

GRAND FORKS - EAST GRAND FORKS

Transit Development Plan

Appendix 2: Public Engagement Summary

September 2022



GRAND FORKS - EAST GRAND FORKS

Transit Development Plan

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary / January 2022





PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PHASE 1 SUMMARY

Introduction

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Transit Development Plan (TDP) is a 10-year plan that provides a vision for transit in the community. Grand Forks – East Grand Forks’ previous transit development plan was completed in 2017. The 2022 plan update will evaluate recent system improvements and has the following areas of focus:



Integration of University of North Dakota (UND) campus bus routes



New or improved fixed route, paratransit, and Senior Rider services



Maintenance and growth of CAT ridership



Fare, pass, or transfer policy changes to increase ridership or funding



Transit fleet and technology recommendations



Investments in capital improvements like buses, bus stop enhancements, and support equipment



Support for existing and future CAT operations at transit facilities such as Midtown Transit Center and Metro Transit Center

PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Two rounds of engagement are planned for the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Transit Development Plan (TDP) update process: Phase I (Fall 2021) and Phase II (Spring 2022). The following schedule outlines the key time periods during which the public and stakeholders are engaged in the project as well as what takes place before and after engagement.





The goal of public engagement is to build and strengthen relationships in the community while gathering stakeholder and public input, responding to comments and concerns, and keeping decision-makers and other stakeholders informed throughout the TDP update process.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of Phase 1 of public engagement for the TDP. In this round, the study team gathered feedback from the public and stakeholders on their experiences using Cities Area Transit and what is/is not working well currently.

Engagement Methods and Results

Phase 1 engagement methods fall in to two primary categories: surveys and meetings. The study team tailored the surveys and meeting information to each stakeholder group. This section discusses each engagement method and key results.

SURVEYS

Public Survey

Methods

The public survey was administered to both current riders of the system and non-riders. The questions asked respondents what they think is currently working well and any issues with the current system as well as barriers to using the system, changes that could be made to make the transit system work for their travel needs, and demographic information. Kimley-Horn developed the survey questions in consultation with Cities Area Transit (CAT) staff and transit administration.

The study team made a special effort to reach people who are traditionally underrepresented in planning processes. To promote the survey, staff strategically placed posters inside buses, at key transit stops, and popular destinations around the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks area to direct people to take the surveys, and they distributed paper surveys on the buses and to locations connected to people who may be less likely to take an online survey (e.g., senior centers, the public school district, social service organizations). The project team also rode buses and was at the transit center to tell people about the project and to encourage riders to take the project survey.

Results

OVERVIEW

We received 208 responses to the public survey. Of these respondents, 55 percent currently ride CAT services or did before the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately one-third of respondents said they ride/rode CAT daily, while 19 percent said they ride/rode CAT on a weekly basis. Demographically, we heard most from 35 – 44-year-olds (25 percent of respondents) and 18 – 24-year-olds (18 percent of respondents), and 64 percent of respondents identified as female. The majority of respondents identified as White (80%) followed by seven percent identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, five percent as Black or African American, four percent as Other, four percent as Asian, one percent as Latino/Hispanic, and one percent as Middle Eastern or North African¹. A majority of respondents reported having access to a personal vehicle and being able to drive it (64%).

¹ Percentages add to more than 100%, since respondents could select all of the races/ethnicities with which they identify



The following are some key findings from the survey results:

- > Most respondents ride CAT to go to stores/restaurants (35%) and/or work (33%)
- > Approximately one-third of respondents ride CAT about the same amount as before the COVID-19 pandemic
- > 40 percent of respondents find riding CAT *easy* or *very easy*
- > Respondents noted that the biggest barrier to taking transit is that traveling on the bus takes too long (34%)
- > Respondents said having the bus serve more locations and come more often would make transit more appealing to them

A full list of survey questions and results are included in Appendix A.

TRADE-OFF SCENARIOS

Respondents were presented with two options and were asked to pick which of the two they strongly preferred or to select that they have no preference between the two. When asked to consider these possible trade-offs for transit service improvements, respondents expressed the following preferences.

- > More respondents would prefer increases to service frequency (45% strongly prefer) over an expansion of span of service (27% strongly prefer).
- > More respondents would prefer increased weekday service (37% strongly prefer) over increased weekend service (25% strongly prefer). 39% of respondents expressed no preference on this issue.
- > More respondents would prefer having more bus stops per route to reduce walking distances (41% strongly prefer) over having fewer bus stops per route for faster travel (19% strongly prefer). 40% of respondents expressed no preference on this issue.
- > Respondents were almost evenly split in their preferences to have buses running on fewer streets, but the bus comes more often (27%) or buses running on more streets, but the bus comes less often (30%). 43% of respondents expressed no preference on this issue.
- > More respondents would prefer for CAT to improve existing service in the same locations (37%) than expand service to new areas (25%). 38% of respondents expressed no preference on this issue.



STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Regarding strengths of the CAT bus system, respondents noted that drivers are courteous, helpful, and friendly. Some said they like the existing routes and wouldn't change them. Some also noted they are appreciative of the service for school kids. Regarding areas of improvement, respondents most commonly noted wanting more frequent service, faster travel times, and earlier and later transit service.

Service Improvements

- > Add services on Sundays (for church, grocery shopping, etc.)
- > Increase service on weeknights and weekends (e.g., UND doesn't have weekend service)
- > Increase bus frequency



- > Reduce bus travel times
- > Make routes more direct – have routes that don't require a transfer downtown (e.g., from UND campus to shopping destinations like Target or Walmart)

Facilities Improvements

- > Improve visibility of bus stops (especially in East Grand Forks)
- > Add more shelters to protect riders from the cold and wind

Customer Information/Experience Improvements

- > CAT Prowler app can be glitchy/incorrect – shows stops in places that don't have a bus sign, can be wrong about arrival times
- > Improve transit information – easy to read maps, education on how to ride the buses



Locations that Need Transit Service

Respondents were asked to identify locations that need transit service that are not served by CAT today. Respondents highlighted the need for transit service to the locations listed below. Multiple respondents mentioned these locations and they are ordered from most to least mentioned:

- > Industrial Park (this location was mentioned many times)
- > Belmont Road
- > More grocery stores (e.g., more Hugo's locations, south Walmart)
- > To schools
- > South Grand Forks
- > Airport
- > East Grand Forks needs better service
- > South Columbia Road
- > To events/games

Operator Survey

Methods

Transit operators know the system better than anyone due to their interaction with customers and experience driving the routes. We collected surveys from operators to gain their insight about the system and give them an opportunity to voice existing issues with the system. These surveys were available at the garage for operators to complete either before or after their shift.



Results

Two operators responded to this survey. These operators drive routes 1, 2, 6, and UND Purple Route 4 and are assigned to trips that operate at different times of day and days of the week.

SAFETY CONCERNS

The survey asked operators to identify any safety concerns that they have regarding the routes that they operate. Operators identified the following safety concerns:

- > Pulling out of Odegard Hall
- > Turning left onto University Avenue
- > 6th & Hamline traffic
- > Feel that the railroad crossing at Gateway & 5th is dangerous
 - > Consider routing to Home of Economy as the vehicle would be on the far right, not the center (fast) lane at the tracks

LOCATIONS THAT NEED TRANSIT SERVICE

The survey asked operators to identify any locations in Grand Forks – East Grand Forks that they or their passengers think should be served by bus service that aren't currently served. The respondents identified the following locations:

- > Students would like a Friday night UND bus
- > Home of Economy stop – locate closer to the correction center and municipal court

ROUTE OR SYSTEM CHANGES

The survey asked operators to identify any changes to the routes or system that would make their jobs easier. Operators identified these:

- > Need for a mall route that travels south to 62nd Avenue to serve the residents in that area
- > Adjustments needed to relief times for Routes 5 and 9
 - > Consider relieving Route 5 across from Odegard Hall

Decision Maker Survey

Methods

The study team also distributed a survey to decision-makers representing the service area, including elected and appointed government officials and staff at the Cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks and partner agencies. The survey collected information about issues with existing transit system as well as priorities for the system. Constituents often contact decision makers when systems are not working well, so they are great resources for this information.





Decision makers also influence the distribution of resources and make choices that affect the system, so it is important to understand their perspective of the system at the beginning of the study.

Results

We received seven responses to the decision maker survey. Respondents represented Grand Forks Public Schools, Grand Forks and East Grand Forks City Councils, City Planning Departments, and East Grand Forks Community Development Office. Respondents were asked to rank CAT's service on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, and to provide an explanation for their selection. The average response for each question and comments about the question from respondents are shown below:

Based on what you have heard from constituents or community members, how well does Grand Forks - East Grand Forks public transit system serve those you represent? 6.8/10

Respondents cited concerns about low ridership in East Grand Forks, the need for more shelters at bus stops, the inconvenience of riding transit, the need for increased frequency and shorter travel times, and that important areas like the industrial park are not served (or are underserved). Some respondents also said they felt the system works well, provides an essential service, and does an exceptional job of serving the communities' highest need areas.

In your opinion, how well does the Grand Forks - East Grand Forks transit system serve those you represent? 7.1/10

Respondents cited the need for improved travel times and ridership. One respondent said they like the Dial-A-Ride service because the route times, hours, and days are more frequent, but feel that microtransit or on-demand transit would better serve residents.

STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

When asked to describe CAT's strengths, decision-maker respondents identified that the following strengths:

- > Availability of service – relatively widespread service
- > Bus drivers are nice, courteous, and professional
- > Buses are nice
- > Timeliness
- > Ability to expand service

We also asked these decision makers to identify areas of improvement for the CAT system:

- > Later hours of operation
- > Need for microtransit or on-demand service





- > Need for better travel times and increased frequency
- > Improvements to shelters
- > Need for service/more service to important destinations (e.g., industrial park)
- > More stops needed by schools

PRIORITIES AND GOALS FOR CAT

When asked about their priorities for CAT, the decision makers who responded to this survey identified the following priorities:

- > Availability of service
- > Increased ridership
- > More efficient, cost-effective, and convenient service
- > Need for a central hub
- > Better travel times
- > Transportation near schools

Finally, this questionnaire asked decision makers to rank potential goals for CAT’s system (Figure 1). The top ranked goal was “to provide transportation for people who do not have or are unable to use a private automobile.”

Below are some potential goals for Grand Forks - East Grand Forks' transit system. Which goals do you think are most important?

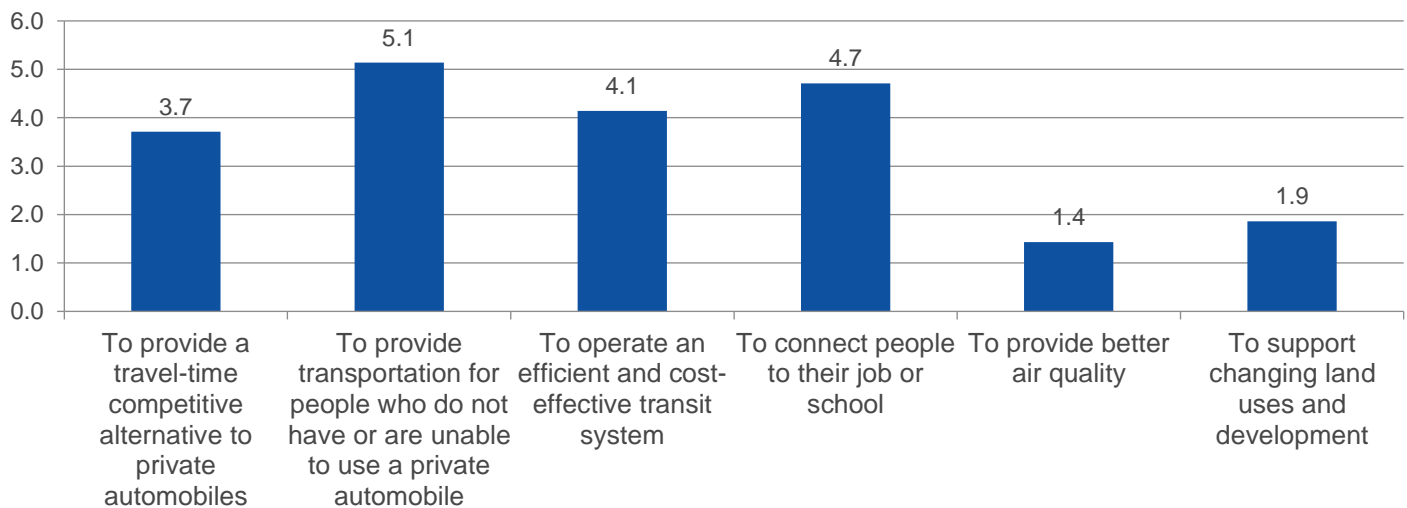


Figure 1. Decision Maker Responses to CAT Goals Question



Interactive Map Comments

Methods

The Kimley-Horn team developed an [interactive map](#) to use for both gathering information at the beginning of the project as well as sharing the proposed recommendations for enhanced services and gathering public feedback on the recommendations. This map allows users to add location-specific comments about transit improvements that they would like to see. The map is prominently advertised on the TDP project website.

Results

In Phase 1, we received 16 comments on the interactive map (Figure 2). Respondents were able to add comments in three categories: *Add Bus Service*, *Places I Go*, and *Needs Improvement*. Respondents provided specific requests for locations in the system where they would like to see service improvements (Appendix B).

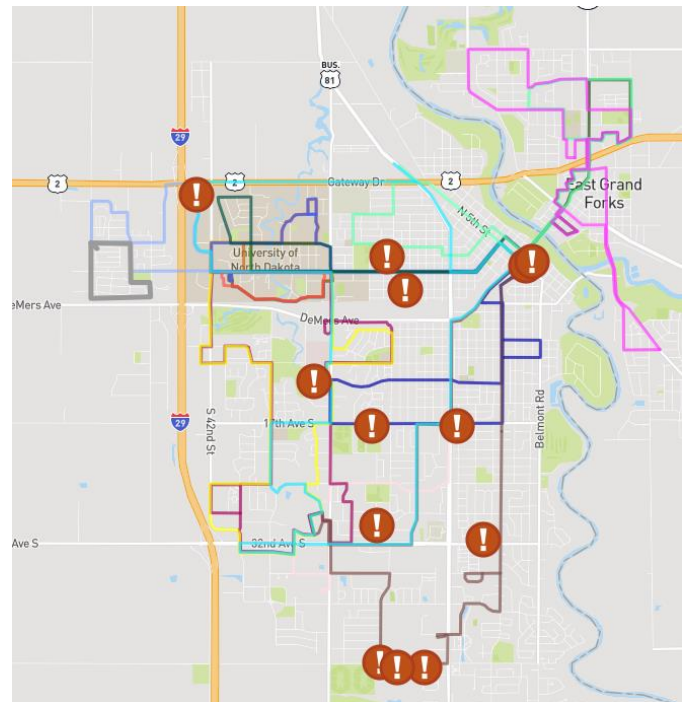


Figure 2. Interactive Map Comment Locations

MEETINGS

Focus Groups

Methods

The study team held three one-hour focus groups discussions on the following dates/times:

- > Monday, November 29, 2021; 11 a.m. – noon
- > Monday, December 7, 2021; 4 – 5 p.m.
- > Wednesday, December 15, 2021; 2 – 3 p.m.

The purpose of these focus groups was to hear from businesses, non-profit organizations, and those living, working, and studying in Grand Forks – East Grand Forks (particularly those already riding the CAT system). We have found focus groups to be especially useful because these representatives are able to share detailed insight and firsthand experiences about how they or their clients use the system. To increase access and accessibility, focus groups were held virtually.

Results

A total of 17 people attended the focus group discussions.

TRAVEL PATTERNS

- > For most, travel patterns are the same before the COVID-19 pandemic
 - > Some employers mentioned allowing flexibility in shift start/end times with their new hires
- > Participants said they travel to appointments, work, downtown, shopping destinations (e.g., Hugo's, Walmart), friends' houses, and the industrial park



LOCATIONS THAT NEED SERVICE

- > Industrial Park
- > Airport
- > New clinics
- > Lincoln Drive
- > North and west Grand Forks
- > South of University Avenue in Grand Forks

LOCATIONS THAT NEED NIGHT SERVICE

- > The Mall and shopping destinations (e.g., Target, Hugo's) – routes end too early
- > Industrial Park – several businesses are 24 hours, would need to align bus schedules with work shifts



BARRIERS/ISSUES TO USING TRANSIT

- > Need for later weekday service and service on Sundays
- > Need increased frequency, once per hour isn't sufficient
- > Need to align service with school and work start/end times
- > Size/bag limitations make transporting groceries difficult
- > Transit information can be too overwhelming/frustrating to understand; needed in multiple languages
- > Application for disabled riders is too long/intrusive

STRENGTHS OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM

- > Fares are reasonable
- > Service is widespread
- > Buses are generally safe and clean
- > Drivers are friendly
- > Dial-A-Ride availability is amazing
- > Appreciative of the educational programming to learn how to ride the bus
- > Like that the CAT Prowler app enables you to track rides

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- > Partner with retailers to sell bus passes
- > Partner with employers to have corporate pass for their employees
- > Have bus passes for students be free of charge
- > Introduce a year-round bus pass option
- > Train drivers on how to engage with someone who has a disability
- > Increase communication about the CAT Prowler app
- > Provide real-time signage at key destinations (e.g., University Ave, Library, Hugo's)
- > Add additional shelters and add heating at shelters
- > Make the CAT Prowler app more accessible and easier to use



Lessons Learned and Next Steps

While Phase 1 engagement efforts on the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks TDP update were beneficial, the study team has a few key lessons learned that can be factored into the next phase of engagement:

- > We experienced high participation from the general public, but participation amongst operators and decision makers was low, so we may need to engage these groups in a different manner in Phase 2.
- > Despite dropping off paper surveys at 10 community organizations, we received only one paper survey response in return. We will partner with community organizations in a different manner in Phase 2.
- > While the business focus group was promoted broadly to businesses in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, only businesses in the industrial park or organizations that work with the industrial park attended the focus group. Future efforts will aim to diversify business stakeholder participation.

Table 1 provides a count of participants by method for Phase 1.

Table 1. Phase Public Engagement Participation by Method

Method	Number of people engaged
Public Survey	208
Operator Survey	2
Decision Maker Survey	7
Interactive Map	16
Focus Groups	17

From these different methods, some common themes emerged. These include:

- > The quality of bus operators' customer service, the cleanliness of buses, and reasonable fares were frequently cited as CAT's strengths by riders.
- > Respondents identified many areas of improvements to CAT service. Key among these were the need for increased frequency, service on weekends (including Sundays) and extended hours on weeknights, service to key destinations like the industrial park and mall, and bus schedules that align with work/school schedules.
- > Respondents identified areas of improvement to CAT facilities. Key among these were shelters that protect from the cold/wind and more visible bus stops.
- > Respondents identified areas of improvement for customer information and customer experience. Key among these were improvements to information at stops and onboard vehicles and easy navigation/more accurate bus tracking on the CAT Prowler app.

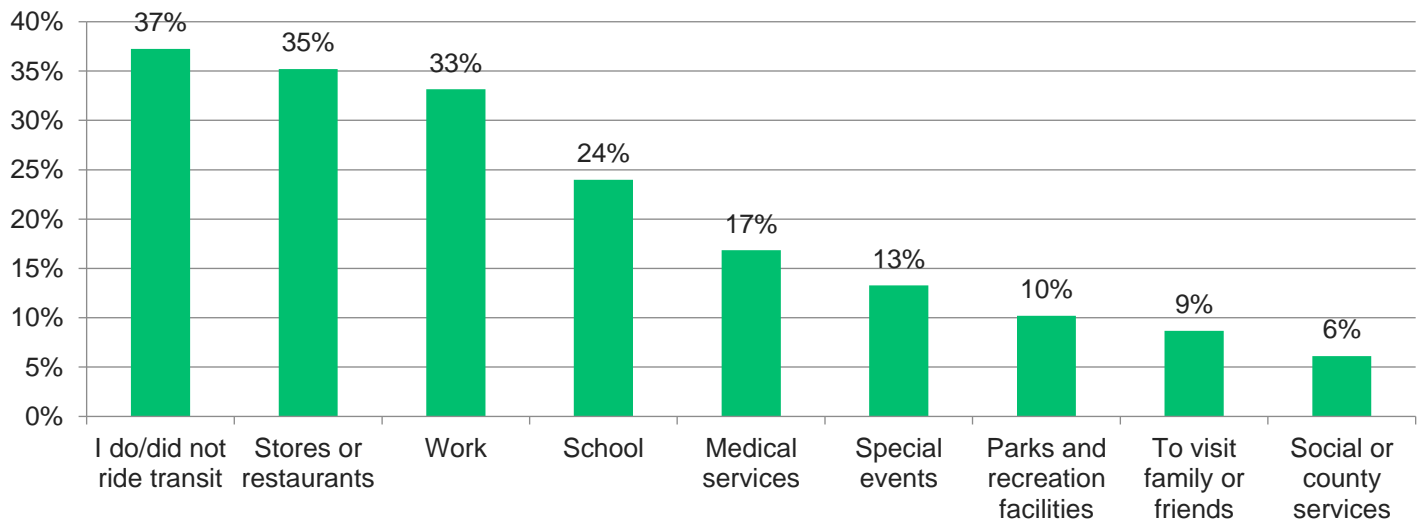
As we move into subsequent phases of the TDP development, the strengths, areas for improvement, and locations that need improved transit service identified in Phase 1 engagement will inform the project team's process.



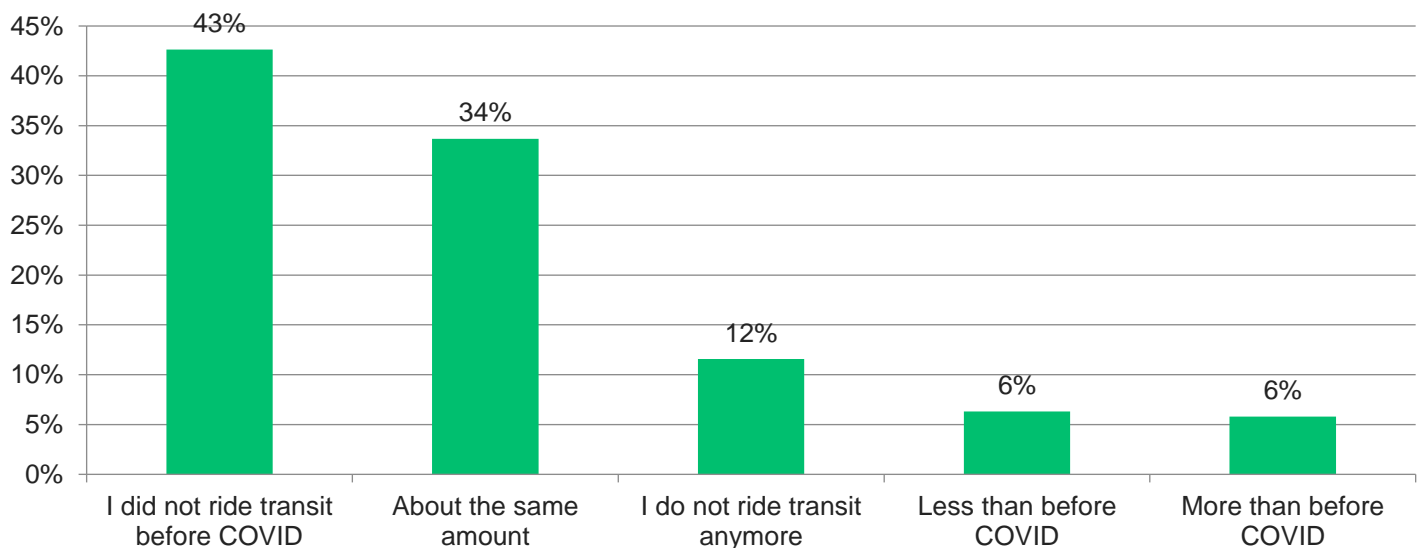
APPENDIX

APPENDIX A. PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

Where do/did you typically go using public transit?
 Select all that apply.

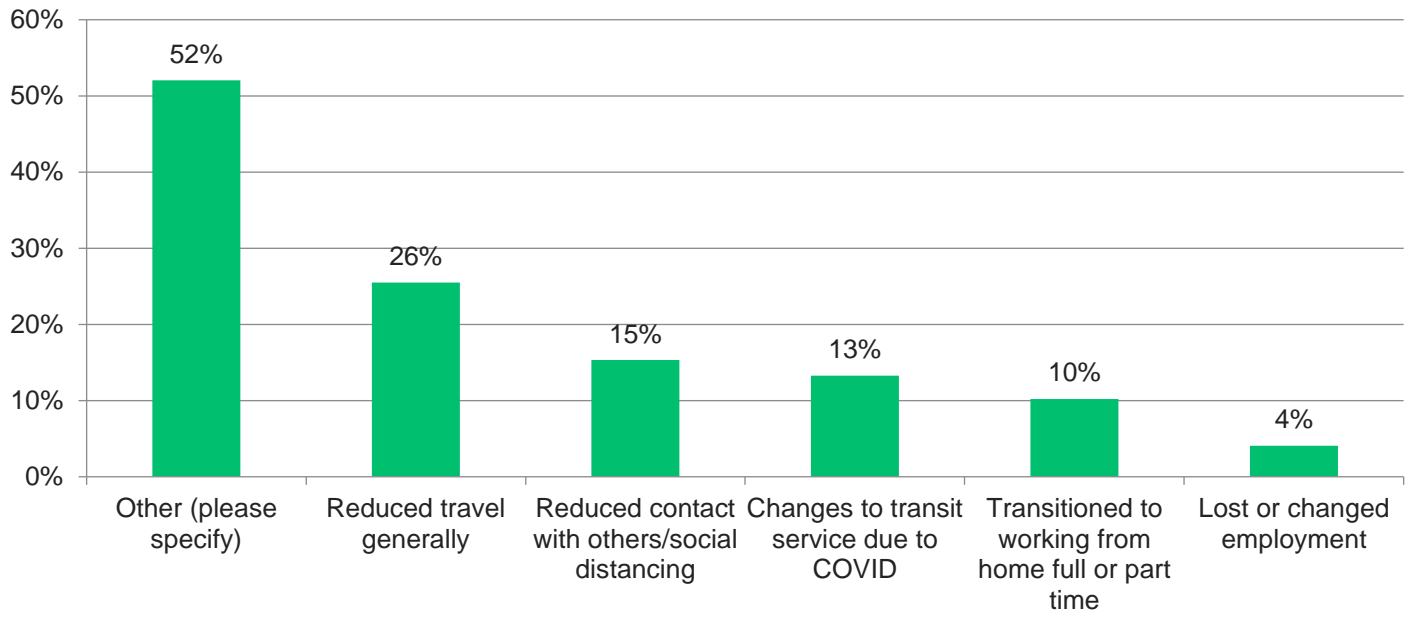


How often do you use transit now compared to before COVID-19?

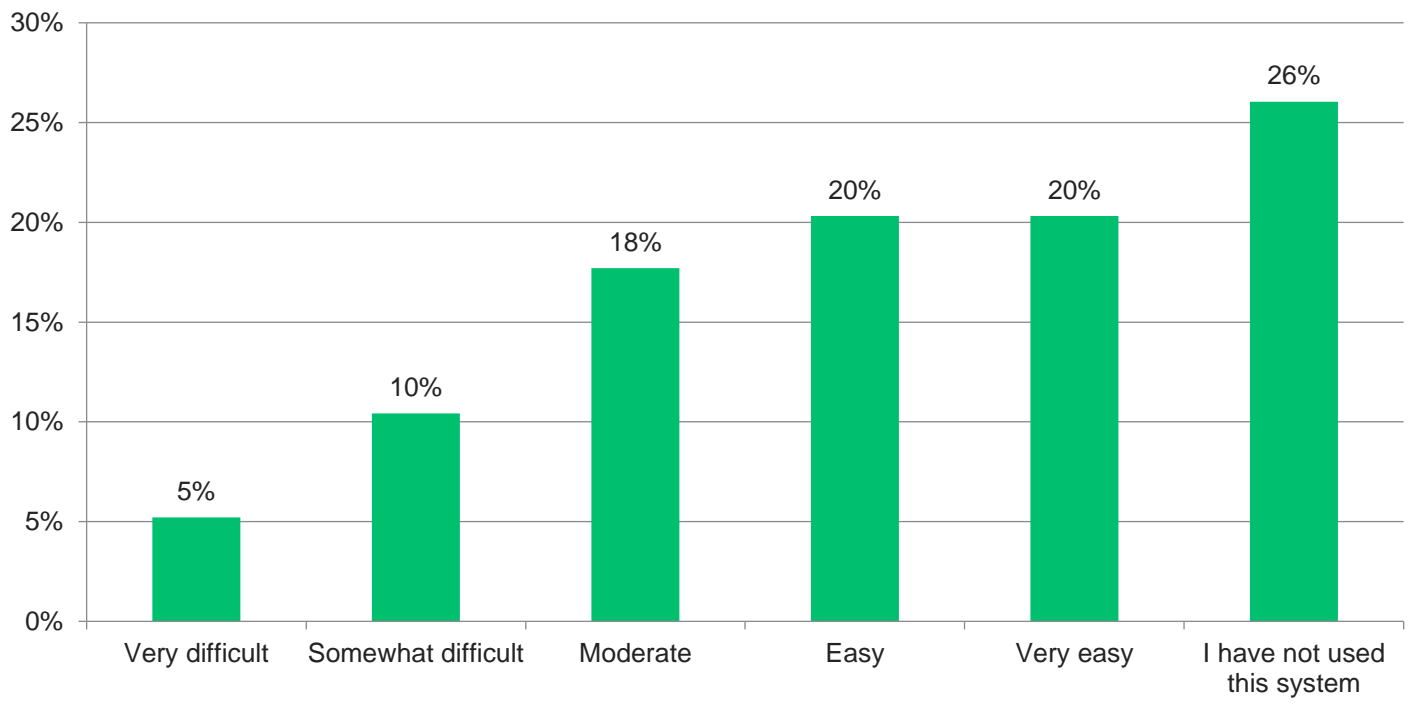




If your use of CAT transit services changed due to COVID-19, why? Select all that apply.

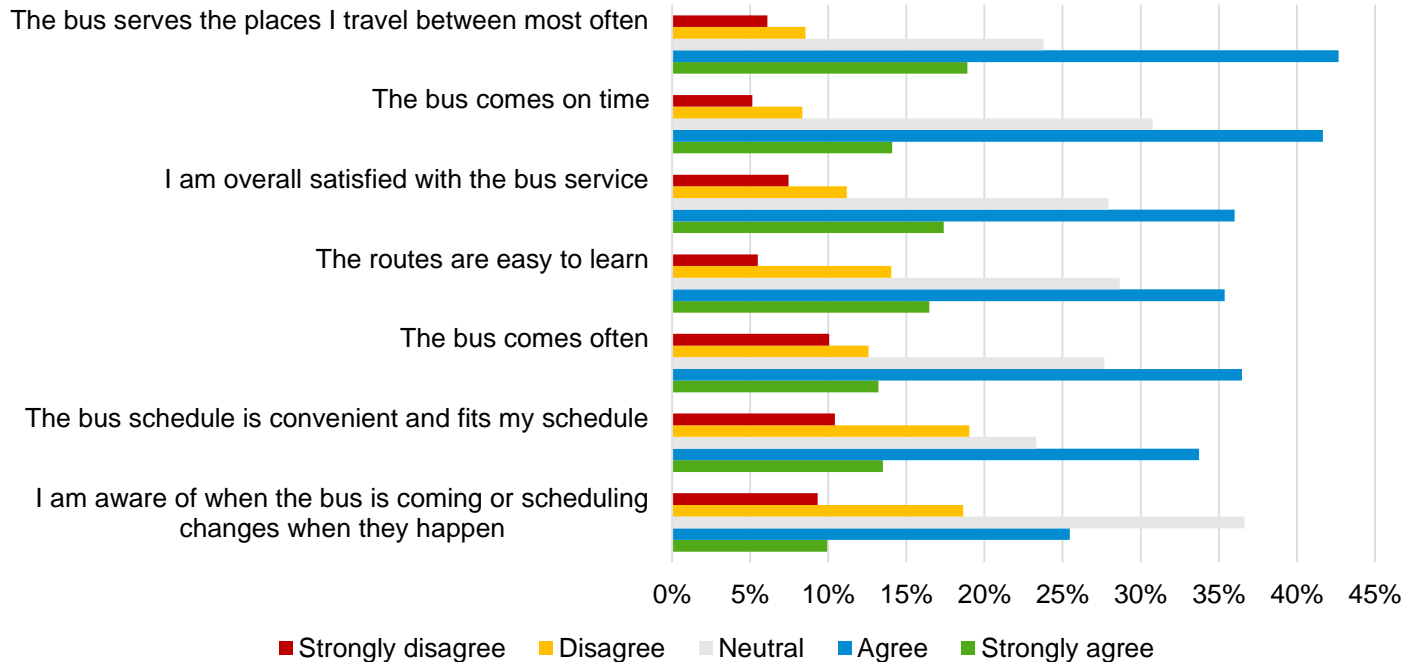


In your opinion, how easy is it to ride CAT?

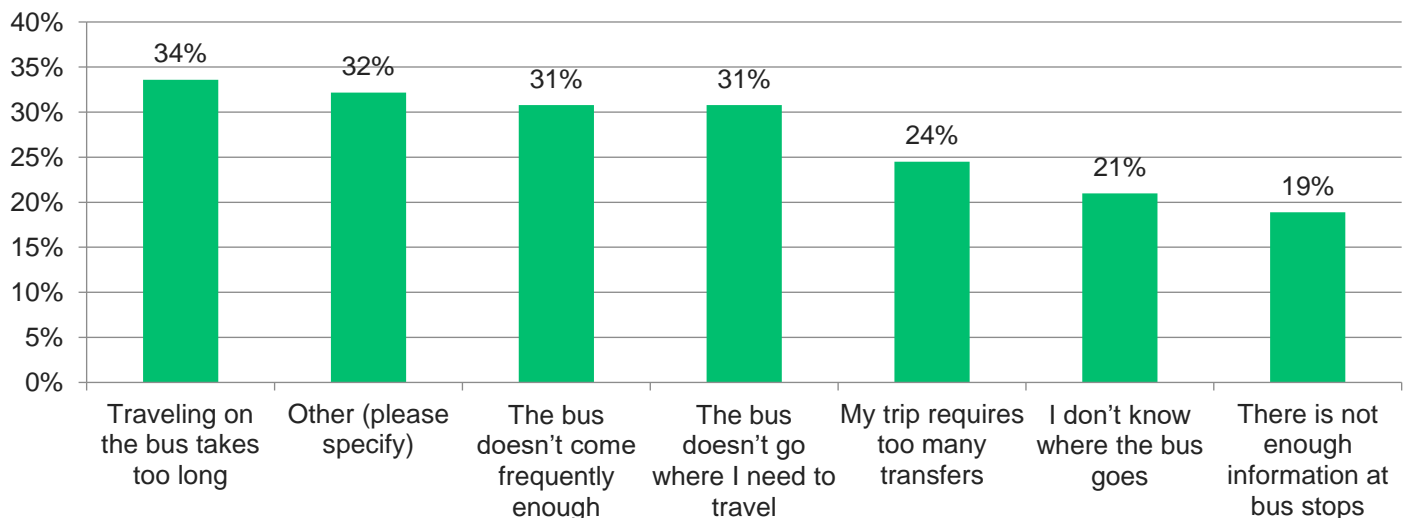


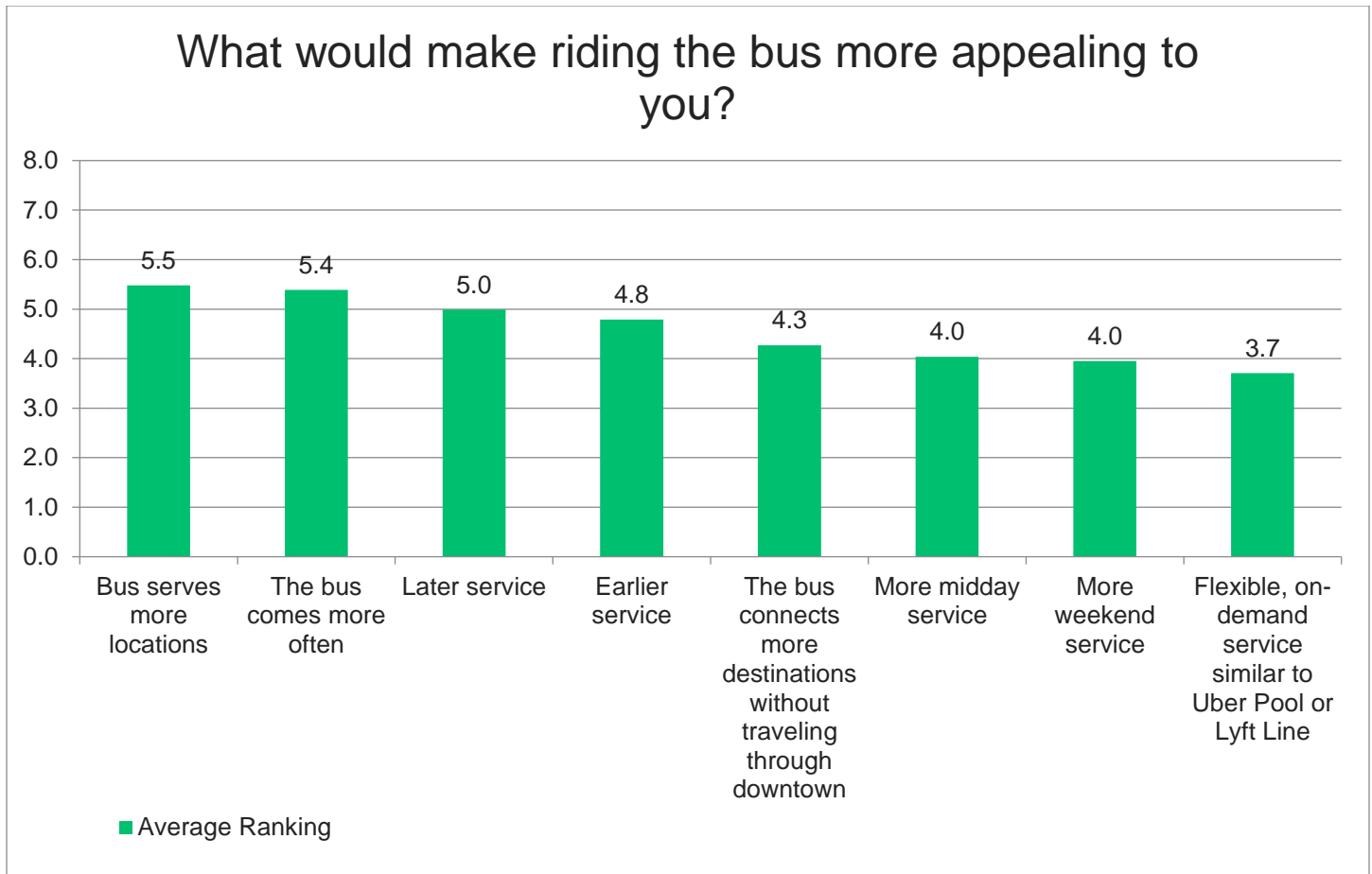


Please rate how much you agree with the following statements.



What barriers have you experienced to taking transit? Select all that apply.





APPENDIX B. INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS

Add Bus Service

- > West of I-29/north of Demers Ave
 - > This area has a large number of families that would benefit greatly from increased service lines

Needs Improvement

- > On S Columbia Rd at Altru Hospital
 - > Any chance this route could extend further west to behind the hospital to 34th street and then down to 17th and back east again? Red River High school has zero bussing options, and many high schoolers live in this area around and west of Century elementary that don't drive. They have very long and cold walks in the winter. Looping this route over to 34th and down to 17th would at least shorten that walk for these kids by a mile or more.
- > At 17th Ave S and S 12th St
 - > I hope you replace the bus shelter there soon!



- > **Near South Middle School**
 - > I wish the timing of this route would line up better with the timing of middle school end time. My child would much prefer to ride a quiet city bus than the obnoxious school bus.
 - > Add a stop in front of South Middle School
- > **At 47th Ave S and Curran Ct**
 - > There is a new Sanford Clinic here but there are no sidewalks or bus stops. There is only one way in or out of their parking lot. Getting off the bus in the winter will be a problem because of snow buildup and no sidewalks on the north side of the street where the clinic is. I'll have to get the driver to let me off in the access street and then walk to the clinic from there, also flagging down the bus to be picked up will mean I will wait in the street in traffic to get picked up.
- > **Near Valley Junior High**
 - > Add a stop in front of Valley
- > **On N 43rd St near Clarion Hotel**
 - > Future CTE Center- would like routes that connect to both High Schools and the greater community.
- > **Near Schroeder Middle School**
 - > Need a stop closer to this school
- > **On S 21st St north of 30th Ave S**
 - > Need to add a stop in this neighborhood
- > **Near 1st Ave N and N 19th St**
 - > Need to add service to this neighborhood.
- > **At S 5th St and Kittson Ave**
 - > The bike path to depot route could use some real improvement. The intersections to be crossed can be dangerous. The sidewalk on S 5th St is narrow and frequently covered by gravel from the railroad.
 - > The shortage of bus drivers has created a great opportunity to rethink the city routes and how well they serve (or don't serve) middle & high schools in this town. Families and youth are getting used to riding city buses, let's capitalize on that and find a way to create riders out of these youth. A strong Public transportation system makes for a family friendly city!
- > **Near Red River High School**
 - > We only have one stop by RRHS, whose boundary is primarily South of 17th Ave South. The current closest route doesn't go South, rather goes back to Central.

GRAND FORKS - EAST GRAND FORKS *Transit Development Plan*

Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary | May/June 2022







PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PHASE 2 SUMMARY


Introduction


PROJECT OVERVIEW


The Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Transit Development Plan (TDP) is a 10-year plan that provides a vision for transit in the community. Grand Forks – East Grand Forks’ previous transit development plan was completed in 2017. The 2022 plan update will evaluate recent system improvements and has the following areas of focus:


- 


Integration of University of North Dakota (UND) campus bus routes
- 

New or improved fixed route, paratransit, and Senior Rider services
- 

Maintenance and growth of CAT ridership
- 

Fare, pass, or transfer policy changes to increase ridership or funding
- 

Transit fleet and technology recommendations
- 

Investments in capital improvements like buses, bus stop enhancements, and support equipment
- 

Support for existing and future CAT operations at transit facilities such as Midtown Transit Center and Metro Transit Center

PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Two rounds of engagement are planned for the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Transit Development Plan (TDP) update process: Phase I (Fall 2021) and Phase II (Spring 2022). The following schedule outlines the key time periods during which the public and stakeholders are engaged in the project as well as what takes place before and after engagement.





The goal of public engagement is to build and strengthen relationships in the community while gathering stakeholder and public input, responding to comments and concerns, and keeping decision-makers and other stakeholders informed throughout the TDP update process.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of Phase 2 of public engagement for the TDP. In this round, the study team gathered feedback from the public and stakeholders on initial service improvement ideas and draft Cities Area Transit (CAT) goals.



Engagement Methods and Results

Phase 2 engagement methods fall into three primary categories: surveys, meetings, and comment forms. The study team tailored the surveys and meeting information to each stakeholder group. This section discusses each engagement method and key results.

MEETINGS

Input Group Meetings

Methods

The study team held five one-hour meetings on the following dates/times:

- > Community meeting: Thursday, April 14, 2022; 5 – 6 p.m.
- > Input group meeting: Thursday, April 21, 2022; 5 – 6 p.m.
- > Coordinated Human Services focus group meeting: Tuesday, May 24, 2022; 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- > University of North Dakota (UND) focus group meeting: Wednesday, May 25, 2022; 9 – 10 a.m.
- > Operators focus group meeting: Wednesday, June 15, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

At the community meeting, the study team shared information about the initial service improvement ideas and draft CAT goals. At the input group meeting, the study team gave a brief presentation, but the primary purpose of the meeting was to have a discussion and gather feedback from those living, working, and studying in Grand Forks – East Grand Forks. These meetings were held virtually and in-person at the East Grand Forks City Hall. Recordings for both meetings were posted to the TDP website for those unable to attend.

At the Coordinated Human Services focus group, the study team shared information about the TDP update and heard from human services partners on how CAT and the MPO can better coordinate with human services to promote interagency coordination, facilitate access to transportation, and minimize duplication. At the UND focus group meeting, the study team discussed initial service improvement ideas for the routes on UND's campus with students and staff from



UND. At the operators focus group meeting, the study team reviewed each of the service ideas to gather feedback from operators on the benefits and drawbacks of each.

Results

Around 30 non-project staff attended these meetings. Below is a summary of the feedback the study team received from these meetings.

COMMUNITY-WIDE MEETINGS

Draft Cities Area Transit Goals

- > Supportive of the draft CAT goals

Service Ideas: Microtransit

- > Supportive of the idea
- > Questions about:
 - > How you far in advance one would need to book a ride
 - > If zones could be expanded
 - > Possibility of providing training to explain microtransit to those who would benefit from its use
 - > Implementing this around shopping areas such as Columbia Mall

Service Ideas: Grand Forks

- > Routes 1, 5, and 3: No strong concerns about these changes
- > Route 7: Questioned whether this change will make the route faster; wait times and “riding the loop” is a common problem social service providers hear
- > Industrial Park Service:
 - > Feel that people will be happy about this route as long as it aligns with shift start/end times
 - > Will open up the possibility for those without vehicles to apply for jobs in the industrial park

Service Ideas: East Grand Forks

- > Consolidation of Routes 4 and 6; Discontinuation of Route 12; Microtransit to East Grand Forks:
 - > Would like Route 6 to go past the apartments in East Grand Forks (e.g., behind Cabela’s near East Grand Forks City Hall); individuals there rely on the service

Service Ideas: Evening Service

- > Questions concerning:
 - > With the Industrial Park shifts, depends on ridership, but the fixed bus routes may be a better fit; if ridership is low, microtransit may be a better fit

Other Feedback

- > Like the changes, especially microtransit service in the evening



COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES

Existing Service

- > The application process for people with disabilities to secure transportation is a barrier for clients.
 - > Too many steps
 - > Processing time is too long
 - > Mailing-in application is inconvenient
 - > 24-hour schedule-ahead requirement is not feasible
- > Technology is another barrier for securing transportation
 - > Clients may not have phone/internet access
 - > App is not always intuitive for clients, particularly seniors
- > Many agencies have transportation programs in place
 - > Bus passes for clients
 - > Funding via grants or donations
 - > Popular programs
 - > Not always easy to organize, bus passes are difficult to replace if lost, for example

Service Needs

- > Online platform for human services agencies
 - > One-time sign up to connect client with multiple services
 - > Agencies can act on behalf of client if technology access is an issue
 - > Would decrease processing time
- > Variety of methods to secure transportation
 - > Agencies may not know what their clients have access to
 - > Consider technology inequities
- > Difficult to prioritize strategies
 - > All strategies shared seemed important to attendees
 - > Agencies never know for sure what their clients need and/or have
 - > Application streamlining might be the place to start

Other Feedback

- > Transportation is not something agencies often consider
 - > Recognized as a problem that must be remedied
 - > Especially a problem with coordination, as transportation often gets left out in those discussions
 - > Get transportation agencies more involved in services coordination discussions





UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA (UND)

Existing Service

- > **Strengths of existing UND service:**
 - > Shuttle is frequent and travels to the places students go (e.g., Wilkerson, Union, Engineering building)
- > **Opportunities for improvement:**
 - > Some feel the reliability of the shuttle has gone down since CAT took over service
 - > Improvements to the app are needed – would like the app to accurately track the buses' locations
 - > Need for signage, maps, QR codes, and other wayfinding at stops on campus; currently there's no indication that buses stop there
 - > Need for external identifiers on buses to identify which route more easily is which (e.g., magnets on the outside of the bus with the route name)
 - > Need for more advertisement/education around the shuttle system (e.g., have a module during Freshman orientation, info booths on campus, etc.)

Service Ideas

- > For routes that go off campus (e.g., Red), would need to confirm with UND that there's enough student usage to warrant the route going off campus
- > **Red route comments:**
 - > Some agree that there's a need for a route northeast of campus due to the number of students living in apartments in that area
 - > Some feel that, unless you're able to travel between the apartment complexes in that area, it's not worth having the route there, few live on Stanford/Gateway/couple blocks on 42nd
- > **Concerns about the Blue route:**
 - > Need for service west of Coulee
 - > Many students congregate at Odegard, would prefer to be picked up at the door of Odegard vs. on University
 - > Liked the previous route – helpful to have one continuous loop on University and behind Odegard
 - > Consider running it on University and looping by Aerospace building instead of 6th
- > **UND Night Microtransit Zone:**
 - > For students who take labs (like Chemistry), the time you get out of lab can vary week to week, so having a flexible microtransit option would be helpful for these students
 - > The existing night route is too long for it to be efficient for many students
 - > Like that the zone include Altru, the Alerus Center, but wish it also included Hugo's
 - > Consider partnering with the dining/housing shuttles

OPERATORS

Service Ideas

- > **Feedback regarding route 2:**
 - > Remove 25th St from route to save time
 - > Busiest stops are Hugo's, St. Anne's in the mornings and afternoons, Valley Middle School



- > 5th Street sees high passenger counts, transferring downtown or transferring to routes 3 or 7
- > Feedback regarding route 1:
 - > JR Simplot and Community High School on Stanford have bus riders
 - > The outbound service down University Ave is good
 - > Crossing Washington is an issue, consider going right on Washington and down to University
- > Feedback regarding route 3:
 - > Important to serve Lewis and Clark Elementary
 - > All the outbound stops are good
 - > Important to have the midtown transfer on 17th
 - > The Red River bus stop is very popular, hotels located there
 - > Ridership is pretty consistently good
- > Feedback regarding route 6:
 - > Issues timing the interlining with route 3
- > Feedback regarding routes 7, 10, and 11
 - > Like that routes 7 and 10 alternate every 30 minutes, helpful if something was missed
 - > Need to drop off at Altru South, after Walmart on 20th route all the way to 47th
- > Feedback regarding route 17, the industrial park route:
 - > If there were a microtransit zone for the industrial park, need transfer points to the 5 on the north end at Walmart and to the 3 on the southern half of the zone

SURVEYS

Service Ideas Survey

Methods

The service ideas survey was administered to both current riders of the system and non-riders. The questions asked respondents about the service improvement ideas and demographic information. Kimley-Horn developed the survey questions in consultation with Cities Area Transit (CAT) staff and transit administration.

The study team made a special effort to reach people who are traditionally underrepresented in planning processes. To promote the survey, staff strategically placed posters inside buses and at key transit stops to direct people to take the surveys, and they distributed paper surveys on the buses. The project team also rode buses and was at the Metro Transit Center to tell people about the project and to encourage riders to take the project survey.

Results

OVERVIEW

We received 59 responses to the public survey. Demographically, we heard the most from 55–64-year-olds (33%) and 35–44-year-olds (22%). Among the respondents, there was an even number of people who identified as male or female (43.5%). Other respondents preferred not to identify their gender (11%) and others' genders were not listed (2%). The majority identified as White (66%) followed by 11% identifying as Latinx/Hispanic, 7.5% as American Indian or Alaska Native, 6% as Black or African American, 4% as Asian, 2% as Middle Eastern or North African, and 9% preferring not to



share their racial/ethnic identity. Of the respondents, 53% reported having access to a vehicle. A majority (63%) reported having an annual household income of less than \$25,000.

Detailed findings from the service ideas survey can be found in **Appendix A**.

ROUTE CHANGES

Respondents were asked about their opinions regarding possible changes to existing CAT bus routes.

- > 56% of respondents support discontinuing Route 1 and operating Route 5 twice an hour, while 22% disliked this idea. An additional 22% expressed no preference.
- > Over half of the respondents (53%) support the proposed changes to Route 3. Only 12% of respondents are not supportive of the changes. 36% of respondents expressed no preference.
- > Most respondents (65%) support the idea of splitting Routes 7 and 10, with only 7% of respondents saying they do not like this idea. 27% of respondents expressed no preference.
- > 77% of respondents support the idea for a new route that serves the Industrial Park and northwest Grand Forks. 21% of respondents expressed no preference, while 2% disliked this idea.
 - > 50% of respondents said they would ride this new route weekly or more frequently

MICROTRANSIT SERVICE

Respondents were asked to provide their opinions about microtransit service in the evenings instead of fixed routes.

- > 44% of respondents support changing evening service of Routes 3, 6, 13, and the UND Night Route to microtransit, while 30% prefer to keep evening service as fixed route. 27% expressed no preference.
- > Route 5 and Route 13 are the two most common routes respondents said should continue to operate as fixed routes in the evening.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

Respondents were asked to provide additional feedback regarding the service ideas. Several respondents noted that they liked the existing routes the way they currently are and don't want to see any changes. One respondent, a student at UND, noted that the proposed plan would complicate riding on campus. A few other respondents provided general support for the proposed changes. Other comments focused on the need for additional service improvements, particularly the need for service on Sundays.

Service Improvements

- > Airport service or microtransit is good; 48th Street service is needed
- > Increase bus frequency at night (two every hour instead of one)
- > Bus service on holidays and Sundays
- > Evening service would be great for people coming from the industrial area
- > Increased number of stops for all routes
- > There should be a bus stop close to the public library
- > Increase student ridership in the summer to encourage local outdoor summer activities
- > Extend the hours that buses run to include 11 p.m.

Facilities Improvements

- > Add garbage cans to the shelters
- > Vision at night can be obscured by the advertisements on bus windows



- > Bus shelters should be upgraded to provide more protection from the rain and cold
- > Employ a mask mandate

University of North Dakota (UND) Survey

Methods

Transportation staff at UND administered their own survey to the undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty at UND to gather more feedback about their familiarity with the campus shuttle service, travel patterns, strengths of the service, and barriers/opportunities to improve the service. UND shared these survey findings with the TDP study team to help inform service improvement ideas.

Results

UND received 438 responses to the survey. The following are some key findings from the survey results:

- > Almost 90% of respondents live on campus or within 5 miles of campus
- > The two most popular ways respondents get to campus are by driving alone (40%) or walking (34%)
- > 86% of respondents said they are aware of the campus shuttle, while 14% said they are not
- > Of respondents that ride, 1/3 said they ride less than once a week
- > Of respondents that ride, they do so because of *lack of parking*, the *weather*, and the *convenience of the shuttle*
- > Respondents said the biggest barrier to riding the shuttle is that it's late/not reliable
- > The top 5 most common responses for preferred locations for campus shuttle stops are Memorial Union, Wilkerson, Odegard, the Medical School, and Columbia
- > 80% of respondents are *somewhat* or *very interested* in an on-demand campus ride share service
- > Respondents said the two most important things to make riding the shuttle more appealing is *servicing more locations* and *more frequent service*

Detailed findings from the UND Survey can be found in **Appendix B**.

Business Survey

Methods

As a result of feedback received during the Phase 1 business focus group meeting, the study team developed a survey for employers and employees in the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks area. The study team shared the survey with business focus group participants and contacts at the Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation and Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce, who helped promote the survey by emailing it out to their member distribution lists.

Results

The survey was live February 16 through March 11, 2022 and received 50 responses. Key takeaways of the survey are summarized below.

- > 56% of respondents identified as employees, while 42% identified as employers
- > Respondents represented 24 different organizations in the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks area
- > Most respondents we heard from work for organizations with less than 25 employees (40%) or 251 – 500 employees (30%)
- > 60% of respondents said their organization does not have easy access to transit, while 24% said it does

Grand Forks - East Grand Forks TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Detailed findings from the Business Survey can be found in **Appendix C**.

Interactive Map Comments

Methods

The Kimley-Horn team developed an [interactive map](#) to use for both gathering information at the beginning of the project as well as sharing the proposed recommendations for enhanced services and gathering public feedback on the recommendations. This map allows users to add location-specific comments about transit improvements that they would like to see. The map is prominently advertised on the TDP project website.

Results

The interactive map platform featured two maps: one of new service ideas and one of existing CAT bus routes. Map users could select a pin and drop it in a location where they wanted to provide feedback. Pin categories included: *Needs Improvement* and *Like service change*. We received two comments on the interactive map. They are summarized below.

SERVICE IDEAS

- > 8th Avenue NW in East Grand Forks needs service

EXISTING BUS ROUTES

- > Need a route to the industrial park; many jobs here but people are unable to access them

GENERAL COMMENTS

Methods

Community members could share their feedback through comment forms (available when the study team tabled at the Metro Transit Center) and via email.

Results

OVERVIEW

We received six comments via email and the comment forms. They offered the following comments as service improvements:

- > Like the ideas of Route 7 going farther south on Columbia
- > Would like to keep the routes and schedules for Route 7 and Route 3 the way they are
- > Route 5 needs increased frequency and to operate at night
- > Need for night service (e.g., runs until midnight) and dial-a-ride service throughout the night
- > Like that Route 7 is one direction; don't need to know which direction bus is going

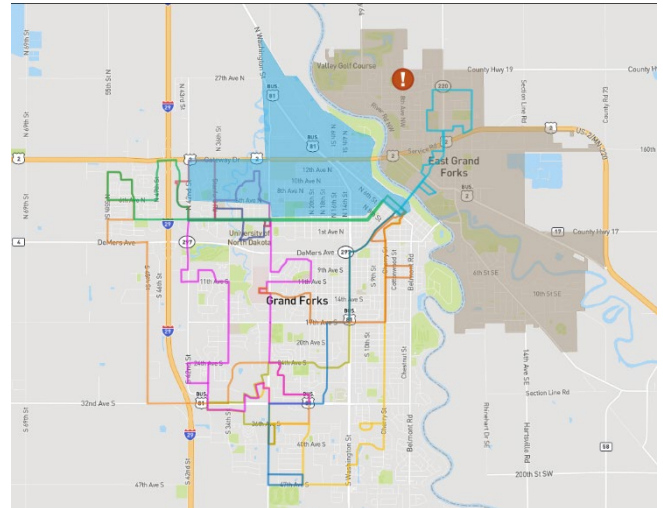


Figure 1. Interactive Map Service Ideas Layer Comment Location

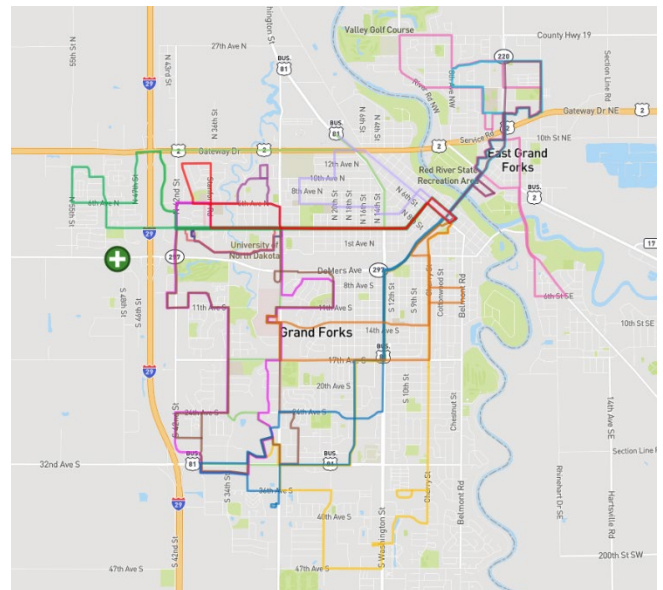


Figure 2. Interactive Map Existing Bus Routes Layer Comment Location



- > Need for bus route to the Industrial Park; employees at FedEx Ground located on South 48th Street in need of transportation

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

While Phase 2 engagement efforts on the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks TDP update were beneficial, the study team has a few key lessons learned:

- > Attendance at the community and input group meetings was low despite promotion on CAT’s Facebook page. Future efforts should aim to advertise public meetings more broadly.
- > Despite placing boxes with the service ideas surveys on board all of the CAT buses, the study team only received 12 paper surveys in return. Future efforts may need to identify other ways to make paper surveys available to the public and promote them.
- > The interactive map only received two comments. Future efforts should look to promote commenting on the interactive map in addition to other feedback tools like the project survey.

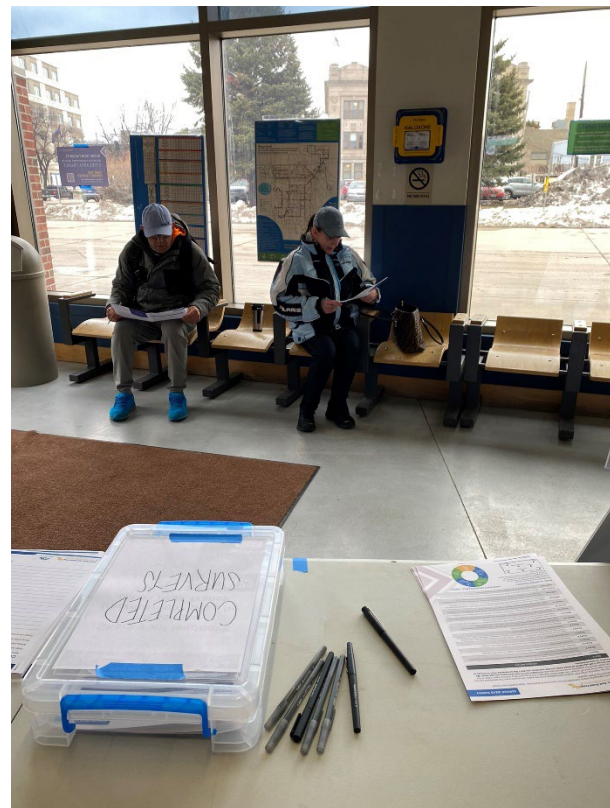


Table 1 provides a count of participants by method for Phase 2.

Table 1. Phase 2 Public Engagement Participation by Method

Method	Number of people engaged
Input Group Meetings	30
Service Ideas Survey	59
UND Survey	438
Business Survey	50
Interactive Map	2
General Comments	6

From these different methods, some common themes emerged. These include:

- > General need for later service
- > Strong support for the proposed route to the Industrial Park and northwest Grand Forks

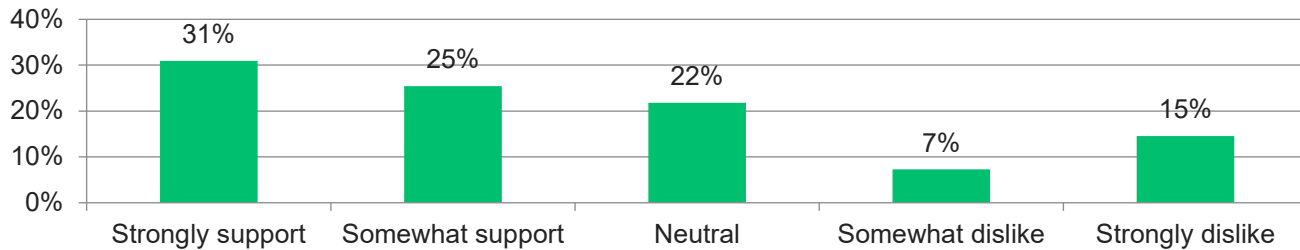
The feedback received on the proposed changes to CAT fixed route and evening service and the possibility of microtransit will help the study team as they revise the service improvement ideas and propose recommendations for inclusion in the draft final plan.



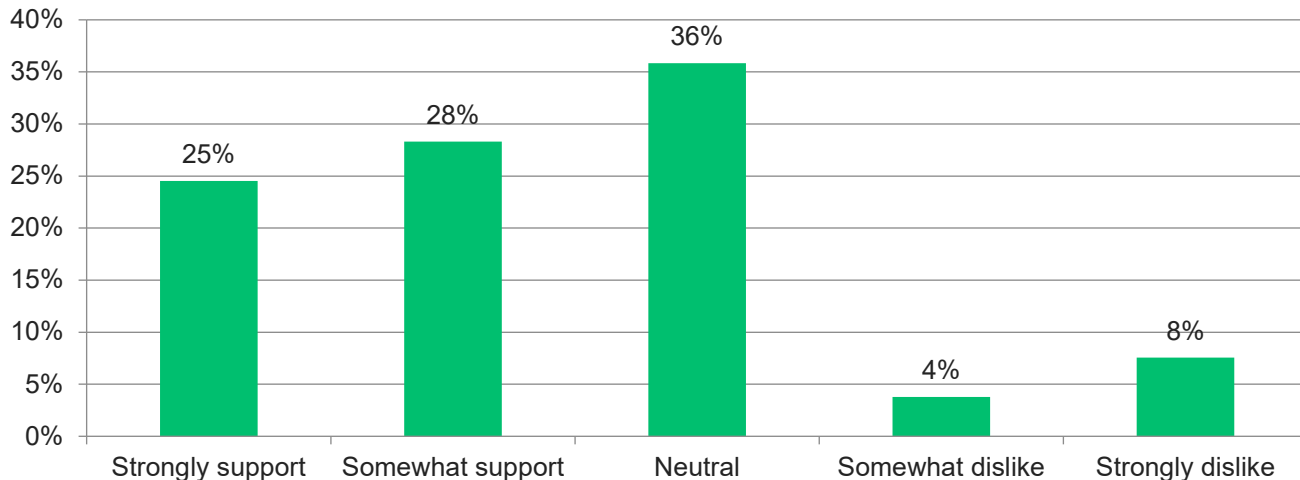
APPENDIX

APPENDIX A. SERVICE IDEAS SURVEY RESULTS

Route 1 and Route 5 currently operate on University Avenue once an hour. One potential service idea is to discontinue Route 1 and operate Route 5 twice an hour. What do you think of this idea?

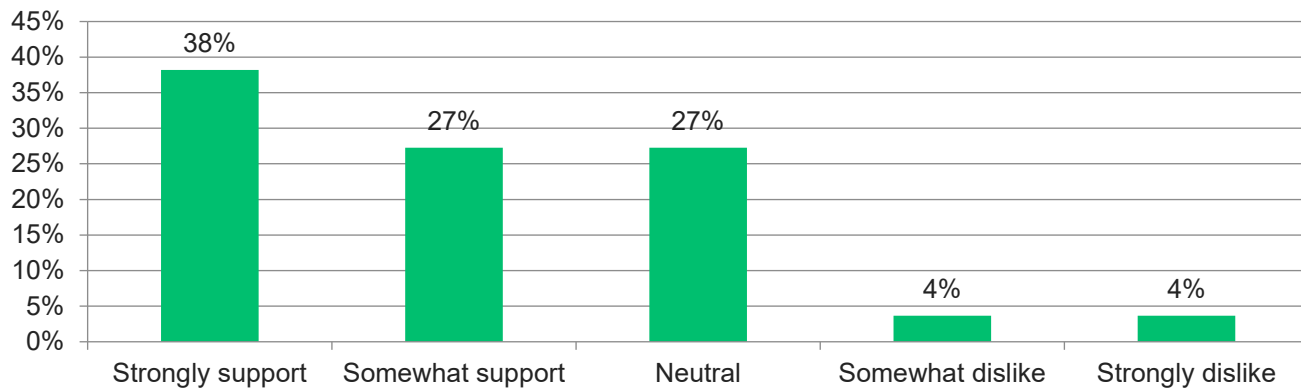


Route 3 currently operates westbound on 13th Avenue and eastbound on 17th Avenue. One potential service idea is to operate in both directions on 17th Avenue between 20th Avenue and Cherry Street and both directions on 13th Avenue between Columbia Road and

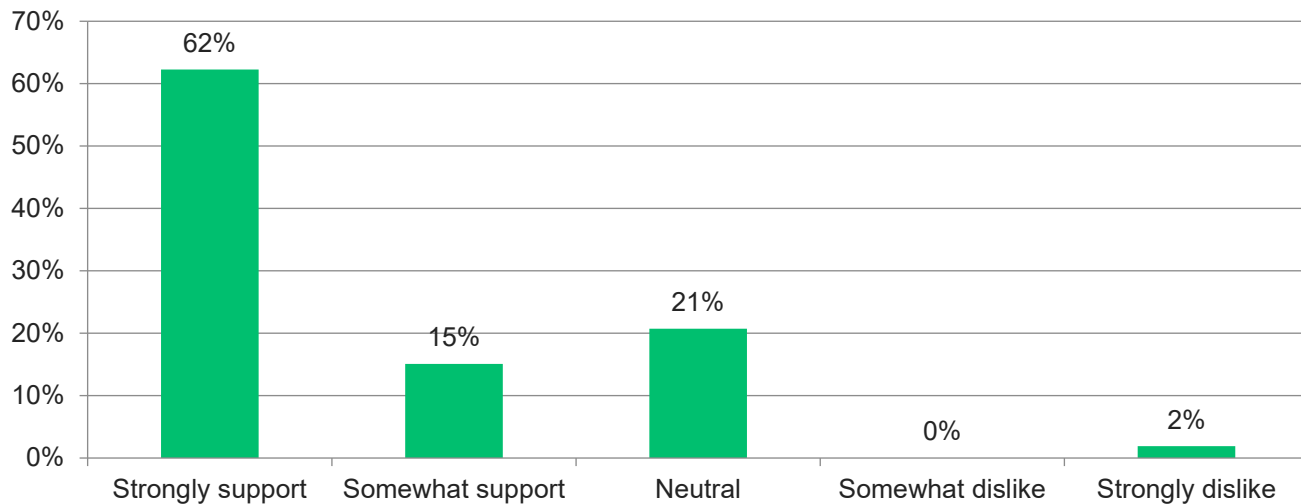




Routes 7 and 10 each currently operate in one-way loops. One potential service idea is to split these two routes into three bidirectional routes and provide service further south on Columbia Road to 47th Avenue. What do you think of this idea?

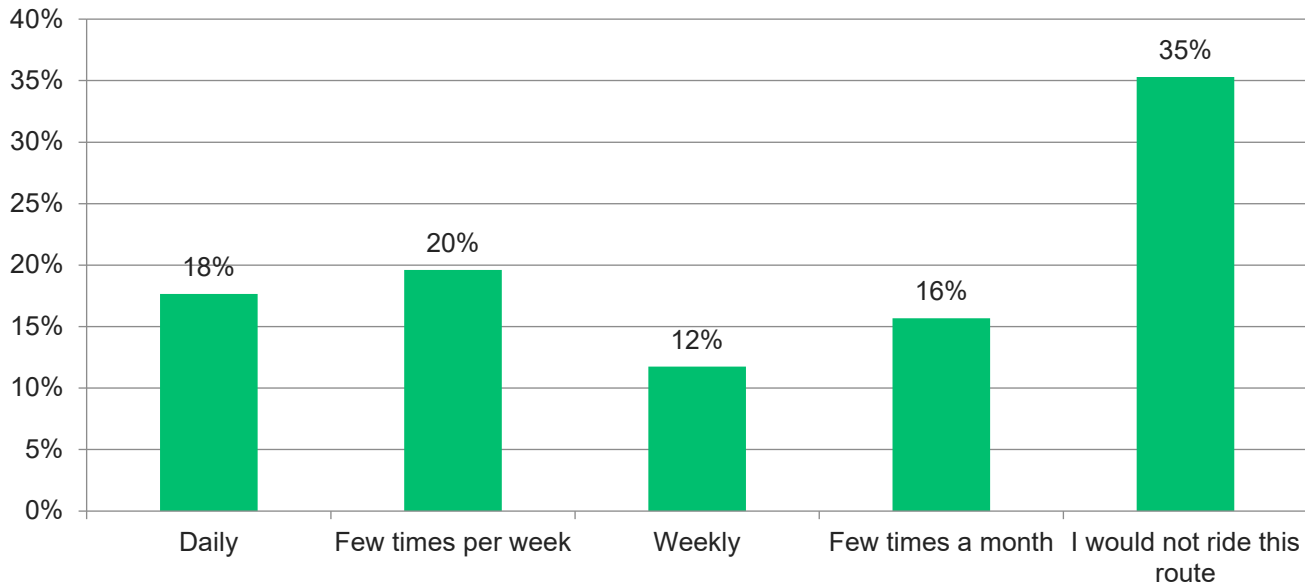


Currently, there is no transit service to the Grand Forks industrial park. One potential service idea is to have a new route near 32nd Avenue that connects to the Industrial Park (48th Street) and northwest Grand Forks (northwest Walmart). What do you thi

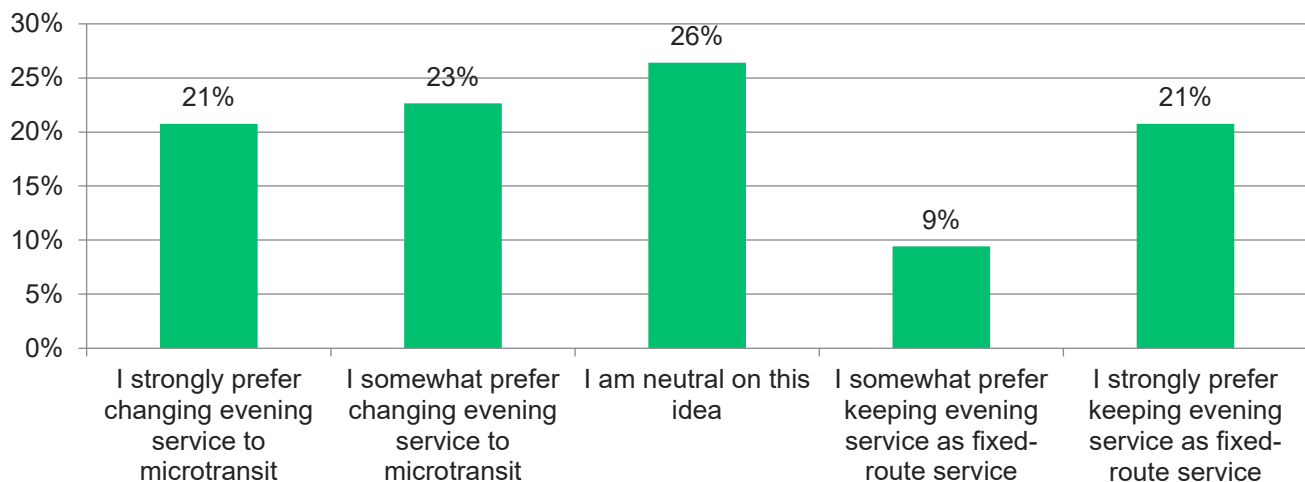




If a new route was added near 32nd Avenue that connected to the Industrial Park (48th Street) and northwest Grand Forks (northwest Walmart), how often would you ride it?

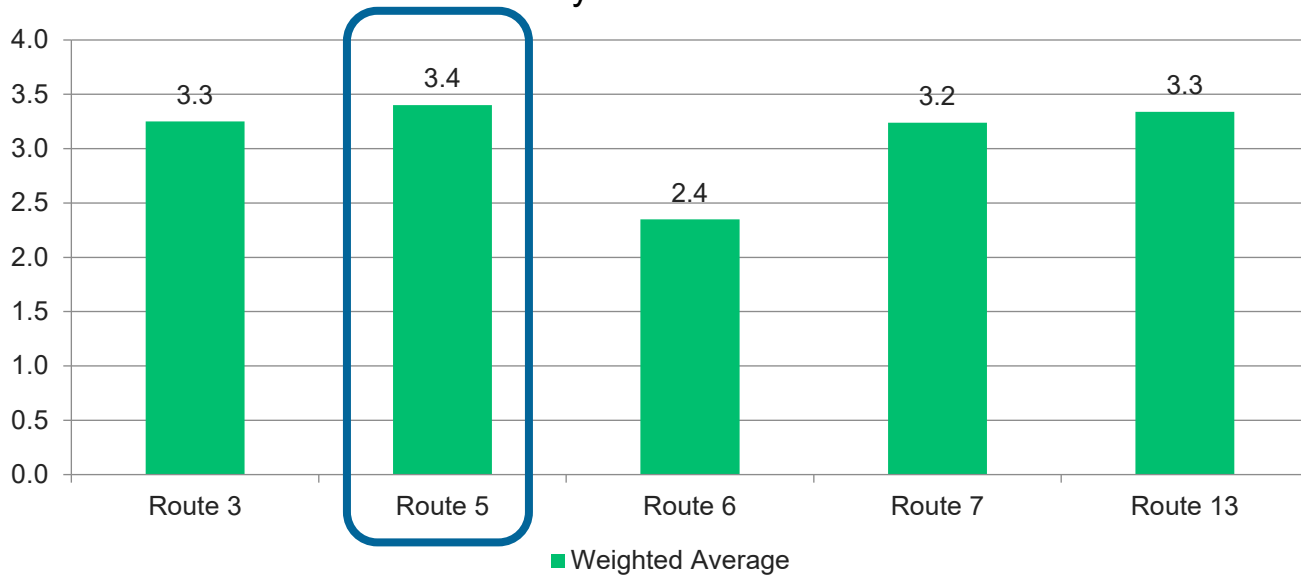


Cities Area Transit currently operates four fixed routes during the evening, including Route 3, Route 6, Route 13, and the UND Night Route. One potential service idea is to have microtransit service during the evenings where riders would request (either o

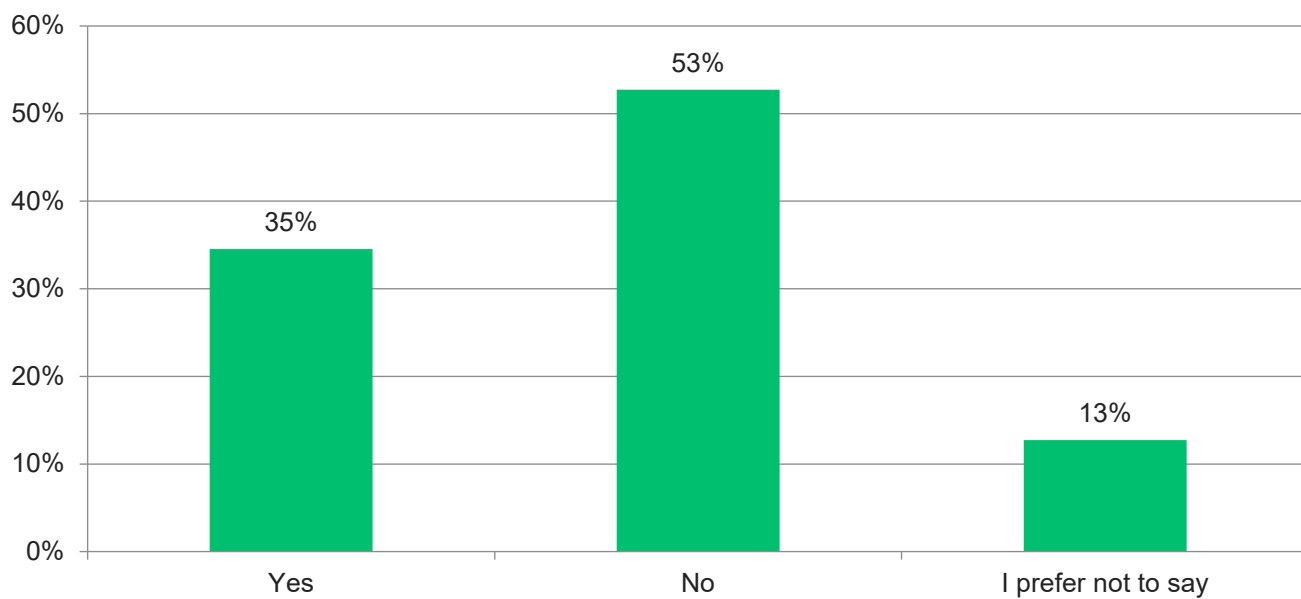




If Cities Area Transit were to continue operating fixed route service in the evenings, please indicate your preference for which routes would operate in the evening by ranking the following choices (1 being your highest preference and 5 being your lowest)

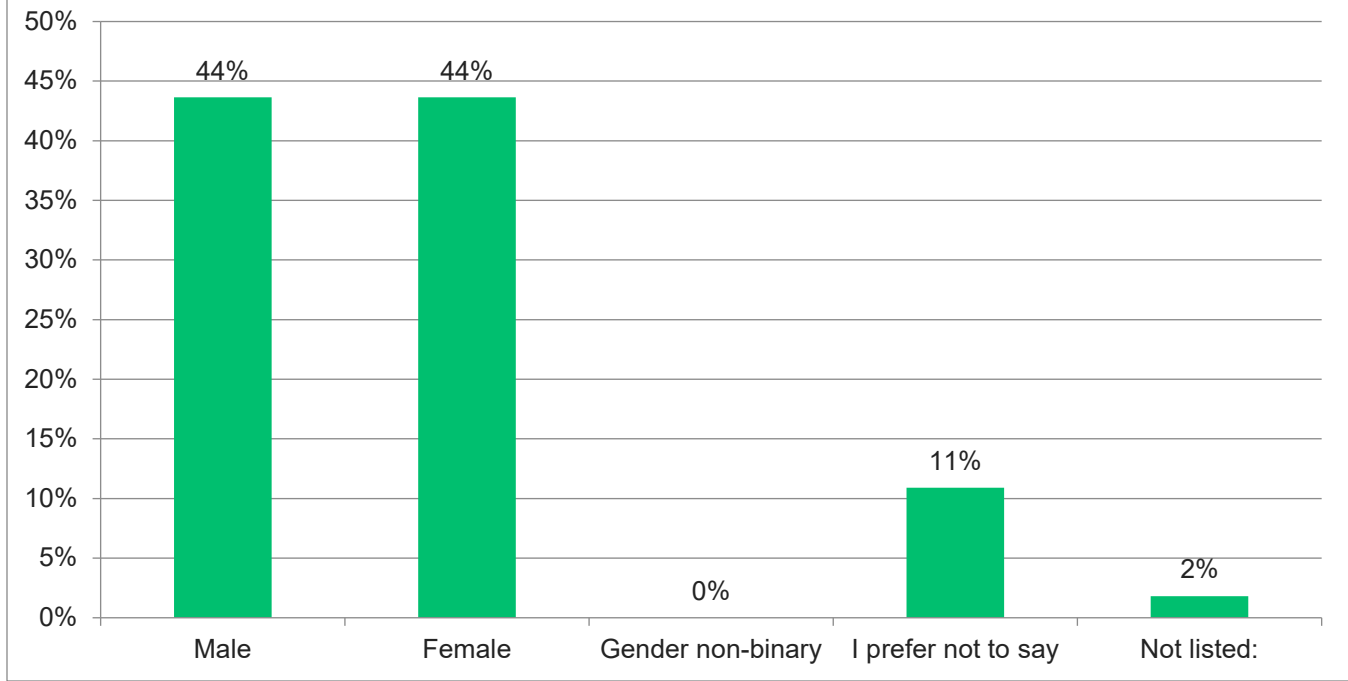


Are you able to drive a vehicle/do you have access to a vehicle?

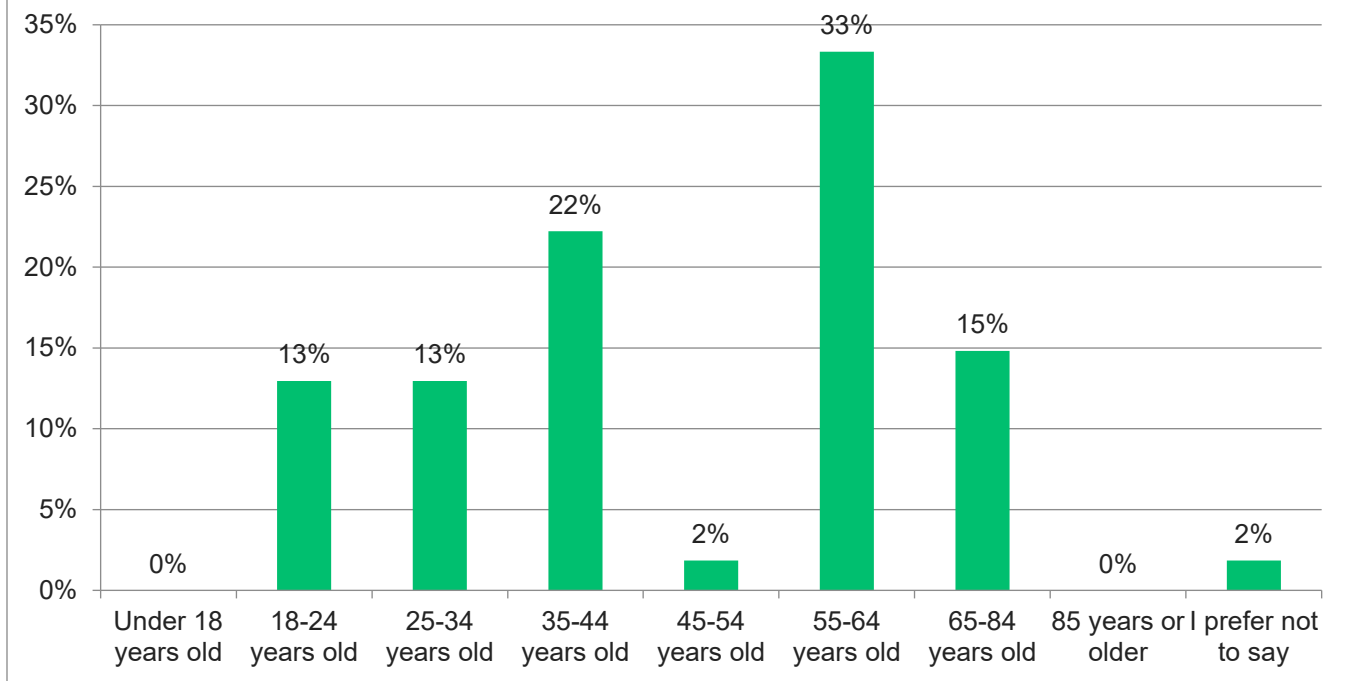




With which gender do you identify?

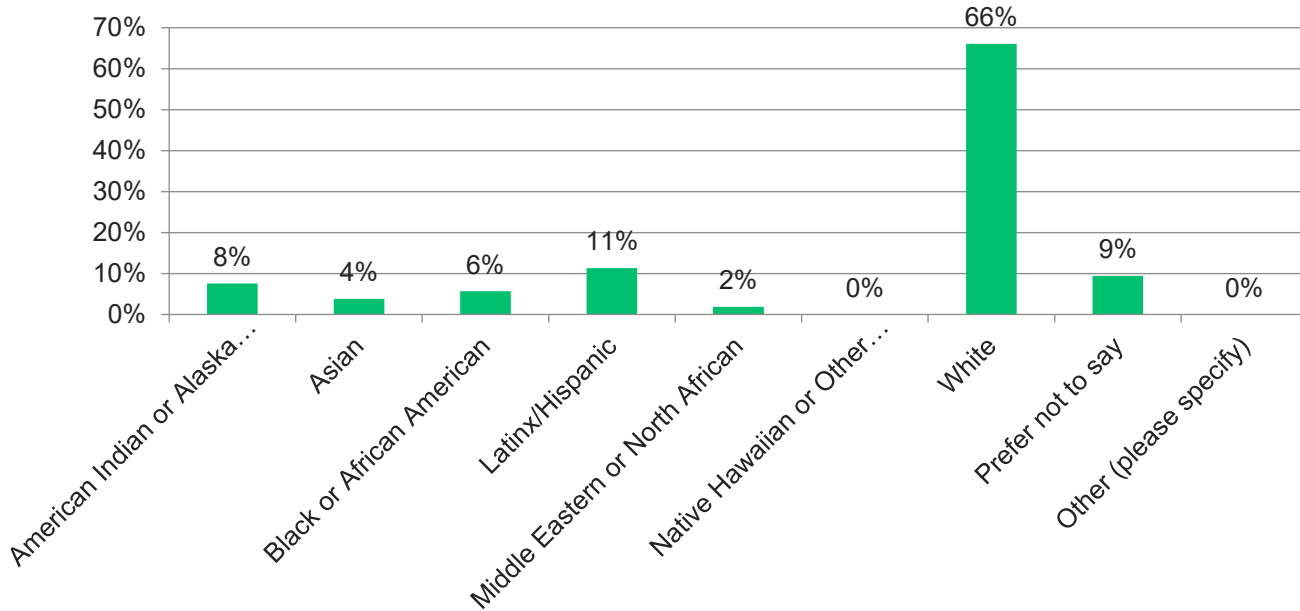


What is your age?

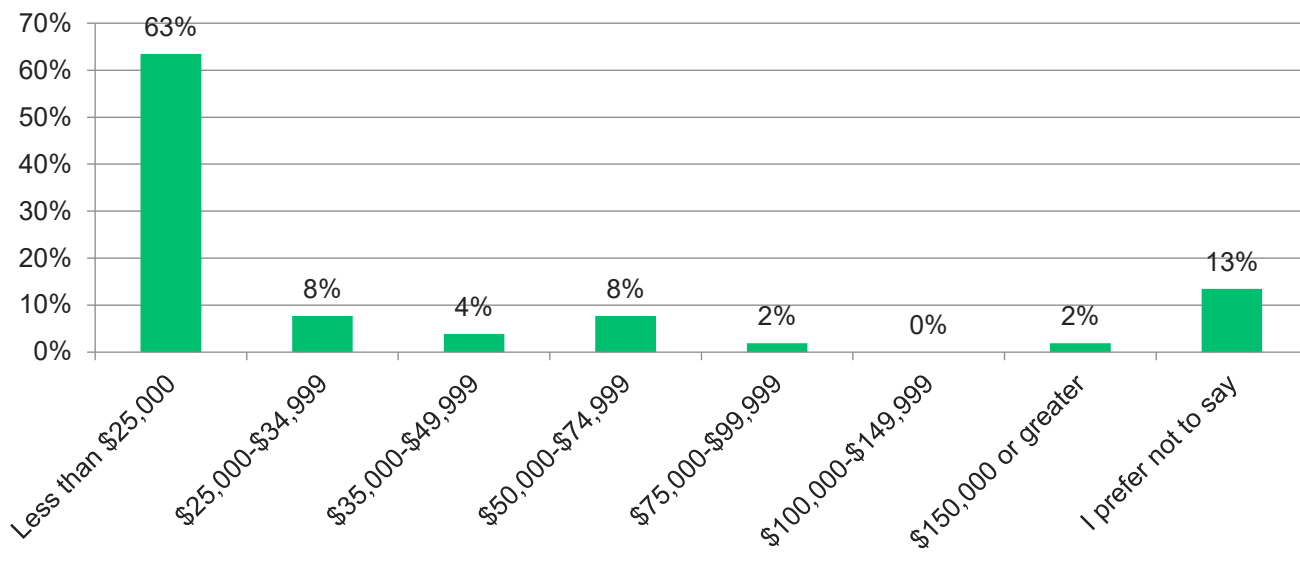




What is your racial, ethnic, or Indigenous identity?
 Select all that apply.



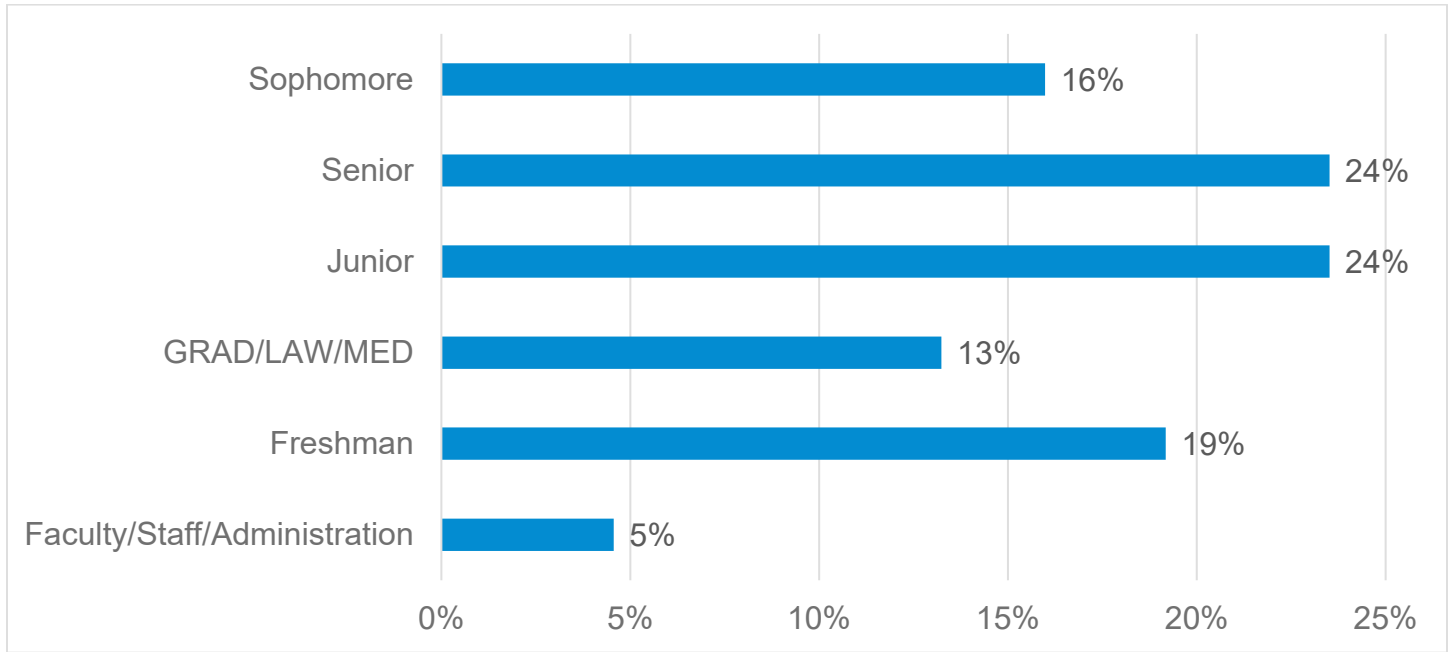
What is your household income (Combined incomes of everyone in the household that is over 15 and working.)



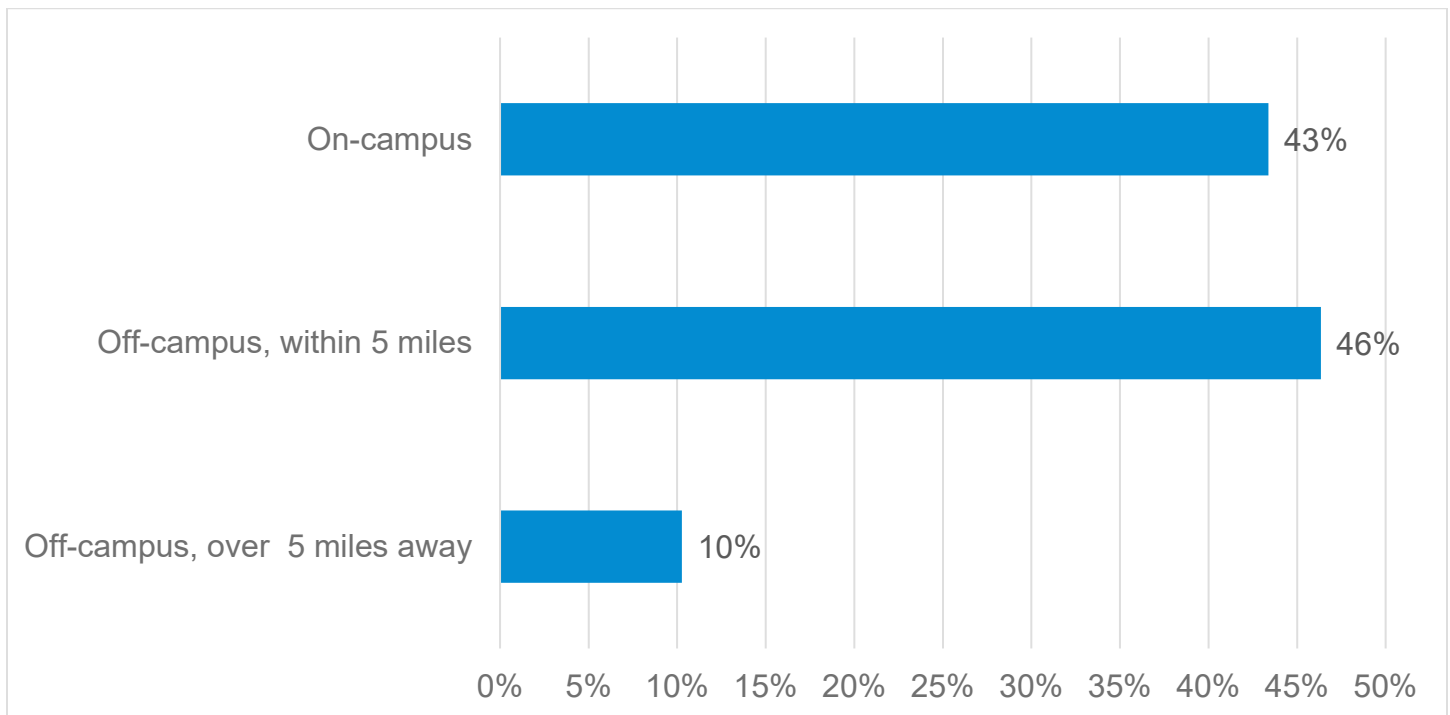


APPENDIX B. UND SURVEY RESULTS

Please select the response that best describes your affiliation with UND:

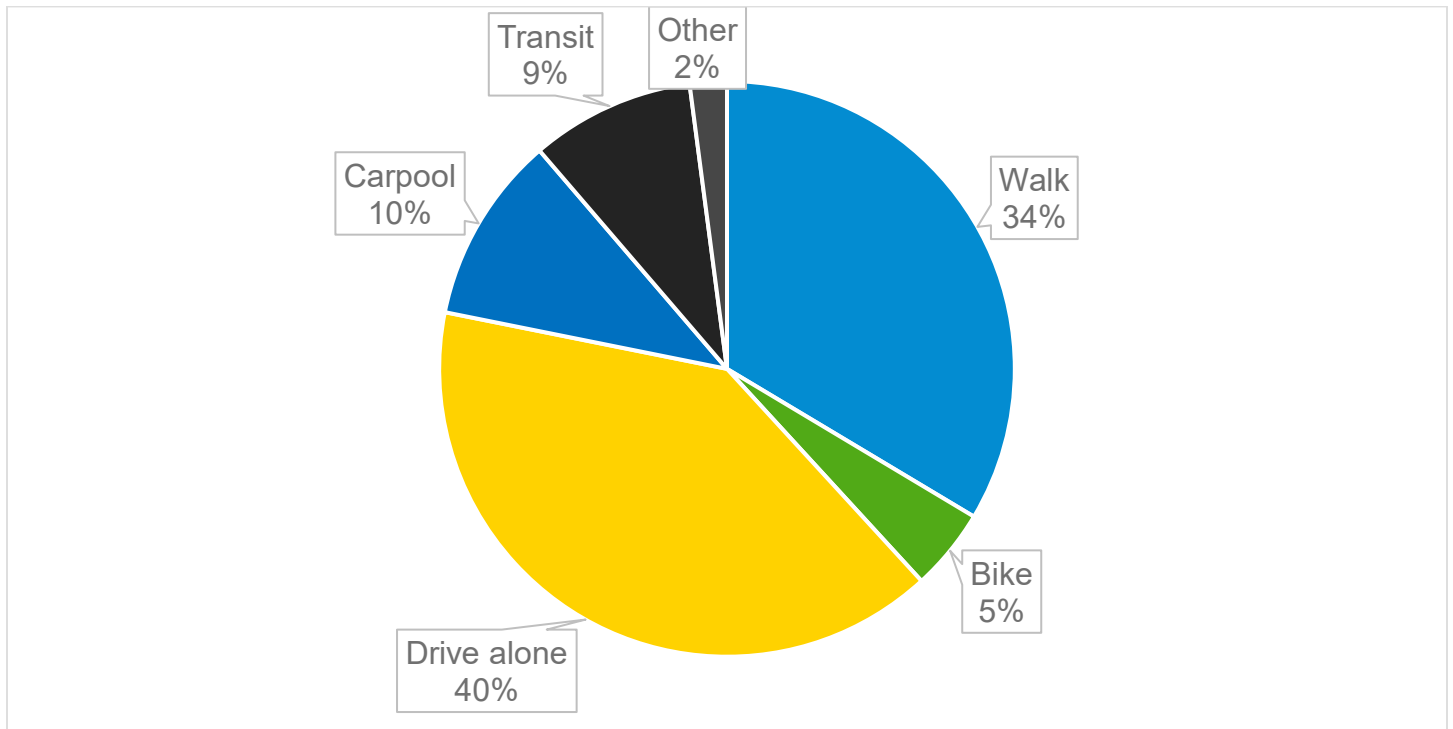


How close to campus do you live?

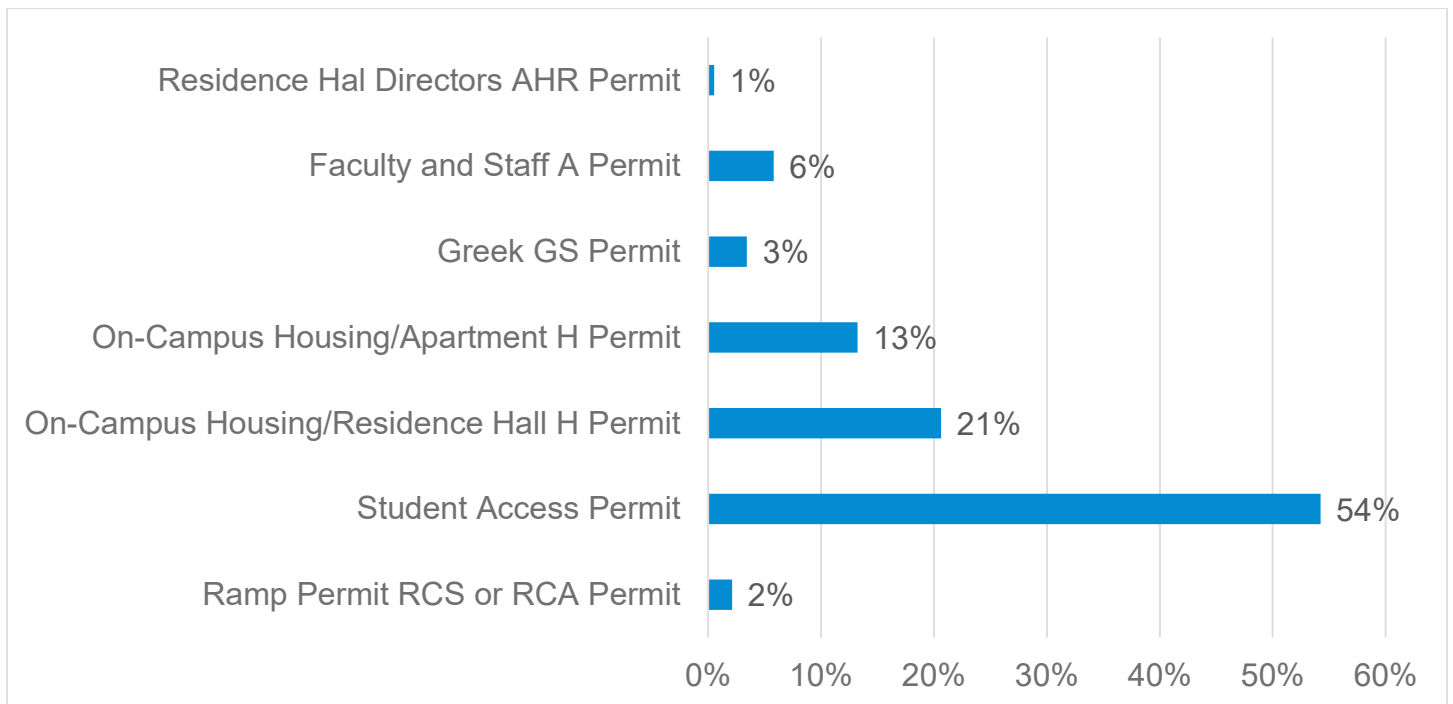




How do you get to campus?

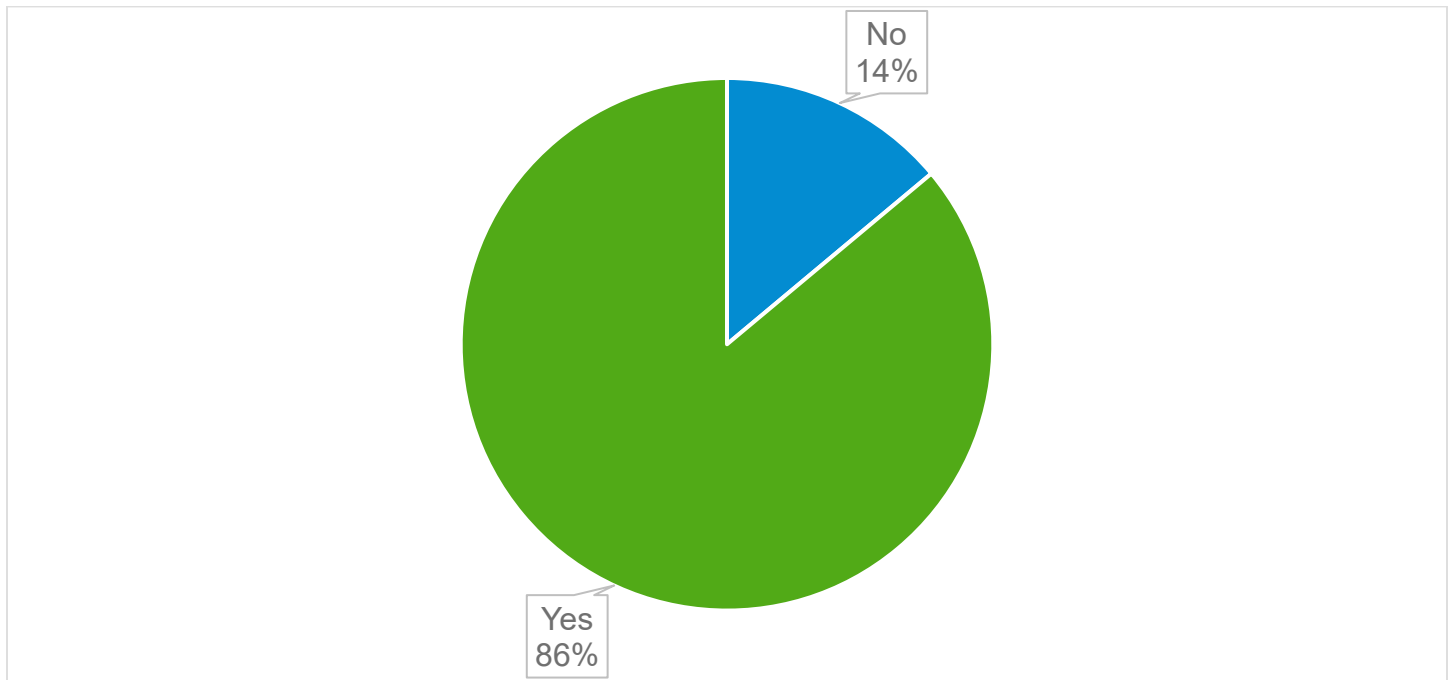


Please select the type(s) of Parking Passes you have:

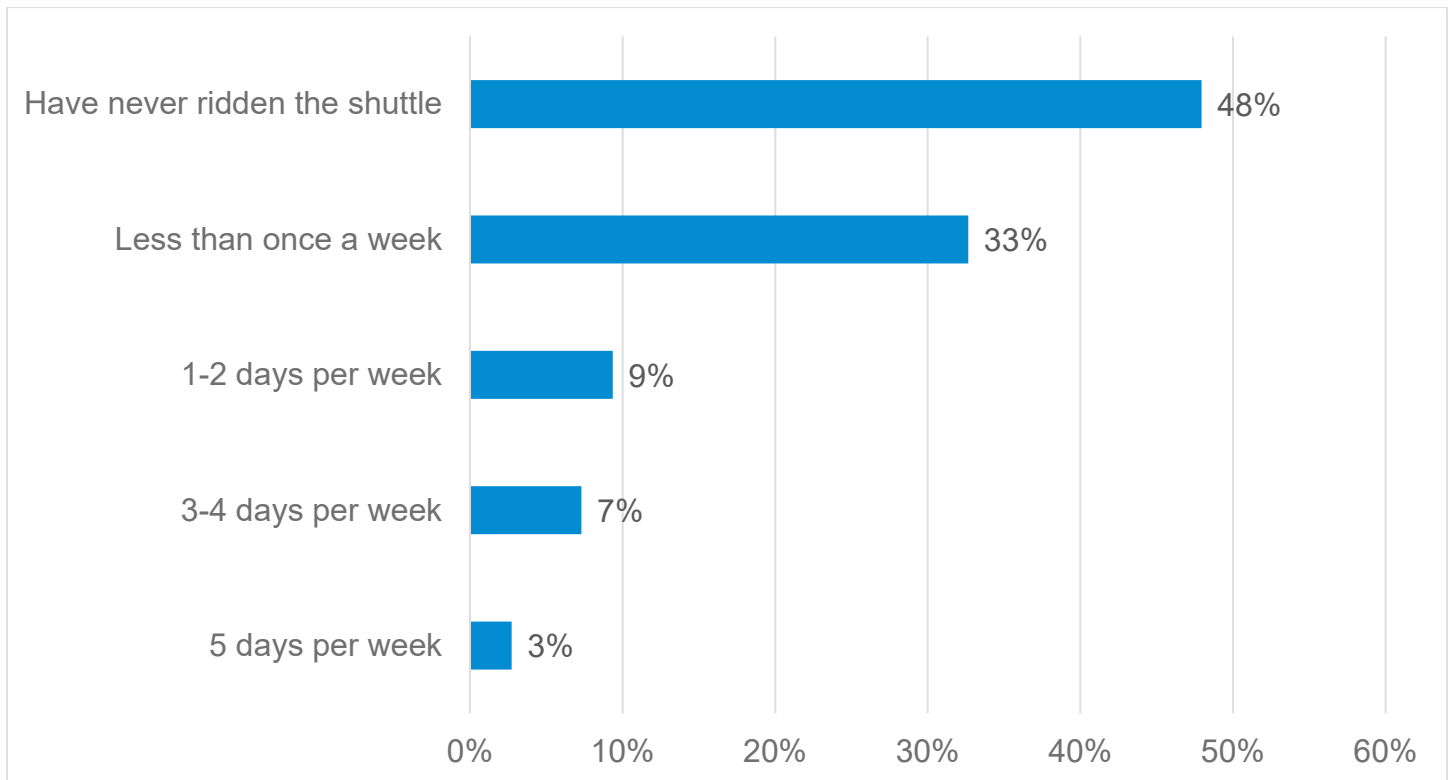




Are you aware of the campus shuttle service that is free to students/faculty/staff?

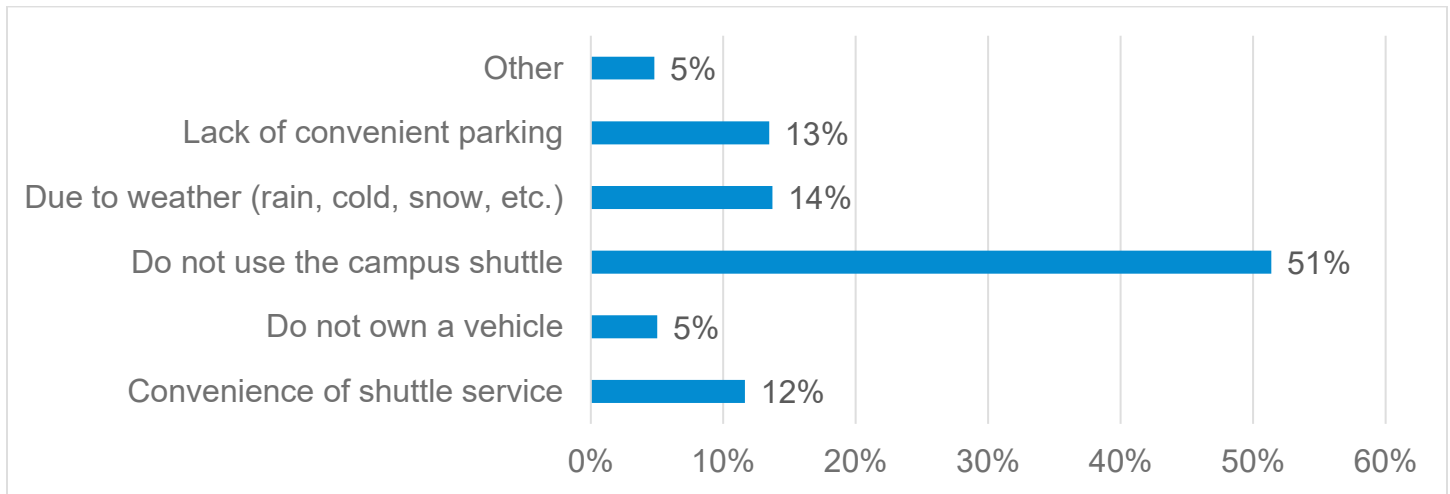


How often do you ride the campus shuttle service?

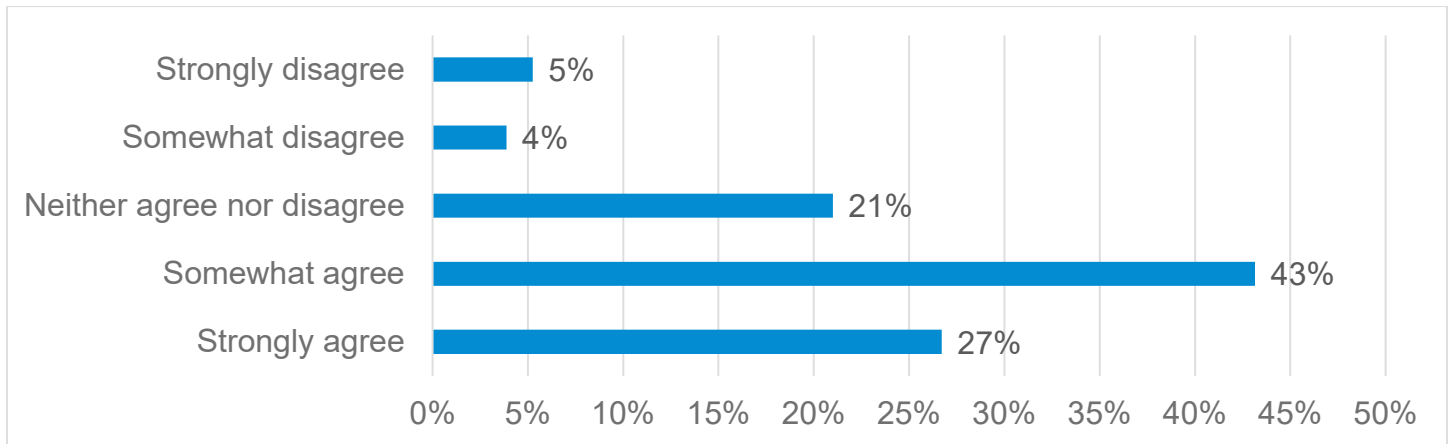




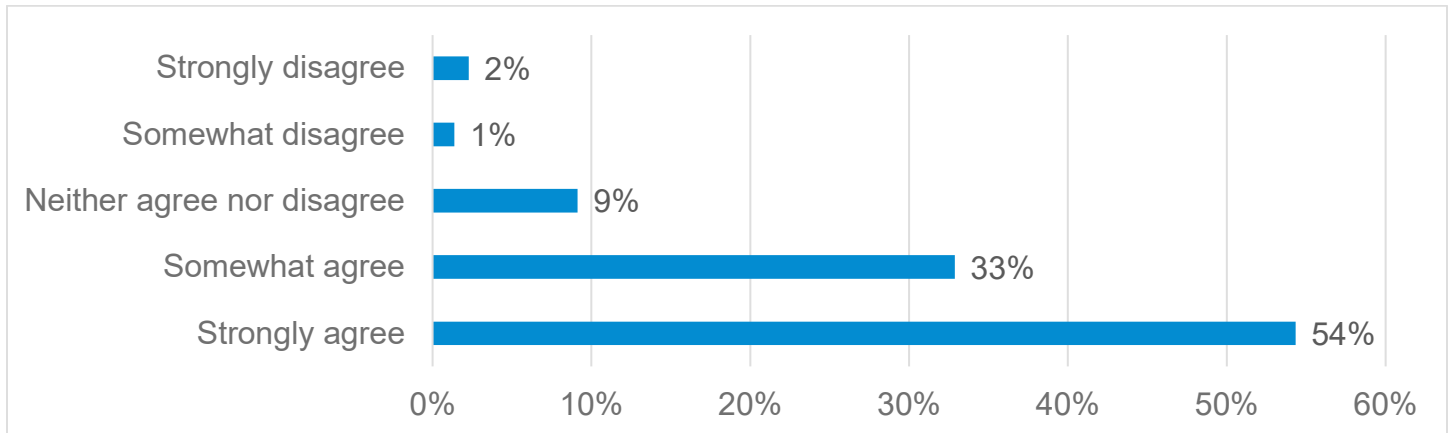
Why do you use the campus shuttle service?



The campus shuttle improves the student experience at UND

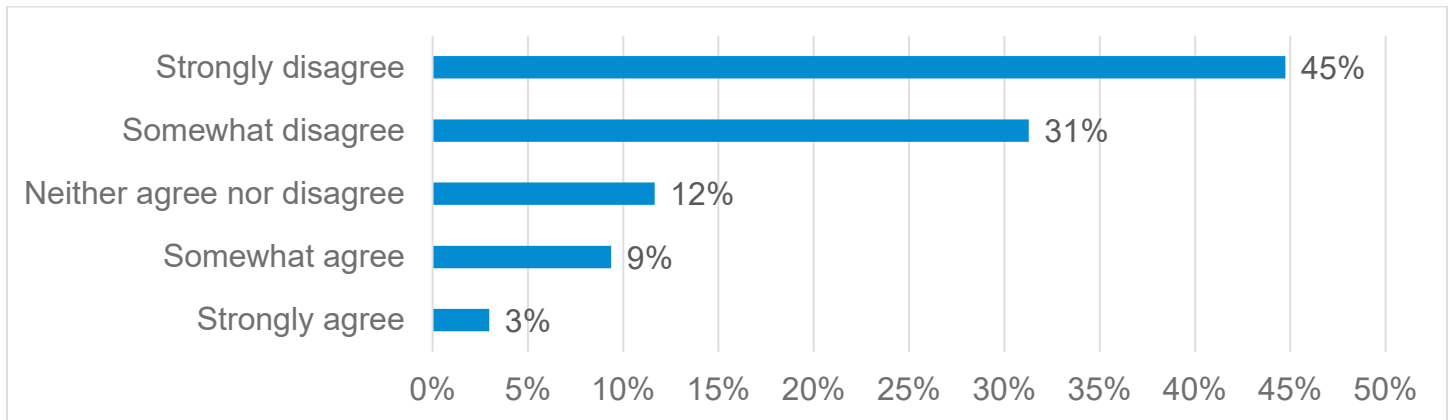


The campus shuttle is an important service for the university

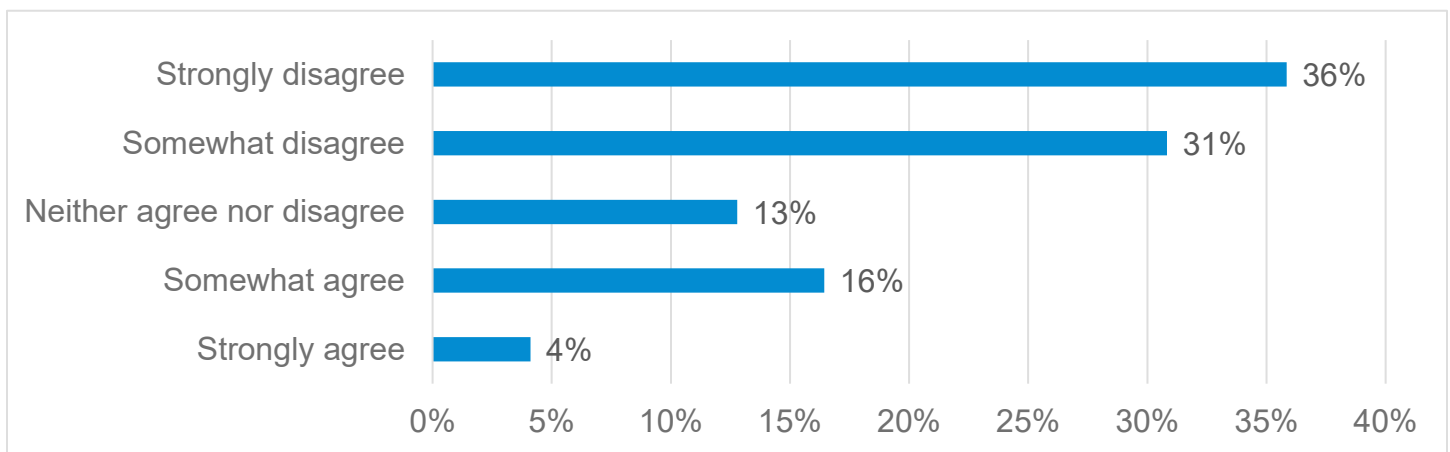




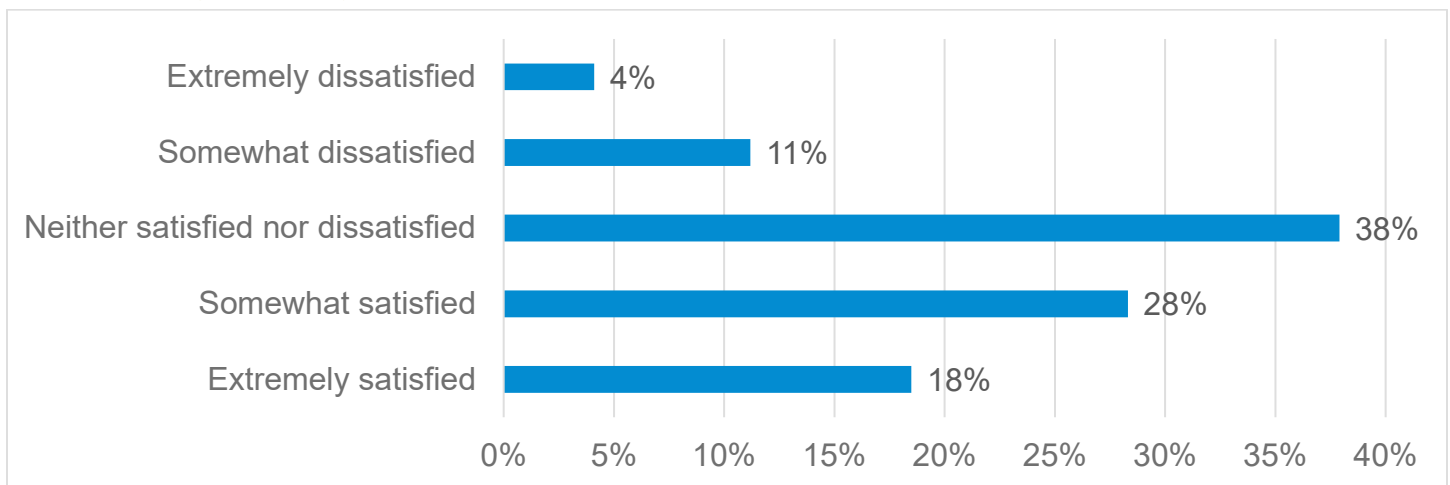
The campus shuttle is only for those without access to an automobile



The campus shuttle is only for those who live on campus

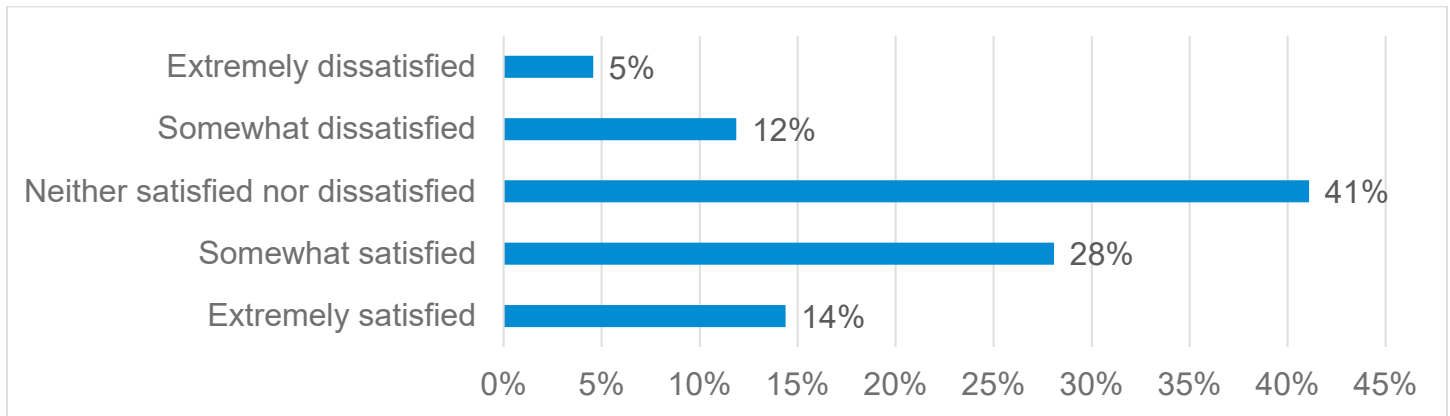


Ease of riding the campus shuttle

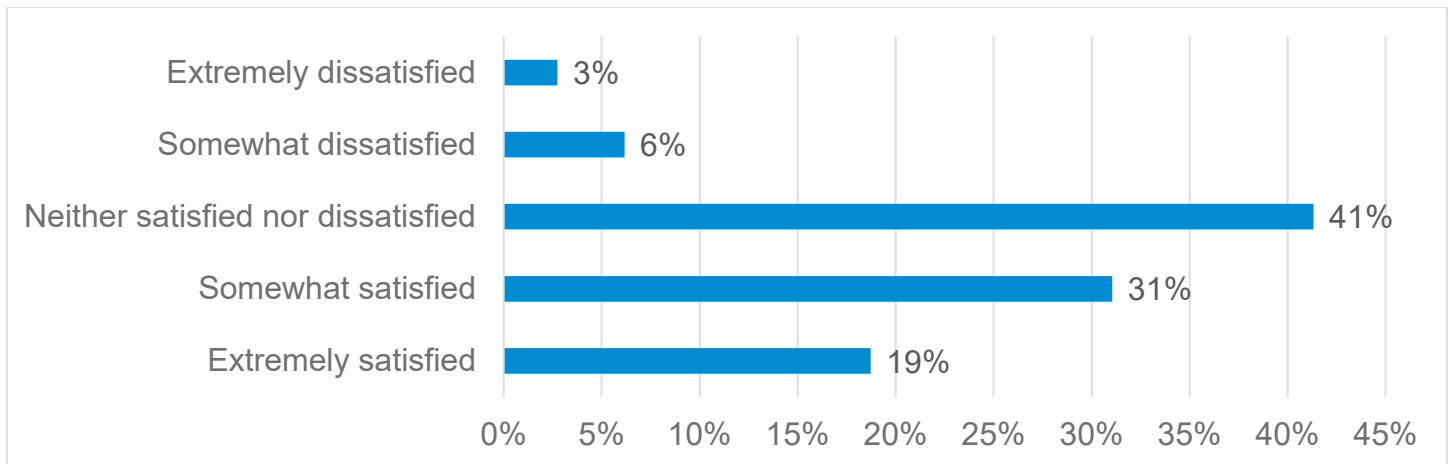




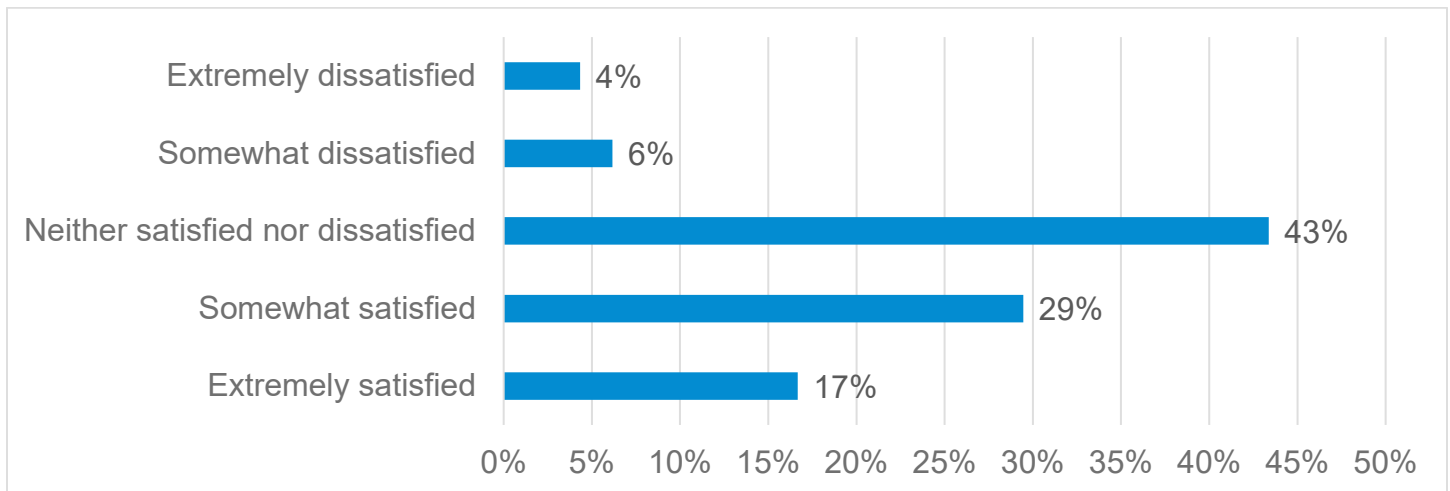
Hours of operation



Travel time

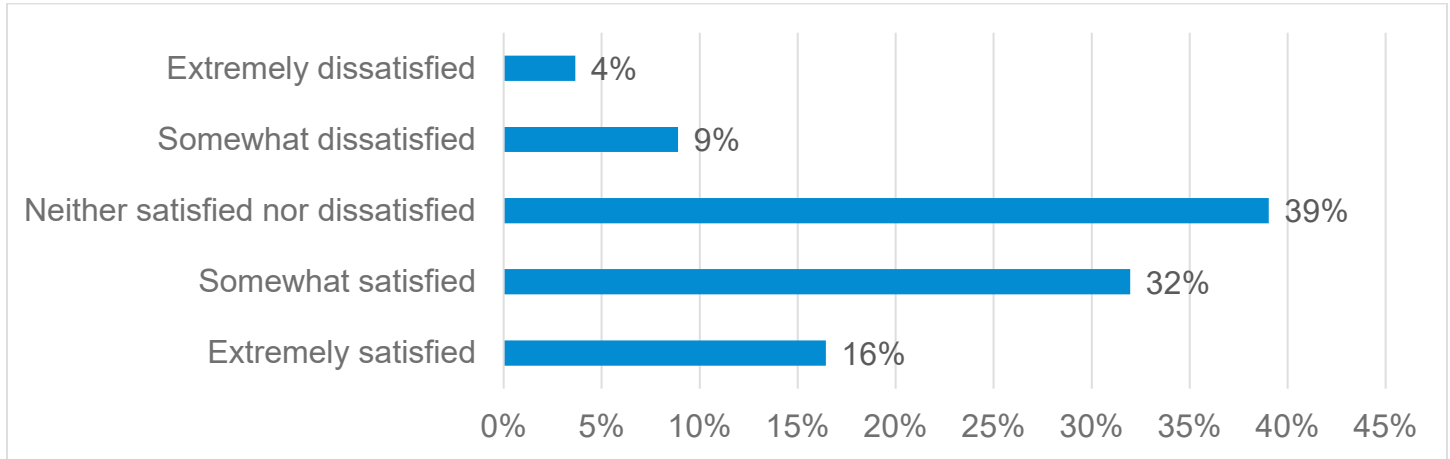


Frequency of stops

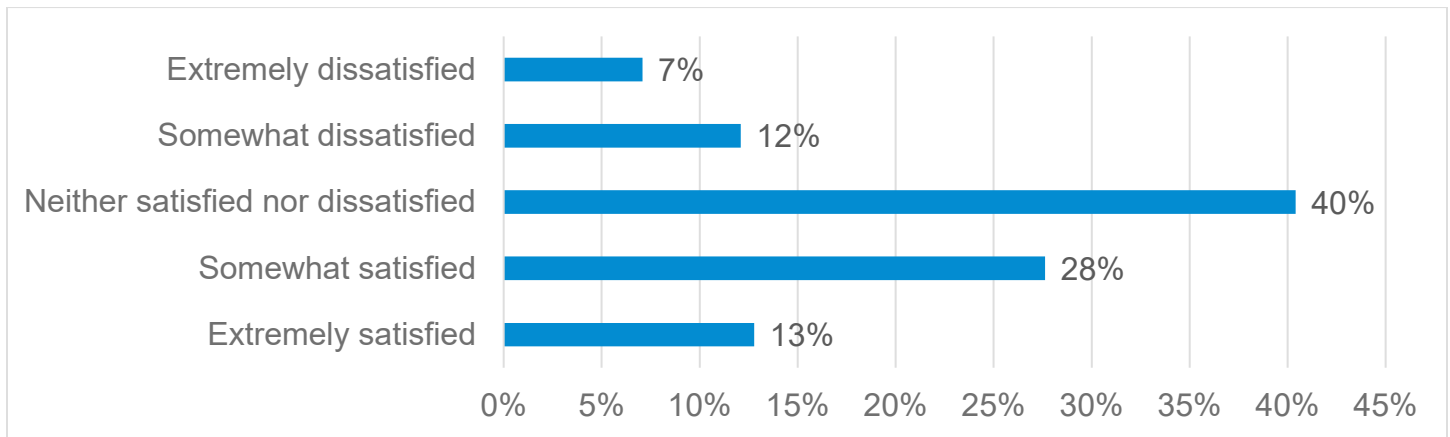




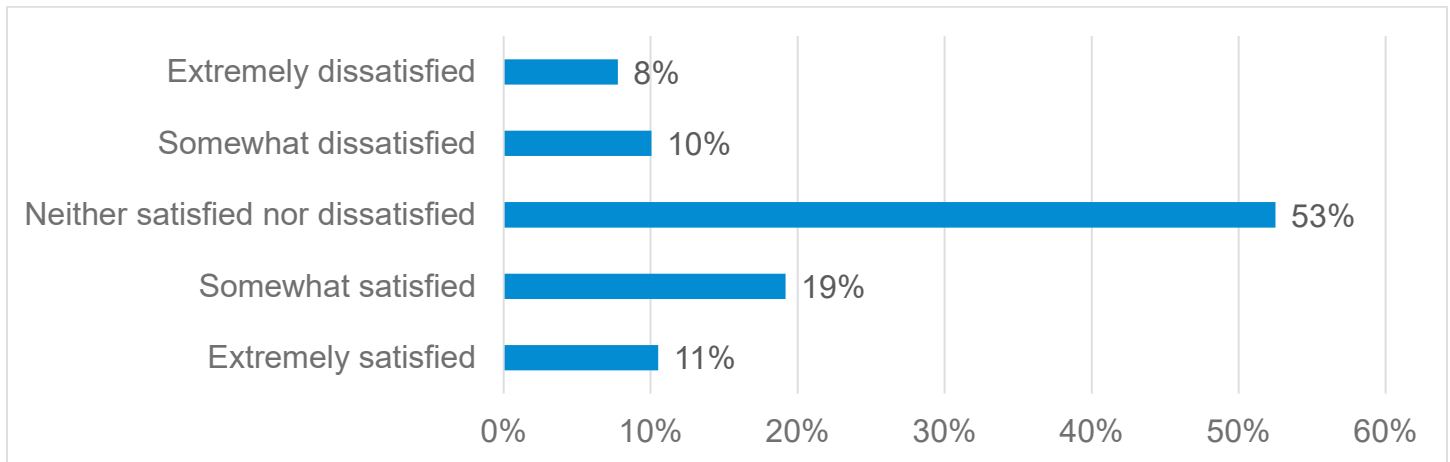
Stop locations



Reliability of scheduled stop times

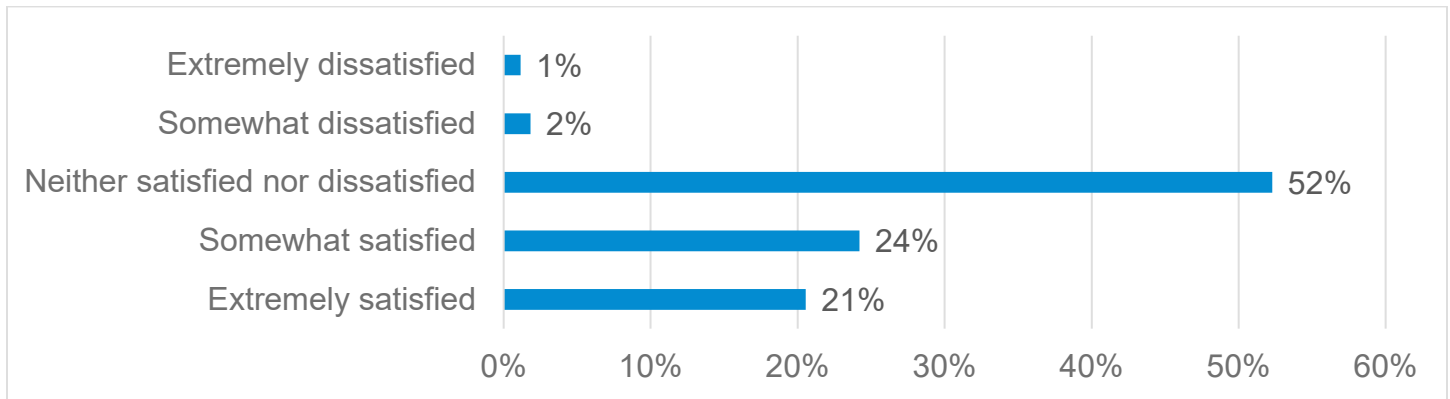


Accuracy of CAT Prowler app

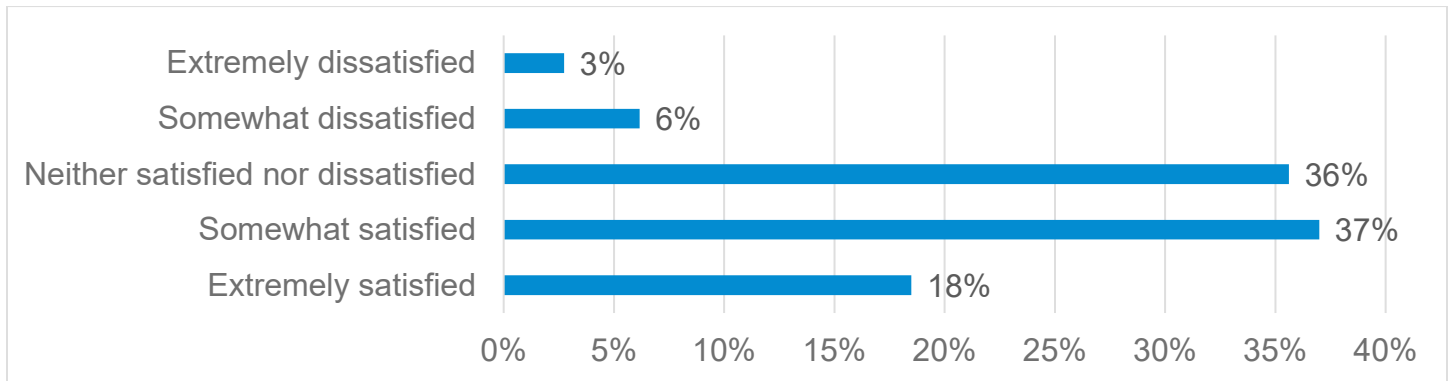




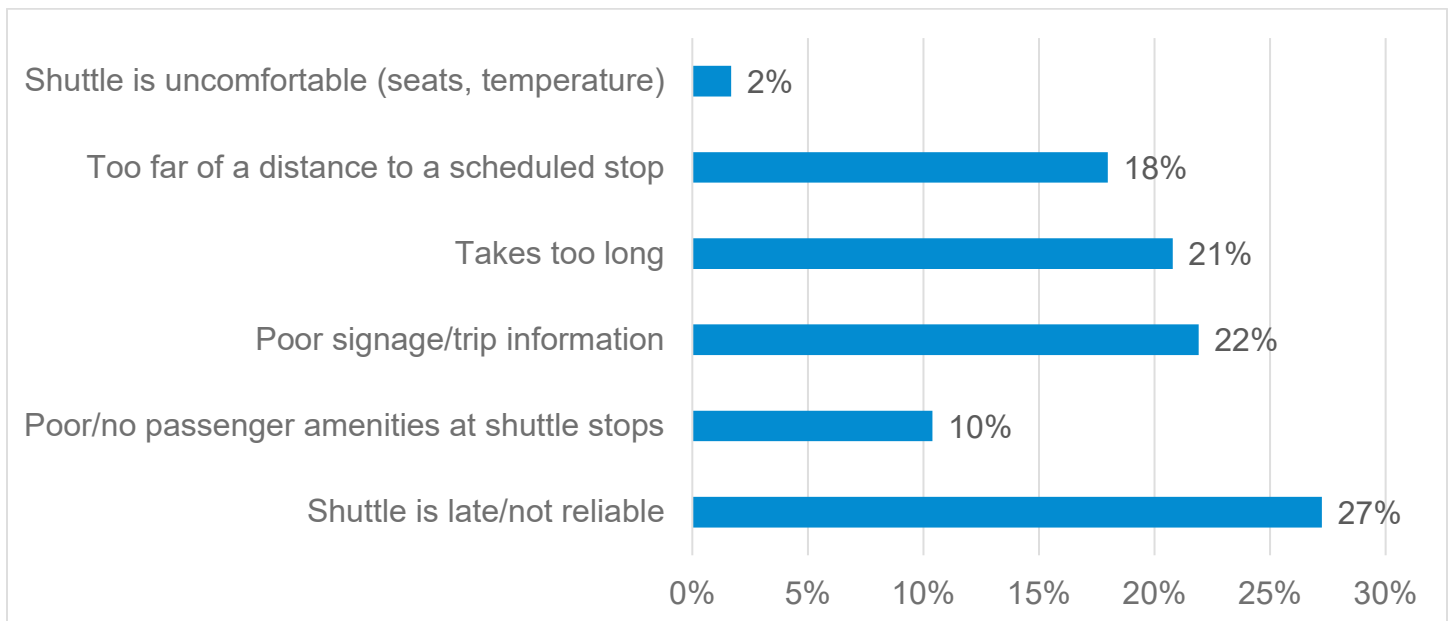
Customer service



Overall campus shuttle service



Do you experience barriers to riding the campus shuttle?

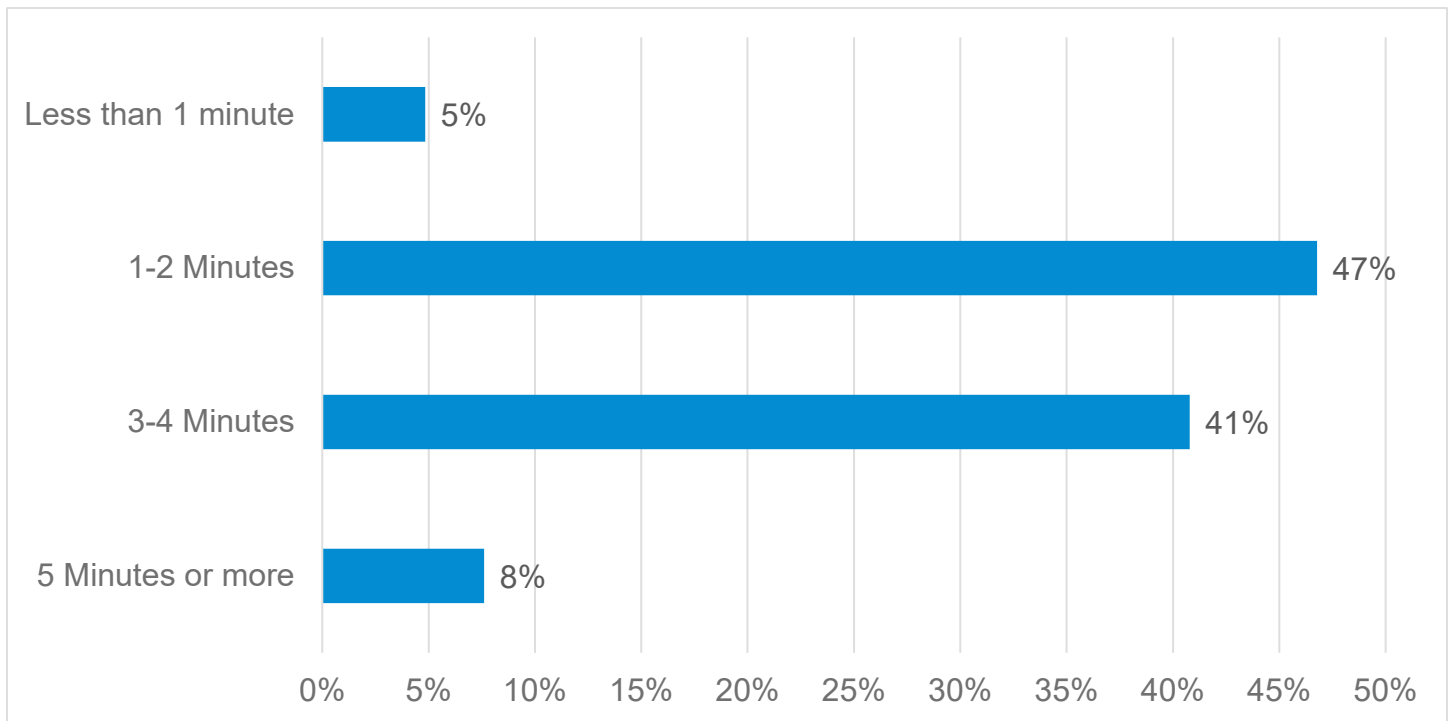




Please describe any aspects of riding the campus shuttle that makes it confusing or difficult

- > Technological issues with the CAT app and inefficient to use
- > Shuttle will often skip over some stops even when students need to get on or off (even more of an issue when the weather is bad)
- > Lack of information on shuttle routes and guidance on how to ride the shuttles
- > Shuttles take too long to arrive at stops and unreliable scheduled stop times
- > Did not know this service existed
- > Shuttles don't run frequently enough
- > Don't know where the stops and/or the routes are

What do you feel is an appropriate time (in minutes) to walk to your destination from the bus stop?



What are your top five preferred buildings/locations for campus shuttle stops?

Most common responses:

- > Memorial Union
- > Wilkerson
- > Odegard
- > Medical School
- > Columbia
- > Library
- > Wellness Center



Between what two locations on campus would you most likely take the shuttle?

Pick-up Location

Most common responses:

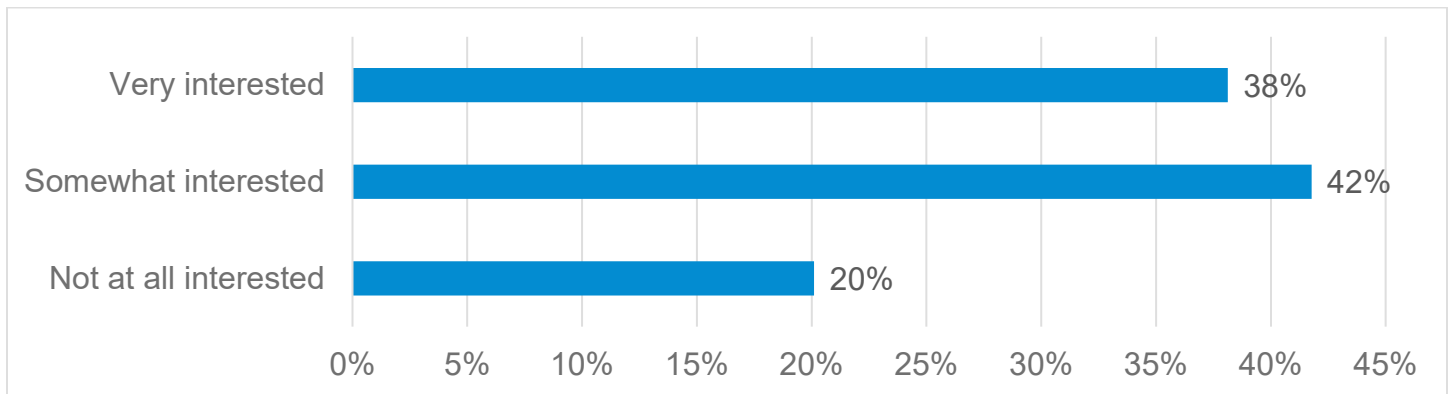
- > Wilkerson
- > Memorial Union
- > Odegard
- > Walsh
- > University Ave/University Place
- > Wellness Center

Drop-off Location

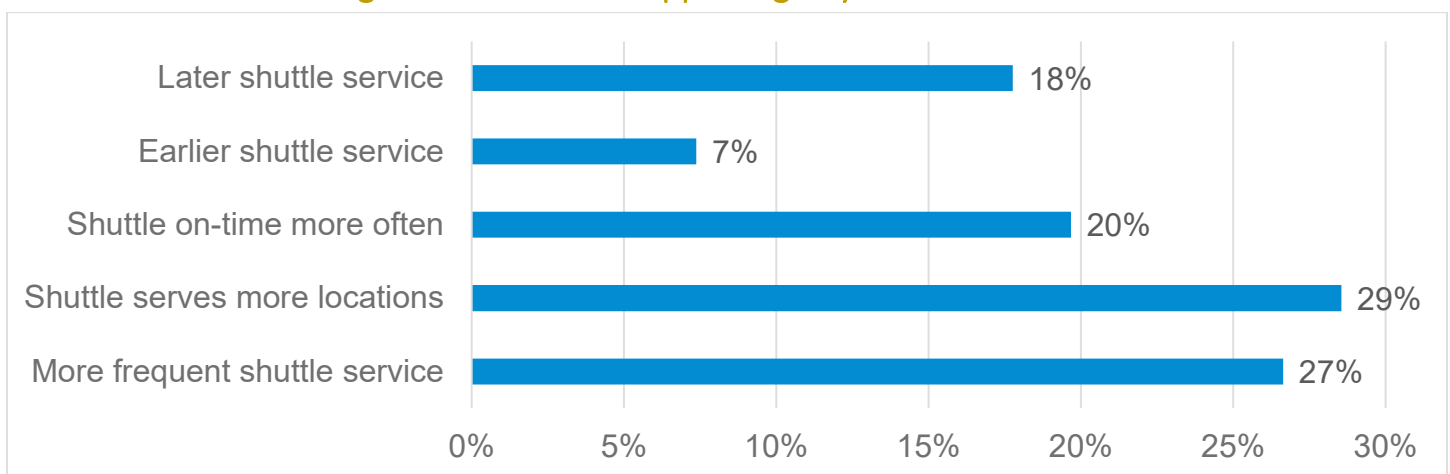
Most common responses:

- > Memorial Union
- > Wilkerson
- > Columbia Hall
- > Medical School
- > Odegard
- > Wellness Center

Would you be interested in an on-demand campus ride share service (similar to Uber), Monday through Thursday, from 5-10 pm?



What would make riding the shuttle more appealing to you?





Please share any other comments related to strengths of the current shuttle system or improvements that you would like to see to the shuttle system

Strengths

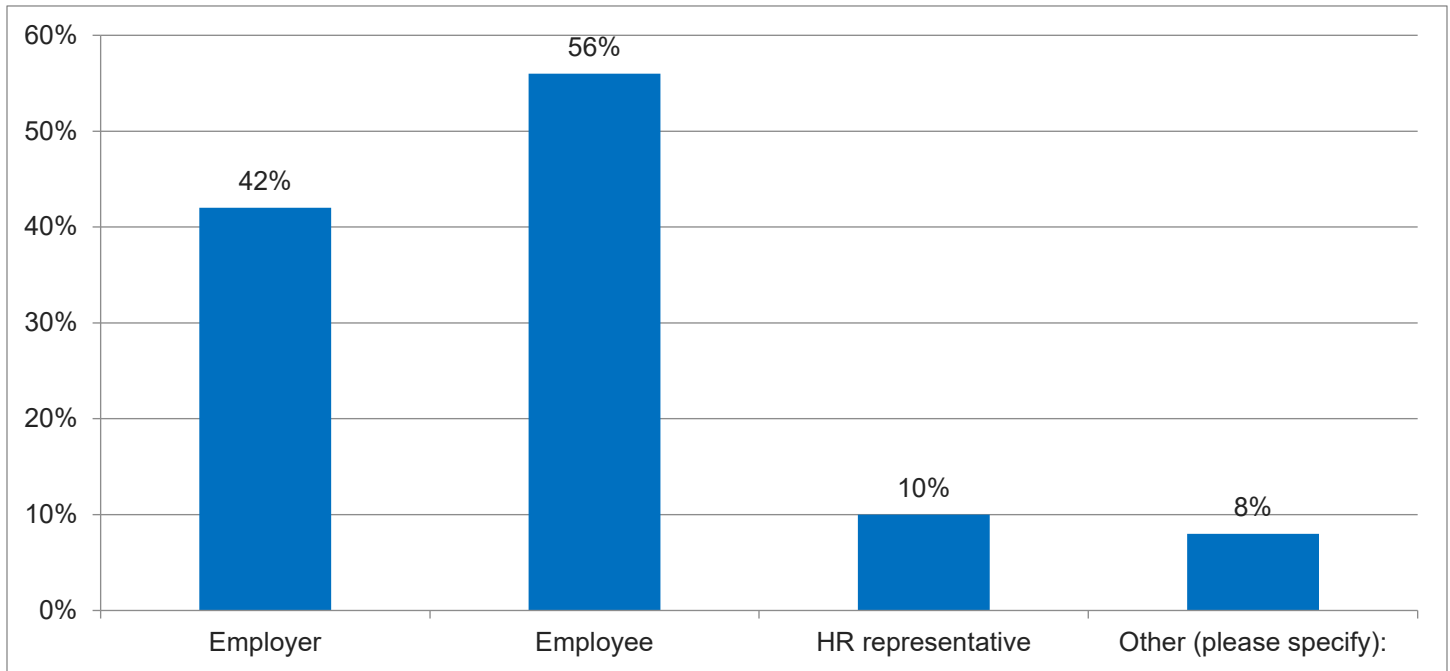
- > Better quality buses with higher rider capacity
- > Can be reliable, especially during bad weather

Improvements

- > Shuttle app needs to be more reliable
- > More frequent stops and make full stops at each designated stop
- > Extended operating hours (weekends, early and later hours)
- > Interactive maps; further guidance on how to use the shuttles and navigate stops and bus routes
- > Additional stops at certain locations
- > Find ways to promote the shuttle and its services (email, announcements, etc.)

APPENDIX C. BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

What is your role within your company? Select all that apply.

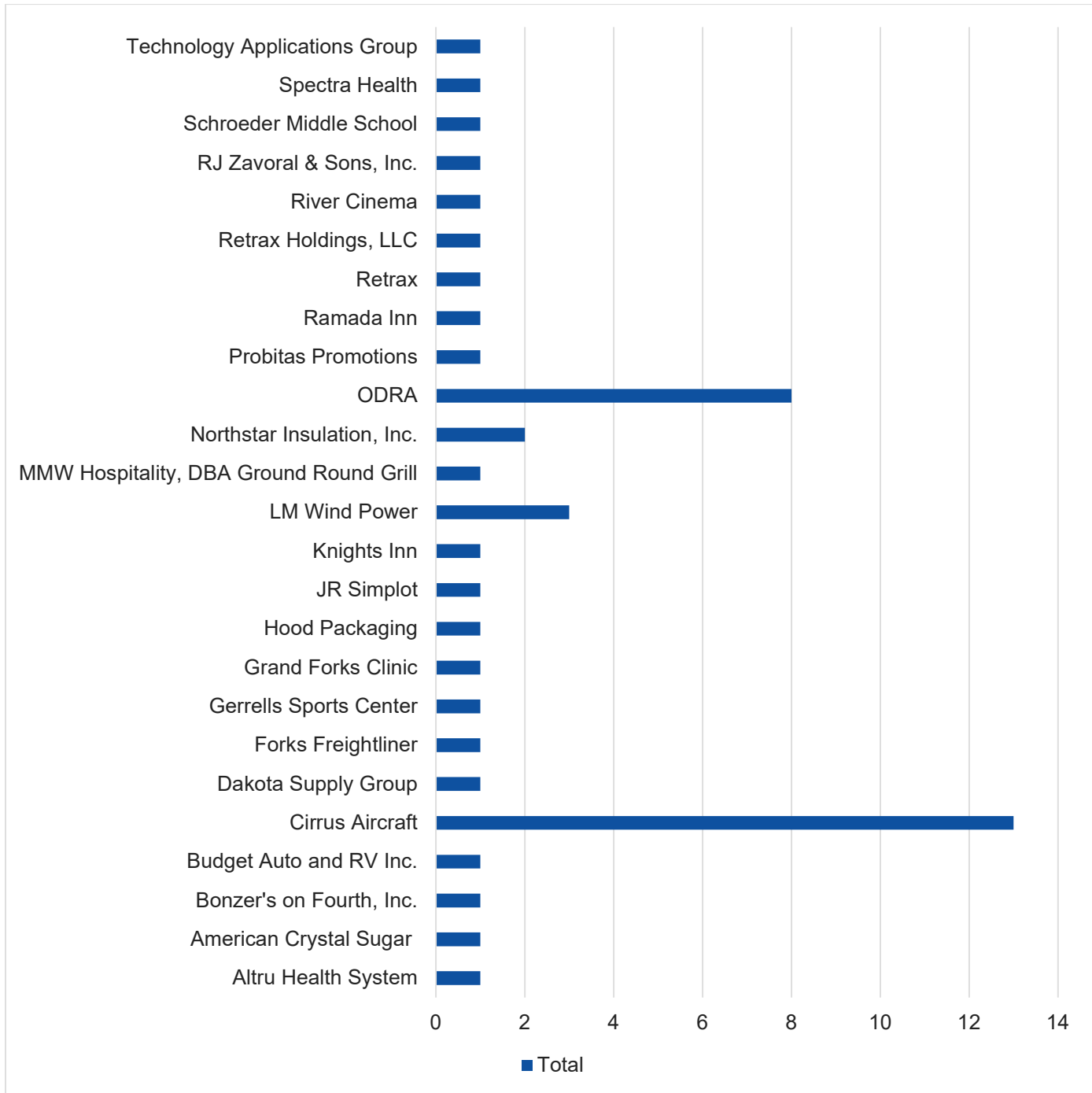


Other (please specify):

- > President
- > Office assistant
- > Operation manager
- > Supervisor

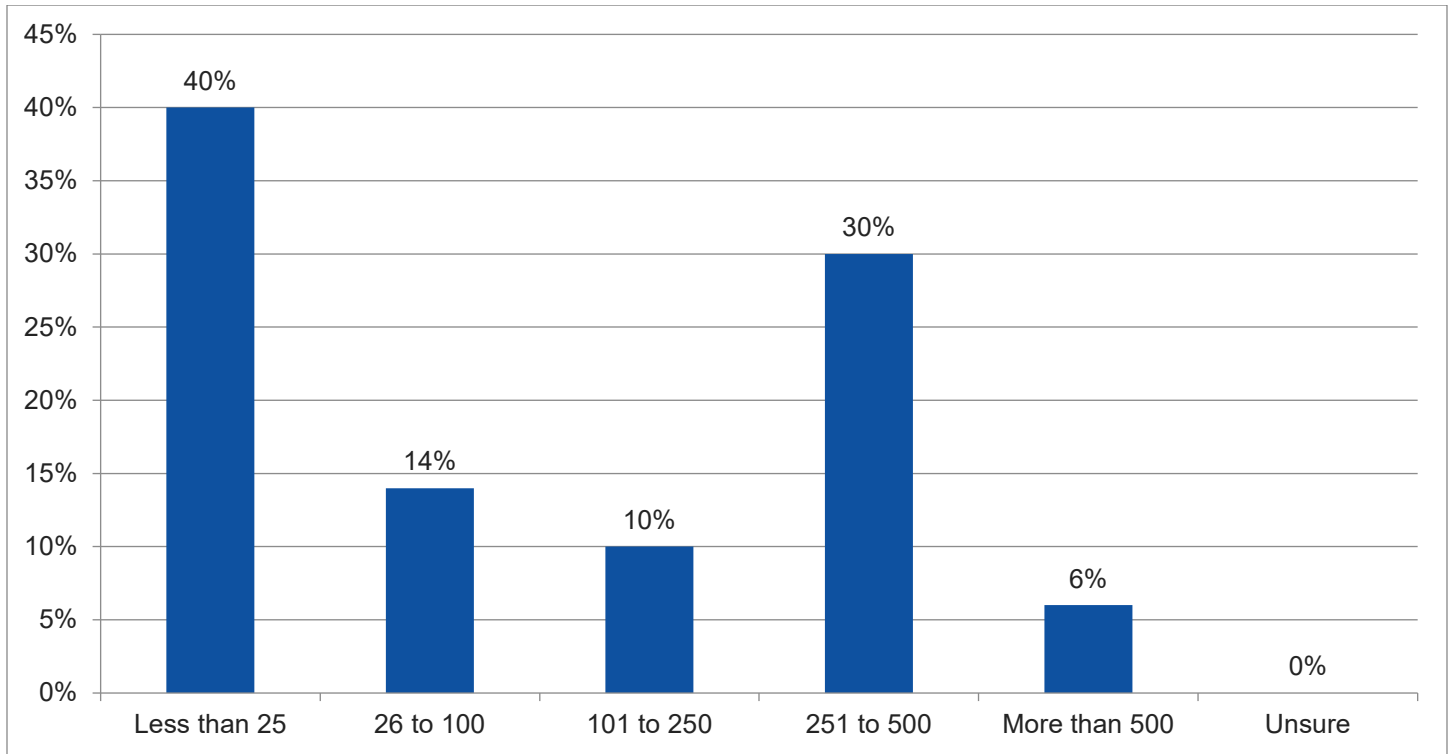


What is the name of your company?

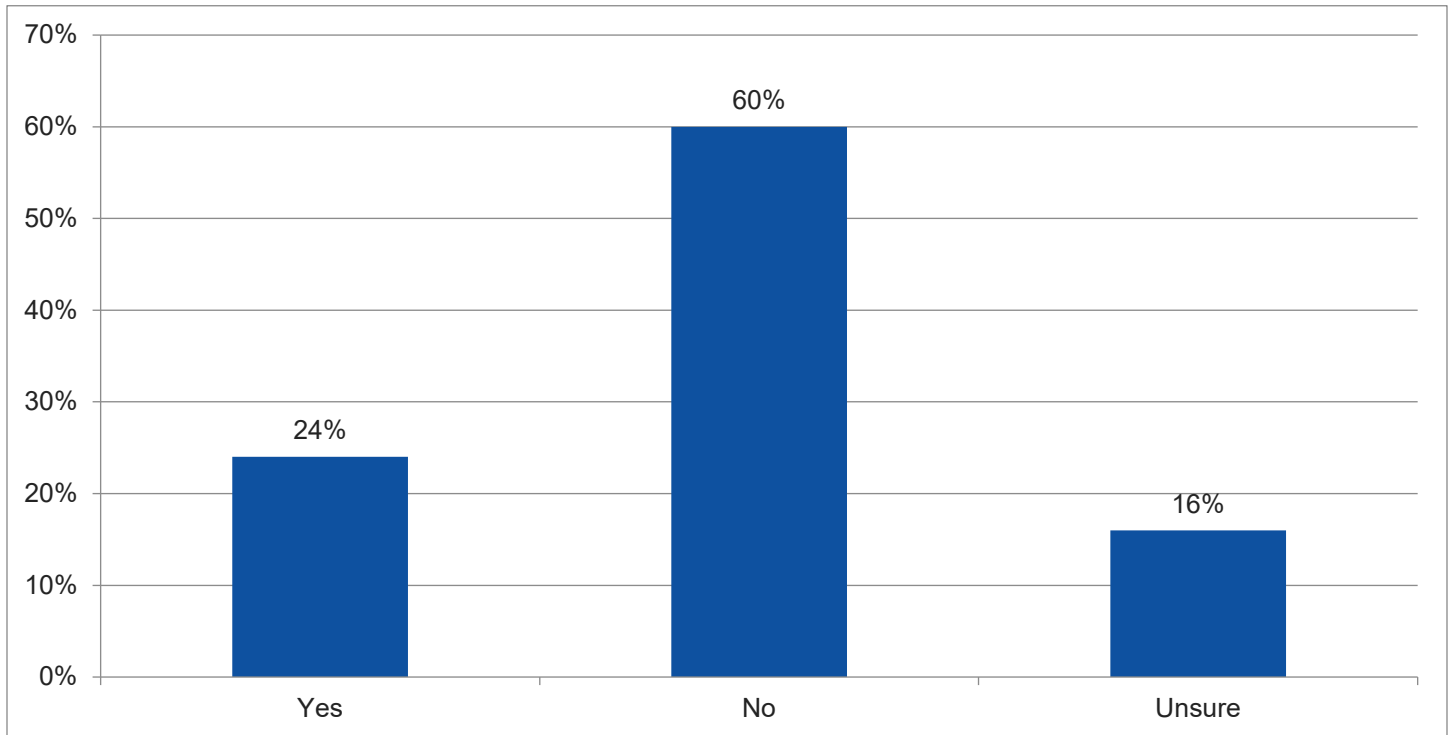




How many employees work at your company?

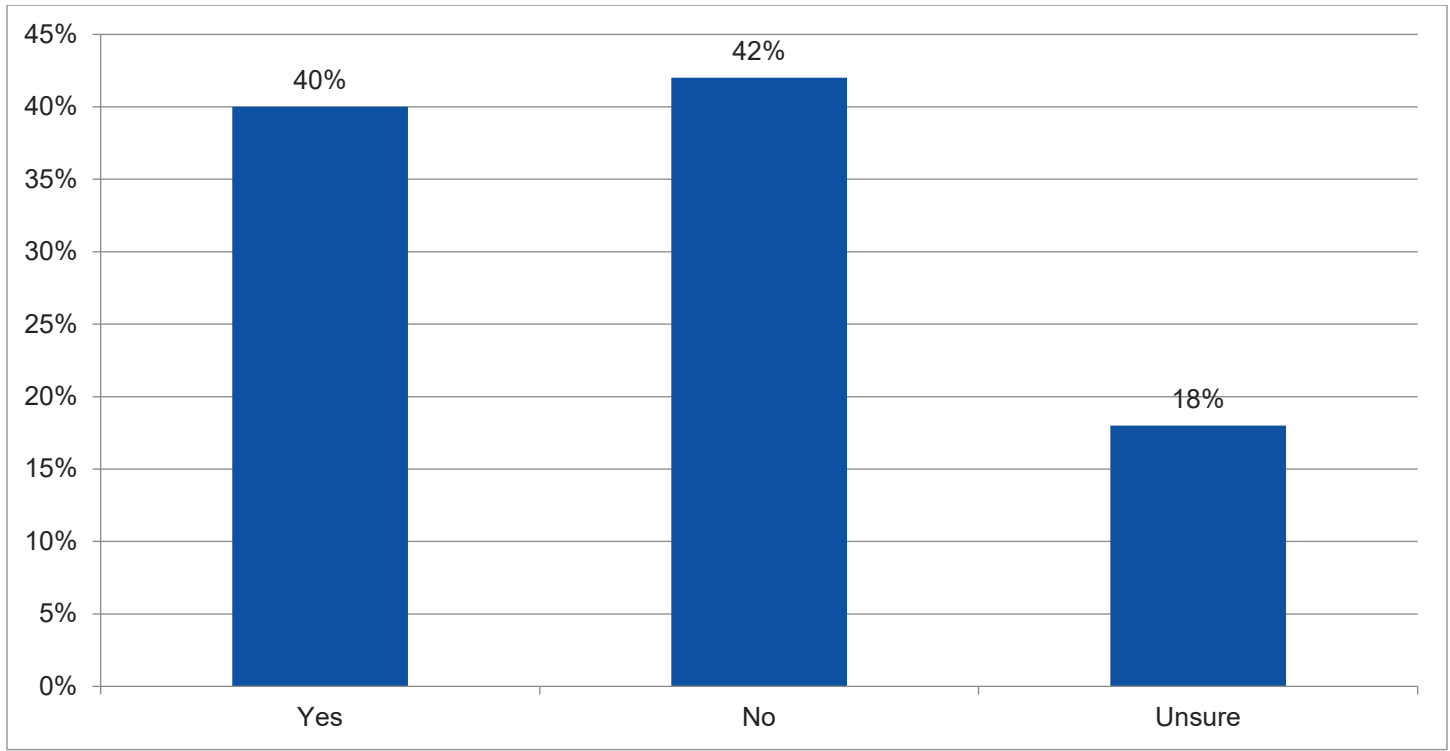


Does your company have easy access to transit?

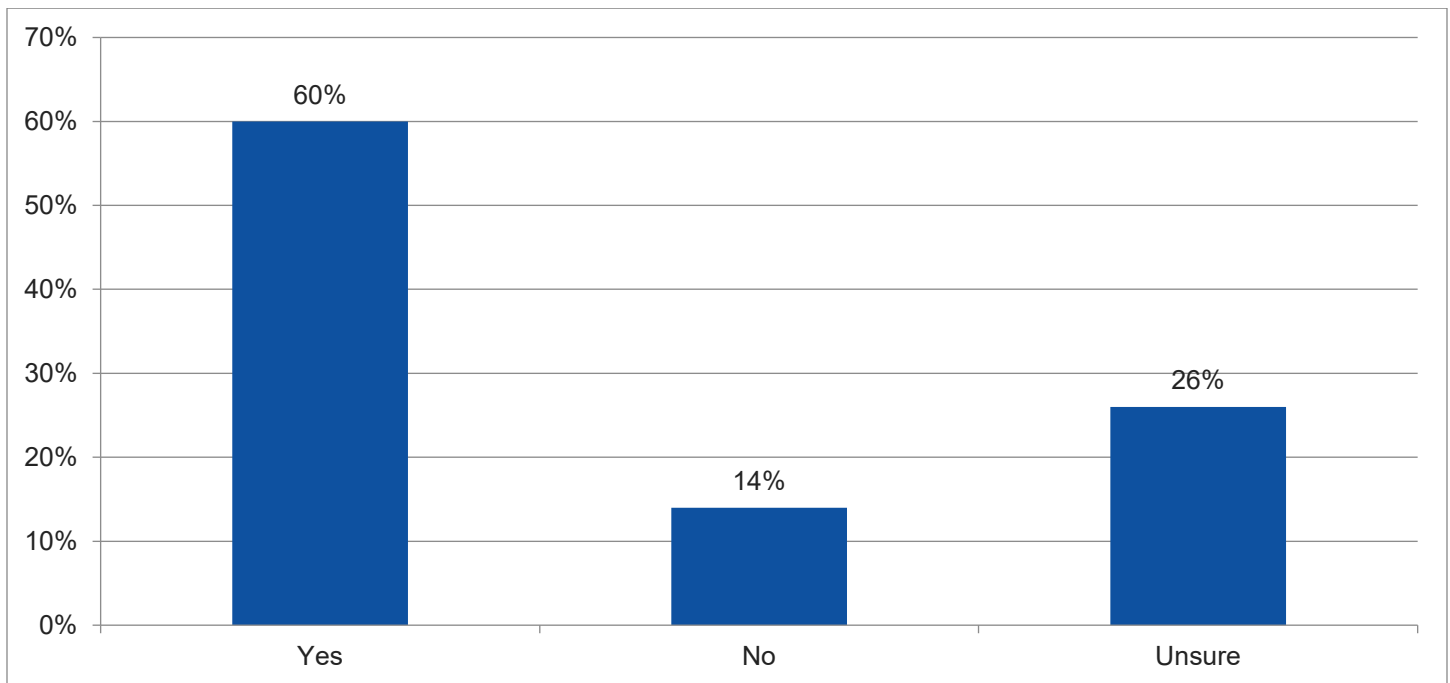




Are you aware of any people at your company that use public transit?

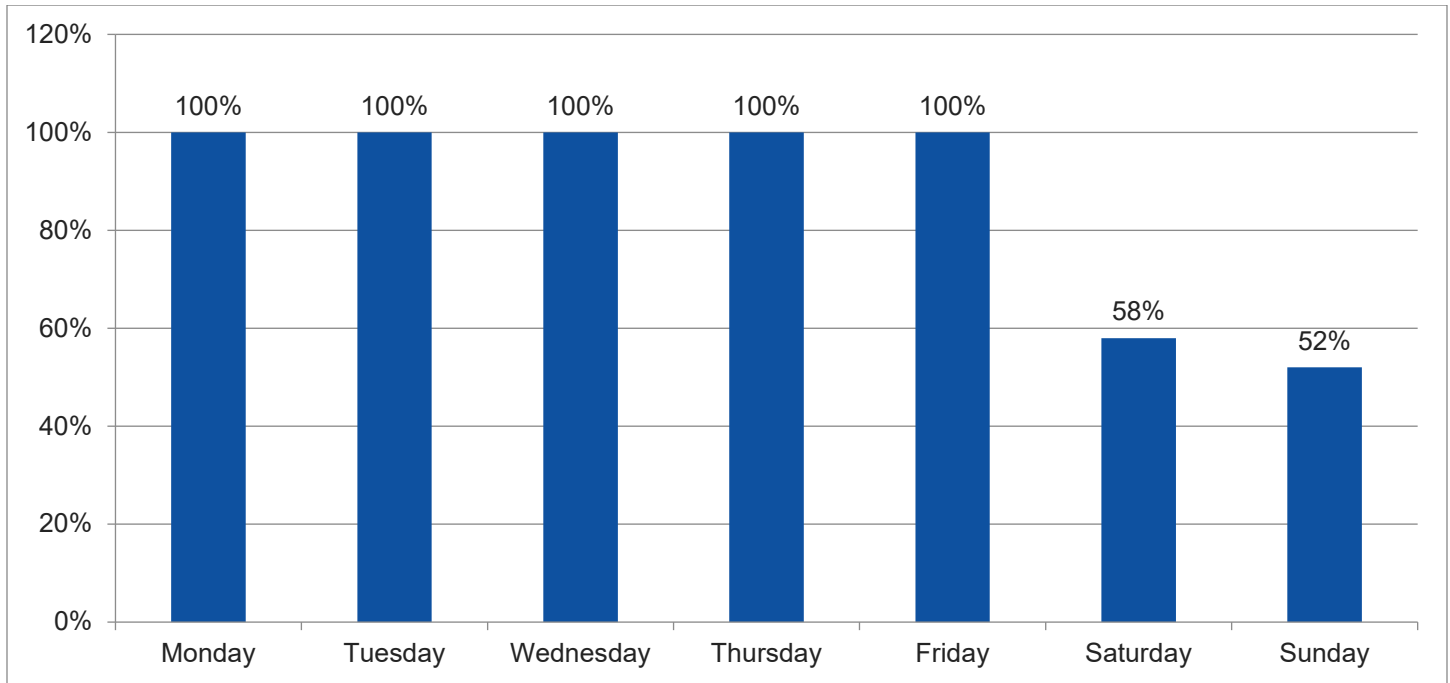


Do you think people at your company would use public transit if a route was available or convenient for them to get to and from work?

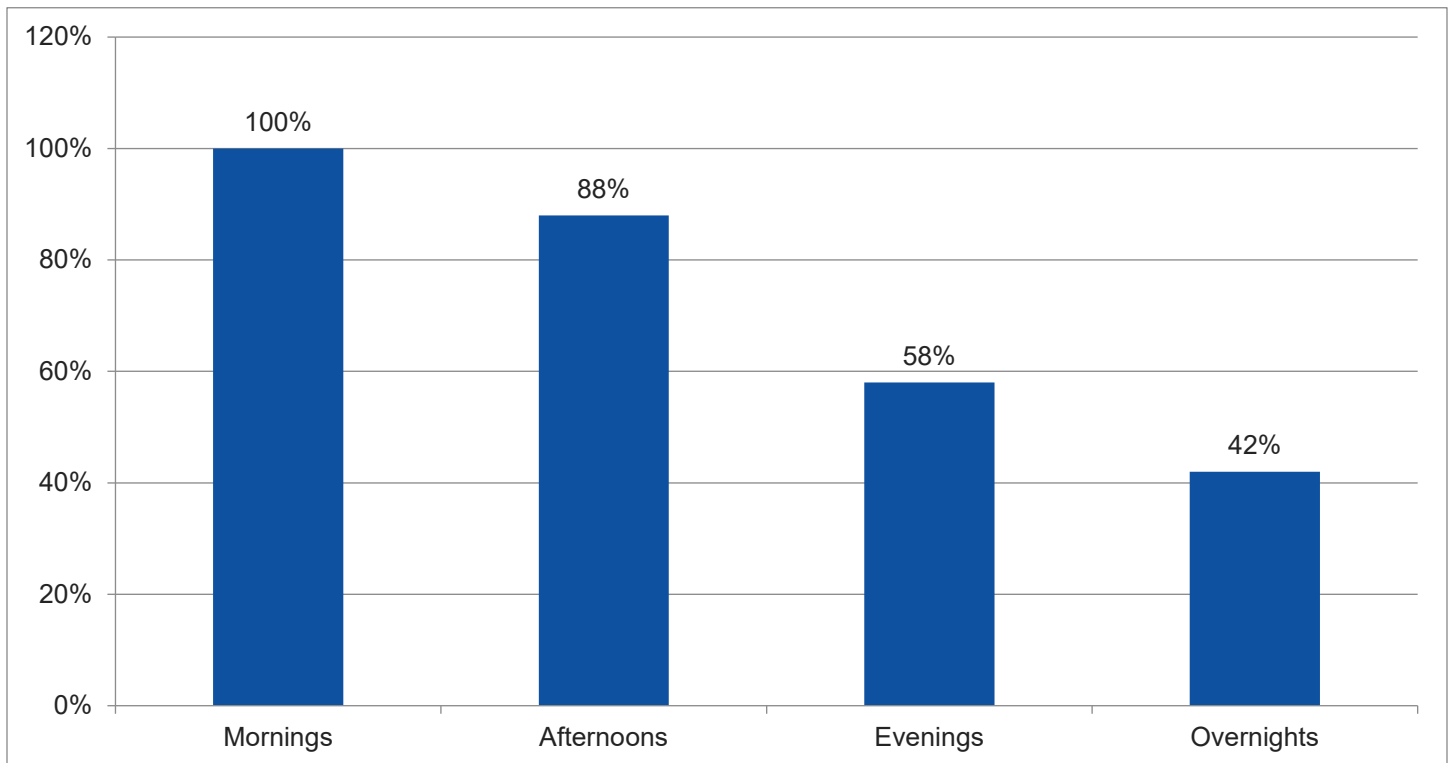




Which days of the week do employees at your company work? Select all that apply.



What times of day do employees at your company work? Select all that apply.





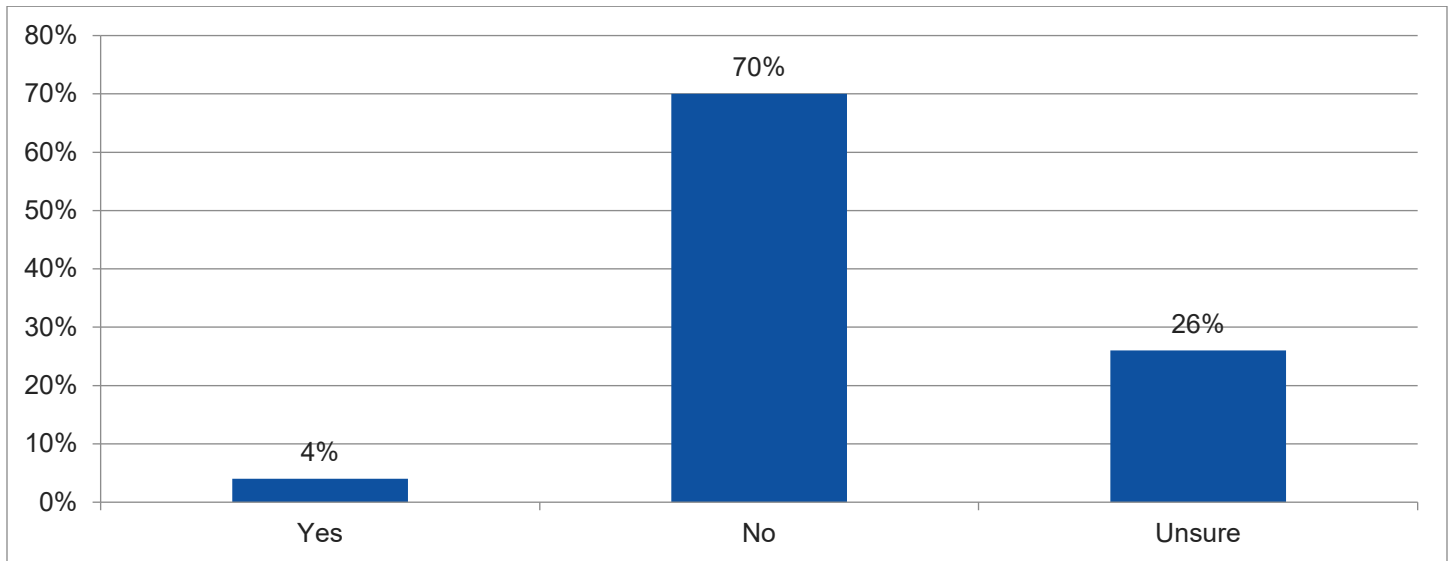
What are your company's typical shift start and end times? Please list out the times for each shift.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 5 a.m. – 3/3:30 p.m. | 2 p.m. – 9 p.m. |
| 5/5:30 a.m. – 5/5:30 p.m. (often on weekends) | 2 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. |
| 6 a.m. – 2/2:30 p.m. | 3 p.m. – 11 p.m. |
| 6 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. | 3 p.m. – 1/1:30 a.m. |
| 7 a.m. – 3/3:30 p.m. | 3:30 p.m. – 2 a.m. |
| 7/7:30 a.m. – 5/5:30 p.m. | 4 p.m. – 2:30 a.m. |
| 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. | 7 p.m. – 7 a.m. |
| 8 a.m. – 5/5:30 p.m. | 8 p.m. – 4:30 a.m. |
| 12 p.m. – 9 p.m. | 10 p.m. – 6:30 a.m. |
| 12:30 p.m. – 11 p.m. | 11 p.m. to 7/7:30 a.m. |

How many employees work per shift?

- Day shift: 130 - 350, Afternoon/Evening shift: 30 – 150, Weekend shift: 15 – 80
- 10
- 50 – 100
- 100
- 200

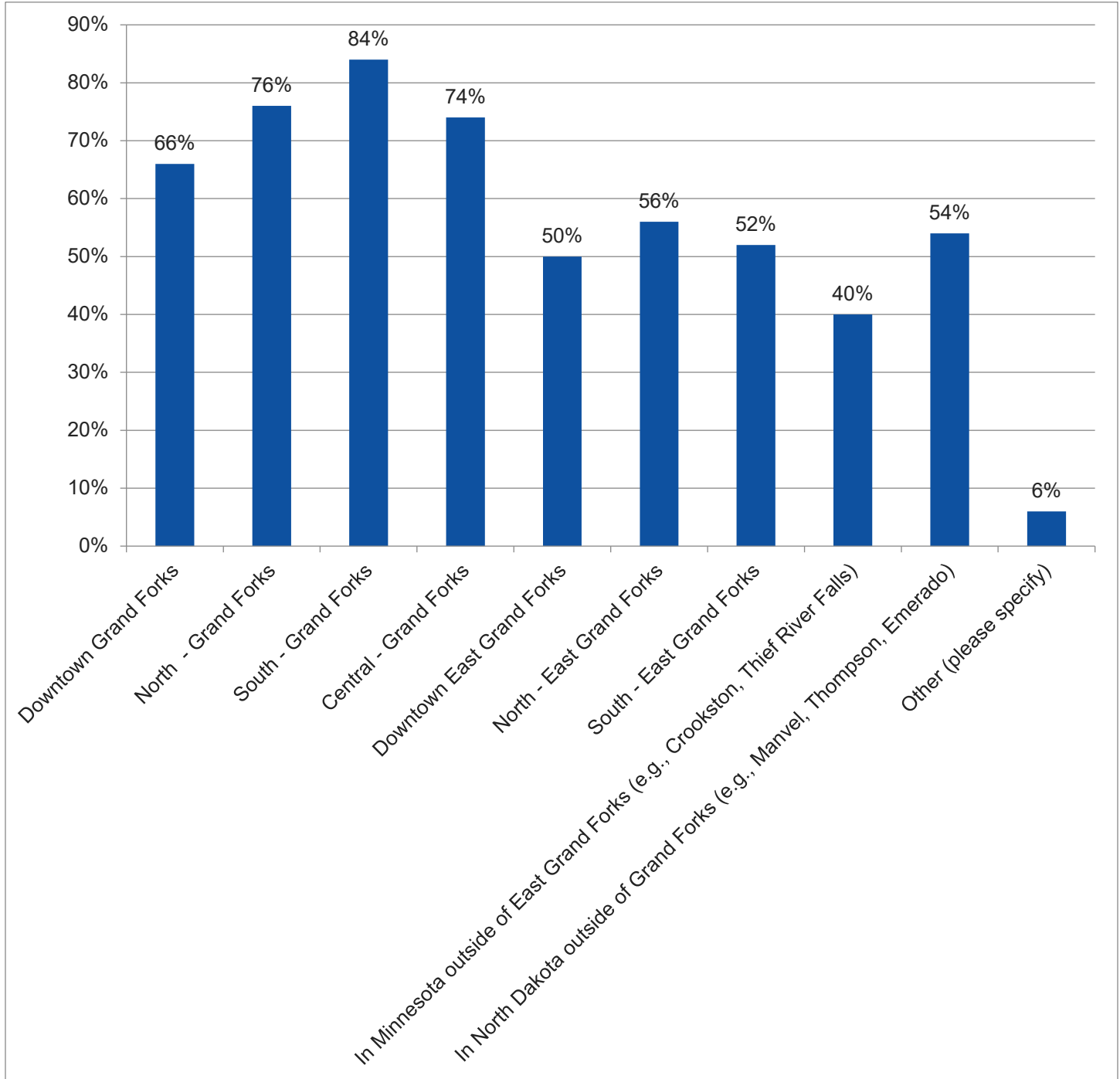
Would you be willing to change your shift time to better accommodate transit schedules?



Grand Forks - East Grand Forks TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN



In which areas of Grand Forks or East Grand Forks do people at your company live? Select all that apply.





Do those at your company typically run errands or make other trips before or after work? If so, where are they most likely to go?

- > Unsure
- > Grocery stores
- > Stores on the south side of town
- > Walmart
- > Target
- > Gas station
- > Menards
- > Lowes
- > Health/doctor appointments
- > Hugo's
- > Bank

Do you have any other feedback about the transit system to share with the project team as they plan improvements?

- > Have several employees that don't have a driver's license. Having public transportation options for them would be helpful.
- > Many employees don't have transportation to the Industrial Park; expanded service to the Industrial Park is needed
 - o Think there should be a centralized stop location around Cirrus, LM Windpower, PS Industries, and Stevens Mattress
- > Staff and students traveling to Grand Forks schools from Thompson and Mayville would benefit from having transit options during the week
- > Need for bus service on Sundays
- > Transit serves the north end of Grand Forks near Simplot but times are not conducive to work shifts
- > Retrax Holding's primary locations (where vast majority of team members work) is at 5400 32nd Ave S, not the Industrial Park