WCU Campus Sustainability Initiatives

Sustainability Research & Creative Activities @ WCU

7-31-2019

Commuter Choices Program Assessment: An analysis of WCU's Uptown Loop Shuttle Bus, RideAmigos, Zagster Bikeshare, and RideShare Parking Spaces programs

Lola Adewale
West Chester University of Pennsylvania

Bradley Flamm
West Chester University of Pennsylvania

Commuter Choices Program Assessment:

An analysis of WCU's Uptown Loop Shuttle Bus, RideAmigos, Zagster Bikeshare, and Rideshare Parking Spaces programs

July 31, 2019

Lola Adewale, Principal Investigator and Master of Public Health student

Bradley Flamm, Co P.I and Director of WCU's Office of Sustainability

West Chester University Office of Sustainability

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2018, three parking lots with over 250 spaces were closed on the North Campus of West Chester University to permit the demolition of Speakman Hall and the university's decommissioned Boiler Plant. This was in preparation for the construction of WCU's Sciences and Engineering Center, currently scheduled to open in the Fall of 2020.

University planners expected commuting challenges to result from this construction project and created a Strategic Transportation and Parking Task Force to develop a strategy for giving WCU students, faculty, and staff more options for commuting to and from campus. Three key initiatives that resulted from the Task Force's work are:

- **WCU RideAmigos**, introduced at WCU in August of 2018, is an easy to use app accessible via smartphone or desktop computer that allows users to receive detailed information on up to date modes of transportation, routes, schedules, and traffic conditions.
- **The Uptown Loop Shuttle Bus Route**, first in service in September 2018. It's the WCU's first shuttle bus route to connect North campus to destinations in West Chester Borough such as Chester County Hospital, major apartment buildings, the Bradford Plaza Shopping Center, and other residential and commercial destinations in West Chester Borough.
- **WCU's Rideshare Parking Space program**, expanded from six campus spaces to 13 in the Fall 2018 and to 17 spaces in Spring 2019, provides opportunity for two or more WCU members to share parking space together by sharing same ride.

In addition, the **Zagster Bikeshare program**, first implemented in August 2016, provides another opportunity for traveling on campus and to destinations within West Chester Borough without having to drive a motor vehicle.

These initiatives, along with other sustainability programs at WCU, are designed to accomplish two goals:

1) To give the WCU community a variety of commuting options with the goal of decreasing demand for campus parking spaces, and
2) To help reduce carbon emissions associated with WCU student and employee commuting as part of a larger strategy to attain the university's Carbon Neutrality by 2025 goal (as detailed in WCU's 2013 Climate Action Plan).

To understand how WCU community members have been using the commuter choice programs and the aspects of the programs that have been most helpful or challenging, we developed a focus group research methodology for implementation in the Spring 2019 semester…The results of this study will provide more data to support the importance of non-motorized and shared modes of transportation to parking management at WCU and to the environment and public health. The result of this research effort will provide to WCU's Strategic Transportation and Parking Task Force the effectiveness and challenges attributed to the utilization of these programs and necessary steps to be taken to improve these initiatives towards WCU Climate Neutrality.

BACKGROUND and CONTEXT

Human activities (particularly those associated with industrialization) have led to large increases in carbon emissions and other Greenhouse Gas (GHS) emissions with potentially catastrophic impacts. Here in the United States, a striking change in the structure of transportation system has been noticed since the year 1960 (Schipper, Saenger & Sudardshan, 2011). The transportation volume of goods and people has tripled because most vehicles operate on gasoline and diesel which is a major contributor to carbon emissions. (Schipper, Saenger & Sudardshan, 2011).

More so, reliance on Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOVs) imposes additional negative impacts on society such as noise, parking congestion, safety concerns for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians, and high maintenance costs (Wilson et al., 2018). High rates of driving are also associated with an increased lack of exercise which in turn exacerbates health problems such as diabetes and other heart related illnesses (Zhou, 2012).

A FOCUS GROUP STUDY

The main goal of this study is to understand the utilization of, and satisfaction with, four initiative programs implemented by West Chester University to provide more commute options to WCU students, faculty, and staff. A focus group methodology of group interviews was identified as the unique way to obtain information from multiple users of each of the four transportation programs.

The objectives include:

    i)   Verifying the utilization of these initiatives.
    ii)   Understanding the benefits perceived by users.
    iii)   Identifying the underlying barriers hindering the use of these initiatives by some WCU students, faculty, and staff.

The outcome of this project will provide an insight on actions that might be taken to increase the utilization of these initiatives by the WCU community. More so, it will provide more data to support the importance and effect of alternative modes of transportation to the environment and Public health.

Research Methodology

This is a qualitative research project involving focus groups to obtain data to support WCU efforts to attain climate neutrality and to evaluate four programs that provide commuter choices in traveling to and from WCU's campuses. Therefore, the participants include active WCU faculty, staff and students who are users of the four commuter choices programs (WCU RideAmigos, WCU's Zagster bikeshare program, WCU's Uptown Loop shuttle bus route, and WCU's Rideshare Parking Spaces program). Focus group participation only included those that are 18 years of age and older. WCU students and employees below this age were not included for this research, this was to allow participants sign the consent form themselves without involving parents or guardians. Focus group sessions were facilitated by the PI and Co-PIs. Since this

research involved the collection of data from human subject, Institutional Review Board approval was obtained before the commencement of the research.

Participants were recruited via email messages and hand distributed flyers. The RideAmigos and Zagster Bikeshare programs both use smartphone and computer-based apps that require users to register with the programs, so we reached out to these users through email messages. Users of the Uptown Loop shuttle bus route were recruited via flyers distributed on the shuttle buses by the PI. And for the Rideshare Parking Spaces program, flyers were put on the windshields of vehicles parked in the Rideshare Parking Spaces. The only incentives provided for participation were catered lunch during the discussion sessions.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected by conducting facilitated focus group sessions based upon semi-structured interview questions. We conducted four separate focus group sessions, each one dedicated to one of the commuter choice programs. All the focus group sessions took place within a space of two weeks and the duration of each focus group session was one hour. Participants' responses were audio-recorded using an audio transcription app named *Otter Voice Meeting Notes*. Participants were asked to sign a consent form (see appendix) before starting the interview session and were as well told the interview session will be recorded using an audio file. The introduction of the focus group was done by the PI while the Co-PI led the discussion session of each group. We achieved a total of 14 participants across the four groups. Table 1 shows the schedule of the focus group while Table 2 shows the number of participants and participants by WCU role is revealed in Table 3.

Table 1. Focus group schedule.

Group 1- Zagster users	Thursday, May 2, 2019	12 pm- 1 pm
Group 2- Uptown Loop users	Friday, May 3,2019	12 pm -1 pm
Group 3- RideAmigos users	Monday, May 6, 2019	12 pm- 1 pm
Group 4- Rideshare Parking Space users	Wednesday, May 8, 2019	12 pm- 1 pm

Table 2. Focus Group Participants.

Group	Participants Registered	Participants Attended
Zagster	5	4
Uptown Loop	7	6
RideAmigos	10	5
Rideshare Parking Space	0	0

Table 3. Focus Group Participants by WCU Role

Group	Faculty	Student	Staff
Zagster	0	3	1
Uptown Loop	3	3	1
RideAmigos	1	1	3
Rideshare Parking Space	0	0	0

The focus group participants' comments were analyzed qualitatively. The PI and Co-PI first listened to the audio and read through each of the group discussions to identify any missing word that was not transcribed by the voice-recorder smartphone app which automatically transcribed spoken words into text. The transcription required review and revisions to correct for mis-transcribed words and phrases. A second reading was done by the PI and Co-PI to identify key statements and general themes in the discussion of each group.

FINDINGS

WCU RideAmigos

    i.   Main conclusions from Focus Group discussion

The five WCU RideAmigos Focus Group participants included students and staff members who engaged in a lively conversation that lasted almost 45 minutes. All of them expressed appreciation that RideAmigos is available to them and to the University community. Some noted that they felt confident logging into the website with their WCU credentials, which seemed a form of security for users. Some also noted that the ability to access daily transportation logs was a useful feature of this program.

However, participants spent most of the conversation discussing ways to improve WCU RideAmigos. Many of the suggestions focused on ways to increase the number of users and improve the usefulness of the WCU RideAmigos website and Commute Tracker app to themselves and others. Most users stated that they don't have a full understanding of how to utilize this program and how to navigate it for its various available options. Inability to view other users, varied locations and schedule of WCU members, and security issues (not feeling comfortable connecting to strangers for carpool) are hindrances to the effective utilization of this program discussed by participants.

Other participant suggestions included:

- Revising the program to resemble a social media platform where people can request to have access to others' information in order to know who they are connecting to and those living in their neighborhood to carpool with.
- Creating a video on the home page of RideAmigos site showing users, especially first-time users, how to navigate the program.

- Posting signs around the WCU campus to create more awareness about this program.
- Including promotional information about WCU RideAmigos in orientation materials for new students, faculty, and staff. WCU offices that have direct links to students might also be asked to promote the program.
- One participant suggested connecting RideAmigos to Ramconnect.
- Providing incentives to users of RideAmigos. Incentives were discussed to be one of the most successful channels that captivate people (interestingly, two of those present for the focus group discussion got to know about RideAmigos through the mass email sent out in late March 2019 about logging into the program and getting a chance to win gift cards).

ii.   Selection of notable quotes

The following are quotes from participants responses regarding their experience with using RideAmigos. The questions are bold, while the key points of the indented quotes are italicized.

And we're curious how you have used WCU RideAmigos. So, you might talk about how you first heard about it, when you first registered, whether you use it frequently, or you've only used it once? How has it been part of your commuting at West Chester University this past semester or two semesters

> "*I like the app mainly for data collection.* So, I mean, because if I'm entering my rides, it tells me you know, how many miles I have gone and how much money I've saved and how much gas we have saved. It's kind of cool."

> "I don't remember exactly. But I think RideAmigos, *we connect with WCU email. Okay, so that's another kind of factor for security there.*"

> "So, my main complaint with RideAmigos is *I haven't been able to find anybody to carpool with on it.*"

If we could make some changes to the program, what would make it a more valuable app? You've been talking about it for the last five or 10 minutes, but is there anything else you can think of that would make WCU RideAmigos more effective, more helpful for you, or that you think would make it more helpful to the larger community of employees and students here?

> "Again, I think that's the biggest factor, *not knowing people with RideAmigos*, is the really, the factor that makes them think. it really, to make it work, you got to know people."

> "So, just *I don't know if there's a way to get the app…* sort of with a broader look of what's available. And maybe what it needs is some like *really targeted focus groups*, and like finding the people on campus with the set schedules, like hitting all the staff, because most of us are here 8am to 4:30pm."

> "Maybe in the future, more emphasis on the app can be used for that, especially with like people you know, and today like, *instead of having to log in every time, if you just have the app, if you notice push notifications come up, somebody is available or something like that*, people are always on their phone. But they're not always on the websites. Right. So that

would definitely kind of… I think that's one way we could kind of increase the usage by just promoting that app."

"I did find when I first logged on logged on to RideAmigos the interface was somewhat confusing to figure out, okay, so I think I did figure it out. But I just wasn't quite sure where to enter and how to do stuff. *And then if you're trying to push it more having even just a tutorial, like, even if it's not like a live training session, but just sort of like a tutorial or some like, you know, quick video* that you could just plug up and look at, though I prefer a non-video tutorial, because I don't like videos, but just sort of be like, here's all the features, here's all the steps."

"*It would be really interesting if you could connect with Ramconnect*, in a way to this, because I don't know if the faculty know or use Ramconnect too much. So, if you could maybe, or if you know, there could be a way to connect RideAmigos to Ramconnect, maybe work with the different offices, there might be another way to kind of gain more interest and gain more programs."

"*I think the push notifications would help too.* So, if you're on your phone, and you get a notification or just like a little number one pops up over that icon, then you know that maybe somebody is like trying to contact you to connect through to set up a carpool or to rideshare."

"Yeah, that's a that's a good point, *maybe also having some lanes that are designated for carpoolers*, so that we have designated areas on campus that where the people know through RideAmigos to pick up people."

"And talking about packages, maybe this is something like you're talking *about orientation, something that we could package together with some of their apps*, you know, because every student comes to campus, and they have to download Microsoft Office, they have to download, you know, like malware software. So maybe you put it in with that package that all students should be downloading when they first come to West Chester. So, *we kind of create that culture change from the start.*"

"*If there's a signing and most buildings saying what right amigos is*, then eventually somebody is looking at that sign, and they pick up what it is. And then maybe they don't log into it, but they know it's there, you've made another step towards that."

Uptown Loop Shuttle Bus

    i.   Main conclusions from Focus Group discussion

In a wide-ranging discussion that lasted almost an hour, seven participants, two facilitators and two observers discussed West Chester University's Uptown Loop Shuttle Bus, a service first introduced in September 2018 that operated during the fall and spring academic semesters, running 28 loops a day, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 6:45 am and 10:15 pm.

In general, participants were appreciative of the service provided by the Uptown Loop Shuttle bus. One or more of the participants mentioned that it:

- saves time in commuting to campus and to work in the borough,
- saves them money in avoided car trips,
- helps them avoid the difficulty of finding parking spaces on campus,
- allows them to do personal errands at the Bradford Plaza, such as grocery shopping at Giant and ophthalmology appointments,
- gives their spouse more time in the evening (by not having to pick them up on campus),
- encourages better time management because the schedule is set and reliable,
- permits emergency trips home in the middle of the day because it runs throughout the day and not just during morning and evening commute hours,
- is predictable because the WCU Shuttle smartphone app works well,
- is operated by drivers who are friendly, courteous, and accommodating,
- in bad weather provides a good alternative to walking, and
- is a visible symbol of West Chester University support for students and employees.

Access to Exton Train Station shuttle has allowed one of the participants to sell off the car not needed while one of the Uptown Loop shuttle riders is also considering doing likewise. The courtesy, kindness, and friendliness of the drivers was greatly appreciated by the participants as well as the daily hours during which the bus is operated.

When asked about how the Uptown Loop could be improved, one or more of the participants suggested:

- extending service to weekends,
- adding a second bus so that frequencies could be increased to about every fifteen minutes,
- improving signage for the service on campus and off-campus,
- identifying the location of stops off campus with signs, particularly at the Bradford Plaza,
- providing more publicity about the service to the campus community,
- improving the app's performance, particularly when a loop of the Shuttle is delayed or canceled,
- rerouting the loop so that it stops by the TD Bank / Wawa convenience store on Market Street and Bolmar Street

More so, participants were willing to know if anything is expected of them to do to sustain the availability of the Uptown Loop shuttle bus. The free reusable bag provided by SUBSAC (Students United by the Sustainability Advisory Council) an official WCU student organization for riders to use for grocery shopping instead of a single use plastic bags was appreciated by one of the participants who also work at giant. **"So, the organization that does that, that gives the reusable bags, especially because it goes to Giant. I know more people have requested that. So, it's really cool to see the added green benefit of reusable bags they put on the Uptown loop."**

     ii.   Selection of notable quotes

The following are quotes from participants responses to questions regarding their experience with riding the shuttle. The quotes are copied directly from the transcribe app including any grammar or other mistakes. The questions are bold, while the key points of the indented quotes are italicized.

We're curious about why you use the Uptown loop?

"I actually *work* at Giant … and so that [the Uptown Loop] is really convenient for me. It saves me time in the morning. So even when I was able to drive, I would ride the bus. Because whether that was last minute readings, I had to get done… sometimes breakfast on the go… even like brushing my hair… It's really helpful as a student who's on a budget, needs to save money, … and also with time management."

"I used it because my *eye doctor* is in the same Plaza as the Giant and I was like, "Oh, that's great!", because when you have an eye appointment and they're going to dilate your eyes, you're not supposed to be driving."

"I use it sometimes to *get my paycheck* from my job on Gay Street. I've used it four times when it rains or for getting groceries at Giant."

"I'm on it at least twice a day, and sometimes more, *to go to and from school*. And then there are occasions where I'll take the shuttle to go into town from school to do an errand over lunch and come back. I've had occasion to take the shuttle to school and then back home for an *emergency* or emergencies and then catch the shuttle to come back to school and then go home again at the end of the day."

What do you appreciate about it. You know, is the cost or the locations, the days of operation hours of operation. What it allows you to do could be lots of other things.

"The Uptown loop is *very timely so, I can depend on that.* I really appreciate that the shuttle has help with *time management*. Also, *the consistency*, I can always rely on the time. And I really like the *GPS tracking*, that's where I tend to look at things if I'm going home in between class and I have time and riding the shuttle to and from my apartment. And it saves me an additional time of *not having the stress of any sort of commuting and finding parking"*.

"It has really me *in going from one end of the borough to the other, I can do a car free*, which I really appreciate because, I want to avoid having to have a car as much as possible have considered getting rid of mine, as well. And this definitely gives me a sense of *comfort and security*. And I *really appreciate the drivers as well."*

"Reliability and convenience and kindness and courteousness of the drivers. It's really great that way".

"It alleviates parking on campus. By having a loop that connects the campus to all of his different areas, and it connects to more people's homes, but also *facilitates and build a community* that is an ordinary part of your life when you're in a car."

"I think just *the visibility* of it is really nice, like when I see it go down walnut, or when I see it go down Marshall Street, I'm like, well, that's the Uptown loop. And it might seem kind of like menial, but when I see it go by, it's like *a symbol of the university support* for those of us who live in places where I don't want to walk in the pouring rain, you know, 30 minutes to campus and *Westchester has provided has this resource* for me so that I don't have to do that."

What about the Uptown what could be better in terms of meeting your needs or your perceptions of what other people on campus need. So, this is, you know, this is your chance to talk about maybe things that you'd criticize about the way they attempt to operate.

"Weekends, it's mostly what I've seen the need for."

"I've heard some people, some students, other fellow riders talk about or talk out loud, think about *possibility of adding stop at the WaWa TD Bank area"*.

"I think not enough folks *know about it*. We need to work on finding *better ways to connect* with the greater West Chester University community to make sure that people know that that is a resource available to them. Even this semester, within the last few weeks, I've heard someone saying that they normally take Uber to their job a giant and just didn't know about the Uptown loop."

"And I think that it would be really important to also *educate the community about the availability of the shuttle*, because if they're like walking or driving or biking and they see Oh, here's the stop. I think that kind of *visibility is really good for like advertisement, and also just for a sense of security*, because like, I'll look at the app and I think I'm in the right spot, but what if I'm like just a few feet away, and then the driver doesn't realize that I'm trying to get on the shuttle bus, and then she's gone."

"I also don't know if there's a *sign* even on campus on Church Street for the shuttle. Just having *that sign* that says uptown loop, someone might pass it and say, what's the Uptown loop and then do some research on it. So, I think that that would be helpful."

Two people on campus wanted to attend the focus group session, but could not, so instead provided written comments (see full text in Appendix of this report) that the provision of the shuttle bus has been a great relief to their commuting to and from campus and having to go through the stress of finding a parking space. The kindness and friendliness of the drivers was also acknowledged and appreciated, and they also suggested the use of a better bus.

One of the participants in the focus group session on the Uptown Loop actually had more experience riding the Exton Regional Rail Station Shuttle, providing comments about that service. This participant commented that the Exton Shuttle:
- allowed him to get rid of his car.
- facilitates person to person connections with other WCU faculty and staff members.
- has fostered collegiality.

Similar suggestions on ways to improve Uptown Loop shuttle was also given for the improvement of the use of Exton shuttle. More importantly, participants suggest that the frequency of the bus should be improved to meet up with the hours of train departure at Exton station. And likewise, the hours of operation should also be elongated beyond 5 pm; many riders take and teach the 4-7:15pm classes.

i.   Main conclusions from Focus Group discussion

Zagster bikeshare program is one of the appreciated WCU transportation initiatives. Participants were appreciative of the availability and easy access to Zagster bicycle. The major reasons for using Zagster as stated by participants are fun and movement to the classroom. When asked about the appreciative impact of this initiative, one or more participants comment on the:

- convenience.
- easy accessibility of bike location.
- ability to ride around the borough.
- ability to lock the bike in and out via the app
- issuance of receipt at the end of each ride.
- cost (it said to be reasonable and of great benefit).

Concerning issues raised by participants about the program include:
- Lock size - the bike locks were said to be small and it has been an hinderance to the utilization of the bikes.
- Locking via the app – participants talked about uncertainty should their phone batteries die or suppose they are out of data and what if they are not in a place where wifi is available.
- Riding down the hill – this is seen as difficulty to do especially at South campus.
- Maintenance issue – two of the participants talked about hearing of "creaking" after driving a long distance and they wondered if maintenance occur often. The stress of adjusting the bike set was also expressed by the participants especially when it has been previously used by someone else.
- Zagster App – one of the participants expressed the trouble and unclarity of reactivating Zagster account. Some participants also mentioned the problem they encounter when locking out with the app; after checking the bike out, the app still indicate they have not done so.

Suggestions raised by participants on how to make Zagster program a better include:

- More awareness of the program.
- Provision of more racks at convenient locations within the campus. Places like library, South campus apartments, and near Sykes.
- Constant checking of bike racks to take out the faulty ones.
- Creation of bike paths on campus and within the borough.
- More transparency on the maintenance of the bicycles.

ii.   Selection of notable quotes

The following are quotes from participants responses to questions regarding their experience with riding the Zagster bikes. The questions are bold, while the key points of the indented quotes are italicized.

Now we do want to ask you about how you use this Zagster bike share program. And, we'd like to hear some details about how often when you first started using it, what purposes Do you use it for?

"I had kind of a dual purpose, I guess it was last summer and it was getting warm, *and I liked to take the bike and it looked like a nice comfortable bike.* So, it was just to take a bike ride at lunchtime. Also, with the parking lot being closed for the new building. I have to go meet with some folks sometimes out on, I forget what the road is about past Swope Hall… Carter Drive. But I did take some bike rides in the summer for just for the fun of it. And I really enjoyed the experience."

"*I do like using Zagster when I'm on campus and going around* even up to areas within… just outside the borough. So, you know, I went to Dunkin Donuts the other day with Zagster up on Gay Street."

I want to ask this question, and have you focus on what you find a positive and beneficial about this extra program?

"*Well, I like the convenience.* Now for me the bike racks are right next to the building I'm in, Allegheny Hall. And I like the style of the bike. Some people, like, if you're going more distance, maybe you'd prefer a different style, but I like the comfortable, you know, easygoing. And I like the ease of, I thought the app's great. That you can, you know, check in and check out with the app."

"*I agree that it's convenient.* Luckily for me, like the nearest was only like a two-minute walk. So, it's really nice. I really like how you can use it to go into town, even though I haven't done that yet. That's something I really want to do. And I was really impressed when I first used one that had like the basket and the bell. And then I just figured out it had the light that was like really bright".

"*I also really enjoy the receipts.* Because that gives me some peace of mind about the bike. You know, I have a start point and then a stop point. I don't have to worry about this biting me back later."

"I drive for Lyft on the weekend so sometimes I will see big groups of people driving the West Chester Zagster bikes. *I like that they have that logo*, because its kind of makes me feel like, Ooh, there's some students and it's like a community kind of feeling. So, I like that aspect of it. And the branding is really nice."

Is there anything else that you think would make this Zagster program at West Chester University more beneficial for you, and your lives at West Chester?

"So that's one downside that I have in terms of accessibility, because *I think that the bike lock could be improved or grown*, at least, you know, maybe they get a *different size or something* that would be really helpful."

"*I think what would be even better if there was something maybe in the South Campus apartments so that a lot more people could access that*. Even if you do have to go back up that hill, I think it's still more worth it because people will have the bike in the first place. Versus people having to go all the way up that hill first and then get the bike and then you know where you're going to go."

"Actually, last night, I was at the library at, like, three am. And I was really hungry and like no deliveries are really open. So, it's like "Oh, maybe I can bike to Wawa," because I looked it up, it was only a five-minute bike ride. But then I saw, like, the nearest Zagster stand was kind of far away. I didn't feel like walking like this late to that far away bike stand. *Maybe like if one was right by the library, that'd be nice or something. I don't know, more convenient locations.*"

"One of the things that would be helpful to implement with Zagster or something is I've seen like systems like city bike. I was in Toronto and they had a city *bike system and the bike could not be checked in until you physically docked it at the station*. There were sensors there that kind of said "Yes, okay, it's at the station, you can fully return it."

"*More transparency* to the users of Zagster would be *really helpful* about how the bikes are being maintained, you know, who's coming in, what the cycle is, you know, what the cycle looks like, on that. And then also, you know, if the Zagster bike is not being functional, like the one I saw the other day, they should be taken out so that people aren't, you know, confused about that. Because that, again, kind of adds concerns. That adds, you know, the fear that, you know, you don't want to overpay for something, or you know, worst case scenario, best case scenario, you have to call them and then they'll be able to fix that, as mentioned before."

WCU Rideshare Parking Spaces Program

      None of the Rideshare Parking Space users registered or showed up for the discussion. Much efforts were put in place by the PI and the Co-PI to recruit the users by putting flyers on their windshields (since that's the only way to notify them about the focus group discussion). Rideshare Parking Space users have access to designated space for parking on parking lots here in WCU, we visited these parking spaces twice a day (morning and afternoon) to share the flyers and this was done for two weeks before the selected day of the focus group discussion, but no one showed up. On the selected day for this group discussion, we set up as we did for other groups hoping someone might show up for the discussion, but no one did throughout the time period (12 pm -1 pm) designated for the discussion.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Consistent themes from the research project

- The initiation of commuter choice programs here at West Chester University was greatly appreciated by participants. They have been a great benefit to users in terms of finances especially for Uptown Loop riders, physical activities and parking issues on campus.
- Participants seems to be unclear about some aspects of the programs especially navigating all of the features of the Zagster and RideAmigos apps and they did not appear to get questions answered.
- Participants feel programs are not publicized on campus as effectively as they could be.
- Participants seemed willing to continue utilizing these programs, but would appreciate more WCU student, staff, and faculty users.

Opportunities for strengthening the four programs

These focus group discussions have helped to identify some basic steps that would help in increasing the utilization of commuter choice programs at WCU. It was mentioned in every discussion session that more promotion and publicity about the programs would be helpful especially for Uptown Loop and RideAmigos. Posting of signs around the campus was suggested to improve the awareness and utilization of RideAmigos while provision of bus-stop signs on campus and in the borough will improve the Uptown Loop Shuttle awareness and utilization. Another way of strengthening these programs as mentioned in all the focus groups is improving the functionality of the app use for each program. Improvement of RideAmigos in such a way to give a better understanding of it use and connecting the app to Ramconnect as suggested by participants is seen as a potential to improve the utilization. Likewise, Uptown Loop app performance should also be improved especially during delays and cancellation and Zagster app should be improved for better accessibility of sign in and out with the app. More so, inclusion of these commuter choices (especially RideAmigos and Uptown Loop Shuttle) in the orientation program will also facilitate the awareness and use.

Next Steps

An underlining hinderance to utilization of these programs is change of behavior. Nevertheless, some steps can be taken to activate this change. Incentive is known as one of the ways to captivate students, therefore giving out of incentives to registered and active members of RideAmigos should be often done. More so, parents have influence in making decisions for their children about their commuting options to and from campus, therefore, it is important to give parents proper awareness and education of these commuting options on campus during orientation. Provision of shower rooms for bike riders is also another important factor to consider in increasing Zagster users; this is one of the major concerns of riders especially during summer period. It is important to also develop a plan and identify resources needed to more effectively educate WCU students, staff, and faculty about a) the existence of these programs and b) the individual and University wide benefits.

Conclusion

Focus group sessions revealed appreciation for the program, identification of weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Results were not sufficient to conclude that programs are directly decreasing carbon emission and improving public health conditions, but results suggest that if promotional efforts can increase utilization by WCU's students, staff, and faculty, measurable changes could be documented.

Acknowledgments

Reference

Schipper, L., Saenger, C., & Sudardshan, A. (2011). Transport and carbon emissions in the United States: the long view. *Energies*, *4*(4), 563-581. https://www.mdpi.com/1996-1073/4/4/563/ htm Accessed 02/14/2019

Wilson, O., Vairo, N., Bopp, M., Sims, D., Dutt, K., & Pinkos, B. (2018). Best practices for promoting cycling amongst university students and employees. *Journal of Transport & Health*, *9*, 234-243. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140517309222 Accessed 02/14/2019

Zhou, J. (2012). Sustainable commute in a car-dominant city: Factors affecting alternative mode choices among university students. *Transportation research part A: policy and practice*, *46*(7), 1013-1029. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965856412000651 Accessed 02/14/2019

Appendix

Consent to Participate in a Focus Group Study
of the Utilization of West Chester University's
Commuter Choices Program

Investigators:

- Omolola Adewale (WCU Graduate of Environmental Health Student)
- Bradley Flamm, Ph.D. (Director, WCU Office of Sustainability)
- Neha Sunger, Ph.D. (WCU Assistant Professor of Environmental Health)

Today's focus group session is one of four we have organized to understand how students, staff, and faculty at WCU are using four *Commuter Choices* programs at West Chester University. These four programs are:

- WCU's **RideAmigos** commuter management software program,
- WCU's **Zagster** bikeshare program,
- WCU's **Uptown Loop** shuttle bus service, and
- WCU's **Rideshare Parking Spaces** program.

Your experiences using one of these programs, and the experiences of other WCU community members, will be helpful to WCU employees who are promoting and managing the programs.

This consent form provides information about the purpose of the study, what you should expect if you decide to participate, the expected risks and benefits to you, what we will do to ensure your privacy, and how you can get more information.

1. **What is the purpose of this study?**
   o Today's focus group session will help us understand how people are using one of four *Commuter Choices* programs at WCU and how satisfied they are with it. WCU offers these programs to give WCU students, faculty, and staff more choices for how they commute to campus. The goal of this study is to understand how well these programs are working and whether people have any problems using them. We plan on using the results of today's session to evaluate the programs and make recommendations for improving them.

2. **If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to:**
   o Read this consent form,
   o Sign it, and
   o Participate in a one-hour focus group session by answering questions and being part of a group discussion.

3. **Are there any experimental medical treatments?**
   o Nope! This study does not involve any experimental medical treatments.

4. **Is there any risk to me?**
    - There are no risks to you and we do not think you'll feel any discomfort from participating in this focus group session.
    - However, if at any point you want to stop participating in the focus group discussion, you have the right to leave.

5. **Is there any benefit to me?**
    - As a member of the WCU community, your help by participating in this session will provide information to help the university be more successful in promoting and managing WCU's Commuter Choices programs.

6. **How will you protect my privacy?**
    - The focus group session today will be audio-recorded using a smart-phone application.
    - The audio file will be stored on the hard-drive of the WCU Office of Sustainability's Director's password-protected computer located at 703 South High Street, Room 101.
    - Your records will be kept confidential. Only the study researchers will have access to your name and responses.
    - Your name will **not** be used in any reports. Any comments made by participants in today's focus group session will only be used anonymously.
    - Records associated with this research project, including audio files, will be destroyed 3 years after the study's completion.

7. **Do I get paid to take part in this study?**
    - Sorry, you will not be paid to participate in this focus group session.
    - But there is a free lunch!

8. **Who do I contact in case of research related injury?**
    - For any questions with this study, contact:
        - **Principal Investigator:** Omolola Adewale at 610-350-1349 or OA878488@wcupa.edu
        - **Secondary Investigator:** Bradley Flamm at 610-436-2053 or bflamm@wcupa.edu

For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact the WCU's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 610-436-3557.

I, _____ (your name), have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

_____   Date:_____

Subject/Participant Signature

_____   Date:_____

Witness Signature

Focus Group Session with WCU RideAmigos users, Monday, May 6, 2019

[Note all reporting will refer only to participants and will not include any names or identifying information.]

- Can you please **introduce yourself (first name only)**?

- And for **a bit of background**, please tell us

  - how far from campus you currently live?

  - … describe what mode or modes you *currently* use to commute to and from WCU,

  - … and describe if and how your commute to campus has changed since WCU RideAmigos started operations.

- Describe **how you use WCU RideAmigos**?

  - Smart phone, desktop computer, or both?
  - How often?
  - For what purposes?
  - Do you log your trips on your phone or desktop computer?
  - Do you use the Commute Tracker app to log your trips?

- What do you **appreciate** about WCU RideAmigos?

  - Information provided? Ease of use? Anything else?

- What about WCU RideAmigos **could be better**?

  - Anything else?

- If changes were made, **would WCU RideAmigos be more useful for you?**

  - Would you use it more often? For more purposes?

- If changes were made, do you believe **WCU RideAmigos would be more useful for other students, faculty and staff?**

  - Do you believe they would use it more often? For more purposes?

- This focus group session is part of a larger effort to understand how WCU students, faculty and staff commute to and from campus.

- Do you have ideas for how the university can support more commuting and travel choices for our community?

- What other alternative transportation modes should the university investigate?

- Thank you!

Focus Group Session with Uptown Loop users, Friday, May 3, 2019

[Note all reporting will refer only to participants and will not include any names or identifying information.]

- Can you please introduce yourself (first name only)?

- And for a bit of background, please tell us

  - how far from campus you currently live?

  - … describe what mode or modes you *currently* use to commute to and from WCU,

  - … and describe if and how your commute to campus has changed since the Uptown Loop started operations.

- Describe how you use WCU's Uptown Loop Shuttle Bus?

  - How often?
  - For what purposes?
  - How many stops on the route have you used to board or get off of the bus?

- What do you **appreciate** about Uptown Loop Shuttle Bus?

  - Cost? Stop locations? Hours of operation? Days of operation? The buses themselves? Personal benefits (health impacts, fun, saving money)? Anything else?

- What about the Uptown Loop **could be better**?

  - Cost? Stop locations? Hours of operation? Days of operation? The buses themselves? Personal benefits (health impacts, fun, saving money)? Anything else?

- If changes were made, **would the Uptown Loop be more useful for you?**

  - Would you use it more often? For more purposes?

- If changes were made, do you believe **the Uptown Loop be more useful for other students, faculty and staff?**

    - Do you believe they would use it more often? For more purposes?

- This focus group session is part of a larger effort to understand how WCU students, faculty and staff commute to and from campus.

    - Do you have ideas for how the university can support more commuting and travel choices for our community?

    - What other alternative transportation modes should the university investigate?

- Thank you!

Focus Group Session with WCU Zagster Bikeshare users, Thursday, May 2, 2019

[Note all reporting will refer only to participants and will not include any names or identifying information.]

- Can you please introduce yourself (first name only)?

- And for a bit of background, please tell us how far from campus you currently live and describe what mode or modes you use to commute to and from WCU.

- Describe how you use (or have used) WCU's Zagster Bikeshare program?

    - How often?
    - For what purposes?
    - Where have you ridden the bikes? (How far? What destinations?)

- What do you appreciate about the Zagster bikes at WCU?

    - Cost? Locations? Hours available? The bikes themselves? Personal benefits (health impacts, fun, saving money)? Anything else?

- What about the Zagster Bikeshare program could be better?

    - Cost? Locations? Hours available? The bikes themselves? Anything else?

- Would these changes make Zagster more useful for you?

    - Would you use Zagster more often?

- Do you believe they would make Zagster more useful for others (students, employees)?

- This focus group session is part of a larger effort to understand how WCU students, faculty and staff commute to and from campus.

  - Do you have ideas for how the university can support more commuting and travel choices for our community?

  - What other alternative transportation modes should the university investigate?

- Thank you!

RideAmigos Focus group, May 6, 2019, 12:00 to 12:50 pm

Sykes Student Union Room 255B

Question 1: 0:47

So, we'd like to start just by asking to go around the room and introduce yourself by first name, and just described briefly what your role here is at West Chester University.

P1: 1:02
My name is -----. I'm a staff person in the ------ department. So, I work a set, you know, almost every day, it's the same time schedule, like I started eight, and I'm done by 4:30 pm here just about every day.

P2: 1:18
My name is ----, I'm the [staff position]. And I advise ------------ students as well.

P3: 1:26
I'm -------, I'm a student success coordinator to one of the colleges on campus. So, I assist with scheduling issues that students have primarily. And if they need strategies to be successful on campus in their classes, my schedule is usually 10am to 6pm, Monday through Thursday, and Friday is eight to 4:30pm. I'm sure in the summer, that will change. During peak advisement. However, I'm pretty much here like 14 hours a day for about six or seven weeks. So that's also my challenge, is just some days have will be here later than other days. Come in earlier later.

P4: 2:13
My name is -------. I am a -------- year ---------- major about to graduate in less than a week. And I as I mentioned before I commute from East Goshen, not too far away from here. But in terms of you know, my day to day interactions. I do spend a lot of time in my car, or at least in someone's car. And I think with RideAmigos, it's been very helpful. But also, there's a lot of more growth that can occur.

Question 2: 2:56
To **set the stage, if each of you could describe about how far away you live, and what are the mode or modes of transportation that you use to get to and from campus. You might use one mode every single day. It might depend upon the day. So how far away do you live? And how do you get here?**

P1: 3:32
About 25 minutes away by car. And generally, I'm just driving myself in my car, which is why I'm interested in other options.

P2: 3:46

I live about two miles away from campus, actually, as the crow flies I live about three to three and a half miles away. You know, but on my bike or when when I drive, I have a Rav4 hybrid. So I drive a hybrid, takes me about five minutes to get to work by driv[ing]. [It] takes me about 20 minutes to ride [by bike]. It's hilly, which is why it takes long because it's up a big hill. I live down near the creeks, the Brandywine Creek so I'm in a close to as low as you can get in this area. And then I have to climb a hill to get out of my neighborhood, climb another hill to get into West Chester. Which if you bike, you'll notice that West Chester it built on a hill, it's you have to climb a hill to get here from any direction. So, I and I try to bike weather permitting, and my schedule permitting. So, in the winter, I generally don't ride my bike. I'm not a fan of like the icy wind that feels like knives, you know. But although I know some people who do that, but sometimes I walk though too, just because you know if I have enough time, and I would like to bike, but it's too cold, I'll just walk instead. That takes me about 45 to 50 minutes. And there's no there's not paths or sidewalks, you know on my route, so you know, I'm just relying on the alertness of drivers.

P3: 5:36
For me, I live about 16 or 17 miles away. A lot of the roads are… would be kind of dangerous to bike. And it's kind of a far distance to bike to, kind of, have enough time. I'd have to really plan ahead to bike. My bike is also a hybrid. So, it's really hard to get up hills, kind of like you were saying. So, I generally just drive every day to work. And I take 202 so that is a major highway. If I didn't do that with the back roads or I'd have to use Pottstown Pike with lots of lights. And that would add on a lot more time to my commute. So, I'm interested in either carpooling or picking up people on my route to and from work. So that's why I kind of added RideAmigos and I added the carpool Waze app to my phone, but I haven't really done much with either.

P4: 6:45
I live about four miles, a little less than four miles away. And well, I fractured my ankle recently so I haven't been able to walk or run long distances. But in previous summers, including this past summer, I used to run to campus and back from East Goshen. Yeah, so about eight miles in total… Do you know the Goshen fire company is, right on the border of East Goshen and West Goshen? So, I live right there next to that Goshen fire station. Yeah, so for this semester, and for most semesters, what I, you know, I usually commute as a "C" commuter, with the "C" pass for students parking behind Sykes or in the M lot or in the Matlack garage… But in terms of timing, in terms of the commute, I've used Zagster, we had a previous focused conversation about that. I used RideAmigos a few times, but never to the end I think… Brad [the Director of the Office of Sustainability] was able to get a full conversation or an information session [refers to introductory session on RideAmigos for Off Campus and Commuter Services Office in September 2018]. So, I attended that. But it has been hard to connect with that. Sometimes, just because, like, if you're not carpooling, then… and you're looking for someone to carpool. But you're living in specific area, I think it's easier to already know someone and get them on the app than it is to try to find someone on the app. So I think that's a potential strategy that we might need to just build up more of, just, like, having more people connected within their social group to the app, bring their entire social group to the app.

Question 3: 8:44
And we're curious how you have used WCU RideAmigos. So, you might talk about how you first heard about it, when you first registered, whether you use it frequently, or you've only

used it once? How has it been part of your commuting at West Chester University this past semester or two semesters

P1: 9:15
So, my main complaint with RideAmigos is I haven't been able to find anybody to carpool with on it. I tell it my starting location in my end location. And it gives me like one or two names, one of which one person is like, I think I guess they set it when they had an evening class or something. And it's not changed because I checked it a week or two ago. But it just seems so limited in the options that it gives me. Like, I know there are people on RideAmigos but I have no way to see beyond what I'm looking at, to be, like, "Oh, this person is driving from somewhere else but going near Paoli, so maybe we could meet up halfway or, like, I think there was one person on it who lived like a mile or two from campus and was on there and on my route. But it's like, well, that's not really useful for me when I'm starting so far away. So, just I don't know if there's a way to get the app… sort of with a broader look of what's available. And maybe what it needs is some like really targeted focus groups, and like finding the people on campus with the set schedules, like hitting all the staff, because most of us are here 8am to 4:30pm. Like, if you're in a… like it's in the job description that those are your hours. So, there is a great opportunity there to get the people with the set schedule. And try to get them to sign up.

P2: 10:44
I like the app mainly for data collection. So, I mean, because if I'm entering my rides, it tells me you know, how many miles have gone and how much money I've saved and how much gas we have saved? It's kind of cool.

Facilitator: 10:59…… Do you use it every day or just when you're bicycling? Do you use it even when you drive?

P2:11:10
I haven't used it when I drive. I mean, there are there are other faculty members in my neighborhood. But as ------- points out, I mean, a lot of us have really varying schedules. So, today I came in at 10. So, I mean, a lot of time I'm here by eight, mainly because my primary job responsibility is advising exploratory students. But a lot of the time I'm not in, or I leave at a different time, and, you know, whatever. So, because I live so close, you know, I could carpool with people. But again, it's the varied schedule thing. And there are, there are some faculty members in my neighborhood that I would love to ride with, if… [noise from door opening].

P3: 12:10
I can say, for me, I've only used RideAmigos a couple of times. I logged, I think, one or two trips. And I think I was a little confused because there was this option to add a group. And all I saw was it was like the business center for WCU Business Center. And when I would log my trips, no other user would come up as be, you know, being close by so that I could you know, pick them up, or anything like that. So, after a couple times, I was like, well, maybe I don't understand how to use this app. And I first downloaded the app because of the email that you all sent, I think it was in April at some point. Because I didn't know about it prior to that. And it also said that you can try Waze. So, I had downloaded Waze and the carpool app for there. And I was getting people with that app. But then you're kind of relying on whether or not you know that person or not. I liked the

point about like, if RideAmigos can be built up at least there's some security knowing its West Chester people, and that can either be verified through social media. So, you kind of know we're… who you're riding with. Yeah,

P1: 13:36
Yeah. I think that's a factor too. Because I mean, what do they tell you from, like, the time you're a kid: don't get in a car with a stranger! So, if you know that, it's like, oh, it's this person that I've worked with occasionally and seen emails, and I know they have been going to the university for a few years. It's like you'd feel more comfortable.

P4: 13:53
I don't remember exactly. But I think RideAmigos, we connect with WCU email. Okay, so that's another kind of factor for security there. Yeah. But I think that what really need to do, more so with, and this is just from listening to maybe some other students, because… I think I'm the only student here, as far as you know… But, you know talking to other students, especially about alternative means of transportation and having them understand and then learn about these different options, it really seems like, you know, especially for younger people in their 20s, they're not going to be necessarily inclined to go out of their way, as you talked about earlier. If that means they have to do a little bit extra work, right. And so, a lot of people are just going to be like that, right? But if they [students] have that secure network and connection, and if they're, all their friends are joining it, right, you know, that kind of mass media effect or that mass bandwagon effect, essentially, if we can make this kind of popular in a way that is appealing to young people, then I think we can really do a really strong job with it. But right now, just talking to other students, it's not seemed like that.

P2: 15:23
I wanted to know if he [P4] had this conversation with the off campus and commuter association or with the transfer student orientation.

P4: 15:35
I can jump into that. So, I work for Sandy Jones, I work for Off-Campus and Commuter Services, which is the student affairs branch, and the association is the student, actual student club. Right. So, I, you know, know about all these different options, because all our staff that are ambassadors, we all learned about these. And I think we've had… earlier this semester, the office provided those information sessions, and I think, I'm not sure exactly if he went directly to OCCA, but at least they're aware of that, at least they have been in the past.

P5: 16:18
What about rideshare? Isn't it… there used to be a rideshare bulletin board? Like down here? It's been there for years, I thought it was still going. I was wondering whether it was the same thing? I didn't know.

Facilitator: 16:40 – P5: **Could you just tell us your first name and how you're connected to West Chester University.**

P5: 17:11

I'm ------, and I work in Facilities Planning. And I got on because I think somebody mentioned about the mass email that they sent out. And I'm a cyclist. So, I thought, oh, and I commute from Phoenixville. So, I put in for…

P3: 17: 33… That's where I live.

P5: 17:36… Yeah. Yeah. And maybe ride our bikes in together.

P3: 17: 38… How do you do that?

P5: 17: 45…. It's a fun adventure. But yeah, it's like a 20-mile ride.

Facilitator: 17:50... **How have you used RideAmigos. Has everyone logged trips in RideAmigos?**

P5: 18:38
It was just for last month, for the cycling [challenge], I figured I'd put it in for that, but I don't log in for any other way.

P4: 18:48
I mean, I'm very inconsistent on that app. I forgot about it for a while. And then, I mean, I didn't forget about it, but I put it in the back of my mind. Because, I remembered I saw a flyer or something like that. I was like, Oh, I should keep up with a little bit. But I don't think I've actually put any biking hours in there. But I think I put a couple weeks of commuting.

Facilitator: 19:09
Have any of you downloaded the app called Commute Tracker? [Explanation of how it works. Only 1 of 5 have done so.]

P3: 19:20
I have it.

P1: 20:15
I think if I had been able to connect with anybody on RideAmigos, that would have motivated me to actually put it on my overworked phone. But since every time I logged in, and looked, there didn't seem to be anybody I could match up with it's like, well, I presumed I would get some sort of email notification if somebody did try to reach out to me to carpool. So, that was my reasoning. And I until you brought it up, I'd forgotten there was a phone app. But now I remember that somebody had talked about that.

P4: 20:51
I actually forgot about that app as well. Maybe in the future, more emphasis on the app can be used for that, especially with like people you know, and today like, instead of having to log in every time, if you just have the app, if you notice push notifications come up, somebody is available or something like that, people are always on their phone. But they're not always on the websites. Right. So that would definitely kind of… I think that's one way we could kind of increase the usage

by just promoting that app. That's what we did for the WCU shuttle app, just by pushing that app people were able to utilize that more and …. It's a lot more user friendly, and a lot more applicable for students. So same idea.

Facilitator: 21:35
And there is in fact, a rideboard feature of WC RideAmigos, I didn't hear any of you mentioned that you had used it, it's on the main screen that's down at the bottom right hand side. And it's meant to provide an opportunity for students who might be traveling home to Scranton, over a weekend match up with other people who might be driving in the same direction. Or if you you're driving to Montgomery County, Maryland, over spring break, you can let other people know in case they're going, and you can share gas or something like that. It's a feature of the app. But we've not seen that much utilization of it. So, but none of you have… were any of you even aware that there was that functionality? Things that are called the rideboard.

P4: 22:33
Yes, there. I forgot. I knew there was a function for that, because actually, I remember that convention. We talked about that. But I hadn't remembered the exact way to use it. And honestly, I hadn't spent enough time. I you know, logged in now looked at what I wanted to do. Didn't really explore it too much more.

P1: 22:54
I did find when I first logged on logged on to RideAmigos the interface was somewhat confusing to figure out. Okay, so I think I did figure it out, but I just wasn't quite sure where to enter and how to do stuff. And then if you're trying to push it more having even just a tutorial, like, even if it's not like a live training session, but just sort of like a tutorial or some like, you know, quick video that you could just plug up and look at, though I prefer a non-video tutorial, because I don't like videos, but just sort of be like, here's all the features, here's all the steps. Because I think that was slightly confusing when I first looked at it. And I was trying to figure out how to find stuff.

P3: 23:39
So, I found it confusing too, because I, once I got registered, and I sort of figured out the interface online, then I think I logged a trip that I was planning, you know, to leave that evening to go to leave work. And then I was like, Well, I don't see anybody else there. I don't… it was almost like I didn't know what was supposed to happen after that. And then I was like, looking around all through the website and I saw that I could download… like, there are three different apps that you could download. The Commute Tracker was one of them. And it talked about Waze Carpool. And then there was one other one that seemed more to be about fitness or biking [Strava]. And so, I didn't do Strava, but I downloaded Waze Carpool and, and the Commute Tracker application, I thought the Commute Tracker would that would make more sense. And it's more convenient. But I still don't know really kind of like what ----- was saying, what happens after you log a trip.

P5: 24:47
Do you get an email? Or do you get notification through the phone? How do you get notification? Yeah, that's the question.

P2: 24:55

I logged five trips, and it doesn't... I don't think it sends me an email. But it just, it just updates my information. On my right-hand side.

P3: 25:07
So how do you connect with someone who would potentially carpool or how do they get in touch?

P2: 25:17
That's a really good question. Because I mean, it should be like… that rideshare thing. Why is that just for like, occasional or long-distance trips? Why not have that be people coming from Phoenixville. Like, we should have folders or a, have a, you know, user groups by region, so that people could connect that way?

P4: 25:41
Yeah. I think what can be difficult… because it's easy to spit ideas out… What can be difficult when you're trying to implement this… I'm sure you you've thought about this in some detail previously, because it's not new information. But, you know, in terms of accessing people's information, the whole reason we had to sign that disclosure waiver, right, it's very, very much a fine line, when you try to log information that is public, that not in the public record, but at least it, to an extent, is at least some public or part of the public record. And so even to look at people's schedules, it requires a lot of confidentiality, and a lot of agreement with both parties, right? So, I think what, what happens then is that when the person has to agree to all these things, they kind of feel like tied down, they don't want to do it. But when something is just like one time, done, then they're more willing to do it. But then again, it's a paradox, because then you really can't get everything done in one agreement. Because things are changing, and especially if they realize they have to put their only, you know, schedule down they didn't really want to agree to this, you know, they didn't know the people on RideAmigos. Again, I think that's the biggest factor, not knowing people with RideAmigos, is the really, the factor that makes them think.. it really, to make it work, you got to know people.

P2: 27:09
It could be similar to like Facebook or LinkedIn where all these people are listed and you see somebody, maybe just, you know, maybe first semester initially, who typically leaves the Paoli area, you know, 7:30 [am] and leaves West Chester at this time. And then you have to request, you know, you can request, you have to send them a message requesting their name or something so that...

P4: 27:36
Yeah, it was actually like more of a social media type of promotion in, not like a conventional, you know, share your family posts or like that, but more of a transportation social media. I think that might be an interesting one. But I don't know if this current interface, RideAmigos is supporting that promotion. So that's another idea altogether, might be a radical idea. But that would be, it would be interesting.

P1: 28:09
I could see advantages to having like, sort of like the network or friend connection. So, you can be like, Oh, I do know, Pat, lives in my same town. And I don't know Pat but we both know this other

person. So, I've got somebody I could check with or an intermediary to, to get find out a little bit more about this person before I try to set up carpool with them. You're talking about social media made me think of that. You could see like, who knows who, to sort of make it not just a random person. But oh, here's the people we have in common, right?

P4: 28:33
Because I'm defining social media not as just like a loose definition of, you know, just fun stuff you do, you know, for a casual thing. In more of a business term of social media, right? It's media, it's presenting someone's information. And it's exploring and sharing that information to other parties, right? LinkedIn isn't like a fun thing. I hate LinkedIn. But it's terribly, it's not a good interface. You know, I have my own problems with LinkedIn. But the reason people use it is because they're trying to share information. So, it's kind of the same thing or the same idea could occur here, you know. It's not something we just do it for fun, per se, but to try to promote different means of transportation and try to promote, you know, having this transportation media is the idea.

P3: 29:18
I think, you know, for me, I said that I downloaded the Waze Carpool. And actually, I was less comfortable with that, because I couldn't verify who those people were, even though they may have verified through like email or verified through Facebook, which I think you actually can do through Waze Carpool. I don't know them. I feel much more comfortable that West Chester has its own platform within RideAmigos. So as long as I connect with somebody that's at West Chester, I'd be comfortable, if they're going, you know, if it's not too far out of my way. It's just a matter of getting more people on.

P4: 29:57
 It would be really interesting if you could connect with Ramconnect, in a way to this, because I don't know if the faculty know or use Ramconnect too much. But basically, for students, and we're trying to push this more and more for the different offices, it's the new Orgsync, right, it's the new way to connect with different student activities, organizations and kind of have this shared general consensus. And that pro… or that, that program or that software is using a sort of pseudo social media program, because you have to request to look at someone else's information. And you also have to, like you know, or you have your own profile, and you can update your own information about yourself and share that out, you know, choose what to share and select it, all that kind of stuff. So, if you could maybe, or if you know, there could be a way to connect RideAmigos to Ramconnect, maybe work with the different offices, there might be another way to kind of gain more interest and gain more programs. But what I think what a lot of students say, especially a lot of people don't like this, but especially students are trying to… we're being asked to download and look at all these different separate programs, right? People like consolidation, people like it when everything is accessible at once. So again, if there could be a way, even if they can still can maintain RideAmigos but connect to… Ramconnect, it happens to be in the same profile for some way.

P3: 31:33
I think the push notifications would help too. So, if you're on your phone, and you get a notification or just like a little number one pops up over that icon, then you know that maybe somebody is like trying to contact you to connect through to set up a carpool or to rideshare. Because otherwise,

you know, I keep going back into it. It's like I log my trips and I'm like, Okay, what happens next? You know?

Question 4: 32:02
If we could make some changes to the program, what would make it a more valuable app? You've been talking about it for the last five or 10 minutes, but is there anything else you can think of that would make WCU RideAmigos more effective, more helpful for you, or that you think would make it more helpful to the larger community of employees and students here?

P2: 32:33
I'd like to see it as part of a package that the university, you know, develops to incentivize active community. So, I think that, you know, I'll be there's a lot of people who live, you know, within the five-mile boundary, who drive who could, you know, carpool at least some of the time. And if the university incentivized that, then, you know, it would be really helpful if there were showers and lockers. But, and even in the absence of that, you know, like, I change in the bathroom in my building, which is fine, I can do that. But even in the absence of that, I mean, it would, it would, if there were a way that like, using like a social media incentive, you know, to tell the other faculty in my neighborhood, hey, we can ride together, that would be fun. That would make it safer.

P5: 33:36
They I think they had an incentive there for a while they had special parking for carpooling. You know, that type of thing.

P3: 33:55
Yeah, that's a that's a good point, maybe also having some lanes that are designated for carpoolers, so that we have designated areas on campus that that where the people know through RideAmigos to pick up people. Yeah. Just a thought. And talking about packages, maybe this is something like you're talking about orientation, something that we could package together with some of their apps, you know, because every student comes to campus, and they have to download Microsoft Office, they have to download, you know, like malware software. So maybe you put it in with that package that all students should be downloading when they first come to West Chester. So, we kind of create that culture change from the start.

P4: 35:08
And I think it can be hard with orientation, because I've had a lot of experience with orientation and working with them for a summer. And a lot of times students, they don't want to… especially at orientation programming you can't package too much in at once because of the sensory overload, and they already get enough of that. And they're also still in high school mode a little bit. They only really get to college once September comes.

P3: 35:14
And it would have to be timely. Because they may not be thinking about it, they're coming for orientation, but they're still in summer mode.

P3: 35:16

Incentivizing it like you did, to have sort of a reward for, you know, biking the most, logging the most trips, or biking the most hours. That I think is probably going to be key for people, to win things, to be rewarded.

P1: 35:31
Just like saturating the culture. Like, if I look at the group on campus that I think is trying to change campus culture, I look at the Green Dot program. And, like, there are signs everywhere. There'se training multiple times a semester, like there's a lot. So, I think some of that could make it easier not just like packaging with like, here when you come up to orientation. But you know, if there's a sign in most buildings saying what RideAmigos is, then eventually somebody is looking at that sign, and they pick up what it is. And then maybe they don't log into it, but they know it's there, you've made another step towards that.

P4: 36:09
And actually that reminds me I, you know, I think we have been able to really well promote Zagster going into that. And I've seen that actually in a lot of different areas. But I haven't seen RideAmigos too much. So I think maybe whatever, the office did for Zagster, or maybe parallel that or do a similar programming target.

P5: 36:31
I think you're right, though, if you only do it once during the, you know, when they first come here, they might miss it or you're overloaded. And then you don't think about it. Yeah, you know, but if you kind of like, sprinkle it around a little bit… or just sprinkle around building entrances.

P4: 36:45
Yes. I mean, I remember the orientation process because I did it eleven, twelve times. But most students don't.

P2: 36:52
Do you have information on the digital signs?

Facilitator: 36:57
We can do and we have had occasionally some WCU RideAmigos ads on the digital signs. But not consistently throughout the semester.

P3 37:09
You could put a QR code on it.

P4 37:10
Yeah, a QR code is the thing these days. Yeah. A lot of young people like QR codes.

P5 37:14
I never use it!

P4 37:20

I was persuaded to use it by other people.

Facilitator: 37:25
Well, we are at a little after 12:50. If you have to leave, please feel free. If you can stay and talk to a few more minutes, that's great too.

P4 37:57
This is the last one, right?

Facilitator 37:58
No, there's one more on Wednesday about the rideshare parking spaces. Talk to people who use those. So all right, we talked about some of the things that might make it better in terms of… promoting it more, in terms of incentives like places to shower or store clothes, better promotion…

P5 38:22
… there are places to shower, but not everybody knows.

Facilitator 38:28
I don't think I do other than the Rec Center. Is there anything that the two of you have used it a bit is there anything you like about the WCU RideAmigos?

P5 38:42
It's fine. But I mean, to be honest, all I knew is about when they sent out in April about the email saying oh, there's a competition thing. Okay, I'll jump on that. And then I started because it was cold before, I hate writing the cold, and so I started commuting with my bike. And I

P4 38:57
I think the promotion is what reminded me. Because I had the profile and everything, but I hadn't put anything in there for a long time.

P3 39:10
Yeah. I like it. I think it is a good interface. I just didn't quite know what happens once I log a trip, do I get notification that someone else is, you know, has logged a trip near my route or someone who's looking to carpool that's kind of on my route or wouldn't be too far away that I could coordinate something with that. And that's kind of why I downloaded the carpool app for Waze because I wasn't quite sure that RideAmigos did that. You know, or if it was just more about logging trips. So I liked that you could add a group. So I saw the WCU Business Center group. Yeah, the Graduate Center. So I think that if we had more of those groups, maybe that might be helpful.

Facilitator 40:11
Well, this has been a really good conversation. Lots of interesting ideas came out. Is there anything else that you wanted to say? Or let us know about WCU RideAmigos? Anything else that comes to mind? All right. Well, thank you all for being here. This is helpful. We are going to write up a report from the findings of all of these conversations about Zagster, about the Uptown Loop shuttle, about RideAmigos, and about the rideshare parking spaces program. And we'll release that

sometime later in the summer. And we'll announce that that's available to review in our Office of Sustainability email bulletin. Are you signed up for that to receive that every week?

[Final thank yous and goodbyes.]

Zagster Focus group, May 2, 2019, 12:00 to 1:00 pm

Sykes Student Union Room 255B

Question 1: 6:02
Briefly introduce yourself by first name only, and what you what you do on campus and how you're associated with West Chester University.

P1: 6:20
I'm -------, and I work in the ------------ Department. And I support ------ applications.

P2: 6:31
I'm -----, I'm a graduate student in the -------------- program

P3: 6:37
 ----------, I'm an undergraduate student. I'm a ----- major.

P4: 6:42
I'm --------. I'm a fourth-year undergraduate student and a ----------- major.

Question 2: 7:03
what mode or modes you use to get to and from campus, you might use different ways of getting to and from campus on different days. So how far and how do you get to him from campus.

P1: 7:14
 I live just over the border in Delaware and I commute by car every day. And I take back roads so that I don't take [Route] 202. Sorry, I have a I just go about 35 miles an hour and avoid any of the stoplights. I just catch stop signs.

P2: 7:42
I live about two blocks off campus, but I do have a car because my hometown is about two and a half hours away. So, I kind of have to keep a car over here to get back there. But I primarily walk to campus.

P3: 7:57
I live off campus about a 10 to 15minute walk actually tried using a Zagster bike and I timed it. And it's really the same as walking. So, I usually just walk. I do have a car but it's in the Q Lot, so I don't really use it. And I live about like an hour away so, I use it [the car] for like going home or grocery shopping.

P4: 8:20
I live about 10 minutes away, about two or three miles in West Chester. As far as going back and forth, I primarily use the car. In the summer, I have run to campus before. Currently, I have, I'm recovering from a fractured ankle. So, I don't see that in my future…in the near future, at the very

least. But you know, I've run. It's not too easy to bike, so, I haven't done that. And when I do, run, it's not something you know, going to classes. Yeah, I would want to do that [take a shower]. But I do like using Zagster when I'm on campus and going around even up to areas within… just outside the borough. So, you know, I went to Dunkin Donuts the other day with Zagster up on Gay Street.

Question 3: 9:27
Now we want to hear more about how you've used Zagster.

P3: 10:15
So actually, last week, my roommates are like, "oh, we're going on a bike ride, we wish you could come." And I was like, "Wait, I can. I'll just use Zagster." So that was fun, very convenient. And I discovered that they had a light on it. I didn't know that. So, we were biking, like, at night, so that was nice. But I wanted to use it to go to town, but I'm afraid because there's no lock and that someone will take it or something. So, I don't know. But I think I might do that eventually, for like a quick run.

P4: 10:47
I want to add on, sorry for jumping in about the lock. So, there is a lock, but the lock is very small. Right. And that's the biggest hindrance, because if I'm trying to tie that to… I mean, there's not enough bike stops, you know, in areas. So, if I'm trying to tie that to like a pole or anything, it doesn't fit around. If I'm trying to tie it to a lot of different, you know, small indents where I can keep the bike safely, it just doesn't stay there. So that's one downside that I have in terms of accessibility, because I think that the bike lock could be improved or grown, at least, you know, maybe they get a different size or something that would be really helpful.

Intro by Facilitator: 11:27
So, it sounds like --------- wasn't aware of that there's a lot going on, there is a lot, could you explain to her a little more detail.

P4: 11:35
Yeah. So, you know, I think it's a yellow or not yellow, sorry, orange tab that goes from the top to the bottom of this Zagster bike right? And then next, that tab, there's like a little cylindrical thing. And that's cylindrical thing is actually a lock, you would be able to, it's hard to describe. It has a cable you can pull out. And that when you pull the cable, the cables, really only this long, [size description with hand] at least in terms of the accessible part of it. So that's the problem, because you need to have something that can only, or that can fit only this size. And usually that would be maybe like something this wide [indicates a narrow width] or this wide [a bit wider], but anything wider it doesn't fit. But again, for a lot of bike racks, at least it does fit because it's just the right size. So that's helpful. And you can lock it with the app… I have more concerns about the app, but I'll save that for later… but you can lock it with the app, you know, there's a code that you press, or you lock it by pressing the lock thing on the bike, on the on the keypad, and then that keeps the bike in place. And then to keep it more secure, then you use that additional lock. But then to unlock it you use the code that you have to get through Wi Fi or, you know, data, whatever. And then that will unlock it.

P3: 13:03
I also feared, like, there's been a few times where I rode it and my phone was like 1%. I'm kind of scared my phone's gonna die. Yeah. I don't know how the resolution would be for that. Yeah, I've also used it to like, ride from North to South campus. Just kind of, I won't do it again, because the hill down there is just kind of crazy. But that's just personal preference.

Facilitator: 13:11
No, but that's important to know, because south to north campus is a major route that one can take because there's a station down on south campus.

P4: 13:37
The thing about that station [the South campus station] is that it's not really on South Campus. It's at the edge of South Campus. And if you're in -------- you know, you probably know about that. I think what would be even better if there was something maybe in the South Campus apartments so that a lot more people could access that. Even if you do have to go back up that hill, I think it's still more worth it because people will have the bike in the first place. Versus people having to go all the way up that hill first and then get the bike and then you know where you're going to go. I guess you can go north, but then that's just a lot of like, extra time for them when they don't have the bike to get from all the way from the apartments or from the, you know, Sturzbecker or whatever, all the way up there.

P3: 14:16
Actually, last night, I was at the library at, like, three am. And I was really hungry and like no deliveries are really open. So, it's like "Oh, maybe I can bike to Wawa," because I looked it up, it was only a five minute bike ride. But then I saw, like, the nearest Zagster stand was kind of far away. I didn't feel like walking like this late to that far away bike stand. Maybe like if one was right by the library, that'd be nice or something. I don't know, more convenient locations.

P4: 14:40
I know my office has talked about locations for the Zagster bikes. So that's not something that's really easily fixed, I think, right? Like there's kind of political stuff, not political, but it's like it's hard to get that location set because they, West Chester didn't decide that as far as I'm aware or it wasn't as much of a factor as it could have been.

P2: 15:03
So, I'd like to jump back in, talking about the lock systems because I haven't used Zagster in a few years actually just because I deactivated my account. I don't even remember why at this point. And I haven't been able to figure out how to reactivate it. I tried to re-sign up with my email and it won't let me because it says there's already an account there. And then I tried to log back in and it said, so your accounts been deactivated. I'm like, "Well, how do I get back in to reactivate it?", you know. So I've been confused about that. But when, I mean, I guess they've been updated since I've used it because when I used to ride them they had like a U-lock, a U-shaped metal lock. And that was a lot more restrictive sounding than the cable. So, I guess the cable lock that you're describing is a step in the right direction. But I would worry about, you know, losing the bike or not locking it securely. I remember when I was using them, the lock could fall apart. And I actually had it in

the basket, and it fell out. So, I had to go searching through the grass to find where the other part of the lock went.

P4: 16:20
So that's a good to hear. But I don't think that's too much of a problem. Yeah, the only time I can think of that being a problem, I know there's one bike right now that I had seen when I was parking the other day at the garage, and the bike didn't have the lock on it. So, if somebody were to accidentally check that out, they're screwed because they can't return it. So that's not, you know, something that I think should be out there.

P2: 16:45
Yeah, that was one of my concerns, because I remember, I had returned my bike. And I was living in Tyson Hall at the time. And I went in and I saw somebody who was keeping a Zagster bike in the building instead of returning it back to the rack. And I think they were kind of using it as their own personal Zagster. They check that specific one out every time and bring it back to the building. So, I don't know, again, I kind of feel like I can't be as helpful as I want to be because I don't know what the new systems like… but one of the things that would be helpful to implement with Zagster or something is I've seen like systems like city bike. I was in Toronto and they had a city bike system and the bike could not be checked in until you physically docked it at the station. There were sensors there that kind of said "Yes, okay, it's at the station, you can fully return it." Because I was getting phone calls from Zagster saying, well, you were the last one to check out this bike, where is it? I said "Well, I returned it. What do you mean?" Like, you know, and I was scared, I didn't want to be charged hundreds of dollars for a missing bike. And I think that might have played into why I kind of stopped using it. I didn't want to be liable for that. Because like, how are they holding us responsible for these bikes? And is there you know, a better system…

P4: 18:01
Well, one thing that I do feel comfortable with is that every time… So, I've ridden… since last August, I was checking my logs, I've ridden… is it rides, I've had 20 rides or 20 logs, and each log, at the end of it, it sends me a receipt. So, it says, you know, "Cost of this ride is, like, free!" You know, uppercase letters and stuff, because, you know, with the plan… and that I feel like is a really helpful thing because it shows the time it shows the duration. And it gives me that understanding that this is the time frame that I need to worry about it. And it's done. You know.

P2: 18:45
So, I guess when I was using it… it must have been when we first got it, I don't know. When it first started on this campus. I'm pretty sure it was right around that time, probably 2016-ish. Yeah, that's what it was sorry. Yeah. So, I must have been one of the guinea pigs.

P4: 19:00
My office was talking… before it was my office, but you know, Sandy Jones, we were talking about it. And you know, I was hesitant just because of that reason, because it was so new. And because I didn't know if there would be a lot of glitches, I didn't want to worry about the concern. Only when, really, my office really started pushing it more and more and me joining that office was I able to, kind of, like, take advantage of it. And I think it's been really helpful for the most

part because, you know, a lot of the initial kinks have been kind of like sorted out. And now we're trying to look at the next set of, you know, ways that we can benefit this program.

Observer: 19:38
What do you mean by that your office was promoting?

P4: 19:46
My office has always been promoting because we serve the off campus and commuter services. So, we look at different ways and means for transportation. So, I joined my office as a student worker with Student Affairs last August or Yeah. And so that's when I picked it up. Right? That's when I decided, you know, I'll put down that $10 and get the subscription for this and check it out. So that's when I got to really start exploring the program. But before that I hadn't personally explored the program.

Facilitator: 20:21
---------- P1, how do you use Zagster?

P1: 20:23
I had kind of a dual purpose, I guess it was last summer and it was getting warm, and I liked to take the bike and it looked like a nice comfortable bike. So, it was just to take a bike ride at lunchtime. Also, with the parking lot being closed for the new building. I have to go meet with some folks sometimes out on, I forget what the road is about past Swope Hall… Carter Drive. And so, I figured if I… I thought at the time that I might have had to park behind E.O. Bull Center there, near the Swope building. And where I'm at in Allegheny Hall, I figured maybe going over that way, I'll just take the bike because I had to meet with the folks over there. But in the summertime… well, they opened up the lot behind Sykes here for the staff to park. And so, I didn't wind up using the bike to visit my coworkers. I wound up just walking over here and taking the car over. z. I thought that the bikes were comfortable and easy to check in and check out. I did forget to shut her off one time and it had kept running. But I did call the help desk that you have set up. And they resolved it, so I didn't get charged for being over the time.

Facilitator: 22:08
You both have talked about using it for fun. Would you mind describing where you went and what routes you took?

P3: 22:16
I used it for fun. My roommates just went around campus. Nowhere too far.

P1: 22:24
Yeah, I did the same thing. I just drove around… rode around campus. And I've taken the route to South Campus. And now I'll just get off bike walk it when it gets to steep. Also, growing up, we never wore helmets. And so, I didn't have a helmet. And the first time I realized that going out on the streets like I pretty much stayed on the sidewalks in the summertime, the campus is quieter. And so, I thought it was you know, safe. But then when I start getting out on the streets, I realized that you probably should have a helmet on. But recently, I actually bought a new bike at home and I bought a helmet, so I'll have that if I do it again.

P3: 23:17
I just wanted to add that sometimes it's like, when you go back to lock it, it's really hard. Like the last time I was struggling, I was like, oh my god, they're gonna charge me for it. But, then like I would try and other locks and some would work better than others. Also, like when it snowed, it was kind of frozen, but I don't know how to fix it. Sometimes like, since other people use some [bikes] you have to adjust the seat. And it can be hard to do sometimes.

P2: 23:47
Two things I want to hit on… I, the fun, new cycles, I've used them for fun. And maintenance, I want to circle back around to that. If I don't put a pin in, and I'll forget, so I also have used them for you know, kind of recreational things. And you may not know this, but I am an avid cyclist. I one time accidentally rode my personal bike to Downingtown using back streets. And I didn't even realize because it was just a long day and I was biking all day. I just, I, you know, took the roads and they took me there and I didn't know where I was going… It's like that's a good thing. Yeah. So, um, but uh, yeah, I've used, I've used the Zagsters for fun, but something, I think, I don't know how sturdy they are for extended use. Because I'm the kind of person I can be biking for hours and hours and hours on end. And I've kind of noticed about halfway through a really long trip, you know, they kind of start making creaking sounds, I would worry about, you know, the sturdiness of the bike, I get worried that my brakes were going to go out. And so, I kind of call it quits and then walk it back. And I think that's something to look at, you know, how… I'm trying to figure the wording out for this... I don't know, like, how built are they for that extended use? You know, are they good for a trip just around town or… now I think I probably took that.. I'd say around eight to ten miles that day, you know, because I did a big loop around West Chester and I kind of went in and out of town. And yeah, and then back to campus. So that's, that's one thing I worry about, is that maintenance because I'm a bigger person. So, it's kind of like, you know, I know, a lot of standard bikes are made for average size people, air quotes, you know, so I wonder about that. And are they sturdily built, where they can keep up with that kind of extended use over and over. I also had that issue where, you know, I was having trouble locking it back up, or, you know, I've noticed that there was something going on with the brakes, and I wasn't sure how to report something happening. So, I wonder how often these are being maintained, you know, worked on?

P4: 26:13
Yeah, because I know, when I was looking at the… maybe not the fact, but maybe the initial procurement and, you know, learning about Zagster, one of the things that they emphasized was because it's a subscription, maintenance is not something you have to worry about. Maybe it's something that Zagster, the company will worry about. But I don't want it to be like this private company is like, "Oh, yeah, we'll worry about it, like, every end of the semester." So every year one, one day maintenance, you know. Especially if people are using this in a continuous type of atmosphere where the bikes are being kept outside, right, and they have to, they are undergoing, you know, natural weathering processes. So a little more transparency to the users of Zagster would be really helpful about how the bikes are being maintained, you know, who's coming in, what the cycle is, you know, what the cycle looks like, on that. And then also, you know, if the Zagster bike is not being functional, like the one I saw the other day, they should be taken out so that people aren't, you know, confused about that. Because that, again, kind of adds concerns. That adds, you know, the fear that, you know, you don't want to overpay for something, or you know, worst case

scenario, best case scenario, you have to call them and then they'll be able to fix that, as mentioned before. But again, that's more effort. And that's more work that you really don't need to have to go through, right, if you're just taking the bike out. I do want to add, as ----- was mentioning. So today is May 2. So, on April 16. I love my I love checking logs and stuff. Before this app [the Zagster app]. Before I was running, I used to have a Runtastic running app. And I used to love checking, like my maps and everything. One thing that's Zagster has is that it's a good start, they do have a map, but I don't know if it's just my phone or not. I can't like look at it in more detail. And I'd love to be able to like to look at that in more detail. So, I can like see exactly where I'm going and everything like that. But, the day on April 16 I actually rode for about two and a half hours, you know, it's three-hour limit. So, I try to keep within that time frame. But I went, I didn't really have a plan. And I was wearing a boot too. So, it was like even more risky. I don't recommend doing that. But I went all the way past Chester County Hospital going up adjacent to High street, you know, where the nursing home is up that way. I forget what they're called. But, you know, that was… I didn't even realize. I kind of realized it, but then, like, once I was there, I was kind of stuck. I couldn't really go backwards. So, like I realized, like, I probably shouldn't do that, but on my way back, I started noticing like, this bike probably shouldn't be going undergoing so much. Like, it's probably not meant for so much, like, extreme kind of biking, right? They do, they do seem really sturdy first. But I did hear creaking on the way back. And part of that, I think is just making sure you're in the right gear sometimes. Right. And you know, accounting for those, you know, extraneous variables, I think there is still some stability issues that could be looked at. And I think it also depends on maybe the model of the bike, because some of them are 4000, you know, 4019, whatever. But then some of them are like, two 2000. I don't know if there's a difference, maybe in terms of like the age for that. Right. So, making sure that the bikes that are kept at West Chester aren't too old or, you know, haven't done repairs or stuff.

Question 4: 29:30
What you find a positive and beneficial about the Zagster program? What do you like about this program?

P1: 29:55
Well, I like the convenience. Now for me the bike racks are right next to the building I'm in, Allegheny Hall. And I like the style of the bike. Some people, like, if you're going more distance, maybe you'd prefer a different style, but I like the comfortable, you know, easygoing. And I like the ease of, I thought the app's great. That you can, you know, check in and check out with the app. It has you, it tracks you where you are while you're on campus, but I don't mind or, or maybe it tracks when you're out. I don't know how far it tracks. But that's, you know, like a privacy... It's funny how all these technologies. You know, you're being… they're listening to you online and, and tracking you. But, you know, for me, I mean, that didn't bother me. So yeah, I just I like the convenience of the app that you could just, you know, login…

P2: 31:01
And I definitely agree with that. Yeah, we kind of dove right into the negative parts … No, but I can agree the convenience was really nice. Because I just love bike riding so much. I remember the ribbon cutting for the Allegheny Zagster station. I remember seeing pictures of it online. And I was in orientation at the time. But you know, all I had to do was cross over the D lot back when it was open, the Lawrence parking lot. And I could go right to the station there. And, you know, it

was close. It was easy. Like, you know, like you said the app was super easy to use. Yeah, and it was just, it was a faster way to get to and from classes. I mean, sometimes if my schedule lined up in a nice way, I would take Zagster over to class, I think there was one [a station] at M lot at the time, I'm pretty sure they are… there was at that point. Because I remember using it. So yeah, yeah, they had to have because I used it.. Yeah, I didn't know you know, I yeah, but I would use it to get to classes, and it was just faster than walking. Because I really go on bikes, like I can zip around pretty fast.

P3: 32:19
I agree that it's convenient. Luckily for me, like the nearest was only like a two-minute walk. So, it's really nice. I really like how you can use it to go into town, even though I haven't done that yet. That's something I really want to do. And I was really impressed when I first used one that had like the basket and the bell. And then I just figured out it had the light that was like really bright. Like I bought one for my personal bike, it doesn't really do anything. So, I was surprised how they were like used to. Also like I transferred from University of Delaware, they didn't have anything like that. So, I was like, really fascinated they have one here and I kind of wish they had something like that at the University of Delaware, because they have a South Campus too and I would have classes there. It was, like, basically the same distance as the South Campus. I think it's really nice for college campuses.

P4: 33:09
I think everybody was able to touch on a lot of the convenience aspect. I also really enjoy the receipts. Because that gives me some peace of mind about the bike. You know, I have a start point and then a stop point. I don't have to worry about this biting me back later. And I also, again, enjoy the accessibility of it, even though they are you know, you kind of have to change your schedule a little bit if you're not in those areas. I spend a lot of time in Sykes, for instance. I'd love to have them in Sykes. But you know, walking over to Allegheny, taking a bike up to M lot takes about the same time as if I were to have parked over there and walked anyway. But it's a little bit more fun, you know? And, yeah, it's just something to be able to continue to do as a student or as a faculty or staff, you know, change up your schedule a little bit.

Intro question: 34:03
None of you mentioned the cost.

P3: 34:07
I was going to add that I was really surprised that you do get like a full two hours or three hours. I'm never going to use it that long, but…

P4: 34:16
That's one of the reasons I did use it that long, because I had that much time. I wanted to see like how long I can get it out there. I think that's a really great benefit.

Question 5: 34: 40
Is there anything else that you think would make this Zagster bikeshare program at West Chester University more beneficial for you, and your lives at West Chester?

P3: 35:07
I guess, like, having a better lock.

P4: 35:13
So that's something that I think, I don't know if there are different types of Zagster bikes because you know, obviously, this isn't the only Zagster location, this is a bigger company. But if there can be you know something about that, where maybe even just an extension for, you know, into that, like, into that mechanism, where it'd just be bigger or just larger. That, you know, even if it's a little bit more bulkier, I wouldn't mind it personally, because then I feel more secure about taking the bike outside of the area. I think it's a surcharge of about $2 for every hour after three, after the three hours. And you know, I think if people really want to go out and use the bike in a little bit more of a professional sense, it's a very feasible thing to do. But again, that light, that lock really needs to be fixed, if that will really happen. In terms of capturing the student population and growing this, because, you know, I think it's a really great opportunity. You know, I love promoting this, you know, telling my students about it. When you know, I talked to first year commuters and other types of commuters and off campus residents. Just talking about this, and having this awareness is a really important aspect. So, I think continuing to do that, and continue to target different offices as, you know, as the Office of Sustainability does, is really important.

Facilitator: 37:12
Is there anything else you think would make this program more useful? Not just for you, but for the campus community as a whole?

P2: 37:21
Not really, no. Oh, this is a quick comment. I don't know if this is useful or not useful. But something I really do like seeing is you know, if I'm driving around town or going to pick somebody up in town, I drive for Lyft on the weekend so sometimes I will see big groups of people driving the West Chester Zagster bikes. I like that they have that logo, because it kind of makes me feel like, Ooh, there's some students and it's like a community kind of feeling. So I like that aspect of it. And the branding is really nice. Yeah, I… just going back to the maintenance or the app comment, it's, it's been a while since I've used it. So, I don't know if that's, you know, obviously, I have to go back and look and see how it's been updated since then. So, don't take that, too seriously there because I have no idea.

P1: 38:13
I was thinking what could make it better for me, but it's not feasible.

Facilitator: 38:21
Well, dream big. What would it be?

P1: 38:25
If you could have like a bike path to go on. You know, like, when you ride around the campus, you're dealing with cars. And that's probably what's kind of set me back. More, more not having like a flat, just a path to go on. You know, for fun. Just for fun rides.

P4: 38:45

Here. Just a quick note, before I forget, the bike handles on even payment pretty well, from my experience, because they are bigger and sturdier.

P3: 38:57
Yeah, the last time I rode I was like, my back was hurting because you know, you have to kind of lean down. But I mean, that's kind of how it is, I don't really expect, like, any change.

Question 6: 39:29
So, is there anything you've been thinking about this Zagster program that we haven't asked a question about? So, anything else you want to say? Or ask or know or suggest?

P3: 39:31
I was wondering if your phone does die while you're on the road, like, what happens? Like if your phone back up and it goes where it was?

Unknown: 39:37
Good question. I don't know.

P2: 39:43
I remember reading something about like a grace period. Like I think in your experience when you forgot to turn it off or something. I remember reading something, and this is going back. So, don't quote me, but it was something along the lines of like if you go over your time by say an hour, like we'll forgive it one time and then after that it's on you, like, you'll have to pay the surcharge or whatever. I think you know, if anything, do you now, with the new locks, do you need the phone to lock it back up or can you just…?

P4: 40:19
So, with the phone I'll describe, in case… To start off, you go to the stations. You would click for instance, like you want to ride, right? Like for instance on the app right now I want a ride, right. [Many people talking for a minute about an indication on P4's Zagster app that a bike currently checked out that he was unaware of.]

P4: 41:41
And this is the first screen that shows up. It might show me something more specifically, like, locations. And it only shows the West Chester locations because it's specific to West Chester program. So, like, it's so… and this isn't always accurate. Sometimes it's say "six plus." It could be like "eight." … So, I would click that, like, 4019, right. Or I could just press unlock. Unlock, there's a bike number on each of them, again, four-oh-nine-one, or whatever. So, you press that, [it says] "do you want to start?", sure, you get a confirmation, choose that, and then I'm on it. The bike is connected to the lock that is right there. And on that lock, there's a… it unlocks, so you pull that chain out, basically, and you're free to go with it. When you want to lock it or when you want to put it back, you have to first connect that back to… you have to connect that back. And the way to do that. And it's hard to describe it. But you know, there's a there's a lock button on the bike, you have to press that down first, then you have to connect chain on to it. And then there's a yellow or orange tabby to push that tab down. So, there's like three steps, basically. So, once you complete

those three steps, and you make sure your WIFI or your data is on, then you can press end ride and be sure. And then it'll give the durations.

P2: 43:07
When I was using it, they had actual little lock boxes on the bike itself. And you had to get a PIN code, punch it in on the buttons, and then it would open. We'd get a key that will pull out on a little zip string. And then you have to unlock the metal lock. So that was a whole process in itself. But because, I think, you could lock those without a code because you had the key. Like if you didn't shut the lock box, you could still use the key. But that's a good point. Because it's like my phone dies, what am I going to do?

P3: 43:34
What would happen if you lost the key?

P2: 43:36
I mean, unless you took scissors to it, but it had like one of those pull strings that would retract back in so yeah, so it was like kind of in there.

Facilitator: 43:48
 Anyway, any last comments or questions?

P3: 43:51
I was thinking of something similar like that. I don't know if it would be possible but like a retractable like charger. That'd be really cool. Like, a Bluetooth speaker. That would be really cool. I've thought about, like, putting my speaker in the basket.

P1: 44:23
Are there instructions for returning… Like I know there's instructions for checking it out.

P4: 44:31
The instructions for the first time were a little unclear. I will say that.

P1: 44:33
Yeah, I remember the first time I used it that there was something that I struggled with… with locking it.

P2: 44:43
Yeah. Yeah. I think it'd be good to have little Youtube videos.

P4: 44:46
Like they do have tutorials and stuff for Zagster's program. So, I think I've watched one of those.

P1: 44:48
Yeah. I think I watched it and I got, I don't know, that was like a step. There are some steps in the final locking that, yeah.

P4: 44:58
You know, there's a Frequently Asked Questions tab on the app as well. So, you can just refer to that tab.

Uptown Loop Focus group, May 3rd, 2019, 12:00 to 1:00 pm

Sykes Student Union Room 255B

PI: 0:00
Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Lola. And I have with me Dr. Brad. He's the director of the Office of Sustainability. And also I have Edward Bruno [from facilities] And he's one of the observers for today focus group. I'm the principal investigator for this focus group. And Dr. Brad is one of the Co-PIs. [The other Co-PI was not] able to come in today is Dr. Sunger, who happens to be my faculty advisor. And today's focus group is all about the Uptown Loop. [We] want to know how effective Uptown Loop shuttle buses have been. And what are any challenges you think you have with commuting, or any other students, and I've been using a faculty and staff members have been comfortable in riding the bus. That's why we want to and what are the environmental advantages [that are] important created by WCU in creating this initiative.

PI 1:14
And before we proceed with the focus group, or someone like to inform you that we are going to be recording this focus group is not for identification on anyone is just for us to have the documentation of the reports we're going to be getting from you guys. And also to be able to draw analysis thereafter. And you'll be required to sign a consent form just to make sure that you understand why you're taking this focus group and you understand that there is no risk attached to anything.

Facilitator: 1:54
So we'll give you a few minutes to read that and sign it. There's a space for a witness. And if you could just witness for someone else who's at the table. That would be great.

… [snipped comments made while participants filled out consent form]

Facilitator: 4:09
All right. Well, thank you all for being here and for signing the consent form. As Lola said, my name is Bradley Flamm. I work in the Office of Sustainability. I know some of you, but I don't know all of you. I'll be posing most of the questions. Lola will jump in when she has a clarifying question to add. But as she said, all of the reporting, … that we will do with the recordings we'll be making today will be aggregated and anonymized. Nobody will be identified by name. And there will be no identifying information attached to any comment that we use.… We'd like to start by a couple of just going around in a circle questions so that everybody gets a chance to introduce him or herself and tell us a little bit about you. And then we're hoping the questions will sort of be a conversation where you should feel free to respond to each other, ask questions of each other. But **we'd like to start just if you could introduce yourself by your first name. And just tell us how you're connected to West Chester University**.

P1: 5:56
[I can start. My name is ----], I ride the uptown loop, I'm a senior, I'll be graduating. And since I started, I transferred into Westchester. But I've been mostly commuting. So I did look locally. At first it did not work out to then I had to commute from Reading, which I'm not from either. And currently I live in the borough, but it still would be a 30 minute walk for me because I've done that before the shuttle existed and, having to pay my tuition this semester, everything was on a budget. So beyond my books there was even considering buying a permit for my car. So I did not buy a permit and therefore have been using the Uptown Loop… in addition to my car breaking down already twice. So I'm out of a car once again. Yeah, that's a little bit about me.

Facilitator: 6:52
Great, thank you.

P2: 6:54
Yeah, I'm so I'm ---- and I work in the ---------. And I've been working here for about a year and live in the borough and usually just walk but I have taken the Uptown loop a couple of times. So

P3: 7:10
I'm ------, a faculty member in the ------ department. I'm a bicycle commuter, so I haven't used the shuttle but I do come to campus by bicycle every day. And I've never purchased a parking permit either.

Observer: 7:31
I'm ---- and I'm an observer today, I will say that, I will disclose that I do administer the [shuttle] buses.
So you can yell at me at any point, but not today because I'm not supposed to talk back.

P4: 7:49
Name is -----. I'm in the English department. I think this is the end of my seventh year here. When I took the job I was living in Dublin and I didn't have a car so I had to house hunt for a place in walking distance to town, to campus. I paid more than one and a half of my paychecks for a place, that was in order to commute. I think the Uptown Loop would have made that budget the first year a lot more doable. I moved to Philly. I live in Philly, I ride the train from Philly twice a day every day.

P5: 8:43
Hi everyone. My name is ----, I actually graduated in December. My apartment-mate, ----, works in the ---------. And he asked me to come because I used the Uptown Loop when I was in school. And now because I don't have a car, to get the Giant usually.

P6: 9:00

Good. -----, I'm in the history department. I ride the shuttle every day. I love it. It's great. It's a great big help. I like the idea that I'm saving a parking space and not wasting gas.

P7: 9:16
And I'm ------, I went to undergrad here at West Cchester which is why I know that ------'s been here for seven years because I was one of his first students here. And now I'm a grad student here, as I said, in my second year, and I live by the Chester County Hospital. So it's about a 30 minute walk. I would say I walk more often than I use the Uptown loop. But I I do use the Uptown loop usually in the evenings to come home from class.

Facilitator: 9:44
Great, thank you everyone. Just in case, during our conversation, you want to take a look at the map of the Uptown loop for the schedule I we did bring copies of those. But for the next round of answers, we'd like you to and some of you have touched on this already. Some of you haven't. **Tell us how far from campus you currently live, what mode or modes you currently use to get to and from campus. And describe if and how your commute to campus has changed since the Uptown loop started operations in September of last year**. So three parts to that. How far do you live from campus? How do you get here now? And how did you get here before?

P1------- 10:35
So I live by Chester County Hospital as well. So it's 30 minutes walking? How do I get you here now? Mostly the Uptown Loop. Yeah. It's very rare that my sister can take me so sometimes I carpool with her. How did I get there before? Yeah, I was walking in the beginning. Because the shuttle I think started late September beginning of October. And I knew it was something… I had seen the email about it. But I didn't know how to actually ride the shuttle or where the stops were. It took me a little bit to find the schedule, and then how to track them down. I didn't know. So it was it more trial and error… I would miss the bus a few times seeing it passed by but didn't know how to identify myself as a student. I had my backpack on. So I would walk. And so that was at the beginning. And then I made a call. It was good after that. They knew who I was and where my stop was. So then I've made good friends with the bus driver. And so she knows me very well. And wherever it may be sometimes she has made accommodations should I miss her at one stop and I walk a little bit up ahead and I just wait. So that's really great. How did I get here? Yeah, that was kind of covered how I got here before because mostly was by car with my other semesters, because I didn't always live in the borough. So that was still… comes with the difficulty of that… part of our tuition is a parking enhancement… parking.

Facilitator 12:21
Transportation fee?

P1--- 12:23
… not something with parking, but it's not maybe not enhancement parking, something, a fee essentially for expansion. I know they're talking about their new parking garage going and… but that's still considering obviously having to pay for the hour… parking garages are very, the

passes are expensive. And even if you invest in a parking pass, which is affordable, you're not guaranteed parking on campus. So that's mostly what I would find before was the issue that even if I… because I was commuting from a lot further, I couldn't just walk, I still would have very hard time finding parking on campus.

P2--- 13:05
So, I, since I've just been here for a year, you know, I guess kind of how I've been getting around the past year before is one in the same. So I live six blocks away from where I work. So it's like an 11 minute walk. So I've always felt that that was, I mean, the easiest way is just to walk, and the fastest. And you know, I'll say my experience with the Uptown loop, which I'm sure we'll get into and other questions was for other commute style, like my daily like home to home to work. But yeah, I have considered using it in bad weather, though, because there have been times where it's like pouring rain. And you know, I didn't bring an umbrella. I'm really bad about that. And I'm lucky enough to have a stop really close to where I think it's this one right here. So like our office is just kind of like, you know, just across like a little field. So I feel like I would have that option. You know, and I always keep that in the back of my mind that I have that as an option. But But yeah, otherwise, you know, I'm on foot all the time.

P3---- 14:22
I live about a mile and a half to campus. So it's a fairly short bike ride. 10 minutes on the outside. I haven't really… the shuttle hasn't really impacted my commute.

P4----- 15:04
I don't remember the questions. How do you get to work? How did you get to work? I live in Center City, I live about a mile from the market Frankford Line. I live close to Fifth and south. So I walk up to the L in the morning if the weather is bad. Or if it's too hot or too cold. Otherwise, I have a membership in the shared bike thing. And it's a skip, less than a block from my house and a stand at 30th Street. And so I often ride to there I almost always ride back because I don't mind sweating when I get home. It's like I get to 30 Street on either the subway or by bike. And then I take the train from 30 Street to Exton. And before the shuttle, I actually kept a car at the train station at exton. And I'm not the only faculty member that did that, I know of at least three other people who did the same exact thing to solve the last mile problem,

Facilitator: 16:07
You could leave them there overnight?

P4 16:10
Two hour a day parking there is very cheap. And I was, I think people love that I left my car there overnight because I would leave at eight or nine in the morning after all the spaces were taken. And someone lucky would get an additional space. And I come back at the end of my work day after all the commuters had left this easy free parking at that time. And so it's a pretty easy plan, especially if you come to campus every day. And it's actually be free. You don't have to pay for overnight. But even if it's $1 a day that's really really useful. It's virtually free parking.

But then parking on campus is, as you guys know, there's lots of great spaces in Q lot. There's not a great space right outside my door for me because everyone else wants that space. And you know I… in grad school, I went to the University of Connecticut and they… my first semester they got rid of their parking lots in the center of campus and closed it to vehicles. So it's for pedestrians only… We wanted to strike for that. And then we realized that's a dumb reason to strike. So we didn't and from then on we just parked on the periphery of campus and rode the shuttle bus in every day. [It just became normal…] So I was really happy when the shuttle service started. I actually got rid of a car as a result of that. Just I live in Philly. I don't need it there. Didn't need it here any longer. So I… I use the [Exton] shuttle a lot.

…

P5----- 17:47
I don't live too close to campus right now. I live in Cambridge. And before that I actually lived right on that corner of Walnut and Nields… So I always just walked to Sykes and whatnot. Yeah, but um, you said it was a rainy day, I would totally just like, take a long route around… the nice scenery and stuff. Yeah, so I lived right on that corner. So it would have been extremely helpful for me to get to like, Giant. Yeah.

Facilitator: 18:11
And did you live in that same location before the Uptown loop started?

P5----- 18:15
Yeah, it was before, I think that the Uptown Loop started this Fall?

Facilitator: 18:19
Yeah, it started this past fall.

P5----- 18:20
Yes, by that point I was [living] in Cambridge. But if I was there, it would have helped me a lot.

P6----- 18:29
I live near the Giant. So I would usually drive to work or walk to work depending on the weather, depending on my mood. But this is so great, because I can just take a walk or roll out to the giant and catch the shuttle and come in. The hassle with driving to work, of course, was finding parking, near my building, or close by. And this really ends any and all of that. It's so remarkably helpful and convenient.

P7---- 19:04
Like I said, I'm about a 30 minute walk away from campus. What the… What has changed for me has mostly been my evening commutes. My morning commutes I'm either walking or my partner will drop me off before he continues on to work. The other reason that I don't…, that I wouldn't do it in the mornings is I get motion sickness. And so there are more stops on the way

to campus for me personally, then there are on the way home. And there was a driver who I'm tempted to say that she was a little bit of an erratic driver. So the stops were really hard. And the constant stopping and going was it was too much for me. So that's also part of why I chose not to take it on the way to campus and, and on the way home was just more conducive to me. If I wasn't taking the Uptown Loop on the way home, I would either walk or my husband would pick me up. It's just been a lot more convenient for us because he can go home and move forward with cooking. And it just makes our evening like a lot smoother. So I've just been really grateful for even just having that extra 20 minutes a day where he can just be home and… and cooking. And I can get home and he doesn't have to worry about coming to pick me up. Because we do only have one car and I hear so many stories about folks who have to come and try to find parking. And that's not a situation, I think most people want to be in, I'd like to avoid it if possible.

…

Facilitator: 20:45
So we've heard from most of you how you do or don't use the Uptown loop, not everybody here has used it regularly. But **we're curious about why you use the Uptown loop**. It's clear, some of you have mentioned coming to and from work. But do you use it for other purposes, to do shopping or for fun to go into the borough, but you might have lots of reasons for using it. So we're curious about what those reasons are. And just a general idea of how often during a typical week during the semester, you, you do actually hop on the shuttle. So now we can keep going in circles or anybody can jump in.

P1---- 21:39
why is it… so I actually work at Giant as well. So that was very helpful for me. Because there are days when… especially my Monday, Wednesday, Friday, they're usually pretty long, you know, on campus, like 930 to three-ish. And I typically work at 4pm. So I can just take. So for a day like that I have to plan, usually pack food, and I have to plan for being on campus for that chunk of time. So it makes it very easy then to also just ride the shuttle either… it's just 10 minutes to my apartment, or straight to work. And so that's really convenient for me. And before I knew about it, and when I again, I had a broken down car at the beginning and a broken down car now. So I was walking. And my mom thought that was pretty far to walk and I said no there's this great thing, I got the email, there is a shuttle bus that will take me there free… for a student. So I was pretty excited about that. And that has been very helpful. So just for me to get to work. I didn't really… I do my shopping there because I work there. So it's not like I take it for an extra ride there… sometimes for coffee, coffee is cheaper there if anybody was wondering. Yeah, so I do that as well. I've gone there even just for coffee. But I would… because of being a student on the go and this semester being very busy for me last semester, I actually use it as it saves me time in the morning. So even when I was able to drive, I would ride the bus. Because whether it was last minute readings I had to get done, that's what I was doing, you know, hands free, or anything, or even sometimes breakfast on the go, I would have time to cook breakfast and not to

53

eat. And that was it. But to so I could eat it, I would eat it on the bus. So that has been very… even like brushing my hair like she saw me getting ready. still finishing getting ready so many times and did not care. So that was nice. That's, that's the main reason for me is that it was really it's really helpful as a student who needs, who's on a budget, needs to save money, transportation and also with time management. So yeah, very helpful for me.

P2---- 24:02
I actually, I used it, because my eye doctor is in the same Plaza as the giant and I was like, Oh, that's great, because, you know, you have an eye appointment, and they're going to dilate your eyes, you're not supposed to be driving and everything. So I was like, this is the perfect opportunity to finally take the Uptown loop because it just stopped like, right, you know, across the field from like our office, and I kind of like went at lunchtime and I could just like hop on and have it take me you know, around and drop me off there. And then I could just like catch it on the way back. So that was really neat. My only kind of bad experience at that point was that, you know, not being able to time when my appointment finished, I had like, just missed the bus that went before. So I ended up having to wait a significantly long amount of time. You know, and it was kind of… and my phone had died. And so I couldn't like track it. And I was like, Oh, I hope I'm like in the right spot. I'm just, you know, there was like no sign. I think that it stops like right here, but it was definitely kind of nerve wracking for a while and I was wondering whether, you know, as I'm, like, you know, I can't really see, you know, like, wondering if it's ever going to come back from here, I'm going to be stranded at giant in the middle of the day on Friday. But it was… it was still it was like a really nice, you know, experience and the driver was like, fantastic. And she like had recognized me from another time that I had just stepped on with some students to you know, show them and she's like, Oh, hey, I know you and I'm like, wow, that's, that's impressive. And you just saw me one time. You know, we'd like chatted the whole way around. And it was really nice. So it made me after, like that experience, like, want to definitely take it more for those, you know, situations, like if I need to go to giant, you know, because it's just a little bit, it's like a little bit too far to walk. You know, or maybe like, on the other side of the borough, if I have to get to like say a friend's house or like you know, to like you then I probably take the Uptown loop because it's just a little bit, you know, kind of time consuming to get there on foot. But I would definitely you know, like make sure that I had a timed out, you know know really well so that I didn't miss the bus because that really kind of detracted from the experience.

…

P5----- 26:29
I think this semester, I've used it four times. So I don't have a car. My roommate -------- always usually drives me. He used to drive me a lot even when we weren't roommates. But now that we are I can use his car as well. So I have his car key on my key chain. But I'm sometimes because… like gas is like three $3 now, and whenever I do use his car I put a gas in his car. So like, I don't have too much money to spare. So I like using the Uptown Loop for that… to go to giant. Actually last month at giant you [N---] helped me at the service. And you gave me $6 in

quarters. [laughter] Besides that I use it sometimes to go to Gay Street, can't get off on Miner to get my paycheck from my job on Gay street. I've used it four times when it rains or getting groceries at giant.

P6---- 27:27
I'm on it at least twice a day, and sometimes more, to go to and from school. And then there are occasions where I'll take the shuttle to go into town from school to do an errand over lunch and come back. And I'll try to catch the shuttle again in town to come back to school. If I don't, I'll walk back or I'll wait. I've had occasion to take the shuttle to school and and then back home for an emergency or emergencies and then catch the shuttle to come back to school and then go home again at the end of the day. It's really remarkably convenient. I like the idea about being green. Or imagining that I'm being green by not, you know, burning gas to get to school and the hassle to park.

Facilitator: 28:23
There have been lots of appreciative comments about the Uptown loop. And that that's helpful for us with one of our questions. But I'd like to pose that question again. So for right now, **let's focus really on what you appreciate about it**. You know, is the cost or the locations, the days of operation hours of operation. What it allows you to do? Could be lots of other things. But you've said some of them already. But if there's other things you want to add about what you appreciate about having the Uptown loop or the Exton shuttle. We'll get to the criticism piece and things that that could be better. But let's focus in this part just on on what's working well for you with the Uptown. If you have anything to add, you may have said it all already.

P1---- 29:28
I did live on campus, only one semester was on south so I did experience the other shuttles. And those tend to be pretty inconvenient. I was always late to class, no matter how early I would be out there sometimes 30 minutes. And usually that's as much time as I would allow myself for parking. Just because they were never, I mean, I'm sure it's difficult sometimes to be consistent with the schedule, but the Uptown loop is very, very timely. So I can depend on that. So I really appreciate that. So that's why… I mean, I'm still working on time management. But somehow I don't have an issue with planning five to 10 minutes and waiting for the shuttle somehow, because I'm never early to things usually. And so the shuttle has helped with time management. Also just the consistency, I can always rely on that time. And I really like the GPS tracking, because I have a screenshot of the schedule. So that's kind of where I, I tend to look at things if I, if I'm going home in between class if I have time, and riding the shuttle to and from my apartment. So I had that to plan out the schedule. So I screenshoted that, but then the GPS helps with knowing where the bus is and how much time I have sometimes in between class. So to get the shuttle and it has always, it's never been an issue really, I don't really miss the bus I've ridden… it's not for the times I have missed it, but it's not because of the shuttle, I knew when it was coming. So that has been so helpful. And just the time that it saves me in addition to not having the stress of any sort of commuting and finding parking. It's kind of comforting almost that after a long day, a busy day, or whatever the day's gonna bring a packed schedule, but for

students to just to have something there that you can rely on that is… transportation and parking is just kind of a stress here on campus for anybody. So to have that to rely on has been has been very nice for me.

P2---- 31:50
Yeah, I really appreciate the route because it like it just helps you kind of bridge those awkward… awkwardly long gaps, you know, where it's like, if I had, you know, like, I could probably like bike it if I was more comfortable on the road with my bike. And, you know, it might be too long to walk or it's going to take like way too big a chunk out of my day, like say I'm doing something on my lunch hour, well, I don't have you know, like, maybe a half an hour to walk somewhere, you know, so it's really nice to kind of, you know, in those instances be able to just hop on and speed things up a little bit. And, you know, really make it so that even if I'm going from like, one end of the borough to the other, I can do it car free, which I really appreciate because, like I, you know, I want to avoid having to have a car as much as possible. I have considered getting rid of mine, as well. And this definitely gives me a sense of comfort and security knowing that like, hey, if I need to, like, get to Giant and you know, you know, I don't have a car, I know that I've got a way you know, that I can get there. So I definitely keep that you know, in consideration when I'm thinking about the future and my own needs for a vehicle. And I really appreciate the drivers as well. Which I know I mentioned because, they… I just think that they… you know for someone who's like a little bit like nervous taking it the first time they provided such a nice like, like welcoming you know, homey, you know, kind of atmosphere on a shuttle bus. But it was just so neat that she like new everybody. It seemed you didn't feel awkward or uncomfortable or like nervous. You know, it's just like the minute you stepped on was like, Oh, hey, friend, you know, like, climb aboard. So yeah, I really appreciated the few experiences that I've had with it, but more so just knowing that it's there having like that sense of security that I know like, if it's like a downpour or something like that, or the special occasions that I know I can that I can take it and I feel comfortable with it.

P6----- 33:48
I can, I'd love to second all of that with a big exclamation point. And reliability and convenience and kindness and courteousness of the drivers. It's really great that way.

P4-------- 34:06
I want to say two things about what's great about this uptown loop, full disclosure, I've never taken it. But had it existed when I lived in the borough, I might still live in the borough. I spent far too much of my money shopping at Carlino's. There was a little bodega on my block that had better prices, but fewer items. I liked to cook what they had instead of what I wanted to have. This would have changed my life. This would have been amazing. The borough lacks functional transport for much of the day. So what's great about this is two things. Number one, obviously, it alleviates parking on campus, but it understands that when people go to and from campus, they're not always going back home. And they're not always coming from home. And so by having a loop that connects the campus to all of these different areas, a) it connects to more people's homes, but also facilitates this sort of triangular commute that is an ordinary part of your life

when you're in a car. And you know, it is because you stop at the grocery store on the way home. And yet lots of spoke and hub commutes don't allow that. This does. That's pretty fantastic. Number two, even though it's clearly built to alleviate parking on campus, it doesn't work. It doesn't concentrate at 7am in the morning, and then at four or five in the afternoon. It goes on all day long, because that's the way people live their lives. And I looked at the schedule, there's about 35 minutes as the largest gap between adjacent shuttles. That is really regular, that is really regular. It's regular enough that you can use it for all kinds of things in addition to getting to and from work. And so it seems to me that if transport is going to work it has to meet a primary need, alleviate parking on campus, get people into the school into work, I gotcha. But also all of these tertiary things that support or free riders to increase the ridership. This does that really well.

P6---- 36:07
I've been ready to use it to run errands from campus. And, and say, you know, I kind of plot in my head, I'll be five or 10 minutes at the drugstore, at the post. And then I'll dash to get the shuttle at the next you know, three or four steps beyond after where it dropped me It's fantastic.

Facilitator: 36:26
Can you say a little bit about the Exton shuttle.

P4-------- 36:31

I love the Exton shuttle, it allowed me to get rid of a car. At its best, when it's at its most beautiful, it's the fastest mode of transport between my house and my work. And a lot of people who live in Philly, and work at West Chester teach the kinds of hours that we teach. Recognize that and committed to the shuttle for that reason. You could not drive, you can't leave my house at 7:30 and get to campus by 9am by taking 95 and 202 or 222, I forget, one of those two numbers. You just can't. It's more than an hour and a half from my… first you got to get to 95 in Center City. I can leave my house and be in my office in less than an hour and a half. And it's remarkable for that. It also, because it works on a schedule like this and it's plannable. And we all get our schedules a year in advance on what I'm teaching next fall. I just found out what I'm teaching next spring. Because it's playable, I can plan my schedule, the department can rely on me in ways that that are important to a career. So I like that. And it also has fostered collegiality, I take the train with almost never someone from my own program, but people from different colleges, sometimes with students, sometimes with grad students, and it's facilitated that person to person connection, like you were talking about, it's friendly to get on the shuttle bus, it's friendly to do that together and the shuttle has facilitated that wonderfully.

P3------ 38:14
And as a cycle commuter there are residual benefits for me, right? Especially if I'm running errands in town, because all the car trips that, that the shuttle is replacing are really like one-person-in-a-vehicle trips. And those are typically, you know, based on, you know, the data I've collected in cycle commuting, typically the folks that are most… or least amenable to cycling as

a form of transportation. Usually, if there are multiple people in the car there's this, you know, usually if somebody's yelling, at me, it's a single person in a car, because they're trying to get from A to B, they're sort of understanding of, like, the, the notion of shared space, and it is typically informed by you know, there, there's, I guess, a lack of attention to other people's also using the space as well. So they take you know, it's cut down those, those number of trips, for sure. And then it just makes it easier for, especially within the area of the borough where it's like super dense, super dense there. And so I would much rather negotiate the streets with a, with a bus who's going to be attentive to my needs, and it's easier, it's much easier for us to avoid each other. Then under a single occupancy car.

P7------------ 39:33
in terms of points to appreciate, I would also add, we talked a little bit about the route, I think just the visibility of it is really nice, like when I see it go down Walnut, or when I see it go down Marshall Street, I'm like, well, that's the Uptown Loop. And it might seem kind of ,like menial, but it's, it's a symbol of West Chester University to me. So when I see it go by, it's like a symbol of the university support for those of us who live in places where I don't want to walk in the pouring rain, you know, 30 minutes to campus and West Chester has provided, has provided this resource for me so that I don't have to do that. And so whenever I see it, I'm, I get excited to see the Uptown Loop passing by. And to bring it back around to the route, I think, you know, it goes down a lot of main streets like Walnut and Marshall, and you know, so it has that kind of high level of visibility in that way. And then kind of a side note, I also appreciate that a number of us have gone into, when it's cold during the wintertime, into the Center for Contemplative Studies and wait, kind of in that little hallway, and, and I appreciate that we don't get yelled at for that. And that there is that space. You know, I don't know if that's the most perfect space to have, and if we really should be using their space for that purpose, but it's cold sometimes. And you know, sometimes you are waiting for 15 or 20 minutes, not that it doesn't come often enough, but just according to your own schedule you, you might, you know, you might just be getting there to be there early or whatever. So whether or not it was meant to be the space for us to wait, I appreciate that. That so far, we've been able to do that.

Facilitator 41:16
So, two comments. One, we're at 12:50. And if people do need to go to get to a class, please feel free to go. If you have 10 more minutes, the next question is, **what about the Uptown Loop could be better in terms of meeting your needs or your perceptions of what other people on campus need. So this is, you know, this is your chance to talk about maybe things that you'd criticize about the way the Uptown Loop operates.**

P1---------- 41:52
Not so much a harsh criticism, but what I've seen are needs of the students, especially undergrads who don't have cars or transportation, So a lot of them work a giant as well. And weekends then… if there could be an accommodation for weekends, whether that be longer periods of time that the shuttle comes out. So whether it's every 30 minutes, or well no, I guess it is already doing this. But if it's longer wait time, but if it were still an option to have. Because otherwise, a

lot of the students take Lyfts or Ubers, to work. And so they do that regularly. So that's really the only thing I've seen a need because I've let everyone that I work with know about ULtown loop so that they know they can come from class as well. And rely on it to get back. But for weekends then it's mostly what I've seen the need for.

P6----- 42:53
I've heard some people, some students, other fellow riders talk about or talk out loud, think about the possibility of adding stop at the Wawa / TD Bank area.

P7--------- 43:05

There's been a lot of talk of that. I've heard that on multiple occasions. A lot of people have have expressed interest in that and thought that that would be a good addition, I would say I think that's the only change that I've heard people suggest in terms of changing the route at all. But yeah, just wanted to second that. I also wanted to mention something about the app. So in my experience, I find it a little unreliable in terms of like where the vehicle is. And I have multiple apps where I kind of, you know, track where my family and friends are. And it seems like it's more accurate in real time versus the Uptown Loop where the bus is over here and then all of a sudden, it jumps all the way down here. And I'm not quite sure exactly where it is at a given time. So I'm not sure if there could be improvements made to that. I think also, and this is something that we've talked about before, but I think not enough folks know about it, I think we need to work on finding better ways to connect with the greater West Chester University community to make sure that people know that that is a resource available to them. Even this semester, within the last few weeks, I've heard someone saying that they normally take Uber to their job at Giant and just didn't know about the Uptown loop. And that's why they weren't doing it. So I think that would be an improvement that could be made. And then finally, I also wanted to mention, there was one day where it was raining very hard. And I was taking the shuttle home for that reason. And I don't know if there was flooding or, or what but I waited for like 45 minutes, and it never came and I never got any updates. And I had to walk home in the rain after waiting for 45 minutes. So, I, the reason I waited is I thought, well, there could be flooding, and maybe they're taking a different route. I never found out what happened to it. But that's, that's like the main negative experience I've had. I've noticed since then, because that was last semester. I've noticed since then that there do seem to be more updates about the route and when things change. So maybe it's already been corrected. But I did want to mention it.

P6----- 45:35

There are those occasional weird glitches on the route. You know, I just had one, when was it, not this morning, but yesterday morning, where a road was blocked off unloading some, something like construction equipment or construction things into someone's home. The whole street was blocked off. So we had to zigzag around and with all our one way streets here in our little community, so we ended up back on market, and came down to loop around again to

Church. It was really kind of crazy.

Facilitator: 46:07
Just a quick comment. Sandy Jones has joined us as another observer. Sandy is the Director of the Office of Off Campus and Commuter Services. So she also knows about the Uptown loop and is here to listen to those of you who use it. **Any other comments about what would make the Uptown loop more useful?**

P5---- 46:35

I like what ------- said about um, I don't know like where the stops are sometimes, like the Giant stop. I'm always like walking around trying to remember where it is. And when I go to Minor and I want to try to come back and was like, what's minor? So maybe like some signage.

P2-----46:49
Yes, signage should be… And I think that that would be really important for also educating the community about the availability of the shuttle, because if they're like walking or driving or biking and they see, Oh, here's the stop. And then they're like, Oh, and there's a bus I could just take, like, there's a shuttle bus. I think that kind of visibility is really good for like advertisement. And also just for a sense of security, because, like, I'll look at the app and be like, I think, you know, I think I'm in the right spot. But what if I'm like just a few feet away, and then the driver doesn't realize that I'm trying to get on the shuttle bus, and then she's gone. And then I've got a 30 minute wait, you know, and I don't have 30 minutes. And you know, so other than that my only like constructive criticism would be, I think it would be great if there was, I know, like, I know, with like funding and everything, I think it'd be great if there was a second bus. So then the wait times in between would be limited to 15 minutes or so I think that that would really do wonders too to have like that sense of security of maybe I don't even have to like check an app and see when it's coming. Because I just know, in 15 minutes or less, a bus will be coming and I just go to the stop. And I just wait. And you know, if I want to check, that's fine. But that's like the main thing that kind of deters me from using it more is just that fear of then getting stuck and like standing there, you know, waiting, looking like a weirdo for like a half hour. Definitely. So yeah.

P7---------- 48:14
I also don't know if there's a sign even on campus on Church Street for the Uptown Loop. And I mean, even again, just having that sign that says Uptown Loop, someone might pass it and say, what's the Uptown Loop and then do some research on it. So I think that that would be helpful. I, I have a sister in law, who is in the first year who I have recommended on multiple occasions taking it. And I think part of her hesitation is I need to go and physically show her, you know, where she's supposed to get on because I've explained it, but it's not obvious. So I've tried to say like, well, it's where all the buses are. And like, you know, Center for Contemplative Studies. And she's a first year so she's not quite sure where that is yet either. So a sign would be helpful.

P6--------- 48:58

Yeah. When I first started riding, first time, first day before, to kind of you know, make sure I wasn't making any mistakes. I went to the Giant to ask "where is the stop?" And they said, "What is the stop?" You know, what are you talking about? We don't know anything. We don't know where. And so you know, I showed up on that morning, the next morning, you know, just kind of pacing up and down looking like a weirdo. Not even knowing if it would stop.

Facilitator: 49:24

P4------------, any thoughts about the Exton Shuttle?

P4---------49:28

if I could suggest ways to improve the Exton Shuttle, it would more closely resemble what what's good about the Uptown Loop Shuttle. The Uptown Loop is a regular shuttle that looks like it's paced every 30, 35 minutes throughout the day. And the Exton Shuttle is not. The last shuttle of the morning leaves the train station at 9:50. And the first goes back at 2:45. The last one leaves campus at five o'clock. So if you work a minute past five, you need an alternate mode of transportation. Nevertheless, ridership is good in the morning, because the shuttle is designed to meet the trains in the morning, actually really well designed. In the afternoon, it meets nothing. And so the closest connection with a train is 30 to 35 minutes. In other words, the shuttle drops you off. And you wait there on the platforms with 30 to 35 minutes in the cold in the heat, whatever it is, you're waiting there. And sometimes it's a little bit more. And that's, that's not ideal. And so if I could improve the Exton Shuttle it would be to increase the frequency. increase the frequency might make it less important to meet the train. If it was the same way, if it was every 15 minutes for the shuttle. If the shuttle was every 30 minutes, and I was going to sit there for 30 minutes, I would just take the next one and not sit there for 30 minutes. That might be me rolling the dice, I would do that. I'd also make it last a little later than five. Classes… four to seven [pm] is a great class. It's hard to find a good room to teach in, four to seven is so popular with students and faculty. But I know I can't get home if I teach the four to seven o'clock schedule. We could run another train station loop at seven o'clock and meet a wonderful 7:45 train it would be easy to do. I think a lot of people would take it.

Facilitator: 51:27

It is one o'clock. But the last question is just **Is there anything we didn't ask that you would like to talk about? About the Uptown Loop that we may not have proposed?**

P1---- 51:46

Just because it is part of the sustainability effort, the bags I know are really helpful. So the organization that does that, that gives the reusable bags, especially because it goes to Giant. I know more people have requested that. So it's really cool to see the added green benefit of reusable bags they put on the Uptown loop.

P7---- 52:11

[Explaining to others] They're reusable bags for students or whoever to be able to take and have as their own.

P4-------- 52:15
That's a wonderful idea. Holy cow.

P1---------52:18
So I think that was, that's a benefit as well. So planning it… and I don't know who came up with that, I think it's a good idea. So I think that should be a regular thing.

P6-------- 52:28
If there would be a way to make it greener, you know, electric or natural gas, you know, something like that would be great. But

P5------------ 52:39
Are there ridership data, figures available?

Facilitator: 52:46
Ed, you can talk now! [Laughter]

Observer: 52:54
I don't have them for the Exton Shuttle, but let me tell you something I have had occasion to meet with with P4--------, he's a very persuasive fellow.

P4------------- 53:04
I'm sorry for leaving some of those messages on your voicemail. I'm embarrassed to say sometimes I leave a hasty voicemail.

Observer: 53:17
P4--------- and I understand that we're both up against some constraints. And if I had more money to spend on things, I would certainly jump on everything. Anyway, daily average passengers. This isn't for publication [a printout document], but kind of let you pass that around. It's for the Uptown Loop, I don't have, I didn't bring anything for the Exton Shuttle because I didn't… Okay. And this is the total passengers by trip and time of day. And, and this is the average passengers.

Facilitator: 54:01
So the answer is yes, there is good data on ridership on the Uptown Loop.

Observer: 54:07

And this is not for publication yet. This will all be turned into John Villella [Vice President for University Affairs]. And then John owns the data if he wants to turn it out. In fact, it's incomplete at this point because we still have data that needs to be entered. And I don't want to put anything out there until we're complete.

P4-------- 54:30

This is spectacular. Usually you build an infrastructure and it's unused for the first year until people find out about it. It looks like people are using it the first year.

Observer: 54:38
Yes, with no ad campaign. The Uptown Loop has really been a success story.

P6 ---------54:49
That's great. That's awesome. That sounds like it will be sticking around for a while longer.

Facilitator: 56:02
Well, thank you very much all of you for for coming and sharing your experiences. This is very helpful. This conversation was one of four were having about commuter choice programs that the university has adopted over the past year. And Zagster that dates back three years at this point. But we're trying to collect information that will help us improve these services in the future and your comments have been very helpful. So if you would like to take more food before you go, please do. And if you have any follow up questions, you have Lola's email address and hours in the Office of Sustainability.

… [snipped endinig comments made while participants departed]

Uptown Loop Comment received via Email.

I am a faculty member from ------------------ and use the uptown loop bus every MWF (Marshall/Walnut stop).

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend your upcoming meeting because I teach during that hour. Hence, I decided to write to share my thoughts.

The bus has made a great difference in my life. I used to come before 7:15 in the morning to be able to park (anywhere on campus). Otherwise, I had to follow students to their cars and hope to get a spot. It was incredibly stressful every MWF.
Walking is not an option because of the weight of my bag. And I am uncomfortable in parking garages.

Along with the practicality of the loop system, I would like to mention the efficiency. Not only Lynn is always on time but also extremely nice with everyone. I have witnessed over the school year a good increase of students using the bus. Lynn knows them all and always finds a nice thing to say to them. I can see how much they enjoy this level of attention and care. As importantly, they tell me how it makes their life easier in regard to work (so many of our students work in town). In addition, many of my students who live off campus also go to Giant to buy food.

As far as improvement is concerned, you could consider using a better bus. Once Lynn drove a smoother one that did not smell as bad. It is difficult some mornings to breathe the gaz smell. Also, many of my students don't know anything about that bus. You might want to advertise more...Just an idea.

Good luck and many thanks for a great initiative

I'm unable to attend the focus group meeting on May 3, but I'd like to share my experiences and comments.

- I began using UTL from the start of the service the second week of classes of the fall semester. I learned about the service from the initial email announcement.
- In my experience the bus runs pretty much on time--which for me means "about two minutes late." Since I have to walk about a quarter mile to get to the stop nearest where I live, it's good to have a little bit of extra time in case I'm running late. The roughly half-hour route seems right to me. So I'm entirely satisfied with the schedule the bus has been running.
- The main advantage I've enjoyed from UTL is avoiding having to plan my arrival on campus around parking. When I drive to campus I have to arrive early in order to find a parking spot, whether I need to be on campus early or not. If I have an 11:00am class I have to arrive on campus around 8:00am to ensure I find parking. That means my car might be taking up a parking spot at times when it doesn't need to be there. UTL has enabled me to come to campus just at the times I need to be there. I've even used it to leave campus and then come back if there is a large gap of time in my day's schedule. So it has been exceptionally convenient for me to use.
- Using UTL has spared me driving costs in fuel and wear and tear on my car. During the fall semester I drove to campus perhaps three times after the UTL service started; this spring I've used UTL to get to and from main campus, though I have had to drive to teach a course at the Graduate Center.
- I've noticed a lot of students use UTL to shop at Giant. There are some who work at Giant and use UTL to commute to work.
- The two buses running the UTL route are both fairly old. One of the drivers has complained of diesel fumes coming back into the bus at times. The morning/early afternoon bus has had mechanical problems several times over the course of this year, and the substitute bus that was used was newer and much more pleasant to ride.
- The closest stop to downtown is at the corner of Walnut and Miner, and to get downtown from there requires going up a bit of a hill. I've not seen anyone with limited mobility use

UTL, but without a stop closer to downtown it might be an access issue for some wheelchair users, for example.
- My anecdotal perception of the ridership is that it is pretty good compared with the size of the bus. At some early times of day, I might be the only one on the route, but when I've been on the bus in the late afternoon and evening there are usually several other riders. On a few occasions I was on the bus when there was at least one person in each seat. It doesn't seem reasonable to expect that the bus should have lots of riders at all times of day. If it is mostly full at sometimes of day then the route seems justified.

In short, I'm very grateful for this new route--it has been a big help to me!