



Commuter Survey Results

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the analysis of data collected through commuter surveys. Information is provided about passenger demographics, travel mode, trip purpose, and perceptions on characteristics which would influence decisions to use bus service into Missoula. This survey was conducted February through March 2007 through both online and hard copy distributions. LSC worked with the University of Montana, Missoula in Motion, MR TMA, and other agencies to distribute and make known the survey effort. Local employers were notified both through Missoula in Motion and an LSC mailing. While this does not provide a statistical sampling of commuters, the information is used to complement the community survey and public involvement program as described in this document. The actual survey instrument is provided in Appendix C.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Responses from the online questionnaires, as well as those hard copy versions received, were exported to a spreadsheet program to perform analysis. A total of 605 commuter surveys were completed. The results should only be considered as representative of those who completed the questionnaire.

Demographic Characteristics

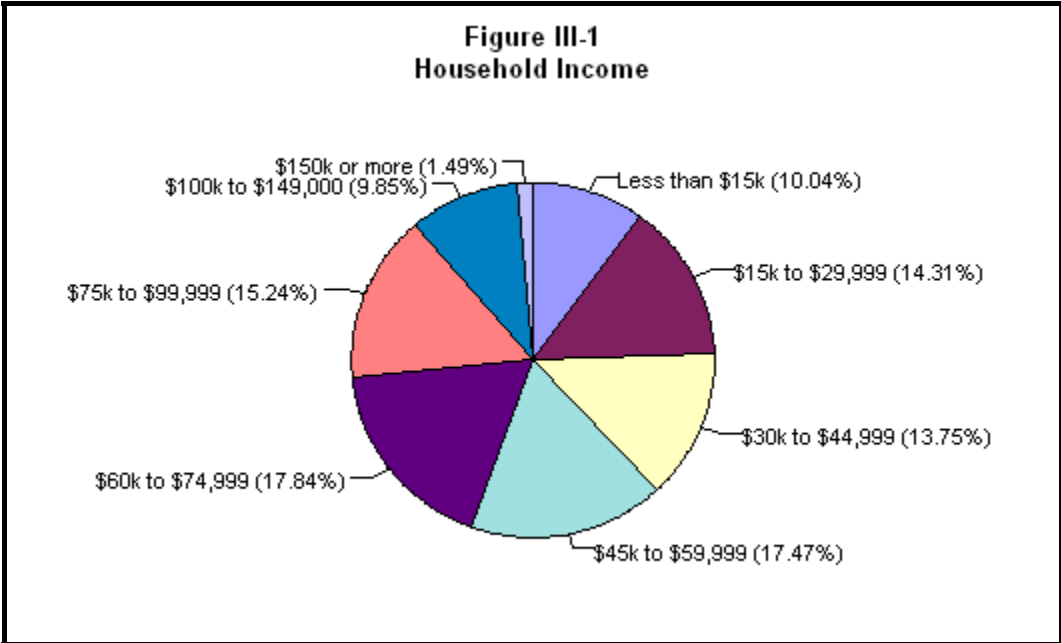
General demographic questions were asked of each participant. This includes information on gender, vehicle availability, income, and whether respondents hold a driver's license and are able to drive. These characteristics help to determine commuter needs by market segment, and were used as service options were developed.

Age

The average age of the respondents is 46 years. The eldest person reported an age of 99 years and the youngest was 18—a range of 81 years. Seventeen (17) percent were between the ages of 18 and 29 years, 77 percent were between 30 and 59 years, and six percent were older than 60 years of age.

Income

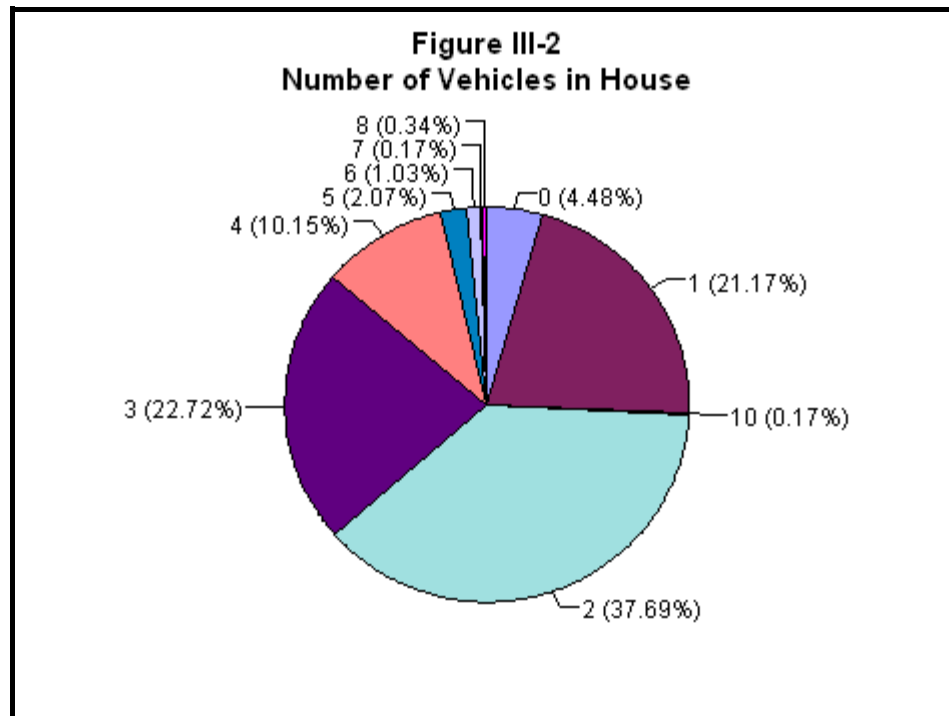
Income helps to determine a particular market segment of the population. Income can tell a lot about the type of service which should be planned. For example, very low-income segments may need different types of services, versus those who are using service to get to and from work. As this was a survey designed for commuters, it is not surprising that the income levels are somewhat higher than would be observed among intercity bus riders. Twenty-five (25) percent of the respondents indicated an income of higher than \$75,000 annually. While this represents household income, not just individual income, it also represents a high level of income for potential riders of any type of system. Figure III-1 shows responses by income range. Twenty-three (23) percent indicated making less than \$30,000 in household income.



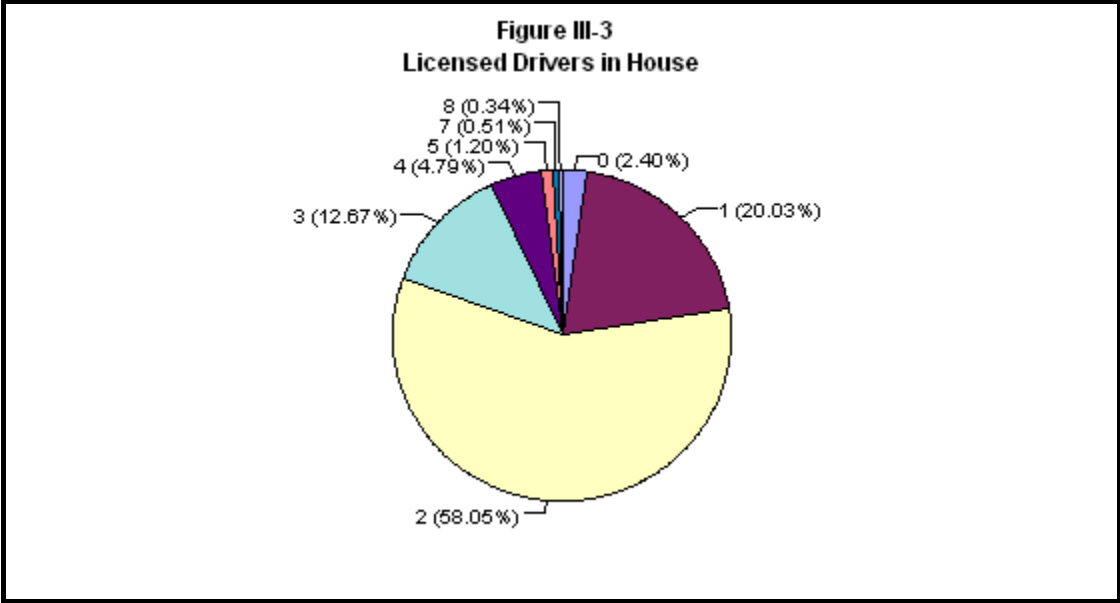
Vehicle Ownership and Licensed Driver

Vehicle ownership for households and the ability to drive play key roles in the demand for public transportation. Lack of a private vehicle or the inability to drive influence people to use public transportation. This comparison provides an indication of the number of possible *choice riders* compared to those who are transit-dependent.

Figure III-2 shows the proportion of passengers and number of operating vehicles available in their household. As illustrated, a small portion of respondents (4.5 percent) live in households with no vehicles. Another 21 percent live in single-vehicle households. Two or three vehicles per respondent household was the most common response, with 60 percent of the respondents indicating such.

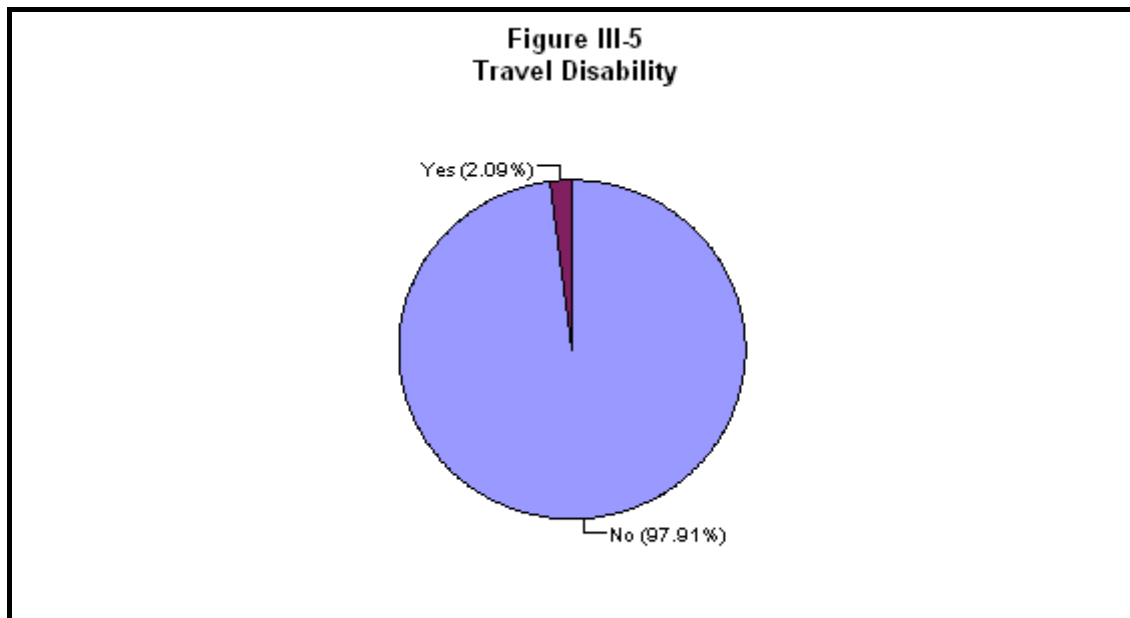
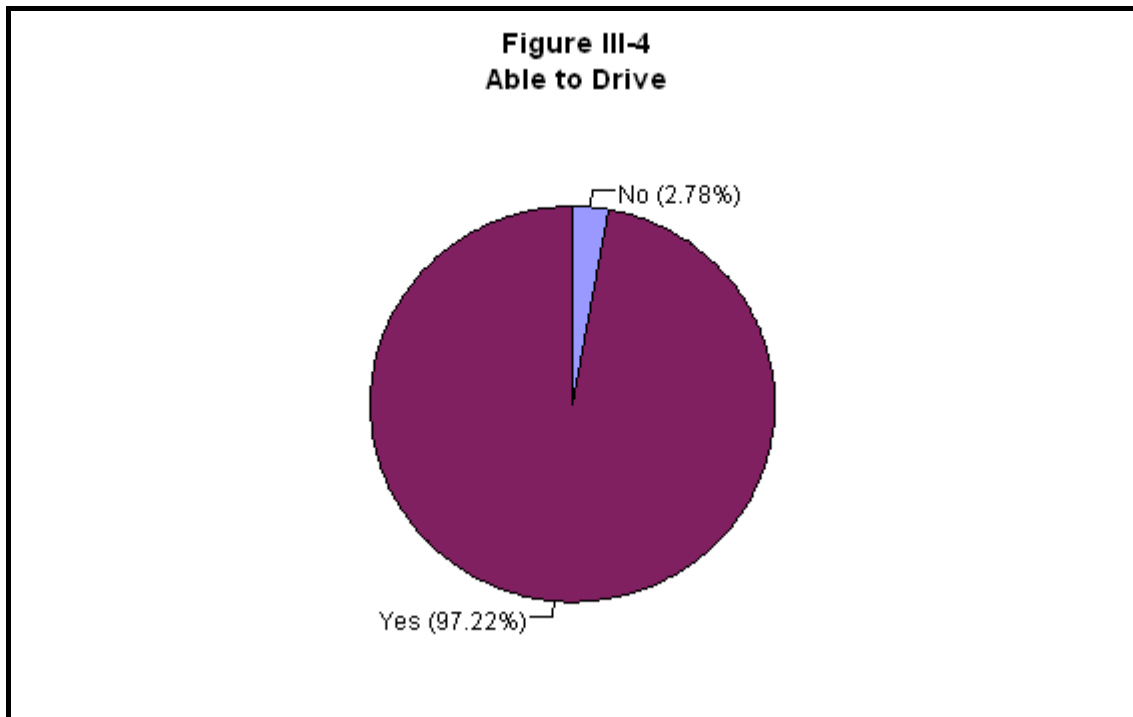


Over two percent of the respondents indicated that they do not have a driver's license, as shown in Figure III-3. Twenty (20) percent indicated at least one licensed driver in the household, including the respondent, while an overwhelming 78 percent of the respondents indicated at least two licensed drivers per household.



Able to Drive and Travel Disabilities

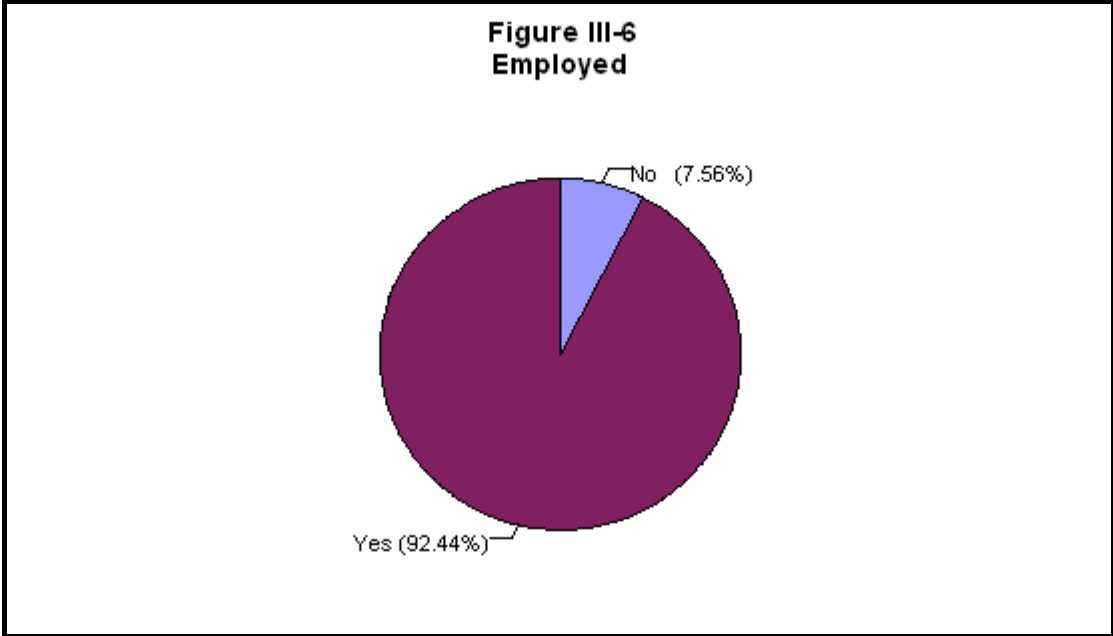
Respondents were asked whether they were able to operate a vehicle. Figure III-4 provides the responses and indicates that less than three percent are unable to currently drive. Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate if they have a disability which limits the ability to travel. As shown in Figure III-5, only approximately two percent responded in the affirmative. Overall, combined with auto ownership and a valid driver’s license, this indicates a very small portion of commuters who suffer extreme difficulty in reaching employment.



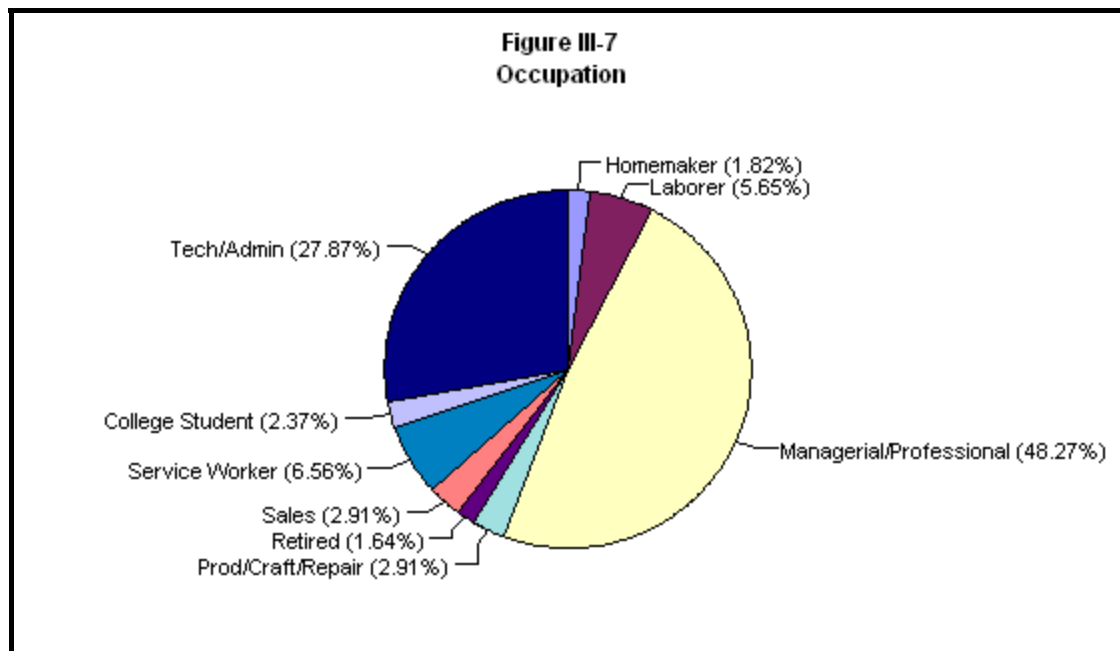
Employment and Occupation

Respondents were asked to indicate if they are currently employed. This question was directed to help determine the employment within the region to aid in planning transit service for job access. As shown in Figure III-6, approximately eight

percent indicated not being employed. While this percentage may seem high, a comparison can be made to the occupation that each respondents indicated.



Respondents were asked to indicate their occupation using several industry categories. Results are shown in Figure III-7. Respondents represent a broad spectrum of occupations. The highest responses were from those who reported occupations such as “Manager/ Professional” (48 percent) followed by “Technician/Administration” (28 percent). The remaining service categories were quite evenly split. The comparison with the previous employment statistics helps to provide insight into the high number of respondents who indicated not being employed. This can be explained—and is illustrated by Figure III-7—by the fact that 2.4 percent indicated being a college student, 1.6 percent indicated being retired, and nearly two percent indicated being a homemaker. This is six percent of the total. There were an additional three percent who did not respond to this question. This may help explain an eight percent unemployment rate for a commuter survey. Likely, some of these respondents may in fact be employed, such as a college student holding a part-time job, or a similar circumstance for a retired person.

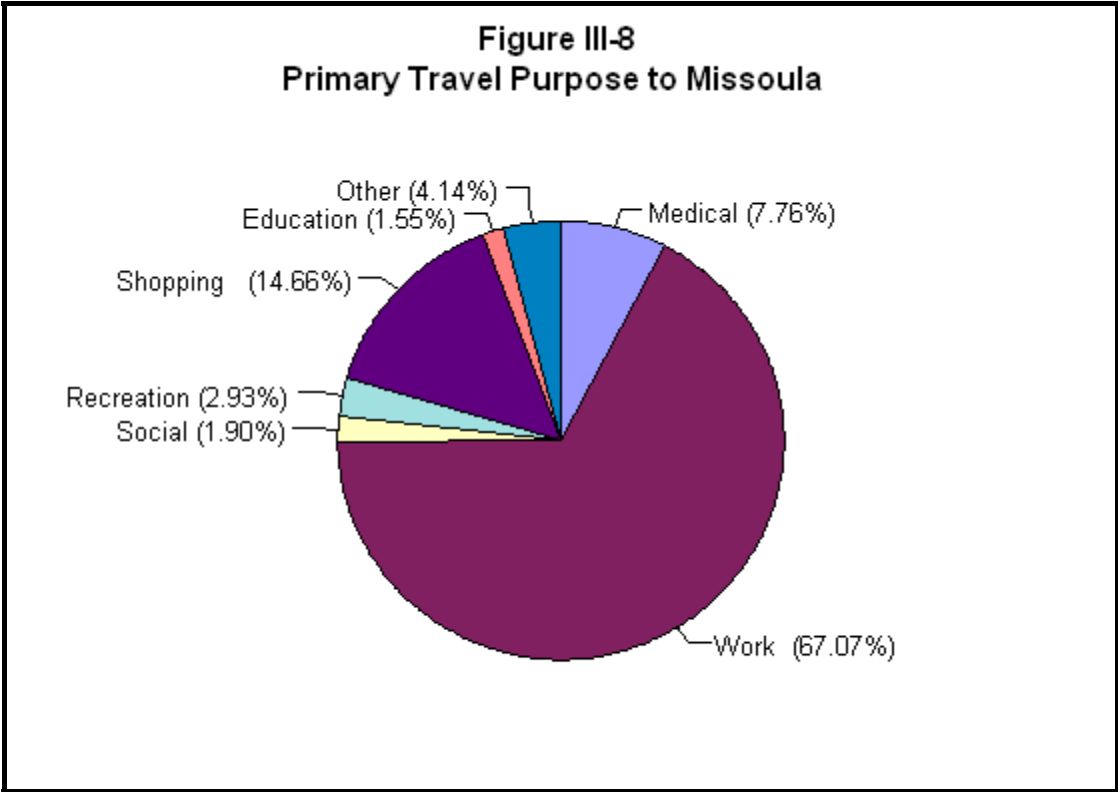


Commuter Characteristics

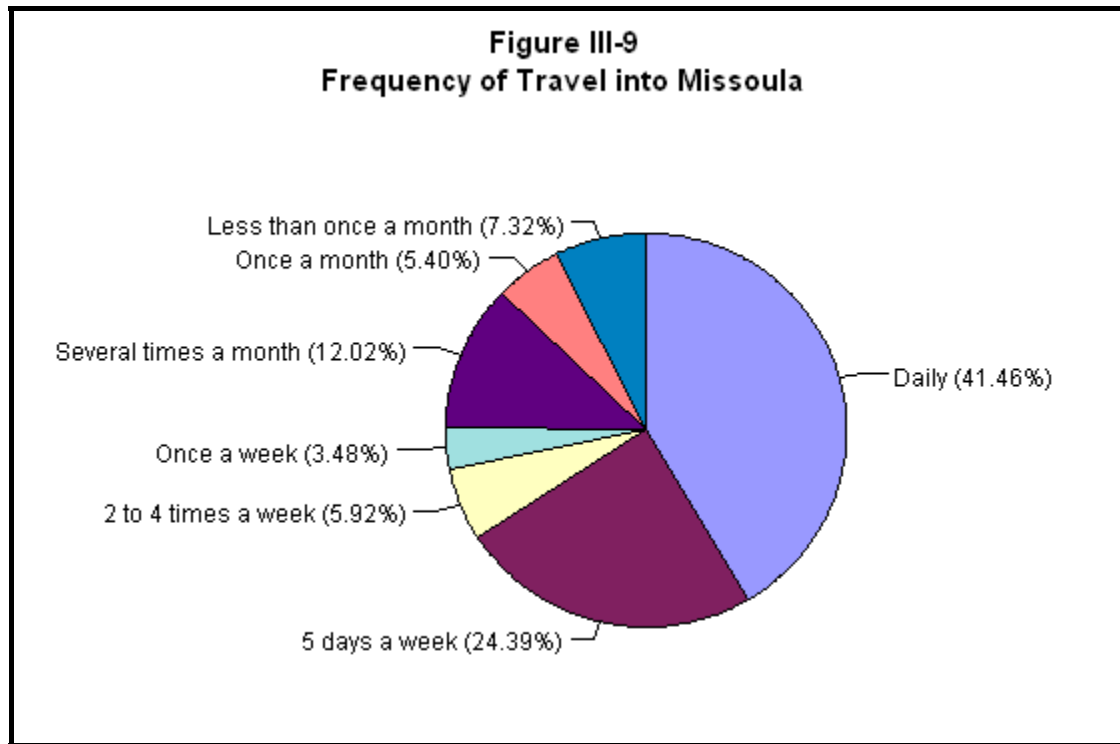
The survey asked commuters to provide information about their commute characteristics such as frequency and purpose, as well as indicators such as if they need their personal car at work. The following analysis provides insight into current travel patterns, as well as the likelihood of someone using bus/transit service for travel into Missoula.

Missoula Trip Characteristics

Respondents were asked the one purpose for which they most often make trips into Missoula. Trip purposes are shown in Figure III-8. The primary trip purpose (67 percent) was to go to and from work. The second most common (14.7 percent) purpose was for shopping. The third most common trip purpose reported was for medical purposes. Not surprisingly, social and recreational trips ranked very low by respondents, given that this survey was designed for commuters.

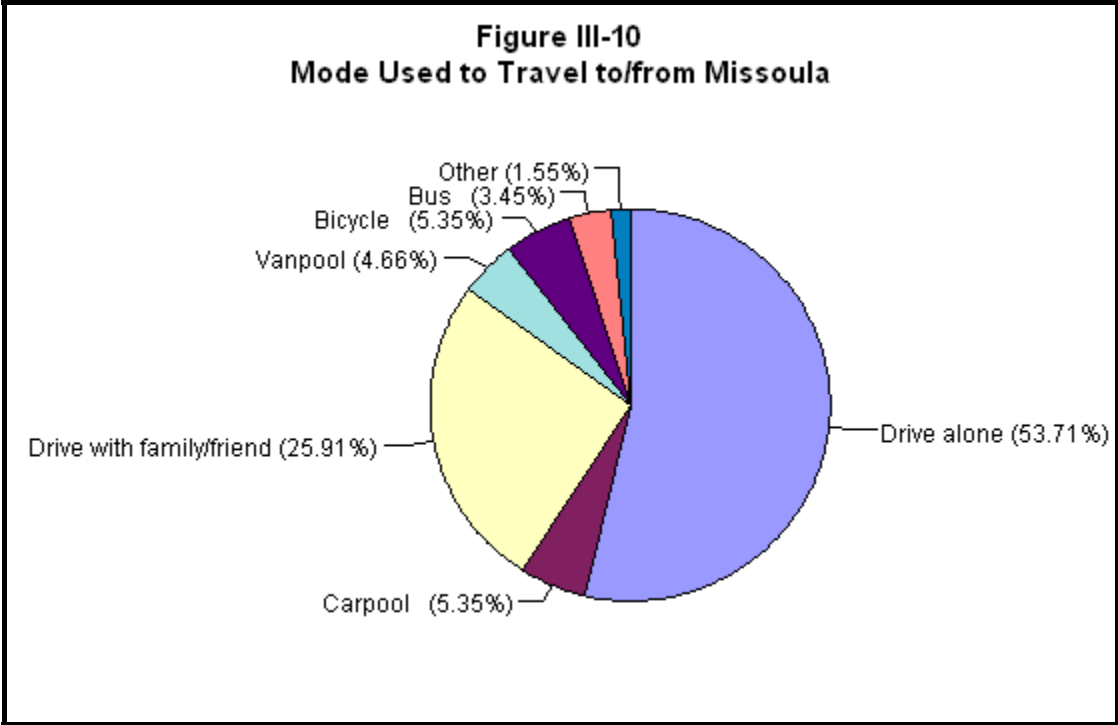


Respondents were given the opportunity to report on the frequency of travel into Missoula. Forty-two (42) percent make the trip into Missoula on a daily basis. Twenty-four (24) percent reported five days per week. It is possible that when respondents saw the survey choice of daily, they may have mistaken that for daily commute (Monday through Friday); however, that is only speculation. If, however, these two responses can be taken as one in the same, the total response would be that 66 percent commute into Missoula regularly. Figure III-9 provides the responses.



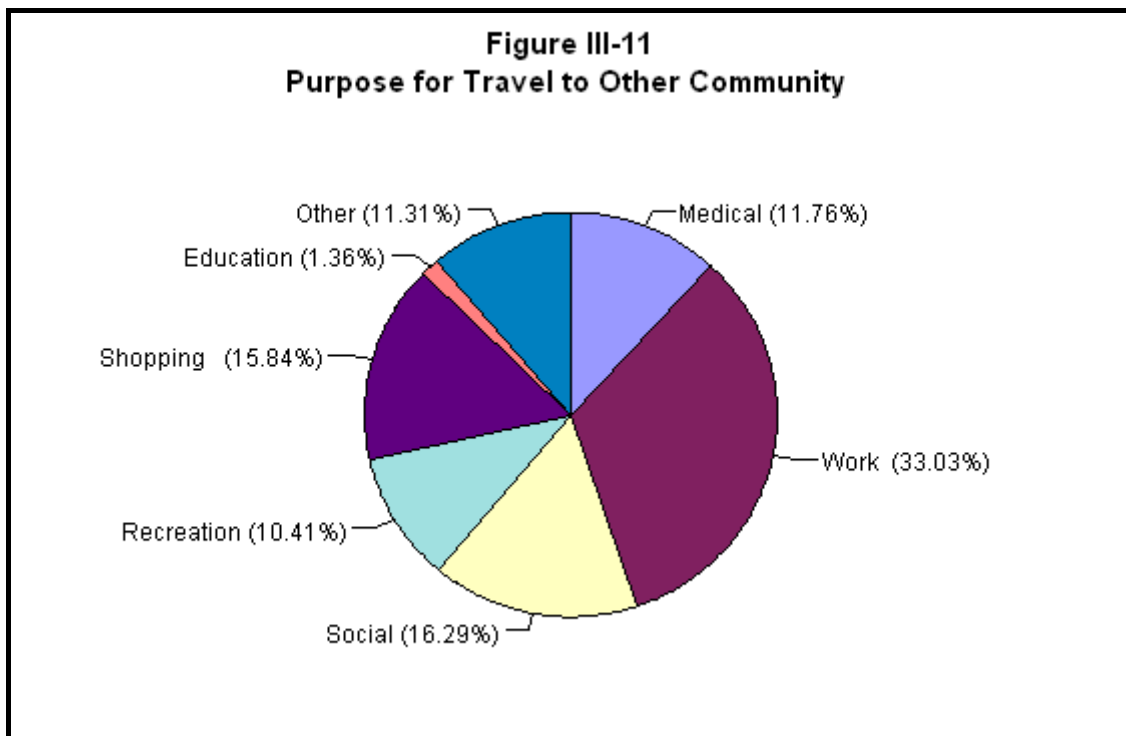
Travel Mode

Respondents were asked to indicate the travel mode they most often use to travel into Missoula. As shown in Figure III-10, there is a wide variety of responses; however, driving alone in one's own car still prevails as the most used mode. There are large percentages who drive with family/friends and carpool (31 percent), nearly five percent who vanpool, and 3.4 percent who use a bus.



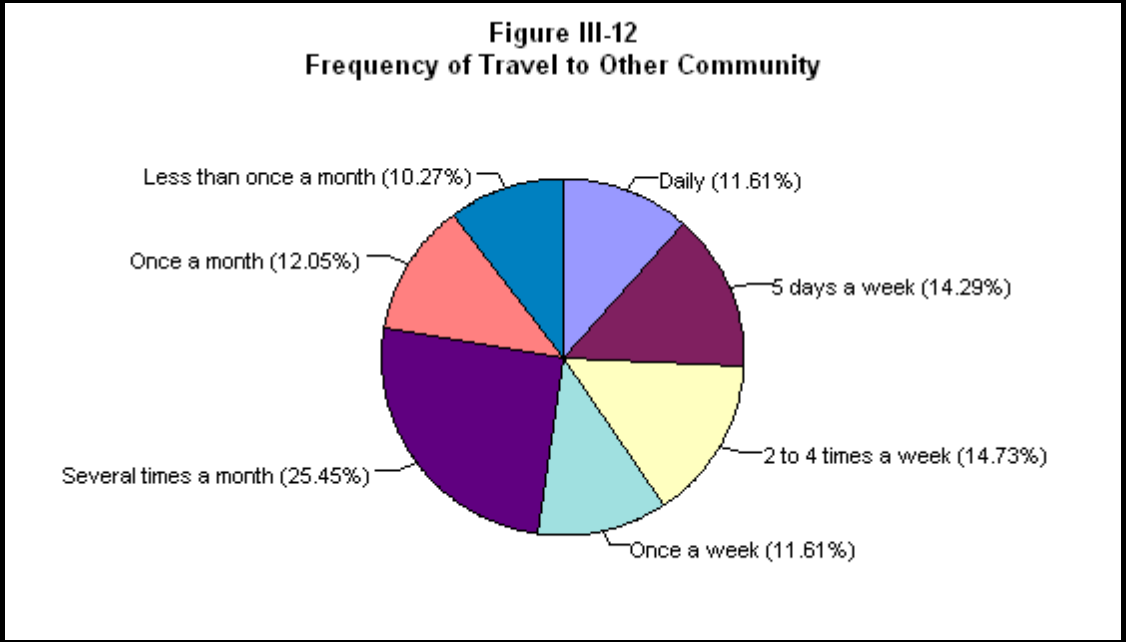
Additional Community Travels

Realizing that Missoula is not the only community to which commuters frequently travel, respondents were asked whether they travel to another community frequently. Approximately 36 percent indicated that they do travel frequently to another community. Additionally, respondents were asked to provide the name of those communities. Not surprisingly, a large percentage indicated a community in the Bitterroot Valley along Highway 93. Communities such as Hamilton, Stevensville, Lolo, Darby, and others were provided. Additionally, many indicated Kalispell and Pablo as destinations. What is interesting is the fact that many of the communities which were listed were not close to the place of residence. For example, there were quite a few respondents from the Bitterroot Valley/Missoula who indicated going to Kalispell or Pablo, likely not for employment purposes. That is confirmed by the fact that only 33 percent indicated going to these locations for employment. The greater number travel frequently to these communities for purposes such as social (16 percent), shopping (16 percent), and recreation (11 percent)—for a total of 43 percent. Other reasons indicated were medical and education, as illustrated in Figure III-11.



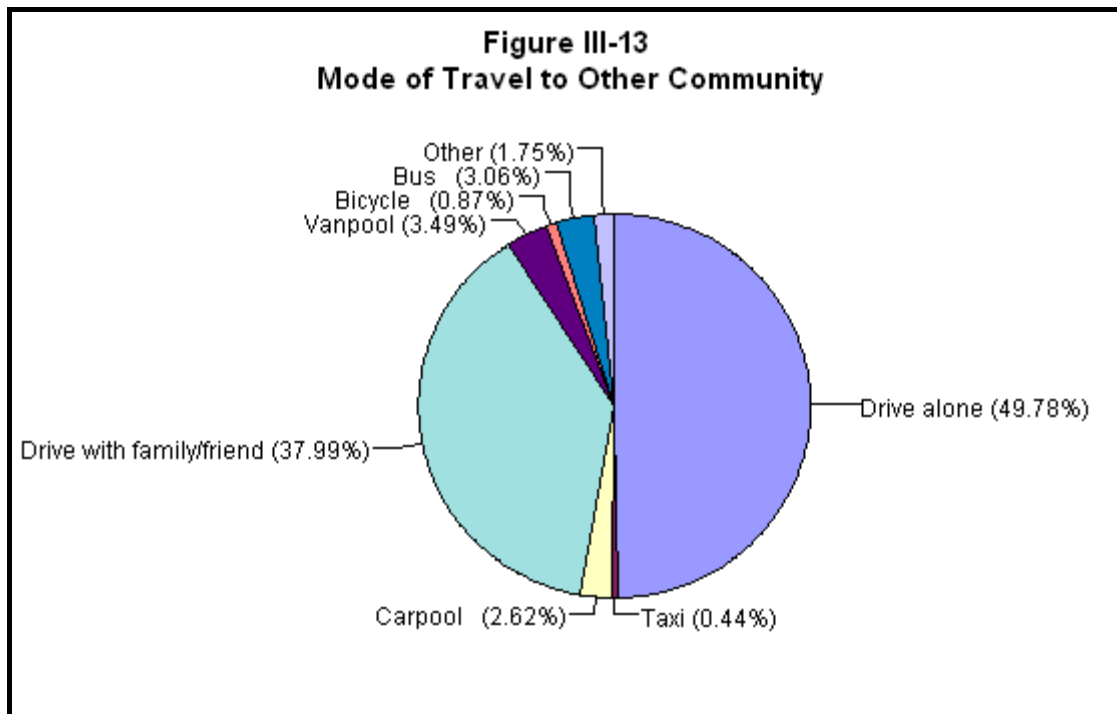
Additional Community Travel Frequency

In order to determine if a percentage of respondents are traveling to these additional communities for employment-specific reasons, it is important to ask the frequency of travel. As shown in Figure III-12, both daily and five days per week show that nearly 26 percent are commuting to communities other than Missoula for work. This corresponds relatively closely to the fact that 33 percent indicated going to these locations for employment. There likely is another small proportion who travel to these communities for work, other than doing it on a daily basis, such as traveling to the community and staying for the week or working in multiple locations.



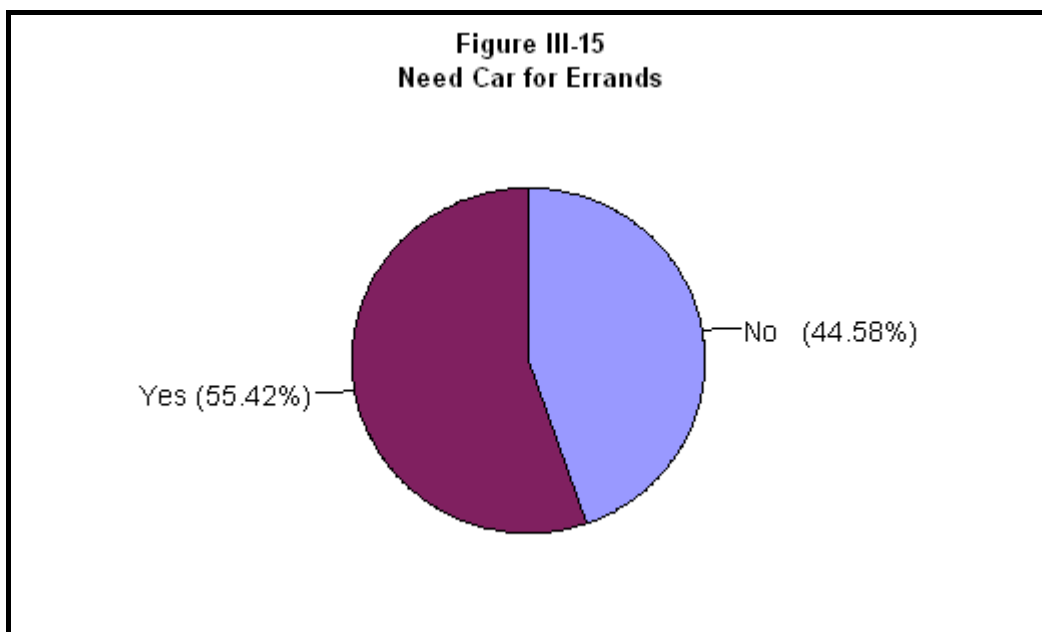
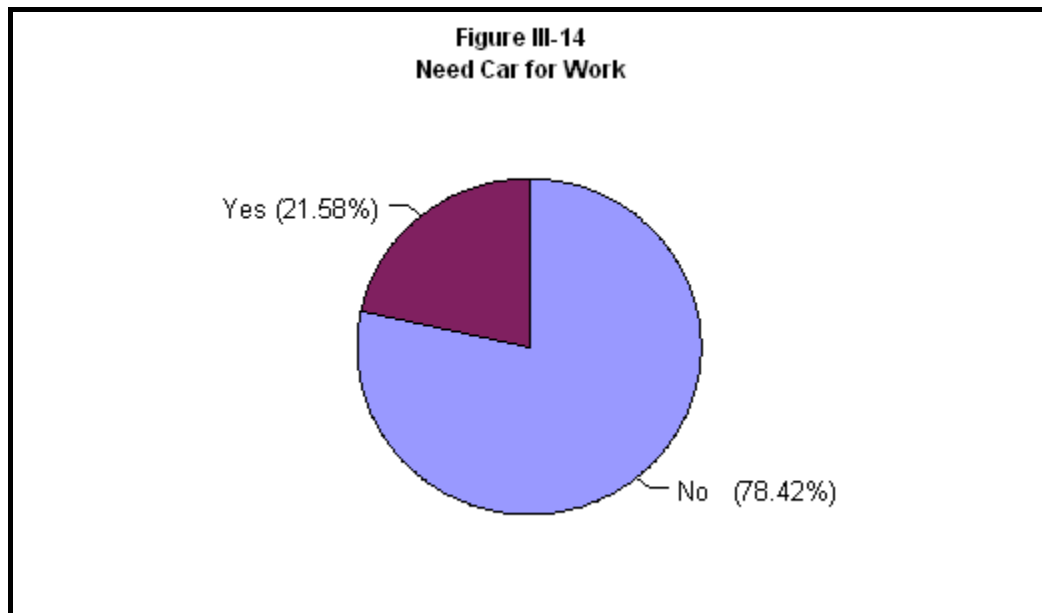
Mode of Travel to Additional Communities

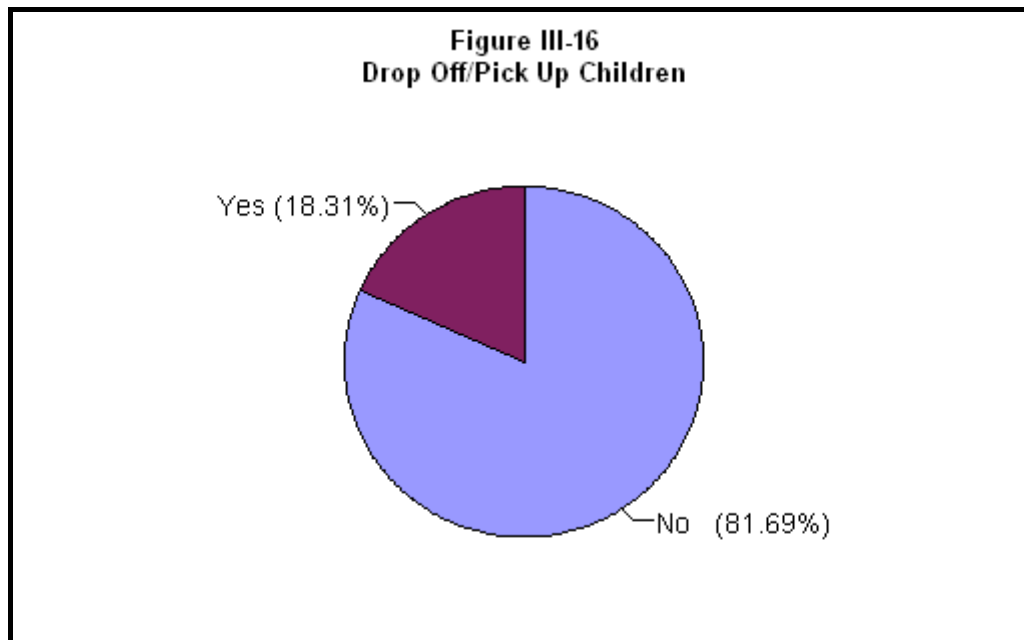
Similar to asking respondents to indicate their mode of travel into Missoula, the survey prompted respondents to indicate their mode of travel to these additional communities. As shown in Figure III-13, nearly 50 percent indicated they drive alone to these other communities. Thirty-eight (38) percent indicated they rode with family/friends, possibly representing those shopping/recreation trips. Three and one-half (3.5) percent vanpool, three percent take a bus, and 2.6 percent carpool.



Commute Limitations

To determine the level of limitations to commute service, the survey asked respondents to indicate whether they need to use their car for other than just getting themselves to and from work. This was accomplished by inquiring if respondents need their car for specific employment purposes. As shown in Figure III-14, 22 percent indicated they need their car for employment/business purposes. Additionally, 55 percent indicated they need their personal car for errands during the day. This is presented in Figure III-15. Finally, approximately 18 percent indicated that they need their car to pick-up or drop off children for school/daycare, as shown in Figure III-16.



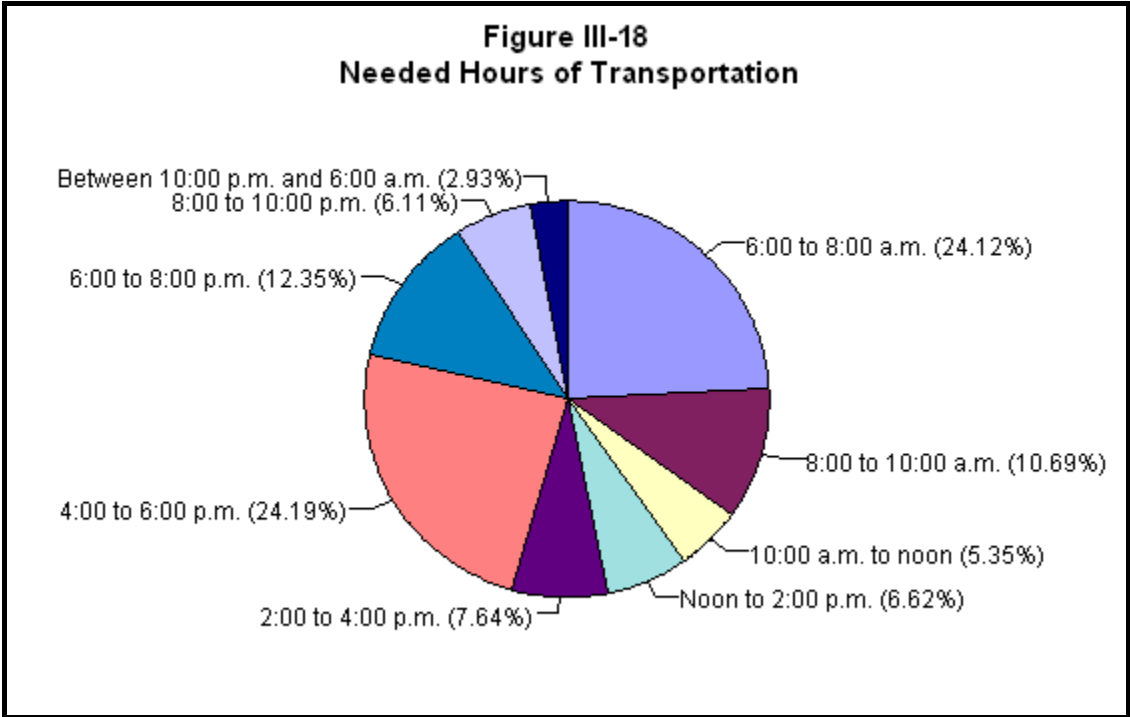
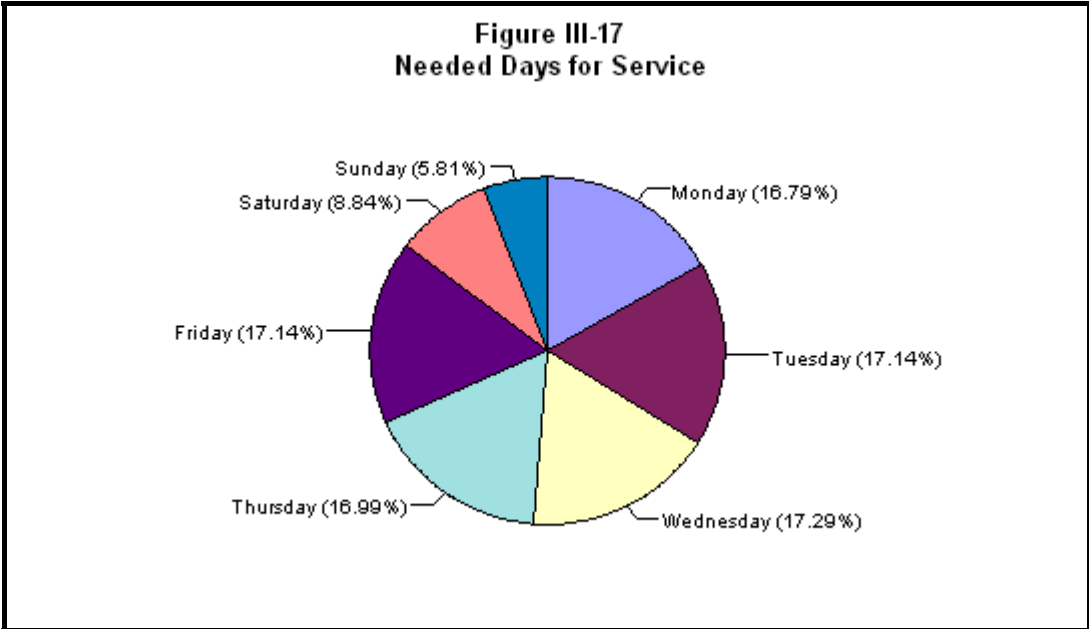


Likelihood of Bus Service Use and Service Characteristics

To determine the likelihood that commuters would use bus service to Missoula if available, several questions were asked of respondents. Additionally, respondents were asked to rank service characteristics in terms of importance for use. The following presents that analysis.

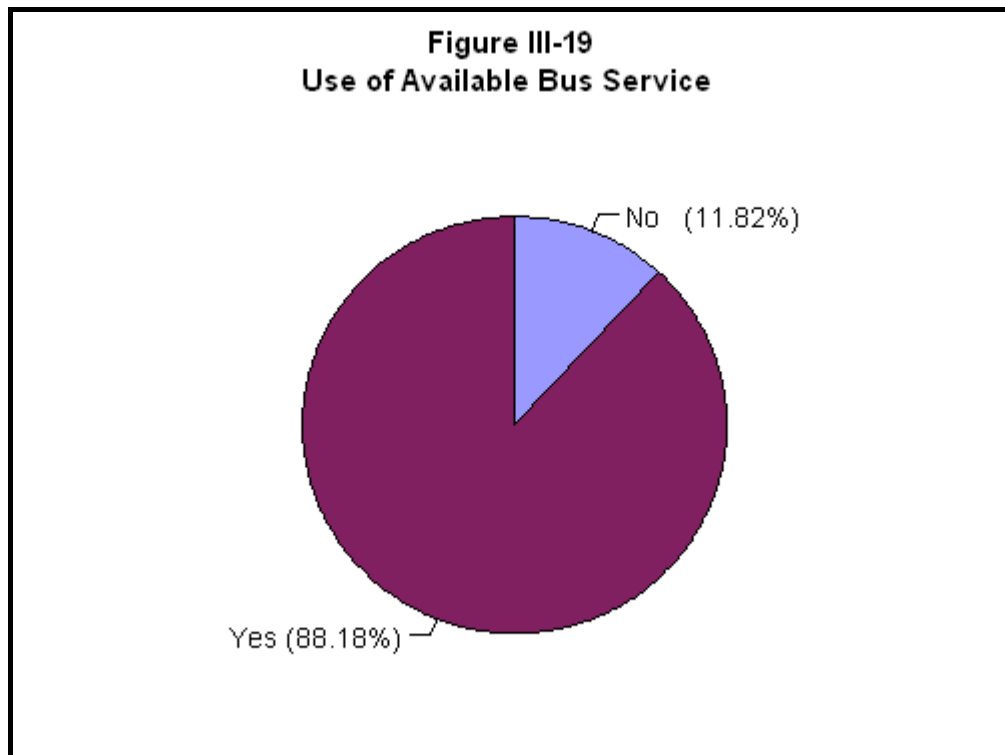
Temporal Need

To determine the hours and days of service, respondents were asked to indicate specific days and those times during the day they would need service to Missoula. Figures III-17 and III-18 provide those responses. As shown in Figure III-17, Monday through Friday are fairly evenly split for needed days of service with the weekends being quite a bit lower in terms of need. In terms of specific times during the day, standard commute times dominate the proportion of needed times. Specifically, 24 percent need service during the 6:00 to 8:00 a.m. and the 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. commute times. Additionally, there appears to be another commute time for respondents during which service is needed, and that corresponds to the 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. (11 percent) and the 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (12 percent) commute times. The remaining times are evenly split, with the exception being the late night 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. time reflecting three percent of the need.



Usage of Bus Service

Respondents were asked if respondents would use a bus service if it was available from their home to Missoula. Figure III-19 shows that nearly 89 percent indicated they would use such a service. Additionally, respondents were asked how often they would use such a service. Responses varied widely and are presented in Figure III-20. Nearly 29 percent indicated they would use service daily or five days per week. Thirty-six (36) percent indicated two to four times weekly, with smaller proportions indicating frequencies from once per week to either several times monthly or once a month.



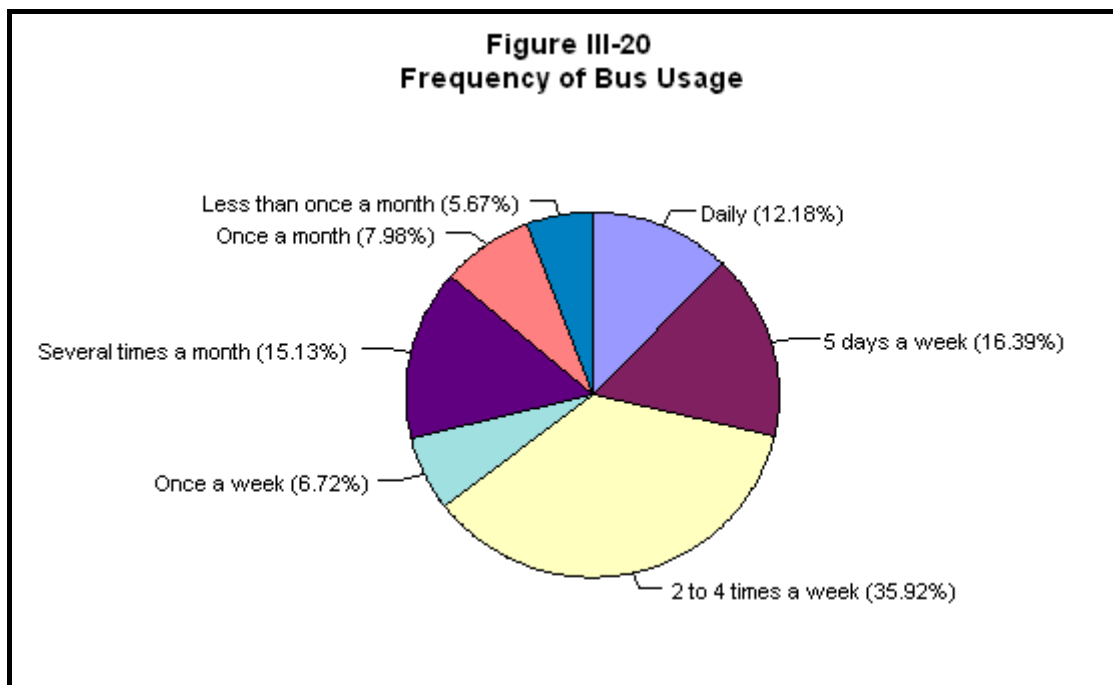
Potential Riders for Service to Missoula

To determine potential riders who would use the bus service to Missoula if available, a multi-step analysis was done. Respondents were first asked if they would use the bus service between their home to Missoula. About 456 out of the 606 respondents responded in the affirmative. Respondents were then asked if they needed a car for businesses purposes while at work. Out of the 456 respondents who indicated that they would use the bus service, about 353 responded that they

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would not need a car for business purposes while at work. The next question asked respondents whether they would need their car for personal errands during the day. Out of the 353 respondents who indicated they would not need a car for business purposes, 189 indicated they would not need a car for personal errands. Finally, respondents were asked if they needed their car to drop off or pick up children to and from work. Based on the responses, about 170 respondents out of those 189 responses were then determined to be potential riders who would use the bus service to Missoula. This indicates that approximately 28 percent of the total number of respondents could do without their cars while at work, reflecting potential riders who would use the bus service to Missoula.

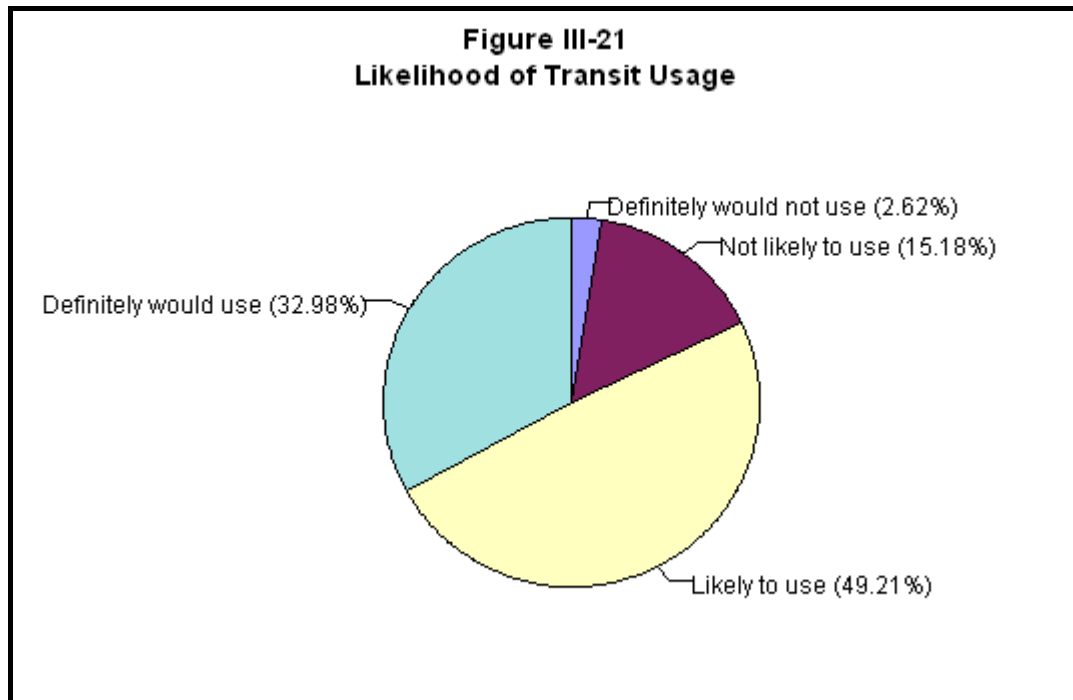
This should be viewed with caution as this survey does not provide statistically significant results, only general community responses. This same step-wise analysis was performed for the statistically significant telephone survey presented in Chapter IV.



Finally, the survey specifically asked how likely the respondent was to use service if it was available. Figure III-21 illustrates that nearly 50 percent are likely to use

the service with an additional 33 percent who would definitely use the service. Nearly 18 percent indicated they would either not likely use service or would definitely not use the service. The top influential reasons why commuters would use service are presented below as well as in Appendix D.

- Convenience of service
- Travel time on bus
- Schedule that meets needs
- Hours of services
- Cost of operating a personal car (rising gas prices)



Service Characteristics

Commuters were asked to rate characteristics of service if provided. The responses were—not important, somewhat important, very important, and extremely important. The responses are shown in Table III-1 as proportions. The characteristics which were rated as extremely important include:

1. Service from home to work
2. Flexible in scheduling rides

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3. Service from park-and-ride lot to work
4. Service twice per day
5. Clean buses
6. Guaranteed ride home.

Table III-1 Service Characteristics					
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important	No Response
Service from home to work	10.7%	6.8%	17.4%	57.2%	7.9%
Service from home to medical facilities	24.5%	27.1%	18.3%	19.5%	10.6%
Local service in the community where I live	24.6%	19.0%	20.5%	24.5%	11.4%
Service must be flexible in scheduling rides	6.9%	18.5%	24.6%	40.8%	9.1%
Service from a park-and-ride lot to work	16.7%	21.3%	22.8%	26.8%	12.4%
Evening service (until 9:00 p.m.)	19.2%	22.1%	23.3%	22.5%	12.9%
Evening service (until 11:00 p.m.)	32.9%	24.5%	9.3%	17.4%	16.0%
Service twice a day	16.0%	21.0%	18.0%	23.5%	21.5%
Service every few hours	17.5%	21.2%	21.2%	20.8%	19.3%
Service every hour	23.5%	19.5%	20.8%	18.7%	17.5%
Service every half-hour	35.9%	14.4%	12.7%	19.0%	18.0%
Saturday service	24.5%	20.2%	21.0%	20.2%	14.2%
Sunday service	35.5%	19.7%	13.1%	15.9%	15.9%
Express service (very few stops)	17.0%	23.6%	24.6%	21.2%	13.6%
Door-to-door service	43.6%	23.6%	10.1%	6.9%	15.7%
Service close to my home	9.9%	18.2%	30.6%	29.3%	12.1%
Service provided by buses	11.9%	20.2%	28.1%	26.1%	13.7%
Clean buses	4.5%	9.6%	31.9%	43.3%	10.7%
Attractive buses	21.2%	26.1%	24.1%	14.5%	14.0%
Service by vanpools	15.7%	26.0%	23.8%	17.9%	16.7%
Guaranteed Ride Home	8.1%	10.1%	19.5%	47.6%	14.7%

**Highest Proportion of Responses is shown in Bold*

Travel Patterns

Travel patterns of riders are an important determining factor in the type and amount of service an area receives. This information is important to route level planning across a geographical area. Travel patterns indicate where commuters live and work. The only limitation is that this information is difficult to extrapolate the final destinations of commuters. The analysis is only able to provide relative travel patterns. Figure III-22 provides the home-to-work travel desire lines for the Five Valleys Region. This information was mapped using the zip codes of residence and work to create an origin-destination matrix. It must be noted that these results are only from the respondents who completed the survey (either online or a hard copy version). This survey is not statistically-significant and should only be viewed as general travel patterns.

As shown, the Highway 93 corridor represents the greatest number of respondents who indicated they live in the Bitterroot Valley and work in Missoula.

Additional Comments

Commuters were given the opportunity to include additional comments regarding carpool, vanpool, or bus transportation in the Five Valleys area. The actual comments are included in Appendix E. These comments were reviewed and considered when service options were planned. The following presents a summary of some of the most frequent comments:

- Bus service on highway 93 is needed.
- Train service to Missoula should be examined.
- Many report either using current bus service or vanpool service and gave ideas for improvements.
- Many believe expansion of regional services is a great idea.
- The cost of service needs to be examined.

Figure III-22
Commuter Travel Patterns

