Appendix D: Public Outreach

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NJTPA LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION

PLAN 2050

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General Public Outreach

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PLAN 2050 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement for North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's (NJTPA's) Plan 2050 is an essential component of creating a plan that meets the current and future needs of the region and its residents. To that end, the NJTPA sought to facilitate effective, inclusive, and meaningful public engagement to inform its long-range planning initiatives.

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the messaging context surrounding the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) has changed. The messaging and outreach for this effort took into account the realities of limited public interaction during the COVID-19 pandemic and sought to replace planned in-person events with safer ways to inform and engage the public.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

The public involvement process began with the launch of the NJTPA Plan 2050 website. The **website** was the launch pad where residents could find relevant reports, meeting times, and additional information about Plan 2050 and the importance of public input. The website included native translation in Spanish, as well as a plugin for visitors to translate the website into other languages. In concert with the website, a short online survey was released. The survey asked questions about what needs to be improved in the region, the modes of transportation most likely to be used, and important transportation factors that help inform people's living choices. These questions helped to give a snapshot of what residents are most concerned about regarding transportation in the NJTPA region. The survey was translated into five languages based on Limited English Proficiency demographics of the region, including Spanish, Chinese (simplified), Korean, Portuguese, and Hindi. The NJTPA also organized various activities to educate and engage the public through virtual platforms, including a symposium series, virtual public meetings, and collaboration with partner organizations to present at their regular meetings. All activities were advertised through traditional NJTPA channels and through targeted, paid social media advertising. Finally, to supplement online activities, the NJTPA worked with partners to distribute print materials to populations that might not have access to online mediums.

To help the NJTPA team refine its public involvement approach, a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) was convened three times during the outreach process. The SAC provided a sounding board for outreach efforts and ideas, particularly related to hard-to-reach populations. They also assisted with promoting outreach activities, hosting NJTPA team members at their own meetings, and co-hosting larger outreach events.

OVERARCHING THEMES

During seven months of public involvement, the NJTPA heard perspectives on North Jersey's transportation system from varied and diverse voices. Below are the overarching themes of that feedback:

- Improving the state of transit—including bus, train, light rail, and the PATH—was the highest concern for residents who took the survey and participated in meetings. The Plan should include ways to improve transit so that it is operationally efficient, and the infrastructure is in a state of good repair. It should also include ways to expand transit, both in terms of the number of lines and frequency of service.

- The public would like to see improvements in in-State/regional transit trips. The focus tends to be on improving transit to and from New York City, while it remains difficult to get around Northern New Jersey (and New Jersey as a whole) using just

public transit.

- Another key theme was equitable access for all modes of transportation—who has access, who does not, and how to improve access for all ages and abilities in the future.

- Bike and pedestrian safety should be prioritized, as well as expanding and connecting bike lanes and trails throughout the region. Bike and pedestrian planning should be thought of regionally rather than municipality by municipality. In general, more funds should be allocated to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

- The increase in goods movement and freight traffic, resulting from changes in consumer behavior, has meant that there is more competition for curb space and increased wear and tear on roads. There needs to be more consideration about how goods movement is integrated into planning.

- Transportation funding in New Jersey is overly reliant on the gas tax. The state should look at ways to diversify and secure more reliable funding sources.

- Planning decisions should be more regional and holistic in nature. More education is needed about the connection between land use planning and transportation so fewer inequities result from planning decisions.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The NJTPA convened a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), made up of a broad cross-section of people from across the region's 13 counties, two cities, and demographic groups. The SAC was specifically tasked with providing feedback to the project team about outreach opportunities in specific geographies and to specific groups, such as youth, older adults, females, racially and ethnically diverse populations, foreign-born, limited English proficiency, disabled, and low-income. The SAC met virtually three times over the course of the public involvement process: Wednesday, August 26, 2020; Friday, October 23, 2020; and January 13, 2021.

During the meetings, the SAC was helpful in refining messaging and imagery for social media and print communication. They also provided substantive feedback on the website and ways to improve accessibility. They provided ideas for ways to reach more traditionally underrepresented populations to attend virtual public meetings, as well as feedback on meeting content and format. SAC members also helped to distribute information about outreach activities to their constituency, and several partnered with NJTPA on targeted outreach meetings and events.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:

- Age-Friendly Englewood
- HOPES Community Action Partnership
- La Casa de Don Pedro
- Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey
- Statewide Independent Living Council
- New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition

- Disability Rights New Jersey
- Project Self-Sufficiency
- New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice
- New Brunswick Tomorrow
- Tri-State Transportation Campaign
- United Way of Northern New Jersey

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

NJTPA deployed several digital communications tools to inform the public about the plan and opportunities to provide feedback.

WEBSITE

The website for the NJTPA's Plan 2050, www.njtpa.org/Plan2050, was launched on September 18, 2020. In addition to spotlighting the quick online survey residents were encouraged to take, the website included information about Plan 2050 and why public engagement is important to its formation. The homepage listed all the events and meetings with links to register. There was also a partner resource page with public event flyers, a printable copy of the survey, sample social media posts, and materials in five additional languages, including Spanish, Chinese (simplified), Korean, Hindi, and Portuguese. The documents page included background papers and other studies that helped to inform Plan 2050. The website included native translation in Spanish, as well as a plugin for visitors to translate the website into other languages.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In September 2020, the NJTPA began promoting Plan 2050 on their Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram channels. Social media content consisted of a variety of posts that advertised the virtual events, the survey, the $50 gift card that participants are eligible to win, and the TPA Tuesdays symposium series. These posts were scripted to create a buzz around the events to gain a larger attendance and to draw social media users to the survey. Two Plan 2050 promotional videos—one in English and one in Spanish—were created and promoted on social media and the project website. Social media posts advertising the Plan 2050 virtual events and survey tended to receive more retweets and likes than other posts. Overall, social media posts and ads yielded over 3.1 million impressions with New Jersey citizens, professionals, and a variety of organizations interacting with the posts.

Social Media Insights						
Social Media Platform	Total Impressions	Average Impressions (Total)	Average Impressions (Information-al Posts)	Average Impressions (Survey Posts)	Average Impressions (Symposium Posts)	Average Impressions (Meeting Posts)
Facebook (non-paid)	21,593	248	199	290	168	291
Facebook (paid)	3,026,193	41,455	N/A	23,023	N/A	87,095
Twitter	47,482	480	594	536	440	399
Instagram	3,237	58	57	58	57	56
YouTube	900	75	51	N/A	52	12
LinkedIn	4,578	83	104	86	84	69

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The NJTPA also coordinated with strategic partners to help reach a broader audience.

COOPERATIVE MARKETING

The NJTPA worked with strategic partners to help spread the word about the plan survey and upcoming meetings.

Promotional Bookmarks

County, municipal and consortium libraries in the region helped distribute nearly 20,000 bookmarks advertising the online survey and hotline.

PARTICIPATING LIBRARIES:

- Bergen County Cooperative Library
- Monmouth County Library
- Somerset County Library System
- Sussex County Library
- Warren County Library
- Cranbury Public Library
- Dunellen Public Library
- Edison Public Library
- Elizabeth Public Library
- Keyport Public Library
- Long Branch Public Library
- Matawan-Aberdeen Public library
- Metuchen Public Library
- Milltown Public Library
- Monroe Township Public Library
- Newark Public Library
- New Brunswick Public Library
- North Brunswick Public Library
- Passaic Public Library
- Paterson Public Library
- Piscataway Public Library
- Perth Amboy Public Library
- Plainfield Public Library
- Plainsboro Public Library
- Red Bank Public Library
- Roselle Park Public Library
- Sayreville Public Library
- South Amboy Public Library
- South Brunswick Public Library
- South River Public Library
- Spotswood Public Library
- Springfield Public Library
- Union Public Library

Communications Partners

NJTPA also identified key community stakeholders as potential public outreach partners. The project team contacted community-based groups, statewide chambers of commerce, aid organizations, public housing authorities, and other anchor institutions to help disseminate outreach materials via social media, print flyers, and print surveys.

Communications Partners	
Organization	**Partner Action**
Alliance for Newark Public Schools	Survey social media
American Planning Association - NJ Chapter	Symposium event listings on website & newsletter
Asian Indian Chamber of Commerce	Symposium in newsletter
Bangladeshi American Women's Development Initiative	Meeting & survey social media
Downtown New Jersey	Symposium event listings on website, survey & symposium social media
Korean Community Center	Shared paper survey with members
Newark NAACP	Shared survey flyer with members
Newark Public Library	Survey social media
Newark Transit Alliance	Survey social media
NJ.com	Published two opinion pieces aligned to Plan 2050
NJ Bike & Walk Coalition	Symposium in newsletter & social media
NJ League of Municipalities	Published magazine article aligned to Plan 2050
NJTOD.org	Meetings, symposiums & survey on website, newsletter, & social media
Ocean County Library	Posted to website and shared flyer
Paterson Task Force	Shared paper survey with members
Together North Jersey	Meetings, symposiums & survey on website, newsletter, & social media
Tri-State Transportation Campaign	Meeting, symposium & survey social media
Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of NJ	Symposium and survey social media
United Way of Central Jersey	Survey social media
United Way of Monmouth & Ocean Counties	Survey social media
United Way of Northern New Jersey	Shared survey with members

PARTNER MEETINGS

The NJTPA attended regularly scheduled meetings of strategic partners to gain deeper insights into transportation concerns of their constituents and members.

Below are **key themes** from the partner meeting discussions:

ENVIRONMENT

- Although there have been transportation improvements over the years, the public health impacts of congestion and emissions on Environmental Justice (EJ) communities have not improved. The transportation sector in New Jersey accounts for over 40 percent of carbon emissions, and minority and low-income communities are disproportionally affected by the lack of green infrastructure.

- Electric vehicles, cleaner transportation modes (particularly for freight), and vast policy changes are needed for equity and reducing pollution in EJ communities.

TRANSIT

- Transportation planning needs to be less auto-centric and focus on improving New Jersey's transit, including adding light rail as an alternative to highway travel. Transit improvements also need to be in conjunction with redevelopment so there is less need to drive.

- Rail transit should be extended to new areas, e.g., the Raritan Valley Line (RVL) should extend farther west to Pennsylvania. Expansion would help reduce congestion on North Jersey's highways and reduce reliance on cars in outlying areas.

- Except for service to and from New York City, transit has not kept up with growth. It is very difficult to get around via transit within the region, and where it exists, regional transit can be confusing and unreliable. There should be a greater focus on improving intra-county public transportation. This is an equity and access issue as low-income residents need to be able to get to jobs, medical care, and food.

- Key considerations are transit reliability and ensuring it is accessible to all.

- NJ TRANSIT bus service needs to be improved and expanded. It is difficult to get around intra-county and service on the weekends is limited, making trips longer and less convenient. Additionally, the system used to evaluate bus drivers should be more positive rather than punitive. This is not only a safety issue, as drivers speed to meet their schedule and to avoid being punished, but also a support issue as drivers get disenchanted quickly.

- There needs to be an increase in the frequency of trains and buses during off-peak hours.

Partner Meeting Attendance		
Meeting Date	**Organization**	**Attended**
October 14, 2020	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) - Environmental Justice Advisory Council	27
October 27, 2020	Summit Old Guard	90
November 4, 2020	Union County Transportation Advisory Board	18
December 11, 2020	Women's Rights Information Center	18
December 17, 2020	Tri-State Transportation Campaign group Bus Rider Meeting	10
Total Attendees		**163**

- Transit should be made affordable for people who live on fixed incomes and who need to get around the county. Education around transit voucher programs should be more widespread so students, seniors, and others who would benefit from such programs know they are available, which may encourage them to use transit.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

- The pandemic has created an opportunity to create more dedicated bike lanes, including lanes that can bring people into Manhattan. Currently the only way to bike into the City is over the George Washington Bridge. In addition, transit should be made more bike friendly for those who bike to and from transit points.

- Currently many roads are not safe to bike on. Safety must be addressed to encourage people to bike, rather than drive.

- Bike lanes, amenities, and other improvements need to be thought of regionally or sub-regionally so there are connections throughout the whole rather than in pieces. In addition, biking can be an economic driver for many communities, which post-COVID could be an opportunity for economic development and recovery.
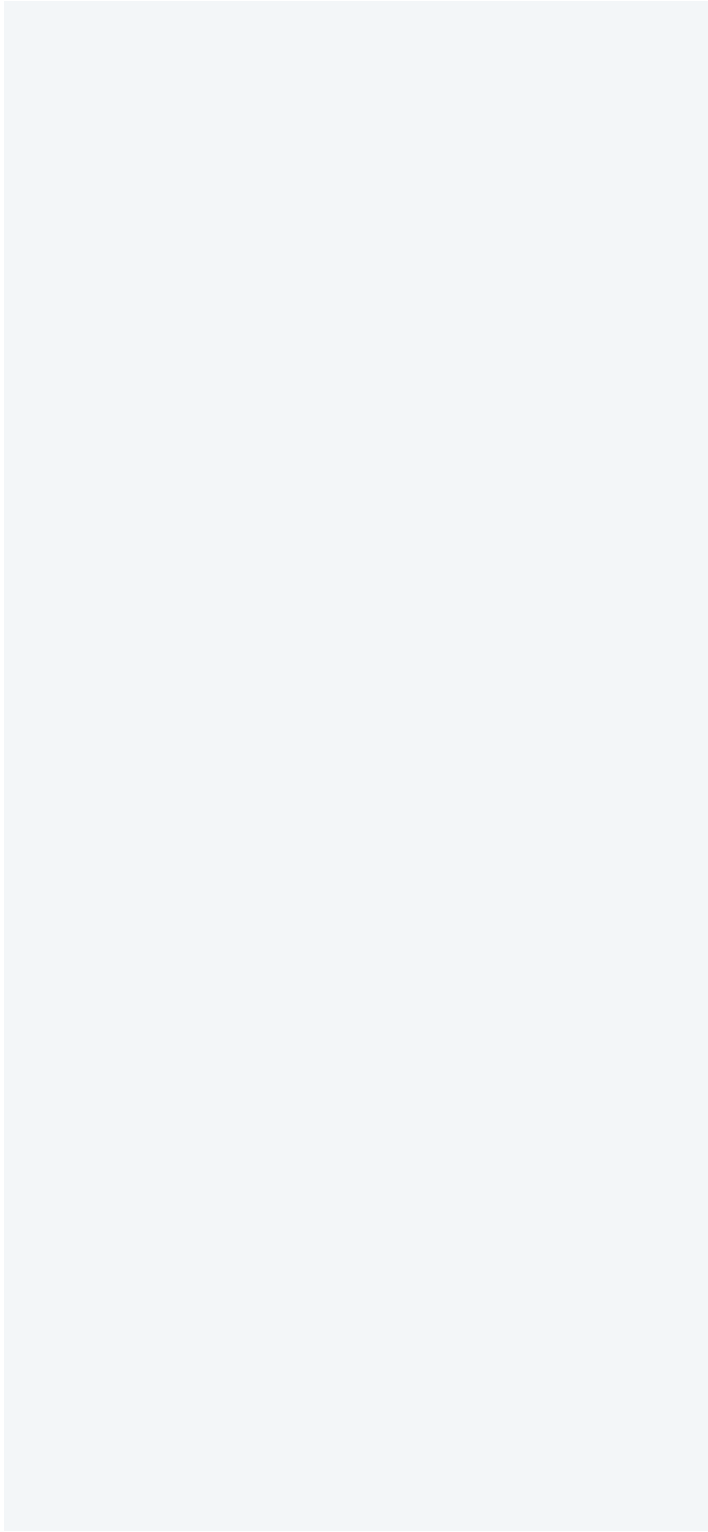
STABLE FUNDING

- As cars become more fuel efficient and Electric Vehicles (EVs) become more common, the State will need to find additional funding sources as revenue from the gas tax decreases. This will be especially important for any future transit improvements, including adding more light rail lines, electrifying the bus fleet, and maintaining a state of good repair.

EQUITY

- Improvements to transportation should not only focus on communities with money, but also on communities who lack resources and perhaps have no existing or very limited public transportation.

REGIONAL PLANNING & COORDINATION

- Municipalities need to think regionally and understand where they fit in the larger transportation network. There also needs to be better communication between the various levels of government and agencies.

VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

The NJTPA organized 12 outreach events over two distinct periods during the public involvement process. Public meetings conducted early in the outreach process focused on gathering general perceptions about North Jersey's transportation system. The second round of public meetings included more targeted discussions about areas of particular concern identified in the first-round meetings and survey responses to date.

ROUND 1 PUBLIC MEETINGS

The first round of outreach consisted of six "virtual public meetings" conducted at varying times between September 30 and October 8, 2020. One of the meetings was conducted entirely in Spanish.

Round 1 Meeting Attendance		
Meeting Date	Meeting Time	Attended
Wednesday, September 30	12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	34
Thursday, October 1	7:00 PM – 8:00 PM	9
Saturday, October 3 (Spanish)	9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	9
Saturday, October 3	10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	4
Wednesday, October 7	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	14
Thursday, October 8	7:00 PM – 8:00 PM	13
Total Attendees		83

During these first-round meetings, participants were presented with a brief overview of the NJTPA and Plan 2050. Participants were then split into manageably sized virtual break out rooms, where team members moderated discussions about positive progress over the past 30 years, areas of concern with the current system, and ideas for improvement for the next 30 years. These meetings were important to gaining substantive insight into how residents think about transportation in the region and what they are looking for in the future. Below are the overarching themes from the first round of virtual public meetings.

TRANSIT, TRANSIT, TRANSIT

The most frequently mentioned theme was **expanding rail transit**, including light rail or monorail, to give customers more options and increased connectivity. The frequency of service, that is the number of trains during the day, should be increased to give people who are traveling during off-peak times the option to use transit instead of driving. Currently the bulk of service is during peak hours when people are commuting. Service on many lines reduces significantly during off-peak times, which hinders how people get around. Adding more trains throughout the day would ensure transit remains an option for customers outside of rush hour. This change may become more crucial if the number of people commuting to work remains low, and peak and off-peak times become less relevant. It is also important to make transit more attractive to customers, including clean and safe stations.

Likewise, coordination between the different agencies, e.g., NJ Transit and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, is important to achieve schedules that make sense for commuters who need to make connections into and out of Manhattan. In addition, there were many comments related to completing the **Gateway project.** Constructing additional tunnels under the Hudson River is critical to the region's economy.

Another prevalent discussion point related to transit was improving and increasing **accessibility** to public transit, particularly for populations who live in underserved or outlying areas, and to low-income populations, people with disabilities, and the elderly. Along with accessibility, meeting attendees discussed issues with **first-mile and last-mile**

connections. How people get to and from transit stations is just as important, and if the starting point or destination is too far away that a car becomes necessary, then transit is no longer a good option. There are services that can bridge that gap, such as ride sharing or car hailing services, but these can be prohibitively expensive. Participants called for an equitable solution to this problem.

Adding to the topic of improving transit, improving **connectivity** for in-State trips was also important to meeting attendees. Many participants felt the priority was getting commuters in and out of New York City, with little attention paid to getting around New Jersey using transit. There needs to be better connections between different lines and different modes, e.g., bus and rail. There are gaps that exist across the system that make it difficult, and at times arduous, to use the transit system to get around Northern New Jersey (and New Jersey as a whole). Expanding current lines and adding new lines to close those gaps will make it easier to get around the region only using transit.

Commuting, over the last thirty years, has changed dramatically. It takes longer to get to work due to increased traffic, and unreliable transit. Participants noted that there should be more thought given to the **live/work** connection and how to link transit and housing, whether this is through Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) or Transit Villages. There is a demand to live near transit; development and redevelopment need to come with transit connections to meet this demand.

Active Transportation
Bike and pedestrian planning needs to be an integral part of transportation planning. There needs to be more connections between existing bike and pedestrian trails in different municipalities. These existing trails should be connected to create a fully realized trail network that runs throughout the region. New trails should also be added to further **expand the network and increase capacity** for more users. One way to decrease the number of trips taken by car is to make it easier and safer to walk or bike to stores or other local trips. Right now, if bike lanes exist, they are not always respected by drivers and are not fully connected. One silver lining of COVID is the increase in active transportation; future planning should address safety issues so people feel comfortable using these modes.

Transportation Funding
Funding was another key point during the discussions, with participants stating that the **funding model** in New Jersey is overly reliant on the gas tax, particularly when transportation planning and policy is moving away from auto-centric development to TOD. The State needs to diversify revenue streams, so these policy changes do not negatively impact how transportation infrastructure is funded. Additionally, funding needs to be directed not just to "state of good repair," but expansion and capital projects, especially for public transit.

Transportation & Land Use
Participants said there needs to be a stronger connection between land use and transportation planning. Land use decisions affect transportation planning and as a result transportation planning has been chasing land use. There should be more cohesion between the two silos and a more **regional approach**. Home rule complicates this—a more holistic plan is necessary for future planning.

Mode Choice
Attendees noted that over the last 30 years, congestion has increased. Instead of adding more lanes or roads, there needs to be **more options** for people to get around. Although there has been a shift in thinking towards transit and active transportation,

transportation planning is still too auto-centric, usually at the expense of other modal options.

BUSINESS & FREIGHT

Participants discussed how freight and freight traffic has increased significantly with more people ordering goods online. This has led to more wear and tear on roads, more **competition for curb space** with the increase in deliveries, and more traffic overall. Given how important freight has become and will continue to be, it should be included in complete streets planning so we can more adequately accommodate it in the future.
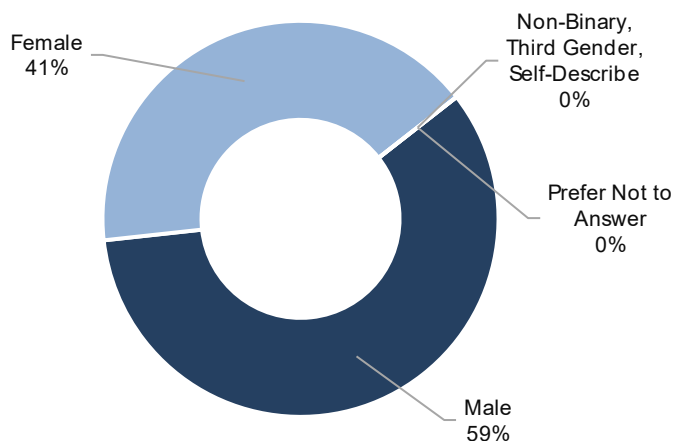
Round 1 Meeting Attendee Demographics

Meeting attendees were asked to complete a demographic survey after each event. Of the **41 percent of attendees who took the survey**, most fell in the 40-49 age range, with the over-fifty age group participation larger than those under-forty at 38 and 26 percent, respectively. Fifty-nine percent of survey respondents were male, and 73 percent were white. Fifteen percent of respondents identified as being of Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish ethnicity.
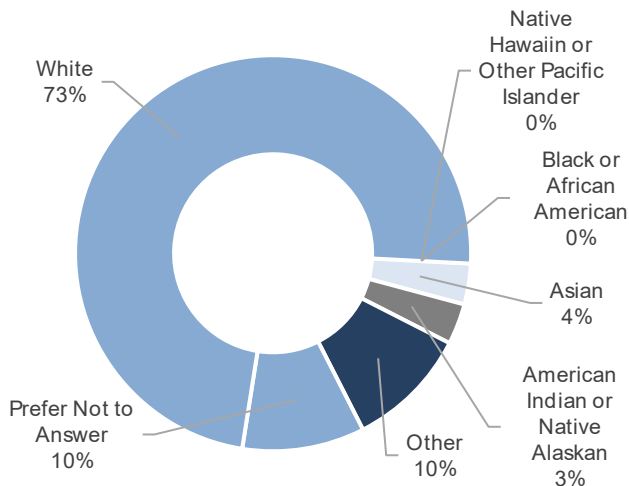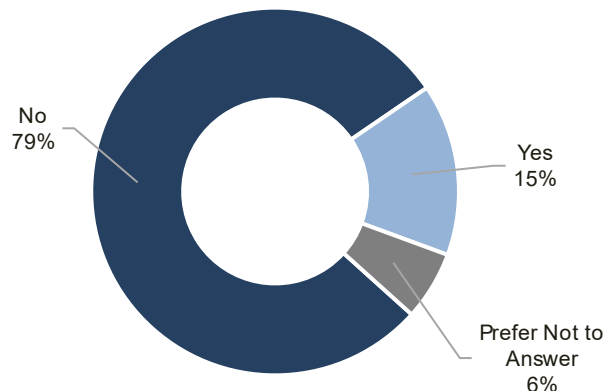
Age of Round 1 Meeting Attendees
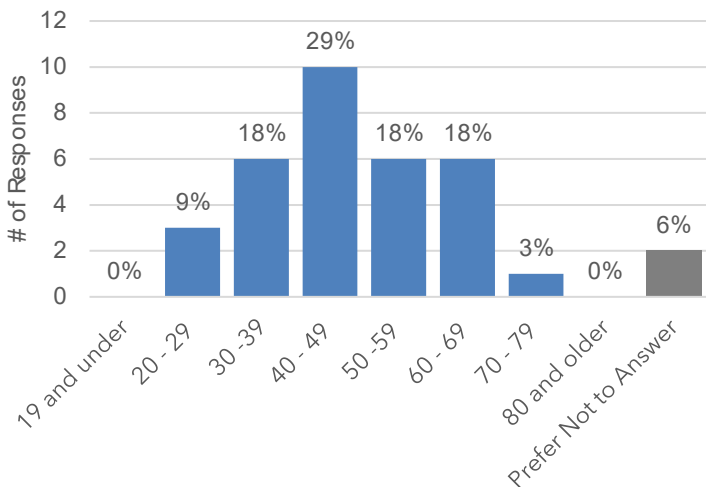
Gender of Round 1 Meeting Attendees

Race of Round 1 Meeting Attendees

Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Round 1 Meeting Attendees

At the time of registration, participants were also asked to identify their zip code of residence and work/school.

Round 1 Meeting Attendance		
Location	Live (82% Responding)	Work (64% Responding)
Bergen	5	6
Essex	10	12
Hudson	3	3
Hunterdon	2	0
Middlesex	6	6
Monmouth	4	3
Morris	2	3
Ocean	1	0
Passaic	6	1
Somerset	5	2
Sussex	1	1
Union	5	0
Warren	1	0
Newark*	3	6
Jersey City*	2	2
Outside NJTPA Region	12	14
Newark and Jersey City attendees are also included in their respective County tallies.		

ROUND 2 PUBLIC MEETINGS

During the second round of public meetings, the NJTPA held a series of virtual transportation-related topic talks to further refine the input received during the first round of public outreach. The topics selected for these events included transit, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and business/

freight. Three of the sessions were dedicated to one specific topic and included a brief introduction to the topic at the beginning of the meeting, followed by facilitated discussion in breakout rooms. To reach a broader audience, the NJTPA partnered with relevant non-profit organizations to "co-host" each of the topical sessions. The three Let's Talk! Transportation "open house" listening sessions enabled participants to drop in at any time during a two-hour session to discuss any of the transportation topics in breakout rooms.

The round two meetings reinforced what was discussed in round one—the importance of improving transit, creating more intra-state connectivity via transit expansion and bike/pedestrian trails, and the effects online retail is having in urban and suburban neighborhoods.

The major themes for each topical session and the general sessions are described below.

Let's Talk! Business & Transportation

This session was co-hosted with the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of NJ (SHCCNJ) and the Asian Indian Chamber of Commerce (AICC). SHCCNJ's CEO, Carlos Medina, introduced the topic of transportation and business to meeting participants prior to the breakout room discussions.

Overarching themes of the discussions included the consequences increased

Round 2 Public Meeting Attendance			
Meeting Date	Meeting Time	Topic	Attended
Thursday, January 28	4:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Let's Talk! Transportation	16
Friday, January 29 (simulcast in Spanish)	3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Let's Talk! Business & Transportation	22
Tuesday, February 2	11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Let's Talk! Transportation	12
Tuesday, February 2	4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Let's Talk! Bike & Pedestrian Safety	93
Thursday, February 4	5:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Let's Talk! Transit	26
Wednesday, February 10	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Let's Talk! Transportation	12
Total Attendees			184

deliveries are having on neighborhood streets and in downtowns, how to balance the need for parking with other uses such as outdoor dining, and creating more connections for transit.

Deliveries

With more people turning to online shopping during the pandemic, the number of trucks making deliveries in cities and suburbs has increased. In already congested areas and areas with limited parking, this increase stresses the network and causes traffic and unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, outdoor dining, closed streets, and other conflicts have increased **competition for curb space**.

The prevalence of online shopping and deliveries, which were already increasing pre-COVID, are not likely to dissipate once the pandemic passes. Suggested solutions included requiring deliveries during **off-peak or designated times**, **designated delivery areas** in downtowns, and **re-designing streets** to better accommodate all users.

Parking & Competition for Curb Space

Outdoor dining, pedestrian malls, temporary street closures, and the implementation of bike lanes have all reduced the amount of available parking on streets. There is a concern that once the pandemic is over and restrictions on capacity are lifted, businesses may not want to give up on-street parking. **Off-street parking, reduced parking standards,** and **better bike/pedestrian infrastructure** may alleviate the need for curbside parking. One way to balance the different needs of a community may be making some streets one way to better accommodate parking and pedestrians, while still allowing some automobile traffic. The most **efficient use of parking spaces** either for parklets, deliveries, take-out/pick up, rideshare, and parking should be evaluated.

Transit

The pandemic has made it difficult to accurately forecast transit ridership, as commuting levels for traditional office workers has significantly reduced. However, as people go back to the office, schedules may shift, and people may choose to commute at traditionally off-peak hours. The availability of transit is crucial to recruiting and retaining workers.

It needs to be easier to choose transit over driving as a travel mode. There are **missing connections** between transit hubs and surrounding businesses. Allowing bikes on trains, creating space to store the bikes, and creating safer pedestrian access would enable people to visit local businesses. **Expanded weekend service** is needed for those who do not own a car but work on weekends, as well as for people to run errands or shop. There should be more focus on local trips, with the idea of living where you work. Town centers should be better connected through multi-use trail networks.

Suburban bus networks need to be expanded. More people are moving to downtowns, but buses do not serve all areas and/or do not run on the weekends. More consideration needs to be given to **intra-state connections**, rather than just commuting to Manhattan. A first step would be to identify new nodes of businesses and residents that could be connected by NJ TRANSIT and county bus systems.

Let's Talk! Bike & Pedestrian Safety

This session was co-hosted by the NJ Bike & Walk Coalition. Jersey City Director of Transportation Planning, Barkha Patel, introduced the topic of bicycle and pedestrian safety to meeting participants prior to the breakout room discussions.

Overarching themes of the discussions included improving connections in and between municipalities and counties, passing

county and statewide policy changes to make biking and walking safer, making infrastructure easier to build, and bridging the first-mile/last-mile gap.

ROUTES AND CONNECTIONS

Participants noted that there are existing trail networks across the region; however, many **lack connections** to outlying areas, downtowns, and transit hubs. For example, in Hunterdon County, there are connections for recreational riding but far fewer connections to other destinations, such as shops or businesses. Connecting trails within and between municipalities would make biking in the region easier. Before creating new trails or routes, priority should be placed on closing existing gaps in networks, particularly those areas where informal routes are known to exist, e.g., goat paths, unmarked crossing locations, etc. This means recognizing and acknowledging where people cross the street or where sidewalks stop, and then formalizing those connections.

Participants said it would also be beneficial to allow bikes in parks. For example, off-road biking is not allowed in Essex County Parks, but the Essex County Lenape Trail already connects many of the parks within the county. By allowing bikes in the park system, people would have access to parts of the county they may otherwise not be able to access without a car.

There are also several **large, regional projects** that participants said should be completed. Once built, they can be connected to other smaller trail networks. The overall goal should be to enable people to get around as much of the region as possible via a bike and trail network. These regional projects include:

- Essex-Hudson Greenway—would link municipalities from Montclair to Jersey City
- Morris Canal Greenway—would link six counties in northern New Jersey

- Middlesex Greenway—would link Metuchen, Edison, and Woodbridge
- Northern Valley Greenway—would run through northeast Bergen County

POLICY AND PROGRAM CHANGES

Participants said policy and program changes need to come from the top down. Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies should be passed at the state, county, and municipal level. It would be helpful to enable and codify **tactical urbanism** at the State level, so counties, municipalities, and officials feel more comfortable engaging in those practices from a public safety standpoint, participants said.

In addition to the necessary policy changes, participants said the State budget should include a line item for **bike infrastructure**. To support the policy changes, participants said there needs to be funding to add protected bike lanes, bike racks, lighting, signage, and other infrastructure necessary for safe and comfortable networks. Bicycle storage in dense cities with smaller homes and apartments is also a challenge; implementing bike depots or subsidizing storage units like the OmniPod could entice more people to own a bike. Technical assistance from the state and education about bike safety, rules, and regulations is crucial for many municipalities who are only beginning to build bike lanes and trails.

NJ TRANSIT allowing bikes on peak hour trains and creating space to store them would make it easier to choose a bike over a car when commuting. On-train storage would also make it easier to bike to destinations and would essentially extend the bike network to places farther away.

IDEAL NETWORK

Participants said the ideal bicycle and pedestrian network is one that is used and valued. For that to happen, they said land use decisions need to be less auto-centric.

The transportation system should be **multi-modal** with separate space for cars, bikes, and pedestrians. Roads should be seen as public places—the network needs to serve the needs of the whole community and not just those with access to vehicles, they said. The network should be connected to downtowns, housing, workplaces, and recreation destinations so people are not forced to drive everywhere. People also need to feel comfortable using the network, so that may mean adding more lighting to trails or bike lanes and lowering (and enforcing) speed limits through areas that are heavily used by cyclists and pedestrians. Participants stressed that the network must be accessible and designed for people of all ages and abilities.

Let's Talk! Transit

This session was co-hosted by the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. Their Deputy Director, Janna Chernetz, and NJ Bus Campaign Manager, Kevin Garcia, introduced the topic of transit to meeting participants prior to the breakout room discussions.

Overarching themes of the discussions included accessibility and what that means for transit, the lack of intra-state or intra-county connections, the difficulty using the bus system, and ways to make is easier for everyone.

Transit Accessibility

Transit accessibility encompasses both the locations of transit stops, as well as how people physically access buses and trains. Participants said that transit needs to be expanded so more people can use it for their daily needs, whether that is commuting to work, shopping, recreation, or school drop offs. It also needs to be **accessible to people of all ages and all abilities**. Participants noted that most transit trips involve walking or biking to or from transit to their final destinations, so more thought must be given to those who are less mobile. If a person who is wheelchair bound, less mobile, or aging cannot access the transit stop, then it is not equally accessible to everyone. Participants said **language barriers** also make transit inaccessible to some. For example, bus drivers fluent in Spanish driving a route predominately used by Spanish speakers will be better able to answer questions, assist passengers, and make announcements so all riders can understand.

Participants said service must also be **convenient, reliable, and more frequent** so customers who may not have traditional hours or are not using transit to commute during peak periods are still able to rely on it as their primary mode. Schedules also need to be coordinated between bus, rail, and light rail lines so connections are not missed, and trips are more seamless.

Transit Routes and Connections

In many counties, bus and rail lines are designed to take people in and out of New York. However, participants said that as more and more people are moving to New Jersey from New York City, and work-from-home becomes the norm, the networks should be re-centered to include **more intra-state and intra-county routes**. They said public transportation should not only serve workplaces, but should serve housing, shopping, and recreation as well. For example, between Somerville/Morristown and Princeton, more routes and service are needed so connections are not missed. In Hunterdon County, there is almost no bus or train service on weekends, which severely limits transportation options.

Make Transit Easier to Use

Tools to teach people how to use New Jersey's transit system in should be more readily accessible and promoted. Educating people through outreach events or social media would help increase awareness of the apps and websites so people can more easily use the network. Participants said that in addition

to educating people about how to use the transit system, there must be overhauls to **make the system simpler**. For example, the bus fare system is difficult to understand. Riders should be able to determine the exact fare prior to boarding or purchasing, so they do not end up losing money if exact change is required.

Another issue that complicates the bus system is how local rules affect operations. Each municipality can set its own rules, which causes a lot of variation between municipalities and complicates the user experience. For example, some participants asked for better accommodations at transit stops, such as benches or shelters that would more clearly mark where buses stop. While NJ TRANSIT will provide shelters, municipalities must pass ordinances to assume responsibility for ongoing maintenance.

Let's Talk! Transportation

Over the course of the Let's Talk discussions, several themes became clear, including the need for more and better connections between existing transportation modes; designing/redesigning streets so they accommodate all modes of transportation and create an environment where people feel comfortable walking, biking, or using other micro mobility; and better accommodation of freight . Many of the participants believe that the transportation system in New Jersey and in the NJTPA region is robust, but that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted areas that still need improvement.

The following are themes discussed during the Let's Talk! Transportation sessions that have not already been highlighted in the topical summaries above.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many participants are concerned about the impacts development and transportation have on the environment. Participants believe transitioning to **electric vehicles**, a c**leaner electric grid**, and putting **denser development** near transit would reduce the Region's carbon footprint. Participants also discussed the ways increased freight, especially truck traffic, will impact the environment and solutions that could minimize harm.

TRANSIT

Ensuring a better user experience matters when trying to encourage people to use transit. Participants said that transit needs to be **convenient and user-friendly**. If stops are too far away, routes do not go to a desired destination, or there are constant delays, people will choose other modes, including driving single-occupancy vehicles (SOV). Transit also needs to be clean and comfortable; and if possible, offer free Wi-Fi (and other similar amenities), which can help make the experience relaxing and more attractive to potential users.

Participants relayed that the bus fare system is complex and confusing, particularly the zone pricing structure. Also, fare payment should be integrated between modes, particularly within the NJ TRANSIT system, but also among the various systems. Participants said that a **unified payment system** would make connections between modes simpler and faster. Various tech solutions would make the system run more efficiently, such as contactless and on-board payment equipment, real time information, and traffic signal prioritization (TSP).

Although a majority of people have and use smart phones, there is still a segment of the population that does not. It is imperative to ensure that people have access to printed transit timetables and maps at all transit locations. If they are not available, it creates a barrier and makes transit more difficult to use. In addition, system maps should be redesigned to include landmarks as points of

reference so customers can orient themselves more easily. Participants also suggested that the current schematic maps are difficult to read, and they only have street names on the transit lines. They noted it can be challenging to navigate that if the users are not familiar with the destination. Participants agreed that the existing system may be robust, but **wayfinding, informational websites,** and **mobile apps** would enhance the user experience. Transit can be intimidating for people who do not use it for regular trips, so transparency is key—people need to be able to understand where they are going and how to change modes if needed.

Creating and expanding **inter-county and intra-state routes** was especially important to participants. A participant noted that about sixty percent of residents commute outside of Sussex County for work (generally to Morris, Essex, and Somerset Counties) but there are few transit options for those trips. Participants said that the Lackawanna Cutoff extension will help to solve the issue, as it would serve some of those counties that lack good transit.

Participants also suggested that the NJ TRANSIT bus network should be redesigned to better serve local and regional trips. Other participants said that corridors with extra traffic volume capacity should be considered for **bus rapid transit** (BRT) connections. One participant familiar with BRT said that priority bus lanes are being implemented on I-87 in Westchester and Rockland counties in New York to bypass highway congestion. BRT should be considered in New Jersey along Route 9 and other heavily trafficked corridors.

Many participants were in favor of new routes that take people to recreational, entertainment, and other **non-commute-oriented destinations**. For example, there should be more transit options to the Jersey Shore and to other recreation areas, which could benefit residents and visitors alike. The

system needs to shift away from a commuter focus to a more holistic system that serves the region's various needs.

In addition to adding new routes and connecting existing routes to address the lack of intra-state connections, many participants expressed concern about **first-mile/last-mile connections**. Participants discussed allowing bikes on trains and buses to better connect bike and pedestrian infrastructure with the larger transit network. This would also mean adding bike racks, bike storage, or bike lockers at stops/stations and on trains/buses to accommodate the equipment. Another suggestion for first/last mile is establishing partnerships with ride hailing services to bridge the gap. Participants suggested that these solutions would reduce the need to drive to a transit stop. Ride hailing, in particular, could assist older residents who may no longer be able to drive.

Although much of the transit discussion focused on bus or rail routes, many participants discussed ferry service expansion. Increased **ferry service** would respond to the increase in residential demand and reduce vehicle traffic. Participants suggested that ferries could be a good alternative for those who may feel uncomfortable going back to using rail or buses post-pandemic.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
Connecting disparate trails, bike lanes, and sidewalks is important to creating a network upon which pedestrians and cyclists can rely. **Connections** need to be made with users in mind. Trails, lanes, and crosswalks should be situated in places people are already using. Participants said there are dedicated bike lanes or trails in many municipalities throughout the region, but they are not always connected nor fully protected. Users are forced to assemble routes that may not be safe to complete trips, such as crossing major highways or busy roads without bike

infrastructure.

The **design** of streets, crosswalks, and bike lanes also impacts how people feel when walking or biking. Participants said roads that allow for protected or completely separate bike lanes feel safer than narrower roads. But for pedestrians, participants said, narrowing the street, and creating a bump out at the crosswalk changes the dynamic between driver and pedestrian and protects pedestrians. Participants agreed that there can be conflicts between bike safety, pedestrian safety, and between bike/pedestrian and micro-mobility (e.g., scooters). Whether they be dedicated bike lanes, or multi-use trails, there needs to be more thought given to design.

Once routes, trails, and lanes are connected, they need to be **enforced**. Participants discussed many instances of vehicles driving or parking in bike lanes, creating unsafe conditions. If users do not feel safe, well-intended infrastructure will go unused. Participants said that enforcement, not just of bike lanes, but of speed limits and right-of-way at crosswalks is as important as building the infrastructure.

Participants noted that utility rights-of-way could be ideal locations for bike/pedestrian infrastructure, but New Jersey's utility companies are often reluctant to broach the subject. In Texas, they passed a law to allow for bike and pedestrian access to utilities, which is something New Jersey should consider. Participants suggested utility corridors could create a vast network throughout the region. In the same vein, participants discussed using transit rights-of-way, particularly disused rail lines, which could offer more connections within and between municipalities and counties in the region.

Increased funding to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure would increase the number of people walking and biking in the region.
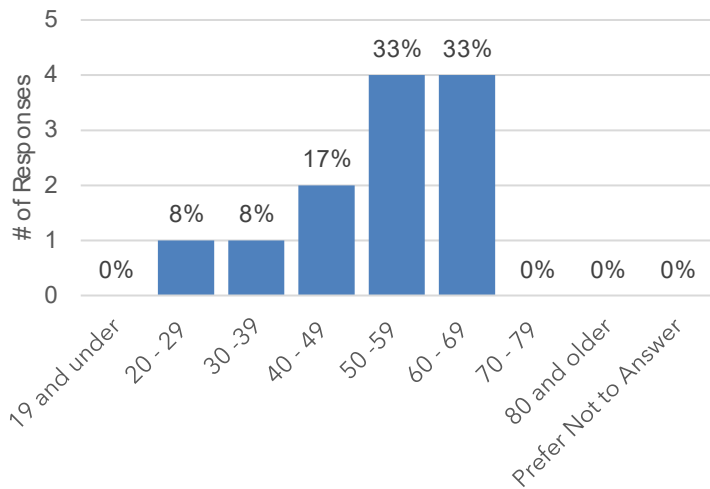
Currently, only about one percent of NJ transportation funds go towards bike and pedestrian projects. Participants noted that increasing that percentage, even to five percent, would allow for more infrastructure to be built. Participants also said that while Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding is available, the million-dollar cap precludes regional projects. They suggested increasing the cap for County projects, as they are usually regional and could even incorporate or link municipal projects into the County system.

Participants suggested that the state require consideration of bike/pedestrian accommodations in the scoping of all infrastructure projects. They also emphasized the need for improving sidewalks and streets to better comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and to increase safety for children who walk or bike to school. Having a **Complete Streets** policy in place at the county and municipal level will force engineers to think about how bike and pedestrian activity is tied to land use and consider ways to make it safer to bike or walk.
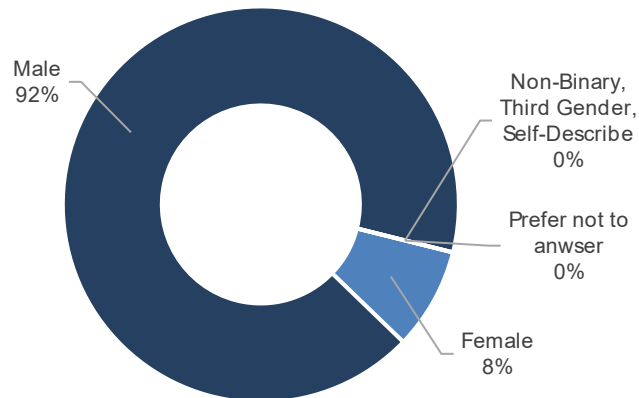
Round 2 Meeting Attendee Demographics

As in round one, meeting attendees were asked to complete a demographic survey after each event, of which **approximately seven percent responded**. The majority of respondents were male and white, non-Hispanic.

Age of Round 2 Meeting Attendees

Y-axis: # of Responses (0 to 5)

Categories: 19 and under (0%), 20 - 29 (8%), 30 - 39 (8%), 40 - 49 (17%), 50 - 59 (33%), 60 - 69 (33%), 70 - 79 (0%), 80 and older (0%), Prefer Not to Answer (0%)

Gender of Round 2 Meeting Attendees

Male 92%
Non-Binary, Third Gender, Self-Describe 0%
Prefer not to answer 0%
Female 8%

Race of Round 2 Meeting Attendees

Asian 8%
Prefer not to answer 25%
Other 0%
Native Hawaiin or Other Pacific Islander 0%
American Indian or Native Alaskan 0%
Black or African American 0%
White 67%
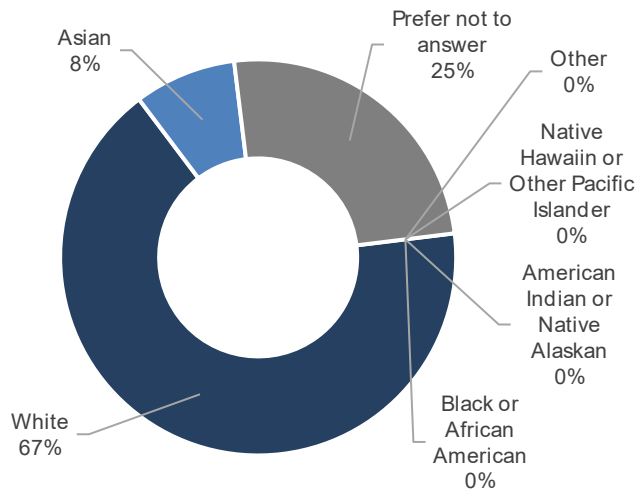
Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Round 2 Meeting Attendees
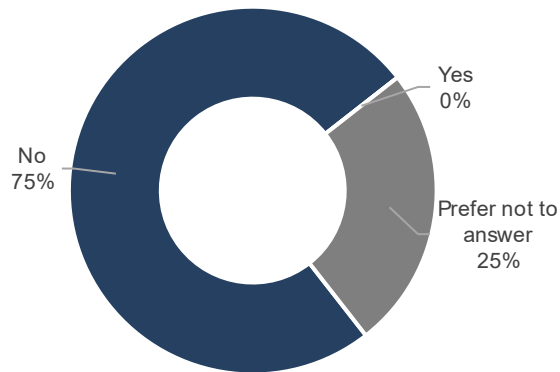
Yes 0%
No 75%
Prefer not to answer 25%

At the time of registration, participants were also asked to identify their zip code of residence and work/school.

Round 2 Meeting Attendance		
Location	Live (76% Responding)	Work (63% Responding)
Bergen	12	10
Essex	12	10
Hudson	17	17
Hunterdon	5	2
Middlesex	13	9
Monmouth	7	6
Morris	6	7
Ocean	4	1
Passaic	2	2
Somerset	12	10
Sussex	3	3
Union	11	6
Warren	0	0
Newark*	3	4
Jersey City*	11	12
Outside NJTPA Region	34	32
Newark and Jersey City attendees are also included in their respective County tallies.		

TPA TUESDAYS SYMPOSIUM SERIES

In addition to the virtual public meetings, NJTPA also a hosted a series of three symposiums intended to "engage the engaged." Called the TPA Tuesday Symposium Series, each included a keynote speaker, a panel discussion, and Q&A from the audience.

TPA Tuesdays Symposium Attendance		
Meeting Date	Topic	Attended
October 6, 2020	Adapting to Changing	74
December 8, 2020	Advancing Equitable Transportation Systems	87
January 26, 2021	Realizing Opportunity Through Transportation	74
Total Attendees		235

Below are the overarching themes from the *Adapting to Change* discussion:

- **Accessibility** has become extremely important in transportation planning, and it has become clearer who has access and who does not. Transportation is a practical need; people need access to jobs, schools, groceries, shops, parks, and healthcare; therefore, our transportation system infrastructure must reflect that practicality. Access requires infrastructure, and we must think about how we invest to meet the needs of people's daily lives. We need to think about transit-dependent individuals, low-income individuals, communities of color, people with a range of disabilities, and elderly populations. Access to jobs will be an important part of our recovery, so we will need to change the rationale for how and why we invest in transportation infrastructure. We need to make sure we are paying attention to how accessible transit is to people, how we are serving people, and provide access to transportation options to as many people as possible. Reliability is also a key metric for determining accessibility. If reliability is uneven through the system, then it is no longer accessible to all.

- **Equity**, which goes hand in hand with accessibility, is at the core of planning. We need to keep in mind that equity affects people who live in denser areas as much as people who live in more rural areas. In areas where transit is not as readily available, people are forced to own a car or to rely on what limited services there are, including riding a bike or walking on unsafe roads. Equity is about choice—choice in where people live and how they get around. If people must own a car to live where they live, if the rising costs of housing forces people to live farther out, that choice has been taken away. If we look at transportation as providing more equitable centers and meeting needs, how do we dismantle that in such a way that ensures everyone has access, particularly those who have fewer options? Making transportation planning decisions with equity in mind can bring more choices to areas (both rural and urban) that do not have many. We need to expand the dialogue, expand who is heard, and ensure that people in underserved neighborhoods are heard and involved in making their communities better. We need to keep in mind the participation imbalance, which leads to lack of access and inequitable environments. Equity begins with access to decision making.

- There is a real **disconnect between land use and transportation planning**. Over the course of the 20th century, we have created sprawl with the rise of auto-centric planning. The land use decisions we have made by building communities farther away from city centers has necessitated the need for automobiles to get around. We need to make the connection between land use

decisions and transportation, so residents are better served. There needs to be a complete re-thinking of our transportation system, what we prioritize, and the types of projects we invest in. We need to think about how we want the system to perform and go from there. Planners need to take more risks and be more ambitious.

- We need to reestablish the **connection between public health and plannin**g. We need to plan better for future pandemics and their impact on transportation. Active transportation has become more popular, which from a health perspective means people are getting more exercise. However, people do not always feel safe walking or biking, so including safety in Plan 2050 is essential for public health. It will also be key to ensure new designs for streets consider elderly and disabled populations. It is also important to note that 80 percent of health outcomes are the result of ambient features in people's lives, including how accessible transportation is for daily needs (work, shopping, etc.), so health is another key indicator for accessibility and equity.

- There needs to be a shift towards using roads for active transportation rather than for driving (e.g., parklets, pedestrian malls, slow streets, open streets). We are already seeing this happen due to COVID-19 and the restrictions placed on indoor activities. We need to **design and redesign streets to account for multiple transportation modes and to ensure the safety of all who are using the road**. Roads should be able to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, e-scooters, cars, and freight safely. This may mean that some roads must go on "diets," reducing the space allotted to cars and parking. It may also mean designating pedestrian/bike/active transportation only streets. Design should manage these different modes, so they do not come into conflict and people feel safe and comfortable.

- Social distancing to prevent COVID-19 has caused people to avoid transit, which has led to a **massive decline in transit ridership** and funding. Although there is no direct link between using public transit and contracting the coronavirus , how do we ensure that transit ridership is not as drastically affected as it has been during COVID-19 when future pandemics occur? As work from home becomes more normal, the distinction between peak and off-peak travel may become irrelevant and transit planning should take this into account.

- Even before the pandemic **freight and freight traffic were increasing** and more deliveries meant more competition for curb space. More thought needs to be given to regulating curb space (e.g., designating certain times of day for deliveries), and low-impact delivery systems need to be explored.

After the symposium, a **breakout session** was held for anyone who wanted to further discuss any of the topics raised during the keynote presentation and panel discussion. Three people attended.

- The areas of the region with **different densities and land use types need different solutions**. The transportation needs in rural areas are different than those in more urban areas. The ability to provide transit is more limited in these areas.

- **Demographic changes** in the region will also change preferences in transportation and will create more options.

- Land use decisions are complicated by **home rule**. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have no authority over land use decisions, and the results can lead to transportation inadequacies and inequity. More education is needed about the link between land use and

transportation, as any changes made to land use impact transportation and safety.

Below are the overarching themes from the *Advancing Equitable Transportation Systems* discussion:

- **Overcoming inequities** in the transportation system is critical to support inclusive communities, better transportation access, improved health, and economic and social opportunities for all residents. Policies need to be updated to tackle the challenges that infrastructure decisions made decades ago have on communities of color and low-income populations.

- To further the goal of these corrective policies, people who go unheard or unseen during the **planning process** must be actively sought out and included. Only in this way can planning address individual and community needs, not just the overall vision.

- There needs to be more **flexibility** for paratransit services and bus routes to be adapted to the needs of current users. The pandemic has shown how important public transportation is to get people to jobs and other services.

- Understanding the **intersection between health and transportation** and the impacts of previous policies on low-income populations and communities of color is vital to reversing the effects of systemic racism. Increased investment in electrification, bicycle infrastructure, and alternative modes are all ways to reduce pollution and improve quality of life.

Below are the overarching themes from the *Realizing Opportunity Through Transportation* discussion:

- Transportation planning must shift focus from traffic and congestion reduction to **mobility and accessibility**.
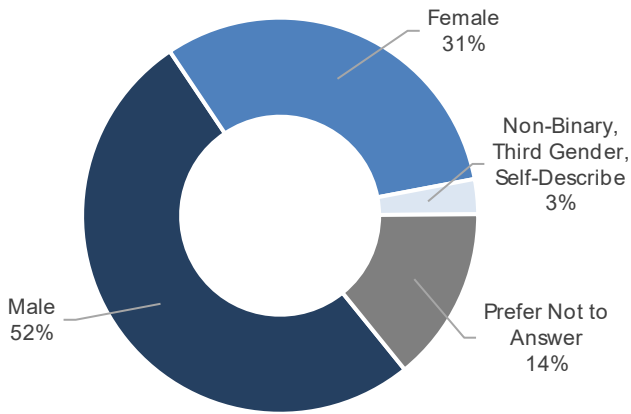
- **Anchor institutions** should understand the role they can play in urban revitalization, and the impact they can have on neighborhoods. To counter gentrification, revitalization efforts need to relate to the existing residents and not to newcomers who may be attracted to a city or neighborhood. Public policy needs to be curative to redress the impact past actions had on racial equity and access. The private sector, especially larger companies, needs to take on the role of becoming advocates for community success by being community champions.

- **Workforce development** is key for economic recovery. It is not just about jobs or innovation, but how they fit together so training programs match growth sectors and industries with a labor shortage or where new jobs are being created. For example, there is currently a shortage of qualified short- and long-haul freight drivers.

- E-commerce and the number of deliveries being made exploded during the pandemic. In urban and inner-ring suburban areas in particular, roads are at capacity, so solutions are needed to improve the infrastructure to handle both the increase in freight and other user demands. Finding ways to **reduce friction** in urban areas will be important going forward.

- It is important to have a strong and **reliable federal partner** that leads in regional and national concerns such as freight, aviation, and climate, but encourages and enables cities and states to be innovative in implementing locally-oriented transportation initiatives.
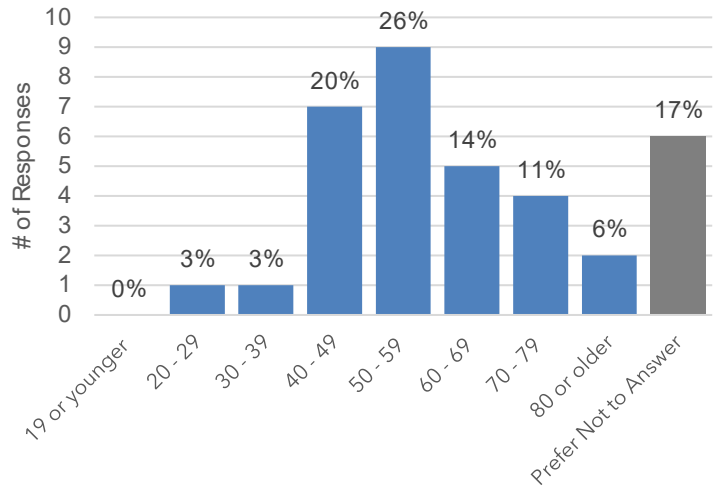
TPA Tuesdays Attendee Demographics

Symposium attendees were asked to complete a demographic survey after each event, of which **approximately 15 percent responded**. Of the attendees who took the survey, the majority were over 50 years of age, and only 6

percent of respondents were under 40. Sixty percent of respondents were male, and 71 percent were white. Only six percent of respondents identified as being of Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish ethnicity.

Gender of Symposium Attendees

Female 31%

Non-Binary, Third Gender, Self-Describe 3%

Male 52%

Prefer Not to Answer 14%

Age of Symposium Attendees

Race of Symposium Attendees
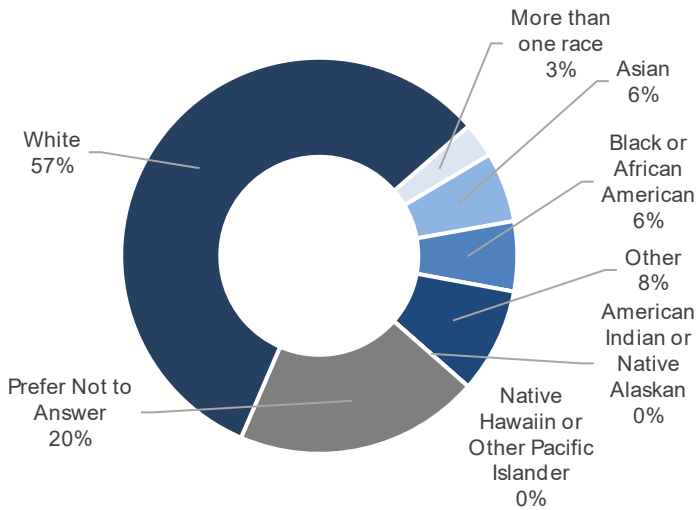
More than one race 3%

Asian 6%

White 57%

Black or African American 6%

Other 8%

American Indian or Native Alaskan 0%

Native Hawaiin or Other Pacific Islander 0%

Prefer Not to Answer 20%

Hispanic/ Latinx Ethnicity of Symposium Attendees

No 77%

Yes 6%

Prefer Not to Answer 17%

At the time of registration, participants were also asked to identify their zip code of residence and work/school.

Symposium Meeting Attendance		
Location	Live (82% Responding)	Work (64% Responding)
Bergen	15	3
Essex	16	30
Hudson	11	9
Hunterdon	2	1
Middlesex	11	7
Monmouth	11	5
Morris	9	8
Ocean	5	2
Passaic	0	1
Somerset	11	7
Sussex	2	2
Union	16	5
Warren	0	0
Newark*	6	25
Jersey City*	10	9
Outside NJTPA Region	49	38

*Newark and Jersey City attendees are also included in their respective County tallies.

SURVEY

The public involvement process included a short online survey to gather insights from across the region about desired transportation improvements, future transportation demand, and anticipated transportation priorities. The survey also included an open-ended opportunity to provide additional comments about transportation in North Jersey. The survey included optional demographic questions, and was available in six languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese (simplified), Korean, Hindi, and Portuguese. To encourage broader participation in the survey, respondents were offered an opportunity to enter a raffle to win one of five $50 gift cards to a local business of their choice.

Ultimately, the survey yielded 2,186 responses. During review, however, some outliers were identified and excluded from the final analysis so as not to skew the results. Examples of outliers include individuals identified as living and working outside the region or obvious instances of multiple submissions.

MAJOR THEMES

Across all four survey questions there was an emphasis and focus on transit, including improving service and expanding service, creating new lines, and improving the fare system. There was also an emphasis on making it safer to walk and bike, expanding the trail network, and Complete Streets.

SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey included optional demographics questions. Survey respondent age was generally in alignment with the population of North Jersey. Sixty percent of respondents were white with nine percent of respondents identifying as Black or African American and 11 percent identifying as Asian. Fifteen percent of respondents identified as Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish ethnicity. The majority of respondents were male.

Participants were also asked to identify their ZIP code of residence and work/school. Nineteen percent of all respondents live in Essex County, 70% of whom live in Newark. Bergen County was the next most represented with 15 percent indicating they live there and 10 percent indicating they work in the County.

Survey Respondent Zip Codes		
(as a Percent of Analyzed Surveys)		
Location	Live *(97% Responding)*	Work *(80% Responding)*
Bergen	15%	10%
Essex	19%	15%
Hudson	10%	6%
Hunterdon	2%	1%
Middlesex	8%	6%
Monmouth	4%	3%
Morris	5%	4%
Ocean	7%	4%
Passaic	4%	3%
Somerset	3%	2%
Sussex	2%	2%
Union	9%	5%
Warren	1%	1%
Newark*	13%	12%
Jersey City*	6%	4%
Within 60 Miles of NJTPA Region	7%	14%

Newark and Jersey City attendees are also included in their respective County tallies.

Age of Survey Respondents
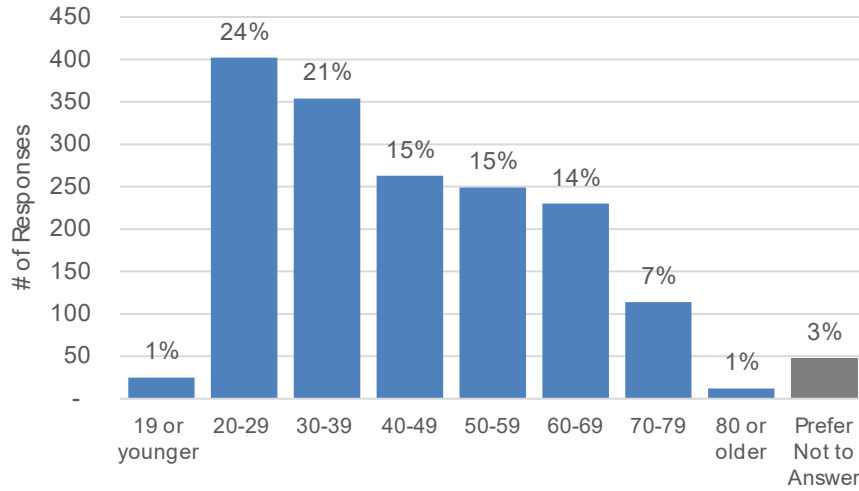
Race of Survey Respondents
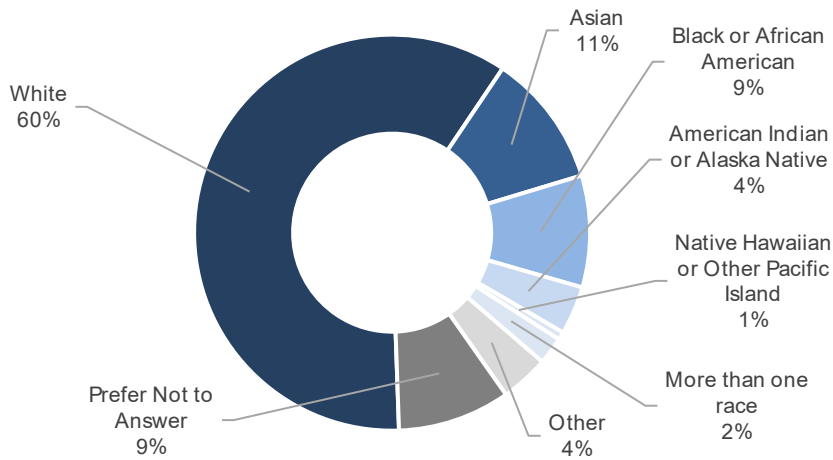
Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Survey Respondents
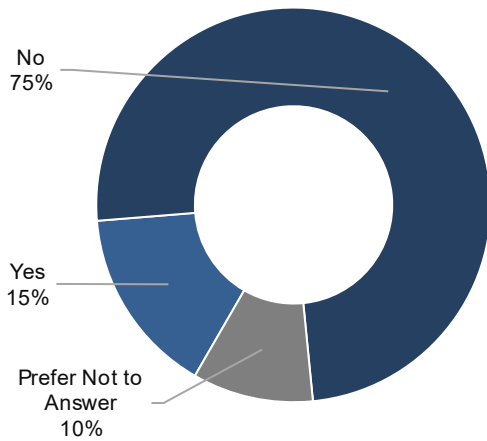
Gender of Survey Respondents

Number of Responses by Home ZIP Code

- 1 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 40
- 41 - 120

NJTPA Counties

N

0   25   50
Miles

Number of Responses
by Work ZIP Code

- 0 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 40
- 41 - 137

NJTPA Counties

N

Miles

0   25   50
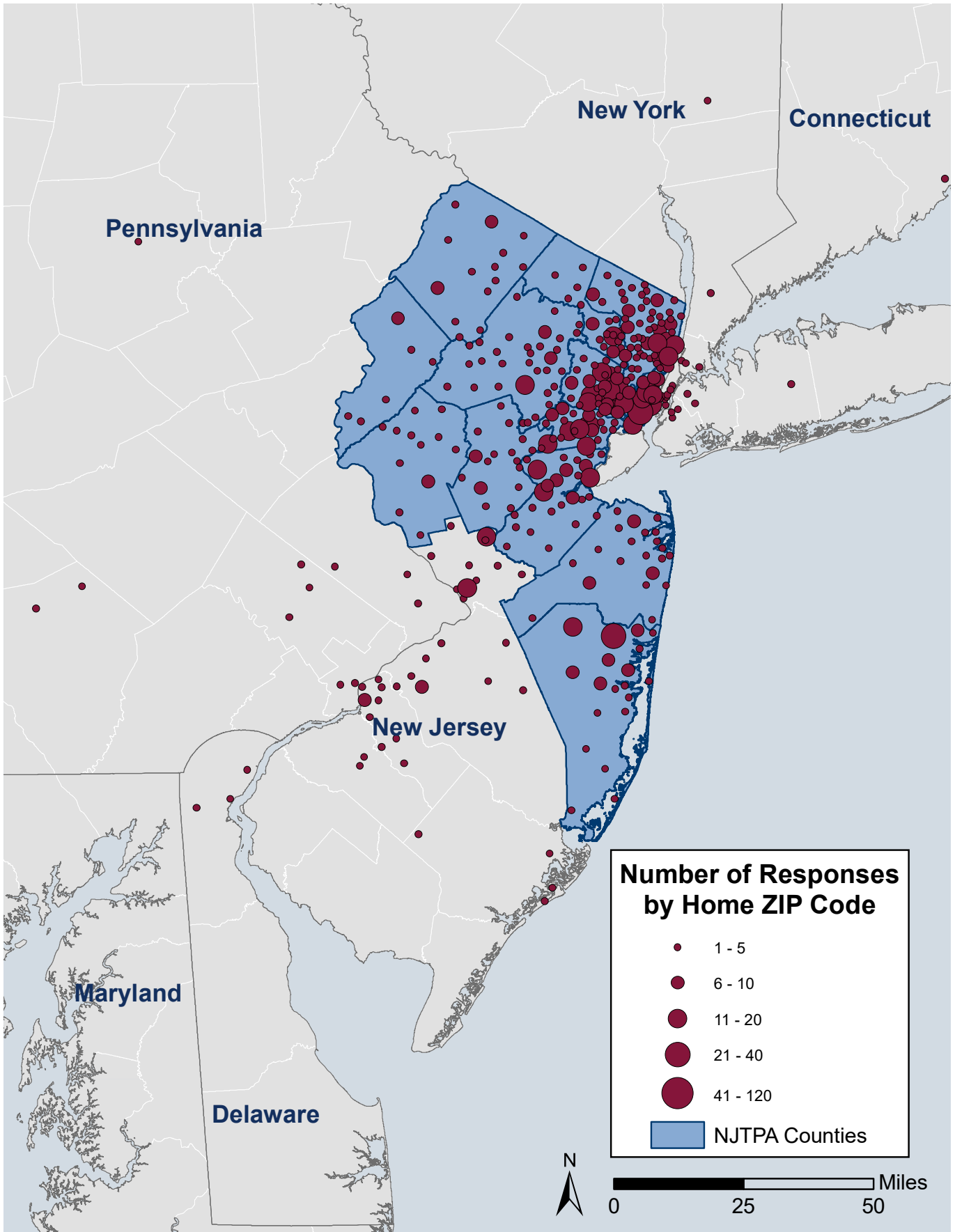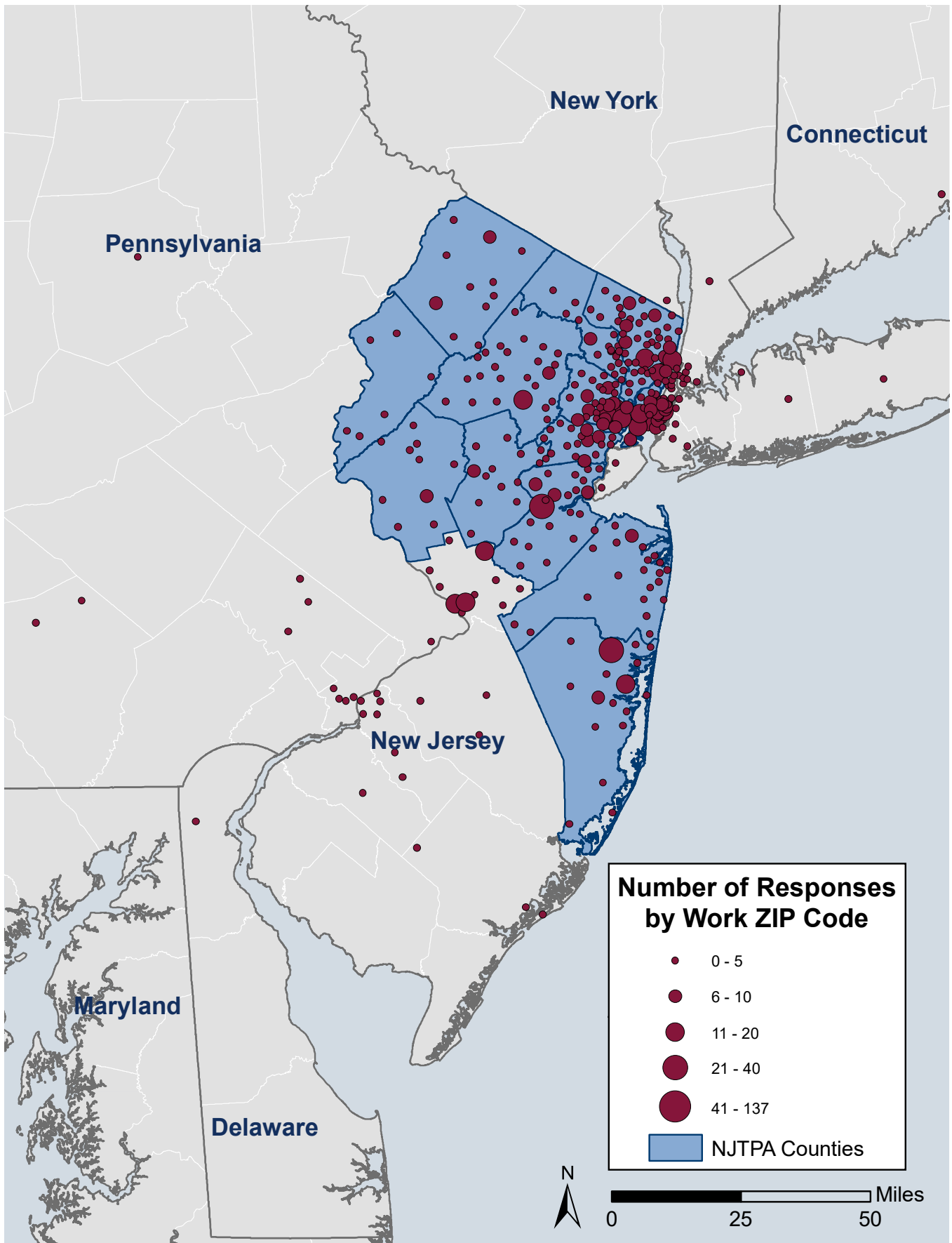
SURVEY RESULTS: QUESTION 1

What types of transportation should be improved to make getting around North Jersey easier for you and your family?

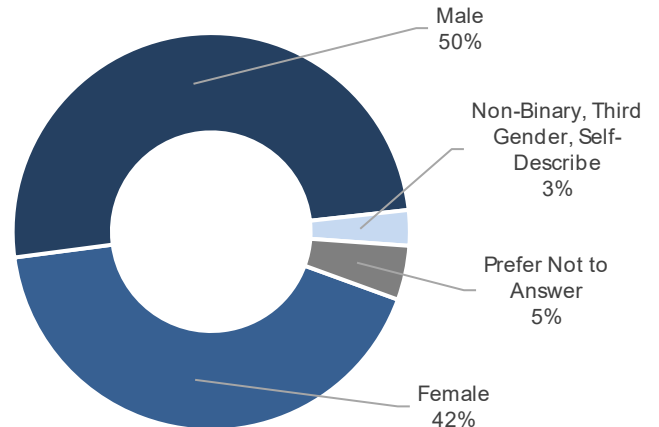Respondents were asked to select their top three choices to Question 1. Seventy-seven percent of respondents selected three options, 12 percent selected two options, 10 percent selected one option, and 4 respondents made no selection.

The two largest desired improvements in North Jersey, at just over 14 percent each, are sidewalks and walking trails and bus service. That is followed closely by improving bike lanes or trails and train service at approximately 13 percent each.

When aggregated, *public transportation* related improvements (*bus, train, PATH, light rail, and ferry*) represented nearly 47 percent of responses, and *active transportation* improvements (*sidewalks/trails, bike lanes/trails, and pedestrian signals/crossings*) represented another 37 percent. Improvements related to enhancing the *vehicular* experience (*road conditions and parking*) only represented 15 percent of responses.

Survey Question 1:
What types of transportation should be improved to making getting around North Jersey easier?
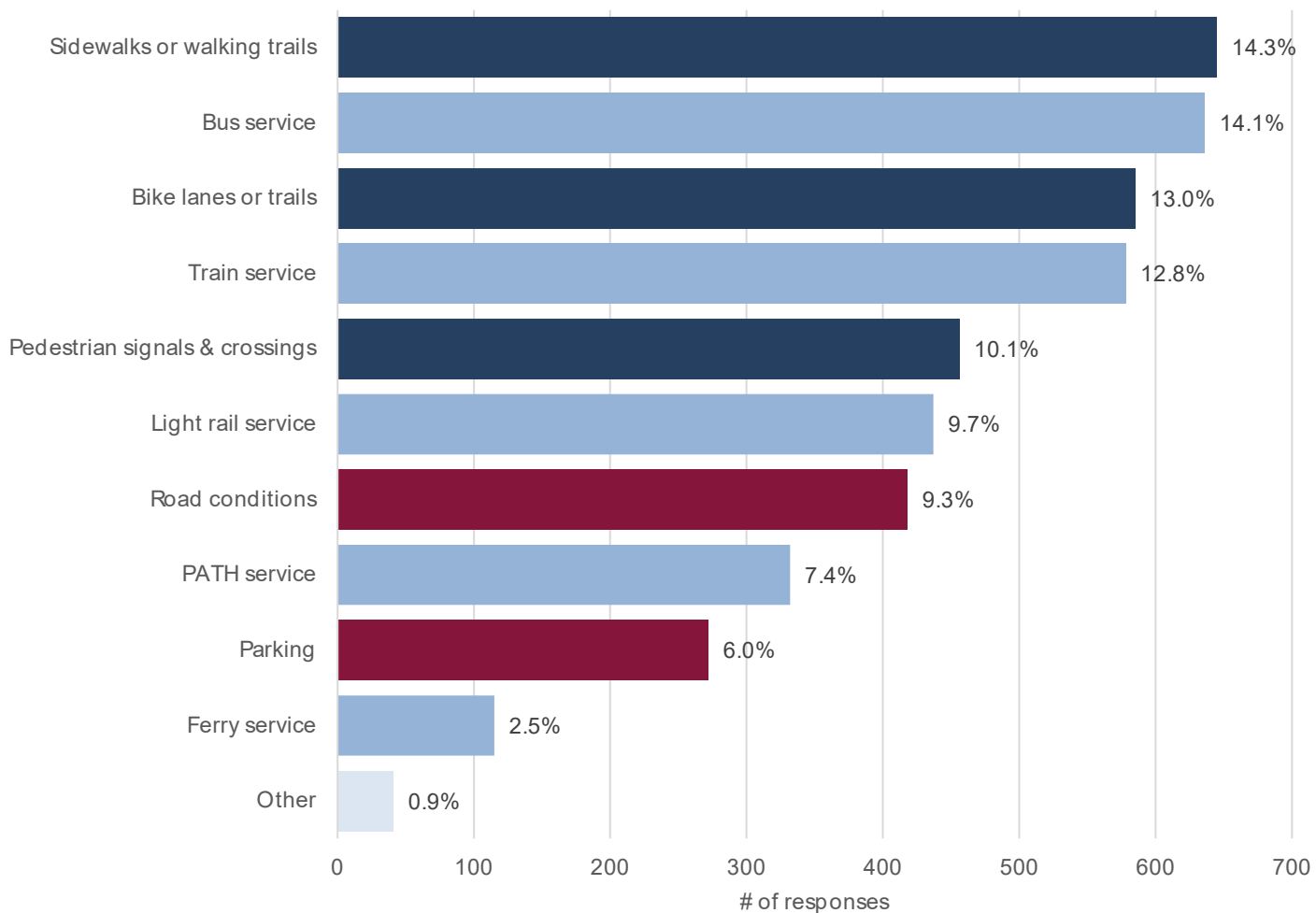
Category	%
Sidewalks or walking trails	14.3%
Bus service	14.1%
Bike lanes or trails	13.0%
Train service	12.8%
Pedestrian signals & crossings	10.1%
Light rail service	9.7%
Road conditions	9.3%
PATH service	7.4%
Parking	6.0%
Ferry service	2.5%
Other	0.9%

# of responses

Results by Age

In general, the responses by age were similar to the overall results, with slight shifts in priority between active transportation and transit improvements. Auto-centric choices were slightly more prominent among those 50 years of age and older. At the same time, public transportation improvements were more important to the over 70 years and older cohort than any other age cohorts, while active transportation was less important.

Question 1: Aggregated Choices by Age
(Percentages within Age Category)
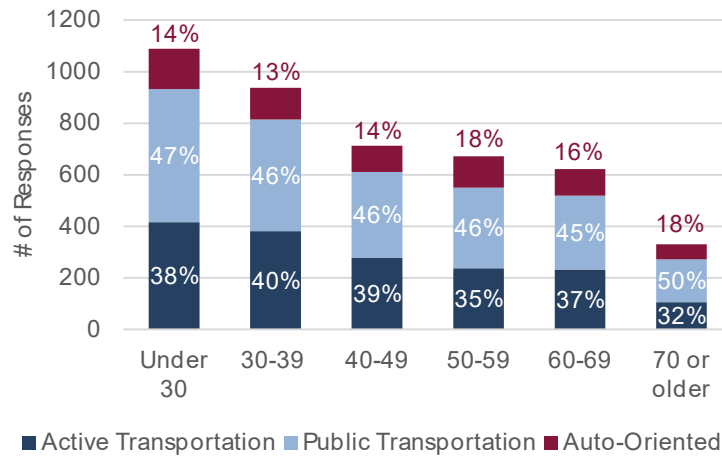
Results by Gender

In general, the responses by gender were similar to the overall results, with slight shifts in priority between active transportation and transit improvements. Women ranked all active transportation improvements slightly lower than men at 36 and 39 percent, respectively. Consequently, women also ranked auto-oriented improvements slightly higher than men (17 and 14 percent, respectively). Overall, all public transportation improvement options aggregated had nearly equal standing among men and women at just over 46 percent.

Although representing a much smaller number of total responses (2.2 percent), of those that identified as non-binary, third gender, or self-described, they placed a larger emphasis on public transportation (52 percent) and active transportation (35 percent) than cisgender respondents.

Question 1: Aggregated Choices by Gender
(Percentages within Gender Category)
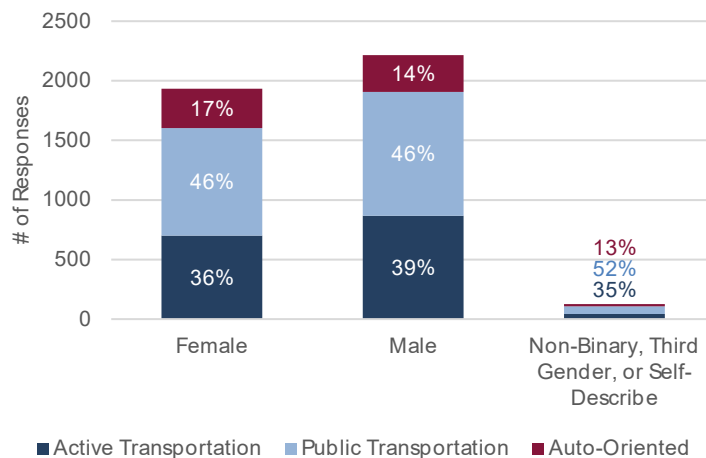
Results by Race

In general, the responses by race were similar to the overall results.

Note that in the corresponding chart, those identifying as White, Black or African American, and Asian provided the most significant number of responses. The remaining categories represent a relatively small cohort of all responses and are thus likely to demonstrate greater result variability.

Question 1: Aggregated Choices by Race
(Percentages within Race Category)
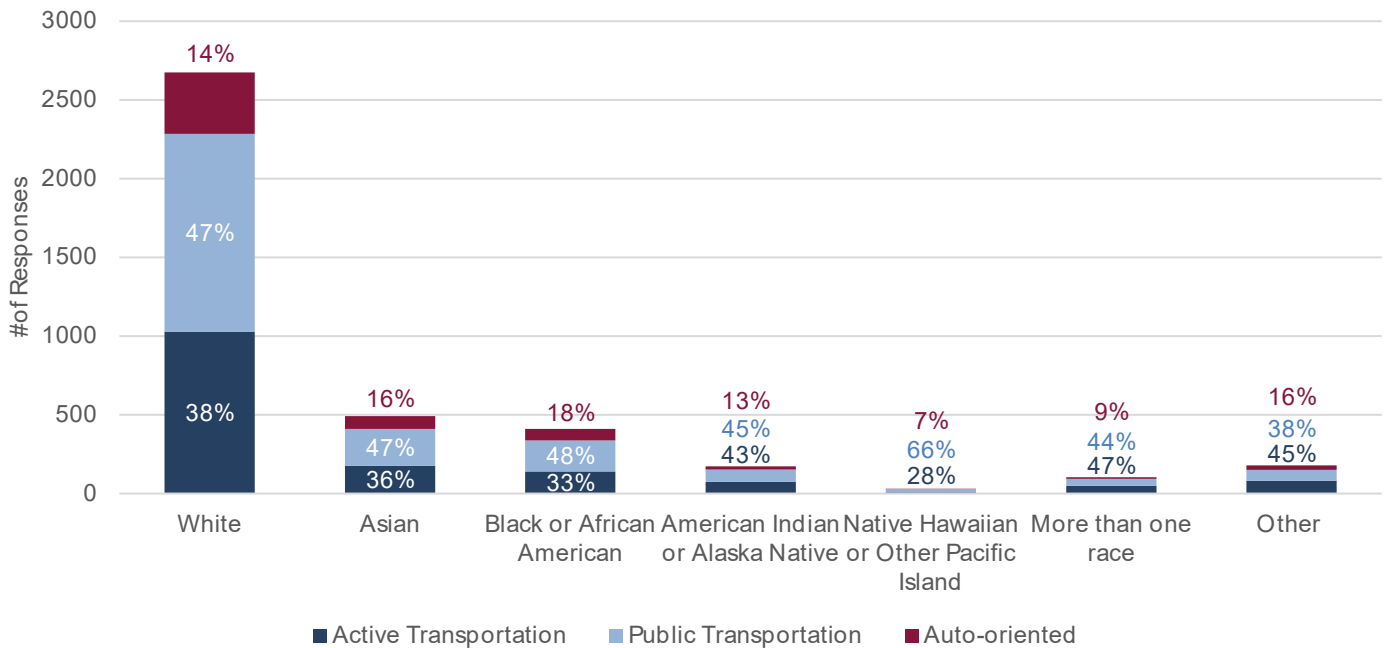
Results by Ethnicity

In general, the responses by ethnicity were similar to the overall results. Those identifying as Hispanic/Latinx demonstrated a slightly higher preference for public transportation and active transportation improvements than those non-Hispanics.

Question 1: Aggregated Choices by Ethnicity
(Percentages within Ethnic Category)
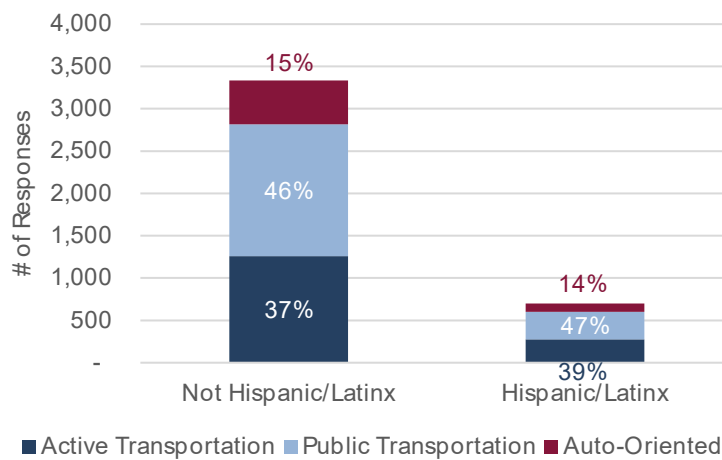
How do you see yourself traveling around the region in the future?

Respondents were asked to select their top three choices to Question 2. Seventy-six percent of respondents selected three options, 12 percent selected two options, 12 percent selected one option, and 3 respondents made no selection.

Of those responding to this question, almost 21 percent said they would travel via public transit in the future. Meanwhile just nearly 15 percent said they would drive alone, nearly 13 percent said they would walk, and approximately 9 percent said they would like to use a bike or scooter. Likely a reflection of the stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 public health crisis, just over 6 percent of respondents anticipated that they would telecommute in the future. All of these figures significantly deviate from current travel mode statistics, indicating a desire to move away from auto-dependence in the future.

Survey Question Two:
How do you see yourself traveling around the region in the future?
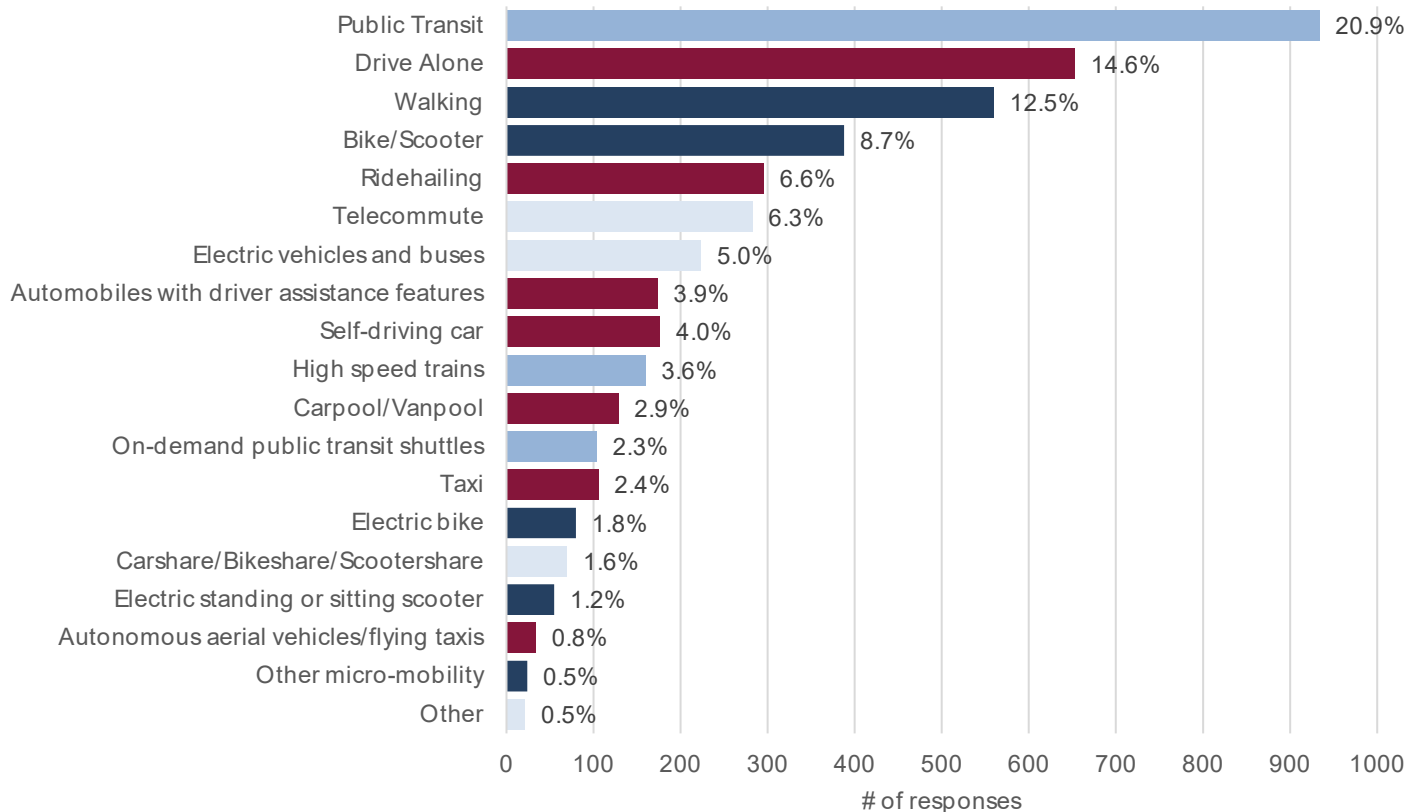
Category	Percentage
Public Transit	20.9%
Drive Alone	14.6%
Walking	12.5%
Bike/Scooter	8.7%
Ridehailing	6.6%
Telecommute	6.3%
Electric vehicles and buses	5.0%
Automobiles with driver assistance features	3.9%
Self-driving car	4.0%
High speed trains	3.6%
Carpool/Vanpool	2.9%
On-demand public transit shuttles	2.3%
Taxi	2.4%
Electric bike	1.8%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	1.6%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	1.2%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	0.8%
Other micro-mobility	0.5%
Other	0.5%

# of responses

Results by Age

In general, the responses by age were similar to the overall results, particularly in the selection of the top three choices – public transit, drive alone, and walking. Priority of fourth through last choices varied some between the age groups.
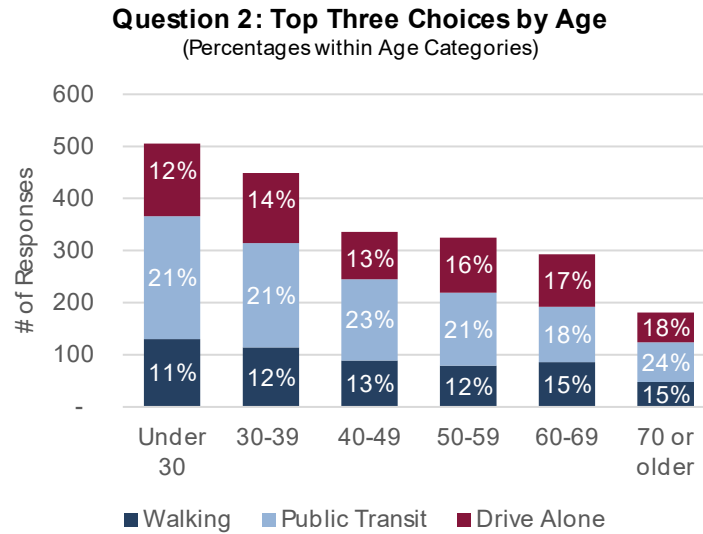
Question 2: Top Three Choices by Age
(Percentages within Age Categories)

Results by Gender

In general, the responses by age were similar to the overall results, particularly in the selection of the top three choices – public transit, drive alone, and walking. Priority of fourth through last choices varied some between gender.

Although representing a much smaller number of total responses (3 percent), those that identified as non-binary, third gender, or self-described placed more emphasis on walking and bike/scooter, and less emphasis on transit and driving alone than cisgender respondents.

Question 2: Top Four Choices by Gender
(Percentages within Gender Category)
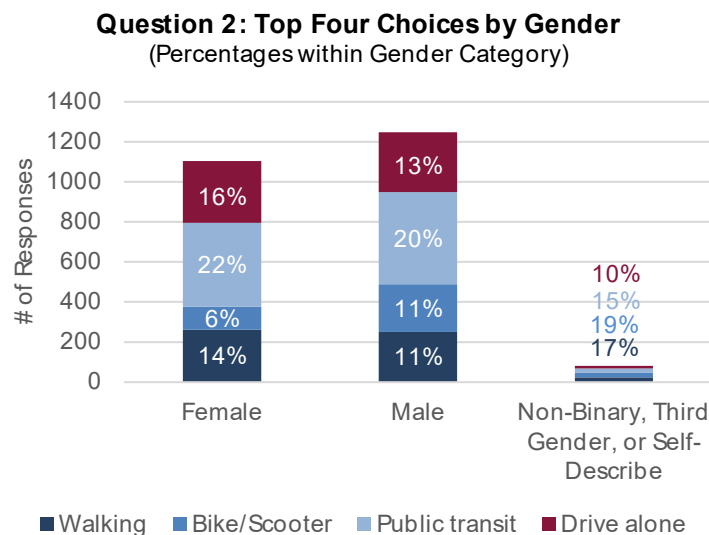
Results by Race

In general, the responses by race were similar to the overall results, with public transit, driving alone, and walking ranking top three choices for most race categories. Those identifying as Black or African American demonstrated a higher proclivity toward public transit.

Note that in the corresponding chart, those identifying as White, Black or African American, and Asian provided the most significant number of responses. The remaining categories represent a relatively small cohort of all responses and are thus likely to demonstrate greater result variability.

Question 2: Top Three Choices by Race
(Percentages within Race Cetegory)
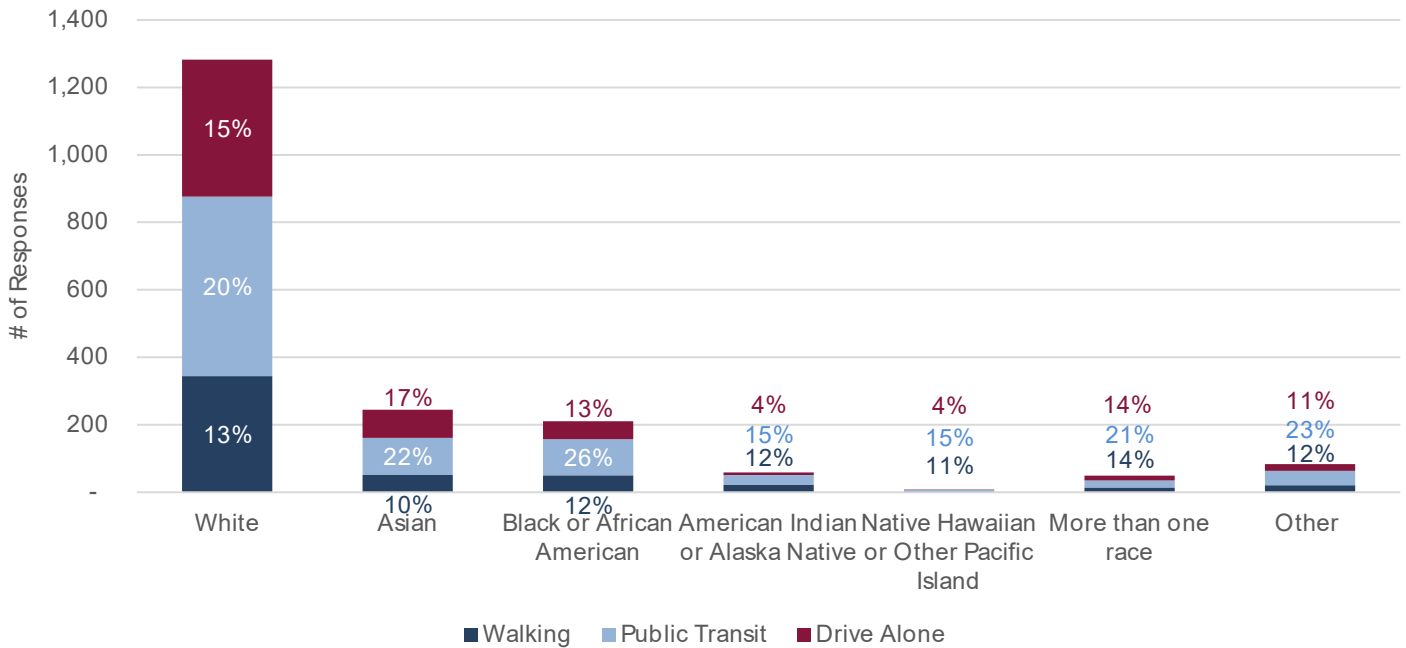
Results by Ethnicity

Responses by ethnicity corresponded to overall results in relation to the top four choices; however, those identifying as Hispanic/Latinx placed less emphasis on driving alone.

Question 2: Top Four Choices by Ethnicity
(Percentages within Ethnic Category)
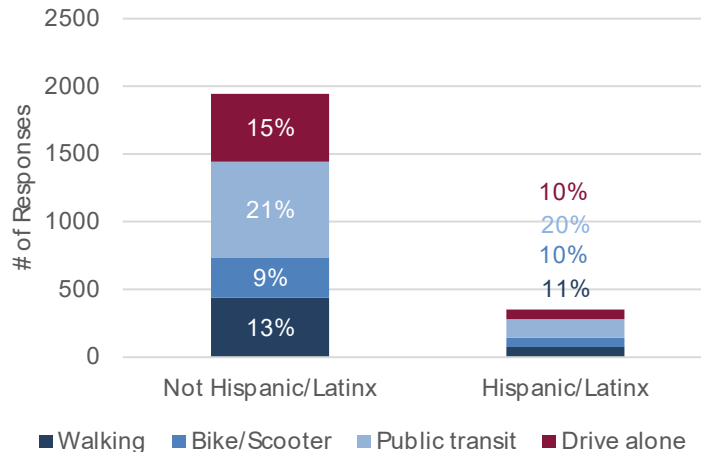
You have an opportunity to help shape what North Jersey could look like in the future by sharing your priorities. Which of these are important to your choices of where to live?

Respondents were asked to select their top three choices to Question 1. Eighty percent of respondents selected three options, 10 percent selected two options, 9 percent selected one option, and 8 respondents made no selection.

Twenty percent of respondents said the availability of transit would be important in their choice of where to live. A safe environment for ***active transportation*** (nearly 16 percent), predictable travel times (nearly 15 percent), and frequency of transit service (approximately 14 percent) were also important to respondents. When aggregated, the three ***transit-related*** choices (availability, frequency, and cost of transit) represented 45 percent of all responses and the two active transportation related choices (safe to walk, bike or scooter and proximity to parks and open space) represented another quarter of responses. The distinctly ***auto-oriented*** choice, meanwhile, represented less 8 percent of all responses.

Survey Question Three:
Which of these are important to your choices of where to live?

Category	Percentage
Availability of transit service	20.0%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	15.6%
Predictable travel times	14.9%
Frequency of transit service	14.2%
Cost of transit service	10.7%
Proximity to parks or open space	9.3%
Cost of automobile ownership/parking	8.0%
Proximity to shopping	6.3%
Other	1.0%
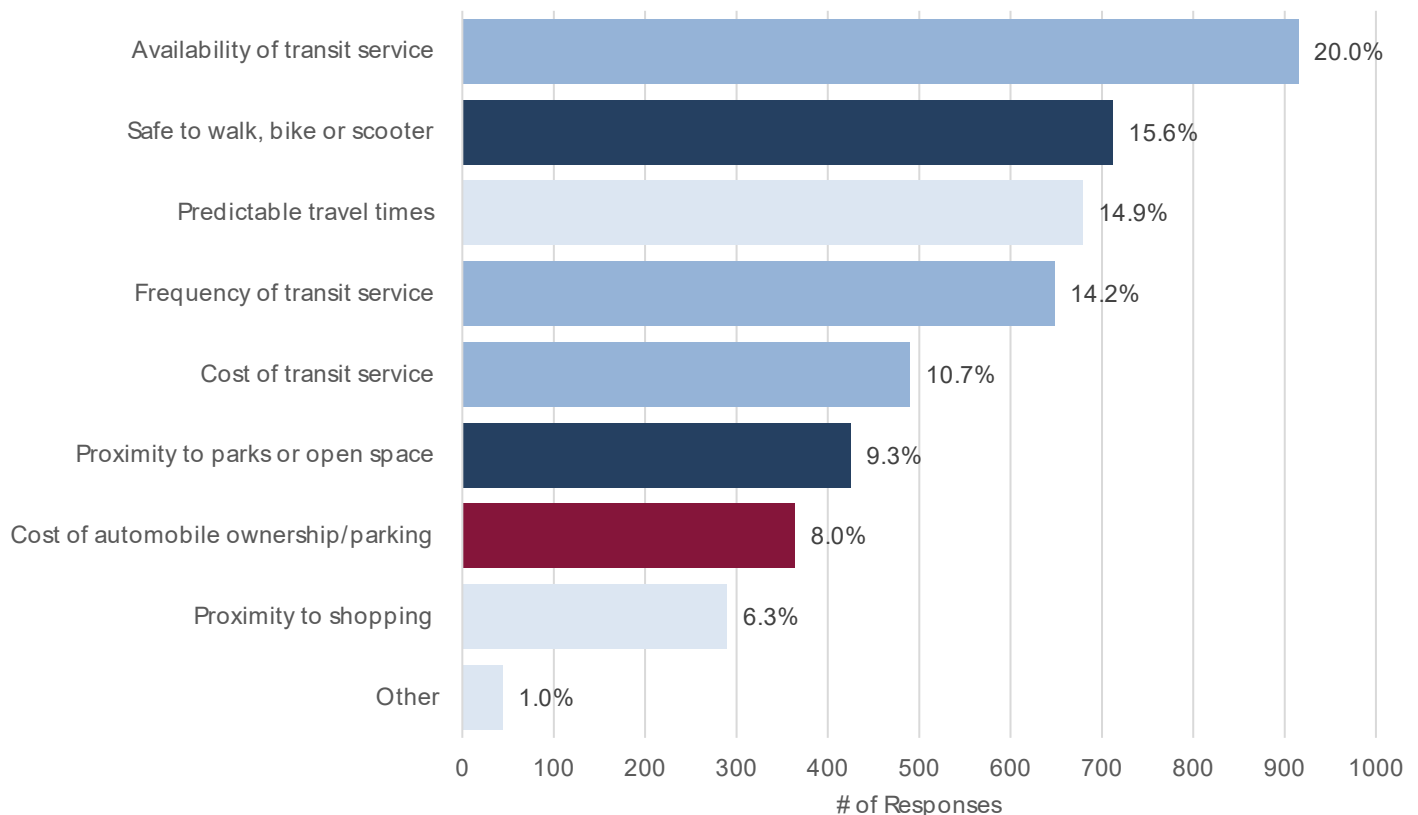
# of Responses

Results by Age

In general, the responses by age corresponded to the overall response. In the two oldest age cohorts, public transportation related answers were slightly less priority, while proximity to shopping was more important than in all other age cohorts.

Question 3: Aggregated Choices by Age
(Percentages within Age Category)

■ Active Transportation ■ Public Transportation ■ Auto-oriented
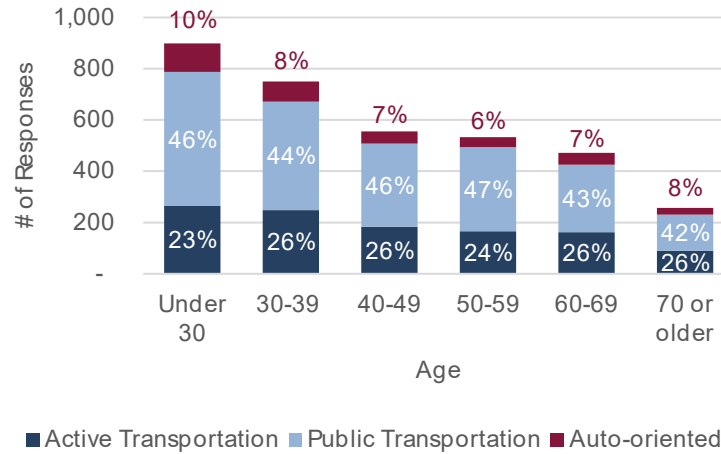
Results by Gender

In general, the responses by gender corresponded to the overall response among cisgender respondents. Among those identifying as non-binary, third gender and self-described; however, much greater emphasis was placed on active transportation choices over public transportation. This cohort also placed greater value on proximity to shopping than cisgender cohorts at 16 percent compared to 7 and 5 percent for women and men, respectively.

Question 3: Aggregated Choices by Gender
(Percentages within Gender Categories)

■ Active Transportation ■ Public Transportation ■ Auto-Oriented
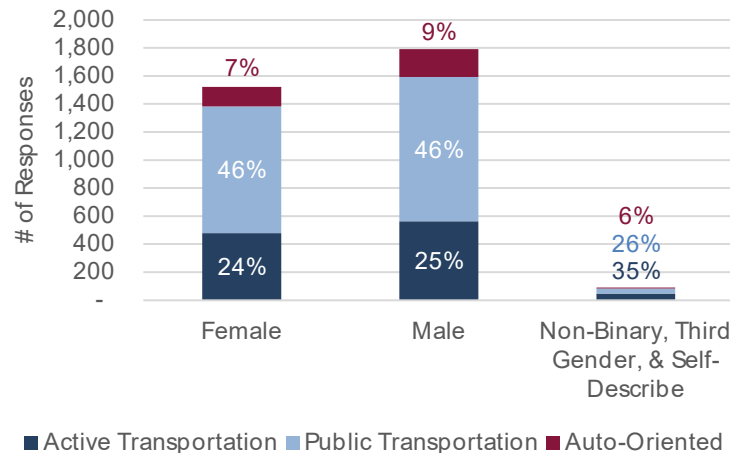
Results by Race

In general, the responses by race were similar to the overall results for most race categories. Those identifying as Black or African American and Asian demonstrated a higher proclivity toward public transportation with a corresponding decrease in active transportation.

Note that in the corresponding chart, those identifying as White, Black or African American, and Asian provided the most significant number of responses. The remaining categories represent a relatively small cohort of all responses and are thus likely to demonstrate greater result variability.

Question 3: Aggregated Choices by Race
(Percentages within Race Category)
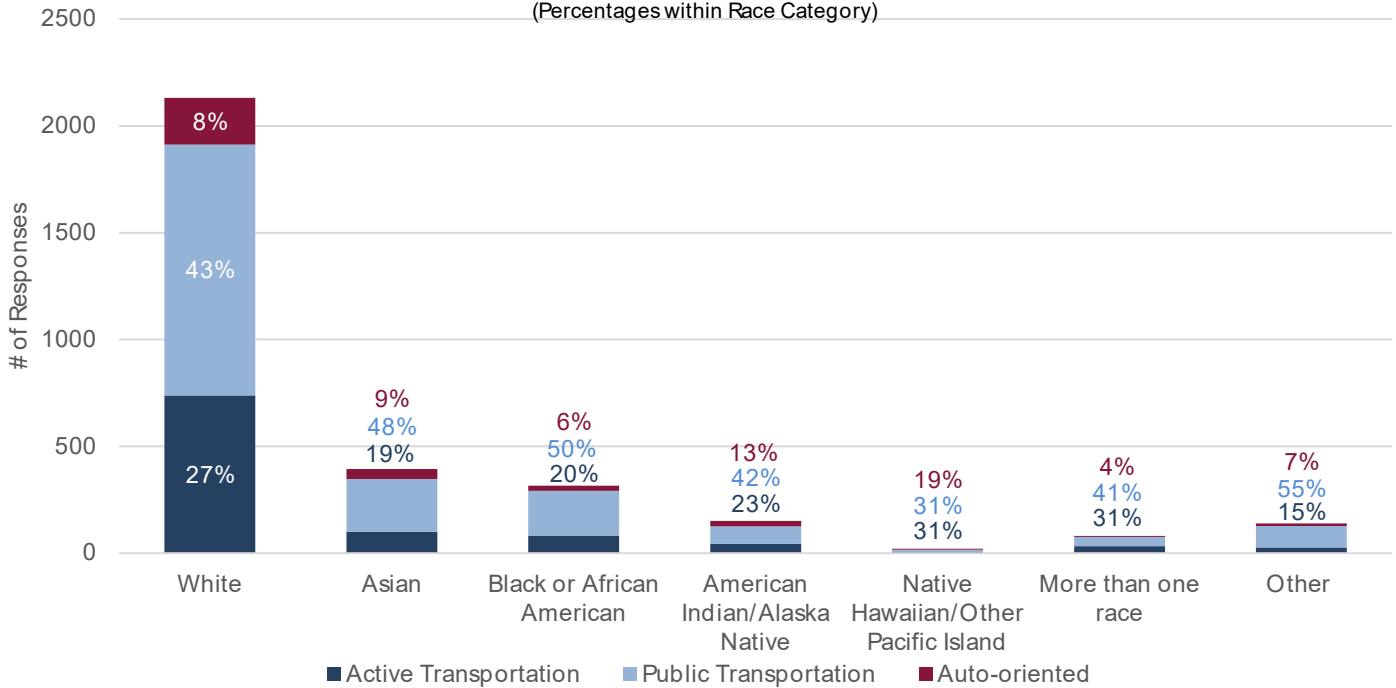
Results by Ethnicity

Responses by ethnicity generally corresponded to overall results; however, those identifying as Hispanic/Latinx placed greater emphasis on public transportation than active transportation.

**Question 3:
Aggregated Choices by Ethnicity**

Do you have any additional comments about transportation in North Jersey?

Survey respondents were also asked to provide any additional comments they had about transportation in North Jersey, which 33 percent of participants opted to answer. Over a third of responses were related to improving transit service, expanding access to transit, and increasing frequency of transit service. Over 10 percent of responses commented on bike and pedestrian infrastructure and how creating additional safer active transportation options will be important to the future of transportation in North Jersey. The third most popular commentary, at just under 10 percent of responses, discussed the lack of intra-state transit options and connections, saying transit options for trips within New Jersey are inadequate.

Results by Age

Respondent comments by age generally aligned with the overall responses, particularly among the highest ranked topics—improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and intra-state transit options. Those 70 years and older, representing 7 percent of all comments, were an outlier cohort in that they placed relatively low priority on the overall top three topics. Instead, those 70 and older overwhelmingly discussed rural transportation needs (36.5 percent), followed by concerns about speeding and controlling costs (9.6 percent each).

Question 4:
Top Three Comment Topics by Age
(Percentages within Age Category)

	Under 30	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 or older
Intra-state Transit	13%	8%	5%	8%	13%	0%
Transit (General)	36%	36%	36%	40%	33%	0%
Bike/Ped	11%	14%	14%	8%	7%	2%

■ Bike/Ped ■ Transit (General) ■ Intra-state Transit
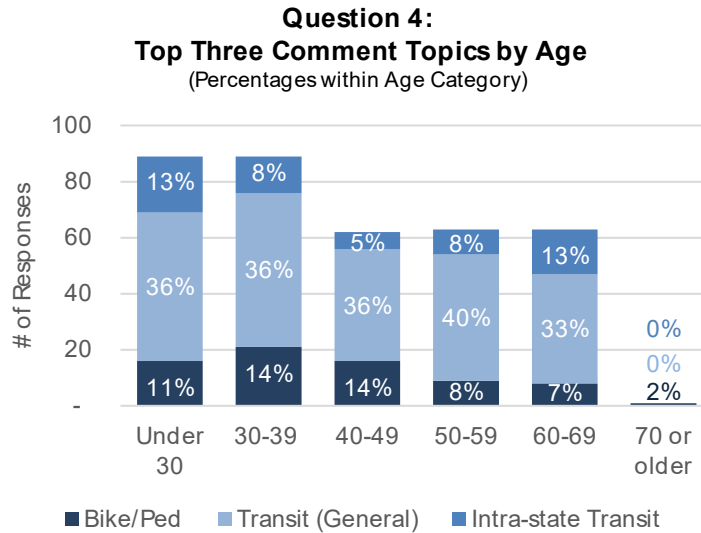
Results by Gender

Respondent comments by gender generally aligned with the overall responses, particularly among the highest ranked topics—improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and intra-state transit options.

Note that those identifying as non-binary, third-gender, and self-describe represented only 2.5 percent of all commentors.

Question 4:
Top Three Comment Topics by Gender
(Percentages within Gender Category)

	Female	Male	Non-Binary, Third Gender, & Self-Describe
Intra-State Transit	35%	9%	13%
Transit (General)	36%	12%	10%
Bike/Ped	39%	11%	0%

■ Bike/Ped ■ Transit (General) ■ Intra-State Transit

Results by Race

In general, the comments by race aligned with the overall responses, particularly among the highest ranked topics—improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and intra-state transit options. That said, transit-related comments were more prevalent within the Asian and Black/African American cohorts than White respondents.

Note that the corresponding chart depicts results only from those identifying as White, Black or African American, and Asian. The number of responses from all other races were too small to accurately depict.

Question 4:
Top Three Comment Topics by Race
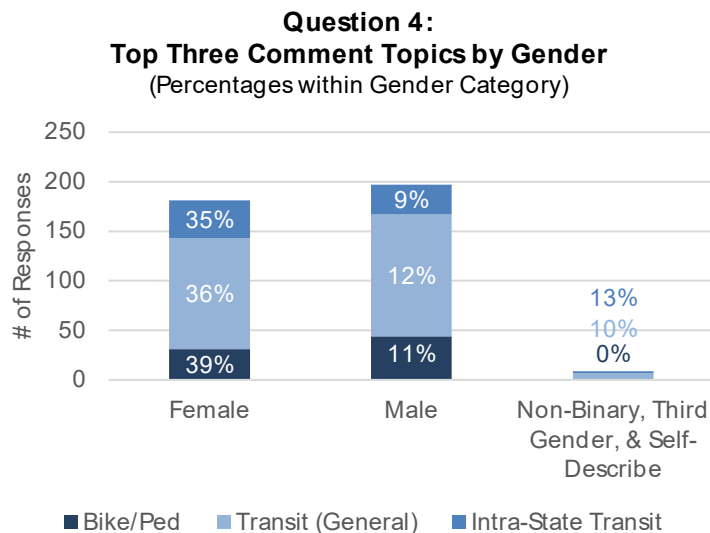(Percentages within Race Category)

Results by Ethnicity

In general, the comments by ethnicity aligned with the overall responses, particularly among the highest ranked topics—improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructu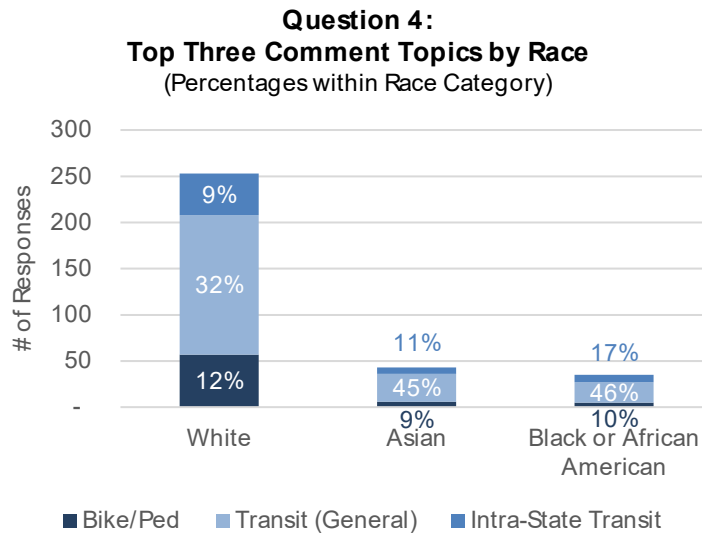re, and intra-state transit options. Those of Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity did discuss safety at a slighter higher rate than bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Question 4:
Top Four Comment Topics by Ethnicity
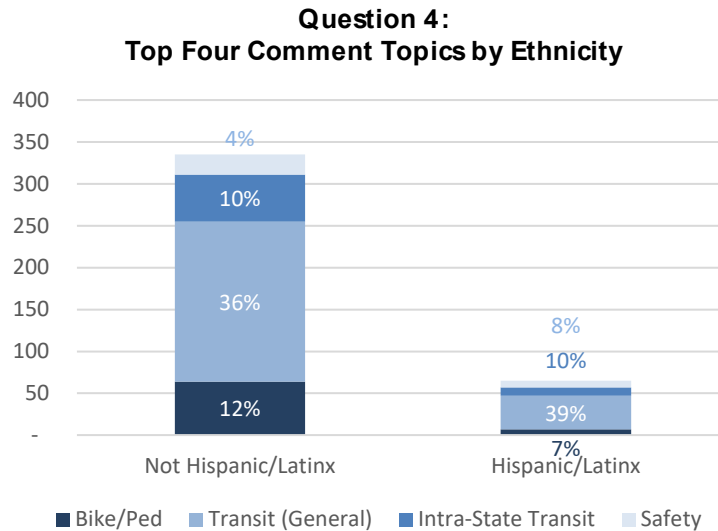
SURVEY RESULTS: BERGEN COUNTY

Age of Bergen County Survey Respondents
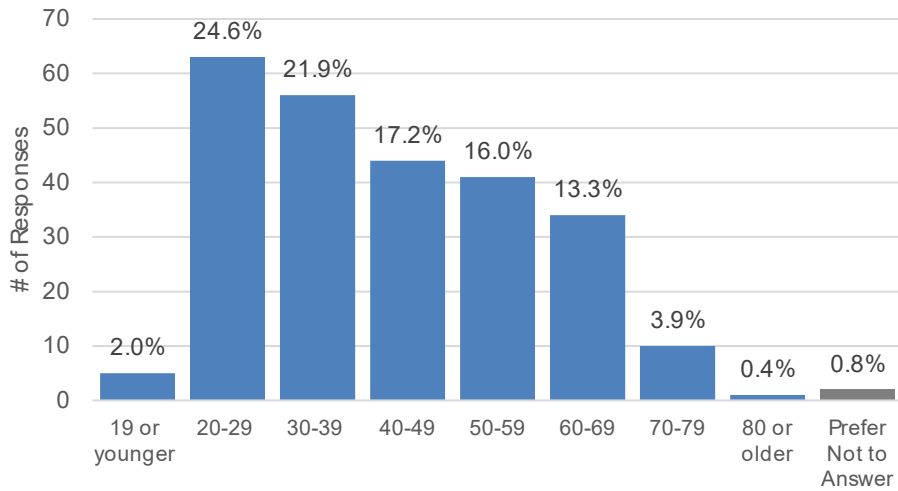
Gender of Bergen County Survey Respondents

- Male 46%
- Non-Binary, Third Gender, Self-Describe 4%
- Prefer Not to Answer 4%
- Female 46%

Race of Bergen County Survey Respondents

- Asian 36%
- Prefer Not to Answer 5%
- American Indian or Alaska Native 4%
- Black or African American 4%
- More Than One Race 3%
- Other 2%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific 1%
- White 45%
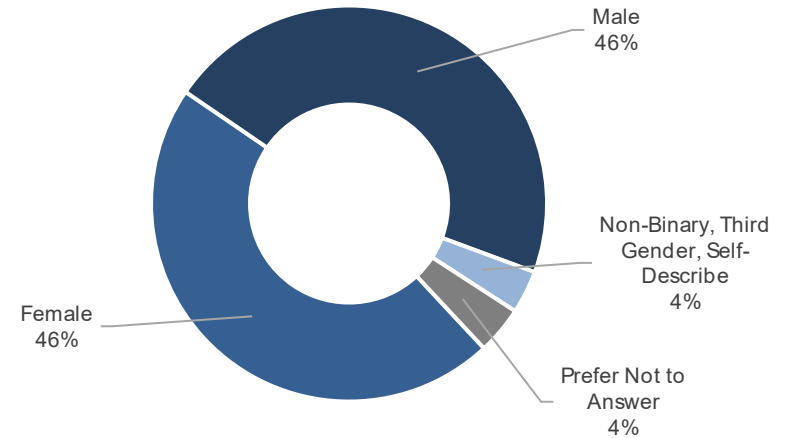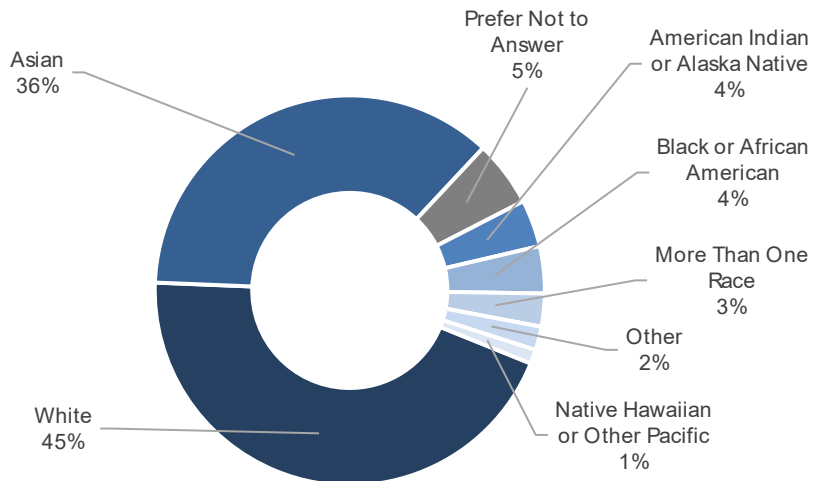
Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Bergen County Survey Respondents

- No 81%
- Yes 11%
- Prefer Not to Answer 8%
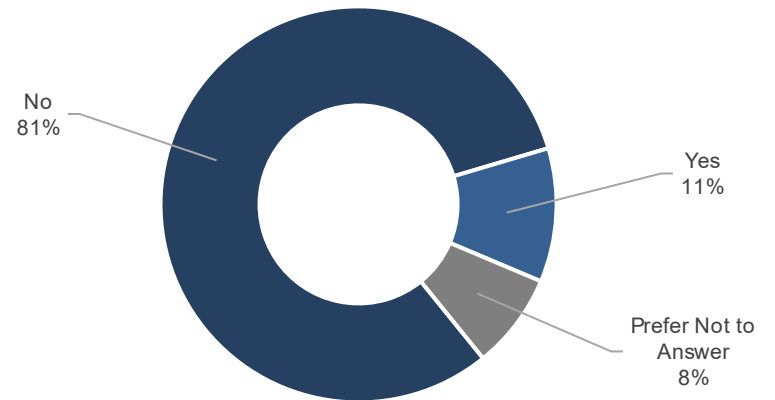
Question 1: Bergen County Responses

Category	Percentage
Bus service	17.4%
Pedestrian signals and crossings	16.0%
Bike lanes or trails	11.3%
Train service	11.0%
Road conditions	9.8%
Sidewalks or walking trails	9.8%
Light rail service	9.4%
Parking	7.2%
PATH service	5.4%
Ferry service	2.3%
Other	0.4%
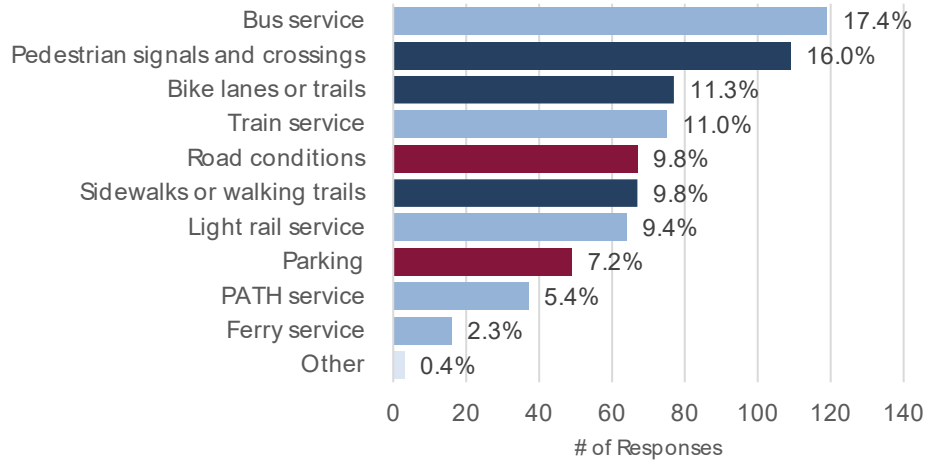
# of Responses

Question 2: Bergen County Responses

Category	Percentage
Public transit	19.9%
Drive alone	18.7%
Walking	13.1%
Bike/Scooter	8.0%
Ridehailing	6.7%
Self-driving car	5.3%
Electric vehicles and buses	4.8%
Telecommute	4.8%
High speed trains	3.5%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	3.5%
On-demand public transit shuttles	2.2%
Taxi	2.2%
Carpool/vanpool	1.9%
Electric bike	1.8%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	1.2%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	1.0%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	0.9%
Other	0.3%
Other micro-mobility	0.3%

# of Responses

Question 3: Bergen County Responses

Category	Percentage
Availability of transit service	20.5%
Frequency of transit service	16.6%
Predictable travel times	16.5%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	13.2%
Cost of transit service	10.4%
Proximity to parks or open space	8.3%
Cost of automobile ownership/parking	8.0%
Proximity to shopping	5.8%
Other	0.7%

# of Responses
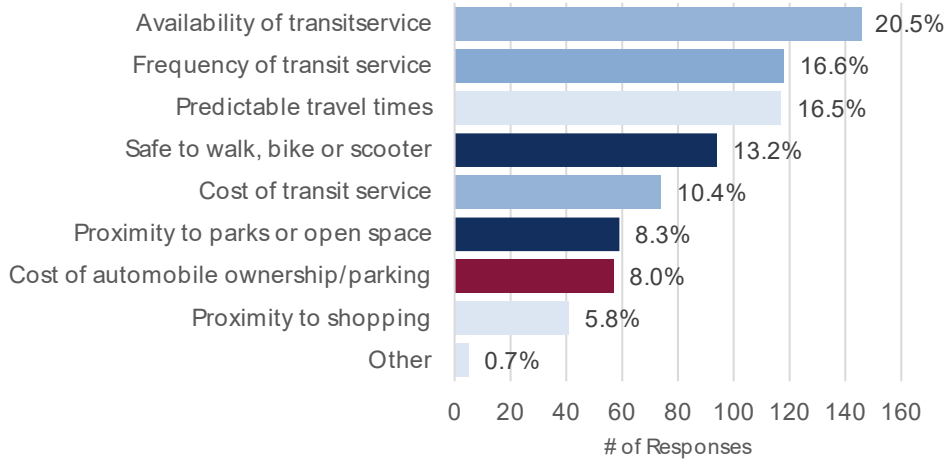
Question 4: Bergen County Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	Percentage
Transit (General)	35.9%
Intra-State Transit	10.7%
Walk/Bike	10.7%
Safety	7.6%
Infrastructure Funding	5.3%

# of Responses
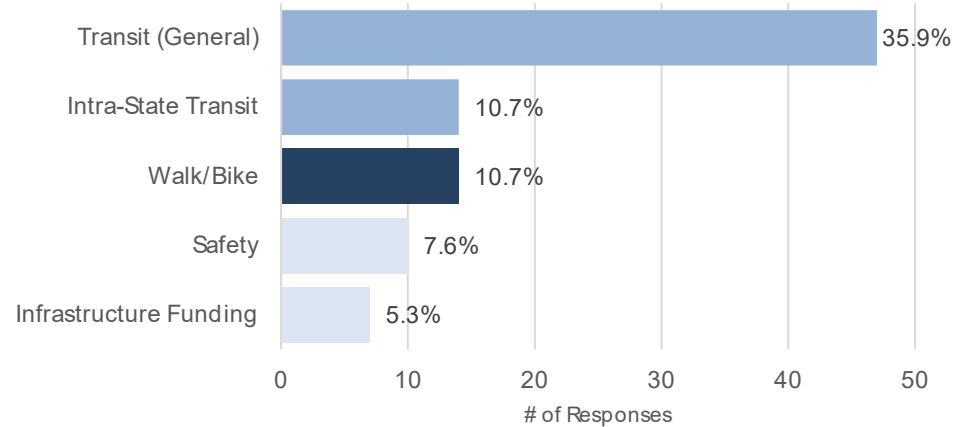
Age of Essex County Survey Respondents
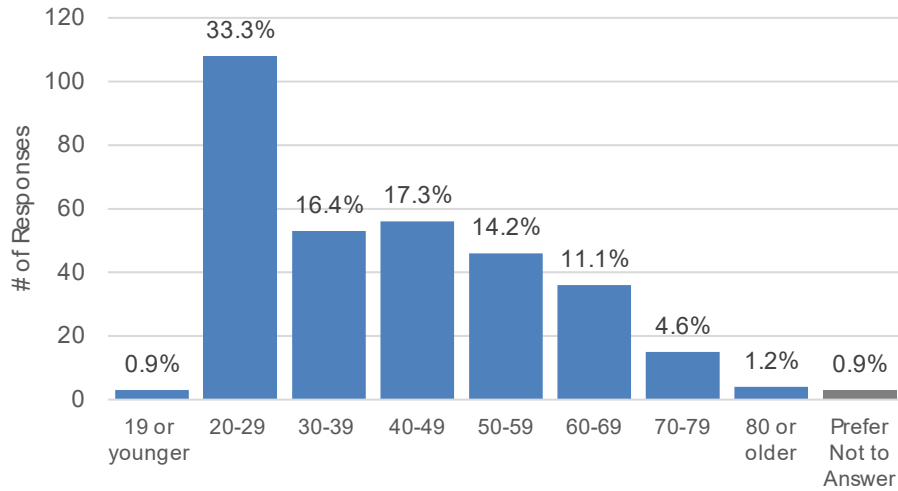
Gender of Essex County Respondents

Male 54%
Non-Binary, Third Gender, Self-Describe 2%
Female 41%
Prefer Not to Answer 3%

Race of Essex County Survey Respondents

Black or African American 18%
Prefer Not to Answer 9%
Other 4%
American Indian or Alaska Native 4%
Asian 4%
More Than One Race 2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific 1%
White 58%

Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Essex County Survey Respondents

Yes 15%
Prefer Not to Answer 6%
No 79%

Question 1: Essex County Responses

Category	# of Responses	Percentage
Pedestrian signals and crossings		15.2%
Bus service		14.0%
Train service		11.4%
Sidewalks or walking trails		11.4%
Light rail service		11.2%
Bike lanes or trails		10.6%
PATH service		9.7%
Road conditions		7.1%
Parking		6.2%
Ferry service		2.4%
Other		0.8%

# of Responses

Question 2: Essex County Responses

Category	# of Responses	Percentage
Public transit		22.1%
Walking		11.8%
Drive alone		11.7%
Bike/Scooter		9.0%
Ridehailing		8.9%
Telecommute		6.2%
Electric vehicles and buses		4.1%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features		3.9%
Carpool/vanpool		3.9%
Self-driving car		3.8%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare		2.9%
Taxi		2.9%
On-demand public transit shuttles		1.9%
Electric standing or sitting scooter		1.9%
High speed trains		1.7%
Electric bike		1.3%
Other micro-mobility		0.7%
Other		0.6%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis		0.6%

# of Responses

Question 3: Essex County Responses

Category	# of Responses	Percentage
Availability of transit service		19.7%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter		16.5%
Frequency of transit service		15.3%
Predictable travel times		13.5%
Cost of transit service		13.0%
Cost of automobile ownership/parking		8.6%
Proximity to parks or open space		7.4%
Proximity to shopping		5.3%
Other		0.7%

# of Responses
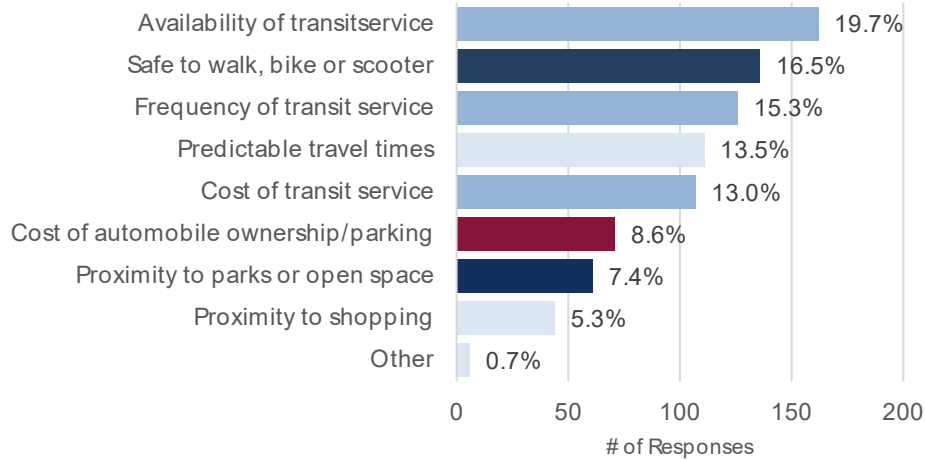
Question 4: Essex County Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	# of Responses	Percentage
Transit (General)		41.5%
Intra-State Transit		8.5%
Auto Connectivity		6.6%
Safety		6.6%
Walk/Bike		6.6%

# of Responses
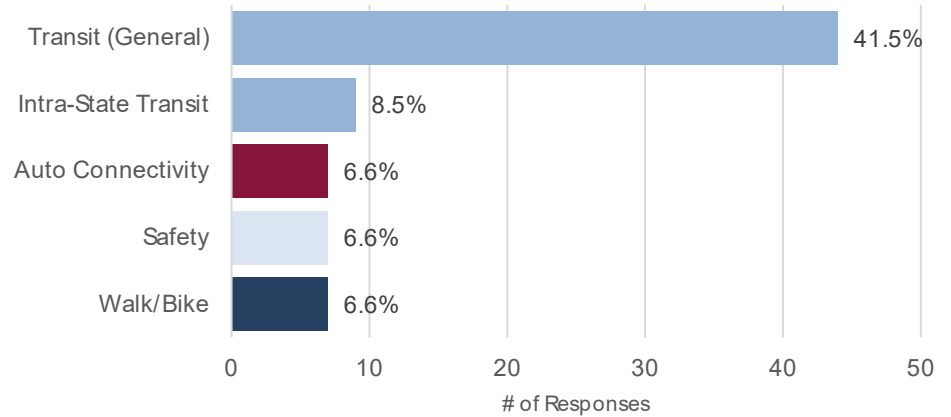
Age of Hudson County Survey Respondents
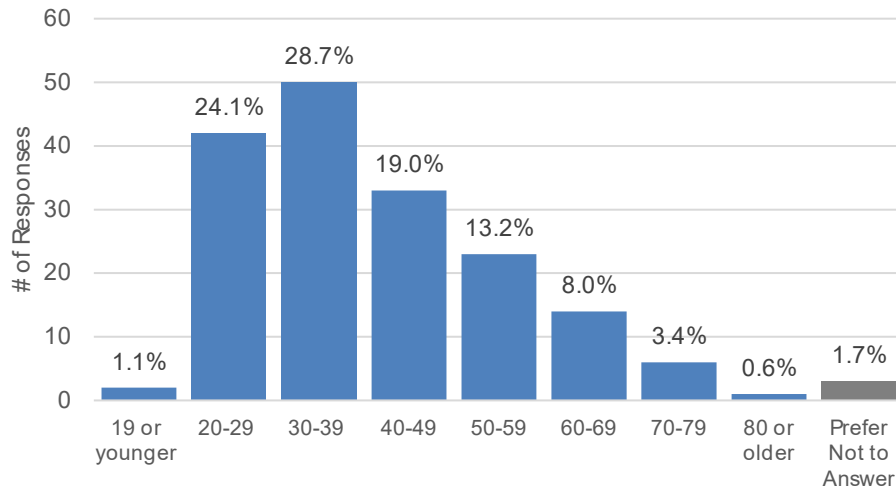
Gender of Hudson County Respondents

Male 61%

Non-Binary, Third Gender, Self-Describe 2%

Prefer Not to Answer 3%

Female 34%

Race of Hudson County Survey Respondents

Other 6%

More Than One Race 3%

Black or African American 8%

American Indian or Alaska Native 2%

Asian 11%

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific 0%

Prefer Not to Answer 15%

White 55%
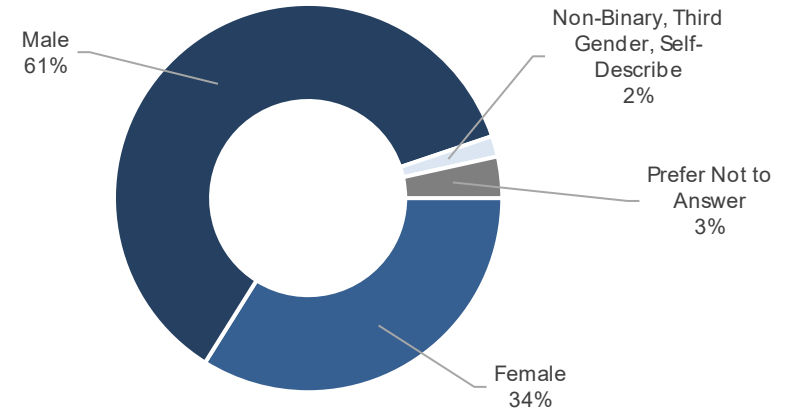
Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Hudson County Survey Respondents

Yes 19%

Prefer Not to Answer 13%

No 68%

Question 1: Hudson County Responses

Category	%
Other	17.1%
Road conditions	14.8%
Bike lanes or trails	13.0%
Train service	10.5%
Parking	9.9%
Ferry service	9.9%
Pedestrian signals and crossings	6.8%
Sidewalks or walking trails	6.4%
Light rail service	6.2%
PATH service	4.3%
Bus service	1.2%

# of Responses

Question 2: Hudson County Responses

Category	%
Public transit	26.2%
Walking	17.0%
Bike/Scooter	11.0%
Drive alone	8.3%
Ridehailing	7.1%
Telecommute	5.2%
Electric vehicles and buses	4.0%
High speed trains	3.1%
On-demand public transit shuttles	2.3%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	2.3%
Self-driving car	2.3%
Electric bike	2.1%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	1.7%
Carpool/vanpool	1.7%
Taxi	1.7%
Other micro-mobility	1.2%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	1.2%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	1.0%
Other	0.6%

# of Responses

Question 3: Hudson County Responses

Category	%
Availability of transitservice	22.3%
Frequency of transit service	18.5%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	14.6%
Predictable travel times	14.2%
Cost of transit service	9.7%
Proximity to parks or open space	8.1%
Cost of automobile ownership/parking	5.9%
Proximity to shopping	5.5%
Other	1.2%

# of Responses

Question 4: Hudson County Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	%
Transit (General)	30.5%
Walk/Bike	18.1%
Intra-State Transit	11.4%
Reduce car culture	4.8%
Safety	4.8%

# of Responses
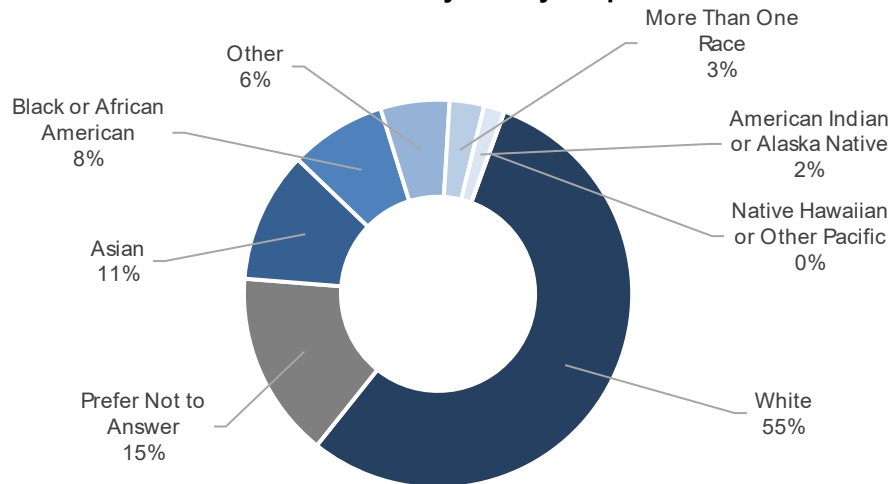
Age of Hunterdon County Survey Respondents
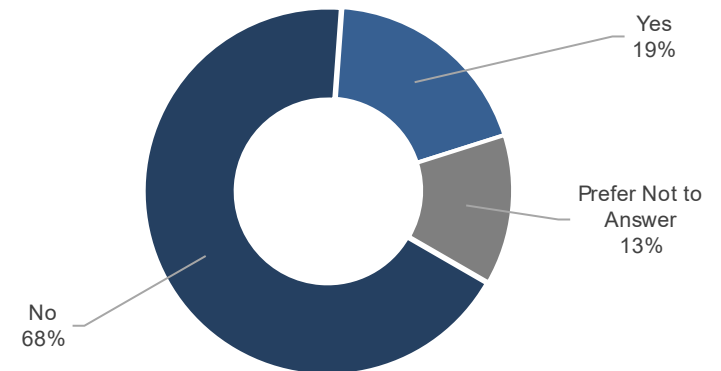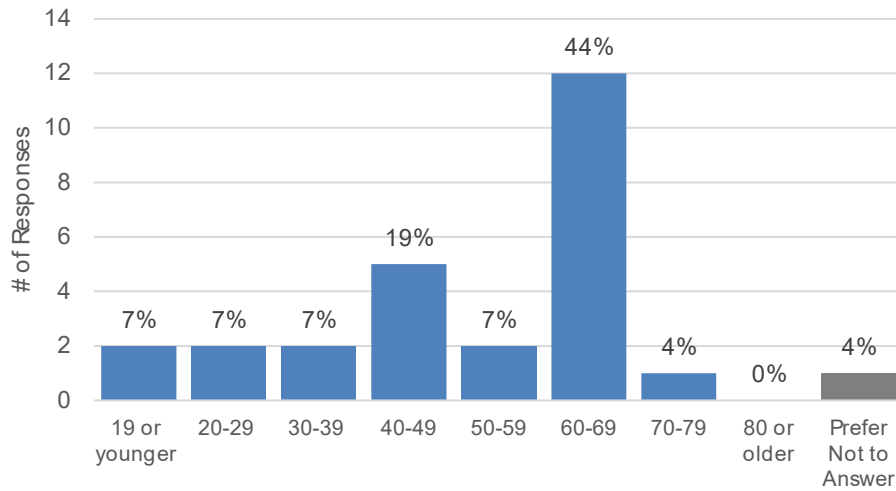

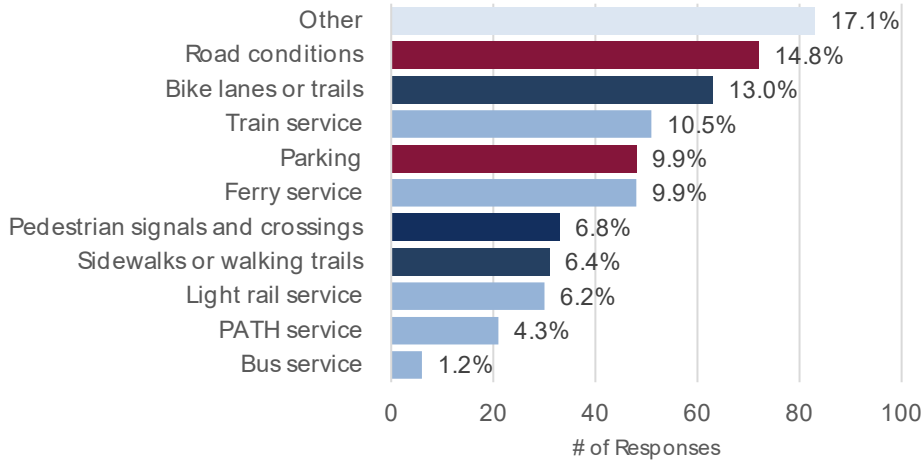**Gender of Hunterdon County Respondents**
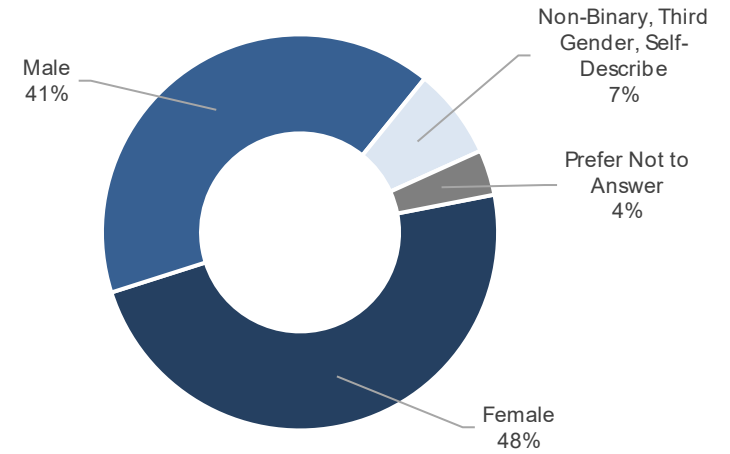
Race of Hunterdon County Survey Respondents

**Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity
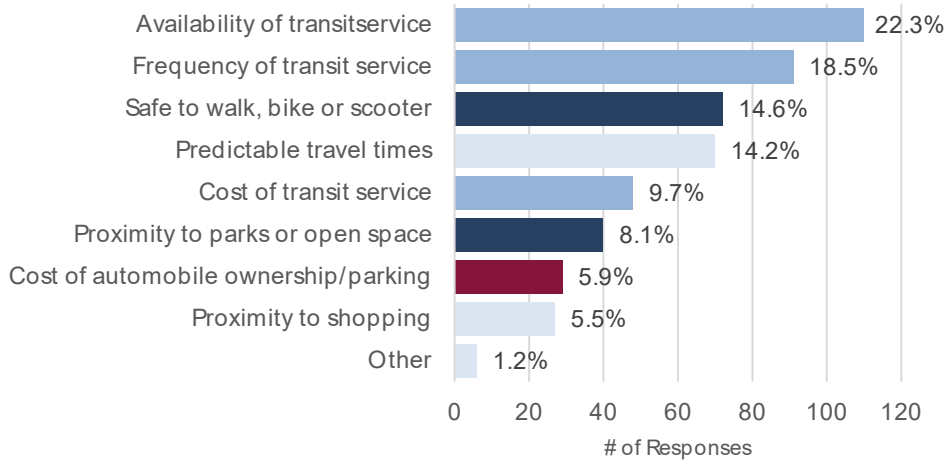of Hunterdon County Survey Respondents**
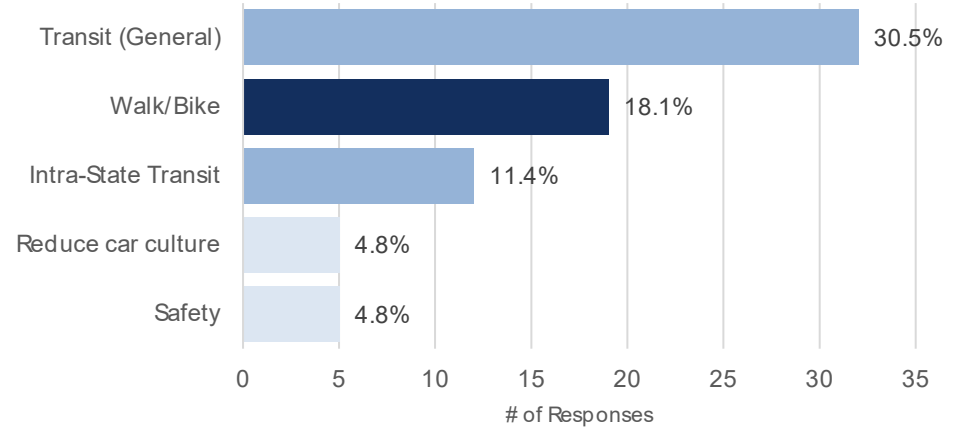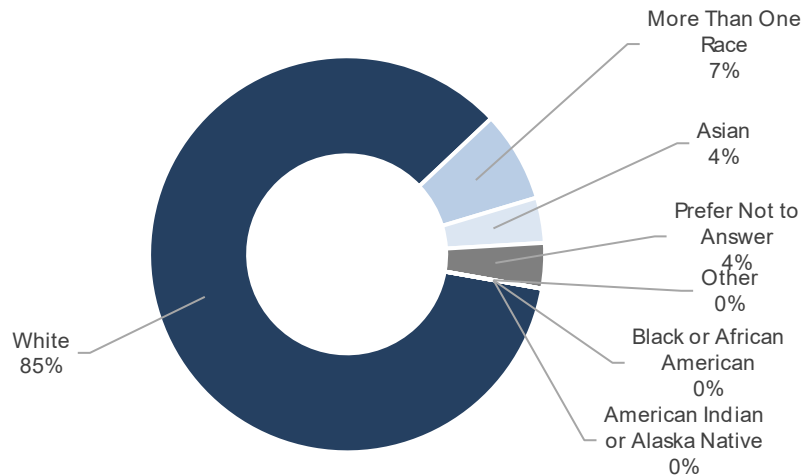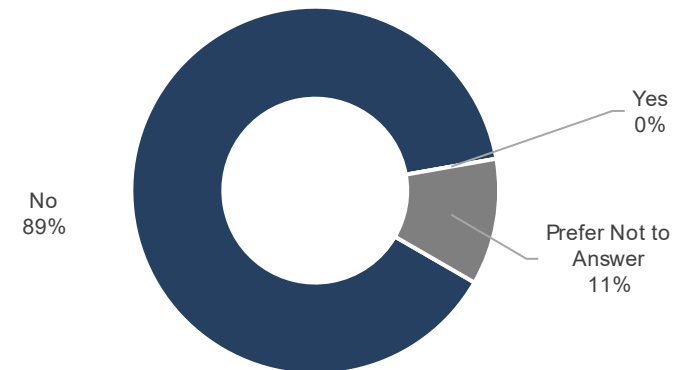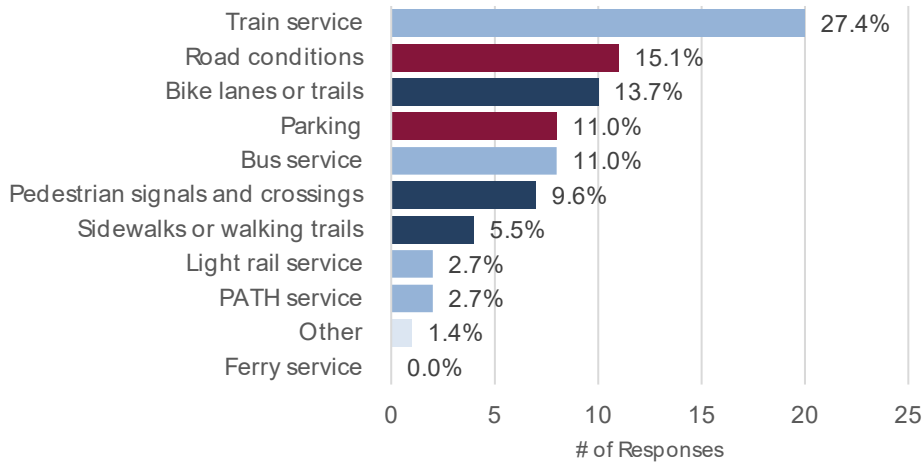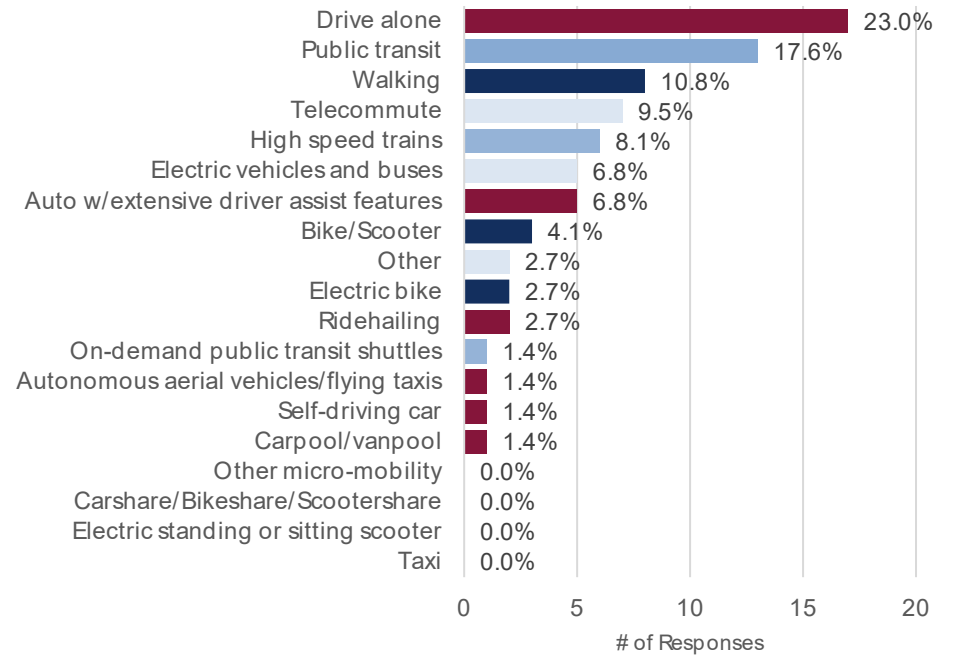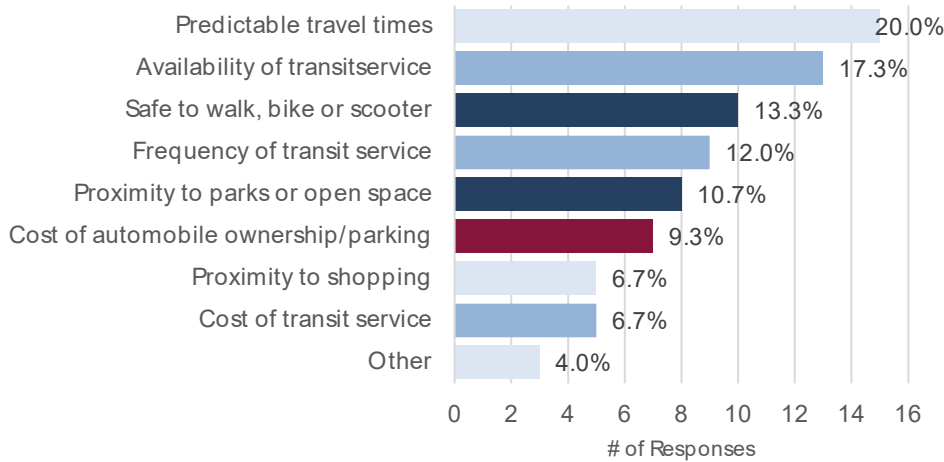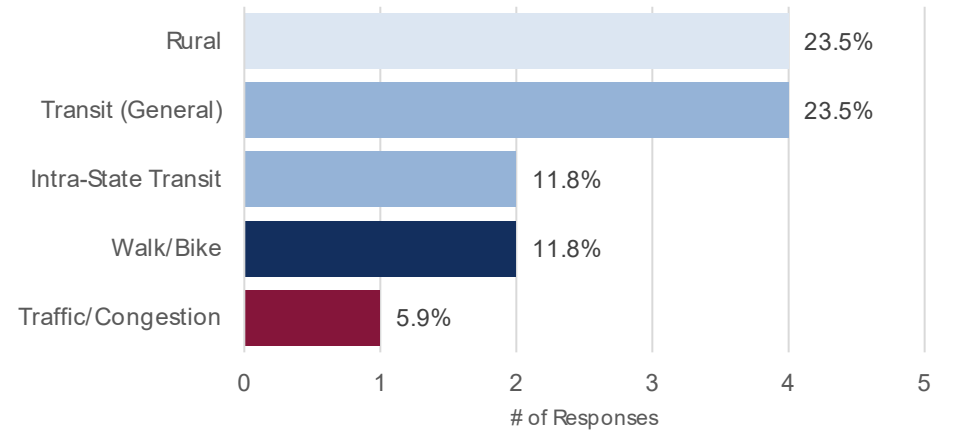
Question 1: Hunterdon County Responses

Category	%
Train service	27.4%
Road conditions	15.1%
Bike lanes or trails	13.7%
Parking	11.0%
Bus service	11.0%
Pedestrian signals and crossings	9.6%
Sidewalks or walking trails	5.5%
Light rail service	2.7%
PATH service	2.7%
Other	1.4%
Ferry service	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 2: Hunterdon County Responses

Category	%
Drive alone	23.0%
Public transit	17.6%
Walking	10.8%
Telecommute	9.5%
High speed trains	8.1%
Electric vehicles and buses	6.8%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	6.8%
Bike/Scooter	4.1%
Other	2.7%
Electric bike	2.7%
Ridehailing	2.7%
On-demand public transit shuttles	1.4%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	1.4%
Self-driving car	1.4%
Carpool/vanpool	1.4%
Other micro-mobility	0.0%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	0.0%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	0.0%
Taxi	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 3: Hunterdon County Responses

Category	%
Predictable travel times	20.0%
Availability of transitservice	17.3%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	13.3%
Frequency of transit service	12.0%
Proximity to parks or open space	10.7%
Cost of automobile ownership/parking	9.3%
Proximity to shopping	6.7%
Cost of transit service	6.7%
Other	4.0%

# of Responses

Question 4: Hunterdon County Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	%
Rural	23.5%
Transit (General)	23.5%
Intra-State Transit	11.8%
Walk/Bike	11.8%
Traffic/Congestion	5.9%

# of Responses

Age of Middlesex County Survey Respondents
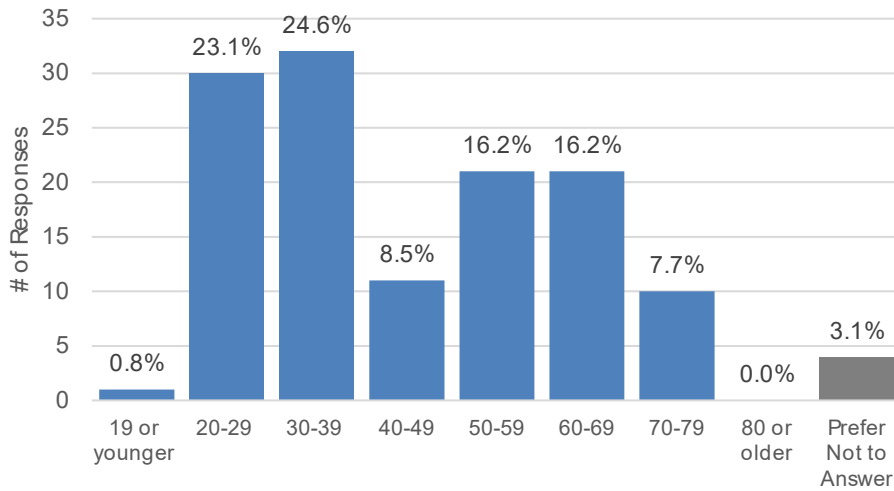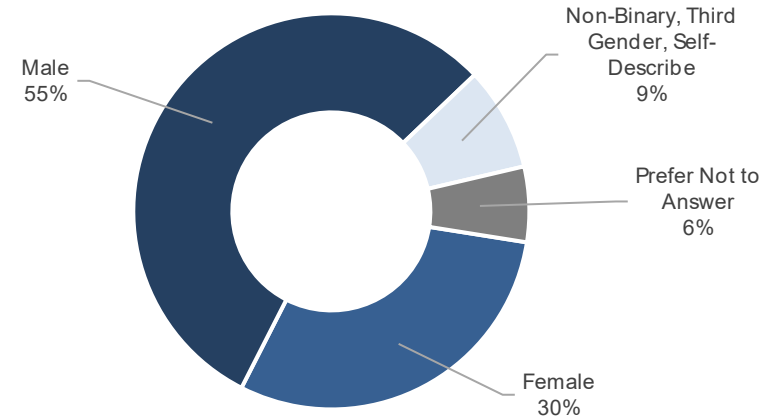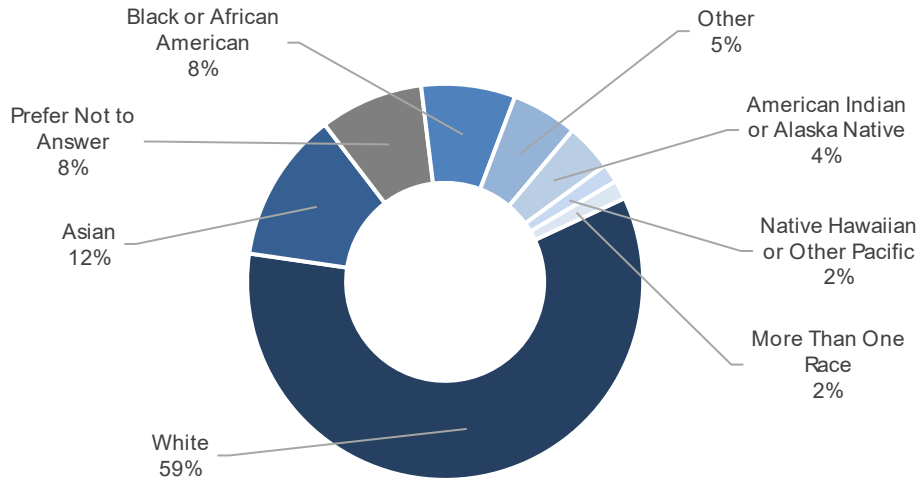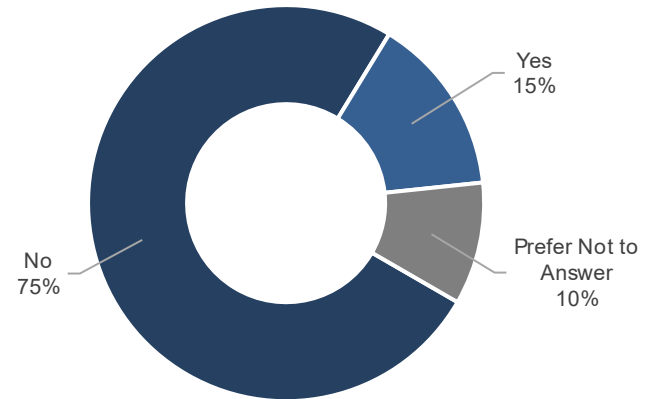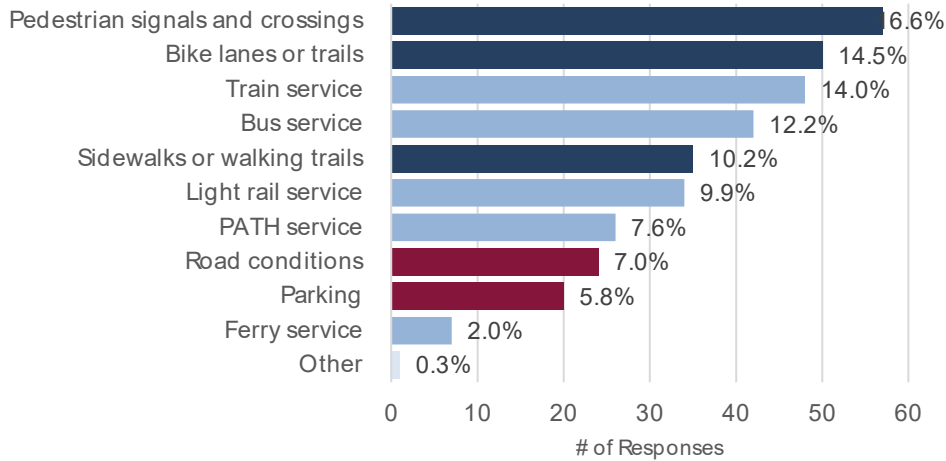

Gender of Middlesex County Respondents
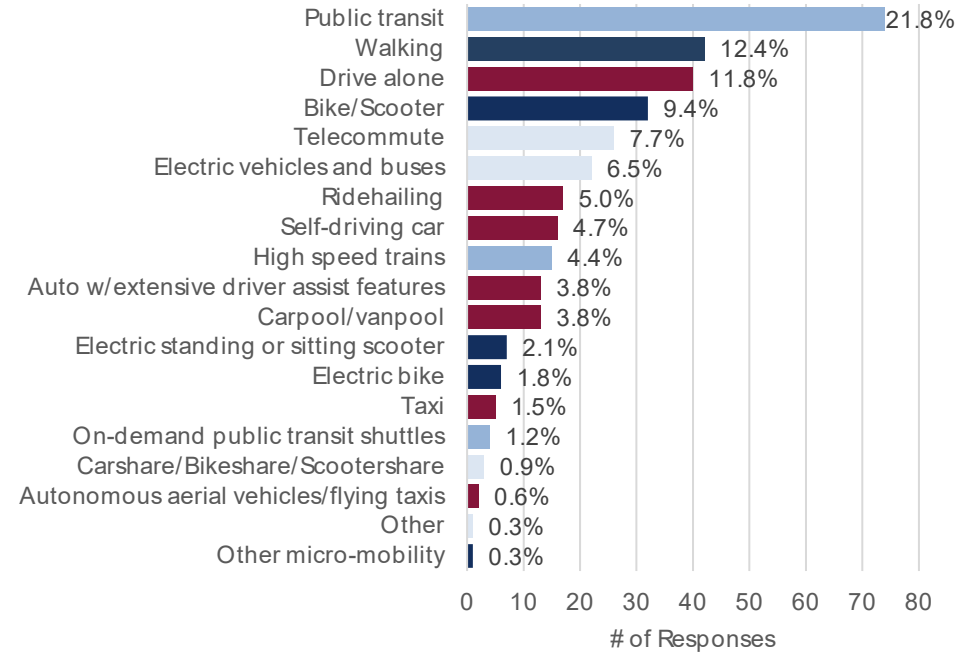

Race of Middlesex County Survey Respondents

Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity
of Middlesex County Survey Respondents
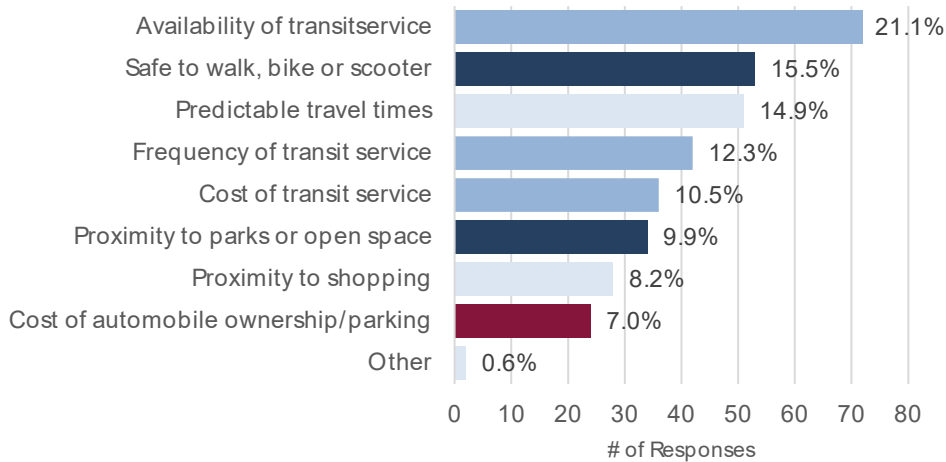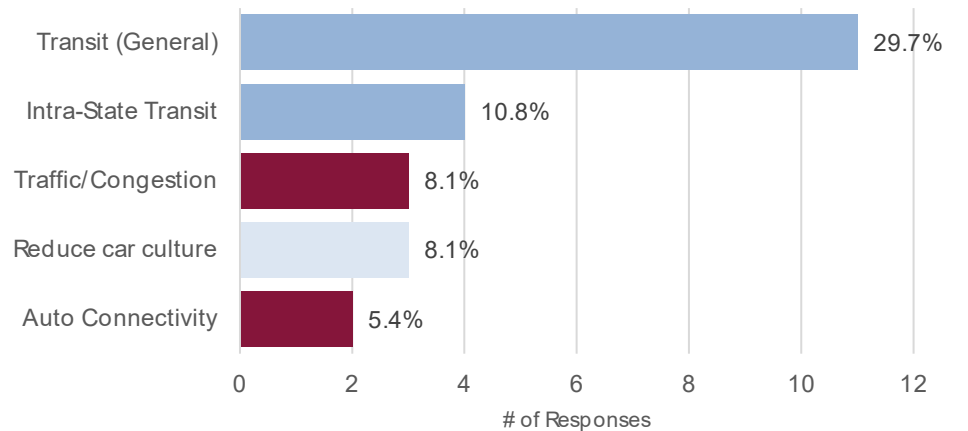
Question 1: Middlesex County Responses

- Pedestrian signals and crossings — 6.6%
- Bike lanes or trails — 14.5%
- Train service — 14.0%
- Bus service — 12.2%
- Sidewalks or walking trails — 10.2%
- Light rail service — 9.9%
- PATH service — 7.6%
- Road conditions — 7.0%
- Parking — 5.8%
- Ferry service — 2.0%
- Other — 0.3%

# of Responses

Question 2: Middlesex County Responses

- Public transit — 21.8%
- Walking — 12.4%
- Drive alone — 11.8%
- Bike/Scooter — 9.4%
- Telecommute — 7.7%
- Electric vehicles and buses — 6.5%
- Ridehailing — 5.0%
- Self-driving car — 4.7%
- High speed trains — 4.4%
- Auto w/extensive driver assist features — 3.8%
- Carpool/vanpool — 3.8%
- Electric standing or sitting scooter — 2.1%
- Electric bike — 1.8%
- Taxi — 1.5%
- On-demand public transit shuttles — 1.2%
- Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare — 0.9%
- Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis — 0.6%
- Other — 0.3%
- Other micro-mobility — 0.3%

# of Responses

Question 3: Middlesex County Responses

- Availability of transit service — 21.1%
- Safe to walk, bike or scooter — 15.5%
- Predictable travel times — 14.9%
- Frequency of transit service — 12.3%
- Cost of transit service — 10.5%
- Proximity to parks or open space — 9.9%
- Proximity to shopping — 8.2%
- Cost of automobile ownership/parking — 7.0%
- Other — 0.6%

# of Responses

Question 4: Middlesex Coutny Top 5 Comment Topics

- Transit (General) — 29.7%
- Intra-State Transit — 10.8%
- Traffic/Congestion — 8.1%
- Reduce car culture — 8.1%
- Auto Connectivity — 5.4%

# of Responses

SURVEY RESULTS: MONMOUTH COUNTY

Age of Monmouth County Survey Respondents

Bar chart showing # of Responses by age group:
- 19 or younger: 0%
- 20 to 29: 22%
- 30 to 39: 19%
- 40 to 49: 11%
- 50 to 59: 19%
- 60 to 69: 22%
- 70 to 79: 6%
- 80 or older: 0%
- Prefer Not to Answer: 2%
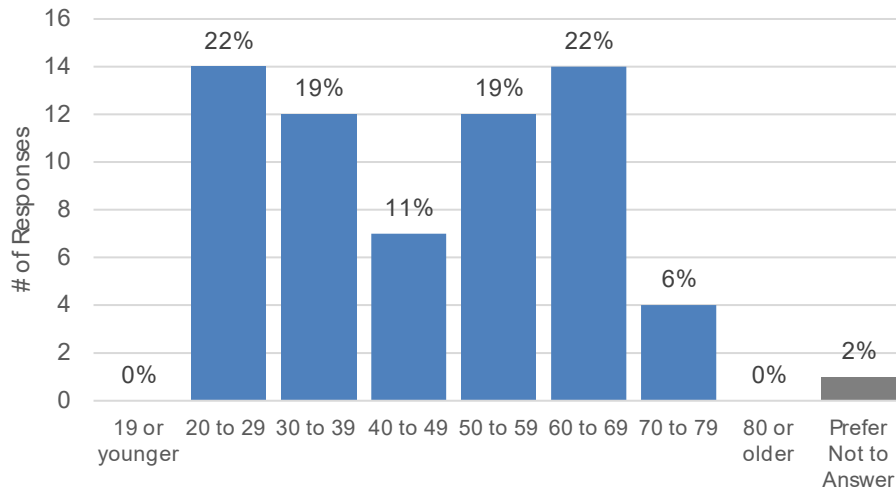
Gender of Monmouth County Respondents

- Male 47%
- Female 45%
- Non-Binary, Third Gender, Self-Describe 3%
- Prefer Not to Answer 5%

Race of Monmouth County Survey Respondents

- Asian 3%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific 1%
- Black or African American 6%
- More Than One Race 2%
- American Indian or Alaska Native 8%
- Other 0%
- Prefer Not to Answer 11%
- White 69%
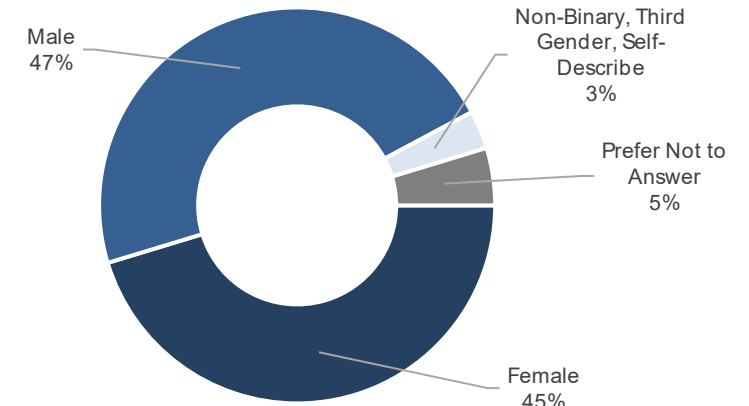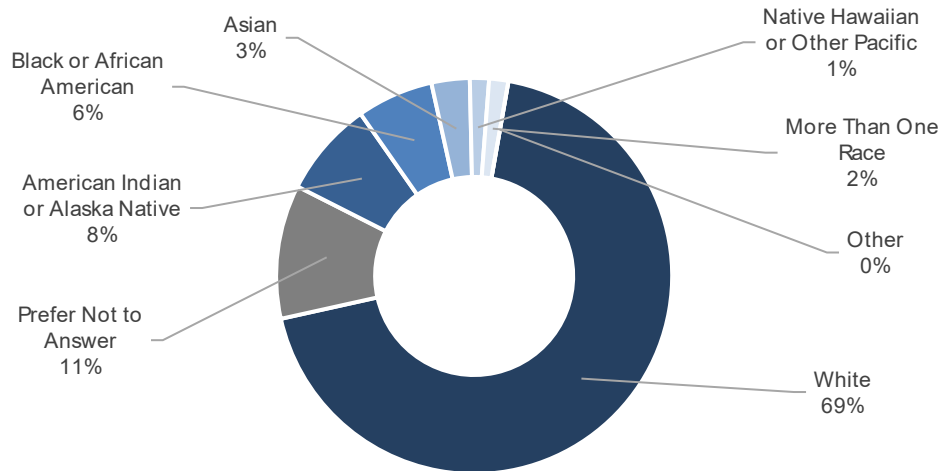
Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Monmouth County Survey Respondents

- Yes 11%
- Prefer Not to Answer 11%
- No 78%
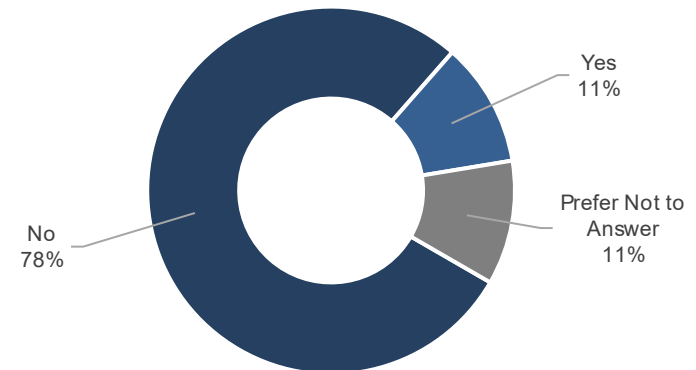
Question 1: Monmouth County Responses

Category	%
Bike lanes or trails	16.3%
Train service	14.5%
Sidewalks or walking trails	14.0%
Pedestrian signals and crossings	14.0%
Bus service	11.0%
Light rail service	8.7%
Road conditions	6.4%
Parking	5.2%
PATH service	4.7%
Ferry service	4.1%
Other	1.2%

# of Responses

Question 2: Monmouth County Responses

Category	%
Other micro-mobility	20.8%
Other	13.7%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	12.5%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	10.1%
Taxi	6.5%
Self-driving car	6.5%
Ridehailing	5.4%
Walking	4.8%
Carpool/vanpool	4.8%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	3.0%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	2.4%
Electric bike	2.4%
Public transit	1.8%
Drive alone	1.8%
On-demand public transit shuttles	1.2%
Bike/Scooter	0.6%
Electric vehicles and buses	0.6%
Telecommute	0.6%
High speed trains	0.6%

# of Responses

Question 3: Monmouth County Responses

Category	%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	22.2%
Availability of transitservice	22.2%
Cost of transit service	11.7%
Predictable travel times	11.1%
Proximity to parks or open space	8.8%
Proximity to shopping	8.2%
Frequency of transit service	8.2%
Cost of automobile…	5.8%
Other	1.8%

# of Responses

Question 4: Monmouth County Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	%
Transit (General)	35.3%
Walk/Bike	14.7%
Intra-State Transit	8.8%
Improve Roads	5.9%
Environment	5.9%

# of Responses

Age of Morris County Survey Respondents

Gender of Morris County Respondents
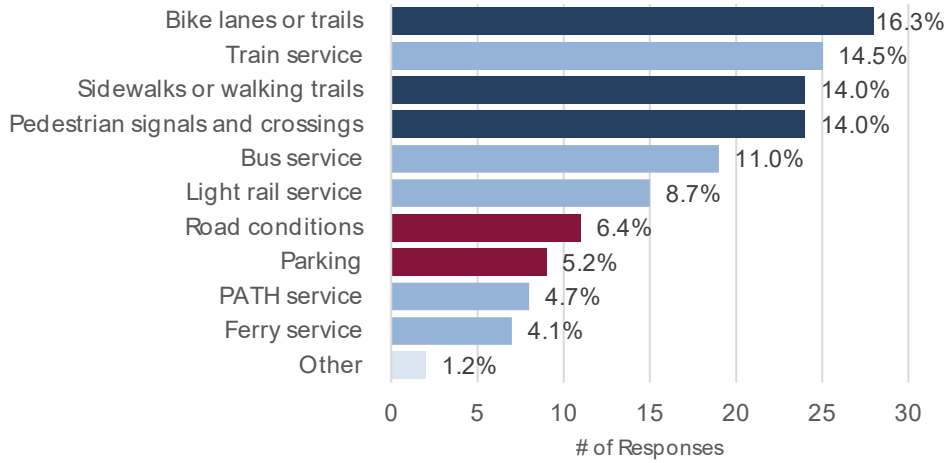

Race of Morris County Survey Respondents

Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity
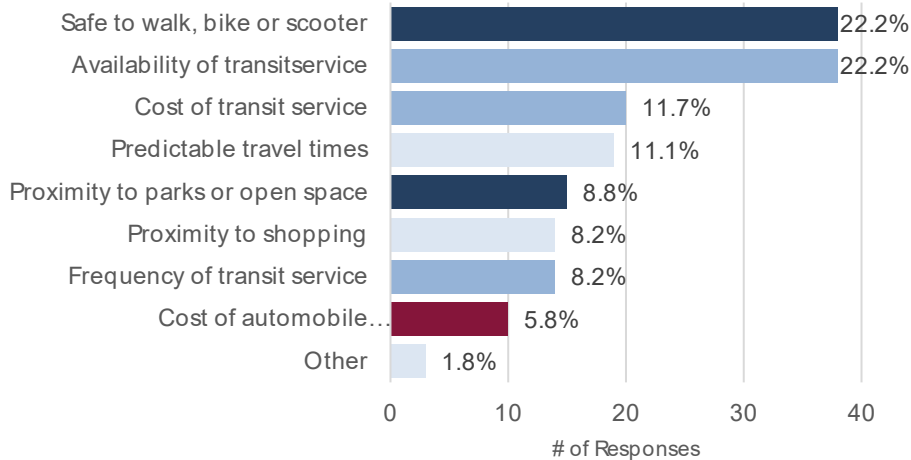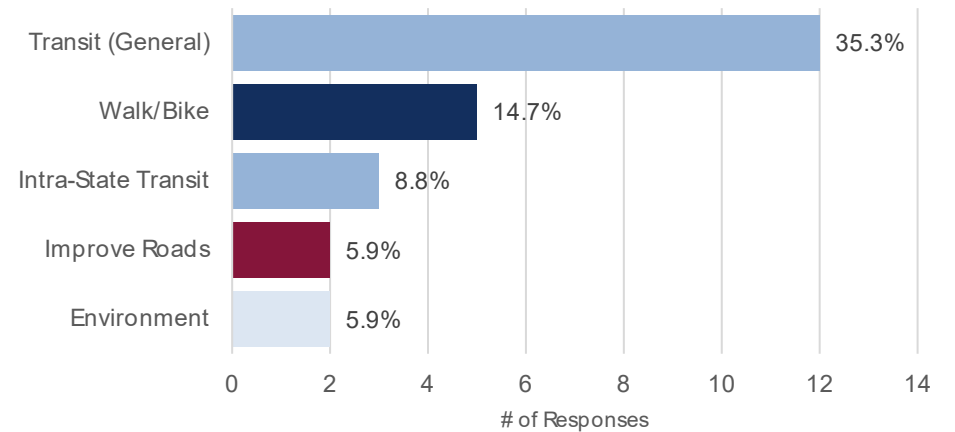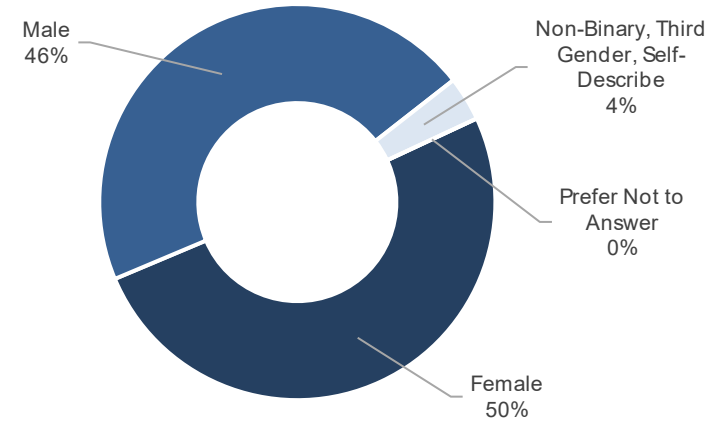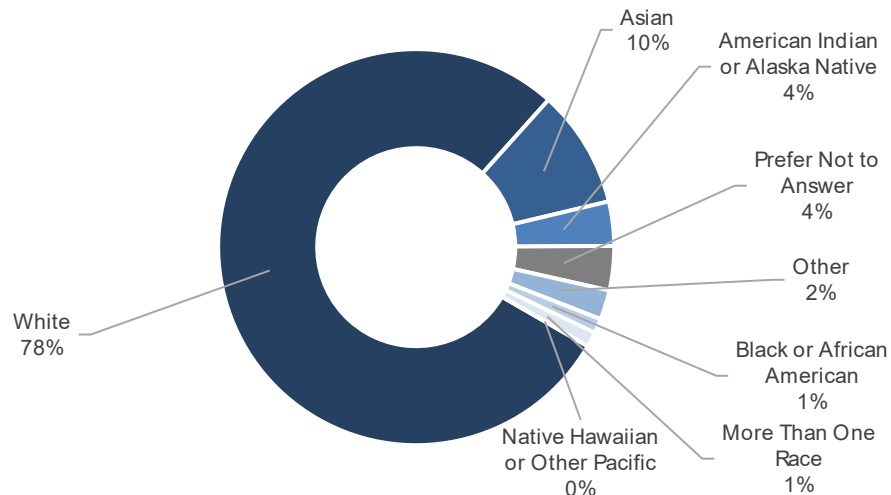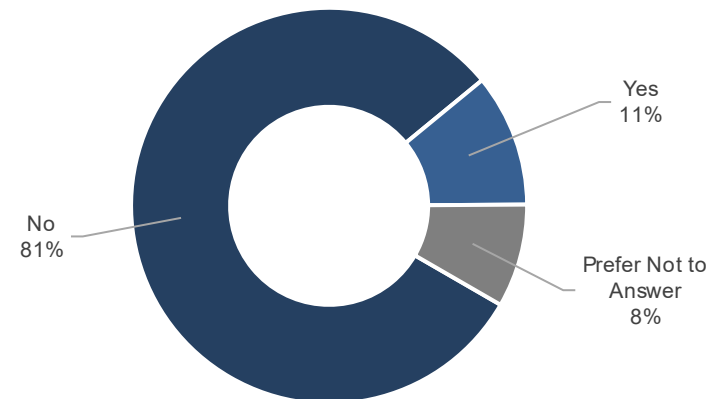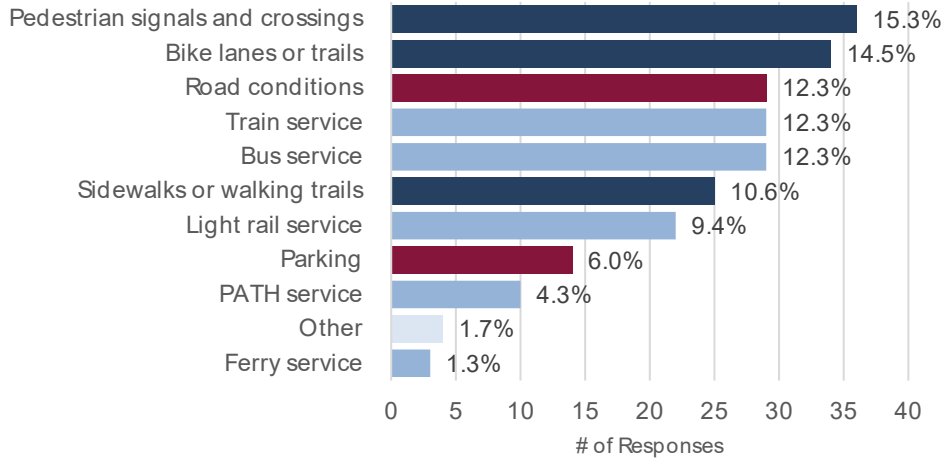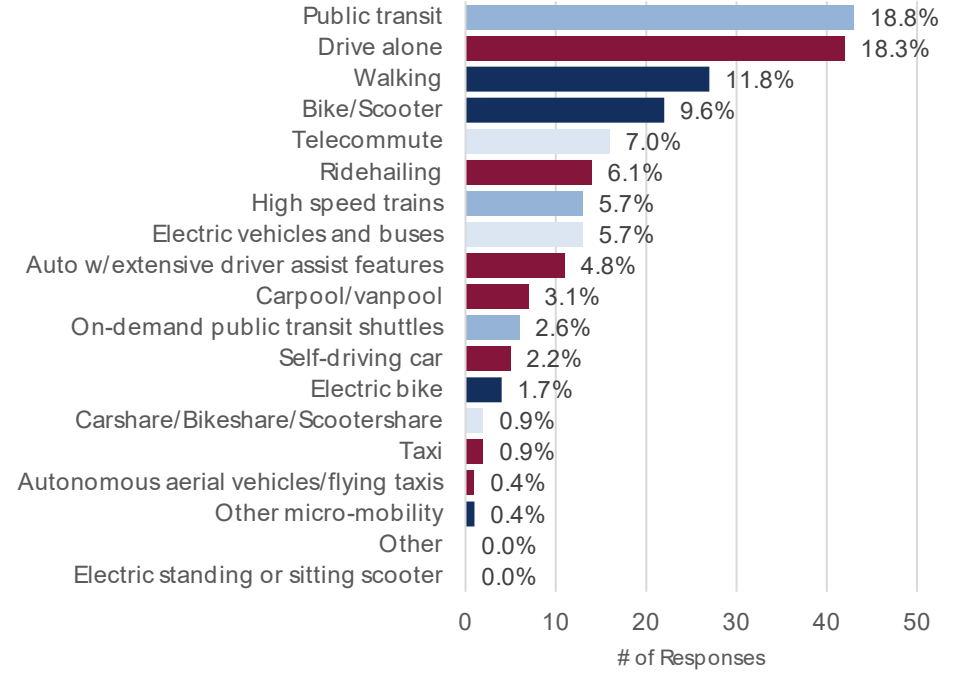of Morris County Survey Respondents
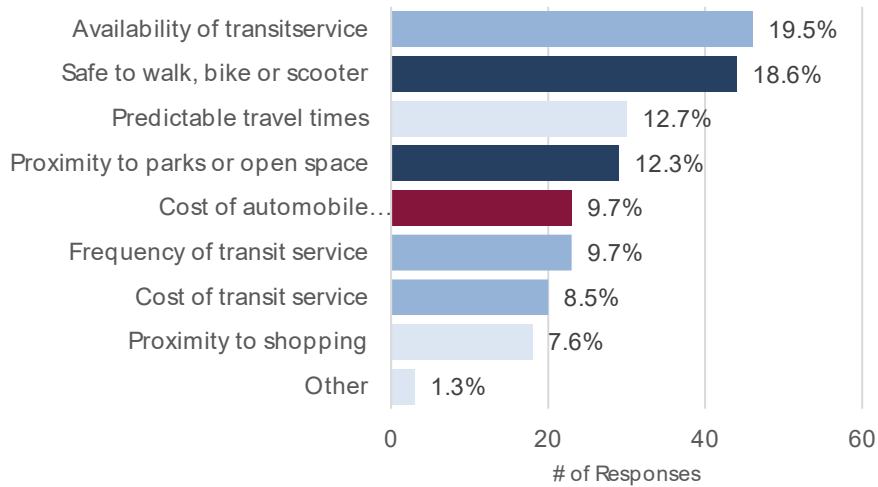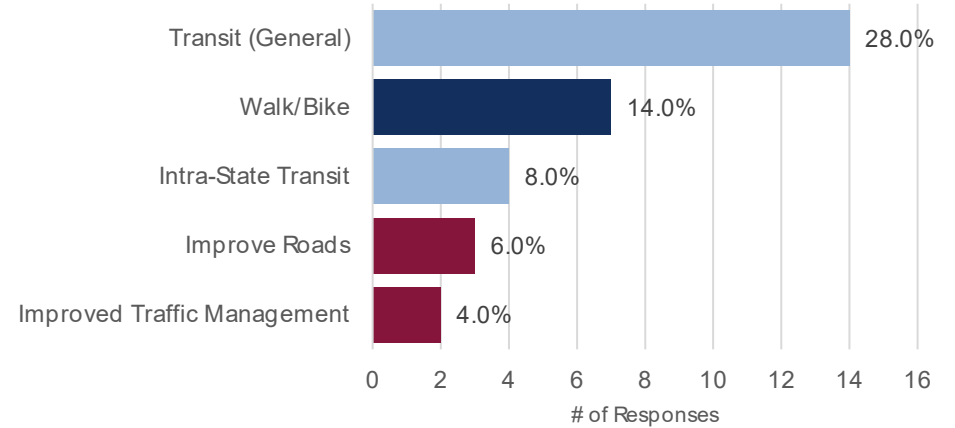
Question 1: Morris County Responses

- Pedestrian signals and crossings — 15.3%
- Bike lanes or trails — 14.5%
- Road conditions — 12.3%
- Train service — 12.3%
- Bus service — 12.3%
- Sidewalks or walking trails — 10.6%
- Light rail service — 9.4%
- Parking — 6.0%
- PATH service — 4.3%
- Other — 1.7%
- Ferry service — 1.3%

# of Responses

Question 2: Morris County Responses

- Public transit — 18.8%
- Drive alone — 18.3%
- Walking — 11.8%
- Bike/Scooter — 9.6%
- Telecommute — 7.0%
- Ridehailing — 6.1%
- High speed trains — 5.7%
- Electric vehicles and buses — 5.7%
- Auto w/extensive driver assist features — 4.8%
- Carpool/vanpool — 3.1%
- On-demand public transit shuttles — 2.6%
- Self-driving car — 2.2%
- Electric bike — 1.7%
- Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare — 0.9%
- Taxi — 0.9%
- Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis — 0.4%
- Other micro-mobility — 0.4%
- Other — 0.0%
- Electric standing or sitting scooter — 0.0%

# of Responses

Question 3: Morris County Responses

- Availability of transit service — 19.5%
- Safe to walk, bike or scooter — 18.6%
- Predictable travel times — 12.7%
- Proximity to parks or open space — 12.3%
- Cost of automobile… — 9.7%
- Frequency of transit service — 9.7%
- Cost of transit service — 8.5%
- Proximity to shopping — 7.6%
- Other — 1.3%

# of Responses

Question 4: Morris County Top 5 Comment Topics

- Transit (General) — 28.0%
- Walk/Bike — 14.0%
- Intra-State Transit — 8.0%
- Improve Roads — 6.0%
- Improved Traffic Management — 4.0%

# of Responses
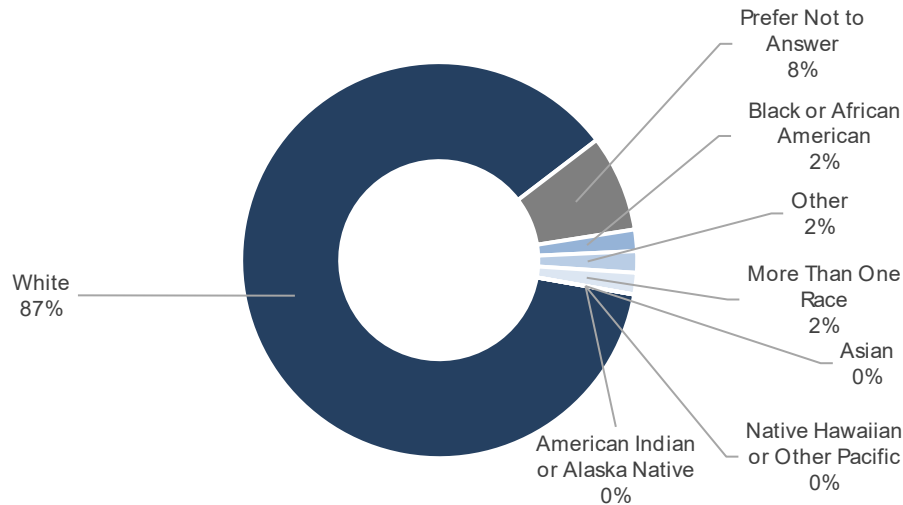
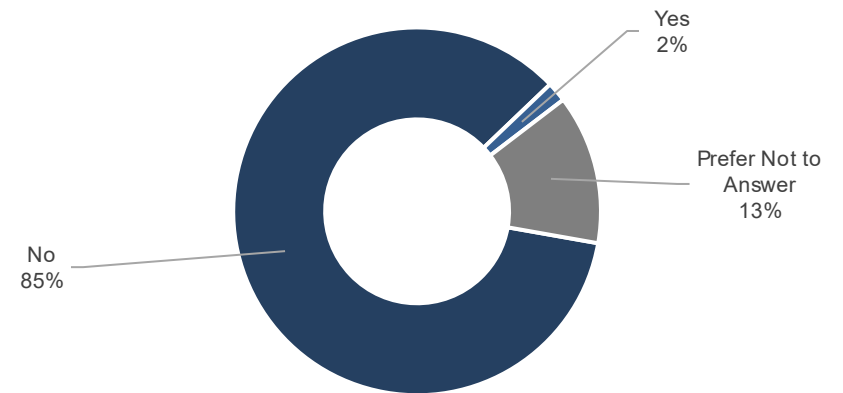## Age of Ocean County Survey Respondents
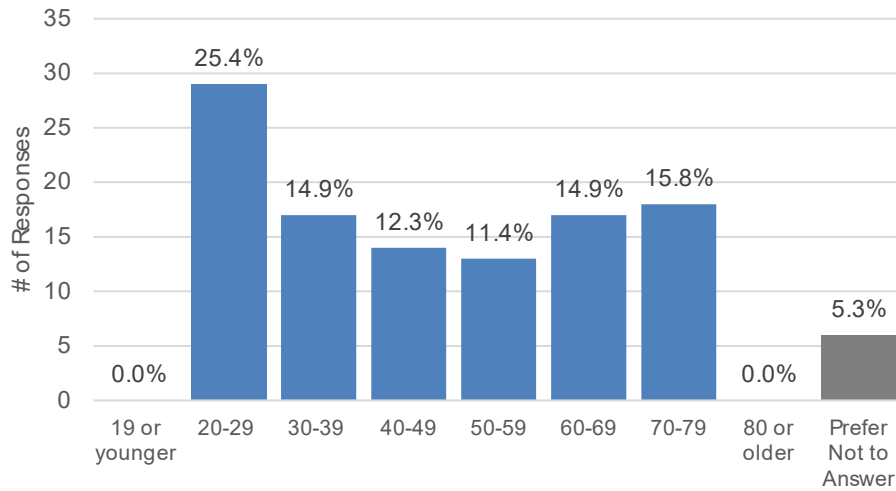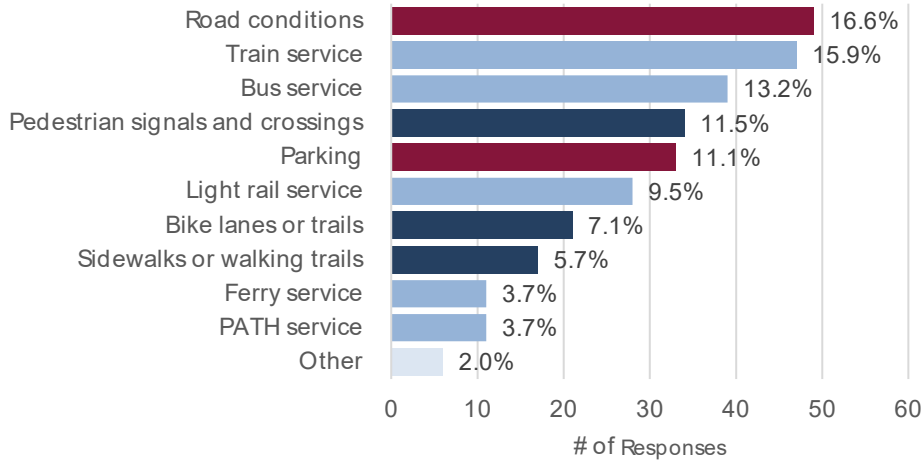

Gender of Ocean County Respondents
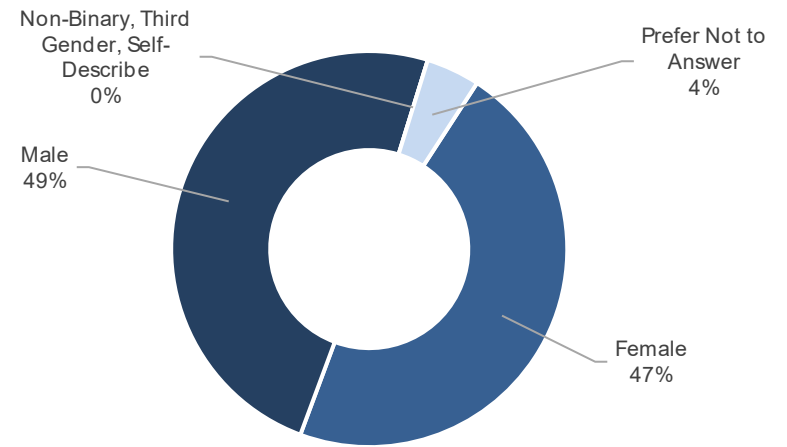
Race of Ocean County Survey Respondents

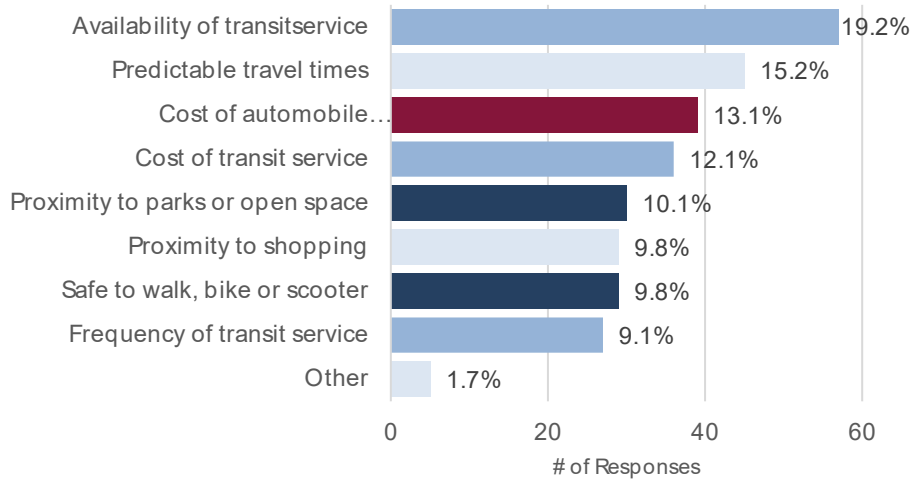## Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Ocean County Survey Respondents
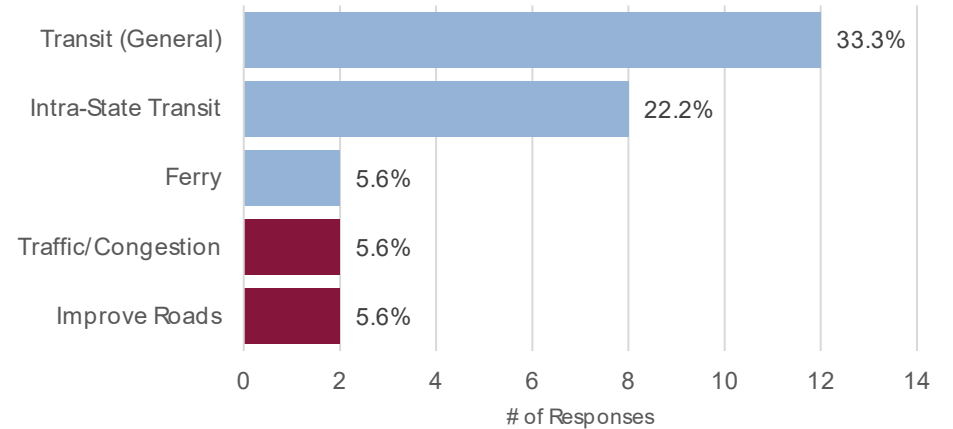
Question 1: Ocean County Responses

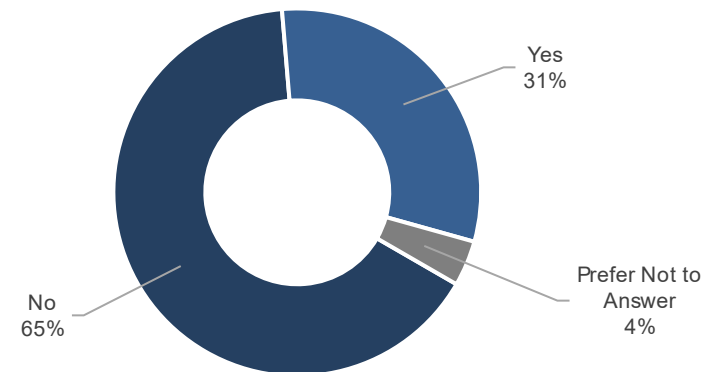| Category	# of Responses	%
Road conditions		16.6%
Train service		15.9%
Bus service		13.2%
Pedestrian signals and crossings		11.5%
Parking		11.1%
Light rail service		9.5%
Bike lanes or trails		7.1%
Sidewalks or walking trails		5.7%
Ferry service		3.7%
PATH service		3.7%
Other		2.0%

# of Responses

Question 2: Ocean County Responses

Category	# of Responses	%
Drive alone		16.8%
Public transit		15.8%
Walking		9.9%
Electric vehicles and buses		6.3%
Ridehailing		6.3%
On-demand public transit shuttles		4.9%
Bike/Scooter		4.9%
High speed trains		4.6%
Telecommute		4.6%
Self-driving car		3.5%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features		3.2%
Carpool/vanpool		2.8%
Electric bike		2.1%
Taxi		1.4%
Other		1.1%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis		0.7%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare		0.7%
Electric standing or sitting scooter		0.4%
Other micro-mobility		0.0%

# of Responses

Question 3: Ocean County Responses

Category	# of Responses	%
Availability of transit service		19.2%
Predictable travel times		15.2%
Cost of automobile…		13.1%
Cost of transit service		12.1%
Proximity to parks or open space		10.1%
Proximity to shopping		9.8%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter		9.8%
Frequency of transit service		9.1%
Other		1.7%

# of Responses

Question 4: Ocean County Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	# of Responses	%
Transit (General)		33.3%
Intra-State Transit		22.2%
Ferry		5.6%
Traffic/Congestion		5.6%
Improve Roads		5.6%

# of Responses

Age of Passaic County Survey Respondents

Age	%
19 or younger	1%
20-29	15%
30-39	21%
40-49	20%
50-59	23%
60-69	13%
70-79	1%
80 or older	1%
Prefer Not to Answer	4%
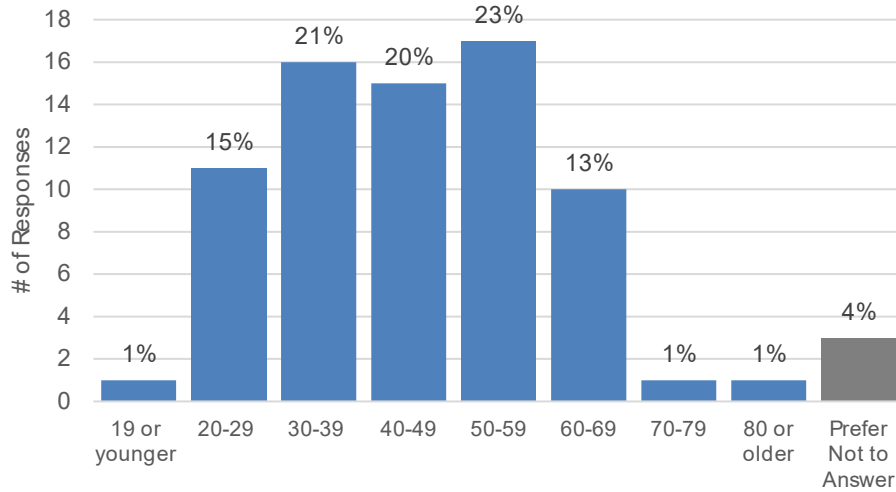
Gender of Passaic County Respondents

Male 35%
Non-Binary, Third Gender, Self-Describe 4%
Prefer Not to Answer 4%
Female 57%

Race of Passaic County Survey Respondents

Prefer Not to Answer 8%
American Indian or Alaska Native 5%
Asian 8%
More Than One Race 3%
Other 13%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific 1%
Black or African American 20%
White 42%
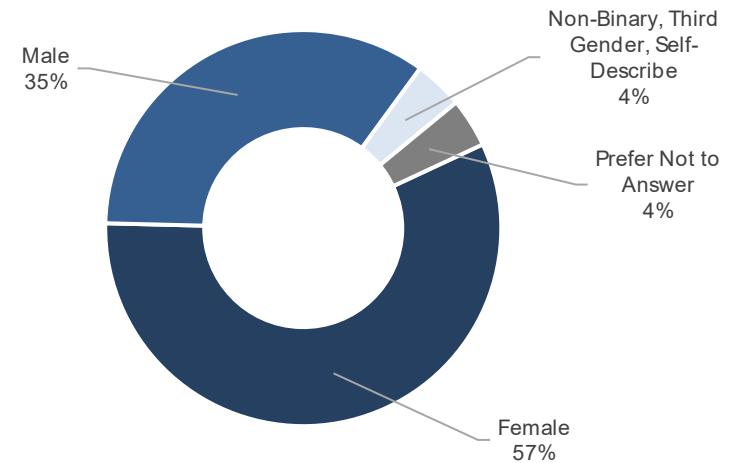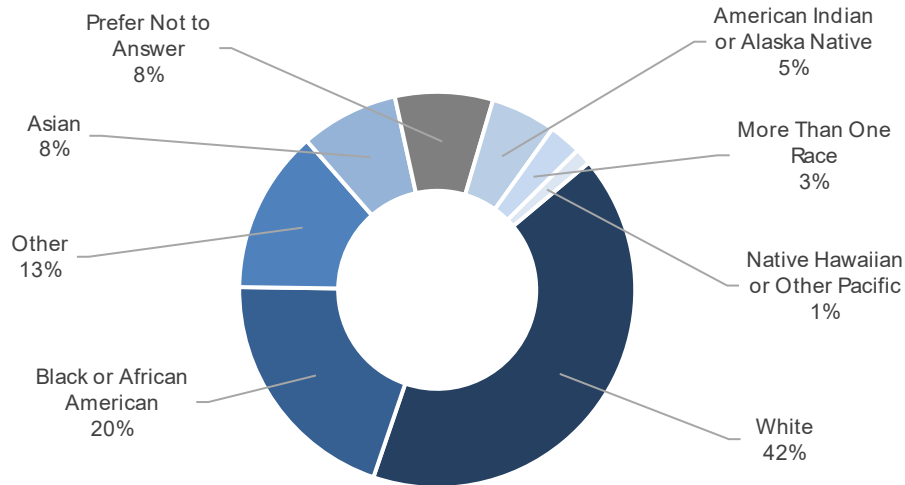
Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Passaic County Survey Respondents

Yes 31%
Prefer Not to Answer 4%
No 65%

Question 1: Passaic County Responses

Category	Percentage
Bus service	17.5%
Train service	13.9%
Pedestrian signals and crossings	13.9%
Road conditions	12.9%
Bike lanes or trails	12.4%
Sidewalks or walking trails	10.3%
Parking	8.2%
Light rail service	4.6%
PATH service	4.1%
Ferry service	1.5%
Other	0.5%
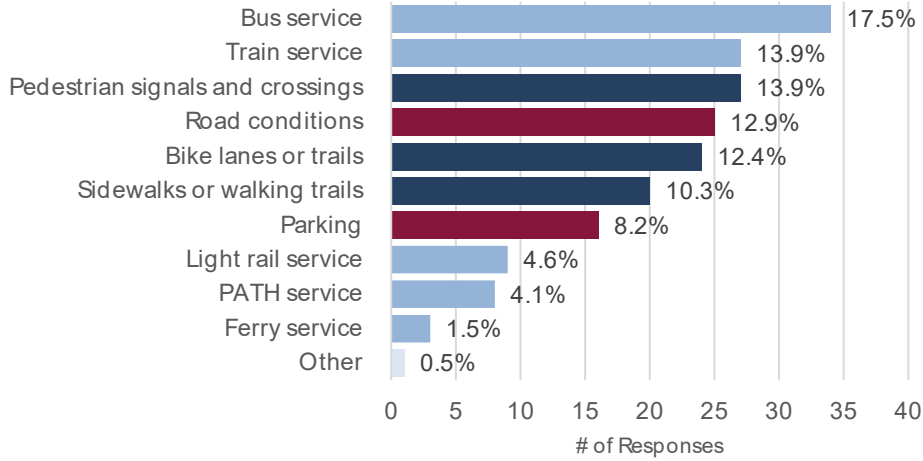
# of Responses

Question 2: Passaic County Responses

Category	Percentage
Public transit	20.2%
Drive alone	19.2%
Walking	12.4%
Telecommute	8.8%
Bike/Scooter	6.2%
Self-driving car	5.2%
Ridehailing	4.7%
On-demand public transit shuttles	3.1%
High speed trains	3.1%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	3.1%
Carpool/vanpool	3.1%
Taxi	3.1%
Electric vehicles and buses	2.6%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	2.1%
Electric bike	2.1%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	1.0%
Other	0.0%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	0.0%
Other micro-mobility	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 3: Passaic County Responses

Category	Percentage
Availability of transit service	22.3%
Predictable travel times	17.0%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	13.1%
Frequency of transit service	12.6%
Cost of transit service	10.7%
Cost of automobile…	9.7%
Proximity to parks or open space	7.3%
Proximity to shopping	6.8%
Other	0.5%

# of Responses

Question 4: Passaic County Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	Percentage
Transit (General)	50.0%
Intra-State Transit	16.7%
Walk/Bike	11.1%
ADA	2.8%
Traffic/Congestion	2.8%

# of Responses

SURVEY RESULTS: SOMERSET COUNTY

Age of Somerset County Survey Respondents
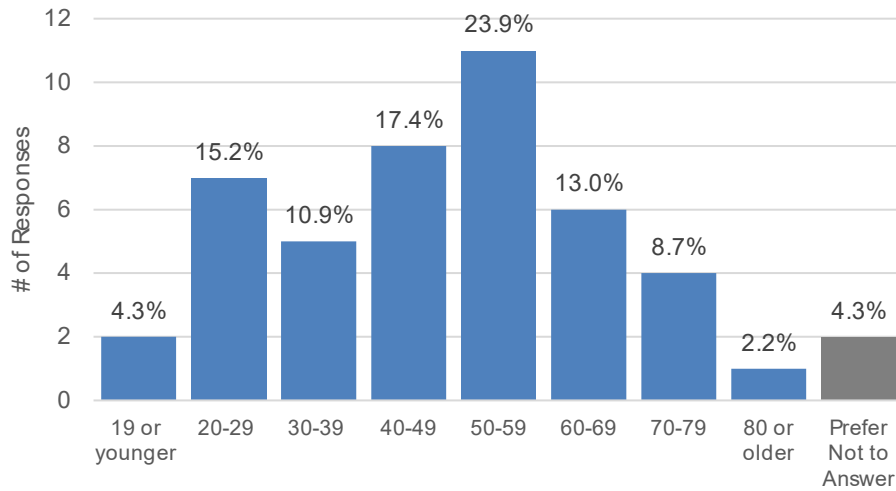
Gender of Somerset County Respondents

Race of Somerst County Survey Respondents

Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity
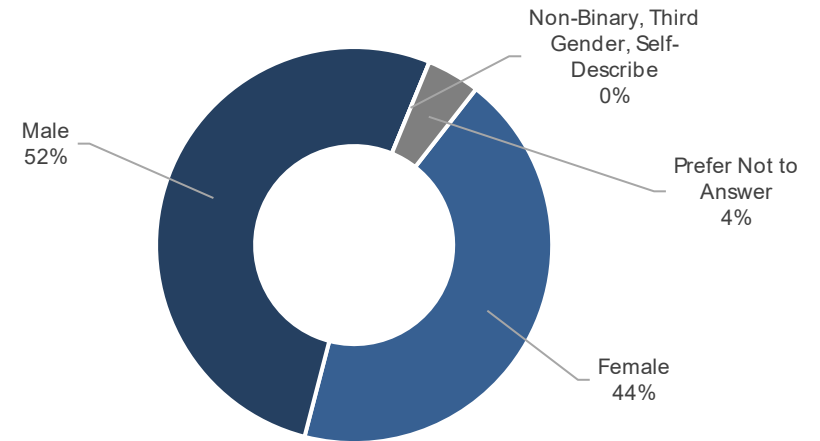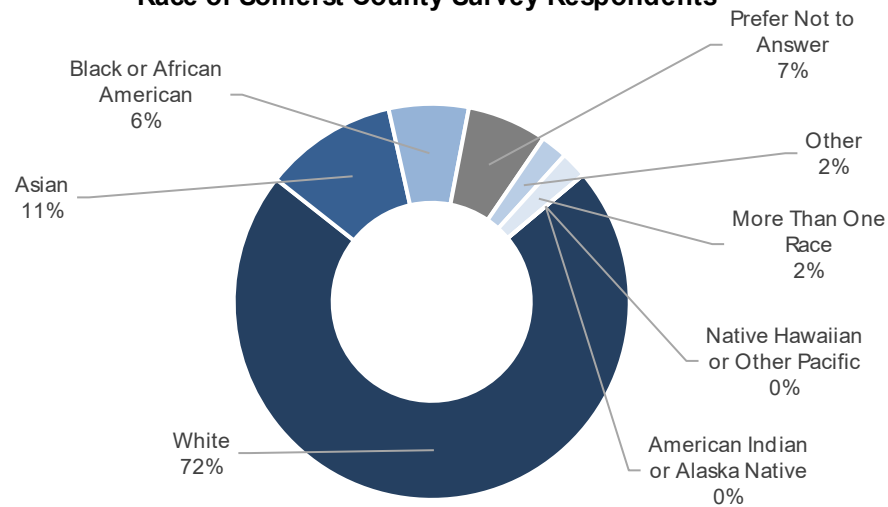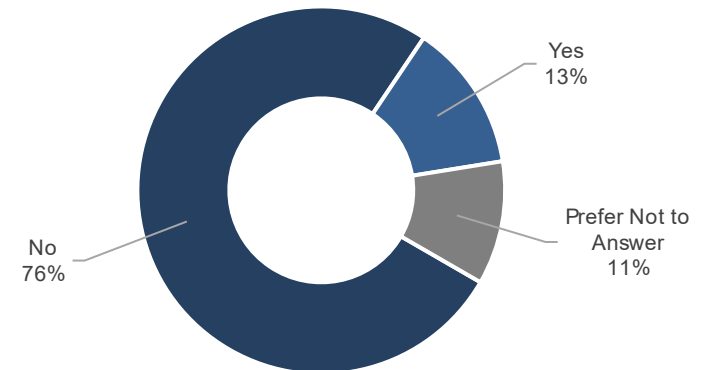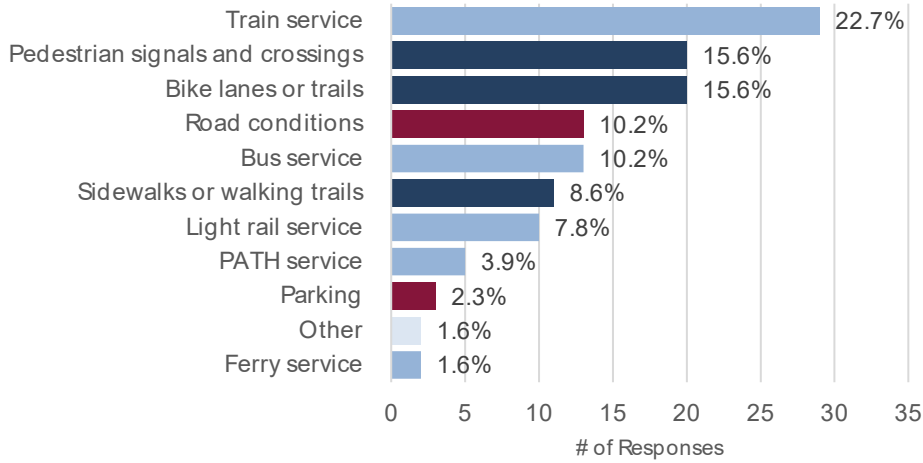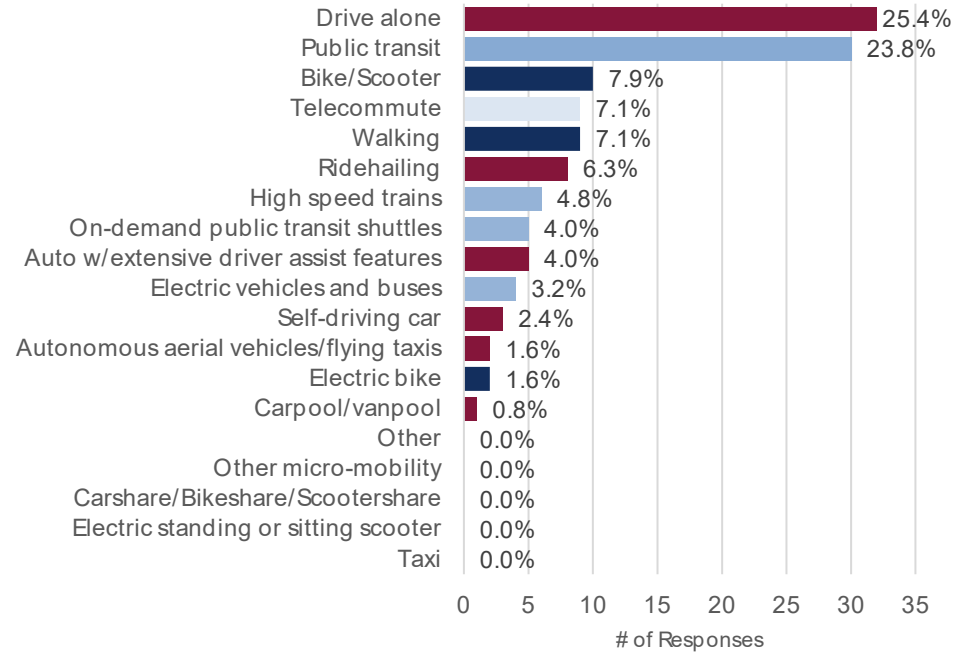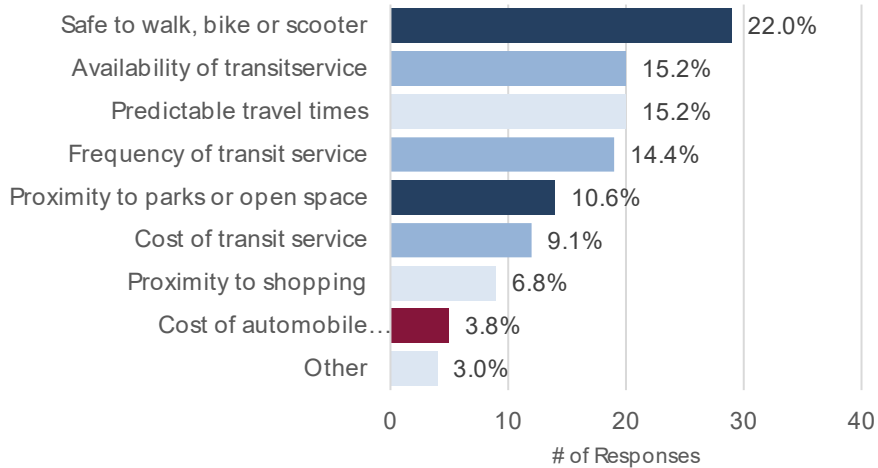### of Somerset County Survey Respondents
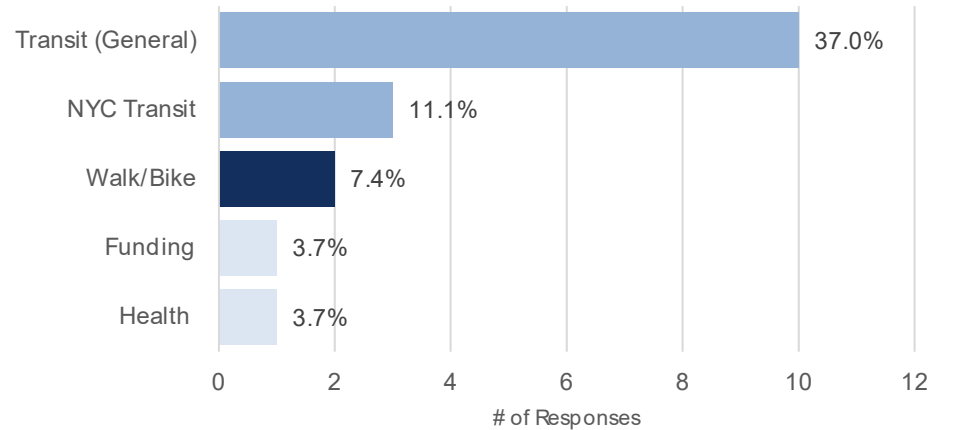
Question 1: Somerset County Responses

Category	Value
Train service	22.7%
Pedestrian signals and crossings	15.6%
Bike lanes or trails	15.6%
Road conditions	10.2%
Bus service	10.2%
Sidewalks or walking trails	8.6%
Light rail service	7.8%
PATH service	3.9%
Parking	2.3%
Other	1.6%
Ferry service	1.6%

# of Responses

Question 2: Somerset County Responses

Category	Value
Drive alone	25.4%
Public transit	23.8%
Bike/Scooter	7.9%
Telecommute	7.1%
Walking	7.1%
Ridehailing	6.3%
High speed trains	4.8%
On-demand public transit shuttles	4.0%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	4.0%
Electric vehicles and buses	3.2%
Self-driving car	2.4%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	1.6%
Electric bike	1.6%
Carpool/vanpool	0.8%
Other	0.0%
Other micro-mobility	0.0%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	0.0%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	0.0%
Taxi	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 3: Somerset County Responses

Category	Value
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	22.0%
Availability of transitservice	15.2%
Predictable travel times	15.2%
Frequency of transit service	14.4%
Proximity to parks or open space	10.6%
Cost of transit service	9.1%
Proximity to shopping	6.8%
Cost of automobile…	3.8%
Other	3.0%

# of Responses

Question 4: Somerset County Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	Value
Transit (General)	37.0%
NYC Transit	11.1%
Walk/Bike	7.4%
Funding	3.7%
Health	3.7%

# of Responses
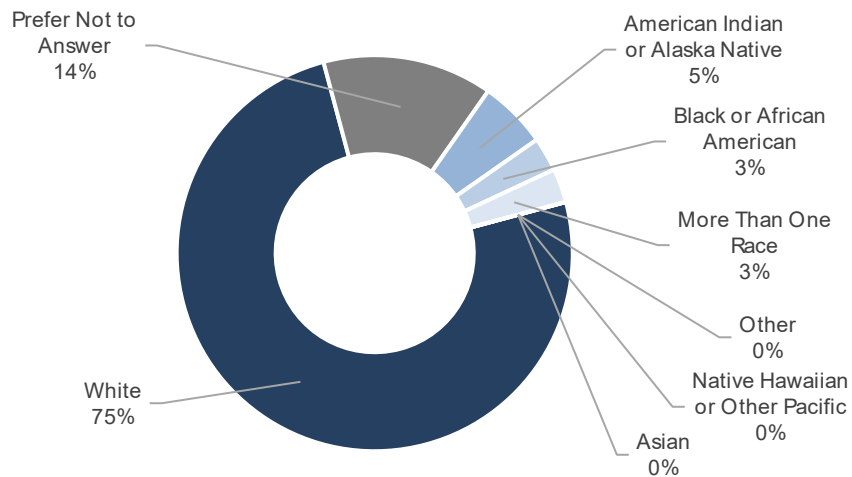
Age of Sussex County Survey Respondents
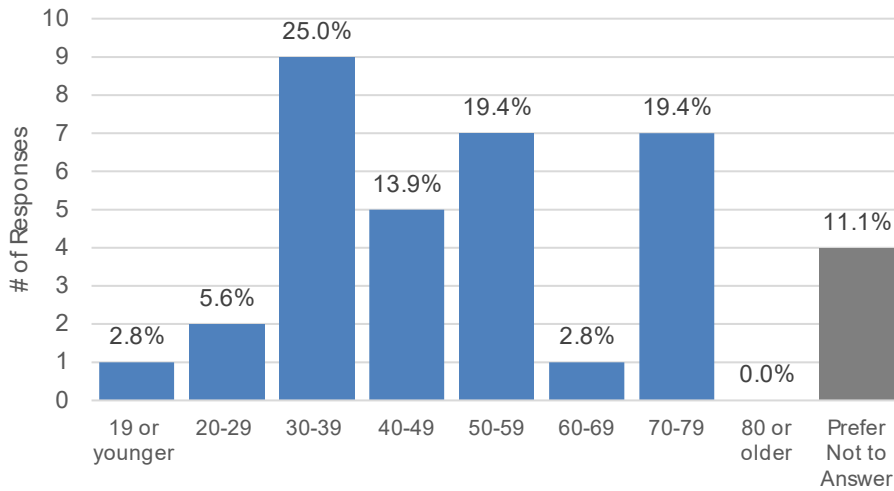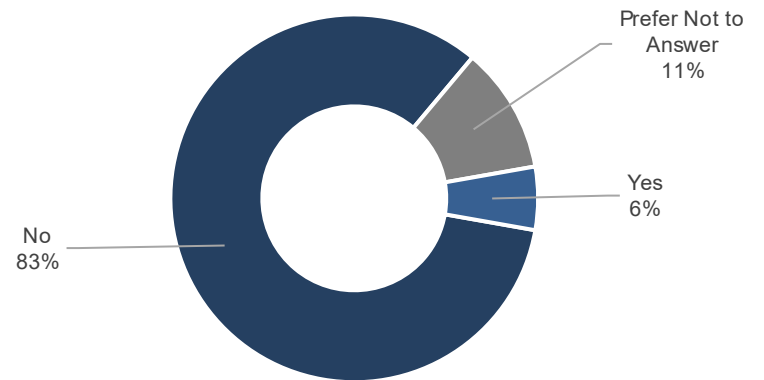

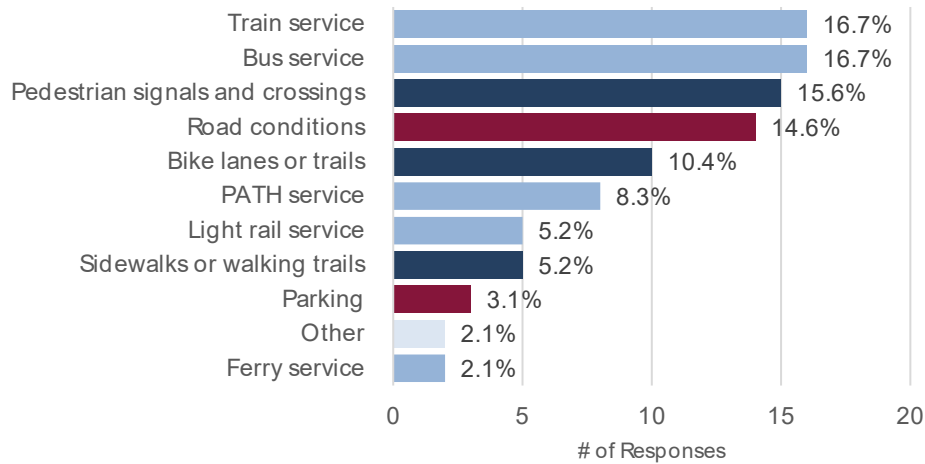## Gender of Sussex County Respondents
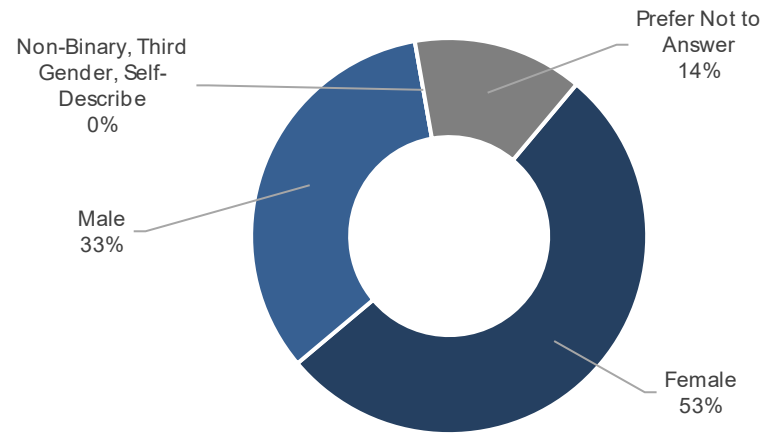
Race of Sussex County Survey Respondents

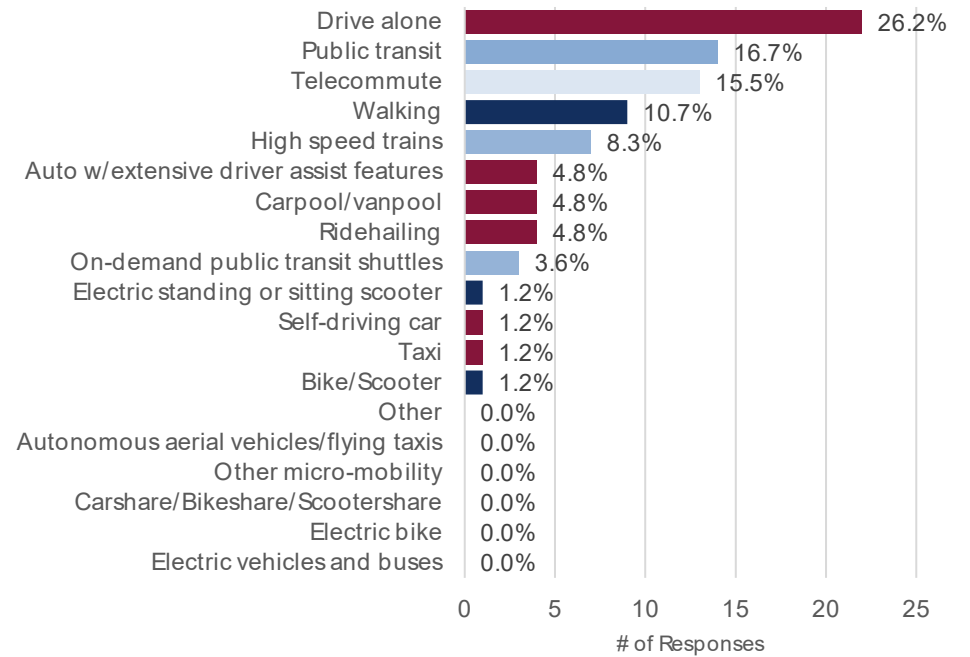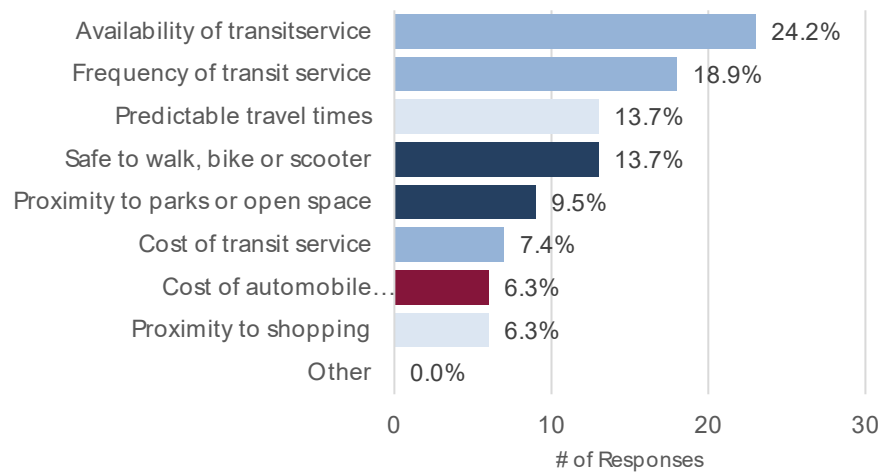## Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Sussex County Survey Respondents
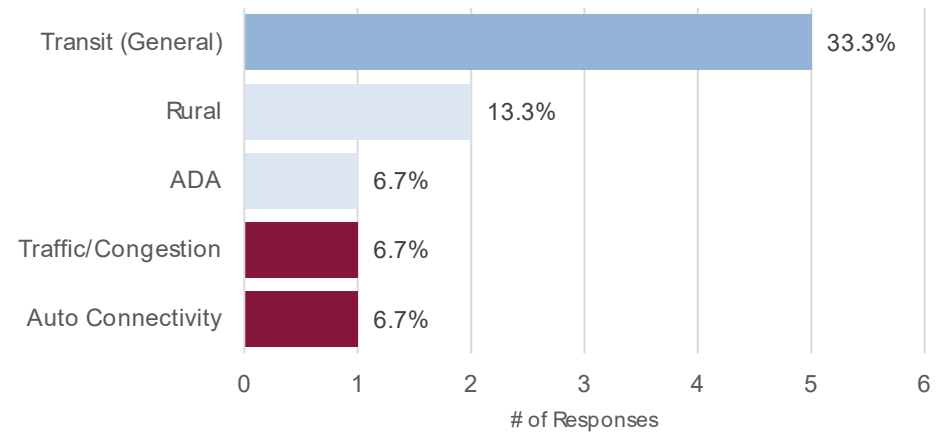
Question 1: Sussex County Responses

Category	Percentage
Train service	16.7%
Bus service	16.7%
Pedestrian signals and crossings	15.6%
Road conditions	14.6%
Bike lanes or trails	10.4%
PATH service	8.3%
Light rail service	5.2%
Sidewalks or walking trails	5.2%
Parking	3.1%
Other	2.1%
Ferry service	2.1%

# of Responses

Question 2: Sussex County Responses

Category	Percentage
Drive alone	26.2%
Public transit	16.7%
Telecommute	15.5%
Walking	10.7%
High speed trains	8.3%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	4.8%
Carpool/vanpool	4.8%
Ridehailing	4.8%
On-demand public transit shuttles	3.6%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	1.2%
Self-driving car	1.2%
Taxi	1.2%
Bike/Scooter	1.2%
Other	0.0%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	0.0%
Other micro-mobility	0.0%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	0.0%
Electric bike	0.0%
Electric vehicles and buses	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 3: Sussex County Responses

Category	Percentage
Availability of transit service	24.2%
Frequency of transit service	18.9%
Predictable travel times	13.7%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	13.7%
Proximity to parks or open space	9.5%
Cost of transit service	7.4%
Cost of automobile…	6.3%
Proximity to shopping	6.3%
Other	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 4: Sussex County Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	Percentage
Transit (General)	33.3%
Rural	13.3%
ADA	6.7%
Traffic/Congestion	6.7%
Auto Connectivity	6.7%

# of Responses
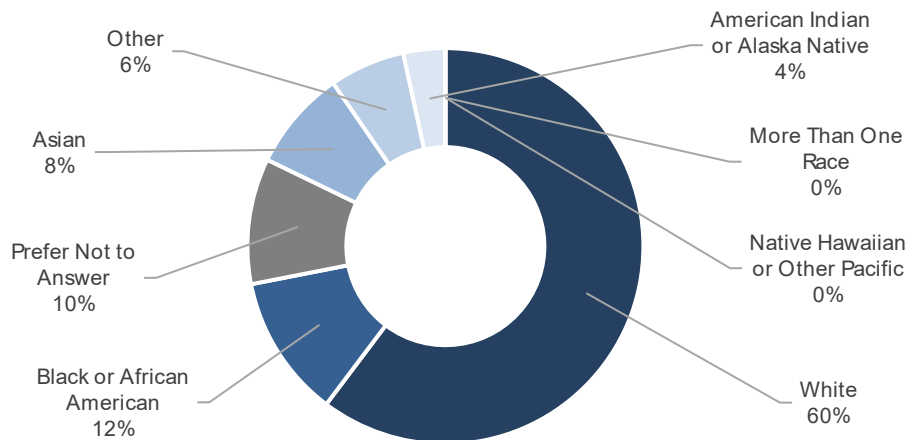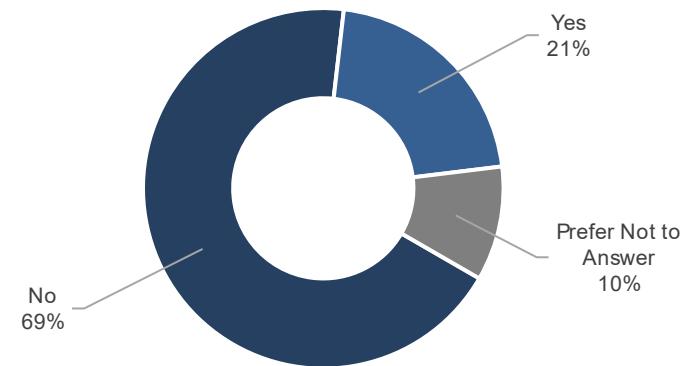
Age of Union County Survey Respondents
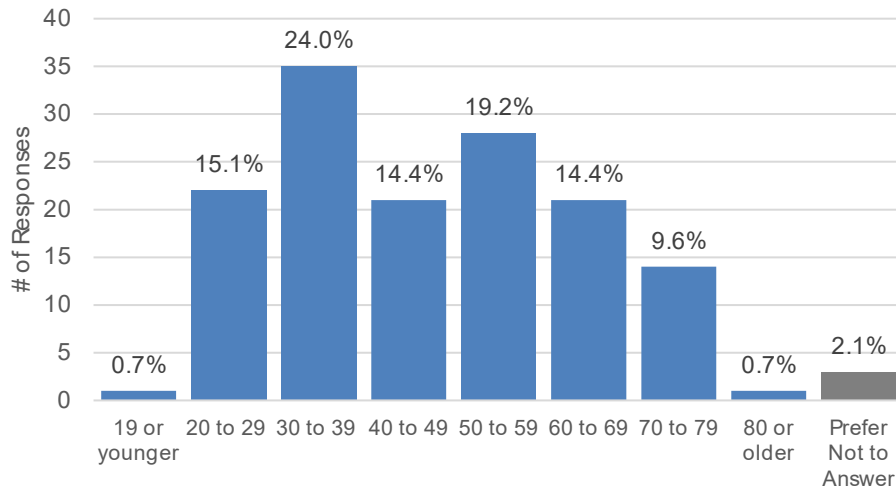
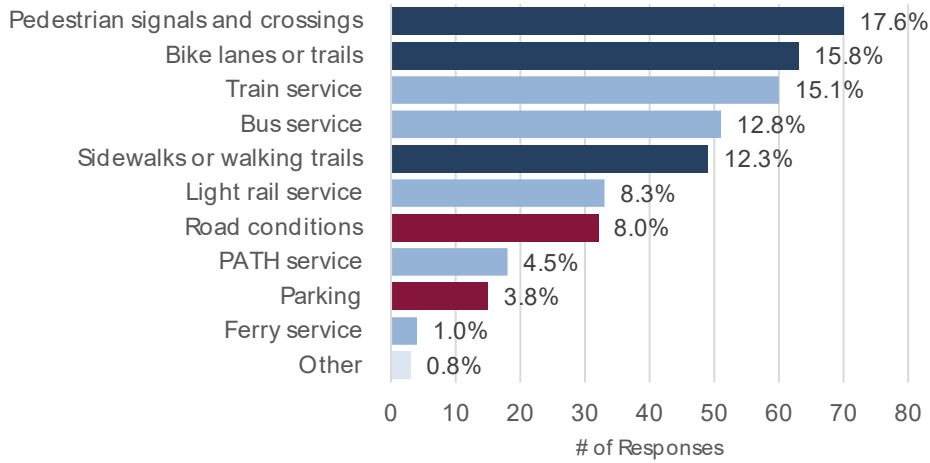## Gender of Union County Respondents
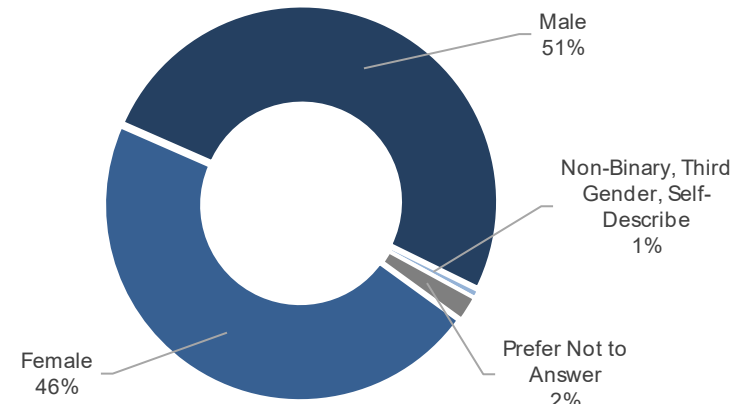
Race of Union County Survey Respondents

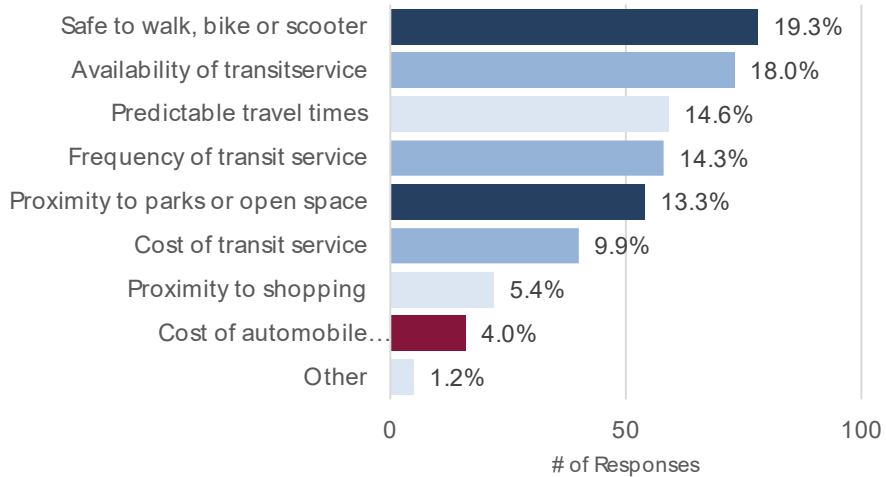## Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Union County Survey Respondents

Question 1: Union County Responses

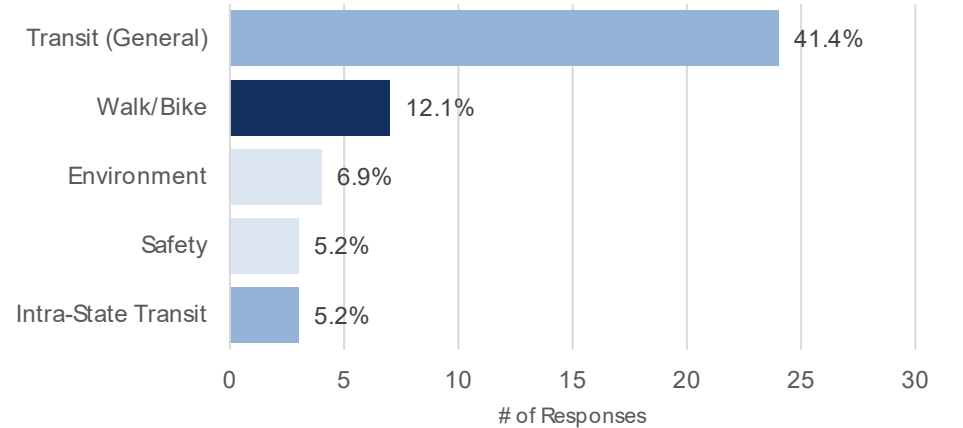| Category	# of Responses	%
Pedestrian signals and crossings		17.6%
Bike lanes or trails		15.8%
Train service		15.1%
Bus service		12.8%
Sidewalks or walking trails		12.3%
Light rail service		8.3%
Road conditions		8.0%
PATH service		4.5%
Parking		3.8%
Ferry service		1.0%
Other		0.8%

# of Responses

Question 2: Union County Responses

Category	%
Public transit	22.4%
Walking	14.7%
Bike/Scooter	11.6%
Drive alone	11.1%
Electric vehicles and buses	8.0%
Ridehailing	5.9%
Telecommute	5.4%
Self-driving car	4.4%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	2.8%
Taxi	2.8%
Electric bike	2.6%
On-demand public transit shuttles	2.3%
Carpool/vanpool	2.3%
High speed trains	2.1%
Other	0.5%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	0.5%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	0.5%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	0.3%
Other micro-mobility	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 3: Union County Responses

Category	%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	19.3%
Availability of transit service	18.0%
Predictable travel times	14.6%
Frequency of transit service	14.3%
Proximity to parks or open space	13.3%
Cost of transit service	9.9%
Proximity to shopping	5.4%
Cost of automobile…	4.0%
Other	1.2%

# of Responses

Question 4: Union County Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	%
Transit (General)	41.4%
Walk/Bike	12.1%
Environment	6.9%
Safety	5.2%
Intra-State Transit	5.2%

# of Responses
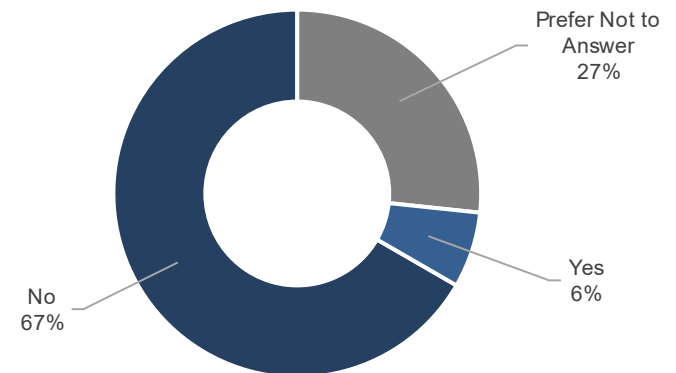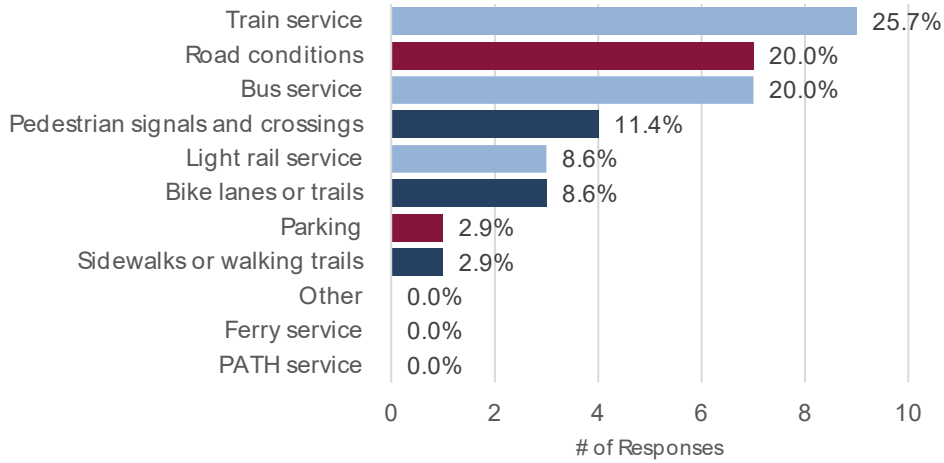
Age of Warren County Survey Respondents
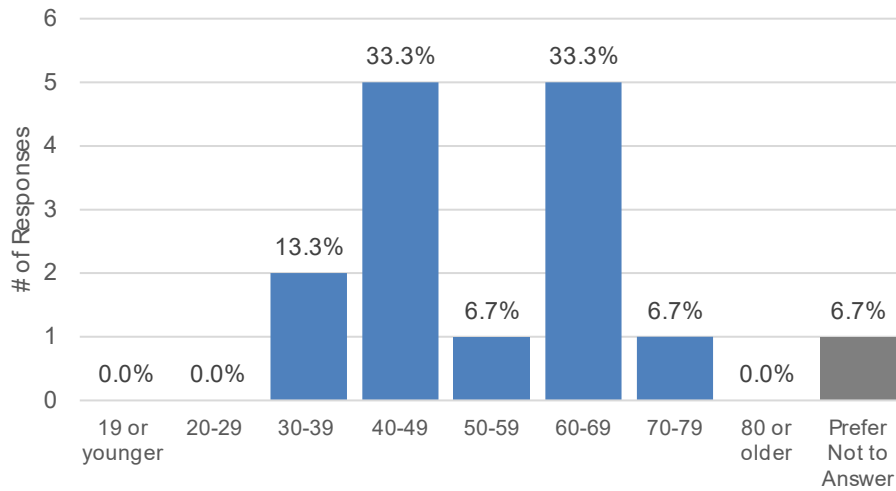
Gender of Warren County Respondents

- Male 33%
- Non-Binary, Third Gender, Self-Describe 0%
- Prefer Not to Answer 7%
- Female 60%

Race of Warren County Survey Respondents

- Prefer Not to Answer 27%
- Asian 0%
- More Than One Race 0%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific 0%
- American Indian or Alaska Native 0%
- White 67%
- Some Other Race 6%
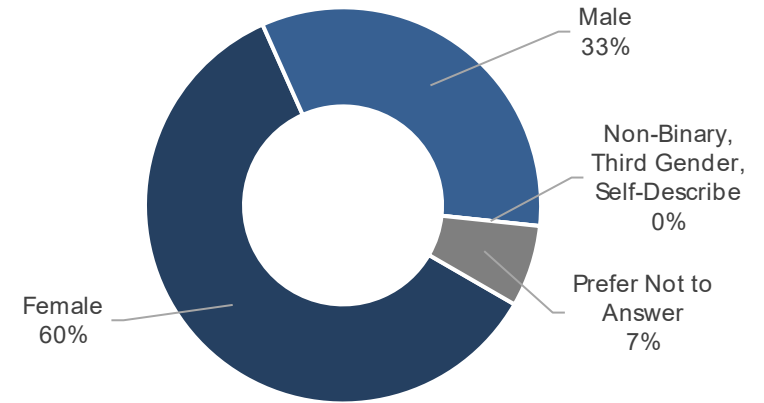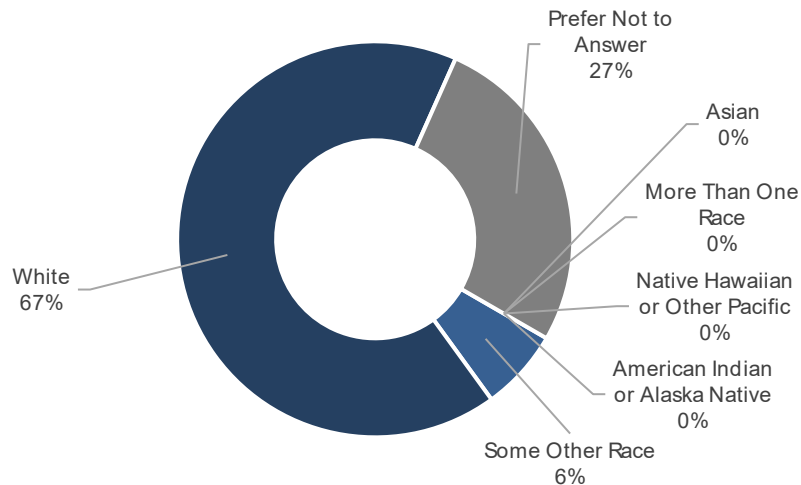
Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of Warren County Survey Respondents

- Prefer Not to Answer 27%
- Yes 6%
- No 67%

Question 1: Warren County Responses

Category	# of Responses	Percentage
Train service	9	25.7%
Road conditions	7	20.0%
Bus service	7	20.0%
Pedestrian signals and crossings	4	11.4%
Light rail service	3	8.6%
Bike lanes or trails	3	8.6%
Parking	1	2.9%
Sidewalks or walking trails	1	2.9%
Other	0	0.0%
Ferry service	0	0.0%
PATH service	0	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 2: Warren County Responses

Category	Percentage
Drive alone	17.9%
Public transit	15.4%
Walking	12.8%
High speed trains	10.3%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	10.3%
Bike/Scooter	7.7%
Electric vehicles and buses	5.1%
Telecommute	5.1%
Carpool/vanpool	5.1%
On-demand public transit shuttles	2.6%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	2.6%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	2.6%
Ridehailing	2.6%
Other	0.0%
Other micro-mobility	0.0%
Electric bike	0.0%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	0.0%
Self-driving car	0.0%
Taxi	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 3: Warren County Responses

Category	Percentage
Availability of transit service	17.5%
Predictable travel times	17.5%
Proximity to parks or open space	15.0%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	15.0%
Proximity to shopping	12.5%
Frequency of transit service	12.5%
Cost of automobile…	7.5%
Cost of transit service	2.5%
Other	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 4: Warren County Top 5 Comment Topics

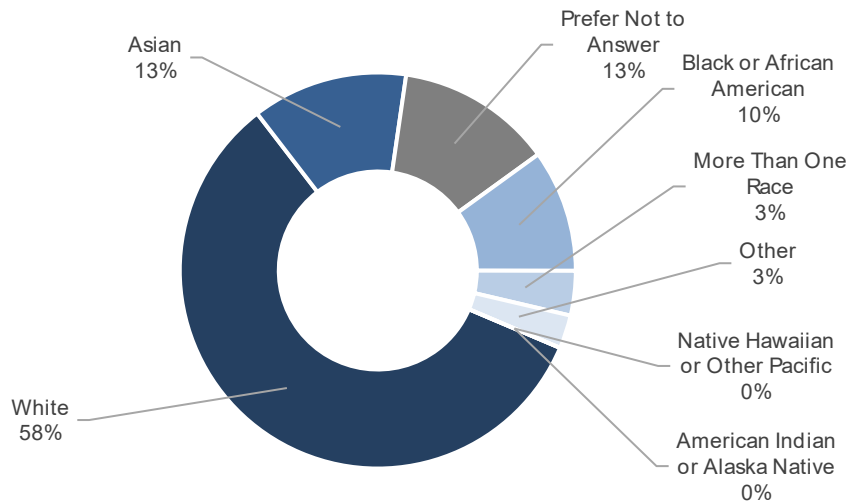| Category	Percentage
Rural	20.0%
Transit (General)	20.0%
Abandoned rail lines	10.0%
Speeding	10.0%
Reduce car culture	10.0%

# of Responses

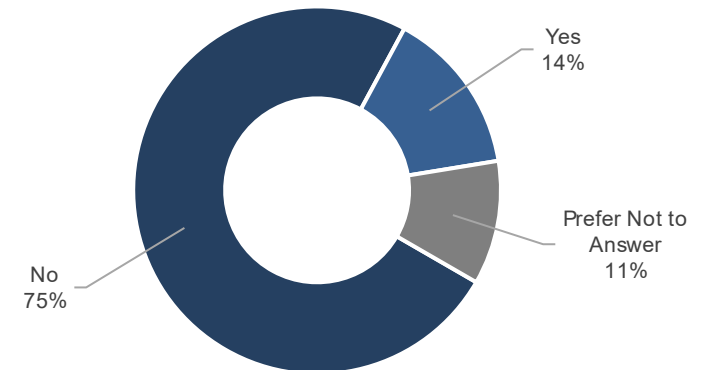**Age of Jersey City Survey Respondents**
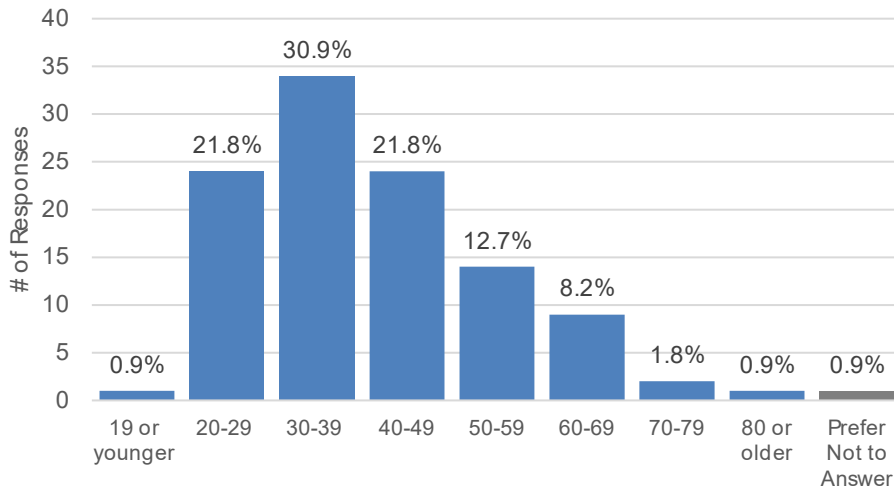
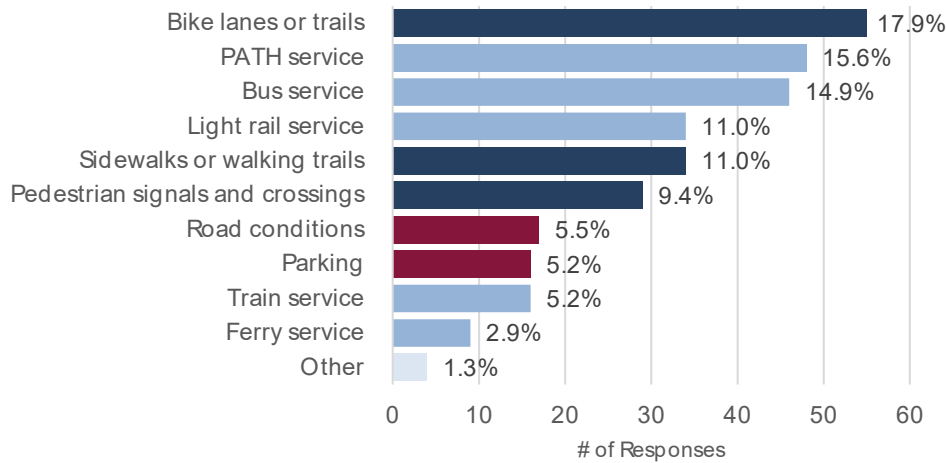**Gender of Jersey City Respondents**
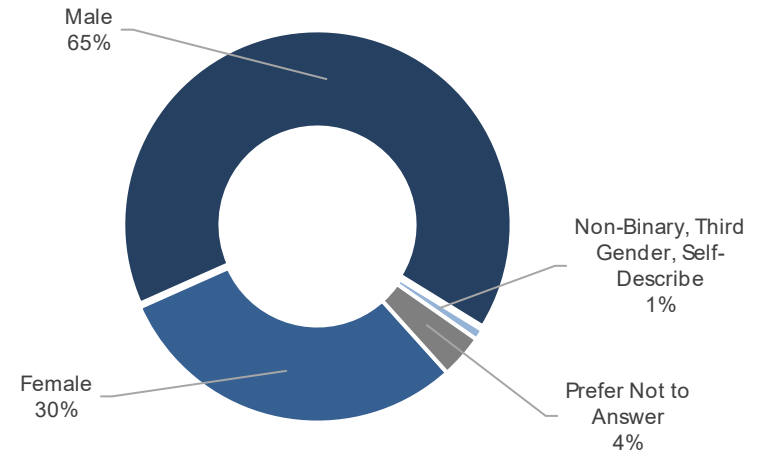
Race of Jersey City Survey Respondents

**Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity
of Jersey City Survey Respondents**

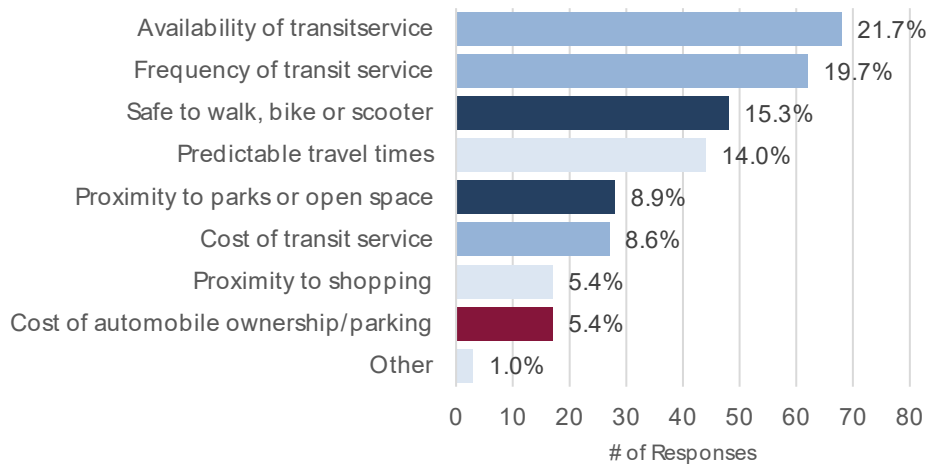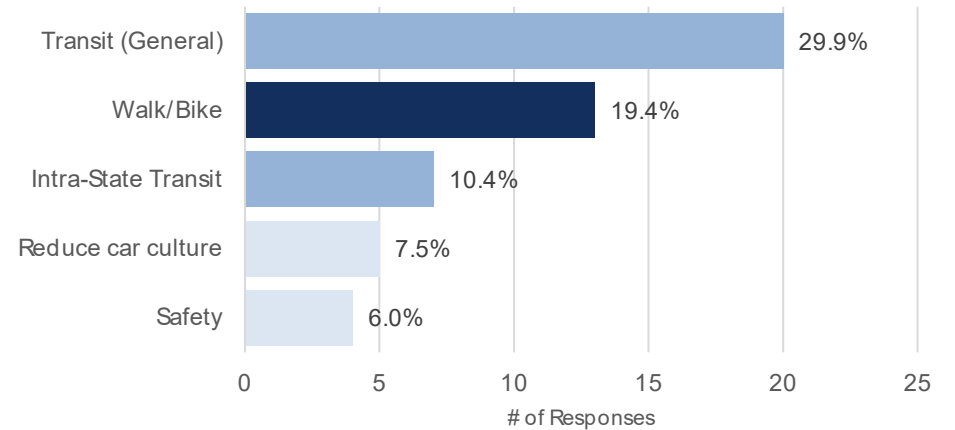## Question 1: Jersey City Responses

Category	%
Bike lanes or trails	17.9%
PATH service	15.6%
Bus service	14.9%
Light rail service	11.0%
Sidewalks or walking trails	11.0%
Pedestrian signals and crossings	9.4%
Road conditions	5.5%
Parking	5.2%
Train service	5.2%
Ferry service	2.9%
Other	1.3%

# of Responses

Question 2: Jersey City Responses

Category	%
Public transit	26.8%
Walking	19.0%
Bike/Scooter	12.4%
Drive alone	7.2%
Ridehailing	6.5%
Telecommute	5.2%
Electric vehicles and buses	3.9%
On-demand public transit shuttles	2.9%
High speed trains	2.6%
Electric bike	2.6%
Self-driving car	2.6%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	1.6%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	1.6%
Carpool/vanpool	1.3%
Taxi	1.3%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	1.0%
Other micro-mobility	0.7%
Other	0.3%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	0.3%

# of Responses

Question 3: Jersey City Responses

Category	%
Availability of transit service	21.7%
Frequency of transit service	19.7%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	15.3%
Predictable travel times	14.0%
Proximity to parks or open space	8.9%
Cost of transit service	8.6%
Proximity to shopping	5.4%
Cost of automobile ownership/parking	5.4%
Other	1.0%

# of Responses

Question 4: Jersey City Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	%
Transit (General)	29.9%
Walk/Bike	19.4%
Intra-State Transit	10.4%
Reduce car culture	7.5%
Safety	6.0%

# of Responses

Age of City of Newark Survey Respondents

Bar chart, # of Responses by age group:
- 19 or younger: 0.9%
- 20-29: 42.3%
- 30-39: 17.6%
- 40-49: 16.3%
- 50-59: 11.9%
- 60-69: 8.4%
- 70-79: 1.8%
- 80 or older: 0.4%
- Prefer Not to Answer: 0.4%
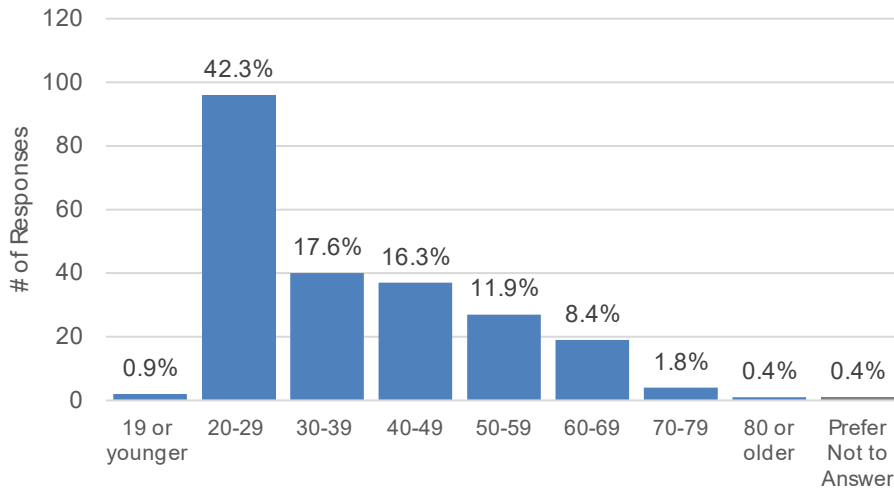
Gender of City of Newark Survey Respondents

- Male 60%
- Female 34%
- Non-Binary, Third Gender, Self-Describe 2%
- Prefer Not to Answer 4%

Race of City of Newark Survey Respondents

- Other 6%
- American Indian or Alaska Native 5%
- Asian 3%
- More Than One Race 2%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific 1%
- White 54%
- Black or African American 19%
- Prefer Not to Answer 10%
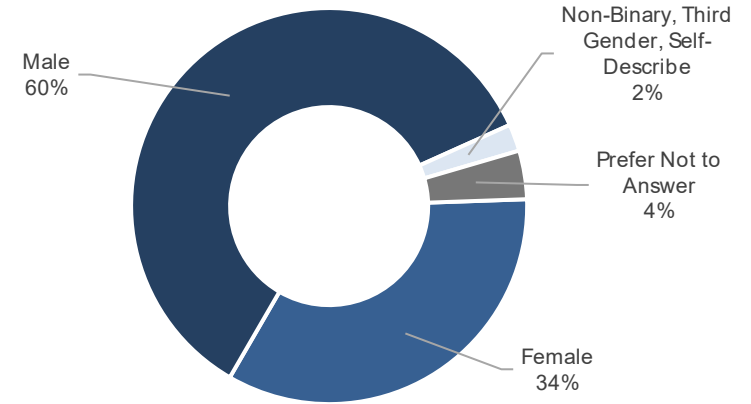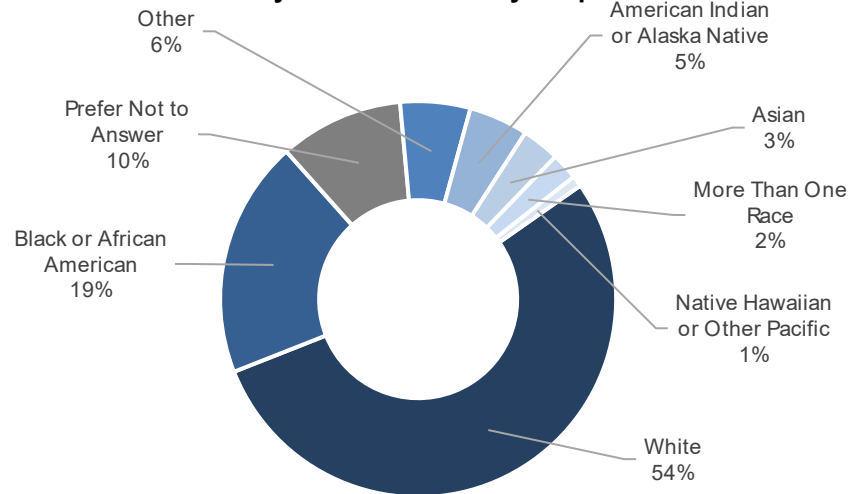
Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity of City of Newark Survey Respondents

- Yes 19%
- Prefer Not to Answer 5%
- No 76%
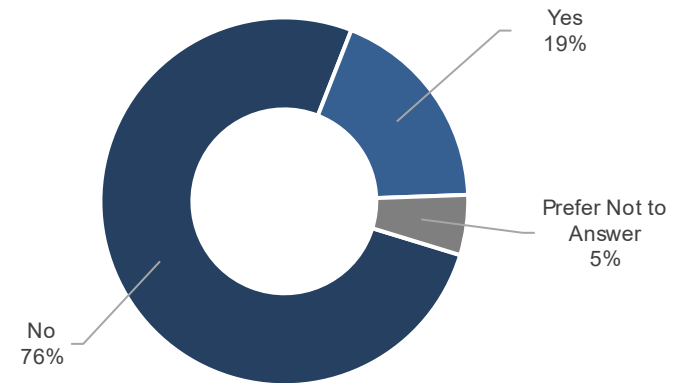
Question 1: City of Newark Responses

Category	%
Bus service	14.7%
Sidewalks or walking trails	14.5%
Light rail service	13.8%
PATH service	12.7%
Pedestrian signals and crossings	10.9%
Train service	9.5%
Bike lanes or trails	8.6%
Road conditions	7.0%
Parking	5.5%
Ferry service	2.7%
Other	0.2%
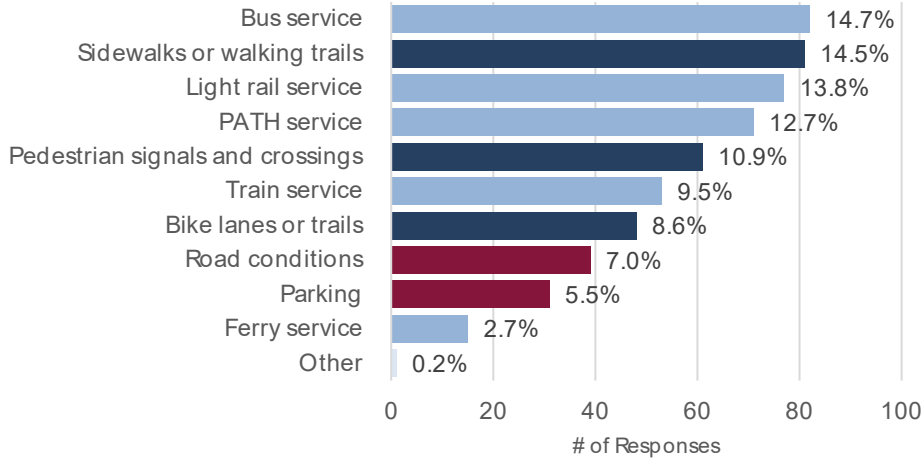
# of Responses

Question 2: City of Newark Responses

Category	%
Public transit	23.1%
Drive alone	9.9%
Ridehailing	9.7%
Walking	9.2%
Bike/Scooter	7.9%
Carpool/vanpool	5.6%
Telecommute	5.3%
Electric vehicles and buses	4.4%
Self-driving car	4.4%
Auto w/extensive driver assist features	4.2%
Carshare/Bikeshare/Scootershare	3.9%
Taxi	3.3%
Electric standing or sitting scooter	2.5%
On-demand public transit shuttles	1.9%
High speed trains	1.8%
Electric bike	1.2%
Other micro-mobility	0.9%
Other	0.5%
Autonomous aerial vehicles/flying taxis	0.4%

# of Responses

Question 3: City of Newark Responses

Category	%
Availability of transit service	18.7%
Cost of transit service	15.8%
Frequency of transit service	15.6%
Safe to walk, bike or scooter	14.5%
Predictable travel times	13.8%
Cost of automobile ownership/parking	10.2%
Proximity to parks or open space	6.7%
Proximity to shopping	4.7%
Other	0.0%

# of Responses

Question 4: City of Newark Top 5 Comment Topics

Category	%
Transit (General)	44.4%
Intra-State Transit	11.1%
Auto Connectivity	9.5%
Safety	9.5%
Improved Traffic Management	4.8%

# of Responses

NJTPA LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION

PLAN **2050**

Transportation ▸ People ▸ Opportunity

RUTGERS
Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy

UpNext North Jersey

NJTPA Emerging Leaders Group

Event Summaries
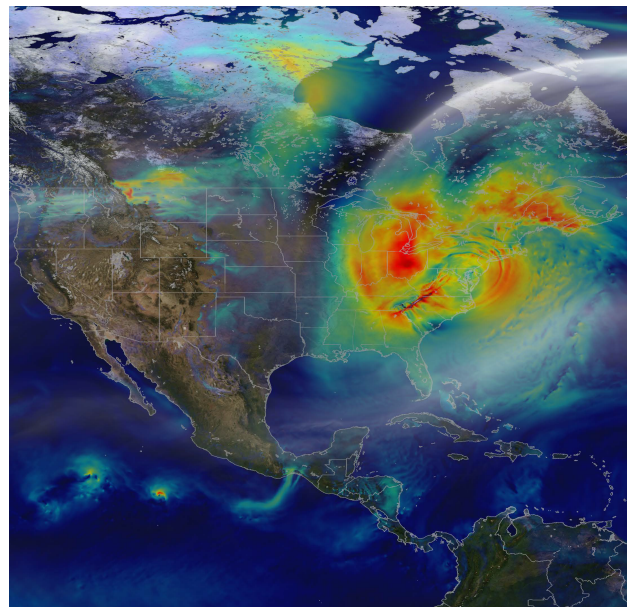
"Planning for the Unplanned: Future Disruptions" Event Summary

Location: Online event

Date: Thursday, April 16, 2020, 6:00 to 7:00 pm

About UpNext North Jersey

UpNext North Jersey (UpNext) is a pilot emerging leaders group that engages young North Jersey residents in a dialogue with the NJTPA regarding important regional issues. The NJTPA seeks to better understand the values and needs of this demographic group related to regional transportation and land use issues. The NJTPA provides UpNext members with unique opportunities to engage with regional thought leaders and decision-makers and also provide creative and fun ways for participants to "give back" to communities.

The Public Outreach and Engagement Team, part of the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University (Rutgers-POET) is working with the NJTPA to plan four events for UpNext members throughout FY 2019-2020. The first event, the program kickoff, occurred in September 2019 at the NJTPA offices in Newark. The second event took place at the Paterson Museum in January 2020. Rutgers-POET worked to plan a third event in Asbury Park in March 2020; however, this event was canceled due to NJTPA and Rutgers policies related to COVID-19 that canceled group events through the spring and summer. In order to make up for this event, Rutgers-POET proposed holding a virtual program that allowed members to discuss the impacts of the pandemic. This report describes Rutgers-POET's event planning and promotion work for the event, memorializes the presentations that took place, and summarizes comments made by UpNext members during a discussion about the pandemic's impacts on the transportation system.

njtpa.org/upnext

NJTPA
NORTH JERSEY
TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING AUTHORITY

Overview of the *Planning for the Unplanned: Future Disruptions* Event

This online event featured presentations and discussion on how we can better adapt to the "continued unanticipated change and further structural disruptions" forecasted for the coming decades by Dean James Hughes of the Bloustein School for Planning and Public Policy. Lois Goldman, Director of Regional Planning at the NJTPA, gave a presentation and facilitated a discussion on the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and how the NJTPA can account for these impacts in the agency's next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the region. Several UpNext North Jersey members also gave presentations on potential disruptions that the region may face and possible adaptations.

Promotion

Rutgers-POET promoted the event through social media and email invitations to UpNext members. Members received a save-the-date invitation, followed by several rounds of emails to request RSVPs and provide more information about the event agenda and day-of logistics. Rutgers-POET also promoted the event on the private UpNext Facebook group by creating an event page where Facebook users could RSVP.

Planning

Leading up to the event, Rutgers-POET worked with NJTPA staff to develop an event agenda, secure speakers, and test the video conference platform. NJTPA communications staff worked with planning staff to craft a presentation and discussion questions regarding the impact of COVID-19 on planning considerations for the LRTP. Rutgers-POET reached out to members to request several volunteers who would give a presentation on a topic of their choice related to the theme of "future disruptions." Four members volunteered to give short presentations and worked with Rutgers-POET to develop presentation material, however one presenter was unable to attend.

Agenda

6:00 to 6:10 pm – Welcome remarks: David Behrend, NJTPA Deputy Director, kicked off the event with welcoming remarks and introductions. Ted Ritter, NJTPA staff, then gave a brief overview of the LRTP process and how it seeks to account for disruptions and uncertainty. To further set the stage for the event's focus, the group viewed a short clip from Dean Hughes's presentation to the NJTPA Board in which he forecasted that "widespread and unrelenting technological, economic, and demographic disruptions and structural change will continue to characterize our future."

6:10 to 6:30 pm – Member presentations: Three UpNext members gave the following presentations:

» Marc Lincer presented on options for diversifying the North Jersey region's transportation system to include a wider range of modes that would enable system-wide resilience in the event of extreme weather or other disruptive hazards.
» Kyrillos Girgis presented on the risk of sea-level rise in Hudson County, showing the areas that would be most impacted and how urban land uses are prevalent in these areas and increase the need for adaptation strategies. Kyrillos's presentation was interrupted due to technical issues, but he was able to give the remainder of his presentation at the end of the event.
» Vincent Marchetto presented on engineering strategies to adapt coastal urban communities such as Jersey City to sea-level rise and increased flooding.

6:30 to 7:00 pm – "Plan 2050: Post Covid-19 Considerations" presentation and discussion: Lois Goldman, NJTPA staff, led a presentation and discussion about the implications of COVID-19 for Plan 2050, the upcoming LRTP. The presentation included the "game changers"—new technologies, demographic trends, and land development patterns—that the NJTPA considered when completing the last LRTP, Plan 2045. Many of those game changers are still relevant to Plan 2050 and some, such as increased telecommuting and home deliveries, have intensified due to

the pandemic. Participants discussed the short-term, medium-term, and long-term impacts of the pandemic on land use and transportation and considered strategies for increasing the region's resilience and equity in the face of future hazards.

Attendance

Of the approximately 30 people that attended the UpNext kickoff event in fall 2019, approximately 15 members participated in this virtual meeting. This attendance is comparable to the event at the Paterson Museum, which had 14 attendees.

Feedback

This section summarizes the feedback the NJTPA received from UpNext members about changes in travel and land use patterns caused by the pandemic. UpNext members described their experiences and their observations of how the pandemic has caused a shift in travel mode preferences, such as a renewed interest in modes like biking and walking, as well as a change in transportation needs as more people work from home. The group considered how these short-term changes in the ways people travel may give way to long term, systemic changes, such as improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, an increase in telecommuting, and concerns about sanitation practices on public transit. The specific comments and ideas shared during the discussion are summarized below.

The pandemic has created more interest in biking and walking that could be translated into infrastructure improvements and open streets.

» On roads, there has been a shift from automobiles to bicyclists and pedestrians. Could biking and walking become more prevalent? Could people ask for more bike and pedestrian oriented infrastructure?
» Changes in street design would be needed to adapt to an increase in biking and walking.
» People better understand sharing the road now based on increased interactions with bicyclists instead of through traffic safety campaigns.
» A successful example in converting transportation infrastructure: Somerset County shut down Division St. in Somerville and converted it into a well-lit pedestrian plaza, and it has now become a very popular and inviting space among residents.
» Encourage Ciclovia or open streets year-round.
  • Open streets events can be an opportunity to evaluate the bike-friendliness of the streets that are closed to vehicle traffic. If a different set of streets is closed each year for the event, over time a town or city can evaluate most of its streets.
  • The general public gets used to street closures as more of these events happen.
  • New Brunswick has run successful Ciclovia events for the last few years

Increased telecommuting creates new policy considerations and opportunities.

» Telecommuting can be used for more than just a pandemic. There is an opportunity to use it on days with poor air quality/high ozone levels or during inclement weather. There could also be city-ordained telecommuting days, where employers agree to a program of alternating telecommuting days for their employees.
» The people who are able to telecommute hold white-collar jobs. Therefore, the commuting demographics will consist of people with lower incomes. Transit agencies should consider changing fare structures to support lower income commuters.
» Many types of jobs cannot support telecommuting. Policies should be considered to help low-income commuters.

Reduced vehicle traffic has created opportunities to improve and expand infrastructure for other travel modes.

» Towns may be more willing to engage in tactical urbanism in the realm of bike/pedestrian infrastructure
» The reduced flow of traffic created opportunities for express bus service and to reorient existing infrastructure to being more transit friendly to learn more about their results

» Participants mentioned an easier buy-in for temporary solutions since municipalities are willing to participate in experiments rather than commit to wholesale changes in infrastructure.

Future reopening prompts questions about health and safety at work and while commuting.

» We will learn a lot from manufacturing and warehousing businesses because they will be the first businesses to reopen. How are these firms adhering to social distancing? What PPE will they provide once they reopen?
» How do we know public transit is sanitary? What do we want to see that gives us confidence in the safety of public transit infrastructure?

Other comments.

» Homelessness remains a big problem that becomes even more difficult to address during a pandemic.
» Government policy to open "slow streets" but close parks seems contradictory and should be rethought. Were parks closed due to budget shortfalls in local governments?

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PLANNING AUTHORITY

"Open Streets" Event Summary

Location: Online event

Date: Thursday, June 18, 2020

Time: 6:00 to 7:00 pm

About UpNext North Jersey

UpNext North Jersey (UpNext) is a pilot emerging leaders group that engages young North Jersey residents in a dialogue with the NJTPA regarding important regional issues. The NJTPA seeks to better understand the values and needs of this demographic group related to regional transportation and land use issues. The NJTPA provides UpNext members with unique opportunities to engage with regional thought leaders and decision-makers and provide creative and fun ways for participants to "give back" to communities.

The Public Outreach and Engagement Team, part of the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University (Rutgers-POET) worked with the NJTPA to plan four events for UpNext members throughout FY 2019-2020. The first event, the program kickoff, occurred in September 2019 at the NJTPA offices in Newark. The second event took place at the Paterson Museum in January 2020. A third planned event for March 2020 in Asbury Park was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Rutgers-POET worked with the NJTPA to plan virtual events for the remainder of FY 2019-2020. The first virtual event occurred in April 2020 and, with the theme of Future Disruptions: Planning for the Unplanned, UpNext members discussed the impacts of the pandemic on transportation and land use considerations in the region. This report describes Rutgers-POET's event planning and promotion work for the year's second virtual event (and fourth event in total) which focused on bicycle and pedestrian issues.

njtpa.org/upnext

Overview of the *Open Streets* Event

The event consisted of a presentation and a discussion session that touched on obstacles to safe and convenient biking and walking, needed infrastructure improvements, and strategies that the public can use to advocate for better biking and walking infrastructure. James Sinclair, of the New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center, gave a presentation on the variety of big and small, permanent and temporary changes localities can make to improve biking and walking conditions, including open streets programs. Following the presentation, UpNext members participated in a discussion about their ideas for improving bicycle and pedestrian accessibility both locally and regionally.

Rutgers-POET and the NJTPA selected this topic based on the results of a membership poll that named bicycle and pedestrian issues as the topic the group most wanted to address during an event. Furthermore, the topic is timely: in response to physical distancing requirements to minimize the spread of COVID-19, many cities and towns in the region and nationwide are limiting vehicle traffic on roads in order to make more room for biking, walking, and outdoor dining and shopping. The immediate need to use roadways, parking spaces, and parking lots in alternative ways may lead to greater long-term support and prioritization for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and safety improvements.

Planning and Promotion

Leading up to the event, Rutgers-POET worked with NJTPA staff to plan and promote the event. Rutgers-POET and NJTPA staff worked with James Sinclair to set an agenda for the event, brainstorm the information to be shared in the presentation, and outline discussion topics. Rutgers-POET promoted the event through social media and email invitations to UpNext members. Members received a save-the-date invitation, followed by several rounds of emails to provide more information about the event agenda. Rutgers-POET also promoted the event on the UpNext Facebook group and created an event page where Facebook users could RSVP.

Agenda

6:00 to 6:10 pm – Welcome remarks: Ted Ritter, NJTPA staff, kicked off the event with welcoming remarks, thanked UpNext members for participating in the pilot year of the program, and described their potential involvement in outreach for the NJTPA's upcoming long-range transportation plan. Sarah Tomasello from Rutgers-POET then introduced the topic of the event and introduced James Sinclair and his presentation.

6:10 to 6:30 pm – Presentation on Open Streets and Bike/Ped Issues: Sinclair's presentation covered a range of practical information about bicycle and pedestrian planning and infrastructure projects, including: design solutions to improve bicycle and pedestrian access; considerations when planning an open streets event; strategies to advocate for local improvements; and examples of temporary and permanent infrastructure installations. Sinclair described how the current need to maximize space for outdoor recreation, dining, and shopping has enabled the implementation of designs such as parklets and open streets that otherwise might take years to receive local approval.

6:30 to 7:15 pm – Discussion: Following the presentation, UpNext members participated in a discussion about their experiences biking and walking in the region and their ideas to improve bicycle and pedestrian accessibility and safety in different place types. Sinclair and NJTPA staff fielded questions about state and local bicycle and pedestrian policies and referred members to key resources and advocacy organizations. The discussion is reported in more detail below.

Attendance

Of the approximately 30 people that attended the UpNext kickoff event in fall 2019, 13 members attended this virtual meeting. The previous virtual event had approximately 15 attendees, and the event at the Paterson Museum had 14 attendees.

Feedback

This section summarizes the feedback that the NJTPA received from UpNext members during the discussion portion of the event. Throughout the discussion, members showed support for building transportation infrastructure that encourages more people to travel by biking, walking, and using other forms of personal mobility. They discussed strategies for making these forms of travel more convenient, safe, and efficient, such as by allowing bikes and scooters on board NJ TRANSIT trains and buses, creating routes for long distance bike travel, and keeping bike lanes free of obstacles and debris. Members recognized that securing support from local officials can be challenging and can prevent bicycle and pedestrian improvements from being prioritized or implemented. Even in places where there is political will for these improvements, a lack of funding resources can be a remaining barrier. The following section organizes and summarizes the comments that UpNext members made throughout the discussion.

Build and retrofit transportation infrastructure that supports and promotes walking and biking rather than driving single occupancy vehicles.

» Shut down McCarter Highway in Newark for a Ciclovia. Part of the reason why Newark's waterfront has not seen mixed use or residential development is because the high volume of traffic on the nearby McCarter Highway creates a hostile environment.
» Route 21/20 should be converted into a waterfront park with bike and pedestrian path stretching from Newark to Paterson, with controlled cut-through streets across the river. The density of the Newark-Paterson corridor will increase over the next 50 years and a permanent linear park would enable the use of active modes like walking and biking to get around the area.
» Prioritize bicycles and pedestrians in street design. Cars should be guests on all non-freeway roads.
» Personal-sized transit uses space most efficiently, and bicycles are both cost-effective and more energy efficient than any other vehicle.
» Why do we incentivize travel in large, inefficient, damage-causing vehicles?
» We should be able to replicate the success of a place such as Amsterdam. The city's roads were full of traffic in the 1970s, but they have since shifted to more efficient modes.
» Remove parking minimums in zoning requirements, especially in high density areas, and use upzoning to allow denser development.
» How do you support walking and biking in the many places in New Jersey that are highly suburban and undeveloped?
» The design solutions shown in the presentation seem geared toward larger towns and cities. In Leonia, the road lanes are not wide enough to accommodate bicycle infrastructure.

A lack of local support and/or funding resources for bicycle and pedestrian (bike/ped) amenities can prevent good design projects from being approved and implemented.

» Politics prevents good design that supports biking and walking from being approved. It is a national problem due to powerful interests that support the predominance of single-occupancy vehicles over alternative travel modes.
» As the pandemic recedes, the present support for bike/ped projects may pass.
» In addition to having an internal champion that pushes for local change, it's very important to have an external champion that is prioritizing the issue and putting pressure on the city or town to make the change.
» Home rule and "boroughitis" are layers of political barriers to bike/ped improvements that are specific to New Jersey municipalities.
» Municipalities have a lot of control over implementing bike/ped improvements if they have jurisdiction over the roadway that needs the improvements.
» While there is a political barrier, many communities primarily lack the resources to plan and build bike/ped infrastructure. There are a lot of communities, such as Piscataway, that show the political will but lack the resources to carry out bike/ped improvements.

» Residents who grew up in the suburbs but now live in a town or city remain culturally dependent on their cars even if they enjoy biking. How do we make cars less cool?

Ease restrictions on allowing bikes and other types of micro-mobility on board public transit.

» Does NJ TRANSIT allow scooters, bicycles, and forms of electric micro-mobility on board its vehicles? If not, then planning for intermodal transit cannot be effective.
» E-bikes and e-scooters are banned on board NJ TRANSIT vehicles. Are they worried about fire hazards?
» Every public transit vehicle should be designed to accommodate regular bikes and scooters, and they should always be allowed on-board.
» E-scooters are an ideal form of personal mobility. They are fast and can travel far distances while also being compact, lightweight, and easy to carry and store. E-scooters are an energy efficient form of transportation and are even more efficient than train travel.

Make longer distance bike travel more efficient and safer.

» Many people bike on Route 18 in Piscataway and it seems very unsafe.
» The straight, efficient routes and smooth surfaces of highways can make them great places to ride bikes for longer distances. Highways provide more direct connections between places than local roads and can be safer for bicyclists if local roads are crowded and congested. Highways often have some amount of extra space that could be adapted for bicyclists.
» Going to the extreme of biking on the highway may not be necessary. There is often a local bike network that is equally safe and efficient.
» The downside of biking along highways is the exposure to pollution from passing vehicles.

Provide enough space on shared paths, or provide separate paths, to safely accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians in parks.

» With more people now walking in parks, should they have dedicated bike lanes that are separate from pedestrian paths? Parks in Orange do not have dedicated bike lands.
» Pedestrian paths should be wide enough to be safe for both bicycle and pedestrian use.
» The paths in Overpeck Park are several feet too narrow to accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians. The paths in the park are paved, but some paths on the northern side of the park have big ruts.
» Bicycles and scooters should be separated from pedestrians in parks, such as in Lincoln Park in Jersey City.

Safe routes to school campaigns and infrastructure projects can benefit all bicyclists and pedestrians while being more politically feasible than other bike/ped improvements.

» The use of bikes and scooters by children and the need to make conditions safe for them can be an effective pressure point for local officials to improve bicycle infrastructure.
» Creating cut-through bike/ped paths between cul-de-sacs helps children get to school safely while cutting down on trip time.
» There should be more safe routes to school campaigns that include all stakeholders, including the local police department that is responsible for enforcing the campaign.
» Improvements that create safer conditions for children to walk and bike to school benefit everyone.

Ensure bike/ped improvements benefit all users, particularly those in disadvantaged communities.

» The presentation mentioned that equity should be part of the planning process. Can you describe how this occurs when planning for bicycle and pedestrian improvements?
» It is important to remember that not only young, affluent people ride bikes. The riding constituency is large and socioeconomically and racially diverse.

» Some bike share, scooter share, and rideshare companies offer discounts to users who are receiving some form of public financial assistance, such as nutrition or housing assistance.

Improve road safety conditions and regulations for bicyclists and educate all road users on how bicyclists may use the road.

» Storm drains, vegetation, litter, and other obstacles in the roadway create unsafe conditions for bicyclists that drivers may not be aware of. Drivers may not understand that bicyclists may be forced to swerve into the roadway to avoid obstacles in their path.
» Many new bicyclists do not know the rules of the road. Encouraging people to bike without educating them on the rules can be dangerous.
» Traffic laws are not very friendly to bicyclists and scooter riders. The Idaho stop should be legal in New Jersey, meaning that, for bicyclists, stop signs become yield signs and red lights become stop signs.

Other comments.

» Jersey City and Hoboken finally agreed to send out an RFP together for the same bike share company, and hopefully the rest of Hudson County joins the bike share as well.
» Bike shops should have been identified as essential in the original executive order that closed all non-essential businesses.
» Newark Bike Club, Newark Community Cycling Center, and Girls on Bikes are several organizations working to promote bicycling in Newark.
» A lack of street trees along roads can make outdoor dining uncomfortable if there is no shade from the sun.

NJTPA
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PLANNING AUTHORITY

Active Transportation Event Summary

Location: Online event

Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020

Time: 6-7 pm

About UpNext North Jersey

UpNext North Jersey (UpNext) is an emerging leaders group that engages young North Jersey residents in a dialogue with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). The NJTPA seeks to better understand the values and needs of this demographic group related regarding key transportation and land use issues. The NJTPA provides UpNext members with unique opportunities to learn about and discuss timely topics related to regional planning and public policy, develop a network of peers who share similar interests, and engage with regional thought leaders and decision-makers.

The Public Outreach and Engagement Team, part of the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University (Rutgers-POET) worked with the NJTPA to plan four events for UpNext members throughout FY 2019-2020. This report describes Rutgers-POET's event planning and promotion work for the first event in FY 2020 – 2021, which occurred online and focused on supporting active transportation in Plan 2050, the upcoming Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the NJTPA region.

Overview of the *Active Transportation* Event

The event included an overview presentation about active transportation, a review of a SWOT activity that members completed prior to the meeting, and a discussion about the bike/ped improvements that the NJTPA should focus on in Plan 2050. Rutgers-POET staff Nieves Pimienta gave a presentation on the present conditions of active transportation in North Jersey. Following the presentation, UpNext members participated in a discussion about their ideas for improving bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, safety, and convenience locally and regionally.

Rutgers-POET and the NJTPA selected this topic due to the publication of the Plan 2050 background paper, Active Transportation in the NJTPA Region. Bike/ped issues are of ongoing interest to UpNext members, and discussion about the active transportation background paper provided a good opportunity to introduce the group to Plan 2050. Rutgers-POET plans to continue to use Plan 2050 background papers as the basis for future UpNext events.

Planning and Promotion

Leading up to the event, Rutgers-POET and NJTPA staff distributed the recently released background paper for context on the status of active transportation in North Jersey. UpNext members also received an online SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of active transportation in the region; this was based on background paper information as well as members' own experiences. Rutgers-POET promoted the event through social media and email invitations. Members received a save-the-date invitation and follow-up emails to provide more information about the event. Rutgers-POET also promoted the event on the UpNext Facebook group and created an RSVP page.

Agenda

6:00 to 6:05 pm – Introduce the LRTP: NJTPA staff introduced Plan 2050 and the series of background papers being published as part of the Plan's development.

6:05 to 6:15 pm – Review active transportation background paper findings and SWOT analysis results: Rutgers-POET staff Nieves Pimienta provided a short presentation of key findings from the active transportation background paper. She also summarized the results of the SWOT analysis that members completed prior to the event. The results of this analysis are provided in an appendix.

6:15 to 6:40 pm – Discuss active transportation recommendations (breakout groups): Pimienta gave attendees instructions for the breakout group activity. Attendees were sent into three Zoom breakout groups where they used the findings of the background paper and the results of the SWOT analysis to develop active transportation recommendations for the LRTP. An NJTPA or Rutgers-POET staff person was present in each room.

6:40 to 6:50 pm: Present active transportation recommendations: A member from each breakout group reported the recommendations that their group developed.

6:50 to 7:00 pm: Closing remarks: Rutgers-POET informed members about the active transportation challenge activity, where they are invited to walk or bike to a destination they do not normally walk or bike to, and share their experience on social media. Ted Ritter, NJTPA staff, also informed members about upcoming public engagement opportunities for Plan 2050.

Attendance

15 members attended this virtual meeting. The previous virtual event in June had approximately 13 attendees, and the April virtual event had 15 attendees.

Feedback

This section summarizes input the NJTPA received from UpNext members during the discussion portion of the event. Throughout the discussion, members showed support for building transportation infrastructure that encourages more people to travel by biking, walking, and using other forms of personal mobility. They discussed strategies for making these forms of travel more convenient, safe, and efficient, such as by allowing bikes and scooters on board NJ TRANSIT trains and buses, creating routes for long distance bike travel, and keeping bike lanes free of obstacles and debris.

Build and retrofit transportation infrastructure that supports and promotes walking and biking rather than driving single occupancy vehicles.

» Prioritize bicycles and pedestrians in street design. Cyclists need protected bike lanes on roadways to be safe.
» Public transit does not accommodate cyclists. NJ TRANSIT buses and other privately owned bus lines should have bicycle racks for riders.

Ease restrictions on allowing bikes and other types of micro-mobility on board public transit.

» E-bikes and e-scooters are banned on board NJ TRANSIT vehicles. Is the agency worried about fire hazards?
» Every public transit vehicle should be designed to accommodate regular bikes and scooters, and they should always be allowed on-board.
» NJ TRANSIT buses and other privately owned bus lines need to have bike racks on them for riders to use.

Improve road safety conditions and regulations for bicyclists and educate all road users on how bicyclists may use the road.

» Many new bicyclists do not know the rules of the road. Encouraging people to bike without educating them on the rules can be dangerous.
» Micromobility users should wear helmets, although this may reinforce the idea that it is their responsibility to be safe and not the responsibility of drivers to share the road safely.
» Motorists should also receive training to drive safely when cyclists and pedestrians are on the road. This topic is not heavily covered in driver education programs.

Create a state-wide bike share program.

» A bike share program would make cycling much more accessible and affordable in New Jersey, but it should be implemented at the state level. There should be a single bike share provider for the entire state, so that riders do not have to worry about geographic gaps in service, or having to switch bikes, when they leave one city or county and enter another.

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Equitable Smart Mobility Event Summary

Location: Online event

Date: Thursday, December 17, 2020

Time: 6-7:15 pm

About UpNext North Jersey

UpNext North Jersey (UpNext) is an emerging leaders group that engages young North Jersey residents in a dialogue with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). The NJTPA seeks to better understand the values and needs of this demographic group related regarding key transportation and land use issues. The NJTPA provides UpNext members with unique opportunities to learn about and discuss timely topics related to regional planning and public policy, develop a network of peers who share similar interests, and engage with regional thought leaders and decision-makers.

The Public Outreach and Engagement Team, part of the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University (Rutgers-POET) worked with the NJTPA to plan four events for UpNext members throughout FY 2019-2020. This is the second UpNext event for FY 2020-2021, following an event on active transportation in September. Both events coincided with the public engagement period for Plan 2050, the NJTPA's next Long Range Transportation Plan. During each event, UpNext members provided input on key topics to be addressed in Plan 2050.

Overview of the *Equitable Smart Mobility* Event

The event consisted of a presentation and small group discussions about how technology can improve transportation access and mobility , and equity. Prior to the event, Rutgers-POET provided a Plan 2050 background paper recently released by the NJTPA, titled Transportation Technology. Rutgers-POET gave a presentation to summarize key findings from this report. Following the presentation, attendees split into two breakout groups. Each group discussed how smart mobility technologies, such as rideshares, transit apps, and driverless cars, can provide

travel options for people with disabilities, seniors, transit-dependent riders, and bicyclists/pedestrians. Each group was tasked with developing 3-5 recommendations for how Plan 2050 can plan address the implementation of new technologies in ways that help the four demographic/travel groups mentioned above.

Planning and Promotion

Leading up to the event, Rutgers-POET worked with NJTPA staff to plan and promote the event. Rutgers-POET promoted the event through social media and email invitations. Members received a save-the-date invitation, followed by emails to provide more information. Rutgers-POET also promoted the event on the UpNext Facebook group and created an RSVP page.

Agenda

6:00 pm – Welcome: Ted Ritter, NJTPA staff, gave a brief welcome.

6:00 to 6:10 pm – Review background paper: RRutgers-POET staff Nieves Pimienta presented key information in the transportation technology background paper, with a focus on how technology is currently used and may be applied in the future to support travelers/commuters with limited mobility options. Pimienta then provided instructions for the breakout session to follow.

6:10 to 6:40 pm – Discuss equity and accessibility recommendations (breakout groups) UpNext members were divided into two breakout groups. Using the background paper and their own knowledge and experiences, the groups discussed how smart mobility can improve access and mobility for people with disabilities, seniors, transit-dependent riders, and bicyclists/pedestrians. Each group then developed 3-5 recommendations for how Plan 2050 can address the implementation of connected/automated vehicles and other transportation technologies to assist these demographic/user groups. An NJTPA or Rutgers-POET staff person was present in each room.

6:40 to 6:55 pm – Present recommendations: Members from each breakout group reported their recommendations.

6:55 to 7:10 pm – Active Transportation Challenge debrief: Rutgers-POET staff Sarah Tomasello reviewed responses submitted for the Active Transportation Challenges and facilitated a discussion with members about their experiences completing the activity.

7:10 to 7:15 pm – Update on Plan 2050 public engagement: Ted Ritter informed members about upcoming opportunities to participate in Plan 2050 public engagement, including an online survey and virtual events.

Attendance

Of approximately 30 people that attended the UpNext kickoff event in fall 2019, 12 members attended this virtual meeting. NJTPA Senior Director of Planning, Jeff Perlman, and Director of Long Range Transportation Planning, Lois Goldman, also attended.

Feedback

This section summarizes the recommendations the NJTPA received from UpNext members during the discussion portion of the event. Throughout the discussion, members discussed strategies for using technology to make travel more convenient, safe, and efficient for people with disabilities, seniors, and bicyclists/pedestrians. The group ran out of time when discussing the needs of various user groups and as a result did not develop recommendations for transit-dependent riders. The following section summarizes the comments from the discussion.

People with Disabilities

People with disabilities may rely on public transit, paratransit, private services, or friends and family to get to work/school/shopping. However, paratransit service can be restrictive and unreliable: public transit information such as station or stop announcements, maps, and schedules can be difficult to access for the deaf and blind; buses, trains, stations and stops may be physically inaccessible; and people with disabilities may have a fixed income. UpNext members discussed how intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and on-demand ride hailing can expand travel

options for people who have limited mobility. The group also discussed Helsinki and Japan as examples of smart delivery and how ITS/automated rideshares might help people with bags, bikes, or mobility devices get safely into a rideshare car.

Recommendations:

» Create a communication app for passengers to notify conductors in advance that they will require assistance. The app could tell passengers where to wait and where to board for assistance and access to accessible seating, bridge plate ramps, etc.
» Install smart screens and visual-audio interfaces and apps for people with ADHD, autistic people, people with visual impairment, or other situations where someone may have difficulty with interpreting a conventional transit map.
» Use sensor-based traffic lights that extend walking signals for people who walk slowly.

Seniors

Participants discussed the differing needs of seniors who are in a retirement community with staff who can schedule trips versus seniors who live on their own. The discussion explored different possibilities for making transit more convenient for seniors via free public transit for those with a Medicare- or NJ TRANSIT-issued senior card; transit cards that are encoded with home addresses, frequent destinations, and emergency contact information; and transit cards that automatically calculate and pay the fare at point of sale/boarding. Additionally, participants discussed using a GPS app for seniors to summon a route deviation bus.

Recommendations:

» Provide cards for seniors that provide free fare or automatic fare calculation. Cards can be 'tapped' using RFID for ease of use. Cards could have frequent destinations and home address information saved in case of emergencies.
» Install wayfinding signs, LED, or eInk signs to display bus information in real time.
» Allow users to use GPS-enabled apps to find and request a route deviation bus.

Bicyclists/Pedestrians

In communities that lack safe infrastructure, those who rely on biking and walking may have limited access to shopping and jobs. Group members discussed the possibility of having signals change in response to incoming pedestrians or bicyclists and having connected vehicles receive a signal when in proximity of a bicyclist that may be out of sight. Participants also discussed the idea that sometimes the best technology is no technology—streets can be designed to be safe without technology as shown in the example of Dutch intersection design.

Recommendations:

» Send virtual signals that can alert drivers of connected vehicles about cyclists and pedestrians that may be out of their line of sight. Pedestrians could use the signal system to request a mid-block crossing.
» Detect and change traffic signals in response to incoming pedestrians/bicyclists to prioritize smooth bike/pedestrian traffic.
» Change laws to make e-bikes/scooters more efficient and convenient to use, i.e. increase the legal speed for e-bikes and e-scooters so people will use them instead of cars and prioritize micro-mobility devices and pedestrians as a good use of space.
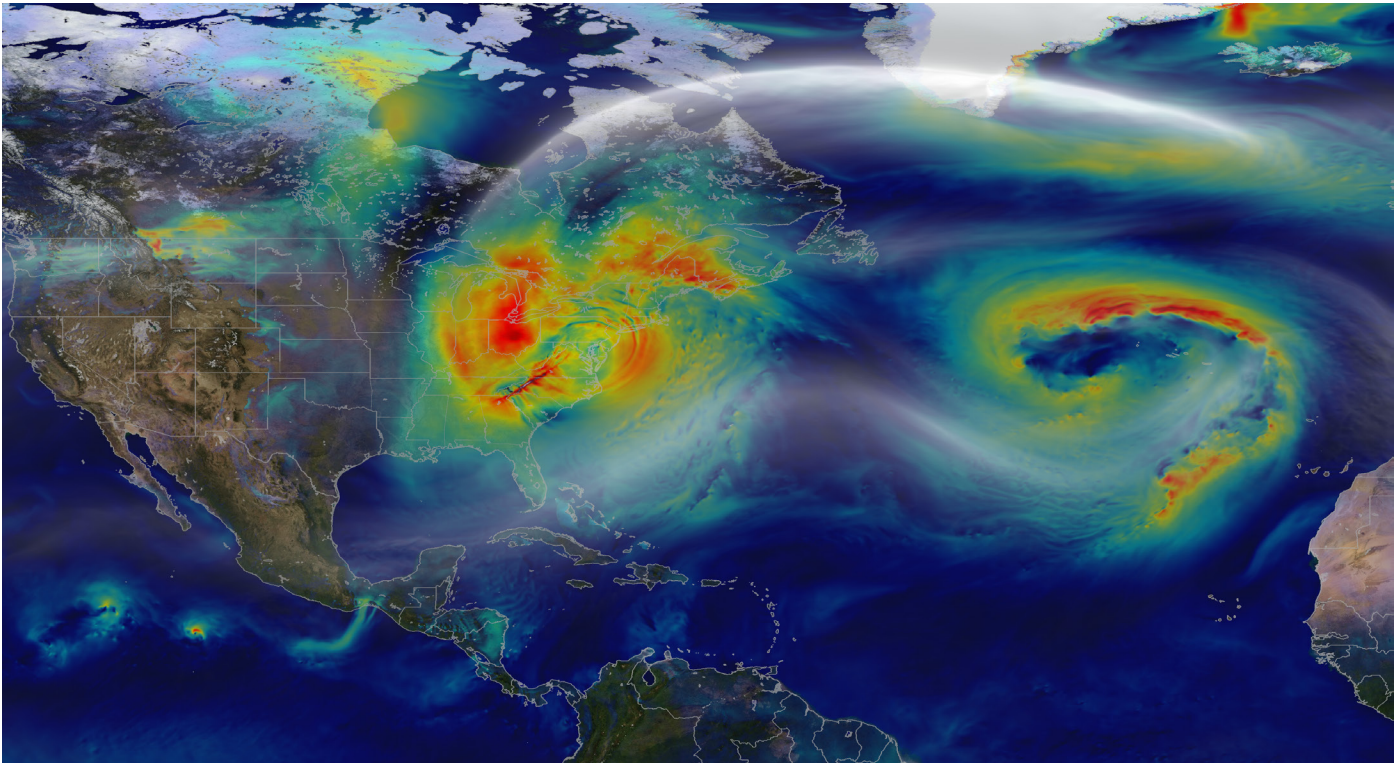
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Ask a Climatologist! Event Summary

Location: Online event

Date: Thursday, January 21, 2021

Time: 6-7 pm

About UpNext North Jersey

UpNext North Jersey (UpNext) is an emerging leaders group that engages young North Jersey residents in a dialogue with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). The NJTPA seeks to better understand the values and needs of this demographic group related regarding key transportation and land use issues. The NJTPA provides UpNext members with unique opportunities to learn about and discuss timely topics related to regional planning and public policy, develop a network of peers who share similar interests, and engage with regional thought leaders and decision-makers.

The Public Outreach and Engagement Team, part of the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University (Rutgers-POET) works with the NJTPA to plan quarterly events for UpNext members. This is the third UpNext event for FY 2020-2021, following events on active transportation in September and emerging transportation technology in December.

Overview of the *Ask a Climatologist* Event

This event focused on the topic of climate change in New Jersey, following the publication of the NJTPA's *Plan 2050* background paper titled *Climate Change and Transportation*. The event consisted of a presentation and discussion with Dr. David Robinson, NJ State Climatologist and Distinguished Professor of Geography at Rutgers University. Dr. Robinson's presentation on climate change science covered how climate change and weather patterns affect New Jersey communities and how climate change's impacts will grow over time, particularly regarding transportation assets.

Planning and Promotion

Leading up to the event, Rutgers-POET worked with NJTPA staff to plan and promote the event. Rutgers-POET promoted the event through social media and email invitations to UpNext members. Members received a save-the-date invitation, followed by several rounds of emails to provide more information. Rutgers-POET also promoted the event on the UpNext Facebook group and created an RSVP page. Prior to the event, Rutgers-POET circulated the Plan 2050 climate change background paper to members and encouraged event attendees to come prepared with questions for Dr. Robinson.

Agenda

6:00 to 6:05 pm – Welcome and Introduction: Ted Ritter, NJTPA staff, gave a brief welcome to attendees and a quick rundown of the NJTPA's report on climate change, after which he introduced Dr. Robinson.

6:05 to 6:30 pm – Presentation on New Jersey's Changing Climate: Dr. Robinson's presentation included recent extreme weather events in NJ; he explained that in recent decades the state's average temperatures have risen and precipitation patterns have become more erratic. Dr. Robinson also described the impacts climate change will cause in the mid-term and how long-term impacts will depend on what is done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

6:30 to 7:00 pm – Q&A Session: Dr. Robinson took questions about climate change, its local impacts, and connections to transportation issues. The questions and responses are summarized below.

7:00 to 7:05 pm – Update on Plan 2050 Engagement: Ted Ritter informed members about upcoming opportunities to participate in the Plan 2050 public engagement process. Miriam Salerno, Rutgers-POET, encouraged UpNext members to suggest ideas for future events.

Attendance

Eleven UpNext members attended this virtual event. Jeff Perlman, NJTPA Senior Director of Planning, and Lois Goldman, NJTPA Director of Long Range Transportation Planning, also attended.

Q&A Session Summary

Are there any estimates of population displacement in North Jersey's coastal/tidal regions for a given magnitude of sea level rise?

» Dr. Robinson: The global population is much more vulnerable to displacement caused by sea level rise (and other climate change impacts). There are projections for displacement caused by sea level rise and evacuations have already happened in parts of coastal Alaska. In New Jersey, the Meadowlands and Jersey Shore communities would be vulnerable. Likely tens of thousands of New Jerseyans would need to move (though it's not clear what degree of sea level rise would precipitate this).

How do we build our infrastructure for today and the future? For example, New York City's LaGuardia airport is an important resource for 30 to 50 more years but will be inundated after that.

» Dr. Robinson: North Jersey will be one of the last regions protected by hard infrastructure due to the value of the property in this area. The value of commercial and residential properties in metropolitan New York will spur costly investment in hard infrastructure to protect against the impacts of climate change. Facilities like LaGuardia and Newark airports will be protected by seawalls and other built systems for as long as possible.

How will residential and coastline development in Hudson and Bergen Counties be affected by sea level rise?

» Dr. Robinson: Superstorm Sandy flooded Hoboken due to a Hudson River tidal surge.. As sea levels rise, flooding will become a greater problem for coastal Hudson and Bergen counties. But (as mentioned above), the economic value of these properties will motivate governments to protect them with seawalls and other built features, rather than let the land be abandoned or returned to nature.

NJ TRANSIT's new green buses hold fewer passengers. How do we expand use of energy-efficient buses when they cannot provide the same level of service for busy routes as the older, dirtier buses can?

» Dr. Robinson: This will hopefully be solved by technological innovation. The problem of reliability affects Rutgers, too: though the University is looking into electric buses to serve students and faculty, current models cannot complete the daily routes that the existing fleet can. North Jersey and other places may need to continue telecommuting after the pandemic to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions stemming from transportation.

» Ted Ritter: The coronavirus pandemic has created new opportunities for innovation, travel patterns, and flexible work schedules that can reduce travel demand and emissions.

How can we encourage greener freight transportation?

» Dr. Robinson: Freight should include more rail transit, though NJTPA staff may be more qualified to answer this question.

» Ted Ritter: The NJTPA already knew that freight traffic would increase exponentially in New Jersey during the next 30 years even without the pandemic. COVID-19 has amplified and accelerated that growth. Smoother and greener freight transportation will be a major challenge for planners.

Do lawns affect climate change?

» Dr. Robinson: Lawns can have a cooling effect, but in some North Jersey communities, they consume as much as 40 percent of the water supply. Overall, dense cities need more green infrastructure—primarily trees that provide shape and transpiration. Lawns do not provide the same ecological services as trees.

How do you work with state agencies like NJ TRANSIT? Do they come to you with questions and requests for information?

» Dr. Robinson: Largely, state agencies approach Rutgers University (New Jersey's main research authority on climate change, and the location of the State Climatologist's office) with requests for help with climate change reports. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection's recent report on sea level rise was largely prepared by Rutgers University faculty. In his role as a research professor at Rutgers and the State Climatologist, Dr. Robinson has contributed to a panel organized by the NJTPA which reviewed areas of North Jersey that are especially vulnerable to climate change. He has also briefed the Director of the Port Authority of NY and NJ on the results of a climate report.

Would ferries help with climate emissions?

» Dr. Robinson: They would likely be helpful, though we may need to improve access to ferries by modes of transportation other than private vehicles.

[Comment] We don't discuss electric bike rebates as a state policy. E-bikes need to be prioritized by the state. .

» Ted Ritter: Support for e-bikes could be indicated as an active transportation option in Plan 2050.

NJTPA
NORTH JERSEY
TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING AUTHORITY

NJTPA LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION

PLAN 2050

Transportation ▸ People ▸ Opportunity

RUTGERS
Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy

NJTPA On Air:
Engaging Children and Teens

Plan 2050 Targeted Engagement

June 2021

NJTPA On Air: Engaging Children and Teens

Plan 2050 Targeted Engagement

Background

To collect input from North Jersey residents for Plan 2050, the Rutgers-POET team implemented innovative public engagement strategies to reach people of all ages. This outreach included the NJTPA On Air "Future of Transportation" contest, in which children and teens submitted their ideas about the region's transportation future. Drawings, essays, poems, and other creative works were submitted. Rutgers-POET first conducted the On Air program as part of public outreach for the NJTPA's Plan 2045; this time, it was reconfigured given the restrictions on in-person activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The original On Air activity consisted of a pop-up booth designed like a radio studio, with a real microphone and recorder that allowed children and teens to share their ideas. For Plan 2050, Rutgers-POET reimagined NJTPA On Air as a virtual multimedia kids contest, utilizing web-based and remote methods to promote and collect responses.

In-person NJTPA On Air booth

Meeting a Need

Rutgers-POET's background interviews with organizations that serve children clearly indicated that youth engagement needs to be fun and interactive and activities must be well-designed and hold the participant's attention. Activities that use video, audio, or other visuals are particularly effective. Participating in NJTPA On Air did not require computer access and could be done via mobile phone, landline phone, or even the regular mail!

The Activity

The purpose of NJTPA On Air was to raise awareness about Plan 2050 and collect ideas from children and teens about the future of transportation. Participant could create short videos or audio recordings, drawings or digital images, or write poems or short essays to share their visions. To encourage participation and quality submissions, participants had the incentive to win gift cards ($100 for first place; $50 for second place) based on age-group and the creativity of the ideas submitted. The contest also included a "Judges' Choice" award that could be given to any participant regardless of age.

Participants were directed to a dedicated On Air webpage that included a video prompt (a refreshed version of the content originally used in the radio booth), activity instructions, and official contest rules. The one-minute video introduced the topic of transportation and prompted participants with the following question: What do you think transportation will be like in the future, say when you are your parents' age? The goal was to encourage participants to think creatively about this question and have fun coming up with their answers. Participants had the option of emailing or uploading their response files, leaving voicemail messages on a Google Voice line, or sending submissions by mail.

Contest Rules and Awards

Rutgers-POET drafted rules for the contest based on the rules of similar contests and advice from Rutgers University's legal services staff. Each participant submitted a consent form signed by a parent or guardian that also included contact information that could be used to notify potential winners. Rutgers-POET identified five award categories:

- Ages 8 and under
- Ages 9-11
- Ages 12-13
- Ages 14 and over
- Judges' Choice

Promotion

In addition to sharing the contest via the NJTPA's and Together North Jersey's email and social media channels, Rutgers-POET widely promoted the On Air contest to a variety of outlets with the goal of attracting a diverse group of participants. This included contacting all public libraries within the NJTPA region via emails to each library's youth librarian. The librarians were asked to share the activity by mentioning it during library events, hanging print-out flyers in the library, and posting about the activity on social media. Rutgers-POET made follow up phone calls to a random selection of the libraries.

Promotion also included outreach to organizations that offer after-school programs or other activities for children, such as Boys and Girls Clubs and Bergen Family Center, as well as a variety of multi-cultural organizations like the Ethical Cultural Society, La Casa de Don Pedro, Jewish Family Services, and the Islamic Society of Essex County, among others. Rutgers-POET also contacted a selection of elementary and middle school teachers via email and/or phone calls, posted to websites that feature children's activities, and reached out to programs for youth with disabilities.

Responses

The NJTPA received a total of 158 submissions from children ages 5 to 15. Rutgers-POET reviewed all responses and identified seven recurring themes: flying and hovering vehicles; high-speed maglev trains; sustainability; future micromobility; live-in, personal transportation; teleportation; and autonomous vehicles. The overwhelming majority of submissions touched on at least one of these themes, which are summarized in the following pages along with quotes from essays, artwork descriptions, and video and audio recordings, and examples of artwork received.

Flying or Hovering Vehicles

When asked to think about what the future of transportation will look like, many people first think of flying cars. Contest participants submitted many ideas that centered on flying or hovering vehicles and highlighted the benefits, challenges, and innerworkings of a primarily airborne transportation system.

Flying or hovering vehicles will provide benefits like reduced traffic, faster travel times, and less land devoted to transportation infrastructure. Contest submissions described easy commutes to work via personal flying or hovering vehicles that are self-driving, or via flying buses and hovering trains. The vehicles can fly over traffic jams and enable passengers to visit inaccessible places, like watching a baseball game from the sky or flying over the ocean. If travel occurs in the sky, then transportation infrastructure like roads and parking lots would take up less space on the ground and could be replaced by other land uses such as natural areas, parks, gardens, and recreation.

While flying cars would provide more freedom to avoid traffic and visit new places, respondents also envisioned that airborne transportation would have similar regulations and standards as the present-day system. Vehicles would travel in an orderly line in the sky and follow signage, speed limits, and parking restrictions. They would run via autopilot or specially trained drivers. Some respondents suggested that flying vehicles would be less safe than ground transportation, or that they would remain a specialized form of travel without wide use.

Selected quotes on flying or hovering vehicles:
- Although flying cars are already being made, I think that it is very unlikely that people will actually be using them for their everyday commute. On average, there are already over 6 million car accidents per year in the United States, having flying cars however would likely raise that number by millions more. Flying cars can maybe be used in the future as a new type of helicopter, but they will not be a part of your everyday commute to work or drive to the grocery store.

- Just as most people in my town, I don't drive to work. Instead, I fly to work. My plane is in the flyway by my home. In the old days, they used to call them driveways instead of flyways.

- I think cars and buses will fly in the air but not too high in the air. There will be a standard of how high vehicles should be in the air and their speed will be limited. In the future, there will be paths and signs in the air to help the flying vehicles. Cars will be in a line one behind another with a small distance between them while buses will fly at a slow and fast pace. When a bus or car arrives at its destination, there will be a special spot for it to park. The vehicles will go down from the sky slowly going into the spot.

- When there is traffic the cars can fly up one by one and go to a place where there is no traffic so no one will ever be late.

- As all transportation is now in the sky, all of the roads from 2021 are now walkways, trails, gardens, fields, lakes, and recreational centers because we don't need them anymore.
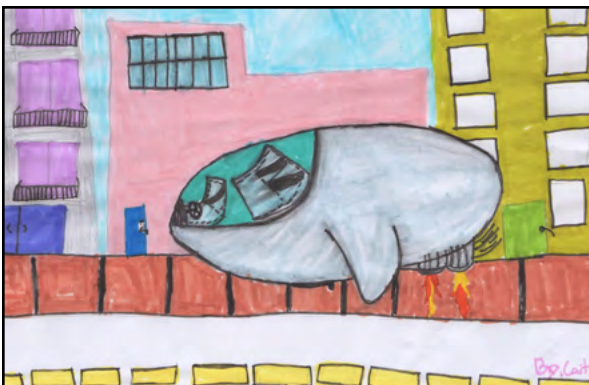
Autonomous Vehicles

Participants agreed that most futuristic travel modes, from flying cars to live-in spaces pods, will be autonomous. They cited the progress that has already been made on autonomous cars, such as automatic parking features, and predicted that this progress would continue. Submissions described how steering wheels will be replaced by tablets or mobile apps, with passengers inputting their desired destinations by voice command or touch screen. The vehicles would have other features, like more comfortable seating, panoramic windows, and food and drink dispensers, that passengers could take advantage of because they are not driving. In addition to enabling a more enjoyable travel experience, autonomous vehicles will also make travel safer overall and more accessible for those who currently have limited mobility, such as children and people with disability.

Selected quotes on autonomous vehicles:

- By 2050 cars will be more safe, more fun and will make kids or teens have more freedom. Cars will have a built in GPS that will let you choose your location. There will be an online system that knows where everyone is going. Since the cars drive themselves there would be no more reckless drivers and the tires would make it harder to slip around in the rain. Driving licenses will be a lot different. Instead of learning how to drive and such, you just learn how to use the GPS. But you would need to be 14 or older just to be safe.

- I quickly throw open the door to reveal the inside of the car which has seats facing each other like on a train. In between them there is a table with a screen in the center. We plop down in our seats and I click the button to map out a route. I drag my finger from our house to the school and to my job.

- Instead of a steering wheel, my Mystery Mobile #2 has a big tablet and it auto drives. But if you want to drive, a steering wheel pops up.

- In 2050 cars will be fully autonomous with no steering wheels so you can do whatever you wish in the car and a fully panoramic glass view on the ceiling and doors. People would also enjoy long car rides because the car would be driving itself.

- There is no steering wheel because Alexa drives herself! So no more driving tests, and even those with visual disabilities can use cars to get around by themselves.
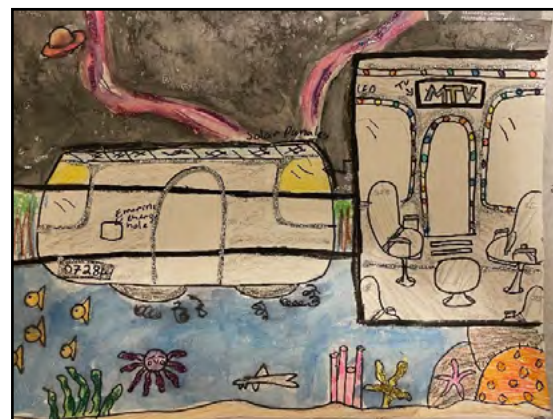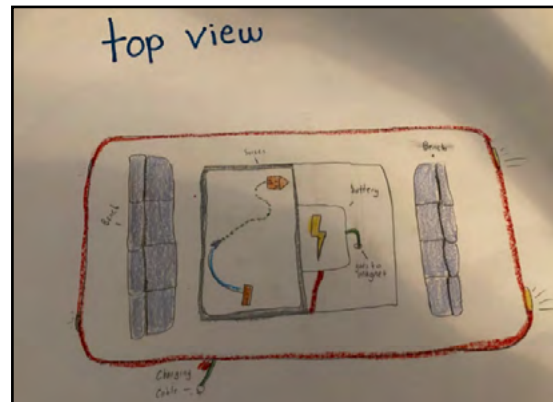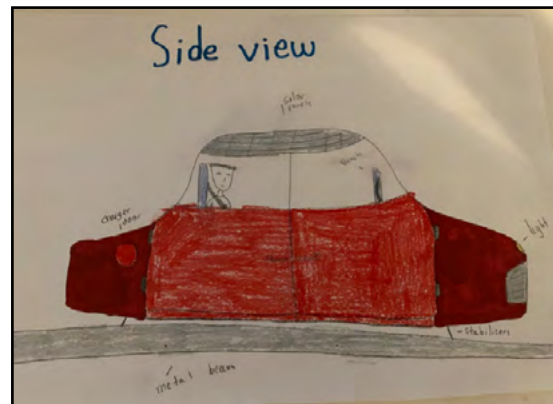
Micromobility of the Future

Respondents had some very creative ideas about what micromobiity (bikes, scooters, skates, and other motorized personal transportation devices) might look like in the future. There was a strong interest and seeing future micromobility that is sustainable, innovative and fast, providing young people with freedom and independence to get where they needed to go without relying on their parents. Some concepts included rocket-fueled skateboards, hover boards, flying roller skates, bike-plane hybrids or bikes that transform into other vehicles. One participant even suggested children could have motorized wings to fly themselves to school.

Selected quotes on micromobility:

- Trains will run on tracks above the roads where people will travel on rocket skateboards below.
- I believe in 2050 there will be flying hoverboards...These flying hoverboards will come with socks that help you stay on the hoverboard and not fall off!
- Introducing Roller Air! The new roller skates of the future!
- In 2050 I want to travel in my plane cycle. The wings are powered by the pedals or battery.
- I have to walk everywhere I need to go when my parents are not home...So i think of hoverbikes when it does all the work and all you have to do is steer and it could have voice automated brecks and gas so no pedals.
- The hoverboard has similar uses to what people a while ago used to call "skateboards" so that teens can get around town quickly.
- In 2050 there will be a vehicle that you can change from bike to scooter to motorcycle. Also by 2050, there would be no need to walk.
- You will put on your skates. You will download an app on your phone and connect it to the skates through Bluetooth. Then you press the GO button, and it will take you to your destination.
- Introducing all-new Solar Powered Bikes! With this totally radical bike, solar power can push you up the hill! Bicycles are fine for the environment, but with solar power, they are even better!
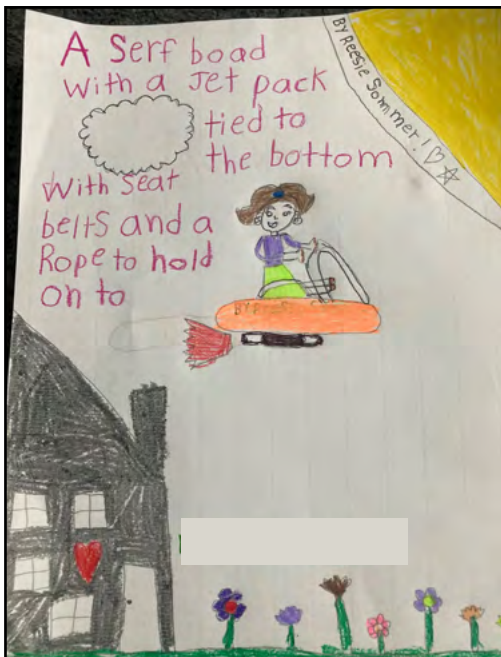
High-speed Rail Powered by Maglev Technology

Respondents frequently described a future where rail transportation is faster and more widespread due to maglev technology. Participants summarized their understanding of how this technology works and cited examples of high-profile, high-speed projects like bullet trains and hyperloops. Several respondents envisioned high-speed trains replacing planes in providing travel connections across the whole world— for example, making it possible to travel from the United States to England in just one hour. This technology would also make local travel faster and more pleasant. Train stations would be hubs where travelers could go grocery shopping and then make other travel connections. High-speed, maglev powered trains will also be better for the environment because they do not cause air pollution.

Selected quotes on High-speed Rail Power by Maglev Technology:

- We still can't forget about the people without cars, what if they can't afford a new electric self-driving vehicle? Well I think there will be a new super-fast train. Similar to the Shinkansen in Japan, I think there will be bullet trains that go super fast. I think that train stations will be cleaner, and maybe even have things like grocery stores in them. Similar to our trains today, I think they would go to different towns, dropping people off closer to work so they can take an electric bus or walk.

- I think trains will be much faster and more train tracks will be added all over. Trains will carry many more passengers and have playrooms for kids in one of the train cars.

- Because of hyperloops people won't have to move to a new city for jobs or school.

- The first maglev train was invented in 1985. It was very fast. If we invented that so long ago, imagine what we will have invented in 2050.

- It takes 9 hours and 30 minutes to go to England by plane. But on this new train it would take you to England in 1 hour!

- Global transportation in 2050 will have trains that can help people travel across oceans. In each country there will be stations located at the cardinal directions. Each station will have three to five trains. The trains will travel across the oceans by hovering.

- In 2050, trains will be maglev. They will have better brakes and automatic crash avoidance systems to track problems miles away.

- I think that floating trains and an eco-friendly world is the future of the world and of public transportation. Trains will have no smoke or other pollution and will fit hundreds of people.
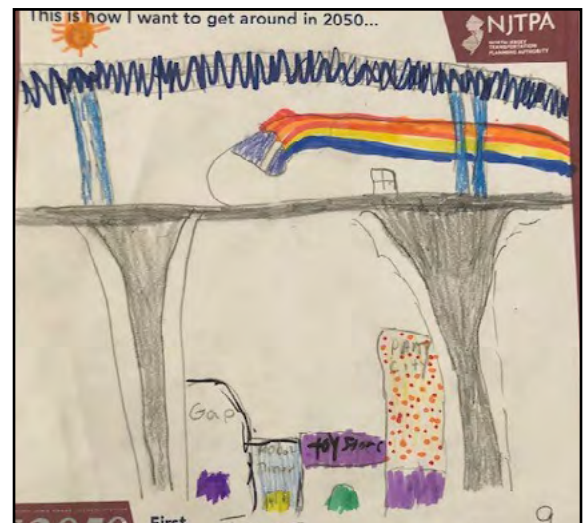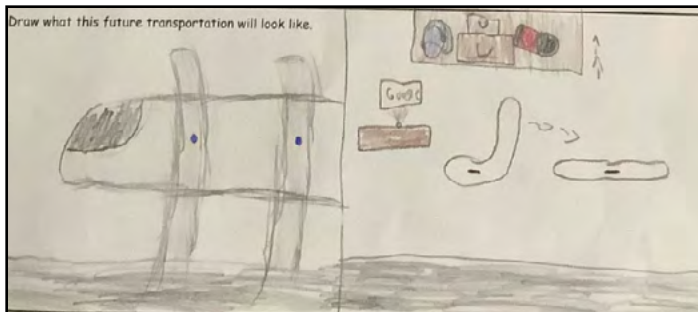
Live-In Transportation

Many participants imagined a future where vehicles do more than just get you where you need to go. In their drawings and descriptions, participants described being able to live, work, relax, eat, and be entertained – all while traveling to their destinations. Planes might have living rooms, televisions, and kitchens. Cars can make you a cup of coffee while you drive or get you a snack on demand. Traveling and living are integrated in one do-it-all vehicle!

Selected quotes on live-in transportation:

- The Spring-O-Tron 2000 is a giant robot with 3 rooms: a bedroom, a kitchen, and a video game room. It has giant springs on its feet to take you wherever you want to go.

- Introducing the Apex-16. The Apex-16 is basically a hover craft that you can live in. The features of the Apex-16 are an auto pilot, a sliding door, and a living area. If you're tired...kick back and relax. Feeling hungry? Then go thru the sliding door and get a snack from the kitchen.

- Maybe there will be more things to do on planes, like games and entertainment?

- Pods that take you across the river with holographic TVs and comfortable chairs for the journey.

- The planes will have beds, bathrooms, and tv for each seat in both economy and business classes. Now for first-class, they get their own apartments with things such as 2 bedrooms, 1 full bathroom, a 56" tv in the living room with an L-shaped couch.

- Cars will be double-floored. The bottom half is for seats, and the top is for a living space.

- A flying driving house that can serve you food. And it has a fish tank and wings of an airplane. There is a machine that can serve you every breakfast!

- Inside of our personal bubble would be a super comfortable couch with a seat belt. In front of us; replacing the window will be our very own personalized setup where we could watch videos, play games, read books and more!

Sustainable Transportation

Many respondents described how different types of future transportation technology will be less polluting and more environmentally friendly than present modes. Whether envisioning underwater trains, personal hoverboards, or flying live-in pods, participants showed how innovations in transportation technology should go hand-in-hand with increasing sustainability and mitigating climate change, such as powering vehicles with renewable fuels or manufacturing them from reusable materials. Solar-powered or electric vehicles of all types were the most described alternative fuel vehicles, while some respondents got creative and imagined new, efficient fuels discovered in space.

Selected quotes on sustainable transportation:

- In the future, I would like to travel by technologically advanced transportation that doesn't harm our planet or our animals.

- I see the future of transportation as an opportunity to support sustainability and embrace renewable energy.

- In the future, I think the cars will be charged by the sun so there will be no more gas that will pollute the environment. So cool!

- Superconductivity is a phenomenon in physics where some materials show zero electrical resistance. If the circuits used in trains were to have no electrical resistance, much less energy would have to be used to keep those trains running.

- Global warming is only getting worse. With this, the water is rising and icebergs are melting. Humans will need to adapt to water rising meaning more transportation across the ocean or rivers. Instead of planes, people will use big ships with hot air balloons on top. The ships will be powered by a sparkling gem found on the planet of Mars. These gems have unlimited energy meaning the ship can fly or sail across the world while causing no pollution whatsoever. Not only does this ship not make any pollution, it's also made of environmentally friendly materials. For example, wood from forests, metals from Mars, and woolen fabric for the sails!

- The propellers on hovercrafts would be powered by carbon dioxide. This will help the environment because in factories, mines, and more a lot of carbon dioxide gets released into the air. So a car can take in the carbon dioxide and use it as a power source!

- in 30 years, virtual reality will have advanced so much that people will not have to leave home to travel. When people want to reach a destination, they just use their device. These devices will be powered by solar power, so they don't even use electricity. The future is clean. The future is green. Don't blink! The future is coming—and the future is virtual.
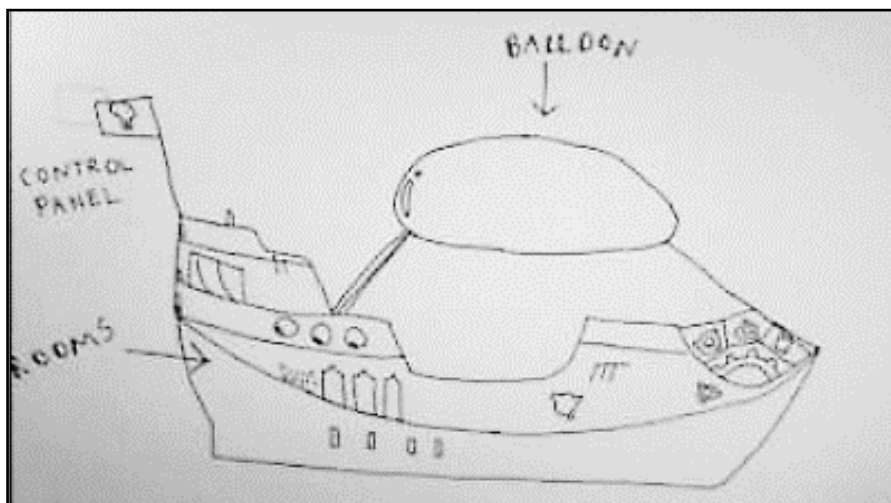
Teleportation

Teleportation – the hypothetical way of traveling from one point to another without traversing the physical space – has long been portrayed in a future envisioned through science fiction, literature and movies. The same is true for participants in NJTPA On Air. Several entries either mentioned, or described in detail, a future where teleportation instantly brings people where they want to go – with a push of a button, a ball, a hop in a tube, or even a specially equipped face mask. Submissions brought to life a future where transportation is easy, instantaneous, and free for everyone.

Selected quotes on teleportation:

- The future of transportation is teleporting. Step 1 is hold the ball. Step 2 is you teleport when you say where you want to go. Step 3 you teleport. I went to a log cabin in the mountains.

- If you want to go to school, you can just press a button and then you will be at school. That can help when you want to go to your friend's house, but your mom and dad won't drive you, then you can just press a button and you are there.

- Instead of train stations and bus stations, there will be portals. No more roads or train tracks, just a little platform where we enter the portal and arrive at the other side in a blink of the eye. We will have so much more land to play and relax in.

- You can put on a mask and you press a glowing button on your mask and you think about where you want to go. You can be there in just three seconds.

- Rules: You have to be 18 to teleport. You have to have an ID card that says you can teleport.

- On your ride to your job at the power station you watch an ad play on tv boasting a new form of traveling known as "teleportation"...

- In 2050, a device that is implanted in the hand, it allows the user to think about a certain destination and your brain sends the message to that device which allows you to put your hand on the wall and open up a portal to the destination you would like to be at. In the future is that you won't need to purchase cars anymore because the device is free.

- Transporters could even be a good machine for families. Families may even use it for fun adventures if they ever feel bored and want to try something new.

Lessons Learned

Conducting outreach has been extremely challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. Limiting options for in-person outreach and engagement has often limited the ability of outreach teams to collect meaningful input from hard-to-reach populations. The NJTPA On Air Future of Transportation Contest was able to break through, grab attention, and provide meaningful insights on how young people feel about the future. A few key lessons from this program are listed below:

- Launching a fun and interactive online contest for children created an opportunity to collect input while at the same time giving them an outlet for creativity and self-expression. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, many children had limited outlets for their talent and creativity. Many of the parents who submitted responses for their children remarked at how much fun the activity was and how grateful they were that their children had this opportunity to channel energy into a contest submission.

- The teachers, libraries, and afterschool programs engaged through this process were also grateful for the chance to provide children with an assignment that was all-at-once fun, educational, and served a purpose to the greater community. Informal feedback from these instructors suggested that the contest was a uniquely exciting opportunity and infused enthusiasm and energy into their classrooms and programs. Several teachers also used the contest as an opportunity to work on creative and critical writing skills with the older contestants, providing a fun and colorful topic to explore while honing the fundamentals of essay writing.

- NJTPA On Air also proved to be a successful opportunity to raise awareness of the NJTPA as a public forum in the transportation planning process and bring a new audience to the Long Range Transportation Plan. Many of the parents, teachers, and kids participating in the contest learned about the NJTPA for the first time. The contest elevated the NJTPA's "name recognition" which will, hopefully, encourage additional participation in future public engagement activities.

- While children dreaming about the future might seem fanciful, the themes they explored in their work represent honest portrayals of what they want their futures to look like. They are concerned about the environment. They'd like to have faster, more reliable transportation options that are comfortable, safe, convenient, and provide them with the independence to get where they need to go. The creative works collected through this contest provide a snapshot of the hopes that today's children have for a future that leverages technology to make life easier, safer, more equitable, sustainable, and (of course) more fun.

Plan 2050 Targeted Outreach Focus Groups

Summary of Findings

April 2021

NJTPA Plan 2050 Targeted Outreach Focus Groups
Summary of Findings

Background

As part of the public engagement process for Plan 2050, the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) actively sought participation from underrepresented and historically disadvantaged populations. To address this need, the Public Outreach and Engagement Team at the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University (Rutgers-POET) conducted five specialized focus groups aimed at understanding the unique travel needs and challenges of vulnerable and traditionally hard-to-reach populations. These groups included caregivers for seniors and people with disabilities; men and women re-entering society after justice system involvement; limited English proficient residents; and residents who are unemployed.

This summary report contains high-level findings from these focus groups, including findings specific to each demographic group. More detail on the feedback received from each group is available in the individual focus group reports in the appendix.

Focus Group Promotion and Recruitment

Rutgers-POET used several engagement strategies to recruit participants from each target population. The outreach consisted of three different approaches, including social media posts, partnerships with community organizations, and one-on-one follow-up with harder-to-reach participants.

Rutgers-POET designed and distributed an online screening form and promoted the focus groups (mentioning the $50 participation incentive) on Facebook within groups related to the five target populations. The information was also posted on Twitter and various local Patch websites, as well as shared directly with relevant community organizations that work with the identified groups.

In order to recruit participants who were re-entering society after incarceration, Rutgers-POET partnered closely with two community organizations: Transition Professionals in Hackensack and the New Jersey Re-entry Organization, which operates statewide. Partnering with these organizations for the purposes of recruitment and facilitations helped the Rutgers-POET facilitator to gain participant trust, and organization staff participating in the conversations gave additional comments and context. Reflecting the practices of these organizations, Rutgers-POET hosted separate focus groups for male and female ex-offenders.

Participant Demographics

Of the 37 total focus group participants, 14 resided in Bergen County, five each in Essex and Hudson Counties, four in Ocean County, two in Monmouth County, and one each in Camden, Hunterdon, Morris, and Union Counties. Participants also provided information on their age and gender, with the exception of participants in the ex-offender groups. Overall, participants were mostly women (72 percent). The largest group (33 percent) was ages 35-44 years, followed by the 45-54 group (29 percent), and the 25-34 group (18 percent). With the exception of the focus group for unemployed residents, the majority of all focus group participants stated that the bus is their primary travel mode.

Common Themes

Each focus group discussion touched on the transportation challenges that participants experience, what aspects of the transportation system they would like to change, what aspects work well for them, how they use technology to aid in getting around, and what they hope transportation will be like in the future. Several common themes arose from these discussions:

- ***Unreliable and late bus service causes cascading problems for riders.*** Bus riders experience significant challenges with reliably reaching destinations on time. These challenges include buses that arrive late or early, buses that do not follow stated schedules, full buses unable to accept more passengers, and buses that do not show up at all. This poor service causes a cascade of issues for riders, including missed transfers and trips that can take three or four hours, especially on bus routes that only run every hour. To arrive on time for a scheduled appointment, bus riders have to factor in the possibility of delays, meaning that they may arrive very early to their destination with no place to wait.

- ***Poor bus service limits access to opportunity.*** Participants who use buses to get around described limiting their job searches to opportunities that were nearby, in order to avoid lengthy bus commutes that could be hampered by delays and unreliable service. Participants described being fired from jobs after arriving late due to bus delays. The availability of bus routes also limits where people can attend school or search for housing.

- ***Limited infrastructure and amenities for bus riders poses safety issues.*** Participants reported feeling unsafe and uncomfortable at bus stops that lack shelters, benches, or lights, especially at night or in the winter. Many participants who take buses that operate along highways felt very unsafe because of the lack of sidewalks or a place to stand, as well as the close proximity of speeding vehicles. The general lack of pedestrian infrastructure that connects to bus stops, including limited crosswalks, force travelers to choose between jaywalking or walking a farther distance.

- ***Bus service is plagued with issues, but it gets users where they need to go.*** During each focus group, the facilitator encouraged participants to reflect on what transportation options and amenities work well for them. While much of the discussion focused on the negative aspects of bus service in the region, participants agreed that, despite unreliable service and lengthy wait times, they are typically able to use the bus system to get where they need to go.

- ***Better outreach to bus riders about digital fare payment is needed.*** Changes to cashless or electronic bus fare payment came as a surprise to many participants. They reported seeing no advance notice about the change on some routes. Some have been denied boarding when attempting to pay in cash, and some riders without debit cards resorted to purchasing pre-paid cards so that they could complete electronic fare payments. Furthermore, it is not always clear when a bus route requires exact change.

- ***Bus riders are dissatisfied by NJ TRANSIT customer service.*** Some participants had called NJ TRANSIT to make complaints, but they received an unsatisfactory response or no response. They felt that the agency has been unresponsive to riders, and that bus drivers sometimes treat

passengers poorly. Riders have experienced bus drivers who do not accommodate people with disabilities, seniors, or people who are not visibly disabled but request an accommodation. Participants were also frustrated about being denied entry onto buses when they were unprepared for the switch to cashless fare payment.

- ***Traffic is an issue for drivers and bus passengers.*** Among drivers and bus riders, a common issue was heavy traffic on the region's numerous highways. Many participants noted heavy rush hour traffic during early mornings and Friday afternoons and evenings. Drivers and bus riders shared the impression that traffic is better in the summer months and becomes worse after Labor Day.

- ***Conversations about transportation technology focused on the use of mobile apps to plan trips, check public transit info, and avoid traffic.*** Conversations about technology focused almost exclusively on the use of mobile apps, and most participants reported using one or more apps as part of their daily travel routines. Popular mobile app features included bus location tracking; retrieving driving, public transit, and walking directions; and checking traffic congestion status. Waze and Moovit were the most popular mobile apps, followed by Google Maps and Uber/Lyft. Many transit riders also reported using the NJ TRANSIT mobile app and the MyBus text service, with mixed reviews. Some stated that the bus location tracker is rarely accurate and that many bus stops lack signage showing the "Stop ID" needed to use the MyBus service.

- ***Poor public transit service leads travelers to switch to driving.*** Some participants who relied on public transit aimed to eventually switch to driving. Reasons for discontinuing public transit use included not having enough space to social distance, language barriers that prevent riders from accessing information and asking questions, and confrontations with rude bus drivers and passengers.

Demographic-Specific Findings

The five demographic groups that participated in the focus groups shared many of the same challenges, such as the reliability and accessibility of public transit. However, some transportation challenges uniquely affected a particular demographic group. The specific challenges discussed by each group are summarized below.

- ***People who are unemployed (Attachment A)*****:** The transportation landscape affects how unemployed residents feel about their career prospects and how they go about looking for work. Gaps in transportation service can lead residents to move between counties or states, miss out on opportunities, or become discouraged in the job search. The challenges faced by this group were the lack of access to public transit to commute to job opportunities, particularly in more suburban/rural areas. For those choosing between commuting via public transit or driving to job opportunities, public transit is typically a less viable option due to the time needed to make transfers. Residents with access to public transit options felt more optimistic and empowered in their job search. Commuting time and availability of transit options is essential for this group.

- *Caregivers (Attachment B):* Caregivers were very aware of the challenges that the built environment poses for their disabled clients or family members. The lack of safe, pedestrian-oriented infrastructure makes it difficult for disabled residents to get the fresh air or physical activity they need for physical and mental health. Caregivers avoid going for walks with the person they care for because uneven and disconnected sidewalks can cause falls, and they worry whether destinations will have adequate handicap parking and ramps. Some caregivers also worry that their client or loved one would face problems when navigating public transit alone, such as reading signs and schedules. They emphasized the utility of paper bus schedules, which facilitate easier trip planning for seniors and people with learning disabilities.

- *Limited English Proficient residents (Attachment C):* Limited English proficient residents experience significant challenges when using public transit. Anxiety about not being able to read signs, alerts, and schedules; the lack of bi-lingual ticketing and fare information; and feeling unable to ask for assistance or directions if they get lost, all contribute to making these residents wary about using public transit. Even residents who have some English proficiency, who are perhaps able to understand English but less able to speak it, experience these challenges. Some participants reported that they avoid NJ TRANSIT buses and primarily use the private shuttle buses or $1 buses that operate in some NJ communities. The language barrier, coupled with poor customer service, a lack of cleanliness, and poorly maintained and run-down amenities, make these residents feel that public transit is not always a safe or welcoming environment.

- *Male and Female Ex-offenders (Attachment D and E):* A significant challenge that formerly incarcerated individuals face is re-entry into the labor market and access to affordable housing. They have difficulty finding housing that is both affordable and in close proximity to public transit service and job opportunities, and they may be forced to exchange a long commute for housing affordability. Successful reentry into society for an ex-offender is partly dependent on access to transportation options.

Improvement Recommendations

Throughout the five focus group discussions, participants shared the following suggestions for improving transportation options in the region:

- Make bigger and more visible signs on the Parkway.
- Limit road construction during rush hours.
- Develop a more modern and inviting image and branding for public transit service.
- Require bus drivers to wait until senior citizens are seated before departing.
- Clean buses more frequently and provide hand sanitizers and masks to riders.
- Increase police presence at transit stations, especially around Elizabeth Station.
- Engage the transit police in assisting the homeless people in Newark Penn Station.
- Make the process for making complaints to NJ TRANSIT more accessible.
- Improve the accuracy of bus location, arrival, and departure information on the NJ TRANSIT app and MyBus text service.
- Expand the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail into Bergen County.

- Make transit information in Spanish easily accessible and have bilingual bus drivers or transit workers.
- Make transit more affordable for low-income residents who make multiple trips per day to reach work, run errands, etc.
- Create a universal fare payment card that can be used across bus, rail, and light rail.
- Facilitate better public outreach and education regarding electronic fare payment.
- Ensure that paper bus schedules are readily available at transit stations.
- Install pedestrian accessibility features at every intersection.
- Introduce more bike parking and more bike rental services.

Background

This focus group was held Thursday, November 19, 2020 via a Zoom video conference. Nine people participated. Rutgers-VTC staff Nieves Pimienta and Miriam Salerno led the session, aided by Sarah Tomasello. This focus group session was convened with the intention to assess the transportation experiences and challenges faced by residents of the Northern New Jersey region who are unemployed or looking for work.

Participant Demographics

Four participants resided in Bergen County. Two participants resided in Essex county and one participant each resided in Camden, Hunterdon, and Morris counties.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Travel Challenges

Ms. Pimienta began the discussion by asking participants to describe the modes of travel they usually use and the challenges they face. Eight of the nine participants usually drive, and the remaining participant mostly uses public transit and walks. Of the eight participants who drive, three sometimes take the train, one participant sometimes walks, and another sometimes takes the bus.

Participants discussed the challenges that they experience when getting around the region. The following common challenges emerged from this discussion:

- **Traffic:** Several participants described issues with car traffic, especially during rush hours. Drivers and bus riders agreed that traffic and delays are noticeably worse in the winter. One participant stated: "It seems like the Turnpike after Labor Day and up to Memorial Day of the next year—it's a nightmare." Drivers also reported experiencing heavy traffic due to construction projects. One participant noted, "even when they're not there working, because they have the construction signs always out, people will slow down."
- **Unreliable and late bus service:** A few participants who regularly take the bus described issues with bus timeliness and consistency with posted schedules. Multiple riders reported buses not arriving on time or not arriving at all at a scheduled stop. One participant shared that late buses make transferring buses to get to her final destination difficult, especially when the driver of the connecting bus refuses to wait for passengers running up to the stop; she sometimes has to run to the next stop or run to a different bus route if her connecting bus refuses to wait for passengers coming from late buses. Another participant noted that sometimes buses arrive early and leave early so that on-time riders must wait an additional hour for the bus to loop back around. Three participants also had issues with late and delayed trains.
- **Limited public transit options in Hunterdon County:** One participant shared that Hunterdon County, where she resides, has limited public transit options that often run once per hour and stop at 6 p.m. She noted, "If you work there and you take public transportation, you can't work after 6 p.m., otherwise you're taking an Uber," and that Uber might cost her approximately $20 per day. Being without access to public transit in Hunterdon County seriously limited her ability

to work, so she was staying with friends in Burlington County several nights per week with the goal of moving there.

What Works Well

Ms. Pimienta asked participants to describe what works well for them when traveling in the region. Participants mainly talked about the benefits of different technologies that provide travel information. Participants liked being able to access public transit schedules and other information through the NJ TRANSIT website and mobile app. Participants also reported satisfaction with other websites and apps that give step-by-step public transit directions. One participant liked the alerts for crime activity, accidents, and storm warnings on the electronic bulletin boards over highways.

Travel and Unemployment

Participants discussed how transportation affected their ability to find employment and how unemployment has changed the way they get around. Their discussion touched on the following topics:

- ***Public transit as a good fallback option:*** One participant felt that their town (Maywood) had a lot of public transit options available if one could not drive or telecommute. Another participant said that, "you would have a way to get to a job if you didn't have a car—I think New Jersey has really good public transportation." One participant was able to find a second job because of the multiple bus options available for commuting to the Cherry Hill mall. Another participant was looking for work that was near buses so he could begin relying on public transit in lieu of his three cars. Conversely, a different participant was wary of train travel because of COVID 19-related precaution and is looking for work-from-home positions and mostly travelling by car.
- ***Managing car upkeep:*** Two drivers reported that since becoming unemployed they have had less money to keep up with car insurance payments, and one participant was considering selling one of his three cars. Another participant found it hard to find a job, resulting in her car being underused; she would drive the car occasionally to avoid issues from under-use.
- ***Relocating:*** Among participants that have had difficulty finding job opportunities, one is considering the relocation costs versus the benefits of accepting job offers in other states.

Travel and Technology

Participants discussed what technologies they use when traveling. They mainly discussed using platforms that provide directions, traffic information, and trip planning tools. Four of the drivers reported using Waze to access this information. They liked that it is an all-in-one platform that provides all of the travel information they need. Participants also used mobile apps like Google Maps, Uber, Lyft, and SpotAngels. One participant used Apple's CarPlay app while driving and liked that it allows her to safely make phone calls. Another participant mentioned that they liked using EZ-Pass express lanes which enable them to maintain speed on the highway while paying tolls.

Participants also talked about NJ TRANSIT mobile services and gave mostly positive feedback. One participant uses the NJ TRANSIT mobile app to track the location of buses. While the app is usually accurate, he has experienced times when the announced bus does not arrive or disappears from the tracking system. Another participant liked having the option to buy tickets through the NJ TRANSIT mobile app because it is simple, fast, and no-touch. She also liked that the app accepts multiple payment methods.

Future Outlook and Final Comments

Participants shared their final remarks and hopes for what transportation will be like in the future. Participants were looking forward to automated vehicles, more protected bike lanes, living closer to work, and increased reliability of public transit.

Participants talked about whether driving would continue to be the predominant travel mode. Several participants agreed that they would use public transit if they knew their destination had limited parking options, but that overall, they strongly preferred to drive. One participant said she likes to drive so that she can listen to music and FaceTime with friends and family. One participant stated, "We enjoy our cars and the private space that we create there. At the same time, we'll take the bus if it's necessary."

Background

This focus group was held Wednesday, December 16, 2020 via a Zoom video conference. Six people participated. Rutgers-VTC staff Nieves Pimienta, and Miriam Salerno led the session, aided by Sarah Tomasello. This focus group session was convened with the intention of assessing the transportation experiences and challenges caregivers in New Jersey face.

Participant Demographics

All of the participants resided in Bergen County. Three of the participants were professional caregivers, while the other three cared for a family member.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Transportation Challenges

Ms. Pimienta inquired about which modes of travel participants usually use and the challenges they face. Four of the six participants usually drive to their destination, although one of these respondents formerly took the bus. The remaining participants mostly use the bus. The following themes emerged from this discussion:

- *Traffic:* All four of the regular drivers described issues with car traffic in Bergen County, especially during rush hours on Route 46 and Route 80. One participant also encountered heavy traffic on Routes 23 and 287; she encounters traffic from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and is forced to leave for work early to avoid it. Taking the bus in lieu of driving would take two hours to commute from Bergen County to Wayne in Passaic County because she would have to transfer in NYC. Two other drivers noted experiencing the most traffic in the evenings around 5 p.m.
- *Unreliable Bus Service*: Several bus riders noted that the consistency of bus schedules was a significant problem for them. Two participants found buses to rarely run according to their officially posted schedule. One driver who used to take the bus mentioned that the posted schedule on the website never matched when the bus would actually arrive. Another participant stopped taking the bus because of the pandemic but previously experienced buses running on schedule very rarely, and usually only in the summer.
- *Infrequent Bus Service:* One rider had an issue with the frequency of buses. Her experience with buses scheduled to come every 40-60 minutes was that because there are so few buses, the bus would arrive to her stop already full and she would have to wait for the next bus, "Now it takes you 3-4 hours to get to your destination, or you just have to go back home. And the person that you're supposed to be with has to stay alone all those hours." Infrequent service also makes it difficult for her to make bus transfers. People resort to taking "minibuses" when the NJ TRANSIT bus is too crowded for them. "If it wasn't for the other buses, the minibuses, I don't think people would be able to make it anywhere."
- *Lack of Sidewalks:* Participants also reported experiencing a lack of sidewalks or broken sidewalks in places they commonly travel. This makes it difficult for them to travel on foot for the people they care for. Participants also noted a general lack of ramps and handicap parking spots. They worried about the people they care for falling or getting hurt.

What is Working

One participant stated that most of the bus lines that she uses arrive on time. Another participant noted that Uber is very useful to her, particularly if she cannot access her car. Two participants agreed that the presence of printed bus schedules on the bus was a good feature for them. Being able to access the schedule without having to take out a phone was beneficial for them as caretakers and for the people they care for who may not be able to take out their phone on the bus.

Transportation and Technology

Participants discussed what technologies they use when travelling. Four participants primarily used Google Maps. One person used Google Maps every day, and one person used it in tandem with Apple maps for driving. One participant used Waze and one participant switched from Google Maps to MoovIt because she found it easier to navigate on her phone.

One participant was aware of the NJ TRANSIT MyBus text service from seeing the signs at bus stops, but she has not followed through on using the service. Another participant has used the NJ TRANSIT mobile app but has not used the MyBus feature. She does not feel comfortable navigating new apps on her own and would like video instructions for them.

Transportation and Caregivers

Participants discussed caretaking challenges related to transportation. One participant no longer travels with the one she cares for because of the pandemic. Three participants reiterated that the lack of sidewalks or the poor quality of sidewalks make travelling with a senior or a person with a disability difficult. One participant is afraid that sidewalk conditions will cause one of her clients to fall or cause her to fall if they are holding onto her. Two participants have encountered a lack of ramps, even at some doctor's offices.

One person was concerned that information is not always offered in multiple languages and some of her non-English-speaking clients would have problems if they were not travelling with her. Additionally, she noted that bus drivers do not always accommodate passengers who are not visibly disabled and she herself has been refused accommodation (lowering of bus stairs) when she was feeling unwell on the 10 bus. She has also encountered dialysis patients forced to wait a long time after dialysis for Medicare-provided transportation to take them home.

Future Outlook and Final Comments

Participants shared their final remarks and hopes for what transportation will be like in the future. Several participants were looking forward to electric vehicles that would reduce automobile-based pollution. One person is hoping for high-speed rail and electric trains for long distance travel. Some participants had lingering concerns. One participant is concerned that autonomous buses will be introduced and that the proliferation of robots and mismanaged technology will detrimentally limit human in-person interactions. Another participant is concerned that the future will bring increased traffic.

Focus Group Summary Report

INTRODUCTION

This focus group was held Wednesday, December 2, 2020 via a Zoom video conference. Ten people participated. Rutgers-VTC staff Nieves Pimienta led the session, aided by Sarah Tomasello. The purpose of this focus group was to understand the unique transportation and mobility challenges that people with limited English proficiency may experience when traveling in the Northern New Jersey region.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

There were five participants who resided in Hudson County, two in Essex County, and one each in Bergen, Union and Ocean counties. Participants also shared their places of origin. The group included participants from Colombia, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Peru, and Puerto Rico.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Transportation Challenges

Ms. Pimienta inquired about which modes of travel participants usually use and the challenges they face. Three of the 10 participants drive and use public transit selectively, specifically the train and bus. The remaining seven participants mostly use public transit. Seven participants use independent mini-bus services to supplement their travel or as a main transportation option. One participant has used the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail as part of their commute and another mentioned resuming cycling as a recreational activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants discussed facing the following challenges when traveling via these various modes:

- ***Bus Delays:*** Bus tardiness was the group's main concern. Eight participants described issues with bus timeliness and consistency with posted schedules. Multiple riders reported buses not arriving on time, arriving late and crowded, or not arriving at all. A lack of bus shelters and harsh weather conditions worsen the experience of waiting for off-schedule buses and riders feel that NJ TRANSIT has neglected them as paying customers. Specifically noted were the River Road and Port Imperial areas for having late and crowded bus routes.
- ***Bus Fare and Ticketing Options:*** Participants have had difficulty getting single one-way bus tickets and having exact change when paying in cash on the bus. Some riders have been denied entrance for missing a few cents of bus fare and some end up paying more than the fare because they do not have change. However, participants also complained about the recent switch to cashless-only ticketing.

- *Public Transit Customer Service:* Overall, participants who use public transit feel they receive unsatisfactory customer service. Some riders have experienced bus drivers who do not lower bus steps despite someone having trouble boarding and bus drivers who abruptly take off without waiting for senior citizens to be seated. Nevertheless, participants have had trouble finding out how to report complaints or feedback, "I couldn't find who to complain to. It is an abuse – because you are paying for something and you feel that you have little right to travel well, comfortably, or calmly, knowing that you are going to get to work on time or vice versa. This – it is not fair; it is an injustice."
- *Public Transit and Language Barriers:* According to some participants, people stop riding the buses out of fear of not knowing how to ask in English about fare or destination. These potential riders are afraid of getting off at the wrong station or bus stop and not knowing how to ask for directions. It was suggested that NJ TRANSIT hire bilingual bus drivers and supply information in both English and Spanish. Another participant claimed that even the police are often not helpful.
- *Traffic:* Both automobile drivers and bus riders described the negative impact of traffic. One participant experienced construction which worsened traffic for almost 5 years, especially at or around Routes 280, 1, and 9. Rains and flood conditions exacerbate traffic on already congested roadways. Two drivers also complained about the number and expense of tolls compared to other states and compared to the benefits of tolled highways. Drivers experience traffic congestion despite entering a tolled highway. Drivers also felt that public transit buses have inconsiderate driving patterns and that bus drivers take up multiple lanes and force other drivers out of lanes "without remorse."
- *Poor Infrastructure Conditions:* Drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists all mentioned issues with road conditions which were viewed as a deterrent from walking or cycling. Participants noted the location of many potholes around the Mills at Jersey Gardens mall and the poor and dangerous condition of the road and bridge turning that leads to the mall. One participant avoids walking in Elizabeth because it is very dark, and the street lighting is often damaged. Another participant mentioned the lack of bike lanes near Ocean County bridges and participants discussed how the narrow space provided for pedestrians and cyclists felt unsafe.
- *Minibus Use:* To make up for gaps in bus service and lateness, several participants use the independent minibuses (usually around Jersey City and Bergenline Avenue). The relatively low-tech mini-buses are viewed as more convenient: riders can pay in cash and receive change, the mini-buses are less expensive, money is not wasted on tickets because riders pay at point-of-service, and the customer service culture is different. Riders who fear getting lost on NJ TRANSIT buses due to the language barrier turn to minibuses instead.

Transportation and Technology

Participants reported using several different mobile apps to aid travel. Google Maps, the NJ TRANSIT app and myBus text service, Moovit, Waze, and iMaps were all mentioned. One participant uses mobile apps in tandem with a printed schedule. All participants use multiple apps to make quick decisions mid-trip. While Google Maps was viewed as the most popular and reliable, no one app was 100 percent reliable

or trusted. Participants also use Lyft and Uber; depending on the destination, rideshare services might be cheaper and may enable safer travel, more social distancing, and less wait-times than public transit.

What Should Change

Participants were specific with their needs and offered several suggestions for better travel in Northern New Jersey. With respect to bus service, participants suggested more bus shelters, more bus options on the east side of Union City (Park Avenue/Boulevard East), and on Kennedy Boulevard (Union City-Jersey City), and better coordination between the buses and light rail in Hoboken and Port Imperial. Bus riders wanted the option to buy bus cards or single tickets at stores or vending machines as an alternative to buying tickets via the NJ TRANSIT app. Bus riders also suggested supplying internet on buses because not everyone has internet access to use the NJ TRANSIT app for cashless payments.

Four participants remarked on ways in which the ambiance and safety around public transit could improve. At Newark Penn Station, participants voiced concern about the apparent lack of hygiene and security and the presence of homeless people. One participant drives mainly to avoid Newark Penn Station. Participants want better security at Newark Penn Station as well as police presence near some bus routes and at Elizabeth Station where people have been seen loitering and potentially "looking for a fight." Participants also suggested bus shelters with benches and cameras would make people feel safer and discourage robberies. Participants expressed frustration with some buses that are often not well-kept and would like more frequent bus cleanings as well as disinfectants for riders to use on the bus so that, "when you enter, not only with a mask, but also with toiletries, you feel safe." Participants want a change to a cleaner and more modern look for transit. One participant stated, "The passenger deserves to go into a more welcoming, more pleasant, and more hygienic environment."

Participants also suggested bus music to discourage loud cell phone users and outreach to promote polite bus rider behaviors and senior citizen priority seating. Public transit users have had difficulty parsing transit information when bus signs are unreadable or hand-written (as experienced in the 156 and 159 buses) or in cases where people and ambient noise drown out audio announcements (as experienced on the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail). Two participants mentioned the need to clearly communicate stops; sometimes bus drivers have skipped stops without notifying the passengers. Another participant stated the need to have NJ TRANSIT communicate bus delays via an alert system.

Those who primarily drive wanted better visibility for the small exit signs on the Parkway and for buses to display a complaint number in large text on the outside of bus to report negligent bus drivers.

What is Working

As stated by one participant, NJ TRANSIT offers security in transportation. If something happens, NJ Transit will cover an accident, and buses have air conditioning and heating, while the independent mini buses do not.

Future Outlook and Final Comments

Participants shared their final remarks and hopes for the future. They had several suggestions for how the future of transit could be more convenient and better meet their needs. One participant summarized her desire to experience NJ TRANSIT as being safe, reliable, and thinking a little more about its passengers.

Attachment D
NJTPA and Rutgers University
NJTPA Plan 2050: Targeted Outreach Focus Group Summary Report

<u>**Background**</u>

This focus group was held Tuesday, November 24, 2020 via a Zoom video conference. Six people participated, not including staff. Rutgers-VTC staff Nieves Pimienta and Miriam Salerno led the session. The session was planned with assistance from the New Jersey Re-Entry Corporation (NJRC), which helped recruit participants, and focused on the transportation experiences and challenges faced by women living in Northern New Jersey who have been involved with the justice system. Former Governor James McGreevey, NJRC board chairman, and Sofia Lesnewski, NJRC outreach staff, also participated in the discussion.

<u>**Participant Demographics**</u>

All six participants were female clients of NJRC. Three resided in Ocean County. Two participants resided in Monmouth County and one participant resided in Essex County.

<u>**DISCUSSION SUMMARY**</u>

Transportation Challenges

Participants began by describing the travel modes they typically use and the challenges they face. Three participants primarily drove and two participants primarily took the bus. Three participants anticipated receiving driver's licenses and reducing their use of public transportation. The following challenges emerged from this discussion:

- *Limited access:* One participant felt limited in her errands, apartment search, and school prospects because her only bus option is the 836 bus. She would have to engage in multiple transfers after the 836 to access school programs.
- *Electronic bus tickets:* Two participants expressed frustration with buses only accepting electronic payment. One participant was not allowed to ride the bus with her physical ticket and had to incur a $10/month expense to buy a prepaid debit card for electronic payments. She noted that "Not everyone has a debit card."
- *Expense of transportation:* Some women have experienced issues with accessing educational opportunities because they could not afford the cost of public transportation to travel to those sites. One participant who primarily drives to different locations for work noted that her EZ-Pass monthly autofill amount increased from $25 to $165 in a month. She also noted that if her account drops below $36, EZ-Pass fees are taken directly from her card. Another participant shared that she felt these kinds of minimums and practices are when "people turn back to criminals."
- *Unsafe bus stops along highways:* One participant uses a bus stop that is near a highway and does not have a sidewalk or bus shelter, so she only does errands while her child is in daycare to avoid having the child with her near the highway. Another participant added that when transitional housing shelters are full, people are housed in hotels near the Newark airport where they have to walk along the highway to reach a bus stop. It can be difficult for these people to travel when there are no safe transportation options, especially late at night.

- **Lack of public transit options**: Participants expressed frustration with the level of bus service available where they live and work. One participant has been driving without a valid license because of a lack of public transportation options in Ocean County. Another participant works at a mall with two major bus stops. Her bus stops at only one of the mall's stops and she is concerned about having to walk through the mall to reach her job, possibly exposing herself to COVID-19.
- **Buses do not stop:** One participant has been late for work because the 559 bus passed her by. The bus only stops if she is standing exactly next to the bus stop. Another participant also experienced the bus passing her on Route 9 when she finishes her job around 1 a.m.
- **Public transit passenger behavior**: Several participants encountered potentially violent or gang-affiliated riders on public transit and felt anxiety about being pulled into confrontations. Other participants expressed frustration that younger people and men do not always give up their seats for older people and women.
- **Transportation at release:** Participants shared that upon release from prison, they were taken to the nearest train station. Some participants were provided with a train ticket and shared that they were forced to save $25 in their account in anticipation of their release and travel expense. However, one participant noted that the train ticket and $25 account balance was not enough for those who needed to make multiple rail transfers to get to their destination.

Travel and Technology

Participants discussed what technologies they use when travelling. One driver uses Waze for directions and information on the location of police officers. Other participants used the MoovIt application for real-time bus information. Two participants used the NJ TRANSIT MyBus texting service, but other participants noted that their bus stops did not have signage showing the stop ID to use for the text service.

Future Outlook and Final Comments

Participants shared their final remarks and hopes for what transportation will be like in the future. Several participants were looking forward to obtaining a driver's license and not having to rely on public transportation. Two participants want safer bus stops, including sidewalks along Route 9. One participant wanted to be able to buy a physical monthly pass to show to a bus driver in lieu of the electronic payment system. Another participant wanted a program to distribute bus cards to women in need of financial assistance. Another participant wanted to run her own transportation service with the needs of women in mind.

Background

This focus group was help Wednesday, November 11, 2020, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. via a Zoom video conference. Six people participated. Rutgers-VTC staff Nieves Pimienta led the discussion, and Miriam Salerno and Sarah Tomasello were also present. The purpose of this focus group was to understand the transportation and mobility challenges that formerly incarcerated people may experience.

Participant Demographics

Participants included three justice-involved individuals who live in Bergen County, one of whom works as an advocate for homeless people. All three participants were males. Focus group attendees also included three staff members at Transition Professionals, a nonprofit organization in Hackensack assisting formerly incarcerated individuals with reentry into society. Transition Professionals assisted in recruiting focus group participants, who are all clients of the organization.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Transportation Challenges

Much of the conversation regarding transportation challenges revolved around the difficulties that participants have experienced with public transit in their area, specifically buses. Travel by bus is the predominate travel mode for all three of the participants, and the Transition Professionals staff confirmed that many of their clients travel by bus. The following challenges emerged during the discussion:

- *Public transit is expensive*: The participants rarely take NJ TRANSIT trains because the fare is too expensive. However, they said that the buses are expensive as well. Each bus ride costs $2.50, which quickly becomes a burden for justice-involved people reentering society who may not have much disposable income. A Transition Professionals staff member suggested that some sort of discount or subsidy be offered to bus riders who rely on the bus and make multiple trips each day, such as to a job interview, the grocery store, etc.
- *Buses are inconsistent and unreliable:* The participants all noted that NJ TRANSIT buses often arrive at stations either late or ahead of their scheduled stop time. This complicates trip planning immensely. A Transition Professionals staff member agreed, mentioning that this is an especially frustrating problem for her clients who depend on bus service to get to time-sensitive destinations such as court hearings, food banks, and job interviews.
- *Unsafe and inadequate bus stop infrastructure:* One participant commented that many bus stops lack shelter or benches. Another participant added that the absence of shelters exposes riders to rain, snow, and wind, jeopardizing riders' health. He also commented that there are many parts of cities with no crosswalks or stop signs, making them dangerous places for riders walking to a bus stop. Riders have to choose between walking five blocks to the nearest crosswalk or jaywalking and risking being struck by a vehicle or ticketed by police officers. Crosswalks over railroad tracks are also spaced too far apart, which complicates walking to bus stops on the other side.
- *Insufficient bus stops and service:* One participant observed that multiple bus stops in Hackensack and Garfield have been removed over the years. The elderly and disabled people for

whom he works as an advocate have difficulty getting to stops. Another participant complained that areas such as Summit Avenue in Hackensack have an abundance of bus stops (perhaps because this is a more affluent neighborhood) while more bus stops are needed in other areas, like River Street, which runs through the city's downtown. He depends on buses to get to different towns, but the service is often slow due to the frequent stops they make. One participant estimates that it takes him two hours to get from Hackensack to Newark between walking to the stop, riding the bus, then transferring to another local bus in Newark to reach his actual destination. Express buses would be much quicker but only run during rush hour, so people with alternative work schedules are out of luck.

- **Some areas are inaccessible by bus**: Other parts of the state are almost unreachable by bus. Northern Bergen County, including towns like Mahwah and Saddle River, have good jobs but infrequent, unreliable bus service and few stops. A Transition Professionals staff member added that many of her clients face difficulties traveling to jobs in the suburban "hinterlands" of New Jersey, where streets and roads are designed for cars, not transit riders.
- **Lack of notice about electronic payment**: One participant was recently unexpectedly denied entry onto a bus because they switched from accepting cash payments to only taking bus tickets, passes, or NJ TRANSIT app tickets without offering public notice.
- **Difficulty with communication channels:** This participant was frustrated but unsure who to speak with about his experience on these buses. Another participant mentioned that he has called NJ TRANSIT to complain about bus service, only to be told that NJ TRANSIT has contracted that bus out to a different company, which he must call instead. One participant has had negative interactions with bus drivers who answered his questions rudely.

What Should Change

Following the discussion about the challenges they face in getting around, participants and Transition Professionals staff discussed the improvements that they would like to see in the region's transportation system.

- **Infrastructure:** One participant mentioned that he would like to see the roads be better maintained. He would hesitate to buy a car because the potholes on major roadways would quickly damage it.
- **New transit options:** One participant would like to see the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail expanded into Bergen County, or more bus routes added to better connect people to jobs and other destinations. Another participant felt that introducing a bike service like CitiBike would improve mobility for locals because many hesitate to purchase bicycles that might then be stolen. Adding bike parking may help mitigate this. This participant also mentioned that there is a nighttime shuttle in Essex County that offers residents of cities like Newark a free ride to different stops, and he wishes it could cross into Bergen County. Another participant liked the Bergen County Transit Connector service, which runs frequent daytime service in Hackensack connecting the city's bus station, train station, and Hackensack Medical Center. The route is convenient, and drivers can deviate from it to make other stops if given advance notice.
- **Services and accessibility**: One participant recalled an intersection in Hackensack that has been made accessible for the blind and deaf, and he would like to see those features (such as braille lettering on street posts) installed at every intersection. He also noted that NJ TRANSIT police seem to be trained in helping homeless people, and he would like to see more of them stationed

or patrolling in the Hackensack bus terminal area. He usually sees them only at Newark Penn Station.

What Works Well

The group praised some specific services that they find helpful for getting around. One participant shared that bus drivers and train operators have done a good job keeping vehicles sanitized and orderly during the pandemic. Bus Routes 752 and 758 both run well and are useful routes. Another participant does not mind the long walk he sometimes has to take to access weekend bus service, because the path has good sidewalks and is well lit.

Transportation and Technology

Participants and staff reported multiple problems with MyBus, the bus-tracking service NJ TRANSIT offers through its app and website that is supposed to indicate a bus's location and arrival time at all stops. MyBus does not always provide schedules for each bus line. Its estimated arrival times are often inaccurate and it does not indicate when a bus has already stopped at a station. Though there is a number that can be texted to receive updates on a bus line, one participant felt it was unhelpful, especially since he has to pay to send text messages, and accessing alternative services like Google Maps requires using cellular data.