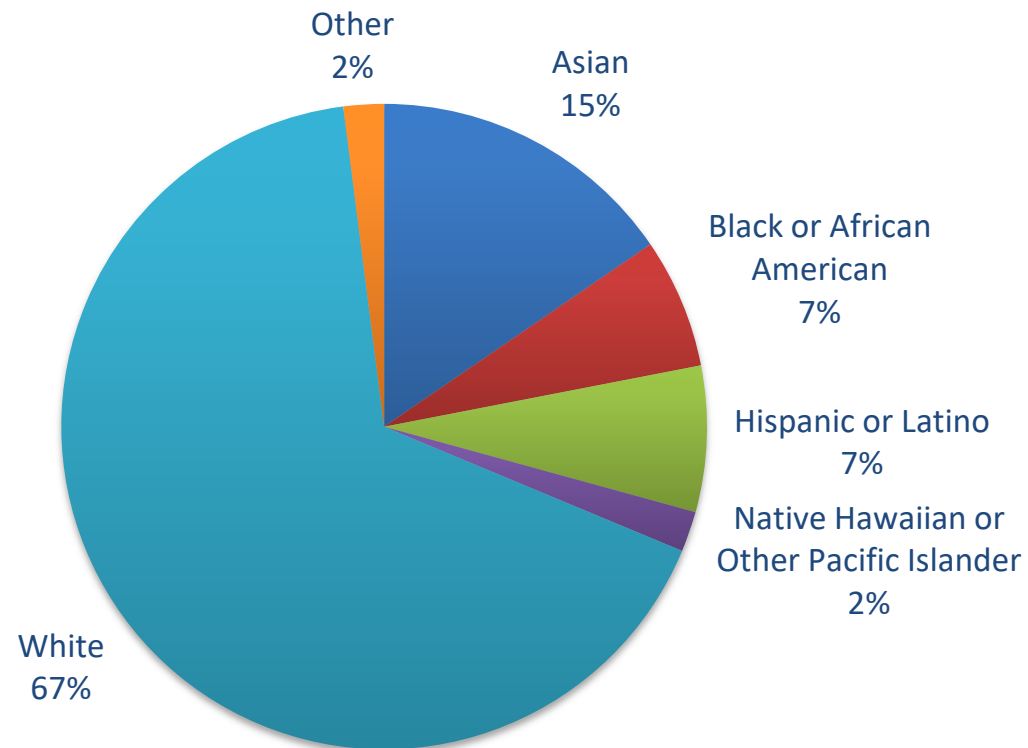
Note: Responses are based only on respondents who reported using My Transit Manager App (N=97).

Awareness of One Seat Regional Ride Program



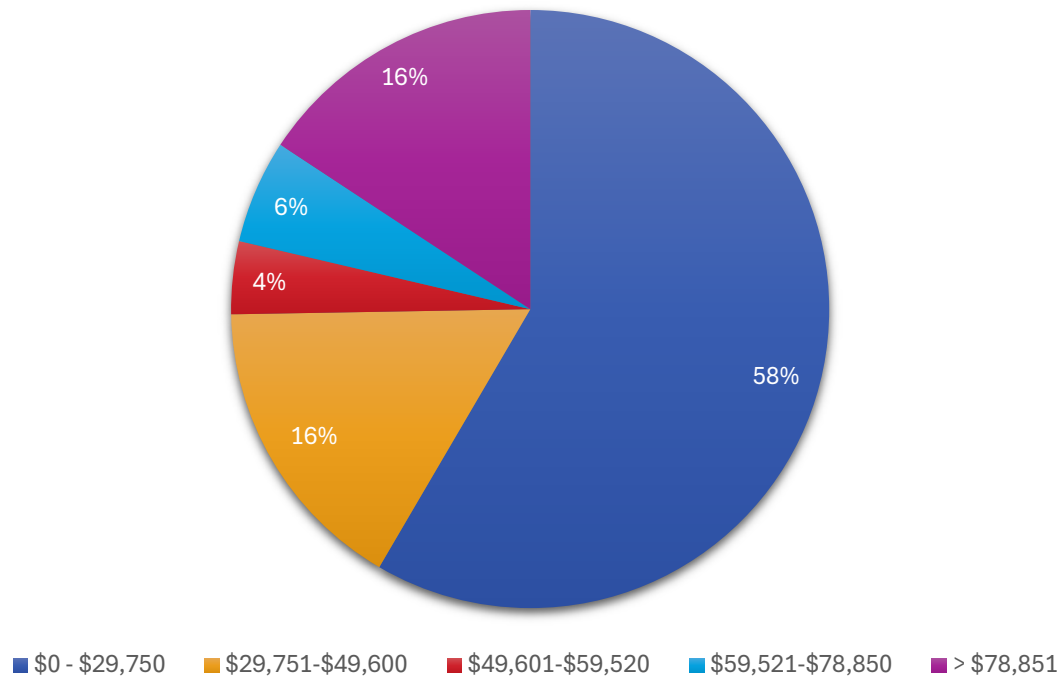


Race/Ethnicity





Household Income





Summary of Mean Ratings

Service Measure	Overall Mean	Riders	Caregivers
<i>Telephone Service</i>			
Acceptable Telephone Hold Time	4.10	4.07	4.15
Easy to Navigate Telephone Menu	4.28	4.32	4.21
Knowledgeable Customer Service Representative	4.32	4.31	4.33
Courteous Telephone Representative	4.45	4.45	4.46
Easy to Make Transportation Arrangements	4.30	4.27	4.36
<i>Ride Experience</i>			
Arrived at Correct Pick-Up Location	4.38	4.33	4.49
Vehicle Arrived on time for Pick Up	3.89	3.93	3.82
Arrived at Destination on Time	4.02	4.08	3.88
Dropped Off at Correct Location	4.47	4.46	4.49
Satisfied with Trip Timeliness	4.05	4.02	4.10
Vehicle was Clean	4.46	4.46	4.46
Vehicle Was Modern and in Working Order	4.32	4.32	4.31
Reasonable Time to Get to Destination	4.08	4.10	4.05
Mobility Device was Safely Secured	4.55	*	*
Highly Satisfied with Riding Experience	4.09	4.08	4.11
<i>Driver Performance</i>			
Driver was Courteous and Helpful	4.44	4.44	4.44
Driver was Dressed Appropriately and Clean	4.44	4.44	4.43
Driver Operated Vehicle Safely	4.46	4.47	4.41
Driver Communicated Clearly/Respectfully	4.41	4.42	4.39
Highly Satisfied with Driver Performance	4.41	4.43	4.39
<i>Overall Service</i>			
Overall Rating of LINK Paratransit Service	3.95	3.99	3.86

*Not shown due to small sample size



Summary of Findings

- LINK Paratransit is viewed as an **essential community service**. Respondents consistently described the service as reliable, accessible, and vital to maintaining independence, while identifying service reliability and communication as the principal opportunities for continued improvement.
- **Overall customer satisfaction was high**, with most service attributes receiving mean ratings above **4.0** on a five-point scale.
- **Driver performance was definitely a significant strength**, receiving consistently high ratings for courtesy, professionalism, communication, and safe vehicle operation.
- **Telephone customer service was comparably well received**, particularly the courtesy and knowledge of reservation staff and the ease of making transportation arrangements.
- **Vehicle cleanliness, condition, and accessibility** were rated favorably, and respondents expressed high satisfaction with arriving at the correct pick-up and drop-off locations.
- **Timeliness represented the primary opportunity for improvement**. On-time pick-up performance received the lowest mean rating (3.89), and open-ended comments frequently cited late pickups, long ride times, and inefficient routing.



Summary of Findings (cont'd)

- **Verbatim responses reinforced the survey findings.** Respondents praised LINK Paratransit's drivers and staff while identifying scheduling, routing, dispatch coordination, and communication regarding delays as the most common areas for improvement.
- Among respondents who had used LINK Paratransit **for five years or longer**, more than half (54%) reported that service has improved over time, while 28% felt service has remained about the same, and 11% believed it has worsened.
- **Customer awareness of available programs could be improved.** More than 40% of respondents were unfamiliar with the My Transit Manager smartphone application, and nearly 60% had not heard of the One Seat Regional Ride program.
- **My Transit Manager users primarily rely on the application to monitor vehicle location, arrival times, and upcoming trips.** While many respondents found these features valuable, several suggested improving the accuracy of real-time tracking and estimated arrival times.



Recommendations

- Improve service reliability by evaluating scheduling practices, routing efficiency, and dispatch operations to reduce late pick-ups, long ride times, and missed appointments.
- Enhance customer communication by providing more timely notifications of delays, improving dispatch responsiveness, and increasing the accuracy of real-time vehicle information within the My Transit Manager application.
- Expand outreach and education regarding available services and technology, including the My Transit Manager application and the One Seat Regional Ride program, to improve customer awareness and utilization.
- Maintain investment in employee training and recognition, as drivers and customer service staff were consistently identified as the agency's greatest strengths and the primary contributors to customer satisfaction.
- Continue monitoring customer feedback through periodic satisfaction surveys and qualitative comments to evaluate the effectiveness of service improvements and identify emerging customer needs.



Quantum Market Research, Inc.
1635 Telegraph Avenue
Oakland, CA 94612

DATE August 11, 2026
TO: Rosa Noya and John Sanderson, County Connection
FROM: Veronica Raymonda and Patty Hoyt
SUBJECT: Results from Coding of Verbatims

The following pages summarize riders' responses to the open-ended questions in the LINK survey. After rating various aspects of the ride – telephone service, ride experience, and driver performance – respondents were asked “How would you rate your experience with the LINK Paratransit service in general?” Those who rated it excellent or great were asked two open-ended questions. Those who rated the service as satisfactory, poor or very poor were asked one.

Coded Responses to “Please Provide County Connection Management
With your Thoughts on What you are Most Satisfied With”
(Base: Excellent or Great Rating
N = 181)

	%
Driver courtesy and professionalism	43%
Overall service satisfaction	29%
Reliability and timeliness	19%
Independence provided by the service	13%
Dispatch and customer service	10%
Accessibility and passenger assistance	8%
Ease of scheduling	8%
Affordability	4%
Vehicle comfort and cleanliness	4%
Communication and notifications	4%
Technology (App/One Seat Ride)	3%
*Multiple response permitted	

The comments reflected a high level of appreciation for the service and consistently reinforced the positive findings observed throughout the survey. Respondents most frequently praised the professionalism and kindness of drivers, the courtesy of staff, the reliability of the service, and the independence that LINK Paratransit provides to individuals who might otherwise have limited transportation options.

The most common theme was appreciation for drivers and customer service staff. Respondents repeatedly described drivers as courteous, respectful, patient, professional, and compassionate. Many also recognized individual drivers and dispatch staff by name, highlighting the positive relationships they had developed over years of using the service. Numerous comments emphasized that staff consistently treated riders with dignity, assisted passengers with disabilities, and created a welcoming experience.

Another recurring theme was the reliability and convenience of the service. Respondents frequently stated that LINK Paratransit enabled them to attend medical appointments, work, community programs, and other essential destinations. Many described the service as dependable, timely, and easy to schedule, while others expressed appreciation for receiving advance notification of arrivals and the flexibility provided by reservation staff.

Several respondents emphasized that LINK Paratransit provides much more than transportation—it provides independence and quality of life. Many described the service as a "lifeline," noting that they would otherwise be unable to travel independently to medical appointments, employment, shopping, or social activities. Caregivers similarly expressed gratitude for the peace of mind the service provides to their families.

Respondents also praised the accessibility and affordability of the service. Comments highlighted safe assistance with boarding and mobility devices, accommodations for companions, reasonable fares, and the availability of transportation for individuals who could not otherwise use conventional public transit. Several respondents also expressed appreciation for improvements made over time, including enhancements to scheduling, technology, and regional travel options.

Clearly, respondents value LINK Paratransit not only as a transportation service but also as an essential resource that promotes independence, accessibility, and community participation. These comments indicate that respondents overwhelmingly recognize and appreciate the dedication of LINK Paratransit's drivers, dispatchers, and staff, as well as the important role the service plays in their daily lives.

These same respondents – those who had rated the service excellent or great – were also asked “Is there anything we could do to improve the service?”

Coded Responses to “Is There Anything we Could do to Improve the Service”
(Base: Excellent or Great Rating
N = 181)

	%
Improve timeliness/reduce delays/shorten pickup window	21%
No improvements needed/Keep up the good work	18%
Improve scheduling/routing efficiency	11%
Improve communication & notifications	10%
Expand service availability (more drivers, weekends, same-day service)	8%
Improve technology (App, online scheduling, payment)	7%
Improve driver training/consistency	6%
Improve dispatch/reservation process	6%
Improve vehicle comfort/ride quality	4%
Simplify policies/recertification/eligibility	3%

*Multiple response permitted

A substantial number of respondents stated that no improvements were needed, expressing appreciation for the quality of service, the professionalism of drivers, and the overall reliability of LINK Paratransit. Several respondents specifically commented that they were "very happy," "totally satisfied," or encouraged the agency to "keep up the good work."

Among those who offered suggestions, timeliness was the most frequently mentioned opportunity for improvement. Respondents requested more punctual pick-ups and drop-offs, shorter pickup windows, and reduced travel times associated with shared rides. Several noted that return trips, in particular, were often delayed because of additional passenger pickups or inefficient routing.

Many comments focused on scheduling and dispatch operations, with respondents suggesting improved coordination of routes, additional drivers, more consistent scheduling, and greater flexibility for same-day or weekend service. Several also recommended reducing the standard 30-minute pickup window or providing more accurate estimates of arrival times.

Overall, the comments from satisfied respondents suggest that customers value the service provided by LINK Paratransit and appreciate the efforts of its employees. The suggestions offered were generally focused on enhancing service reliability, improving scheduling efficiency, expanding service options, and strengthening communication rather than addressing fundamental concerns with the service itself.

Those who gave lower ratings to the service in general – satisfactory, poor or very poor – were asked to make suggestions on ways service could be improved.

Coded Responses to “Please Provide County Connection Management
With your Thoughts on How we May Improve our Service”
(Base: Satisfactory, Poor or Very Poor Rating
N = 84)

	%
Timeliness/On-Time Performance	69%
Scheduling & Routing	40%
Dispatch/Reservations	29%
Communication & Notifications	25%
Driver Concerns	24%
Vehicle Comfort & Condition	15%
Service Availability/Capacity	12%
Accessibility (lift, ramp, door assistance, mobility devices)	11%
Technology/App	10%
Policies/Procedures	7%
Positive Feedback (despite concerns)	18%

*Multiple response permitted

While several respondents expressed appreciation for the professionalism and kindness of drivers and staff, recurring concerns centered on on-time performance, scheduling practices, and communication regarding delays.

Timeliness emerged as the most frequently discussed issue. Many respondents described late pick-ups, extended ride times, missed appointments, and early arrivals that required passengers to wait unnecessarily. Several comments noted that unreliable service created stress and made it difficult to arrive at medical appointments, work, school, or other scheduled activities.

A second recurring theme involved scheduling and route planning. Respondents frequently reported concerns about inefficient routing, lengthy shared rides, and trip sequencing that resulted in unnecessary travel time. Several suggested that improved route planning and scheduling practices could reduce delays and improve the overall rider experience.

Many respondents also commented on communication and dispatch operations. Common concerns included long times on hold, problems reaching someone on the phone, delayed callbacks, and not being informed when trips were running late or pickup times changed. Several respondents recommended expanding text or email notifications and improving communication between dispatch and riders.

Comments regarding driver performance were generally mixed but leaned positive. Many praised drivers for being courteous, patient, and helpful, while others reported isolated experiences involving rude interactions, inconsistent customer service, or concerns regarding driver training and familiarity with routes or accessibility procedures.

Other responses included requests for improvements to vehicle comfort and maintenance, enhancements to the My Transit Manager app, and increasing service capacity through additional drivers, expanded weekend service, and improved availability of accessible vehicles.

Nearly two in ten gave positive feedback, expressing appreciation for LINK Paratransit and recognizing both drivers and other staff. Several comments encouraged the agency to continue its current level of service while focusing on improving reliability, communication, and scheduling efficiency.

The final open-ended question was posed to users of the My Transit Manager app. Just over one-third of all riders indicated they had used the app, and they were asked “How are you using the app.”

Coded Responses to “How are you Using the App”
(Base: My Transit Manager App Users
N = 97)

	%
Track vehicle location/monitor arrival (ETA, "Where's My Ride")	64%
View upcoming rides/confirm pickup times	42%
Schedule or book rides	26%
Cancel rides	24%
Reschedule or modify rides	8%
Receive notifications/reminders	7%
Check driver information	6%
Other features (balance, rate drivers, confidentiality, VoiceOver)	6%
Does not use many features/limited use	6%
*Multiple response permitted	

Respondents most commonly reported using the My Transit Manager app to monitor vehicle location and estimated arrival times. Many also used the app to view upcoming rides, confirm pickup times, schedule or cancel reservations, and monitor trip status. Less frequently mentioned features included receiving arrival notifications, viewing driver information, checking account balances, and using accessibility features such as VoiceOver. Several respondents indicated they used only a limited number of the app's functions or were unfamiliar with some of its capabilities.

Although respondents primarily described how they use the application, some also pointed out that the estimated arrival times and vehicle location information were not always accurate, suggesting an opportunity to improve the reliability of real-time tracking.