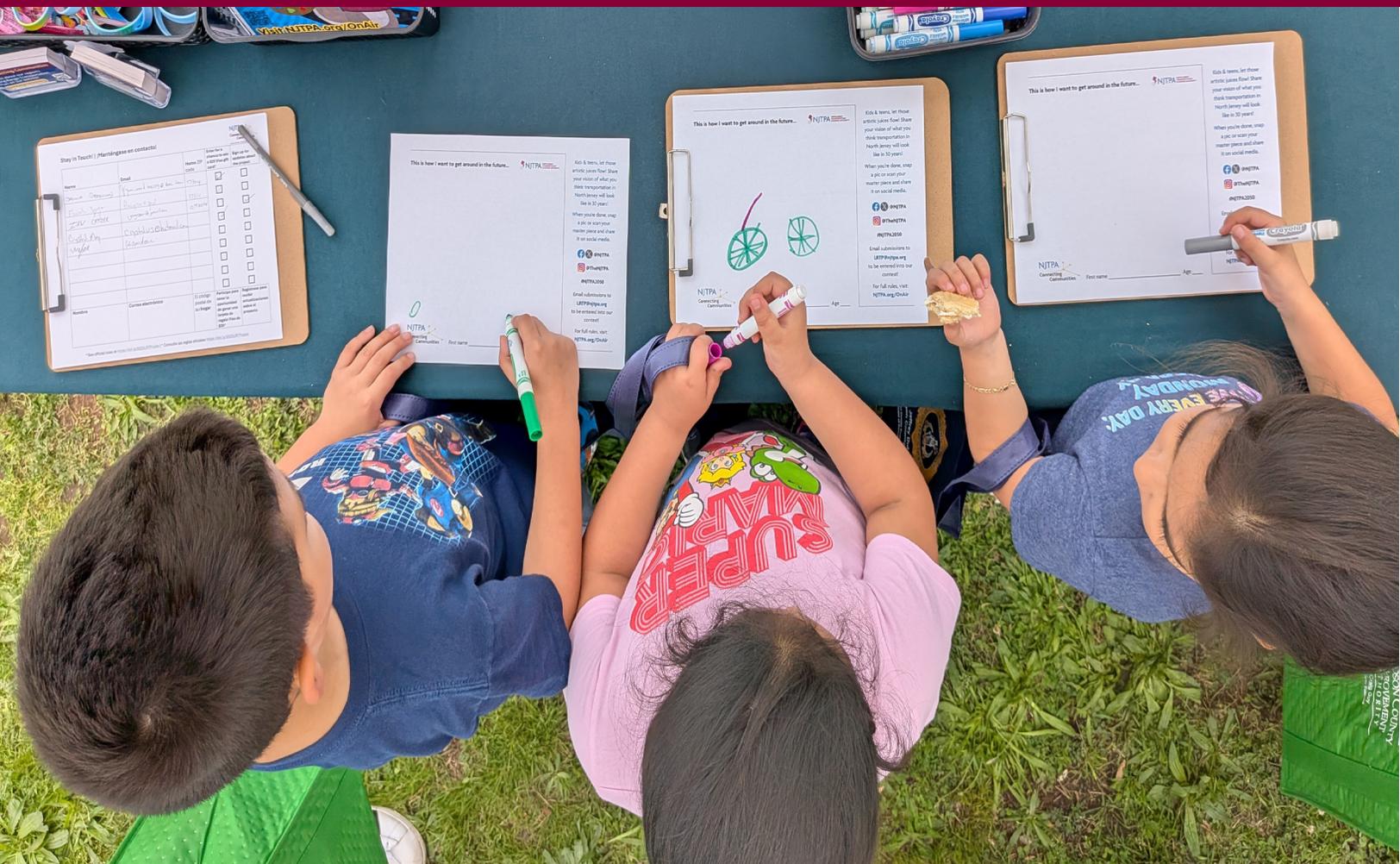


# Public Engagement

JUNE 2025



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## A. Introduction

The NJTPA's **CONNECTING COMMUNITIES** Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) reflects the priorities and values of residents, workers, and communities across North and Central New Jersey. The outreach process was designed to be inclusive, accessible, and meaningful, centered on the idea that everyone should have a voice in shaping the region's transportation future.

Outreach strategies were developed to reach a broad cross-section of the public, with specific attention to ensure participation from individuals and communities who are often underrepresented in planning processes. These efforts helped shape the LRTP and provided a strong foundation for regional transportation investment decisions.

Public engagement for *Connecting Communities* was designed to ensure broad participation across the NJTPA region. The approach focused on informing, involving, and learning from the public throughout the plan development process. Engagement was structured in three phases to allow for early input and continued dialogue. Phase 1 concentrated on building awareness and collecting initial feedback. It relied primarily on digital tools, including a multilingual public survey, virtual forums, and targeted online advertising. Phase 2 shifted to in-person outreach, with a focus on meeting people in their communities to deepen conversations and refine priorities identified during Phase 1. Finally, Phase 3 provided a final opportunity for stakeholders and community members to provide feedback on the draft LRTP. This multi-phase structure supported both reach and depth, offering multiple avenues for a range of communities to participate.



Input gathered through surveys, forums, and pop-up events reflected strong interest in safer, more connected, and more accessible transportation options. Participants expressed a desire for a system that offers more choices beyond driving, addresses safety concerns, and improves access to everyday destinations.

In the Phase 1 survey, nearly half of the participants said they use car-oriented transportation (car, taxi, or ride-share) as their primary mode of getting around today, yet 72 percent of respondents said they would like to take transit more often in the future, over half said they wanted to walk more, and nearly 39 percent hoped to bike or use scooters more. Meanwhile, nearly two-thirds of respondents ranked driving as their least desired future travel mode.

*“I can’t drive due to my disability and transit options limit my ability to get work.”*

*— Bergen County resident*

Nearly 60 percent of respondents said the current transportation system does not fully meet their needs, with public transit concerns most prominent. Top changes that would encourage transit use included increased availability, more frequent service, more flexible hours, faster travel times, and better reliability. Comments also emphasized developing a more connected bike network and improving safety for pedestrians. While some respondents raised concerns about congestion and road conditions, most focused on improving access to transit and enhancing options for walking and biking.

During Phase 2, residents responded to four simple questions at pop-up events and through the supplemental online survey. Their top priorities were:

- **Transit:** Service that goes to more places people want to go
- **Safety:** Streets designed for all users—walkers, cyclists, and drivers
- **Walking and Mobility:** Connected and well-maintained sidewalks
- **Bicycling:** Better connections to parks and community spaces



In addition to structured responses, many participants shared comments reflecting local challenges and personal experiences. These firsthand accounts reinforced broader themes and highlighted the importance of addressing infrastructure gaps, safety concerns, and multimodal accessibility across the region. This input shaped the draft plan’s goals and strategies and will continue to guide the NJTPA’s planning and project development.

*“County roads have no shoulders or sidewalks in my town, Oceanport [...] They keep passing the buck. But the next town has sidewalks on the same county road.”*  
- Monmouth County Pop-up Participant

*“I won’t ride [my bike] on the street anymore because I recently got hit by a car.”*  
- Essex County Pop-up Participant

*“Lower traffic speeds need to be enforced.”*  
- Ocean County Pop-up Participant

*“More ADA-accessible, low-floor buses.”*  
- Monmouth County Pop-up Participant

Finally, in Phase 3, we listened to feedback about the draft LRTP, Air Quality Conformity (AQC) Determination, Transportation Improvement Program through a virtual workshop dedicated to the AQC, a virtual open house for all documents, and by accepting comments via email, phone, and text message.



# HOW WE LISTENED

**1,861**  
SURVEY  
RESPONSES



**17**  
POP-UP  
EVENTS

**1,307 +**  
IN-PERSON  
PARTICIPANTS

**347**  
ONLINE  
SURVEY  
RESPONSES



TARGETED OUTREACH:  
**326**  
PARTICIPANTS

**32**  
BOARD  
VISIONING  
WORKSHOP  
ATTENDEES

**1,836**  
PAPER SURVEYS

**8,125**  
BOOKMARKS

**395** DISTRIBUTED  
TO 51  
FLYERS LIBRARIES



**18**  
STAKEHOLDER  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE  
MEMBERS

**6**  
LANGUAGES  
USED TO  
OUTREACH



**95**

VIRTUAL  
STAKEHOLDER FORUM  
PARTICIPANTS

**274**  
YOUTH  
COLORING  
CONTEST  
ENTRIES

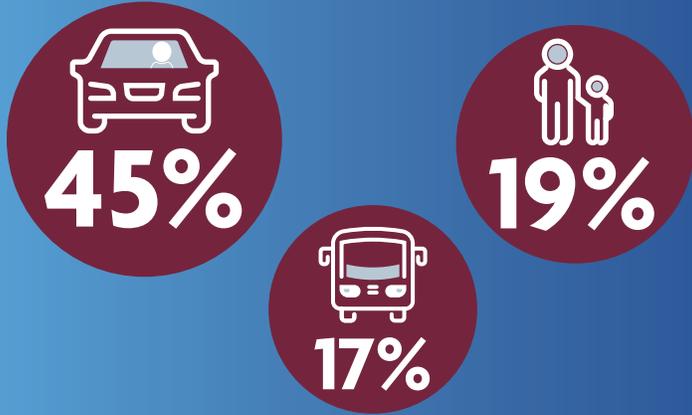


**365**  
SOCIAL  
MEDIA  
POSTS



# WHAT WE HEARD

## CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



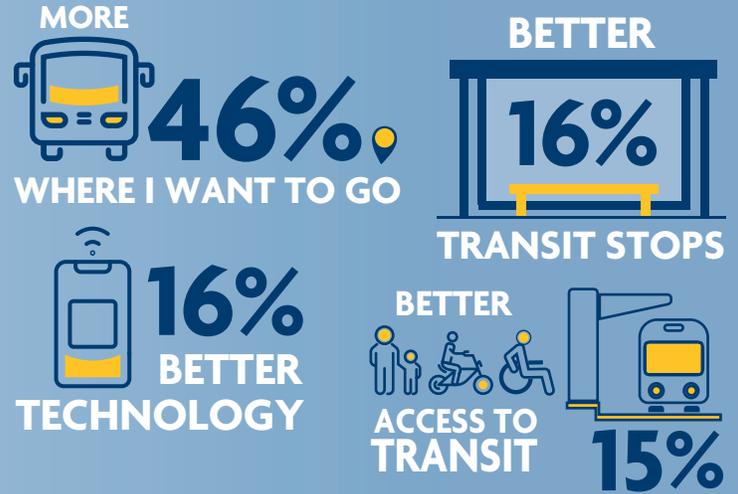
## FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



### SAFER STREETS



### TRANSIT ACCESS

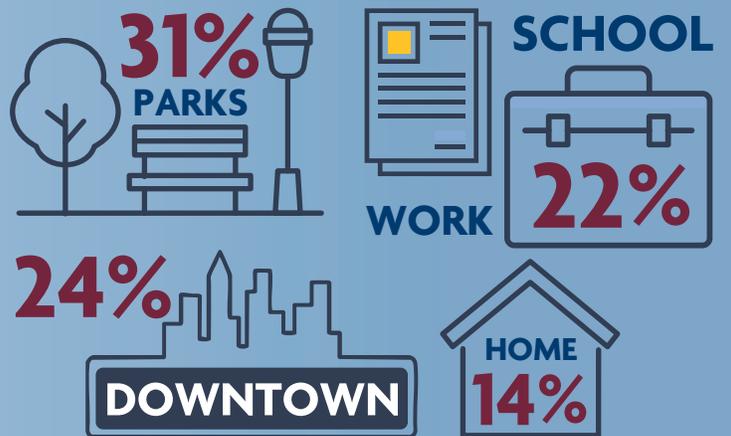


59% said their transportation needs are not being met

### WALKING IMPROVEMENTS



### BIKING IMPROVEMENTS



## B. Communications

Communication materials were developed to be clear, engaging, recognizable, and accessible. Outreach content was written in plain language and most materials were translated into five languages in addition to English, namely Spanish, Hindi, Chinese (simplified), Korean, and Portuguese. The same visual identity and content was used across platforms to reinforce consistency.

A variety of communication tools were used to make participation easy, inclusive, and accessible throughout the planning process. These included social media posts, printed flyers and bookmarks, youth coloring contests, and in-person community pop-ups. Together, these tools supported the NJTPA's broad and flexible engagement strategy to reach communities across the region and meet residents "where they are."

### *Website*

A dedicated project website ([www.njtpa.org/connecting](http://www.njtpa.org/connecting)) served as a central hub for outreach. It provided background information, updates, translated resources, surveys, and events. The website emphasized the online survey to encourage residents to share their feedback. It also provided information about Connecting Communities and the importance of public engagement in developing the LRTP. The home page listed all events and meetings with links to register. A partner resource page provided public event flyers, social media post templates, and materials in six languages: English, Spanish, Hindi, Chinese (simplified), Korean, and Portuguese. The website also included a plugin for visitors to translate the website into other languages.

### *Social Media*

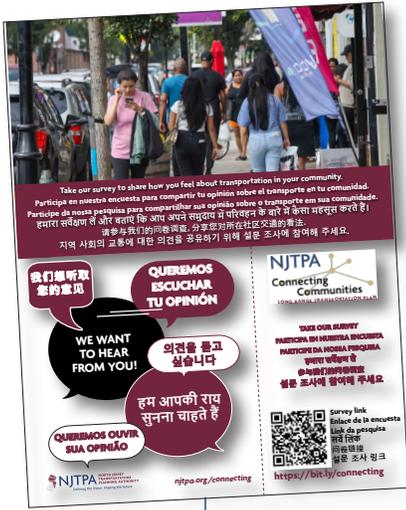
Social media played a central role in raising awareness about Connecting Communities and encouraging public participation. The project team leveraged the NJTPA's existing social media channels, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, and Instagram, to reach followers already engaged with transportation planning topics. These platforms were used to share general information about the LRTP, promote the survey and website, and invite the public to register for virtual events.



To expand reach, the team developed a series of pre-written, multilingual posts and graphics for the NJTPA partner organizations to share with their networks. These materials highlighted a range of transportation modes and reflected the diversity of people and communities across the region. The goal was to provide accessible and ready-to-use content that would reinforce consistent messaging while enabling trusted community groups to communicate in ways that resonated with their audiences.

A targeted paid advertising campaign complemented the organic social media posts, using tailored messages and imagery to reach specific audiences. Ads were created for speakers of each of the five translated survey languages, as well as women, low-income residents, and

Social Media					
Category	# Posts	Reach	Engagements	Avg. Reach	Avg. Engagements
PopUps Promotion	126	7,579	323	60	3
On Air Studio	75	6,964	422	93	6
Survey	66	5,856	335	89	5
Let's Talk Transportation	55	4,299	228	78	4
PopUp photos	27	3,160	323	117	12
LGBTQ + discussion	7	1,019	55	146	8
Young Adult meetup	4	744	62	186	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>29,621</b>	<b>1,784</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>53</b>
Youtube (5 Videos)					
Date Posted	Link				Views
March 26	<i>Let's Talk Transportation: Creating Vibrant Downtowns</i>				40
March 5	<i>Let's Talk Transportation: Improving Access to Transit</i>				38
February 25	<i>Meet Sammy the Squirrel</i>				114
January 30	<i>Let's talk Transportation: Walking, Biking &amp; Rolling Investments</i>				67
January 10	<i>Connecting Communities: Planning for the Future</i>				120
<b>Total</b>					<b>379</b>



individuals with interests in walking, biking, hiking, and public transit.

Visual content was carefully selected to reflect the identities and neighborhoods of the intended audiences, with text, captions, and links provided in the relevant language. Each post directed people to the corresponding version of the survey. During the campaign, the project team tested different images to see which ones generated the most interest. Based on this information, the most engaging ads were used for the remainder of the campaign. The team also monitored response demographics and adjusted targeting and budget allocations to ensure broader regional and demographic representation.

The Phase 1 campaign reached over 250,000 individuals across the NJTPA region and generated more than 5,000 direct clicks to the survey. Spanish-language ads were particularly successful, with over 1,300 link clicks and more than 120,000 impressions. The project team monitored ad performance and survey demographics throughout the campaign, adjusting outreach strategies to ensure a representative sample of participants.

### Other Digital & Print Collateral

Other materials to publicize the Phase 1 survey included flyers that could be shared digitally or posted on public bulletin boards, print surveys, and bookmarks.

### Library Collaboration

The NJTPA conducted targeted outreach to the region’s libraries to help disseminate information and resources to help promote the Phase 1 Survey, prioritizing collaboration with regional libraries and those in traditionally underrepresented communities. Over 8,000 bookmarks and 400 flyers advertising the survey, as well as more than 1,800 print versions of the survey were distributed to 51 public library locations across the region. Bookmarks and flyers included QR codes linking directly to the online survey.



### Outreach Activity Display

At in-person events, the team used a stacked display cube to present information in an interactive and flexible format. Each side of the cube highlighted a different aspect of the plan, allowing participants to engage with content in a self-guided way.

## C. Advisory & Partner Networks

In addition to broad public outreach, the NJTPA engaged with leadership and community-based organizations to help shape the outreach strategy and expand its reach. These advisory and partner networks played a central role in identifying priorities, tailoring outreach methods, and connecting with populations that may be underrepresented in regional planning processes.



### *Board Visioning Workshop*

Before launching public outreach activities, the NJTPA hosted a Visioning Workshop with its Board of Trustees to help shape the direction of the LRTP. The Board includes representatives from each of the subregions, a citizen representative, and relevant agencies, including the NJ Department of Transportation, NJ TRANSIT, the Port Authority of NY and NJ, and the Governor's Authorities Unit.



The workshop was held in person at the NJTPA's offices and provided an opportunity for Board Members to share their perspectives on long-term transportation needs and challenges across the region. To prepare for the session, Board members completed a pre-meeting survey identifying the region's transportation strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. During the workshop, they participated in facilitated breakout discussions and group dialogue focused on regional priorities.



Input from the Visioning Workshop helped inform the design of the Phase 1 outreach strategy, including the focus of the public survey and the framing of topics addressed in virtual forums. Board Members were also encouraged to support public engagement by promoting the plan and outreach activities within their subregions and agency networks.

## Pre-Workshop Survey

Prior to the workshop, Board members and Subregional staff were asked to take a short survey to identify priorities, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. There were 30 responses to the pre-Visioning Workshop survey, including at least one response from every subregion. Collectively, the Board identified the Region's major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as related to transportation planning.

### *Strengths*

- Geographic location
- Demographic diversity
- Educated workforce
- Existing transportation assets (roads, bridges, freight, port facilities, etc.)

### *Weaknesses*

- Transit network access, capacity, and reliability
- Road congestion and unreliable travel times
- Aging or outmoded facilities

### *Opportunities*

- Development/redevelopment around rail stations and bus terminals
- Expanding infrastructure and programs to give people more local travel options, including walking, biking, scooters, demand responsive shuttles, etc.
- Increased commitments to Vision Zero and Complete Streets.

### *Threats*

- Uncoordinated land use and transportation investments
- Unmet funding needs for transportation projects
- Regulations that delay and increase the cost of infrastructure.

## Access & Opportunity Discussion

During the workshop, a facilitated discussion about access and opportunity to the transportation system for all users began with a review of factors the NJTPA uses for its demographic analysis. Newark also provided insights into their community-centric approach and focus on connecting projects and neighborhoods. The importance of engaging communities through meaningful outreach was also highlighted.

### Challenges

- Funding is an issue
- Meeting the needs of people with disabilities in rural areas
- Younger people do not want to obtain a license or a car
- Difficult for undocumented people to obtain a license
- Return on investment for microtransit
- Accessible transit
- Safety and accessibility
- Quality of life
- Improve sidewalks
- ADA ramps at intersections
- Trail connections

### Suggestions

- Support small entities that have limited resources
- Make data-driven funding decisions
- Multiple transportation options
- Research funding opportunities
- Incentivize transit users
- Institutionalize access and opportunity in the planning process
- Local partnerships to provide access to transit
- Provide essential transportation services
- Complement fixed route with on-demand microtransit system
- Permanent microtransit program
- Systematic approach to safety
- More partnerships

## Breakout Groups

Three breakout groups discussed land use, transportation needs, affordable housing, and safety. Overarching challenges included a lack of coordination between towns and counties, new infrastructure to support the increase in residential development and increased demand for both freight and local deliveries, and the need for affordable housing near transit. Popular solutions included better utilization of master plans to identify and address transportation needs in line with land use, taking a data-focused approach, and prioritizing collaboration between municipalities and counties.



## BREAKOUT GROUP 1

### Land Use and Transportation Coordination

#### *Challenges*

- Home rule
- Counties cannot make policies or mandates
- Towns do not coordinate with counties
- Infrastructure cannot support increasing residential development

#### *Suggestions*

- Address challenges with the state legislature (County Planners Act, Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), etc.)
- Require developers to pay a share of transportation improvements
- Consider transportation in zoning and planning decisions and approvals
- Go back to a statewide master plan

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### Existing Transportation Infrastructure

#### *Challenges*

- Limited funding
- Transit Village program does not work everywhere
- Transit service cannot keep up with demand from newer transit villages
- Focus is too heavy on rail transit as opposed to buses, bike lanes, etc.

#### *Suggestions*

- First and Last-Mile Transportation needs to be incorporated into master plans

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### Affordable Housing

#### *Challenges*

- New development near transit is not affordable
- Obtaining higher density development approval in some locations

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### Safety

#### *Suggestions*

- Need a data-focused approach
- Counties and municipalities should collaborate
- Earlier education about bike/pedestrian/driver safety in schools
- Treat distracted walking/biking as a more serious problem
- Partner with Transportation Management Associations (TMA)
- Need better metrics to evaluate the success of safety investments

## BREAKOUT GROUP 2

### Land Use and Transportation Coordination

#### *Challenges*

- Counties are not always included in discussions about municipal redevelopment plans (and often do not even receive a copy)
- There are no requirements to update redevelopment plans to adjust to changing needs

#### *Suggestions*

- Municipalities and counties should collaborate
  - Address transportation impacts that arise because of new development
  - Community benefits agreements
  - Engage municipalities in planning studies
  - Plan for future opportunities
- 

### Safety

#### *Suggestions*

- Need adequate sidewalks and other infrastructure
  - Create a process for implementing Complete Streets policies
  - Counties and municipalities should partner to develop implementation plans – SS4A is opening dialogues and should continue to be an impetus for collaboration
  - Counties support municipalities that have limited resources
  - Expand the NJTPA’s Planning for Emerging Centers program
  - Assist locals in applying for federal grants
  - NJ could help funnel federal funds to municipalities
  - New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) could use more federal funds for projects and put state funds into other programs
- 

### Staffing

#### *Challenges*

- Newark needs staff to review ordinances and meet current standards
- Shortage of inspectors
- Subregions in need of qualified planning staff

#### *Suggestions*

- Legislation to help the inspector certification process needs improvement
- Internships
- Targeted workforce development programs

### **BREAKOUT GROUP 3**

#### **Land Use and Transportation Coordination**

##### *Challenges*

- Lack of coordination
- The NJTPA has limited control

#### **Affordable Housing**

##### *Challenges*

- Transit Villages have the highest need for affordable housing
- Need workforce housing
- Microtransit
- Capacity of the system vs number of new residents



##### *Suggestions*

- Encourage affordable housing within Transit Villages

#### **Safety**

##### *Challenges*

- Need safe access to transit
- Speeding

##### *Suggestions*

- Need camera enforcement to acknowledge driver behavior and careless driving
- Improve driver visibility of pedestrians
- Timing pedestrian signals would also help cross safely
- Paint and maintenance are important for safety even though it is less exciting

#### **Existing Transportation Infrastructure**

##### *Challenges*

- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is being oversold as a concept
- Transit network is linear
- Getting to work
- Train from Hackettstown is not efficient
- Need transit that isn't focused on New York City
- Local roads are becoming more congested

##### *Suggestions*

- Consider a microtransit study, presentation, or working group
- Don't build for today; build for the future
- Add incentives to expedite site plan approval process
- Convert New York City offices to apartments
- Consider shift to work from home in the L RTP
- Consider active transportation differently in urban and rural areas
- Future need for electric vehicle infrastructure

### *Stakeholder Advisory Committee*

As part of the early planning for public engagement, the NJTPA formed a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) to provide input on outreach strategies and help the project team connect with communities. The SAC served as a resource for reviewing materials and advised on methods that could support engagement efforts.

The committee included representatives from organizations with local ties and experience in serving a range of populations, including older adults, people with disabilities, immigrants, low-income residents, and youth.

The SAC met virtually on January 14, March 20, and June 25, 2025. Members reviewed outreach materials before they were finalized and shared ideas for how to adapt messages and tactics for different communities. Several organizations also helped distribute materials and shared engagement opportunities through their networks, strengthening the accessibility and reach of the overall engagement effort.

SAC Member Organizations	
Age-Friendly Englewood	NJ Advocates for Aging Well
Amtrak	NJ Bike & Walk Coalition
Bike JC	Passaic County Planning
Disability Rights NJ	Somerset County Planning Division
Hands Inc	Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of NJ
Jewish Federation of Ocean County	Tri-State Transportation Campaign
New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition	UpNext North Jersey

### **SAC Meeting #1 Summary**

The NJTPA held the first SAC meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, via Zoom. The meeting introduced the planning process and sought feedback on the proposed public engagement strategy. The SAC included representatives from advocacy organizations, county planning departments, transportation agencies, and community-based organizations to help shape an inclusive planning process.

### **Introduction**

Ted Ritter, the NJTPA's Manager of External Affairs, opened the meeting with an introduction to the LRTP, which will guide transportation investments in North Jersey through 2050. He highlighted the plan's goals to improve mobility, enhance safety, support sustainability, and promote economic growth.



## Public Engagement Strategy

Christina Arlt of McCormick Taylor presented the public engagement approach, explaining that the strategy includes a multilingual online survey, a mix of virtual and in-person events, and targeted outreach to underserved communities. The team plans to host three *Let's Talk! Transportation* virtual forums and attend festivals and community gatherings for pop-up engagement. To support outreach efforts, the team will provide a social media toolkit, event flyers, and multilingual promotional materials for stakeholders to share.

The project team encouraged SAC members to take an active role in promoting participation by sharing outreach ideas and contacts, promoting the survey and events, distributing printed materials, using the Partner Resources toolkit, and supporting youth outreach through the NJTPA's UpNext advisory group and related contests.

## Discussion

After the presentation, the project team facilitated a discussion to gather feedback and ideas from SAC members. Stakeholders shared a variety of practical outreach strategies, suggested community partners, and offered support.

### Targeted Outreach Tactics

Stakeholders recommended distributing bookmarks and flyers at local libraries, community centers, and municipal buildings. They also suggested advertising on NJ Transit buses, local radio stations, and online community pages (e.g., Facebook groups, Nextdoor, etc.). To reach seniors and residents without internet access, they emphasized the importance of offering print versions of the survey.

### Groups and Networks to Engage

Stakeholders identified key audiences to involve in the outreach process, including older adults through age-friendly community networks and libraries, youth via schools and the NJTPA's youth initiatives, and people with disabilities through Independent Living Centers, the Ability Expo, and disability advocacy groups. They also recommended engaging cyclists and pedestrians through local bike shops, advocacy coalitions, and the NJ Bike & Walk Summit,

and reaching transit riders through groups like the NJ Association of Railroad Passengers.

### *Offers of Support*

Several SAC members offered direct support, including sharing materials via newsletters and community calendars (e.g., Bike JC, Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce), promoting the survey through county transportation committees and United Way networks, and inviting the NJTPA to speak at upcoming events like the NJ Bike and Walk Coalition Summit.

Members also volunteered to help distribute printed surveys and to host outreach at forums and local events, such as an April 3rd age-friendly transportation gathering.

### **Next Steps**

Ritter closed the meeting by thanking participants for their time, insights, and enthusiasm. He encouraged SAC members to contact him with outreach ideas or upcoming opportunities. The project team will continue sharing updated materials and event details throughout the engagement process.

### **SAC Meeting #2 Summary**

The NJTPA held its second SAC meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2025, via Zoom. Ted Ritter, the NJTPA's Manager of External Affairs, welcomed participants, shared updates on the ongoing public engagement process, highlighted upcoming events, and invited feedback on strategies for reaching a diverse range of communities.

### **Public Engagement Progress**

Christina Arlt of McCormick Taylor and Courtenay Mercer of Mercer Planning Associates gave an overview of current engagement activities. They reported that the online survey received over 1,600 survey responses so far, but highlighted were respondents were not matching regional demographic benchmarks. SAC members were asked for ideas and assistance in reaching missed audiences while the survey remains open through March 31, 2025.

Arlt and Mercer also reviewed participation in the first two *Let's Talk! Transportation* virtual forums, which focused on walking, biking, and downtown mobility. They noted that the final virtual event is scheduled for March 25, 2025. Recordings will be available online for all three forums.

To expand outreach, the team has distributed over 8,000 bookmarks and 1,000 multilingual printed surveys across 51 libraries, launched targeted social media ads to reach



underrepresented communities, and partnered with English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, and developed a new OnAir Studio initiative for youth engagement.

They encouraged SAC members to continue using the Partner Resources toolkit and to help identify additional events, community contacts, and networks to support outreach.

Finally, while the initial outreach phase focused on digital efforts, the next phase (April through June) will emphasize in-person engagement through pop-up events at festivals and community gatherings. During discussion, SAC members were asked to share their ideas for potential events or locations to attend.

### Discussion

Following the update, the project team facilitated a discussion to gather feedback on the ongoing outreach efforts and engagement with underrepresented communities. Stakeholders shared a range of insights as summarized below.

#### *Targeted Outreach Tactics*

Stakeholders recommended other organizations to reach out to, along with concerns that they may face when targeting particular demographics.

New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well highlighted an upcoming April 3, 2025 travel symposium co-hosted with Age-Friendly North Jersey and Rutgers. They noted that the survey had already been distributed through newsletters and local Google groups.

Passaic County Planning Department staff offered to circulate the survey among student networks and youth groups.

The New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition recommended that the NJTPA participate in upcoming trail-related events in Union, Essex, and Hudson counties and appreciated the NJTPA's OnAir Studio youth engagement initiative as an effective and replicable outreach model.

The Jewish Federation of Ocean County raised concerns about effectively reaching Orthodox Jewish communities, and also requested clarification on the plan's support for trails and active transportation. The project team responded that the LRTP addresses all modes of

transportation and shared examples of trail investments, such as the Barnegat Branch and trails in Union County.

### *Groups and Networks to Engage*

Stakeholders encouraged the project team to expand outreach to clergy associations, Independent Living Centers, local Jewish organizations, bike and trail groups, and municipal event organizers. Event suggestions included Celebrate Trails Day (April 26, 2025), Juneteenth events at Harriet Tubman Park in Newark, National Get Outdoors Day (June 14, 2025), and other environmental or recreation-focused community gatherings. They also suggest engaging youth through First Friday events, university activities, and ESL programs.

### *Offers of Support*

Several organizations offered direct support for outreach. A representative from the Passaic County Planning Department offered to distribute materials to the Morris Canal Greenway project team and their Economic Development Committee. The Jewish Federation of Ocean County volunteered to share the survey with its network and raise awareness through trail advocacy groups. Somerset County Planning Division offered coordination support for local outreach events. Several organizations, including the New Jersey Advocates for Aging Well and New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition, confirmed they would continue promoting the survey and sharing outreach materials within their networks.

### **Next Steps**

Ritter thanked SAC members for their continued involvement and encouraged them to share additional outreach ideas, especially events that could help reach a broad range of community members. The team is finalizing the spring and summer pop-up schedule, with confirmed participation in events like Bloomfest (Essex County) and Made in Monmouth (Monmouth County). He reminded stakeholders to register for the March 25, 2025 virtual event and to reach out with any further suggestions. Following this outreach phase, the team will develop the draft LRTP, which is scheduled for final adoption in September 2025.

### **SAC Meeting #3 Summary**

The NJTPA held the third and final SAC meeting on Wednesday, June 25, 2025, via Zoom. Ted Ritter, the NJTPA's Manager of External Affairs, welcomed attendees and thanked them for their ongoing contributions. He emphasized how their feedback directly improved the study's public engagement strategy.

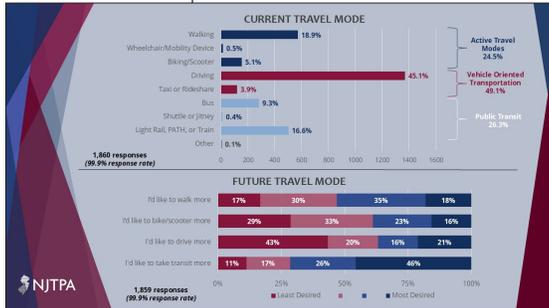
### **Public Engagement Updates**

Christina Arlt of McCormick Taylor shared an update on the virtual public forums. A total of 95 participants joined the three sessions. The most recent forum, *Creating Vibrant Downtowns: Balancing People, Parking, and Deliveries*, featured Alison Conway from City College of New York and Michael J. Manzella from Jersey City.

Courtenay Mercer of Mercer Planning Associates shared survey findings. Nearly half of the respondents reported using vehicle-oriented travel modes. About one-quarter used public transit, and another quarter used active transportation (i.e., walking and biking).

When asked about their preferred future travel modes, approximately three-quarters chose transit, with walking also ranking high. Respondents identified driving and biking/scootering as the least preferred options.

Arlt then summarized the pop-up engagement events held at 16 locations across the subregion, including festivals and markets. The team prioritized underserved communities to ensure diverse participation. These events used interactive cubes that asked questions about transit access, road safety, walking, and biking. More than 1,300 people engaged with the pop-ups, and over 300 completed surveys using QR codes. Participants called for connected and well-maintained sidewalks, better bike lane access to parks and community hubs, expanded transit service, and safer street designs for all users. She also mentioned the youth coloring contest, which received 274 entries.



## Discussion

Stakeholders expressed appreciation for the wide-ranging outreach, especially the success of in-person engagement compared to previous virtual-only efforts. They discussed strategies to better reach underrepresented groups—such as youth, ESL speakers, LGBTQ+ individuals, and older adults—and emphasized the value of personal engagement and family-friendly, creative activities.

The committee explored additional ways to involve young people, including offering stipends for peer outreach, partnering with youth and faith-based organizations, and leveraging programs like WTS International’s Transportation YOU. Members stressed the importance of engaging young adults who are not yet eligible to vote. They recommended using outreach liaisons and youth advisory groups to maintain long-term connections.

A representative from the Tri-State Transportation Campaign urged the group to strengthen active transportation infrastructure. Recommendations included building greenways, implementing traffic calming measures, and creating dedicated lanes for bicycles and scooters. Stakeholders also discussed improving transit service by enhancing frequency, connectivity, and first- and last-mile options.

### Next Steps

Ritter closed the meeting by announcing a 30-day public comment period for the draft LRTP, scheduled from July 7 to August 5, 2025. He invited stakeholders to attend and share information with their networks about the virtual public meeting on July 17, 2025 which will follow an open house format with breakout sessions covering the LRTP, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Air Quality Conformity (AQC) Determination. The NJTPA will also host a AQC technical workshop on that same day. After the public comment period ends, the NJTPA’s standing committees will review the draft plan in mid-August. The NJTPA Board is expected to approve the final plan in September 2025.

### Partner Meetings

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

Partner Meeting Attendance		
Meeting Date	Organization	# of Attendees
July 10, 2024	Union County Transportation Advisory Board	20
October 16, 2024	Morris County Board of Transportation	10
November 12, 2024	Hackensack River Working Group	15
December 2, 2024	Morris Canal Working Group	50

Below are key themes that emerged from these discussions:

### Transit Accessibility and Service

- Improving public transit service is critical to reducing car dependency and addressing traffic congestion. Unreliable and infrequent service remains a significant concern. Riders need more consistent, efficient, and dependable transit options. Better connectivity and prioritization of first- and last-mile solutions—such as improved links between rail, bus, bike, and pedestrian networks—are essential for a seamless multimodal experience.
- Transit access should not be limited to travel into cities. More inter-town services are needed to serve local and regional travel demands. Additionally, new developments, particularly affordable housing, should be strategically located near existing transit infrastructure to support transit use and reduce car trips.

- Lack of information about NJ TRANSIT services also discourages public transit use and contributes to higher car travel. Changes in work and school schedules have shifted peak travel to afternoon hours, creating new safety and capacity challenges that must be addressed.
- Transit service should not be reduced; instead, investment should prioritize making public transportation more attractive and accessible. This includes offering incentives, expanding park-and-ride options, and aligning transit planning with current and future travel behaviors.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure**

- There is a strong need to prioritize safe and connected bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, both on and off-road. Protected bike lanes, dedicated greenways, and improved walk/bike connections—particularly to parks and transit—are essential for creating a safe and accessible active transportation network.
- New developments should be required to conduct walkability studies to ensure pedestrian safety and accessibility from the start. Opportunities to repurpose underused or older rights-of-way (ROW), such as along the Raritan Valley Line (RVL) or former Central New Jersey (CNJ) corridors, should be explored—for example, to create a walking/biking connection between Kean University and the soon-to-be-rebuilt Roselle Park train station.
- Local planning tools must also be updated. In Union County, the existing bicycle and pedestrian elements in the Master Plan are outdated—over 12 years old. The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) recently passed a resolution urging the County to update these critical components to better reflect current needs and priorities.

### **Trails and Greenways Connections**

- Trails and greenways should be planned and designed as integrated networks—not isolated segments. This requires a regional approach that emphasizes connectivity between trails, communities, and destinations. River crossings and bridges should be built or retrofitted to accommodate trail users, ensuring safe and continuous access.
- In urban areas like Jersey City, on-street trail and greenway connections are essential to avoid gaps and maintain access. Projects must also ensure strong connections at either end of major crossings, such as the Hackensack River, to support bicycle and pedestrian travel.
- Transportation projects should systematically incorporate trail and greenway planning from the outset. Interconnecting trails—rather than developing them in silos—will help grow their utility for recreation, commuting, and everyday travel. Accurate trail mapping and signage are critical to support this system-wide vision.
- There is also strong support for better linking trails to historic sites and local destinations. Partnerships with local governments, businesses, and organizations, such as the NY/NJ Trails Conference, can enhance these connections and amplify the economic and community benefits. Towns are more likely to invest in trail-friendly infrastructure if they see increased foot traffic and local business activity. App-based tools could support these connections by highlighting nearby amenities and attractions.
- The North Jersey Trail Network initiative (NJTN), a collaboration between the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition and the Rails to Trails Conservancy, is a promising model. NJTN aims to establish a shared-use path network across North Jersey, supporting equitable and sustainable mobility and recreation. The LRTP should acknowledge the role of trails in achieving these broader goals.
- Greenways also offer climate resiliency benefits, such as mitigating flooding and reducing heat island effects—further strengthening the case for investment. However, to truly

support long-term use, consistent and improved trail maintenance is necessary.

### **Street Design and Infrastructure**

- Many street designs are outdated and operating beyond their intended capacity, leading to inefficiencies and congestion. There is also a need to update obsolete traffic signals and add more sensors to better respond to real-time conditions.
- Enhanced wayfinding and signage can also improve traffic flow and help drivers better navigate the system. In addition to operational improvements, climate resilience must be addressed, as many roads are experiencing more frequent flooding due to extreme weather events.
- There is a desire for local signage to be interpretive and have informational elements that reflect the character and history of neighborhoods, enhancing both orientation and community identity.

### **Freight & Infrastructure Modernization**

- Partners noted that freight rail infrastructure must evolve to accommodate heavier freight loads (286K or 319K) to remain competitive with trucking. Modernizing freight capacity was seen as critical for both economic development and reducing truck traffic on overburdened roads.
- Promote electric vehicle (EV) adoption by offering stronger buying incentives to encourage cleaner transportation options.
- Ensure follow-up on previous traffic and transportation studies to build on existing research and implement recommended actions.
- Increase public awareness and engagement around the Mobility and Community Form Guide (MCFG) initiative. Many people remain unaware of this effort, so spreading the word is a top priority. Develop a strong marketing campaign to support the MCFG, amplifying its visibility and community participation.
- Expand outreach by involving a wide range of local groups and organizations connected to transportation. This will help advertise and inform the public about available resources.

## D. Engagement Activities - Phase 1

### *Let's Talk Forums*

The NJTPA hosted three virtual public forums focused on a key theme and invited the public to share insights, experiences, and priorities to help guide future investments. Each session included brief presentations from guest speakers, followed by breakout discussions to gather public input, which was used to guide the development of outreach materials and topics for Phase 2. Forums were promoted through the NJTPA's website, social media, and partner networks. Forum recordings were posted to the project website following each event.

The sessions were attended by a diverse group of stakeholders, including residents, advocates, and professionals from across the region.

Forum Participation		
Topic	Date	# of Participants
<b>Walking, Biking, &amp; Rolling Investments: Creating Active &amp; Accessible Communities</b>	January 28, 2025	36
<b>Going Places: Improving Access to Transit</b>	March 3, 2025	20
<b>Creating Vibrant Downtowns: Balancing People, Parking, &amp; Deliveries</b>	March 25, 2025	39
Location	Live	Work or School
Bergen	11%	10%
Essex	19%	19%
Hudson	17%	8%
Hunterdon	2%	3%
Middlesex	3%	10%
Monmouth	3%	8%
Morris	1%	2%
Ocean	5%	2%
Passaic	1%	2%
Somerset	5%	10%
Sussex	1%	2%
Union	5%	5%
Warren	2%	2%
Newark	3%	5%
Jersey City	13%	8%
<i>Outside the Region</i>	10%	8%
<i>*Newark &amp; Jersey City Respondents are also included in their respective County tallies.</i>		

## Forum 1: Walking, Biking, & Rolling Investments

### Introduction

The first session, *Walking, Biking & Rolling Investments: Creating Active and Accessible Communities*, was held on January 28, 2025, and focused on strategies to improve active transportation. The NJ Bike and Walk Coalition was the co-sponsor of the forum, helping to set the messaging and advertise to their members and contacts.

A total of 36 participants attended, and among those who responded to an in-meeting demographics poll, most were white males, along with several African American men. The majority were members of Generation X or Baby Boomer age cohorts, had high incomes, access to vehicles, and were active in the workforce.



David Behrend, Executive Director of the NJTPA, introduced LRTP, highlighting the critical role of transportation in connecting the region to opportunities. Ted Ritter, Manager of External Affairs at the NJTPA, welcomed the attendees and introduced the speakers.

Leigh Ann Von Hagen, Executive Director of the Voorhees Transportation Center, presented the role of active transportation within the LRTP, emphasizing safety, economic resilience, and inclusivity. She raised key questions, including “Can people get around safely without a car?,” and highlighted the higher traffic fatality risks for seniors, low-income, and foreign-born communities. During an interactive exercise, participants discussed school zone speed limits, noting that drivers tend to speed in areas lacking safety features but slow down when interventions, like raised medians and crosswalks, are in place. Von Hagen also discussed critical safety initiatives such as Vision Zero, the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) Safe Systems Approach, and the Complete Streets Initiative while outlining the transportation planning “playbook,” which covers roadway ownership, funding, and strategies for improving safety and accessibility.

Tiffany Robinson, Trails Network Manager at the NJ Bike and Walk Coalition, presented the benefits of trails, emphasizing their role in safety, sustainability, and community connectivity. She explained how trails are integral to the larger transportation network, supporting the local economy, providing active transportation options, protecting the environment, improving wellness, and promoting access and opportunity by offering community spaces to gather. Robinson highlighted key planning documents like the Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity and Access Plan (PCAP) and discussed how LRTP offers an opportunity to integrate active

transportation and traffic safety.

### **Discussion Highlights**

After the presentation, attendees were divided into smaller groups for a facilitated discussion focused on key questions related to bicycle and pedestrian safety. During the discussions, several themes emerged: improving regional connectivity, engaging local officials to pass county- and region-wide policy changes for safer biking and walking, reducing car dependency by expanding bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and improving public transit services while addressing first-mile/last-mile connectivity to transit.

### *Political Will & Policy Barriers*

Participants highlighted political reluctance and resistance among leaders, who often prioritize cars over pedestrians and bikes, block bike lane projects, and resist road capacity reductions as a significant concern. Progress is frequently slowed or obstructed by local officials and agencies, while certain local regulations, such as bans on biking in parks, contradict broader bike-friendly policies.

The participants emphasized the need for regional coordination, such as models like the Morris Canal Working Group, to ensure connectivity across municipal boundaries. They also emphasized the importance of engaging local leaders to support and implement transit plans and securing dedicated funding pipelines for off-road trails and bike infrastructure. Establishing concrete goals, such as reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and exploring partnerships with counties to leverage bus services for first and last-mile connections, were suggested as potential solutions.

### *Street Design and Infrastructure Prioritization for Drivers vs. Active Transportation*

Participants expressed concern that street design overwhelmingly prioritizes vehicle movement, often at the expense of pedestrian and cyclist safety. Funding tends to favor road features that benefit drivers, such as angled parking, rather than improvements for vulnerable road users. Participants called for more studies, such as county-level Complete Streets policies, to ensure that the infrastructure supports all modes of transportation, thereby fostering safer and more accessible environments for walking, biking, and e-mobility.

Additionally, there is a need for a cultural shift in public perception, where biking and walking are viewed as fundamental transportation rights, rather than optional amenities. The current planning framework prioritizes vehicle Level of Service (LOS) over multimodal accessibility. A mindset shifts toward planning for all users, not just drivers, is crucial.

### *Improving Safety for All Road Users*

Participants highlighted significant safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists due to the lack of protected bike lanes, unsafe at-grade rail crossings, and outdated infrastructure in areas like Red Bank. They emphasized that new developments often overlook critical safety needs, such as those at railroad crossings, which contribute to crashes near transit stops. Simply adding signage is not enough—proper lane delineation and traffic calming measures, such as speed humps, are also essential. As a potential solution, they suggested converting streets to one-way to accommodate bike lanes without removing parking. Additionally, they stressed the need to improve safety around train stations and enhance train speeds to encourage ridership.

### *Infrastructure Gaps and Connectivity Challenges*

Participants identified major gaps in biking, walking, and transit connectivity across municipal and regional boundaries. While some transit-heavy areas have bike lanes, a lack of coordination between municipalities leads to inconsistencies and a fragmented network. Specific challenges include missing bike lanes in Bergen County, poor sidewalk conditions in underserved areas, and unsafe crossings near key destinations, underscoring the need for targeted improvements. The lack of cohesive planning at the local, county, and regional levels has resulted in fragmented and inefficient bike and pedestrian networks, creating “bike lanes to nowhere” with limited connectivity. To address these issues, participants emphasized the crucial role of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in facilitating regional bike, bus, and pedestrian corridors supported by dedicated funding pipelines.

### *Improving Public Transit Service and Accessibility*

Participants raised concerns about public transit access and service, particularly for seniors and individuals with adaptive mobility needs. They highlighted the lack of consistent bus services in areas like Ringwood and South Orange, which negatively impact local economies and school transportation and contribute to increased car dependency and road congestion. To address these issues, participants called for improved bus connectivity, more frequent services, and a more integrated transit system to reduce reliance on cars. Participants also noted the need for a more robust and dependable public transit system with improved regional connectivity. Enhancing bus routes between Bergen County and Jersey City, along with services tailored to meet the needs of vulnerable populations—especially seniors—was seen as essential to improving accessibility and removing barriers to essential services.

### *First and Last-Mile Connectivity*

Participants emphasized the importance of enhancing access to public transportation and reducing car dependency. They pointed out the financial strain of high parking costs, often

leading people to explore alternative travel options, such as ferries or driving longer distances to find cheaper parking. Additionally, participants emphasized the need to integrate walking and biking with transit systems to improve access to stations and key destinations to further reduce their reliance on cars. They advocated for creating infrastructure, such as bike lanes that seamlessly connect to transit hubs. Enhancing first and last-mile connectivity would provide more convenient travel options, encouraging greater use of public transportation and active mobility.

### *Emerging Micromobility Needs and Solutions*

Participants emphasized the growing use of e-bikes and e-scooters, which the current infrastructure and policies fail to support. They highlighted innovative solutions, like cargo bike delivery models, that could help reduce congestion and improve safety. Additionally, expanding micromobility options, like bike-sharing systems and scooters, could serve as vital links between suburban areas and larger urban centers. E-bikes were considered an effective solution in areas with steep terrain, offering energy efficiency and a low carbon footprint, as long as proper facilities were in place. Participants also advocated for creating a North Jersey Trail Network to enable uninterrupted bike and e-bike travel across the region, thereby improving accessibility to shopping centers, transit hubs, and job centers.

### *Education and Awareness*

Participants emphasized the need for education and awareness through temporary street closures, allowing the public to experience biking and walking infrastructure, citing models like the weekend closures on the Bronx River Parkway. They also noted the need to engage officials by encouraging them to go car-free for a day and help them understand the challenges non-drivers face. Additionally, participants suggested that educational campaigns could also help people realize the actual costs of driving versus using transit. Engaging youth in advocacy, such as walking to school, could help decision-makers be more receptive to changes.

## **Forum 2: Improving Access to Transit**

### **Introduction**

The second session on March 3, 2025, *Going Places: Improving Access to Transit*, explored how land use and community design can support public transportation. NJ TRANSIT and NJTOD.org (aka *The Transit Friendly Planning Newsletter*), were co-sponsors, helping to set the messaging of the forum and advertise to their members and constituencies.

A total of 20 participants attended. Among those who responded to an in-meeting demographics poll, most were white men, spanning from Generation Z to Baby Boomer age



groups. The majority had access to a vehicle and represented working-age adults with higher household incomes.

David Behrend, Executive Director of the NJTPA, welcomed attendees and introduced the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), emphasizing the critical role of public input in connecting the region to opportunities. Melissa Hayes, Senior Director of Communications & External Affairs at the NJTPA, provided a brief overview of the plan, encouraged participation through an online survey, and introduced the forum’s speakers.

Megan Massey, Director of Transit-Friendly Planning at NJ TRANSIT, presented the *Transit-Friendly Planning Guide*, which promotes development and infrastructure improvements that enhance access to public transit. The guide also outlines strategies for creating transit-friendly environments, including complete streets and integrating trails with transit. One key focus is active transportation, ensuring that walking and biking infrastructure supports transit access. This includes complete street policies that accommodate all road users and trail connections that enhance mobility, health, and economic opportunities. A case study in Dunellen examined transit access, crash data, and community feedback to identify barriers and improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Massey then introduced the Route 9 TOD Plan, a federally funded project in collaboration with Perkins Eastman, focusing on transit-oriented development (TOD) along the busy Route 9 bus corridor. Covering a 21-mile stretch from Old Bridge (Middlesex County) to Howell (Monmouth County), the study assessed TOD potential at 17 station areas before narrowing the focus to Old Bridge Park & Ride, Old Bridge Central, and Franklin Lane in Manalapan.

Tamanna Tiku, Associate at Perkins Eastman, outlined the design approach for the Route 9 TOD Plan, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that all roads lead to transit. Each station area was evaluated for its unique opportunities and challenges, focusing on increasing density near bus stops, preserving green spaces while concentrating development, promoting pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure, and incorporating stormwater management into the designs. Tiku then highlighted site-specific proposals, pointing out the benefits of TOD along Route 9. She noted that TOD and other transit-friendly planning initiatives aim to create safer, more accessible, and economically vibrant transit corridors, benefiting a wide range of stakeholders.

Kyle Skala, manager of NJDOT’s Local Division Office, presented the various funding

opportunities available to municipalities and counties, specifically those focusing on improving transit access. He mentioned that over half a billion dollars in grants are distributed annually, and NJDOT's Local Aid provides multiple grant programs focusing on construction projects. There are six programs, each with distinct eligibility criteria, types of improvement, and goals. Skala stressed the importance of applying for these grants, as substantial funds are available to improve transit access.

### **Discussion Highlights**

After the presentation, attendees were divided into smaller groups for a facilitated discussion on key transit-related topics. During the discussions, several recurring themes emerged: first and last-mile connectivity, the need to reassess service requirements and address the lack of intra-state connections, inadequate transit facilities and amenities, and ways to make transit more accessible and user-friendly for everyone.

#### *Transit Accessibility and Inclusivity*

A central theme across the discussions was making transit stops, stations, and surrounding infrastructure accessible for all, especially people with disabilities, seniors, and others with mobility challenges. Suggestions included improving sidewalks for pedestrians and those accessing the station without a car, adding solar-lit shelters for better nighttime safety, standardizing shelter designs to include seating, shade, and weather protection, and enhancing wayfinding signage. Specific attention should be given to the needs of people with disabilities, particularly people on the autism spectrum. The importance of clear, accessible signage and secure spaces to make transit systems more navigable and independent for these groups was emphasized. Additionally, participants recommended installing electronic kiosks with real-time transit information to ensure transit is usable and user-friendly for everyone.

#### *Improved First/Last-Mile Connectivity*

Participants discussed the significant challenge of first/last-mile connectivity, which affects peoples' ability to access transit stops easily. While some pedestrian improvements have been made, issues such as inconsistent pedestrian signal operation and problematic pedestrian crossings persist. Suggestions included standardizing pedestrian signals and improving crosswalk safety. It was noted that in some areas, like Leonia, pedestrian safety beacons are not always effective, and adopting a consistent approach to these features across municipalities could significantly improve safety. The group also highlighted the importance of secure bike and scooter parking, suggesting the implementation of well-lit, secure bike racks to encourage cycling as a viable alternative to driving. Additionally, they noted that rural and suburban areas face challenges with isolated stations accessible only by car, and there is a need to reduce

car reliance by providing access to these stations through pedestrian paths or bike routes.

### *Safety and Security*

Another major theme was safety, emphasizing the importance of lighting, cleanliness, and security at transit stops. It was noted that clean, well-maintained spaces are essential to ensuring that transit users feel comfortable and safe. Participants raised concerns such as stations being closed in the evening or locked vestibules discouraging public transit use after hours. Suggestions for improvement included better trash management and enhanced lighting around stations, particularly at night, to increase safety. The group also discussed the need for a Safe Streets approach to ensure lower speed limits around bus stops and stations.

### *Developing Transit Hubs and Villages*

The idea of transforming transit stations into vibrant community hubs was widely supported. Participants suggested that redevelopment around transit stops should include a mix of residential, retail, and community spaces to increase density and activity in the area. They emphasized the need to integrate development with transit infrastructure, where new residential or commercial buildings would connect to transit hubs via sidewalks, bike lanes, or multi-use paths. They also proposed that retail opportunities, such as libraries or fitness centers near transit stops, would make the area more inviting and increase foot traffic. Furthermore, they recommended designing buildings with views of transit areas to encourage people to use transit and make it visible and normalized for the entire community.

### *Education and Cultural Shifts*

A cultural shift from a car-first mentality to one that embraces walking, cycling, and public transit was seen as essential for long-term improvements in transit access. They highlighted education as a crucial tool to address behavioral issues such as double parking and drivers not yielding. Advocacy efforts should focus on engaging communities at a hyper-local level, where grassroots organizations can work with local Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to promote safer behaviors. They also identified education about available transit options and promoting programs as key to improving the effectiveness of transit services.

### *Adapting To Changing Needs*

The changing travel patterns due to remote work and fluctuating commuter needs were discussed as significant challenges in planning future transit services. Participants noted that ridership trends have become less predictable, making planning for future transit demand difficult. While commuter rail and bus ridership into Manhattan has fluctuated, local bus and train ridership within New Jersey remains relatively stable. However, with non-traditional

commuting on the rise (mid-day, late-night, and weekend travel), they emphasized the need to reassess transit schedules to better reflect the current needs of the community.

### *Investment and Funding for Infrastructure Development*

Participants identified the need for more significant investment in early-stage planning as many municipalities face funding challenges when securing resources for shovel-ready projects. They proposed creating a non-competitive funding program for bike and walking facilities to simplify the process, especially for municipalities with limited capacity. They suggested allocating funds specifically for projects that improve access to transit to ensure that funding issues do not delay infrastructure development. Additionally, participants saw vision plans for transit stations as a necessary investment. These plans should focus on active transportation and accessibility to ensure that stations are usable for all residents, regardless of mobility level.

## **Forum 3: Creating Vibrant Downtowns**

### **Introduction**

The third forum on March 25, 2025, *Creating Vibrant Downtowns: Balancing People, Parking, and Deliveries*, focused on managing multiple demands in commercial districts. Downtown New Jersey was the co-sponsor of the forum, helping to set the messaging of the forum and advertise to their members and contacts.

A total of 39 participants attended. Among those who responded to an in-meeting demographics poll, the majority were white males from the Gen X and Baby Boomer age groups, with high household incomes, access to vehicles, and employed.



David Behrend, Executive Director of the NJTPA, welcomed attendees, emphasizing the vital role transportation plays in connecting residents to jobs, education, healthcare, and cultural opportunities. He stressed the importance of community input in shaping the plan and highlighted two NJTPA programs that support municipal planning: Vibrant Places, which provides technical assistance for placemaking projects, and Planning for Emerging Centers, which promotes walkable, transit-oriented development.

Ted Ritter, Manager of External Affairs at the NJTPA, thanked Downtown New Jersey for co-sponsoring. Natalie Pineiro, Executive Director of Downtown New Jersey, described the organization's mission to strengthen downtowns across the state, noting that managing curb space remains a key challenge. She encouraged attendees to engage and share their experiences

to inform both the NJTPA's LRTP and Downtown New Jersey's future programming.

Alison Conway, professor at the City College of New York, discussed the often-overlooked complexity of freight in downtowns, noting it includes everything from large trucks to handcarts used in last-mile delivery. She emphasized the need for street designs that account for diverse vehicle types, loading requirements, and delivery behaviors. Conway outlined three key players shaping freight outcomes: receivers, carriers, and the public sector. She emphasized the importance of freight-sensitive planning that supports safe and efficient deliveries, integrating curb access, land use, and enforceable policies.

Mike Manzella, Director of Transportation Planning for Jersey City, outlined the City's comprehensive approach to balancing parking, deliveries, and public space in its downtown areas. He highlighted key projects, such as the Newark Avenue Pedestrian Plaza and the revitalization of Bergen Square in Journal Square, both of which have been transformed into welcoming public spaces that have stimulated new retail activity. Manzella also emphasized Jersey City's strong support for public transportation, noting its extensive bus network, protected bike lanes, a popular bike-sharing program, and an on-demand micro-transit service. To accommodate evolving delivery methods, the City is adapting to new technologies, including e-bikes and autonomous delivery robots. Additionally, Jersey City has invested in over 23 miles of protected bike lanes, secure bike parking facilities, and electric vehicle charging stations to support sustainable urban mobility.

### **Discussion Highlights**

After the introductory remarks, meeting attendees were divided into smaller breakout rooms to engage in facilitated discussions focused on critical concepts about balancing the needs of pedestrians, parking, and deliveries in downtown and commercial districts. During the discussions, several key themes emerged: parking as a major challenge, street and curb space constraints, challenges in public engagement and enforcement, barriers to connectivity and walkability, regulatory and institutional challenges, data-driven and innovative approaches to curb management, infrastructure design for emergency access, and pedestrian and cyclist safety improvements.

### *Parking as a Major Challenge*

Parking emerged as a key issue in all breakout rooms. Residents and businesses highly value on-street parking, which often leads to conflicts over the limited curb space. Although structured and municipal parking lots exist, they are frequently underused due to factors like inconvenient locations, reluctance to walk longer distances, or poor wayfinding. Proposals to

reduce or remove on-street parking consistently face strong public resistance, highlighting the struggle to balance parking with other curb space uses such as parklets and outdoor dining.

Participants shared some short-term solutions, like 15-minute parking zones, which have been successful in Doylestown, Ambler, and Summit, improving turnover and access for food pickups or quick visits. Dynamic pricing and employee parking relocation were also noted as essential management tools. Municipalities like Summit have developed layered parking strategies with varied time limits, kiosks, and zones that better balance the needs of residents, visitors, and commuters.

### *Street and Curb Space Constraints*

Many downtown and commercial districts face challenges due to narrow streets and outdated designs that were not built for today's volume of traffic, deliveries, and multimodal activity. These spatial limits often cause conflicts among delivery trucks, ride-hailing vehicles, parked cars, pedestrians, and cyclists. Commercial vehicles frequently double-park illegally, blocking travel and bike lanes and creating safety risks. Due to the limited availability of side streets, event closures or pedestrian-only zones tend to be rare or temporary.

Participants shared that cities like Hanover, Germany, and several New Jersey municipalities have tested design solutions—such as retractable bollards—to balance deliveries with pedestrian use. Despite these efforts, space constraints continue to be a persistent challenge. One participant proposed repurposing travel lanes through road diets or converting two-way streets into one-way streets to reclaim space for deliveries or expanded sidewalks.

### *Challenges in Public Engagement and Enforcement*

Participants emphasized that advancing new street uses requires strong public engagement and consistent enforcement. Many towns lack planning staff to proactively manage trade-offs or address concerns from residents, who are often focused mainly on parking access. Limited resources and competing law enforcement priorities often lead to weak enforcement of existing parking and curb regulations. Poor communication and inadequate signage in areas with underutilized parking create perception and trust issues around proposed changes.

Municipalities struggle to communicate changes—such as EV charging installations or new curb rules—resulting in misuse or confusion. Programs like EZ Ride's Street-Smart Campaign work to improve safety and community awareness. Participants stressed the importance of involving businesses and residents early in the process to build buy-in and avoid backlash, especially when repurposing parking spaces for parklets, loading zones, or bike lanes.

### *Connectivity and Walkability Barriers*

Many communities face challenges in creating continuous, connected pedestrian and bike infrastructure. When improvements only focus on single intersections, they fail to build usable networks that encourage walking and biking. Physical barriers like large parking lots, state highways, and rail corridors isolate neighborhoods from downtown and other destinations. Even where walking is possible, people often hesitate to walk short distances if convenient parking isn't available. Off-street parking is available, but it only works well if it connects smoothly to pedestrian routes. Poor access from garages or rear parking lots discourages use.

Clear wayfinding signs and safer walking paths are necessary to shift demand away from curbside parking. Similarly, EV charging stations in places like New Brunswick and Westwood remain underused due to poor visibility, inconvenient locations, and lack of signage. Trail systems and safer crossings, such as those in Frenchtown and similar communities, provide strong models for expanding non-motorized connectivity for recreation and everyday travel.

### *Regulatory and Institutional Challenges*

State and local regulations, particularly on state-owned roads or constrained corridors, were frequently cited as barriers to innovation. Communities frequently face long approval processes, unclear rules, and conflicting jurisdictional responsibilities when they try to implement outdoor dining, delivery zones, or pedestrian plazas. Coordination among different agencies, especially for signal upgrades, EV infrastructure, or curb space repurposing, varies widely across New Jersey. Nevertheless, several communities have found creative solutions, such as partnering with the NJTPA, Green Acres, or local arts organizations to fund placemaking projects and activate public spaces despite regulatory hurdles.

### *Data-Driven and Innovative Approaches to Curb Management*

As demand for limited curb space increases, there is growing interest in using data and technology to better manage loading, ride-hailing, and other curbside activities. Participants emphasized the need to prioritize these uses, particularly in areas with high traffic and conflicting demands. Municipalities like Hoboken have taken proactive steps—such as removing corner parking to improve visibility—but many others still struggle with disorganized curb use due to weak enforcement and limited policy tools. The broader adoption of innovative curb technologies, timed delivery zones, and demonstration projects could help balance curb space more fairly, while improving safety and access for everyone. Participants also noted that Business Improvement Districts (BID) and business coalitions can play a key role in mediating between merchants, property owners, and the public to allocate curb functions more effectively.

### *Infrastructure Design for Emergency Access*

Participants stressed the need to improve infrastructure supporting emergency vehicle access in dense urban areas. Outdated traffic signal systems and limited use of signal preemption technology make it difficult for fire trucks, ambulances, and police vehicles to navigate congested streets quickly and safely. Many municipalities lack the resources or coordination to implement emergency signal prioritization, and existing infrastructure often cannot support newer systems. Inconsistent training for engineers means emergency access is not always considered during traffic signal upgrades. Although funding exists for these improvements, successful implementation varies widely across New Jersey due to fragmented jurisdiction, limited local capacity, and competing priorities. Participants expressed strong interest in having the NJTPA lead regional coordination efforts and provide technical assistance to expand the use of emergency vehicle preemption systems.

### *Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety Improvements*

Participants identified several effective strategies to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety while accommodating deliveries and personal vehicles. Permanent curb extensions were praised for preventing illegal parking near intersections and creating space for critical infrastructure such as stormwater systems, EV charging stations, and bike racks, while maintaining ADA accessibility. Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs), successfully implemented in Somerset County, give pedestrians a head start at crossings, improving safety without significantly affecting traffic flow. Municipalities can schedule LPIs during peak pedestrian times, such as school start and dismissal hours, to strike a balance between safety and efficiency. Additionally, improved street lighting, especially pedestrian-focused lighting, offers a cost-effective way to create safer and more inviting streetscapes near crosswalks and downtowns.

## Survey

A central component of the public engagement effort was a short survey designed to understand how people in the NJTPA region experience the transportation system today, what challenges they face, and what improvements they would most like to see. The survey aimed to gather input on residents' needs, priorities, travel behavior, and preferences for future transportation options. The survey was available online and in print from January through April 2025. To support participation among non-English-speaking residents, it was translated into five additional languages, including Spanish, Chinese (simplified), Korean, Hindi, and Portuguese. Participants were given the option to enter a raffle for a chance to win a \$25 gift card for completing the survey.

The online version was hosted on the project website and promoted through the NJTPA's social media channels, email outreach, and partner organizations. Paper versions of the surveys were also distributed to libraries throughout the region. The survey gathered insights from across the region about desired transportation improvements, future transportation demand, and anticipated transportation priorities. It also included an open-ended opportunity to provide additional comments about transportation in North Jersey.

### Survey Respondents Demographics

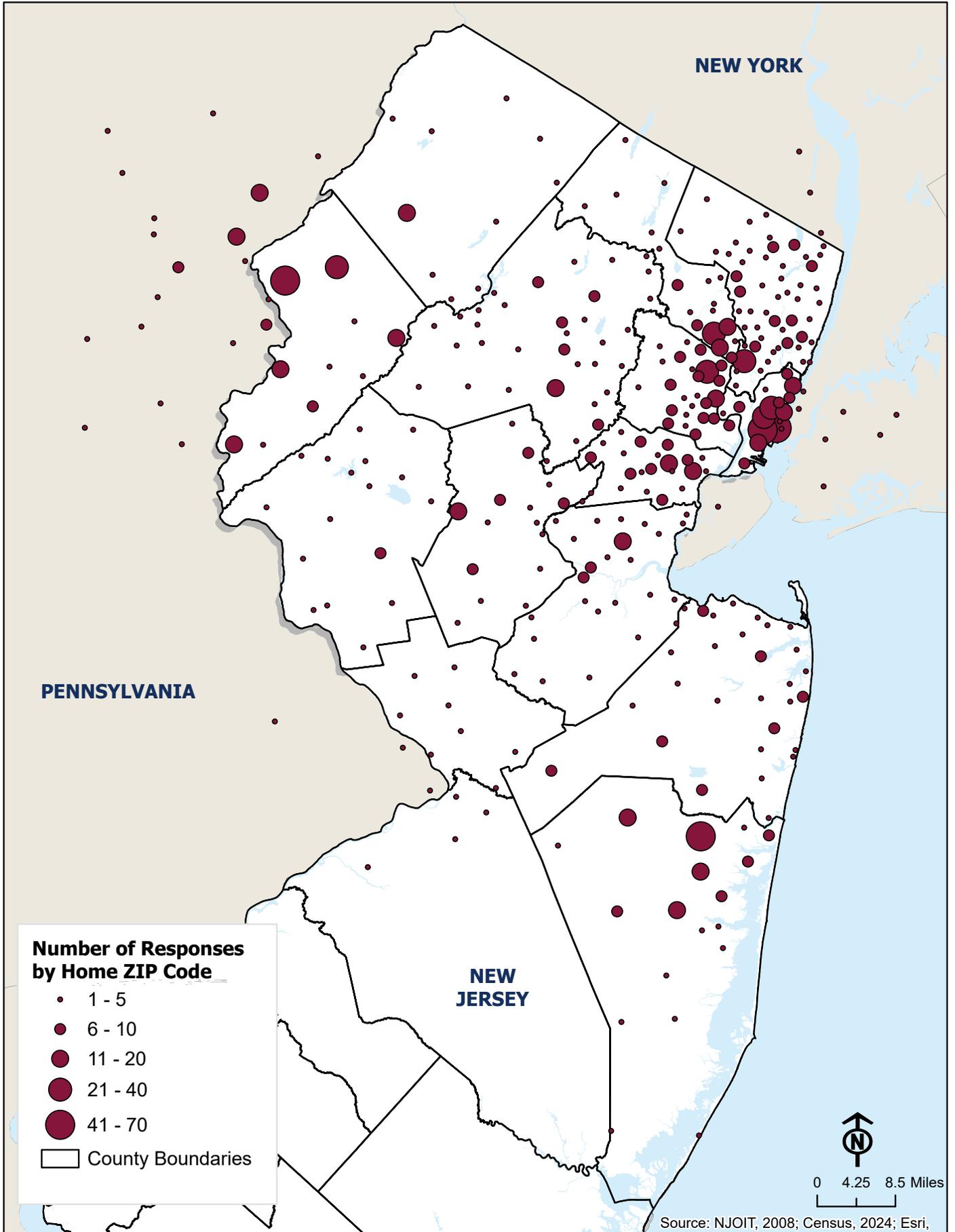
The survey received 1,861 valid responses. The optional demographic questions provided an idea of who participated in the survey.

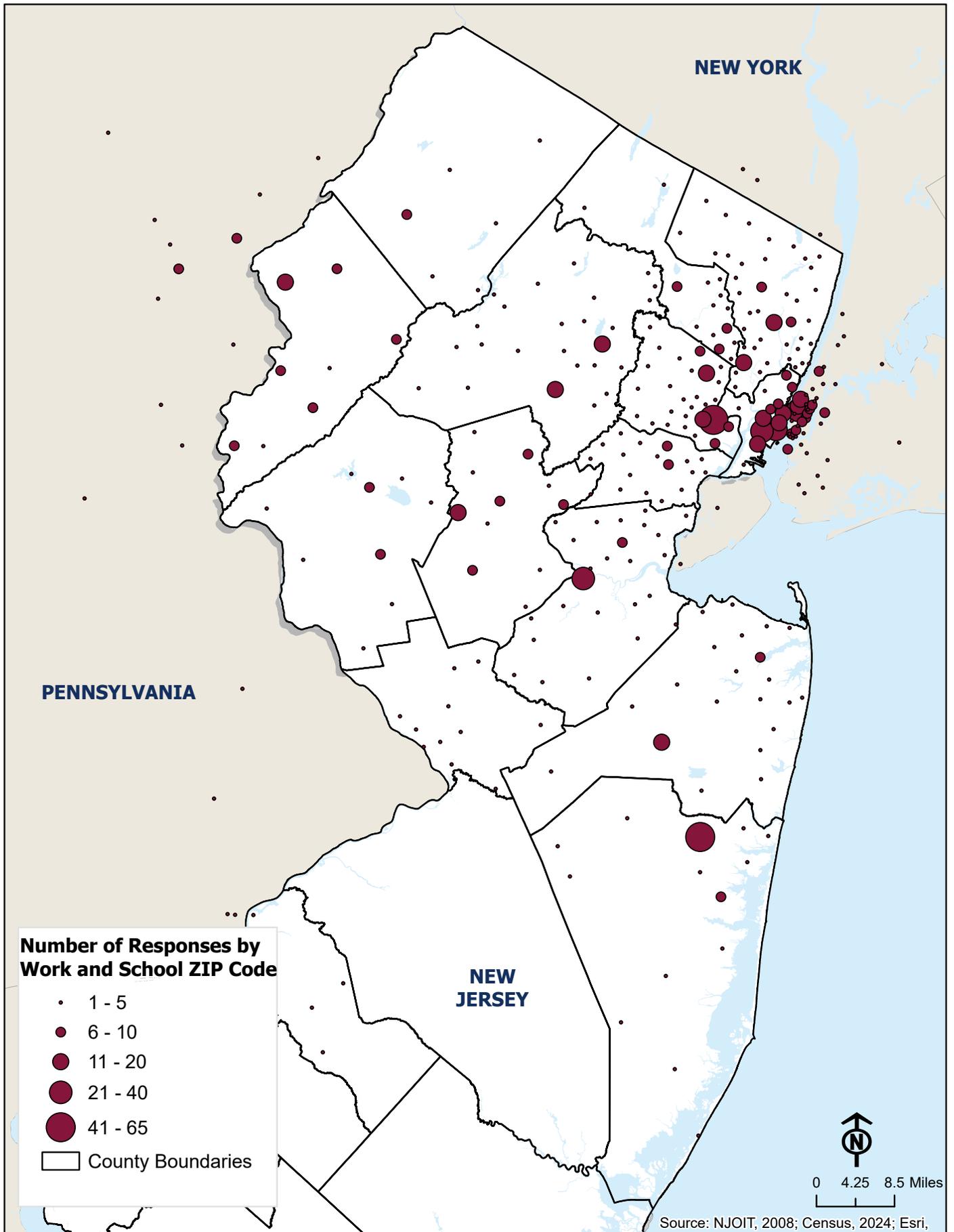
Participants were asked to identify their ZIP code of residence and work or school (*maps on next 2 pages*), and 91 percent and 61 percent, respectively, provided these answers. Hudson County had the most responses at 17 percent with 75 percent of those responses coming from Jersey City residents. Bergen County was the next most

#### Survey Respondent ZIP Codes

Location	Live	Work or School
Bergen	12%	9%
Essex	10%	11%
Hudson	17%	12%
Hunterdon	2%	2%
Middlesex	5%	6%
Monmouth	5%	4%
Morris	7%	7%
Ocean	9%	6%
Passaic	6%	3%
Somerset	4%	4%
Sussex	1%	1%
Union	7%	4%
Warren	9%	5%
Newark	3%	7%
Jersey City	12%	8%
<i>Outside the Region</i>	7%	25%

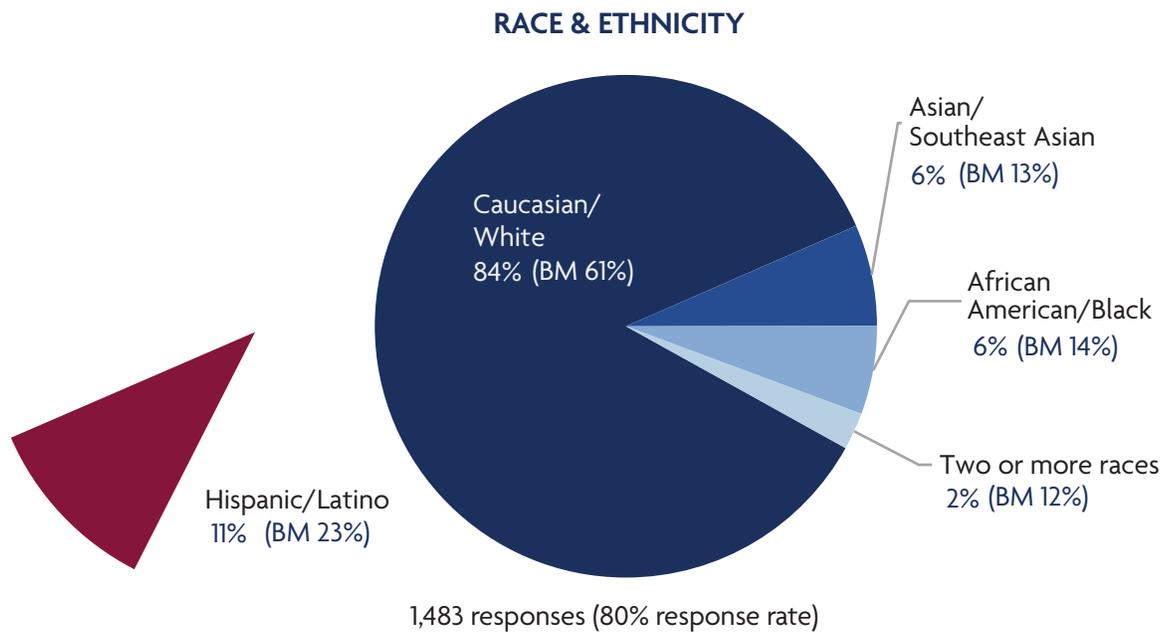
*\*Newark & Jersey City Respondents are also included in their respective County tallies.*



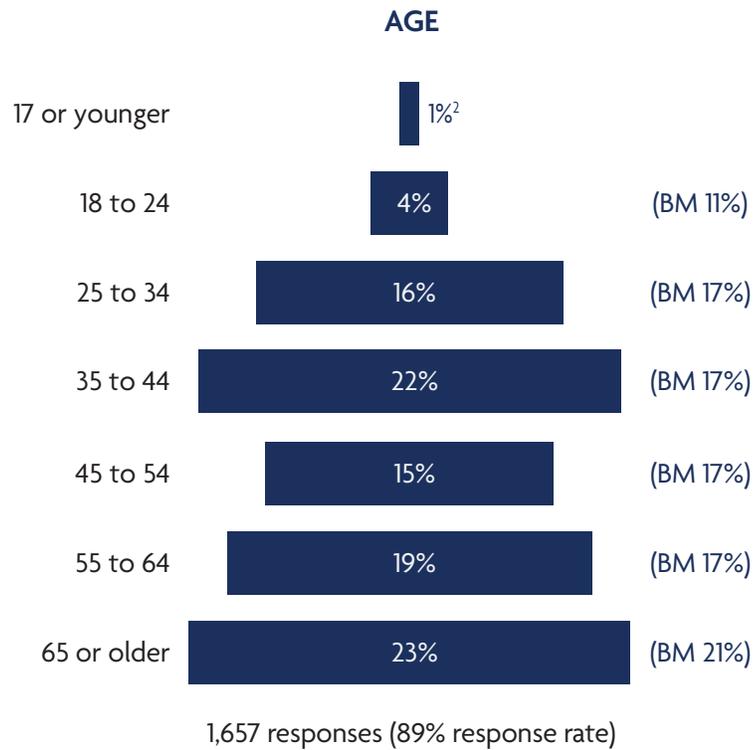
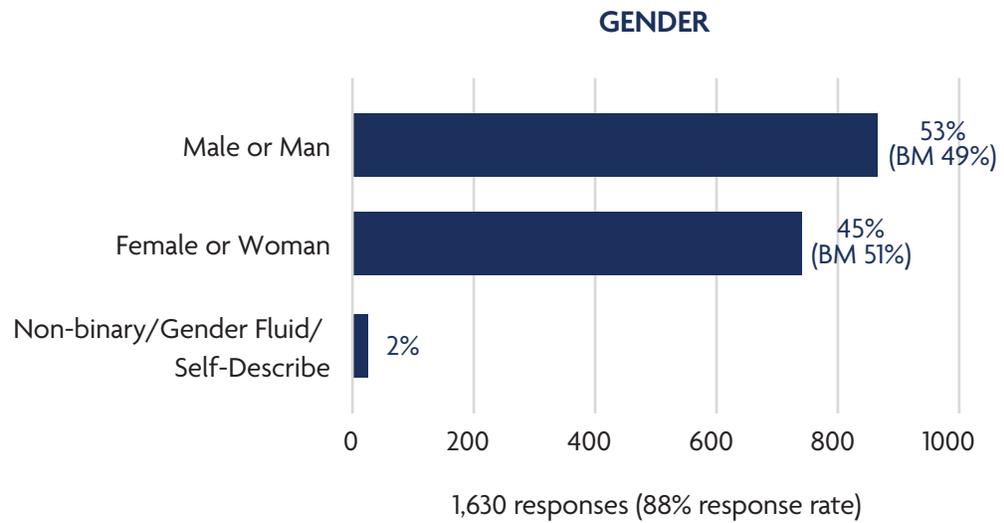


represented with 12 percent indicating they live there. Middlesex and Monmouth Counties were underrepresented as compared to the percentage of population living in those counties. A quarter of respondents work or go to school outside the Region (25 percent), followed by Hudson, Essex, and Bergen Counties, each hovering around 10 percent. Participant home and work/school zip codes were mapped to show the distribution across the region.

Participant responses to the optional demographic questions were compared to United States Census “benchmarks” (BM in following charts)<sup>1</sup>. In general, survey respondents skewed younger, were less racially and ethnically diverse, and more affluent than the population of North Jersey. Men were slightly overrepresented. Car ownership of survey respondents was generally in line with residents of the Region. Where available, the demographic questions include benchmarks based on the mix within the entire Region to show where survey responses are over or underrepresented.

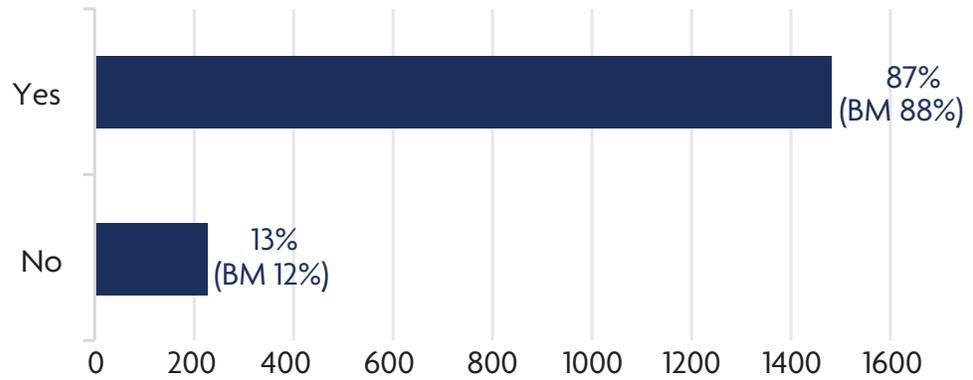


<sup>1</sup> Population totals, race, ethnicity and gender benchmarks for the NJTPA region were calculated using the Decennial Census (2020), while age, income, and access to vehicle benchmarks used the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2023).



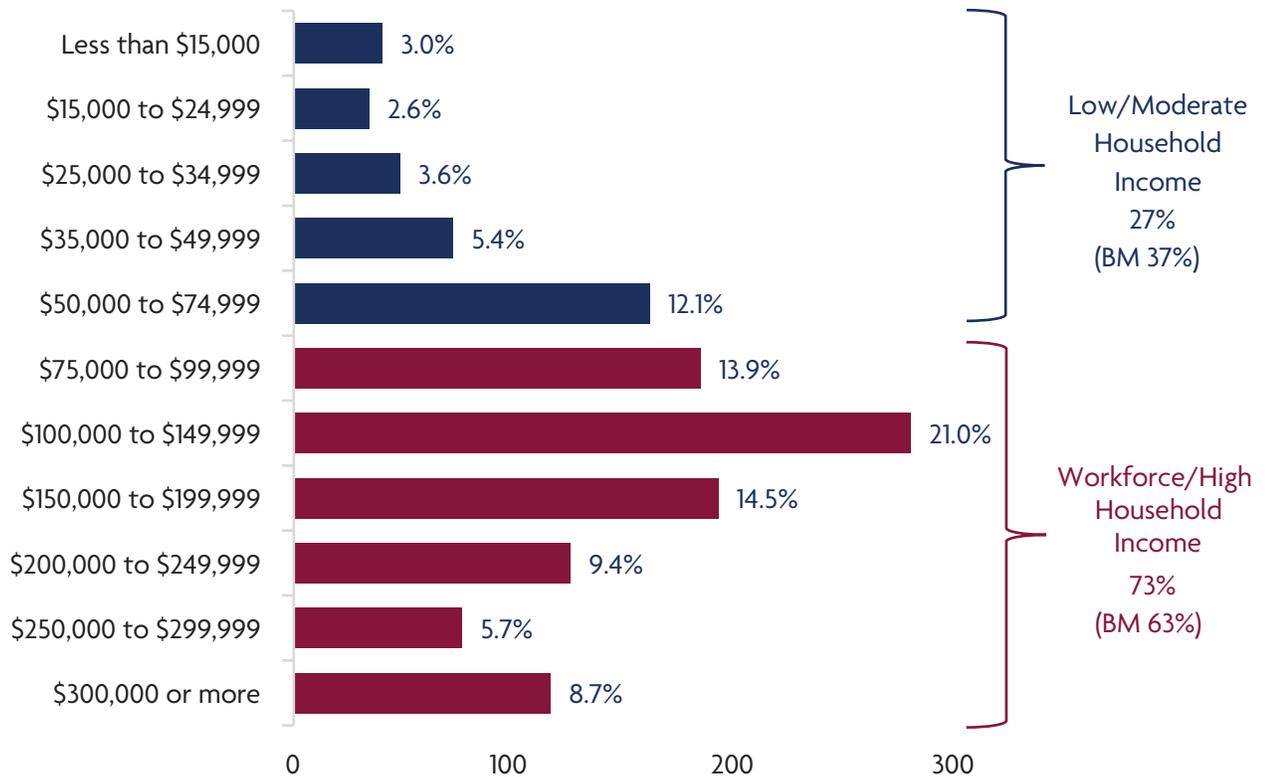
<sup>2</sup> Due to the limited response by those 17 years old or younger, the benchmark for age was calculated for only the 18 year or older population to provide a better representation of relative respondent participation by adults.

### ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



1,706 responses (92% response rate)

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME



1,327 responses (71% response rate)

## Survey Analysis

The survey included five questions about travel mode choices and transportation priorities. One of the five questions was only shown to respondents who did not select transit as a current travel mode.

For each of the questions, we further examined the survey responses by conducting a crosstab analysis by income and vehicle ownership to see how these demographic factors impacted the survey responses. While we evaluated each question by income and vehicle ownership, we only discuss ones with differing results. We also compared what respondents selected as their most and least desired travel mode compared to their current travel mode.

### *Travel Mode Classifications*

For the purpose of the subsequent survey analyses, classifications were used to aggregate travel mode results as follows:

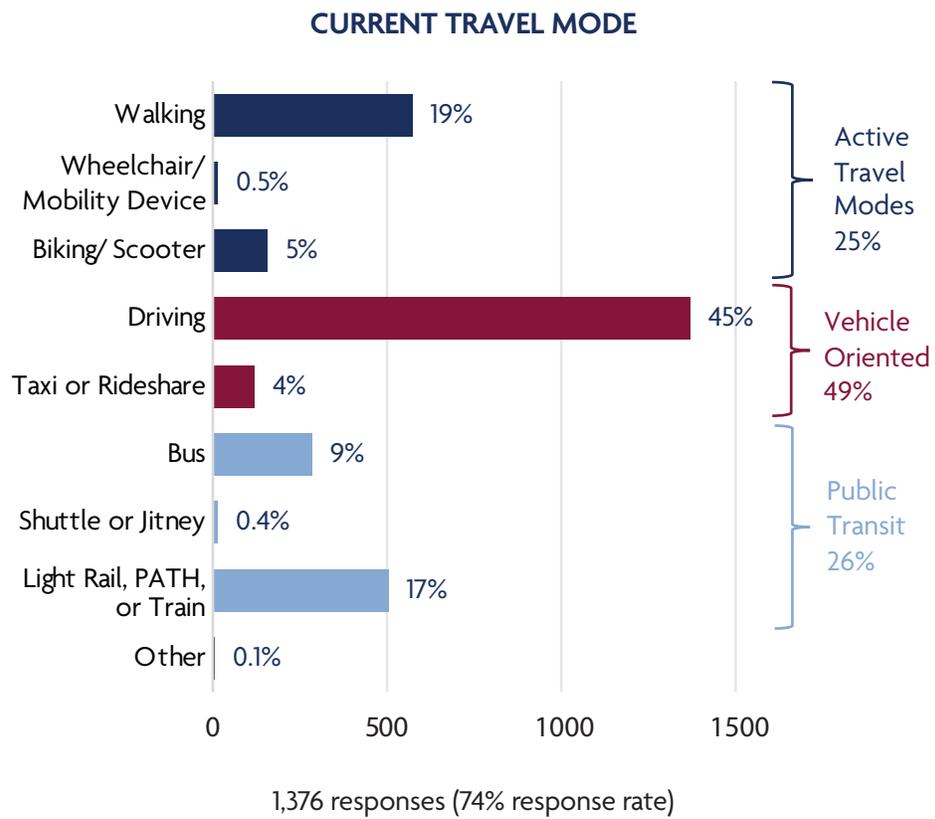
**Active transportation** includes walking, bike, scooter, e-bike/e-scooter, wheelchairs, and mobility scooters

**Vehicle-oriented transportation** includes driving and taxi/ride sharing

**Public transit** includes bus, jitneys, light rail, PATH, or train

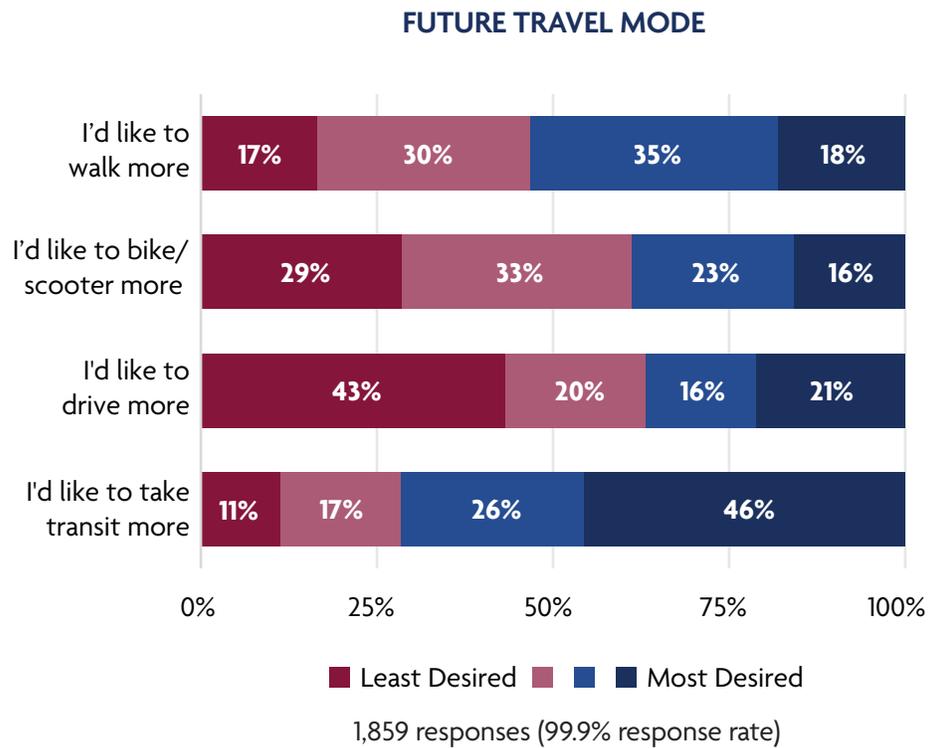
### Current Travel Mode

Respondents were asked to identify their top three most commonly used travel modes. When responses were aggregated **active transportation** accounted for 25 percent of responses, **vehicular-oriented travel** accounted for 49 percent, and **public transit** accounted for 26 percent.



### Future Travel Mode

Respondents were then asked to rank their most and least desired future travel mode. Public transit was the clear favorite with 72 percent of respondents ranking transit as their first or second most desired future travel mode and only 11 percent ranking it as their least desired mode. A majority of respondents also ranked walking as their first or second most desired future travel mode. Driving was the least desired travel mode with 63 percent of respondents ranking it third or fourth, followed closely by biking at 62 percent ranking it as their least desired future travel mode. These results show a clear desire to move the mix of travel modes towards more transit and safer walking options.



## Current & Future Travel Mode Crosstabs

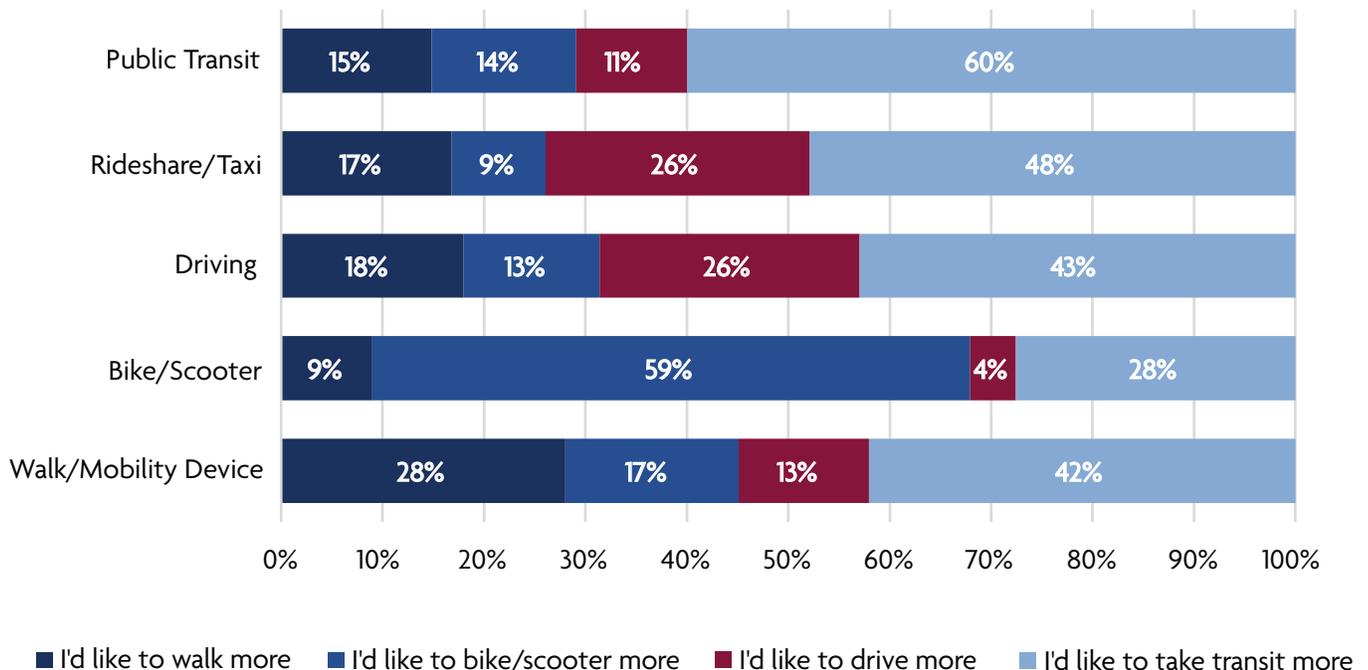
### *Current vs. Future Travel Mode*

In a crosstab analysis of current travel modes and preferred future travel modes, respondents generally expressed a strong desire to use public transit more, regardless of current mode. Those who indicated that they currently use transit expressed the greatest desire to do so in the future. Other public transit users were fairly evenly split between walking, biking, and driving as a desired future travel mode.

Those currently bicycling were equally committed to their travel mode, ranking bicycling as their most desired travel mode 59 percent of the time. About 28 percent of current cyclists ranked transit as their most desired future travel mode. Meanwhile, only 4 percent ranked driving as their most desired future travel mode, demonstrating a clear preference for non-auto modes.

Walking was the second most desired future mode among walkers. Similarly, driving more was the second most desired future mode for those who currently drive or use taxi/rideshare services. These results demonstrate that, absent more robust transit options, most people are happy to stay with their current travel mode.

### CURRENT VS MOST DESIRED FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



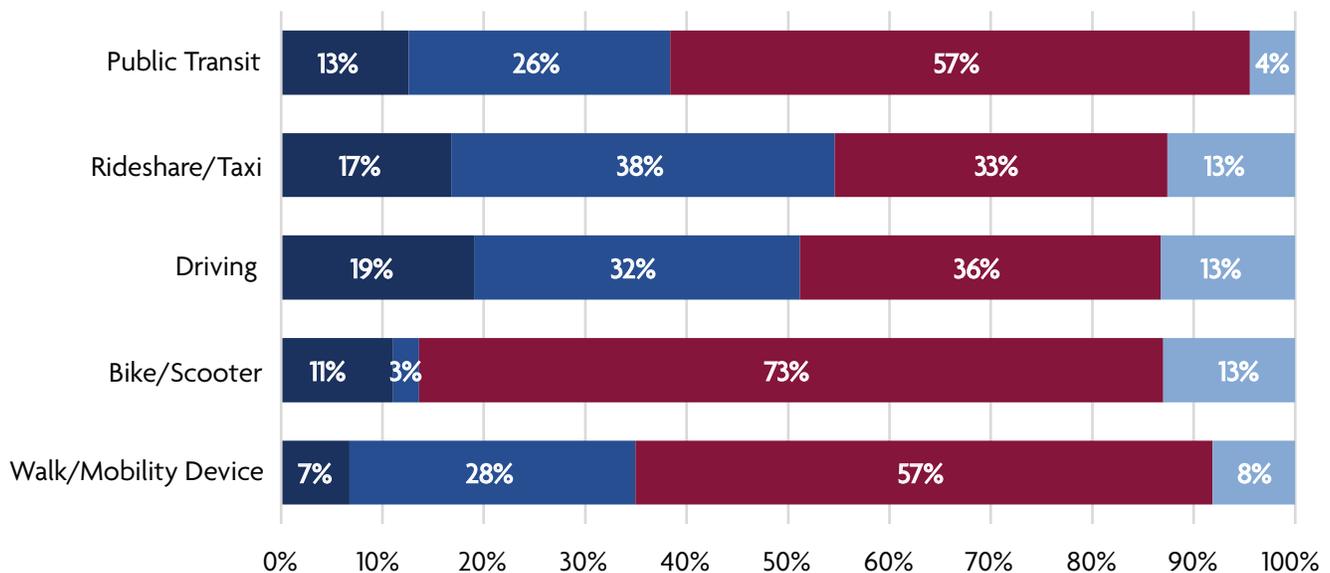
Looking at the least desired travel mode, driving is clearly the least favorite with 73 percent of bicyclists and 57 percent of both walkers and transit users ranking driving as their least preferred future travel mode. In addition to this, nearly a third of drivers and taxi/rideshare users ranked driving as their least preferred future travel mode.

With the exception of current cyclists, the second least preferred mode is bicycling with 38 percent of rideshare users, 32 percent of drivers, 28 percent of walkers, and 26 percent of public transit users ranking bicycling as their least desired mode.

These results reflect the unpopularity of bicycling among some for a variety of reasons that are revealed in subsequent survey questions, including concerns about safety, lack of bicycle infrastructure, and lack of bikeable destinations nearby.

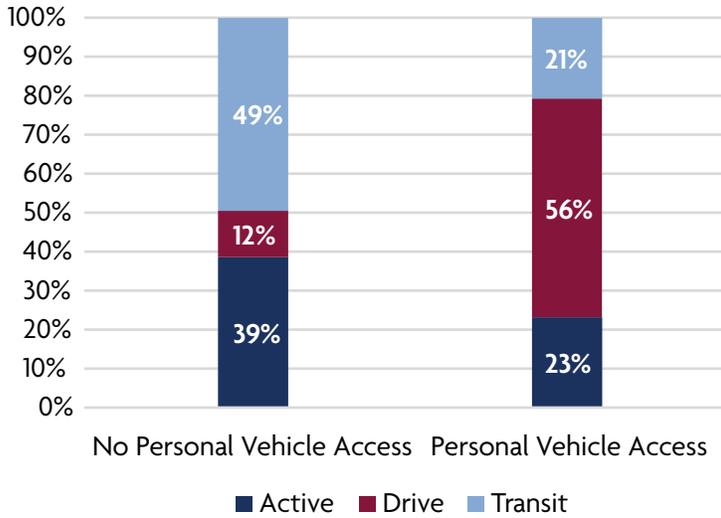
Walking is ranked the lowest among current drivers which may reflect a lack of desire to use active travel modes and/or that many drivers live in locations with limited pedestrian infrastructure and lack walkable destinations nearby.

### CURRENT VS LEAST DESIRED FUTURE TRAVEL MODE

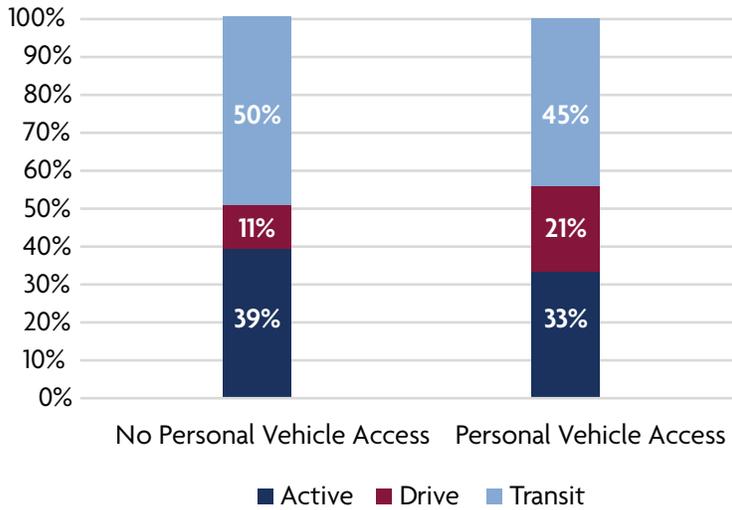


■ I'd like to walk more   ■ I'd like to bike/scooter more   ■ I'd like to drive more   ■ I'd like to take transit more

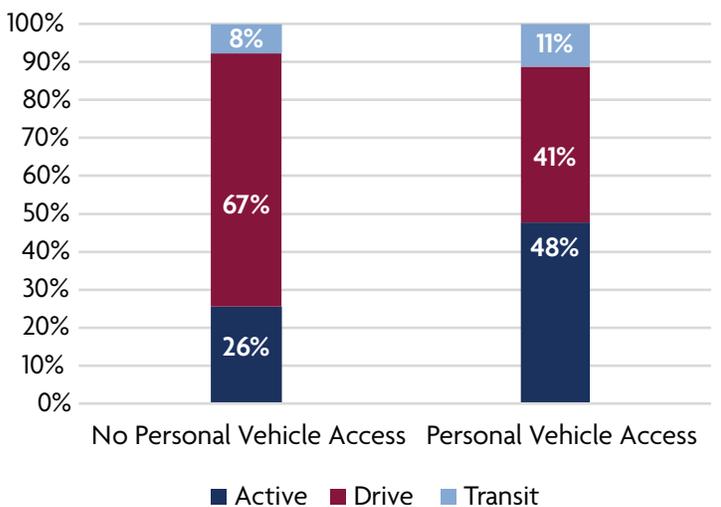
### CURRENT TRAVEL MODE BY VEHICLE ACCESS



### MOST DESIRED FUTURE TRAVEL MODE BY VEHICLE ACCESS



### LEAST DESIRED FUTURE TRAVEL MODE BY VEHICLE ACCESS

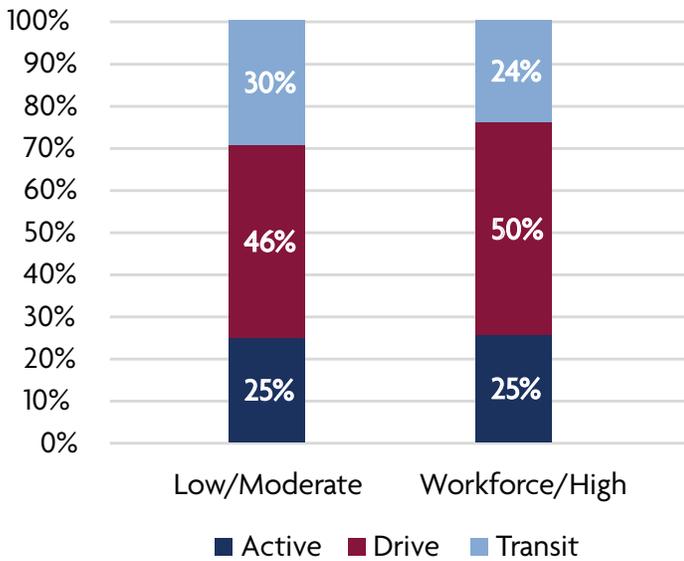


#### *Current & Future Travel Mode by Vehicle Access*

As expected, vehicle access has a major impact on current and future travel modes. Only 12 percent of respondents without access to a personal vehicle in their household said they used vehicle-oriented modes. These could include taxis or rideshare, getting rides from friends or family, or carpooling. Of those with access to a personal vehicle, 56 percent currently use vehicle-oriented transportation modes. Correspondingly, those without access to a vehicle use public transit and active modes of transportation at a higher rate than those with access to a vehicle.

Interestingly, the most desired future travel mode among those without access to a vehicle remains pretty consistent with their current travel mode, while future preferences shift significantly toward transit and active modes of transportation for those with access to a vehicle.

## CURRENT TRAVEL MODE BY INCOME



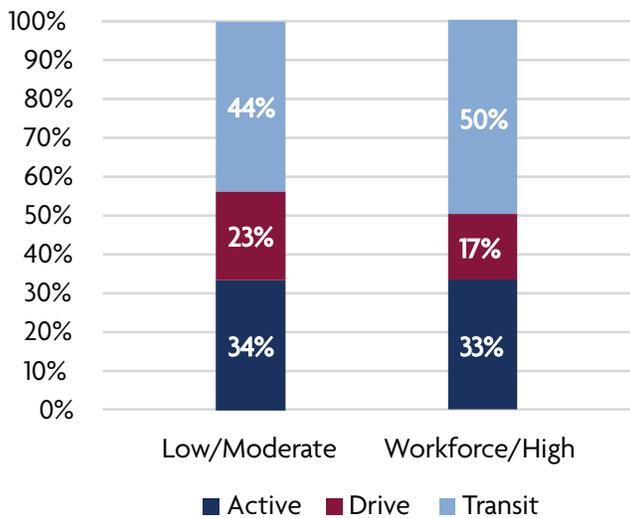
### *Current & Future Travel Mode by Income*

Current travel mode is generally similar across income brackets; however, low/moderate income respondents are 6 percent more likely to use transit over driving compared to workforce and high income respondents.

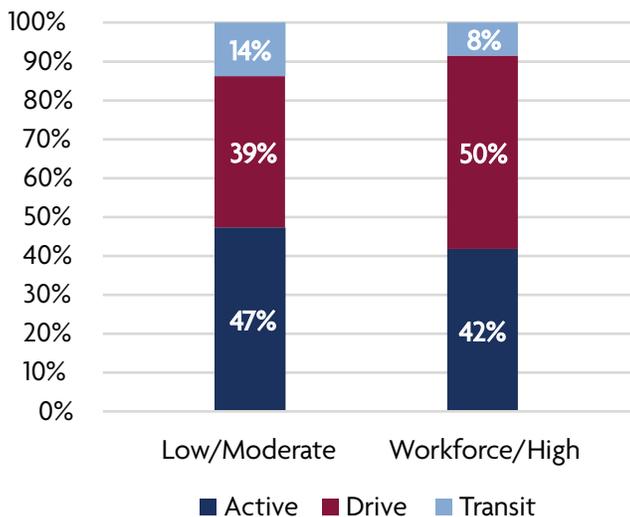
For future travel mode, all respondents demonstrated a desire to shift away from driving toward transit and active transportation. That said, the preference shift towards transit was more pronounced among the higher income brackets at 26 percent compared to 14 percent in the lower income brackets.

Conversely, 50 percent of higher income respondents ranked driving as their least desired future travel mode as opposed to 39 percent of low/moderate income respondents. This may be related to the higher rate of driving among higher income respondents and their concerns about congestion that could be alleviated if there were a fast, reliable transit network and safe active travel options.

## MOST DESIRED FUTURE TRAVEL MODE BY INCOME



## LEAST DESIRED FUTURE TRAVEL MODE BY INCOME



### **What would encourage you to take transit?**

The respondents who did not state that they use public transit as a current travel mode were asked to choose the top three options that would encourage them to take transit (*chart on next page*). The most common answers included more frequent service, better connections with other transit lines, faster travel times, and more flexible hours (improved service outside of the peak commute hours). Another 4 percent of respondents specifically noted dedicated bus travel lanes to avoid traffic delays, which would also result in faster travel times. These responses show that travelers not currently using transit could be encouraged to use transit if it were more frequent, more flexible, and faster.

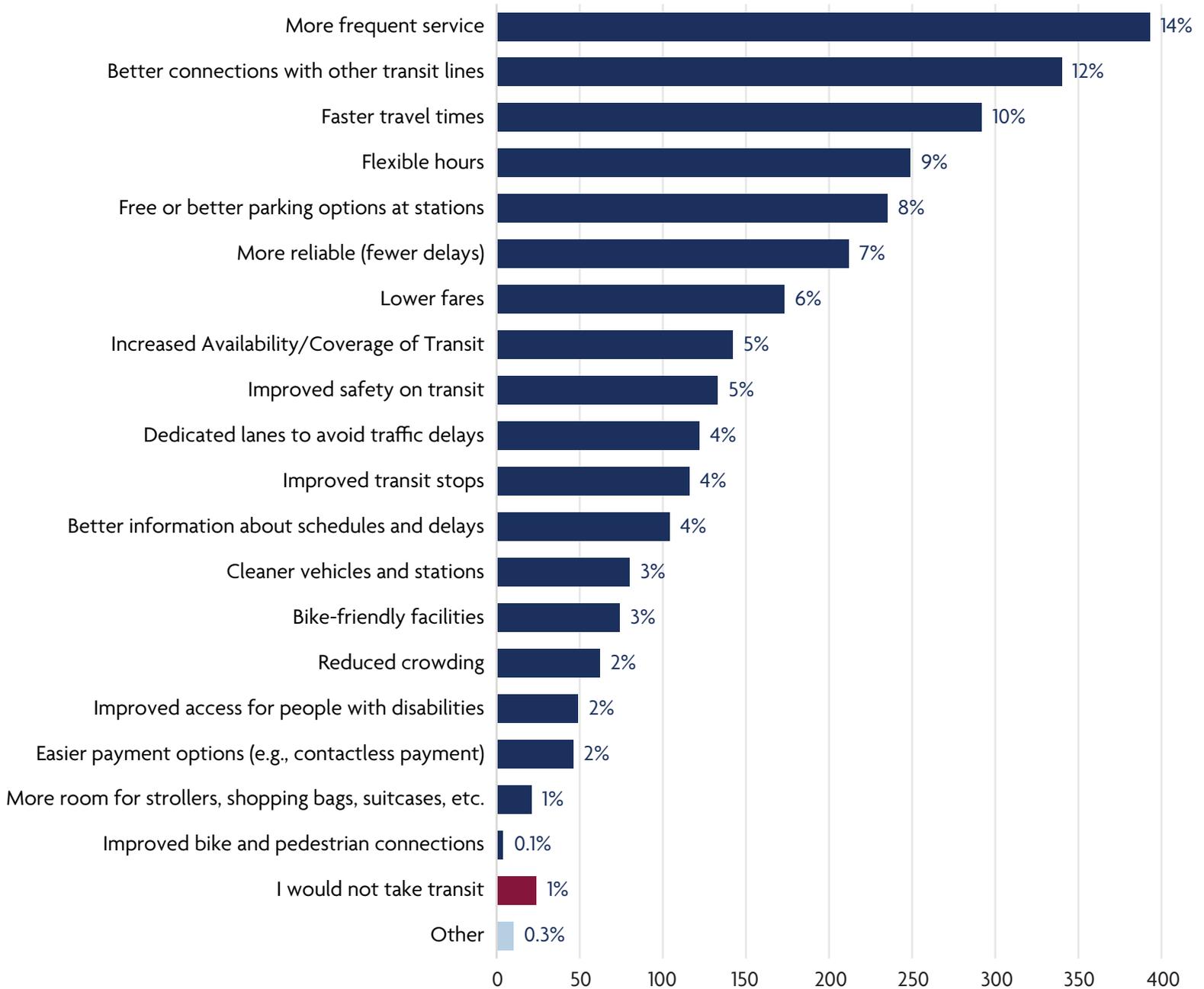
### *Transit Enticements by Vehicle Access*

There are some slight differences between those who do not currently take transit and their access to a vehicle. Those with vehicle access were more concerned with better connections with other transit lines and free or better parking at stations. Those without a vehicle were more interested in dedicated bus travel lanes, bike-friendly facilities, reduced crowding, improved access for people with disabilities, and easier payment options.

### *Transit Enticements by Income*

Comparing what would encourage respondents to take transit, higher income respondents were slightly more concerned with frequent service, faster travel times, and more reliable service. Low/moderate income respondents were slightly more concerned with affordability, safety, and access for people with disabilities. While the differences were not drastic, they highlight different concerns for those with additional choice in travel mode due to a higher income and those with less choice due to limited income.

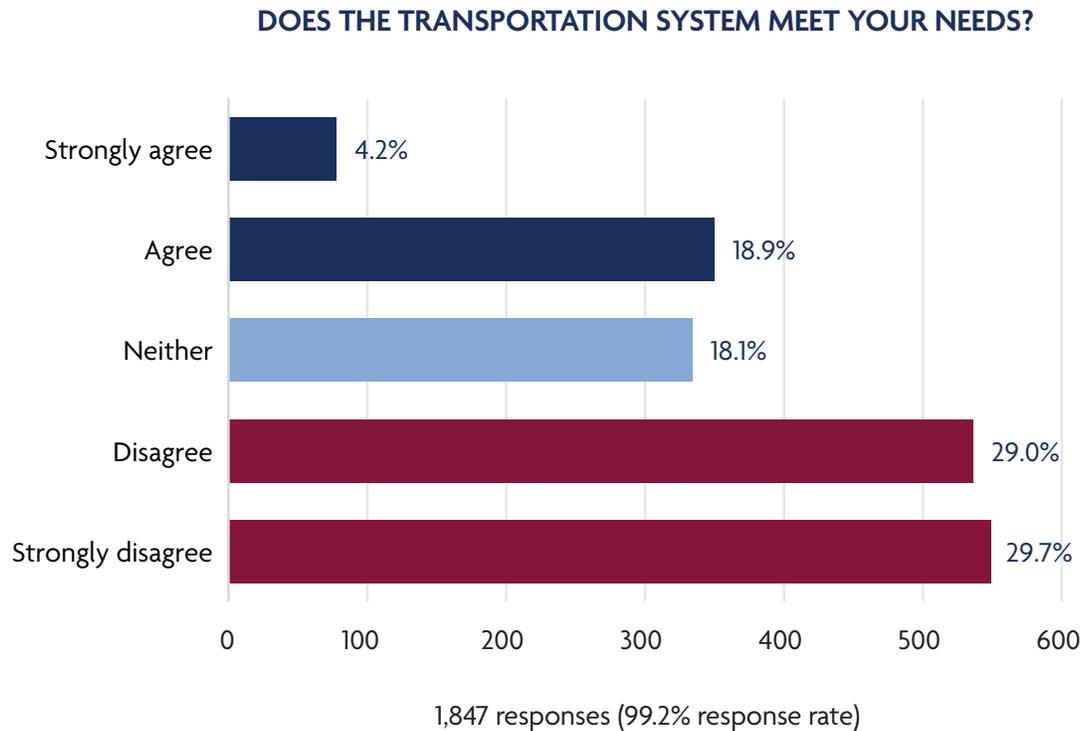
## WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?



1,443 respondents (61.4%) Directed to Question  
 1,110 responses (97% response rate)

### Does the transportation system meet your needs?

Respondents were asked the degree to which they agree whether the transportation system meets their needs. Nearly 60 percent of respondents stated that it did not meet their needs.



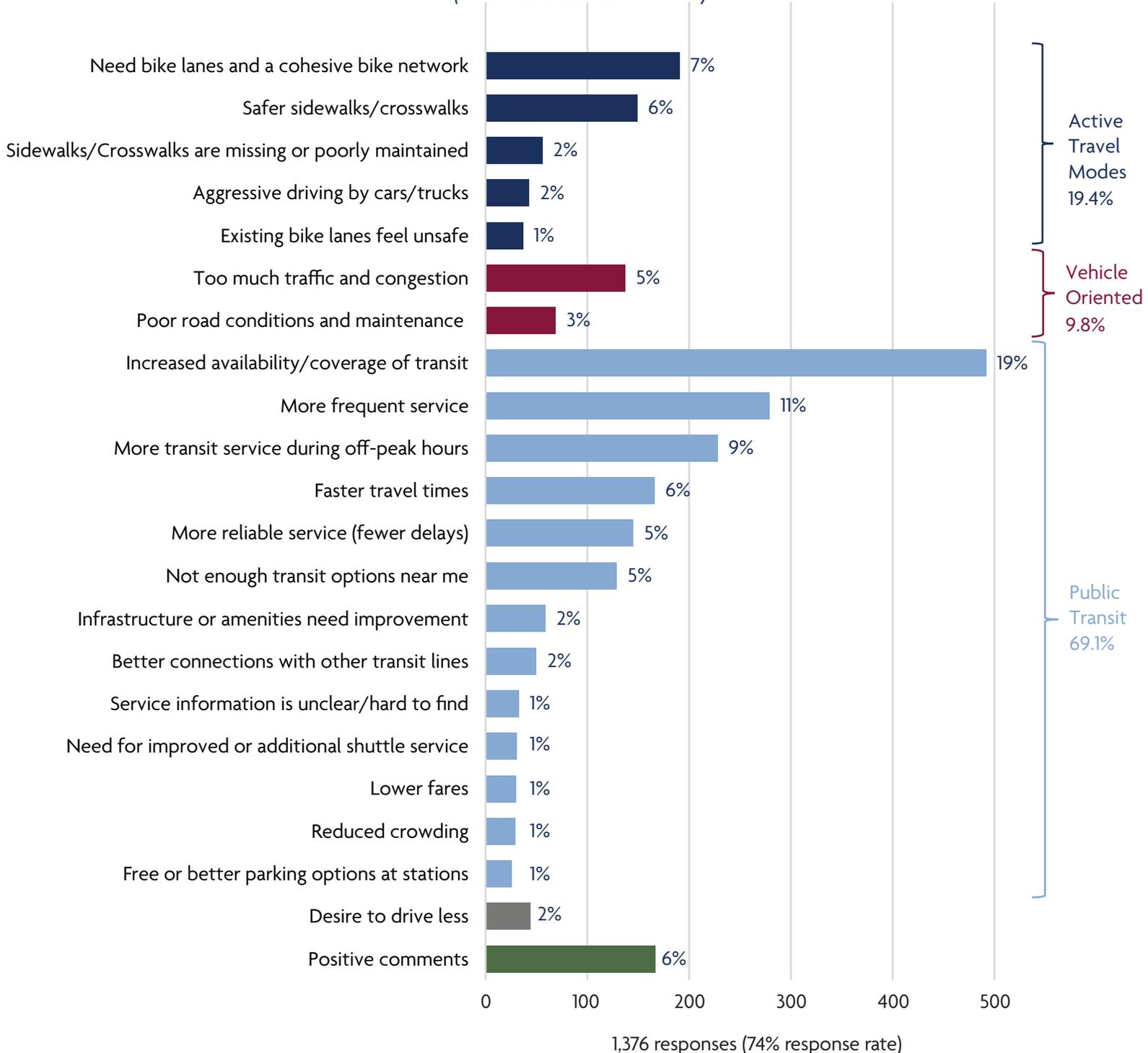
Respondents were then able to provide an open-ended answer as to why the system did or did not meet their needs (*chart on next page*). In these comments, even those who were neutral or stated the transportation system met their needs often provided concerns or complaints about issues in the transportation system.

The comments about the transportation system were 87 percent negative, 3 percent mixed, and 9 percent positive. Of these comments, 62 percent of comment related to public transit, 12 percent to walking, 12 percent to biking, and 14 percent to driving.

#### *Public Transit*

The most frequent transit-related comment was that transit should have increased coverage and availability in the region, with nearly 500 respondents making a comment to this effect. Many noted that the existing transit system does not serve the destinations they want or need

**TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY**  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



to access. This was especially common for people wishing to access New Jersey hubs such as Newark, New Brunswick, Jersey City, and other areas rather than New York City. Similarly, nearly 150 respondents commented that transit simply does not reach the locations where they live.

Other transit comments covered similar themes to the top improvements that would encourage non-transit users to take transit. These included more frequent service, more flexible hours (e.g., off-peak service, weekends, and nights), and faster travel times. Of those mentioning more frequent service, about 39 percent mentioned the bus and 15 percent mentioned PATH. Respondents wanting faster travel times often mentioned how difficult it is to get places within New Jersey because the existing transit is oriented to New York City. Respondents also mentioned the lack of direct train access to New York City and that dedicated bus lanes would significantly improve travel times.

### Active Transportation

Active travel comments were split between asking for more and safer infrastructure for biking and walking. There were also comments about how current infrastructure is unsafe or poorly maintained, as well as concerns about aggressive driving.

### Driving

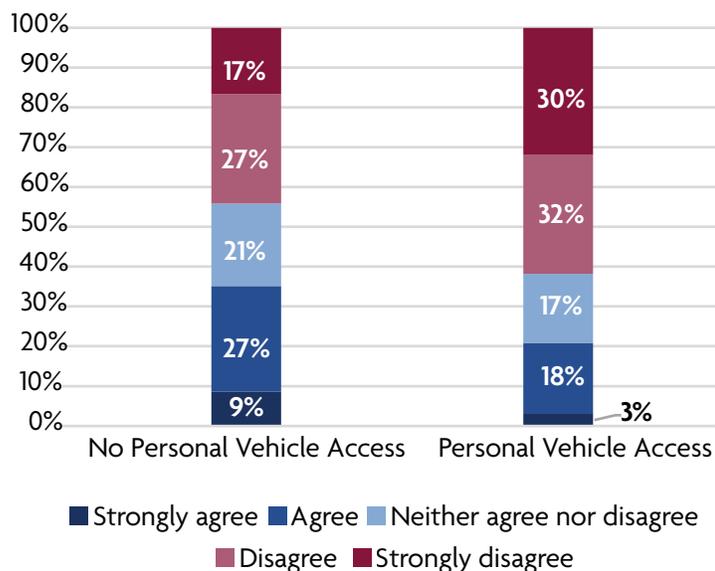
The comments about the vehicular road network were largely related to congestion and poor road conditions. About one-third of the comments about congestion were specifically related to the issues with I-80 at the Delaware Water Gap, which was under construction at the time of the survey.

### Needs by Vehicle Access

Respondents without access to a vehicle felt more positively about the transportation system meeting their travel needs. Sixty-two percent of those with access to a vehicle stated that it did not meet their needs as opposed to only 44 percent of those without.

There were also significant differences in their comments about the transportation system. Those with a vehicle

**DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS BY VEHICLE ACCESS**



were 11 percent more likely to say that transit needs expanded coverage and 7 percent more likely to say there is no transit nearby. Those without a vehicle were 9 percent more likely to say transit should be more frequent, 7 percent more likely to say transit is unreliable, and 6 percent more likely to say that transit should have more flexible hours during the off-peak, nights, and weekends. These comments clearly reflect the concerns of many frequent transit users without access to a vehicle, while also reflecting the reality of more vehicle owners living in locations not served or poorly served by the transit network.

With regard to active transportation, those without access to a vehicle were 8 percent more likely to say that the sidewalks and crosswalks are dangerous or in poor condition, and 3 percent more likely to say they wanted safer pedestrian infrastructure. Interestingly, those with access to a vehicle were about 3 percent more likely to want improved bike infrastructure.

### *Needs by Income*

While the responses whether the transportation system met their needs were similar across income groups, the comments about why had some notable differences. For active transportation comments, higher income respondents were 7 percent more likely to want more and safer bike infrastructure, while low/moderate income respondents were 4 percent more likely to say they wanted to drive less.

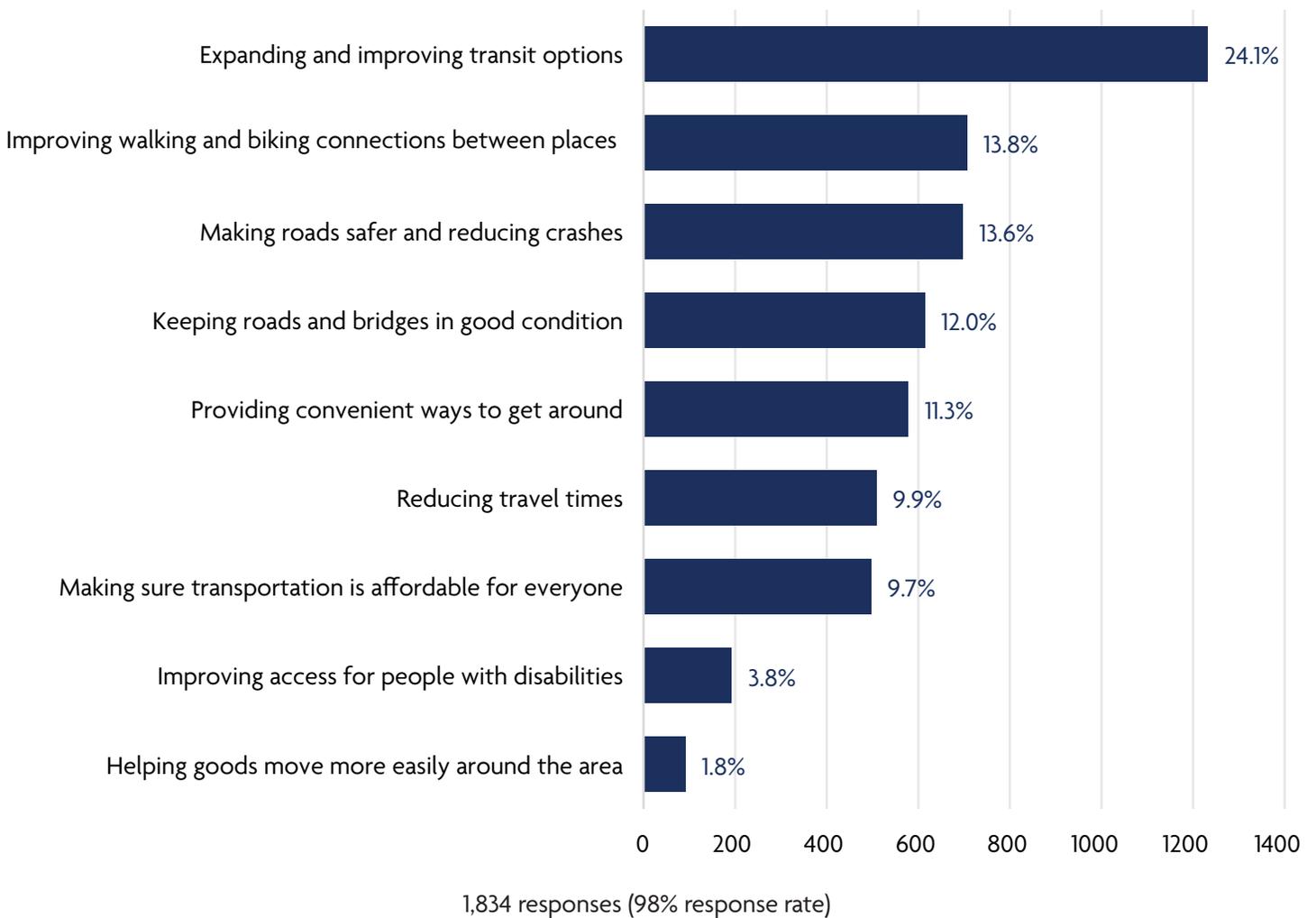
For vehicle transportation comments, higher income respondents said there is too much congestion 11 percent more, while 10 percent of low/moderate income respondents said driving is too expensive (compared to none of the higher income respondents).

Across the transit comments, the differences between income were less stark. Higher income respondents requested expanded coverage, more frequency, and flexible hours 3 to 5 percent more than low/moderate income respondents. Alternatively, low/moderate income respondents were about 2 percent more likely to say that public transit was too expensive, new shuttle services were needed, and transit is not available nearby.

### Biggest Impact Improvements

Respondents were asked to choose the top three improvements that would have the biggest positive impact on the transportation network. The top comment was expanding and improving transit options at 24 percent. The next two top comments, at approximately 14 percent each, were improving walking and biking connections and making roads safer and reducing crashes. Following close behind at 12 percent was maintaining roads and bridges in good condition. These responses continue the trend of emphasizing transit and active transportation modes as priorities for residents in the region.

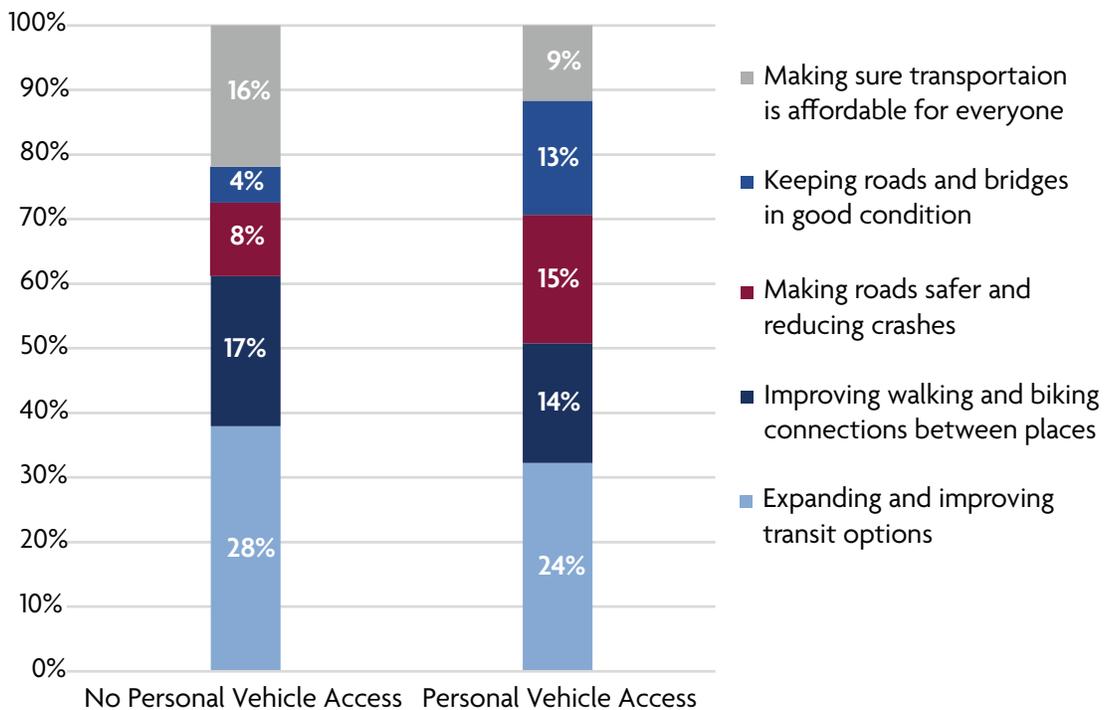
### IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT



### *Biggest Impact Improvements by Vehicle Access*

There were significant differences when looking at the transportation improvements that would have the biggest impact by household vehicular access. Those without access to a vehicle were 7 percent more likely to select making transportation affordable, 4 percent more likely to select expanding and improving transit options, and 3 percent more likely to select improving walking and biking access. Those with a vehicle were 9 percent more likely to select keeping roads in good condition and 6 percent more likely to select making roads safer and reducing crashes. These differences highlight the orientation of those without a vehicle towards transit and active transportation modes, and the greater focus of vehicle owners on the roadway conditions.

#### **TOP 5 IMPROVEMENTS BY VEHICLE ACCESS**



### *Biggest Impact Improvements by Income*

For the improvements that would make the biggest impact on the transportation system, higher income respondents were 4 percent more likely to select improving walking and biking conditions, while low/moderate income respondents were 7 percent more likely to select making transportation affordable for everyone.

## E. Engagement Activities - Phase 2

Phase 2 shifted to in-person outreach, with a focus on meeting people in their communities to deepen conversations and refine priorities identified during Phase 1.

### *Pop-Up Events & Supplemental Survey*

The NJTPA hosted 15 in-person pop-up events, one in each subregion, to gather public input in casual, relaxed settings. Pop-up materials were also used to gather feedback at the NJ TransAction Conference and during an UpNext North Jersey event. The 15 main events were held at community gatherings such as farmers markets, festivals, and regional events from April through June. The goal was to meet people where they already were and make it easy to participate in the planning process.

Each event featured a stacked display cube designed to present information in a visually appealing way that invited interaction. Participants responded to four questions about walking, biking, transit, and street safety to help refine plan priorities. These questions aimed to explore perspectives raised during Phase 1 in greater detail. Materials were available in English as well as Spanish, Chinese (simplified), Korean, Hindi, and Portuguese. Staff were present to assist participants and collect input, including Spanish and Hindi-speaking staff as appropriate to the event location. Participants were able to enter into a raffle for a chance to win a \$25 gift card for participating at the pop-ups.



BERGEN COUNTY



ESSEX COUNTY



HUDSON COUNTY



HUNTERDON COUNTY



MIDDLESEX COUNTY



MONMOUTH COUNTY



MORRIS COUNTY



OCEAN COUNTY



PASSAIC COUNTY



SOMERSET COUNTY



SUSSEX COUNTY



UNION COUNTY



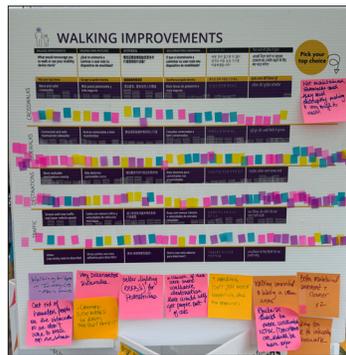
WARREN COUNTY



JERSEY CITY



NEWARK

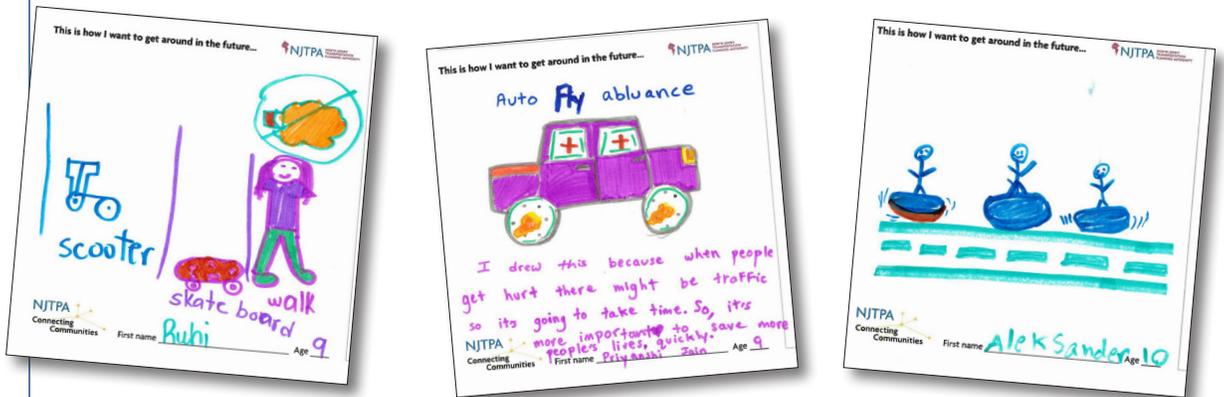


Pop-up locations were selected with support from the NJTPA subregional staff and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee to ensure a wide geographic and demographic reach. Events emphasized engagement with communities that may not typically attend formal public meetings. Participant representation generally reflected the diversity of the region and of each host location, including a range of races and ethnicities, spoken languages, and ages. Over 300 children also participated, with older children answering the main questions and younger children participating in the drawing activity. In total, the pop-ups engaged more than 1,300 visitors, whose input helped validate and refine the themes developed during Phase 1.

Pop-Up Participation			
Sub-Region	Event/Location	Date	# of Participants
Bergen	EarthFest/Leonia	May 18, 2025	115
Essex	Bloomfest/Newark	April 13, 2025	201
Hudson	Earth Day Festival/North Bergen	May 3, 2025	88
Hunterdon	Farmers Market/Frenchtown	May 10, 2025	79
Middlesex	Keep Middlesex Moving (KMM) Bike Rodeo/Piscataway	May 31, 2025	54
Monmouth	Made in Monmouth/Middletown	May 3, 2025	172
Morris	Block Party/Lake Hopatcong	May 17, 2025	91
Ocean	Kids Stuff Flea Market/Lakewood	May 4, 2025	51
Passaic	Touch-a-Truck/Paterson	May 10, 2025	74
Somerset	Girls Night Out/Somerville	May 15, 2025	102
Sussex	Newton Day/Newton	June 7, 2025	61
Union	Touch-A-Truck/Cranford	June 1, 2025	34
Warren	Earth Day Festival/Hackettstown	April 27, 2025	44
Newark	Girl Scout Leadership Center/Newark	April 12, 2025	50
Jersey City	Earth Day Festival/Jersey City	May 17, 2025	92
N/A	TransAction Conference/Atlantic City	April 15-17, 2025	17
N/A	UpNext North Jersey Event/Newark	June 7, 2025	52

The in-person outreach was supplemented by an online survey posing the same questions and translated into the same five non-English languages. The survey was advertised on the NJTPA’s social media platforms and paid social media ads focused on hard-to-reach populations. Nearly 350 people responded to the online survey, supplementing the overall Phase 2 outreach results. Ultimately, over 1,700 people participated in either the pop-ups or the online survey.

Recognizing the importance of including younger voices in the long-range planning process, the NJTPA partnered with Rutgers Public Outreach and Engagement Team (POET) to design activities specifically for children and teens. At the pop-up events, children were encouraged to participate in the drawing contest. To encourage participation, the NJTPA offered a \$100 gift card prize, which was featured at the pop-up events, and provided small giveaways, such as stickers and bracelets, to thank children for participating. The contest proved to be a highly effective way to engage children and spark interest from accompanying adults. In total, approximately 274 youth submitted artwork through pop-up events and the on-air outreach. The other youth engagement efforts of POET are described later in section G. Targeted Engagement.



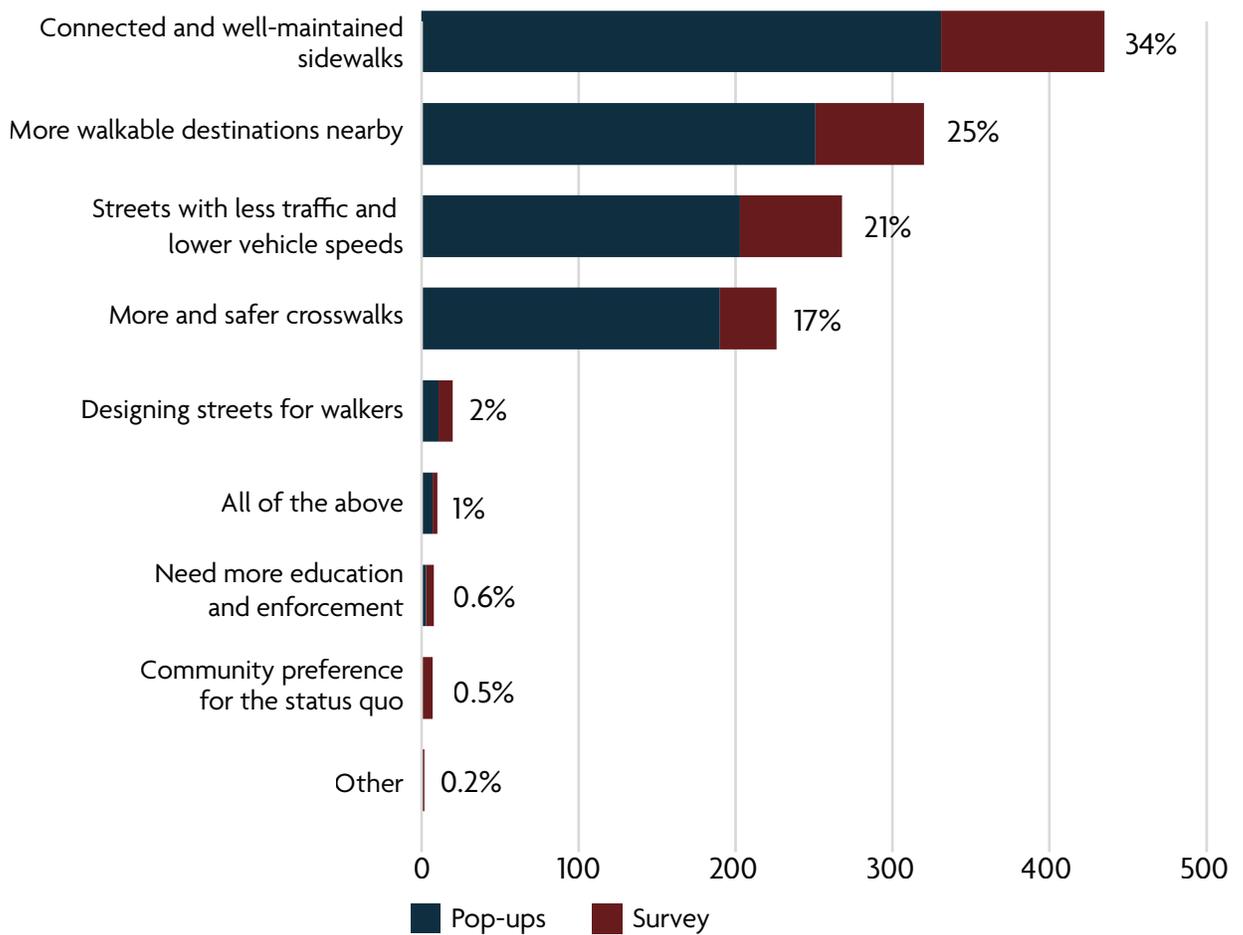
### Walking Improvements

Participants were asked “What would encourage you to walk or use your mobility device more?,” and were asked to choose the single most important among four given options: *more and safer crosswalks*; *connected and well-maintained sidewalks*; *more walkable destinations nearby*; and *streets with less traffic and lower vehicle speeds*. Participants also had the option of writing in an “other.”

*Connected and well-maintained sidewalks* was the most popular response with 34 percent of respondents choosing this option. A quarter of respondents chose *more walkable destinations nearby*, followed by *streets with less traffic and lower vehicle speeds* at 21 percent and *more*

and safer crosswalks 17 percent. Among those respondents who wrote in an “other,” most indicated other improvements beyond the given sidewalk and crosswalk options to *design streets for walkers*.

**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

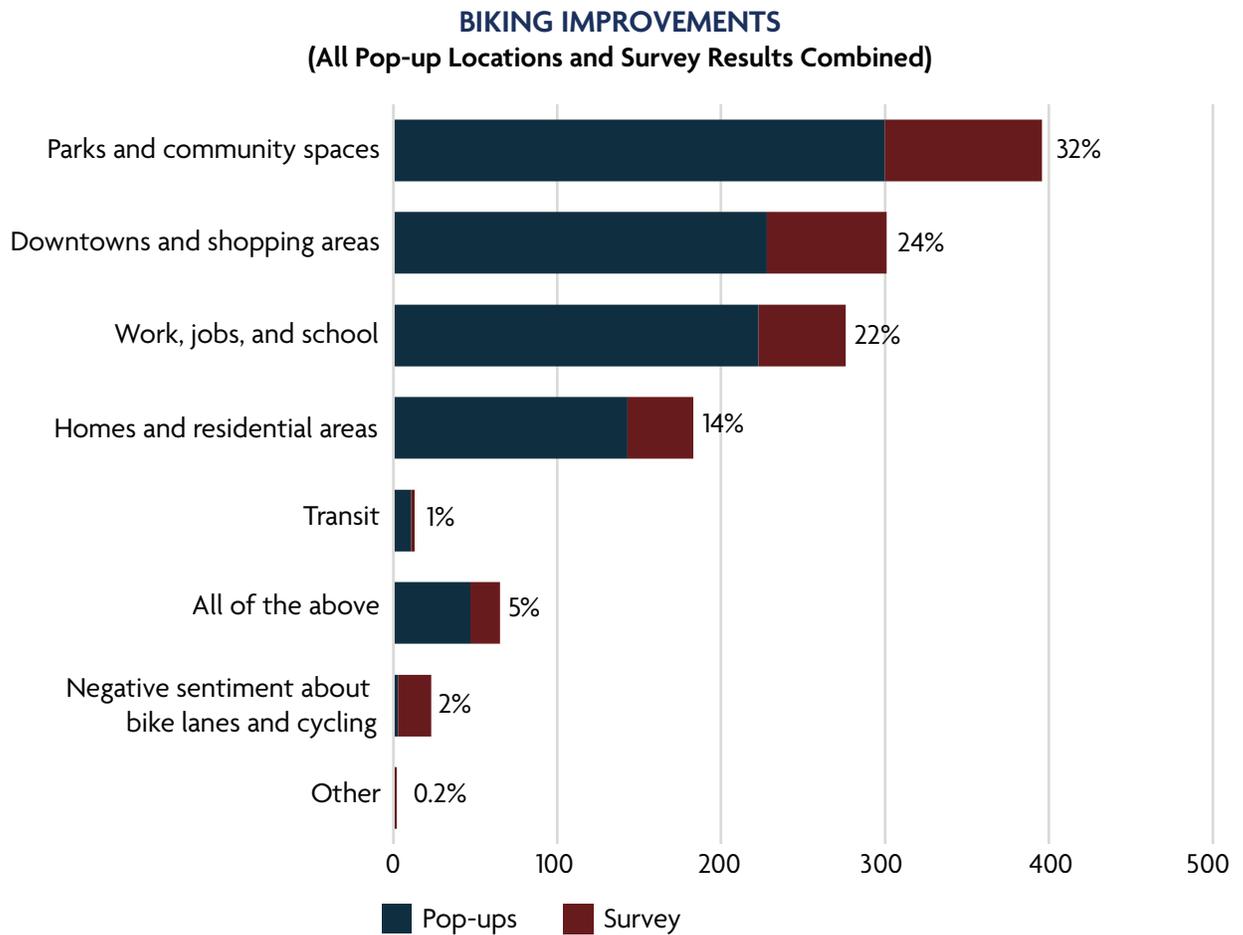


**Biking Improvements**

Participants were asked “What places should be more connected by bike lane?,” and were asked to choose the single most important among four given options: *homes and residential areas; downtowns and shopping areas; work, jobs, and school; and parks and community spaces*. Participants also had the option of writing in an “other.”

The most common response was *parks and community spaces* at 32 percent of responses. *Downtowns and shopping areas* and *work, jobs, and school* were the next most common

responses at 24 percent and 22 percent, respectively. Fourteen percent of respondents selected *homes and residences*. Among those respondents who wrote in an “other,” 5 percent indicated *all of the above* and about 2 percent expressed a *negative sentiment about bike lanes and cycling*.

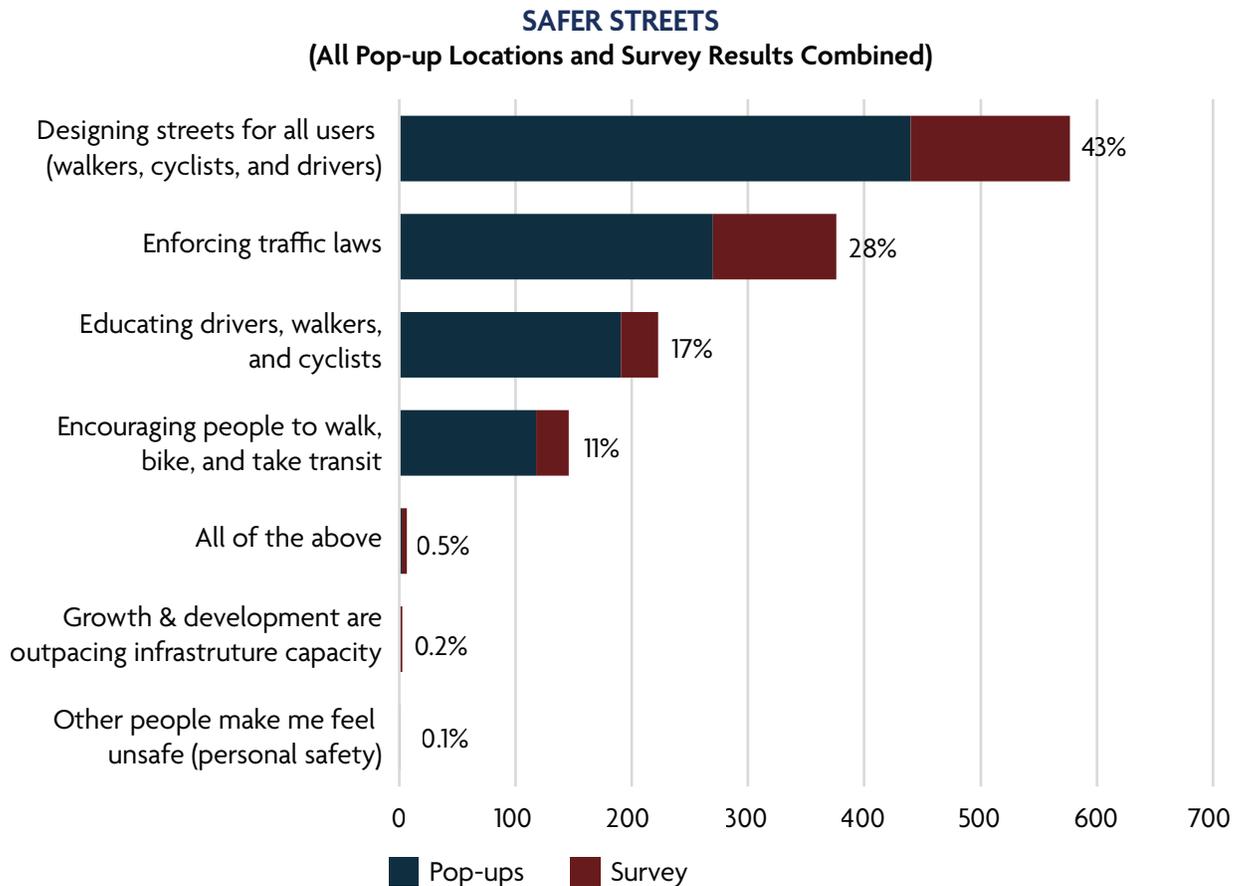


### Safer Streets

Participants at the pop-up events and on the survey were asked “What would help make streets safer?” and were asked to choose the single most important among four given options: *designing streets for all users*; *educating drivers, walkers, and cyclists*; *enforcing traffic laws*; and *encouraging people to walk, bike, and take transit more*. Participants also had the option of writing in an “other.”

At 43 percent, *designing streets for all users* was resoundingly the most popular choice. About

28 percent of respondents selected *enforcing traffic laws*, followed by *educating drivers, walkers, and cyclists* at 17 percent, and *encouraging people to walk, bike, and take transit more* at 11 percent.



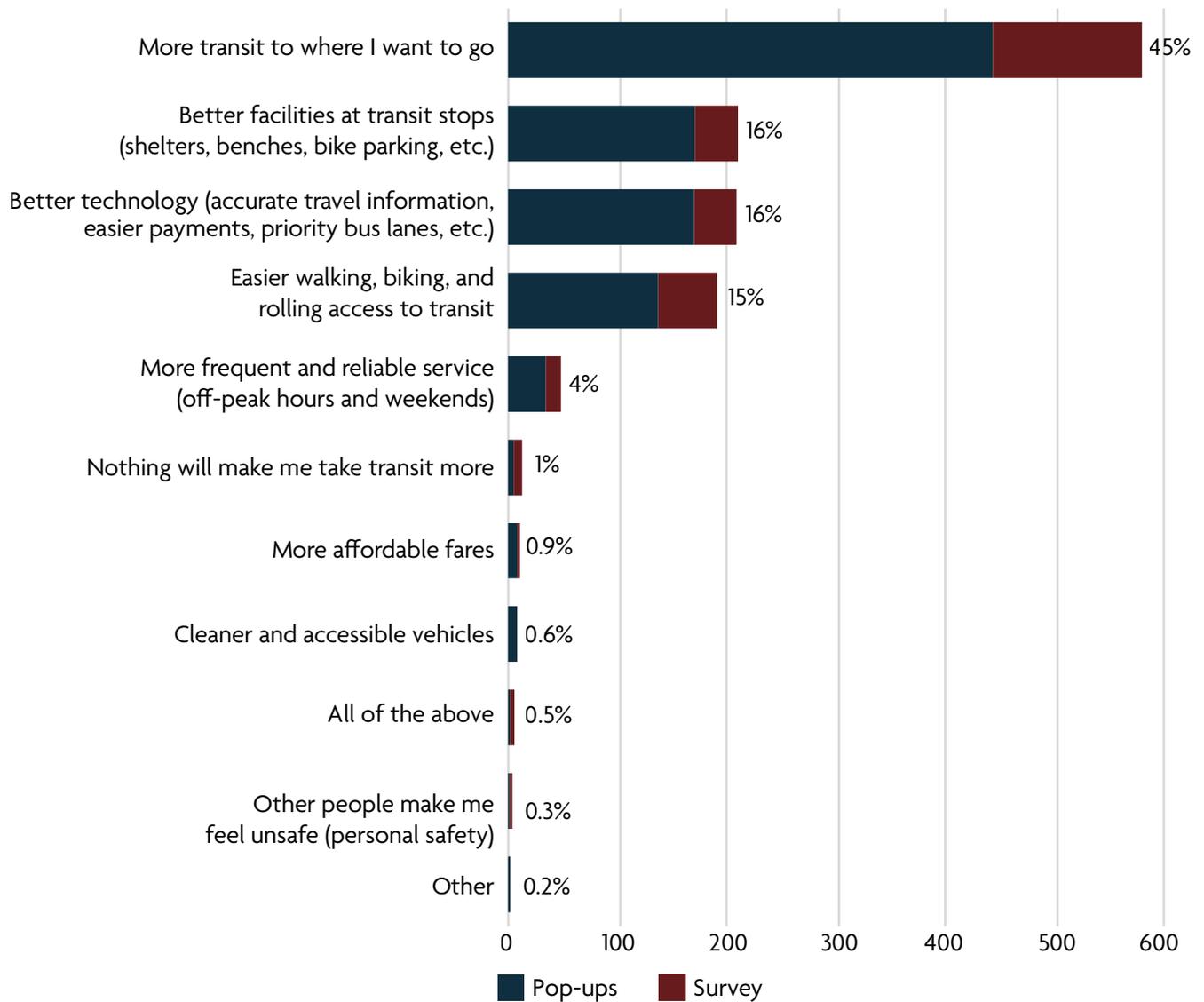
### Transit Access

Participants were asked “What would make it easier for you to use transit?,” and were asked to choose the single most important among four given options: *more transit where I want to go*; *easier walking, biking, and rolling access to transit*; *better facilities at transit stops (shelters, benches, bike parking, etc.)*; and *better technology (accurate travel information, easier payments, priority bus lanes, etc.)*. Participants also had the option of writing in an “other.”

At 45 percent, *more transit where I want to go* was the resoundingly most popular option. The remainder of the given choices were relatively split between *better facilities*, *better technology*,

and *easier walking, biking, and rolling access to transit*. Among those respondents who wrote in an “other,” most commented on a desire for *more frequent and reliable service*. About 1 percent of respondents said that nothing would make them take transit more often.

**TRANSIT ACCESS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



## F. Engagement Activities - Phase 3

The NJTPA engaged over 3,200 people during the first two phases of outreach. The third and final phase included a federally required 30-day public comment period from July 4 to August 5, 2025, on the draft Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Fiscal Year 2026–2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Air Quality Conformity Determination for both the LRTP and TIP. The public comment period was advertised on the website, emails, social media posts, and paid social media ads. In addition to accepting comments during the Virtual Open House, the NJTPA also accepted comments via email, voicemail, and text.

### *Virtual Workshop & Open House*

To support this effort, the NJTPA hosted a public workshop on the Air Quality Conformity Determination ahead of the Virtual Open House held on July 17, 2025. The workshop drew 38 participants, including NJTPA staff and consultants.

The Virtual Open House was held from 4:00 to 7:00 PM and engaged 42 participants, excluding NJTPA staff and consultants. During the Open House, Ted Ritter, Manager of External Affairs, and David Behrend, the NJTPA Executive Director, introduced the LRTP, TIP, and AQC Determination. After the presentation, participants were encouraged to join one of the topic-specific breakout rooms for more detailed discussions.

### **Breakout Room Summaries**

#### **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Breakout Room**

Vanessa Koenigkramer, Director of Capital Programming, outlined the FY 2026–2029 TIP—a fiscally constrained, federally required four-year list of surface transportation projects. The TIP includes investments in bridges, roads, transit, bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, and freight facilities, aligning with LRTP priorities.

#### **Air Quality Conformity Breakout Room**

Liz DeRuchie, Manager of Air Quality Programs, explained the federally mandated conformity process, which ensures transportation projects do not worsen air quality in non-attainment areas. The current determination covers more than 400 projects across the LRTP and TIP, focusing on mobile-source emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which are key contributors to ground-level ozone.

#### **LRTP and Outreach Breakout Room**

Lois Goldman, Director of Regional Planning, Jeff Perlman, Senior Director of Planning, and Winstina Hughes, Senior Manager of Outreach, provided an in-depth overview of the LRTP, covering its purpose, development, financial scenarios, public engagement, and priority

actions. They discussed regional transportation trends, funding levels from fiscally constrained to aspirational scenarios, and how stakeholder input informed the plan's priorities.

## Key Takeaways

### Expanding Trails and Active Transportation

- Participants supported expanding trail infrastructure, especially along the East Coast Greenway and the future Greenway at Van Keuren Avenue.
- They recommended elevating “trails” as a standalone category in the TIP, alongside roads, bridges, and transit.
- Participants raised concerns about bike infrastructure designs that narrow vehicle lanes, particularly in dense urban areas, and emphasized the need to prioritize safety for all users.
- Participants noted confusion or inconsistency in how e-bikes vs. traditional bikes are referenced in planning documents, suggesting a need for clearer definitions and policies as micro-mobility grows.
- Many participants urged the need to improve safe access to Liberty State Park from southern Jersey City and proposed forming a dedicated liaison team across agencies to coordinate solutions proactively.

### Improving Street Safety

- Participants flagged unsafe conditions along arterial roads in high-density residential areas and called for stronger alignment with the State's *Target Zero* safety initiative.
- They encouraged supporting multimodal access in mixed-use districts and recognizing its role in strengthening local economies.
- One participant introduced a demonstration project that explores alternative freight and utility delivery methods to reduce traffic congestion, energy use, and emissions.

### Integrating Mobility, Land Use, and Congestion Solutions

- Participants stressed the need to integrate transportation and land use planning to manage growing congestion along suburban corridors. They emphasized the importance of balancing growth, affordability, and mobility in planning decisions.
- Several participants raised concerns about safety risks in transit-oriented development (TOD) areas suggesting better coordination between municipalities and transportation agencies on land use, enforcement, and infrastructure improvements.

### Addressing AQC

- Participants expressed interest in using local air quality monitors, such as PurpleAir, and asked how these efforts align with the NJTPA's regional air quality analysis. The NJTPA clarified that, although the region has achieved PM2.5 attainment and no longer requires modeling for it, local monitoring remains essential and aligns with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Citizen Science efforts.
- Participants raised concerns that regional conformity may miss local issues near

schools, terminals, and construction zones. The NJTPA explained that project sponsors (e.g., NJDOT or the Turnpike Authority) address these issues through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

- Participants questioned the air quality and public health impacts of a possible highway expansion near the Holland Tunnel and urged agencies to consider public transit alternatives. The NJTPA confirmed that this project is not currently included in the LRTP or TIP, but it would undergo conformity analysis if it moves forward.

### **Strengthening Coordination and Supporting Innovation**

- Participants encouraged the NJTPA to share public outreach best practices and create toolkits to help other organizations run effective, low-cost engagement efforts.
- They called for more technical assistance and flexible funding to support pilot projects, including placemaking and alternative freight delivery demonstrations.
- One participant highlighted challenges in Teaneck caused by jurisdictional boundaries and urged agencies to pursue institutional coordination and broader governance reforms.

Additional materials, including a summary of public comments and responses from the comment period, are included in the *H. Resources* section of this Appendix.

## G. Targeted Engagement

To expand the reach of the engagement effort and ensure diverse perspectives were included, the NJTPA partnered with Rutgers Public Outreach and Engagement Team (POET) to conduct outreach with specific populations that may be underrepresented in traditional planning processes including youth, non-English speakers, and LGBTQ individuals. These activities occurred in parallel with Phase 1 and 2 of the broader public engagement program.

### *Youth Outreach*

The POET team engaged youth through three efforts: NJTPA OnAir Studio, Set the Table, and UpNext North Jersey.



ON AIR STUDIO! - SAMMY THE SQUIRREL

### **NJTPA OnAir Studio: Engaging Kids and Teens**

To collect input from North Jersey residents for Connecting Communities, the Rutgers-POET team implemented innovative public engagement strategies to reach people of all ages. POET continued to use of the NJTPA “On Air” initiative, conducted as part of public outreach for the NJTPA’s Plan 2045 and for Plan 2050. This year, POET reimagined OnAir to create the NJTPA On Air Studio, a hybrid in-person and virtual space with multiple activities for engagement: a recording booth to create a short voice message about their ideas for the future of transportation, the “Future of Transportation” multimedia art contest, and a survey. The studio also

featured Sammy the Squirrel, a character to bring emotion and identity to the outreach campaign. POET created three engagement activities, offered in both English and Spanish. The three different activities were designed to allow kids and teens to participate in the ways in which they are comfortable, using their voice, creating art, or completing a survey. A description of these activities are detailed below.

### **Recording Booth**

The recording booth activity focused on how kids and teens feel about transportation in their communities today. Questions for this activity included:

- How do you get around? Walk? Bike? In a car? In the train or on the bus? What do you like or dislike about it?
- If you could choose how you would like to get around, what would it be? Something different?
- How do you feel when you’re getting around?



RECORDING BOOTH SET UP

Participants were able to record directly onto the On Air Recording Booth website. Recordings could be up to 30 seconds. In addition, POET created a physical booth designed like a recording studio; this was used at in-person events. In person-events also featured a puppet of Sammy the Squirrel, giving kids a character to interact with, and a reason to approach the On Air booth.

### Multimedia Art Contest

The NJTPA On Air Studio also hosted a multimedia art competition to collect ideas about transportation futures for the region. Participants had an opportunity to submit short videos or audio recordings, drawings or digital images, or poems or short essays to share their visions. To encourage participation and quality submissions, participants had the incentive to win gift cards (\$100 for the winner; \$50 for the runner-up) based on age-group and the creativity of the ideas submitted. Like the last version of the On Air Contest, participants watched a short video with the rules and the prompt “What do you think transportation will be like in the future when you’re an adult?”



### Survey

The On Air Survey was open to kids and teens in the region to participate in an adapted version of the region-wide survey administered by the NJTPA. The questions were targeted to the transportation needs of youth.

### Participant Characteristics

Through the various outreach activities, POET reached 388 kids and teens from 10 of the 13 counties in the NJTPA region. The majority of participants were under the age of 10. The group with the lowest number of participants was teens over 14 years old. Participating counties included Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, and Union.



The distribution of participation of each activity by age group is displayed in Table 1 below:

Participants by Age & Activity					
Age	Activity				Total by Age Group
	Radio Booth	Art Contest	Survey	Set the Table	
Under 10	123	151	3	-	277
10 to 14	70	59	10	-	139
Over 14	4	-	24	30	58
Unknown	-	64	-	-	64
<b>Total by Activity</b>	197	274	37	30	538

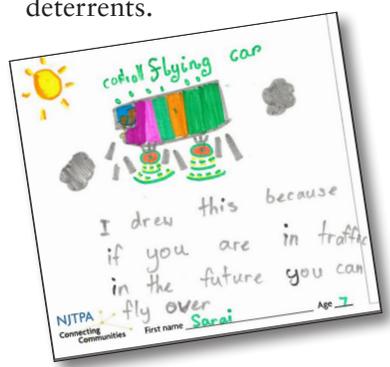
### Key Findings

Across all activities, the NJTPA and POET received a total of 538 submissions from youth ages 5 to 17. POET reviewed all responses and identified four recurring themes. The overwhelming majority of submissions touched on at least one of these themes.

#### *Theme #1: Transportation that is efficient, safe and reliable*

Youth across all outreach efforts voiced a strong desire for transportation that gets them where they need to go – quickly, safely, and on time. Elementary and middle school students emphasized dependency on parents and wished for transportation options that gave them more freedom when adults weren’t available. High schoolers focused on needing reliable transit, noting that lateness or confusing systems posed real barriers to use. Teens in Jersey City also critiqued the unreliability of transit apps and long waits for the light rail, citing those delays as deterrents.

<p><i>“I think cars should have rocket boosters.”</i> - Radio Booth</p>	<p><i>“Transit service should also be more reliable.”</i> - Set the Table</p>	<p><i>“Sometimes I want to get to a place fast and the buses or cars are delayed.”</i> - Radio Booth</p>
<p><i>“In the mornings, there’s a lot of traffic... people dropping their kids off blocks the road.”</i> - Radio Booth</p>	<p><i>“If my parents are not available to give me a ride, I can’t go to those events.”</i> - Survey</p>	





“There’s certain times of the day where traffic is crazy.” - Radio Booth

“I get around by Uber every single day.” - Radio Booth

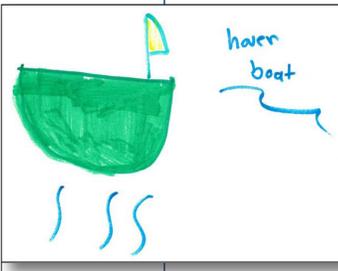
“Having something that can get me there in the rain when my mom is in a meeting.” - Survey

“Transit apps are unreliable and difficult to navigate.” - Set the Table

Others flagged traffic congestion, especially during school drop-off hours, and expressed the desire for better traffic flow.

*Theme #2: Transportation that is better for the environment*

While fewer youth focused directly on sustainability, there was a small cluster of older students who referenced the need for environmentally responsible transportation. These students suggested electric flying cars, planes that use biofuels, or vehicles that do not rely on fossil fuels. Mostly, these ideas were voiced in the On Air Radio Booth sessions, but they were visually echoed in a few of the art submissions. In some art contest submissions, children drew futuristic vehicles floating above ground or powered by abstract, clean energy sources. These entries suggest awareness of climate and pollution impacts, even among very young participants.

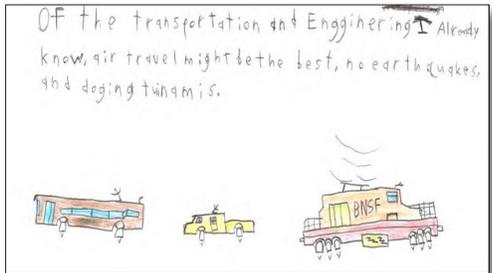
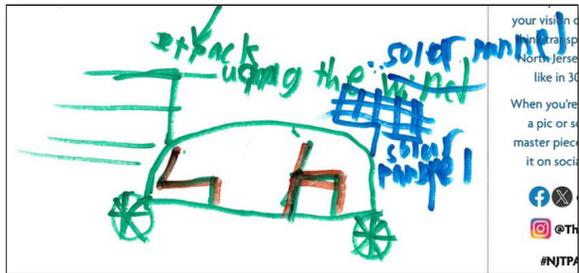


“Airplanes made out of biofuel.” - Radio Booth

“Flying cars powered by magnets instead of gas.” - Radio Booth

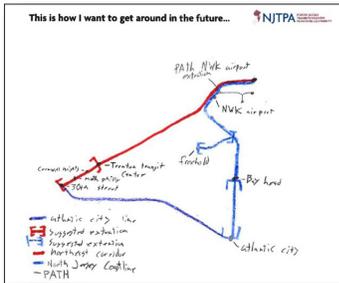
“Flying cars that don’t use fuel – electric flying cars.” - Radio Booth

“Buses should change their environment and cleanliness.” - Radio Booth



*Theme #3: Transportation as a component of social issues*

Youth also articulated how transportation intersects with broader social issues like safety, gender, access, and emotional well-being. In the On Air recordings, several students described navigating areas impacted by gang activity, expressing a need for transportation that also



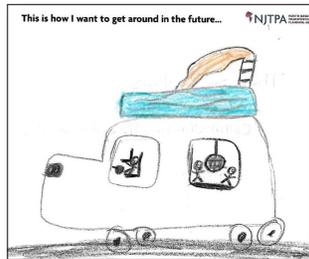
provides a sense of protection and support. Teens in Jersey City noted that even where transit existed, they avoided it due to fears around harassment or safety, especially in the evening. Girls in particular shared discomfort around biking or waiting for the light rail. The survey reinforced these findings, with responses noting that lack of parental availability often translated into missed opportunities. Together, these insights help build understanding of the emotional and social context in which transportation systems are used or avoided by young people.

<p><i>“Security concerns on PATH.” - Set the Table</i></p>	<p><i>“Unsafe to walk [to light rail stop].” - Set the Table</i></p>	<p><i>“Disconnected bike lane networks... the nearest ones aren’t close.” - Set the Table</i></p>	
<p><i>“There should be something that takes kids that are around gang violence... [so that] they could walk around safely.” - Recording Booth</i></p>	<p><i>“Girls don’t feel comfortable biking near cars.” - Set the Table</i></p>	<p><i>“If my parents are not available, I can’t go.” - Survey</i></p>	
<p><i>“I think there should be a kid under 20 years old on the bus, and teachers should pick up their students.” - Recording Booth</i></p>	<p><i>“Transit... not only to serve as transit, but a way to vent about what you’re going through.” - Recording Booth</i></p>		

**Theme #4: Transportation that is a fun experience**

For many kids, transportation isn’t just a practical tool. The On Air recordings were filled with whimsical and imaginative ideas: cars made of candy, flying skateboards, and Lamborghinis everywhere. Even in the most outlandish suggestions, there is a clear desire for autonomy, fun, and identity. While planners and engineers often focus on safety, reliability, and cost, youth

<p><i>“I want a candy car.” - Recording Booth</i></p>	<p><i>“A teal bike and a boat.” - Recording Booth</i></p>	<p><i>“There should be Lamborghinis everywhere.” - Recording Booth</i></p>	<p><i>“[I want a] coach bus to get to school. It has TVs, a bathroom, and very comfy seats.” - Radio Booth</i></p>
<p><i>“Cars should have inflatable wheels so it can transport on water.” - Recording Booth</i></p>	<p><i>“A car that can levitate over air, water, and land.” - Recording Booth</i></p>	<p><i>“I like to walk... or use a car that drives itself.” - Recording Booth</i></p>	
<p><i>“Ride my bike... that’s epic.” - Recording Booth</i></p>	<p><i>“Flying cars going through the rainbow.” - Recording Booth</i></p>		<p><i>“Racecars.” - Recording Booth</i></p>



### *“Flying bikes.” - Recording Booth*

prioritize freedom, wonder, creativity and play. These visions also remind us that joy is a valid metric of success in youth mobility planning.

#### **Teen Outreach: Set the Table**

POET created Set the Table alongside the NJTPA as an engagement strategy based on the “meeting in a box” concept for previous years’ LRTP outreach efforts. For this cycle of LRTP outreach, POET adapted the Set the Table concept to create an interactive, web-based game, calling this new iteration Set the Table...For Game Night.

Using the platform Slides with Friends, POET created a series of interactive slides that included questions with opportunities to provide feedback on four LRTP topics: pedestrian improvements, bicycling improvements, public transportation, and safety. In addition, POET included trivia questions to retain participant interest. Participants used their cell phones or other devices to join the game and respond to the prompts and questions. This outreach was conducted at three events in Bergen, Hudson, and Middlesex counties:

- Lodi Keystone Club (part of the Boys and Girls Club of Lower Bergen County) with 7 participants.
- Youth Foundation of Jersey City (Hudson County) with 17 participants.
- Highland Park Public Library (with high schoolers from various high schools in Middlesex County) with 6 participants.

#### **Key Findings**

##### *Pedestrian Improvements*

Experience is impacted by the design and maintenance of the built environment. Across all three groups, participants felt safe as pedestrians in places with well-designed pedestrian infrastructure, such as well-maintained sidewalks, board walks, and spaces that are well-lit with availability of crosswalks. In addition, placemaking and aesthetics influence perceptions of safety, as these places are seen as more vibrant and welcoming. Many participants responded that places like Downtown Jersey City, Hoboken, Metuchen, and East Rutherford feel safe as

pedestrians. Participants also discussed the appeal of pedestrian-only zones, like part of Newark Avenue in Jersey City.



More pedestrian infrastructure is needed. As far as improvements are concerned, all groups mentioned the need for more, highly visible crosswalks. Participants pointed out a need for well-trained crossing guards and more complete sidewalk systems in their communities.

### *Bicycling Improvements*

Sharing the road with cars is a concern. When it comes to cycling, participants' major concern is the behavior of drivers. Drivers in vehicles creating unsafe conditions, such as occupying the bike lane, ignoring traffic signs, and creating conflict, which discourage participants from using bicycling as a mode of transportation. In addition to cars, some participants are also concerned about e-bikes, which are a prevalent mode of transportation, especially in urban areas such as Jersey City. Participants are unsure about how e-bikes “fit” into a street’s bicycle infrastructure.

Bicycle lanes and parking would make bicycling easier. Bike lanes, especially those that are highly visible and protected, would encourage more participants to use a bicycle as a mode of transportation. For those that live in communities without bike lanes, like those at the event in Lodi, there is uncertainty about where it is acceptable to ride a bike; they do not feel safe on the road but also are concerned about pedestrians if riding on the sidewalk. Because of feeling unsafe using bicycles or scooters in the roadway, sidewalk repair is needed to make biking and scooter use safer. Designated spaces for bicycles could address these concerns. Other concerns are bike parking; participants worry about not having secure parking, including at their schools, and risk their bike being stolen or damaged.

Bicycling is not always an option. In both Jersey City and Highland Park, participants brought up new concerns about bicycling as an accessible transportation option. In Jersey City, some participants cannot ride a bicycle for various reasons: their bike was stolen, they can’t afford a bike, and the cost of bikeshare (e.g., Citibikes) is too expensive. In Highland Park, participants pointed out that some parents do not allow their children to ride their bikes because conditions are not safe.

### *Public Transportation*

Transit experiences vary across the region. Participants have diverse experiences with public transportation in the region; public transportation availability varies by place type. Across these groups, “public transportation” was understood in different ways: In Lodi and Highland Park, participants primarily discussed buses, whereas in Jersey City, participants focused on light rail.

Transit is not always reliable or convenient. Participants who live in places with less public transportation options, such as Lodi and Highland Park, experience long wait times and infrequent service, making it an undesirable transportation option. Some of these participants have had better experiences using transportation outside of their own home communities. In Jersey City, the light rail does not have stops that are convenient for these participants.

Transit is not always accessible or safe. Participants do not always feel safe using public transportation; in Jersey City and Highland Park, participants discussed concerns about poor lighting at stops and stations and the maintenance of stops and stations. In addition, accessibility is a concern; participants discussed feeling unsafe using public transportation in certain conditions (such as at night) as a woman, and others pointed out that transit needs to be accessible to riders of all ages. In addition, participants suggested that the cost of transportation should be more affordable for students.

### *Safety*

Lighting is a concern. Participants who rely on walking, biking, and public transportation feel unsafe in areas that are not well lit, such as roadways, sidewalks, and bus stops. Improved lighting would improve safety for teens.

Infrastructure should be repaired and maintained. Participants across groups discussed the need for improvements to infrastructure, including fixing potholes and other damage to roads and repairing sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Infrastructure that is in good repair and well-maintained increases feelings of safety and accessibility.

More infrastructure for pedestrian safety is needed. Participants expressed the most interest in pedestrian infrastructure improvements (as opposed to roads, bike lanes or paths, or rail). Suggestions included adding more sidewalks, crosswalks, stop signs, crossing guards, and better lighting and improved visibility.

Signage should be improved. Across all groups, participants brought up signage as a safety concern. They said signs should be clear, visible, and better communicate with drivers. They suggest that this could improve driver behaviors, creating safer environments for other road users. In addition, some suggested that there should be improved enforcement of road laws when drivers create unsafe conditions.

### **Conclusion**

Participation varied across the three groups, but some key consistencies suggest that teens

in the region seek similar improvements. They emphasize the importance of pedestrian infrastructure improvements that could increase feelings of safety when walking, such as better, visible crosswalks and better-connected sidewalks. Bicycling is not always seen as a safe transportation option, as much of the region lacks infrastructure to protect cyclists. Public transportation is not always seen as reliable or accessible, but the reasons for this varies between groups. In Jersey City, participant experiences were either neutral or negative due to concerns about safety and the convenience of stops (specifically the light rail). In Lodi and Highland Park, public transportation service is infrequent and not seen as an efficient mode of transportation. Improvements to infrastructure would improve perceptions of safety in the region, especially when addressing pedestrian needs.

### UpNext North Jersey

UpNext North Jersey is an advisory group that engages North Jersey residents ages 21-30 in a dialogue with the NJTPA. The NJTPA seeks to better understand the values and needs of this demographic regarding key transportation 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.



Using the same Set the Table...for Game Night set up as in the teen events, POET worked with the NJTPA to plan and conduct an event for UpNext members to provide their feedback and participate in the development of the NJTPA's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The meeting was held at the NJTPA office in Newark on May 13, 2025. Six UpNext members were joined by members of the NJTPA's outreach team and POET. The purpose of the discussion was to gain valuable insight from young professionals who live/work in the region and better understand their housing needs, especially transportation-related needs.

### Discussion Summary

UpNext members were given a quick introduction to the NJTPA's LRTP and outreach efforts. Members, NJTPA staff, and POET staff provided self-introductions. Then, POET led the participants in the guided discussion using the Slides with Friends tool as a conversation guide. The conversation addressed four topics: pedestrian improvements, bicycle improvements, public transportation, and safety.

### *Pedestrian Improvements*

A majority of the participating UpNext members indicated walking was one of their primary transportation modes. When presented a list of options to encourage participants to walk more, the most frequently selected option was “Better-connected sidewalks” followed by “Making crosswalks safer.” Members were primarily concerned with a lack of sidewalks along roadways and/or leading to bus stops, as well as road conditions and designs that encourage dangerous behaviors by motorists.

Participants were asked to identify a place in New Jersey where they feel safe walking. Responses varied from specific municipalities to types of environments. For example, most participants agreed that trails (and specifically off-road trails) and parks were safe places to walk. Some included a specific trail, the Hudson Riverfront Walkway in Hudson County. Specific places in the NJTPA region include Asbury Park (which had the highest rate of consensus), Hudson County (as a whole), Downtown Jersey City, Cranford, Hoboken, Lambertville, Morristown, Ridgewood, and Westfield.

### *Bicycle Improvements*

Although biking was not one of the primary modes of transportation for the participating members, one participant was an avid cyclist. UpNext members offered feedback on biking improvements for the region. Participants were provided with options for places that should be better connected by bike lanes. While all the options received votes, there was the most support for “Downtown businesses & commercial areas.” Participants were asked to identify obstacles for biking in the region; most said cars and drivers were the biggest obstacle. In the words of UpNext member Garren Lewis, there are “too many high stress roads and a lack of dedicated infrastructure (bikeways, protected bike lanes, etc.)”

### *Public Transportation*

The third topic of discussion was public transportation. Participants had a range of experience with public transportation in the NJTPA region. For some, they live in places with solid transit options, especially during the week. Others live in areas where transit is infrequent or “nonexistent.” For example, one participant described walking for hours because of limited frequency of transit. Limited service and low frequency on weekends remain a major issue. PATH trains also have long wait times on weekends. Additionally, NJ Transit trains to and from NYC tend to be bunched together due to Amtrak dispatching constraints, so a missed connection may result in a long delay.

### *Safety*

Safety was discussed as a component of the other three discussion topics but is a key concern from a multi-road user perspective. Members were asked: “What road improvements would you like to see to make streets safer?” Their responses included:

- Better road repair and paved roads
- Road diets
- Daylighting
- More sidewalks and curb extensions
- Narrower streets
- Improved connectivity
- Improved lighting
- More frequent transit service (including bus service)

These responses support the NJTPA’s complete streets approach to projects.

### **Member Feedback About the Event**

Participants enjoyed the opportunity to meet with other young people that are interested in improving transportation in the region. The use of Slides with Friends as a discussion tool received positive feedback for its interactive nature. In the words of member Zach Forstot, “It was informative to learn how the different transportation agencies in NJ operate separately and together, and also to learn about the challenges UpNext participants have in getting around.” Members are interested in participating in upcoming events, especially after the L RTP has been adopted and new projects are implemented.

The meeting concluded with the NJTPA staff acknowledging the valuable input gathered from UpNext members and a commitment to continue engaging the group in the future.

### *English as a Second Language Outreach*

POET collaborated with an NJTPA Outreach Liaison to develop a lesson plan and materials for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes that focused on transportation and the NJTPA’s Long Range Transportation Plan. The materials included a survey based on the NJTPA’s ground-truthing outreach covering the following topics: public transportation, pedestrian improvements, biking improvements, and safety. This outreach was conducted in communities in North Bergen in Hudson County and Linden in Union County. In addition to the survey, discussion groups were conducted in the Hudson County ESL classes.

### *Hudson County*

Hudson County is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse counties in New Jersey with a population of 679,756 people. The population features strong representation from Hispanic (particularly Dominican and Puerto Rican) and Asian communities. A significant 43 percent of the county's residents are foreign-born, hailing primarily from the Dominican Republic, India, and the Philippines. Spanish is the predominant language spoken at home, with many speakers having limited English proficiency. Other languages such as Arabic, Hindi, Tagalog, and Urdu are also common.

Hudson County, due to its high urban density and proximity to New York City, features a highly developed and widely used public transportation infrastructure. The county provides different modes of transportation for its residents including the PATH trains, NJ TRANSIT buses, the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail, and ferries.

### *Union County*

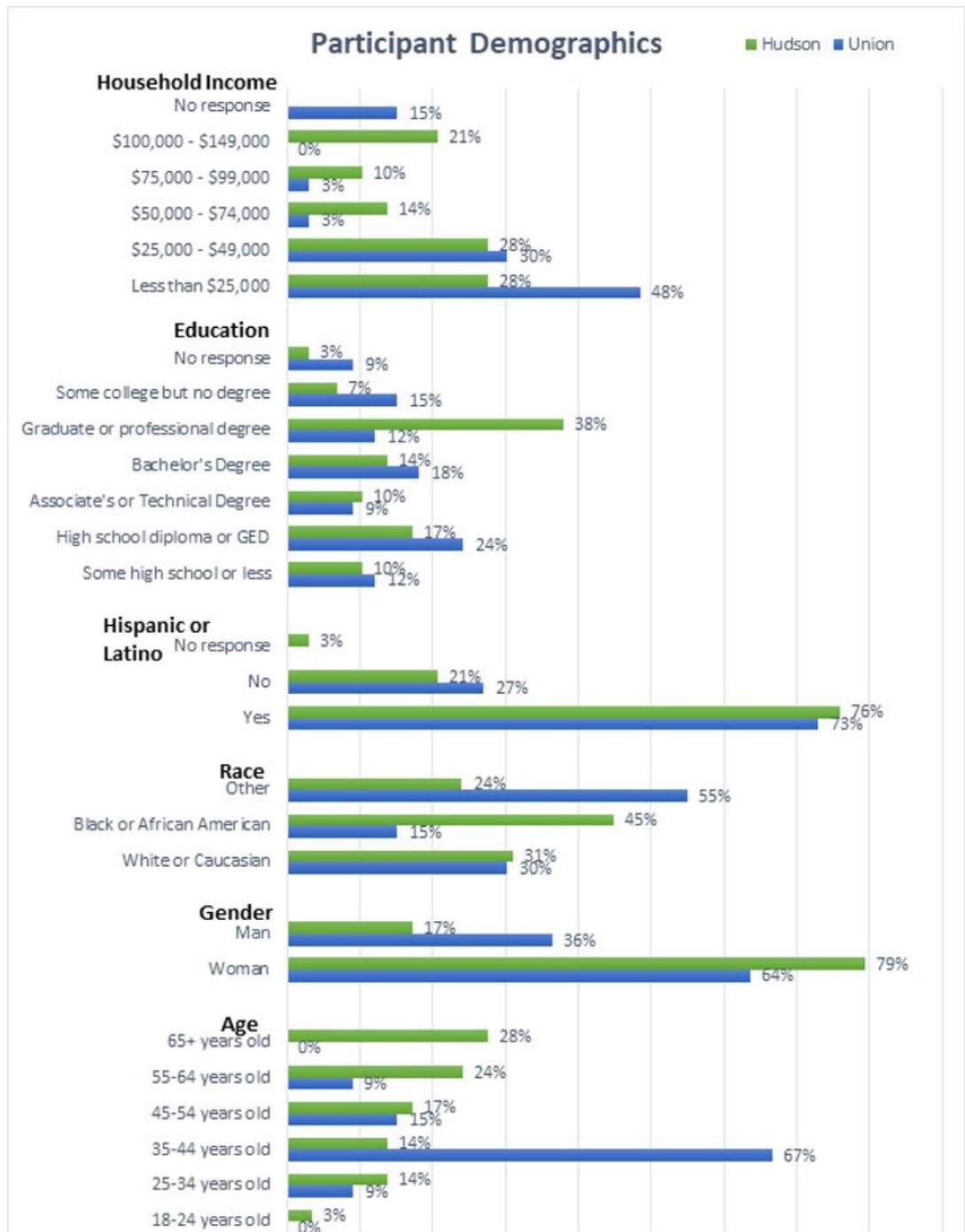
Union County, with a population of 557,320, is a racially and ethnically diverse county featuring a large Hispanic or Latino population (30.7 percent) and a substantial Black or African American community (20.1 percent). The largest Hispanic sub-groups include Puerto Ricans, Colombians, and Dominicans, with significant populations from Peru and Mexico as well. Foreign-born residents account for 29.9 percent of the county's population, with Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador among the top countries of origin. Linguistically, more than 40 percent of residents speak a language other than English at home, primarily Spanish and Portuguese. About 18 percent of the population has limited English proficiency, with Spanish-speaking Limited-English Proficiency (LEP) residents making up the majority. Union County also has a relatively high poverty rate of 10.3 percent, indicating ongoing economic challenges for many households, particularly within immigrant and minority communities.

Union County exhibits urban density in cities like Elizabeth and Plainfield. These characteristics influence the county's transportation landscape, which includes NJ TRANSIT rail and bus service. Linden is less dense than other cities mentioned but has a train station and bus lines as public transit options.

### **Participant Demographics**

A total of 62 people participated in ESL classes and took the survey. All participants are students in ESL classes in the NJTPA region. While most of the demographic characteristics are evenly distributed across groups, most participants in both Hudson County (76 percent)

and Union County (73 percent) identified as Latino or Hispanic. In addition, participants were primarily women (79 percent in Hudson County and 64 percent in Union County). Notably, two-thirds of participants in Union County were between the ages of 35 and 44.



## Key Findings

The following section contains a presentation of data collected in the survey, an analysis of this data, and a presentation of the discussions that took place in Hudson County. Due to limited time and large class size, the discussion portion was not held in Union County.

Overall key findings are:

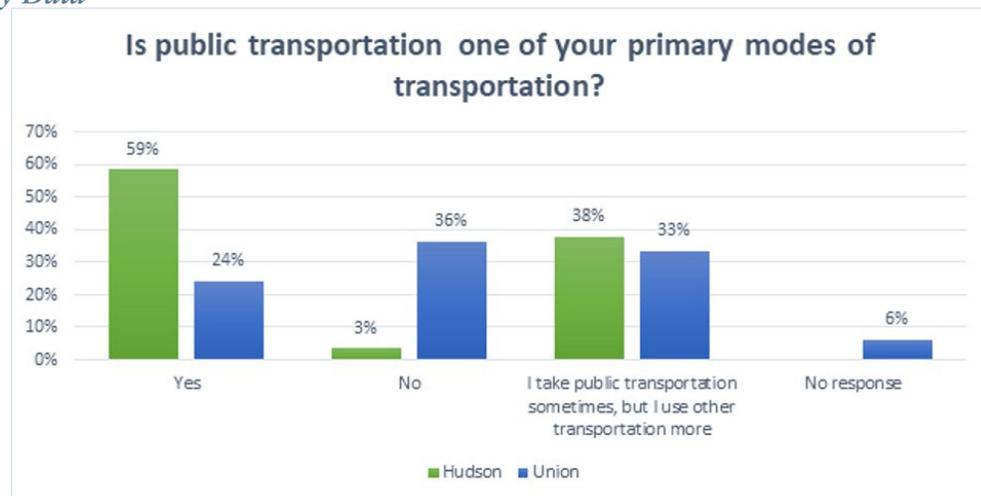
- Improvements to public transportation, particularly in Hudson County, is the main topic of interest. Participants provided the most feedback on ways to improve public transportation.
- Improving bicycle infrastructure may not be a priority. Although several participants in Hudson County indicated that adding bike lanes would make roads safer, most participants do not regularly use bicycles as a mode of transportation. Rather, it is more often for recreation.
- Education for drivers and pedestrians was a popular improvement for road safety. Participants see road user behaviors as a primary safety concern, more so than road design.

## Public Transportation

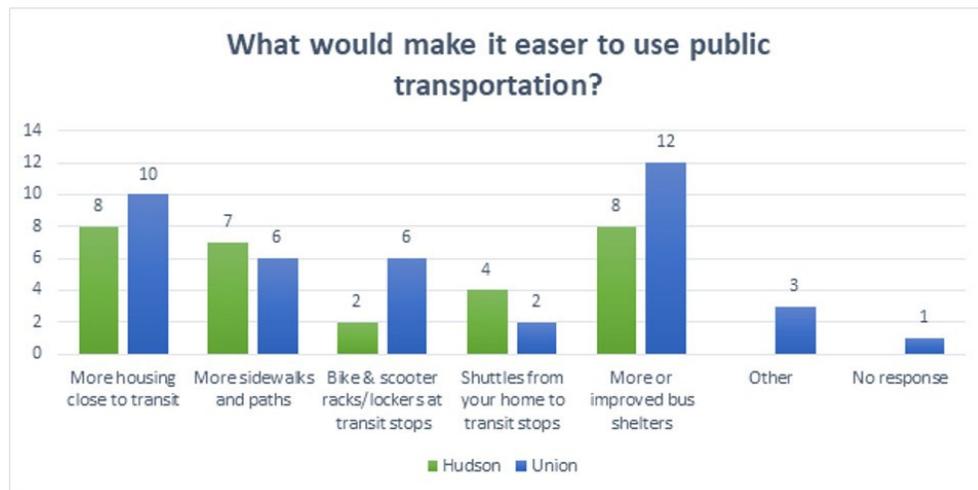
Public transportation usage varied by location. Those in Hudson County reported higher use of public transportation as a primary way of traveling (59 percent) compared to those in Union County (24 percent).

When asked what would make it easier to use public transportation, most participants in both counties included “More housing close to transit” and “More or improved bus shelters.”

## Survey Data



In both Hudson County and Union County, most participants said, “more or improved bus shelters” and “more housing close to transit” would make it easier to use public transit,



followed by “more sidewalks and paths.” These responses suggest communities want convenient access to transit stops and routes. Less popular in Hudson County was “bike and scooter racks” and “shuttles from your home to transit stop.” This suggests that micromobility options are less of a priority in Hudson County; rather, these communities desire easier access to stops by walking and adequate shelters upon arrival. As mentioned in the discussion summary below, biking is a more recreational mode of travel. However, “bike and scooter racks” are more desirable in Union County, where transit usage is lower.

#### *Discussion in Hudson County*

Most participants indicated that they use public transportation. Participants were asked to identify the public transportation options in their communities. The most popular answers were bus, train, and ferry. However, participants focused primarily on sharing detailed experiences related to bus services and bus stops.

Overall, most participants mentioned they were satisfied with the public transportation in their area, though some contrasting opinions were noted. Many participants also had suggestions for improvement. Within the discussion groups, the most popular answers included:

- **More frequent service:** Participants said they wanted buses to arrive more often. They shared examples of having to wait a long time for a bus. Others highlighted that evening and weekend service is not frequent enough.
- **Better information:** Participants also wanted more information about routes and arrival times. For example, we heard participants wanting to know when the next bus would arrive

(some participants were surprised to learn that this information was available in the NJ TRANSIT app). Another mentioned wanting information about which stop was next or upcoming while onboard the bus.

- Speed & reliability: A few others noted that the buses make too many stops, making the ride too slow. They also mentioned the need for buses to arrive on time so that riders can make connections to other routes.

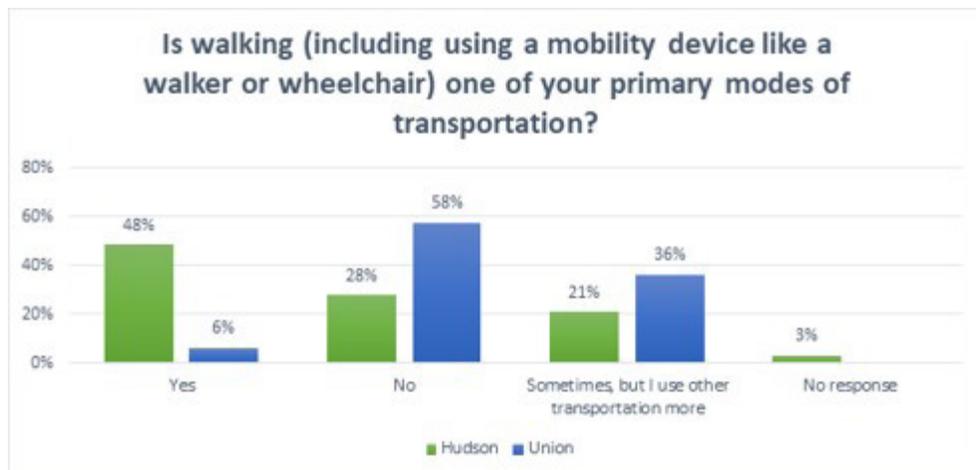
### Pedestrian Improvements

As seen in the discussion of public transportation, the use of walking as a primary mode

<i>“I like it, but I don’t like the frequency.”</i>	<i>“I think we need more buses because we have to wait a long time.”</i>	<i>“More information on when the bus is arriving.”</i>	<i>“They need to arrive at the exact time. Sometimes I have to make a transfer to a different location.”</i>
<i>“Cleaner streets and more trash bins.”</i>	<i>“It should be more frequent.”</i>	<i>“Frequency and provide more information on the times and stops.”</i>	
<i>“Improve the bus/train frequency during rush hours.”</i>	<i>“Moving the bus shelter” (participant didn’t say, but may have meant moving it somewhere that feels safer)</i>		

of transportation differed between Hudson and Union Counties. In Hudson County, most participants (48 percent) indicated that they do use walking as a primary mode of transportation. In Union County, most participants (58 percent) said they do not use it as a primary mode of transportation, but 36 percent of participants sometimes walk while relying primarily on other modes of transportation.

Participants were asked what improvements could be made to make walking safer. In Hudson



County, the participants’ most frequent response was “Better-connected sidewalks,” whereas in Union County, it was “Making crosswalks safer.”

### *Survey Responses*

While all the suggested improvements received some interest, the most popular was different between the two counties. In Hudson, the concern is improving the sidewalk network, which may relate to the high usage of public transportation in the county and walking as a primary mode of travel.

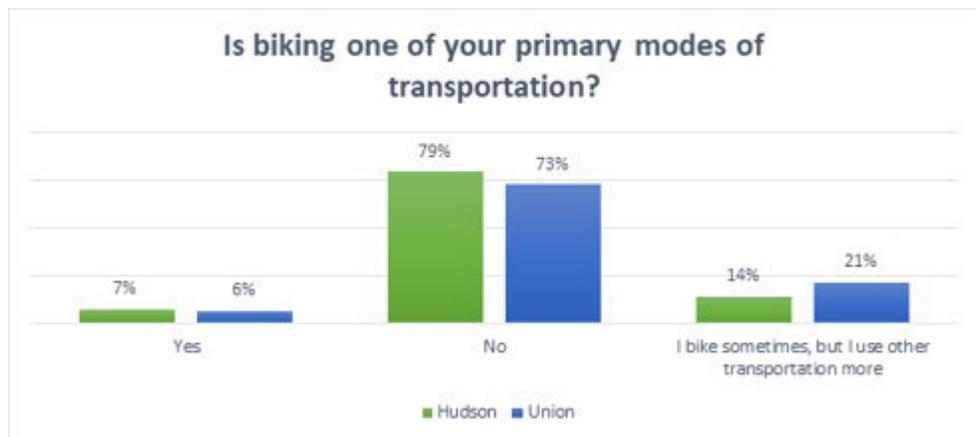
In Union County, there is more interest in safer crosswalks; because the population in Union is more car-dependent, participants may prefer this option to avoid dangerous interactions between pedestrians and drivers.

### *Discussion in Hudson County*

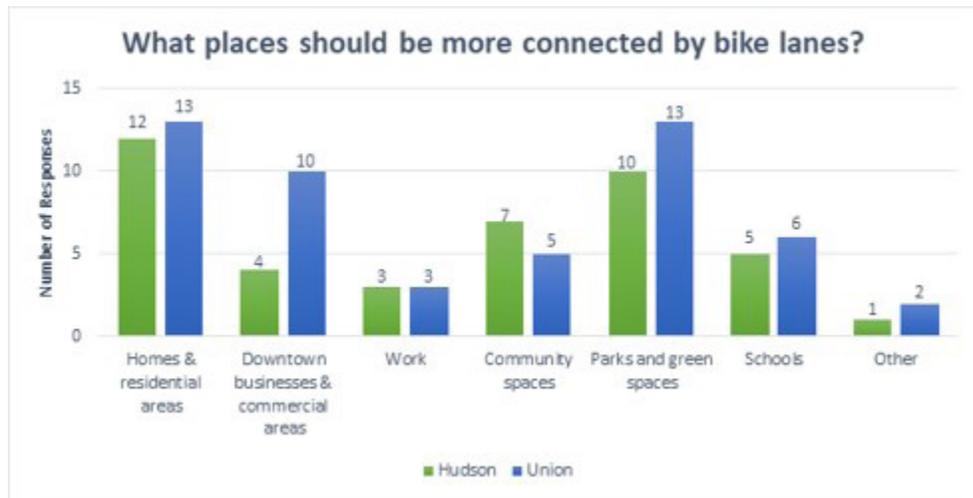
Most of the participants mentioned that they walk frequently around their community – whether to access public transportation or as a primary mode of transportation.

### **Biking Improvements**

For the participants in both Hudson and Union County, biking is not a primary mode of transportation.



Participants were asked which places should be more connected by bike lanes; most said, “Homes and residential areas” or “Parks and green spaces”; notably, accessing work by bike was not a popular choice.



*Survey Responses*

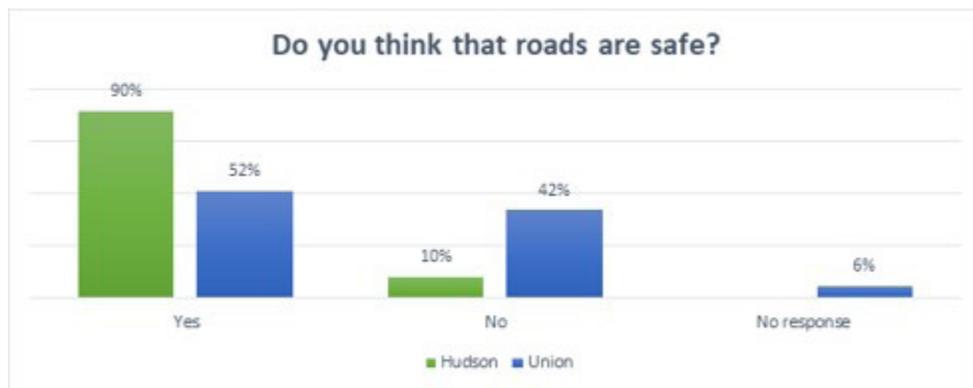
It is important to consider how people want to use transportation modes to better plan improvements; in both Hudson County and Union County, participants in these classes were generally not interested in using bicycling as a mode of transportation, especially to commute to work.

*Discussion in Hudson County*

A very small number of participants mentioned that biking was their primary mode of transportation and others mentioned that they do it recreationally.

**Safety**

Participants were asked about general safety on the roads in the region. In Hudson County, most respondents (90 percent) believe that roads are safe. However, in Union County, there was a more mixed response.



In both Hudson and Union Counties, “Driver and pedestrian education” was the most popular suggested improvement. In Hudson County, the next most popular was “More bike lanes/fewer vehicle lanes.” In Union, the next most popular was “Signals that adjust based on traffic.”



### Survey Responses

Both groups expressed the most interest in driver and pedestrian education, suggesting that they believe driver and pedestrian behaviors, rather than design, create unsafe roads in their communities. In Hudson County, more respondents are interested in adding more bike lanes; however, in Union County, more respondents were interested in adjusting traffic signals. These responses speak to the higher use of public transit and walking in Hudson County compared to Union County.

### Discussion in Hudson County

Even though most of the participants stated that they felt safe, a few mentioned they felt unsafe. The safety concerns were mainly at night; some drivers, for instance drivers run red lights not respecting pedestrians.

### LGBTQ+ Outreach

Throughout Fall 2024 and Winter 2025, the NJTPA and POET conducted targeted outreach to Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Queer and other sexual minority (LGBTQ+) populations for *Connecting Communities*, the NJTPA’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Conducting intentional outreach to LGBTQ+ New Jersey residents aimed to uncover and highlight concerns, feedback, and hopes for the future of transportation in the NJTPA region that might not otherwise be discussed. The NJTPA is one of the first metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) to conduct outreach addressing the unique transportation experiences of LGBTQ+

populations. However, the project team had difficulty recruiting participants.

### **Background Research on LGBTQ+ Populations and Transportation**

As this was the first year the NJTPA implemented a LGBTQ+ targeted effort, the project team conducted desktop research. Research provided an overview of how best to interact with LGBTQ+ populations and how these individuals are often especially impacted by transportation-related challenges or issues.

Intentional outreach to LGBTQ+ populations is important for several reasons. LGBTQ+ individuals are a part of the planning region, and their needs, therefore, should be incorporated into planning documents. There are generally also differences in the travel patterns of LGBTQ+ populations versus those who do not identify as LGBTQ+. For example, LGBTQ+ populations are often over-represented in shared mobility usage like public transit, biking and walking. In New Jersey, individuals in same-sex relationships use public transit more often than those in opposite-sex relationships, especially for work trips. Women in same-sex relationships use transit for commuting significantly more than their opposite-sex counterparts, showing that transit is a key mode for LGBTQ+ communities<sup>1</sup>. In turn, public transportation is a key topic for the NJTPA's LRTP.

Public transportation is not only used often by LGBTQ+ populations, but it is often used to access important services and community spaces. LGBTQ+ individuals aged 18-24 and those over 65 use transit more often for social and recreational trips, while those over 65 also frequently use transit for essential trips such as medical appointments and shopping. These trends highlight the importance of transit accessibility for social and essential trips, especially among older and younger LGBTQ+ groups.

### **Engagement Strategies**

The project team selected methods to engage the region's LGBTQ+ community based on best practices for inclusive public engagement. The project team selected both synchronous activities and an asynchronous activity (survey questionnaire) to allow multiple options for public participation. For the synchronous engagement, the project team conducted journey mapping exercises for various transportation modes that are present in the region. In addition, the team developed a questionnaire for LGBTQ+ communities for those who could not participate in journey mapping activities and to supplement the general LRTP public survey with questions specific to gender and sexuality.

## Journey Mapping

The project team selected “Journey Mapping” as an engagement tool, a process in which the participant moves through a hypothetical journey and their thoughts and feelings are documented. Journey Mapping is an innovative approach for considering the entirety of an individual’s experience through a ‘journey’; in other words, transportation is not just a way of getting from one place to another, but an experience itself. Often used as a strategy in user experience or marketing, journey mapping looks at a person’s thoughts, emotions and sensations as they move through a series of decisions and actions towards a goal. In the case of transportation, these journeys are the entire process between deciding to make a trip and reaching the destination.

Journey Mapping is a useful tool for determining what pain points exist and where they are located within a system. Finalized journey maps can allow planners to begin to consider solutions. Data collected from journey maps are specific to the individual, though often these ‘individuals’ are created as ‘profiles’ and are used to represent a larger population with a shared characteristic. Co-creating journey maps for different members of the LGBTQ+ community can give insight to the specific issues these individuals may face—as well as the impact the challenges may have on their overall experience.

The project team adapted journey mapping to be contextual to the region’s transportation by developing separate journey maps by mode of transportation. The modes included were: biking, train, bus, personal car, walking, and shared transportation (rideshare). Participants had the opportunity to self-select two modes of transportation that they would use to share their “journey.”

The project team hosted two Journey Mapping events, one virtual and another in-person. The virtual event was hosted on Zoom for 90 minutes, utilizing Mentimeter to simulate journey mapping. Modes included walking, biking, shared transportation, personal car, and bus. Seven people participated in the event. The Mentimeter presentation is at the end of this section.

The in-person event was held at Newark Public Library from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. Large scale posters for each transportation mode were posted on the wall. Participants were to write thoughts on sticky notes and placed them on corresponding posters. Only one individual attended the in-person event; they had also participated in the virtual event. The team adapted the activity to allow for an informal conversation about identity, transportation planning, and transportation needs.



### Questionnaire

While a general questionnaire for the LRTP was already being used, the team created an LGBTQ+-specific version. The goals were to identify challenges specific to LGBTQ+ populations and provide an alternative form of engagement. Questions were informed by best practice research, past LGBTQ+ and transit studies, and input from subject matter expert Bernie Wagenblast. The questionnaire was available throughout the outreach period and received 12 responses. The full questionnaire is at the end of this section.

### Communications Strategies

The project team used a variety of outreach strategies to engage the LGBTQ+ community including:

**Social Media:** Informative posts (some featuring Bernie Wagenblast) were shared through the NJTPA's social channels.

**Flyer Distribution:** Flyers included QR codes to the survey and event registration and were distributed to LGBTQ+ organizations, state universities, and colleges.

**Outreach List:** The team compiled a list of LGBTQ+ organizations and influencers for outreach, recognizing the importance of leveraging trusted networks (*next page*).

#### Bergen County

- Bergen County LGBTQ+ Alliance
- Teaneck Pride Awareness Advisory Board
- Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) of Bergen County
- Bergen Pride
- Fair Lawn Pride Coalition
- Center for Hope and Safety – LGBTQ+ Services
- West Bergen Mental Healthcare

#### Essex County

- Newark LGBTQ Community Center
- LGBT RAIN Foundation
- Pride+ (Family Connections)
- Garden State Equality
- Hetrick-Martin Institute (HMI): New Jersey

#### Hudson County

- Hudson Pride Center
- Hoboken Rainbow Family
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation
- Jersey City Medical Center

#### Hunterdon County

- PFLAG Flemington/Hunterdon County
- Hunterdon Healthcare LGBTQIA Navigation
- GLBT of Hunterdon County of NJ

#### Middlesex County

- The Pride Center of New Jersey
- City of New Brunswick LGBTQ

#### Liaison

- Middlesex College LGBTQ+ Resources – Queer Identity and Lifestyle Club

#### Monmouth County

- Jersey Shore LGBT Community Center
- PFLAG Jersey Shore
- Make It Better for Youth
- Your Authentic Self (YAS) Teen Support Group
- LGBTQ Center for Health and Wellness
- QSpot LGBT Community Center
- Monmouth County Democrats LGBTQ Caucus

#### Morris County

- EDGE Pride Center
- Gay Activist Alliance of Morris County (GAAMC)

#### Ocean County

- PFLAG Jersey Shore (Toms River location)

#### Somerset County

- Babs Siperstein PROUD Center

## Key Findings

Participants selected one or more transportation modes to discuss. No responses were received for walking, train, or shared transportation.

### *Biking*

- Time of day and weather strongly influenced biking decisions.
- Route selection prioritized speed, directness, and safety over crowd levels.
- Desired infrastructure: wide paths, clear markings, fewer car crossings, delineated lanes, and grade separation.
- Emotional experiences ranged from joy to fear. Many respondents explained that moving into the driving lane (“taking the lane”) is a useful strategy for slowing down and feeling safer. Another common coping strategy is dismounting (from their bike) and taking a moment to regroup before continuing riding.

### *Bus*

- All respondents walked to bus stops; challenges included unsafe crossings, walking alone at night, and unclear schedules.
- Concerns while waiting included safety, visibility, and timing.
- Most used mobile payment methods.
- Seating was chosen based on perceived safety; emotions during travel ranged from relaxed to hyper-aware.

### *Personal Car*

- Used for destinations not served by transit, convenience, and flexibility.
- Gas station stops preferred in well-lit, populated areas.
- Safety is not a major deterrent except in certain neighborhoods.
- Cars were valued for independence and the ability to transport goods.

## Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The outreach process provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of engaging LGBTQ+ communities in planning efforts. Low turnout and participation highlighted structural, social, and logistical barriers that must be addressed through more intentional, inclusive strategies. The following lessons and recommendations offer guidance for improving future engagement by aligning efforts more closely with community realities, building sustained trust, and adapting methods to better meet participants’ needs.

### Political Climate and Trust

*Lesson:* Political climate may discourage LGBTQ+ community participation in government outreach. Traditionally, there is distrust between marginalized communities and government organizations.

*Recommendation:* Partner with well-established LGBTQ+ organizations and engage during Pride Month to boost visibility. Build long-term trust by showing up consistently. Consider informal conversations or presence at LGBTQ+ events year-round.

### **Rethink Outreach Methods**

*Lesson:* Limited turnout suggests a disconnect between outreach methods and community needs. Attending in-person outreach events should not be a burden on participants. Ensure that the audience is reached and do not rely on social media profiles that are not already engaged with the target audience.

*Recommendation:* Meet people where they are; create partnerships with trusted organizations to reach audiences and invest in long-term, ongoing outreach. Coordinate outreach events with existing LGBTQ+ events, such as community meetings or Pride events. Incentivize participation to ensure participants know their input is valued.

### **Prepare for Unexpected Outcomes**

*Lesson:* In-person engagement faces unpredictable barriers like weather, transportation issues, or other unexpected events.

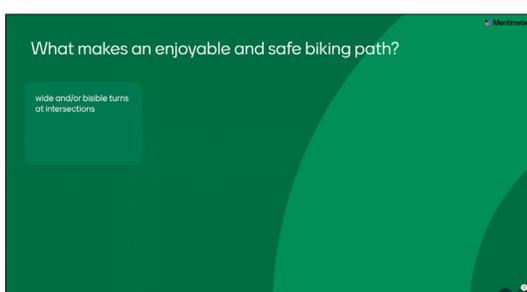
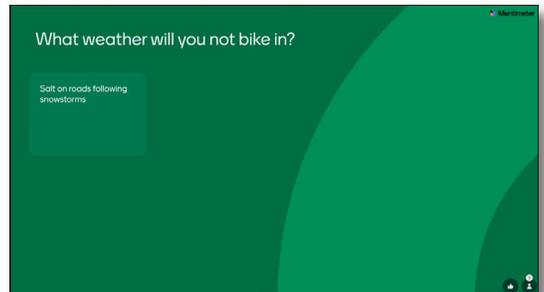
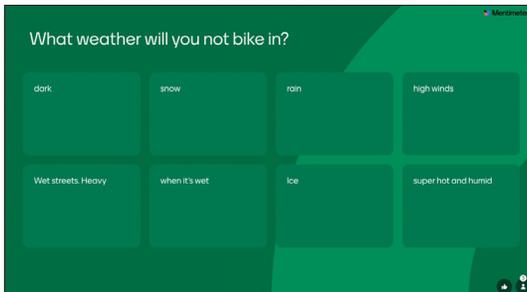
*Recommendation:* Maintain flexible engagement tools that can be adapted to different sized groups; include virtual options as well.

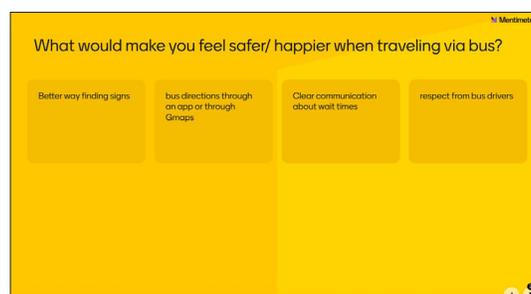
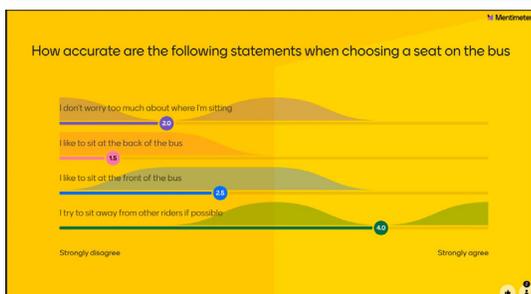
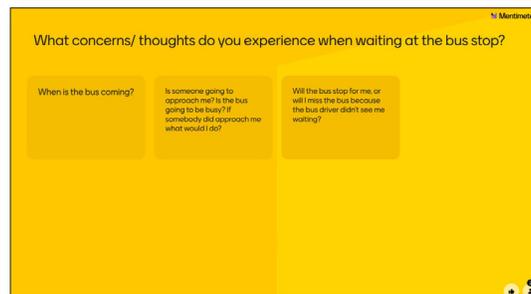
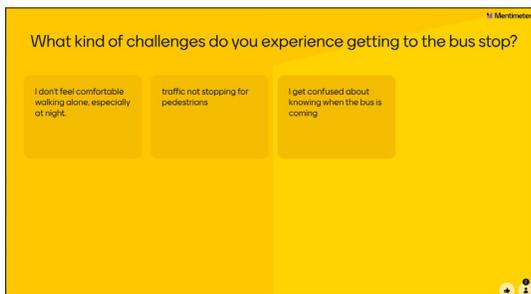
### **Continue to Explore Journey Mapping as an Engagement Technique**

*Lesson:* Journey mapping did provide opportunities for in-depth discussions.

*Recommendation:* Continue to explore journey mapping, testing it in different spaces and contexts.

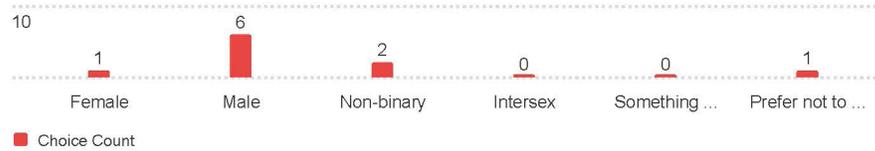
## Mentimeter Slides from Virtual Event



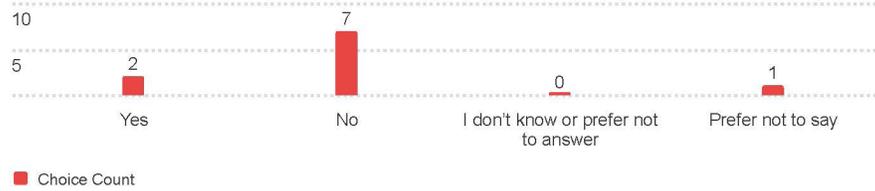


## Questionnaire Responses

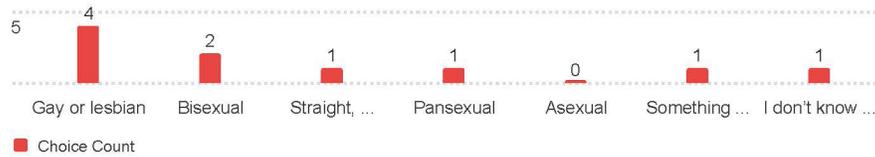
Q2 - How do you currently describe yourself? (select one) - Selected Choice



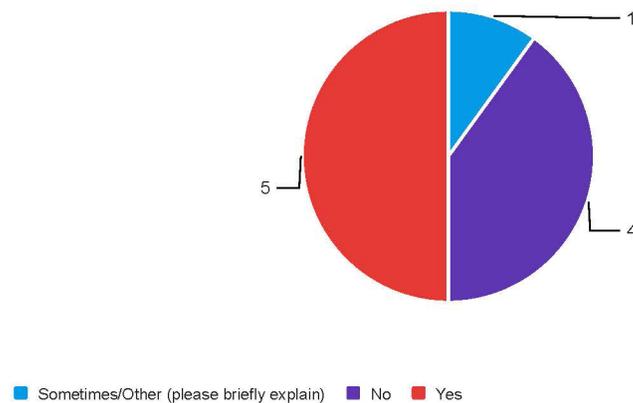
Q3 - Do you identify as transgender?



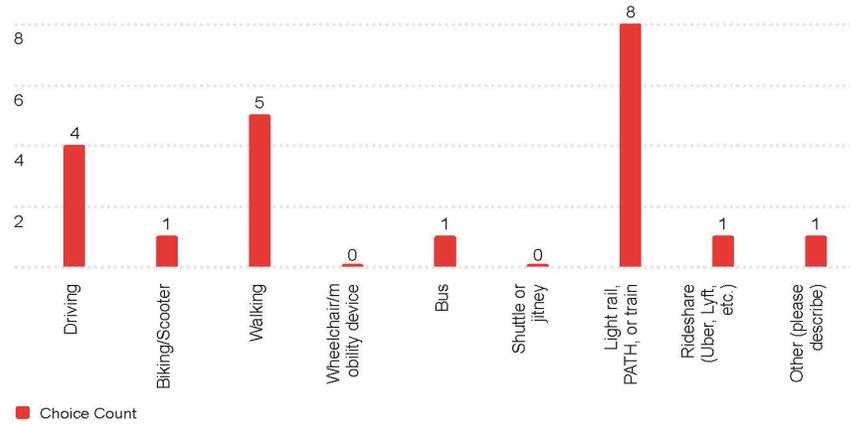
Q4 - Which of the following best represents your sexual orientation? (select one) - Selected Choice



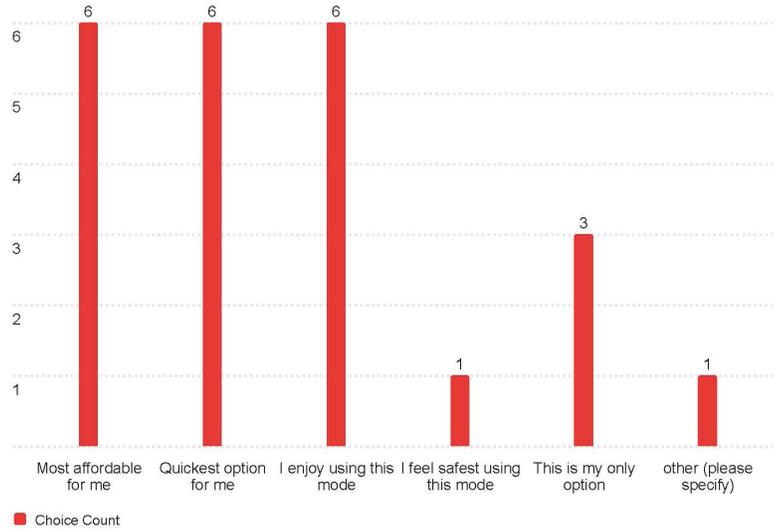
Q5 - Does identifying as a member of the LGBTQ+ population impact your travel decisions? - Selected Choice



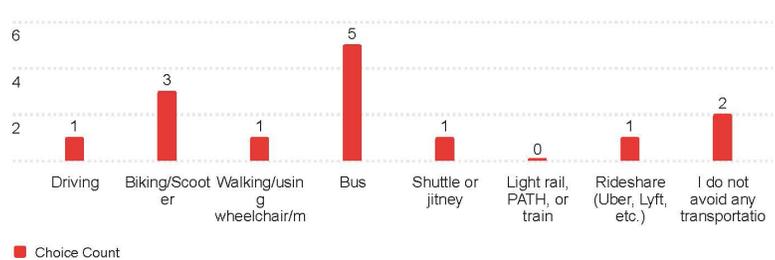
**Q6 - What modes of transportation do you most frequently rely on? (select top 2) - Selected Choice**



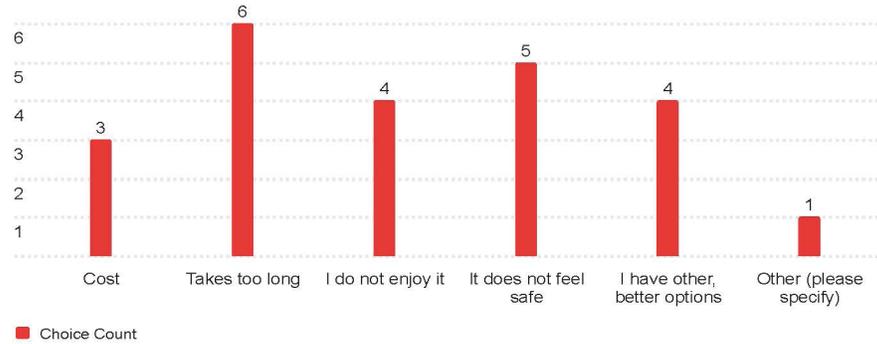
**Q7 - Why do you choose these modes? (select all that apply) - Selected Choice**



**Q8 - Are there any modes of transportation you avoid? (select modes that are available in your community, and you could use, but choose not to)**



**Q9 - Why do you avoid these transportation mode(s)? (select all that apply) - Selected Choice**



**Q10 - As a member of the LGBTQ+ population, what issue(s) with transportation do you think is/are the most pressing or important for you and other members of the LGBTQ+ community?**

As a member of the LGBTQ+ population, what issue(s) with transportation do you think is/are the most pressing or important for you and other members of the LGBTQ+ community?

**Safety**

Access/ability to get to certain places

Harassment of people who show a visible gender nonconformity.

I haven't noticed any queer-related problems when it comes to transportation, but I have noticed problems when it comes to accessibility- especially in the more suburban areas in NJ.

When I used to take public transit, it didn't always seem like the route to busstops were wheelchair, or even person friendly. Busstops on the sides of busy roads with no sidewalks, no shelters, sometimes even no signs.

safety and security

Probably safety - the possibility of hate crimes if taking public transit (due to being with other people). Access to transportation as well, be it price or availability.

**Q11 - As a member of the LGBTQ+ population, what changes would you like to see in the overall transportation system of this region?**

As a member of the LGBTQ+ population, what changes would you like to see in the overall transportation system of this region?

Better infrastructure to make more places in NJ accessible to each other via train/public transportation

More accessibility to travel using public transportation to areas like work, grocery store and home.

For public transit- more stops would mean less walking needed for those without personal vehicles, and less dangerous situations. Shelters at all bus stops without hostile (anti-homeless) architecture would be best case scenario.

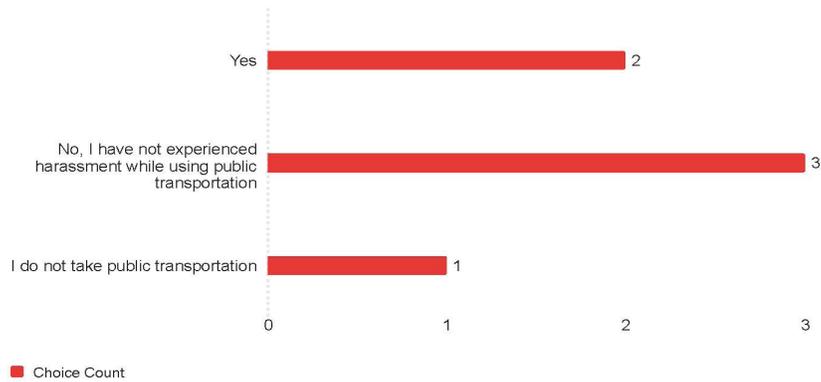
more inclusivity/representation in messaging (e.g., NJ TRANSIT ads).

Improved safety

Better service. But has zero to do with my sexual preferences.

This lies outside the purview of NJTPA perhaps but it's definitely by far the most important thing to me -- more police presence on the streets would make me feel safer (in downtown Newark, specifically).

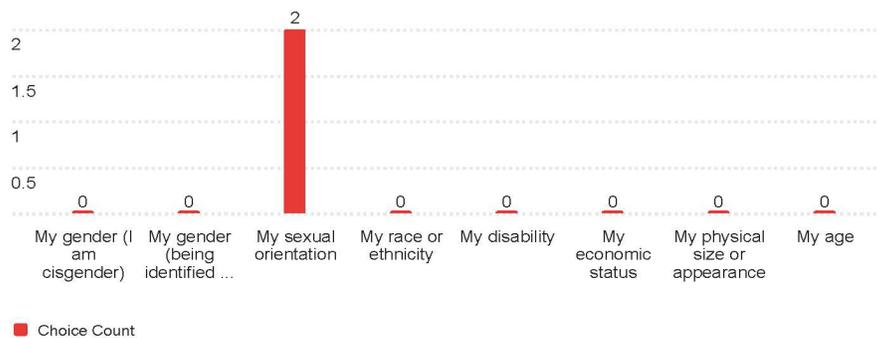
Q13 - In the past six months have you experienced direct harassment when using public transportation in the NJTPA region?



Q14 - Which mode(s) were you using when the incident(s) occurred?



Q15 - Which of the following do you think motivated the harasser or attacker? (Select all that apply to your situation)



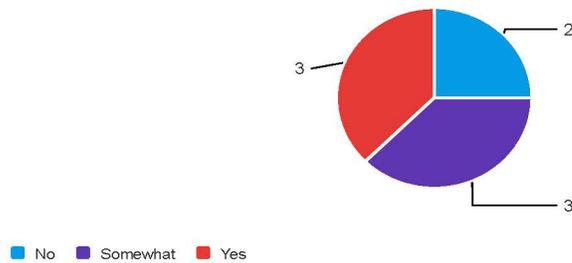
Q16 - In the past six months, have you witnessed other people experiencing harassment while using public transportation?



**Q17 - Which mode(s) were you using when the incident(s) occurred?**



**Q18 - As an LGBTQ+ person, do you believe housing options are safe, affordable, and in appealing locations in your community?**



**Q19 - What are some LGBTQ+ friendly destinations in the NJTPA region? (neighborhoods, towns, public spaces, etc.)**

What are some LGBTQ+ friendly destinations in the NJTPA region? (neighborhoods, towns, public spaces, etc.)

Jersey City & Hoboken

Feathers, Maywood, Hackensack, Propagate Studios, Montclair, Howling Basset Books

Highland Park, Jersey City, Montclair

THE LIBRARY!!!!

And Asbury, VNACJ in Asbury is where i get my HRT, right across the street is Georgies (gay bar) and Wolfe & Kron (Queer bookstore). And theres a park nearby <3  
And Trinity's Magjckal Intentions in Downtown Toms River!

Jersey City, Montclair, Madison

Everywhere

The Ironbound, Newark  
Downtown Jersey City

**Q20 - What makes these places LGBTQ+ friendly?**

What makes these places LGBTQ+ friendly?

An active and diverse community

Some of them are businesses owned/operated by queer people, some of them are towns with large gay populations, etc. Places where it doesn't feel like gay people are such a minority or silenced presence

They show a clear sign of welcome to the queer community through flags, festivals and events. Additionally, many queer live there and i don't feel like I'm the only queer person in the room.

The library is one of the few places that exist in modern day where you can be in an indoor space, and are not expected to spend money. Theres usually displays of pride books in June and October. The Ocean County Library just held its first LGBTQ+ resource faire last October, and it plans to be yearly. Ive also seen OCL at many pride events, like Asbury Pride and Seaside pride.

VNACJ is where i get my HRT, so theyre queer friendly by default. Georgies, Wolfe, and Trinity's are all either lgbt+ owned or have queer people as the target audience.

# H. Resources Contents

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## *1. Results by Subregion*

The project team conducted additional crosstab analysis to depict results of the Phase 1 Survey, and Phase 2 pop-ups and supplemental survey by the NJTPA subregion.

### **Phase 1 - Survey**

All respondents that indicated that they live, work, or attend school within a subregion were included in the subregion's results. This means that some respondents are counted multiple times if they live, work, and/or attend school in different subregions. Those living, working, and/or attending school in Newark and Jersey City are included both in the city and respective county results. Respondents that did not include a ZIP code in their survey response were not included.

### **Phase 2 - Pop-up and Survey**

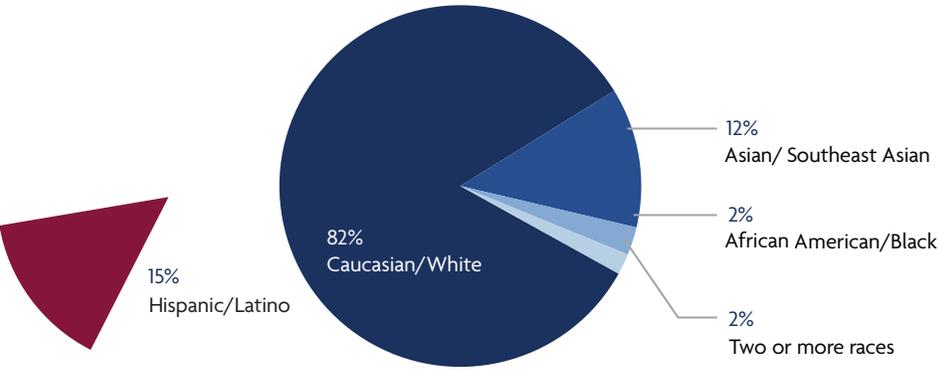
One pop-up event was held in each of the 15 subregions. Since pop-up participants were not asked to indicate their home, work, or school ZIP codes, responses were allocated by location of the event. This means that some of the responses within a subregion may be from residents of other areas who attended the event.

Similar to the Phase 1 survey, respondents of the Phase 2 supplemental were asked to supply the ZIP code where they live, work, and/or attend school and their responses were recorded to the respective subregion(s). As in the Phase 1 survey results, respondents may be counted in multiple subregions if they live, work, and/or attend school in different subregions. Those living, working, and/or attending school in Newark and Jersey City are included both in the city and respective county results. Respondents that did not include a ZIP code in their survey response were not included.

#### *Chart Orientation*

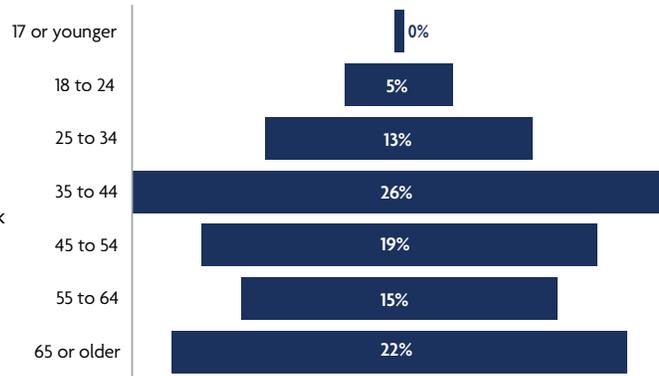
While preferences may vary within each subregion, charts for substantive questions are maintained in the same descending order as the preferences for the region as a whole. This enables the reader to more easily see where subregion preferences may differ from the region as a whole.

RACE & ETHNICITY



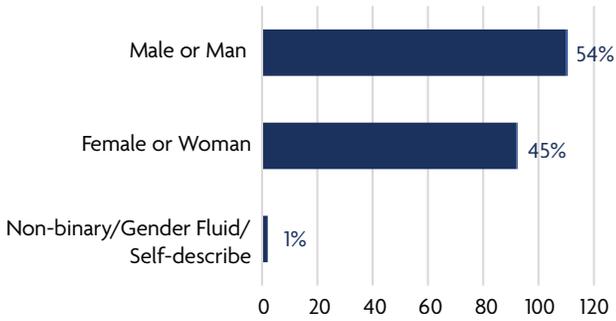
182 responses (80.5% response rate)

AGE



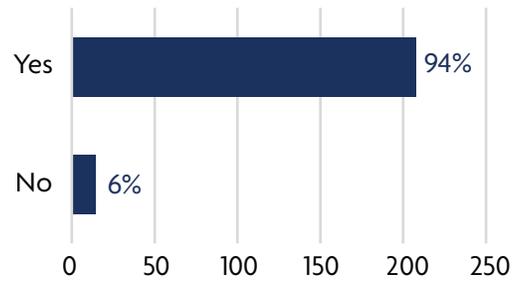
211 responses (93.4% response rate)

GENDER



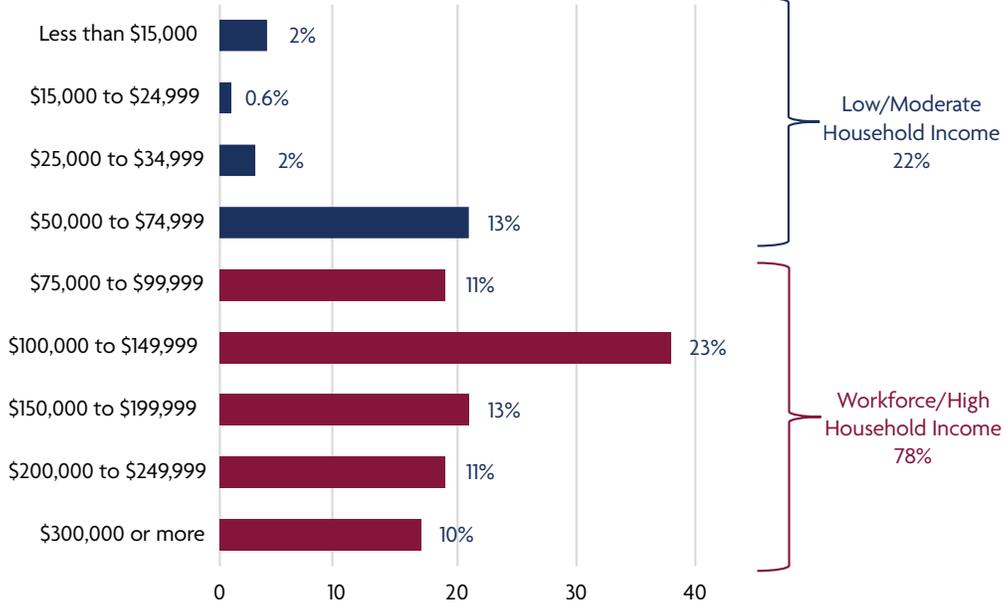
204 responses (90.3% response rate)

ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



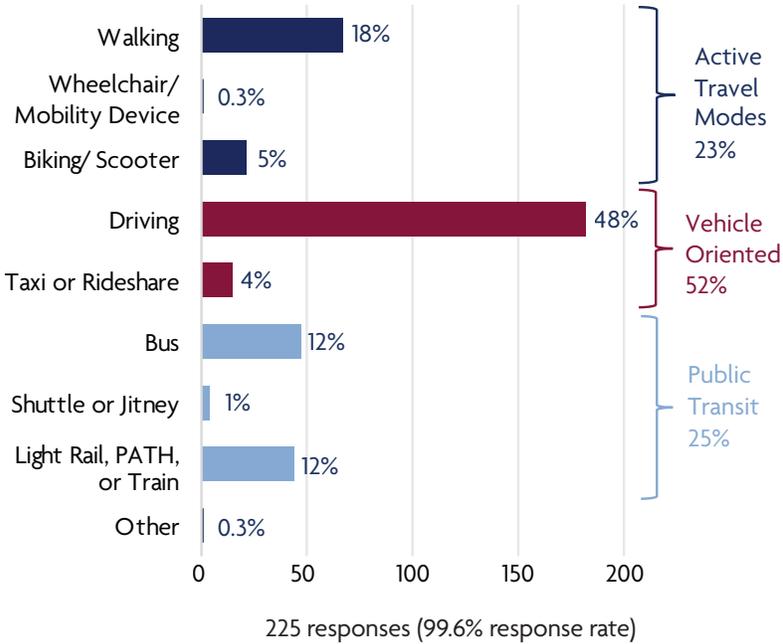
222 responses (98.2% response rate)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

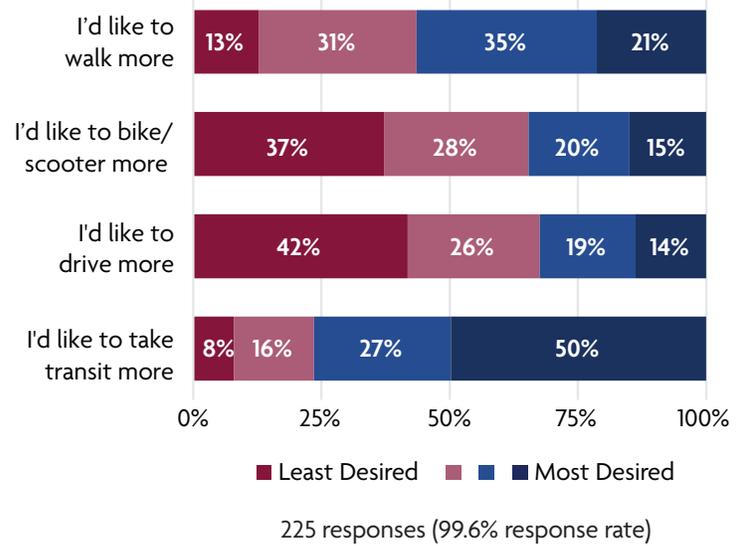


167 responses (73.9% response rate)

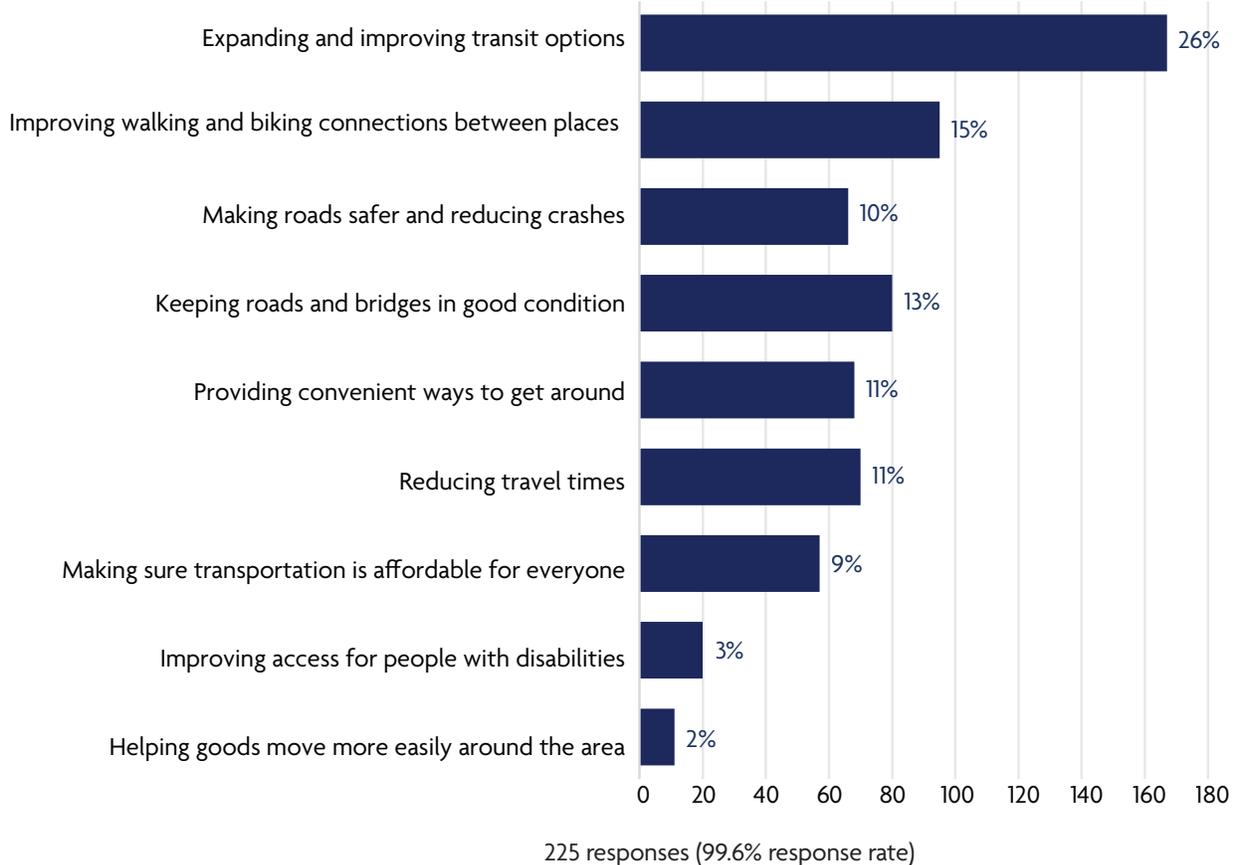
CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



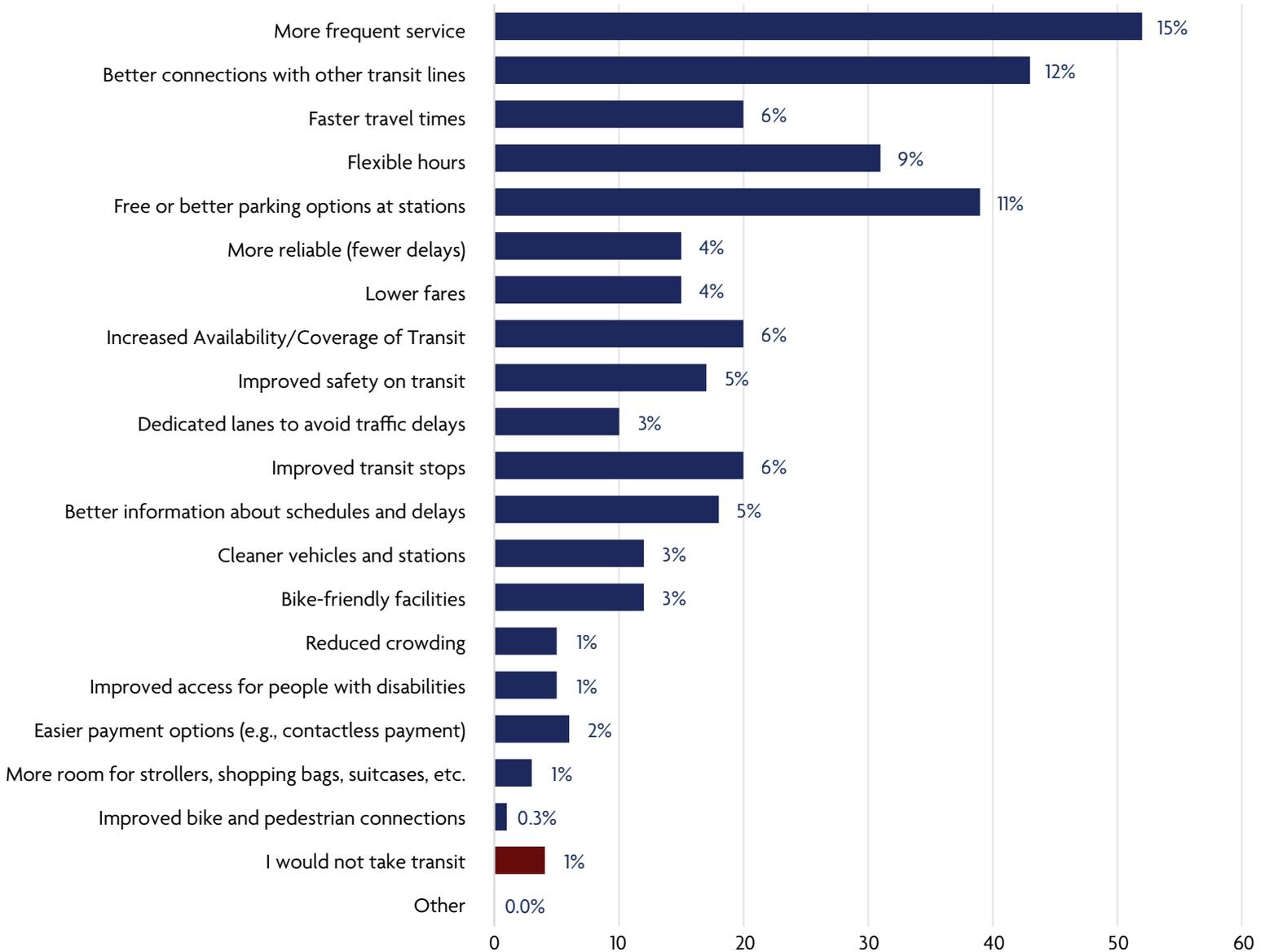
FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

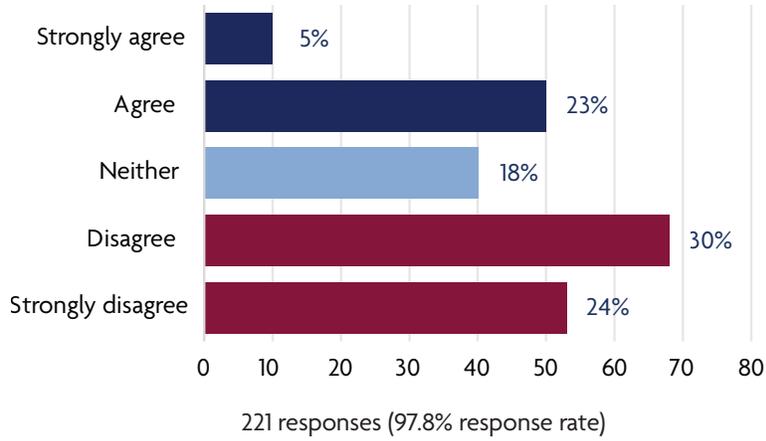


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

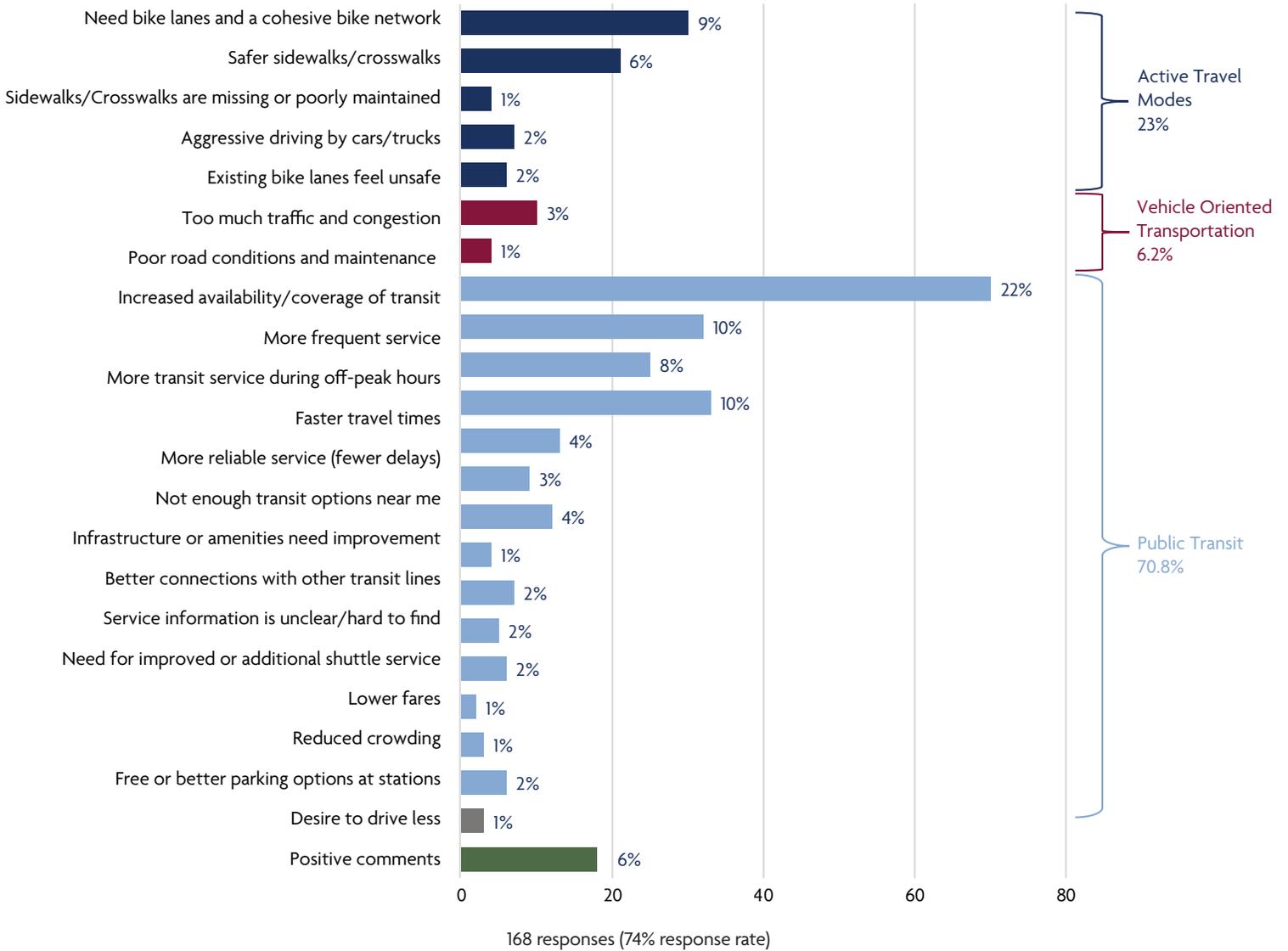


135 respondents (59.7%) Directed to Question  
 134 responses (99.3% response rate)

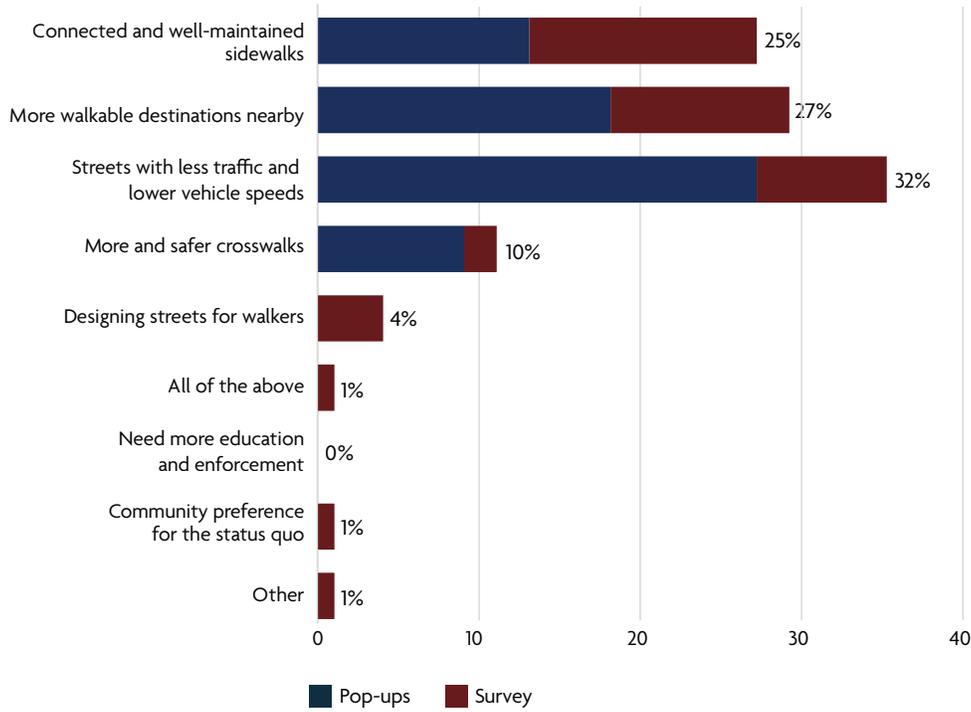
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



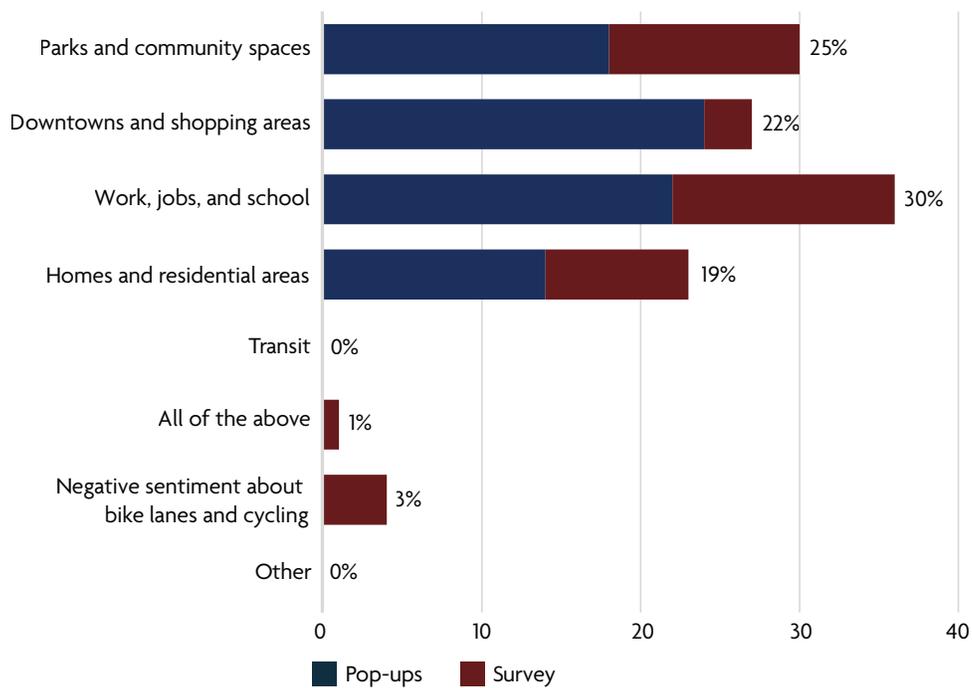
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

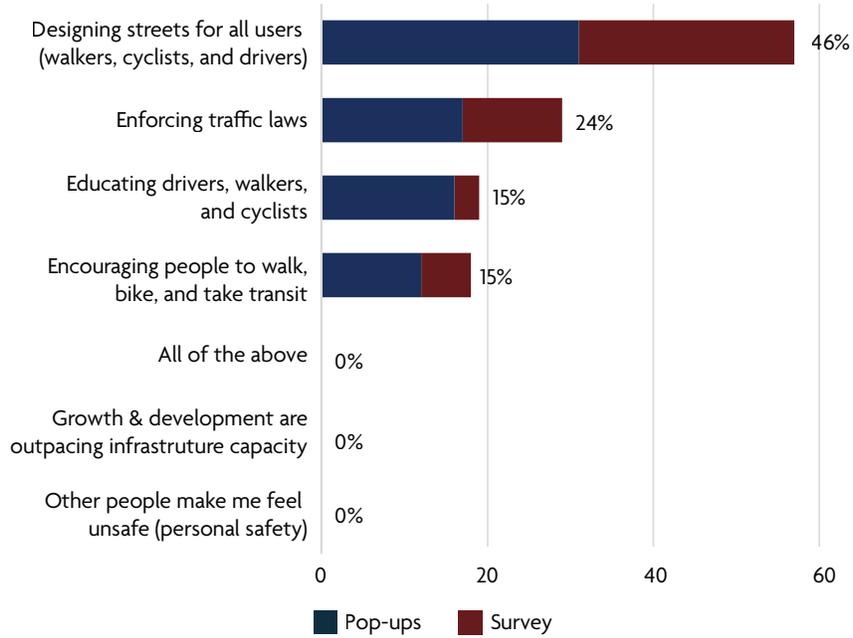


**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



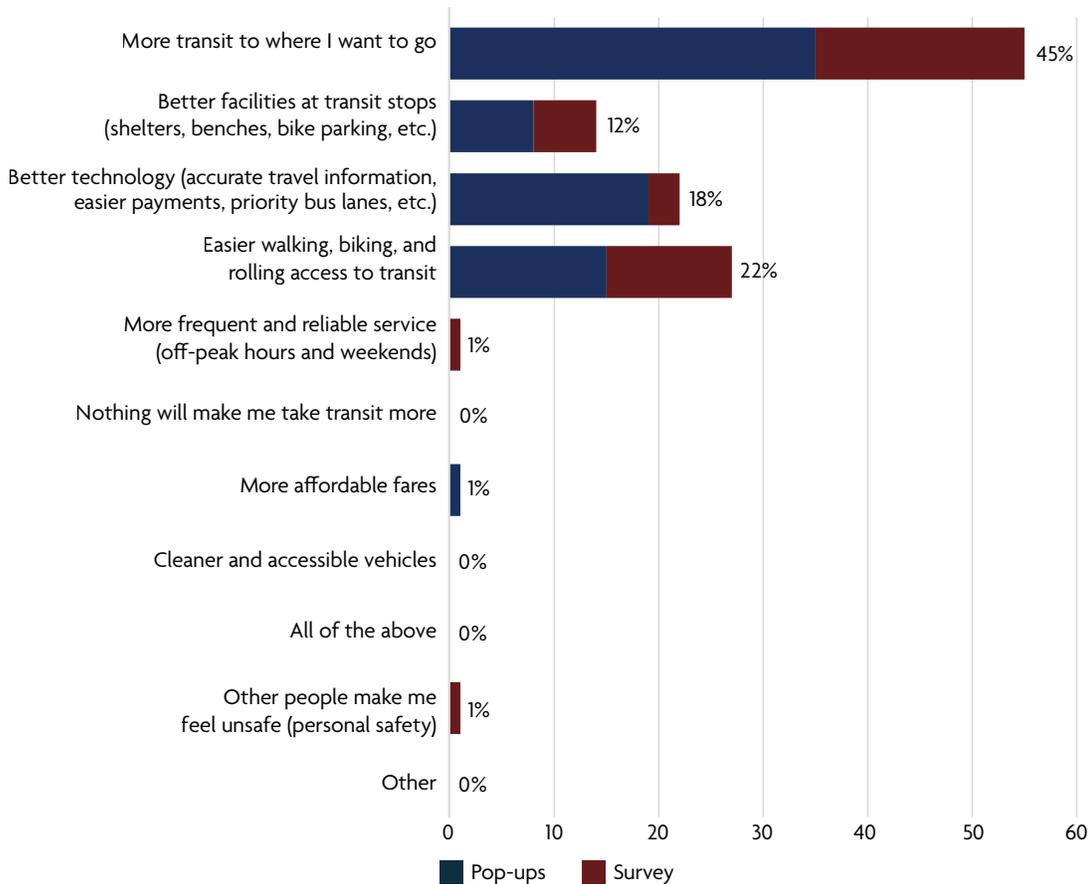
**SAFER STREETS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

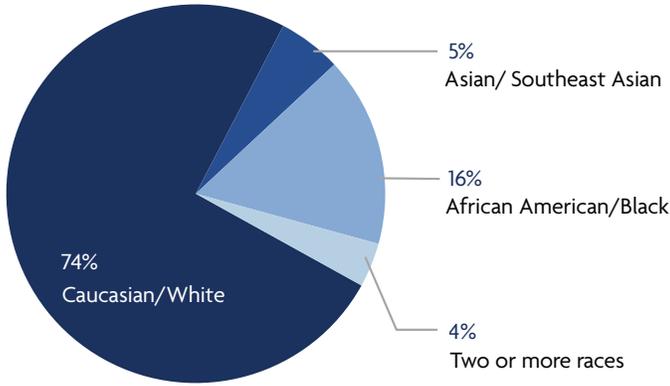


**TRANSIT ACCESS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

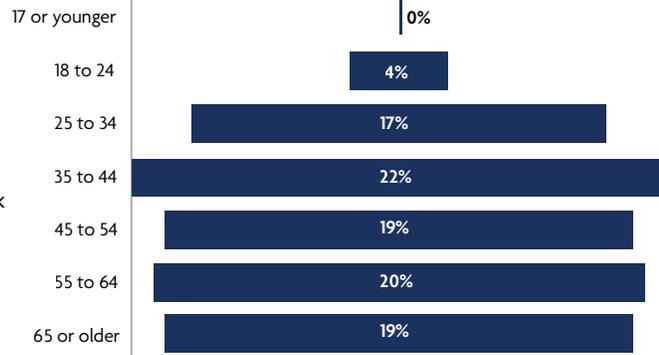


RACE & ETHNICITY



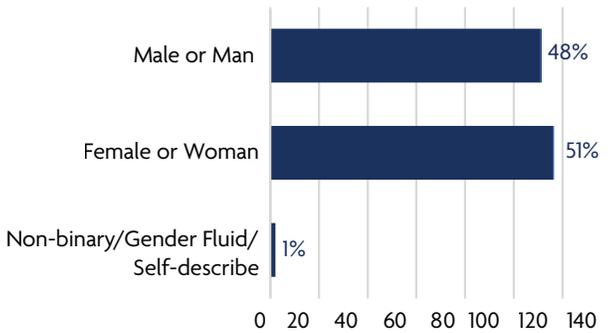
215 responses (88.8% response rate)

AGE



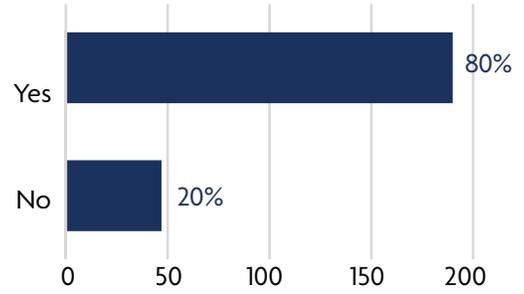
228 responses (94.2% response rate)

GENDER



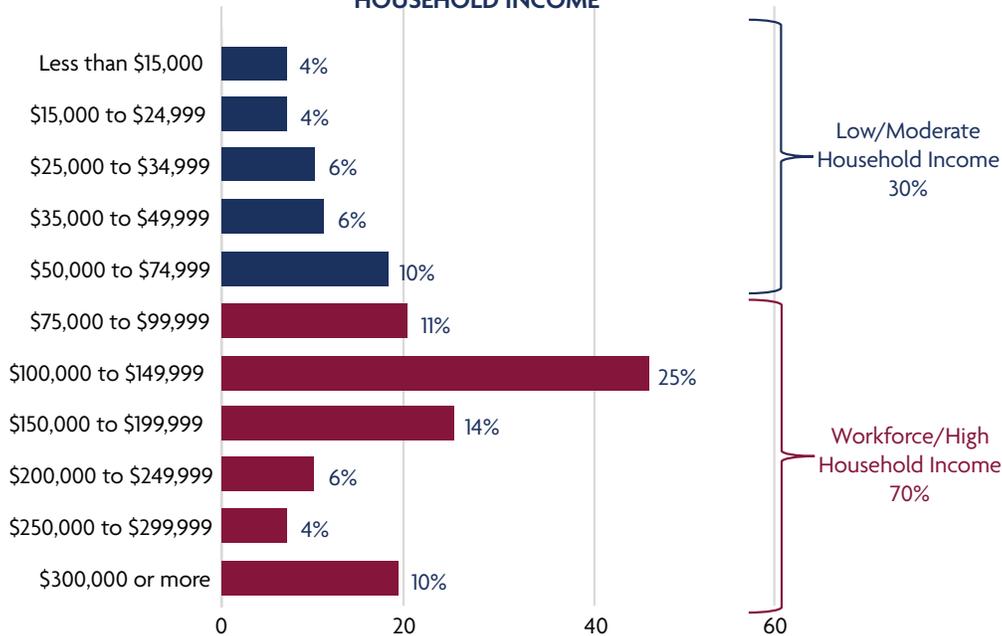
229 responses (94.6% response rate)

ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



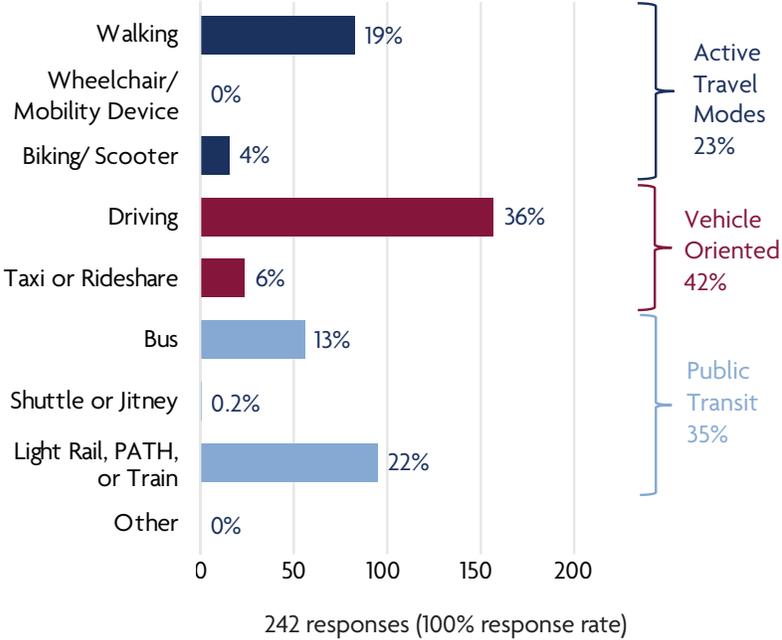
237 responses (97.9% response rate)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

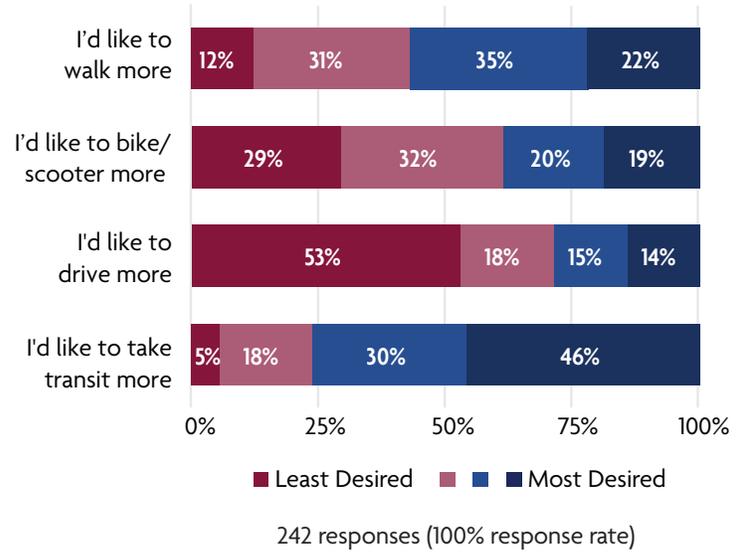


181 responses (74.8% response rate)

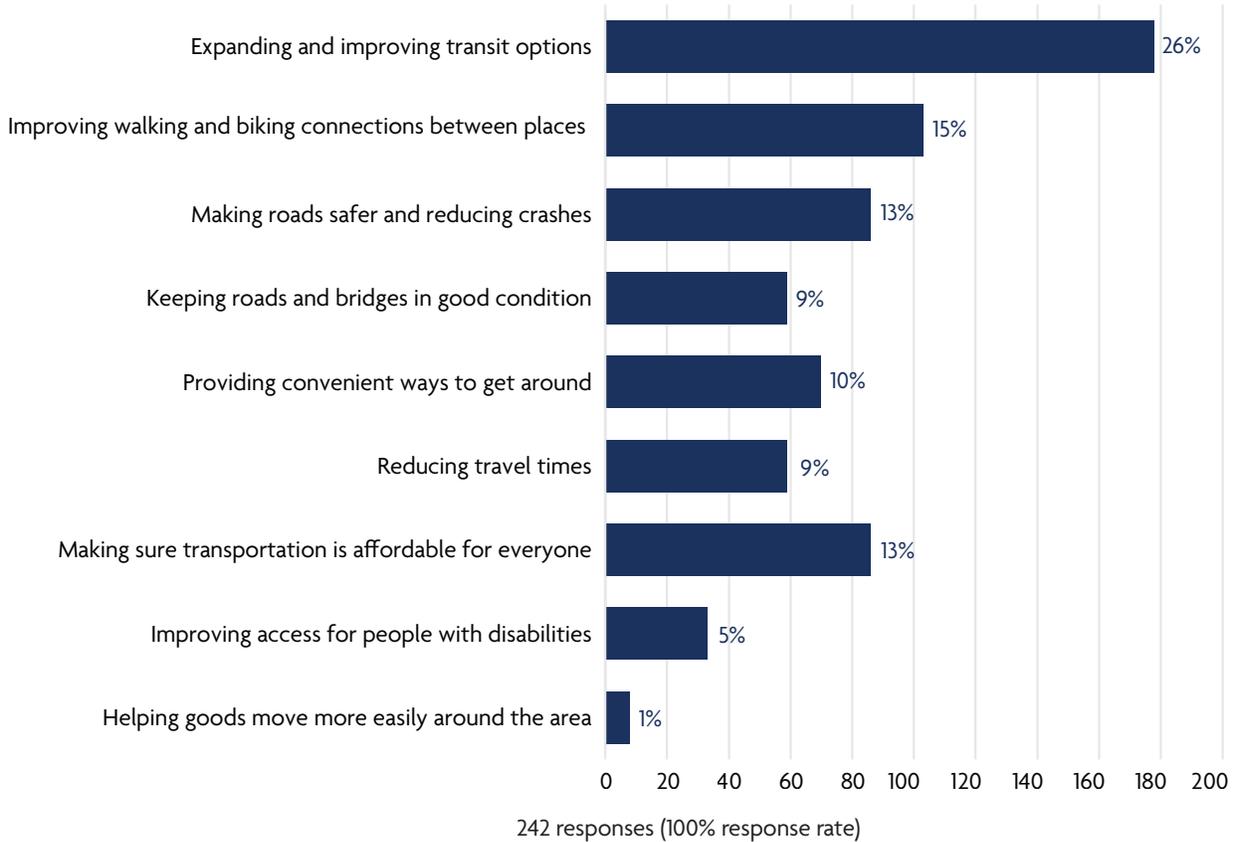
CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



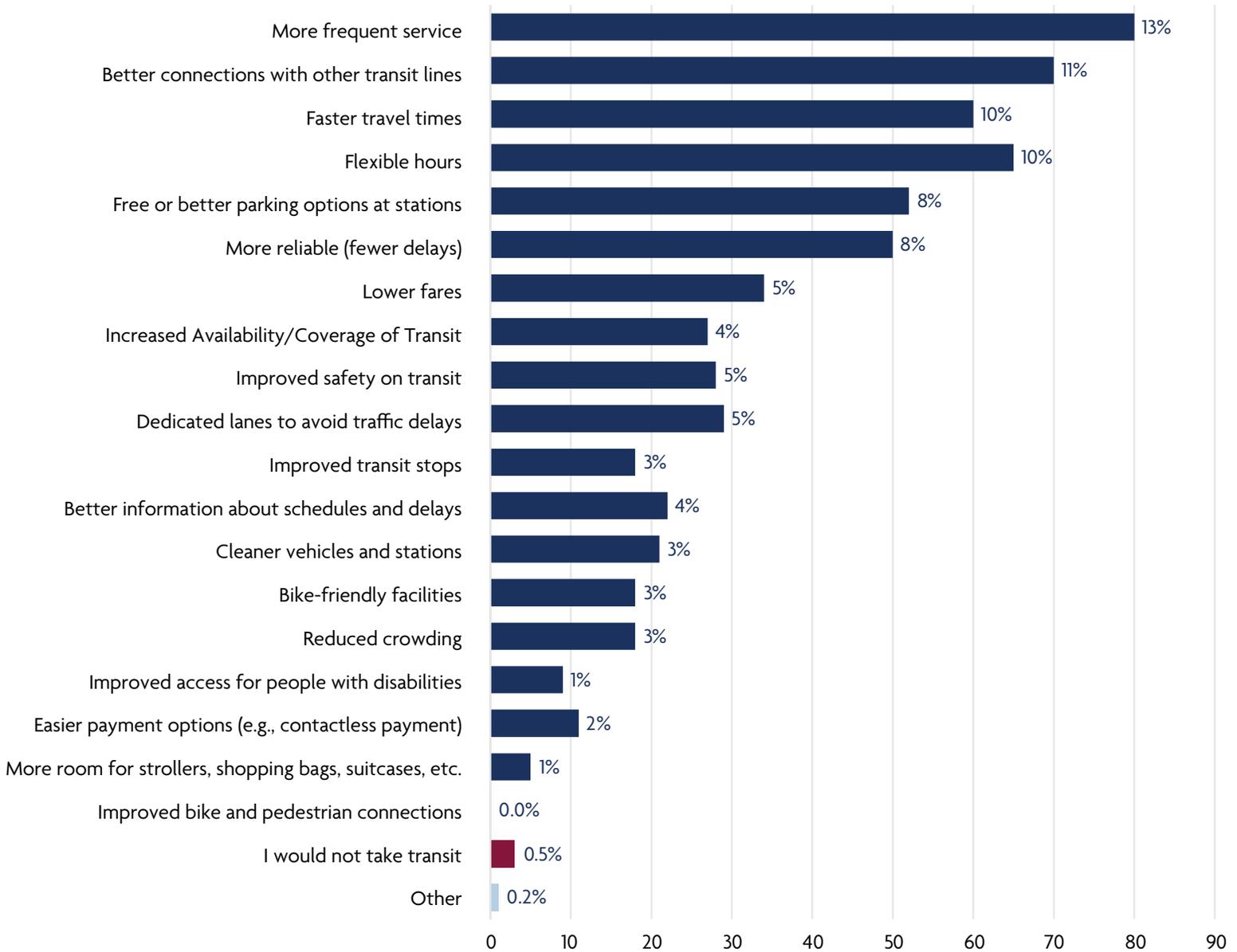
FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

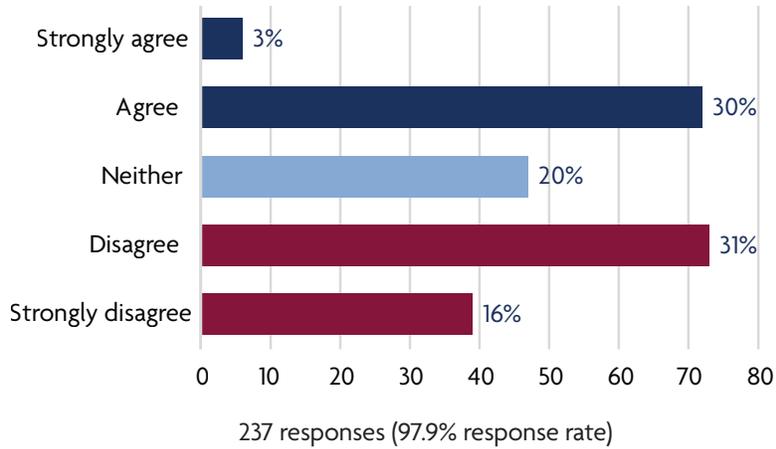


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

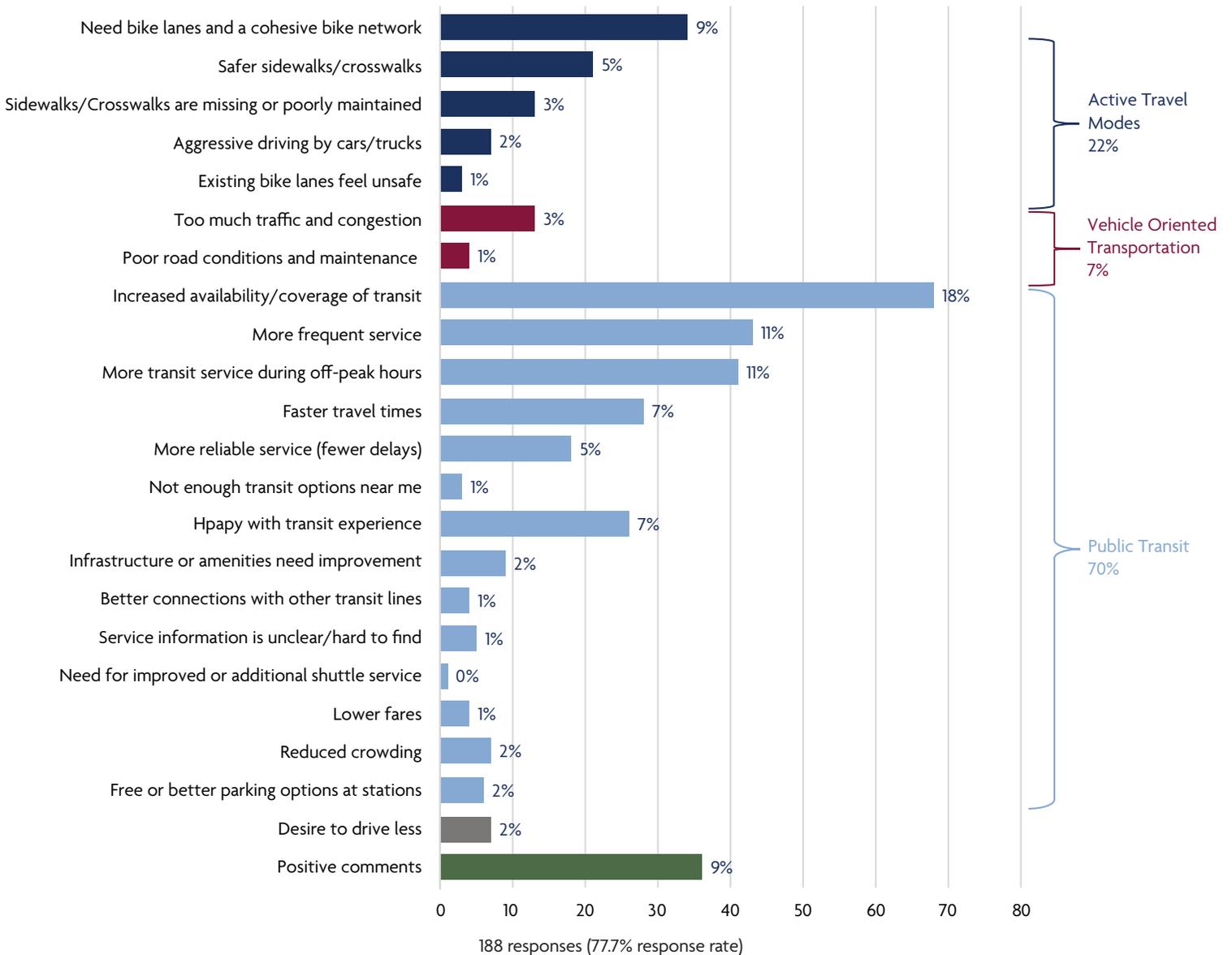


107 respondents (44.2%) Directed to Question  
 103 responses (96.3% response rate)

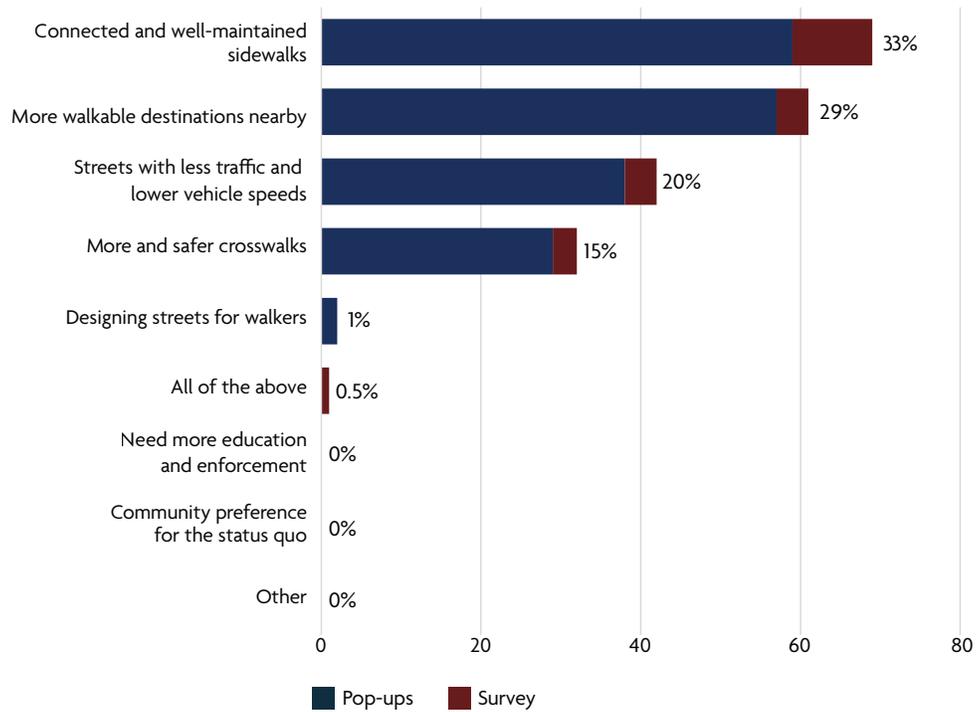
DOES THE TRANSPORTAION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



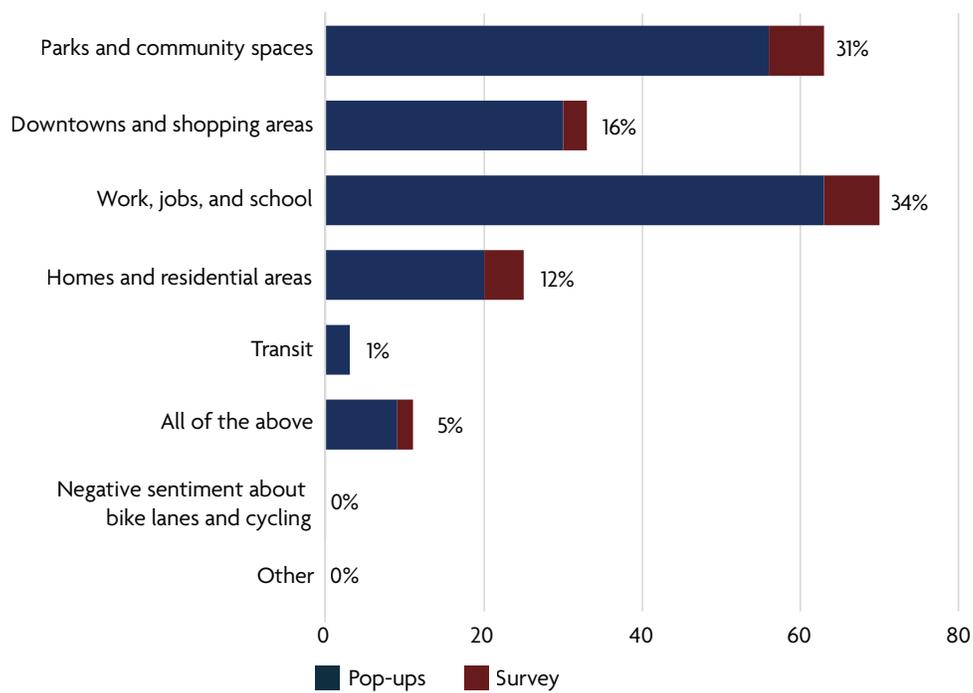
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

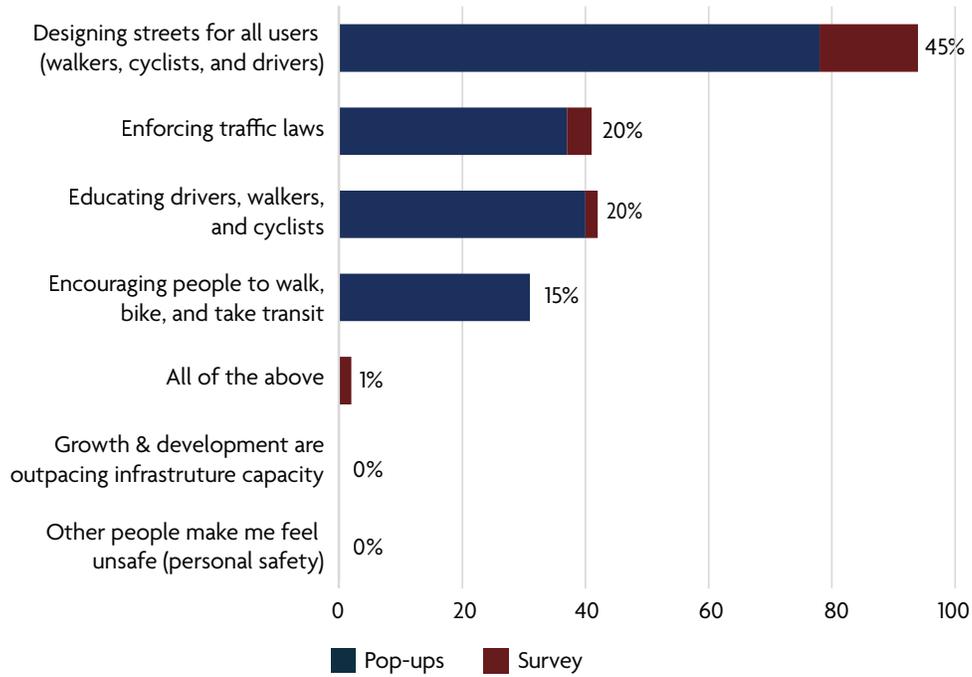


**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



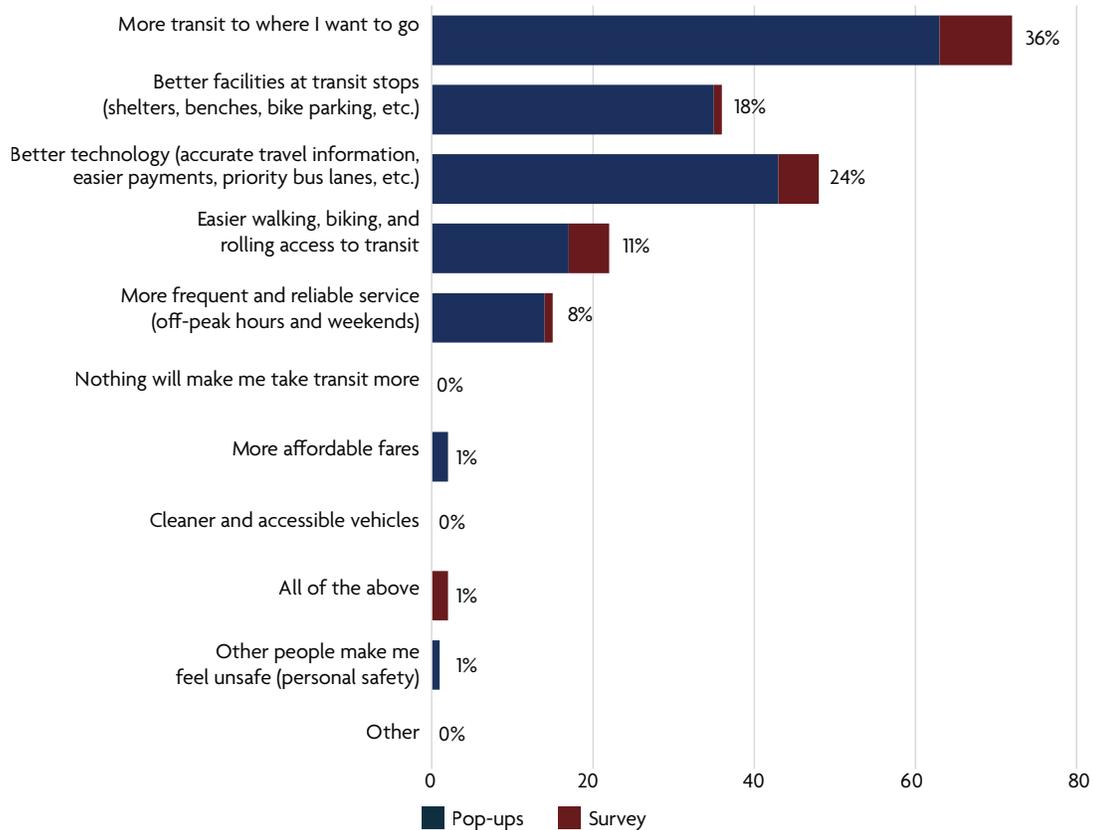
SAFER STREETS

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



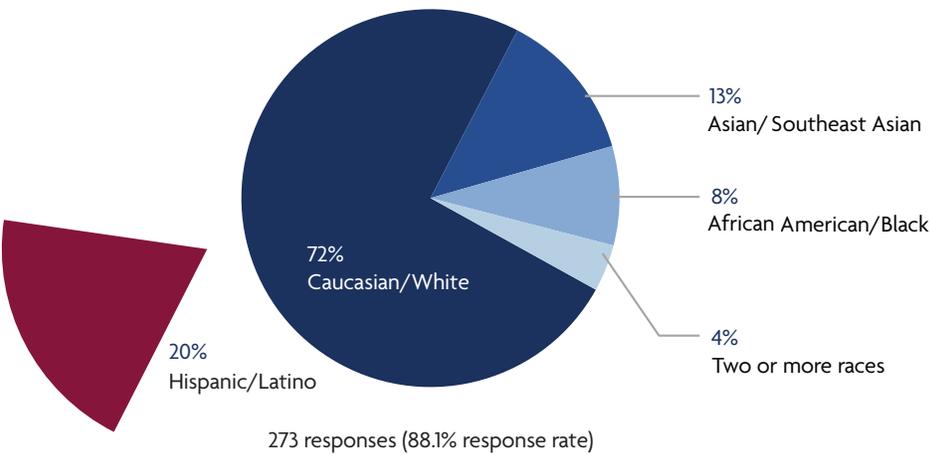
TRANSIT ACCESS

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

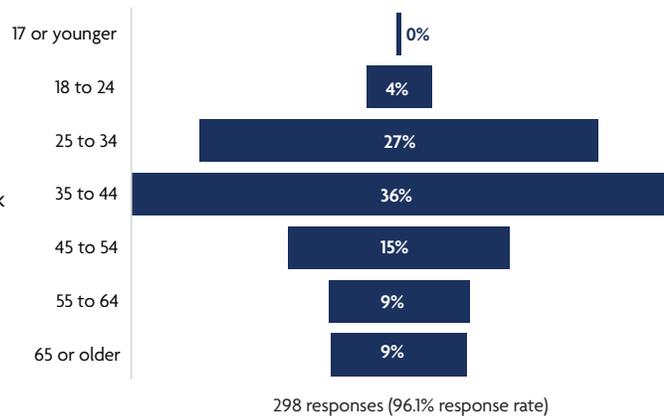


# Hudson County - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

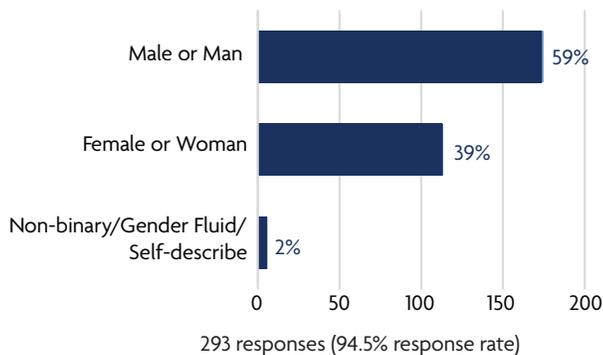
## RACE & ETHNICITY



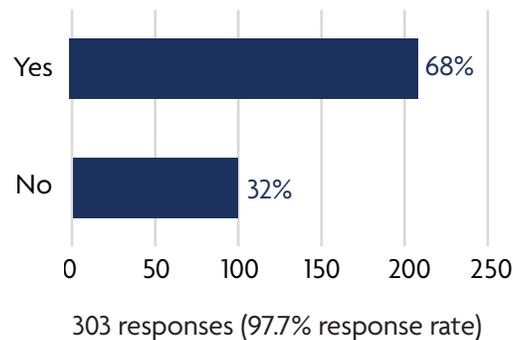
## AGE



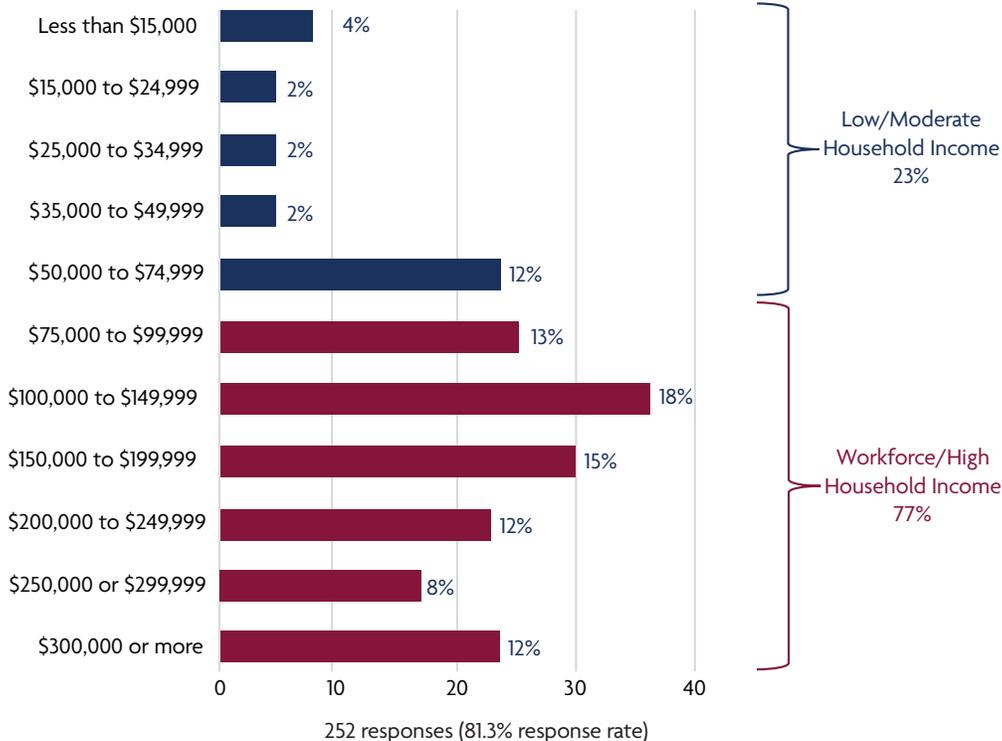
## GENDER



## ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE

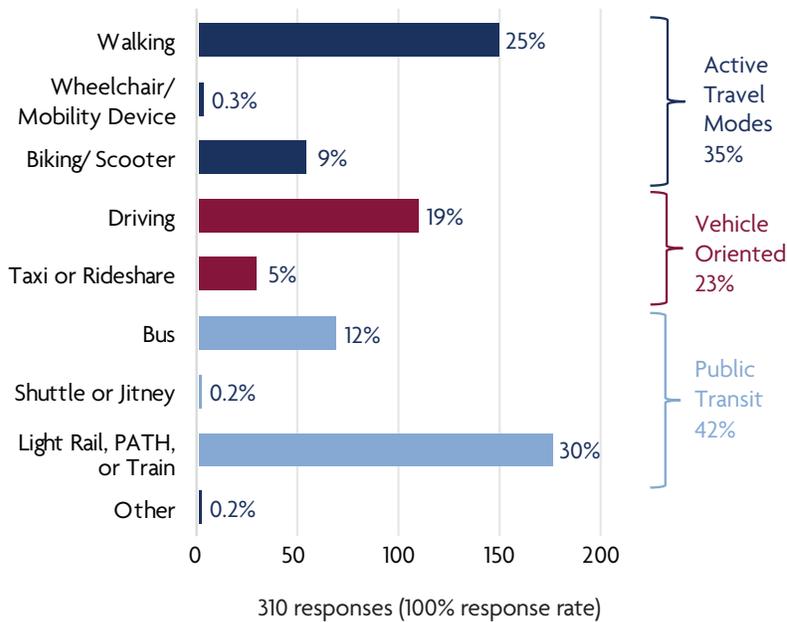


## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

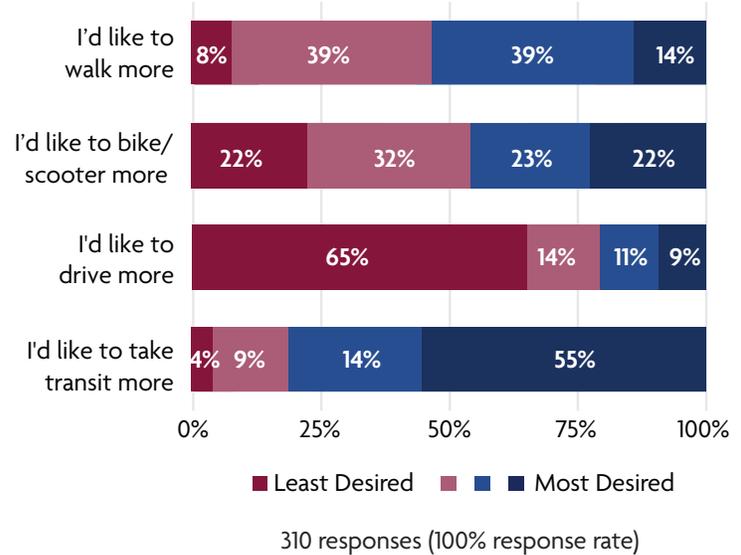


# Hudson County - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

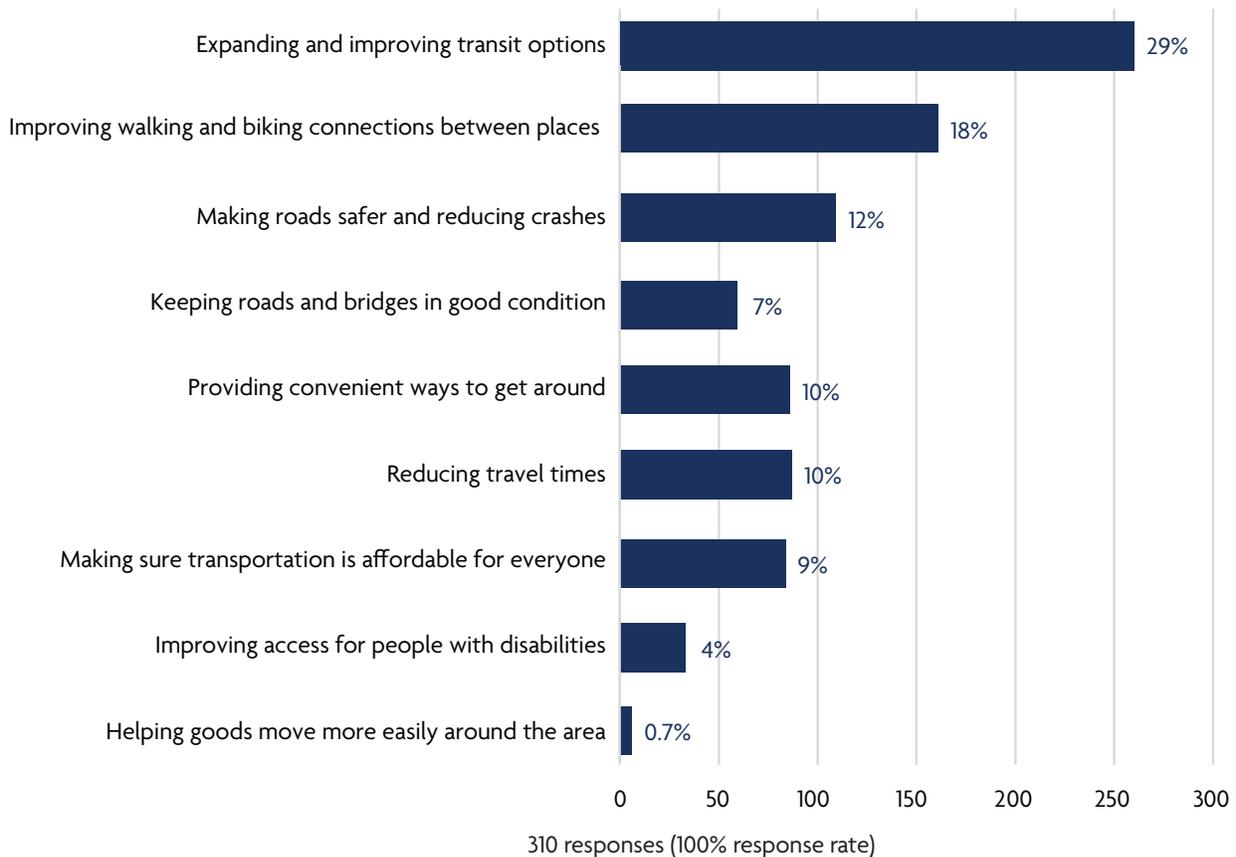
## CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



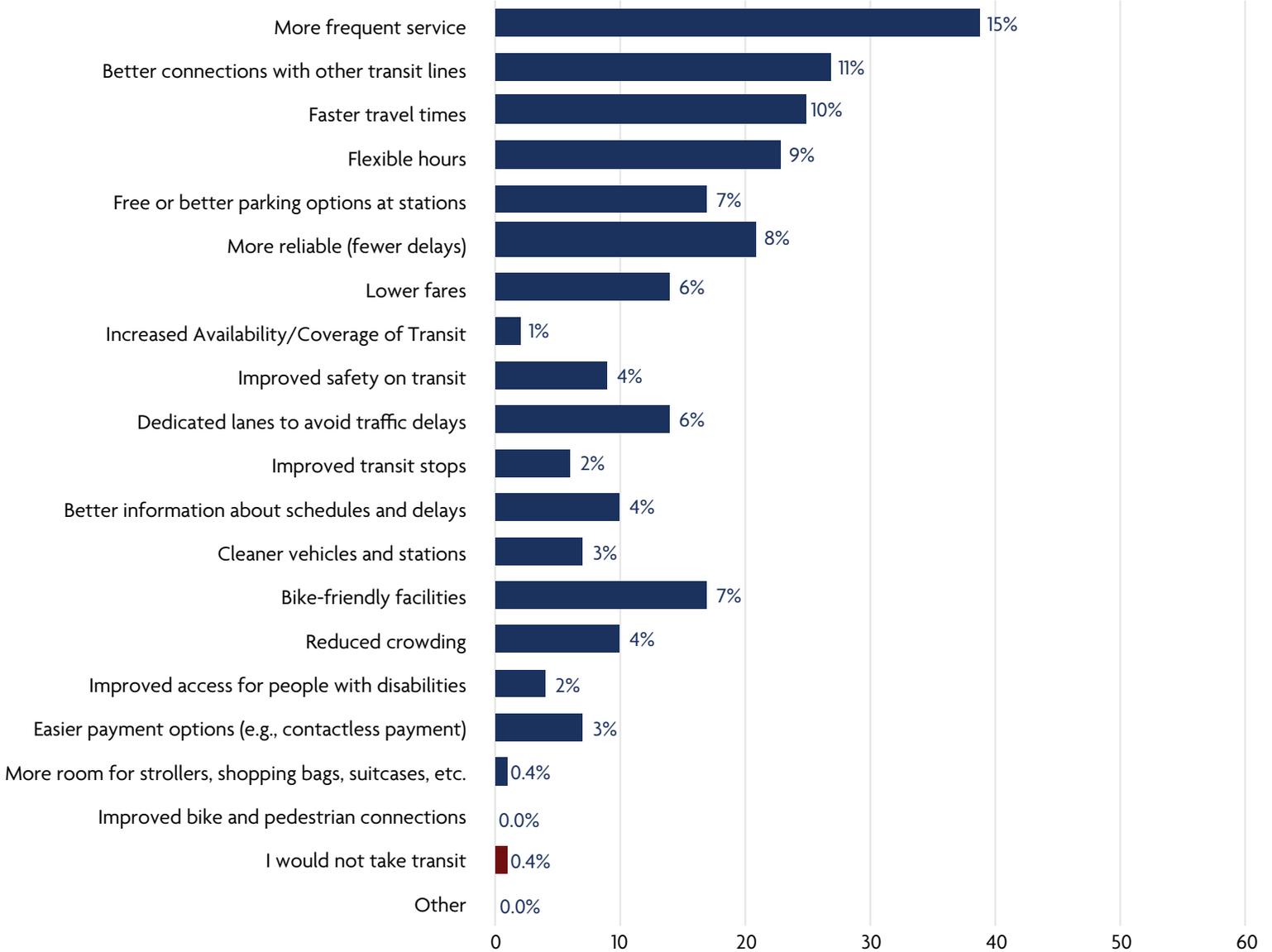
## FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



## IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

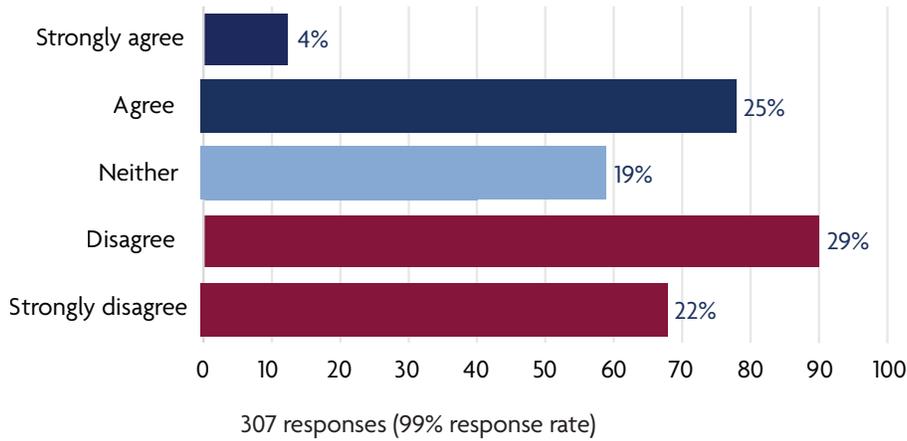


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

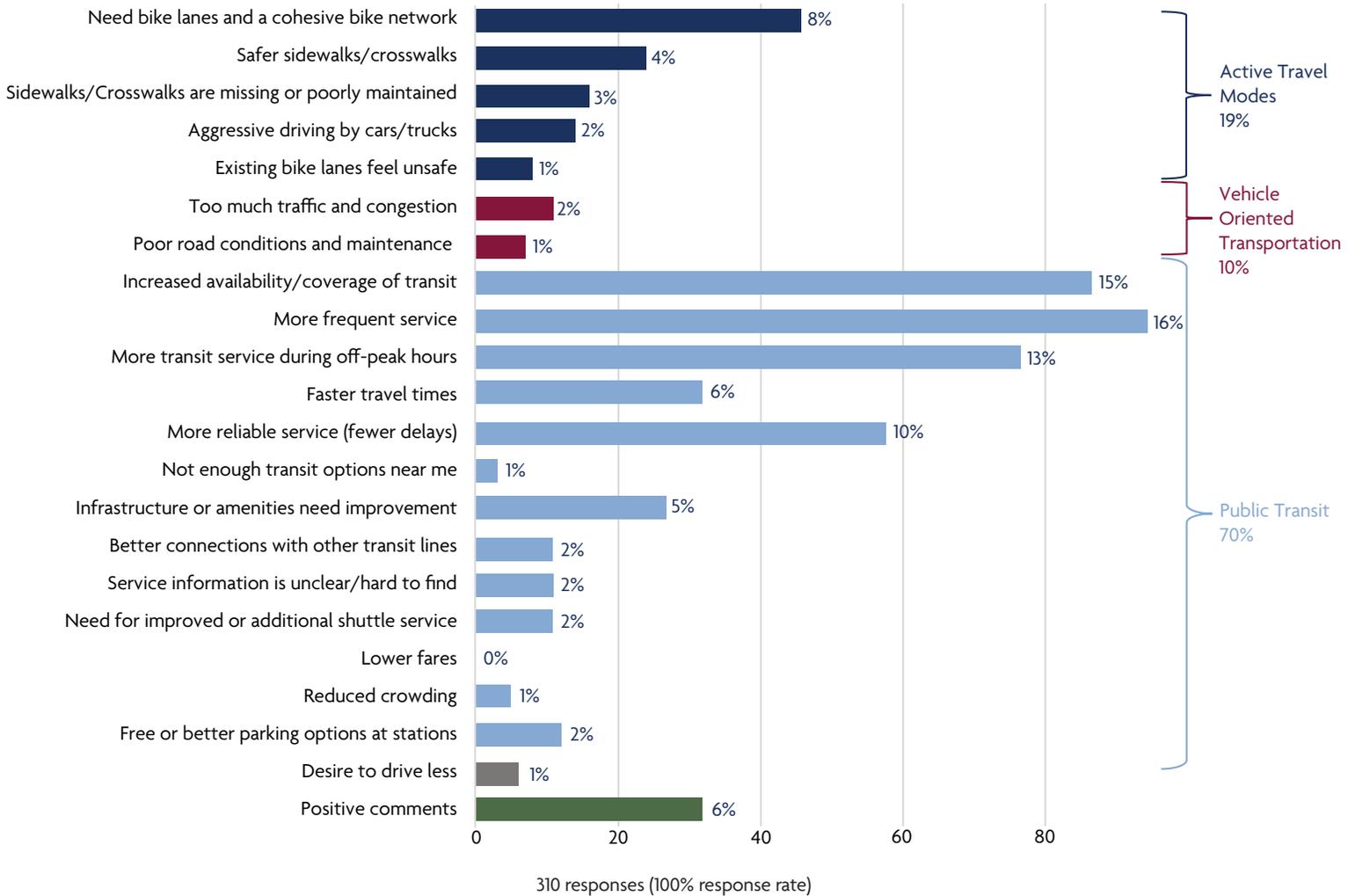


90 respondents (29%) Directed to Question  
 86 responses (95.6% response rate)

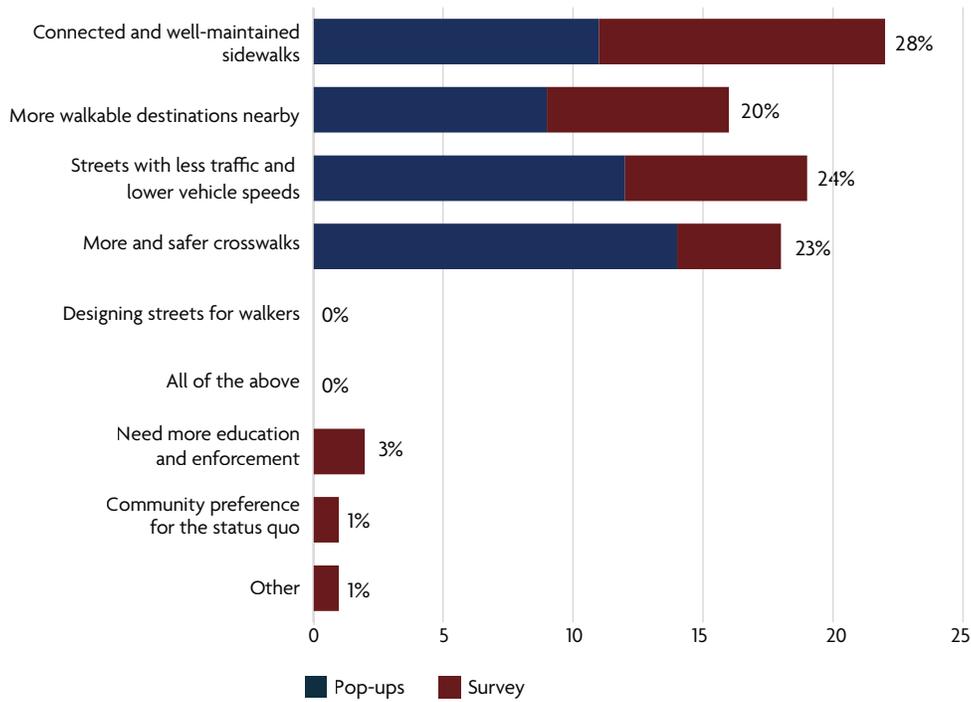
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



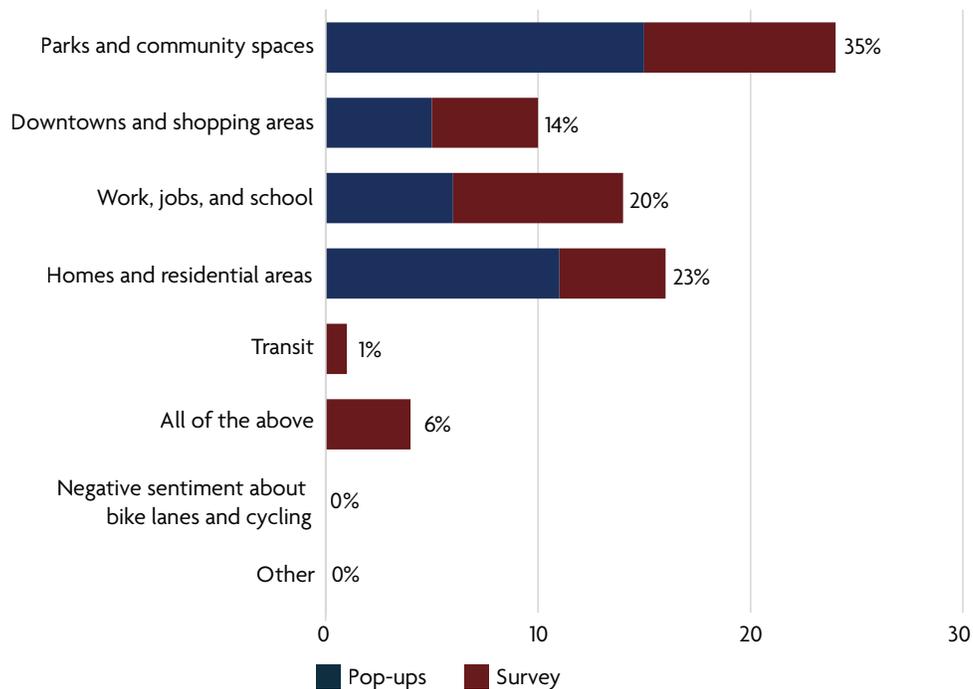
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

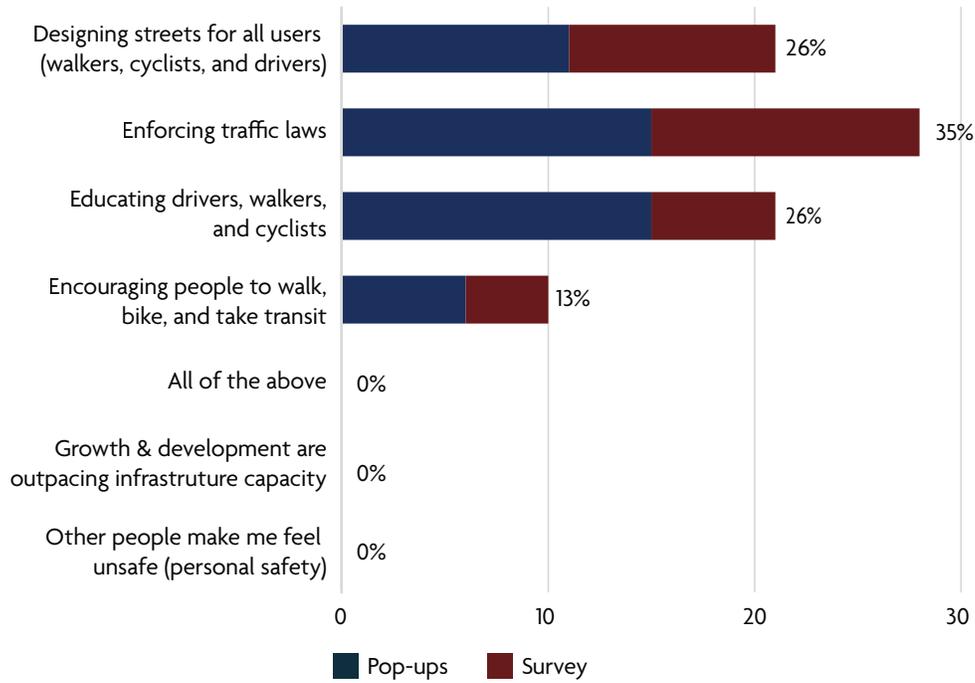


**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



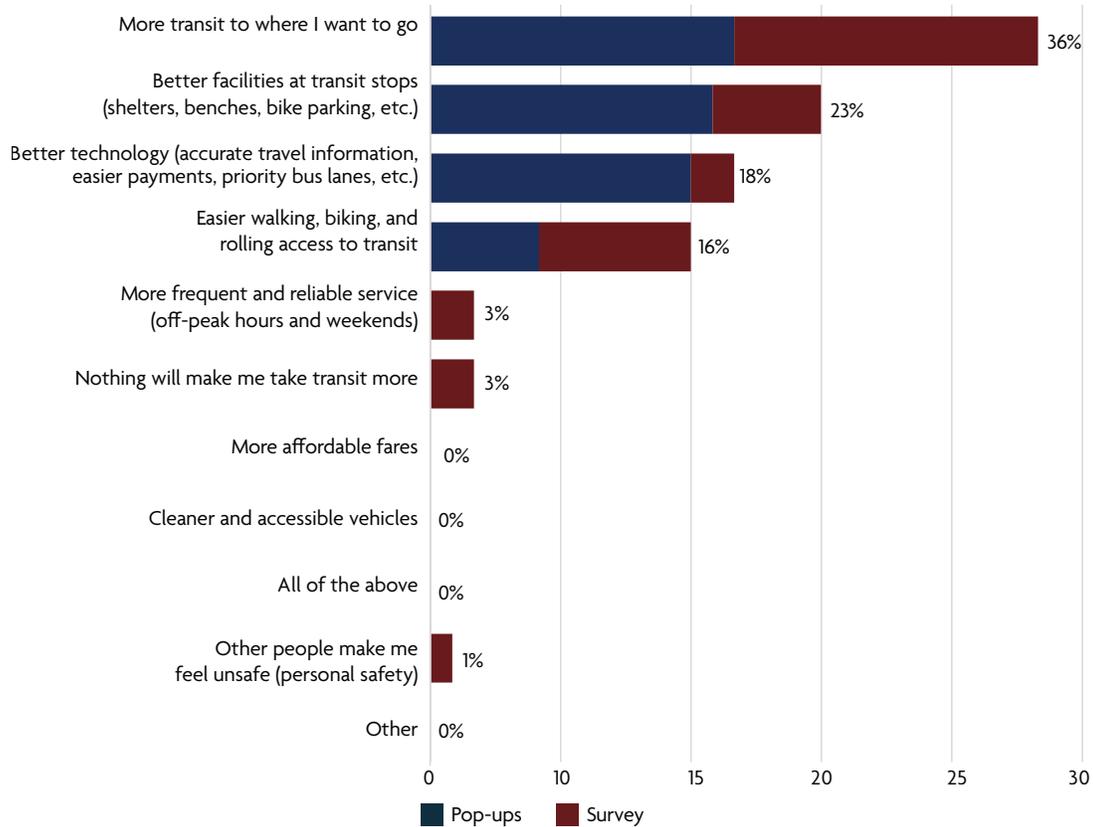
**SAFER STREETS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

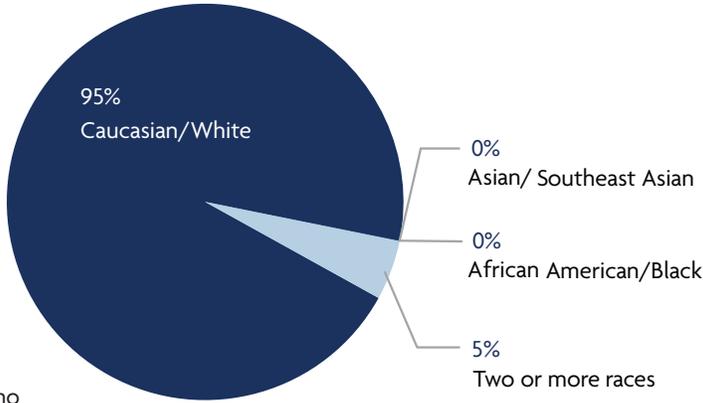


**TRANSIT ACCESS**

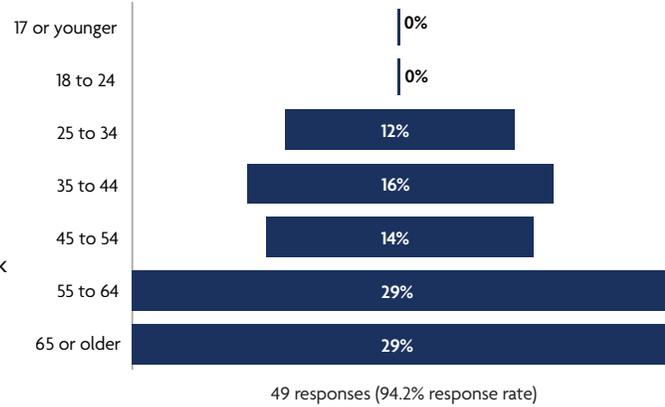
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



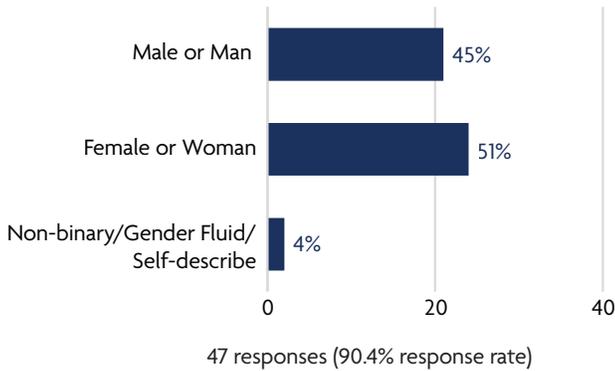
RACE & ETHNICITY



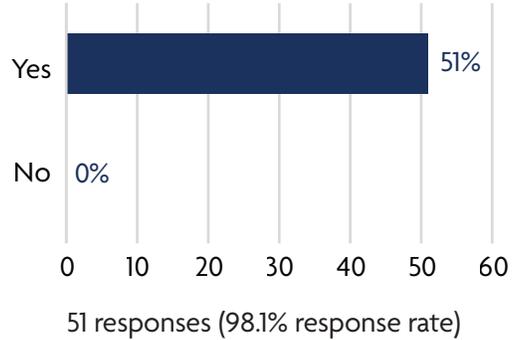
AGE



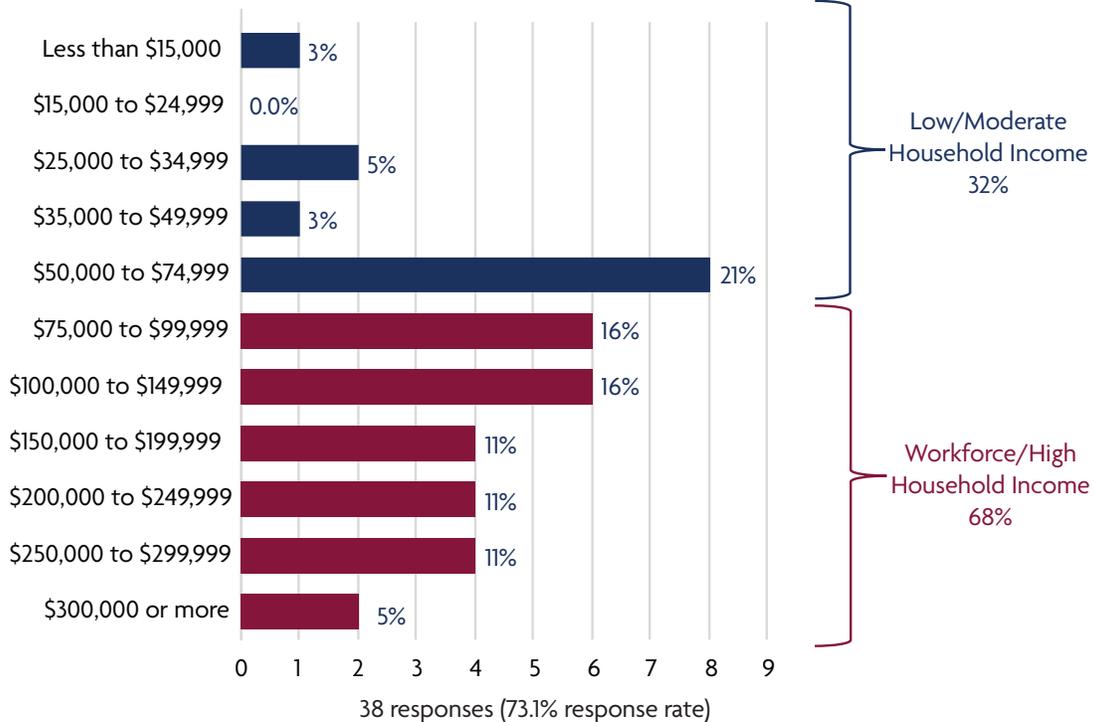
GENDER



ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE

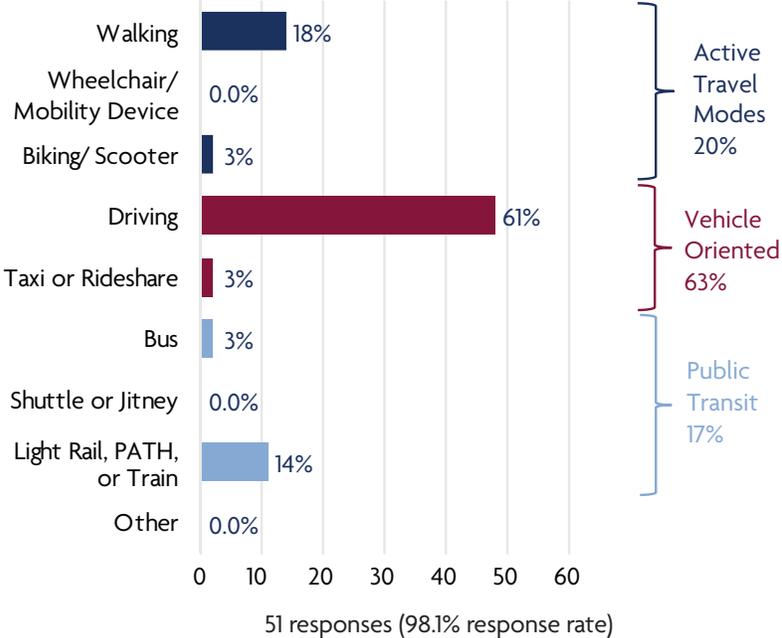


HOUSEHOLD INCOME

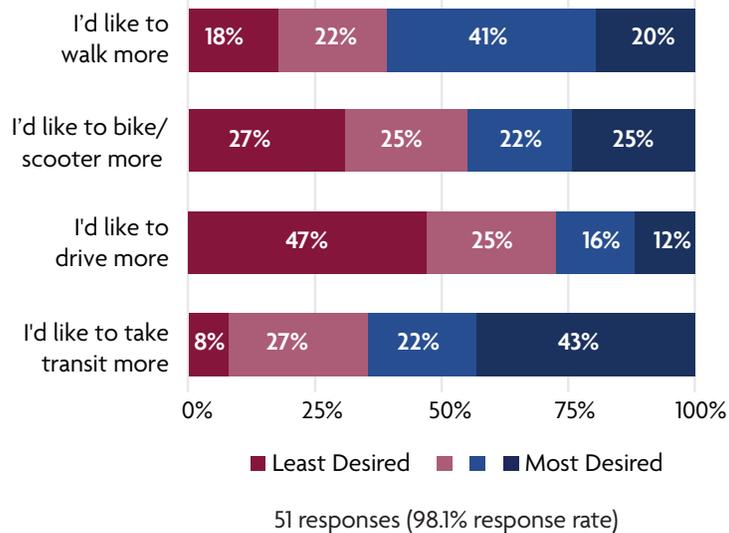


# Hunterdon County - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

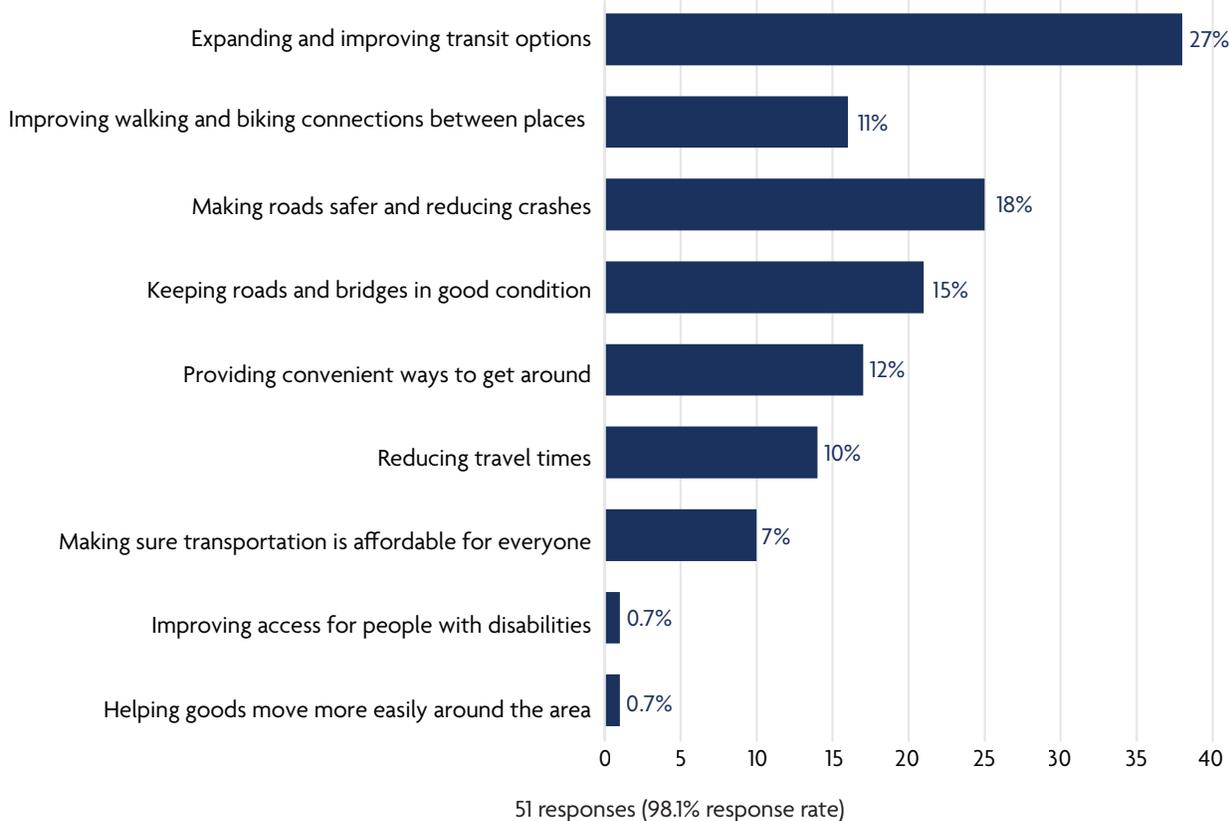
## CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



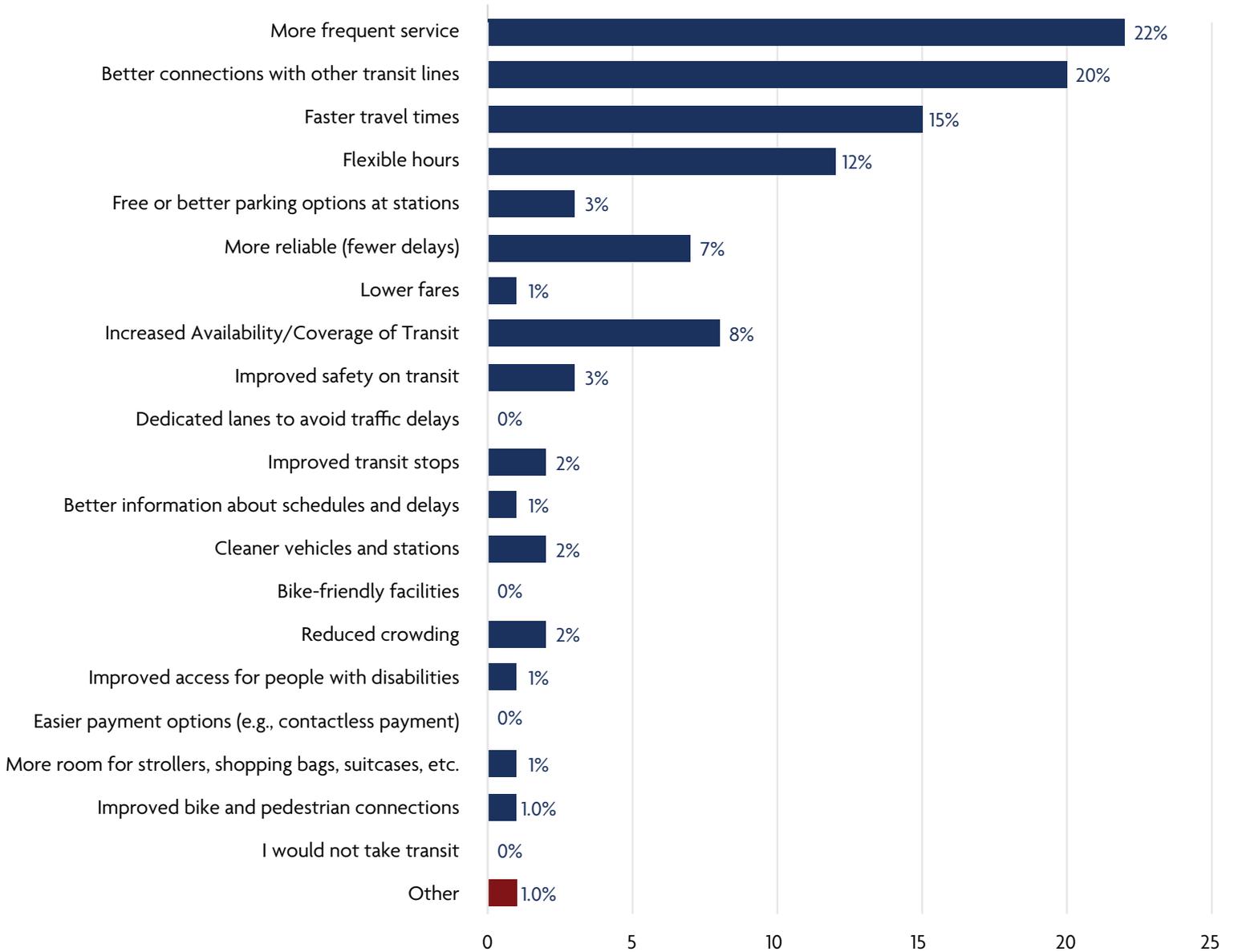
## FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



## IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

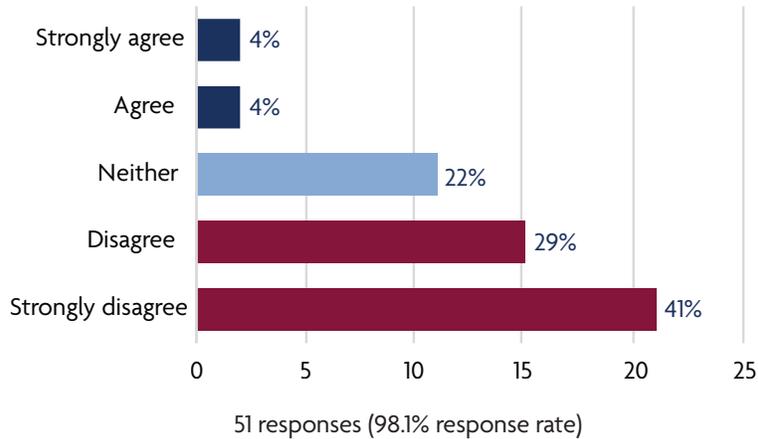


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

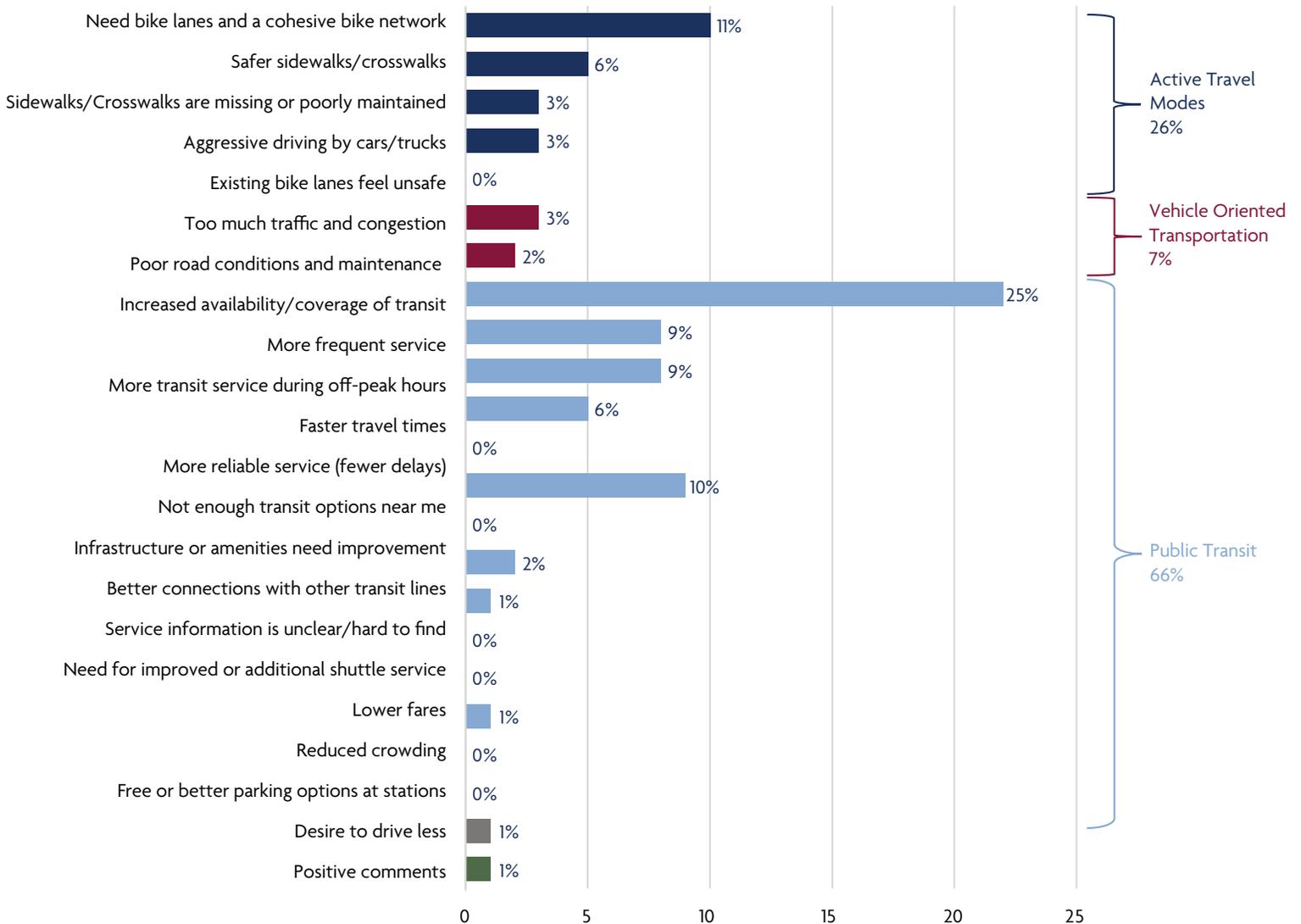


37 respondents (71.2%) Directed to Question  
 37 responses (100% response rate)

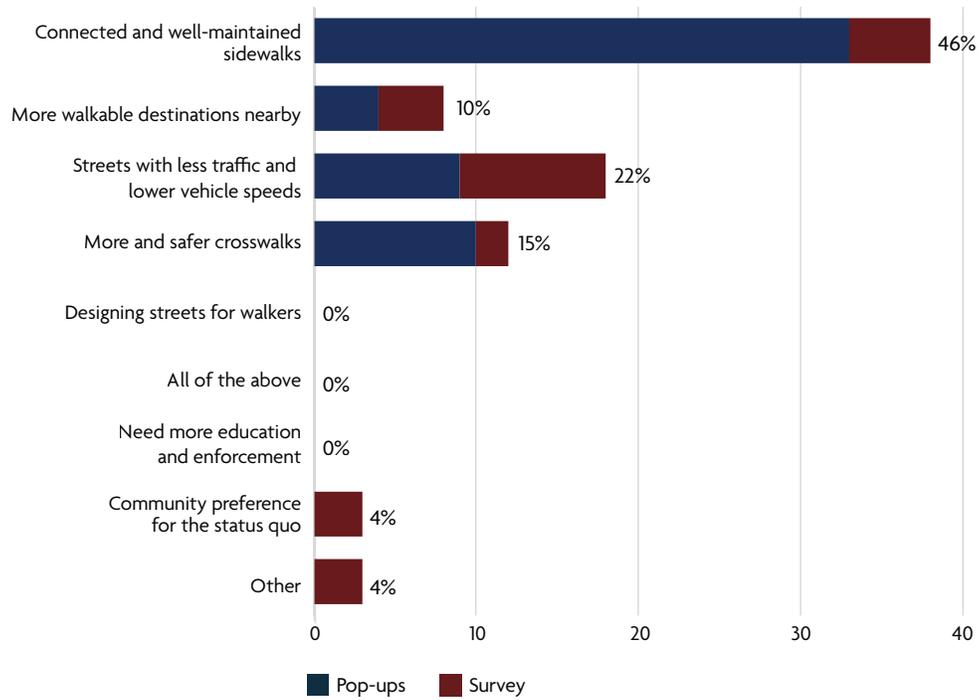
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



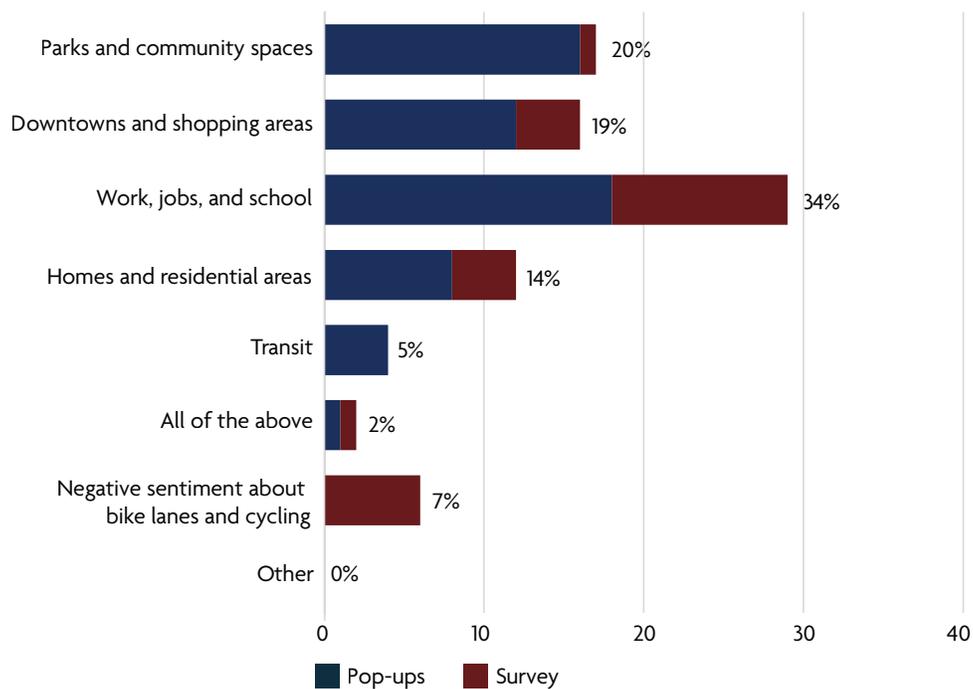
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

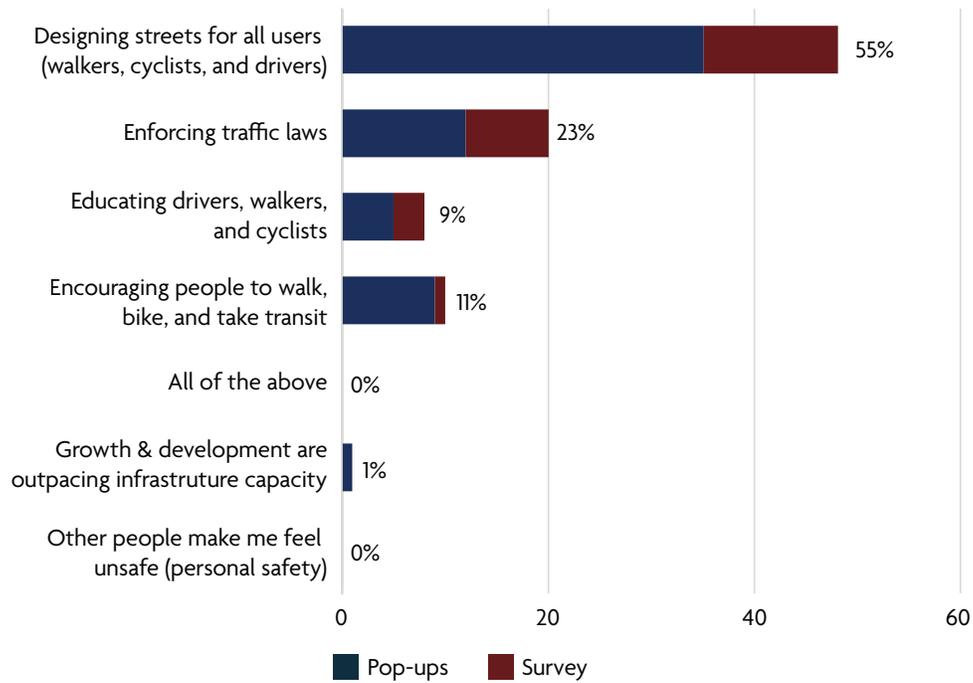


**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



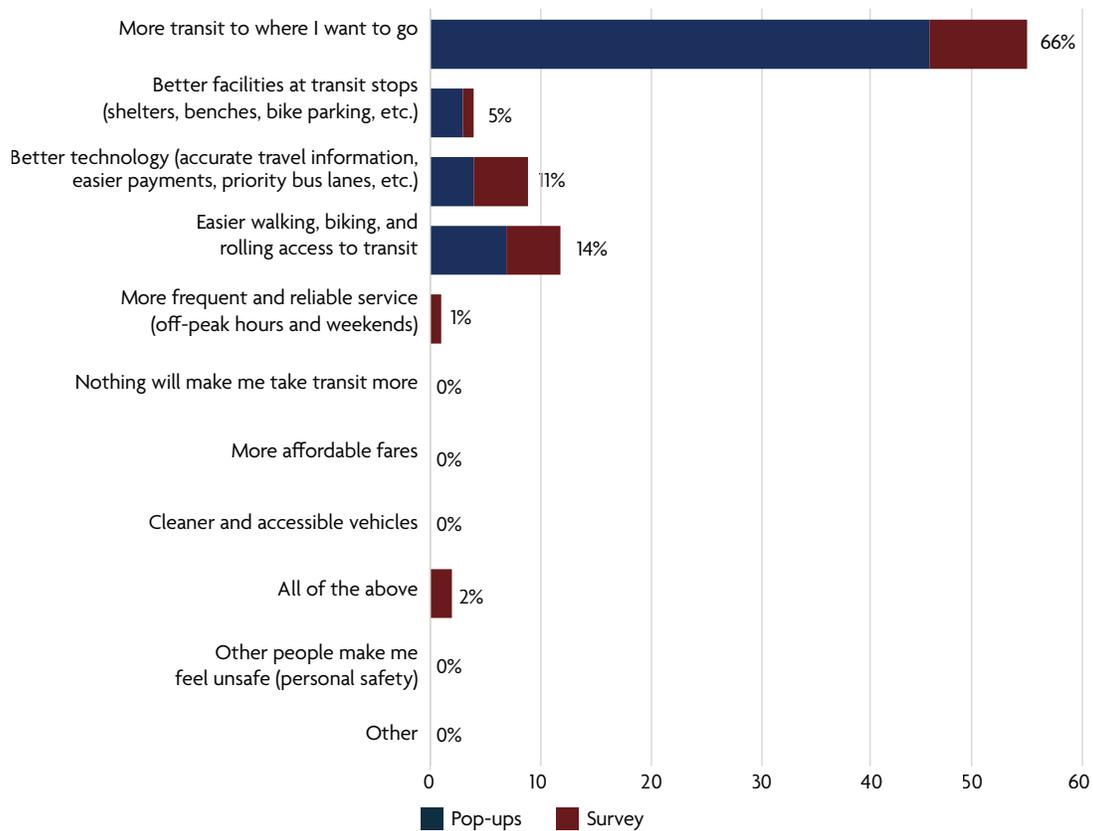
**SAFER STREETS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



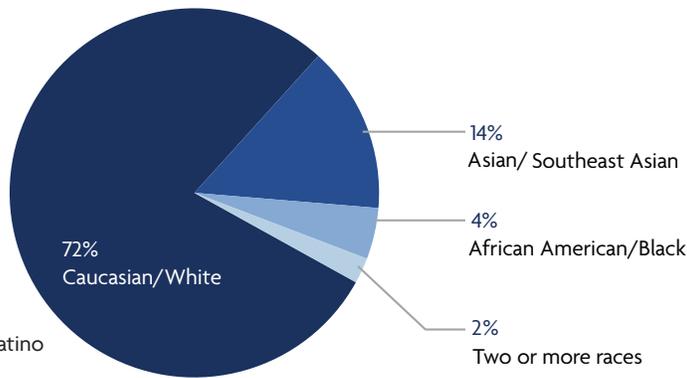
**TRANSIT ACCESS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



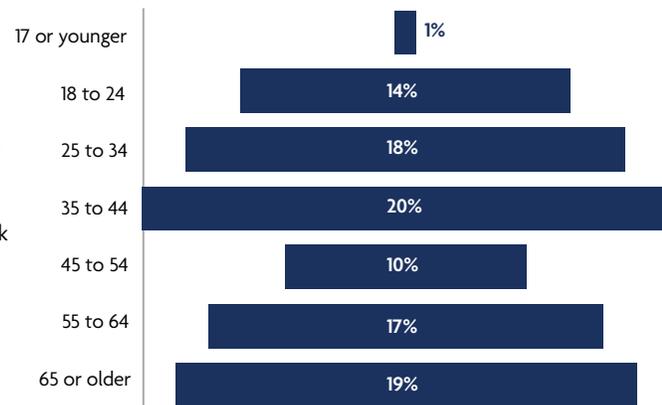
# Middlesex County - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

## RACE & ETHNICITY



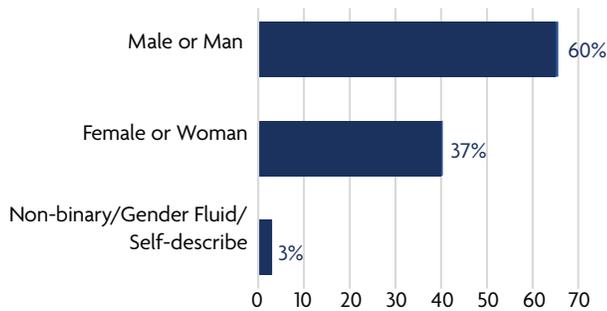
96 responses (84.2% response rate)

## AGE



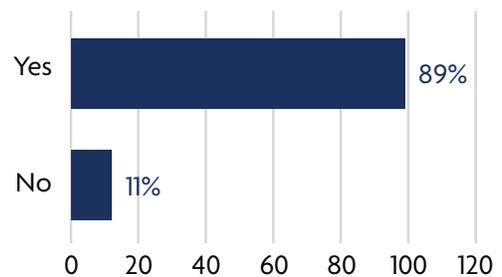
110 responses (96.5% response rate)

## GENDER



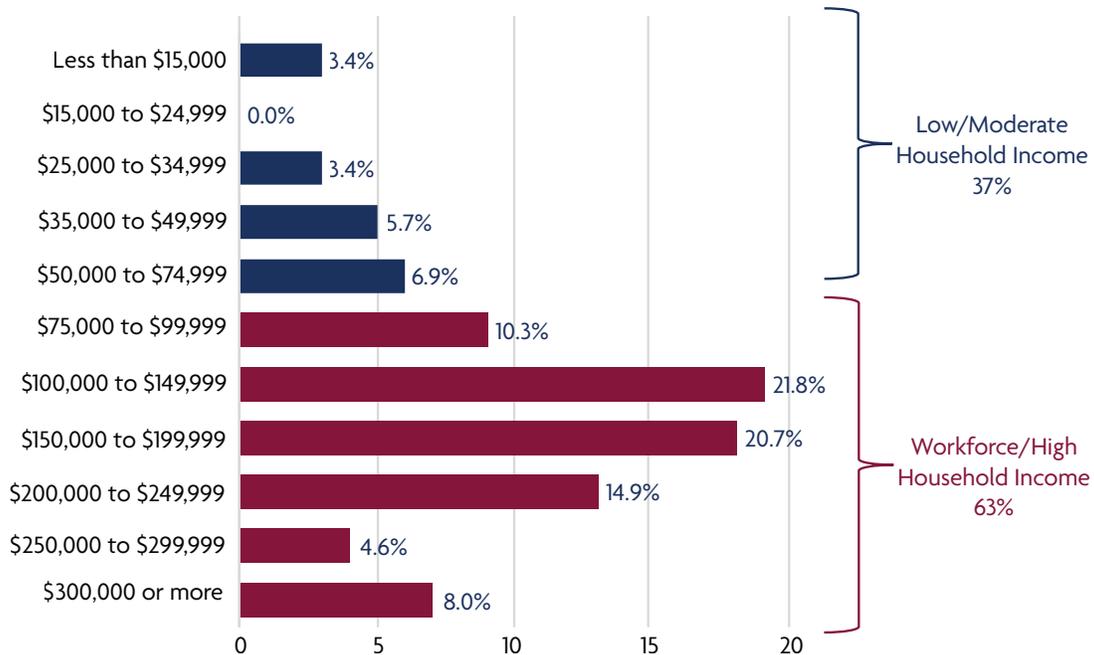
108 responses (94.7% response rate)

## ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



111 responses (97.4% response rate)

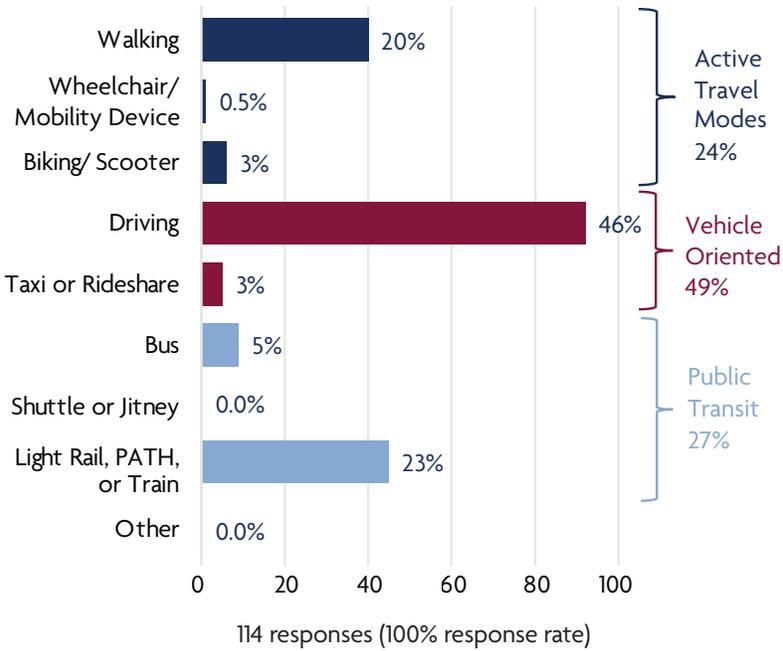
## HOUSEHOLD INCOME



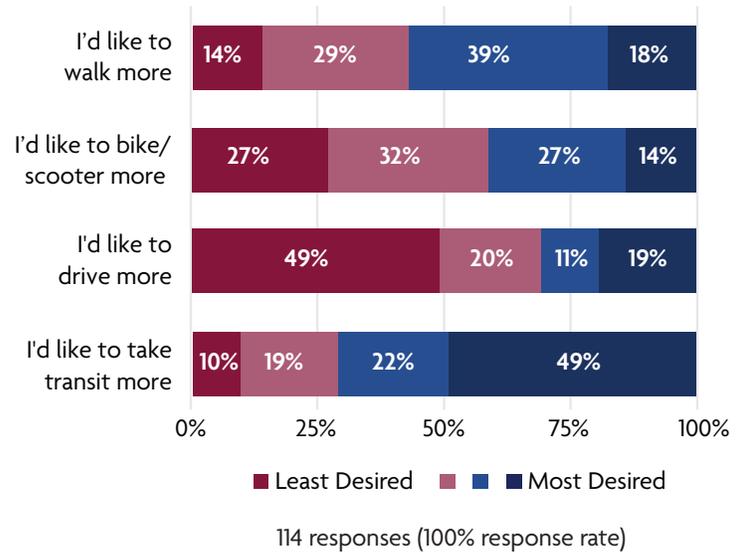
87 responses (76.3% response rate)

# Middlesex County - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

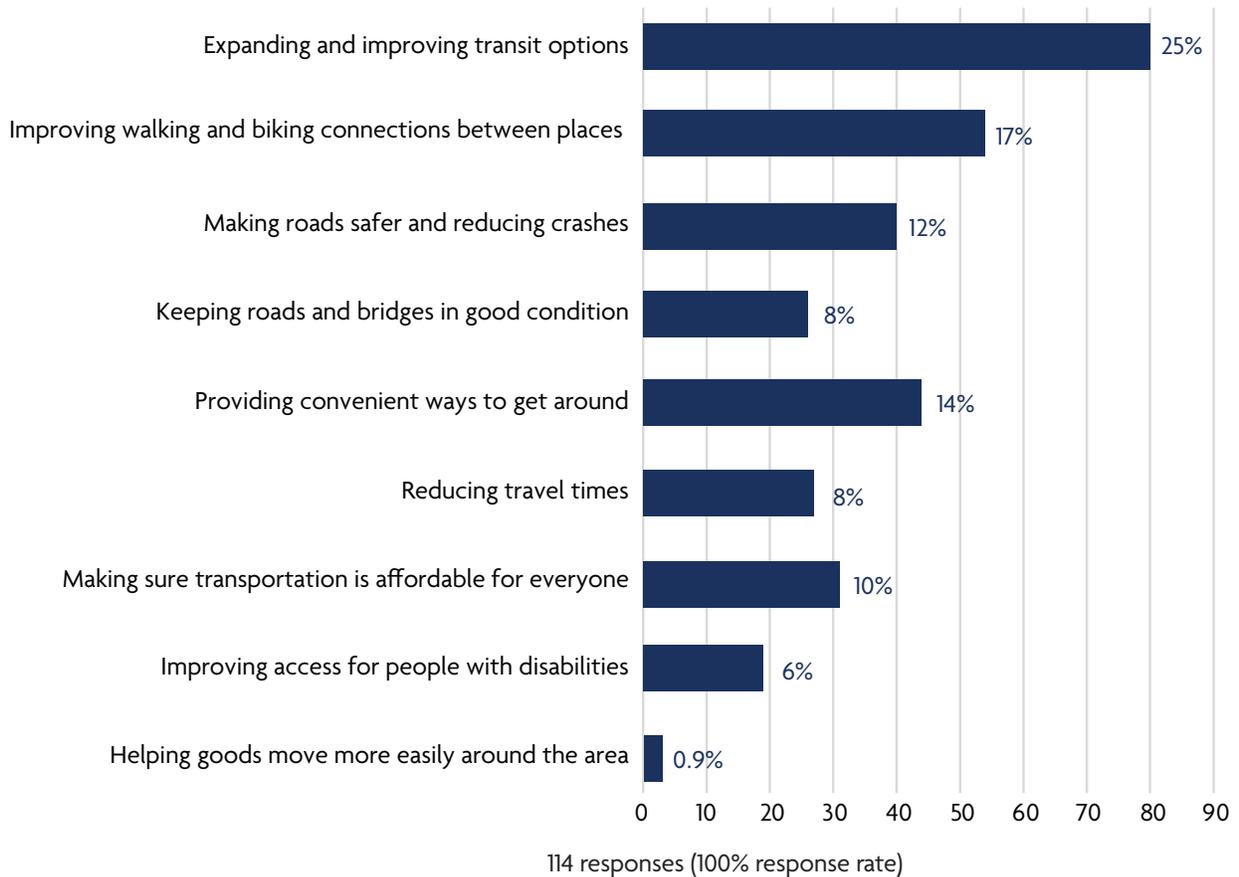
## CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



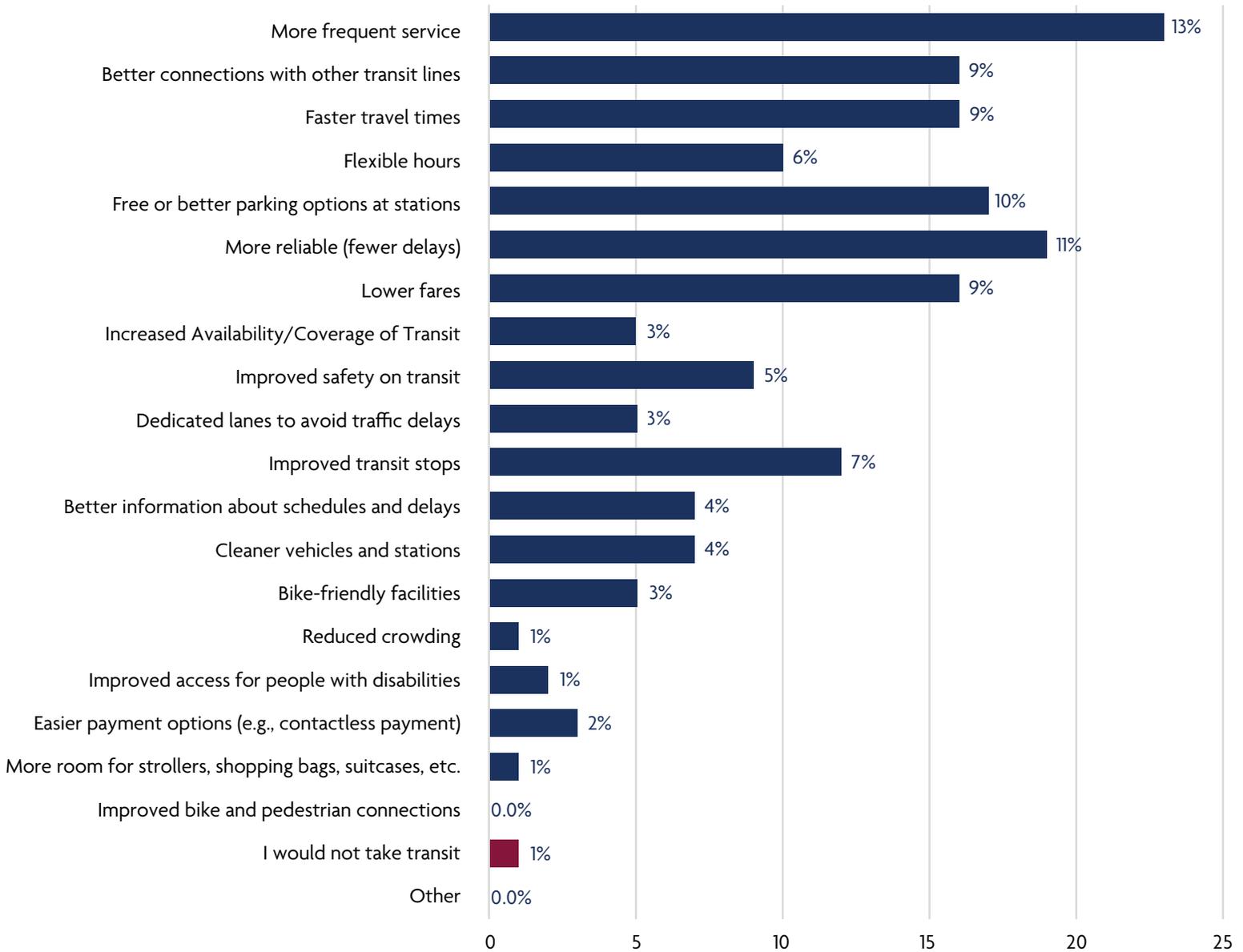
## FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



## IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

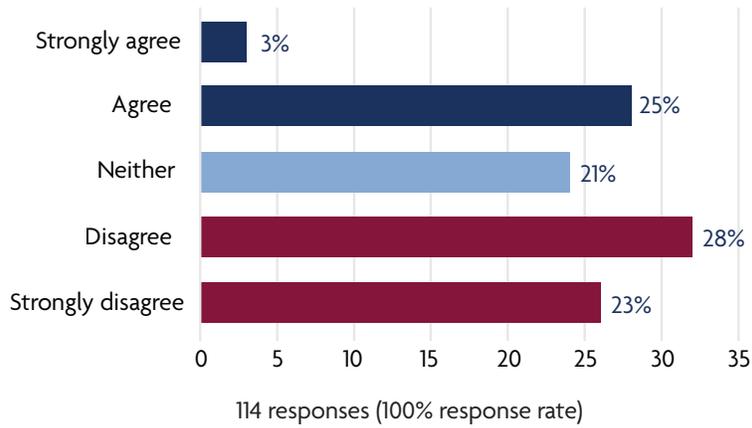


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

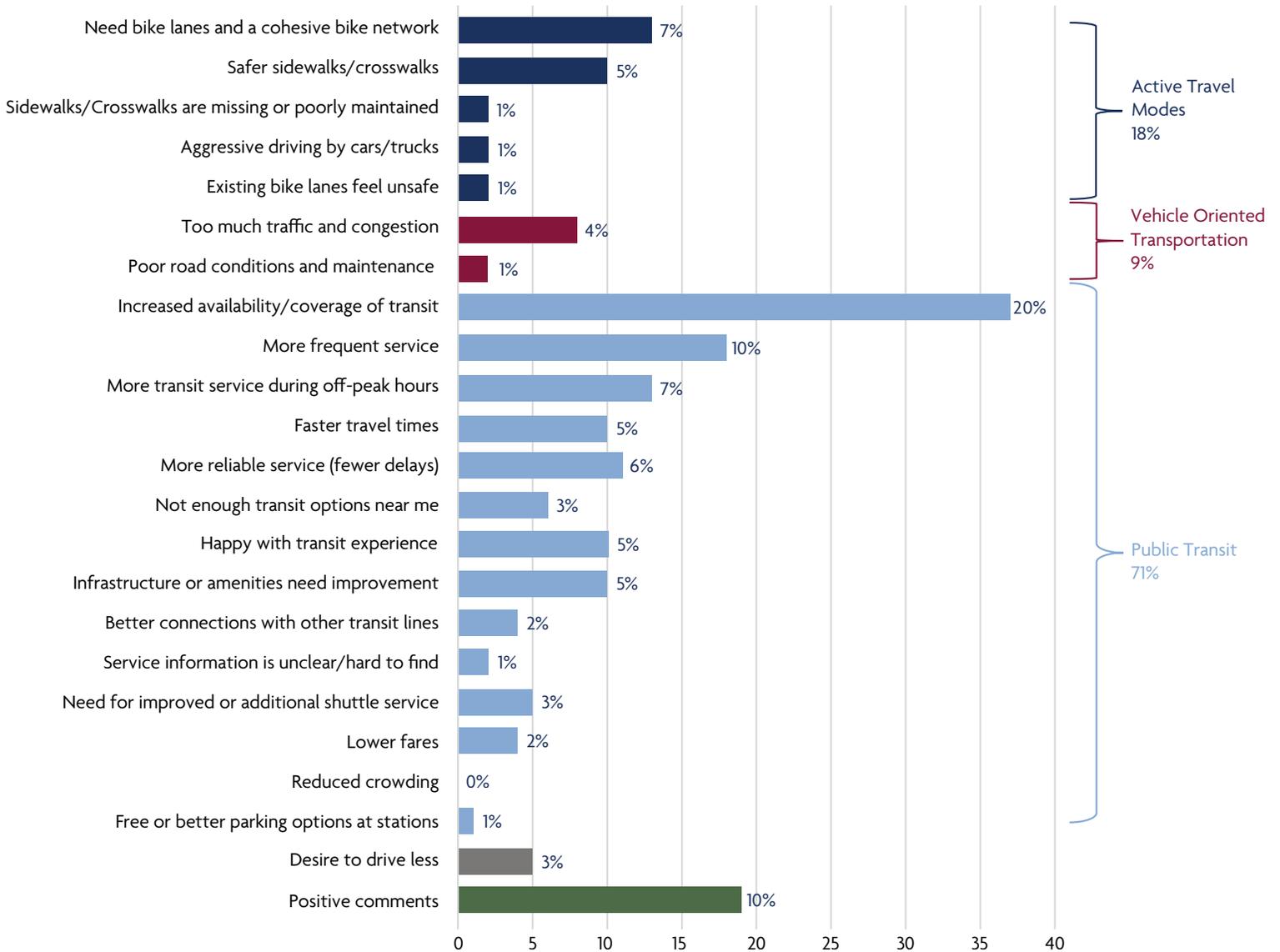


63 respondents (55.3%) Directed to Question  
 63 responses (100% response rate)

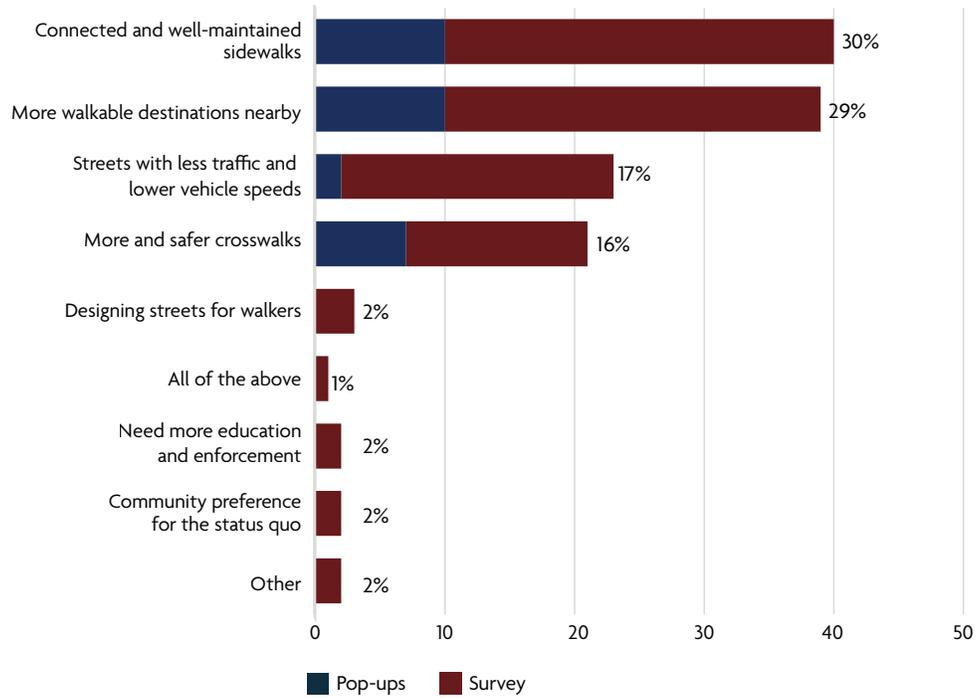
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



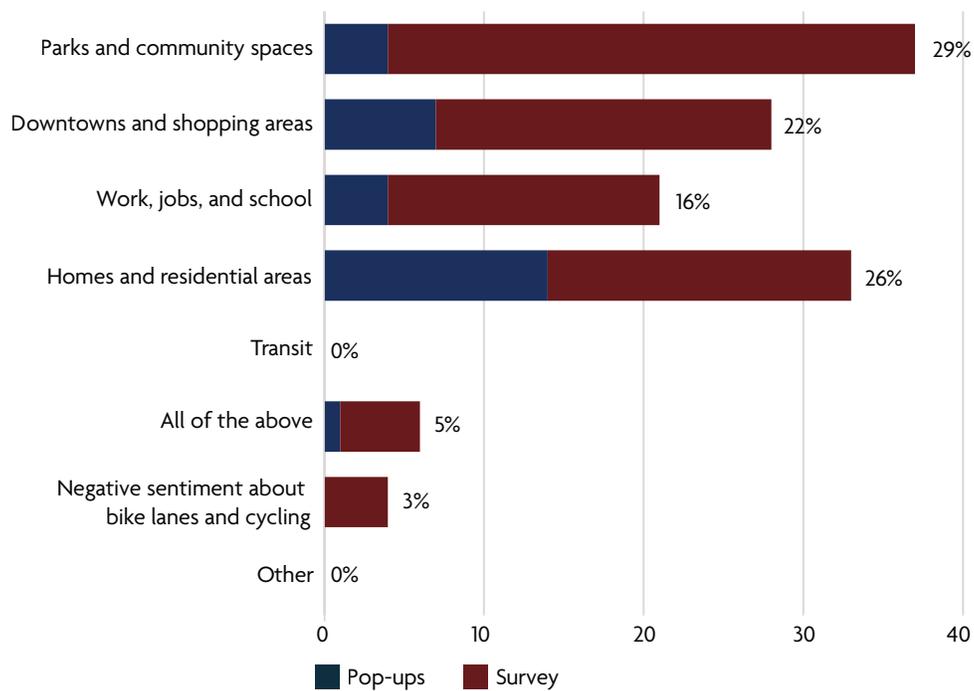
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



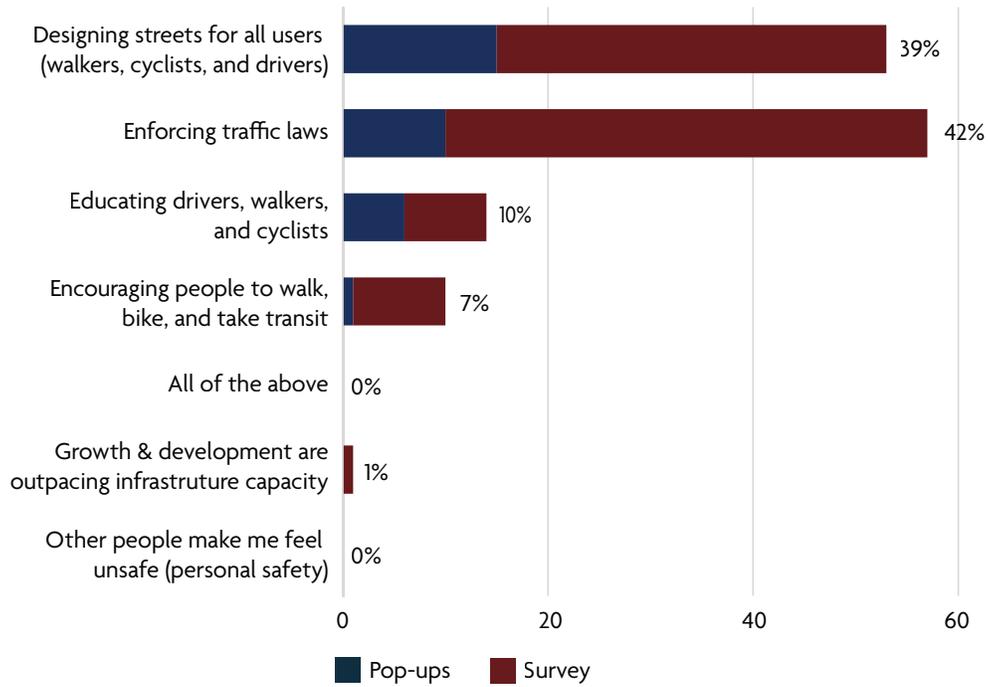
**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



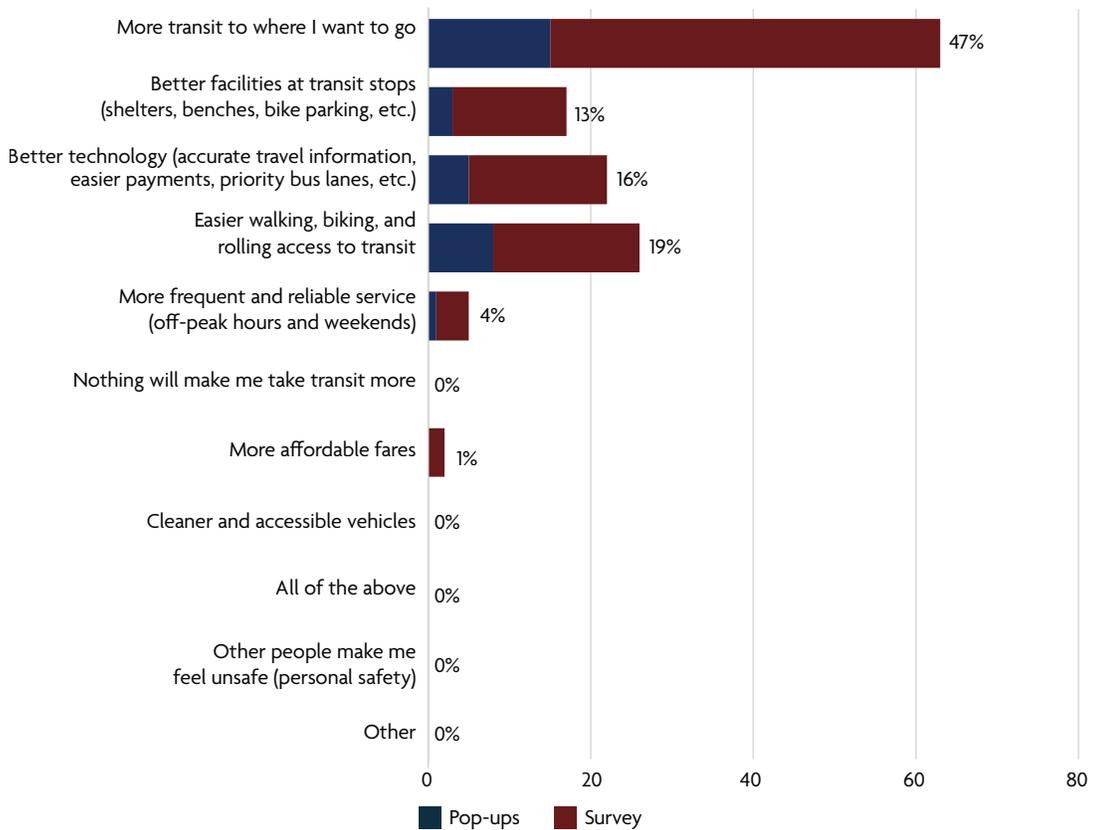
**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



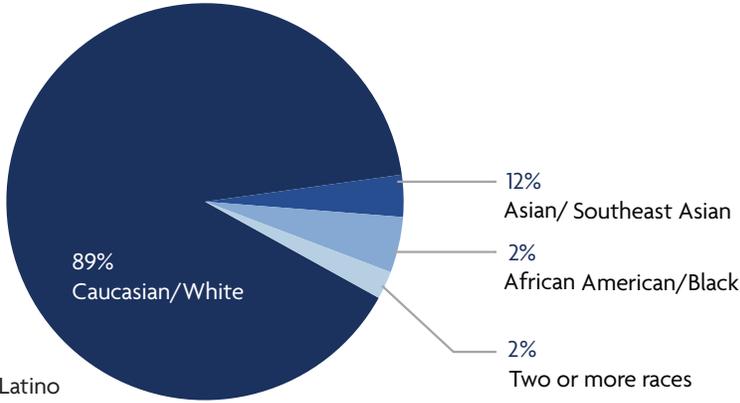
**SAFER STREETS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



**TRANSIT ACCESS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

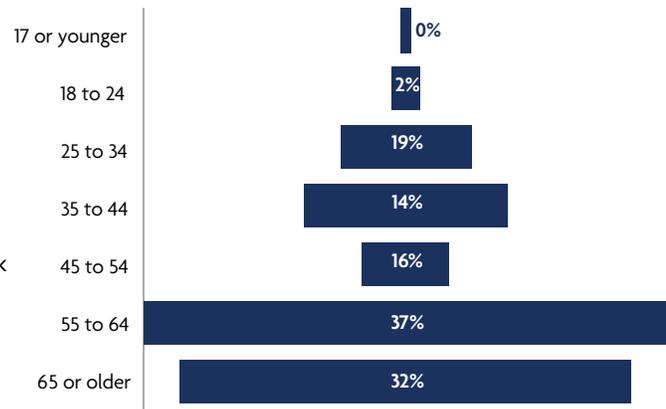


RACE & ETHNICITY



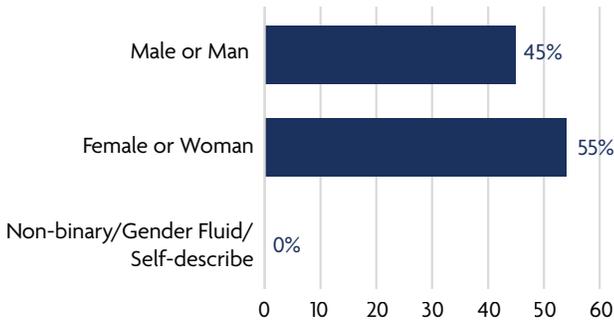
89 responses (87.3% response rate)

AGE



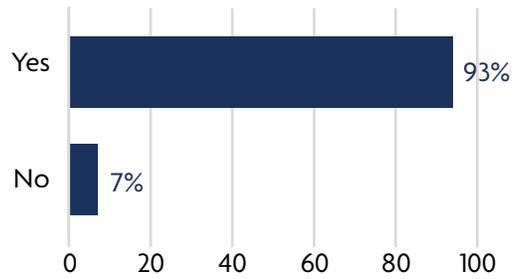
98 responses (96.1% response rate)

GENDER



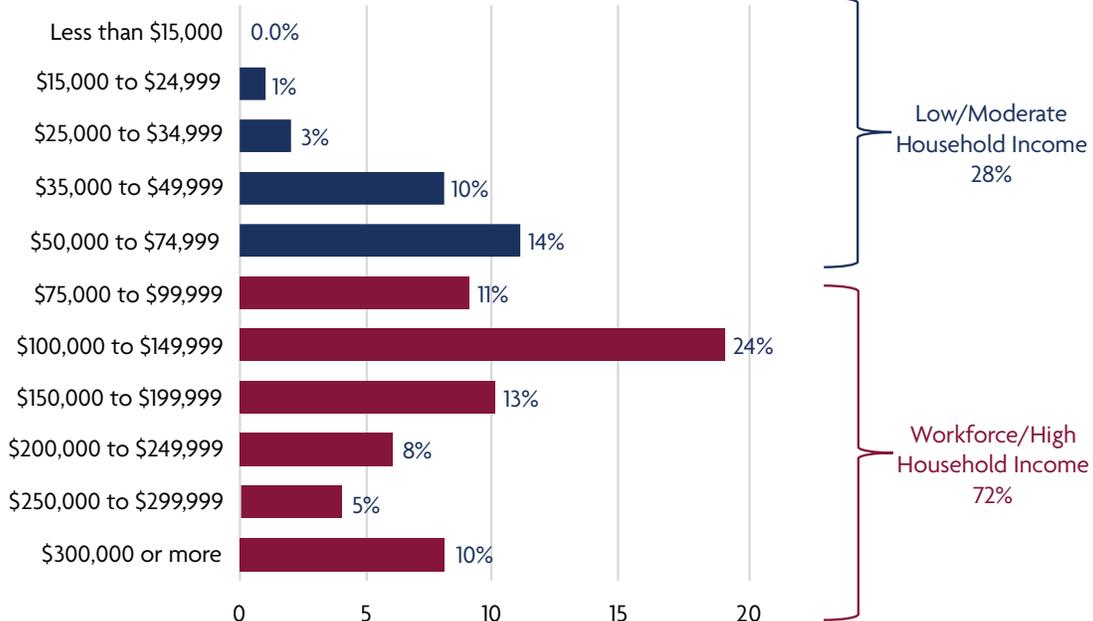
101 responses (99% response rate)

ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



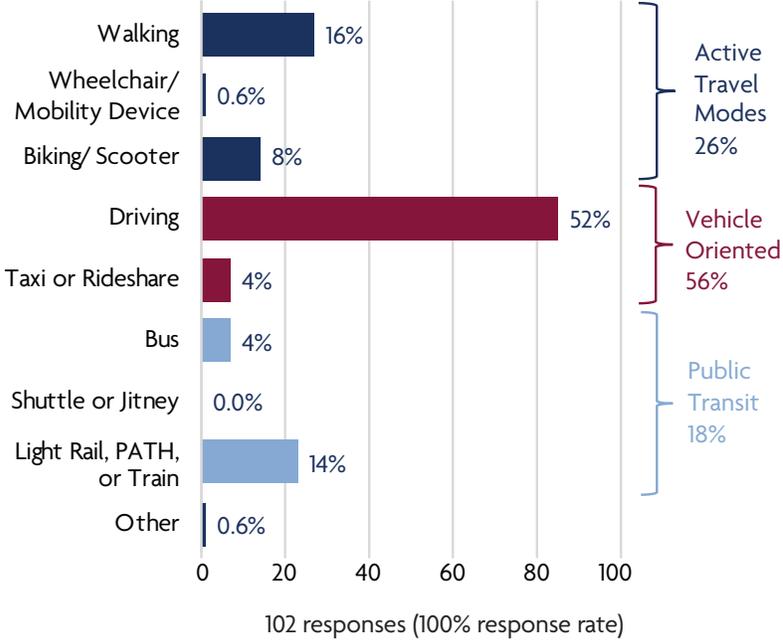
101 responses (99% response rate)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

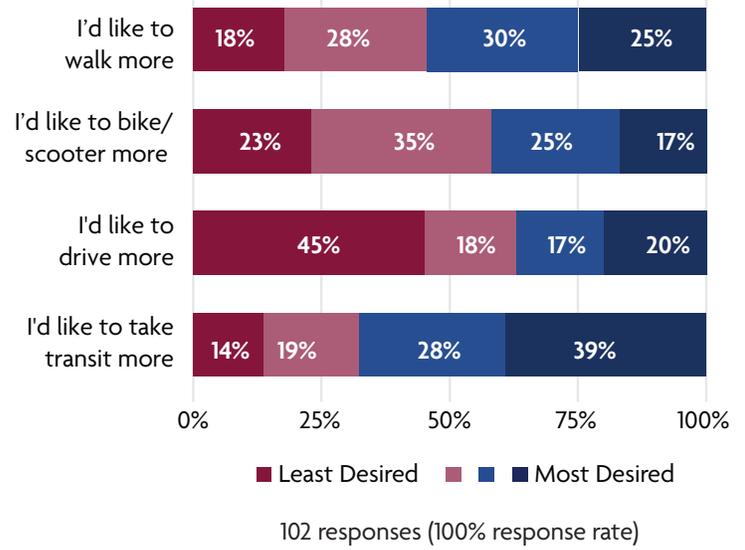


78 responses (76.5% response rate)

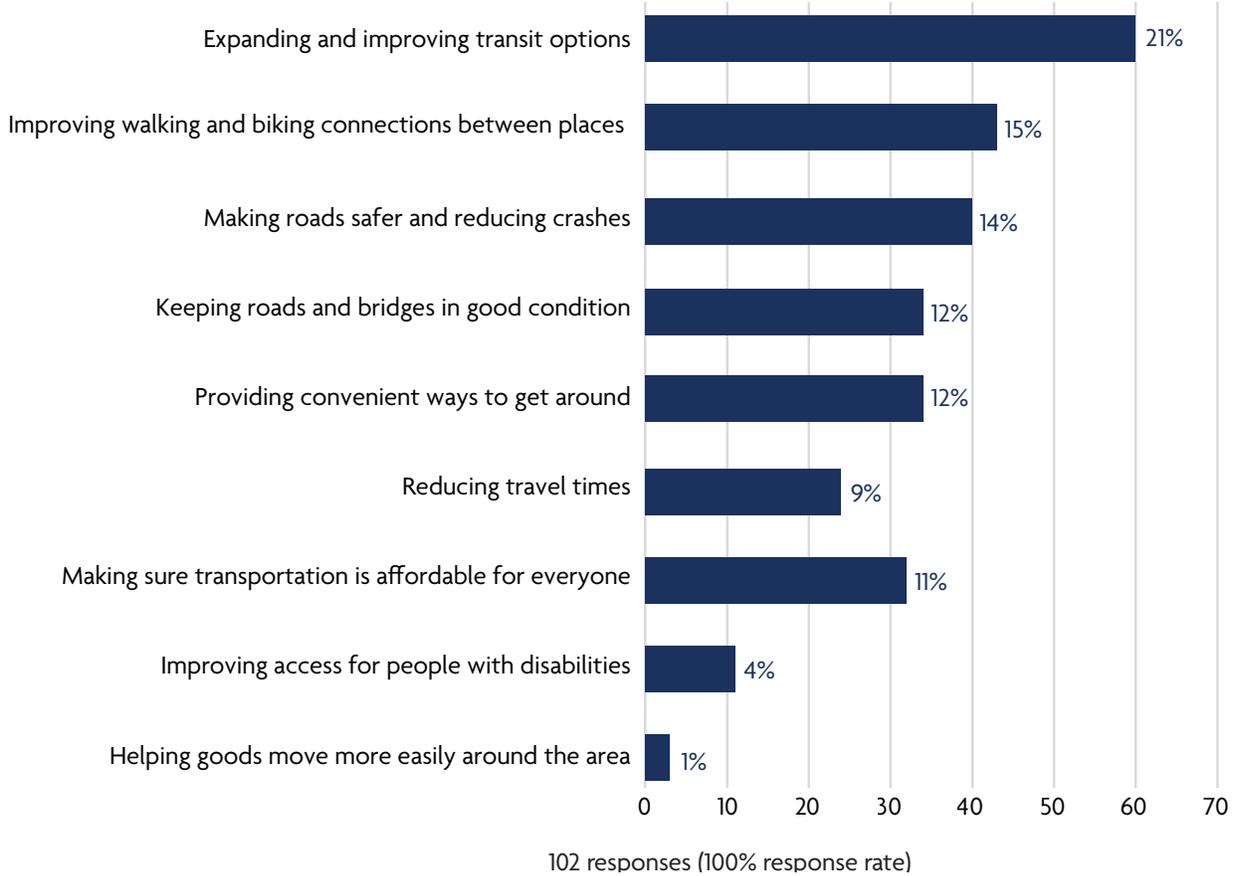
CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



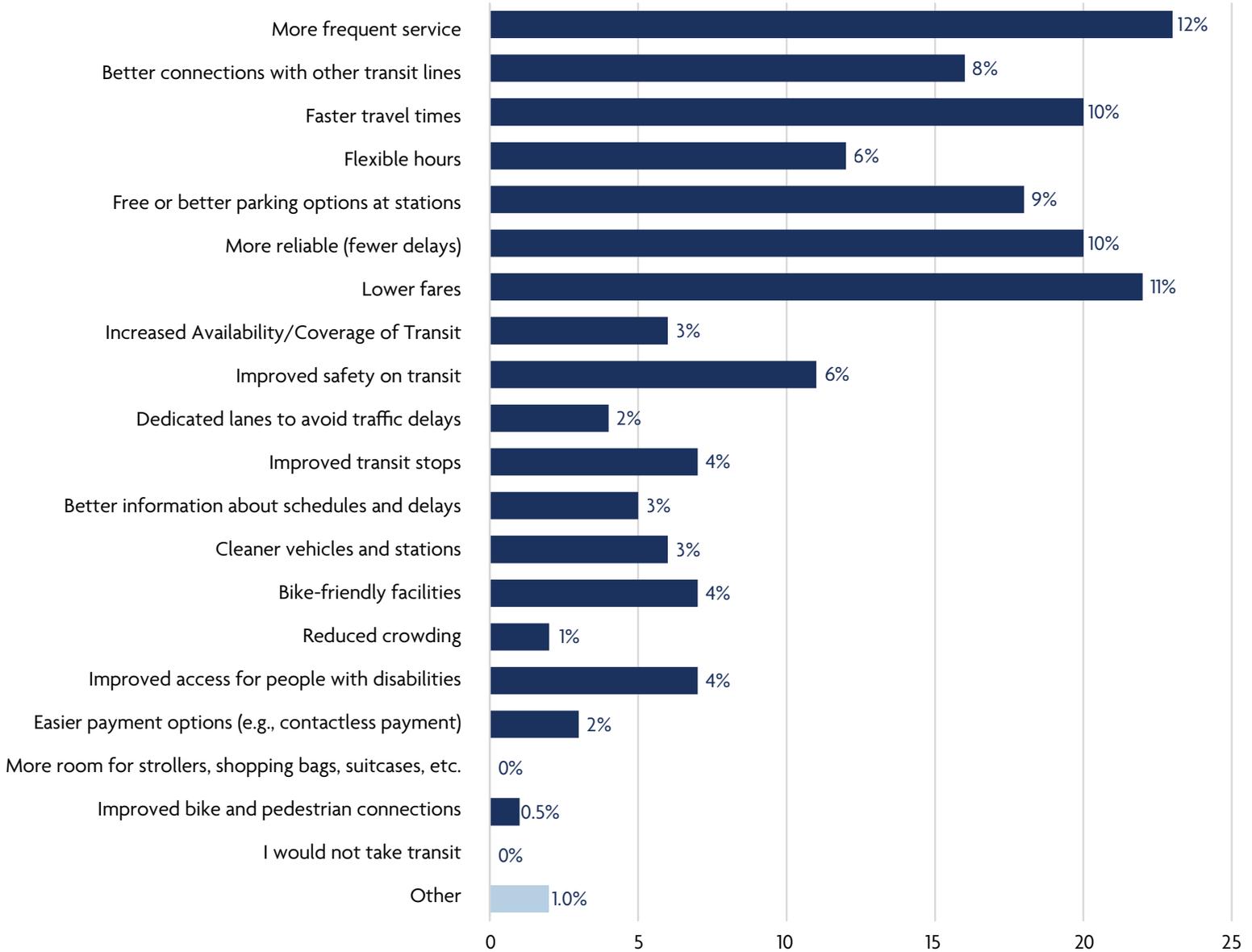
FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

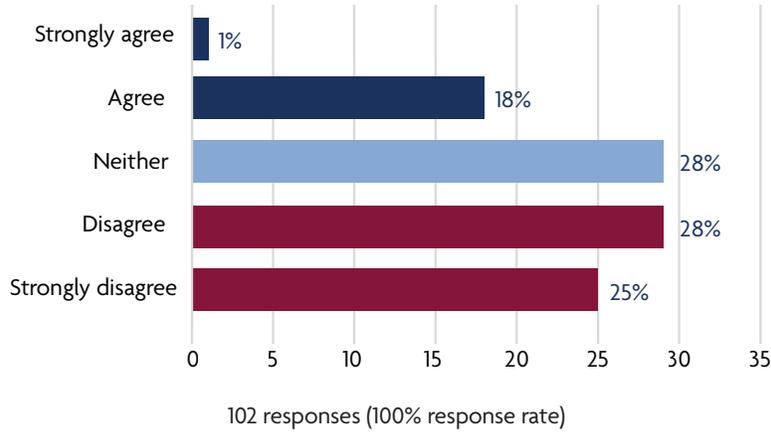


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

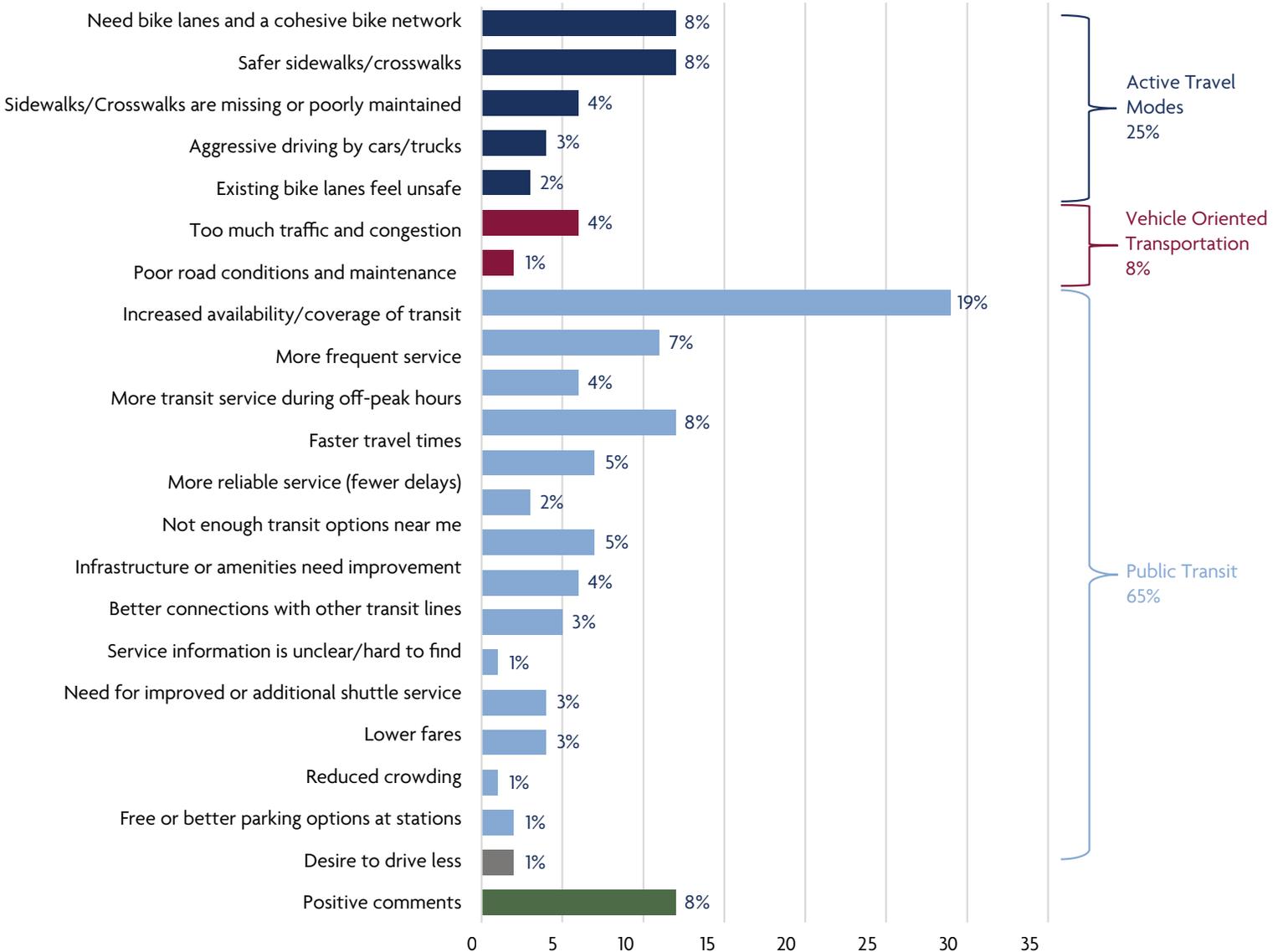


72 respondents (70.6%) Directed to Question  
 71 responses (98.6% response rate)

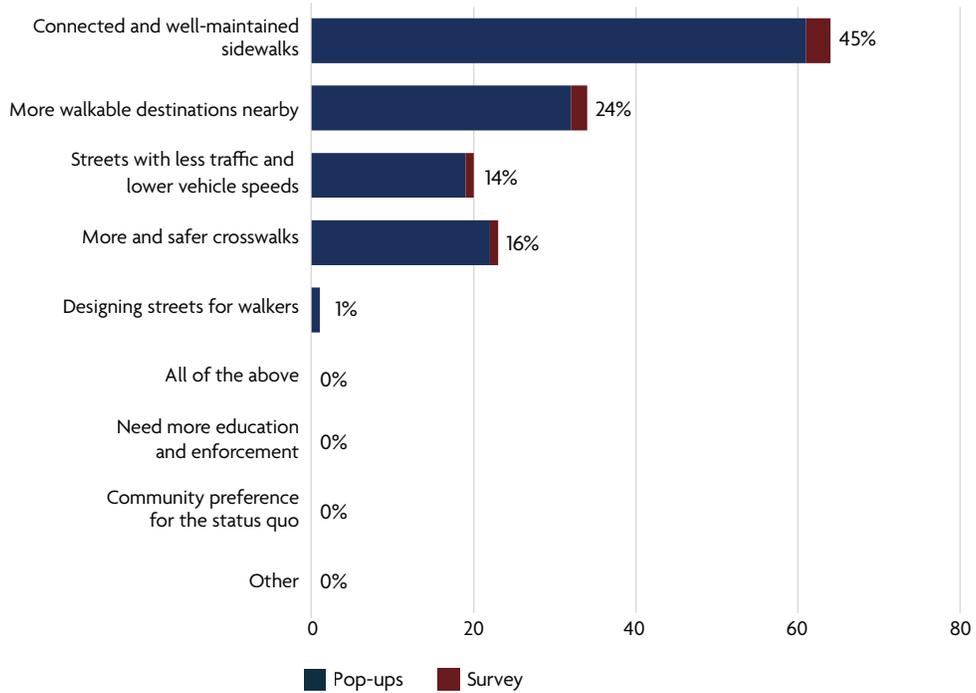
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



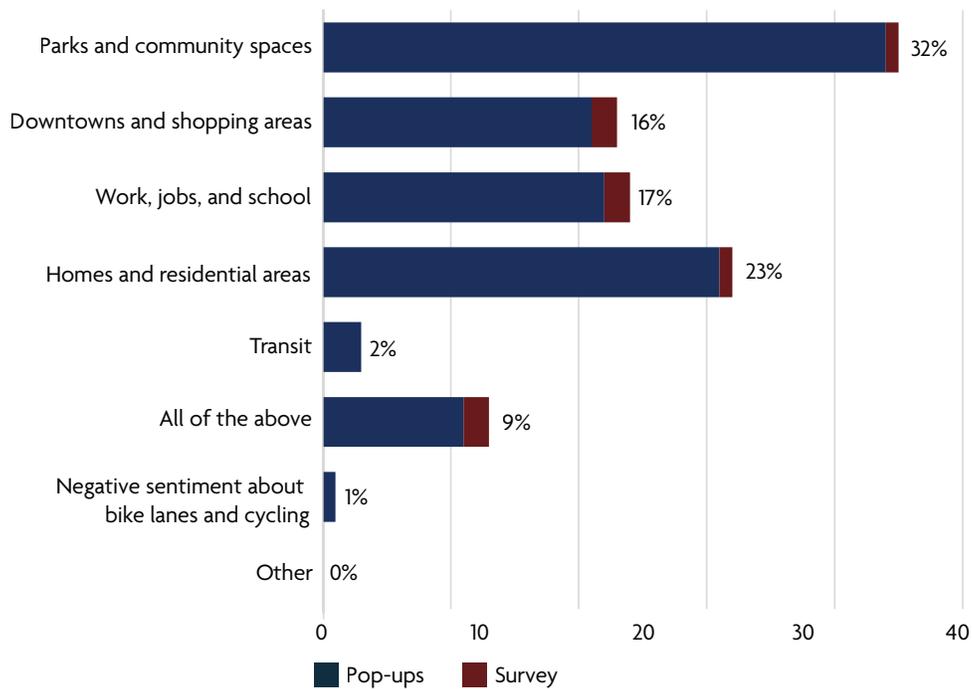
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



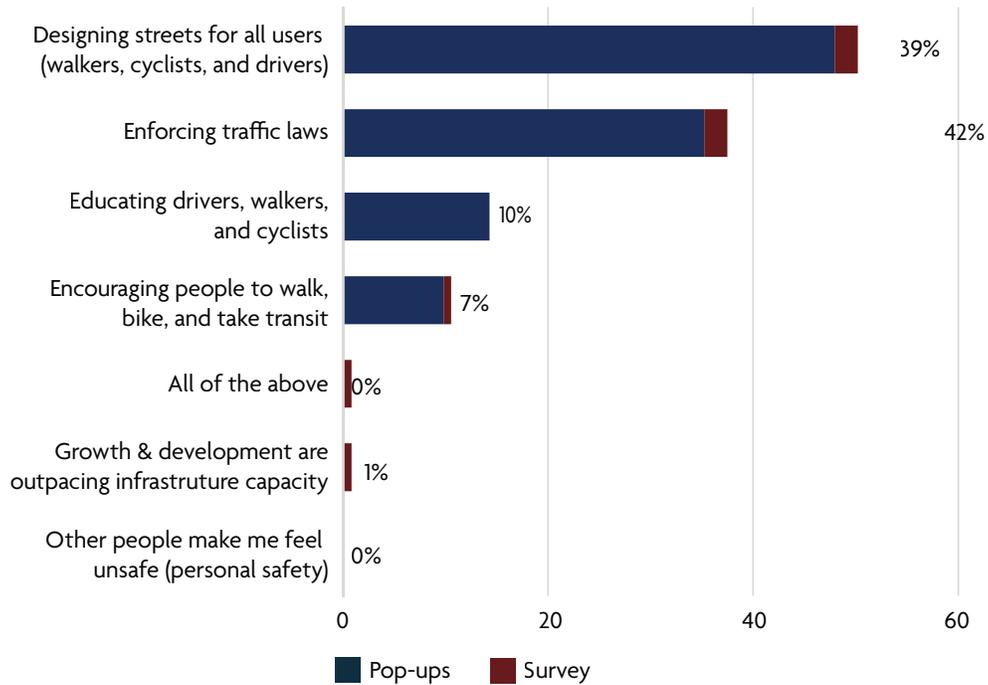
**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



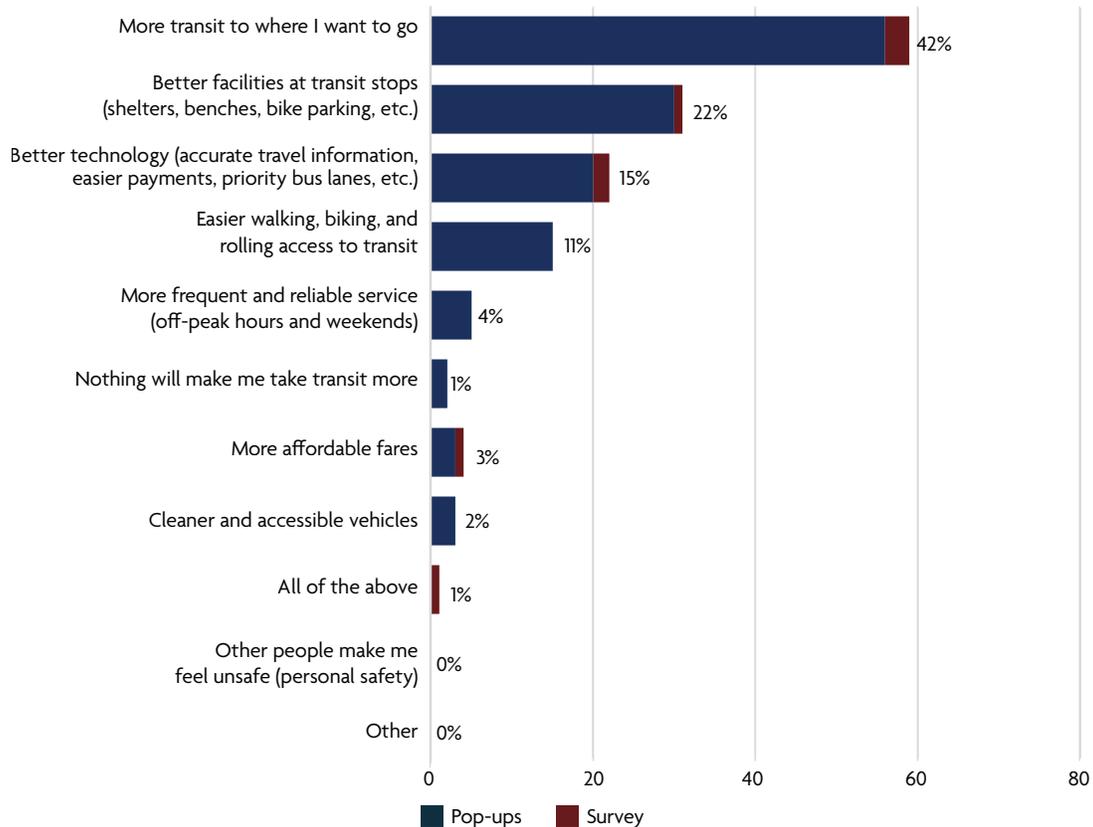
**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



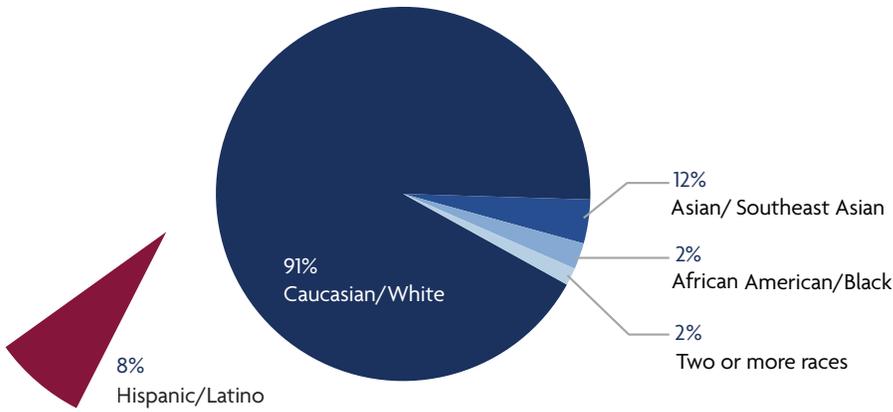
**SAFER STREETS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



**TRANSIT ACCESS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

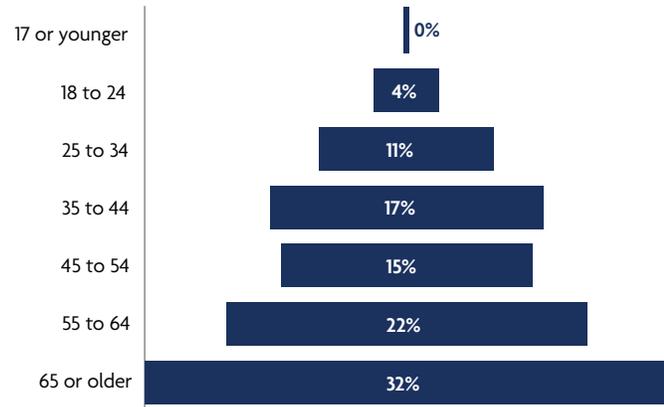


RACE & ETHNICITY



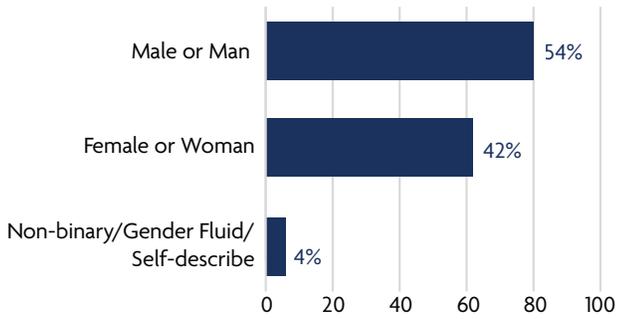
142 responses (89.9% response rate)

AGE



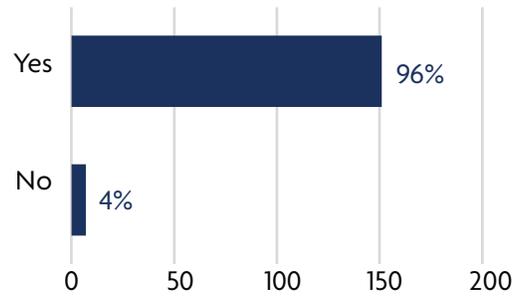
142 responses (89.9% response rate)

GENDER



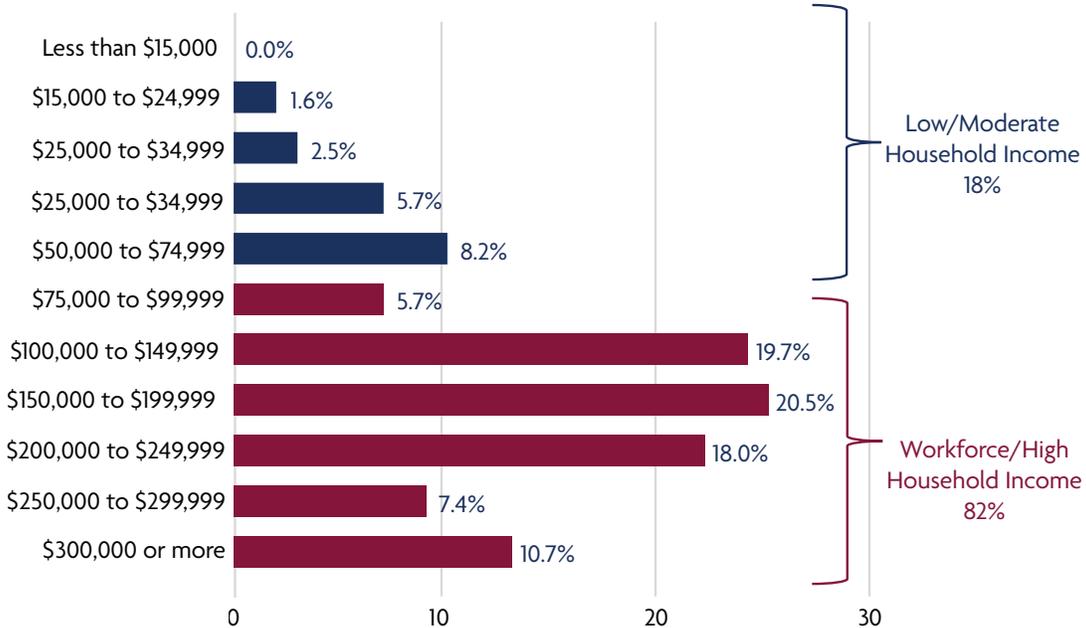
148 responses (93.7% response rate)

ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



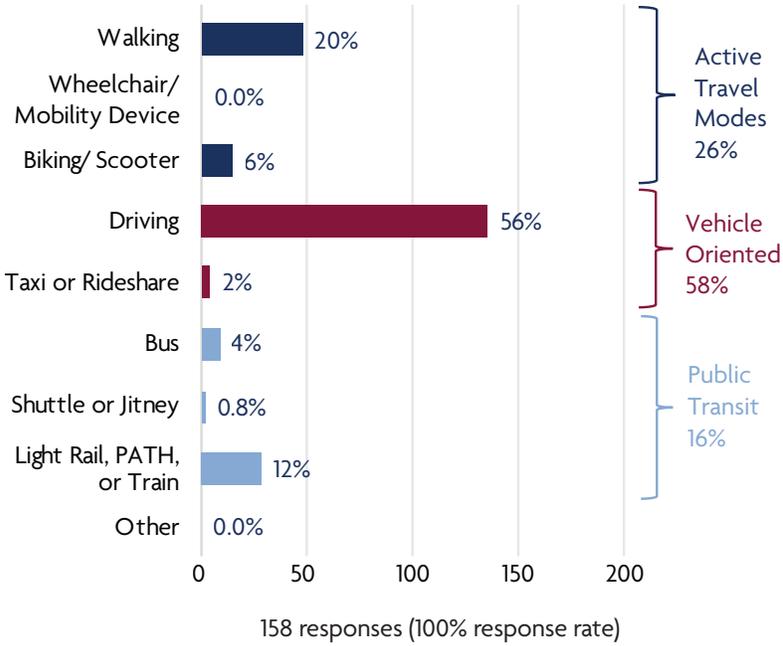
158 responses (100% response rate)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

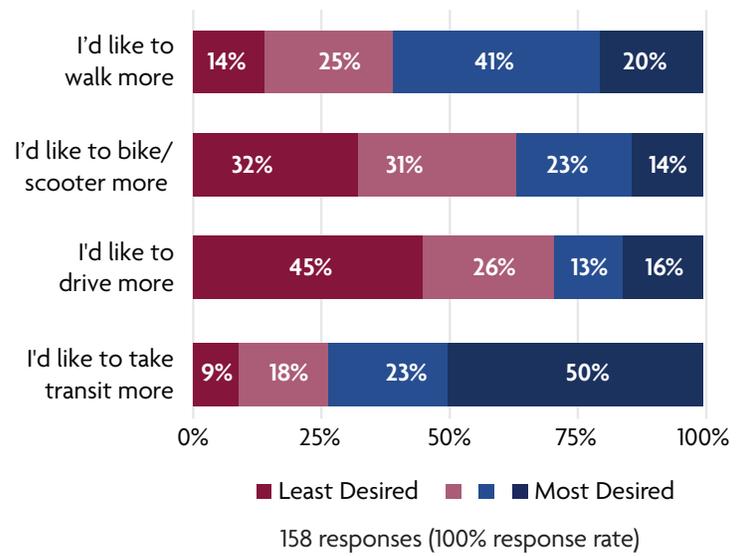


122 responses (77.2% response rate)

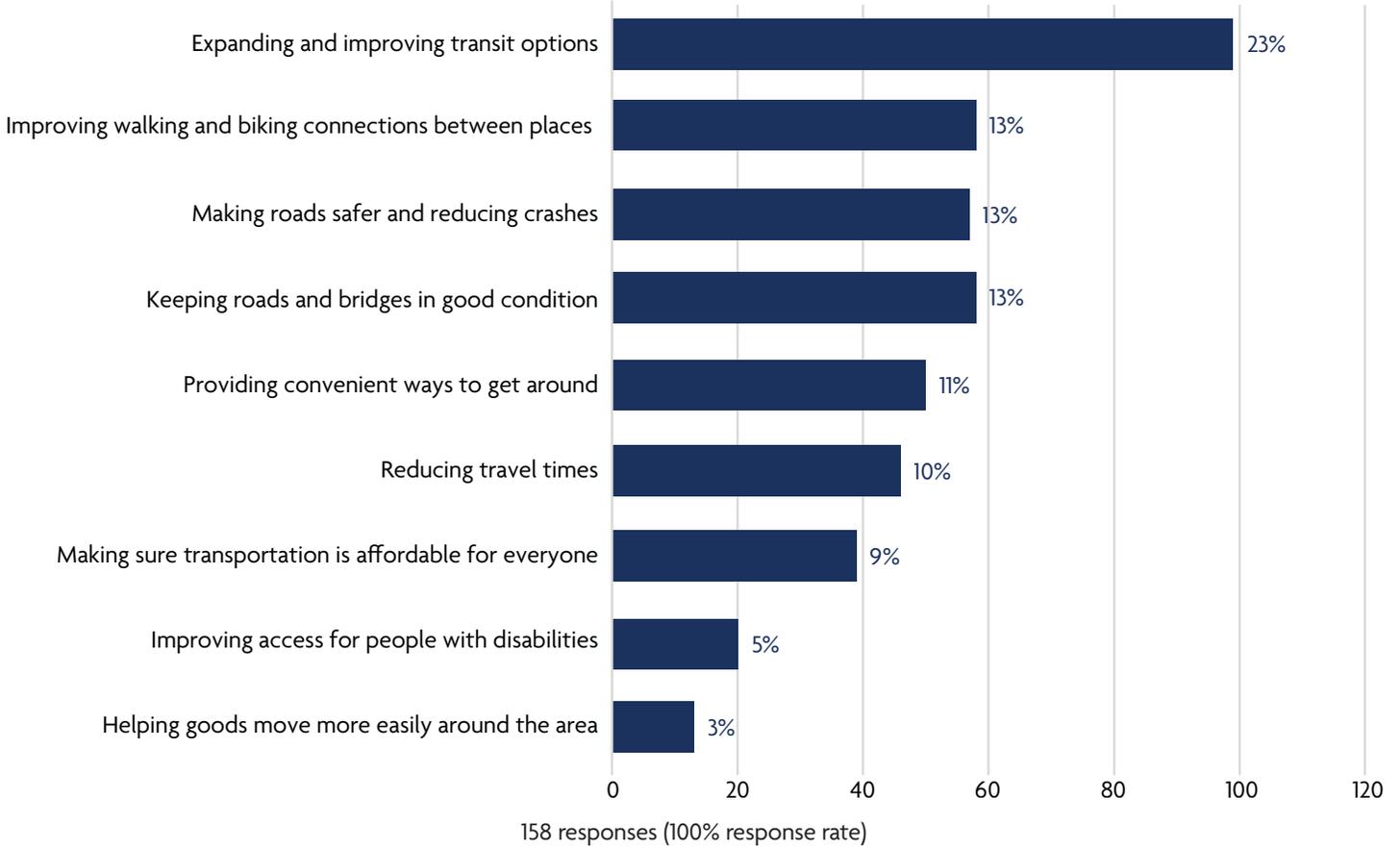
CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



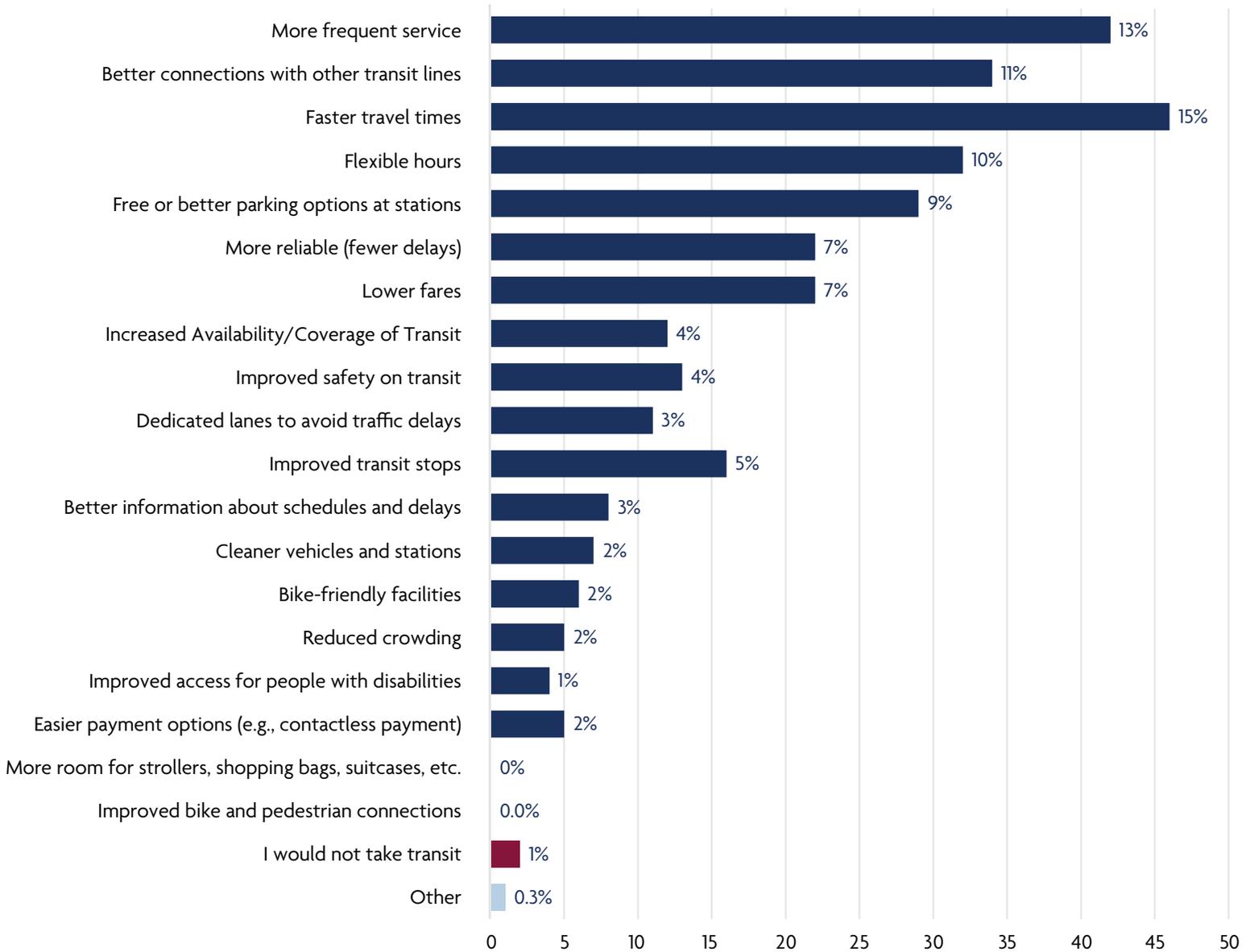
FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

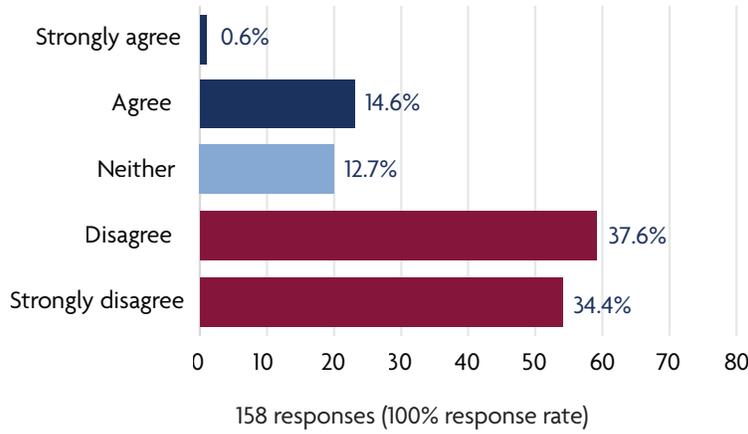


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

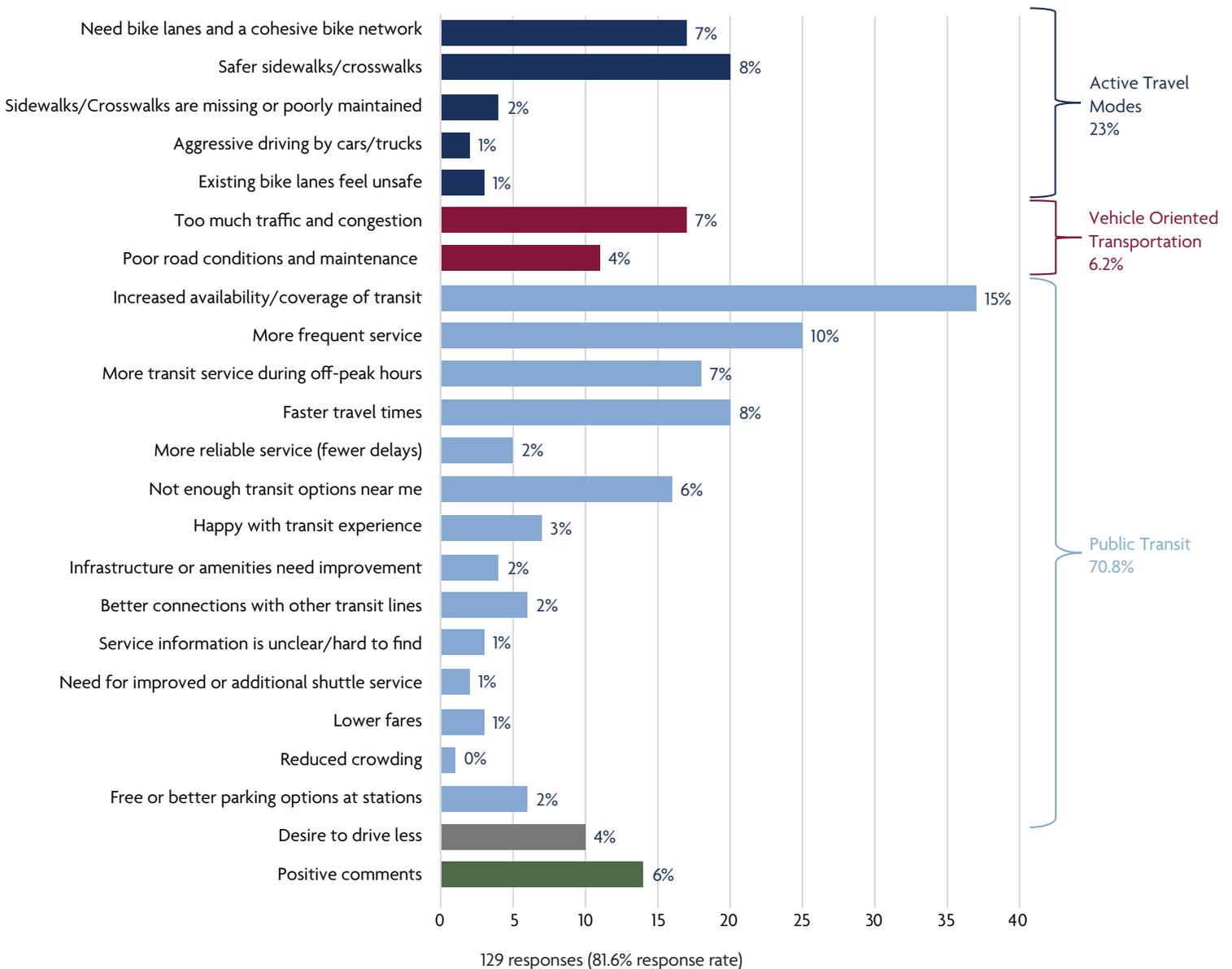


121 respondents (6.5%) Directed to Question  
 121 responses (100% response rate)

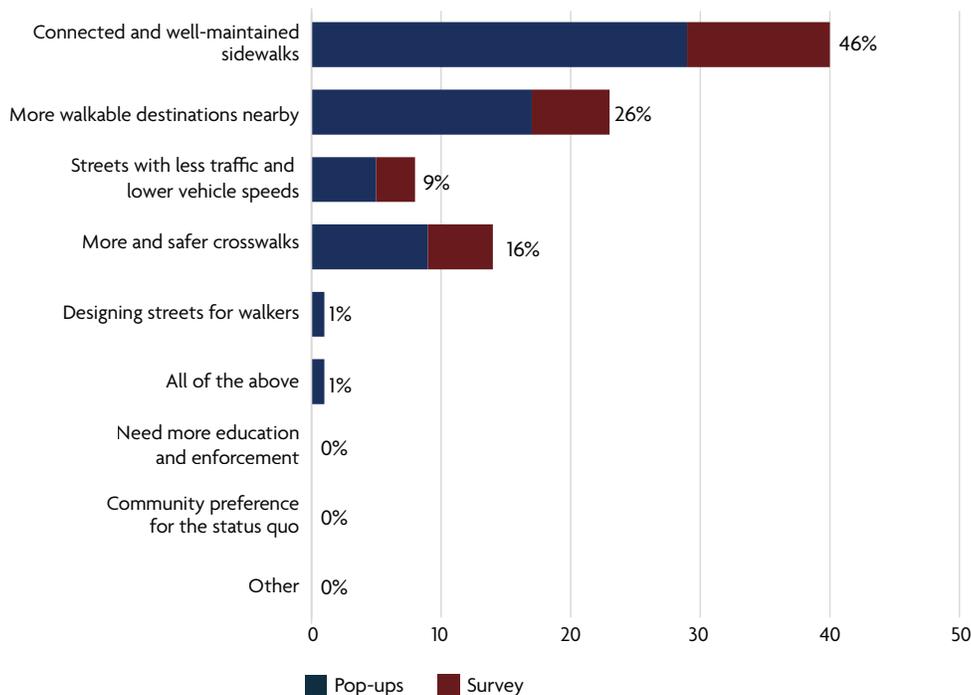
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



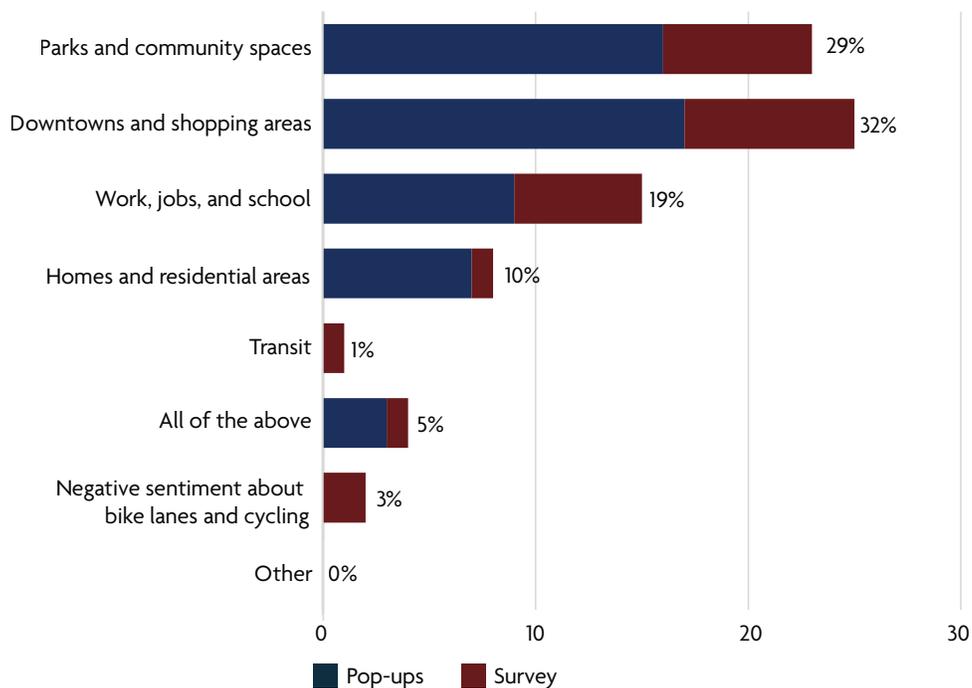
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

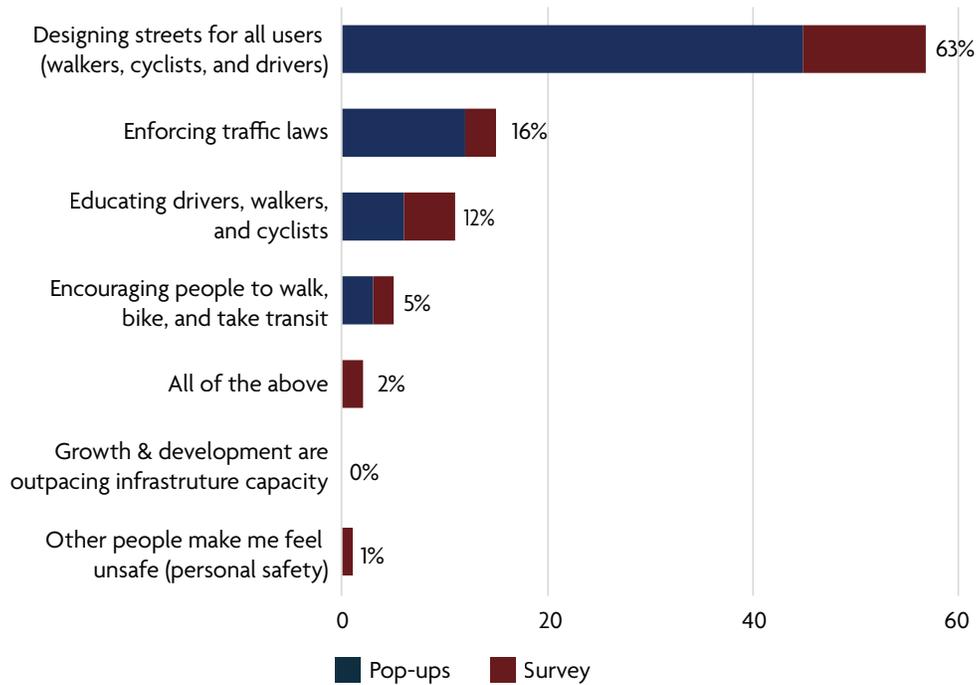


**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



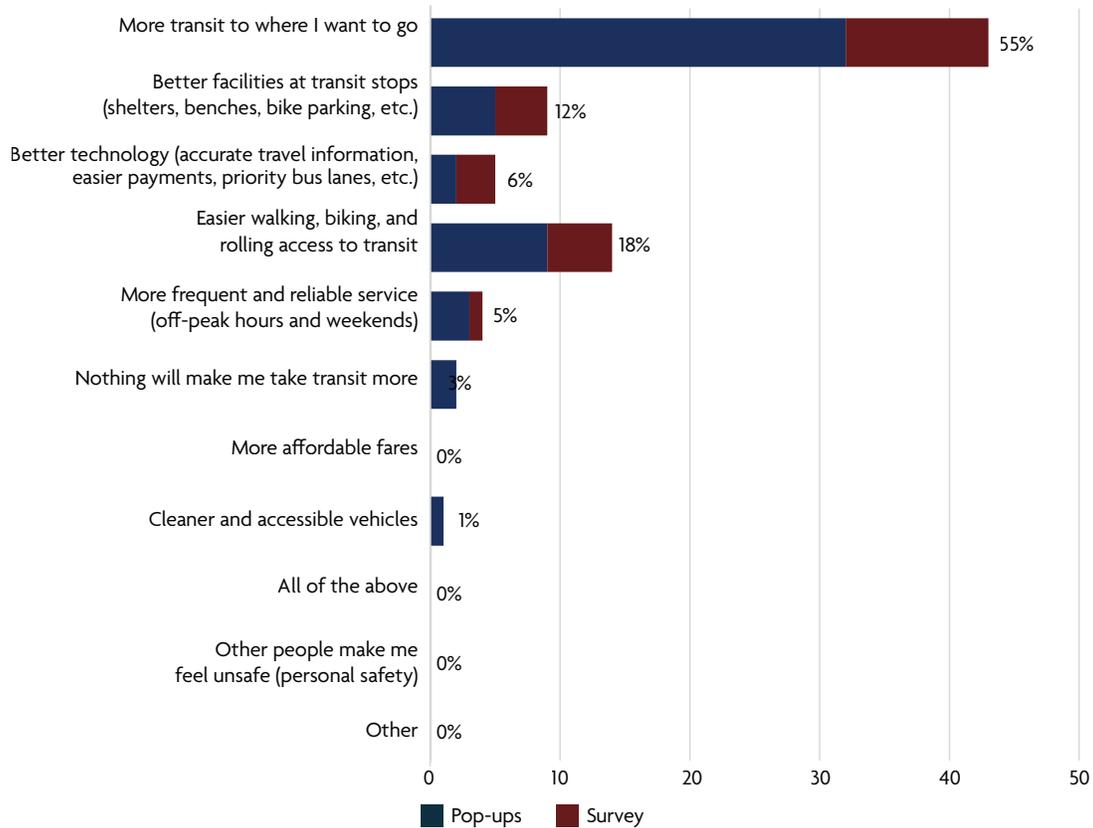
**SAFER STREETS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

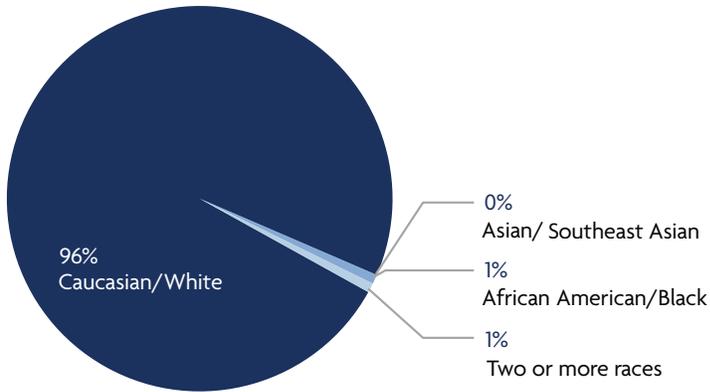


**TRANSIT ACCESS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

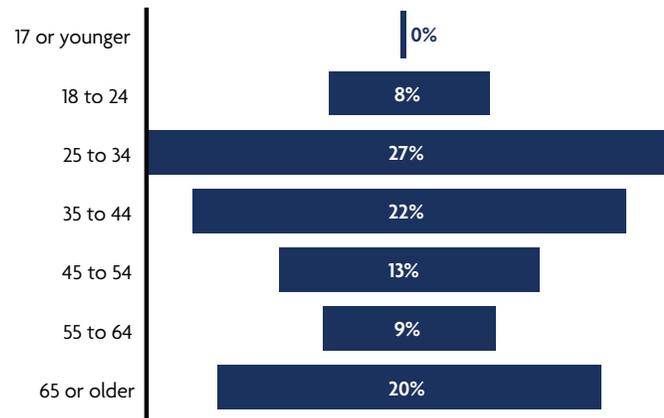


RACE & ETHNICITY



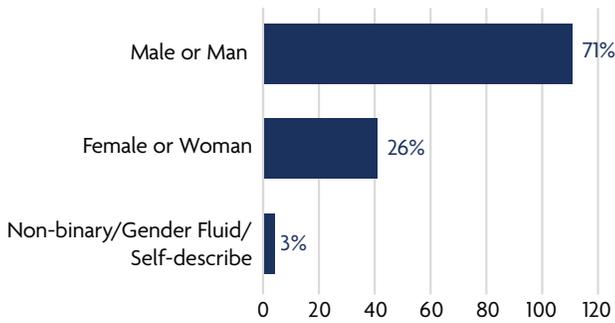
132 responses (85.2% response rate)

AGE



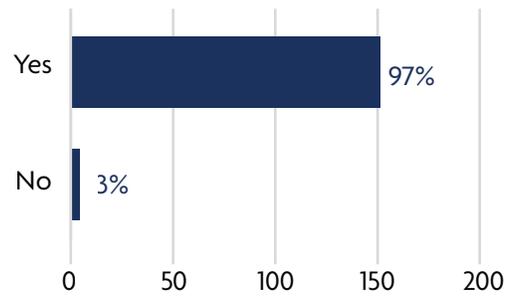
156 responses (97.5% response rate)

GENDER



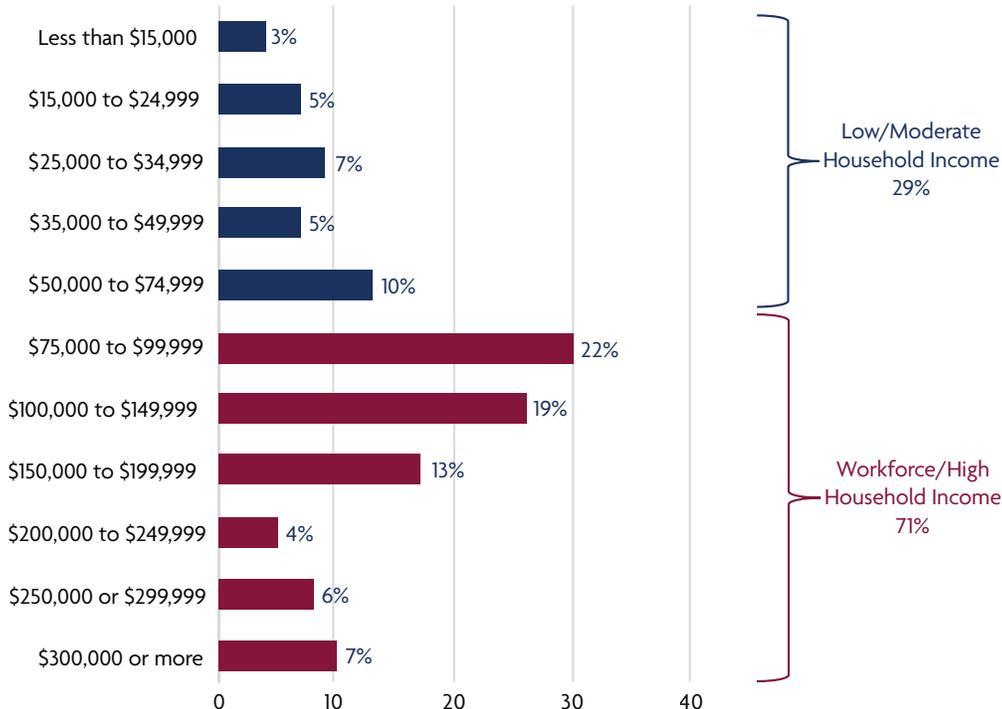
156 responses (97.5% response rate)

ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



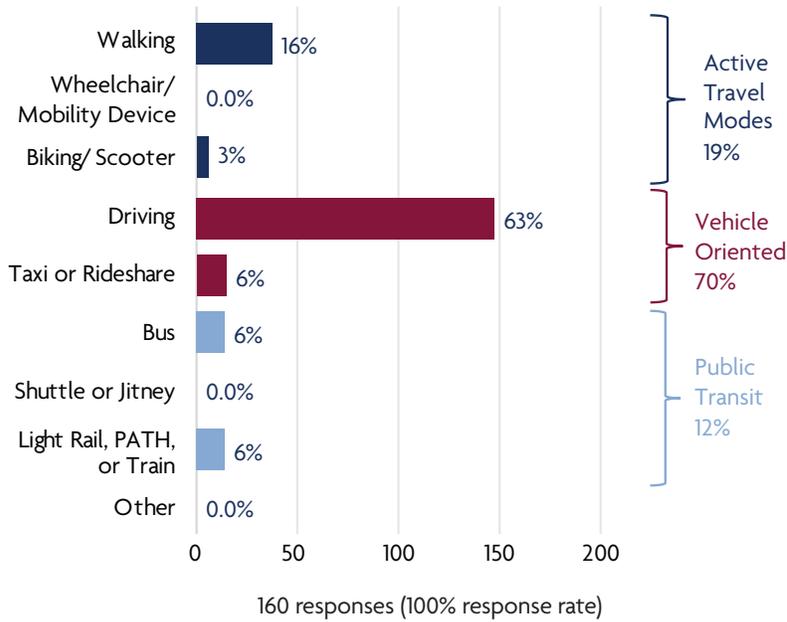
155 responses (96.9% response rate)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

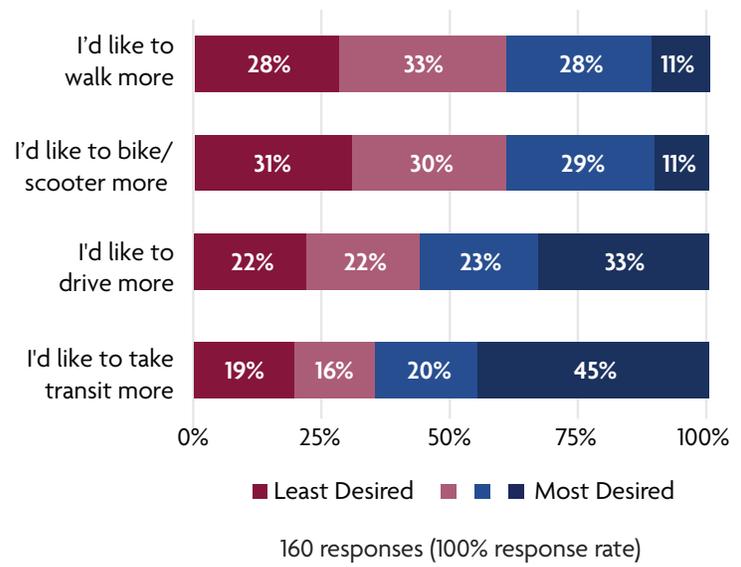


136 responses (85% response rate)

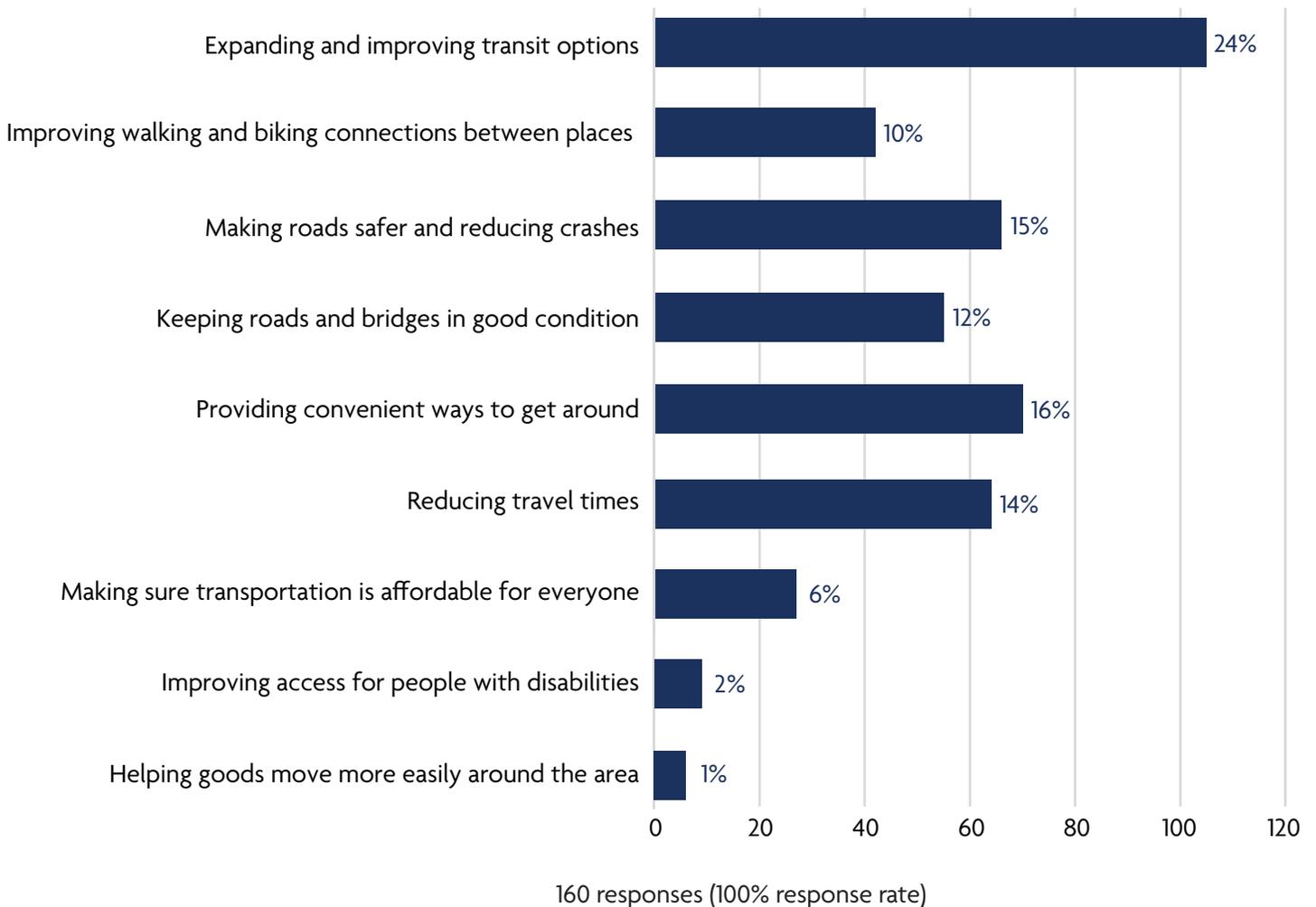
CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



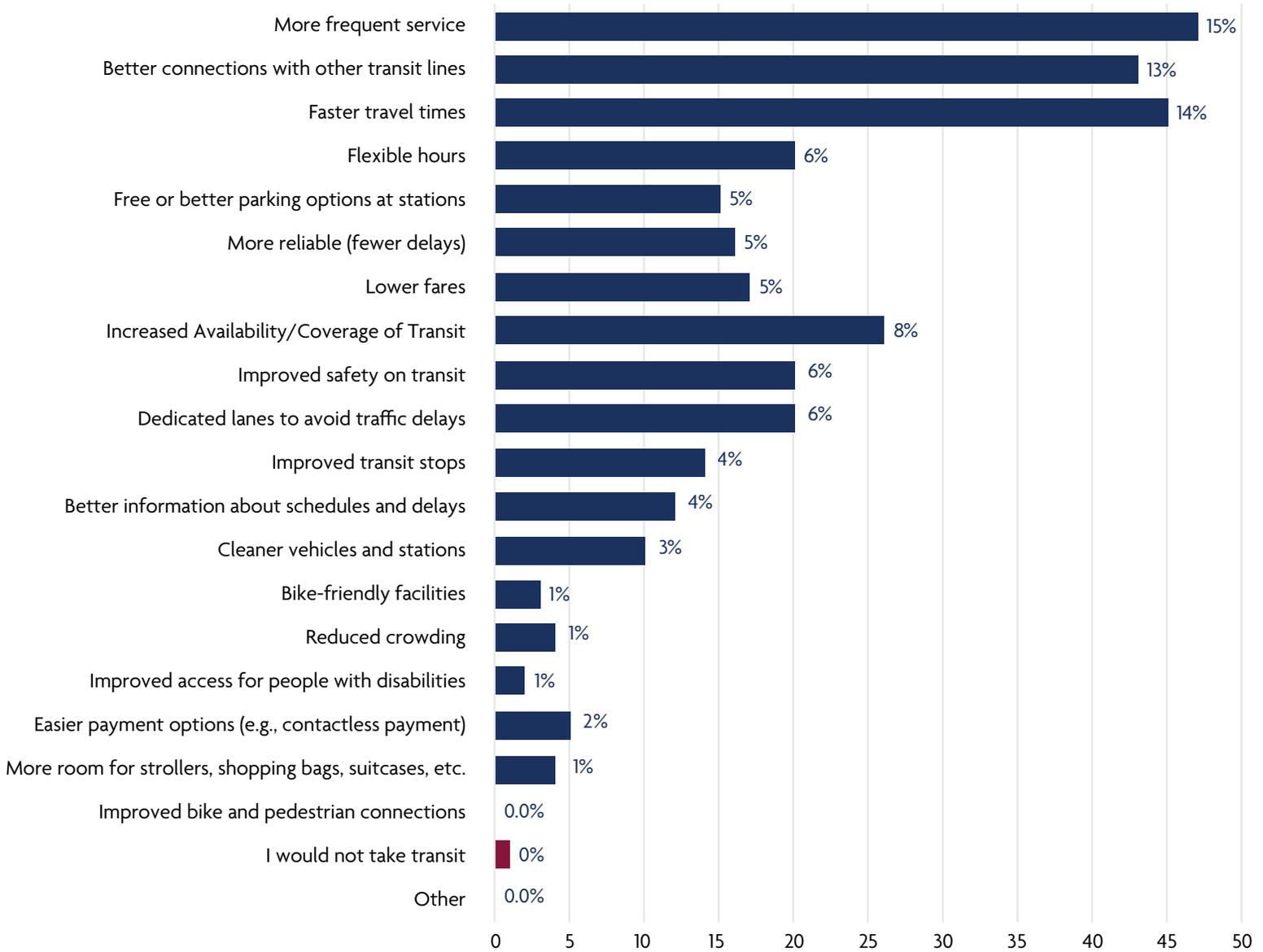
FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

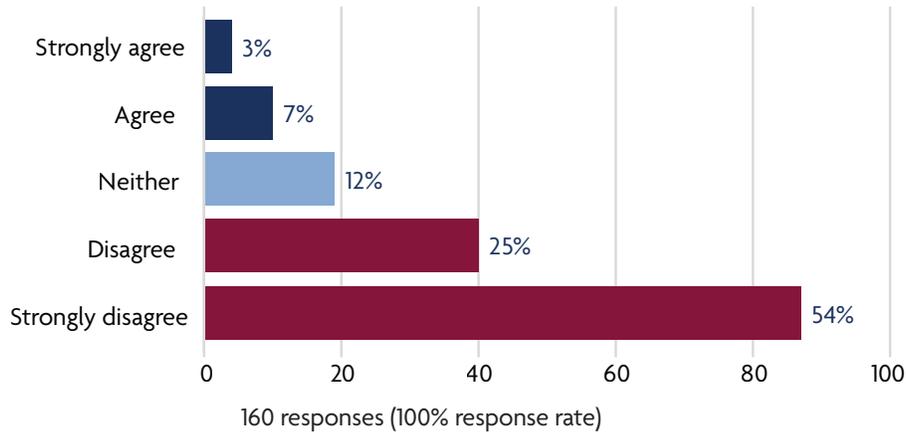


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

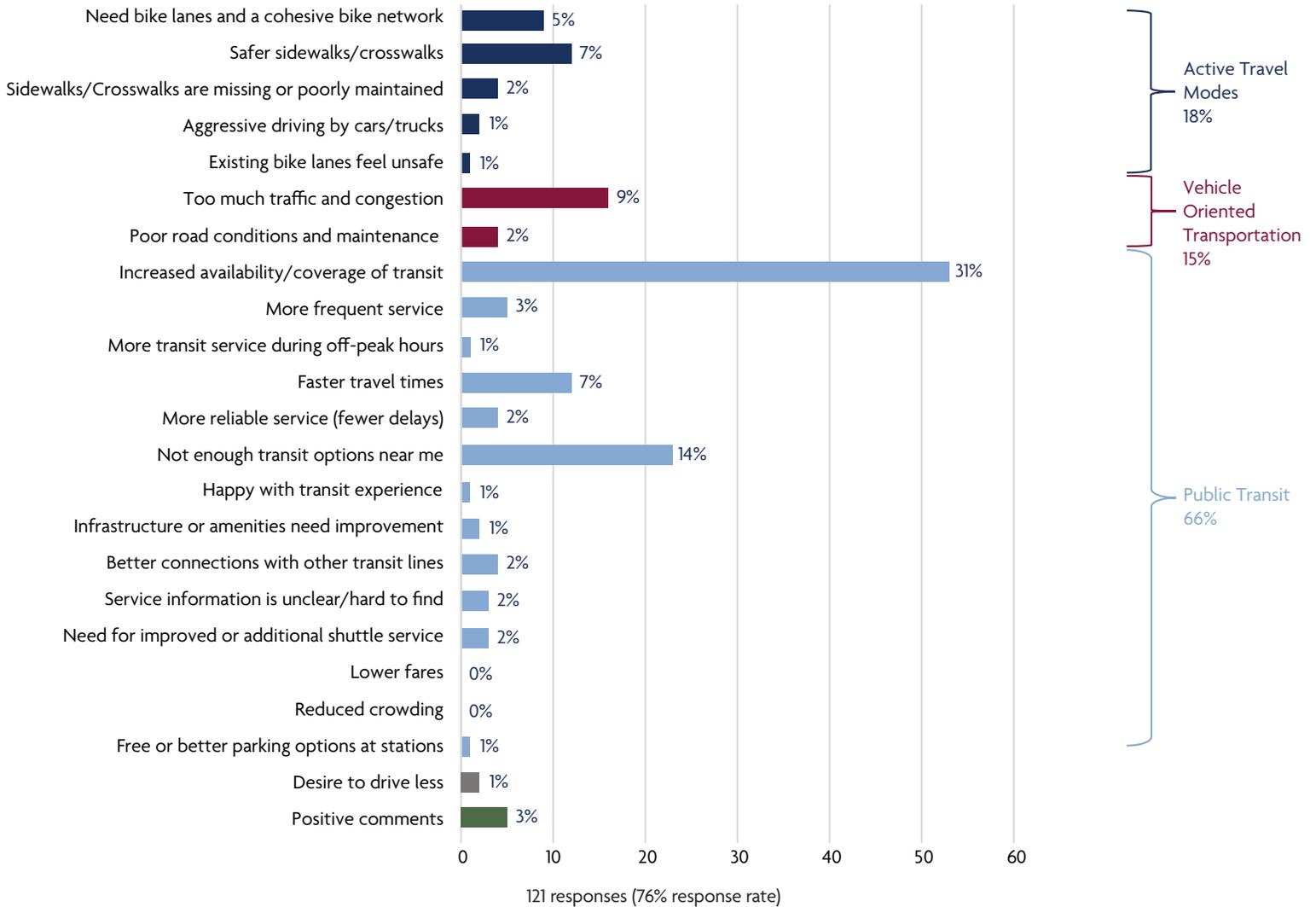


134 respondents (83.8%) Directed to Question  
 133 responses (99.3% response rate)

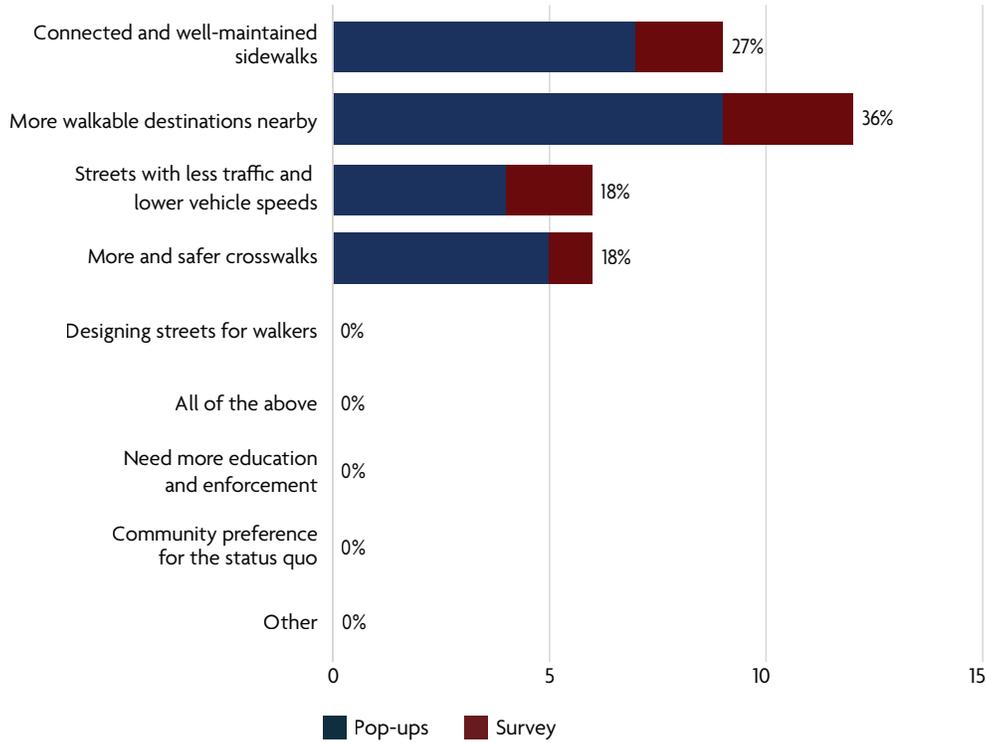
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



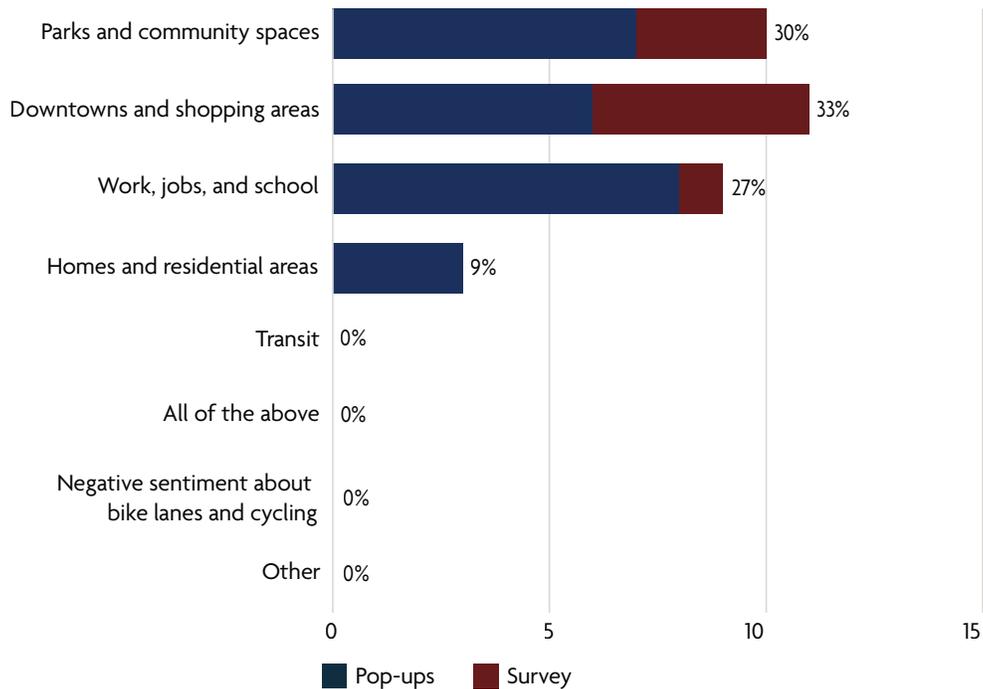
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



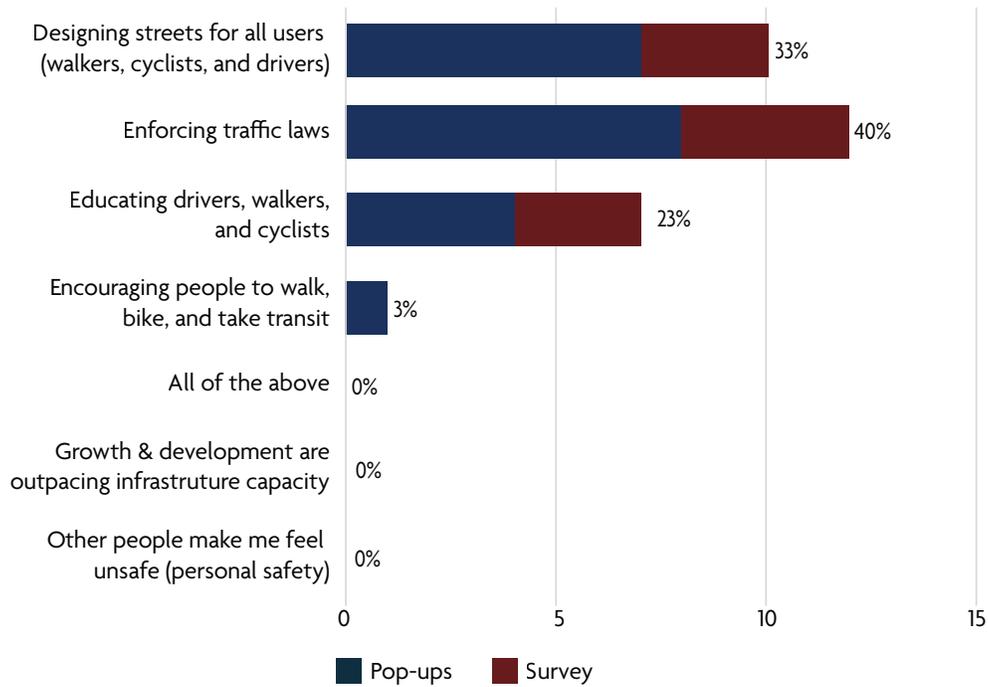
**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



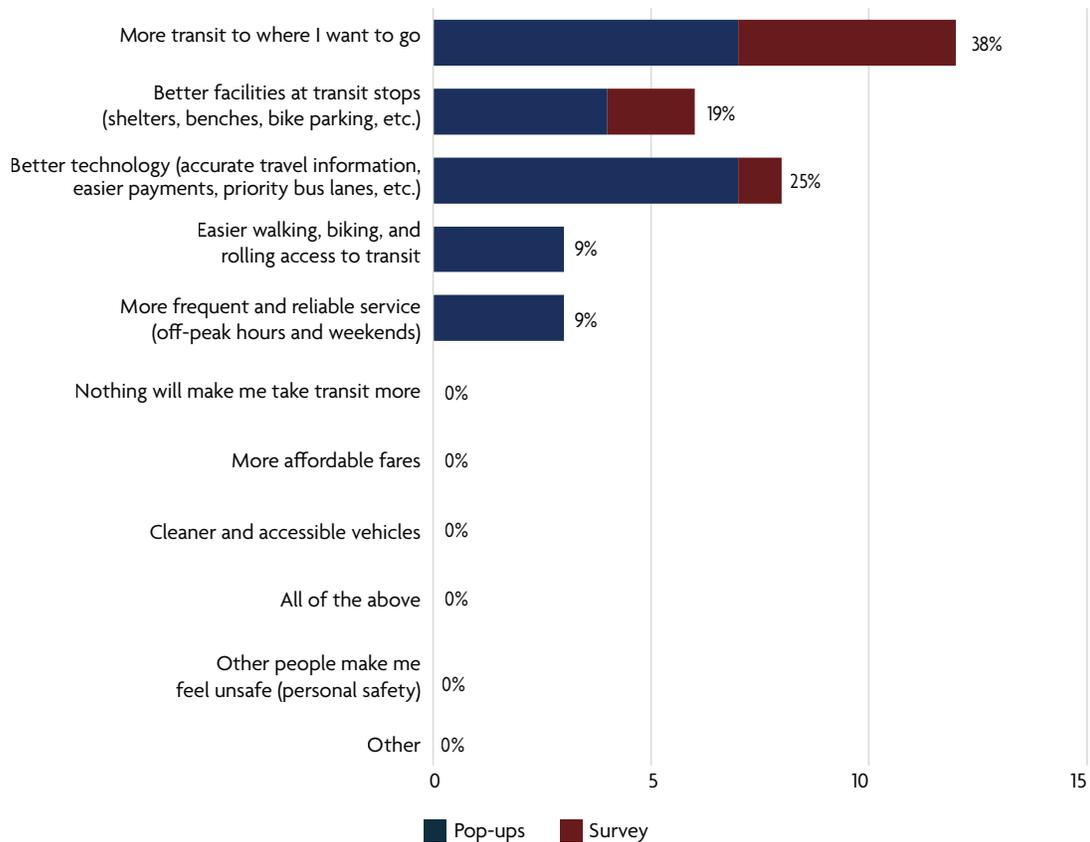
**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



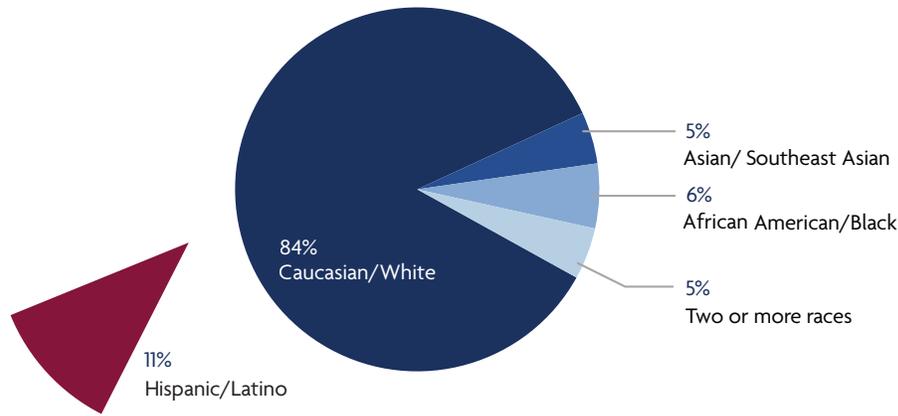
**SAFER STREETS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



**TRANSIT ACCESS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

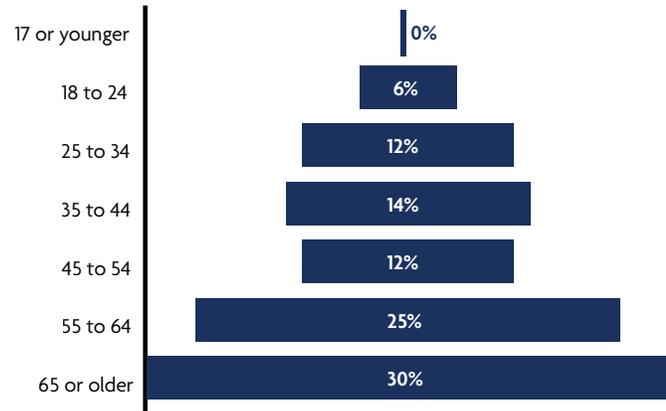


RACE & ETHNICITY



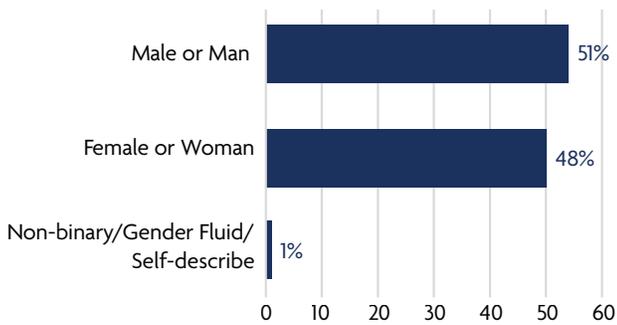
97 responses (88.2% response rate)

AGE



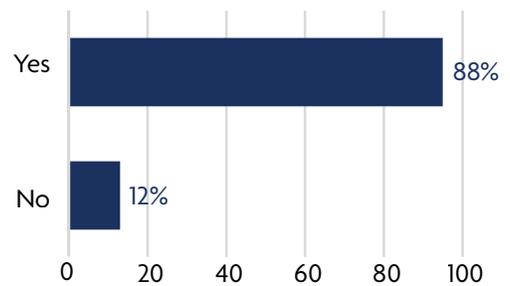
105 responses (95.5% response rate)

GENDER



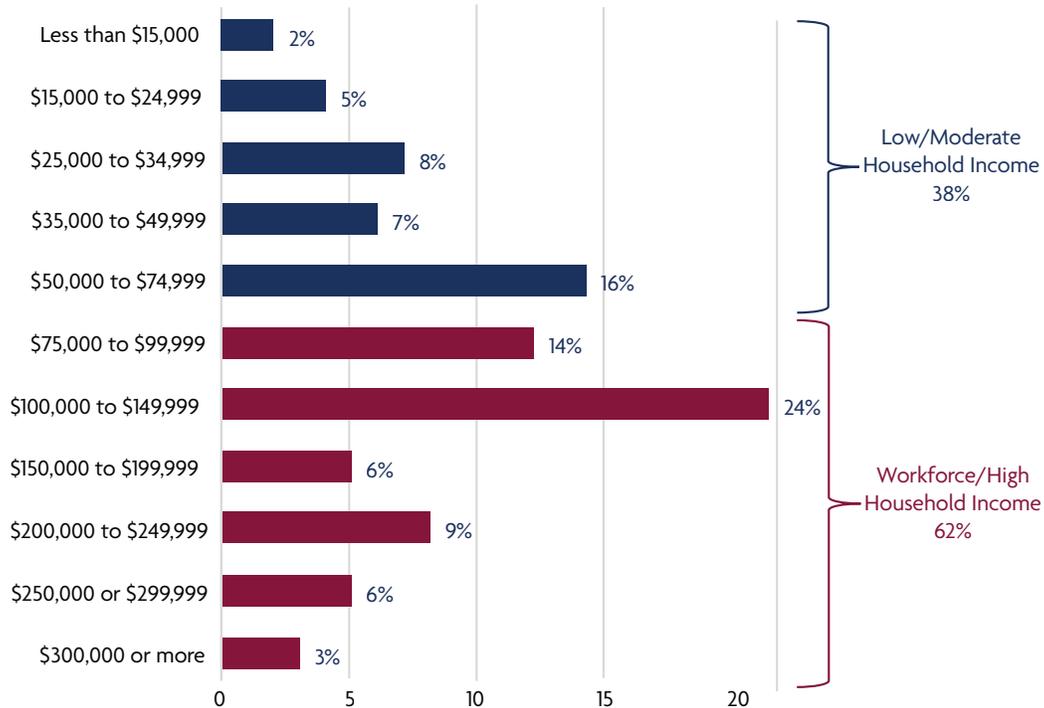
105 responses (95.5% response rate)

ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



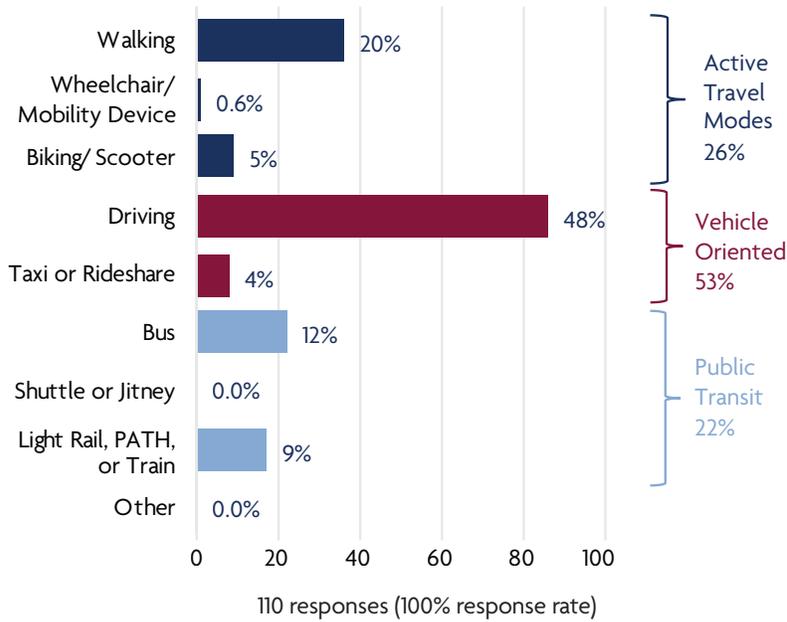
108 responses (98.2% response rate)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

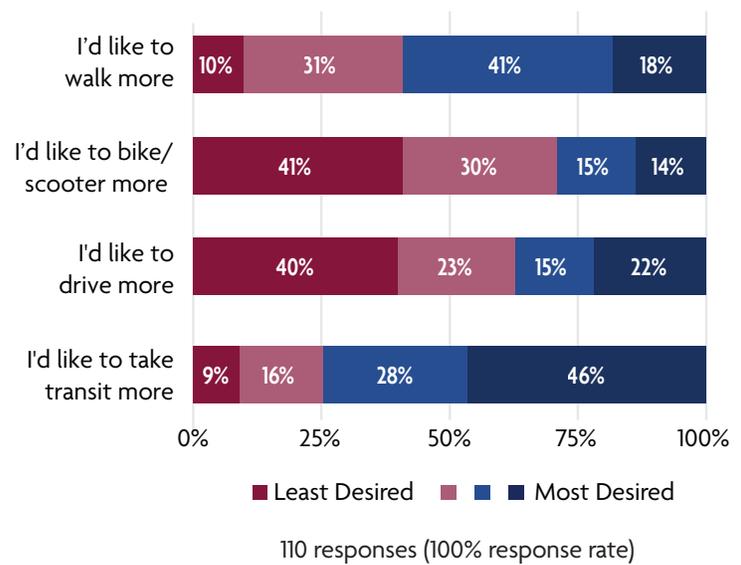


87 responses (79.1% response rate)

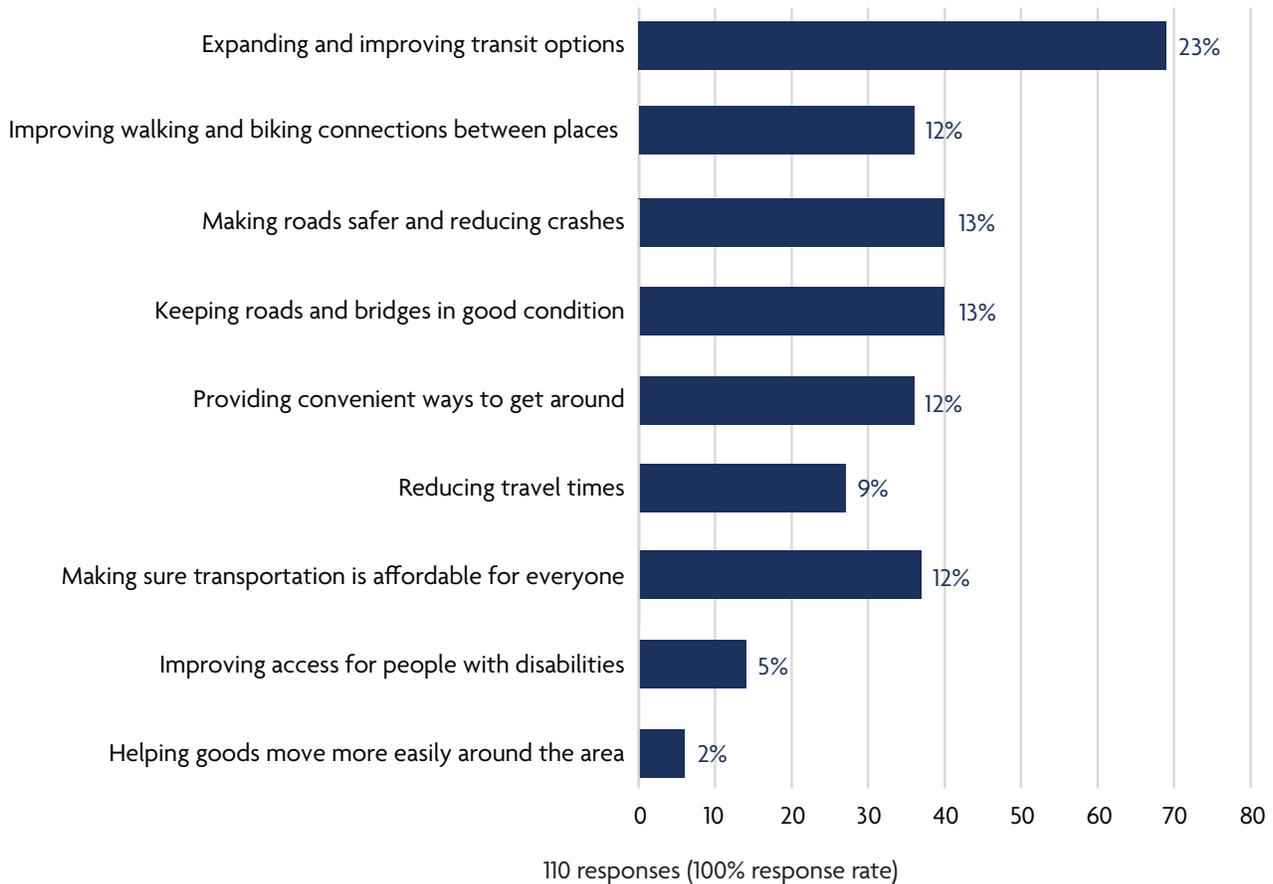
CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



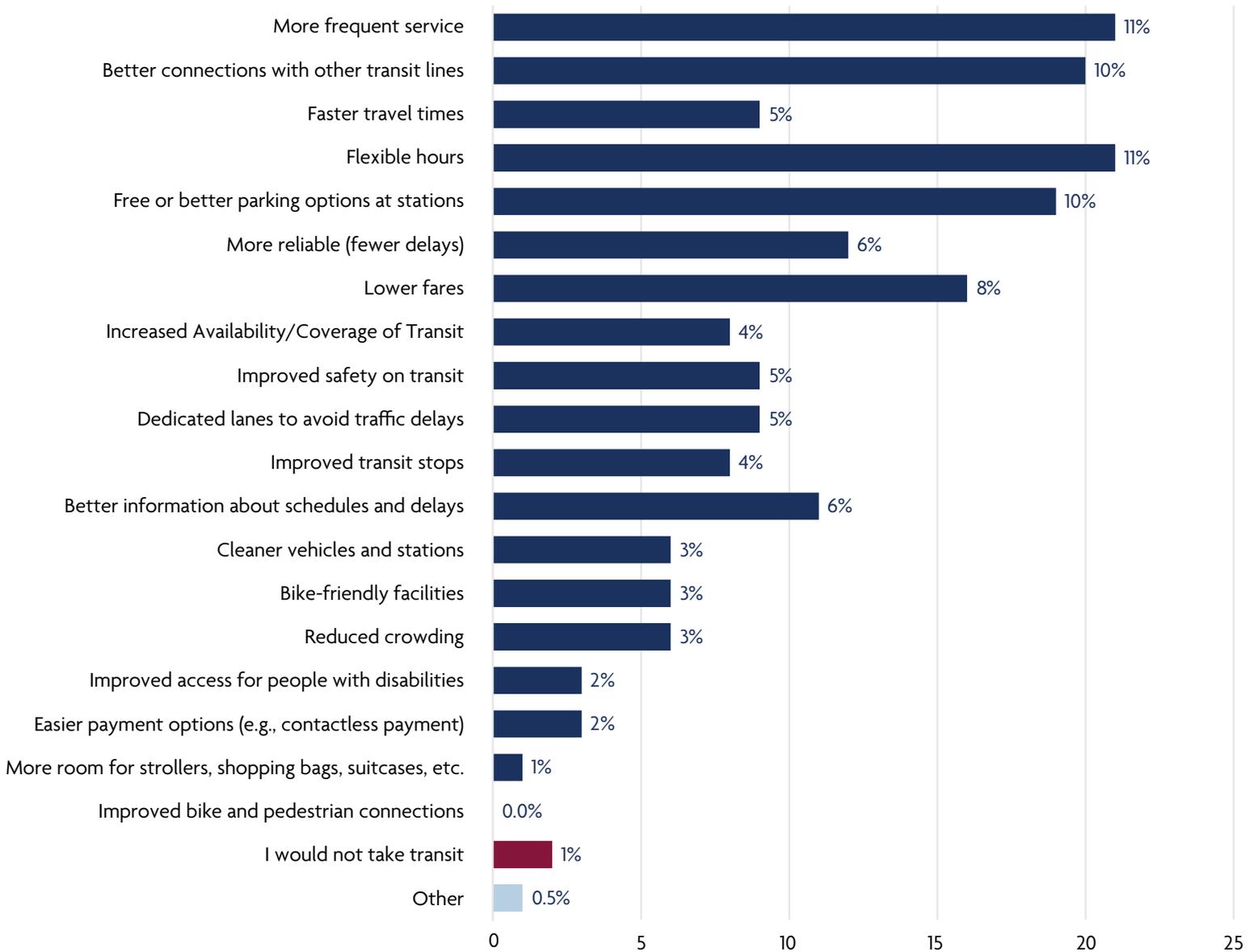
FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

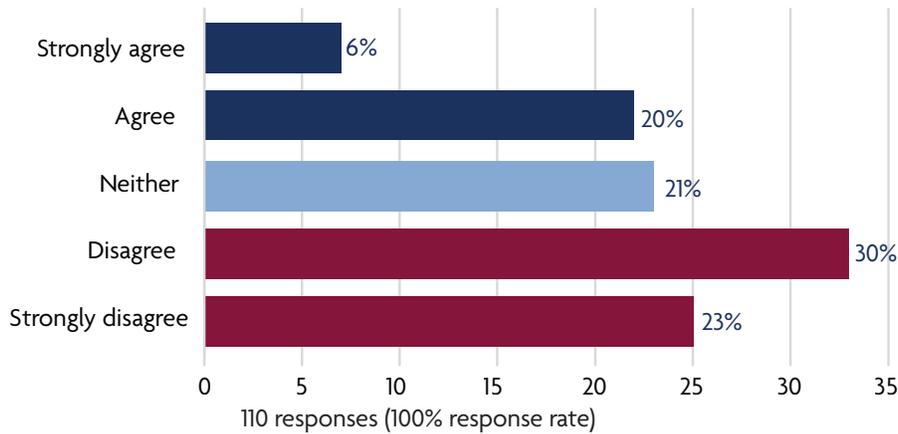


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

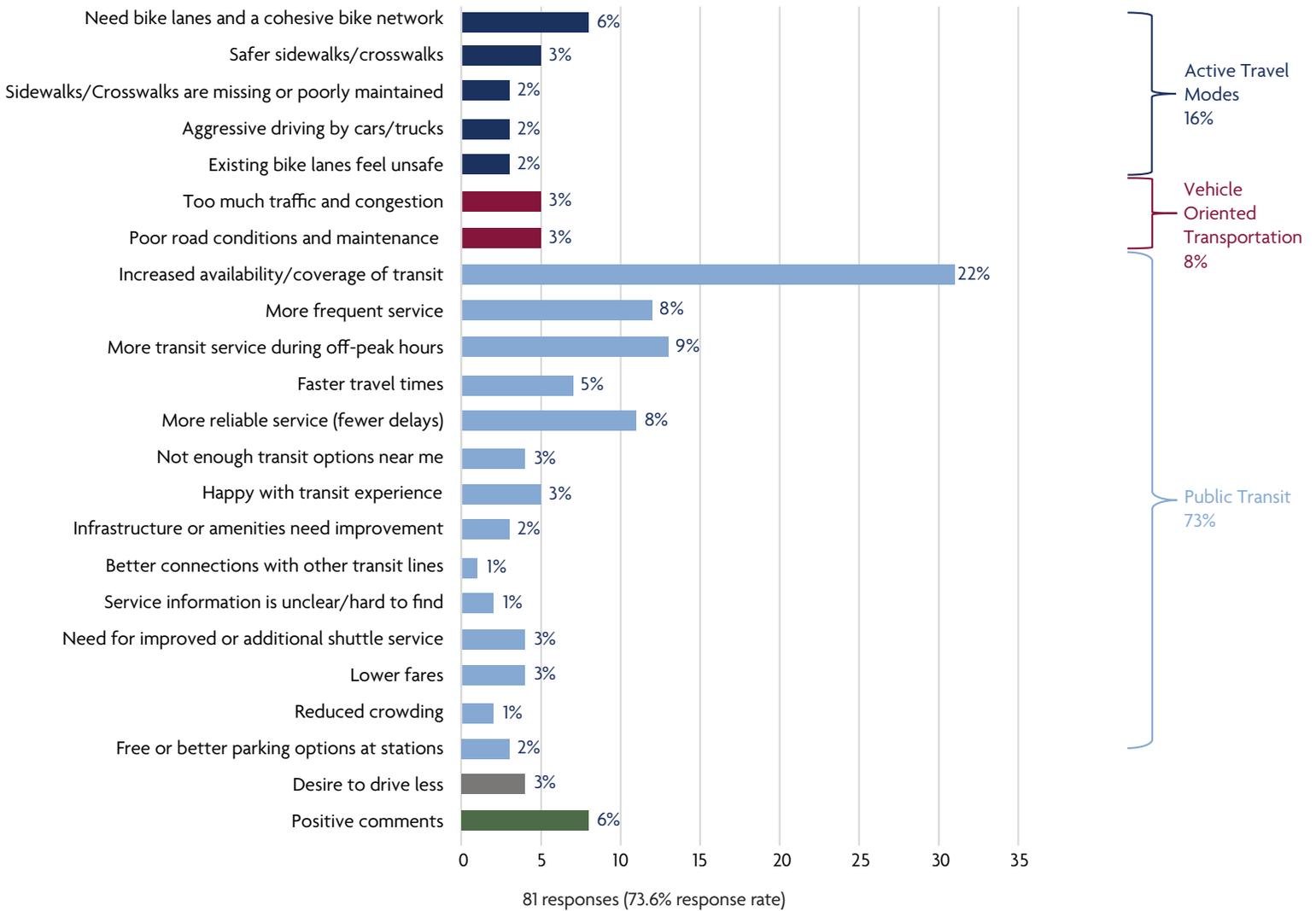


75 respondents (68.2%) Directed to Question  
 73 responses (97.3% response rate)

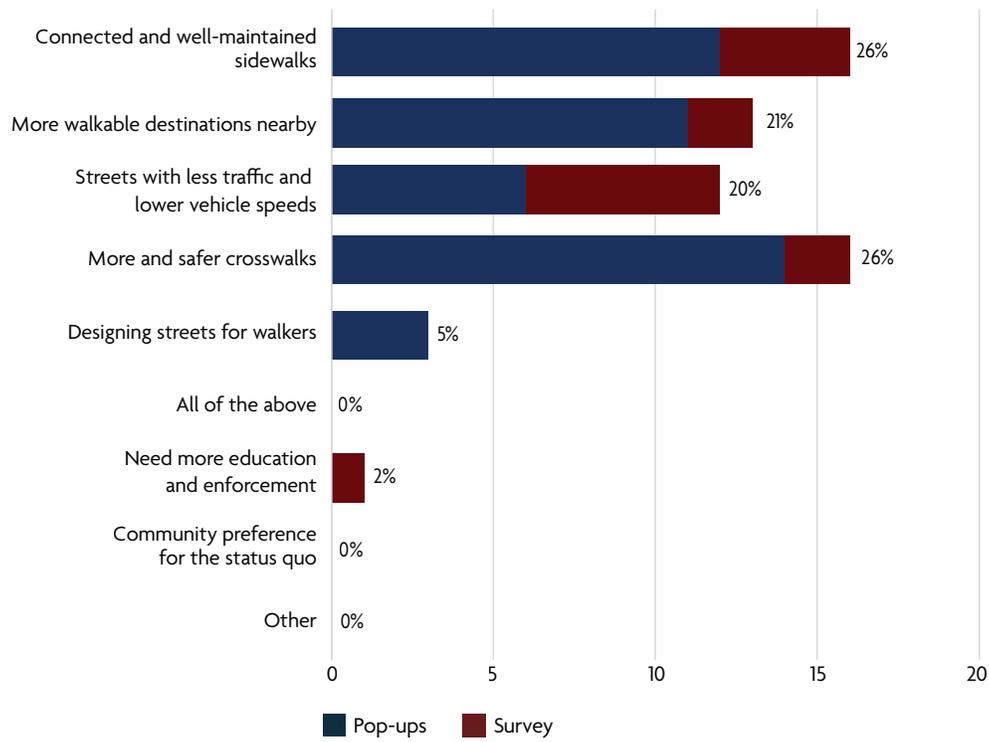
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



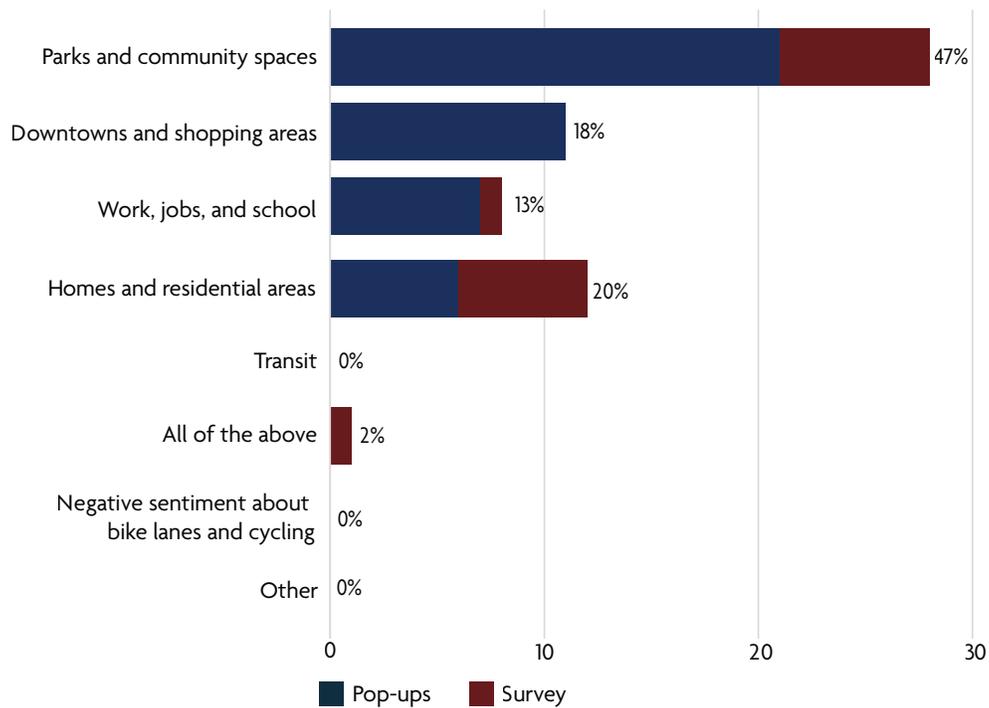
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



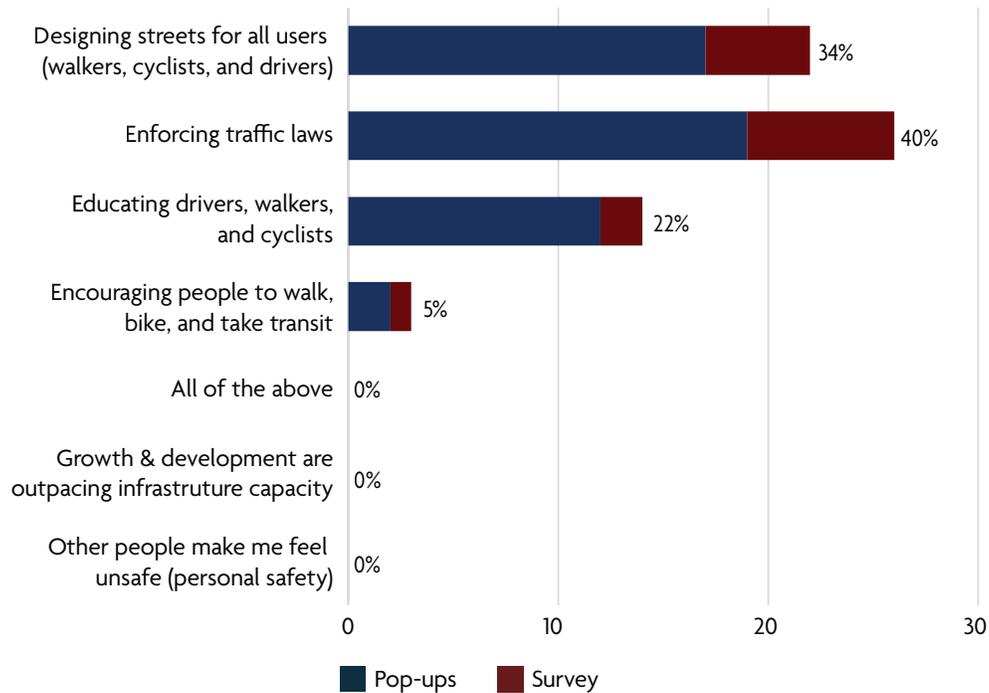
**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



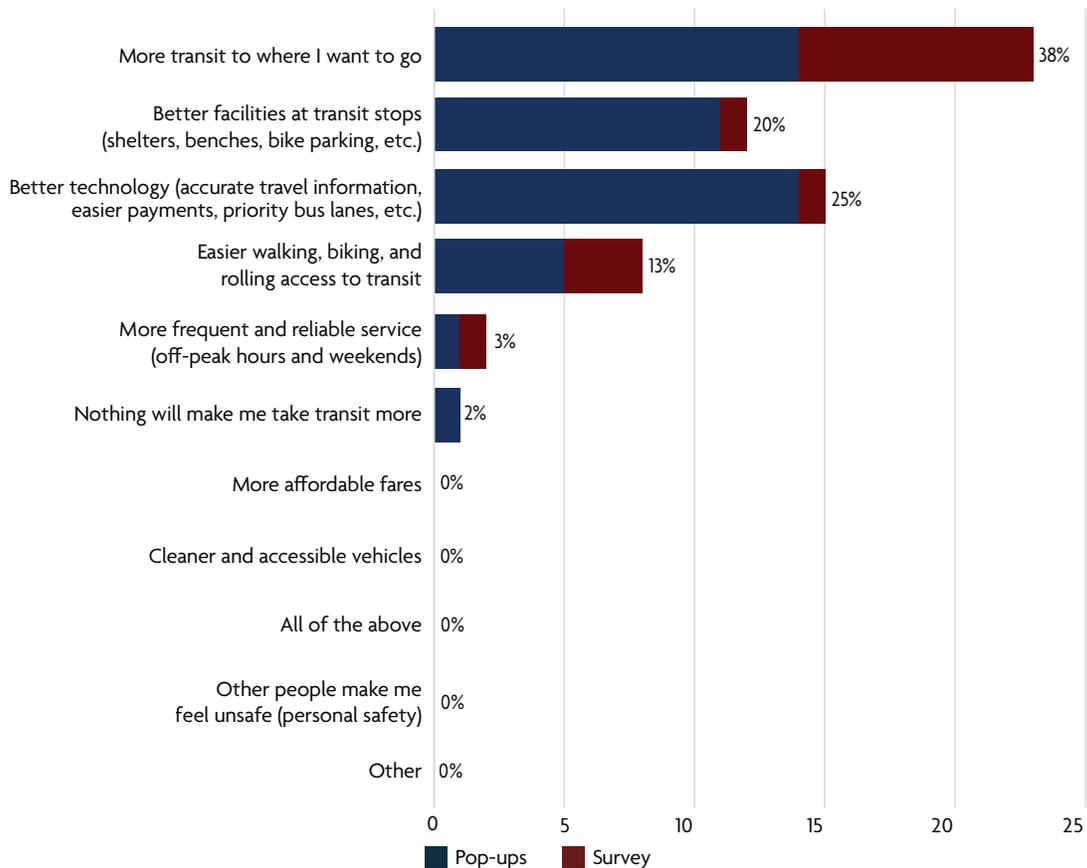
**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



**SAFER STREETS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

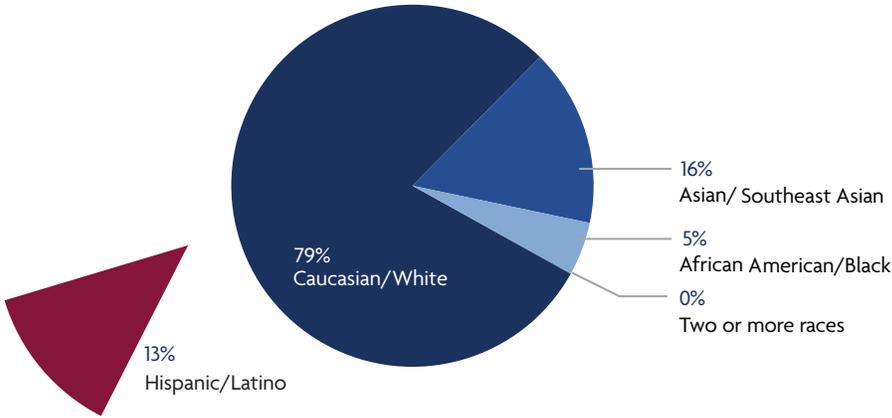


**TRANSIT ACCESS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



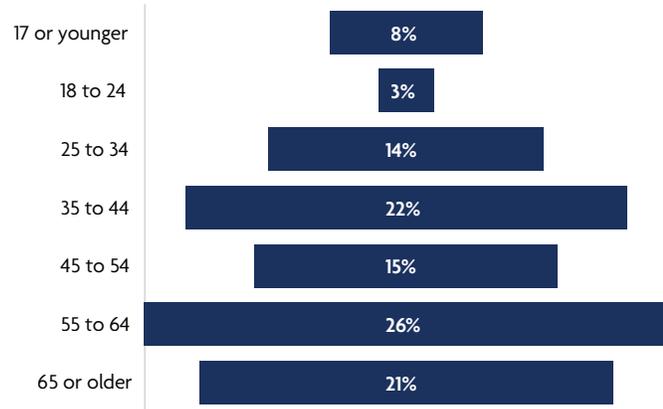
# Somerset County - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

## RACE & ETHNICITY



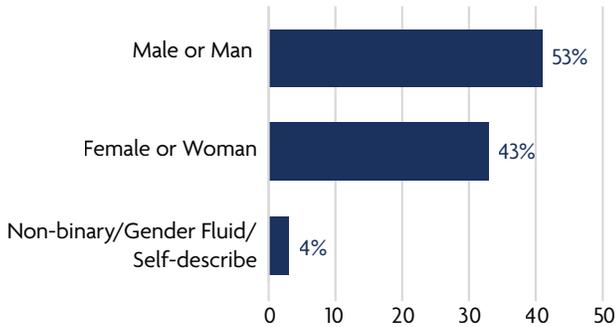
70 responses (84.3% response rate)

## AGE



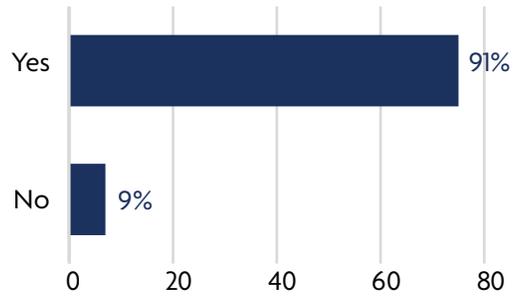
79 responses (95.2% response rate)

## GENDER



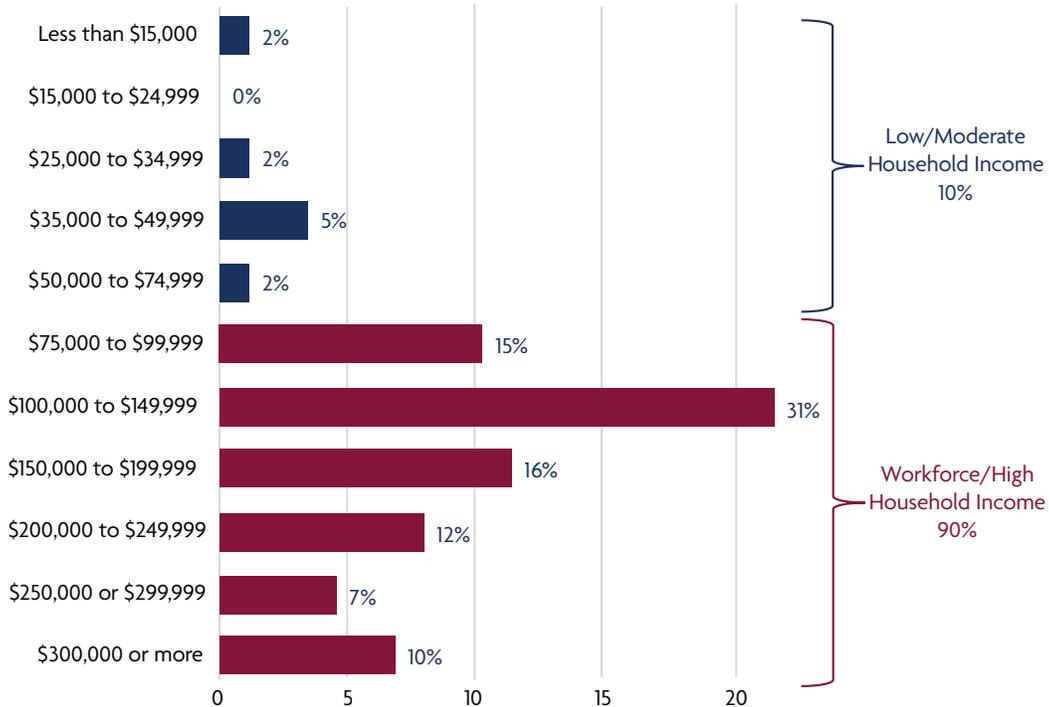
82 responses (98.8% response rate)

## ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



82 responses (98.8% response rate)

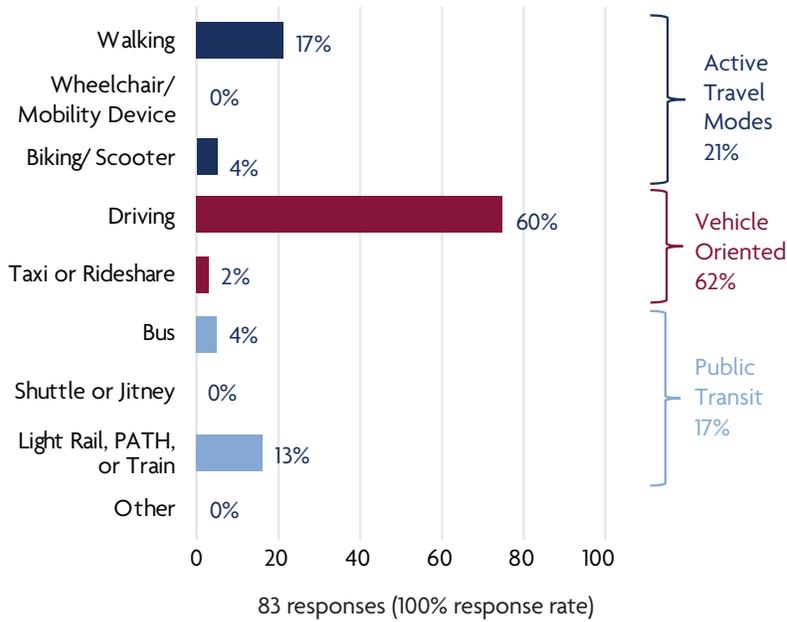
## HOUSEHOLD INCOME



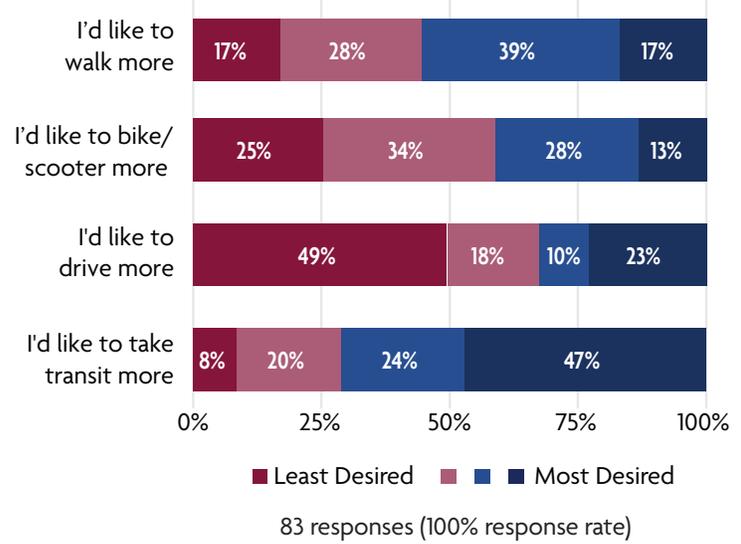
61 responses (73.5% response rate)

# Somerset County - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

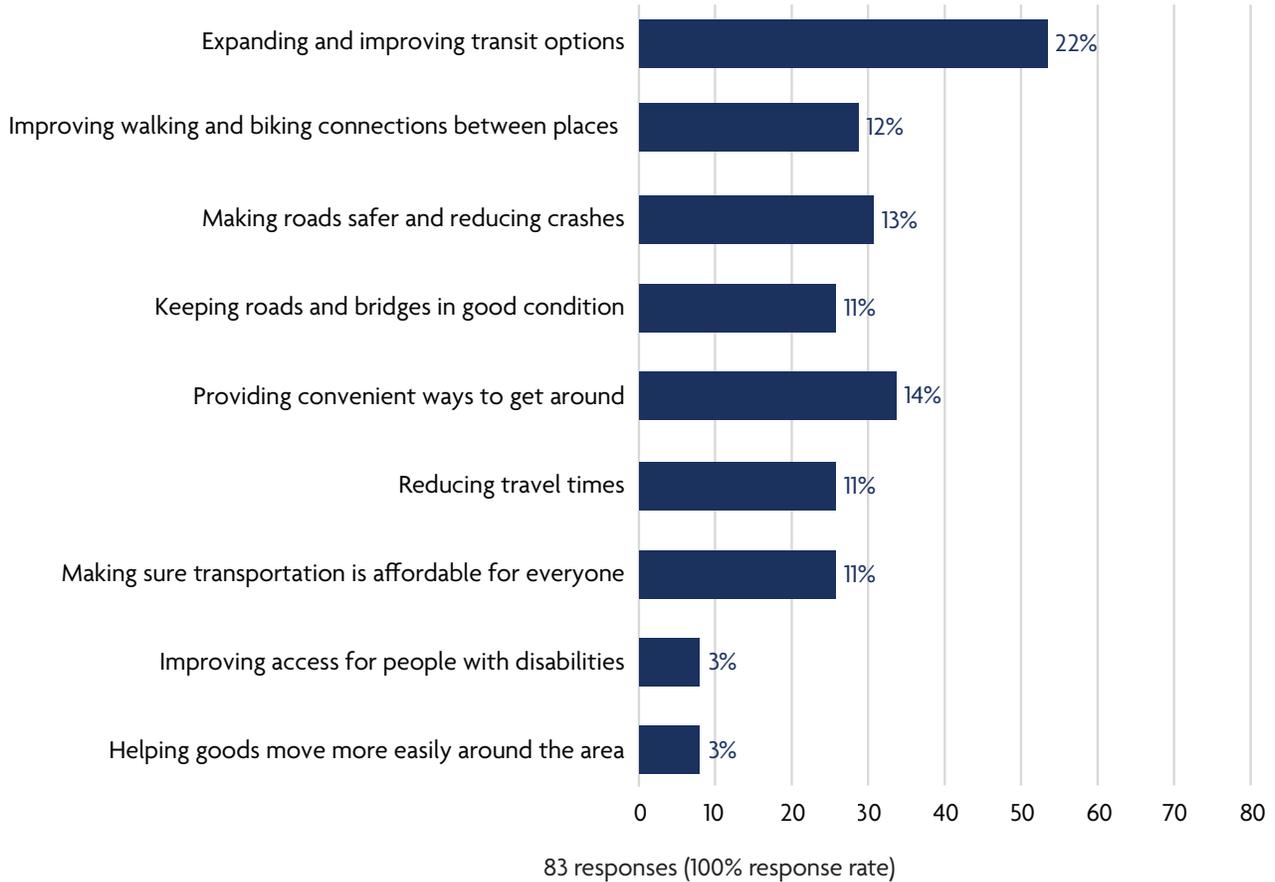
## CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



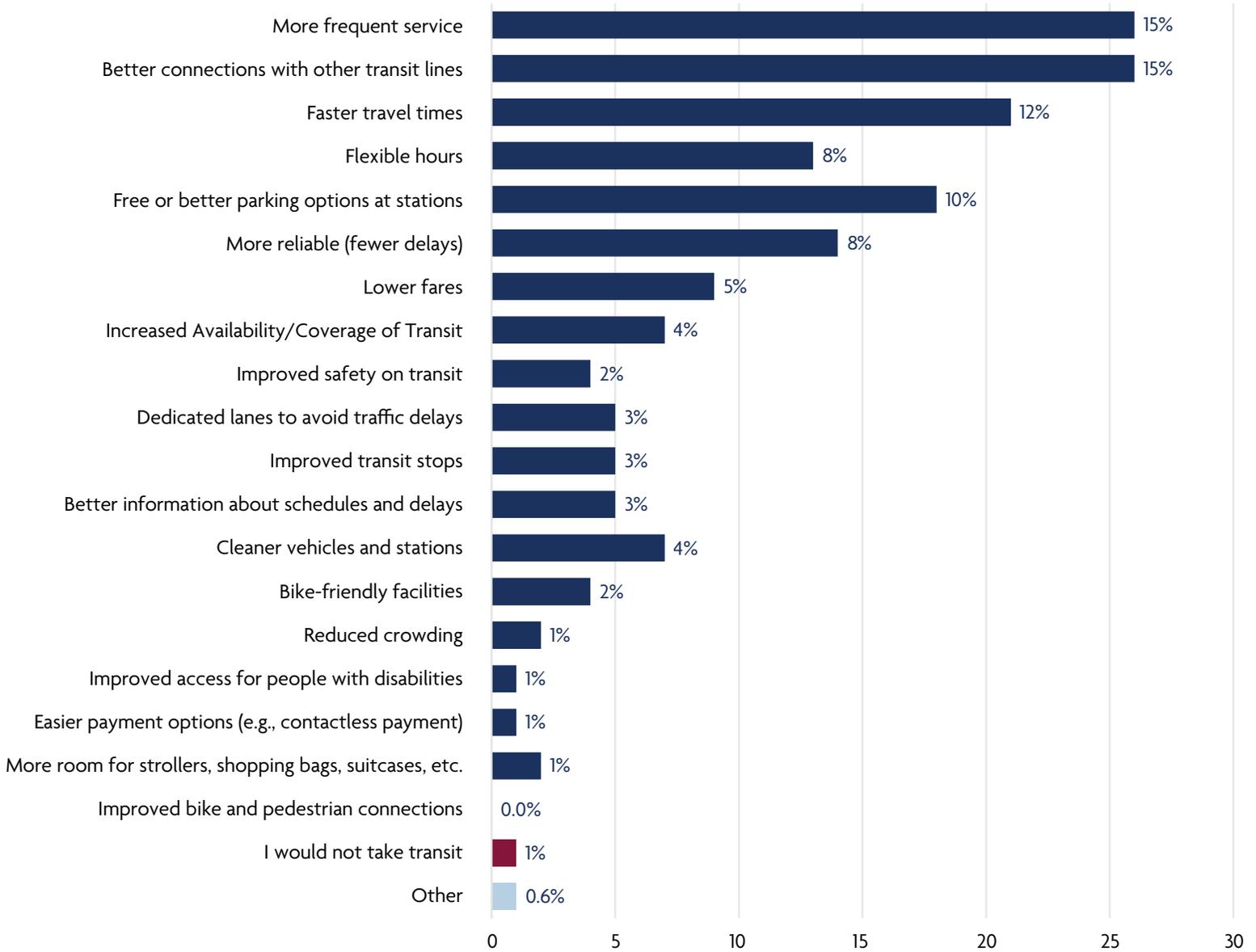
## FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



## IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

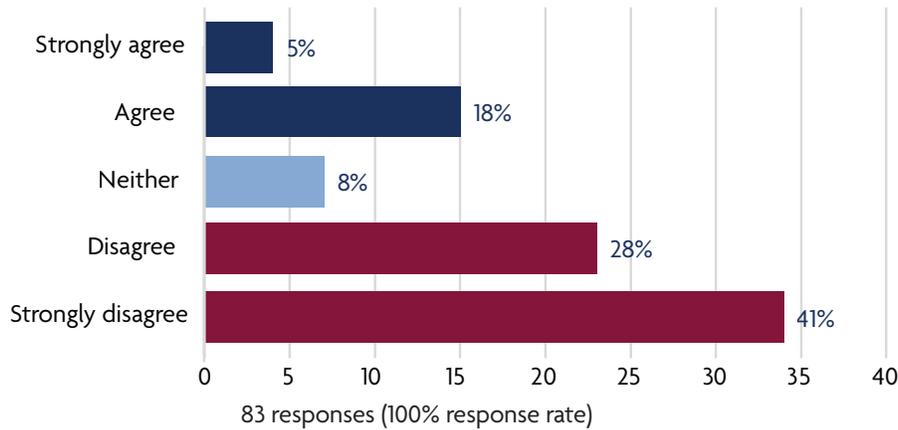


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

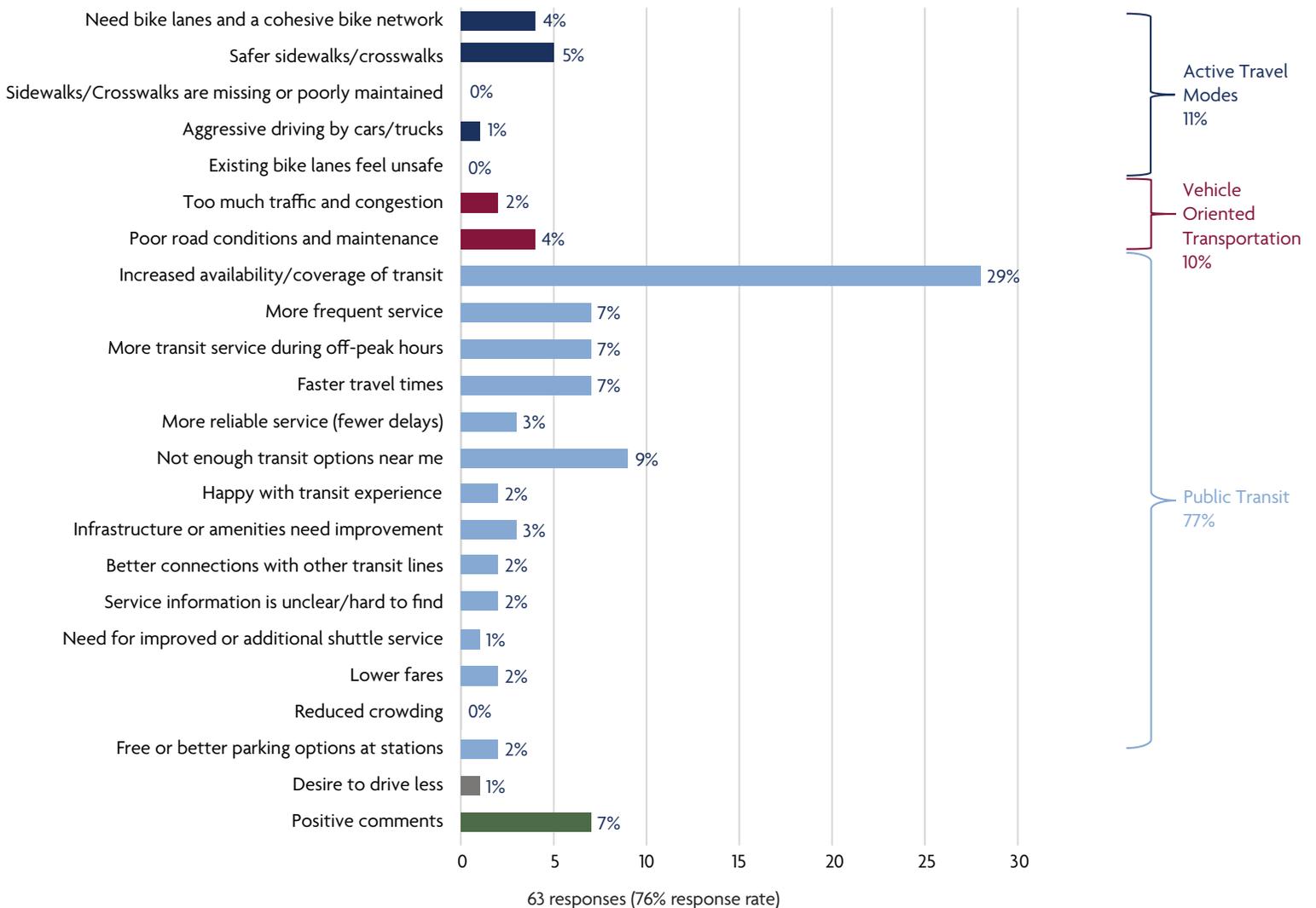


64 respondents (77.1%) Directed to Question  
 64 responses (100% response rate)

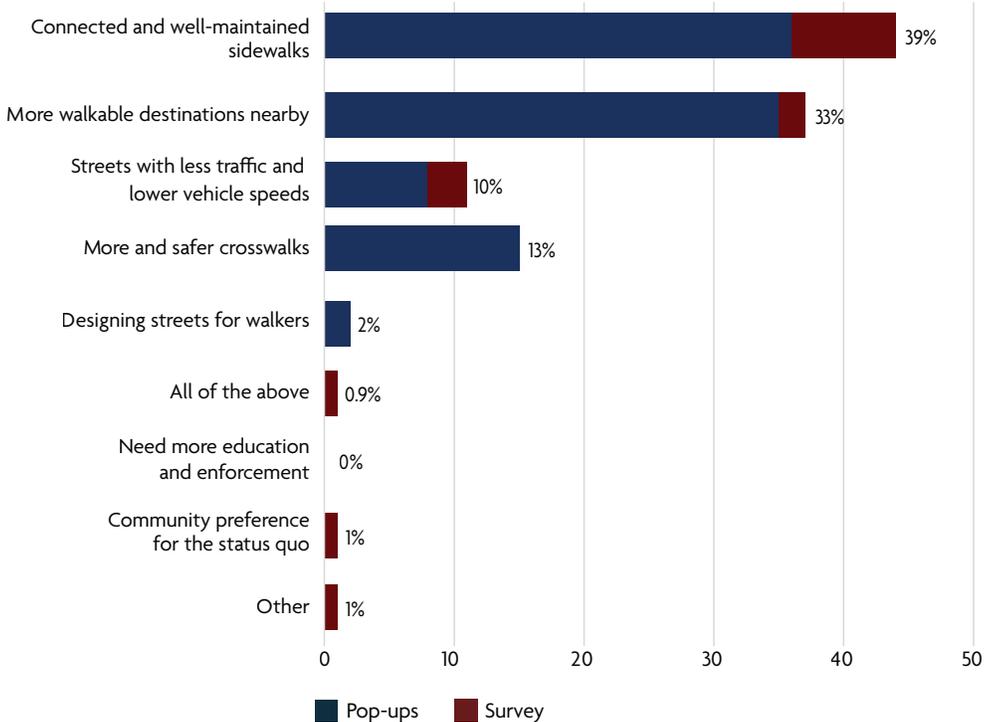
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



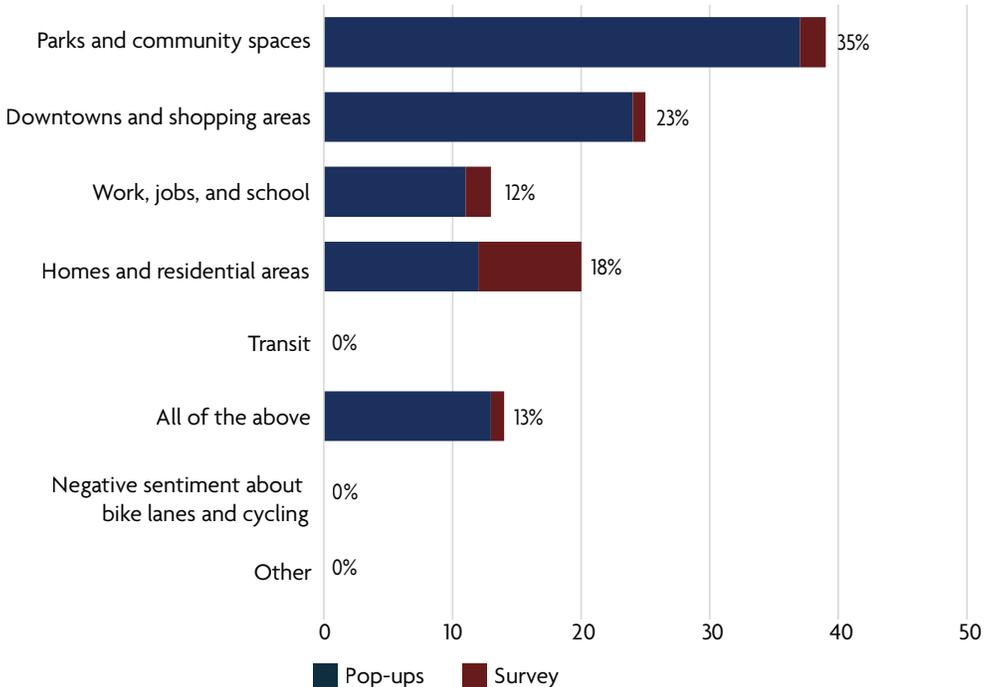
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

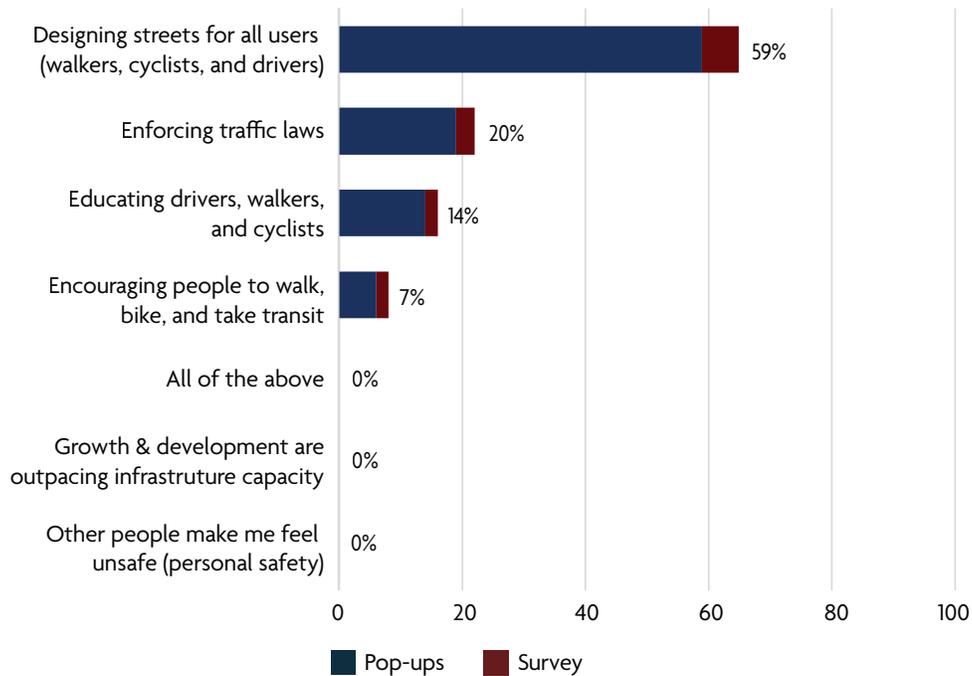


**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



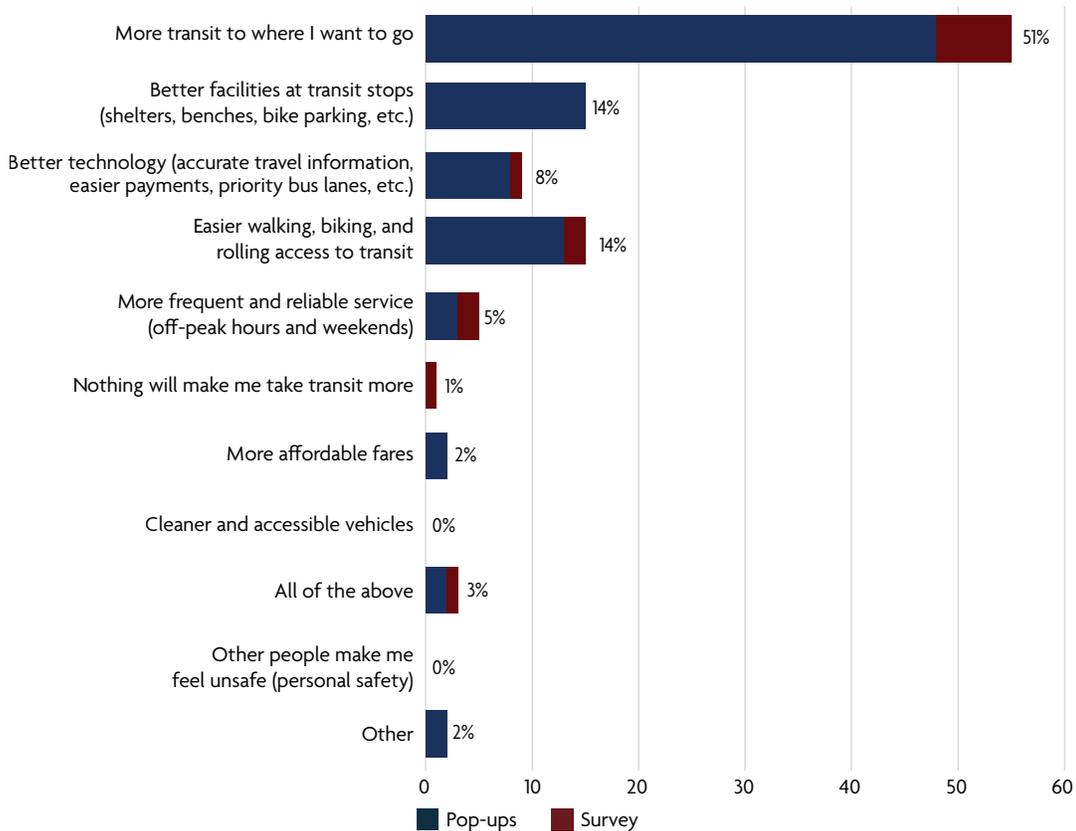
**SAFER STREETS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

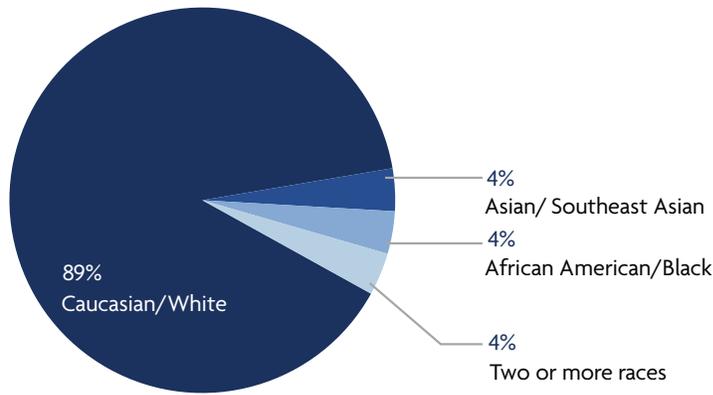


**TRANSIT ACCESS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

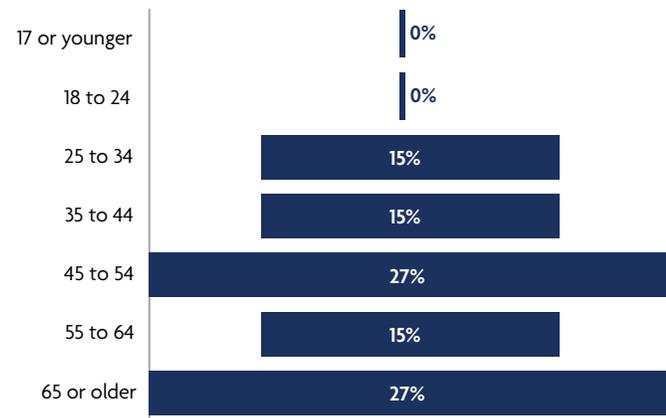


RACE & ETHNICITY



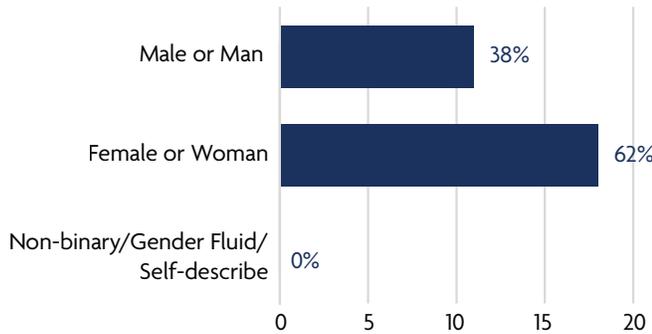
28 responses (96.6% response rate)

AGE



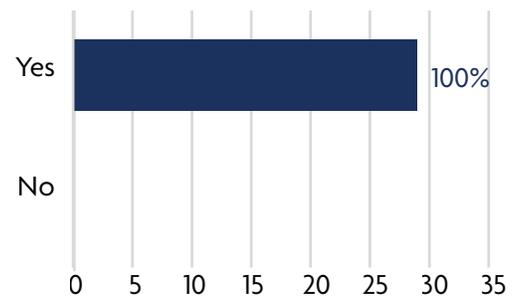
26 responses (96.6% response rate)

GENDER



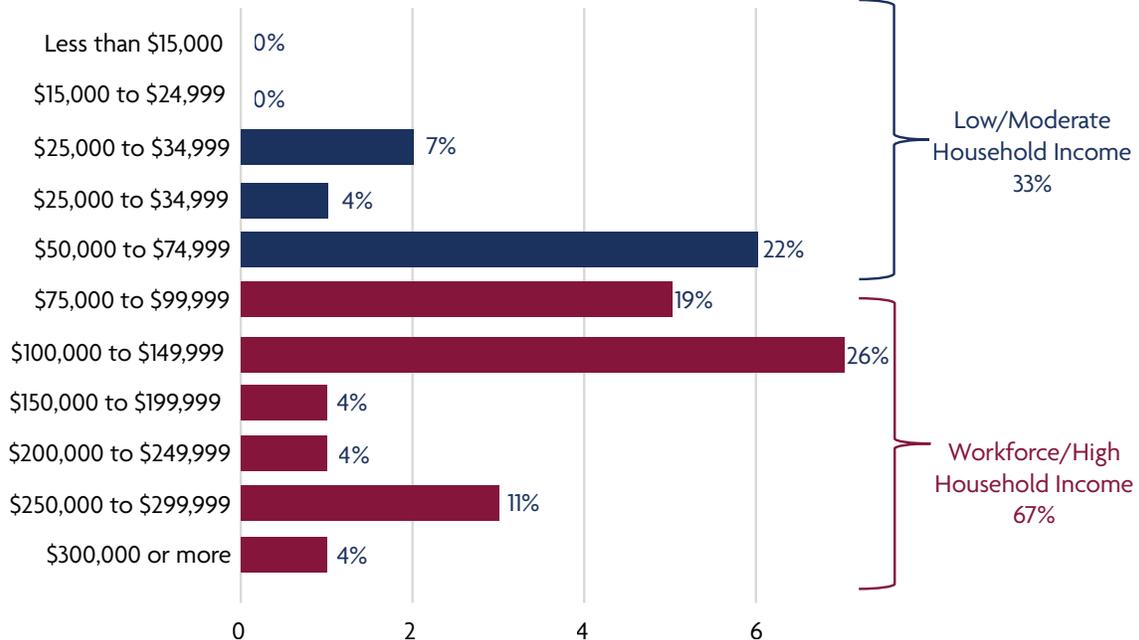
29 responses (100% response rate)

ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



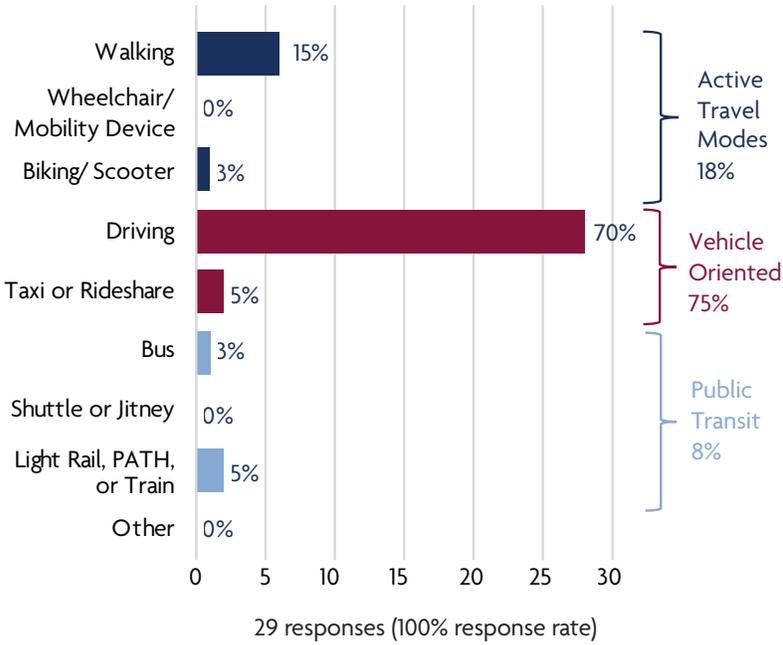
29 responses (100% response rate)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

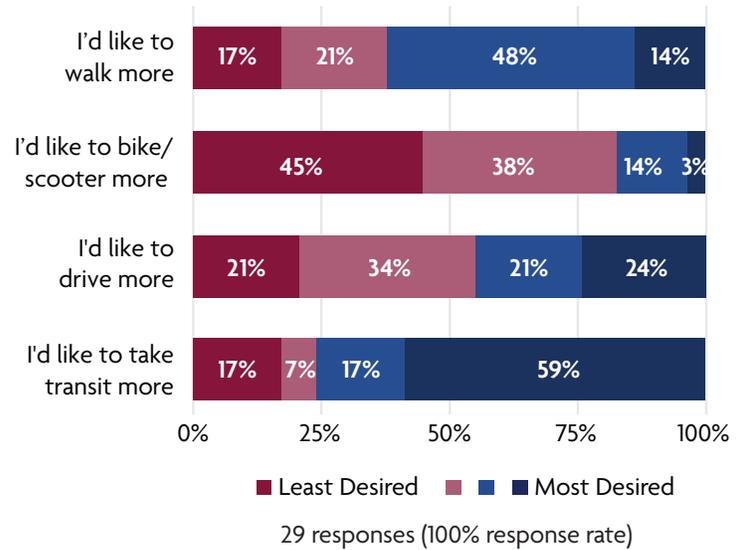


27 responses (93.1% response rate)

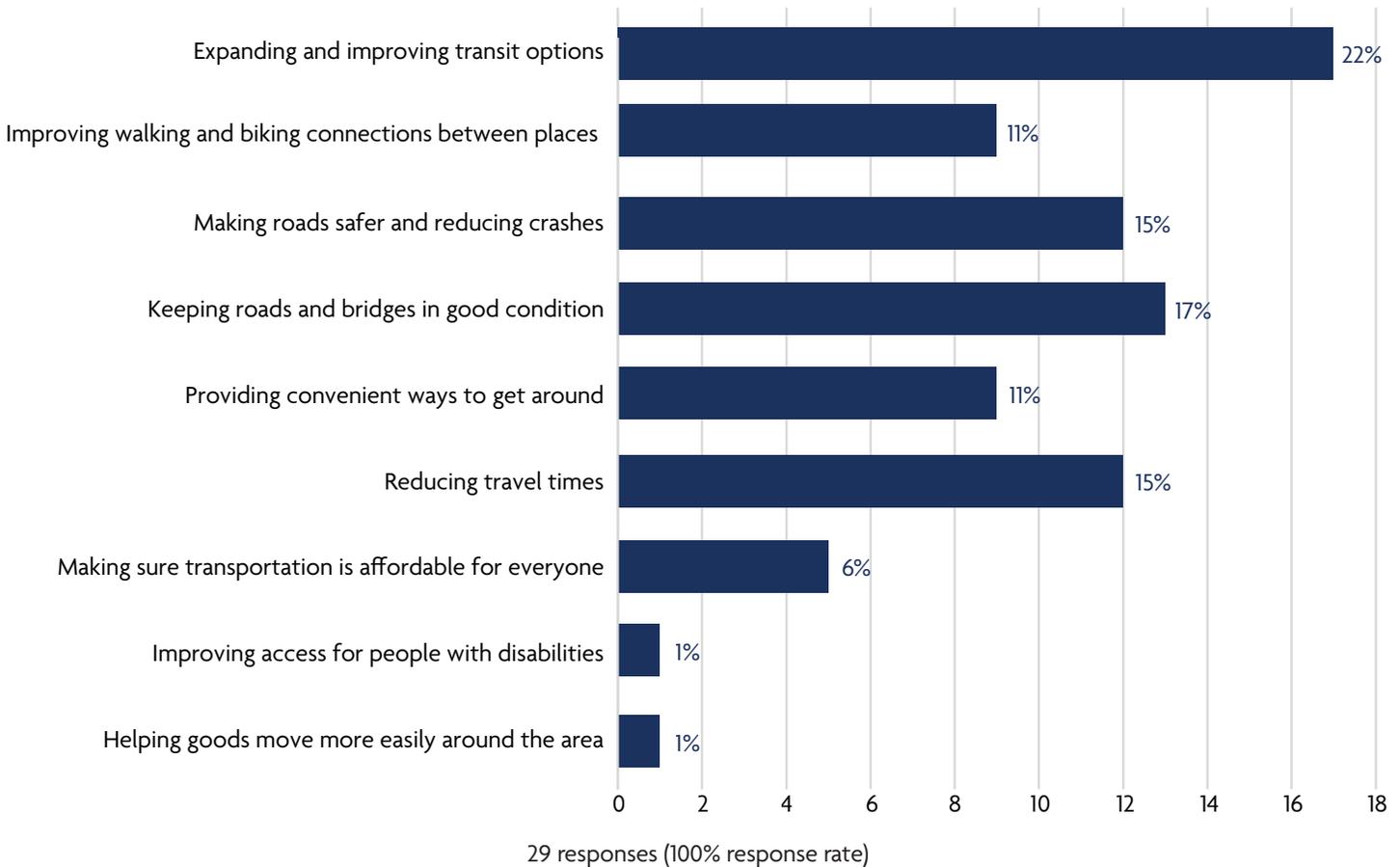
CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



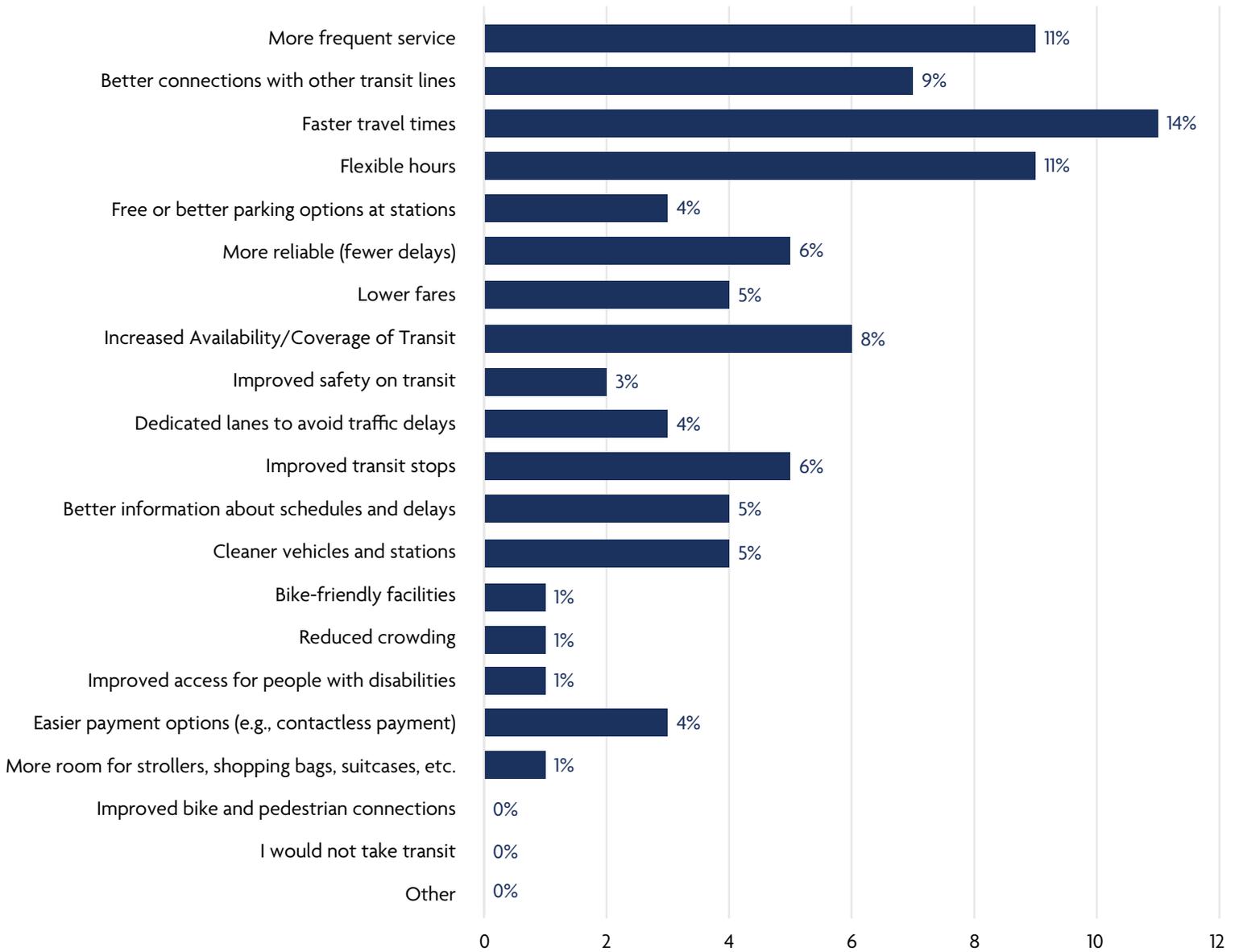
FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

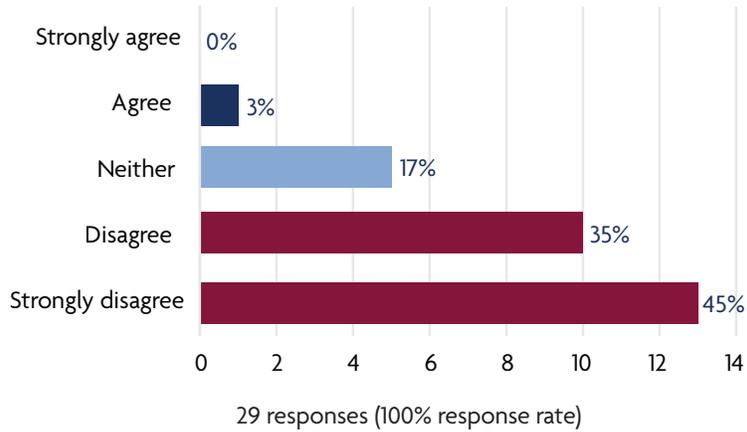


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

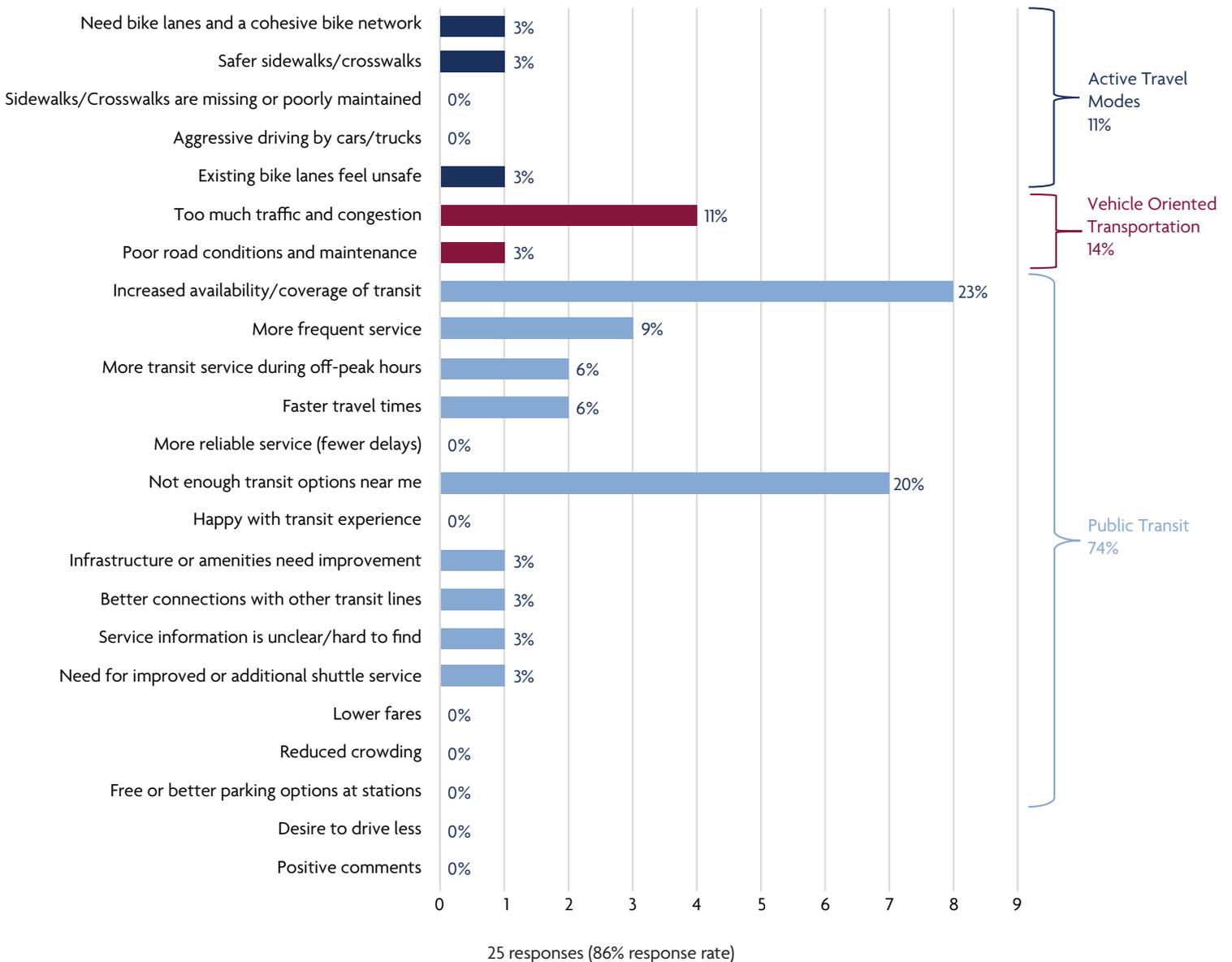


26 respondents (89.7%) Directed to Question  
 25 responses (96.2% response rate)

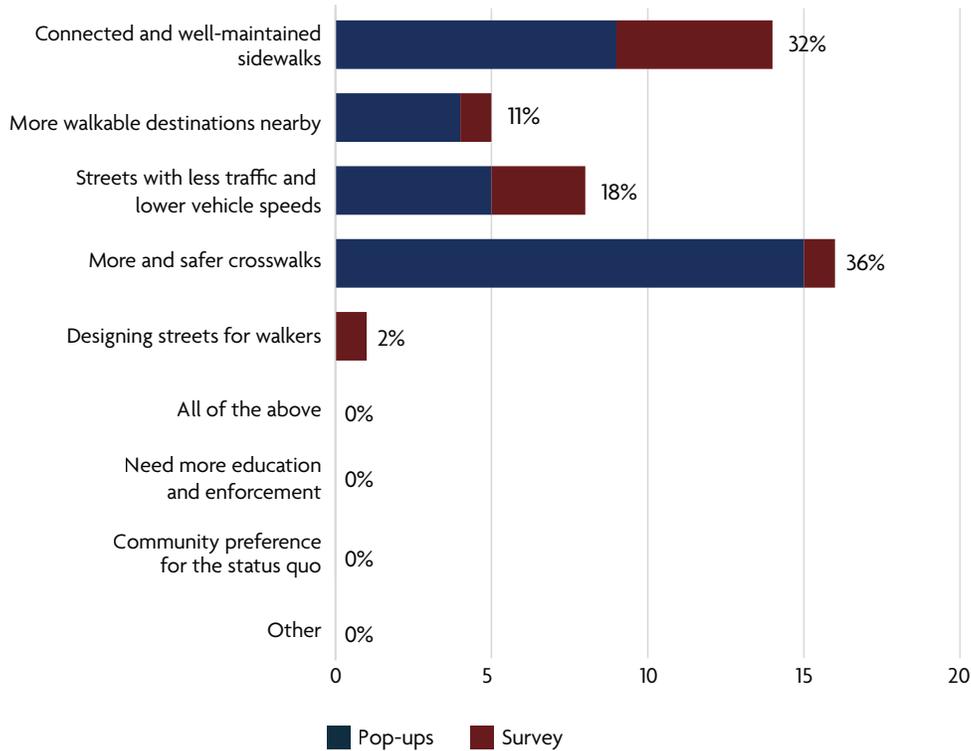
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



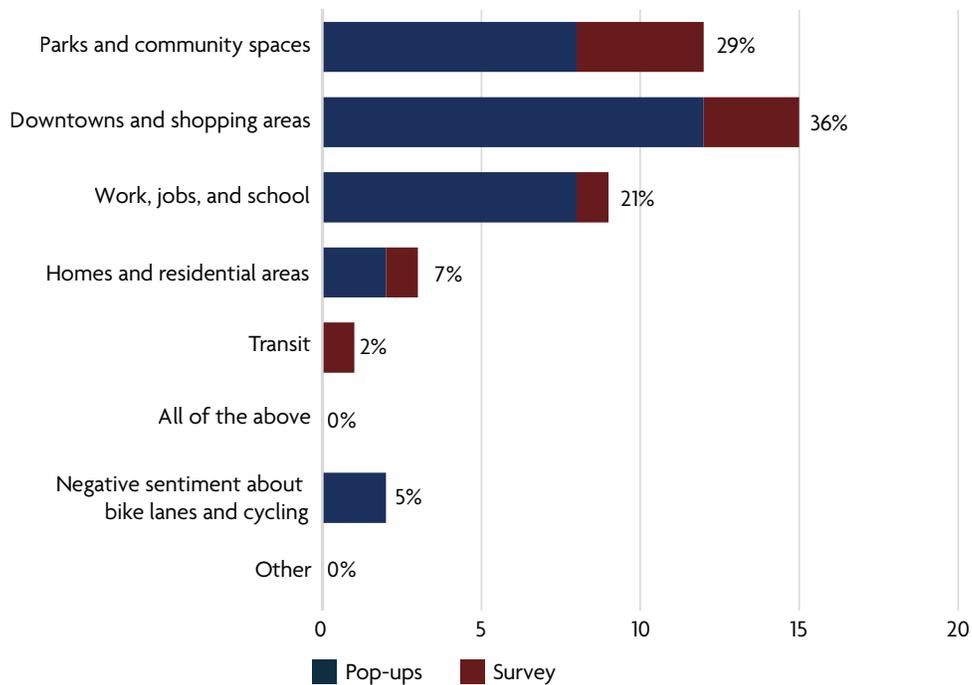
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



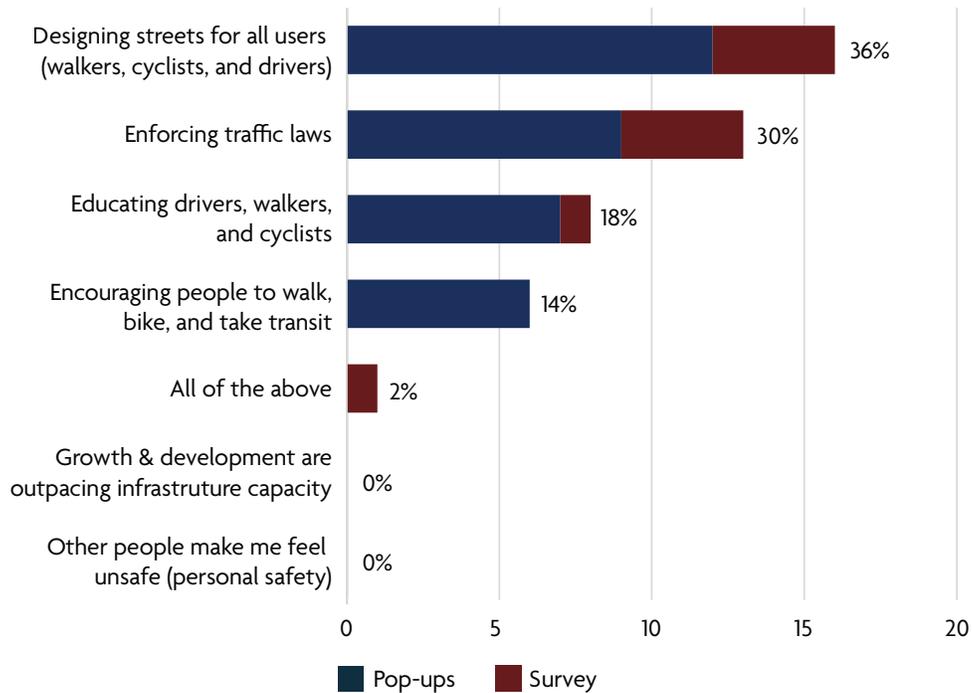
**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



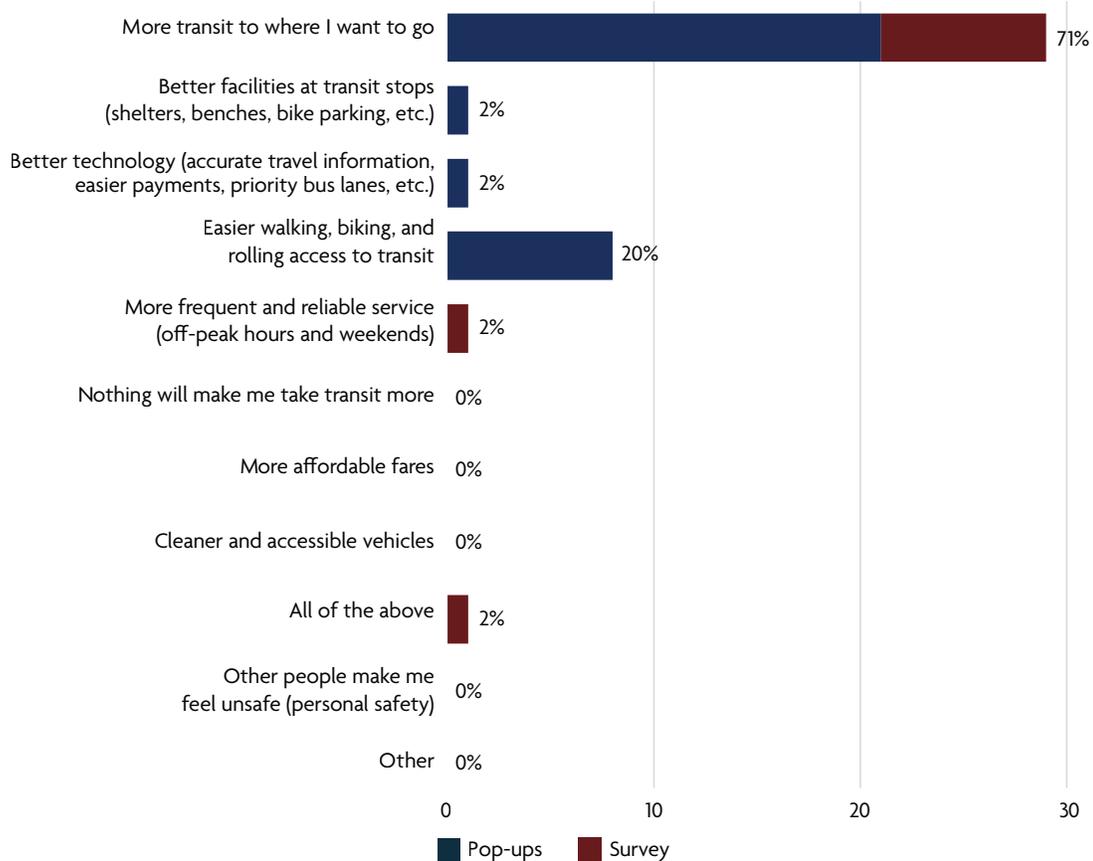
**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



**SAFER STREETS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

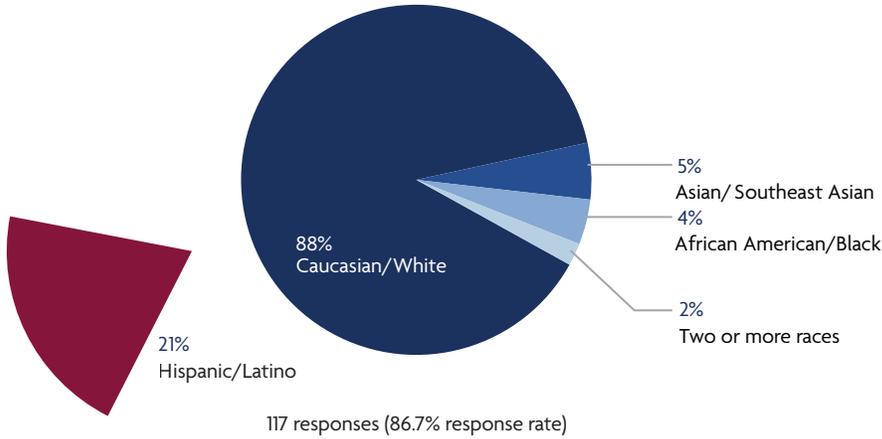


**TRANSIT ACCESS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

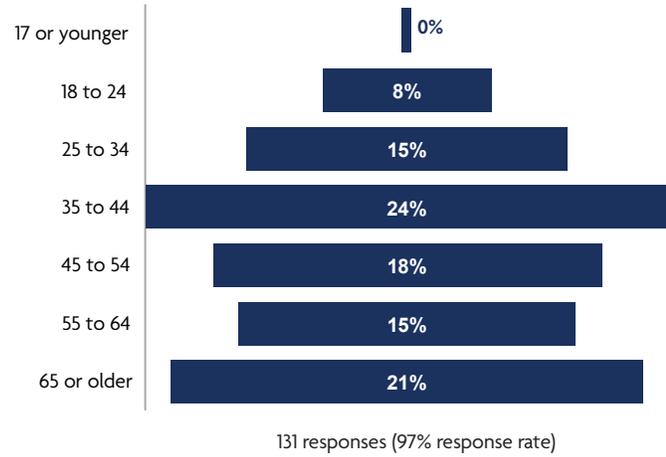


# Union County - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

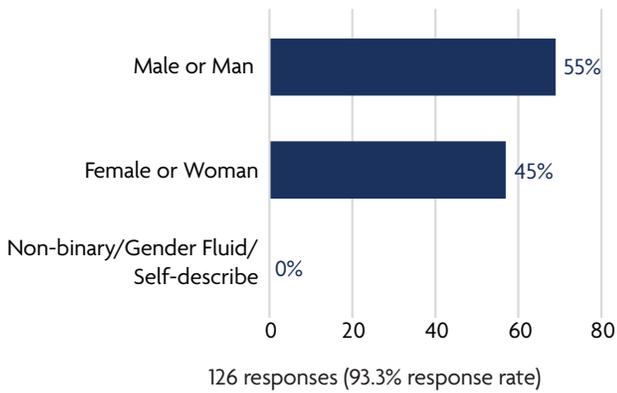
## RACE & ETHNICITY



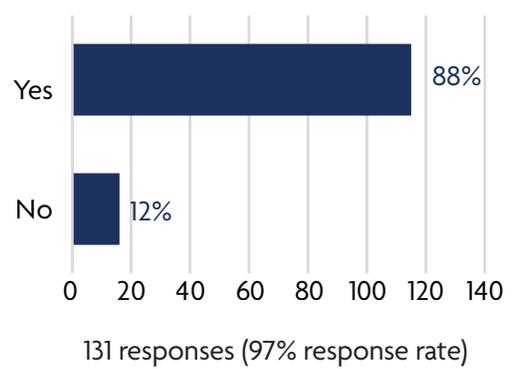
## AGE



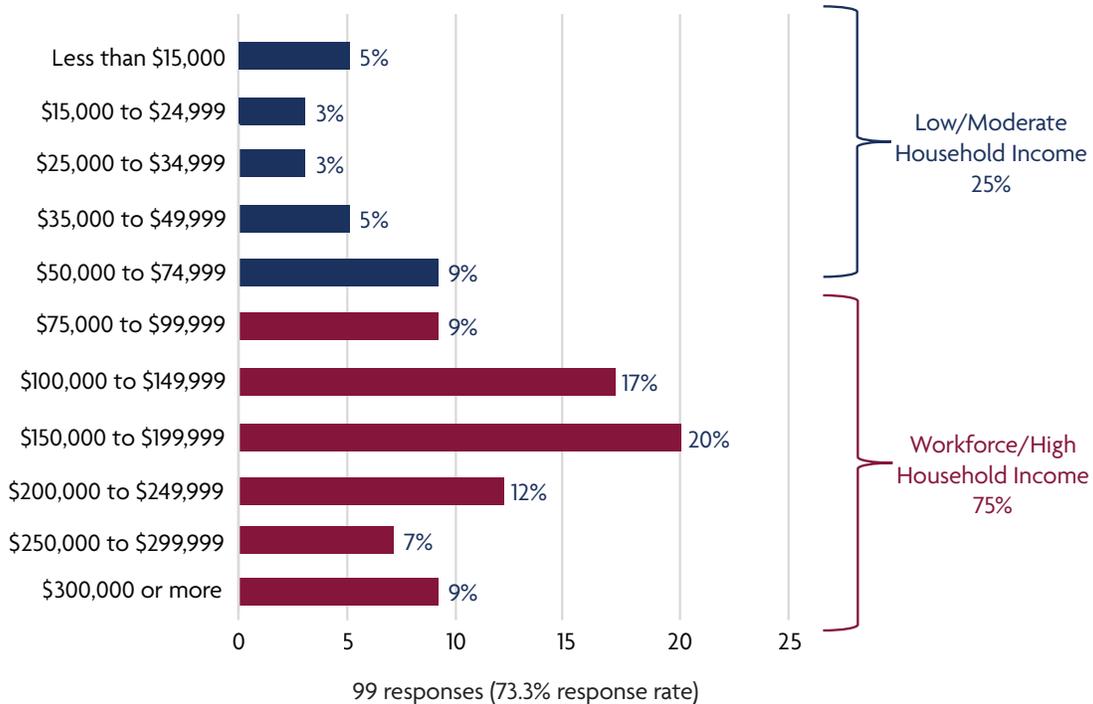
## GENDER



## ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE

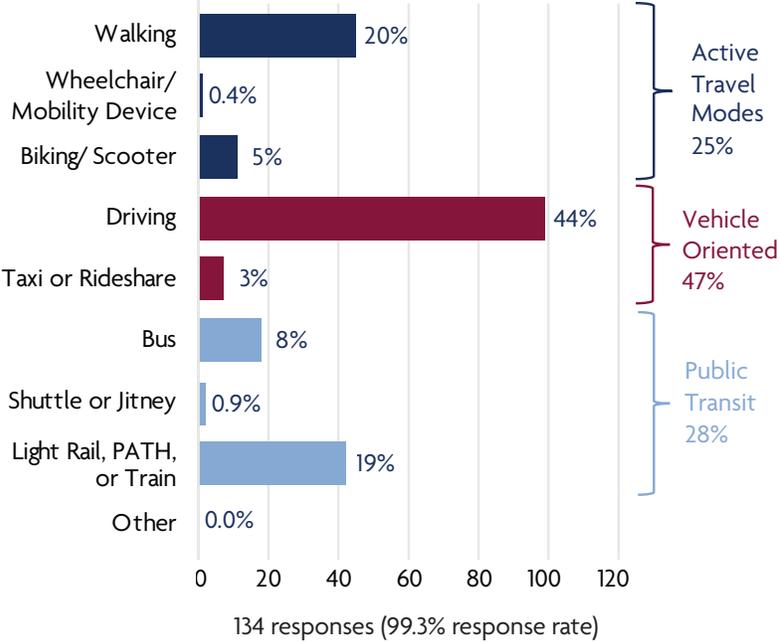


## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

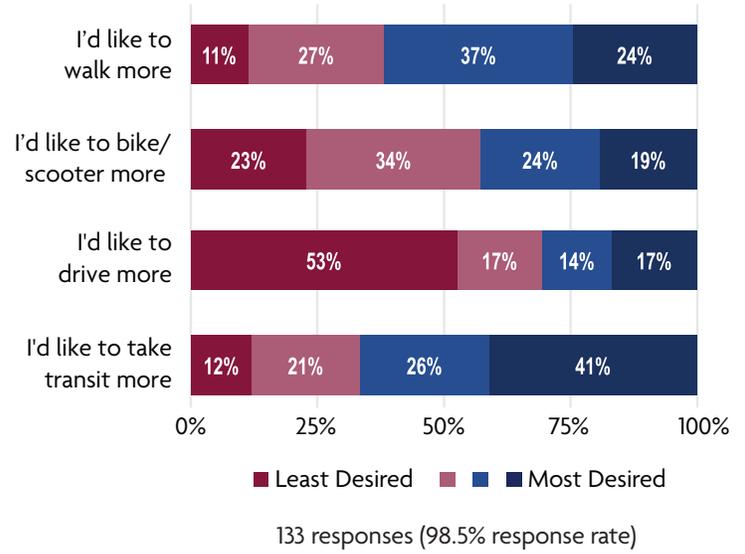


# Union County - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

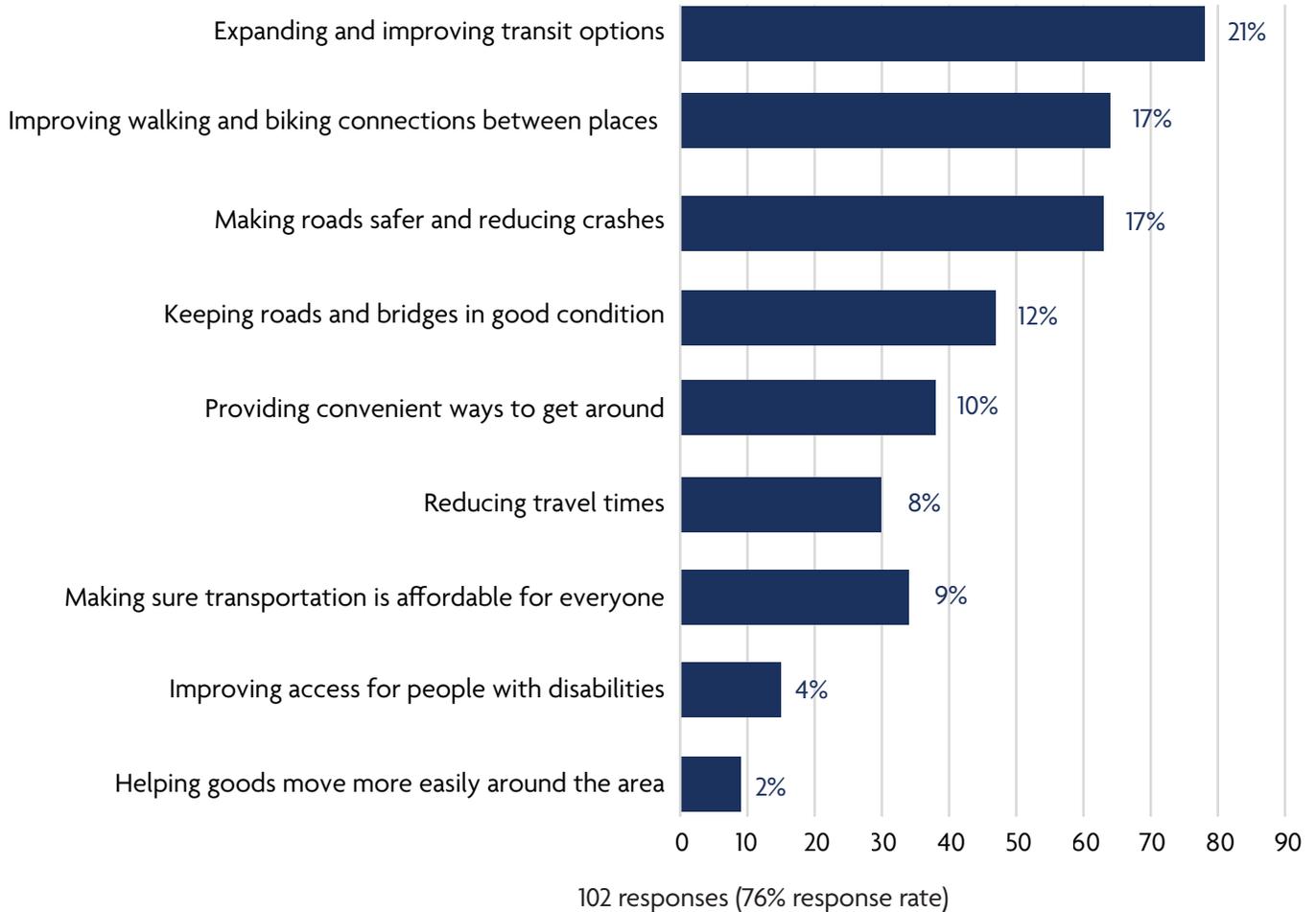
## CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



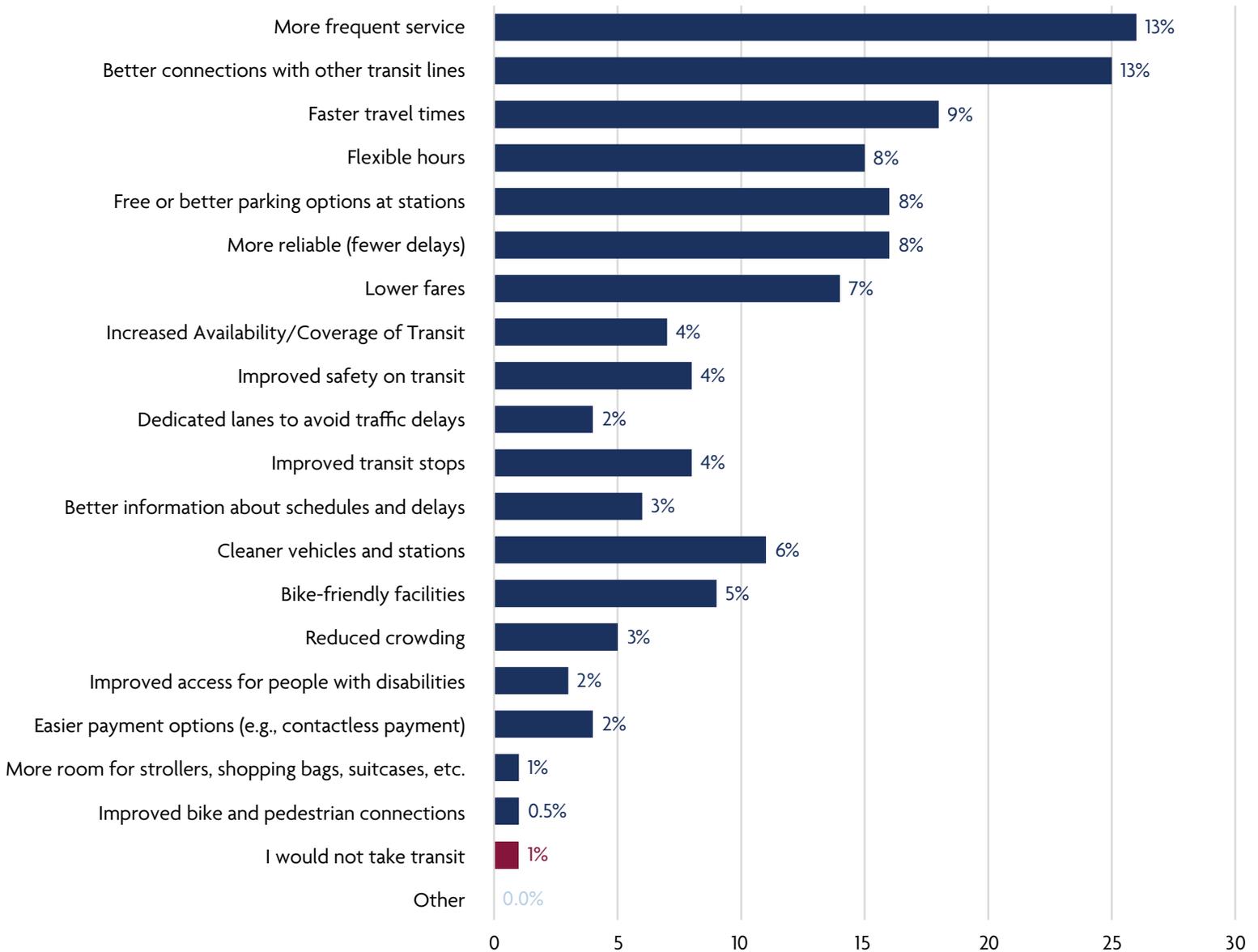
## FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



## IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

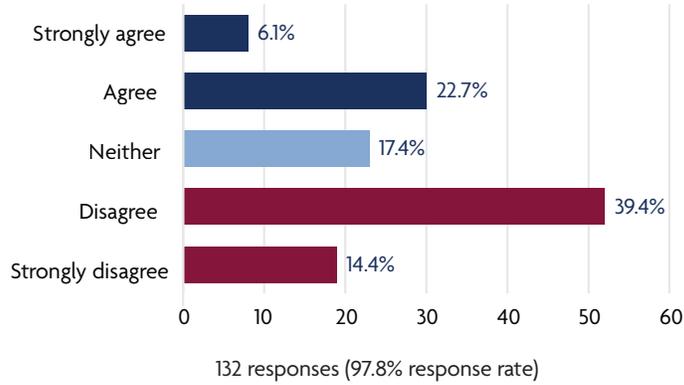


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

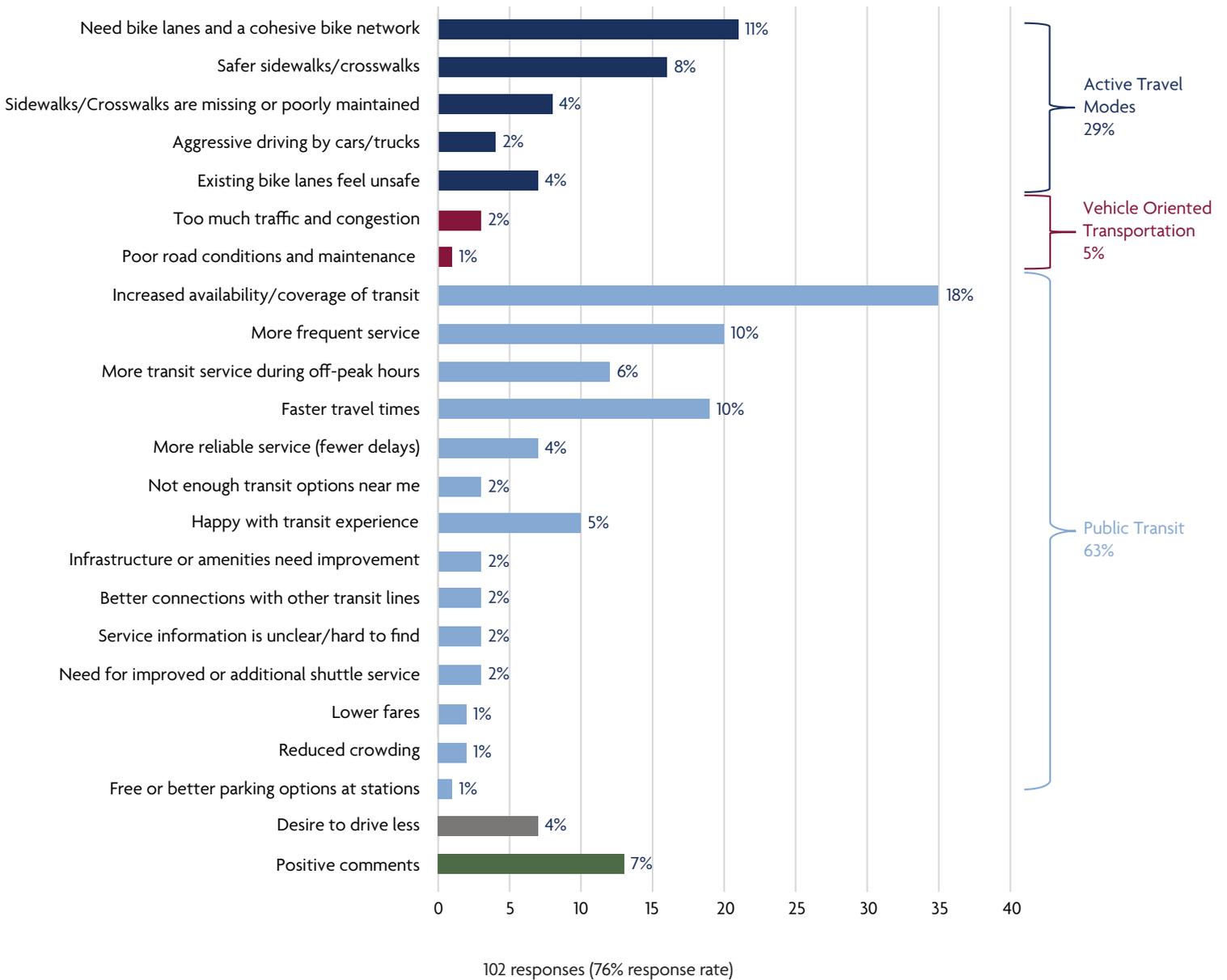


78 respondents (57.8%) Directed to Question  
 72 responses (92.3% response rate)

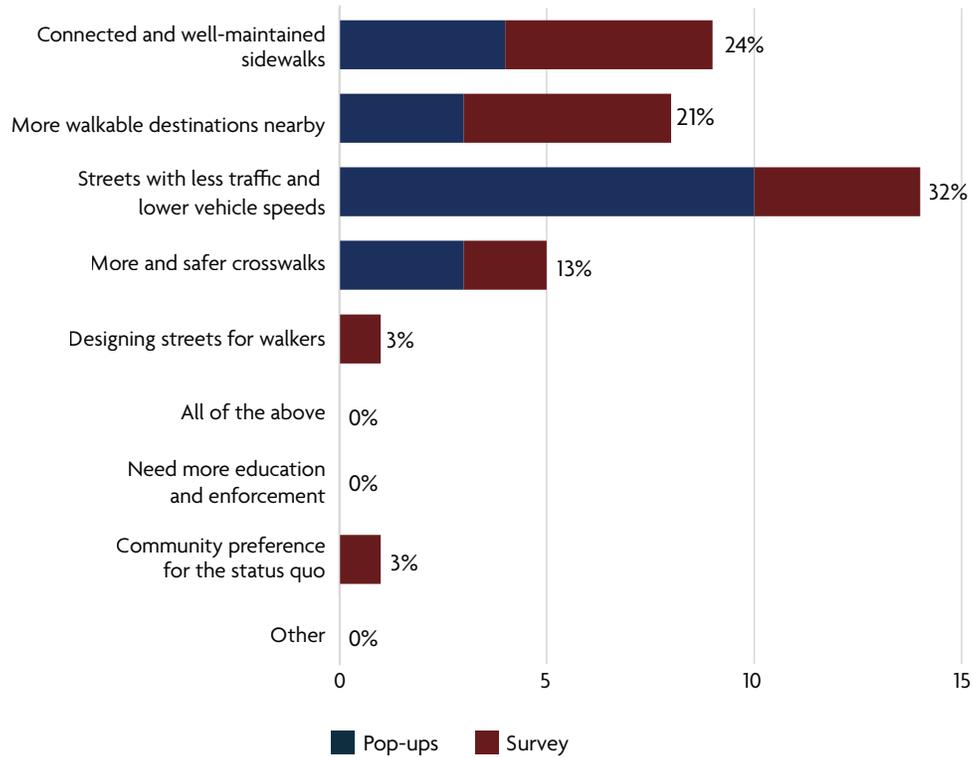
## DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



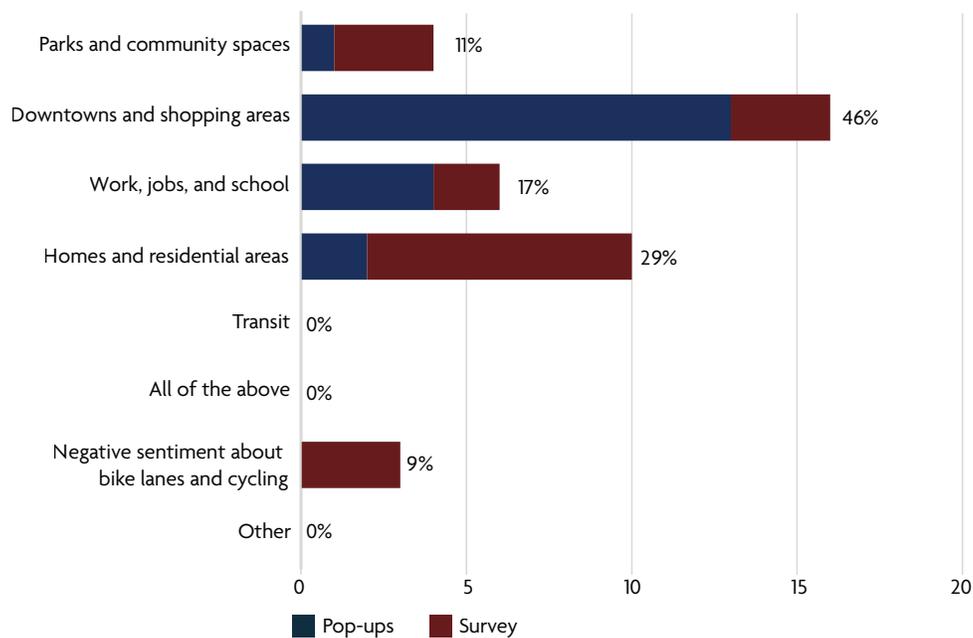
## TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY (OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



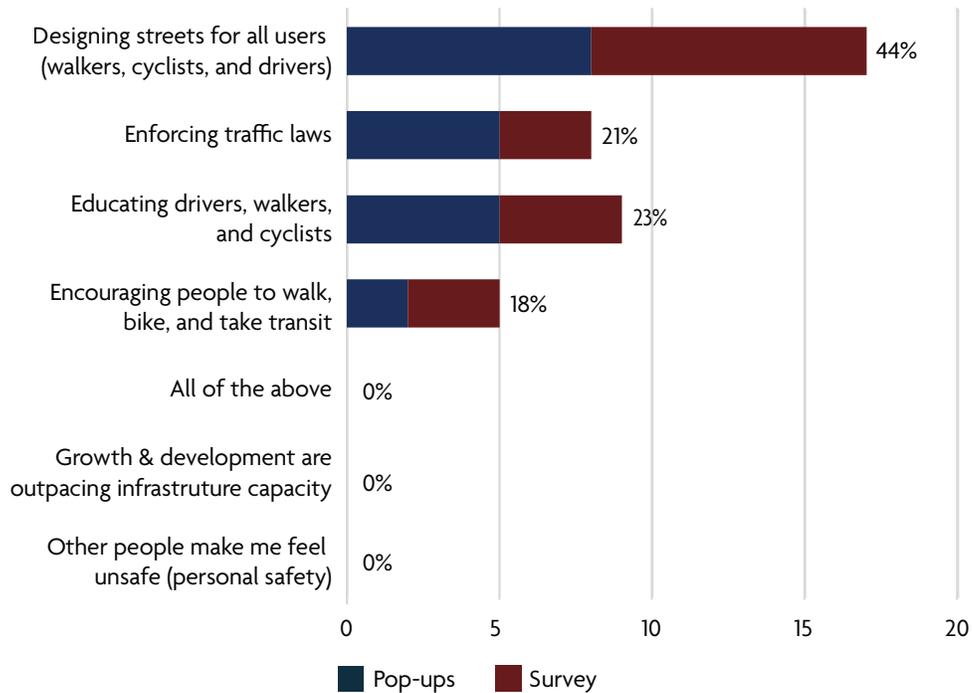
**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



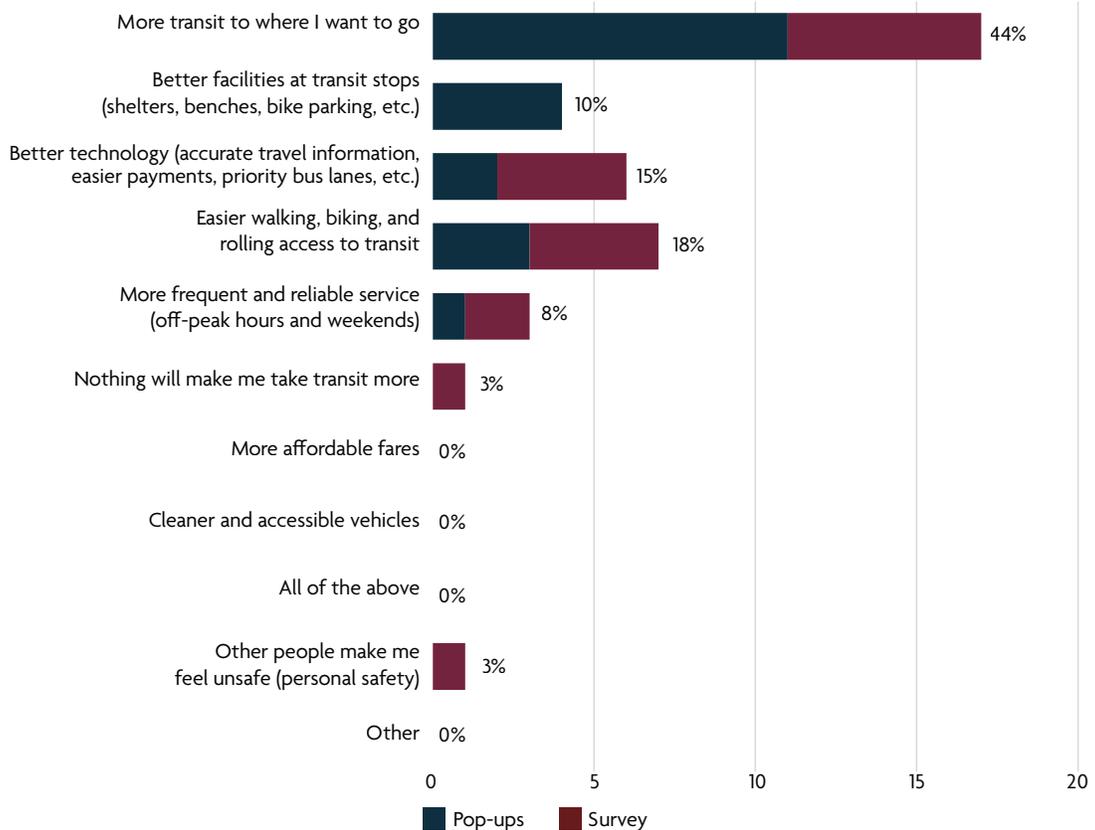
**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



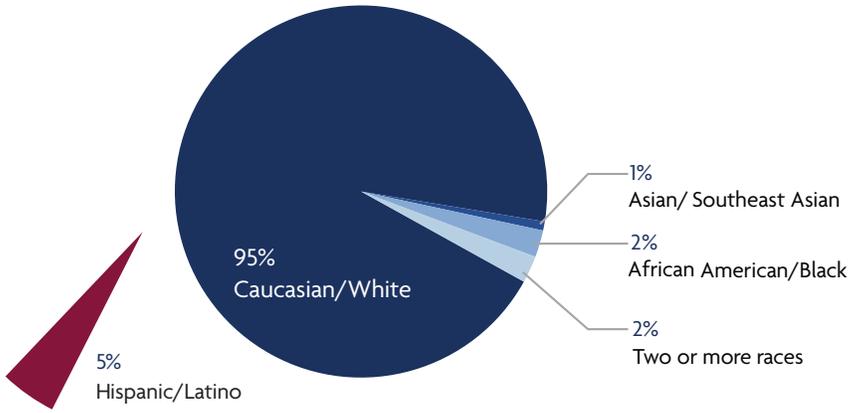
**SAFER STREETS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



**TRANSIT ACCESS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

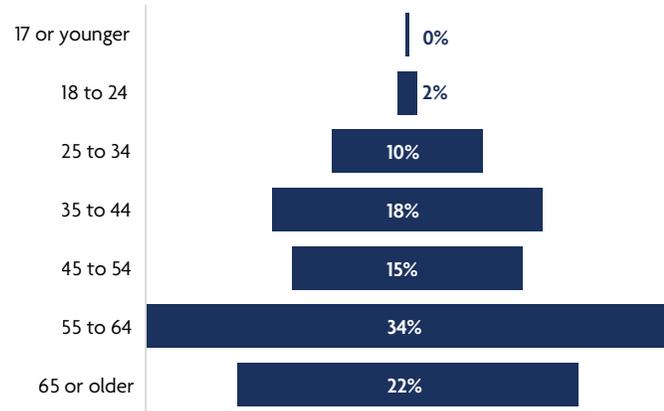


RACE & ETHNICITY



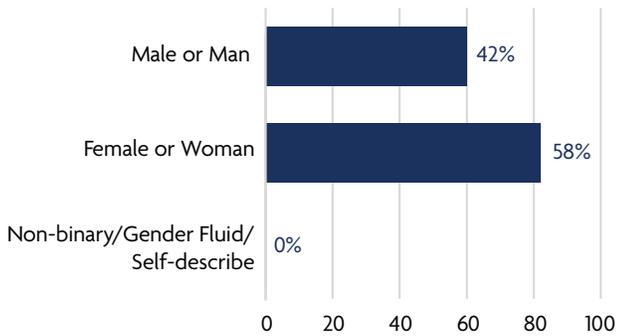
142 responses (89.9% response rate)

AGE



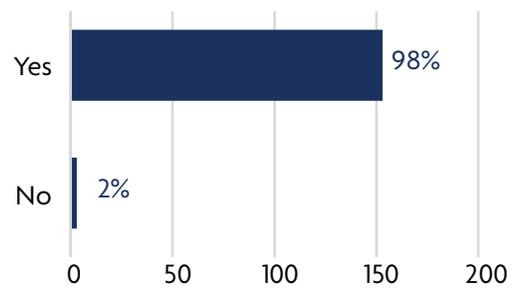
153 responses (96.8% response rate)

GENDER



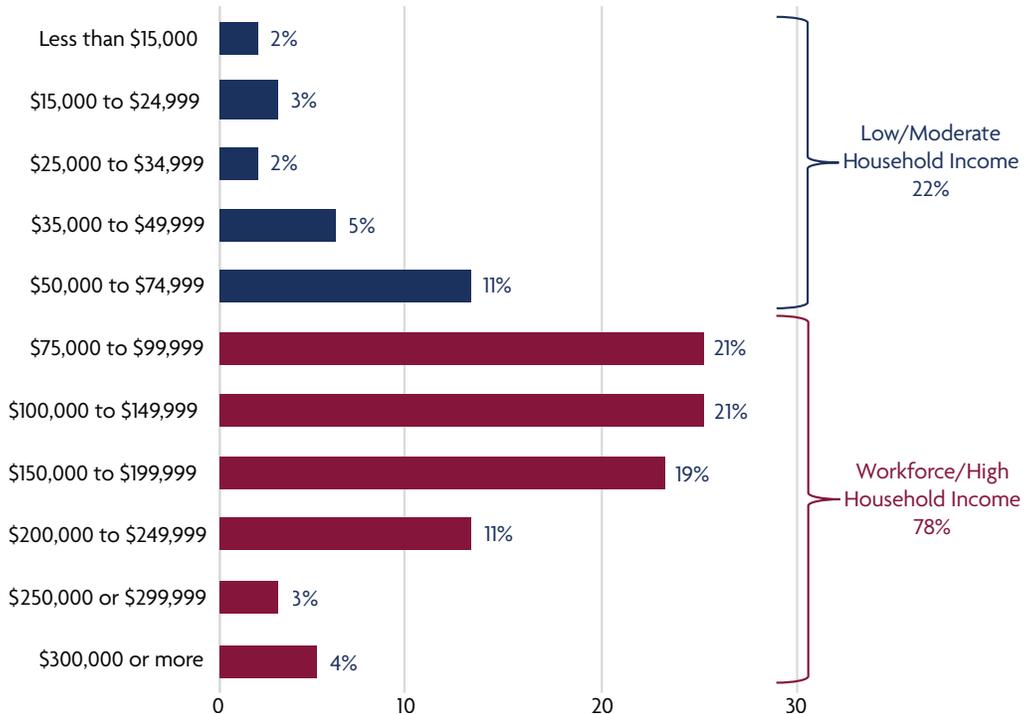
142 responses (89.9% response rate)

ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



156 responses (98.7% response rate)

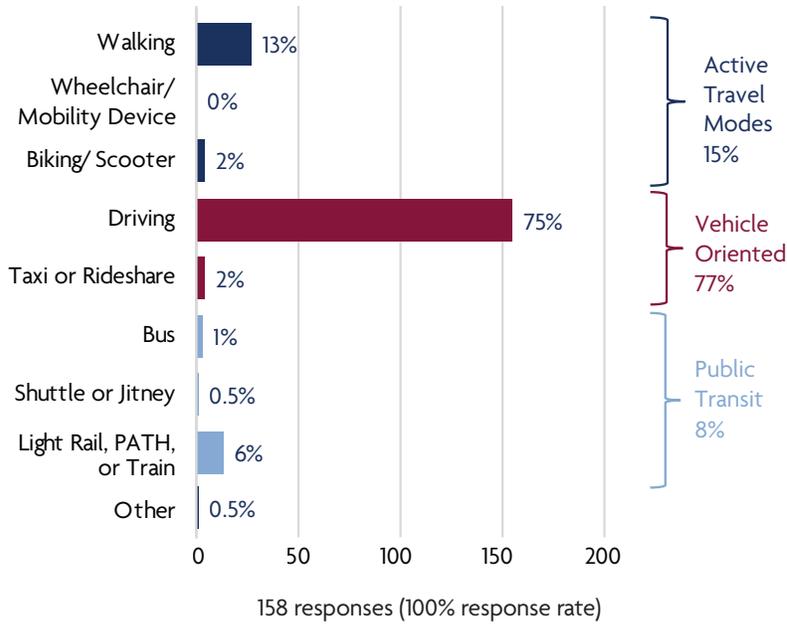
HOUSEHOLD INCOME



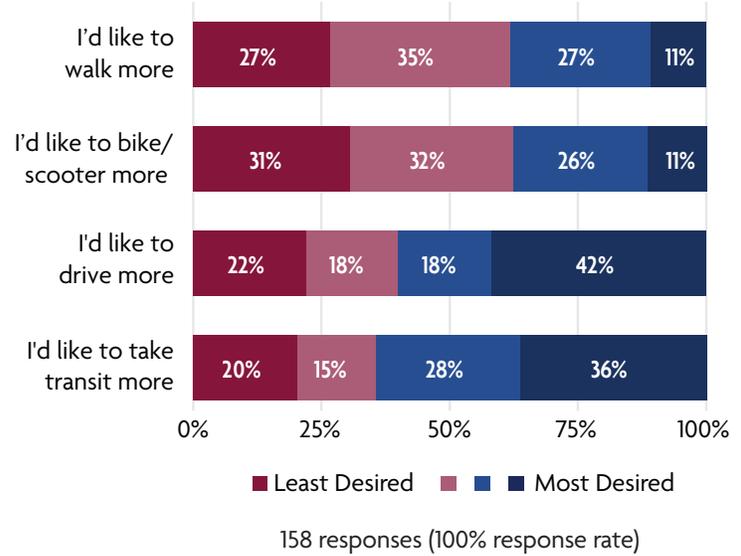
120 responses (75.9% response rate)

# Warren County - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

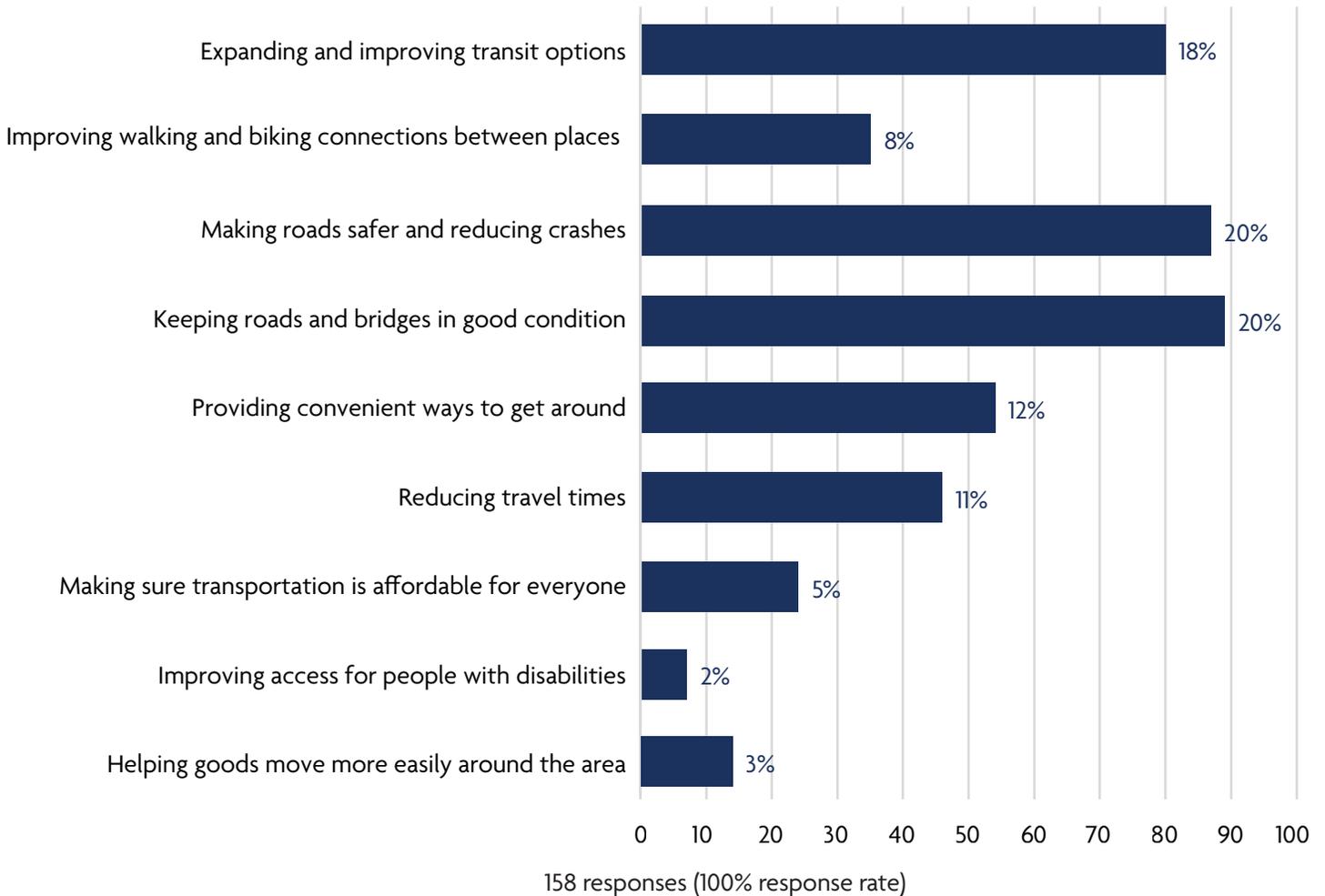
## CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



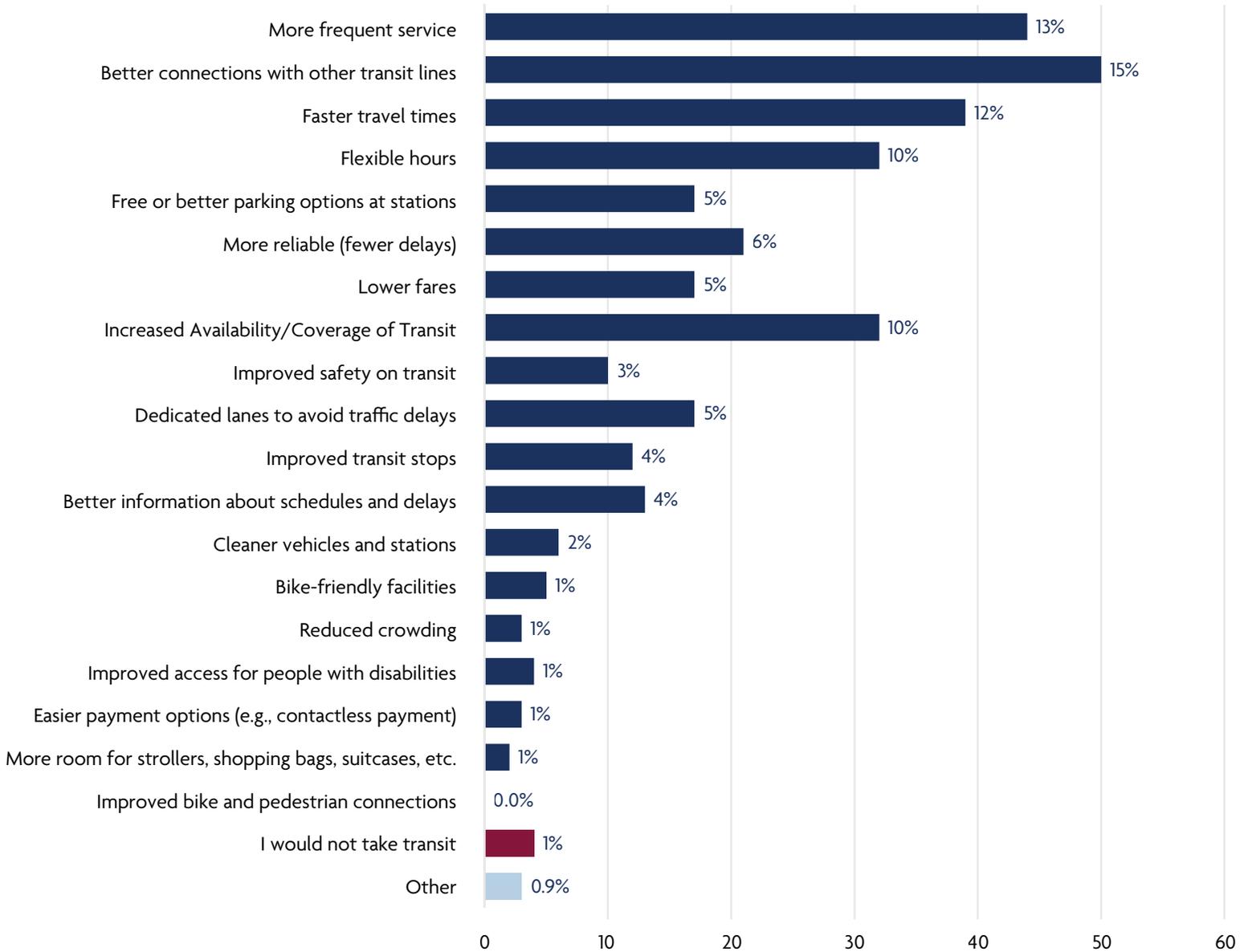
## FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



## IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

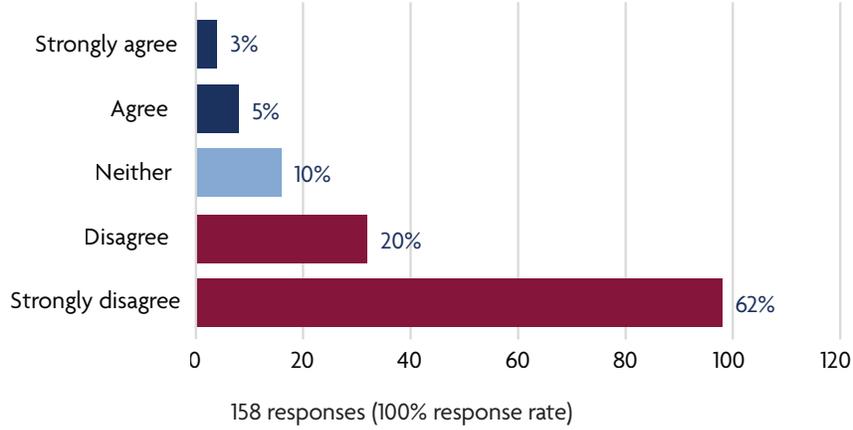


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

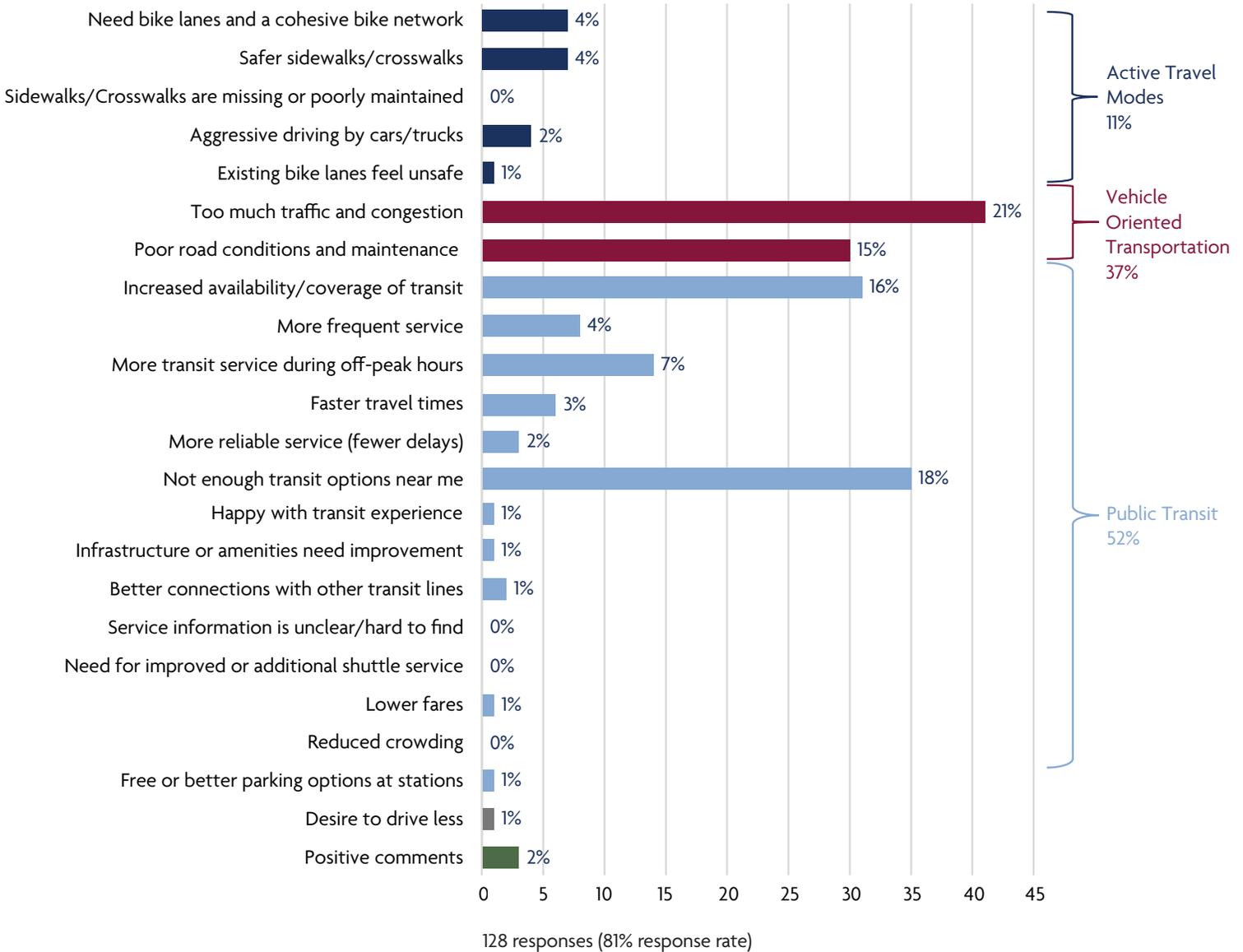


142 respondents (89.9%) Directed to Question  
 136 responses (95.8% response rate)

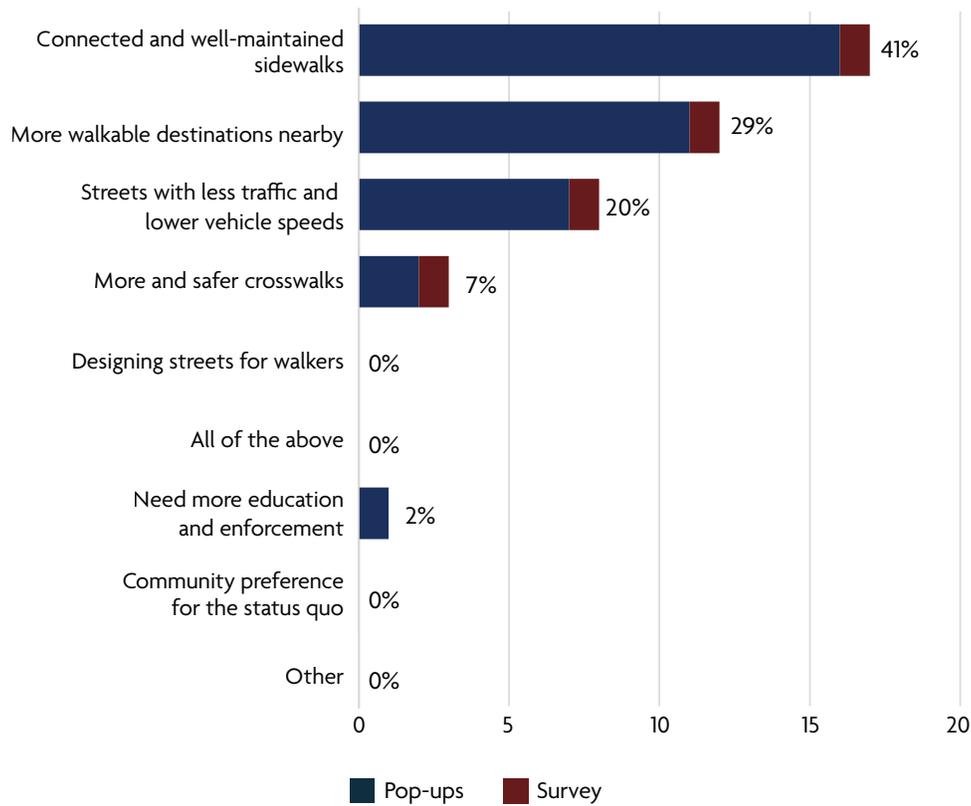
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



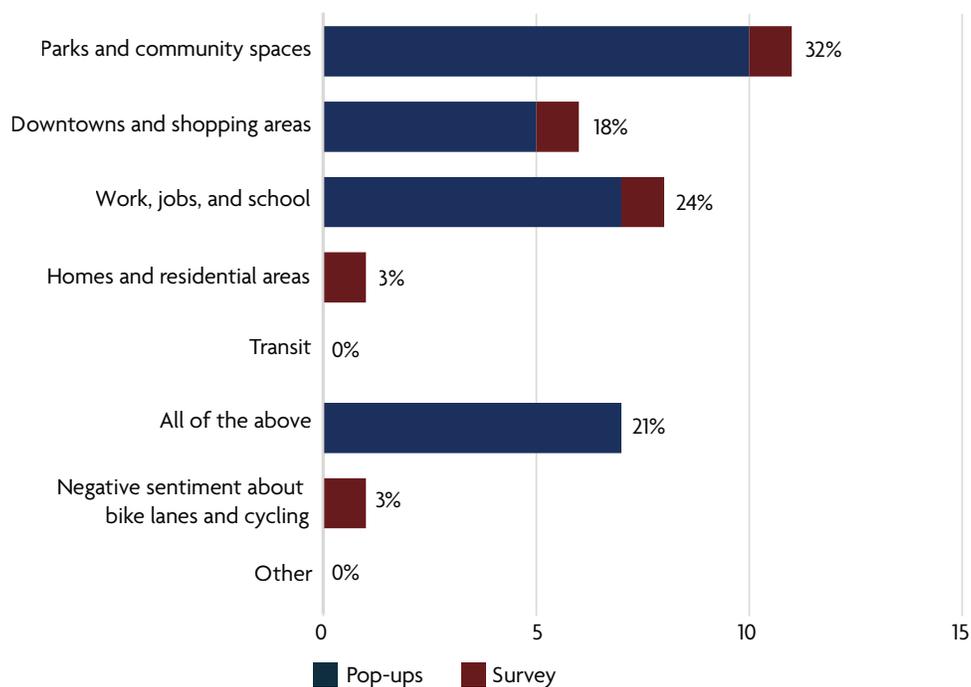
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

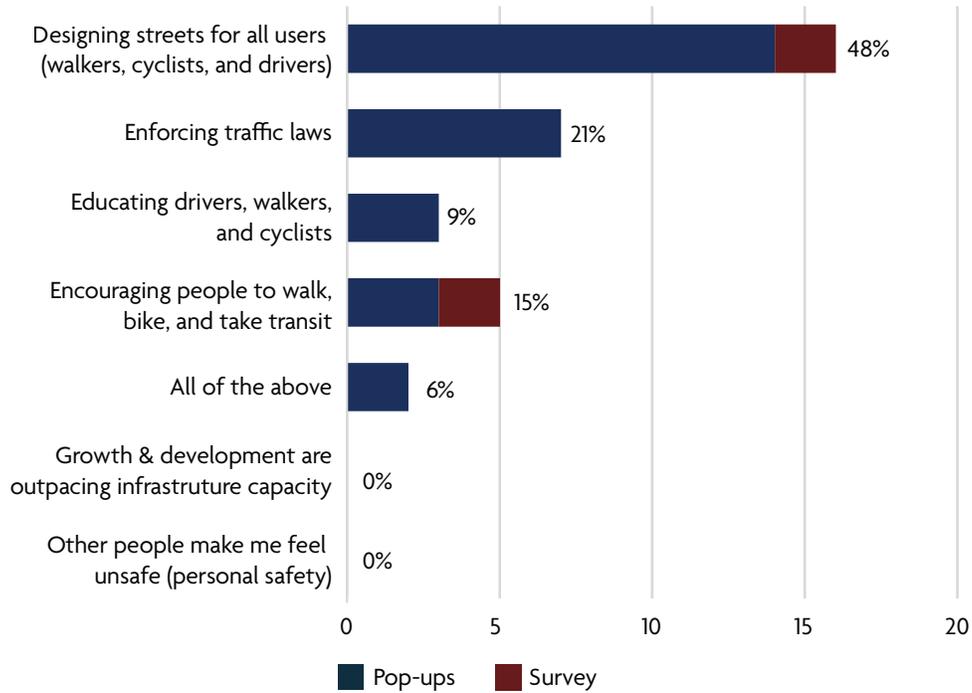


**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



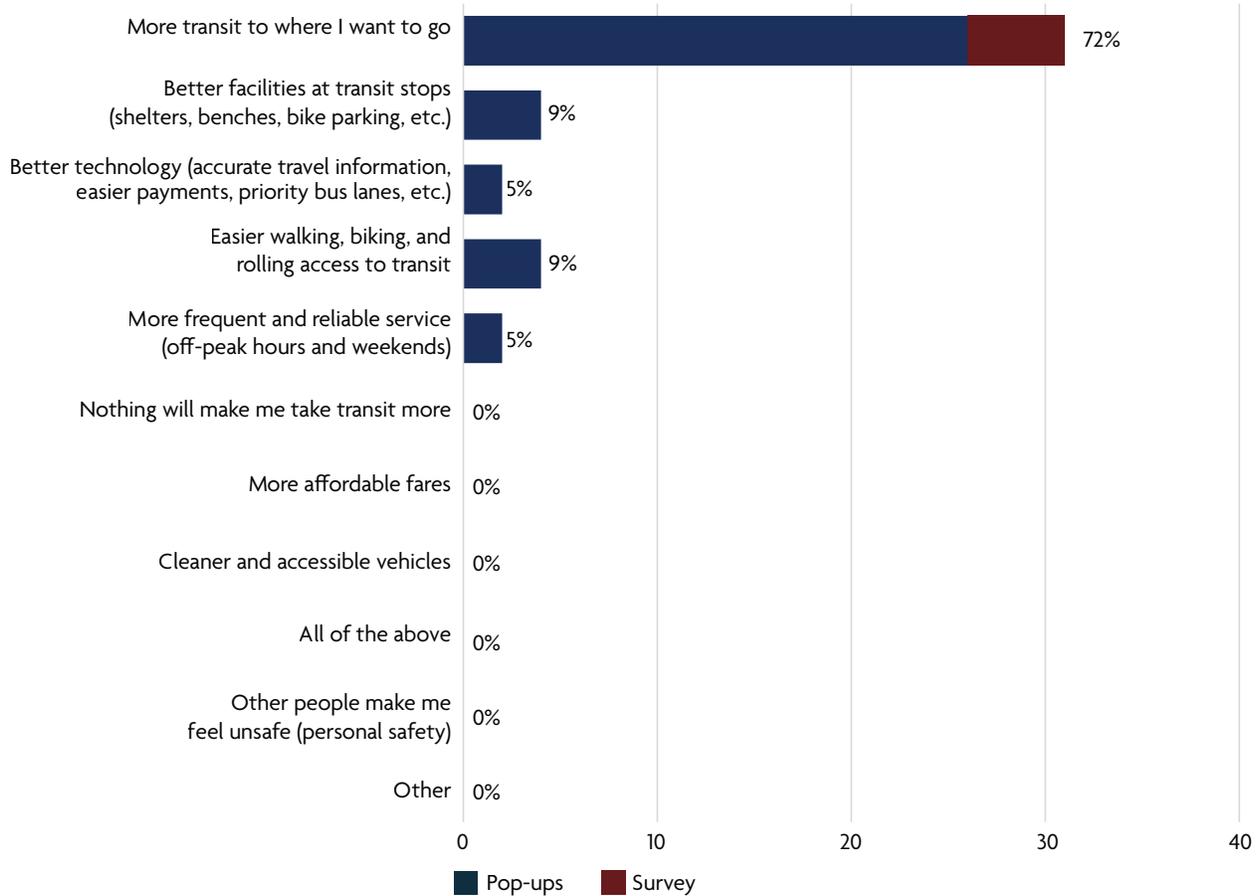
**SAFER STREETS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

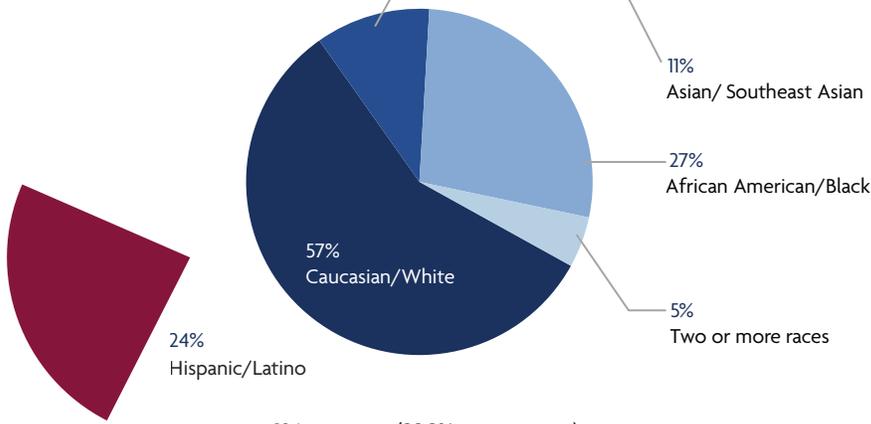


**TRANSIT ACCESS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

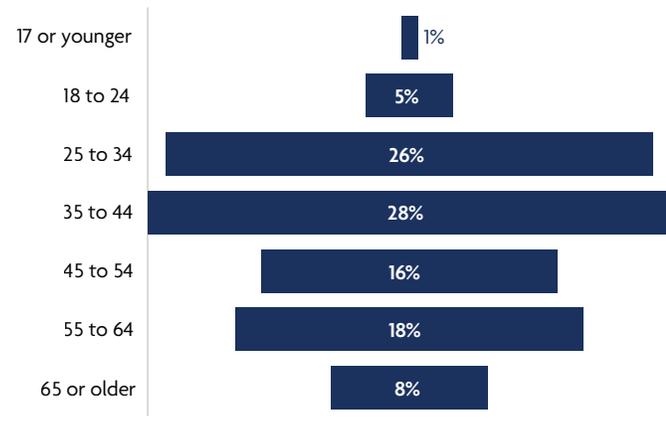


RACE & ETHNICITY



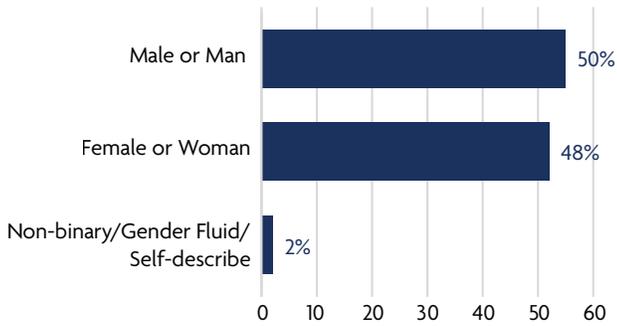
104 responses (88.9% response rate)

AGE



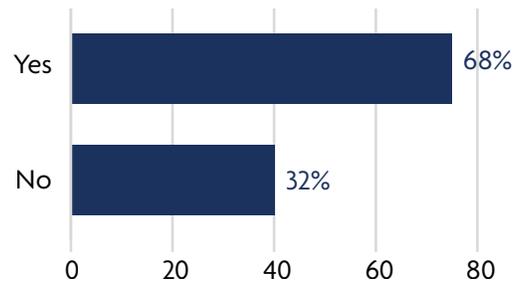
110 responses (94% response rate)

GENDER



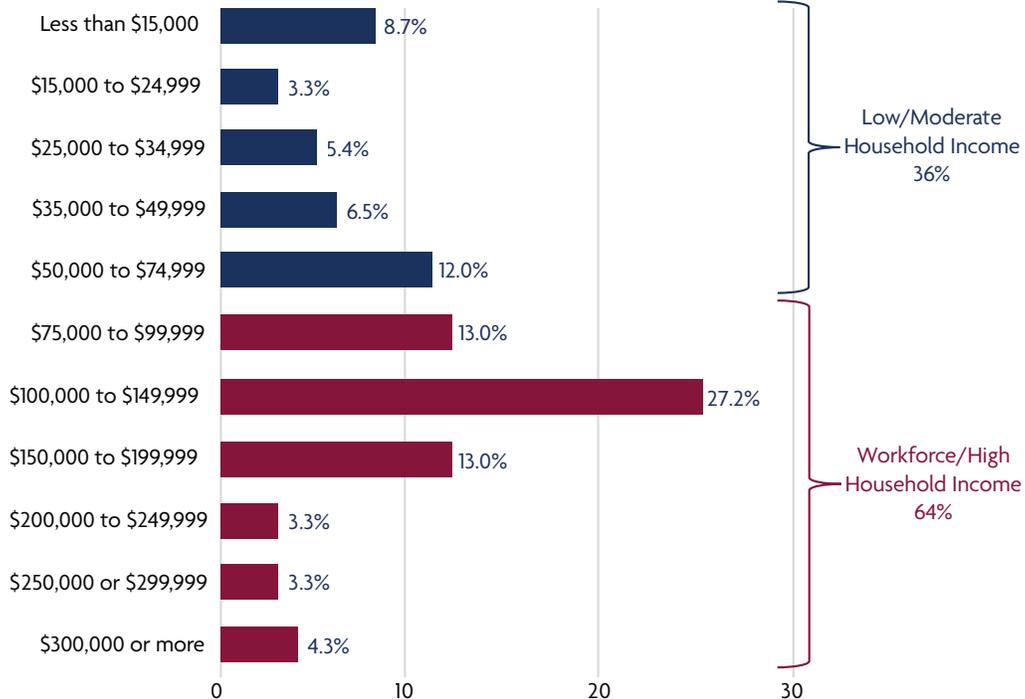
109 responses (93.2% response rate)

ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE



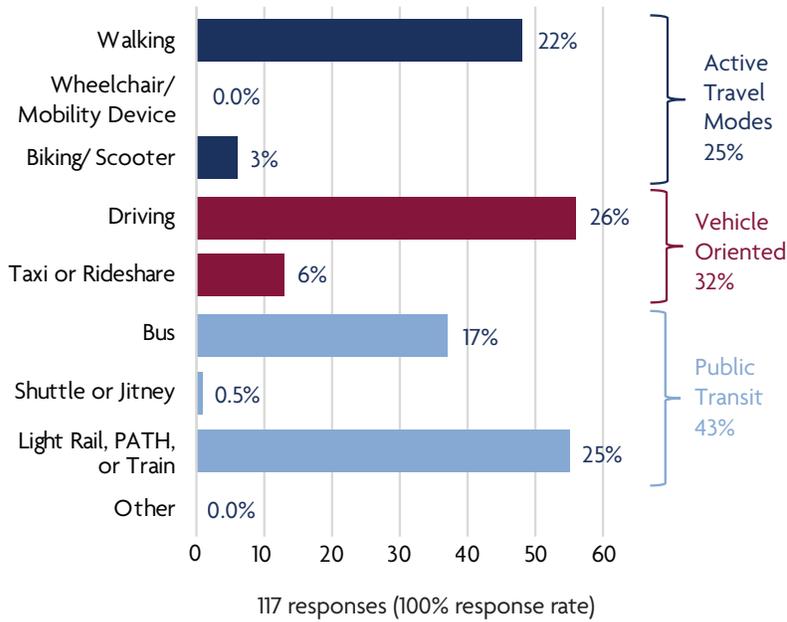
110 responses (94% response rate)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

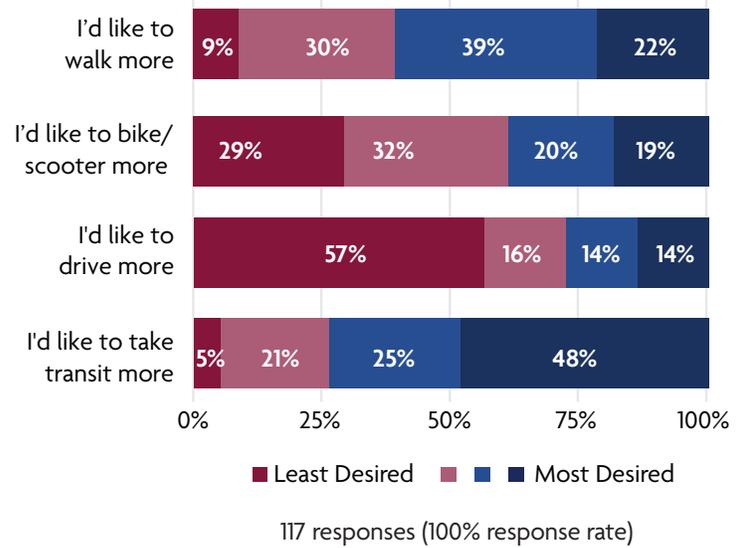


92 responses (78.6% response rate)

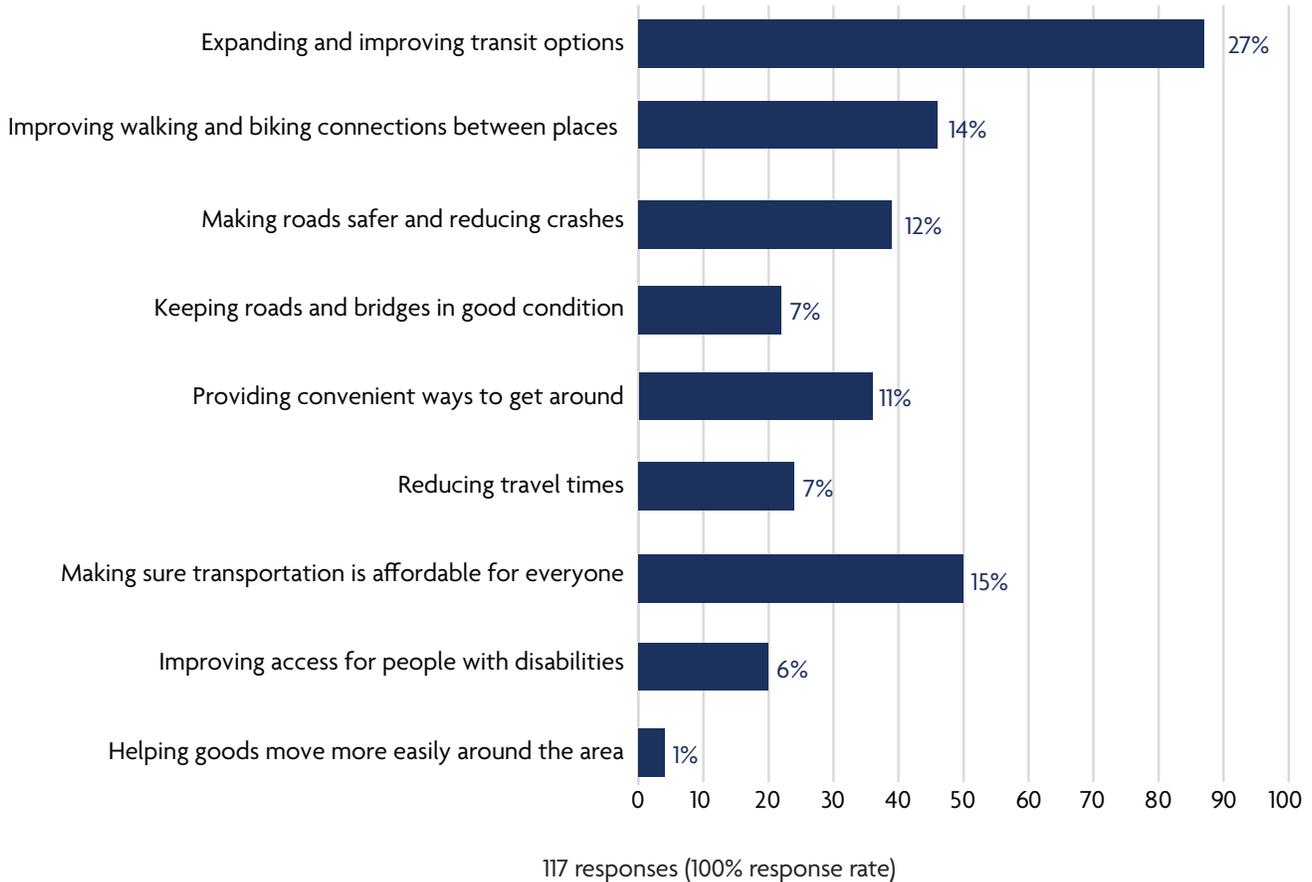
CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



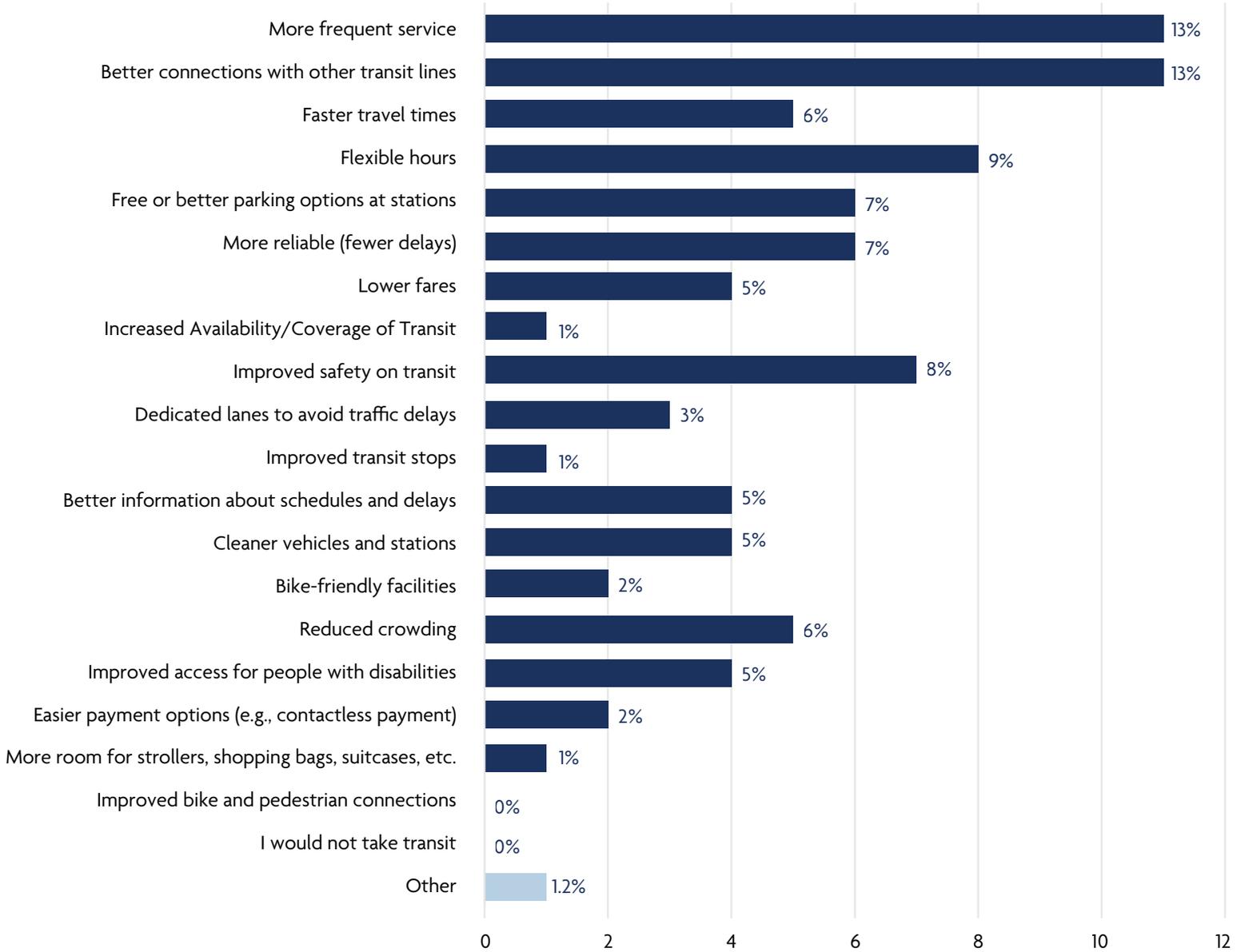
FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

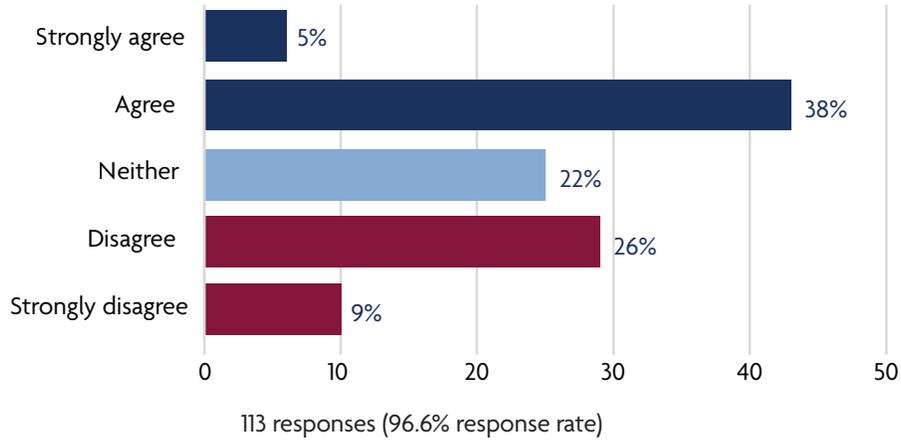


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

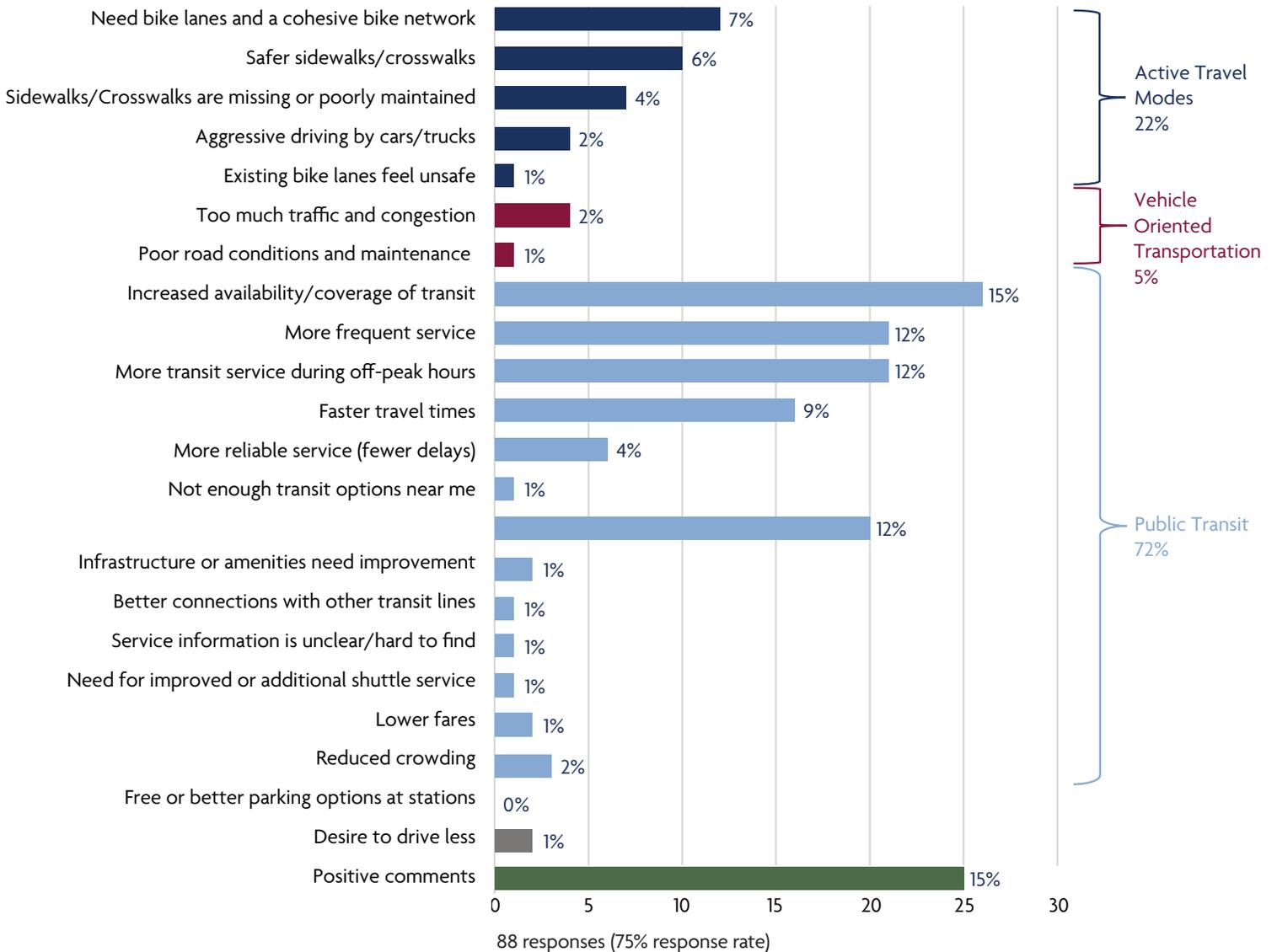


37 respondents (31.6%) Directed to Question  
 33 responses (89.2% response rate)

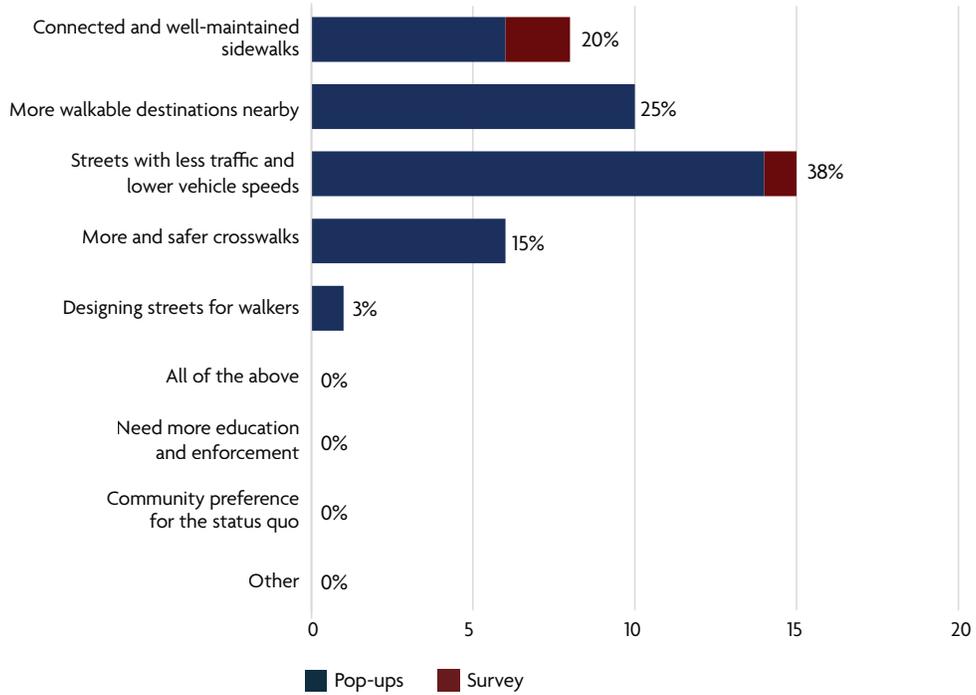
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



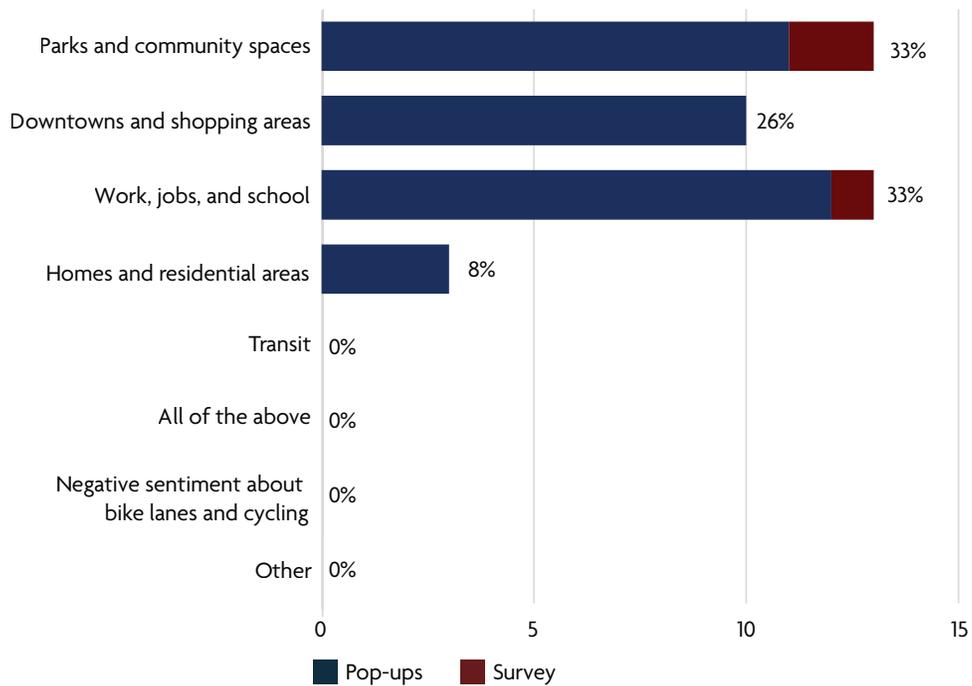
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

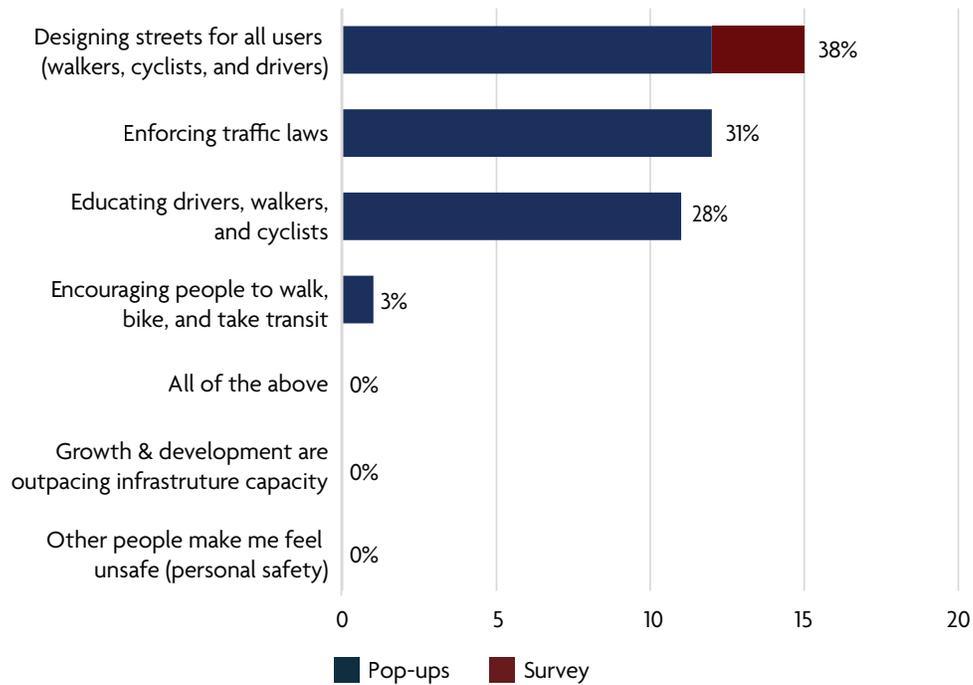


**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



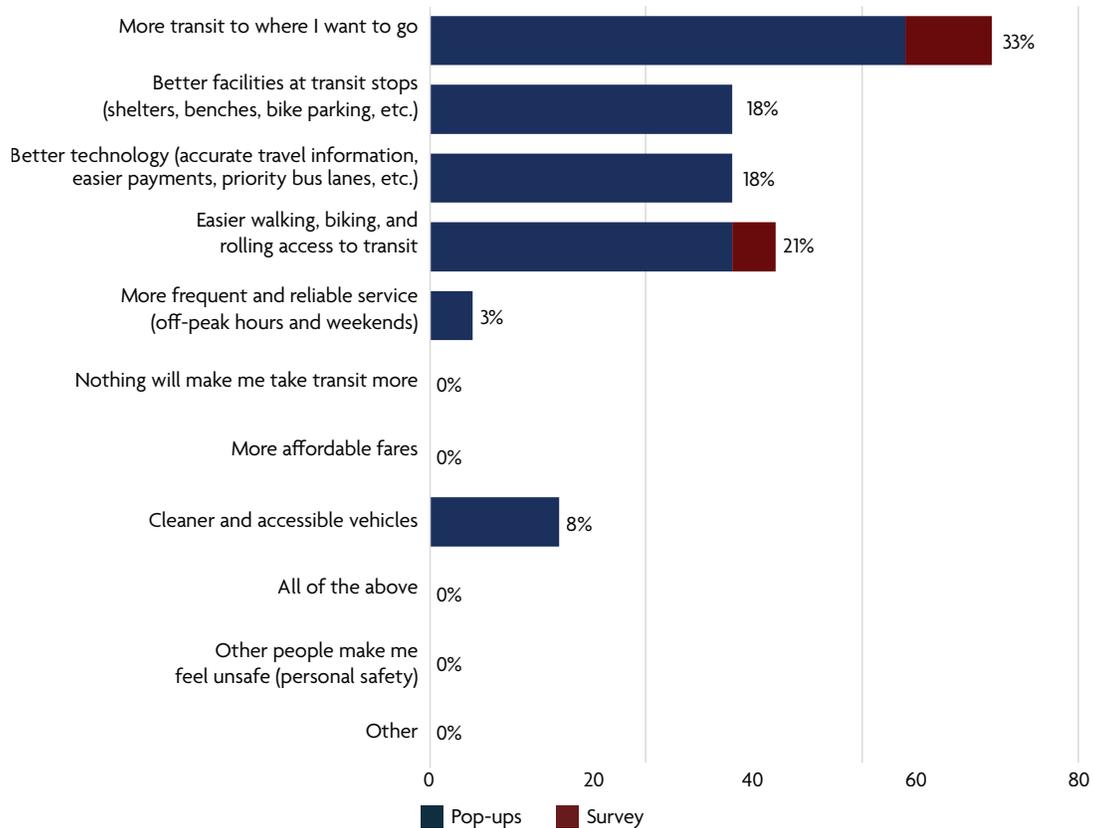
**SAFER STREETS**

(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)

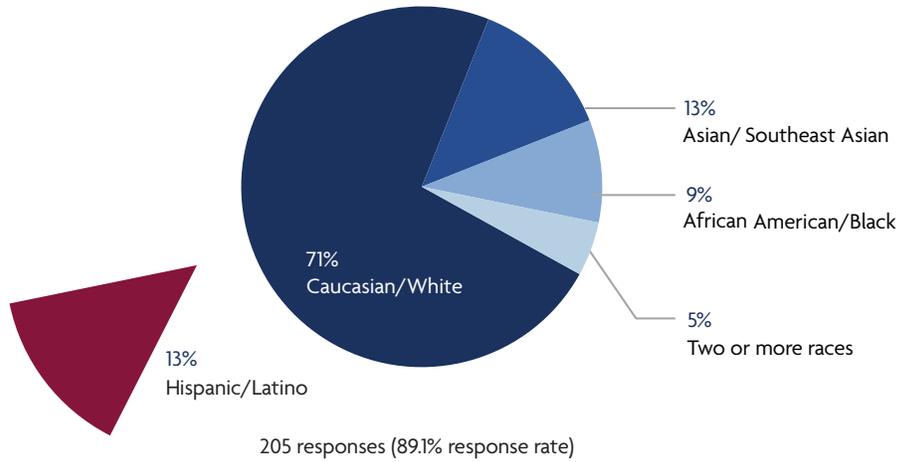


**TRANSIT ACCESS**

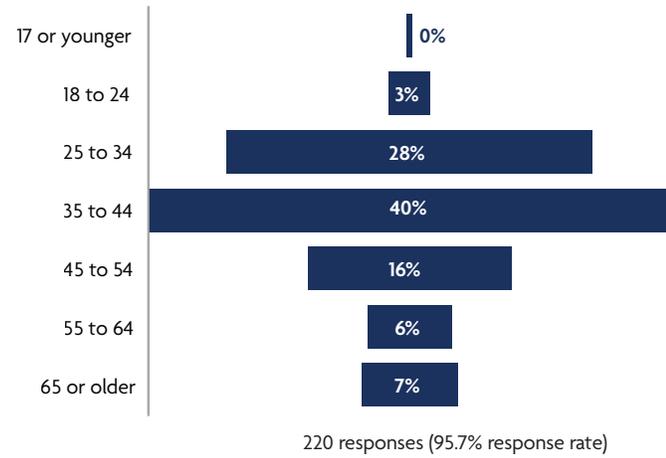
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



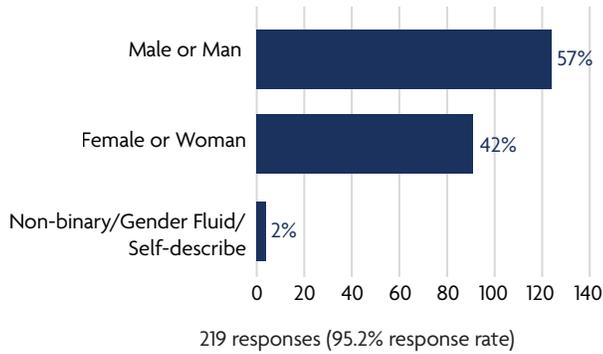
## RACE & ETHNICITY



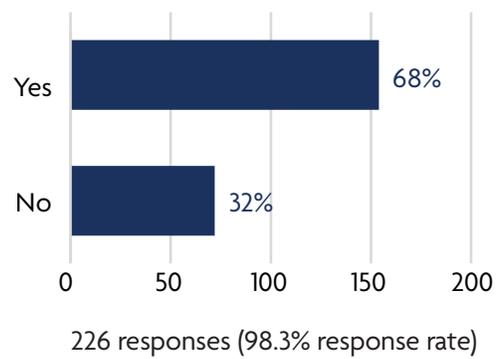
## AGE



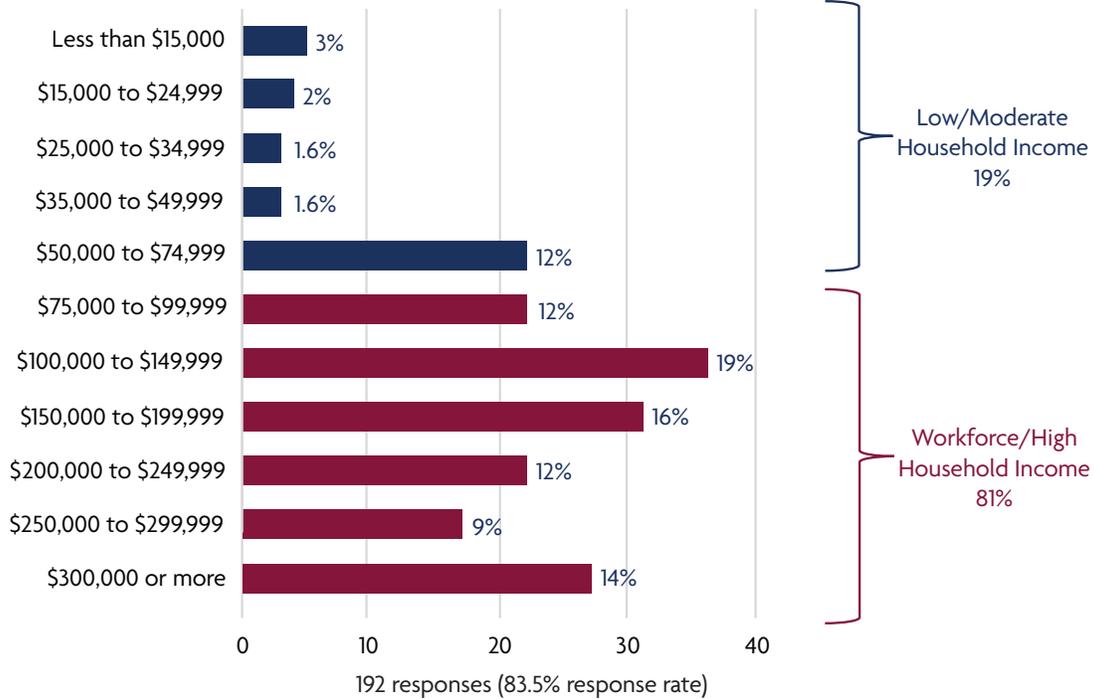
## GENDER



## ACCESS TO PERSONAL VEHICLE

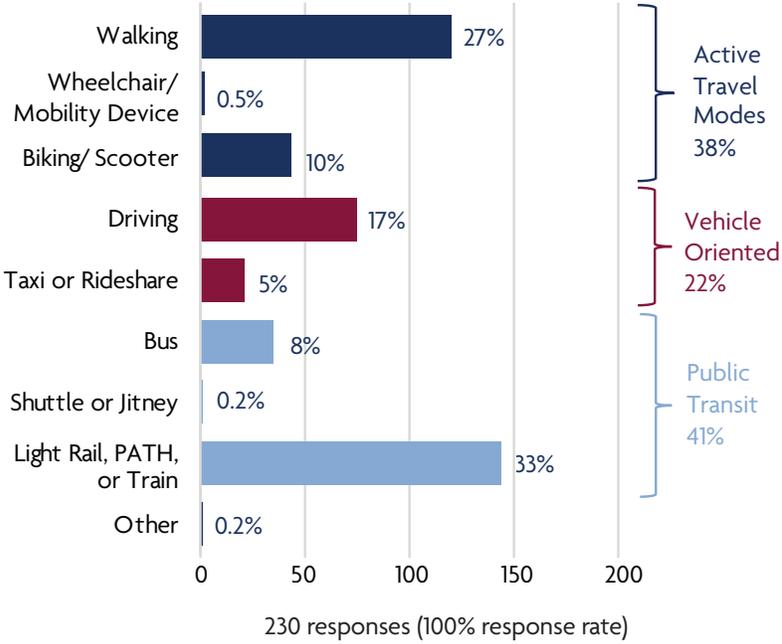


## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

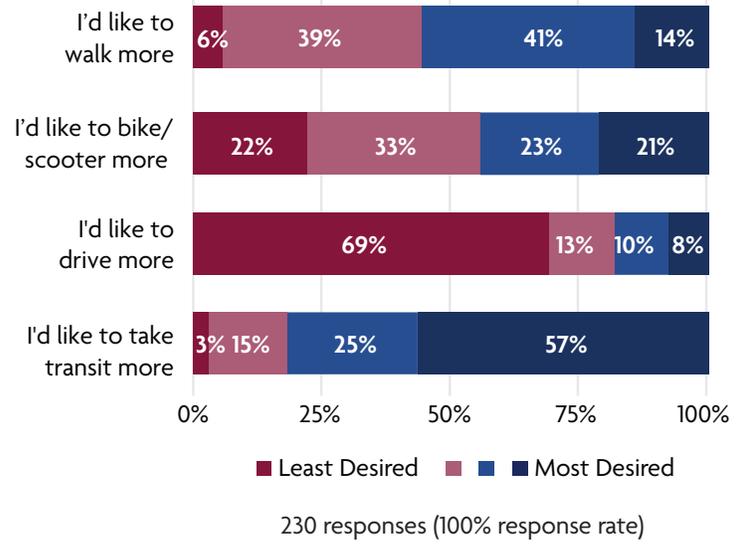


# Jersey City - Survey Responses (Phase 1)

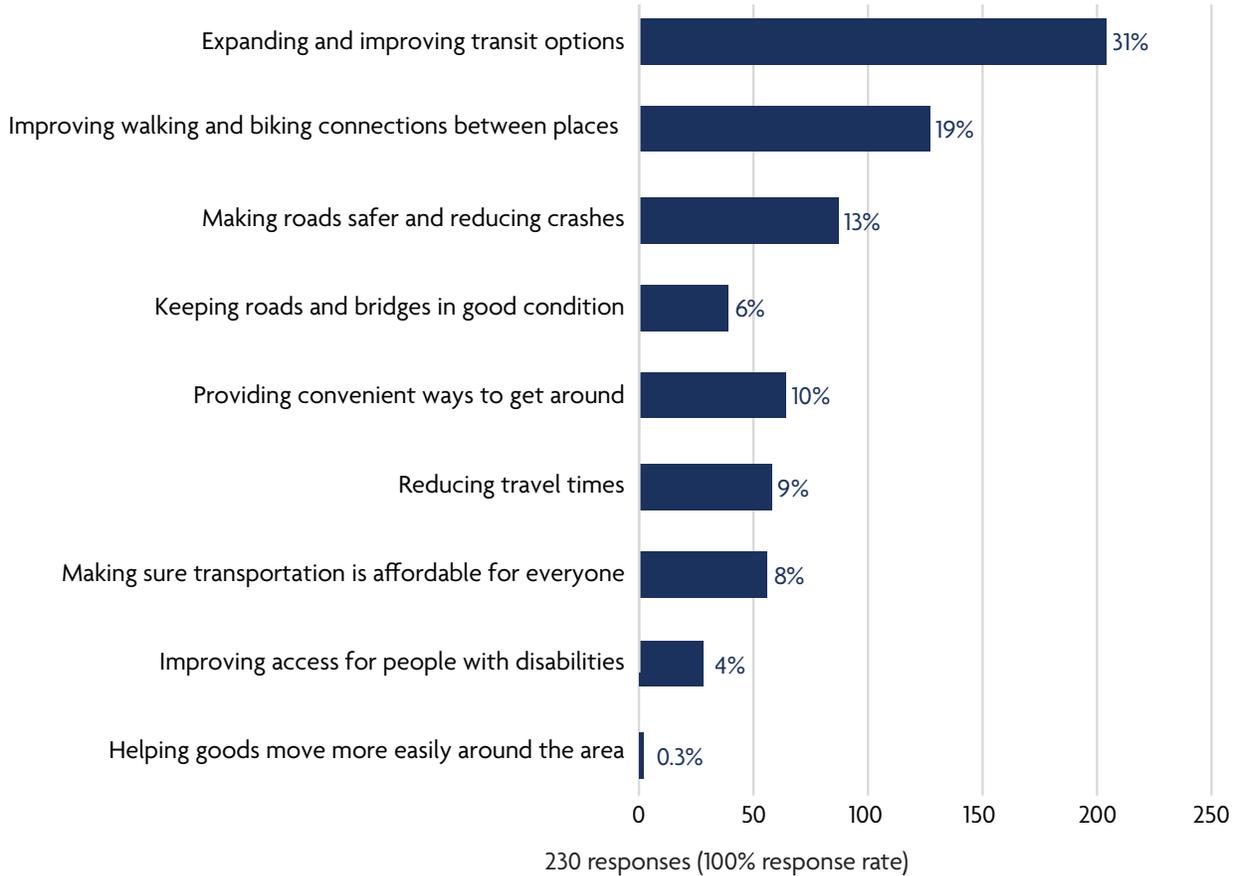
## CURRENT TRAVEL MODE



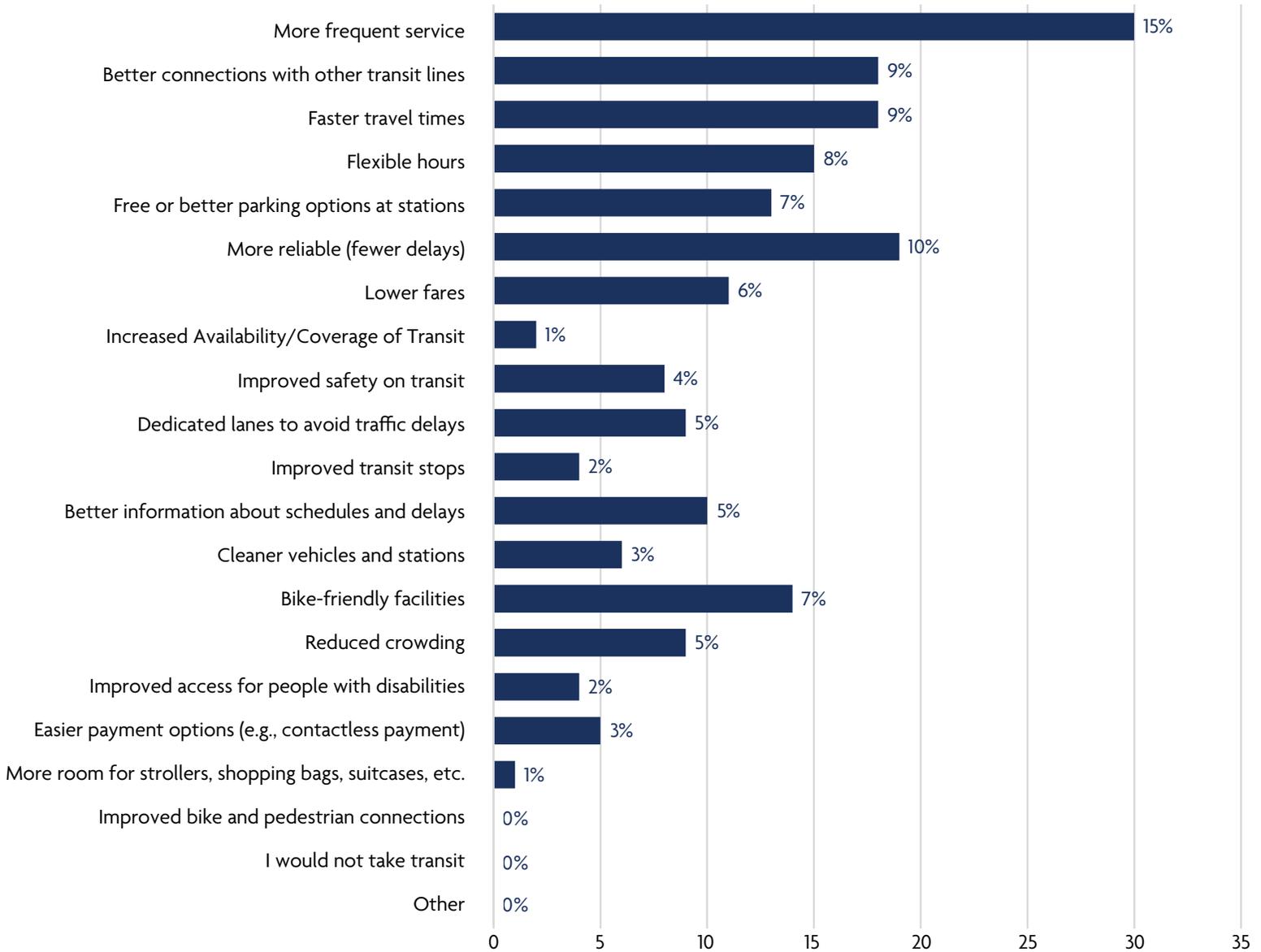
## FUTURE TRAVEL MODE



## IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT

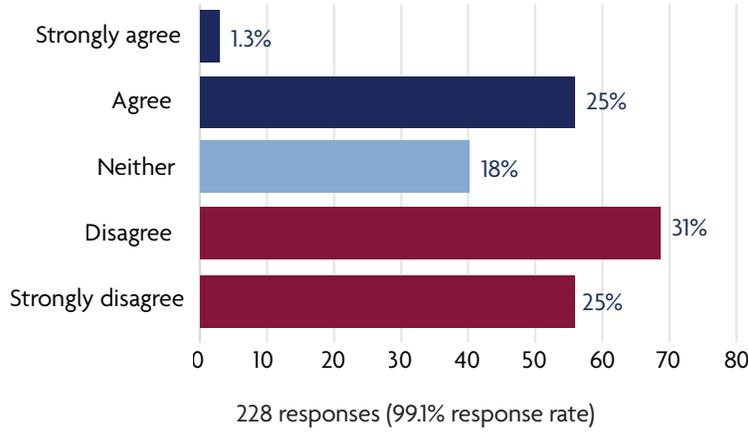


WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE TRANSIT?

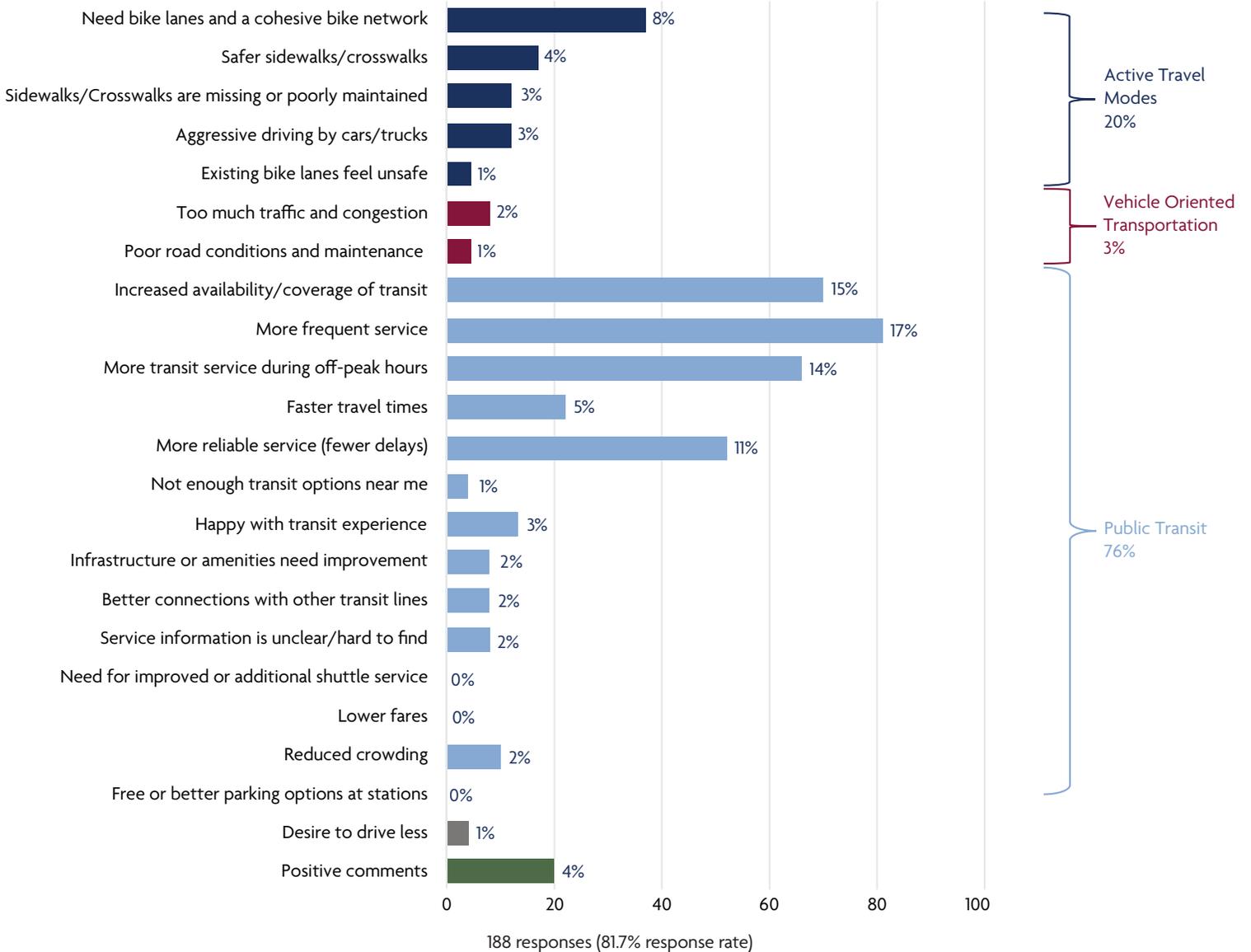


64 respondents (27.8%) Directed to Question  
 64 responses (100% response rate)

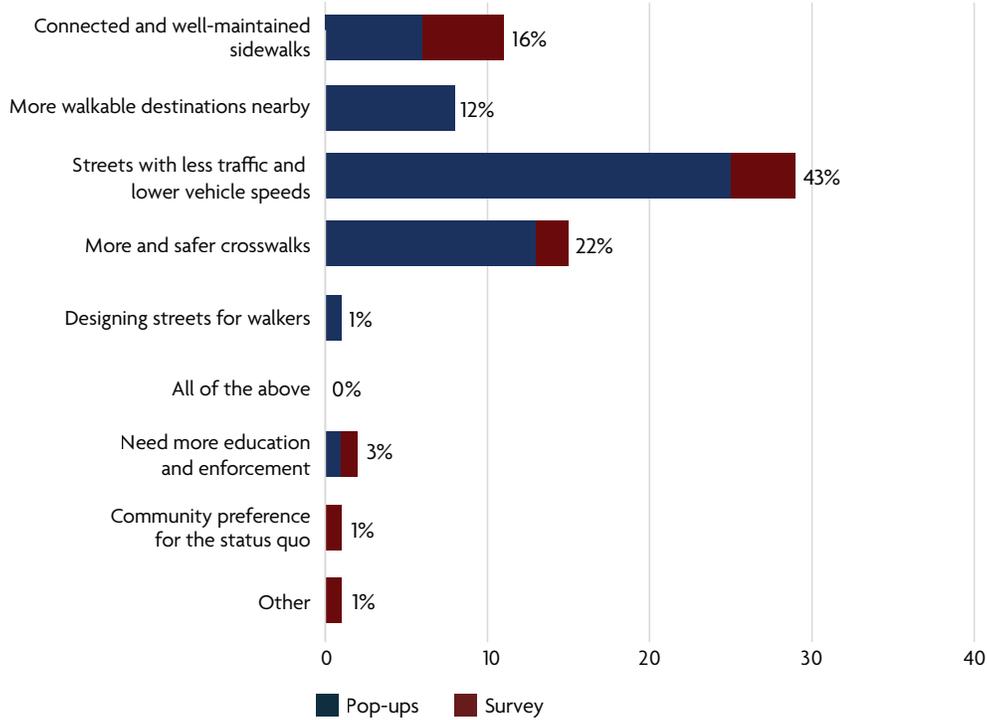
DOES THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEET YOUR NEEDS?



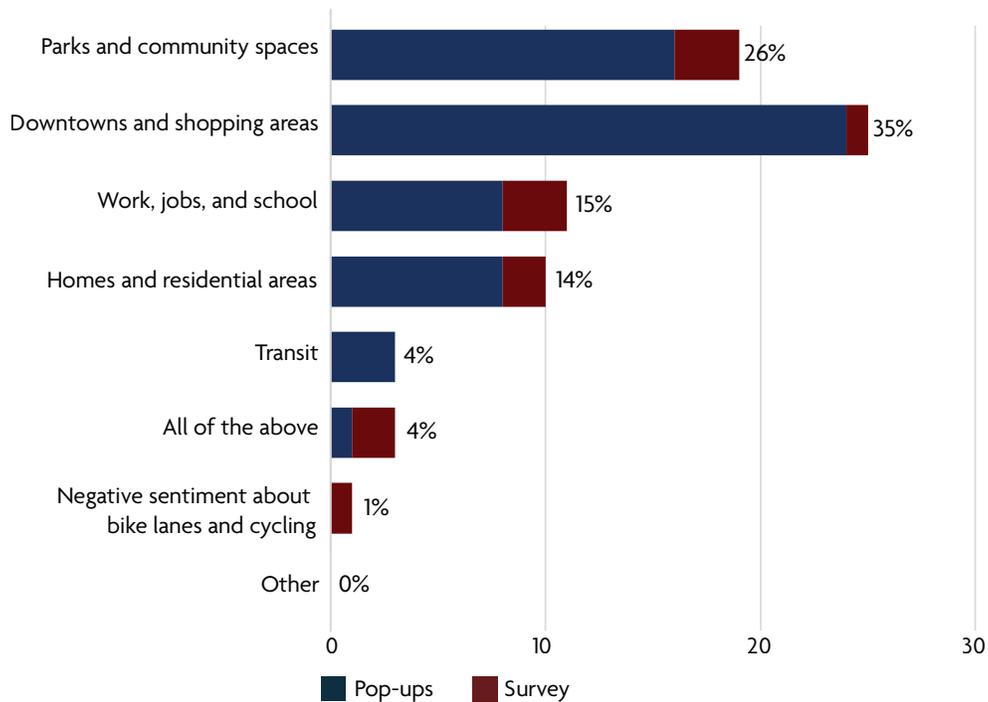
TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY  
(OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)



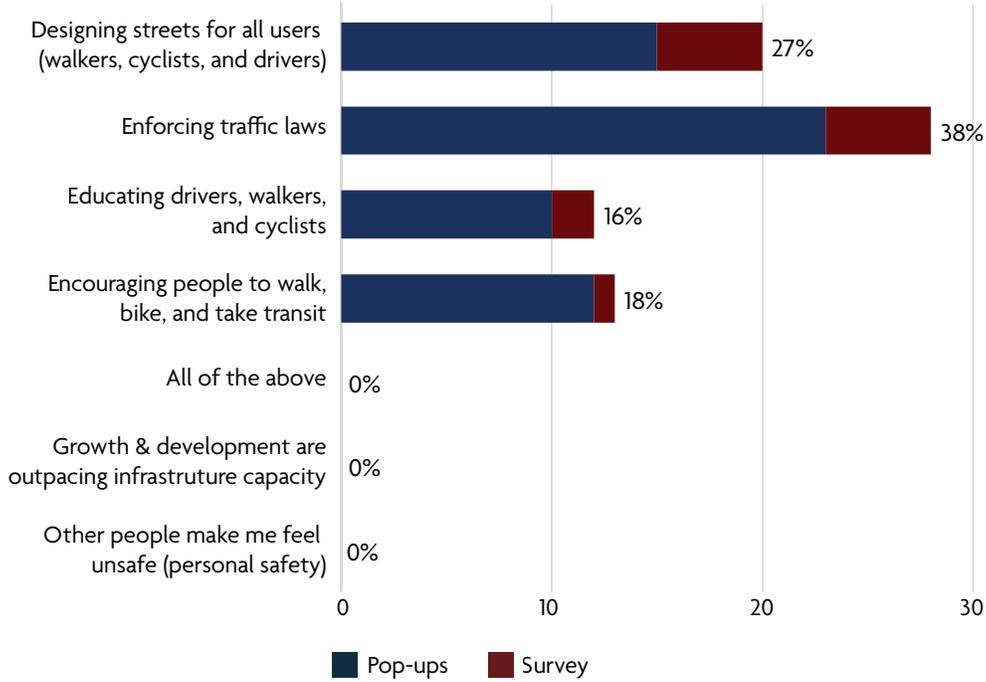
**WALKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



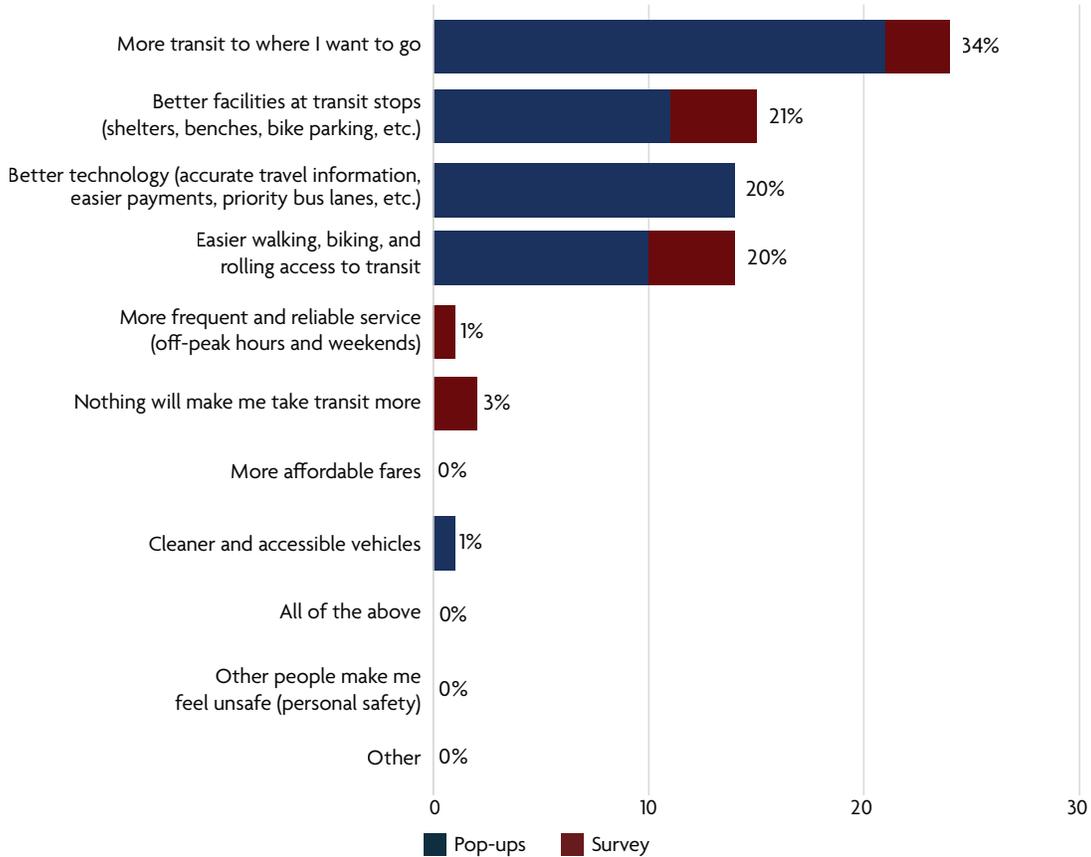
**BIKING IMPROVEMENTS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



**SAFER STREETS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



**TRANSIT ACCESS**  
(All Pop-up Locations and Survey Results Combined)



## 2. Public Comment

### **Comments received on drafts of *Connecting Communities*, the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program, FY 2026-2035 State Transportation Improvement Program, and Air Quality Conformity Determination with Responses August 27, 2025**

The NJTPA provided many opportunities for public input when developing *Connecting Communities: The NJTPA Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)*. This included a plan website, online and paper surveys, virtual forums, in-person pop-up events across the region and targeted outreach to engage kids and teens, young adults, people with limited English proficiency and more. Information about the public input gathered through these means is incorporated into the draft *Connecting Communities* and detailed in Appendix C.

The draft LRTP was the subject of a 30-day public comment period (beginning on July 7, 2025 and concluding August 5, 2025) as required by federal law. The comment period also provided an opportunity for public review of the draft FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the FY 2026-2035 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and the accompanying Air Quality Conformity Determination for both *Connecting Communities* and the TIP.

Before the start of the public comment period, the draft LRTP, TIP, and Air Quality Conformity Determination documents were distributed by mail and electronically (as requested) to the state-designated main libraries in each county in the NJTPA region. Also, the draft documents were distributed electronically to the NJTPA's Board of Trustees, Board alternates, members of the NJTPA's Regional Transportation Advisory Committee, the federally recognized Tribal Nations, and any other parties who so requested. The NJTPA also used its electronic mailing list, the list of people who participated in outreach events, and other stakeholder lists to distribute links to all draft documents, provide information about the comment period and announce opportunities to provide input.

During the comment period, the NJTPA held a virtual open house public meeting on July 17, 2025 in which 42 people participated. This meeting, preceded by a separate virtual public workshop on the draft Air Quality Conformity Determination attended by approximately 30 people, included a welcome "lobby," a general presentation (conducted four times during the meeting), and a series of virtual breakout rooms in which people could ask specific questions and get more information about *Connecting Communities*, the TIP/STIP and Air Quality Conformity Determination. There also was a separate breakout room for attendees

to participate in Spanish.

This document contains summaries of comments received prior to and during the 30-day public comment period as well as responses. The full text of written and voicemail comments is available on the [NJTPA website](#). The NJTPA thanks all commenters for their ongoing interest, engagement and participation in the regional transportation planning process.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

*Commenter:* Andy Weiss

*Summary:* There is a need for bus rapid transit, particularly in Bergen and Hudson counties, and an extension of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail to Bergen County.

*Response:* *Connecting Communities* highlights the need for strategic transit improvements and for funding to implement and operate them, such as in Chapter 3. Appendix A: Transit Needs discusses the benefits of extending the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail into Bergen County (page 7). In addition, bus service enhancements, including those in Hudson County, are mentioned on page 6. These comments were also shared with NJ TRANSIT who concurred with this response.

*Commenter:* Jason Huang

*Summary:* Consider creating a registry of municipal government master plans that have made a commitment to creating active transportation routes.

*Response:* The New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center compiles a list of counties and municipalities that have adopted a Complete Streets policy, which can be used to identify towns that have a commitment to active transportation: <https://njbikeped.org/nj-complete-streets-policy-compilation/>

*Summary:* Provide financial incentives for demonstration projects or full design-build construction of small-scale projects to help municipalities improve sidewalks, crosswalks or install roundabouts.

*Response:* The NJTPA provides technical assistance to municipalities, which includes materials to install demonstration projects. In partnership with the state's Transportation

Management Associations (TMAs) the NJTPA has supported more than 20 demonstration projects. Municipalities can apply to the state's Transportation Alternative Set-Aside Program, Safe Routes to School, and other federally funded programs to implement improvements.

*Summary:* Use the *Connecting Communities* website to publicize actionable output from the Regional Active Transportation Plan and to provide output of the Barrier Analysis.

*Response:* The *Connecting Communities* website is about the long-range plan. The NJTPA has a webpage and data and mapping tools that aim to advance recommendations of the Regional Active Transportation Plan, including sharing the Barrier Analysis. In addition, in the next year, the NJTPA will undertake a corridor study of select trail segments to advance recommendations of the Regional Active Transportation Plan.

*Summary:* Evaluate the inclusion of an Automated Guideway Transit system running parallel to the multi-use path within the Essex-Hudson Greenway. Add a reference to autonomous shuttles or vehicles to *Connecting Communities*.

*Response:* *Connecting Communities* supports continued development of technologies that are transformative, such as automated or connected vehicles, and those that improve travel operations, such as connected traffic signals, real-time transit information, and public transportation automation. The draft is being updated to include a reference to automating public transportation.

*NJ TRANSIT Response:* NJ TRANSIT is working with partners such as the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in the development of the transit component of the Essex-Hudson Greenway. NJ TRANSIT continues to participate in several efforts and forums associated with the testing and analysis of autonomous vehicles (AVs) for use in passenger transportation. NJ TRANSIT recognizes the potential role of AVs as a transit mode and for access to trunk line transit. The agency continues to monitor AV industry developments and consider the readiness and suitability for potential use of AVs, safely, within the rigors of a real-world operating environment.

## COMMENTS FROM LACKAWANNA COALITION

Sally Jane Gellert, Chair of the Lackawanna Coalition, submitted two pages of comments on behalf of the organization. They are summarized and responded to below by topic area.

## Rail Projects

*Summary:* Should funding become available, there is a need for several rail improvements including adding passing sidings on the single-track Pascack Valley, Gladstone Branch and Montclair-Boonton lines and recently purchased right-of-way west of Lake Hopatcong; and full electrification of the North Jersey Coast Line. There is also a need to connect the new Andover station to existing rail lines in Pennsylvania. Explore reactivating passenger service to Elizabeth through Aldene, rather than turning this into a busway; and restore West Trenton Service to connect to SEPTA. Address the logistical challenges to advance the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Northern Branch project.

*Response:* Thank you for your comments. *Connecting Communities* supports improving rail service where possible and as funding becomes available. The NJTPA will continue to work with NJ TRANSIT to advance the agency's capital program. Some of these projects are highlighted in Appendix A: Transit Needs, including the Andover Extension, West Trenton Line (both on page 5 of LTRP Appendix A) and the Northern Branch (page 7).

*NJ TRANSIT Response:* Proposed rail service west of Andover would be operated by Amtrak. The TIP comprises the transportation capital program for the MPO region and does not include operating funds for regular NJT or Amtrak services.

## ADA Compliance

*Summary:* Stations need to be made fully accessible. Start with small steps, such as wayfinding and automatic or push-button doors at all stations.

*Response:* The need to continue to address ADA accessibility at rail stations, as well as the many challenges of modernizing stations close to and over 100 years old, is discussed on page 5 of Appendix A.

*NJTRANSIT Response:* NJ TRANSIT has continued to advance rail station accessibility projects across its system as resources allow. Several projects are currently under way, and NJT continually seeks funding opportunities to advance new accessibility projects at its rail and light rail stations

## COMMENTS FROM THE NEW JERSEY BIKE AND WALK COALITION

Tiffany Robinson, Trails Network Manager of the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition, submitted three pages of comments on behalf of the organization. They are summarized and responded to below by topic area.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety**

*Summary:* Providing safe options for walking and biking reduces the number of vehicles on the road, decreasing congestion and improving safety. These priorities should be reflected in the LRTP and TIP.

*Response:* Safety is one of the seven *Connecting Communities* goals and is a priority for the NJTPA in all its work. It should be noted that projects in the TIP can only be assigned to one funding category. So, for example, a road or bridge rehabilitation project may include safety or pedestrian and bicycle improvements, but these would not be reflected in the investment allocations, as the projects would predominately be considered preservation and categorized as such.

### **Trails and Greenways**

*Summary:* Commends funding for The Greenway and Transitway project in the FY2026 TIP, but trails and shared-use paths remain underrepresented in both the TIP and the LRTP. Support planning efforts to identify and prioritize trail gaps and connections as part of the North Jersey Trail Network, with the goal of incorporating them into future TIP and STIP updates to build a fully connected active transportation system. Specifically requested funding local and regional connections to The Greenway.

*Response:* Thank you for your comments. *Connecting Communities* supports trail projects. Chapter 5 of the draft (pages 77, 79, and 80) includes a priority action to collaborate with the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition on a study to prioritize and advance trail segments. This initiative, to begin in FY 2026, will build on the regional Active Transportation Network (discussed in Chapter 3 on pages 28-30) and will be an initial step toward creating a North Jersey Trails Network.

*NJTRANSIT Response:* NJ TRANSIT's Secaucus to Meadowlands Transitway project will evaluate alternatives and develop designs for a rapid transit system between NJ TRANSIT's Secaucus Junction Station and the Meadowlands Sports and Entertainment Complex. The project will also assess options to enhance local mobility within the project

area, defined as the catchment area between Montclair and Secaucus along the path of The Greenway – the former Boonton Line, with additional consideration of later stages that could extend to Newark and Jersey City.

*Summary:* Elevate the role of shared-use paths and trails beyond isolated projects, reflecting the role they play in improving the environment and safety.

*Response:* In Chapter 3, active transportation is noted as being critical to improving safety (pages 27-28) and as a strategy to reach the state’s climate goals (page 41).

*Summary:* Develop a formal trail program or dedicate staff to trail planning to guide cross-county trail and active transportation planning and coordination.

*Response:* The NJTPA has many programs that support existing trails that are included in *Connecting Communities*. In addition to work related to the Regional Active Transportation Plan, the NJTPA coordinates the Morris Canal Greenway Working Group and is working on a pilot trail crossing initiative. These priorities are included in *Connecting Communities*.

## COMMENTS FROM PHILLIPSBURG HOUSING AUTHORITY

Thomas McGuire, Executive Director of the Phillipsburg Housing Authority, submitted comments on behalf of the agency.

*Summary:* Public transportation in Phillipsburg and Warren County is unreliable and inconvenient. The lack of public transportation makes it challenging for residents without vehicles, particularly low-income individuals, to access and retain jobs. Restoring and expanding transit infrastructure in Phillipsburg is critical.

*Response:* The need for transportation options for all residents, regardless of income or ability, is reflected in the NJTPA goal to “Ensure the transportation system meets the needs of all communities.” A discussion of housing and transportation is included in Chapters 3 and 5, with emphasis on the need to coordinate affordable housing with access to opportunities. In addition, Chapter 3 discusses how the TMAs provide transportation services to low-income individuals and others. The NJTPA oversees the eight TMAs and can help coordinate with Avenues in Motion, the TMA for Warren County.

## COMMENTS FROM TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN

Corey Hannigan, Active Transportation Program Manager at the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, submitted three pages of comments on behalf of the organization. They are summarized and responded to below by topic area.

### Project Specific Comments

*Summary:* Supports projects that include bicycle safety elements: DB# 321, 19311, 98540, 99358, N1806, N2305, TN21007, X107, X185; also supports Sinatra Drive Redesign Project.

*NJTPA Response:* Thank you for your comments.

*NJDOT Response:* Thank you for your comments. They will be shared with NJDOT staff.

*Summary:* Opposes projects that include roadway widenings: DBNUM N1402, N1405, 14416, 99316, NS9802, 95023, 17419, 12303, 103A1, 99381, 08327C, 08327D, 16344, 97062B, 11415, 780B, 780A.

*Response:* DBNUM 780B is a project from the FY 2024 TIP that is substantially completed and is not included in the draft FY 2026 TIP.

DBNUM 12303 and 99381 are in the Study & Development (S&D) Program. Both mention exploring potential widening to address congestion and safety. #99381 is also exploring pedestrian safety improvements. These projects are still being developed and there will be opportunities for public input.

DBNUM N1402, 99316 and 14416 are bridge replacement projects that include widening of the span to accommodate such features as safe bicycle and pedestrian access and modern shoulders. They are not capacity expansion projects.

DBNUM 95023, 17419, 103A1, 97062B, 11415F and 780A are being widened to address congestion and safety concerns.

All comments related to NJDOT projects (which also include DBNUM NS9802, 08327C, 08327D and 16344) were shared with the agency.

*NJDOT Response:* Thank you for your comments. They will be shared with NJDOT staff. the NJDOT project delivery process includes hearings and local briefings at which public comment can be provided.

*Summary:* Strongly supports the Hudson Tunnel Project, which is essential for regional mobility and economic resiliency. Requested New Jersey be prepared to increase state funding to cover any gap created by potentially rescinded federal funds.

*Response:* Thank you for your comments.

*NJDOT Response:* Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff.

*Summary:* Work with Middlesex County on Easton Ave (CR 527) Safety Improvements to ensure bicycle/micromobility safety is included.

*Response:* This project is sponsored by Somerset County. It recently completed Local Concept Development and includes pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Middlesex County has been involved as a key stakeholder and has provided valuable feedback.

*Summary:* Work with NJDOT and Bergen County on Route 67, Route 5 (Central Boulevard) to Route 9W project to update the striping to include proven safety countermeasures to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and connections to George Washington Bridge bike path

*Response:* Thank you for your comments. NJDOT is the project sponsor.

*NJDOT Response:* Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff. NJDOT projects comply with its Complete Street policies and include bicycle and pedestrian facilities where feasible.

*Summary:* Support Route 9W, Palisades Avenue to New York State Line project. Please work with NJDOT to include physical protection (at least vertical delineation) and incorporate the recommendations from the NJTPA/NYMTC Palisades Shared Use Path Study.

*Response:* Thank you for your comment. NJDOT is sponsoring this project, which is included in the S&D Program and still under development.

*NJDOT Response:* Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff.

*Summary:* Work with NJDOT and NJDEP to include a shared-use path on the Delaware & Raritan Canal Bridges project and ADA connections to D&R Canal Trail.

*Response:* Thank you for your comment. NJDOT is sponsoring this project, which is included in the S&D Program and still under development.

*NJDOT Response:* Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff. NJDOT projects comply with Complete Streets policies and include bicycle and pedestrian facilities where feasible.

*Summary:* Oppose curb widening in the Route 57/182/46, Hackettstown Mobility Improvements project.

*Response:* Thank you for your comment. NJDOT is sponsoring this project, which is included in the S&D Program and still under development.

*NJDOT Response:* Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff. NJDOT projects comply with its Complete Street policies and include bicycle and pedestrian facilities where feasible.

## Transit

*Comment:* Include the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Northern Branch Corridor Project in the TIP. Extend Hudson Bergen Light Rail West Side line to Newark (as an alternative to widening the NJ Turnpike Extension to Bayonne).

*Response:* Thank you for your comments. The TIP includes projects that have been allocated federal funding. These projects are not yet federally funded and therefore cannot be included in the TIP. This comment was also shared with NJ TRANSIT who concurs with this response.

*Summary:* Work with the Governor's Office and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to restart work to extend the PATH train to Newark Airport and South Ward Newark.

*Response:* Thank you for your comments. These comments have been shared with the Port Authority.

*Port Authority Response:* The Port Authority Board of Commissioners has fully authorized the EWR Station Access Project, which is now under construction, and has deferred the PATH extension project. As noted in Appendix A, the EWR Station Access Project will improve access, mobility and regional connectivity for the neighboring airport communities and includes provisions for a possible future extension of the PATH system to the station.

*Summary:* Work with NJ TRANSIT to include rail electrification in the TIP.

*Response:* Appendix A notes that NJ TRANSIT's budget funds the ongoing replacement of equipment as it reaches its end of life. This approach also permits NJ TRANSIT to procure newer propulsion and fuel systems for vehicles and railroad equipment as they are proven to be feasible, reliable, and cost effective.

*NJ TRANSIT Response:* NJ TRANSIT is cognizant of the state's growth and its impacts on current and forecasted travel demand. NJ TRANSIT's efforts include a wide array of planned investments aimed at accommodating transit travel demand in the state, some of which are advancing through design and construction as resources allow. These projects, particularly those that address transit capacity constraints and service expansion, typically constitute major investments that are able to move forward if and when funding becomes available. Some major projects such as the Portal North Bridge and County Yard, both of which are located in electrified rail territory, have been able to move forward because substantial funding was made available by the federal government. NJ TRANSIT continues to cooperate and coordinate with partner agencies working to advance major investments associated with the Gateway program, but many such projects are not yet funded. Expansion of electrification, along with other major, proposed transit investments, will require examination to determine feasibility and capital costs.

*Summary:* Increase STGBP funding for the Transit-Friendly Planning Program . It appears that this program is not funded at all under the current TIP.

*Response:* This program is in the S&D Program, which is why there is no funding identified in the TIP.

***NJ TRANSIT Response:*** The Transit Friendly Planning (TFP) Program at NJ TRANSIT is dedicated to strengthening the link between public transit and land use through six key goals that are aligned with NJ TRANSIT’s 10-Year Strategic Plan. The program strives to promote equitable, economically resilient, and environmentally sustainable development that improves the quality of life for all New Jersey residents. The five pillars of the TFP Program—technical assistance, public education and community engagement, partnership development, data collection, and program management—ensure that NJ TRANSIT supports the development of transit-friendly communities.

***Summary:*** Increase STBGP funding for the Transit Village Program.

***Response:*** Thank you for your comment. This is an NJDOT program.

***NJDOT Response:*** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff.

***Summary:*** Increase funding for Rail Capital Maintenance, Preventative Maintenance-Rail, NEC Improvements .

***Response:*** Thank you for your comments. These programs have several funding sources, including Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Urbanized Area Formula Program Grants (SECT 5307), FTA State of Good Repair Grants Program (SECT 5337) and state funds. If additional funding becomes available, they can be added to the TIP.

***NJ TRANSIT Response:*** NJ TRANSIT’s Strategic Plan (NJT2030: A Ten-Year Strategic Plan), is grounded in the idea that maintaining a state of good repair is essential to delivering high-quality and reliable service to NJ TRANSIT customers. With proper investment, NJ TRANSIT’s infrastructure and equipment can benefit from targeted improvements in business performance, enhance the customer experience, improve safety, and make the system more resilient and sustainable.

***NJDOT Response:*** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff.

## **Other Comments**

***Summary:*** Please work with NJDOT and NJDEP to include a full corridor study for The Greenway to help advance this project beyond the first phase.

*Response:* The NJTPA supports The Greenway, which is a transformative initiative that will greatly increase opportunities for walking and biking. Chapter 5 of *Connecting Communities* includes calls for increased collaboration between state agencies to advance this and other key projects. This comment was also shared with NJDOT and NJDEP.

*NJDOT Response:* Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff.

*Summary:* Rockfall mitigation projects should be deprioritized in funding priority relative to bike/pedestrian safety projects.

*Response:* Thank you for your comment. NJDOT is the sponsor of the referenced rockfall mitigation projects.

*NJDOT Response:* Thank you for your comment. We remain steadfast in our commitment to reducing all fatalities and improving the quality of life for residents and the traveling public. With a vision for a safer New Jersey, the department is deeply committed to eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries in New Jersey by 2040. Rockfall mitigation projects are also a vital part of creating and maintaining safe roadways for pedestrians, bikers, and motorists. Addressing safety requires a wholistic approach.

## COMMENTS ON BERGEN COUNTY PROJECTS

Richard Jones and Jim Jansen both submitted comments on four projects in Bergen County.

*Summary:* The TIP projects sponsored by Bergen County lack bicycle and pedestrian improvements. This includes East Anderson Street Bridge, Kingsland Avenue Bridge, Market Street/Essex Street/Rochelle Avenue and Oradell Avenue Bridge. Bicycle improvements are particularly needed on East Anderson Street.

*NJTPA Response:* Thank you for your comments. As noted, Bergen County is the project sponsor, and your comments were shared with the county. Bergen County sought funding from the NJTPA's Local Concept Development Program for the three bridge projects. This program explores various options for a potential bridge replacement or rehabilitation. All three projects include pedestrian improvements and bicycle compatible shoulders. The county received Congressionally Directed Spending funds for the Market Street/Essex Street/Rochelle Avenue project.

*Bergen County Response:* These projects have completed Local Concept Development and Preliminary Engineering. Each of those phases was about two years and included extensive public, stakeholders, and local official engagement. This input contributed to the selection of the Preferred Alternative during Concept Development, which was further refined based on feedback received during Preliminary Engineering, prior to the current final design stage.

### COMMENTS ON I-80 ROCKFALL/FIX THE S-CURVE STUDY

Several comments received requested that the NJTPA include a “Fix the S-Curve” study in *Connecting Communities* to examine safety, mobility and congestion issues along Interstate 80 (I-80) from Exit 4 to the Delaware Water Gap Bridge. Some of the comments also asked that the funding for the I-80 Retaining Wall Replacement Project (DB# 222360) and I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project (DBNUM 09545) be reprogrammed to concept development and included in the Fix the S-Curve study.

Commenters:

- Warren County Board of County Commissioners
- Congressman Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
- NJ Senator Douglas Steinhardt
- Assemblyman John DiMaio
- NJ Assemblyman Erik Peterson
- Knowlton Township Committee
- Hardwick Township Committee
- Blairstown Township Committee
- Tara Mezzanotte, Founder I-80/611 DWG Coalition

*NJTPA Response:* Thank you for your comments. NJDOT owns, operates and maintains I-80 and we shared your comments with NJDOT. Given that I-80 is under NJDOT’s jurisdiction, their cooperation and support would be required to include such a study in our plan. A safety-focused study of an interstate would be consistent with the long-range plan’s goals and policies. Should NJDOT choose to pursue such a study, we would be able to incorporate it into *Connecting Communities*.

*NJDOT Response:* There have been previous requests from external stakeholders to realign Rt. 80 to eliminate the existing S-curve. Potential realignment alternatives were

initially evaluated during the rockfall project's development; but these were dismissed from further consideration given their extensive social, economic, and environmental impacts as well as excessive construction costs. The significant topographical constraints on either side of Rt. 80 – the steep slopes of Mount Tammany to the north and the Delaware River to the west – limit the potential for realignment of the footprint of the highway without impacting the Delaware River or adjacent parkland.

Given the critical environmental resources and constraints associated with this segment of Rt. 80, NJDOT prefers options that largely remain within Rt. 80's existing physical footprint and right-of-way. Projects being completed along this segment of Rt. 80 are focused on improving safety along the corridor without realigning the highway as well as maintaining Rt. 80 in a state of good repair. For example, NJDOT has installed new speed limit and warning signs with flashing lights, completed pavement improvements, and tree trimming. As previously presented in public outreach efforts, options that involve major realignment of Rt. 80 are not preferred given their associated adverse environmental impacts and excessive costs.

To maintain Rt. 80 in a state of good repair, capital improvements planned for this segment include two independent projects: the Route 80 EB Retaining Wall Replacement Project and the Rt. 80 WB Rockfall Mitigation Project. The Rt. 80 EB Retaining Wall Project will address critical needs associated with the retaining wall's existing condition. The project is needed to ensure the retaining wall meets current serviceability requirements and supports safe travel along Rt. 80.

In summary, existing conditions of the retaining wall that will be addressed by the project include:

- Areas of voids/undermining under the retaining wall Wide cracks and large spalling with efflorescence through and on the retaining wall
- Signs of separation and deflection of four to five inches at the northwest end of the retaining wall
- Erosion along the embankment
- Material loss, deterioration, and settlement of inlets and pipes in the vicinity of the retaining wall
- Severe corrosion of the corrugated metal arch culvert that carries water from I-80 WB to the Delaware River

The Rt. 80 WB Rockfall Mitigation Project will address existing rock slopes that exhibit physical and geological safety hazards. This Rt. 80 segment, between mileposts 1.04

and 1.45, has been characterized as having the highest rockfall hazard rating scores (i.e., highest risk) in New Jersey based on the Rockfall Hazard Management System that was developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

FHWA regulations outline three general principles at 23 CFR 771.111(f) that are to be used to frame a highway project. The action evaluated under NEPA as a Category Exclusion (CE), Environmental Assessment (EA), or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must:

1. connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope; and
2. have independent utility or independent significance, i.e., be useable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made; and
3. not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

In conclusion, the Rt. 80 EB Retaining Wall Replacement Project and the Rt. 80 WB Rockfall Mitigation Project each have logical termini. Both projects include rational end points for transportation improvements and for review of the environmental impacts. Additionally, both projects have independent utility since they can function as stand-alone improvements without forcing other improvements that have impacts. The purpose of the rockfall mitigation project is to increase safety and to maintain the mobility of the traveling public by mitigating rockfall incidents. The purpose of the Rt. 80 EB Retaining Wall Replacement Project is to address the subject wall's poor structural condition and meet current serviceability requirements by addressing the wall's minimal reinforcement. Neither project will restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC MEETING (June 17, 2025)**

*Commenter:* Bethany Wall

*Summary:* Supports trail investments along the East Coast Greenway, specifically The Greenway project.

*Response:* Funding for The Greenway is included in the TIP. Thank you for your comment.

*Commenter:* Cheryl Shiber

**Summary:** Noted challenges in Teaneck due to jurisdictional complications with county roads and called for more connections and improved public transportation as investment priorities.

**Response:** It can be challenging to coordinate different jurisdictions for transportation purposes. Chapter 5 of *Connecting Communities* has actions to assist municipalities with meeting transportation needs and to continue and increase the NJTPA's efforts to coordinate agencies and jurisdictions. We will share your concerns with Bergen County.

**Commenter:** Christian Nowell

**Summary:** Asked how the TIP relates to counties and municipalities.

**Response:** Federal law requires all surface transportation projects financed with federal funds from FHWA and FTA to appear in the TIP. This includes federally funded projects or programs led by municipalities, counties and state agencies. These funds are apportioned annually based on formulas and guidelines in federal legislation to NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT projects and programs. Other authorities, counties and municipalities can also apply for formula and competitive federal funding based on eligibility requirements. As competitive funding is awarded to projects, they are added to the TIP.

**Commenter:** Dennis Joshi

**Summary:** Raised concerns about vehicle lanes being narrowed to construct bicycle lanes or sidewalks in Jersey City.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* supports Complete Streets, which are roads designed to make travel safer for all users, this includes vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Municipalities can use the NJTPA's Demonstration Library to install temporary improvements so that motorists, cyclists, and other roadway users can "try out" potential changes before making permanent changes. We will also share these concerns with Jersey City.

**Summary:** Asked if TIP bicycle infrastructure investments/improvements include e-bikes.

**Response:** The Pedestrian and Bicycle investment category includes sidewalks, bike lanes and paths, pedestrian crossings and greenways.

*Commenter:* Lisa Lee

*Summary:* Asked about the difference between the roadway enhancement and expansion funding categories in the TIP.

*Response:* Road Enhancement focuses on roadway improvements that do not add capacity to the network. These may include intersection redesigns, highway access/egress improvements, geometry changes, or other road redesigns that are meant to improve traffic flow. Road Expansion involves new capacity (including the construction of new roadways, connections, or lanes). Additional information: <https://rcis.njtpa.org/investments/system-improvement>

*Summary:* Prioritize safety in projects and the TIP and align funding with recommendations from the Target Zero Commission.

*Response:* Thank you for your comments. Safety is a priority in *Connecting Communities* and in all the NJTPA's work. It should be noted that projects in the TIP can only be assigned to one funding category. So, the Direct Safety allocations do not reflect all safety improvements being funded in the TIP. For example, a road or bridge rehabilitation project may include safety or pedestrian and bicycle improvements, but these would not be reflected in the investment allocations, as the projects would predominately be considered preservation and categorized as such.

*Commenter:* Matthew Ford

*Summary:* How do current TIP allocations compare to past plans, particularly regarding mode share, and whether they reflect the vision of the LRTP?

*Response:* The RCIS guidelines identify how projects and programs within each category should be planned and designed to help the region achieve desired performance outcomes. The allocation targets largely mirror current spending patterns, with some adjustments, and therefore reinforce past investment decisions by the NJTPA and partner agencies. Transit enhancement, transit expansion, direct safety improvements, pedestrian and bike investments, and environment and climate investment have been given additional emphasis.

*Commenter:* Maureen Crowley

**Summary:** Advocated for The Greenway and emphasized the importance of trail investments.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. The NJTPA continues to support trail projects in the region, including The Greenway, which is funded in the TIP.

**Commenter:** Michael Dannemiller

**Summary:** Asked whether trail projects could be their own TIP category and asked what category includes active transportation.

**Response:** Trails and active transportation generally fall under the Pedestrian and Bicycle investment category. However, it is important to recognize that an individual project or program may serve multiple functions but only one (primary) category can be assigned to each project/program so active transportation work may also be included in other categories.

**Commenter:** Paul Dennison

**Summary:** Concerned about the impact the New Jersey Turnpike Expansion project in Bayonne and Jersey City will have on air quality and health. Said investing in transit could also have a positive economic impact, while also improving health.

**Response:** The NJTPA does not provide any funding to the New Jersey Turnpike Authority and has no involvement in this project. However, the Air Quality Conformity Determination for *Connecting Communities* and the TIP included this project due to its regional significance. The conformity determination evaluates all investments in the region, as whole, and determined there would be no negative impact on air quality overall. Strategies to increase public transit are included in *Connecting Communities* throughout Chapters 3 and 5.

**Summary:** There is a lack of safe bicycle and pedestrian access to Liberty State Park from the southern end of Jersey City, particularly Greenville.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* supports active transportation accessibility to parks, jobs, shopping and other locations through support for Complete Streets (Chapter 5, page 79). In addition, the City of Jersey City is using the NJTPA Subregional Studies Program

to update its circulation element in 2026. These concerns have also been shared with Jersey City.

**Summary:** As chair of a Jersey City theater organization he would like to partner on making walking and biking safer, which can also boost the local economy.

**Response:** Travel safety is one of the seven *Connecting Communities* goals and is central to the work of the NJTPA. This includes walking and biking access to transit and destinations including cultural centers, employment, health services, shopping and recreation. *Connecting Communities* Section 3.2 (starting on page 25) discusses safety issues and potential solutions.

**Summary:** Will funding and technical assistance continue to be available for planning, demonstration projects, and placemaking efforts?

**Response:** Yes, as detailed in Chapter 5 of *Connecting Communities*, the NJTPA plans to continue its many technical assistance programs.

**Commenter:** Tiffany Robinson

**Summary:** Complimented the NJTPA on its comprehensive public engagement for *Connecting Communities*, highlighting the On Air youth engagement activities. Asked if the NJTPA could share best practices for outreach with other organizations.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. The NJTPA has a public engagement toolkit, called Engage, available at <https://njtpa.org/engage>. This includes tips for planning and executing outreach, focus group reports and a searchable database of tools and techniques, which we will be updating including new activities from *Connecting Communities*, like the use of a mascot, Sammy the Squirrel, to engage children. Appendix C: Public Engagement includes additional details about outreach conducted for *Connecting Communities*.

**Summary:** What is included under “system improvements” related to safety in the TIP?

**Response:** Many categories under the Systems Improvement group may include safety elements. For the specifics, please see: <https://rcis.njtpa.org/investments/system-improvement>. It is important to recognize that an individual project or program can only be assigned to one funding category, so safety may be incorporated even if the project isn't

assigned to the Direct Safety category.

*Summary:* How do public outreach priorities align with the TIP's spending categories?

*Response:* Priorities identified during public outreach have reinforced the proposed *Connecting Communities* goals, which guide the target investment allocations.

*Commenter:* Robert DeDomenico, CargoFish

*Summary:* Has developed CargoFish as a limited goods movement utility prototype that could reduce congestion from deliveries/distribution while also reducing emissions. Encouraged the NJTPA to consider innovative, sustainable solutions such as this.

*Response:* The NJTPA appreciates your interest and innovation with technology. In Chapter 5, technology investments and research are noted as a priority.

*Commenter:* Syd Chan

*Summary:* Encouraged the NJTPA to use consistent terminology to distinguish between bikes and e-bikes.

*Response:* The NJTPA will update *Connecting Communities* to use more consistent language.

*Commenter:* Tom Drabic, Sussex County

*Summary:* There is an increase in luxury housing developments along transportation corridors in Sussex and Morris counties. This raises concerns of housing affordability, and the need to eventually manage congestion on highways with higher residential densities.

*Response:* *Connecting Communities* discusses housing and transportation coordination, particularly related to affordable housing and transit in Chapter 1 (page 2) and Chapter 2 (pages 21-33). In addition, a roundtable with housing advocates and providers was held to inform the plan and is described on page 16.

*Summary:* The shift to remote work and flexible schedules is causing traffic congestion during the day.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. The changes in travel from the pandemic, including increased working from home, are noted in *Connecting Communities* (page 4).

**Summary:** Asked how fluctuations in federal funding could impact the TIP.

**Response:** Congress is working on a federal transportation funding reauthorization. The current funding, through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, expires in November 2026. It is too early to say how funding may be impacted. However, the TIP is updated every two years, as required under federal regulations, and can be modified and amended between those updates to reflect any change to funding.

**Commenter:** Vito Gallo

**Summary:** Concerned about safety for cyclists and pedestrians in high-density areas that are prioritized for transit-oriented development, where there is increased vehicular traffic and speeding. Asked if *Connecting Communities* could also consider how to engage municipalities who are allowing high-density development along arterial zones to comply with new affordable housing mandates. This is creating friction between the need for density and pedestrian safety, making it unsafe to walk downtown or to transit.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* discusses housing and transportation coordination, including in Chapter 1 (page 2) and Chapter 3 (pages 21-23). The NJTPA held a roundtable discussion with housing advocates and providers to inform the plan (described on page 16). In addition, Chapter 5 (page 78) includes a description of the NJTPA's technical assistance programs available to municipalities. Also, one of the plan's priority actions is to increase support for municipalities.

**Summary:** Need safe bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to Liberty State Park. The NJTPA should ensure parks are not isolated or inaccessible.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* supports active transportation accessibility to parks, jobs, shopping and other locations through support for Complete Streets (Chapter 5, page 79). In addition, the City of Jersey City is using the NJTPA Subregional Studies Program to update its circulation element in 2026. These concerns have also been shared with Jersey City.