Who’s On Board

What today’s riders teach us about transit that works

“First Mile, Last Mile: Connections to Transit”
America Walks
September 8, 2016
TransitCenter is a foundation working to improve public transportation and urban mobility, through grantmaking, research, training, and events.
About the research

- Online survey of 3,000 transit riders in 17 regions
- Focus group discussions (Raleigh, Denver, New York)
Core messages:

• Transit must compete for every rider: Car-less riders aren’t “captive”
• Improvements to frequency and travel time are the most important for building ridership
• Walking is the most important “first mile” solution
Transit must compete for every rider

Historical definitions: “choice riders” own cars but choose transit; Car-less “captive riders” use transit because they lack options (can be taken for granted)

- Reality: People use transit more when quality is better, regardless of car ownership.

(AllTransit – alltransit.cnt.org)
Frequency and travel time matter

Satisfaction With Transit Service Attributes

- Frequency of service: 32
- Travel time: 36
- Stop/station facilities: 37
- Info. on when the next bus/train is coming: 43
- Reliability of service: 44
- Number of transfers necessary: 53
- Distance from home/work to stop/station: 55
- Price: 58
- Ability to be productive on bus/train: 58
- Availability of seating on train/bus: 60
- Safety & pleasantness of walk to stop/station: 65
- Fare payment options: 71
- Likely to recommend transit ("promoter"): 81
- Unlikely to recommend transit ("detractor"): 82
- Likely to recommend transit ("promoter"): 74
- Unlikely to recommend transit ("detractor"): 79
- Likely to recommend transit ("promoter"): 80
- Unlikely to recommend transit ("detractor"): 85
- Likely to recommend transit ("promoter"): 86
- Likely to recommend transit ("promoter"): 82
- Likely to recommend transit ("promoter"): 82
- Likely to recommend transit ("promoter"): 85
- Likely to recommend transit ("promoter"): 89
- Likely to recommend transit ("promoter"): 90
Walkability and transit

- Most transit riders typically access transit on foot
- Especially true for “all-purpose” riders (frequent riders who use transit for multiple purposes)

Typical Access Mode to Transit, by Segment

**Occasional**: Uses transit at most 1 day/week

**Commuter**: Uses transit at least 2 days/week for work; rarely for other purposes

**All-purpose**: Uses transit at least 2 days/week for multiple purposes
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Typical Access Mode to Transit
Walkability and transit

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72% of people who ride transit 4+ days/week typically walk to transit
Walkability and transit

Silver Line Ridership In Tysons Well Below Metro Estimates
Lack of sidewalks blamed in internal WMATA analysis

By: Martin Di Caro
August 3, 2015

“The Tysons Corner area grew up around the automobile: parking is abundant, and good pedestrian facilities are lacking in many places,” Metro planners said in the analysis.

For instance, an estimated 4,000 jobs are cut off from the Greensboro station because of a lack of sidewalks...
Walkability and transit
Walkability and transit

Auto-first design, transit riders forced to walk through parking lots

Very frequent curb cuts

Intimidating intersections, long crossing distances
A natural partnership: Transit agencies, city street departments

- **Portland TriMet** (transit): Asks cities to prioritize sidewalk, shelter improvements near “high-opportunity” bus stops

- **Houston METRO** (transit): Hiring urban designer to liaise w/municipalities on walkability

- **Seattle DOT**: Dedicated transit unit
A natural partnership: Transit agencies, city street departments

Transit Street Design Guide

National Association of City Transportation Officials

http://nacto.org/publication/transit-street-design-guide/
Implications for system design

• Walkable neighborhoods w/o frequent service may be low-hanging fruit for transit
• More frequent service in walkable neighborhoods, less in car-oriented areas
• Use zoning to concentrate density, create pedestrian-first design near transit

Evanston, IL
The recipe for useful transit

Make it easy for people to walk to transit, put transit close to important destinations, and make transit frequent, fast, and reliable.

Get in touch!
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