

2004 Arlington County Public Perceptions of Transit Study

SPONSOR:

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RESEARCH VENDOR:

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OVERALL STUDY PURPOSE:

- ☞ This project was a component of a semi-annual psychographic and behavioral study of Washington area residents.
- ☞ The purpose of this study was to determine Washington area residents' behaviors and attitudes toward transportation, in particular toward the private car, Metrobus, and Metrorail.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- ☞ Determine the size and characteristics of current rider customer groups
- ☞ Identify how these customer groups are distinct from the regional population as a whole
- ☞ Determine the size and characteristics of the customer groups representing the greatest potential for conversion to transit from other modes of transportation
- ☞ Identify the service-related and/or attitudinal factors that inhibit increased use of transit by these groups
- ☞ Identify motivating positions and marketing strategies that would overcome factors inhibiting use or increased use of transit within individual market segments
- ☞ Determine the size and characteristics of the customer groups representing non-potential groups
- ☞ Identify the specific information needs of existing customers and potential customers
- ☞ Identify the most effective medium(a) for meeting those information needs to affect mode choice decisions

METHODOLOGY:

Mode of Data Collection	Random Digit Dialing Telephone Survey
Completed Surveys	503 Respondents Total: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Private vehicle only – 274- Mass transit - 206- Ethnicity – 78% white
Survey Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Residents of Arlington County and those who may live elsewhere but work in Arlington County- Must be at least 18 years of age
Survey Instrument	Questionnaire and CATI Interviewing

KEY FINDINGS:

Private Car Usage:

- ☞ Use of the private car was quite prevalent in Arlington County.
 - The vast majority of all trips taken by Arlington residents were by private car (74%), with more than one-half being by private car occupied by the driver alone (55%).
- ☞ Private vehicle only users tended to be older and have a higher household income than did transit users. They also were more likely to be married and not employed full-time, than were mass transit users.
 - Mass transit users were significantly more likely to have a post-graduate or professional degree.
- ☞ Residents tended to be neutral in their opinions of the private car as a mode of transportation.
 - They did, however, show concern about cost, safety, parking, and other issues.

Metrorail:

- ☞ Use of Metrorail, particularly for commuting to and from work or school, was fairly strong among Arlington County residents – there is still room for growth, though.
 - Virtually every resident (97%) had used Metrorail at some point in the past.
 - More than half of Arlington County residents said that they are using Metrorail less often now than they did in the past.
- ☞ Metrorail users tended to be younger, single, employed full-time, and have a college degree, compared with non-users.
 - The household income, gender, and ethnicity of Metrorail riders were comparable to those of the general public.
- ☞ Arlington County residents had generally positive opinions of Metrorail as a mode of transportation – lifestyle, parking, and safety issues were factors impeding greater use.

Metrobus:

- ☞ Use of Metrobus appeared to be limited among Arlington County residents, although, almost three-quarters said they have used Metrobus at some point in the past.
 - Only 4% of Arlington County residents' trips are typically made by Metrobus.
 - A large proportion of area residents said they use Metrobus less often than they did in the past - primarily because of a preference for the car or Metrorail.
 - Almost nine in ten residents said they live within four blocks of a bus stop.

- ☞ Arlington County residents held less positive opinions of Metrobus as a mode of transportation – safety, convenience, comfort, available, and meeting transportation needs were areas of concern.

Other Issues:

- ☞ 73% of Arlington County residents were aware of SmarTrip – 30% were currently using it.
- ☞ About four in ten of those employed were aware that their employer offers Metrocheck or SmartBenefits.
- ☞ When asked what sources they have used to plan trips, the large majority said they used maps or signage at Metrorail stations the most.
 - The Internet was the most popular information resource respondents would consider using as a potential option.
- ☞ More than two-thirds of respondents reacted favorably to the idea of video monitors on Metrobuses and Metrorail cars.
- ☞ More than one-third reacted favorably to the idea of animated advertising within the tunnels of the Metrorail system.

OTHER RELATED STUDIES, PLANS & DOCUMENTS:

2003 Arlington County "Pike Ride" Transit Service Study
2005 Arlington County Public Perceptions of Transit Study
2006 Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative Study

AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS:

PowerPoint Presentation

KEY WORDS:

Arlington County , Car, Commuters, Metrobus, Metrocheck, Metropolitan DC Area, Metrorail, Perceptions, Private Vehicle, Smartbenefits, Smartrip, Transit, Transportation