

Fare Study Public Outreach

Results and Takeaways



Background on Fare Policy Changes

- Part of the Fare Study
- Fare Policy Changes were approved to collect public feedback
- There were four main policy changes that ETD is proposing



Simplify The Fare Structure

- Merger of systems requires merger of fare structures
- Consolidating two different prices of fare products into one system wide price
- Mostly small changes
- Elimination of the Student Monthly Pass
- Necessary to reduce confusion and unify the system

Proposed Simplified ETD Fare Structure

Fare Product	Previous ETD	Previous MAT	Proposed	Ridership Impact	Revenue Impact
Cash Fare	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	0	\$0
10-Ride Ticket	\$15.75	\$15.75	\$15.75	0	\$0
Dial-A-Ride Senior by donation only (funded by communities)	Y	NA	Y (where funded)	0	\$0
Same Day Dial-A-Ride (on space available basis)	\$7	NA	\$7	0	\$0
All Day Pass	\$3.50	\$4.50	\$3.50	3,300	-\$1,000
Dial-A-Ride Multiple Trip	\$15.75/5	\$35 / 10	\$35/10	----	----
Senior / Disabled 10-Ride	\$7.75	\$7.65	\$7.65	0	0
Monthly Pass	\$59	\$52.50	\$52.50	200	-\$2000
Discounted Youth Monthly Pass	\$59	\$38	\$52.50	0	0
Age for free children with parent	4 -	5-	5-	0	0
Surcharge for Off-Route	\$1.75	NA	\$1.75	0	0
XtraMile	Free	Free	Full Fixed Route	-3,600	+\$8,400

Low-Income and Student Discount

- Affordability is a key issue we wanted to address as part of this merger
- Proposal of a 50% discount to reduce financial barriers for those in most need and to encourage the next generation to utilize transit
- Determination of Low-Income status would be done in collaboration of other state agencies, so that we do not make that determination

2. New Reduced Fares for Low Income & Student Riders - Recommended

Provides a strong increase in ridership for the cost.

Description	Benefits	Impacts/Costs
<p>Builds upon the Simplified Fare Structure of Option 1 by expanding who qualifies for reduced fares.</p> <p>Reduced fares for low-income and student riders are being implemented by many agencies in the US.</p>	<p><u>Ability to Meet Goals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved affordability by those with lowest income.• Increased ridership (+66,000 / year) in the short and long-term by lowering fares for the most transit dependent riders and the riders of the future.• Reduced fares for students encourages the potential riders of the future to adopt a habit of using transit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction in fare revenue from discounts (-\$91,000)• Additional administrative effort in setting up program, including arranging for other agencies to determine eligibility and distribute cards. Some costs can be avoided by partnering with other agencies.• Slight additional administrative effort for on-going administration

Introduce Fare Capping

- Another proposal to improve affordability, is the creation of a new fare capping system that will allow riders to stop paying for fare once they have paid the cost of a monthly pass.
- This will mean that riders will never pay more than \$52.50 a month, no matter how many rides they use
- Increasingly common practice in many transit agencies
- In order to implement this policy, it would require new fare collection technology, which we are currently reviewing. This means this policy would not take effect right away but could be enacted in the future once our fare collection technology is improved.

3. Offer “Best Fare” - Recommended

Increasingly adopted by other agencies throughout the US to improve equity and affordability, but requires technology upgrade.

Description	Benefits	Costs/Impacts
<p>Provide riders with a free upgrade to a Daily or Monthly pass after they pass the price in other fares.</p> <p>Has been implemented by several agencies (e.g. RIPTA in Rhode Island) to improve affordability and simplify fares.</p>	<p><u>Goals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improves customer convenience / removes barriers to use• Improves equity and affordability by removing need to pay for monthly passes in one lump sum.• Increases ridership (6,000-10,000 / year) <p><u>Other Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simplifies fare decisions for riders by providing the benefit of passes with payment over time and removes the decision of what type of fare to purchase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction in fare revenue of \$13,500 - \$18,000/year• Requires a new account-based fare collection system with real-time communications with all vehicles

Fare Free for ADA Eligible Riders on Fixed Routes

- Proposal to allow ADA eligible riders the ability to ride for free on traditional fixed route buses
- ADA paratransit services would remain the same and the fare would remain at \$3.50
- This would provide a free option for transit if they are able to use it or they can continue to use the ADA paratransit service for the \$3.50 fare
- This proposal would also likely provide cost savings for ETD, as ADA rides are expensive to operate

4b. Eliminate Fixed-Route Fares for ADA Riders - Recommended

Implemented by multiple agencies in the US. Establishing administrative process to determine eligibility will be key.

Description	Benefits	Costs/Impacts
<p>Eliminate fixed-route fares ADA paratransit eligible individuals</p> <p>Adopted by some agencies, but generally only with tight functional eligibility determination.</p>	<p><u>Ability to Meet Goals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases customer convenience / removes barriers to use• Builds off simpler fare structure• Improves affordability for ADA paratransit riders.• Increased ridership (+3,000 / year in short and long-term) by lowering fares. <p><u>Other Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potentially reduce ADA complementary paratransit operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential increases to ADA paratransit determination costs• Minor loss of fare revenue for free rides for ADA riders.• Loss in revenue can be met or exceeded by reductions in ADA paratransit costs.• Allowing unqualified individuals can result in increased ADA paratransit costs and greater loss of fixed-route revenue.

Fare Outreach Overview

- We wanted to go above and beyond just a public meeting
- 2 Public Meetings were held
 - 11/15 Middletown City Hall
 - 11/17 Westbrook Town Hall
- Online survey/comment collection
- Middletown Terminal and bus rides to collect feedback
- We visited all 17 towns in the region collecting feedback in a variety of locations
 - Train Stations
 - Bus Stops
 - Grocery Stores
 - Libraries
 - Community Events

SHARE ABOUT
COMMENT &
FARES

9 TOWN
TRANSIT

Fare Outreach Survey Questions

1. How often do you ride the bus?
2. Do you believe a reduced fare for students and low-income individuals would enable people to use bus more frequently?
3. Would the elimination* of the student monthly pass impact you or your family?
4. Is a \$1.75 a reasonable fare for our XtraMile on-demand service?
5. Any other comments related to the proposed fare changes?

Fare Study Public Comment Survey

* 1. How often do you ride the bus?

- Never
- I have ridden a few times
- A few times a month
- I ride weekly
- I ride daily

* 2. Do you believe a reduced fare for students and low-income individuals would enable people to use the bus more frequently?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Other comments

* 3. Would the elimination of the monthly student pass impact you or your family?

- Yes
- No

Other comments

* 4. Is a \$1.75 a reasonable fare for our XtraMile on-demand service?

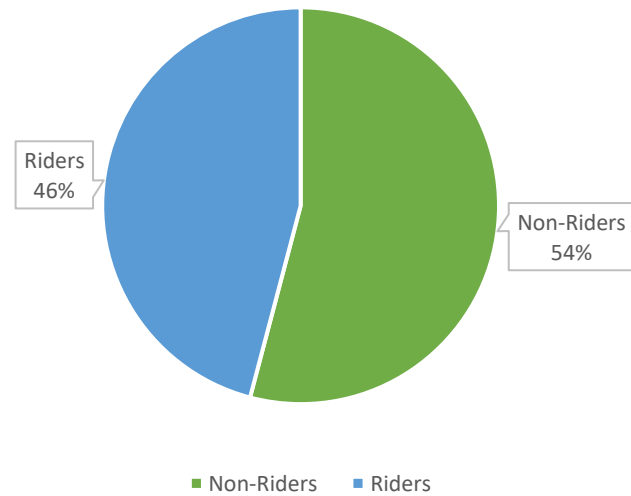
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Other (please specify)

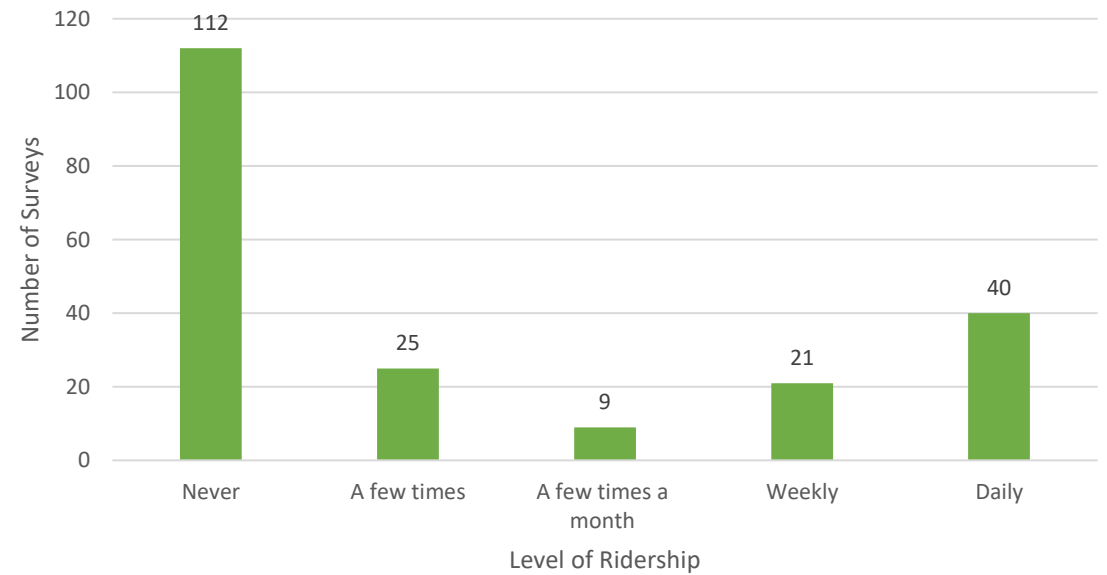
Fare Outreach Results

- 209 Total responses
- Roughly half of respondents have used the bus

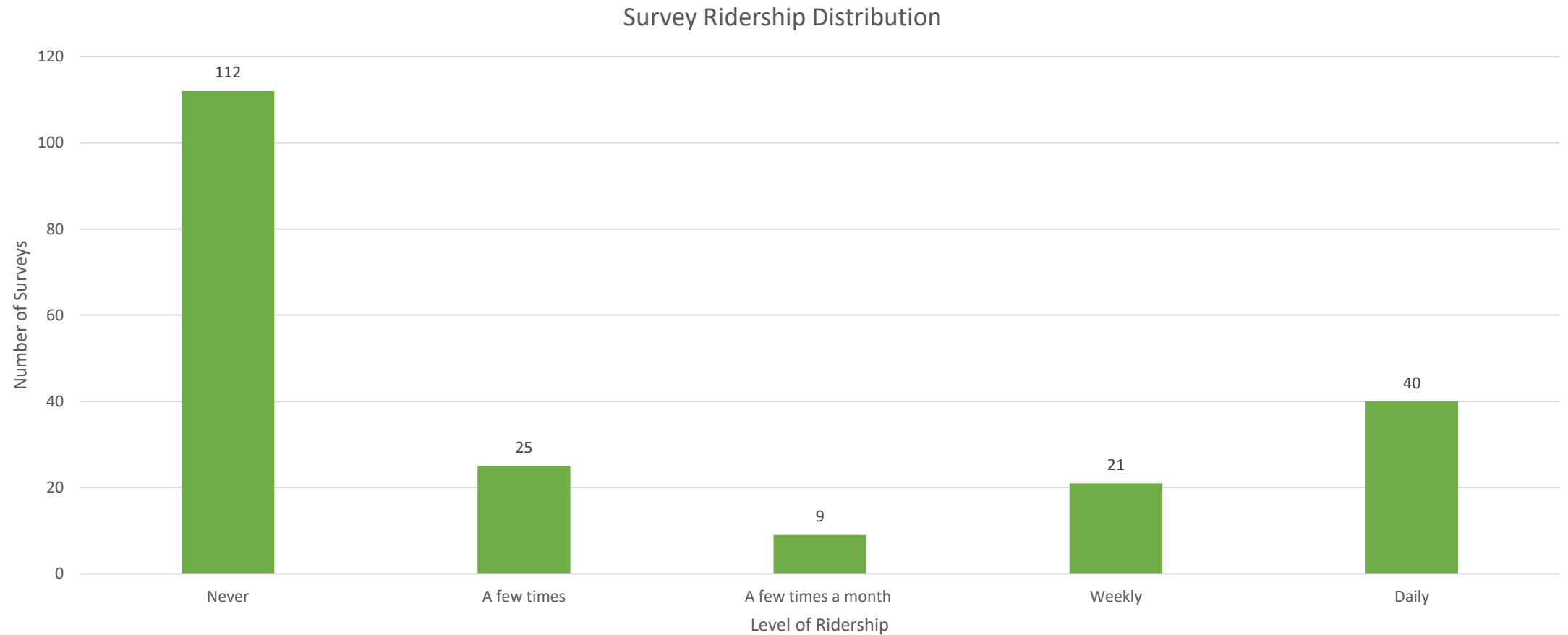
Rider vs. Non-Rider Survey Distribution



Survey Ridership Distribution

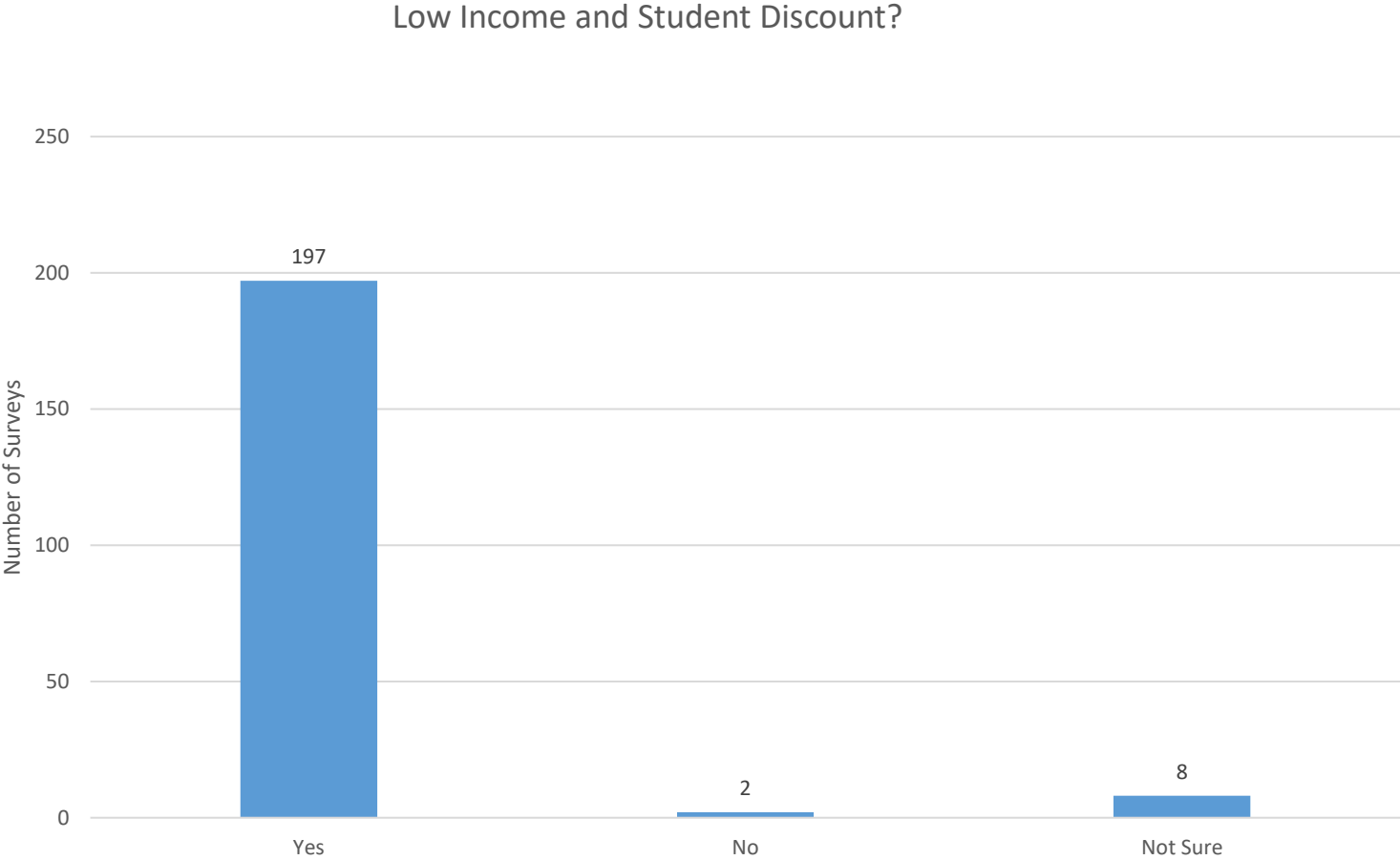


Bus Ridership



Support for Reduced Fare for Low-Income/Students?

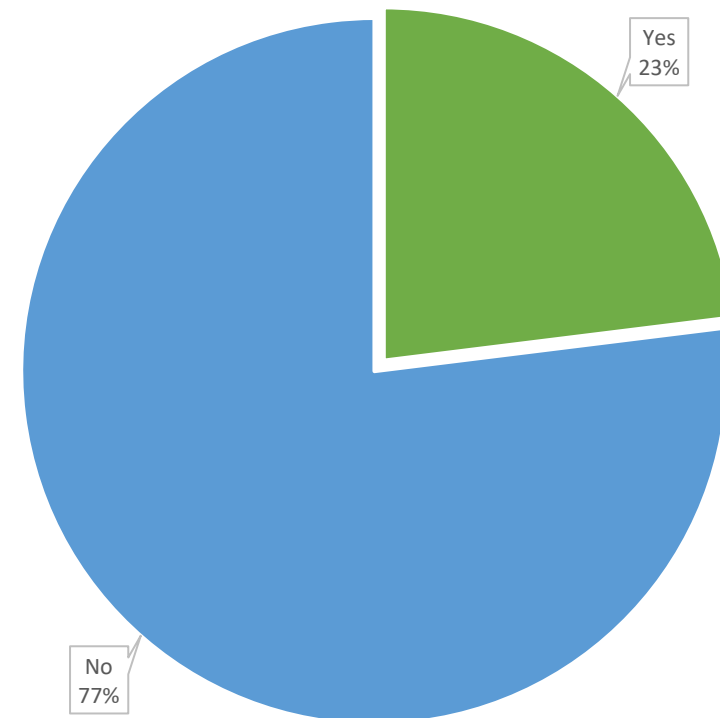
- Yes: 197
- No: 2
- Not Sure: 8



Would the Elimination of Student Monthly Pass Impact you?

Would the Elimination of the Student Monthly Pass Impact You or Your Family?

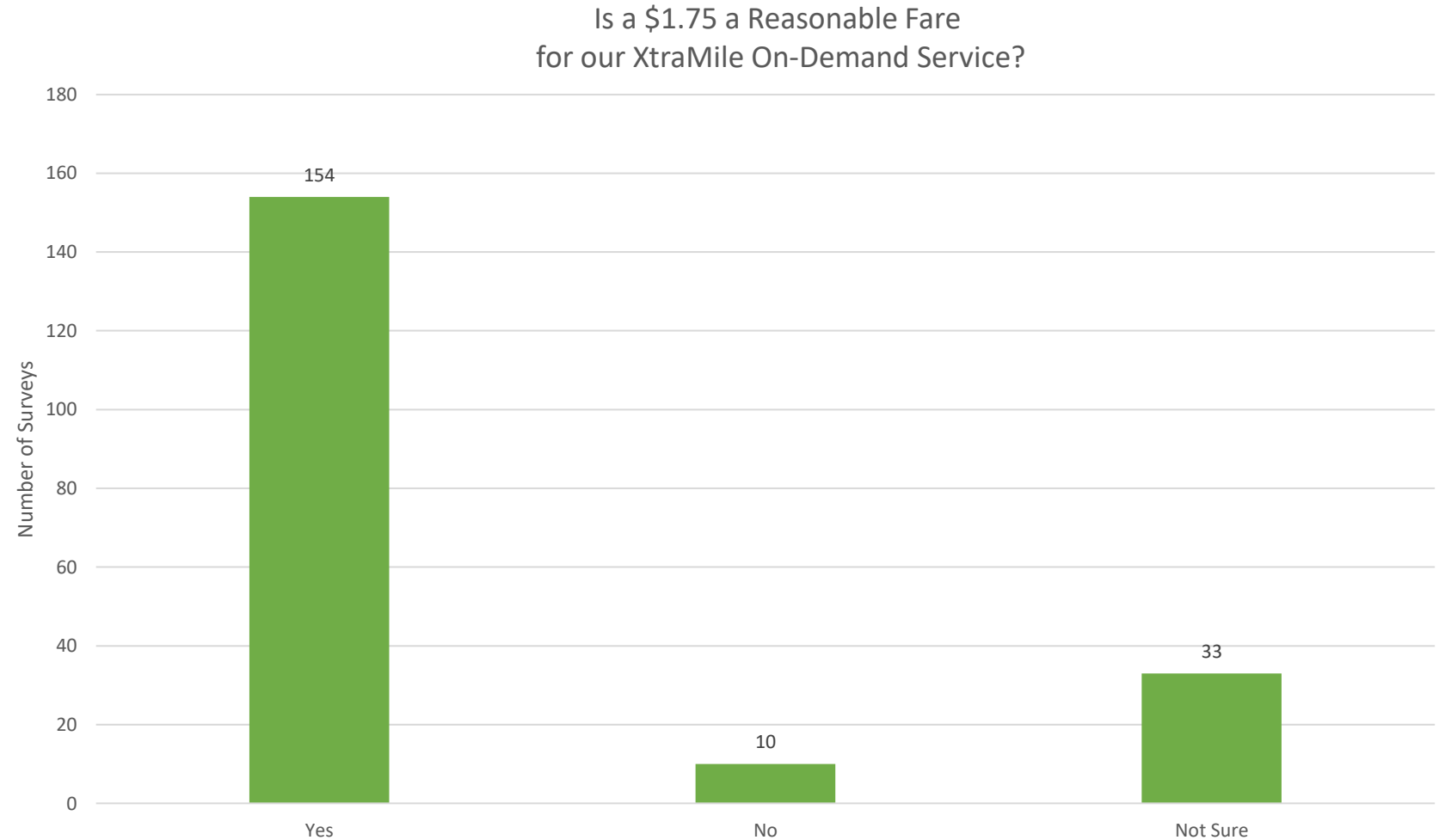
- Yes: 44*
- No: 147



■ Yes ■ No

Is \$1.75 a Reasonable XtraMile Fare?

- Yes: 154
- No: 10
- Not Sure: 33



Overall Takeaways from Survey Data

- Almost everyone supports a low-income/student discount
- The elimination of the student monthly pass would not impact most people
- Most people agree that a \$1.75 is a reasonable fare for XtraMile





Additional Public Comments

- “appreciate all efforts to assist low-income families + seniors”
- “9 Town Transit is a wonderful service to the area-we could not go on without it”
- “the free fare has been incredibly helpful in keeping me financially solvent and food secure. It is an amazing program that I endorse wholeheartedly”
- “I am collecting SNAP benefits and Medicare so reduced fare is great”
- “Happy to have 9-Transit, it’s a good service, I am happy with the service”