



Sunshine Coast handyDART Service Review

FINAL REPORT MARCH 2024



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Survey Background and Methodology



Telephone Survey



Online Survey



Paper Survey



Focus Groups



Background

Background



- handyDART is a door-to-door, shared-ride service for passengers with physical or cognitive disabilities who are unable to use conventional public transit without assistance.
- Sunshine Coast Regional District requested a handyDART service review to better understand handyDART performance, client satisfaction and service expansion opportunities



The main objectives of the study are:

- ✓ Measure Operational Performance of the handyDART system
- ✓ Understand the current usage of handyDART services
- ✓ Gauge client and public satisfaction with handyDART service
- ✓ Identify key system improvement opportunities
- ✓ Identify key opportunities for service expansion



Methodology

Public Engagement Included:



- Phone Interviews and paper based survey for handyDART clients
- Online survey focused on non-clients (family, caregivers, community etc)
- Additional paper based surveys made available at 8 community locations
- 3 Focus Group (in person) sessions hosted by SCRD and BC Transit staff



- Surveys were distributed and fieldwork was conducted from Nov 1st 2023 to January 1st 2024.

Summary:



- In total, 88 handyDART clients and caregivers completed survey (43 via phone survey, 45 online or paper survey. All respondents confirmed that they had recently used or supported the handyDART service.
- Client surveys represented 17% of ~245 current active users of system – survey target was 15%
- In addition 21 clients and caregivers attended 3 open house sessions in November 2023



Operational Performance



Operational Performance - Ridership

- The Total Passenger Rides have steadily increased since pandemic lows.
- We estimate fiscal year end ridership in March'23 to be approximately 7,000
 - +36 % increase versus last year
- This would resemble the previous high annual ridership reached pre pandemic in 2019/20 of 7,333
- Supported by SCRD reported 2023 Ridership of 7,264 rides
- Ridership is projected to reach new all-time highs next fiscal year

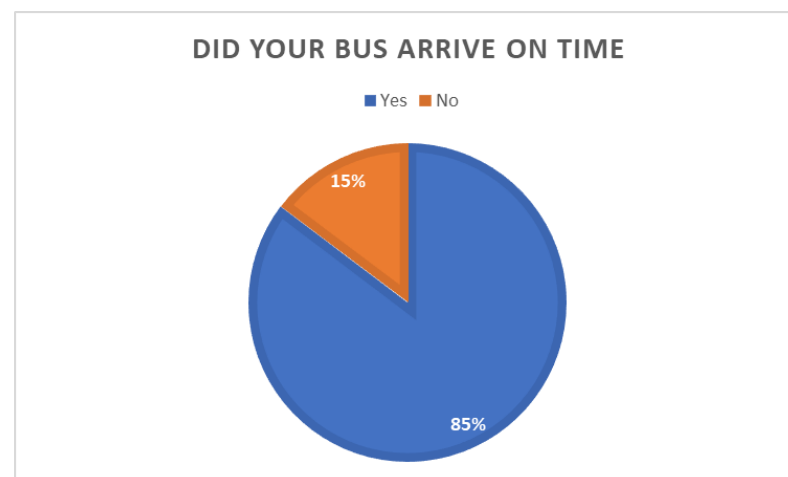
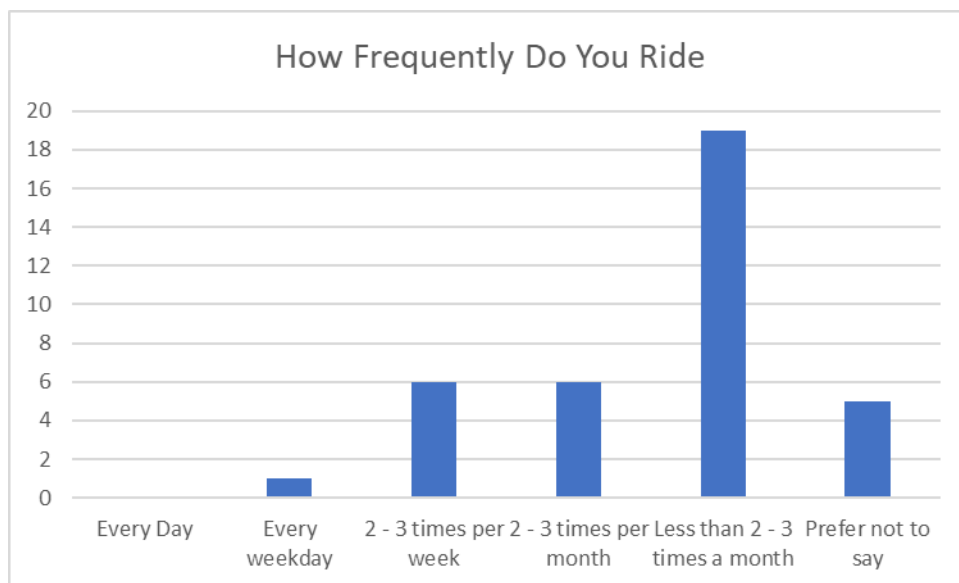
| Passenger Rides | YTD Actual | YoY Var | 2022/23 Actual | YoY Var | 2021/22 Actual | YoY Var | 2020/21 Actual |
|-----------------------|------------|---------|----------------|---------|----------------|---------|----------------|
| Total Passenger Rides | 4,817 | -6% | 5,148 | 54% | 3,341 | 60% | 2,094 |

- *BC Transit reporting is fiscal year (April – March) calendar, YTD data above is April– Dec'23
- *YTD Rides are April'23 to Dec'23 so still 3 months of data to compare apples to apples to F2022/23
- **Currently Averaging ~535 rides per month



Operational Performance - Ridership

- **handyDART ridership has rebounded from Covid lows – of clients surveyed:**
 - 22% are heavy riders (use handyDART more than twice per week)
 - 19% are medium riders (2-3 times per month)
 - 59% are occasional riders (Less than 2-3 per month)
- 85% of client trips arrive on time



Operational Performance - Service

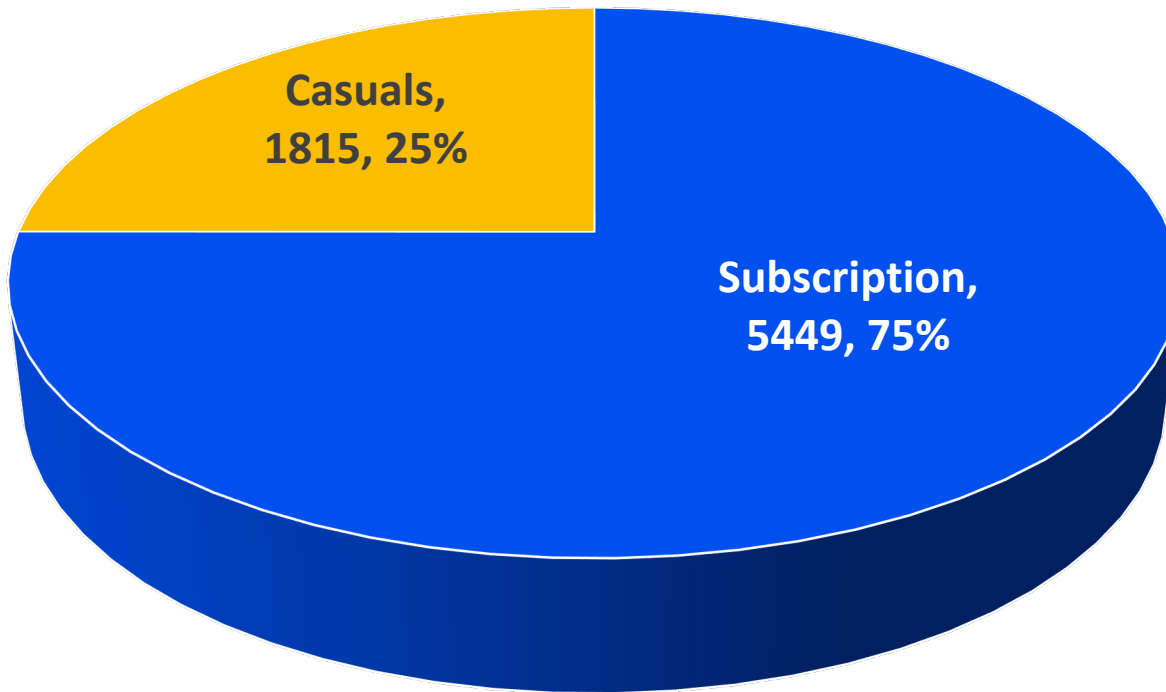
- The information below indicates one positive trend and one area for improvement.
- Rides per Hour have seen positive improvement since 2020 as ridership has returned
- Subscription Trips have been trending upwards since 2020 and were as high as 88%
 - Too many subscribed users can limit semi-spontaneous travel options and discourage current and future customers
 - The Sunshine Coast Transit System has already taken steps to reduce this ratio
- Unmet Trips remain around 2.5%, which is within the acceptable peer average in BC

| Current Service Performance | YTD Actual | YoY Var | 2022/23 Actual | YoY Var | 2021/22 Actual | YoY Var | 2020/21 Actual | YTD Peer System Average |
|-----------------------------|------------|---------|----------------|---------|----------------|---------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Van Rides per Actual Hour | 1.83 | 29% | 1.42 | 54% | 0.92 | 59% | 0.58 | - |
| Unmet Trip %* | 2.57% | 342% | 0.58% | -52% | 1.22% | -38% | 1.96% | 2.50% |
| Subscription Trips | 4,249 | 30% | 3,279 | 70% | 1,924 | 272% | 517 | |
| As Percentage of Rides | 88% | | 58% | | 58% | | 25% | 84% |



Operational Performance: Types of Trips

Subscription vs. Casual Riders



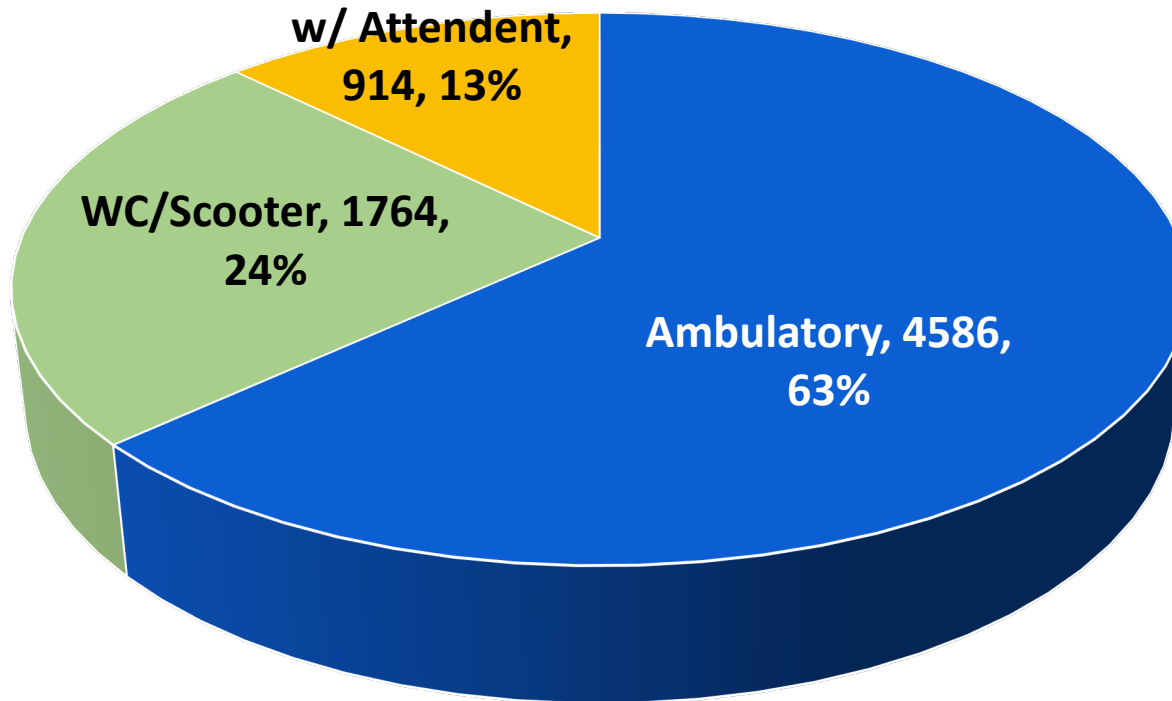
Total 2023 Ridership: 7,264

■ Subscription ■ Casuals

- Subscription trips are pre-booked, reoccurring trips
- BC Transit Target for Subscription Trips = 65% max
- SCRD has continued to work to reduce subscription trip rates – currently at 75% (down from 88%)

Operational Performance: Ridership Type

2023 Ridership Breakdown



Total 2023 Ridership: 7,264

■ Ambulatory ■ WC/Scooter ■ Attendent

- Ambulatory Trips are trips where the client walks onto the bus without a mobility aid
- 63% of handyDART trips are made by able bodied passengers
- 24% utilize a mobility aid
- 13% require the support of an attendant

Operational Performance – Cost Ratio's

- The chart below shows the average Cost per Passenger Ride
 - YTD = \$56.29 total cost per handyDART ride
 - Provincial Tier Average handyDART Cost per Ride = \$60.77*
 - Pre Covid 2019/20 Cost per Ride = \$86.56*
 - To Compare: Conventional system = ~\$9 cost per ride
- The Cost per Passenger Ride has been steadily declining due to the increase in ridership combined with cost base that has remained stable.
 - No expansions of handyDART service since pandemic has limited investment growth, just inflationary cost increases
- If current service expansions are approved for provincial funding, these ratio's will adjust accordingly

| Operating Cost Ratios | YTD Actual | YoY Var | 2022/23 Actual | YoY Var | 2021/22 Actual | YoY Var | 2020/21 Actual |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Cost per Passenger Ride | \$ 56.29 | -22% | \$ 72.13 | -22% | \$ 92.57 | -22% | \$ 118.52 |



Operational Performance – Service Span

- The table below reflects the current average service span for both Conventional and handyDART services.
- Progressively increasing service first in the available days of service followed by the span of hours each day, fares and boundaries should be a priority towards the longer term goal of equitable service
- Improving the handyDART service span to resemble Conventional service would improve the accessibility of service for clients who are restricted to only handyDART service options

Conventional Transit

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Monday to Sunday | 05:00 am – 01:00 am |
|------------------|---------------------|

handyDART Service

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Monday - Friday | 08:30 am – 04:30 pm |
| Saturday | 10:00 am – 03:00 pm |
| Sunday / Holidays | No Service |



Operational Performance: New Client Registration

| | Action | Processing Timelines |
|---|--|----------------------|
| 1 | SCRD: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Application for handyDART services• Conduct Site Assessment Submit application and site assessment to BCT's contractor (Home Healthcare Network) | 8 working days |
| 2 | Home Healthcare Network <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Application and contact application• Schedules appointment assessment• Coordinates transportation to assessment. If required, SCRD provides applicant a ride to assessment (as capacity allows) | 10 working days |
| 3 | Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment conducted by an Occupational Therapist• Assessment submitted to Home Healthcare Network• Home Healthcare Network determines eligibility and informs applicant as well as SCRD | 6 working days |
| | Total Processing time | ~ 5 weeks |

- Current process is too long for registering new clients and should be reduced



Operational Performance: 2023 Key Statistics

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Number of buses | 2 |
| Number of register customers | 660 |
| Number of Active customers | 245 |
| Total Service Hours | 3,612 |
| Total Ridership | 7,264 |
| Passenger / Service hour | 2.01 |
| Avg Trips by Customer / Month | 2 |
| Casual Riders | 1,815 |
| Subscription Riders | 5,449 |
| Subscription % | 75% |
| Average Rides each Month | 605 |
| Cost / Ride (as per RR PP) | \$ 56.29 |
| Unmet Trips | 196 |
| Unmet Trips % | 2.63% |
| No Show / Late Cancellation | 215 |
| No Show / Late Cancellation % | 3% |

Service Satisfaction



Customer Satisfaction: Key Findings

- ✓ **handyDART users continue to be satisfied with the service provided**
 - 82% of client respondents were neutral, satisfied or very satisfied
 - 59% of online respondents were neutral, satisfied or very satisfied
- ✓ **handyDART drivers continue to deliver excellent service**
 - 94% of client respondents stated driver was friendly and helpful
 - 85% of online respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with drivers
- ✓ **handyDART buses are arriving on time to take clients to destinations**
 - 85% of client respondents indicated their bus arrived on time
 - 81% of client respondents were neutral, satisfied or very satisfied
 - 79% of online respondents were neutral, satisfied or very satisfied
- ✓ **handyDART wait/trip times on bus are satisfactory**
 - 81% of client respondents were neutral, satisfied or very satisfied
 - 80% of online respondents were satisfied or very satisfied



Customer Satisfaction: Key Findings

➤ **Booking of handyDART rides is an area for improvement**

- 60% of client respondents have to book a week or more in advance,
- 58% of clients are dissatisfied with booking experience and lead times
- 56% of online respondents were neutral, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
- Focus Groups felt that booking lead times were too long (over a week)

➤ **Availability of handyDART buses when needed can be improved**

- 57% of client respondents were dissatisfied with wait time for a bus
- 76% of online respondents were neutral, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
- Focus Groups felt that there are not enough buses available at peak times

➤ **Custom Registration wait times are preventing new users from accessing HD**

- Focus Groups highlighted it can take up to a month or more to get in to see occupational therapist , then another week or two to book a ride
 - Target is one week to get new client in for assessment



Service Opportunities



Opportunities for Service Improvements

Service Improvements requested in order of preference:

- 1. Improve booking process and dispatch technology to increase efficiencies**
 - SCRD transit staff to review current processes and short term improvement opportunities
 - BC Transit is currently in the process of procuring a provincial dispatch software solution that could enhance the foundation for scheduling, dispatching, reporting, customer facing interfaces for booking, and real-time trip tracking – Targeting to pilot in spring 2025
- 2. Improve custom registration process and bookings to decrease wait times for assessments for potential new clients**
 - Current 5 week process is too lengthy for new registrants
- 3. Reduce subscription trip rates as a percentage of total rides**
 - Limit the availability of booking Subscription Trips in the future to reduce the ratio of Subscription Trips to Total Rides to 65 percent



Opportunities for Service Expansion

Service expansion improvements requested in order of preference:

1. Increase peak capacity by adding additional handyDART buses

- 64% of client respondents ranked this in top 2 choices
- 64% of online respondents ranked this in top 2 choices
- Focus Group feedback consistently requested additional capacity

2. Increase weekend service span / add number of service days

- 60% of client respondents ranked this in top 2 choices
- 71% of online respondents ranked this in top 3 choices

3. Increase service later on weekdays

- 42% of client respondents ranked this in top 2 choices
 - 74% of online survey respondents put in top 3 choices
- Of Note – increasing geography of current service span was ranked lower compared to other service increase options in both surveys and focus groups



Service Recommendations – 2024

- The SCRD has been approved for a handyDART service expansion of 550 hours for implementation July 2024
- Based on survey and engagement results we recommend the following service improvements :
 1. **Increase weekend service span / add number of service days**
 - Add Sunday and Holiday handyDART service, align to Sat service hours
 - 275 Hours required
 2. **Increase and extend service hours on weekdays**
 - Extend evening service by one hour to 5:30pm
 - 275 Hours Required
 3. **Work to improve custom registration processes to decrease wait times to access handyDART services**
 - Engagement indicates current 5 week process is too long

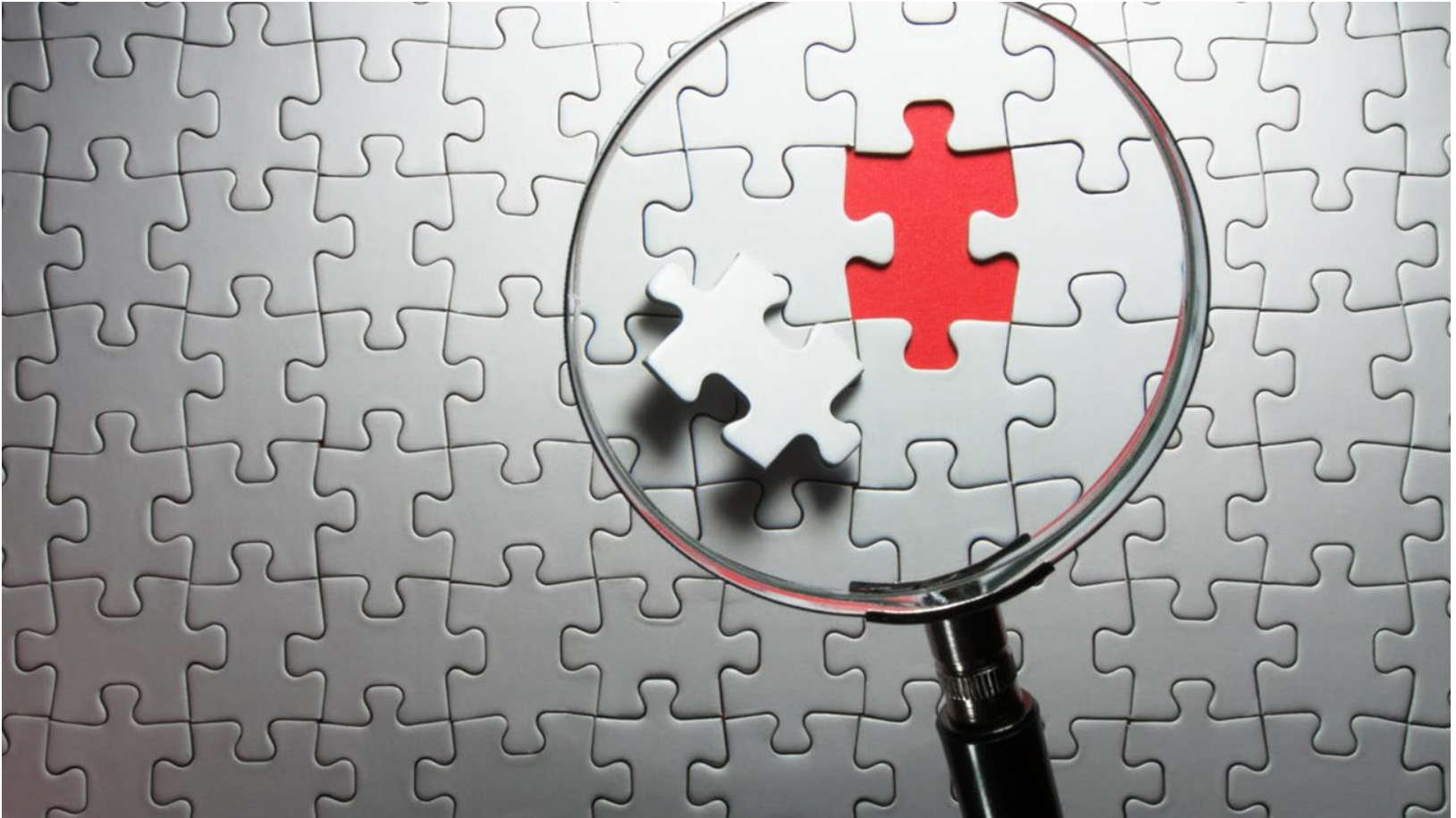


Service Recommendations – Future

- Based on survey and engagement results we recommend the following service improvements for future planning:
 - 1. Increase ridership capacity by adding additional handyDART buses**
 - Capacity is currently challenged in morning and afternoon peak times
 - Survey respondents and Focus Group feedback consistently requested additional peak service
 - 2. Continue to increase hours of operation / service**
 - Increase weekend service span
 - Increase evening weekday service
 - 3. Improve booking process and dispatch technology to increase efficiencies**
 - Work with BC Transit on sourcing an advanced dispatch software solution
 - 4. Continue to reduce subscription trip rates as a percentage of total rides**
 - Target to reduce to 60 – 65% from current 75%

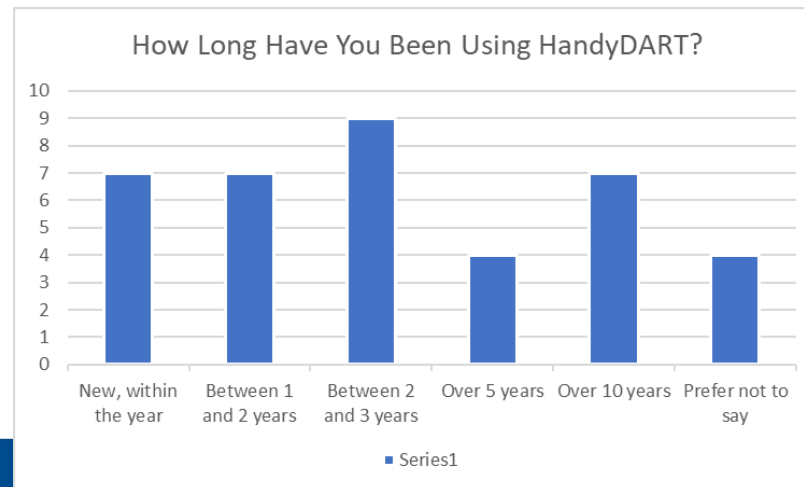
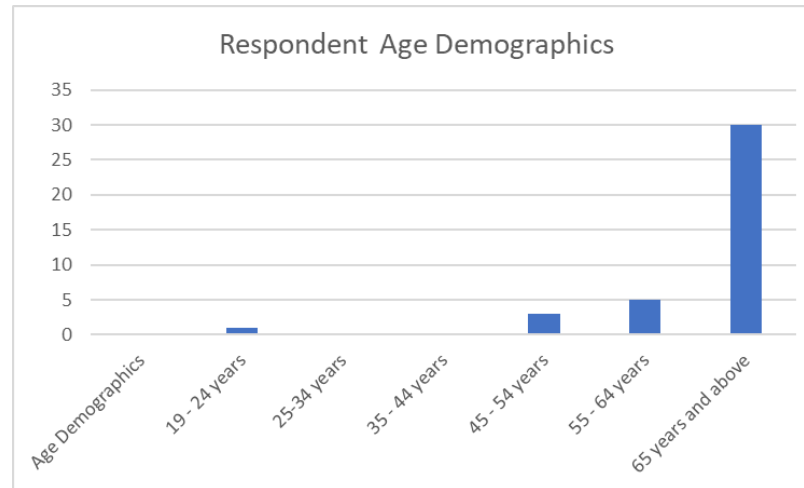
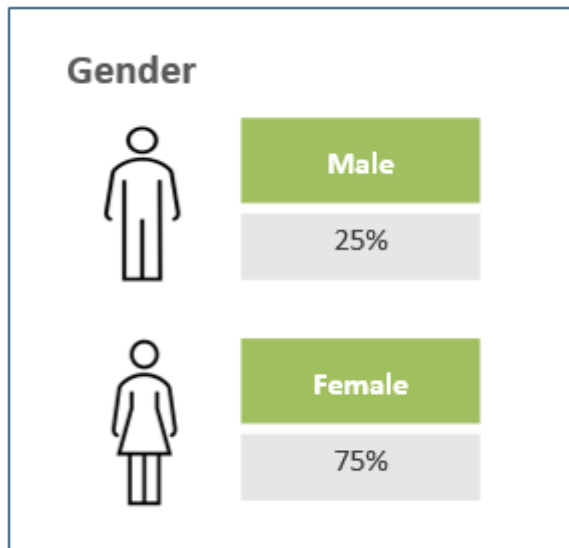


Appendix: Engagement Data and Results



handyDART Respondent Profile

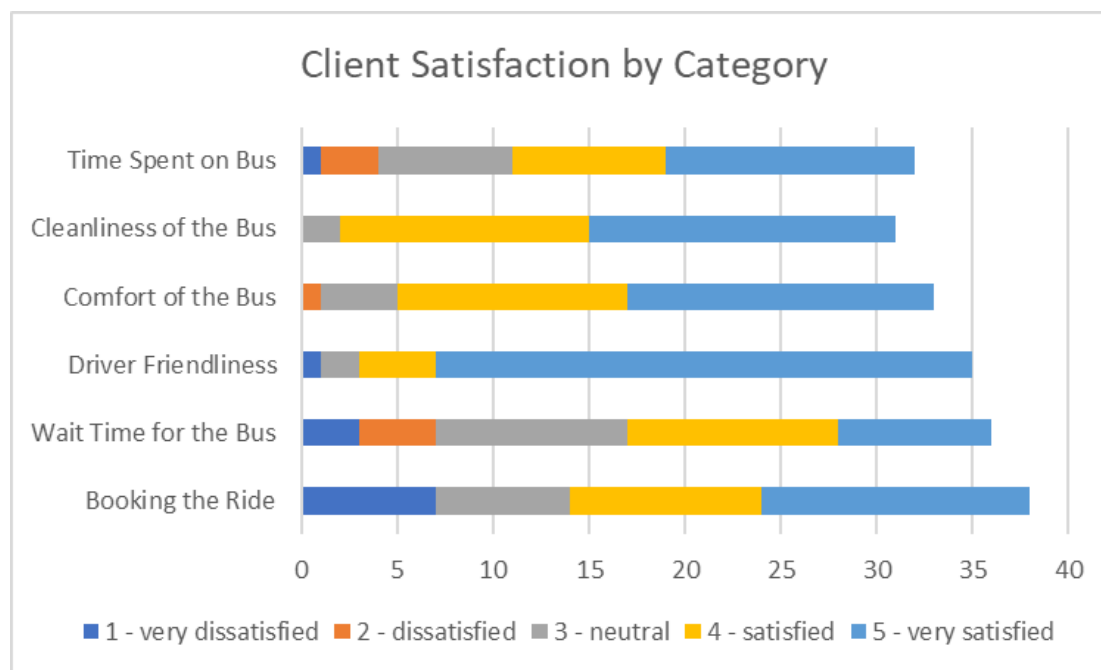
- $\frac{3}{4}$ of Respondents were Women and 90% are over the age of 55



handyDART Client Survey Results

| | % Satisfied | % Neutral | %Dissatisfied |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| Booking the Ride | 63% | 18% | 18% |
| Wait Time for the Bus | 53% | 28% | 19% |
| Driver Friendliness | 91% | 6% | 3% |
| Comfort of the Bus | 85% | 12% | 3% |
| Cleanliness of the Bus | 94% | 6% | 0% |
| Time Spent on Bus | 66% | 22% | 13% |

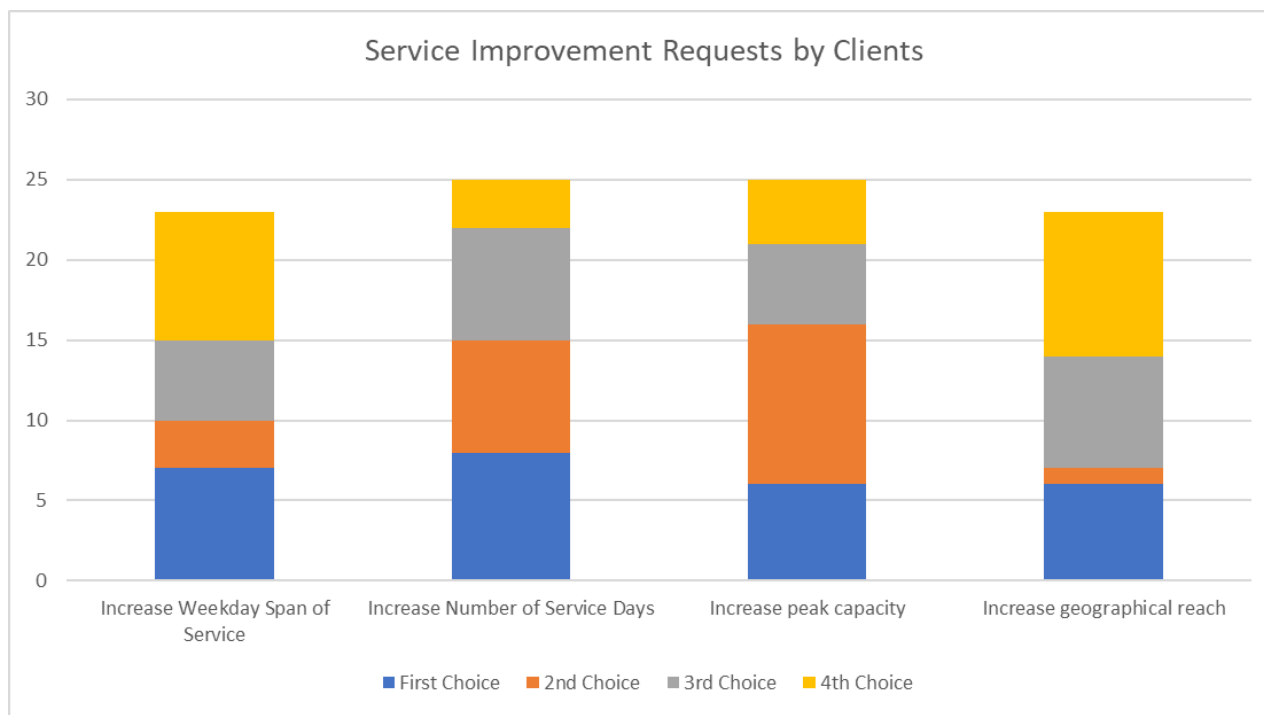
Red = area for improvement
Green = area of excellence
Yellow = neutral



handyDART Client Survey Results

| | % 1st or 2nd Choice | % 3rd or 4th Choice |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Increase Weekday Span of Service | 43% | 57% |
| Increase Number of Service Days | 60% | 40% |
| Increase peak capacity | 64% | 36% |
| Increase geographical reach | 30% | 70% |

Green = priority improvement
Yellow = neutral improvement
Red = lower priority improvement

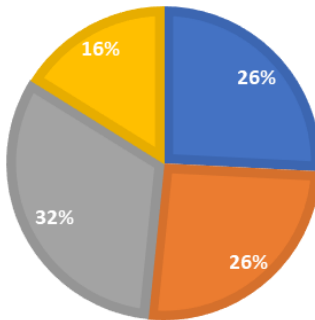


Booking Elements

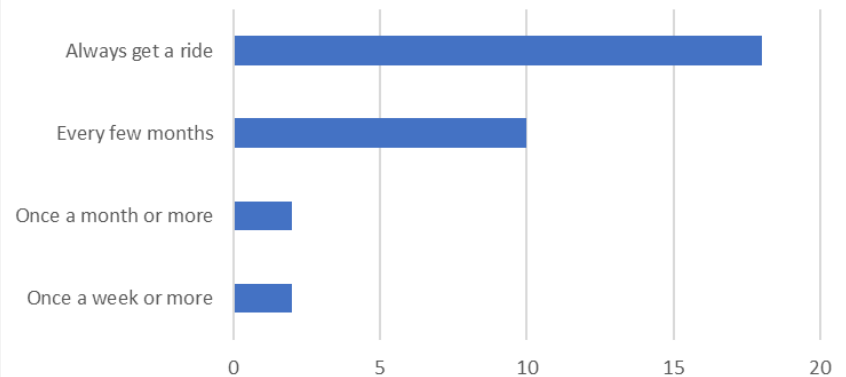
- 52% of clients spend less than 30 minutes on the handyDART bus
- 16% of clients have to spend over an hour on the handyDART bus
- 56% of clients indicate they can always book the ride needed
- 12% of online respondents indicate they have not been able to get the ride needed once a month or more

WAIT TIME ON BUS

■ Less than 15 minutes ■ 15 minutes to 30 minutes
■ 30 minutes to 1 hour ■ Over 1 hour



How often have you **not** been able to book a ride?

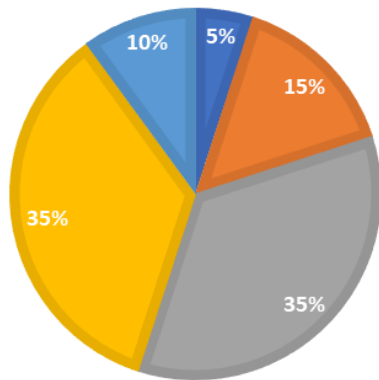


Booking Elements

- **57% of online respondents were neutral or dissatisfied with booking times**
- 55% of trips need to be booked more than a week in advance
 - Reduces availability of spontaneous trips

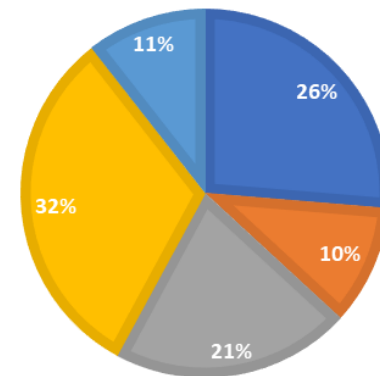
HOW FAR IN ADVANCE TO BOOK A RIDE?

■ More than two weeks ■ Two weeks ■ One week ■ A few days ■ One day



TRIP BOOKING EXPERIENCE

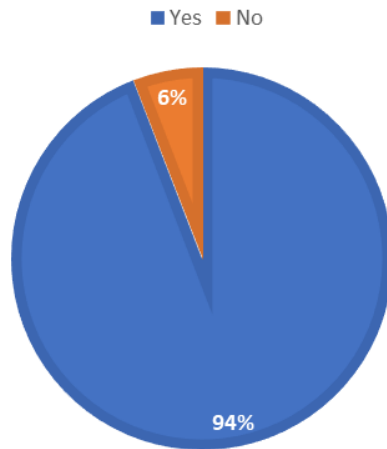
■ Very Dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Neutral ■ Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied



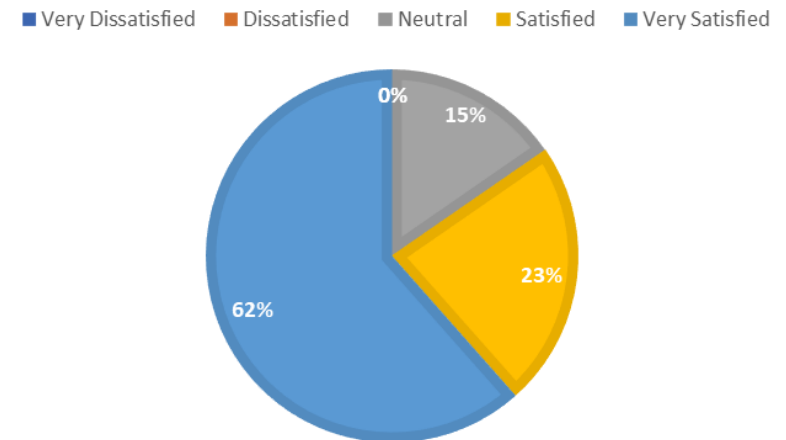
Driver/ Operator Satisfaction

- Overwhelmingly positive response to handyDART driver friendliness and helpfulness from all survey respondents
- 94% of clients feel driver was friendly and helpful
- 85% of online respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with drivers

WAS YOUR DRIVER FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL

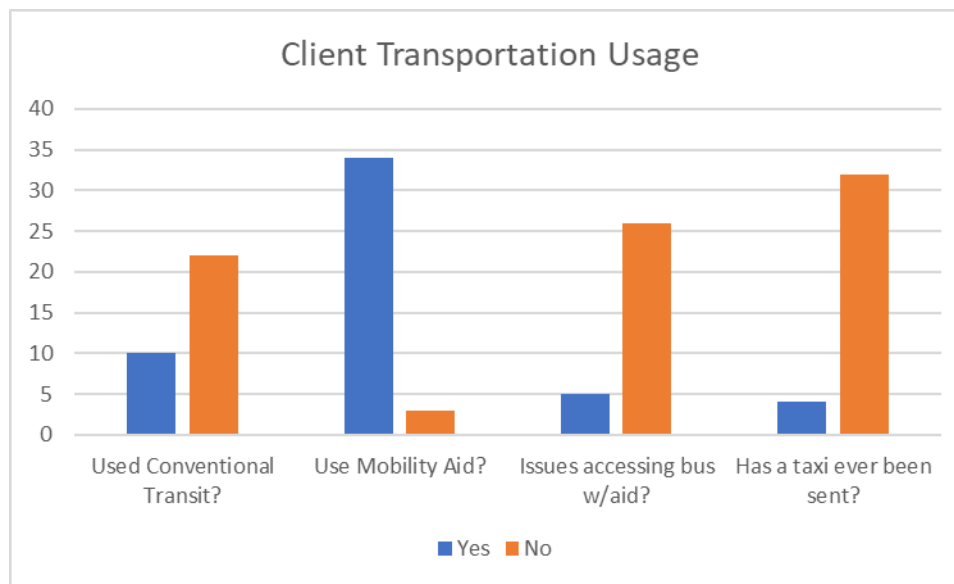


DRIVER SATISFACTION



Transportation Usage and Needs

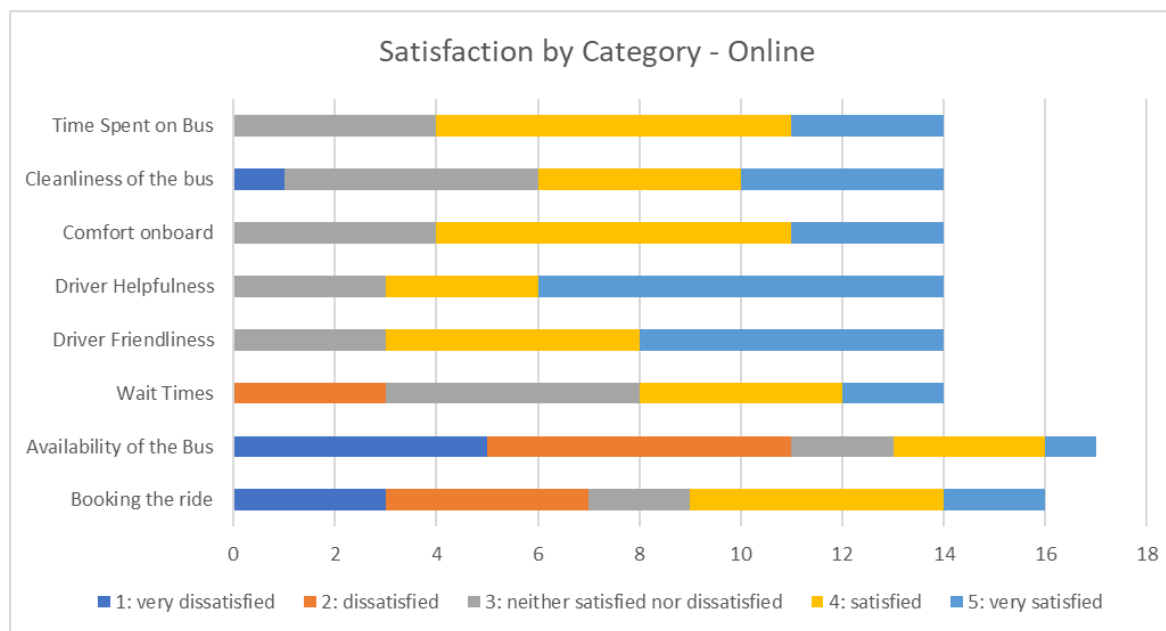
- 69% of handyDART clients have not used conventional transit
- 92% of handyDART clients utilize a form of mobility aid
 - 16% have experienced issues accessing (boarding) the handyDART bus
- **There is an opportunity to provide a “Travel Training” program in the community**
- It serves to inform the community of travel options and unlock the latent demand that may exist within the region. Travel Training assists individuals who may meet the handyDART eligibility criteria in learning to use Conventional and Paratransit Services



Online Survey Results

| | % Satisfied | % Neutral | % Dissatisfied |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|
| Booking the ride | 44% | 13% | 44% |
| Availability of the Bus | 24% | 12% | 65% |
| Wait Times | 43% | 36% | 21% |
| Driver Friendliness | 79% | 21% | 0% |
| Driver Helpfulness | 79% | 21% | 0% |
| Comfort onboard | 71% | 29% | 0% |
| Cleanliness | 57% | 36% | 7% |
| Time Spent on Bus | 71% | 29% | 0% |

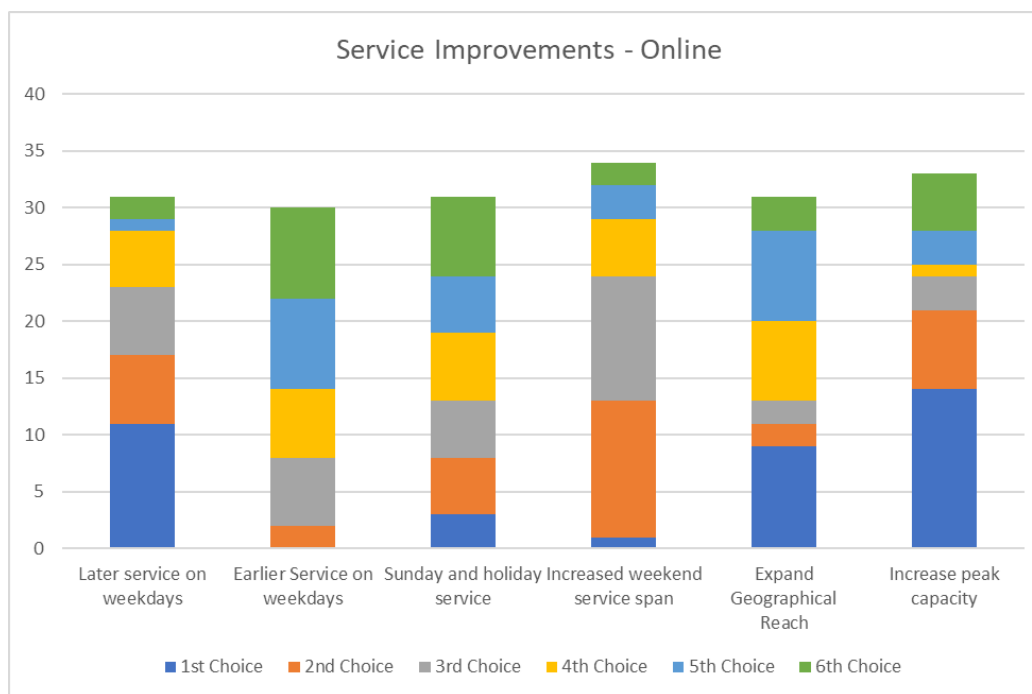
Red = area for improvement
Green = area of excellence



Online Survey Results

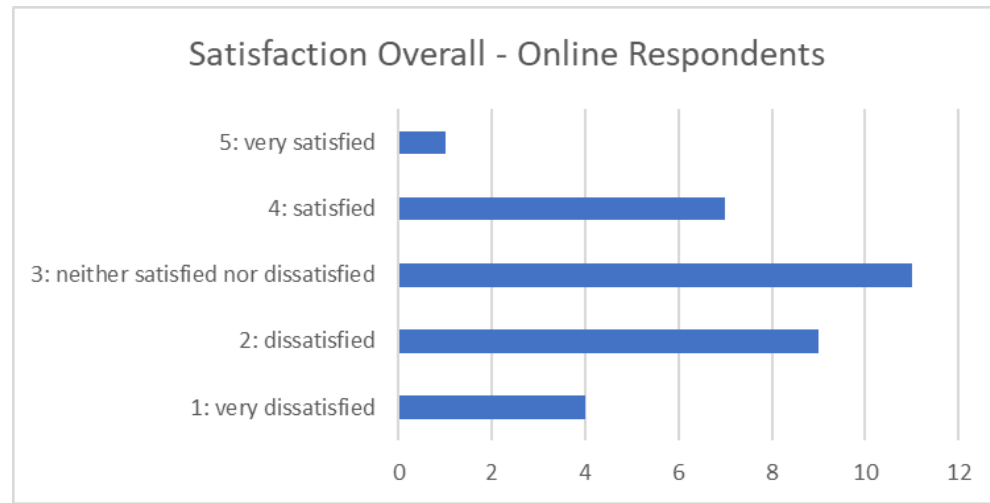
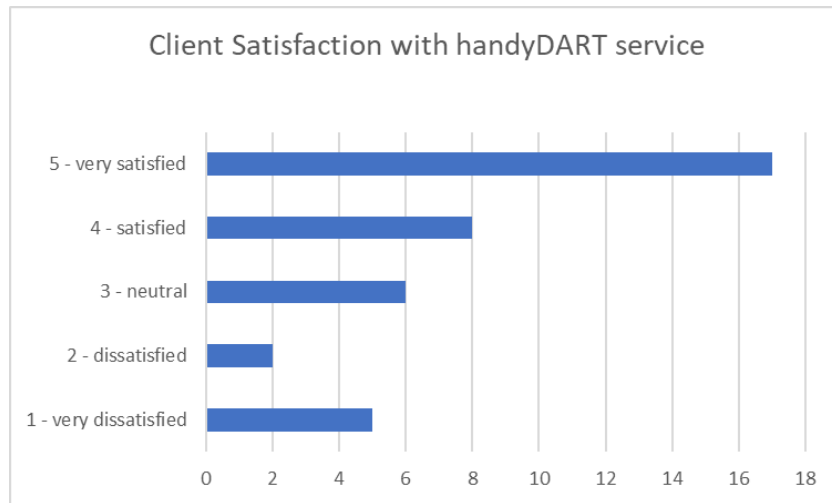
| | % 1st-3rd choice | % 4th-6th choice |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Later service on weekdays | 74% | 26% |
| Earlier Service on weekdays | 27% | 73% |
| Sunday and holiday service | 42% | 58% |
| Increased weekend service span | 71% | 29% |
| Expand Geographical Reach | 42% | 58% |
| Increase peak capacity | 73% | 27% |

Green = priority improvement
 Yellow = neutral improvement
 Red = lower priority improvement



Surveys Summary

- **Overall handyDART clients are quite satisfied by service levels provided**
- Online respondents which includes non clients such as caregivers, family and the public have a more neutral/ balanced view of the handyDART system
- The assumption here is that the challenges with booking windows and availability may be frustrating for non clients while clients are more grateful for the service and more focused on the service itself and friendliness of drivers.



Focus Group Comments



Focus Group Comments

Availability

Users would like outings to the beach/parks, not just appointments

Age in place is the new goal – make sure resources like handyDART are in place

Clients try to be flexible with days and times but not always an option when going to appointments

Peak times are when most riders want to go out, so the system gets overloaded.

Can't go for lunch with friends anymore or must plan far in advance

Day programs take up a lot of spots. Creates less spots for one off type trips.

Booking

Booking windows – booking requests a week of notice.

Users try to book a ride 2-3 weeks before the requested trip.

Can be tough to get a bus when you are booked at a specific time for appointments

In a perfect world, clients would like to be able to book a trip only a couple of days in advance.

Peak times hard to book due to subscription trips and make one-off trips “feel like conflict” when booking.

Try to give dispatch as much notice as possible to book a trip/to get your spot but not always doable if an appointment comes up

Focus Group Comments

Drivers

Drivers are amazing helping everyone on the bus

Drivers are compassionate and patient.

Drivers are absolutely wonderful. They go above and beyond.

Drivers have a lot of patience.

Our drivers have good training.

Drivers get good training – thanks to Dan

Custom Registration

3 weeks in advance for bookings to go to the assessment meeting with OT

Wait for assessment with OT – up to a month long

Once assessed, and approved for rides, Users can't get the ride they need for a couple of weeks, as their time wanted is booked

Peak times are when most riders want to go out, so the system gets overloaded.

OTs hard to come by on the Coast and number of requests versus the number of OT's impact turnaround time.

Barrier of having to get to the appointment to access the assessment. Wait time is too long

Focus Group Comments

Service Improvements

Third bus and peak service capacity also a future need

Tough call between evening vs weekend service expansion

Our Saturday current length of service is short.

Maximize capacity for the trips. May mean more time on the bus for some to be able to provide the most efficient travel route

Sunday options would allow Users to go to church or increase more social trips

Suggested that the weekday service be earlier on some days and end later other days to offer balance.

Other Opportunities

Education about how to access the service needed including communication to spread the word about the service

Our Saturday current length of service is short.

Peak capacity – what mechanisms are in other communities to add in private operators to assist

Peak times are when most riders want to go out, so the system gets overloaded.

Concern about accessing the new Silverstone Care Home

Fun and special trips are wanted like Holiday lights tour, duck pond visits.

