



Caltrain Q4 2023
Ridership Recovery Survey
November 2023

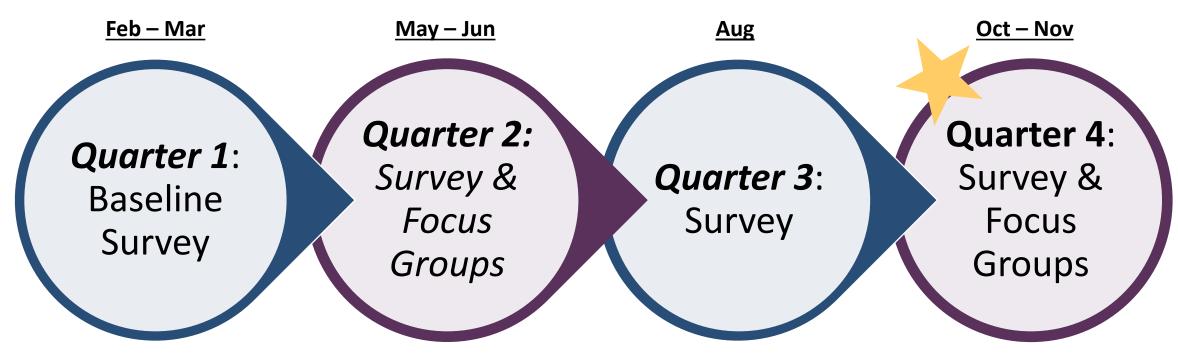
Project Purpose



- Track various aspects of residents' travel and commute behavior throughout the San Francisco Peninsula, and track how their behavior may change over time;
- Measure awareness and perceptions surrounding public transit and Caltrain, specifically, including various aspects of the Agency's communications and the electrification of its system;
- Identify key barriers to riding Caltrain, with a focus on potential factors and incentives for switching from driving alone to riding public transit;
- Gauge priorities for service improvement and expansion efforts and interest in concepts like new fare products and other potential service amenities;
- Understand demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal characteristics of riders, nonriders, and potential riders.

Overview of 2023 Opinion Research





- Survey of adults 18+ in the Caltrain service area
- Survey of adults 18+ in the Caltrain service area
- Three (3) focus groups among Caltrain frequent riders, infrequent riders, lapsed/non-riders

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Quarterly Survey Approach



- Quarterly online survey of adult residents in communities served by Caltrain throughout San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties
- Respondents invited to participate via email and text-to-web
- Surveys were conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese
- Results are compared with past quarterly surveys

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Quarterly Survey Scope



- **Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4**: 7,355 interviews; margin of error ±1.1 percentage points
- Data from each quarter was rescaled to 1,500n in order to be equally representative
 - **Quarter 4 (independent random sample survey of adult residents):**
 - Survey conducted October 26-November 6, 2023
 - 2,370 interviews, margin of error ±2.0 percentage points
 - **Quarter 3 (independent random sample survey of adult residents):**
 - Survey conducted August 7-21, 2023
 - 1,637 interviews; margin of error ±2.4 percentage points
 - **Quarter 2 (independent random sample survey of adult residents):**
 - Survey conducted May 8-22, 2023
 - 1,816 interviews; margin of error ±2.3 percentage points
 - Quarter 1 (independent random sample survey of adult residents):
 - Survey conducted February 23 March 15, 2023
 - 1,532 interviews; margin of error ±2.3 percentage points

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Quarter 4 Focus Groups: Methodology

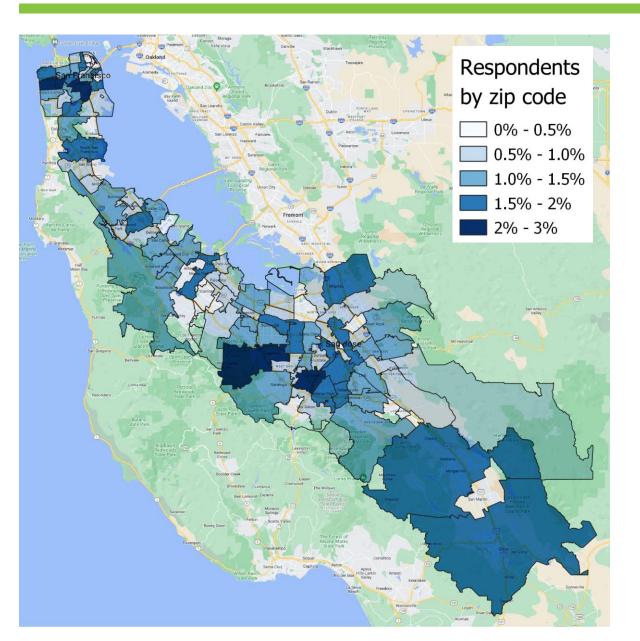


- A total of three focus groups were conducted with Bay Area residents.
 - Each group was moderated by a professional moderator. The groups were held online on November 8th and 9th.
- A prescreening survey was used to identify qualified participants for the study, which focused on the following rider audiences:
 - A) Frequent riders: those who currently ride at least once a week
 - B) Infrequent riders: those who ride Caltrain less than once a week, but within the last six months
 - C) Non-Riders/Lapsed riders: those who have never ridden Caltrain but are interested in riding, or those who used to ride but no longer do so
- Quotes from focus groups are included throughout the report to highlight qualitative sentiments that participants may have shared.

Please note that qualitative research is not designed to be representative and generalizable to the population, but rather to explore how participants view the issue in-depth, and in their own words.

Survey Region Map





Peninsula-corridor residents were sampled from selected zip codes in communities served by the Caltrain rail line.

	% of Respondents (Weighted)			
County of Residence	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
San Francisco	27%	27%	27%	27%
San Mateo	18%	18%	18%	18%
Santa Clara	55%	55%	55%	54%

General Key Findings



- Reported travel habits and perceptions of Caltrain have remained largely stable throughout 2023.
- Caltrain favorability remains high, overall, and is virtually unchanged since the beginning of the year. Top-rated attributes of Caltrain include reliability, safety, sufficient seating on board, and two new items tested in Q4 – ease of paying fares and clear signage at stations.
- In line with the past two quarters, only about one-in-ten residents use Caltrain's service monthly, and around a third use it at least a few times a year for occasional trips.
- Barriers to increased ridership are largely convenience-related and include concerns relating to trip time, frequency, and proximity to stations. More actionable pain points identified by residents include a lack of shelter, limited food/retail options, and infrequent train services.
- Furthermore, residents express a willingness to use Caltrain more frequently if these convenience remedies were improved with more frequent service, additional routes, destinations, and stations.

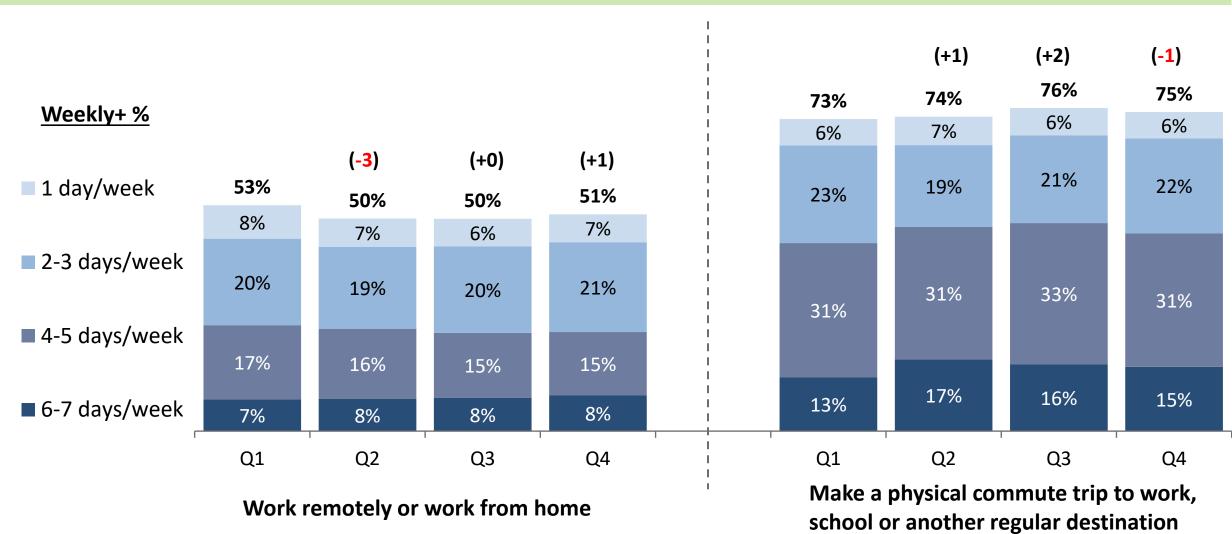


Travel Behavior

Commute Frequency



Commute and remote work frequency have remained generally consistent across all four quarters.

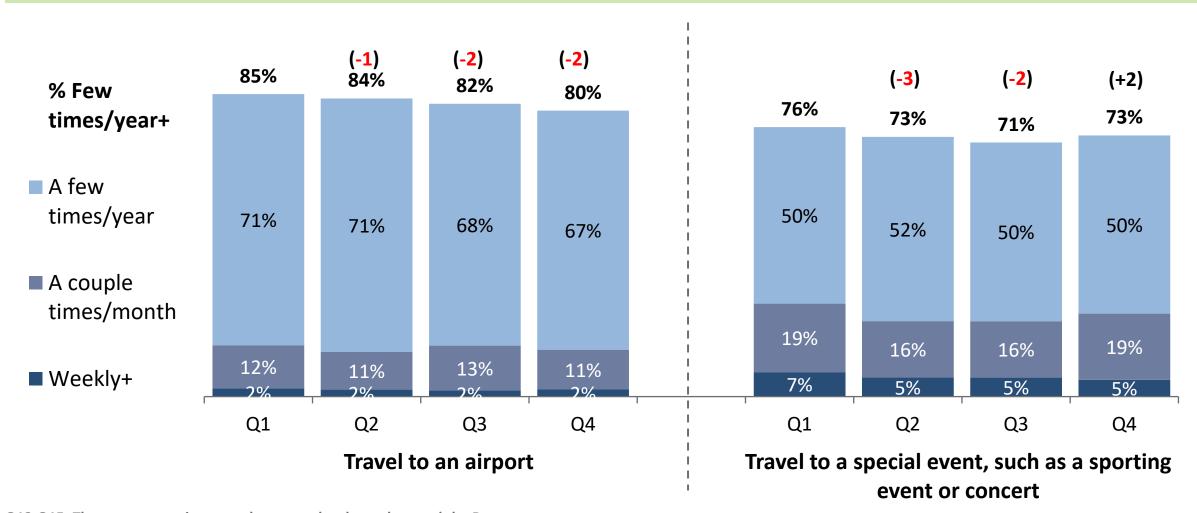


Q12.-Q15. These next questions are about your local travel around the Bay Area. Please indicate how often you do each of the following, on average.

Other Travel Frequency



The number of respondents who report traveling to an airport at least a few times a year has slightly but steadily declined year-to-date. Travel to a special event has remained more stable.

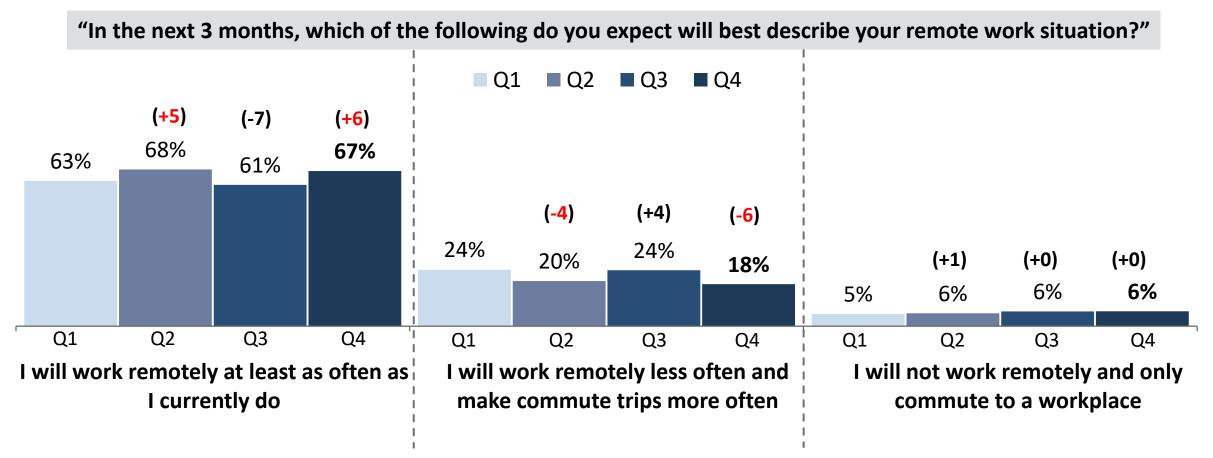


Future Remote Work Frequency



The number of remote workers who plan to work less remotely and commute more in the next 3 months has decreased to its lowest point year-to-date. One third of respondents indicated that they plan to work remotely at least as often as they currently do.

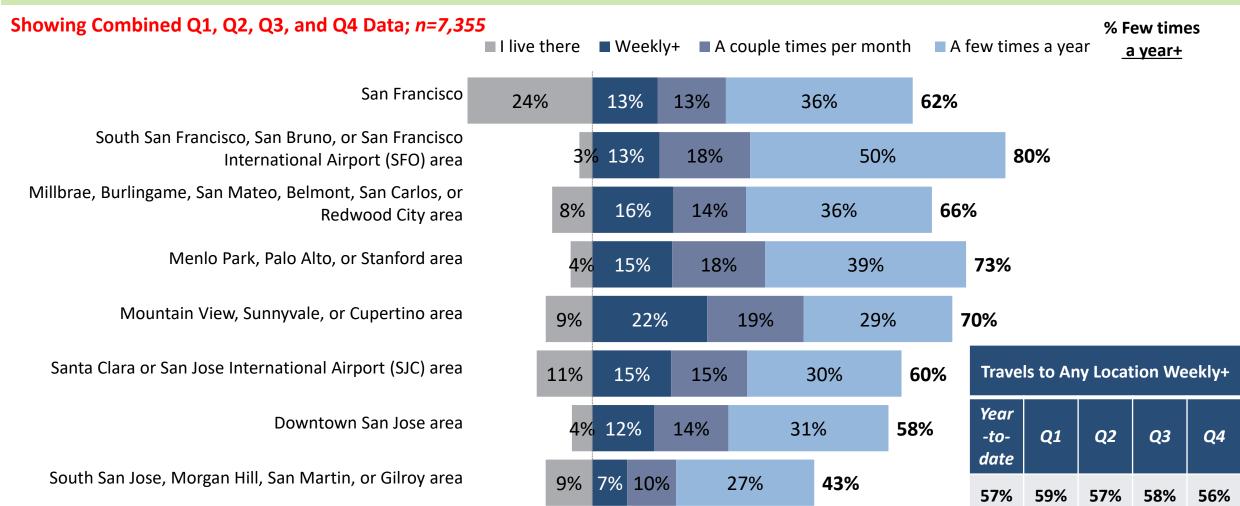
Asked among those who work remotely a couple times per month or more (Q1 n=875, Q2 n=985, Q3 n=888, Q4 n=1,270)



Destination Frequency



The most frequent destinations are in the mid-Peninsula area, with over two-thirds of respondents visiting these destinations a few times a year. Weekly visits have remained steady.

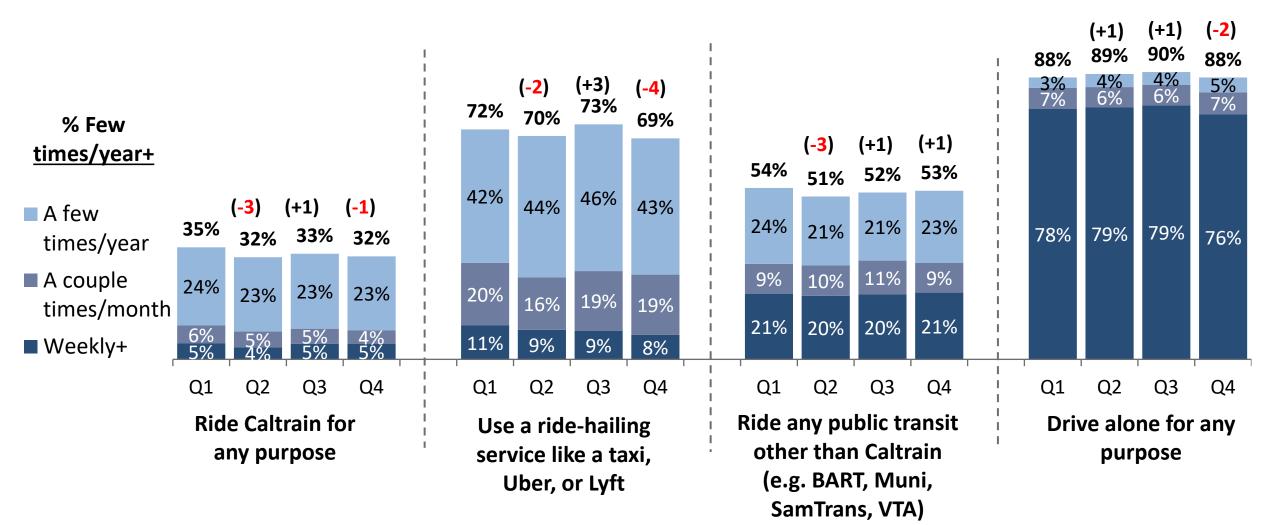


Q4-11. How often do you travel to each of the following locations around the San Francisco Peninsula, on average? If you live in that area, please just say so.

Typical Travel Modes



Driving alone continues to be respondents' primary mode of transportation, followed by a ride-hailing service. Nearly a third of respondents report riding Caltrain at least a few times a year.



Caltrain Ridership – Year-to-date



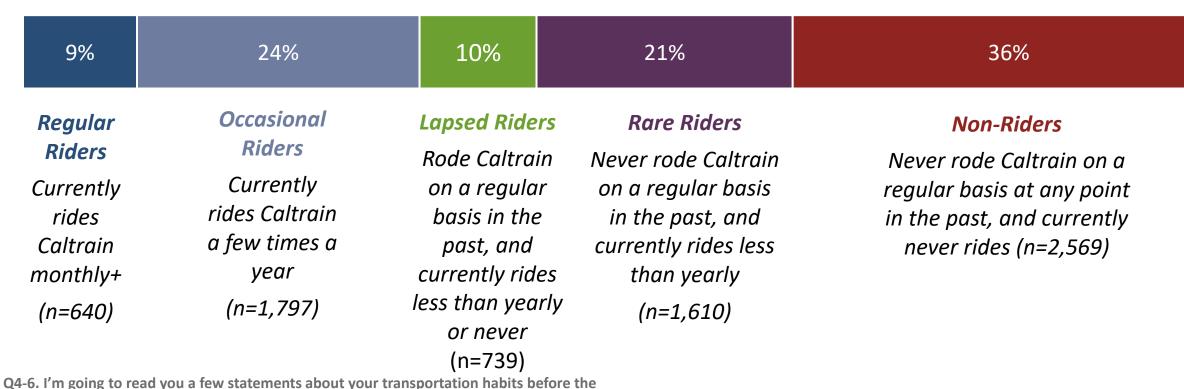
Only one in ten respondents report riding Caltrain a couple of times per month or more, and a third indicate riding it at least a few times a year. However, more than a third don't ride Caltrain and never rode it in the past.

Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355 % of All Residents

Regular Riders Occasional Riders Lapsed Riders

■ Rare Riders

■ Non-Riders

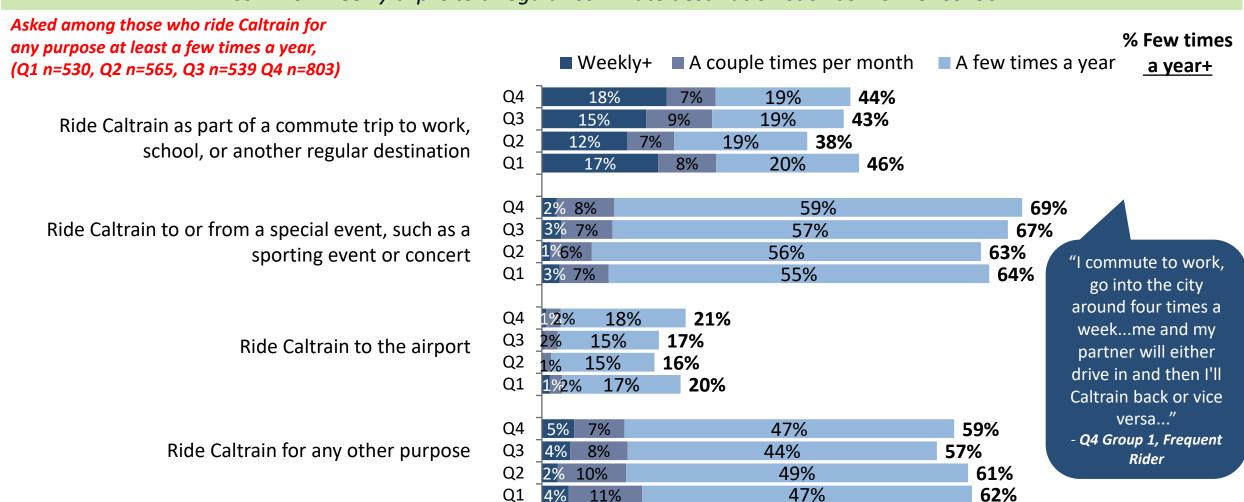


pandemic. Please tell me if you did each one more than once a week or less than once a week. Q7-9. Next, I'm going to read you a few statements about your transportation habits currently. Please tell me if you do each one more than once a week or less than once a week.

Caltrain Trip Purpose



More than two-thirds of Caltrain riders take the train to or from a special event at least a few times a year, but the most common weekly trip is to a regular commute destination such as work or school.





Commute Behavior

(Those who make physical commute trips;

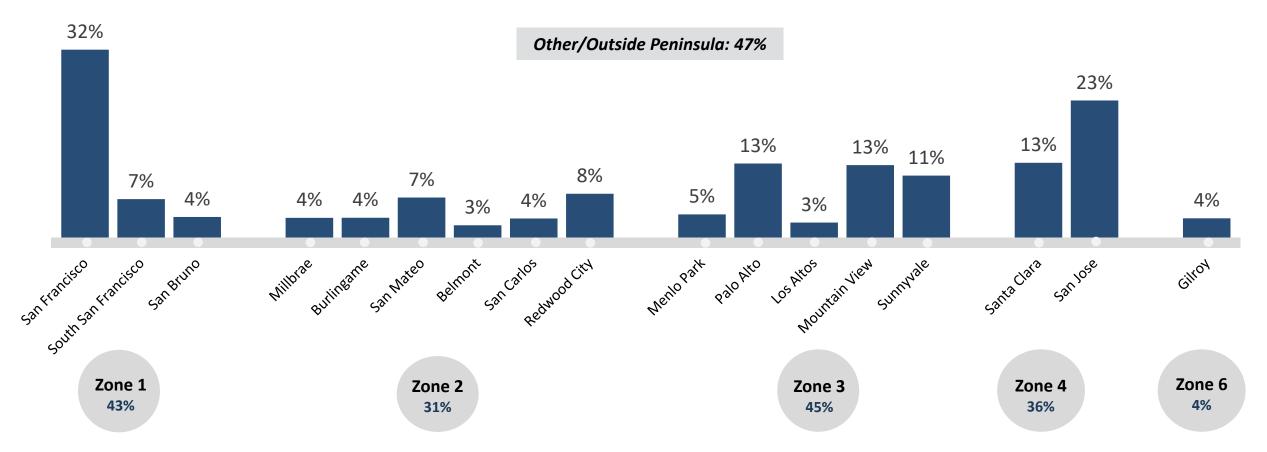
Q1 n=1,308, Q2 n=1,562, Q3 n=1,421, Q4 n=2,031)

Typical Destination – Commuters



San Francisco and San Jose are the most commonly reported destinations by physical commuters.

Asked among those who make a physical commute trip (Q4 n=2,031)

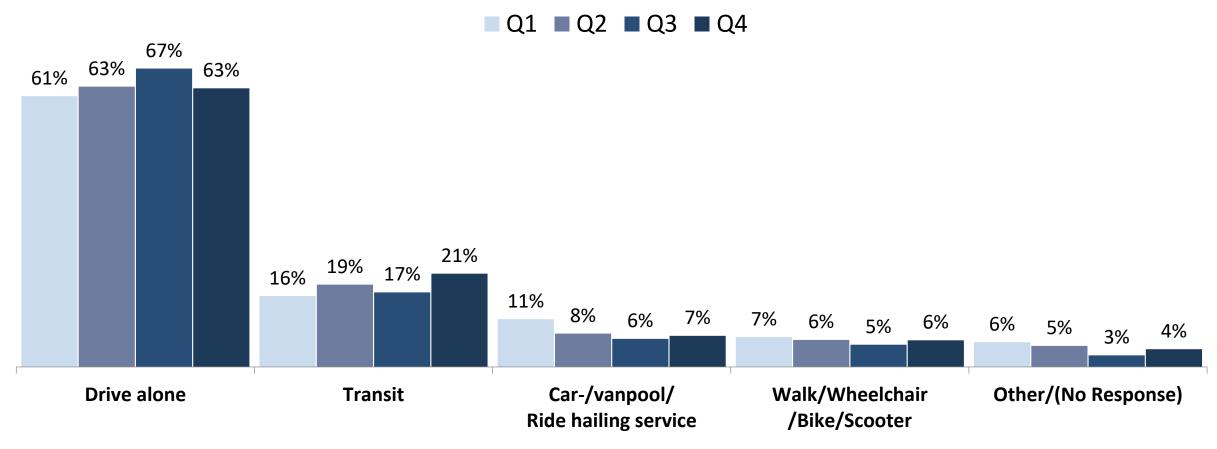


Commute Mode – Commuters



The number of commuters who drive alone has decreased, while the number of commuters who use transit has increased.

Asked among those who make a physical commute trip (Q1 n=1,308, Q2 n=1,562, Q3=1,421, Q4=2,031)



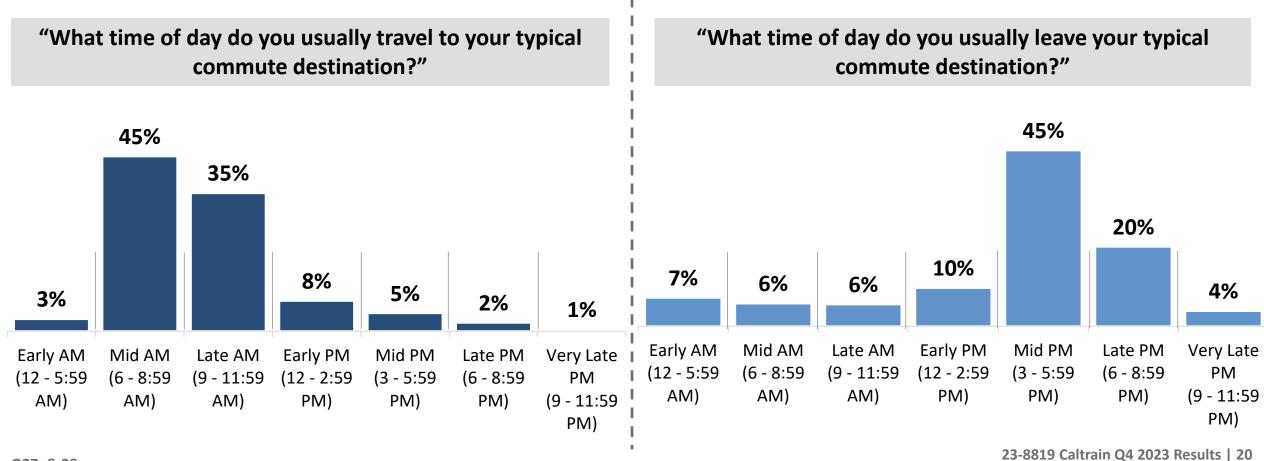
Q29. When you make trips to your typical commute location, how do you usually travel? If you use more than one mode, please select the one you use most often or for the longest distance of your trip.

Commute Times – Commuters



Throughout 2023, a most regional commuters start their commutes in the mid or late morning. A plurality make return trips in peak afternoon hours but a sizeable share commute during evening hours, as well.

Asked among those who make a physical commute trip (Showing combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=6,322)





Overall Caltrain Perceptions

Favorable Ratings Tracked



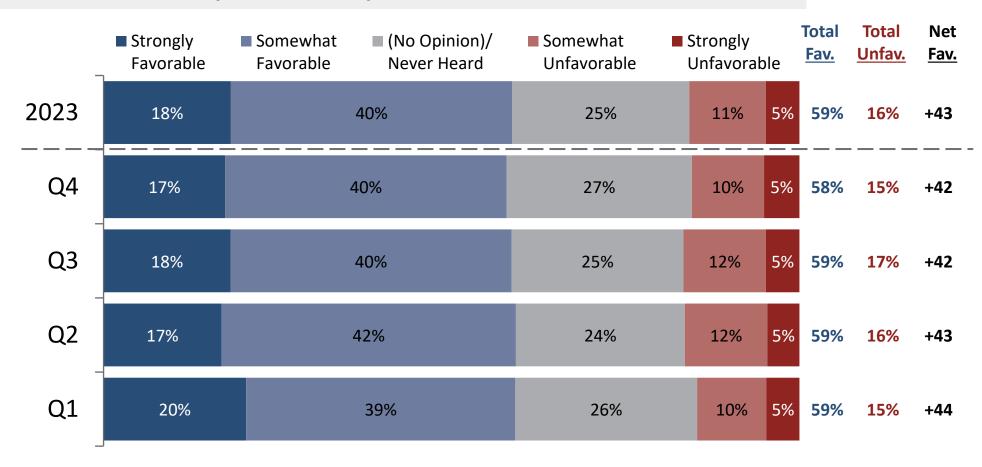
Caltrain favorability has remained consistently positive over all four quarters, with nearly six-in-ten respondents indicating that they have either a strongly or somewhat favorable opinion of Caltrain.

What is your overall opinion of Caltrain?

"...I'm generally favorable [of Caltrain], although communication from Caltrain is not always good."

- Q4 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"I thought it was one of the nicest public transportations that I've been on and I like that it's more comfortable to ride than a bus especially..." - Q4 Group 3, Non-Rider



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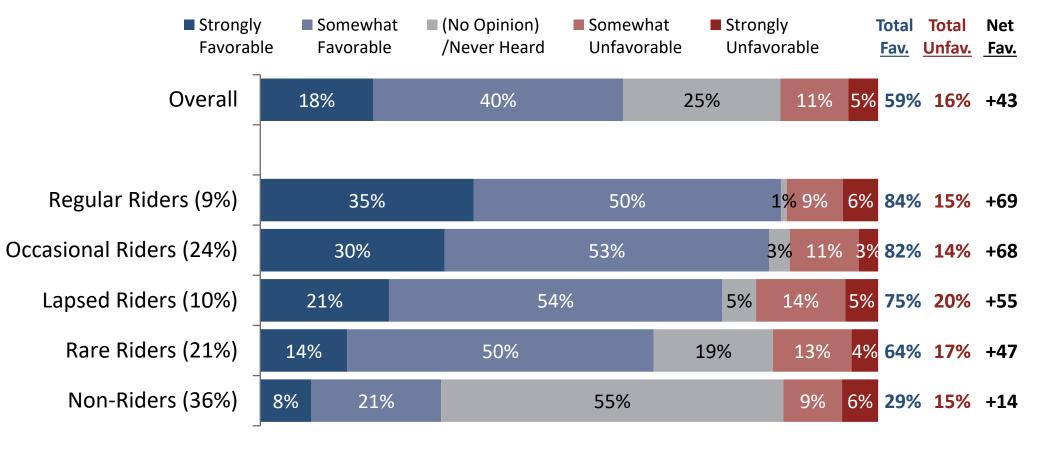
Caltrain Favorability Ratings – Ridership



Three-quarters or more of Lapsed, Occasional, and Regular Riders rate Caltrain as generally favorable, and this positive rating is most intense among Regular Riders. Over half of Non-Riders have no opinion about Caltrain, perhaps because their lack of direct engagement with the agency limits their ability to form strong opinions.

Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4 Data; n=7,355

"I love taking the train... I don't have to sit in angry traffic. I... actually get to work earlier. I get to leave earlier. It's actually been a positive impact." - Q4 Group 1, **Frequent Rider**

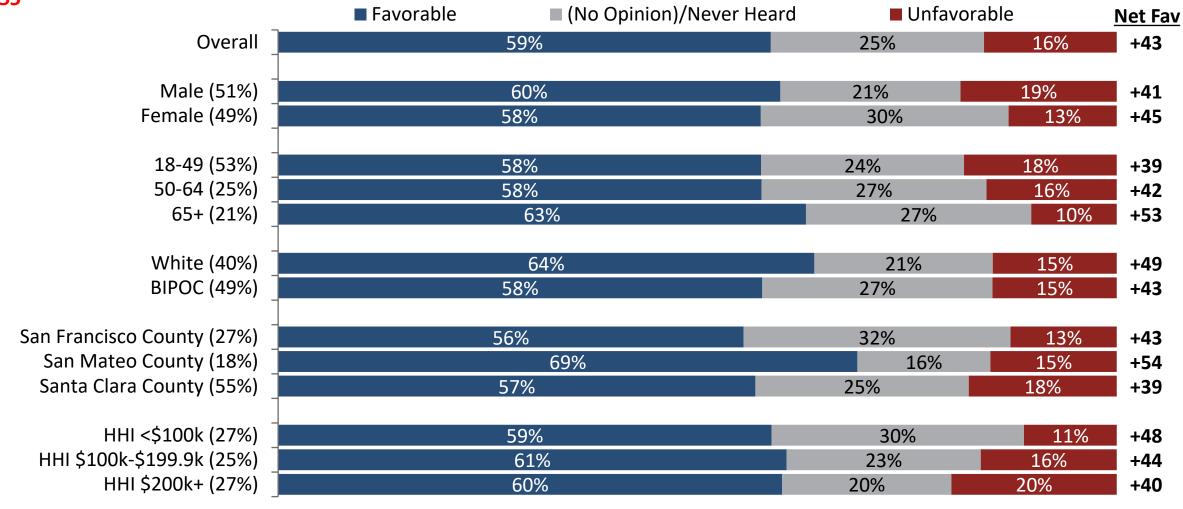


Caltrain Favorability Ratings – Subgroups



Respondents aged 65 or over and San Mateo County Residents are more likely to have a favorable opinion of Caltrain.

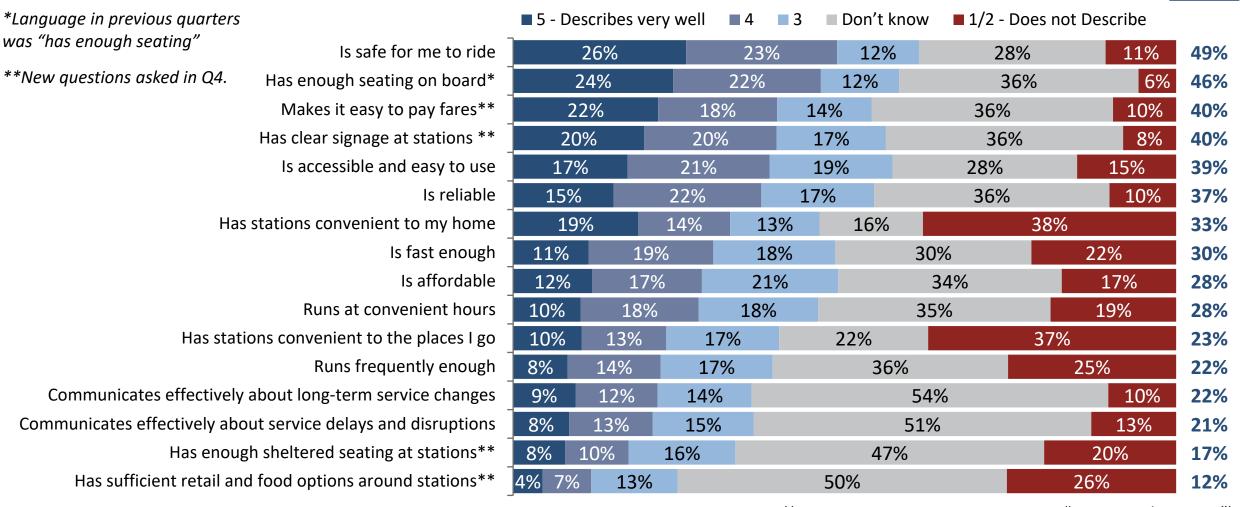
Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355



Caltrain Attributes – Q4 Overall



Most residents consider Caltrain to be safe, reliable, and easy to use. Apart from station proximity, concerns are elevated for frequency, shelter availability, travel time, operating hours, and affordability, although many are unable to rate these aspects of the service either way.



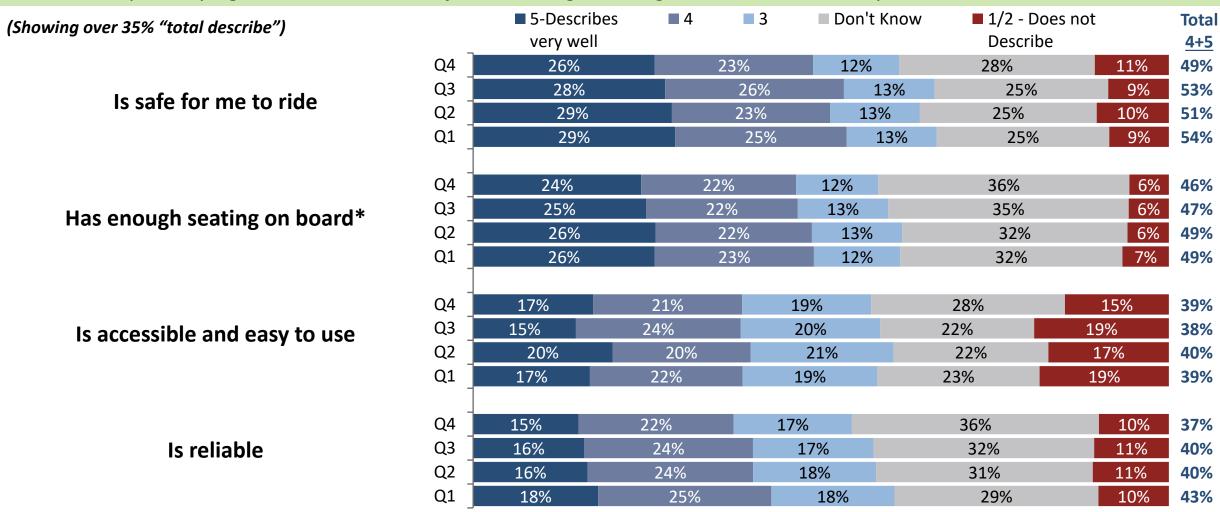
Q32-47. Based on what you may have experienced or heard regarding Caltrain, for each of the following phrases, please indicate how well you think that phrase describes Caltrain.

(*Language in previous quarters was "Has enough seating")

Caltrain Attributes – Overall (Top Tier)



The number of respondents who agree that Caltrain is safe has decreased since Q3, with just under half in agreeance. Still, a plurality agree that Caltrain is safe, has enough seating, is accessible and easy to use, and is reliable.



Q32-47. Based on what you may have experienced or heard regarding Caltrain, for each of the following phrases, please indicate how well you think that phrase describes Caltrain.

(*Language in previous quarters was "has enough seating") 23-8819 Caltrain Q4 2023 Results | 26

Caltrain Attributes – Overall (Mid Tier)



However, a plurality of respondents across all four quarters indicate that Caltrain stations are not convenient to their home.

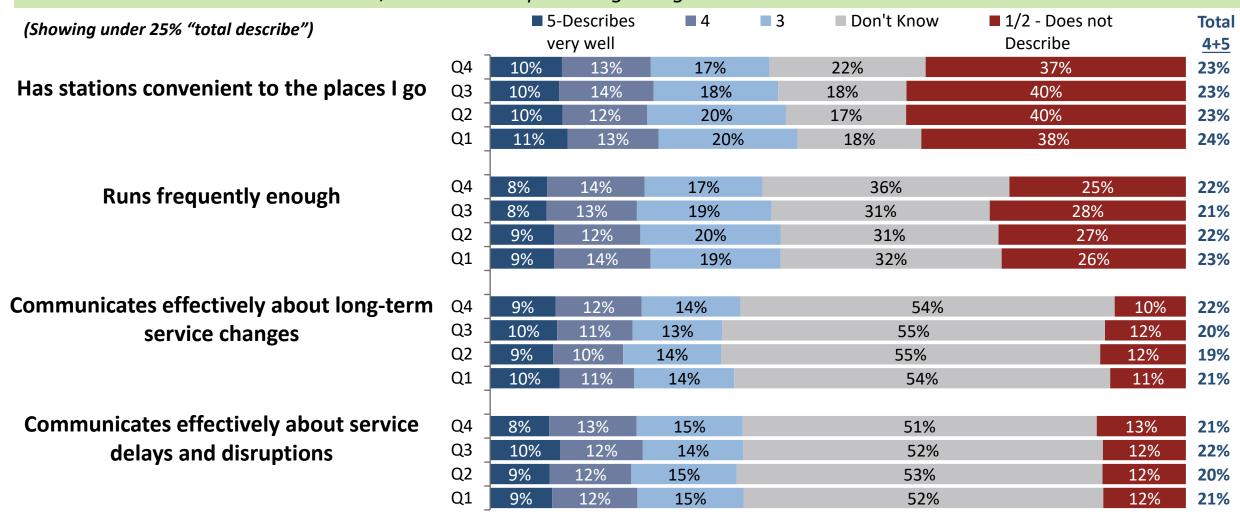
(Showing between 25% - 35% "total describe") ■ 5-Describes 3 ■ Don't Know ■ 1/2 - Does not 4 **Total** Describe very well 4+5 Q4 19% 14% 13% 16% 38% 33% Q3 18% 13% 14% 11% 45% 30% Has stations convenient to my home Q2 13% 12% 20% 15% 41% 32% Q1 12% 18% 15% 12% 42% 30% Q4 19% 30% 11% 18% 30% 22% Q3 12% 19% 19% 25% 25% 31% Is fast enough Q2 15% 16% 20% 26% 23% 31% Q1 26% 14% 18% 20% 23% 31% 12% 17% Q4 21% 34% 17% 28% Q3 12% 15% 22% 29% 22% 28% Is affordable Q2 13% 16% 22% 30% 30% 19% Q1 14% 16% 21% 20% 30% 30% 28% Q4 10% 18% 18% 35% 19% 10% Runs at convenient hours Q3 17% 21% 31% 21% 28% 11% 18% 19% 21% 29% 31% 12% 20% 20% 30% 18% 32%

Q32-47. Based on what you may have experienced or heard regarding Caltrain, for each of the following phrases, please indicate how well you think that phrase describes Caltrain.

Caltrain Attributes – Overall (Bottom Tier)



Stations convenient to destinations, frequent enough service, and effective communication are among the worst-rated Caltrain attributes, with under a quarter agreeing that those attributes describe Caltrain.

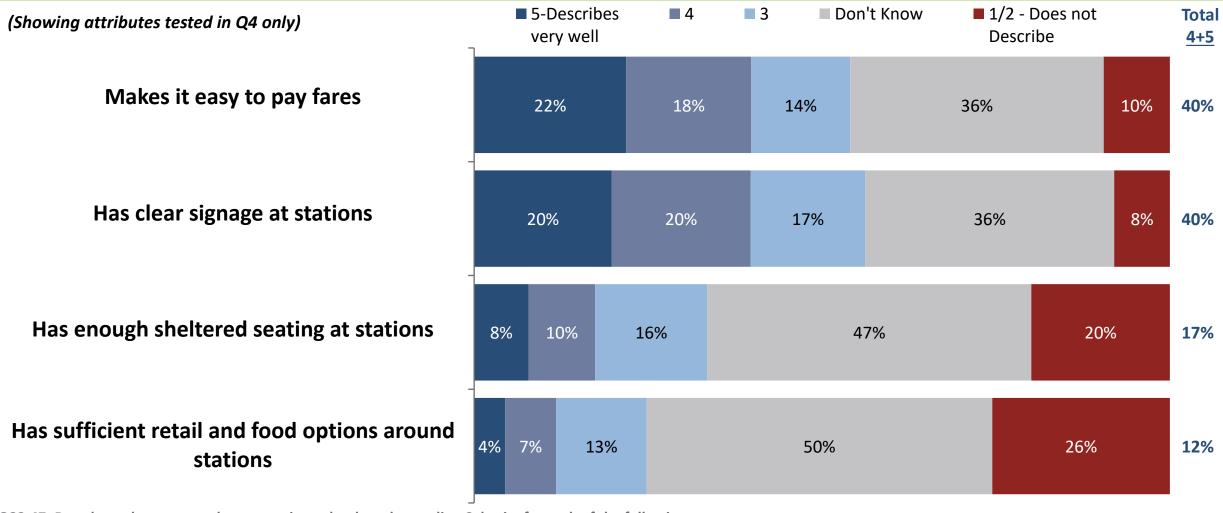


Q32-47. Based on what you may have experienced or heard regarding Caltrain, for each of the following phrases, please indicate how well you think that phrase describes Caltrain.

Caltrain Attributes – Overall (Q4 Additions)



Among the new attributes tested in Q4, ease of paying fares and clear signage at stations were the best-rated, with four-inten agreeing that they describe Caltrain. However, ratings for sufficient sheltered seating and retail options were low.



Q32-47. Based on what you may have experienced or heard regarding Caltrain, for each of the following phrases, please indicate how well you think that phrase describes Caltrain.

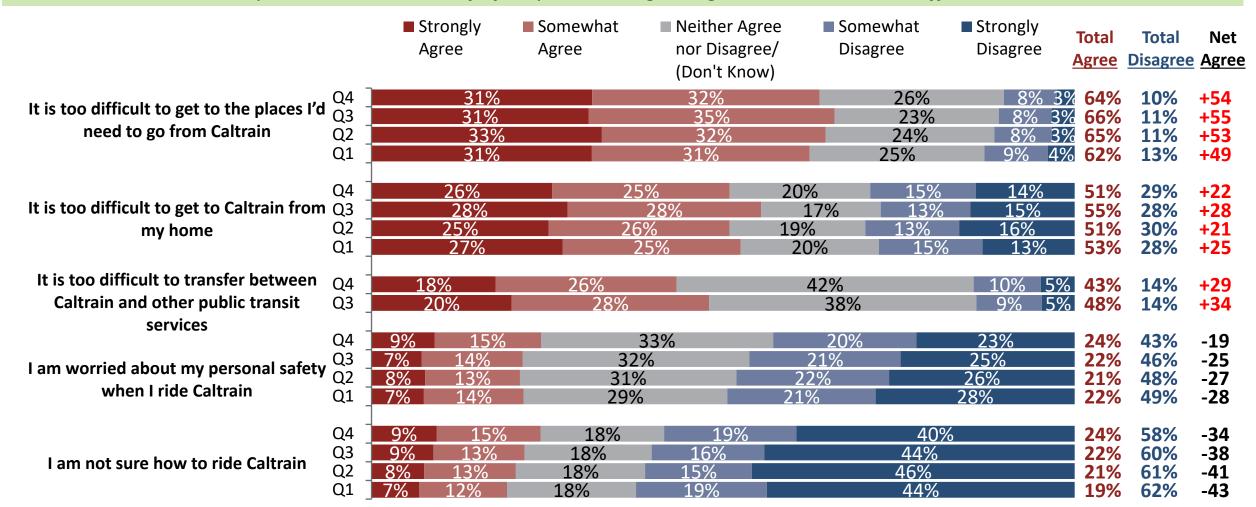


Caltrain Attitudes, Barriers & Incentives

Caltrain Barriers - Overall



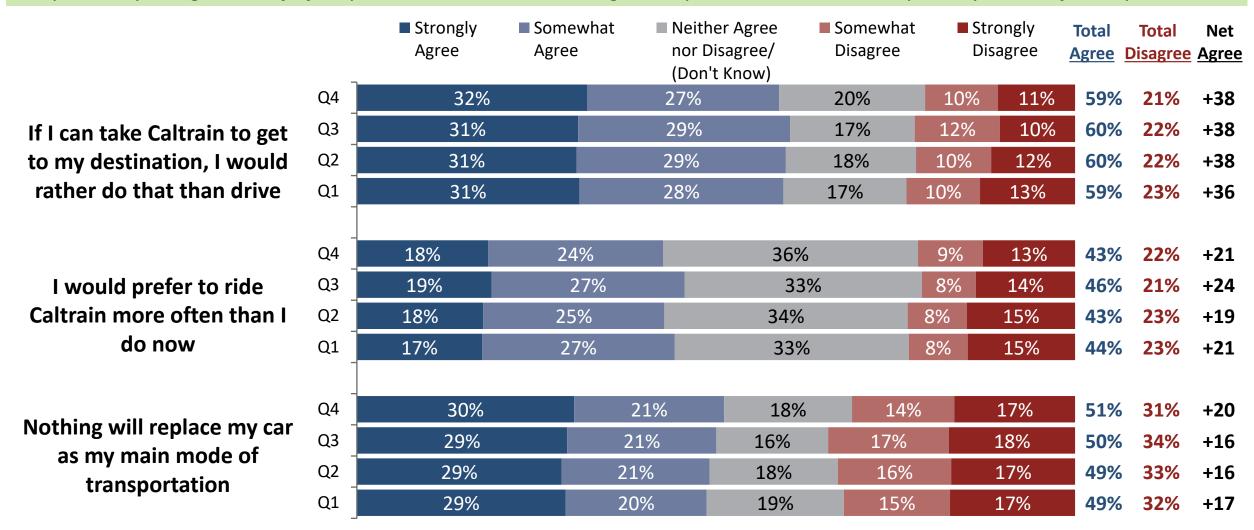
Difficulty getting to Caltrain from home or getting to destinations from Caltrain remain the largest barriers across all four quarters, with over half of respondents agreeing those tasks are too difficult.



Transportation Preferences - Overall



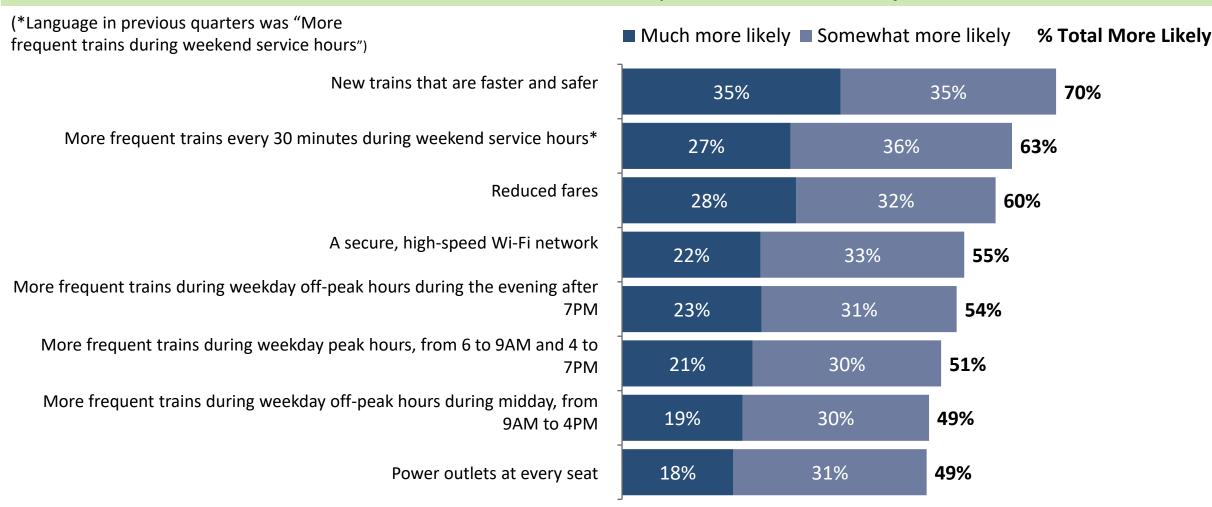
Nearly six-in-ten respondents indicate they would rather take Caltrain to their destination than drive, when possible. Still, car dependency is high, as half of respondents state that nothing will replace their car as their primary mode of transportation.



Ridership Incentives - Overall



New trains that are faster and safer, more frequent weekend service, and reduced fares are the top changes respondents indicate would make them more likely to ride Caltrain more often.



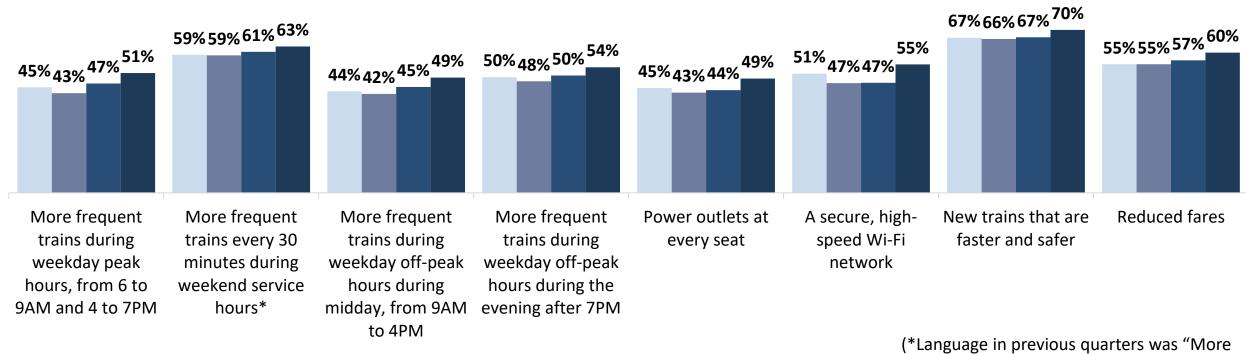
Ridership Incentives Tracked



New trains that are faster and safer remains the top-rated ridership incentive year-to-date, with two-thirds or more of respondents in all four quarters indicating that it would make them more likely to ride Caltrain more often.



% Total More Likely



frequent trains during weekend service hours")

Potential Changes to Service

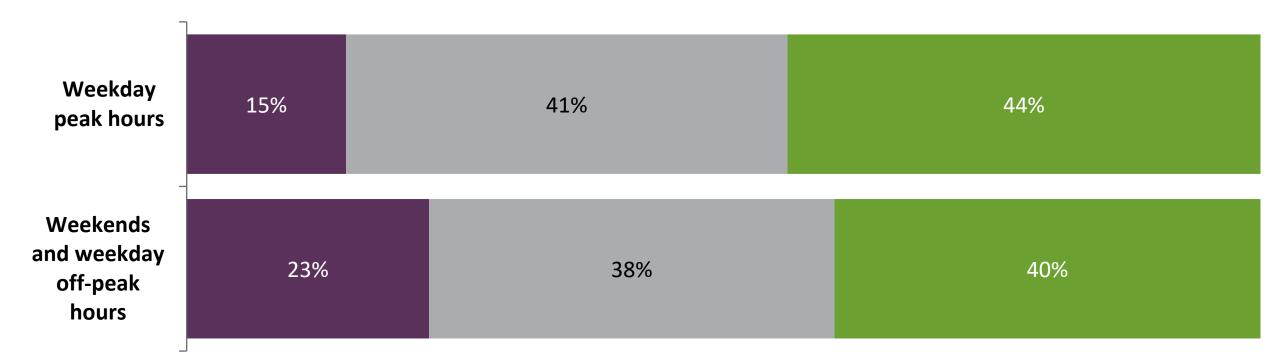


A plurality of respondents indicated that they would prefer more express trains during both weekday peak hours and weekends/weekday off-peak hours.

> Add more local trains which run more frequently but make more local stops and take longer

Maintain the existing balance of local and express trains/(No response recorded)

Add more express trains which run less frequently but are faster and make fewer stops



Q69. Thinking about potential changes Caltrain could make to its service during weekday peak hours, which of the following options would you prefer? Q70. Now, thinking about potential changes Caltrain could make to its service during weekends and weekday off-peak hours, which of the following options would you prefer?

Potential Changes to Service



A majority of regular and occasional riders prefer more express trains during weekday peak hours, and express trains are preferred over more local trains to some extent across all ridership groups.



Q69. Thinking about potential changes Caltrain could make to its service during weekday peak hours, which of the following options would you prefer? Q70. Now, thinking about potential changes Caltrain could make to its service during weekends and weekday off-peak hours, which of the following options would you prefer?



EMC Potential Ridership Segmentation

Potential Rider Segmentation – Key Questions



Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 Q4 Data; n=7,355

% of All Residents

Ride Caltrain at least once a week

59%

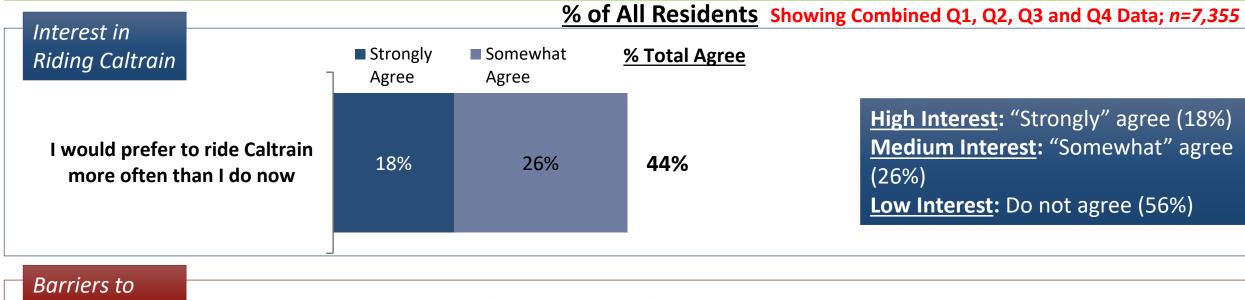
Are infrequent Caltrain Riders (Ride less than monthly or are lapsed riders)

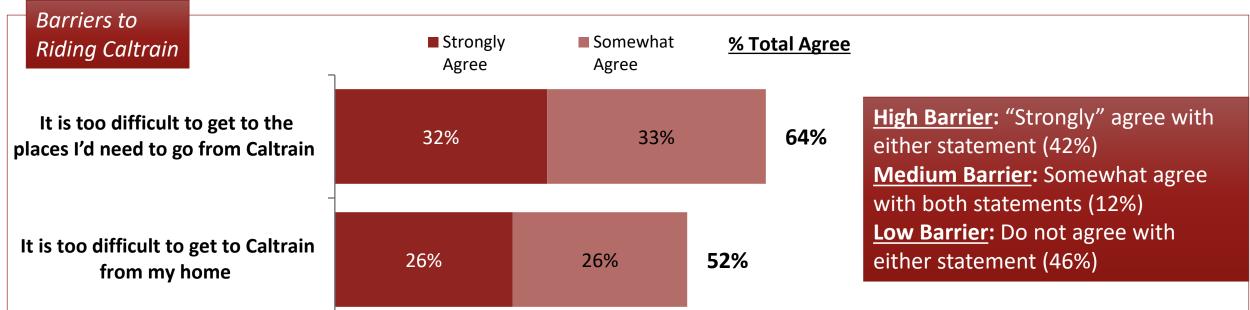
Are non-riders

(Never ride Caltrain, either now or in the past)

Potential Rider Segmentation – Key Questions







Potential Rider Segmentation Definition



Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355

% of All Residents

Total Reachable Target: 45%

10% 16% 19% 28% 27%

Maximize Engagement

Weekly+ Caltrain riders or riders with strong interest in riding more often, and have low or no barriers to riding (n=687)

Strengthen **Engagement**

Less than weekly Caltrain riders with either medium interest or medium barriers OR non-riders with low or no barriers & high interest in riding Caltrain

Longer-Term Convertible

Infrequent or lapsed riders or non-riders with some interest in riding Caltrain more often, but believe it is too difficult to get to Caltrain or where they would need to go via Caltrain (n=1,402)

Monitor

Infrequent or lapsed riders who are not immediately interested in riding Caltrain more often (n=2,094)

Out of Target

Non-riders who are not interested in riding Caltrain (n=1,964)

(n=1.208)

Q4-11. I'm going to read you a few statements about your transportation habits before the pandemic. Please tell me if you did each one more than once a week or less than once a week. Q19. / Q50./ Q53./Q54

Segmentation Summary



Maximize Engagement (10%):

Riders who are on board – attitudinally and behaviorally – and hopefully, amenity or scheduling-based improvements of Caltrain can increase Caltrain ridership and satisfaction with service.

Strengthen Engagement (16%):

Infrequent and non-riders who can viably ride more often. They are interested in riding more and have low barriers to riding. These riders may or may not need Caltrain for their commute, but faster service will be a compelling proposition, as well as off-peak and weekend service frequency.

Longer-Term Convertible (19%):

Caltrain doesn't currently work for these riders, and most short- and medium-term improvements are unlikely to change that. Still, Caltrain may well be a top-of-mind option if their circumstances change. In the meantime, these respondents are open to riding for more occasional/special event trips as they come up.

Monitor (28%):

This group rides Caltrain occasionally and generally likes the service, they're unlikely to ride any more than they already do, even with significant service changes.

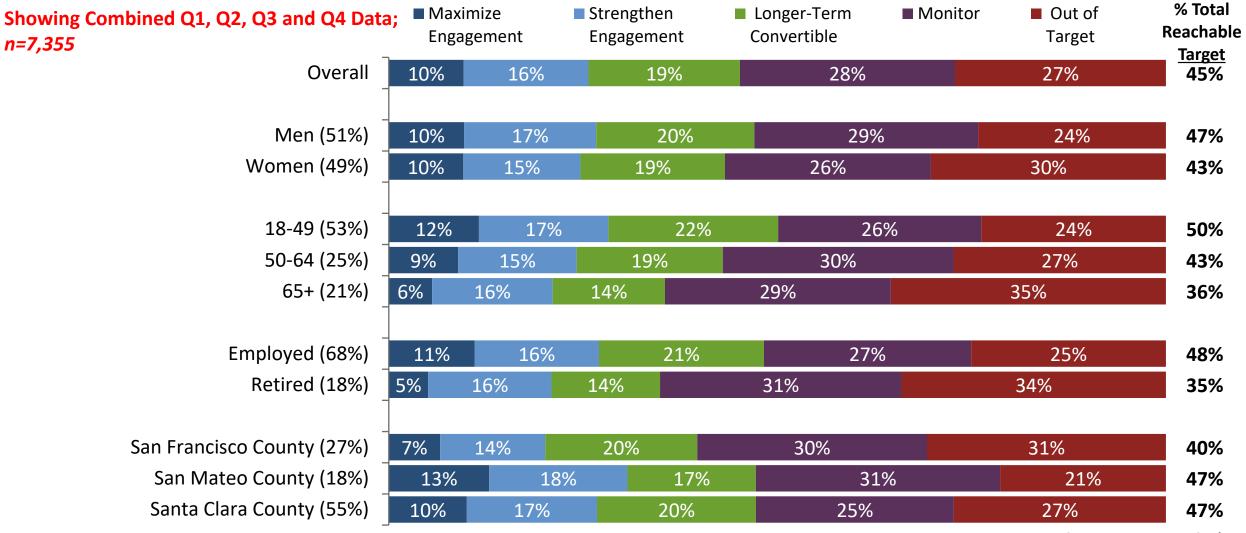
Out of Target (27%):

Caltrain isn't relevant to these people and most likely never will be.

Segmentation by Demographic Subgroups



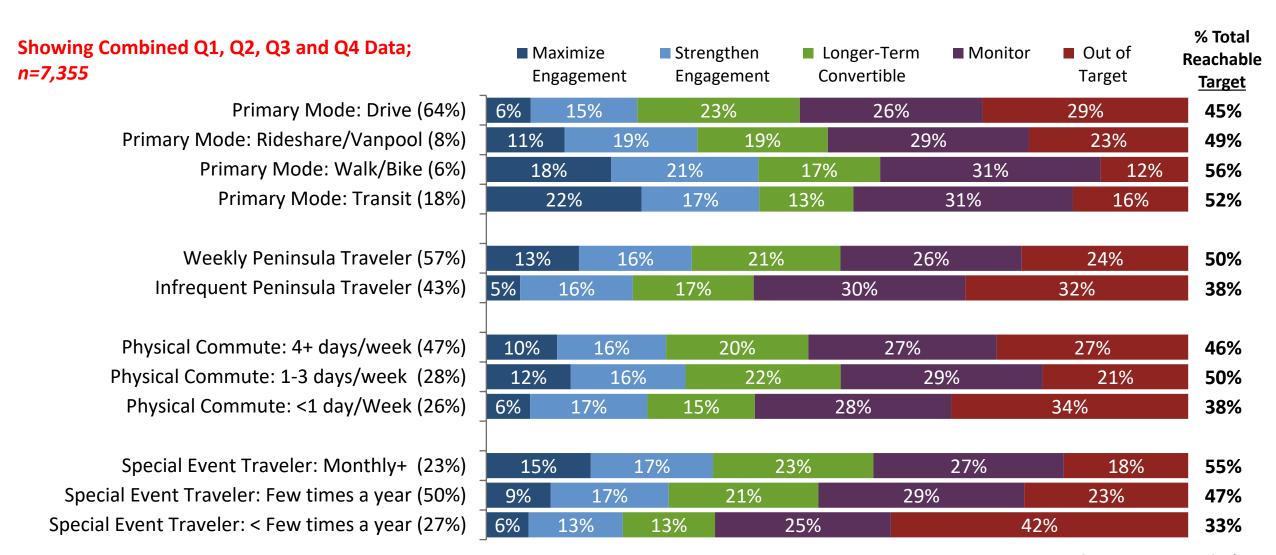
Among all year-to-date respondents in 2023, short or long-term Caltrain rider targets are highest among those under 50, people currently employed, and those living in San Mateo or Santa Clara Counties.



Segmentation by Travel Subgroups



Over half of current public transit and non-motorized travel users and monthly special event travelers are reachable targets.



Potential Changes to Service

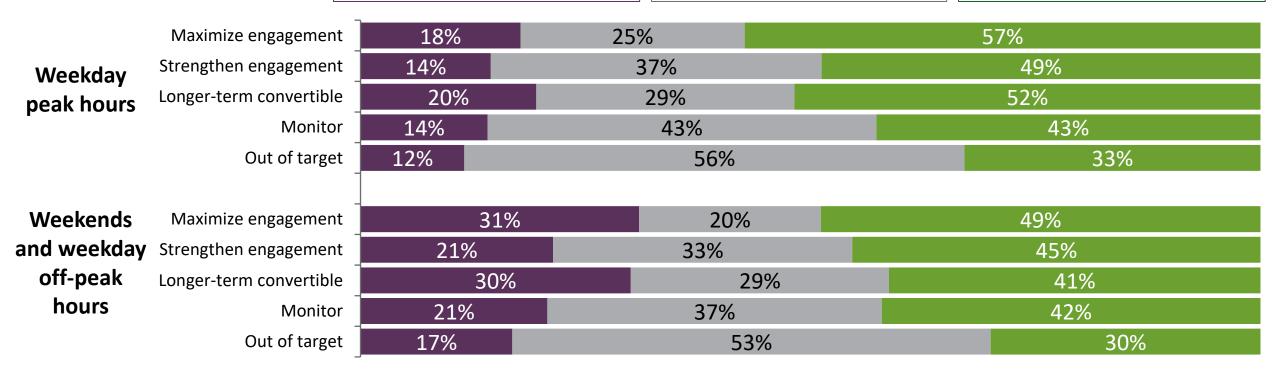


A majority of regular and occasional riders prefer more express trains during weekday peak hours, and express trains are preferred over more local trains to some extent across all ridership groups.

> Add more local trains which run more frequently but make more local stops and take longer

Maintain the existing balance of local and express trains/(No response recorded)

Add more express trains which run less frequently but are faster and make fewer stops



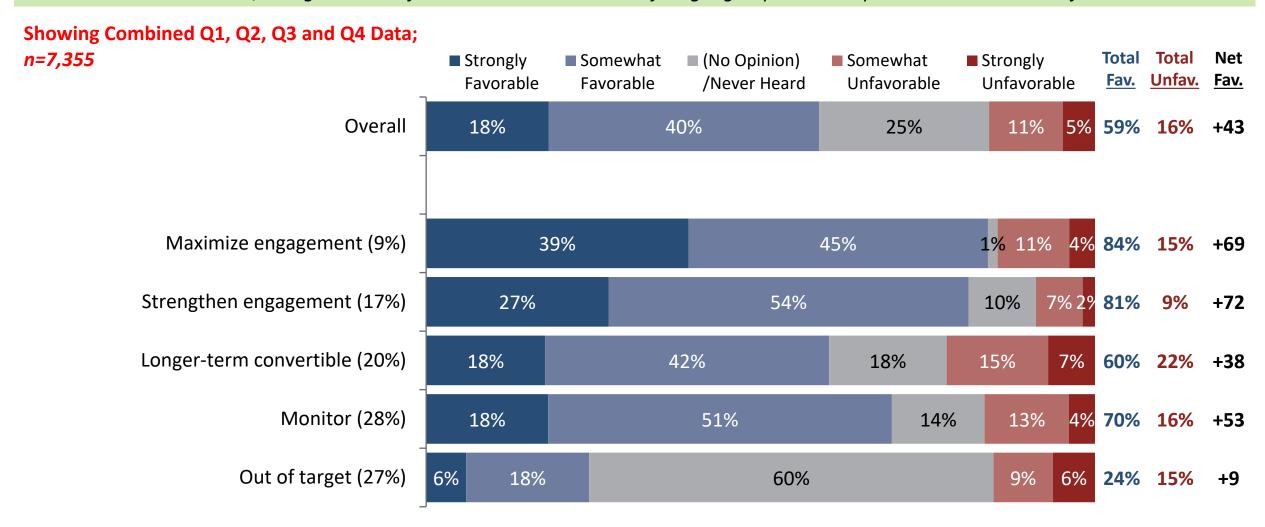
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weekends and weekday off-peak hours, which of the following options would you prefer?

Caltrain Favorability by Potential Rider Segmentation



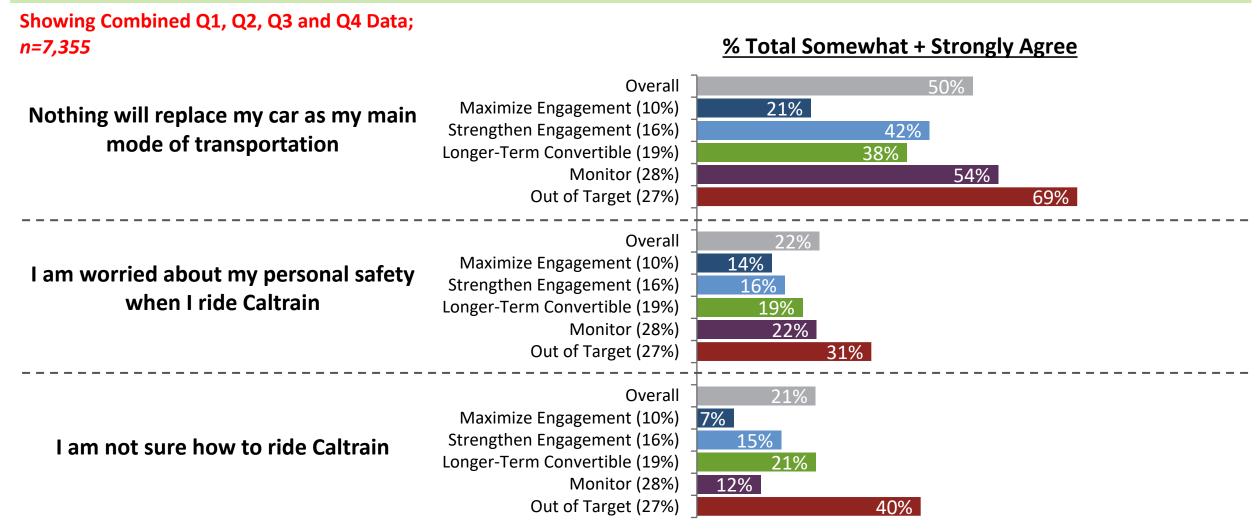
Caltrain is most highly rated by those in the Maximize and Strengthen categories. Those in the Monitor category rate it higher than Longerterm convertible, though both are favorable. Most in the Out of Target group have no opinion or are unaware of Caltrain.



Caltrain Barriers by Potential Rider Segmentation



Significant shares of each potential rider target indicated that nothing would replace their car as their main mode of transportation. Personal safety and uncertainty do not constitute nearly as high a barrier to ridership.



Maximize Engagement (10%) Key Findings

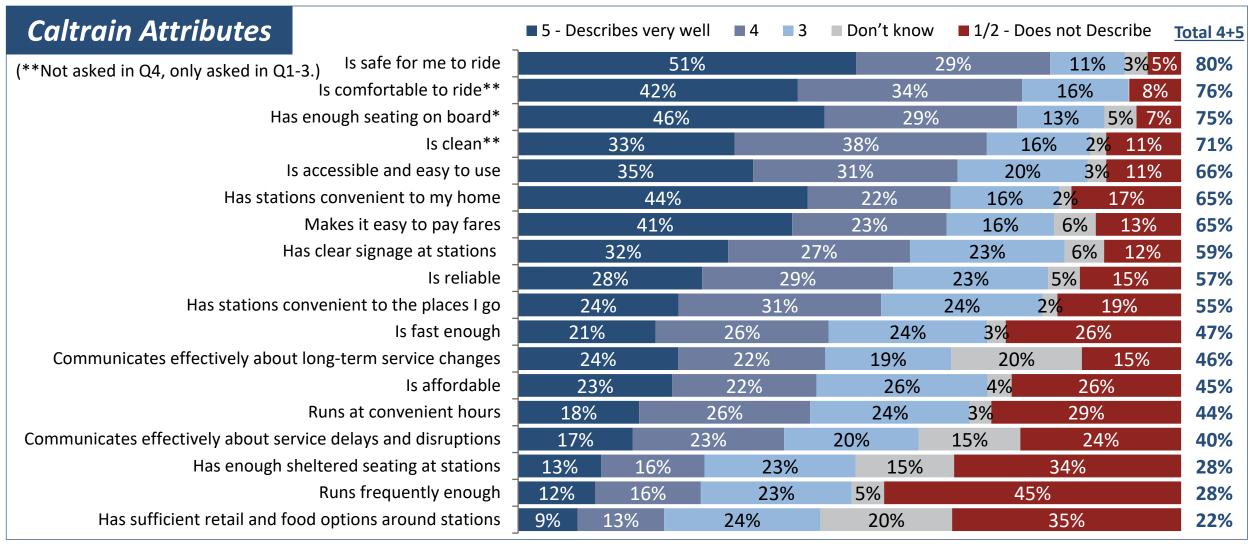


- This segmentation target consists of residents who already use Caltrain and exhibit strong interest in riding even more often.
- This group has strongly positive perceptions of the Agency and most of its service attributes.
- However, this group is strongly critical of Caltrain's service frequency, as well as station amenities such as sheltered seating and retail options.
- The most prominent top-of-mind barrier to riding Caltrain is its schedule, with nearly one-third mentioning this. Similarly, more frequent service is their primary suggestion for getting them to ride more often.
- When asked about improvements Caltrain is making that could serve as an incentive to ride more often, this group reacted very positively to faster trains, more frequent service (including during off-peak hours, weekends, and peak hours), and reduced fares.

Maximize Engagement (10%) Snapshot



Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; *n=7,355*

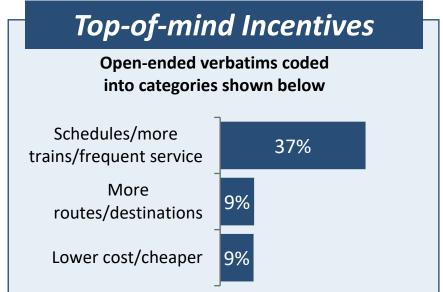


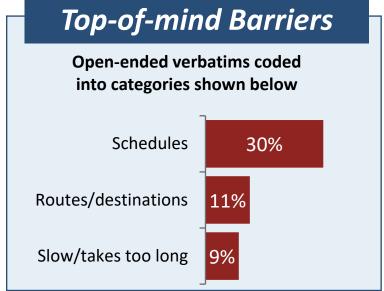
(*Language in previous quarters was "Has enough seating")

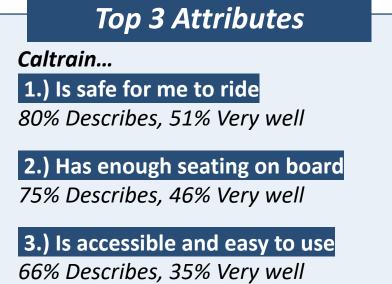
Maximize Engagement (10%) Snapshot

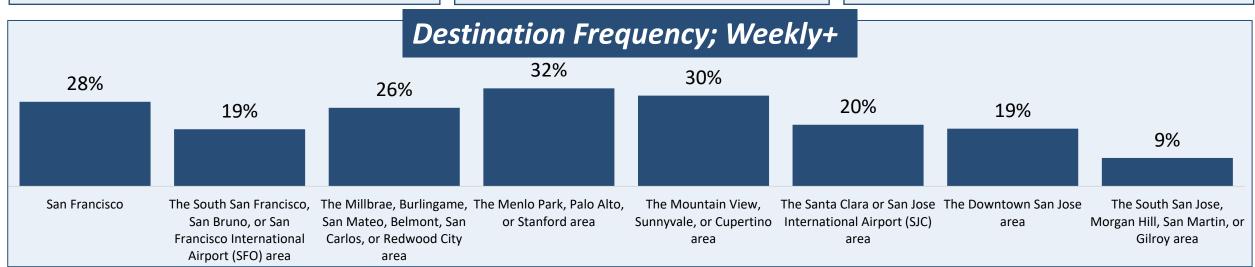


Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355







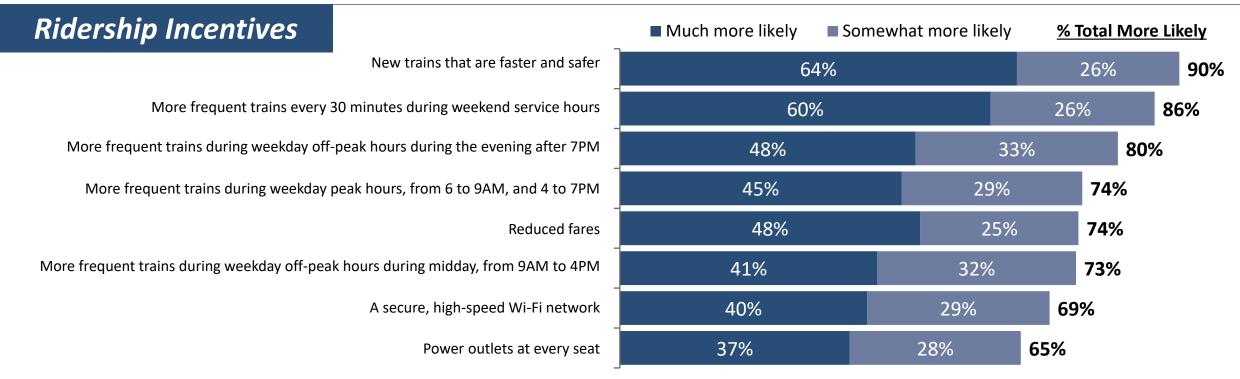


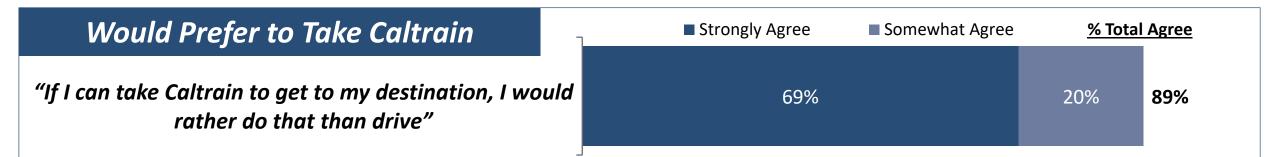
Q56., Q31., Q32-47., Q4-11. 23-8819 Caltrain Q4 2023 Results | 49

Maximize Engagement (10%) Snapshot



Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355





Strengthen Engagement (16%) Key Findings

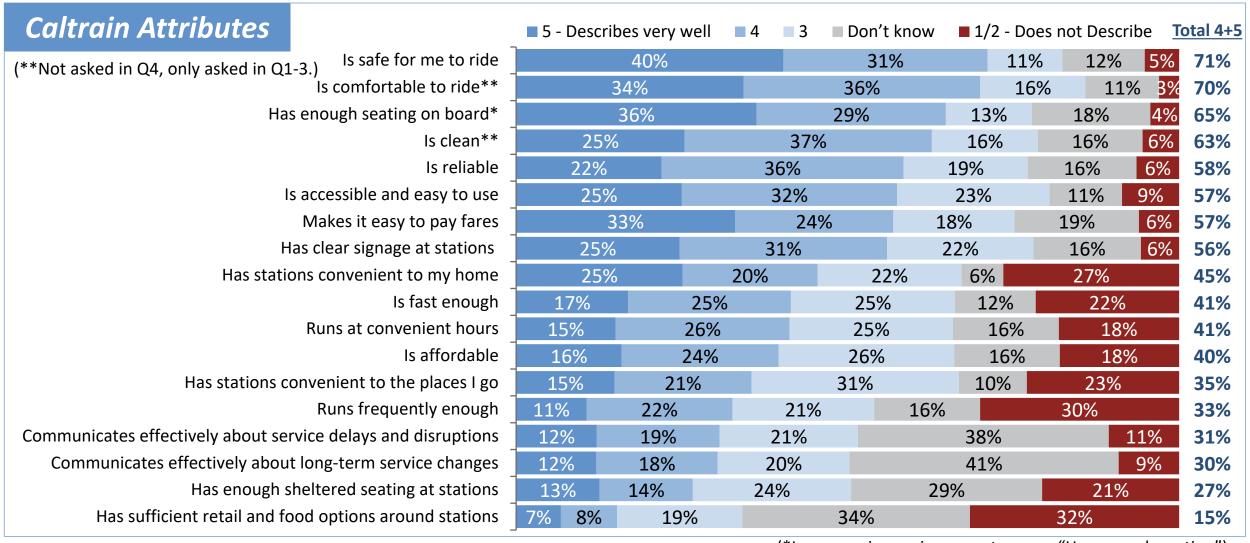


- This segmentation target includes those who may ride Caltrain infrequently or not at all – but express at least moderate interest in riding more often and do not consider accessing the stations as prohibitively difficult for where they live and would need to go.
- This group generally views Caltrain's service positively, agreeing that it is a safe, comfortable, clean, and reliable service with sufficient seating on board. Still, some are critical of the convenience of station locations and the availability of retail options at stations.
- The most mentioned top-of-mind barriers to riding Caltrain include a lack of sufficient routes and destinations, as well as Caltrain's schedule.
- Among those in this target group, new trains with faster service is a compelling incentive to ride Caltrain more often, along with increased weekend service frequency and reduced fares.

Strengthen Engagement (16%) Snapshot



Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355



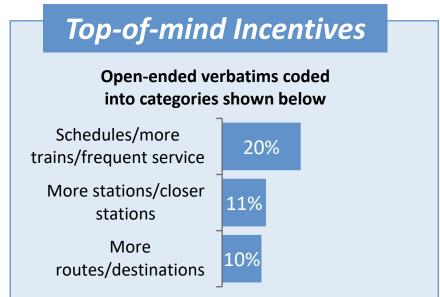
Q32-47. Based on what you may have experienced or heard regarding Caltrain, for each of the following phrases, please indicate how well you think that phrase describes Caltrain.

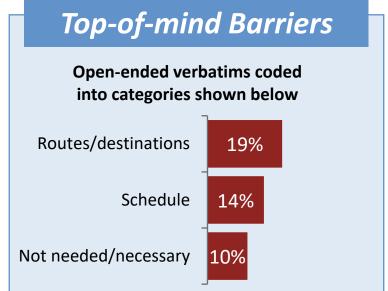
(*Language in previous quarters was "Has enough seating")

Strengthen Engagement (16%) Snapshot

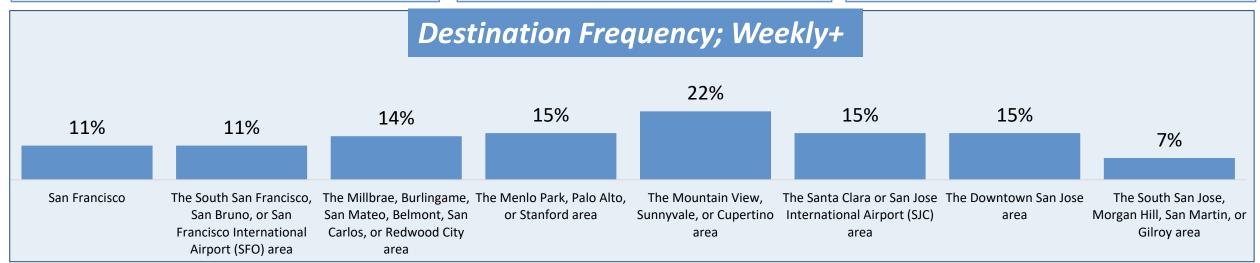


Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355







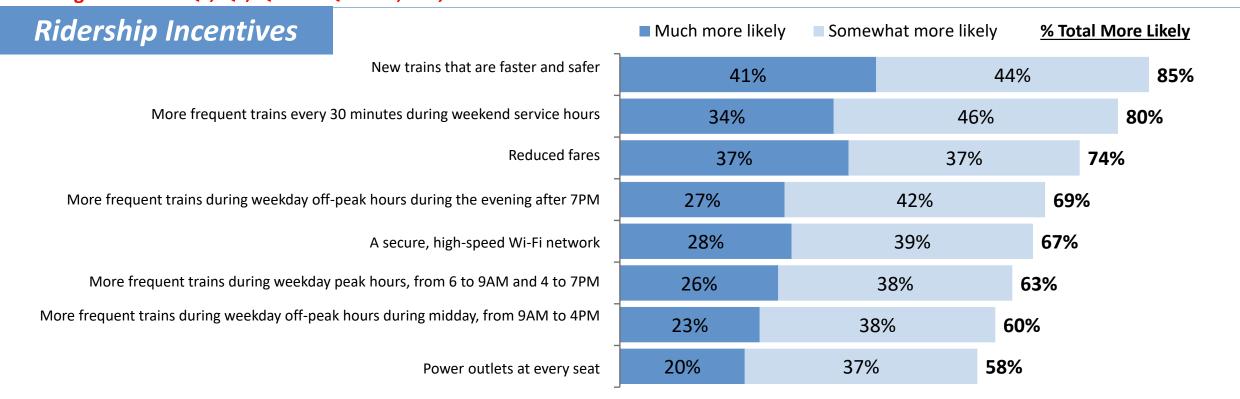


Q56., Q31., Q32-47., Q4-11. 23-8819 Caltrain Q4 2023 Results | 53

Strengthen Engagement (16%) Snapshot

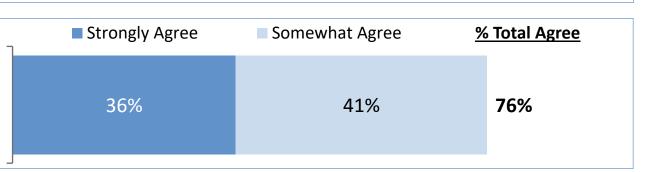


Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355



Would Prefer to Take Caltrain

"If I can take Caltrain to get to my destination, I would rather do that than drive"



Longer-Term Convertible (19%) Key Findings

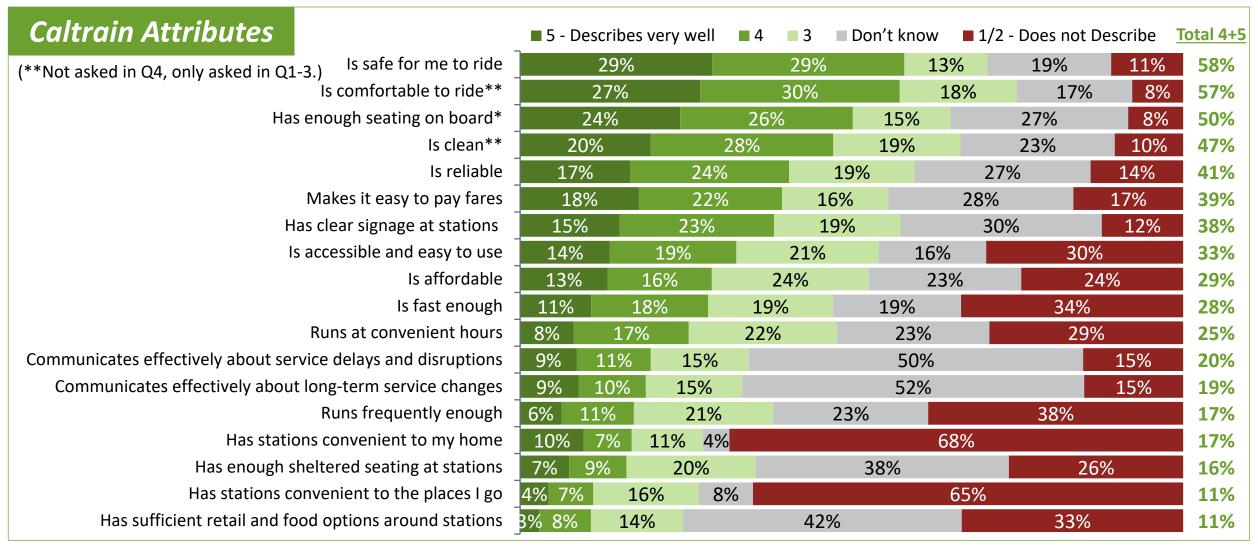


- By definition, residents in this longer-term target use Caltrain infrequently but are at least moderately interested in riding more often. However, they currently believe the service does not serve where they live or go to the places they would want to go.
- Although over eight-in-ten of longer-term convertibles would prefer to take Caltrain over driving if they could, limited routes/destinations and a lack of access/nearby stations are significant barriers to them riding more often.
- For most, riding Caltrain currently isn't viable. There currently aren't stations near their destinations or homes, but they may keep Caltrain top-of-mind if their situation changes in the future.
- For some, new, faster trains, increased service frequency, and reduced fares may help increase their ridership over time, particularly if travel time and flexibility grow closer to parity with driving alone.

Longer-term Convertible (19%) Snapshot



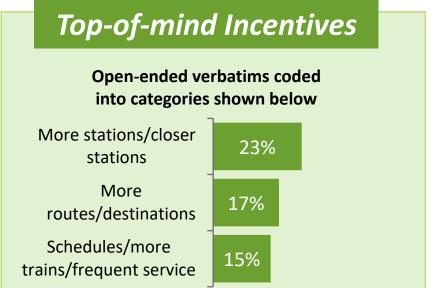
Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355

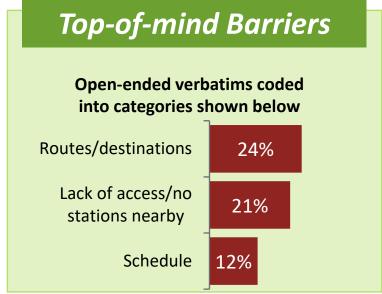


Longer-term Convertible (19%) Snapshot

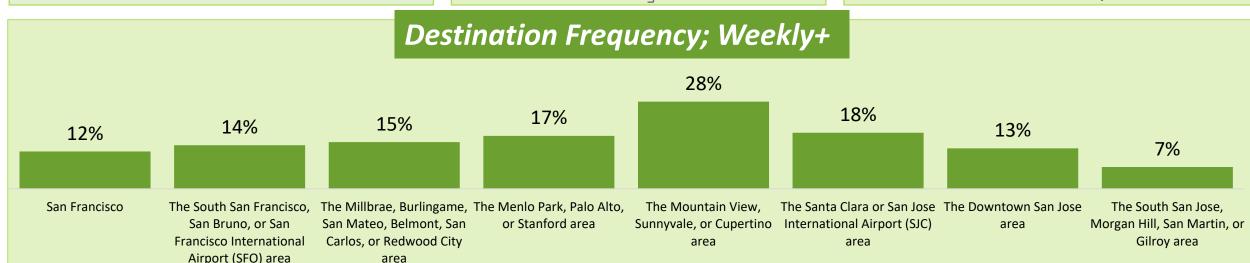


Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355







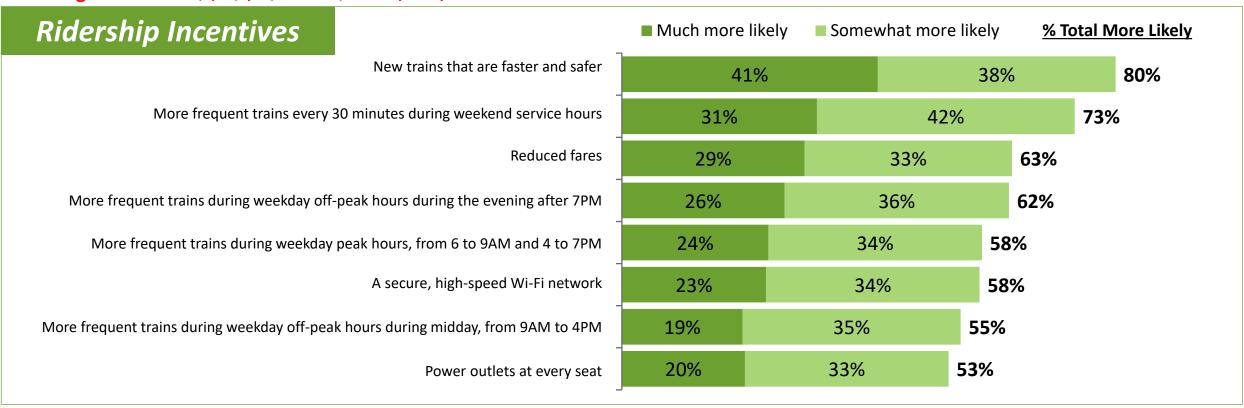


Q56., Q31., Q32-47., Q4-11. 23-8819 Caltrain Q4 2023 Results | 57

Longer-term Convertible (19%) Snapshot

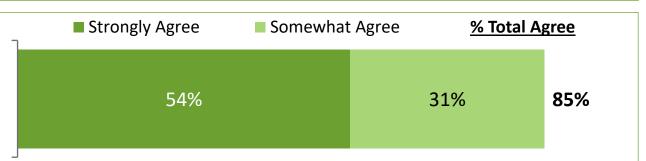


Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355



Would Prefer to Take Caltrain

"If I can take Caltrain to get to my destination, I would rather do that than drive"



Top-of-Mind Barriers to Riding Caltrain



Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355

Q31.

In general, what is the main thing that keeps you from riding Caltrain, if anything?

(Open-ended question; verbatim responses coded into categories shown)

	Overall	Maximize Engagement (10%)	Strengthen Engagement (16%)	Longer-Term Convertible (19%)	Monitor (28%)	Out of Target (27%)
Routes/destinations	18%	11%	19%	24%	18%	18%
Not needed/necessary	13%	3%	10%	6%	16%	21%
Schedule	11%	30%	14%	12%	8%	3%
Lack of access/no stations nearby	11%	5%	9%	21%	8%	10%
Slow/takes too long	8%	9%	8%	10%	8%	5%
Not convenient	6%	3%	5%	6%	6%	8%
Have a car/prefer to drive	4%	0%	3%	1%	5%	8%
Cost	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%
Safety concerns/crimes	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%
Transportation to/from station	2%	3%	2%	5%	2%	1%
No longer commute/retired/work remotely	3%	2%	5%	1%	5%	1%
Short commute/live near my destination	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Dirty/lack of cleanliness	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%

Ridership Incentives by Potential Rider Segmentation



Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355

% More Likely (Much + Somewhat)

	Overall	Maximize Engagement (10%)	Strengthen Engagement (16%)	Longer-Term Convertible (19%)	Monitor (28%)	Out of Target (27%)
New trains that are faster and safer	67%	90%	85%	80%	66%	41%
More frequent trains every 30 minutes during weekend service hours*	60%	86%	80%	73%	60%	31%
Reduced fares	57%	74%	74%	63%	57%	36%
A secure, high-speed Wi-Fi network	50%	69%	67%	58%	50%	28%
More frequent trains during weekday off-peak hours during the evening after 7PM	50%	80%	69%	62%	48%	23%
More frequent trains during weekday peak hours, from 6-9AM and 4 -7PM	47%	74%	63%	58%	41%	25%
Power outlets at every seat	45%	65%	58%	53%	42%	29%
More frequent trains during weekday off-peak hours during midday, from 9AM-4PM	45%	73%	60%	55%	42%	23%

Q61.-Q68. Next, you will read about some changes Caltrain made recently or is currently making. For each one, please indicate whether that change makes you much more likely, somewhat more likely, or not more likely to ride Caltrain more often.

Top-of-Mind Ridership Incentives



Showing Combined Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Data; n=7,355

And what is the main thing Caltrain could change to make you more likely to ride more often in the future, if anything?

(Open-ended question; verbatim responses coded into categories shown)

	Overall	Maximize Engagement (9%)	Strengthen Engagement (17%)	Longer-Term Convertible (20%)	Monitor (28%)	Out of Target (27%)
Schedules/more trains/ frequent service	14%	37%	20%	15%	11%	3%
More routes/destinations	11%	9%	10%	17%	11%	9%
More stations/closer stations	14%	4%	11%	23%	10%	16%
Lower cost/cheaper	6%	9%	8%	4%	8%	5%
Personal circumstances	7%	2%	5%	3%	8%	10%
Faster/shorten travel time	5%	7%	7%	6%	5%	2%
Better connection to other transit systems	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%
Transportation to/from station	5%	3%	6%	10%	4%	3%
Improve safety	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%	5%
More advertising/information/promoting	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Improve convenience/ ease of use	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Improve cleanliness	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Improve parking	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%

Note: excluding responses under 2% and those coded as "Other," "Nothing," and "Don't know"



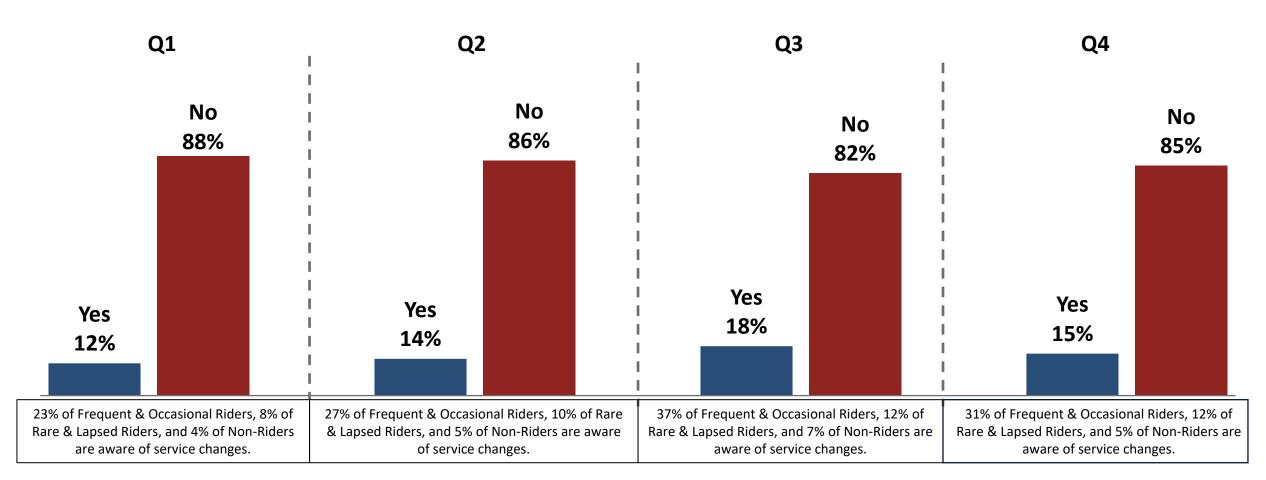
Information

Caltrain Service Changes Awareness



A large majority of respondents have not heard anything about Caltrain service changes recently.

Have you heard anything about Caltrain service changes recently?



Caltrain Service Changes Awareness



Among respondents who have heard about any changes, over one-third mentioned hearing about electrification, which has increased steadily year-to-date.

What have you heard about Caltrain service changes recently?

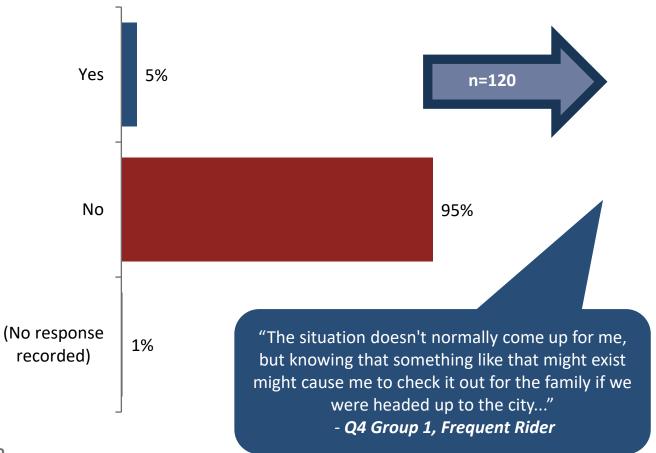
(Open-ended question; verbatim responses coded into categories shown)	Q1 (n=186)	Q2 (n=238)	Q3 (n=311)	Q4 (n=384)
Electrification	27%	27%	35%	37%
Schedule changes	5%	10%	10%	13%
Weekend service changes/disruptions	24%	15%	15%	9%
Frequency increase/more trains	4%	4%	4%	8%
Construction/track updates/extensions	-	5%	1%	5%
Bus bridge	10%	7%	2%	4%
Service suspensions/shutdowns	8%	6%	5%	2%
Reduced service/disruptions	-	-	7%	2%
Frequency decrease/fewer trains	3%	7%	4%	2%
Slower service/delays	2%	2%	1%	1%
Fare/rate changes	-	-	2%	1%
Information source mentions	3%	1%	1%	-

Caltrain Passes and Fare Discounts Awareness



Awareness of new types of passes or fare discounts is very low, with ninety-five percent not having seen or heard anything.





Which of the following have you seen or heard about on Caltrain?	%
Group pass	21%
Family pass	32%
Three-day pass	41%
\$1 youth ticket	20%
Other	26%
No response	4%

Caltrain Information Sources



The Caltrain website, by a large margin, continues to be the most mentioned source where respondents typically find information about Caltrain's service and schedule.

How do you typically find information about Caltrain's service and schedules? Please select all that apply. (Multiple responses accepted) (Open-ended question; verbatim responses coded into categories shown)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Caltrain website	56%	55%	56%	54%
Caltrain's online timetable	24%	21%	21%	18%
Caltrain smartphone app	14%	14%	13%	11%
Caltrain station announcements or digital displays	8%	8%	8%	7%
Advertisement on a website	8%	8%	8%	7%
Caltrain's printed timetable	8%	6%	7%	6%
Flyers on board Caltrain or at stations	6%	5%	5%	6%
Advertisement on TV or a TV streaming app	4%	5%	4%	6%
Twitter	5%	4%	5%	3%
Email	4%	4%	5%	5%
Facebook	3%	2%	3%	4%
Instagram	3%	2%	3%	3%
YouTube	2%	2%	2%	3%
Newspaper website	2%	1%	1%	2%
Print newspaper	1%	1%	1%	2%
Some other source	9%	10%	11%	10%



Resident Survey: Conclusions

Resident Survey: Summary



- In general, residents' travel and commute behavior has held steady since the beginning of 2023. Most drive alone and their reported Caltrain usage has remained virtually unchanged throughout 2023. Around a third ride Caltrain at least a few times a year, and most who use the service do so infrequently.
- Caltrain favorability remains high and stable. The service earns its highest marks for safety, sufficient seating on board, ease of use, and reliability.
- Overall, residents remain critical of the convenience of station locations, service frequency, speed, and operating hours, which pose more tangible barriers to those who may be interested in riding more often.

Resident Survey: Summary



- Residents express interest in new trains that are faster and safer, as well as more frequent weekend service, and these are the top incentives that could increase their ridership.
- When given the choice between more express trains or more local trains, a plurality of residents expressed interest in more express trains. This preference is strongest among regular and occasional riders.
- Loyal Caltrain riders remain relatively critical of Caltrain's service frequency, and are highly critical of station amenities. They also welcome faster trains, more frequent service, and reduced fares.



Focus Groups Methodology & Key Findings

Key Focus Group Findings



- Despite some needs and challenges, participants across groups generally expressed favorable views of Caltrain, describing it as safer and cleaner than other public transit options. Though it was viewed as safer than other options, Caltrain stations specifically were presented as a safety concern, particularly among women who currently ride.
- One of the largest barriers for infrequent rider and non-rider participants was station locations, with many stating they don't ride Caltrain simply because there are not stations convenient to their homes or destinations. Frequency and reliability were also commonly cited as pain points across all groups.
- Awareness of current fare promotions was extremely low, even among frequent riders and those with higher familiarity with the service.
- When asked to choose between adding more express trains or more local trains, participants did not express uniform preferences, and many pointed out the benefits and drawbacks of each option.
- Frequent and infrequent riders had extremely positive reactions to the possibility of adding retail options at stations, though non-riders did not see the benefits.



Focus Group Different Group Perceptions

Focus Group Frequent Riders: Perceptions of Caltrain



Frequent riders expressed very positive opinions of Caltrain, noting its cleanliness, safety, and convenience. Still, they are critical of the service frequency, and voiced desires for more frequent trains, especially in the evenings.

"I love taking the train. It makes my life so much easier. I don't have to sit in angry traffic. I get to actually get to work earlier. I get to leave earlier. It's actually been a positive impact..."

- Q4 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"I don't mind if they're a couple minutes late, but if they're an hour late, to me that's kind of unacceptable because I'm already at the train station." - Q2 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"I really like it. For years, 'No, I'm not going to take the train,' and then when I did I was pleasantly surprised. I've been taking it for about 10 years now and I like it. It gets me to the city and meeting friends along the peninsula from Sunnyvale. I'm happy, very happy with it." - Q2 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"...sometimes it's hard to get a train. I have to wait a while, they don't run that frequently in the off hours. So that's something that I wish would be improved on."

- Q4 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"I think Caltrain is overall safer and cleaner compared to Muni and BART." - Q4 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"So, maintaining frequency later in the day would definitely be good. And then also, as I've found with BART, the more trains you have running, the less bad a delay is, because it's like, 'Oh no, I missed my train.' Five minutes later, 'Oh look, a train going in the right direction."

- Q2 Group 1, Frequent Rider

Focus Group Infrequent Riders: Perceptions of Caltrain



Though infrequent riders viewed the service as safer and cleaner than other transit options, many found the service confusing and difficult to navigate.

"I think in general I think that Caltrain usually has pretty good on-time performance. In my experience, I typically have a positive view of Caltrain compared to BART. If given the choice, I'd prefer to use Caltrain."

- Q4 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"Usually it is very much on time. I don't think I've ever seen a train not show up or be canceled." - Q4 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"I was taking a night class in San Francisco at one point and it started at 7:00 and if I wanted to drive there, I'd have to leave at 4:30 because of how traffic was before the pandemic. So I just hopped on the Caltrain instead because traffic in the evening was killer." - Q2 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"I think for me, if time isn't a constraint, then I'm much more flexible and I like using Caltrain. But yeah, if I'm on a tight schedule, then I'm probably going to drive more. And usually with the Giants game, if it's a nighttime game, as much as I like taking Caltrain up there, I don't want to be forced onto that last train so it's really more about time and flexibility."

- Q2 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"I do think compared to most of the other sort of Muni or BART, it is the one I like better than the others. It's typically cleaner, but I feel like in recent years maybe that has dropped off a little bit or certain stations, well specifically thinking maybe doesn't feel as safe as it used to. My whole thing about Caltrain usually has more to do with schedule. I do wish it would run more frequently."

- Q4 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

Focus Group Non-Riders: Perceptions of Caltrain



Non-riders shared generally positive impressions of Caltrain, but viewed it as an inconvenient option for themselves, citing barriers such as distance from stations and frequency of trains.

"...it's been quite a while since I used Caltrain, but I did like it. I thought it was pretty clean and it was nice to have a seat and it was a relaxing commute. I think the only reason why I don't really use it is because I live far away from the station."

- Q4 Group 3, Non-Rider

"I thought it was one of the nicest public transportations that I've been on and I like that it's more comfortable to ride than a bus especially..." - Q4 Group 3, Non-Rider

"It is a nice ride, I would agree with that, but having to transfer to get to where you want to go or find other transportation once you arrive at the station is the big problem, I think. It's not coordinated at all with other transportation companies, like the buses or other things."

- Q4 Group 3, Non-Rider

"I guess the biggest factor, because I always wanted to go take it down into San Fran and stuff, but obviously, for live music stuff, that stuff happens later in the night, so if I get out of the concert at 11 or 12, a bit late time. I'm under a bit of a time crunch to try and make it back to get the last train back because that's about what, a half hour, 40 minute normal car ride that becomes an hour via Caltrain."

- Q2 Group 3, Non-Rider

"I've always wanted to ride it. But the issue for me is that to get to the Caltrain from where I live, I would have to drive to Mountain View first. Which means that if it's a 30-minute drive, getting to Mountain View was 15 minutes of that anyways, so might as well drive all the way. So, if it was more than that one vertical line that the Caltrain runs along, then I would probably be writing it quite a bit. But, because it's so limited, I can't ride it."

- Q2 Group 3, Non-Rider



Focus Group Barriers and Incentives to Riding

Focus Group Frequent Riders: Barriers and Incentives



Frequent riders were critical of the frequency of service, and voiced desire for more frequent trains, especially on weekends.

"Something that makes it just so clear that one side is closed or the train is going in one direction or the other. There are signs of course to show northbound, southbound, but I don't think people get it. So having something that's a little more integrated would be awesome."

- Q4 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"Like I said, it isn't cheap, but if it was really a good bargain, I would definitely consider it."

- Q4 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"The trains run once an hour each way on the weekends, which is painful."

- Q2 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"I think it's time and efficiency. Time is something you don't get back. And maybe when I was single and when I had no kids, I had more time and I would be willing to wait because it was cheaper, more affordable, whatever. But if it's going to take twice or three times as long, then I'd rather just Uber it or drive."

- Q4 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"To answer the question, literally, what would make me take Caltrain more often? If there... was just faster service all the way along the line. Both in terms of frequency and the amount of time that I have to spend on the train. So basically, right now it takes me well over an hour. It's like an hour and a half commute. If that were under an hour due to location and service, I would go into work more often."

- Q2 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"...the accessibility.

If there's not a train coming in this direction, I can't take the train."

- Q4 Group 1,

Frequent Rider

"I'll definitely add that on weekends it does become much harder to plan to visit friends or do things because of the hour-long frequency. And same thing at evenings on weekdays."

- Q2 Group 1, Frequent Rider

Focus Group Infrequent Riders: Barriers and Incentives



Infrequent riders also expressed frustration with the frequency of service, while also citing ease of use and reliability as reasons they may not choose Caltrain.

"If they could come up with something different that's more of an introductory pamphlet because the pamphlet that has the schedules is great, but for somebody who's never taken it before, I think they could come up with something that explains, okay, you are traveling between zones, you need to look at what zone you're in and what zone you're going to to calculate your fares." - Q4 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"I'm trying to think of the times that I weigh BART versus Caltrain. And at first I was thinking that it was based on where I was go trying to go. And then I realized that no... it's frequency. Because if I show up at the Caltrain station and I miss it, it sucks. But if I show up at the Millbrae station to take BART, I'll wait an extra 15 minutes."

- Q2 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"I think just make it easier for me to ride it. If I know that I can show up and I have to wait 10 to 15 minutes for the next train, totally fine... I think just reduce the friction, so it's just easy for me to make that decision" - Q2 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"I think the overall thing for me for a lot of stuff is just frequency in general.. So whether it's the connections to the Muni or BART or VTA, more is better." - Q4 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"If it's somehow just like a seamless, whether it's all the signage, the pricing, the messaging, if it's all more uniform and seamless, I think it's a better experience for just people who may not ride it all the time or not be from the area. But when you have to kind of navigate each different system and it's all their own version of how things work, it makes it very complicated."

- Q4 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

Focus Group Non-Riders: Barriers and Incentives



Elements of convenience constituted the highest barriers for non-riders, such as station locations, ease of navigating the service, and frequency of trains.

"Yeah, I was just going to second what Jack said, the I would ride it more if it was guicker." - Q2 Group 3, Non-Rider

"If there was this convenient ways for me to get to Caltrain, let's say there's some kind of Express Muni near my neighborhood that goes directly to the closest Caltrain station, then something like that might convince me to take Caltrain more."

- Q4 Group 3, Non-Rider

"For me, it's like the expense of it, especially for myself... it gets really expensive comparatively to just driving... then I might as well just spend that on the gas money and then, we have the car and then we have other stuff and don't have to worry about it." - Q2 Group 3, Non-Rider

"It's too complicated to look up the schedules and plan the connections, all the transit connections from my place to Caltrain and then from Caltrain to the place I'm going and taking into consideration all the possible delays. Just complicated, yeah."

- Q4 Group 3, Non-Rider

"There needs to be one pass that goes on all the different modes of transportation that you're taking. It needs to be seamless and it needs to be easier for people to use, and it's really intimidating to try to figure out where to go to get to the next kind of transportation." - Q4 Group 3, Non-Rider

"Some form of an express train, that would make it way more efficient. And then the difference versus driving or versus taking BART starts to grow and then I have much more of an incentive to make Caltrain work for me."

- Q2 Group 3, Non-Rider

Focus Groups: Fare Promotions Awareness



- Awareness of current fare promotions was very low, even among regular riders and those very familiar with the service
- ▶ Though participants thought the fare promotions could be useful for other groups, such as tourists, they didn't necessarily see them as beneficial for themselves
 - All frequent riders who commuted to work using Caltrain had employer-subsidized passes, so they were not personally concerned with cost savings
- Some expressed limited interest in group passes and fare-capping, though this interest was more conceptual and participants sawing themselves using these passes once or twice a year at best

"I think having the right threshold would be important to figure out what that sweet spot is for most riders as far as the benefits of riding extra after you reach that quota."

- Q4 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"Yeah, that sounds like something that somebody who was coming in from out of town would use and nobody that actually lives here would use it."

- Q4 Group 3, Non-Rider

Focus Groups: Express vs. Local Trains



- When asked to choose between the option of more express trains or more local trains, participants were split
- Generally, the option of more local trains was viewed as more favorable for infrequent riders attending special events or riding during off-peak hours
 - Increased flexibility and the ability to not have to plan ahead were cited as benefits of this option
- For regular commuters and those more familiar with Caltrain's schedule, more express trains was viewed as the preferred option, as it could make their trip times faster

"Certainly for the working week, more express trains, love those express trains, so I'd honestly rather stay at work for an extra 20 minutes or 30 minutes and catch the express than catch a sooner train that will get me home not much quicker..."

- Q4 Group 1, Frequent Rider

"...If I wanted to take the train every day to work, I would say one. If I was talking about leisure, I'd pick

- Q4 Group 2, Infrequent Rider

"Personally, I would go with number one because I would've probably just take Caltrain for a special event, so I'm not in a rush to get somewhere usually. I don't have to be at the office. I would say number one."

- Q4 Group 3, Non-Rider



Appendix

Resident Survey: Demographic Profile



	Overall				Regular & Occasional Riders			Rare & Lapsed Riders			Non-Riders					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1 (35%)	Q2 (32%)	Q3 (33%)	Q4 (32%)	Q1 (32%)	Q2 (32%)	Q3 (29%)	Q4 (31%)	Q1 (33%)	Q2 (36%)	Q3 (38%)	Q4 (37%)
Male	51%	51%	51%	51%	58%	51%	53%	53%	50%	56%	52%	53%	44%	47%	48%	47%
Female	49%	49%	49%	49%	42%	49%	47%	47%	50%	44%	48%	47%	56%	53%	52%	53%
18-29	14%	13%	14%	14%	17%	21%	21%	19%	9%	9%	10%	9%	15%	10%	10%	12%
30-39	21%	21%	20%	20%	25%	24%	23%	24%	21%	18%	23%	18%	16%	21%	17%	19%
40-49	19%	19%	19%	19%	20%	14%	17%	18%	18%	22%	23%	22%	19%	22%	18%	18%
50-64	25%	25%	25%	25%	23%	24%	25%	23%	27%	28%	24%	29%	26%	24%	27%	24%
65+	21%	21%	21%	21%	15%	17%	14%	16%	24%	23%	21%	21%	24%	24%	28%	26%
White	39%	39%	40%	40%	43%	46%	40%	41%	41%	40%	40%	43%	33%	33%	39%	36%
Hispanic/Latino	15%	15%	15%	15%	17%	13%	16%	16%	14%	14%	15%	13%	13%	18%	13%	15%
AAPI	28%	27%	27%	27%	25%	24%	26%	24%	27%	29%	28%	28%	32%	29%	28%	30%
Other BIPOC	7%	7%	7%	7%	8%	7%	8%	9%	6%	8%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%
Homeowner	55%	55%	55%	55%	51%	47%	48%	47%	59%	63%	60%	62%	56%	56%	58%	56%
Renter/Other	45%	45%	45%	45%	49%	53%	52%	53%	41%	37%	40%	38%	44%	44%	42%	44%
San Francisco County	27%	27%	27%	27%	26%	24%	23%	24%	27%	28%	29%	25%	28%	29%	29%	31%
San Mateo County	18%	18%	18%	18%	24%	24%	25%	26%	16%	18%	17%	17%	14%	13%	13%	14%
Santa Clara County	55%	55%	55%	54%	51%	52%	52%	50%	57%	54%	54%	58%	58%	58%	58%	55%

Focus Groups: Demographic Profiles



		Q2		Q4				
		Frequent Riders	Infrequent Riders	Non-Riders	Frequent Riders	Infrequent Riders	Non-Riders	
Gender	Male	4	3	2	3	4	3	
	Female	4	4	4	5	4	4	
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Age	18-29	2	0	1	0	2	0	
	30-39	3	3	1	2	2	3	
	40-49	0	1	2	4	2	2	
	50-64	1	1	2	2	1	2	
	65+	2	2	0	0	1	1	
County	San Francisco County	1	2	1	0	2	2	
	San Mateo County	4	2	0	5	3	5	
	Santa Clara County	3	3	5	3	3	1	
How often do you ride Caltrain?	At least once a week	8	-	-	8	-	-	
	At least a few times a month	-	1	-	-	6	-	
	At least a few times a year	-	6	-	-	2	-	
	Never	-	-	6	-	-	8	

Focus Groups: Demographic Profiles



			Q2		Q4				
		Frequent Riders	Infrequent Riders	Non-Riders	Frequent Riders	Infrequent Riders	Non-Riders		
Income	Less than \$25,000	0	0	0	0	2	2		
	\$25,000 to less than \$50,000	0	0	0	1	2	1		
	\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	2	0	1	0	1	0		
	\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	0	1	1	2	1	3		
	\$100,000 to less than \$150,000	3	1	2	2	1	2		
	\$150,000 to less than \$200,000	2	3	1	1	0	0		
	\$200,000 and over	1	1	1	2	1	0		
	Prefer not to respond	0	1	0					
	White	5	3	2	5	3	3		
	Hispanic/Latino	1	1	1	1	2	2		
Ethnicity	AAPI	0	2	2	1	3	2		
	Black or African American	1	0	1	1	0	0		
	Multiracial/Something else	1	1	0	0	0	1		
	Employed Full Time	-	-	-	7	4	4		
	Employed Part Time	-	-	-	1	2	3		
Employment	Retired	-	-	-	0	0	1		
	Unemployed	-	-	-	0	0	0		
	Other	-	-	-	0	2	0		



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