

December 2025

Phase I Public Engagement Report



Introduction

Phase I of public engagement for the Durham County BRT Vision Plan occurred in Fall 2025 as part of an iterative approach designed to collaborate with the public throughout the planning process.

The purpose of Phase I was to gather community feedback on:

- Potential BRT corridors in Durham County
- Goals and evaluation criteria that will be used to assess the potential BRT corridors

The project team conducted a variety of engagement efforts, including a series of in-person pop-up events, three public workshops (two in-person and one virtual), a virtual public survey, and stakeholder engagement meetings. These activities offered opportunities for residents to learn about the project, share feedback on planning efforts, and provide input to inform the next steps in the Vision Plan development process.

Across the pop-up events, workshops, survey, and stakeholder meetings, several priorities for BRT service were identified by the public:

- **Speed, Reliability, and Frequency**
 - Frequent service (at least every 15 minutes) and reduced travel times are top priorities for riders. Real-time arrival information and operational reliability must be central to system design.
- **Connectivity to Regional Destinations**
 - Corridors should serve major employment centers, dense residential areas, and major regional destinations in RTP, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill.
- **Equity and Access**
 - Feedback highlighted the need to prioritize low-income communities and ensure BRT investments support inclusive growth and improved access for underserved neighborhoods.
- **Safety and Rider Experience**
 - Lighting, secure stations, safer stop locations, and safer pedestrian infrastructure are essential for building user comfort and confidence in the transit system.
- **Incremental Improvements**
 - Participants expressed desire to build on the short-term investments identified in the Durham County Transit Plan and the Better Bus Study. Clear communication about service changes and project progress will be critical to building trust.

Pop-Ups

The project team hosted four in-person pop-up events at high-traffic locations across Durham County, providing community members with an opportunity to learn about the BRT Vision Plan and share feedback. Each pop-up included an interactive map activity where participants placed dots to indicate important destinations. Staff also discussed transit priorities with community members, distributed information about the BRT Vision Plan, and directed attendees to the project website to take the virtual survey and learn about future engagement opportunities. Spanish engagement materials were available online and at pop-up events.

Table 1: Phase I Pop-Up Events

Date	Location	Time
10/25/2025	Duke Regional Hospital	10:30-12:30pm
11/5/2025	Go Triangle Regional Transit Center	3-5pm
11/10/2025	Durham Station	9-11am
11/12/2025	The Village	11am-1pm

Summary of Pop-Up Findings

- **Service Hours and Frequency:**
 - Strong demand for extended service hours (early mornings and late nights) and 5–15-minute frequency, especially during peak periods.
- **Reliability and Communication:**
 - Desire for real-time arrival information, accurate transfer information, and clearer communication about service changes.
 - Need for the Plan to address reliability concerns tied to congestion and signal delays.
- **Safety and Rider Experience:**
 - Safety improvements at stops (e.g., lighting, location) and security improvements at Durham Station.
 - Desire for better amenities (e.g., shelters, signage) and improved rider-staff interactions.

Public Workshops

The project team hosted three public workshops to provide a deeper understanding of BRT and its role in Durham County's future transit network. Two of the workshops were in-person, and the third was hosted virtually on Zoom.

Each session included a presentation covering the corridors under consideration, connections to the Central Durham BRT, preliminary travel demand analysis results, and project goals. The in-person workshops included a mapping exercise where attendees could provide feedback on the Universe of Corridors. Attendees were encouraged to highlight sections of the Universe of Corridors they liked the best, to extend proposed corridors, or draw other corridors for consideration. The virtual workshop included an interactive session where the project team responded to attendees' questions in real time. During all workshops, attendees were encouraged to visit the project website for additional resources, the public survey, and future engagement opportunities. Spanish translation services were available at the workshops. Additionally, Spanish engagement materials were available online and at workshops.

Table 2: Phase I Public Workshops

Date	Location	Time	Attendance
10/30/2025	Main Library	3-5pm	5
11/6/2025	Durham Station	5-7pm	5
11/18/2025	Online (Zoom)	11:30am-12:30pm	13

Public Workshop Findings

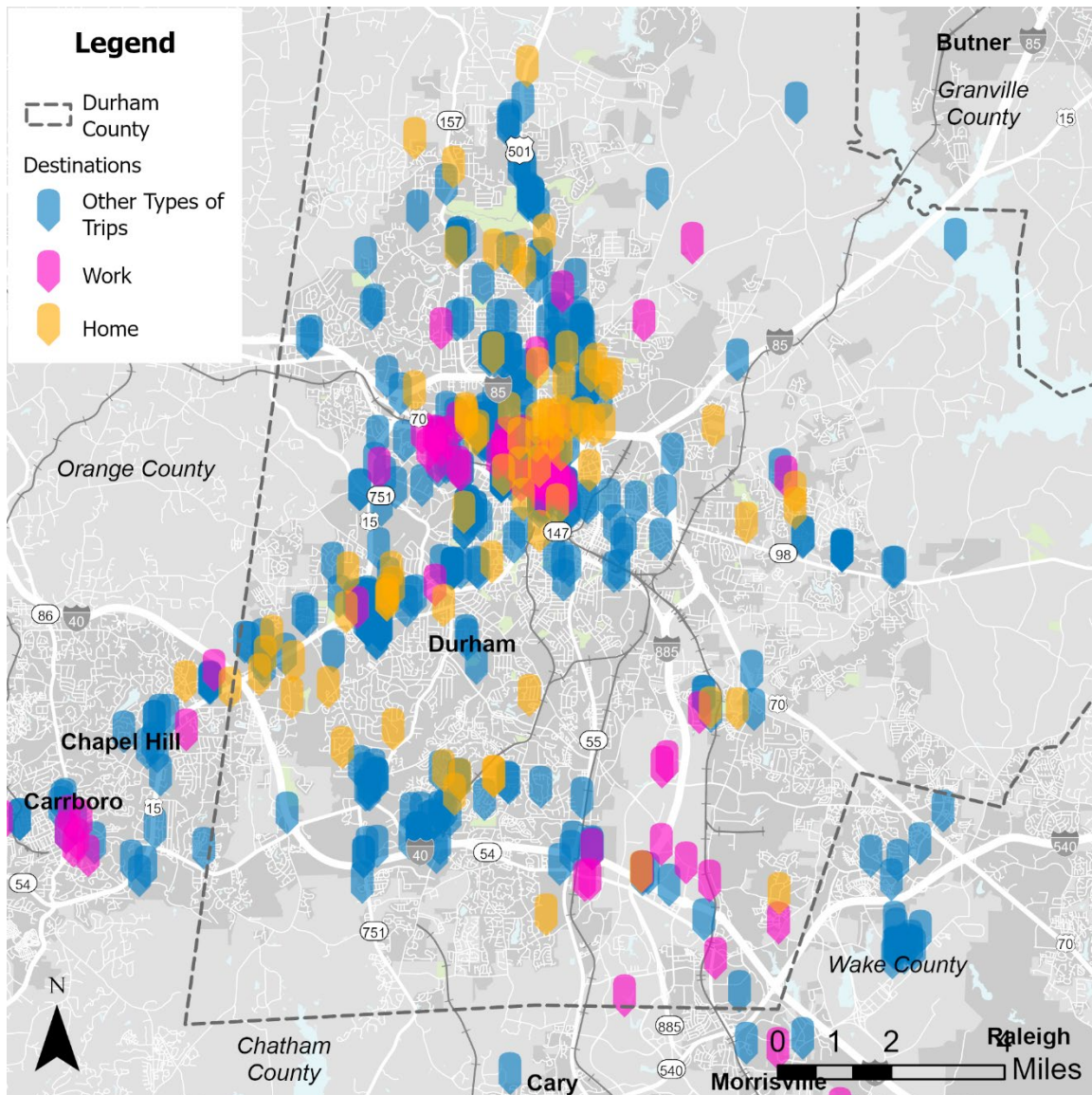
- **Corridors Selection and Connectivity**
 - Strong interest in corridors serving major job centers and dense residential areas, with emphasis on regional connectivity.
 - Suggestions for incremental improvements (signal priority, better stops) during construction of dedicated lanes.
- **Service and Reliability**
 - Concerns about whether dedicated lanes will be feasible in Downtown Durham and whether BRT can deliver on speed promises.
 - Desire for frequent service (15-minutes or greater) across more routes rather than focusing on service increases in one corridor.
- **Equity and Land Use**
 - Calls for prioritizing low-income communities and connecting to major job centers.
 - Recognition of the link between land use and transit investment, with requests to reevaluate land use policies where BRT is planned.
- **Safety and Operations**
 - Concerns about stop consistency, signage clutter, poor lighting, and unsafe stop locations.
 - Issues with cars blocking stops and inadequate space for multiple buses at existing stops.
- **Evaluation Criteria**
 - Participants identified trip diversity, planned transit-supportive land use, future ridership, and project cost estimation as the most important evaluation criteria.

Survey

The virtual public survey was designed to give residents an opportunity to shape the future of BRT service in Durham County. The survey was open from October 7, 2025 to December 1, 2025, and was promoted through social media, workshops, and pop-up events. It included questions about personal transit habits, priorities for BRT features, and demographic information. A detailed breakdown of the responses to these questions can be found in the **Phase I Survey Results Attachment**.

The survey also included a mapping component, where respondents were asked to place pins at locations that they would take transit to. The results of the mapping survey are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Interactive Map: "Where do you go?"



A total of 234 responses were collected. Respondents were primarily between 35-44 years old (30%) and 25-34 years old (25%), with very few under 24. Most identified as White (69%), followed by Black (14%), and Asian (7%). The majority work full-time (75%), and the largest share of respondents live in ZIP codes representing central and northern Durham. Household income levels skewed higher, with 27% reporting over \$150,000 annually.

Survey Findings:

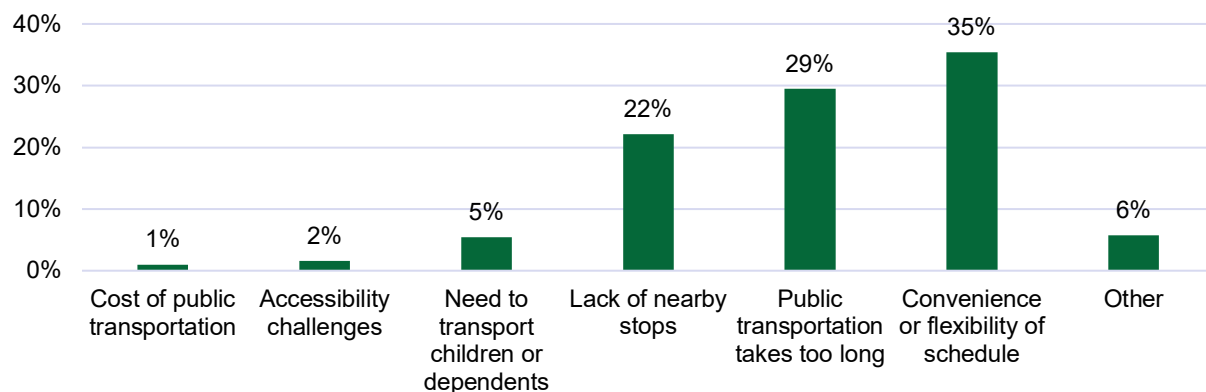
• Corridor Preferences

- All types of trips were pinned heavily in Downtown Durham, along the US 15-501 corridor, and along the Interstate 40 corridor.
- Map “work” pins showed destinations concentrated in Downtown Durham and around Duke University.
- “Home” locations spread across the county but clustered near Downtown Durham and Braggtown.
- “Other types of trips” were concentrated in Downtown Durham, Old West Durham, and commercial areas near Duke Forest.

• Current Transit Use

- Most respondents rarely or never use transit today; Only 15% reported riding transit most days.
- Transit trips are primarily for entertainment, recreation, or visiting friends (30%) and commuting to work (20%).
- Driving alone (27%) and walking (25%) were the most common primary travel modes.
- Barriers to transit use include need for convenience and flexibility (35%), long travel times (29%), and lack of nearby stops (22%).

Figure 2: Phase I Public Survey: Reasons for Choosing Alternatives to Public Transportation



• Priorities for BRT

- Respondents emphasized speed and reliability as critical factors: buses running every 15 minutes or faster (21%), shorter travel times (20%), and consistent on-time performance (20%) were ranked as highly important.
- Favored amenities included real-time arrival information, shelters, lighting/security, and accessibility improvements.

Stakeholder Engagement

A significant component of the Phase I public engagement effort for the Durham BRT Vision Plan was focused engagement with key stakeholder groups. These groups included residents, business owners, public service providers, community leaders, and other local stakeholders along with local staff and elected officials. The purpose of these meetings was to gain perspectives from those with a vested interest in connecting the region based on the transit needs of the populations they serve, employ, educate, etc. early in the process, gathering feedback on preferred corridors and evaluation criteria to guide the next stages of planning.

The stakeholder meetings completed during Phase I focused on introducing the Durham BRT Vision Plan to the committees, teams, councils, and boards who will be involved with shaping the project through upcoming phases of study. During these meetings, the project team shared background information about the Plan, as well as initial findings from the existing conditions analysis. The Phase I Stakeholder Engagement meetings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Phase I Stakeholder Engagement Schedule

	Board/Body	Number Completed	Last Meeting	Next Meeting	Following Meeting
Project Working Groups	Stakeholder Advisory Committee	1/3	October 7, 2025	March/April 2026	May/June 2026
	Technical Advisory Committee	2/7	November 6, 2025	January 7, 2026	Early Spring 2026
	Leadership Team	3/15	December 3, 2025	January 14, 2026	February 4, 2026
Elected Official Engagement	Durham City Council	0/4	-	Late Spring 2026	Fall 2026
	Durham County Board of Commissioners	1/4	November 3, 2025	Late Spring 2026	Fall 2026
	GoTriangle Board of Trustees	1/4	December 3, 2025	Late Spring 2026	Fall 2026
	Triangle West Board	1/4	November 18, 2025	Late Spring 2026	Fall 2026

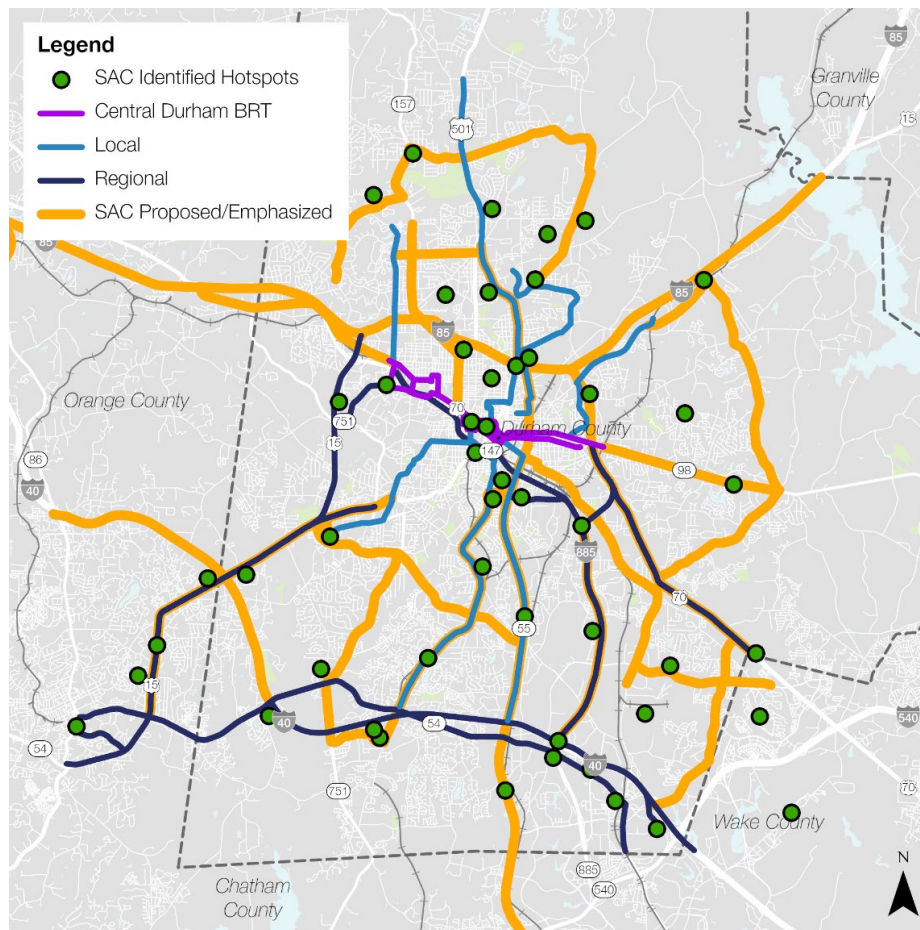
Stakeholder Advisory Committee

The first Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting was held on October 7th, 2025, engaging 50 attendees. The two-hour event began with a presentation introducing the Committee to the study, BRT as a transit option for Durham County, and initial findings gleaned from the market analysis and bus speed opportunity scan. Committee members had opportunities to discuss goals-based evaluation criteria and participate in a mapping activity. Participants produced 118 map engagements as they discussed important corridors and destinations around Durham County. The most prevalent feedback brought forward during the Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting is summarized as follows:

- **Connectivity and Regional Access**
 - Stakeholders emphasized the need for strong connections within Durham and to surrounding communities and job centers
 - Housing affordability issues are pushing residents to leave central Durham, increasing commute times and the need for affordable transportation options

- The Triangle, central Durham, Chapel Hill, and Raleigh should all be well-connected by transit
- **Equity and Displacement**
 - Durham community members are already experiencing high rates of displacement due to rising costs of housing
 - BRT network must be carefully paired with strategies to avoid displacement for at-risk communities
- **Safety**
 - People start their transit trip as pedestrians. Sidewalk connections to bus stops should be a priority, especially in Durham communities with historical disinvestment.
 - Signalized pedestrian crossings are needed to ensure a safe first- and last-mile connection
- **Incremental Improvements**
 - Residents want to see smaller-scale improvements like transit signal priority, better stops, and park-and-rides implemented over time, while building up to full BRT implementation
- **Land Use and Growth**
 - Corridors should reach both established and growing neighborhoods
 - Land use must be re-evaluated in areas receiving transit investments

Figure 3: Stakeholder Advisory Committee Mapping Activity



Next Phase

The next phase of the Durham BRT Vision project will incorporate the feedback from Phase I of public engagement into the detailed evaluation of the Universe of BRT Corridors. Insights from the community about speed, reliability, connectivity, equity, and safety gathered during the first phase will directly shape this analysis and ensure that public priorities guide decision-making.

Phase II of public engagement will focus on sharing the results of the detailed evaluation and present a prioritized list of BRT corridors. The next phase will also include public workshops, pop-up events, a survey, and continued stakeholder engagement. The project team will adjust the public engagement strategy based on findings from Phase I to reach more members of the community. Shifting the focus from public workshops to pop-up events and presenting at already scheduled community meetings will allow the project team to reach people where they are.

December 2025

Attachment A: Phase I Survey Results

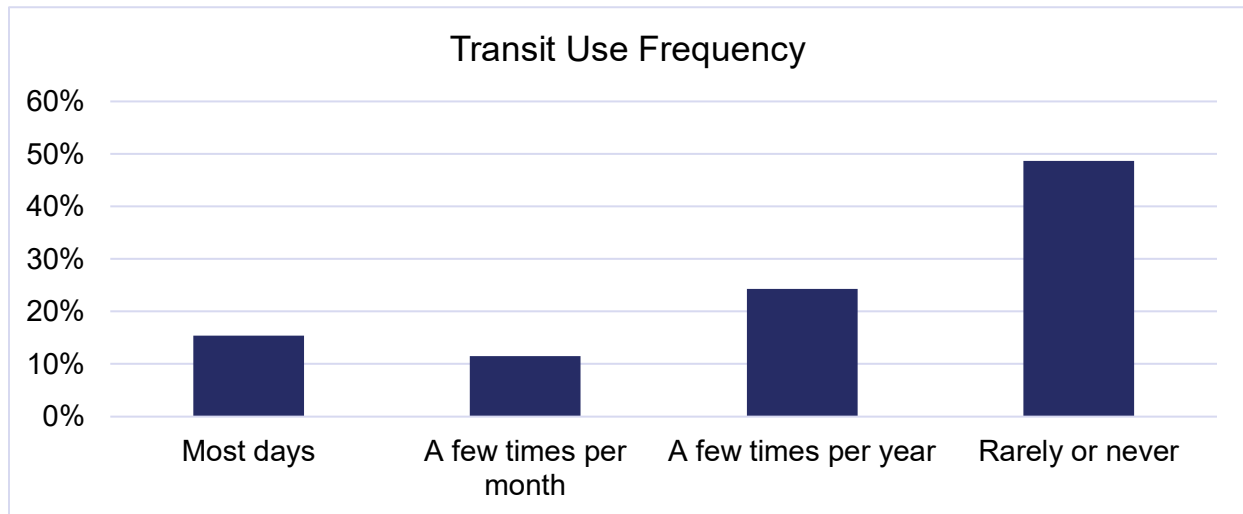


This public survey was designed to give residents an opportunity to shape the future of BRT service in Durham County. The survey was open from October 7th to December 1st of 2025 and was promoted through social media, workshops, and pop-up events.

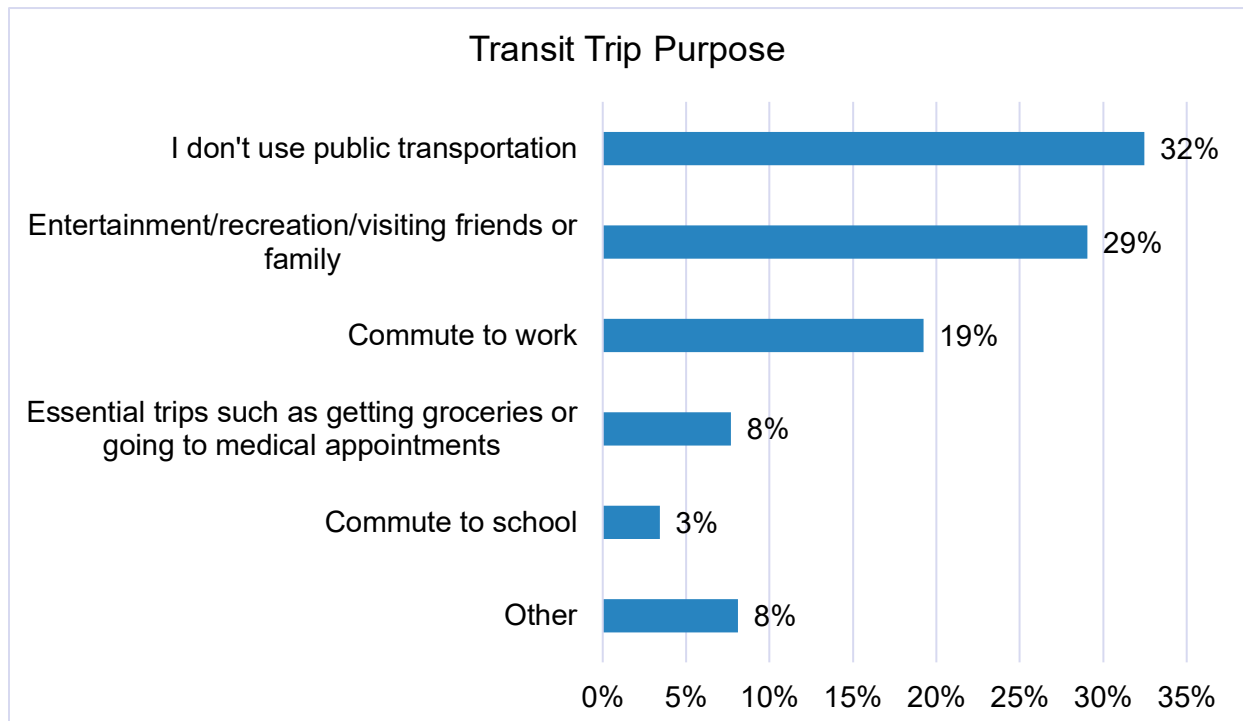
A total of 234 responses were collected.

Survey Results

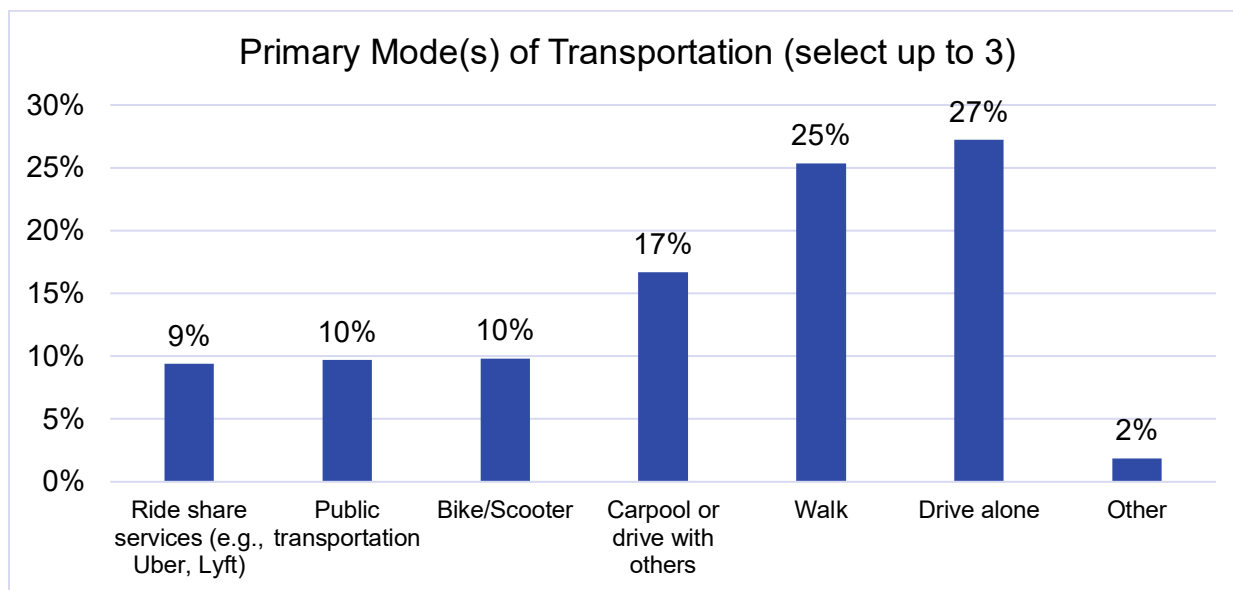
1. How often do you use public transportation?



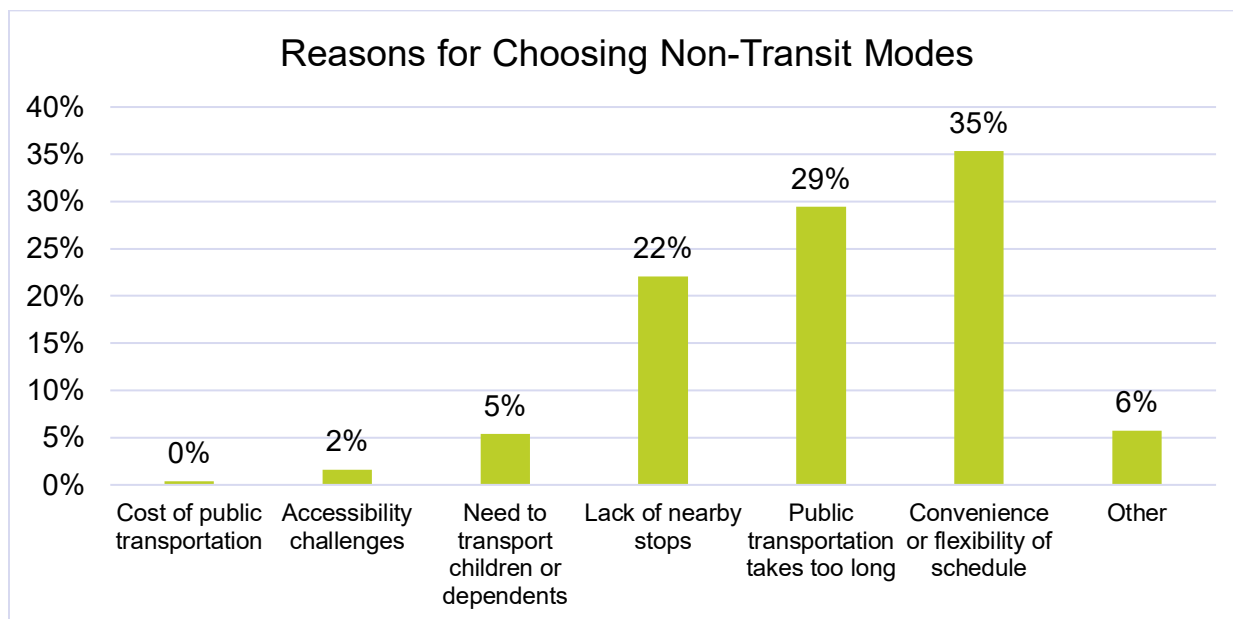
2. For what purpose do you most frequently use public transportation?



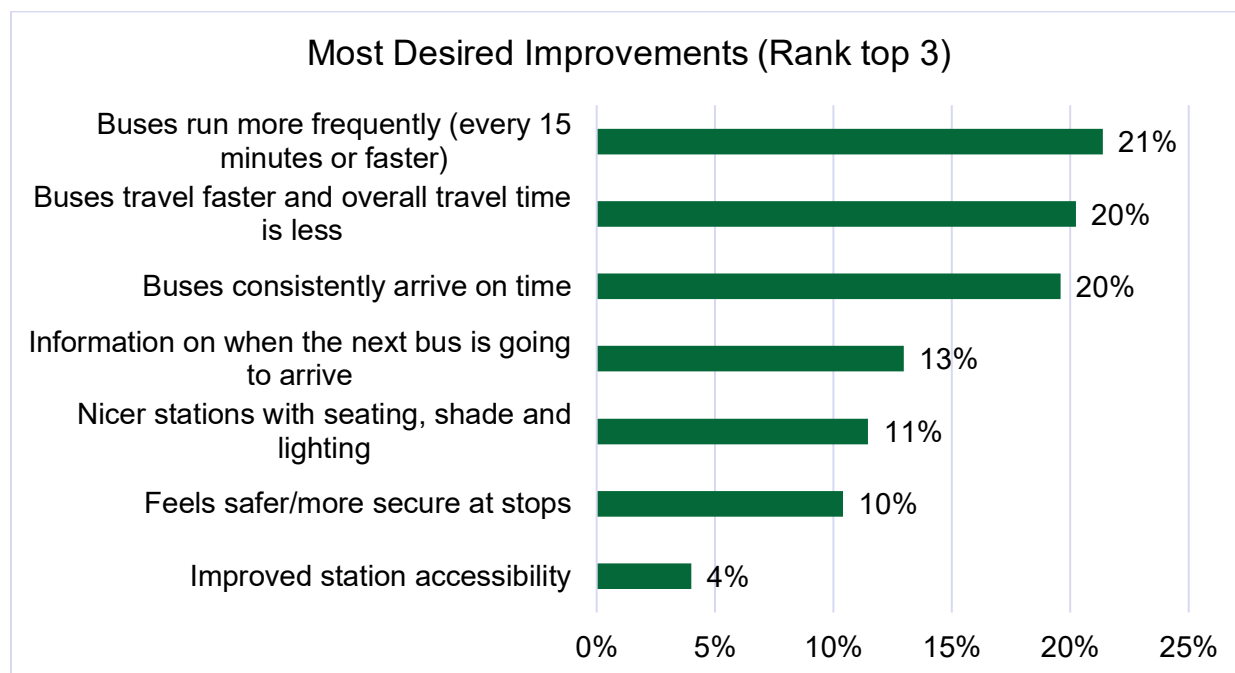
3. What is your primary mode(s) of transportation? (Choose up to three)



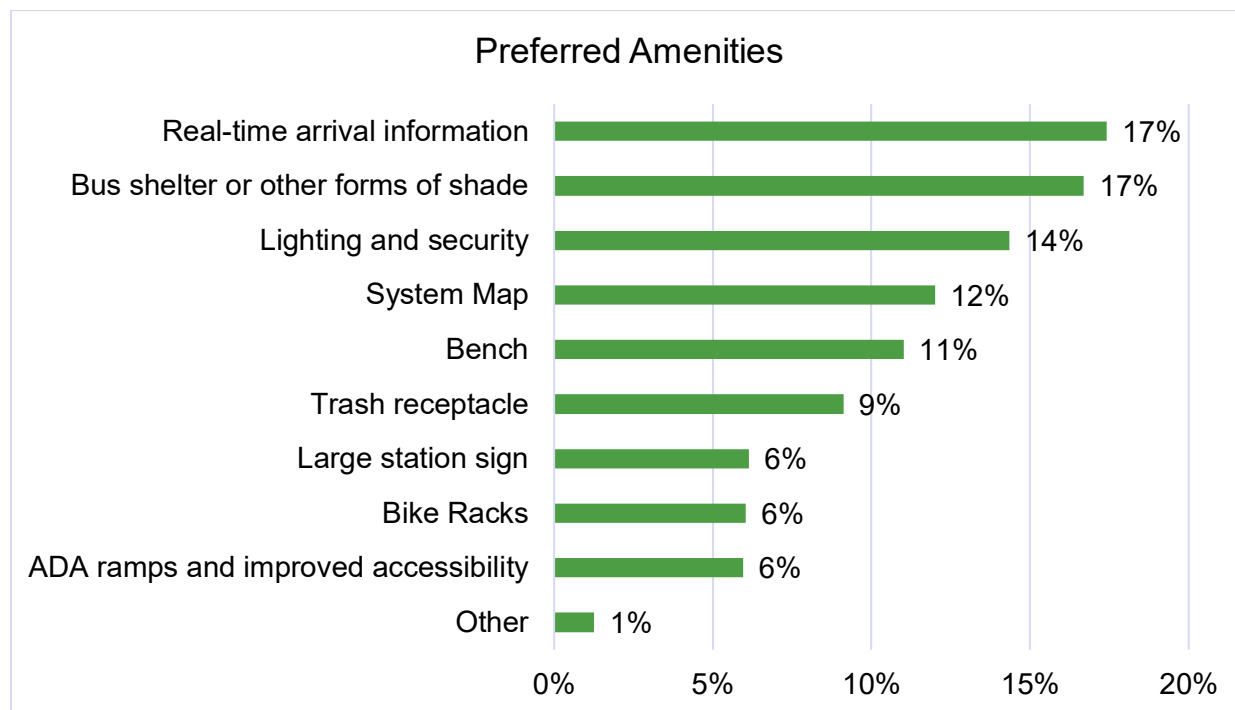
4. What are your main reasons for choosing alternatives to public transportation? (Select all that apply)



5. BRT enhancements can benefit transit service. Which potential areas of improvement would most encourage you to take transit or make your existing transit trip better? (rank top 3)



6. What BRT station amenities are you most excited to see in Durham?



7. Please rank the above goals based on what you think is most important

Respondents were asked to rank these goals from 1 to 4, with 1 being the best. A lower average score indicates preference from respondents.

Criteria	Average Score
Connectivity	1.99
Convenience	2.20
Access	2.73
Deliverability	2.96

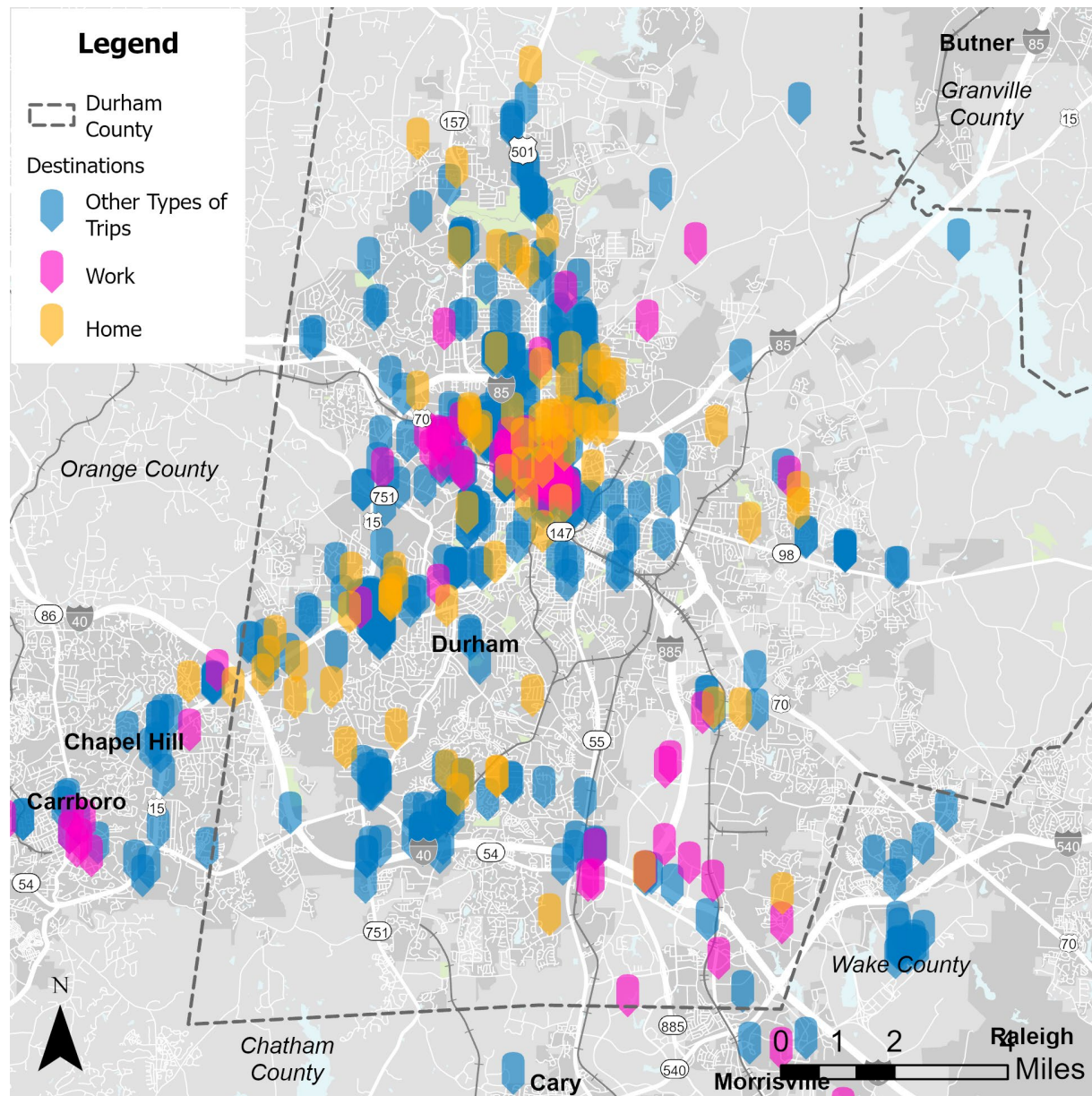
8. Are there any criteria that are missing? (Short Answer)

- Out of 269 total responses:
 - o 102 said No/N/A/None/Unsure
 - o 57 mentioned **comfort and safety**
 - o 54 mentioned **serviceability** including regional connectivity, frequency, and operating hours
 - o 34 mentioned **equity** for low-income riders and people with disabilities
 - o 28 mentioned **walkability**
 - o 22 mentioned **physical stop amenities**
 - o 14 mentioned **innovation**, with ideas like gondolas and rail
 - o 18 mentioned **cost and implementation**

Interactive Map Results

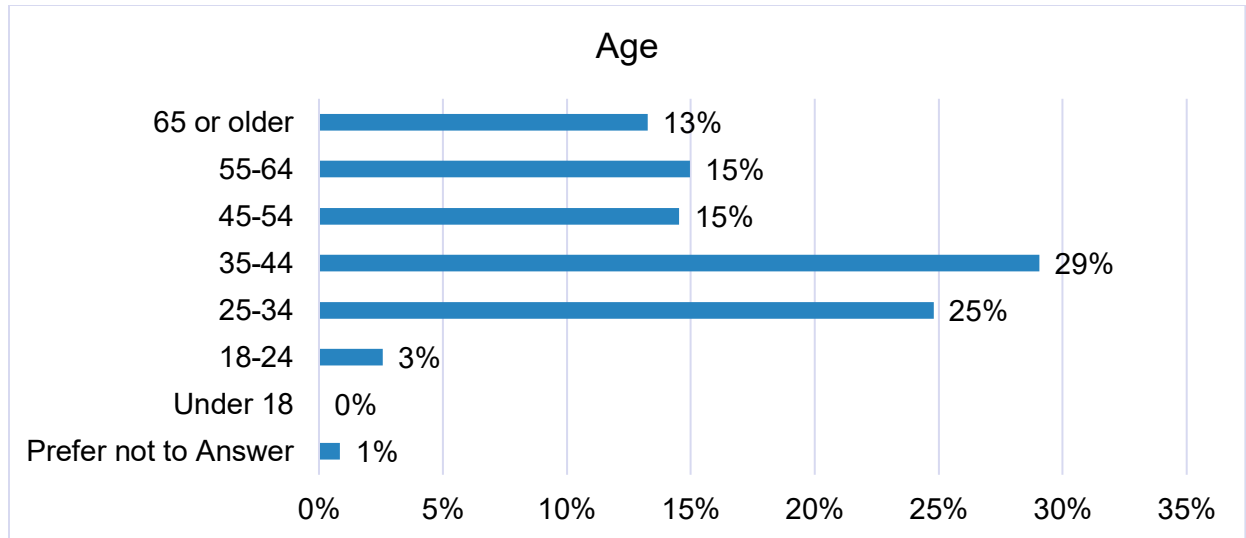
Respondents were asked to pin the map in response to the prompt, "Where do you go?", with pin types for "Home," "Work," and "Other types of trips."

Figure 1: Interactive Map Results - "Where do you go?"

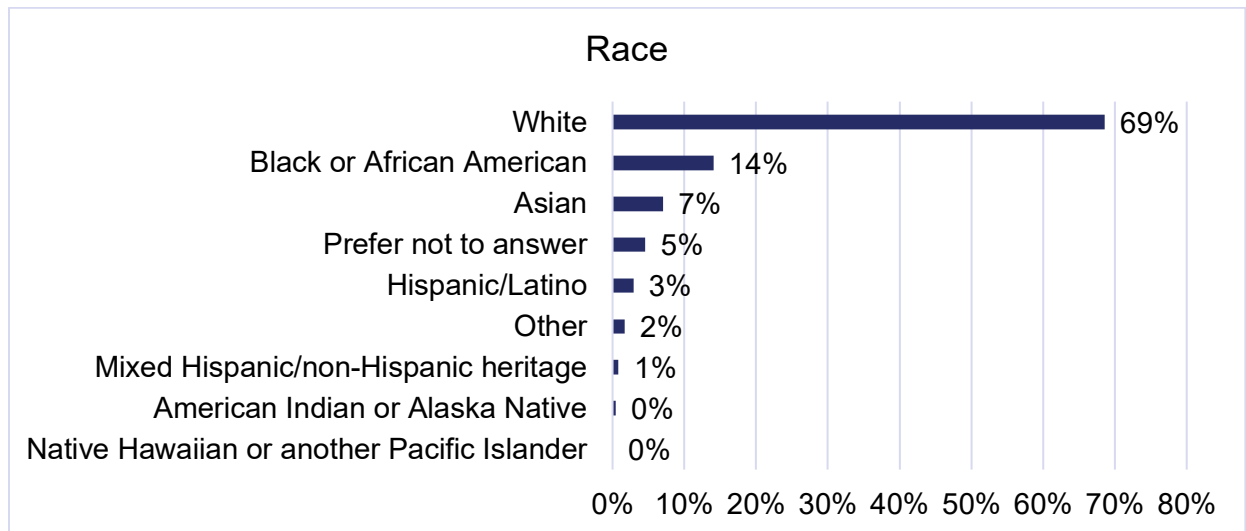


Demographic Results

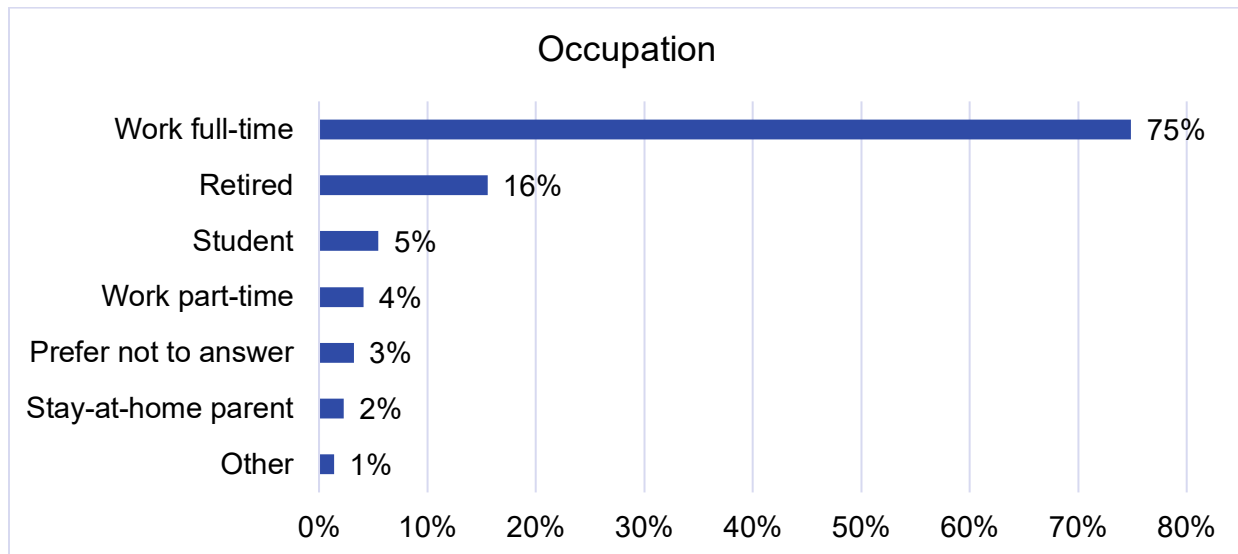
1. How old are you?



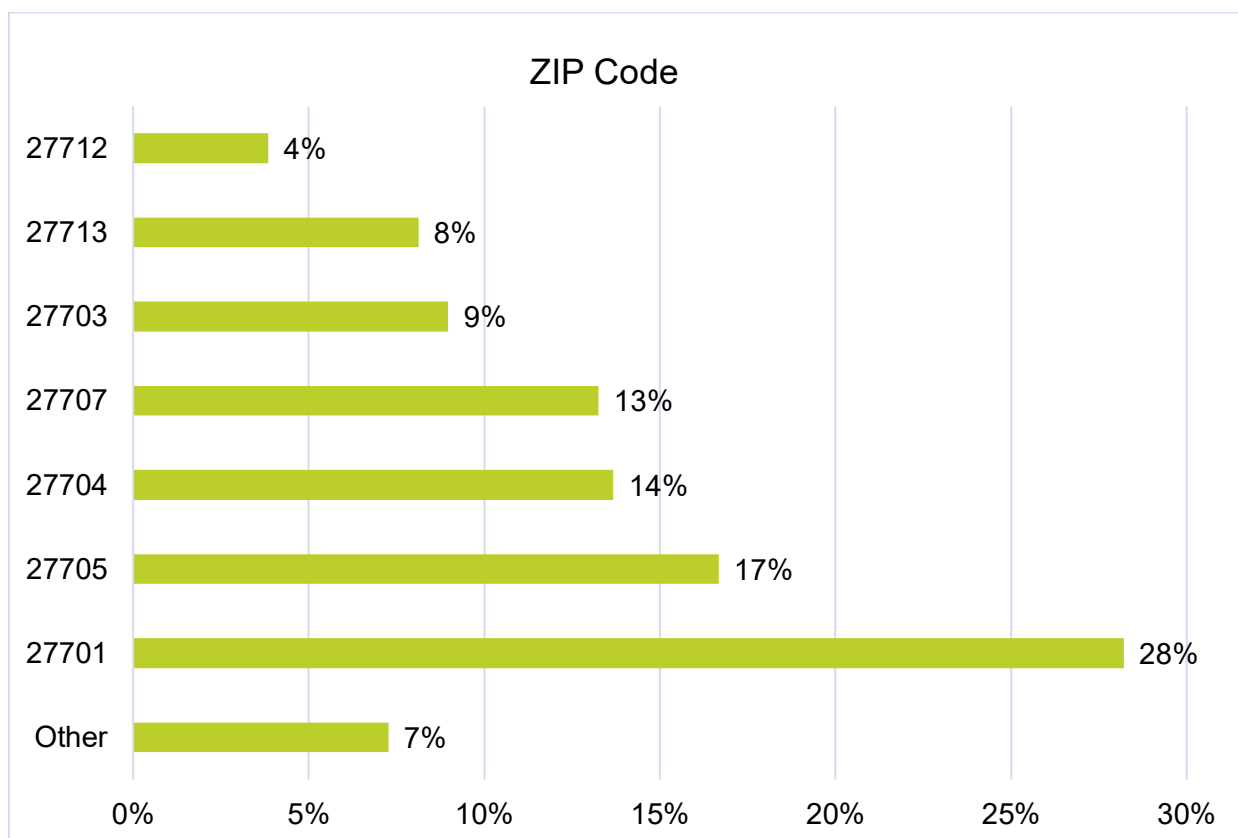
2. What race(s) and ethnicity do you identify with? (Select all that apply)



3. Select the option(s) that best fits your current occupation. (Select all that apply)



4. What is your zip code?



5. What is your household income?

