



**Summary of King County Metro's Results
from the
2016 International Bus Benchmarking Group's
Customer Satisfaction Survey**
Including additional information from Metro's Rider/Non-Rider Survey

September 2016



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Executive Summary

King County Metro Transit participated in the International Bus Benchmarking Group's (IBBG) 2016 Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS). This online survey was active from April 4 through May 1, 2016. Metro promoted the survey via our website, Facebook, tweets, e-mail subscriber lists, and some business communications. We received more than 3,300 responses.

Some of the findings related to Metro:

- Compared to other IBBG organizations' respondents, on average:
 - Metro respondents were more likely to use the bus to get to work or school.
 - More Metro respondents were in the 50-65 age bracket.
- The service quality areas of most importance to Metro respondents were availability, time, and comfort, closely followed by security.
- When asked about their willingness to recommend the bus, Metro respondents were more likely to be "promoters" and less likely to be "detractors" compared to all IBBG members' respondents.
 - 27% of Metro respondents were "promoters"—**the highest among the IBBG members.**

Among the 19 service attributes studied, Metro received positive scores (greater than three on a five-point scale where five is "strongly agree" and one is "strongly disagree") on all but one attribute. The exception was for the rating of "If there are problems, I can easily find an alternative route."

The percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with attribute statements (a score of four or five) was highest for these attributes:

- It is convenient paying a fare (88%)
- It is easy for me to get into and out of the bus (86%)
- The bus helps to reduce pollution (82%)
- Staff are well dressed (80%)

The attribute statements with the lowest scores were:

- If there are problems, I can easily find an alternative route (22%)
- The seats are comfortable and there is enough space (43%)
- The bus is quiet, well lit, ventilated and at an adequate temperature (45%)
- It is easy to get up to-the-minute information on when my bus will arrive (46%)

Compared to other organizations, Seattle-area respondents rated Metro:

- Significantly higher on environmental performance and resolving problems; and also higher on ease of fare payment and staff helpfulness.
- Significantly lower on the route network, interior comfort, feeling secure on the bus, and information about alternative routes; and somewhat lower on, cleanliness and internal ambience.

Some of these same attributes were measured in Metro’s 2015 Rider/Non-Rider survey. In all cases, the IBBG survey results showed lower satisfaction than the Rider/Non-Rider. The wording, methodologies, and samples are different in the two studies, so different results are expected.

Background on IBBG’s Customer Satisfaction Survey

The IBBG is a comprehensive program of benchmarking urban bus operations. Currently the group is made up of 15 medium and large bus organizations located around the world. The group is jointly owned and directed by the members, with project management, administration, and research carried out by the Railway and Transport Strategy Centre at Imperial College London.

Customer satisfaction—in other words, the extent to which organizations meet their customers’ expectations—is an important indication of an organization’s success and sustainability. Customer satisfaction should be included in any benchmarking exercise through which participants aim to understand their relative performance.

IBBG members agreed that directly comparing *their own* customer satisfaction scores with other agencies’ scores in a benchmarking exercise would not be useful because of differences in:

- measured items
- definitions of items
- measurement methods (sample size, location, time, collection method, etc.)
- socio-political, structural and cultural biases.

Furthermore, a customer satisfaction survey is a subjective measurement, so it is less suitable for benchmarking than objective measurements.

Nonetheless, because of the importance of customer satisfaction, the IBBG members started a research project in 2009 to overcome these challenges. A pilot Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted for all IBBG members.

After the success of the pilot, IBBG established a regular survey process. Member organizations agreed to annually post identical customer satisfaction surveys on their website homepages during the same agreed time period. The 2016 survey was the eighth.

IBBG Survey Methodology

The 2016 IBBG customer satisfaction survey included 26 questions:

- 19 questions grouped into eight attribute categories:
 - **Availability:** Bus reliability, convenience of routes/network, and service frequency
 - **Accessibility:** Ease to get on/off the bus, ease to move inside the bus, and the convenience of paying a fare/buying a ticket
 - **Comfort:** Cleanliness, ride comfort, internal ambiance, and seat availability/comfort
 - **Customer Care:** Staff helpfulness, staff appearance, ease of sorting out problems/complaints
 - **Information:** Availability and quality of general/scheduled information, real-time information, and information on alternatives during disruption

- **Time:** Incorporates both journey time and punctuality (statement was “the bus gets me to my destination in good time”)
- **Security:** One question about feeling secure on the bus
- **Environment:** One question about bus reducing pollution
- One general question on overall satisfaction
- One “net promoter score” question on likeliness to recommend the service
- One request to select the top three customer service areas/priorities
- Four demographic questions: age, gender, frequency of bus use, and primary trip purpose

The questionnaire was administered via www.surveymonkey.com

- Identical questionnaires for all participants were in local languages, each with a separate link.
- Metro provided links to a Spanish version of the questionnaire and six of Metro’s surveys were completed in Spanish.

Metro directed respondents to the online survey through five types of collectors:

- Link on home page of the Metro website
- Direct email with a link
- Link on Facebook
- Link on Twitter
- Link on Instagram

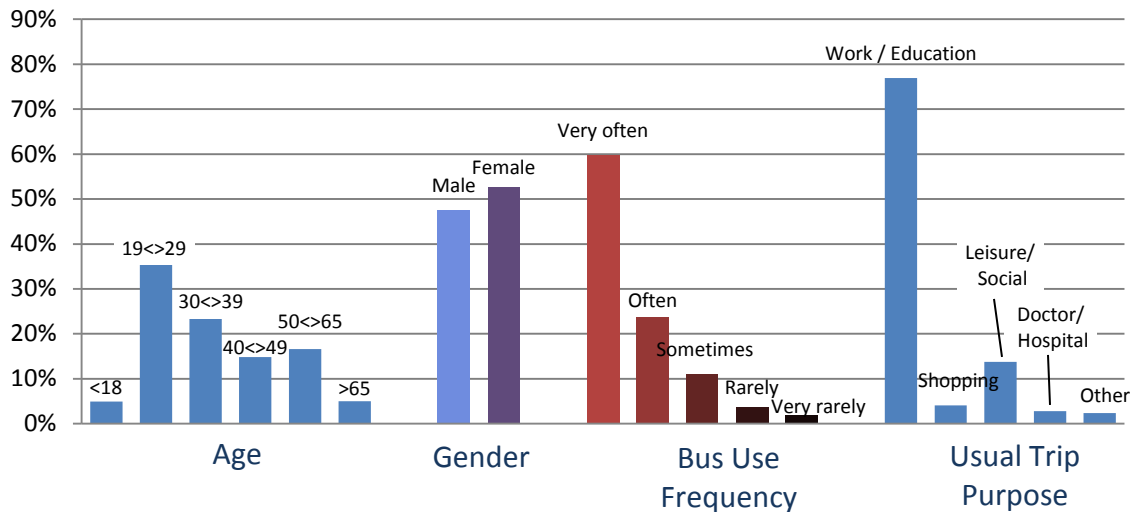
Metro had 3,337 initial responses, and after data cleaning 3,217 responses remained, the third highest among the members.

Demographics of Respondents

The graphs below show the segmentation of respondents in 2016.

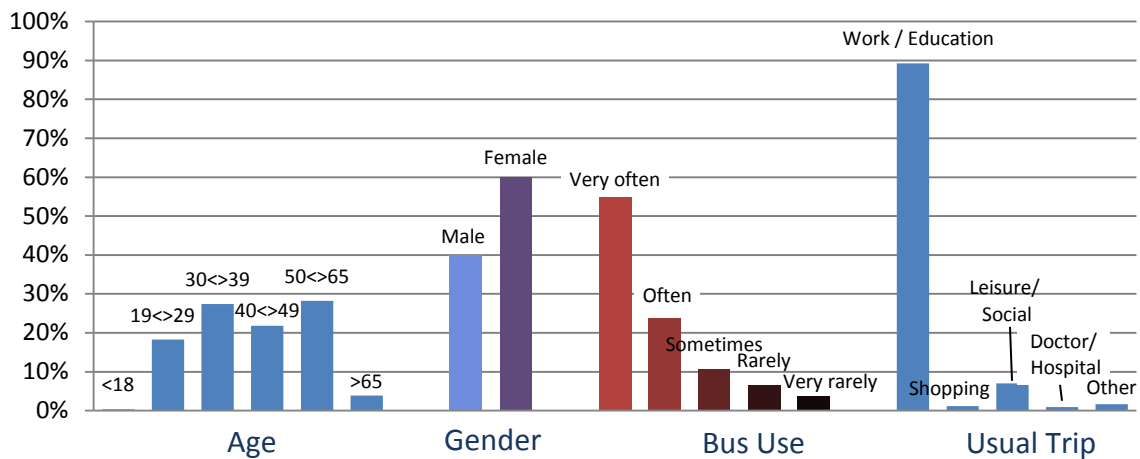
Compared to the average of all other IBBG members, more of Metro’s respondents were in the 50 to 65 age category (28% vs 17%). They also varied significantly in usual bus-trip purpose: more Metro respondents used the bus for work and school (89% vs 77%).

Demographics of All 26,412 Respondents



2016 IBBG Customer Survey

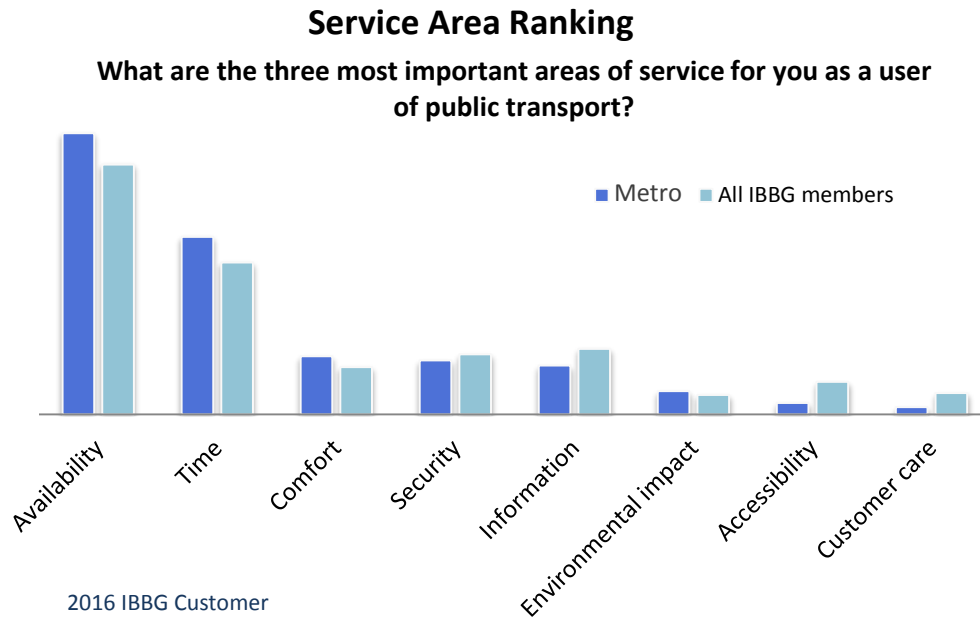
Demographics of Metro's Respondents



2016 IBBG Customer Survey

Service Area Priorities

Customer satisfaction research assesses both the level of satisfaction of the service areas and the importance of those areas for customers. To understand which areas of service quality are most important for customers, the IBBG survey included the question “What are the three most important areas of service for you as a user of public transport?” Eight service areas were listed and briefly described: availability, accessibility, comfort, customer care, information, time, security, and environment.



In all 14 IBBG communities, the most important quality area was “availability” and the second most important area was “time.” The third most important quality areas were “information” and “comfort,” each chosen by half of the IBBG communities.

Top 3 Most Important				
based on % of Respondents who ranked service quality area in Top 3				
	Availability	Time	Comfort	
Seattle Respondents	94.6%	78.6%	36.0%	

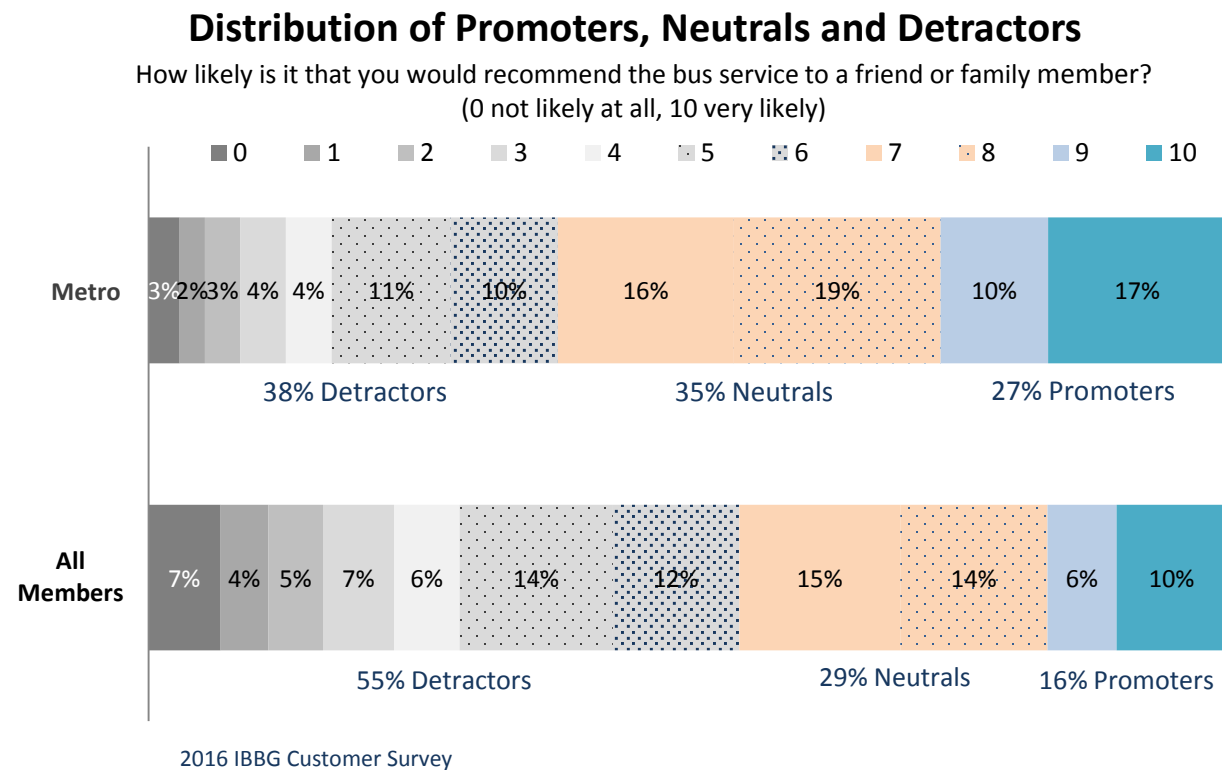
Top 1 Most Important				
% of Respondents who ranked service quality area as Top 1				
	Availability	Time	Security	
Seattle Respondents	68.7%	17.0%	6.4%	

While just 6% of Metro’s respondents ranked “security” as the most important, nearly a third (32%) ranked it as a top-three most important quality area.

Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score was developed by Fred Reichheld (The Ultimate Question: Driving Good Profits and True Growth), based around the question, “Please rate how likely you would be to recommend the service to a friend or family member (0 not likely at all, 10 very likely)?” Scores were then classified as promoters (9-10), neutrals (7-8), and detractors (0-6).

The chart below shows that Metro respondents are more likely to be promoters and less likely to be detractors compared to the scores of all IBBG members’ respondents.

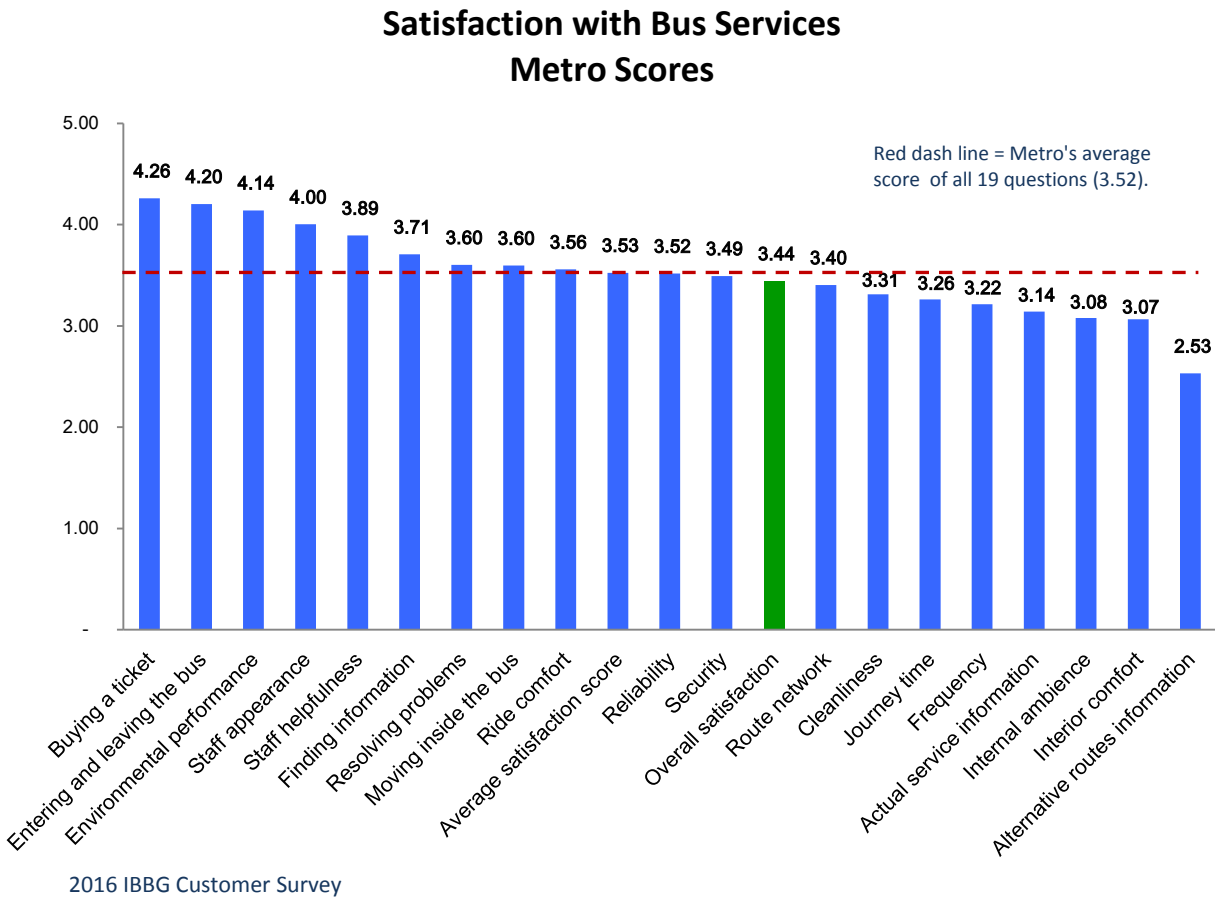


Twenty-seven percent of Metro respondents were classified as promoters—the highest among the 14 IBBG members. However, Metro had more detractors (38%) than promoters and a large group of neutrals (35%). The majority of IBBG members had less than 20% promoters. For five IBBG members, more than 50% of respondents were detractors.

Absolute Customer Satisfaction Results

This section presents the absolute scores for each question asked.

The graph below shows Metro’s 2016 results ranked from “most satisfied” to “least satisfied” for all 19 questions, in addition to the overall satisfaction. The average of all 19 questions is shown by the red dotted line, which can be used to distinguish above- and below-average aspects of service.



For Metro, the average score of the 19 individual questions, 3.52, is higher (more positive) than the score passengers gave on the overall satisfaction question (shown in green). This was true for eight other IBBG cities as well.

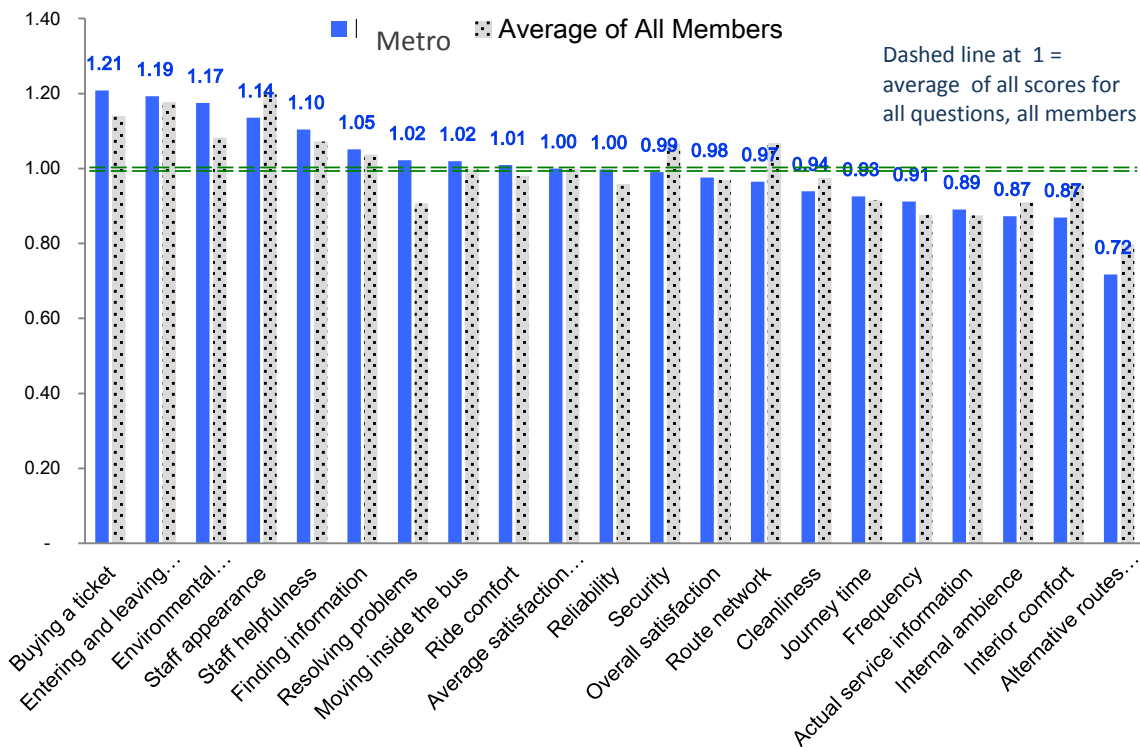
All of Metro’s scores were greater than 3.0, except for the rating of “If there are problems, I can easily find an alternative route.”

Relative Customer Satisfaction Results

Satisfying passengers can also be described as meeting passengers’ expectations. An issue for benchmarking is that these passengers’ expectations will differ from city to city, so to compare results, we normalize them:

- For each member, each question’s score is divided by the member’s overall average for all 19 questions to create a satisfaction index.
- A satisfaction index (normalized score) will have a value around 1.0. A score of 1.0 means that the average score for a specific question equals the average score for all questions.
- A satisfaction index above 1.0 indicates that passengers are relatively more satisfied with this service quality aspect than other areas on average.
- A score > 1.0 indicates a good internal result. A score of 1.0 is the average of all IBBG members so a statement with a score > 1.0 is also very good compared to peers.

Normalized Results



The chart shows high ratings in the same areas that received high ratings in the absolute results, presented on the previous page. This chart shows that compared to other organizations, Seattle-area respondents rated Metro:

- Significantly higher on environmental performance and resolving problems; and also higher on ease of fare payment and staff helpfulness.

- Significantly lower on the route network, interior comfort, feeling secure on the bus, and information about alternative routes; and somewhat lower on, cleanliness and internal ambience.

How IBBG’s Customer Satisfaction Survey compares to Metro’s Rider/Non-Rider Survey

Metro places high value on customer feedback. For more than 30 years, we have conducted an annual telephone survey of King County residents—the Rider/Non-Rider Survey (RNR). This survey has multiple objectives, but a large component of it is satisfaction and importance questions. The table below provides information on how the IBBG and RNR surveys compare in terms of objectives, methodology and questionnaires.

	IBBG's Customer Satisfaction Survey	Metro's Rider/Non-Rider Survey
Objectives	For bus operators to understand their relative performance compared to IBBG peers in meeting customers’ expectations in multiple service quality areas.	Tracks awareness and perceptions of Metro services among both riders and non-riders
	Allows operators to target those areas in which they underperform (relative to other operators).	Identifies and track demographic characteristics, attitudes, and transit use among riders and non-riders
	Provides bus operators with a customer satisfaction dataset that can be used to validate and/or complement their own customer satisfaction research.	Provides insight about topics related to Metro’s service, marketing, and communications strategies
		Provides a reliable measure of market share
Methodology	Self-selected respondents	Randomly selected respondents
	Respond to collector (link in email, on website, Facebook etc.)	Dual-frame (cell and land line) phone sample
Questionnaire	Self-administered online survey	Computer-assisted telephone interviewing conducted by professional interviewers
	Short questionnaire, < 30 questions	Complex survey with many programmed skips; 100+ questions
	19 service attributes in eight categories rated on a five-point agree/ disagree scale	42 attributes in nine categories rated on a five-point satisfied/ dissatisfied scale

	Designed for single customer group: bus riders	Designed to obtain information about multiple customer groups: bus riders, commuters, park-and-ride lot users, non-riders
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The IBBG survey is designed to be usable by diverse bus agencies in very different markets, so the questions are not specific to any particular transit system. Metro’s Rider/Non-Rider survey does have some questions that are similar to IBBG’s, although many of the RNR questions are more specific than IBBG’s.

The table below compares the two surveys’ best-matching “satisfaction” questions, including both the wording and the responses received for the top two categories of the rating scale. The percentage of riders who agree with the IBBG statements is always lower than the percentage of riders who are satisfied with the RNR attributes. The wording, methodologies, and samples are different in the two studies, so different results are expected.

IBBG Service Area	IBBG question wording: Respondent is asked if they agree or disagree with the statement	% for Top 2 Boxes	RNR question that’s most similar to IBBG question: Respondent is asked if they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the attribute	% for Top 2 Boxes
Availability	The bus service is usually reliable	65%	On-time performance	80%
	The buses are frequent	49%	Frequency of service	82%
	The bus routes are convenient for me	59%	Availability of service where you need to travel	81%
Accessibility	It is easy for me to get into and out of the bus	86%	Distance from home to bus stop	89%
	It is easy to move around inside the bus	63%	Ease of getting on and off the bus due to crowding at the bus stops	87%
	It is convenient paying a fare	88%	Ease of getting on and off due to crowding on the bus	74%
Information	It is easy to get information about the bus services	70%	Ease of paying fares when boarding	96%
	It is easy to get up to the minute information on when my bus will arrive	46%	Overall ability to get information about Metro’s routes and schedules	92%
	If there are problems, I can easily find an alternative route	22%	Website posting of delays and problems	86%
Time	The bus gets me to my destination in good time	52%	Amount of time it takes to travel	80%
Customer care	Staff are well dressed	80%		
	Staff are helpful	73%	Driver helpfulness with route and stop information	93%
	Staff are helpful resolving problems or complaints	56%	Ability to provide feedback	70%
Comfort	The seats are comfortable and there is enough space	43%	Drivers effectively handle problems on the bus	89%
	The bus is well driven and gives a comfortable ride	61%	Availability of seating on the bus	77%
	The bus is clean	50%	Drivers operate the bus in a safe and competent manner	96%
	The bus is quiet, well lit, ventilated and at an adequate temperature	45%	Inside cleanliness of buses	84%
Security	The bus is a secure place for me	58%	Personal safety on the bus related to the conduct of others during the daytime	89%
Environmental impact	The bus helps to reduce pollution	82%		
Overall Satisfaction	How satisfied are you overall with the bus services in the city? (Uses Satisfaction scale)	61%	Overall, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with Metro?	85%

The shaded areas in the RNR column indicate that there is no close match for the IBBG questions.

In addition to the questions listed in the table, the RNR asks many other questions that provide more specific information for use in planning, marketing and communications. For example, RNR uses several questions to evaluate more specific aspects of security: questions about security during the day versus the night and on the bus versus at the stops.

Appendix – IBBG Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire

1. Introduction

Dear Customer,

We would like to hear your thoughts about the bus service King County Metro provides for you. For example, are the buses usually on time? Is it easy to get information about the bus services, is it convenient paying a fare? Are the buses clean, comfortable and well-driven?

We are interested in your replies whether you use the buses frequently, occasionally, or even if you hardly ever use the bus service.

There are 20 statements below, and we would like to know whether you agree or disagree with each of them. Just click the column that shows your reaction to each statement.

Fourteen world cities are conducting this survey at the same time, so that they can find out what their passengers think of the service they provide. These cities will compare the results of the surveys, so that they can learn from each other and work towards giving you an even better service. Your personal details and responses will remain confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

Thank you for completing our survey.

2. Detailed Questions Part 1

The following statements relate to the availability, accessibility, information and travel time of your bus service, so that we can see what our customers think.

Please click the column that best describes your reaction to each of the following statements:

1. Availability

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
The bus service is usually reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The buses are frequent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The bus routes are convenient for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Accessibility

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
It is easy for me to get into and out of the bus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy to move around inside the bus	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is convenient paying a fare	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Information

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
It is easy to get information about the bus services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy to get up to the minute information on when my bus will arrive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If there are problems, I can easily find an alternative route	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Time

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
The bus gets me to my destination in good time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Detailed Questions Part 2

The following statements relate to the customer care, comfort, security and environmental impact of your bus service, so that we can see what our customers think.

Please click the column that best describes your reaction to each of the following statements:

5. Customer Care

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
Staff are well dressed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff are helpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff are helpful resolving problems or complaints	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Comfort

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
The seats are comfortable and there is enough space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The bus is well driven and gives a comfortable ride	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The bus is clean	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The bus is quiet, well lit, ventilated and at an adequate temperature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Security

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
The bus is a secure place for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Environmental Impact

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
The bus helps to reduce pollution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

4. Overall Satisfaction and Priority

9. Overall Satisfaction

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Overall, how satisfied are you with Metro's bus service?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Please rate how likely you would be to recommend the service to a friend or family member (0 not likely at all, 10 very likely).

0
 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8
 9
 10

Don't Know / Don't Use

11. What are the 3 most important areas of service for you as a user of public transport? (Please specify 3 categories only)

	1st	2nd	3rd
Availability (frequency and reliability of the service, hours of operation)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessibility (ease of getting on and off the bus)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information (availability and quality of maps, timetables and information on delays)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time (Travel time and staying on-time)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customer Care (helpful staff, responding to your suggestions or complaints)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comfort (temperature, ventilation, comfortable journey, cleanliness, crowding)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Security (feeling safe and secure)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environment (effect on pollution)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Your Details

12. What is your current age?

- Less than 18
- 18 to 29
- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 65
- More than 65

13. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

14. How often do you use our buses?

- Very often (every day)
- Often (at least 3 days per week)
- Sometimes (at least once per week)
- Rarely (at least once per month)
- Very rarely (less than once per month)

15. What is your most frequent trip purpose?

- Work / Education
- Shopping
- Leisure / Social
- Doctor / Hospital
- Other

Other (please specify)

6. End

Thank you for participating in our survey.

Your opinions and comments will be used to improve our service to you