

# Fast Bus!

How San Diego Can Make Progress  
by Speeding Up the Bus



October 2022

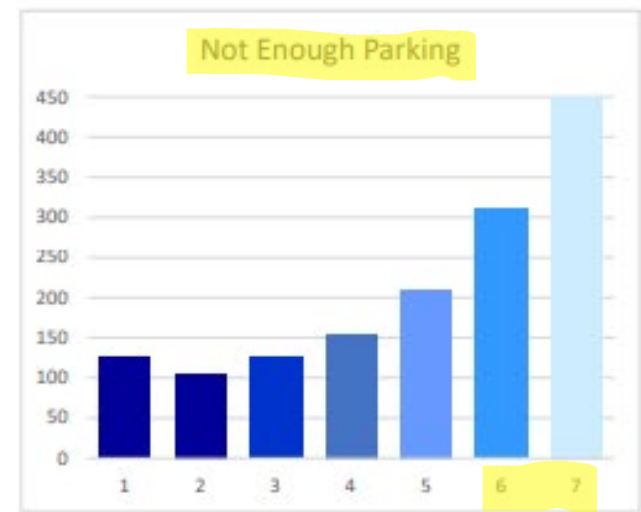
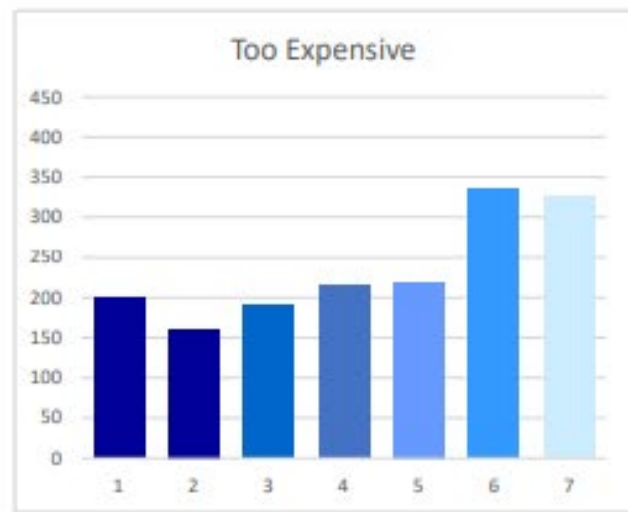
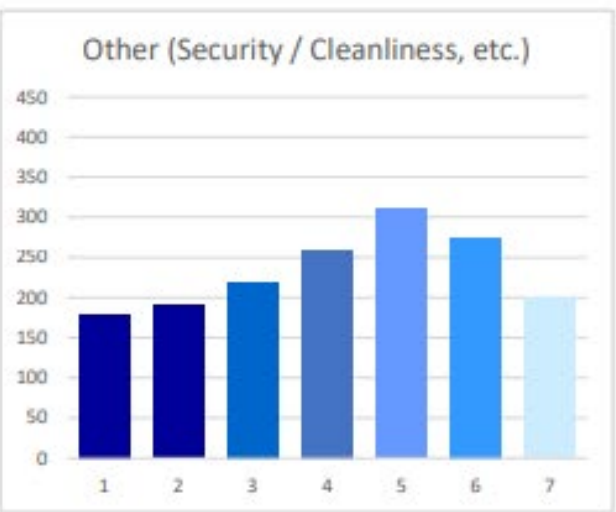
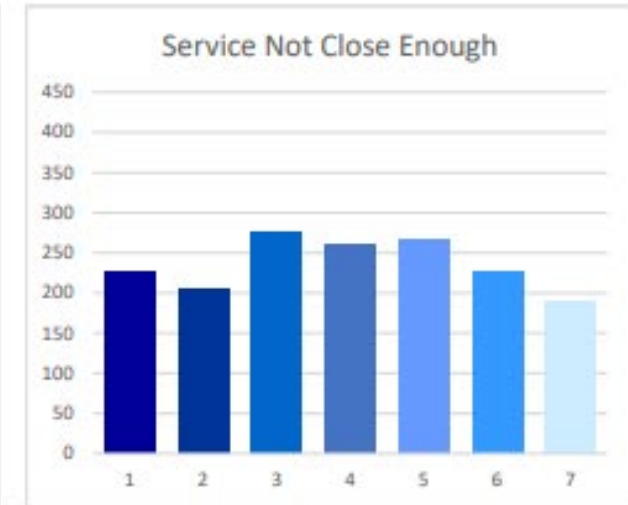
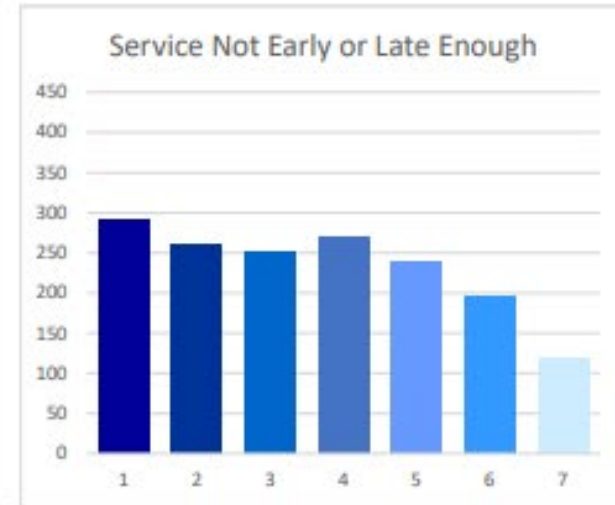
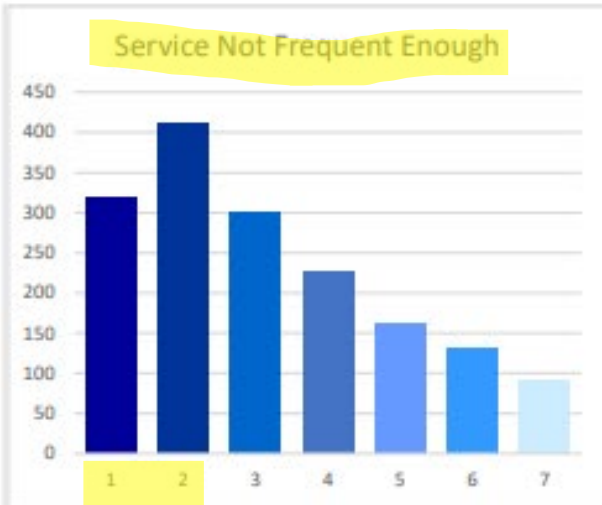


## Executive Summary

Bus riders are essential members of our community. They include hospital workers, grocery store employees, janitors, social services workers, students, retirees, and more. They are disproportionately people of color and disproportionately low-income. These valuable members of our community often rely on bus trips that take far longer than they would in a car.

This report identifies cost-effective interventions to make the bus fairer and more attractive for riders, including:

- Dedicated Bus-Only Lanes
- Transit Signal Priority
- Improved Frequencies



San Diego Community Survey Data, 2015  
 Photo source: MTS

**What are your biggest challenges using MTS?  
 Or, Why don't you ride MTS?**  
 (1 = Biggest challenge, 7 = Least challenging)

## *A faster system is a more equitable system.*

Campaigns from transit advocates around the country agree that fast, reliable service is “a matter of racial justice and transit equity.”<sup>19</sup> The same holds true in San Diego: MTS riders are disproportionately people of color and disproportionately low-income.<sup>20</sup> Fast, reliable buses are critical to riders’ ability to access jobs, schools, and services.

- 19 “Bus Riders Deserve Better,” Riders Alliance (accessed July 17, 2022), available at <https://www.ridersalliance.org/better-buses>. See also “We are Transit Forward Philadelphia,” Transit Forward Philadelphia (accessed July 17, 2022), available at <https://www.transitforwardphilly.org/about>; “Back on the Bus: Speeding Up Chicago’s Buses,” Active Transportation Alliance (accessed July 17, 2022), available at <https://activetrans.org/our-work/transit/bus-rapid-transit>.
- 20 Lynn Reaser and Thomas Hale, The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System: A Study of Its Economic Impact, Point Loma Nazarene University (2019), p. 6, available at [https://www.sdmts.com/sites/default/files/attachments/mts\\_impact\\_study\\_final.pdf](https://www.sdmts.com/sites/default/files/attachments/mts_impact_study_final.pdf).

## *Speed.*

The most obvious factor in bus travel time is the speed at which the bus moves between stops. Increasing bus speed depends on allowing the bus to bypass local traffic. Improvements that **increase bus speed include dedicated bus-only lanes**, transit signal priority, and freeway bus priority lanes.

## *Transit Performs Best in Support of Trips to/from:*

1. Homes to/from Work
2. Homes to/from Schools
3. **Tourist & Locals to/from Regional Destinations**
  - Downtown
  - **Recreation**  
(Stadiums, Theme Parks, and **Regional Parks**)
  - Airports & Rail Stations
  - Hospitals

[Preferences for regional destinations are due to the rider’s time spent at each deadditional time involved to access transit via either walking, biking or driving to a station platform]