

Chapter 4: Web-based Survey Results

The Sussex County Transportation Needs Survey was designed to gain public input as part of the overall study process. The survey is an innovative technique to garner input from as many sectors of the Sussex County population as possible. In order to develop a ten-year strategy for transportation and transit improvements, it was determined that addressing multiple markets through a heavily promoted web-based survey would be a more proficient way of understanding needs as compared to traditional public meetings and hearings, which tend to be poorly attended. The survey was designed to identify the unmet or poorly met transportation needs in and around Sussex County. This Survey was designed to gain the opinions of those who use the roadways on a daily basis, and use this information to find the best way to address these concerns.

The survey was conducted as a separate page on the Sussex County website (<http://www.sussex.nj.us/>). The survey was available between May 18th and November 2nd 2003. The web site address and survey were widely advertised via flyers, radio and television to the County residents. The Survey collected 643 total responses with 1517 hits, a 43% response rate.

The survey collected information from three groups:

- General Public
- Business,
- Social Service Agencies

The general public included county residents and people who commute to or through Sussex County. The business community included business owners and representatives who provided information with regard to employees' transportation choices, preferences, and needs. Social Service Agency representatives reported about transportation services they provide to their clients, clients' transportation needs and problems. Each group of responders had a specific set of questions to gain the information to better understand the needs of that market segment. Responses from each market segment are included in this Chapter.

Data Processing

This survey was tabulated to connect with specific markets: General Public, Business, and the Social Services. This section presents information on the process that was used to gather and tabulate the data.

The Welcome page, which opens the survey, was designed to get basic information about the individual(s) filling out the survey form. The welcome page also directed the respondent to the market segment for which they were filling out the survey, based on response. To accommodate time constraints the survey was designed to be user friendly, simply understood and easily interactive. The respondents were allowed to log in and out at their own leisure without losing the data already inputted and continue with their answers and comments.

The general public survey questions were formulated to gather data on the roadways utilized by the respondents and their input on 'why and how' to better the transportation and transit issues

that are being faced in Sussex County at the present time and in the future. The first set of questions gathered data on the respondents’ employment status and commute patterns. The next set of questions gathered respondents’ opinions on the transportation problems facing the county’s residents and prioritized the problems for clarity of understanding. The third set of questions went into greater detail on the concerns of transportation and the available transit options. The remainder of the general public section solicited opinions with regard to transportation and transit for residents.

The business and social service agency sections of the survey prompted respondents to identify the total number of employees and clients that are employed or served, the location of residence of these persons, and their schedule and transportation preferences. These two sections were relatively smaller than the general public section as business and social service agency travel patterns and needs are generally well-documented and more easily obtainable than the general public. The comment area allowed employers and social service agencies to input data with regard to transportation challenges and problems along with possible solutions from the employer or agency perspective.

The processing of the survey responses was performed in three phases – sort web entries, summarize responses for individual questions, and categorize reviewed comments which will be presented in the following sections.

Phase I – Sort web entries

Responses were accumulated in a database during the period when the survey was conducted. There were 643 overall responses, which is an encouraging number indicating that public input for this strategic process was maximized. All responses (643) were sorted into three groups (see Table 4-26) and evaluated separately: General Public – 551, Business – 55, and Social Services Agencies – 37 responses. The overwhelming majority of responses came from the

Table 4-26

**Summary of the Survey Questions
Response Category - Type of User**

	# Records	%
Business Community	55	8.6%
Social Service Agencies	37	5.8%
General Public	551	85.7%
Total	643	

general public, which will be beneficial to the study process. The task of reaching this market can be difficult and has been a source of endless strategizing over the years. It is exemplary to see a medium (internet) that has provided the county with the ability to reach larger numbers of county residents. It is unclear whether there are biases in the response group. Internet availability is assumed to be generally high in the county, although there could be difficulty for low-income, elderly, and disadvantaged people. The same could be said of any other medium

used for public input including public meetings, however. The data assisted the study team throughout the issue and strategy development phases to clearly understand the needs of the Sussex County community.

Phase II – Summarize responses for individual questions

This section provides an analysis of the responses that have been provided for each market segment. Each of the three market segments (general public, business, social service agency) are analyzed separately. It is also assumed that the social service agency responses would speak to the concerns of those residents without internet availability.

The following sections present each market segment based on survey responses. Note that the total number of responses may vary slightly from table to table. This is because respondents did not necessarily answer all questions, and therefore the number of usable responses varied from question to question.

General Public

There were 551 general public respondents to the survey. This represented the bulk of the survey respondents. Table 4-27, at the end of this section presents some detailed information with regard to the general public responses and will be referred to throughout this analysis.

In terms of employment status, Figure 4-53 presents an overview of the respondents' current situation. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents (80%) indicated that they are employed on a full-time basis. The remainder of responses, including part-time employed, work at home, student, retired, disabled and other, were all well below 10%. These figures provide an indication that the input received will be more easily synthesized with the origin and destination survey results since both detail the status of employed persons.

Figure 4-54 provides insight into the employment locations of survey respondents. The largest share of employment locations for these individuals was Sussex County (25%) and neighboring Morris County (33%). The remainder of employment location choices tended to be well under 10%. Table 2 presents information with regard to the place of residence of employed survey respondents within Sussex County. There were 20+ towns from which respondents could choose. The most respondents indicated that they reside in Newton (31%), followed by Sparta Township (13%). The next largest numbers came from Vernon and Hopatcong. This information is similar to data gathered in the origin and destination survey (O-D) where the most common origin-destination pairs included trips from Sparta to numerous Morris County communities. Because it was designed to intercept traffic leaving the county, the O-D survey did not capture as many Sussex to Sussex trip needs as were seen in the web survey, which allows for a better understanding of the need for intra-county transportation options.

Figure 4-53: Employment Status

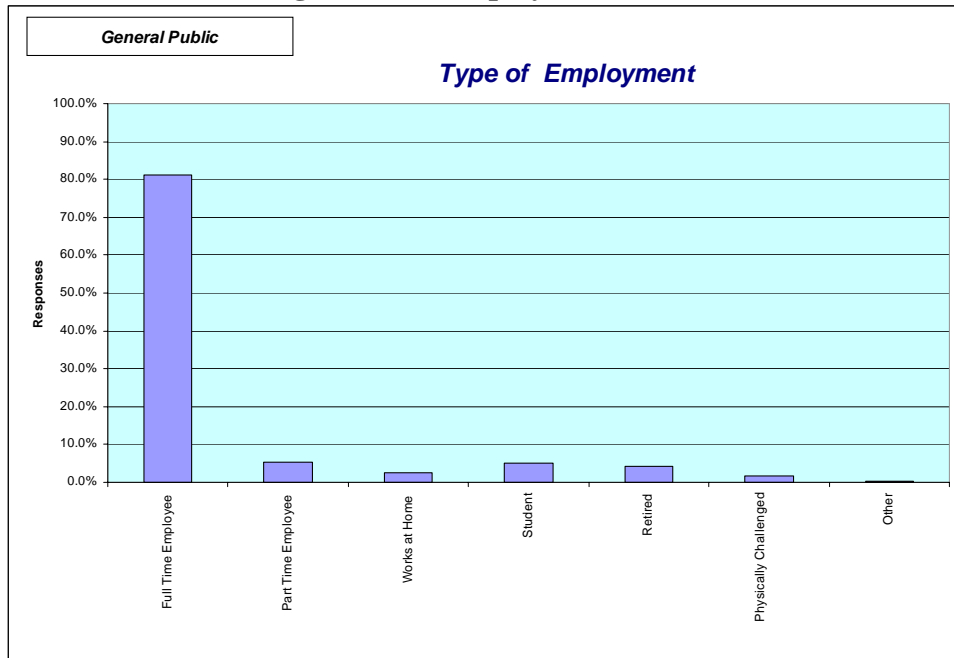
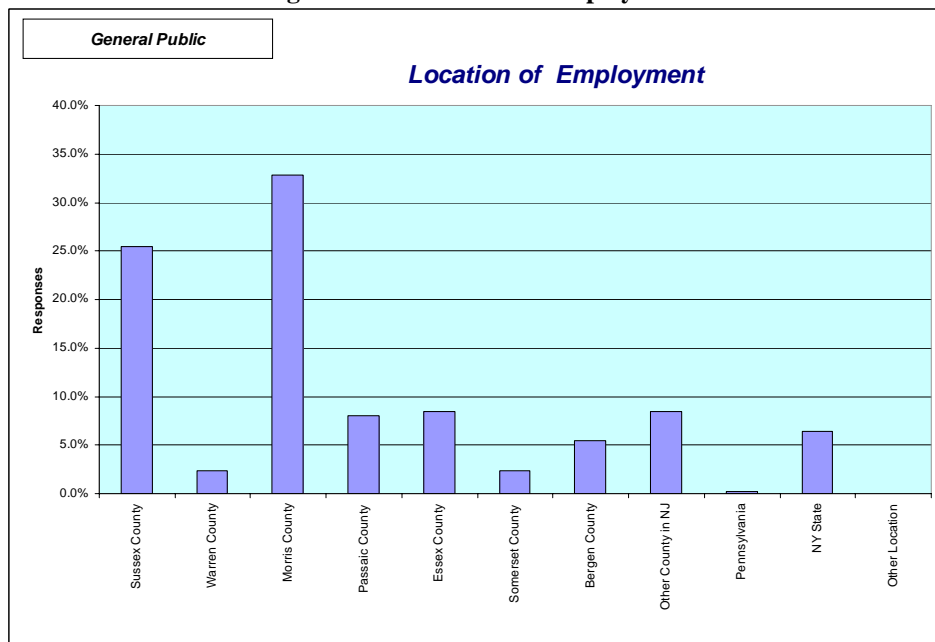


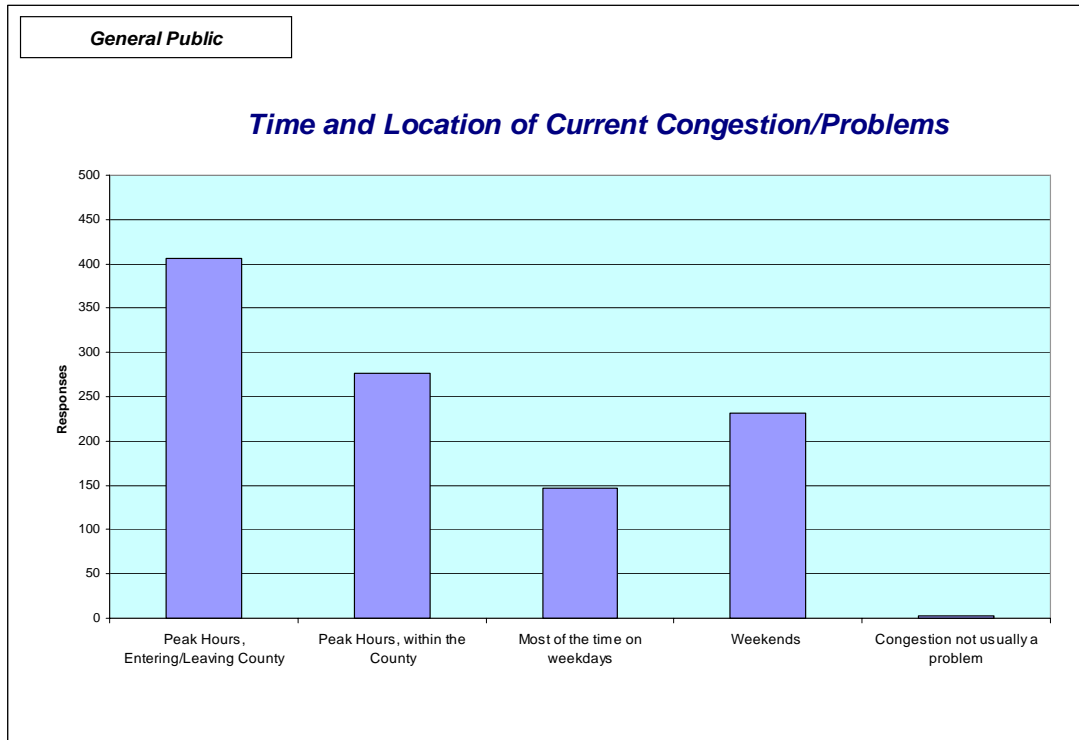
Figure 4-54: Location of Employment



The survey also requested information with regard to congestion in the county. Survey results indicate that many persons experience congestion as part of their daily commute and consider this to be an important issue for the county to address as they seek to continually improve quality of life in the county. The largest share of respondents indicated that they encounter congestion

when entering and exiting the county during peak travel times. The congestion, however, was experienced mainly outside of the county border. This will be a major issue as strategies are developed. Sussex County will need to work with adjacent communities and the state to address their residents' concerns on issues outside of Sussex County jurisdiction.

Figure 4-55: Congestion Identification



The remainder of questions pertained to public transit usage and availability. Based on the information in Chapter Two of this document, transit services are not readily available in Sussex County when compared with neighboring counties and more densely populated areas. It is often surprising to persons who relocate in areas similar to Sussex that these services are not as prevalent. In this respect, it is interesting to garner general public input into the state of current transit services and transit needs. Table 4-27 contains information with regard to transit usage.

Only 8.6% responded affirmatively to using available transit. Some 63% of respondents do not use transit, and 28.5 % did not respond at all. It can be reasonably assumed that the non-respondents also do not use transit. For those respondents who do use transit, 58% identified transit as the best way to get to their destination, compared with only 13% who choose it for convenience. Among the people who do not use transit, 37% responded that it does not go to their destination and 18% cited infrequent service. For those transit users, the most common modes of transportation are NJ Transit rail service and express bus service. Very few respondents utilize the Sussex County Transit System. It could be assumed that the majority of the SCT ridership did not respond to the survey due to lack of computer access.

The final questions pertained to transportation dependency issues. The most common issues for persons in a single household were advanced age (10%), physical challenges (15%), and youth

(75%). Within this General Public category, respondents were asked to identify the limitation issues they face due to transportation dependency. Thirty-one % of people are limited from shopping, another 31% limited from social activities, 19% limited from employment, 14% from medical help, and 5% from other activities. Although the overall number of respondents to these questions was small, it does indicate a need for transportation services for the County’s youth, elderly and disabled populations.

**Table 4-27
Summary: General Public**

Type of Employment

	# Responses	%
Full Time Employee	396	81.1%
Part Time Employee	26	5.3%
Works at Home	12	2.5%
Student	25	5.1%
Retired	20	4.1%
Physically Challenged	8	1.6%
Other	1	0.2%
Total	488	

*Note: 456 unique answers, 32 selected more than one box
Usable responses only

Employment Location

	# Responses	%
Sussex County	108	25.5%
Warren County	10	2.4%
Morris County	139	32.8%
Passaic County	34	8.0%
Essex County	36	8.5%
Somerset County	10	2.4%
Bergen County	23	5.4%
Other County in NJ	36	8.5%
Pennsylvania	1	0.2%
NY State	27	6.4%
Other Location	0	0.0%
Total	424	

*Note: 412 unique answers, 12 selected more than one box
Usable responses only

Place of Residence within Sussex County

	# Responses	%
Andover Boro	2	1.6%
Andover Twp	4	3.3%
Branchville Boro	2	1.6%
Byram Twp	6	4.9%
Franford Twp	6	4.9%
Franklin Boro	4	0.8%
Fredon Twp	1	0.2%
Green Twp	1	0.8%
Hamburg Boro	2	1.6%
Hampton Twp	1	0.8%
Hardyston Twp	1	0.8%
Hopatcong Boro	7	5.7%
Lafayette Twp	1	0.8%
Montague Twp	2	1.6%
Newton Town	38	31.1%
Sandyston Twp	1	0.8%
Sparta Twp	16	13.1%
Stanhope Boro	2	1.6%
Stillwater Twp	1	0.8%
Sussex Boro	5	4.1%
Vernon Twp	12	9.8%
Wantage Twp	7	5.7%
Total	122	
Usable responses only		

Time and Location of Current Congestion/Problems

	# Responses
Peak Hours, Entering/Leaving County	406
Peak Hours, within the County	276
Most of the time on weekdays	147
Weekends	231
Congestion not usually a problem	3
Total	1063

*Note: 457 people answered this question most of them with multiple selection of boxes

Do you use Transit?

	# Responses	%
Yes	55	8.6%
No	405	63.0%
No responses	183	28.5%
Total	643	

Why do you use Transit?

	# Responses	%
No available car	8	11.9%
Can't get a ride	2	3.0%
Convenient	9	13.4%
Best way	39	58.2%
Other reasons	9	13.4%
Total	67	

Type of transit

	# Responses
Sussex County Transit System	6
NJ Transit	38
Express Bus	23
Other Types of Transit (Description)	0

Why don't you use Transit?

	# Responses	%
Does not go where I want	344	37.8%
Infrequent service	166	18.2%
Expensive	33	3.6%
Nearest stop too far	106	11.6%
Destination from stop too far	91	10.0%
Not enough schedule	61	6.7%
No place to park	50	5.5%
Other reasons	59	6.5%
Total	910	

*Note: 407 people answered this question, most of them with multiple selection of boxes

People affected by transportation limitations

	# Responses	%
Elderly	10	10.3%
Physically Challenged	14	14.4%
Child/Teenager	73	75.3%
Total	97	

Limited activities

	# Responses	%
Shopping	66	31.0%
Medical Help	31	14.6%
Employment	40	18.8%
Social Activities	66	31.0%
Other Activities	10	4.7%
Total	213	

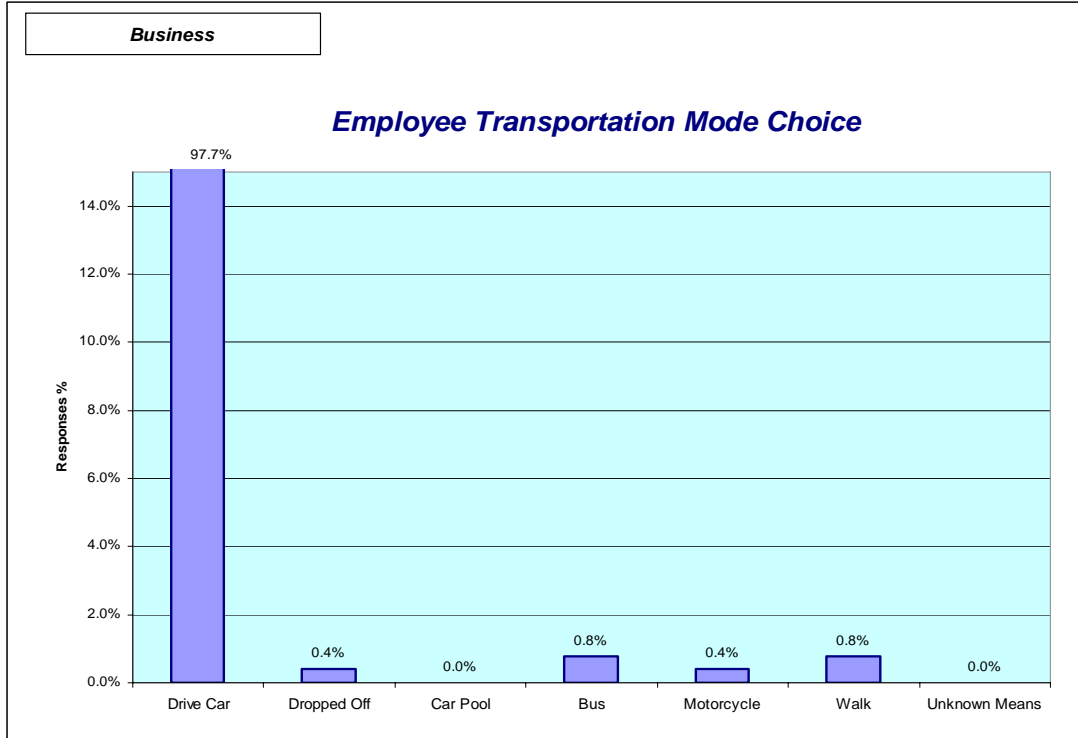
Business

Table 4-28 shows the tabulation for the business survey group. Information requested from business respondents, who were primarily Sussex County based employers, was less detailed than that requested from the general public. The intent of approaching the business community was to identify needs of employers and to develop an understanding of the travel habits of their employees. There were only 55 responses that were categorized as part of that market. However, based on numbers of employees at each agency, the responses pertain to nearly 16,000 employees which is more than half of the employees in Sussex County. The results are described below.

More than half (52%) of the business employees within this group are full-time employees. Another one-third of employees represented are considered part time. The remainder of respondents indicated that their employees are considered either contract employees or volunteers.

The majority of employees that were represented by the responses use a single-occupant vehicle to access their work site. An overwhelming number (97.7%) of employees utilize this mode. Less than 1% of respondents utilized any other mode. Figure 4-56 displays this information.

Figure 4-56: Mode Choice of Employees



The majority of those workers generally commute during the peak period, specifically between 7 and 9 AM. Similar to information gathered from census data and the O-D survey, workers’ highest travel patterns consisted of trips within Sussex County and between Sussex County and neighboring counties (Morris, Warren, etc.). However, the numbers of persons commuting to Sussex County for work trips tends to be much lower than those traveling in the opposite direction. When viewed in conjunction with general public considerations of the majority of congestion being located when one exits the county during peak times, a clearer picture tends to emerge of ‘hot spots’ that will need to be addressed.

The final question for the business survey requested information about mode choices available to employees to access a Sussex County worksite. The largest share of persons that responded to this question indicated that the personal auto was the only mode option available to them. It can be reasonably assumed that this is the case for many employers, although there may be instances where employees and employers are simply unaware of the mode choices available to them.

Table 4-28
Summary: Business

How Many Employees do you have?

	# Responses	
Full Time Employees	8325	52.1%
Part Time Employees	5631	35.2%
Contract Employees	1357	8.5%
Volunteer Employees	662	4.1%
Employees On Site	-	
Employees Off Site	-	
Total	15975	

Employees Work This Shift

<i>Workday</i>	# Employer Responses	
	<i>Starts</i>	<i>Ends</i>
Weekday Before 7 am	52	0
Weekday 7-9 am	188	0
Weekday 9-12	5	0
Weekday 12-4 pm	3	2
Weekday 4-7 pm	12	172
Weekday 7-12 pm	3	13
Weekend Before 7 am	3	0
Weekend 7-9 am	2	0
Weekend 9-12	9	0
Weekend 12-4 pm	0	6
Weekend 4-7 pm	0	5
Weekend 7-12 pm	0	3

Employee's transportation mode

	# Responses	%
Drive Car	251	97.7%
Dropped Off	1	0.4%
Car Pool	0	0.0%
Bus	2	0.8%
Motorcycle	1	0.4%
Walk	2	0.8%
Unknown Means	0	0.0%
Total	257	

Where do your employees live?

	# Responses	%
Sussex Cty	121	44.6%
Warren Cty	10	3.7%
Morris Cty	47	17.3%
Passaic Cty	6	2.2%
Other_NJ	20	7.4%
Pennsylvania	16	5.9%
NY State	51	18.8%
Other Location	0	0.0%
Total	271	

Other transportation options available

	# Responses
Drop Off	4
Car Pool	3
Bus	1
Train	3
Walk	3
None	19
Unknown	4
Total	37

*Note: some selected multiple options.

Social Service Agencies

Table 4-28 shows the tabulation for the social service agency market segment. The social service agencies represent people who typically display higher levels of transit need than the general public. There is a wide network of social service agencies in the county and they make up an integral part of the county’s ability to provide services tailored to people’s needs. Although the numbers of people utilizing roadways and transit services for access to social service agencies is much smaller than that of the general public accessing work sites, it is important to gather information from this market segment. They generally have better insight into transit options in the area and can provide input into the needs of persons who may have no personal transportation available to them.

There were 21 respondents that filled in the survey for the social service agency segment. More than half of the agencies (52.4%) characterize themselves as private non-profit organizations. There were five responses by agencies that consider themselves government agencies or departments. There was also one school and one private, for-profit.

Trip purpose is an important facet of social service agency transportation to understand in order to recognize the types of locations that require access. Figure 4-57 presents a breakdown of trip

purpose for social service clients. Trip purpose, both for types of trips served by an agency and trips needed by agency clients, was split relatively evenly among medical, employment, shopping, and social. Medical trip needs were slightly higher than the other trip purposes.

Survey results show that there are more than 100 vehicles owned or used by the social service agencies in Sussex County, most of which are intended for client transportation. The majority of agencies indicate that they operate during regular business hours on weekdays. While very few indicated a need for transportation services outside of these regular hours, including weekends, anecdotally there has been mention of the need for recreational and social transportation services on weekends.

Figure 4-57: Trip Purpose

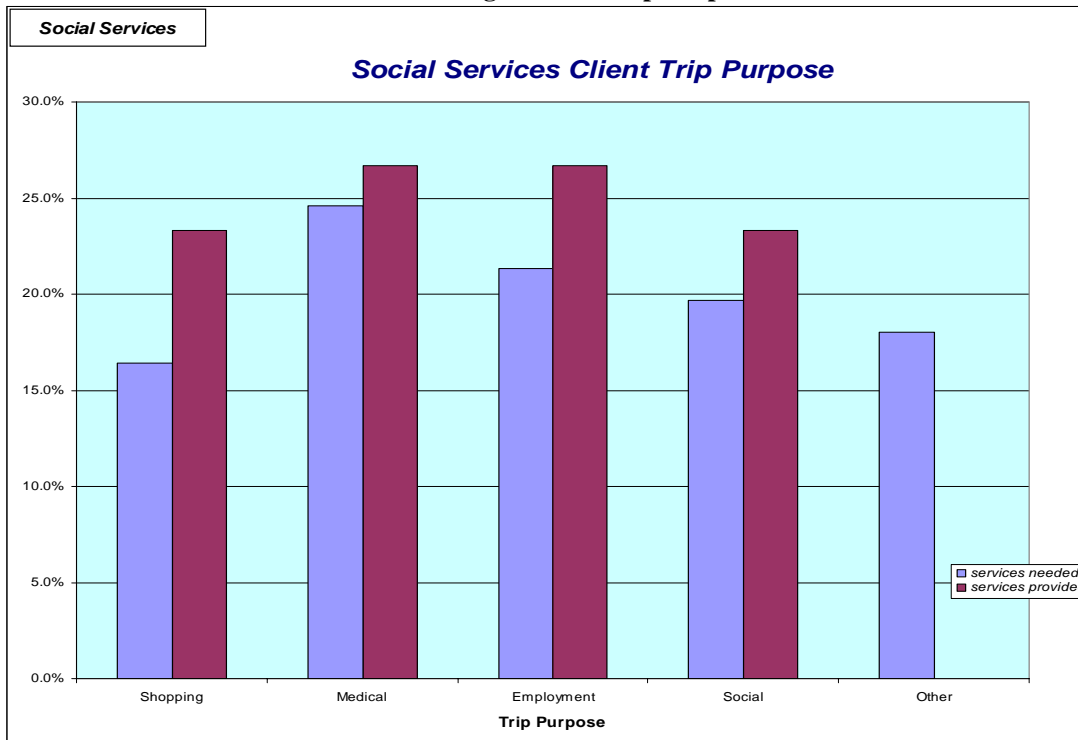


Table 4-29

Summary: Social Service Agency

Agency Type

Agency Type	# Responses	%
Private Non-Profit	11	52.4%
Private for Profit	1	4.8%
School	1	4.8%
Government Agency of Department	5	23.8%
Other	3	14.3%
Total	21	

What do you believe the trip purposes of your clients are?

	# Responses	%
Shopping	10	16.4%
Medical	15	24.6%
Employment	13	21.3%
Social	12	19.7%
Other	11	18.0%
Total	61	

Which of these transportation needs does your agency help address?

	# Responses	%
Shopping	7	23.3%
Medical	8	26.7%
Employment	8	26.7%
Social	7	23.3%
Other	0	0.0%
Total	30	

Agency Mobility Related Questions

	# Responses
How many Vehicles do you Own/Lease?	108
How many are available for client transportation?	95
Are you permitted to use those vehicles to transport non-clients?	0
Do you do so?	0
What days do you operate (Weekdays)	9
What days do you operate (Weekends)	2

Business Hours of Operation

	# Responses
Weekdays during business hours	10
Weekday evenings	4
Weekends during business hours	2
Weekend evenings	2
24/7	1
Other	1

Phase III – Categorize reviewed comments

The survey web pages were designed to allow respondents to type their comments on specific transportation issues and suggestions to resolve known problems. All of the comments were sorted by three groups. After reviewing responses, several major categories and areas of concern were identified. Comments and recommendations were tabulated based on these categories. Table 4-30 shows comments and their tabulation.

Table 4-30
WEB SURVEY SUMMARY
Comments in General Public Group

What is the biggest transportation issue faced by Sussex County?
 432 Comments

Congestion	Congestion Due to Urban Sprawl	Road Network Capacity Limitations	Mass Transit	Other
239	82	95	108	19

Where do you experience traffic congestion?
 77 Comments

On Rt 15	Rt 206	Rt 206 at Byram	Rt 23	Rt 80	Newton Square	Other
15	16	7	11	7	10	4

Where are you employed?
 26 Comments

New York City	New Jersey	Other
5	15	6

Why do you not use transit?
 112 Comments

Transit Route doesn't go where I need to	No transit close by	Transit Schedule not flexible enough	Transit too slow	No Information about transit	Need transportation at all times	Prefer to drive	Other
15	32	17	8	6	12	6	16

Do you or a family member refrain from activity due to lack of transportation?
 133 Comments

No	Yes
40	93

If you answered "Yes" on above question, what are the activities they are limited from?
 90 Comments

Travel outside of the County	Shopping	Other
15	32	43

Table 4-30 (continued)

Business Comments

What is the biggest transportation issue faced by your employees?

34 Comments

Congestion	Lack of mass transit	Distance traveled	Other
9	8	3	4

Additional Transportation Problem Comments.

14 Comments

Lack of mass transit	Other
7	7

Social Services Comments

What type of transportation services would be most beneficial to your clients?

16 Comments

Bus Service	Other
11	5

Conclusion

The web based survey effort has provided excellent insight into the transportation needs of Sussex County residents. This method of soliciting information from the public has provided a wider base of respondents than would have been possible to reach in many traditional methods of public outreach. The results have provided excellent information that will combine with all other data steps in the study process to develop a strategy to address transportation issues in coming years.

The survey has made it evident that congestion and transportation issues are a common concern of Sussex County residents, businesses, and social service agencies. Congestion seems to be the most pressing issue, and is a peak hour issue that many people face when leaving or entering the county. Based on the projected growth in the county that has been identified, it is evident that these issues need to be addressed in the near term to prevent them from becoming larger issues in the future.