

Campus Transit Survey Spring 2005 Results

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1. A Description of Transit Survey Respondents

The 2005 campus transit survey received responses from 1,380 students enrolled at North Dakota State University, Minnesota State University-Moorhead, and Concordia College. The data provides insight into campus transportation use and other transit related issues. Survey topics included the mobility demands of students, perceptions of MAT services and campus parking, students' interest in intercampus public transportation, desired transit accommodations and the prices students are willing to pay for service.

1.1 Data Collection

Data was collected by inviting all students on each institution's email list to participate in an on-line survey. All completed surveys were included in the final analysis. The sampling methodology does not guarantee equal participation from all students and likely led to some degree of bias in the survey findings.

1.2 Response by Class

The response to this year's survey shows a relatively proportionate distribution across undergraduate and graduate class levels (Figure 1). Upperclassmen had relatively higher response rates than freshman and sophomores. Seniors had the highest response rate of any class making up roughly 27 percent of all responses. MSUM had a very low response rate among sophomores with 6 percent of the responses coming from that class though they make up 18 percent of the study body.

| Classification | Actual Class Distribution | Class Size | Respondent Distribution | Sample Size |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Freshmen | 22.57% | 4,909 | 24.13% | 333 |
| Sophomores | 19.23% | 4,183 | 19.64% | 271 |
| Juniors | 18.24% | 3,966 | 21.67% | 299 |
| Seniors | 28.32% | 6,159 | 27.25% | 376 |
| Graduate | 8.74% | 1,901 | 6.81% | 94 |
| Non-degree | 2.90% | 630 | 0.51% | 7 |
| Total | 100.00% | 21,748 | 100.00% | 1,380 |

Figure 1. Survey Response Distribution Compared to Actual Class Distribution (N=1,380)

1.3 Response by Gender

Of the 1,380 students who responded, 967 or 70 percent were female, and 413 or 30 percent were male. The actual 2005 enrollment at the three institutions consisted of 11,507 females and 10,241 males, making up 53 and 47 percent of the student body. Thus, the percentage of women who responded to this survey is substantially higher than the percentage of women enrolled at the institutions. This self-selection effect is even more pronounced at MSUM and Concordia where 88 and 81 percent of the surveys were completed by females though they made up only 61 and 63 percent of their respective student bodies.

1.4 Fulltime Status

Both MSUM and NDSU have sizeable part-time student populations. Of MSUM respondents 90 percent were full-time students as were 95 percent of NDSU's. This compares to student bodies with 77 and 85 percent full-time students at the two universities.

1.5 Employment Status

A student's employment status has a significant impact on his or her behavior outside of the workplace, including mobility demand. The student employment data gathered is presented graphically in Figure 2. One-fourth of the survey respondents were not employed. Approximately 36 percent of students surveyed were employed off campus and less than 40 percent of the survey respondents were employed on campus.

One notable deviation was the high percentage of Concordia students who work on-campus, about 63 percent of the survey respondents.

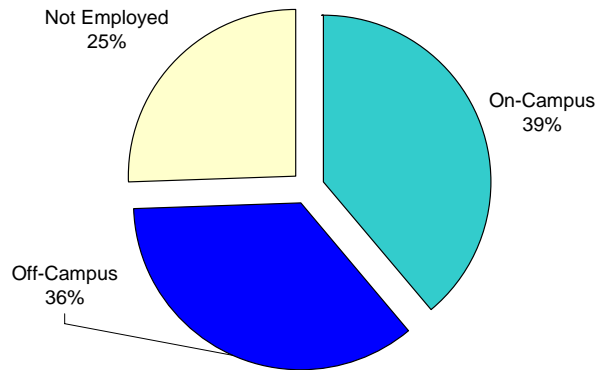


Figure 2. Student Work Status (n=1,380)

2. Mobility Demands of NDSU, MSUM, & Concordia Students

Factors that affect the mobility demands of students are presented in this section. The results describe where students live, the origins of campus-bound students, the times that students are on campus, preferred modes of travel, why on-campus students leave, and the impacts of weather on transportation choices.

2.1 Location of Residence

Forty-seven percent, or 655 of the survey respondents, live off campus. Fifty-eight percent of NDSU's respondents lived off campus compared to 23 percent of Concordia and about 66 percent of MSUM students.

About 47 percent of the respondents, 624 individuals, stated that they had considered transportation when deciding where to live. NDSU had the highest "yes" response rate at 52 percent.

2.2 Distance from Campus

Students live at various distances from their respective campus (Figure 3). Approximately 46 percent of all off-campus respondents live at least 2 miles from campus. However, only 25 percent of Concordia students live that far from their campus.

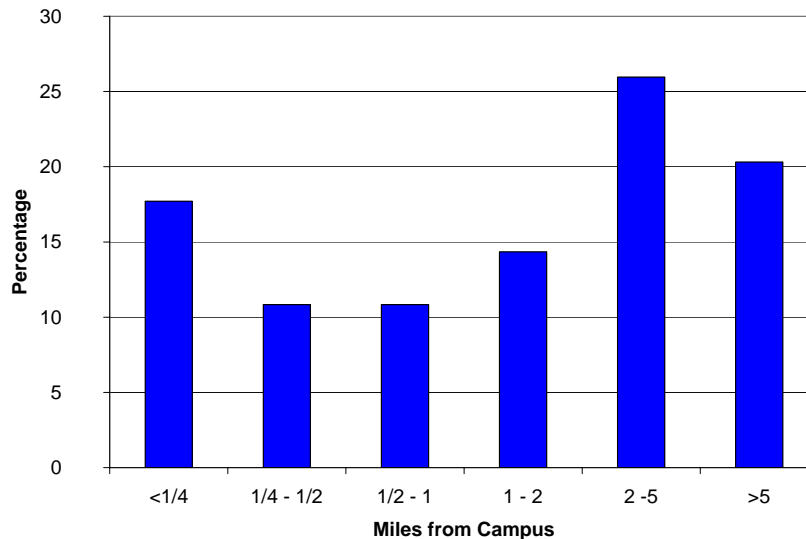


Figure 3. Distance Students Live from Campus (n=655)

2.3 Origins of Campus Bound Trips

About 92 percent of respondents indicated they travel to campus directly from his or her home (Figure 4). Approximately 5 percent indicated that they travel to campus from their place of work and 2 percent from child care. The responses were relatively uniform across the campuses.

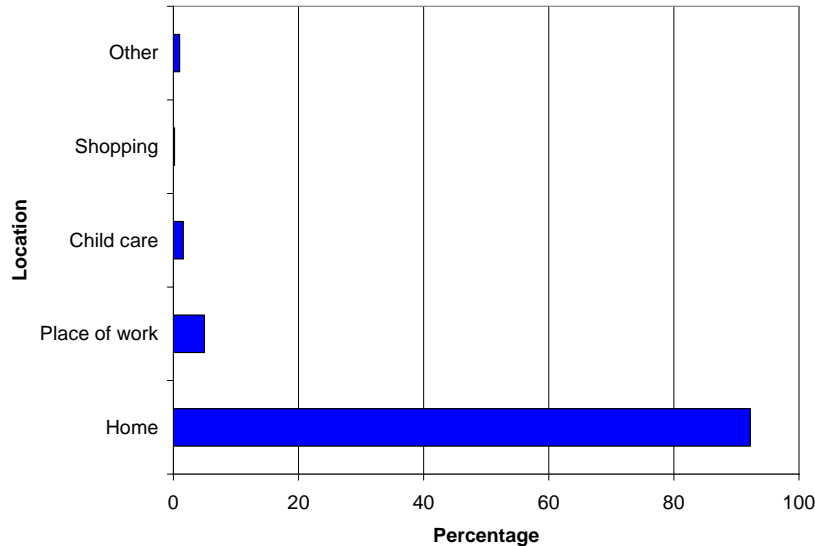


Figure 4. Origins of Campus-Bound Students (n=655)

2.4 Vehicle Access

Eighty-five percent of respondents indicated they have access to a motor vehicle. Ninety percent of NDSU and MSUM respondents had access to a vehicle while only 74 percent of Concordia's did. A study done by Independent Insurance Agents of America and College Parents of America showed that nearly 70 percent of college students have either their own or use of their parents' car at school.

2.5 Time on Campus

The majority of student respondents indicated they are on campus from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Figure 5). The greatest numbers of respondents, approximately 82 percent, are on campus from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. More than 81 percent of the students reported being on campus from noon to 2 p.m. The responses were relatively uniform across the campuses except that slightly more students are on the campus of Concordia College from noon to 2 p.m. than the two hour period following.

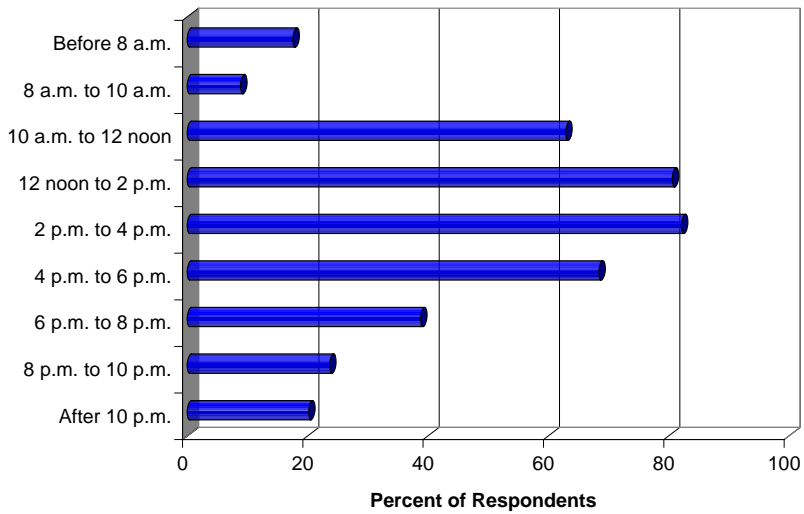


Figure 5. Times When Students are on Campus (n=655)

2.6 Number of Daily One-Way Trips

Approximately 44 percent of students indicated that they made two one-way trips per day and nearly 36 percent of the respondents made four one-way trips per day (Figure 6). Seven percent of the students made more than four one-way trips per day. Respondents from Concordia reported taking more trips than those from NDSU and MSUM with 26 and 41 percent reporting two and four one way trips. Sixty-one percent of MSUM students made only two one way trips.

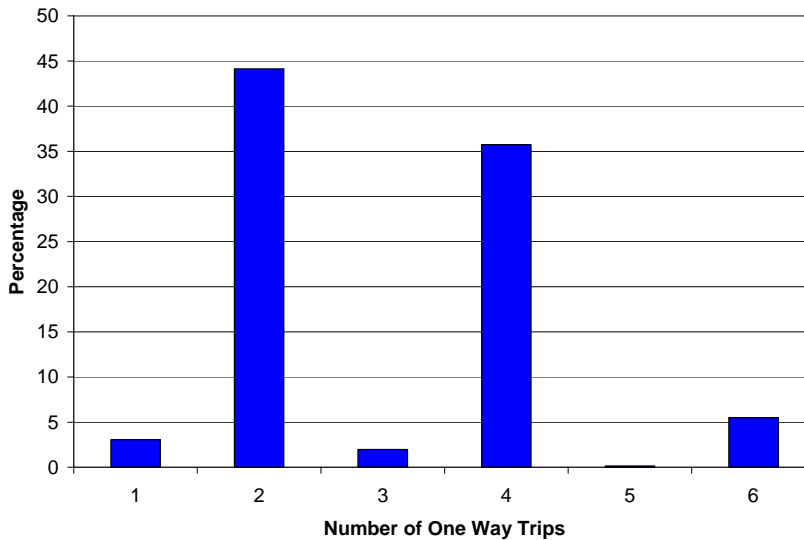


Figure 6. Number of One-Way Trips (n=655)

2.7 Most Common Mode of Transportation

Students were asked how they most frequently travel to campus. Nearly 57 percent, 786 of the respondents indicated they traveled to campus via auto. The next most popular form of transportation to campus was walking with 53 percent, followed by riding MAT and bicycling both with 12 percent.

Forty-two percent of Concordia students indicated they walk while 30 percent drive. Seventy-four percent of MSUM and 59 percent of NDSU students drive. Nineteen percent of NDSU and 5 percent of MSUM and Concordia students ride the bus.

2.8 Locations Which are too Far to Walk Between

Approximately 25 percent of the respondents felt that there are locations on their campus that are too far to walk between. NDSU students identified the FargoDome, Minard Hall, and the Bison Sports Arena regularly. MSUM students often felt that Nemzek Hall and the Center of Business were too far to walk to from other locations. There was no consensus among Concordia students, of whom only 9 percent felt there were inconvenient locations to walk to on their campus.

2.9 Time to Travel to Campus

Of the 786 students who stated that they travel to campus by automobile 48 percent said it took them less than ten minutes to make the trip. Thirty-four percent estimated that their trips lasted between 10 and 19 minutes. Eleven percent said it took between 20 and 30 minutes and 7 percent 30 minutes or longer.

MSUM students had longer commutes than others with 65 percent of their trips by automobile taking 10 minutes or longer. Seventy-six percent of Concordia commuters trips were less than 10 minutes. These statistics likely correspond to the high numbers of MSUM students who reported living in South Fargo and Concordia students who identified Moorhead as their place of residence.

2.10 Mode Selection

Figure 7 presents data describing students' perception of the importance of various factors impacting their choice of mode of transportation. The factors included convenience, the cost of their vehicle, the cost of parking, weather, parking availability, and time. Approximately 94 percent of respondents felt that convenience was either an important or very important influence on their choice of mode of transportation. Eighty-eight percent stated that time was important or very important, while 81 percent identified parking availability as being so. The responses were relatively uniform across the campuses.

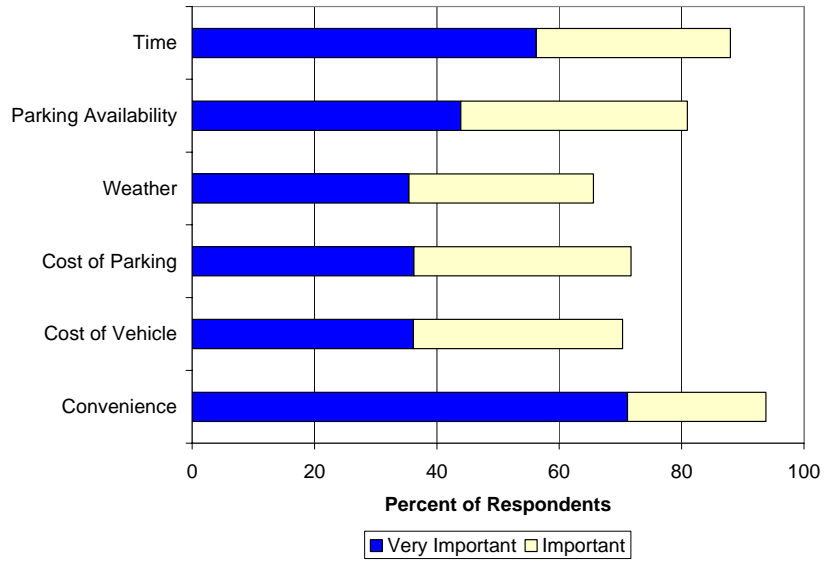


Figure 7. Factors Influencing Mode of Travel (n=1,380)

2.11 Reasons for Leaving Campus

On-campus students were asked why they most often leave campus (Figure 8). Seventy-nine percent responded that they most frequently leave campus to shop for items other than food, seventy two percent indicated that they leave to go grocery shopping and 66 to visit family and/or friends. Other choices the students were given included going to the movie theatre, entertainment (other than movies), and work.

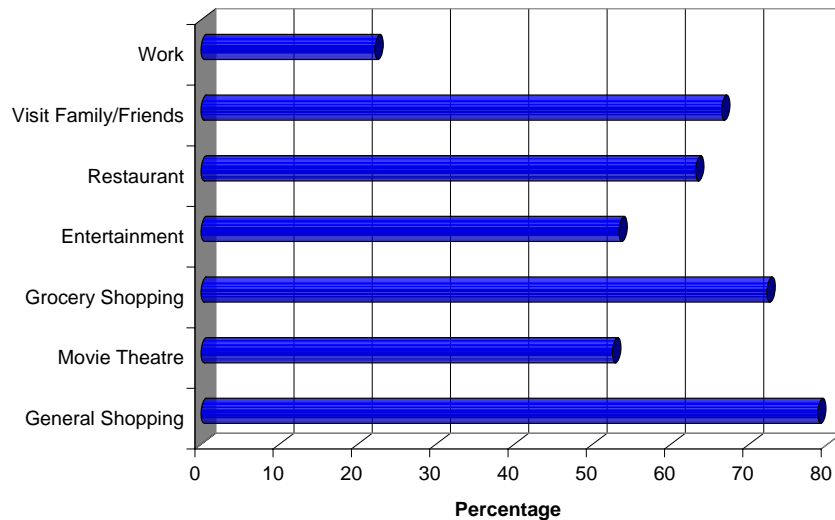


Figure 8. Why On-Campus Students Leave Campus (n=725)

2.12 The Impacts of Weather on Acceptable Walking Distance

Students were asked what distances are too far to walk to campus under varying weather conditions. As Figure 9 shows, there is a strong inverse relationship between these variables. Twenty-nine percent of respondents believe that walking more than 1/4 mile when temperatures are below freezing is too far. The attitudes of Concordia and MSUM students are similar, while NDSU students are less averse to traveling distances in the cold. Thirty-five percent of students at North Dakota States will walk up to 1/4 mile when it is 30 degrees or lower.

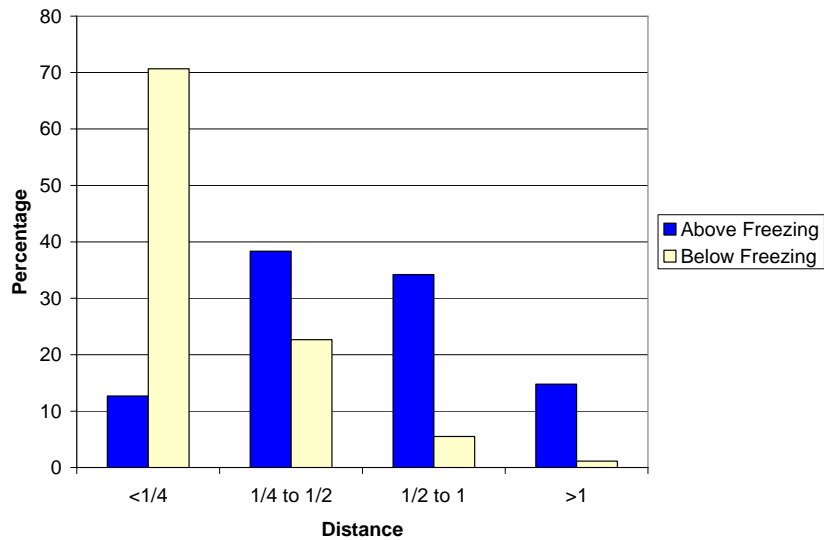


Figure 9. Reasonable Walking Distance by Temperature (n=1,380)

3. Student Perceptions of MAT Services

This section of the report focuses on students' perception of the quality of MAT service. Questions focused on the benefits of public transportation in general and MAT in specific, potential trip purposes using MAT, deterrents to MAT use, user experiences, and maximum wait times.

3.1 Benefits of Public Transportation

There are many benefits to public transportation. These benefits range from reducing parking demand, saving money, safety and saving time (Figure 10). The majority of respondents felt that public transit services help reduce parking demand, traffic congestion, and save money. These benefits were identified consistently by students across the three campuses. However, Concordia students placed a significantly higher emphasis on environmental concerns relative to NDSU and MSUM students with 54 percent identifying the benefit as opposed to 35 percent of NDSU and 45 percent of MSUM students.

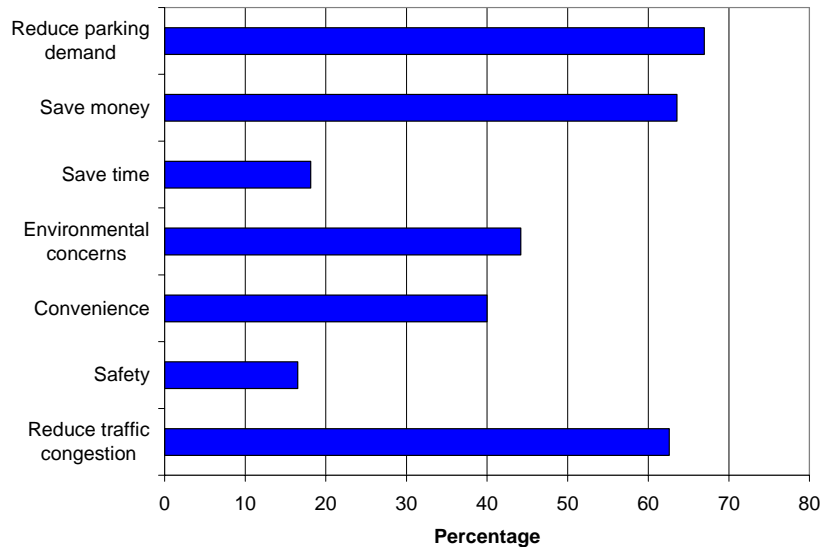


Figure 10. Benefits to Riding Public Transit (n=1,380)

3.2 MAT Ridership

Changes in MAT ridership are presented in Figure 11. The percentage of respondents attending Concordia that use the MAT decreased to 27 percent of survey respondents (Figure 11). This compares to 22 percent in 2002-03 and 35 percent in 2003-04. Twenty-seven percent of MSUM respondents stated that they had ridden MAT. Twenty-five percent of these students stated that they had used MAT to make trips to or from campus. The percentage of NDSU students responding to the survey that use the MAT increased to 43 percent (Figure 11). This compares to 20 in 2002-03 and 32 percent in 2003-04. Forty-four percent of the NDSU MAT riders said they had used MAT to travel to or from campus.

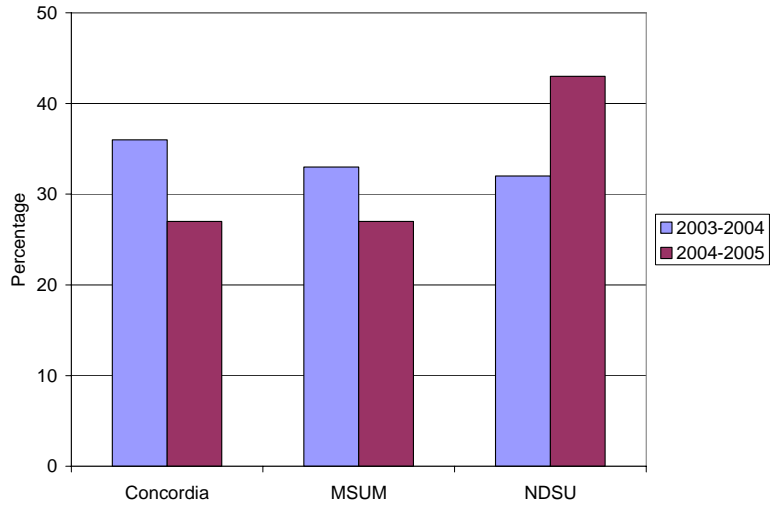


Figure 11. 2005 Students Using MAT (n=1,380)

3.3 Trip Purpose

An important issue is what motivates students to use MAT. Survey respondents were asked to select the most important reasons for using MAT from a list of choices (Figure 12). Just more than half of the respondents stated that they would consider using the MAT to travel to and from campus. Forty-three percent would consider the MAT as a travel option to get around campus. Just fewer than 40 percent would do so when planning their trips to other campuses.

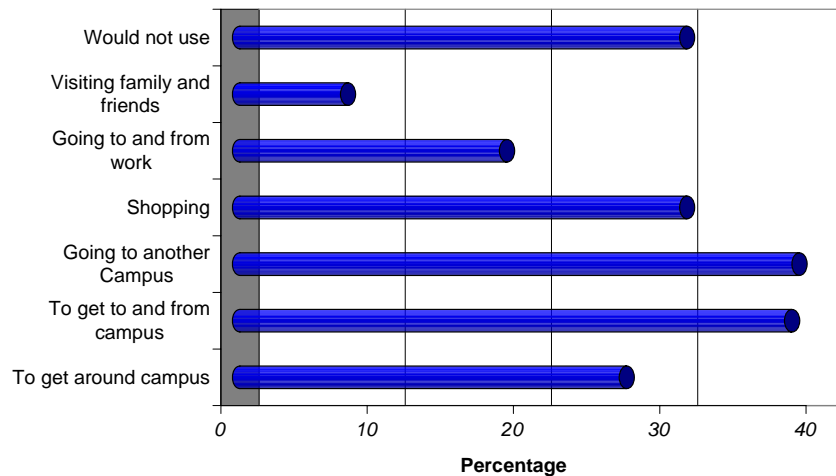


Figure 12. Reasons Students Use MAT (n=1,380)

3.4 Reasons for Not Using MAT

Those who don't currently ride MAT were given a set of possible reasons for not using MAT services and asked to respond with a level of agreement with the reason (Figure 13). Preferring to drive/walk/bike, it takes too long, and reliability were the main reasons that keep students from riding.

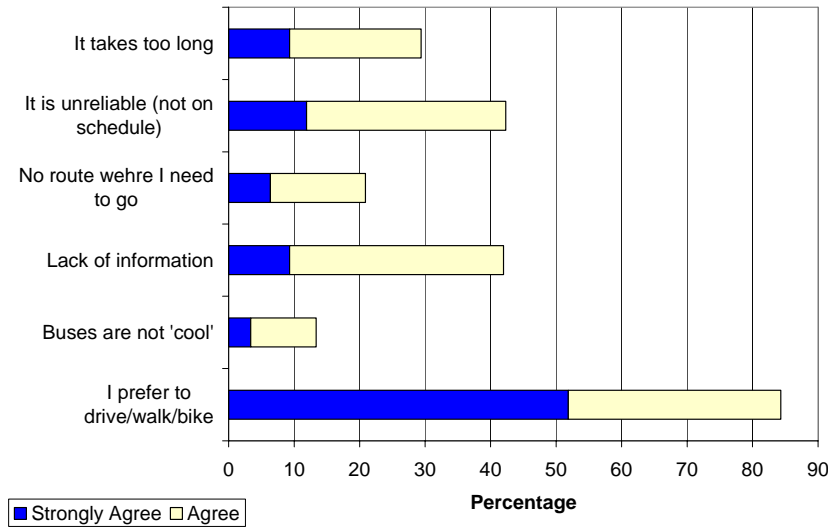


Figure 13. Factors Keeping Users from Using MAT Services (n=891)

3.5 Valued Attributes of MAT

The value of the characteristics of transit services are also of interest. The choices provided included free service, convenience, friendly drivers, and environmentally friendly characteristics (Figure 14). Respondents indicated that free service, friendly drivers, reliability and being environmentally friendly were the most important characteristics. Once again Concordia students were more conscious of the environmental value of public transportation. Seventy-seven percent of Concordia students identified the attribute while only 56 percent of NDSU and 50 of MSUM students did.

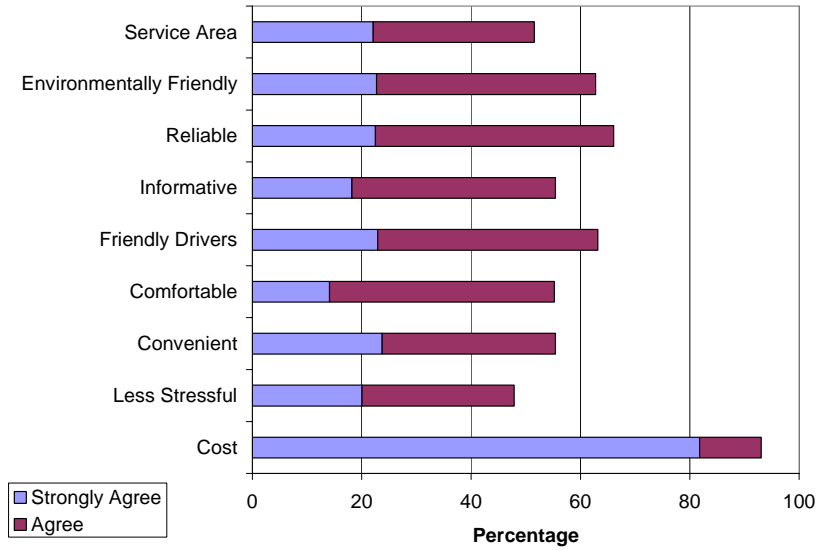


Figure 14. Characteristic Values of Public Transportation (n=492)

3.6 MAT User Experiences

Figure 15 describes students' opinion of previous MAT experiences by presenting the percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed that a given measure was met. Seventy-nine percent stated that it took them where they wanted to go. Seventy-eight percent felt that it was easy to use. Seventy-four percent agreed or strongly agreed that the bus was clean. There was little variation in responses among students from different campuses.

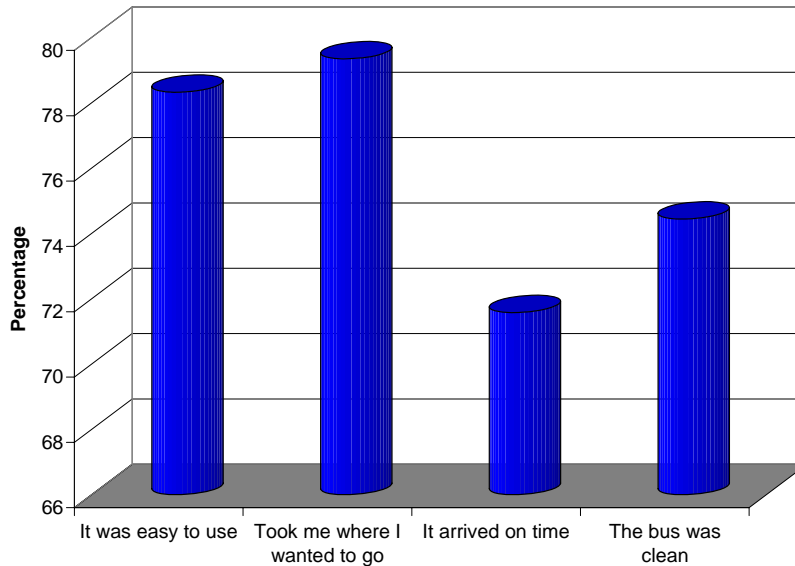


Figure 15. MAT User Experience (n=492)

3.7 Acceptable Wait Times for Next Bus

Sixty-one percent of respondents indicated they would wait 15 minutes for the next bus. Eight percent would wait 30 minutes, while 30 percent would not wait at all. Wait times of 45 minutes and 60 minutes had very minimal responses, together equaling less than 1 percent. The responses were similar across campuses.

3.8 Acceptable Trip Times by Bus

Thirty-seven percent of respondents felt that an acceptable trip time of less than 10 minutes between their home and campus would be acceptable. Forty-two percent felt that trip times between 10 and 15 minutes would be tolerable, while 12 percent more would accept times up to 20 minutes.

These values differ significantly by school with Concordia students being significantly less accepting of long trips times with 46 percent indicating that they would accept trips 10 minutes or less. Only 35 percent of NDSU students and 24 percent of MSUM students were that demanding. This preference is likely correlated with the high proportion of Concordia students who live near their campus relative to those who attend NDSU and MSUM.

4. Student Perceptions of Parking

The perception of affordable and convenient parking plays a decided role in the selection of passenger travel mode. Of the students who responded to the survey, more than 60 percent of the students indicated that they had parking permits (Figure 16). The campus with the highest percentage of permit holders reporting was Concordia at 69 percent, followed by MSUM with 62 percent. Sixty percent of NDSU respondents had parking permits.

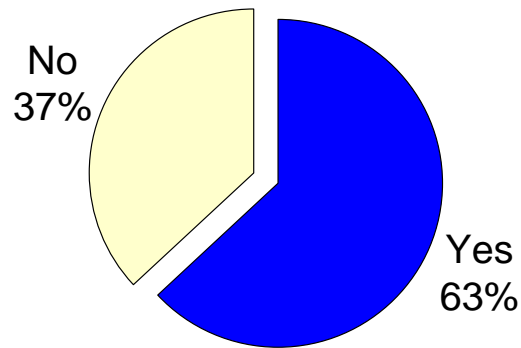


Figure 16. Students with Parking Permits (n=1,380)

4.1 Parking Convenience

There was no consensus in regard to the convenience of parking across the three institutions. The data presented in Figure 17 is relatively deceiving as it masks the relative satisfaction of Concordia students, 41 percent of whom rated the convenience of parking as good or very good, and dissatisfaction of MSUM students, only 15 percent who felt the same way. North Dakota State students, on average, seemed satisfied with 30 percent thinking that parking was good or very good and 30 percent thinking it was poor or very poor.

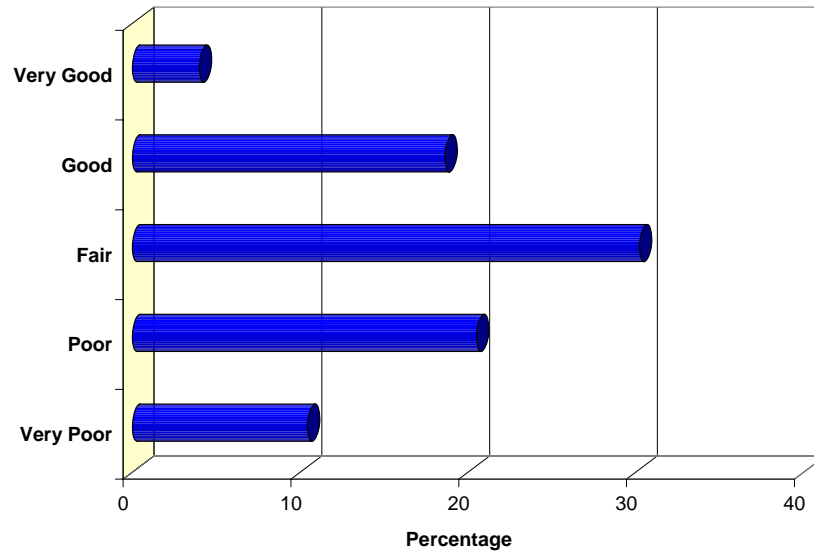


Figure 17. Student Perception of Parking Convenience (n=1,380)

4.2 Parking Affordability

The same phenomenon present when measuring parking convenience was found when looking at affordability as shown in Figure 18. Ninety percent of Concordia students felt that parking affordability was good or very good. At the same time just more than half of the MSUM students participating in the survey thought affordability was poor or very poor. NDSU students were split with approximately one-third thinking affordability was good, fair, or poor.

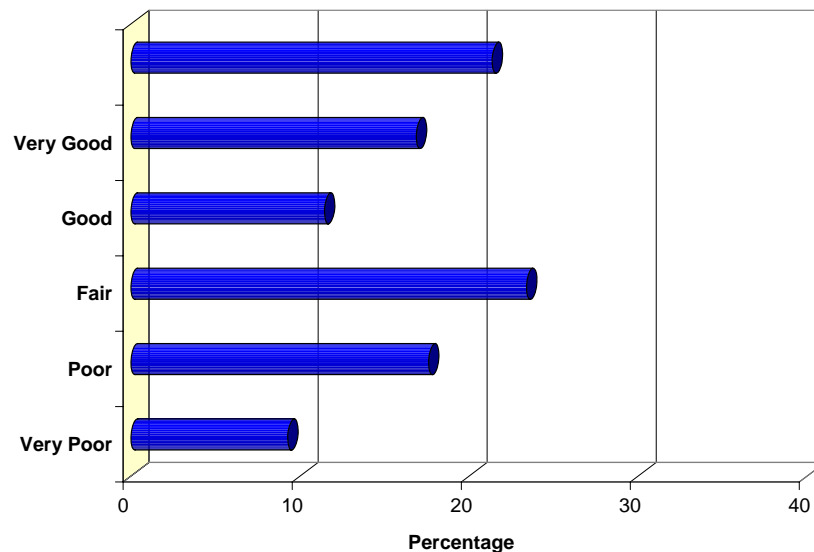


Figure 18. Student Perception of Parking Affordability (n=1,380)

4.3 On Street Parking

Thirty-one percent of parking permit holders regularly found themselves parking on the street. However, this measure too was unequal among the student bodies. Just fewer than 60 percent of Concordia students with permits had found themselves parking on the street. Only 31 percent of MSUM students and 10 percent of NDSU students did so.

4.4 MAT Service to Off-campus Parking Lot

Approximately 37 percent of respondents stated that they would make use of MAT if it were adjacent to an off-campus parking lot serviced every 15 minutes. Only 6 percent would consider using such a service if the bus left the lot every half hour.

Forty-seven percent of NDSU students indicated that they would be interested in a parking lot circulator providing service every 15 minutes as opposed to 26 percent of MSUM students and 16 percent of Concordia College students.

5. Intercampus Public Transportation

Students may take classes through the Tri-College system of NDSU, Concordia, and MSUM. This section contains questions to determine if there is demand for public transportation among the three colleges. The first question addresses whether or not students plan on taking Tri-College courses with 98 out of 1,380 indicating they planned on doing so. Nearly 44 percent of students reporting that they would be taking Tri-College courses indicated that they would consider taking the MAT bus. Only 18 percent of respondents indicated that they would not consider taking the MAT bus, and 38 percent responded maybe (Figure 19).

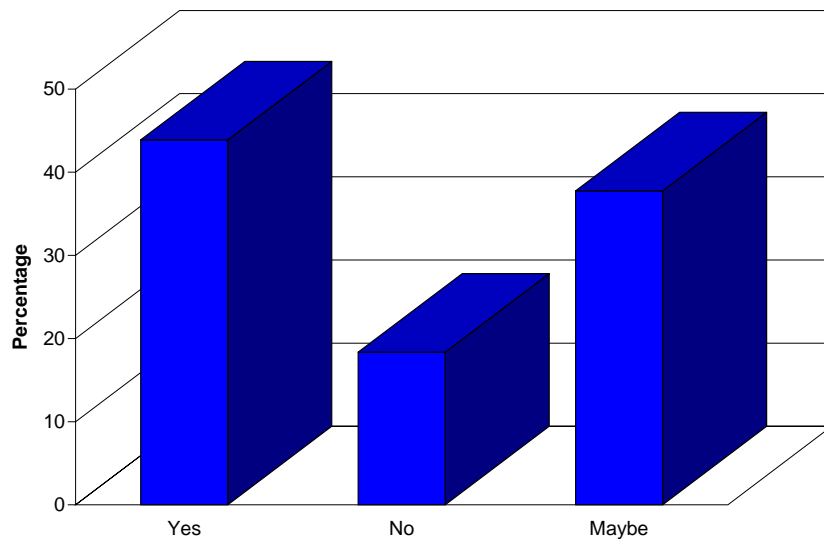


Figure 19. Tri-College Students Who Would Consider Taking the MAT Bus (n=98)

5.1 MSUM-Concordia College Circulator

For students at the Moorhead campuses, the next question asked if they would use a MAT circulator bus routed around the MSUM and Concordia campus neighborhoods with approximately 15 minute intervals (Figure 20). Seventeen percent of the participating students at the two institutions responded yes while 36 percent stated that they would consider it. MSUM students were slightly less inclined to use the service, with about 16 percent responding yes.

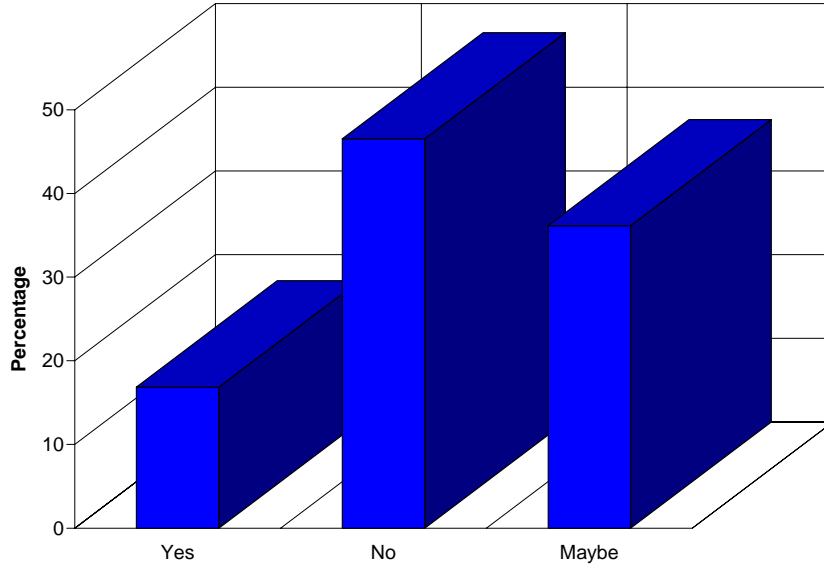


Figure 20. MSUM-Concordia Circulator Use (n=664)

The periods when survey respondents felt that they would likely make use of circulator service are presented in Figure 21. This figure mirrors the times when students are on campus. Six percent of respondents said they would use the circulator several times a day, 23 percent once per day, and 57 percent once per week. Fourteen percent replied that they would never use the service.

MSUM students reported stronger interest in daily trips than Concordia students with 33 percent positively replying compared to nineteen percent. Concordia students were more interested in occasional trips.

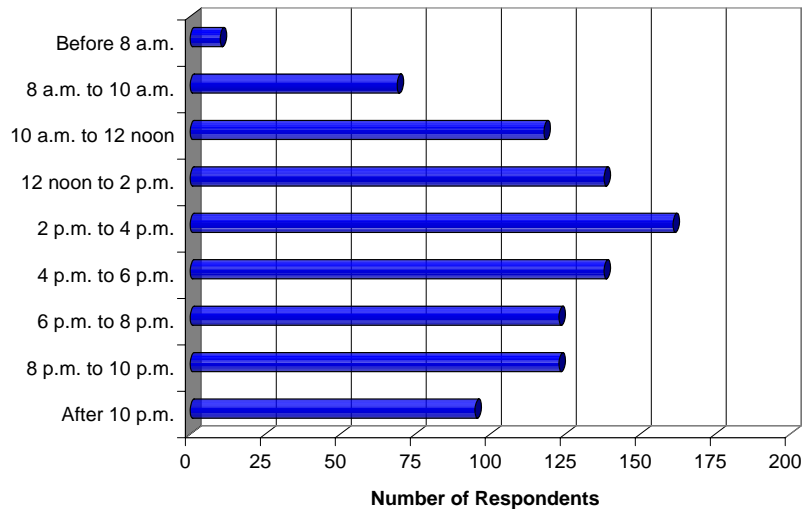


Figure 21. Time of Use of the MSUM-Concordia Circulator

5.2 Knowledge and Use of NDSU Campus Circulators

Fifty-three percent of NDSU respondents, 335 students, stated that they had knowledge of the campus circulators. Twenty-two percent said that they use them. Seven and a half percent of respondents indicated additional desirable locations for service. Common locations were the Bison Sports Arena, the Wellness Center, and the Living and Learning Center.

5.3 Wait for NDSU Circulator

Twenty-four percent of respondents said they would wait up to 7 minutes for a circulator, 16 would wait 10 minutes, 8 percent would wait 15 minutes, while 48 percent would not wait at all.

5.4 Deuce Use

Of all NDSU respondents, 228 students, 32 percent, indicated that they use *The Deuce* taxi service in the evening. Less than 5 percent of the 228 students use the service before 10 p.m. Ten percent of the respondents indicated that they had considered taking the MAT bus to go out at night and then use *The Deuce* to get home. Only 11 percent indicated that they were shifting rides away from MAT by using the taxi service.

5.5 Dragon Drive

About a third of MSUM survey respondents use the Dragon Drive taxi service, one-sixth of whom use it before 10 p.m. Ten percent stated that their use of Dragon Drive replaced rides previously taken on MAT. Fifteen individuals surveyed had considered taking MAT for the first leg of a trip and Dragon Drive to return home.

5.6 Doyle Taxi

About 28 percent of the Concordia respondents use the Doyle taxi service, one-fourth of whom use it before 10 p.m. Eleven percent stated that their use of Doyle replaced rides previously taken on MAT. Sixteen percent of respondents had considered taking MAT for the first leg of a trip and Doyle to return home.

5.7 MAT Evening Service

Twenty-eight percent of the MSUM respondents knew about MAT's evening service provided by Routes 7 and 8. However, 17 percent of those aware of the service did make use of the service. Thirty-three percent of Concordia students knew about evening service, 24 percent of whom had used it.

5.8 Guaranteed Ride Home Program

Thirty-one percent of NDSU students responded yes and 47 percent responded maybe to a question regarding willingness to participate in a Guaranteed Ride Home Program. Concordia students responded yes 29 percent and maybe 53 percent of the time. This is quite similar to the value of 28 and 53 percent provided by MSUM students.

6. Campus Transit Accommodation

The final section of the survey asked the respondents whether they think more shelters should be placed around campus and whether or not they would be willing to pay a fee per semester to use the MAT services.

6.1 Bus Stop Amenities

Nearly 39 percent indicated they would like to see more heated bus shelters and roughly 31 percent indicated they would like to see more bus shelters all together (Figure 22). NDSU students desired these amenities at 41 and 36 percent, MSUM at 46 and 31 percent, and Concordia at the very low rates of 21 and 26 percent.

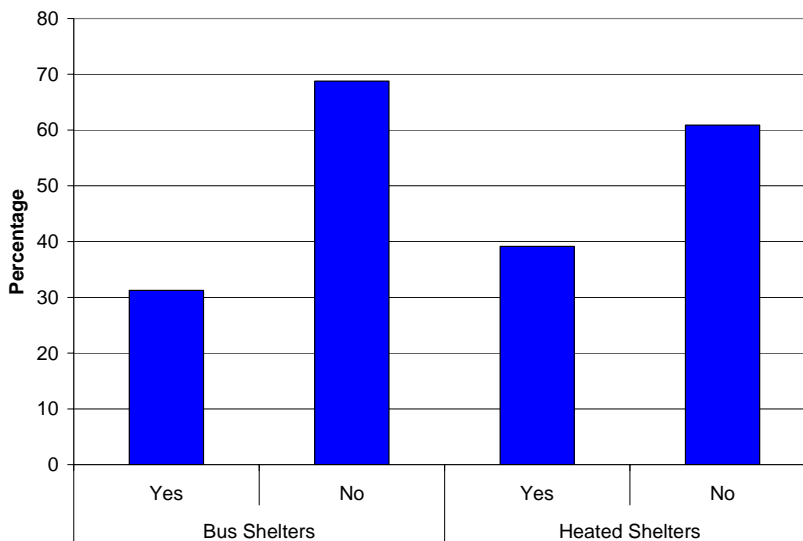


Figure 22. Desire for More/Heated Shelters (n=1,380)

6.2 Willingness to Pay for MAT Service

One of the main factors that determine the value of service is whether the customer is willing to pay for that service. Students were asked if they would be willing to pay an activity fee for free, unlimited use of the MAT Bus around campus and the Fargo-Moorhead area (Figure 23). The responses across all campus were one-third for and two-thirds against. Twenty-seven percent of Concordia, 42 percent of MSUM, and 38 percent of NDSU students supported the concept of an activity fee.

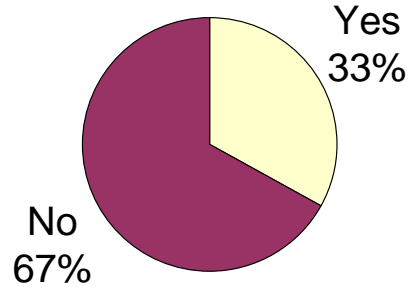


Figure 23. Students Willing to Pay Activity Fee (n=1,380)

Students were then asked how much they would be willing to pay on a per semester basis for unlimited use of MAT service (Figure 24). About 46 percent of respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay \$10 or more. The majority indicated that they would be willing to pay an activity fee of \$5 or \$10. The amount students were willing to pay was quite consistent across institutions.

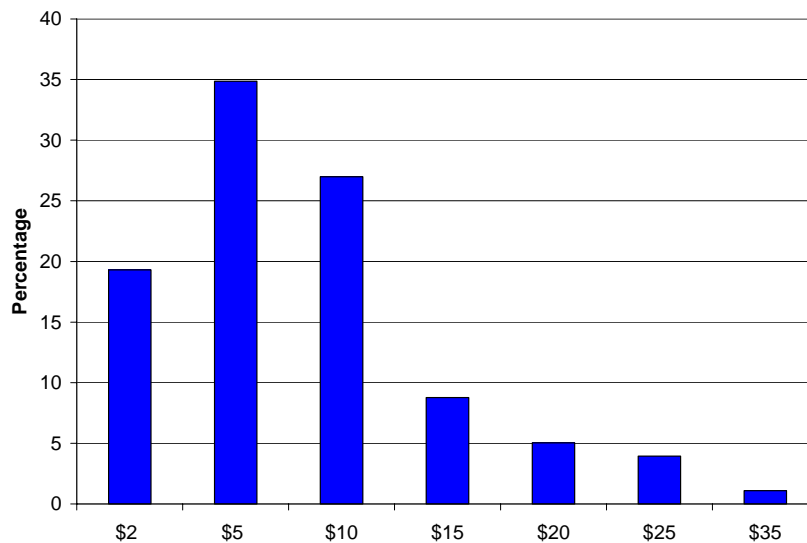


Figure 24. How Much Students are willing to Pay for MAT Service (n=456)

7. Summary

The 2005 Campus Transit Survey provides insight into the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of students enrolled at Concordia College, Minnesota State University-Moorhead, and North Dakota State University. A number of topics were addressed by the survey including mobility characteristics, MAT service, parking, inter- and intra-campus transportation, and desired services changes.

MAT ridership by North Dakota State University respondents rose from 32 percent in 2003-2004 to 43 percent this academic year. At Concordia and MSUM, the number of students fell from 35 to 27 and 34 to 27 percent respectively.

MSUM students living off-campus reported having the longest commutes. This is likely due to large number of respondents that live in South Fargo. Concordia students indicated the environmentally beneficial aspects of public transportation at much higher rates than those from NDSU or MSUM. North Dakota State University students are more accepting of long walks in adverse weather than those at the other two campuses.

Students at Concordia were happier than those at MSUM or NDSU with regard to both the convenience and affordability of campus parking. At the same time, nearly 60 percent of Concordia respondents reporting parking on the street regularly, as compared with 31 percent of MSUM and 10 percent of NDSU students.

Subsidized taxi service is popular with the students with about a third of the respondents from each campus indicating that they had used the service. There is also strong interest in the Guaranteed Ride Home Program. Eighty-two percent of Concordia, 81 percent of MSUM, and 78 percent of NDSU students said they were or might be interested in the service. Less than a third of MSUM and Concordia respondents knew about MAT's evening service.

There is relatively weak support for an activity fee to support campus transportation. Of those who do support it, fees of \$5 \$10 are most acceptable. Of the students planning on taking Tri-College courses this year, 44 percent reported that they would and 38 percent that they might consider MAT as their mode of transportation.

Finally, the disproportionately high female response rates at MSUM and Concordia College provides strong motivation for reassessing the sampling methodology to be used in future surveys.