

Impact of Regional Transit on Rider Quality of Life

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Presented by: Meetings on the Bus

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Summary of Findings

- The most common purpose riders reported for using Regional Transit was to get to work. Many riders reported that Regional Transit had allowed them to attain work, lower the cost of getting to work, or get a better paying job.
- This impact was reported less by Niagara Falls residents, who use Regional Transit less frequently to get to work than residents of St. Catharines or Welland.

BACKGROUND

Purpose

- The Niagara Region Transportation Strategy Steering Committee (TSSC) will be reviewing the 3-year Niagara Regional Transit Pilot in the Summer of 2013
- The Purpose of this Research is to provide information to the TSSC about the Impact that the Niagara Regional Transit Pilot has had on the Quality of life of its riders

Research Question

- *What impact has the Regional Transit had on the Quality of Life of those who ride it?*

Framework

- Uses the “Most Significant Change” (MSC) Technique
- Groups riders by the Neighbourhood in which they reside using the Neighbourhoods from the Niagara Prosperity Initiative (NPI) Mapping Tool
- Recognizes rider impact as an increase in Individual and Household Assets, using the Vibrant Communities Sustainable Livelihood Approach

Method

- Sample was taken from all riders of Regional Transit routes 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, and 75
- Surveys were administered between April 12th and May 7th, 2013
- Surveys were administered on each route during weekdays and weekends, during morning, afternoon, and evening trips
- Surveys were administered to individual riders while they were riding the bus
- Riders filled out the surveys themselves
- Data was analysed by a team of 3 researchers familiar with the framework used
- Analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel

Response Rate

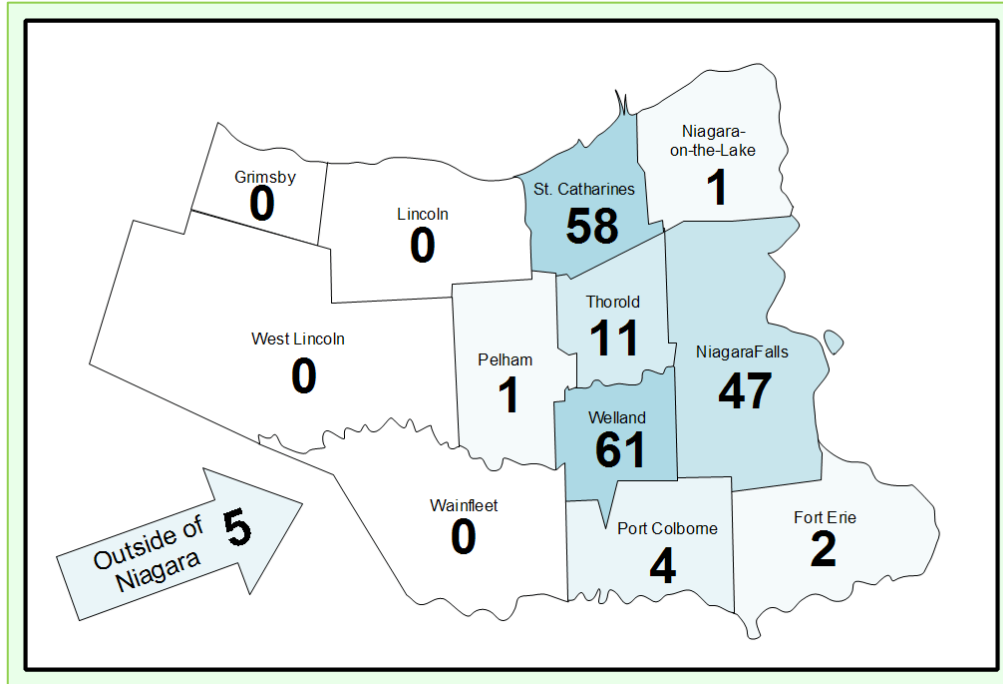
- 190 (85%) of the 224 riders approached agreed to fill out the survey
- Many who declined did so because of language barriers

Limitations

- Results do not apply to the general population of Niagara, but only to riders of the 6 trial routes.
- The research did not capture data from some riders who were not fluent in English. This group may be underrepresented in the findings.
- Changes in ridership after May 2013, such as fewer student riders in summer, are not reflected.

RIDER PLACE OF RESIDENCE

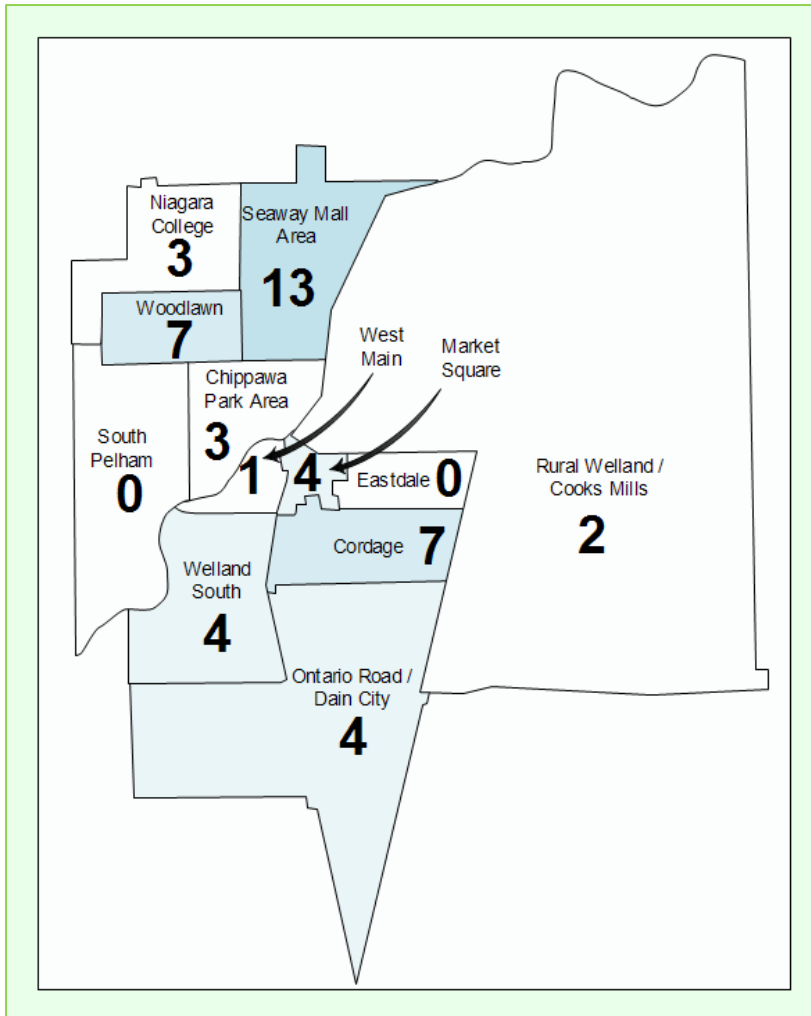
Residence by Municipality



Residence	# of Riders	% of Riders
Welland	61	32.1%
St. Catharines	58	30.5%
Niagara Falls	47	24.7%
Thorold	11	5.8%
Port Colborne	4	2.1%
Fort Erie	2	1.0%
Pelham	1	0.5%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	1	0.5%
Outside of Niagara Region	5	2.6%

- Nearly all (97.4%) of riders lived in Niagara
- Riders from outside of Niagara lived in Toronto, Hamilton, Dunnville, and Milton
- There were no riders from Grimsby, Lincoln, West Lincoln, or Wainfleet

Residence by Neighbourhood: **Welland**



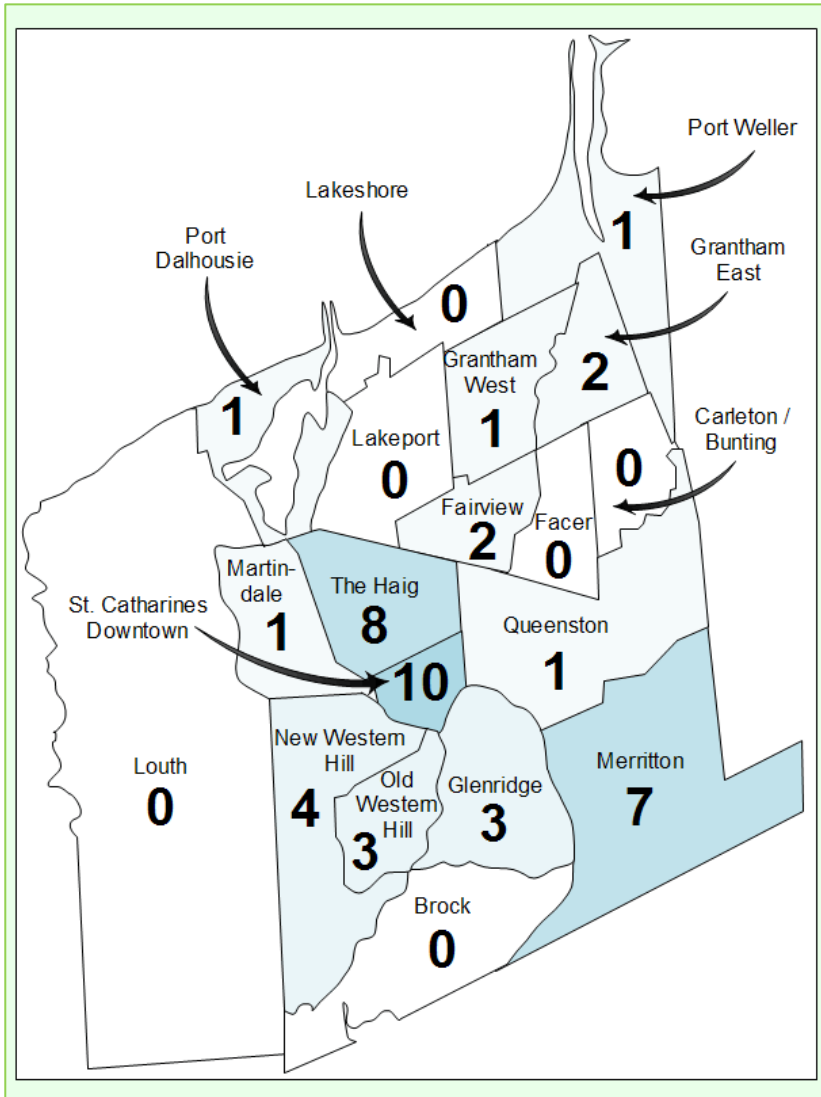
Residence	# of Riders	%
Seaway Mall Area	13	21.3%
Woodlawn	7	11.5%
Cordage	7	11.5%
Market Square	4	6.6%
Welland South	4	6.6%
Ontario Road / Dain City	4	6.6%
Niagara College	3	4.9%
Chippawa Park Area	3	4.9%
Rural Welland/Cooks Mills	2	3.2%
West Main	1	1.6%
Unknown	13	21.3%

- Most common residence was the Seaway Mall Area
- There were no riders from South Pelham or Eastdale

Residence by Neighbourhood: **St. Catharines**

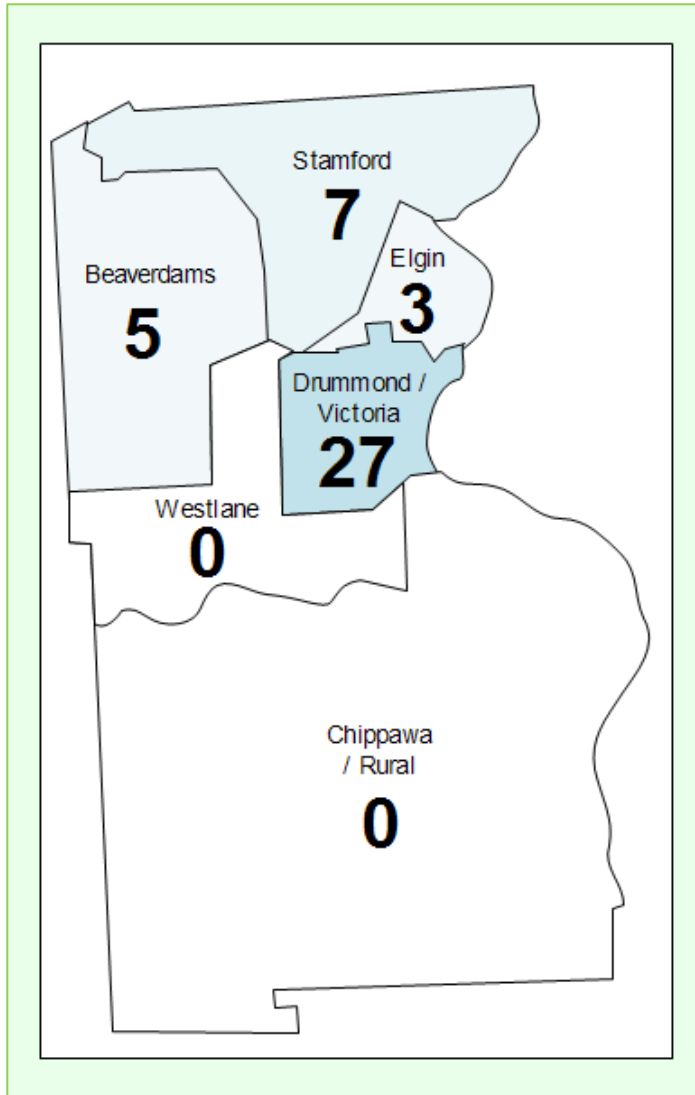
Residence	# of Riders	%
St. Catharines Downtown	10	17.2%
The Haig	8	13.8%
Merritton	7	12.0%
New Western Hill	4	6.9%
Old Western Hill	3	5.2%
Glenridge	3	5.2%
Fairview	2	3.5%
Grantham East	2	3.5%
Grantham West	1	1.7%
Port Weller	1	1.7%
Port Dalhousie	1	1.7%
Queenston	1	1.7%
Martindale	1	1.7%
Unknown	14	24.1%

Residence by Neighbourhood: **St. Catharines** (cont.)



- Most common residence was St. Catharines Downtown
- There were no riders from Lakeshore, Lakeport, Carleton/Bunting, Facer, Louth or Brock

Residence by Neighbourhood: **Niagara Falls**

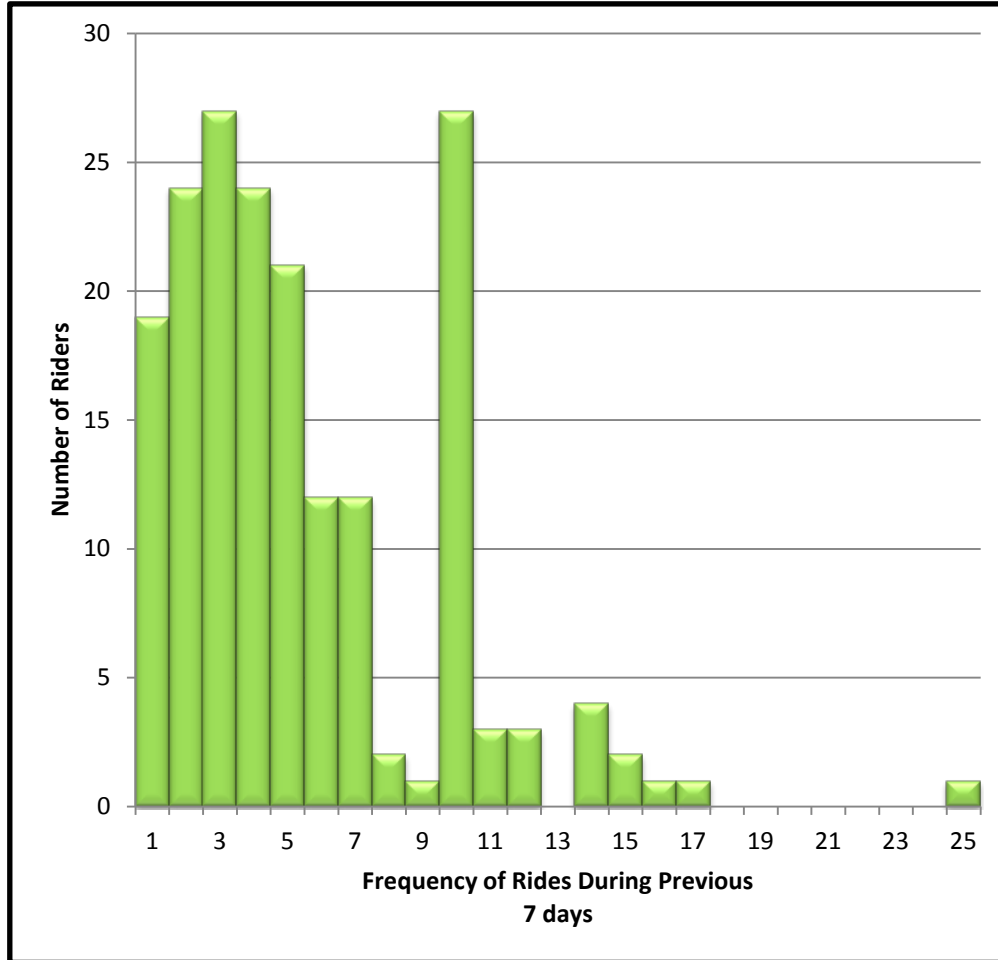


Residence	# of Riders	%
Drummond / Victoria	27	57.4%
Stamford	7	14.9%
Beaverdams	5	10.6%
Elgin	3	6.4%
Unknown	5	10.6%

- Most common residence was Drummond / Victoria
- There were no riders from Westlane or Chippawa / Rural

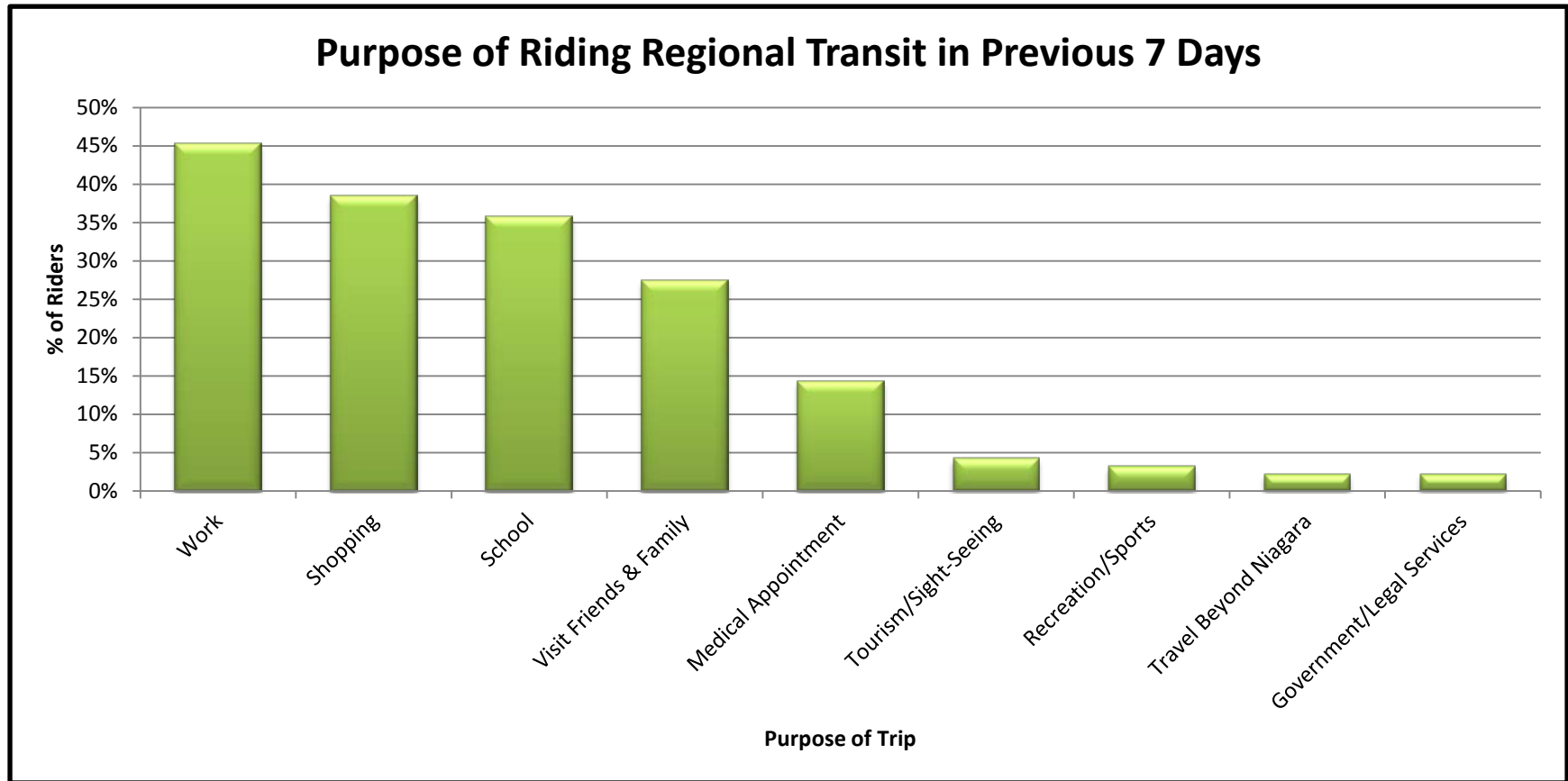
RIDER BEHAVIOR

Frequency of Rides – All Riders



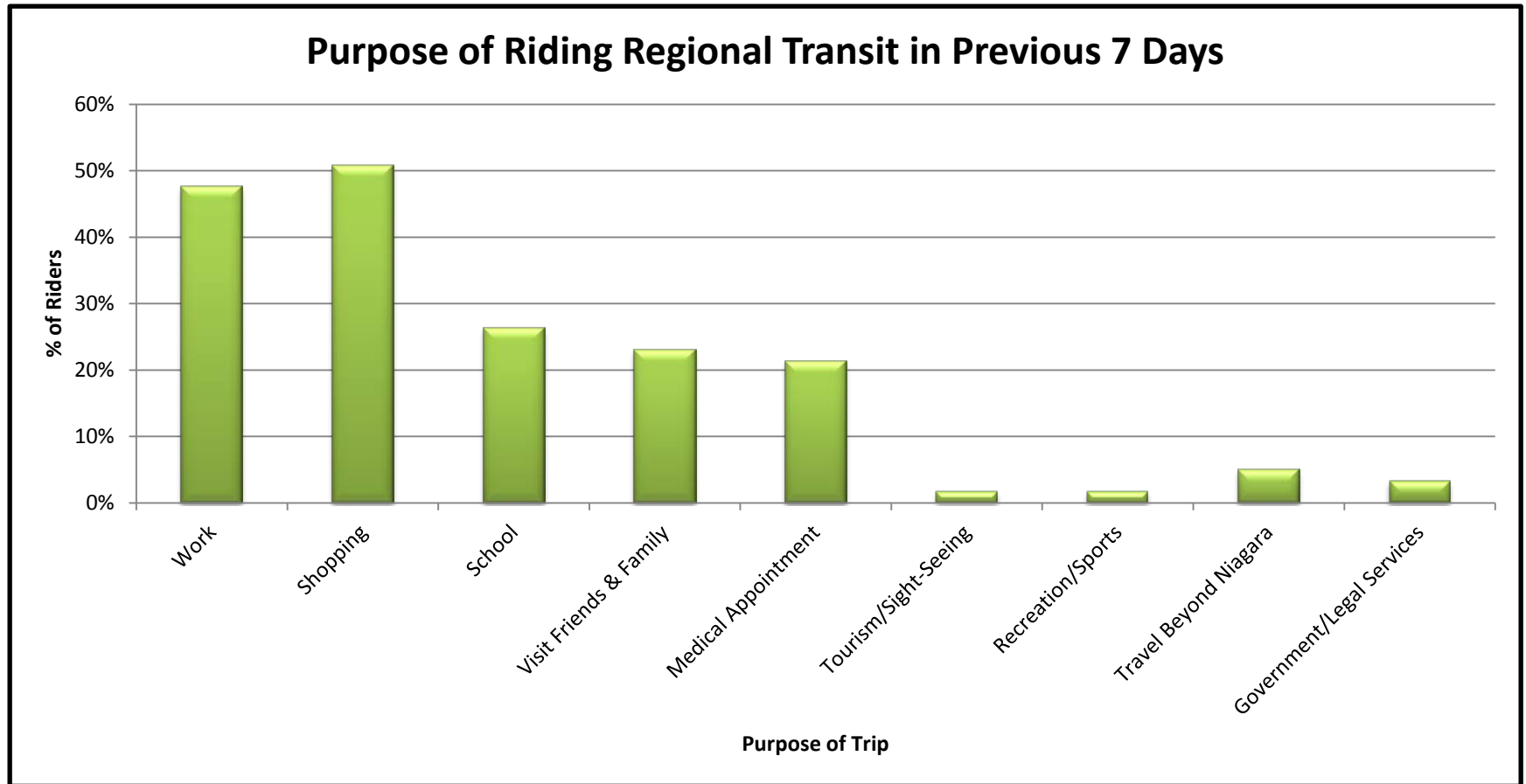
- Mean was 5.5 rides
- Median was 4 rides
- Modes were 3 and 10 rides (bimodal)
- This pattern did not differ significantly when riders were grouped by municipality of residence

Purpose of Riding Regional Transit – All Riders



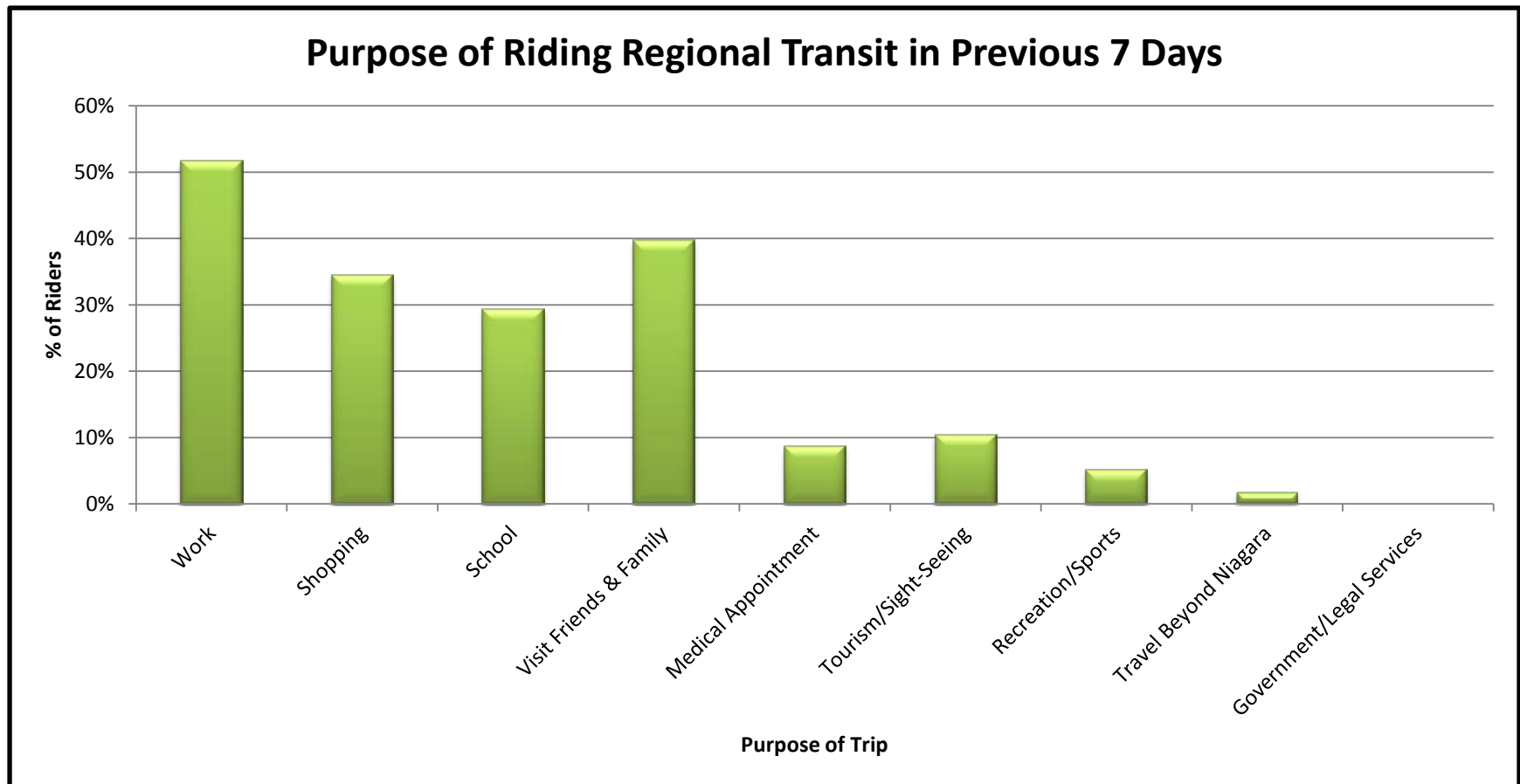
- The most common purpose for riding Regional Transit was to get to work (45.3% of riders)
- The Second most common purpose was to go shopping (38.4% of riders)
- The third most common purpose was to get to and from school (35.8% of riders)
- *Note: riders could report more than one purpose*

Purpose of Riding – Riders from Welland



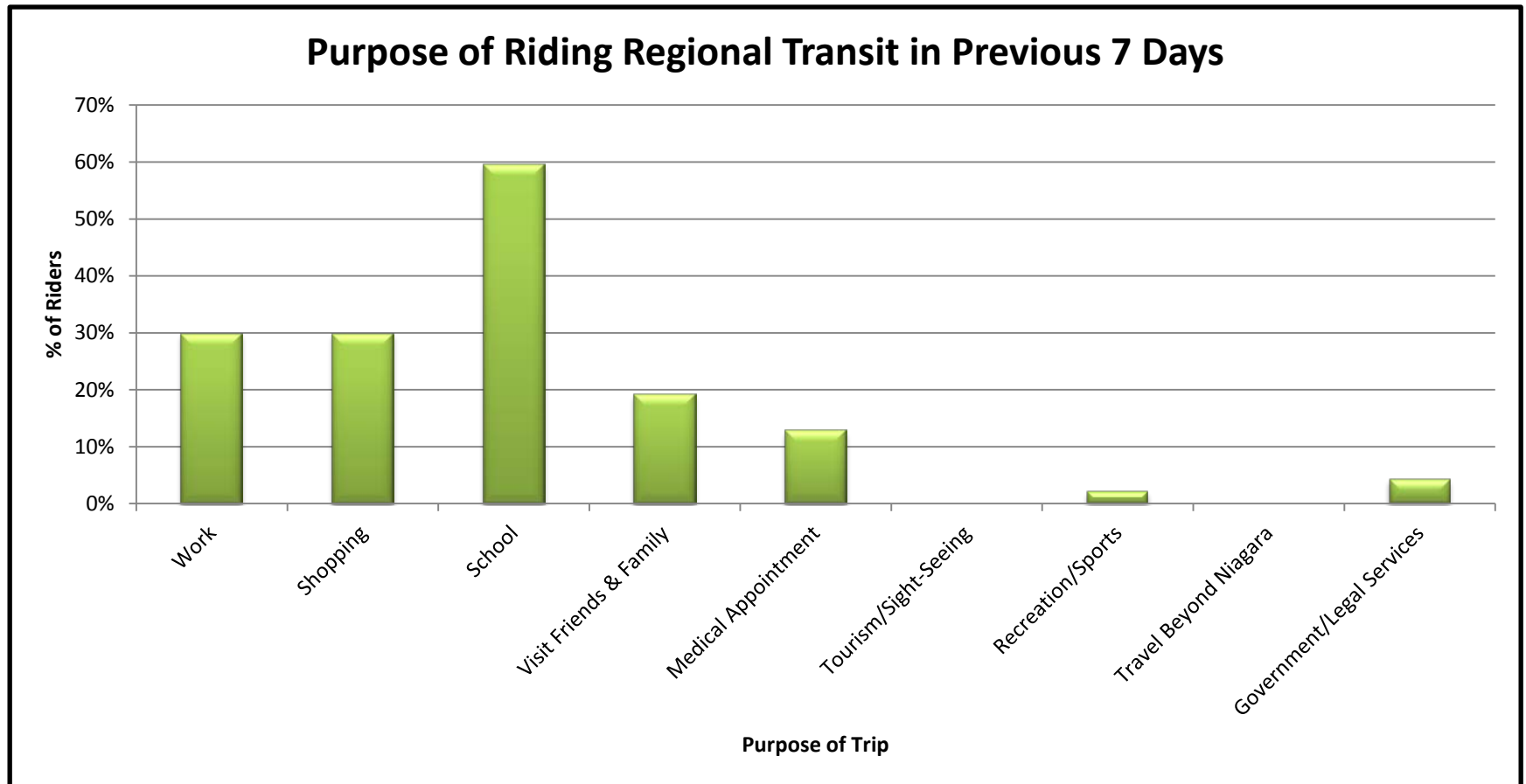
- The most common purpose for Welland residents was to go shopping (50.8%)
- The Second most common purpose was to get to work (47.5% of riders)
- The third most common purpose was to get to and from school (26.2% of riders)
- *Note: riders could report more than one purpose*

Purpose of Riding – Riders from St. Catharines



- The most common purpose for St. Catharines residents was to go to work (51.7%)
- The second most common purpose was to get to visit friends & Family (39.7% of riders)
- The third most common purpose was to go shopping (34.5% of riders)
- *Note: riders could report more than one purpose*

Purpose of Riding – Riders from Niagara Falls



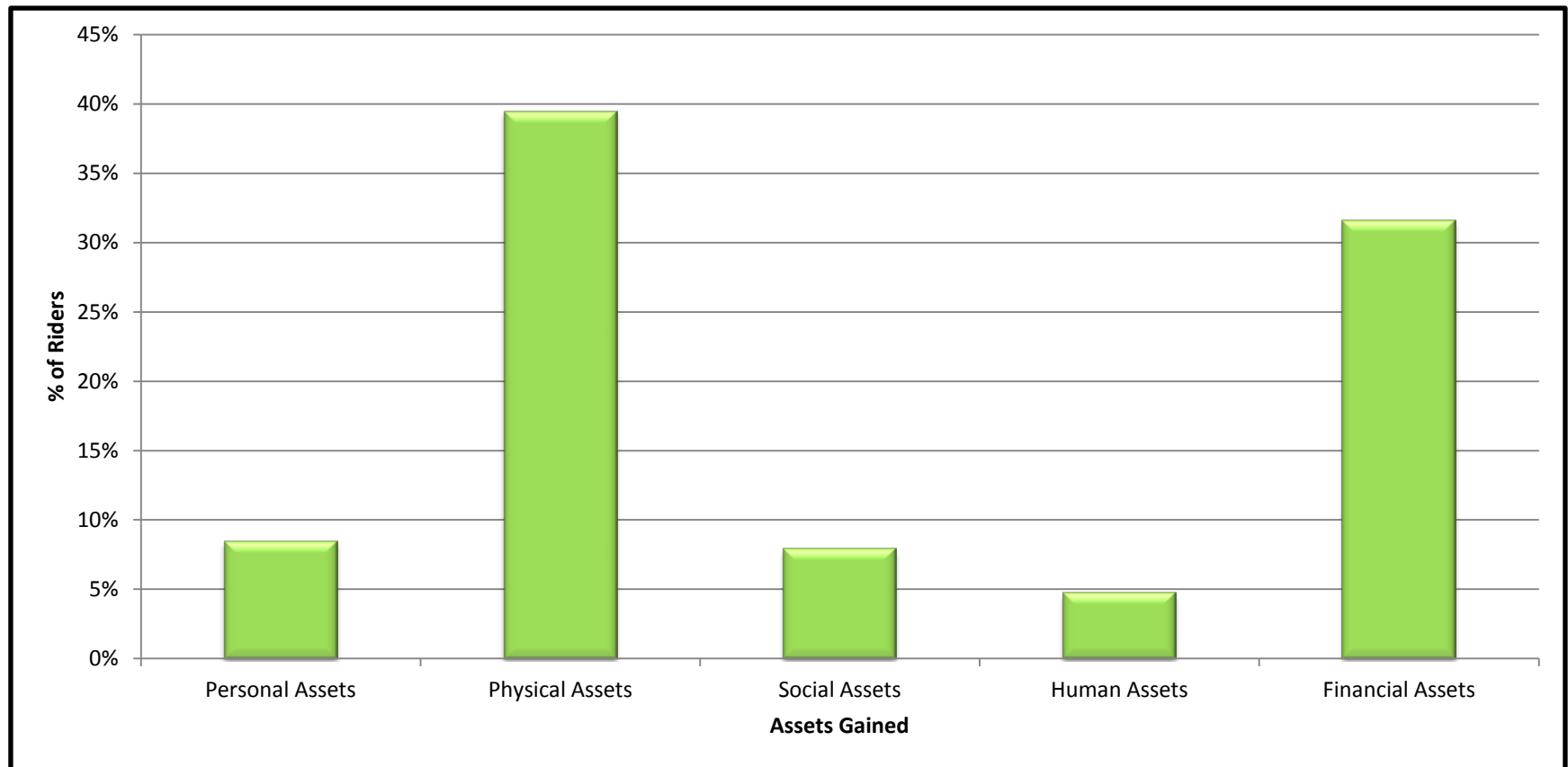
- The most common purpose for Niagara Falls residents was to go to school (59.6%)
- The second most common purpose was to get to work (29.8% of riders) and to go shopping (29.8% of riders)
- *Note: riders could report more than one purpose*

Discussion

- Residents of St. Catharines, Welland, and Niagara Falls ride Regional Transit for different reasons.
- Welland residents mainly use Regional Transit for shopping and travelling to work.
- St. Catharines residents mainly use Regional Transit for travelling to work and visiting friends and family.
- Niagara Falls residents mainly use Regional Transit to get to school.

IMPACT ON QUALITY OF LIFE

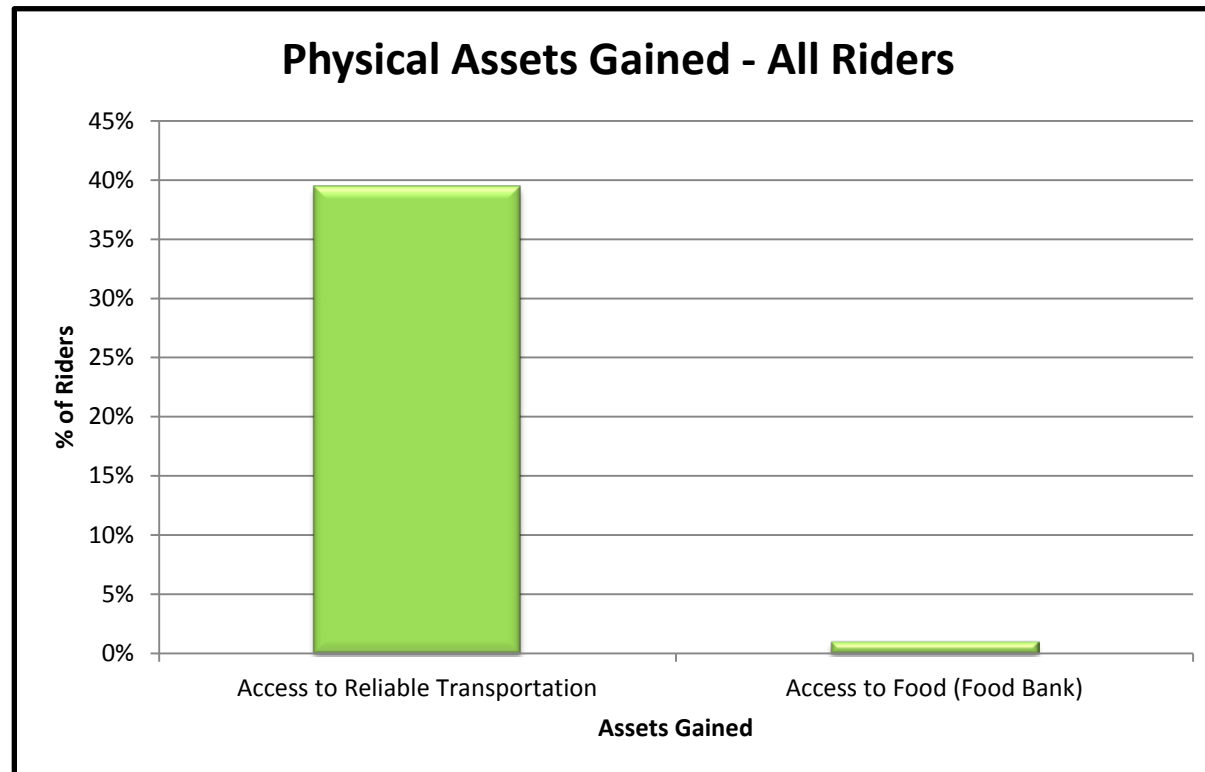
Assets Gained by Riders – All Riders



- The most common impact identified was an increase in physical assets (39.5% of riders)
- The second most common impact identified was an increase in financial assets (31.6% of riders)

Physical Assets

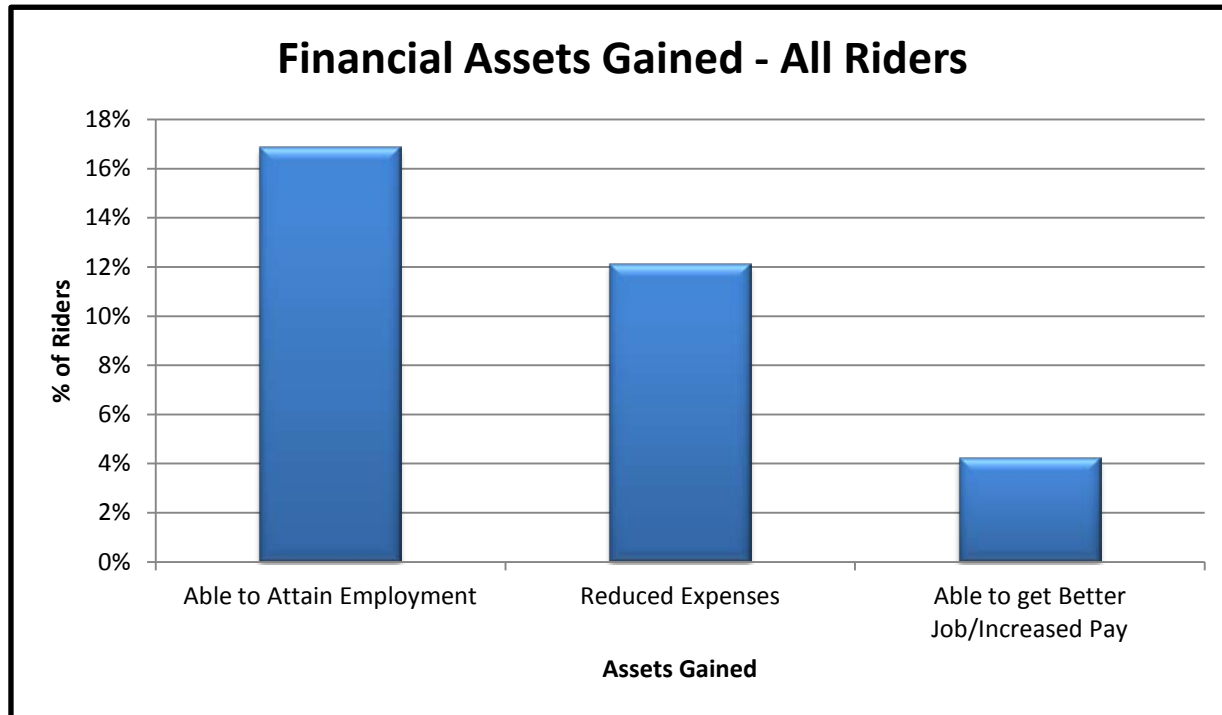
- **Physical Assets** – basic material goods and services such as food, shelter, transportation and child care



- 75 riders (39.5%) stated that Regional Transit provided access to reliable transportation

Financial Assets

- **Financial Assets** – income, savings, and sources of financial security



- 32 riders (16.8%) stated that they had attained employment because of Regional Transit
- 23 riders (12.1%) stated that their expenses were reduced because of Regional Transit
- 8 riders (4.2%) stated that they were able to get a better paying job because of Regional Transit

Personal Assets

- **Personal Assets** – inner resources such as self-esteem and self-confidence
 - 9 riders (4.7%) stated they were more independent because of Regional Transit
 - 5 riders (2.6%) stated they had greater personal choice because of Regional Transit
 - 4 riders (2.1%) stated they were more relaxed or less stressed because of Regional Transit

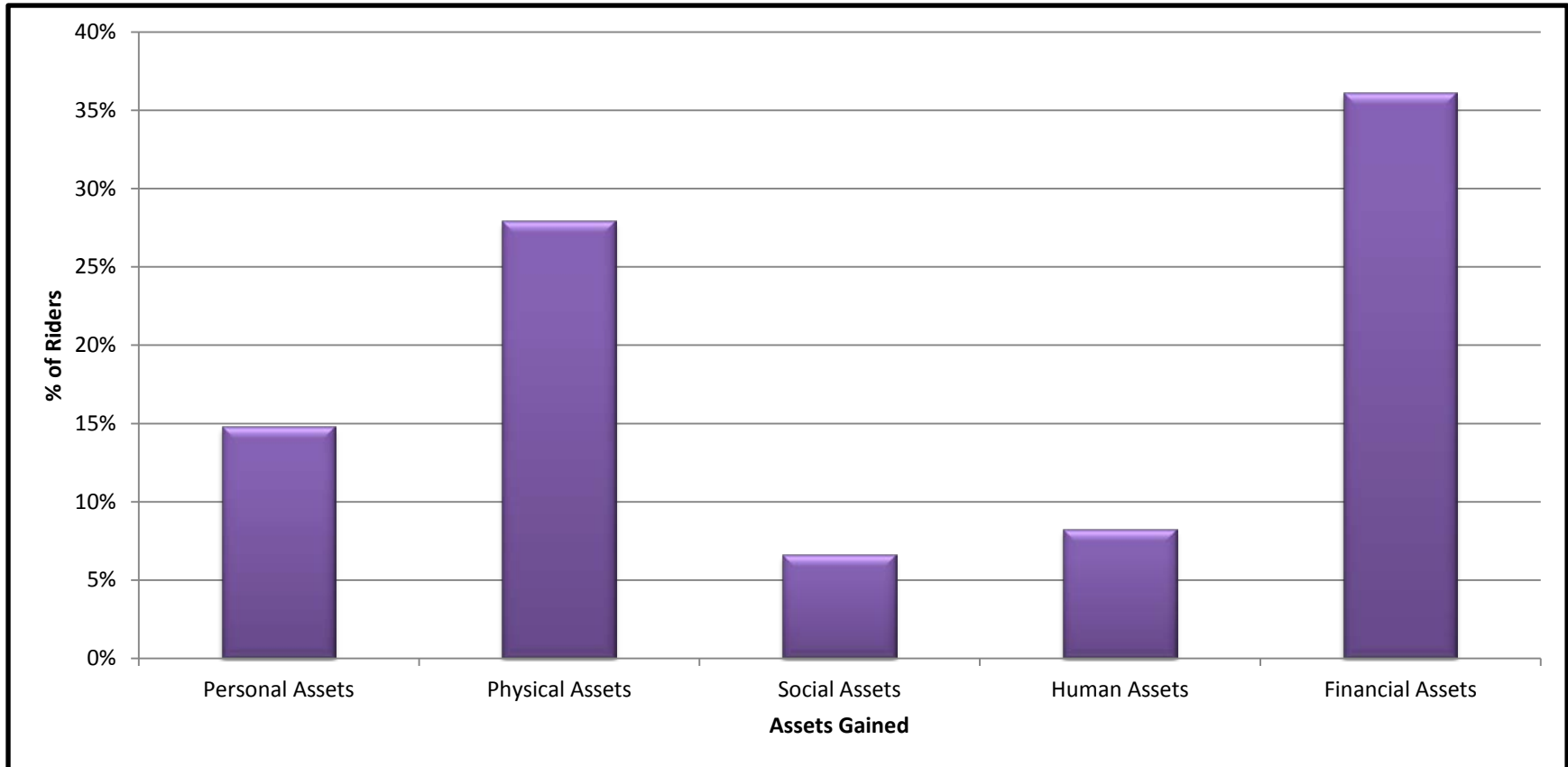
Social Assets

- **Social Assets** – relationships and networks
 - 14 riders (7.4%) stated they had an increased social network because of Regional Transit

Human Assets

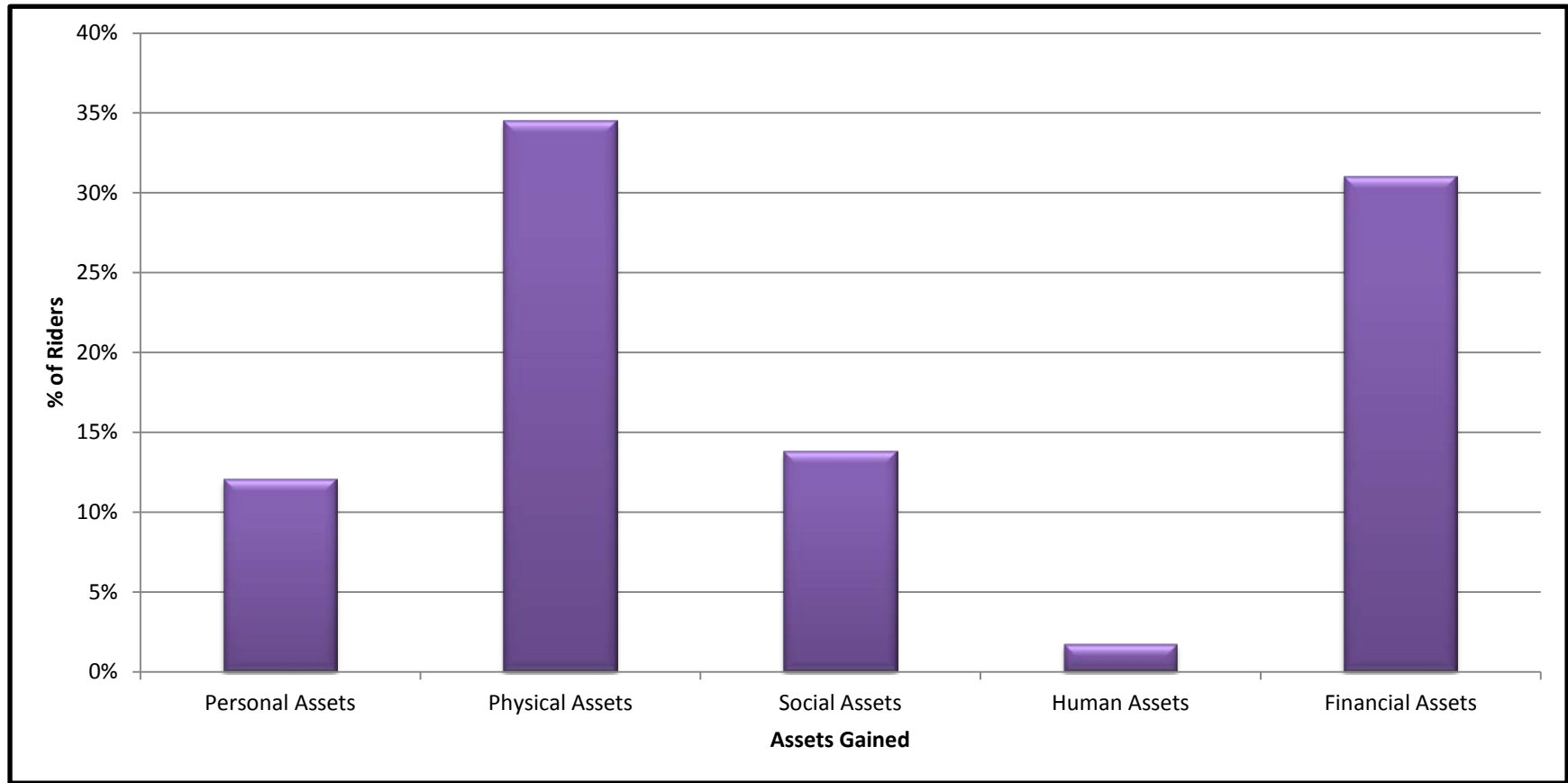
- **Human Assets** – skills, knowledge, education and health
 - 5 riders (2.6%) stated they were able to access health care because of Regional Transit
 - 4 riders (2.1%) stated they were able to access education because of Regional Transit

Assets Gained by Riders from Welland



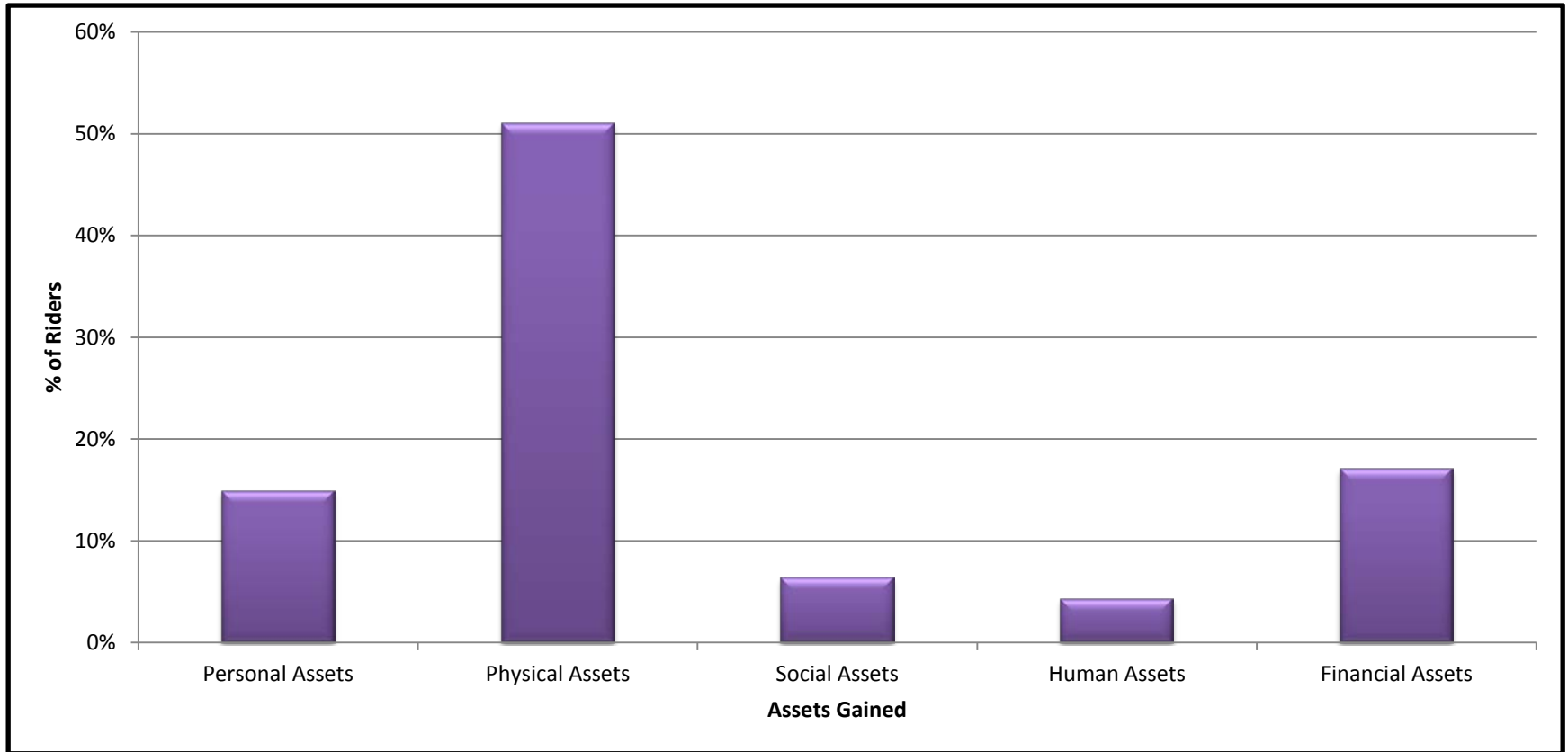
- The most common impact identified by Welland residents was an increase in financial assets (36.1% of riders)
- The second most common impact identified was an increase in physical assets (27.9% of riders)

Assets Gained by Riders from St. Catharines



- The most common impact identified by St. Catharines residents was an increase in physical assets (34.5% of riders)
- The second most common impact identified was an increase in financial assets (31.0% of riders)

Assets Gained by Riders from Niagara Falls



- The most common impact identified by St. Catharines residents was an increase in physical assets (51.1% of riders).
- The second most common impact identified was an increase in financial assets (17.0% of riders).
- A significantly smaller percentage (17.0%) of Niagara Falls residents identified an increase in financial assets than residents from Welland (36.1%) or St. Catharines (31.0%).

Discussion

- The impact of Regional Transit on quality of life is different for residents of Niagara Falls than for residents of St. Catharines and Welland
- Riders from Niagara Falls reported less frequently that Regional Transit increased their financial assets. This corresponds to the finding that a smaller percentage of Niagara Falls residents use Regional Transit to get to work

QUOTES FROM RIDERS

Quotes

“Without Regional transit I couldn't get to work, appointments, school and to see family. If regional transit is stopped I won't have employment!”

“It gave me a way to get to work. Taking cabs is too expensive. It's hard when you work out of town with no transportation. I would lose my job if I couldn't afford to get there.”

“I kept my job when my car broke down.”

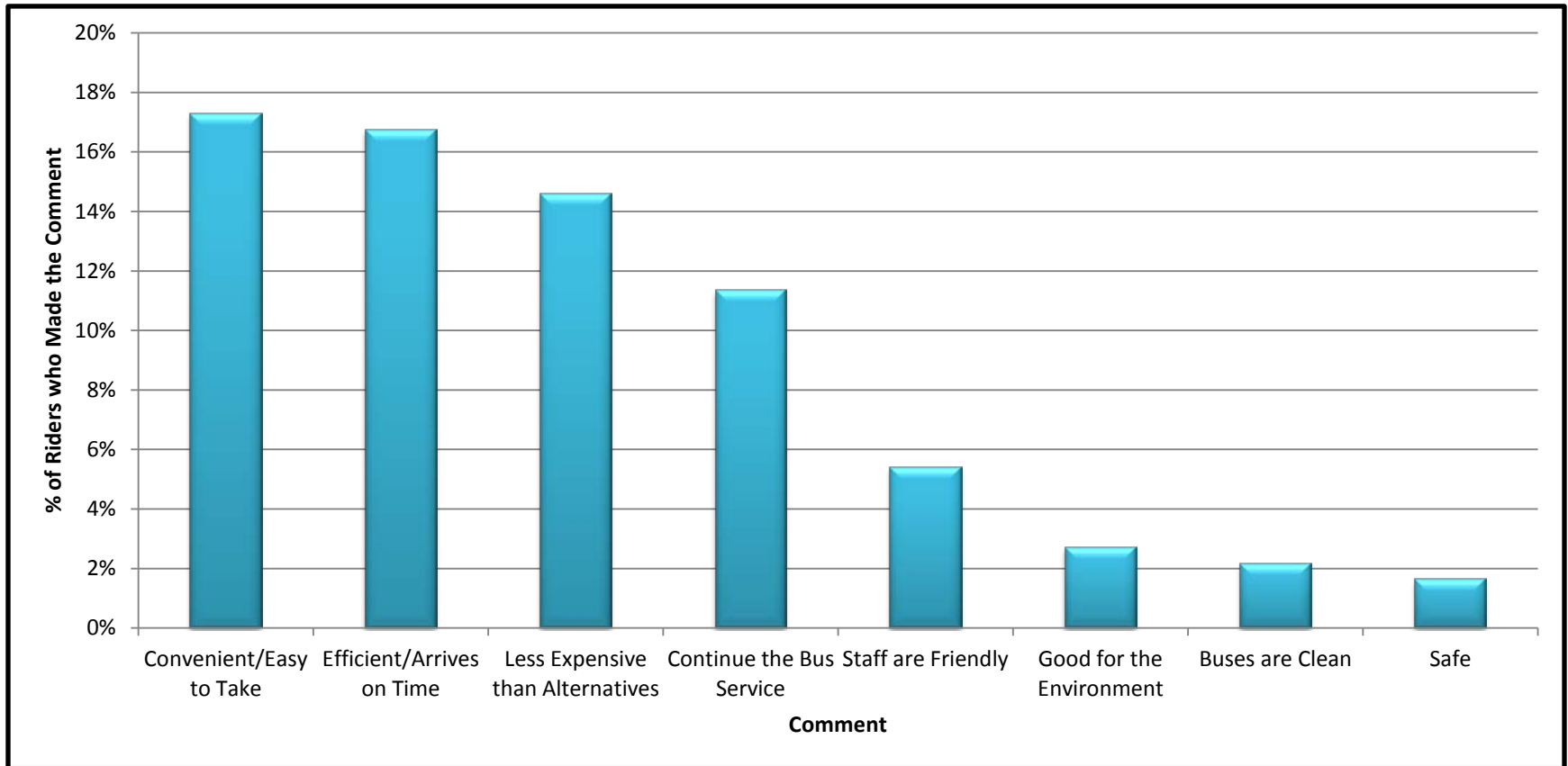
“It's cheaper than parking – I don't require a second vehicle now.”

Quotes (cont.)

“Because of the Regional Transportation system I was able to accept a better paying position with the company I work for. This was very significant for me because I'm saving up to go back to school. If there wasn't a Regional bus, I wouldn't have been able to accept the new position and saving for my education would be nearly impossible.”

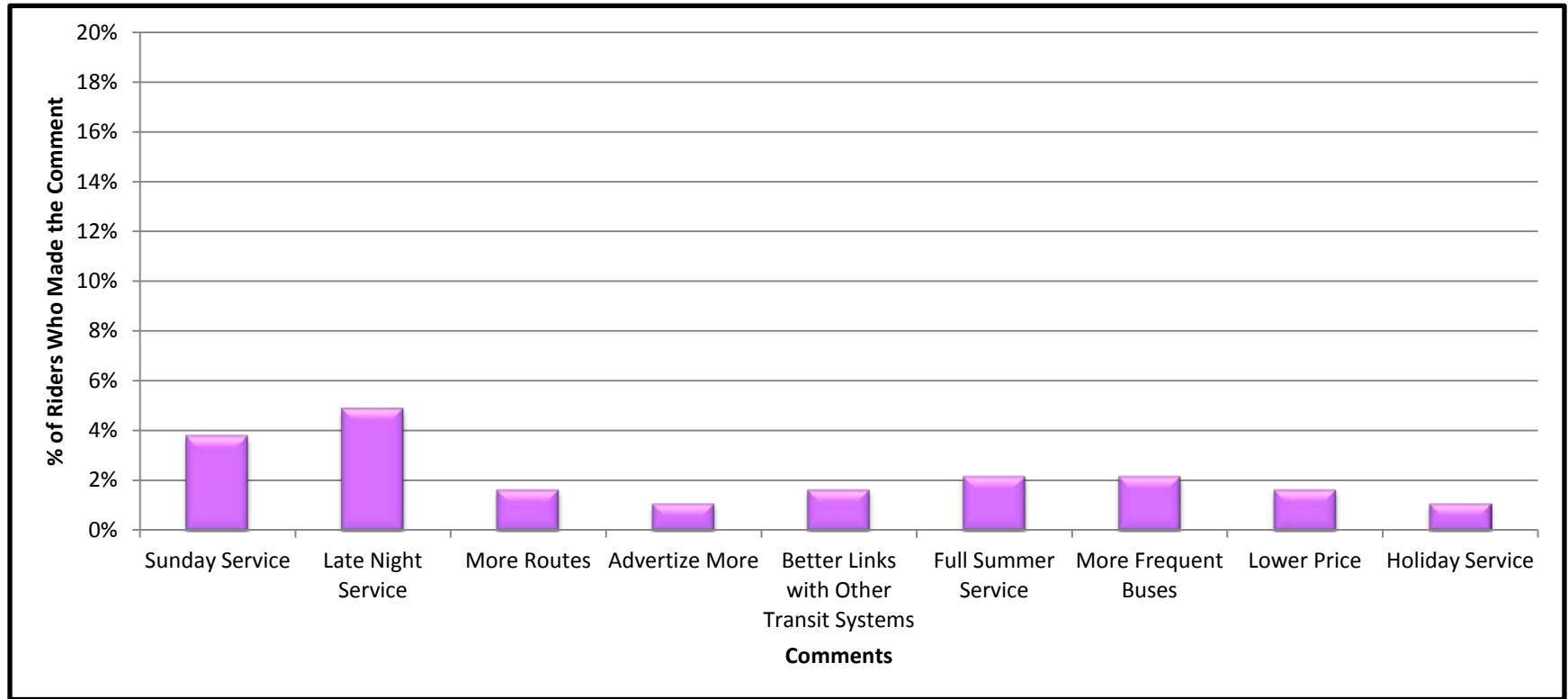
OTHER RIDER COMMENTS

Positive Comments from all Riders



- The most common comment was that the Regional Transit was convenient and easy to use (17.4% of riders)
- The second most common comment was that the Regional Transit is efficient and arrives on time (16.8% of riders)
- The third most common comment was that Regional Transit is less expensive than alternatives such as Greyhound, Taxi, or driving a car (14.2% of riders)

Suggestions from All Riders



- There were significantly fewer suggestions for improvement from riders than there were positive comments
- The most common request was for Regional Transit service to run later at night (4.7% of riders)
- The second most common request was for Regional Transit to run on Sundays (3.7% of riders)

Online Resources

The Most Significant Change Technique: A Guide to Its Use, by Rick Davies and Jess Dart:

<https://www.kepa.fi/tiedostot/most-significant-change-guide.pdf>

Niagara Prosperity Initiative Mapping Tool:

<http://maps.niagararegion.ca/prosperityinitiative/>

Basic Outcome Tracking in Vibrant Communities:

http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/VC_Basic_Outcome_Tracking_062711.pdf

#: _____ Date: (Y) _____ (M) _____ (D) _____ Time: _____ Bus Route: _____

Regional Transportation Rider Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. This questionnaire has been created by Meetings on the Bus, a citizen-led initiative which supports Niagara's new Regional Transit System. The questionnaire is being used to gather stories of how the new Regional Transportation System is impacting the quality of life of its riders. Your story is important. The results of this survey will be made available to the public through the Meetings on the Bus blog at <http://meetingsonthebus.tumblr.com/> and presented to the government and interested agencies. Your answers will remain anonymous.

[1] In which city do you currently live? _____

[2] In which neighbourhood do you currently live? (Respondent selects from map) _____

[3] What is your destination on this trip? _____

[4] How many times have you used the Regional Transit in the last seven days (including any times today)? _____

[5] When you used the Regional Transit System in the last seven days, where did you go? (work, shopping, doctor's appointment, school, etc.) List all destinations.

[6] What is the best thing/change that has happened to you as a result of the new Regional transportation system?

[7] Why was this significant?

[8] Additional Information/Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to share your story!



For more information, please contact Jeffrey Sinclair at:
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