

# Community Survey Summary

# 1. Community Survey

As part of Phase 1 of public outreach, SCTA put out a community survey to understand the public’s motivation for using, or not using, BARTA and RRTA services. Separate surveys were created in English and Spanish for BARTA and RRTA; however, the questions across the two surveys remained consistent. The surveys were available online from January to February 2023 and received a total of 525 responses. About 31 percent of the responses were from regular riders, who ride transit at least weekly; 24 percent from occasional riders, who ride transit less than weekly; and 45 percent from non-riders, who reported never riding transit. Throughout this report, the term “riders” includes regular riders and occasional riders.

The surveys asked respondents to provide basic demographic information, details about their transit usage, information about their most common transit trip (if applicable), opinions about existing service, preferences for future service, and demographics.

## KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

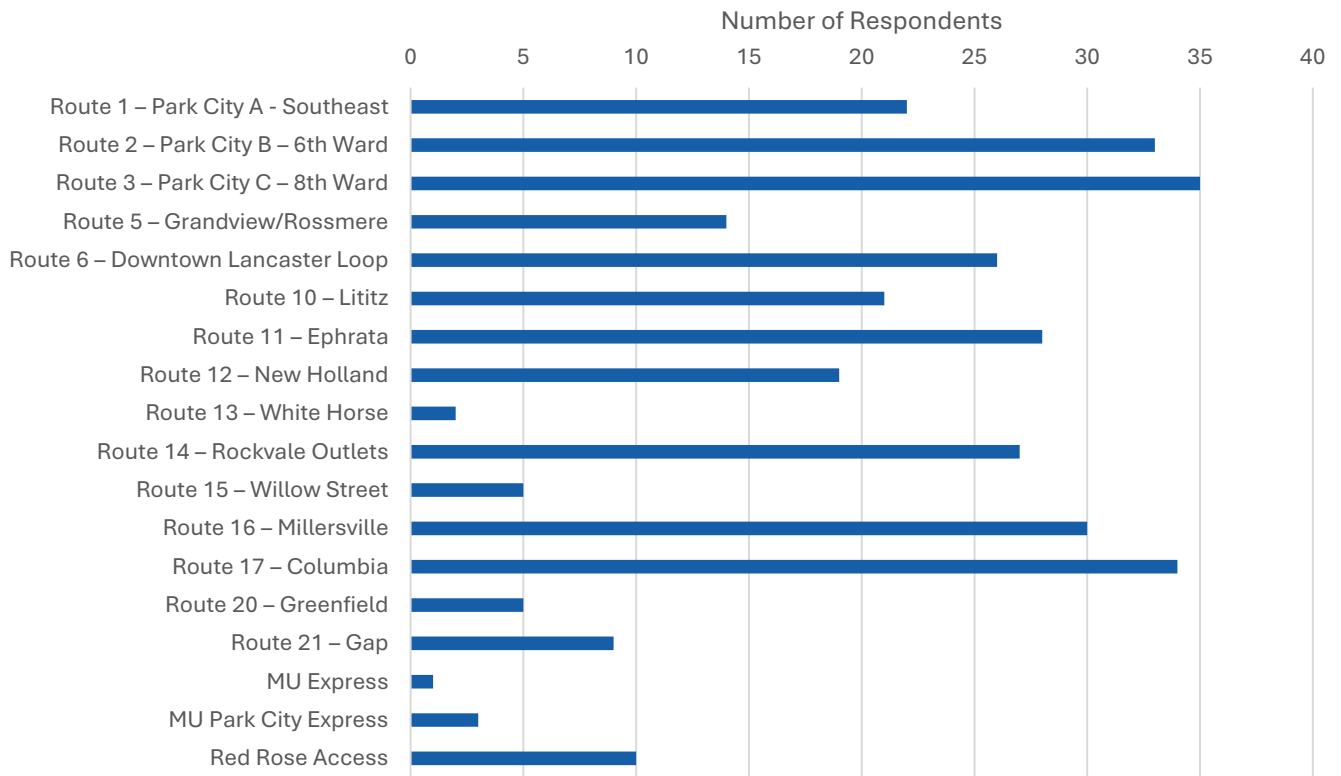
Several key themes and findings emerged from the summary and analysis of the community survey responses, including the following:

- Survey participants who are transit riders typically do not have access to a car and mostly use BARTA and RRTA services to commute to work.
- Survey respondents are generally satisfied with RRTA and BARTA service but expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with telephone customer service and the availability of service on nights and weekends.
- Survey participants said they’d prioritize increasing frequency of buses during peak periods over expanding weekday service or running buses on more streets.

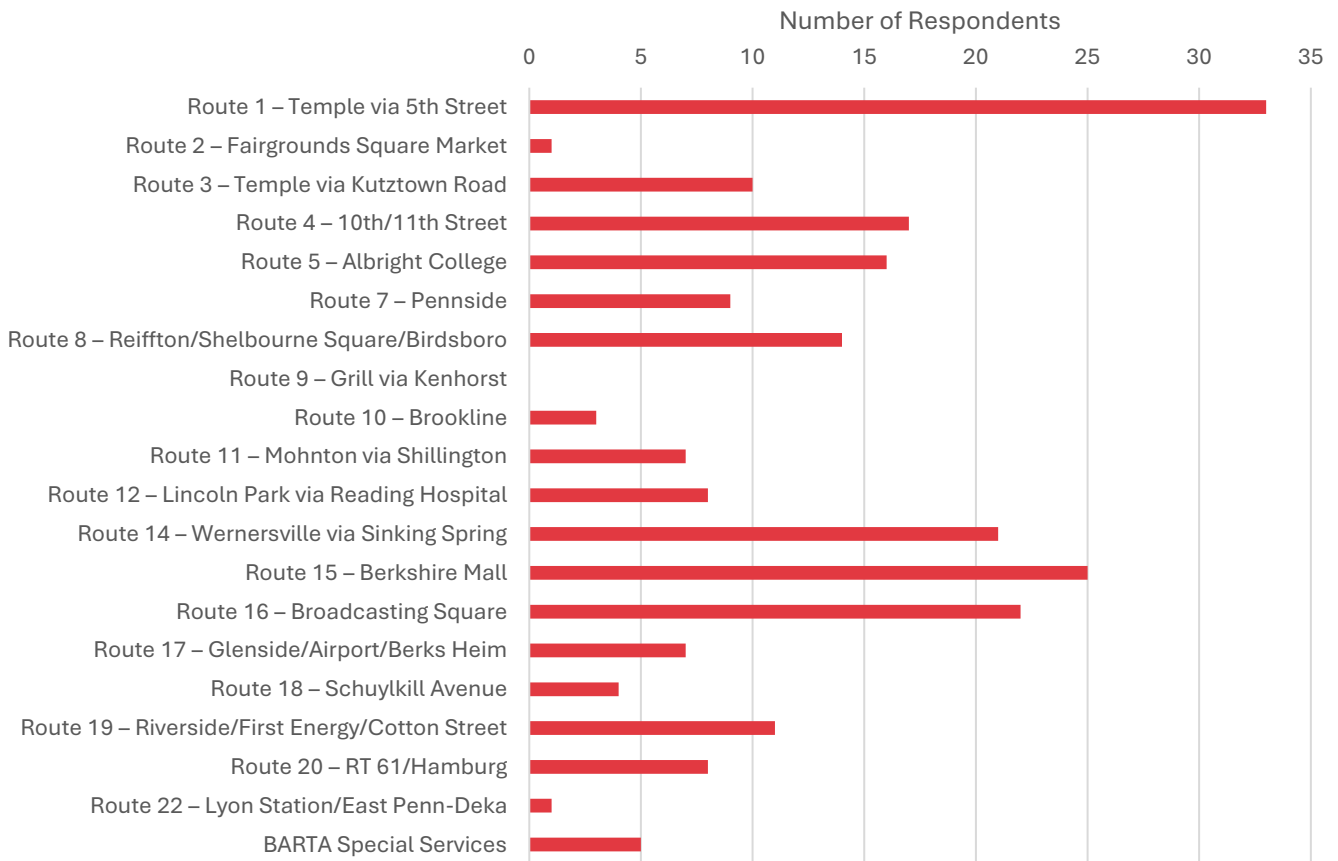
## Routes Used

Among BARTA riders who responded to the survey, BARTA Routes 1, 14, 15, and 16 were the most ridden among survey respondents (**Figure 9**). RRTA riders who responded to the survey were most likely to say they ride Routes 2, 3, and 17 (**Figure 10**).

**Figure 1: BARTA Routes Used (Survey Respondents)**



**Figure 2: RRTA Routes Used (Survey Responses)**

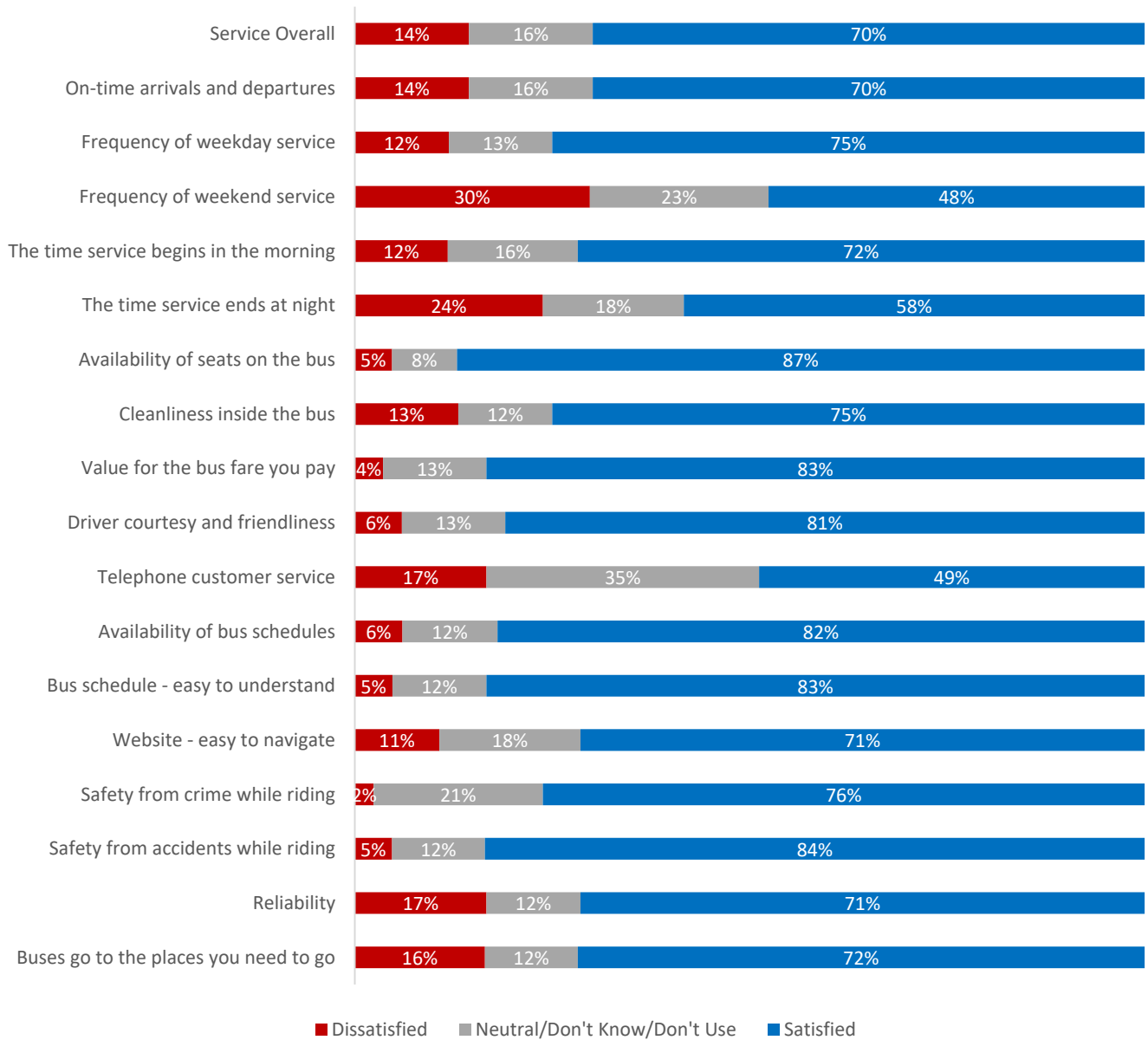


## Rider Opinions

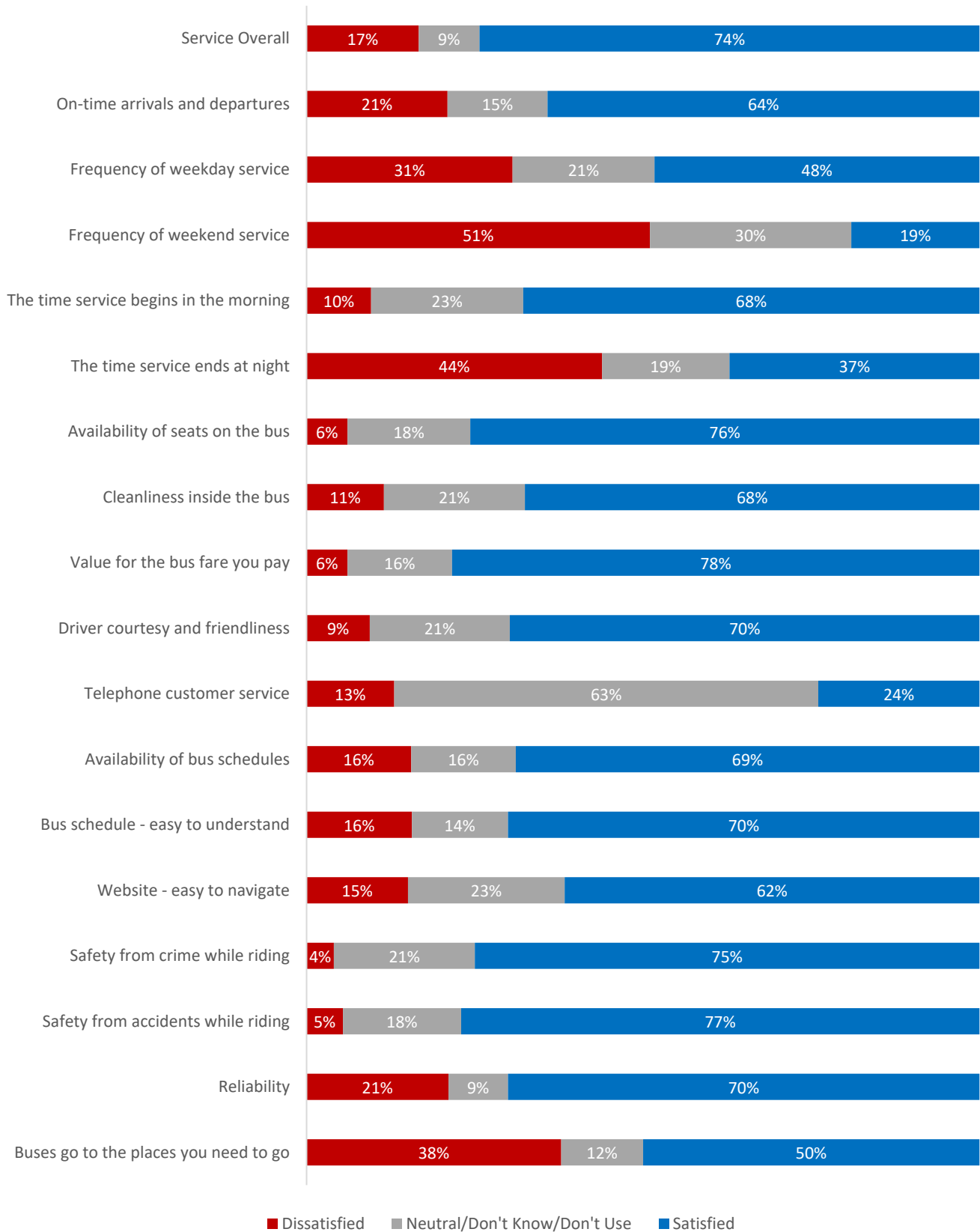
Respondents who reported riding RRTA or BARTA at least occasionally were asked how satisfied they were with the service. Over 70 percent of respondents reported being satisfied with the service of both BARTA and RRTA. For BARTA customers, the areas of greatest dissatisfaction were the time service ends at night (24 percent dissatisfied) and the frequency of weekend service (30 percent) (**Figure 11**).

Although 74 percent of RRTA respondents said they were satisfied overall, they were more dissatisfied than their BARTA counterparts with the frequency and span of bus service. Fifty-one percent said they were dissatisfied by the frequency of weekend service, 44 percent were dissatisfied with the time service ends at night, and 31 percent were dissatisfied with the frequency of weekday service. In addition, over one third of RRTA respondents said they were dissatisfied with the destinations accessible via RRTA (**Figure 12**).

**Figure 3: Service Satisfaction - BARTA Riders (N=85)**



**Figure 4: Service Satisfaction - RRTA Riders (N=145)**

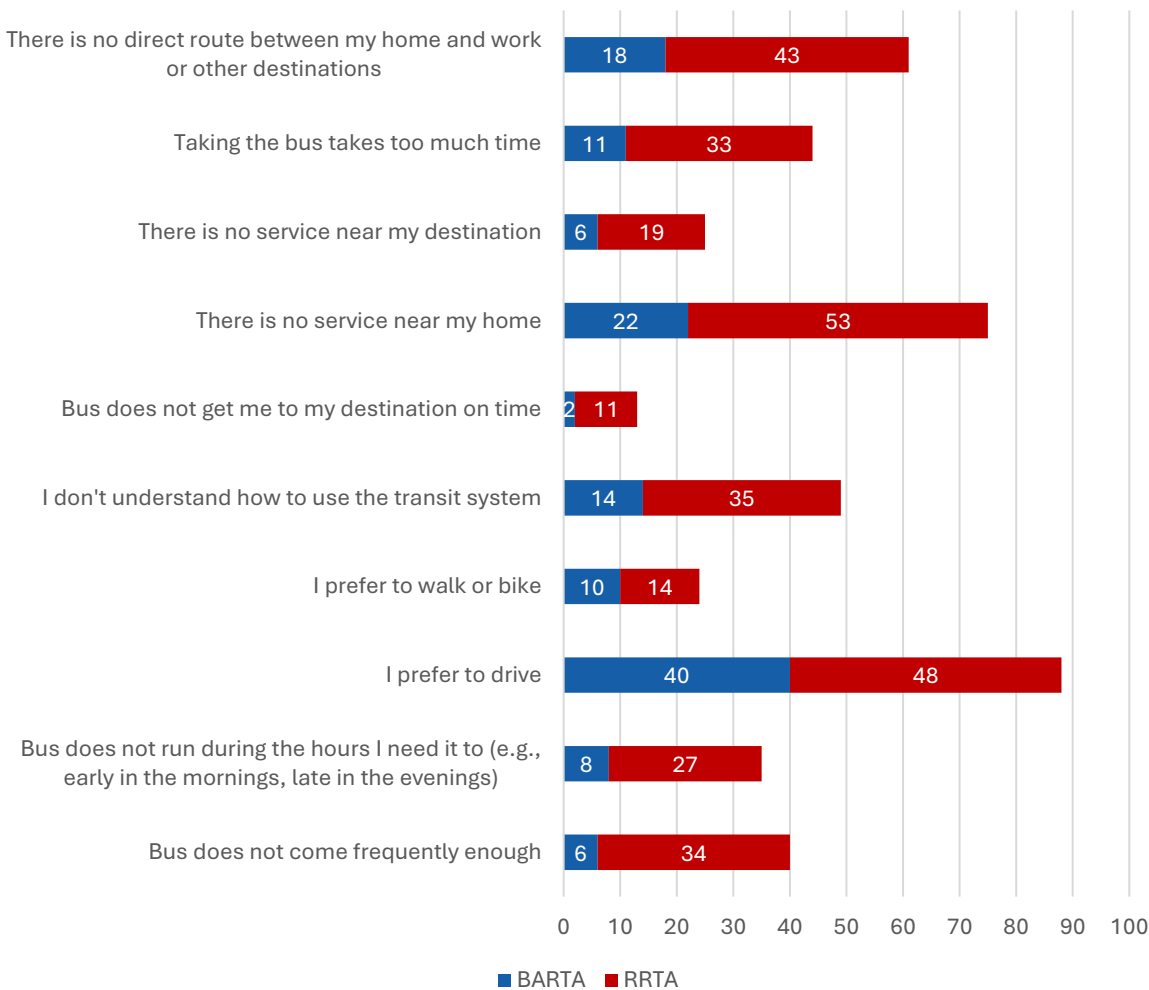


## Reasons for Transit Use

BARTA and RRTA riders were asked to choose up to three reasons why they ride the bus; respondents who don't ride were asked to provide three reasons why not (**Figure 13**). The most common reason among riders of both agencies for taking the bus was not owning a car (64 percent of BARTA riders and 44 percent of RRTA riders). In addition, over 30 percent of RRTA riders said that “doing their part for the environment” and the cost of owning and operating a car contributed to their ridership.

Non-riders were mixed in their reasons for not taking the bus. Among respondents to the BARTA survey who said they do not ride the bus, more than half said they “prefer to drive.” For RRTA respondents, however, the most common reason for not riding was “there is no service near my home.”

**Figure 5: Reasons for Using Or Not Using Transit**



Reasons for taking: BARTA N=86, RRTA N=146. Reasons for not taking: BARTA N=74, RRTA N=145.



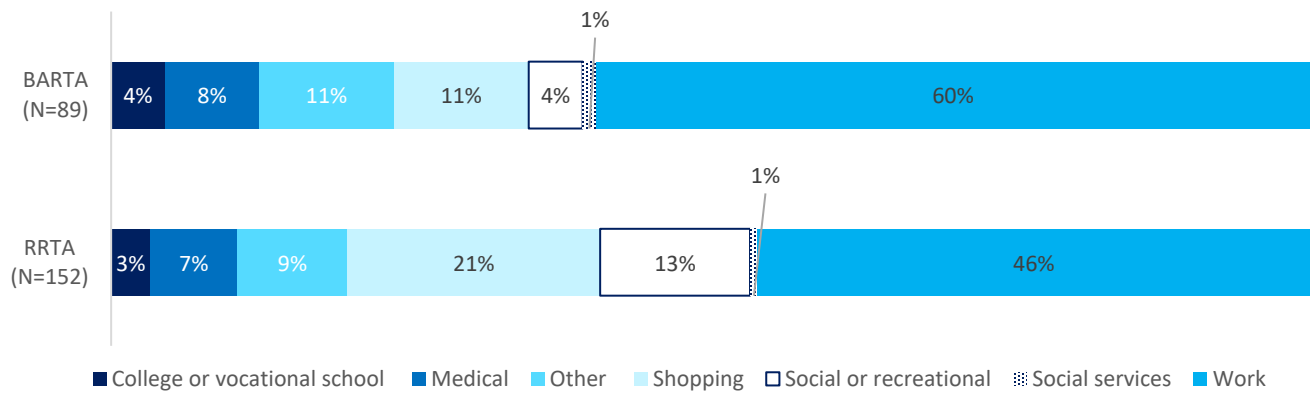
# MOST COMMON TRIPS

BARTA and RRTA riders who responded to the survey were asked about the most common trip they take on BARTA and RRTA services.

## Purpose

For survey respondents who indicated they are transit riders, getting to and from work was the most common reason for riding on BARTA and RRTA (**Figure 12**). Respondents who responded “other” provided a variety of other reasons for using BART and RRTA services, including alternative transportation when car is being repaired, volunteering, and accessing Amtrak.

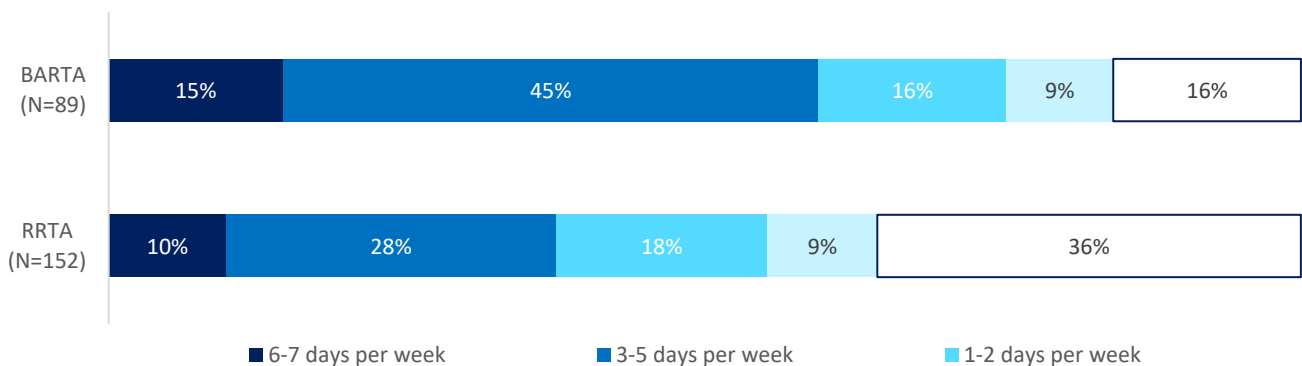
**Figure 6: Purpose of Trip by Agency (Riders)**



## Frequency of Trip

Sixty percent of BARTA riders said they make their most common trip at least three days a week. RRTA riders were more likely to take their most common trip occasionally, with 63 percent saying they make their trip less than three days a week (**Figure 13**).

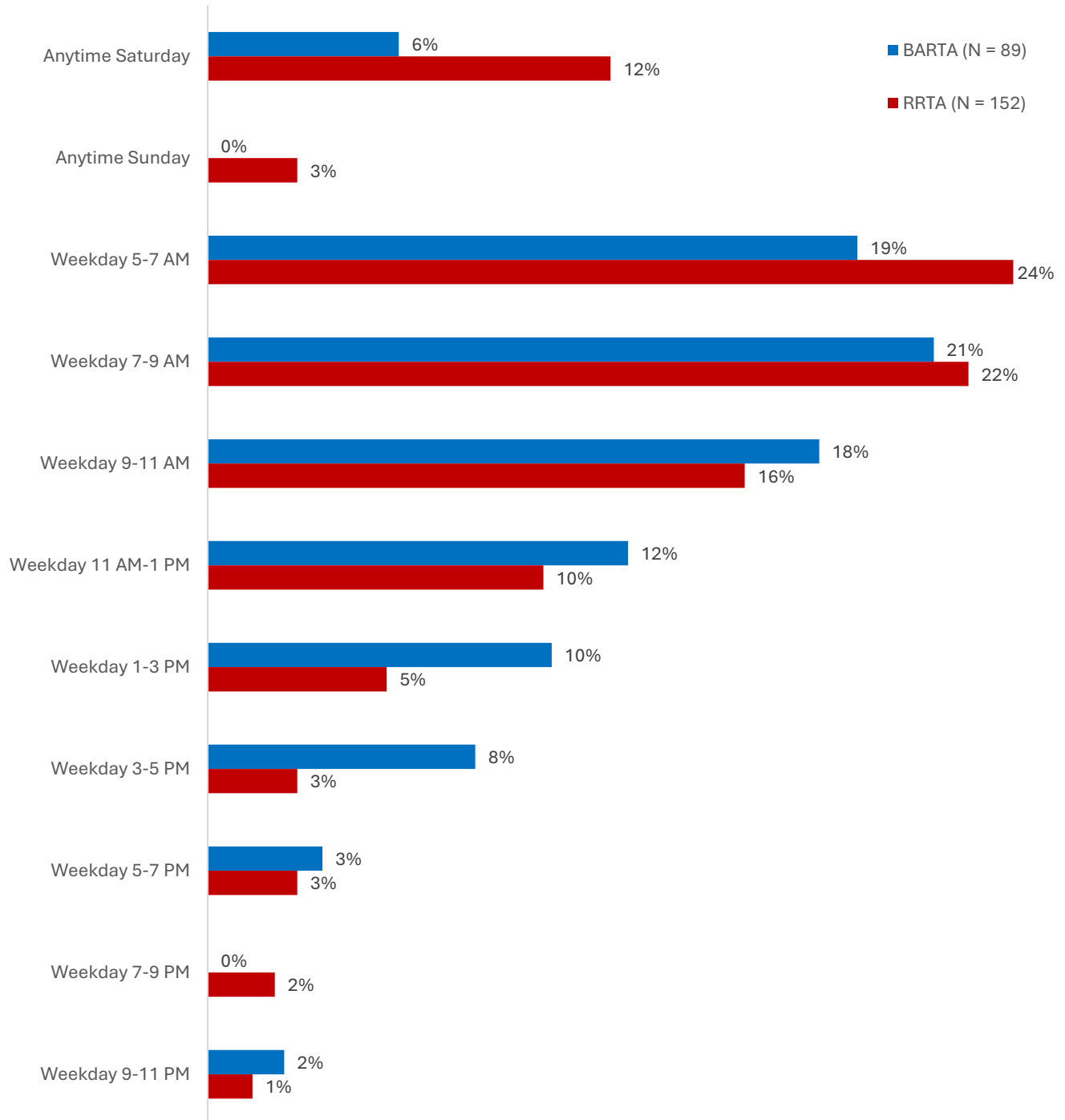
**Figure 7: Frequency of Trip by Agency (Riders)**



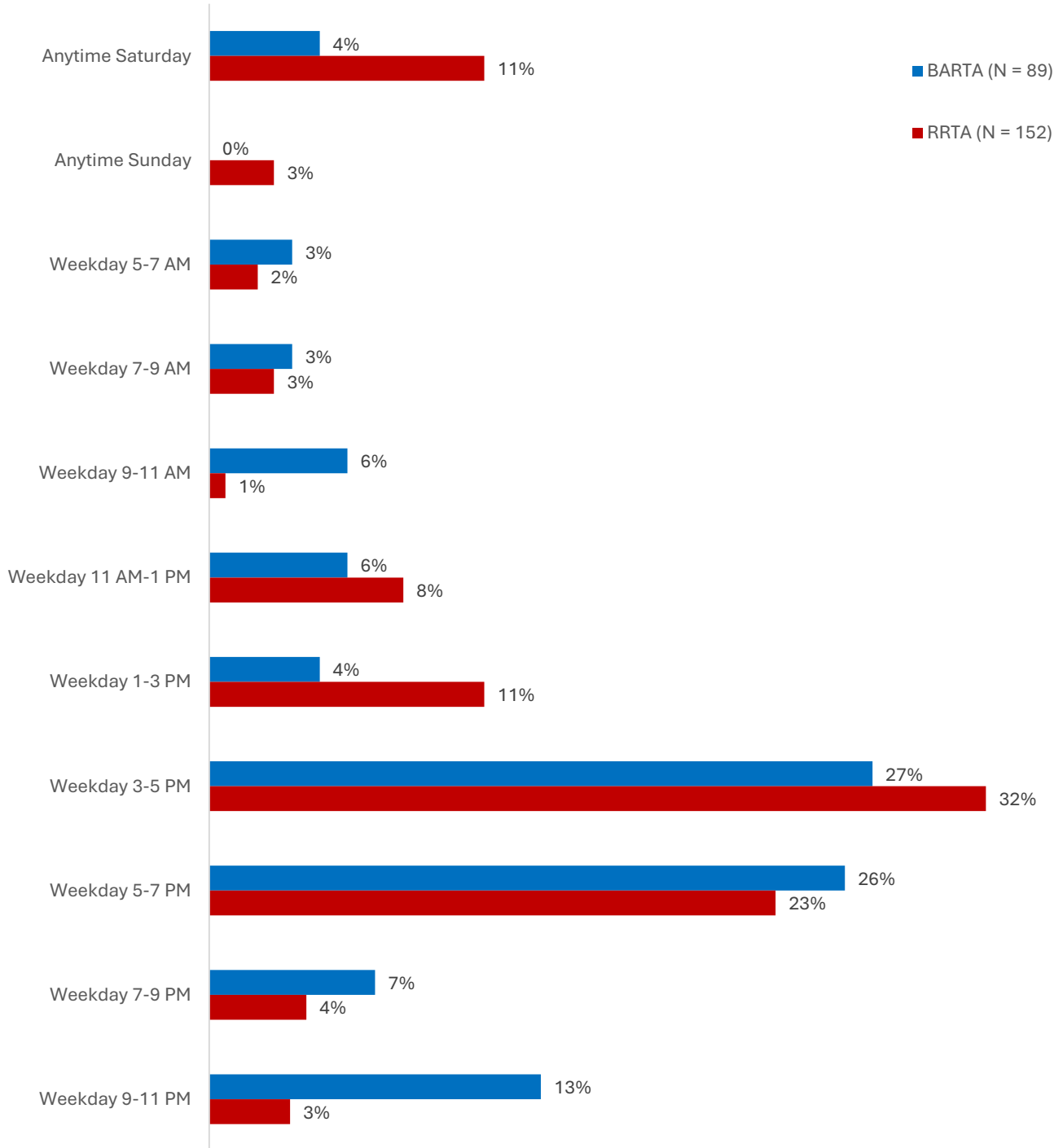
## Time Period

Rider-respondents for both agencies indicated that they most often traveled during the week, departing in the morning and returning in the afternoon. RRTA respondents were more likely than BARTA respondents to report taking trips that began and ended on the weekend (**Figure 14** and **Figure 15**).

**Figure 8: When Do You Most Commonly Take This Trip? (Riders)**



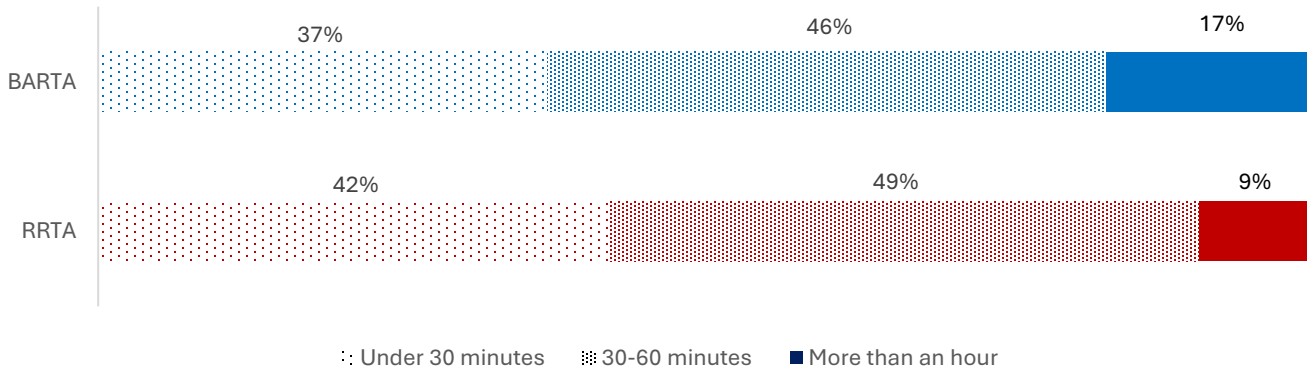
**Figure 9: When do you most Commonly Return From this Trip? (Riders)**



## Journey Duration

About half of rider-respondents said the most common trip they take on BARTA and RRTA takes between 30 and 60 minutes. BARTA trips were more likely to be longer than an hour, and less likely to be shorter than 30 minutes compared to RRTA trips (**Figure 16**).

**Figure 10: Duration of Most Common Journey by Agency (Riders)**

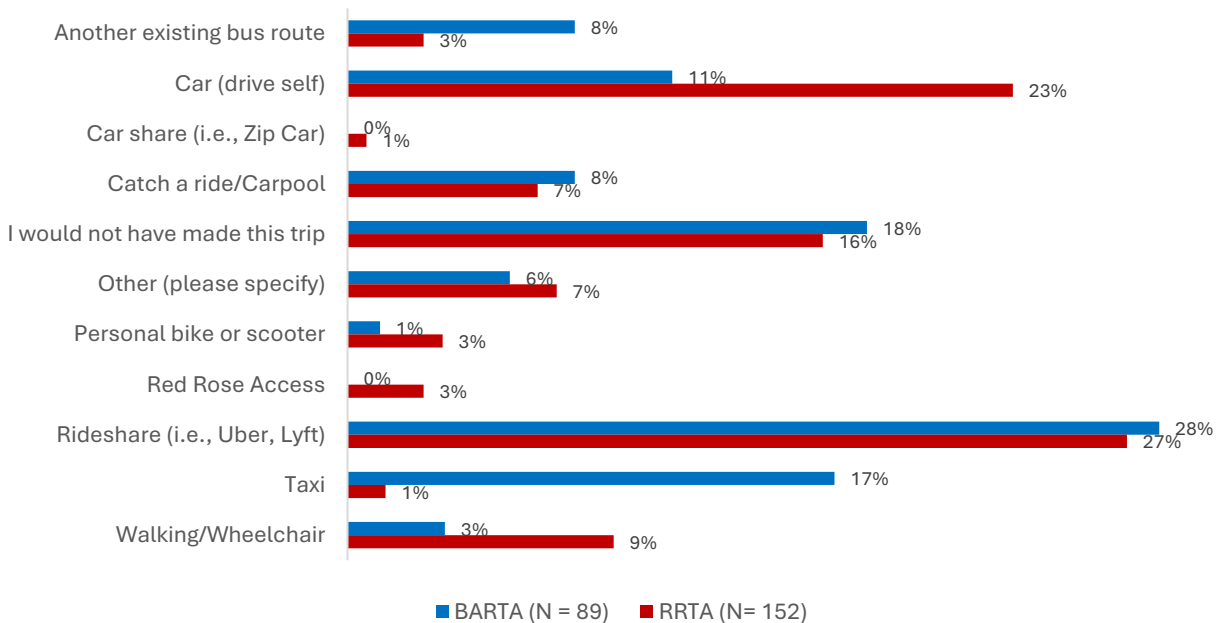


## Alternative Mode

When asked how they would have gotten to their destination had the BARTA or RRTA route they usually take not been available, rider-respondents were most likely to say they would have used a rideshare app like Uber or Lyft. Sixteen percent of RRTA riders and 18 percent of BARTA riders said they would not have made the trip at all.

While responses to the alternative mode question were largely similar between the agencies, there were two notable differences. BARTA riders were far more likely to say they would have taken a taxi, and more RRTA riders said they would have driven themselves (**Figure 17**).

**Figure 11: How would you Get to your Destination Were SCTA service not available? (By Agency) (Riders)**



# TRADE-OFF QUESTIONS

Respondents were asked to indicate their preference between two options for improving service. On the BARTA survey, these questions received responses from 86 riders and 74 non-riders. On the RRTA survey, there were 146 riders and 145 non-riders.

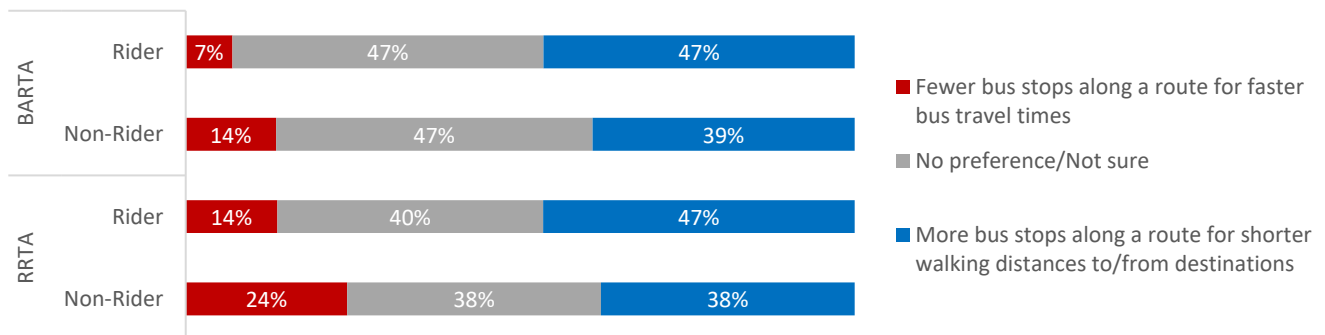
Survey respondents were asked their preferences regarding the following tradeoffs:

- Fewer bus stops along a route for faster bus travel versus more bus stops along a route for shorter walking distances to/from destinations
- Expanded service to new areas versus improved service/schedules and reliability in the existing service area
- More weekend service versus improved weekday service schedules
- Longer service hours versus more frequent service
- Buses running more frequently on fewer streets versus buses running less frequently on more streets.

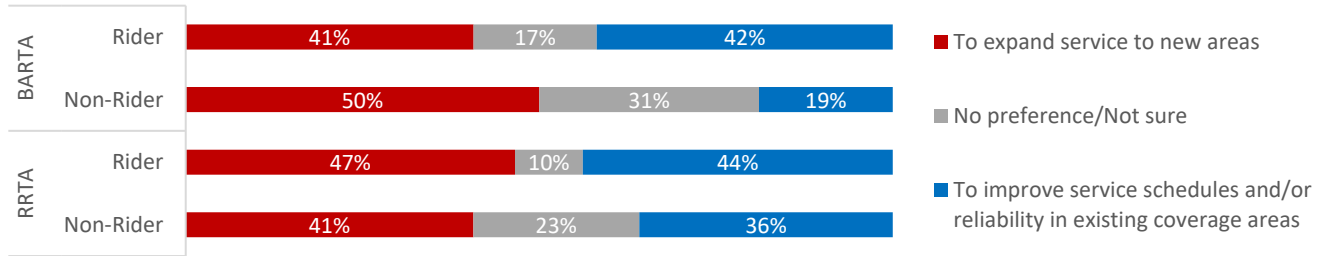
Responses to these tradeoff questions were fairly similar between the RRTA and BARTA surveys. Among both riders and non-riders, respondents were more likely to prefer adding bus stops to removing them; however, the number of people saying they had no preference between the two was substantial (**Figure 18**). Non-riders were more likely to prefer adding service to new areas rather than expanding service in existing areas; but this is unsurprising, since riders are people for whom existing service is most convenient (**Figure 19**). Half of riders indicated they'd prefer adding weekend service over improving weekday service, far more than non-riders (**Figure 20**).

RRTA respondents were more interested in improving the frequency of buses than other objectives. For example, RRTA respondents were more likely to prefer more frequent buses to longer service hours; BARTA respondents were about evenly split between improving service frequency and service span (**Figure 21**). RRTA respondents also said they'd rather see more buses on fewer streets than vice versa (**Figure 22**).

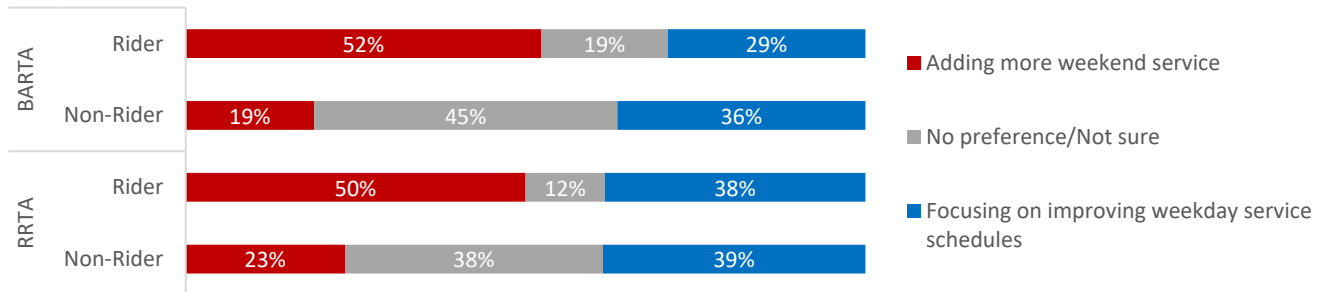
**Figure 12: Fewer or More Stops**



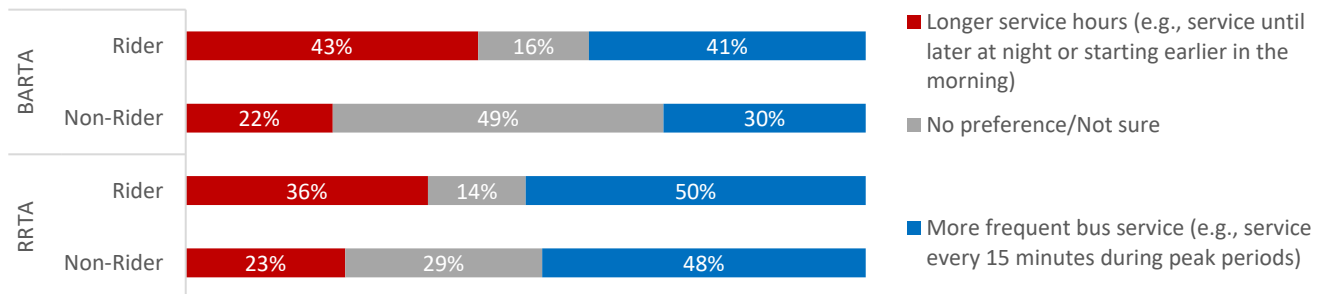
**Figure 13: Improve Service in Existing Areas or Expand to New Areas?**



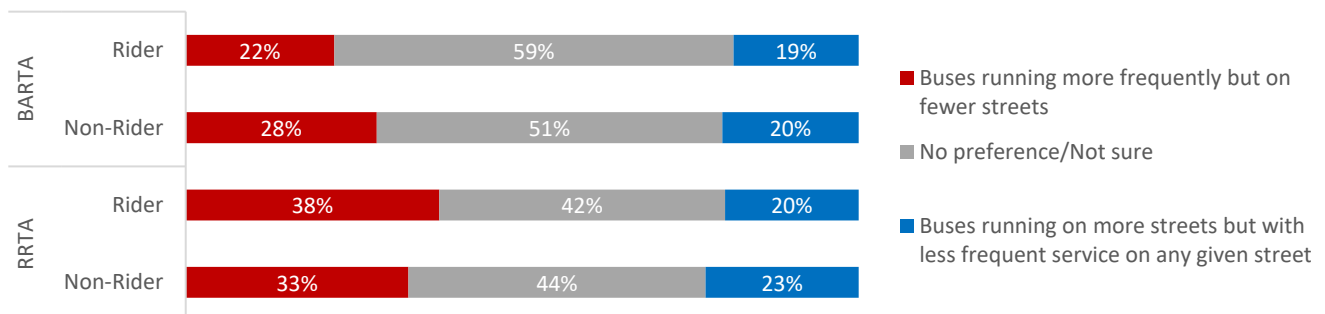
**Figure 14: Increase Weekend Service or Weekday Service?**



**Figure 15: More Frequent Service or Longer Service Span?**



**Figure 16: More Streets or Fewer Streets?**



# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Age

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the age bracket they fall into. The age distribution of riders differed between the agencies. The largest group of BARTA rider-respondents was age 45-54 (23 percent) while for RRTA the largest group was age 25-34 (27 percent). For both agencies, non-riders were overwhelmingly 60 years or older (**Figure 23** and **Figure 24**).

Figure 17: BARTA Survey Results by Age

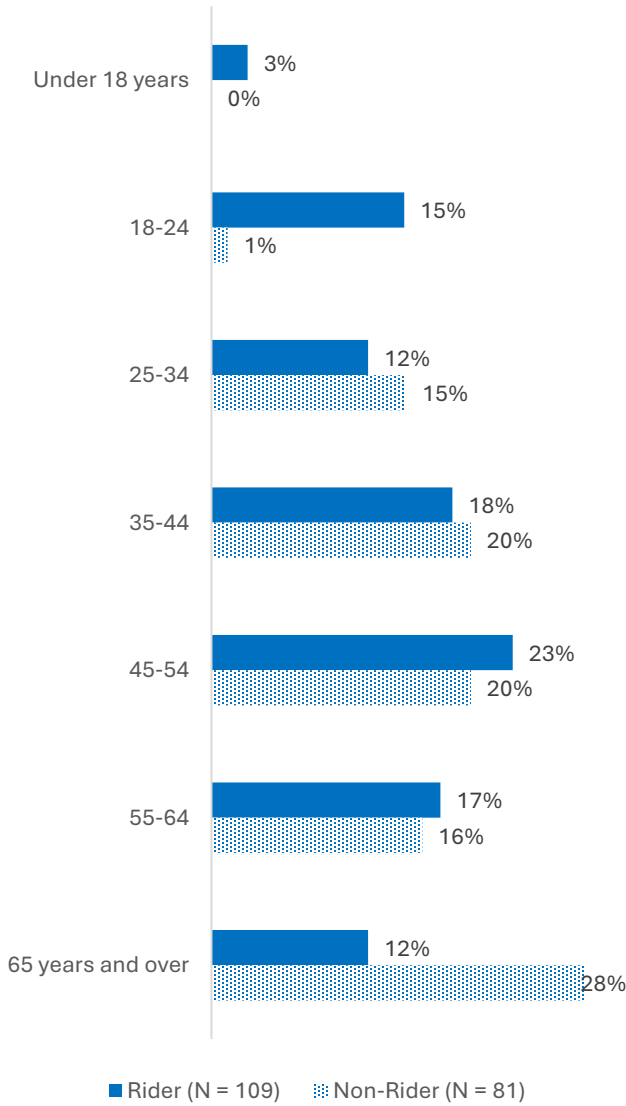
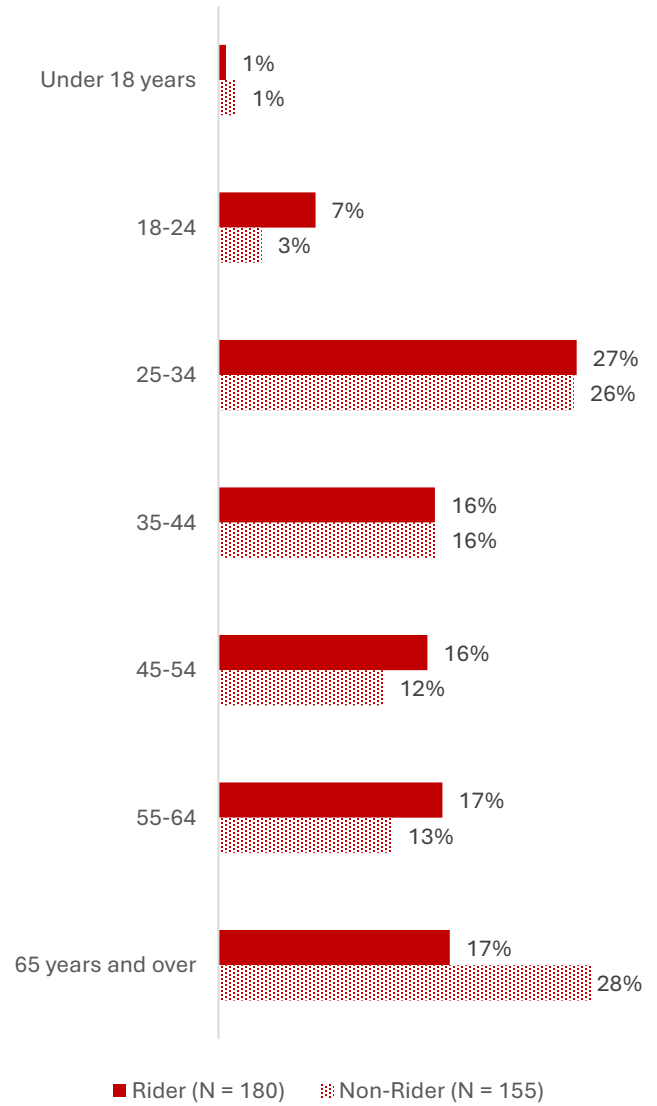


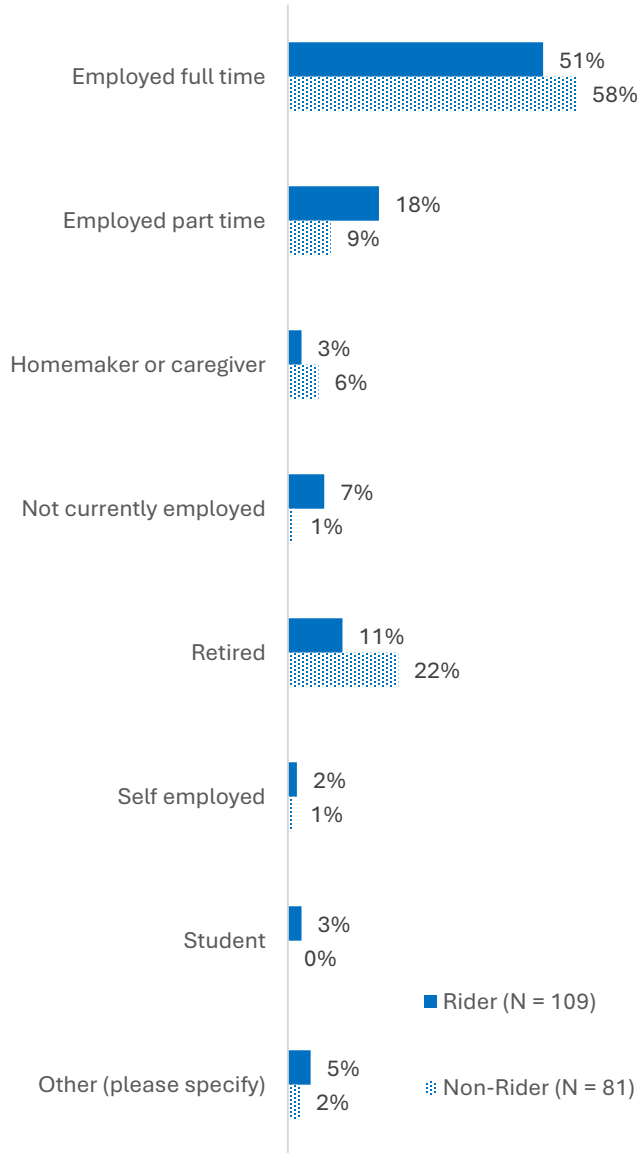
Figure 18: RRTA Survey Results by Age



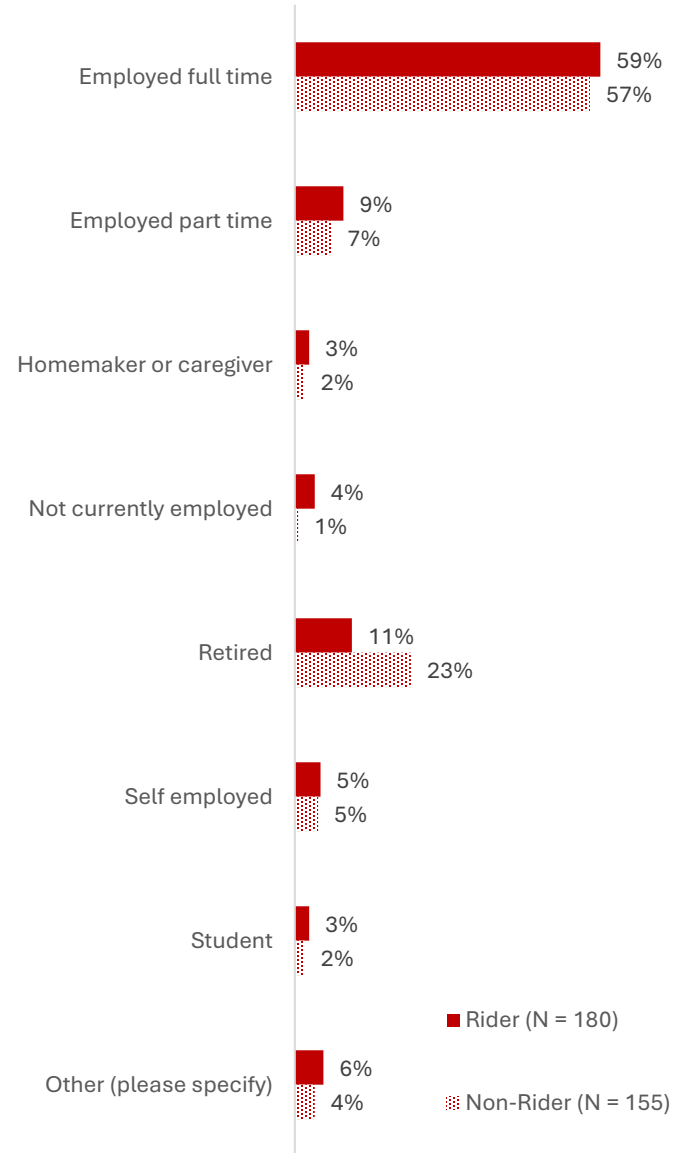
# Employment Status

Most survey respondents reported being employed full-time; nearly 60 percent of rider and non-rider respondents for both agencies. The percentage of non-riders who are retired was double that of riders (Figure 25 and Figure 26).

**Figure 19: BARTA Survey Responses by Employment Status**



**Figure 20: RRTA Survey Responses by Employment Status**





# Race and Ethnicity

Most survey respondents indicated they are White. A larger share of those responding to BARTA’s survey indicated being Hispanic/Latino (32 percent) than those responding to RRTA’s survey (six percent) (Figure 27 and Figure 28).<sup>6</sup>

Figure 21: BARTA Survey Responses by Race/Ethnicity

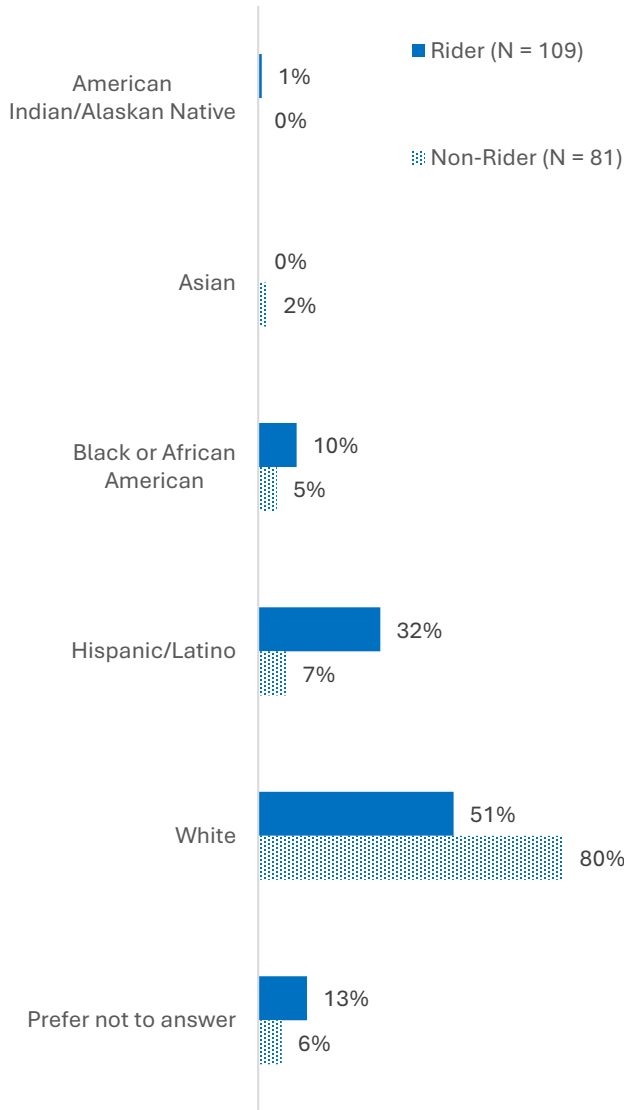
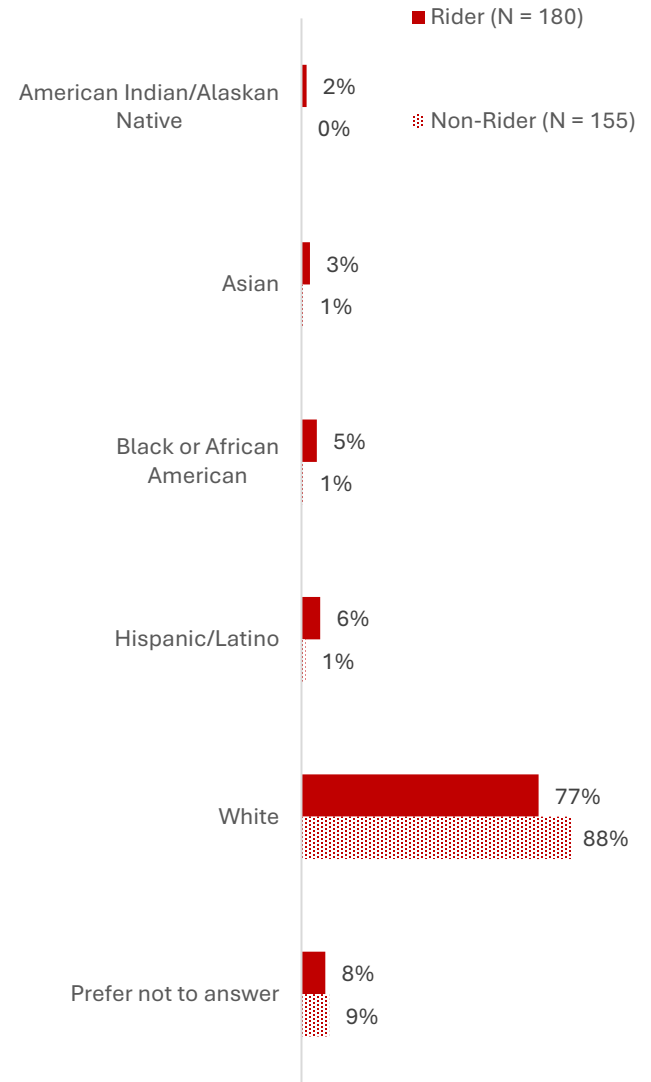


Figure 22: RRTA Survey Responses by Race/Ethnicity

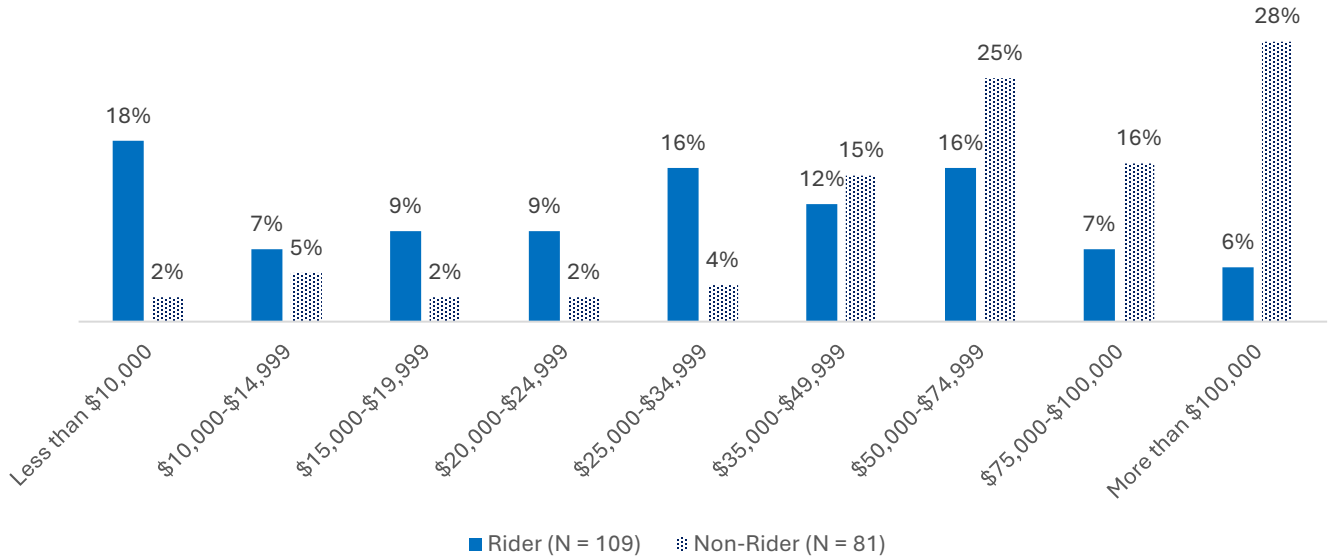


<sup>6</sup> Note that categories may sum to greater than 100 percent because some respondents indicated more than one race or ethnicity group. The category “Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander” has been left off this chart because no respondents identified as such.

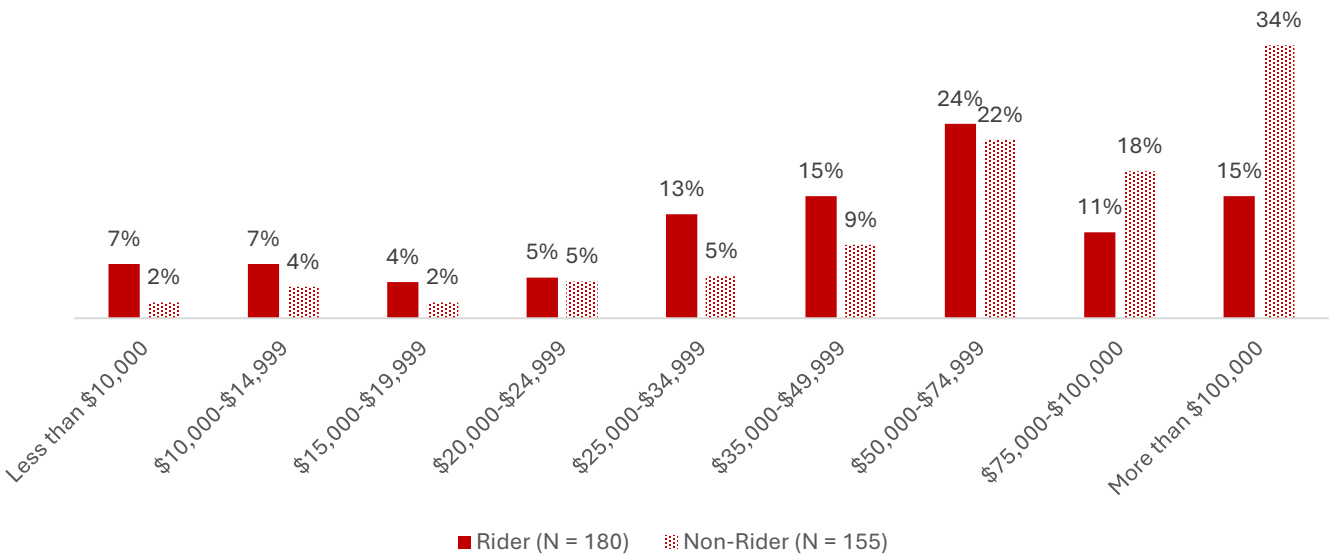
# Household Income

Among survey respondents, BARTA riders reported lower household incomes than RRTA riders. Sixty percent of BARTA riders who responded say they make less than \$35,000 per year; only 36 percent of RRTA riders who responded make below that amount. Non-rider respondents generally reported having higher incomes, compared to the rider respondents (**Figure 29** and **Figure 30**).

**Figure 23: BARTA Survey Responses by income**



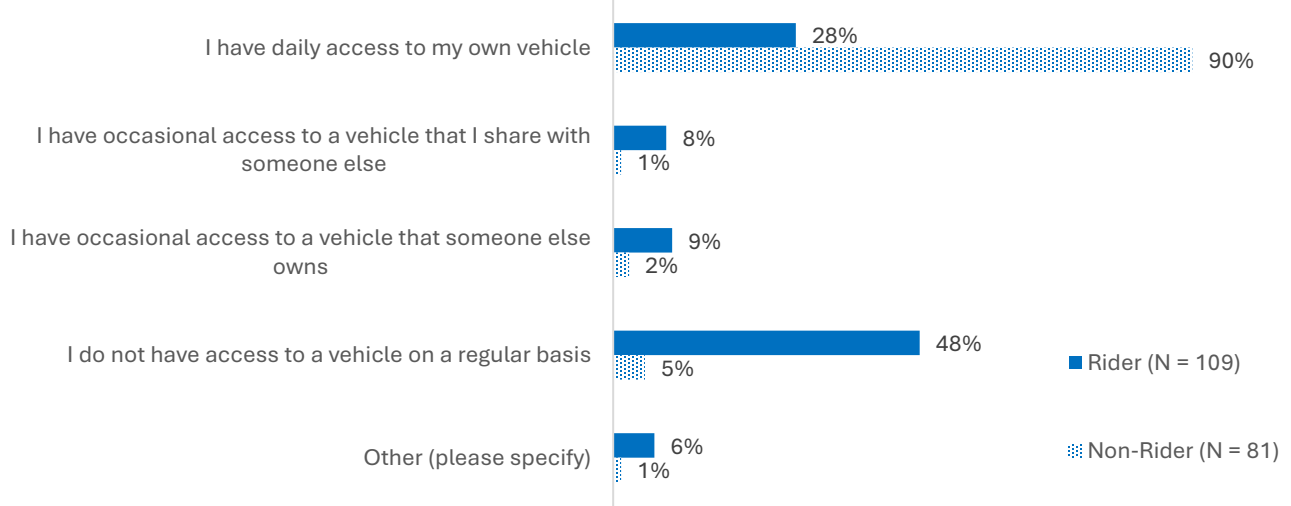
**Figure 24: RRTA Survey Responses by Income**



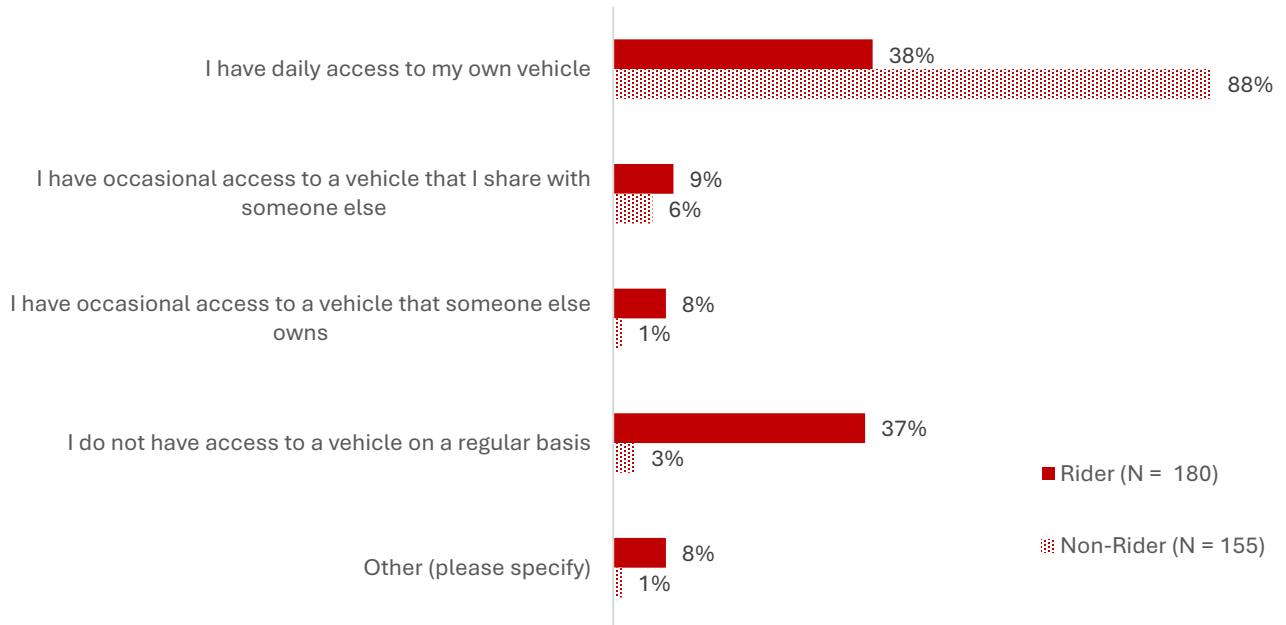
## Access to a Personal Vehicle

Among survey respondents, 28 percent of BARTA riders and 38 percent of RRTA riders have daily access to their own vehicle. By comparison, over 85 percent of non-rider respondents in both surveys have daily access to a vehicle (**Figure 31** and **Figure 32**).

**Figure 25: BARTA Survey Responses by Access to Vehicle**



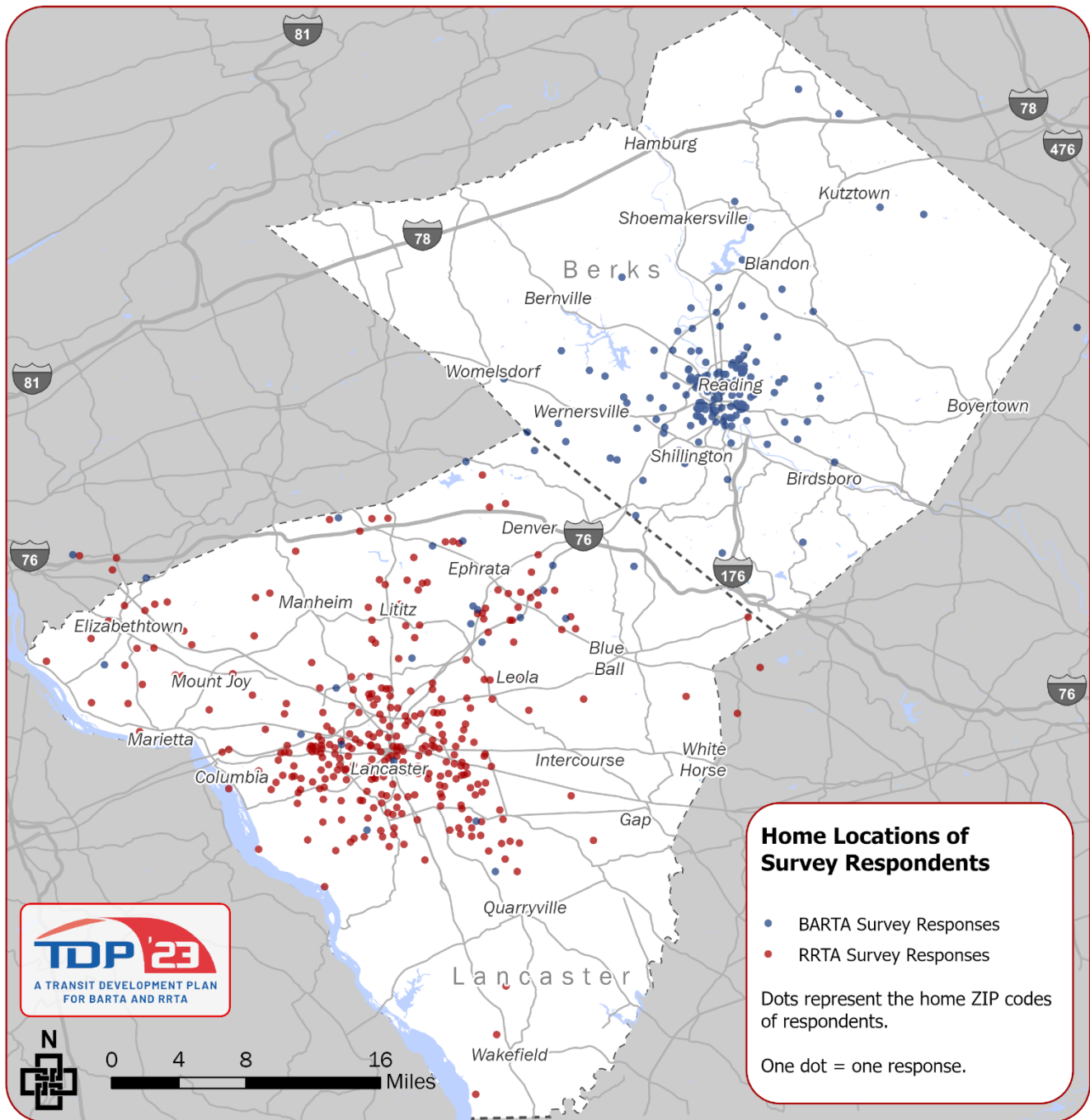
**Figure 26: RRTA Survey responses by Access to Vehicle**



## Home Location

The survey asked respondents to provide the zip code where they live. BARTA responses were clustered somewhat more densely around Reading than RRTA responses were around the City of Lancaster (**Figure 33**). Some respondents who indicated they are residents of Lancaster County responded to the BARTA survey.

Figure 27: Home Locations of Survey Respondents



## FREE RESPONSES

The survey also asked respondents for other comments regarding BARTA and RRTA service. The most commonly mentioned issues and concerns raised by respondents are summarized here.

### Increase in frequency of buses and span of service

Respondents requested an increase in weekend and late-night bus service as well as an increase in bus frequency.

## Requests for specific new routes

Many responses included suggestions for new routes and destinations, including:

- Strasburg
- Denver
- Oregon Dairies
- Quarryville
- Kutztown
- Bethel
- Pottstown, PA
- Oley
- Allentown
- Lebanon
- Service between Reading and Lancaster

## Concerns about behavior of SCTA employees

Survey respondents expressed concern about the behavior of BARTA and RRTA operators and customer service representatives, complaining of rudeness and unsafe driving.

## Improved bus stops and shelters

A common theme of the survey responses was the need for improved bus stops. Commenters requested additional shelters for protection from the elements as well as better signage to make it easier to find stops. Several respondents said they had difficulty flagging down stops in outlying areas.

## Additional service between outlying areas

Commenters said they would appreciate being able to travel between areas of Berks and Lancaster Counties without needing to travel downtown to transfer between buses.

## Improved rider information

Riders said they would appreciate additional information, including notifications about missed trips and delays, as well as improved trip planning functionality like Google transit.

## Increased access to jobs

Both employees and employers said they'd like to see more access to job centers, like the Amazon warehouse in Hamburg.

## Reliability of bus service

Several riders said they'd missed their bus because the buses were running ahead of schedule. Others expressed frustration about late service and missed trips.

## Access to medical institutions

Providing access to medical facilities, in particular Lancaster Medical Center, was a priority of multiple commenters.