

2013 STA Passenger Survey Results

Attachment E

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Overview

Spokane Transit Authority (STA) conducted its most recent passenger survey in December 2013. This survey is used to better understand which bus routes have a higher proportion of minority and low income riders, which fare types have a higher use among minority and low income riders, and the degree to which these populations rely on transit service. In addition, the objectives of the survey explored ridership behaviors of bus passengers, determined the leading reasons for riding the bus, and evaluated STA service and performance.

Methodology

STA contracted with Moore Information of Portland, Oregon, to tabulate data and analyze the results of the passenger survey. A total of 1,630 STA bus passengers (age 16 and older) completed a two-page self-administered survey on one of 34 STA bus routes during the weekday and/or weekend. The amount of surveys administered per route was developed based on actual number of passenger trips for each route, on all days of the week. 34 bus routes were sampled during weekdays from 7 AM to 9 PM and weekends from 10 AM to 6 PM. The routes with the highest ridership had higher questionnaire quotas than those with fewer riders.

On-board surveys were conducted from December 7-12, 2013. Questionnaires were distributed until the target quota for that route was met. Survey responders returned the survey before leaving the bus. Most questionnaires were completed, but those less than 75% complete were discarded.

Passenger Survey Conclusions

The conclusions listed below only reflect the survey as it relates to minority and low-income populations. Specific questions were used to determine the percentages of both populations. It does not reflect whether the entire survey has been validated.

Based on the sample data gathered for this survey, 24% that responded to the survey were minorities and 57% made less than \$20,000 a year (for the purposes of this survey, people that made less than \$20,000 per year were considered to be low income.) The percent use of fare payment methods is roughly the same between minorities, low income, and total responders. Based on passenger survey results, the number of minority and low income passengers on several routes is larger than the percentage of low income and minority people living along those same routes.

Survey Findings

Below is a summary of the findings from the STA December 2013 Passenger Survey. The data is organized by the type of data that is presented.

Minority Data

The values for minority data were based on responses of participants to questions in the survey that asked of their ethnicity. (Throughout the survey, all ethnicities, other than Caucasian, were summed into a category called Non-Caucasian. For the purposes of this summary report, "Minority" is substituted for "Non-Caucasian.") After reviewing these responses, 24% of survey participants were minorities. This value is calculated from the total survey responses from Questions 31 (What is your ethnicity?). The rest of the demographic data collected from respondents based on their ethnicity was also from survey Question 31 (What is your ethnicity?). The demographics collected were the responders' age; the size of their household; and whether they were minorities, students, and/or employed.

Here are a summary of the minority findings from the survey:

- 24% of survey participants were minority. 7% answered that they were African American, 5.3% Hispanic, 5.2% American Indian, 3.1% Asian, and 3.3% considered themselves to be of mixed racial background. Less than 1% identified themselves as Pacific Islander and Arab.
- 76% of the total people who answered the survey question on ethnicity said they were Caucasian.
- Among the minority riders who answered this question of the survey, 32.3% were between the ages of 19-24. The age groups of 25-34 and 35-44 tied for being the second highest age group at 17.7%. Those within age group 16-18 comprised of 14.6% of responders, ages 45-54 were 10.8%, and ages 55-64 were 6.4%. Only 0.6% of minority responders were age 65 and older.
- 45.3% of minority riders/survey responders stated that they were students. 54.7% reported that they were not students.
- 58% of minority responders live in a household with three or more people. 21.5% reported living alone or and 20.5% reported living with only one other person.
- 58% of minority responders reported having one or more cars in their household. 42% reported not having a car.
- 55% of minority riders reported being employed. 41% reported not being employed and 4% reported being retired. (Many of those not employed are also likely full-time students)
- 60.5% of minority responders reported to make less than \$20K a year; therefore, they are also considered low income. 23.2% made \$20-39K annually, 7.1% made \$40-59K, and 9.3% made over \$60K.

Low Income Data

The values for low income data were based on the responses of participants to questions in the survey that asked of their annual income. After reviewing these responses, 57% of survey participants earned less than \$20,000 a year. (For the summary report purposes, this variable was termed "low income.") This percentage is based on an average of the total number of participants making less than \$20,000 from survey Question 35 (Your household income is). The demographics collected were the responders' age; the size of their household; and whether they were minorities, students, and/or employed.

For this survey, there were six levels of annual income that survey responders could choose. The lowest category was under \$20,000 a year and people who answered this were classified as being low income. The determination does not automatically mean that an individual is below the federal poverty line because factors for being under the poverty line vary greatly depending on the size of a household, the age of the responder, and the number of children one may have.

- 28.4% of responders who answered they earned less than \$20K per year were in the age group 19-24. 25.1% of responders in age group 25-34 reported that they made less than \$20K. 15.5% of those in age group 35-44 reported this, 11.7% for ages 45-54, 9.3% for ages 55-64, 7.6% were ages 16-18, and 2.4% were age 65 and older.
- 25% who reported making less than \$20K per year reported themselves as minorities.
- 36.4% of those who reported making less than \$20K were students. 63.6% were not students.
- 43.9% of responders who make less than \$20K live in a household of three or more. 31.5% live alone and 24.6% live with one other.
- 58% of those making less than \$20K reported having no car in their household.
- 45% of responders making less than \$20K were employed 48% reported not being employed, and 7% were retired.

Fare Payment Method Data

According to the responses of survey participants, use of different fare payment methods is fairly consistent between minorities, low income, and the total amount of responders. The majority of minority survey responders use adult fare pass (36.2%), cash (28.8%), and student and youth pass (18.9%). The majority of low income survey responders use adult fare pass (40.6%), cash (23.2%), reduced fare (10.7%), student pass (9.1%), and Eagle Pass (7.2%).

Relying on Transit Service

The information below summarizes the findings on how much survey participants rely on transit service for their transportation needs, specifically focusing on those participants who were minority or low income. For this section of the survey, responses for the following survey questions were used: Question 22 *To get around the Spokane area, which of the following best describes how much you currently rely on bus service?*, Question 25 *Do you currently have a valid driver's license?*, and Question 26 *How many licensed, working cars are at your household?*. These were chosen because these questions all relate to one's transportation options and ability to get around Spokane. Below, is a summary of the data gathered to determine reliance on transit service:

- Among total responders, 77% completely or mostly rely on transit, 21.3% somewhat or rarely relied on it, and 1.7% did not know.
- Among minority rider responders, 76.8% completely or mostly relied on transit, 21.9% somewhat or rarely relied on it, and 1.3% did not know. These values were very similar to those among the total number of minority and non-minority responders.
- Among responders who make less than \$20,000, 83.6% completely or mostly rely on transit, 14.8% somewhat or rarely rely on transit, and 1.7% did not know. Compared to the

total number of responders from all incomes, 77% mostly or completely relied on transit, 21% somewhat or rarely relied on it, and 2% did not know.

- 44% of minority responders had a driver's license and 56% did not. Among all minority and non-minority responders, 48% had a driver's license and 52% did not.
- 38% of low income responders had a driver's license and 62% did not. Considering the total number of responders from all incomes, 49% had a driver's license and 51% did not; therefore, it can be determined that low income riders are less likely to have a driver's license than those with a higher annual income.
- Among minority responders, 42% had no cars in their household, 33% had one, 15% has two, 7% had three, and 2% had four or more. These values were very similar to those among the total number of minority and non-minority responders.
- Among low income responders, 58% had no cars in their household, 27% had one, 9% had two, 4% had three, and 2% had four or more. Among the total number of responders from all incomes, 43% has no cars, 31% had one, 16% had two, 7% had three, and 3% had four or more.

Minority Riders and Bus Routes

As explained earlier, survey administrators rode all 34 bus routes on the STA network. The quota of surveys to gather for each route and day (weekdays, Saturday, Sunday) was based on actual passenger trips for each route (more surveys are given on routes with higher ridership).

- Based on 2010 Census data, it should be noted that the proportion of minority people living in the service area of most bus routes is actually smaller than the proportion of riders who are minorities on those routes.
 - For example, Route 25 serves a population of approximately 64,744. 14% (9,022) of this population is minority; however, according to the survey results, about 23% of passengers on Route 25 are minorities. Along Route 45, 12% (4305) of its service area population of 35,679 are minority, but 28% of riders on this route are minority.
- Some popular routes in the STA network had the following proportion of minority riders:
 - Route 24 Monroe: 19% (out of 104 surveyed)
 - Route 27 Hillyard: 27% (out of 76 surveyed)
 - Route 61 Highway 2/ Browne's Addition: 20% (out of 67 surveyed)
 - Route 66 Cheney/EWU: 25% (out of 126 surveyed)
 - Route 90 Sprague: 23% (out of 131 surveyed)
 - City Loop North (Routes 20 and 33): 22% (out of 148 surveyed)
 - City Loop South (Routes 34 and 44): 22% (out of 83 surveyed)

Low Income Rides and Bus Routes

- Similar to the conclusion drawn about minority ridership on bus routes, the proportion of low income riders on bus routes are higher than the actual population served by bus routes.
 - For instance, Route 27 has a total service area population of approximately 76,262 and 23% (17,912) of residents are considered low income; however, according to the survey responses, 77% of passengers on Route 27 are low income. Route 90 serves a population of about 22,595, with 23% (5,298) of this population being low

income. Results from the survey report that 68% of riders on the route are low income.

- Popular STA routes had the following proportion of low income riders:
 - Route 24 Monroe: 55% (out of 104 surveyed)
 - Route 25 Division: 58% (out of 152 surveyed)
 - Route 45 Regal: 50% (out of 64 surveyed)
 - Route 61 Highway 2 Browne's Addition: 57% (out of 67 surveyed)
 - Route 66 Cheney/EWU: 50% (out of 126 surveyed)
 - City Loop North (Routes 20 and 33): 54% (out of 148 surveyed)
 - City Loop South (Routes 34 and 44): 51% (out of 83 surveyed)