

FAIRFAX AREA TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: SURVEY RESULTS



The rest of these slides are (with one exception) best left as notes, with a picture to give the idea. I've put picture ideas in this box

Survey Approach

- Yielded 1,163 responses
- 27 questions on trip patterns, unmet needs, barriers, and awareness of services
- Wide-scale public outreach campaign

Conducted during the winter of 2013

27 questions on trip patterns, unmet needs, barriers, and awareness of services

Wide-scale public outreach campaign

Available online or by hard copy

Who Responded?



Birth years spanned from 1905 to 2002

Average respondent's birth year was 1940

67% of respondents were female

Respondents have difficulty climbing stairs (62%), walking $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile (59%), and lifting or carrying a package (51%)

31% use a cane or walker and 14% use a mobility device

Key Findings

- 27% of respondents were unable to get somewhere in the past month because they could not find transportation
- Majority were not aware of free travel training programs that could help them increase their independence
- Those with the lowest annual household incomes are most likely to be homebound

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27% were unable to get somewhere in the past month

Of those who could not get somewhere:

70% do not drive

64% were unaware of free travel

training

34% did not know about any of taxi
subsidies and fare discounts

45% have a household income of less
than \$25,000

Transportation and Mobility Barriers: Public Transit



Service not provided where they live or during times needed
Travel time too long
Unreliable service
Bus service is commuter-centric
Metrorail station parking lots fill up during morning rush hour, which prevents them from using Metrorail on weekdays



Many drivers avoid driving in rush hours, inclement weather, and after dark

**44% have poor access to bus stops
or Metrorail stations**

**Many bus stops have the following
barriers**

Unsafe pedestrian access

Lack shelters and seating

**Lack curb cuts, sidewalks, and
bus stop pads**

34% who have difficulty finding transportation are not aware of any fare discounts, or taxi subsidies. 64% are not aware of free travel training programs

Inaccessible bus stops, unsafe pedestrian crossings, and limited service prevent older adults and people with disabilities from using public transit

Transportation and Mobility Barriers: MetroAccess

- 19% of MetroAccess users were denied a ride on MetroAccess because the bus route did not run on a particular day of the week or time of day
- The fares are too costly, forcing customers to limit rides
- Excessively late pick-ups/drop-offs and vehicle no-shows occur regularly
- Drivers unfamiliar with the service area

19% of MetroAccess users were denied a ride on MetroAccess because the bus route near their homes did not run on a particular day of the week or time of day

The fares are too costly, forcing customers to limit their amount of rides

Excessively late pick-ups/drop-offs and vehicle no-shows occur regularly

Drivers unfamiliar with the service area

Transportation and Mobility Barriers: Fastran

- 37% of Fastran customers could not get somewhere in the past month because they could not find transportation
- Many residents may not have or cannot afford other transportation options, but their income limit is too high to qualify for Fastran
- Bimonthly trips from senior housing for shopping trips are insufficient



Transportation and Mobility Barriers: Taxi Subsidies

- 39% were not aware of any taxi subsidies
- Older adults with moderate incomes do not qualify for taxi subsidies but they cannot afford regular taxi fare
- Seniors-on-the-Go taxi subsidy amount is too low



(users pay \$20 for \$33 worth of taxi fare)

Transportation and Mobility Barriers: Travel Training

- 68% were unaware of free travel training programs

“With proper training and information, I would use public transportation. I can't afford my car and have been too scared to try the bus on my own.”

—Survey respondent

WMATA and ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia offer free travel training to older adults and people with disabilities

Transportation and Mobility Barriers: Accessing Information



No concise directory available that lists all of the different transportation options

There is not enough awareness about transportation programs for people with disabilities and older adults

Mobility and Transportation Priorities

The top three recommendations were:

1. Improving the availability of accessible and affordable public transportation (52%)
1. Expanding transit and taxi subsidies (46%)
1. Developing information and referral services for transportation options (37%)

Ok

Recommendations- Mobility Management

- Establish a mobility management coalition, managed by a staff coordinator, to foster collaboration to expand transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities.

Ok

Recommendations- Public Transit



Off-Peak Service: Increase bus service during off-peak times to connect neighborhoods with shopping centers, senior centers, recreation centers, and libraries as well as transfer points at main-line transit stops.

Fares: Expand the locations where people can buy Senior SmarTrip cards and Metro Disability ID cards. Display information on Metrorail parking policies and fees more prominently.

Stop Announcements: Install automated bus stop annunciators and visual LED displays on all buses. Upgrade communications equipment and train Metrorail operators to announce stations clearly at every stop.

Recommendations- Public Transit



Conduct PSAs about priority seating areas

Improve way-finding signage and lighting at Metrorail stations

Ensure that escalator and elevator outages are fixed expeditiously and publicize elevator and escalator outages

Schedule improvements to provide elevator redundancy at every new Metrorail station.

Provide contact information at transit stops to enable riders to report deficiencies in service.

Recommendations- Bus Stop Accessibility/Pedestrian Issues

- Source: Greater Greater Washington

<http://greatergreaterwashington.org/post/15287/citizens-make-big-impact-with-low-cost-bus-stop-seating/>



Pathways: Prioritize bus stop accessibility improvements by constructing sidewalks and curb cuts leading to stops, installing pedestrian signals and crosswalks, and adding shelters with sufficient seating.

Empowerment: Provide contact information at bus stops to enable residents to report inaccessible bus stops.

Recommendations- MetroAccess



Fare Policy: Provide a consistent, affordable fare structure that is easy to understand, especially for individuals with cognitive disabilities.

Service Area Policy: Provide consistent service hours throughout the MetroAccess service area, particularly to subsidized housing complexes built for older adults or people with disabilities.

Service Quality: Develop and implement procedures that will improve the quality of service so that excessively late pick-ups/drop-offs and no-shows are prevented. Increase drivers' familiarity with local roads.

Recommendations- MetroAccess

- Require MetroAccess to contact customers in their preferred communication mode upon the vehicle's arrival. Implement a text messaging system for MetroAccess customers with hearing disabilities to contact MetroAccess' "Where's My Ride?" staff for the status of their pick-up.
- Ensure MetroAccess vehicles are equipped with working safety equipment.

Customers with visual disabilities cannot watch for vehicles to arrive. Customers with hearing disabilities require text messages.

Recommendations- Fastran

- **Eligibility and Fares:** Expand eligibility for Fastran programs or establish a graduated fare policy based on income so that more people can use the service.
- **Group Shopping Trips:** Increase the frequency of shopping trips from senior housing complexes, as bimonthly is inadequate.
- **Partnerships:** Solicit sponsorships from local businesses and community groups for rides by older adults and people with disabilities during off-peak hours at rates that recover off-peak incremental costs (driver salaries and benefits, fuel and maintenance).

Recommendations- Taxi Programs

- **Fare Subsidies:** Subsidized taxi programs should include subsidy tiers based on income, providing mobility to residents who cannot drive due to a disability, but do not qualify for MetroAccess.
- **Accessibility:** Increase the number of wheelchair-accessible taxicabs. Consumers currently expect a two-hour wait for same-day ride requests.

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Recommendations- Awareness of Existing Transportation Programs

- Both print & internet
- Workshops on transportation options and transit travel-training



Promote print publications and web sites that clearly describe all of the different transportation options including fare discounts and free transit travel-training. Transportation options should be regularly promoted in the Golden Gazette and other print and electronic newsletters and communications/marketing materials for older adults and people with disabilities.

Questions about the survey?

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