

CHAPTER II

Community Input

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the analysis of data collected through a survey of residents in the City of Wheaton. Surveys (in a paper format) were distributed in two locations—the DuPage Government Center and the Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital. A total of 13 responses were received from the residents—eight from the DuPage Government Center and five from the Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital. This small number of responses limits the ability to analyze the survey to be statistically based, but helps to gather input from residents about the proposed local circulator bus service that would take passengers to destinations within the community of Wheaton. If a respondent did not answer, the response was reported in the “no answer” category.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Information is provided about household characteristics, trip characteristics, travel patterns, and service characteristics that would influence the use of the proposed local circulator service. A draft survey instrument was prepared and submitted to the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference for review and comment. The survey instrument was provided in English and is included in Appendix A.

These survey efforts from the two key destinations—along with the focus group—were focused on the target population segments to identify the service that best meets the needs of the community. Responses were entered into a database, and an analysis was performed in a spreadsheet program. In addition to the individual responses, several of the questions were open-ended and those responses are included in Appendix B. The responses are summarized in the following sections.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

There were a number of questions asked to determine the household characteristics of each respondent. This includes information on the household size, vehicle availability in a household, number of people employed in a household, number of people in a household with a health condition or a disability that limits their travel, and employment status. These characteristics help to determine the household characteristics and market segments of respondents in the City of Wheaton.

Household Size

Respondents were asked the number of people that live in their household. A two-person household was the average household size of the respondent. Responses were up to five people in a household. A single-person household was the most frequent response.

Respondents were also asked the number of people under 16 years of age and over 60 years of age in their household. Four out of the 13 respondents (31 percent) indicated having household members less than 16 years of age, and seven out of 13 of respondents (54 percent) indicated having household members 60 years and older.

Vehicle Availability in a Household

Residents were asked the number of vehicles available in their household. The highest responses (six responses) were from zero-vehicle households followed by single-vehicle households (five responses).

Travel Disability in a Household

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of people in their household that had a health condition or a disability which limited their ability to drive. Eight out of the 13 respondents (62 percent) indicated having a household member with a health condition or a disability that restricted them from driving.

Employment Status

Respondents were asked the number of people in their household that were employed outside the home. Nine out of the 13 respondents indicated that household members were employed outside home. An average of one person per household was employed outside the home. The number of employed persons per household was up to four persons per household.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their employment status from a list of options and were allowed to select multiple responses. The majority (69 percent) of the respondents indicated being employed (which includes 63 percent employed full-time and six percent employed part-time) reflecting the potential commuter market segment within the City of Wheaton. Thirteen percent of respondents indicated being unemployed. One respondent (six percent) indicated being a part-time student.

TRAVEL PATTERNS

The survey asked respondents to indicate their municipality of work or school so that travel patterns might be assessed. The majority (69 percent) of the respondents live and work within Wheaton. Other places of work or school reported were Glen Ellyn and Des Plaines.

The survey asked residents to provide information about their trip characteristics such as the likelihood of using public transit, vehicle availability, and mode of transportation on their trip to work or school. The following analysis provides insight on the current trip characteristics of Wheaton residents.

Likelihood of Using Public Transit

Respondents who are employed or are students were asked to indicate whether they could travel by public transit to the location of work or school to which they reported most days. Five out of 13 respondents indicated that they could travel to their place of employment or school using public transit, while three out of the 13 respondents indicated they could not use public transit to travel to this location.

Vehicle Availability and Mode of Travel

Lack of a private vehicle influences people to use public transportation. This comparison provides an indication of the number of *potential choice riders* compared to those who are *transit-dependent*. Potential choice riders refer to those respondents that have a vehicle available to drive to work or school but may choose to use transit.

There was a somewhat equal split of respondents between those respondents who did and did not have a vehicle available to drive to work or school. Six out of 13 respondents (46 percent) do not have a vehicle available.

Respondents were asked to indicate their usual mode of travel to work or school. Approximately 31 percent of respondents drove alone. This is followed by 23 percent of respondents who reported walking to work. Approximately 30 percent of respondents use public transportation such as the public bus or the Metra rail to work/school.

Since the survey was conducted at the Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital and the DuPage Government Center, respondents were asked to indicate their mode of travel to this location the day they filled out the survey. Approximately 47 percent of respondents used public transportation which includes the public bus (33 percent) and the Metra rail (13 percent) to the two locations.

Metra Riders

Respondents were asked to indicate which station they used most often if they used Metra rail to get to work or school. Appendix B presents the responses. The highest used station reported was Wheaton (seven responses).

Metra passengers were also asked their mode of travel to and from the Metra station. The highest responses were from passengers who reported walking (22 percent) and using Pace routes (22 percent) as the mode of travel to and from the station.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the Pace route numbers or names that they used. Metra riders reported using Pace routes 711, 712, 714, and 715 to get to and from the station.

Travel To and From Pace Routes

Metra and Pace riders were then asked how they traveled to and from the Pace bus stops. All Metra rail and Pace bus riders walked to the Pace bus stop.

Pay to Park at Work/School

Realizing that there may be commuters or students who use a particular mode of transportation depending on whether there was a cost to park at work or school, respondents were asked whether they had to pay to park at work or school and the amount paid per day. The majority of the respondents (77 percent) indicated that they did not have to pay to park at work or school, while a small percentage of respondents (eight percent) had to pay to park. The only amount reported per day for parking was \$5.00.

Travel Time

Respondents were asked how long it took to travel from home to work or school. The average travel time from home to work was approximately 38 minutes, ranging from five minute to 1.5 hours. The most frequent travel time from home to work or school reported by respondents was 60 minutes.

Places in Wheaton That You Travel To/From

In order to get a better idea of the places that the Wheaton local circulator bus should serve, respondents were asked to provide the names of those places within the community that they travel to and from once a week or more often. Appendix B shows the responses. The Metra station, County Health Department, DuPage County Government Center, and Downtown Wheaton were some of the places that the respondents currently travel to and from.

Likelihood of Using the Local Circulator Bus

To determine the likelihood that residents would use local circulator bus service, several questions were asked of respondents.

Usage of Bus Service

Respondents were asked if they would use the local circulator bus service if it was available. All of the respondents indicated they would use such a service. Additionally, respondents were asked how often they would use such a service. The majority (62 percent) of the respondents indicated that they would use service at least five days a week. Fifteen percent indicated using the service two to four times weekly. The remaining percentage of respondents would use the service infrequently ranging from once a month to several times a month.

Respondents were asked questions on the type of service that they would prefer. The majority of the respondents (69 percent) indicated that the type of preferred service was one that stopped at a nearby corner at regular intervals.

Number of Blocks/Minutes To or From a Bus Stop

Respondents were asked the number of blocks or the number of minutes to and from a bus stop. The average number of blocks a respondent was willing to walk was three blocks (or three minutes).

One-Way Fare

Respondents were also asked what was the most they would be willing to pay for a one-way trip. The highest response (38 percent) on the fare for a one-way trip was \$1.00, followed by 23 percent of respondents who were willing to pay \$0.50 and another 23 percent who were willing to pay \$1.50.

Frequency and Response Time

Respondents were also asked other preferences such as the frequency of the local circulator bus service at the bus stop and the response time after a phone request was made. The majority of the responses (92 percent) about expected frequency at the bus stop was 15 to 30 minutes. Thirty minutes was the highest response

(38 percent) for the expected response time after a phone request to schedule a trip is made.

Primary Trip Purpose

Respondents were asked to indicate the primary purpose for using the local circulator service. The two primary trip purposes reported were to and from work (62 percent) and for medical purposes (38 percent).

Temporal Need

To determine the hours and days of service, respondents were asked to indicate specific days and times during the day they would need the local circulator service. Respondents were allowed to select multiple responses. Monday through Friday are evenly represented for needed days of service, while the need for service on weekends was lower. In terms of specific times during the day, standard commute times dominate the proportion of needed times. Specifically, 22 percent of the respondents need service during the 6:00 to 8:00 a.m. commute time, and 39 percent need the service between 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. The lowest need for transportation was between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. and between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

WHEATON SERVICE PLANNING FOCUS GROUP

The Wheaton focus group was held on Thursday, April 19, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wheaton City Hall. There were five participants. Four of the participants are residents of Wheaton. The fifth was not a resident, but works at the Marianjoy clinic. All of the participants are employed full-time. Three of the participants are employed at the County complex.

All of the participants except one drive to work alone. The fifth participant has been driving, but is beginning to take the bus to employment in Oak Brook.

Participants provided input on the suggested route. It would be better to operate west on Roosevelt to Winchester or County Farm Road than on Liberty Drive. Central DuPage Hospital should also be served. There are apartments on Roosevelt which would be served with the revised route. People going to Marionjoy would need to be dropped off on-site. There is a convalescent center at the County

Community Input

complex, and veterans' housing is located in downtown Wheaton, which would be connected by this route.

The service should operate daily. Employees at the County complex and visitors will need service on weekdays. There are many visitors on weekends to Marianjoy. Residents at the convalescent home use Pace paratransit to get to work at Marianjoy. Service should start at 6:00 or 6:30 a.m. and match the train schedule. Most County employees start at 8:00 a.m. Appointments for patients at the hospitals start as early as 6:00 a.m. Service to the convalescent home should operate until 7:00 p.m. Weekend service would be preferred between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Service frequency is preferred at 15 minutes during peak times of 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. During off-peak periods, 30-minute service would be suitable. Sunday service should match the Metra schedule.

The vehicle type preferred by participants is a low-floor, small transit coach. Vehicle characteristics that were preferred included the low floor, a vehicle which looks like a bus rather than an airport shuttle or truck, and large windows.

When asked if they preferred the local circulator service to have an identity related to Pace, the region, or the community, participants said they preferred an identity related to Wheaton.