Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative

Prepared For

Arlington County Commuter Services

Prepared By

Southeastern Institute of Research
Study Report Contents

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Study Background & Objectives
Study Objectives

- Understand where Arlington County’s teens want to go.
- Identify why they want to go there.
- Understand how they currently get there.
- Understand if they need help getting there.
- Assess how transit could help them.
- Identify who currently uses transit and the optimal target audiences to increase transit use.
- Understand what improvements would help get existing teen riders to ride transit on a more regular basis.
- Understand what barriers must be overcome to attract more teens to transit.
Study Methodology
## Study Methodology

### Teen Audience
- Paper survey
- Administered during the last week of school: June 12-16, 2006
- Teens in grades 8-11 were surveyed from Arlington County middle & high schools
- Arlington County selected the classes from which teens would participate
- Surveys were administered in English or Language Art classes in grades 9-11
- Surveys were administered in Gym or PE classes in grade 8
- Instructions were included with the survey that allowed any student whose first language was not English to be exempt from the survey

### Parent Audience
- Online survey
- Emails were sent to parent groups
- The survey was presented in both English and Spanish

### Educator Audience
- Online survey
- Postcards were placed in teachers’ mailboxes
- The survey was presented in English only
Participation in Survey
Teen Audience

• In total, 698 Arlington County teens completed the survey:
  - 8th Grade = 111
  - 9th Grade = 188
  - 10th Grade = 169
  - 11th Grade = 230

• Margin of error: +/-3.7%

Research Note:
This report presents quantitative survey findings from the Teen Survey and qualitative insights from the Parents and Educators Surveys.
### Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative Survey Participation by School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arlington County School</th>
<th>Student Participation*</th>
<th>School Percent of Total Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yorktown</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington-Lee</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakefield</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langston or Arlington Mill</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB Woodlawn</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swanson</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunston</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Center</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenmore</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Parenting Center</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Directions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>776</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*698 students took the survey. Some students attend more than one school.*
# Survey Respondent Participation Level

**By Arlington County School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th># Students Participated</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents to Survey by School</th>
<th>Total Students enrolled</th>
<th>Estimated Students in Grades 8-11*</th>
<th>Estimated Percent Penetration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yorktown</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>1618</td>
<td>1214</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington-Lee</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>1513</td>
<td>1135</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wakefield</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1442</td>
<td>1082</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langston or Arlington Mill</td>
<td>HS Continuation</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB Woodlawn</td>
<td>HS and MS</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swanson</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunston</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Center</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Kenmore</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teen Parenting Center</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Directions</td>
<td>Alt HS Program</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>776</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study
Respondents’ Profile
Demographics
Respondents’ Gender

Q34: Are you male or female?

Female: 58%
Male: 42%

n=698
Respondents’ Age

Q2: How old are you?

18 Years Old: 11%
17 Years Old: 20%
16 Years Old: 23%
15 Years Old: 26%
14 Years Old: 17%
13 Years Old: 3%

n=698
Q1: What grade are you in?

- 8th: 16%
- 9th: 27%
- 10th: 24%
- 11th: 33%

n=698
Respondents’ Ethnicity

- **White**: 47%
- **Hispanic**: 21%
- **African American**: 12%
- **Asian**: 8%
- **Native Hawaiian**: 6%
- **American Indian**: 2%
- **Other**: 2%
- **No Answer**: 2%

**Q31**: What best describes you?

**Arlington County Public School Population Estimate 2006:**
- **White**: 45.8%
- **Hispanic**: 29%
- **African American**: 14.1%
- **Asian**: 10.3%

**Source:** ArlingtonK12.va.us
Respondents’ Length of Time Living in Arlington County

Q33: About how long have you lived in Arlington County?

- Less Than 2 Years: 15%
- 2-5 Years: 12%
- 6-10 Years: 17%
- 10+ Years: 18%
- Born in Arlington: 38%

n=668
Key Finding:

This Study’s survey fieldwork methodology generated a large pool of teen respondents, evenly divided by high school grade levels, in schools throughout Arlington County. The one sampling issue may be the disproportionate number of respondents from Washington-Lee and Yorktown schools. This aside, survey respondents’ ethnicity distribution closely matches Arlington Public Schools’ demographic profile.

Strategic Implication:

This Study’s dataset provides a robust and solid base from which to project with statistical certainty how Arlington County teens view issues surrounding the use/non use of transit.
Opportunity Audiences for Teen Transit Initiative
How to Get More Teens to Ride the Bus?
Almost Three-quarters of Teens Have Used Metrorail

Q14: Do you ever ride Metrorail?

- Yes: 71%
- No: 29%

n=697
Almost Half of Teens Have Used the ART and/or Metrobus

Q15: Do you ever ride the ART and/or Metrobus?

- Yes: 47%
- No: 53%

n=692
Of Those Who Ride ART/Metrobus, Almost Half Ride at Least Once a Week

Q16: How often do you ride ART and/or Metrobus?

49% Ride at least once/week
51% Ride less than a few times/month

5 to 7 Times/Week: 22%
4 Times/Week: 6%
2 to 3 Times/Week: 12%
Once/Week: 9%
A Few Times/Month: 23%
Once/Month: 28%

n=309
Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative Opportunity Audiences

**Different Segments of Riders/Non-riders**

- **Non-riders**: 53%
  - Light Riders: A few times a month or less - 24%
  - Heavy Riders: At least once a week - 23%

Q15: Do you ever ride the ART and/or Metrobus?
Q16: How often do you ride ART and/or Metrobus?

- 49% of 47% say they ride at least once a week: $47 \times 49 = 23.03\%$
- $51 \times 47 = 23.97\%$
Classic Marketing Approach

*Focus on Most Likely Prospects:*
*Move Non-riders to Light Riders and Convert Light Riders to Heavy Riders*
Demographic Profile of Non-riders Vs. Riders (Heavy & Light)

### Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Non-rider</th>
<th>Heavy Rider</th>
<th>Light Rider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Non-rider</th>
<th>Heavy Rider</th>
<th>Light Rider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Length of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Residence</th>
<th>Non-rider</th>
<th>Heavy Rider</th>
<th>Light Rider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than 2 Years</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 Years</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Years</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than 10 Years</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Arlington</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic Profile of Non-riders Vs. Riders (Heavy & Light)

### Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Non-rider</th>
<th>Heavy Rider</th>
<th>Light Rider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td><strong>58%</strong></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td><strong>36%</strong></td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td><strong>25%</strong></td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Finding:

Teens who are not transit riders tend to be 14-17 year olds (few 13 or 18 year olds) who have lived in Arlington County for a long time (born in the County or lived there more than 10 years).

Current riders tend to be newer Hispanic and African American residents in the County. Heavy riders skew older (18) and light riders tend to be younger teens (15-16).

Strategic Implication:

Take steps to ensure that the Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative takes into consideration the perspectives of these different teen audiences or segments - age, race, and experience with the County.
The Need: Do Teens Need Help Finding a Ride?
Q12: Other than getting to and from school, overall how easy or hard is it for you to find a ride?
One in Five Respondents Have Their Driver’s License

Q36: What best describes you?

- Not Old Enough: 21%
- Learner’s Permit: 34%
- Old Enough but Don’t Have: 24%
- Have a License: 21%

n=668
Having a **Driver’s License** Makes It Easier to Find a Ride

70% of teens who have a driver’s license say it is **easy** to find a ride.

Q12: Other than getting to and from school, overall how easy or hard is it for you to find a ride?
56% of all teens say it is easy to find a ride.

Q12: Other than getting to and from school, overall how easy or hard is it for you to find a ride?
44% of All Teens **May Benefit** from Some Help in Getting a Ride

- **56%** say easy
- **23%** say neither hard or easy
- **21%** say hard

*Let’s assume for the sake of this analysis, the 24% of teens “on the fence” fall to the group that says it is hard to find a ride

\[23\% + 21\% = 44\%\]

Q12: Other than getting to and from school, overall how easy or hard is it for you to find a ride?
ART and/or Metrobus Are Already Helping Teens in Need Find a Ride

*Increased Use of Transit Correlates to How Hard Teens Say It Is to Find a Ride*

Q12: Other than getting to and from school, overall how easy or hard is it for you to find a ride?

- **Very Hard**
  - Non-rider: 5%
  - Light Riders: 5%
  - Heavy Riders: 7%

- **Somewhat Hard**
  - Non-rider: 10%
  - Light Riders: 19%
  - Heavy Riders: 26%

- **Neither**
  - Non-rider: 20%
  - Light Riders: 21%
  - Heavy Riders: 32%

- **Somewhat Easy**
  - Non-rider: 36%
  - Light Riders: 32%
  - Heavy Riders: 17%

- **Very Easy**
  - Non-rider: 29%
  - Light Riders: 23%
  - Heavy Riders: 17%

33% of Heavy Users find it difficult to find a ride.
Key Finding:

Those who say it is easy to find a ride (56%) tend to use transit less than other teens. One out of five Arlington County teens say finding a ride is hard. Another one in four are on the fence saying it is neither easy or hard. ART & Metrobus are already a resource for some of these teens in need of a ride.

Strategic Implication:

The Teen Transit Initiative holds promise to help others in need.
Where Arlington County Teens Go
Teens Go Everywhere!
Ballston & North Arlington Are the Most Popular Destinations

Q9: Do you regularly go to any of the places listed below?

- Ballston: 90%
- North Arlington: 83%
- Clarendon: 69%
- Pentagon City: 68%
- Court House: 68%
- Downtown DC: 62%
- Columbia Pike: 60%
- Fairfax County: 54%
- Rosslyn: 45%
- Crystal City: 44%
- Maryland: 40%
- Shirlington: 37%
- Virginia Square: 32%

80% plus of all teens go to Ballston & N. Arlington.
A Higher Number of Heavy Riders Go to These Same Destinations on a More Regular Basis Than Light and Non-riders

Heavy riders are those teens who ride ART and/or Metrobus weekly.

Light riders ride monthly.

Non-riders don’t ride at all.

Q9: Do you regularly go to any of the places listed below?
North Arlington and Ballston are **THE** Most Popular Destinations for Both Riders & Non-riders

Q10: Of all the places that you go, **which place do you go most often?**
Key Finding:

Teens go everywhere. Most popular destinations are North Arlington & Ballston. Heavy riders appear to go to all of Arlington County destinations more regularly than light riders and non-riders.

Strategic Implication:

Keep the top destinations in mind when exploring service issues and when creating communication images and messages - use North Arlington & Ballston images and iconology. Show how ART & Metrobus help teens get to these favorite spots. Maybe even show how ART and Metrobus help teens who need to go everywhere in the County.
What Teens Do When They Get There
Almost Two-thirds of Teens Go to the Mall, Eat Out, & the Movies

Q11: What do you do there?

- Mall, Movies: 64%
- Friend's House: 37%
- After School Events: 20%
- Other: 20%
- Work: 16%
- Community Center: 8%

n=584
Non-riders and Riders Do the Same Things When They Get to Their Destinations, with the Exception of Work as More Heavy Riders Work Than Non-riders and Light Riders

Q11: What do you do there?

Heavy riders are those teens who ride ART and/or Metrobus weekly.
Light riders ride monthly.
Non-riders don’t ride at all.
Key Finding:

When they get to their destinations, teens frequent malls, movie theaters, and friends’ houses. Non-riders and riders do the same activities at these destinations, with the one exception being “work.” Twice as many heavy riders are heading to work than non-riders and light riders.

Strategic Implication:

Keep these activities in mind when creating communication messages. Show how ART & Metrobus can help teens get to their favorite destinations and, in particular, how ART & Metrobus help teens get to their jobs.

Connecting the Teen Transit Initiative to teen jobs effectively positions the Initiative as “infrastructure support” for Arlington County’s economy. If practical, tie-in the larger teen employers and employment sites in the final Teen Transit Initiative’s marketing program. Include teen jobs as part of the messaging.
How Teens Currently Get To These Places
Q3: How do you get to school?

- **School bus**: 48%
- **Parent**: 32%
- **Walk**: 10%
- **Drive themselves**: 8%
- **Ride w/a friend**: 4%
- **ART**: 1%
- **Metrobus**: 1%
- **Bike/skateboard**: 0%

**Less than 10%**

**n=691**
Destination: **Mall, Eat Out, & Movies**

Q6: If you go to a shopping mall, a movie theater, or places to eat with your friends, how do you usually get there?

Less than 15%
Q8: If you go to someone else’s house, how do you get there?
473 or 56% of the students said they have a job.

Q4: If you have a job, how do you usually get there?

Less than 10%
Q5: If you attend after school events such as sports activities, clubs, music, or other lessons, how do you usually get there?

580 or 87% of students attend after school events.

Less than 10%
Q7: If you go to a community center, how do you usually get there?

60% or 404 teens go to a community center.

Less than 10%
Research Note:

19% of all teens answered yes to using ART and/or Metrobus to get to the aforementioned destinations in Q4. through Q8. (to school, to work, to the mall, etc.).

As noted earlier, 47% of all teens said yes to the question (Q15) “Do you ever ride ART and/or Metrobus?” We assume that the 19% who answered yes to using ART & Metrobus to reach specific activities in previous slides were probably half of this group of all riders - the heavy riders who use ART and/or Metrobus at least once a week. This heavy rider group makes up 23% of all teens.
Key Finding:
As expected, most teens get to places with their parents’ help or they walk. Transit currently has light penetration (use) among teens. ART and Metrobus are currently serving less than 10% of teens who are engaged in any one activity - going to the mall, to the community center, to jobs, etc. Even when taking into account all of teens’ current uses of ART and/or Metrobus, only 19% of all teen respondents say they use ART and/or Metrobus as the way they “usually get there.”

Strategic Implication:
There is a great opportunity for ART and/or Metrobus to further serve Arlington County teens’ transportation needs. The Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative should explore the greatest points of leverage - where limited transit resources can have the biggest impact (i.e., serve the most teens).
How to Make Transit More Attractive to Existing Riders
How to Get More Existing Teen Riders to Ride the Bus More Often?
Convenience and Dependability Are the Two Most Important Attributes to Teens When Riding ART and/or Metrobus

Q17-21: How important is ________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?

Top 2 Boxes: Somewhat important or Very important 4 or 5.

- **Convenience**: 24% Somewhat Important, 51% Very Important (75% total important)
- **Dependability**: 21% Somewhat Important, 52% Very Important (73% total important)
- **Safety**: 19% Somewhat Important, 42% Very Important (61% total important)
- **Cost**: 25% Somewhat Important, 35% Very Important (60% total important)
- **Comfort**: 23% Somewhat Important, 34% Very Important (57% total important)

Southeastern Institute of Research
Teens Are Most Satisfied with Safety, Convenience, and Comfort When Riding ART and/or Metrobus

Q22-26: How satisfied are you with ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?

Top 2 Boxes: Satisfied or Very Satisfied 4 or 5.
Convenience, Dependability, and Cost May Be Issues with *All Current Riders*

*Satisfaction vs. Expectation (Importance)*

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<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q17-21: How important is ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?

Q22-26: How satisfied are you with ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?
Convenience and Dependability May Be Issues with **Light Riders**

*Satisfaction vs. Expectation (Importance)*

- **Convenience**: 64% satisfied, 81% important
- **Dependability**: 41% satisfied, 79% important
- **Safety**: 64% satisfied, 65% important
- **Cost**: 49% satisfied, 55% important
- **Comfort**: 62% satisfied, 59% important

Q17-21: How important is ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?

Q22-26: How satisfied are you with ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?
Dependability and Cost
May Be Issues with **Heavy Riders**

*Saturation vs. Expectation (Importance)*

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q17-21: How important is ___________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?

Q22-26: How satisfied are you with ___________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?
#1. The “Cost Factor” may be a bigger deal for Heavy Riders than Light Riders.

#2. Light Riders may have greater expectations of what convenience and dependability mean to them. This creates a bigger “gap.”

Q17-21: How important is ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?

Q22-26: How satisfied are you with ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?
Suggestions for Improvements
Current Riders Say Dependability, Cheaper Fares, and More Stops Will Improve ART and/or Metrobus

Q27a: Please tell us one single improvement you would like to see on ART and/or Metrobus.
Key Finding:

For those currently using ART & Metrobus, convenience, dependability, and costs (fares) are most important considerations (expectations) and these expectations are not currently being met by existing service. There are significant “performance gaps.”

Light Riders, when compared to heavy riders, may have greater expectations of what convenience and dependability mean to them. This creates an even bigger “performance gap” to close.

The “Cost Factor” may be a bigger deal for Heavy Riders than Light Riders perhaps as Heavy Riders experience fares (cost) more often.

Strategic Implication:

To make transit even more appealing to all current riders, look for ways to close the “performance gaps.” Recognizing that the Light Riders opportunity segment has relatively higher convenience and dependability expectations, make sure if routes are enhanced and promoted that they can actually deliver. Consider discounted fares for Heavy Riders.
How to Make Transit Attractive to Non-riders
How to Get New Teen Riders on the Bus
Why Don’t Teens Ride the Bus Now?

A Few Hypotheses

Don’t know how.
Not convenient to them.
Don’t have the money.
Parents won’t let them.
Don’t think it’s cool.
Never thought about it as an option.

Getting to the Answer . . .

28. This question is for people who DO NOT ride ART and/or Metrobus. Below are some reasons that a person might NOT ride ART and/or Metrobus. Please fill in all the reasons that apply to you.

28a. Please fill in the PRIMARY reason you do not ride ART and/or Metrobus. Please fill in only one bubble.
Barrier #1: Lack of Information & Knowledge
Q28: This question is for people who **DO NOT** ride ART and/or Metrobus. Below are some reasons that a person might **NOT** ride ART and/or Metrobus. Please fill in all the reasons that apply to you.
Barrier #1: Lack of Information & Knowledge

In Fact, Some Teens Say Lack of Information & Knowledge Does Impact Their Own Ridership

Q28a: Please fill in the PRIMARY reason you do not ride ART and/or Metrobus. Please fill in only one bubble.

n=331

Note: Only one answer was requested. Doesn’t add to 100% due to rounding.
Why Is Information Important?

*Behavioral Change Marketing Model*

- Awareness
- Familiarity
- Favorability/Consideration
- Trial
- Usage/Adopt Behavior
Almost Six in Ten Non-riders are Unfamiliar with ART and/or Metrobus

Q13: How familiar are you with ART and/or Metrobus?

57% of non-riders are unfamiliar

Awareness
Familiarity
Favorability/Consideration
Trial
Usage/Adept Behavior
Barrier #2:
Service Area, Schedules, and Convenience Issues
Barrier #2: Service Area, Schedules, and Convenience Issues

Two-thirds of Teens Believe Service Areas, Schedules, and Convenience Issues May Be Barriers for Riding the Bus

Q28: This question is for people who DO NOT ride ART and/or Metrobus. Below are some reasons that a person might NOT ride ART and/or Metrobus. Please fill in all the reasons that apply to you.
Barrier #2: Service Area, Schedules and Convenience Issues

In Fact, Teens Say Service Area, Schedules, and Convenience Issues Impact Their Own Ridership

Have a car 23%
It takes forever to ride the bus 12%
Buses are lame 11%
Parents won’t allow it 9%
Can’t find bus info 8%
Friends don’t ride 8%
Bus is too far from home 8%
Bus schedules don’t match teen schedules 5%
Don’t know where bus stops are 5%
Buses don’t go where we want them to go 4%
Buses aren’t safe 4%
Buses are too crowded 2%

Q28a: Please fill in the PRIMARY reason you do not ride ART and/or Metrobus. Please fill in only one bubble.

Note: Question asked of non-riders only.

n=331
Recall That Convenience & Dependability Expectations (Importance) Are Higher for Light Riders, So They Are Probably Even Greater for Non-riders

Light Riders may have greater expectations of what convenience and dependability mean to them. This creates a bigger “gap.”

**Heavy Riders**

- **Convenience**: Importance 63%, Satisfaction 68%
- **Dependability**: Importance 43%, Satisfaction 66%
- **Safety**: Importance 57%, Satisfaction 68%
- **Cost**: Importance 36%, Satisfaction 66%
- **Comfort**: Importance 59%, Satisfaction 56%

**Light Riders**

- **Convenience**: Importance 64%, Satisfaction 81%
- **Dependability**: Importance 41%, Satisfaction 79%
- **Safety**: Importance 64%, Satisfaction 65%
- **Cost**: Importance 49%, Satisfaction 55%
- **Comfort**: Importance 62%, Satisfaction 59%

Q17-21: How important is ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?

Q22-26: How satisfied are you with ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?
Barrier #3: Perception of High Fares
Barrier #3: Fare Pricing

There Are Many Perceptions of What It Costs to Ride ART and/or Metrobus

Note: Question asked of non-riders only.

Q29: How much do you think it costs to ride ART and/or Metrobus for one round trip to a place you want to go?
Barrier #3: Fare Pricing
There Is a Gap Between What Teens Think It Costs and What They Are Willing to Pay

Q29: How much do you think it costs to ride ART and/or Metrobus for one round trip to a place you want to go?

Q30: How much would you be willing to pay to ride ART and/or Metrobus for one round trip to a place you want to go?

Note: Question asked of non-riders only.
Recall That Cost Is a Bigger Deal for Heavy Riders ... and They Are Less Satisfied with Fares Than Light Riders

**Heavy Riders**

- **Convenience**: 63% Importance, 68% Satisfaction
- **Dependability**: 43% Importance, 66% Satisfaction
- **Safety**: 68% Importance, 66% Satisfaction
- **Cost**: 36% Importance, 66% Satisfaction
- **Comfort**: 59% Importance, 66% Satisfaction

**Light Riders**

- **Convenience**: 64% Importance, 81% Satisfaction
- **Dependability**: 41% Importance, 79% Satisfaction
- **Safety**: 64% Importance, 65% Satisfaction
- **Cost**: 49% Importance, 55% Satisfaction
- **Comfort**: 62% Importance, 59% Satisfaction

Q17-21: How important is ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?

Q22-26: How satisfied are you with ____________ when deciding to ride ART and/or Metrobus?
Barrier #4: A “Hip Image” Factor or Lack of It
Barrier #4: Hip Image Factor

Almost Six in Ten (57%) Teens Believe “Bus Image” May Be a Barrier for Some in Riding the Bus

- It takes forever to ride the bus: 43%
- Friends don't ride: 41%
- Don't know where bus stops are: 35%
- Can't find bus info: 31%
- Buses are lame: 30%
- Have a car: 29%
- Bus schedules don't match teen schedules: 26%
- Buses don't go where we want them to go: 22%
- Buses are too crowded: 20%
- Bus is too far from home: 20%
- Parents won't allow it: 13%
- Buses aren't safe: 13%

Q28: This question is for people who DO NOT ride ART and/or Metrobus. Below are some reasons that a person might NOT ride ART and/or Metrobus. Please fill in all the reasons that apply to you.
Barrier #4: Hip Image Factor

In Fact, Almost One in Five Teens Say Image & Friends Impact Their Own Ridership

Q28a: Please fill in the PRIMARY reason you do not ride ART and/or Metrobus. Please fill in only one bubble.
Barrier #5: Parents’ Permission
Barrier #5: Parents’ Permission

20% of Teens Say “Parents Permission” May Be a Barrier for Some in Riding the Bus

Q28: This question is for people who DO NOT ride ART and/or Metrobus. Below are some reasons that a person might NOT ride ART and/or Metrobus. Please fill in all the reasons that apply to you.
Barrier #5: Parents’ Permission

In Fact, 9% of Teens Say Their Parents Impact Their Own Ridership

Q28a: Please fill in the PRIMARY reason you do not ride ART and/or Metrobus. Please fill in only one bubble.

- Have a car: 23%
- It takes forever to ride the bus: 12%
- Buses are lame: 11%
- Parents won’t allow it: 9%
- Can’t find bus info: 8%
- Friends don’t ride: 8%
- Bus is too far from home: 8%
- Bus schedules don’t match teen schedules: 5%
- Don’t know where bus stops are: 5%
- Buses don’t go where we want them to go: 4%
- Buses aren’t safe: 4%
- Buses are too crowded: 2%

n=331
What Will It Take to Get Parents “On Board”?  
A Few Insights from the Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative Parents’ Study That’s Still in the Field

There’s No One Silver Bullet ...
Parents of **Current Teen Riders**
(ART and/or Metrobus)

Q37: Please tell us one single improvement you would like to see on ART and/or Metrobus.

**Lower Fares**

“Discount for children”

“Dependability and cost-reduction!!!”

**Schedules & Service Areas**

“More frequency.”

“I would like waits between buses to be no more than a half hour.”

Note: Question only asked to parents of current riders.
Parents of **Current Teen Riders**
(ART and/or Metrobus)

**Schedules & Service Areas**
(Continued)

“Longer hours for the ART bus.”

“I’d like ART to run during the day, not just rush hour.”

“Connections with other routes that run more frequently and for longer hours would be much better coordinated and easier.”

“I’d like my son to be able to stay on ART, even with a connection, since a transfer to Metrobus adds time to the excursion.”

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Note:
Question only asked to parents of current riders.
Parents of Current Teen Non-riders

Schedules & Service Area

“Convenience, friends riding it, going where he wants and needs to go.”

“She would take the bus if it would take her to a direct destination where she wants to go and it was faster.”

“We live in North Arlington and it is difficult for us to get to South Arlington for activities. It would be good for kids to be able to get to the sports centers on the buses without having to make transfers.”

“More scheduled times, bus stops that are within a few blocks of our home.”

“Routes near our house that do not require transferring at Ballston.”

Note: Question only asked to parents of non-riders.
Parents of Current Teen Non-riders

Safety

“Bus stops that are safe for her to wait at ... from a safety standpoint, since she is 14 years old, I am not comfortable with her riding without at least one friend with her.”

“Most times the parents prefer to drive and pick up the kids so we know where they are going. The bus might allow them too much freedom for social activities.”

Work Tie-in

“Going to or from work as he gets older is an option to take the bus.”

“If he had a job to go to he would take the bus more often.”

Note: Question only asked to parents of non-riders.
Parents of Current Teen **Non-riders**

Experience/Introduction

“Probably just trying it out. Might help to have some simple fare card for kids trying it for the first time - maybe have a pass that you issue only once per student, good for a summer's riding.”

“Practice. I am not opposed to it and I think it would be good for him to learn the local transit system.”
Recap of Barriers: All Have Impact

- Don’t know how/lack of information.
- Not convenient to them.
- Fares too expensive.
- Parent’s won’t let them.
- Don’t think it’s cool.
These Barriers Are Consistent with What Teens Say Transit Has to Offer to Become a Viable Alternative

Based on Teens’ Answers to
“What Would It Take for You to Ride the Bus?”
(Open-ended, unaided question)

Q28b: What would it take for you to ride the bus?

Note: Question only asked of non-riders.
Key Finding:

There is no one major barrier or specific issue that makes transit unappealing to non-riders. There are multiple issues - lack of information, high fares, lack of convenient and dependable service and schedules, overall “lame” image, and parents’ permission. These same issues came up when non-riders were asked (unprompted) “what would it take for you to ride the bus?” All of these stated barriers (real or perceived) collectively limit the appeal of transit.

Parents appear to have the same issues with ART and/or Metrobus that teens do - high fares, lack of convenient and dependable service and schedules. Some parents are also concerned about safety. On a positive note, parents see the benefit of ART and/or Metrobus helping teens get to work!

Strategic Implication:

Unfortunately, there is no single “silver bullet” solution that, in and of itself, can make transit attractive!

If and when resources are available, the Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative should address all of these barriers through communications efforts and service enhancements.
Possible Long-Term Impact of the Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative
Q37: Does anyone in your family ride ART and/or Metrobus?

How to Read This Slide:
- 14% of non-riders answered yes, I have a parent or guardian who rides ART and/or Metrobus.
- 42% of riders answered yes, I have a parent or guardian who rides ART and/or Metrobus.

ART and/or Metrobus Riders Come from Families That Ride ART and/or Metrobus

- Parents/Guardians: 14% of non-riders and 42% of riders answered yes.
- Siblings: 10% of non-riders and 36% of riders answered yes.
- Grandparents: 3% of non-riders and 11% of riders answered yes.

N=632
Key Finding:
There is a direct and positive correlation between family experience with ART and/or Metrobus and teen use of ART and/or Metrobus.
The Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative can have a long-term positive impact. Any conversion to transit will potentially create another “pro-transit influencer” on extended family members in this and future generations.

Strategic Implication:
Proceed with Arlington County Teen Transit Initiative! Develop a sensible plan based on many of the fundamental insights gained through this research. Carpe Diem!
Thank You!