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Working Paper Series

***Los Angeles County CalWORKs
Transportation Needs Assessment***

By: Paul M. Ong, Douglas Houston, John Horton and Linda L. Shaw

Working Paper #36 in the series

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY CALWORKS TRANSPORTATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Forward

The analysis contained in this report is the product of a number of on going research projects at the Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies that help assess and evaluate the impact of welfare reform on the ability of recipients to transition from welfare towards self-sufficiency. In particular, this report presents the results of our collaborative research on the role that transportation resources play on the ability of recipients to leave welfare and find employment. This report, though, does not translate findings into planning and policy recommendations.

Much of the analysis in this report was conducted in conjunction with the CalWORKs Transportation Needs Assessment (CTNA) project coordinated by the Urban Research Division of the County of Los Angeles for the Los Angeles County Department of Social Services (LADPSS). In this capacity, the results contained in this analysis comprised a critical component of the report by LADPSS to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on the nature and depth of the transportation needs of the welfare-to-work population in Los Angeles County (LADPSS, 2000).

This analysis was also supported by the University of California Transportation Center (UCTC). This support allowed the Lewis Center to collect and analyze baseline information on the welfare caseload and to assemble and process information on the transit system and other transportation resources in Los Angeles County. Additional support was provided by the US Department of Labor, California Program on Access to Care (CPAC), the Urban Research Division of Los Angeles County and the UCLA Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies.

Research partners, policy-makers and planners across Los Angeles County helped structure the research design and priorities of this project. In particular, we wish to acknowledge the contributions of the research team that participated with us through the process of assembling this needs assessment: Manuel Moreno of the Urban Research Division, Nicole Eisenberg formerly of the Urban Research Division, Dr. John Horton of UCLA, Dr. Linda Shaw of the California State University, San Marcos, and Terry Bills of GISTrans. We particularly wish to acknowledge the research staff of the Lewis Center who contributed their expertise and analytical abilities to compiling this body of research: Evelyn Blumenberg, Michela Zonta, Shannon McConville, Douglas Miller, Hiro Iseki, Todd Snyder, Donny Ha, Julia Heintz-Mackoff and Katsumi Nonaka.

We hope that the findings contained in this report contribute to our ability as planners and policy-makers to make informed decisions and policies that ensure recipient access to the transportation resources necessary to make a lasting transition from welfare towards self-sufficiency.

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Summary of Findings

This needs assessment describes a number of common transportation experiences and difficulties faced by recipients as they transition to work. In brief, this collaborative research project uncovered the following findings, which are described in more detail in the main sections of the report:

Travel Patterns and Needs:

- Job search and work activities require recipients to travel more; for instance, recipients searching for a job make twice as many trips a day as those not working and not actively searching for work. (Section 2)
- The job-search stage, in particular, is characterized by a high degree of complexity and uncertainty in transportation as participants make an increased number of daily trips and travel to unknown neighborhoods. (Section 3)
- Work trips account for only about 11 percent of recipient trips; other trip purposes include shopping, childcare, and other activities. (Section 2)
- Recipients balance work-related travel with family obligations. For instance, 42 percent of those searching for work and 84 percent of those working use childcare compared to only 34 percent of those not working and not actively searching for work. (Section 4)
- Nearly three-quarters of welfare-to-work participants made a health-related trip in the past six months; one-half perceive transportation as a problem to receiving health care and nearly one-third report that a lack of transportation has prevented them from accessing health care. (Section 4)

Travel Modes:

- Most recipients travel by car whenever possible, perhaps because GAIN offices, job clubs, potential employers, and childcare are located some distance from home. (Section 3)
- On a typical day, almost two-thirds (63 percent) of all recipient trips were by car, either as a passenger or a driver, 18 percent were on public transit, and 16 percent were walking. (Section 5)
- Many recipients without access to a car ride with friends or relatives rather than rely on public transit. For every ten trips on a bus or train, there are nine trips as a passenger in a private vehicle. (Section 5)
- Approximately half of the welfare-to-work population live in households with cars, and approximately two-thirds of this group have unlimited access to these cars. Also, the rate of car ownership and usage increases as recipients transition to work. (Section 3)
- Welfare recipients are more likely to use public transit more than the general population. (Section 2)

Public Transit Difficulty, Preferences and Existing Services:

- About two-fifths of recipients who used transit found public transit a viable mode of transportation. (Section 3)
- The higher the level of public transit service near a recipient's home, the more likely a recipient is to use public transportation; however, public transit is often not the preferred

choice of travel since it does not enable recipients to cope with the complexity and uncertainty of work and household-related trips. (Section 3)

- Travel by public transit can be difficult for participants because of the difficulty identifying appropriate routes, the lack of direct lines (requiring transfers), crowding (with some being passed by), limited off-hour runs, and the inconvenience of making multiple work and family-related trips. (Section 5)
- Most recipients prefer more frequent and reliable transit service regardless of whether they live in areas with high or low levels of transit service. (Section 5)
- The availability and reliability of public transit varies greatly from one neighborhood to another; roughly one-third of recipients live in areas with low levels of transit service. (Section 5)
- Recipients who use public transit live in areas with congested bus stops; transit congestion, though, does not appear disproportionately concentrated in congested areas. (Section 6)
- Recipients need backup transportation services for emergencies regardless of whether they have access to reliable transit or a private vehicle. (Section 5)

Auto Difficulty and Preferences:

- Recipients who travel by car are significantly less likely to report trip difficulty compared to those using other modes of travel; this finding holds for job-search, work commute, childcare and health care trips. (Section 3)
- Unrestricted access to a household car is the most effective transportation resource in promoting the transition from welfare to work. (Section 3)
- Despite the usefulness of an automobile in meeting welfare-to-work and family obligations, recipients with a household car report problems related to reliability and cost. (Section 5)
- Recipients have a strong preference for programs that facilitate ownership of a reliable vehicle, such as auto loans and help with insurance costs. (Section 5)
- Given their limited income and the asset limits imposed by public assistance programs, recipients are likely to purchase older cars that often have higher maintenance and operating costs. (Section 6)
- Financing and credit for auto loans can often be problematic for recipients due to low wages, a lack of stable employment, and problematic credit histories. (Section 6)
- Auto insurance can also present a substantial barrier to owning and operating a car and often constitutes the highest annual vehicle-related cost for low-income drivers. (Section 6)

Section 1. Introduction

Overview: Transportation and Welfare-to-Work Requirements

On August 11, 1997, the State of California established the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, which represents California's implementation of the welfare reforms prescribed by Congress in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWOA) of 1996. The CalWORKs program is designed to transition public assistance families from welfare into employment, with a final goal of self-sufficiency. Therefore, CalWORKs focuses primarily on finding and retaining employment and providing assistance to mitigate potential barriers to employment for CalWORKs participants.

With increased pressure to transition from welfare to work, many CalWORKs participants in Los Angeles County are required to participate in the GAIN (Greater Avenues for Independence) program. GAIN is the employment training component of welfare in California that was implemented prior to the initiation of welfare reform. Once a relatively small, optional program, GAIN is now the primary programmatic vehicle for employment training and placement and is a requirement for nearly all non-exempt CalWORKs participants. The program requires recipients to participate in various welfare-to-work activities aimed at helping them secure employment. The job-search component of GAIN, in particular, presents transportation challenges because participants undertake many trips to job sites in often unfamiliar neighborhoods. In addition, the transition to work for families requires reliable, efficient and safe transportation to access child care, schools, health care, and other services. Unfortunately, many recipients do not have the resources to meet these needs. Consequently, transportation can present a substantial barrier for those on the path to economic self-sufficiency.

This report provides analysis of the transportation barriers facing welfare-to-work participants in Los Angeles County compiled by the UCLA Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies for the CalWORKs Transportation Needs Assessment (CTNA). The results of this analysis comprise a critical component of the report by the Los Angeles County Department of Social Services to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on the nature and depth of the transportation needs of the welfare-to-work population in Los Angeles County (LADPSS, 2000). These results provide the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and county transportation planners with:

- Baseline information on the transportation behavior and needs of welfare-to-work participants in Los Angeles County.
- Description of the transportation barriers to the transition from welfare to work.
- A foundation upon which a framework of effective transportation policies for welfare recipients can be developed.

Methodology

Although the UCLA Lewis Center compiled the results presented into this report, the CTNA analysis in this report is the result of a collaborative project that has benefited from the input, suggestions, and contribution of a number of agencies and research partners. Technical and analytical support was provided by Urban Research Division of Los Angeles County, the Social

Science Research Center at California State University, Fullerton, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Dr. John Horton of UCLA and Dr. Linda Shaw of the California State University, San Marcos.

The data for this needs assessment comes from numerous sources. Information on the travel behavior and needs of welfare-to-work participants is drawn from a survey of 1,645 GAIN participants and eight focus group sessions conducted in GAIN offices between November 1999 and February 2000. Survey analysis provides a quantitative and representative portrait of transportation needs. Focus groups provide an in-depth understanding of people's lived experiences. Qualitative data collected from the focus groups provide insight into the processes and patterns that may not be apparent in survey results. This report also makes use of findings and tabulations from other surveys covering the non-welfare population. County and State administrative data are also used to supplement findings.

The CTNA also relies on numerous sources of information on public transportation in Los Angeles County provided by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). These data contain detailed information on transit usage levels. Much of the data are mapped to identify geographic patterns. The analysis also relies on state of the art transportation research tools including transportation modeling, geographic information systems (GIS), and multivariate methods of analysis. Detailed descriptions of the data and methods are provided in the appendices.

Central Questions

This needs assessment centers on the following four questions:

- How do welfare recipients travel around Los Angeles County?
- What are the transportation needs of welfare recipients?
- To what extent can existing transportation programs and services meet the transportation needs of welfare recipients?
- What is the policy framework around which specific transportation programs and service can be developed?

The report is organized into six sections. Section 2 reviews existing research on the travel behavior of welfare recipients and the role of transportation in moving them to employment. Section 3 describes the transportation needs of welfare recipients in Los Angeles County as they search for work, secure employment and commute regularly to jobs. Section 4 describes transportation challenges participants face in balancing work and family obligations and focuses on needs related to child-serving and health-related trips. Section 5 describes the transportation problems reported by participants and participants' policy preferences for transportation programs. Section 6 discusses the limitations and costs associated with automobiles and public transit.¹

¹ Due to length, the technical appendices associated with this report are not included in this working paper. They can be found in the report titled "Assessing the Transportation Needs of Welfare-to-Work Participants in Los Angeles County" released by the County of Los Angeles (LADPSS, 2000).

Section 2. Travel by Welfare-to-Work Participants

Section Highlights

This section reviews existing research on the travel behavior of welfare recipients and the role of transportation in moving recipients to work. In addition, it describes the travel patterns of recipients in Los Angeles County and compares these patterns with those of two national reference groups. In this way, this section identifies the key issues addressed in this needs assessment and places the results of this report in a broader context.

The key issues identified in this section are:

- The travel patterns of the CTNA population differ markedly from the travel patterns of working-age adults in general, but are similar to those of low-income single parents nationwide.
- Like the two comparison groups, the majority of trips made by welfare recipients are not work-related. Work trips account for only about 11 percent of all recipient trips; a typical recipient makes multiple daily trips to fulfill family and household obligations.
- Job search and work activities require recipients to travel more; for instance, recipients searching for a job make twice as many trips a day as those not working and not actively searching for work.
- Welfare recipients are more likely to use public transit than the general population.
- Among the CTNA population who own a car, the majority of trips (83 percent) were in a car. Among respondents who do not own a car, only about a third (35 percent) of trips were in private vehicles.

Current Research on Transportation and Welfare

Current research identifies the lack of adequate transportation as a major barrier in making the transition from welfare to work. It is one of many new challenges imposed by the “job first” strategy of welfare-to-work policies. Many recipients with little or no work experience must search for and secure employment. Even those who have worked occasionally must dramatically increase their level of employment. These new demands mean recipients must address the travel difficulties that emerge with these new work requirements. The precise nature and magnitude of these requirements on the travel behavior and needs of recipients is hard to determine since the welfare-to-work transformation is relatively recent and is still underway. Nonetheless, recent research begins to address the dimensions of the welfare-to-work transition and the role of transportation in this process:

Transportation and welfare studies show that without adequate transportation, welfare recipients face significant barriers in trying to move from welfare to work. These challenges are particularly acute for urban mothers receiving welfare who do not own cars and must make multiple trips each day to accommodate child care and other domestic responsibilities and for the rural poor who generally drive long distances in poorly maintained cars. Existing public transportation systems cannot always bridge

the gap between where the poor live and where the jobs are located (United States General Accounting Office, 1998).

Current research on transportation and welfare provides insight into several key issues that impact recipients' ability to travel (summarized in Table 2.1):

- *Spatial Mismatch and Job Accessibility* – recipients often live far from potential job sites.
- *The Role of Car and Public Transit* – the availability of both private vehicles and public transit affect recipient work opportunities.
- *The Characteristics of Recipient Jobs* – recipients often work in jobs that require them to work off hours, to travel great distances and to have great commute burdens; this creates substantial travel difficulties and challenges.

Table 2.1, Major Research on Transportation and Welfare

	Study	Population	Results
Spatial Mismatch	Blumenberg et al. (1999) Bania et al. (1999) Rich (1999) Pugh (1998)	LA TANF Cleveland TANF Atlanta TANF multi sites AFDC/TANF - multi sites	Spatial Mismatch present for many Spatial Mismatch present for most Spatial Mismatch present for most LA has more dispersed poor and welfare populations, lower level of spatial mismatch
Job Accessibility	Blumenberg and Ong (1999) Hoynes (1996)	LA AFDC CA AFDC	Welfare usage is lower in job rich areas Welfare usage is lower in tight labor markets
Role of Car	Ong (1996) Cervero et al. (1999) Raphael and Rice (1999) Danziger and Corcoran (1998)	CA AFDC CA AFDC US AFDC/TANF Michigan TANF	Car ownership greatly increases employment and earnings Car ownership greatly increases employment and exit from welfare Car ownership greatly decreases welfare use Cars enable recipients to search more widely
Role of Transit	Cervero et al. (1999) O'Regan and Quigley (2000) Leete and Bania (1999)	CA AFDC US AFDC Cleveland TANF	Access to public transit has no measurable input on employment or exit from welfare Recipients are more reliant on public transportation even after controlling for a car Only 20 percent of entry-level positions are accessible to recipients using transit
Work Schedule	Presser and Cox (1997) O'Regan and Quigley (2000)	US Low-Educated Women US AFDC	Welfare recipients are most likely to work non-standard hours and days Recipients are 1.5x as likely to commute at off peak hours as the poor
Burden of Travel	Ong and Blumenberg (1999) Passero (1996)	LA AFDC US AFDC	Longer commutes decrease earnings and job stability Working recipients spend four times as much on transportation than non-working recipients

Spatial Mismatch and Job Accessibility

Transportation difficulties arise for welfare-to-work participants since job opportunities are often located far from their homes. This geographic separation is referred to as “spatial mismatch” by existing research and is a major barrier for many low-income workers, especially for those without access to an automobile (Kasarda, 1980; Kain, 1992; Wilson, 1987). This group often cannot move closer to jobs and, for this reason, remains isolated from expanding suburban employment opportunities.

Even when low-income households live near jobs, they often experience a “skills mismatch.” That is, some low-income workers in the inner-city live near jobs that are higher-skill, higher-paying jobs for which they are unqualified. Even when they are qualified for nearby jobs, their search for employment in the inner-city can be further aggravated by a reluctance on the part of many firms to recruit and hire workers from low-income, minority neighborhoods (Kirschenman and Neckerman, 1991).

As one might expect, welfare recipients can be particularly affected by the spatial and skills mismatches. A growing body of research shows that the degree of isolation experienced by recipients varies from metropolitan area to metropolitan area. Cleveland and Atlanta, for example, are typical of eastern cities with extreme racial segregation between African-Americans and Anglos. In such cities, the spatial mismatch between economically depressed, largely black neighborhoods and economically vibrant white suburbs is often clear and dramatic (Bania et al., 1999; Rich, 1999).

Metropolitan Los Angeles, in contrast, is both more ethnically diverse and spatially diffuse than either Cleveland or Atlanta. While some recipient households clearly face a spatial mismatch in finding and keeping employment (Blumenberg et al., 1999), both the causes and consequences of mismatches are more subtle and complex than in many other cities (Blumenberg and Ong, 1998). For example, the levels of employment access vary considerably between low-income neighborhoods in Los Angeles. However, recent studies have shown that greater neighborhood accessibility to jobs is correlated with rates of lower welfare usage (Hoynes, 1996; Blumenberg and Ong, 1999).

Existing research suggests that the problems presented by spatial and skills mismatches can be addressed in three ways: workers can relocate to live nearer to jobs, jobs can be relocated closer to workers, or the transportation system connecting workers with jobs can be improved to reduce the “friction of distance” between poor households and job opportunities. The literature indicates that moving poor households into suburbs has a positive effect, but this approach has not been widely used, due in part to resistance by suburban communities. Creating jobs near workers through economic development of the inner-city has had mixed results, with a very high cost for creating new jobs and few of those jobs going to local residents. A disproportionate number of disadvantaged people rely on the existing public transit system to get them to distant jobs. Research suggests that the public transit system often imposes a heavy burden in terms of slower commutes. In this way, spatial mismatch can be considered a transportation mismatch for disadvantaged groups given their lower access to private vehicles (Taylor and Ong, 1995).

Role of Transportation Resources

Improved transportation can increase a recipient’s ability to reach distant jobs, especially given the difficulties in relocating jobs or residents to reduce spatial and skills mismatches. The availability and reliability of both private vehicles and public transit often determines the quality and quantity of jobs that are accessible by welfare recipients and the working poor.

A number of recent studies has clearly shown that regular access to a reliable vehicle is one of the most effective means of increasing steady employment among recipients. In Michigan, research shows that car access substantially increases the area that the recipient can search for a job (Danziger and Corcoran, 1998). A study of California AFDC data finds that car ownership greatly increases both the likelihood of employment and earnings (Ong, 1996). A second study using similar data shows that automobile ownership increases the likelihood of employment and exiting welfare (Cervero et al., 1999). When a recipient can increase the job search area, they can overcome spatial mismatch by going to the other neighborhoods where the majority of the new jobs are. Overall, the research shows that car ownership decreases welfare use (Raphael and Rice, 1999).

The role of public transportation in increasing employment outcomes for low-income households is more complex. The availability and, especially, use of public transportation vary widely and is usually greatest in the centers of the largest metropolitan areas. Nearly a third of all transit riders nationwide reside in the New York metropolitan area, and the 10 largest U.S. transit systems (including the Los Angeles County MTA) carry about 60 percent of all transit patrons – the other 5,000+ systems carry the remaining 40 percent (Taylor and McCullough, 1998). Simply put, frequent bus and rail service in densely developed urban areas can be a convenient and affordable way to get around.

Transit availability and use drop off dramatically in suburban areas. Furthermore, they are frequently absent in small towns and rural areas. Even in older, less sprawling Cleveland, only 20 percent of all entry-level positions are accessible via public transit (Bania et al., 1999). Thus, while many recipients have access to nearby public transportation stops, the available service offers only limited access to job opportunities. A recent study using data on AFDC in California found that access to public transit had no measurable impact on employment outcomes or leaving welfare (Cervero et al., 1999).

Even though public transit is not as effective as automobiles in improving employment outcomes, recipient households are nevertheless far more likely to use public transit than the general population (O'Regan and Quigley, 2000). Public transit, therefore, plays an important, though spatially varied, role in the life and employment of welfare recipients.

Job Characteristics

Recipients who do find employment often work off hours, travel great distances and experience substantial commute burdens. These job characteristics often create substantial travel difficulties and challenges as recipients face not only the demands of work-related travel, but also the travel demands related to family obligations such as childcare outside of the home.

Research on the employment of welfare recipients indicates such workers are more likely than workers in general to be employed non-standard hours and days (Presser and Cox, 1997). For those dependent on public transportation, this represents a problem if transit schedules do not conform to work schedules. Such scheduling constraints appear to be especially problematic for welfare recipients, who are 50 percent more likely than low-income workers in general to commute outside of the peak hours (O'Regan and Quigley, 2000).

Work commutes are time-consuming and expensive for welfare recipients relative to their limited earnings. On the average working welfare recipients have shorter commutes than higher-paid workers, however, the time and money costs of commuting to low-wage jobs can constitute a significant burden. Among welfare recipients, longer commutes decrease earnings and job stability (Blumenberg and Ong, 1998). In particular, reliance on public transportation increases the probability of tardiness, which can affect job security and promotion. Commuting implies higher out-of-pocket costs for travel. Working recipients, for example, spend four times as much on transportation than non-working recipients (Passero, 1996). Such costs may act to discourage recipients from searching for and securing employment.

Comparison of Travel Behavior

A comparison of recipients in Los Angeles County with two national reference groups helps frame the results of this report in a broader context. Table 2.2 compares the demographic characteristics of the GAIN welfare-to-work population in Los Angeles County based on the results of the CTNA survey (described in Appendix 2) to two comparison groups from the 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS) (described in Appendix 1). The first comparison group is a nationwide sample of working-age adults from the NPTS survey; the second is comprised of NPTS survey respondents who were low-income single parents.

Demographic Comparisons

The demographic characteristics of the CTNA population differ markedly from nationwide working-age adults (Table 2.2). As expected, the low-income single parents have a much lower income than the working-age population at large. The median household income for the whole NPTS group is between \$45,000 and \$50,000, and the median income the NPTS low-income single parents was between \$5,000 and \$10,000. There are no income data available for the CTNA group.

Of those interviewed for the CTNA, 81 percent lived in a single-parent household compared to only 7 percent of working-age adults. There is also a striking difference with respect to sexes. For the CTNA, 93 percent were female compared with 50 percent of working-age adults in general. Ninety-one percent of low-income single parents were women. With respect to education level, 42 percent of CTNA respondents had less than a high school degree, compared with 13 percent of the working-age population in general. Not too surprisingly, the employment rate among the working-age population (82 percent) was much higher than the CTNA respondents (51 percent), or the NPTS low-income single parents (50 percent). It should be noted that about half of the CTNA respondents without a job were actively engaged in job-search at the time of the survey.

Table 2.2, Comparison of Demographic Characteristics, CTNA Survey and 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS)

Demographic Characteristics	NPTS – All working- age adults	NPTS – low-income single parents	CTNA
<i>Type of Household</i>			
Single parent family	7 %	100 %	81 %
Two parent family	45 %	0 %	19 %
Other	48 %	0 %	0 %
<i>Education Level</i>			
Less than High School Degree	13 %	33 %	42 %
High School Degree or GED	27 %	48 %	26 %
More than High School Degree	42 %	19 %	33 %
Unknown	18 %	0 %	0 %
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	50 %	9 %	7 %
Female	50 %	91 %	93 %
<i>Employment Status</i>			
Employed	82 %	50 %	51 %
Unemployed/Not Working	18 %	59 %	49 %
<i>Age</i>			
18-30	31 %	46 %	37 %
31-44	41 %	44 %	44 %
45+	28 %	10 %	11 %
Not Reported	0 %	0 %	8 %
<i>Car Ownership</i>			
Own a Car	92 %	53 %	55 %
Do Not Own a Car	8 %	47 %	45 %

Travel Pattern Comparisons

The travel patterns of the CTNA population differ markedly from the travel patterns of working-age adults in general, but are similar to those of low-income single parents nationwide (Table 2.3). Here, travel patterns are compared in terms of mobility, trip purpose and mode.

Mobility. On average, most people make several trips in a given day. Because the CTNA survey only includes a partial travel diary, it does not directly measure the total number of trips taken by respondents. It is possible, however, to estimate the number of trips per day through extrapolation. Using some reasonable and conservative assumptions, it appears that welfare recipients in Los Angeles average slightly more than 3 trips per day. Existing studies (e.g. Pucher et al. 1998; Murakami and Young, 1997; Rosenbloom, 1992) using nationwide data have found average daily trips ranging between 3.4 and 4.5. The lower number of trips for recipients

is not surprising since higher levels of mobility are associated with a higher quality of life, and people with more resources make more trips and, hence, travel more (Pucher et al., 1998).

Travel distance is also important. The estimated average distance between places of residence and places of employment for CTNA respondent actively working is about seven miles. This compares to about twelve miles for the general NPTS working-age population in general and about nine miles for NPTS low-income single parents. These results are consistent with the existing research described above. It is likely that welfare recipients have shorter commutes because the geographic extent of their initial job search is relatively confined and because they do not have the reliable transportation necessary to hold jobs located farther away.

Finally, the time of travel is important. There does not seem to be a great difference in the time of travel between the respondents to the CTNA survey and working-age adults in general. CTNA results, though, do show a clear difference between the time that working recipients left home for their first trip of the day and the time that non-working recipients left home for their first trip.

Purpose and Mode. The travel patterns of CTNA respondents are complex. In addition to work trips, a typical recipient makes multiple daily trips to fulfill family and household obligations. Among CTNA respondents, work trips account for only about 11 percent of all trips (Table 2.3). This is generally consistent with the NPTS working-age adult population in which the categories “other” and “home” account for the majority of trips. Not surprisingly, the general population makes more work trips than CTNA survey respondents. NPTS low-income single parents, though, have trip purposes very similar to the trip purposes of CTNA respondents.

Welfare recipients are one of the most transit-dependent populations; nevertheless, over half of the CTNA respondents reside in a household with cars. This may seem surprisingly high, but this rate is consistent with other studies. Before welfare reform, 65 percent of families receiving welfare owned a car or truck (Federman et al., 1996). More recent estimates are also high: 58 percent of recipients in Santa Cruz County, California own a car (Coalition for Workforce Preparation, 1999), 50 percent recipients in Alameda County, California have an “available car,” (Green et al., 2000), and half of recipients in Michigan had access to a car (Danziger et al., 1999). Moreover, Murakami and Young (1997) estimate that only 36 percent of single parent, low-income households do not own a car.

While the rate of access to a household car for welfare recipients may seem unexpectedly high, it is still lower than car access rate of the general population. Compared with the national car ownership rate of 92 percent, the rate of car ownership and access for recipients clearly lags far behind the national rate.

Table 2.3, Comparison of Trip Purpose and Mode, CTNA Survey and 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS)

	NPTS – All working- age adults	NPTS – Low-income single parents	CTNA
Purpose			
Work	18 %	9 %	11 %
Home	33 %	33 %	36 %
Shopping	14 %	15 %	13 %
Other	35 %	44 %	40 %
(TANF Activities)	(N.A.)	(N.A.)	(5 %)
(Child Care)	(N.A.)	(N.A.)	(6 %)
Trip Mode			
Car Driver	76 %	50 %	48 %
Car Passenger	16 %	22 %	16 %
Public Transit	3 %	14 %	18 %
Walk	4 %	13 %	16 %
Other	1 %	2 %	1 %
Work Trip Mode			
Car Driver	83 %	55 %	50 %
Car Passenger	9 %	21 %	10 %
Public Transit	4 %	16 %	26 %
Walk	4 %	8 %	7 %
Other	1 %	0 %	2 %

The mode of travel varies significantly between CTNA survey respondents and the working-age population in general. Among CTNA respondents, 64 percent of the trips were taken in private vehicles compared with 92 percent among the NPTS population in general and 72 percent among the NPTS low-income single parent group. The CTNA population is more likely to use public transit than these other groups. Closer scrutiny of the mode used for work trips reveals that work locations are more difficult to access than other destinations. Work trips have the lowest proportion of walking trips (7 percent) and the highest proportion (66 percent) of trips in a private vehicle. The percent of trips taken by CTNA respondents in private vehicles is quite low compared with the general population. Among the NPTS working-age population, virtually all trips were made in private vehicles, followed distantly by walking and transit. This holds true for both all trips and for work trips, in particular. NPTS low-income single parents, though, used private vehicles at a rate very similar to that of the CTNA survey population.

Automobile use is related to income level and employment status; car use is substantially lower among low-income and unemployed drivers. In 1990, over 75 percent of the workers in households with incomes below \$5,000 commuted to work in private vehicles (Pisarski, 1996). Nearly 95 percent of workers in households with 1990 incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000 commuted in private vehicles. Thus, the majority of public transit users come from low-income

households, and this finding holds for the U.S. and Los Angeles (O'Regan and Quigley, 1998; Garrett and Taylor, 1999). Seventy-one percent of employed CTNA respondents traveled by private vehicle compared to 59 percent of those not in the labor force.

The best predictor of mode is whether or not a household possesses a car. Not surprisingly, for households with a car, travel in a private vehicle is the preferred mode. Among CTNA respondents who own a car, the majority of trips (83 percent) were in a car. Among respondents who do not own a car, only about a third (35 percent) of trips were in private vehicles. This general pattern holds true for both NTPS comparison groups. Among those who do not own cars, trips are almost evenly split between walking, transit and private vehicles.

CTNA Trip Characteristics by Welfare-to-Work Stages

Welfare-to-work requirements impose substantial changes to recipient travel patterns and trip characteristics. Table 2.4 describes the trips of CTNA respondents by their welfare-to-work activity: (1) a baseline group comprised of those not working and not engaged in job search, (2) a second group comprised of those unemployed and undertaking job search and/or job preparation activities, and (3) a final group represented by those working.

The analysis reveals that those recipients in job-search activities experience the greatest travel burden. Compared to the baseline group, recipients who are employed make more daily trips. Recipients in the job-search stage, though, made almost twice as many trips daily compared to the baseline group. This can partially be explained by the GAIN job-search requirements (See Appendix 1).

Job-searchers not only have the heaviest travel demand, but they also rely on the least reliable and least flexible forms of transportation. They are more than the baseline group and the employed group to take public transit and are less likely to take trips by private vehicle. CTNA focus groups reveal that many recipients in the job-search phase attempt to offset the heavy burden of travel by "chaining" their trips. That is, these recipients often combine travel to many destinations (e.g., childcare and attendance in Job Club) into one "trip." This, however, can prove to be very difficult, particularly for those relying on public transit.

In addition to increasing the number of trips, working and job-search activities often generally shift the time of day that recipients travel. Only a third of the baseline group initially leave home during the morning peak hours, but three-quarters of those engaged in job-search do so. Although the proportion drops after finding a job, approximately two-thirds continue to leave early in the morning.

Table 2.4, Trips Characteristics by Welfare-to-Work Stages

	Unemployed, Not In Labor Force	Unemployed, Job-Search Day	Employed Working day
Avg. # of Trips per Day	2.5	4.3	3.4
More than 5 trips per day	19 %	38 %	27 %
Travel AM Peak hours	33 %	74 %	65 %
By Car	56 %	53 %	68 %
By Public Transit	16 %	28 %	20 %
By Walking	25 %	18 %	10 %
Involved in Trip Chain	12 %	26 %	22 %
Total	336	107	432

In summary, welfare recipients experience travel patterns that differ substantially from the working-age population in general. Their travel does, though, resemble that of low-income parents in many ways and does vary substantially by the stages of welfare-to-work activities. Despite a growing body of research on the transportation challenges and burdens facing welfare recipients, there remains a paucity of information on many aspects of the travel behavior and needs of welfare households nation wide:

There is little information about whether transportation is a small problem for many welfare recipients, a large problem for many, or a large problem for a small portion of the population. Some work-welfare evaluations that have asked recipients about barriers to employment suggest that transportation may be a very serious barrier to employment for small portions of the welfare population. [...] Transportation may be only one of several problems impeding stable employment (Smith-Nightingale, 1997).

The goal of this transportation needs assessment, therefore, is to begin to fill in the gaps in our understanding of the transportation needs of recipients in Los Angeles County as they strive for economic self-sufficiency.

Section 3. Transportation Needs and the Transition from Welfare to Work

Section Highlights

This section examines the transportation needs of welfare participants in Los Angeles County as they search for work, find employment and commute. As the previous section suggests, participant travel patterns vary substantially according to their stage of welfare-to-work activities. Approximately half of CTNA survey respondents were employed (51 percent), about a quarter (24 percent) were actively engaged in job search, and the remaining quarter (24 percent) were not in the labor force (i.e., neither employed or actively engaged in job search).

These groups help clarify the travel dynamics of participants as they transition to self-sufficiency. This section examines the trip characteristics and travel modes of participants looking for jobs or currently working and whether they found travel difficult or problematic. In addition, this section examines how differences in access to transportation affect participants' chances of having a job.

The key findings are:

- The job-search stage, in particular, is characterized by a high degree of complexity and uncertainty in transportation as participants make an increased number of daily trips, travel to unknown areas and make new arrangements for family obligations.
- About two-fifths of participants who used transit found public transit a viable mode of transportation.
- The higher the level of public transit service near a recipient's home, the more likely a recipient is to use public transportation; however, public transit is often not the preferred choice of travel since it does not enable recipient to cope with the complexity and uncertainty of work and household-related trips.
- Transit users are more likely to have difficult commutes than those using cars or other modes.
- Transit usage increases among those without cars in their households and among those residing in neighborhoods with good transit service.
- Approximately half of the welfare-to-work population live in a household with cars, and about two-thirds of this group have unlimited access to these car. Also, the rate of car ownership and usage increases as welfare-to-work participants transition to work.
- Most recipients travel by car whenever possible, perhaps because GAIN offices, job clubs, potential employers, and childcare are located some distance from home.
- Recipients who travel by car are significantly less likely to report trip difficulty compared to those using other modes of travel; this finding holds for job-search, work commute, childcare and health care trips.
- Unrestricted access to a household car is the most effective transportation resource in promoting the transition from welfare to work.
- Among those with limited access or no access to household cars, the employment rate increases with higher levels of transit service.
- Many employed participants work occasionally during weekends and/or outside of the standard workday; this creates transportation problems.

- Among employed participants, the average travel distance (approximately 7 miles) is shorter than the average for other workers.

Looking for Work

As the previous section suggests, job-search activities can present substantial travel burdens for participants. During this phase, eligible CalWORKs participants in Los Angeles County are enrolled in Job Club (See Appendix 1 for GAIN program requirements). A participant is expected to participate in Job Club as if it were a job. Participants arrive at the site in the morning and conduct a full day of activities. They attend workshops on job-finding skills during the first week. In subsequent weeks, they must engage actively in supervised job searches. Each person has a daily goal of 50 telephone calls to prospective employers and five interviews. Every participant must fill out 5 job applications and bring back business cards as proof. The CTNA survey found that about half of those not employed were actively engaged in job search.² Focus group participants described the demands of the job search phase:

I have to fill out applications, I mean everywhere, all around the Valley. I tried to look for a job from Van Nuys, Panorama City. Well, I got papers, printouts from the EDD office, and all of the jobs were in Reseda, Canoga, and Pacoima and there was only one here in Van Nuys.

This job search stage can be very difficult on participants because of uncertainty in making trips to Job Clubs and to numerous job sites that are often in unfamiliar areas. The average distance to the nearest GAIN office is 3.5 miles; the average distance to the nearest Job Club is slightly longer, 4.5 miles (Table 3.1).³ Approximately 17 percent of the participants live six or more miles away from the nearest GAIN office, and 30 percent are six or more miles away from the nearest Job Club.

²This percentage should be interpreted cautiously since many participants may be exempt from welfare-to-work requirements. Also, in some two-parent households, the parent who did not respond to the survey may be undertaking job-search. In this case, the respondent may not be required to participate in job search.

³The distances are based on the rectangular distance between place of residence and the nearest GAIN office and Job Club. This estimate is a relative measure that is useful since much of the Los Angeles road system is on a grid system.

Table 3.1, Travel Characteristics of CTNA Survey Respondents

	Travel Mode		
	<i>Car*</i>	<i>Transit</i>	<i>Other**</i>
Job Seekers			
Travel for Job Search is Difficult	29 %	60 %	41 %
Transportation is a Problem in			
Finding or Keeping a Job	35 %	61 %	41 %
Average Distance to Nearest GAIN office	3.7 miles	3.0 miles	5.0 miles
Average Distance to Nearest Job Club	4.5 miles	4.4 miles	5.0 miles
Employed			
Commute to Work is Difficult	21 %	52 %	16 %
Transportation is a Problem in			
Finding or Keeping a Job	31 %	60 %	43 %
Average Commute Distance	8.0 miles	7.3 miles	2.8 miles
Percent Traveling 11+ miles	24 %	18 %	5 %
Estimated Time Starting Work After Leaving Home	67 minutes	103 minutes	66 minutes

* Indicates travel in a private vehicle as a driver or passenger.

** Most ‘other’ trips were walking trips or may have been by other means such as by bicycle.

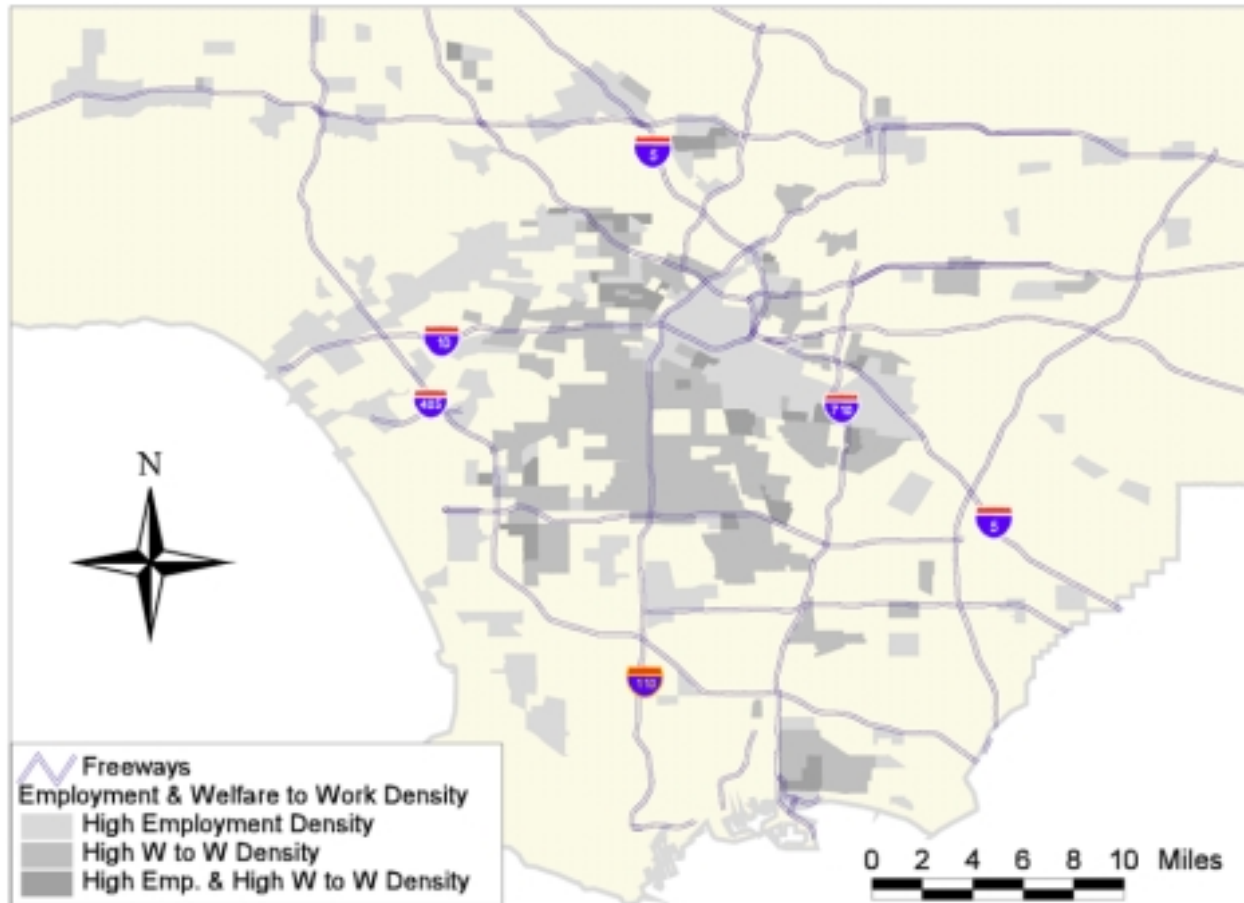
Many potential jobs are at substantial distances from participants’ homes. This can be seen in Map 3.1, which shows the areas with high densities of welfare participants and areas with high densities of potential jobs. There are very few neighborhoods with both. Consequently, many job leads— sometimes leads for better paying jobs— are far away. Several focus group participants commented on forgoing higher paying, better jobs due to long distances and the transportation burdens:

... it would have been more money than what I make. So in that sense, I did turn the job down. Now, I’m not saying that I was guaranteed to get it, but I thought that just with the travel time that that would be too much for me with, uh, being a single parent. It’s not easy without a car. So I did turn the two jobs down. I just didn’t respond at all. And, um, my GAIN worker, he told me that wasn’t a good decision, but I told him, I said I thought it was for me.

And the high paying jobs are in LA...with the good benefits, they’re usually too far to get to. So you compromise and take the eight dollars an hour where you could have the ten dollars or twelve dollars an hour all the way in LA...I mean, if you live in Pacoima and you gonna drive every single day—which is forty-five minutes to LA— you’re not gonna do it with not a reliable car.

I could make ten dollars an hour. But if that job was out in Valencia, I couldn’t get there. So I, you know, had to lose that job.

Map 3.1. Areas with High Density of Potential Jobs and High Density of Welfare-to-Work Participants



While participation in Job Club is required, not all of those assigned to Job Club attend. For example, in March 2000, only 46 percent of the persons referred to Job Club (1311 out of 2880) showed up and started Job Club.⁴ Some may undertake a job search individually. For instance, some participants find a job without traveling to a potential job site as part of Job Club activities. Tabulations from a 1996 survey of welfare participants in California, though, suggest that 42 percent found jobs through referrals from friends and relatives.⁵

The relative difficulty of job-search activities varies systematically with the type of transportation used (Table 3.1). Relative to those traveling by car, transit users were twice as likely to state that their job-search trips were somewhat or very difficult. In fact, a majority of the transit users evaluated their trips as being difficult and stated that transportation problems make it hard for them to find or keep a job. This is not because the travel distance to the nearest

⁴ These data were provided by Mary Williams, LACOE Coordinator for GAIN Job Services, with authorization from DPSS. Mary Williams, email message to Jose Salgado, forwarded to Nicole Eisenberg, May 23, 2000.

⁵ *AFDC Job Readiness Survey, Study Months of May, June or July 1996*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Social Services, 1996.

Job Club or GAIN office is greater for transit riders. In fact, the average distance to these destinations is lower for transit users than for the other two groups. Nevertheless, travel by transit frequently takes longer than an equivalent trip by car and may be more difficult because of the need to make transfers.

...And then they want us to fill out of a various applications on one day, and, like yesterday, Friday, we have to fill out four. And starting Monday, and everyday after, it will be six applications. I think that's somewhat impossible even if you have a car...I have a car and it's so hard for me...I couldn't fill out four yesterday. I went to Reseda, to Canoga, went to Chatsworth, came back, got my kids from school, took them back to my sister and I just couldn't. I got home at six."

Job-search trips using other modes, primarily walking, fell between auto and transit users in terms of difficulty. This may be because walkers are able to conduct their job search closer to home.

In light of the substantial difference in the difficulty of conducting job search by auto and transit, most participants use private vehicles for the job search whenever possible. This can be seen in Table 3.2, which reports on those who actively traveled to look for work during the week prior to the survey. Nearly nine-tenths of those with *unlimited* access to cars in their households (i.e., the vehicle is available any time) chose to travel by car. The few people who used public transit tended to reside in areas with good transit service. Among those with limited access to cars in their households (i.e., vehicle is available only some times), a majority traveled by car for job searches. Even among those without cars in their households, a fifth traveled by car either as drivers or passengers.

Table 3.2, Modal Choice of CTNA Survey Respondents

	Travel Mode		
	Car*	Transit	Other**
Job Seekers			
Unlimited Access to a Household Car	89 %	7 %	4 %
Limited Access to a Household Car	53 %	34 %	13 %
No Car in Household	22 %	71 %	7 %
Employed			
Unlimited Access to a Household Car	90 %	3 %	6 %
Limited Access to a Household Car	47 %	32 %	22 %
No Car in Household	28 %	55 %	17 %

* Indicates travel in a private vehicle as a driver or passenger.

** Most "other" trips were walking trips but also include trips made by bicycles and taxis.

Public transit is generally not the preferred choice of travel for job-search activities since it does not enable participants to cope with the complexities and uncertainties of job searches. Participants from the focus groups point out several problems with using transit for job-search activities. Full buses sometimes pass by participants, making their trips difficult to plan:

Sometimes they'll [buses] pass you up. And then you have to stand there for another forty-five minutes and wait for another bus. Hopefully, that one isn't crowded and don't pass you up.

Buses are often overcrowded:

I got on the bus and it was so packed that I didn't have anywhere to hold on to and when the bus stopped, I fell. You know, I hated that. I didn't like that at all. People were like laughing and I got up and I, it was like I wanted to cry, you know, and cus [laughter]. But I just got off the bus and I walked home.

Buses are especially inconvenient and stressful when parents are dealing with children and shopping:

I have three children: 7, 2, and 1. It's hard getting on the bus with the kids. Oh man, the stroller, I rather just not go anywhere. You know, if I can't really avoid taking my children, I just, I stay at home. My children remember the nightmares of going grocery shopping on the bus. It's sickening, you know, you have all these bags, and sometimes forget things and frustrated with kids. Thank God for my car, raggedy as it is.

It is difficult to find the right routes. According to one person:

You get lost on the buses, you know, or transfer to the wrong bus. Because you don't know what bus to get on.

The fear of getting lost forced one participant to rely on family and friends for rides until she could get a car:

I'm scared first of all because I don't know the bus routes. And since I have my child with me, what if I get lost? So, I've never dealt with the bus. I was just too scared of the bus. So, I've always had family, friends, or I finally go my own car.

Other participants in focus groups felt that using public transit is time consuming and unsafe.

Despite the problems of public transit, about two-fifths of participants who used transit found public transit a viable mode of transportation. Moreover, the usefulness of public transit hinges on the quality and frequency of service. A higher level of transit service near a participant's home increases the odds that a participant is actively engaged in job search activities (Appendix 5B). Finally, it should be noted that despite the relative advantage offered by car travel, car ownership is not a panacea, as discussed later in Sections 5 and 6.

A few participants discussed positive aspects of the transit system, praising the timeliness of routes and the safety provided by new onboard video cameras:⁶

⁶The CTNA focus groups and survey were primarily designed to document transportation needs and deficiencies of participants and, in that way, did not explicitly target positive perceptions and comments on the transit system.

I'm thankful we do have a bus, though, make it a little better you know. I really like those new buses that have those video cameras on them. I like a little security for myself and my child.

I like the public transportation. It takes away the responsibility of driving. It is more reliable than in your own car.

I do not have that many problems with the bus. I usually use my car, but when I have used it I have liked it. It has come on time and I have not wasted time. My wife tells me why she uses public transportation more than I do because she likes it and it always comes on time. She likes it more so now because there is a new smaller bus that costs \$.25 which is reasonable.

Securing a Job

Job searches are not always successful. There are numerous barriers in securing a job such as the lack of education, experience, or childcare obligations. In addition, poor transportation during the job search seems to translate into lower odds of successfully finding employment. This can be clearly seen in the employment ratio compared with relative access to a household car. Sixty-four percent of those with unlimited access to a car in their households (i.e., the vehicle is available any time) were employed at the time of the survey. Among those with limited access to cars in their households (vehicle is available only some times), only 44 percent had a job.⁷ The employment ratio for those with no access to household cars was nearly the same (43 percent).

Access to a car seems related to whether participants in the labor force are employed. Of those in the labor force, four-fifths (80 percent) of those with unlimited car access were employed at the time of the survey, compared with two-thirds (66 percent) of those with a limited access, and only 59 percent of those with no access to household cars. In addition, analysis of those for which there is information on transportation mode for job search or employment shows an interesting pattern. Of these survey respondents, 83 percent of those using a car were employed, while only 67 percent of those using public transit were employed.

Although each of the above estimates presents some weaknesses, they nonetheless reveal a consistent result for each sub-sample of survey respondents— access to an automobile has a significant impact on the odds of finding a job. The one plausible problem with this finding is that access to a car does not *cause* employment. Instead, employment may enable working participants to purchase a car. In other words, the direction of causality may run in the opposite direction. The existing research indicates that this is not true, and that access to a car indeed has a positive effect on increasing employment (Rafeal and Rice, 1999; Ong, 2000). The multivariate analysis in Appendix 5 isolates the impact of car access on employment outcomes.

⁷ These employment ratios, however, may be slightly misleading since a disproportionately high percent of those with limited access to a car are in two-parent households. Since one parent in two-parent households may not be required to participate in welfare-to-work activities, this group may contain a disproportionate number of parents not in the labor force.

The results show that greater access to an automobile does raise the odds of being employed after controlling for personal and household characteristics.

Focus group participants discussed the ways that using public transit reduces the odds of securing a job. Participants who rely on public transit often miss out on some job opportunities. One participant's job-search trip ended in failure:

... This was for a driving position on Burbank that I had to go to see about. But because of limited funds and not knowing where the location was at, I got lost. So I turned back around, paid the other fare and just come home.

Sometimes Job Club participants were not referred to job openings because they relied on the bus, as illustrated by the following exchange:

If you're lucky, if you have a car, [the job developer will] give you job leads. Cuz yesterday, he started to give us one. As soon as I told him we didn't have we didn't have a car we were on the bus he [the job developer] was like, "Oh, oh well, forget it."

Focus group participants also revealed that employers often prefer job applicants with vehicles and/or reliable transportation arrangements. Often, job applications ask about reliable transportation, even if the job doesn't directly require having a car. In addition, during the interviewing process, many employers ask job applicants if they have reliable transportation to get to work, especially if the job applicant lives a considerable distance from the employment site.

... And they [the employer] ask you... do you have a car? Nope. The employer will ask you do you have transportation on the application.

... or they'll say that this job requires that you have a reliable car.

Public transit also lowers the employment rate by increasing job termination. Because public transit is often unreliable and time consuming, it can cause a worker to be late, leading to a higher quit or layoff rate. One participant recalled the transportation difficulty she had with her previous job:

It would take about... about an hour and fifteen minutes total. Well, no it was actually a lot longer because when I got off of a bus, I would have to wait forty minutes for the bus to take me from the bus station to my work. So, probably an hour-and-a-half, two hours. Just to get there... the problem with the transportation— I didn't have a car, but a company of three hundred people depended on me to be there on time everyday because nobody there knew how to do my job, except me, and my boss, you know, and I felt really bad when I'd be late so I finally had to let that job go. I was not dependable, you know, because of too many car problems, transportation problems...

Again, it is important to keep in mind that the findings refer to the relatively greater effectiveness of car access in increasing the employment rate. Car ownership also presents problems, which are discussed in Sections 5 and 6.

Commuting to Work

As discussed in Section 2, the characteristic of the jobs that participants secure often exacerbate their commutes to work. These jobs frequently require participants to work weekends and variable schedules and to travel substantial distances. Over half (57 percent) of those employed worked at least occasionally during the weekend, with a third (34 percent) working very often during the weekend. One-third (34 percent) did not have a fixed workday. Among those with regular schedule, two-fifths (40 percent) did not start work during the start of the normal workday (6:00 am to 8:59 am). The average distance to work (approximately 7 miles) is shorter than the average for other workers, but a fifth of working participants were at least 11 miles away. These factors create a burden on the commute to work, particularly when available transportation is poor.

The relative difficulty in commuting varies systematically with the type of transportation used (Table 3.1). Relative to those traveling by car, transit users were twice as likely to state that their commutes were difficult and that transportation problems made it hard for them to find or keep a job. The difficulty of the commute of those using other modes (primarily walking) fell between those using transit and auto. The difference in the difficulty of commute between those using transit and auto is not due to any major differences in travel distance. Instead, there is a noticeable difference between each group's estimated travel time between leaving home and starting work. The average time for transit users is one-and-a-half times that for car users. Those using other modes were the least likely to report that their commute is difficult. This could be because many of their jobs are close to home, affording them the option to walk to work.

Given the substantial difference in the relative difficulty in commuting to work by auto compared with transit, most participants use a private vehicle for their trip to work whenever possible. This can be seen in the bottom half of Table 3.2. Nine-tenths of those with unlimited access to a car in their households (i.e., the vehicle is available any time) chose to commute by car. The few who used public transit are the ones that reside in areas with good transit service. Among those with a limited access to a car in the household (vehicle is available only some times), nearly half traveled by car to work. Even among those without a car in their household, over a quarter traveled by car. Interestingly, transit usage among employed participants without a car in their household is lower than among job searchers (55 percent versus 71 percent). This may indicate that as participants transition from the more chaotic travel patterns of the job search and to the more predictable travel patterns of employment, they are able to make car-sharing arrangements. Among those with limited or no access to a household car, transit usage increases with the level of nearby transit service (Appendix 5).

Section 4. Childcare and Health Care Travel

Section Highlights

This section describes transportation challenges that welfare-to-work participants face in balancing work and family obligations and focuses on needs related to child-serving and health-related trips. Employment and job searching obligations required of welfare-to-work participants, when combined with transportation difficulties/barriers, can affect the ability of participants to adequately meet family obligations, such as transporting children to and from childcare/school and accessing health services. Welfare-to-work participants rely heavily on support networks and family in order to help them meet both their transportation needs and family obligations such as childcare. Likewise, these obligations may make it difficult for participants to complete welfare-to-work requirements.

The key findings of this section include:

- The presence of younger children (age 0-4) decreases the odds of currently being employed and increases the odds of perceiving transportation as a major problem in finding and keeping a job.
- Welfare-to-work requirements impose substantial changes to participants' need for and use of childcare. About a third (35 percent) of those not working and not actively searching use childcare while two-fifths (42 percent) of job seekers and 84 percent of employed respondents use childcare.
- The most common type of childcare involves relatives, friends and neighbors caring for the children; employed participants tend to use more formal, paid childcare arrangements.
- The relative supply of nearby licensed care slots increases the likelihood that a child receives licensed care over other types of care, although the relative supply of nearby licensed care slots does not seem to impact the overall level of childcare usage.
- Job searchers and welfare-to-work participants who rely on public transit report the greatest difficulties with childcare trips.
- Trips for job search and work often impact the amount of time school-age children are left unsupervised and whether they can participate in after-school activities.
- Nearly three-quarters of participants made a health-related trip in the past six months; one-half perceive transportation as a problem to receiving health care.
- Nearly one-third of participants report that a lack of transportation has prevented them or a member of their family from accessing health care in the past.

Childcare for Younger Children (0-4 Years Old)

Among families with children age 4 years or younger,⁸ over half use some form of childcare (58 percent). The most common type of childcare involves having a relative, friend or neighbor take care of the children (60 percent). Most families leave their children with paid relatives or friends⁹ (37 percent), while others leave children with unpaid relatives and friends (23 percent). Others use more formal childcare arrangements by sending their children to daycare centers (23 percent) or daycare homes (11 percent).

The presence of younger children decreases the odds of currently being employed and increases the odds of perceiving transportation as a major problem in finding and keeping a job. This is true for all survey respondents as well as for those who have limited or no access to a car (Appendix 5).

Welfare-to-work requirements impose substantial changes to participants' need for and use of childcare (Table 4.1). For example, searching for a job or working increases the use of childcare. Only about a third (35 percent) of those not working and not actively searching use childcare, while two-fifths (42 percent) of job seekers use childcare. The highest rate of childcare usage (84 percent) is among the employed. Employed participants tend to utilize more formal childcare arrangements either by paying relatives, friends or neighbors (36 percent) or by using some type of licensed care (30 percent) than do job searchers or those not currently in the labor market.

Table 4.1, Employment Status and Type of Childcare, CTNA Survey Respondents

Type of Childcare	Unemployed, Not Actively Searching	Unemployed, Actively Searching	Employed
Unpaid Relative, Friend, Neighbor	9 %	18 %	13 %
Paid Relative, Friend, Neighbor	10 %	12 %	36 %
Day Care Centers and Homes	13 %	11 %	30 %
Other	2 %	2 %	5 %
No Childcare	65 %	58 %	16 %

Among all families who use some form of childcare, 19 percent have their children cared for in their own homes and therefore do not need transportation to childcare. However, the remaining 81 percent require some means of transportation to access childcare services. Most survey respondents stated that they were responsible for taking their young children to and from childcare (70 percent). These respondents most frequently traveled to childcare by a car (54 percent), followed by bus (23 percent) and walking (17 percent).

⁸This group includes children who are 5 years old and do not go to school.

⁹DPSS now pays for family or friends who serve as childcare providers in addition to licensed child care.

For welfare-to-work participants traveling by transit, childcare travel arrangements are often time-consuming and costly as described by one focus group participant whose one-way commute is about 3 hours and costs \$5.40 for herself and her three children:

My name is Betty and I get up at five o'clock to shower and everything else...From five-thirty I have to get the kids up, get them ready and feed them and then get them ready to go to the babysitter's house. I have to pay for their transportation from my house to their [babysitter's] house. And their rate is the same as mine. So I gotta pay \$1.35 for each one of them. And there's three.... And by the time I get there its already six-thirty. So I get ready at the babysitter's house and then I catch the bus from her house back to Firestone and then from Firestone I catch it all the way up this way....Then I get here about eight-thirty....And then I gotta pick up—go through the whole same routine all over again and bring them back home.

The travel distance to childcare varies depending on the type of childcare provider that participants utilize. Participants who use license exempt providers (including paid care provided by family, friends, and neighbors) generally travel the shortest median distance (0.1 miles). In comparison, participants who use licensed childcare facilities generally travel a greater distance from home to reach childcare (1.7 miles). Clearly license-exempt care greatly lowers the travel burden of participants.¹⁰

Welfare-to-work requirements also impact the ease in transporting young children to childcare. Participants in job-search activities experience the greatest difficulty in traveling to childcare. About half (52 percent) of job searchers state that their childcare-related trips are difficult, compared to only 37 percent of those not working and not searching. The employed are the least likely to experience difficulties, with only a quarter (25 percent) stating that their childcare trips are difficult.

The difficulties of childcare travel may vary between these groups due to differences in schedules, recent experience using childcare, and the mode of travel. Employed participants, for instance, tend to have more a fixed time schedule and travel pattern than job seekers, who are more likely to have constant changes to their schedule. Participants who are employed may also be more likely to have recent experience with childcare and may have been able to resolve a number of transportation difficulties. Job seekers, on the other hand, may have to adjust to delivering children to childcare for the first time in the midst of traveling to Job Club and numerous job sites per day. Difficulties of childcare travel may also vary due to differences in the mode of travel. Half of those relying on public transit state that their childcare-related trips are difficult, while only a quarter of those using a car report difficulties with childcare trips. Notably, employed participants are much more likely to use cars than job seekers.

One focus group participant described the difficulty she experienced while trying to search for a job and make childcare arrangements:

¹⁰ Analysis of travel distance to childcare is based on the locations at which participants received childcare based on CalWORKs payments for childcare services. The geographic locations that participants received childcare were compared to their residential location to derive travel distance. Appendix 5 provides additional details on this analysis.

If I go and look for jobs in between that time to the time I go and pick them [children] up, I'm on the bus all day long. Until five. So it takes me maybe...from anywhere to two to three hours, you know, coming back and forth—like yesterday I went all the way to Long Beach for an interview and they kept me there for two hours. Came all the way back over this way and I had to pick up the kids and then bring them home through my route and I didn't get home until five.

The availability of nearby licensed care, or daycare centers or homes has a strong influence on the type of childcare that participants use for their younger children. Participants show a strong tendency to travel short distances for childcare. There are enormous variations in the relative supply of nearby licensed care across Los Angeles County (See Appendix 6). Table 4.2 describes the type of childcare that CTNA respondents used according to their proximity to nearby licensed care. While the relative supply of nearby licensed care slots does not seem to impact the overall level of childcare usage, it does influence the likelihood that a respondent uses licensed care over other types of care. Among those respondents who reside in neighborhoods where the ratio is 30 or more licensed slots per 100 younger children, 44 percent use some type of licensed care compared to 24 percent who reside in neighborhoods with a ratio of 15 or less slots.

Table 4.2, Childcare Usage by Availability of Nearby Licensed Care¹¹

	Number of Licensed Slots per 100 Younger Children (0-4 years old)		
	0-15	16-30	30+
Unpaid Relative, Friend, Neighbor	27 %	19 %	23 %
Paid Relative, Friend, Neighbor	40 %	40 %	30 %
Day Care Centers and Homes	24 %	39 %	44 %
Other	10 %	1 %	3 %

¹¹ The Licensing Information System File for December 1999 was obtained from LADPSS and provides details on the geographic location of all licensed providers in Los Angeles County regardless of whether they provided service to CalWORKS participants. This provides more comprehensive detail on all respondents, since only certain respondents were asked about their younger children. See Appendix 5 for additional details on this data. Note: column percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

School-Age Children

Participant families with school-age children have different needs. The majority of children between 5 and 12 go home after school (71 percent), as do teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 (81 percent). Approximately a quarter of children between the ages of 5 to 18 participate in some type of after-school activity. Almost half of participants with children between 5 and 12 pick up their children from after-school activities/care; 48 percent of these participants use a car to get home, 42 percent walk, and only 9 percent take the bus. Even fewer participants pick up older children (ages 13-18) from school or after-school activities or care (21 percent). Among those who do, the majority use a car to get home (88 percent). While the survey sample size for data on travel difficulties is too small to generate precise estimates, available information indicates that job seekers experience more difficulties for after-school related trips, and those using public transit experience the most difficulties.

Not all parents are able to pick up their children. When they have to work late or must rely on slow transportation, their children are often left unsupervised. Focus group participants were very concerned that their children would be left unsupervised and that getting home late would limit their time with their children:

And the bus— if I had taken the bus home—for instance, I got out of work at five.... I wouldn't have been home `til like around seven. And my daughter, you know, she gets home at three. She'd be unsupervised from three `til seven. And then when I would get home, I would have to walk home from Lassen to Nordhoff and Nordhoff, like I said, is a real bad street. Nordhoff and Sepulveda. And I couldn't do it anymore. So I, I had to quit. And it's only because of transportation that I can't get a job.

Focus group participants often felt that transportation difficulties impacted their quality of life and that of their children. Many agreed that it was difficult to manage children on the bus. Others said that because they spent so much time traveling to and from work on public transit, they now left children at childcare or alone for longer periods. Some participants said that they lacked time and/or transportation means to take their children to after-school activities. Participants also discussed the frustration of trying to pick up their children after school or in case of emergencies:

I just moved! I just moved. I was living on – in Sherman Oaks. Just a block away from Ventura Boulevard. And I totally miss it. Because out there, there was lots of job opportunities on Ventura Boulevard...Um, now I live here. Why I had to move there was because I had to live somewhere where my daughter can walk home from school and back. Where I didn't have to drive her to middle school every day and have to pick her up from middle school. So now that's like one less worry.

Transportation is a problem ... you need to have a car because if your work is in Valencia and my kids go to school out here, there's an emergency at school or something, what am I going to do, jump on the bus, and still take three hours to get back home before you can get them...

You know, I work in Pasadena and I live in Glendale. So it means, like, I need a car. And especially when you have kids and any problems at school or anything, you have to just leave the job and rush, you know, to see the children and so its essential.

Travel to Health Care Providers

This section discusses the transportation needs of families accessing health care facilities.¹² Access to preventive health measures is important as a condition for achieving long-term self-sufficiency.

The majority of the survey respondents (72 percent) had visited a health care facility within the past 6 months to access health care services for themselves or a family member. The most common transportation mode to health care is driving a car (41 percent), followed by taking the bus (25 percent), and getting a ride in someone else's car (22 percent). A small proportion mentioned walking to health care facilities (6 percent). For approximately one-half of the welfare-to-work participants, transportation is perceived as a problem in receiving health care. Almost one-third of the participants respond that the lack of transportation has prevented them — or a member of their family who depends on them for transportation — from receiving health care in the past. Results also show that the perceived difficulty of travel to health care is different for those who own cars when compared to those who do not. Transportation is a big problem for 28 percent of those without cars compared to 12 percent of those with cars.

Focus group participants described instances in which transportation prevented them from accessing health services:

And I have a private doctor which also the state picked for me. The doctor's great, but its also hard for me to get transportation for me to get there. There's times I miss appointments because I don't have a ride to get there. I have to walk. It takes me about forty-five minutes to walk to the doctor's.

"I couldn't take her to the doctor's. The doctors before prescribed me like cough medicine. Because she like coughs and she can't breathe. So I gave here some cough medicine and you know— and she finally relaxed, but I couldn't just get up and say we're going to the hospital. You know, I have to wait for somebody to take us. But usually people are at work."

¹² The Long-Term Family Self Sufficiency Plan approved by the Board of Supervisors on October 29, 1999 required the transportation needs assessment be expanded to include this medical component because of the importance that adequate access to health care has for CalWORKs families. Adults need to be in good health in order to work or participate in welfare-to-work activities. If parents and their children are healthy, they are less likely to have absentee-related problems or be unemployed. Additionally, children who have regular medical check-ups and immunizations have a greater probability of having an optimum development, staying in school and graduating from high school. If families obtain preventive health care services regularly, health problems can be treated at early stages and have fewer chances of turning into cases of extreme illness or emergencies. Families will access health care to a greater degree if transportation is available to and from medical sites; on the other hand, lack of transportation prevents families from utilizing available health care services.

The transition from welfare to work may also affect the ease with which participants are able to access health care. As participants move into job search and employment, travel for health care can become more complicated. Flexibility becomes limited because health appointments must be scheduled around job-search and work obligations and participants may not have the luxury of sick leave and flexible work schedules that allow them to take time off for health care visits, particularly if those visits must be made via public transportation. Several focus group participants shed light on the difficulty balancing transportation, work obligations and health care visits for themselves and their children:

...Because those things happen and, you know, when your kids get sick at school, when you can't take off and go and get them, you have to have somebody that's gonna pick them up for you, you know? Until you can get off and get them to the doctor or have them get them to the doctor.

With my kids... I might have a slight emergency. I can't get home, even if I don't have no car, if the buses stop running after seven o'clock, if I told my boss, well, look I need to go home because I got an emergency. I'll still got to figure out who going to get me to the house, see.

Survey results show that smaller proportions of working or job-searching participants report visiting a health care facility in the past 6 months compared to participants that are not actively in the labor market. While overall 72 percent of respondents reported a health care visit in the past 6 months, 79 percent of non-working, non-searching participants reported making a visit compared to 69 percent of employed participants and 70 percent of participants searching for work. This suggests that job-seekers and the employed may be delaying or deferring health care visits, although there may be other unobserved factors that are affecting these differences.

The CTNA focus groups also gathered participants' opinions and experiences regarding transportation to health care facilities. When participants can plan their health-related trips in advance, they do not view transportation as a major problem. They can usually rely on family or friends for help and either use their own car or get a ride or borrow a car from a relative or friend. However, some participants experienced difficulty riding the bus to medical facilities, especially during nights and weekends. This resulted in participants calling 911, accessing care in emergency rooms, or delaying treatment because of concern about riding the bus when feeling ill. Several focus group participants commented on the difficulties accessing health care due to transportation concerns:

Sometimes you have difficulty going to the doctor, cause you don't have the money to get to the bus or you just feeling so bad, you know, to ride the bus so let's just stay home...I just stayed home and wing it out, you know, you don't want to get on the bus, you don't feel good, you don't feel good enough to get dressed. You know, enough to be presentable to be on the bus, and you don't go you just stay home.

When I have gotten sick and there has not been transportation I call 911 and the ambulance comes. Usually if my neighbors are home I ask them, but here in Temple City

the bus is not close by and it comes by every hour. To take the El Monte bus which comes by every 20 minutes I have to walk to Kidree which takes me 30 minutes.

Most CalWORKs families are eligible for medical coverage under the California Medical Assistance Program, Medi-Cal.¹³ In recent years, California has made efforts to phase out traditional fee-for-service arrangements, where the state reimburses individual health care providers for services rendered to covered individuals. By 1999, just over half of Californians enrolled in Medi-Cal were covered by managed care plans, and the majority of CalWORKs participants receiving Medi-Cal coverage are required to enroll in a managed care plan.¹⁴ Fee-for-service allows covered families a high degree of provider choice, but many providers shun Medi-Cal because its payments are low and its claims processing slow. Ideally, managed care will result in greater quality of care for covered families, but managed care plans restrict provider choice to specific physicians and facilities.

The shift to Medi-Cal managed care arrangements, primarily Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), can result in longer and more complicated travel arrangements. Like everyone else, participants want clinics, general practitioners, and specialists close to home, which for some is difficult to achieve at least in this period of transition to HMOs. Focus group participants indicated that the new managed care system often resulted in longer and more complicated travel arrangements. One participant expressed her problems:

They hook you into the HMOs and it's an automatic thing. You send in a paper, but it's still an automatic thing where they pick a doctor for you and everything. So you send 'em a little paper later and try and get it changed, but like I say, I'm in San Pedro, they put me at a doctor in Southgate. Which is another three hours on the bus. I tried to get referrals to an eye doctor from the doctor. He sent me to some doctor in Chinatown. [laughter] I needed an ultrasound done; they sent me on Wilshire for one. I needed a mammogram; they sent me on Vernon and Broadway. And I said, you know, do you have anything in Torrance? In Inglewood? Somewhere within an hour?

Although participants are given choices of plans and providers, they are required to navigate, usually on their own, the very complicated landscape of HMOs and managed care. Additionally, many families are "defaulted" to specific plans and providers if paperwork is not received within a designated time period; often, these default assignments are not sensitive to the location of provider networks in relation to participants. The new managed care arrangements may also make it difficult for participants to access care at local community clinics and traditional safety net providers because those providers may not be in the plan that the participant selected or was assigned to.

Employment has the potential of moving participants off Medi-Cal to employer-based health insurance plans. Unfortunately, only a small minority of working participants qualify for such

¹³ Medi-Cal is California's implementation of the federal Medicaid program. Persons who are not citizens or legal residents are only eligible for prenatal, emergency and some long-term care under Medi-Cal.

¹⁴ Legislative Analyst Office, State of California. 1999. Analysis of the 2000-01 Budget Bill: Health and Social Services. [WWW] http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_2000/health_ss/hss_9_Medi-Cal_an100.htm [Accessed] March 28, 2000.

plans. While a high percentage of firms, including those with entry-level positions, offer health insurance to their work-force, eligibility requirements and employee premium contributions represent significant barriers to employer-based health insurance for employed welfare-to-work participants.

Employment obligations, inflexible work schedules and reliance on public transportation, coupled with the shift to managed care arrangements marked by geographically dispersed provider networks, affect the ability of participants to access health care services. Transportation is perceived as a barrier to accessing health care services by nearly half of participants surveyed, and over one-third report that they have forgone medical treatment for themselves or their families due to transportation constraints. Regardless of the source of insurance coverage (Medi-Cal vs. Employer-Based) or the type of providers used, transportation is a crucial component to accessing medical services.

Section 5. Transportation Problems and Policy Preferences

Section Highlights

The transportation needs of participants are shaped by experiences described in previous sections. Welfare-to-work activities require many trips to fulfill job-search and work activities. Job-search trips can be complex and frequently involve uncertainties as participants are forced to travel to unknown territory. Employment opportunities and childcare are often located at considerable distances from home, forcing participants to rely on vehicular travel. Participants who use public transit face difficulties in identifying appropriate routes, which may be complicated by the need to make multiple transfers to get to distant job sites. A number of participants also face crowded buses and limited transit availability in certain neighborhoods and at certain times of day. Although having a car can be a major transportation resource, survey and focus group results suggest that travel using an auto is not a panacea.

This section attempts to better understand the travel needs of participants by examining the transportation problems faced by three groups of participants: car drivers, car passengers and public transit riders. This section also discusses the preferences of these groups for both auto- and transit-related programs in relation to the transportation problems they describe. These preferences help identify programs that participants believe would most benefit them as they face the transportation challenges presented by welfare-to-work requirements.

The key issues identified in this section are:

- On a typical day, over half (63 percent) of all recipient trips were by car, either as a passenger or a driver, 18 percent were on public transit, and 16 percent were walking.
- Many recipients without access to a car ride with friends or relatives rather than rely on public transit. For every ten trips on a bus or train, there are nine trips as a passenger in a private vehicle.
- Travel by public transit can be difficult for participants because of the difficulty identifying appropriate routes, the lack of direct lines (requiring transfers), crowding (with some being passed by), limited off-hour runs, and the inconvenience of making multiple work and family-related trips.
- Most recipients prefer more frequent and reliable transit service regardless of whether they live in areas with high or low levels of transit service.
- The availability and reliability of public transit varies greatly from one neighborhood to another; roughly a third of recipients live in areas with low levels of transit service.
- Recipients need backup transportation services for emergencies regardless of whether they have access to reliable transit or a private vehicle.
- Despite the usefulness of an automobile in meeting welfare-to-work and family obligations, recipients with a household car report problems related to reliability and cost.
- Recipients have a strong preference for programs that facilitate ownership of a reliable vehicle, such as auto loans and help with insurance costs.
- Participants also suggest ways to improve access to transit information, Job Club transportation services, and transportation subsidies.

Private Cars – Transportation Problems and Policy Preferences

Private Car Travel Patterns

As described in previous sections, cars can be valuable resources for participants as they transition from welfare to work. Car travel provides participants flexibility and convenience as they face the complexity and uncertainty of work-related trips on top of their multiple household responsibilities. It increases the odds of making the transition from welfare to work, and it makes trips for other purposes less difficult. Over half of all trips reported by survey respondents are taken in cars (63 percent), and most of those are as drivers (47 percent of all trips). Unfortunately, not everyone has access to a car. Car access is a multidimensional phenomenon.

Table 5.1 shows the level of access to cars among participants according to their status as drivers or car passengers. While over half of all participants reside in a household with a car (54 percent), only about a third (36 percent) have unlimited access (can use the car anytime).¹⁵ Limited access means the respondent is not always able to use the car as a driver. Compared to those with unlimited access, participants with limited access are less likely to make trips as drivers. In fact, these participants are only one-third as likely to drive as a participant with unlimited access to a household car. In other words, sharing a car translates into less direct access to a car. This is partially offset since those with limited access may have higher odds of being a passenger. Interestingly, the pattern for those with limited access to household cars is very similar to the pattern for those who can borrow non-household cars; the odds of being a driver or passenger are roughly the same. For many participants, having friends, relatives or neighbors who are willing to lend cars mitigates the lack of cars within their households.

Additional results using multivariate techniques provide some insights into the factors that affect car access, and indirectly car ownership (See Appendix 5.). This analysis shows that car access increases with past earnings and age. One major finding is that minority participants are less likely to have access to cars than are white participants. This is true for both unlimited and limited access. Since it is likely that those with unlimited access are also the owners, the racial disparity for that level of access is consistent with the hypothesis that minorities are disadvantaged by discrimination and redlining in the credit and insurance markets. Furthermore, multivariate techniques suggest that automobile access is related to the level of transit service near a participant's residence. This analysis reveals that car access (and indirectly, car ownership) increases as the level of transit service decreases. In other words, public transit and private vehicles act as substitutes for each other.

¹⁵ Unfortunately, there is no information on whether a participant owns the car in the household. It is likely that those with unlimited access are also car owners. A person with limited access, however, not only shares a household car, but most likely the vehicle belongs to a household member who is not a part of the welfare case.

Table 5.1, Levels of Car Access by Drivers and Car Passengers

	All Participants	Drivers	Car Passengers
Unlimited Access to a household car	36 %	74 %	19 %
Limited Access to a household car	18 %	13 %	25 %
No household car but borrowed a car	15 %	12 %	30 %
No household car and unable to borrow	30 %	0 %	26 %

Problems with Car Ownership

Despite the usefulness of cars, the cars owned by participants or members of their household are often problematic. The overwhelming majority (69 percent) are 10 years or older, and one-sixth (17 percent) are not covered by insurance. Some focus group participants stated that their cars are not registered, and many of their vehicles are not functional. The CTNA survey also finds evidence that maintenance is a problem. Over half (55 percent) of the respondents had at least one mechanical problem over the last three months that prevented them from making trips, and nearly a quarter (23 percent) had three or more mechanical failures. Fifty-nine percent state that mechanical problems are among the two major problems with owning a car.

Focus group participants often weighed potential job opportunities with the multiple costs associated with owning and maintaining a car:

...I could make ten dollars an hour. But if that job was out in Valencia, I couldn't get there. So I, you know, I had to lose that job. And I can get plenty of jobs if I just— well, you gotta get a license. Well, I can't... I gotta get insurance and that's the only way I can get my license, if I get insurance. I can't afford that. And so it's just the lack of transportation. I mean, I even thought about taking the Metro to Valencia, but the hours are— they won't compromise with the jobs.

A south bay resident with an unreliable car described her reluctance to take a job for fear of getting stranded far from home:

Oh, so since then I've looked for jobs on my own since I've finished the Job Club. And I did get hired— I went to an agency and I did get hired, but it was in Thousand Oaks and I didn't really have a car. I was gonna *try* it, but— my mother's clinker. I was using her car and I said no, 'I don't wanna get stranded.' And it was the hours I wanted, three to eleven, but I was like— I couldn't take that chance [laughs] in that car.

Program Preferences Related to Car Ownership

The importance of a car to participants is reflected in their program preferences for auto-related programs. The majority of survey respondents opted for help in securing car loans as their first choice among the four listed options (See Table 5.2.). The preference for this program increases the less access one has to a car. Not surprisingly, the preference for insurance assistance is highest among those with unlimited car access.¹⁶

Table 5.2, Auto Related Program Preferences by Percent First Choice
(Row Percentages Add to 100 percent, except when due to rounding)

	Help getting a car loan	Help maintaining car / emergency road service	Help buying lower cost liability insurance	Help clearing parking tickets
All	53 %	16 %	19 %	12 %
Unlimited Access to a household car	39 %	18 %	25 %	17 %
Limited Access to a household car	49 %	13 %	24 %	14 %
No household car	66 %	16 %	11 %	7 %

During focus groups, participants expressed enthusiastic approval of proposals that would reduce the costs of owning and maintaining a car, such as subsidies for car purchase, repairs and insurance. Generally, focus group participants discussed that cars allowed them to cover more distance in much less time and were convenient for making the multiple trips required by family life, and they felt safer and more private in cars than on public transportation. One participant expressed her preference for cars this way:

Give me my money, I'm getting a car [laughter]. Because transportation in Los Angeles is a big issue. Distances are too, you know, too big and too far.

Another focus group participant expressed her preference for owning a car in this way:

In my circumstances, right now, as this point, I don't own a car, or, um, the future I probably will own one, but I would go with the first thing, the program to help me get a car loan. Now the second one would be... help me with the liability insurance, of low cost. Then I would go for the program ... that helps you, you know, in case of an

¹⁶ In both the survey and focus groups, participants were presented with a choice of four automobile-oriented programs and four public transit programs. They were asked to rank those programs from most to least helpful. The survey and focus group approaches allow for slightly different, yet complementary types of information on participant preferences. The controlled nature of the survey allows for the assembly and discussion of descriptive statistics of preferences, whereas the focus groups allow more extensive commentary on participants' perspectives and opinions. The results from both methods should be interpreted with some caution since each presented participants with a prescribed list of options. While this approach resulted in clear feedback on the specific programs listed, this list may have precluded participant comments and input on other potential program options that were not listed.

emergency at side of the road. And I don't get tickets, and I don't plan to get any, but that would... Yeah, if they would help *ooo-wheee!*

Survey results are consistent with focus group preferences; participants chose car loan programs and programs to assist with insurance costs as their first and second priorities regardless of their level of auto or transit access (Appendix 3). Fewer participants selected programs to help with car maintenance and emergency road services as their first or second choice. The option least favored by survey respondents was assistance in clearing parking tickets. Focus groups revealed that a number of participants did not see the proposal to help clear parking tickets as financially significant or on the level of importance as the other options. One participant also suggested that getting tickets is an individual's fault and paying for them is not the responsibility of the County.

Car Passengers – Transportation Problems and Policy Preferences

Car Passenger Patterns

One of the unanticipated findings of the CTNA is the significant number of participants who travel as passengers in private vehicles. The CTNA focus groups and survey find that, for many, getting a ride from a friend, relative or neighbor is an important way to look for work, transport children, go to health care services, and commute to work. Participants also used rides for other purposes, such as shopping, going to social services, and a host of other activities. In short, being a car passenger helps those participants without access to a car meet both regular and extraordinary transportation needs.¹⁷

Participants are very resourceful in arranging car travel and often rely on friends, relatives and others to borrow a car or secure a ride. Focus group participants revealed that mothers and grandmothers most often provided rides, followed by siblings and friends. Participants also relied on neighbors in case of emergencies but were careful not to ask for too many favors that they could not return or did not want to return in the future. One focus group participant described what it is like not to have a car and why she hesitates to ask for rides:

Just not havin' a car! [laughs] You know, not having a car is very strenuous. It's hard. It cuts down on your daily to-do's. You know, things that you have to do and put off because you don't have it. And waiting for someone to help you out and what not. But, you know, with family and friends it's a little easier but you still don't like to bother with puttin' someone else in the inconvenience of goin' on their time too. 'Cuz I mean, you only have so much in your day and then you have to squeeze into their day so that things will work out for you. So, I mean, by not having it, it's very hard.

Unfortunately, the CTNA survey was not designed to gather extensive and specific information on these types of riders, or their needs and preferences. Nevertheless, there is sufficient information to make some inferences. On a typical day, about a quarter (24 percent) of the adult

¹⁷ Section 4 provides additional details on participants' needs for transportation in the case of emergencies.

participants who travel make at least one trip by catching a ride. The number of trips as a car passenger is only slightly lower than the number of trips made on public transit. For every ten trips on buses or trains, there are nine trips as passengers in private vehicles.

Being a passenger helps fill gaps in household resources. Over half (56 percent) of the car passengers reside in households without cars. Moreover, catching a ride with someone else often serves as a complete substitute for public transit. Nearly half (45 percent) of these car passengers did not use public transit in the previous week. In other words, a significant number of participants in a household without a car rely on car rides rather on public transit.

Many focus group participants indicated they preferred getting a ride to taking public transit when a car is not available. One woman described the reasons for her preference of rides over public transit this way:

I have a car, I basically ride a car. But when it's broken, I have to find a ride, because I cannot rely on the bus. The bus is usually... one time I tried to get a bus to go to my job and then to leave my daughter to school. As she said, it's like every hour they go by, so just to go there to the bus stop is like four blocks away from my house. Then from there to get to my daughter's school and my job is like taking maybe ten buses. So that time was really hard for me... So I cannot really rely on the bus because I would like to, but it's not convenient for the time. I mean, if I decide to go to my job or with my kid to school in the bus, it would take me maybe like two hours.

Fearing that she will get lost, another participant avoids public transportation altogether preferring to rely on family and friends for rides until she can get a car:

I'm scared first of all because I don't know the bus routes. And since I have my child with me, what if I get lost? So, I've never dealt with the bus. I was just too scared of the bus. So, I've always had family, friends, or I finally got my own car.

A quarter (25 percent) of all car passengers reside in a household with a car but have only limited access to the car. It is likely that many, if not most, of this group receive a ride from another person in the household. However, over two-thirds (70 percent) of this group are in single-parent households. This implies that the car is owned by a household adult who is not a member of the welfare case. The remaining one fifth (19 percent) of all car passengers reside in a household with a car where the person has limited access to the car. The focus groups suggest that this group gets rides because their cars are not working or are unreliable, or because car pooling is more convenient.

Table 5.3 suggests that participant household characteristics and level of relative transit access are related to whether a participant is a car passenger. Survey respondents are broken into three groups based on their travel patterns for a given day— (1) those who drive, (2) those who use at

least one other mode along with being a passenger and (3) those who were car passengers and used no other mode (i.e., all of their trips as passengers in a private automobile).¹⁸

Table 5.3, Participant Household Characteristic by Car Passenger Status

	Driver	Passenger in Private Car	
		Also used other mode	No other mode
In neighborhoods with low # of bus stops*	39%	34%	45%
No Drivers' License*	6%	45%	45%
Singe-parents with younger children*	35%	44%	48%
Received Transportation Subsidy*	5%	15%	8%

* Statistically significant. Note, significance is based on a Chi Square statistical test for each row. For instance, in the table above the percentage of each group (drivers, passengers who used another mode and passengers who used no other mode) who had no drivers' license is statistically significant.

Passengers— particularly those who did not use other modes—are more likely to reside in areas with relatively low transit service. These passengers may partially compensate for a relative lack of transit service by arranging car rides. Many passengers do not have a driver's license, so it is difficult for them to become a driver, even if a car is available. Many are single-parents with younger children (under four years old), and they may have a particularly hard time using public transit.

Many participants rely on an informal system that offers rides for a fee. Focus group participants revealed that family members or acquaintances sometimes charge a fee to provide them with a ride. In fact, some people make a little business and help solve the transportation problems of the poor by shuttling them around. Focus group participants also indicated that in some cases participants of the same Job Club assist their carless comrades to potential job sites:

Shirley: You have to caravan with somebody [in Job Club]. Hopefully, they'll let you go with `em.

Facilitator: You mean if somebody has a car?

Shirley: Yeah, somebody has a car.

Facilitator: People help each other out?

Carrie: Our last class, we were—

Shirley: We was like family. We all go along...together, so we all helped each other.

Previous research by Genevieve Guiliano also suggests that informal neighborhood carpools are an important means of travel for low income people in Los Angeles:

Neighborhood carpools are rides given in private automobiles by the owner to a neighbor or acquaintance for a small fee. In a study of neighborhood carpools in Los Angeles, Professor Guiliano found that the drivers of the cars are usually female and that driving their neighbors where they need to go is a source of income for them. The passengers are

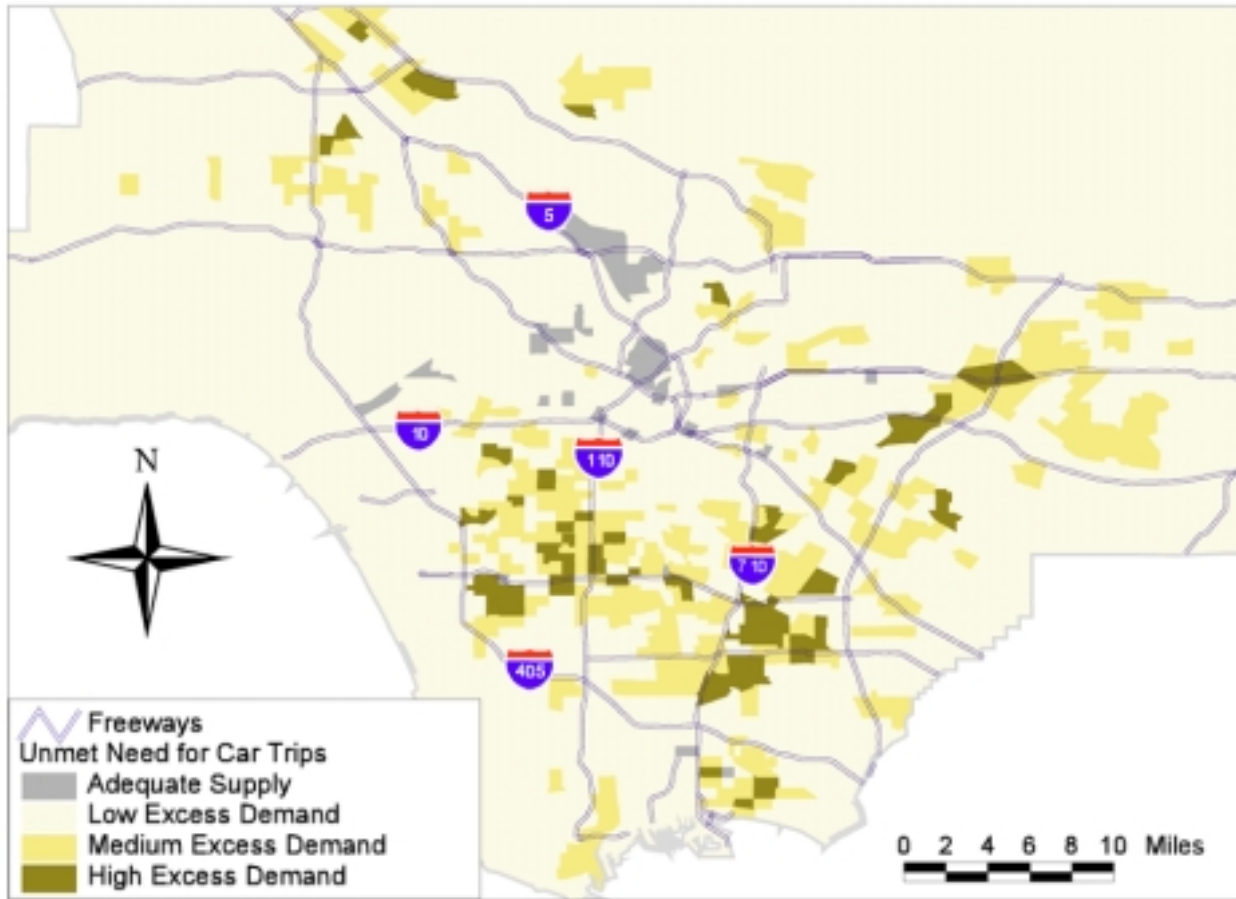
¹⁸ These are not absolute categories since they are based on only travel for one day. It is possible that those who are only passengers for the reference day may use public transit the next day. Despite this limitation, the following analysis provides useful profiles.

mostly female, have no access to a private vehicle, and are very low income. The drivers are motivated by earning extra money and by helping others. The passengers use neighborhood carpools because they offer decreased travel time, increased personal safety, increased convenience, and a low price. The price is universally \$1.00 per trip. (Blumenberg et al., 1998).

Although this research does not identify explicitly that women that use these informal carpools are welfare-to-work participants, it may be safe to assume that these carpools may be a viable, affordable means of transportation for participants.

Map 5.1 provides a relative description of those areas of Los Angeles County in which the demand for work-related car trips may exceed the number of participant-owned cars. This suggests those areas in which participants may have a higher need to arrange passenger rides with friends or relatives. This map shows that car passengers are not only in areas with a high density of welfare-to-work participants. They are both within and outside the inner city.

Map 5.1, Estimated Distribution of Participant Car Passenger Trips¹⁹



Problems of Car Passengers

Participants who are car passengers must often face the same problems that car owners face—cars are often unreliable and break down. The unreliability of cars can add another level of uncertainty to the trips of car passengers. One focus group participant describes how getting a ride is often unreliable and unpredictable:

In the mornings when I miss the bus, I will call my boyfriend, and he'll come to take me. But sometimes he can't take me because ... he works, too, you know. And he just does odd jobs right now, because, you know, he's not in a stable job right now, so I can't always rely on him, and he's the only one I can rely on, you know, 'cause I don't have family out here.

¹⁹ Map 5.1 shades the difference between the number of auto trips for work per TAZ estimated by SCAG and the estimated number of participant household cars. The shading represents the excess number of car trips that must be supplied by friends or relatives that are not a part of the welfare case. Unfortunately, we do not know the average number of work-related car trips supplied by a household where an adult participant owns a car. The analysis uses a plausible range from 1.5 to 2.0. Although the estimates of excess demand vary directly with the assumption of the household supply, the relative distribution by TAZ is very similar. See Appendix 6 for additional details.

See, even if you plan ahead...something fails. Something will come up with that person you've got your plans made with. And then they're gonna drop out and you have absolutely *nowhere, nobody* else to turn to. It's like, oh my god.

In the following case, a focus group participant left a good-paying job far from home for a lower-paying job closer to home because she could not afford car insurance and her arrangement to get a ride with a friend broke down:

I went to school and graduated as a computer office specialist and um, I got a job –my friend and I – she was taking me to work every day. But then she couldn't take me to work anymore, and I would have to take the bus and that was on Lassen. There's like hardly any buses on Lassen. And, it's like a little street; it's not a major street. And um, you know, I drove my car to work. And being real nervous about it, but after another month, I quit. Because I couldn't handle it anymore, I was too nervous.

This participant considered taking the bus, but the longer travel times on the bus meant that her daughter would have been left at home unsupervised. She tried to drive her own car, but still had problems affording car insurance. Eventually she quit her job. She stated: "... and now I'm not even working at it [finding a job]... you know, it's just like I am stuck."

Car Passenger Program Choices

The CTNA survey provides insight into the program preferences of car passengers. Using the breakdowns described above, Table 5.4 provides the program choices most widely cited by survey respondents who took a trip in a private vehicle, by whether the respondent was a car driver or passenger. Clearly, there is a strong desire for car ownership, particularly among those who are only car passengers. Over two-thirds (70 percent) of all riders without a car state that they do not own a car because they cannot afford one. There is not a clear stated preference among the listed transit programs for these groups. The transit program receiving the greatest number of responses is for more frequent service.

Table 5.4, Auto Program Preferences by Passenger Status, CTNA Respondents With at Least One Trip in a Private Vehicle

	Driver	Passenger in Private Car Used Other mode	No other mode
Car Loan as 1st Choice among Auto Program Options*	43%	52%	65%
More Frequent Service as 1st Choice among Transit Programs Options *	28%	38%	33%

* Statistically significant. Note, significance is based on a Chi Square statistical test for each row.

These statistics strongly confirm observations from the CTNA focus groups that many of the car passengers would like to eventually become car owners. When they must rely on public transit, they would like to see more frequent service.

Transit Users – Transportation Problems and Policy Preferences

Transit-Related Problems

As previously discussed in Section 3, public transit is often not the preferred choice of travel for participants since it does not enable participants to cope with the complexity and uncertainty of work in combination with household-related trips. Nevertheless, about 40 percent of survey respondents found public transit a workable alternative.²⁰

CTNA focus group participants discussed a number of problems that they had with the transit system. They mentioned that buses sometimes pass them by, making their trips difficult to plan. Some reported that buses are often overcrowded and are often especially inconvenient and stressful when dealing with children and shopping. Participants also have problems finding the correct routes and traveling by bus in unfamiliar areas. Other participants in focus groups felt that using public transit is time-consuming and unsafe.²¹

CTNA survey respondents also described problems they have had with the transit system. Of those respondents who used public transit in the last 6 months, 67 percent had one or more transfers, 60 percent were passed by at least occasionally or sometimes, and 55 percent stated that they felt unsafe at least occasionally or sometimes. The average waiting time was 22.5 minutes. Respondents were also asked an open-ended question that allowed them to suggest their biggest two problems with using transit. Twenty-seven percent suggested that one of their biggest problems was infrequent service or waiting, 27 percent stated crowding, 21 percent stated the bus not on schedule, and only 7 percent stated expense (See Appendix 3.).

Table 5.5 breaks down transit-related problems by four types of geographic areas based on the relative level of transit service and the relative density of welfare-to-work transit riders. There are clear differences in transit-related problems across these neighborhood types. Crowding is a particular problem for respondents in areas with a high level of transit service and a high density of welfare-to-work transit riders.

²⁰ See Section 3 for participants' positive comments on the public transit system.

²¹ See Section 3 for participant quotes about transit problems.

Table 5.5 Transit Problems by Geographic Area, CTNA Respondents Who Used Public Transit Within the last 6 Months.

	Level of Service / Density of Welfare-to-Work Transit Riders			
	High / Low	Low / High	High / High	Low / Low
Problems				
Transfers (1+)	65 %	70 %	68 %	64 %
Pass By*	61 %	60 %	70 %	55 %
Wait*	17.7	23.4	20.0	24.5
Unsafe*	38 %	59 %	52 %	56 %
Among biggest two problems using transit				
Infrequent Service*	23 %	23 %	26 %	32 %
Crowded*	25 %	25 %	37 %	21 %
Bus Late	16 %	21 %	18 %	23 %
Expensive	10 %	9 %	6 %	6 %

* Statistically significant. Note, significance is based on a Chi Square statistical test for each row.

Transit-Related Program Choices

Participant preferences for transit-related programs generally reflect their frustrations with the reliability and level of transit service. Table 5.6 breaks down transit-related problems by the relative level of transit service and by those who stated that crowding and infrequent service or waiting were among their two biggest problems.

Survey participants were given a list of transit-related programs to choose from. This question reveals little variation: 24 percent picked free transit pass, 31 percent picked more frequent service, 26 percent picked emergency ride, and 19 percent picked shuttle. Moreover, there is not much difference across the subgroups (Appendix 3). Survey participants were also asked an open-ended question in which respondents suggested their own transit program preference. The answers to this question reveal a clearer sense of priority – participants prefer increased service over assistance with out-of-pocket costs of transportation.

Responses to this open-ended question reveal that more frequent service (including less crowded service) is first, with 33 percent of the responses. Participants also prefer two other service-related improvements, being on-time (9 percent) and closer bus stops (6 percent). Cost is a lower consideration, only 9 percent of the responses. There are also differences in program preferences depending on the type of area that a respondent resides. Those in areas with a high level of service are *more* likely to want better or more frequent service. A majority of those who experienced infrequent service preferred more services, and an even larger majority of those who experienced crowding preferred more frequent service.

Table 5.6 Transit-Related Program Preferences by Geographic Area and Major Problem Groups

	Low Level of Service	High Level of Service	Crowded	Infrequent
Rank 1st of Closed List (not statistically different)				
Free Pass	22 %	30 %	26 %	26 %
More Frequent	32 %	29 %	31 %	35 %
Emergency	27 %	24 %	25 %	25 %
Shuttle	20 %	18 %	20 %	17 %
Open ended responses (all statistically different)				
More Service	30 %	41 %	61 %	52 %
On Time	9 %	10 %	12 %	14 %
Lower Cost/Free	9 %	8 %	8 %	8 %
Closer Stop	7 %	3 %	3 %	6 %

Focus group participants also said they wanted more frequent bus service, especially in suburban areas, and more frequently scheduled buses on nights and weekends. They also recommended monthly bus passes, that these bus passes be interchangeable between transit agencies, and that participants be able to ride free for a specified distance such as two miles.

Other Program Suggestions

Focus group participants made a number of suggestions for ways that Job Clubs could assist their transportation needs:

- *Information.* Provide transportation information at Job Club about bus routes and commercial areas. They would like directions and maps, including Internet map searches for job referrals. Participants report that this has been helpful when provided, usually in connection with job development.
- *Ride Sharing.* Facilitate ride sharing in Job Club.
- *Shuttles.* Provide shuttles for a regional job search.
- *Home-based Job Search.* Allow participants to do their job search from home and thereby cut down on visits to the Job Club and searches in unfamiliar areas.
- *Time-limited Requirement.* A time-limited requirement to find a job rather than requiring daily visits to Job Club and making daily application quotas.

Focus group participants also made suggestions for improvements for transportation subsidies:

- *Reliability.* Reliable and promptly issued transportation subsidies from GAIN.
- *Information.* Better information about transportation support.
- *More Adequate Subsidies.* For example, rather than a fixed dollar amount of support, the County could provide more convenient and cost-effective monthly passes, family passes, and interline passes.

Focus group participants also suggested that car pools or shuttles be implemented to jobs with multiple participants. Also, participants expressed interest in shuttles or taxis to assist with emergencies.

Focus group participants also suggested that they be involved in the developing the solutions to their transportation needs. Many feel that policy-makers really do not understand their lives and needs. The following recommendation by a participant received nods and sounds of agreement:

Facilitator: Are there any other recommendations that are not on this list, that we haven't talked about, and that you'd like to make. Cause we don't assume that we know all of the answers here for you. So are there things you'd like to suggest that could be helpful? That are not on this list?

Participant: I think they need to pick the lowest person on the shelf, you know, somebody who really doesn't have any family to help them, who has actually survived, you know, get some people who really know what's its like to start like this, and let them help make those decisions.

That's what you're doing, you know, but I mean, I see people that work, you know, they work in DPSS, and they say [mimics an officious voice] "*Oh, yeah, I understand, I understand it.*" They really don't. You know? I see the car they drive, and the clothes they wear, and you can tell by looking at them, they have never had to live like this, ever.

In summary, focus group and survey results reveal no clear rank order of auto- and transit-related program proposals. Rather, findings suggest that program priorities vary by participant's situation and needs. Program suggestions from the focus groups, though, are consistent with the program priorities revealed in surveys. Combined, focus group and survey results suggest that the County needs to take into account a range or proposals that reflect the diversity of needs, the desire for car ownership, the need to reduce the cost of owning cars, and the need to reduce the opportunity costs associated with time, disruption and inconvenience of public transit, particularly buses.

Section 6. Limitations and Costs of Transportation Resources

Section Highlights

Previous sections have described the travel patterns, transportation needs and problems facing welfare-to-work participants in Los Angeles County. The limitations and costs of transportation resources also impact participants, especially since recipients moving into employment significantly increase their expenditures on travel.²² This section describes the availability and cost of auto- and transit-related resources to recipients in Los Angeles County from two perspectives. First, it provides a general discussion of regional auto-related markets including the cost of cars, insurance and maintenance, and the difficulties of credit and financing. Second, this section describes the transit-related resources available to recipients and examines the potential limitations of the county's transit system.

The key issues identified in this section are:

- Given their limited income and the asset limits imposed by public assistance programs, recipients are likely to purchase older cars that often have higher maintenance and operating costs.
- Financing and credit for auto loans can often be problematic for recipients due to low wages, a lack of stable employment, and problematic credit histories.
- Auto insurance can also present a substantial barrier to owning and operating a car and often constitutes the highest annual vehicle-related cost for low-income drivers.
- Recipients who use public transit live in areas with congested bus stops; transit congestion, though, does not appear disproportionately concentrated in congested areas.

Auto-Related Markets

Previous sections have described how having access to a household car increases the employment outcome of recipients and lowers their travel burden. In this sense, it is not surprising that many recipients without a car want to purchase an automobile and that recipients with a car want to replace their aging and unreliable vehicles.²³ For many, car ownership is not only desired, but is an integral yet difficult part of the transition from welfare to work. The high relative costs of purchasing, maintaining and operating a car, though, often hinders the ability of welfare recipients to own a vehicle. This section discusses costs and limitations that may face low-income individuals who wish to purchase and maintain a car. In particular, it discusses asset

²² Household transportation expenditures dramatically increase as families move from public assistance to work. Transportation expenditures are more than four times higher for public assistance families that have at least one working member compared to families receiving aid that have no workers, going from about \$1,000 per year to about \$4,000 per year (Passero, 1996). Among families that receive public assistance and do not have working members, transportation expenses account for about 10 percent of total household expenditures, compared to nearly 20 percent for public assistance families with a working member. The jump in expenditure level as families enter the workforce from public assistance is driven by an increased reliance on autos.

²³ Unfortunately, there is no detailed longitudinal study on the dynamics in the change in car-ownership status. One study using data for AFDC recipients finds that over a period of approximately two years, a quarter of owners lost their cars and a fifth of non-owners became owners (Miller and Ong, 1999, cited in Ong, 2000).

limits, the used car market, financing and credit, and operating, maintenance and insurance costs. Finally, this section discusses some auto-related policy options.

Asset Limits and The Used Car Market

The amount that recipients can spend on purchasing or maintaining a car is limited by their income as well as by the eligibility rules of public assistance programs. The employment records for CTNA survey respondents were extracted from welfare administrative data.²⁴ The median annual earnings for respondents with some reported employment between the third quarter of 1998 and the second quarter of 1999 was about \$4,700. The median income for all survey respondents was about \$800 during this period. Low earnings translate into low purchasing power for recipients. Even as recipients find work and their earnings increase, they will most likely join the burgeoning ranks of the working poor.

Recipients who are able to purchase a car are limited by the asset limits that public assistance programs place on the value of the vehicle they can own and remain eligible for aid. AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the program that preceded TANF) eligibility asset rules limited the equity value of a vehicle to \$1,500 before the value of the vehicle counted towards allowable resources. Under TANF, states have the flexibility to adopt new vehicle asset limits, and twenty-four states have chosen to exclude the value of one vehicle; that is, households can own one vehicle, regardless of worth, and still qualify for state TANF programs. CalWORKs chose to adopt the same vehicle asset limits used by the Food Stamp program. The CalWORKs, Food Stamps and Medi-Cal²⁵ asset limit for vehicles— established in 1977 and raised only 3 percent since— is \$4,650²⁶ and refers to the wholesale market value of the vehicle.

The limited income of recipients and the restrictions of asset limitations effectively force recipients into the lower end of the used car market. A simple analysis of the Los Angeles used car market provides some insight into the supply of used vehicles that would allow recipients to remain qualified for CalWORKs, and/or Food Stamps.²⁷ Among used cars with a purchase price less than \$5,000 dollars, the average age of vehicles was 11 years and over three-quarters of the

²⁴ Administrative data on employment was provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) from the California Employment Development Department (EDD) Base Wage database, which contains quarterly records of all workers in the unemployment insurance (UI) program. The UI program covers approximately 95 percent of all paid workers in the private sector. The data do not include self-employment, employment in firms not in the Unemployment Insurance Program, and some governmental agencies. Given the lack of continuous employment for welfare recipients, this study does not use the calculated potential years of labor market experience, which is commonly used in most empirical studies of labor-market outcomes.

²⁵ Vehicle limits for Medi-Cal recipients under the 1931(b) category of eligibility, which is the aid code that most CalWORKs recipients fall under.

²⁶ Food stamp recipients are allowed \$2000 in assets and \$4650 for the market value of the vehicle before the value of the vehicle is counted towards the \$2000 in allowable resources. The equity value in the vehicle does not appear to count against allowable resources (Phone conversation with Mrs. Ederlin at the California Department of Social Services.)

²⁷ The data come from cars advertised in the Sunday edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, May 28, 2000. A total of 50 used cars were identified.

cars were over 10 years old.²⁸ The newest used cars available within the price range were 1994 models, with an average asking price of about \$4,300 and an average of 85,000 miles.

Financing and Credit

After finding a car within their means and under the eligibility asset cap, most recipients would need to finance the car purchase. Obtaining credit is difficult for most welfare recipients due to low wages, a lack of stable attachment to the labor force, and problematic credit histories. Furthermore, in cases where financing options are available, the terms and interest rates can be usurious. Those with bad credit or no credit are typically subjected to high interest rates and shorter borrowing periods. In addition, many recipients reside in low-income and minority communities that have less access to credit options. In Los Angeles County, areas with large African American populations have considerably fewer financial offices (bank branches) per 100,000 residents than neighboring communities (Dymski and Mohanty, 1999). Another study provides evidence of unequal credit flows based on income and minority status in Los Angeles County. Aside from a lack of credit options, purchasing a used vehicle also carries burdens in terms of financing. Older vehicles translate into higher interest rates and more prohibitive financing options. Generally, the rate of interest on car loans increases with the age of the car being purchased due to the depreciation factor, and banks will often not provide car loans for vehicles that are more than 10 years old. Given these difficulties, it is not surprising that more CTNA respondents picked the auto-loan program as their first choice than any other car or transit option.

Operating and Maintenance

Most recipients who own cars must be content with the costs and limitations associated with operating and maintaining an older car. Annual average maintenance costs peak when a vehicle is ten years old. Maintenance costs on a ten-year old-vehicle are over twice as much as maintenance costs on a four-year old-vehicle. Operating costs such as fuel costs are higher for older vehicles because of less efficient engine technology. In addition, the institutional costs such as registration and liability insurance may be financially prohibitive. While registration fees on older vehicles may not be burdensome, costs associated with vehicle emissions testing are often higher for older vehicles because of high failure rates.²⁹ These costs may offset and possibly outweigh lower vehicle registration fees. Lower rates of registered vehicles in poorer

²⁸ Analysis of CTNA survey data and national transportation data strongly indicate that welfare recipients and the working poor are limited to the low end of the used car market. Nationwide, the average age of vehicles owned is correlated with income level. Lower income households on average own much older vehicles. The average age of vehicles owned by families earning \$15,000 or less is over ten years. Results from TNA found that among recipients with vehicles in their household, over 69 percent owned vehicles that were 10 years old or greater. Furthermore, Q5 data for California welfare recipients show that the average age of vehicles registered to welfare recipients is 14 years.

²⁹ If vehicles fail the smog check, owners are required to spend up to \$450 to lower the emissions to an acceptable level. Once the required amount has been spent, vehicles can be registered for the upcoming year despite failing the emissions test. However, this only applies for a single year and if the vehicle does not pass again the following year, it must be scrapped. There are provisions for low-income individuals, which provide lower spending caps—\$250 and \$75 based on income levels, and, in certain cases, subsidies for maintenance costs.

communities may be partially attributed to the fact that older cars are more likely to fail emissions tests.

Insurance

Auto insurance can also present a substantial barrier to owning and operating a car. The California vehicle code requires that all licensed drivers have liability insurance coverage. For a variety of reasons, this may be the highest annual vehicle-related cost for low-income drivers. California insurance rates are among the highest in the nation and because of redlining—the practice of setting discriminatory insurance rates based on the neighborhood of residence—low-income drivers are often subject to the highest insurance rates. Although officially banned in 1988 by Proposition 103, redlining persists. A survey of insurance rates based on a typical driver for the zip codes with respondents to the CTNA survey resulted in a range of rates from \$820 to \$1,565 per year, with an average premium cost of over \$1,100. Additional analysis indicates that the racial composition and household income of communities affect insurance premiums. As the percent of the population that is African American increases, insurance premiums also increase, and as the median household income decreases, insurance premiums increase. Not only are premiums higher in low-income, minority neighborhoods, but these are the same areas that major insurers tend to avoid. For example, 1997 data for State Farm Mutual Insurance Company show that the company lacks agents in most of the zip codes in central and south-central Los Angeles, areas that have high concentrations of welfare recipients (The Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights, 1999; Los Angeles Times, 1999). Only two of the 25 company’s claims offices are located in low-income neighborhoods.³⁰

Auto-Related Costs

There may be some forthcoming relief for the high automobile insurance premiums. In 1999, as part of the legislation that requires minimum coverage, Governor Davis approved a “Lifeline Insurance Program.” This pilot program requires that all insurance companies offer flat rate insurance to residents of Los Angeles and San Francisco counties to qualified drivers who earn less than 150 percent of the official poverty line at a \$450 flat fee rather than an area-based rate. However, the rules proposed for this program are likely to discourage many drivers because they require participants to make an initial payment of \$100. Another rule prevents a driver from participating in the program if any other person in the household already possesses insurance. Nonetheless, this program, if fully implemented without major barriers, can promote welfare-to-work travel for a significant number of individuals. Taking advantage of the Lifeline Insurance Program can dramatically decrease the cost of car ownership for a recipient. This can be seen in

³⁰ One of the consequences of high premiums, low accessibility to major insurers and limited income is a high uninsured rate. A recent study showed that county-wide, over 30 percent of drivers are uninsured and in some areas of Los Angeles county the rate of uninsured drivers exceeds 80 percent. It should not be surprising that these areas also coincide with the highest levels of welfare recipients, giving support to the finding that, statewide, over 70 percent of uninsured drivers earn less than \$20,000 per year. Most of the drivers without insurance (87 percent) would be considered “low risks” to insurance companies, but simply drive without insurance because they are unable to afford coverage. This relationship suggests that the day-to-day value of having a car exceeds the potential penalty for driving without insurance. Possible penalties include large fines and vehicle impoundment. Additionally, Proposition 213 limits the amount an uninsured driver can collect if he or she is the victim of an accident.

Table 6.1, which provides estimates of the monthly cost. A lifeline premium would decrease monthly cost by 16 percent to 20 percent.

Table 6.1, Estimated Monthly Cost of Car Ownership, Los Angeles County 1999

Cost of Used Car	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Interest	9%	11%	9%	11%
Months	36	36	36	36
Payment	(\$95.40)	(\$98.22)	(\$127.20)	(\$130.95)
Insurance	\$ (900.00)	\$ (900.00)	\$(1,100.00)	\$(1,100.00)
	\$ (75.00)	\$ (75.00)	\$ (91.67)	\$ (91.67)
Gasoline				
8000mi@\$1.50/ga	\$ (33.33)	\$ (33.33)	\$ (33.33)	\$ (33.33)
Maintenance	\$ (25.00)	\$ (25.00)	\$ (15.00)	\$ (15.00)
Total Monthly	\$ (228.73)	\$ (231.55)	\$ (267.20)	\$ (270.95)
With Lifeline Insurance	\$ (191.23)	\$ (194.05)	\$ (213.03)	\$ (216.79)
Fungible Pass (\$42/month)	\$ (149.23)	\$ (152.05)	\$ (171.03)	\$ (174.79)
Zero Interest Loan	\$ (137.17)	\$ (137.17)	\$ (154.94)	\$ (154.94)
Working at \$5.75, Full -time	\$ 996.67	\$ 996.67	\$ 996.67	\$ 996.67
Working at \$10 Full-time	\$1,733.33	\$1,733.33	\$ 1,733.33	\$ 1,733.33

The table also shows that there are other reasonable ways to reduce the monthly cost of car ownership. If the dollar value of a bus pass is made completely fungible, then the monthly costs decrease by another 15 to 18 percentage points. If the interest rate for a car loan program is fully subsidized, then the monthly cost would drop by another 5 to 7 percentage points. The three programs together would reduce the monthly cost to 60 percent or less of the unsubsidized monthly cost, and this would put car ownership within reach of many of those working full-time.

Additional gains can be made by addressing maintenance costs and uncertainty due to unreliable vehicles. For example, loan programs could require and pay for mandatory testing of potential used cars, thus eliminating lemons. There are potential net gains to providing training on do-it-yourself maintenance, and referrals to reliable and honest automobile repair services. Some of this can be accomplished at a low cost through cooperation with vocational training programs related to automobile repair. There should be some assistance given to those encountering temporary needs caused by unforeseen disruptions to employment or major repair problems. This can include providing temporary transportation assistance. Improving the continuity of employment or car ownership can prevent short-term crises from degenerating into prolonged joblessness.

Another policy option involves saving accounts for vehicles. TANF also allows Individual Development Accounts (IDA), which are restricted savings accounts that can be used for post-

secondary education expenses, home purchase, or business start-ups. The CalWORKs program allows for IDAs up to \$5,000. Currently, IDAs cannot include monies being saved for car purchases, although this is a policy option recently suggested by President Clinton to aid families transitioning from welfare with their transportation needs.

A final policy option is the exclusion of one vehicle from the calculation of asset limits if a car is necessary for employment-related transportation, *including* work commutes. Current regulations for Food Stamps and CalWORKs exclude the value of one vehicle if it is necessary for business or employment purposes. Unfortunately, the work commute does not count towards a vehicle being necessary for employment, even though access to vehicles has very large and positive impact on employment outcomes.

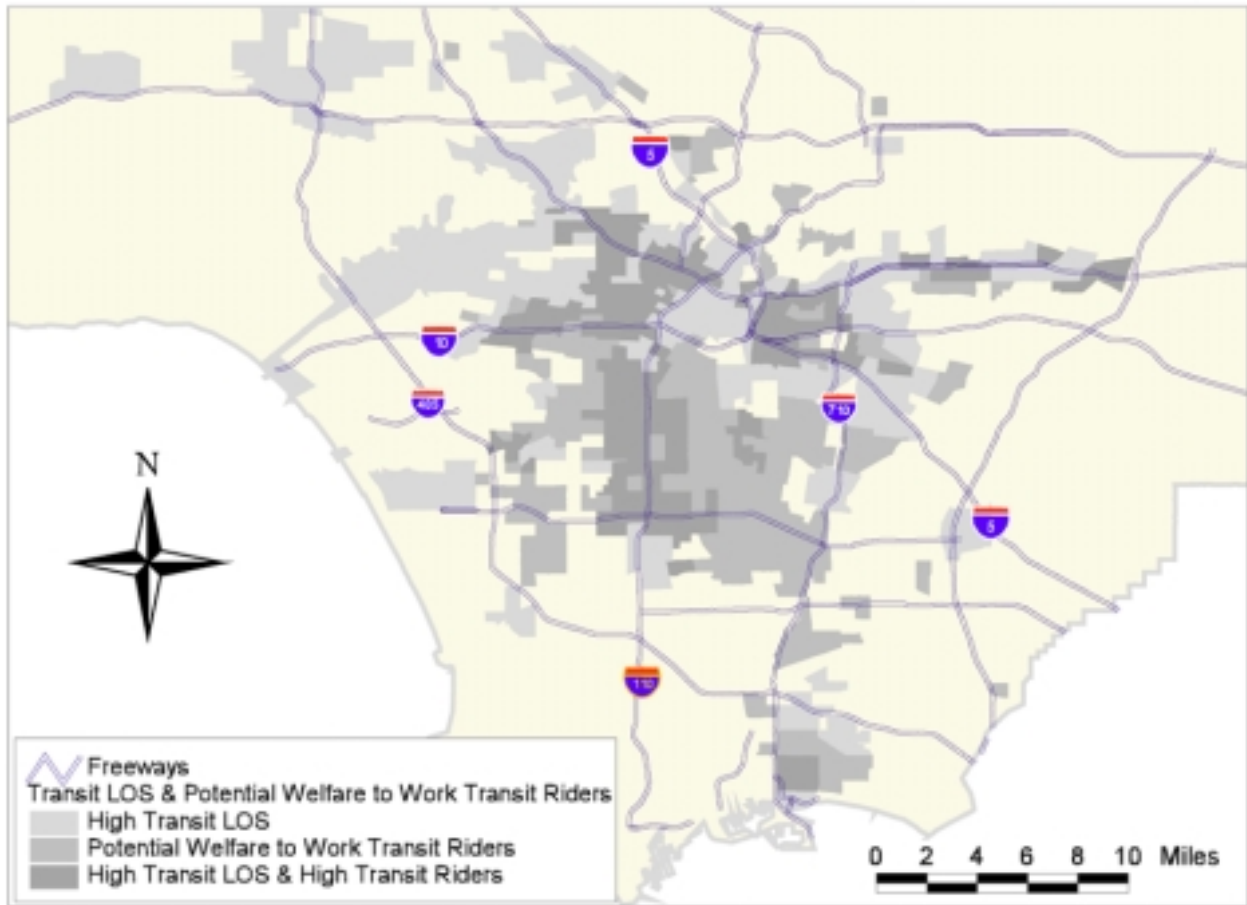
Public Transit System

Public transportation provides a valuable resource for recipients, especially for those who do not have access to a reliable household car or who are unable to catch a ride. This section briefly compares the existing level of transportation services to potential transportation riders and then analyzes the level of congestion on the transit system.

Existing Transportation Resources

Many welfare-to-work participants in Los Angeles County live in areas that have a high level of transit service during the morning travel peak. Map 6.1 compares the existing level of transit service on the major transit providers in the county with the areas identified as having a high concentration of participants who are potential transit riders. Some recipients who need transportation live in areas that are not highly served by transit and may benefit from extended services and/or transportation alternatives such as paratransit, carpool programs or transportation provided by CBOs.

Map 6.1, Level of Transit Service and Estimated Welfare Transit Riders, Los Angeles County 1999



Existing Transit Ridership and Potential Additional Welfare-to-Work Riders

This section provides a large-scale description of the parts of the transit system of Los Angeles County that could be most heavily impacted by welfare-to-work programs. This impact is estimated at an aggregate level and does not provide line-specific details. In aggregate, areas estimated to have welfare-to-work transit riders have congested bus stops during the am peak period. Transit congestion, though, does not appear disproportionately concentrated in these areas.

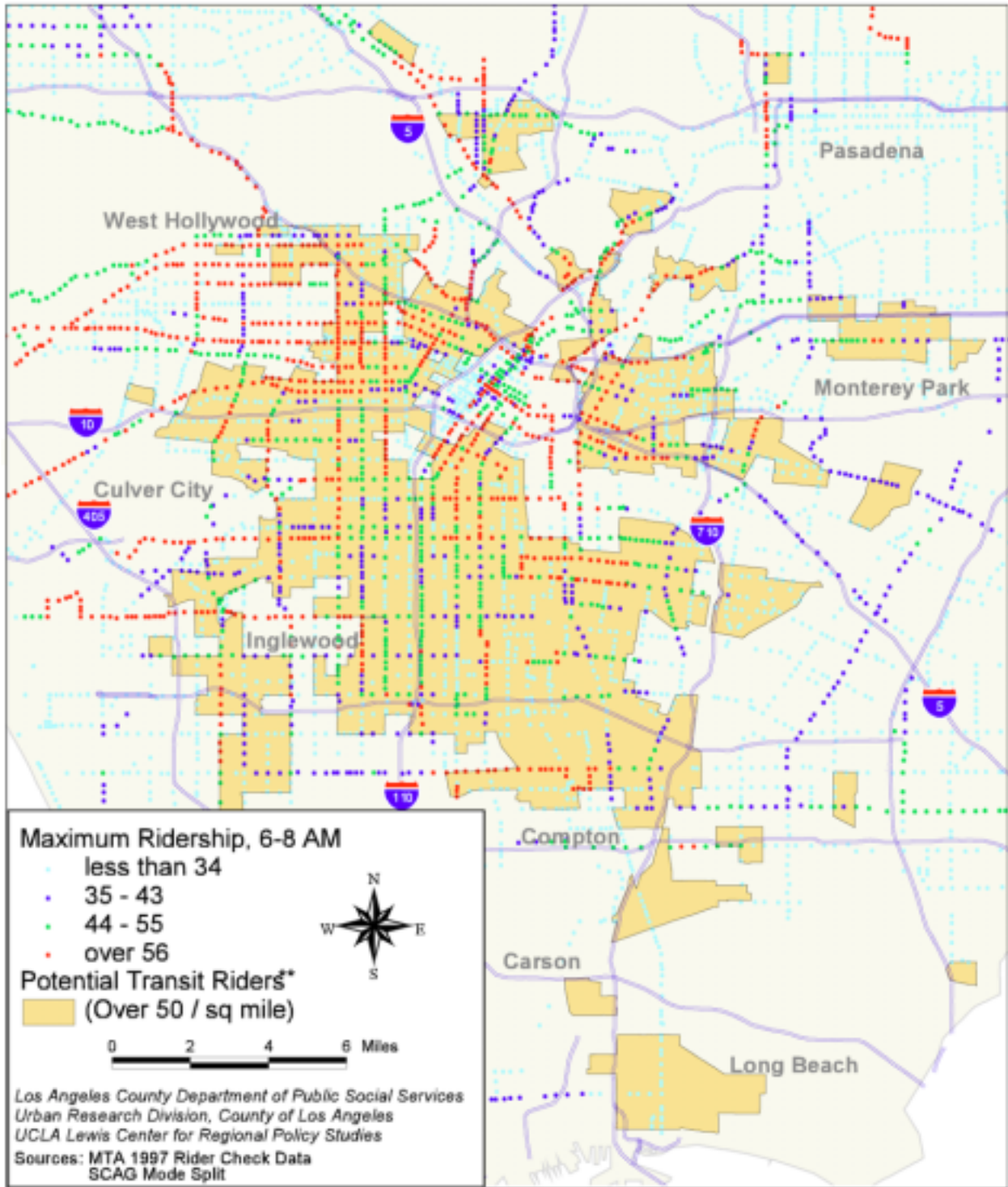
This evaluation is based on a two-step analysis: estimating existing ridership and estimating potential transit demand (described in Appendix 6). First, estimates of the existing level of transit ridership between 6 am and 8 am was derived from 1997 MTA's Ride Check data. This is the most comprehensive data available on the level of transit usage across the MTAs entire service area. Next, the number of welfare-to-work participants expected to take transit to work was estimated using from SCAGs Regional Mode Choice Model.

Maps 6.2 and 6.3 present the results of this analysis (Appendix 6). These maps divide the analysis of line load by direction since previous research indicates the level of transit ridership can vary greatly by line direction. Also, these maps focus on those areas in Los Angeles County that are estimated to have over 50 welfare-to-work transit riders.

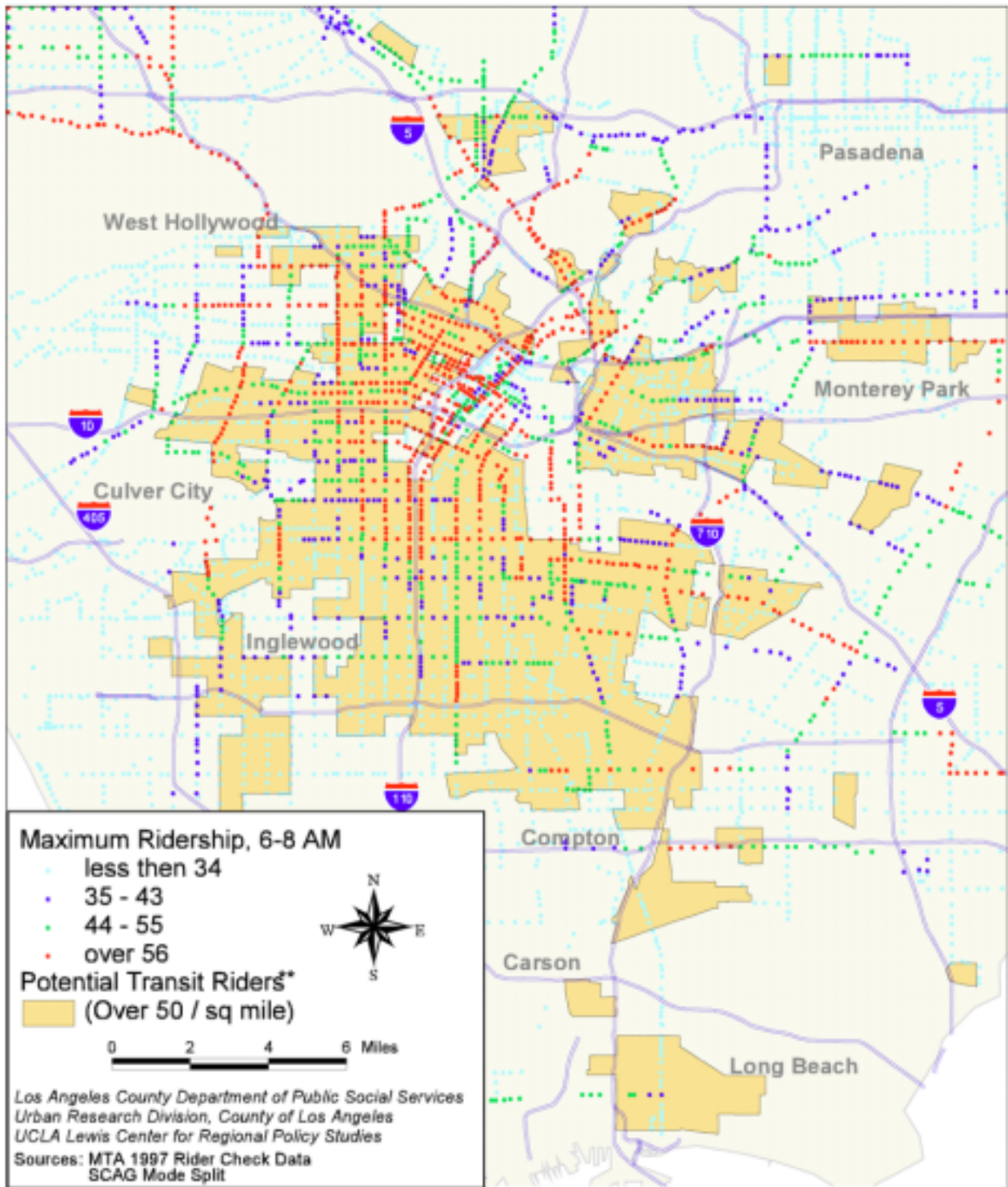
The points on Maps 6.2 and 6.3 display the maximum level of congestion on any line at any stop between 6 am and 8 am. Assuming that a bus has 43 seats, buses with over 55 persons are shaded red to represent the highest level of congestion. These maps display the “worst” congestion at all stops during this period and should be interpreted with caution. For instance, if only one bus at one stop was overcrowded during this time, it is shaded as crowded on these maps. These results should be interpreted cautiously since previous research indicates that load fluctuates greatly during this period for each of these stops depending on the time, line and direction of the line (Galindez and Mireles-Cordova, 1999). Maps 6.2 and 6.3 also shade areas with potential additional transit riders due to welfare-to-work trips. This provides a general description of those areas in Los Angeles County that may experience increased transit demand due to welfare to work.

Maps 6.2 and 6.3 indicate that areas estimated to have welfare-to-work transit riders have congested bus stops during the am peak period. Participants living in these areas may face increased difficulty using the transit system for welfare-to-work trips during high load periods. Congestion varies spatially both inside and outside of these areas, though. Furthermore, transit congestion does not appear disproportionately concentrated in areas with potential welfare-to-work-riders. For instance, about 2.5 percent of all unique stops for all lines in both areas were highly congested, or had over 55 persons.

Map 6.2, Existing Ridership and Potential Welfare-to-Work Riders, AM Peak, South and West Bound Lines, Los Angeles County 1997



Map 6.3, Existing Ridership and Potential Welfare-to-Work Riders, AM Peak, North and East Bound Lines, Los Angeles County 1997



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