



TARTA Onboard Survey Analysis

November 2021

TARTA | **Next** 
It's Go Time.

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Introduction

Overview

Nelson\Nygaard conducted an on-board passenger survey in support of the TARTA COA. The goal of this survey was to understand trip characteristics, customer priorities, and customer characteristics. Data was collected in October 2021. This report provides a summary of survey results and key findings that will inform future improvements to TARTA's services.

KEY FINDINGS

- TARTA's ridership is **highly transit dependent** and rely on the service for most of their travel. A large portion of customers use the service every day and do not have reliable access to a vehicle.
- **Many customers use TARTA to travel to/from work**, but other trip types are also important, especially "quality of life" trips to go shopping, attend school and get to medical appointments.
- **Customers tend not to transfer between routes**. This could indicate the strength of downtown Toledo as a destination, but also that many customers use TARTA to make trips within their neighborhood as opposed to making long-distance trips.
- **The highest ranked priority for service improvements was keeping costs low**. After costs, priorities for improvements include increased frequency, faster and more direct routes and more comfortable bus stops.
- When asked about priorities for specific service improvements, customers said they preferred investments in more frequent service (over longer hours), more service on weekend days (over weekdays) and improving existing services (over expanding to new areas). They also prioritize short walks to bus routes, even if the bus travels more slowly.
- TARTA customers are **more likely to have a low income and more likely to be Black** as compared with the region's population overall.

Overview

SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND REPORT OUTLINE

Nelson\Nygaard partnered with AJM & Associates (Loveland, OH) to survey fixed route customers between October 5, 2021, and October 8, 2021. The survey instrument included English on one side and Spanish on the other (Figure 1) and surveys were also available in Arabic and Chinese.

This report presents the results of the on-board survey in five separate sections:

- **Customer Profile**, which explores the types of customers using the system, how frequently they use the system, whether they have access to an automobile, and whether they have utilized alternative mobility options.
- **Trip Details**, which measures customers’ trip purpose, bus stop access, trip origin-destination pair, and route transfers.
- **Customer Preference**, which presents customers’ priority service improvements and response to a series of tradeoff questions related to how service could be provided.
- **Customer Input**, which includes open-ended comments that have been categorized to highlight key themes.
- **Customer Demographics**, which assesses additional characteristics such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, and household income.

Figure 1: Survey Instrument (English)

ON-BOARD RIDER SURVEY

We want to hear from you about how transit can be improved in the Toledo area!

Route: _____ Time: _____

Part 1: Service Understanding

- How often do you ride TARTA?**
 - Regularly (every day)
 - Occasionally (a few times a week)
 - Rarely (less than once a week)
 - Only when I have no other option
 - Never
- Have you used – or do you usually use - any of the following services? (Select all that apply)**
 - TARTA Fixed-Route service TARTA Park-N-Ride
 - TARTA Call-A-Ride TARPS Paratransit service
 - Other (please specify) _____
- Why are you riding TARTA today? (Select all that apply)**
 - Work Medical or dental appt
 - Shopping or grocery store Visiting friends/family
 - Going out
 - School or college (specify) _____
 - Other (specify) _____
- Where did your trip begin today?**
Example: Michigan St. & Washington St.
 Nearest Intersection: _____ & _____
- Where will you end your trip?**
Example: Michigan St. & Washington St.
 Nearest Intersection: _____ & _____
- Will/Did you transfer between routes to complete your trip?**
 - No transfers
 - Yes ► Start Route: _____ End Route: _____
 ► If yes, where did you transfer? _____

Part 2: Customer Satisfaction

7. **Below are potential service improvements. Select the three (3) improvements most important to you and then rank them in order of importance (1 being most important).**

	Rank
a. Cost: TARTA should keep fares low	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Frequency: Increase bus frequency (how often the bus comes)	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Efficiency: routes should be more direct and run faster	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Reliability: TARTA buses should run on-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Comfort: TARTA buses and amenities (benches, shelters) should be spotless and comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Destinations: TARTA should include bus service to: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Information: More information about scheduled arrival times and routes at bus stops	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Service Type: TARTA should consider alternative services to provide more flexibility and choice to customers where a bus doesn't make sense	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 3: Rider Information

- 8. Please let us know which of the following transit options would make TARTA work best for you.**
 - More frequent bus service **OR** Longer service hours
 - More weekday service **OR** More weekend service
 - More bus stops for shorter walk distance of/from bus stops **OR** Fewer bus stops for faster service
 - Improve existing TARTA service **OR** Serve new areas in Lucas or Wood Counties not currently served
- 9. Do you have access to a vehicle? (Select one)**
 - Yes, for myself
 - Yes, but not always (shared car, reliability issue, etc.)
 - No
- 10. What is your approximate annual household income?**
 - Under \$15,000 \$35,000 to \$49,999
 - \$15,000 to \$24,999 \$50,000 to \$74,999
 - \$25,000 to \$34,999 \$75,000 or more
- 11. Do you identify as...?**
 - Female Male Non-binary Prefer not to answer
- 12. What is your age?**
 - Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44
 - 45-54 55-64 65 or older
- 13. Do you have a disability or health condition that significantly affects your ability to travel?**
 - Yes No Prefer not to answer
- 14. How do you identify your race/ethnicity? (Select all that apply)**
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin
 - Middle Eastern or North African
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White or Caucasian
 - Other
 - Prefer not to answer
- 15. What is your home Zip Code?** _____

Part 4: Open-Ended

16. Do you have any other feedback about how TARTA could improve its services?

Thank you
 for your participation in this survey.
 Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Overview

ROUTES SURVEYED

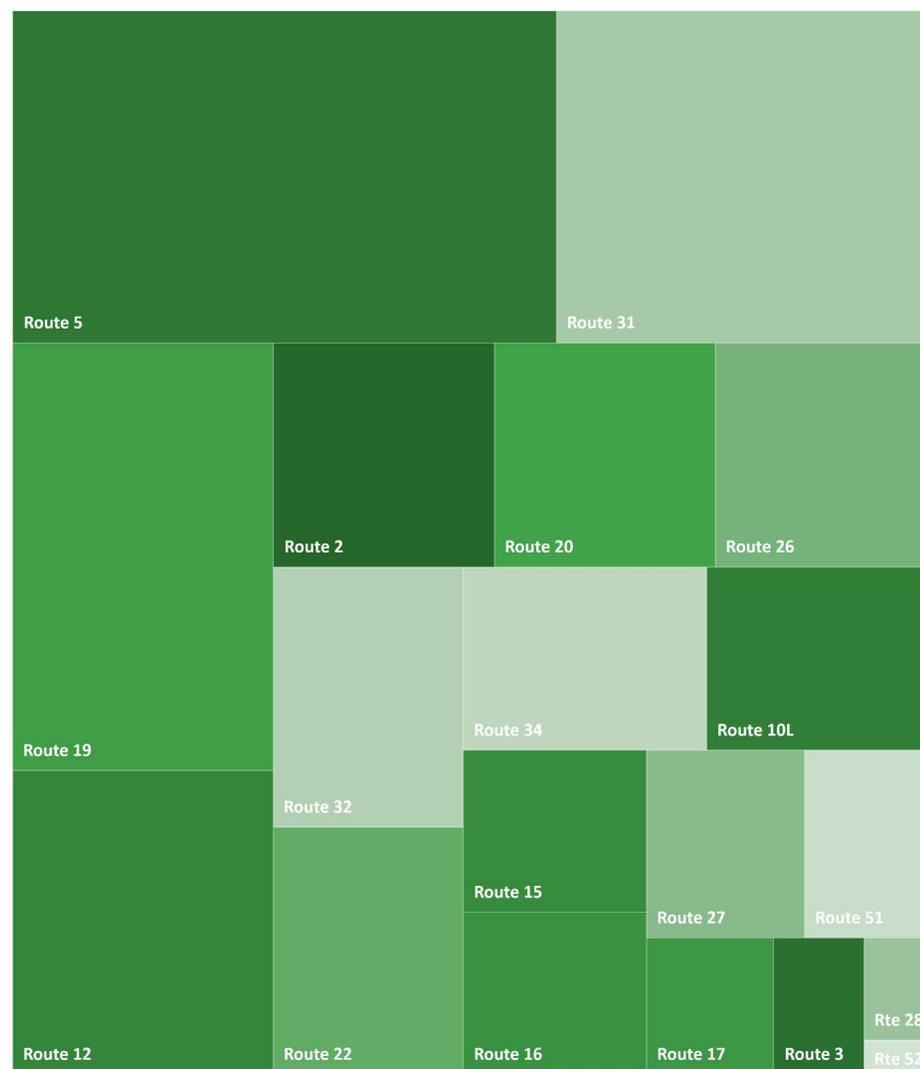
A total of 399 unique survey responses were received, with the highest volume of surveys collected on Routes 5, 19, 31, and 12 (Figure 2). Most of the routes where the response rate was highest are also some of TARTA's highest ridership routes.

While few (or no) surveys were collected on some routes (3, 14, 28 and 52), the survey is intended to offer customer input at the *system level* and not at the route level. The goal of the survey was to collect responses from a variety of routes at different times of the day.

SERVICES UTILIZED

When asked what services customers have used, or usually use, nearly two thirds say they use the fixed route service (65%). While this is to be expected given the data collection methods, a significant number of customers also use TARPS Paratransit (14%) and Call-A-Ride (17%), which shows the importance of these services as supplements to fixed route customers.

Figure 2: Surveys collected by route



Survey Results

Customer Profile

TRIP FREQUENCY

Most TARTA customers (73%) use the system every day, with less than 8% saying they ride less than once a week or only when they have no other choice (see Figure 3).

VEHICLE AVAILABILITY

Most TARTA customers (81%) do not have access to a vehicle (Figure 4). About 20% of customers say they have access to a vehicle, but over half of those customers said this access is not reliable.

Results from these two questions indicate a **very high level of transit dependency** where most customers depend on TARTA for their daily travel needs *and* do not have access to a vehicle.

Figure 3: Trip Frequency

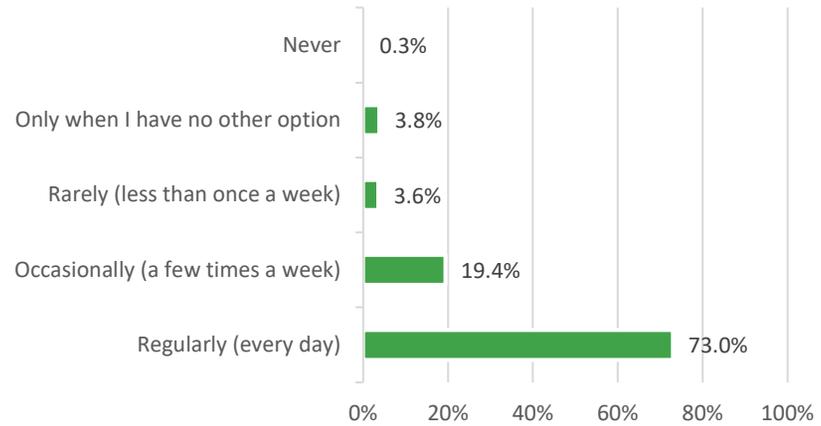
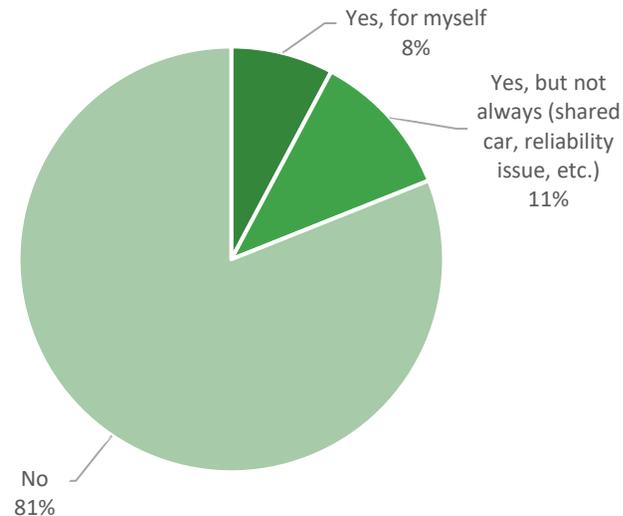


Figure 4: Vehicle Availability



Trip Details

TRIP PURPOSE

Over one third of TARTA customers (37%) use the bus to get to work (Figure 5). Many customers also use TARTA to go shopping, get groceries (18%), medical or dental appointments (13%) or “going out” (8%). Less than 10% of customers use TARTA for school or college.

Figure 5: Trip Purpose

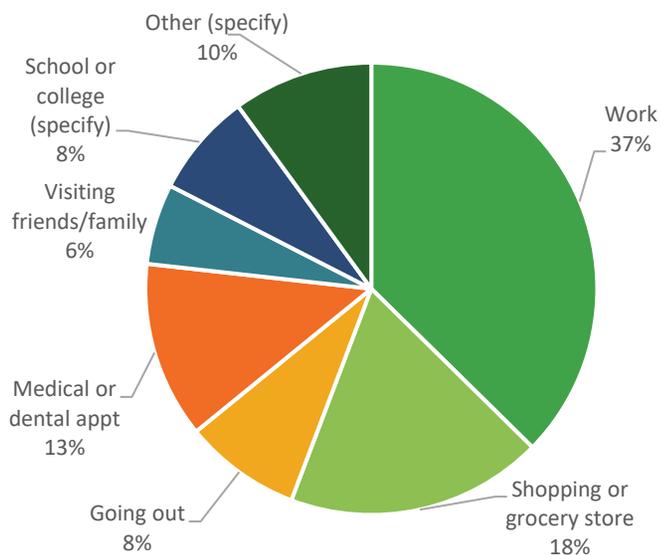
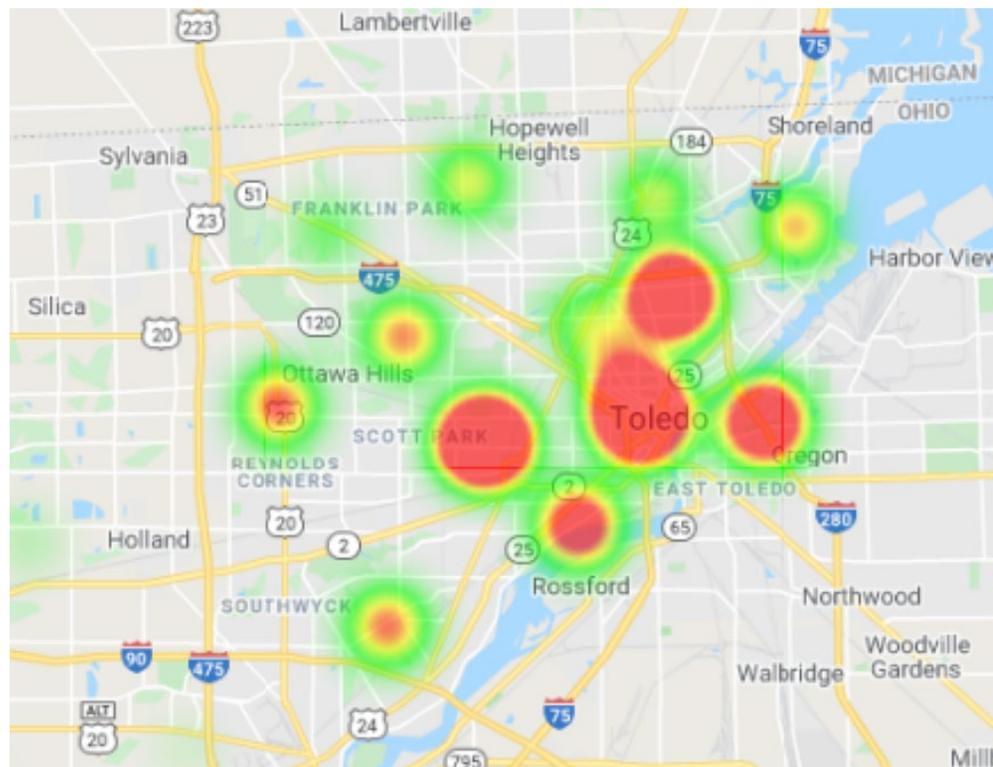


Figure 6: TARTA Customer Home ZIP Code



HOME LOCATIONS

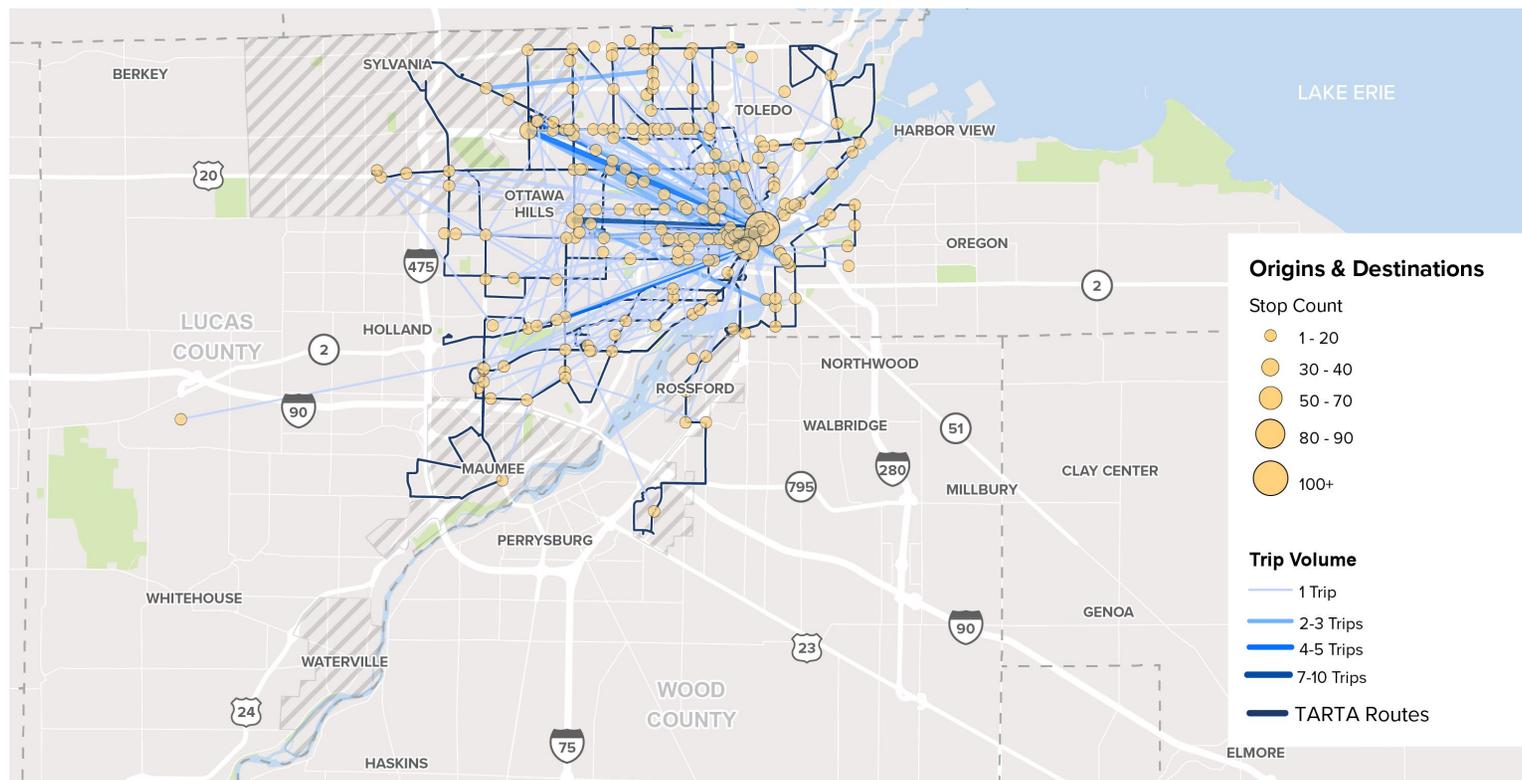
While TARTA customers live all over the service area (Figure 6), survey respondents are concentrated in the densely-populated communities of central Toledo, including the Old West End, Warren Sherman and Lagrange neighborhoods. A significant proportion of customers also live in the Scott Park/Westmoreland neighborhood, as well as East Toledo and the Southside of Toledo near the Toledo Zoo.

Trip Details

TRIP ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS

Figure 7 illustrates where customers begin and end their trips and trip volumes between those locations. Downtown Toledo remains an important destination, which is partially due to the design of the system with most transfers happening in downtown (although as noted on the next page, transfers on the system only account for about a quarter of all trips). The primary travel corridors are Monroe Avenue, Cherry/Sylvania and Dorr Street, as well as the streets that connect downtown Toledo to Maumee (Broadway and Airport Highway). It should be noted that these travel flows may not represent all travel flows on the system but are indicative of the major corridors and destinations in the region. This information will be evaluated in conjunction with ridership data by stop that will be presented in a later deliverable.

Figure 7: Customer Origins & Destinations



Trip Details

TRANSFERS

About 3 out of 4 customers said they did not transfer to another route (78%) to get to their destination (Figure 8). This indicates that most trips can be made on a single route and likely does not require longer distance travel. This may also indicate that downtown Toledo (where most routes connect) remains a major destination in the region, but that the connections between routes, as well as timed transfers at the HUB, may not be as important to many customers.

Of the 22% of customers who did transfer, most of them (66%) did so at the HUB (Cherry & Huron), with the remaining customers transferring either at the HUB or at another location where their routes connect. A very small number of customers said they transfer at the Franklin Park Mall or University of Toledo where multiple routes connect (less than 5%). While Figure 9 shows transfer activity between routes, the routes with the most transfer activity overall are Routes 2, 5, 12 and 19. However, it should be noted that this is a relatively small sample and does not represent all transfer activity on the system.

Figure 8: Transfer Usage

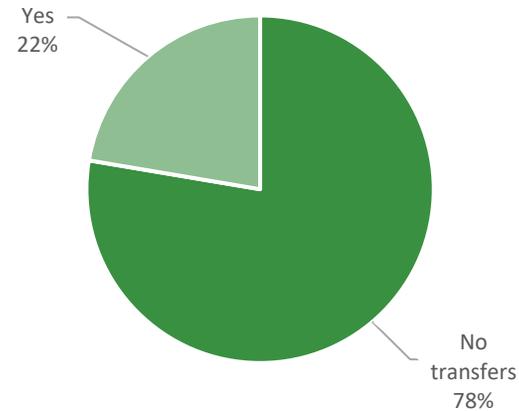


Figure 9: Transfer Matrix

	Route 2	Route 3	Route 5	Route 10L	Route 12	Route 14	Route 15	Route 16	Route 17	Route 19	Route 20	Route 22	Route 26	Route 27	Route 28	Route 31	Route 32	Route 34	Route 51	Route 52
Route 2		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Route 3			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Route 5			1	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Route 10L					0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Route 12						0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Route 14							0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Route 15								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Route 16									0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Route 17										0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Route 19											0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Route 20												1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Route 22													0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Route 26														1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Route 27															1	0	1	0	0	0
Route 28																0	0	0	0	0
Route 31																	1	0	0	0
Route 32																		0	0	0
Route 34																			0	0
Route 51																				0
Route 52																				

Customer Preference

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Customers were asked to rank potential service improvements in order of importance. Survey results show that cost, service frequency, reliability, efficiency, and comfort are valued most among customers. (Figure 10) The service improvements customers were asked to consider are as follows:

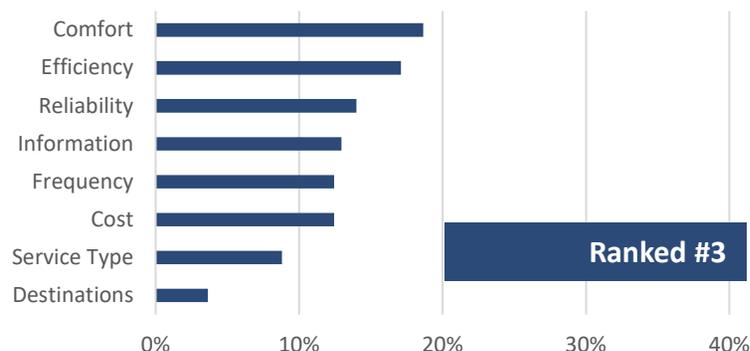
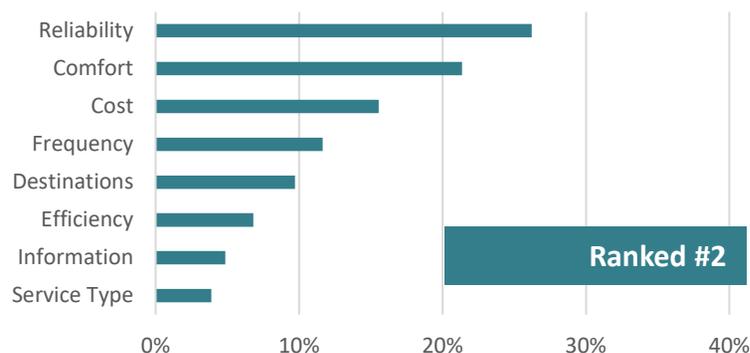
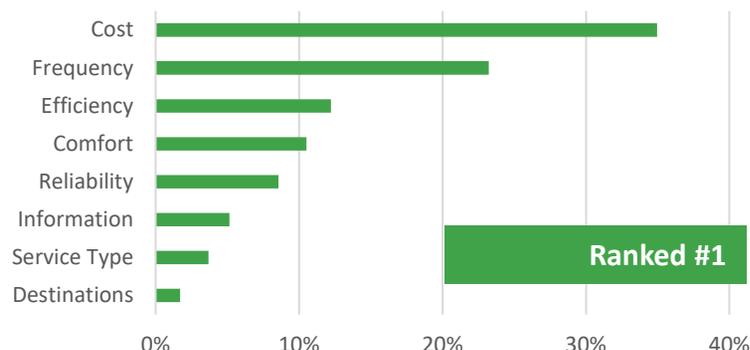
- **Cost:** TARTA should keep fares low
- **Frequency:** Increase bus frequency (how often the bus comes)
- **Efficiency:** routes should be more direct and run faster
- **Reliability:** TARTA buses should run on time
- **Comfort:** TARTA buses and amenities (benches/shelters) should be spotless and comfortable
- **Destinations:** TARTA should include bus service to: _____
- **Information:** More information about scheduled arrival times and routes at bus stops
- **Service Type:** TARTA should consider alternative services to provide more flexibility and choice to customers where a bus doesn't make sense

TARTA customers prioritized cost (or keeping fares low), which is interesting given at the time the survey was conducted, TARTA was operating fare-free. One potential interpretation is customers' desire to keep the system fare free. Other priorities associated with service reliability and efficiency are typically among the highest scoring attributes by transit riders nationally.

The relative importance of Comfort indicates that TARTA vehicles and facilities (benches, shelters, etc.) need improvement and are equally, if not more, important as adding more frequent service, providing more direct service, or ensuring buses run on time.

While still important, customers were less interested in improving information, diversifying service types and expanding service to new destinations.

Figure 10: Ranked Service Improvements



Customer Preference

SERVICE TRADEOFFS

To better understand their priorities, TARTA customers were asked four questions that required them to make the tradeoff between competing service options. The tradeoff questions are not intended to be prescriptive in terms of how future services *will* be provided, but rather indicative of customer preferences and values that can help inform the process. The following is a summary of the responses:

- **Slight preference for frequency over longer service spans.** While more customers prefer more frequent bus service (59%) compared to a longer span of service (41%), customers are somewhat split in terms of their preference.
- **Shorter walks to the bus.** Even if it means the bus is slower, about two thirds (63%) of customers prefer more bus stops as opposed to faster service.
- **Strong preference for improved weekend service.** Two thirds of customers (66%) said that they prefer more weekend service compared to weekday service. The responses to this question align with open-ended responses on the following page.
- **Investments in existing services.** Most customers (63%) said that TARTA should focus on improving the services they already operate over expanding service to new areas (37%).

Figure 11: Service Hours vs. Frequency

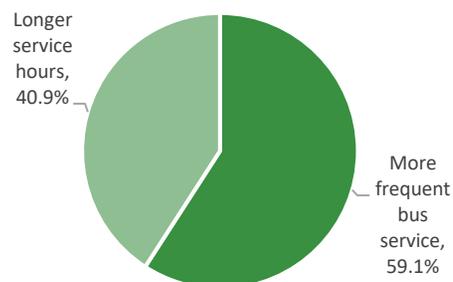


Figure 12: Weekend vs. Weekday Service

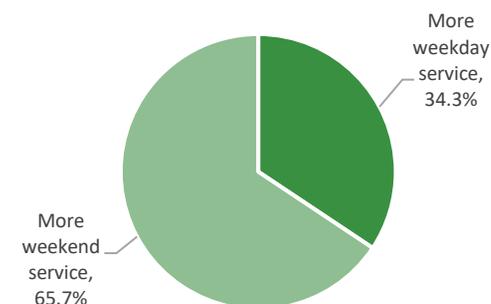


Figure 13: Faster Service vs. Shorter Walk

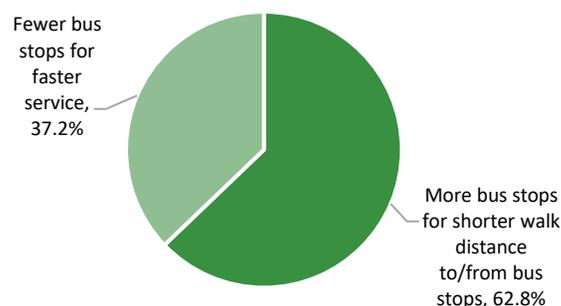
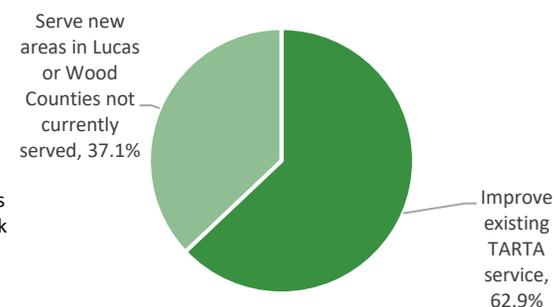


Figure 14: New vs. Existing Services



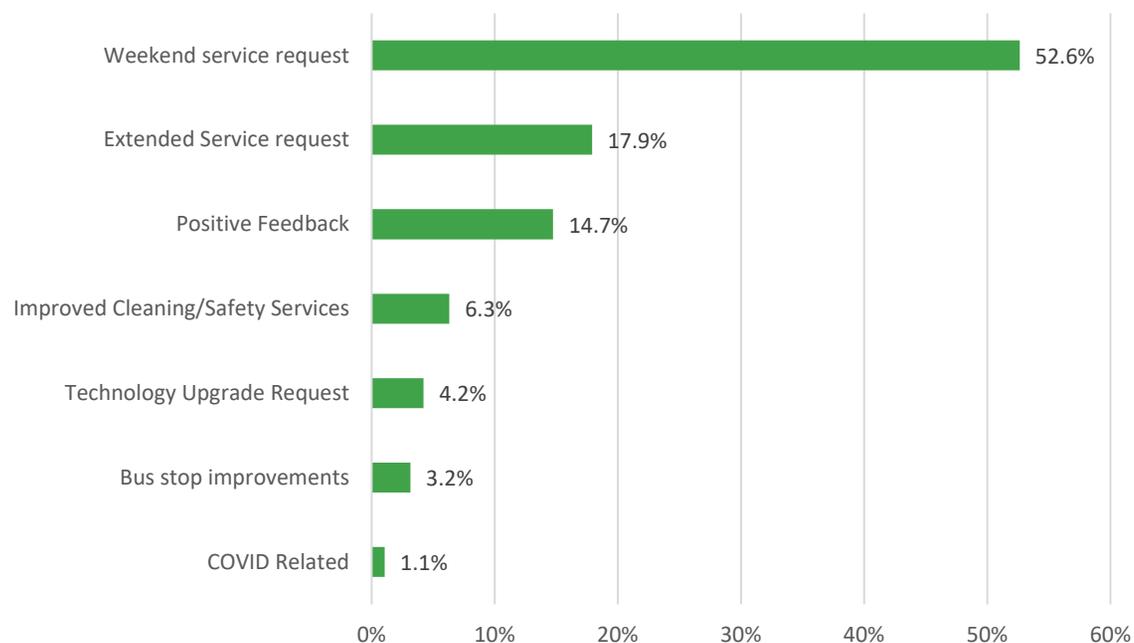
Customer Input

OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

In the open-response portion of the survey, customers were encouraged to leave general comments about TARTA services. These results were categorized into several themes as presented below in Figure 15. Verbatim open response comments are included in the Appendix.

Most customers chose to comment about weekend service requests (52%). Another top request was extending service later in the evening on weekdays (18%). Some specific recommended service improvements included *“Expand core content to establish mini hub like Southwyck to FPM. Put a stop on Summit inbound by Promenade Park.”* and *“I usually google bus routes, but sometimes the information is wrong and puts me at stops no longer in use.”* Some customers chose to give positive feedback in their comments as well, such as; *“Thank you TARTA I think your service is great, I wish you had service on Sunday 1-10 PM near Monroe, Detroit.”*

Figure 15: Customer Comments



Customer Demographics

DISABILITY

About 14% of TARTA fixed route customers have a disability or health condition that significantly affects their ability to travel (Figure 16). Most of these customers are over 55 (49%), which likely reflects those individuals who also use ADA transit services (as noted on Page 6 in the Services Utilized section). There is also a notable amount (22%) of TARTA customers within the 45-54 age range who also have a disability.

Figure 16: Disability or Health Condition

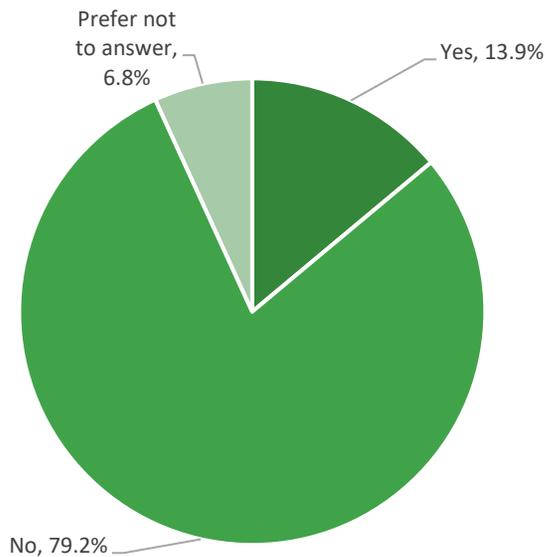


Figure 17: Disability by Age

Age	Yes, I have a disability	No, I do not have a disability
Under 18	2%	7%
18-24	4%	16%
25-34	6%	24%
35-44	16%	19%
45-54	22%	16%
55-64	39%	14%
65+	10%	3%

Customer Demographics

INCOME LEVEL

TARTA’s customers are largely low income, which supports the high transit dependency as presented earlier. About two thirds (62%) have a household income of less than \$15,000 and another 24% earn between \$15,000 and \$24,999. This contrasts with the all residents in the service area where just 30% have household incomes less than \$25,000.

Figure 18: Income Level



*The Service Area consists of (Maumee, Ottawa Hills Village, Sylvania city, Sylvania Township, Rossford, Toledo city, and Waterville)

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates

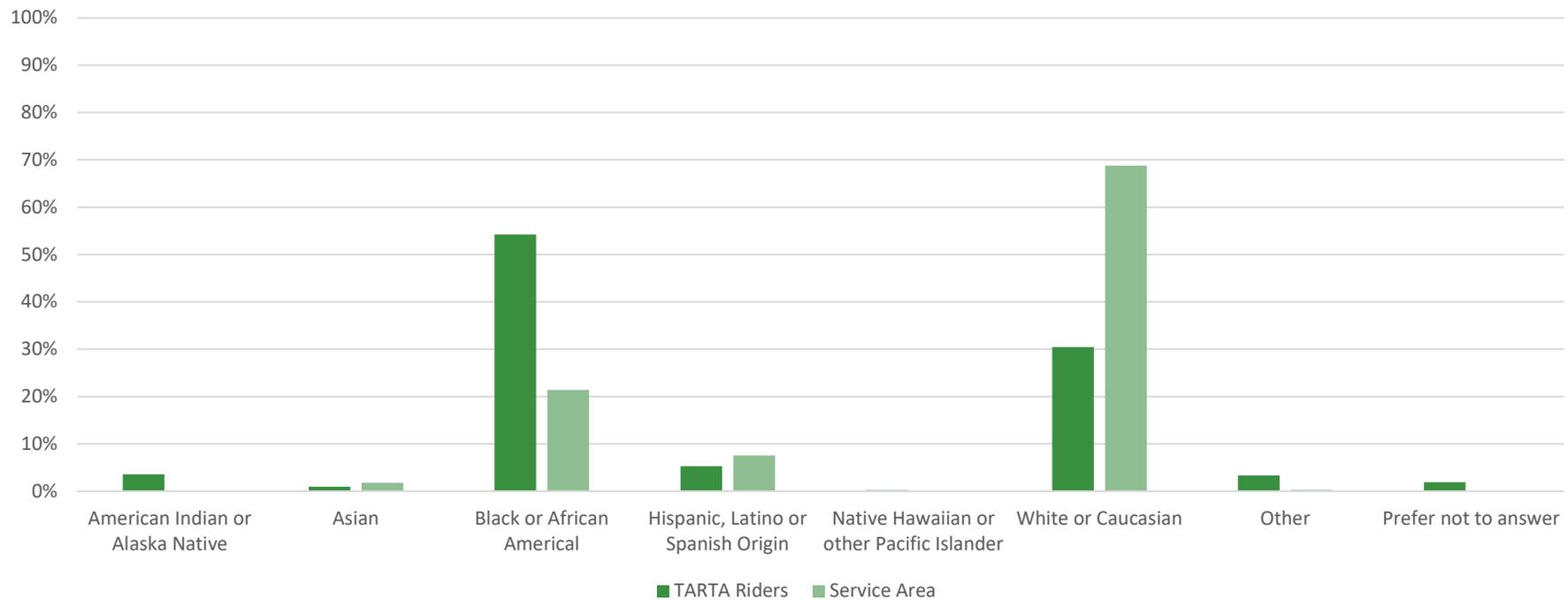
Customer Demographics

RACE/ETHNICITY

The majority of TARTA’s customers identify as Black or African American (54%), followed by White (30%) and Hispanic customers (5.3%).

The demographic characteristics of TARTA customers does not mirror demographics of the region, being that it is a majority white region (69%) with Black residents accounting for 21% of the region. Referencing the heat map in Figure 6, we can see that most of TARTA’s customers responding to the survey are from central Toledo where most of the African-American community in the service area is concentrated.

Figure 19: Race/Ethnicity



*The Service Area consists of (Maumee, Ottawa Hills Village, Sylvania city, Sylvania Township, Rossford, Toledo city, and Waterville)

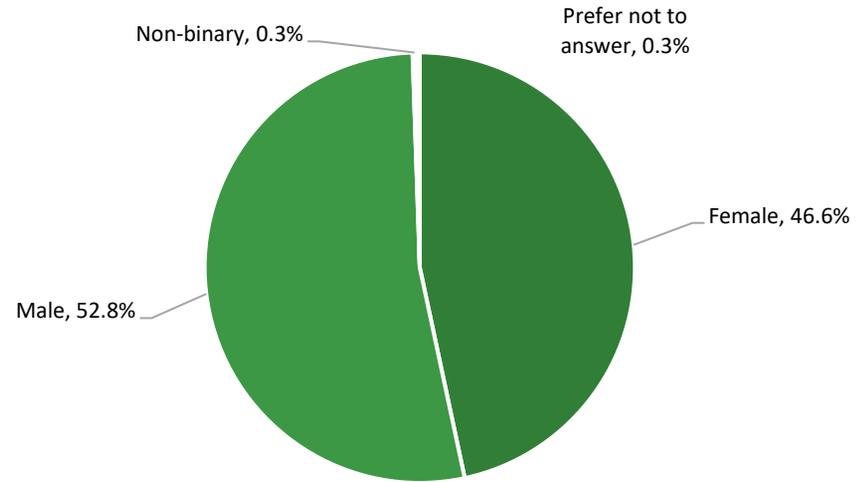
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Customer Demographics

GENDER

Survey responses were nearly evenly distributed between men and women, with a slight majority of men filling out the survey.

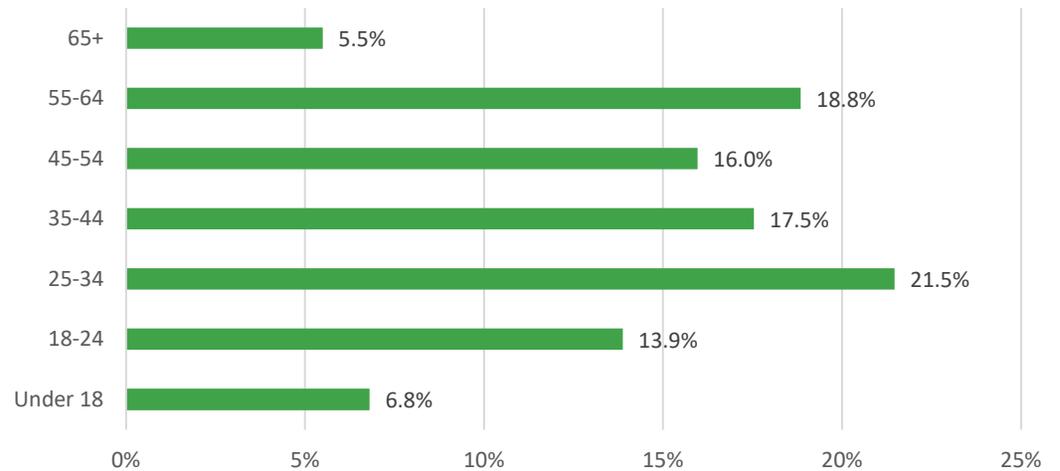
Figure 20: Customer Gender



AGE

TARTA customers represent a wide variety of ages, as shown in Figure 21. While about a quarter (24%) of customers are over 55, nearly 40% are under 35.

Figure 21: Customer Age



Appendix A: Full Open-Ended Comments

Full Open-Ended Comments

31H run on time, Don't pass riders at stops.
Add Sunday service back.
Be on time and not ride passed people. More comfortable seating.
Be on time more.
Bring back Sunday service. Increase service hours for Saturday. Bring back a fare system so everybody has some skin in the game.
Bring bus back on Sunday.
Bring Wi-fi services back.
Cashless, Metro cards, mask less.
Clean buses for bugs.
Clean the buses, bedbug scare. Saw a cockroach about two weeks ago and killed it.
Cleaner bus
Cleaner buses, customer service more accessible to reach.
Drivers to be more patient with handicap people. Drivers can be very mean to people that need a ramp. Appreciate the free ride and good drivers.
Drivers, Southwyck route better 32R and 32H back to Southwyck.
Drop off on Drassel Dr. in Maumee would be great.
During covid there has been over 30 people on one bus.
Cashless, Metro cards, mask less.
Clean buses for bugs.
Clean the buses, bedbug scare. Saw a cockroach about two weeks ago and killed it.
Cleaner bus
Cleaner buses, customer service more accessible to reach.
Drivers to be more patient with handicap people. Drivers can be very mean to people that need a ramp. Appreciate the free ride and good drivers.
Drivers, Southwyck route better 32R and 32H back to Southwyck.
Drop off on Drassel Dr. in Maumee would be great.

Full Open-Ended Comments

During covid there has been over 30 people on one bus.
Expand core content to establish mini hub like Southwyck to FPM. Put a stop on Summit inbound by Promenade Park.
I am new to the area and rely on TARTA for 90 percent of my transportation along with Lyft. TARTA is more cost effective but not enough to meet my needs.
I don't wish to express this yet at time the certain drivers are not always friendly. I realize though that as lonely as well and they may not hear our/my thankfulness or greeting.
I enjoy TARTA services, better than walking.
I feel no one higher up listens to riders, never view our concerns.
I usually google bus routes, but sometimes the information is wrong and puts me at stops no longer in use.
Just be fair with people that struggle.
Just make sure seats are clean and spotless. It would also be nice for transit to permanently free.
Laura is awesome.
Like the bus system here in Toledo, just there was more good booklets.
Longer hours
Make sure bus runs on time.
Make sure buses operate on Sundays.
More bus enclosures and benches to sit down.
More drivers with attitude and personalities plus friendliness, she greets her passengers.
More hours on weekends
More hours, nicer driver, shorter bus rides, be more patient with disabilities, more stops.
More weekend services.
Need stop sign by Starbucks and Imagination Station.
Need to run longer, nighttime.

Full Open-Ended Comments

Please I want TARTA bus route go through or down to Heather downs at St. Joan of Arc School because am afraid of this winter. I used to walk from Cheyenne to St. Joan of Arc School with my 7-year-old child.
Provide wi-fi on routes
Rules (eating, drinking, or loud music) apply to everyone; Too many bus benches removed, please install new ones & replace ones damaged
Run bus on the weekend.
Run on Sunday
Services on Sundays.
Provide wi-fi on routes
Rules (eating, drinking, or loud music) apply to everyone; Too many bus benches removed, please install new ones & replace ones damaged
Some of the drivers are rude. Will talk to you crazy.
Some security on buses, air conditioning; in the summer sometimes, it works and sometimes it doesn't
Sunday 24 hours.
Sunday bus
Sunday bus route back.
Sunday bus services.
Sunday buses. Maumee, more coverage. Oregon, more coverage.
Sunday line up back better work if bus ran more on weekend.
Sunday route.
Sunday service is a must!!!
Sunday service until midnight.
Sunday service, 24-hour service.
Sunday service.
Sunday service. Current zero cost is great. You took away many benches.
Sundays more stops.

Full Open-Ended Comments

Sunday service. Current zero cost is great. You took away many benches.
Sundays more stops.
TARTA should actively promote the sales tax, keep hub open in winter.
Thank you for your service.
Thank you TARTA I think your service is great, I wish you had service on Sunday 1-10 PM near Monroe, Detroit.
The bus are good for being on time and departing TARTA stations. I wish that there were several buses running on Saturday.
The bus should run Sunday. Run every hour.
The buses should get cleaned.
These buses are so filthy that you don't want to sit down.
Today the 19 changed into the 2 after getting on the bus.
Want buses to run on Sundays.
We really need to bring our Sundays back.
We want Sunday services, Holiday Services got church.
When I have to sit down at the hub either half hour or an hour that is not right.
Y'all is doing fine and thank you.
Yes, have the 32H go to Target and turn around would be nice.
Yes, stay at work stops a little longer, Amazon.
Yes, I have to be at work at 7AM, but the 17 don't go all the way to Alexis Rd until 8AM so I have to walk down to Alexis from Jackman.
Zelphie the bus driver on 31 Wednesday October 6 was an amazing, beautiful person.