

2026 Customer Satisfaction Survey Key Findings

**Community Advisory Committee
October 21, 2026
Agenda Item 10**



Survey Purpose & Methodology

The 2026 Customer Satisfaction Survey is required under the contract with TASI. The survey measures customer satisfaction with the onboard experience, stations, and service overall.

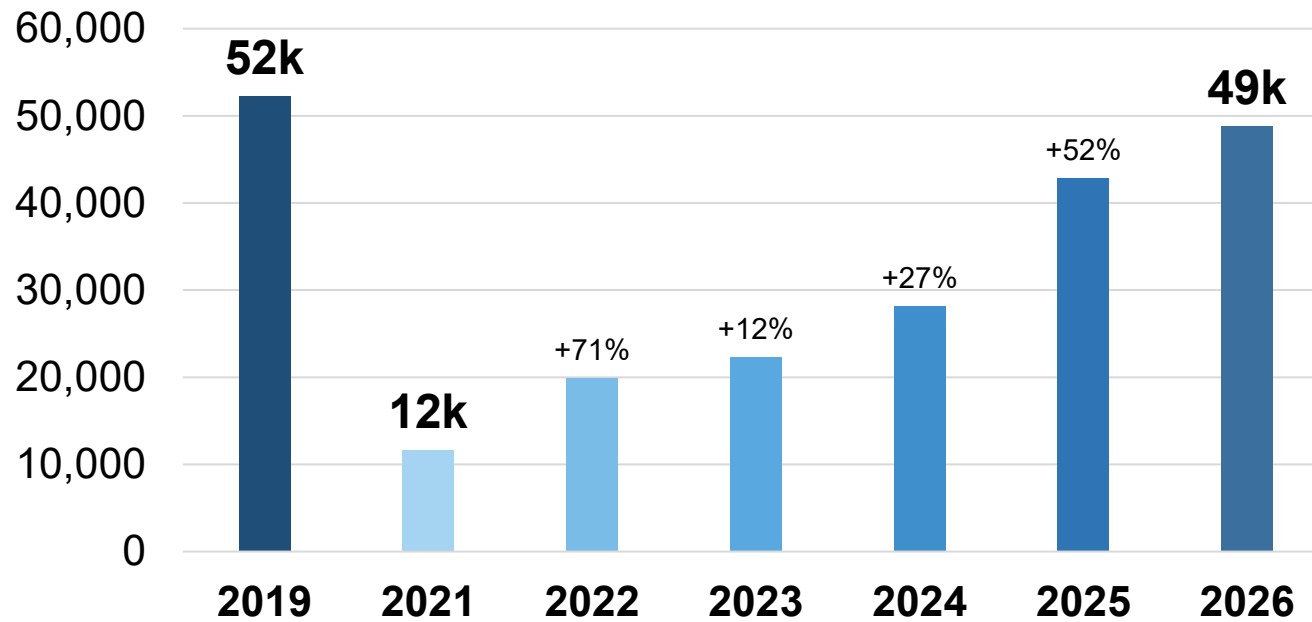
Fieldwork Details	Sampling Design	Questionnaire
Dates: 5/5/26 – 5/20/26 Sample size: $N = 2631$ Margin of Error: 1.78%	Northbound + Southbound trains • Local (23) • Express (9) • Limited (6) • South County Connector (4) • Weekend local (16) Random selection of trains above	• Overall satisfaction • Onboard satisfaction • Station satisfaction • Specific questions on conductor, safety, information, service/schedule satisfaction

Executive Summary

- **Record-high customer satisfaction** sustained in 2026, holding steady at 4.40 out of 5.
- **Highest-ever rating** for helpfulness of **train conductors** (4.63 out of 5).
- **Cleanliness** and **on-time service** are key drivers to high customer satisfaction.
- **Cleaner restrooms**, more frequent and useful **audio announcements**, and timely **delay updates** were identified as areas for improvement.
- **Special events** introduce new riders to Caltrain — **one in five riders took their first Caltrain trip to attend an event.**

Large YOY Growth in Customer Base Since 2021

Caltrain's Rider Base Quadruples



Key Findings

- Additional 37,000 unique monthly riders since 2021.
- Ride frequency stabilized to average of 2-3x/week.

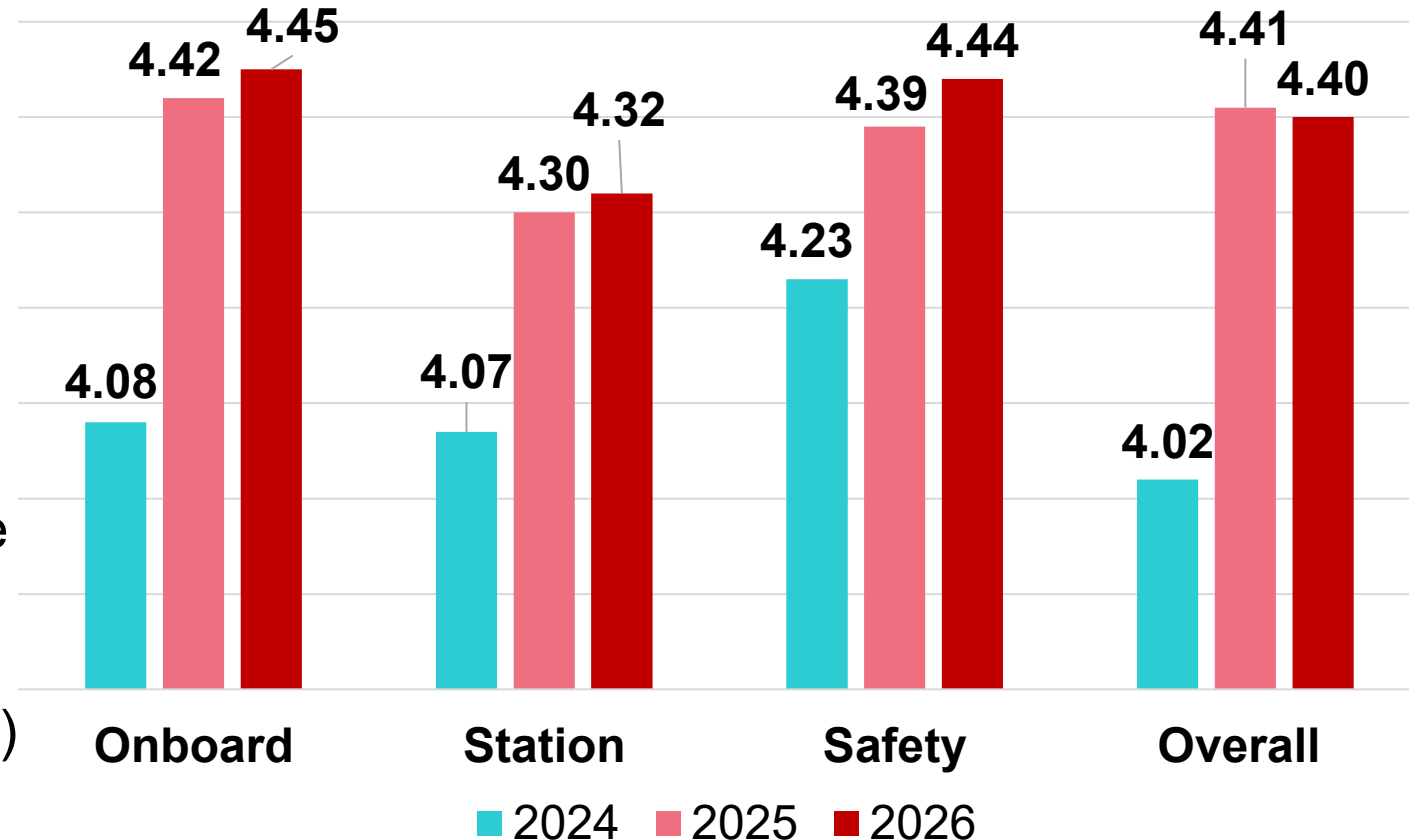
Key Insight: Caltrain now serves nearly as many unique monthly riders as in 2019 (pre-pandemic) even though fewer commuters travel 5x/week.

*Estimated unique riders = total monthly ridership / reported trip frequency

Post-Electrification Satisfaction: High

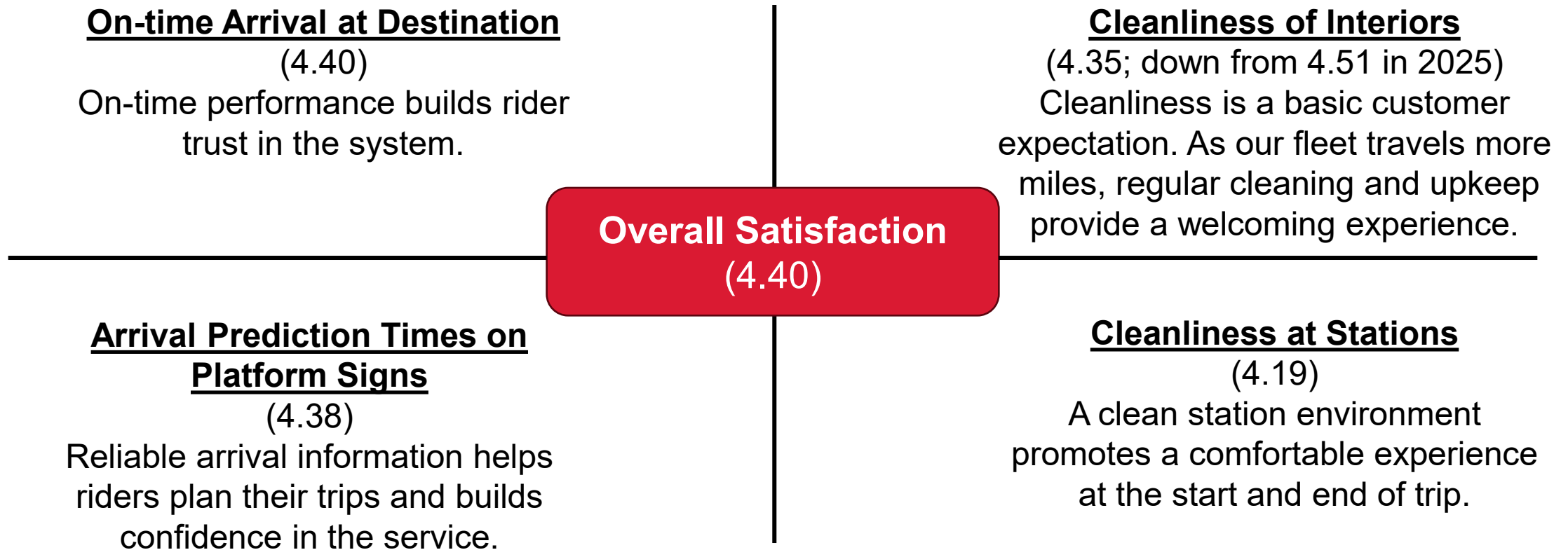
Key Findings

- Overall customer satisfaction increased from **4.02 to 4.40** since 2024.
- **92% of riders** are satisfied with Caltrain overall.
- Riders feel safe on Caltrain (4.44), a core Caltrain value.
- Consistent high ratings for onboard (4.45) and station experience (4.32) since May 2025.



Key Insight: Customer satisfaction has risen significantly since Caltrain electrification and has remained at record-high levels.

What Creates an Excellent Customer Experience?



Recommendation: On-time arrival performance, cleanliness onboard and at stations, and train arrival info should be maintained and monitored to ensure continued high customer satisfaction.

Conductors: Our Strength



Key Findings

- Professional appearance of conductors rated **4.70***
- Visibility of conductors rated **4.38***
- Politeness and helpfulness of conductors rated **4.63** (up from 4.57)

Key Insight

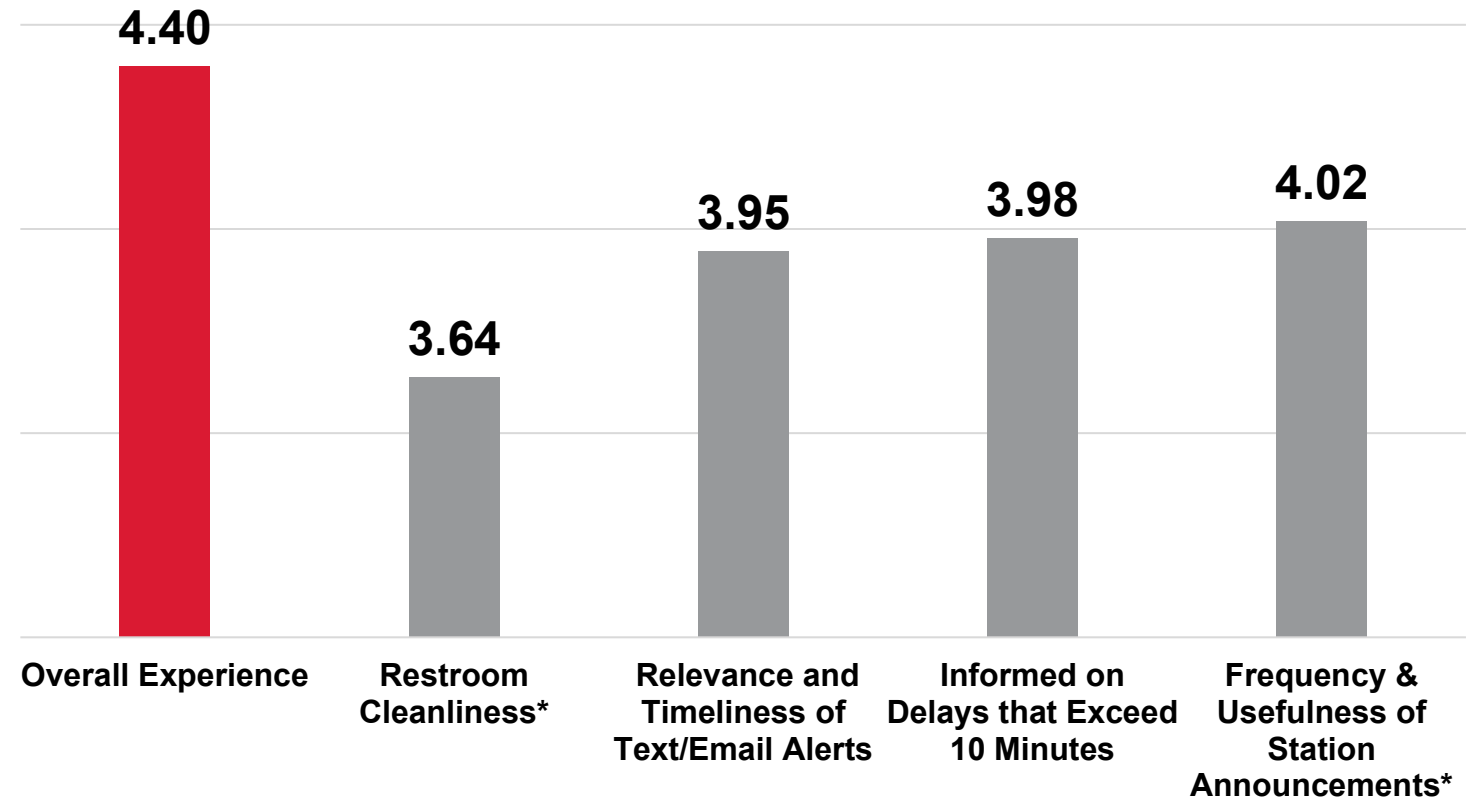
Highly-rated conductors create a welcoming onboard experience and reinforce riders' sense of safety and confidence.

*New in the 2026 survey

Opportunities to Improve

Key Findings

- Restroom cleanliness is the largest opportunity for improvement.
- Riders seek more timely, relevant, and useful service information, especially during delays.
- Frequent and long-term riders rate these areas lower, making them important opportunities for improvement.



Key Insight: Targeted improvements can lift the rider experience, especially for frequent and long-term riders.

*new or modified rating

Special Events Attract New Riders

What brought first-time riders to Caltrain?

- 60% commute (50% work; 10% school)
- 20% special event (sports, concert, festival/parade)
- 15% Other purposes

Special events generate strong ridership

- 25% of riders use Caltrain for special events at least monthly
- Event riders report high overall satisfaction 4.40 / 5



Insight

- Leisure-rider marketing and co-branding with sports teams and special events continues to expand customer base beyond traditional work commuter travel.

Addressing Rider Feedback

Customer Priority Areas Identified in Survey	Projects/Service Supporting Customer Priorities
Station and onboard cleanliness	• New customer feedback platform launched August 2026 makes it easier to report cleanliness issues and supports faster, more targeted follow-up.
Onboard restroom cleanliness	• Increased onboard restroom servicing to improve cleanliness and rider comfort. • Alerts on train restroom status will be provided on dedicated Caltrain webpage.
On-time arrival at destination	• Continued monitoring of delay minutes by train; implement schedule adjustments as needed.
Train arrival prediction times (electronic platform signs)	• Improving the accuracy and timeliness of train arrival and delay information on platform signs.
Text and email service alerts	• Continue refining alerts and protocols for clearer, more timely service updates. • Strengthen ongoing QA to improve alert accuracy, consistency and relevance.

Ridership Growth Opportunities

Growth Focus	Key Actions
Attract new riders through special events	• Continue post-event service for major events throughout Caltrain corridor. • Make fare payment easier and faster with mobile Clipper readers at major events. • Improve event wayfinding with portable station signage. • Continue theme train and special event activations to build awareness and engagement. • Expand co-branding partnerships with venues, teams and event organizers to reach new riders and promote Caltrain.
Grow commuter ridership	• Deliver marketing campaigns that highlight Caltrain's value to commuters with fare products like GoPass, and Caltrain Monthly Pass (once Next-Generation Clipper is stabilized).

Quotes From Riders

I love taking Caltrain. It is one of the best trains that I have been on, and I'm from New York. Thank you for all that you do.

This is the best public transportation that I have had in my life. Everything is extraordinary, including the staff, announcements, cleanliness, and timing. Thank you for everything.

The Caltrain experience is always pleasant. It helps with my commute and has a positive impact on the environment.

I take the train to work every day and to go to dinners, etc. I love having the option of not driving and the frequent trains!

Caltrain has greatly improved my commute over the last three years. The conductors are friendly, and the service is reliable. I couldn't work where I do without Caltrain.



Quotes From Riders Continued

I love Caltrain! Post-electrification service is much better and has improved my life.

I really appreciate Caltrain's onboard conductors. I regularly ride the trains home very late at night and feel safe thanks to the great conductors.

This is my first ride—very impressed with the comfort, cleanliness, and convenience compared to where I'm from.

I rely on Caltrain for the once or twice a year that I attend conferences at the Santa Clara Convention Center. Even on nights when there are 49ers games at the stadium, the rides have been organized and well run. I know that does not happen magically on its own and is a testament to Caltrain operations.

This is one of the best rail systems in the entire U.S. I've been committed to riding since electrification. You all are amazing. Keep up the good work.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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