



# SamTrans



SamTrans Paratransit  
Triennial Customer Survey  
December 2023

# Methodology

- ▶ Multimodal live telephone and text-to-web survey of Redi-Wheels and RediCoast customers conducted October 10th – 30th, 2023
- ▶ 300 interviews; overall margin of error  $\pm 5.7$  percentage points
  - 225 telephone interviews; 75 text-to-web interviews
  - Phone interviews were conducted in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Tagalog by trained, professional interviewers; landlines and mobile phones included; text-to-web survey was available in English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and Tagalog.
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with the following:

*Methodology	Dates	Universe	Sample Size	Margin of Error	EMC #
Phone	June 10-23, 2015	Redi-Wheels/ RediCoast Customers	500	$\pm 4.4$ percentage points	15-5649
Phone	October 10-23, 2017	Redi-Wheels/ RediCoast Customers	500	$\pm 4.4$ percentage points	17-6542
Phone	October 14-27, 2020	Redi-Wheels/ RediCoast Customers	500	$\pm 4.4$ percentage points	20-7862

**\*NOTE: Previous survey was conducted by phone only. This survey utilized a mixed-mode methodology (telephone, text-to-web, and email-to-web). This shift typically has some impact on how people respond to some types of questions.**

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

# Key Findings

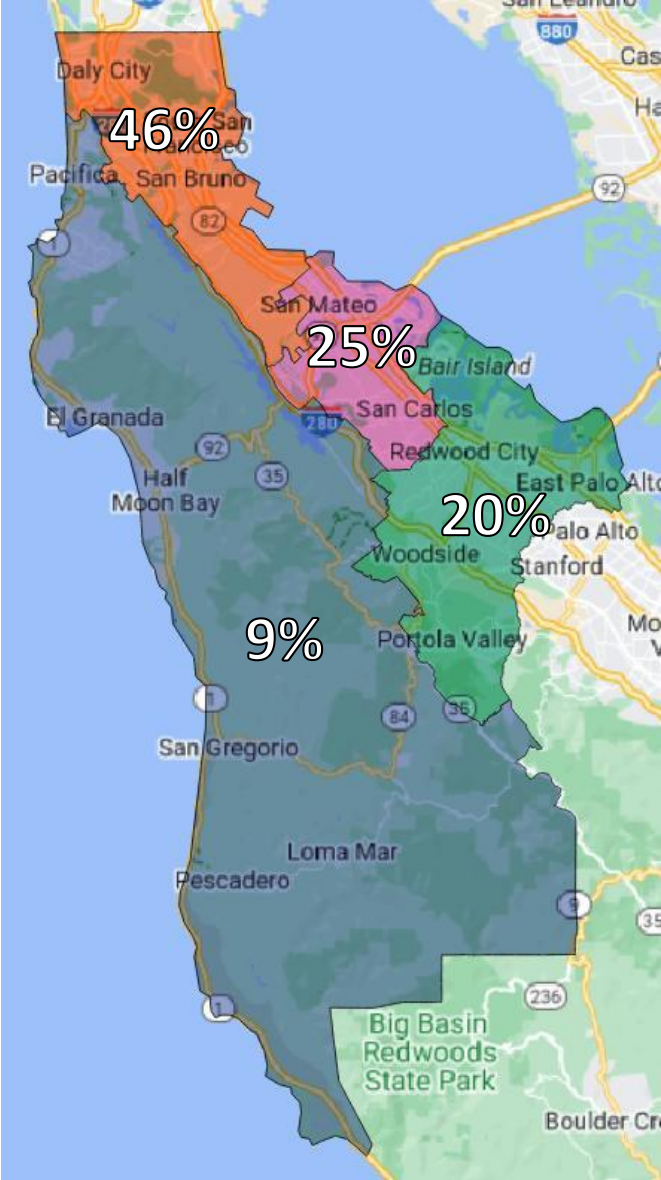
- ▶ Most SamTrans paratransit customers continue to give the services high marks, with over three-quarters indicating they are satisfied with the overall quality of service. Following a ratings spike in 2020, overall sentiments have returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- ▶ Over half of customers stated that they use Paratransit because of mobility/health issues or the accessibility/convenience of the service.
- ▶ Wheelchair users, which constitute nearly three-in-ten respondents, gave strongly favorable ratings of wheelchair-specific service elements.
- ▶ Active customers report riding more frequently than in 2020, returning to pre-pandemic levels, while medical appointments remaining the leading trip purpose.
- ▶ Top-of-mind suggestions for service improvement mentioned by customers include more available reservations and increased punctuality.
- ▶ When asked initially, a little over half of respondents indicated at least some level of interest in using a same-day service.
- ▶ While customers welcomed the option of scheduling a same-day return trip at the same time, many balked at the \$10 cost and the possibility that a ride may not be available during busy times.



**Customer Profile**

# San Mateo County Map

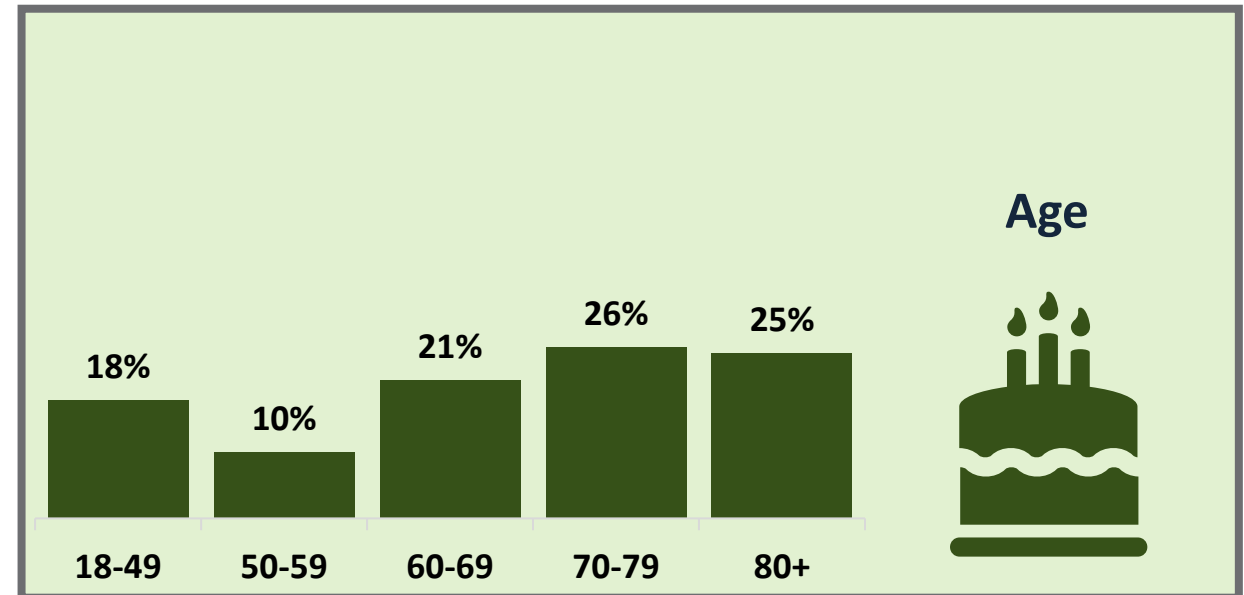
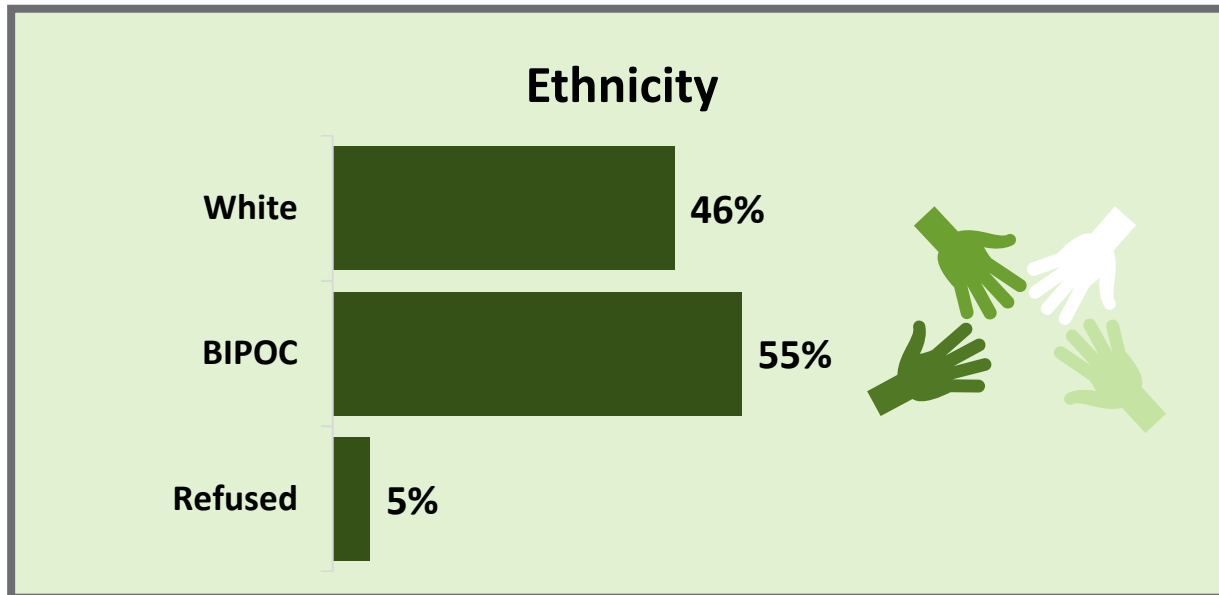
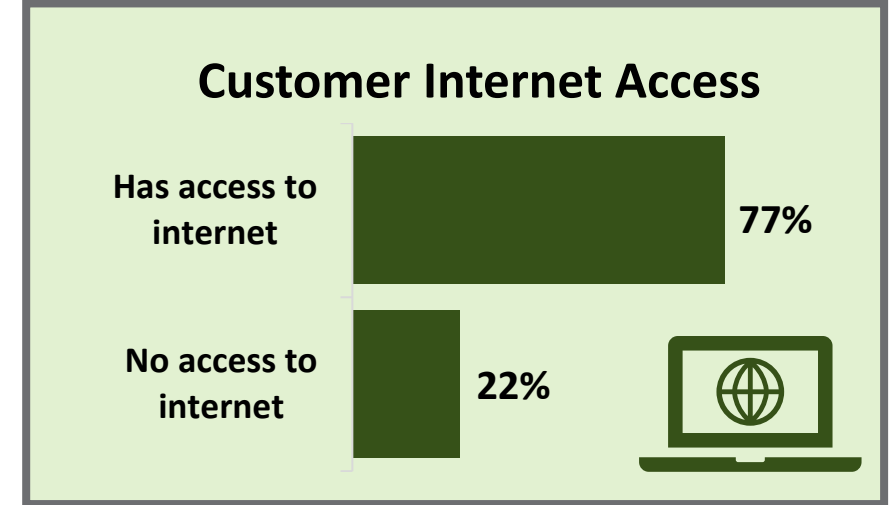
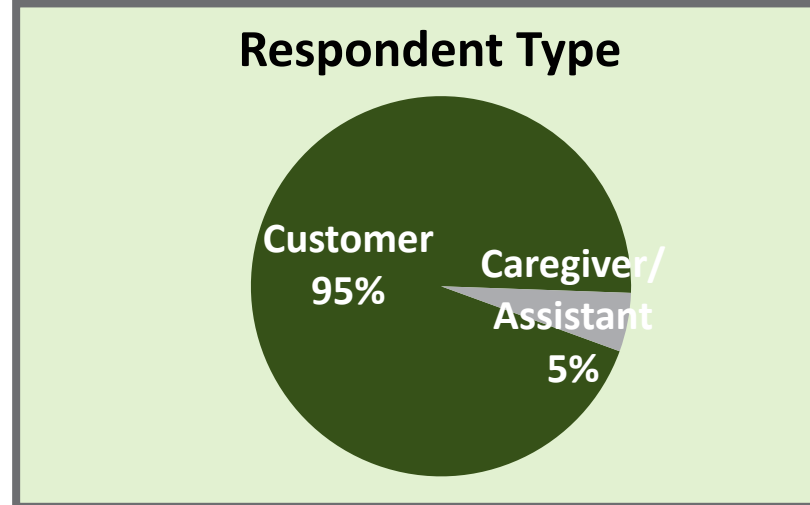
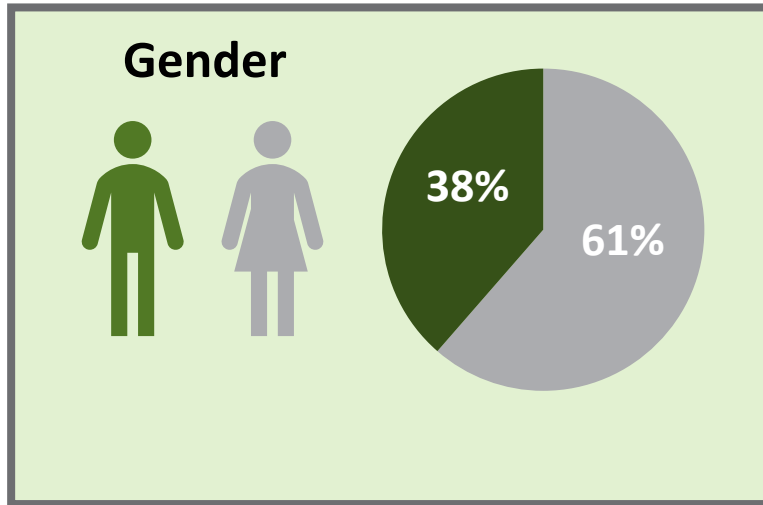
% of respondents from each region shown



### Region

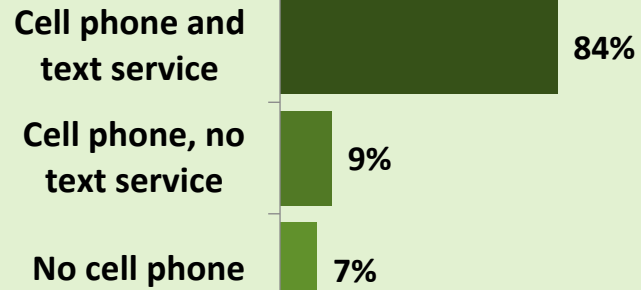
- South San Mateo
- North San Mateo
- Coastside San Mateo
- Central San Mateo

# Profile of Respondents

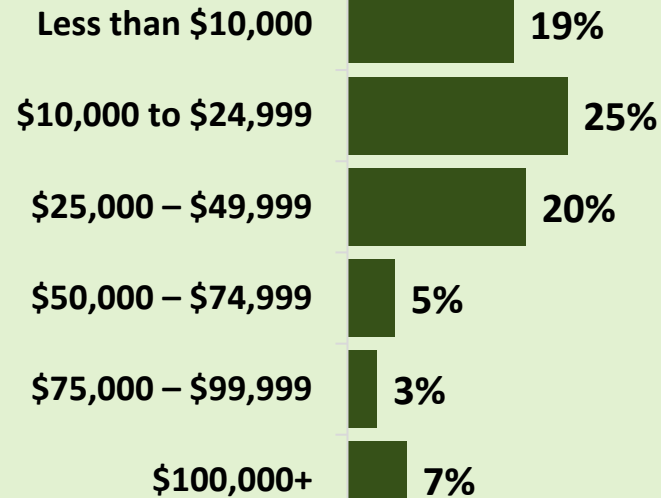
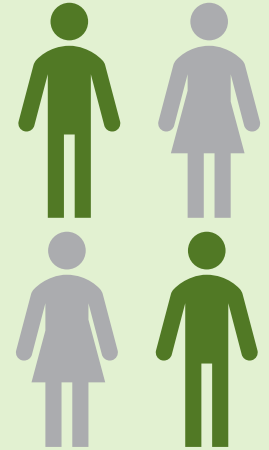
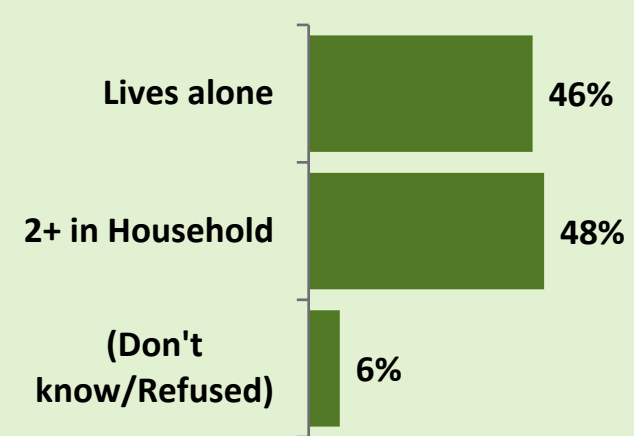


# Profile of Respondents

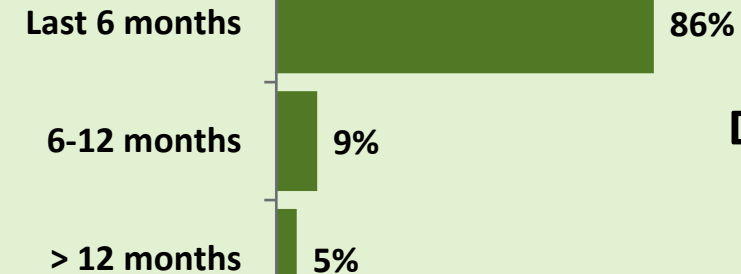
## Customer Cellphone Access



## Household Size



## Household Income



## Date of Last Ride



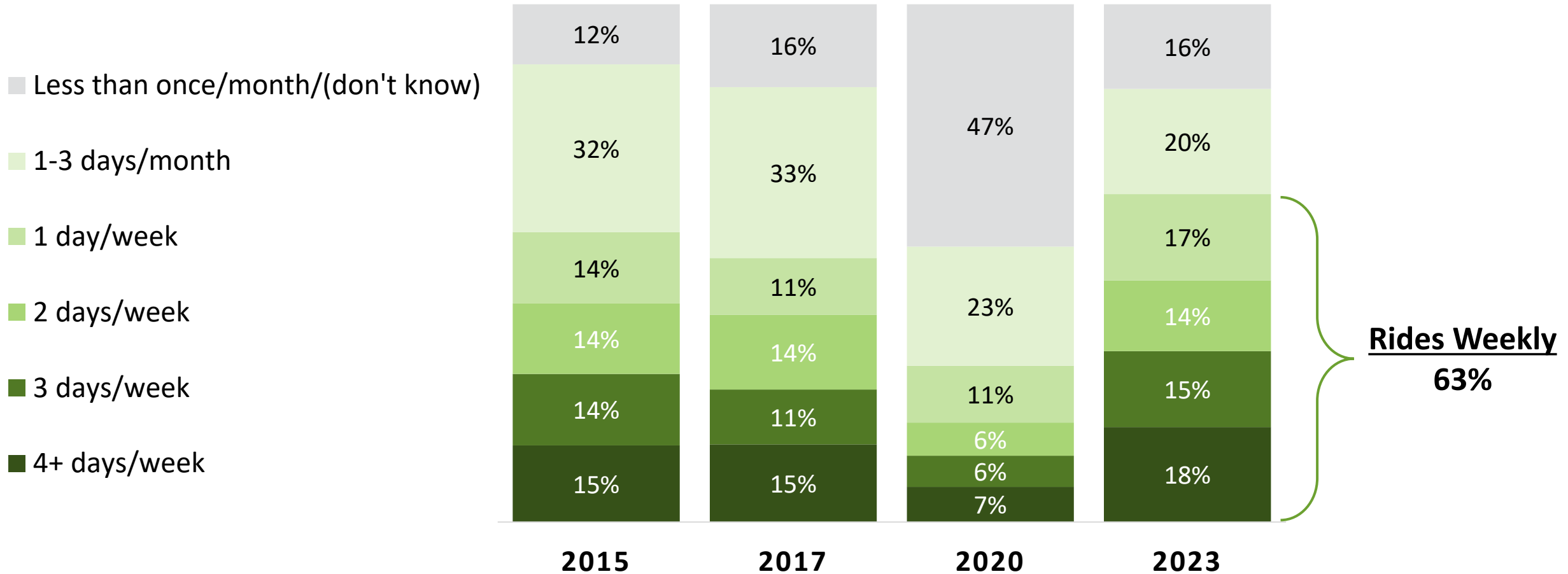


**Transportation Usage**



# Frequency of Paratransit Usage Over Time

Among those who have used Redi-Wheels or RediCoast in the last year, their reported ridership frequency has bounced back compared to 2020, with nearly two-thirds using the service weekly.



Q1. Thinking about your current usage of [SERVICE], generally how often are you using [SERVICE]? Please tell me whether you use this service at least once a week, or less than once a week.

# Primary Purpose of Trips

*By a large margin, medical appointments are the most commonly-cited type of trip customers use Paratransit for.*

<i>Open-ended question, verbatim responses coded into categories below</i>	2015 %	*2017 %	2020 %	2023 %
**Medical appointment other than dialysis or rehabilitation/physical therapy	51%	47%	62%	48%
Errands (grocery shopping, bank, drug store, hair appointment, shopping, etc.)	12%	17%	14%	11%
Visiting/recreation/social/out for a meal	8%	11%	5%	10%
Employment	2%	2%	4%	7%
Dialysis	3%	2%	4%	4%
Visiting a place of worship (church/temple)	3%	3%	2%	3%
Other	19%	15%	8%	16%
Don't know/Refused	2%	2%	1%	0%

*Note: Showing 2023 responses above 2%*

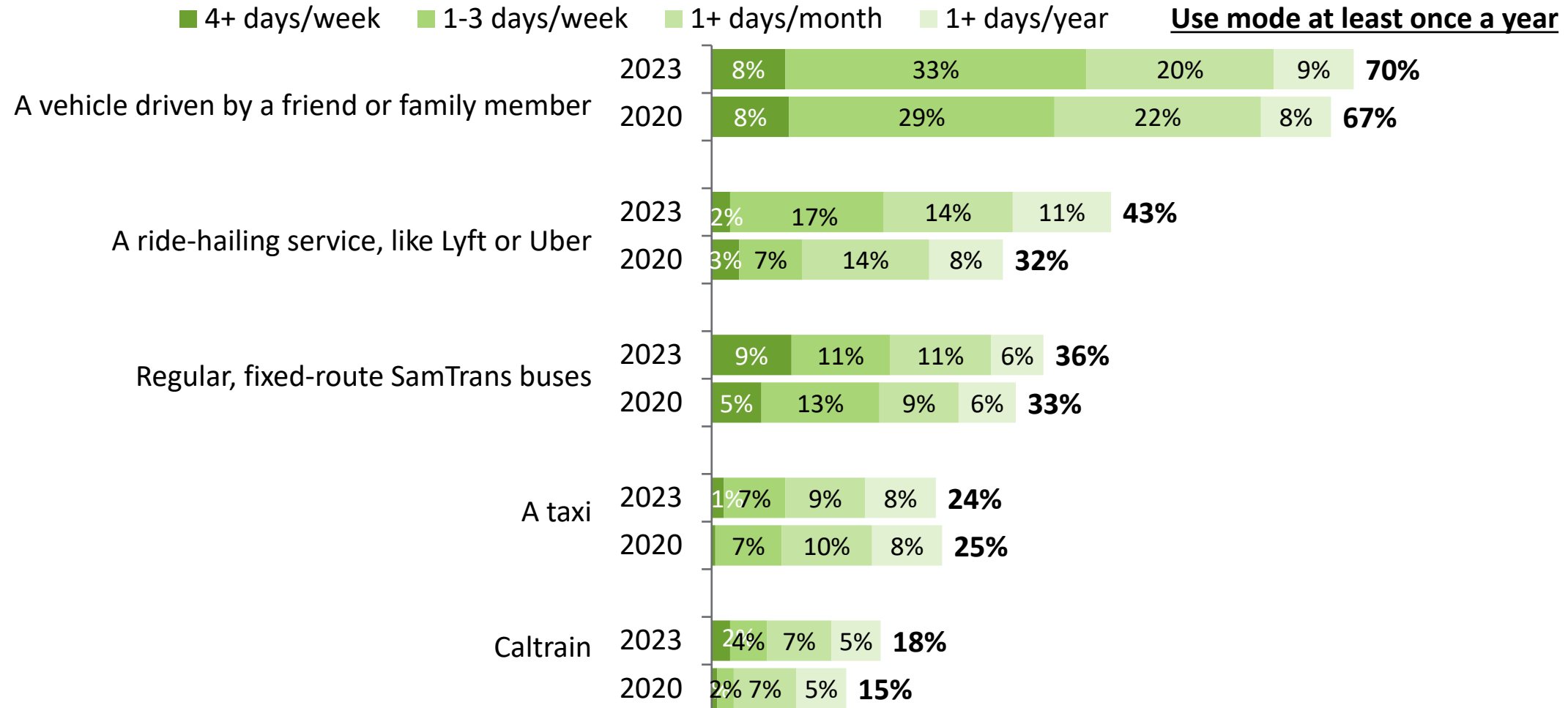
\*In 2017, question asked specifically about the current trip.

\*\* In 2015 and 2017, Physical Therapy was categorized separately

Q3. What is the main purpose of the trips you currently take on [SERVICE]?

# Usage of Other Modes of Transportation

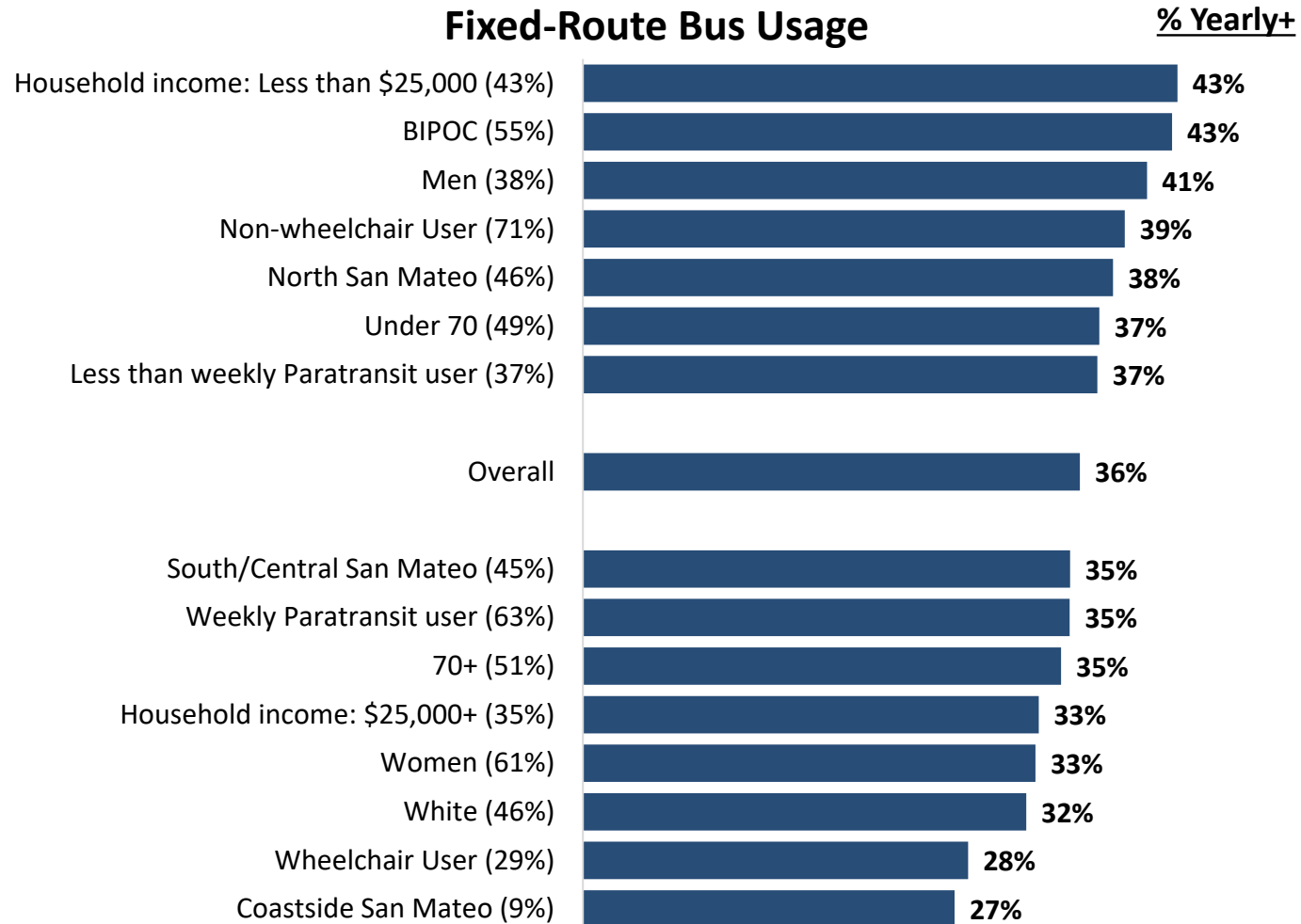
*A vehicle driven by a friend or family member is the most common mode of transportation among customers, while one-third use a regular, fixed-route SamTrans bus at least once a year.*



Q23-Q27. I'm going to read you a list of ways that people get around your area. Please tell me if you currently use that as a way to get around at least once a week, or less than once a week. If you don't know, please take your best guess.

# Fixed-Route Bus Usage by Subgroup

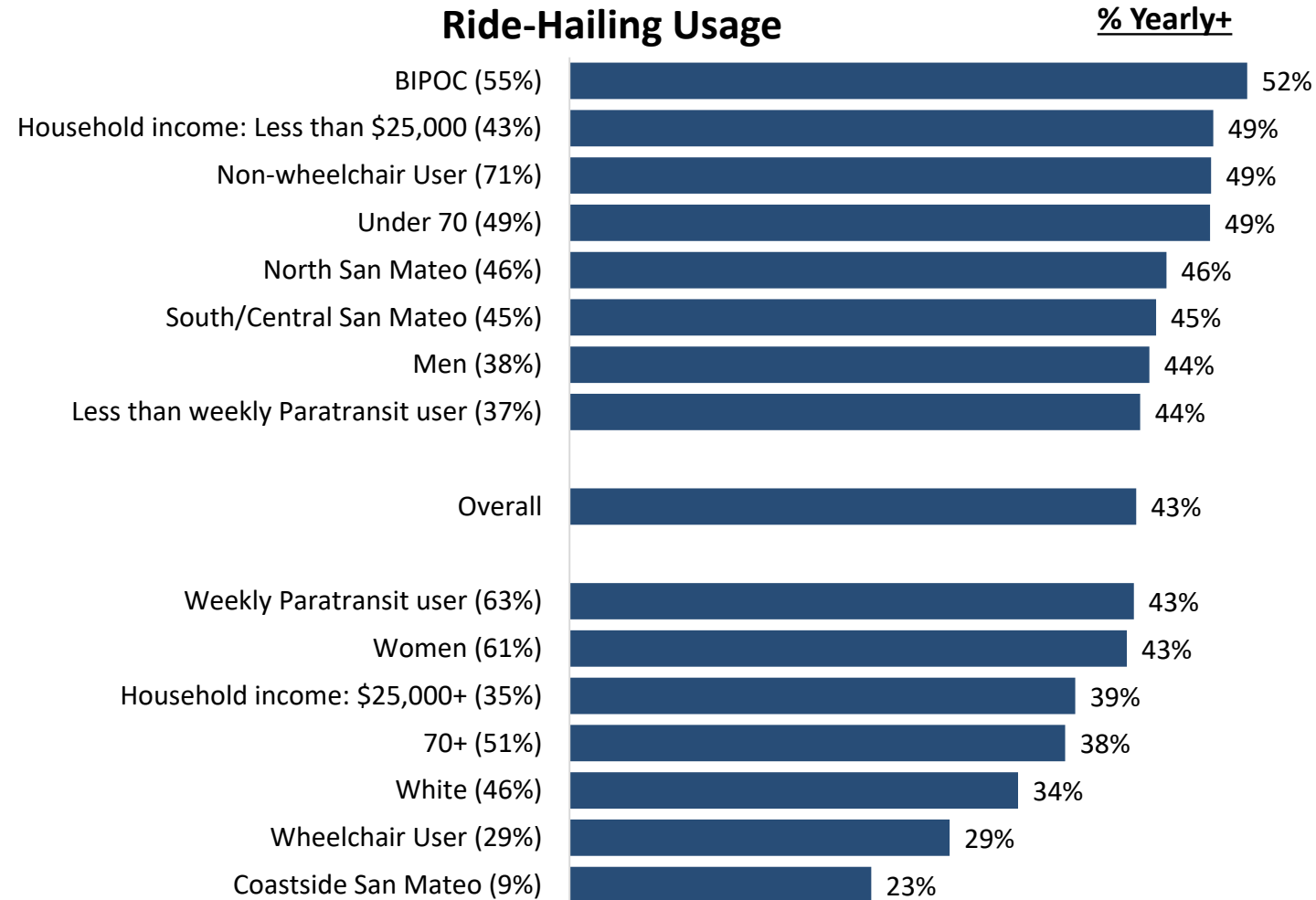
About a third of active paratransit customers also use fixed-route bus service, including SamTrans. A greater share of those with incomes under \$25,000, and who are BIPOC, male, and do not use wheelchairs report using fixed-route buses alongside RediCoast and Redi-Wheels.



Q23. I'm going to read you a list of ways that people get around your area. Please tell me if you currently use that as a way to get around at least once a week, or less than once a week. If you don't know, please take your best guess.

# Ride-Hailing Usage by Subgroups

Nearly half of customers who are BIPOC, have household incomes under \$25K/year, do not use wheelchairs, and are under 70 report using a ride-hailing app at least once a year. Around two-in-five customers use ride-hailing apps, overall.



Q27. I'm going to read you a list of ways that people get around your area. Please tell me if you currently use that as a way to get around at least once a week, or less than once a week. If you don't know, please take your best guess.

# Reasons for Paratransit Usage

*Customers cite a variety of reasons for choosing Paratransit over regular, fixed-route SamTrans bus service. The leading top-of-mind reasons include mobility and health issues, and accessibility and convenience needs.*

<i>Open-ended question, verbatim responses coded into categories below</i>	2020 %	2023 %
Mobility/Health issues/Senior/Medical issues	30%	32%
Accessible/More convenient/Reliable/Direct routes/Comes to them	33%	23%
SamTrans bus service problems/Transportation issues/Bus takes too long/Far	22%	17%
Getting to appointments (doctor, dental, hospital, etc.)	19%	16%
Wheelchair accommodation	-	6%
Uses them to run errands (grocery, shopping, city, pick up rx, etc.)	5%	5%
Long commutes/service not limited by distance or location	3%	5%
Safety	-	4%
Getting to work/employment	2%	3%
General favorable of service (I like it, I trust them, etc.)	2%	2%
Other	12%	14%
Don't know/Refused/Nothing	4%	1%

**Note: Showing 2023 responses above 2%**

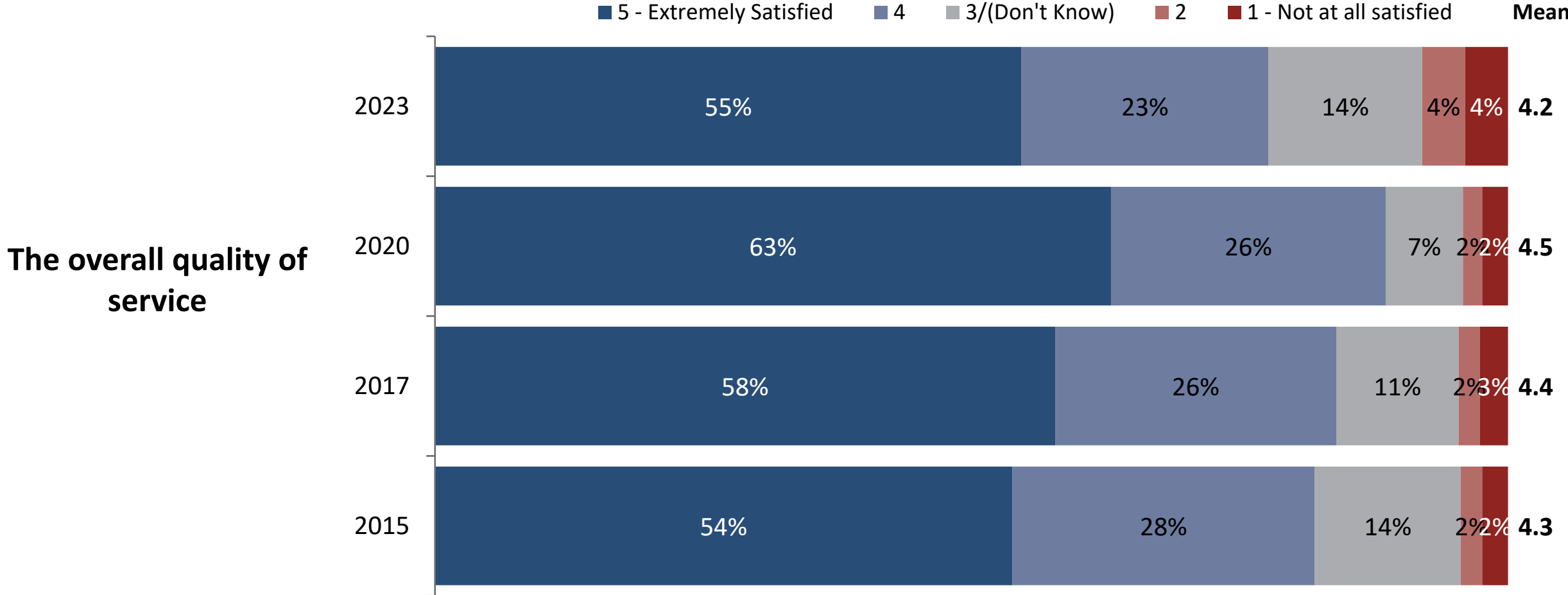


## Paratransit Ratings

# Satisfaction with Paratransit Service Over Time



Over half of SamTrans Paratransit customers are “extremely satisfied” with the overall quality of service. Although still largely positive, these overall marks have cooled slightly from their peak in 2020.

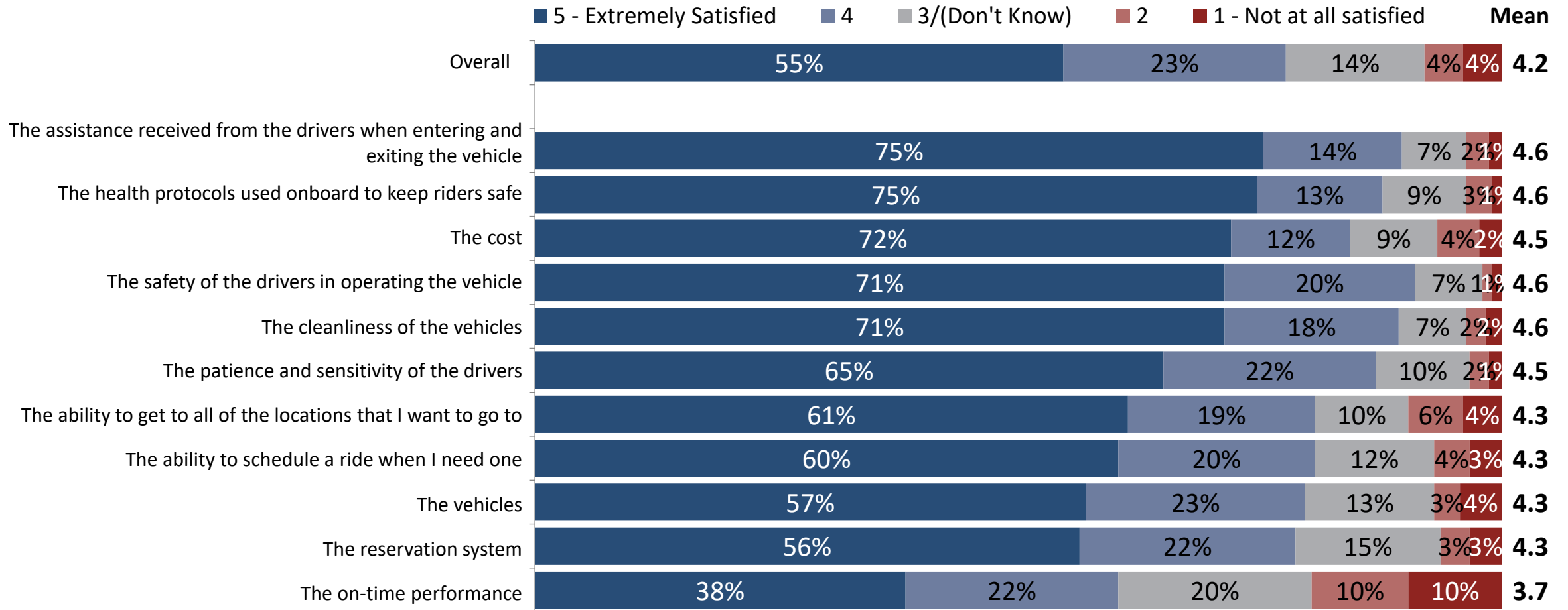


Q5. In general, how would you rate your satisfaction with [SERVICE] on each of the following, using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all satisfied” and 5 means “extremely satisfied.”



# Satisfaction with Paratransit Service

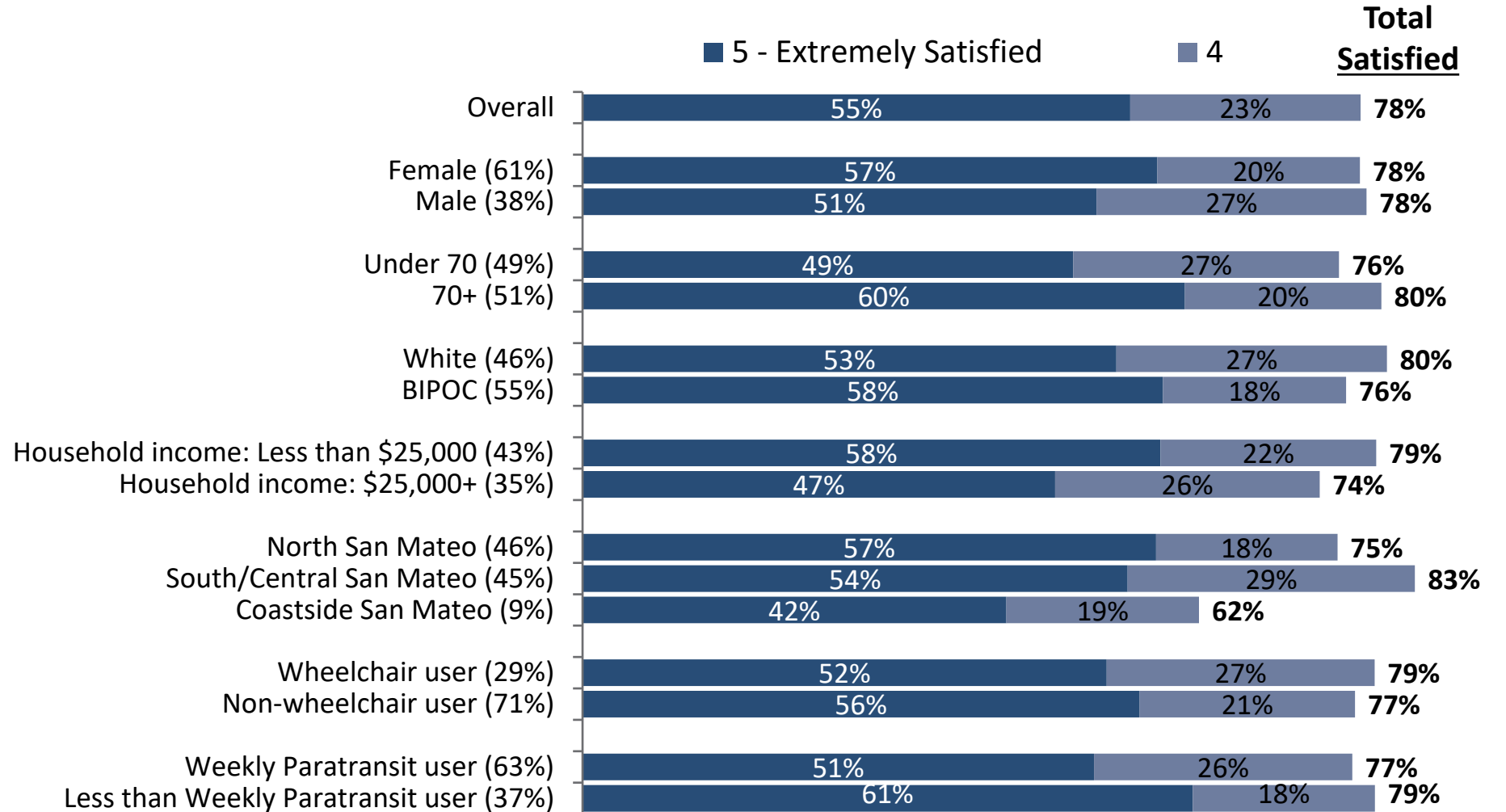
*Most customers are satisfied with SamTrans' Paratransit services, overall. Some cite on-time performance as a sticking point, but most are "extremely satisfied" with other aspects of driver performance, with relatively negligible dissatisfaction.*



Q5-Q16. In general, how would you rate your satisfaction with [SERVICE] on each of the following, using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all satisfied" and 5 means "extremely satisfied."

# Satisfaction by Subgroups

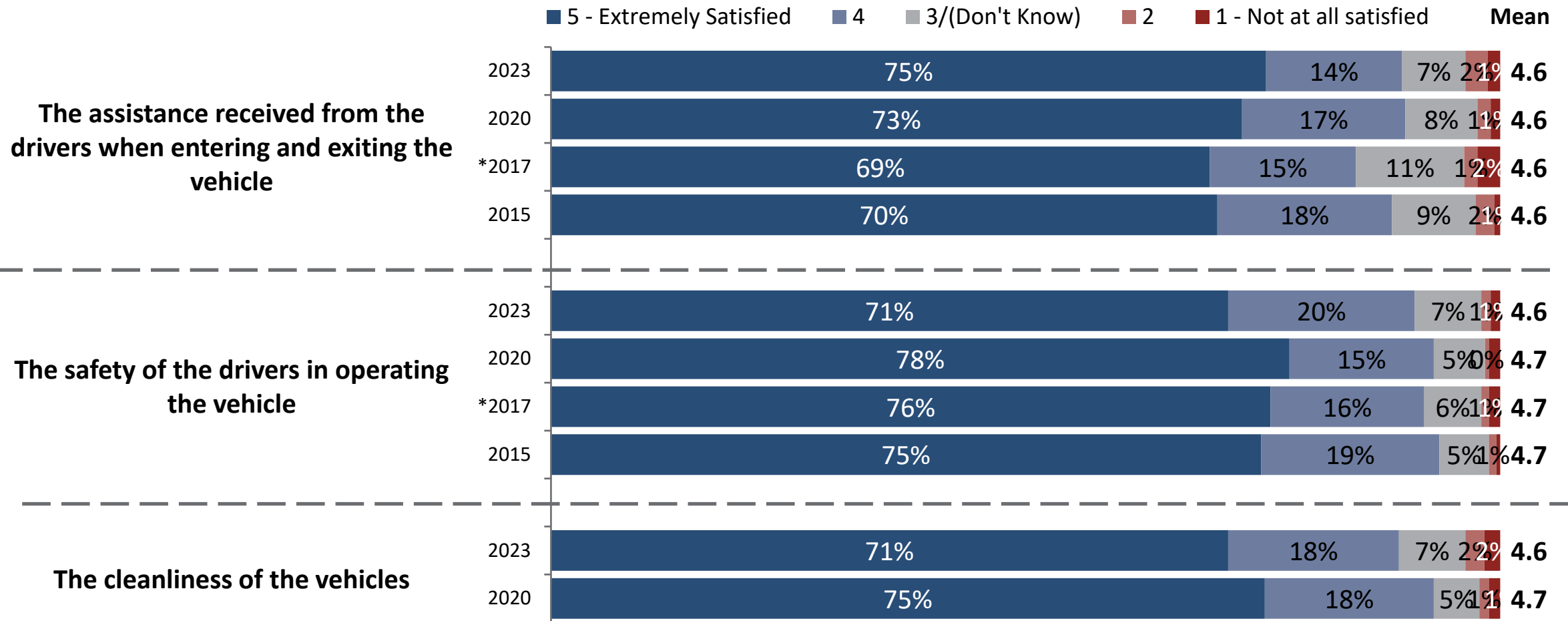
*SamTrans Paratransit customers across subgroups are satisfied with the overall quality of service.*



Q5. In general, how would you rate your satisfaction with [SERVICE] on each of the following, using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all satisfied” and 5 means “extremely satisfied.”

# Satisfaction with Paratransit Service

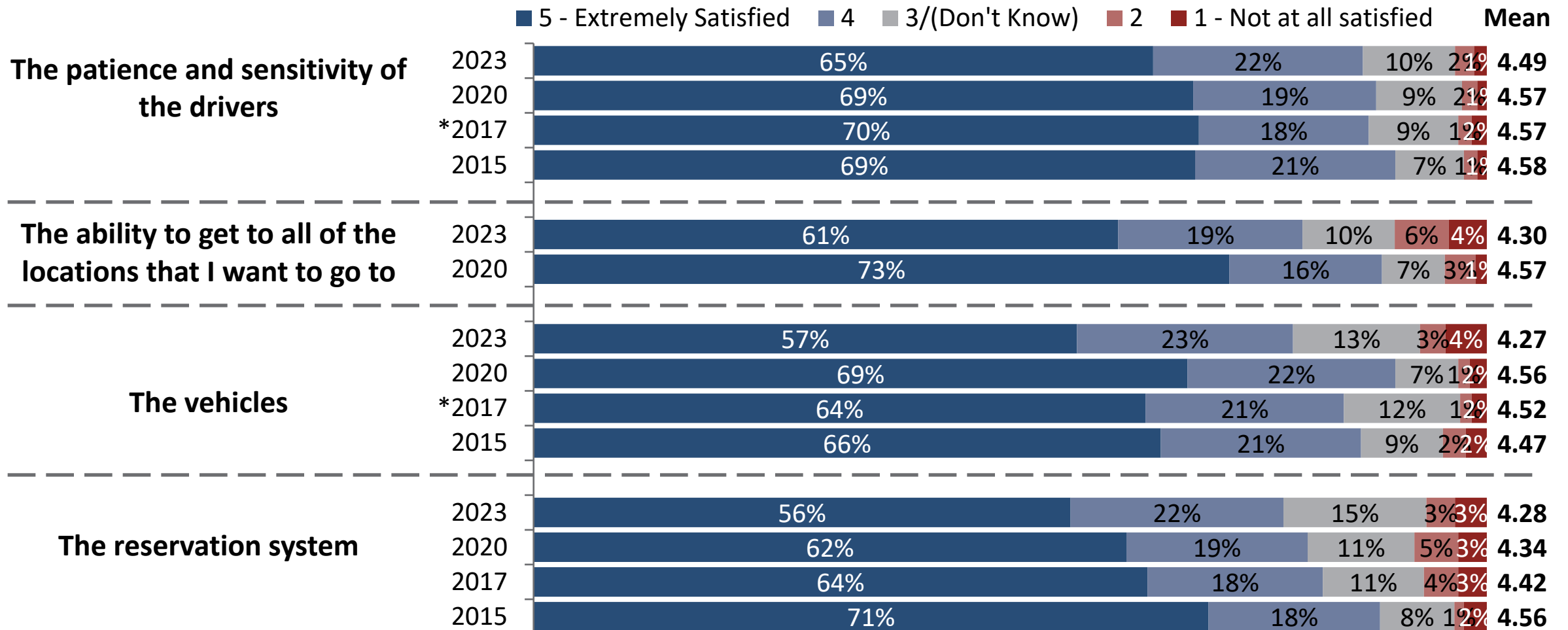
*Over seven-in-ten are extremely satisfied with the assistance received from drivers when entering and exiting the vehicle, the safety of the drivers, and the cleanliness of vehicles.*



\*In 2017, question asked specifically about the current trip.  
 Q5-Q16. In general, how would you rate your satisfaction with [SERVICE] on each of the following, using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all satisfied” and 5 means “extremely satisfied.”

# Satisfaction with Paratransit Service

While significant majorities remain satisfied with these services, overall marks have declined since their high point in 2020.



Q5-Q16. In general, how would you rate your satisfaction with [SERVICE] on each of the following, using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all satisfied" and 5 means "extremely satisfied."

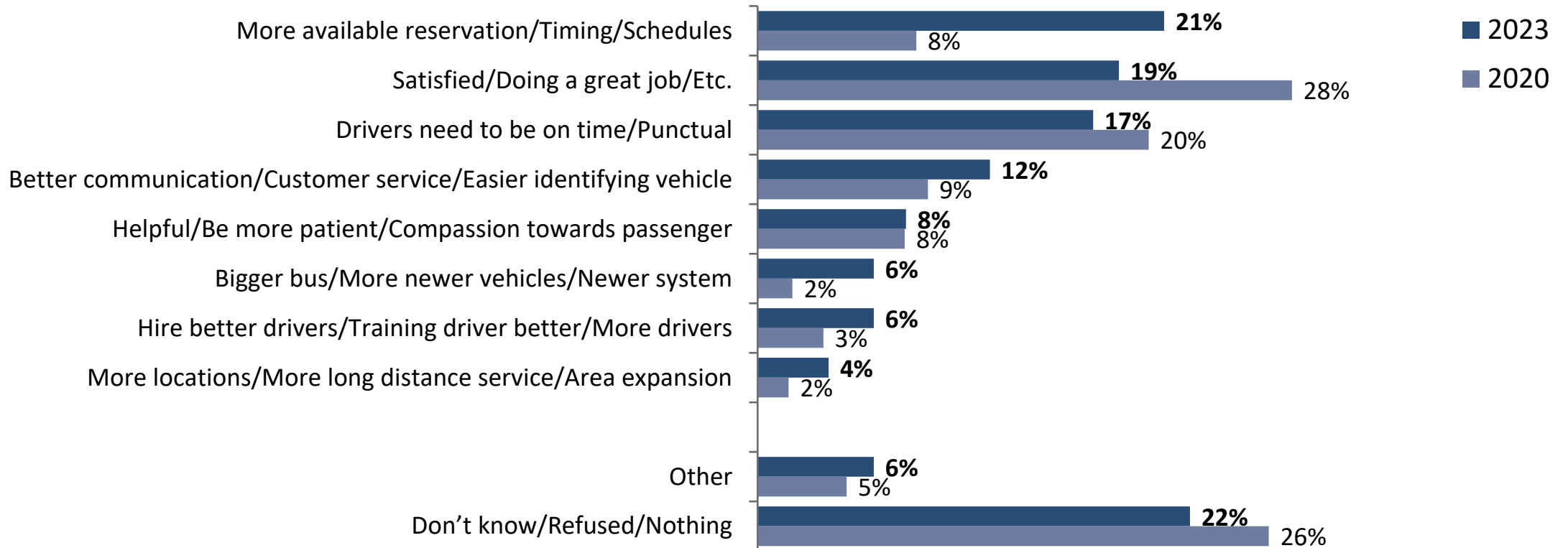
# Respondent Suggestions for Paratransit Service

*Top-of-mind suggestions for the service included more available reservations and schedules, increased punctuality, and better communication and customer service.*

*Note: Showing 2023 responses above 2%*

**Now, thinking about how you use [SERVICE] and your recent experiences with them do you have any suggestions for how [SERVICE] could serve you better?**

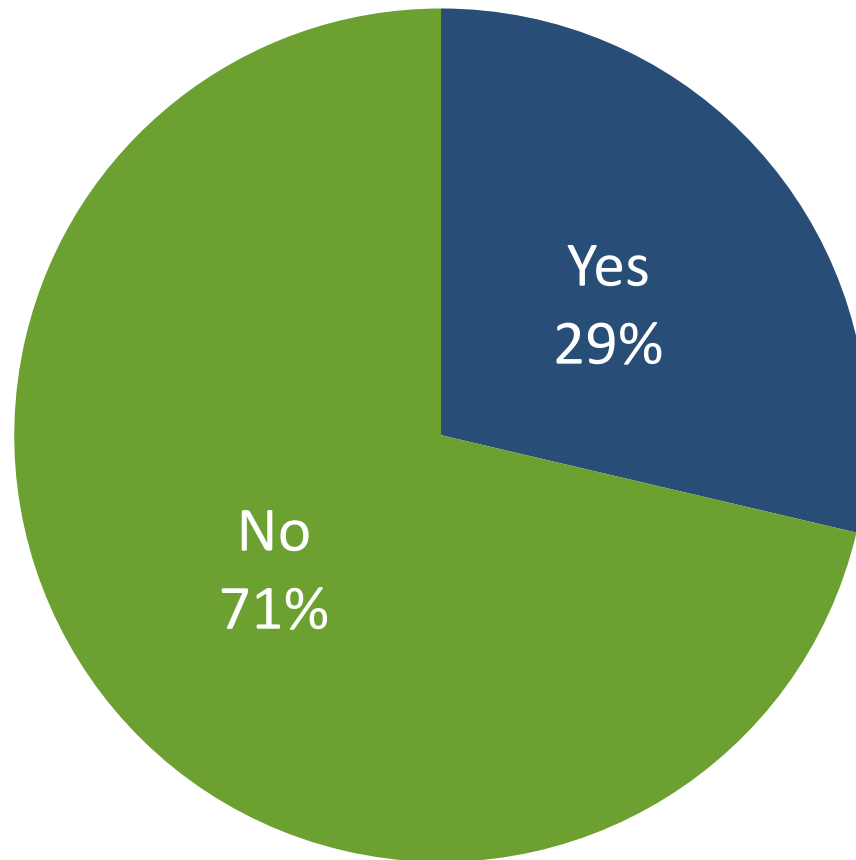
*Open-ended question, verbatim responses coded into categories shown below.*



# Wheelchair Usage

*Nearly three-in-ten customers use a wheelchair as a mobility aid while traveling with Paratransit.*

## Customer Wheelchair Usage



# Driver Ratings – Wheelchair Users

*Wheelchair users gave exceptionally positive ratings for drivers securing wheelchairs and operating wheelchair lifts.*

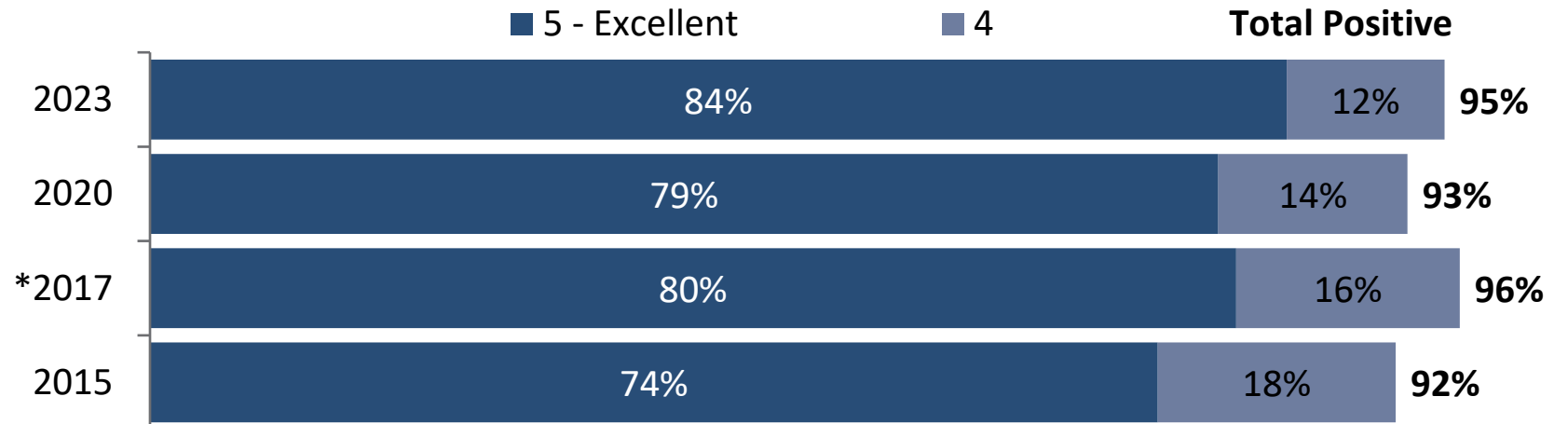
2023: n=86

2020: n=122

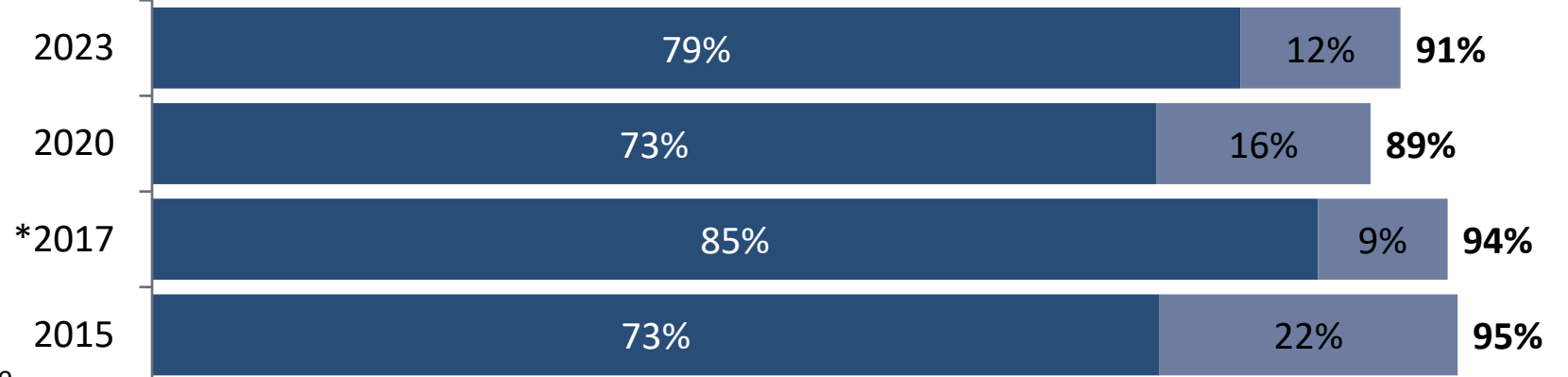
2017: n=85

2015: n=98

How would you rate the ability of the drivers on [SERVICE] in operating the wheelchair lift?



How would you rate the ability of the drivers on [SERVICE] in securing the wheelchair?



\*In 2017, question was not in relation to a specific service.

Q18-Q19. How would you rate the ability of the drivers on [SERVICE] in securing/operating the wheelchair, using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “poor” and 5 means “excellent.”

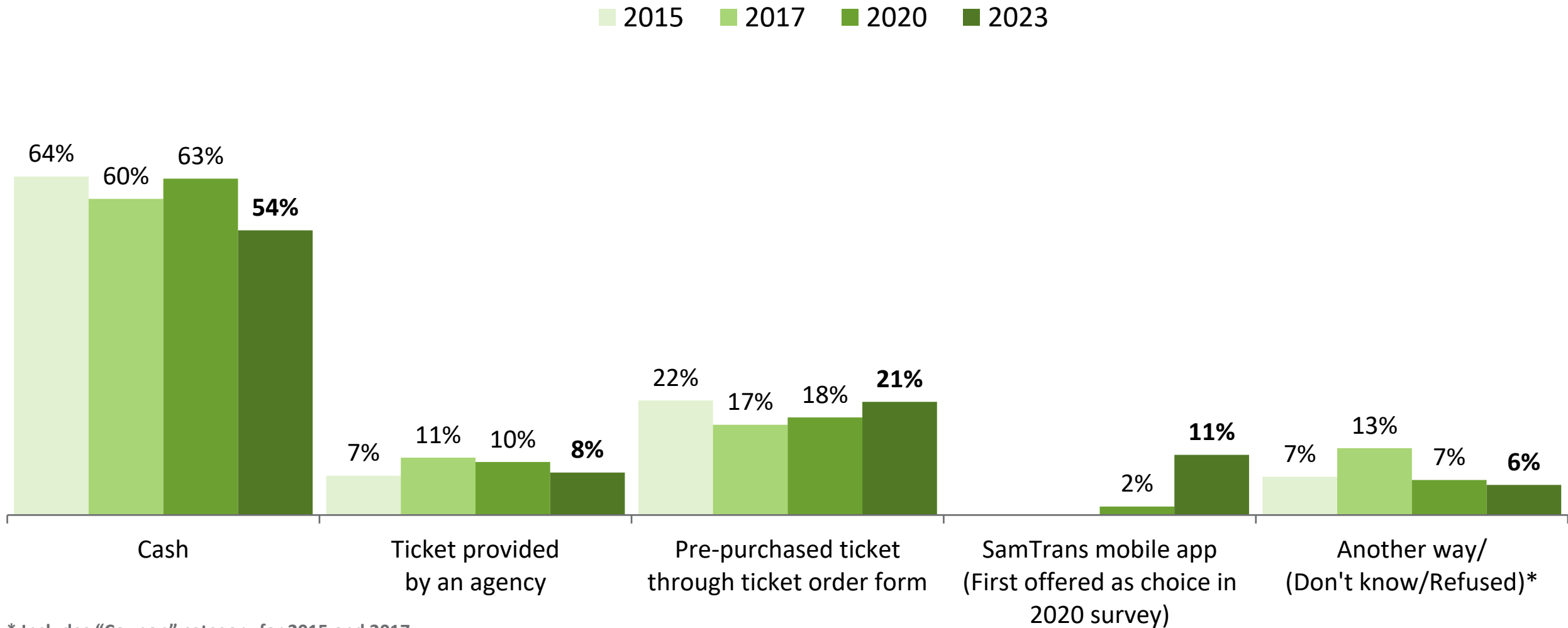


**Customer Contact and Certification**



# Paratransit Payment Type

*Cash remains the most common way customers pay for their fare when traveling on Paratransit, but the reported share of cash usage has fallen slightly while mobile app usage has grown in 2023.*



\* Includes "Coupon" category for 2015 and 2017

# Paratransit Information Source

*SamTrans customer service and the SamTrans website are the most-commonly-used information sources.*

Multiple Responses accepted, totals may add up to more than 100%	2015 %	2017 %	2020 %	2023 %
SamTrans customer service	14%	12%	16%	19%
SamTrans website	3%	7%	7%	16%
Reservationist or driver	7%	7%	13%	14%
Friend	22%	21%	10%	13%
Paratransit rider's guide	3%	5%	5%	11%
Social worker	12%	12%	9%	10%
*Call the service	-	2%	-	9%
Email from SamTrans	-	-	3%	8%
SamTrans mobile app	-	-	3%	7%
Senior center	6%	5%	7%	5%
By Mail	6%	-	-	4%
Paratransit coordinating council (PCC website)	-	-	-	3%
Facebook	-	-	-	1%
YouTube	-	-	0%	1%
Twitter or X	-	-	-	-
Instagram	-	-	1%	-
Other	18%	24%	25%	15%
Don't know/Refused	10%	11%	16%	7%

NOTE: Not all responses listed in survey were selected

\*In 2017, this punch was phrased as "Called office/service"

Q43. How do you typically get information regarding [SERVICE] paratransit service?

# Preferred Information Source

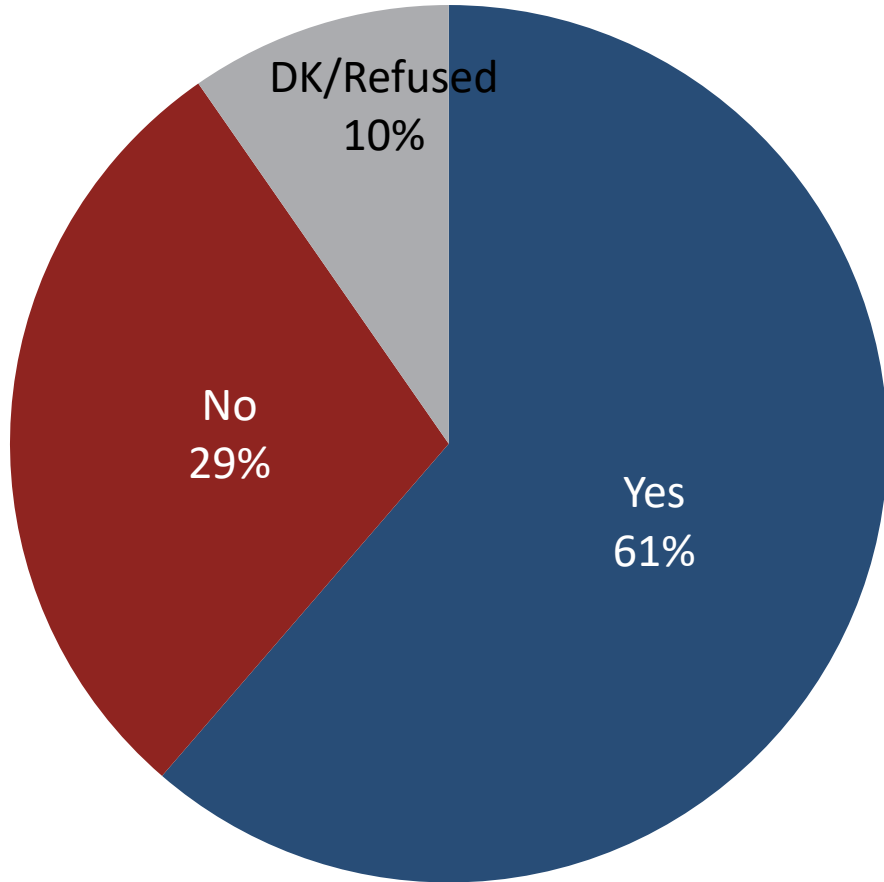
*Email is the most common way customers would prefer to receive information regarding the service.*

Multiple Responses accepted, totals may add up to more than 100%	2020 %	2023 %
Email from SamTrans	24%	30%
SamTrans website	9%	15%
SamTrans customer service	16%	13%
Reservationist or driver	14%	13%
SamTrans mobile app	7%	12%
Mail	-	11%
Paratransit rider's guide	8%	10%
Friend	7%	6%
Social worker	8%	5%
Phone call	-	5%
Text	3%	5%
Senior center	7%	3%
Facebook	3%	3%
Paratransit coordinating council (PCC website)	-	3%
YouTube	2%	2%
Email	-	2%
Instagram	3%	1%
Twitter or X	2%	0%
Snapchat	2%	-
Other	26%	5%
Don't know/Refused	14%	7%

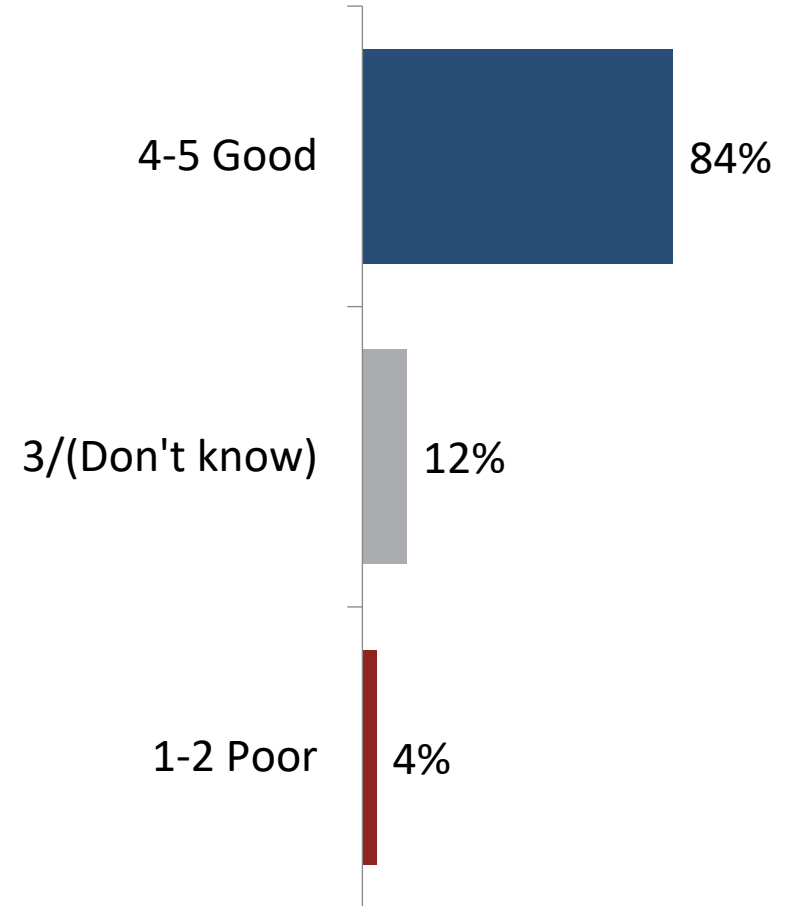
# Certification Process

Among customers who have been certified or recertified in the past 12 months, a large majority – over eight in ten – rated the certification process positively.

## Have you been (re)certified in the past 12 months?



## Certification Process Rating



Q21. Have you been certified or recertified with [SERVICE] services in the past 12 months?  
Q22. How would you rate the overall certification process?



## Same-Day Paratransit Service

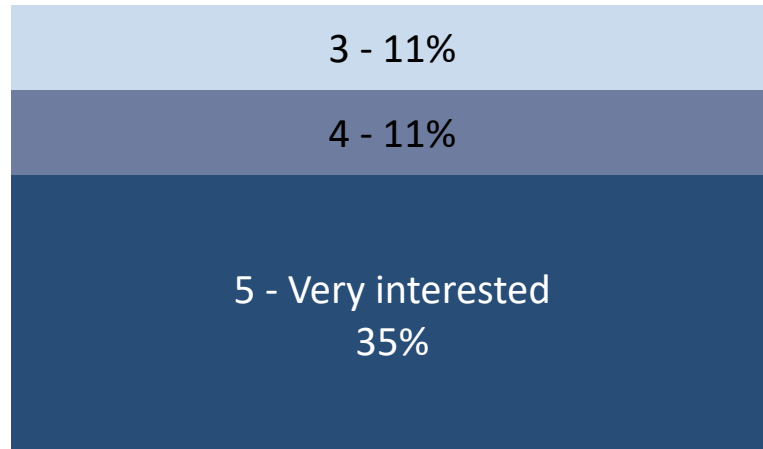
# Interest in a Same-Day Paratransit Service

*Slightly over half of customers indicated at least some interest in the same-day paratransit service.*

In addition to its existing paratransit service, SamTrans is considering offering a *same-day* paratransit service. With this service, existing Redi-Wheels customers would be able to request a same-day ride, which would come within 90 minutes of the requested time. If a driver is not available for the trip, customers would be informed immediately in order to make alternative travel arrangements. The service would cost \$10 per ride and would be limited to short trips within cities or between nearby cities only. This service would be available between 9:30 am – 3:00 pm.

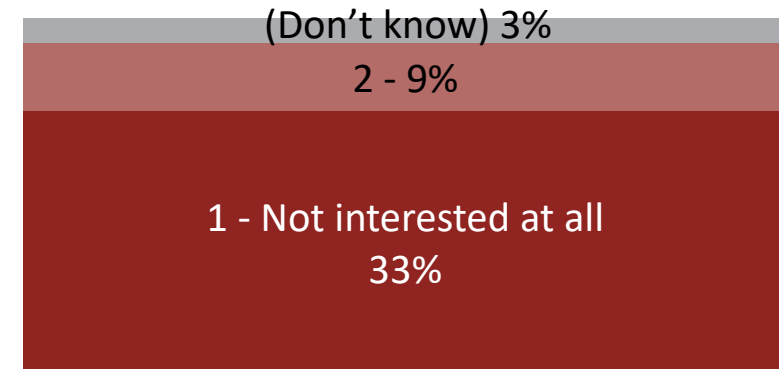
## Potential Interest

**56%**



## Total Low/No Interest

**44%**

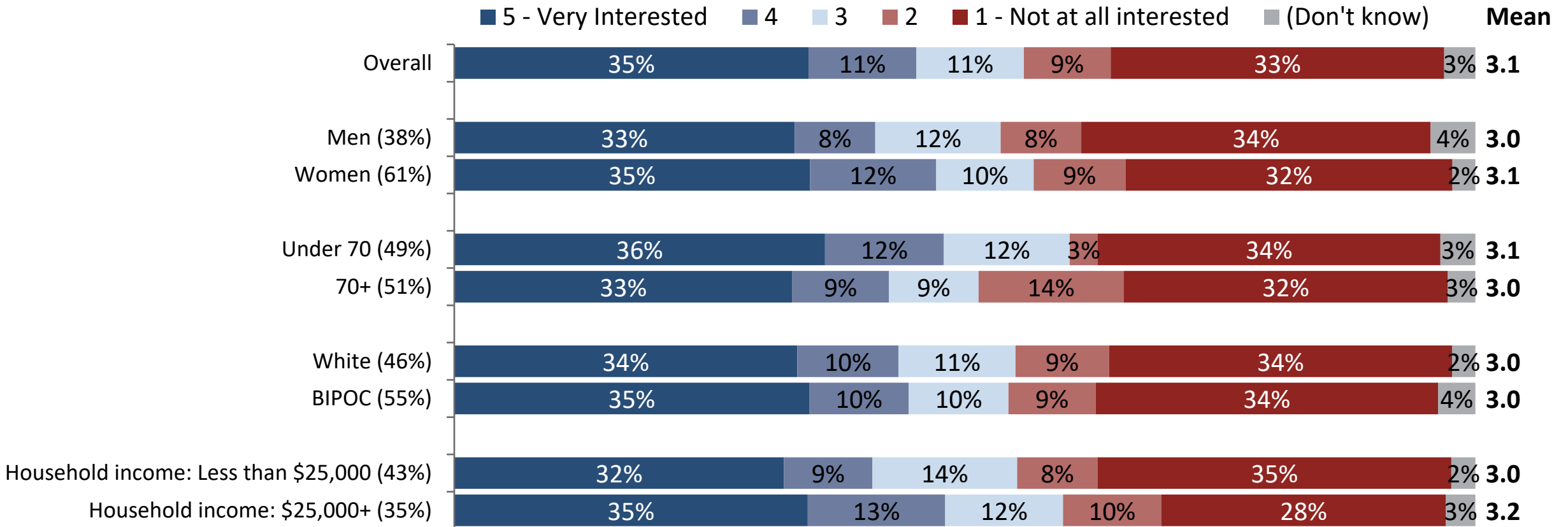


Q29. Having heard this description, how interested would you be in using this kind of service, using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all interested, and 5 is very interested?

# Interest in a Same-Day Paratransit Service

*Interest in the same-day service holds relatively stable across subgroups.*

In addition to its existing paratransit service, SamTrans is considering offering a *same-day* paratransit service. With this service, existing Redi-Wheels customers would be able to request a same-day ride, which would come within 90 minutes of the requested time. If a driver is not available for the trip, customers would be informed immediately in order to make alternative travel arrangements. The service would cost \$10 per ride and would be limited to short trips within cities or between nearby cities only. This service would be available between 9:30 am – 3:00 pm.

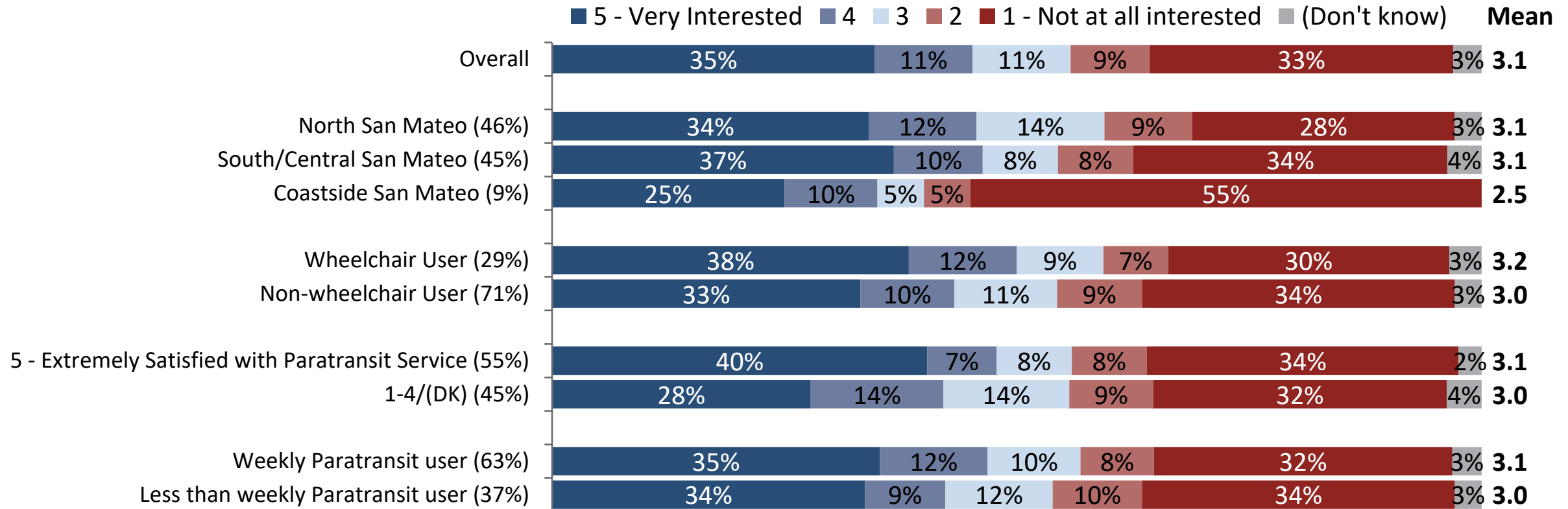


Q29. Having heard this description, how interested would you be in using this kind of service, using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all interested, and 5 is very interested?

# Interest in a Same-Day Paratransit Service

*Interest in the same-day service is highest among customers who live in North San Mateo, South/Central San Mateo and who are extremely satisfied with SamTrans paratransit service.*

In addition to its existing paratransit service, SamTrans is considering offering a *same-day* paratransit service. With this service, existing Redi-Wheels customers would be able to request a same-day ride, which would come within 90 minutes of the requested time. If a driver is not available for the trip, customers would be informed immediately in order to make alternative travel arrangements. The service would cost \$10 per ride and would be limited to short trips within cities or between nearby cities only. This service would be available between 9:30 am – 3:00 pm.

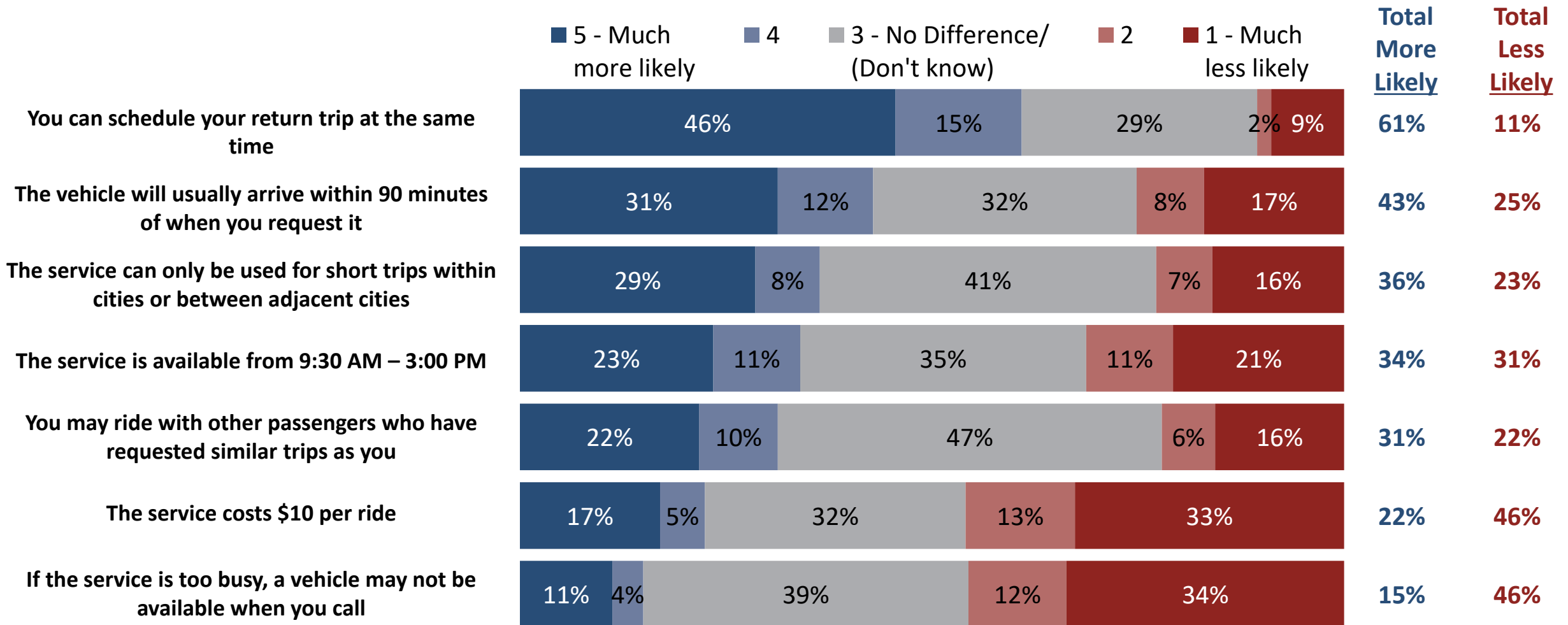


Q29. Having heard this description, how interested would you be in using this kind of service, using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all interested, and 5 is very interested?



# Features of a Same-Day Paratransit Service

*The ability to schedule a return trip at the same time is the highest-rated feature of the same-day service, with over half of customers stating it would make them more likely to ride. Cost and availability present the highest barriers.*



Q33. – Q39. I would like to read you each feature of the same-day paratransit service I just described. For each, please tell me if that feature would make you more likely or less likely to use the service, or if it would make no difference one way or another.

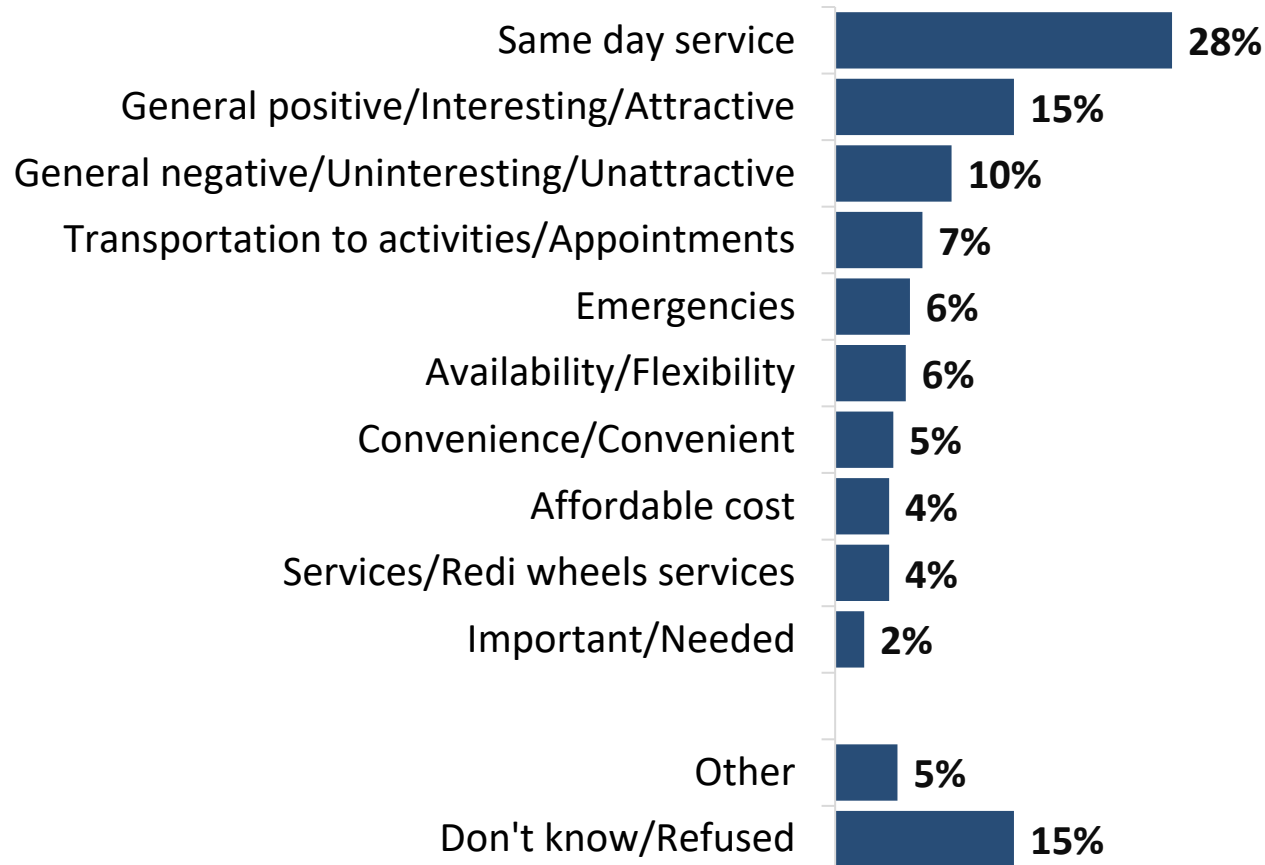
# Elements of a Same-Day Paratransit Service

*The option for same-day service is the most attractive top-of-mind element to over a quarter of customers.*

*Note: Showing 2023 responses above 2%*

**What about the same-day paratransit service I just described is the most interesting or attractive to you?**

*Open-ended question, verbatim responses coded into categories shown below.*

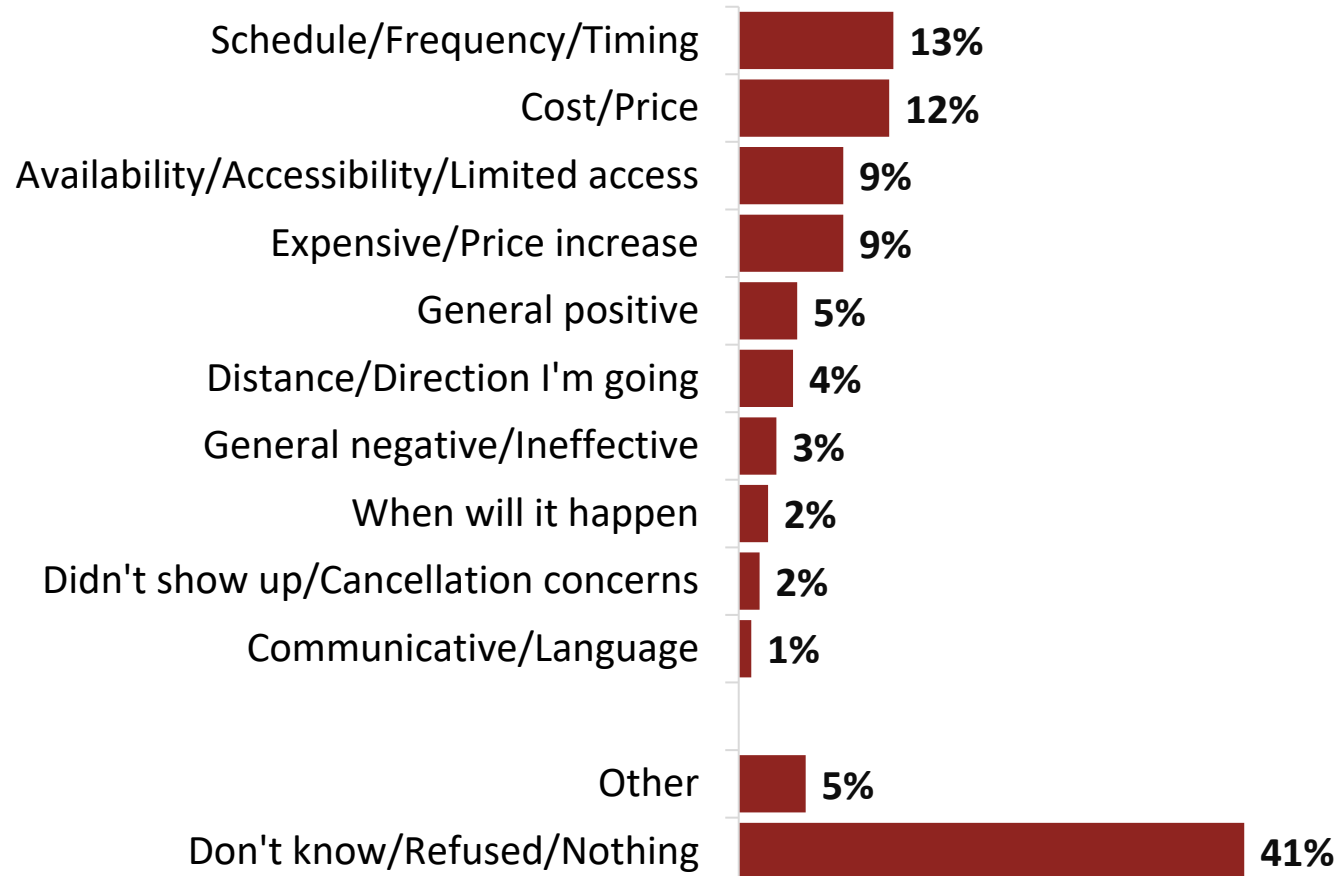


# Elements of a Same-Day Paratransit Service

*While some customers noted questions or concerns about schedule and cost, a large share did not state any concerns.*

## What questions or concerns do you have about the same-day paratransit service I just described?

*Open-ended question, verbatim responses coded into categories shown below.*

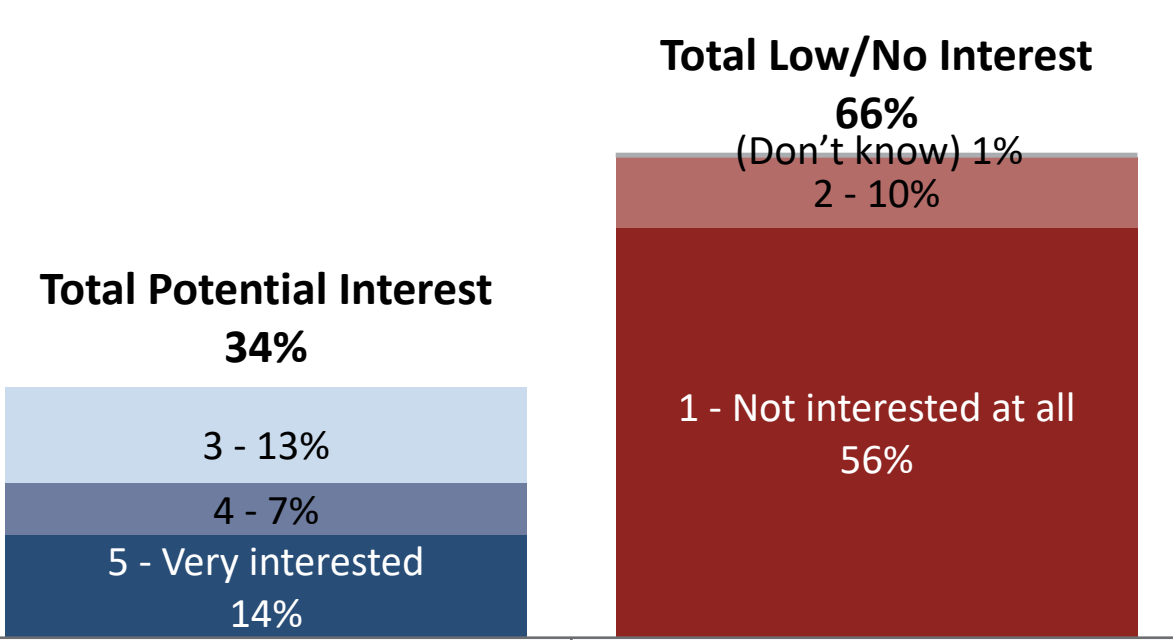
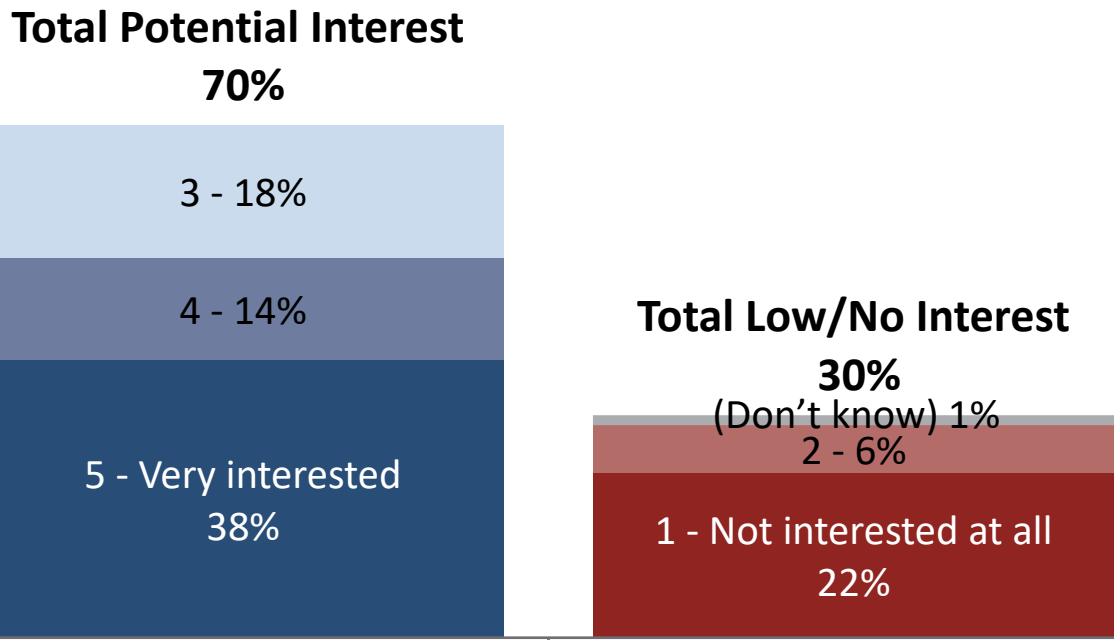


# Interest After Additional Information

*Cost sensitivity is clear among customers: when the same-day service was described as a cheaper alternative to taxi or rideshares, interest increased dramatically. Additionally, when the option of more reliability was offered for an increased price, interest dropped drastically.*

**While this fare is more than the cost of a regular scheduled paratransit trip, it is generally less than taking a taxi, Lyft, or Uber.**

**If there is no driver or vehicle available, it may not be possible to arrange a same-day paratransit trip. If the fare for same-day service was \$20 per trip instead of \$10, but it was more likely that there would be a driver and vehicle available, how interested would you be in using this service?**



Q40. & Q41. Having heard this, how interested would you be in using this same-day service, using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all interested, and 5 is very interested?

# Interest After Info by Subgroups

*The share of those “very interested” in same-day service declines across subgroups after additional information.*

	Initial % Very Interested (5)	% Very Interested After Cost (5)	Shift in % Very Interested (5)
Overall	35%	14%	<b>-21</b>
Men (38%)	33%	11%	<b>-22</b>
Women (61%)	35%	16%	<b>-19</b>
Under 70 (49%)	36%	15%	<b>-21</b>
70+ (51%)	33%	13%	<b>-20</b>
White (46%)	34%	11%	<b>-23</b>
BIPOC (55%)	35%	17%	<b>-18</b>
Household income: Less than \$25,000 (43%)	32%	13%	<b>-20</b>
Household income: \$25,000+ (35%)	35%	13%	<b>-21</b>
Wheelchair User (29%)	38%	17%	<b>-21</b>
Non-wheelchair User (71%)	33%	13%	<b>-21</b>
Weekly Paratransit user (63%)	35%	14%	<b>-21</b>
Less than weekly Paratransit user (37%)	34%	13%	<b>-20</b>

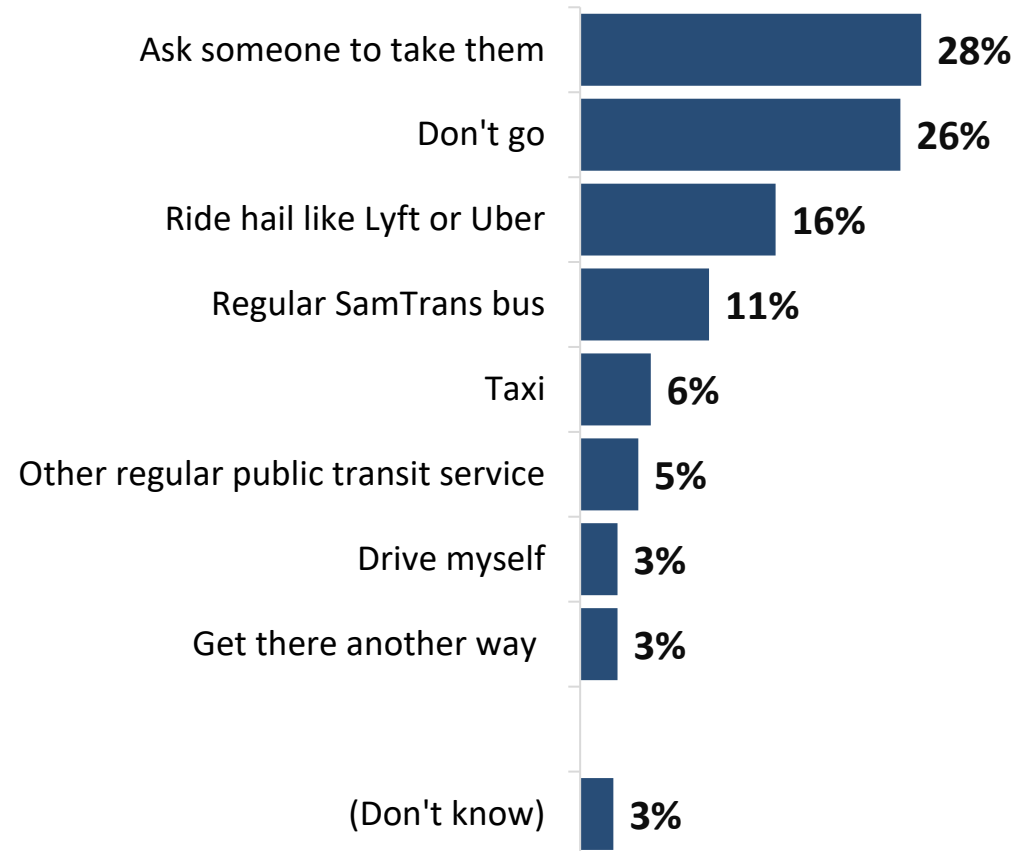
Q29. & Q41. Having heard this, how interested would you be in using this same-day service, using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all interested, and 5 is very interested?

# Current Same-Day Travel Habits

*Currently, if customers needed to take a trip but hadn't scheduled service ahead of time, about one quarter would ask someone to take them, while another quarter would not make the trip.*

**If you needed to take a trip today and had not scheduled ahead of time for Redi-Wheels service, how would you take that trip?**

*Multiple responses accepted; percentages may not add up to 100%.*



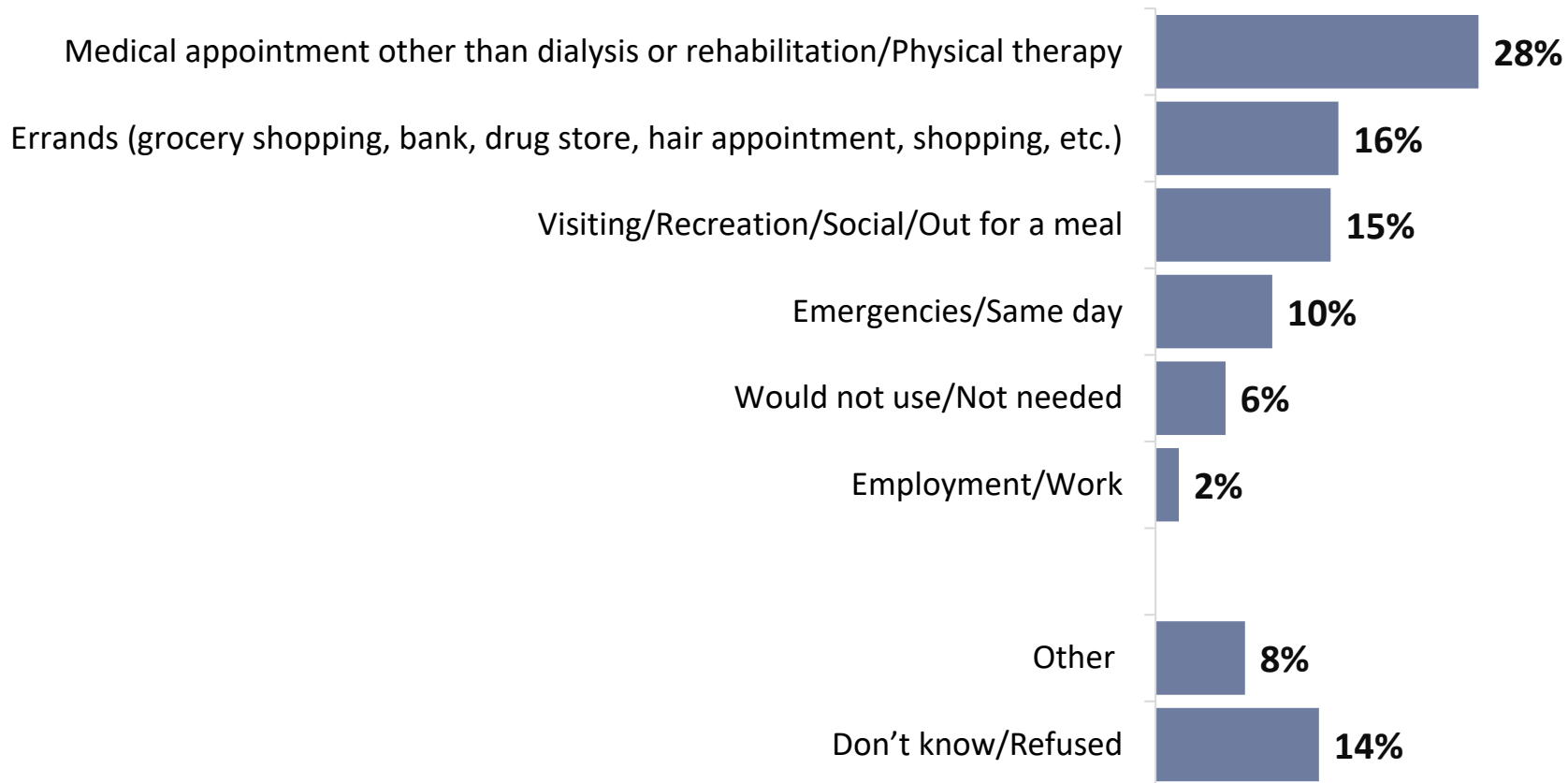
# Elements of a Same-Day Paratransit Service

*Many respondents would potentially use the same-day service to travel to medical appointments, followed by ad hoc trips such as running errands, making social engagements, and urgent trips if needed.*

*Note: Showing responses above 2%*

## What types of trips do you think you might take using the same-day paratransit service I just described?

*Open-ended question, verbatim responses coded into categories shown below.*



# Conclusions

- ▶ Customers are largely satisfied with SamTrans' existing paratransit service, although some are concerned with on-time performance.
- ▶ Customers appreciated the general concept of same-day service and considered transportation to appointments, emergencies, flexibility, and general convenience to be potential draws for the service.
- ▶ While there is tangible demand for same-day service, it is not universal, and customers heavily value low costs and high reliability of the current service. Cost sensitivity and concerns around reliability are significant deterrents to same-day service.
- ▶ Despite these concerns, there is a discernible interest, and customers might opt for same-day service when unable to plan in advance.





**Sara LaBatt**

**Sara@EMCresearch.com**

**510.550.8924**

**Brian Vines**

**brian@EMCresearch.com**

**206.204.8034**