

Receive Results of the Annual Caltrain Customer Satisfaction Survey

**JPB TOPS Committee Meeting
October 29, 2025**



Executive Summary

- Annual customer satisfaction survey required by contract with Caltrain operator Transit America Services Inc. (TASI) to measure customer satisfaction.
- **Highest ratings in 27 years of conducting annual survey.**
- Out of 5.00
 - Overall satisfaction increased: 4.02 to 4.41
 - Overall *station* rating increased: 4.07 to 4.30
 - Overall *onboard* rating increased: 4.08 to 4.42
- This survey is the first to poll participants since Caltrain electrification.



Methodology

Survey Dates

May 6 – May 31, 2025

Method

Onboard intercept and online surveys in English, Spanish and Chinese during weekdays and weekends

Participants

2,986 respondents, margin of error +/-1.65%

Scale

Satisfaction rated 1-5 (1=Very Dissatisfied, 5=Very Satisfied)



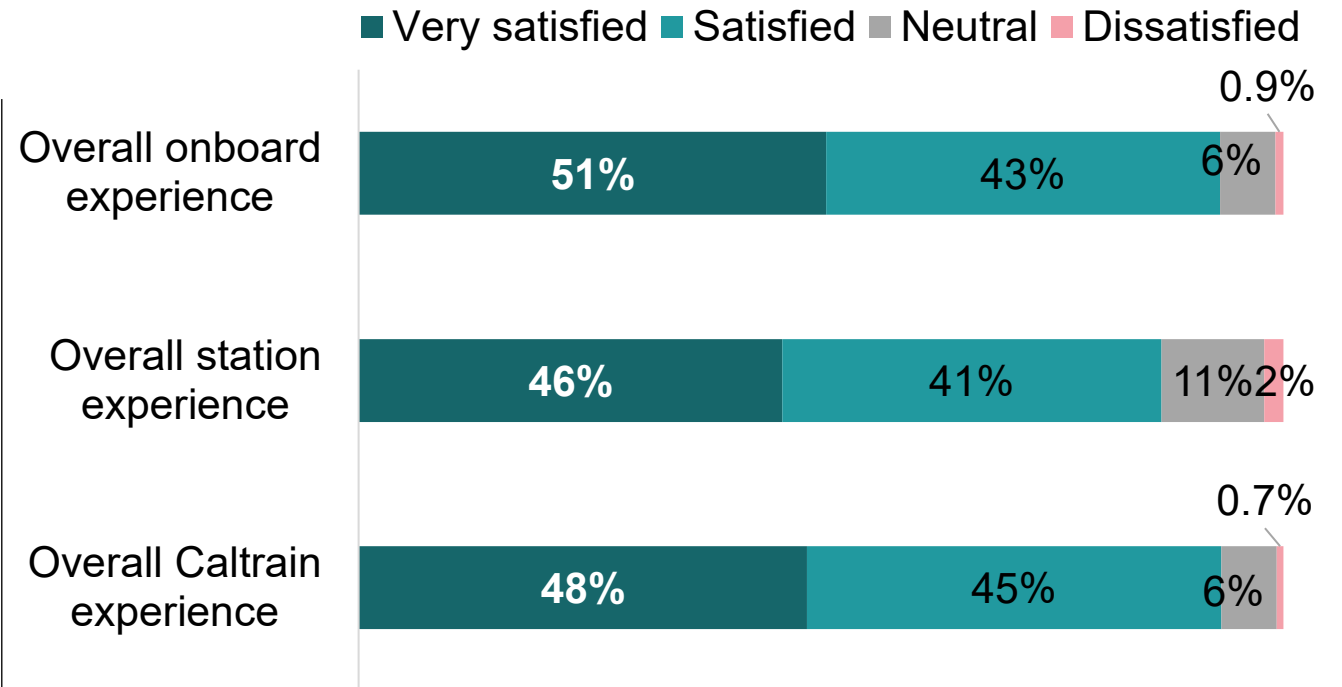
Overall Satisfaction

Data

- 93% of riders satisfied with overall experience, up from 78% in 2024.
- Satisfaction with both onboard and station service has increased.

Key Insight

Electric trains and service have delivered the highest satisfaction levels since survey inception in 1998.



Key Benefits of the New Electric Trains



Shorter travel time/faster trains (55% of riders)

Increased frequency/more trains per hour (52%)

Cleanliness/condition of the train car (43%)

Comfort of ride (42%)

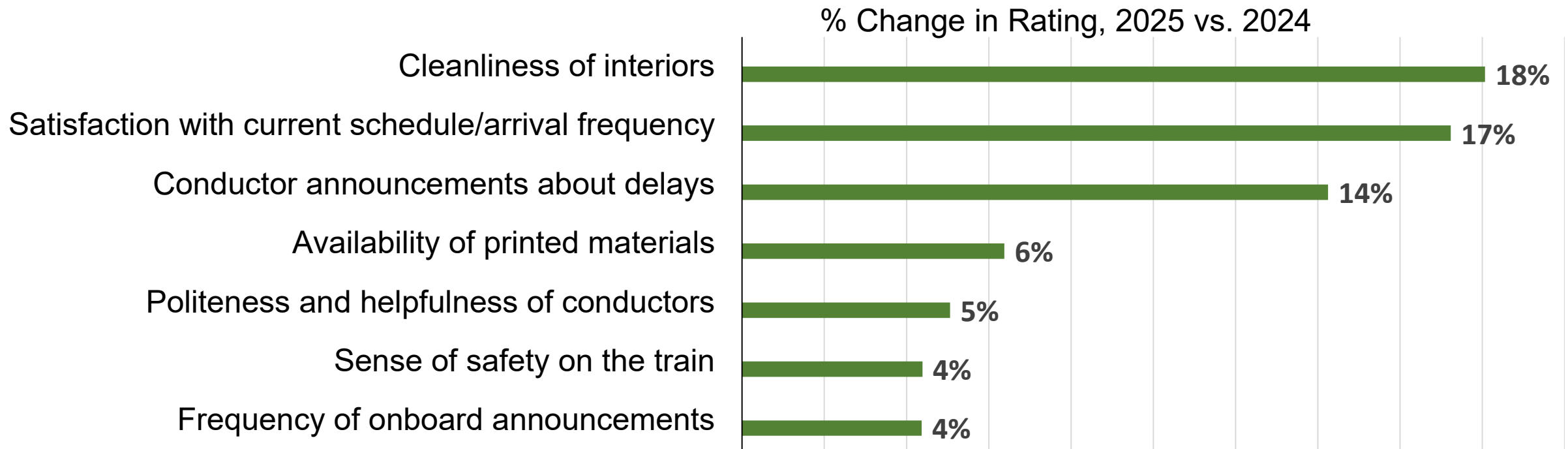
Onboard Wi-Fi (37%)

Significance

- 52% of riders are riding more often as a direct result of electrification benefits.
- The combination of time savings + better ride experience = a major driver of ridership growth.

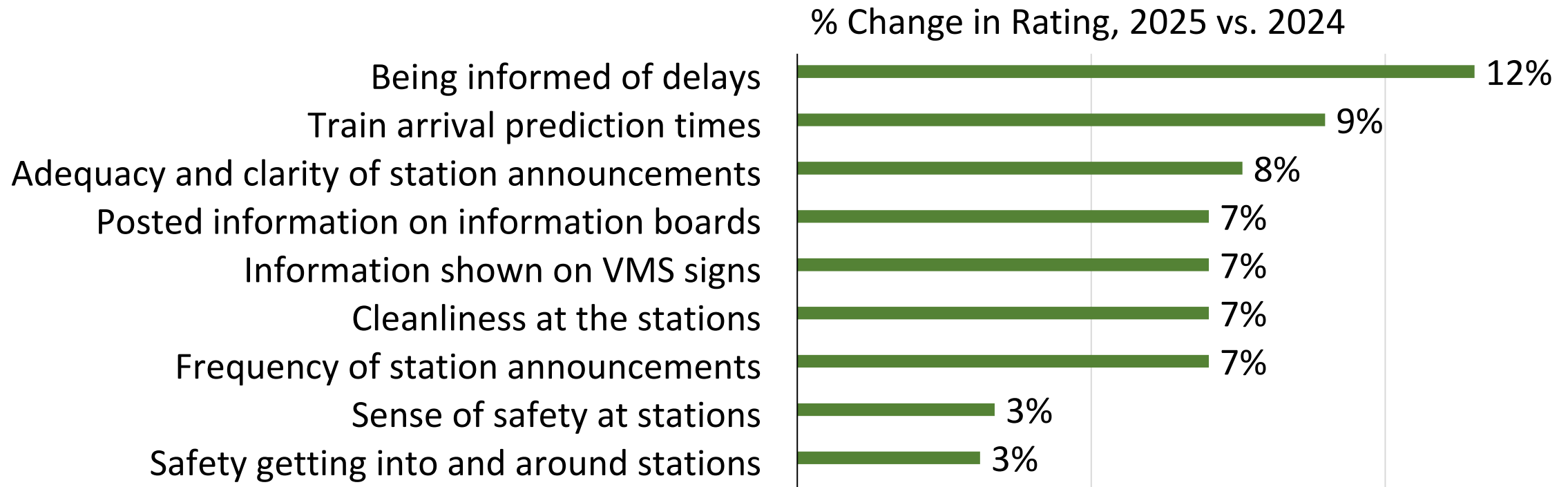
Change in Mean Onboard Ratings: Post- vs. Pre-Electrification

Significance: Clean trains provide a welcoming ambiance, and riders have more options for travel throughout the weekday and weekend.



Change in Mean Onboard Ratings: Post- vs. Pre-Electrification

Significance: Improved station communication boosts rider confidence and convenience, while slower gains in safety reflect already high levels of satisfaction.



High Impact Onboard Ratings



On-Time Performance

Among the highest rated items reflecting a positive experience for riders wanting to get to their destination on-time.

- *Data Point:* On-time arrival at your destination (4.41).
- *Why it Matters:* On-time performance builds rider trust in the system to get to work or social destinations.



Onboard announcements

New automated announcements are having a positive impact on the customer experience.

- *Data Point:* Frequency of onboard announcements up from 4.12 (2024) to 4.30 (2025).
- *Why it Matters:* Consistent communications reassures riders allowing them to enjoy their trip.

Top Onboard Findings: Upward Trends



Cleanliness of Train Interiors

Customers are enjoying the onboard condition of the new electric trains.

- *Data Point:* 18% increase in cleanliness of interiors, up from 3.82 (2024) to 4.51 in (2024).
- *Why it Matters:* Clean environments improve customer satisfaction.



Current Schedule/train arrival frequency

Riders are benefitting from more frequent service especially on the weekends.

- *Data Point:* 17% increase in satisfaction with current schedule/arrival frequency up from 3.54 (2024) to 4.15 (2025).
- *Why it Matters:* more frequent, faster service creates opportunities for riders to use Caltrain to get around.

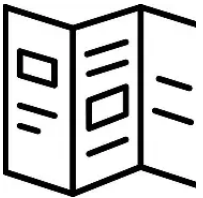
Top Onboard Findings: Upward Trends



Conductor Announcements about Delays

Customers felt more informed by conductors during service delays.

- *Data Point:* 14% increase in conductor announcements about delays that exceed 10 min. up from 3.72 (2024) to 4.25 (2025).
- *Why it Matters:* Updates from conductors reassure riders during unexpected disruptions.



Printed Materials

Customers appreciate more widely available printed schedules and materials.

- *Data Point:* Availability of printed materials up from 3.92 (2024) to 4.17 (2025).
- *Why it Matters:* Some riders prefer printed schedules and “take-one” materials. Riders without access to mobile apps rely on physical resources; this creates an equity issue.

High Impact Station Ratings



Safety at the Station

Feeling safe at the station is important to customers and is a key indicator of overall satisfaction.

- *Data Point:* Sense of safety at boarding station up from 4.17 (2024) to 4.31 (2025).
- *Why it Matters:* Station safety helps riders feel comfortable and encourages repeat use.



Safety Getting Into and Around the Station

Riders are having a positive experience using entrances, exists, crossings, stairs and other access points to stations.

- *Data Point:* Safety getting into and around boarding station up from 4.18 (2024) to 4.31 (2025).
- *Why it Matters:* Safe navigation into and around stations helps current and new riders feel welcomed.

High Impact Station Ratings



Station Cleanliness

Riders recognize the effort gone into keeping the station clean and presentable.

- *Data Point:* Cleanliness at station up from 3.97 (2024) to 4.23 (2025).
- *Why it Matters:* Station cleanliness can provide riders with a pleasant experience, and shapes perception of Caltrain's brand.



Top Station Findings: Upward Trends



Delay Information

Most improved station rating compared to 2024

- *Data Point: Being informed of delays that exceed 10 min. up from 3.56 (2024) to 3.97 (2025).*
- *Why it Matters: Good communication about delays reduces wait anxiety and builds trust.*



Train Arrival Predictions

Train arrival times improvements contributed to overall satisfaction score.

- *Data Point: Train arrival prediction times on electronic platform signs up from 4.01 (2024) to 4.37 (2025).*
- *Why it Matters: Consistent communications reinforces perceived dependability and consistency.*

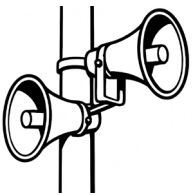
Top Station Findings: Upward Trends



Posted information on info boards

Customers are well served by information board communications.

- *Data Point:* Posted information on info. Boards up from 3.91 (2024) to 4.20 (2025).
- *Why it Matters:* Information boards are particularly important for new riders and those who don't have access to digital communication channels.



Station Announcements

Customers feel well informed by station announcements.

- *Data Point:* Adequacy and clarity of station announcements up from 3.83 (2024) to 4.12 (2025).
- *Why it Matters:* Consistent, well-articulated announcements help riders make informed decisions about their trip, especially riders with visual impairments.

Sample Verbatims: Compliments

*"CLEAN, FAST, EFFICIENT.
FRIENDLY. LOVE
CALTRAIN."*

*"THIS IS MY FAVORITE
WAY TO TRAVEL."*

*"ABSOLUTELY LOVING
THE ELECTRIC TRAINS
AND NEW SCHEDULE!"*

*"MY COMMUTE
EXPERIENCE BECAME A
LOT SMOOTHER AND
PLEASANT! THANK YOU!"*

*"I RODE BACK IN 2019 AND
NOW IN 2025 KEEP IT UP! 5
STARS!"*

*"I USE CALTRAIN FOR
WORK COMMUTE AND
FOR GIANTS GAMES.
LOVE IT!"*

*"VERY EFFICIENT FOR
COMMUTING TO WORK IN
THE SOUTH BAY FROM
SF."*

*"WE TOOK THE TRAIN TO
A CONCERT. IT IS EASIER
THAN PARKING IN SF."*

*"VERY PLEASURABLE
EXPERIENCE THAT MAKES
ME PROUD OF BEING
FROM THE BAY AREA."*

Sample Verbatims: Suggestions

"PLEASE ADD MORE FREQUENT TRAINS! WOULD LOVE TO HAVE MORE OPTIONS."

"I WISH IT WOULD START EARLIER SINCE I WORK AT 6AM SO I CAN'T TAKE IT IN THE MORNINGS ON WEEKDAYS /WEEKENDS."

"YOU NEED TO MAKE THE 15 MINUTE FREQUENCIES ALL DAY SEVEN DAYS A WEEK!"

"THE RESTROOM INSIDE THE TRAIN HAS A DOOR THAT NEEDS TO BE BANGED SHUT AND SOMETIMES WON'T LOCK."

"IMPROVE WI-FI EXPERIENCE. THE CONNECTION DROPS FROM TIME TO TIME."

"PLEASE CONSIDER CLEARLY MAKING TRAINS THAT HAVE BATHROOMS ABOARD AND SPECIFY WHICH CAR ITS IN."

"ON TIME PERFORMANCE HAS GOTTEN BETTER SINCE THE INITIAL ROLL OUT OF ELECTRIC TRAINS."

"TRAINS SEEM TO LEAVE EARLY (DOORS CLOSED ~2 MINUTES BEFORE DEPARTURE) WHICH ADDS STRESS/UNCERTAINTY."

"SOME HICCUPS IN LATE 2024 WITH LATE TRAINS, BUT 2025 HAS BEEN GREAT."

Addressing Customer Onboard Priorities

Onboard Digital Displays

- Customers are satisfied with onboard digital displays; we are actively addressing technical performance to improve consistency.
- Refreshing displays with updated content, including new video graphics.

Safety Onboard the Train

- New trains delivering safe service with enhanced lighting and onboard cameras.

Improved Wi-Fi Coverage

- Tree trimming along the corridor.
- Maintenance and repairs to trackside equipment.
- Installation of additional antennas.

Opportunities and Analysis

Maintain High Service Levels

- Continue delivering reliable, high-quality service that drives ridership growth and encourages off-peak travel.
- Enhancing on-time performance through schedule refinements based on rider input.

South County Connector Riders

- Train staging at San Jose Diridon for a more efficient transfer.
- Installation of digital displays to improve communications at stations.
- Caltrain, VTA and South County coordination; possible Aug. 2026 schedule change.
- Future service with Battery Electric Multiple Unit (BEMU) trains.
- New marketing and promotional efforts via digital and print ads and co-marketing.

Cleanliness of Train Interiors

- Maintain new train cleanliness to reinforce a positive onboard environment.

Addressing Customer Station Priorities

Station Safety

- CCTV upgrades at San Francisco (4th & King) and San Jose Diridon stations.

Station Cleanliness

- Maintain improvements in station cleanliness to provide a welcoming environment to riders.

Platform Communications

- Completed installation of new digital platform signs.
- Enhanced GPS reporting for more accurate train arrival predications.
- Planned backend system upgrades to provide precise platform updates (e.g., single tracking alerts).

Opportunities and Analysis

Current Projects: Text/Email Alerts and Redesigned Alerts Webpage

- One-year anniversary of text/email alerts program – now with more than 13,000 subscribers.
- Redesigned Caltrain.com/alerts page, with dedicated sections for train arrival, elevator status and planned service changes.

Upcoming Projects: Boost Engagement with New Customer Feedback Tools

- Launch a research panel called R.I.D.E. (Riders Influencing Decisions and Experiences) to provide continuous targeted feedback on customer experience.
- A new post-call phone survey designed to track performance and drive ongoing improvements.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

WWW.CALTRAIN.COM

