

ROGUE VALLEY TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

2005 PASSENGER SURVEY



**Prepared by
The Rogue Valley Council of Governments**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) conducted a passenger survey for RVTD in May 2005. A total of 450 passengers were surveyed over four days by six surveyors. Those 450 passengers were selected from RVTD's eight (8) fixed routes according to each route's percentage of total ridership in March 2005. This document displays and analyzes the data gathered during the survey.

Survey Information on Passengers and their Use of the Bus System

- 74% are between the ages of 19 and 64
- 69% do not have a valid driver's license
- 50% say their combined annual household income is less than \$15,000
- 73% walk to catch the bus
- 69% travel no more than 3 blocks to connect with the bus system and 74% travel no more than 3 blocks to their final destination from the bus
- 24% are using the bus to get to work
- 83% use the bus 3-5 days per week
- 54% use the bus 5 days per week
- 26% would not have made the trip, if they had not taken the bus

Relationships Among Data

The data suggested the following relationships:

- The higher a person's annual combined household income, the more likely that person is to have a valid driver's license.
- Passengers using the bus for work purposes are more likely to have higher combined annual household incomes.
- Passengers in the 65+ age category are most likely to be using the bus for recreational or shopping purposes.
- Passengers' incomes tend to reflect socio-economic trends in the neighborhoods served by that route.
- Reasons for the trip vary with age. The youngest (10-18) tend to be using the bus most for school and getting home; the elderly (65+) are shopping or recreating; those aged 19 – 64 are more likely to be using the bus to get to work.

Data by Route

The survey did not reveal clear differences between routes with respect to a wide set of factors covered in the survey. The differences that are suggested by the data need to be further and more specifically researched. For example, Route 30 seems to vary from other routes, but only 8 passengers were surveyed on this route because it represents 1.7% of total ridership.

Comments from Passengers

At the end of the interview, passengers were asked if they had any comments. Passengers were very consistent in requesting weekend service and later weekday service. They advocated strongly for weekend service, even if it would have to cost more and run infrequently. They also wanted bus service to extend into the nighttime hours during weekdays. Some suggested 7 PM, others 9 PM and yet others wanted service until 1 AM each weekday.

Impressions

RVTD is providing an indispensable service for its passengers. People using the bus seem dependent upon it. They often do not have viable options to taking the bus. Most people use the bus from 3-5 days per week, meaning that it is an important constant in the routines of their lives.

The majority of people travel no more than 3 blocks to the bus system and then approximately the same distance from the bus to their final destination. This strongly suggests that convenience has a lot to do with using the bus system. Yet other data suggests that having a lower annual income encourages use of the bus system.

Passengers are clamoring for weekend bus service and service into evening hours during the week. It might be beneficial to do a special survey on these two topics to understand the need and potential market for additional services.

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1.0 OVERVIEW

The Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) contracted with the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) to conduct a survey of bus passengers. RVTD had last surveyed its passengers in 2001.

The purposes of the 2005 survey were:

- To better understand the role of the bus system in riders' activities
- To identify certain social and economic characteristics of riders on the entire system
- To identify characteristics of bus trips, including purpose, departure and destination locations, etc., and
- To query riders on miscellaneous topics.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

RVTD staff provided ridership data for March 2005 to RVCOG and instructed RVCOG to produce 450 surveys. The surveys were to be allocated among the eight (8) fixed routes according to the ridership percentage represented by each route. That approach is represented in the table below, which shows ridership percentages and corresponding numbers of surveys to be completed per route.

RVCOG's team of six surveyors interviewed passengers as they rode RVTD buses from Monday, May 9 through Thursday, May 12, 2005.

The survey instrument used in the 2005 survey is in the Appendix. This instrument was produced by RVTD staff who revised the instrument used in the 2001 survey.

RVCOG surveyors successfully interviewed 450 passengers. However, the total number of respondents often varies from that number due to several factors: 1) respondents were not required to answer all questions, so the total number of respondents varies; 2) some questions allowed for both numerical and qualitative responses and this report reflects only the numerical responses, since the qualitative responses varied so widely; and finally, 3) incomplete surveys in which the surveyor inadvertently skipped a question.

Percent Ridership and Surveys Required per Fixed Route

Route Number	March 05 Ridership	Percent of Total Fixed Route Ridership	Required Number of Surveys
Rt.1 RV Mall/Poplar Square	3,869	3.6%	16
Rt.2 Main St./W. Medford	8,299	7.8%	35
Rt.4 RVMC	4,971	4.6%	21
Rt.5 Ashland Loop	8,644	8.1%	36
Rt.10 Ashland	47,339	44.2%	199
Rt.30 Jacksonville	1,821	1.7%	8
Rt.40 Central Point	11,665	10.9%	49
Rt.60 White City/VA Dom	20,461	19.1%	86
TOTALS	107,069	100%	450

3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

This report first presents findings that speak to the demographic characteristics of all bus riders surveyed that week on fixed routes.

3.1 Age

The majority of riders, 74%, are in the 19 – 64 age group. The second largest category is the 10 – 18 category, comprising 18% of the ridership. In the 2001 survey, the under 18 category made up 10.59% of all riders. By comparison, the 2005 survey included persons aged 18 in this category and the percentage was 18%.

Only one category, 65+, was the same in both surveys, allowing for a direct comparison. The table below shows all categories for the 2005 survey and the 65%+ age category in the various survey years.

Age Category	2005	2001	1998
<9	0% (2)		
65+	7% (31)	9%	2.51%
10 – 18	18% (82)		
19 – 64	74% (332)		

3.2 Gender

As shown in the table below, 54% of respondents were male and 46% were female. It is not clear whether this imbalance was due to surveyor bias or if there were indeed more male riders on buses.

Gender	2005	2001	1998
Male	54% (236)	50.9%	50.42%
Female	46% (205)	49.10%	49.58%

3.3 Valid Drivers License

A high percentage of persons riding the bus do not have a valid driver's license.

Valid Drivers License	2005	2001
Yes	31% (140)	35%
No	69% (307)	65%

3.4 Income

The income distribution among survey respondents shows an increase since 2001 in the percentage of persons reporting incomes of less than \$15,000. The percentage of persons in that category is 6% higher than it was in the 2001 survey. However, the percentage of persons refusing to answer was 3% higher in 2001; some portion of that 3% was likely in the lowest income category.

Income	2005	2001
< \$15,000	50% (225)	44%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	19% (86)	20%
Prefer not to answer/Refused	17% (75)	20%
\$25,000 – \$44,999	9% (39)	11%
\$45,000 +	5% (25)	5%

3.5 Finding Bus Route Information

Riders most often find bus route information by using the printed schedule (48%), asking the bus driver (14%), calling RVTD (9%) or asking other passengers (9%). A version of this question, although not exactly the same, was asked in the 2001 survey. The table below, however, provides the answers from both the recent survey and the one conducted in 2001. (NA denotes that the category was not present in that survey.)

Between 2001 and 2005, the data suggest a significant jump in people finding route information by using the printed schedule; it went from 27% to 47% over the 4-year period. There was correspondingly less dependence on Front St. staff for schedule information in 2005. Bus drivers, identified by 14% in 2005 and 14% in 2001, remain important information sources.

The “Other” category was selected when people said they didn’t seek out information because they were frequent riders. This category also includes people who simply wait for a bus without knowing exactly when it will arrive.

Source of Information	2005	2001
Printed schedule	48% (208)	27%
Bus driver	14% (59)	14%
Other	13% (58)	18%
RVTD telephone/office	9% (40)	3%
Other passengers	9% (38)	7%
Front St. staff	7% (30)	20%
RVTD web site	NA	2%
Auto Schedule Information	NA	9%

3.6 RVTD Radio and TV Advertisements

When asked if they had seen or heard RVTD radio or TV advertisements, 59% answered “yes” and 41% answered “no”. This question was not asked in the 2001 survey, so a comparison is not possible.

Yes	No
59%	41%

4.0 RIDE CHARACTERISTICS

The survey included several questions regarding the characteristics of the bus trip respondents were taking when surveyed. Each of these is presented below.

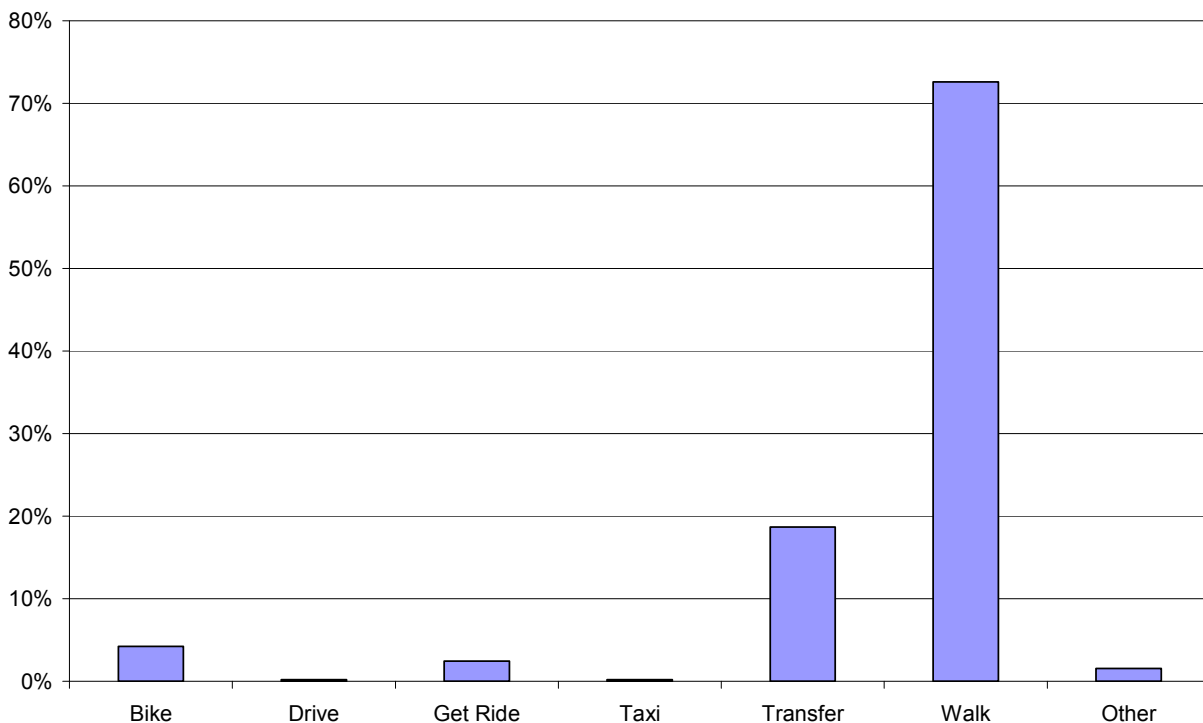
4.1 Place Where Boarded the Bus System

Of the 450 persons queried, 72% (325) boarded the system at a bus stop and 28% (125) boarded at the Front St. transfer station.

4.2 How Arrived at the Bus Stop/Front St.

The majority of people, 73%, had walked to a bus stop; 19% had gotten a transfer to the Front St. transfer station; 4% had ridden a bike. The graph below shows the full range of means used for arriving at the bus stop/Front St. Station.

Method of Travel To Bus Trip



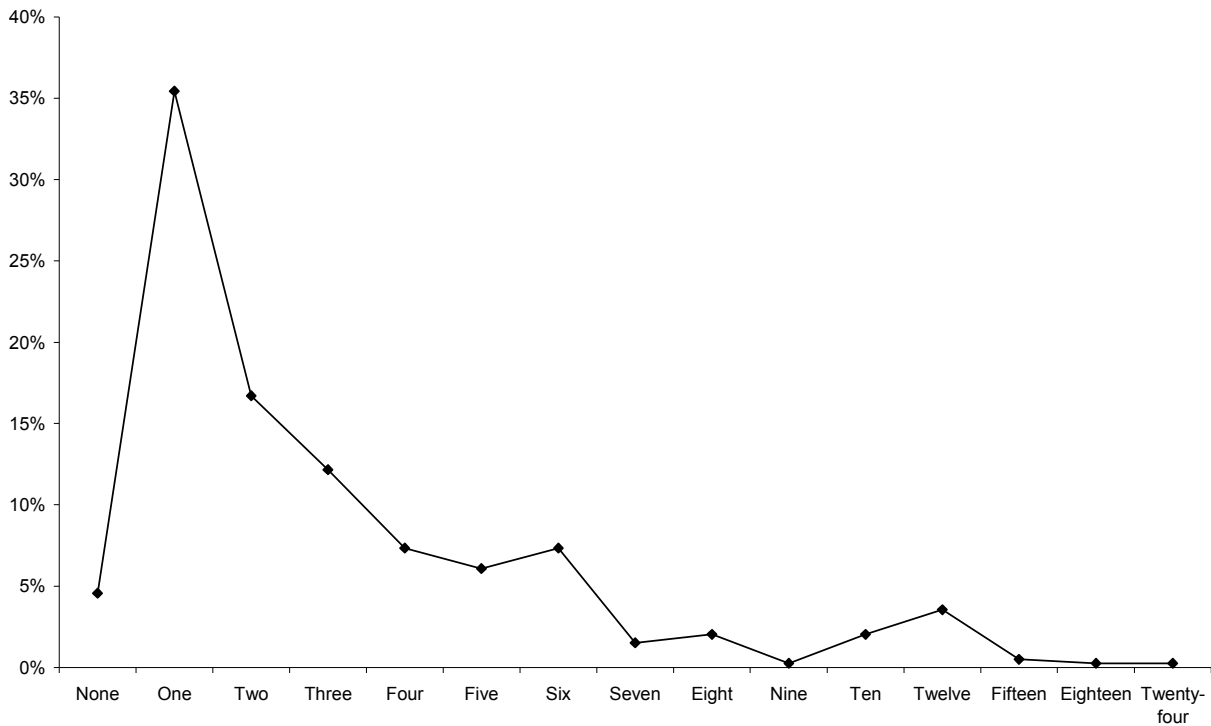
The same information may be displayed in a table as follows:

Method	Per Cent
Walk	73%
Transfer	19%
Biked	4%
Got ride	2%
Other	2%
Drove	0%
Taxi	0%

4.3 Distance Traveled to the Bus Stop/Front St. Transfer Station

The graph below shows that the number of blocks traveled ranged from 0 to 24, but there was a strong drop in numbers after 1 block and another strong drop after 6 blocks. The mean average of

Distance Traveled to Bus Stop (in blocks)



blocks traveled was 3.2 blocks.

The majority (69%) of people using the bus during the period of the survey traveled no more than 3 blocks to connect with the bus system. Percentages are below for the number of blocks traveled.

Blocks traveled	Per Cent
0 blocks (less than 1)	5%
1 block	35%
2 blocks	17%
3 blocks	12%

4.4 Where Deboarding the Bus

There was too much variability in answers to this question to merit analysis.

4.5 Method of Travel after Leaving this Bus

After leaving the bus upon which they were surveyed, 72% were going to walk and 21% were going to transfer to another bus. The full range of methods is displayed in the table below.

	2005	2001
Travel Method	Per cent (number)	Per cent
Walk	72% (321)	90%
Transfer	21% (95)	2%
Bike	3% (15)	3%
Get ride	2% (7)	3%
Drive	1% (5)	1%
Other	1% (4)	1%
Taxi	0% (0)	NA

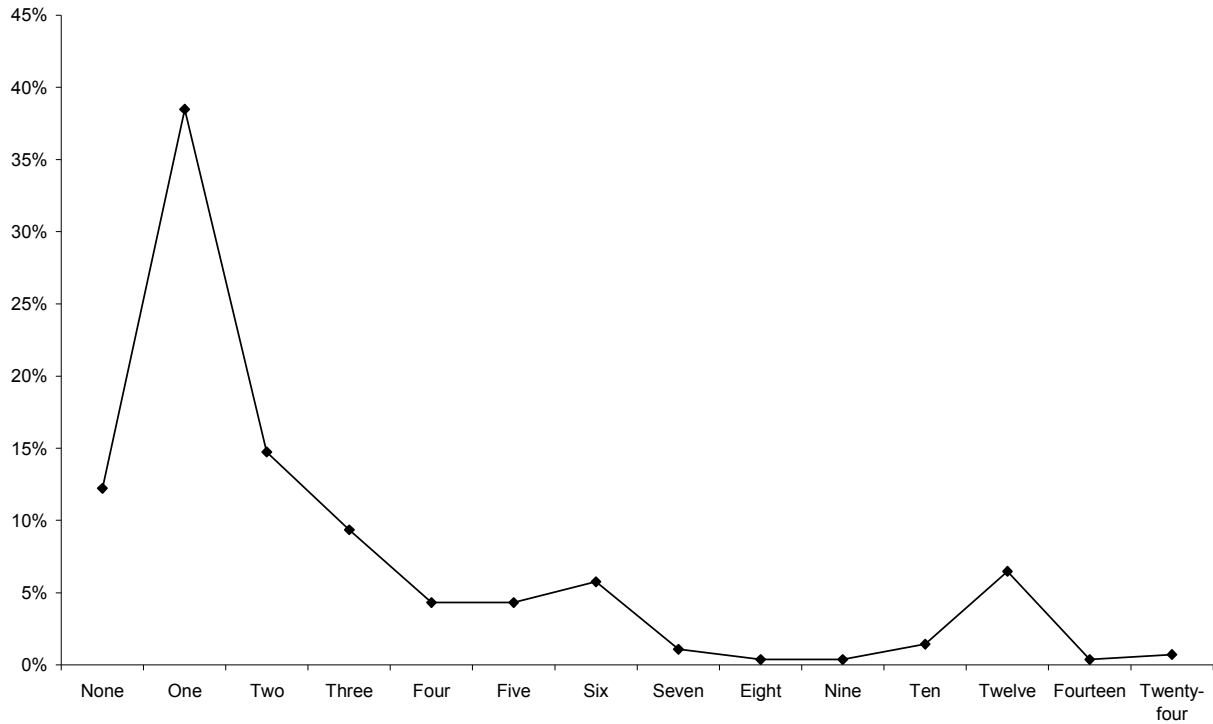
4.6 Distances from Bus to Final Destination

The number of blocks traveled from the bus to the final destination ranged from less than one block to twenty-four blocks. Of the total queried, 208 persons (74%) traveled less than one block to three blocks. The mean average of blocks to travel from the bus to the final destination was 3.

Referring back to Section 4.3, it is interesting to note that the graph for distance traveled to the bus is similar to the graph for distance traveled from the bus to the final destination. Both peak at 1 block and 6 blocks.

This suggests that people are more likely to take the bus if they can connect conveniently with the bus near the start and finish of their particular trip.

Distance to Travel After Bus Trip (in blocks)



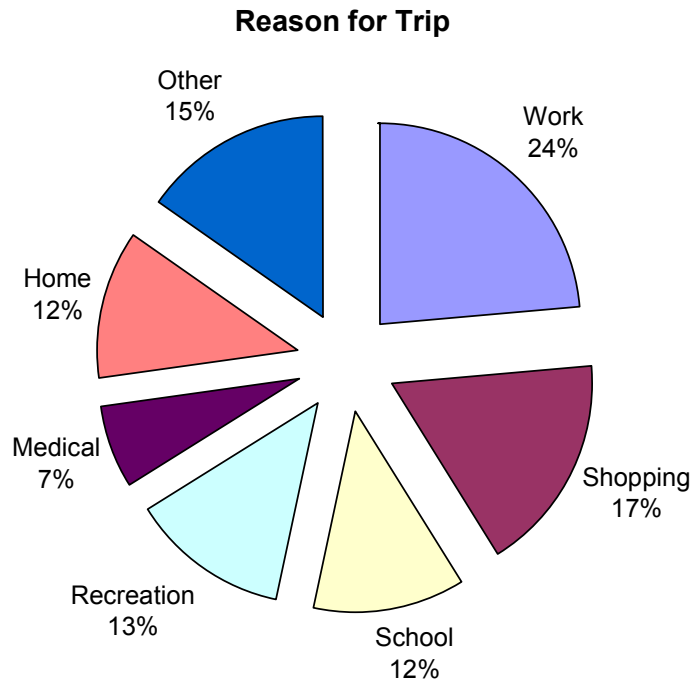
4.7 Reason for Trip

When respondents were asked the reason for their trip, work was the most common response at 24% (103). Other responses, however, were well represented, as portrayed in the table below.

Reason for Trip	Per Cent	Number
Work	24%	103
Shopping	17%	76
Other	15%	67
School	12%	54
Recreation	13%	55
Home	12%	52
Medical	7%	29

The “Other” category includes people using the bus to go visit with friends and family; take and pick up children at school; do banking and run other errands; have job interviews and seek work. If “visiting” had been counted in the Recreation category, that category would have ranked number three.

The pie graph below shows that bus service allows riders to pursue major tasks in life, whether shopping, going to work and school, visiting friends or receiving medical attention.



4.8 Other Bus Routes Used on a Regular Basis

Respondents were asked to identify what other bus routes they used on a regular basis.

Other Bus Route Used	Per Cent Using Route Regularly	Number
10 Ashland	27%	272
60 White City	15%	153
5 Ashland Loop	14%	135
40 Central Point	11%	114
1 Rogue Valley Mall	11%	112
2 Main St./West Medford	10%	99
4 RVMC	8%	82
30 Jacksonville	3%	33

4.9 Days Per Week of Bus Use

Respondents were asked how many days per week they used the bus. More than half of all respondents use the bus 5 days per week. Eighty-three per cent (83%) use the bus from 3-5 days per week... Results of the 2001 survey are not comparable, since that survey instrument asked how many trips a week respondents made.

Days Per Week of Bus Use	Per Cent	Number of Persons
0	0%	1
1	7%	30
2	9%	38
3	15%	64
4	14%	59
5	54%	227

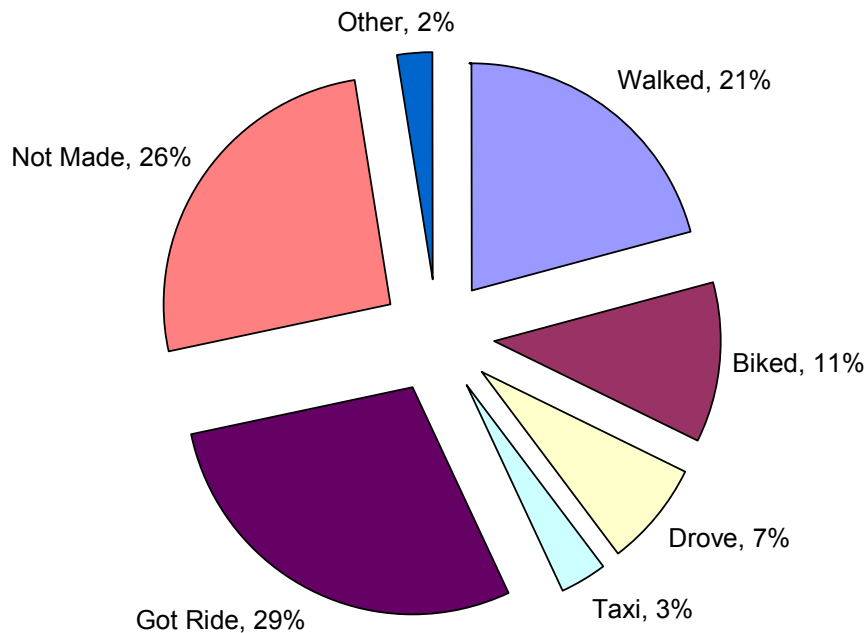
4.10 Options to Taking the Bus

Respondents were asked how they would have made the trip, if they had not taken the bus. While many people felt they had other options available, a full 26% (115) said that they would not have made the trip at all. This suggests that for a rather high percentage of riders, the bus is their only transportation option. The table below provides the specific results.

Option	Per Cent	Number
Would have gotten a ride	29%	128
Would not have made the trip	26%	115
Would have walked	21%	94
Would have biked	11%	51
Would have driven	7%	33
Would have taken a taxi	3%	15
Other	2%	11

The pie graph below presents this same information.

If you had not taken the bus today, how would you have made this trip?



4.11 Method of Payment

More than half of all respondents (54%), paid for their trip using cash. A similar question was asked in 2001, but the categories were different enough to make precise comparison difficult. However, the categories warrant comparison. (In the table below, an “NA” denotes that this category was not included in the 2001 survey.)

One apparent difference is that the percentage of reduced fares increased from 4% to 7%. Another difference was the decrease in the percentage of SOU passes from 8% in 2001 to 1% in 2005. There are a variety of potential reasons for this including an increase in the number of non-students using the bus system.

Method of Payment	2005	2001
Cash	54% (218)	51%
Free Trip	10% (42)	3%**
Explorer Pass	0% (2)	
Full fare monthly pass	8% (32)	7%
SOU full fare pass*	1% (5)	NA
SOU group pass*	NA	8%
RCC group pass	7% (27)	7%
Reduced fare:		4%
Senior	7% (30)	NA
ABT	0% (0)	NA

Method of Payment	2005	2001
35 Punch Pass	5% (19)	NA
Token	3% (13)	3%
Valley Lift ID	3% (12)	4%
Other	1% (3)	2%

* In 2001, the SOU pass was a group pass, not a full fare pass. As a group pass, it accounted for 8% of all payments in 2001.

** In 2001, the Free Trip and Explorer Pass were reported in a combined category. The 3% combines numbers for both in 2001.

4.12 Trips not to RCC, SOU or ABT

If a respondent paid for the trip with pass for RCC, SOU or ABT (Advanced Business Teleservices, Inc.), surveyors were to ask two additional questions. The first question asked how many trips the person took per week that were not to SOU, RCC or ABT. Twenty-four (24) persons responded to this question.

Trips/week not for RCC, SOU, ABT	Percent of Respondents	
	2005	2001
0	8 (33%)	0%
1	6 (25%)	10%
2	2 (8%)	45% (2-5 trips)
3	3 (12.5%)	
4	1 (4%)	
5	3 (12.5%)	
6 -10	1 (4%)	27%
11-15	NA	7%
16+	NA	5%
Other	NA	6%

The results in this table suggest that people with such passes do not take many unrelated trips per week.

4.13 Options for Making the Trip

Persons using a group bus pass were asked how they would have made the trip, if they had not had such a pass. Thirty (30) persons responded to this question. The results, in the table below, show that the most frequent response was paying cash to ride the bus. However, five (5) persons, or almost 16% of those responding, would have been less likely to attend or work at SOU, ABT or RCC, if they did not have a group pass.

The response categories were quite different in 2001, making an exact comparison difficult, but we have provided them in the far right column, because they provide some perspective.

Other Options for Making Trip	Number of Persons	
	2005	2001
Other (Most common response in 2005 was “would have paid cash.”)	11 (34%)	5%
Ride a bus	NA	58%
Make no difference	NA	8%
Less likely to attend/work [there]	5 (16%)	2%
Would have gotten a ride	4 (13%)	NA
Would have biked	4 (13%)	NA
Would have walked	3 (9%)	13%
Would have driven alone	2 (6%)	8%
Would have taken a taxi	1 (3%)	NA
Would have carpooled	NA	6%

It is safe to assume that the responses regarding paying cash in 2005 are parallel to the response “ride a bus” in 2001. The percentage of persons stating that they would be less likely to attend or work was much larger in 2005 than in 2001.

4.14 Additional Comments

At the very end of the survey, each respondent was asked if he/she had any comments to share. By far the most frequent comment, counted 96 times, had to do with the desire for weekend service. Following behind those comments were ones about the desire for weekday service to continue much later into the night; this was mentioned 48 times. Some respondents wanted service to continue until midnight or 1:00 AM. Others wanted to have service until 9 PM on weekdays. A desire for Saturday service was mentioned 38 times on its own; this might be added to the first large set where people mentioned “weekend service”. Other comments were too diverse to usefully analyze.

5.0 RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE DATA

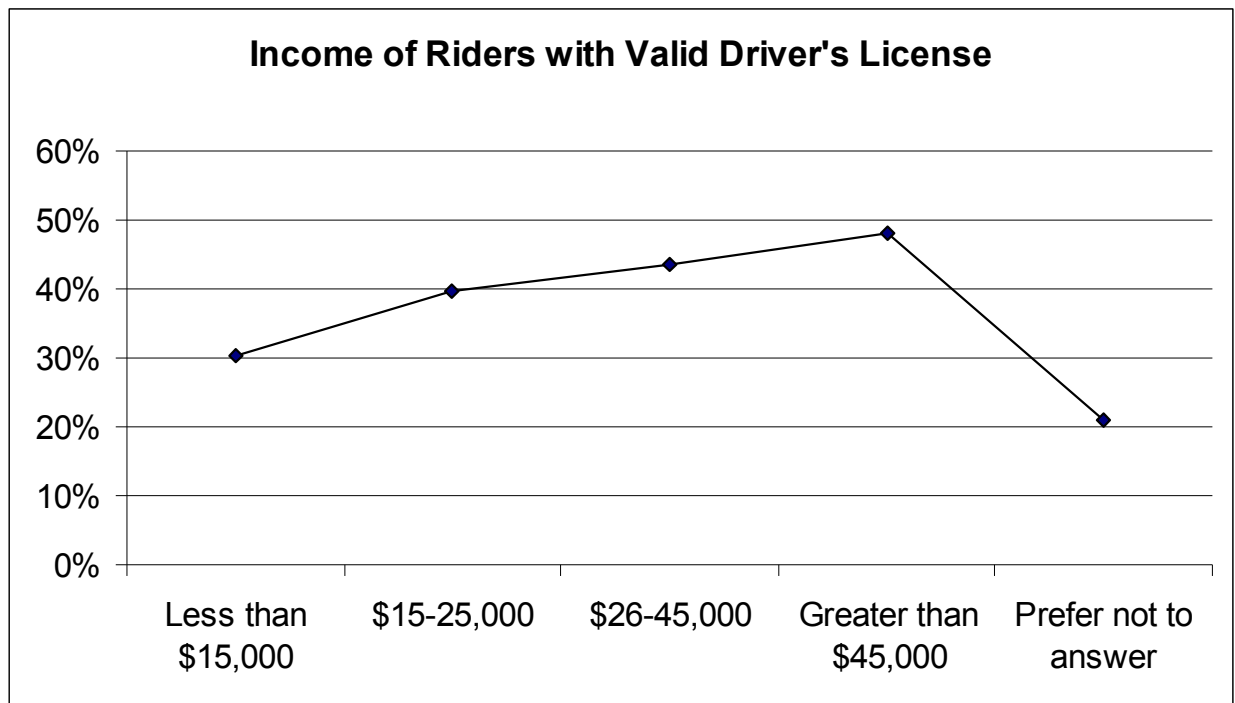
Different data sets were graphed together to search for co-variances or correlations among them.

5.1 Income

A main question regarded the potential relationship among income level, other characteristics of riders and how they use the bus system.

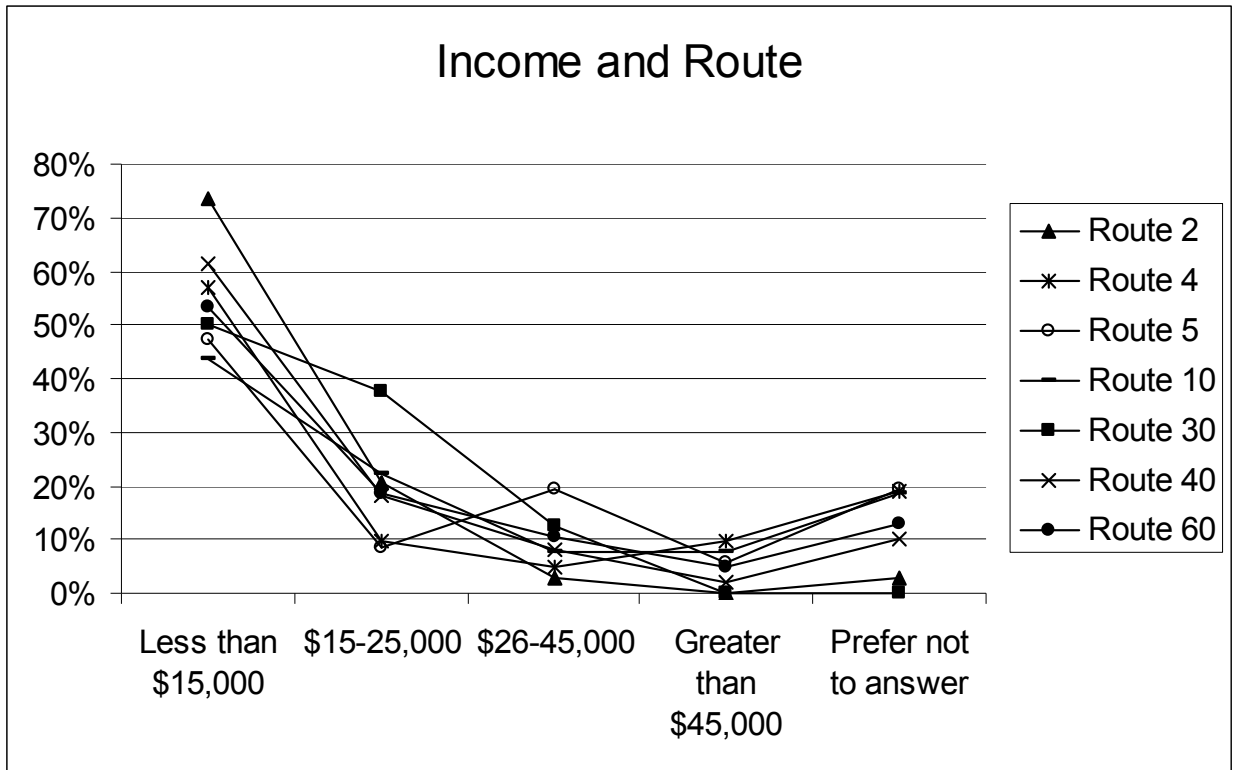
5.1.1 Income and Possession of a Valid Driver's License

There is an apparent relationship between income level and the possession of a valid driver's license, as shown in the graph below. The higher the income, the more likely the person was to have a valid driver's license.



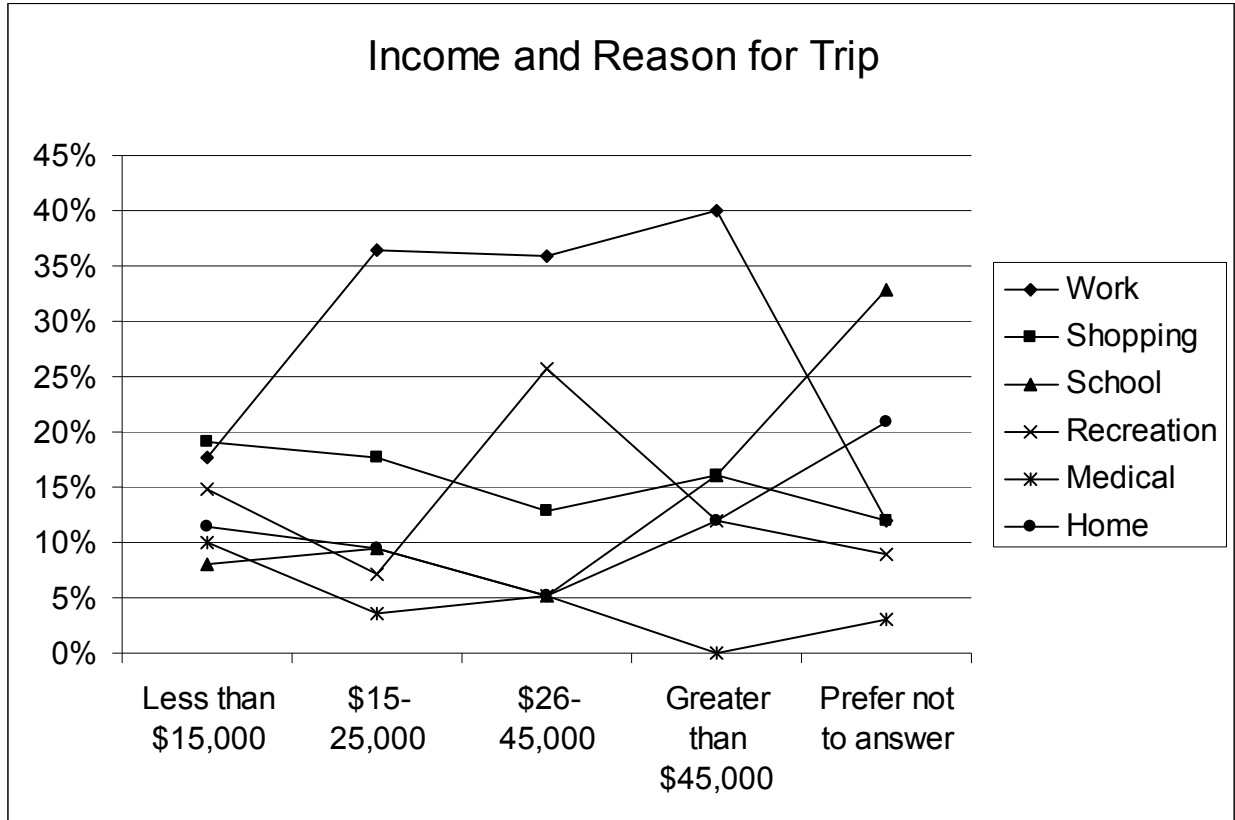
5.1.2 Income and Route

As shown in the graph below, ridership follows the same general trend with respect to income levels. The majority of riders are in the “less than \$15,000” income bracket. It is important to keep in mind that between 10% and 20% of respondents refused to answer this question on four routes, so the data is incomplete. Route 30, which goes to Jacksonville, has higher percentages of riders in the \$15,000-\$25,000 bracket and in the \$26,000 - \$45,000 bracket than most other routes. Route 5 which runs a loop within Ashland, has the highest percentage of riders in the \$26,000 - \$45,000 bracket.



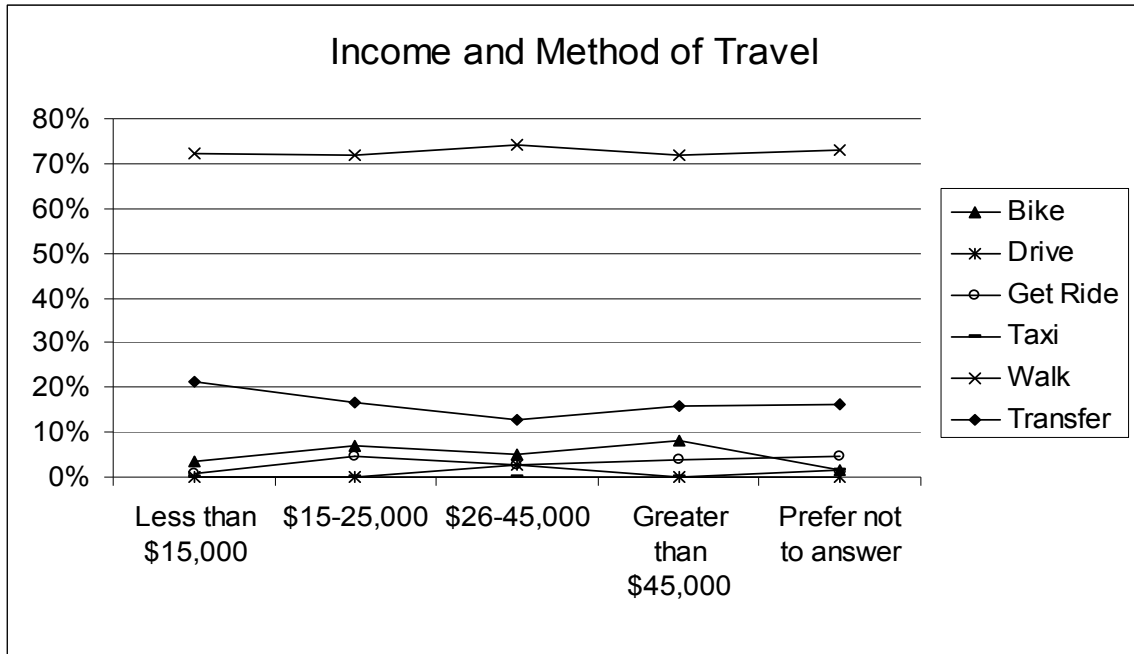
5.1.3. Income and Reason for Trip

Do people with higher incomes use the bus for different reasons? The graph below suggests that riders in higher income brackets are more likely to be using the bus to get to and from work. Shopping is a reason that is distributed relatively consistently across the income brackets.



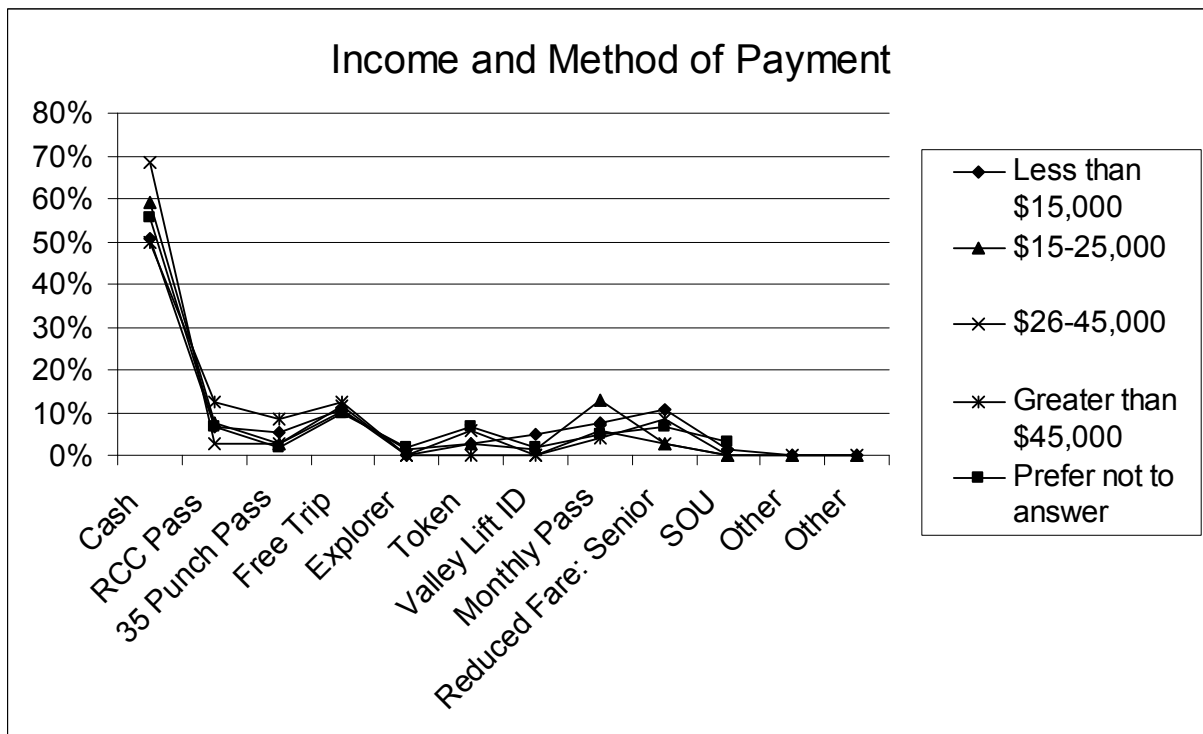
5.1.4 Income and Method of Travel

This graph shows very little variability in the method of travel to the bus, whatever the income bracket may be.



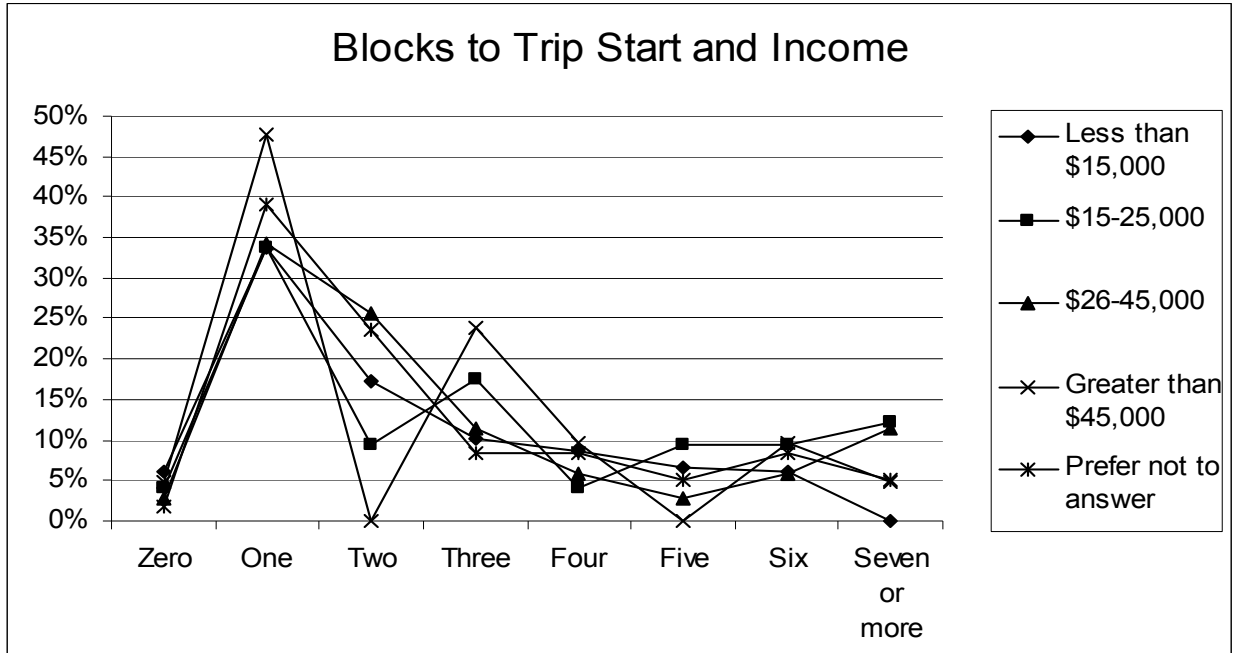
5.1.5 Income and Method of Payment

This graph suggests that the method of payment does not vary with a person's income. All income levels follow the same basic pattern. Cash is the most frequent payment method. After that, a wide range of payment methods are used by people.



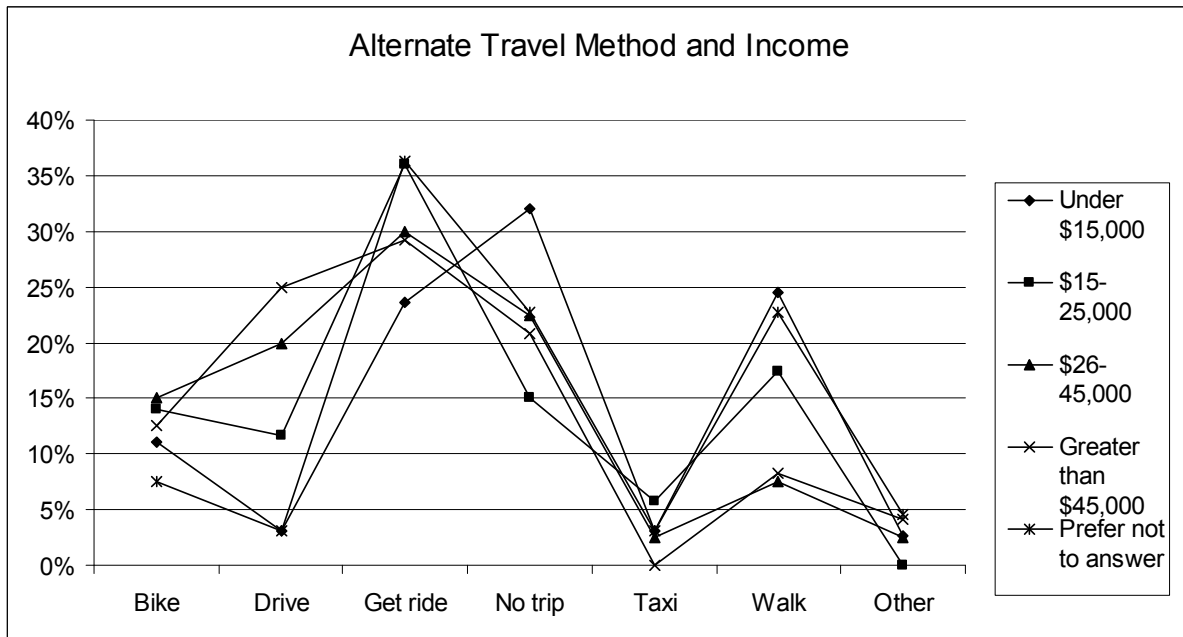
5.1.6 Blocks to Trip Start and Income

There is no clear relationship between income level and the number of blocks to the point where the respondent started his/her trip.



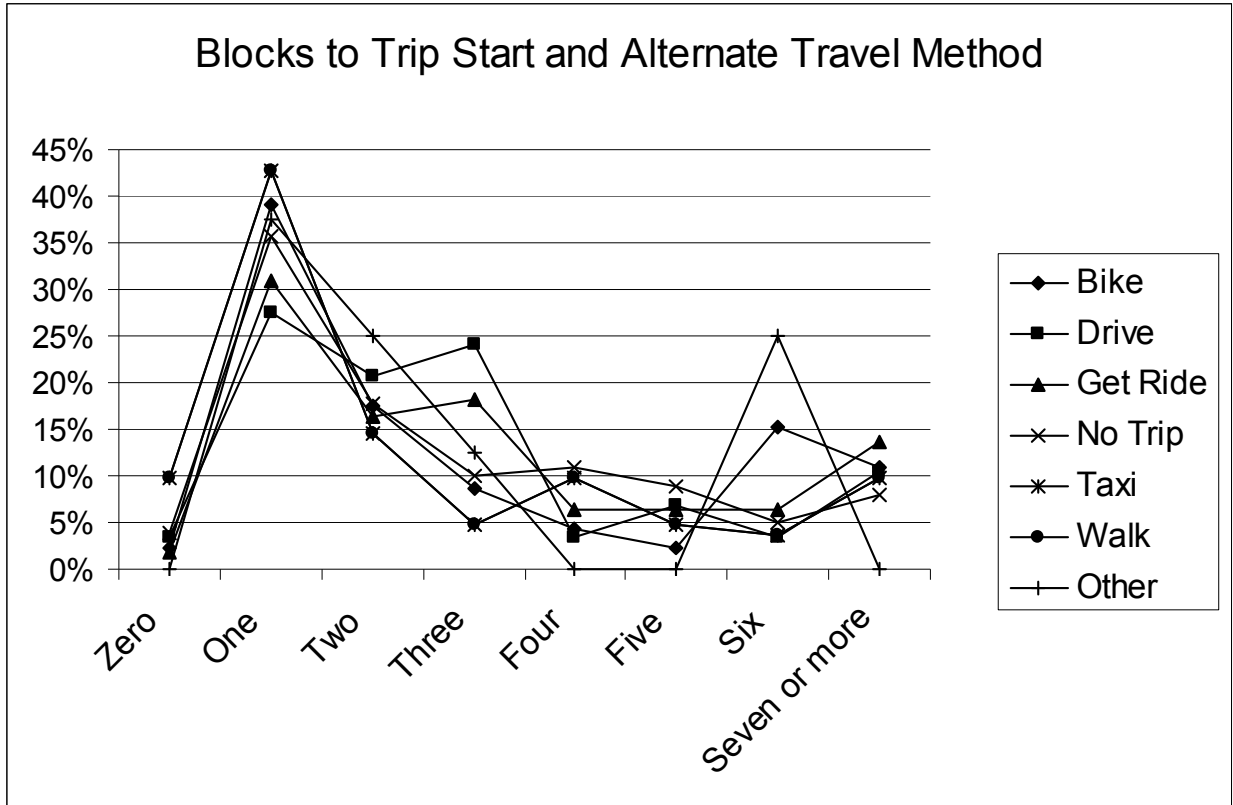
5.1.7 Alternative Travel Method and Income

This graph suggests, as might be expected, that persons in the two highest income categories would be more likely to drive to their destination if the bus weren't available. It is interesting to note, however, that some 21% of the "Greater than \$45,000" category said that they would not have made the trip. Approximately 32% of persons in the lowest income category would not have made the trip.



5.1.8 Blocks to Trip Start and Alternative Travel Method

This graph shows no apparent relationships between the number of blocks the respondent had to travel to start his/her trip and his/her alternative travel mode. The number of persons who would not take the trip does spike when the distance reaches 6 blocks.

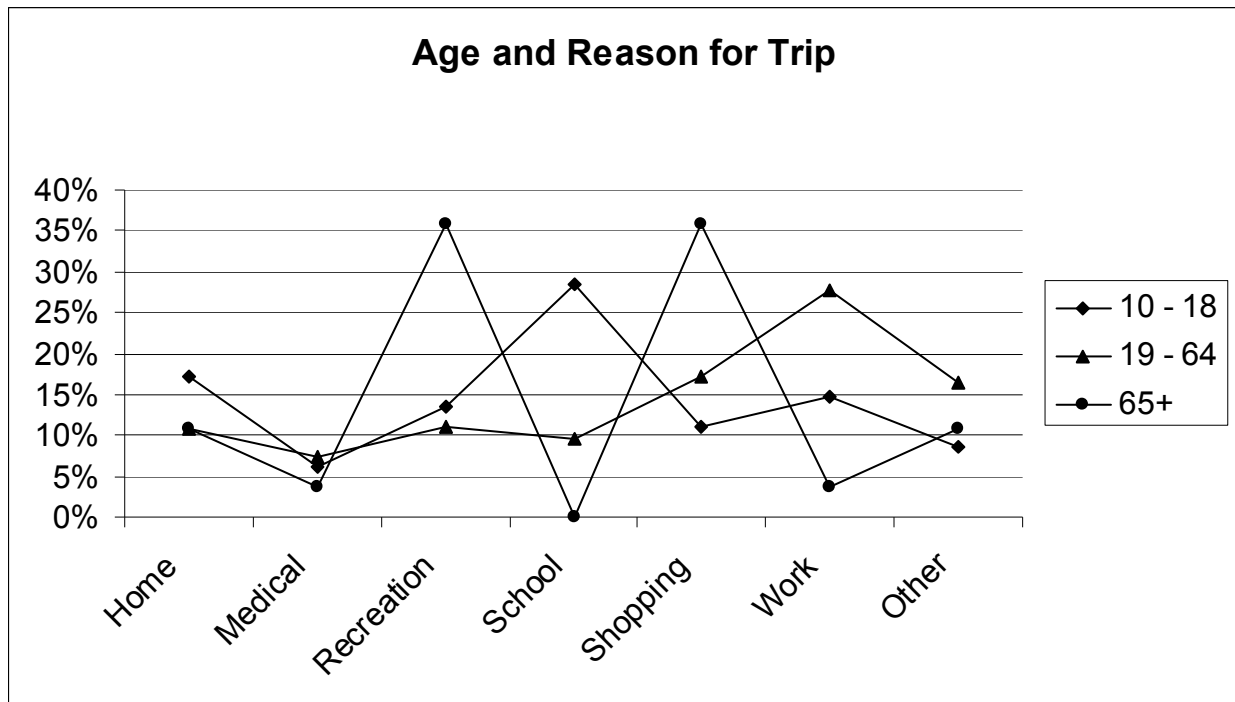


5.2 Reason for Trip

Another special area of inquiry concerned whether or not the reason for a person's trip would vary with other ride characteristics or demographics.

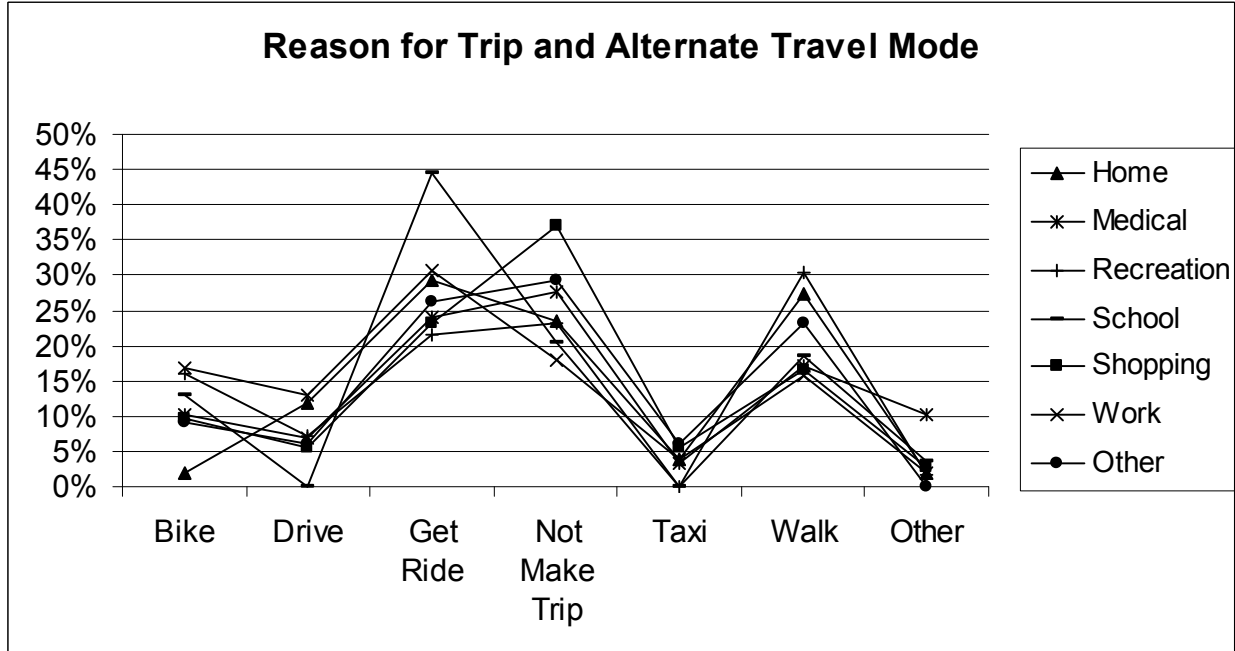
5.2.1 Reason for Trip and Age

The table below suggests that reasons for trip vary by age. As might be expected, persons in the 65+ age group are on the bus most often for recreational and shopping reasons. The 19-64 age group is most often on the bus for work or shopping purposes. After that, they are traveling for recreation, school (college), and medical reasons. The 10-18 age group is most often going to school, but recreation, shopping, work and returning home are also frequent reasons for their trip.



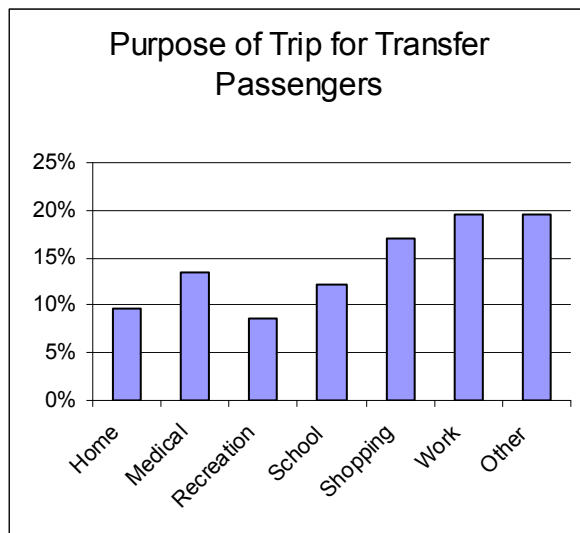
5.2.2 Reason for Trip and Alternate Travel Mode

Respondents were asked how they would have made the trip if the bus had not been available. The graph below relates their responses to that question to the reason for trips. Approximately 18% of those persons using the bus for work reasons would not have made the trip if bus service had not been available.



5.2.3 Reason for Trip for Transfer Passengers

Of all those persons using transfers, the graph suggests that persons riding the bus for work purposes were somewhat more likely to use a transfer than other passengers, with the exception of the “Other” category.



6.0 DATA BY ROUTE

In the final pages of this report, survey data is displayed by route. The sample for this survey was stratified according to the percentage of the total bus ridership on a particular route. That resulted in small samples of Route 30 to Jacksonville, Route 1 to Rogue Valley Mall and Route 4 to Rogue Valley Medical Center. Those samples are not likely to be strictly representative of each route. These graphs are helpful, however, because they suggest characteristics of each route. Those characteristics may be more fully researched in the future.

6.1 Age and Route

6.2 Gender and Route

6.3 Bus Trips per Week and Route

6.4 Payment Method and Route

6.5 Method of Travel to Bus and Route

6.6 Method of Travel after Bus and Route

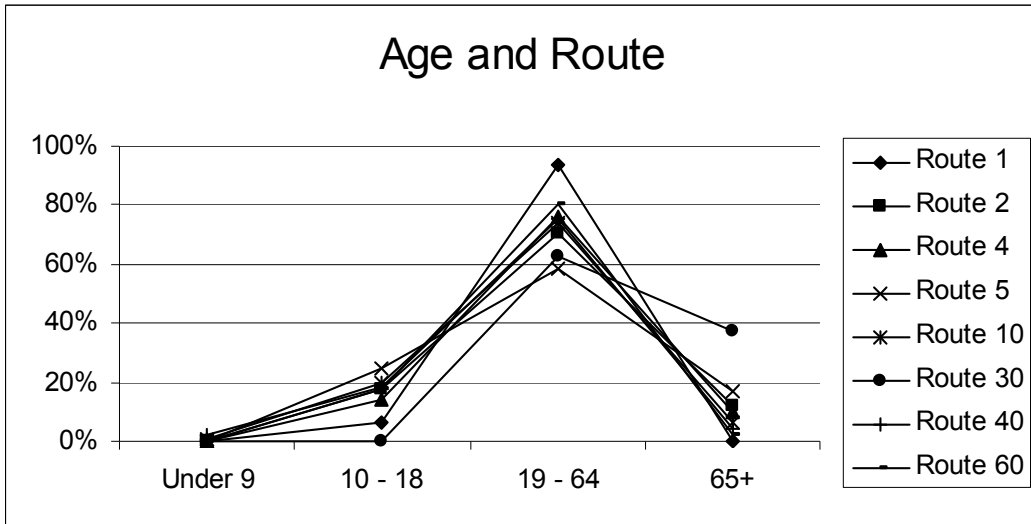
6.7 Distance (in blocks) to Bus and Route

6.8 Distance (in blocks) after Bus and Route

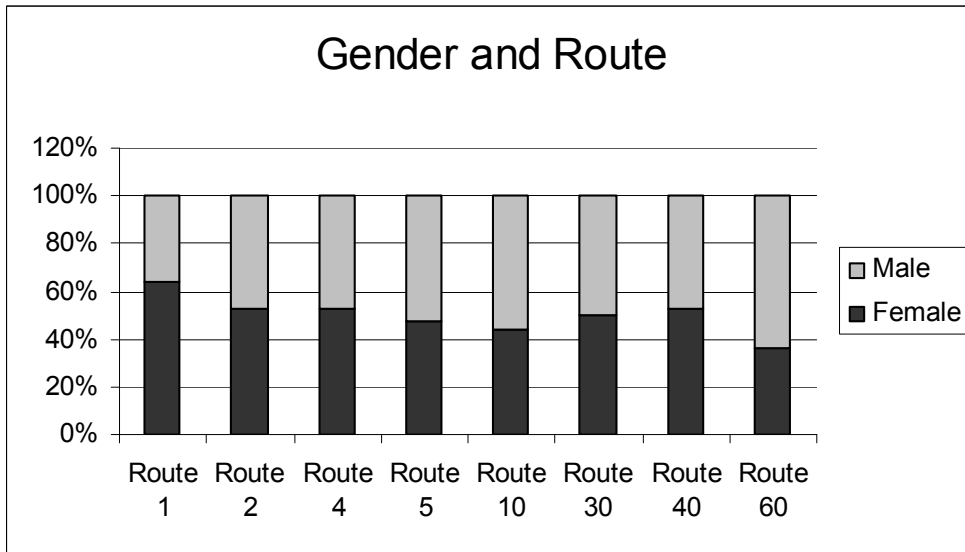
6.9 Reason for Trip and Route

6.10 Blocks to Trip Start and Alternate Travel Method

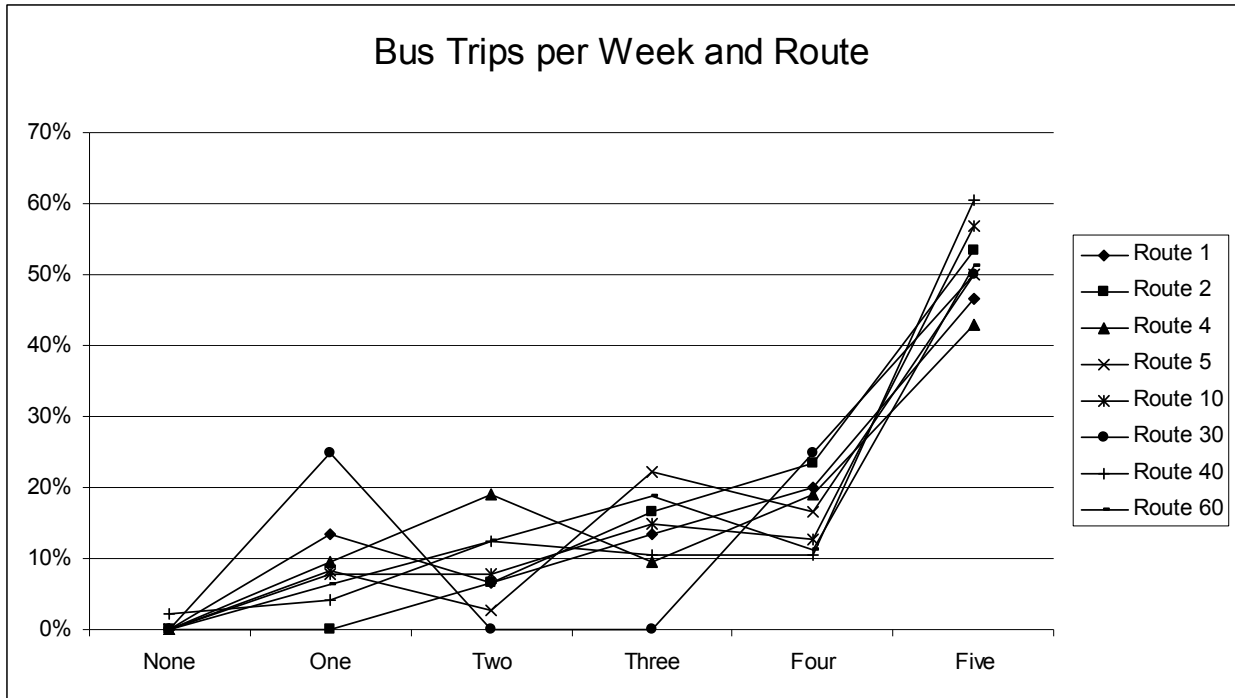
6.1



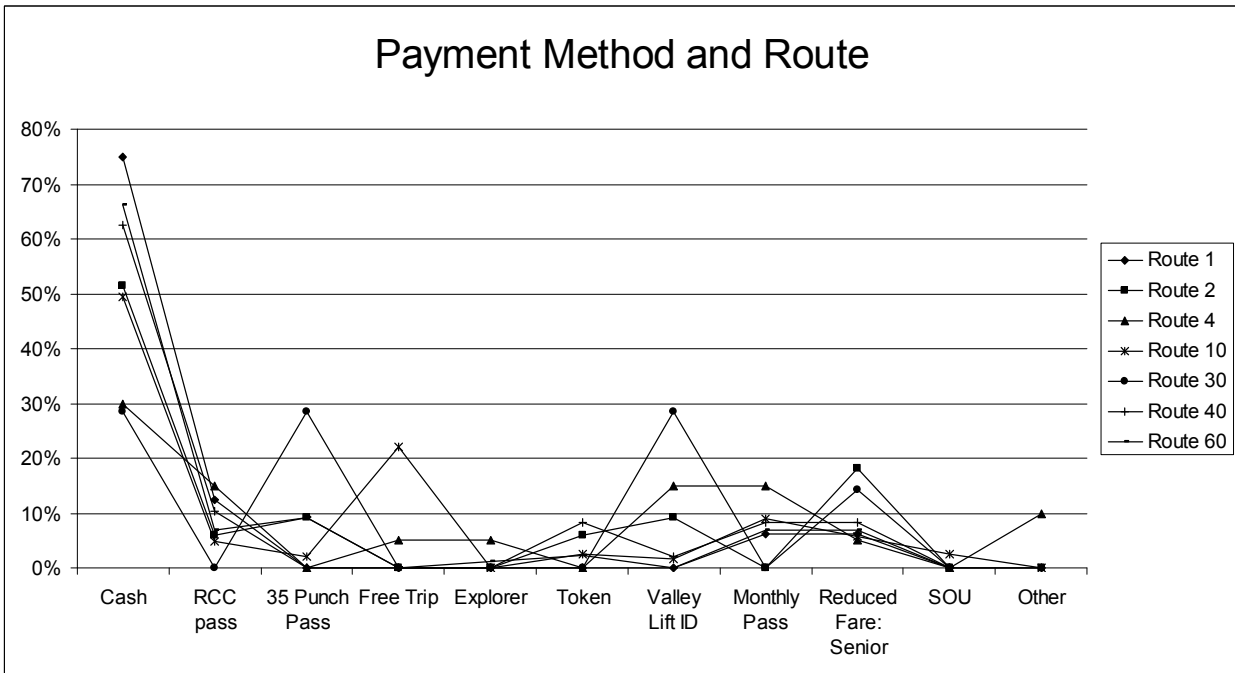
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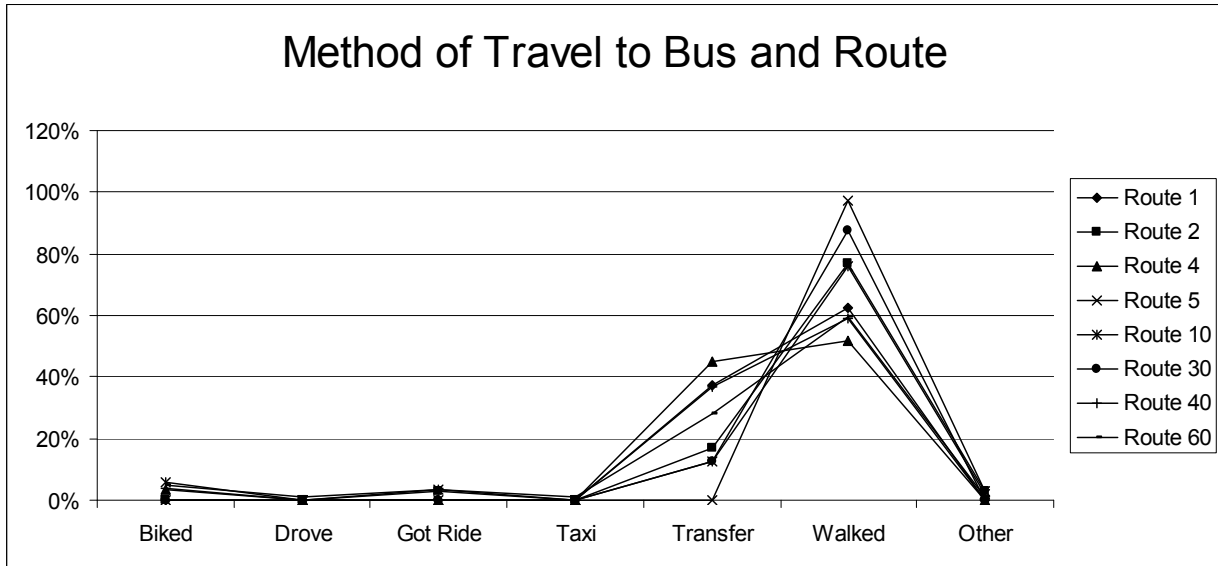
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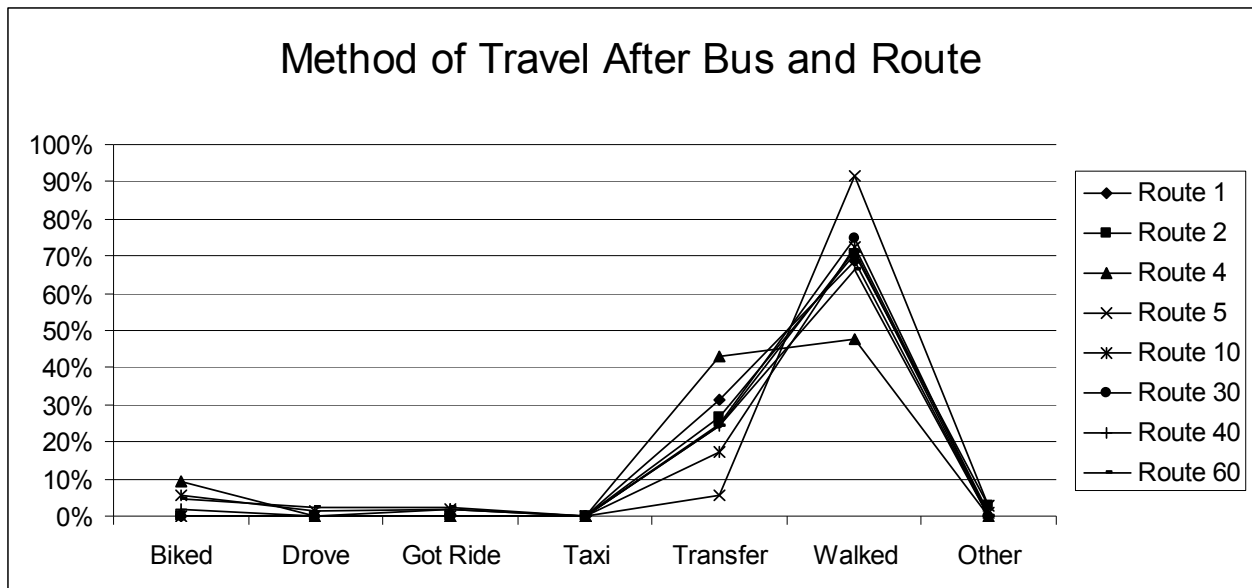
6.4



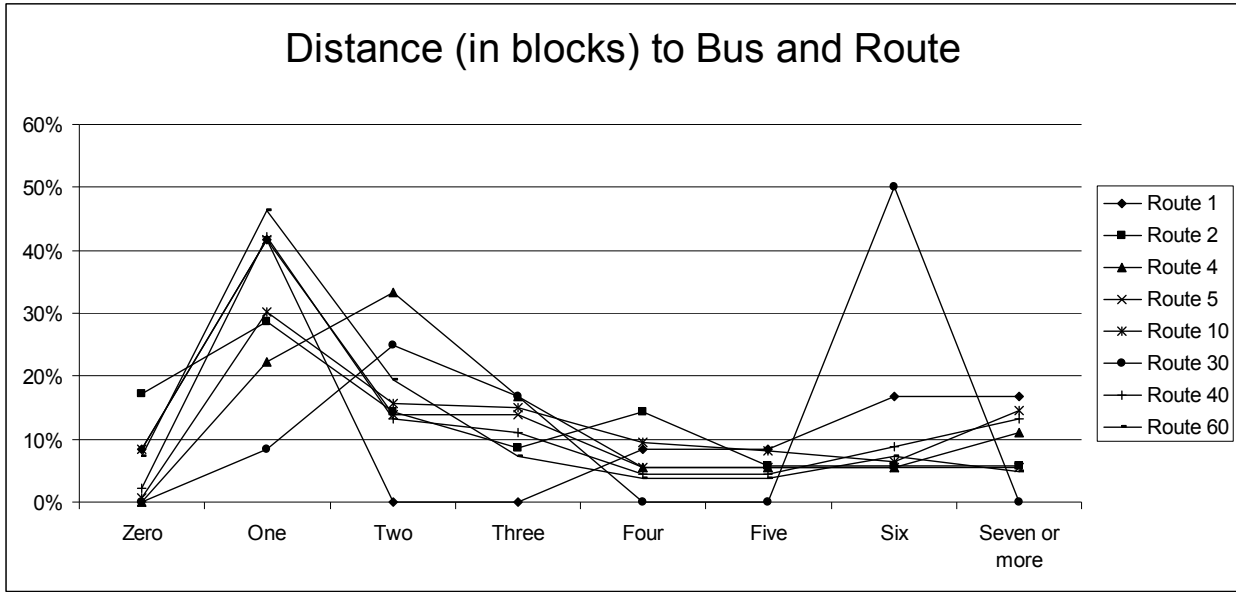
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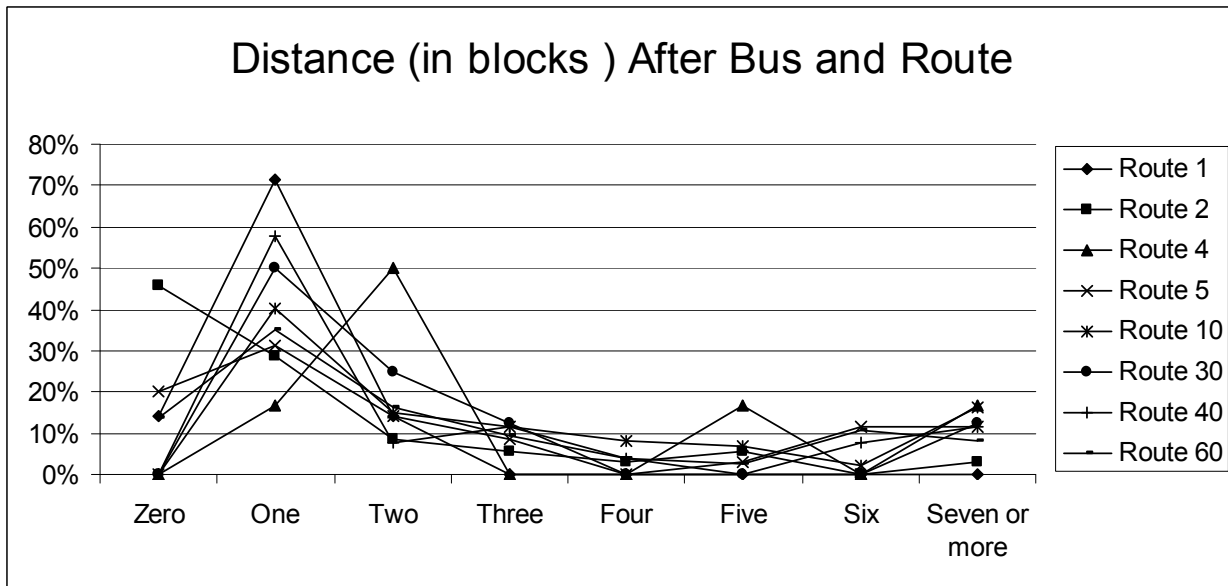
6.6



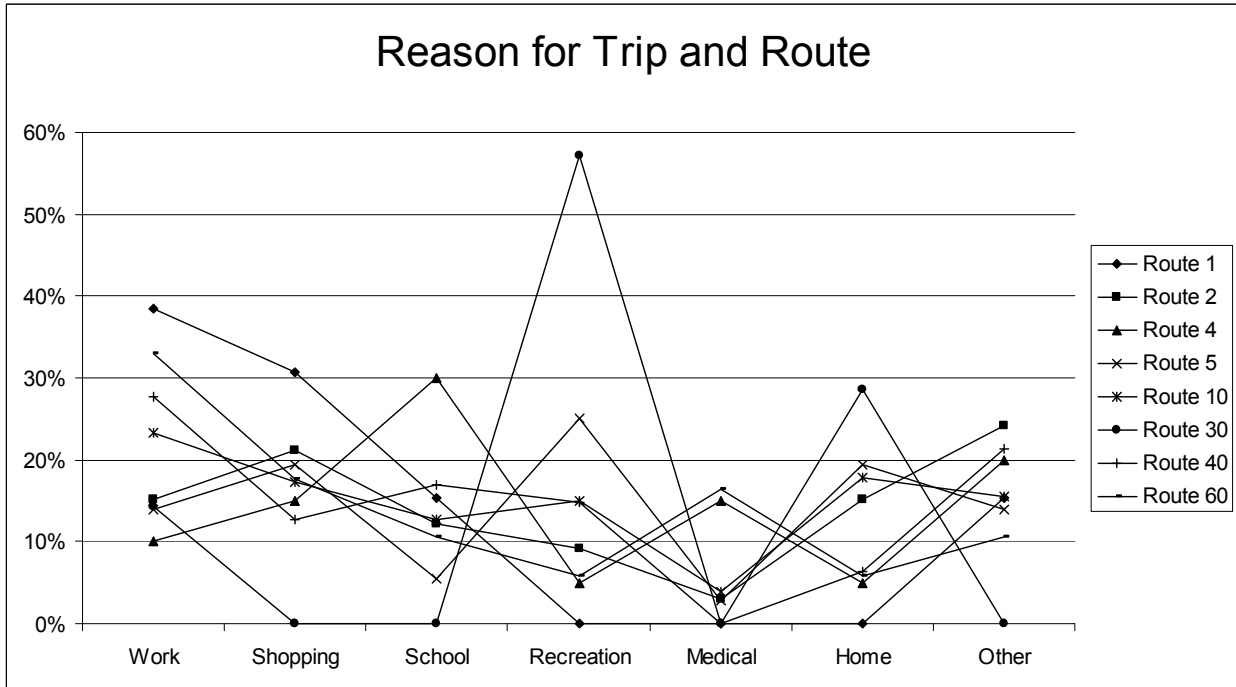
6.7



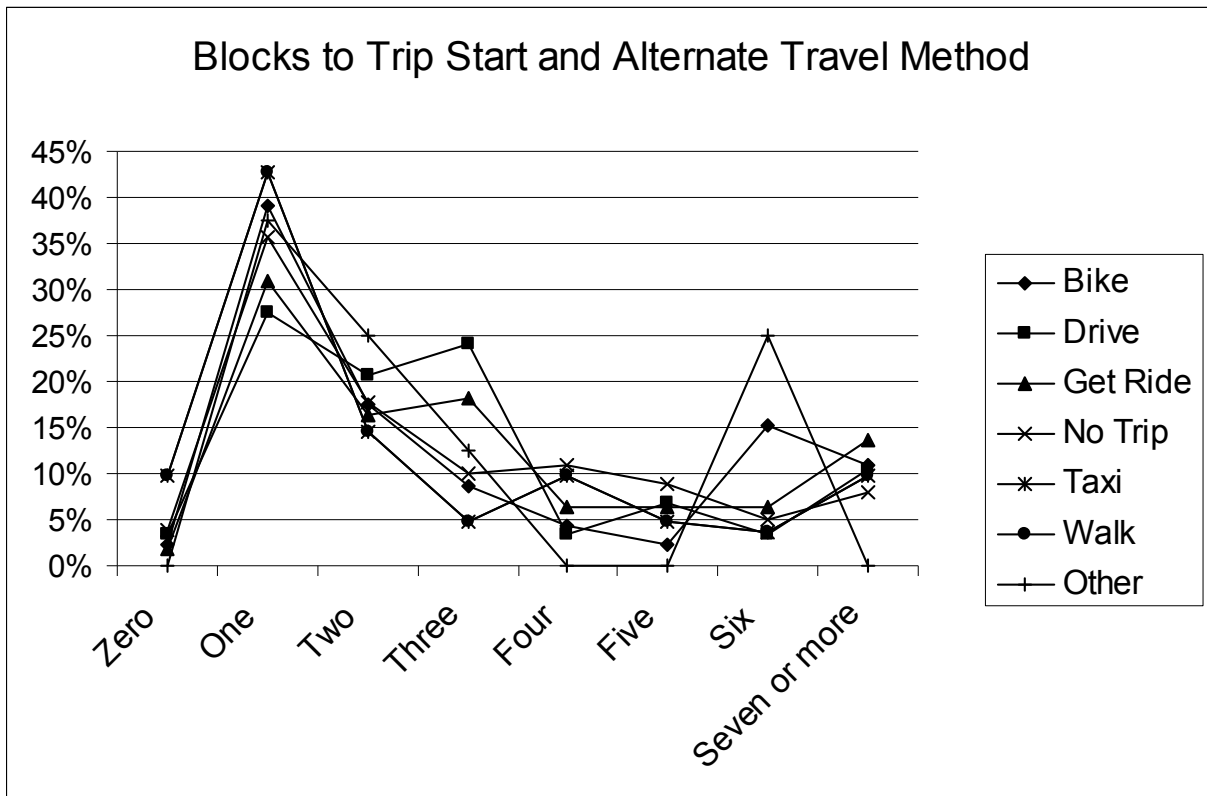
6.8



6.9



6.10



APPENDIX

Surveyor:

Date _____ Time _____

Bus Route- (circle) - 1 2 4 5 10 30 40 60

Bus Fleet Number _____

“This is our annual ridership survey to understand your travel choices. We won’t be asking for your name. The answers should be based on today’s activities.”

1. Did you get on this bus at (circle one) a bus stop or Front St. Station?

Location of bus stop (nearest intersection/ or Business) _____

2. How did you arrive at the bus stop/ Station? (circle one)

transfer from another bus
walked
bicycled
got a ride
drove alone
other _____

3. Approximately how many blocks did you have to travel to arrive at the Bus Stop/ Station? _____ location of origin

4. Where do you plan to get off this bus?

Location (nearest intersection/City or Business)

5. After you get off this bus how will you travel? (circle)

transfer to another bus
walk
bicycle
get a ride
drive alone
other _____

6. How far do you have to travel from the Bus Stop/ Front St. Station to get to your final destination? _____ location of destination _____

7. What is the reason for your trip today? To arrive at- (circle)

School/College

Home

Recreation

Work

Shopping

Medical

Other _____

8. What other bus routes do you use on a regular basis? (circle one)

1 RV/Mall/Poplar Square 2 Main/West Medford 4 RVMC 5 Ashland Loop
10 Medford/Ashland 30 Jacksonville 40 Central Point 60 Medford/White
City

9. How many days per week do you use the bus? (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. Are you required to transfer to another bus to complete your trip? Yes ___ No ___

11. If you had not taken the bus today how would you have made this trip? (circle one)

Walked

Bicycled

Drove alone

Taken a taxi

Got a ride

Not made the trip at all

Other _____

12. How did you pay for this bus trip? (circle one)

Cash

RCC group pass

Full Fare Monthly pass (circle type) Reduced Fare ABT SOU

Free trip

Explorer pass

Token

Valley lift ID

Other _____

(If 'RCC, ABT or SOU' is answer to previous question then ask the next two questions)

13. In a typical week, how many trips do you take that are not for RCC, SOU, ABT?

14. If you did not have a group bus pass how would you have made this trip? (circle one)

Walked

Bicycled

Drove alone

Taken a taxi

Got a ride

Not made the trip at all

Would be less likely to attend/work at RCC, ABT or SOU

Other _____

15. Are you? <9 10-18 19-64 65+

16. Male ___ Female ___

17. Do you have a valid driver's license?

Yes ___ No ___

18. What is the combined annual income of all members of your household? (list until they say yes and then circle)

<15,000/yr

15,000-25,000/yr

26,000-45,000/yr

45,000+

Prefer not to answer

19. How do you most often find bus route information? (circle)

Front St. Station staff

Bus Driver

Printed Schedule

RVTD telephone

Other passengers

Bus Stop

Other_____

20. Have you seen/heard one of RVTD's radio or TV advertisements? Yes___ No___

21. Additional Comments-

Problems? Need to talk to customer service at Front St. Station 779-BUSS (2877)