



## ***RTCC Project Memorandum #3 Rider Survey***

***To: Brian Gibson, St. Cloud APO Executive Director***

***From: Tom Cruikshank, Project Manager***

***Date: November 9, 2018***

***Re: WSB Project No. 012670-000***

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### ***Introduction***

The St. Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) and WSB have been analyzing existing transit ridership and transit satisfaction, as a part of the process of creating the Regional Transportation Coordination Council (RTCC). Data from the 2016 On-Board Survey, distributed among Rainbow Rider, Tri-CAP Transit Connection (Tri-CAP), Trailblazer Transit (Trailblazer), and the Timber Trails Transit (Timber Trails) riders was analyzed. The analysis also includes the Metro Bus 2015 Rider Survey. Understanding current transit riders' satisfaction levels can benefit the RTCC by addressing existing gaps in the network that transit users identified. This memo summarizes the survey results for the St. Cloud APO and the RTCC Project Management Team (PMT).

The 2016 Onboard Rider Survey was distributed in late 2015 state-wide to rural and community transit providers to survey a sample of riders on their respective systems. The Metro Bus Survey was completed in 2015 for fixed route service as a component of the Transit Development Planning process. WSB received the original data results for the On-Board Survey for Rainbow Rider, Tri-CAP, Trailblazer, and Timber Trails. WSB used the St. Cloud Metro Bus Long Range Transit Plan Update (Plan Update) to summarize the Metro Bus 2015 Rider Survey.

According to the Plan Update, surveys were distributed to riders and community members to better understand travel needs, support for transit, and to prioritize investments in the Metro Bus system. The surveys were distributed on all Metro Bus fixed routes over two days in September 2015 to capture the rider input. There were 763 responses from the Metro Bus rider survey.

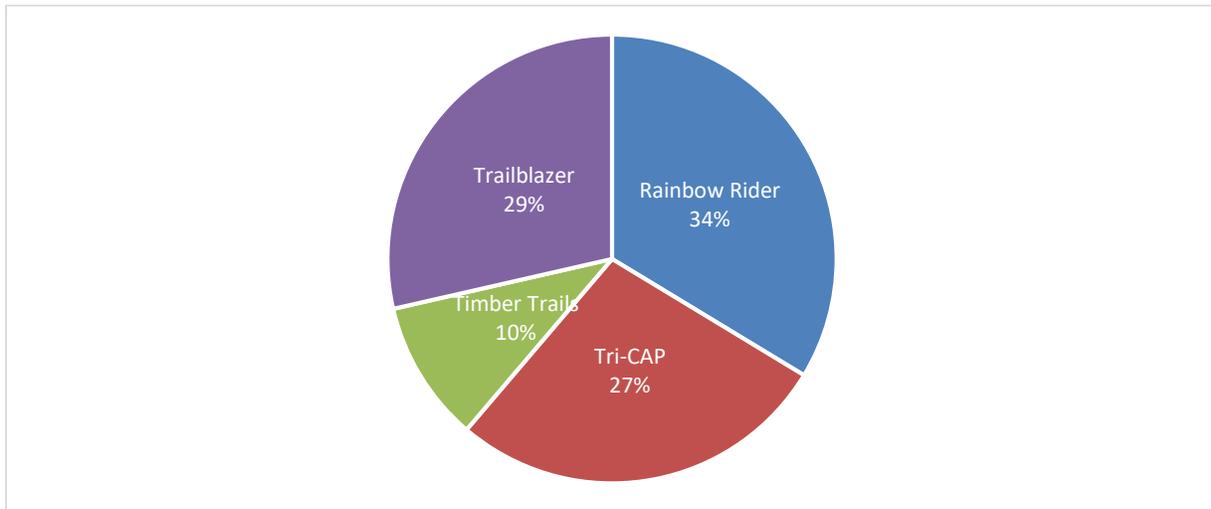
The rural transit system and Metro Bus surveys were not in the same format, so WSB compared results where applicable and noted where differences exist. For instance, the two surveys had some comparable questions with different response options. This analysis will compare the findings when applicable.

### ***Demographics***

The 2016 On-Board survey produced a combined 490 survey results. **Figure 1** shows the distribution of the survey results collected by transit providers. The survey is overall

evenly distributed between Rainbow Rider, Tri-CAP, and Trailblazer. Timber Trails had a ten percent survey response rate and therefore has a lower representation overall, as shown in **Figure 1** below.

*Figure 1: 2016 On-Board Survey Transit Provider Distribution*



Demographic information is provided from the survey results. The demographic information can be used by the PMT to understand who is riding transit to determine who will benefit from the RTCC. Members of the PMT represent clients and provide services for individuals based on demographics. Providing demographic information of survey respondents will enable PMT members to continue to provide services to their client base by creating a larger coordinating council.

The Metro Bus survey had 763 responses. Both the On-Board and Metro Bus Survey collected demographic data on ridership and race. Most of the survey respondents are white (**Figure 2 and 3**). The On-Board Survey had more white respondents (**Figure 2**). Eighty six percent of On-Board survey responders were white compared to 69 percent of Metro Bus Survey respondents (**Figure 3**). There are no stand-out minority populations that filled out the On-Board Survey. The Metro Bus Survey reported greater volumes of minority representation, accounting for 17 percent of the Metro Bus Survey results.

Figure 2: On-Board Survey by Race

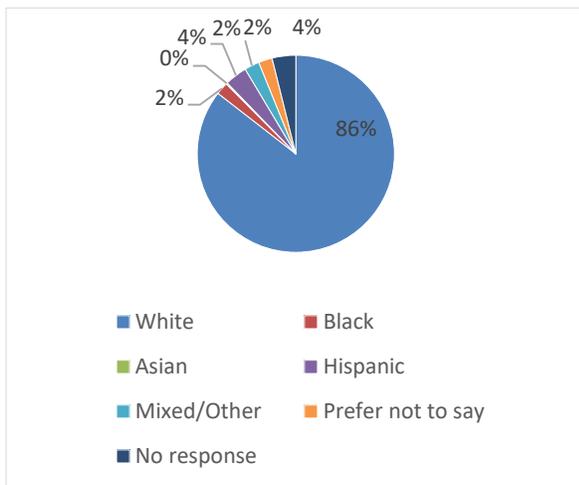
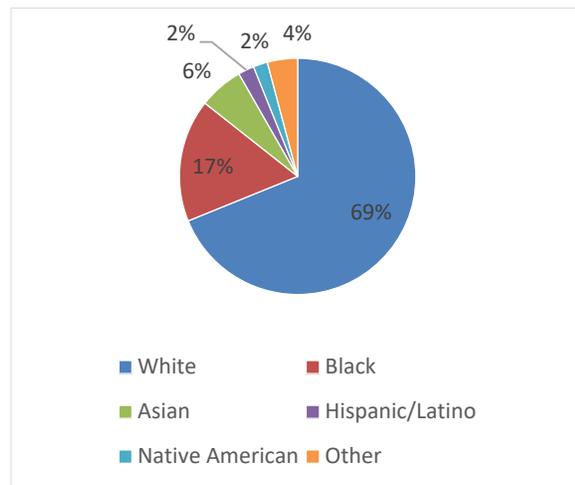


Figure 3: Metro Bus Survey by Race



The On-Board Survey provided the opportunity for all survey respondents to disclose whether they currently possessed a driver’s license. Sixty percent of On-Board Survey respondents reported not having a driver’s license (**Figure 4**). Respondents who do not have a driver’s license are more likely to be transit-dependent. Transit-dependent populations will be more likely to be impacted by any RTCC.

Figure 4: On-Board Survey Driver’s License

	Yes	No	No Response
Number	139	327	24
Percentage	28%	67%	5%

The Metro Bus Survey did not directly inquire about whether respondents had a driver’s license. However, the Metro Bus Survey asked respondents if they had an access to a motor vehicle. Forty-one percent of Metro Bus Survey respondents reported not having access to an automobile (**Figure 5**). Similar to possessing a driver’s license, not having access to a motor vehicle can cause an individual to become transit-dependent.

Figure 5: Metro Bus Survey Access to a Motor Vehicle

Access to a Motor Vehicle	No Access to a Motor Vehicle
59%	41%

Not possessing a driver’s license or having access to a motor vehicle are not the only indicators of transit-dependent populations. People with disabilities are also more likely to be transit-dependent. Only On-Board Survey respondents were asked if they had a disability. Fifty-one percent of On-Board Survey respondents identified as having a disability (**Figure 6**). People with disabilities typically require additional amenities when they ride a bus. The PMT needs to plan their transportation coordination based on transit and service needs.

Figure 6: On-Board Survey Persons with Disabilities

	Person with a Disability	Person without a Disability	No Response
Number	249	213	28
Person	51%	43%	6%

Asking respondents to share their income can help the PMT identify low-income riders because low-income riders are more likely to be transit-dependent due to the costs of a private motor vehicle. Both surveys included questions about income; however, the two surveys have different categories to quantify the results. Most On-Board Survey respondents reported annual household incomes under \$25,000 (**Figure 7**). A majority of the Metro Bus Survey respondents reported annual household incomes under \$15,000 (**Figure 8**). A sizable number of respondents from both surveys preferred not to identify their income.

Metro Bus survey respondents may be more likely to report lower income levels because 81 percent of the survey respondents identified as current students. There was no direct question for the On-Board Survey to specify whether respondents were students. Students are more likely to have lower household income levels. However, students' lower income levels are typically considered a temporary status.

Figure 7: On-Board Survey Household Income

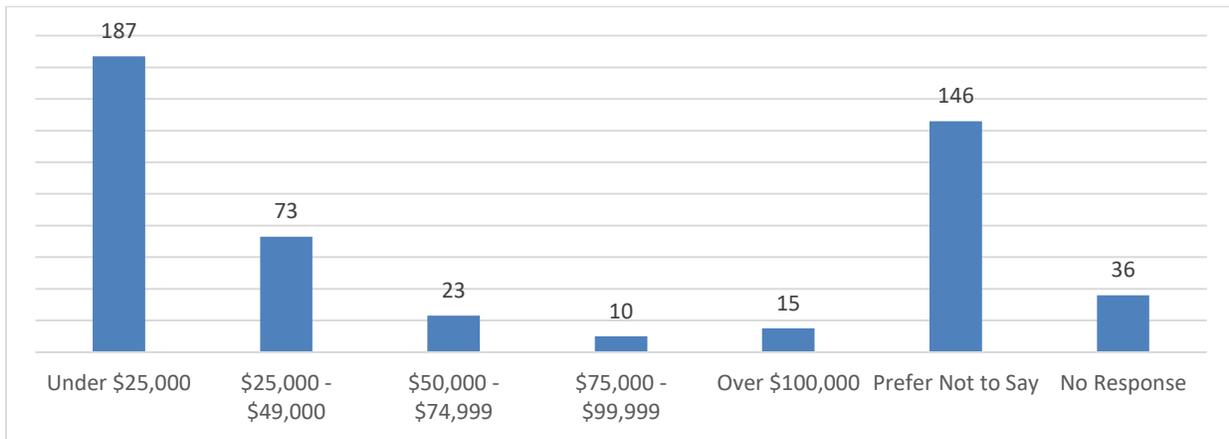
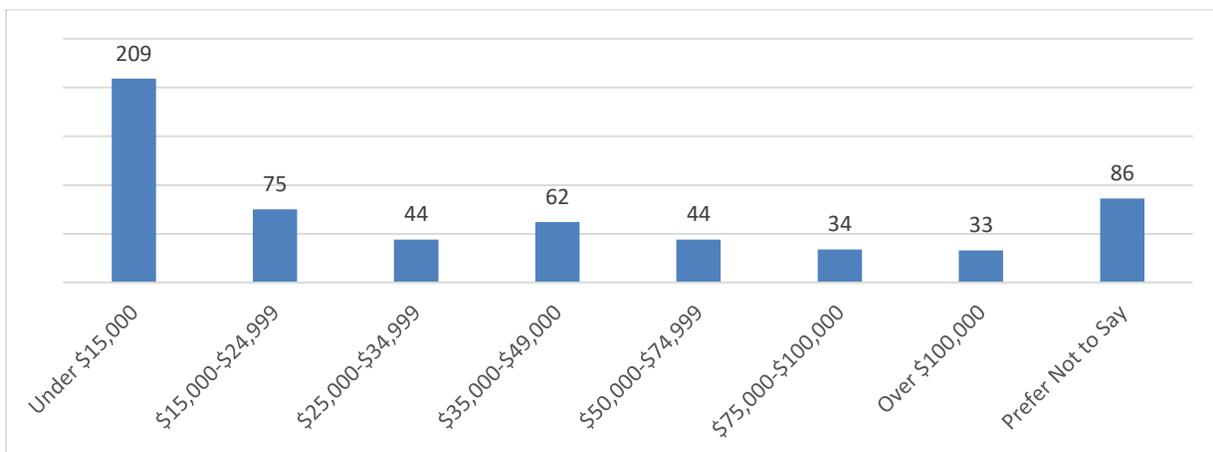


Figure 8: Metro Bus Survey Household Income



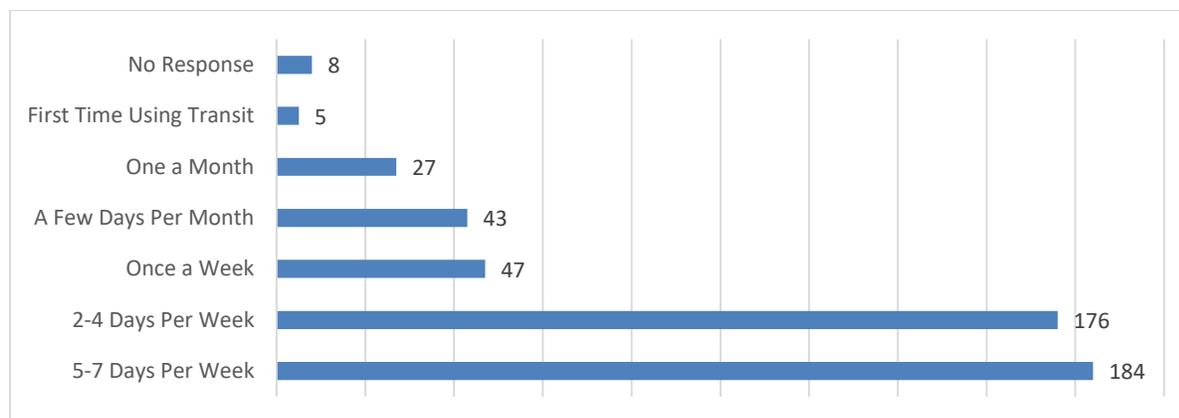
Based on the demographic information provided by both surveys, most of the survey respondents identify as white. Most survey respondents either do not possess a driver's license nor have access to a motor vehicle. Half of the respondents identified as living with a disability. Most survey respondents reported lower income levels. The demographics of the survey respondents indicate that individuals who took both surveys are more likely to be transit-dependent. An effective RTCC can help increase mobility and access for transit-dependent populations.

### **Ride Choice**

Individuals can rely on multiple modes of transportation. Using public transit is a choice. Individuals who choose public transit impact overall ridership of each transit service. The frequency in which individuals choose public transit can help determine what level of transit service the RTCC needs to coordinate. Both surveys included questions to describe transit frequency. However, both used different categories to quantify public transit frequency.

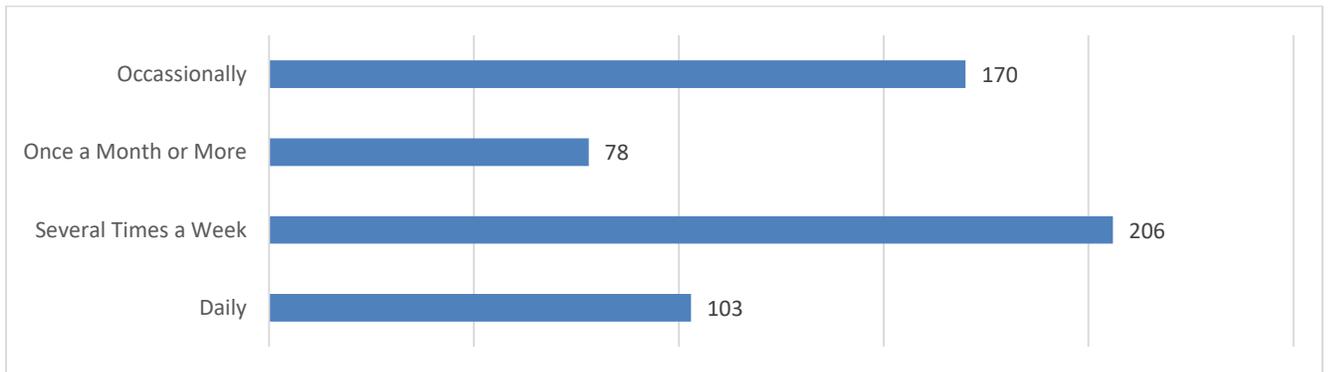
Most of the On-Board Survey respondents reported using public transit five to seven days a week, followed closely by two to four days per week (**Figure 9**). Individuals who took the On-Board Survey are far more likely to use public transit regularly. Regular transit riders most likely rely on public transit as their primary resource of public transit.

*Figure 9: On-Board Survey Transit Use Frequency*



The Metro Bus survey produced more varied results in using public transit. Most survey respondents reporting using public transit several times a week (see **Figure 10**). The other most reported response indicated using public transit occasionally, or less than once a month. The varied results may be because the Metro Bus survey was distributed to the entire community and not just transit riders.

Figure 10: Metro Bus Survey Transit Use Frequency

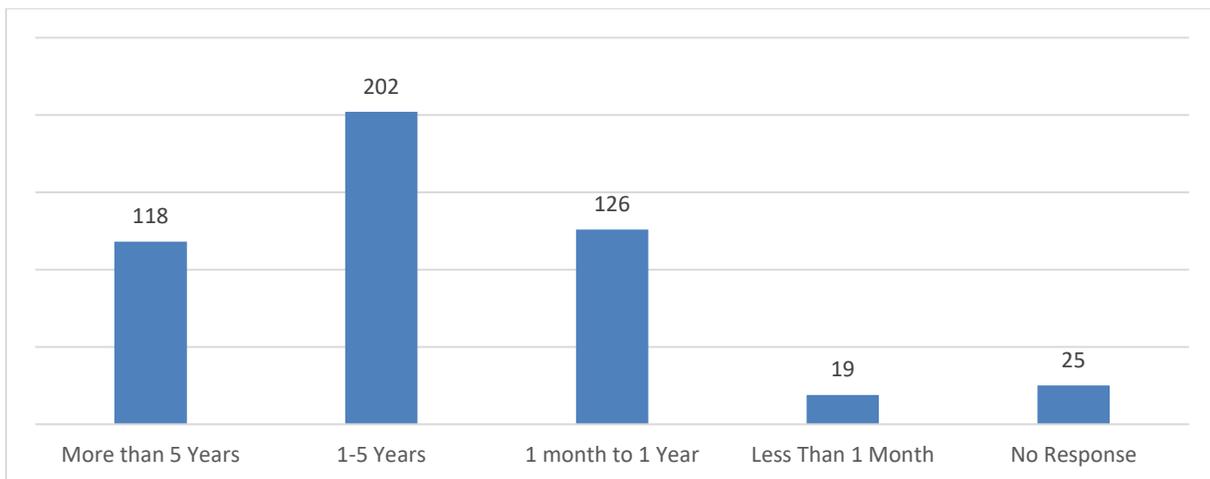


Choosing to rely on public transit is impacted by several factors. Through the two surveys, factors that can impact choosing transit include duration using transit, trip purpose, and identified factors that impact trip choice.

Determining how many years individual has used public transit can help the PMT identify public stakeholders. Individuals who have used public transit for at least a year are more likely to continue relying on the transit service consistently, regardless of the impact of the RTCC. While most On-Board Survey respondents reported using public transit for one to five years, a sizable number of respondents identified as using transit for one month to one year (see **Figure 11**). Users who have been using public transit for a shorter amount of time are more likely to be influenced by the RTCC. If the RTCC proves to coordinate effectively and efficiently, newer riders will be more likely to continue using public transit.

The Metro Transit Survey did not include any questions about the duration of transit service.

Figure 11: On-Board Survey Transit Duration



Having survey respondents identify the purpose of their trip when using public transit helps determine the transit service type and frequency needed. Most of the On-Board Survey users reported relying on public transit to commute to work (**Figures 12 and 13**). This suggests the RTCC needs to coordinate enough transit to satisfy peak travel

times. However, respondents gave a variety of responses and many identified using the “Service for Multiple Trip Purposes.” Another On-Board survey category with sizable feedback was “Other Trips.” Most “Other” responses involved medical needs, such as having access to appointments and services. The Metro Bus Survey had a category to specify medical needs as the trip purpose.

Figure 12: On-Board Survey Trip Purpose

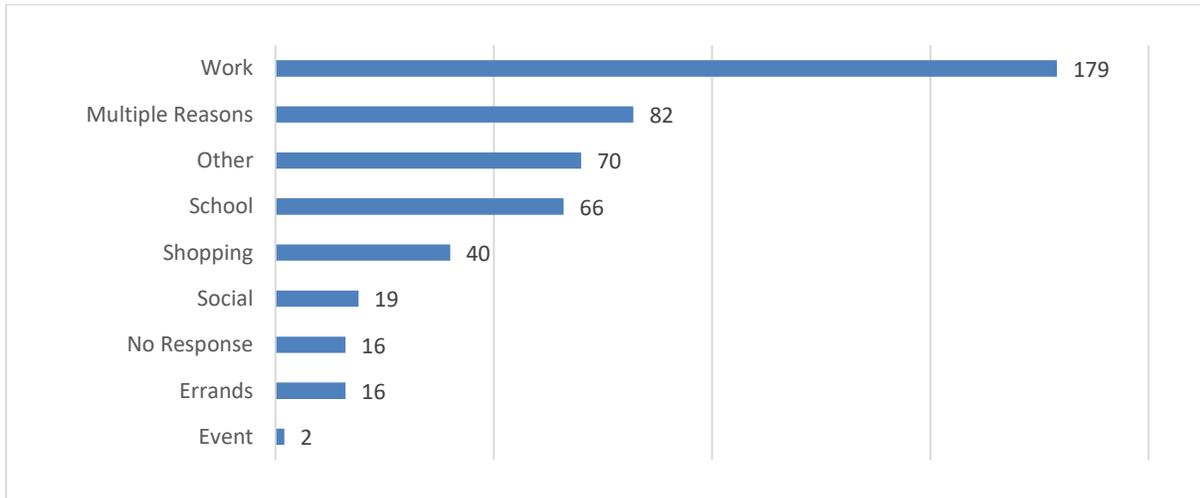
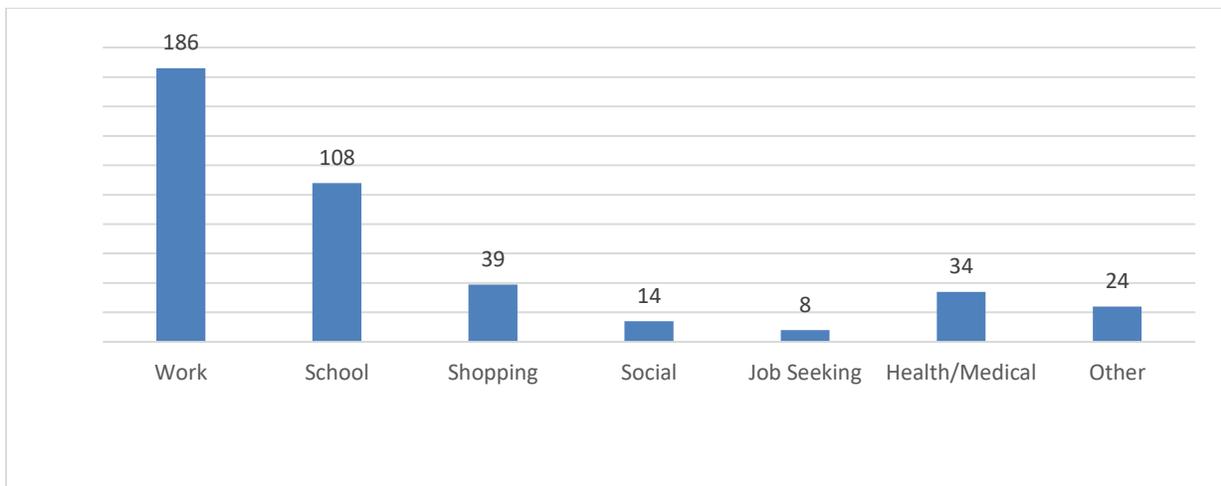
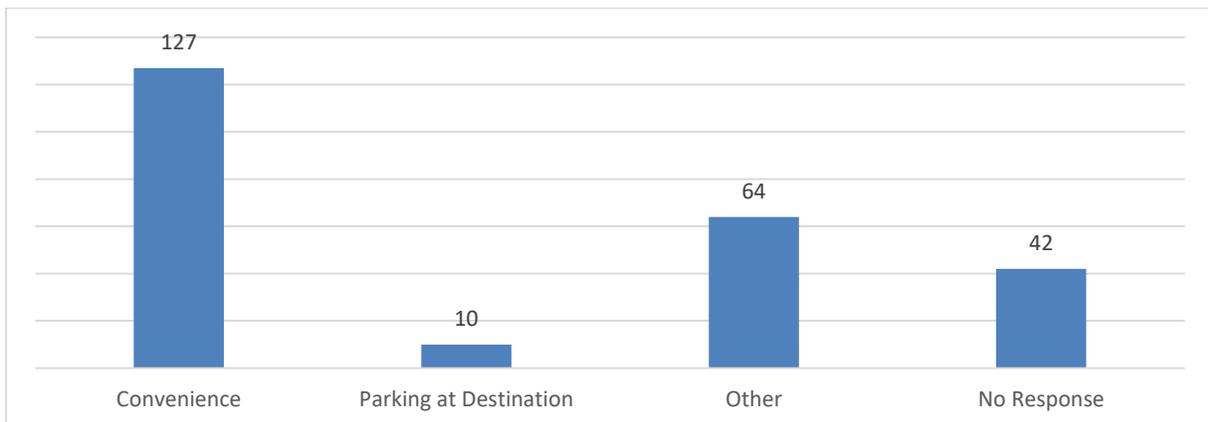


Figure 13: Metro Bus Survey Trip Purpose



Individuals consider multiple factors when choosing a travel type, particularly for individuals who do not use the same mode every day to travel. On-Board Survey respondents were asked to identify the most important factor in choosing their travel mode. Most survey respondents identified convenience as the greatest influence of travel behavior (**Figure 14**). Individuals are more likely to choose convenience over other factors. The RTCC can work to improve transit service by focusing on the convenience of transit. A single service to coordinate transit should make transit more convenient for its users. Transit convenience will be explored more in the next section.

Figure 14: On-Board Survey Factors that Impact Trip Choice



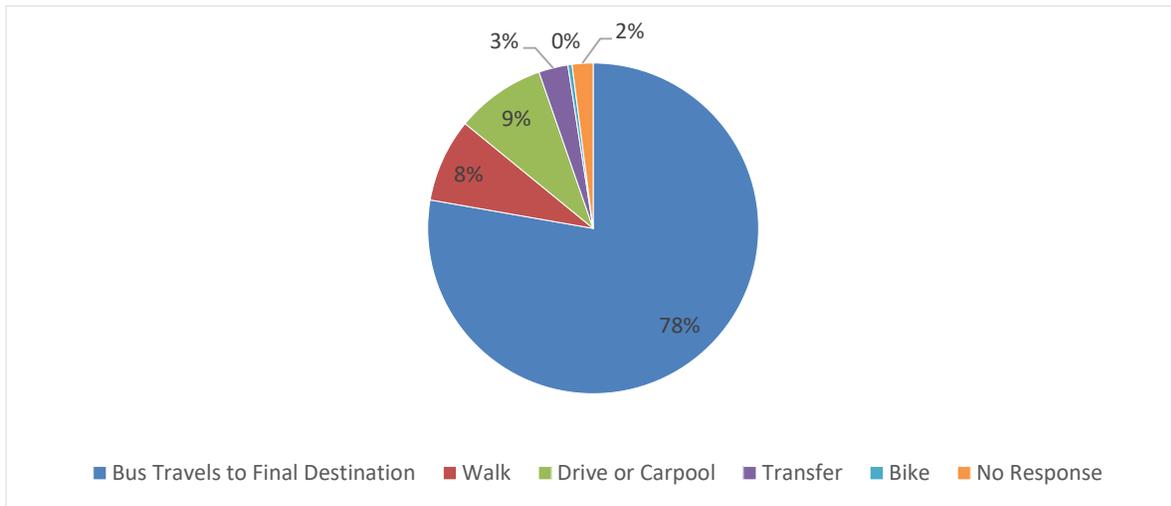
### ***Ridership Convenience***

As described in the previous section, convenience impacts travel behavior. If public transit is not convenient for users, individuals will be less likely to continue to use it. Transit convenience is explored in this survey by determining whether public transit is the users' final destination and what percentage of trips met the rider's needs. Both topics are covered only by the On-Board Survey.

How riders reach their destination after getting off the bus can determine how convenient the service is for them. If the bus drops off users at their final destination, riders are more likely to view public transit as convenient. Public transit was also be considered convenient if the respondent reported a short walk to reach their destination. When users need to drive, carpool, or transfer bus routes, the transit service is more likely to be inconvenient for users.

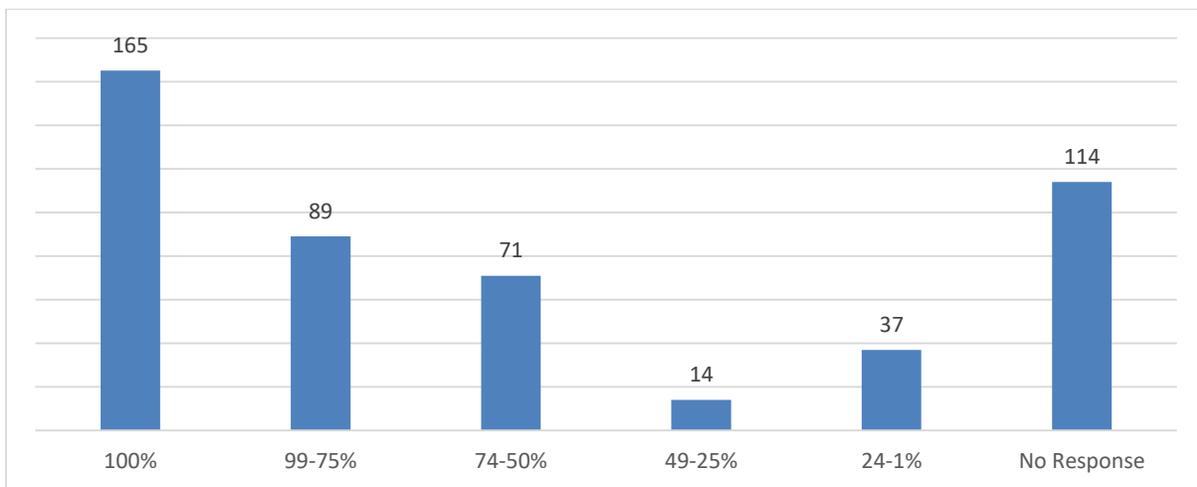
Seventy-eight percent of respondents reported the bus reaching their final destination (**Figure 15**). Eight percent (40 respondents) reported walking after their bus trip. In addition, 30 out of 40 riders who walked to their final destination reported reaching their destination within five minutes. A less than five-minute walk is considered a short walk, which should be easy for transit users.

Figure 15: On-Board Survey Respondents Destination



The On-Board Survey further asked respondents to determine what percent of the users transportation needs were meant by the bus within the past week. Users were able to answer by reporting any single percentage value between 1 and 100. Most respondents reported 100 percent satisfaction (see **Figure 16**), and most survey respondents reported transit satisfaction at least at 75 percent. Transit satisfaction can indicate how convenient users view the transit service.

Figure 16: On-Board Survey Transportation Needs Met by Transit



Transit convenience can determine whether users choose transit. The PMT’s goal should be to make transit even more convenient or convenient to more users. Although many identified transit services as convenient, the RTCC should increase the convenience of transit service through coordinating service.

### **Ridership Satisfaction**

As the RTCC aims to analyze transit convenience, rider satisfaction can impact ridership. Ridership satisfaction is covered only by the On-Board Survey. Ridership satisfaction is categorized by varying levels of satisfaction, ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied.

Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents reported they were very satisfied with the public transit service (**Figure 17**). **Figure 18** shows a further breakdown of rider satisfaction. All satisfied and dissatisfied responses were categorized. Ninety-three percent of the survey respondents reported some sort of transit satisfaction compared to only 4 percent of dissatisfied users. Users who indicated satisfaction reported higher levels of satisfaction, whereas dissatisfied users reported lower levels of dissatisfaction.

Figure 17: On-Board Survey Transit Satisfaction

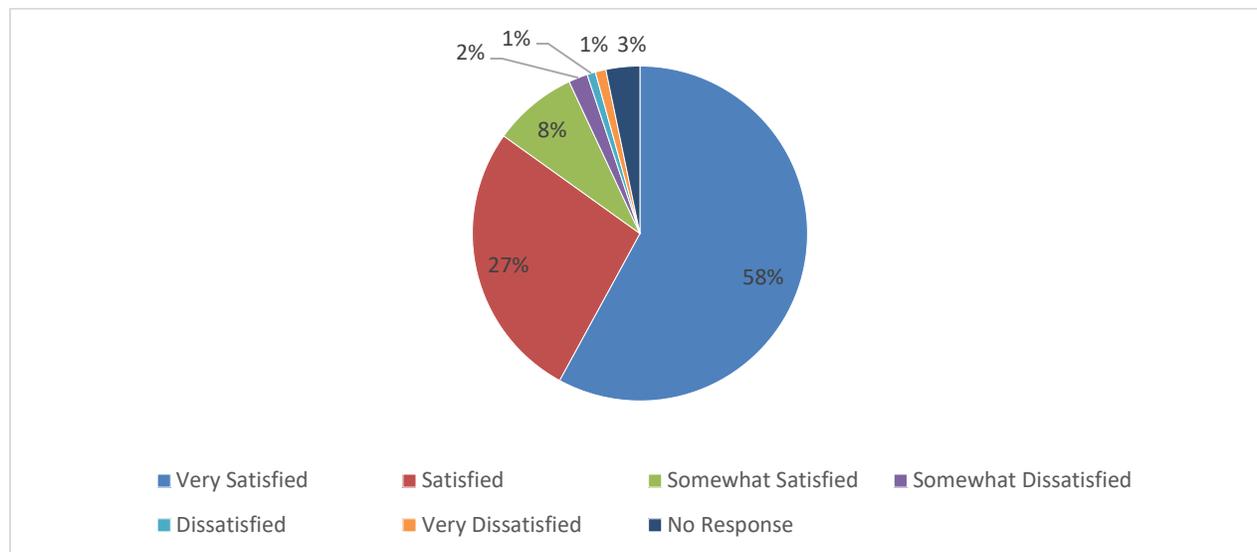


Figure 18: On-Board Survey Satisfaction Breakdown

Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfaction Level
93%	4%	Total
58%	1%	Very Satisfied or Dissatisfied
27%	1%	Satisfied or Dissatisfied
8%	2%	Somewhat Satisfied or Dissatisfied
No Response: 3%		

Ridership satisfaction can be used by the RTCC. RTCCs do not provide transit but instead can make transit service more convenient through facilitation. Because transit satisfaction is reported higher, the PMT needs to ensure that the RTCC maintains transit satisfaction.

### Summary

The rider survey gave riders the opportunity to share their insights and priorities for transit ridership. An effective RTCC should increase positive perspectives on public transit, and improve service where gaps are identified. As the PMT shapes the RTCC, the PMT needs to consider current transit riders to create efficient transportation solutions.

Going forward, the PMT should consider how the rider survey can be used with the information provided in the stakeholder survey (**Memo #2**). The PMT can identify what

feedback they should prioritize, how the rider survey connects to the stakeholder memo, and if there are any major differences between the two results that need to be addressed. The PMT should identify if there are any gaps from the survey responses.

Once the PMT identifies and addresses priorities based on the rider survey, the RTCC can shape their priorities, and update their mission and vision to meet the needs of riders.