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Feasibility of Commuter Bus Service Between Wahpeton-Breckenridge and Fargo-Moorhead

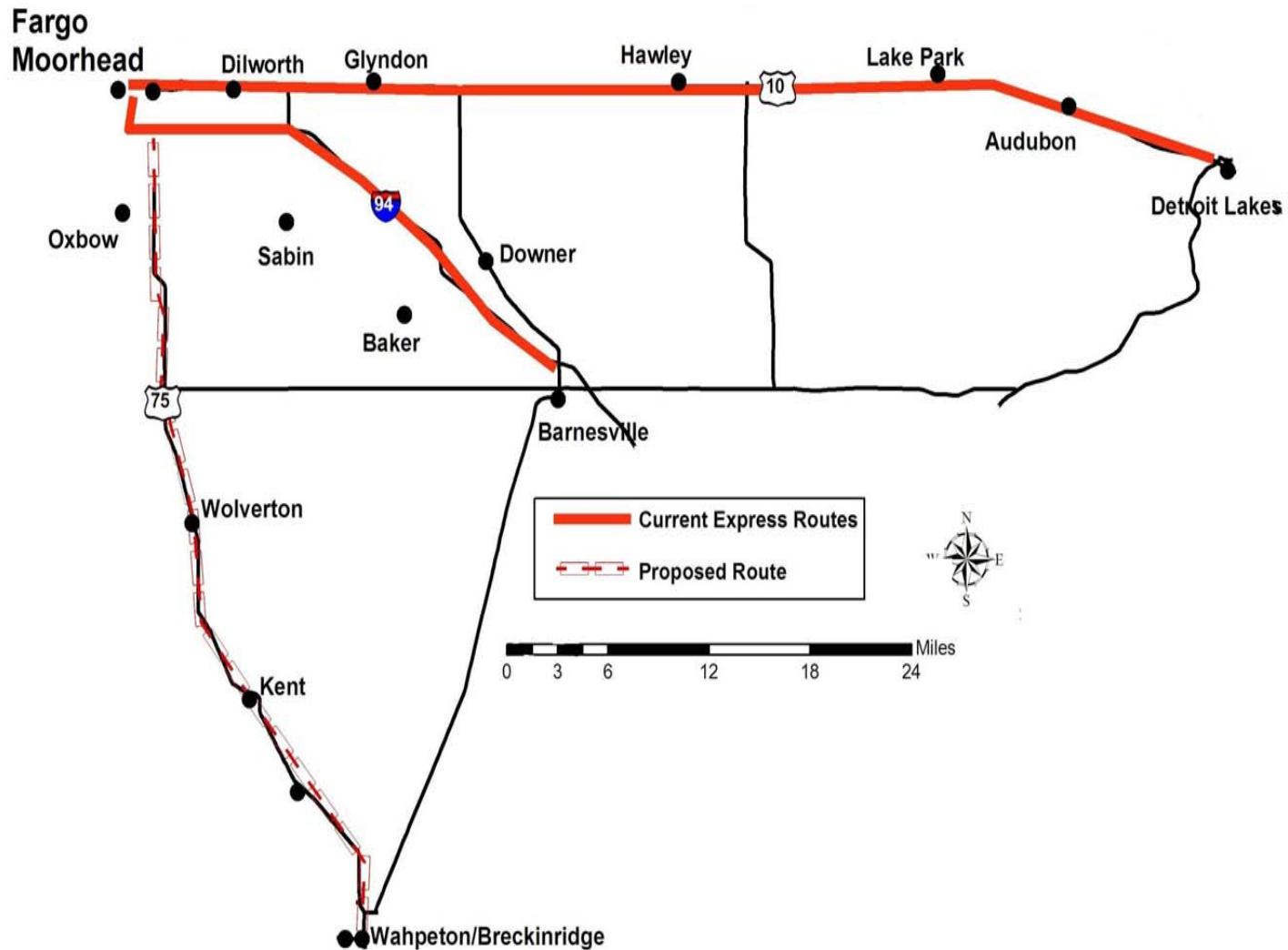
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2006 Transportation Research Forum
New York, NY

[Objectives]

- Determine the number of regular commuters between the Wahpeton-Breckenridge and Fargo-Moorhead metro areas,
- Make commuters aware of the cost of driving their personal automobile and compare that cost to that of using commuter bus service,
- Discover the willingness of commuters to utilize commuter bus service,
- Determine what commuter bus service features were of utmost importance to travelers, and
- Gauge the awareness of local commuters to commuter bus service and its features.

Current and Proposed Routes



Clay County Rural Transit's (CCRT) Current Routes

- Detroit Lakes to Fargo-Moorhead
 - Serves six communities
 - Morning service: (6:20-7:20am)
 - Return service: (4:45-6:00 pm)
- Barnesville to Fargo-Moorhead
 - Serves four communities
 - Morning service: (6:15-7:00am)
 - Return service: (4:30-5:45pm)

[Ridership]

	<u>2005 Passengers</u>		<u>2005 Mileage</u>	
	Detroit Lakes	Barnesville	Detroit Lakes	Barnesville
January	726	236	4565	2400
February	515	247	4344	2762
March	555	274	4934	3223
April	459	214	4476	2652
May	430	171	4561	2968
June	467	113	4499	2606
July	375	95	4201	2425

Clay County Rural Transit's (CCRT) Proposed Route

- Wahpeton-Breckenridge to Fargo-Moorhead
 - Serves four communities
 - Morning service: (6:30-7:30am)
 - Return service: (4:45-6:00pm)
- 3-month trial basis (Oct.-Dec. 2005)
 - Rate \$30/hr
 - 4hr day, \$120/day
 - Roughly \$8000 for three month trial

Clay County Rural Transit's (CCRT) Proposed Route

■ Funding Sources

- Passenger Monthly Passes \$140
- Passenger Daily Passes \$10 Roundtrip
- Contributions from the cities of Wahpeton, Breckenridge, Wilkin, and Richland Counties, at \$750 each. Totaling \$3000 dollars for the 3 month trial.
- The Fargo-Moorhead Council of Governments (the metropolitan planning organization for the Fargo-Moorhead area) would match the \$3,000 local contribution with Job Access Reverse Commute funding (JARC).

Clay County Rural Transit's (CCRT) Proposed Route

- Target Ridership for Trial Period

(12-15 daily passengers)

- 12 month funding sources

○ Annual Passenger Fares (12 passengers per month)	\$15,840
○ Subsidy from Local Jurisdictions	7,920
○ <u>(JARC) Grant Match</u>	<u>7,920</u>
○ Total Cost for 12 Months	\$31,680

Clay County Rural Transit's (CCRT) Proposed Route

■ Marketing

- Inserts in Utility Bills
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Local Church bulletins
- North Dakota State College of Science (Wahpeton)
- City and County Websites
- Public Access Television

Clay County Rural Transit's (CCRT) Proposed Route

■ Advantages

- Affordable option for Wahpeton-Breckenridge area residents who are commuting to Fargo-Moorhead
- Transportation options for residents that would just like to go to Fargo-Moorhead for one day (Medical, Visiting, Shopping)
- Commuters using the service will see it as a value to living in Wahpeton-Breckenridge.
- Potential to add Fargo-Moorhead residents to Wahpeton-Breckenridge. The empty backhaul trips that the commuter bus would take could possibly be used for Fargo Moorhead residents that work in Wahpeton Breckenridge.
- The JARC grant that can match the local jurisdictions contributions provides a unique opportunity to try the service at a lower cost to the jurisdictions.
- This route would offer transportation to individuals in Wilkin County, an area that currently does not have any public transportation.
- Service compliments rural transit in Richland County.

[Survey]

- 16 questions focusing on travel behaviors and demographic characteristics
- Major employers contacted to distribute the survey included:
 - Blue Cross Blue Shield,
 - Meritcare,
 - Cass County,
 - City of Fargo,
 - Fargo's Downtown Community Partnership,
 - North Dakota State University,
 - Minnesota State University (Moorhead), and
 - Concordia College.

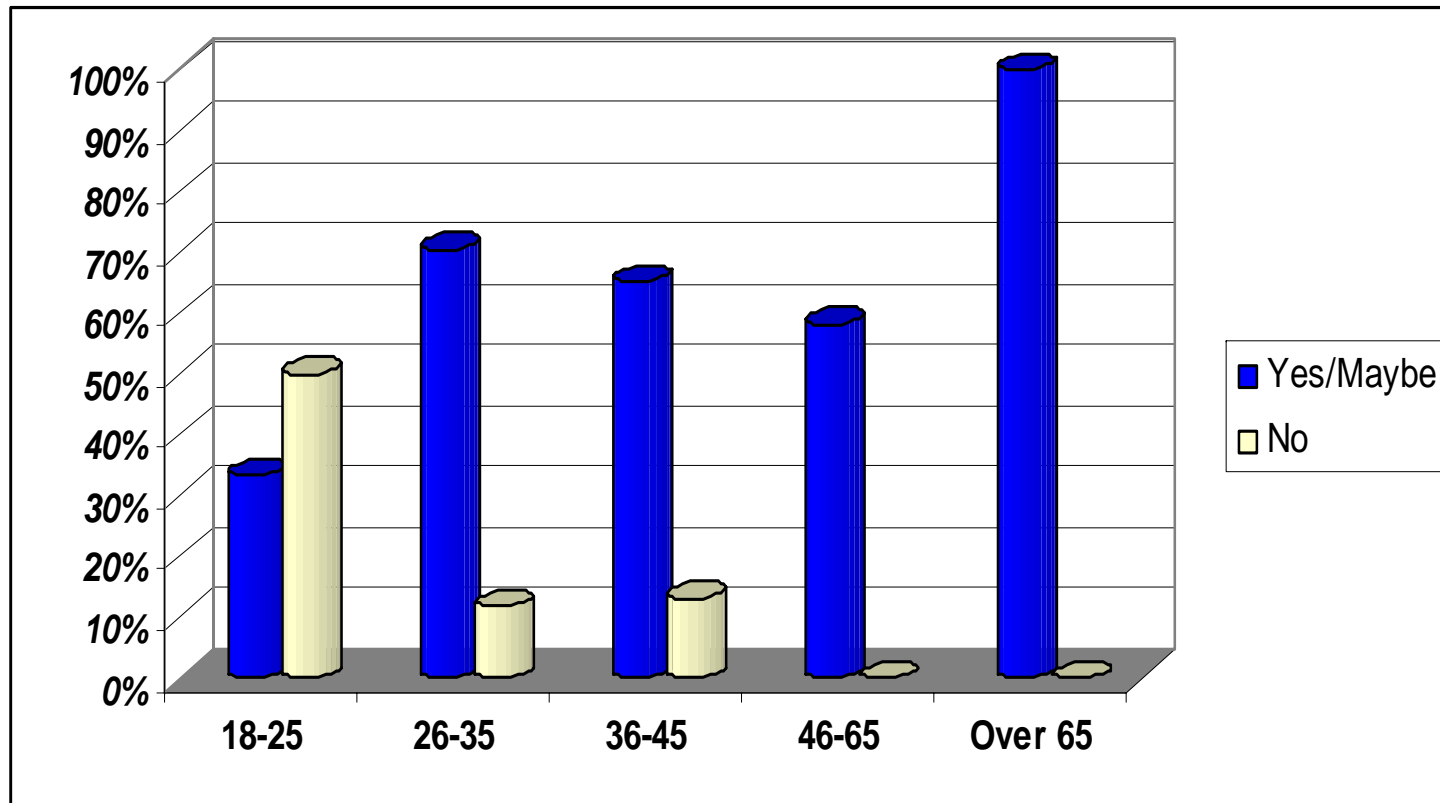
Survey

	Medium Car (Cavalier LS)	Large Car (Taurus SE)	SUV (Blazer)	Van (Caravan SE)
Gas & oil	6.1¢	7.1¢	7.9¢	7.1¢
Maintenance	3.9¢	4.1¢	4.1¢	3.9¢
Tires	1.5¢	1.8¢	1.5¢	1.6¢
Operating costs/mile	11.5¢	13.0¢	13.5¢	12.6¢
Insurance	\$811	\$1075	\$950	\$873
License & registration	\$167	\$206	\$289	\$259
Depreciation	\$3,051	\$3,693	\$4,286	\$3,772
Financing	\$554	\$751	\$867	\$755
Ownership cost/year	\$4,583	\$5,725	\$6,392	\$5,659
<i>Total cost for 12,500 annual miles</i>	\$6,021	\$7,350	\$8,080	\$7,234
<i>Average cost/mile</i>	\$0.48	\$0.59	\$0.65	\$0.58

(Energy Information Association, 2005)

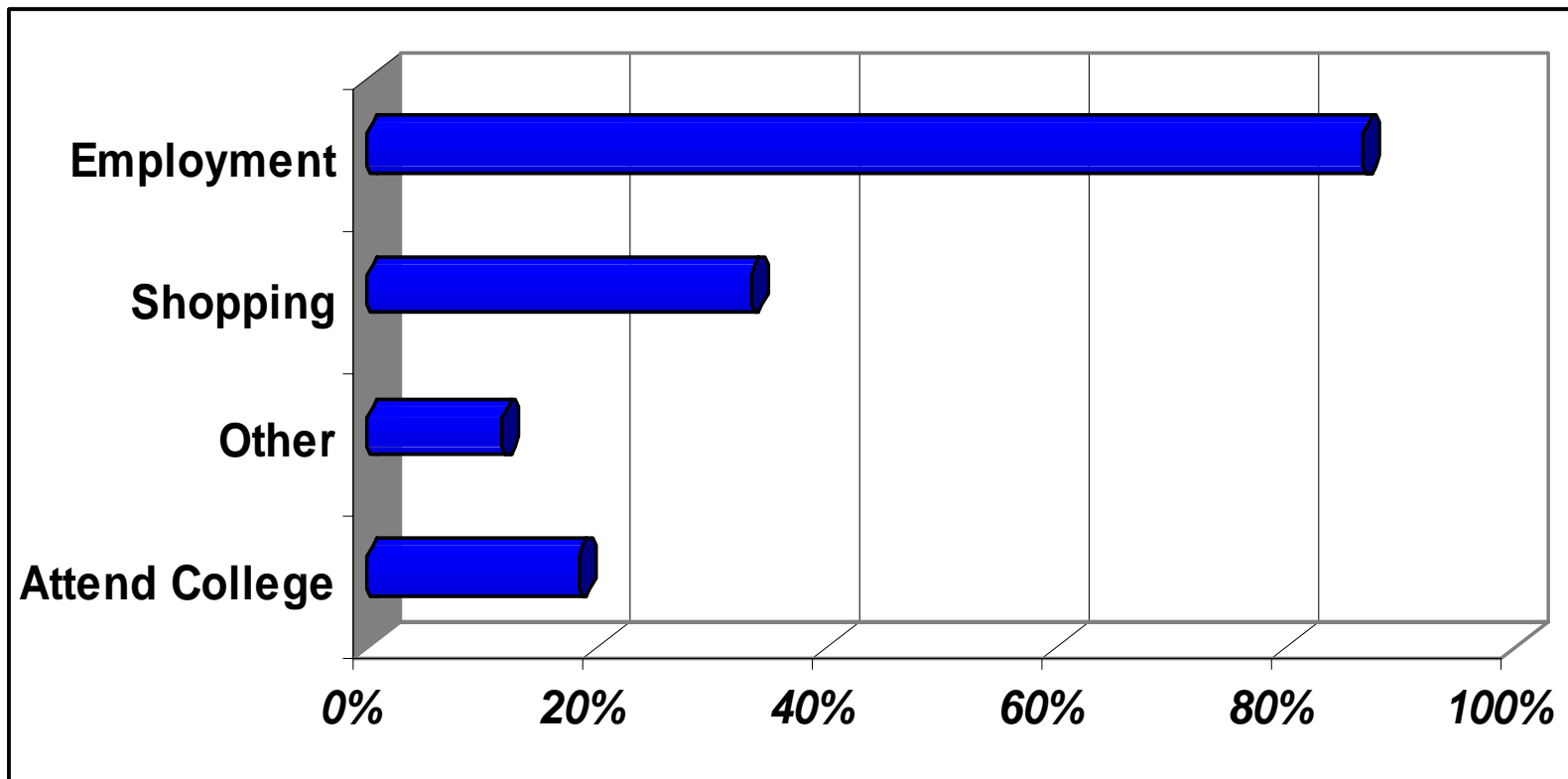
[Survey]

■ Willingness to Ride



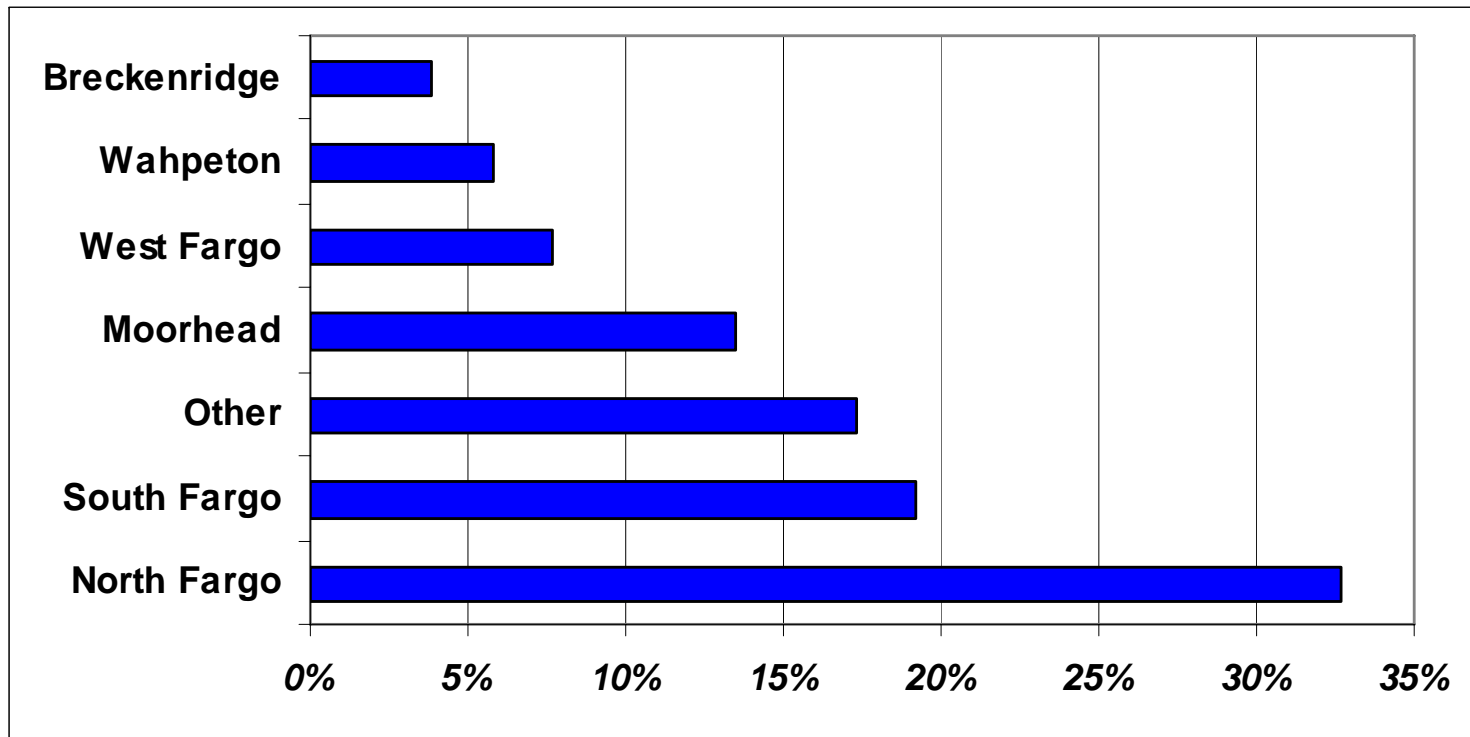
Survey

- Reasons for travel between W-B & F-M



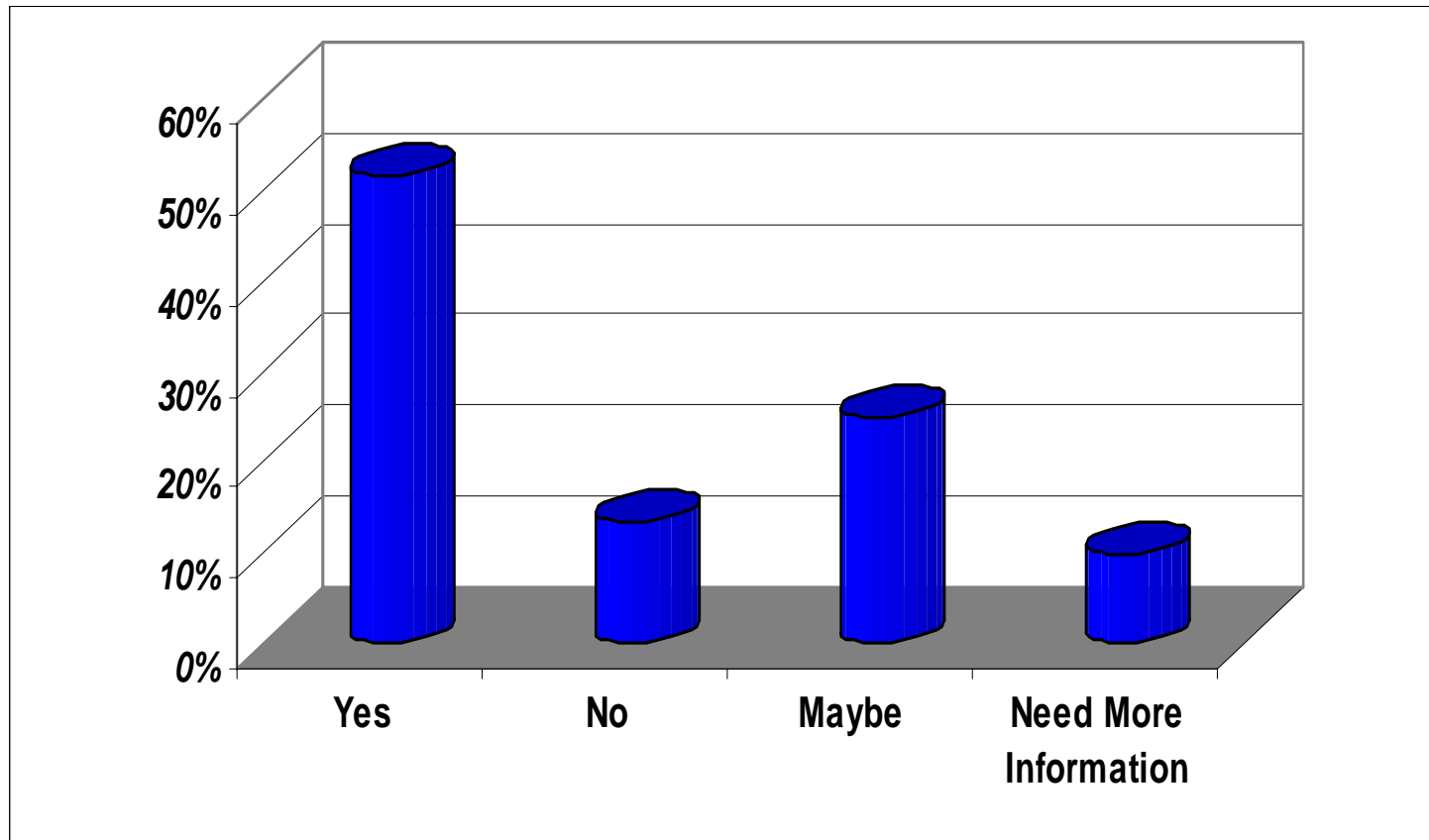
[Survey]

- Location of Employment / School



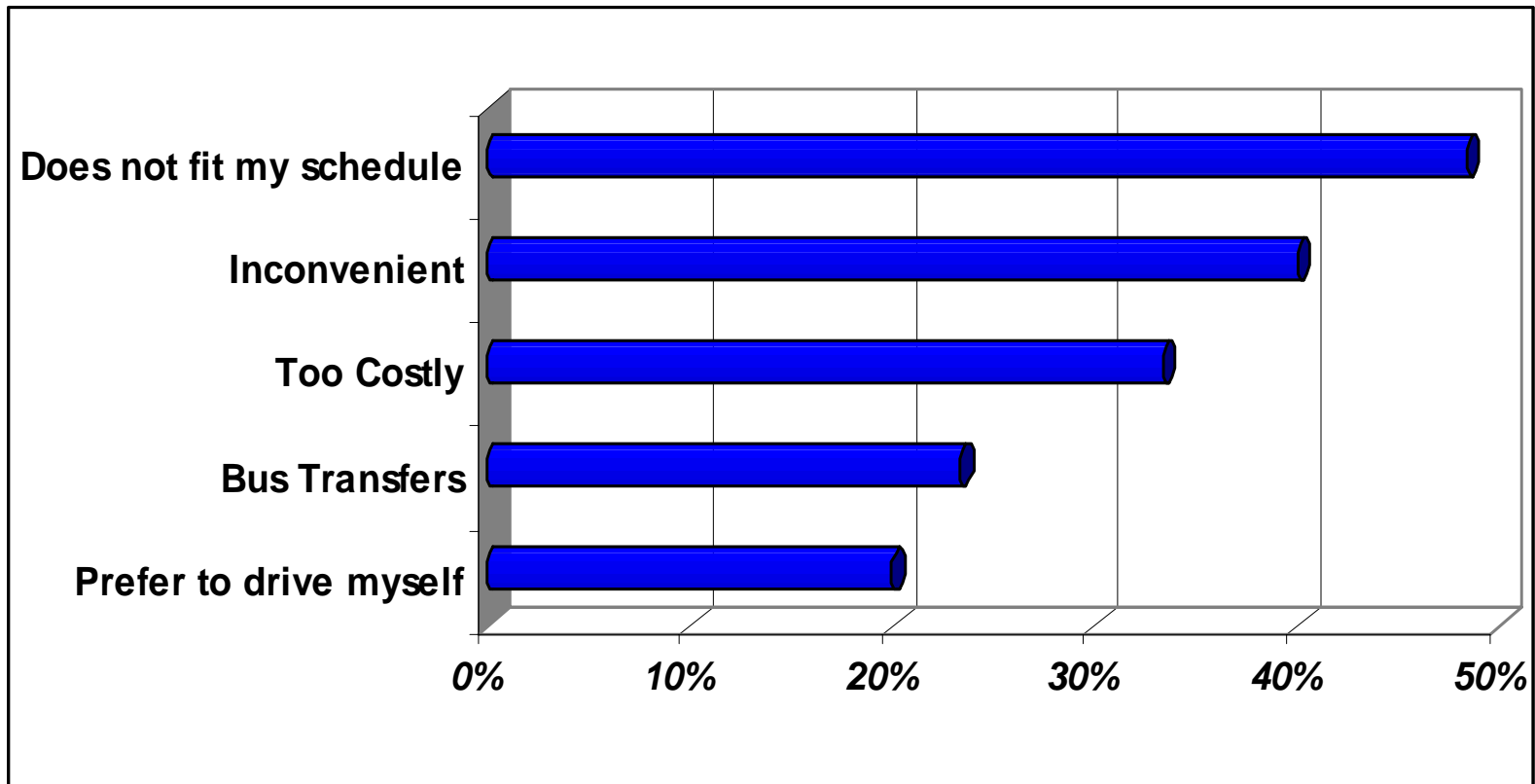
[Survey]

- Willingness to use Service with Guaranteed Ride



[Survey]

- Reasons for not Using Service



[New Service Experiences]

■ Why Low Ridership?

- Many potential W-B riders work at either Blue Cross/Blue Shield Insurance or the Veteran's Hospital
- F-M fixed routes do not run past Blue Cross/Blue Shield
- F-M fixed routes run to Veteran's Hospital once every hour
- Gas Prices Decreased from \$2.75/gallon to \$2.00/gallon during three month trial period

[Door-to-Door Service]

- Dropped on Oct. 1st
 - Ridership has increased on established routes
 - Not enough time to drop off everyone at their place of employment
 - Money no longer available to provide such a service
 - Lost riders due to policy
 - Gained some as well who work downtown (F-M fixed route transfer center)