



Commuter Page.com Study

July 2007

Prepared By



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Study Background & Objectives

Study Background

- This research study is a component of the 2006-2008 ACCS Program Research and Evaluation Plan.
- The overall purpose of this study is four-fold:
 1. Understand how *CommuterPage.com* is currently performing.
 2. Identify ways to improve the site
 3. Measure the overall impact of ACCS' investment in *CommuterPage.com*.
 4. Establish benchmarks from which performance gains can be made.

Study Objectives

- Identify what prompted visit(s).
- Identify users' needs for commuter information and trip planning assistance services.
- Assess the current customer experience and related satisfaction with *CommuterPage.com*.
- Find perceived opportunities and challenges with site's existing products/services.
- Identify return on investment/impact of *CommuterPage.com*; results/outcomes of site services - did it influence or support travel change.

Study Methodology

Methodology

- Pop-up advertisement of survey on main pages of CommuterPage.com site from May 14, 2007 to June 25, 2007.
 - Pop-up appears twice but did not return once the user closed it for the second time.
 - Static survey advertisement remained on the page.
- Drawing incentive offered where one respondent earns either \$250 in Metro fares or Amazon.com gift certificate.
- An email was also sent to 2300 email news, ART Alerts, and schedule updates subscribers. Unfortunately, a few of those who responded from this group were not familiar with CommuterPage.com.
- 11 questions in the survey remained constant while 9 other questions rotated in (in groups of three) to keep total survey length down.
 - Therefore, each respondent only answered 14 total questions.
- 346 Respondents total
 - Between 101 and 139 Respondents for Rotating Questions

Constant Questions

1. How do you rate CommuterPage.com on each of the following characteristics?
2. What do you like about CommuterPage.com? How could we make CommuterPage.com better?
3. Did you find what you were looking for on CommuterPage.com today?

7. In what year were you born?
8. Are you male or female?
9. What is your current employment status?
10. What type of transportation do you typically use to get to work/school?
11. What is your home zip code?

Revolving Questions

GROUP 1

4. What is the purpose of your visit to CommuterPage.com today?
5. Which of the following organizations and services are you aware of?
6. Please indicate which of the following materials you downloaded or requested today.

GROUP2

4. How did you first hear about CommuterPage.com?
5. How often do you visit CommuterPage.com?
6. Can you provide an example of an outstanding informational Web site?

Revolving Questions *continued*

GROUP3

4. Since your first started using CommuterPage.com, have you made any of the following changes in how you travel to work? Did any information, service, or benefit you received from CommuterPage.com influence you or assist you to make this change?
5. How did you typically travel to work before you made this change?
6. Since you first started using CommuterPage.com, have you made any of the following changes in how you make non-work trips around Arlington County or around the Washington metropolitan region? Did any information, service, or benefit you received from CommuterPage.com influence you or assist you to make this change?

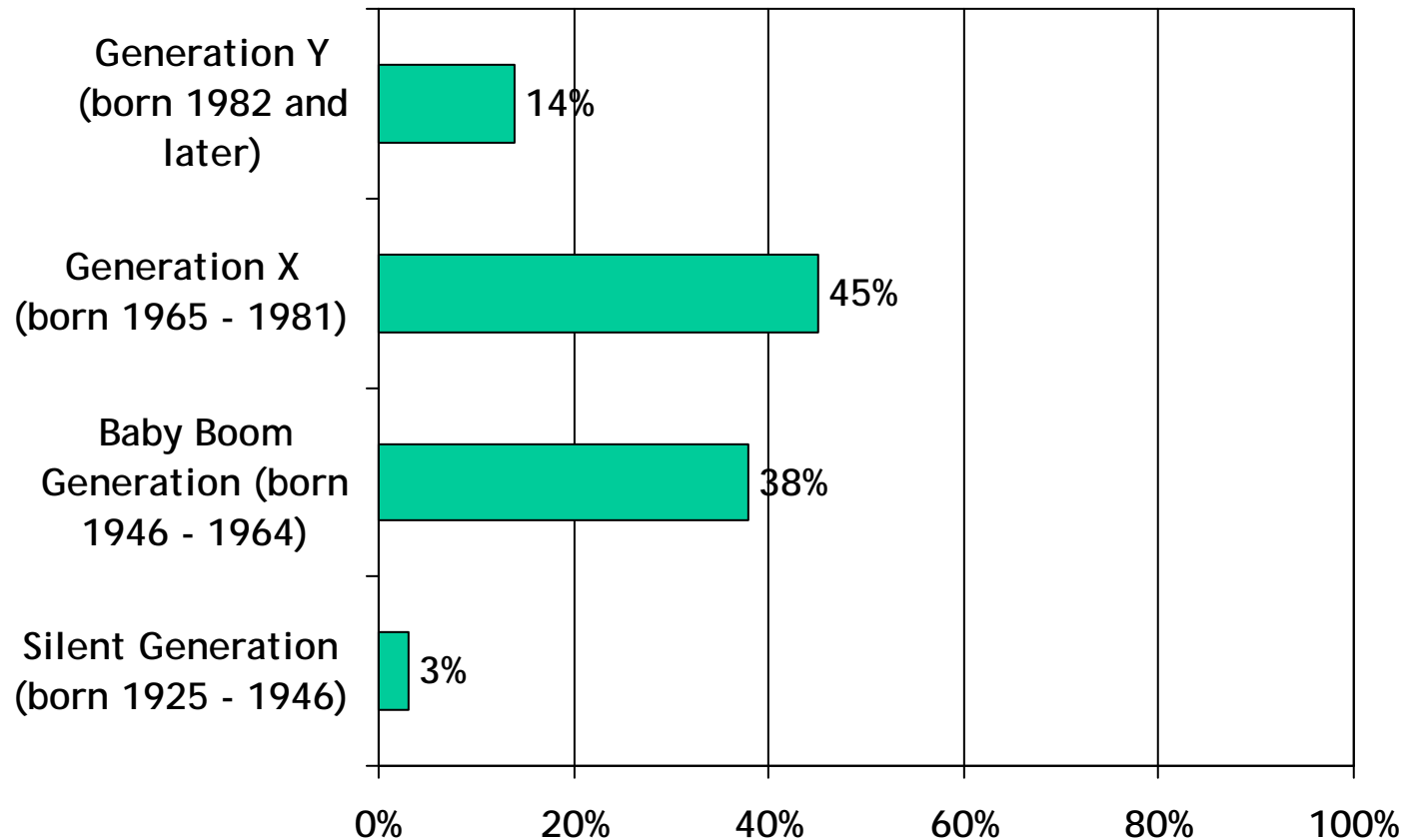
Web Site Statistics

CommuterPage.com Site Statistics

- 2.6M Visitor Sessions in FY 07
 - an increase of 22% over FY06
- 843K Unique Visitors in FY07
 - an increase of 3% over FY06
- Top 10 Pages for FY07
 1. Arlington Transportation Partners
 2. Home page
 3. Taxicabs
 4. Commuter Rail
 5. ART-Arlington Transit
 6. Metro Connections
 7. Bicycle Trails and Routes
 8. Palm OS Schedules for Metrobus
 9. Current Traffic Conditions
 10. Local and Commuter Buses

Respondent Profile

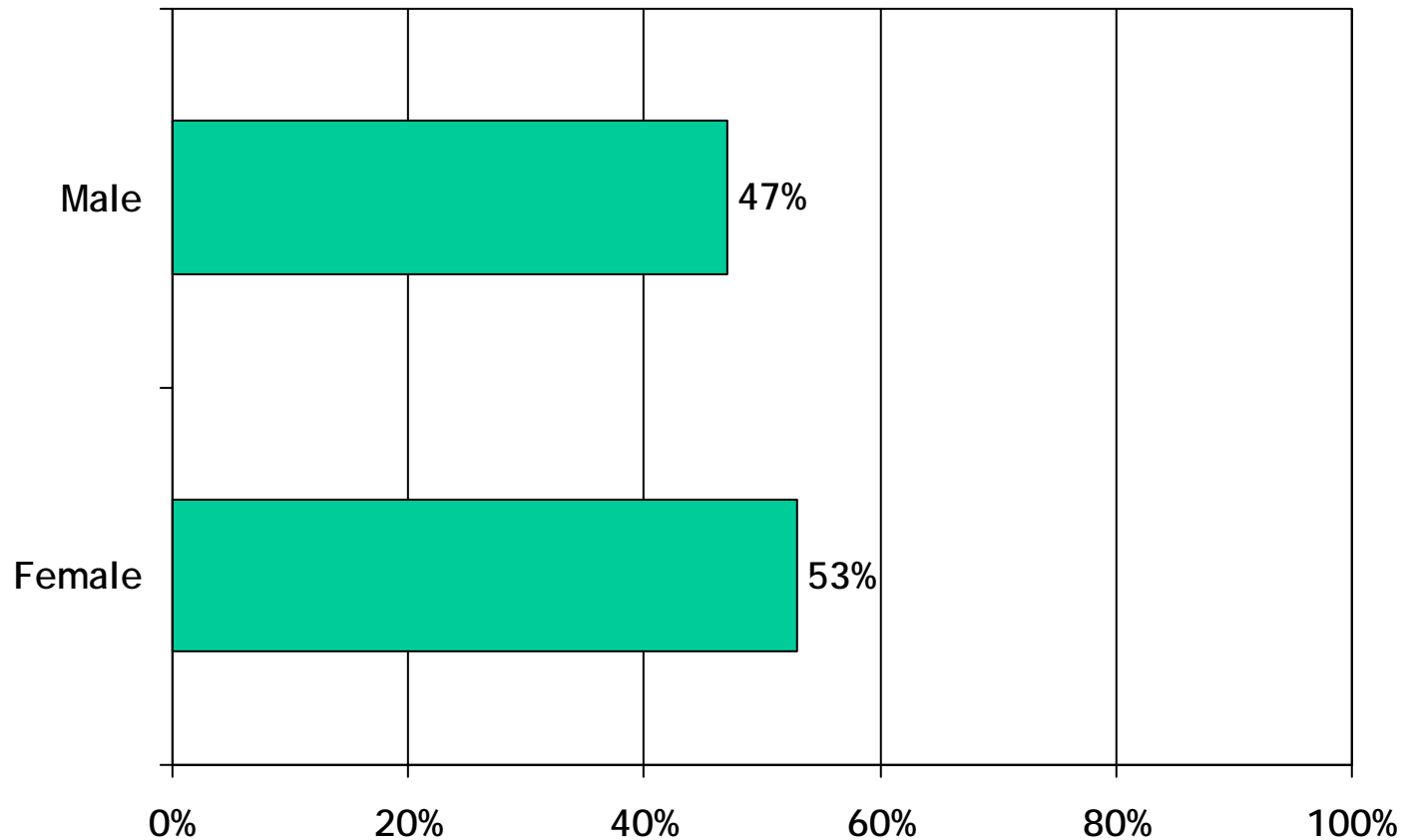
The Mean Age of the Respondents is 40



Arlington Residents are less likely than other residents to be Baby Boomers (34% vs. 48%).

Q7: (based on) In what year were you born?

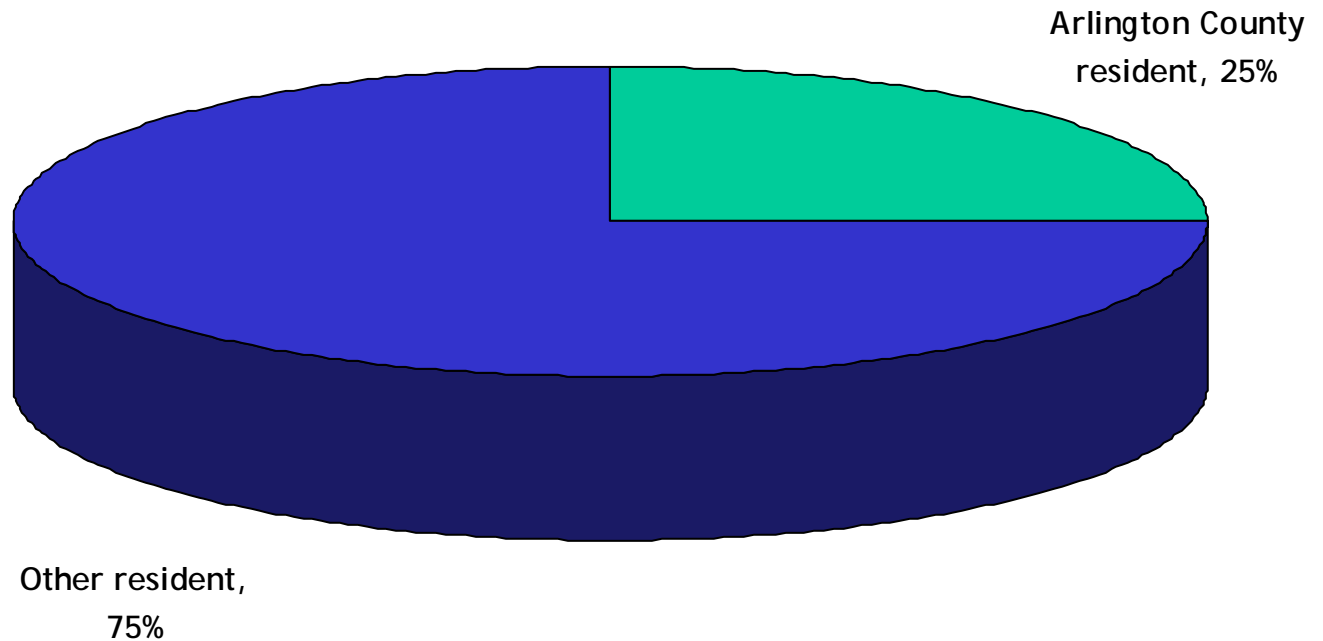
Gender is Almost Evenly Split



Q8: Are you . . .

Only a Quarter Actually Live in Arlington

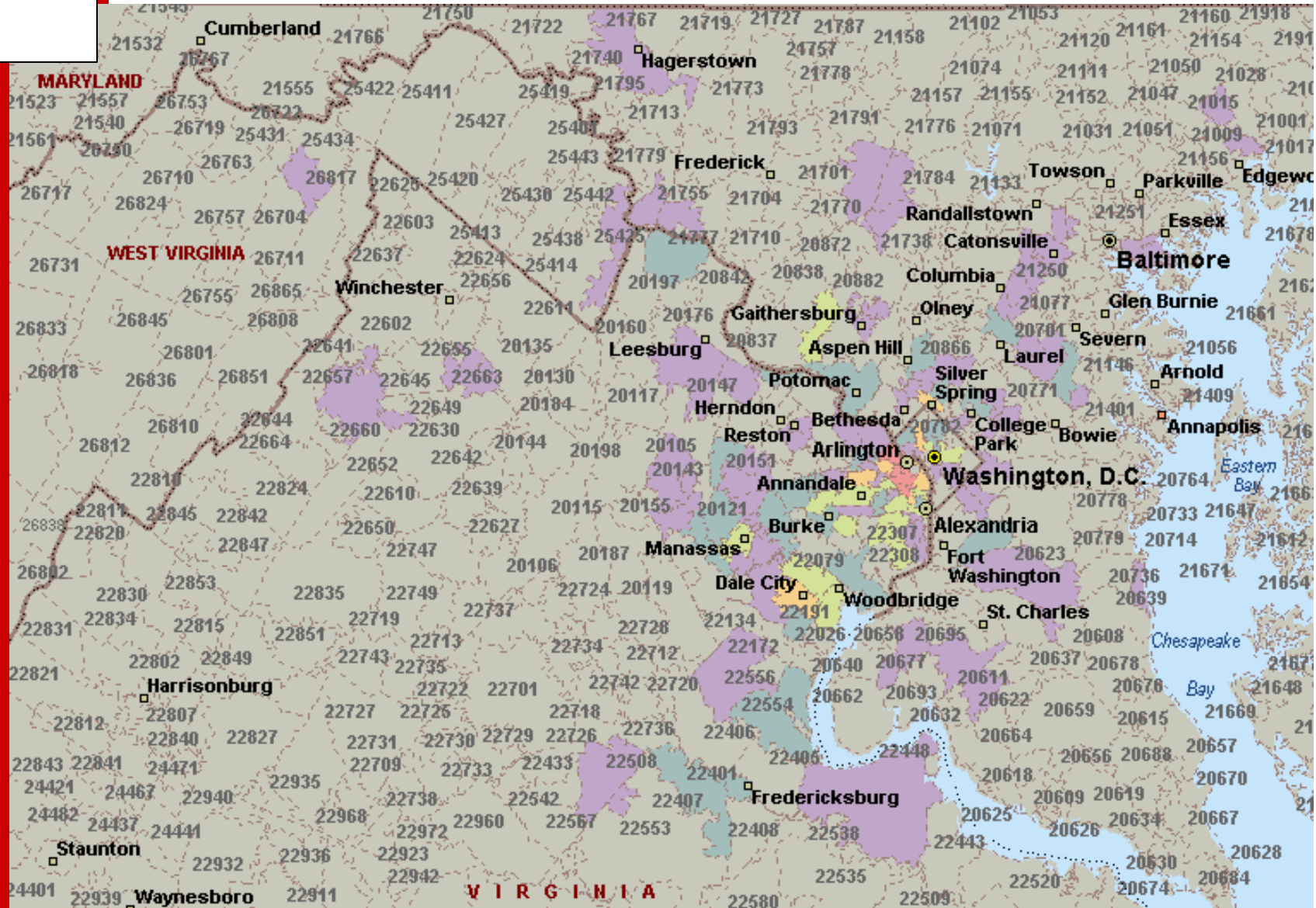
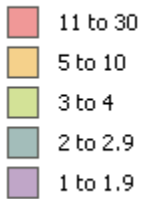
Only 35 (10%) of Zip Codes begin with digits other than 20XXX, 21XXX, or 22XXX.



Q11: Area of residence (based on: What is your home zip code?)

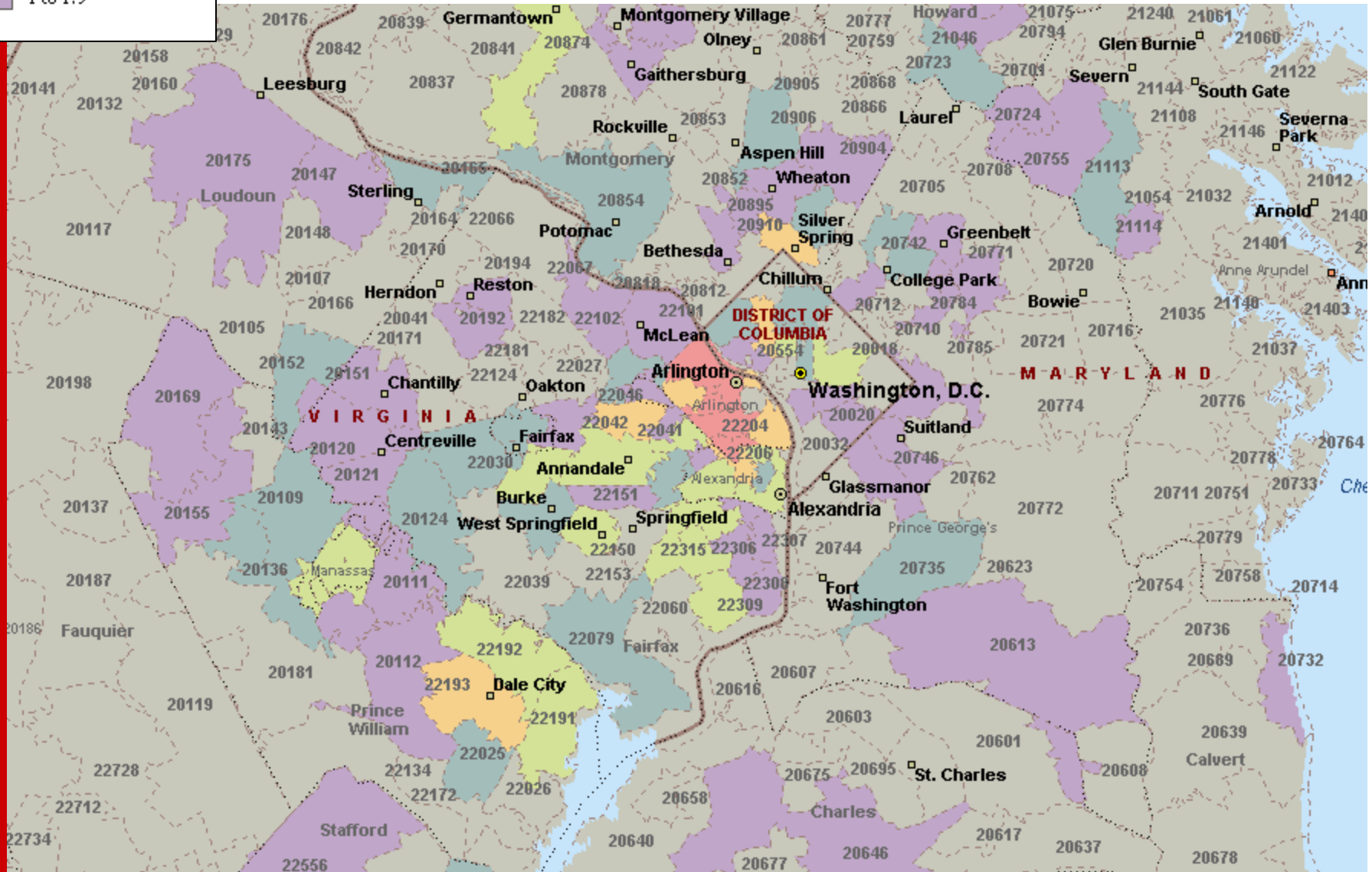
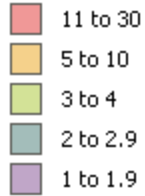
Quantity of Respondents Per Zip Code

Quantity by ZIP Code

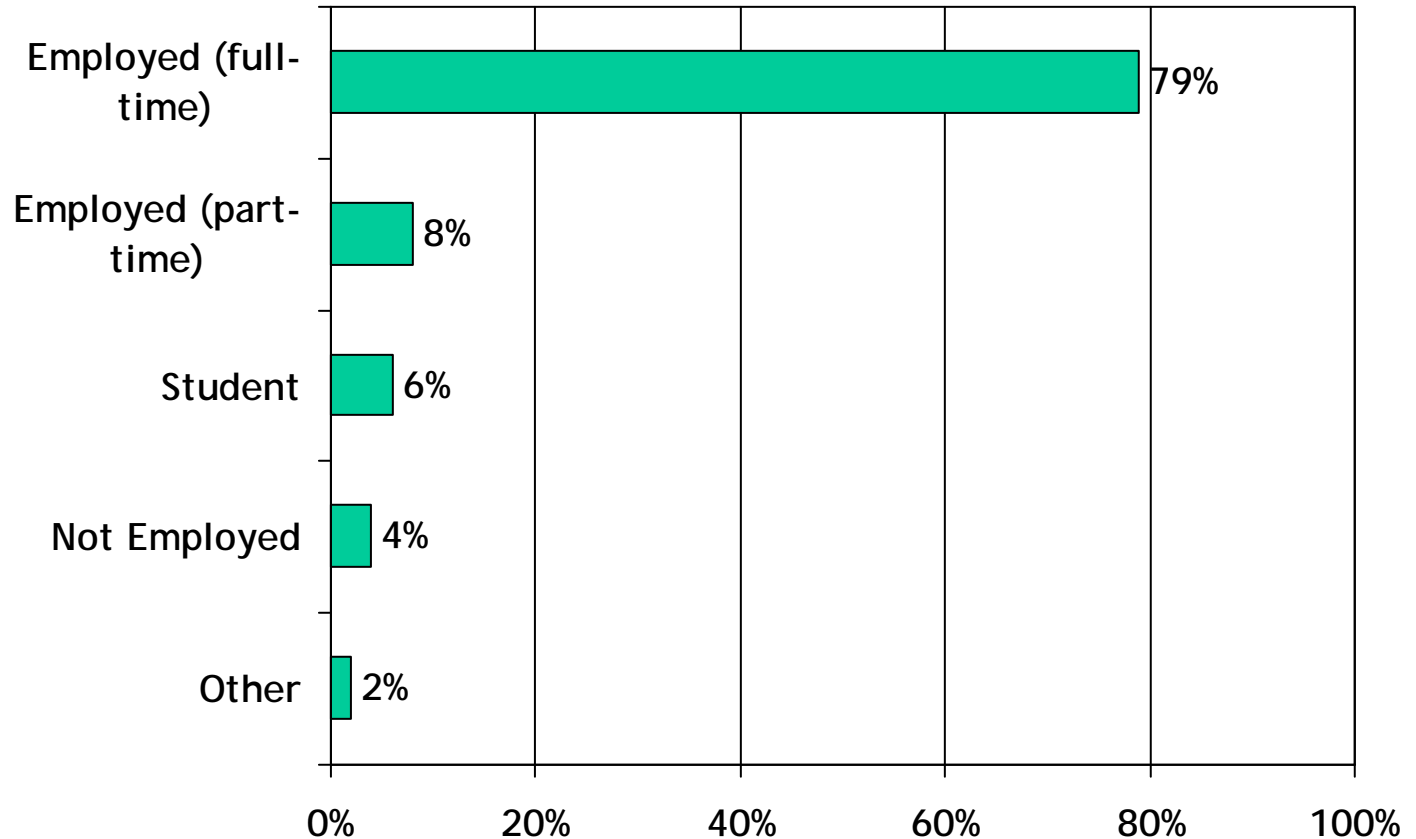


Quantity of Respondents Per Zip Code (Zoom In)

Quantity by ZIP Code



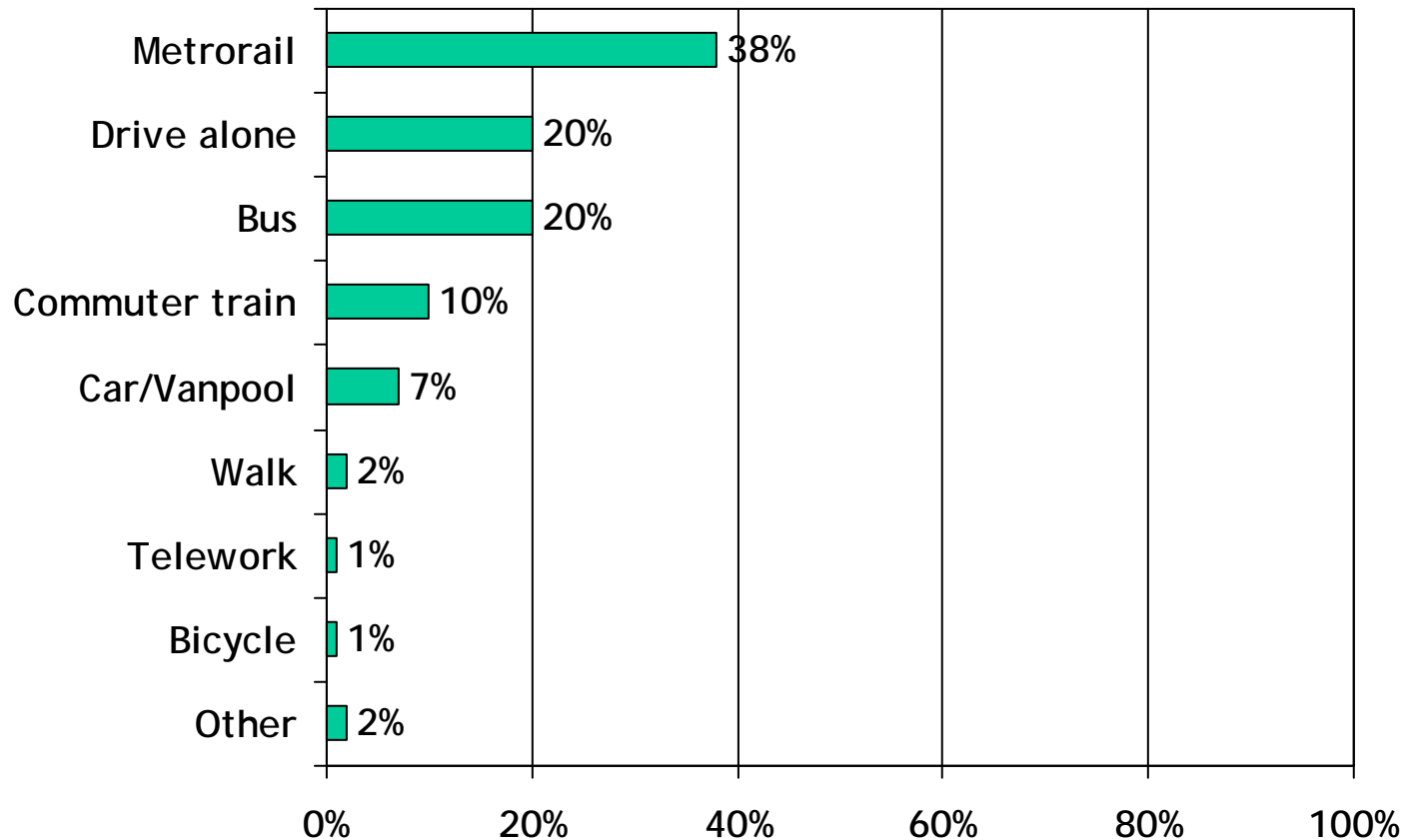
87% of Respondents Are Employed



Arlington Residents are more likely than other residents to not be employed (9% vs. 3%).

Q9: What is your current employment status?

A Third Typically Commute via Metrorail



Females (7% vs. 14%) and Arlington residents (0% vs. 13%) are less likely than their counterparts to ride the Commuter train.

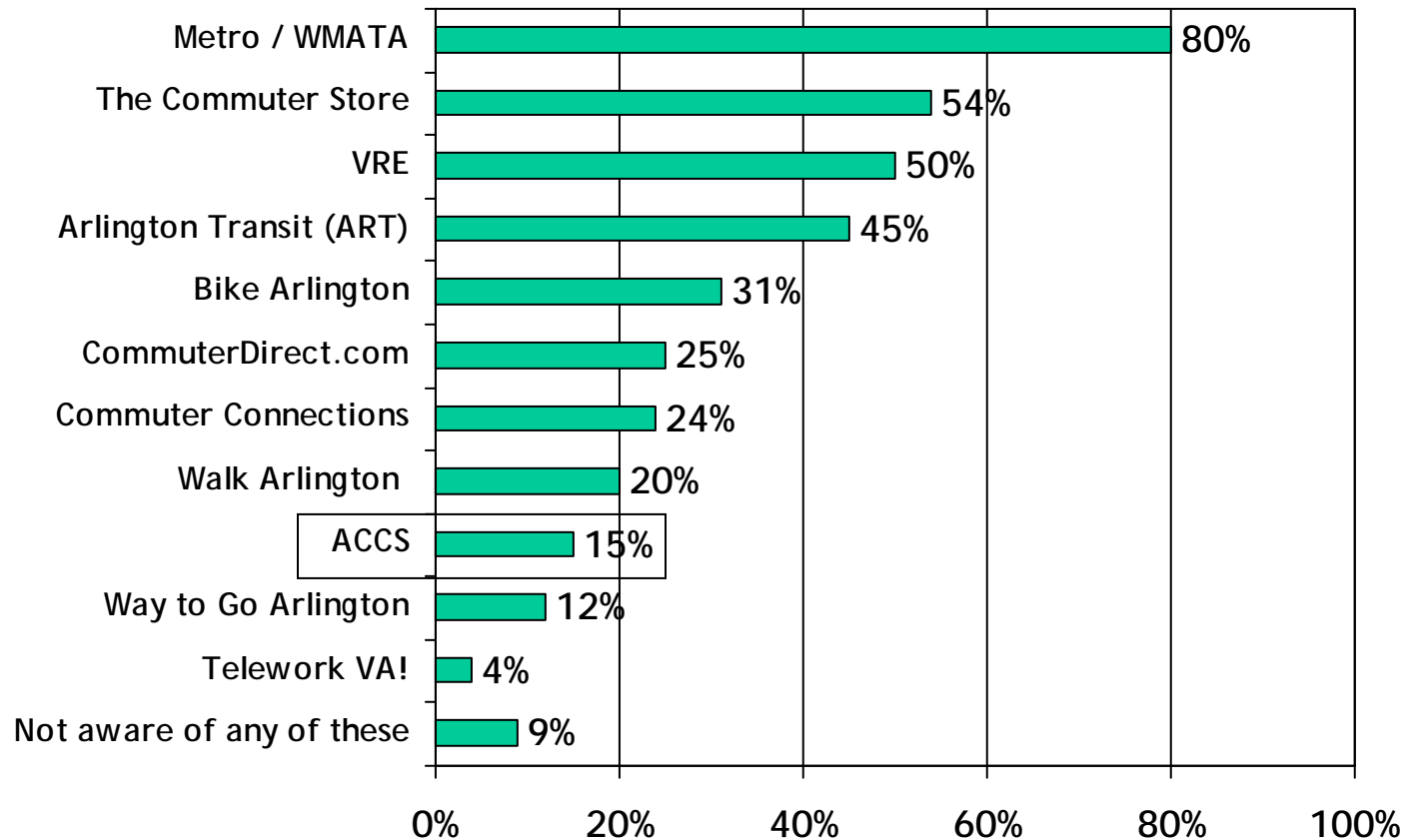
Q10: What type of transportation do you typically use to get to work/school?

Detailed Findings

User Behavior

15% Are Aware of ACCS

Only 9% Are Not Aware of Any of These Organizations

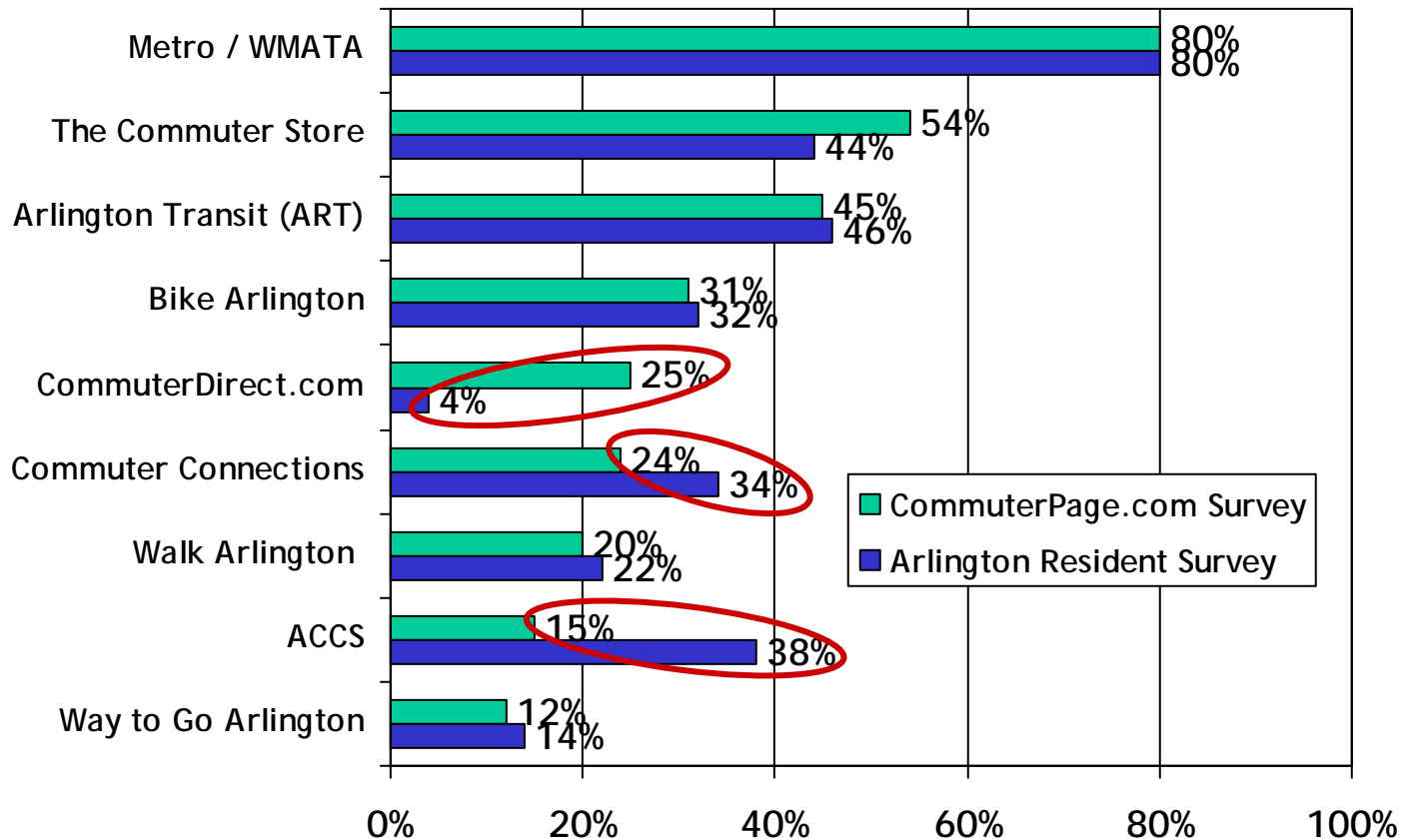


Males were more likely than females to be aware of Commuter Connections (36% vs. 15%).

QB: Which of the following organizations and services are you aware of?

n = 101

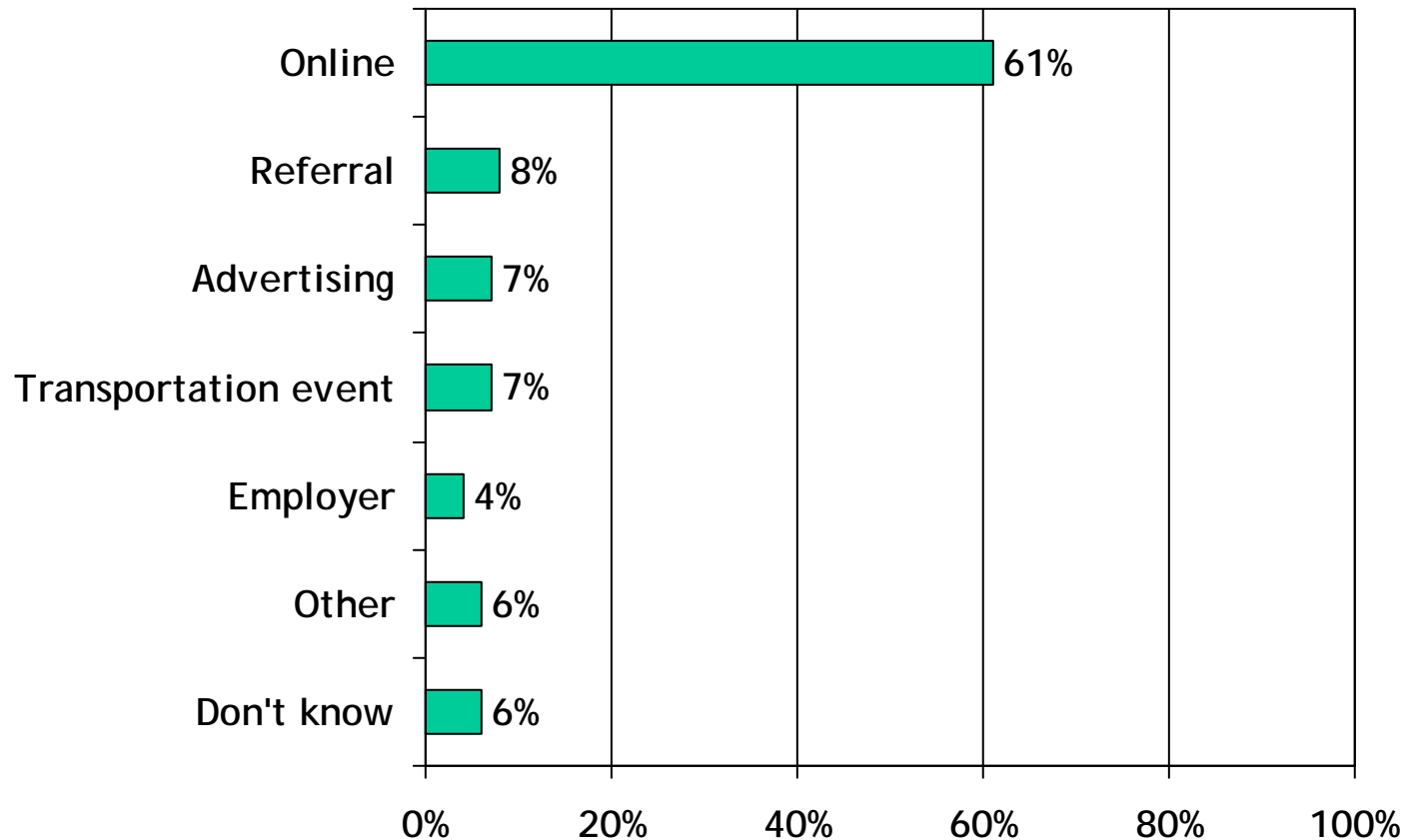
Awareness Compares Favorably With the 2006 Arlington County Resident Study



Commuter
Page
n = 101
Resident Study
n = 447

QB: Which of the following organizations and services are you aware of?

Most Come to CommuterPage.com Via Some Other Online Source



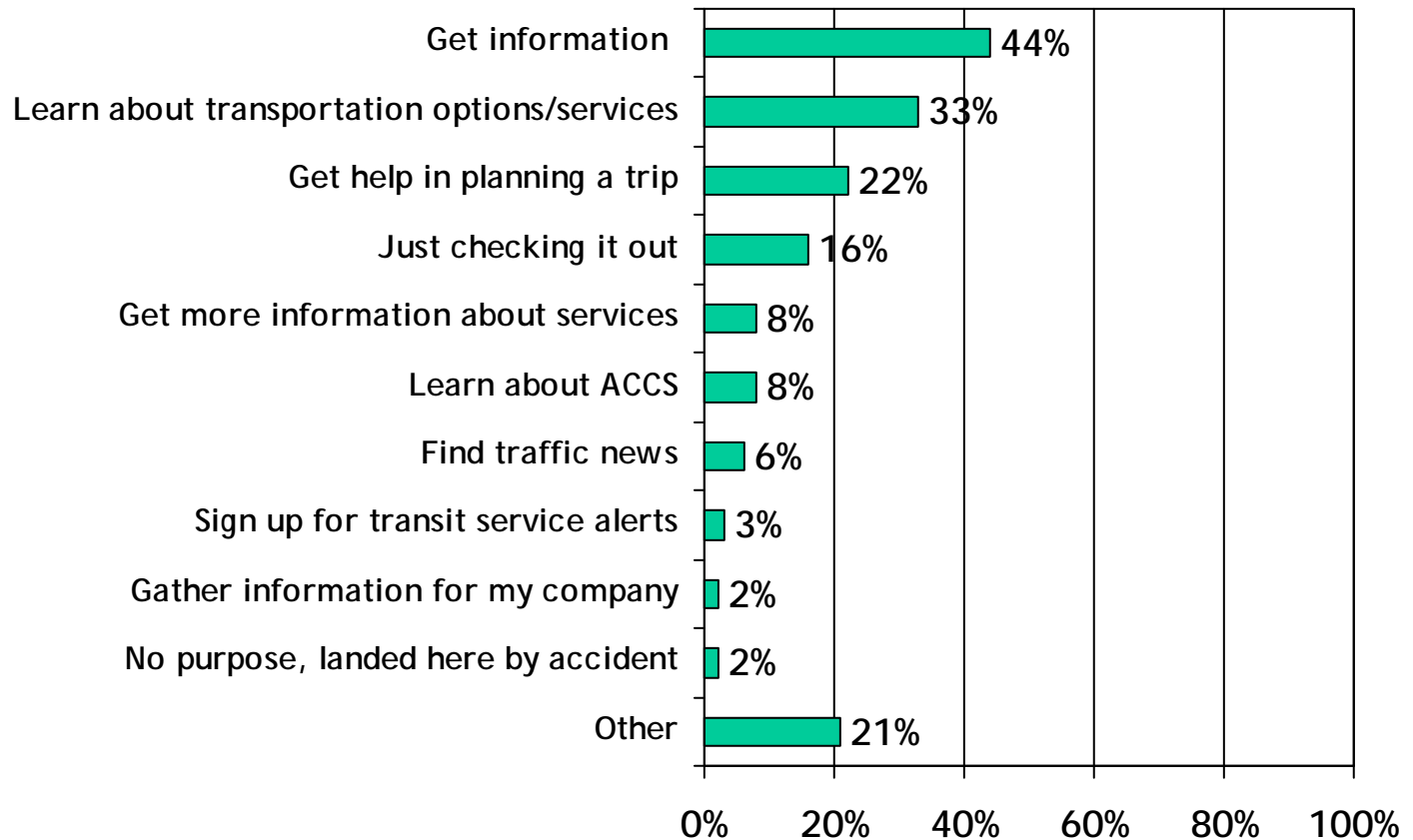
QD: How did you first hear about CommuterPage.com?

n = 139

Not Surprisingly, People Go to CommuterPage.com to Get Information About Transportation

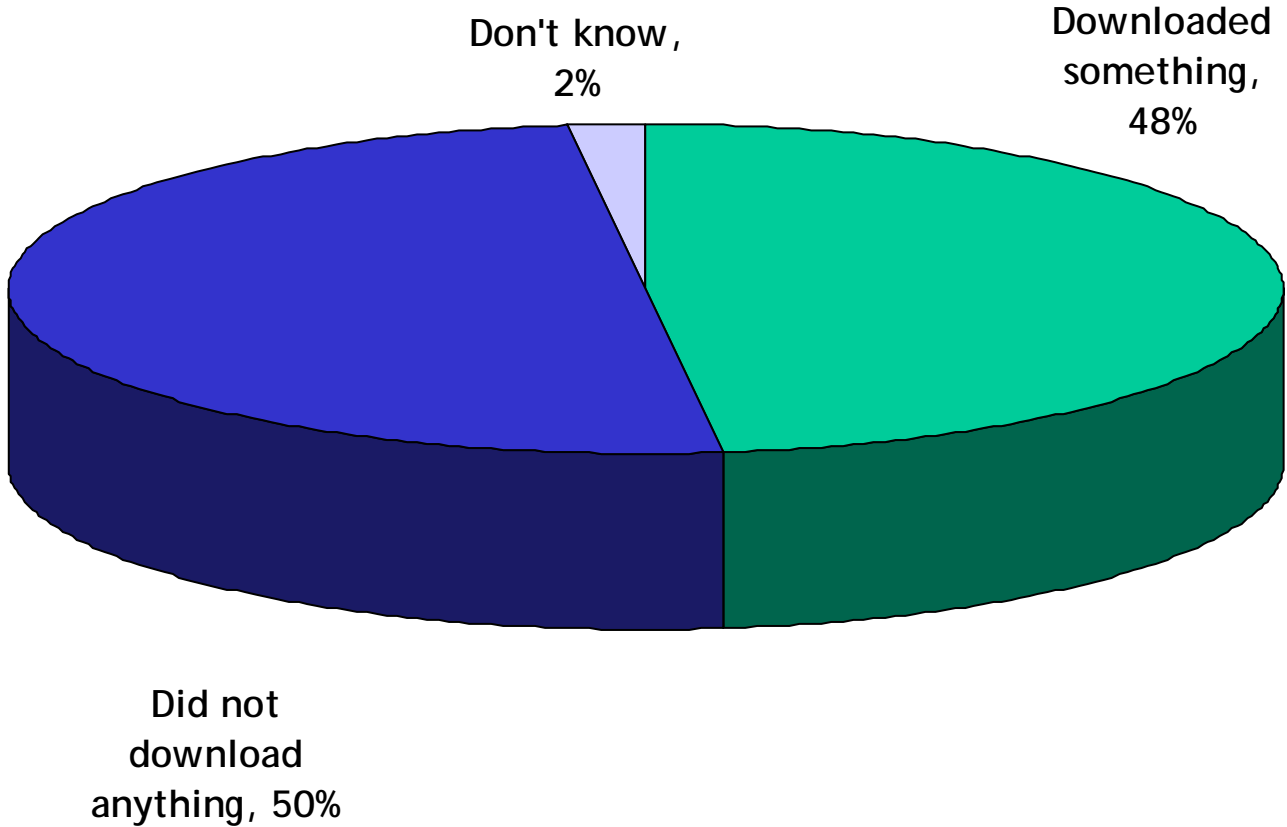
Those who gave the site a 4 or 5 on all aspects were more likely than those who didn't to come to the site to get help in planning a trip (36% vs. 16%).

Note: 5 respondents said they came for the survey.



QA: What is the purpose of your visit to CommuterPage.com today?

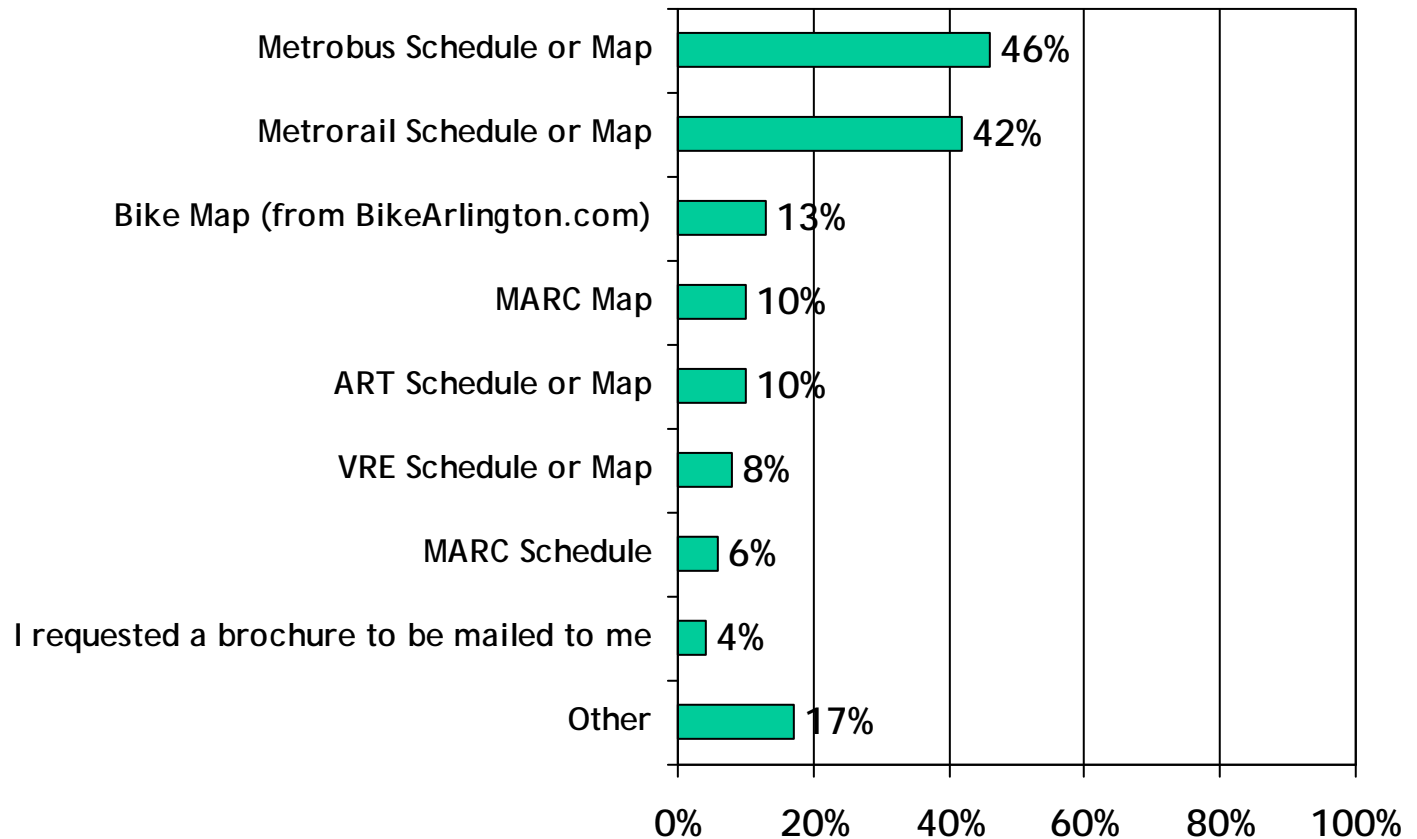
Almost Half Downloaded or Requested Something



QC: Please indicate which of the following materials you downloaded or requested today.

n = 101

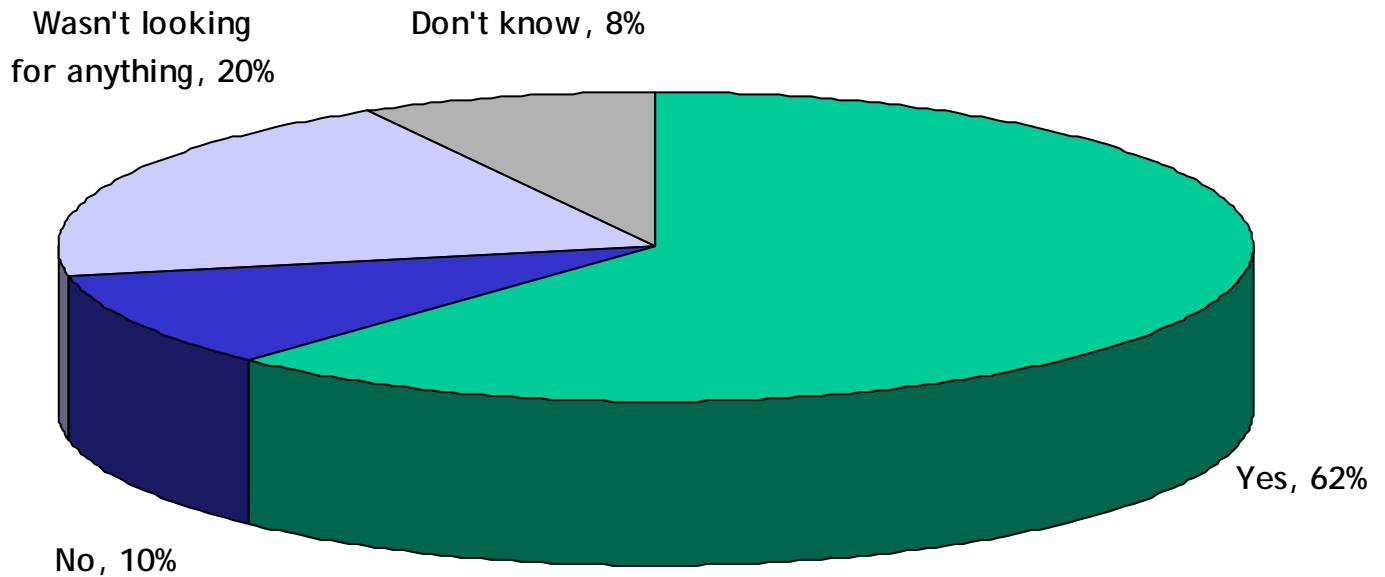
Metrobus Items Are the Most Frequently Downloaded & Requested



Males were more likely than females to download a Bike Map (12% vs. 2%) or a MARC Schedule (7% vs. 0%).

QC: Please indicate which of the following materials you downloaded or requested today.

86% of the People Who Knew What They Were Looking For, Found It



Those who gave the site a 4 or 5 on all aspects were more likely than those who didn't to find what they were looking for (77% vs. 55%).

Q3: Did you find what you were looking for on CommuterPage.com today?

The Items People Were Looking For, But Could Not Find

- "Van pool from Mount Airy"
- "bus schedule 4 mobile"
- "A trip planner."
- "Photos of Arlington's urban villages."
- "how to get to Mandarin Oriental hotel from downtown"
- "schedules for DC buses in PDA format to download."
- "Schedule for Skyline/Crytal City shuttle."
- "Link to download VRE schedules and others for BlackBerry"
- ". . . some kind of email or RSS notification when something changes on a particular bus route (like the 2 lines going down Washington Blvd.); I'd also like to get the schedules on a spreadsheet."
- "palm format bus line schedules"
- "I was looking for information on carpooling to Loudoun county from the District during week days."
- "A map that would take me from the Clarendon area to the Pentagon."
- "King George county commute info"
- "An easy to follow commute to the Mall from Arlington map."
- "I was looking to see if there was a way to add money to my smartcard from the internet using a debit/credit card."
- "Information about how to travel to a theater in Shirlington."
- "Downloadable schedules... I need to keep searching."

More Items People Were Looking For, But Could Not Find

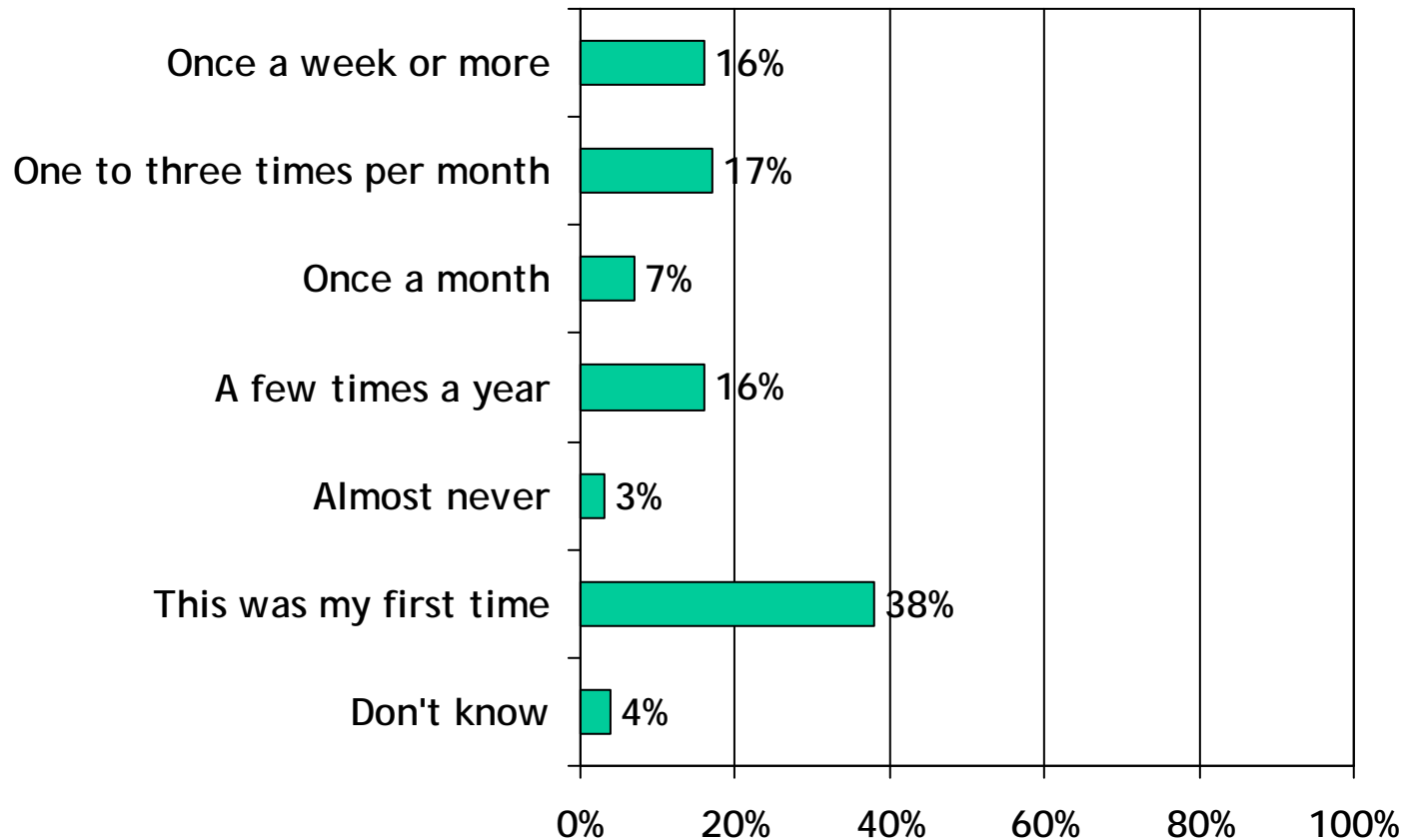
- "I passed a commuter bus hub along the Dulles Toll Road, and I wanted to find out what buses go to this station. I couldn't find any information about major bus stations, what buses go along the Dulles Toll Road, or anything else that would help me figure out how to get to this station."
- "I wanted to see a defined map of Westover"
- "estimated fares"
- "How ART works and why it exists."
- "Nearest metro bus stop to my home address. easy route from my home to my office using ART and Metro services."
- "detailed Fairfax County Connector stops from Franconia-Springfield to Terminal Road on bus 331 or 332."
- "A list of taxicabs in Northern Virginia."
- "services available nearby"
- "I think it is available (electronic trans schedules for BB) just couldn't dig it out of the site."
- "Directions to Rosylin from RiverPlace apts. Metro changes to get to DAR building and name of stop closest."
- "link to WMATA"
- "Smart-trip badge holder."
- "info regarding smartrip cards"
- "more information on airport transit"
- "pdf of new bus schedule"
- "Interactive Bike Map."

Many Were First-time Visitors, But a Third Visit More Than Once a Month

Those who gave the site a 4 or 5 on all aspects were more likely than those who didn't to visit the site once a week or more (25% vs. 12%) or once a month (14% vs. 4%).

Males are more likely than females to visit once a week or more (24% vs. 7%) but Females are more likely to be first-timers (49% vs. 27%).

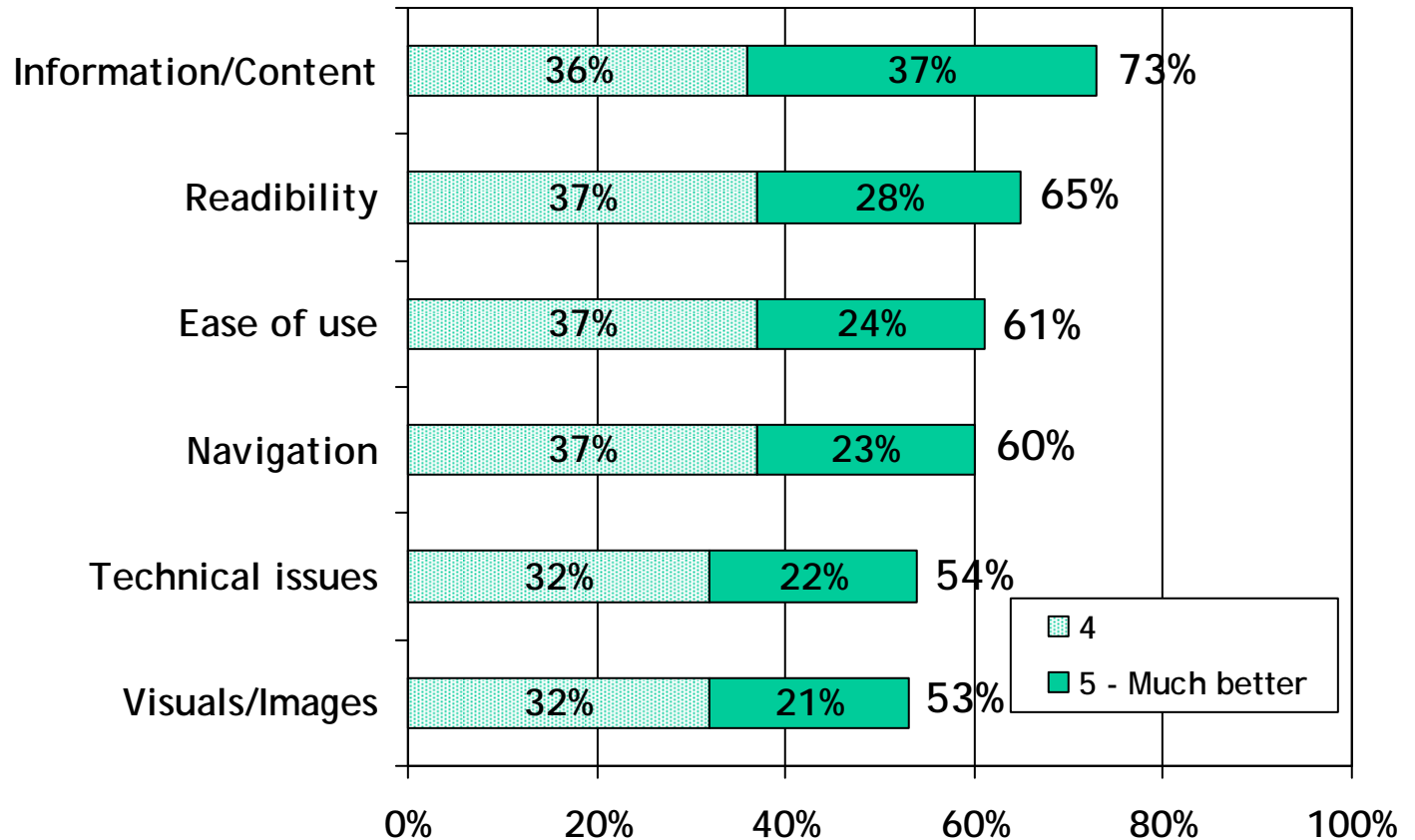
Arlington residents were less likely than non-residents to be first timers (22% vs. 44%).



QE: How often do you visit CommuterPage.com?

Customer Experience

Three Quarters Find the Content on CommuterPage.com Better Than That of Other Informational Sites



Full Results
are Listed in
the Appendix

Q1: How do you rate CommuterPage.com on each of the following characteristics?

Of Those Who Gave Information/Content a 1 or 2 . . .

"Lots of information on the page. And the info is good, but the homepage is overwhelming with too much clutter. I had to think way to much to find what I was looking for."

"Commuter Pages is really not useful for commuters from Maryland into DC. It used to carry more information for these commuters, but no longer does."

"Because it should be easy to find information via pda,palm etc buts it not. Way to large a format"

"The map was hard to read. It did not let me look at other lines. I cannot figure out how to get from one point to another or to the line itself. This does not help new visitors. I was in DC a few years ago and forget the names of stops I need. I will be in DC on June 26th and need help soon."

Q1a: Why did you give Information/Content this rating?

Of Those Who Gave Readability - Type Size a 1 or 2 . . .

"Too much text on a single page and it seems that the text is all over the place. Eyes don't go to the most important part of the page 1st. Too much info in 1 location"

"The background color of the left nav column makes it hard to read, there is not enough contrast. The serif font is more difficult to read than a non-serif screen font."

"I think people who are older are going to have trouble with the size...I think you might want to increase the size and the menu side bar on the left could be increased in size and bolded to make it more easily readable."

"Again, the pages are far too cluttered. Consequently, the fonts are too small to be readable. Also, this site is not at all accessible for people with vision impairments."

Many mentioned that they thought the font size was too small.

Q1a: Why did you give Readability - Type Size this rating?

Of Those Who Gave Ease of Use a 1 or 2 . . .

"I would consider myself fairly computer literate, but I have yet to figure out how to download the schedules to my blackberry."

"because it takes a while to find/get the info I need"

"It isn't as good as other sites I've used - not always clear where you can find things. Reading through text to find Metro maps is annoying."

"I am not sure how I would use the services you offer. With several links pointing to external sites, I am not sure what services you offer. Do you just link to other sites?"

"It's too difficult to find anything and it's hard to navigate. The information is all there, but it's very poorly organized which makes the website very difficult to use."

Q1a: Why did you give Ease of Use this rating?

Of Those Who Gave Navigation a 1 or 2 . . .

"It is a bit hard to get to the Transit Service providers that I am trying to gain information about. If I want to see a schedule, I have to take a roundabout way to locate it."

"Menus are cute, but I could do without the fancy graphics to wait for them to pop up. It's also a very cluttered page: lots of options on the top, lots of stuff going on to the sides...it's not necessarily "bad", just not as clean as it could be."

"Menu items are wordy; weird mix of site features and modes of transportation at the top in tiny print; pictures on home page are pointless as they use jargon (ATP? VRE?) but don't link to anything. Homepage navigation seems to be unrelated to interior pages. I understand that interior page layouts will differ, but does it really make sense to have the transit alerts move to the opposite end of the page, for both the left-hand menu font typeface and size change so dramatically, and the "Topics" drop-down menu appear and disappear willy-nilly?"

"The [shade] of green in the navigation column makes it hard to read the underlined links."

"The sidebar doesn't stay the same from page to page, and I often have a hard time figuring out where I need to go to find the information I want. I usually end up clicking on three or four pages before I find the one with the information I want. I shouldn't have to do that -- I should be able to find the right page on the first try."

Of Those Who Gave Technical Issues a 1 or 2 . . .

"A couple of pages on the site used to have (not sure if they still do, because I now avoid going to them) a video that started automatically. It would freeze up my browser, sometimes crashing it, and there was no way to stop it from playing automatically. That's just stupid to do to your customers -- there is absolutely no reason EVER to have a video play automatically."

"Interactive Bike Map link was not working--message returned said that this page did not exist."

Q1a: Why did you give Technical Issues this rating?

Of Those Who Gave Visuals/Images a 1 or 2 . . .

"The font size is too small and there is too much on the page."

"Inconsistency of typography is visually distracting."

*"Need to download a plugin to view one of the graphics on first page.
Find flash graphics to be unnecessary."*

*"Logo ad some other elements appear "clunky" and dated. Commuter
Page.com is not as appealing as Way to Go Arlington for example"*

*"The page is far too cluttered. All the text and graphics conflate the
views. Just put what is needed, make it simple and clear."*

*"site pages look cluttered, fonts/colors not crisp; very utilitarian when
it could be 'sleek, seamless and functional'"*

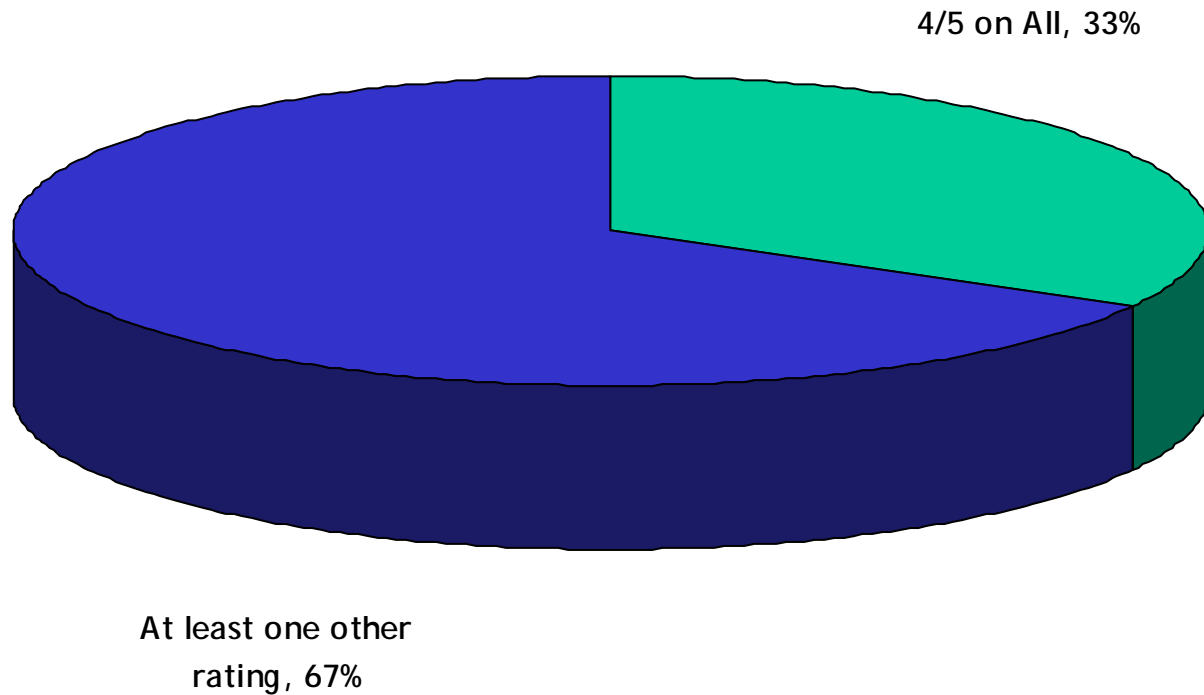
Q1a: Why did you give Visuals/Images this rating?

One Third of Respondents Gave a 4 or 5 Rating for All 6 Aspects

Finding CommuterPage.com to Be Better Than Other Informational Web Sites on All Aspects

Those who gave the site a 4 or 5 on all aspects are more likely to be Boomers and those who did not are more likely to be Generation X.

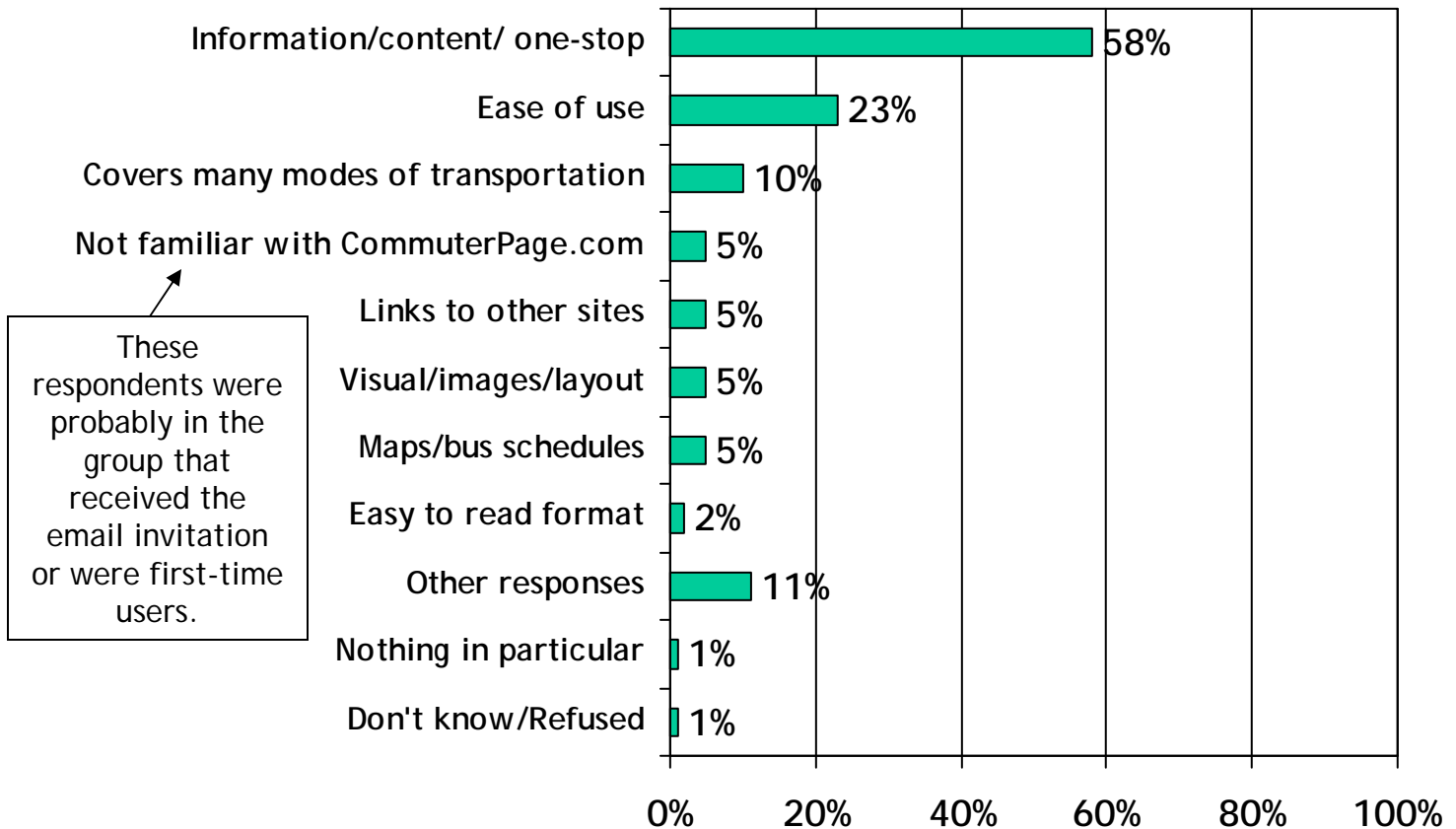
Those who gave the site a 4 or 5 on all aspects are more likely to be unemployed and those who did not are more likely to be students.



Q1: How do you rate CommuterPage.com on each of the following characteristics?

Site Users Like CommuterPage.com's Content

Those who gave the site a 4 or 5 on all aspects were more likely than those who didn't to like the ease of use (34% vs. 17%).



Q2: What do you like about CommuterPage.com? (open end)

Some Specific Comments

"I can get all the information I need to make my commute easier"

"Tons of great info every day - central information source for not only Arlington, but DC area in general"

"Actual articles on commuting. Info for local commuters."

"balance of direct information and opinion pieces"

"The daily news summaries. Should be expanded to cover national trends as well."

"VERY HELPFUL!! I am moving to Arlington and use the commuter page to get all my info"

"I like the comprehensiveness of the programs and the quick-to-the-point explanations. I've always found the information I've needed without looking too hard"

"Otherwise scattered transit information all in one place -- and not Arlington-centric!"

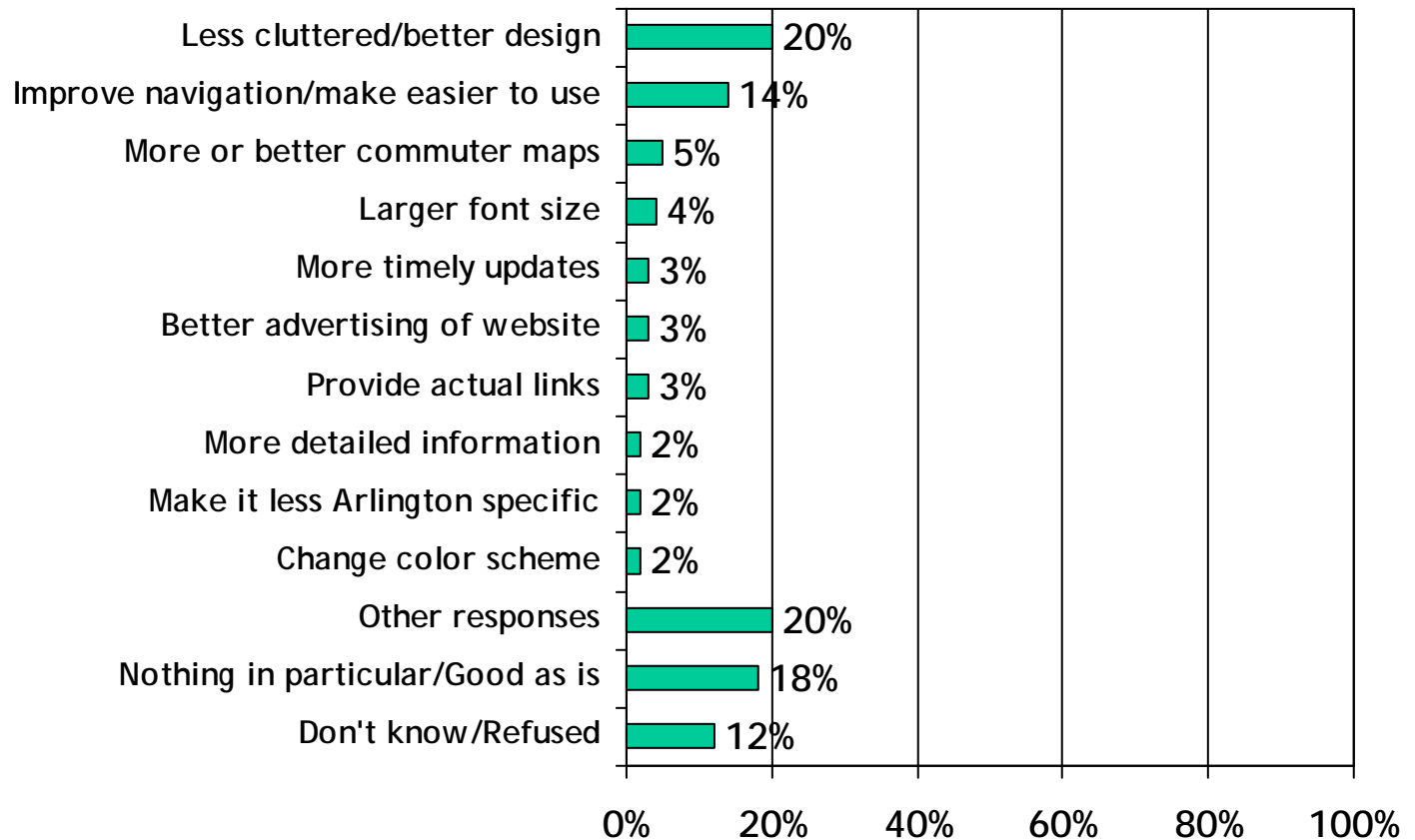
"It allows the entire family to access it and get information, which is useful for my teens. I can't always, or am not always willing, to chauffeur them around town!"

"The information and humor of the writers"

Q2: What do you like about CommuterPage.com? (open end)

A Fifth Wish the Site Were Less Cluttered But Almost As Many Did Not Have Any Suggestions for Improvement

Those who gave the site a 4 or 5 on all aspects were less likely than those who didn't to say that the design could be less cluttered (5% vs. 18%) and the navigation could be improved (5% vs. 18%) but more likely to say the site is good as it is (22% vs. 7%) or nothing in particular (14% vs. 3%).



Q2A: How could we make CommuterPage.com better? (open end)

Some Specific Comments

"Instead of requiring the user to search for transit providers and then schedules, perhaps make it so that schedules are navigable by location."

"Perhaps could add just a maps site or a 'how to get there' portion with indications of different modes of transportation given a certain route. Rideshare site hard to navigate. Perhaps add clearer tags to indicate which routes offered for rideshare/carpool."

"could you expand transit information outside of Arlington? Write about 'Urban Villages' outside of the Arlington area where transit users could also live."

"Have live action video of traffic cams. List breaking traffic news in a newsfeed bar."

"if you could click on a station and find out everything about it that would be great, instead of by train or by time"

Q2A: How could we make CommuterPage.com better? (open end)

Some More Specific Comments

"Clean it up. it should be set up by location. Almost like mapquest. Start and end. This way it should be able to very. Simply tell you this bus trip or this train trip will get you from point a to point b. It needs tp be formatted not for pc as much as for pda/palms etc"

"I think maybe marketing it better. I have lived here almost two years and no one ever mentioned this to me. It is such a wonderful program."

"make it more known via search engines and advertised links from transit authorities. I stumbled onto this site from a MARC email about the SilverSpring closure."

"Page is obviously designed for those with 600x800 resolution monitors. Few still use 600x800, which means wasted screen space for most users."

"Have a login page so one can customize the page to see only information they need or request. For example, I don't need to see any information or updates on biking, walking or taxis. Plus, maybe I only want to see MD based commuter news."

Q2A: How could we make CommuterPage.com better? (open end)

Many Offered Examples of Outstanding Informational Web sites

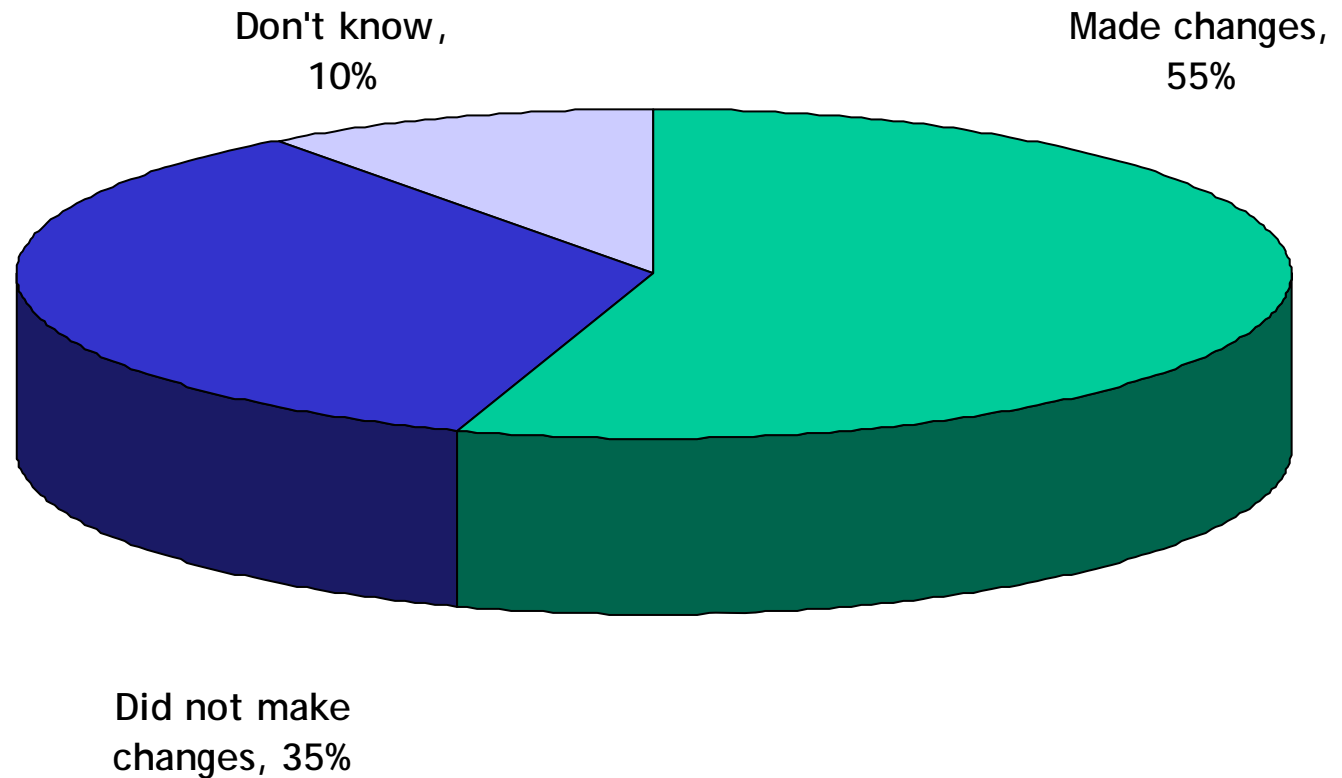
- aarp.org
- aoa.gov
- arlingtontransportationpartners.com
- army.mil/
- bain.com
- census.gov
- ci.fort-collins.co.us/transfort/
- clarkson.edu
- co.arlingtonva.us
- craigslist.com
- diebahn.de
- digg.com
- dlse.org
- economist.com
- Energy Star.com
- google.com (3 respondents)
- governmentsjobs.gov
- imdb.com
- irs.gov
- kayak.com
- maps.google.com
- mbta.com
- metrotransit.com
- mgma.com
- monrovia.com
- mta.info/nyct/ (2 respondents)
- MushroomExpert.Com
- my.yahoo.com
- nextbus.com
- opm.gov
- passrider.com
- prtctransit.org
- seat61.com/
- stockcharts.com
- sungazette.net
- sunspot.net
- thinkvitamin.com
- transit.metrokc.gov
- virginiahospitalcenter.com/content/homepage.asp
- VRE.com (2 respondents)
- washingtonpost.com (3 respondents)
- weather.com
- wikipedia.com (2 respondents)
- wizards.com
- wmata.com (6 respondents)
- stationmaster (off wmata site)
- worldwatch.org

4 respondents mentioned Commuter Page.com.

QF: Can you provide an example of an outstanding informational Web site?
If yes, please list one or more addresses (e.g. www.commuterpage.com)

CommuterPage.com's Impact

More Than Half Made Changes in How They Travel to Work Since They First Started Using CommuterPage.com



Females were more likely than males to not have made changes (44% vs. 25%).

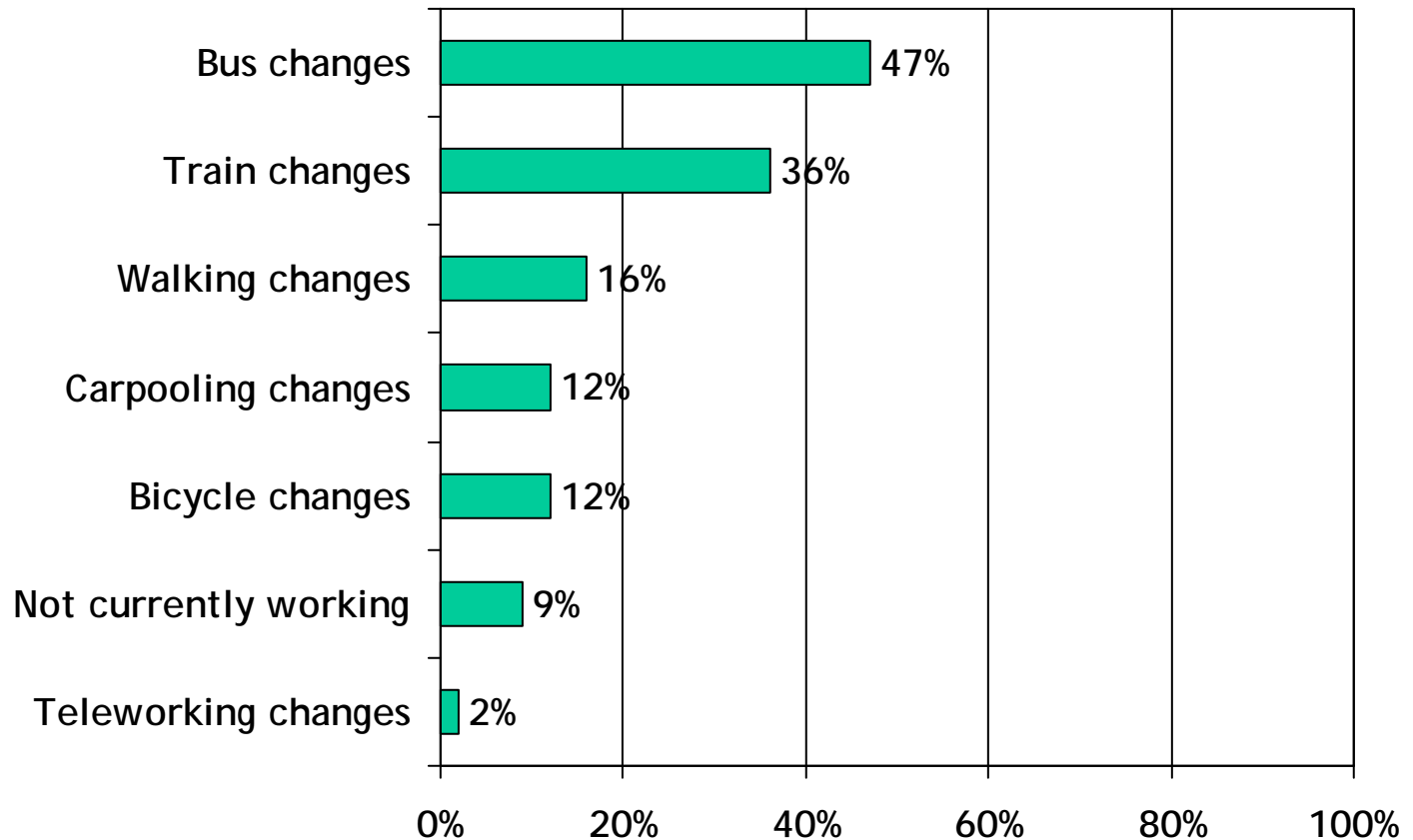
QG: Since you first started using CommuterPage.com, have you made any of the following changes in how you travel to work?

n = 106

Of Those Changes, 83% Were Transit-related

Those who gave the site a 4 or 5 on all aspects were more likely than those who didn't to make bus-related changes (56% vs. 39%).

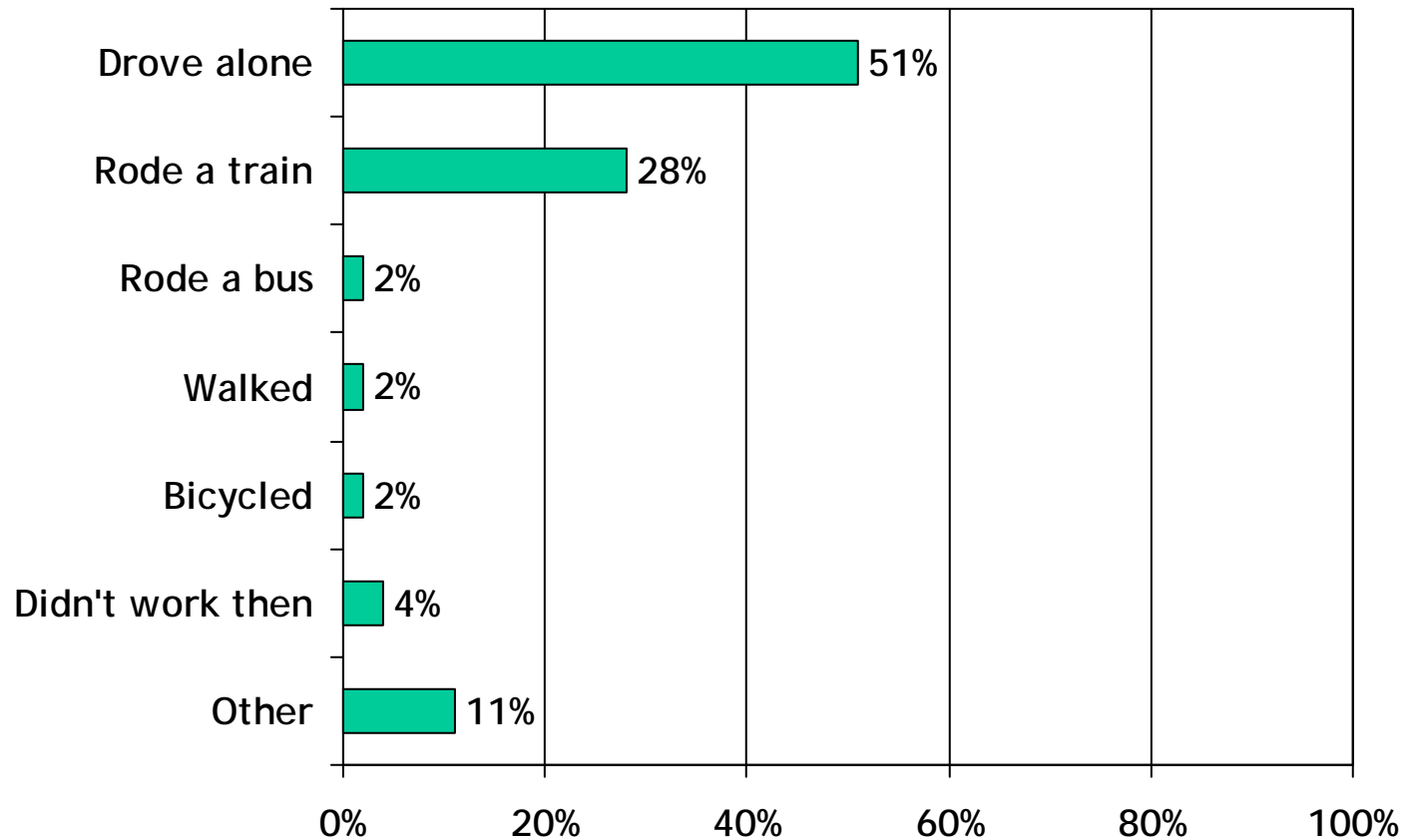
Generation X'ers were more likely than Boomers to have made carpool-related changes (11% vs. 0%).



QG: Since you first started using CommuterPage.com, have you made any of the following changes in how you travel to work?

n = 58

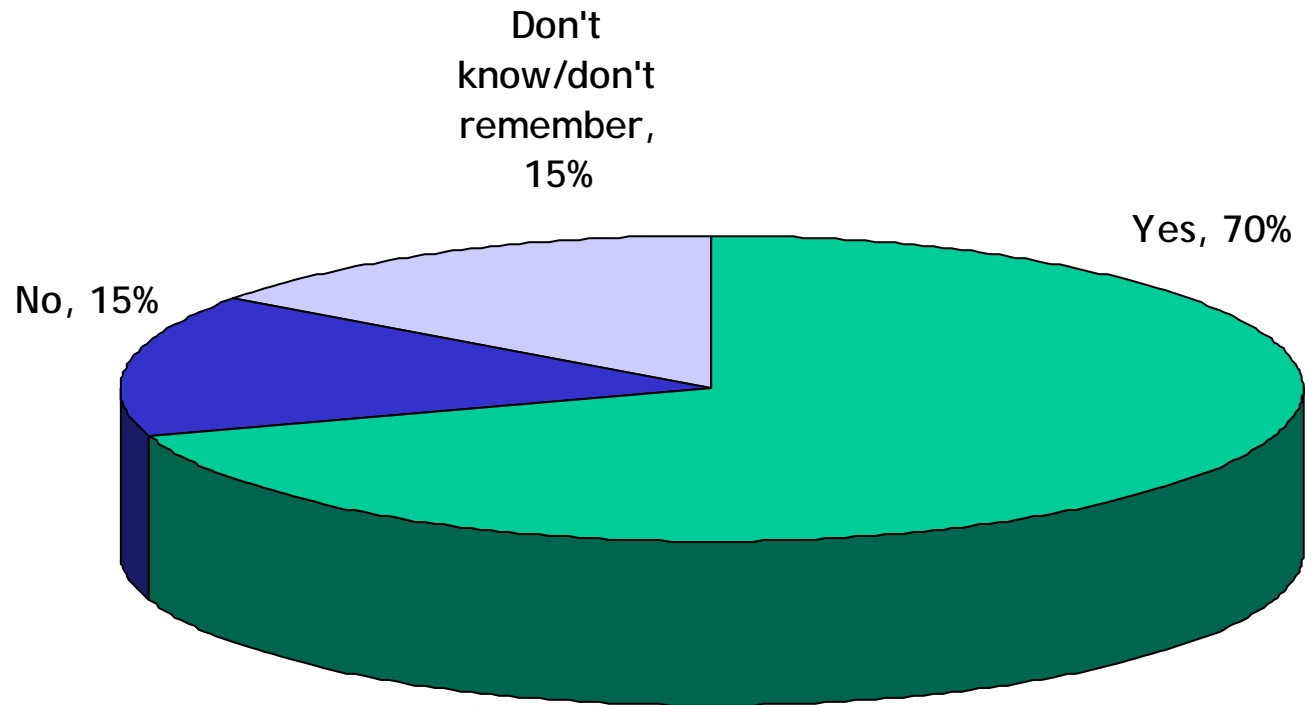
About Half Drove Alone Prior to Using CommuterPage.com



QH: How did you typically travel to work before you made this change?

n = 53

CommuterPage.com Was Instrumental in 70% of Work-related Changes



QGA: Did any information, service, or benefit you received from CommuterPage.com influence you or assist you to make this change?

n = 53

Some Comments on What Influenced the Commute-change Decision

"I used to ride the metro only but found through this site that it saved me money and time to ride the marc train and metro with the transit link card."

"Being able to purchase monthly MARC passes made a commute that combined MARC and walking as cost-effective as one that combined Metrorail and Metrobus. Now I alternate between the two routes; previously I only used the latter. I appreciate both the increase in time table flexibility and the extra exercise"

"The fact that traveling by train or bus one needs some type of assistance to help one get around."

"Let me look at different options - compared prices."

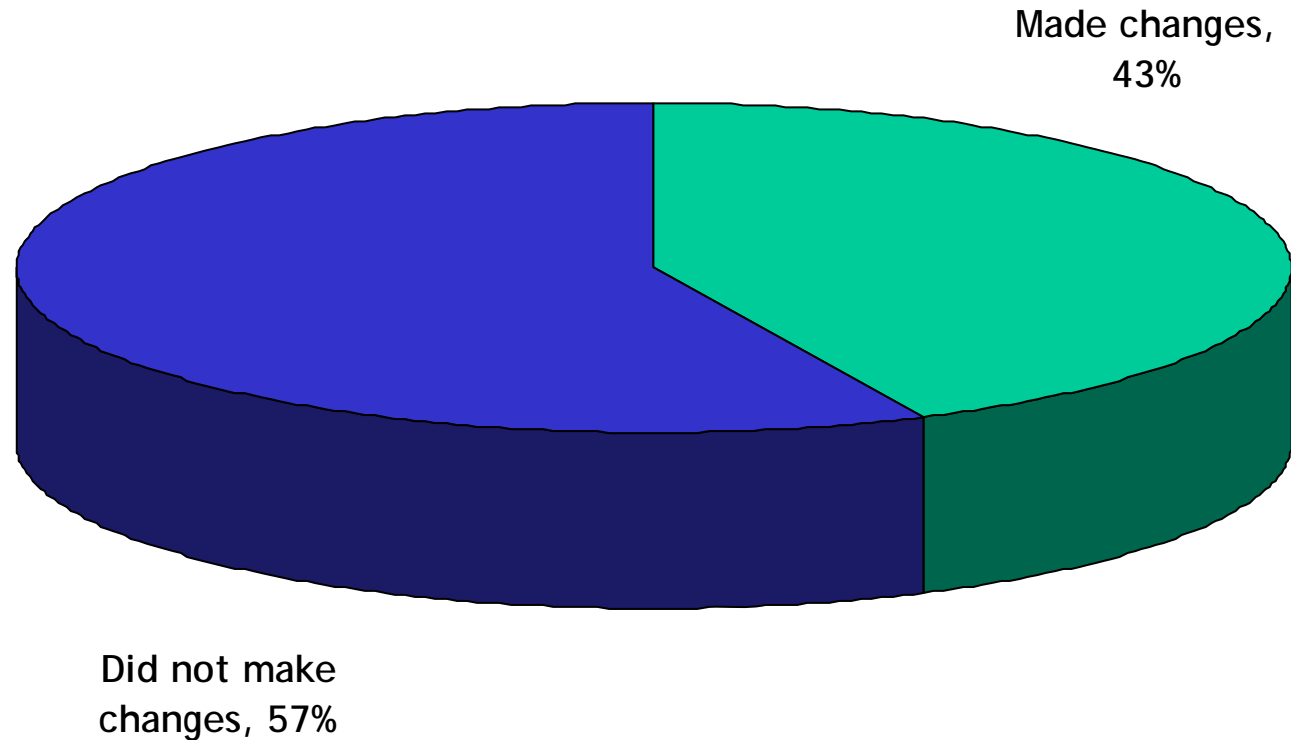
"The encouragement to not travel by car that I read in the articles there."

"By having instant access to the bus/train routes (in pda form) to and from work, I am better able to alter my travel plans if needed"

"I like the fact that if I find out I have to work late I can quickly find out whether I can take a later bus home before I miss my usual bus. This is a great stress reliever."

QGB: What information, service or benefit influenced or assisted your decision?

Almost Half Made Non-Work Changes Since They First Started Using CommuterPage.com



46% of
Arlington
Residents
made non-
work changes.

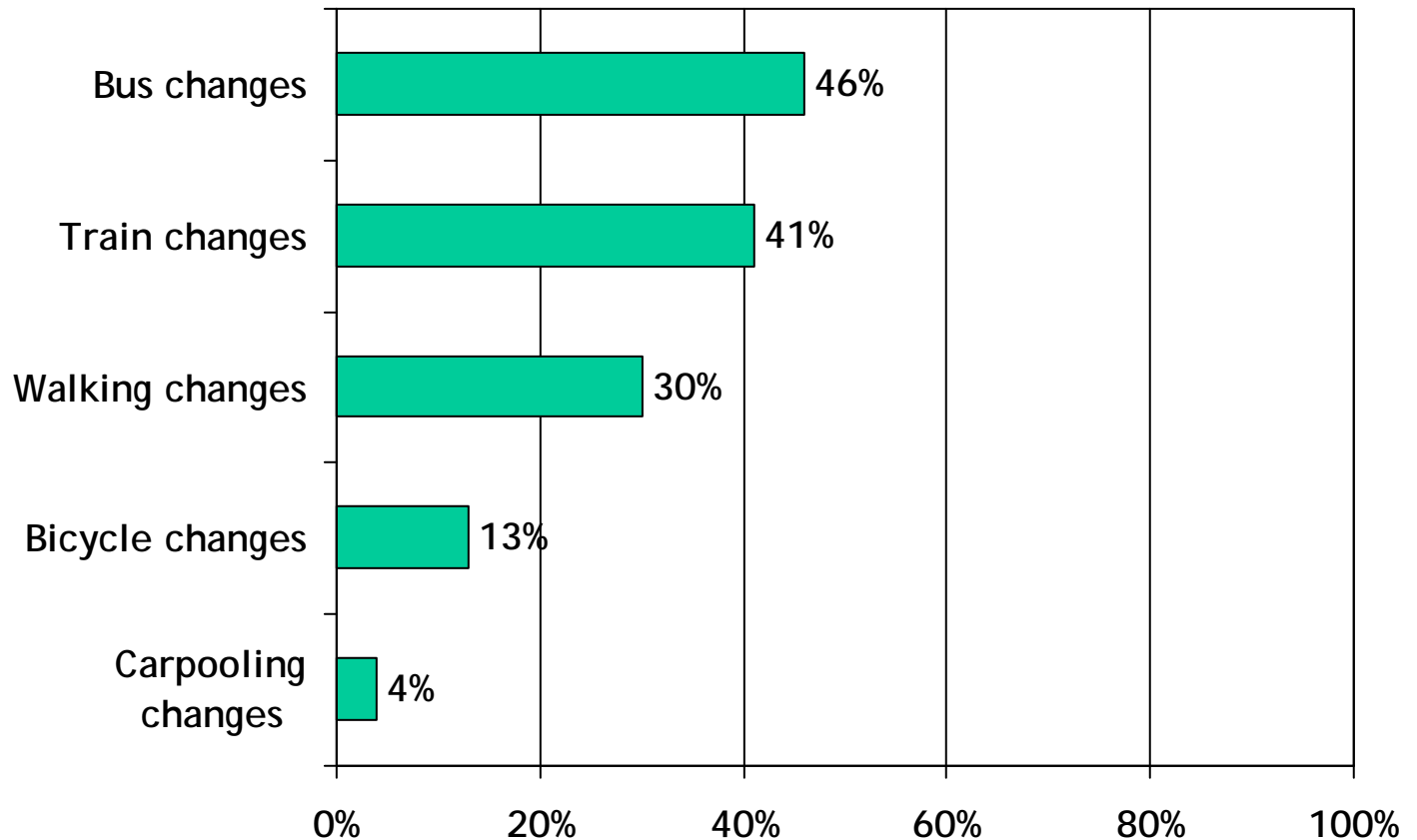
Q1: Since you first started using CommuterPage.com, have you made any of the following changes in how you make non-work trips around Arlington County or around the Washington metropolitan region?

n = 106

Almost Half Started Riding the Bus or Began Riding it More Often

Those who gave the site a 4 or 5 on all aspects were more likely than those who didn't to make bus-related changes (57% vs. 36%).

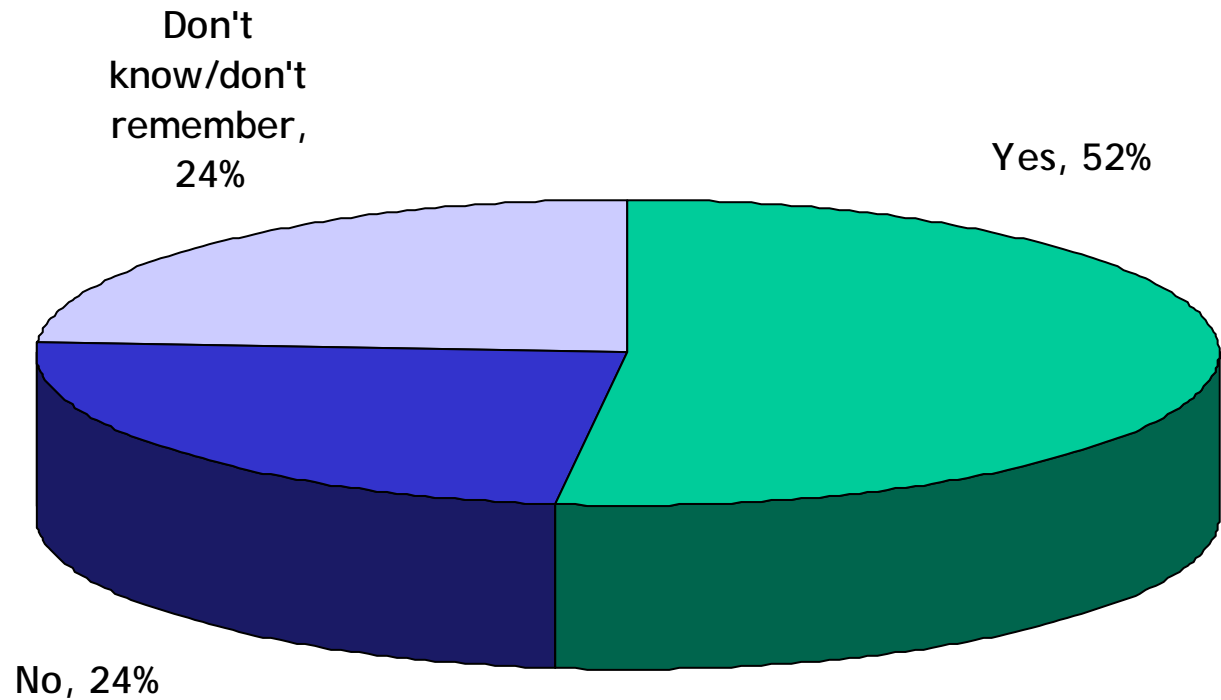
25% of Arlington residents made bus-related changes.



Q1: Since you first started using CommuterPage.com, have you made any of the following changes in how you make non-work trips around Arlington County or around the Washington metropolitan region?

n = 46

CommuterPage.com Was Instrumental in Half of the Non-work Changes



QIA: Did any information, service, or benefit you received from CommuterPage.com influence you or assist you to make this change?

n = 46

Some Comments on What Influenced the Non-work-change Decision

"They print information about buses that I didn't even know were there before. Then I go and try the bus."

"Again, Bus and train routes -in pda form- in the vicinity of my neighborhood. Also CommuterPage's news about Arlington and environs."

"I always walk to and from the metro, but now in the summer with the heat, I need to know about the bus schedule because walking home may not be possible. Also will be taking the bus to different locations rather than driving"

5 Key Take-A-Ways

5 Key Take-A-Ways

1. Only a quarter of respondents live in Arlington County, but visitors are not coming from too far off as 90% are in the 20XXX, 21XXX, and 22XXX zip code areas. These people find the transit information on CommuterPage.com useful and not exclusively for Arlington residents. *CommuterPage.com transcends Arlington County.*
2. 13% of the people who visit the site are *not* commuters, despite the site's name. 30% of people in Arlington County are not employed, according to 2006 statistics. These people find the site useful for non-work trips. Even those who do commute, will also make non-work trips. *Way to Go Arlington, which encourages people to think outside of work trips for transit options, could be leveraged as the main portal.*

5 Key Take-Aways

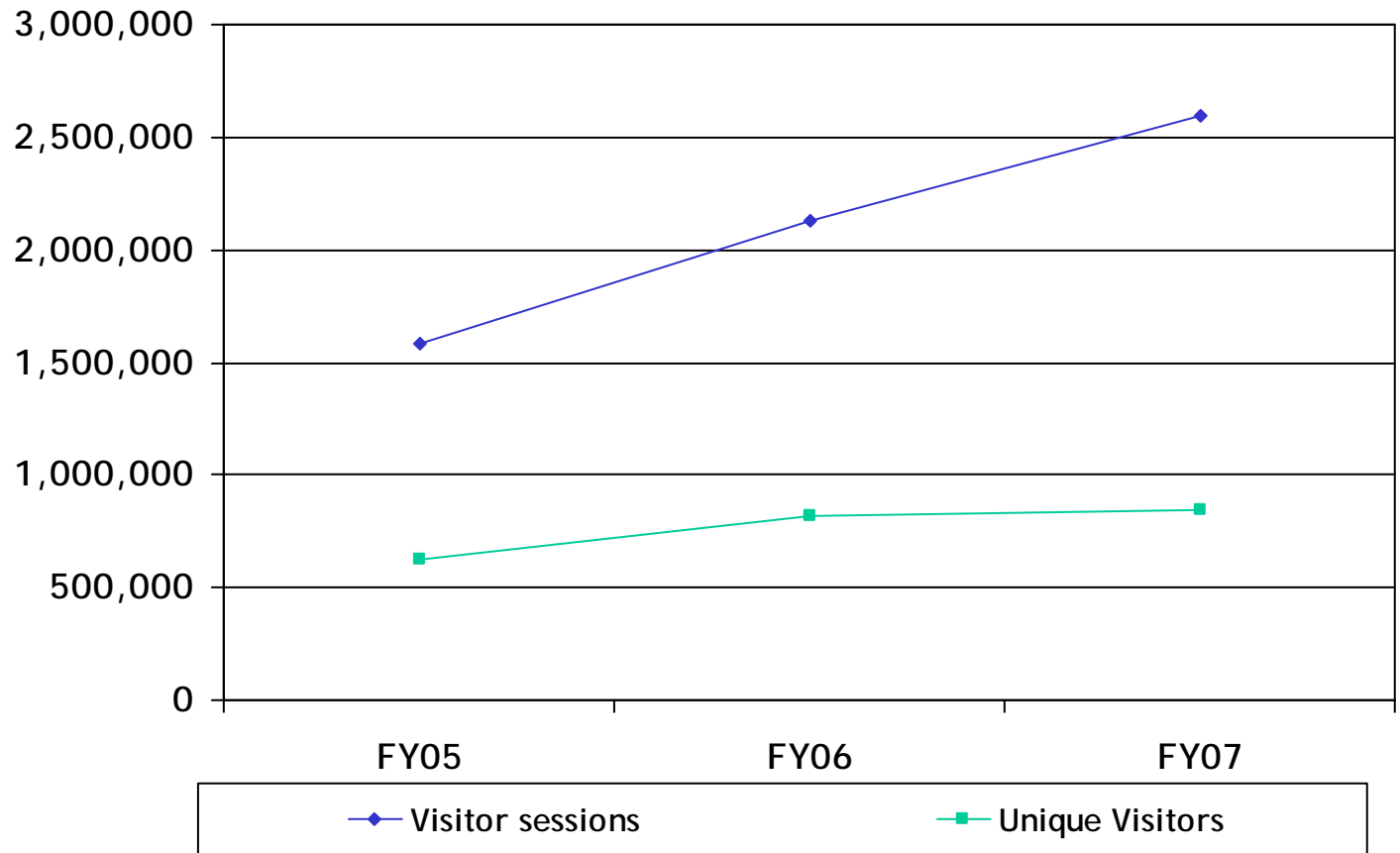
3. Most found CommuterPage.com through another online site. Once they locate they site, they are likely to find the items they need to change their commute habits. *Advertising of the site and online partnerships are essential to ultimately convert commuters to transit options outside of driving alone.*
4. The information and content on the site is good, but some find the delivery a bit daunting. *Consider simplifying the home page so that new users are less overwhelmed. A common look throughout will also help users easily navigate the site*
5. 55% made changes in work trips and 43% made changes in non-work trips. The only current comparison is with the Commuter Stores where 32% made changes in work and non-work trips. *The impact of CommuterPage.com is undeniable.*

*For Additional Information
on this Study Contact:*

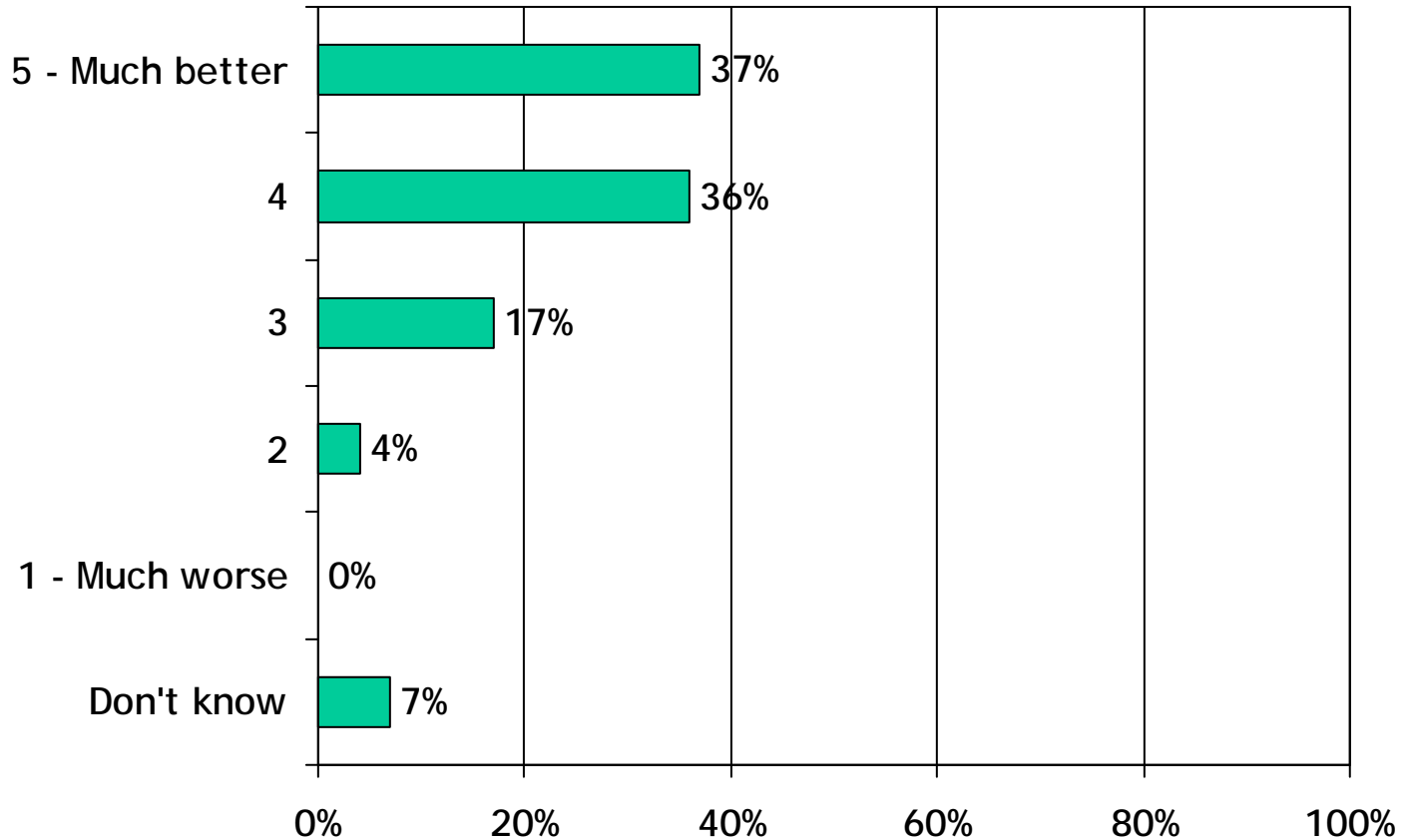
Christy Evanko
Southeastern Institute of Research
804-358-8981

APPENDIX

Visitor Sessions and Unique Visitors

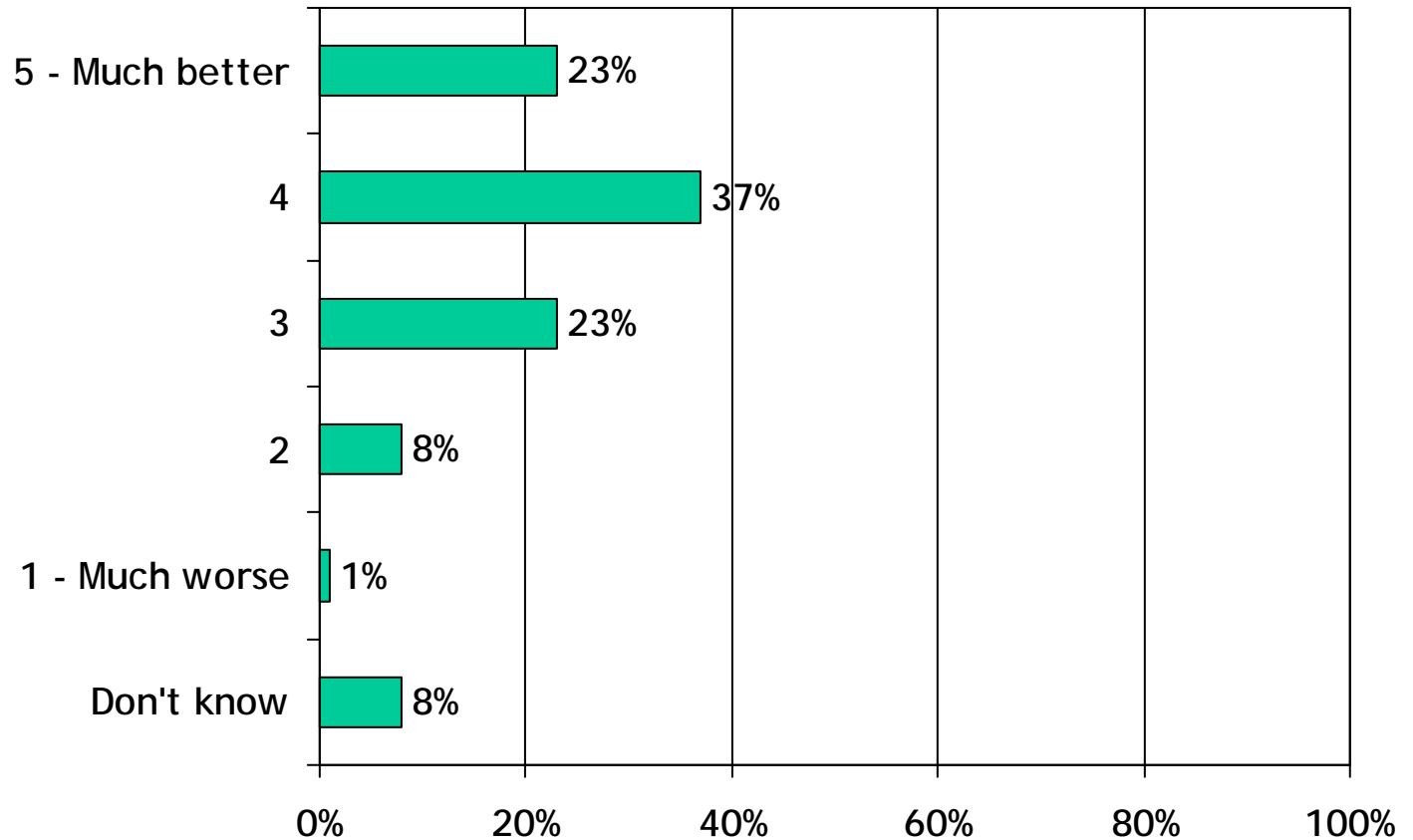


Information/Content



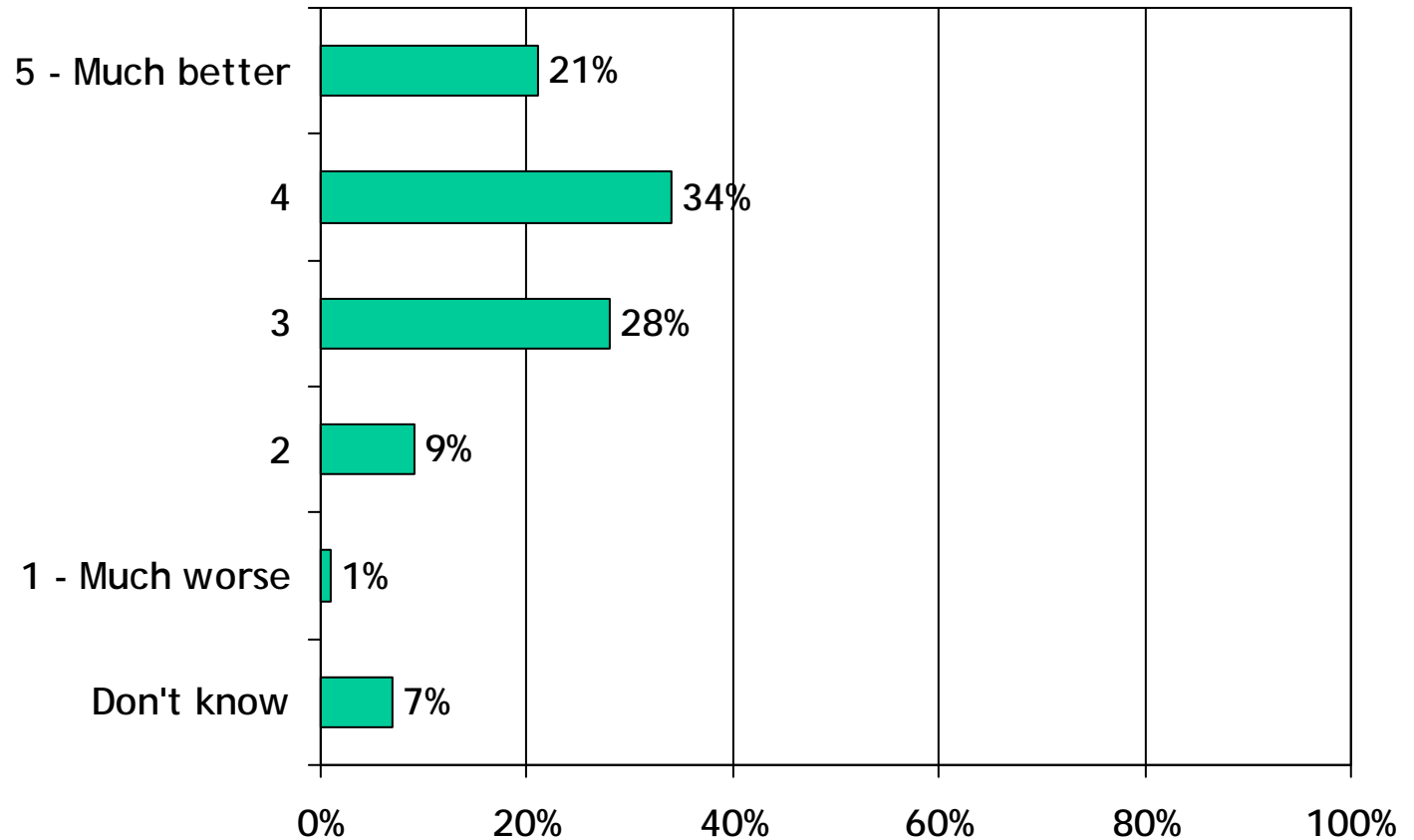
Q1: How do you rate CommuterPage.com on each of the following characteristics?

Navigation



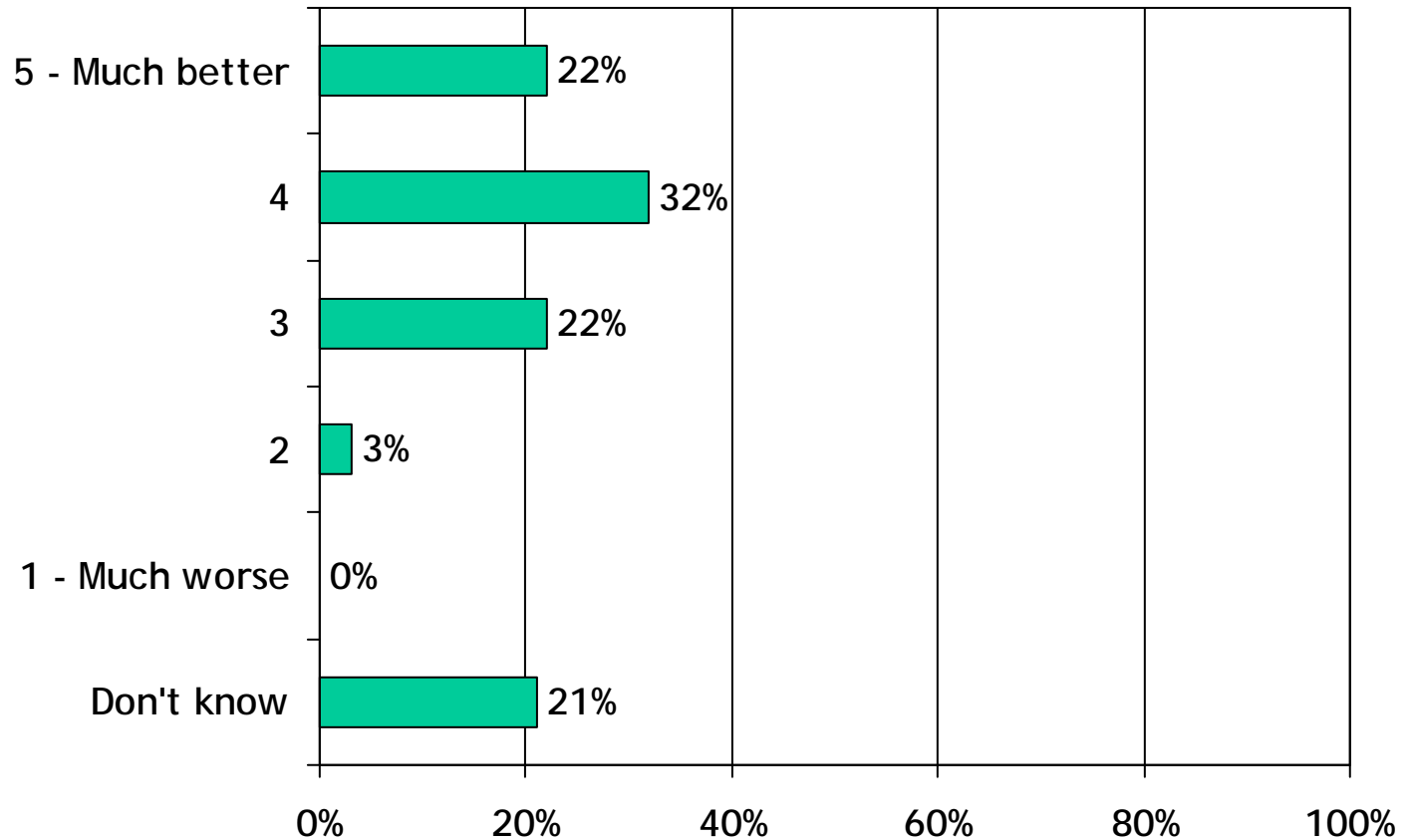
Q1: How do you rate CommuterPage.com on each of the following characteristics?

Visuals/Images



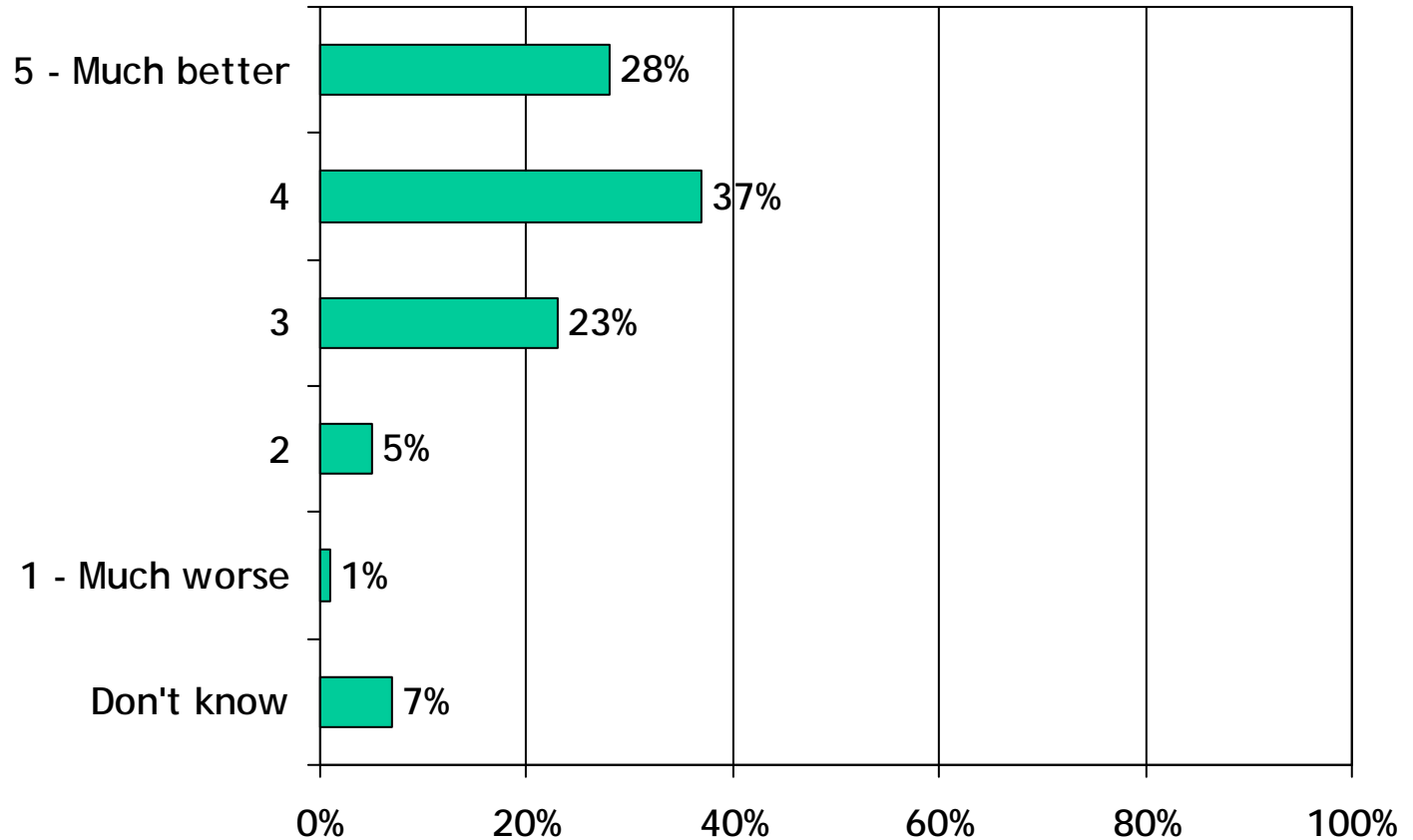
Q1: How do you rate CommuterPage.com on each of the following characteristics?

Technical Issues



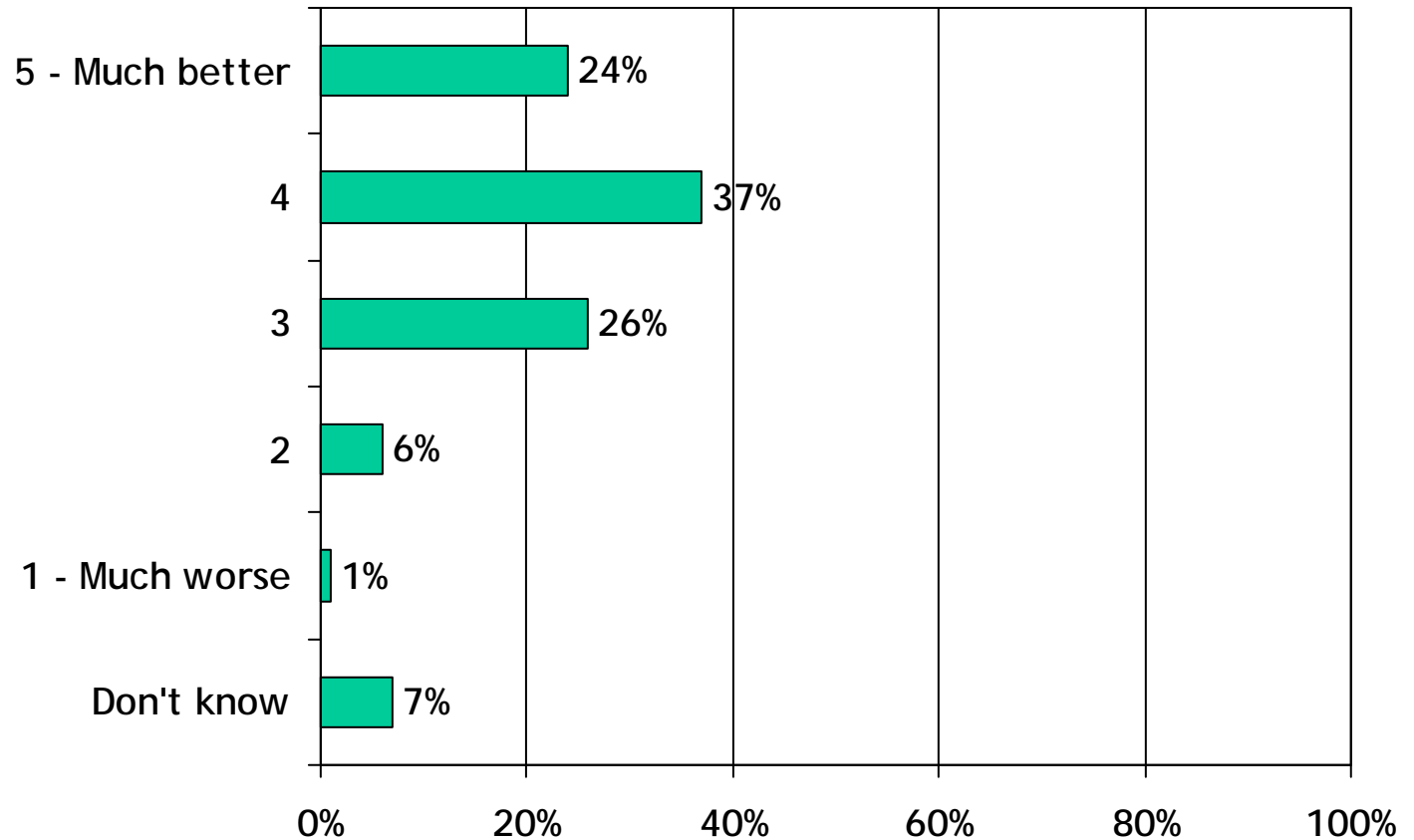
Q1: How do you rate CommuterPage.com on each of the following characteristics?

Readability - Type Size, etc.



Q1: How do you rate CommuterPage.com on each of the following characteristics?

Ease of Use



Q1: How do you rate CommuterPage.com on each of the following characteristics?