

Appendix G:

Transit Rider Survey Results

Rider Survey Overview

The project team conducted an on-board survey of Livingston Area Transit System patrons to determine rider characteristics, perceptions of service, riding habits, opinion of potential improvements, and trip origins, destinations, and purposes. This summary of the findings is intended to serve as an easily accessible overview of the results and their possible implications for LATS service.

Methodology

The on-board survey was administered to the riders of the LATS transit service. The riders completed a total of 24 surveys. The survey consisted of ten questions; most questions were multiple choice, but two questions provided space for a write-in response.

Statistical note: In response to some questions, multiple answers were accepted from each respondent. In these cases, the percentages analyzed and discussed actually constitute the proportion of valid responses rather than just the number of respondents that answered the question. The questions where proportions of valid responses were used are questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9. For example, Question 4 has six possible answers. We received 24 surveys with 50 valid responses to this question, which is due to some respondents providing multiple answers to the question.

Summary of Significant Findings

The main findings of the rider survey are:

- A large percentage of survey respondents were likely captive riders, or transit dependent riders. Three-quarters of respondents listed reasons for using LATS that would indicate they may lack suitable alternative options.
- Supporting the claim that many riders may be transit dependent, one third of respondents said they would not have made their trip absent LATS, which shows many rely on LATS to provide access to needed services.
- The most common trip purposes were work, medical/dental services, human/social services, and shopping/personal business.
- Respondents used both the Dial-a-Ride and fixed-route services frequently.
- Overall, respondents were pleased with LATS services. Areas that were particularly praised were convenience, reliability, and safety. Areas that received less praise and which may have room for improvement were service frequency, stop amenities, and the availability of printed, phone, and web information.

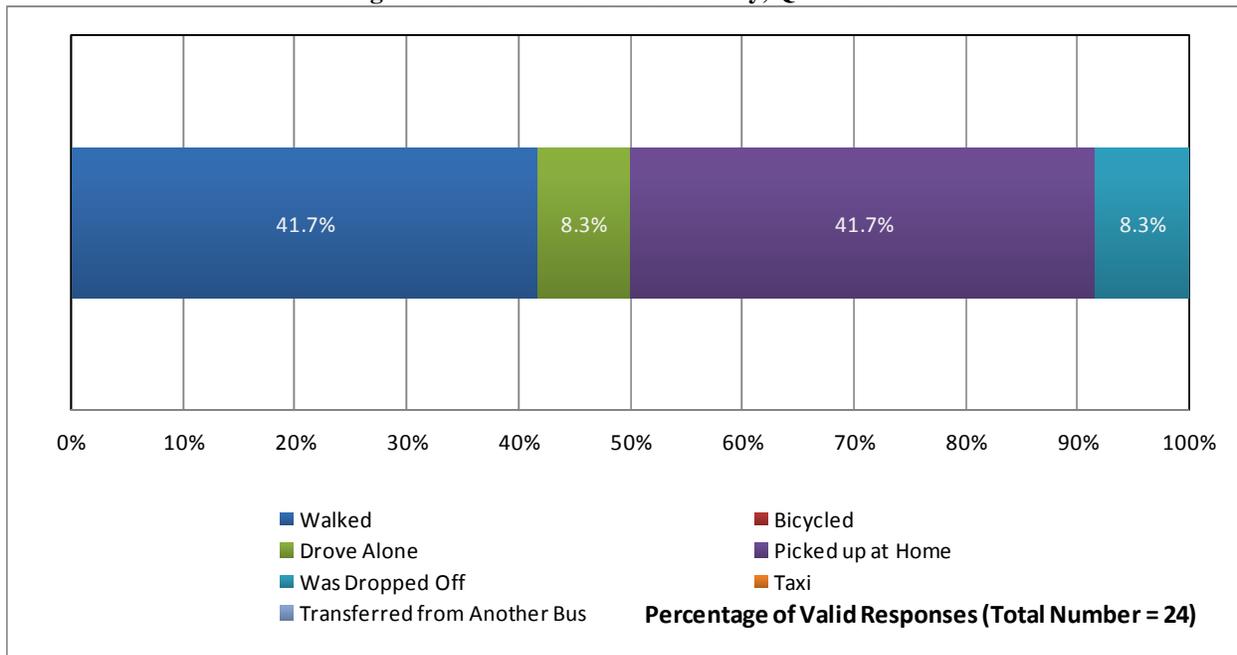
Individual Question Analysis

For each question asked on the survey, the following analysis is provided:

- **Chart** – a chart (if applicable) which shows the breakdown of responses.
- **Purpose** – a brief explanation of the why the question was asked.
- **Results** – a summary of the main results.
- **Significance** – an assessment of what the results mean for LATS.

Question 1. How did you get to the bus stop for this trip?

Figure A-1: LATS On-Board Survey, Question 1



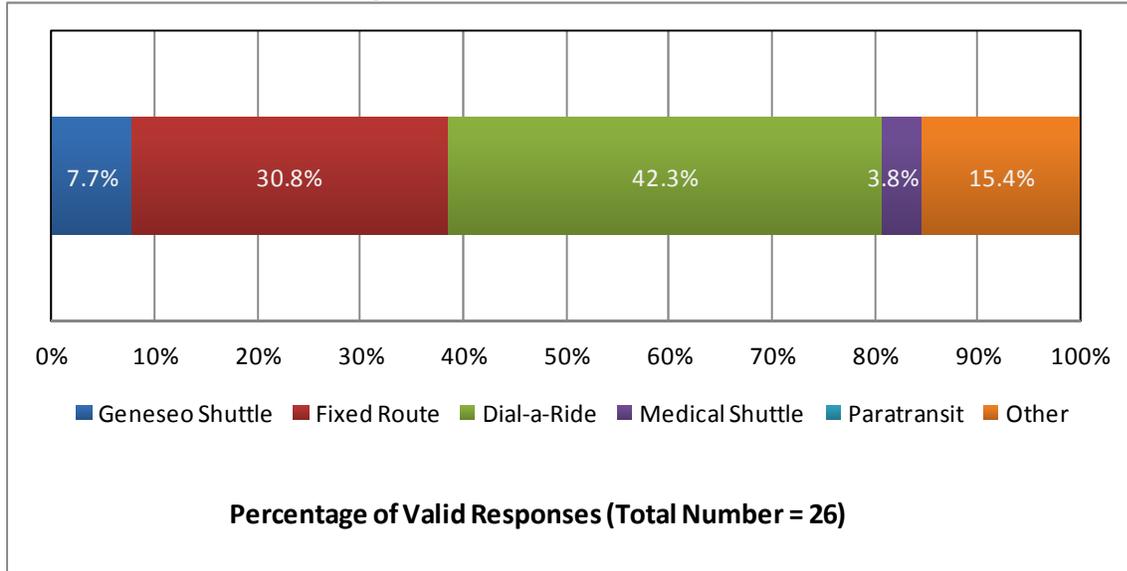
Purpose: To understand of LATS riders access the service.

Results: Most respondents stated they walked to a LATS stop to board a bus (42%) or were picked up at home (42%). The remaining respondents were dropped off at the stop (8%) or drove alone to a stop (8%). No respondents said they transferred from another bus, bicycled, or took a taxi to a stop.

Significance: The results are not surprising, but do show the importance of services that provide curb-to-curb access for many people who are not able to walk to stops. The results also have implications for routing decisions for fixed-route lines. Because many passengers have no choice but to walk to access transit services, stops need to be planned close to key destinations and residential centers to ensure that walk distances are not onerous.

Question 2. What service are you using?

Figure A-2: LATS On-Board Survey, Question 2



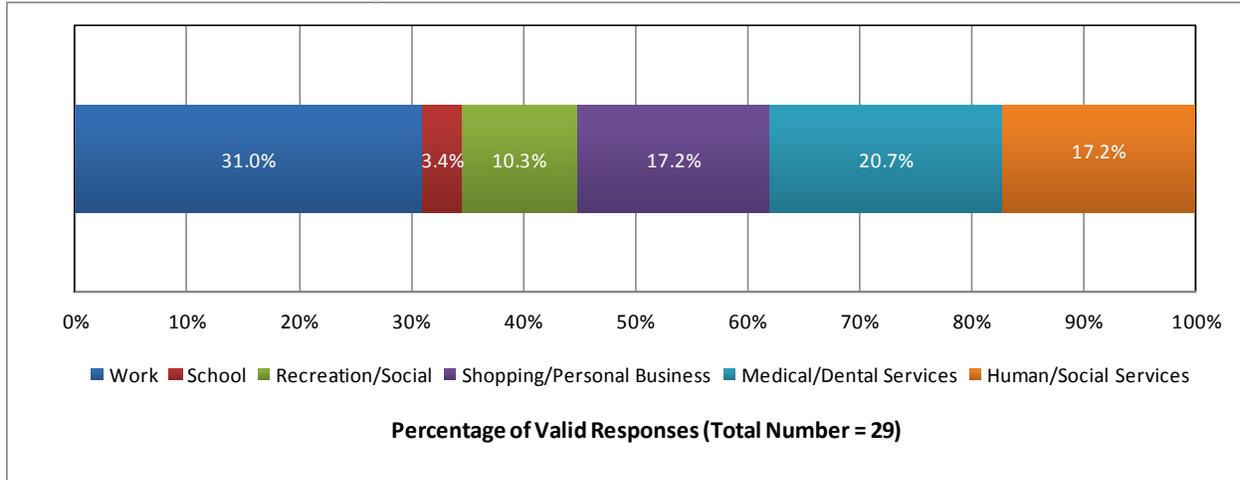
Purpose: To determine which LATS services are accessed the most.

Results: Respondents used the Dial-a-Ride services (42%) and the fixed-route buses (31%) the most. Other (15%) was the next most listed service, followed by Geneseo shuttle (8%) and the Medical Shuttle (4%). Respondents who listed Fixed Route, Dial-a-Ride, and Other were asked to clarify their results. Of the eight responses for Fixed Route, two responses stated they used Route 3 and four responses stated they used Route 2A. Of the eleven responses for Dial-a-Ride, four respondents stated they used the service in Dansville, two in Mt. Morris, and one respondent stated “LATS.” Of the four responses for Other, the three write-in responses were: “LATS,” “Bus from Dansville to Geneseo,” and “Experimental route Nunda to Geneseo and back.”

Significance: The fixed route services and Dial-a-Ride services are the most used by respondents. This helps show why respondents in Question 1 stated they mostly accessed LATS via walking or being picked up at home. The individual written responses show a large number using services around Dansville, Mt. Morris, and Nunda.

Question 3. What is the purpose of this trip?

Figure A-3: LATS On-Board Survey, Question 3



Purpose: To determine common services and activities accessed by using the LATS services.

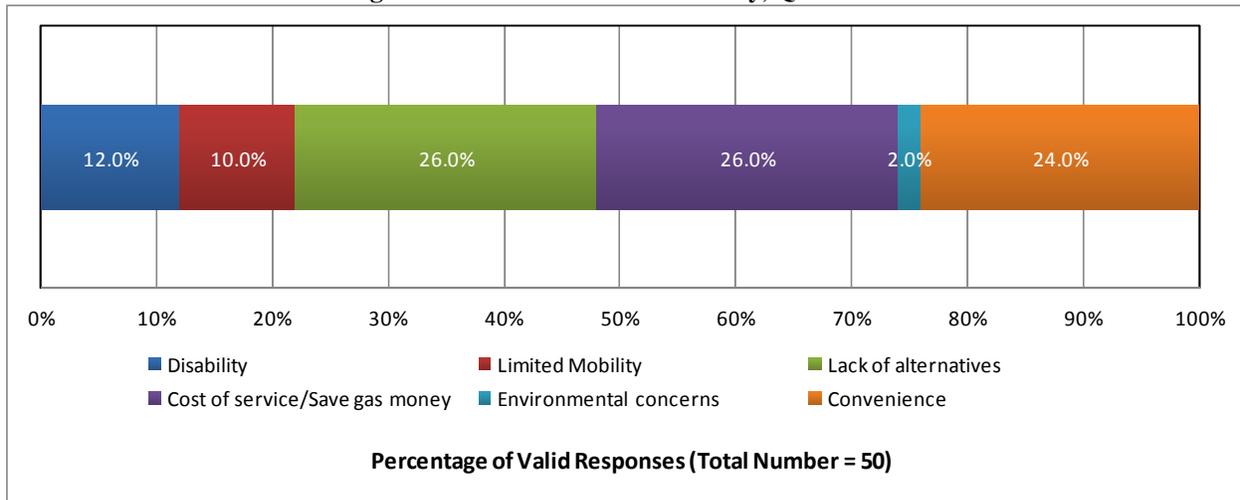
Results: Respondents use the LATS services to access a wide variety of activities and services. The most common trip purpose is to get to or from a job (31%). The next most common trip purposes were Medical/Dental Services (21%), Shopping/Personal Business (17%), and Human/Social Services (17%). Other responses include Recreational/Social (10%) and School (3%). 29 valid responses were given by 24 respondents, meaning some respondents use the service to access more than one service.

Significance: LATS serves a variety of needs within Livingston County, most of which are vital for health and quality of life. Access to employment is critical both for employees to provide the income they need for their families and for employers to attract the right workers for their jobs. For many transit users who do not have access to cars, employment opportunities would be severely limited without adequate transit service. Job access is also easier to plan around (both for the passenger and the transit agency) as they are regularly recurring trips, and the hours and trips can generally be anticipated far in advance.

Medical appointments are a common destination, particularly for Dial-a-Ride services, as well as Human/Social Service appointments. Both of these are critical for the Livingston County residents who need to access them and often lack alternative means. Other destinations are important for living an active and fulfilling life. The lower number of trips for School and Recreation/Social functions may be because these trips are hard to anticipate or plan around.

Question 4. Why did you choose to ride the LATS bus for this trip? Mark *all* that apply.

Figure A-4: LATS On-Board Survey, Question 4



Purpose: To understand the reason(s) behind the decision to ride LATS, and to determine captive riders (transit-dependent) versus choice riders.

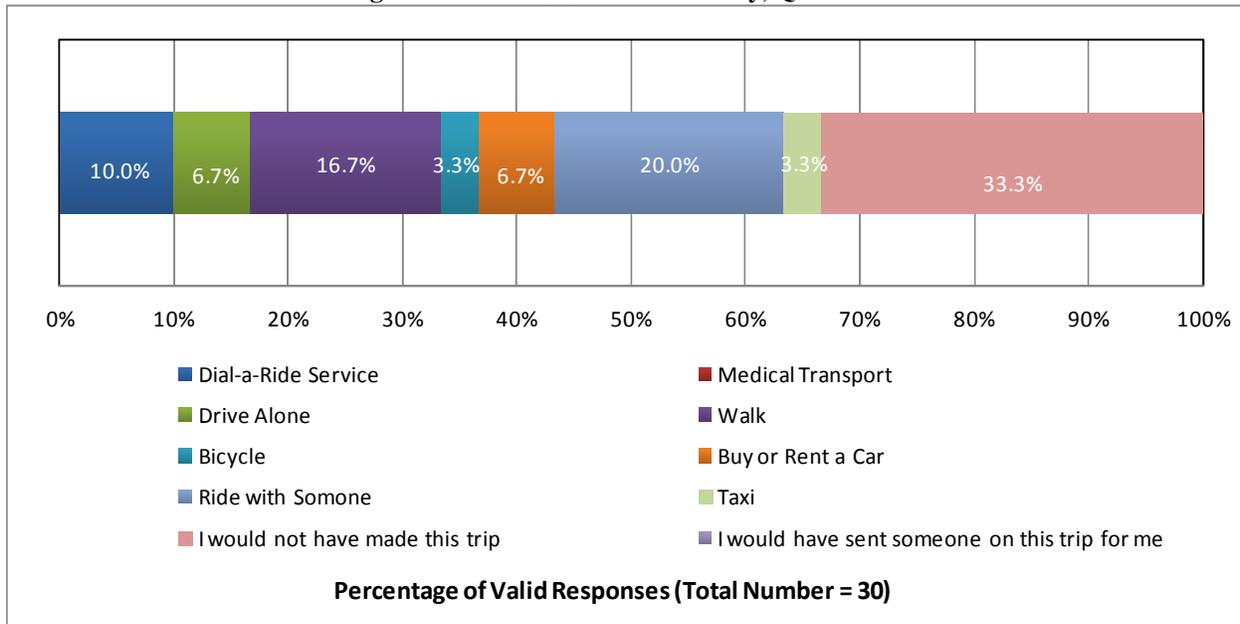
Results: About three-quarters of responses were for a reason which may indicate the rider is transit-dependent – lack of alternatives (26%), cost of service/save gas money (26%), disability (12%), and limited mobility (10%). These riders may have trouble accessing the needed services without adequate transit service. The other quarter of respondents who selected reasons which may indicate they are choice riders, mostly listed Convenience (24%); only one response listed environmental concerns.

It is important to note, however, that respondents were allowed and encouraged to make more than one selection, and there were 50 valid responses for the 24 riders who answered the question. Therefore, it is possible for a rider to select both disability and convenience as reasons for the trip. Or a rider could select disability, lack of alternatives, and limited mobility. This means that a direct translation of these percentages to assumptions about the percentage of riders who are captive may not be accurate. However, it is possible to infer that many riders of LATS do not have other reliable or affordable transportation options available to them.

Significance: The high level of transit-dependent riders on LATS is both a good sign for continuing patronage of the service and an indication of the importance LATS has for Livingston County. Without LATS service, many community members may not be able to access critical services, jobs, medical care, or other needed destinations.

Question 5. If the LATS bus service did not exist, how would you have made this trip?

Figure A-5: LATS On-Board Survey, Question 5



Purpose: To understand how riders would have made this trip absent LATS, the relationship between captive and choice riders, and other transportation options available to riders.

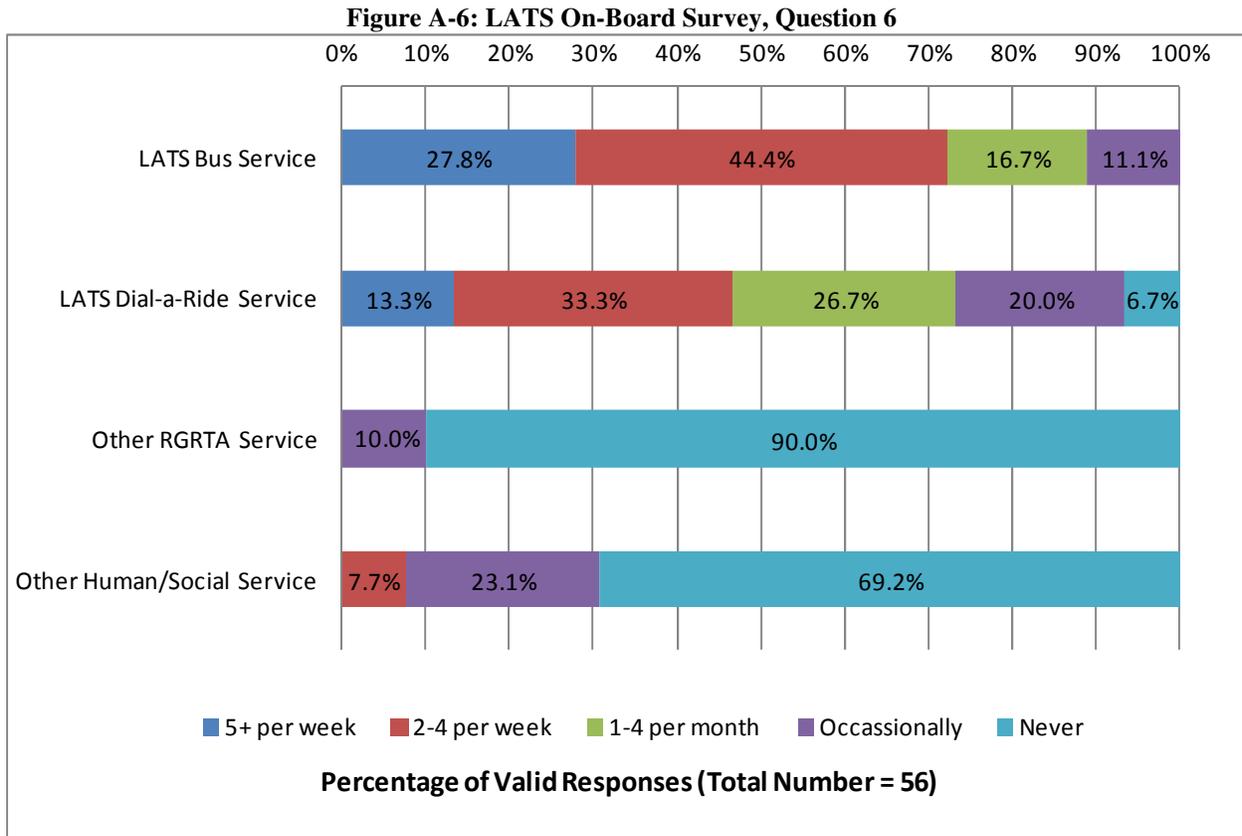
Results: The largest response was that respondents would not have made the trip (33%) without LATS service. The next largest responses were to ride with someone (20%) and walk (17%). Other responses were to use Dial-a-Ride services (10%), drive alone (7%), buy or rent a car (7%), bike (3%), or take a taxi (3%).

Significance: That a third of responses indicated that the trip would not have been made in the absence of LATS is an important finding. This shows that LATS is the only option available for some respondents or some trip purposes. This is particularly telling since so many LATS trips are to access critical destinations like jobs or medical care.

The second largest response was to ride with someone, which indicates at least a certain level of access to private vehicles, but the low response to drive alone (7%) shows that vehicle ownership among LATS riders is likely low. Riding with someone also is not always an available option and could add burden to family, friends, and neighbors if they were called up on in the absence of LATS service. The low number of responses for drive alone, buy/rent a car, and taxi are not surprising given that cost of service was listed as a major reason to use LATS.

It is interesting that the third highest response was walking. This indicates that at least some trips on LATS are fairly short, likely less than one mile, but perhaps a little longer. However, walking is not feasible for many trips either because the destinations are too far away or because there is some mobility limitation, disability, or medical issue precluding walking.

Question 6. On average, how many times do you ride each of the following transit services?



Purpose: To find out how often riders use LATS services as well as other existing transportation services in the Study Area.

Results: Respondents use LATS fixed-route bus service and Dial-a-Ride services frequently and use other non-LATS services infrequently. About 72% of respondents use LATS fixed-route bus service multiple times per week, indicating that riders are frequent users of the service. A little under half of respondents (47%) use the Dial-a-Ride service multiple times per week. Most respondents (90%) never use other RGRTA services and no respondents use them frequently. Most respondents (69%) also never use other human/social service transportation services, but some (8%) do use these services multiple times per week.

Significance: These results show how important LATS service is for residents of Livingston County who need transit service. LATS is used frequently by its riders and no other option is used with much frequency in the County. Given that many riders are captive riders and many trip destinations are important ones like jobs, medical appointments, and social services, maintaining a good level of LATS service is important to many riders who may not be able to access their needed destinations on other services.

Question 7. Are there any locations inside Livingston County that need LATS service – if so, which ones? Please provide town/village and destination or major cross streets.

Purpose: To understand which destinations riders feel are unserved or underserved by LATS.

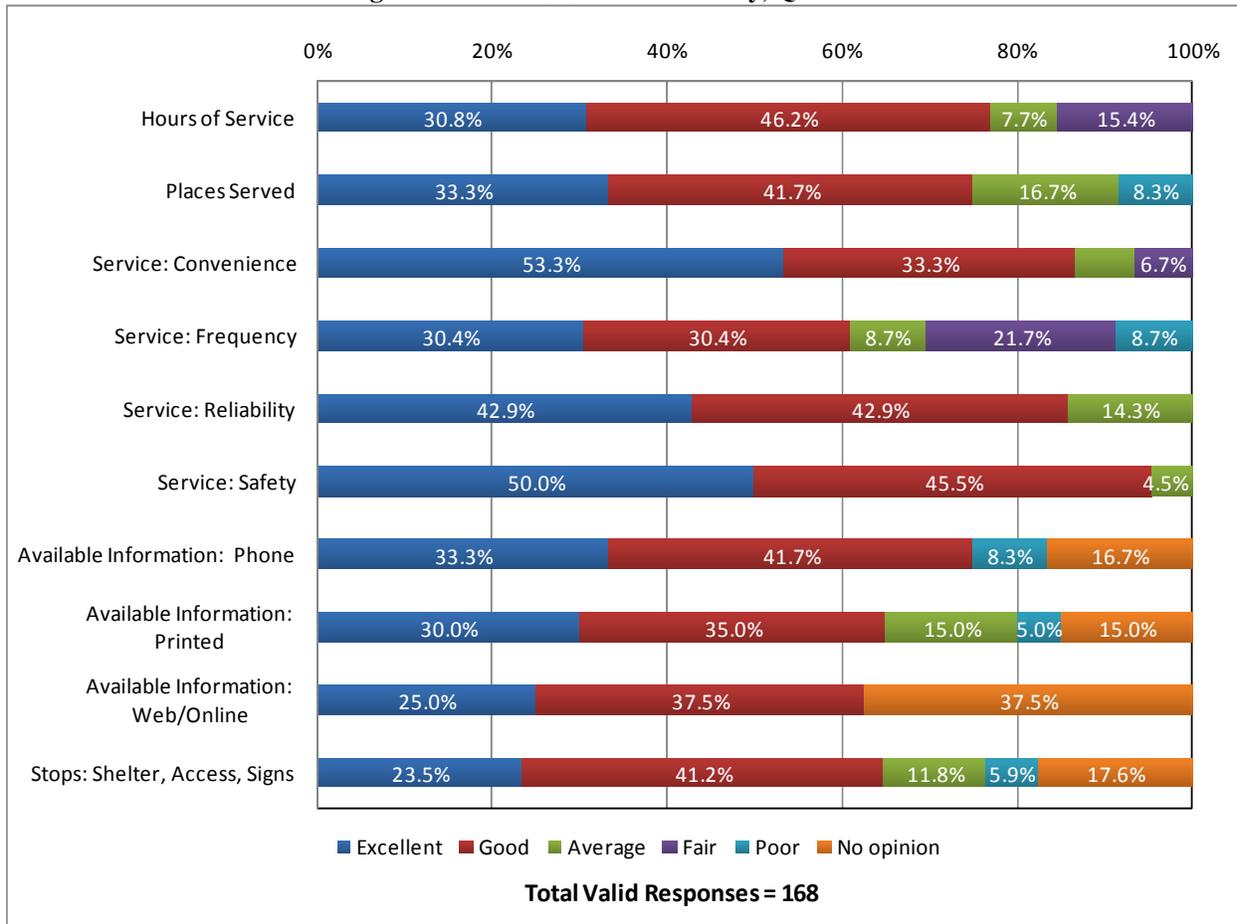
Results: The following ten responses were received:

- To work in Avon
- I like to see LATS run on weekends
- Nunda
- From CASA at 11:35 back to Nunda
- Nunda
- No
- From Geneseo to Nunda 4:30 pm
- To work in Dansville
- Not have to wait for 2 hours in Mt. Morris
- Nunda to Geneseo

Significance: Nunda clearly popped up a lot in responses, which shows that at least some riders with origins and/or destinations in Nunda do not feel the scheduled services adequately meet their needs. Some of these responses seem to indicate schedule timing issues more than destination issues.

Question 8. Please indicate your opinion of the following LATS qualities.

Figure A-7: LATS On-Board Survey, Question 8



Purpose: To understand the respondents’ perceptions of the current quality of LATS services and to highlight areas that could be improved.

Results: Overall, LATS received high marks from respondents. At least 60% of respondents indicated they perceived each item as either ‘excellent’ or ‘good.’ Additionally, no items received a ‘poor’ rating from more than 9% of respondents. However, there is definitely room for improvement as most responses were for ‘good’ not ‘excellent’ and a few items received higher than hoped for levels of ‘average,’ ‘fair,’ and ‘poor.’

The highest rated item was safety with 96% giving it an ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ rating. That is terrific, as safety is of utmost importance for any transit agency. The next highest rated categories were service convenience (86% ‘excellent’ or ‘good’) and service reliability (86% ‘excellent’ or ‘good’), which are both important basic components of a good system. Service convenience also received the highest proportion of ‘excellent’ ratings (53%).

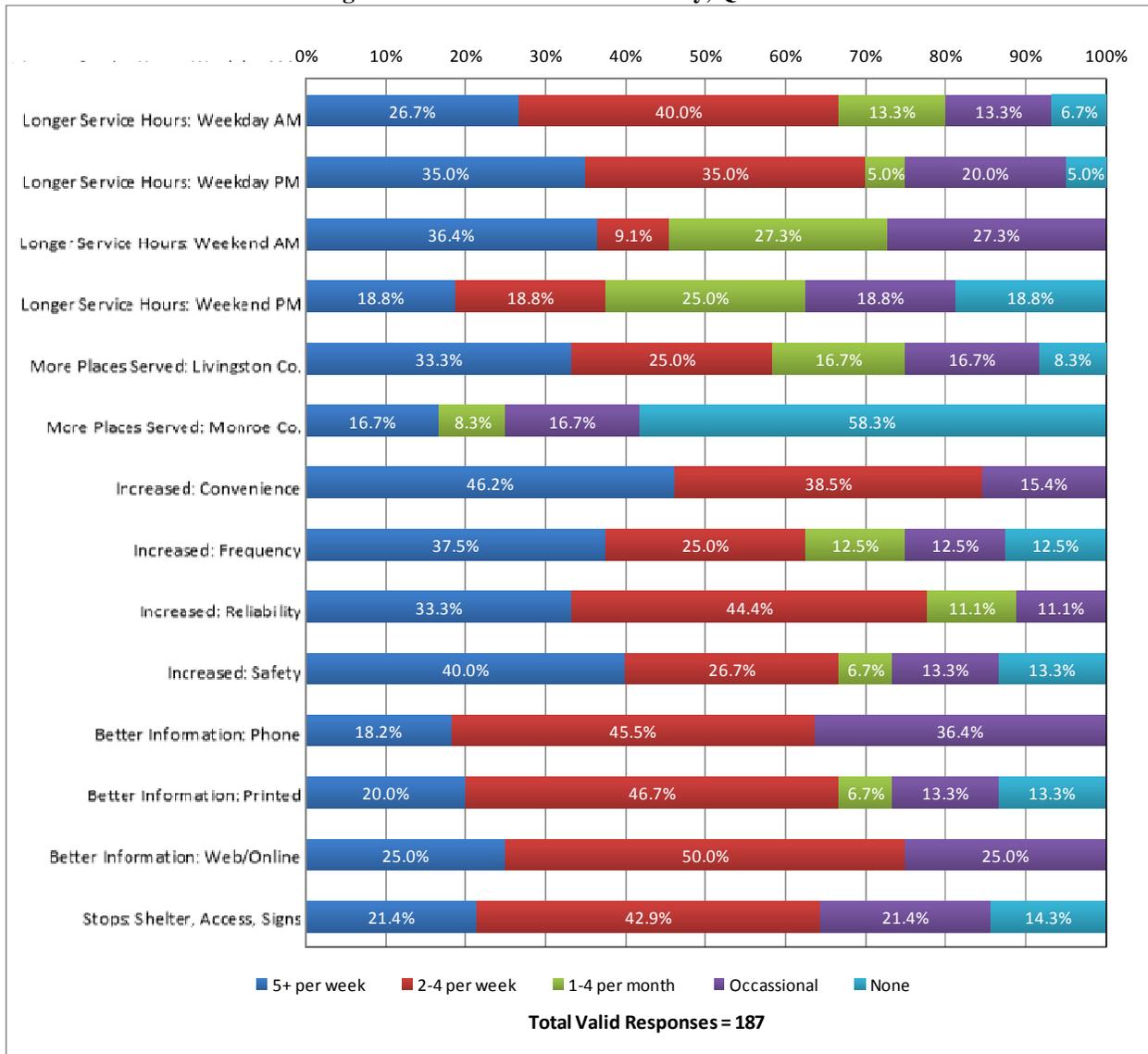
The worst performing categories were service frequency (61% ‘good’ or ‘excellent’), web information availability (63% ‘good’ or ‘excellent’), stops (65% ‘good’ or ‘excellent’), and

available printed information (65% 'good' or 'excellent'). Stops received the lowest percentage of 'excellent' ratings (24%), followed closely by web information availability (25%). Service frequency received the highest percentage of 'fair' or 'poor' ratings (30%), followed by hours of service (15% all 'fair'), and places served (8% all 'poor'), and phone information (8% all 'poor').

Significance: The results are good overall for LATS. Safety and reliability are two of the most critical pieces for transit systems to generate ridership, and these were two of the three highest rated categories. However, respondents indicate some displeasure with service frequency, information availability (in all forms), and the quality of amenities at stops. Of course, improvements in any of these categories carries with it costs, but the perceptions of riders can help give an idea of where LATS can get a good "bang for its buck" when targeting improvements to make to the system.

Question 9. If the following IMPROVEMENTS were made, how many MORE TRIPS would you make, on average?

Figure A-8: LATS On-Board Survey, Question 9



Purpose: To understand what types of service improvements could result in increased ridership levels.

Results: Most respondents indicated that making a given improvement would lead to them making multiple trips more per week using the LATS service. With the exception of more places served in Monroe County and longer weekend PM service hours, at least 50% of respondents for each question indicated that were that improvement to be made, they would use the service two or more times more per week.

Increased convenience was the most cited improvement that would lead to more trips with LATS (85% indicating this improvement would lead to multiple trips per week more), followed by increased reliability (77%), better web information (75%), longer weekday PM service hours (70%), longer weekday AM service hours (67%), increased safety (67%), better printed information (67%), and improvements to stops (64%).

The item which had the worst response was more places served in Monroe County, with 58% of respondents saying this improvement would not lead to them using LATS any more frequently and only 17% indicating that they would LATS multiple times per week more with that improvement.

Significance: The results of Question 9 are a bit odd when viewed in conjunction with Question 8. The second highest-rated component of service from Question 8 (convenience) was the improvement that respondents indicated was most likely to lead to them using the service much more. Similarly, Safety (the highest rated element) and reliability (third highest rated element) were also rated by a high proportion of respondents as improvements which would lead to them using LATS much more. That is not expected and a little surprising.

Of course, some results are more in line with expectations. Improvements to information availability (in all forms), stops, service hours, and service frequency were all selected by respondents as improvements which would lead to them using the service much more. This fits with the results from Question 8 which showed lower ratings from respondents for these items.

There is a chance some respondents misunderstood the question and approached it as if the question was seeking information on the respondent's opinion of the current level of LATS service in each category (like in Question 8). Because of the small number of respondents to any individual item (8 to 20 responses per question), it is possible that a misinterpretation by a few respondents would skew results noticeably.

However, it is also possible that all respondents correctly interpreted the question and these results do represent a blueprint for improvements that would increase ridership. After all, terms like 'convenience' and 'reliability' can be interpreted broadly, and even if these elements receive good marks from riders, improvements in these areas could still lead to increased ridership.

Question 10. Please provide any general comments on LATS or ways to improve connectivity in the County?

Purpose: To provide a space for open-ended comments on any aspects of LATS services which may not have been captured by other elements of the survey instrument.

Results: A total of 14 write-in responses were received which appear below:

- The bus doesn't accommodate any area factory work schedules
- Love the low prices! The office people suck - the drivers are good. Wish we could just go where we need to go, that we do not have to be on a bus for hours or ride around on the fixed rts. Don't know about how anything works because people who ride told me about LATS and where it goes, the office people are no help at all. You need more advertisement about LATS that it is open to public not just elderly, state home and ARC people (put ads on TV, not in the penny saver - people don't read, etc.). Direct Rt to and from work would be awesome, not twenty diff stops before you get to where you're going.
- New phone system frustrates drivers and I do not think it is safe to use while driving [specific comment on Safety part of #8]. Old hand held speakers were never much safer for drivers to use. I think the new black telephones are inconvenient and dangerous. Thank you.
- I like all of the drivers
- Shelters at stops. Standing outside in the rain/snow is not really good.
- More trips from Geneseo to Nunda in late afternoon.
- I have waited 1 hour to be picked up to go home from app at hospital.
- More runs to Nunda from Mt. Morse.
- Drive on Sundays; sheltered benches at bus stops - it gets cold.
- I am satisfied.
- Generally very good; better transfer times in Geneseo would be nice.
- Keep up the good work.
- We had a temporary service this summer from Geneseo to Nunda (PM) and it was GREAT.
- We need a fixed-route from Nunda to Geneseo and back. Work hours for most SUNY-Geneseo employees are 8:00 am to 4:15 pm. Thank you.

Significance: Many of the comments were further praise for LATS, including a number of comments praising drivers. A few comments indicated specific service improvements, like Geneseo to Nunda bus service, and a couple included a recommendation to improve bus stop amenities. Wait and transfer times, service hours, and information availability were also items listed as areas for improvement.

