

2025

Pace Fixed Route

Customer Satisfaction Study



February 20, 2026



In 2025, Pace and the Regional Transportation Authority collaborated on a customer satisfaction study. This report presents the major results of that survey effort.

Methodology

The survey was concurrent to surveying of Metra and Chicago Transit Authority customers. It used a large, mixed-mode sample and rigorous weighting procedures. A total of 5,084 completed surveys were collected. Participants were recruited through email invitations, on-board paper surveys distributed by trained field staff, and postcards with QR codes placed on buses.

The survey was offered in English, Spanish, Chinese, Polish, and Arabic. Data was collected between January 17–April 17, 2025.

Executive Summary

The Pace Customer Satisfaction Study is part of a regionally coordinated effort led by the RTA to assess rider experience across Pace, CTA, and Metra. Conducted every few years using comparable survey instruments, the study allows Pace to track performance over time, identify strengths and weaknesses, and align improvements with rider priorities. The 2025 Pace Customer Satisfaction Study confirms that overall rider satisfaction with Pace bus service remains high and stable, even as travel behavior and rider expectations continue to evolve following the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2025, 84% of riders reported being satisfied with Pace, slightly up from the 83% reported in 2022. This consistency indicates that Pace has successfully maintained service quality to keep the customers satisfied during a period of ridership recovery and operational change.

Traditional strengths—such as bus operator courtesy, value for fare paid, and personal security—continue to receive high ratings. At the same time, information accuracy, particularly real-time arrival information, has emerged as a significant influential driver of overall satisfaction. These findings underscore the importance of reliability, communication, and predictability in today's rider experience.

This report focuses on satisfaction outcomes, trends since 2022, and the implications for improvement opportunities.

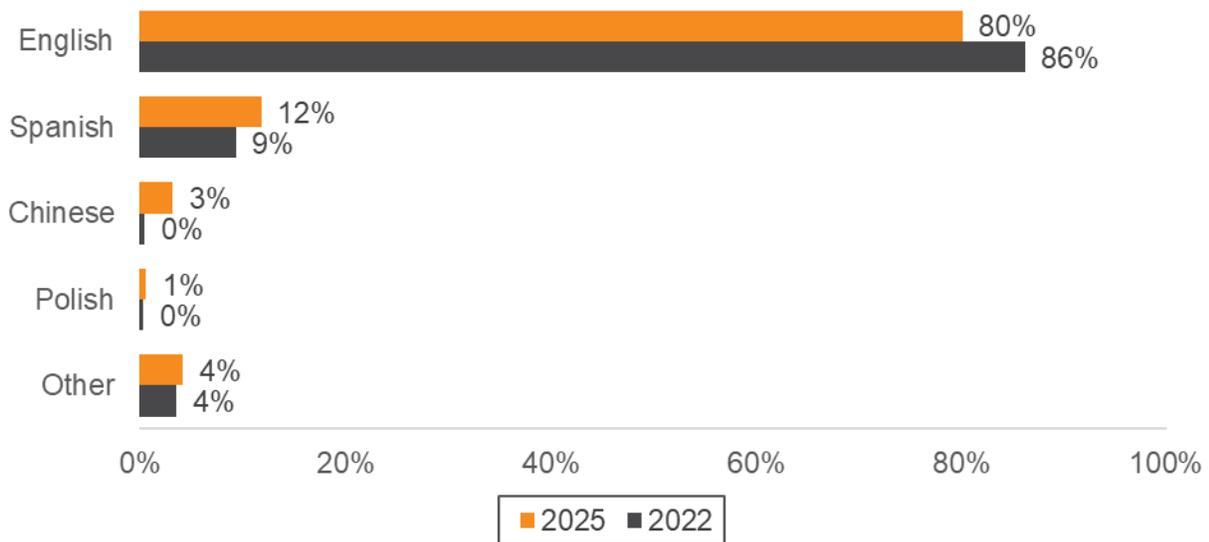
Rider Characteristics

Consistent with 2022 survey, 2025 respondents are very transit-dependent, heavy users, and long-term riders. The conventional wisdom that many Pace riders are transit dependent holds true in these data. Notably, only 24% of Pace riders have access to a car at home, while 80% of Metra riders do. The most common riding frequency remained 5 days per week. In both 2025 and 2022, 28% to 29% of riders reported riding for more than 10 years, making it the most common choice in the duration category. Work trips continue to be the predominant reason for using Pace.

Latino riders increased by 7 percentage points, from 20% to 27%. The share of African American riders declined from 46% to 40%. Compared to 2022, the share of riders aged 55 and older decreased 10 percentage points from 40% to 30%. Meanwhile, those aged 25 to 34 increased from 14% to 20%. The trend towards younger riders bodes well for long-term ridership growth. The share of newer riders (less than 1 year) increased from 12% in 2022 to 15% in 2025. Riders with 1–2 years of experience also increased by 5 percentage points (from 13% to 18%).

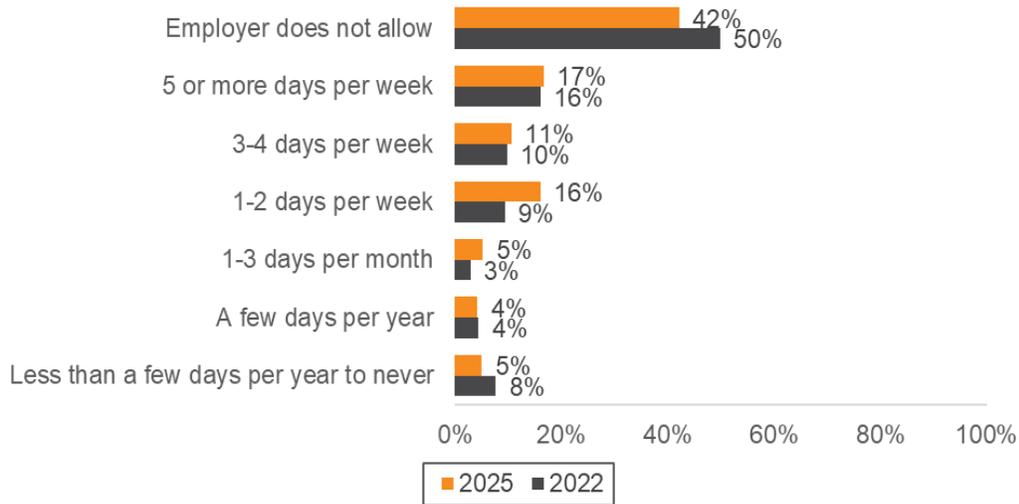
Riders: Language spoken at home

The share of riders reporting English as their primary language declined by 6%, from 86% in 2022 to 80% in 2025. The proportion of riders who speak Spanish at home rose from 9% to 12%.



Riders: Telecommute Frequency Among Full Time Employees

Among riders who are employed full-time, more indicated that their employer allows telecommuting—which probably speaks to a broader customer base in 2025 rather than a greater willingness by employers to allow telecommuting as we get further away from the pandemic. In 2025, fewer full-time Pace riders reported that their employer does not allow telecommuting, with 42% saying so compared to 50% in 2022. More riders reported telecommuting one to two days per week in 2025, increasing from 9 to 16%, and three to four days per week, rising slightly from 10 to 11%.

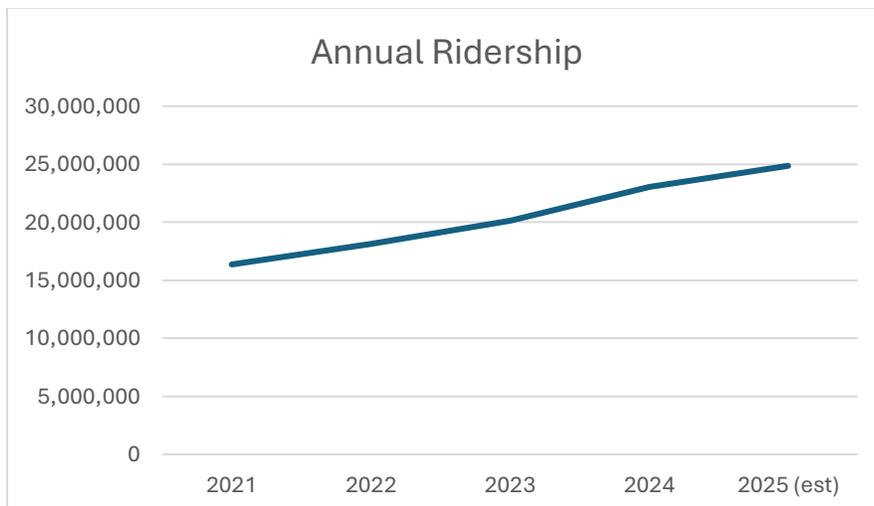


Overall satisfaction

Fully 84% of the 2025 study respondents are satisfied with Pace overall, which represents a slight increase in overall satisfaction from 2022 survey. In comparison to regional peers, Pace customer satisfaction stands consistently high, and is the only one that scored a higher rating than 2022.

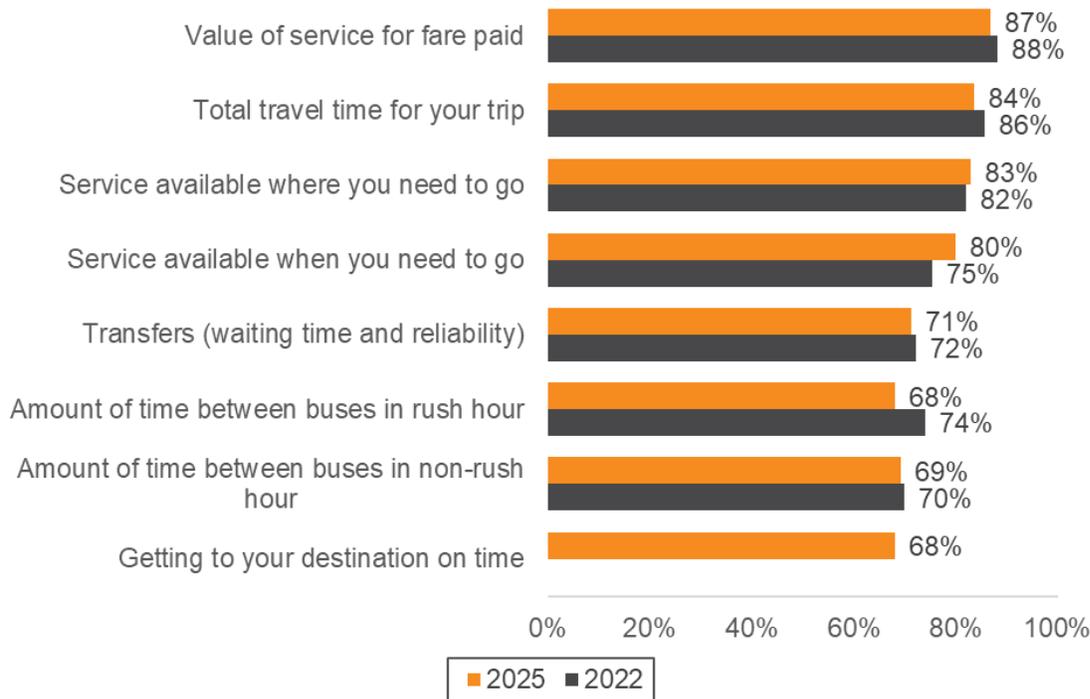
Regional Service Boards Customer Satisfaction				
	2013	2016	2022	2025
Pace	87%	88%	83%	84%
CTA	77%	85%	75%	70%
Metra	75%	83%	92%	91%
Combined	77%	85%	78%	73%

Riders of Chicagoland transit are not as satisfied with their service boards as they were pre-COVID. Second, Pace is the only service board whose riders are more satisfied than three years ago. That satisfaction with Pace service is corroborated by the increased ridership on Pace. Ridership has grown more than 10% per year since COVID.



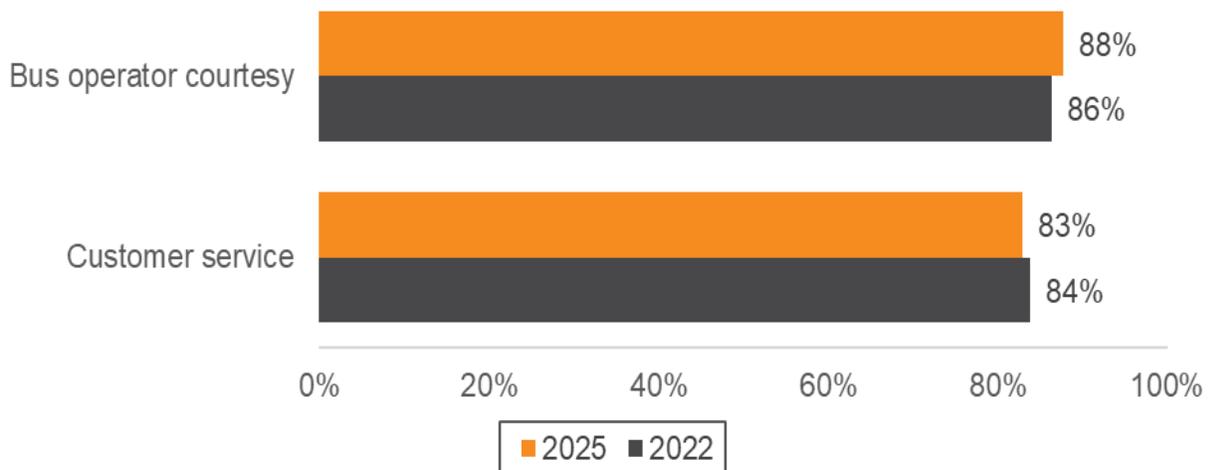
Satisfaction with Service Delivery

Pace riders in 2025 continued to report high satisfaction across key service delivery attributes, with most ratings remaining stable compared to 2022. Time-related measures showed small shifts: satisfaction with total travel time declined slightly from 86% to 84%, and getting to destinations on time held steady at 68%. Ratings for wait times between buses dipped modestly in rush hour (68%, down 6 percentage points) and remained stable in non-rush periods (69%, down 1 percentage point). Satisfaction with transfers stayed essentially flat at 71%, compared to 72% in 2022.



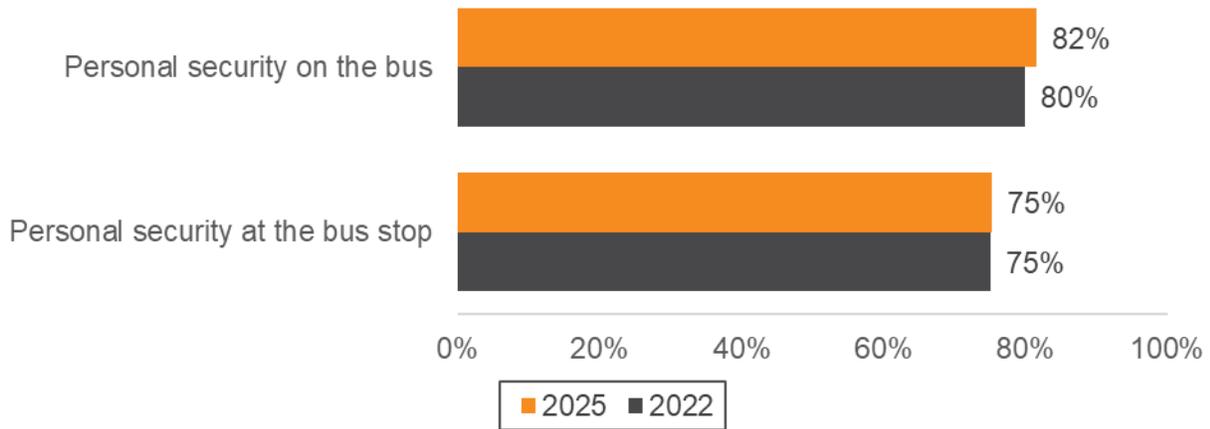
Satisfaction with Employee Performance

Employee service performance continues to have high rating. Satisfaction with bus operator courtesy rose slightly between 2022 and 2025, increasing 2 percentage points from 86% to 88%. Meanwhile, satisfaction with customer service remained relatively stable.



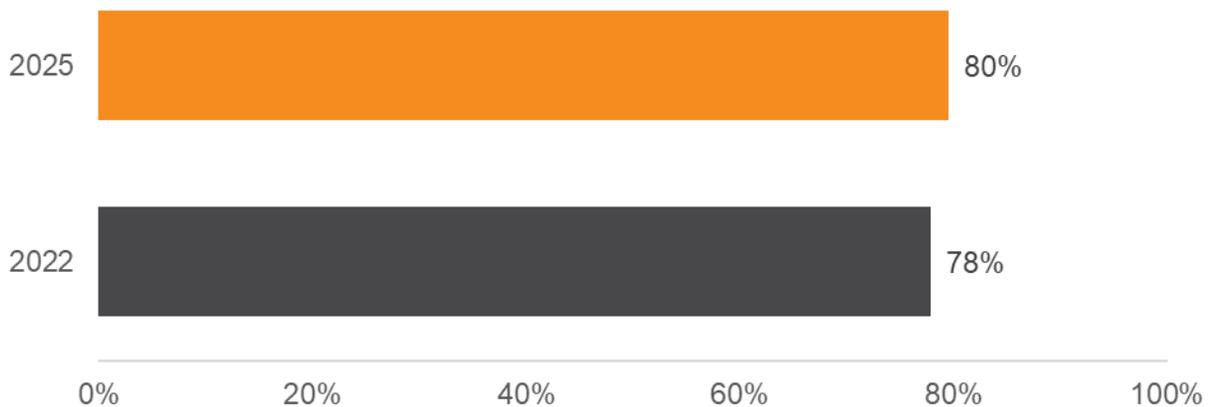
Satisfaction with Personal Security

Security of the Chicagoland transit system has been one of the hottest topics in the recent three-years-long discussion on transit reform and funding. Satisfaction with personal security remained high among Pace riders in 2025. Eighty-two percent of riders reported being satisfied with their security on the bus, a 2-percentage point increase from 80% in 2022. Satisfaction with personal security at the bus stop remained unchanged at 75%.



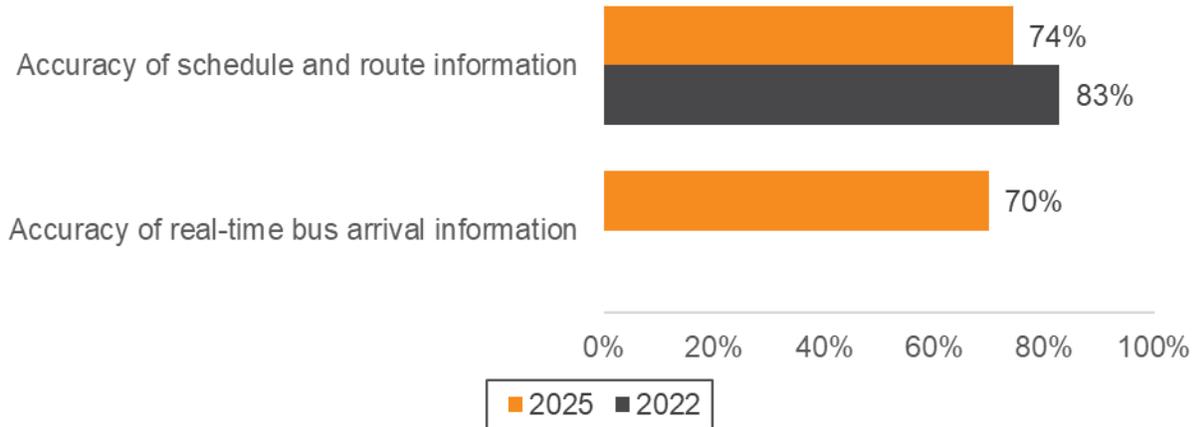
Satisfaction with Cleanliness of Bus Interior

Cleanliness of the system was another topic which garnered plenty of attention in the transit reform discussion. On Pace, satisfaction with cleanliness improved slightly from 78% in 2022 to 80% in 2025.



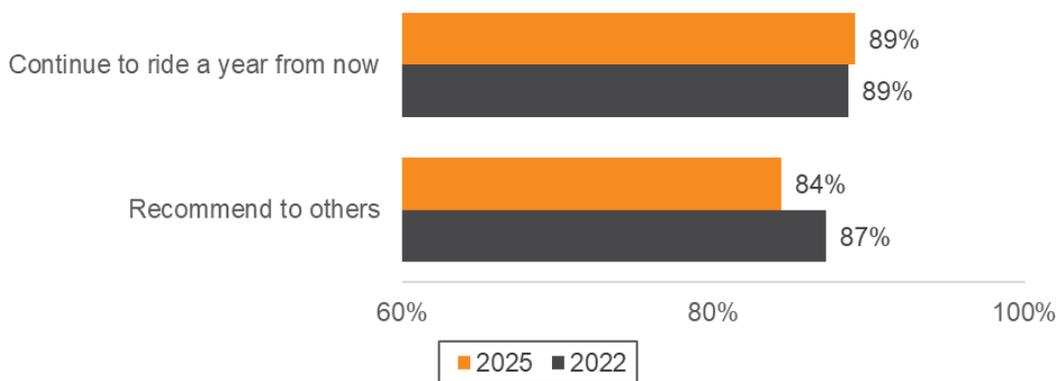
Satisfaction with Bus Information

Between 2022 and 2025, rider satisfaction with the accuracy of schedule and route information dropped by 9 percentage points, falling from 83% to 74%. In 2022 we asked separate questions about web-based bus tracker (which had 78% satisfaction) and the text messaging service (which had 75% satisfaction). In 2025, the survey introduced a new attribute about the accuracy of real-time bus and train arrival information in all its forms, and 70% reported being satisfied.



Customer Loyalty

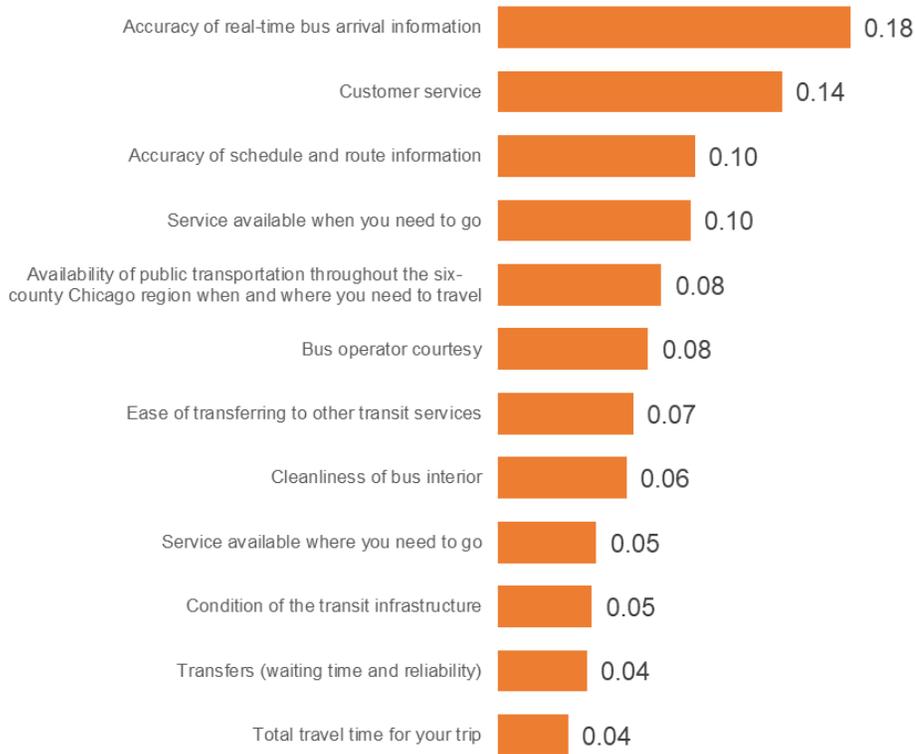
The percentage of riders who said they were likely to continue riding Pace a year from now remained steady at 89% in both 2022 and 2025. That bodes well for customer retention and ridership growth over time. However, the share who said they would recommend Pace to others declined slightly, dropping from 87% in 2022 to 84% in 2025.



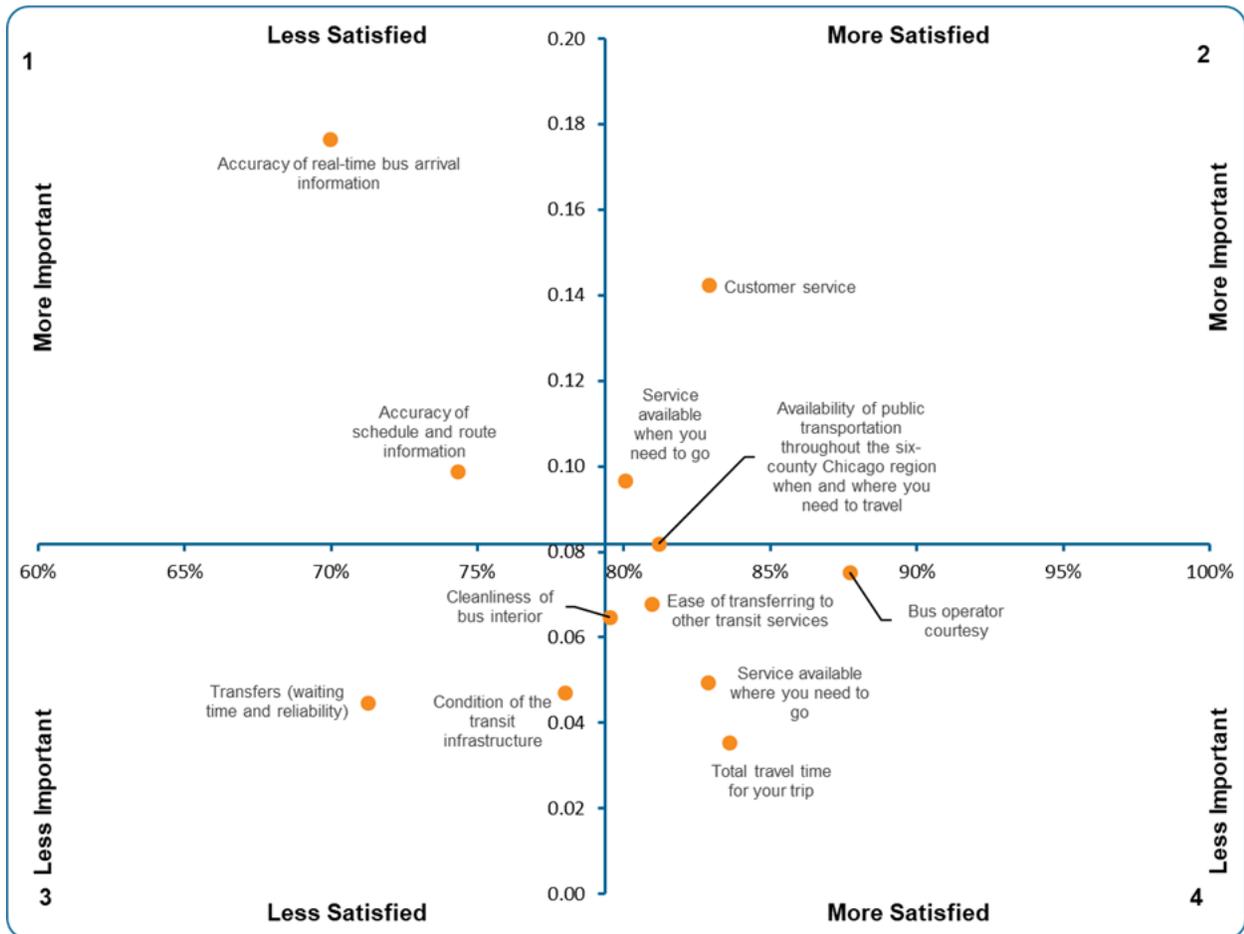
Relative Importance of Attributes

As part of gauging their satisfaction, we also asked riders which elements of Pace service were most important to them. You can see those ranked below. In both 2022 and 2025, customer service remained a top contributor, underscoring the continued importance of positive rider-staff interactions. However, in 2025, the accuracy of real-time bus arrival information emerged as the most influential factor. In the age of ridehail services and

digital countdown signage at every train station, customers expect that information and expect it to be accurate. Overall, these shifts suggest that riders in 2025 are increasingly focused on core operational elements, particularly reliability and access to real-time information, when evaluating their experience with Pace.



This quadrant chart maps the derived importance and satisfaction of the seventeen service attributes. Attributes located in the top-right quadrant are both highly important to riders and rated above average in satisfaction. Those include customer service and service availability when needed. Pace is performing well in key areas that riders value most and maintaining strong performance. The top-left quadrant contains attributes that are important to riders but have satisfaction levels below the mean. In 2025, only two attributes fall into this category: the accuracy of real-time bus arrival information and the accuracy of schedule and route information. Improving these areas presents an opportunity for Pace to enhance overall satisfaction by addressing top-priority concerns.



Conclusions

Overall, Pace’s riders are very satisfied. The overall scores here are objectively positive:

- 84% are satisfied with Pace’s service overall.
- 89% are likely to continue to ride Pace.
- Pace customers are satisfied with the most important attribute--customer service.

Work is the main trip purpose (63% of riders rely on Pace to commute between home and work), and about three-quarters of Pace riders are transit-dependent (76% of respondents have no access to a car for their Pace trip), showing how crucial Pace is to the region’s economy.

For any service provider, there is always room for improvement. For Pace, the accuracy of our real-time information is already being improved. Similarly, speed and timeliness of buses is something that will only improve with Pace’s continued implementation of transit signal priority and the transit reform legislation’s emphasis on enhancing roadway operations for the benefit of buses.

