

Carpooling to North Dakota State University

Survey Results

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Carpooling to North Dakota State University

North Dakota State University (NDSU) has experienced tremendous growth over the past couple of years. This growth has resulted in some overcrowding, particularly in parking lots. We have sought out ways to better serve the campus by incorporating more public transportation. Yet public transportation may not work for everyone, so we are considering additional transportation alternatives. A brief questionnaire was designed to gain student and faculty perspectives on carpooling. Carpooling is when two or more people ride together to reach a common destination, in this case, NDSU. Carpooling helps reduce the demand for parking spaces and relieve some of the congestion on and around campus.

The survey was developed for the internet and emailed to all NDSU students and faculty/staff. A message accompanied the survey explaining the setup and the objective of the survey. The response rate included 801 student and 278 faculty/staff responses. All responses were considered when developing the survey results.

Survey results are discussed in the following report. The two sections that comprise this report are, 1) student perceptions regarding carpooling, and 2) faculty perceptions regarding carpooling.

Student Perceptions Regarding Carpooling

Student responses indicated that they were in favor of carpooling. Less than 10 percent indicated they would never consider carpooling to the NDSU campus (Figure 1) while almost 80 percent of respondents have an open mind towards carpooling. These results show that if an incentive to carpool existed, many students would take advantage.

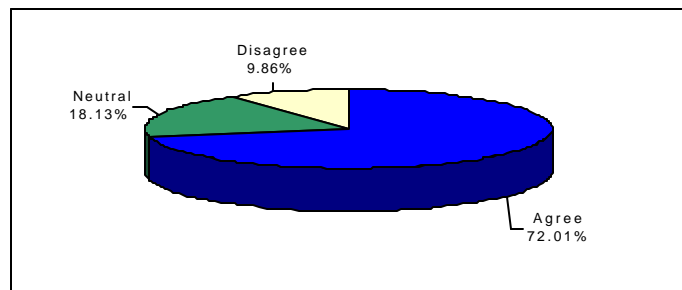


Figure 1. Students in favor of carpooling, (n=801)

A main carpool incentive to guarantee student carpoolers is better parking spots on campus compared to traditional student parking permit holders. If better parking spots were available to students, nearly 70 percent of respondents would consider carpooling (Figure 2). These results show the willingness to arrive at campus near a specific destination. This is likely due to harsh weather conditions throughout much of the traditional school year.

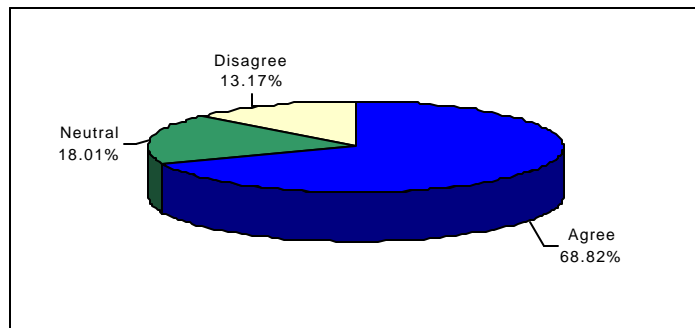


Figure 2. Student willingness to carpool if guaranteed better parking (n=801)

Another incentive for students to carpool would be to offer students willing to carpool a discount on their carpooling permit. Almost three-fourths of respondents agreed that a discounted permit would encourage them to carpool (Figure 3). The size of the discount will largely determine the receptiveness of students to this policy. If a discount of 10% or less were offered to carpooling students, nearly 30% of respondents would carpool; whereas, if a discount on a carpooling permit (vs. normal parking permit) of 10-20 percent were offered, more than 65% of students would carpool (Figure 4). The question of cost is very important to students, considering many lack funding due to the cost of higher education.

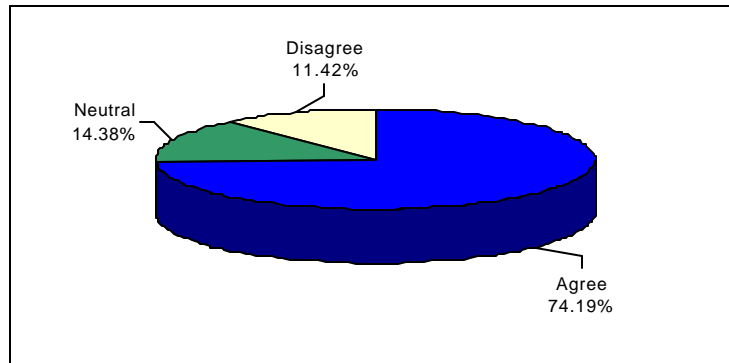


Figure 3. Students willing to carpool given discounted parking permits (n=801)

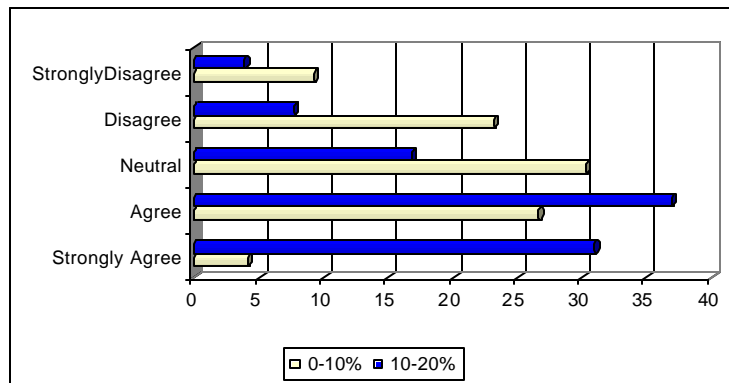


Figure 4. Students willing to carpool at discounted rates (n=801)

A campus shuttle is currently available serving a number of parking lots throughout the NDSU campus. Many students already utilize the shuttle and were asked if they would carpool if shuttle service were available from their parking lot to the rest of campus. Almost 42 percent would consider carpooling if a shuttle was available to them near their respective parking lot (Figure 5). However, almost 30 percent disagreed with carpooling and utilizing the campus shuttle to get to their desired location. Parking further from campus would have an adverse effect on carpooling according to student respondents. Nearly 80 percent of respondents agreed that parking further from campus would discourage them from carpooling while only 9 percent disagreed (Figure 6), saying parking further from campus would not discourage them from carpooling.

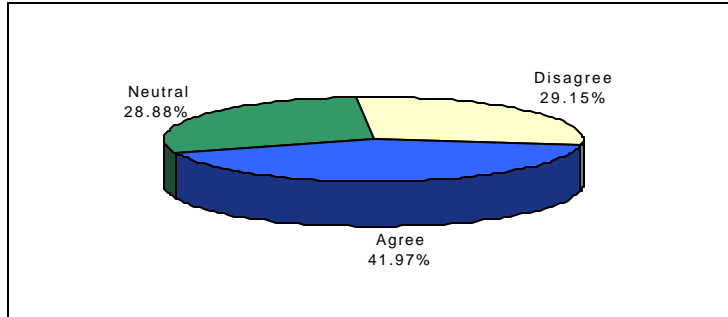


Figure 5. Student willingness to carpool if shuttle service was provided (n=801)

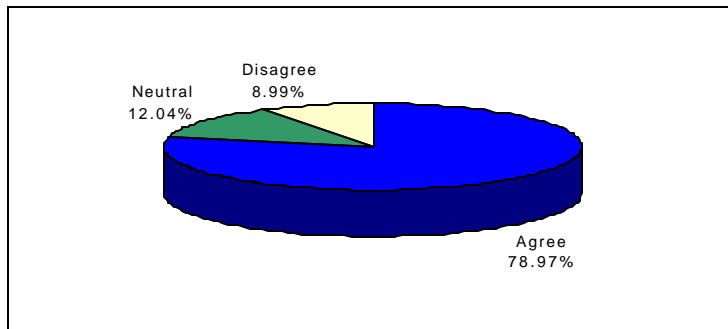


Figure 6. Agreement that parking further from campus would discourage carpooling (n=801)

Finally, students were asked which NDSU parking lots they would utilize for carpooling (Figure 7). Lots CF, T and SF were the preferred lots. This is not a surprising result as all three of these lots provide ideal locations for students to get to and from classes and activities throughout the NDSU campus. The dome parking lot was largely considered the worst choice for carpooling among student respondents. Roughly 55 percent of respondents felt the dome lot would not be a good lot for carpooling. This can be attributed to the dome lot's isolated location in relation to the rest of campus. Also, many student comments stemming from the survey were adamant about not allocating the dome lot for carpooling, showing that location of a parking lot in relation to campus should be of greatest importance when implementing a campus wide carpooling policy.

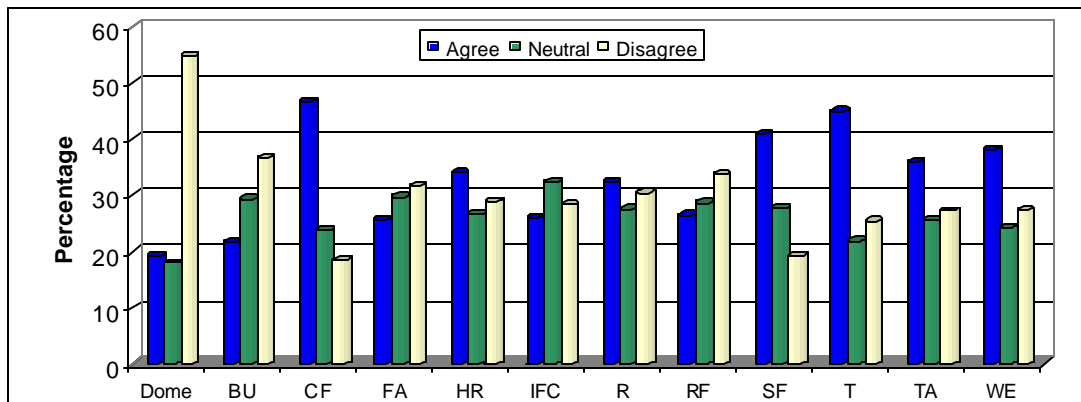


Figure 7. Possible student parking lots for carpooling (n=801)

Faculty/Staff Perceptions Regarding Carpooling

Virtually the same survey that was given to NDSU students was also given to NDSU faculty and staff. The specific parking lot preference question differed as faculty and staff had different parking lot choices compared to students. Among faculty and staff, approximately 15 percent said they would not consider carpooling, whereas almost 65 percent were in favor of carpooling (Figure 8). NDSU faculty and staff are less willing than students to carpool, probably due in part to financial reasons and time constraints, among others.

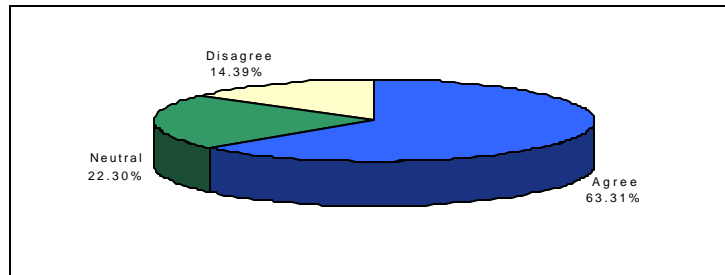


Figure 8. Faculty/Staff in favor of carpooling (n=278)

Thirty-one percent of faculty/staff respondents said if better parking spots were guaranteed, as compared to traditional lot parking, they would consider carpooling. This result was much lower than the nearly 70 percent of student respondents who would consider carpooling if better parking options were offered. This

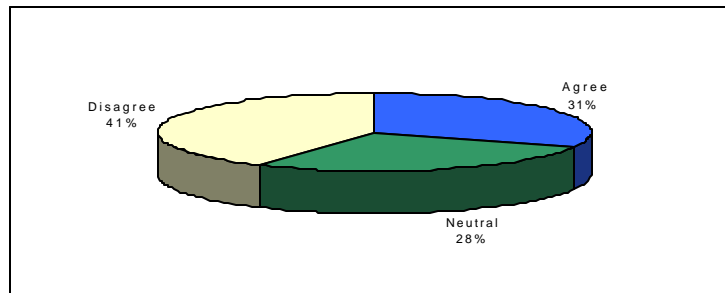


Figure 9. Faculty/Staff willingness to carpool if guaranteed better parking (n=278)

may be due to the lots faculty and staff presently park in, which tend to be closer to their office building.

A discounted parking permit would motivate 42 percent of faculty/staff survey respondents to carpool (Figure 10). Once again, this was much a much lower percentage than the student survey indicated, probably due to similar reasons as the better parking incentive. The size of the discount did not give as much incentive to faculty/staff carpooling when compared to students either with less than 40 percent of respondents who would consider carpooling with a 10 to 20 percent discount on a carpooling permits compared to traditional parking permits. However, if a discount of 0 to 10 percent on carpooling permits was offered, only 15 percent of faculty/staff respondents would consider carpooling (Figure 11) showing a need for a large discount to encourage participation.

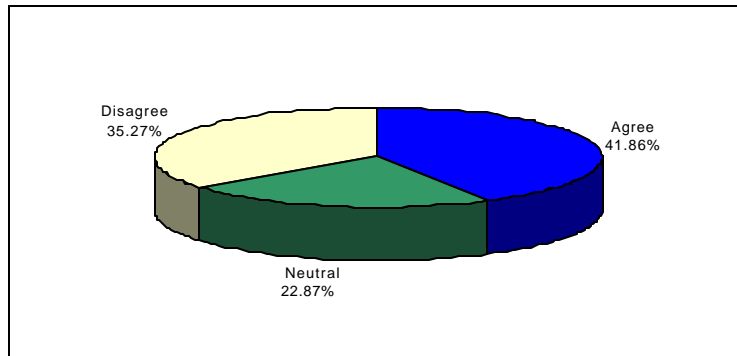


Figure 10. Faculty/Staff willing to carpool given discounted parking permits (n= 278)

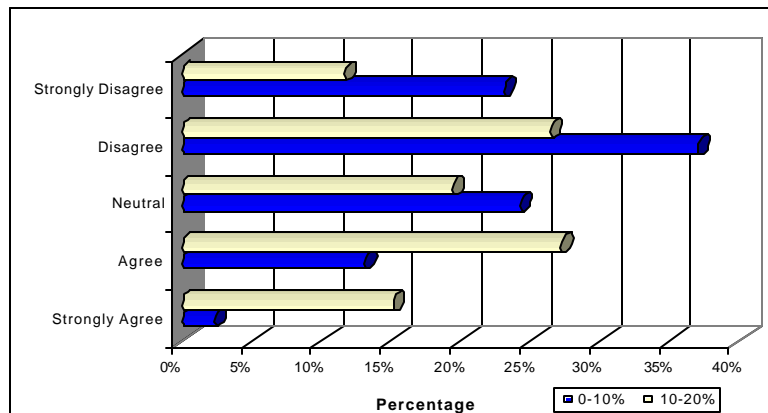


Figure 11. Faculty/Staff willingness to carpool at discounted rates (n=278)

Nearly 30 percent of faculty/staff respondents would consider carpooling if shuttle service was offered near their respective carpool lot (Figure 12). Presently, very few faculty and staff ride the shuttle to and from their campus destination. Results indicate that almost half of faculty/staff respondents would not consider using the campus shuttle as almost 50 percent of respondents were not in favor of shuttle service.

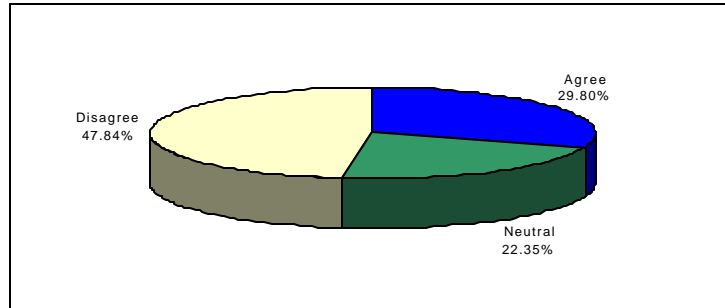


Figure 12. Faculty/Staff willingness to carpool if shuttle service was provided (n=278)

NDSU faculty/staff and student survey results were very similar when considering the negative effect on carpooling when parking further from their respective destination. Less than 13 percent of faculty/staff respondents indicated that parking further from campus would not discourage them from carpooling. The location of parking destinations is once again a prominent factor to consider when discussing alternatives.

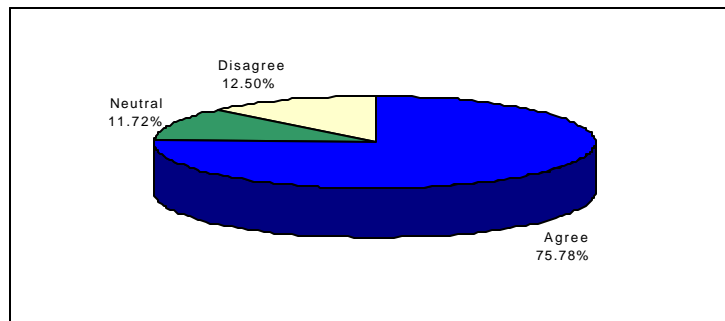


Figure 13. Agreement that parking further from campus would discourage carpooling (n=278)

The faculty/staff survey concluded similar to the student version by asking respondents to indicate which parking lots they would consider for carpooling. Faculty/staff respondents disagreed with most lot options but listed lots C, T1, T2, and AD as their primary carpooling lots (Figure 14). Similar to student respondents, all of the previous four lots are in close proximity to central campus locations. Greater than 50 percent of respondents indicated that lots AE, F, and ST would not be good choices for carpooling stalls.

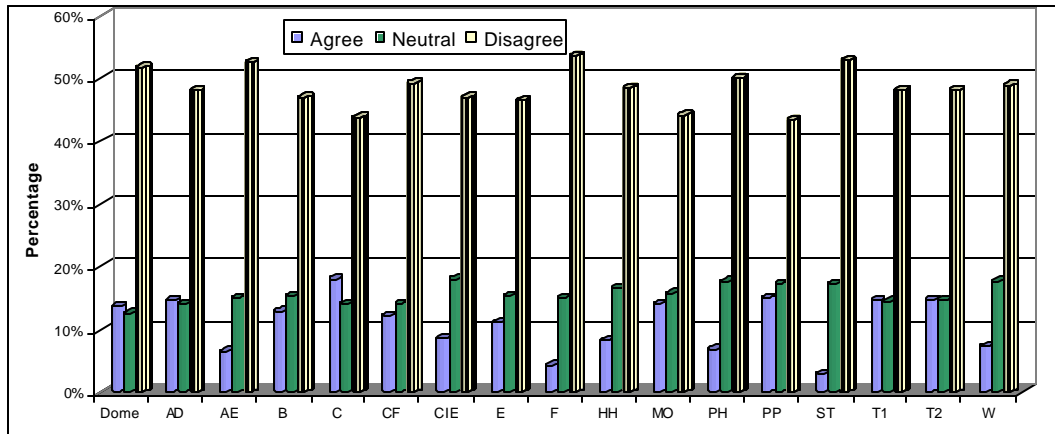


Figure 14. Possible faculty/staff parking lots for carpooling (n=278)

Summary

In responding to this survey, NDSU students gave very useful information about themselves, including personal perceptions regarding carpooling and an idea how NDSU could successfully implement a carpooling program. The next step is for NDSU to respond to the viewpoints of the student body.

Carpooling presents a viable option for NDSU's parking issues. The main aspects to focus on as a result of this survey are location and cost. If a 10 to 20 percent permit discount, compared to regular parking permits, were offered along with better parking locations for carpoolers, carpooling would have a high probability of succeeding at NDSU.

Undesirable weather conditions throughout much of the school year offers even greater incentive for students to carpool and park in stalls closer to their final destination. Although faculty and staff appear less willing to carpool than students, permit discounts and better parking alternatives will give faculty and staff member incentives to cooperate with the program as well.