

Vonie, here are some statistics from the Arthur Ravenel, Jr. Bridge Study that should help in your meetings.

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Please make sure to indicate that all of this is
PRELIMINARY DATA.

*Number of people surveyed (n=393).

1) BRIDGE PATHS AS TOURISM ASSETS:

Tourists were not surveyed. Tourists are any people who live 20 or more miles from the bridge. Though we did not interview tourists, we did count them. We approached 476 users, out of this number, 83 tourists were approached. This means that out of 476 bridge users, 83 (17%) were tourists. We did not interview tourists, so our sample size is $476 - 83 = 393$ people.

This number is really very impressive and indicates that the bridge path is not just a local asset but it is a potential catalyst of tourism. Given the importance of tourism to our local economy, it is clear that the current bridge path and any future bridge path will contribute to the long term financial health of the community.

2) HEALTH IMPACT OF THE BRIDGE PATH: A whopping 67% of all those surveyed indicated that their activity levels had increased since the opening of the bridge path. If Charleston and Mt. Pleasant want to take a lead in addressing our region's and country's obesity epidemic, it is clear that building bridge paths are a smart place to start.

3) THE BRIDGE PATH AS A FACILITATOR OF IMPROVING THE ACTIVITY LEVELS OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS: That risk levels for obesity related diseases are higher in African American populations than in Caucasian populations is well documented.

Our study shows that there is a significant difference between whites and nonwhites in terms of the degree to which the bridge path is associated with

increases in activity levels. 85.4% of nonwhites reported increased activity levels versus 64.0% of whites.

* $p = .01$

**The survey categorized race as Hispanic, African American, Asian American, and Caucasian. However, due to low numbers in the non-white category, this variable was dichotomized into a white/non-white variable. Most of the non-white respondents are African American.

4) CHOICE OF MODALITY AND HEALTH: Bike riders, runners, and walkers all reported increases in activity levels with no significant differences between the increases. This data shows that it is important to build sidewalks and paths that are multi-modal.

5) IMPACT OF BRIDGE ON ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION COMMUTERS: Gas prices for unleaded gas in the lowcountry area are now approaching \$3.50 per gallon. For fiscal as well as environmental reasons, it is important to encourage alternative forms of transportation. It looks like the bridge path is doing a great job of this. Out of 393 respondents, 41 reported that they are commuters (about 10.4%).

Also, though the majority of the bridge path users are recreational users, the impact of the bridge path on activity levels is greater for commuters than recreationists. There was a significant difference between recreators (65.8% reporting increased activity levels) and commuters (90% reporting increased activity levels) in terms of the degree to which the bridge path increased activity levels.

* $p < .05$

6) WHY COMMUTE?: As noted above, gas prices are high and keep climbing. In downtown Charleston we also have a well known parking shortage. Both of these issues ranked high as reasons for commuting on the bridge path. Bridge paths also provide opportunities for commuters, and tourists, to view our scenic waterways. As you can see below, commuters ranked "the chance to be outside" and "scenery" as strong reasons for commuting.

Commuters rated the importance of several reasons for commuting by bike or foot rather than by car. Rankings are based on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 = not very important, 5 = very important). The median for each ranking is given below:

- To Save Time = 1
- To Fit Exercise Into Routine = 5
- For Scenery = 5
- For the Chance to be Outside = 5
- To Save on Gas and Expenses = 4
- To Avoid Parking Hassles and/or Costs = 4
- To Contribute to Less Resource Depletion = 5
- For Social Aspects = 2
- Time to Reflect and Daydream = 5

7) LEARNING FROM THE PATH IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD: Before building another bridge path, it is important to understand what people want in a bridge path and what people like about our current bridge path.

WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT FROM A BRIDGE PATH?

All users rated the following bridge path qualities in terms of importance. Rankings are based on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 = not very important, 5 = very important). The median for each ranking is given below:

- Safety = 5
- Lighting = 5
- Terrain Paved = 4
- Terrain Flat = 2
- Terrain Hilly = 3
- Maintenance = 5
- Scenery = 5
- Parking = 5
- Access On an Off = 5
- Convenient Location = 5
- Social Atmosphere = 3
- Restrooms and H2O = 4
- Adequate Space = 5

CURRENT CONDITION OF THE BRIDGE? All users rated the existing bridge path in terms of the following qualities. Rankings are based on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 = not very important, 5 = very important). The median for each ranking is given below:

Safety =5

Lighting = 5

Condition of Terrain = 5

Maintenance = 5

Scenery = 5

Parking = 4

Access On an Off = 5

Convenient Location = 5

Social Atmosphere = 4

Restrooms and H2O = 2

Adequate Space = 3

Note that while Restrooms/H2O and Adequate Space are rated high in terms of what users desire, they are rated lower in terms of what the bridge actually delivers. Otherwise, the bridge received very high marks from users.

8) CONNECTIVITY: Of the 393 bridge path users, 286 (72.8 %) drove to the bridge path in order to utilize the bridge path. This indicates that there is a severe mismatch between the pedestrian/bike assets offered by the bridge and the assets available in the larger community. This bridge path, and any future bridge path, will not be able to reach its full potential in terms of offering alternative transit opportunities until the bridge path is connected to a wider, interconnected, system of paths both on and off the peninsula. Similarly, path development on the peninsula and off the peninsula must be connected by bridge paths in order for commuters and recreationists to experience full mobility.