UTown@UBC

Walk 'n Roll to School: U-Hill Elementary School Survey

May 1, 2013

1. Introduction

The week of April 8th to 12th, Campus and Community Planning and the UNA conducted a survey with over 400 University Hill Elementary School students as part of the planning process for the **Walk 'n Roll to School** initiative. The purpose of this survey was to determine the most often-used walking and cycling routes students take when commuting to U-Hill Elementary, as well as to determine the most popular forms of active and passive transportation.

The following report outlines the feedback received from the surveys. Please note that the total number of surveys received was 403, however the number of respondents per question varied and is indicated. The percentage values are based upon the number of respondents for that particular question.

2. Demographics

2.1. Question #1: What grade are you in?
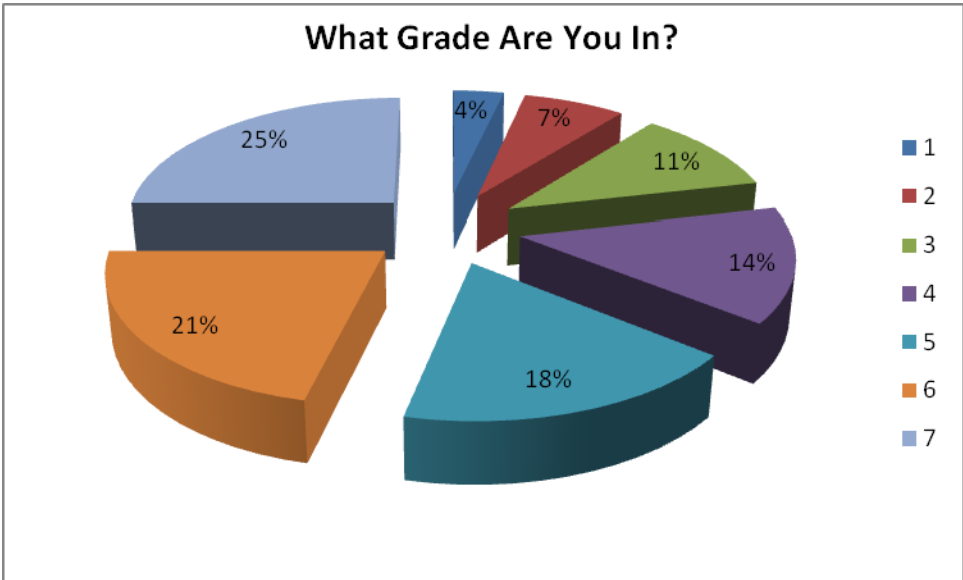

Figure 1.0: Percentage breakdown of respondent grade level (398 respondents)

Intermediate students (grades 4-7) made up the majority of survey respondents (78%). Surveys were conducted in class and administered by classroom teachers.
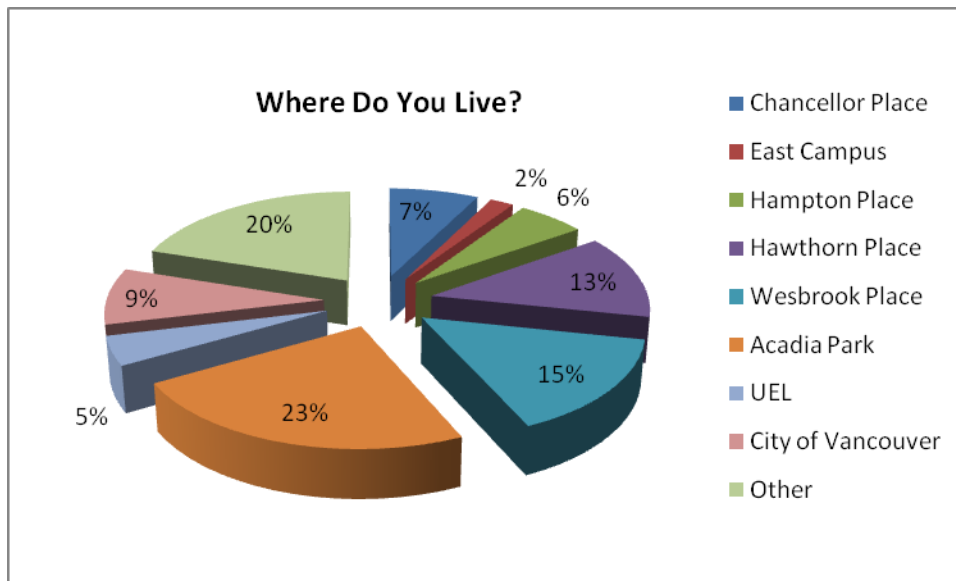
2.2. Question #2: *Where do you live?*

Figure 1.1: Chart showing where respondents live and commute from (399 respondents)

Acadia Park (23%) residents comprised the majority of respondents, followed by **"Other" (20%)**, **Wesbrook Place (15%)** and **Hawthorn Place (13%).**

While 20% of respondents reported that they live somewhere "other" than the indicated areas, it is important to note that some students appeared to be unaware of the official name of their neighbourhood and checked "other" as a result. For example, several students who answered in this way wrote the street they live on. Examining individual responses to "other" indicated that in some cases they did belong to one of the UTown@UBC neighbourhoods but were perhaps unaware of the specific name of that neighbourhood. Results were compiled based on how students answered.

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3. Questions on Commuting:

Students were asked questions about their daily commute to and from school, to determine how they commute and why they choose particular transportation methods over others.

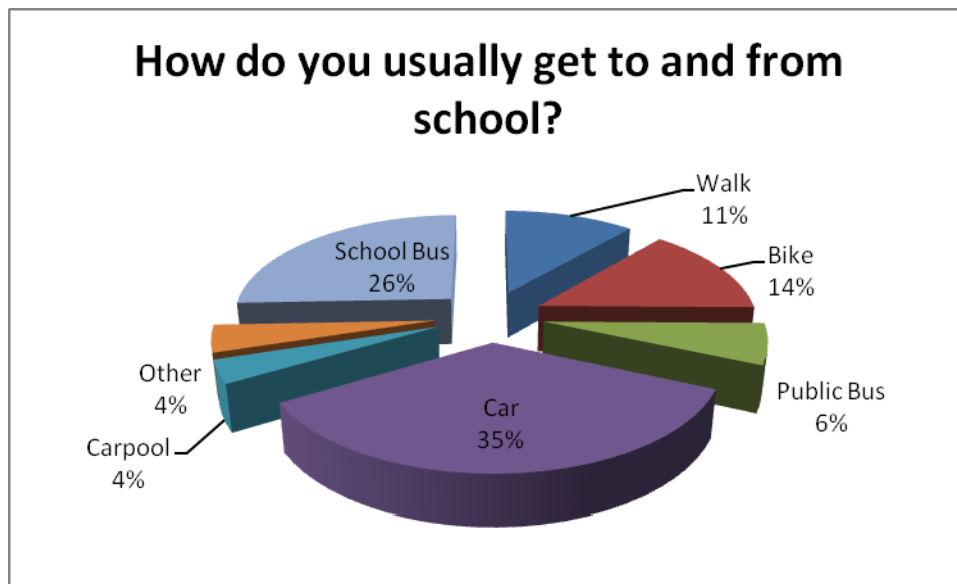### 3.1. *Question #3: How do you usually get to and from school?*

Figure 1.2: Transportation methods used by respondents to commute to and from school (396 respondents)

Commuting by car emerged as the most often-used form of transportation, with 35% of responses showing that a car is used to commute to and from school. The UTown@UBC School Bus is also well-utilized by students at U-Hill Elementary (26%). Active forms of transportation such as biking (14%) and walking (11%) had the next-highest number of responses, although significantly lower in comparison to the previous two.

Respondents were permitted to answer this question with multiple responses, which is reflected in the survey results; although 396 respondents answered this question, there were 476 answers and percentage values are based on this.

3.2. Question #4: Why do you choose to get to school this way?

Of particular interest are the reasons why U-Hill Elementary School students opt to use a specific mode of transportation to commute to and from school. Walk 'n Roll Celebration Week aims to get students and

parents excited about using active transportation as part of the daily commute to and from school and it is therefore integral to know why they are choosing their current mode of transportation and what can be done to encourage them to continue to use active forms or start using them.

Modes of transportation were further themed into two categories: active transportation (walking, biking, skateboarding etc) and passive transportation (car, bus, etc). They were then referenced with indicated reasons for choosing active or passive transportation.
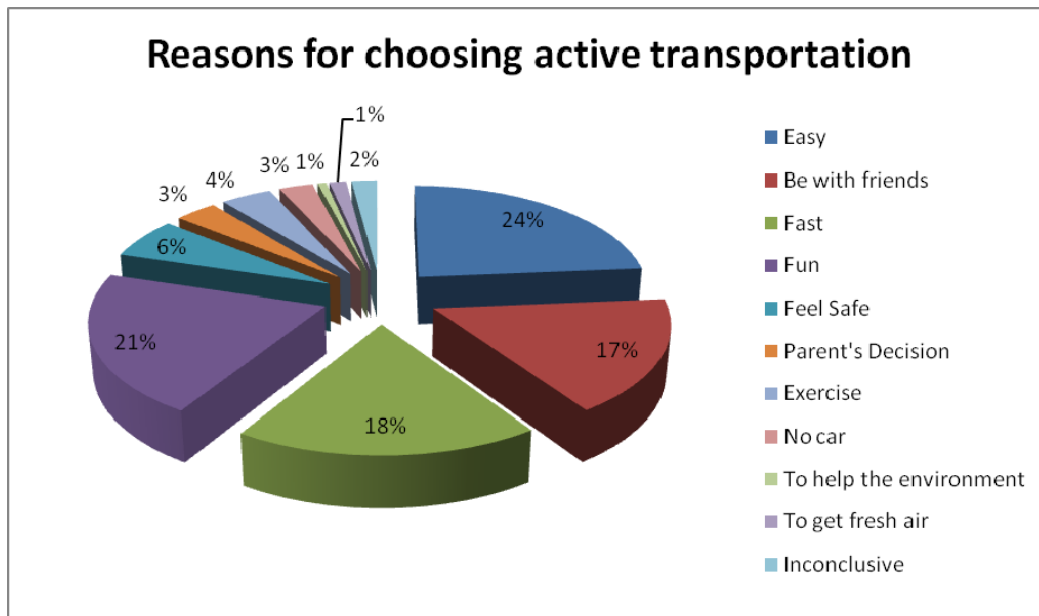

Figure 1.3: Indicated reasons respondents choose to commute via active transportation modes (148 responses)

Time and ease play a large role in determining how students get to and from school. Of the students who indicated that they primarily use active transportation to commute to and from school, 24% indicated they did so because it is **easy**, while 18% stated they do so because it is **fast.**

 "Be with friends" was also noted as an important factor; 17% of responses showed this as a reason for choosing active transportation methods. Respondents also indicated that they find walking, biking and other active transportation methods to be **fun** (21%).

In total, 102 students indicated that they take some form of active transportation to commute to school. Students were permitted to answer more than once, so these findings must take into account the fact that some students may have indicated more than one form of transportation and in many cases gave multiple reasons as to why they chose it. In cases where students indicated multiple forms of active transportation, this was grouped as a singular response when categorized into active and passive transportation modes.

As shown in Figure 1.3, passive forms of transportation (car, school bus etc) are used by more students than active forms of transportation; there were 307 students who indicated that they use some form of passive transportation to commute to school. The reasons indicated are shown below:
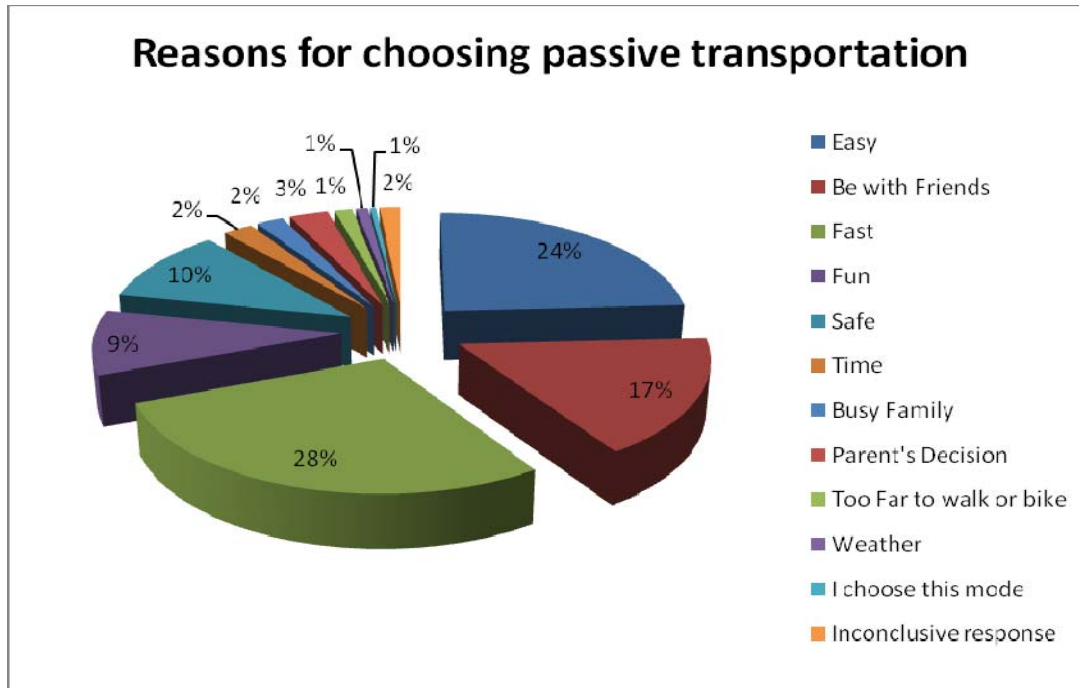

Figure 1.4: Indicated reasons respondents choose to commute via passive transportation modes.

As with active forms of transportation, **time and ease** proved to be significant factors in the decision to drive or bus to school; respondents indicated that they choose to do so because it is **fast** (28%) and **easy** (24%). **"Be with friends"** was also cited as an important factor, however a significantly lower percentage of students indicated that passive transportation was fun when compared to the number of students who cited active transportation as being fun. **Safety** is a concern as well, with 10% of passive commuters noting that they commute via vehicle because it feels safe.

As with the previous question, respondents were permitted to answer this question with multiple responses and may have indicated more than one form of transportation. In some cases, students may have indicated both an active and passive form of transportation as they alternate between the two.

4. Respondent Feedback

In addition to multiple choice questions, survey participants were asked to answer the question **"What can we do to help kids walk or bike to school?"** in their own words. This yielded a range of responses and feedback, which were then grouped into more general categories. Statistically significant responses (over 5%) are as follows:

What can we do to help kids walk or bike to school?	Responses	Total	Percentage
Walk or ride with friends and family	40	430	9.30%
Make improvements to walking or biking routes	35	430	8.14%
Encourage them with incentives	29	430	6.74%
Emphasize the benefits	22	430	5.12%

Creating the opportunity for students to **walk or ride with others** was most often cited as a way to help kids walk or ride to school; as shown in Figure 1.4, a large number of students choose active transportation because they find it fun, or because they want to be with friends. Of the students who indicated that walking or riding with friends and family would help encourage them to use active transportation, nearly half (47.5%) specifically mentioned a walking school bus or organized group of students would help them walk or bike to school.

Many students also indicated that improvements to cycling and walking routes would assist them getting to school using active transportation. Suggested improvements to biking and walking routes included:

- Adding more bike lanes and walking routes
- Improving existing bike lanes and pedestrian corridors
- Creating easier, shorter routes to school, specifically for students
- Repaving sidewalks
- Adding more stop signs along the routes
- Making the routes to school more interesting and fun

Students were permitted to give more than one response for this question and where multiple responses were given, each was considered as a separate entry. The percentage values were calculated using the total number of responses (430) as opposed to respondents (403). This also takes into account the 29.8% of students who answered the survey but did not offer specific suggestions for this question.

5. Route Mapping

For the final part of the survey, respondents were given a map of UBC and were asked to draw their favourite walking, biking or skating route. The results were analyzed by looking at the indicated starting point, mapping out roads, trails and streets that students took in their journey to school and themeing them accordingly.

While 116 unique routes were identified by students through the mapping exercise, only two yielded statistically significant results:

Statistically Significant Routes to U-Hill Elementary	Percentage of responses
Acadia Road to Chancellor Boulevard to Hamber Road to U-Hill Elementary	12.16%
Thunderbird Boulevard to Wesbrook Mall to Chancellor Boulevard to Hamber Road to U-Hill Elementary	5.08%

When grouped into broader themes examining primary connecting routes used by students to complete the majority of their journey, the survey showed four main "spines:"

Most-used Arterial Routes to U-Hill Elemenary	Percentage of responses
Acadia Road to Chancellor Boulevard	41.57%
Wesbrook Mall	32.16%
Chancellor Boulevard to U-Hill Elementary	16.08%
Trails (Salish, Sword Ferns)	7.06%

**Answered by 255 respondents

These survey findings, including identified routes, have been shared with UBC Transportation Planning, to assist in developing safe, recommended routes to school as well as to help identify potential "stops" for a walking school bus, based on where students are commuting from and existing routes they are taking.

The identified routes have been used by C+CP staff, Transportation Planners and community members to conduct a "walk through" so that potential hazards can be identified and appropriate collateral materials can be developed to assist both students and parents in safely and actively getting to and from school.

6. Potential Survey Biases:

It is important to note that in some cases, classroom teachers assisted students in mapping their safe routes to school; therefore interviewer bias or interpretation may have impacted some of the results.

Although the mapping exercise specifically asked that students draw their favourite **walking or biking route** potential misinterpretation of the exercise may have caused students to map out routes that they take when using alternate forms of transportation.

Although efforts were made to be as specific as possible when identifying and analyzing the routes, as the mapping information was compiled by hand, there is also the potential for human error or misinterpretation.

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