

To: Board of Directors

Date: May 11, 2026

From: John Sanderson, Director of ADA & Specialized Services

Reviewed by: *Ref*

SUBJECT: Paratransit Passenger Survey

Background:

Since 2010, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has managed a regional transit passenger survey program for fixed-route services operating within the nine-county Bay Area. The purpose of the survey is to collect data that is used by MTC to support regional planning efforts and to fulfill Title VI requirements. Surveys are conducted by MTC for each operator roughly every five to seven years. Additionally, County Connection also conducts separate onboard surveys to obtain community input when implementing major service changes or to assess pilot programs.

However, County Connection's and MTC's passenger surveys have been limited to fixed-route bus passengers and have not included County Connection LINK paratransit passengers. LINK passengers using the My Transit Manager smartphone app are prompted to rate each ride and all passenger feedback from LINK passengers is tracked, analyzed, and reported in the LINK monthly service summary, along with other metrics such as ridership, on-time performance, and cost per passenger. Nevertheless, the lack of targeted passenger surveys greatly increases the difficulty of accurately gauging overall LINK passenger sentiment.

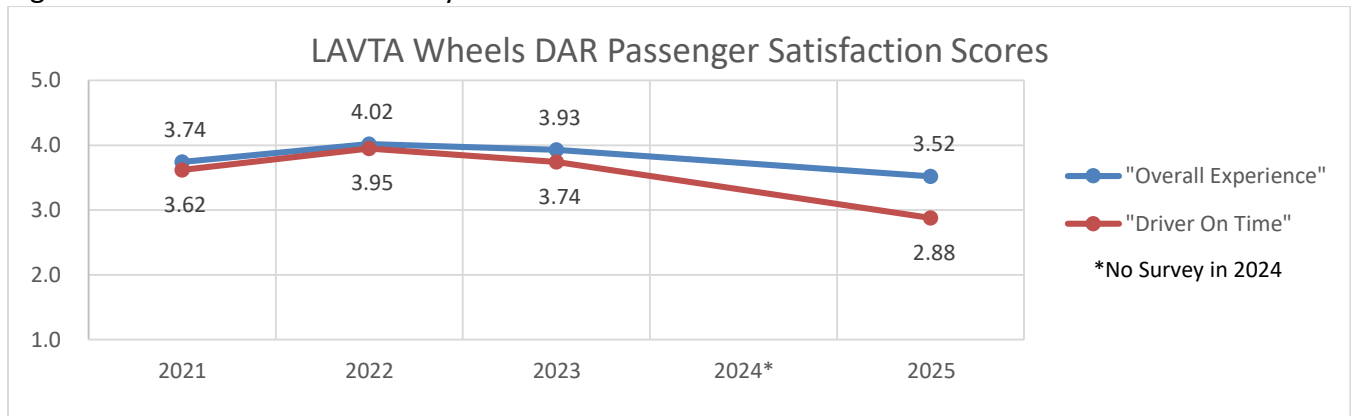
LAVTA Paratransit Survey:

The Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA), through a contracted survey firm, conducts a survey of Wheels Dial-A-Ride passengers annually or bi-annually, with the most recent conducted in late 2025 and the results presented to the LAVTA Projects & Services Committee in late April followed by the full LAVTA Board in early May 2026.

For the survey, LAVTA Wheels Dial-A-Ride users were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with statements about various aspects of the service. The answers were subsequently assigned numerical values – “Strongly Agree” or “Very High” satisfaction having a value of 5, and “Strongly Disagree” or “Very Low” satisfaction having a value of 1, with 3 as the neutral midpoint. The numerical scores were then averaged to determine an overall/composite score for each question. In addition, survey respondents were asked to provide open-ended statements on “how our service can be even better” or “how we may improve our service.”

Unfortunately, the LAVTA survey revealed a significant decline in average passenger satisfaction scores from the 2023 survey to the 2025 survey across nearly all answers including Overall Experience, and Driver Timeliness as shown in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: LAVTA Paratransit Survey Results



While these results were not entirely unexpected given recent struggles with the subcontractors responsible for providing the bulk of LAVTA’s paratransit service, the data do point toward some specific areas in need of immediate attention.

LINK Paratransit Survey Considerations

Since LAVTA Wheels Dial-A-Ride, County Connection LINK paratransit, and One-Seat Ride (OSR) service are all provided under the same contract, which is overseen by County Connection staff, the results of LAVTA’s survey raise important questions about passengers’ perceptions of and sentiment towards both LINK and OSR. Therefore, County Connection should conduct a formal survey of LINK and OSR paratransit passengers – preferably in time for the survey results to inform the scope of work for the next paratransit service procurement, which will take place in the next fiscal year.

An important differentiator between a paratransit passenger survey and a fixed-route bus passenger survey is that the name, contact information, and ride history of every LINK and OSR passenger is already known and readily available, whereas that is not the case for fixed route passengers. The availability of these details creates two distinct advantages for conducting a survey. Since each passenger’s name and contact information are already in hand, the survey can be conducted via telephone or direct mail without the need to expend resources compiling a list of potential respondents. And, since each passenger’s trip history is known and updated in real-time, survey interviews can focus on specific trips that the passenger has taken recently, which would allow survey responses to be mapped against observed operational data at a granular level. Passenger survey data about specific recent trips can then be used to plan future communications and service delivery much more efficiently and effectively than uncorrelated data would allow for.

Financial Implications:

Unknown at time of report, pending receipt of consultant bids; however, the total cost is expected to be within the General Manager’s signing authority. The total cost of the LAVTA survey was approximately \$14,000.

Recommendation:

Staff and the Marketing, Planning and Legislative Committee recommend that a survey firm be engaged to conduct a telephone survey of County Connection LINK and OSR passengers, as soon as practicable.

Action Requested:

None. Information only.