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EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

BUS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT

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Market Research  
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## BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

In line with SCRTD's continuing efforts to improve service, the San Gabriel Valley Bus Improvement Program went into effect on April 11, 1976. Shortly thereafter, a study was conducted among bus riders to measure reaction toward the Guide (a route map and informational brochure) used in the area.

In order to measure the overall perceptions of area residents toward this major service improvement, a series of sectional studies are planned. This first study was limited to the far eastern section of the San Gabriel Valley.

The major purposes of the study were to measure residents' level of awareness of the service improvements, the extent of usage of various RTD services and the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service.

Additionally, data concerning respondents' characteristics, such as age and income, were collected, as well as other pertinent information.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to reach a cross section of the residents, the central location personal interview technique was utilized. Interviews were conducted August 17 - 22, 1976 by the firm of Trotta Associates, an independent market research firm in Los Angeles.

Respondents were screened according to four criteria:

1. Resident of area defined as East San Gabriel Valley
2. Eighteen years of age or older
3. Equal number of interviews with males and females
4. At least one third of the interviews to be with bus riders (defined as those who ride the bus at least once a week)

The following pages report the findings of the study according to cross tabulations by riders and non-riders.

The data in this report reflect a 95% level of confidence with a  $\pm 4\%$  error factor.

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a moderate level of transit dependency in this area as indicated by the proportion of households with no automobile.
- The majority (55%) of those working away from home, work within the East San Gabriel area.
  - While a more definitive study of work hours, trip patterns, etc. is required to make specific routing and scheduling decisions, data from this study indicate that:
    - 1) local, or possibly shuttle-type service, would meet the needs of most of the residents in the area
    - 2) less than one in five requires service into the Los Angeles CBD or west of the CBD on a regular 5-days a week basis
- There is a high level of knowledge of buses going near their home, as well as the location of their nearest bus stop. However, less than half knew of the service improvements introduced in April, 1976.
- More than half had not heard of RTD's Park 'n Ride service, in spite of the fact that the Pomona Park 'n Ride is located within the study area.

- On-going promotional and informational programs are called for in this area to inform the public and keep them aware of the service available to them.
  
- Among those who use the service, satisfaction is relatively high. Those dissatisfied with the service cite off-schedule buses or lack of knowledge of schedules as reasons.
  
- Those who do not ride buses give preference for own car and inconvenience of buses as reasons for not riding.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Among all respondents, 17% do not own an automobile. The proportion without automobiles is much higher among bus riders than non-riders. Additionally, non-riders have a higher incidence of multiple car ownership.

Comparing riders and non-riders by age shows a significantly higher proportion of young persons (18 to 29) among the rider group. Conversely, the non-rider group has a disproportionately higher representation of the 30 - 49 age groups. The 50 and older groups are nearly equally represented among both riders and non-riders.

Consistent with the age and automobile ownership data, riders have a lower income level than non-riders. Thus, average (median) income among riders is \$8,000 as compared with \$12,740 for non-riders.

More than three out of five respondents work away from home. Of this group, the majority work within the East San Gabriel Valley. Overall, one in ten works in the Los Angeles CBD. However, there are differences between riders and non-riders, with 23% of riders working in the CBD as compared with 5% of non-riders. Non-riders have a higher proportion of employment in the East San Gabriel Valley.



TABLE 1NUMBER OF AUTOMOBILES OWNED

	<u>Riders</u>	<u>Non- Riders</u>
None	41%	5%
One	31	57
Two	19	42
Three or more	8	16
No answer	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>
	100%	100%

TABLE 2AGE

	<u>Riders</u>	<u>Non- Riders</u>
18 - 21	22%	7%
22 - 29	26	18
30 - 39	8	24
40 - 49	6	18
50 - 61	12	12
62 & older	25	20
No answer	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	100%	100%
Median age	<u>33</u>	<u>41</u>

TABLE 3

	<u>Riders</u>	<u>Non- Riders</u>
Under \$5,000	37%	15%
\$5,000 - 9,999	22	25
\$10,000 - \$14,999	20	18
\$15,000 - 19,999	10	18
\$20,000 - 29,999	2	14
\$30,000 & over	-	5
No answer	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>
	100%	100%
Median income	\$8,000	\$12,740

TABLE 4

<u>COMMUNITY OF EMPLOYMENT</u>	
Total Los Angeles County	<u>81%</u>
East San Gabriel Valley	55
Central San Gabriel Valley	11
Los Angeles CBD	11
All other Los Angeles County	4
San Bernardino County	13
Riverside County	2
Orange County	2
All other	<u>2</u>
	100%
Base: Those who work away from home	(169)

RIDERSHIP PATTERNS

Riders and non-riders are nearly equally likely to work away from home or go to school. Riders show a somewhat greater proportion of medical visits (i.e. go to a doctor, clinic or hospital). Non-riders have a higher incidence of non-grocery shopping, visiting friends or relatives and engaging in recreational activities (i.e. go to the movies, sports events, etc.).

Riders are most likely to use the bus for work or non-grocery shopping. They are least likely to use the bus for school. By definition non-riders use the bus less than once a week. However, they have used it for various activities, although the incidence of such use is too low for generalization.

TABLE 5

ACTIVITIES ENGAGE IN AND BUS USE

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Engage in</u>		<u>Bus Ever Used</u>	
	<u>Rider</u>	<u>Non-Rider</u>	<u>Rider</u>	<u>Non-Rider</u>
Work away from home	62%	63%	53%	1%
Shop (other than grocery)	71%	81%	52%	4%
Go to a doctor/clinic/hospital	35%	27%	28%	1%
Visit friends/relatives	67%	78%	47%	3%
Go to school	27%	28%	18%	1%
For recreational activities	51%	65%	32%	2%
Base	(92)	(177)	(92)	(177)

## KNOWLEDGE & USAGE OF SERVICES

There was a high level of knowledge among both riders and non-riders of the location of the bus stop nearest their home. Both groups were also knowledgeable of whether a bus passed within walking distance of their home. However, when it came to knowing where that bus goes for either all or part of its route, the non-riders were clearly at a disadvantage. Only one in three non-riders knew where a bus passing near their home goes. This compares with three out of four riders who knew the destination of a bus passing near their home.

About three-fourths of the riders had heard of RTD monthly passes, the El Monte Busway, RTD Telephone Information and the downtown Minibus. A significantly lower proportion of non-riders had heard of these services.

Three out of five riders have used the El Monte Busway. More than half have called RTD Telephone Information. Among the non-riders, one in ten has used the Busway or called RTD Telephone Information.

The single most frequently mentioned reason for not riding a bus for any regular activities is a preference for their own car. Other responses indicate that various convenience factors are seen as lacking. One in ten doesn't ride buses because of lack of knowledge of routes, schedules, etc. There was a small, but perhaps significant, group who gave fear of riding buses as their reason.

TABLE 6

KNOWLEDGE OF BUS LINES RELATIVE TO HOME

	<u>Riders</u>	<u>Non- Riders</u>
Know location of nearest bus stop	98%	85%
Bus passes near home	88	82
Know where bus goes	75	34
Base	(92)	(177)

TABLE 7

AWARENESS & USAGE OF RTD SERVICES

	<u>Heard of Service</u>		<u>Have Used Service</u>	
	<u>Rider</u>	<u>Non- Rider</u>	<u>Rider</u>	<u>Non- Rider</u>
RTD monthly passes	76%	60%	35%	3%
El Monte Busway	74	48	62	10
Downtown minibus	72	49	35	7
RTD Park 'n Ride	55	43	18	4
RTD Telephone Information	74	29	54	10
Base	(92)	(177)	(92)	(177)

TABLE 8

REASONS FOR NOT USING BUS

Prefer car/car more convenient	34%
Inconvenient routes/schedules	25
Buses take too long/too slow	16
Don't like to wait for bus	13
Lack knowledge of buses/schedules/etc.	10
Live within walking distance (of where they want to go)	6
Afraid to ride buses	5
Too far to walk to/from bus stop	4
Just don't like buses	4
Handicapped/ill	3
All other reasons (less than 3% each)	13
Total	*

Base: Non-Riders (177)

\*Totals to more than 100% due to multiple reasons

AWARENESS OF SAN GABRIEL VALLEY BUS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Awareness of the San Gabriel Valley Bus Improvement Program is not as high as some of the other RTD services. Unaided awareness was 19% among all respondents, while aided awareness was 23%. Thus, only two out of five are aware of the service improvements that have been introduced.

TABLE 9

	<u>Riders</u>	<u>Non- Riders</u>
Unaided awareness	36%	10%
Aided awareness	21	24
Total awareness	57%	34%

Newspapers were the most frequently quoted source of information about the service improvement, followed by brochures handed out by District personnel.

TABLE 10

SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

Newspapers	45%
Brochures handed out by RTD personnel	27
From friends/relatives	14
Observed in person	10
Radio	9
Television	8
All other sources	9

Base: Those aware of improvements (111)

## LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH SERVICE

There is a relatively high level of satisfaction with the bus service among those who have ever ridden the bus. On a scale of one to four (1-very satisfied, 4-very dissatisfied), the satisfaction rating was 1.8, or slightly better than "somewhat satisfied."

TABLE 11

Q. "How satisfied are you with the bus service?"

Very satisfied	43%
Somewhat satisfied	37
Somewhat dissatisfied	13
Very dissatisfied	6
No answer	<u>1</u>
	100%

Base: Those who have  
ever used the bus (103)

Those who are satisfied with the service cite driver courtesy, on time schedules and convenient routing as reasons for satisfaction.

Those expressing some dissatisfaction with the service, mentioned the same reasons in a negative context - i.e. lack of driver courtesy, buses not on time, etc.



SATISFACTION WITH BUS SERVICE

Very/Somewhat Satisfied	<u>80%</u>
Gets me where I want to go	27%
Buses are on time	14
Drivers are nice	11
Reasonable rates	7
Convenient (unspecified)	7
Don't have to drive/worry about freeway	5
More convenient schedule	5
Comfortable/clean/cool buses	3
Good for people without a car	3
Just like (to take bus)	3
All other favorable reasons	6
Somewhat/Very Dissatisfied	<u>20%</u>
Buses not on time	8%
Don't know schedule	6
Takes too long to get to destination	5
Drivers rude/don't help	5
Not enough buses	5
Increase in cost	5
Too long a wait	5
Too confusing/frightening	4
Inconvenient routing	4
Too many transfers	4
All other unfavorable	4

Base: Those who have ever used bus (103)