CHRISTIANSBURG QUARTERLY REPORT
JANUARY 2011 – MARCH 2011

Service Overview

Below is an overview of service changes that have occurred over the last year. This information is helpful when reviewing current data.

- The expanded service is still in its infancy stage, as it has only been in service for 16 full months.
- Fares were reduced from $2.00 to $.50 on the *Go Anywhere* route in October 2010.
- This new expanded service has benefitted the citizens of Christiansburg by providing more hours, a greater range of travel and better accessibility to employment, services and leisure activities compared to the limited Two Town Trolley.
- It was not until the third quarter that group trips were booked on *Go Anywhere*.
- A new commuter route has been added which provides a connection between Christiansburg and Blacksburg.
- The *Shopper Express* route was eliminated, effective March 31, 2011.

Monthly Ridership Review: November 2009 through March 2011

Monthly Ridership

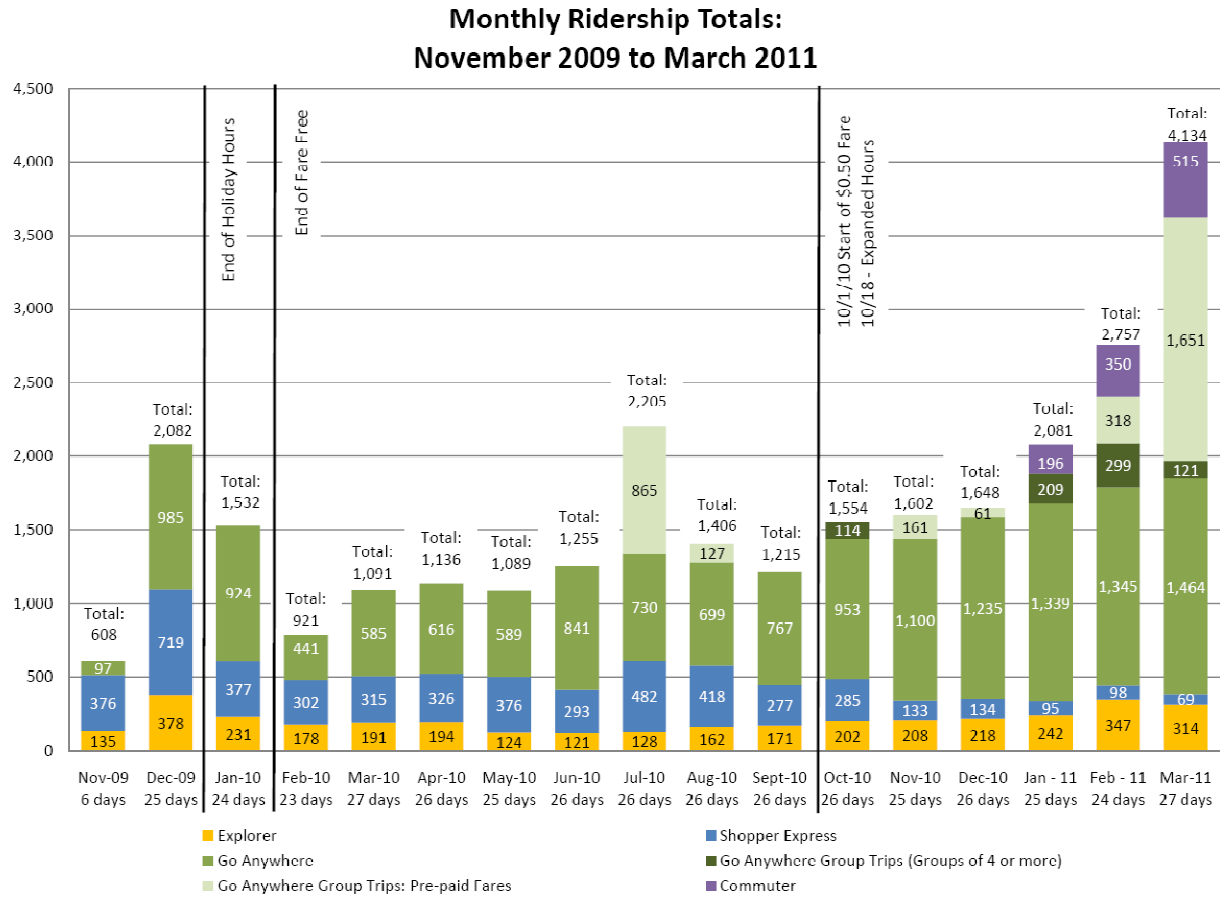
Total ridership for the *Explorer*, *Shoppers Express*, and *Go Anywhere* was 8,972 for the first quarter of 2011. This was a considerable increase in riders over the previous quarter, mainly due to a large number of pre-paid group trips and the addition of the commuter route. As in previous quarters, the *Go Anywhere* route accounted for 75 percent of all riders, with a total of 6,746 riders.

Last quarter the ridership during October, November and December 2010 were three of the four highest ridership months since the system began charging fares. This quarter, January, February and March exceeded even those numbers!

The chart on the following page reflects the total ridership per month, with a breakdown between routes. Group trips of four or more (represented by the dark green areas) accounted for 629 passengers during these three months. In March this number decreased because the group that was using the service twice a day, six days a week is no longer making those trips.

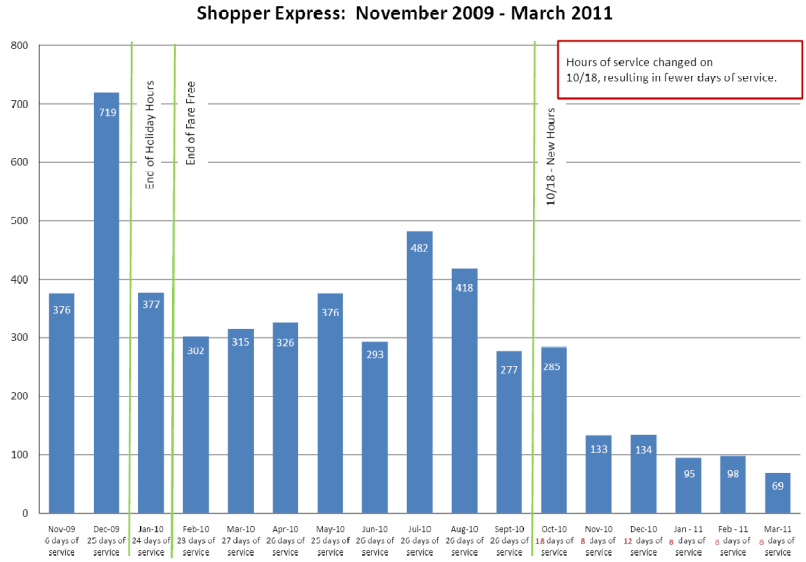
We expect that they will resume again next winter. The light green area represents the pre-paid group trips, the majority of which are service to and from the Christiansburg Aquatic Center during swim meets. In March they had a very large three-day event accounting for 1,428 passengers!

The new addition to the chart this quarter is the ridership for the commuter service that started in January (shown in purple). As you can see, this service has been very successful, growing considerably each month!



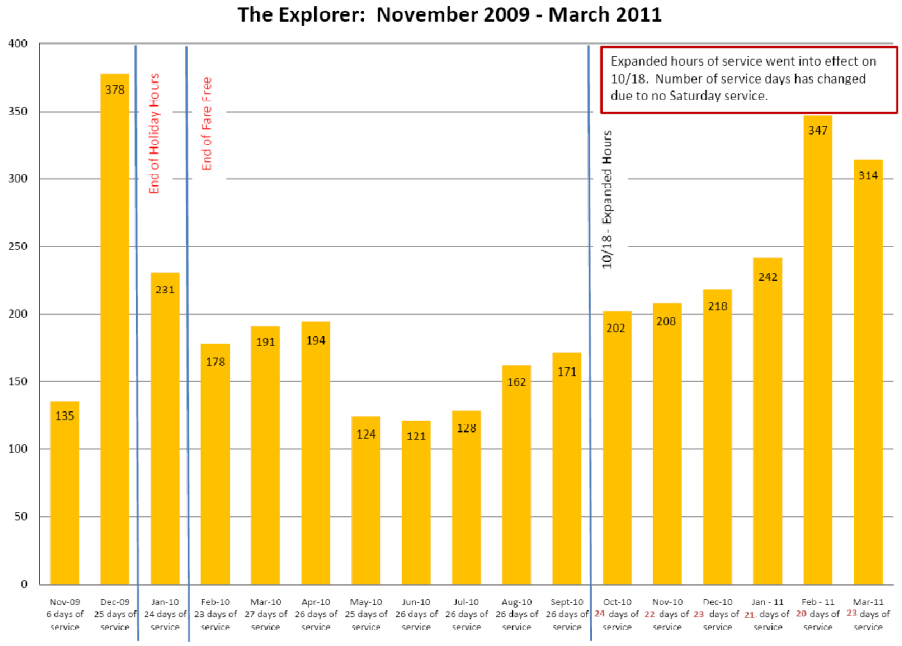
Shopper Express

Total ridership for the *Shopper Express* continued to decline in the first quarter to 262 riders vs. 552 in the fourth quarter of 2010. The reduction of service days, 24 service days in the first quarter vs. 38 days in the fourth quarter, contributed to this decline. Based on the declining ridership, it was decided to terminate this route, effective March 31, 2011.



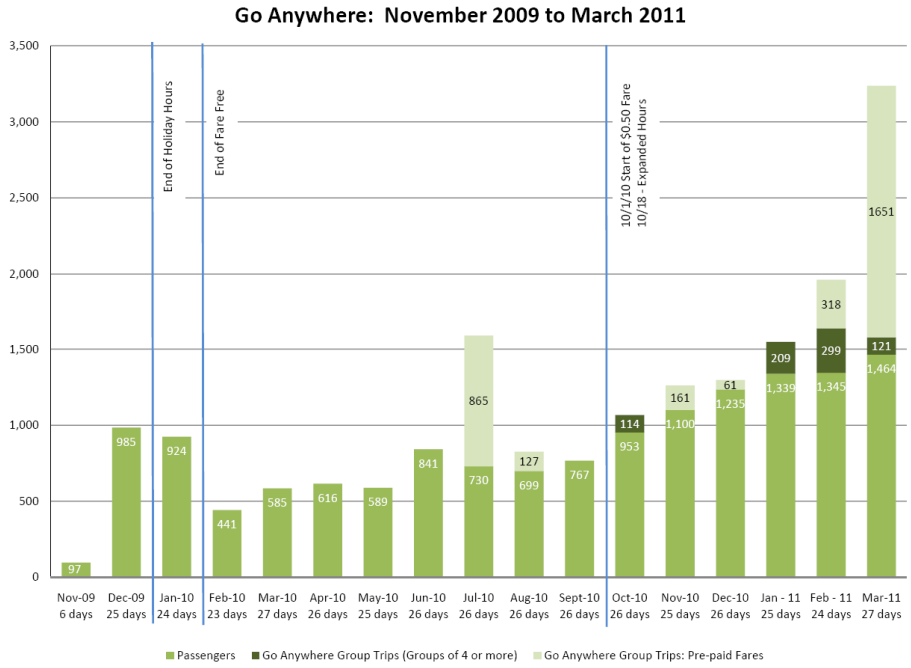
Explorer

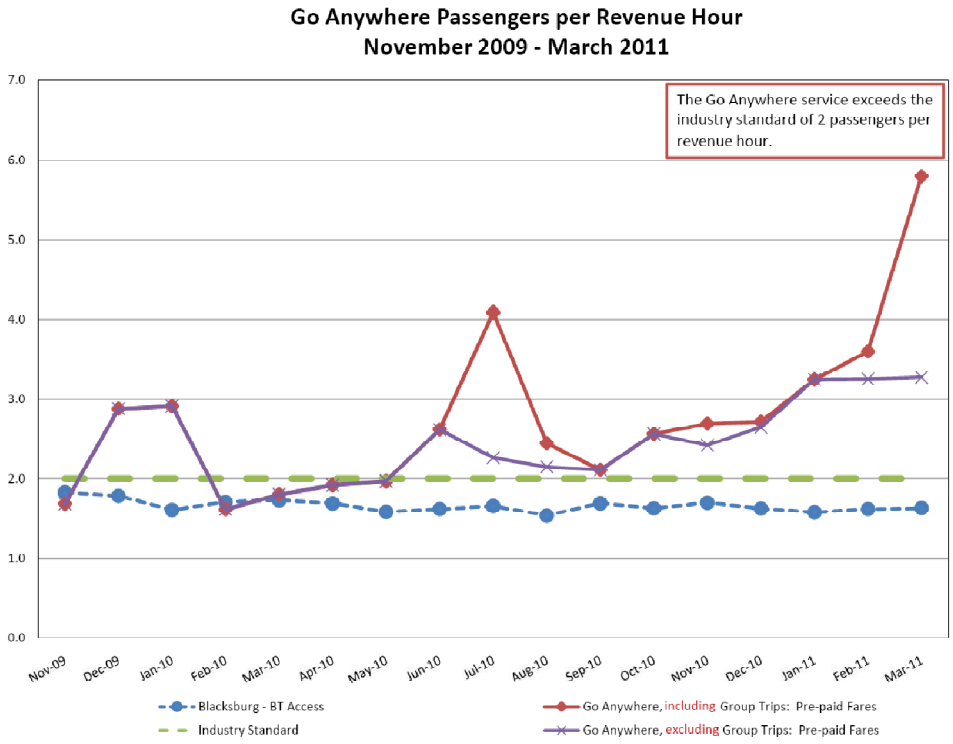
Total ridership for the *Explorer* route increased significantly in the first quarter to 903 riders which was a 44 percent change or an additional 275 riders. February ridership saw an increase of 100 trips. Though there was a slight decrease in March, ridership remains high. Passengers per revenue hour also increased this quarter to 1.42 vs. .97 in the fourth quarter of 2010.



Go Anywhere

Ridership on the *Go Anywhere* route continues to increase significantly. There were 6,746 passengers, reflecting an increase of 40 percent over the fourth quarter of 2010. The majority of this increase can be attributed to high ridership on the Aquatic Center shuttles. There were two events during March, one of which was a three day event, generating over 1,400 riders.





The *Go Anywhere* service compares favorably with peer groups in the category of passengers per revenue hour. The service regularly exceeds the industry standard for demand response, which is two passengers per revenue hour. As shown in the chart above, the passengers per revenue hour continues to increase at a substantial rate. The red line indicates the passengers per revenue hour including the pre-paid group trips. The purple line represents the passengers per revenue hour excluding the pre-paid group trips. This line indicates 3.28 passengers per revenue hour for March.

New customers continue to sign up for the *Go Anywhere* service, bringing the total passengers signed up since November 2009 to 808.

Unique New Passengers - Go Anywhere Route

Month	Number of New Passengers Added
Pre-Route Match (4.2 months)	227
April, 2010	33
May, 2010	44
June, 2010	33
July, 2010	33
August, 2010	42
September, 2010	36
October, 2010	58
November, 2010	59
December, 2010	78
January, 2011	61
February, 2011	50
March, 2011	54
Total	**808**
Average/Month	**49.88**

The *Go Anywhere* route touches the lives of citizens each day by providing trips from near their homes and work locations for medical visits, work, shopping, and other errands. Recapped below are the 12 most popular locations requested during the quarter in order of volume:

- NRV Mall, Walmart, Kmart, G&H Appliance, Montgomery County Government Center, Ryan's, Long John Silvers, Burger King, Social Services, KFC, Arby's, and Big Lots.

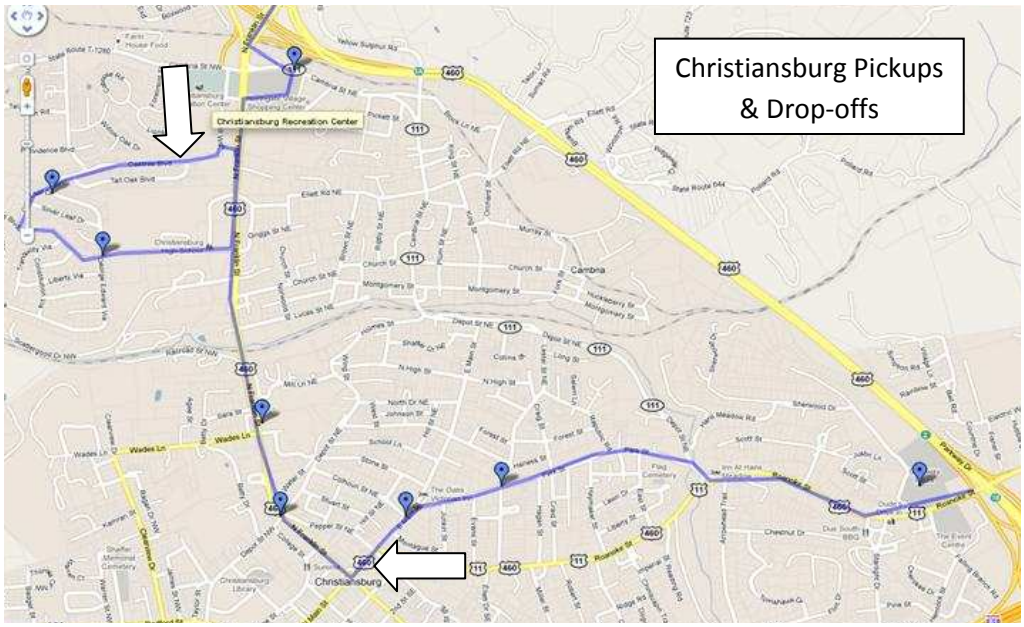
BT Commuter Service

The BT Commuter Service is off to a great start. New customers continue to sign up on a regular basis and the per-trip ridership is steadily increasing. During the first week of service in January the peak per-trip ridership was four, two months later in March the peak per-trip ridership is up to 16! There are approximately 25 regular users of the service, with many using the service five days a week.

Joyce Shelton, a regular user of the commuter service, had nothing but good things to say. "I told you I would let you know how I like the commuter service….Love, love, love it!" she wrote. "I have been riding the bus for a little over two months now; I have saved lots of gas money and enjoyed not having to fight all that traffic. Wish I had started riding sooner. The drivers are great!"

Since the start of the commuter route, minor tweaks have been made to the times and number of stops made. Two extra stops have been added to the Christiansburg portion to better accommodate passengers; one at Christiansburg's Town Hall and the other at 128 Oak Tree

Blvd. In Blacksburg an additional stop has been added at the Wright House. New stops are represented by the white arrows below.



Marketing Update Review

Recapped below is the "Quarters" marketing campaign which has been used to promote the fare change for the *Go Anywhere* route on bus rears, newspaper ads and bus cards.

BT continued to get the word out about bus services in Christiansburg between October 1 and December 31, 2010 with over 20 articles, editorials, website announcements, advertisement campaigns, and press announcements. Here are some highlights:

- A flyer about the *BT Commuter* was distributed in the NRVe on 3/11 and in The Current on 3/13. Additional dates are planned.

- A flyer about the *Explorer* route was distributed in the NRVe on 3/25 and in The Current on 3/27. Additional dates are planned.

- Rear ads were installed on four vehicles to promote the Quarters campaign for the Go Anywhere service.

- Two rear ads were developed and installed to promote the BT commuter service.

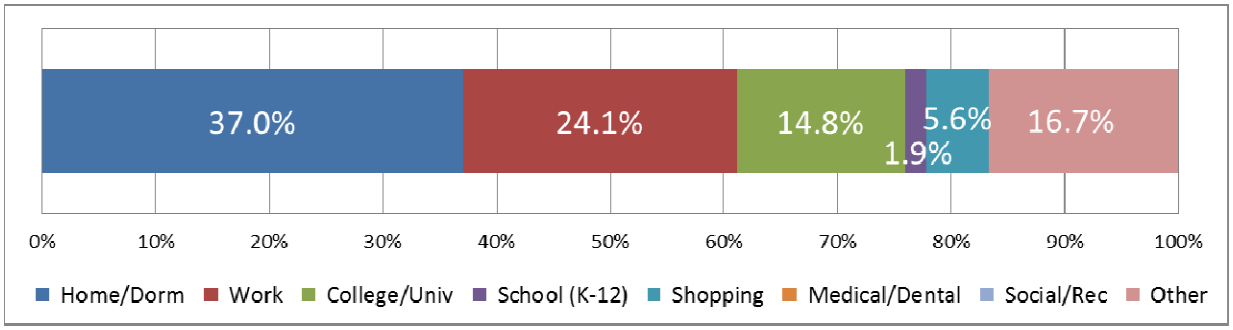
- Additional newspaper ads ran in The Current (to subscribers) and NRVe (to non-subscribers) to promote the Christiansburg service.

Transportation Survey Conducted on Christiansburg Routes

In conjunction with the recent development of BT's Transportation Development Plan, on-board surveys were conducted to get more information about the people who ride the bus.

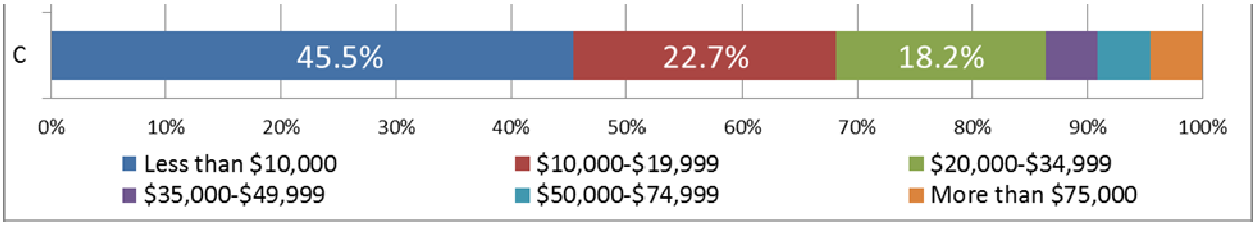
The surveys were completed in December. Below are some charts detailing the demographics of the riders using the Christiansburg service. The surveys supported our theories about the riders, but in some ways were surprising!

Travel Behavior



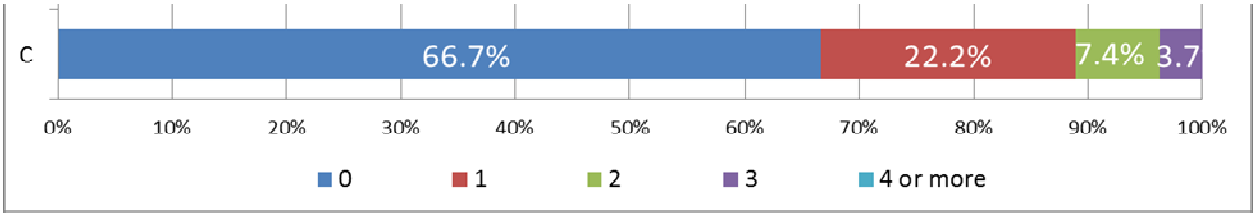
30% of trips are Home-Work

Income



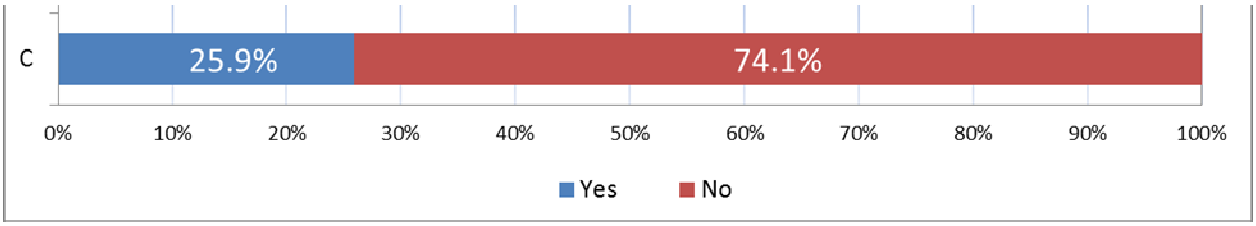
68% of riders earn less than $20,000 per year

Auto's Available



67 percent of the passengers in Christiansburg do not own or have access to a car

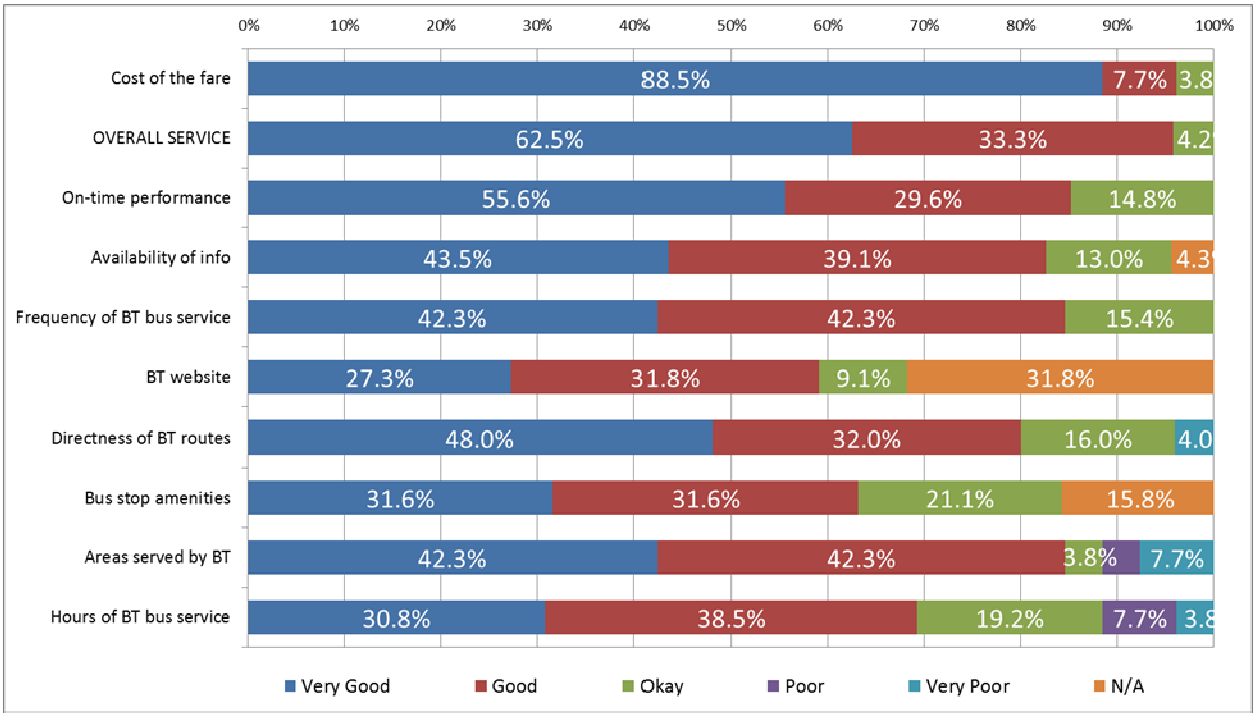
Driver's License



74 percent do not have a driver's license

When you combine all this information together, it really confirms how valuable public transportation is to the residents of Christiansburg. Top locations continue to include key government services buildings, shopping locations and fast-food restaurants.

Service Ratings



Riders were surveyed on almost every aspect of the BT service. As indicated above, 96 percent of passengers rated the service as “Very Good” or “Good.”