

Public Attitudes and Perceptions toward Salem/Keizer Transit

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Prepared for Salem/Keizer Transit District

DRC **research**

PO Box 662
Salem, OR 97308

503 510 8237
dcresearch@mac.com

dcresearch.org

2008 Salem/Keizer Transit District Survey: Summary of results

INTRODUCTION

DRC Research was commissioned by the Salem/Keizer Transit District to conduct a survey among Transit District voters. The objective of the survey was to identify voter opinions, attitudes, and perceptions toward Salem/Keizer Transit District. These results will help assist the District in assessing support/opposition for a proposed operating levy.

METHODOLOGY

- ▶ Persons selected to participate in the community survey meet the following criteria: Salem/Keizer Transit District resident, 18 years of age or older, registered voter, and a likely voter (defined as: a person having voted in three of the last five major elections).
- ▶ Salem/Keizer area telephone numbers were selected at random to maintain a representative sample.
- ▶ Interviews were conducted by telephone from May 5, 2008 through May 13, 2008 (6 p.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekends).
- ▶ Completed interviews totaled 400 corresponding to a margin of error of ± 4.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.
- ▶ All information collected was reduced to numeric values that allowed for computer processing and analysis. Categories used in the analysis of the data are identified in the context of the report.

SURVEY RESULTS

When respondents were asked about their knowledge of Salem/Keizer Transit District: 17.5 percent said they have a lot of knowledge, 38.5 percent said some knowledge, 37 percent said not very much knowledge, and the remaining 7 percent responded don't know to the question.

Interestingly, 25.5 percent of respondents had ridden on a Cherriots bus, used the Cherry Lift, or wheels service and 14.3 percent had a household member who had used the service(s). Conversely, 53.5 percent of respondents had not used the service(s) nor had a household member used the service(s). The remaining 6.8 percent responded don't know to the question.

In terms of the importance of Cherriots to the quality of life in the community: 65.5 percent said very important, compared to 2.3 percent who said not important. When asked to evaluate the operation and performance of Salem/Keizer Transit District, 18.3 percent said excellent, 52.8 percent said good, 16 percent said fair, 2.5 percent said poor and 10.5 percent would not give a response.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the performance of Salem/Keizer Transit District in several different areas. A poor evaluation was a response of one and an excellent evaluation was a response of four. The following shows percents and median scores for each of the questions. (Median scores are based on the point where half of the responses are higher and half are lower. Don't know responses were excluded).

Question	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT	DON'T KNOW	Median
Q5 Contributing to the local economy?	3.0%	13.5%	54.3%	19.8%	9.5%	3.03
Q6 Being well managed and efficient?	4.5%	13.5%	50.5%	15.8%	15.8%	2.98
Q7 Providing economical and effective public transportation?	2.5%	13.5%	51.8%	26.8%	5.5%	3.10
Q8 Giving a good return on tax dollars?	5.5%	13.8%	47.0%	16.8%	17.0%	2.97
Q9 Having drivers that are courteous?	2.0%	10.8%	41.8%	28.5%	17.0%	3.19
Q10 Keeping the public well informed about services and schedules?	5.3%	18.5%	47.3%	19.3%	9.8%	2.95
Q11 Operating a safe and secure transit system?	1.3%	11.0%	50.0%	31.8%	6.0%	3.19

Respondents were read several statements and then asked whether they agree or disagree. Strongly disagree was a response of one and strongly agree was a response of four. The following shows percents and median scores for each of the questions. (Median scores are based on the point where half of the responses are higher and half are lower. Refusals were excluded).

Question	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	REFUSED	Median
Q12 Provides cost effective transportation for people as an alternative to driving a car?	4.0%	4.0%	35.3%	55.5%	1.3%	3.61
Q13 Reduces traffic congestion by decreasing the number of cars on the road?	6.3%	9.5%	39.5%	43.3%	1.5%	3.35
Q14 Improves air quality by reducing auto emissions?	4.5%	11.3%	37.0%	42.8%	4.5%	3.36
Q15 Support for public transportation is even more important during difficult economic times?	4.0%	4.0%	29.0%	60.8%	2.3%	3.70
Q16 Offers convenient schedules and routes throughout the area?	5.0%	11.0%	47.5%	28.5%	8.0%	3.13
Q17 Assists employers and the local economy by providing low cost transportation for workers?	3.8%	6.3%	43.5%	42.3%	4.3%	3.37

Respondents were read a brief description of the proposed Salem/Keizer Transit District operating levy and asked whether they would vote for or against the tax measure.

If the election were held today, would you vote for or against the \$30.4 million operating levy for Salem/Keizer Transit? Almost two-thirds (63 percent) said they would vote for the levy, while 28 percent said they would vote against the levy. Nine percent were undecided.

Respondents were read several reasons why someone might vote for the levy. A very poor reason was a response of one and very good reason was a response of five. The following shows median scores for each of the reasons. (Median scores are based on the point where half of the responses are higher and half are lower. Don't know responses were excluded).

Question	VERY POOR REASON	2	3	4	VERY GOOD REASON	DON'T KNOW	Median
Q21 Public transportation benefits our entire community, even those who do not use buses.	5.0%	4.5%	14.8%	21.5%	51.3%	3.0%	4.56
Q22 Bus service is necessary to provide transportation for seniors, students, persons with disabilities, and people who cannot drive.	1.0%	2.5%	5.0%	18.3%	70.8%	2.5%	4.81
Q23 Most of the funds from the levy would be used only for maintenance and operating costs.	7.0%	7.0%	23.3%	23.0%	30.5%	9.3%	3.85
Q24 Bus service provides access to work and shopping to those without cars.	2.8%	3.0%	10.8%	26.5%	54.3%	2.8%	4.61
Q25 Public transportation is needed for our community and local economy to prosper.	4.0%	5.0%	12.3%	30.0%	46.0%	2.8%	4.41
Q26 Salem/Keizer Transit is a good investment of tax dollars.	4.5%	7.3%	14.0%	22.0%	48.0%	4.3%	4.51
Q27 Funding for public transportation is needed in order to provide better access to and from outlying communities.	5.8%	7.5%	19.0%	23.3%	39.5%	5.0%	4.15
Q28 The benefits of public transportation outweigh the costs.	5.3%	5.3%	21.0%	21.5%	40.0%	7.0%	4.20
Q29 Local tax dollars should be used to support public transportation.	6.8%	4.5%	19.3%	24.0%	41.0%	4.5%	4.22
Q30 Since voters last approved a funding measure for the Transit District in 1996, ridership has increased 60 percent.	7.0%	7.0%	14.5%	22.5%	37.8%	11.3%	4.20

Overall, the survey shows that voters' attitudes toward the Salem/Keizer Transit District are positive. The Transit District receives mostly above average evaluations on its services and benefits to the community.

The survey results will benefit the Transit District by providing insight into the public's opinions regarding its services, benefits to the community and assist in developing a position regarding a new operating levy.