City of Columbia
2014 Public Transit Survey Findings

Presented by

November 2014
ETC Institute
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Purpose

- To assess current usage and perceptions of existing transit services in the City of Columbia
- To identify ways to improve transit services in the City
- To assess support for increased funding for public transit services
Methodology

• Survey Description
  - four-page survey
  - each survey took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete

• Method of Administration
  - by mail, phone, and online
  - randomly selected sample of households in the City

• Sample size: 668 completed surveys (goal was 400)
• Confidence level: 95%
• Margin of error: +/- 3.8% overall
2014 Columbia Public Transit Survey

Good representation throughout the City
Topic #1: Usage and Perceptions of Existing Transit Services
Q1. Have you ever used Columbia's bus system and/or paratransit system (Columbia Transit)?

by percentage of respondents

Yes: Paratransit System
3%

Yes: Bus System
23%

No
74%

Source: ETC Institute (2014)

1 in 4 Residents Indicated That They Have Used Transit Service
Q1a. How often do you currently use Columbia's bus system and/or paratransit system (or Columbia Transit)?

by percentage of respondents that have used Columbia's bus system and/or paratransit system

- Rarely or never: 58%
- Several times a year: 19%
- Several times a month: 3%
- Once a week: 1%
- 2 or 3 days a week: 6%
- 4 or more days a week: 5%
- Every day that buses are running: 8%

Most Residents Do Not Use Transit Service Frequently

Source: ETC Institute (2014)
Q1b. For which of the following reasons do you currently use Columbia's bus system and/or paratransit system (or Columbia Transit)?

by percentage of respondents that have used Columbia's bus system and/or paratransit system
(multiple choices could be made)

- Run errands, go shopping: 32%
- Go to/from work: 28%
- Medical/dental appointments: 24%
- Meals, social activities: 15%
- Go to/from school: 9%
- Other: 27%

Source: ETC Institute (2014)
Q2. Overall, how satisfied are you with the service provided by Columbia's bus system or paratransit system (or Columbia Transit)?

by percentage of respondents that have used Columbia's bus system and/or paratransit system

A Majority of Users Are Satisfied with the Service
Total Satisfied: 59%
Total Dissatisfied: 26%

Source: ETC Institute (2014)
Opportunities for Improvement
Q3. Improvements That Would Encourage Residents to Begin Using Columbia Transit or Increase Their Current Ridership

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)

- Service was offered to more destinations: 50%
- Buses could get you to destinations more quickly: 47%
- Bus stops were located closer to your home: 46%
- Buses arrived at stops more frequently: 44%
- More information about services was offered: 41%
- Service was more reliable and on-time: 41%
- Bus route info was available on smartphone/tablet: 37%
- More covered shelters were available: 36%
- Service was free: 36%
- Service was offered later in the evening: 31%
- Service was offered on Sunday: 25%
- Service was offered earlier in the morning: 24%
- Buses were cleaner: 22%
- Buses were more comfortable: 21%
- Drivers were more helpful: 19%

Source: ETC Institute (2014)
The Top Two Improvements Both Involve Expanding Service Coverage to More Areas
Topic #3

Funding Related Issues
Q5. How supportive would you be of increasing the amount the City of Columbia spends to improve public transit and paratransit over the next three years?

by percentage of respondents

- Supportive: 19%
- Somewhat Supportive: 21%
- Unsupportive: 7%
- Very Unsupportive: 16%
- Somewhat Unsupportive: 5%
- Very Supportive: 20%
- Don't know: 12%

A Majority of Residents Support Increased Funding
Total Support: 60%
Total Opposition: 28%

Source: ETC Institute (2014)
Q6. If you support increasing the amount spent on public transit and paratransit, how much of an increase are you willing to support?

by percentage of respondents who are supportive of increasing the amount spent on public transit/paratransit

- 10% increase: 21%
- 25% increase: 17%
- 50% increase: 8%
- 100% increase: 8%
- 200% increase: 2%
- Don't know: 44%

Source: ETC Institute (2014)
Q7. Level of Support for Various Methods of Funding for Public Transit in Columbia

by percentage of respondents (excluding don't knows)

- Add a 3% increase in the tax charged to visitors who stay in hotels in the City: Total Support: 62%
- Increase the general City sales tax by 1/20th of a cent each year for 3 years: Total Support: 54%
- Increase the monthly fee by $70 per month for persons who have City parking permits
- Raise the City property tax by 12 cents from 41 cents to 53 cents per $100 of assessed valuation
- Add a fee of $3 - $10 per month to the utility bill of each household and commercial customer

A Majority of Residents Support These Options

Source: ETC Institute (2014)
Q8. Methods of Funding for Public Transit in Columbia That Residents Support Most

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top two choices

- Add a 3% increase in the tax charged to visitors who stay in hotels in the City: 52%
- Increase the general City sales tax by 1/20th of a cent each year for 3 years: 43%
- Increase the monthly fee by $70 per month for persons who have City parking permits: 24%
- Raise the City property tax by 12 cents from 41 cents to 53 cents per $100 of assessed valuation: 15%
- Add a fee of $3 - $10 per month to the utility bill of each household and commercial customer: 8%

Source: ETC Institute (2014)
Summary

• Most residents are not currently using public transit service in Columbia

• The improvements to public transit that residents think are most likely to lead to higher ridership are:
  • Adding stops that are closer to people’s homes
  • Adding service to more destinations

• Even though most residents are not currently using public transit services in Columbia, a majority think funding for public transit services should be increased

• The preferred sources of funding expanded public transit services are:
  • 3% increase in the tax charged on hotel rooms
  • 1/20th of a cent sales tax for 3 years
Questions ???