CTC OPERATOR AND PASSENGER SURVEY RESULTS

This document presents the findings of two surveys conducted for the CTC in Sarasota County. First, results and analysis of a survey conducted with CTC bus operators is presented. Secondly, results and analysis of the CTC paratransit passenger survey are presented. The results of both surveys are also included in Chapter Three of the full STEP document.

CTC OPERATOR SURVEY

This section of the paratransit evaluation portion of the STEP summarizes the results of a survey of CTC bus operators. Since bus operators are in direct contact with passengers on a daily basis, they are a valuable resource for information concerning CTC operations, particularly from the rider’s perspective. The surveys were distributed to 35 bus operators on July 21, 1999, by SFC staff. The surveys were placed in the operator’s mailbox and operators were given until July 23, 1999, to complete and return the surveys to the SFC office. A total of 29 surveys were completed and returned by the bus operators. For reference, a copy of the actual operator survey is contained in Appendix ___.

The first question on the survey asked CTC operators to read over a list of common complaints that riders often voice and rank, from 1 to 5, the complaints that they hear most frequently from TD riders with 1 being the most frequent complaint and 5 being the least frequent. A total of 12 possible complaints were listed on the survey for bus operators to read over and select from including an “other” category. This particular category required bus operators to write-out their response if it was not represented among the list of common complaints.

The most frequent rider complaints expressed to the bus operators by CTC clients are presented in Table 3-11. According to the results of the survey, the most frequent complaint expressed by CTC clients is the vehicle is late in picking me up. In addition to late pick-ups, clients similarly complained that CTC vehicles are late in delivering riders to their destinations. For the most part, the results from the survey indicate that bus operators feel that the complaints are valid or some of the passengers complaints were valid, as shown in Figure 3-58.
### Table 3-11
**Most Frequent Client Complaints About SFC Identified by Bus Operators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Frequently Heard Complaints</th>
<th>Composite Score</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SFC vehicle is late in picking me up</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFC vehicle is late in delivering me to my destination</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick up window is too long</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFC vehicle is not comfortable</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need Sunday service</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passengers cannot get information</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need night/evening service</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not feel safe on vehicle</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFC vehicle doesn't go where I want</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fare is too high</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus is not clean</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The composite score was calculated by assigning five points for each first priority ranking and a single point for each fifth priority ranking.

![Figure 3-58](image-url)
Table 3-12 shows the results from survey Question 3. This question asked bus operators to read over a list of possible improvements and to select and rank those improvements that would be most helpful to the CTC. Almost all of the bus operators that responded to this survey question expressed a need to improve scheduling and to provide more time in driver schedules. Finally, the results of the survey indicated that CTC consider using new, smaller buses (ranked 3rd), maintain buses more frequently (ranked 4th), and provide better system information.

**Table 3-12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Improvement</th>
<th>Composite Score</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve scheduling</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give more time to schedules</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operate new, smaller vehicles</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain buses more frequently</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide better system information</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operate Sunday service</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operate night/evening service</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operate new, larger vehicles</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower the fares</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 4 of the bus operator survey asked bus operators to indicate potential safety problems with the CTC transportation service. The question required bus operators to write-out their comments. The potential safety problems/hazards noted by bus operators are listed below:

- Pick-ups and drop-offs at the main entrance of Sarasota Memorial Hospital would be safer than current location
- Contact with clients with contagious diseases is unsafe
- Due to bus radios poor quality, drivers sometimes cannot contact dispatch
- Drivers need to hurry from point to point in order to maintain schedule
- Lack of proper driver training
- Drivers are familiar with the vehicle that they normally drive which causes problems when they are assigned to a different vehicle

1 The composite score was calculated by assigning eleven points for each first priority ranking and one point for each eleventh priority ranking.
Nursing home clients that are unable to communicate
Drop-off area at 5741 Bee Ridge Road
The need to look for street signs and house numbers in the dark
Some drivers do not use turn signals when changing lanes

Question 5 on the bus operator survey queried bus operators about modifications that should be made to the scheduling process. The question required bus operators to write-out their comments. The following is a complete list of comments offered by bus operators.

- The only way to solve the window problem is to increase the number of drivers and vehicles
- Schedule pick-ups and drop-offs in a circle
- Decrease deadheading
- Have schedulers ride with drivers to get a better understanding of time needed
- Lunch hours are left out of schedules many times
- All schedules should be reviewed by someone other than the person producing them to ensure accuracy
- Give drivers more time between pick-ups and drop-offs
- Allow drivers to work areas they are familiar with
- Allow more load time for wheelchairs
- Use a different computer scheduling program
- Computer scheduled routes will never work due to bridges, road repairs and unforeseen accidents

Finally, question 6 on the bus operator survey asked bus operators to indicate any other comments that would be helpful to improve CTC transportation service. The question required bus operators to write-out their comments. The following is a complete list of comments made by bus operators.

- Better scheduling will improve SFC and will reduce the amount of late arrival/departures
- We provide a very beneficial service to the community, elderly, homebound, and institutionalized
- The service is a good value for the fare charged
- If a vehicle is not dispatched for a single individual, clients will always have complaints
- Institute a decision making process from the supervisors to drivers
- Install a dependable radio system
- Fine tune schedules
- Too many clients, not enough buses
- Outside of scheduling, SFC runs fairly well
- Schedules are quite busy, we need more drivers
- Prioritize clients
Have someone knowledgeable proofread manifests
• Have a drivers meeting every six weeks to discuss problems/solutions
• Input from drivers should be taken seriously
• Don’t schedule pick-ups at the same time on opposite ends of town
• New radio system is a must
• Improve radio system
• Poor radio system is downright unsafe
• Include customer phone number on manifests
SENIOR FRIENDSHIP CENTER ON-BOARD SURVEY

This section summarizes the results of an on-board survey of Senior Friendship Center (SFC) paratransit riders conducted on July 21, 1999. The purpose of this survey was to obtain data about rider demographics, travel behavior, satisfaction with specific aspects of Senior Friendship Center's services, and the use or potential use of Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) services by SFC riders.

Survey Methodology

The paratransit on-board survey was designed to elicit descriptive information regarding the demographic traits and travel behavior of SFC riders as well as their satisfaction with specific aspects of SFC paratransit service. This information will enable SFC to focus on relevant needs and issues. In addition, information about SFC riders' perception and use of SCAT will help to determine ways of encouraging paratransit riders to use fixed-route transit for some or all of their trips.

The on-board survey was conducted on Wednesday, July 21, 1999. Surveys were distributed by the drivers of all CTC vehicles on that date. Passengers filled out the survey while riding the vehicle and returned the survey to the driver before exiting the vehicle. If passengers were not able to complete the survey before the end of their trip, they were asked to return the completed survey on their next trip. Riders were asked to complete only one survey regardless of whether they used the system multiple times during the survey period. For reference, a copy of the survey instrument is included in Appendix __ (to be determined later).

SFC On-Board Survey Analysis

The on-board survey analysis is composed of five sections: demographics, travel behavior, rider satisfaction with specific aspects of SFC paratransit service, ridership of SFC clients on SCAT, and rider comments and suggestions. Each section provides information that will be useful in improving the performance and service offered by the CTC.

Demographic data consists of such information as rider age, gender, ethnicity, annual household income, and the number of working vehicles in the rider's household. This information is useful for comparison of the demographic characteristics of SFC riders to the characteristics of all persons in Sarasota County.

Travel behavior included data such as frequency of use, length of use, trip purpose, fare payment and fare category, alternative transportation, and assistance requirements. This information can assist SFC in effective scheduling and general policy-decisions regarding overall SFC service.
A series of questions were asked to evaluate quality of service and user satisfaction. The questions asked include information concerning comfort of vehicles, on-time performance, driver assistance, driver courtesy, telephone agent courtesy, and overall quality of service. Identified weaknesses may potentially be addressed through changes in the system. By distinguishing rider sensitivities regarding specific characteristics of the system, the CTC will be better able to prioritize improvements to the service.

Three questions were also included in the on-board survey regarding the use of SCAT bus services by users of SFC Transportation. These questions were asked to establish what percentage of SFC clients have ever ridden SCAT, the reason(s) they haven’t tried SCAT, and under what conditions would they consider using SCAT bus services.

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to provide open-ended comments regarding SFC service.

A total of 141 surveys were returned by riders. This represents a 44 percent coverage of all persons riding SFC on the day of the survey. (This assumes that all of the 642 trips paratransit trips provided in this day were roundtrips. Therefore, 321 people were transported.) Each survey question was analyzed independently and the results for each question are provided in either tables or figures. The tables and figures are accompanied by brief narratives that explain the relevance of the findings being reported. All questions were included in the analysis regardless of whether or not the survey was completed entirely.

**SFC Rider Demographic Information**

A number of questions were asked in order to establish a demographic profile of the typical SFC paratransit rider. Demographic-related questions included age (Question 17), gender (Question 18), ethnicity (Question 19), annual household income (Question 20), and auto ownership (Question 21). Where information is available the demographics of SFC riders was compared to the demographics of all residents of Sarasota County (as derived from the 1990 and 1997 US Census data), as shown in Table 3-13.

**Age** - The on-board survey results indicate that more than 72 percent of SFC riders are 60 years or older. Another 12 percent of the riders are between the age of 45 and 59 years old.

**Gender** - Results from the on-board survey show that many more women currently use SFC service than men. As Table 3-13 indicates, 74 percent of the riders are female and 26 percent are male. This finding related to gender is typical of overall paratransit ridership.
Ethnicity - For the entire system, according to the results from the on-board survey, 82 percent of riders are white, while 17 percent are black. Only 1 percent of riders indicated their ethnicity to be Hispanic.

Annual Household Income – The on-board survey results indicate that 55 percent of riders have an annual household income that is less than $10,000, and another 29 percent have an annual household income between $10,000 and $19,999. Of all the riders surveyed, only 7 percent have an annual household income of $30,000 or greater.

Vehicle Ownership - The on-board survey results indicate that 61 percent of riders do not have a vehicle available to them in their household. Another 29 percent indicated that they have only one vehicle available at their household.

SFC Rider Travel Behavior Information

A number of questions were included in the on-board survey to obtain information about the travel behavior of SFC riders. This information includes frequency of use, length of use, trip purpose, fare payment and fare category, alternative transportation, and assistance requirements. The results of these questions are shown in Figures 3-59 through 3-65.

Frequency of Use – The majority of respondents reported that they use SFC three days per week (30 percent), as illustrated in Figure 3-59. The second most common response to this question was five days per week (25 percent). Fewer than 2 percent of respondents ride more than five days per week.
Table 3-13
Rider Demographic Comparisons of the SFC and SCAT On-Board Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>SFC</th>
<th>Sarasota County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>47%(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>53%(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Ownership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>6%(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>47%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36%(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Household Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>6%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $19,999</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>13%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $29,999</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 or more</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>74%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Origin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 years or under</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>16%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 24</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 59</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 years or older</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>38%(^3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) 1997 data from Florida Statistical Abstract.
\(^2\) 1990 U.S. Census Data.
\(^3\) 1997 data from Caliper Corporation.
n/a = data not available in compatible format.
Note: Percents may be slightly greater or less than 100 due to rounding.

Length of Use - As revealed by the on-board survey results shown in Figure 3-60, 54 percent of riders have been using SFC for 2 years or more. These riders may be characterized as the long time users of the system.

Trip Purpose - The results from the on-board survey show that most riders are traveling to a doctor/dentist or to a senior center, with response rates of 31 percent for both options. The response rates for this question are illustrated in Figure 3-61.

Fare Payment - In Question 2 respondents were asked whether they pay a fare to ride on SFC
vehicles and if they do pay, what the amount of the fare was. As shown in Figure 3-62, approximately 73 percent of respondents paid a fare, with the majority paying $1.00 for each trip (see Figure 3-63).

Trip Type   Riders were also asked whether their trip was sponsored by an organization. The largest group of respondents indicated that they were Silver Card riders (36 percent), as shown in Figure 3-64. Silver Card paratransit trips are sponsored through the ADA complementary paratransit service and are open to individuals who are not able to use the fixed-route bus service because of a disability. The next most common trip type was Medicaid-sponsored trips (22 percent).

Alternative Transportation   To find out how people would travel to their destinations if they could not travel by a SFC vehicle, the survey included Question 15. SFC riders were asked to indicate from eight discrete choices how they would make their trip if SFC were not available; the results are presented in Figure 3-65. If the SFC transportation services were not available, 41 percent of riders wouldn't make the trip, 30 percent would ride with someone, 11 percent would use a taxi service, 7 percent would take a SCAT bus, 3 percent would drive themselves, 1 percent would walk, and 8 percent would use other means of making their trip.

Assistance Requirements   In Question 8, respondents were asked whether they require assistance from a SFC driver to board the vehicle. Of the respondents, 55 percent indicated that they do not require assistance, 45 percent require assistance from the driver.
Figure 3-59
Question 1: Frequency of Use (Days/Week), SFC Survey

Figure 3-60
Question 7: Length of Use, SFC Survey
Figure 3-61
Question 16: Trip Purpose, SFC Survey

- Doctor/Dentist: 31.4%
- Senior Center: 30.7%
- Work: 9.5%
- Home: 5.1%
- Shopping: 5.1%
- School: 3.6%
- Workshop: 2.9%
- Rec/Visit: 2.9%

Figure 3-62
Question 2: Did you pay a fare?, SFC Survey

- Yes: 73.3%
- No: 26.7%
Figure 3-63
Question 3: Fare Payment, SFC Survey

- $1.00: 1.3%
- $1.50: 1.3%
- $2.00: 3.8%
- $4.00: 1.3%
- $10.00: 1.3%
- $24.00: 1.3%

Figure 3-64
Question 3: Trip Type, SFC Survey

- Silver Card: 35.8%
- Medicaid: 21.6%
- SFC Spons.: 15.7%
- Don't Know: 14.2%
- Nonspons.: 12.7%

Figure 3-65
Question 15: Alternative Transportation, SFC Survey

- Wouldn't Make Trip: 40.9%
- Ride w/ Someone: 30.3%
- Taxi: 10.6%
- Other: 7.6%
- Take SCAT Bus: 6.8%
- Drive: 3.0%
- Walk: 0.8%
CTC Rider Satisfaction Information

A series of questions were asked in the CTC paratransit on-board survey to evaluate quality of service and user satisfaction with CTC trips. The questions asked include information concerning comfort of vehicles, on-time performance, driver assistance, driver courtesy, telephone agent courtesy, and overall quality of service. Results are included in the discussion below and are displayed in Figures 3-66 through 3-71.

Comfort of Vehicles  Respondents were asked in to rate the comfort of SFC vehicles. As contained in Figure 3-66, 76 percent of respondents rated the comfort of the vehicles as good or excellent. Only 2 percent of respondents rated the comfort below fair.

On-Time Performance  In Question 6, respondents were asked how often they arrive on-time to their appointments. Illustrated in Figure 3-67, 35 percent of respondents stated that they always arrive at their appointments on time, and 49 percent arrive on time most of the time.

Driver Assistance  - All of the respondents who indicated that they required driver assistance to board a SFC vehicle, were also asked to rate the quality of that assistance. An overwhelming majority of respondents answered that the quality of the driver assistance was good or excellent (92 percent). None of the respondents rated the driver assistance as poor. The results from this question are contained in Figure 3-68.

Driver and Telephone Agent Courtesy  Two questions were asked in the on-board survey about the courtesy and helpfulness of SFC employees. Respondents were asked to rate the drivers in Question 9 and the telephone agents in Question 10. As shown in Figure 3-69, the majority (94 percent) of respondents rated driver courtesy and helpfulness as excellent or good. Also illustrated in Figure 3-70, telephone agent courtesy and helpfulness was rated by 78 percent of the respondents as excellent or good.

Overall Quality of Service  Finally, in Question 4, respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of SFC’s paratransit service. The results of this question are illustrated in Figure 3-71. Respondents rated the service as excellent, good, average, fair, or poor; and 31 percent rated overall quality of service as excellent, 45 percent rated it as good, and 12 percent as average. Only 13 percent rated the overall service as fair or poor.
Figure 3-66
Question 5: Vehicle Comfort, SFC Survey

- Excellent: 30.9%
- Good: 44.6%
- Average: 11.5%
- Fair: 10.8%
- Poor: 2.2%

Figure 3-67
Question 6: On Time?, SFC Survey

- Always: 34.6%
- Most of the time: 49.3%
- Sometimes: 16.2%
- Never: 0.0%

Figure 3-68
Question 8b: Driver Assistance, SFC Survey

- Excellent: 61.7%
- Good: 30.0%
- Average: 6.7%
- Fair: 1.7%
- Poor: 0.0%
Figure 3-69
Question 9: Driver Courtesy, SFC Survey

- Excellent: 65.0%
- Good: 28.6%
- Average: 4.3%
- Fair: 2.1%
- Poor: 0.0%

Figure 3-70
Question 10: Telephone Agent Courtesy, SFC Survey

- Excellent: 43.4%
- Good: 35.3%
- Average: 9.6%
- Fair: 11.0%
- Poor: 0.7%

Figure 3-71
Question 4: Overall Quality, SFC Survey

- Excellent: 36.4%
- Good: 45.0%
- Average: 5.7%
- Fair: 11.4%
- Poor: 1.4%
Ridership of CTC Clients on Sarasota County Area Transit

Three questions were included in the on-board survey regarding the use of SCAT bus services by SFC clients. These questions were asked to establish what percentage of SFC clients have ever ridden SCAT; if they haven’t tried SCAT, what is the reason; and under what conditions would they consider using SCAT.

Question 12 asked respondents whether they have ever ridden SCAT bus routes for any of their travel needs. As shown in Figure 3-72, 44 percent of respondents indicated that they have tried SCAT bus routes at least once. Of the 44 percent that have tried SCAT bus service, the majority are either Silver Card riders (36 percent) or Medicaid clients (27 percent).

As a follow up question to Question 12, Question 13 asked respondents who answered No to Question 12 to give a reason why they have not used SCAT bus routes. The most frequently cited reason for not riding SCAT was that it does not run in their neighborhood (30 percent). The second most common reason, other than other, was that the bus route is not accessible (27 percent). Other reasons respondents noted for not using SCAT bus service were already having transportation and problems with accessing vehicles due to a disability. These results are shown in Figure 3-73.

The final question about the use of SCAT service asked respondents about conditions that might make them consider using SCAT. The majority of respondents, 79 percent, stated that they would consider using SCAT if they could get to a bus stop or if SFC could take them to a safe SCAT bus stop. These responses and all other responses to this question (Question 14) are displayed in Figure 3-74.
Figure 3-72
Question 12: Used SCAT?, SFC Survey

Yes: 56.4%
No: 43.6%

Figure 3-73
Question 13: Why haven't used SCAT?, SFC Survey

- Doesn't Run in My Neighborhood: 30.2%
- Not Accessible: 26.9%
- Doesn't go where I am going: 9.3%
- Other: 32.6%
- Doesn't Run Early/Late: 1.2%

Figure 3-74
Question 14: Under what conditions would you use SCAT?, SFC Survey

- If I could get to bus stop: 63.4%
- If SFC took me to safe SCAT stop: 15.9%
- If rides on SCAT cheaper than SFC: 11.0%
- If rides were free: 9.8%
Rider Comments and Suggestions

The last three question of the SFC on-board survey gave riders the opportunity to provide open-ended comments regarding SFC service. In these three questions respondents were asked to list the one thing they like the most about SFC service, the one thing they like the least, and how they feel SFC could improve the quality of service or serve transportation needs better. Numerous riders took the time to provide comments in the space provided on the survey.

Question 22 asked respondents to list the one thing they like the most about riding Senior Friendship Centers Transportation. Eighty-nine percent of respondents gave answers to this question. The most common one thing that people liked the most about SFC included:

- the courteous staff (especially the drivers),
- SFC being dependable/convenient transportation,
- the ability to get out and go somewhere,
- the social aspect of riding on SFC, and
- the fact that the service is door-to-door.

The opposite of Question 22, Question 23 asked respondents to report the one thing they liked the least about SFC transportation. For this question, 68 percent of the respondents included comments. The following are the most common comments by respondents.

- on-time performance (i.e., often late)
- long waiting time (especially for return trips)
- scheduling problems
- quality of ride (vehicles are uncomfortable)

Finally, respondents, in Question 24, were asked to comment on how SFC could improve the quality of their service or serve transportation needs better. Of those who responded to this question (67 percent), the most common response was that no changes were needed. Many respondents stated that they are very happy with the service and it can’t get any better. However, other responses to this question included comments on: improved scheduling, on-time performance, the need for additional service (more buses, more hours/days of service), waiting time, and the quality of vehicles.

Conclusions

The objective of the Senior Friendship Center paratransit on-board survey was to collect rider demographic information, travel behavior, satisfaction with specific aspects of SFC paratransit
service, and the use of SCAT bus service by SFC clients. A typical 1999 SFC rider profile was developed through the compilation of responses to demographic and travel behavior-related questions, as shown in Table 3-14. This rider profile is also compared to the rider profile of the typical SCAT rider, as taken from the latest SCAT on-board survey. As shown in Table 3-14, the typical SFC and SCAT rider have many characteristics in common. The main difference, however, is age; the typical SCAT rider is 25 to 44 years old; and the typical SFC rider is 60 years or older.

Table 3-14
SFC Typical Rider Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>SFC Typical Rider Profile</th>
<th>SCAT Typical Rider Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>60 or older</td>
<td>25 to 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Origin</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Household Income</td>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>Less than $15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Use</td>
<td>2 years or longer</td>
<td>5 years or longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Use</td>
<td>3 or more days per week</td>
<td>4 or more days per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Ownership</td>
<td>No autos</td>
<td>No autos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip Type</td>
<td>Silver Card</td>
<td>Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Transportation</td>
<td>Wouldn’t make trip</td>
<td>Ride with someone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bullet points below summarize the findings from the on-board survey analysis.

- Most SFC riders use the service 3 or more days per week.
- Most riders are long time users of the system
- The most common destinations are doctor/dentist and senior centers.
- The majority of riders pay $2.00 for each trip.
- If SFC service was not available most riders wouldn’t make the trip or they would ride with someone else.

The majority of respondents are satisfied with the paratransit service they receive from Senior Friendship Centers. Of particular distinction, riders were overwhelmingly satisfied with driver courtesy, helpfulness, and assistance. As indicated from Question 6 and the open-ended questions, some respondents are not happy with the on-time performance of services. However, overall, 31 percent of respondents rated quality of service as excellent and 45 percent rated it as good.
Areas that suggest the need for further examination and analysis include data indicating that many paratransit users may be able to use and/or have used the SCAT fixed-route bus service. According to the survey findings, 44 percent of survey respondents indicated that they have used SCAT bus services at least one time. Of further interest is the finding that 63 percent of these respondents are either Silver Card (ADA paratransit) riders or Medicaid clients. Both of these paratransit programs require that individuals use the fixed-route bus service if they are able. The survey results also suggest that lack of access to bus stops may be contributing to the use of paratransit services among these respondents. This is supported by the survey finding that 79 percent of respondents would consider using SCAT bus service if they could get to a bus stop or if SFC could transport them to a safe bus stop. The implementation of a stricter ADA paratransit eligibility determination process and/or paratransit feeder services may impact these findings in the future, as well as result in the delivery of more plentiful, cost effective and efficient services for individuals are not able to use fixed-route bus service.