

Understanding Visitor Motivations and Decision Making in Transportation Choices:

Acadia National Park

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Abstract

In the last decade, Acadia National Park has experienced record visitation, surpassing 4 million annual visits. Increased visitation can boost local economies, provide greater opportunities for recreation, and spread conservation messages to a wider audience. At the same time, more visitors have meant greater numbers of personal vehicles, which has caused resource damage across the park. In response, park management implemented several strategies to manage vehicle use and encourage alternative methods of transportation. One such method, the park's fare-free shuttle bus service called the Island Explorer, has proven successful in mitigating some of these issues and improving visitor experience. Though the Island Explorer is popular amongst users, a large proportion of park visitors are not utilizing the service during their time in the park. To investigate this issue, a survey was administered to the vehicle driving population at Acadia. Visitors were asked a variety of questions about their transportation decision-making process and potential barriers to Island Explorer use. Results revealed a significant knowledge and usage gap especially amongst first-time park visitors who are learning about the bus service too late in their trips or not at all. Many visitors also struggle to make informed transportation decisions without awareness of the park's congestion issues. Finally, several factors related to bus operations such as long travel time and insufficient user-focused communication can prevent access to the Island Explorer.

Keywords: Acadia National Park, public transportation, Island Explorer, visitor use management, recreation planning, public land

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In 2022, Acadia National Park (ANP), located on the central coast of Maine, became the 5th most visited National Park in the country, with approximately 4 million annual visits (National Park Service (NPS), 2022). The previous year, the park set a record with 4.07 million visits – a 23% increase from the 5-year pre-pandemic average (Clement & Stanley, 2022). Accompanying these visitors are the vehicles they arrive in. Not only are there more vehicles in the park than in previous years, but the proportion of visitors using their personal vehicle to visit the park has also increased. In 2019, approximately 90% of ANP visits were made using a personal vehicle; by 2022, this figure rose to 95% (NPS, 2022). This increase was largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which heavily discouraged people from crowding into shared spaces. However, after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines eased, car drivers did not resume their previous level of public transportation use. Consequently, the 5% increase meant thousands of more vehicles for the park to manage and make space for. While this mass of people and cars is significant in its own right, it becomes more meaningful when considering Acadia's size. At 49,000 acres, Acadia is one of the smallest national parks. Yet, its visitation is higher than that of both Yosemite – 760,000 acres, and Yellowstone – 2.22 million acres (NPS, 2022). At a fraction of those dimensions, Acadia's incredible density of visitors brings forth a unique host of issues.

The majority of Acadia's land lies on Mount Desert Island (MDI), Maine's largest island. The roads on MDI and in the main town of Bar Harbor do not lend themselves to heavy traffic conditions. They are narrow two-lane roads, with little room for passing except parts of the one-way Park Loop Road. Where right-lane parking is permitted, mainly along the Ocean Drive

corridor from the Sand Beach Entrance Station to Otter Cliffs Road, the drivable area is reduced back to one lane in this high-use area. The roads are also twisting, with blind corners, and often no shoulder (NPS, 2022). Parking lots in the park are extremely limited. Officially, there are just under 2,000 designated parking spots on MDI. With around 20,000 visits per day in the busy season, vehicle overflow is imminent and leads to frequent damage of natural resources, consumption of staff resources, safety concerns, and overall reduced visitor experience (Clement & Stanley, 2022; NPS, 1992; Department of the Interior, 2021). Congestion is exacerbated by the fact that more than 90% of visitation takes place from May through October (NPS, 2022) and that visitation occurs mostly in the small window between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. each day. Finally, the nature of the island itself means that the one access point from the mainland becomes a bottleneck that can stall traffic for hours (Flynn, 2023). Given the challenging traffic conditions, limited parking infrastructure, and heavy influx of visitors in Acadia, a formal management plan was needed to outline ANP's preferred conditions and standards for the visitor experience.

In 1992, Acadia National Park adopted a General Management Plan (GMP) that sought to address the traffic congestion in the park and its surrounding communities. The GMP explained that “alternate means of park access will be developed, with the goal of replacing private automobiles with nonmotorized means and a public transportation system.” (NPS, 1992). In the following years, funding for said public transportation system was gathered through a variety of sources, including the Maine Department of Transportation, Friends of Acadia, MDI townships, Acadia National Park, and corporate sponsorship. In 1999, Downeast Transportation, a non-profit organization, officially launched the Island Explorer Shuttle Bus System (Island Explorer or IEx) with six fare-free routes across the island. The Island Explorer served around 142,000 riders in its first year.

In the years that followed, visitation began rising consistently with a 59% increase between 2007 and 2017. In 2016, Acadia received 3 million visits for the first time in its history.¹ This trend prompted ANP management to draft a new transportation plan that would address increased vehicle usage on MDI (NPS, 2015). The Transportation Plan, finalized and approved in 2019, aimed to “comprehensively (examine) several management options to improve safety on park roads and reduce crowding and congestion at key visitor destinations and travel corridors.” The primary proposed actions of the study were: to implement a timed-entry system at key high-traffic areas of the park, namely, Cadillac Mountain, Jordan Pond House, and the Ocean Drive corridor; to eventually phase out right lane parking on the Park Loop Road; to expand parking lots in several locations; to remove the visitor services center on Thompson Island upon completion of the Acadia Gateway Center; and to expand Island Explorer services throughout the park.

Since the Island Explorer’s establishment, the number of buses, the number of locations serviced, and the number of riders have all increased substantially. The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted ridership and the overall running of the Island Explorer, as routes were paused in 2020 and reduced in 2021. Usage is rebounding, however, and as of 2022, Downeast Transportation recorded 414,808 passenger rides for the season leading to a cumulative total of 8.7 million passenger rides since the bus service began (Broom & White, 2022). Feedback from surveys conducted among Island Explorer passengers, as reported by Tom Crikelair Associates in 2023, has been overwhelmingly positive. This indicates a high level of satisfaction among Island Explorer riders and effective functioning of the service.

¹ Using the current 1990 method of counting

Many questions remain, however, with regard to Acadia's visitors. What are their attitudes, habits, and priorities while traveling in the park and how might these evolve as the park pursues its Transportation Plan policies? Building an understanding of visitors' decision-making process is an important step in finding workable solutions and anticipating public response to said solutions. With this idea in mind, the following section delves into a literature review to explore past and present research related to visitor transportation choices in Acadia National Park and other public land recreation areas.

Literature Review

Transportation Planning in Public Land

Two methods of public land congestion management surfaced in the literature. Cullinane and Cullinane discuss both in their 1999 study. The first method describes a "carrot" based strategy that encourages the use of public transportation by making the service as enticing and user-friendly as possible. Some examples of this include reducing the cost of the service, increasing its frequency and route coverage, and making it generally more desirable through added amenities. The second method, a "stick" based approach, discourages using personal vehicles through added fines, vehicle restrictions, and reduction of parking areas. Debate persists between the effectiveness of the two methods and the degree to which each should be implemented.

In this same study, Cullinane and Cullinane considered the theory that for carrot-based methods to be successful in national parks, visitors must both be aware of traffic congestion as a problem and must also view alternative means of transportation as a valid option. Assessing visitors' attitudes in two different parks, they found that some visitors, especially residents of the area, did view traffic as a major issue. However, attitudes towards public transportation were so

poor that even large incentives were not enough to change the habits of the majority of respondents. These results led the authors to conclude that carrot-based methods alone are ineffective in congestion management. Instead, a combination of carrot and stick must be employed.

This finding was similar to one reached by Holding and Kreutner in 1998, who found stick-based methods to be more effective in managing visitor behavior. As they point out, however, one downside to restrictive enforcement is the cost of public opinion, which generally favors policies that will add options rather than take them away. This was a drawback considered in the NPS Transportation Plan of 2019. Though alternative proposals would have allowed for greater control of resource use, the chosen proposal offered more opportunities for freedom and spontaneity of travel (NPS, 2019). Restrictions on personal vehicles are often very controversial, and pockets of opposition from gateway communities can be the loudest voice of rejection in such proposals (Eaton & Holding, 1996; Cullinane & Cullinane, 1999).

Transportation Research in Acadia National Park

In Acadia National Park specifically, several surveys have been conducted with questions about visitors' transportation decisions. In a 1999 National Parks Service Visitor Service Project study, Margaret Littlejohn asked Acadia visitors a wide-ranging series of questions about their use and opinion on various aspects of the park. One question asked visitors about the likelihood that they would park their vehicles and ride a free shuttle service.² Forty-eight percent of respondents indicated they would be willing to use such a service. When asked if they would be willing *to pay* to use an island shuttle service, the percentage dropped from 48% to 25%. Yet, in a question asking visitors what they liked least about their visit to Acadia, the top four responses

² At this time, the only shuttle system Acadia had was a campground shuttle, later to be developed into the Island Explorer.

were: “crowds,” “traffic,” “nothing,” and “congested parking.” A follow-up study asked visitor whether they would be willing to park at the Acadia Gateway Center, an upcoming transit hub³, and ride the Island Explorer into the park (Littlejohn, 1999). Thirty-seven percent of respondents said they were “somewhat” or “very likely,” 19% were “unsure,” and 44% were “somewhat” or “very unlikely.”

In the year prior Frank Holly, a graduate student from Clemson University, surveyed visitors with a similar question: “What would make Acadia visitors more or less likely to use the Acadia Gateway Center as a park-and-ride facility?” (Holly, 2009). Using a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions, Holly found the most important factors for visitors centered around time and freedom – specifically, the ability to save as much time as possible in the transit process and the freedom to travel when and where they wanted on the island. The most commonly cited solution from survey respondents was an increased frequency of buses. The goal was to reduce wait time and bring public transportation closer to the perceived freedom associated with private car use. The longer the wait time for a bus, visitors said, the more likely they were to use their car instead. Similarly, in 1996, researchers Eaton and Holding found that the biggest factor in increasing public transportation use is whether the service runs on time. They wrote, “In short, visitors were not prepared to use their leisure time waiting for public transport.” They noted, too, that visitors did not consider time spent searching for a parking spot as waiting time. And as Holly observes, “For many, the length of wait time required is irrelevant because any wait is less flexible than a vehicle.”

³ Currently in its final stages of construction, set to be completed by 2025.

Holly also found that visitors' likelihood to park and ride was affected by the length of their trip. Quantitatively and qualitatively, visitors expressed that the longer their trip was, the more likely they were to use the Island Explorer. One respondent said,

We're kind of pressed for time; we were supposed to be here an hour ago – actually two hours ago. We kind of got up late, so I feel like I've got to get it all done and if I've got to wait on public transportation – you know, how often does it come? When's it going to get me back? Am I tied to it?

Longer visits make it more feasible to “get it all done.” Visitors have more time to spare for researching the bus service, planning where they want to go in advance, wait times at the bus stop, and time spent in transit.

Secondary factors that surfaced in Holly's survey related to features of the bus itself that might provide added enjoyment to the experience. Bus amenities such as large windows for sightseeing, ample storage space for belongings, and tour bus-type narration to provide context for passing scenery would turn the transportation into its own form of entertainment. As one respondent said, if the bus were “something more than just a ride,” they would be compelled to try it. Eaton and Holding saw a similar desire in their 1996 study from respondents who expressed interest in “novelty vehicles” such as trains or open-top buses. If transportation is an activity in itself, visitors might not feel that they are wasting their vacation time in the process. Rather, they could achieve multiple objectives – fun and transit – at the same time.

As mentioned above, Island Explorer passenger surveys by Tom Crikelair Associates have been conducted annually for many years to assess user satisfaction and gain feedback. In 2009 and 2011, surveys found that 100% of passengers felt it was “important that the [Island Explorer] service be continued” (Tom Crikelair Associates, 2009; Tom Crikelair Associates,

2011). Additionally, in both years, 99% of those surveyed felt that it was “important to keep the service free.” In the most recent survey conducted in 2022, riders of the Island Explorer were also generally pleased with their experience (Tom Crikelair Associates, 2023). More than 90% of passengers gave the bus service a rating of either “excellent” or “good” on all measures of its performance, such as the buses being on time, the buses being clean, the buses serving the right destinations, etc. When asked what comments or suggestions people had about the Island Explorer, many respondents expressed gratitude towards the service and felt that it significantly improved their vacation or daily lives. However, there were suggestions for improvements. The most common of these fell into two categories: extending the hours of service in the day and making more routes to and from the Village Green in downtown Bar Harbor.

While Acadia’s transportation and congestion issues have been investigated by both park staff and outside partners, this research differs slightly from previous literature. First, of the three main assessments of visitor transportation habits at Acadia, two are older; both Littlejohn’s and Holly’s surveys were conducted in 2009. The other main study, passenger surveys by Tom Crikelair Associates, has been repeated every year since the Island Explorer launched and so has data from as recent as 2022. However, the surveys ask only passengers already using the bus. While this ensures a more bus savvy population from which to survey, it stands to reason that the opinion and concerns of those *not* using the Island Explorer should be assessed as well. To target this population directly, our survey asked only visitors who drove their vehicles into the park.

Methods

This survey aimed to address several key research questions. Is the vehicle-driving population of Acadia inflexible in their transportation choice? Or is there a portion of car drivers that would take the Island Explorer under different conditions? If so, what are these conditions?

Can they be reasonably implemented through park policy or changes in bus operations? To answer these questions, a verbal survey was administered at 10 sample sites around Acadia National Park. There were 119 total responses, averaging 11.9 responses per location. While varying in location, the average response rate of survey interceptions was 68%.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument consisted of 20 questions – 16 of which were multiple choice questions, along with two short-answer questions and two factor ranking questions (See Appendix A). Multiple choice was the preferred structure due to its ease of interpretation and brevity for visitors. The short length of the survey (approximately 5 minutes) also helped reduce the barrier that time might place on visitors. This was important, especially in encouraging visitors with little investment in the park or those with extenuating circumstances — these being the visitors who may also be least likely to use the Island Explorer. The survey was also designed to be given verbally to visitors to prevent confusion in survey directions, misinterpretation of questions, and skipped questions.

The survey questions were largely developed using previous literature on the subject of public transportation in National Parks as well as previous research conducted specifically on the Island Explorer. (Cullinane & Cullinane, 1999; Eaton & Holding, 1996; Holly, 2009; Tom Crikelair Associates, 2009; Tom Crikelair Associates, 2022). A few questions were written based on anecdotal stories heard from visitors and ANP employees in the process of survey development.

Experimental Design

To understand the motivations and attitudes of those not using the Island Explorer, our survey targeted Acadia visitors who used their personal vehicles to enter the park. This approach

is supported by Cullinane and Cullinane, who exclusively surveyed personal vehicle drivers in their 1999 study of public transportation in British National Parks. To identify this population, surveys were administered in ANP parking lots and given only to those seen exiting or approaching their parked personal vehicles. Additionally, parking lots were not chosen as sites if they weren't serviced directly by the Island Explorer. This ensured that personal vehicle users had the option to access the site via bus if desired. From the parking lots, a mixture of high and low visitation areas were selected. The selected parking lot sites included: Acadia Mountain Parking Lot, Echo Lake Parking Lot, Parkman Mountain Parking Lot, Brown Mountain Parking Lot, Jordan Pond Parking Lot, Eagle Lake Parking Lot, Sieur de Monts Parking Lot, Sand Beach Parking Lot, Thunder Hole Parking Lot, and Otter Cliffs Parking Lot. A map of the site locations can be seen in Figure 1. Cadillac Mountain Summit Parking Lot, one of the most visited sites in the park, was not considered as a sampling location because it is not serviced by the IEx.

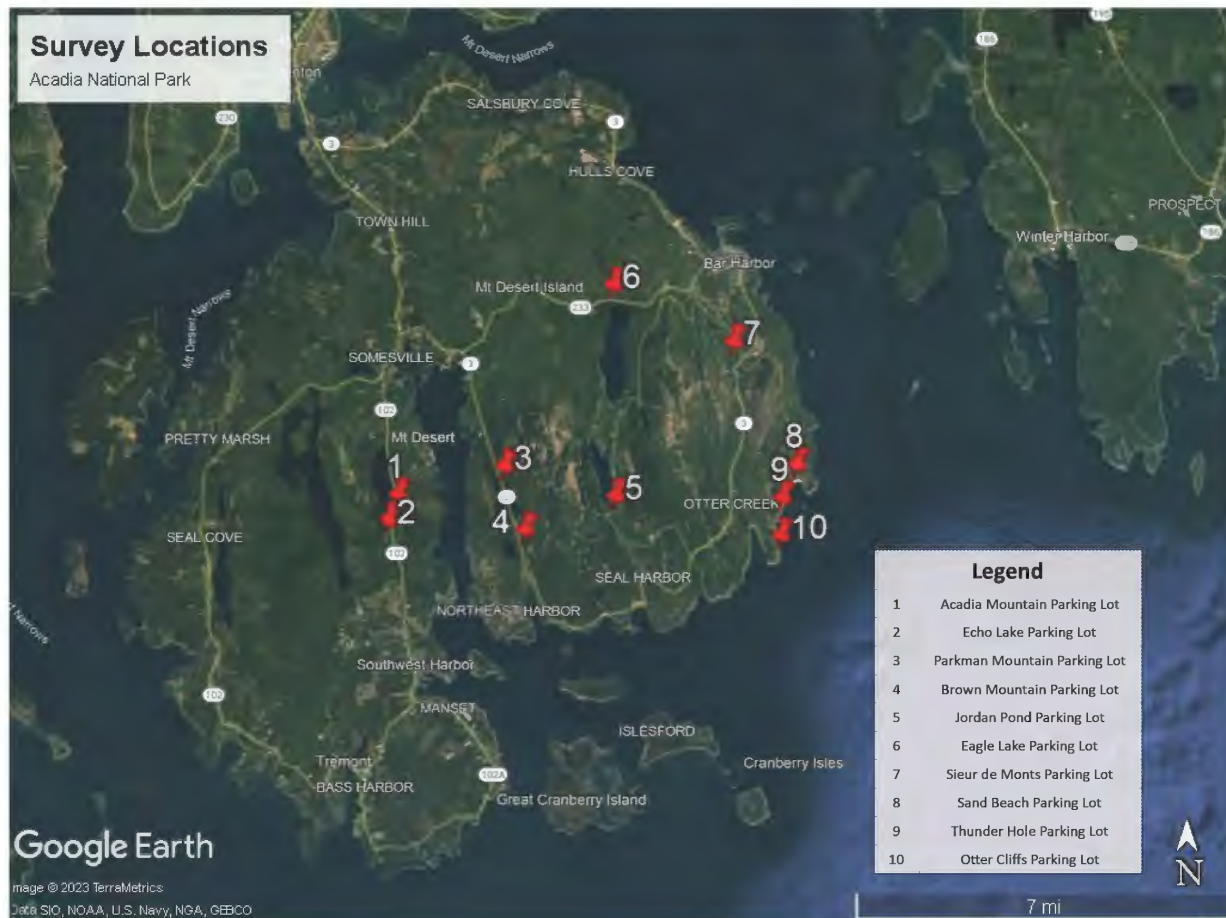


Figure 1: 2019 Google Earth imagery of Mount Desert Island and 2023 survey sampling locations.

Surveys were conducted at randomly selected times and days of the week. Survey participants were chosen through convenience sampling. Contact was initiated with each passerby who had come from, or was walking to, their vehicle. If contact was reciprocated, an offer to participate in the survey was made. Surveying began on Wednesday August 9, 2023, and was completed approximately one month later on Thursday September 7, 2023. During this time, three surveyors completed 15 different sampling periods, each lasting around 2-4 hours.

Analysis

Results were analyzed using a combination of Microsoft Excel, The R Project for Statistical Computing, and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software made by

IBM. Summary statistics were generated using Excel. Data was then transferred to R and SPSS for further analysis. Multiple-choice questions were analyzed for statistical significance using chi-square testing and cross-tabulation analysis. Location variance was initially observed while comparing the summary statistics for each location and then confirmed using Two-Step Cluster Analysis in SPSS.

The ranked questions were analyzed by assigning increased weight depending on the placement a factor was given. Visitors could choose their top three factors. If a factor was ranked first choice, it was given a weight of 3 value points. The second place received a weight of 2 value points, and the third place received a weight of 1 value point. The scores were totaled for each factor. In this way, the more times each factor was chosen and the more times it was put in first place, the higher its total score was. A perfect score, if every respondent had placed one factor in the first place, was 357 (119 responses * weight of 3 value points).

Open-ended responses were analyzed through an open coding process. Codes were developed throughout the initial review of responses. Responses were given one or more codes depending on its content. Themes were derived from these codes and a frequency was then found for each theme based on the number of independent mentions.

Results

Univariate Analysis

The sample consisted of a majority of repeat visitors to the park – 57% (n = 68) versus 43% (n = 51) first-time visitors. The sample included 10.9% (n = 13) summer residents, 8.4% (n = 10) year-round residents⁴, and 80.7% (n = 96) non-residents. The most common age range of the population was 45-64 (37.9% of respondents, n = 44), followed by 25-44 years old (32.8%, n = 38) (See Appendix A). The most common income range was \$120k+ (46.1% of respondents, n =

⁴ Those living within 50 miles of the park.

53), followed by \$91k-\$120k (14.8%, n = 17) (Figure 2). Comparatively, in 2022, fewer than one-third of U.S. households made more than 120k annually (Guzman & Kollar, 2023). The largest racial group was Caucasian/White respondents (83.2%, n = 94). The second largest racial group was Asian respondents (13.3%, n = 15). All other racial groups made up less than 1% (n = 2) of those surveyed.

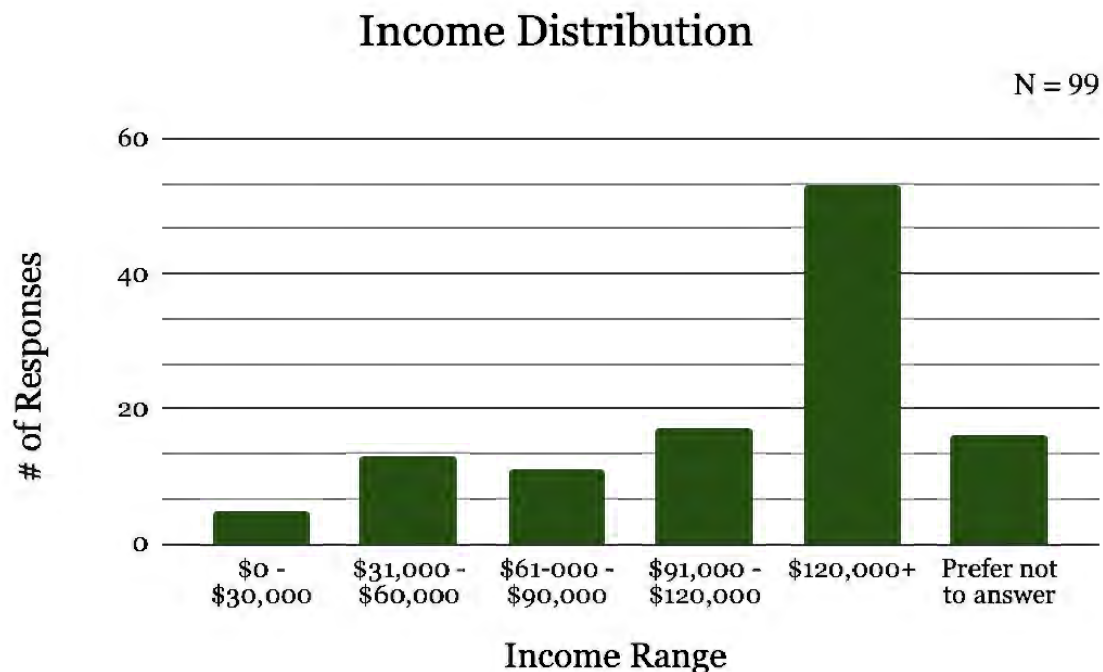


Figure 2: Respondent income distribution

One of the first survey questions asked visitors, “How would you describe the traffic congestion level at the park?” and listed the following options: (1) “Not congested at all,” (2) “Slightly congested,” (3) “Somewhat congested,” and (4) “Very congested.” The average response was 2.6 out of 4.0, falling between “Slightly congested” and “Somewhat congested.” Overall, 54% (N = 118, n = 64) of respondents felt the park was “Somewhat congested” or “Very congested.” Next, when asked, “On average, how often do you use the public transportation in your area at home?” the majority indicated that they rarely or never use public transportation.

Seventy-one percent (n = 85) responded with either, “Never,” “Public transportation is not available where I live,” or “Once a year or less.” Other responses included: “Once a month,” (10%, n = 12) “Once a week,” (9%, n = 11) “Once a day or more” (9%, n = 11).

Survey takers were then asked, “How would you describe your level of familiarity with the Island Explorer bus service?” Visitors chose from a scale of 1 to 4: (1) “Not familiar at all,” (2) “Slightly familiar,” (3) “Somewhat familiar,” and (4) “Very familiar.” The average rating was 2.2 out of 4.0, and the most frequent rating was 1. Overall, more than half of respondents (57%, N = 119, n = 68) rated themselves as either “Not at all familiar” or “Slightly familiar” with the bus service. Corresponding with this, the survey asked visitors, “When did you first find out about the Island Explorer?” Options included: “Had not heard of it until now,” “Upon arrival to the area,” “During the planning process for the trip,” and “Long before this visit.” Figure 3 shows the results of this question. Most notably, 18% (n = 21) of respondents had not heard of the bus system until the administration of the survey instrument, and 29% (n = 34) heard about it after arriving in the area. In answer to the question, “Have you ever used the Island Explorer?” 65.5% (N = 116, n = 78) responded that they had not. Those who had used the Island Explorer at least once were asked a follow-up question: “How user-friendly is the Island Explorer?” Of the 38 respondents, 33 (86.8%) rated it either “Moderately user-friendly” or “Very user-friendly.” Finally, visitors were asked, “Do you have a plan to use the Island Explorer on this visit?” In total, 21% (n = 25) said they had a plan to use the bus, while 39.3% (n = 46) said they did not have a plan. Another 39% (n = 46) were considering/unsure.

When did you find out about the Island Explorer? N = 118

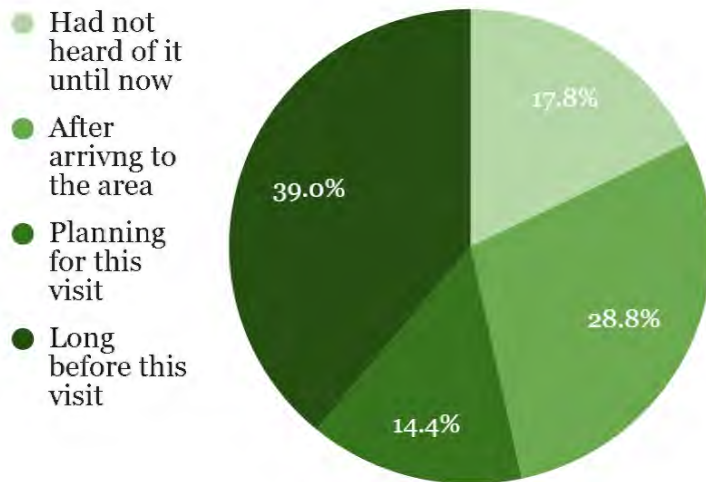


Figure 3: Respondents' first hearing of Island Explorer

Location Variance

Survey responses varied depending on the site location. At Parkman Mountain, for example, 86% (N = 14, n = 12) of survey takers were repeat visitors to the park, while at Thunder Hole, just 33% (N = 15, n = 5) had been prior visitors. A pattern emerged within this variance. Low visitation areas seemed to attract a different group of visitors than high visitation areas. Using a Two-Step Cluster Analysis, two distinct clusters of locations became apparent based on contrasts in demographic and behavioral factors. The first group, identified as Group 1, is made up of three high-use sites: Jordan Pond, Thunder Hole, and Otter Cliffs. These areas tended to have a higher proportion of first-time, non-resident respondents. Group 3 included Parkman Mountain, Brown Mountain, and Echo Lake, all low/mid use sites. These locations, on average, correlated with a higher proportion of repeat visitors and resident respondents than Group 1. The differences in repeat and resident respondents between these two groups were

statistically significant with p-values less than 0.001. Group 2 consisted of Eagle Lake, Sand Beach, and Sieur de Monts, mid/high use sites.⁵ This group generally represented a mixture between Group 1 and Group 3, but the visitors were more unpredictable and did not correlate significantly with any particular demographic or behavior.

There were other differences between Group 1 and Group 3 locations. Along with being less recurrent park visitors, respondents at Group 1 locations were less likely to be familiar with the Island Explorer and less likely to find the park congested than Group 1 respondents. ($p < 0.01$, $p < 0.05$). At Jordan Pond and Otter Cliffs (Group 1), for example, more than 20% ($N = 31$, $n = 7$) had never heard of the Island Explorer, and less than a quarter were somewhat or very familiar with it ($n = 16$). At Brown Mountain and Parkman Mountain (Group 3), however, each respondent had heard of the Island Explorer, and roughly 64% ($N = 25$, $n = 16$) indicated that they were “Somewhat familiar” or “Very familiar” with the bus system. The transportation habits of the two groups differed as well. At Group 1 locations, 15% ($N = 46$, $n = 7$) of the visitors had used the bus at least once in the past, while at Group 3 locations, 62% ($N = 37$, $n = 23$) had used the bus at least once. This difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Additionally, 11% ($N = 46$, $n = 5$) of visitors at Group 1 locations were planning to use the bus on their trip compared to 39% ($N = 36$, $n = 14$) of visitors at Group 3 locations – another significant difference ($p < 0.05$). A bar chart for each of these results can be seen in Appendix C. The average for each group can be at the bottom of the charts.

Familiarity, Congestion, and Intention to Use Island Explorer

Considerable differences in transportation attitudes were present in subsets of the sample population. Repeat park visitors as well as summer and year-round residents of the area were more likely to view the park as more highly congested. Nearly 30% more repeat visitors rated

⁵ The last location, Acadia Mtn, did not have a large enough sample size to be placed in any group.

Acadia as either “Somewhat congested” or “Very congested” (See Appendix D.1). This difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Amongst non-residents ($N = 96$), 47% ($n = 45$) rated Acadia as either “Somewhat congested” or “Very congested.” In contrast, 86% ($n = 19$) of residents ($N = 23$) described the park as “Somewhat congested” or “Very congested,” another statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) (See Appendix D.2). There were also differences in residents’ intended IEx usage, with 15% ($n = 14$) of non-residents planning to use the Island Explorer compared to 50% ($n = 11$) of residents (See Appendix D.3). This difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

In the respondent population as a whole, the level of awareness and experience a visitor had with the Island Explorer was able to predict future plans of using the service. Figure 4 highlights how those who rated themselves as “Somewhat familiar” or “Very familiar” with the IEx were more likely to have a plan to use it ($p < 0.001$). Additionally, visitors who had used the bus at least once in the past were significantly more likely to plan on using it again ($p < 0.001$). The proportion of respondents planning to use the Island Explorer increased by 31% if they had used it at least once (See Appendix D.4).

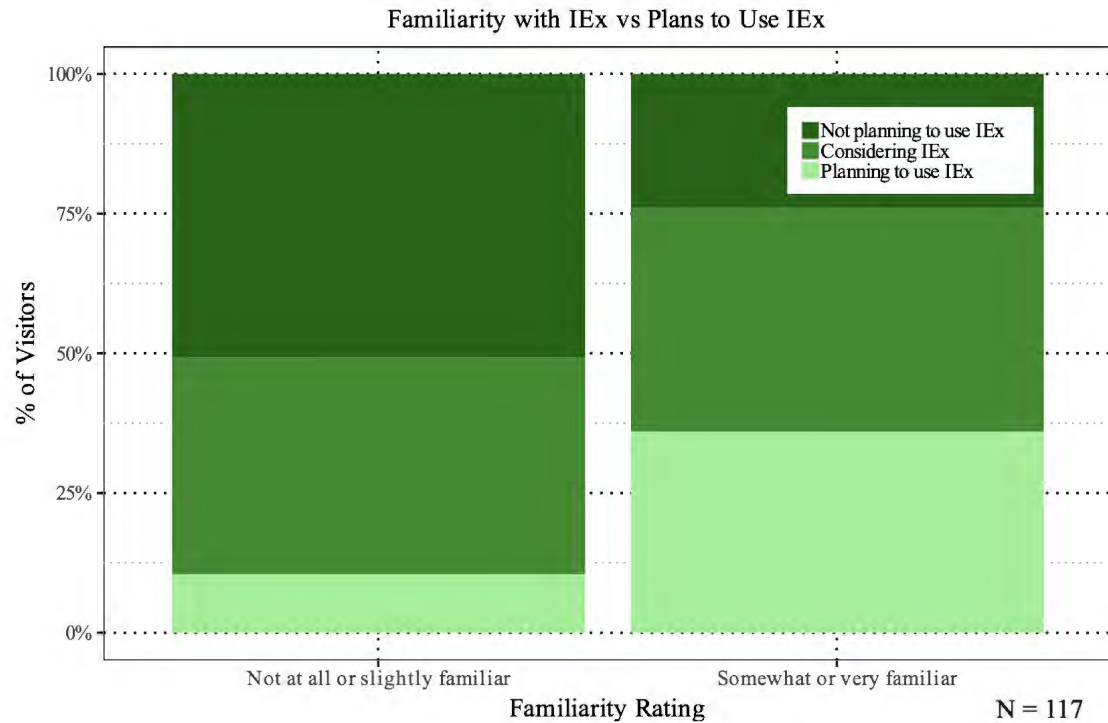


Figure 4: Respondents' familiarity level and intention level of using the Island Explorer bus system.

Finally, Figure 5 demonstrates a visitors' view of the park's traffic congestion compared to their plans to use the Island Explorer. Visitors were asked, "How would you describe the traffic congestion level at the park?" Those who responded that the park was "Somewhat congested" or "Very congested" were significantly more likely to plan on taking the bus on their visit. ($p < 0.05$)

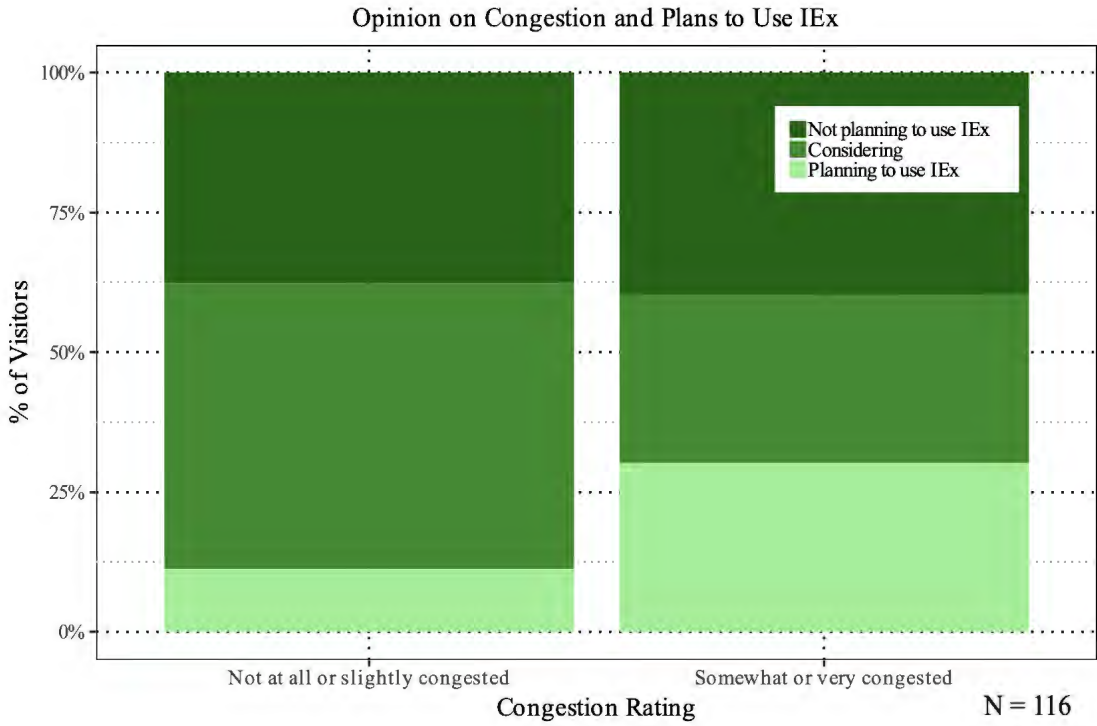


Figure 5: Respondents' rating of traffic congestion and intention of bus usage.

Ranked Questions

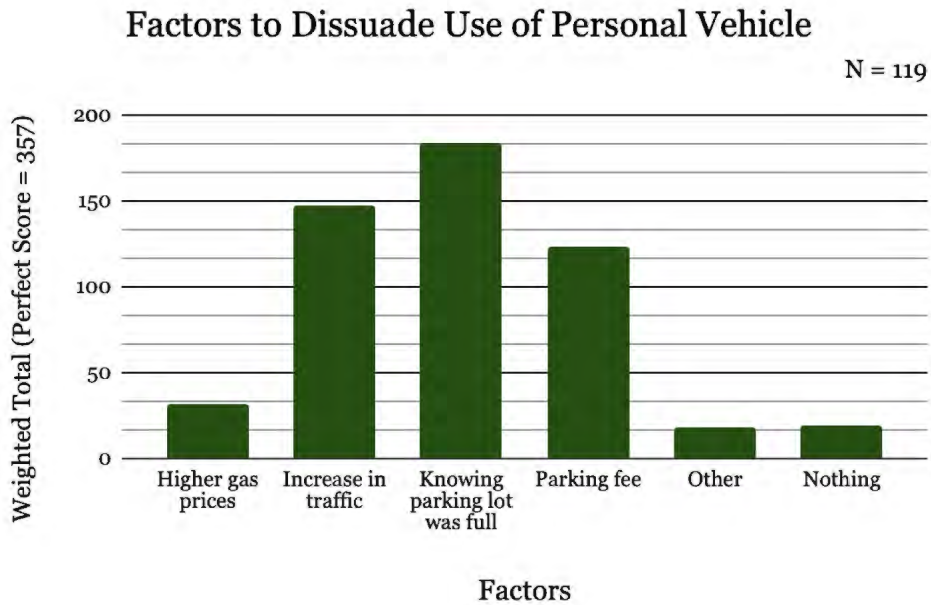


Figure 6: Respondents' ranked disincentives for using a personal vehicle in the park.

Two questions asked visitors to rank a list of factors in order of the effect they might have on their transportation habits. The first asked, “Which of the following factors might dissuade your use of a personal vehicle?” As shown in Figure 6, the three most important factors to respondents were “Knowing your desired parking lot was full” (score: 184 out of 357), “Increase in traffic” (score: 147/357), and “Parking fee” (score: 123/357).⁶ Nineteen respondents chose “Nothing.” This response was not scored because it was the only factor the respondents chose, however, if weighted, it would surpass “Higher gas prices.” Eleven respondents chose “Other” and wrote in a factor. These written-in factors were analyzed along with the other open-ended responses.

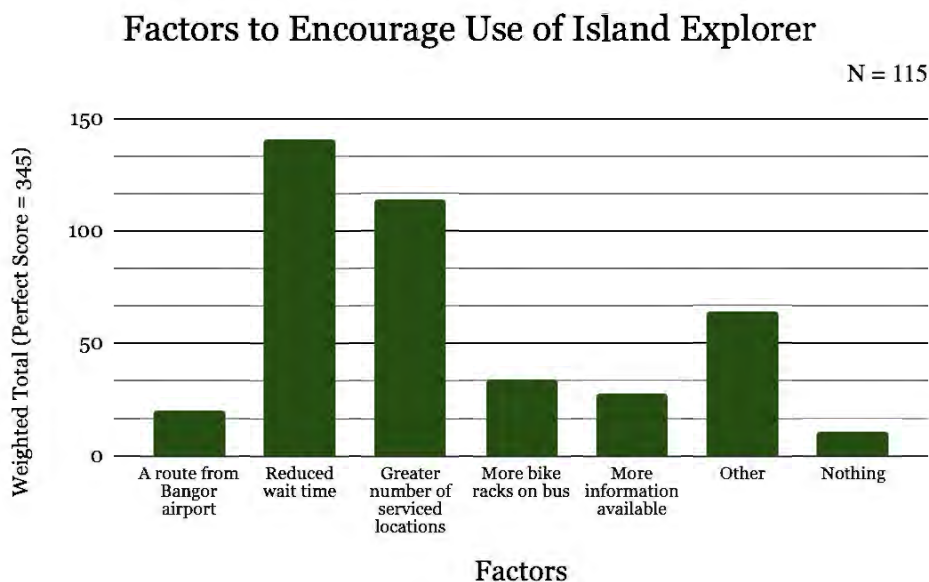


Figure 7: Respondents’ ranked incentives for using the Island Explorer bus system.

The second-ranked choice question asked, “Which of the following factors might make you use the Island Explorer more than you currently do?” The results of this question are shown in Figure 7. The top three factors were “Reduced wait time” (score: 141/345), “Greater number

⁶ A description of this scoring system can be found in the methods section.

of serviced locations" (score: 114/345), and "Other" (score: 64/345). "Nothing" was chosen by 11 respondents.

Open-Ended Responses

Why Visitors Choose to Use the Island Explorer. The first open-ended question asked visitors, "Thinking back to the last time you rode on the Island Explorer, why did you choose to use the bus then instead of driving?" The most frequent responses (19 out of 34 comments) centered around the idea of avoiding traffic congestion and not having to worry about finding a place to park. Comments such as, "Used it to go to Jordan Pond to avoid parking," or "Didn't want the hassle of parking," were common. Many of these survey takers either explicitly or implicitly stated that they took the bus because they knew ahead of time that parking would be difficult. Two comments mentioned that it would be "impossible" to park at their intended destinations (Jordan Pond and Bubble Pond) without using the bus: "I knew there would be no parking spots at Bubble." Three respondents simply stated, "Because we were going to Jordan Pond," or "Going to Bar Harbor," implying that nothing more needed to be said because parking is notoriously difficult there.

Related to this, 6 respondents mentioned specifically that taking the bus was "easier" or "more convenient" than driving. One visitor discussed the stress of driving, and two others discussed the perks of taking the bus, such as being able to look out the windows and not having to navigate. "You can look out the window, someone else does the driving." Several respondents talked about the benefit of being able to go anywhere in the park, regardless of its congestion level. "I like the idea of using it to get to crowded places in the park."

The other main category of responses related to logistical convenience. Nine respondents talked about how they would use the bus to connect back to their car after hiking – essentially

allowing them to create a loop without doubling back. However, two survey takers touched on the issues that had occurred when they did take the bus and why it had discouraged them from taking it again. Both had ended up missing the bus and getting stuck somewhere, interrupting their trip.

Why Visitors Do Not Choose the Island Explorer. The second open-ended component of the survey asked visitors to “Provide any other comments or suggestions” they had in the space below. Together, the designated comment section, written in “Other” factors from the ranked questions, as well as any other comments vocalized throughout the survey, resulted in feedback from 77 individual respondents.

One common challenge for visitors was trying to use public transportation while traveling with young children. One parent simply said that nothing would make them choose to use the Island Explorer if they were with their kids. Another had tried using the bus with their kids and found it difficult: “Our two-year-old wanted to take the bus. We took it to Sand Beach. Getting there was fine, but the way back was an hour and the baby started crying.” These respondents also talked about the factor of car-seats/strollers— lamenting that the bus does not have car-seats and the complication of carrying this type of luggage around: “When we have our kids – car seats and all...” It felt easier to be able to keep all the necessary items for their kids in their car instead of having to pack it with them for the day.

One of the other most frequently mentioned ideas came from respondents who, in one way or another, felt they did not have enough time to use the Island Explorer. There were several reasons for this. A number of visitors felt that they had not learned about the bus system in time to use it on this trip. Several were frustrated by the missed opportunity to utilize the service. They expressed that they would have liked to use it or would use it next time they came. One

visitor commented, “If we knew ahead of time, we would have used it [Island Explorer], but we leave tomorrow.” Another visitor felt he needed to learn about it early on so he could have time to incorporate it into his trip: “I need more time to plan on using it. Needs more push when first arriving, no info given at Visitor Center, should be on the park website.”

Several respondents expressed that the Island Explorer would take too much time out of their day. They referred to the added time spent waiting for the bus to arrive but also to the travel time during the journey itself. Most of these visitors were informed about the service and had explored it to some degree but could not find it feasible for their trip. One visitor said, “We tried to do the park-and-ride from Trenton but [we] had to wait a long time.” Another described a difficult day of trying to use the bus:

We took the Island Explorer [to Schoodic Peninsula] and weren't able to accomplish everything we wanted. Very friendly drivers but they shouldn't leave people stranded... We had a full day to make it work but missed it. We would have used it today, but it added an hour to travel time.

Connected with this lament over added travel time was the complaint of unhelpful route coordination for making connections and indirect routes in general, especially the routes heading out of the park back to Bar Harbor or to the Hull’s Cove Visitor Center. A regular rider of the bus rated it as “Not at all user-friendly,” explaining: “[My] biggest issue with the IEx is the park loop route going to the visitor center – adds unnecessary time, [a] more direct route would be better.”

Compounding the time issue was the length of a visitor’s trip. Several described how the short nature of their stay meant they were trying to make the most of the time they did have: “I don't use [the Island Explorer] because we usually have been here on a day trip and want to maximize time by being in control of our schedule.”

Other issues arose due to a general lack of trust in the bus service to run as expected. There were several mentions of bus drivers “leaving people stranded” or “passing people waiting.” It’s possible that visitors are referring to buses passing by stops that are not on their intended route or buses that have already reached their max capacity. Regardless of how or why it happens, the fear of “getting stranded” is very real. Given the island's lack of taxi or ride-sharing services, the outcome could mean walking any number of miles back to a vehicle, lodging, or in-service bus stop. As one respondent said bluntly, “I missed one bus and had to walk.”

Lastly, visitors discussed fears of not knowing the schedule well enough, unknown schedule changes, and/or not having service to access the schedule: “You have to carry around the physical schedule because your phone doesn't always work, but who wants to do that?” Three respondents described the bus routes and schedule as “confusing.” Many of these comments then went on to say that the schedule could be better publicized around the park to increase confidence in using the service.

Discussion

The characteristics of the surveyed population differ slightly from the characteristics of previous Acadia visitor surveys. First, the percentage of first-time visitors, 43%, was slightly lower than Holly’s finding of 47% as well as Littlejohn’s 2009 finding of 50% (Holly, 2009; Littlejohn, 2009). Our survey also found a greater proportion of year-round residents than the 2022 passenger survey conducted by Tom Crikelair Associates (8.5% compared to 5%) (Tom Crikelair Associates, 2023). Due to the intentional effort for this survey to include participants from both high and low-visitation areas, the observed higher percentage of repeat and resident visitors in less popular locations may be attributed to this sampling approach.

User Groups

Analyzing the interactions between visitor characteristics and location revealed a divide within the sample population at Acadia. Two distinct user groups emerged – each tending towards certain behaviors and locations while using the park. A Two-Step Cluster Analysis confirmed this pattern, indicating that some locations in the park and the visitors that frequent them form specific clusters. In other words, there are groups of visitors who are statistically more alike to one another than they are to the population as a whole. The location they choose for recreating is one of the most telling factors of this split.

However, it is likely not the location itself but the visitation level of the location which draws the line between the two groups. The locations in each cluster fell at the two extreme ends of visitor use. The high-use areas formed Group 1 – Jordan Pond Parking Lot, Otter Cliffs Parking Lot, and Thunder Hole Parking Lot. The low-use areas formed Group 3 – Brown Mountain Parking Lot, Parkman Mountain Parking Lot, and Echo Lake Parking Lot. Group 3 locations attracted more knowledgeable, area residents or repeat park visitors. Group 1 locations attracted more first-time, unfamiliar visitors. There were also significant transportation behaviors that followed these user groups. Compared to Group 3, respondents from Group 1 were less likely to be familiar with the Island Explorer, less likely to have used it at least once, and less likely to have a plan to use it again. This is useful for understanding the places in the park that attract a less informed knowledge base who may need more persuasion and guidance to encourage their use of the Island Explorer.

Familiarity

Overall, there is a general lack of knowledge and awareness of the Island Explorer bus system. Based on survey responses, 18% (N=118, n = 21) of respondents indicated having no

prior knowledge of the IEx, and only 25% (N = 52, n = 13) of first-time visitors had learned about the service prior to their trip. In addition, a majority (57%, N = 119, n = 68) signified a familiarity level below "Somewhat Familiar." It is evident, therefore, that a significant portion of visitors undertake their entire trip without a comprehensive understanding of this transportation option. Even those who professed some knowledge about the bus service were missing key facts – that it is fare-free, dog-friendly, and island-wide – which might have persuaded them to use it. As with many of the results, this knowledge gap varied significantly based on the user group. Residents and repeat visitors, those that frequented the “local,” low-use areas, were more likely to have a better comprehension of the Island Explorer and know how it could be used effectively. First-time visitors, who are more likely to flock towards the busy sites of the park, on the other hand, do not tend to learn this skill. Based on the open-ended feedback received throughout the survey, a number of visitors wished they had become aware of the bus service earlier in their trip. Others knew about the IEx but struggled to feel confident in using it. These respondents suggested increased schedule promotion, and promotion of the bus service in general, to address this issue.

Gaining exposure and experience with the Island Explorer does appear to increase the likelihood of future use. Statistical analyses revealed that both past usage and overall familiarity with the IEx service are predictors of a visitor’s plan to use the bus on their trip. Additionally, residents of the area, who were also more familiar with the bus on average, were more likely to have a plan to ride the bus. These findings highlight the importance of getting the word out to people early on in the planning stages and on their trip, especially first-time visitors who know less about it and need it more for their desired locations.

Time

The issue of time proved to be a pervasive theme in both the ranked-choice and open-ended questions. The ranked-choice question, “Which of the following factors might make you more likely to use the Island Explorer?” found that respondents valued reduced wait time more than any other listed options. This aligns with Holly’s 2009 conclusion that providing a high frequency of buses would be the most effective management strategy in encouraging park-and-ride behavior at the Acadia Gateway Center. Visitors also mentioned that they found the Island Explorer’s transit time to be prohibitive for their trip plans. They suggested that the indirect nature of some routes – specifically, routes that lead out of the park to the Hulls Cove Visitor Center – may be to blame for the added time. Crikelair’s 2022 passenger survey saw many comments about this issue as well, with visitors requesting an express from Bar Harbor to Jordan Pond.

Within the open-ended feedback, the theme of time manifested in several ways. First, visitors wanted to learn about the Island Explorer early, so they had more time to plan on using it. Developing this skill was an investment that might not pay off if discovered too late in the game. In conjunction with this, visitors discussed how the length of their trip was a factor in deciding to use the bus. The shorter the trip, the less time they felt they had to learn how to use the bus and the less time they had to spare on any inefficiencies it caused. Again, this correlates with Holly’s 2009 finding that short visits decrease the likelihood to park at the Acadia Gateway Center and ride the Island Explorer.

Awareness of Congestion

In addition to requiring time and know-how to use the Island Explorer, certain visitors might also lack the necessary motivation to do so. When this survey asked visitors why, if ever, they had taken the Island Explorer, the biggest reason mentioned was to avoid parking

challenges. Visitors without any concept of these parking challenges in the first place will, therefore, have lost much of the incentive to change their driving behavior. This may be the case with almost 50% (N = 118) of survey takers who did not perceive the park to be anything more than “slightly congested.” While this is a matter of perception in some ways, those who have seen more of the park overall i.e. residents and repeat visitors were more likely to rate the congestion as worse. Regardless, without a sense of *why* public transportation is needed, the Island Explorer loses much of its draw.

Further evidence of this can be seen in the analysis of visitors’ congestion ratings. Visitors who rated the traffic congestion in the park as worse were more likely to plan on using the Island Explorer on their trip. It is also evident that first-hand experience can help them change the minds of those who drive their personal vehicles unaware of congestion issues. According to Crikelair’s 2022 passenger survey, 39% of Jordan Pond IEx riders decided to use the Island Explorer *after* experiencing problems trying to park (Tom Crikelair Associates, 2023). Coinciding with this, the ranked-choice questions revealed that one of the biggest disincentives of using a personal vehicle for visitors would be knowing their desired parking lot was already full with real-time information.

Another facet of the problem is that first-time visitors specifically are less likely to know how congested they will be, and, at the same time, more likely to go to the most popular spots in the park. In this way, a perfect storm is generated – hundreds of vehicles show up at the same small parking lot at the same time. These are the visitors who could benefit themselves (and the park) most by accessing Acadia’s hot spots with public transportation. However, once they bring their vehicle in, it's hard to undo the mistake without wasting valuable vacation time. The only

options these visitors have are to keep circling, park illegally, or drive back out of the park to try to park and ride the bus.

Families

Almost all visitors with children accompanying them mentioned that children were a major factor in their decision to use the Island Explorer – either as a limitation or an absolute barrier. There were several reasons for this. The extra items that a family must carry with them to the park such as diaper bags, strollers, etc. were mentioned several times, as there is limited storage capacity on the buses. Additionally, the fact that the Island Explorer does not have car seats for young children was prohibitive to several of the parents surveyed.

Management Implications

A significant portion of the sample population lacked a basic awareness of the Island Explorer, and many more lacked a developed understanding of how or why it can be used. First time visitors were especially at risk for this, and at the same time, more likely to seek out the most highly trafficked areas in the park. In addition, the vast majority of first-time visitors learned about the bus service *after* their trip began, and respondents often mentioned learning about the service too late in their trip to be useful. Given these results, more could be done to advertise the Island Explorer to first-time visitors *before* they arrive on the island. The most obvious tool for this is the internet and, in particular, the park’s website and social media presence. Currently, the park website, while advertising the Island Explorer to some degree, does not touch on the key messages which visitors seem to respond to most (See Appendix E) (NPS, 2023). Factors such as “reducing traffic congestion and air pollution” in the park may be added perks for IEx riders, however, respondents ultimately chose to use the Island Explorer based on the personal benefits it provides and the immediate, felt drawbacks of not using it. The website

should therefore offer information to visitors about what traffic looks like during peak season and peak hours of the day. A realistic outlook on the conditions that car drivers face could provide the “stick” or disincentive that visitors need to make a more informed choice. In addition, benefits such as the ability to travel to busy places in the park at any time of day, reducing stress in navigation, and sightseeing without the hassle of driving should be expanded on and emphasized more fully in park media.

Not all car-drivers were unaware of the Island Explorer as an option, however. Some were quite familiar with the service as a whole but were discouraged from using it, often because they were not confident in using it successfully. The fact that several visitors surveyed were “stranded” in the park without transportation could indicate that better signage, wider publication of the schedule, and other user-focused tools might be necessary in boosting comfort and trust with the bus service. This is especially important in areas without reliable cell phone coverage. Sand Beach and Jordan Pond both provide electronic sign boards announcing when the next bus is expected to arrive. These signs could be expanded to other areas of the park. Additionally, a “last bus” time could be posted at every stop in the park to reduce chances of stragglers at the end of the day.

A comprehensive look at the needs of families while using the Island Explorer may be another important step in reducing the barriers to bus use. Based on the comments received in this survey, more storage space on the buses could help families travel comfortably with their belongings. However, a survey focused on, and targeted to, families would be helpful to better understand how the Island Explorer can best serve this group of visitors.

Reducing wait time, route length, and overall travel time is clearly important to respondents. It is mentioned frequently in past public transportation literature and in both Holly’s

2009 study and Crikelair's latest 2022 survey. Most importantly, in this survey, it was a top incentive for respondents in both the ranked question segment and the open-ended segment. Based on these results, increasing the frequency of buses in certain locations, or adding direct routes may increase feasibility for visitors with limited time to spend in the park. However, a significant minority of the sample population expressed a strong opposition to using the bus and would likely be unmoved regardless of the wait/travel time. Additionally, buses will have a hard time directly competing with personal vehicles in this category as they will never be able to provide a perfectly tailored route for each passenger. Instead, it may be more effective to promote the other conveniences of public transportation for best results.

Limitations

There were several inconsistencies in the sampling procedure that may have impacted the results of this research. Initially, it was intended that survey participants choose whether they wanted to complete the survey themselves with pen and paper or respond to the surveyor's questions verbally. The former could help mitigate privacy issues and reduce response biases, but the latter would be better at garnering impromptu comments and reducing errors in interpretation. In the first sampling location, the Eagle Lake Carriage Road Entrance, many visitors took the survey non-verbally. Looking over the first round of these results, the number of skipped questions, misinterpreted questions, and misunderstanding of survey directions was high enough that it felt necessary to make verbal surveys the default for all future sampling blocks – the one exception being the demographic questions. Therefore, approximately 95% (n = 107) were conducted verbally. The remaining 5% (n=12) occurred when visitors were asked to take the survey themselves. However, the large percentage from Eagle Lake that were conducted

non-verbally may have impacted the results from this location, especially if the results are being analyzed against other locations.

Another area for improvement in the sampling process was the number of surveys completed at each location. This was due to the varying response rates of each location. For example, 3 hours were spent at the Sand Beach Parking Lot. In this time, 9 surveys were completed. In one hour at Eagle Lake, on the other hand, 12 completed surveys were gathered. Because of this issue, some sites had to be sampled twice while others were sampled only once.

There were also several general limitations of the study. Since surveys were administered verbally, there was potential for response bias in survey respondents as visitors consciously or subconsciously alter their answers to fit the desired response. Other limitations include the number of responses – 119 and the short time period of sampling – one month in the summer, specifically August 2023. As demonstrated in Crikelair’s survey comparison between Summer 2018 and Fall 2019, the demographics of Acadia do change significantly depending on the season, so this constraint may make the results incomprehensive of Acadia’s entire vehicle-using population.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the Island Explorer is a tool that visitors can use to achieve a number of desired outcomes on their trips – freedom to travel to busy locations in the park, ability to connect hikes, less stressful navigation, less time circling a parking lot, and unimpaired sightseeing. However, as evidenced by survey results, a large proportion of visitors – especially first time park visitors – are not aware of the Island Explorer and/or are not confident in using it. This logically prohibits them from utilizing the bus service when it would be most beneficial. The knowledge gap also indicates a need for improved pre-trip promotion of the Island Explorer

to acquaint first time visitors with the services as early as possible. In addition, some visitors may not have a sense of motivation to use the Island Explorer. Visitors who are unaware of the congestion patterns and hotspots in the park cannot make an informed transportation choice. These visitors are also most likely to visit the most popular sites in the park. To reduce the worst congestion issues in the park, therefore, it is important that more visitors know both *how to* use the Island Explorer but also know *when* and *why* to use it. As observed in open-ended feedback, those familiar and comfortable with the Island Explorer did not necessarily use it on every outing but, instead, used it when they knew it would be helpful to them. Increasing the proportion of Acadia visitors who develop this understanding could be achieved through greater promotion of the Island Explorer itself as well as increased messaging on the realistic traffic conditions of the park.

Much more is left to learn about the motivations and factors behind Acadia visitors' transportation choices. Further studies may consider exploring the potential impact of increased Island Explorer navigation and user tools such as schedules and last-bus times posted at each stop. Additionally, one of the single biggest factors not thoroughly examined in this research is the impact of children, especially young children, on a family's ability to utilize the IEx. The presence of children was not recorded in the survey but based on anecdotal non-response rates, families were likely underrepresented in the study. In future surveys, a question about the number and ages of group members should be included to quantify this factor and gain further feedback from this visitor demographic.

The Acadia Gateway Center, set to be completed by May 2025, will very likely transform the transportation patterns of Acadia visitors. The ~\$30-million-dollar project will include park-and-ride parking for hundreds of vehicles, a bus maintenance and storage facility, a visitor

welcome center, a theater, and staff resources to provide trip planning and tourist information (Ogrysko, 2023). Located on State Highway 3 in Trenton, Maine, just minutes from MDI, the center will serve as a central hub for Island Explorer buses and passengers – a key feature that does not yet exist within park infrastructure (NPS, n.d.). Since visitation has increased substantially since Holly’s 2009 study, updated research focused solely on visitors’ planned use of this resource is needed. Understanding which visitors the Gateway Center can best serve and in which ways it can serve them could be vital in bridging the gap so that a personal vehicle is not needed on the island at all.

Overall, this research underlines the critical role of knowledge and experience in helping visitors make informed transportation choices. It offers a foundation from which to better understand Acadia’s visitors – what they are looking to get out of their park experience and how the Island Explorer can best suit those needs. As National Parks, and Acadia National Park specifically, continue to feel the effects of increased visitation, results from this survey can provide valuable insights for park management as they strive to enhance visitor experience and promote sustainable transportation alternatives.

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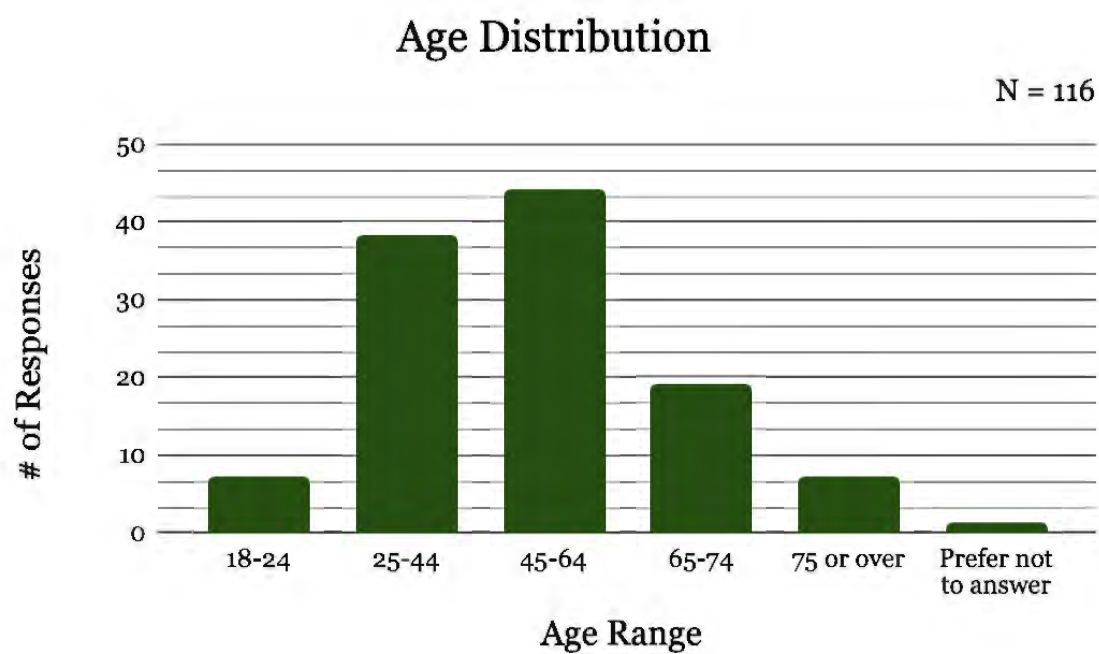
Appendix A

Survey instrument

- *Have you been to Acadia before?* (Yes, No)
- *Are you a resident of the area within 1 hr drive?* (Summer resident, Year-long resident, Neither)
- *Did you arrive in a vehicle to this site?* (Yes, No)
- *What type of vehicle is it?* (Personal, Rental)
- *How would you rate the congestion level in the park?* (Not at all congested, Slightly congested, Somewhat congested, Very congested)
- *How much time would you be willing to spend attempting to park your vehicle at this site, including time spent walking to the site from a faraway spot?* (0 - 5 minutes, 6 - 10 minutes, 11 - 15 minutes, 16 - 20 minutes, Other)
- *Which of the following factors, if any, might dissuade your use of a personal vehicle?*
(Higher gas prices, Increase in traffic, Knowing your desired parking lot was full, Parking fees, Other, Nothing)
- *On average, how much do you use public transportation in your area at home?* (Never, Once a year or less, Once a month, Once a week, Once a day, Not an available option)
- *How would you rate your familiarity with the Island Explorer?* (Not at all familiar, Slightly familiar, Somewhat familiar, Very familiar)
- *When did you first find out about the Island Explorer?* (Just now, Upon arrival on this visit, Planning process for this visit, Long before this visit)

- *Have you used the Island Explorer?* (Yes, No)
- *If yes, how user friendly did you find the Island Explorer to be?* (Not at all user friendly, Slightly user friendly, Somewhat user friendly, Very user friendly)
- *Do you have a plan to use the Island Explorer on this visit?* (Yes, Considering it, No)
- *Which of the following factors, if any, would encourage you to use the Island Explorer more than you currently do?* (More park and ride options, Route to the park from the Bangor Airport, Reduced wait time, Greater number of serviced locations, More bike racks on the bus, More information available, Other, Nothing)
- *Age?* (18 - 24, 25 - 44, 45 - 64, 65 - 74, 75+)
- *Income?* (\$0 - 30k, \$31k - \$60k, \$61k - \$90k, \$91k - \$119k, \$120k+)
- *Race/Ethnicity?* (Asian, African, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American/Indigenous, Pacific Islander, White, Other, Prefer Not to Answer)

Appendix B:



Appendix B: Respondents' Age Distribution

Appendix C:

Location Variance Results

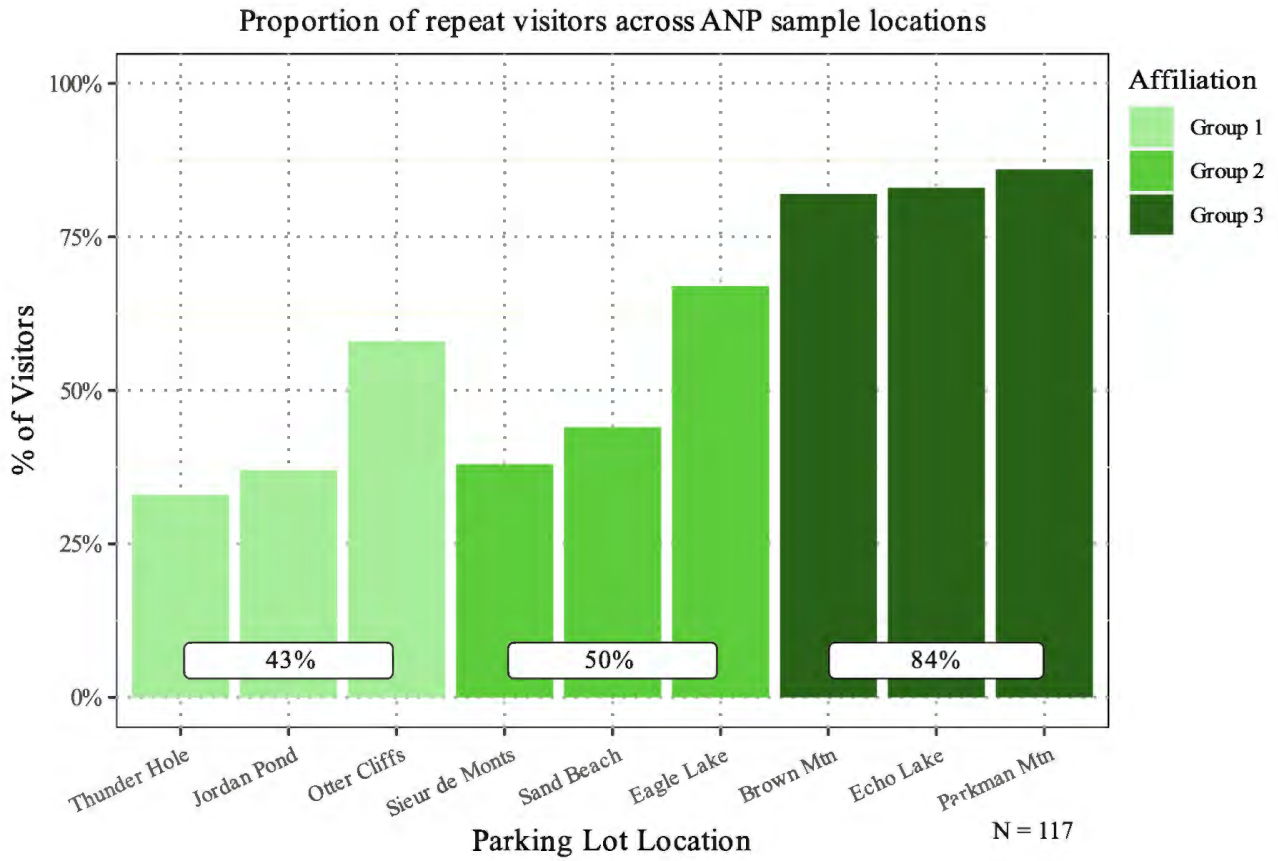


Figure C.1. Average prior visitation to park by location and group affiliation.

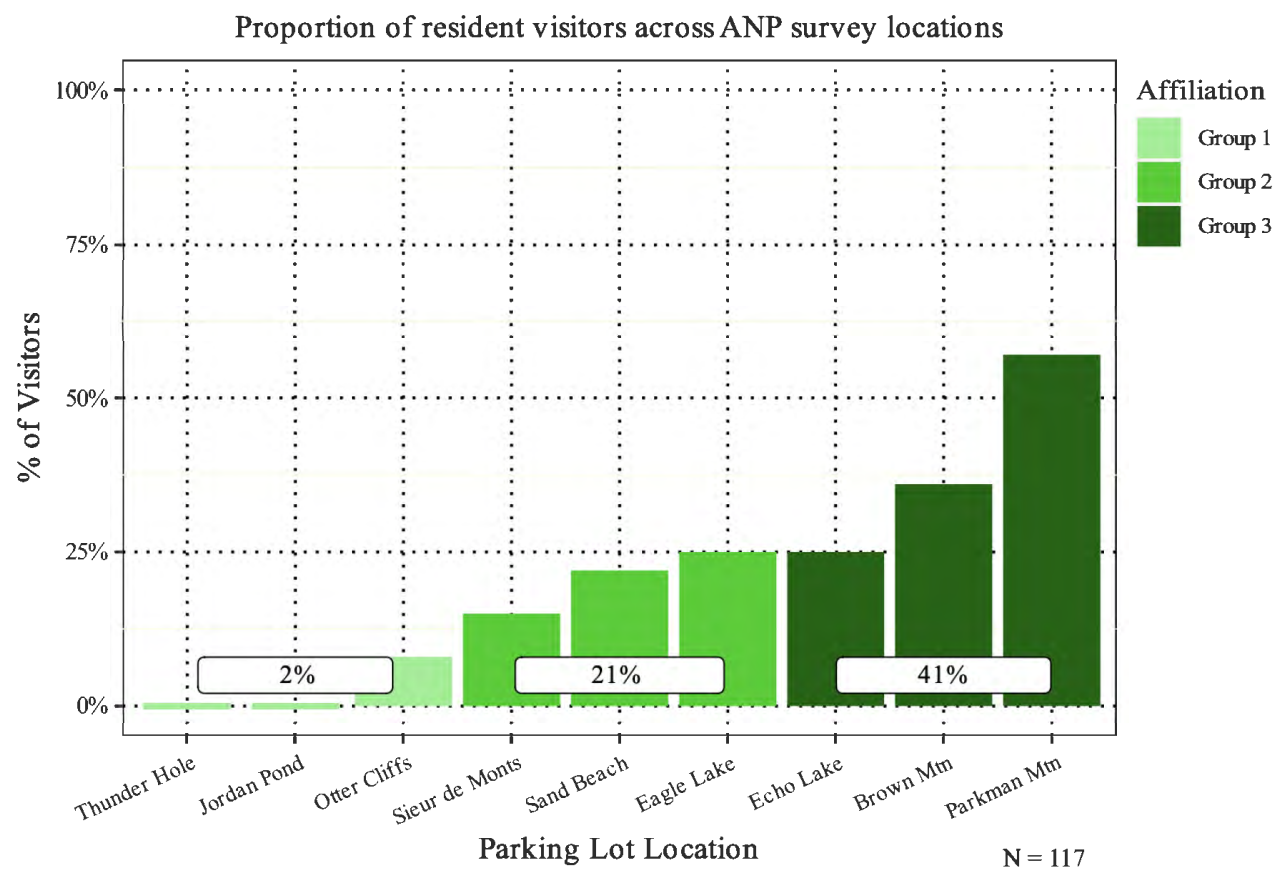


Figure C.2. Visitors' average residency by location and group affiliation.

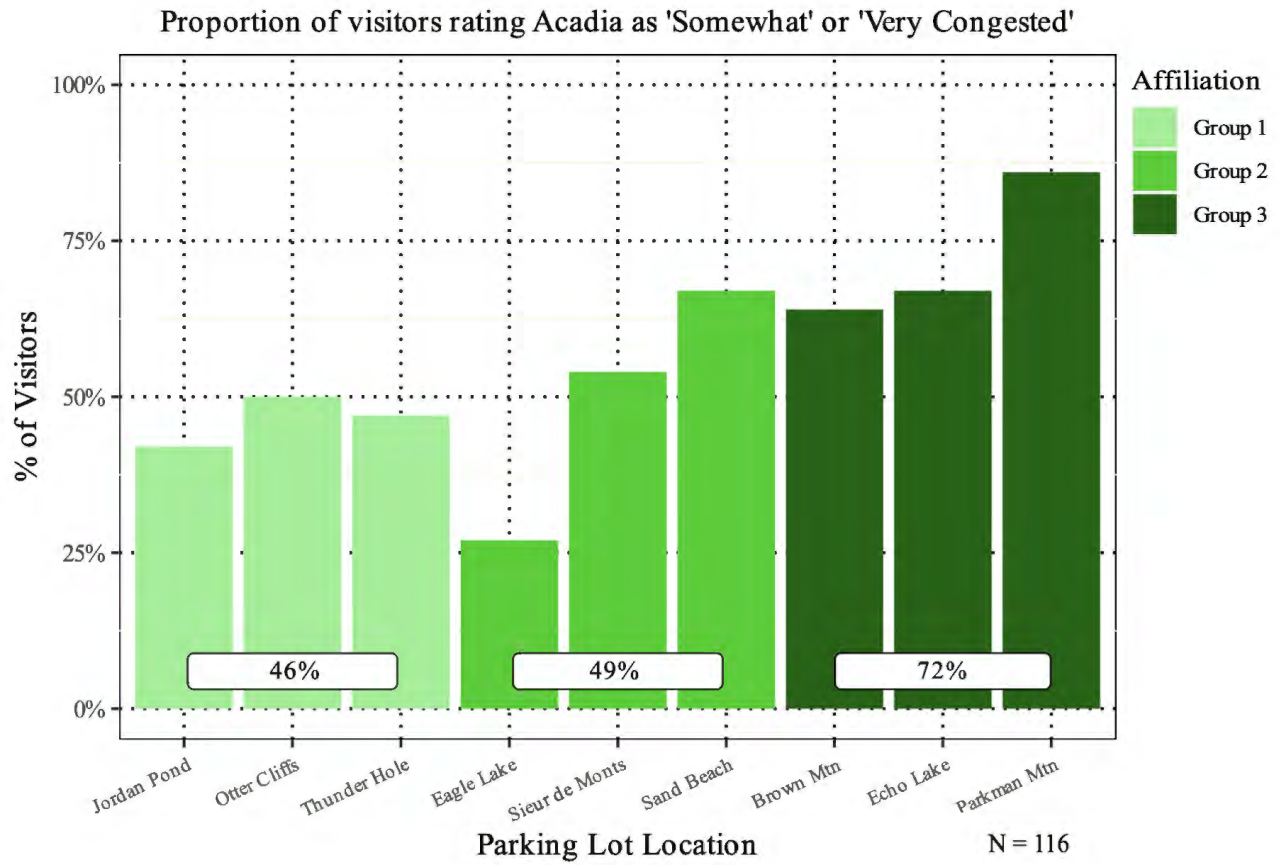


Figure C.3. Visitors' rating of park congestion by location and group affiliation.

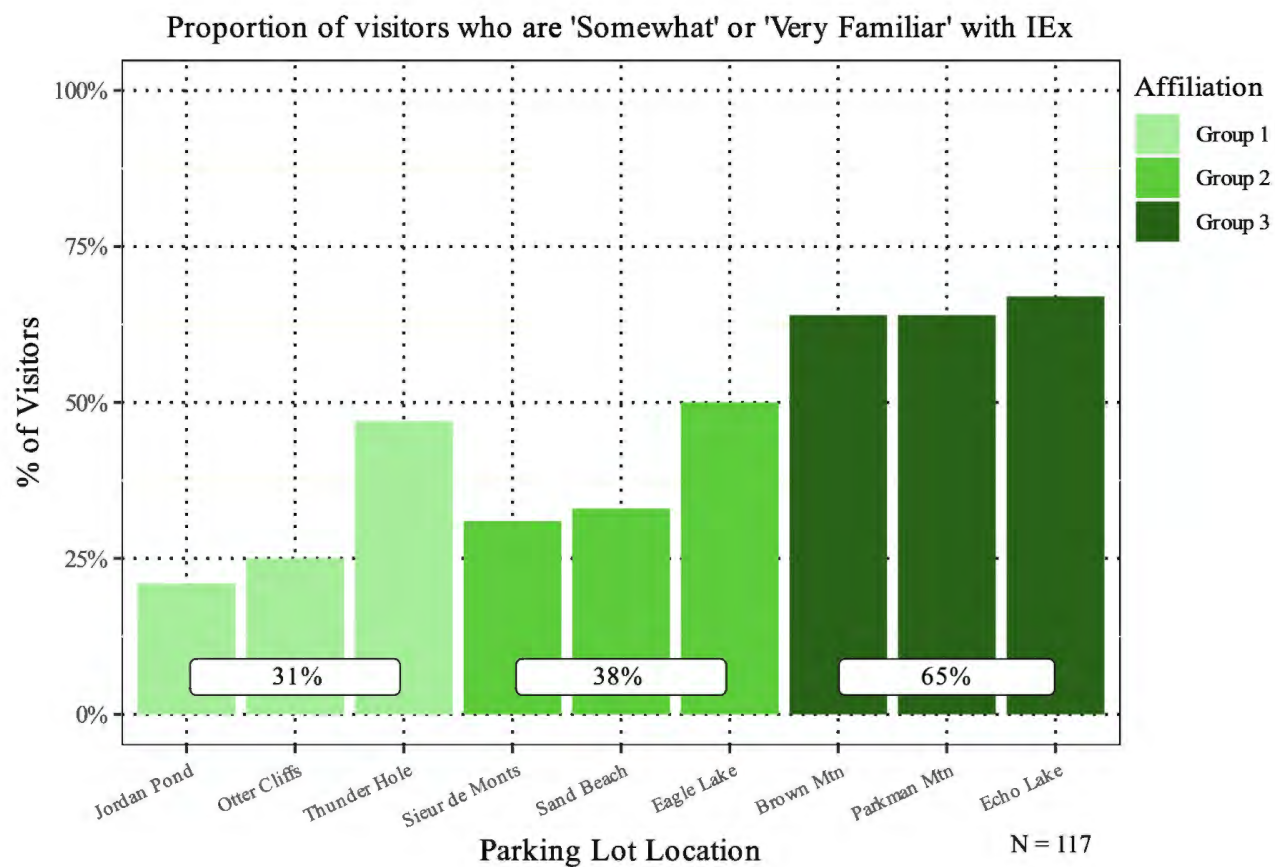


Figure C.4. Visitors' self-rated familiarity level with Island Explorer by location and group affiliation.

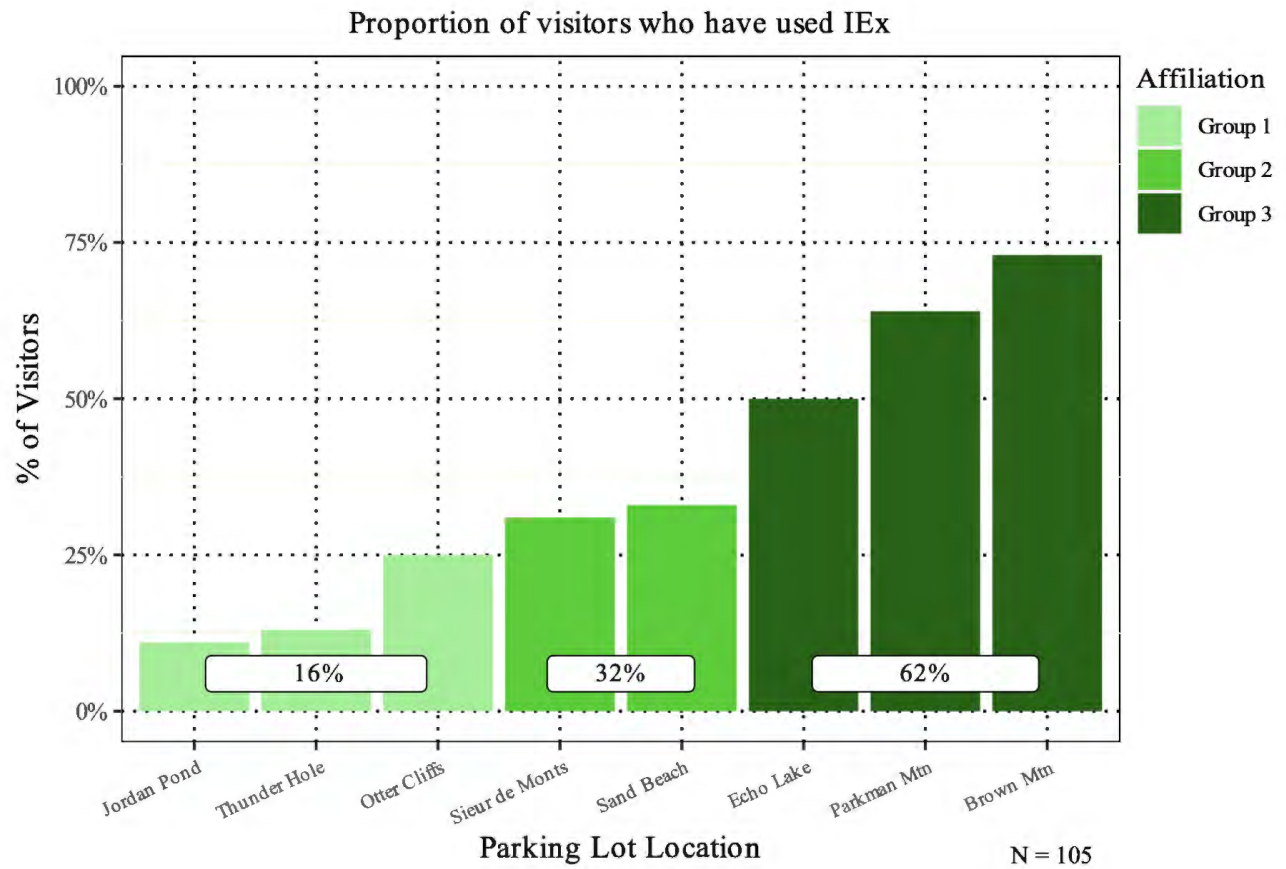


Figure C.5. Visitors' past usage of Island Explorer by location and group affiliation.

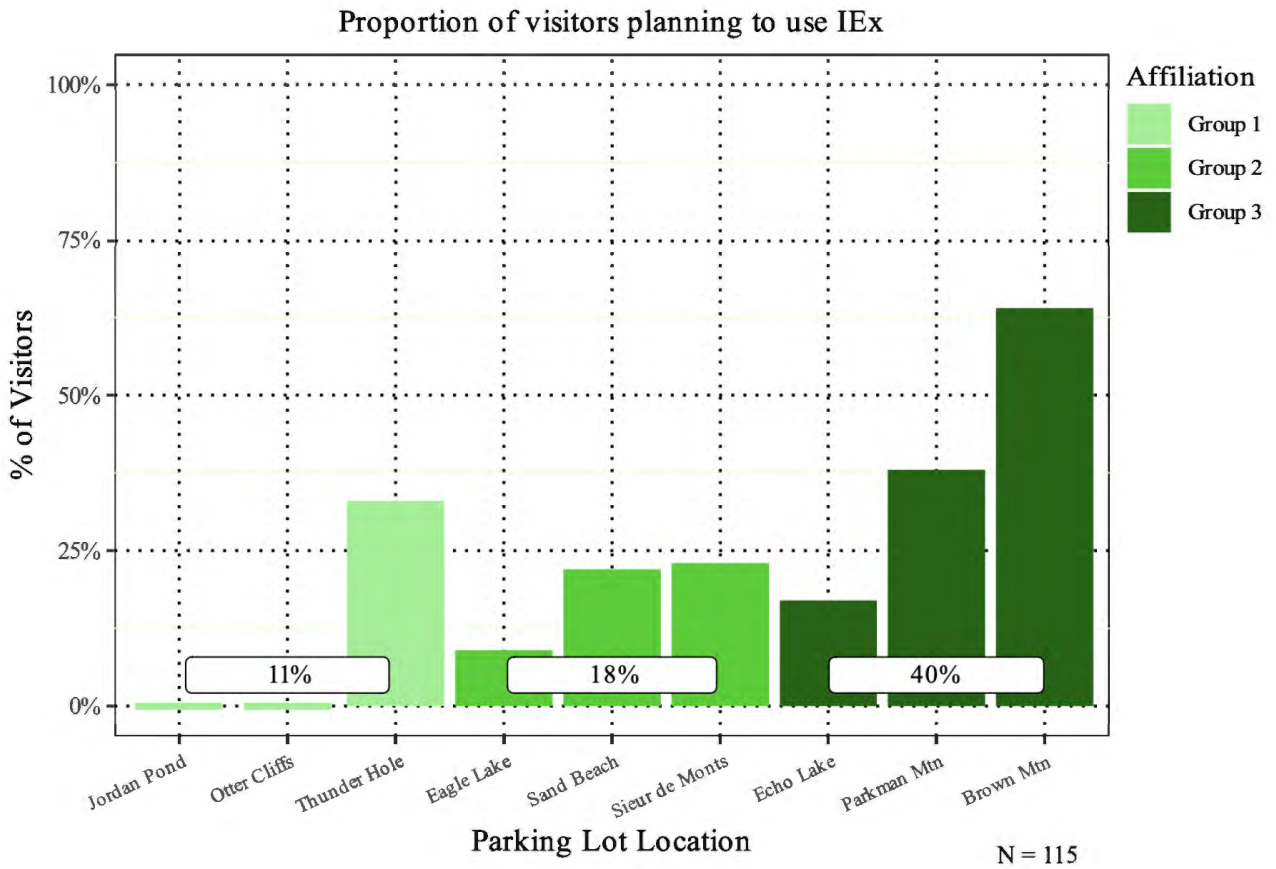


Figure C.6. Visitors' plan to use Island Explorer by location and group affiliation.

Appendix D:

Familiarity, Congestion, and Intention to Use Island Explorer

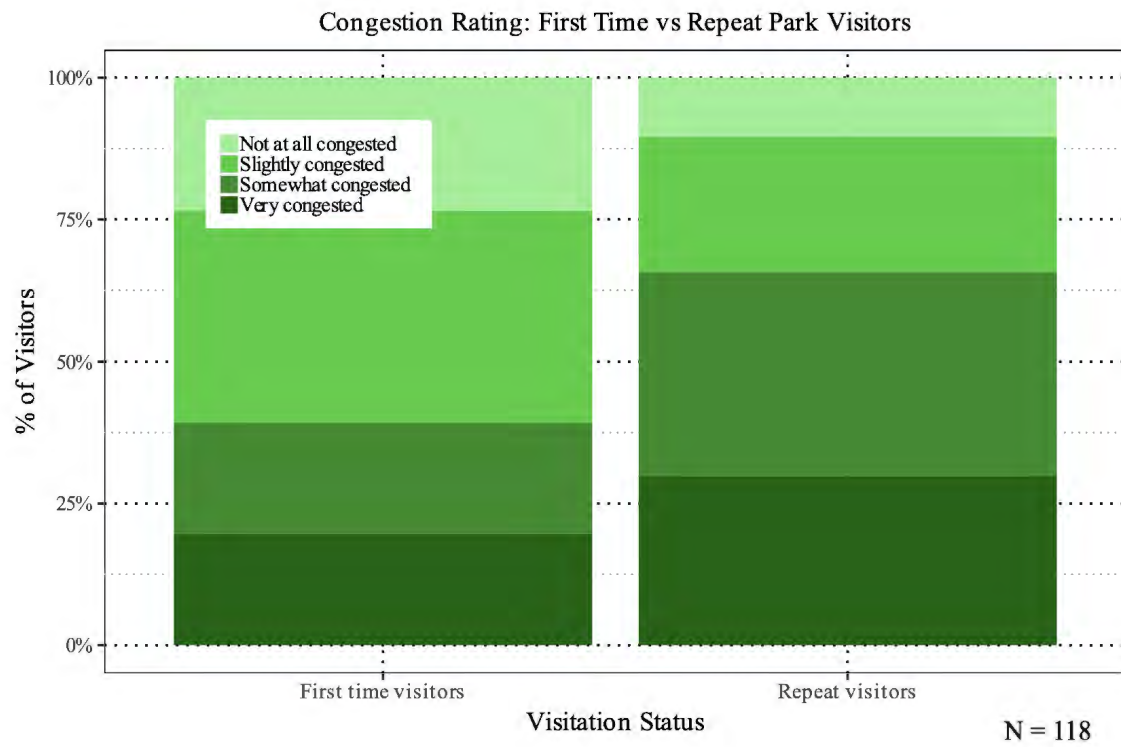


Figure D.1. Park congestion rating of first-time park visitors compared to repeat park visitors.

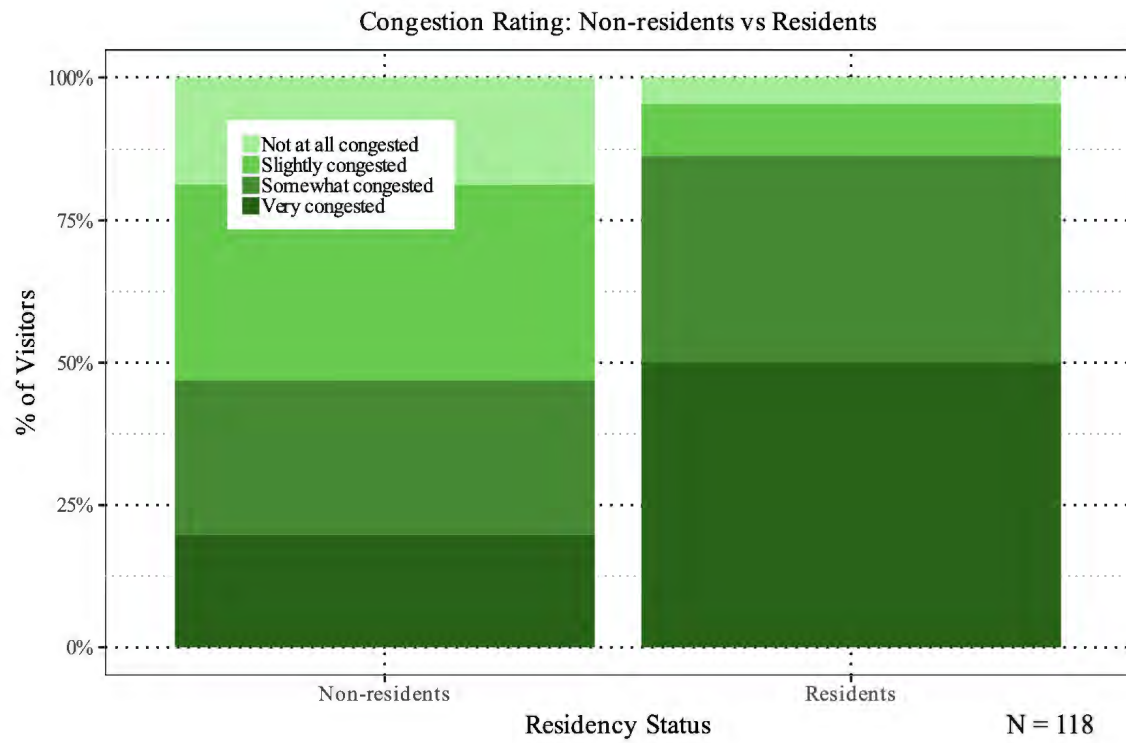


Figure D.2. Park congestion rating of residents compared to non-residents.

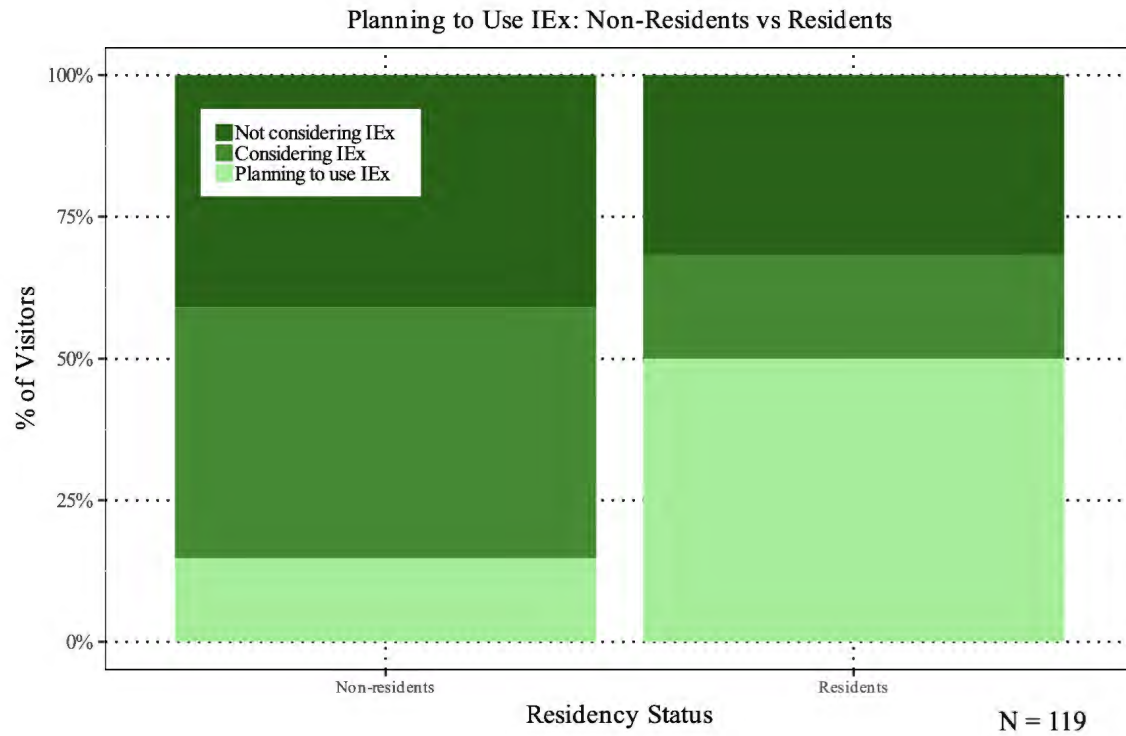


Figure D.3. Residents and non-residents' intention to use the Island Explorer bus system.

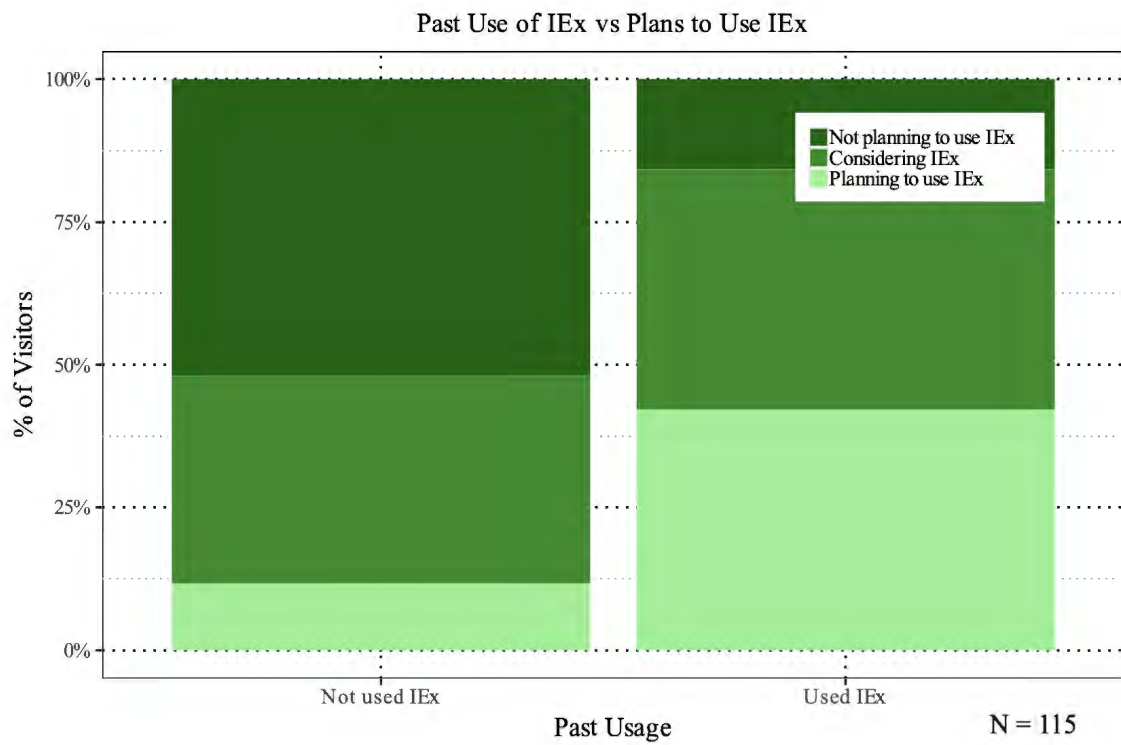


Figure D.4. Respondents' past use of Island Explorer compared to future plans to use it.

Appendix E:

Ride With Us

Try a car-free experience. The fare-free **Island Explorer** serves most of the park and surrounding communities except Cadillac Mountain. Using the propane-powered bus reduces traffic congestion and air pollution. More at **go.nps.gov/IslandExplorer**

Appendix E: Website Capture from of Acadia National Park site: “Essential Acadia: Top 5 Things to Know Before Visiting.”