

# CAPITAL REGION BUS LANE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Phase I Public Engagement MetroQuest Survey Results

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# 1. ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Bus Lane Study will determine the feasibility of bus lanes throughout the region that will allow buses to operate faster and more reliably, improving service to thousands of riders daily. This survey was created to gather input from community members including transit riders, motorists, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to better understand opportunities and challenges as well as tradeoffs related to bus lanes in the region. The survey results will be used to inform the project team's work to determine the feasibility of bus lanes in the Capital Region.

The survey opened on October 18, 2021 and closed on November, 21, 2021. The survey was built in the MetroQuest platform and made available in English and Spanish. The survey was highly graphical and interactive in nature. Links to the demonstration versions of the surveys are provided in **Table 1**, and **Figure 1** shows an image of one of the pages of the survey. The Metroquest survey is not accessible to the visually impaired so a phone number was provided to connect them with consultant staff to allow them to perform the survey via a phone conversation.

CDTC staff and the project team used a variety of methods to inform people about the survey and encourage them to take it.

## Pop-Up Events

The project team held four pop-up events to speak with members of the community and encourage participation in the survey. A summary of the pop-up events is in the **Appendi**.

- 7am to 9am on October 20, 2021: Bus stops at corner of State St and Pearl St in downtown Albany.
- 11am to 1pm on October 20, 2021: Bus stop in front of Albany Public Library.
- 12pm to 3pm on October 22, 2021: Riverfront Station in Troy.
- 11am to 2pm on October 27, 2021: Gateway Plaza in Schenectady.

## Webinars

The project team held a virtual workshop, available during two separate sessions, on October 20, 2021. The webinar featured several interactive polls and a question-and-answer session. The webinar detailed an overview of the project, the benefits of bus lanes, and a screen-by-screen preview of the survey. A recording of the webinar is available on [the project website](#).

## Website

The [project website](#) was set up to provide members of the public with one location to find information and stay updated on the Bus Lane Feasibility Study. The website has a list of events; information on potential bus lane corridors, including an interactive online map; a project documents tab with stakeholder presentations, project documents, and press releases. The website includes a button in the top corner that allows a user to switch the language to Spanish.

## Press Release

A press release was distributed on October 12, 2021 that gave an overview of the study and promoted the survey. A second press release was distributed to newspapers one week prior to survey end,

including Spectrum Local News, WNYT, CBS6 Albany, Times Union, CW Albany, and Albany Business Review.

## Social Media

CDTA, CDTC, and MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C. posted about the survey on their respective Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages. The largest single day increases in survey activity came after social media activity from CDTA and the Mayor of Albany. A direct email from the City of Troy also resulted in significant survey activity.

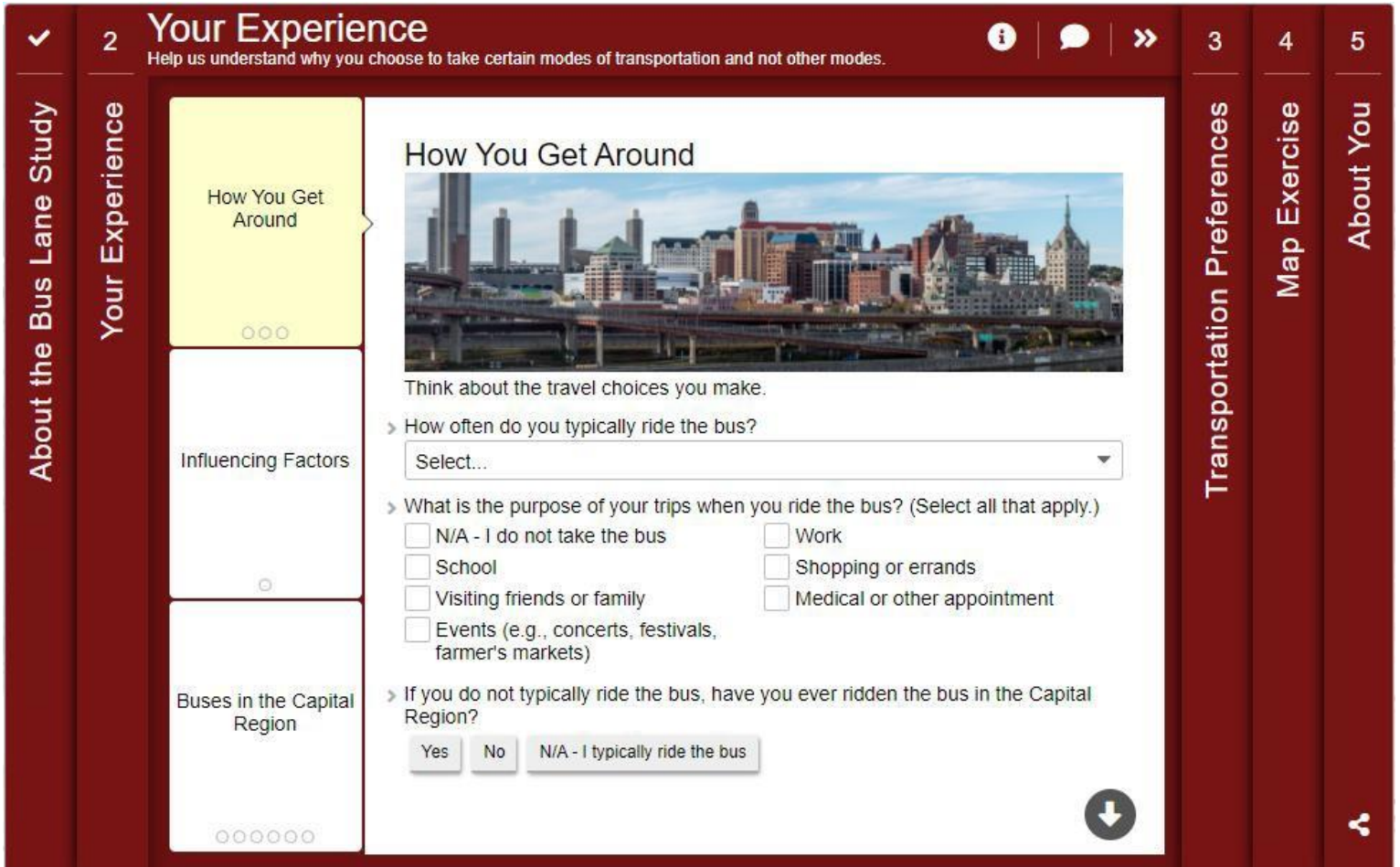
## Stakeholders Outreach

Stakeholder outreach was conducted through a series of emails and online meetings, including a workshop on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. Several emails were sent to stakeholders to solicit input on the potential study corridors, and to request assistance in promoting the survey.

Table 1: Links to Demonstration Versions of the Surveys

Language	Link to Demo
English	<a href="http://demo.metroquestsurvey.com/zy5a5c">http://demo.metroquestsurvey.com/zy5a5c</a>
Spanish	<a href="http://demo.metroquestsurvey.com/ne6q6b">http://demo.metroquestsurvey.com/ne6q6b</a>

Figure 1: Image from the CDTC Survey



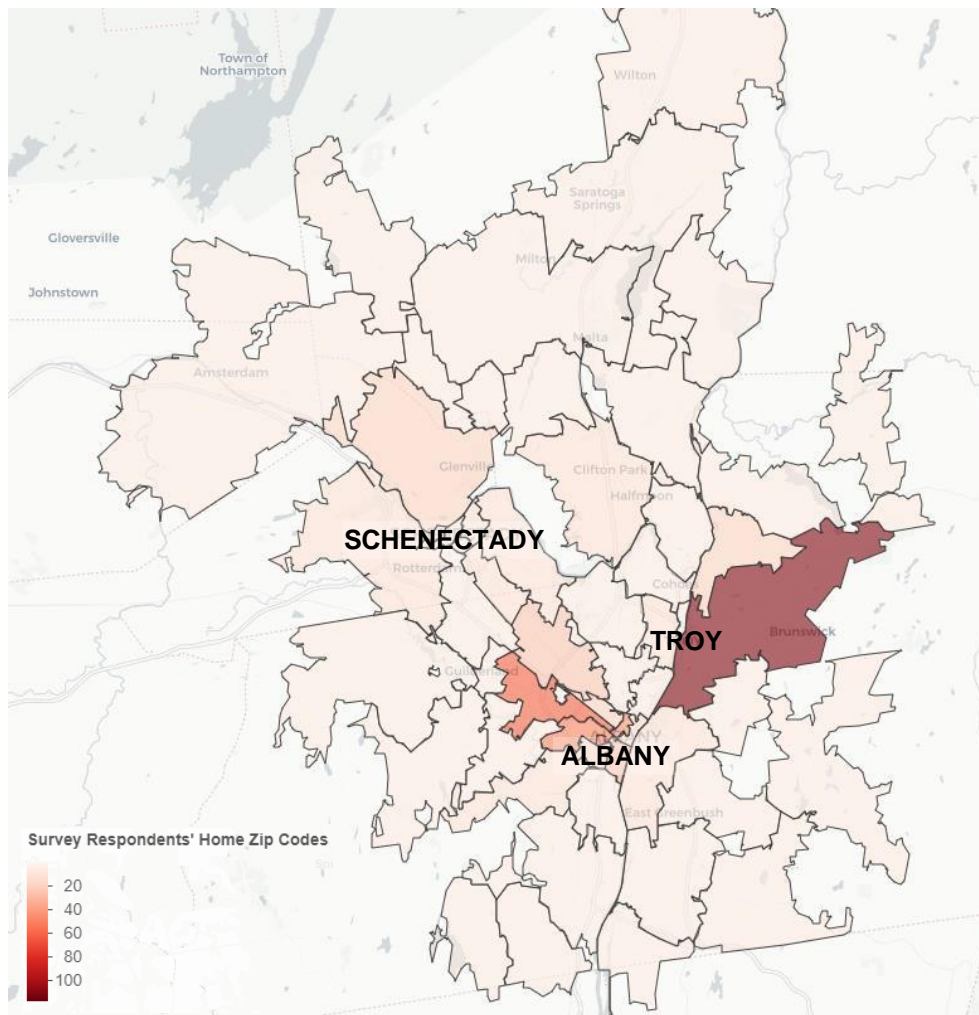
## 2. ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

There were 836 survey respondents: 833 respondents to the English survey and three respondents to the Spanish survey. The following sections summarize the survey sample by geographic location, income, race, age, gender, and disability status. All of the results in this section include only those respondents who answered the optional demographic questions.

### Geographic Location

Figure 2 is a map showing the distribution of home zip codes of survey respondents. The project team received responses from most of the zip codes within CDTA's service area, with a large number of respondents from Troy (due in large part to a direct email sent to Troy residents).

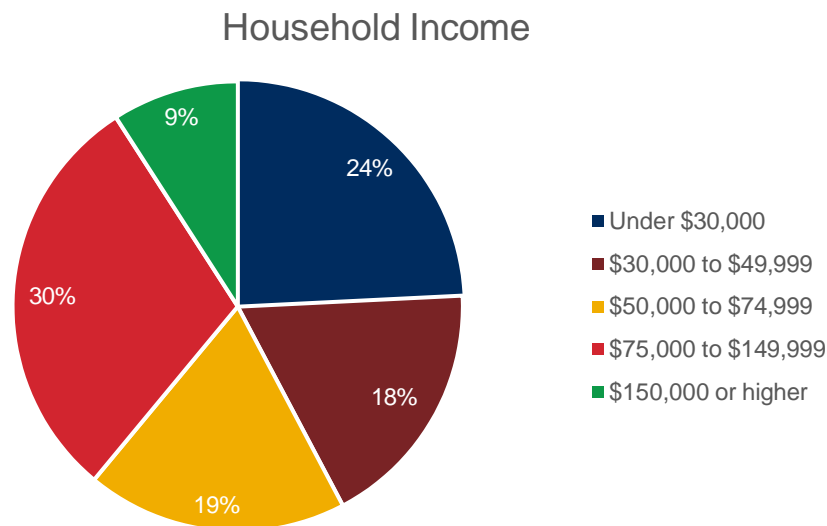
Figure 2: Map of Home Zip Codes of Survey Respondents



## Income

The household incomes of survey respondents are shown in **Figure 3**, with the largest group of respondents reporting an annual household income of \$75,000-\$149,999, followed by the under \$30,000 category. Of the 549 survey respondents who answered the question regarding household income, 24 percent had an annual household income under \$30,000; 18 percent between \$30,000 and \$49,999; 19 percent between \$50,000 and \$74,999; 30 percent between \$75,000 and \$149,999; and nine percent had an annual household income higher than \$150,000. The household income breakdown of survey respondents is similar to that of the Capital Region population: 17 percent of the population have an annual household income between \$50,000 and \$74,999; 32 percent between \$75,000 and \$149,999; and 15 percent have an annual household income higher than \$150,000.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 3: Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Household Income



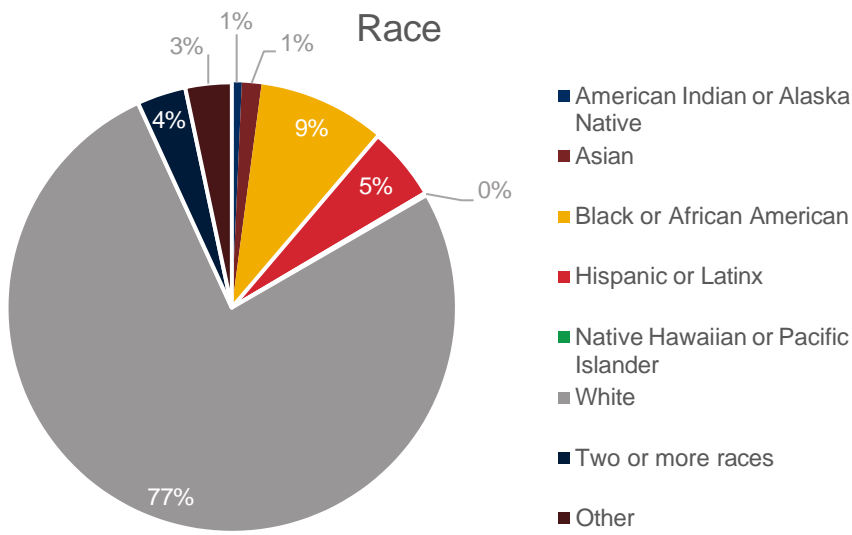
## Race

**Figure 4** shows the racial breakdown of survey respondents. Of the 570 respondents who chose to report their race, over three-quarters (77 percent) identified as white. The next two largest racial groups were Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx at nine percent and five percent, respectively. Four percent of respondents identified as two or more races and three percent identified as Other. One percent of respondents identified as Asian, one percent identified as American Indian / Alaska Native, and less than one percent identified as Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander. The racial breakdown of survey respondents is similar to the racial breakdown of the Capital Region population: in the Capital Region, 80 percent of the population identifies as non-Hispanic white, eight percent identify as Black/African American, five percent identify as Hispanic/Latinx, five percent identify as Asian, one percent identify as American Indian / Alaska Native, less than one percent identify as Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander, four percent identify as two or more races, and two percent identify as Other.

<sup>1</sup> All Capital Region demographic statistics in this section come from the American Community Survey 2019 5-year estimates for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy metropolitan statistical area. Data for under \$49,999 is not available from the Census in the same intervals used in the survey.



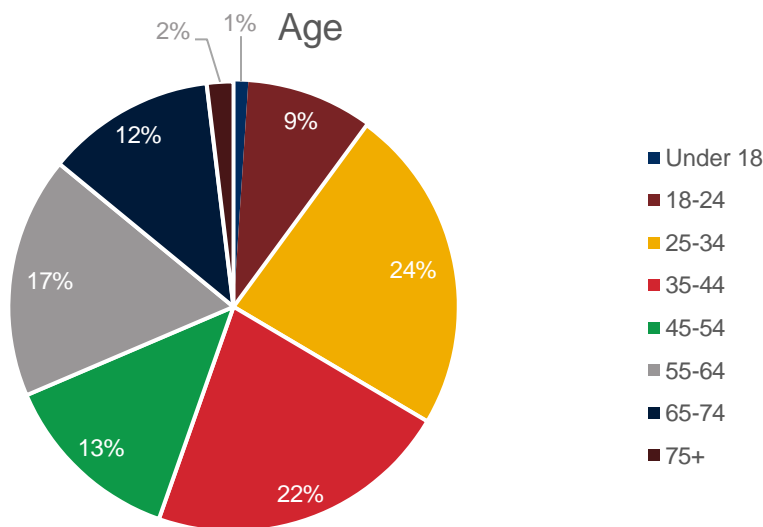
Figure 4: Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Race



## Age

Figure 5 shows that of the 576 survey respondents who reported their age, the two largest age groups were 25-34 (24 percent) and 35-44 (22 percent), representing a combined total of 46 percent of the respondents. Following those two groups, 17 percent were aged 55-64, followed by 13 percent aged 45-54 and 12 percent aged 65-74. Of the remaining, nine percent were between the ages of 18-24, two percent were over 75 years old, and one percent were under 18. Some age groups overrepresented in the survey with respect to the age of the population: 13 percent of the population is aged 25-34, which represents 24 percent of survey respondents, and 12 percent of the population is aged 35-44, which represents 22 percent of survey respondents. Additionally, while only one percent of respondents were under 18, 20 percent of the population is under 18.

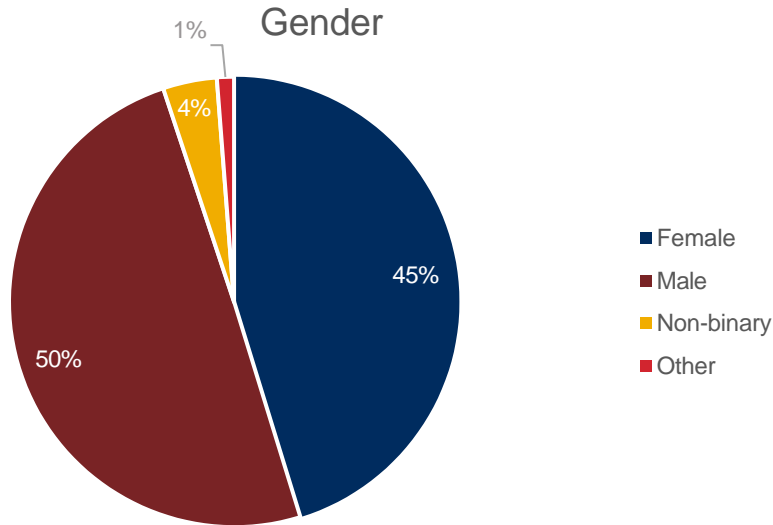
Figure 5: Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Age



## Gender

**Figure 6** shows that of the 568 survey respondents who reported their gender, 50 percent identified as male and 45 percent identified as female. Of the remaining five percent, four percent identified as non-binary and one percent identified as Other. While the Census does not collect data on gender identity, according to the data on sex, 49 percent of the region is male and 51 percent is female.

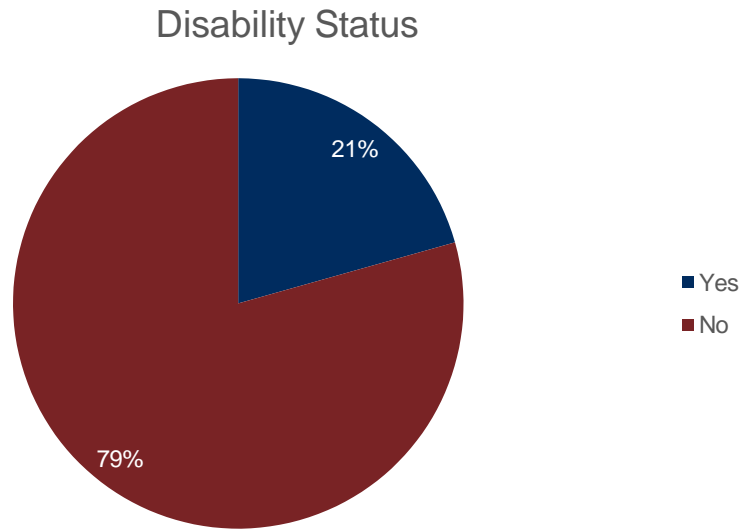
Figure 6: Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Gender Identity



## Disability Status

**Figure 7** shows that of the 577 survey respondents who reported their disability status, just over one-fifth (21 percent) identified as living with a disability while the remainder (79 percent) do not. This is similar to the disability status of the Capital Region with 26 percent of the population has a disability.

Figure 7: Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Disability Status



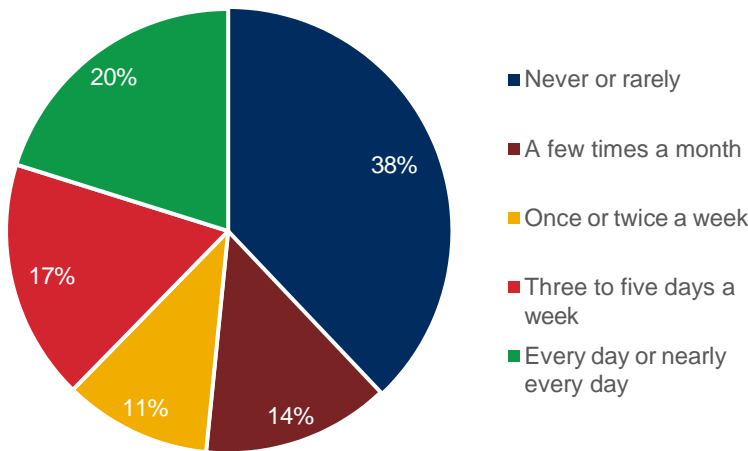
# 3. HOW RESPONDENTS TRAVEL

In the first section of the survey, respondents were asked to provide information about how often they typically ride the bus, the purpose of those bus trips, and the factors that influence their decision to drive or take the bus.

## Frequency of Bus Trips

Figure 8: Frequency of Bus Trips

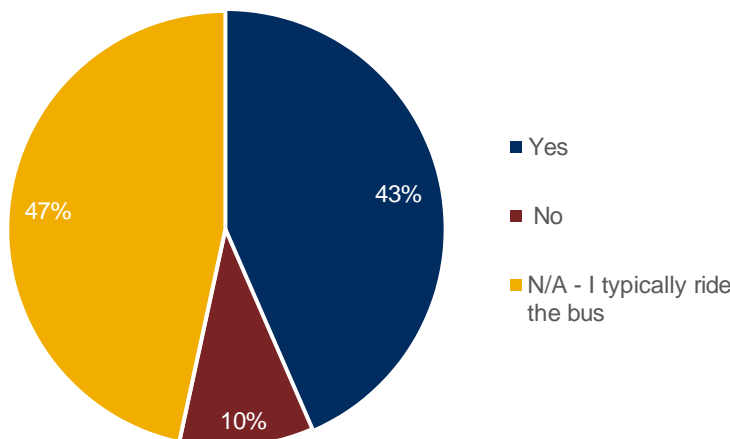
Frequency of Bus Trips



When asked how frequently they ride the bus, as shown in **Figure 8**, 48 percent of respondents said they ride the bus at least once a week: 20 percent ride the bus every day or nearly every day, 17 percent ride the bus three to five days a week, and 11 percent ride the bus once or twice a week. Fourteen percent of respondents ride the bus a few times a month, and 38 percent never or rarely ride the bus.

Figure 9: Infrequent Riders' Bus Experience

Infrequent Riders' Bus Experience

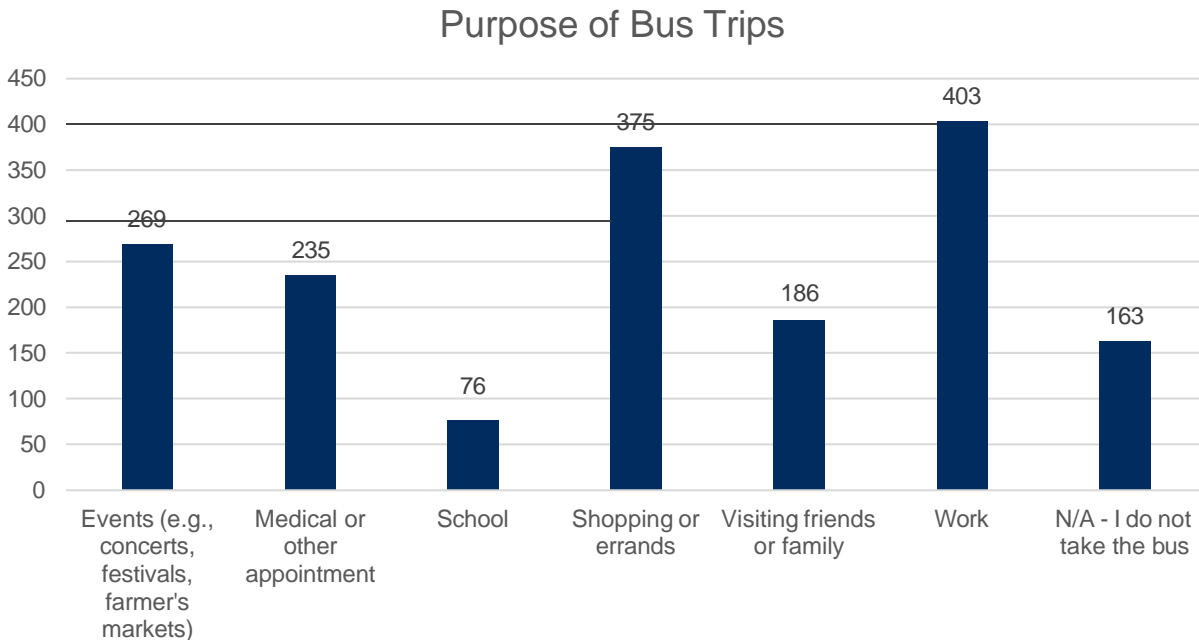


Respondents who do not typically ride the bus were asked if they have ever ridden the bus in the Capital Region. As shown in **Figure 9**, of respondents who do not typically ride the bus, 10 percent have never taken the bus, while 43 percent have. Forty-seven (47) percent of respondents said they typically ride the bus.

## Purpose of Bus Trips

Respondents were asked the purpose of their trips when they ride the bus. As shown in **Figure 10**, the most common purpose is work. Of the 800 people who responded to this question, 403, or 50 percent, selected work as a purpose for bus trips. Other commonly selected purposes include shopping or errands (47 percent of respondents), events (34 percent), and medical or other appointment (29 percent). The purposes selected the least are school (one percent) and visiting friends or family (23 percent). Twenty percent of respondents reported that they do not take the bus.

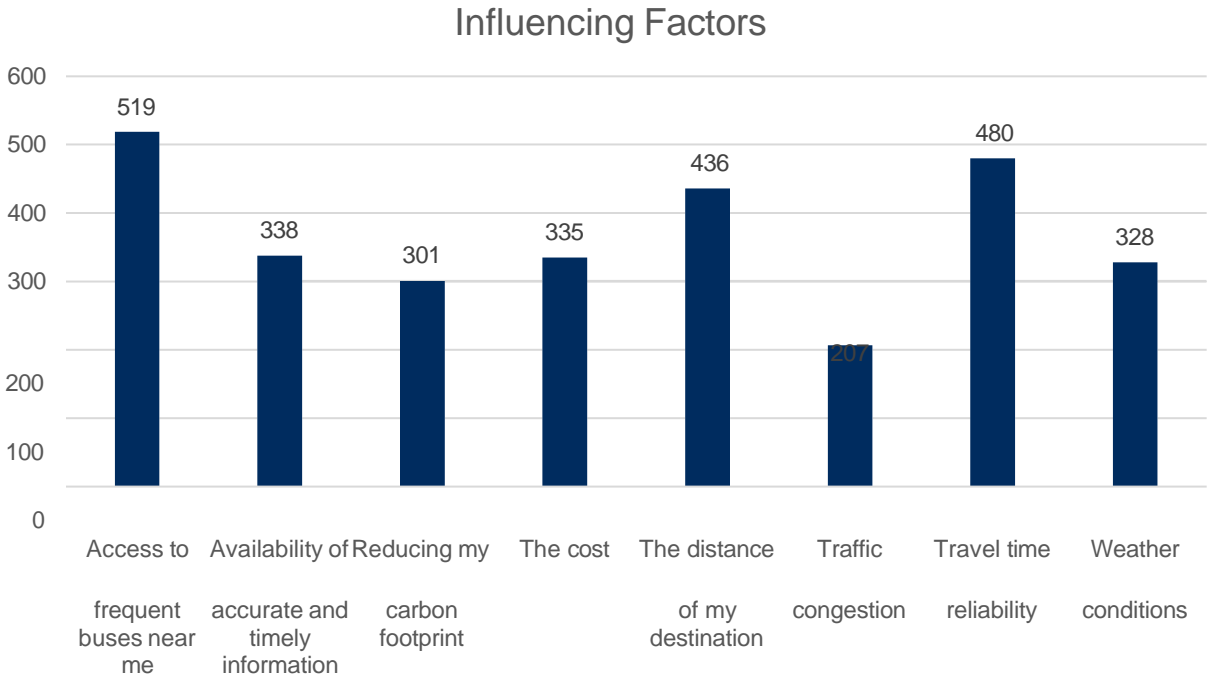
Figure 10: Purpose of Bus Trips



## Influencing Factors

Respondents were asked what factors influence their decision to drive or take the bus. As shown in **Figure 11**, the most commonly selected factor was “access to frequent buses near me.” Of the 746 people who answered, this question, 519, or 70 percent, cited access to frequent buses as a factor that will influence their decision to take transit. Other commonly selected factors include travel time reliability (64 percent of respondents) and distance of their destination (58 percent). The factors that will least influence respondents’ decisions to take transit include traffic congestion (28 percent) and reducing their carbon footprint (40 percent).

Figure 11: Factors That Influence Decision to Take Transit

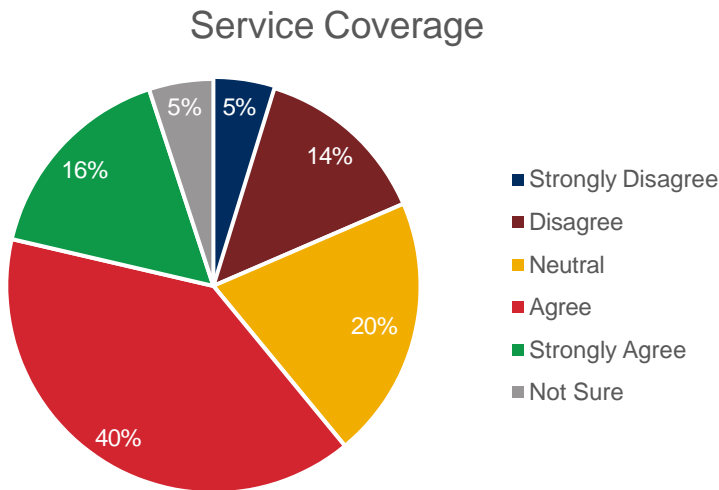


# 4. BUSES IN THE CAPITAL REGION

Respondents were asked to share their thoughts on current bus service in the Capital Region by selecting whether they strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree, or are not sure about each statement.

## Service Coverage

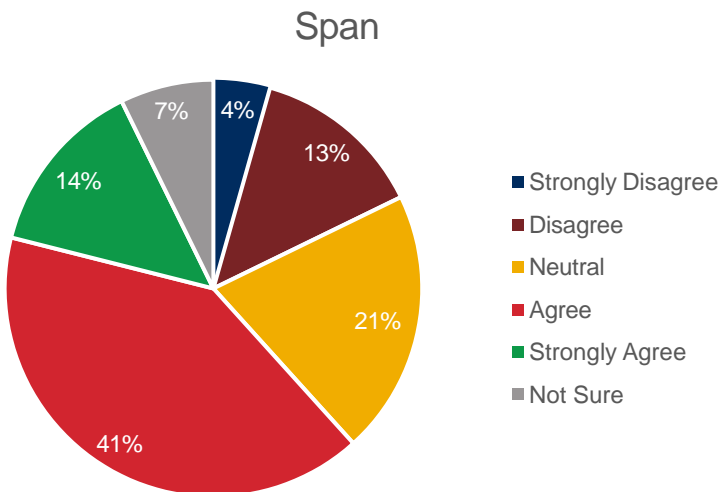
Figure 12: Buses Go Where I Need Them to Go



Respondents were given the statement “buses go where I need them to go.” As shown in **Figure 12**, of the 735 people who answered this question, a majority of respondents, 40 percent, agree with the statement, and 16 percent strongly agree. Twenty (20) percent are neutral, 14 percent disagree, and five percent of respondents strongly disagree.

## Span

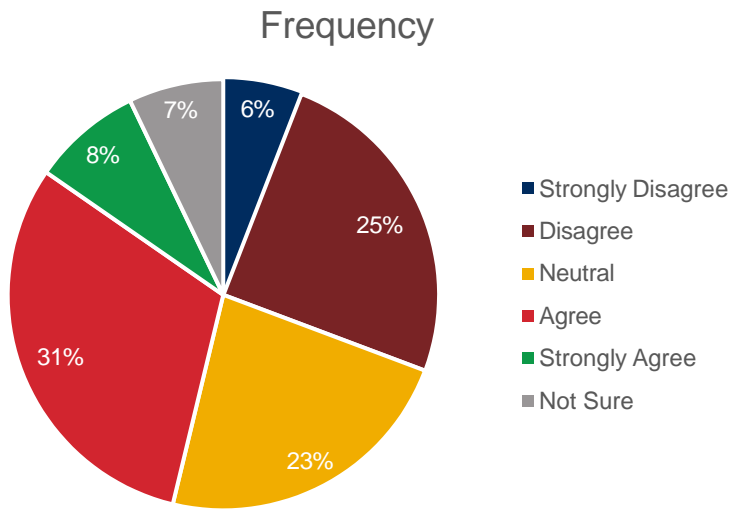
Figure 13: Buses Operate on the Times/Days I Need Them



Respondents were given the statement “buses operate on the times/days I need them.” As shown in **Figure 13**, of the 731 people who answered this question, 41 percent agree with the statement and 14 percent strongly agree. Twenty-one (21) percent are neutral, 13 percent disagree, and four percent of respondents strongly disagree.

## Frequency

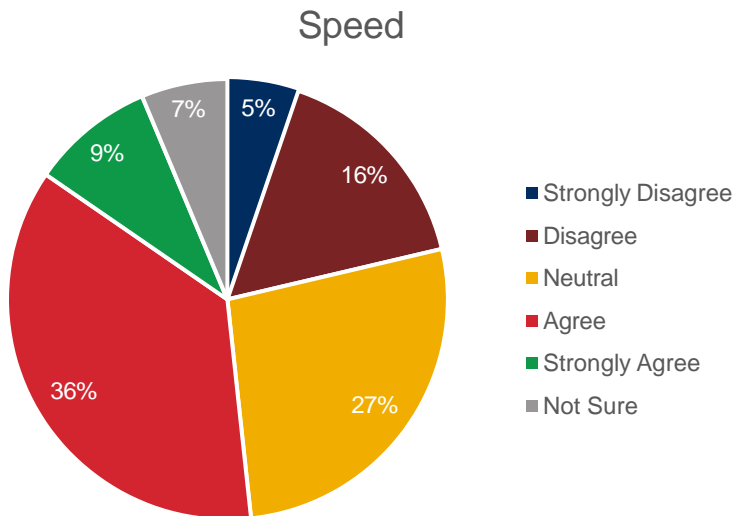
Figure 14: Buses Come Frequently Enough



Respondents were given the statement “buses come frequently enough.” As shown in **Figure 14**, of the 729 people who answered this question, 31 percent agree with the statement and eight percent strongly agree. Six percent of respondents strongly disagree and 25 percent disagree. Of all the statements in this section, this has the largest percentage (31 percent) of respondents who disagree or strongly disagree.

## Speed

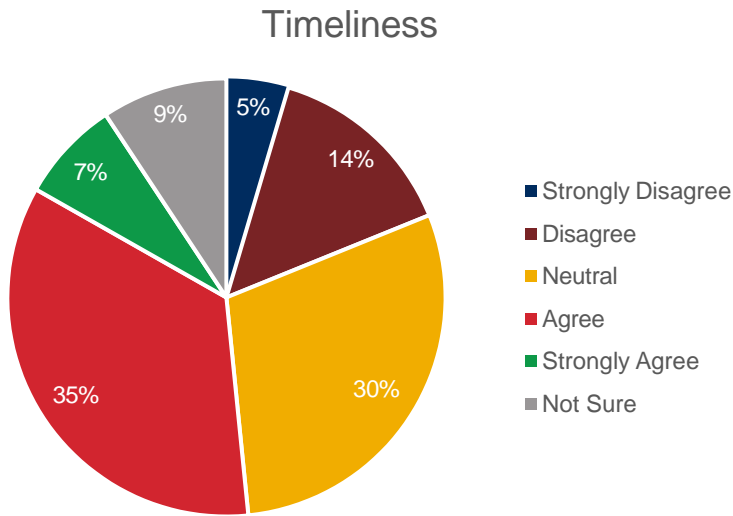
Figure 15: Buses Get Me to My Destination Quickly



Respondents were given the statement “buses get me to my destination quickly.” As shown in **Figure 15**, of the 727 people who responded to this question, 36 percent agree with the statement and nine percent strongly agree. Twenty-seven (27) percent are neutral, 16 percent disagree, and five percent strongly disagree.

## Timeliness

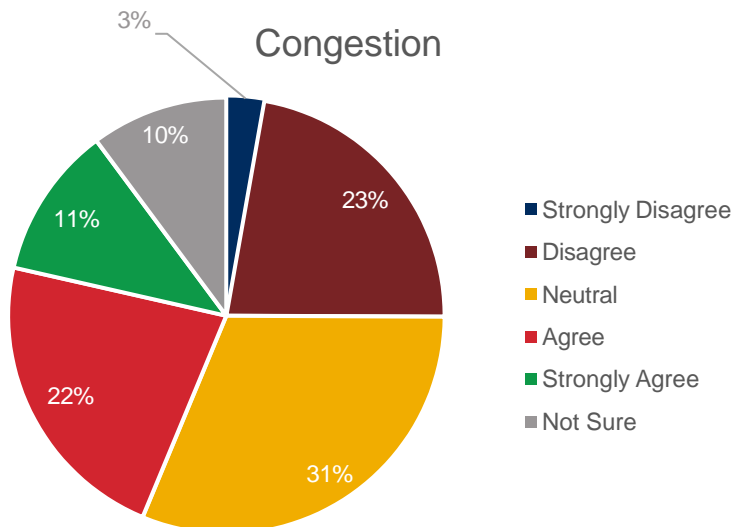
Figure 16: Buses Arrive On-Time



In response to the statement “buses arrive on-time,” as shown in **Figure 16**, 35 percent of the 721 people who responded to this question agree and seven percent strongly agree. Thirty (30) percent are neutral, 14 percent disagree, and five percent strongly disagree.

## Congestion

Figure 17: Buses are Frequently Stuck in Congestion



In response to the statement “buses are frequently stuck in congestion,” as shown in **Figure 17**, 22 percent of the 718 people who responded to this question agree and 11 percent strongly agree. Thirty-one (31) percent are neutral, 23 percent disagree, and three percent strongly disagree.



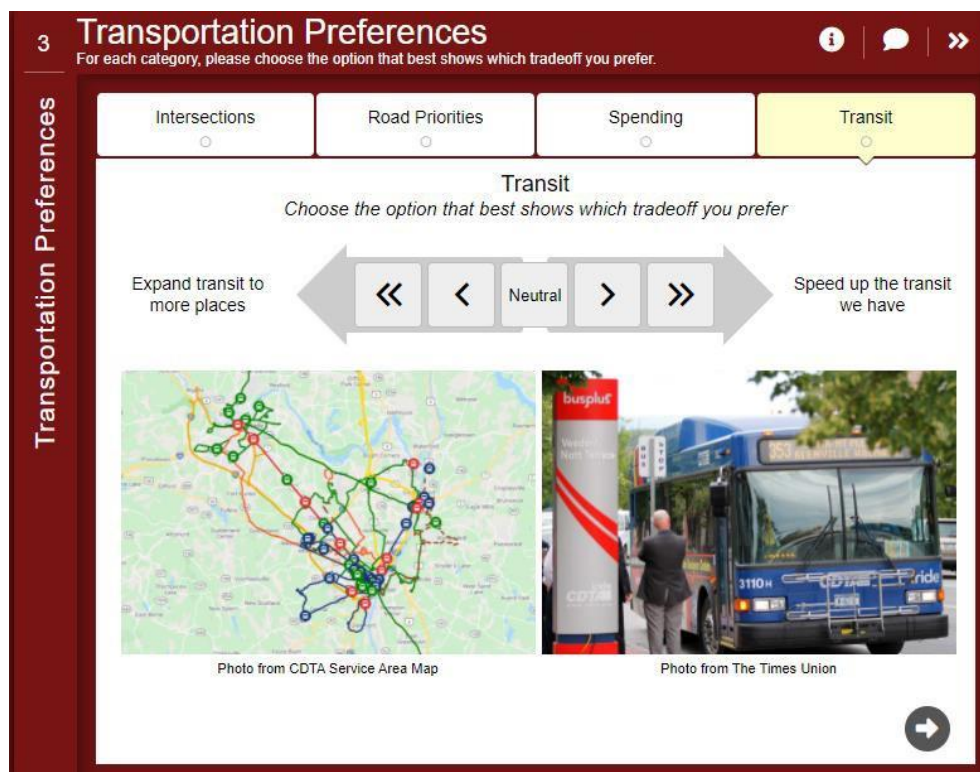
# 5. TRANSPORTATION PREFERENCES

Respondents were asked to choose which tradeoffs they prefer for four categories: intersections, road priorities, spending, and transit. Each screen showed a large arrow with single or double angle brackets to designate how strongly the respondent preferred a certain option. **Figure 18** shows the arrow used on each screen and **Figure 19** shows a sample tradeoff tab of the survey. The graphs in the following sections have labels “far left,” “left,” “neutral,” “right,” and “far right,” which refer to the respective angle brackets. For example, “left” refers to the single angle bracket on the left of the “neutral” choice. In the written summary, “prefer” refers to the single angle brackets and “strongly prefer” refers to the double angle brackets.

Figure 18: Tradeoff Arrows



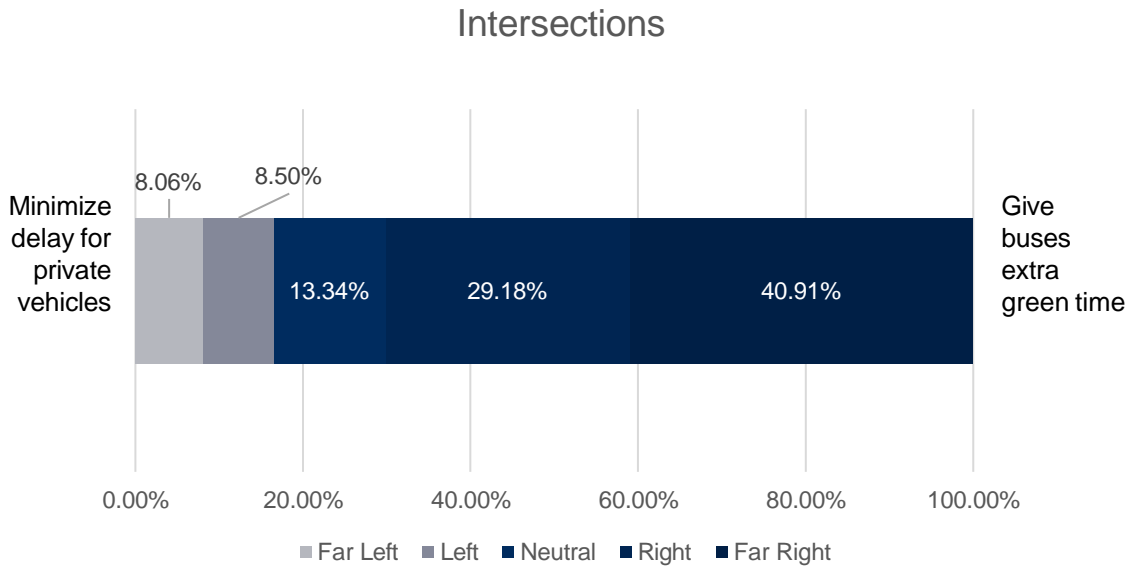
Figure 19: Sample Tradeoff Tab on Survey



## Intersections

Respondents were asked to choose between “minimize delay for private vehicles” on the left and “give buses extra green time” on the right. As shown in **Figure 20**, a majority of respondents prefer (29 percent) or strongly prefer (41 percent) giving buses extra green time.

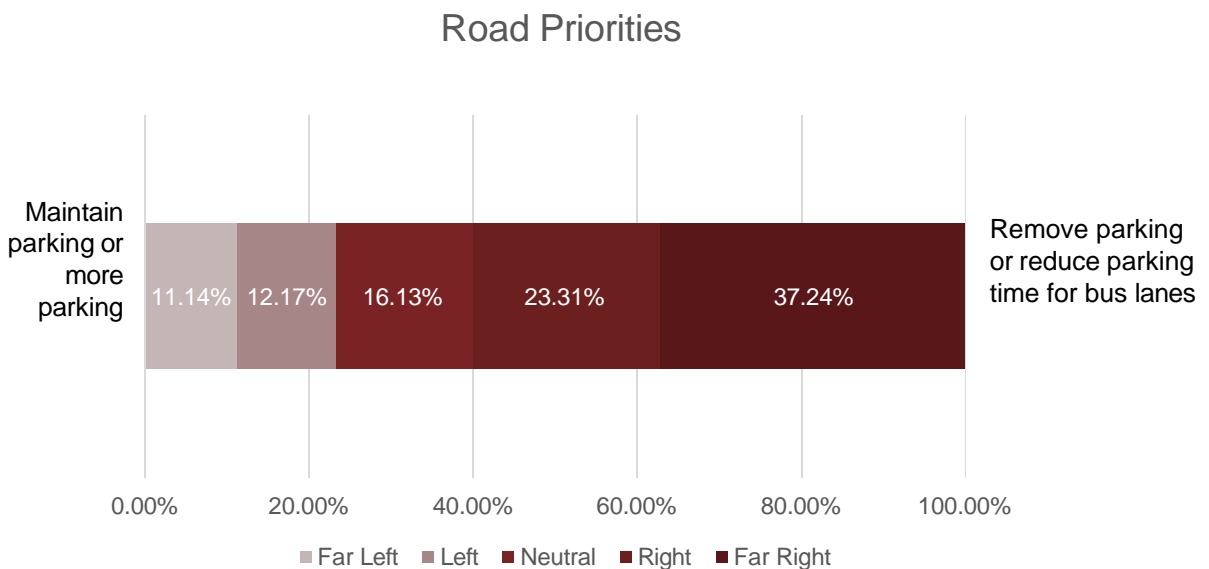
Figure 20: Intersection Tradeoff Preferences



## Road Priorities

Respondents were asked to choose between “maintain parking or more parking” on the left and “remove parking or reduce parking time for bus lanes” on the right. As shown in **Figure 21**, a majority of respondents prefer (24 percent) or strongly prefer (37 percent) removing parking or reducing parking time for bus lanes.

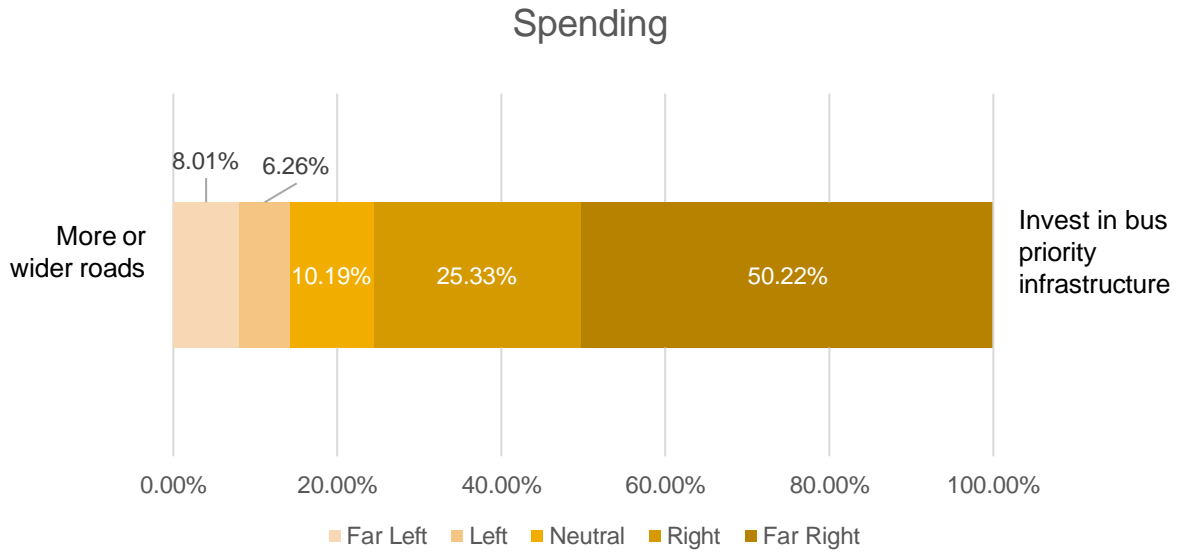
Figure 21: Road Priorities Tradeoff Preferences



## Spending

Respondents were asked to choose between “more or wider roads” on the left and “invest in bus priority infrastructure” on the right. As shown in **Figure 22**, a majority of respondents prefer (26 percent) or strongly prefer (50 percent) investing in bus priority infrastructure.

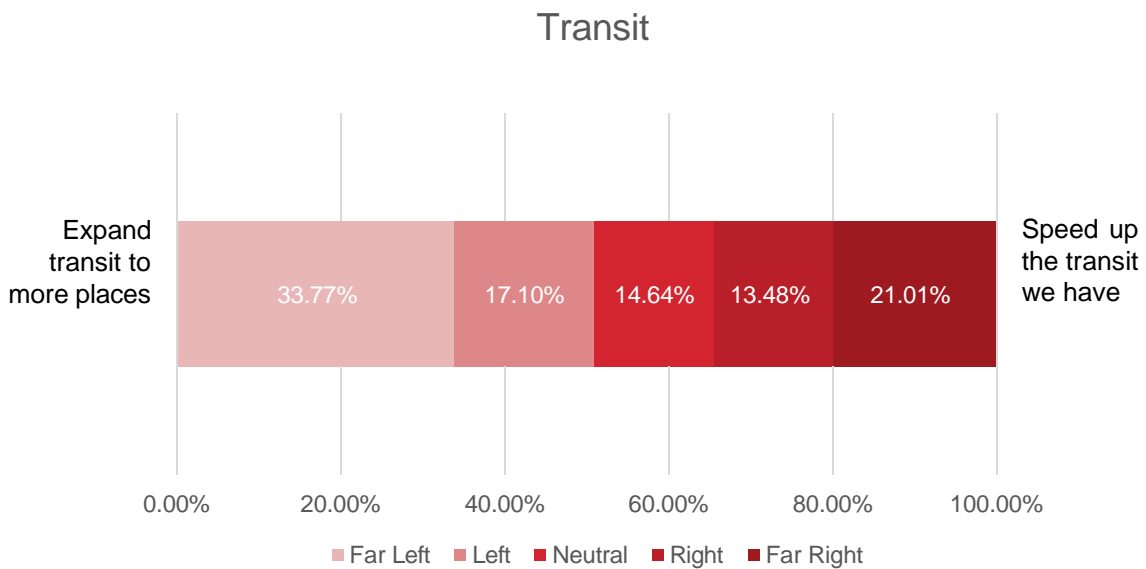
Figure 22: Spending Tradeoff Preferences



## Transit

Respondents were asked to choose between “expand transit to more places” on the left and “speed up the transit we have” on the right. As shown in **Figure 23**, a majority of respondents, 51 percent, prefer expanding transit to more places: 17 percent prefer this option and 34 percent strongly prefer it. Thirty-four (34) percent of respondents prefer (13 percent) or strongly prefer (21 percent) expanding transit to more places.

Figure 23: Transit Tradeoff Preferences

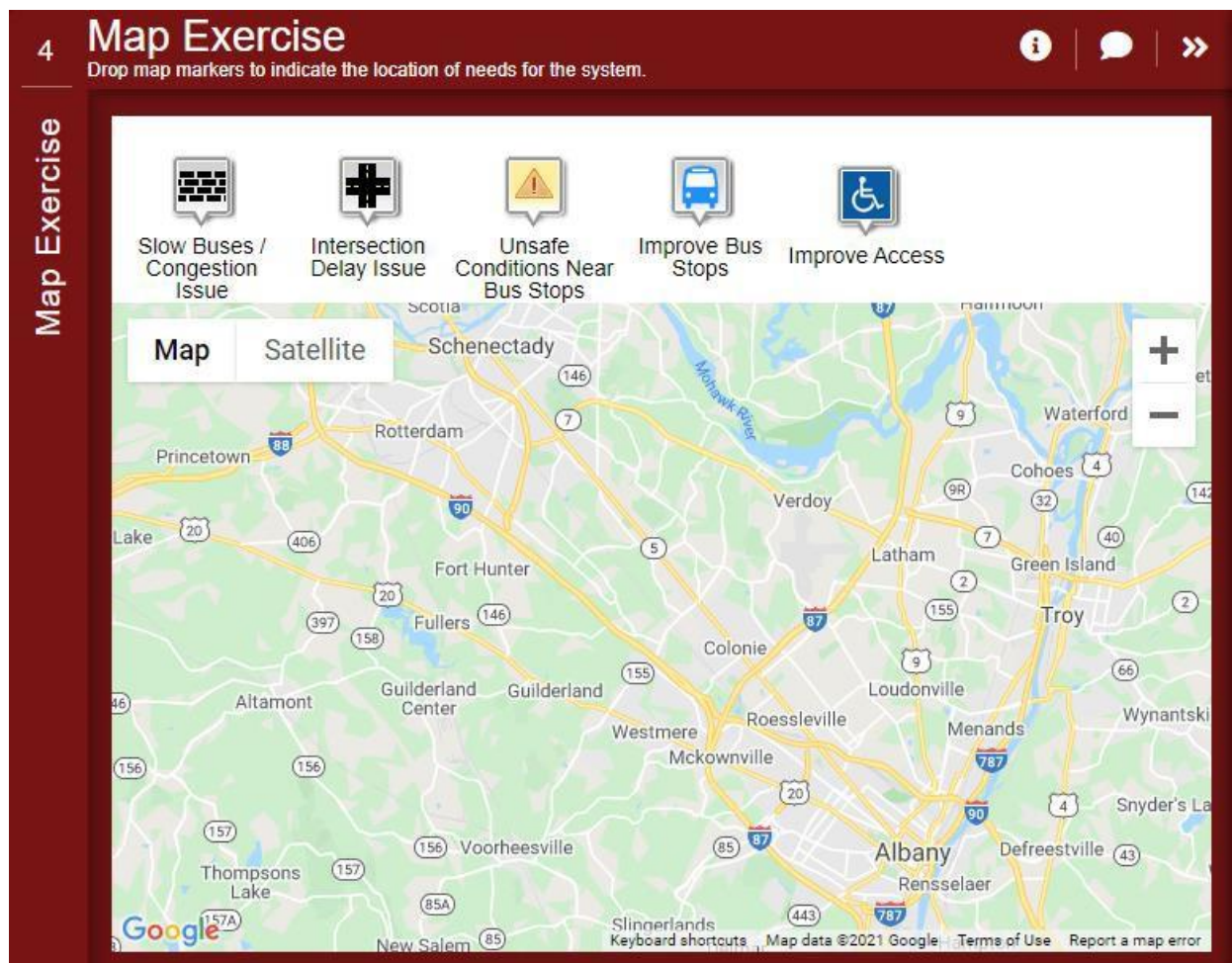


## 6. LOCATION OF NEEDS

Respondents were asked to drop map markers to indicate the location of needs for the bus system. The default map was zoomed out to show the full Capital Region in the window, and respondents were able to zoom in. The map exercise tab on the survey is shown in **Figure 24**. The map markers were:

- Slow buses / congestion issue
- Intersection delay issue
- Unsafe conditions near bus stops
- Improve bus stops
- Improve access.

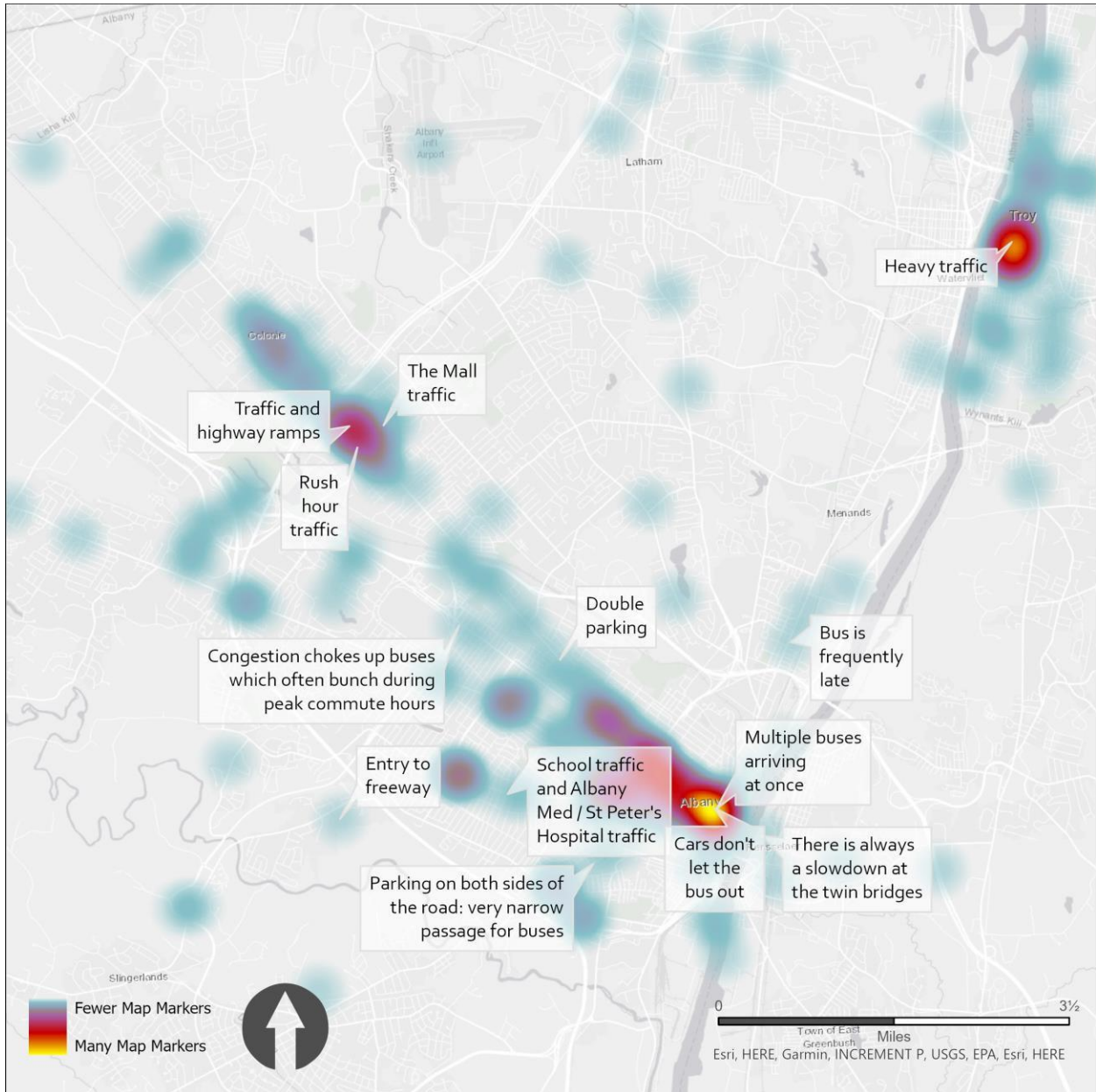
Figure 24: Map Exercise Tab on Survey



## Slow Buses / Congestion Issue

Respondents placed 298 Slow Buses / Congestion Issue map markers and left 136 comments to describe what causes congestion at their selected point. A heat map of the markers is shown in **Figure 25**, along with a selection of comments, edited for clarity.

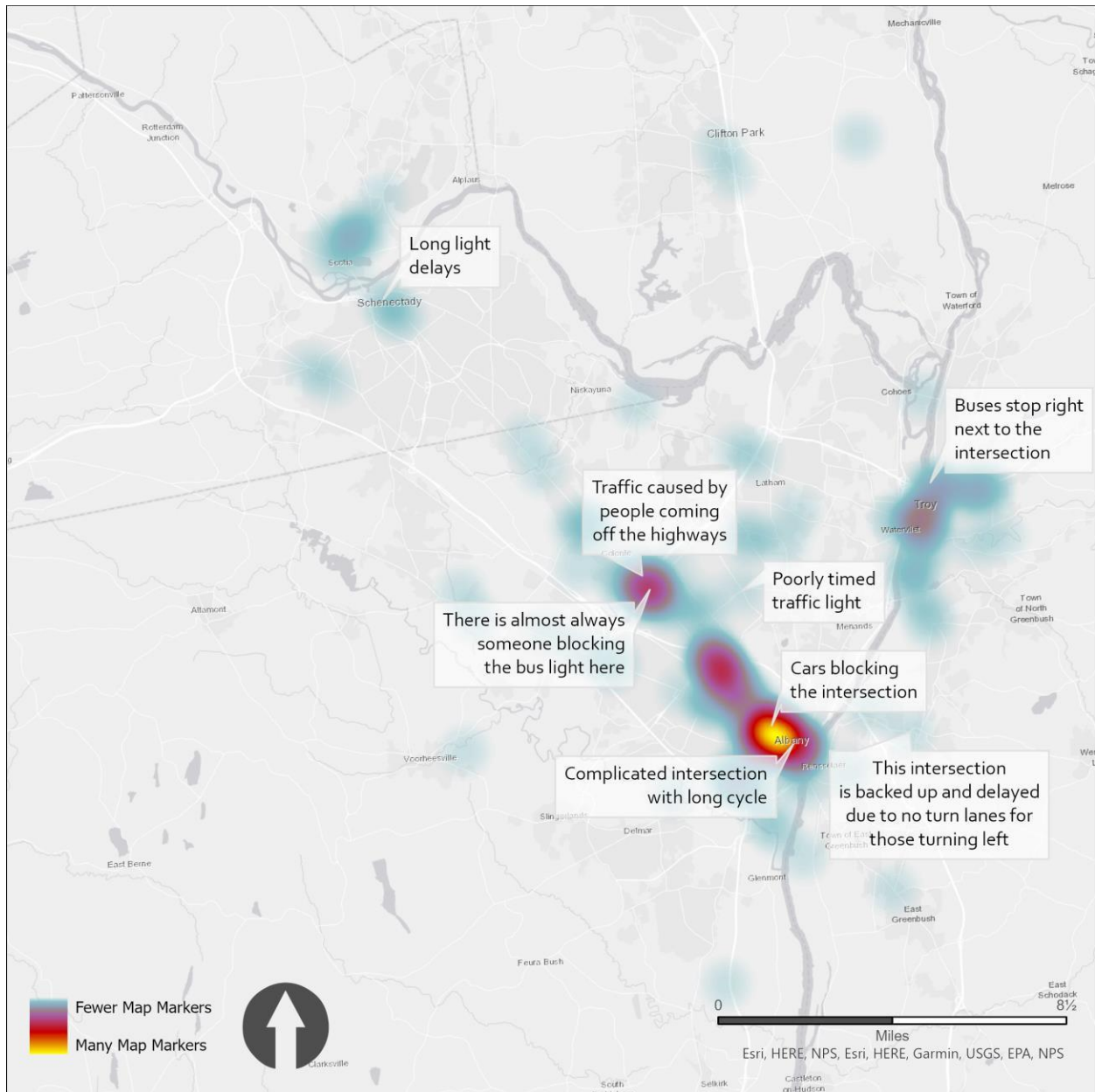
Figure 25: Slow Buses / Congestion Issue Map Markers



## Intersection Delay Issue

Respondents placed 193 Intersection Delay Issue map markers and left 81 comments to describe what causes the delay at their selected point. A heat map of the markers is shown in **Figure 26**, along with a selection of comments, edited for clarity.

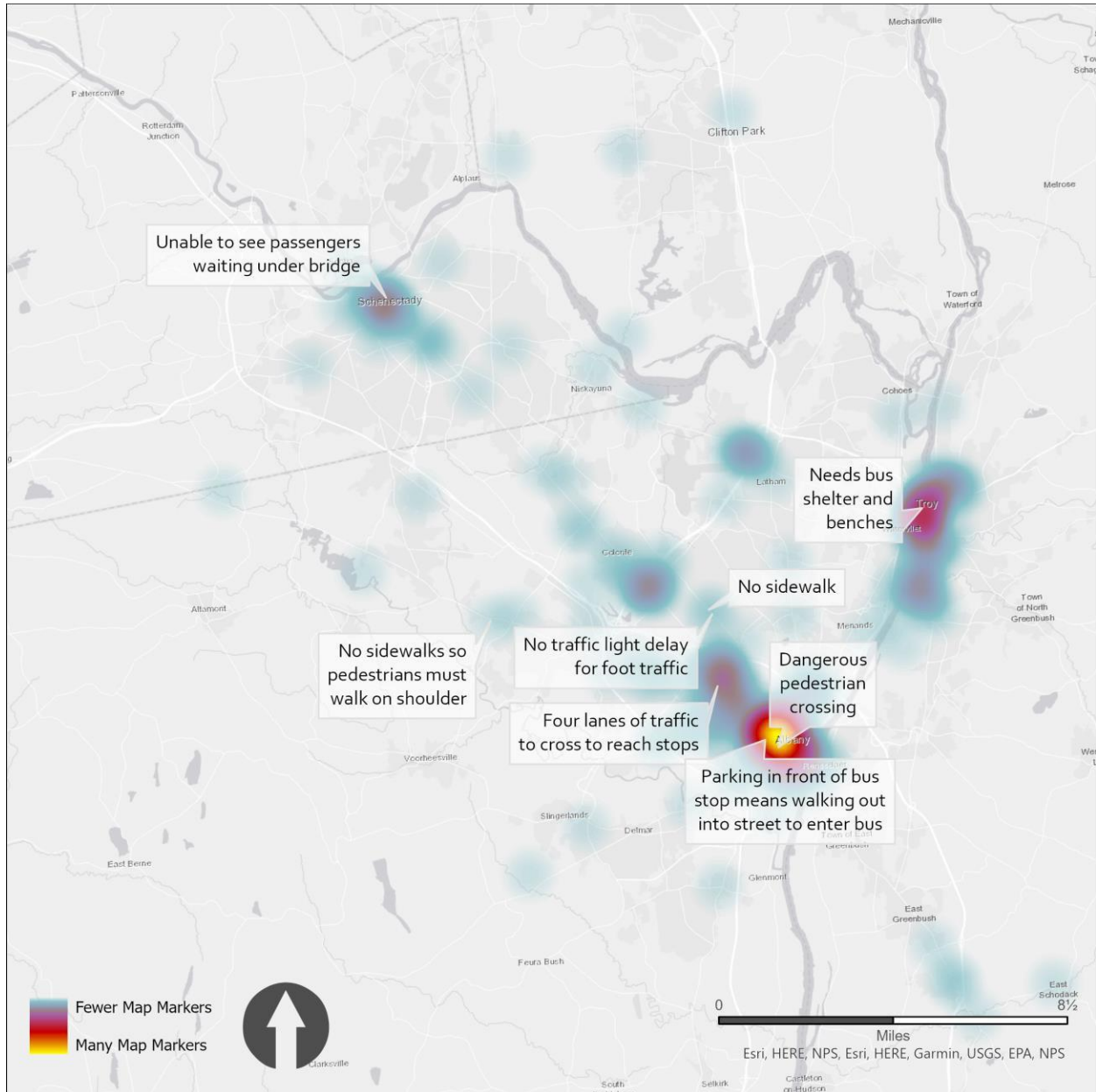
Figure 26: Intersection Delay Issue Map Markers



## Unsafe Conditions Near Bus Stops

Respondents placed 219 Unsafe Conditions Near Bus Stops map markers and left 136 comments to describe what is unsafe at their selected point. A heat map of the markers is shown in **Figure 27**, along with a selection of comments, edited for clarity.

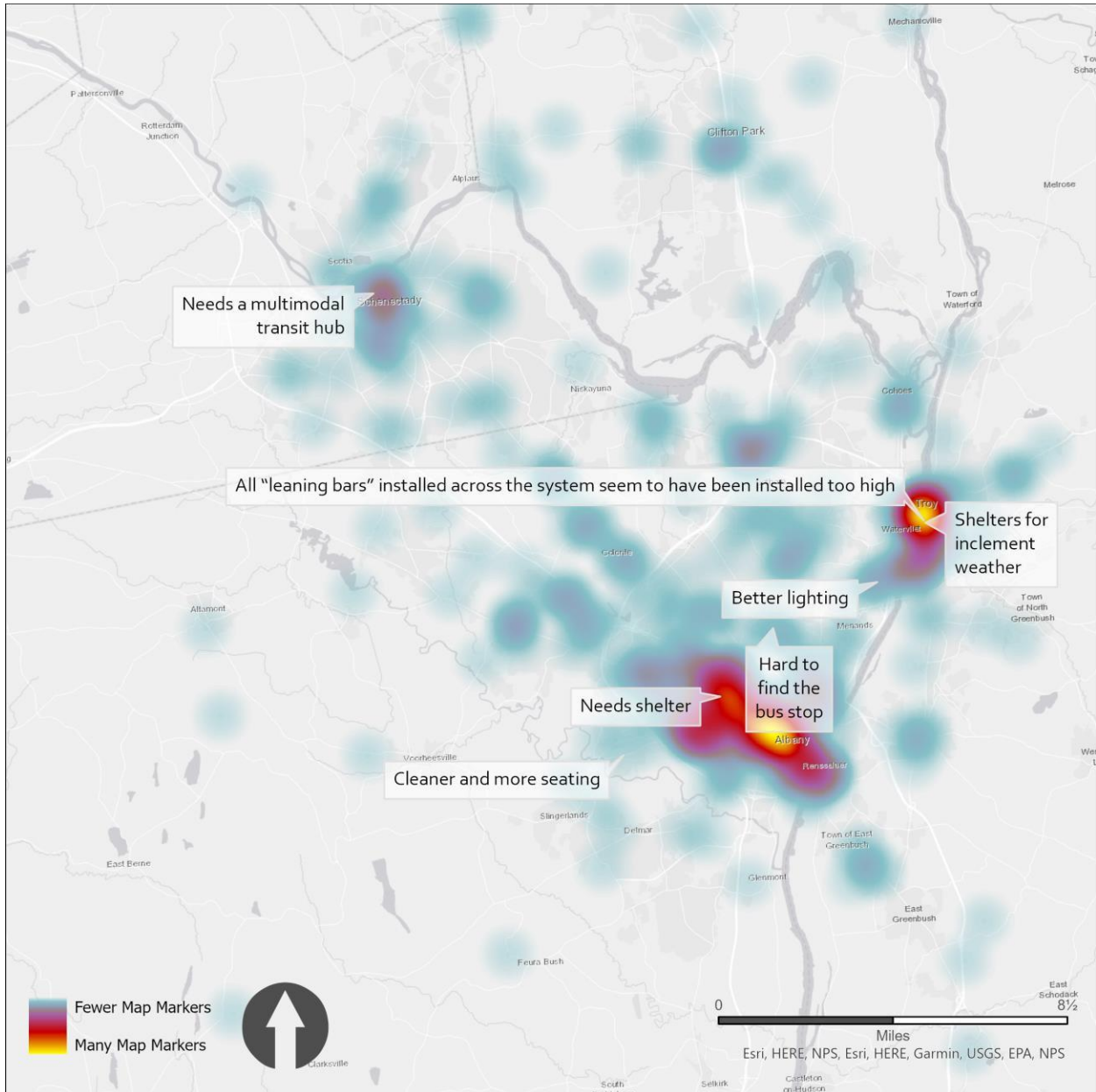
Figure 27: Unsafe Conditions Near Bus Stops Map Markers



## Improve Bus Stops

Respondents placed 426 Improve Bus Stops map markers and left 234 comments to describe what needs improvement at their selected point. A heat map of the markers is shown in **Figure 28**, along with a selection of comments, edited for clarity.

Figure 28: Improve Bus Stops Map Markers

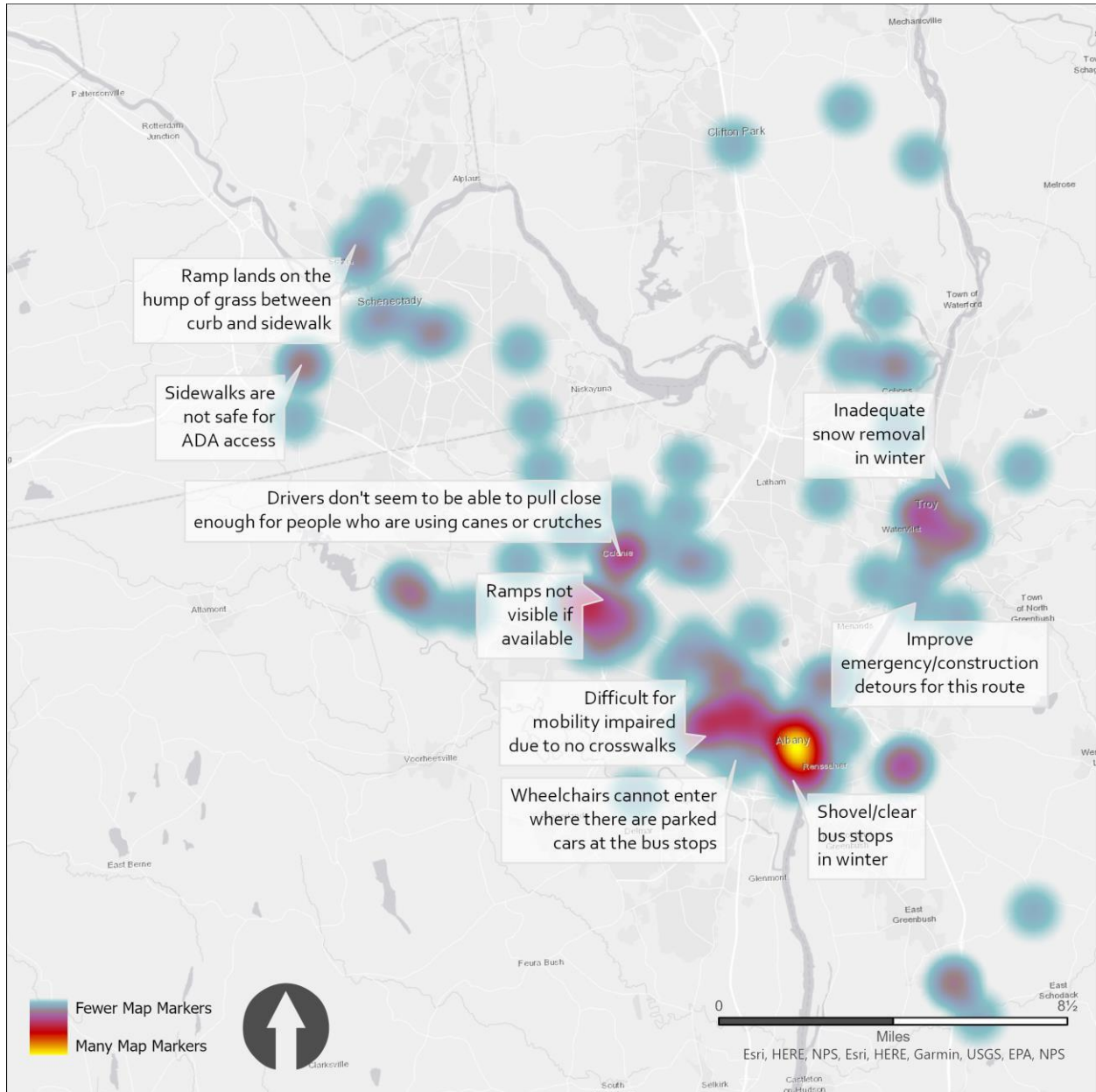




## Improve Access

Respondents placed 117 Improve Access map markers and left 48 comments to describe how access can be improved at their selected point. A heat map of the markers is shown in **Figure 29**, along with a selection of comments, edited for clarity.

Figure 29: Improve Access Map Markers



## 7. KEY FINDINGS

The survey results indicate that respondents would generally support bus lanes. The most commonly selected factors that influence respondents' decision to drive or take the bus are access to frequent buses near them and travel time reliability, both of which would improve with bus lanes. Respondent's answers to the following themes show that they find congestion to be an issue and prefer bus lanes and bus priority policies and investments over those that favor private vehicles.



### Congestion

- **33 percent** of respondents agree that buses are frequently stuck in congestion.
- The Slow Buses / Congestion Issues map marker received the **second-most responses**.



### Bus Priority Infrastructure

- **70 percent** of respondents prefer giving buses extra green time.
- **76 percent** prefer investing in bus priority infrastructure.
- **61 percent** prefer removing parking or reducing parking time for bus lanes.

### Congestion

More respondents agree or strongly agree (33 percent) rather than disagree or strongly disagree (26 percent) that buses are frequently stuck in congestion. Additionally, in the mapping activity, the "Slow Buses / Congestion Issues" map marker received the second-most responses after "Improve Bus Stops," indicating riders have more issues with congestion than accessibility, safety conditions near bus stops, and intersection delay issues.

### Bus Priority Infrastructure

The tradeoff exercise offered support for bus lanes. Seventy (70) percent of respondents strongly prefer or prefer giving buses extra green time over maintaining delay for private vehicles, and 76 percent strongly prefer or prefer investing in bus priority infrastructure over investing in more or wider roads. Additionally, 61 percent of respondents strongly prefer or prefer removing parking or reducing parking time for bus lanes over maintaining parking or more parking.

# 8. APPENDICES

## Pop-Up Summary

<b>Purpose:</b>	Inform Public About the Project, Distribute Survey Cards and Virtual Webinar Notice
<b>Date, Times, and Locations:</b>	<p>October 21, 2021, #1 7:00am-9:00am and #2 11:00am to 1:00pm.</p> <p>#1: Bus stops at corner of State St and Pearl St in downtown Albany, 90 State St, Albany, NY 12207</p> <p>#2: Bus stop in front of Albany Public Library and at corner of Washington Ave and Route 9W</p>
<b>Number of survey cards distributed during the day.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Approximately 465</li> </ul>
<b>Number of project flyers distributed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Approximately 25-30</li> </ul>
<b>Key observations about what worked well, what was challenging, any lessons learned to keep in mind for hosting a future event at this location, and any extenuating circumstances that impacted the event success (e.g., weather conditions, many non-English speakers, etc.).</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The weather conditions were perfect for event.</li> <li>■ The morning was busier and more materials were distributed than the afternoon session.</li> <li>■ At the library location, important to be in front of the bus stop, not the library.</li> <li>■ The survey cards were easier to distribute and more readily picked up as opposed to the flyers.</li> <li>■ The swag items were great, and people loved them.</li> <li>■ The MJ group did not encounter any non-English speakers.</li> <li>■ The morning transit riders moved much quicker than the afternoon crowd who seemed to have more time between buses and wanted to chat.</li> <li>■ Table locations were very good – visible but out of the way for riders getting in and out of the buses.</li> </ul>

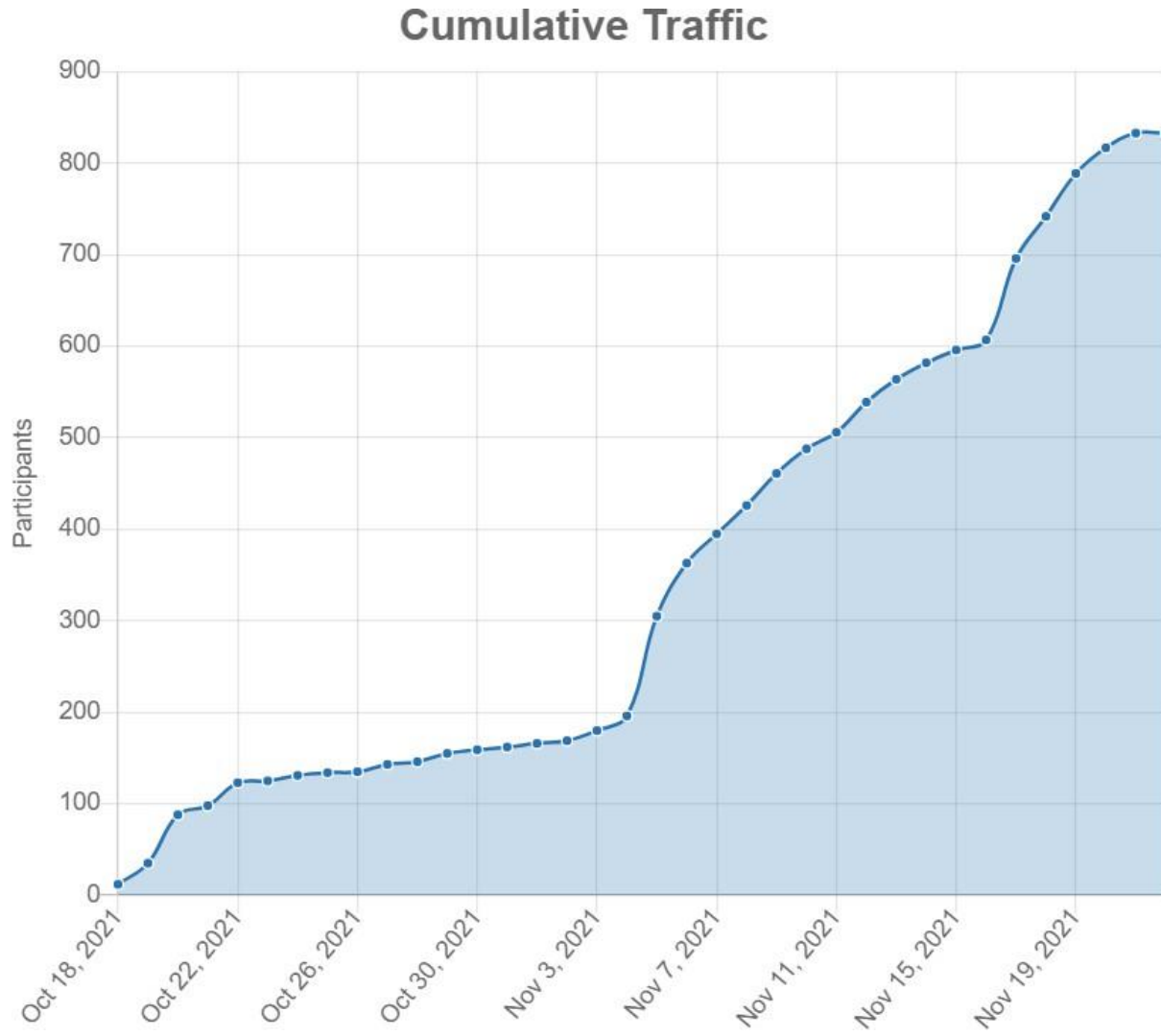
<p><b>Conversation topic highlights</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Comments from riders:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Support for the bus lanes and said there could be improvements in dependability, speed, and frequency of buses</li> <li>— Lack of confidence from folks that changes will be made</li> <li>— Focus on certain routes, not bus lane project specific</li> <li>— Described issues with transfers, not having enough time between buses (e.g., from Pearl to State)</li> <li>— Positive feedback on bus service in general</li> <li>— Positive feedback regarding the quality of bus drivers</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Bus drivers:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Need more drivers</li> <li>— Feel like they do not have a voice</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Photos taken at the event</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Link to photos</a></p>

<b>Purpose:</b>	Inform Public About the Project, Distribute Survey Cards and Virtual Webinar Notice
<b>Date, Times, and Locations:</b>	October 27, 2021, 11:00am to 2:00pm.  Gateway Plaza: 12 State St, Schenectady, NY 12305
<b>Number of survey cards distributed during the day.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ English: 84</li> <li>■ Spanish: 0</li> <li>■ Mandarin: 0</li> </ul>
<b>Conversation topic highlights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have the 450 stop at the casino</li> <li>■ Don't have an issue with the 905/10 running slow – passengers slow it down</li> <li>■ 905 and 353 weekend service should be same as weekday service. Can't get to work on Sundays by bus.</li> <li>■ Consider bus priority signal at State + McClelland and State + Brandywine</li> <li>■ Slow in Albany: Central + Lake and Central + Hannford</li> <li>■ Service to Wilton Mall + Wolf Rd Colonie Center</li> <li>■ Washington Ave: Crossings to the Commons is complicated transfer</li> <li>■ Difficult to add cash to bus card as there are not enough locations</li> <li>■ Oscar is an exceptional driver on the 353</li> <li>■ Try and have a route from Troy to Saratoga: maybe up route 32 or 9</li> <li>■ Bus cards are hard to load for seniors who live alone and there are not enough locations when paying with cash</li> <li>■ The 353 needs to be slowed on Altamont Avenue: it jostles grocery bags and backpack</li> <li>■ The Albany street area at Veeder and Georgetta Dix has an intersection problem related to the signal and the bus stops</li> </ul>

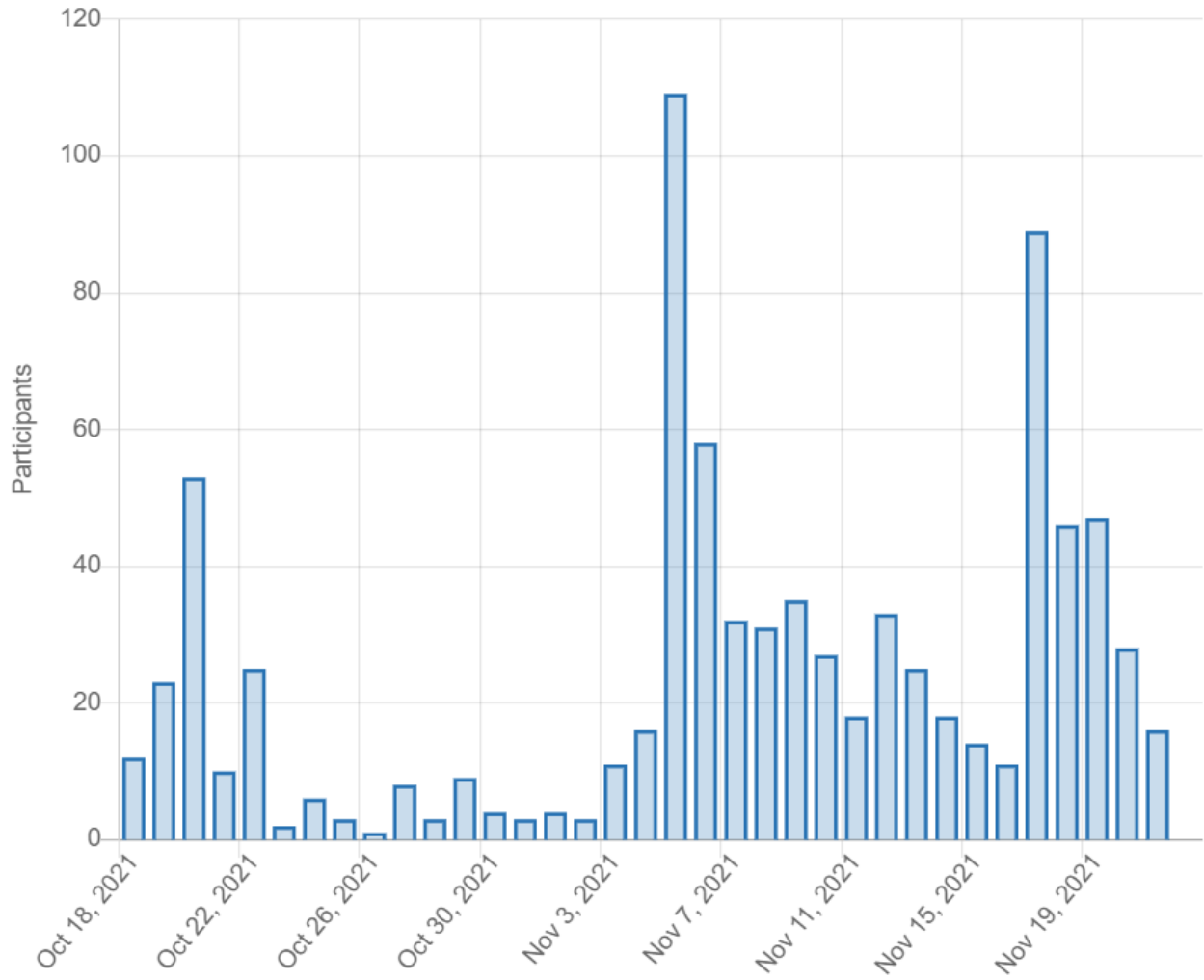
**METROQUEST SURVEY RESULTS**

<b>Purpose:</b>	Inform Public About the Project, Distribute Survey Cards and Virtual Webinar Notice
<b>Date, Times, and Locations:</b>	October 22, 2021, 12:00pm to 3:00pm. Riverfront Station in Troy
<b>Number of survey cards distributed during the day.</b>	■ Not documented
<b>Conversation topic highlights</b>	■ Not documented

## Measuring Success

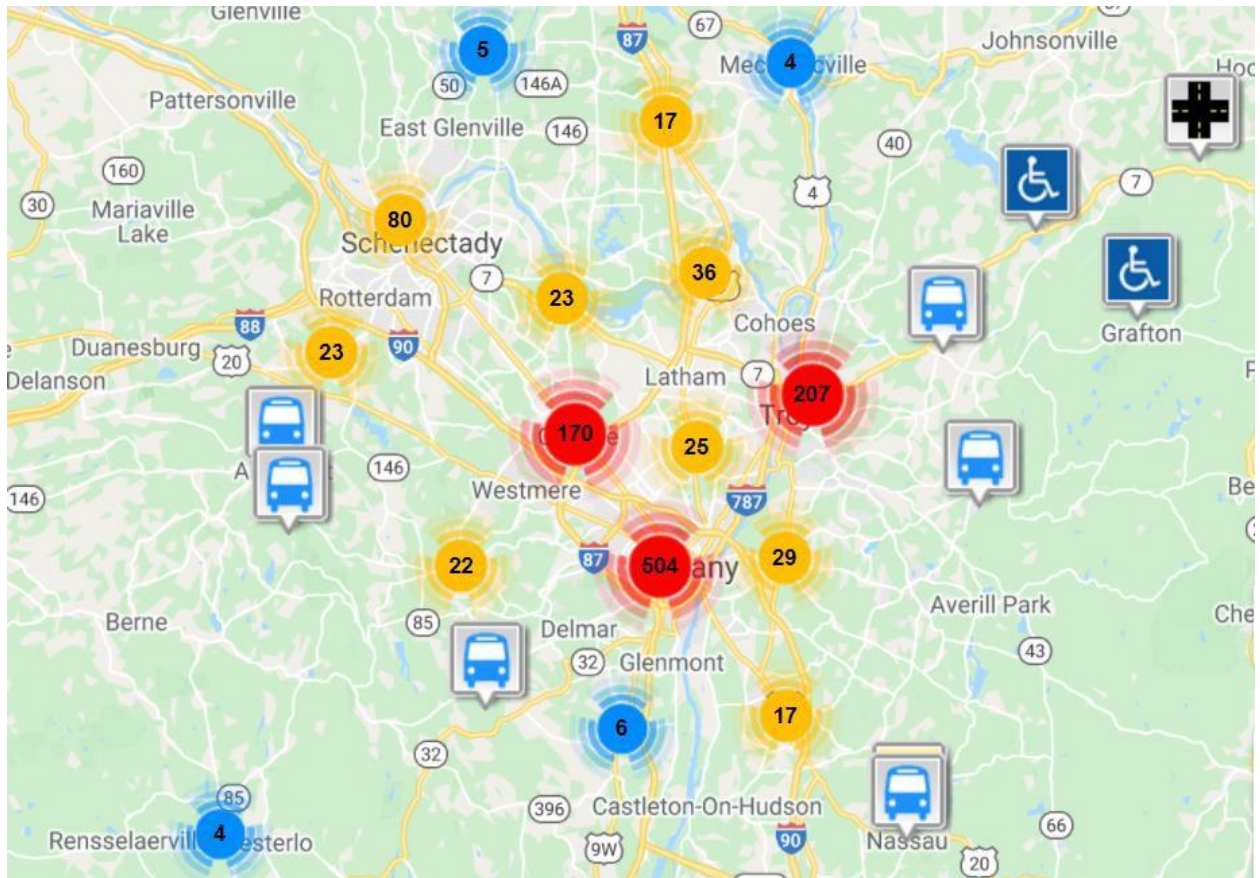


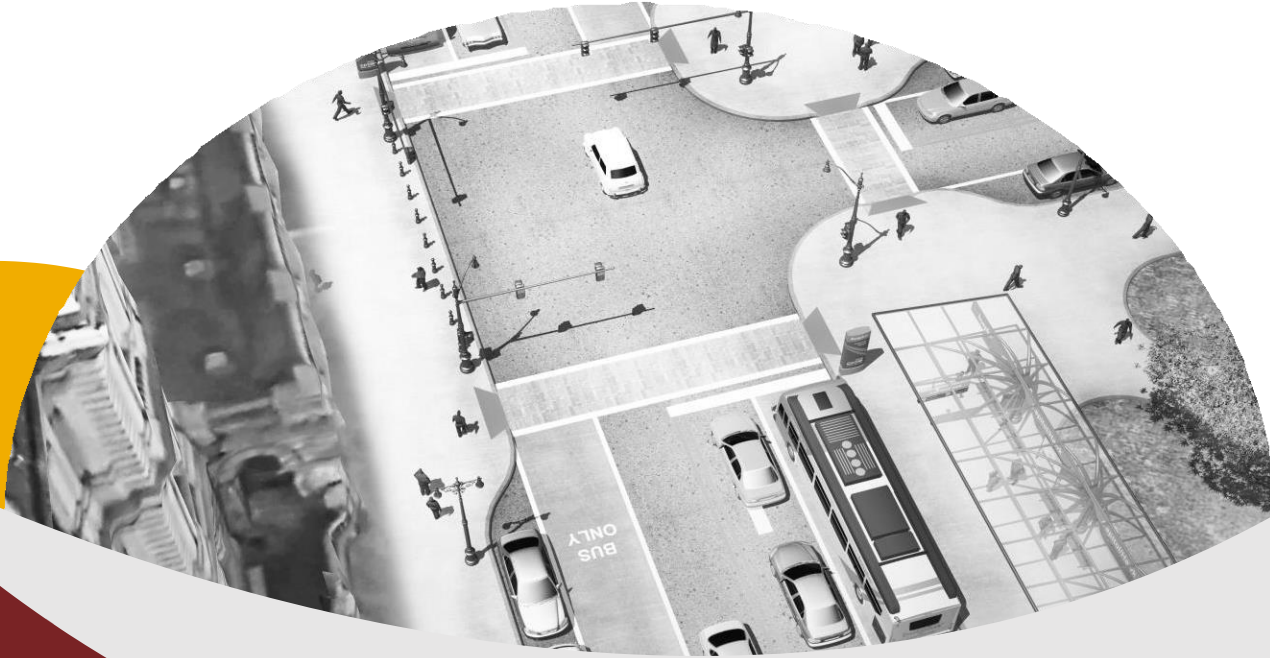
### Daily Traffic





**METROQUEST SURVEY RESULTS**





# CAPITAL REGION BUS LANE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Phase II Public Engagement MetroQuest Survey Results

November 2022

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# 1. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

## Geographic Distribution

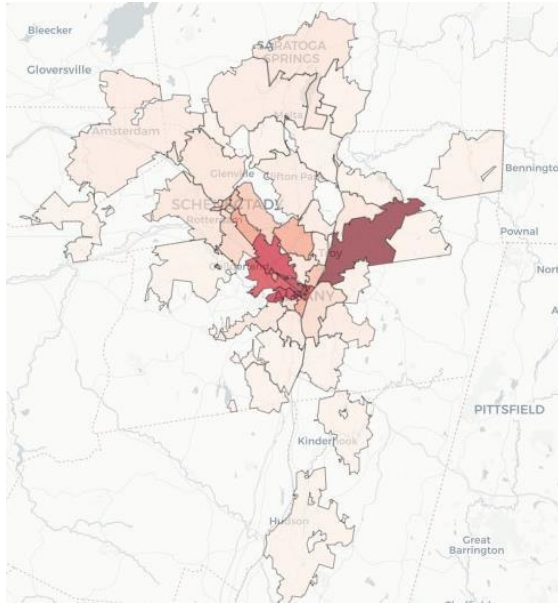


Figure 1: Work/School Zip Code

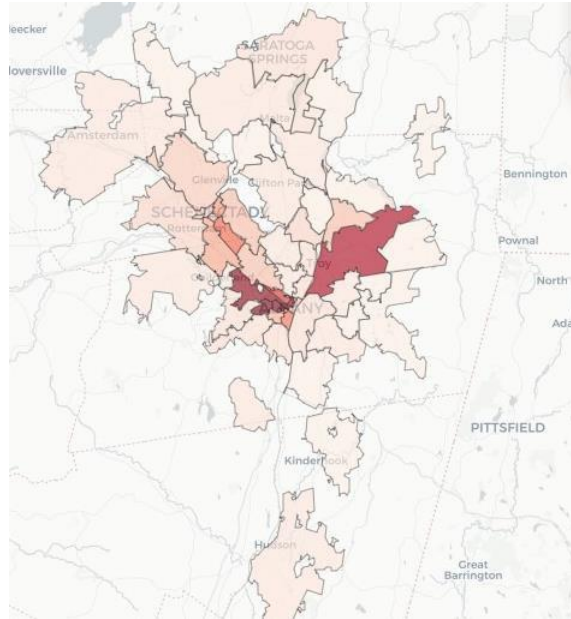


Figure 2: Home Zip Code

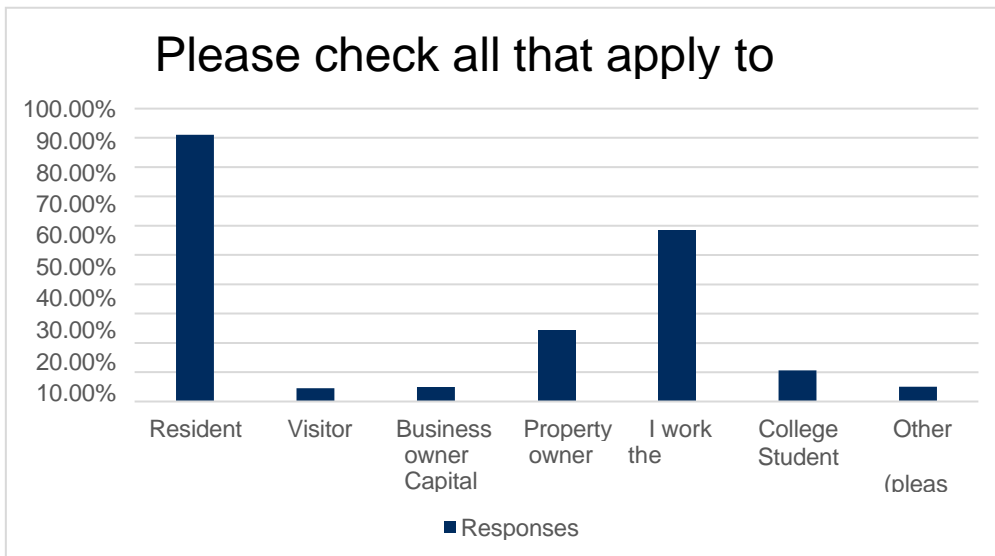


Figure 3: Respondent Residency

## Age

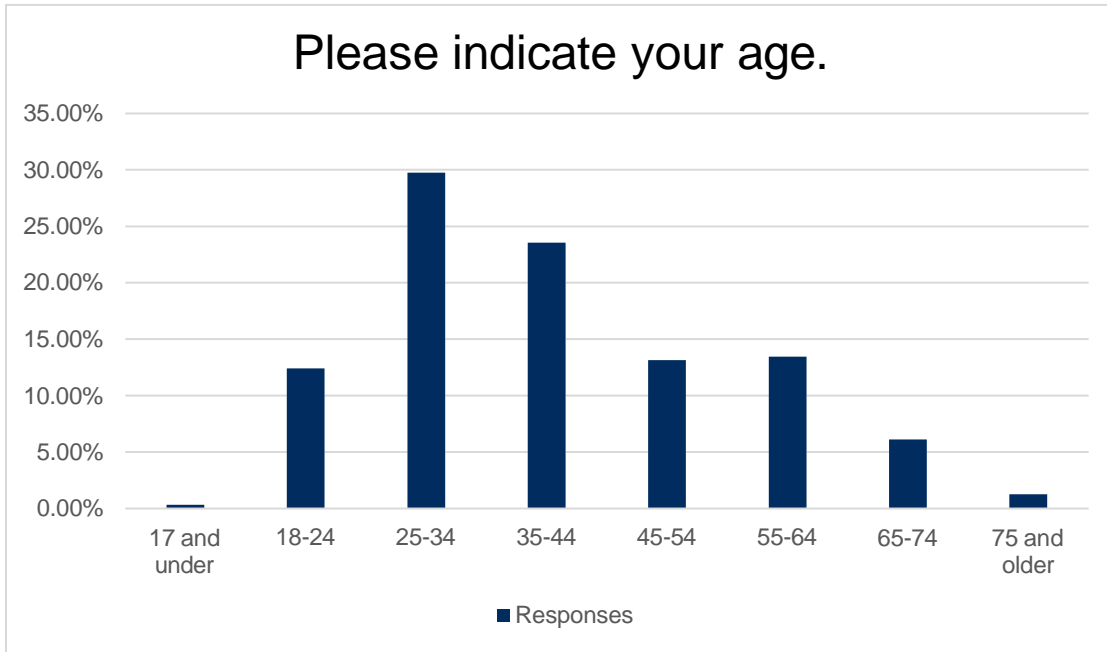


Figure 4: Respondent Age Distribution

## Household Income

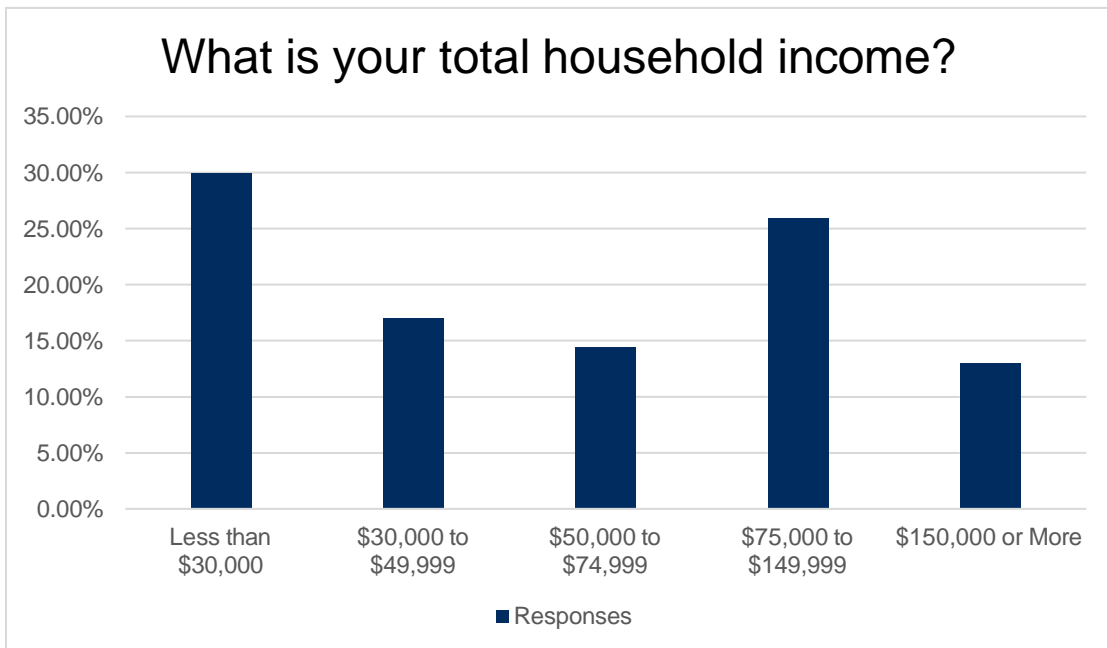


Figure 5: Respondent Income Distribution

## Disability

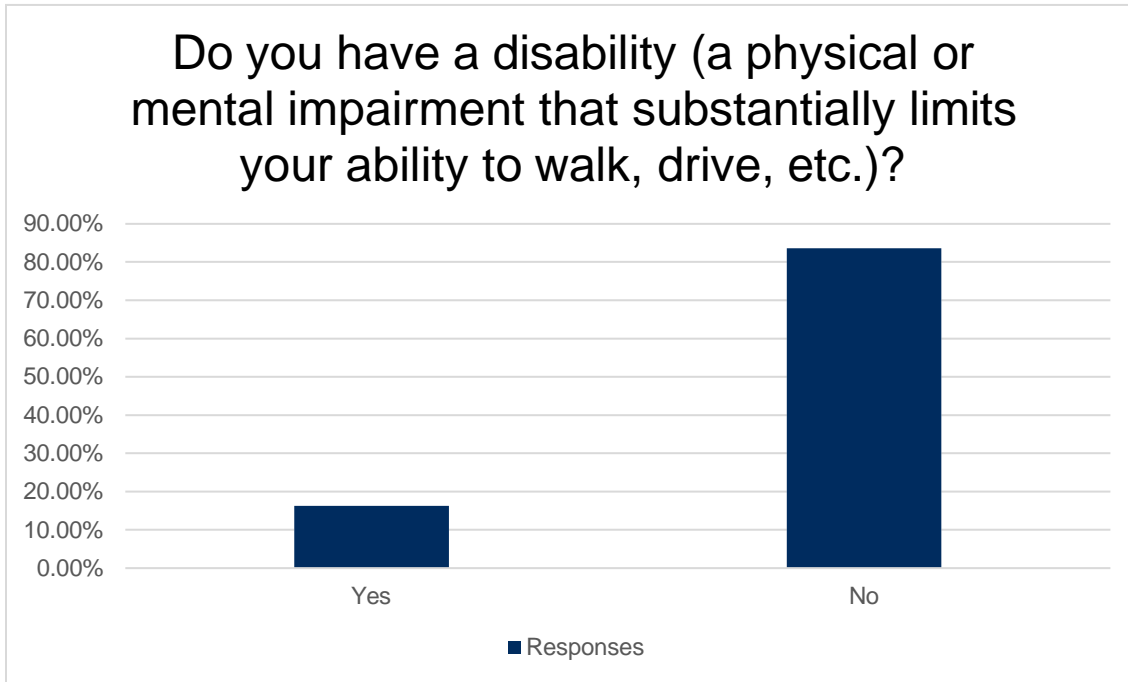


Figure 6: Respondent Disability

## 2. BUS RIDERSHIP

How often do you typically ride the bus?

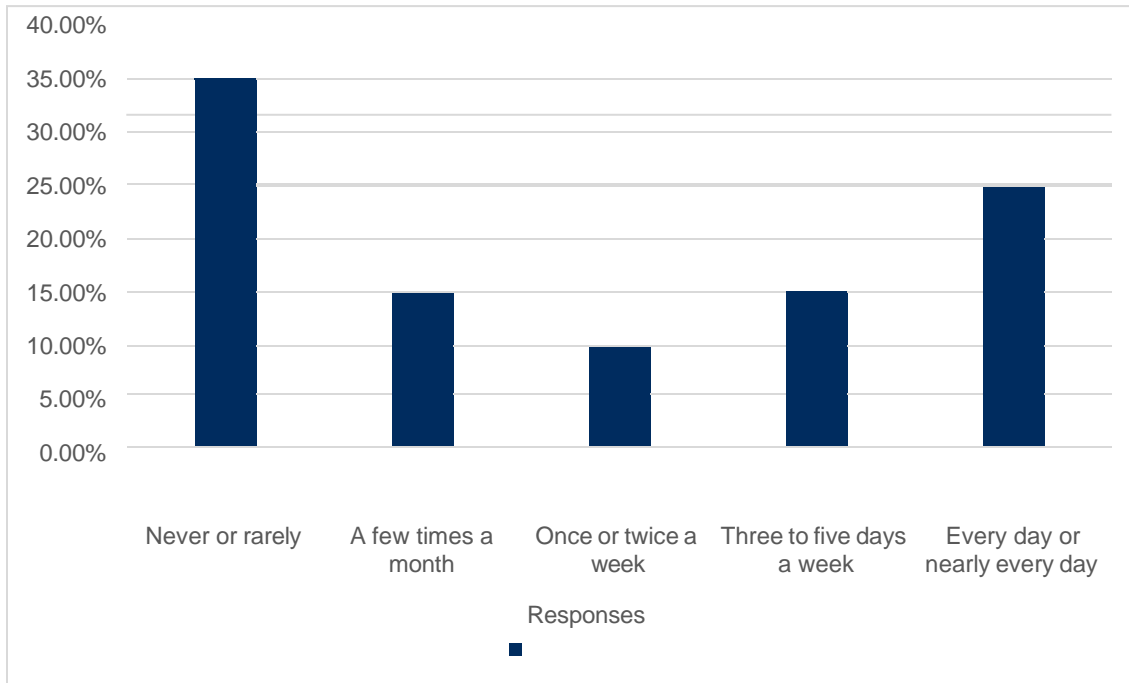


Figure 7: Respondent Bus Ridership

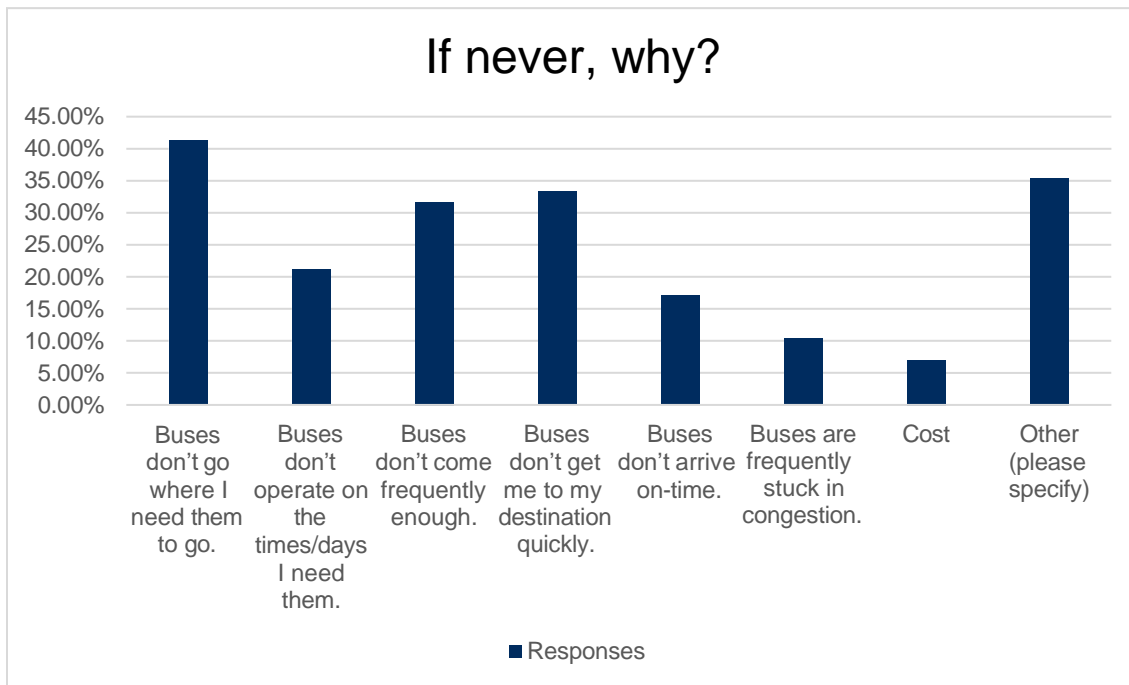


Figure 8: Respondent Bus Concerns



# 3. CORRIDOR PRIORITY MODES

## Washington/State Street

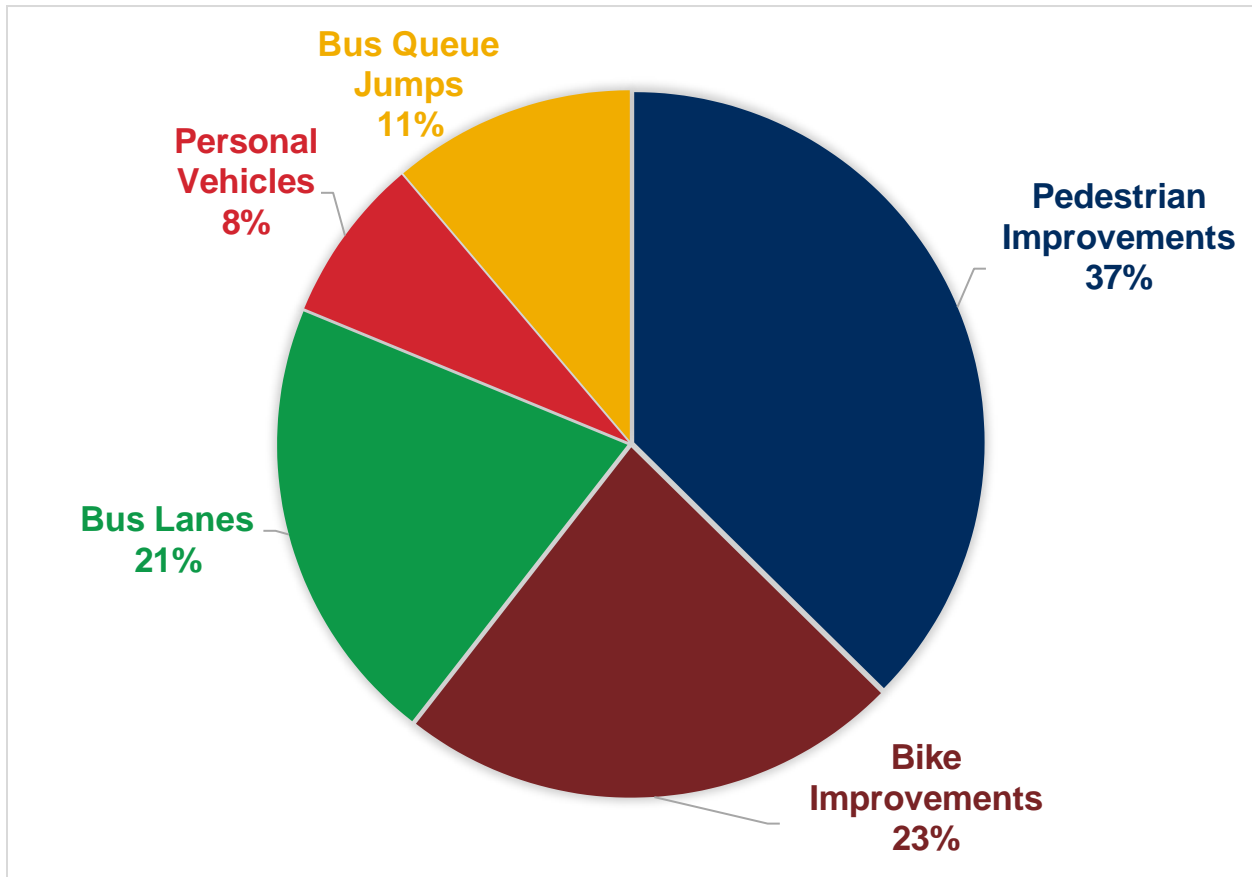


Figure 9: Washington/State Street - Distribution of First Place Rankings

## Central Avenue

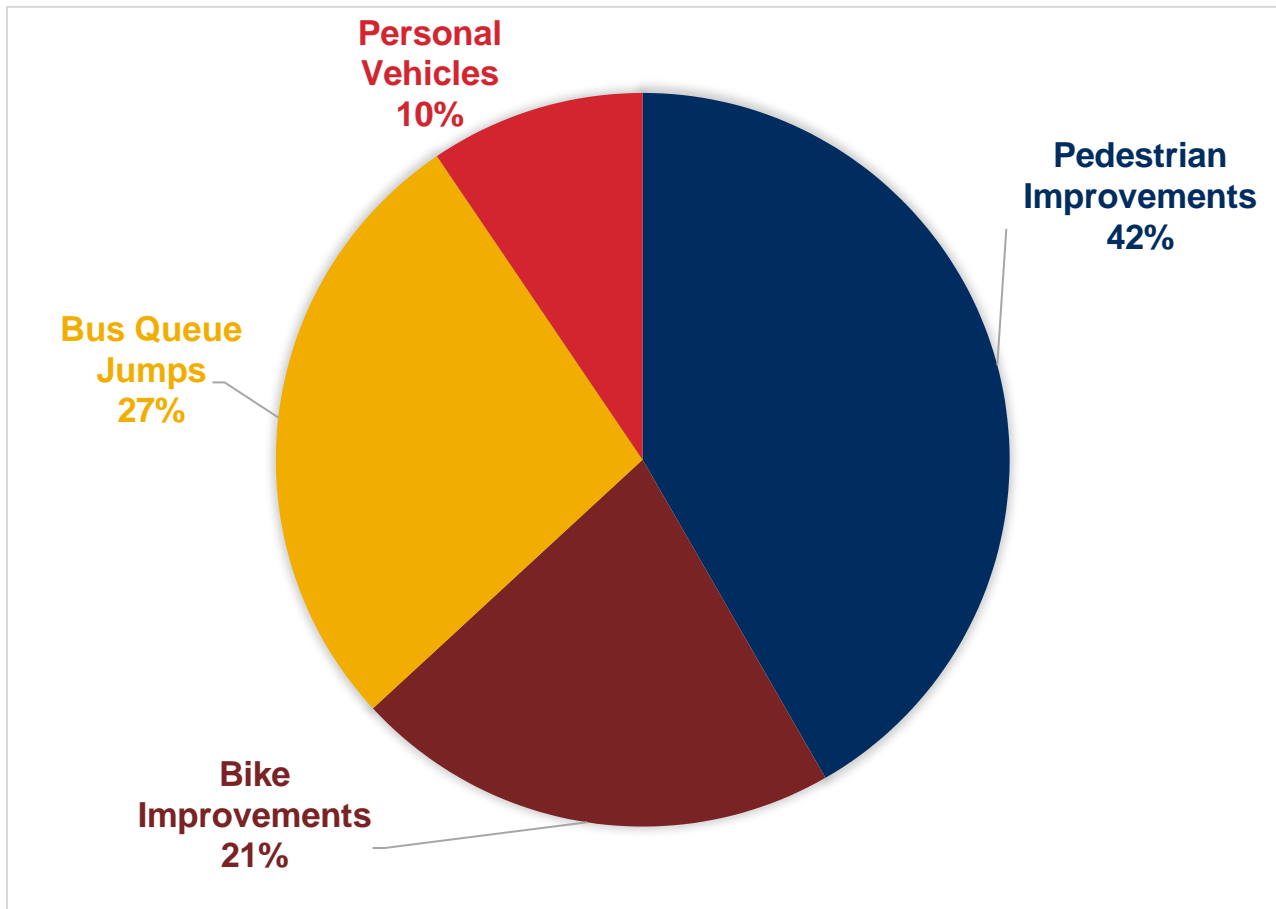


Figure 10: Central Avenue - Distribution of First Place Rankings

### 3rd/4th Street

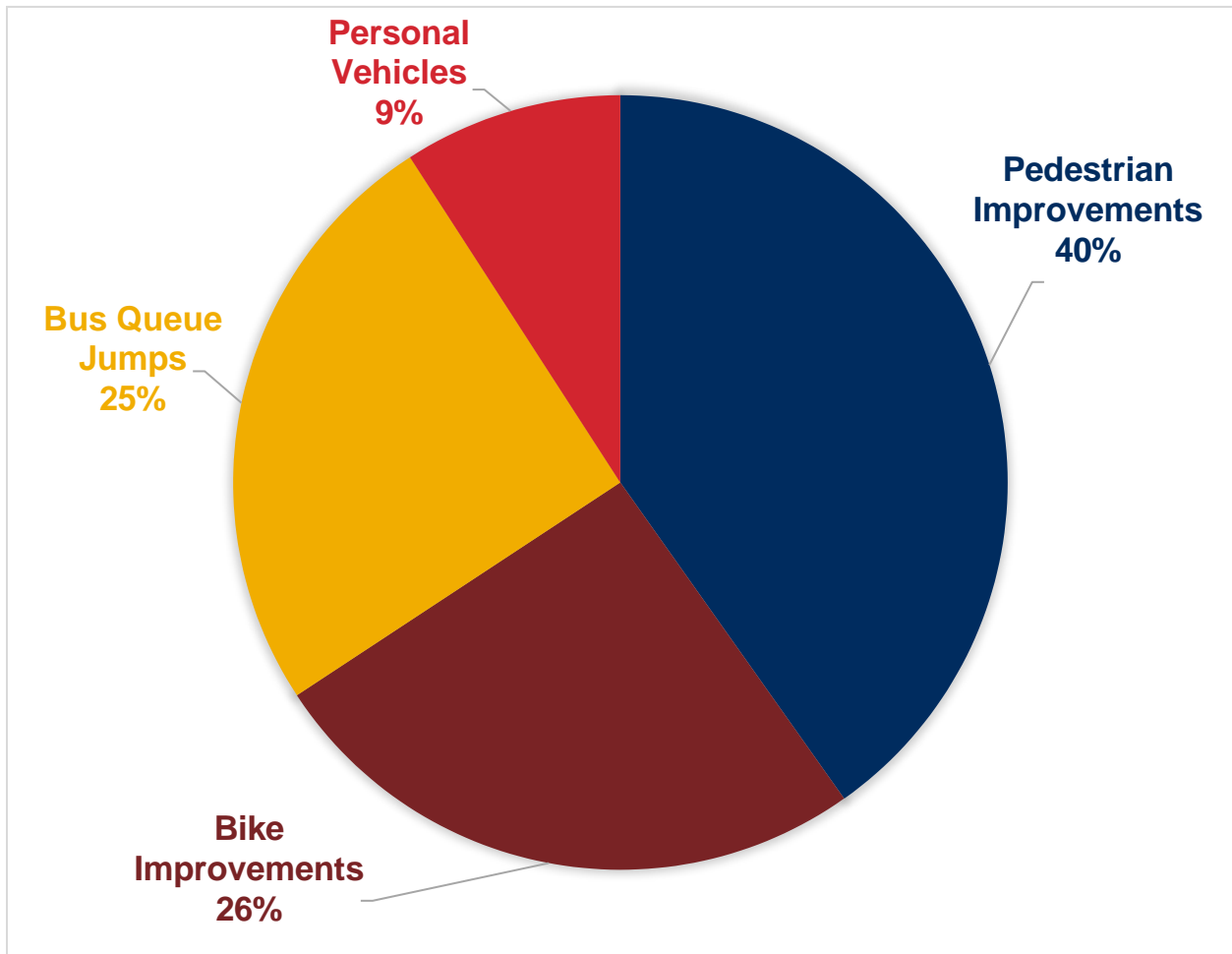


Figure 11: 3rd/4th Street - Distribution of First Place Rankings

## Schenectady State Street

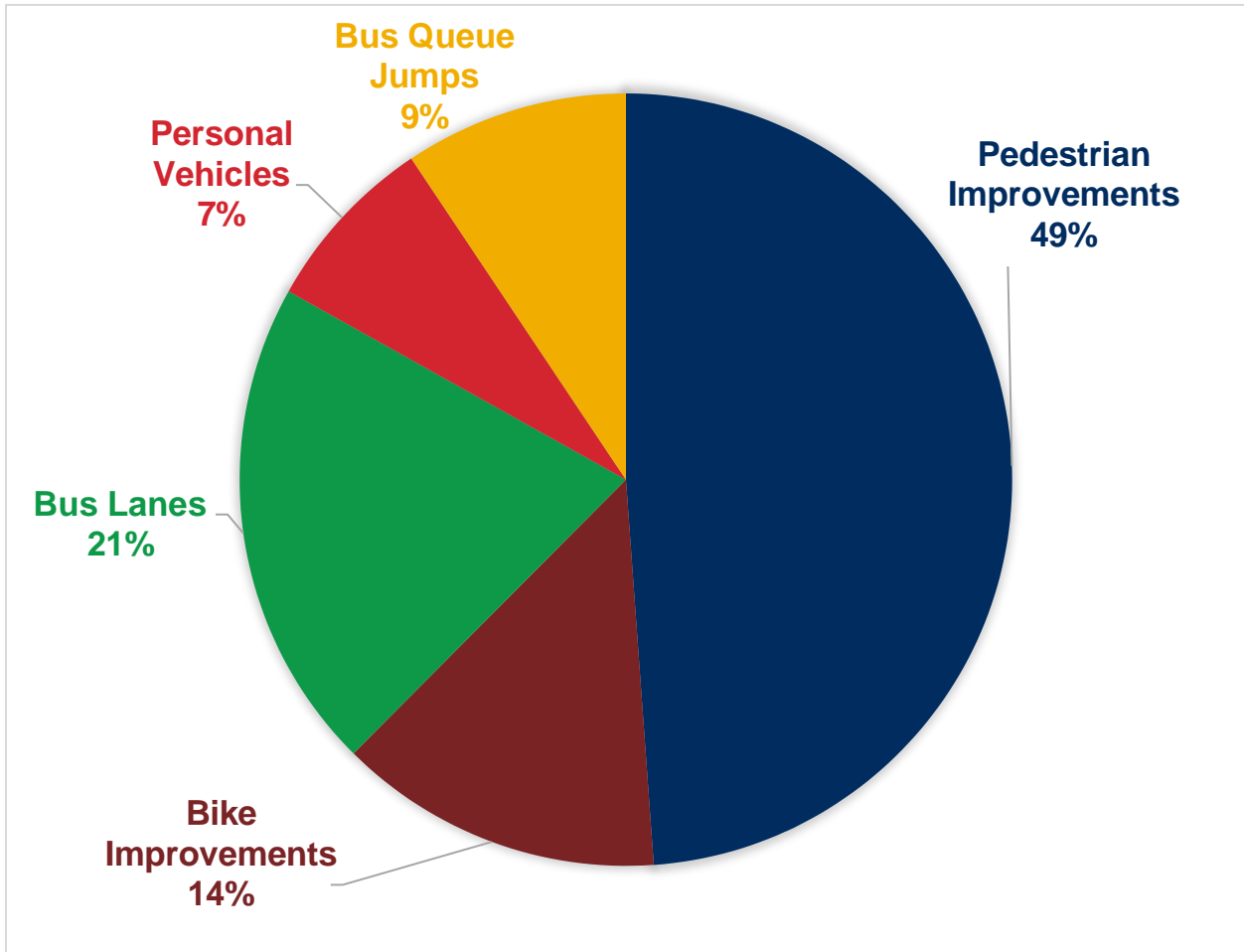


Figure 12: Schenectady State Street - Distribution of First Place Rankings

## 4. QUEUE JUMPS

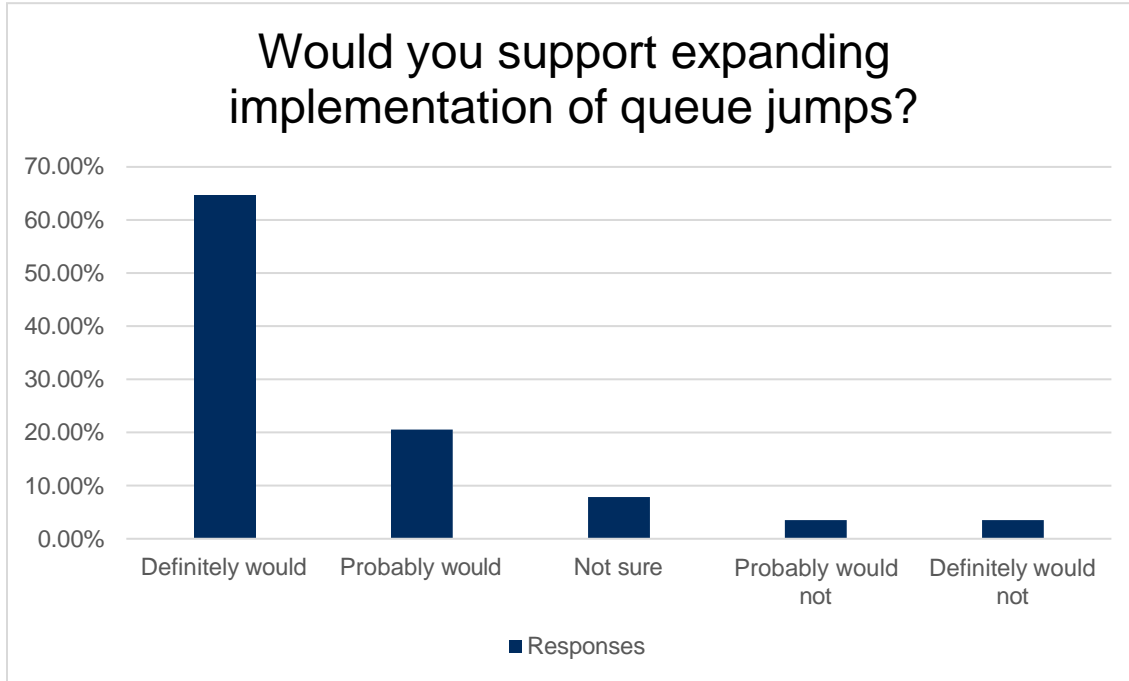


Figure 13: Respondent Queue Jump Support