

CHAPTER VII

Community Input

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the input from the 13 communities involved in the first phase of this study and analyze the results of a community survey. This is a very important segment of the study in that community involvement and input is extremely important in the selection process for the three communities that will qualify for the transit circulator plan. Community input involved local planning staffs providing pertinent information and data to the consultants, conducting community meetings, and administering both community and commuter surveys.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Each community was tasked with providing data concerning local demographics, existing planning studies pertinent to transit, and current transit services, if any. The communities were also responsible for conducting community meetings and distributing and collecting community and commuter surveys developed by LSC. LSC staff also assisted in conducting several community meetings and developed the presentation materials. Listed below, by community, is a summary of community involvement activities and input.

Village of Addison

The Village of Addison made a significant commitment to involve the community in the planning process. DMMC staff were interviewed on the local access government channel. DMMC and LSC staff gave a presentation to the Village Board about the circulator service transit planning process which was also aired on the government television channel. Village staff distributed commuter surveys at the Itasca Metra Station and mailed community surveys to elementary schools for the students to give to their parents. Community surveys were also mailed to members of the Addison Chamber of Industry and Commerce and distributed to Senior

Community Input

Citizens at a Senior Luncheon. The Village maintained ongoing information displays at the Addison Village Hall, the library, Traffic Court, Addison Senior Center, parks and recreation facilities, and District 4 and 15 elementary schools. Finally, Village staff provided necessary municipal data requested by DMMC and LSC.

Village of Bensenville

The Village of Bensenville made a significant commitment to involve the community in the planning process. In conjunction with staff from DMMC and LSC, village staff gave a presentation to the Village Board early in the community input process and also held a public meeting shortly thereafter. The Village also worked to involve the business community by giving a presentation to the Bensenville Chamber of Business and Industry, coordinating a mailing to businesses, and encouraging businesses to have their employees fill out the community survey. The Village sent staff to the Bensenville Metra Station to distribute commuter surveys and went to the local high school to inform the students about the plan and distribute community surveys. The Village of Bensenville maintained ongoing information displays at the high school, library, Village Hall, and Life Link assisted living center. The Village also provided municipal data requested by DMMC and LSC.

Village of Downers Grove

Downers Grove has several Metra stations and a local shuttle bus service, and planning staff focused their efforts on distributing commuter surveys to passengers on these two transportation modes. Staff distributed commuter surveys to rail commuters at the Main Street and Belmont Metra stations and to passengers on the Downers Grove Shuttle Service. Planning staff also conducted a mass mailing of community surveys to apartment complexes and to special service groups. Downers Grove had an Open House meeting to give a presentation on the circulator study and maintained information displays at the Public Works Building and the Downers Grove Public Library. Downers Grove also provided municipal data requested by DMMC and LSC.

City of Elmhurst

The City of Elmhurst provided the municipal data requested by DMMC and LSC, distributed the community survey to municipal employees, and supported Metra commuter survey efforts.

Village of Glen Ellyn

Community involvement activities for the Village of Glen Ellyn consisted of distributing the community survey to village employees and placing information on the municipal website.

Village of Glendale Heights

The Village of Glendale Heights has shown a great interest in informing its citizens about the circulator study. Village staff gave a presentation on how this service works to the Village Board. This presentation was also aired on the local access television channel. Staff distributed commuter surveys to rail commuters at the Glen Ellyn Metra station and gave a presentation on the study at a senior luncheon and to the Chamber of Commerce where they also handed out community survey questionnaires. Glendale Heights also included an article about the circulator study (as well as a copy of the community survey) in the village newsletter. Information and surveys were also included on the Village's municipal website. The Village also provided the municipal data requested by DMMC and LSC.

Village of Lombard

Village staff distributed commuter survey forms to rail commuters at the Lombard Metra station and distributed the community survey to village employees.

Village of Oak Brook

The Village of Oak Brook has a large concentration of corporations and commercial businesses. Oak Brook is the home for the corporate headquarters of McDonalds as well as several other major corporations. As such, village staff worked hard to get business involved in the planning process. Village staff conducted an Open House for the corporate community, e-mailed information and surveys to members

Community Input

of the Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce. The Village also mailed information and surveys to approximately 1,500 businesses and corporations in the Village.

The Village also conducted several activities for the residents of Oak Brook. An Open House was held for the public at the village library, information on the planning study was placed on the Village's municipal website, including a link to the online survey form. A letter and survey form were mailed to all residents with the monthly Civic Association newsletter. Ongoing informational displays have been maintained at the Village Hall and the Oak Brook Library. Oak Brook has also provided the municipal data requested by DMMC and LSC.

City of Oakbrook Terrace

The City of Oakbrook Terrace concentrated its community involvement activities on distributing the community survey to city employees and maintaining information displays at City Hall, two park district buildings, and a local fitness center.

Village of Villa Park

Villa Park municipal staff along with LSC staff distributed commuter surveys to rail commuters at the Villa Park Metra Station. Village staff gave presentations on the planning study to the Village Board and to the Villa Park Senior Citizens Commission. Ongoing information displays were maintained by the Village at the Public Works Building and the Villa Park Public Library. The Village also provided the municipal data requested by DMMC and LSC.

City of West Chicago

The City of West Chicago was active in generating community involvement for the planning study. West Chicago, DMMC, and LSC staff gave a presentation to the West Chicago Chamber of Commerce at which the Chamber committed to getting the West Chicago Business community involved in the planning process. City staff distributed commuter surveys to rail commuters at the West Chicago Metra Station and mailed out approximately 4,000 surveys to elementary and high school students in the community.

The City maintained a number of information displays at City Hall, the West Chicago Police Station, the local library, the Park District Building, and five local businesses. City staff were informed of the planning study, and West Chicago provided the municipal information requested by DMMC and LSC.

City of Wheaton

The City of Wheaton conducted several outreach efforts at the two Metra stations in the community. Commuter surveys were distributed at the College Avenue Metra Station and the Wheaton Metra Station. The City also conducted an Open House for the citizens of the community and produced a public service announcement describing the planning process and urging its citizens to fill out community surveys. Information on the planning study was added to the municipal website, and municipal data requested by DMMC and LSC was provided.

City of Wood Dale

The City of Wood Dale was active in garnering community involvement. City staff have given presentations to the City Council, the Senior Citizens Commission, and the Chamber of Commerce. Staff also distributed commuter surveys to rail commuters at the Wood Dale Metra station. Information on the planning study was developed for the municipal newsletter and website. City staff encouraged involvement from the business community by mailing information on the planning study to targeted businesses and sent mailings to the city's Dial-A-Ride transit service. Information was also distributed to city employees. The City of Wood Dale also provided municipal data requested by DMMC and LSC.

Other Community Involvement Activities

Besides the activities stated above, survey forms were also distributed at the Westmont Metra Station and on Pace Routes 322,332, and 747. Pace provides bus transit service throughout DuPage County to Chicago. The routes surveyed provide service to Oak Brook.

Conclusion

The 13 communities involved in this study worked extremely hard to involve their citizens in the Local Circulator Study planning process. They understand the importance of having the community involved in developing the circulator service and developed innovative methods to facilitate that involvement. Their efforts were instrumental in the high response to the community questionnaire, which is discussed in the next section.

COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

This section of Chapter VII provides the analysis of data collected through a survey of residents and employees in the 13 communities being studied as part of the DuPage Local Area Circulator Survey. Surveys were distributed by the communities and agencies, both in paper and electronic formats. The questionnaire was available to anyone on the Internet as part of the project website. The questionnaire was provided in English. A Spanish translation was prepared by the City of West Chicago and by the Village of Addison. The questionnaires are included in Appendix D. The Spanish version was handed out in the communities and posted on the website. Responses from the questionnaires were entered into a database and an analysis was performed in a spreadsheet program. The responses are summarized in the following paragraphs.

This survey was not based on a representative sample of the DuPage County population, but the number of responses are a good indicator of characteristics and travel patterns of those who may use local circulators. The results should be used with care and should not be considered as representative of all residents of DuPage County or the 13 communities.

There were 2,182 responses to the community survey. Of these, 526 were completed using the online form. The remainder were completed using paper copies of the questionnaire. These were entered into the database for analysis. Of the paper responses, 1,306 were in English and 350 were in Spanish.

Demographic Characteristics

A number of questions were asked to determine demographic characteristics of the respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate their home zip code. Figure VII-1 shows the number of responses from those residing in zip codes in and near DuPage County. Figure VII-2 shows the number of responses regarding workplace zip codes.

The majority of respondents were female with 1,347 (66 percent) responding and 708 (34 percent) male respondents.

Figure VII-1
Number of Responses by Residence Zipcode

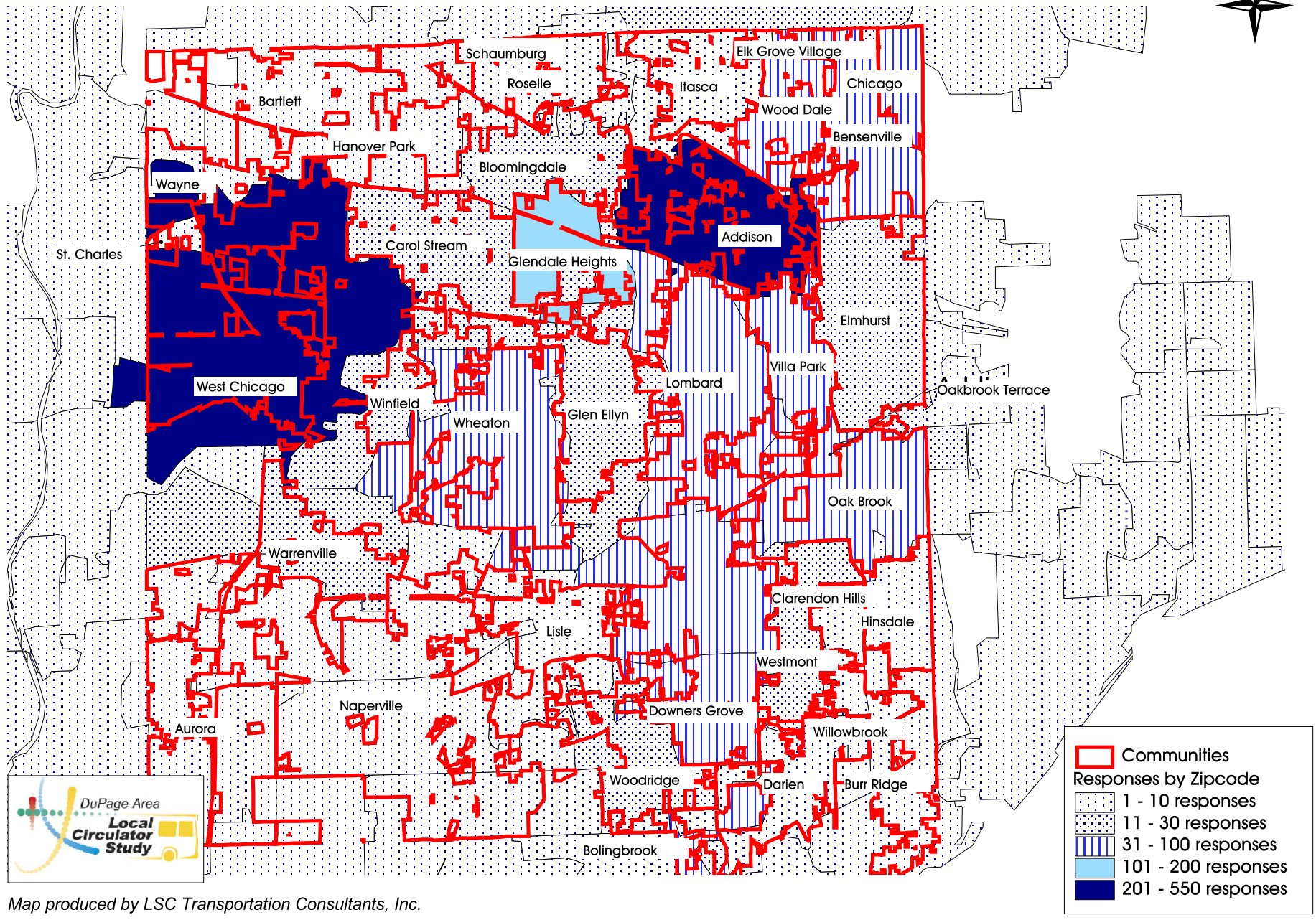
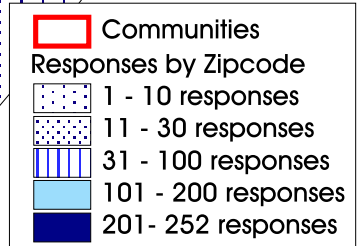
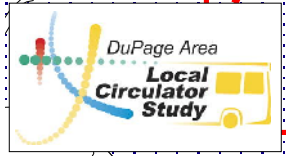
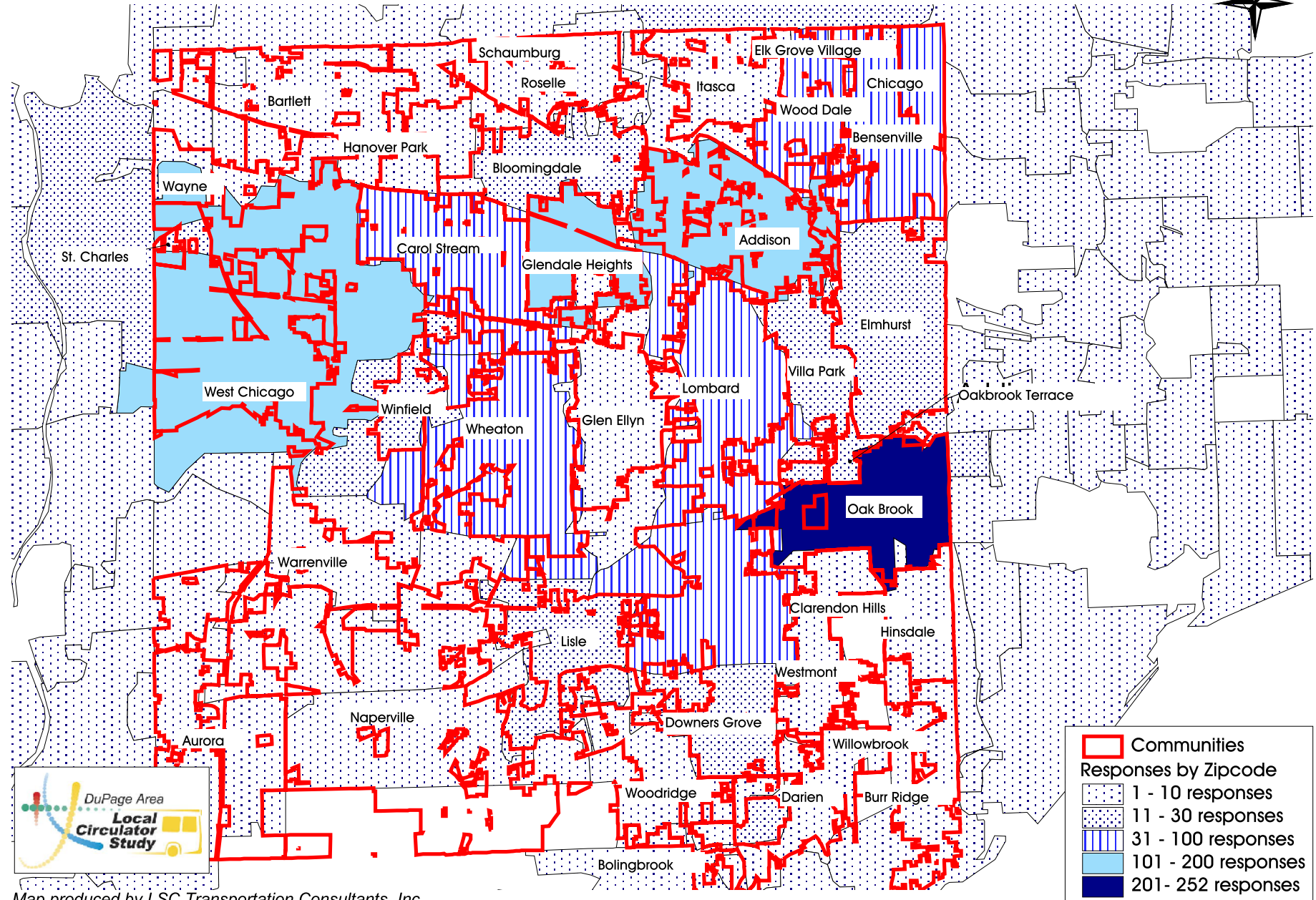
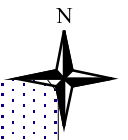


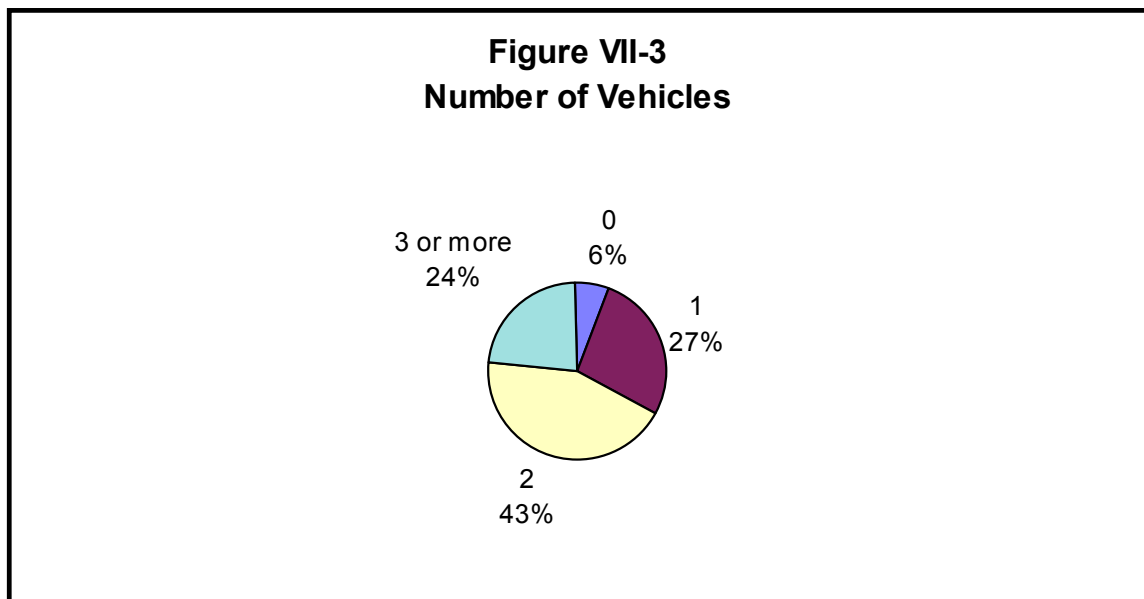
Figure VII-2
Number of Responses by Workplace Zipcode



Map produced by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

Community Input

The majority of respondents (80 percent) have driver's licenses, and 86 percent indicated they are able to drive. Only 14 percent indicated they are not able to drive. As shown in Figure VII-3, the vast majority of respondents are in households with one or more vehicles. Only six percent were from zero-vehicle households. Another 27 percent were from single-vehicle households. Respondents were also asked to indicate the number of licensed drivers in their household. Approximately six percent live in households with no licensed drivers, and approximately 24 percent live in households with only one licensed driver. Approximately 48 percent live in households with two licensed drivers, and the remainder have three or more licensed drivers.

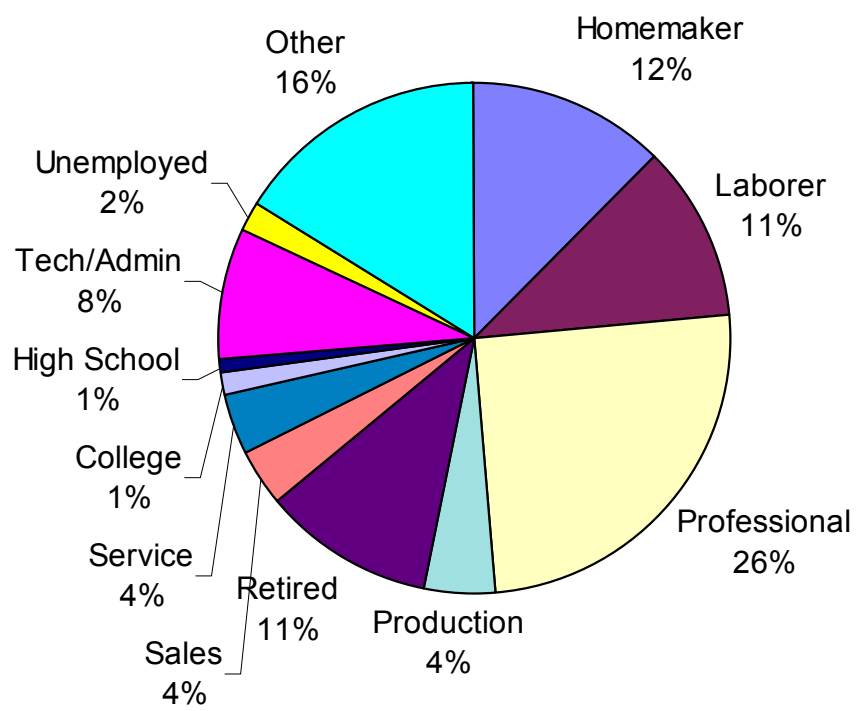


Source: Community Survey, LSC, 2006.

Figure VII-4 shows the occupations of the respondents. A significant portion (26 percent) classified themselves as professional or managerial. The second highest category was homemaker with 12 percent of the responses.

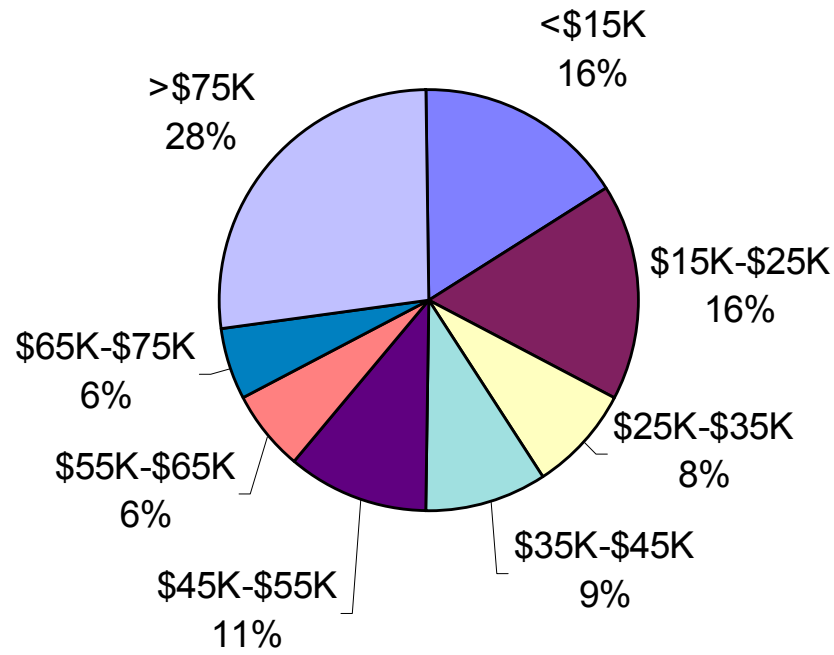
Household income is shown in Figure VII-5. All income groups appear to be represented by the respondents, with 32 percent having household incomes of less than \$25,000 and 28 percent having household incomes of \$75,000 or more.

Figure VII-4 Occupation



Source: Community Survey, LSC, 2006.

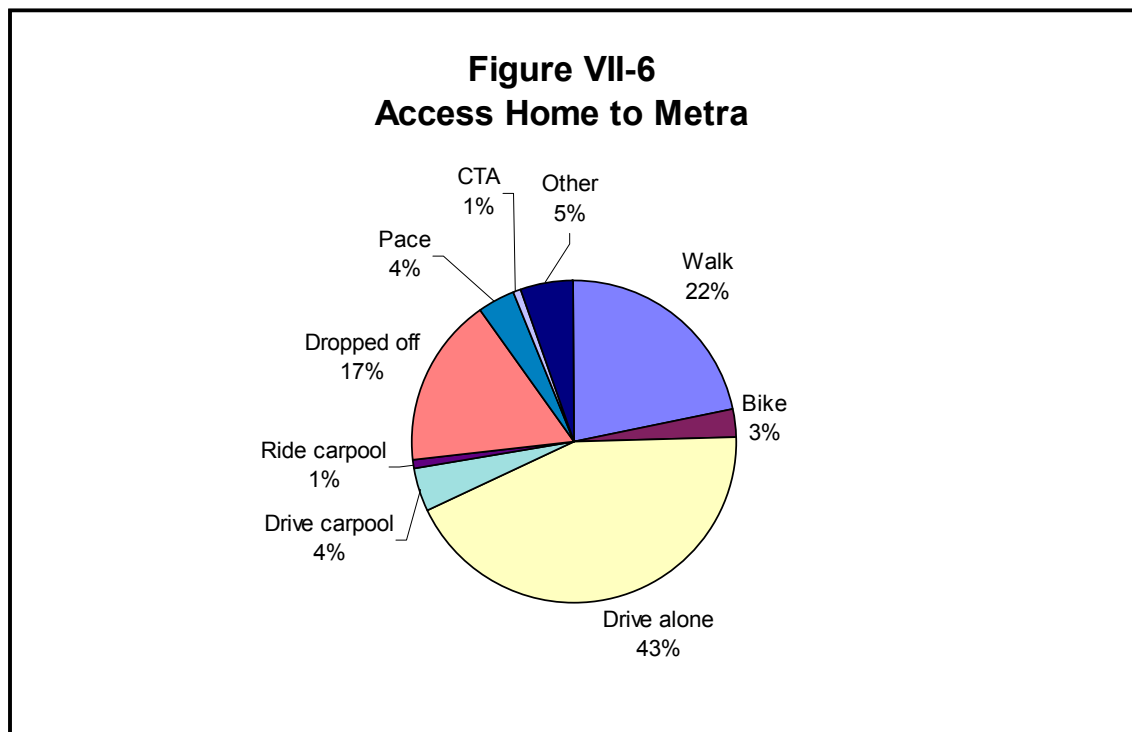
Figure VII-5 Household Income



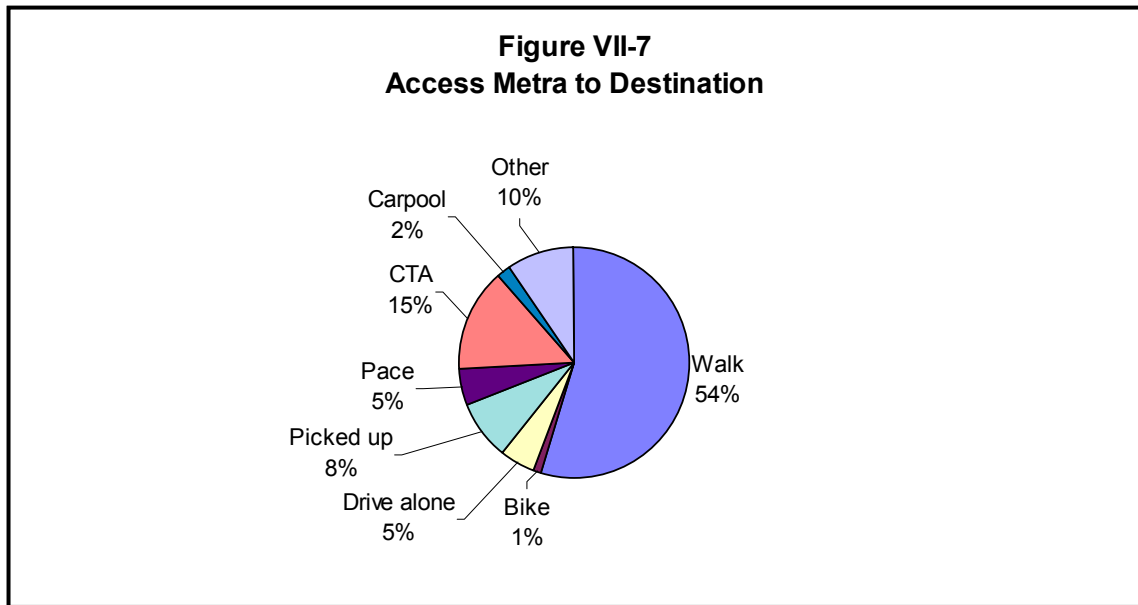
Source: Community Survey, LSC, 2006.

Use of Pace and Metra

One potential market for local circulator service may be access to and from Pace routes and Metra stations. Respondents were asked to indicate if they use either of these transportation services. Approximately 42 percent indicated they used Metra, at least on an occasional basis. Only 15 percent indicated that they used Pace. Respondents were asked to indicate their mode of access from home to Metra and the mode of travel between Metra and their destination. Figure VII-6 shows the access mode, and Figure VII-7 shows the mode used to reach their destination. As can be seen, the greatest response (42 percent) is for driving alone with walking as the mode for another 22 percent and 17 percent being dropped off. All other modes were much lower. The majority (54 percent) reach their destination by walking while 15 percent use CTA to reach their destination.

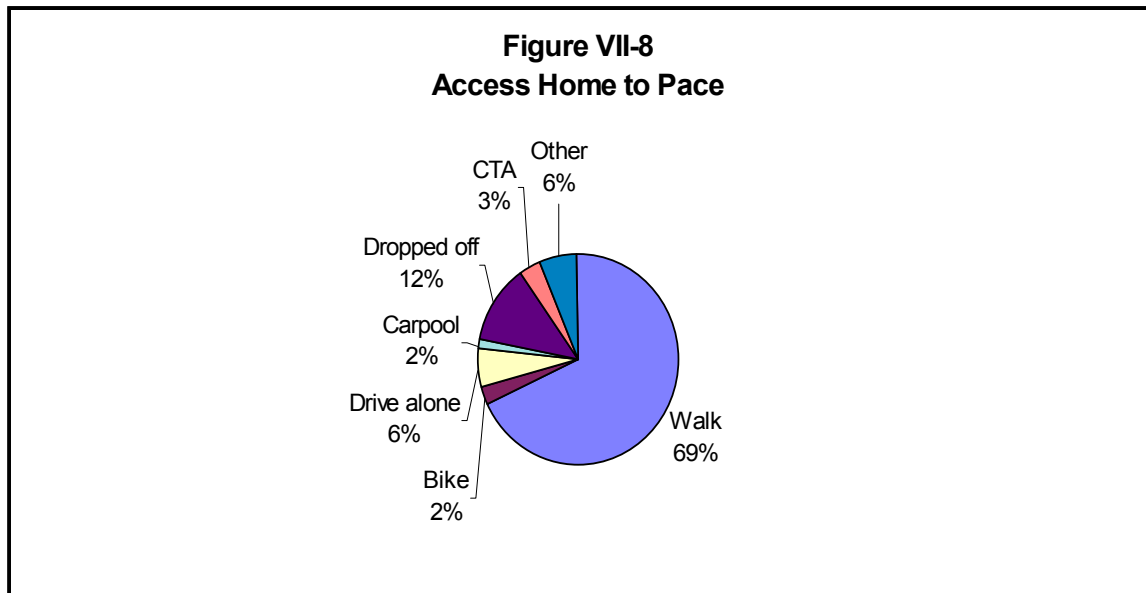


Source: Community Survey, LSC, 2006.

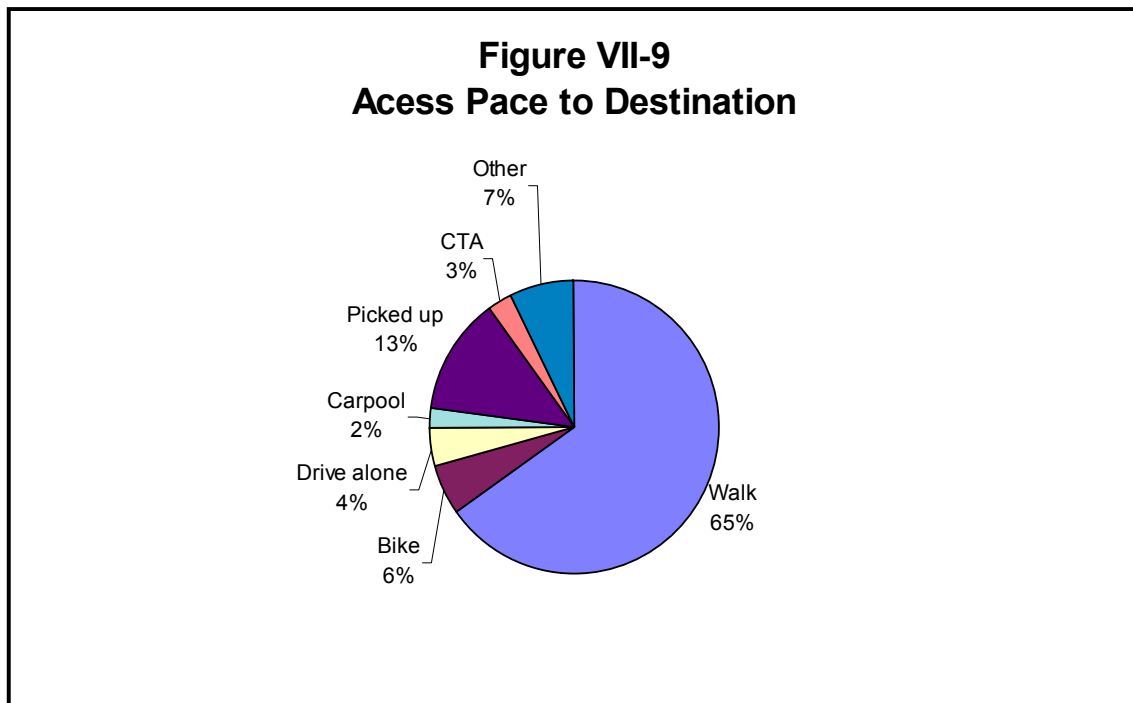


Source: Community Survey, LSC, 2006.

The modes of access to and from Pace are shown in Figures VII-8 and VII-9. The majority both walk to access Pace and then walk to reach their final destination. The second greatest response is to be dropped off or picked up.



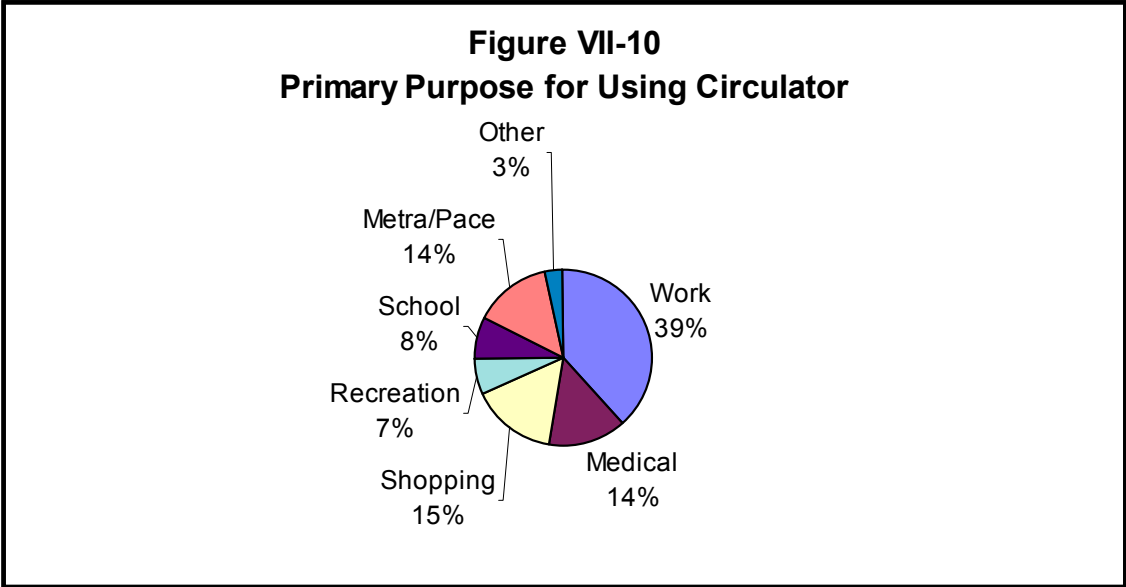
Source: Community Survey, LSC, 2006.



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Potential Circulator Use

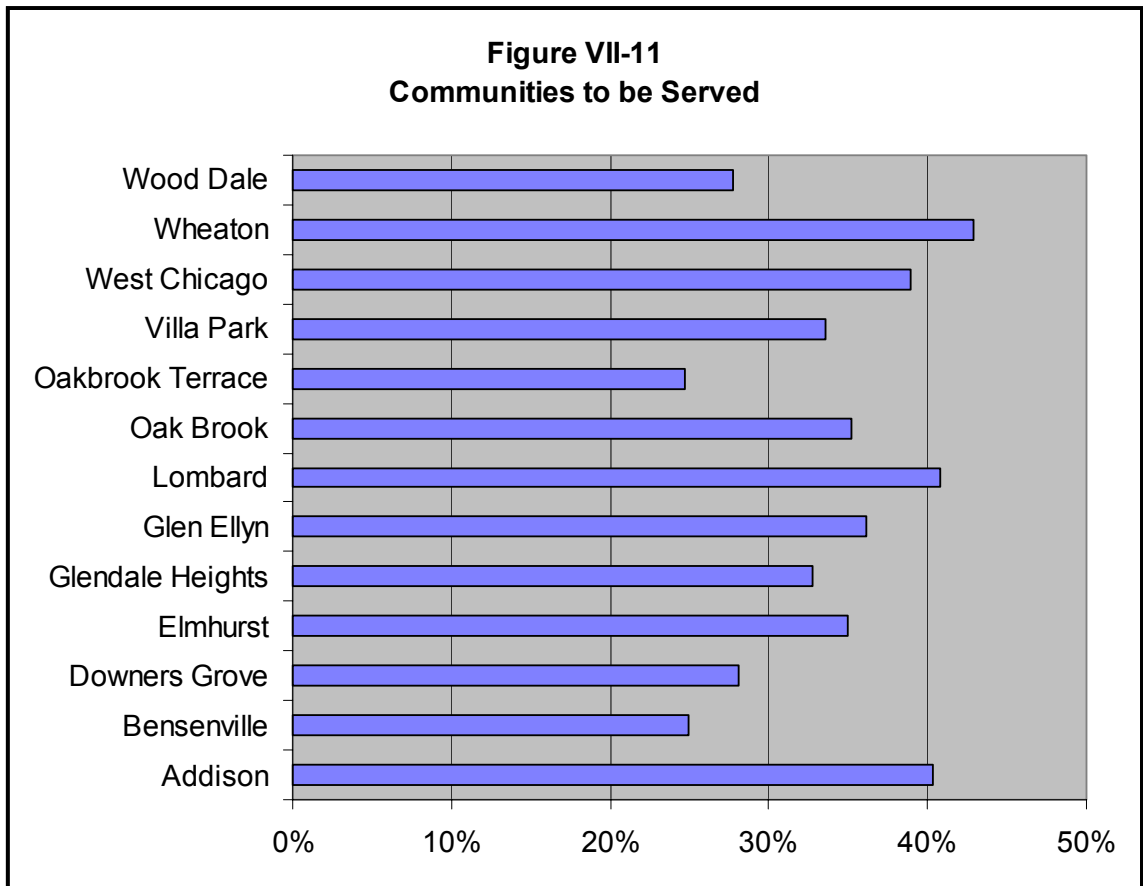
The final group of questions relate to the possible use of a local circulator service. Approximately 72 percent of the respondents indicated they would use a local circulator service if it was available. Among these responses, many comments indicated a qualified response such as use of the circulator would depend on where it went, how frequently it operated, and how convenient it was. Respondents were asked to indicate the primary purpose for using a local circulator. The responses are shown in Figure VII-10. The greatest response was 39 percent for work with other responses being divided among the various purposes.



Source: Community Survey, LSC, 2006.

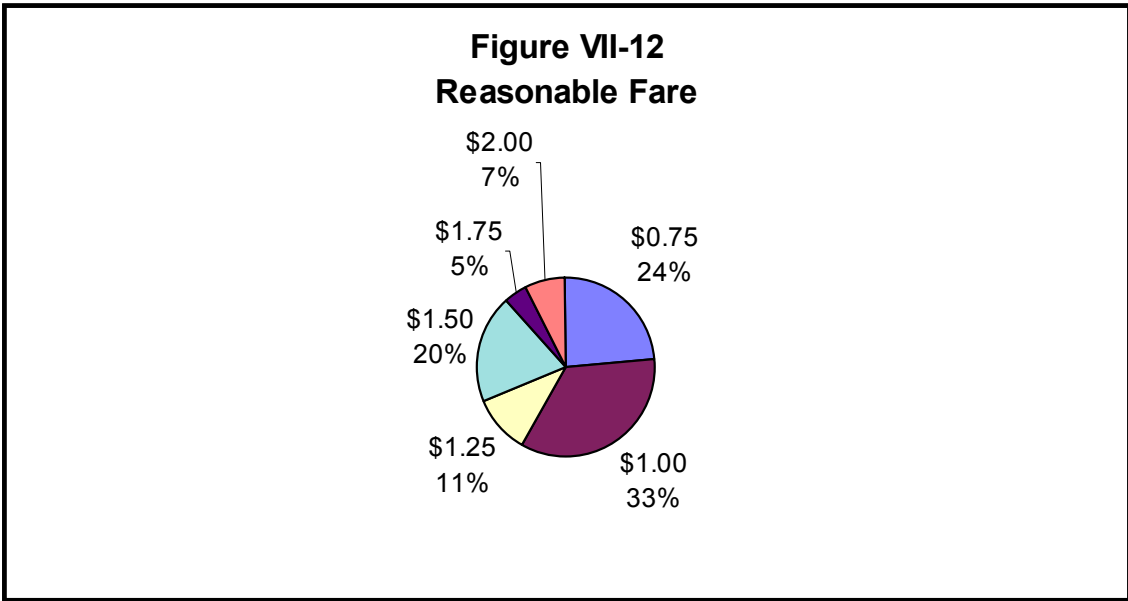
Figure VII-11 shows the percentage of responses indicating which communities should be served by local circulator services. This question restricted responses to the 13 communities included in this study. A separate question asked respondents to indicate other communities which should be served. Those responses are included in Appendix E. A number of communities were listed. Although useful in considering service areas for adjacent communities, many of the locations will be served by other transit regional transit services. Respondents were also asked to list specific destinations within the 13 communities. These responses are also included in Appendix E and will be used to determine potential service areas in each of the communities.

Respondents were asked to indicate destinations to which they currently drove but would take transit if it was available. These responses are provided in Appendix F. Again, a variety of destinations were identified and will be used to develop potential service areas in each community. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide any additional comments and these are included as Appendix G.



Source: Community Survey, LSC, 2006.

The final question in this group asked respondents to indicate what they thought would be a reasonable fare to ride a local circulator bus. The responses are shown in Figure VII-12. The greatest response was 33 percent indicating \$1.00 as a reasonable fare. Another 43 percent would be willing to pay more than \$1.00.



Source: Community Survey, LSC, 2006.

Interest in Study

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to receive notices about future meetings for the local circulator study. Three hundred twenty-six respondents provided either an e-mail or mailing address and will be placed in a mailing list to be notified of future project activity.