



2014 Ontario Works Transit Survey: Final Results

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- Background
 - Survey Purpose and Objectives
 - Methodology
- Respondent Demographics
- Findings
 - Bus usage
 - Opinions about the bus pass
- Conclusions
- Transportation Challenges and Suggestions



Background



Background



- The County of Simcoe regularly supports transportation costs for eligible Ontario Works clients for medical, educational, and employment/training needs.
- In some areas, taxi cab costs represent a significant portion of Ontario Works program expenditures.
- The implementation of the transit link between Collingwood and Wasaga Beach was an opportunity to provide Ontario Works clients with an alternative mode of transportation, as well as to support the new transit link.
- Subsidized bus passes are now regularly provided to eligible Ontario Works clients and have resulted in significant program cost-savings; but what do Ontario Works clients think?



Purpose

- To determine the impact having a bus pass instead of subsidized taxi service has had on the lives of Ontario Works clients in the Collingwood/Wasaga Beach area.

Objectives

- To determine the level of satisfaction that Ontario Works clients have with receiving a subsidized bus pass;
- To understand how having a bus pass has impacted the lives of Ontario Works clients;
- To understand bus usage patterns of Ontario Works clients;
- To develop a demographic profile of survey respondents.

Methodology



- During the month of July, 2014, Ontario Works clients in the Collingwood office receiving a subsidized bus pass were invited to participate in a satisfaction survey.
- 53 bus passes were handed out, for a response rate of 68%.
- The survey invitation was initiated by Ontario Works clerical staff.
- Interested clients received a survey package consisting of a survey purpose letter, a questionnaire, an envelope in which to seal the completed questionnaire to maintain anonymity, and a ballot card for the \$25 gift card incentive draw.
- The ballot card and sealed questionnaire were collected separately to maintain anonymity.



Respondent Demographics

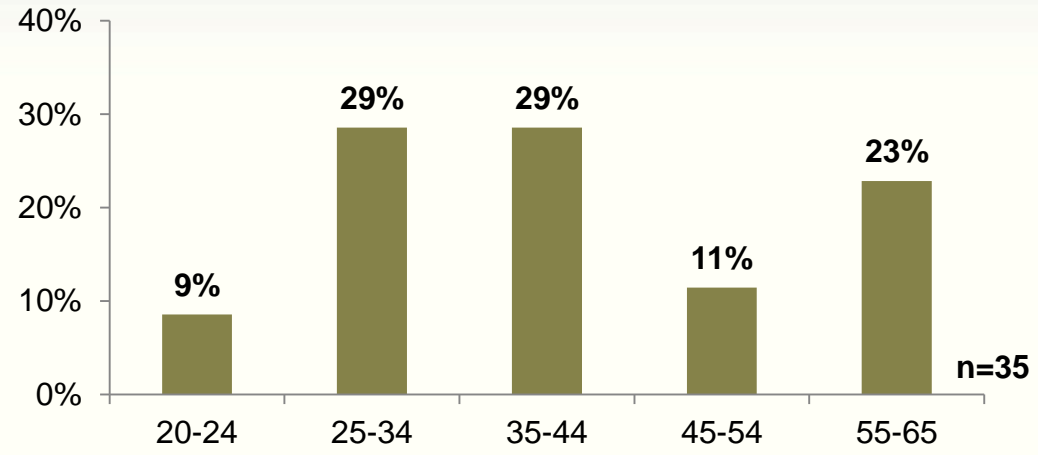


Respondent Demographics (1)

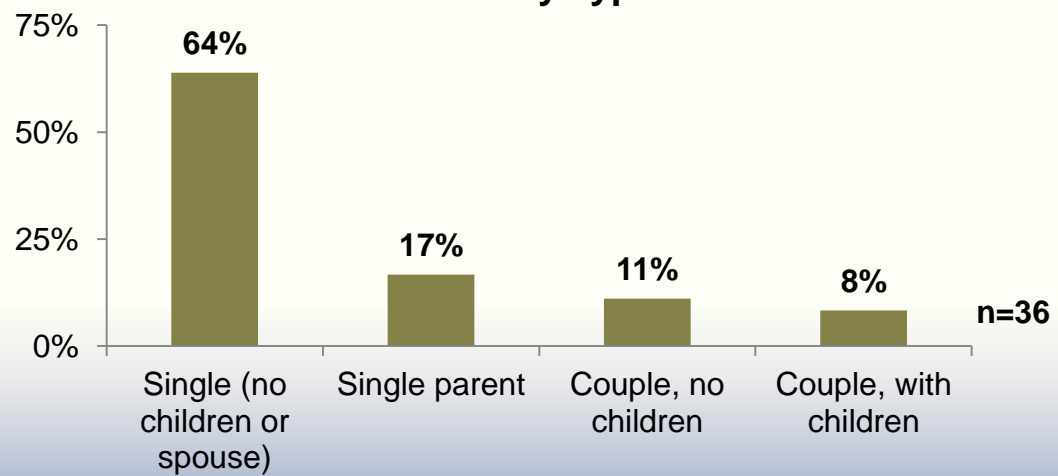


- The majority of respondents were:
 - Between the ages of 25 and 44 (with 55-65 also signifying a sizeable cohort);
 - Male;
 - Single (with no children or spouse).

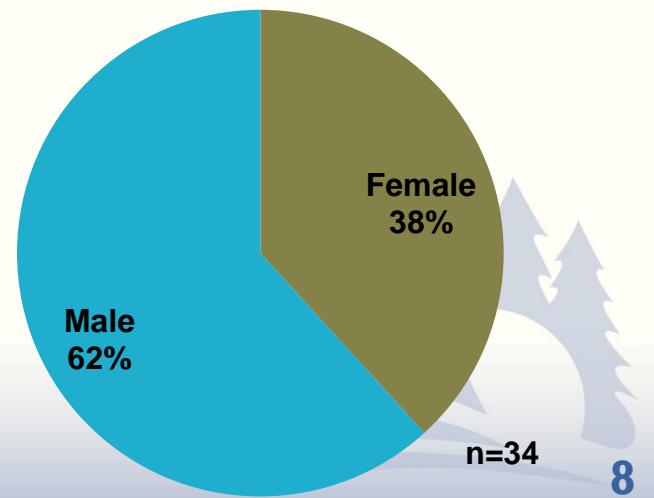
Age



Family Type



Gender

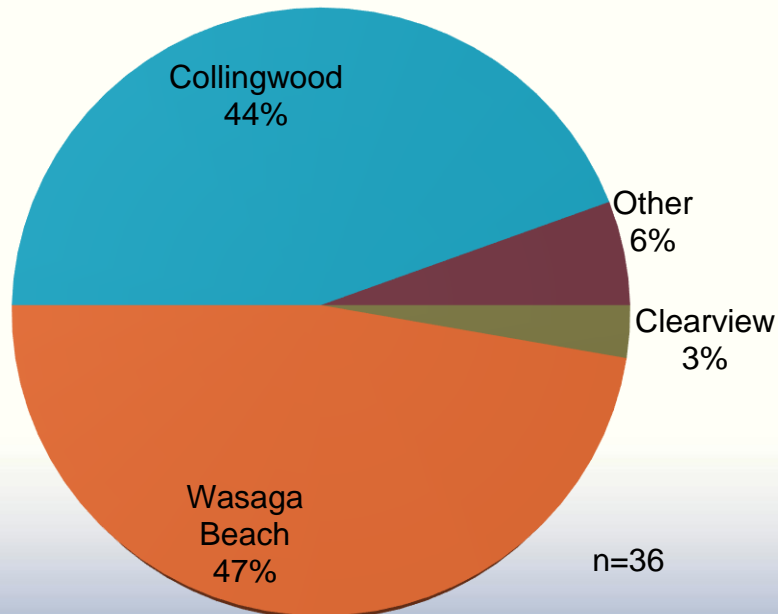


Respondent Demographics (2)

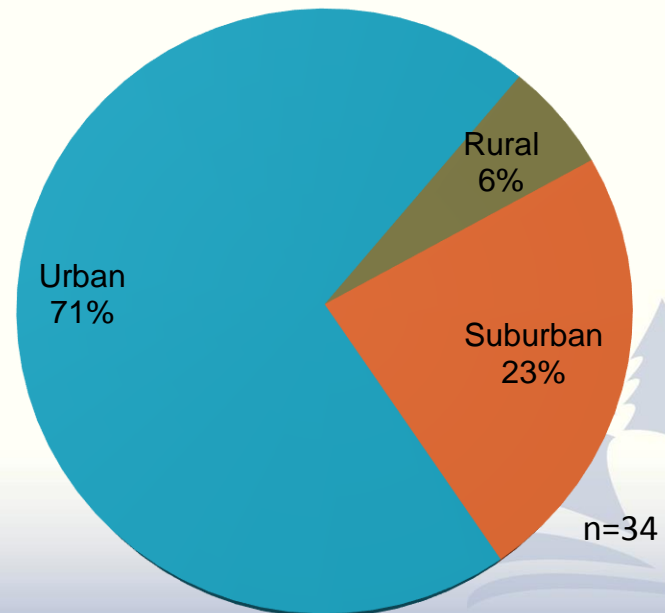


- Only 5 (15%) respondents had accessible transit requirements, such as a stroller, wheelchair, or walker.
- The majority were from the more urban areas of Collingwood or Wasaga Beach.

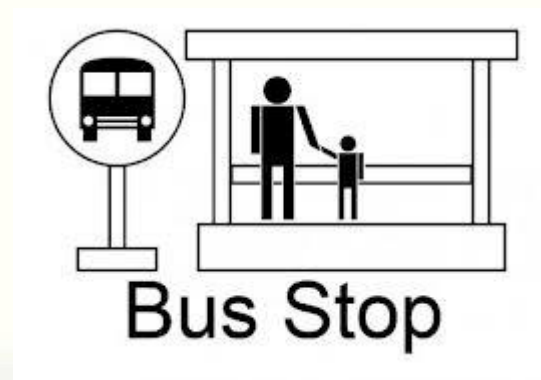
Residence



Community Type



Findings: Bus Usage

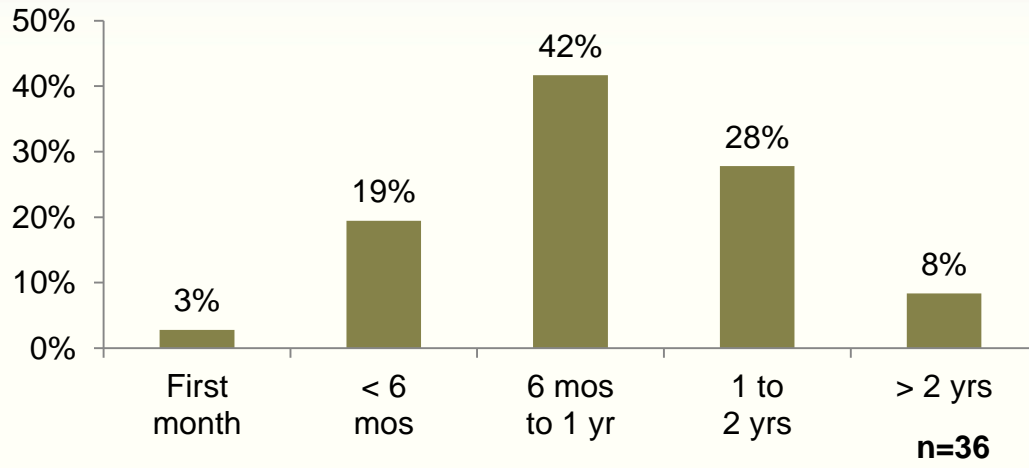


Bus Usage

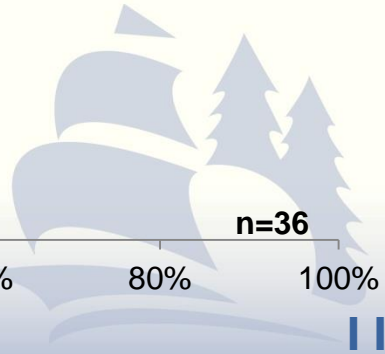
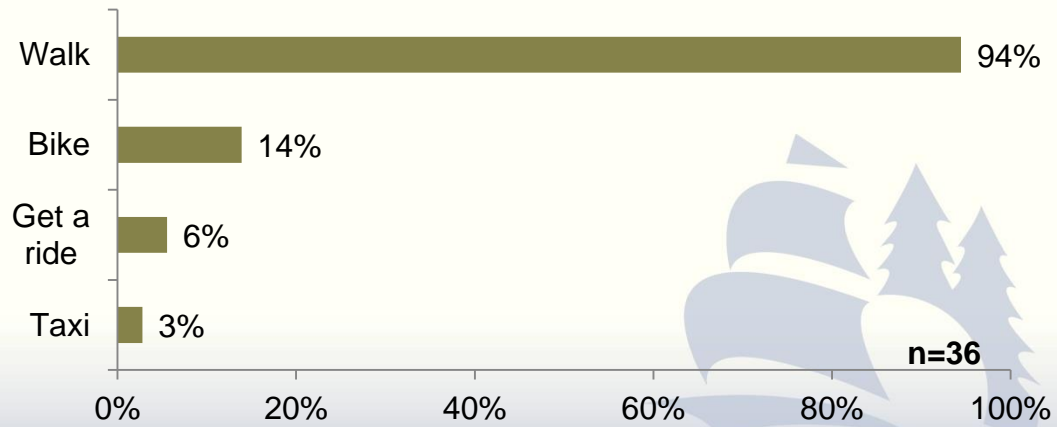


- The majority of respondents have been using the bus pass for more than 6 months, with two-fifths using it for between 6 months to 1 year, and just over a quarter for between 1 to 2 years.
- Almost all respondents (94%) walk to the bus stop, while a handful bike.
- A few respondents get a ride or take a taxi.

Length of time using a bus pass



Usual method of getting to the bus stop

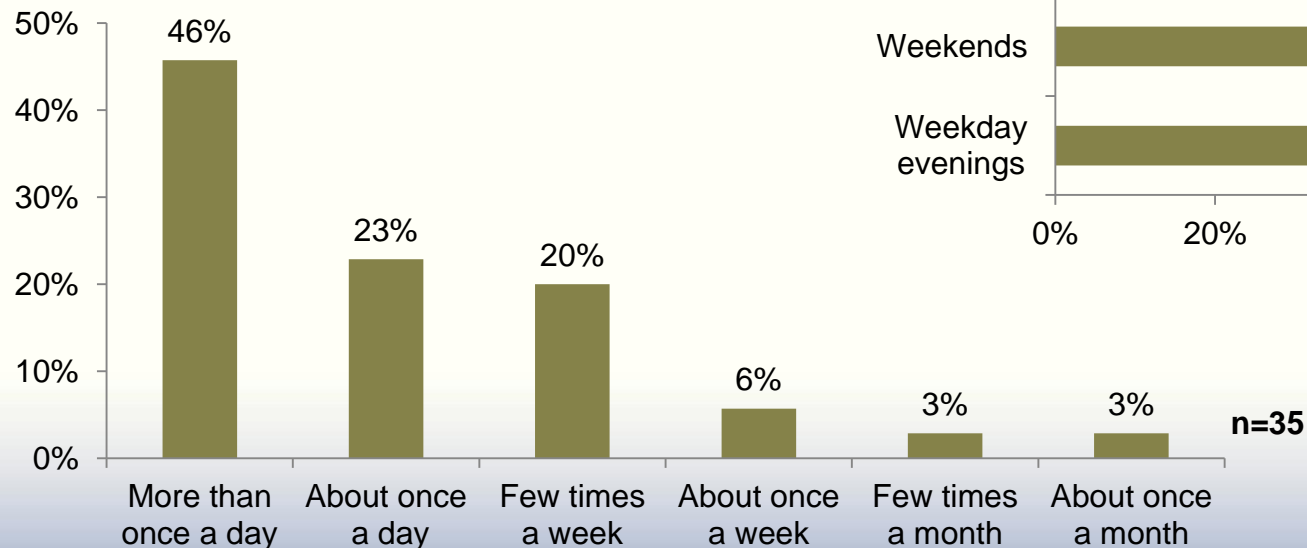


Frequency and time of use

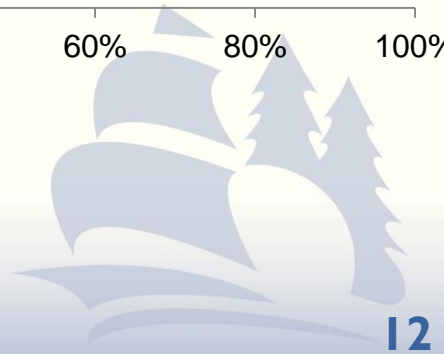
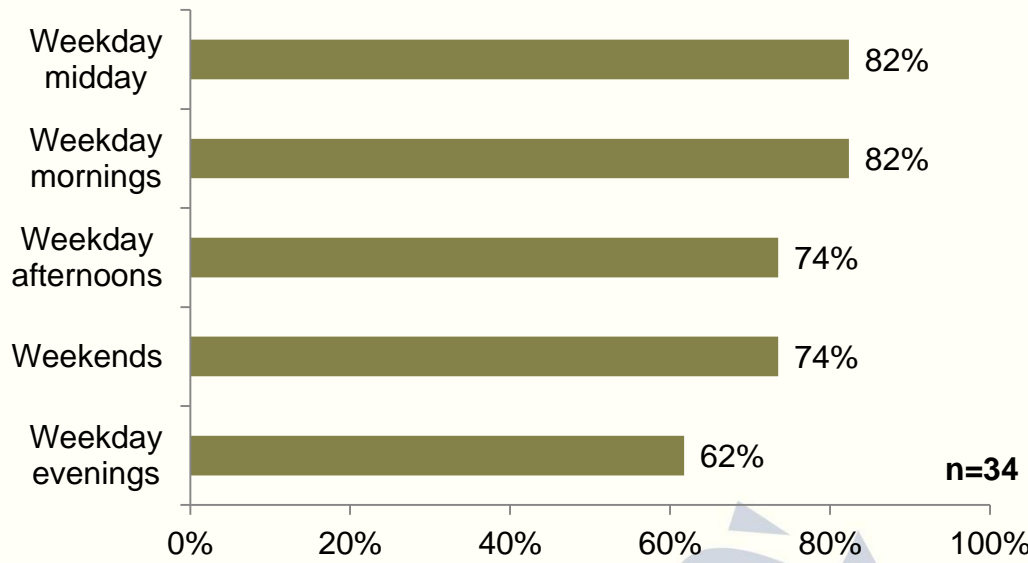


- Almost half of respondents use their bus pas more than once a day, while another quarter use it about once a day.
- Weekdays (midday and mornings) are the most frequent time of use.

Frequency of bus pass use



Most frequent times of bus pass use



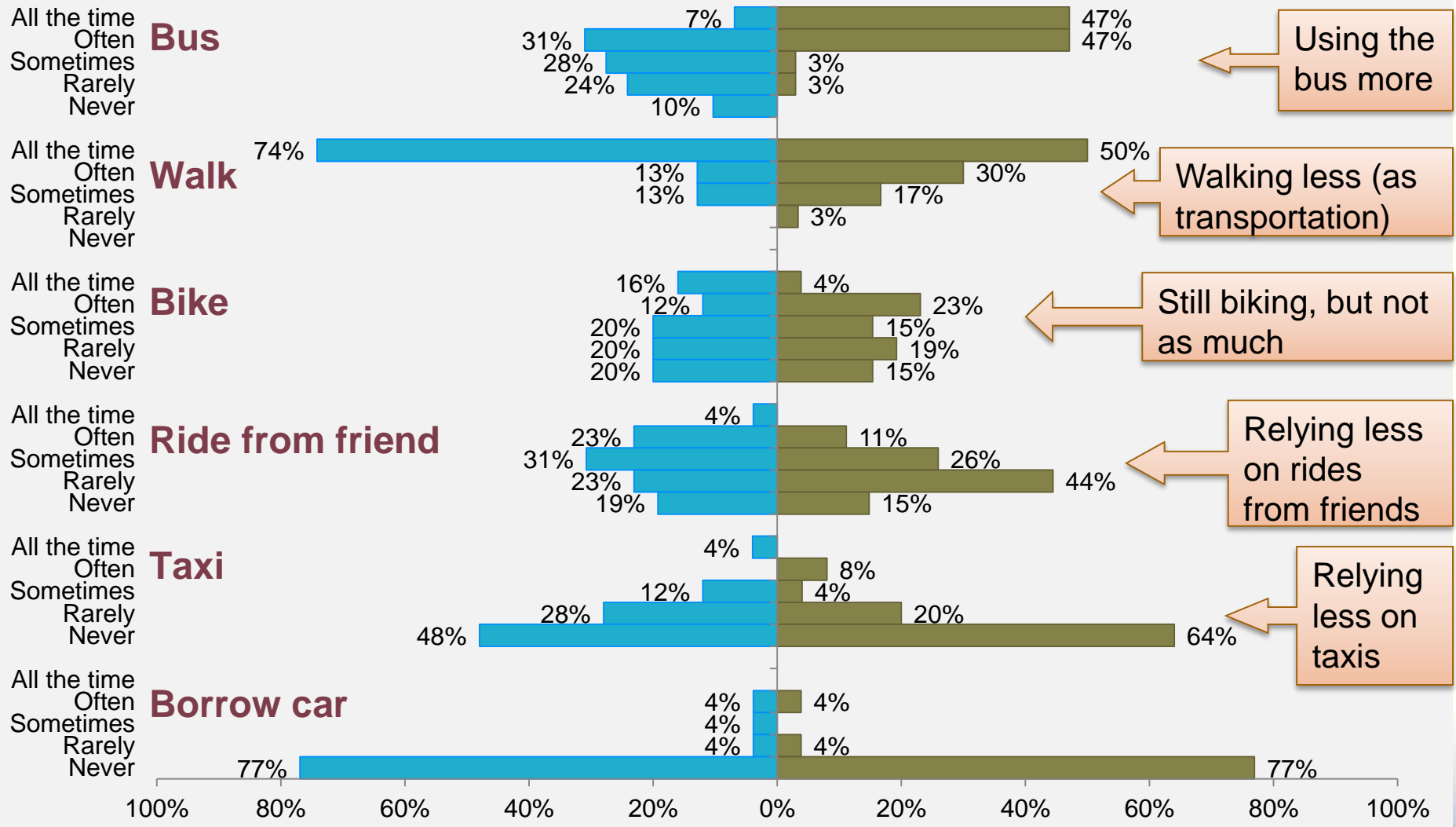
Method of Transportation: Before bus pass and currently



n = 25 - 31

■ Before bus pass ■ With bus pass

Respondents are...



Using the bus more

Walking less (as transportation)

Still biking, but not as much

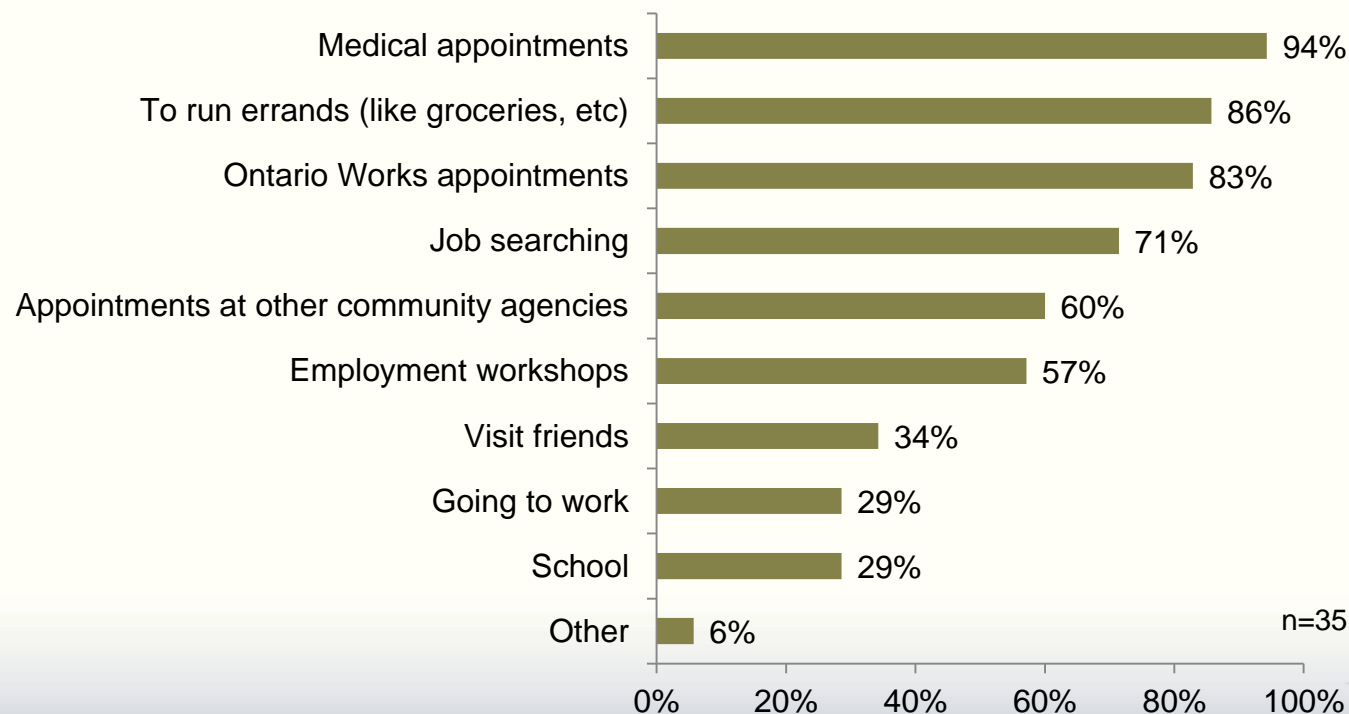
Relying less on rides from friends

Relying less on taxis

How the bus pass is used



- The primary reason for using the bus pass is medical appointments, followed by running errands (like groceries), getting to Ontario Works appointments, and job searching.
- The other reasons included picking up children for weekends, and recreational/social reasons.



Findings:

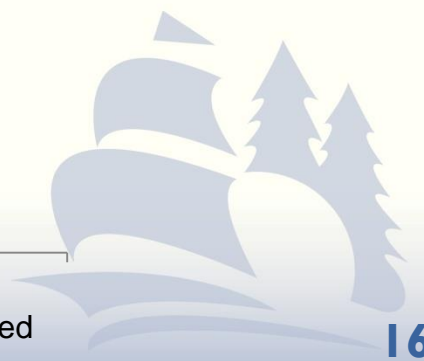
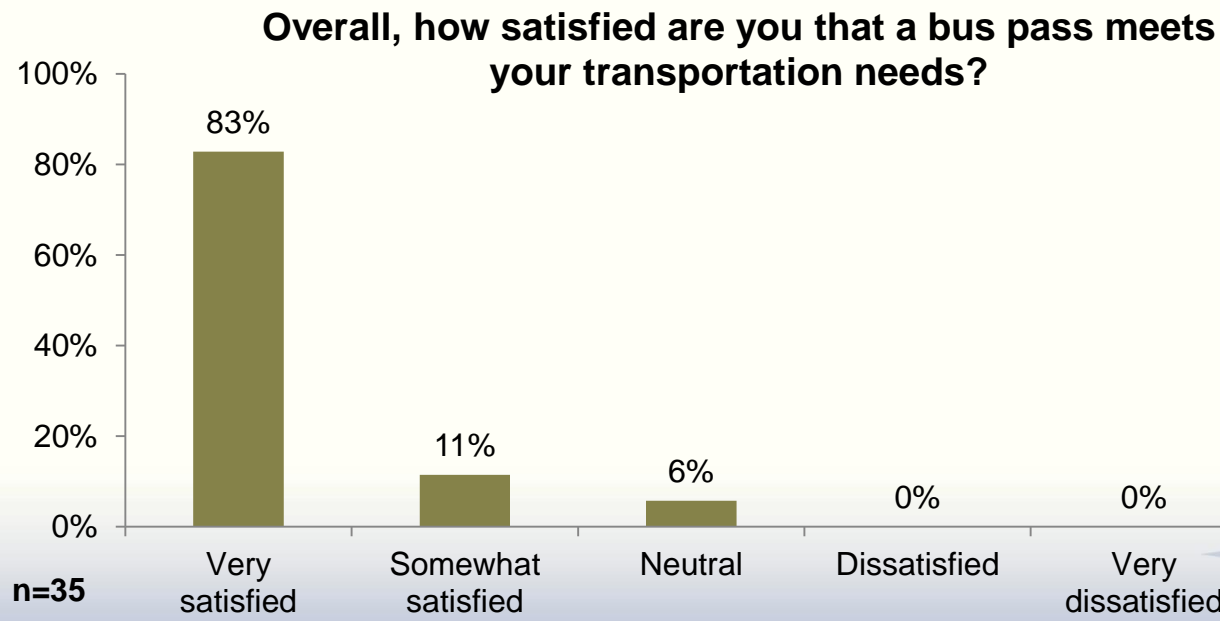
Opinions about the bus pass



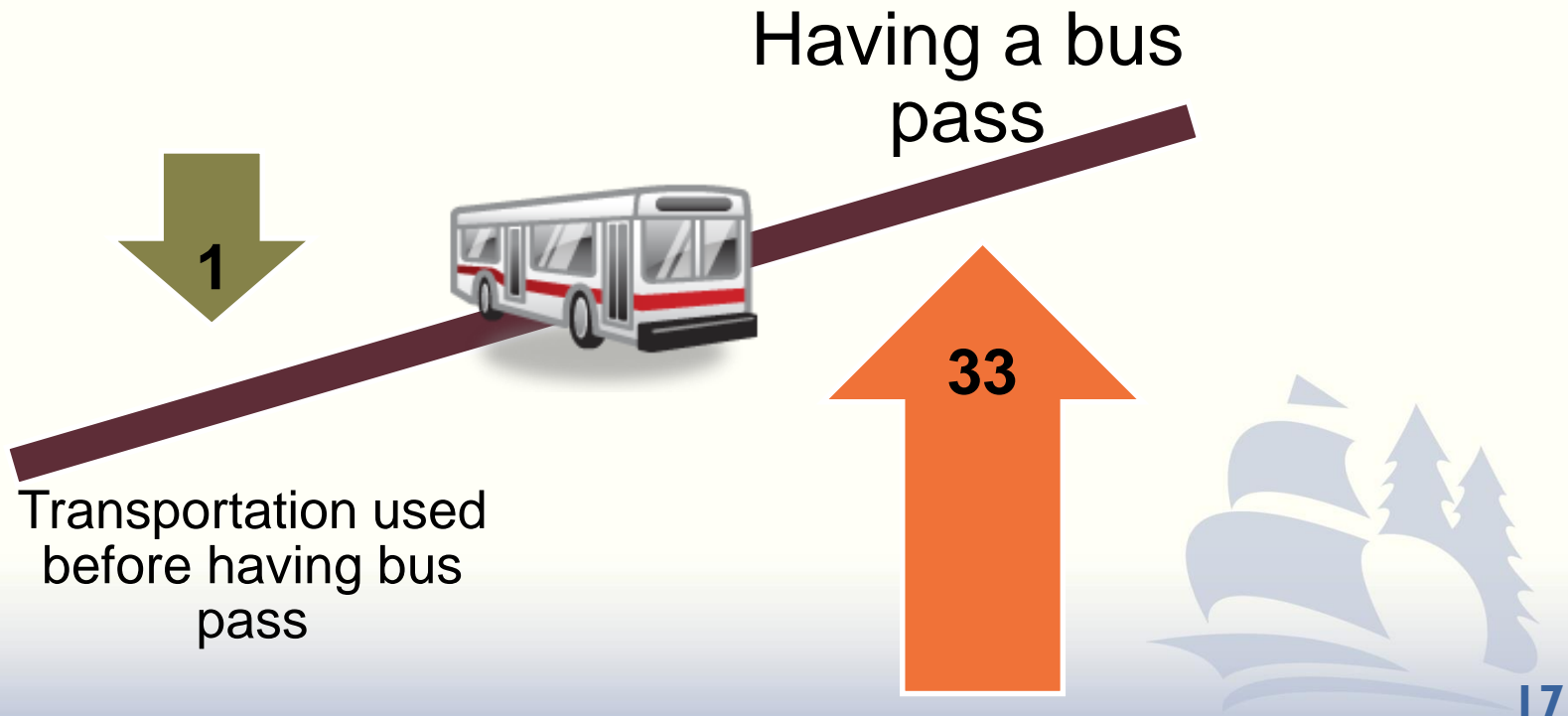
Satisfaction



- Overall, respondents are very satisfied that the bus pass is meeting their transportation needs; the majority are very satisfied, a handful are satisfied, and no respondents are dissatisfied.
- For the majority of respondents, their transportation needs have **gotten better** because of the monthly bus pass;
 - Only 2 respondents indicated transportation needs have remained the same
 - No respondents indicated that their transportation needs have gotten worse



- With the exception of one respondent, the vast majority indicated they prefer having a bus pass over the transportation used prior to having the bus pass.



Preference: why?



- Reasons were: convenience; flexibility, affordability; increase in mobility; environmentally friendly; and a better option than walking.

It's easier when I have my kids to get to appointments

I'm unable to walk anymore and the transportation services I receive from OW are essential for my living

Walking with groceries/
walking to Collingwood is not a preference

Flexibility to use when needed!

It saves me \$300 - \$500 monthly on having a vehicle!

Don't have to depend on others to get to appointments, and helps in my job search

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Suggestions for improvements



- 20 respondents provided suggestions about what would improve having a bus pass, including*:
 - Having a children's bus pass (3);
 - More bus routes available (3);
 - Longer hours of service (3);
 - Laminate the paper pass (2);
 - Friendlier drivers (2);
 - Nothing – it's great! (2);
 - Transit connection to Barrie (1).

* Frequency of response indicated in brackets.



General Transportation Challenges



- Inconvenience of being limited to the bus schedule/route;
- Not having a car (which would increase convenience of travel);
- Travelling to out-of-town destinations;
- Limited employment opportunities;
- Getting to appointments on time;
- Need a children's bus pass;
- Being able-bodied (when walking for transportation).



General Transportation Challenges – Verbatim



Having to use someone else's schedule

Getting my special needs child to and from appointments [is a challenge].
The bus pass helps greatly.

No vehicle. Job selection is limited due to hours the bus runs

Getting somewhere for a certain time

Getting to appointments in Barrie

Weather, waiting, walking (back, knees, etc).

Getting where the bus does not travel to

Verbatim comments indicated by italicized text

Conclusions



Summary:

Respondent Demographics



- The majority of respondents were:
 - Between the ages of 25 and 44;
 - Male;
 - Single (with no children or spouse).
- A very small proportion (15%) had accessible transit requirements, such as a stroller, wheelchair, or walker.
- The majority were from the more urban areas of Collingwood or Wasaga Beach.



Summary:

Bus Usage (1)



- The majority of respondents have been using the bus pass for more than half a year.
- Almost all respondents (94%) walk to the bus stop, while a handful bike.
- A few respondents get a ride or take a taxi.
- Almost half of respondents use their bus pass more than once a day, while another quarter use it about once a day.
- Weekdays (midday and mornings) are the most frequent time of use.



Summary:

Bus Usage (2)



- With a bus pass, respondents are:
 - Using the bus more frequently;
 - Walking less (as transportation);
 - Still biking, but not as frequently;
 - Relying less on rides from a friend;
 - Relying less on taxi service.
- Primary reasons for using the bus pass includes medical appointments, followed by running errands (like groceries), getting to Ontario Works appointments, and job searching.

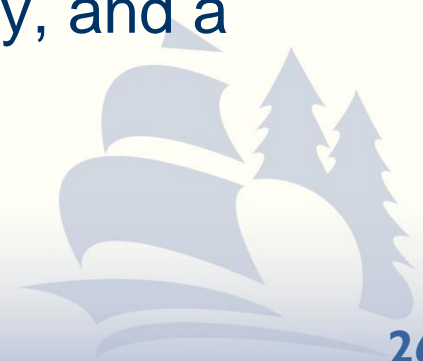


Summary:

Opinions about the bus pass (1)



- Overall, respondents are very satisfied that the bus pass is meeting their transportation needs.
- For the majority of respondents, their transportation needs have **gotten better** with the monthly bus pass.
- With the exception of one respondent, the vast majority indicated they prefer having a bus pass over the transportation used prior to having the bus pass.
- Reasons were: convenience, flexibility, affordability, increase in mobility, environmentally friendly, and a better option than walking.



Summary:

Opinions about the bus pass (2)



- Some of the suggestions for improving having a bus pass included: having a children's bus pass, having more routes, longer hours of service, and laminating the paper pass.
- General transportation challenges faced include:
 - Inconvenience of being limited to a bus schedule/route;
 - Not having a car (which would increase travel convenience);
 - Travelling to out-of-town locations;
 - Limited employment opportunities;
 - Getting to appointments on time.



Satisfaction is high

- Ontario Works clients in the Collingwood office are very satisfied with having a bus pass, and the vast majority prefer having a bus pass over the transportation used prior to having the bus pass.

The bus pass is used frequently

- Almost half of respondents using their bus pass more than once a day.
- Bus travel is used for medical appointments, running errands, getting to appointments, and job searching.

Transportation needs have gotten better because of the monthly bus pass

- A bus pass provides a convenient, flexible, and affordable method of travel, especially for people for whom accessibility is a concern.
- However, travel is still limited within areas not covered by the bus route.

Transportation challenges (and recommendations)



Need to travel in areas not covered by the bus route

- Increase the bus routes

Travelling with children

- Provide a children's bus pass

Being limited to a bus schedule

- Increase hours of service/routes

Getting to appointments on time

- Increase hours of service/routes

Employment opportunities can be limited

- Increase hours of service/routes

The paper monthly pass is not durable

- Laminate it, or provide plastic covers



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