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Beth Potier

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Majority Of NH Residents Want Public Transportation That Is Accessible To All, Says New Study From UNH Institute On Disability



If you couldn't drive, how would you get to where you needed to go?

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Contact: [Beth Potier](#)
603-862-1566
UNH Media Relations

Nov. 22, 2005

DURHAM, N.H. – A majority of New Hampshire residents want public transportation that is accessible to all, and are willing to pay for it, according to the findings of the first statewide survey of citizens' perspectives on public transportation. The survey, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability (IOD) and Community Action Program – Belknap and Merrimack Counties, Inc., provides the first statewide look at resident perspectives on the use, availability and need for public transportation.

Results from the survey will be presented and discussed at “New Hampshire Speaks Out: We Want Public Transportation”

- Wednesday, Dec. 7, 9–11 a.m.
- Holiday Inn, Concord, N.H.
- Free
- Register by Dec. 2 at www.iod.unh.edu (click on “Workshops and Seminars”)

Reactions to the findings will be provided by transportation experts and key decision-makers:

Patrick Herlihy, director of homeless, housing, and transportation services, DHHS
Mickey McIver, director, Concord Area Transit
Representative Martha McLeod, executive director, North Country Health Consortium
Christopher Morgan, administrator of the Bureau of Rail and Transit, DOT
Kelly Murphy, executive director, United Way of Sullivan County
Fred Roberge, vice president, Easter Seals, Special Transit Service

“Transportation equals independence in New Hampshire,” says Peter Antal, assistant research professor at the University of New Hampshire’s IOD and one of the survey’s authors. “Yet with few alternatives to the individual automobile, an increasing number of state residents – people with disabilities as well as the growing aging population – are forced to give up that independence and live very restricted lives. Given survey findings that estimate that there are 95,000 New Hampshire residents who are concerned about losing their ability to drive in the next few years, the challenges of access to critical community supports, such as jobs, recreation,

shopping, and health care will increase across the state.”

The survey, which was conducted by the UNH Survey Center between March and August of 2005, collected responses from 749 adult residents ages 18 and over from New Hampshire. Among the key findings:

- Three-quarters of New Hampshire residents support the idea of a transportation service in their area that provides accessible and affordable transportation options for any member of their community.
- An estimated 45,000-80,000 of New Hampshire’s population indicated that they had missed or chosen not to schedule a medical appointment because they didn’t know if they could get a ride.
- Over one-third of state residents who currently drive to work five or more times per week would use public transportation to get to work if it were available.
- A majority – 57 percent – of respondents, representing between 510,000 to 581,000 New Hampshire residents, support the idea of adding a \$5 annual fee to car registrations to develop and sustain an affordable and accessible transportation system.

Members of the media interested in learning more about the study and key findings should contact Dr. Peter Antal at 603-228-2084 or Peter.Antal@unh.edu. For questions about the implications of the study for New Hampshire transportation policy, please contact Sönke Dornblut at 603-862-4064 or sd@unh.edu.