



Transit On-Demand Pilot Program

2019 BOWEN ISLAND REPORT



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Introduction

In the age of smartphones, e-commerce and technological innovation, public expectation for responsive services has increased. These advances and the uptake of new technologies have unlocked opportunities for more customized and flexible “on-demand” transit services.

In 2019, TransLink launched a two-month pilot project on Bowen Island to understand how an online, app-based booking tool may be used as a customer interface and provide on-demand transit services. The pilot project aimed to explore the technical feasibility and customer experience of this new service, as well as identify potential logistical and procedural issues. It will create a framework and provide TransLink with the experience to implement flexible, on-demand transit services in other suburban areas of Metro Vancouver down the line.

TransLink piloted Transit On-Demand services on Bowen Island from July 15 to September 15, 2019. The on-demand services supplemented existing routes—the 280, 281 and 282—which continued to provide regular transit service through the duration of the pilot.

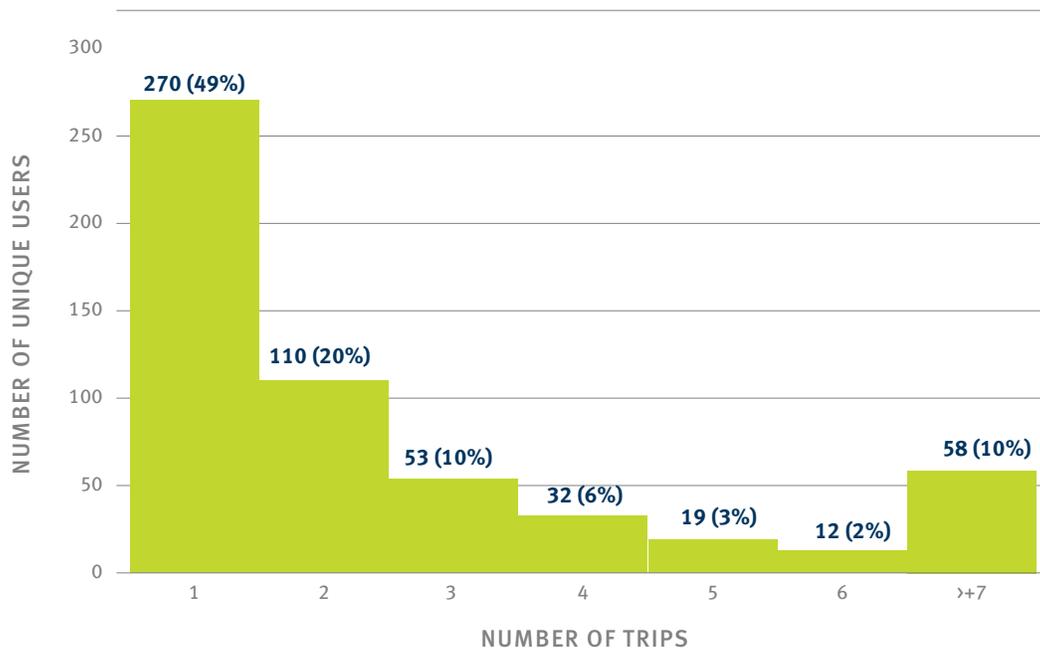
Two additional shuttles were deployed to provide Transit On-Demand services:

- **Weekday Evenings:** Fixed pick-up from Snug Cove from 4:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- **Weekends:** Flexible pick-up and drop-off anytime between 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Transit On-Demand customers could book trips up to two weeks in advance using the TapRide app on a smartphone or web browser, or by calling a dispatcher during operating hours. Each customer was permitted to book rides for up to 6 people.

Executive Summary

Over 1,600 people downloaded the TapRide app and registered to use Transit On-Demand Pilot services on Bowen Island, with one-third of those registered eventually booking a trip. The pilot yielded 554 unique users during the two-month trial with half of these users boarding an on-demand shuttle two or more times. The total number of trips provided in the two-month trial was 1,200 which resulted in approximately 2,000 boardings.

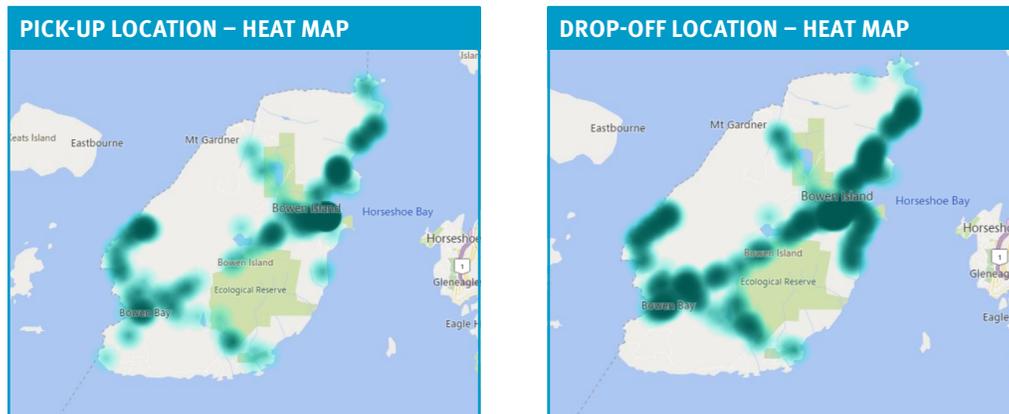


Number of trips taken by unique users during the two-month pilot

Transit On-Demand users were able to access additional areas of service not covered by the established fixed-route service, including Cowan Point and Cates Hill. The pilot project expanded the service area by 75% with a total of 17.5 kilometres of additional route service on the island. This additional service area represented one in every three pick-ups and drop-offs.

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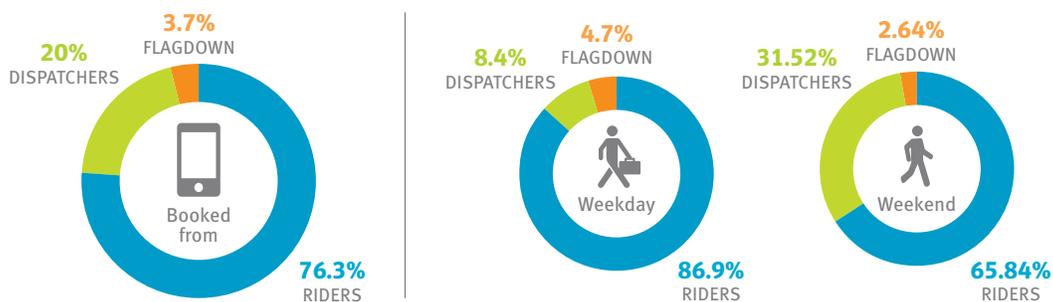
2019 BOWEN ISLAND REPORT



On-Demand service heat map indicating pick-up and drop-off locations on Bowen Island

The Transit On-Demand service experienced a monthly ridership of approximately 1,000 boardings, which represents 5.17 boardings per hour of service. There were 3.4 boardings per hour on weekdays and 7.1 boardings per hour on weekends. However, it is worth noting that two shuttles operated throughout the weekends, resulting in 3.55 boardings per hour per shuttle.

Pilot participants could book trips through a smartphone app, web browser, or by calling a dedicated number. Therefore, booking options were measured in three different ways. Smartphone app and web bookings accounted for 76.3% of total bookings. The second most popular method to book a trip was the call-in option with one in five bookings conducted through this method, which was particularly popular during the weekends. Flag stopping, a method by which customers are able to ride a shuttle without a booking, was registered in the system by shuttle drivers and accounted for 3.7% of total trips. Bookings via smartphone proved most popular throughout the pilot.



Percentage of trips booked by Riders, Dispatchers or Flagdowns

The average wait time was 8.4 minutes and 57% of these trips had a wait time of less than 5 minutes.

Customer Experience

Following the pilot period, TransLink sought feedback from Bowen Island transit customers and residents, through a program of in-person and digital engagement activities, to better understand the experience of customers who used the service and any barriers for those who did not participate.

From September 16–27, 2019, TransLink sought customer and public feedback on the Transit On-Demand services via an on-line survey.

There was also an opportunity to provide feedback in-person to TransLink staff at the Bowen Island Farmers’ Market and on board the Bowen Queen ferry during several crossings.

We also engaged directly with self-identified frequent users of the on-demand service and on-demand shuttle operators for a deeper conversation about their experiences with the service in a series of phone interviews.

We heard from citizens of all ages who live, work, visit and travel to, from and within Bowen Island. Following is a summary of our outreach and engagement activities:

WHAT WE DID

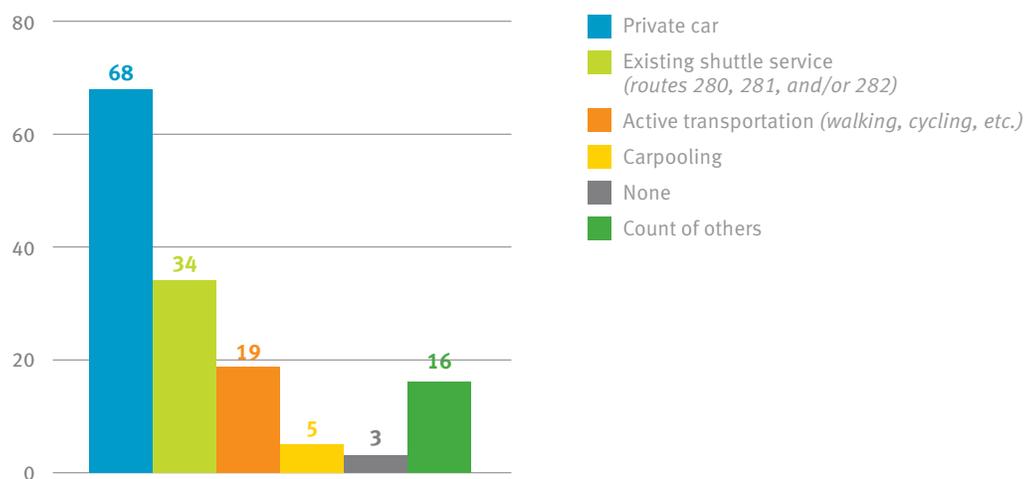
OUTREACH	ENGAGEMENT	PARTICIPATION
<p>2 newspaper ads</p> <p>946 emails to registered TapRide users</p> <p>100 postcards distributed to key community locations and businesses</p>	<p>1 online survey</p> <p>1 public info session during 6 Bowen Island ferry sailings</p> <p>1 public info session at the Bowen Island Farmers’ Market</p> <p>6 phone interviews</p>	<p>147 completed surveys</p> <p>81 in-person interactions</p> <p>4 interviews with customers</p> <p>2 interviews with shuttle operators</p>

WHAT WE HEARD

Online Survey

A total of 147 users completed the survey sent at the end of the two-month pilot program. The survey results collected feedback from 20% of customers who used Transit On-Demand service on Bowen Island during the summer. This percentage was calculated by taking into account ridership and the number of respondents that indicated using the service.

What is the transportation mode that you replaced by the On-Demand shuttle?



Survey results showing the proportion of new Compass Product customers (left) and the transportation modes replaced by the On-Demand shuttle according to survey (right)

Approximately half of the users (47%) indicated that they opted to use the Transit On-Demand service over their own private cars. A minority of survey respondents (23.45%) indicated that they replaced the use of fixed-route transit services with on-demand services.

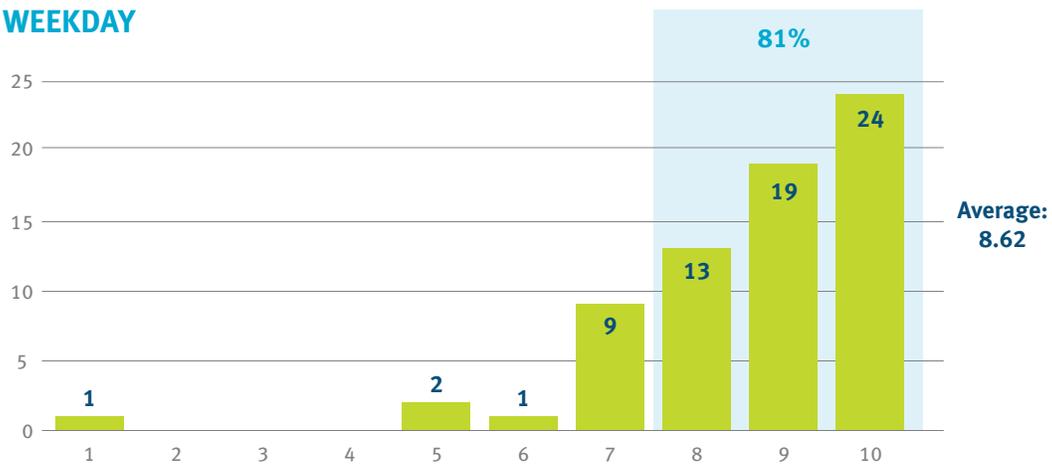
Transit On-Demand Pilot Program

2019 BOWEN ISLAND REPORT

The Transit On-Demand Pilot was well-received by users, which was confirmed through the results of the survey. Approximately 80% of users gave top scores on their experience with the on-demand service, with an average score of 8.6 out of 10.

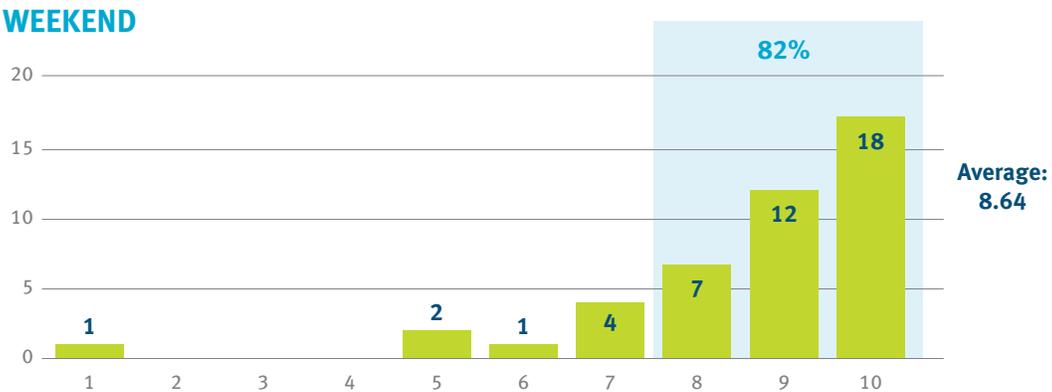
Based on your own experience in the past 60 days, how would you rate the overall service provided by the Transit On-Demand service on Bowen Island?

WEEKDAY



Ratings for weekday service

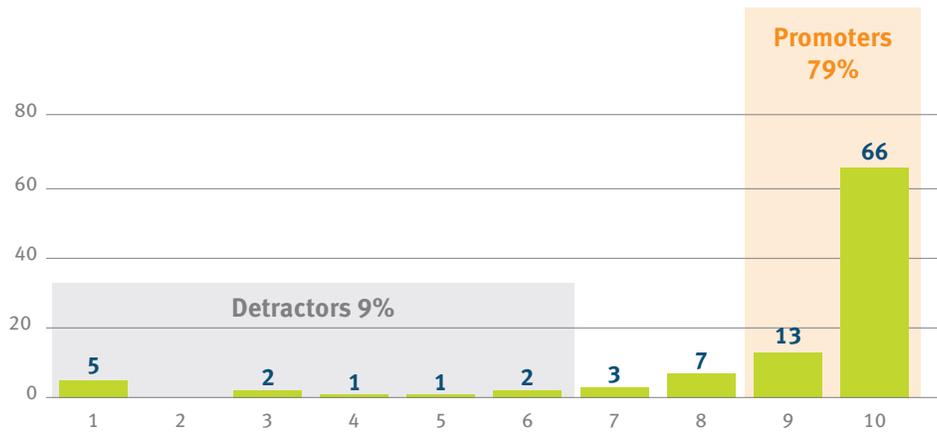
WEEKEND



Ratings for weekend service

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) was calculated to understand a pilot participant’s loyalty to on-demand service. The results imply that users appreciated the service and were willing to generate positive word-of-mouth referrals. The survey results indicated a Net Promoter Score of 70.

Considering your complete experience with the On-Demand service, how likely would you to recommend the service to a friend or colleague?



The results show that most people would recommend the service to a friend or colleague

WHAT WE HEARD

Information Sessions and Phone Interviews

The feedback TransLink received at public info sessions and during the phone interviews affirmed the online survey results: indication that a high level of satisfaction with on-demand service was offered.

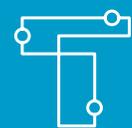
Next Steps

We want to continue learning about how the Transit On-Demand model can improve Metro Vancouver's transportation system. As part of the learning process, customer and operator feedback is being analyzed to determine next steps regarding service delivery and technology providers. This analysis will help refine the Transit On-Demand model for further testing in suitable areas across the region.





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