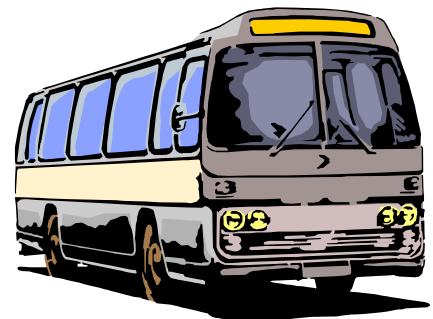




HANDOUTS

From previous meeting

October 17, 2006



washingtonpost.com

Around D.C., a Cheaper House May Cost You

Longer Commutes Outweigh Savings of Living in Outer Suburbs, Study Shows

By Eric M. Weiss
Washington Post Staff Writer
Thursday, October 12, 2006; A01

One of the lures of the outer suburbs is more house -- maybe even one with a big yard -- for less money. But a new study shows that the savings are illusory: The costs of longer commutes are so high that they can outweigh the cheaper mortgage payments.

A study of Washington and 27 other metropolitan areas by the Center for Housing Policy found that the costs of one-way commutes of as little as 12 to 15 miles -- roughly the distance between Gaithersburg and Bethesda -- cancel any savings on lower-priced outer-suburban homes.

"If you save \$40,000 to \$50,000 by not buying that house in Montgomery County but expand your commute by an extra 30 miles a day, you can certainly see how that new house could not end up being the deal you thought it was, especially if gas is at \$3 a gallon," said Lon Anderson, spokesman for AAA Mid-Atlantic. "But because of the exorbitant cost of housing closer in to [the District], they don't have a choice if they want to live with their families in a home they can afford."

Barbara J. Lipman, an author of the study, said that people tend to focus on all the zeroes that differentiate the price of a closer-in house from one in the outer suburbs, but they don't realize how much they're spending on commuting costs, such as gas, tires and insurance.

"Even if you save a couple of hundred dollars a month on your mortgage, it doesn't nearly outweigh the costs of the cars you are driving," she said.

The average cost of owning a 2006 Toyota Camry and driving it 15,000 miles a year with gas at \$2.40 a gallon works out to \$7,967 a year, according to AAA.

Higher gas prices put such a strain on Hannah and David Lynch's budget that they decided to carpool instead of driving separately to their jobs from their Sterling home, even though she works in the District and he works in Baileys Crossroads.

Moving closer to their jobs is out, Hannah said, because "there is no way we could move into an equivalent three-bedroom house for the same amount," she said. "We don't want to downsize and give up a yard, for instance."

Still, the frustrations of her 90-minute one-way commute can sometimes rankle, she said, "especially when there's a stupidity delay on the [Dulles] Toll Road. It's a trade-off."

The study also found that a lack of affordable housing near job centers in the Washington area and elsewhere forces low- to moderate-income families to live in outer suburbs where transportation options are few and costs are high.

Families in the Washington area that earn \$20,000 to \$50,000 a year spend nearly a third of their income on housing, a figure exceeded only in the San Francisco area, the study says.

"We do have central-city job growth, but in Washington and other places, jobs are growing faster in the suburbs, and the population generally is suburbanizing farther and farther out," said Lipman, who works for the Center for Housing Policy, which is a research arm of the National Housing Conference, a District-based, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advocates for affordable housing.

Of the 20 fastest-growing counties in the United States, 15 are located 30 miles or more from urban centers, including Loudoun and Stafford counties, Lipman said.

Lipman said many communities have identified a lack of affordable housing, traffic-clogged roads and longer commutes as critical issues but have not linked them. "One thing this study shows is the need to have regional solutions about both housing and transportation," she said.

The study found that most people in the outer suburbs pay so much for transportation not just because of long commutes but also because they have to use their cars for nearly every errand and trip.

Lipman also said many of the trends will accelerate. The study noted that 62.1 percent of the U.S. metropolitan population lived in the suburbs in 1996, up from 55.1 percent in 1970.

And although the median national household income has risen 10.3 percent from 2000 to 2005, it has been outpaced by housing costs that have gone up 15.4 percent and transportation costs that have risen 13.4 percent over the same period. Gas prices, for instance, have been rising steadily over the past four years, more than doubling from \$1.42 a gallon in June 2002 to \$2.86 a gallon this past June.

Stewart Schwartz, executive director of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, said the data highlight a disconnect between where people live and work. Those with the highest commuting costs generally live on the eastern side of Washington, while many of the jobs are on the northern and western sides.

"A three-car family puts a lot of money into depreciating assets, instead of into mortgages and college educations," he said.

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School System Offers Teachers Special Inducement

Packet of Discounts Helps Newcomers Handle
Cost of Living Inside Loudoun

By Michael Alison Chandler
Washington Post Staff Writer
Sunday, October 8, 2006; PW19

In the competitive realm of teacher recruitment, Loudoun County public school officials cannot rely on signing bonuses or springing for relocation expenses.

"It's all we can do to keep up with salaries," said Michael S. Draeger, personnel specialist for the school system, before heading to a job fair in Philadelphia last week -- one of dozens of recruiting trips the district has planned this school year to hire the more than 1,000 new teachers needed by next fall.

And although Loudoun teachers' salaries have been rising steadily to stay competitive with salaries in neighboring districts, the starting pay of a little more than \$40,000 a year is well below the median household income of \$98,483 that has placed Loudoun first among the nation's counties.

The income gap is especially large when the household consists of one person: a first-time teacher fresh out of college, which is the case for at least a third of the school system's hires each year.

Despite those limitations, school officials came up with a new tool this year to entice more teachers to Loudoun.

With help from the county's chamber of commerce, a school employee approached dozens of area businesses, banks and apartment complexes about offering discounts of some kind for county educators.

The result is the Loudoun Incentives for New Employees program. Think of it as a coupon book for teachers.

School officials say they hope that with the extra financial assistance -- a break on closing costs for a new home, for example, or a \$100 deposit in a new checking account -- more teachers will choose to live in Loudoun, closer to the football games and after-school activities that are part of school life. Loudoun is now the home address of 63 percent of the county's teachers.

"When you have beginning teachers, they don't come with big bank accounts. Many of them come in debt because of student loans . . . so finding money to help them save on start-up expenses is something we think will help," said Paul H. Webb Jr., director of personnel services.

Fairfax and Prince William county schools offer similar incentive programs. But some districts in the area do not, and Webb said the new program here might help "tip the scales" for potential recruits considering Loudoun.

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Susan Y. Mills, a retired principal who works part time in personnel, visited 20 apartment complexes to see whether they could offer the young recruits a break. She found managers willing to waive application fees or security deposits or to shave 5 percent off the rent.

Mills's bargain-hunting has already proved useful for Barry Blair, a new 11th-grade English teacher at Park View High School in Sterling.

Blair, 23, signed on with the county school system last fall and moved north in December after graduating from Radford University in southwest Virginia.

For the first six months, Blair lived with his girlfriend's parents while he adapted to the faster pace and higher cost of living. He also saved money while working as a long-term substitute for the school system.

Through Mills's recommendation, Blair found a one-bedroom apartment at Camden Lansdowne last month.

He didn't have to pay the \$350 administrative fee or the \$35 application fee, a big savings in move-in costs.

What's left is the monthly rent of \$1,125, which is steep on Blair's \$40,000 salary.

"It's still difficult," he said. "It takes a lot of managing and budgeting."

Blair said that when balancing a budget that includes student loans, he usually can't afford to eat out or drive on the Dulles Greenway.

The discounts are presented to new teachers in a spiral-bound book. The book includes coupons for Leesburg Corner Premium Outlets mall, lower rates for hotel rooms, a discount membership at Gold's Gym and 25 percent off at Ashburn Car Wash. Some of the discounts are available to all teachers.

Webb said the objective is to keep adding to the book, and he urged businesses to think about ways to make living in Loudoun "a little easier" for the county's teachers.

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Va., Md. Top List for Percentage of Out-of-County Commutes

By Eric M. Weiss
Washington Post Staff Writer
Tuesday, October 17, 2006; A06

Washington area workers are more likely to travel to jobs outside their home counties than commuters in any other region in the nation, according to a new study.

A higher percentage of Virginia residents live and work in different counties than commuters in any other state; Marylanders ranked second, according to "Commuting in America III," a national report on commuting patterns and trends published yesterday by the Transportation Research Board.

The Washington region is second only to New York for the percentage of workers with "extreme commutes," which the study defined as 90 minutes or more each way. Of the 12 counties with the highest percentage of long commutes, the region had three: Prince William, Prince George's and Montgomery.

The extreme commutes of Prince George's and Montgomery residents suggest that many of them are traveling to jobs in other suburbs rather than in the District.

Alan E. Pisarski, the Falls Church-based author of the report, said the region also has rush hours that are beginning earlier.

"It's the combination of those things that really makes the area stand out," he said.

But the report also highlights some positive trends in the region, such as the use of transit and carpools. Washington ranked third in that area, just behind New York and San Francisco.

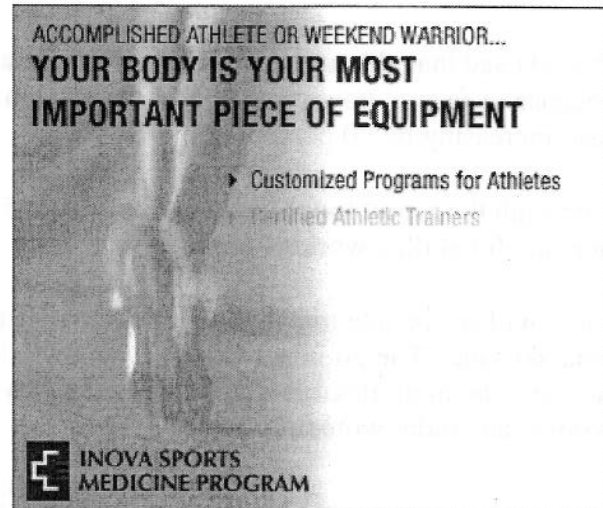
The report was based on an analysis of census data and is considered by transportation planners to be the most comprehensive study of commuting habits. Previous editions were published in 1996 and 1987.

Across the nation, there are more cars and more drivers on the roads. According to the report, 30 million vehicles were added to households between 1990 and 2000, with 13 million of them going to households that already had two or more vehicles.

And there are more solo drivers logging more hours on the road. The number of drivers who commute alone grew by nearly 13 million in the past decade, and the number of workers with commutes over an hour jumped by nearly 50 percent in the same period.

Among the national findings in the report, Pisarski said the number of immigrant workers has increased, helping to counter the number of baby boomers who are retiring.

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Many of the new immigrants share rides, boosting the number of carpools. Although immigrants make up 14 percent of all workers, they represent about 40 percent of those in large carpools, according to the report.

Pisarski said that although Washington will always have a large suburb-to-city commuting pattern because of federal government jobs, changing national patterns show that reverse commuting is growing fast, increasing by 20 percent in the 1990s.

Although the report looks back in time, Pisarski said the future growth of the Washington region and the demand for skilled workers probably will force changes in coming years.

"You will see people making longer commutes to live where they want to and work where they want," Pisarski said. "The good news is that there will be more people working at home, and employers will be forced to be more flexible in schedules. Employers will have to create options, especially to attract women and older women in the workforce."

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Live Near Your Work

September 7, 2006

Work Program Overview

- Develop collateral materials
- Information resource
- Coordination with Jurisdictional Outreach Representatives

Public Outreach

- How to promote the programs
 1. Remove stigma that is attached to "affordable housing"
 2. Grassroots Awareness – educating the employees on what's available
 3. Public Service Announcements – provide partnerships and increase exposure to wider audience.
 4. Free media – submission of articles to local media outlets

Options for Employers

- Innovative way for employers to provide near permanent commute solutions for employees
- Promotion of local programs to those employees who would be eligible (ie. Long commutes, pay scale issues, schooling, etc)
- Opportunity to be ahead of competition in creative employee retention programs

Existing Programs

- Local Rental Assistance Program
 - * Frederick County, Maryland
 - provides rental assistance on a short-term basis (six-months)
 - Prevention of eviction and providing transitional housing

Existing Programs

- Homeowner Assistance
 - * Provides down payment or closing cost assistance to qualifying homebuyers.
 - * Loans are low-interest or interest-free
 - * Loans forgivable over a number of years
- Washington DC
 - Homeowner's Purchase Assistance Program

Existing Programs

- Employer Assisted/Live Near Your Work
 - * Motivates employees to stay
 - * Encourages employees to buy homes in specific neighborhoods
 - * Reduces commuting costs
- City of Alexandria
 - * Employee Homeownership Incentive Program (EHIP)
 - deferred payments, 0% interest loans
 - No income limits but has a purchase price limit

Existing Programs

- American Dream Down-payment Initiative (ADDI)
- Encourages home purchase and assists low-income, first-time homebuyers
- Arlington County
 - Moderate Income Purchase Assistance Program (MIPAP)
 - offers down payment and closing cost help to low and moderate income, first-time homebuyers

Existing Programs

- Mortgage Certificates
- Available each year as long as mortgage payment is made
- Tax reduction taken into account when applying for a mortgage
- Austin, Texas
 - for first-time home buyers
 - qualified parties have up to \$2,000 per year for expendable cash

Existing Programs

- Housing Choice Voucher Program
 - allows families to choose privately owned rental housing
 - allows voucher recipients to find housing within 60 days
 - family must provide about 30% of income towards rent.
- Orange County, California
 - works with local landlords to provide benefit

Additional Information

- COG's Housing Choice Voucher Program
 - works with local jurisdictions in implementation of federally funded initiative
- Smart Commute Program
 - Requires down payment of 3% of purchase price
 - Home located within ¼ mile of bus top or public rail station.

Additional Information

- Smart Commute (continued)
 - Borrowers in program receive 50% discount for six months Metrobus or Metrorail service for up to two people per household
 - Lenders add commuting costs into loan, savings of \$200 to \$250 per month.

Additional Information

- Future items
- Meetings & Seminars
- Training
- Partnerships

Live Near Your Work Webinar
September 7, 2006

1. Overview of the Program

A. Staff presented information on the specific section of the FY2007 Work Program covering the Live Near Your Work initiative. Items covered were:

1. Development of collateral materials
2. Act as an information resource for the program
3. Coordination with Jurisdictional Outreach Representatives

B. Information was discussed regarding how the programs are promoted through public outreach. Several of the "How to's" shown were:

1. Remove stigma attached to "affordable housing"
2. Grassroots awareness – educating employees of available programs
3. PSAs – opportunities to partner with private sector sponsors ("Good Neighbor")
4. Free Media – coverage in local media outlets and article submissions

C. Options for Employers

The group discussed the program and how it is an innovative way for employers to provide near-permanent commute solutions for their employees. The local programs can assist in helping the employer in addressing employee commute issues and bottom line costs in regards to benefits packages. The program can also provide an opportunity to an employer to be "ahead of the pack" in offering such programs or assistance in enrolling in housing assistance programs.

2. Existing Programs

A. Regional Examples

The group reviewed some of the area housing assistance programs. Localities covered were:

1. Frederick County – provides rental assistance on a short-term basis
2. Washington DC – provides down payment or closing cost assistance to qualifying homeowners. The loans are low-interest or interest free. (The Homeowner's Purchase Assistance Program)
3. City of Alexandria – The Employee Homeownership Incentive Program is provided to qualifying city employees. Payments can be deferred and there are zero percent loans available. There is no income limit for the program but there is a price ceiling for purchase (approximately \$570,000).
4. Arlington County – the County's program is a modification of the American Dream Down-Payment Initiative (ADDI). The Moderate Income Purchase Assistance Program (MIPAP) offers down-payment and closing cost assistance to low and moderate income first-time homebuyers.

The group also discussed the State of Maryland's matching grant program with local Agencies for housing purchase assistance. One of the stipulations is that the home buyer live five miles or less distance from their worksite.

B. National Examples

The group also reviewed programs from other states such as Texas's Mortgage Certificates Program and Orange County, California's Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Additional Information

The group received information on COG's Housing Choice Voucher Program. The Program works with local jurisdictions in implementation of the ADDI federally funded program. Another program is the Smart Commute Program sponsored by COG and Fannie Mae. The program requires a down payment of at least 3% of the purchase price and the home has to be located within ¼ of a transit option such as bus or public rail station. Borrowers also are able to receive a 50% discount on Metrobus or Metrorail for up to two people per household.

The group endeavored to define what Live Near Your Work means. The group offered the following: "Providing convenient access to non-SOV trips to work with trip times lower than the regional average."

The next meeting was scheduled for September 27, 2006.

	Goal	Overall Confirmed to Date (through 6-30-06)
Alexandria	10	11
Arlington	21	81
DC	110	102
Fairfax	40	41
Frederick	4	4
Loudoun	2	8
Montgomery	40	147
Prince George's	26	24
PRTC	6	8
Tri-County	3	3
Total	262	429

	Employer Forecast Goal	New Employer Goal at 5%	New Employer Goal at 10%	New Employer Goal at 15%
Alexandria	0.2	1	1	2
Arlington	6.0	4	8	12
DC	3.0	5	10	15
Fairfax	3.0	2	4	6
Frederick	4.0	1	1	1
Loudoun	1.0	0	1	1
Montgomery	8.0	7	15	22
Prince George's	1.0	1	3	4
PRTC	1.0	1	1	1
Tri-County	0.1	1	1	0

	Total Employer Forecast Goal	Total Goal for 5%	Total Goal for 10%	Total Goal for 15%
Alexandria	11	12	12	13
Arlington	87	85	89	93
DC	105	107	112	117
Fairfax	44	43	45	47
Frederick	4	5	5	4
Loudoun	9	8	9	9
Montgomery	155	154	162	169
Prince George's	25	25	27	30
PRTC	9	9	9	9
Tri-County	3	4	4	4
Total	452	453	473	496

Note: Employment figures are from intermediate Forecasts Round 7.0a Cooperative Forecasts (thousand) Source: April 25, 06 Memo from Paul DesJardin (May17, TPB Meeting - Item 10)

Final							
Conformity Statement through June 30, 2006							
Employers with 100 or more employees							
	Level 3 Employers	Level 4 Employers	Levels 3 & 4 <100 Employers	FY06 Confirmed to Date including <100 Employers for Levels 3 & 4 (through 6-30-06)	Amount Needed to Attain Goal for Levels 3 & 4	Goal	Overall Confirmed to Date (through 6-30-06)
Alexandria	3	0	2	5	0	10	11
Arlington	21	5	12	38	0	21	81
DC	21	3	4	28	8	110	102
Fairfax	25	4	2	31	0	40	41
Frederick	4	0	0	4	0	4	4
Loudoun	6	2	0	8	0	2	8
Montgomery	22	2	15	39	0	40	147
Prince George's	12	4	4	20	2	26	24
PRTC	2	0	0	2	0	6	8
Tri-County	1	0	0	1	0	3	3
Total	117	20	40	177	10	262	429
Conformity Statement through June 30, 2006							
Employers with less than 100 employees							
	Level 3 Employers	Level 3 # of employees	Level 4 Employers	Level 4 # of employees	Counted toward Conformity		
Alexandria	9	155	0	0	2		
Arlington	29	1045	4	149	12		
DC	8	341	2	68	4		
Fairfax	12	223	0	0	2		
Frederick	0	0	0	0	0		
Loudoun	0	0	0	0	0		
Montgomery	47	1421	1	5	15		
Prince George's	5	416	0	0	4		
PRTC	0	0	0	0	0		
Tri-County	0	0	0	0	0		
Total	110	3601	7	222	39		

Draft							
Conformity Statement through September 30, 2006							
Employers with 100 or more employees							
	Level 3 Employees	Level 4 Employees	Levels 3 & 4 <100 Employers	FY06 Confirmed to Date including <100 Employers for Levels 3 & 4 (through 6-30-06)	Amount Needed to Attain Goal for Levels 3 & 4	Goal	Overall Confirmed to Date (through 6-30-06)
Alexandria	3	0	2	5	0	10	11
Arlington	21	5	12	38	0	21	81
DC	23	3	4	30	6	110	104
Fairfax	25	4	2	31	0	40	41
Frederick	4	0	0	4	0	4	4
Loudoun	6	2	0	8	0	2	8
Montgomery	22	2	16	40	0	40	150
Prince George's	12	4	4	20	2	26	24
PRTC	2	0	0	2	0	6	8
Tri-County	1	0	0	1	0	3	3
Total	119	20	41	180	8	262	434
Conformity Statement through September 30, 2006							
Employers with less than 100 employees							
	Level 3 Employers	Level 3 # of employees	Level 4 Employers	Level 4 # of employees	Counted toward Conformity		
Alexandria	9	155	0	0	2		
Arlington	29	1045	4	149	12		
DC	8	341	2	68	4		
Fairfax	12	223	0	0	2		
Frederick	0	0	0	0	0		
Loudoun	0	0	0	0	0		
Montgomery	52	1517	1	5	16		
Prince George's	5	416	0	0	4		
PRTC	0	0	0	0	0		
Tri-County	0	0	0	0	0		
Total	115	3697	7	222	40		

Handout-Item# 12

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Talkin' 'Bout Lead Generation

September 01, 2006

In marketing, only one number counts: Qualified prospects.
Rebecca Aronauer

A recent study revealed that brute campaigning will not give marketers or salespeople the results they want. According to research by KnowledgeStorm, a technology solutions firm based in Alpharetta, Ga., and SiriusDecisions, a sales and marketing intelligence company based in Wilton, Conn., the average senior executive receives 15 campaigns a week. That means getting the attention of a potential client takes more than a mass e-mail. The survey found that personalized messages directed at smaller audiences are more effective than large, generic campaigns. Matt Lohman, the director of market research at KnowledgeStorm, believes marketing departments focus too much on a broad push to promote their product. Instead, marketers should make a series of pitches related to their perspective client's actual buying cycle. "There's a good understanding today of what a buying cycle is, but [marketers] are not marketing to that buying cycle," Lohman says.

Though marketers may receive a high reply rate from a large campaign, many of those responding are not ready to purchase anything. "When someone comes forward, they might not necessarily be ready to receive a cold call from a sales rep," Lohman says. In fact, 61 percent of respondents in the survey said that cold calling is the delivery method that most marketers get wrong, and 45 percent said they never respond to a cold call. To improve quality lead generation, Lohman offers the following suggestions:

- Do the Research: Before sending out a marketing campaign, do some research and tailor your pitch to each company's specific needs. "The better you understand who you're targeting, the better you'll be able to deliver that material to them," Lohman says.
- Choose the Right Medium: Although the study found that the message is more significant than the way it is delivered, marketers should still contact their perspective customers through their preferred medium. If the product or service is relevant, 90 percent of respondents said they would respond to an e-mail campaign, while 24 percent of respondents said they would never reply to direct mail.
- Develop Relationships: To find quality leads for the sales department, marketers should work with potential clients and learn their needs before handing them to sales. Lohman recommends that marketers create a second message for the first set of responders to gauge their interest and understand their buying cycle.

Links referenced within this article

Find this article at:

http://www.salesandmarketing.com/msg/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003053491

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September 26, 2006

Dear Metrochek Administrator:

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has been a trailblazer in the use of smart card technology. In 1999, WMATA became the first major public transportation system in the United States to provide smart cards for fare payment. As a customer service initiative, Metro is advancing "digital money" for fare collection. Specifically, WMATA's SmarTrip® card enables customers to purchase more rides and receive transit benefits easier than traditional Metrochek vouchers.

SmartBenefits® allows you and your employees to move beyond the original paper Metrochek voucher to the reusable, rechargeable plastic SmarTrip® card. Nearly two million SmarTrip® cards have been purchased. SmarTrip® is accepted on Metrorail, Metrobus and for vanpools. Moreover, SmarTrip® in the near future will provide seamless travel among the many transit systems serving the Washington metropolitan region.

Metro is focusing on SmartBenefits® as a means of administering transit benefits.

Metrochek was introduced in 1993 and is a paper farecard voucher that employers provide to employees as a transit commuter benefit. WMATA is advancing from the paper voucher program to the SmarTrip® card-based SmartBenefits® Program. SmartBenefits® is a Web-based program whereby employers load the dollar value of employees' Metrochek commuter benefits electronically on their SmarTrip® cards at vending machines in Metrorail stations. With SmartBenefits®, you'll immediately eliminate the need to distribute Metrocheks to Metrorail, Metrobus and van pool commuters. SmartBenefits® offers the employer and employee added benefits not available with Metrocheks.

For these reasons, SmartBenefits® is rapidly gaining favor among federal and private sector employers and employees as evidenced by the fact that more than 61,000 employees now receive their monthly commuting benefit through SmartBenefits®.

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Transit Partnership

WMATA's digital money strategy is part of a commitment to make good business decisions in the face of severe fiscal constraints under which we operate. As a transit provider that is exclusively dependent upon public funds and fares to finance operations and capital costs, we must be able to justify every expenditure. Given the many urgent investments we must make to ensure safe and reliable transit services for customers, we are reluctant to continue to sell and distribute paper Metrocheks when the more efficient, rechargeable SmarTrip® card is widely available and utilized. Accordingly, and after careful consideration of the business implications, WMATA will transition all federal agencies to SmartBenefits® before January 2008.

Metrocheks will be made available through SmartBenefits® for employees that use commuting modes that have not adopted the SmarTrip® technology. However, WMATA will establish a limit on Metrochek purchases and communicate that threshold with each agency by July 2007. For planning purposes, you can estimate that at least 50 percent of your employee benefits must be provided on SmarTrip® through the SmartBenefits® Web application. Currently, close to 70 percent of all Metrocheks are used for Metrorail, Metrobus and van pool services.

The good news is that you can do something today to ensure a smooth conversion to SmartBenefits®. Join us for a **FREE** federal SmartBenefits® workshop on Tuesday, October 31 from 11:30 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. in the Metro headquarters Meeting Room, 600 Fifth Street, NW (near Gallery Place-Chinatown and the Judiciary Square Metro stations). For details about SmartBenefits® and to register for the workshop, go to MetroOpensDoors.com or call your Metro Account Representative at 202-962-1326.

We thank you for your participation in the Metrochek/SmartBenefits Program and look forward to our continued partnership.

Sincerely,



Dan Tangherlini
Interim General Manager

Enclosures

This page is located on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Homes and Communities Web site at <http://www.hud.gov/news/release.cfm?CONTENT=pr06-076.cfm>.



News Release

HUD No. 06-076
Antoinette Perry-Banks
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For Release
Monday
July 3, 2006

HUD EMPLOYEES TRANSITION TO ELECTRONIC TRANSIT SUBSIDIES **HUD "Gets Smart" with Electronic SmarTrip Cards**

WASHINGTON – The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) today announced a major improvement in the delivery of transit subsidy to HUD employees working in the Washington metropolitan area. Instead of receiving paper Metrocheks, eligible HUD employees will be able to electronically download subsidies directly onto their SmarTrip cards. HUD is the first cabinet level agency to implement the upgrade to the SmartBenefits program.

The upgrade will save HUD a minimum of \$100,000 annually. In FY 2006, HUD spent \$2.6 million on Washington area employee transit costs.

"Electronic cards are a more convenient way to deliver transit subsidy for the vast majority of Washington-based HUD employees who use public transportation," said Keith Nelson, HUD Assistant Secretary for Administration. "We believe SmarTrip cards will spare our employees from having to wait in long lines, as well as avoiding the problems associated with losing or damaging the old paper Metrocheks."

Throughout the month of July, Washington-based HUD commuters will be able to download their monthly transit subsidy using SmarTrip cards.

By using a SmarTrip card, employees who commute using Metrorail, Metrobus or a WMATA-registered vanpool can download their subsidy at Metrorail stations at their own convenience. Employees will also be able to receive their subsidy on one card, without having to safeguard multiple paper Metrocheks.

"HUD employees now join more than 60,000 other employees in the Washington metropolitan region who participate in Metro's SmartBenefits program," WMATA Sales Programs Manager Lorraine Taylor, who manages SmartBenefits, said. "Enrolling in SmartBenefits streamlines the process for getting transit benefits into the hands of employees. It saves time for both the employer and the employee, and cuts administrative costs."

All HUD employees eligible for the SmartBenefits program have been registered. Those ineligible for the program include employees who use mass transit currently

not compatible with the SmarTrip card, such as commuter rail trains operated by the MARC (Maryland) and VRE (Virginia).

HUD is the nation's housing agency committed to increasing homeownership, particularly among minorities; creating affordable housing opportunities for low-income Americans; and supporting the homeless, elderly, people with disabilities and people living with AIDS. The Department also promotes economic and community development, and enforces the nation's fair housing laws. More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and espanol.hud.gov.

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

451 7th Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20410

Telephone: (202) 708-1112 Find the address of a HUD office near you



DRAFT

**Commuter Connections Employer Satisfaction Survey Report
Fiscal Year 2006
October 17, 2006**

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INTRODUCTION

At the conclusion of FY06, Commuter Connections conducted its seventh annual survey of employers participating in the Commuter Connections Employer Outreach program. The survey, the *Employer Satisfaction Survey*, is intended to measure the employer's use of and satisfaction with the products and services provided through Commuter Connections member organizations.

Employer survey candidates were selected from the regional employer database, which is electronically updated monthly by the local jurisdictions. The main criterion for the survey respondents' selection was the employers' basic contact with local sales jurisdictions. The surveys were mailed to the contacts listed for 1,657 employers region-wide on June 26 and July 6, 2006. An incentive for response was offered for all on-time responses (the date for final responses was July 28th). The incentives given were a travel pack cooler, with the Commuter Connections logo on the front cover, or a compact portfolio with the Commuter Connections logo on it, or CD carrying cases (the total incentive items sent was 45).

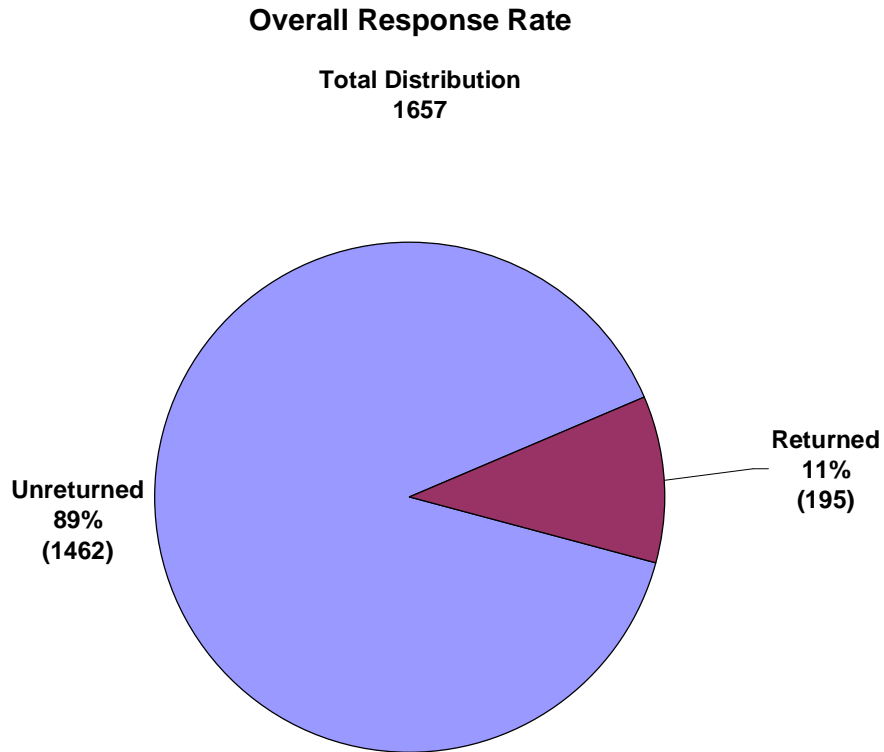
Response to the survey increased six percent over last year's response with 195 forms returned reflecting an 11 percent response rate for the survey. These responses provide a range of opinions in line with responses from previous years and provide informative data. The responses show specific employer reaction to Commuter Connections products and services and will be helpful in improving the individual and overall outreach efforts.

The Addendum contains a simple breakdown of surveys sent by jurisdiction and the rates of return and bad addresses. The Appendix contains a copy of the survey instrument and cover letter. The cover letter was customized for each jurisdiction. The letter listed the name of the local sales organizations and the names of the employer outreach representatives servicing that jurisdiction.

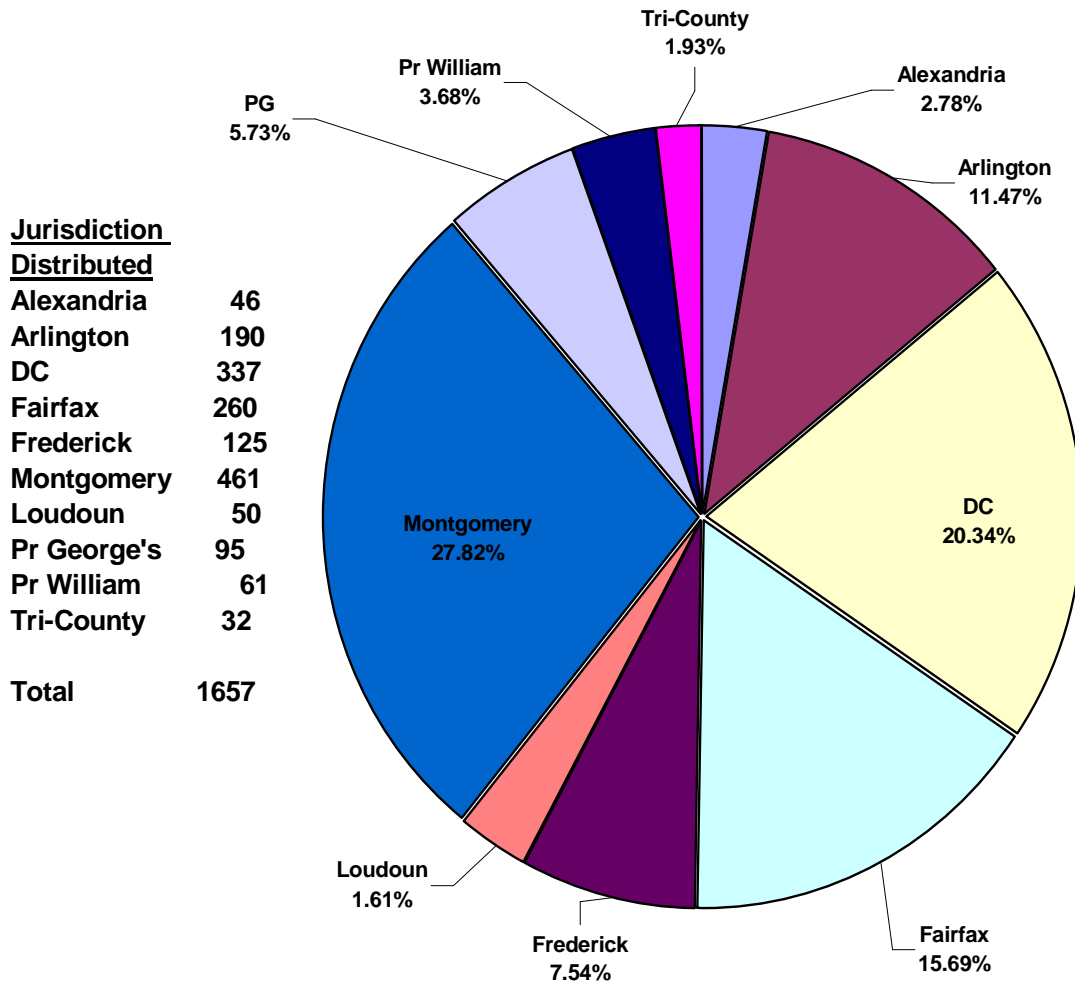
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

RESPONSE:

A total of 1,657 surveys were distributed to all sales jurisdictions. A 11 percent response rate was achieved. The number of forms distributed in each jurisdiction depended on the number of employers contacted about Commuter Connections Employer Services programs. The next two graphs illustrate overall response and distribution by jurisdiction.

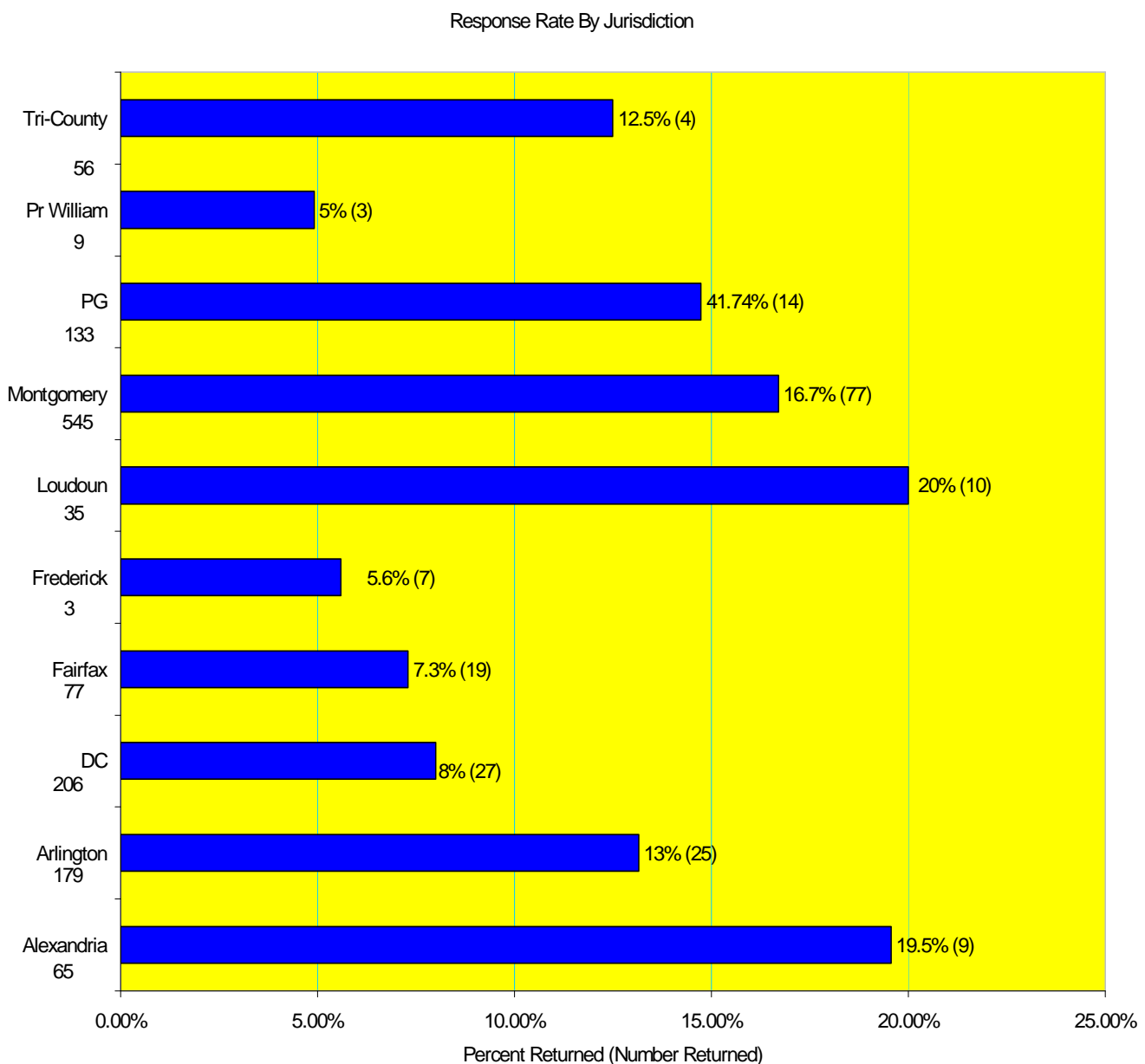


Forms Distributed by Jurisdiction



RESPONSE BY JURISDICTION:

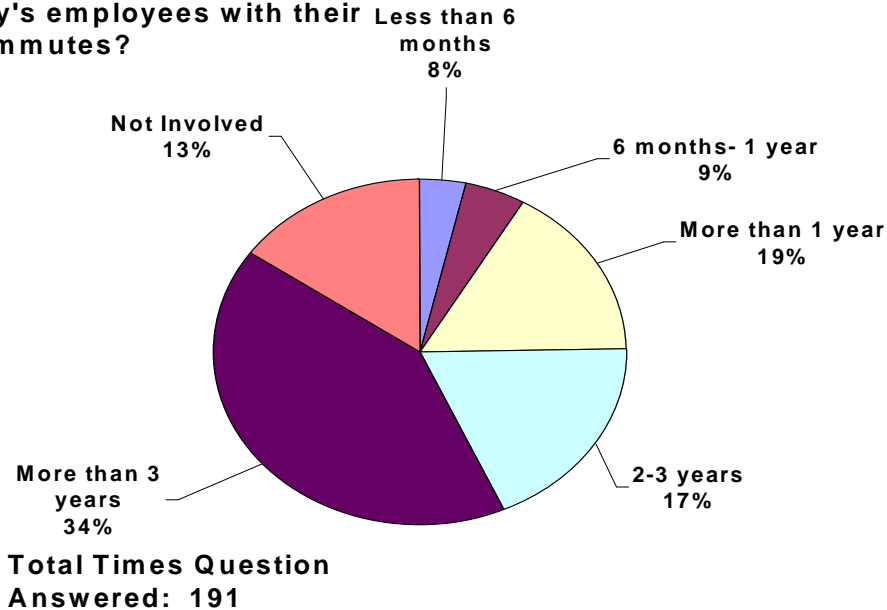
This chart shows the percent of total forms returned (195) from each jurisdiction for the overall distribution of the survey. Response rates (forms returned from jurisdictions/forms distributed to jurisdiction) were also calculated for each jurisdiction relative to the number of surveys sent to each jurisdiction. For example, Alexandria achieved a 16 percent response rate with 65 surveys distributed in its jurisdiction and 11 forms returned.



Question 1.

Respondent's Involvement with Assisting Employees with Daily Commutes

Question 1. How long have you been involved with helping your company's employees with their daily commutes?



A question concerning the employer contact's length of involvement in assisting employees with their commutes to work was included to gauge the level of familiarity that Commuter Connections contacts have with the products and services associated with alternate commuting.

As the pie chart illustrates, a substantial proportion of respondents, 34 percent have been involved with assisting their employees with commuting options for over three years. This result suggests that significant turnover among employees tasked with coordinating employee transportation issues has remained very low and combined with the percentage for two to three years participation (17 percent) shows that oversight of onsite programs has remained steady. This group of veteran TDM program coordinators for their respective employers suggests a healthy relationship with alternative commuting.

Thirteen percent of respondents indicated that they are not involved with helping their employees plan their commutes to work. Surveys were sent only to contacts listed by outreach representatives.

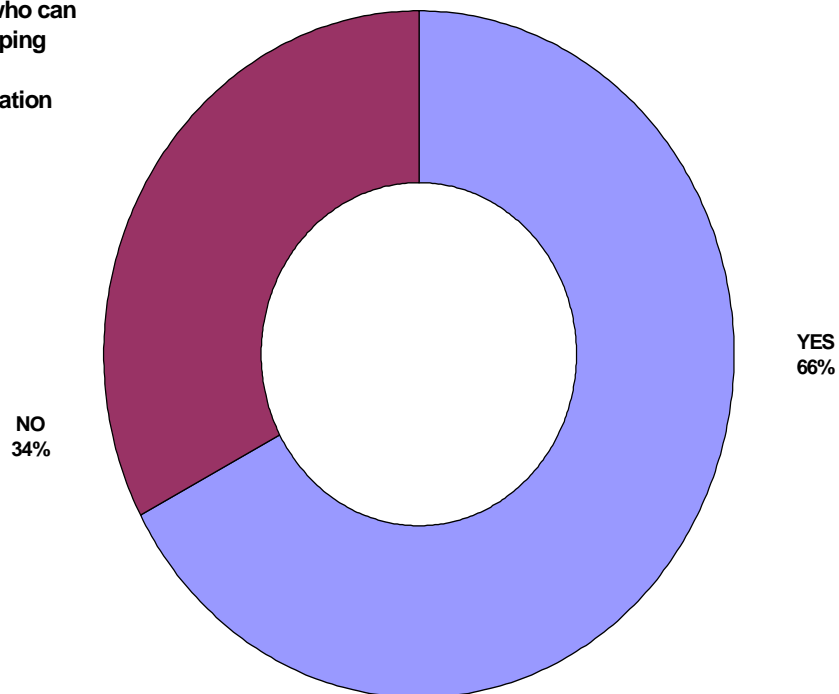
Turnover is indicated with at least 17 percent of those involved with TDM programs having done so for one year or less. This information reinforces the importance of maintaining a current relationship between the outreach representatives and their Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs).

Question 2.

The question concerning the respondent's knowledge of available commuter services for employers provides positive news for the outreach program as a whole. Sixty-six percent of respondents indicated that they had knowledge of a person or organization that could assist them in developing a commuter transportation program. This number has remained constant with last year's results that were at the same percentage. These responses suggest that a great majority of employers know that there are organizations that can help them develop a transportation management program at their worksite, and their relationships with their corresponding outreach representatives appear to be improving.

**Respondent's Knowledge of Available
Commuter Services for Employers**

Question 2.
**Do you know of someone
or an organization who can
assist you in developing
and implementing a
commuter transportation
program?**



Forms Distributed:	1657
Forms Returned:	195
Total Times Question Answered:	189

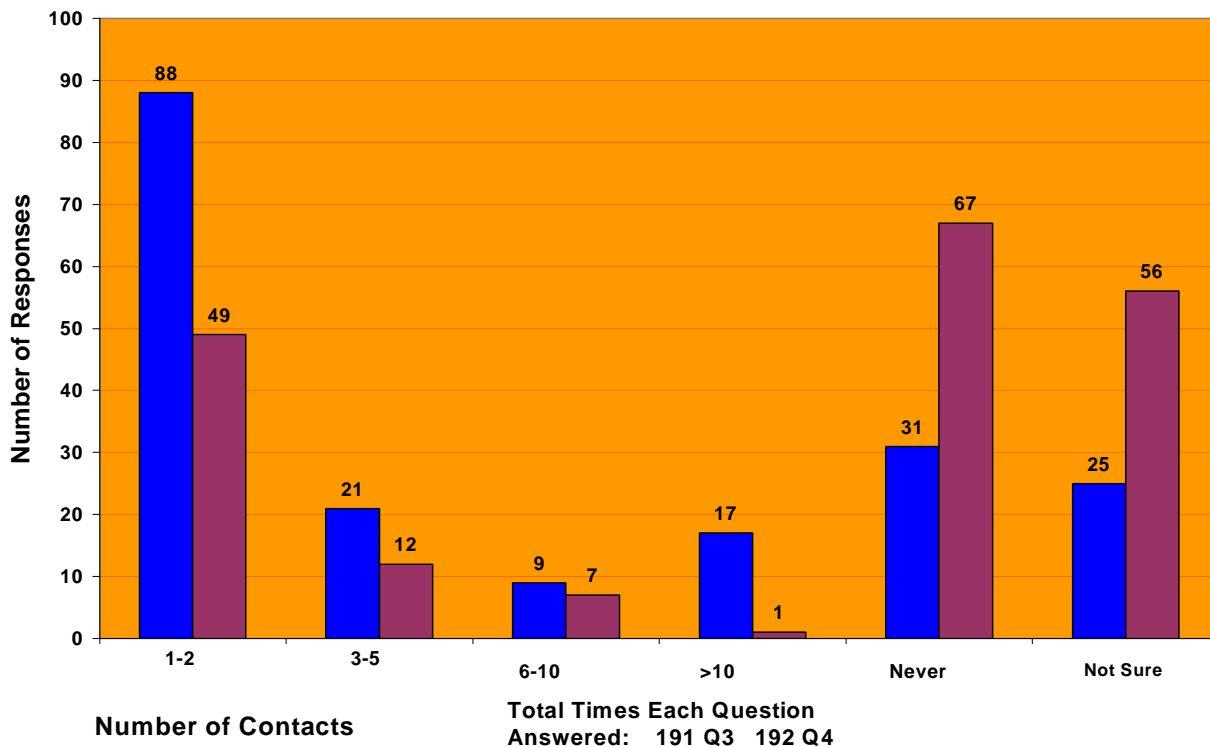
Question 3 and Question 4.

These questions were included to measure the outreach representative's contact with employers. These are important measures of the effort expended by the regional sales force. The largest group of respondents (88 out of 191 for Question 3) were those who were contacted 1 or 2 times during the year. The largest number for Question 4 was those not being contacted, or never with 67 responses. Overall, the outreach effort shows a continued concentration on phone contact and there is also an increase of on-site employer visits that are viewed as having impact.

Contact with Employer Outreach Representative

● **Question 3. How often were you contacted by a representative who can assist you in developing and implementing a commuter transportation program, during the past 12 months?**

■ **Question 4. How often were you contacted by your representative in person?**

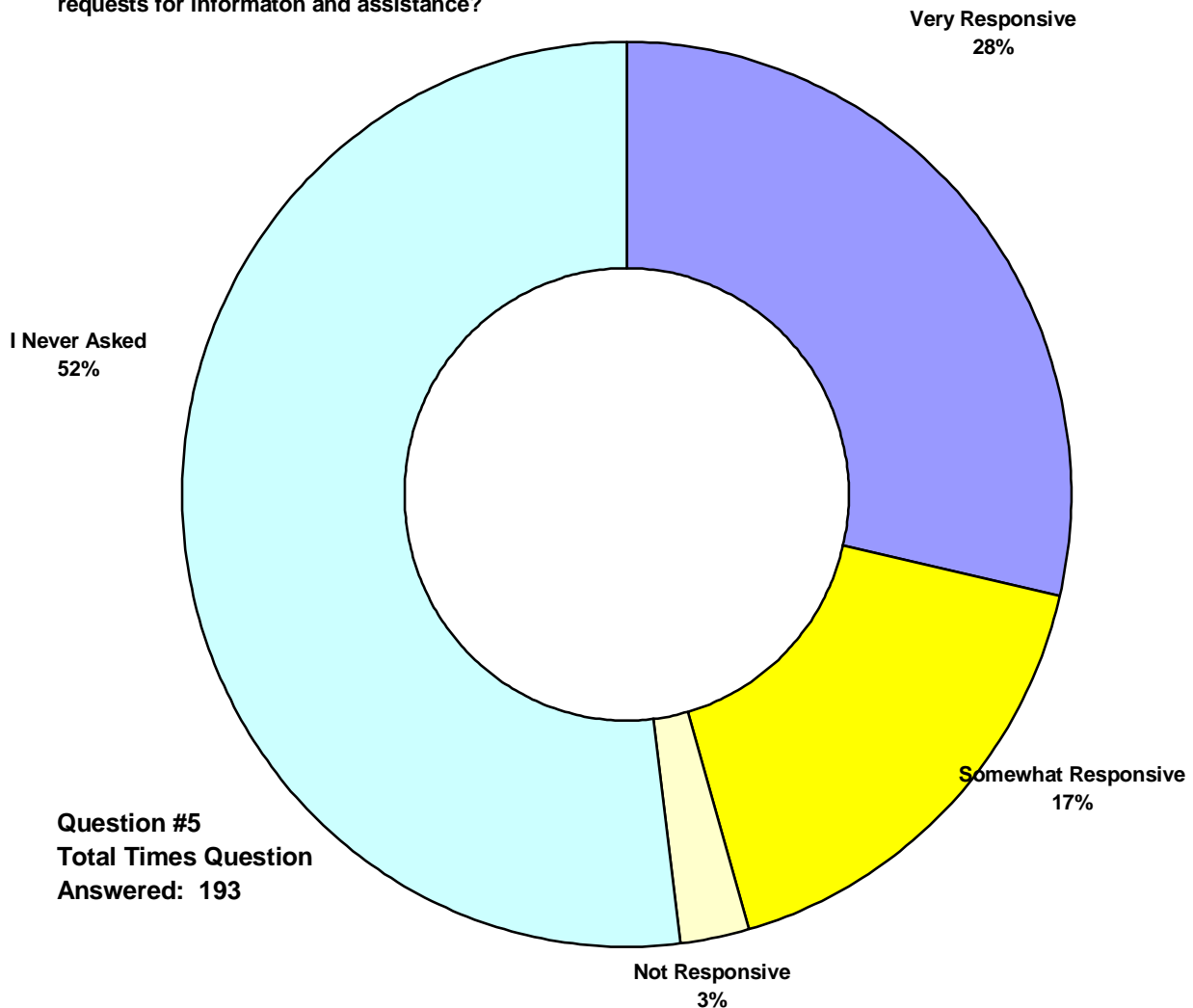


Question 5.

An essential indicator, responsiveness, is measured in the next question. Again, the outreach effort is represented by the responses. As the chart shows, an almost equal amount of respondents that requested information reported their representative was very responsive (28 percent) to those who said they had never asked for assistance (52 percent). This emphatically suggests that not only are the employers not fully aware of the information and assistance that is freely available to them, but that outreach efforts to contact them on a regular basis may not be occurring or not being received positively.

Employer Representative's Responsiveness

Question 5. How Responsive is your representative to your questions, requests for informaton and assistance?



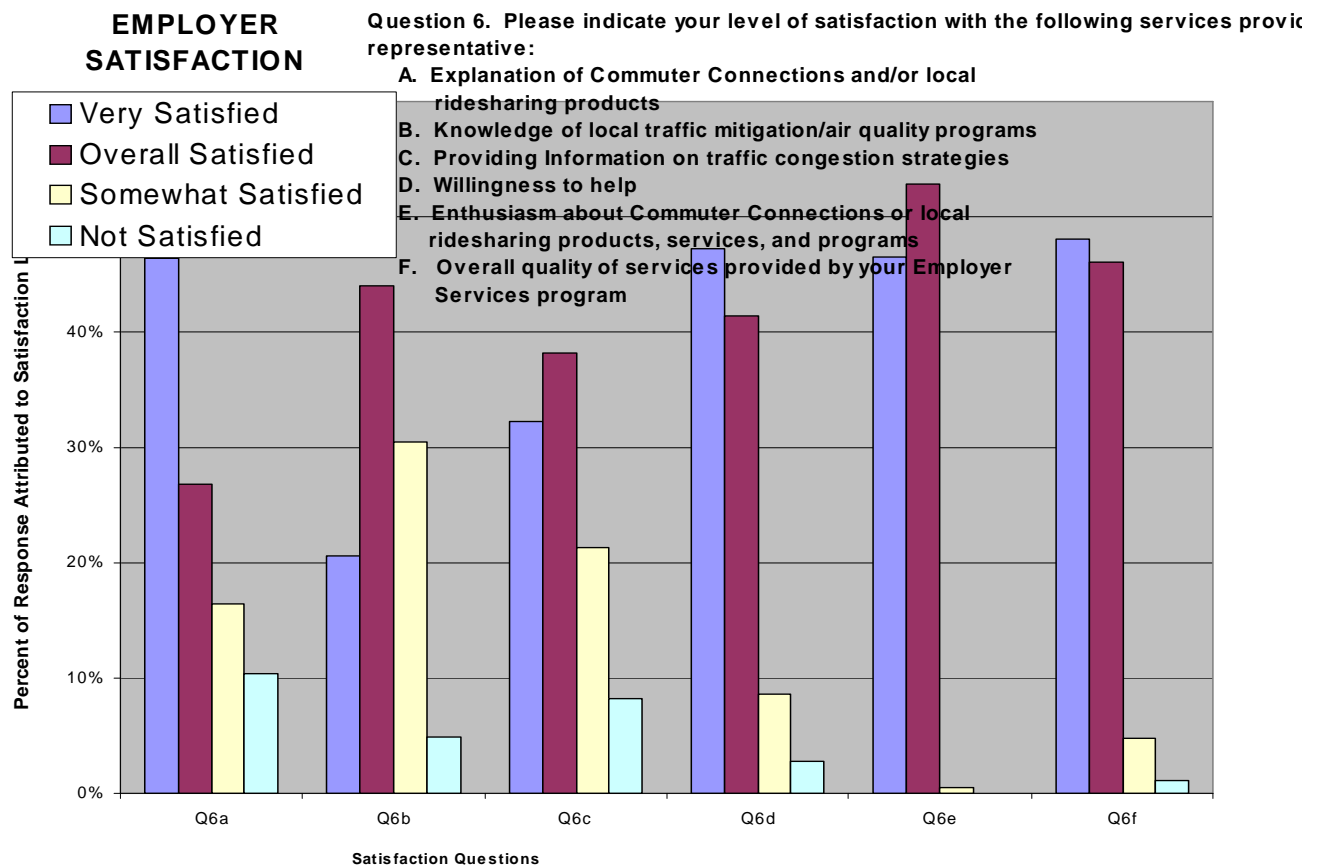
Questions 6A-F.

This series of questions represents the heart of the survey and were included to measure employer satisfaction across a range of topic areas including: explanation of local rideshare products, knowledge of local traffic mitigation, traffic congestion strategies, and willingness to help, enthusiasm, and finally overall quality of their local employer services program. The responses show encouraging trends and several areas for improvement.

More than 40 percent of respondents reported they were “Very Satisfied” in four (6A, 6D, 6E, and 6F) out of the six topic areas. To the all-important question of employer satisfaction with the overall quality of employer services (Question 6F), 48 percent of respondents indicated that they were “Very Satisfied”.

Respondents gave high marks for the outreach representatives’ willingness to help (Question 6D) and the enthusiasm with which representative’s communicated the Commuter Connections message, with 47 percent of respondents choosing the highest level of satisfaction.

The “Somewhat Satisfied” category decreased from the previous years’ with an average of 13 percent for all services of employers responding. The overall average for the “Not Satisfied” category dropped from 5 percent to 4 percent for a response this year.

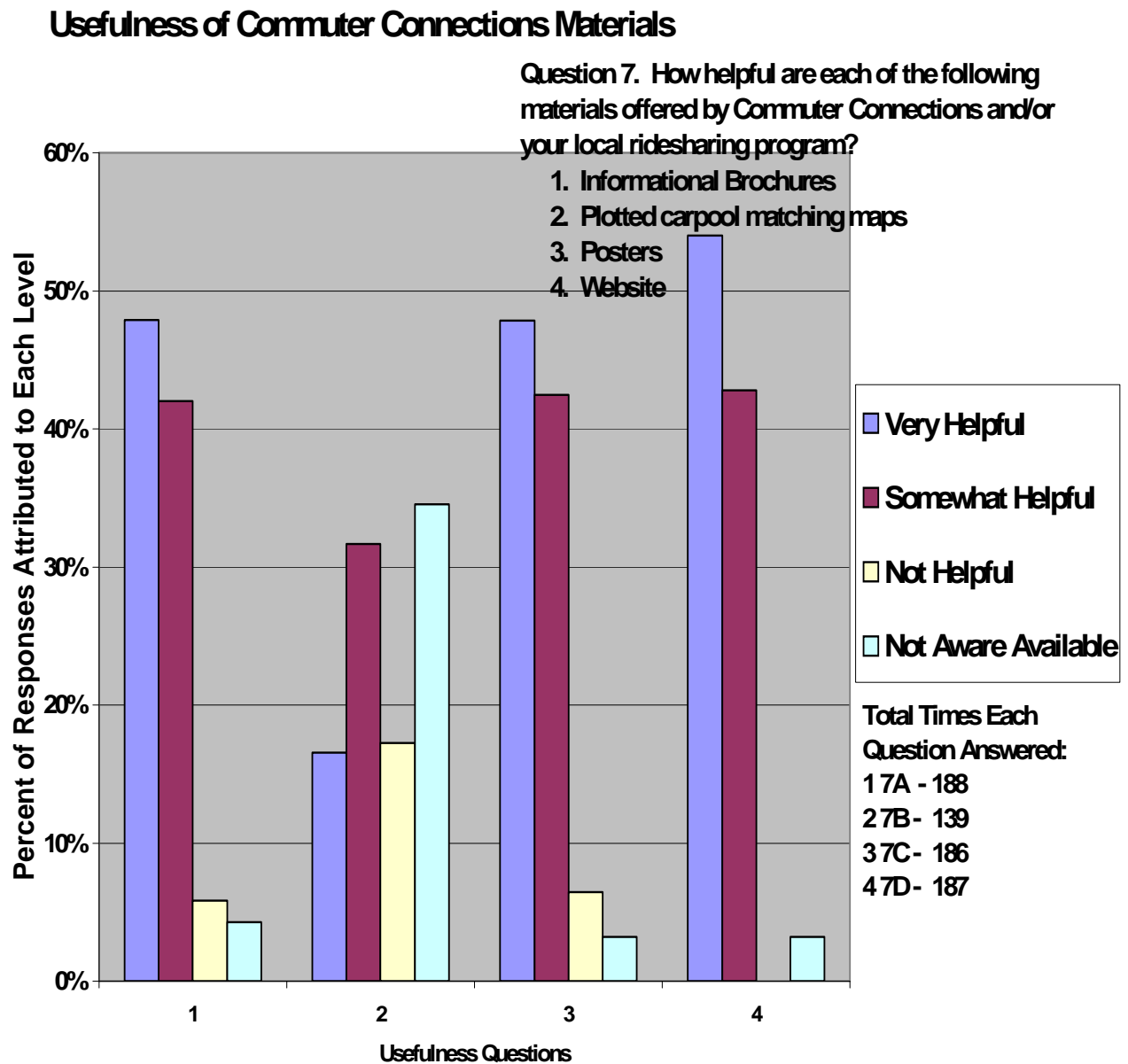


Totals for Questions Answered: 6A 193 6B 194 6C 193 6D 186 6E 191 6F 189

Questions 7A-7C.

With a great volume of Commuter Connections materials produced, the next series of questions attempts to measure the employer's perception of the usefulness of these materials.

As the graph illustrates, most respondents reported that the posters are seen as very helpful (53 percent). Plotted carpool matching maps received a lower response with 18 percent reporting that they are very helpful and 32 percent that they are somewhat helpful. Informational brochures were viewed in a favorable light with 48 percent of the employers responding said that they were very helpful and 43 percent seeing them as somewhat helpful. Overall, a small number of responses indicated they were not aware on the usefulness of these products or that they did not



know that the materials were available (11 percent).

Question 8-8C.

This series of questions was included to measure the use of the commuter survey and the outreach representative's use of the statistical reports of the results. There were 12 Yeses, or 15 percent of the 80 responses to this question, show that the commuter survey was used at the worksite. The table below summarizes the results.

Table 1. Employer Commute Survey Use

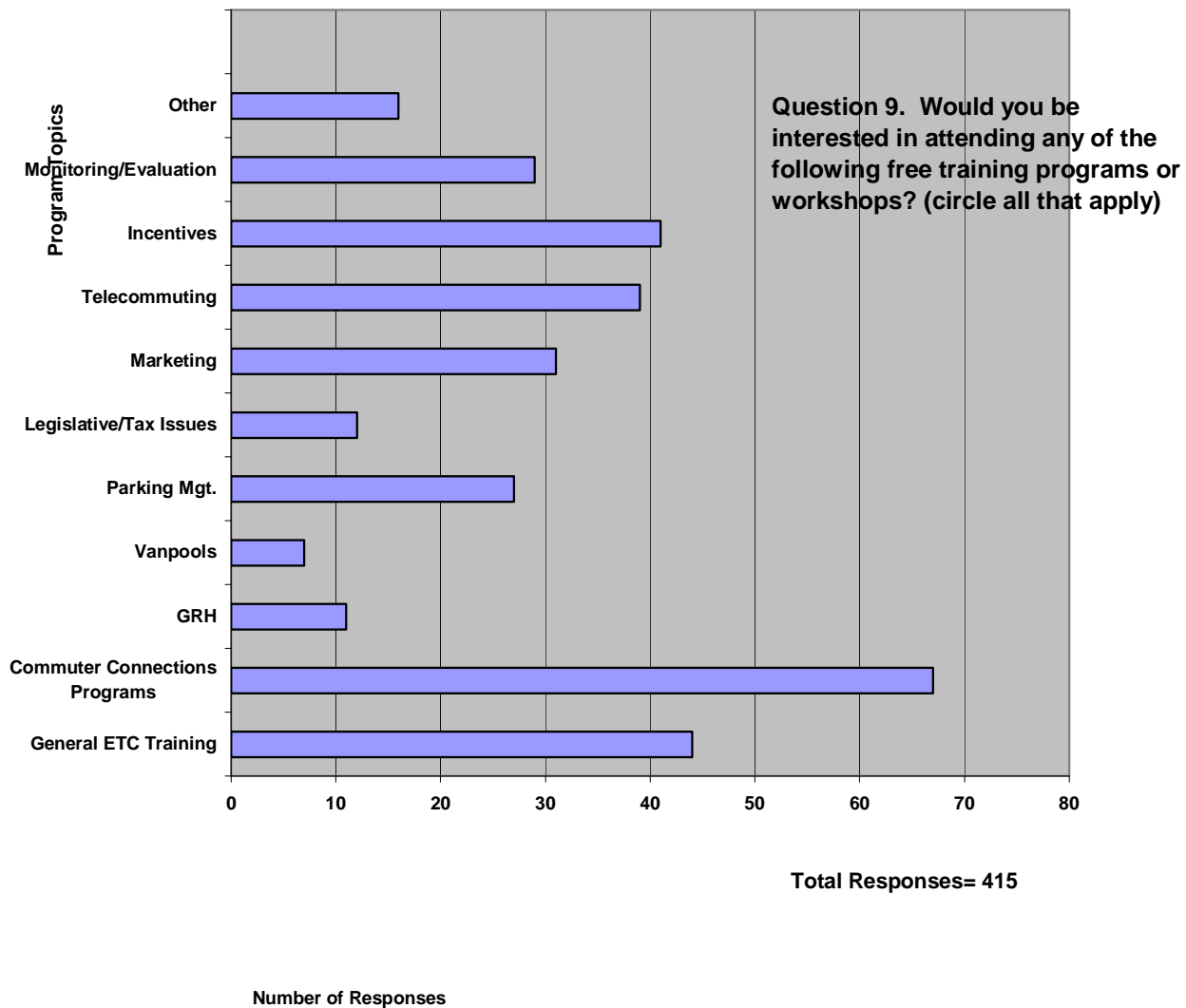
QUESTIONS	Possible Responses	# of Responses	Percent of Total
Q8. Did you participate in the Commuter Connections employee survey or another commuter Survey?	YES (answers 8A)	12	15 percent
	NO	44	55 percent
	NOT SURE	24	30 percent
	TOTAL RESPONSES	80	
Q8A. Did your representative give you a copy of the statistical summary of your employee Commute Survey?	YES (answers 8B)	45	75 percent
	NO	10	17 percent
	NOT SURE	5	8 percent
	TOTAL RESPONSES	60	
Q8B. Did Your Representative use your statistics to create an employee commute program or to promote ridesharing in general?	YES	17	53 percent
	NO	4	12 percent
	NOT SURE	11	35 percent
	TOTAL RESPONSES	32	

These results suggest that a fair amount of employers are not being surveyed (or they are unaware of their most recent completed survey), or they are uninterested in conducting a survey. Of the employers that reported that a commuter survey had been conducted at their site, 75 percent of them had received a statistical analysis against 17 percent that did not receive a summary or they did not recall receiving one. This data shows that there is some room for growth in the area of surveying employers and supplying them with a free report of their employees commuting habits, which then could lead to the adoption of higher level transportation demand management programs. Of note, though, is the increase of commuter survey participation throughout the region over previous years (*FY2005 there was only one commuter survey completed by an employer).

Question 9.

The next question reveals a great deal about what type of informational seminars employers need to help them better assist their employees.

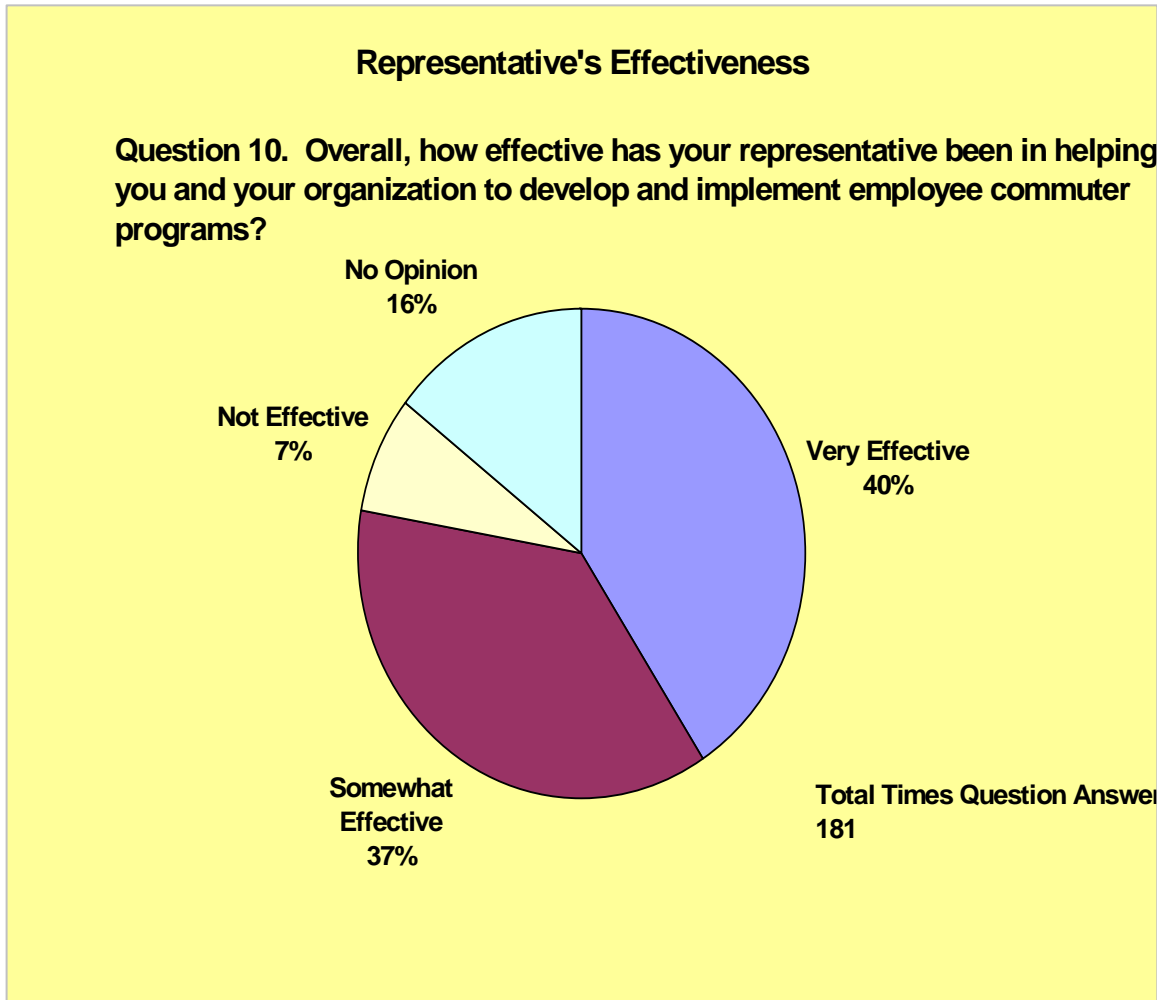
Program Topics of Interest



As the graph shows, the three most popular topic areas indicated were Commuter Connections programs, General ETC Training, and incentives. This is slightly different from previous years' responses.

Question 10.

Like the responsiveness and satisfaction measures, this question provides an overall indicator, effectiveness. As the graph illustrates, the responses to this question are unequally distributed between the categories.



As the pie chart illustrates, the largest group of respondents (40 percent) reported that the representatives were *very effective*. 37 percent indicated that their representative(s) is *somewhat effective*. Seven percent said that their representative was *not effective*. The combination of the first two groups demonstrates that the majority of respondents (77 percent) find that the efforts of their outreach representative are effective in helping them implement commute programs at their worksites. 16 percent of the respondents indicated that they had *no opinion* about their representatives' effectiveness. Though this represents a drop in negative impressions, the numbers do represent challenges for the outreach representatives to translate their efforts to effective programs. Overall, this is a significant improvement in the measurement of the outreach effort's effectiveness.

Question 11.

Do you have any suggestions for improving Commuter Connections' effectiveness in promoting commuter programs and in assisting organizations such as yours in developing commuter programs?

I think the development of "New Town Alexandria" will essentially gridlock the Eisenhower – Telegraph – Van Dorn corridors. No connection to Duke from Van Dorn to Telegraph. There is essentially a stop light on each corner of Duke and Eisenhower. See no relief for those who must drive and work in New and Old Town Alexandria.

I am new so I would like to meet a rep.

Increase Metrochek subsidies and have employers offer incentives.

More bus routes in Prince George's County.

Make Ride-On free countywide.

Question 12.

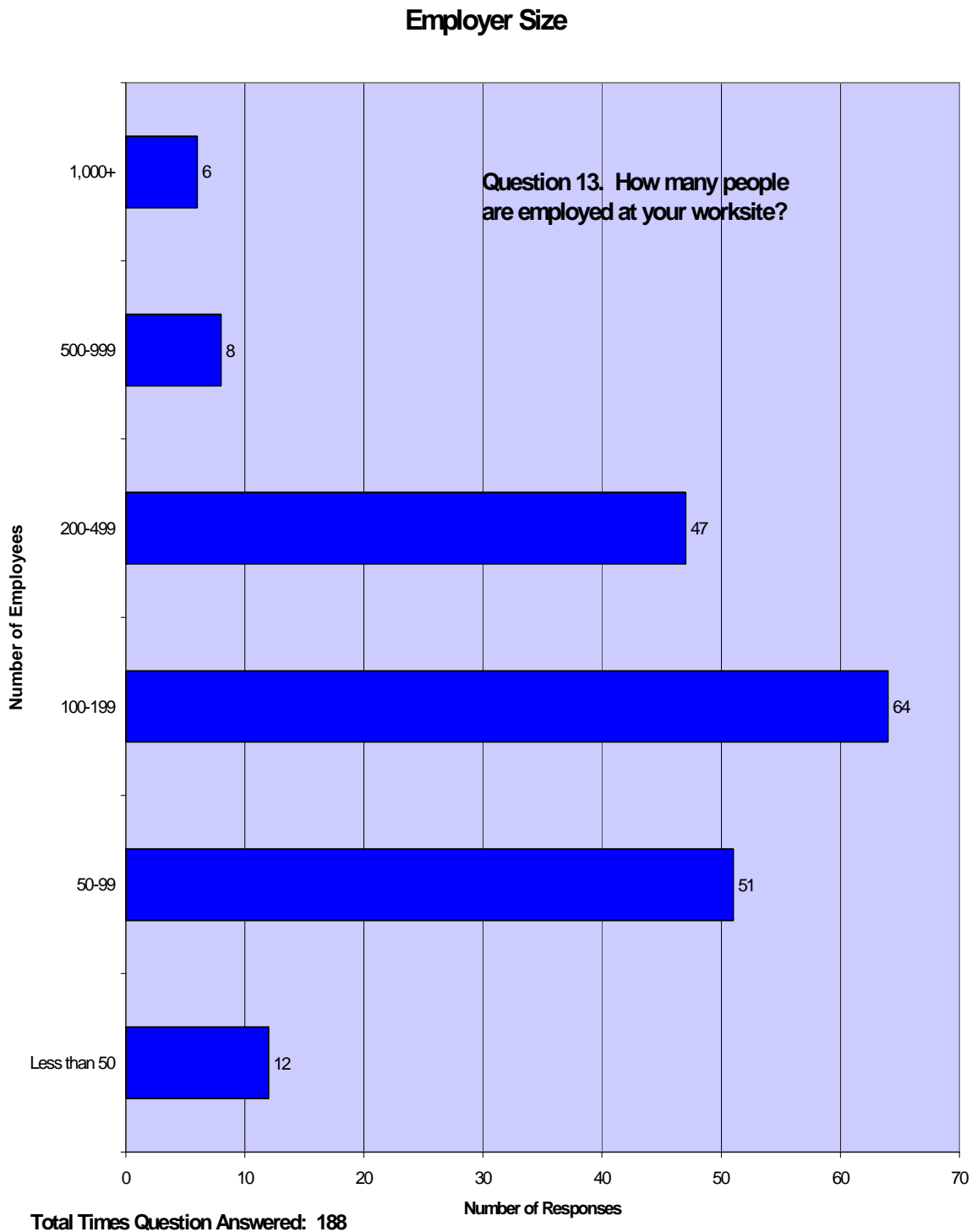
Please write in any additional comments you have about Commuter Connections Products, services, or your representative.

We are a small organization.

Thank you for the information.

Questions 13 & 14.

Respondents represented a wide range of employers. The majority of industries represented included: consulting, health services, non-profit organizations, financial services, legal services, and computer services. The respondents are also employed by organizations of various sizes. See the bar graph below:



Employer Size by Jurisdiction

1000 or more employees

Arlington	1
Fairfax	2
Montgomery	2
Prince Georges	1

500 to 999 employees

Arlington	1
DC	2
Fairfax	2
Loudoun	2
Montgomery	2

200 to 499 employees

Alexandria	1
Arlington	6
DC	12
Fairfax	2
Frederick	5
Loudoun	5
Montgomery	11
Prince George's	2
Prince William	2
Tri-County	2

100 to 199 employees

Alexandria	5
Arlington	12
DC	9
Fairfax	7
Frederick	2
Loudoun	3
Montgomery	14
Prince George's	4
Prince William	1
Tri-County	2

50 to 99 employees

Alexandria	2
Arlington	1
DC	4
Fairfax	3
Montgomery	33
Prince George's	4

Less than 50 employees

Alexandria	1
Arlington	4
Fairfax	3
Montgomery	10

CONCLUSIONS

With 11 percent of the surveyed employers responding this year, the Satisfaction Survey gives us some generalizations for use. The distribution of the responses among the jurisdictions lends credence of applying this information to the overall employer outreach effort.

It should be emphasized here that employers were not randomly selected from the universe of employers from the regional database. Employers were selected based on the fact that they have interacted with the local sales jurisdictions, which are indicated, by a level of service (1 through 4). This survey's purpose is to measure the satisfaction of employers that have encountered Commuter Connections Employer Services products. The information demonstrates employer reaction to Commuter Connections' products, services and outreach efforts. The news is encouraging for the most part, with some notes of dissatisfaction and unawareness of the programs offered.

The majority of employers found that the posters were extremely helpful, bolstered no doubt by the Bike Work Day materials just one month prior to the survey. The survey responses show that employers are mostly satisfied with their outreach representative's willingness to help, enthusiasm with which outreach representatives approach them, and the overall quality of the service provided. A large number of the respondents had no opinion of their Employer Service representative's efforts. This possibly suggests that not enough contact between the employer and outreach representative is going on during the course of the year, or that employers do not wish to be contacted beyond mailings and the like. The survey does show that the responding employers are also interested in seminars focused on Transit Incentives, general Commuter Connection's programs and general Employee Transportation Coordinator Training/Networking.

The results also demonstrate some areas for improvement. Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated that they are not directly involved with assisting employees with their daily commutes—which is the same as last year, but still represents a double digit percentage of non-involvement. This suggests that outreach representatives should continue to raise their efforts in contacting the appropriate person at that employer site and building on that success will only enhance Commuter Connections Program awareness. However, a fair amount of the respondents would most likely consider involvement to be more than passing information along or that their position isn't involved with employee benefits.

A fair amount of respondents selected the *no opinion* in rating the representative's effectiveness, which possibly suggests a lack of contact with employer representatives. The responses measuring the effectiveness of the Employer Outreach representatives show us that there has been sustained improvement. Forty percent of respondents selected the highest level of effectiveness and another 37 percent indicated that their representative was *somewhat effective*. The 23 percent that expressed no opinion or indicated that their representative was not effective represent a diminishing number of those either unaware of who their representative is or whether they've ever been in contact with them.

Overall, the results provide a very favorable view of the employer outreach effort as have previous surveys. The main indicators of responsiveness, satisfaction and effectiveness all reveal encouraging trends, but also show room for improvement. In each of these sets of measures, more respondents chose the highest level of satisfaction in rating the employer services program and/or their representative. The Employer Outreach Sales Representatives should view this synopsis as encouraging and the means to build upon the program's continuing success.

Addendum to the Satisfaction Survey Report FY06

CUSTOMER SERVICE SATISFACTION SURVEY 2006

Jurisdictions	Surveys sent	Responses	Returns	Percentage/Response	Percentage/Return
Alexandria	46	9	2	20%	4%
Arlington	190	25	16	13%	8%
DC	337	27	11	8%	3%
Fairfax	260	19	9	7%	3%
Frederick	125	7	6	6%	5%
Loudoun	50	10	7	20%	14%
Montgomery	461	77	23	17%	5%
Prince George's	95	14	8	15%	8%
PRTC	61	3	6	5%	10%
Tri-County	32	4	4	13%	13%
Total Surveys sent	1657	195	92	12%	6%

Appendixes

Employer Services Employer Satisfaction Survey

This survey is being conducted to find out about the use of and satisfaction with the products and services provided by Commuter Connections, and its member organizations, to help employers implement employee transportation programs.

Your response to this survey is very important to us! All information you provide will be confidential.

Please return your completed survey and gift request form by July 28th, 2006 to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, c/o Commuter Connections, or, fax your completed survey to **202-962-3218**.

1. How long have you been involved with helping your company's employees with their daily commutes? *(Please circle one response)*
 - a. Less than 6 months
 - b. 6 months to 1-year
 - c. More than one-year
 - d. 2 to 3 years
 - e. More than 3 years
 - f. I am not involved

2. Do you know a person or organization that can assist you in developing and implementing a commuter transportation program for your employees?
(Please circle one response)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

3. How often were you contacted by a representative who can assist you in developing and implementing a commuter transportation program, during the past 12 months?
(Please circle one response)
 - a. Once or twice
 - b. Three to five times
 - c. Six to ten times
 - d. More than ten times
 - e. Have never been contacted
 - f. Not sure

4. How often were you contacted by your representative in person?
(Please circle one response)
 - a. Once or twice
 - b. Three to five times
 - c. Six to ten times
 - d. More than ten times
 - e. Have never been contacted
 - f. Not sure

5. How responsive is your representative to your questions, requests for information and assistance? *(Please circle one response)*
 - a. Very responsive
 - b. Somewhat responsive
 - c. Not at all responsive
 - d. I have never asked for information or assistance

6. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following services provided by your representative: *(circle the number under each response)*

	Very Satisfied	Overall Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied
A. Explanation of Commuter Connections and/or local Ridesharing products	1	2	3	4
B. Knowledge of local traffic mitigation/air quality programs	1	2	3	4
C. Providing information on traffic congestion strategies	1	2	3	4
D. Willingness to help	1	2	3	4
E. Enthusiasm about Commuter Connections or local ridesharing products, services and programs	1	2	3	4
F. Overall quality of services provided by your Employer Services program	1	2	3	4

7. How helpful are each of the following materials offered by Commuter Connections and/or your local ridesharing program? *(circle the number under the most appropriate response)*

	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not at all Helpful	Didn't know Available	No Opinion
A. Informational brochures and fact sheets	1	2	3	4	5
B. Plotted carpool matching maps	1	2	3	4	5
C. Posters	1	2	3	4	5
D. Web-Site	1	2	3	4	5

8. Have you ever used the Commuter Connections employee Commute Survey or another commute survey? *(please circle one response)*

- a. Yes (go to question 8a) b. No (skip to question 9) c. Not sure (skip to question 9)

8a. Did your representative give you a copy of the statistical summary of your employee Commute Survey? *(please circle one response)*

- a. Yes (go to question 8b and 8c) b. No (skip to question 9) c. Not sure (skip to question 9)

8b. Did your representative use your statistics to create an employee commute program or to promote ridesharing in general? *(please circle one response)*

- a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

8c. Please write in any additional comments you have about the statistics.

9. Would you be interested in attending any of the following free training programs or workshops? (*circle all that apply*)

- a. General employee transportation benefits coordinator-training
- b. Briefing on Commuter Connections services and programs

Topic-specific workshops:

- c. Guaranteed Ride Home program
- d. Vanpool formation
- e. Parking management
- f. Legislation/tax issues
- g. Marketing
- h. Telecommuting
- i. Transit incentives
- j. Monitoring and evaluation
- k. Other (please specify)_____

10. Overall, how effective has your representative been in helping you and your organization to develop and implement employee commuter programs?
(*please circle one response*)

- a. Very effective
- b. Somewhat effective
- c. Not at all effective
- d. No opinion

11. Do you have any suggestions for improving Commuter Connections' effectiveness in promoting commuter programs and in assisting organizations such as yours in developing commuter programs?

12. Please write in any additional comments you have about Commuter Connections products, services, or your representative.

13. How many people are employed at your worksite? (*please circle one response*)

- a. Less than 50
- b. 50 to 99
- c. 100 to 199
- d. 200 to 499
- e. 500 to 999
- f. 1,000 or more

14. Which of the following best describes the kind of work conducted at your worksite?
(*please circle one response*)

- a. Biotechnology
- b. Commuter hardware/software
- c. Educational Services
- d. Finance, insurance, or real estate
- e. Government
- f. Health Services
- g. Manufacturing
- h. Retail trade
- i. Research and development
- j. Restaurant or Hotel
- k. Wholesale trade
- l. Other (please specify)_____

15. What is the zip code of your worksite?_____

OPTIONAL— Gift Request Form

We would like to thank you for participating in this survey. Please complete the items below and return with your completed survey and we will send you a **free GIFT**.

Your Name: _____

Title: _____

Employer Name: _____

Employer Address: _____

Your Phone Number: _____

Again, thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please **FAX** to MWCOG, Commuter Connections at **202-962-3218** by **July 29, 2005**.

or mail:

MWCOG
Commuter Connections
ATTN: Satisfaction Survey Coordinator
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002



June 26, 2006

Dear Employer:

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments is conducting a survey of employers to find out about the use of and satisfaction with the products and services provided by Commuter Connections, and its member organizations, to help employers implement employee transportation programs.

Member Organization Serving You: Arlington Transportation Partners
Your Employer Services Representative(s): Katie Sihler, Christina Gordon, and Kate Konrad

Your response to this survey is very important to us! All information you provide will be confidential.

The information you provide will be used to help us better understand your employee transportation needs and improve the products and services provided to employers by Commuter Connections and its member organizations.

Please take a few minutes of your time to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire by July 28, 2006. RETURN BY FAX OR MAIL:

Fax#: 202-962-3218
Mail: MWCOG
Commuter Connections
ATTN: Satisfaction Survey Coordinator
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Those responding by July 28 will RECEIVE A FREE GIFT compliments of Commuter Connections.

If you have any questions, please call Mark Hersey at 202-962-3383.

Thank you for your cooperation,

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS