



RTO Focus Group Presentation

Marketing Outreach Working Group (MOWG)

PREPARED FOR
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dhm RESEARCH
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Methodology

- Two Focus groups:
- Conducted April 30, 2011
- Groups segmented by age:
 - Group 1: 18-39 (low to middle income range)
 - Group 2: 40-54 (middle to upper middle income range)
- Clark, Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties
 - One-half of participants lived outside Multnomah County
- Recruited through RDD, intercepts at transit stops, TriMet mailing list, and Opt In
- Led by professional moderator
- Operator controlled video recording

(Although research of this type is not designed to measure with statistical reliability the attitudes of a particular group, it is valuable because it gives a sense of the attitudes and opinions of the population from which the sample was drawn.)

Methodology

- Participant Characteristics:
- Use public transit 1-3 times a week
- Bike or walk as a form of transportation at least once a month, but not weekly
- Employed at least 20 hours a week or a full time student
- Expressed some interest in using public transit, walking, or biking as transportation forms
- Do not work for a transportation agency

REASONS

Reasons for Using Public Transit



"It's easier to get downtown. On my first day of work, I drove and the car behind me got hit by the car behind them, so I started taking the MAX from Clackamas Town Center to downtown Portland." (Group 1)

"In my car, I find myself very irritated, but I can get on a bus and read a book and relax. It may take longer, but I get off with a smile on my face." (Group 1)

"I started commuting sometimes when I lived in southeast but it was difficult because I had to transfer a lot to get to work. When we moved to St. John's, it became an 18 minute bus ride." (Group 1)

"I take it because it's better for the environment, it feels less wasteful, and I get some exercise in my commute. It's a great way to see and know the community." (Group 2)

"I take it for Blazer games. I'll park at the Lloyd Center and take it to the Rose Garden." (Group 2)



Reasons for Using Public Transit

- Saving Money
 - Gas prices
 - Paying for parking
 - Car payments and car insurance
- Necessity
 - One car household
 - Don't own a vehicle
- Convenience (Mixed Relationship)
 - Avoid traffic
 - Avoid searching for parking

Side benefits

Reduce stress

See more of the community

Alcohol related activities

Helping the environment

"Greener" lifestyle

Reasons for Biking or Walking

- **Pleasure**
 - Enjoy sunshine/outdoors
 - Pleasure/enjoyment
 - See the city/community
- **Health**
 - Form of exercise

Side benefits
"Cheap"
"Free"

INFORMATION SOURCES

Information Sources



"An app where you put in the start/end locations and it gives you real time information." (Group 1)

"Google figures out what you're trying to say when you put in an address. It's less annoying [than Trip Planner]." (Group 1)

"There's uncertainty with TriMet Trip Planner. Sometimes things are late and then you miss your connection." (Group 1)

"A lot of bus stops don't have maps or anything at them." (Group 1)

"If I were to do this more often, I'd like to see a computer station at high traffic areas to help me plan my trip, like a printed thing comes out that tells me how to go to get there." (Group 2)

"A reader board that tells you when the next train is coming and if there is a delay." (Group 2)

"It must be a generational thing. I wouldn't use an app, but my kids would. But I'd like a text message." (Group 2)



Ideal Information Sources for Transit On-the-Go and Real Time

Information in physical spaces:

- Maps (including maps that overlap multiple bus lines)
- Electronic boards at transit stops that display real time arrival information
- Computers that allow transit users to plan a trip at high-usage transit stops

Ideal Information Sources for Transit On-the-Go and Real Time

Information in virtual spaces:

- A Smart Phone application that allow users to plan trips with real time information* * *

“Google Maps combined with Transit Tracker”

- Text messages
- 238-RIDE
- A person at TriMet to talk to about a trip (especially for less frequent riders)

** * * older riders may take longer to start using this feature*

Ideal Information Sources for Walking and Biking

Physical Information:

- Bike There! Map

Virtual Information:

- Bycycle.org
- Smart Phone application for Bike There! Map

Ideal Information Sources for Walking and Biking

Maps should include:

- Bike routes, greenways, and through-ways
- Information on high traffic and low traffic areas
- Estimated length of times for trips
- Information on elevation gains – “hills”

“I would take routes that I would drive on . . . this bike specific map. . . it shows you where the greenways are. If you’re not looking for them, you’d be totally unaware of it without this map.”

“The wallet map made me feel very safe on my bike when I was lost. I was covered.”

BARRIERS

Barriers



*"Paying for public transportation on top of paying for a car is hard. If I have a car and am already paying for gas, it's probably cheaper to drive than go buy a \$5 MAX ticket."
(Group 1)*

*"I have two kids so it gets pretty spendy. We'll get on the bus to go to Saturday market, which they think is fun but it's more expensive than driving for me. You can park for \$5, which is cheaper than buying everyone MAX tickets."
(Group 1)*



*"We own three cars, but I have two teenagers and two little ones. They're all active –tennis practice, basketball games – so we had to provide a car for my daughter and there's no public transit that goes to their school."
(Group 2)*

"Sometimes I'm at a place, and I'm like 'how do I get to this place?' And then I have to piece together 30 brochures to plan the trip. So I just drive." (Group 2)

Barriers to Public Transit

- Cost
 - Already paying for gas, car payment, and car insurance
 - More expensive than driving when with kids or significant others
- Necessity of a vehicle
 - Need to make vehicle work trips during day
- Inconvenience
 - Stress – comes too early, late, not enough frequency
 - No convenient transit stop near home and/or work

**WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO
INCREASE USAGE**

What it Would Take To Increase Usage



"A free 30 day pass in a packet. I don't want to spend a bunch of money getting lost. If the cost wasn't a factor initially, I'd take it more." (Group 1)

"A weekend rate or family rate where kids are a lot cheaper. I'd use it all the time if they had that." (Group 1)

"Lower cost for a monthly pass. It's hard to get one now on top of what I'm paying for the car." (Group 1)

"I think more people would take the bus if there was more frequent service." (Group 1)

"A small tax break as an incentive to put your car away. A lot of us could use that a tax time." (Group 2)

"There's not much information out there. We're not being marketed to." (Group 2)

"We need more buses. A few buses I used to take have been cut. It impacts the convenience factor which is a big factor for a lot of people." (Group 2)

What It Would Take To Increase Usage

Address some of people's top barriers to public transit:

- Perception that it is too costly
- Not convenient

They asked for:

- Infrastructure improvements
- Community support
- Education and messaging

What It Would Take To Increase Usage

Cost Reductions:

- A free 30 day trial pass
- A public transit “punch card” – (e.g. take 10 trips, get one free)
- Unlimited transfers after 7pm
- A discounted weekend rate
- A family rate
- Tax break
- Reduced car insurance

Participants want immediate financial incentives that directly relate to the cost of riding transit.

What It Would Take To Increase Usage

Infrastructure Improvements:

- Bus/MAX stops closer to their homes
- Increased frequency of service
- Maps, schedules, and real time information at transit stops

Community Support and Education:

- Positive advertising and messaging
- Community leaders supporting and promoting the system

"If there is a free week every three months where you can go wherever you want to go for free, so people will try it out. And then you get on the bus and they give you a brochure and they tell you the benefit."

What It Would Take To Increase Usage

Biking and Walking:

- More bike lanes and sidewalks
- Community events—*“discounts to people who walk or bike to farmer’s markets.”*
- Spreading awareness of Bike There!, Walk There!, and SmartTrips maps and materials

MESSAGING

Messaging: Public Transit

“Environment. Cost savings. Parking. Less cars on road, less accidents. The sense of community—meeting your neighbors. Because really, the only messages you hear are safety issues, bus crashes, and other bad things.”

- Talk about cost benefits—how much are riders saving? What financial support is available?
- Talk about the positive side of public transit—Why is public transit a good thing?
 - Save money
 - Better for the environment
 - Less stressful
 - See the community
 - Spend time with family

Messaging: Public Transit

Let people know about the information that is already out there-

- Transit Tracker
- TriMet Trip Planner
- Google Maps
- 238-RIDE
- Smart Phone Apps
- Maps
- Real-Time information at transit stops

Messaging: Biking and Walking

Spread the word-

- Pass out Bike There!, Walk There!
- Pass out SmartTrips maps and materials at businesses, community events, and family-centered establishments



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