



## 2021 USER EVALUATION OF TRIP SERVICE COMPONENTS REPORT

### Executive Summary

The TRIP Program was designed and created by collaborating planners from the Riverside County Transportation Commission and the Riverside County Office on Aging in the early 1990s with input through community studies and consultation with organizations and agencies that protect and advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities.

Components for the service were stipulated through consensus of the participants of the focus groups and listening sessions conducted in the early 1990s and were included in the design of the program that was implemented by the nonprofit Independent Living Partnership (ILP) in 1993. The payment of mileage reimbursement for the volunteer drivers was an added element of the service to help cover the cost of fuel for the volunteer's use of their own vehicles to provide the service.

The service has operated continuously since inception, expanding to full County service by 1994. It is highly regarded by the Riverside County Transportation Commission and the Riverside County Office on Aging and received competitive funding continuously for the full period of its operation, with substantial additional Section 5310 FTA funding in recent years through the California Department of Transportation, and from other funders as well.

The service has proven to meet the original study consensus that the service "must empower users to become more independent". Over the years it has received the highest satisfaction ratings from its user-riders. Outcome profiles have shown the service to be highly effective in supporting and improving the well-being of the mobility challenges constituency it serves. The volunteer reliant service has been a stable and reliable service and has consistently delivered trips at comparatively very low cost to funding sources.

In the fourth quarter of 2021, ILP surveyed current riders to extract their evaluation of the importance of the components of the services operation and found that all of the components of the original design are regarded as very important by most riders. When asked to make suggestions for improvement, some suggestions were made for increased travel allowances, which are generally determined at the time of enrollment by the travel needs stated by applicants, and for payment of increased mileage reimbursements for the volunteer drivers. Our latest analysis, based on the average mpg of U.S. passenger vehicles indicated that the current mileage rate paid results in reimbursement for volunteer of \$8.75 per mile of transportation they provide.

The report of survey findings includes more details about the design and creation of the service and respondent evaluations of each of the services components.

## Report

The TRIP Volunteer Driver Program of the Independent Living Partnership was designed and created through the collaboration of the Riverside County Transportation Commission and the Riverside County Office on Aging. The regional transportation agency had been given the responsibility of making sure that usable transportation was available for all residents of Riverside County. The Riverside County Office on Aging had received many calls and recorded comments and complaints from older adults and people with disabilities who had expressed concerns that adequate services were not available for them.

Planners from the partnering agencies conducted listening sessions and focus groups in the early 1990s of “seniors” experiencing transportation challenges. Participants in the studies were asked to describe the characteristics of the program that they thought should be available for mobility challenges individuals. The plan was to design a service that would eliminate the issues that were seen to be limiting transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities.

The consensus of study participants was that:

- Service should be available on a 24/7 basis
- The service should be highly flexible and adaptable for those most difficult to serve
- No advance scheduling should be required
- An escort should be provided who could stay with and go through-the-door with riders
- No curbside waiting should be required
- Multiple stops should be possible on a single trip
- Travel by personal vehicle was the preference
- All trips should be free to the rider
- The resulting program must empower users to become more independent.

Planners from the Commission and the Office on Aging, with additional input from organizations that protect and advocate for the civil and human rights of people with disabilities, outlined a service that could be implemented to meet the requirements specified through the community studies. In order to make the service functional, the planners determined that a monetary incentive should be provided to compensate volunteers for the use of their own vehicles to provide the rides and make them free for the riders.

The Commission and Office on Aging selected the nonprofit Independent Living Partnership, then the “Senior and Disabled Citizen's Coalition”, to further develop and implement the service. The TRIP (Transportation Reimbursement and Information Program) for Riverside County began in the Coachella Valley in 1993 and expanded to service for the entire county by the following year.

Since inception, the service has provided more than 2.5 million one-way trips and more than 35 million miles of volunteer assisted transportation for persons with disabilities who had no other way to access needed care or services, or to improve the quality of their lives and continue to live independently. Mission accomplished.

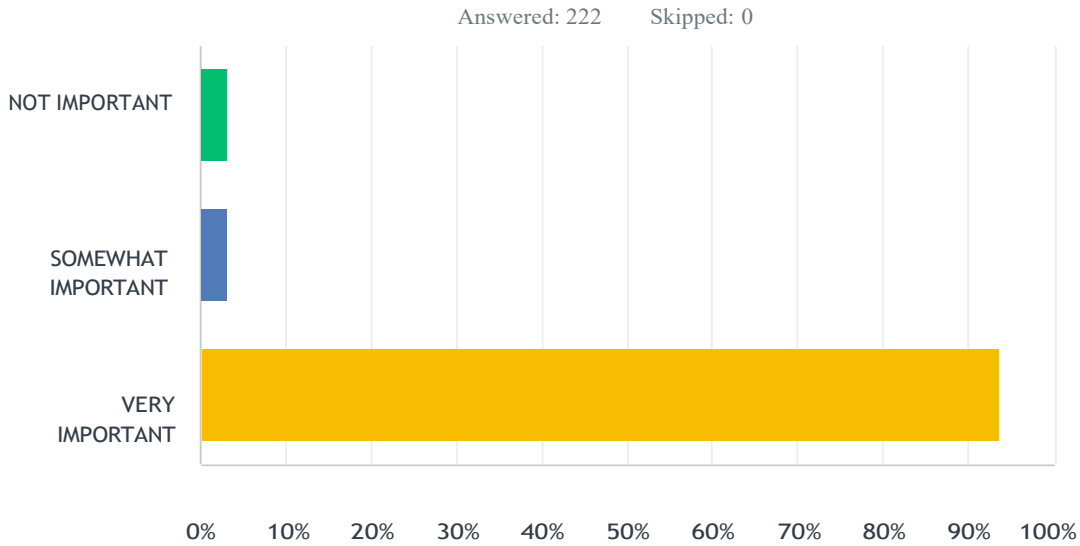
Regular surveys of riders, over the years, have found the TRIP service to be very popular. In all cases, when asked, 98% of riders have rated their satisfaction with TRIP service as five stars out of five possible.

During the fourth quarter of 2021, when COVID continued to depress ridership on transit services, and much less so on TRIP Program ridership, we decided we should ask our current ridership to evaluate the operating components of the service. 222 surveys were mailed to, completed, and returned to us by active TRIP riders. Some adjustments of the original design were needed to the service over the years to keep it

compliant with government requirements, but all of the original components of the functionality of the service have remained as stipulated by participants in the original studies.

Following is the analysis of the responses from the completed survey:

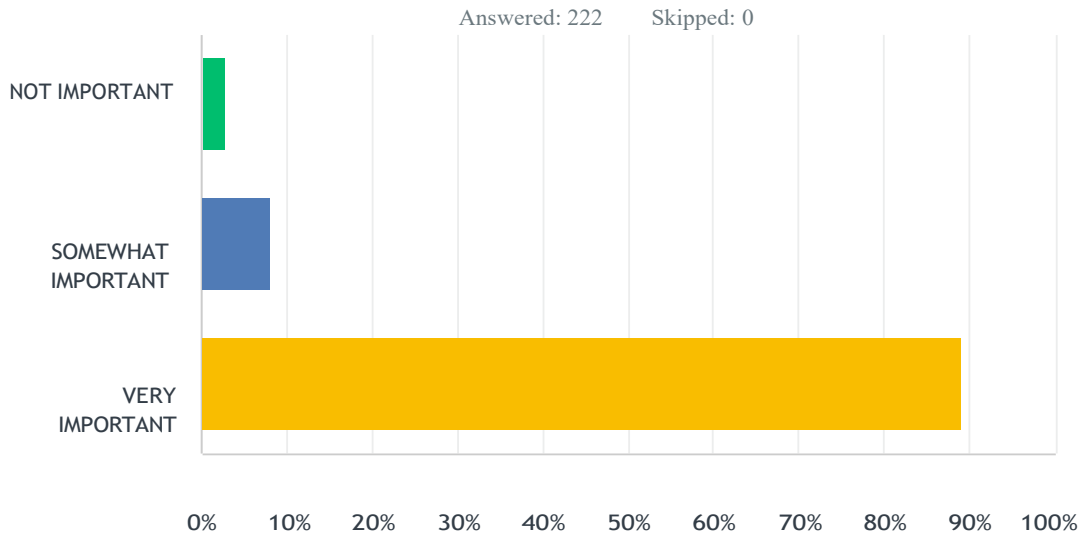
Q1 I can make arrangements for trips directly with my volunteer driver and not have to call the TRIP office.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
NOT IMPORTANT	3.15% 7
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	3.15% 7
VERY IMPORTANT	93.69% 208
TOTAL	222

TRIP USER EVALUATION OF SERVICE 2 I

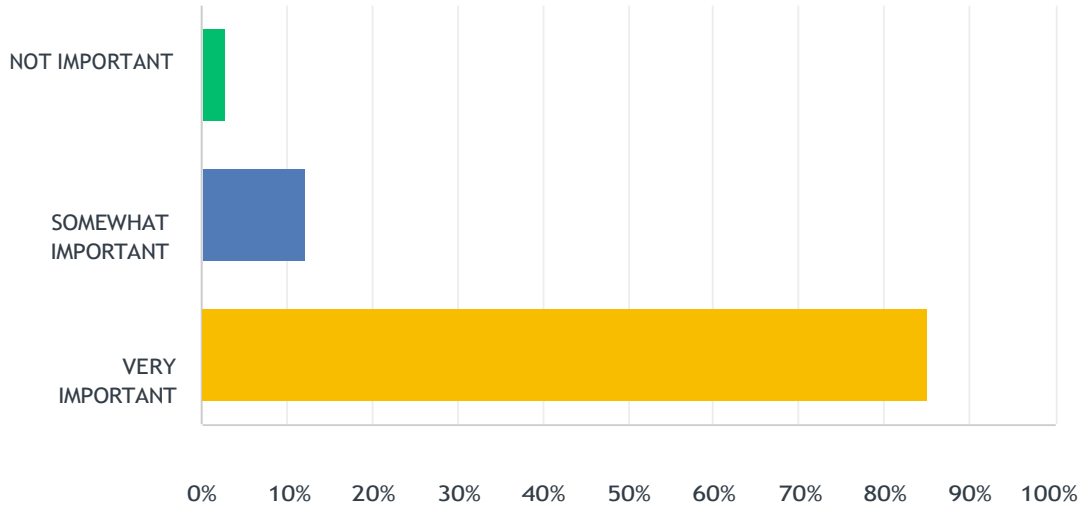
Q2 Travel can be provided whenever needed, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, even on the spur of the moment when my volunteerdriver is available



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
NOT IMPORTANT	2.70%	6
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	8.11%	18
VERY IMPORTANT	89.19%	198

Q3 Multiple stops can be made on an outing

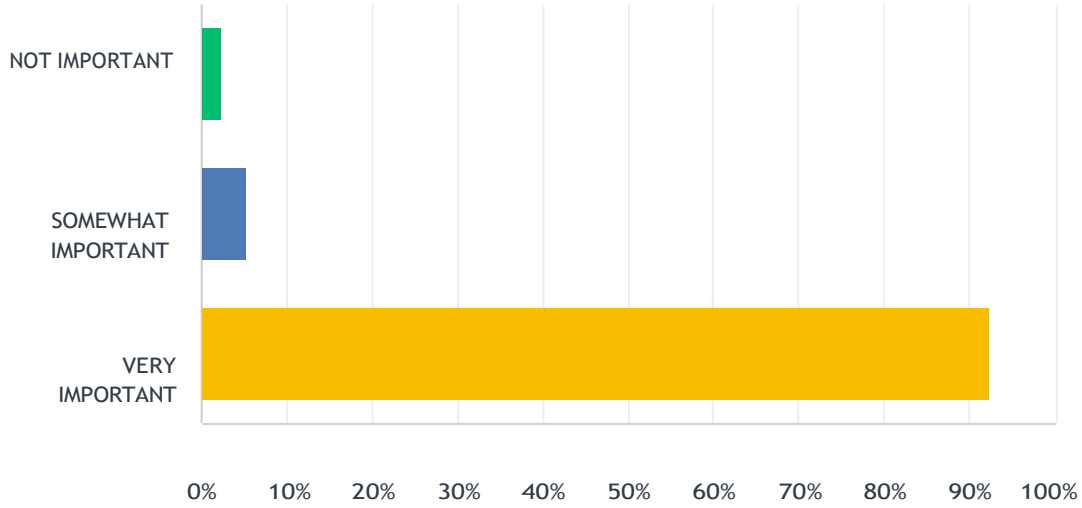
Answered: 222 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
NOT IMPORTANT	2.70%	6
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	12.16%	27
VERY IMPORTANT	85.14%	189
TOTAL		222

Q4 You are able to pick your own volunteer driver from friends or neighbors

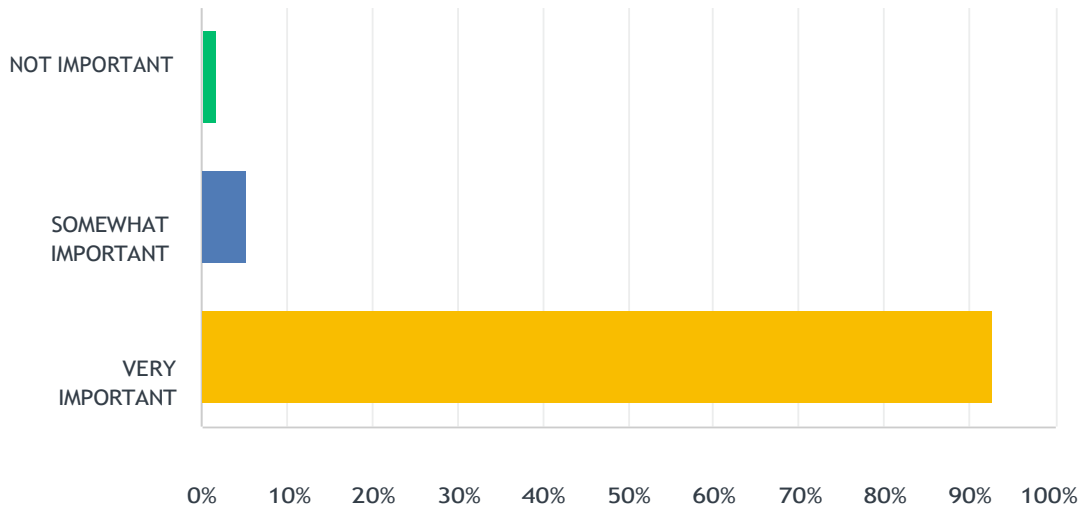
Answered: 222 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
NOT IMPORTANT	2.25%	5
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	5.41%	12
VERY IMPORTANT	92.34%	205

Q5 Volunteer drivers can pick them up at their homes, stay with them during the day's outing, help them as their destinations, even help them put away their groceries when they get back home

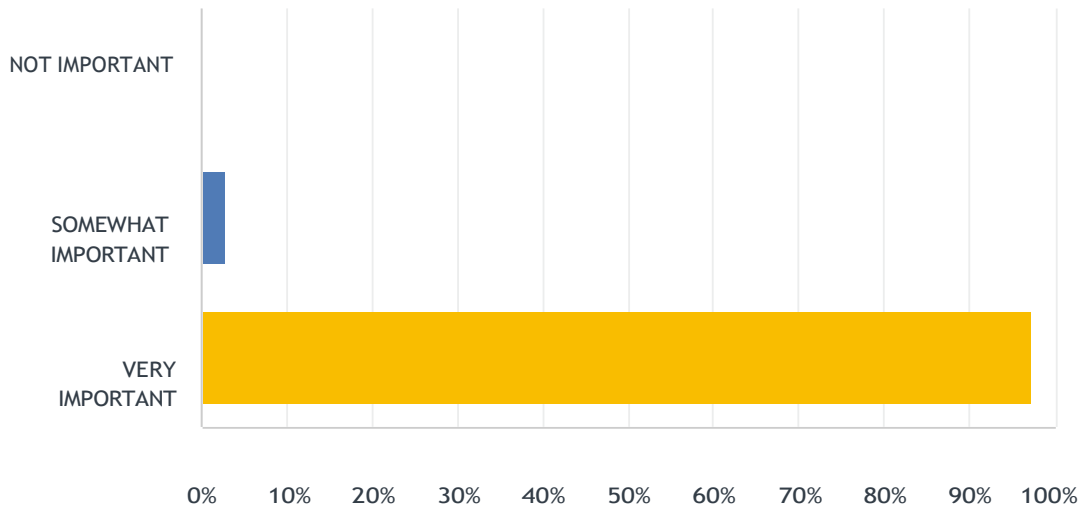
Answered: 222 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
NOT IMPORTANT	1.80%	4
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	5.41%	12
VERY IMPORTANT	92.79%	206
TOTAL		222

Q6 TRIP service means that you do not have to wait for your ride in cold,hot or inclement weather

Answered: 222 Skipped: 0



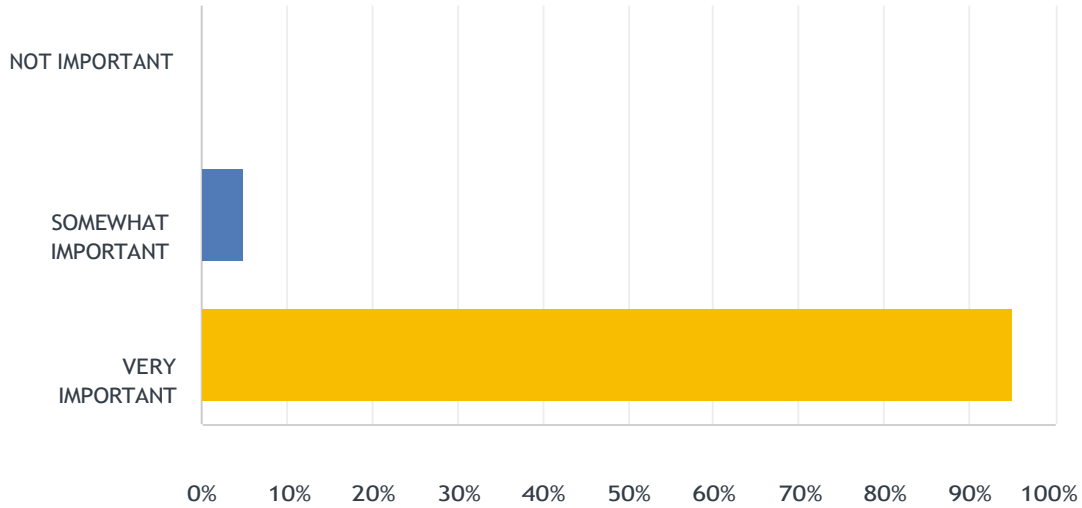
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
NOT IMPORTANT	0.00%	0
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	2.70%	6
VERY IMPORTANT	97.30%	216
TOTAL		222



TRIP USER EVALUATION OF SERVICE 21

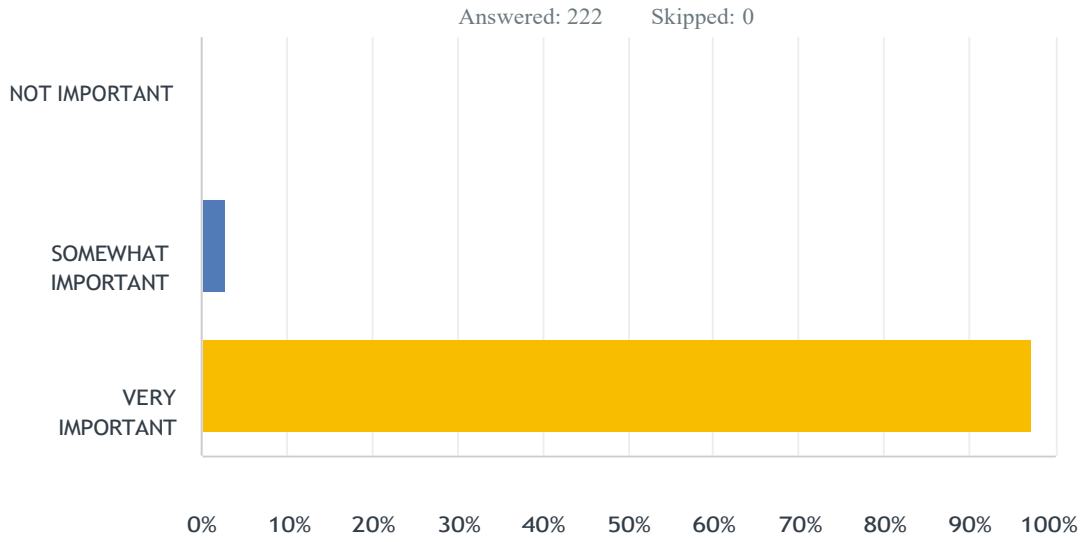
Q7 If needed you are able to be transported out of the area in which you live to access needed medical services or for other approved purposes

Answered: 222 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
NOT IMPORTANT	0.00%	0
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	4.95%	11
VERY IMPORTANT	95.05%	211
TOTAL		222

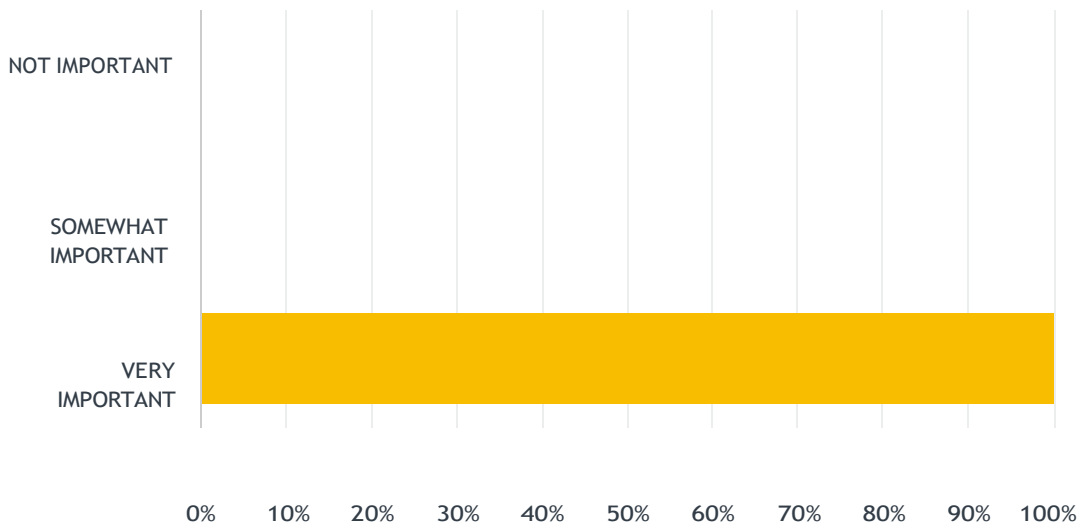
Q8 You are not charged anything for the rides they receive.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
NOT IMPORTANT	0.00%	0
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	2.70%	6
VERY IMPORTANT	97.30%	216
TOTAL		222

Q9 You are sent a mileage reimbursement check each month to pay your volunteer driver for the miles of transportation that they provide for you.

Answered: 222 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
NOT IMPORTANT	0.00% 0
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	0.00% 0
VERY IMPORTANT	100.00% 222

At the end the short survey we asked respondents to "tell us ways in which the TRIP Program can be made better for you". Some of the respondents did offer suggestions:

- Pay a higher mileage reimbursement rate
- Increase monthly mileage allowed for reimbursement
- Offer on-line travel reporting and submission of requests for mileage reimbursement.

These are all things that we regularly consider making changes to as travel needs change and our technological capabilities and funding levels permit.

**Most comments that respondents made were along the lines of "couldn't live without this service". We appreciate knowing that the service is so helpful.**