

## Research about Washington DC Bus Circulator Reveals Surprising Results

*Mineta National Transit Research Consortium report also shows significant circulator use in other cities*

**San Jose, Calif., October 15, 2013**—Are Washington DC riders happy with the city’s Circulator bus? Can its success become a model for other cities? A new peer-reviewed research report, [\*Long-Term Trends in Patron Satisfaction of DC Circulator\*](#), investigated several facets of rider use and came away with some surprising results. The report was authored by Errol D. Noel, PhD, Stephen Arhin, PhD, and Janet Thomas, all of Howard University and working under the sponsorship of the [Mineta National Transit Research Consortium](#).

“The Circulator was introduced in 2005 as a way to connect fringe areas of the city with transit, especially for visitors,” said Dr. Noel. “Its popularity was apparent because of the increased use each year. However, some results were surprising. For example, in all routes, almost 100 percent of riders would recommend the Circulator to others. In addition, about 80 percent of riders lived in the city, demonstrating that locals rather than visitors were primary users.”

Among other results from the 2012 survey:

- Nearly 60 percent of riders said they used the Circulator to travel to and from work.
- About 60 percent of riders traveled more than 10 blocks.
- Interestingly, in the summer of 2012, 84 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander and Latino/Hispanic riders took part in the survey while in the autumn of 2012, 77 percent of Black/African American and White/Caucasian took part in the survey.
- Nearly 30 percent of riders take the Circulator daily or several times a week.
- About 50 percent of riders strongly agree that the Circulator “goes where I want it to go.”
- About 47 percent strongly prefer the Circulator to other transit.
- An average of about 55 percent of riders own vehicles.
- About 24 percent of riders earn less than \$20,000 per year, while about 11 percent earn more than \$100,000.

The report includes a discussion of other circulator services, including those in Broward County FL, Ann Arbor MI, Bethesda MD, Alexandria VA, Pembroke Pines FL, and other cities.

Surveys had been conducted annually for the DC Circulator, but questions were inconsistent. This report used some of the raw data from previous studies, and its 2012 survey was an effort to create a reliable and meaningful annual assessment.

The 50-page report includes 29 figures and four tables. It can be downloaded at no cost from <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1138.html>

The Mineta National Transit Research Consortium is led by the [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) in San Jose CA.

### **ABOUT THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

Errol C. Noel, PhD, PE, FASCE, is a tenured full professor and chair (2000-2010) of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering of Howard University, director of the Howard University Traffic Safety and Transportation Data Center, and director for transit research conducted by Howard University as a member of the Mineta National Transit Research

Consortium. He teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in traffic and highway engineering, project management, and engineering systems analysis.

**ABOUT THE MINETA NATIONAL TRANSIT RESEARCH CONSORTIUM**

The Mineta National Transit Research Consortium (MNTRC) is composed of nine university transportation centers led by the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University. The Consortium was organized in January 2012 after winning a competition sponsored by the US Department of Transportation (DOT) to create consortia tasked with “Delivering Solutions that Improve Public Transportation.” Member universities include Bowling Green State University, Grand Valley State University, Howard University, Penn State University, Rutgers University, San Jose State University, University of Detroit Mercy, University of Nevada Las Vegas, and University of Toledo. Visit [transweb.sjsu.edu/mntrc](http://transweb.sjsu.edu/mntrc)

**ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE (MTI):**

MTI conducts research, education, and information transfer programs focusing on surface transportation policy and management issues, especially related to transit. MTI was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and won national re-designation competitions in 2002, 2006 and 2011. The Institute is funded by Congress through the US DOT Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through Caltrans, and public and private grants. In 2006 the US Department of Homeland Security selected MTI as a National Transportation Security Center of Excellence. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI is the lead institute for the Mineta National Transit Research Consortium, an affiliation of nine university transportation research centers. MTI is affiliated with San Jose (CA) State University’s College of Business. Visit [transweb.sjsu.edu](http://transweb.sjsu.edu)

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