Increasing People Mover Ridership among Jobholders in Anchorage, Alaska

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Introduction
While public transit ridership is increasing across America, public transit use has decreased in Anchorage, Alaska. Our research focused on one guiding question: What incentives might increase ridership among jobholders on People Mover bus?

Methods
The study analyzed 720 surveys collected from jobholders in Anchorage in eateries and other venues. We use SPSS statistical software to analyze the quantitative data. Open-ended responses were coded and analyzed with Microsoft Excel.

Results
The open-ended responses suggest improving and expanding service, changing the bus-riding experience and increasing awareness of People Mover’s service could increase ridership. In general, full-time workers were most enthusiastic about increased bus trips per day and weekend service. We found significant age differences in service preferences. Younger age cohorts expressed higher likelihood of using the bus if new technologies were implemented (e.g., bus-tracking phone apps, credit card option). Younger respondents were also more likely to increase ridership if there were improvements in the rider. Results differed by the neighborhood where respondents lived and worked.

Recommendations
We recommend People Mover focus on improving service levels by providing extended hours of operation, increasing frequency of buses per hour, adjusting the schedule for easier transfers, providing more service on weekends, increasing the reliability of the timetable and making information about bus destination, route and timetable more accessible though technological means such as an App for the bus—as well as focusing their marketing campaign on making the Bus appear as a clean, safe and welcoming environment.