2008 STAR User Satisfaction SURVEY

SPONSOR:
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OVERALL STUDY PURPOSE:
- STAR is an acronym for Specialized Transit for Arlington Residents. The service provides
  transportation for Arlington residents who have difficulty using public transit due to the
  effects of age or disability. Basic STAR services are intended to provide a comparable
  level of transportation as provided by ART, Metrobus, and Metrorail. All rides are
  arranged in advance through the STAR Call Center.
- This survey was intended to assess the current performance of the STAR program.

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH:
- Assess overall satisfaction of STAR Riders
- Assess satisfaction of Call Center
- Determine frequency of use and reasons to use STAR
- Determine use of other transportation modes
METHODOLOGY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Data Collection</th>
<th>2-page paper survey mailed to entire database along with a newsletter (ART Forum)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed Surveys</td>
<td>208 respondents - 19% response rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey Population</td>
<td>1,086 individuals (1,204 minus 118 returned to sender)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey Instrument</td>
<td>Paper Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for Participation</td>
<td>Current STAR clients</td>
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</tbody>
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KEY FINDINGS

Use of STAR:

❖ Over half of the respondents ride 1-5 days each week – though only 16 (about 8%) ride 5 days/week. Almost three-quarters of the respondents had used STAR during the previous 30 days.
❖ The overwhelming majority of respondents, 87%, ride STAR to medical appointments; over 1/3rd for shopping; and over 11% for work. Few (2%) use STAR for school. 44% use STAR for other purposes including Adult Day Health Care, Senior Centers, and church.

Vendor Performance:

❖ One-third of respondents either did not report which vendor normally provides their rides or checked two or all three. Those who did respond noted that almost a quarter usually ride Diamond – which is reflected in Trip Booking statistics.
❖ In contrast, the response rate concerning the quality of services provided by the transportation vendors was excellent – 92-94%, depending on the issue. A fair number of people rate their vendor highly – even if they aren’t sure who the vendor is! This dichotomy may be due to the wording of the question – trying to distinguish between Red Top sedan and Red Top minivan. Also, some respondents who occasionally ride with two or all three vendors wanted to rate each vendor.
❖ Some respondents clearly prefer Red Top; others prefer Diamond – however those preferring Diamond were more likely to write in comments to that effect.
❖ The respondents were highly positive of the transportation vendors regarding ease of finding the vehicle, driver politeness, and vehicle condition – negative ratings of only 3-4%. Driver Politeness was rated Excellent by 55%. The ratings regarding On-Time Pickup and On-Time Arrival were slightly less positive – negative ratings of 7-8%.
❖ Assistance into the Vehicle received negative ratings of 11%. Of those respondents who indicated which carrier usually transported them, this issue received worse ratings – 13% on Diamond and Red Top Sedan; 11% on Red Top Minivan. Other topics of particular concern are On-Time Arrival (Red Top Sedan and Minivan) and On-Time Pickup (all three vendors).

Satisfaction with STAR:

❖ Overall ratings of the STAR Call Center for speed, politeness, and accuracy are all very positive – only 5-6% of the ratings were negative.
❖ The survey results are overall very positive. “Excellent” ratings from the 208 responses ranged from 39% to 61%. Negative ratings (“Poor” and “Fair”) ranged from 3% to 13%. Fifteen people took the time to write compliments. However, 148 people requested a copy of the most recent STAR Rider Guide.
Eighteen respondents noted a complaint on the survey. The lead topics concerned the inability of several ambulatory riders to board a minivan due to knee issues (5); a few missed trips; a general observation that the newer drivers are less willing and competent to assist passengers into and out of the vehicles; the need to provide exact addresses for landmarks such as museums and the Iwo Jima Memorial; irritation with call center reservationists who are also having a second conversation and consequently book rides incorrectly; and concern about drivers being able to provide return trips from Wolf Trap.

Use of Other Transportation:

- Of the 208 survey responses, 120 (58%) indicated that they had not used fixed route transit, 67 (32%) had, and 21 (10%) didn’t answer that question.
- Thirty-Four of the 67 who had used transit service want to learn more about that type of service. Of the 120 non-transit users, 44 are interested in learning more about transit service.

OTHER RELATED STUDIES, PLANS & DOCUMENTS:

AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS:

- Questionnaire
- Data Tables

KEY WORDS:

ACCS, Arlington County, Arlington County Commuter Services, Attitudes, Evaluation, Perceptions, Performance Measurement, Satisfaction, Scorecard, Services, Transit, Transportation needs, Transportation options.