

Mobility of MSUM Faculty & Staff Transit Survey Results

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Mobility of MSUM Faculty and Staff

Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) is a major employer in the Fargo-Moorhead area. A transit survey was developed to determine faculty and staff transportation needs and to explore options and opportunities in meeting those needs. A letter was then emailed asking MSUM faculty and staff to participate in the survey. Response to the survey included 115 respondents consisting of almost exactly half faculty and half staff members.

The results for the faculty and staff are presented in four main sections. These include: 1) location questions such as distance faculty and staff live from campus; 2) current mobility issues such as access to motor vehicles; 3) utilization of MAT; and 4) campus accommodations for transit.

Location Results

The survey results revealed that greater than 75 percent of respondents live less than five miles from campus (Figure 1). A high percentage, (35 percent), live between two and five miles and given the size of the Fargo-Moorhead area, residents who live within a three-mile radius of the MSUM campus should have access to the Metropolitan Area Transit (MAT) routes.

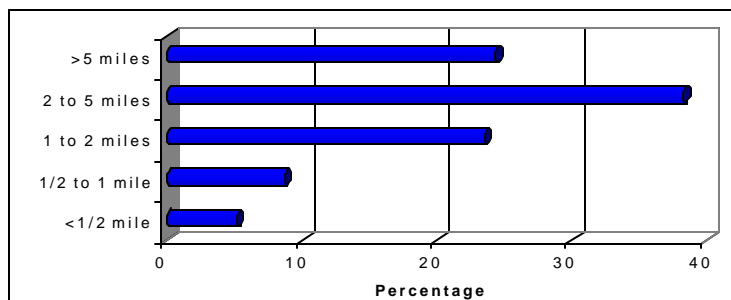


Figure 1. Distance Faculty & Staff Live from Campus (n=115)

The majority of faculty and staff indicated they travel from home before arriving on campus (95.65 percent), and almost all of the other respondents (2.61 percent) indicated they travel to MSUM from child care locations (Figure 2).

Thirty-four percent of faculty and staff reported being on-campus before 8 a.m. (Figure 3). More than 90 percent of faculty and staff indicated they are on-campus between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

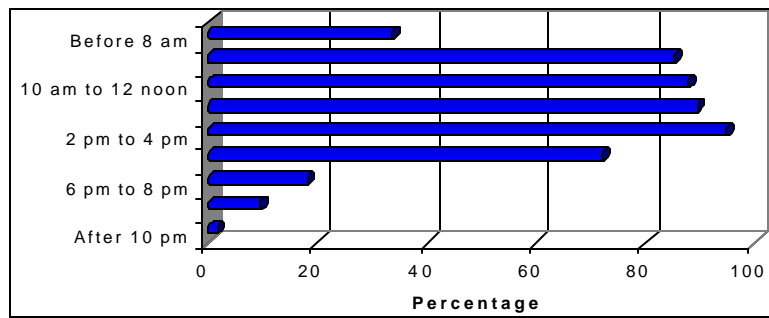


Figure 3. Times When Faculty/Staff are On Campus (n=115)

We asked three questions relevant to travel mode to campus. First, we asked faculty and staff how they most frequently travel to campus. Second, we asked in their travel mode changed during the winter. Finally, we asked what factors influenced their mode choice.

Almost 90 percent of respondents indicated they drive their vehicle to campus (Figure 4). Fewer than 14 percent of survey respondents indicated they bike or walk to campus and just over 5 percent indicated they take a MAT bus to campus.

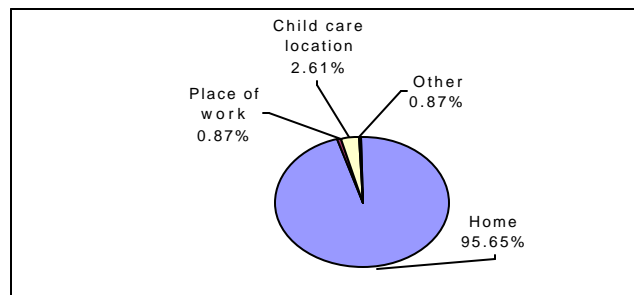


Figure 2. Locations Most Often Traveled From (n=115)

Almost 25 percent of faculty/staff respondents indicated they choose a different mode of travel during the winter (Figure 5). Some may choose to ride the MAT as opposed to riding their bike or walking during the winter months.

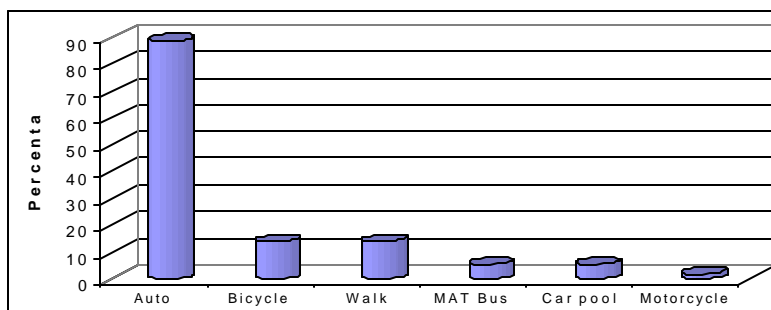


Figure 4. Travel Mode to Campus (n=115)

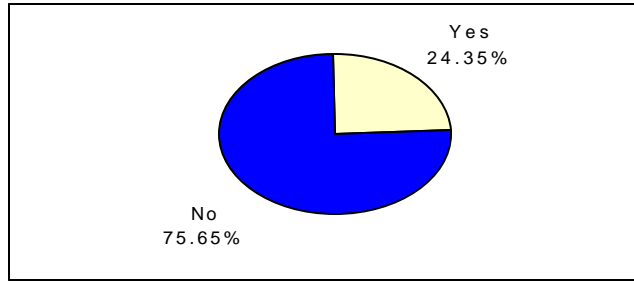


Figure 5. Percent That Change Mode During Winter (n=115)

Convenience, time and parking availability are the greatest factors that influence the mode choice of MSUM faculty and staff (Figure 6). The survey question asked faculty and staff to indicate the level of importance each of the factors had on influencing mode choice to and from campus.

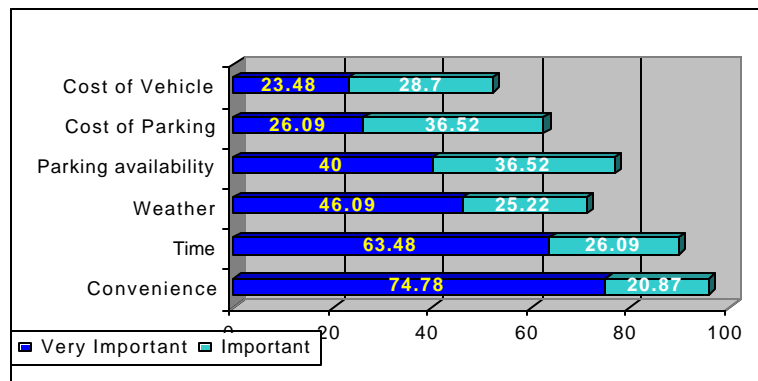


Figure 6. Influences on Mode of Travel (n=115)

Seventy-five percent of faculty and staff respondents make two one-way trips to campus per day, equivalent to one round-trip each day. Using public transportation or riding in car pools would be more accommodating for those faculty and staff making one round trip to and from campus per day.

Parking lots used by surveyed faculty and staff members (Figure 7) show that the C and W1 lots are used by more than 50 percent of respondents.

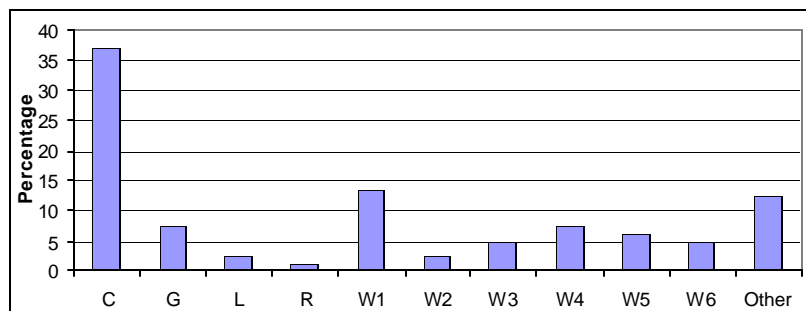


Figure 7. Parking Lots Used by Survey Respondents (n=81)

Current Mobility

We asked questions to gain insight into faculty and staff current mobility. This section contains responses to questions about access to motor vehicles, ownership of parking permits, attitudes toward parking convenience and cost.

Most of the faculty and staff surveyed have access to a motor vehicle (95 percent). Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated they owned parking permits. This shows that many faculty and staff do not park in the MSUM parking lots either choosing not to or due to a lack of available parking permits.

Faculty and staff perceptions toward parking convenience were then analyzed. Approximately 60 percent of respondents indicated they felt parking convenience on campus was good, whereas 43 percent of respondents indicated parking convenience was either poor or fair (Figure 8).

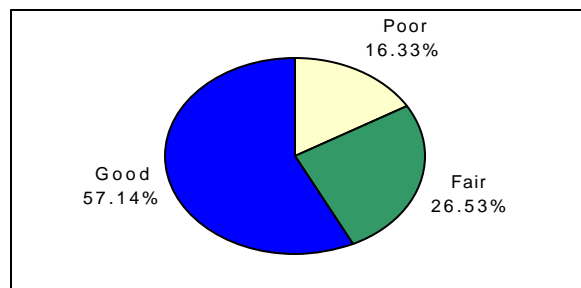


Figure 8. Parking Convenience (n=115)

Approximately 35 percent of respondents indicated they thought parking costs were affordable, whereas 36

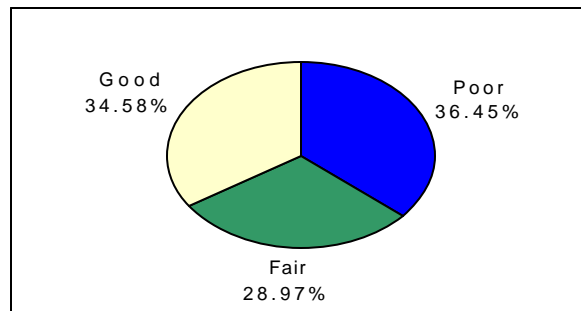


Figure 9. Parking Cost (n=115)

percent considered parking affordability poor with 29 percent considering parking affordability fair (Figure 9).

Utilization of MAT

A number of questions were asked to discern how faculty and staff view public transportation. We wanted a better understanding of their perceptions of the benefits of public transit, and if they had ever ridden public transportation.

First, survey respondents were asked if they have used and were familiar with the MAT. Less than 36 percent of respondents specified that they were familiar with MAT (Figure 10). This shows a large untapped market among MSUM faculty and staff.

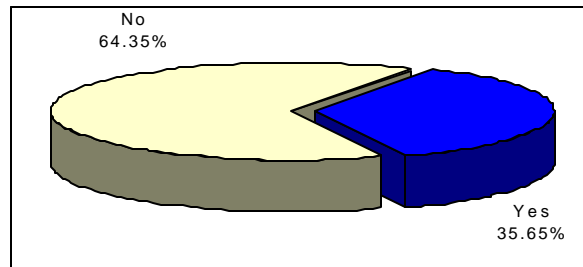


Figure 10. Respondents Familiar with MAT (n=115)

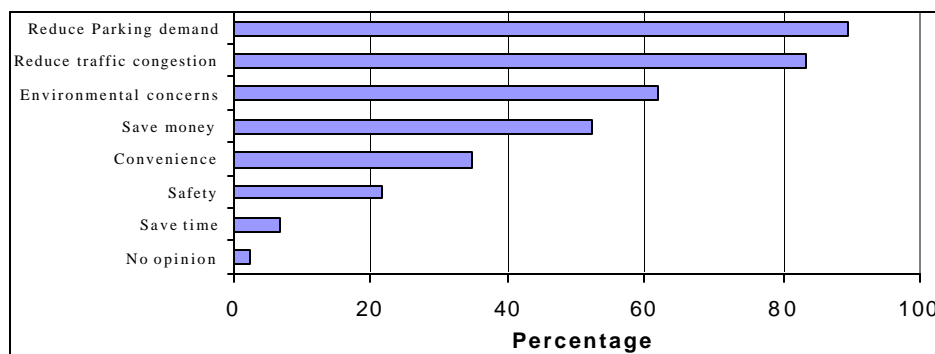


Figure 11. Benefits to Riding Public Transportation (n=115)

Faculty and staff were asked to identify what they believed were the benefits of public transportation on the MSUM campus. The top benefit among respondents was reduced parking demand, followed by reduced traffic congestion, and environmental concerns (Figure 11).

Among faculty and staff who have ridden a MAT bus, the outlook is quite positive. Better than 90 percent felt that the bus was clean, and almost 80 percent of respondents rated the other characteristics as favorable

(Figure 12).

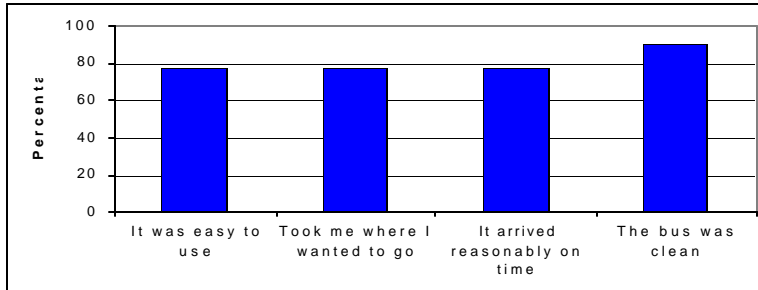


Figure 12. Faculty and Staff Experiences Riding MAT (n=41)

We also asked respondents about characteristics they might value as important for riding MAT. Reliability scored highest among categories at 90 percent followed by it serves the Fargo-Moorhead area (78 percent) and the drivers are friendly (78 percent) (Figure 13).

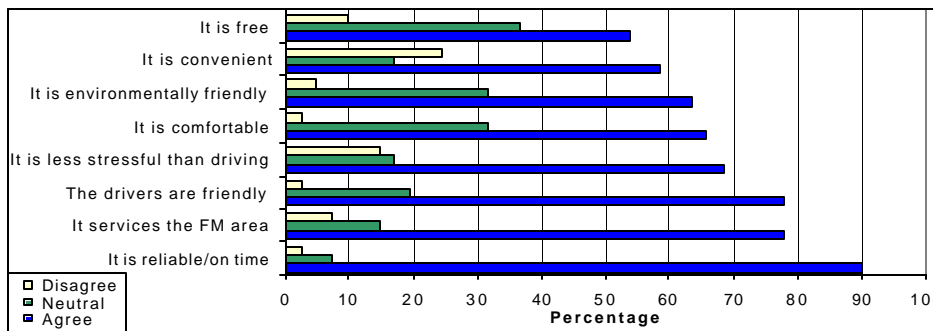


Figure 13. Valuable Characteristics of MAT (n=41)

Faculty and staff were asked what keeps them from using MAT bus service. The highest reported reason was their preference to drive, walk or ride their bike. It takes to long was the next answer of choice followed by no route where I need to go (Figure 14).

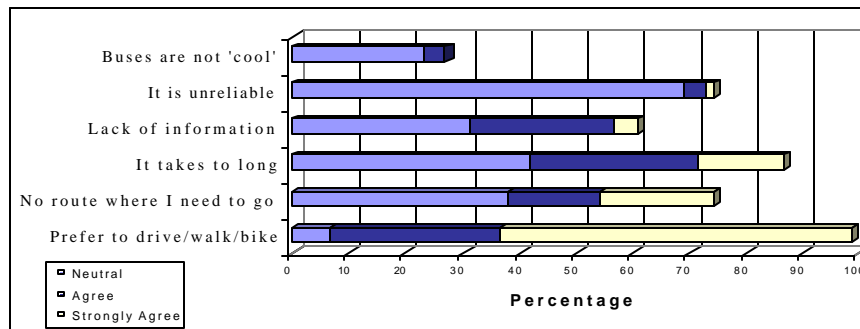


Figure 14. Factors that Discourage Use of MAT (n=74)

Respondents were asked how long they would wait for MAT. Fifty-nine percent reported they would wait 15 minutes, 14 percent would wait 30 minutes, and 27 percent would not wait for a MAT bus (Figure 15).

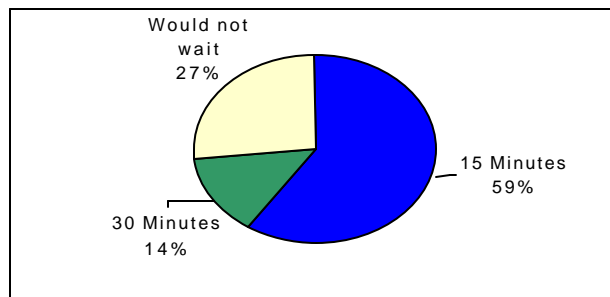


Figure 15. Time Willing to Wait for MAT (n=115)

We asked faculty and staff to identify reasons they would ride MAT in the Fargo-Moorhead area. They were presented potential reasons and they were to reply “yes” or “no” for each reason. Just under 30 percent

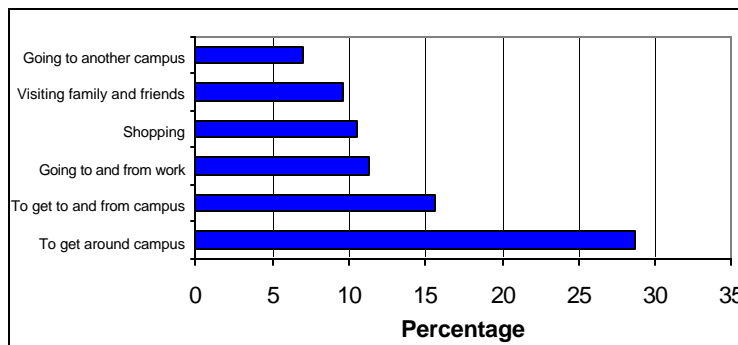


Figure 16. Reasons to Use MAT (n=115)

of respondents indicated they would use MAT to get around campus, and 16 percent indicated they would use MAT to get to and from campus (Figure 16).

Finally, faculty and staff were asked what they consider reasonable walking distance given a temperature above 32 degrees and above 32 degrees. Discrepancies began to occur at the half mile to one mile walking distance (Figure 17). Forty percent of respondents indicated they would walk between one-quarter and one mile if the temperature was above 32 degrees, but only 11 percent indicated they would walk the same distance in temperatures below 32 degrees. On-campus transit could increase ridership during winter months according to these results.

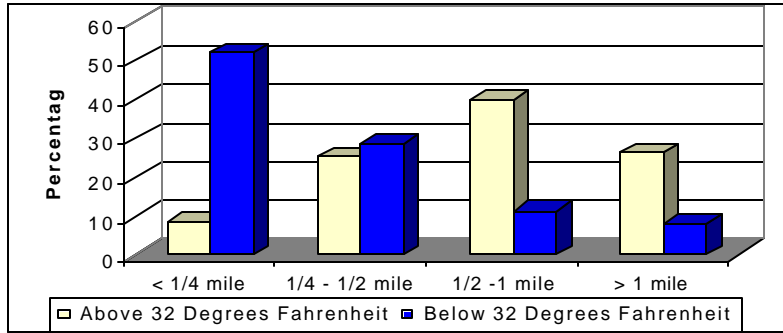


Figure 17. Reasonable walking distances in given temperatures (n=115)

Campus Accommodations for Transit

Transit accommodations can make riding the bus more appealing. We asked faculty and staff three questions including their desire for more and heated shelters, if they would ride a campus circulator with 15 minute intervals, and their willingness to ride MAT buses at a reduced rate or for free.

Fifty-two percent of respondents indicated they would like to see more bus shelters on campus, and 46

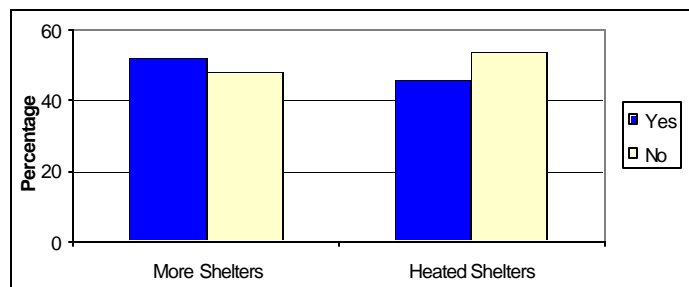


Figure 18. Desire for More and Heated Shelters at MSUM (n=115)

percent specified they would like the shelters to be heated (Figure 18).

Next, faculty and staff were asked if they would use a campus circulator to get around the MSUM campus. Thirty-two percent of respondents specified they would use a campus circulator and 68 percent said they would not use the circulator (Figure 19).

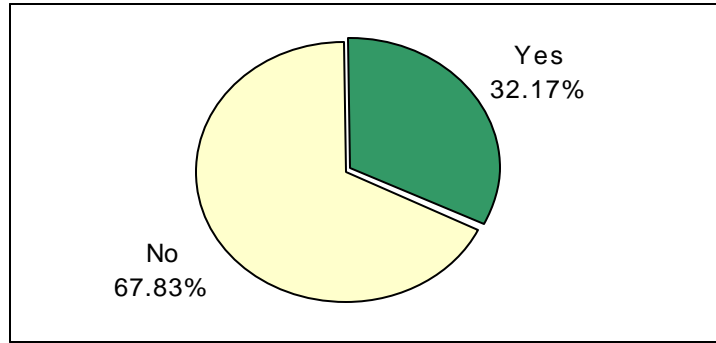


Figure 19. Willingness to Use Circulator (n=115)

Finally, faculty and staff were asked their willingness to ride a MAT bus at a reduced rate or for free (Figure 20). Thirty-six percent of respondents indicated they would ride a MAT bus if a reduced price monthly pass was offered, and 50 percent specified they would ride the MAT if it were free.

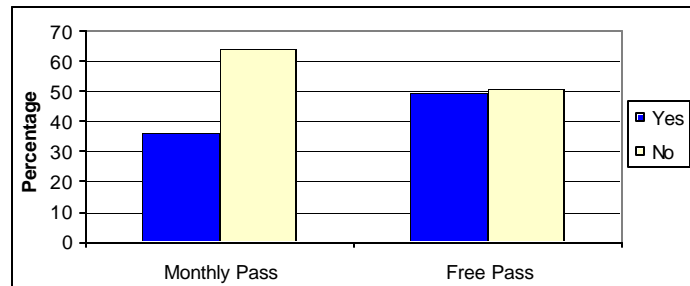


Figure 20. Willingness to Ride MAT for a Reduced Rate or Free (n=115)

The study found that MSUM faculty and staff are very reliant upon their personal automobiles. However, many do appear open to public transportation. There also appears to be a need for better marketing of bus schedules and services provided to MSUM faculty and staff as greater than 60 percent of survey respondents were unfamiliar with MAT services. Convenience and ease of use are aspects of MAT service that must also be addressed to increase the utilization of public transportation on the MSUM campus and throughout the entire Fargo-Moorhead area.