

# Chapter 3

## Public and Stakeholder Input

### INTRODUCTION

A significant outreach effort was conducted to obtain input from riders, the general public, and stakeholders. The information and opinions gathered from these efforts are presented in this chapter. The following outreach was conducted:

- Fixed-route rider survey
- Mobility/paratransit rider survey
- Community survey
- Interactive online map
- Public meetings
- Stakeholder interviews
- Public website

Rider surveys were conducted on all RTA operated services and were available in the three languages that are predominant in the service area – English, Spanish, and Korean. The community survey was conducted through the assistance of local government and non-profit agencies. All three surveys were also available online.

Five public meetings (three in Howard County, one in Anne Arundel County, and one in the City of Laurel) were held at different locations throughout the service area. These locations included:

- George Howard Building
- North Laurel Community Center
- Charles I. Ecker Business Training Center
- Arundel Mills Mall
- Laurel Municipal Center

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with local agencies and advocacy groups. A list of agencies interviewed is provided in Appendix A. During the project period a Central Maryland website with information about the project and public input opportunities was available. The website can be reached at this address:

<http://www.kfhgroup.com/centralmd/transitplan.html>.

In addition to background information about the plan, there was a project schedule, public input section with links to the surveys and an interactive Wikimap that allowed people to draw and comment on a map. The website also had information about all of the

public meetings, copies of the study materials, and contact information for the project partners.

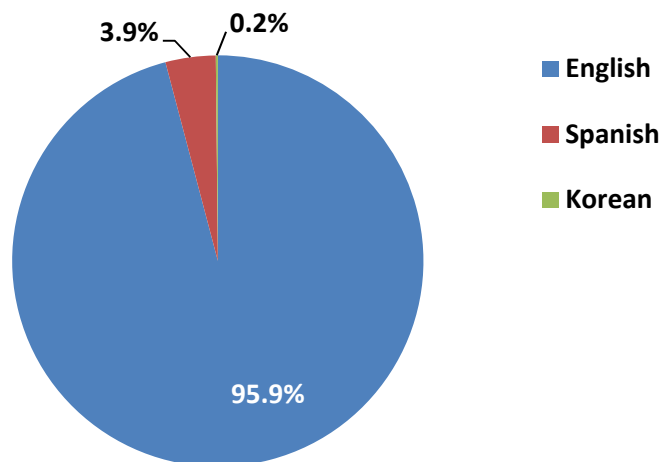
## RTA FIXED-ROUTE RIDER SURVEY

An important task for the Transit Development Plan (TDP) was to gather opinions from system users concerning RTA's current fixed-route services. With input from RTA staff, an onboard survey was prepared for this purpose. The survey was administered onboard RTA vehicles from November 1-November 14, 2016. RTA staff assisted with distributing and collecting the surveys.

Additionally, riders could fill out the survey online from November 1 - December 6, 2016. In total, 1,243 valid surveys were returned and analyzed. A copy of the onboard rider survey instrument is provided in Appendix B.

Of the 1,243 valid surveys collected, 95.9 percent were in English, 3.9 percent were in Spanish, and 0.2 percent were in Korean. This is represented in Figure 3-1.

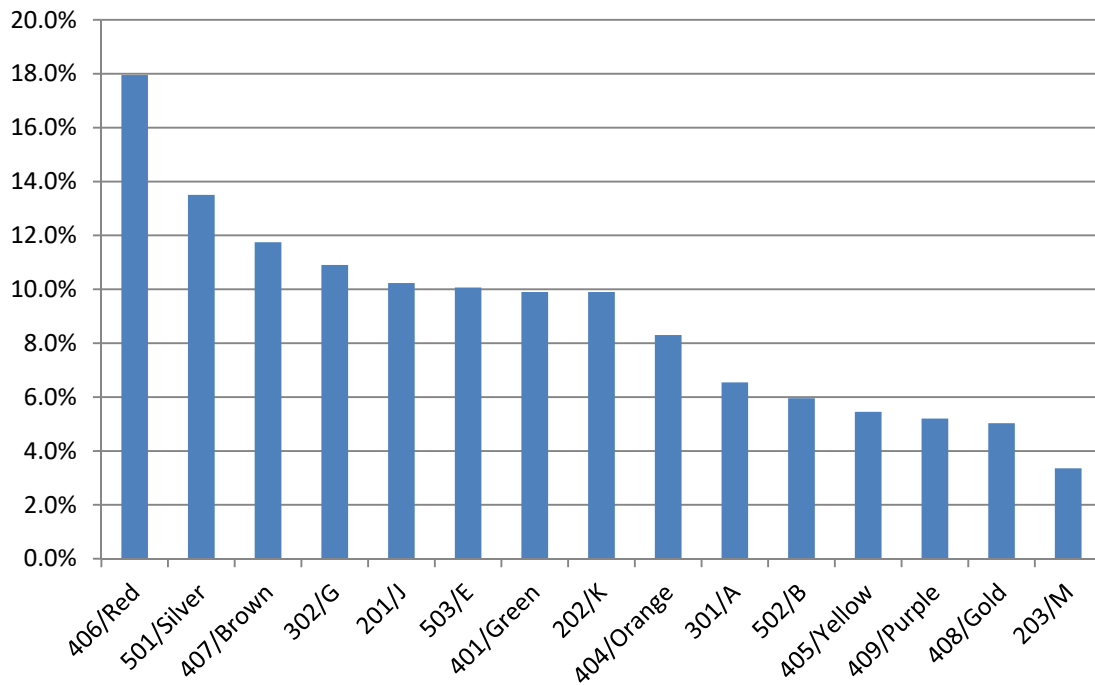
**Figure 3-1: Language of Surveys Returned by Fixed-Route Riders**



## Trip Information

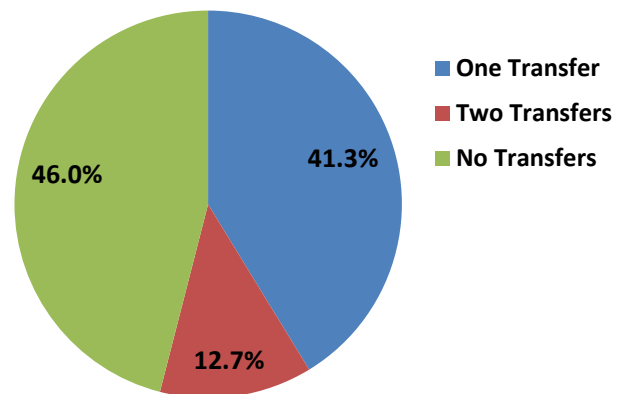
Survey respondents were asked several questions pertaining to their trip. The first question asked participants to indicate which RTA route they boarded. The three routes that generated the most responses were the 406/Red, 501/Silver, and 407/Brown. Figure 3-2 provides the results across all routes.

**Figure 3-2: Percentage of Respondents by Route**



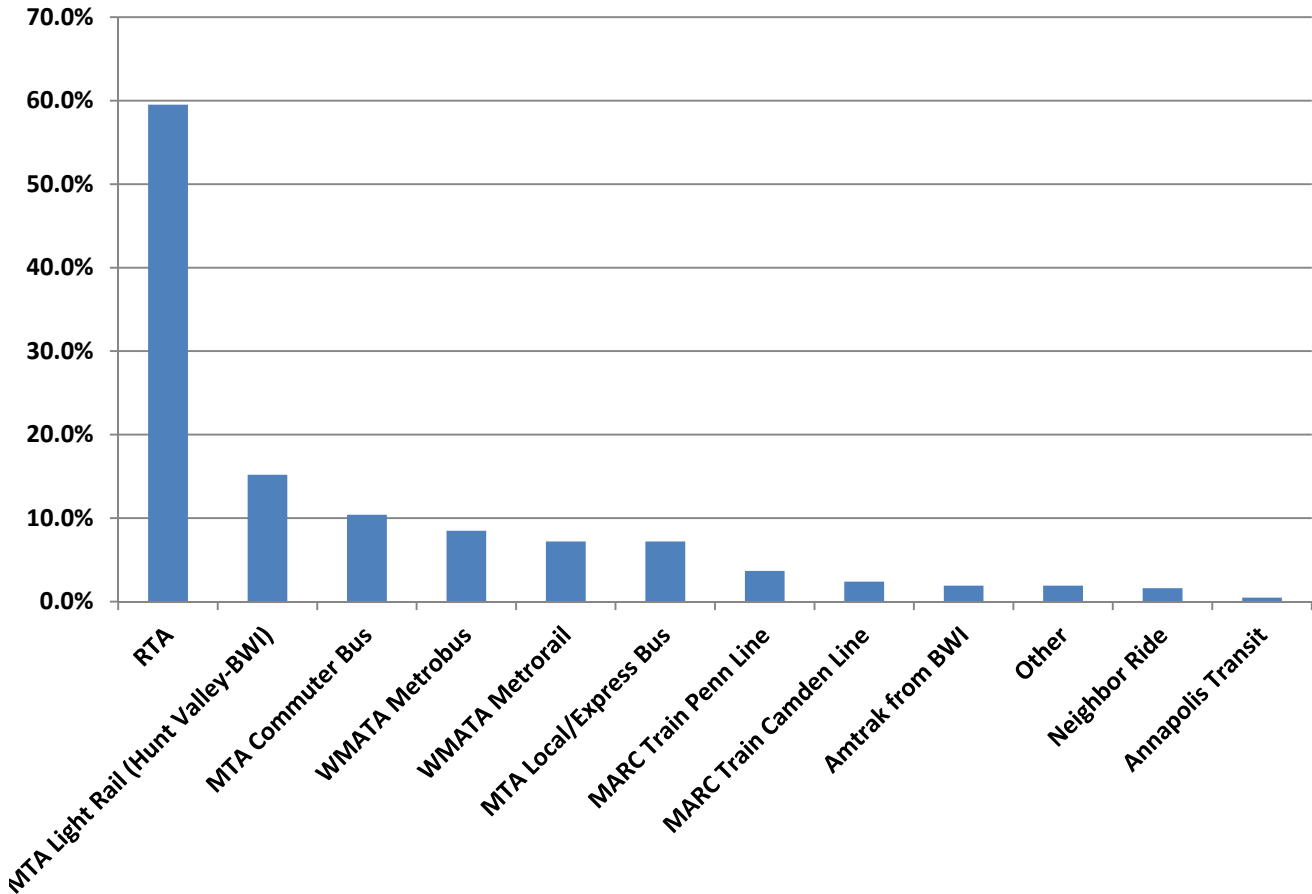
The survey then asked riders about whether or not they had to transfer to complete their trip and, if so, how many times. Most of the fixed-route riders (54%) had to make at least one transfer. This information is reflected in Figure 3-3.

**Figure 3-3: Fixed-Route Riders that Transferred**



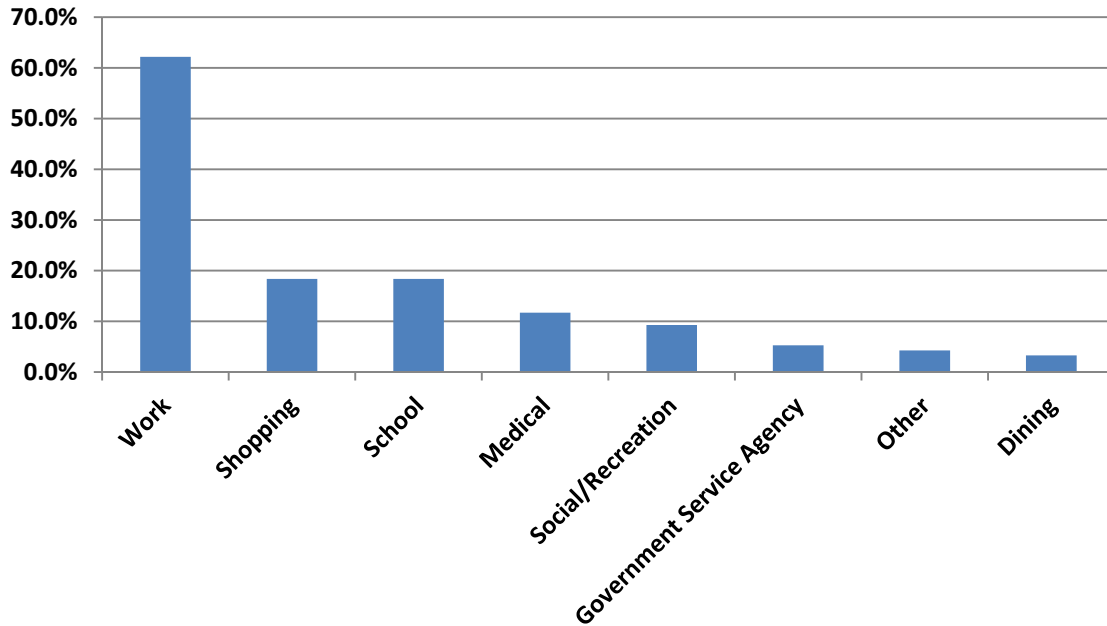
The survey asked which, if any, alternative transit services riders were transferring to. Statistics were derived by dividing the total number of responses for each service by the total number of individuals that responded to this question. Since multiple responses could be recorded, the total percentage of responses could exceed one-hundred percent. A plurality of riders indicated they were transferring to other RTA routes. Other popular services were MTA Light Rail, MTA commuter bus, Metrobus, and Metrorail. Full results may be viewed in Figure 3-4.

**Figure 3-4: Transfers To/From Other Routes and Operators**



The survey inquired about the frequency and purpose of riders' trips. Since multiple responses could be recorded for this question, statistics were derived by dividing the total number of responses for each trip purpose by the total number of responses that were marked. A plurality of riders indicated they were traveling for work. After work, the top three purposes for traveling were shopping, school, and medical. Full results are on display in Figure 3-5.

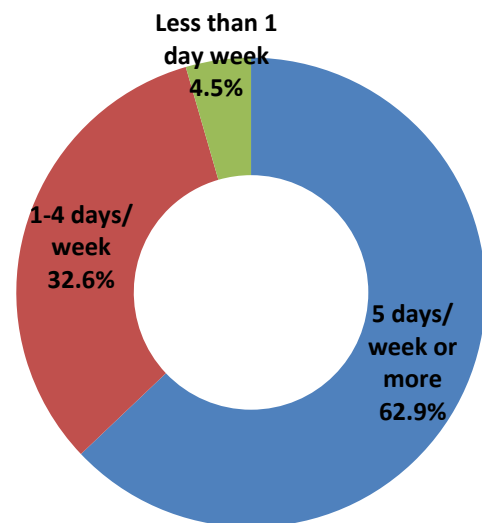
**Figure 3-5: Trip Purpose**



**Figure 3-6: Frequency of Use**

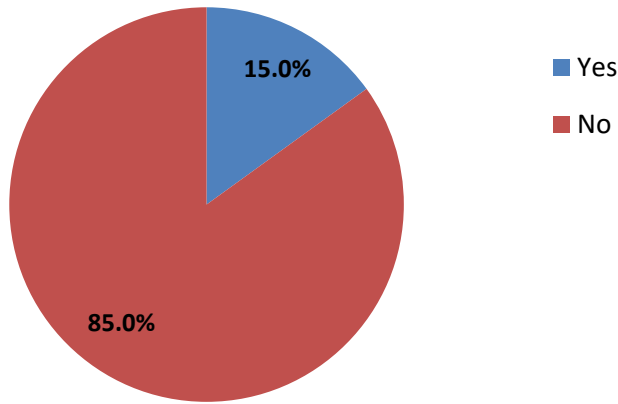
**Rider Profile**

The survey sought to learn more about RTA riders. Several questions were asked to identify characteristics of RTA riders. The survey asked how often they ride the bus. Nearly 2/3 of respondents claimed they rode the bus five days a week or more, roughly 1/3 of respondents marked they rode the bus one to four days a week, and only 4.5 percent of riders said they use the bus less than one day a week. Full results are shown in Figure 3-6.

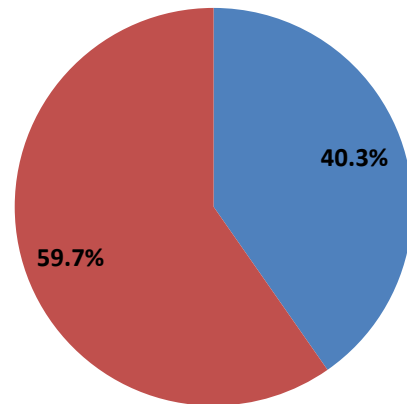


Several questions focused on rider car ownership, car availability and whether or not they have a driver's license. Eighty-five percent of respondents said they do not have a car, while 15 percent said they do. Of those with a car, 40.3 percent of respondents said a car was available for them to use at the time of their RTA trip and 59.7 percent said their car was not available. A slim majority of 51.8 percent reported they do not have a driver's license while 48.2 percent said they do. This information is displayed graphically in Figures 3-7, Figure 3-8, and Figure 3-9.

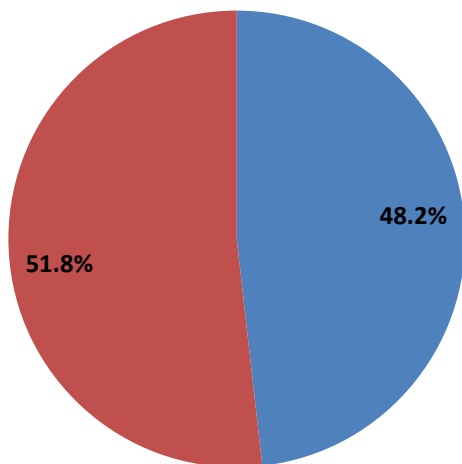
**Figure 3-7: Car Ownership**



**Figure 3-8: Access to a Car**

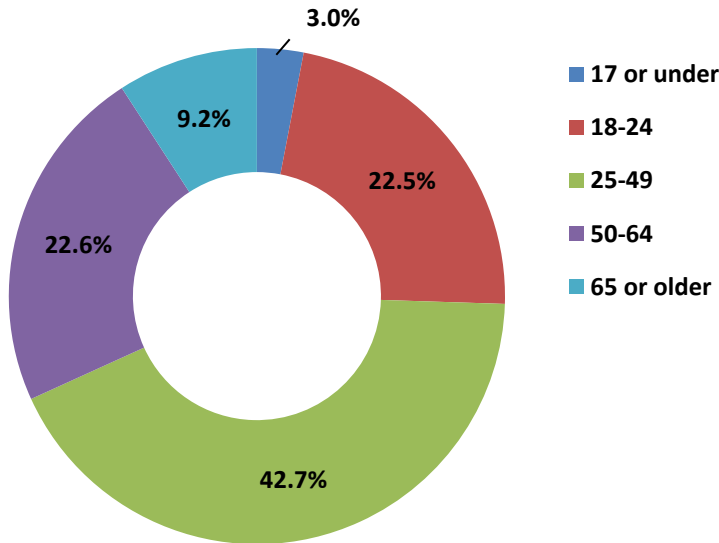


**Figure 3-9: Driver's License**



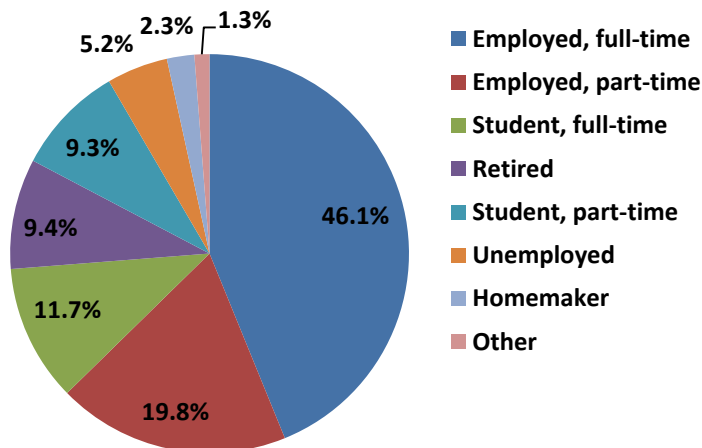
The survey asked a series of questions to obtain demographic information pertaining to RTA riders. Regarding age, a plurality of respondents indicated they were between the ages of 25 and 49. Additionally, 22.6 percent of respondents indicated they were between the ages of 50 and 64 and 22.5 percent reported they were between the ages of 18 and 24. Full results can be found in Figure 3-10.

**Figure 3-10: Age of Riders**



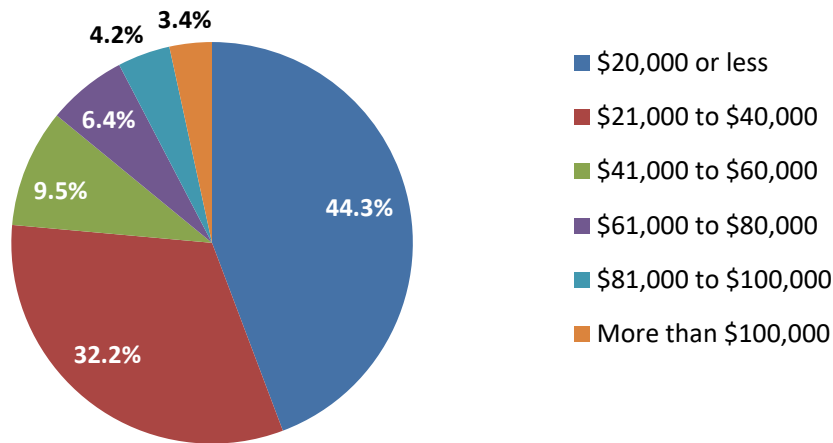
The survey continued by asking riders about their employment status. Nearly 50 percent of respondents indicated they were employed full-time, 21.4 percent were employed part-time, and 12.6 percent were full-time students. Full results can be seen in Figure 3-11. A plurality of those who marked “other” indicated they were disabled.

**Figure 3-11: Employment Status**



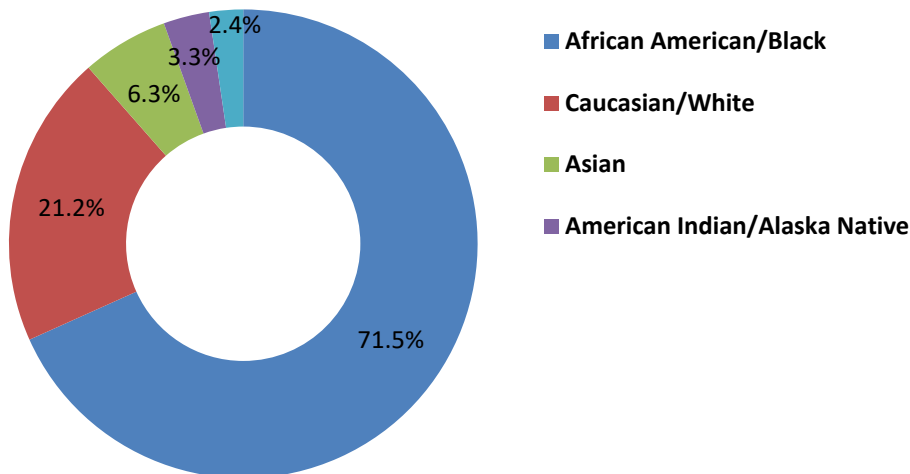
The survey asked about the annual household income of riders. Forty-four and 3/10 percent of riders indicated they had an annual household income of under \$20,000, 32.3 percent claimed between \$21,000 and \$40,000, and 9.5 percent said they made between \$41,000 and \$60,000. Full results are on display in Figure 3-12.

**Figure 3-12: Annual Household Income**



The survey continued by asking riders about which ethnic group/groups they identified with. Approximately 71.5 percent identified themselves they were African American/Black, 21.2 said they were Caucasian/White, and 6.3 percent indicated they were Asian. Full results are displayed in Figure 3-13.

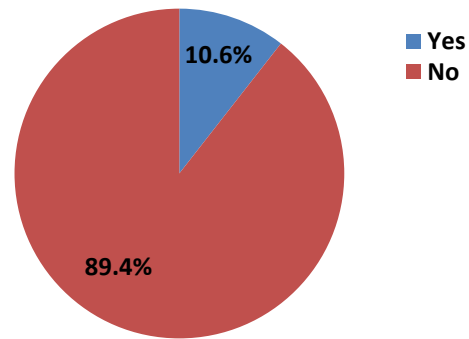
**Figure 3-13: Ethnic Background**





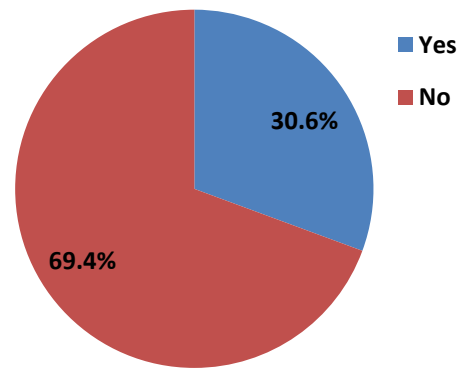
The survey asked whether the respondent was of Hispanic or Latino origin. Ten and 6/10 percent of respondents indicated they were of Hispanic or Latino origin and 89.4 percent claimed they were not. This is shown in Figure 3-14.

**Figure 3-14: Hispanic or Latino Status**



The survey then asked several questions regarding the languages spoken and their proficiency in English. Riders were asked if they spoke a language other than English at home. Thirty and 6/10 percent of respondents indicated they speak a language other than English at home and 69.4 percent indicated they do not. This is seen in Figure 3-15.

**Figure 3-15: Speak Language Other than English**



Riders were asked which other language they spoke at home. To derive data for this question we combined results which were written-in on the English survey with 49 “Spanish” and two “Korean” entries which corresponded to the number of surveys collected in these languages. Spanish was the most commonly cited language spoken, followed by French and Yoruba. Full results can be viewed in Table 3-1.

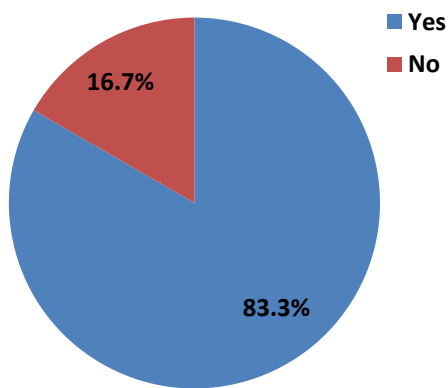
**Table 3-1: Languages Spoken Other than English**

Language	Count	Language	Count	Language	Count
Spanish	44%	Portuguese	1.8%	Cherokee	0.3%
French	11.5%	Twí	1.8%	Dominican	0.3%
Yoruba	8.5%	Hindi	1.5%	Farsi	0.3%
Creole	4%	Russian	1.5%	Greek	0.3%
Korean	3.7%	Thai	1.5%	Haitian	0.3%
Tagalog	3.7%	Igbo	0.7%	Jamaican Patois	0.3%
Arabic	3%	Japanese	0.7%	Krio	0.3%
Amharic	2.6%	Luganda	0.7%	Latin	0.3%
American Sign Language	2.6%	Malayalam	0.7%	Somali	0.3%
Chinese	2.6%	Bassa	0.3%	Swahili	0.3%
Urdu	2.6%	Bengali	0.3%	Telugu	0.3%
German	1.8%				

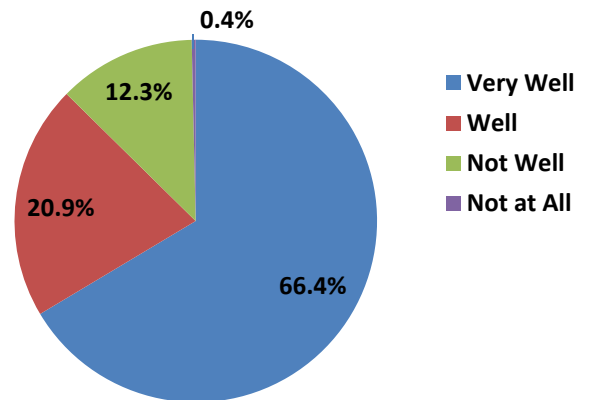
Riders who completed foreign language surveys were asked whether or not they spoke English. Eighty-three and 3/10 percent of respondents indicated they could speak English while 16.7 percent could not. This is shown in Figure 3-16.

Those who indicated they spoke a language other than English at home and those who completed foreign language surveys were asked how well they spoke English. Sixty-six and 4/10 percent said they spoke English “very well”, 20.9 percent claimed they spoke it “well”, 12.3 percent said “not well”, and 0.4 percent indicated “not at all”. This is shown in Figure 3-17.

**Figure 3-16: Speaks English**



**Figure 3-17: Fluency in English**

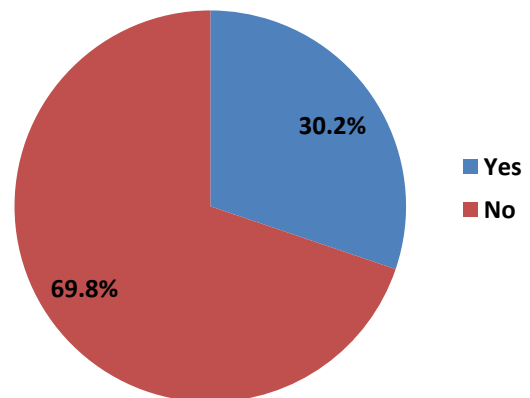


## Rider Input and Comments

### *Destinations Not Served*

A chief aim of the survey was to ascertain riders’ opinions about RTA’s service. First, the survey asked whether or not there were specific destinations which they needed to go on a regular basis that transit does not currently service. A majority of the respondents (69.8%) indicated that the service meets their needs. Thirty and 2/10 percent of respondents indicated there were destinations which they could not go. This is shown graphically in Figure 3-18. Some of the destinations that were noted as not being served are listed below. Several of the destinations in this list can be accessed using RTA and other transit services, to some extent. It could be that the specific address the respondent intended is not served by public transit in that area. The destinations that are **not** accessible via public transportation are in **bold**.

**Figure 3-18: Destinations not Served**

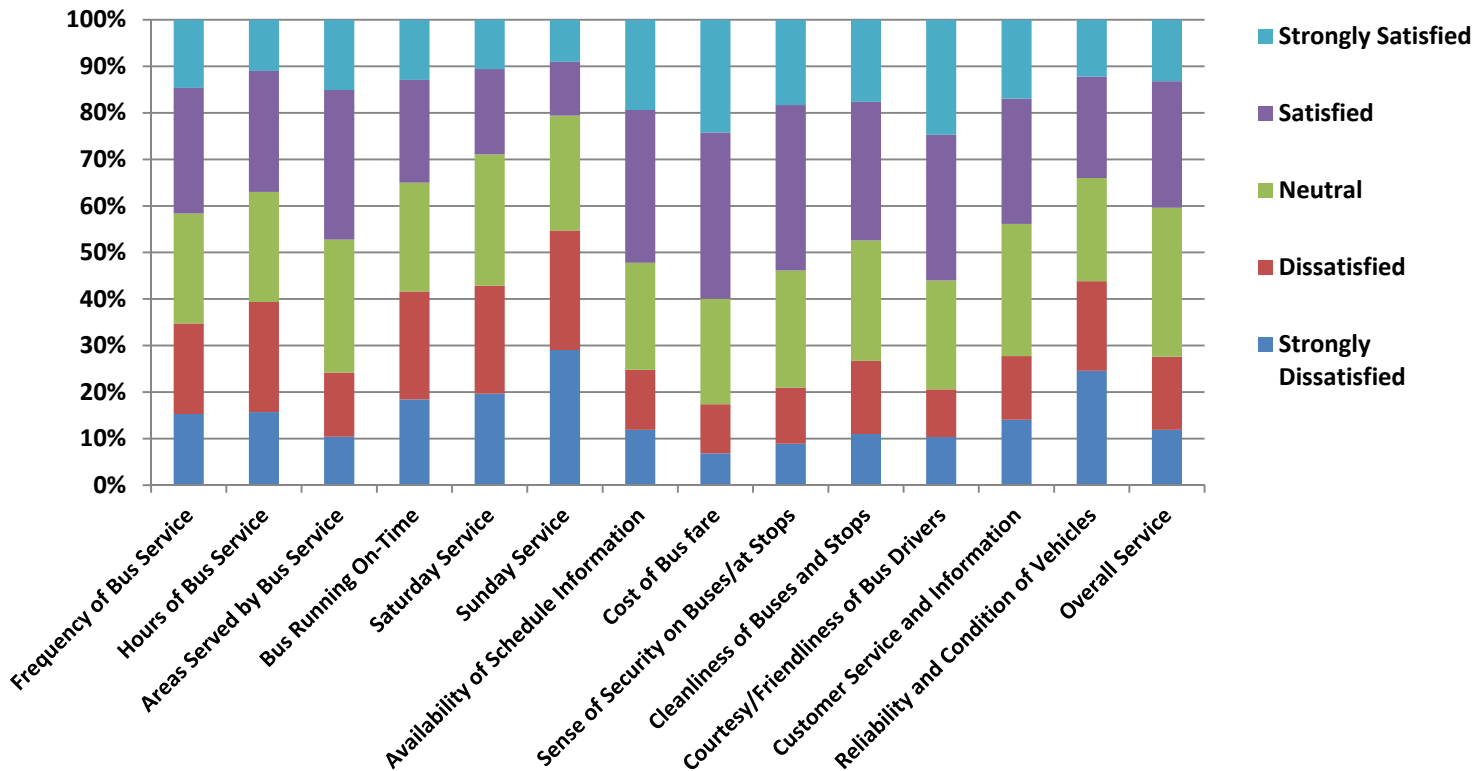


- **UMUC in Largo, MD**
- Baltimore City
- **Annapolis**
- **Clarksville**
- Laurel Regional Hospital
- Jessup
- **Walmart, Bowie, MD**
- Walmart, Ellicott City, MD
- Pasadena
- Elkridge
- Savage
- Marley Station Mall
- **Owings Mill**
- Crofton
- Maple Lawn
- H Mart
- **Fulton**
- Greenbelt
- **New Carrollton**
- BWMC Hospital, Glen Burnie, MD
- Bowie State College
- **Applied Physics Lab**
- **Chapelgate**
- AACC Arnold Campus

### Service Satisfaction

A major component of the survey concerned rider satisfaction with various components of RTA service. They were asked to rate their satisfaction from “strongly dissatisfied” to “strongly satisfied” for thirteen aspects of RTA service. The most dissatisfaction was found with lack of Sunday service, reliability and condition of vehicles, limited Saturday service, and buses being on time. Full results may be viewed in Figure 3-19 and Table 3-2.

**Figure 3-19: Rider Satisfaction**



**Table 3-2: Rider Satisfaction**

Area	Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied
Frequency of Bus Service	15.3%	19.5%	23.6%	27.0%	14.7%
Hours of Bus Service	15.7%	23.6%	23.6%	26.0%	11.0%
Areas Served by Bus Service	10.4%	13.8%	28.6%	32.1%	15.1%
Bus Running On-Time	18.4%	23.2%	23.4%	22.1%	12.9%
Saturday Service	19.6%	23.2%	28.2%	18.3%	10.6%
Sunday Service	29.1%	25.7%	24.7%	11.6%	9.0%
Availability of Schedule Information	11.9%	12.9%	23.0%	32.9%	19.4%
Cost of Bus fare	6.8%	10.6%	22.7%	35.8%	24.2%
Sense of Security on Buses/at Stops	8.9%	12.0%	25.2%	35.6%	18.3%
Cleanliness of Buses and Stops	11.0%	15.7%	25.9%	29.8%	17.7%
Courtesy/Friendliness of Bus Drivers	10.3%	10.2%	23.4%	31.3%	24.7%
Customer Service and Information	14.1%	13.7%	28.4%	26.9%	16.9%
Reliability and Condition of Vehicles	24.6%	19.2%	22.2%	21.8%	12.2%
Overall Service	11.9%	15.7%	32.0%	27.2%	13.2%

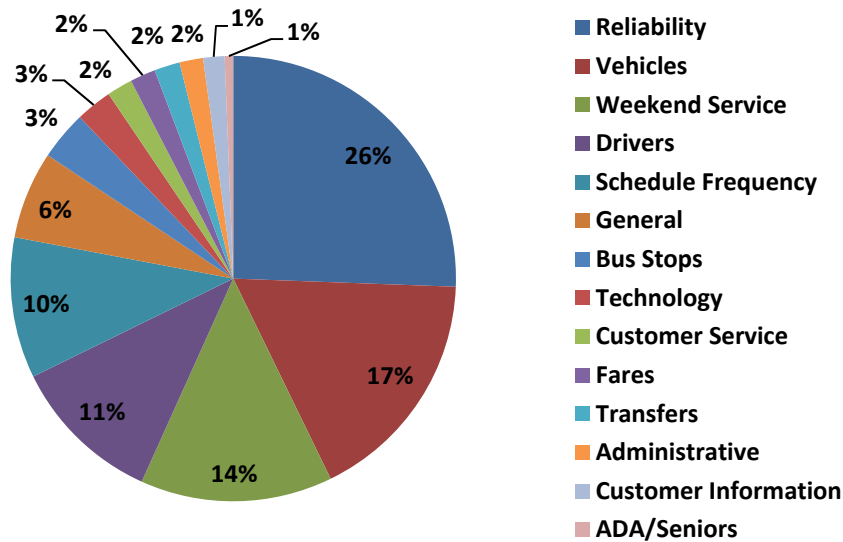
### ***Rider Comments***

The survey provided participants an opportunity to submit comments concerning public transportation in Central Maryland. Since the survey was for people riding the RTA system, the majority of comments were directed toward RTA. The comments were grouped into topic areas and are available for review in Appendix C. Figure 3-20 illustrates the amount of comments received in each topic area.

The majority of comments focused on a need to improve system reliability, capital, scheduling, and customer service. Several riders commented about the difficulty of using the buses to get to work on time. Here is a sample of some comments regarding reliability of the system.

*“New buses a must!!! Have to leave 2-3 hours earlier for appointments because buses are breaking down frequently, miss connecting bus.”*

Figure 3-20: Number of Comments by Topic Area



*“Monday it took 4 HOURS to get to work. First Silver bus was early, second skipped the BWI Business District stop, and we nearly missed the Brown. I was 2 hours late to work. It sucks in the evening because if I miss the Silver connection from the Brown, I won't get home until 10 pm, when I left at 7 pm.”*

*“It is terrible! The buses don't run on time. They break down constantly. At least once a week I am late to work because of the bus.”*

*“The bus is always late. Need new bus!!! And when I go back to work I will take the bus and have to leave my house 2 hours early to be at work on time.”*

An overwhelming majority of comments were about system reliability and a need for more reliable buses. One hundred and sixty five comments mentioned a need to increase reliability of the system. In addition, poor condition of the buses was mentioned 111 times, often in relation to unreliable service. The 71 negative comments about drivers had some relation to unreliable service, with both customers and drivers expressing frustration about inconsistencies in scheduling and service. Comments about the buses include the following:

*“Please provide buses that are new and that will not break down and interfere with my commute.”*

*“The bells-- why do they not work about 1/3 of the time? Why should I have to look for a working bell when I get on the bus when the bell is a key feature of the bus?”*

*"Totally dissatisfied with conditions of buses in use, they are unsafe and poorly maintained."*

*"A bus literally caught on fire."*

After reliability (mentioned 165 times), specific capital needs were mentioned 153 times. The need for newer, more reliable, buses was mentioned 111 times in addition to the 165 comments about reliability issues. The need for improved bus stops and bus stop amenities was second at 23 mentions, and technology improvements were third with seventeen requests for better payment and vehicle tracking systems. Improved pathways to bus stops were mentioned twice.

Scheduling also had a large number of comments, mentioned 141 times. Survey participants mentioned the need to increase frequency of service 66 times, expand service hours or area 56 times, and add express routes seven times. A need for more weekend service was mentioned 90 times in the comments. Some scheduling comments included the following:

*"Bus services should be available at least every ½ hour for all buses. New, clean buses are needed. An all-day bus pass should be available."*

*"Buses should run more frequently. They should run longer on weekends being as how places are open 24 hours now. Better buses."*

*"I wish it was less than one hour, because if you miss one there's not another one until one hour then you have to wait at stop for one hour until next bus."*

There were 95 mentions of drivers, 71 comments were negative and 24 were positive, complementing drivers. There were 58 comments about general service. With, 41 of those comments reflecting positive views and seventeen negative. A need for better communications about scheduling and customer service was reflected in 32 comments. Fare policy was mentioned 31 times with requests for improved transfer policy mentioned twelve times, fare passes were requested twelve times and seven riders thought the fares were too high. Some of the positive comments are below.

*"I have been taking the K bus for 14 years and I have seen some changes and improvements over the last year that are great."*

*"I'm pretty satisfied with this system of public transportation, after using it for the past year and half."*

*"I am grateful for this transportation option. This is a much needed service."*

## RTA PARATRANSIT RIDER SURVEY

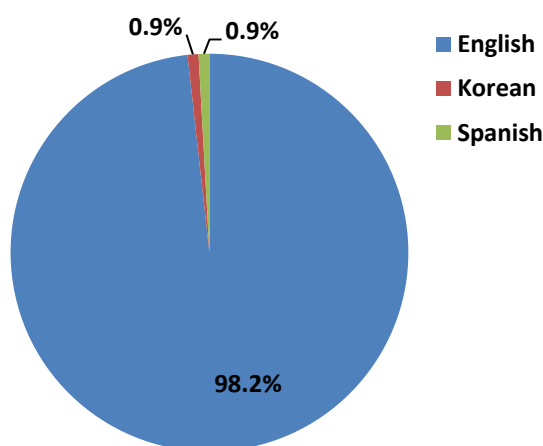
The paratransit rider survey was mailed directly to paratransit customers and caregivers and included a return envelope with pre-paid postage. The mailing list included all active clients (or caregivers) on the RTA paratransit client list, approximately 600 clients. Additionally, riders and caregivers could fill out the survey online from November 1 - December 12, 2016. In total, 228 valid surveys were returned and analyzed an overall response rate of approximately 38 percent. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix D.

### Survey Language

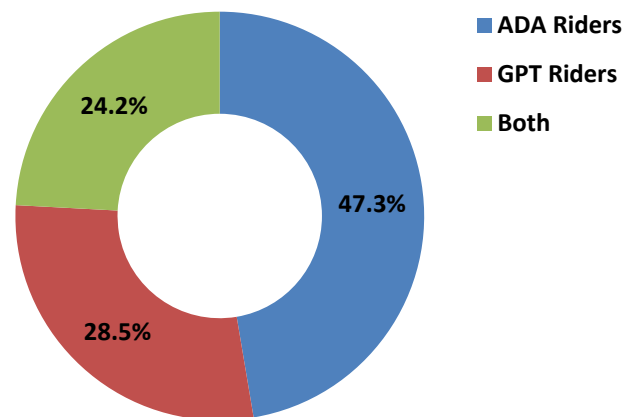
Surveys were made available in three languages which are predominant in the area: English, Spanish, and Korean. Of the 228 valid surveys collected, 98.2 percent were in English, 0.9 percent were in Spanish, and 0.9 percent were in Korean. This is represented in Figure 3-21.

Survey respondents were asked several questions pertaining to their use of RTA's ADA and general paratransit services, the purpose of their trips, frequency of use and length of time using the service. The first question asked participants to indicate which type of rider they are, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rider, General Paratransit (GPT) rider, or both. Two hundred and seven out of the 228 survey participants answered this question. The majority indicated they were ADA riders (47.3%), 28 indicated they were GPT riders and 24.2 percent said they were both ADA and GPT riders. Figure 3-22 shows the type of rider that survey respondents identified as.

**Figure 3-21: Language of Returned Surveys**



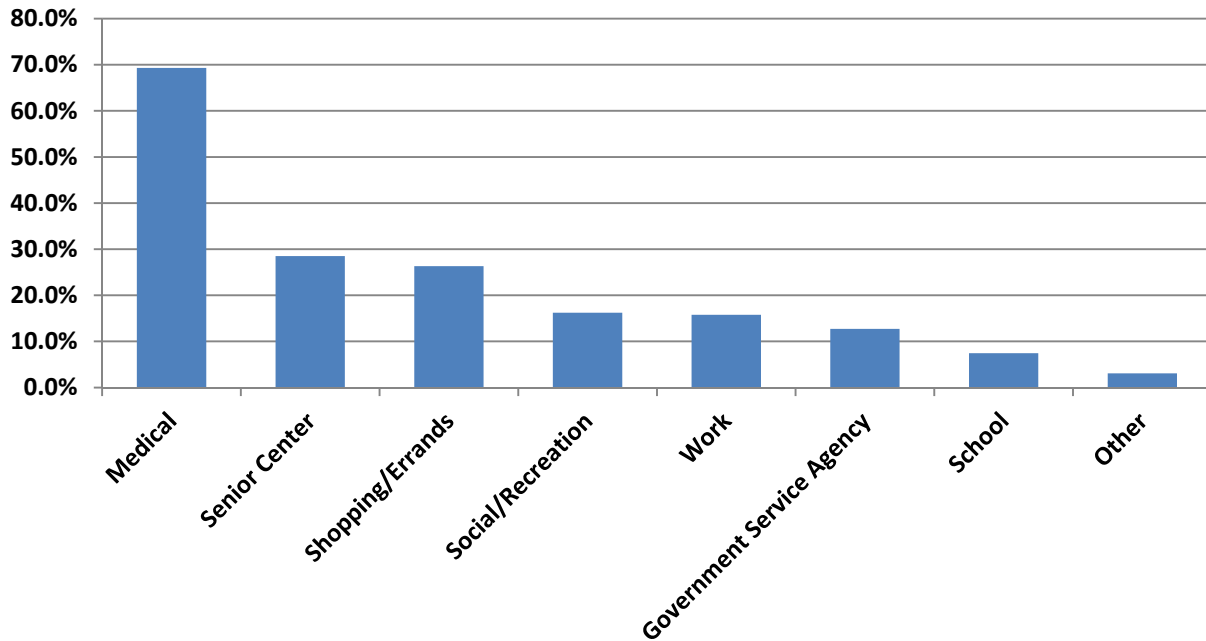
**Figure 3-22: Type of Rider**



The survey asked riders what they normally used the service for. Participants could select as many trip purposes as appropriate. Statistics were derived by dividing the total number of responses for each trip purpose by the total number respondents. Almost 70 percent of

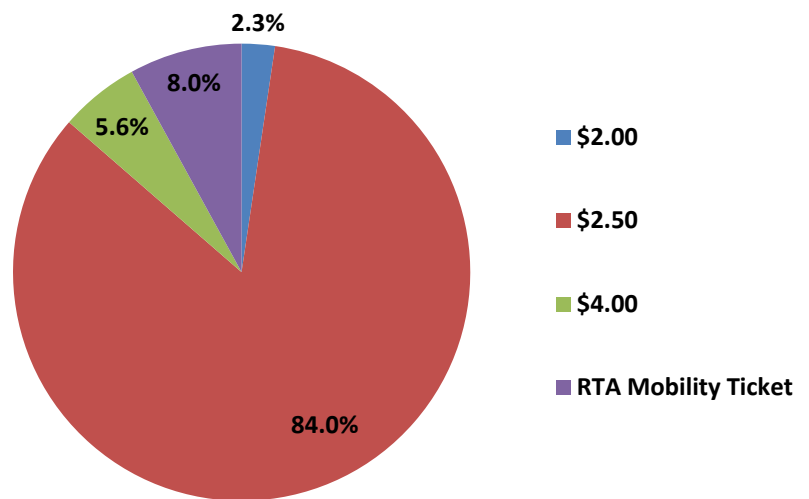
trip purposes were for medical services. Trips to senior centers (28%), and shopping and errands (26%) were the next most selected answers. Full results for this question are reflected in Figure 3-23.

**Figure 3-23: Trip Purpose**



The survey asked what fare riders normally paid for a one-way trip. Eighty-four percent indicated they normally paid \$2.50 per one-way trip. Full results may be viewed in Figure 3-24.

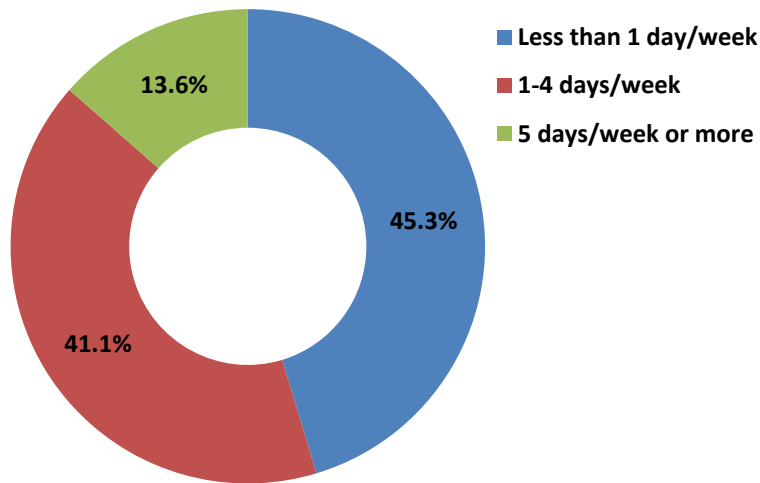
**Figure 3-24: Fare Type**



The survey also inquired how often survey participants rode this service. Most participants indicated they rode less than five days a week, 45.3 percent selected less than one day a week and 41.1 percent selected one to four days a week. Only 13.6 percent indicated they rode five days a week or more. Full results are on display in Figure 3-25.

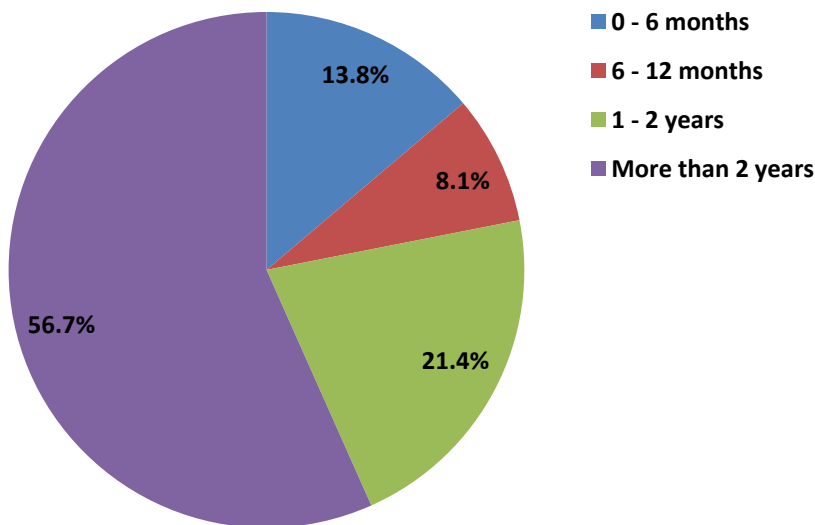


**Figure 3-25: Rider Frequency**



The survey asked how long participants had been using the service. Fifty-seven percent of survey participants indicated they had been using the service more than two years. Full results are shown in Figure 3-26.

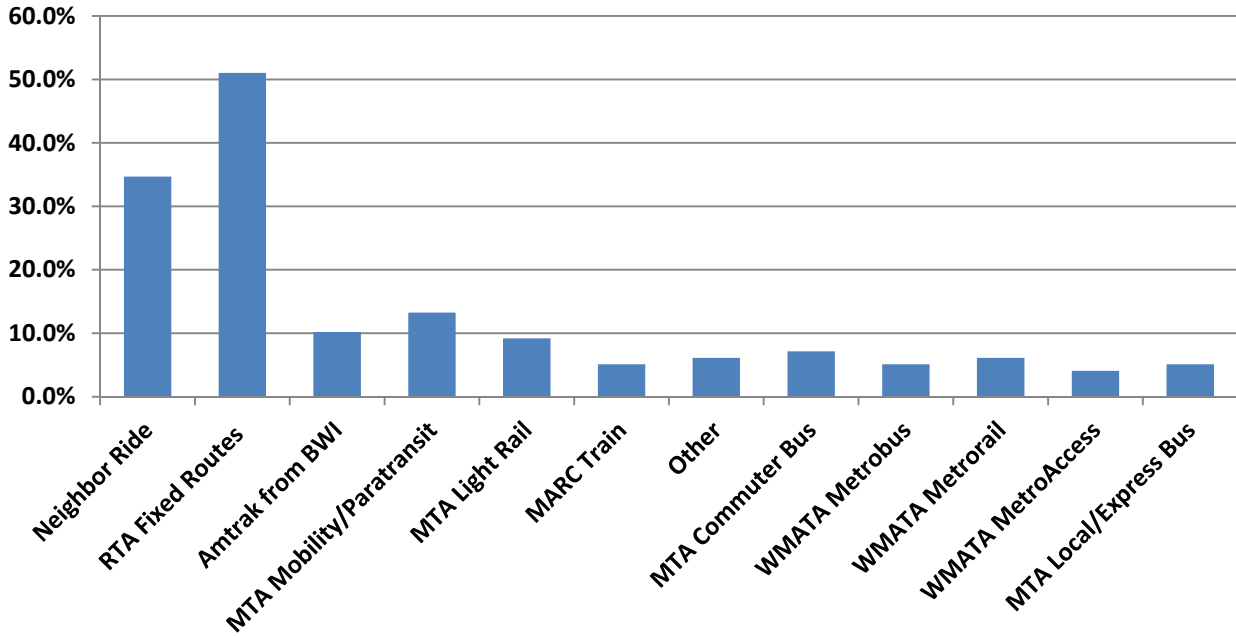
**Figure 3-26: Duration of Use**



Survey participants were asked to select the other transportation services they use from a list of public transit services in the region. Statistics for this question were calculated by dividing the number of responses per transportation service by the number of individuals

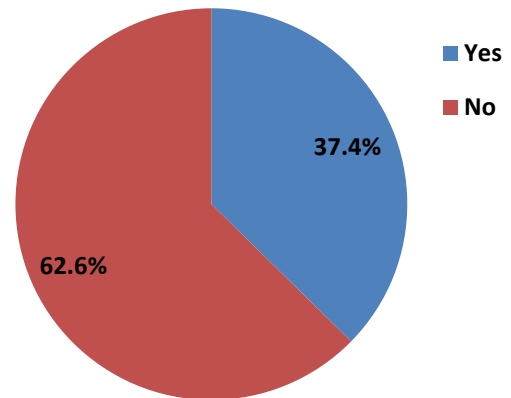
that responded. RTA fixed-routes (51%) and Neighbor Ride (34.7%) were the two most frequently selected transportation services. The full results are available in Figure 3-27.

**Figure 3-27: Other Transportation Services Used**



The survey asked if there were specific destinations that participants needed to go on a regular basis that transit does not serve. One hundred and eighty two people answered this question; a little over half (62.6%) indicated that transit does cover the areas they needed to travel on a regular basis. Figure 3-28 illustrates the responses to this question. Thirty seven percent indicated there were places they regularly needed to travel that they could not reach by using transit. Table 3-3 provides the comments participants shared when asked to describe the destinations they could not reach by using transit. The majority of places people said that they could not reach were related to medical services. Some of the destinations in this list have some form of RTA service but respondents indicated that they were not able to reach the places there that they needed to go.

**Figure 3-28: Destinations Not Served**

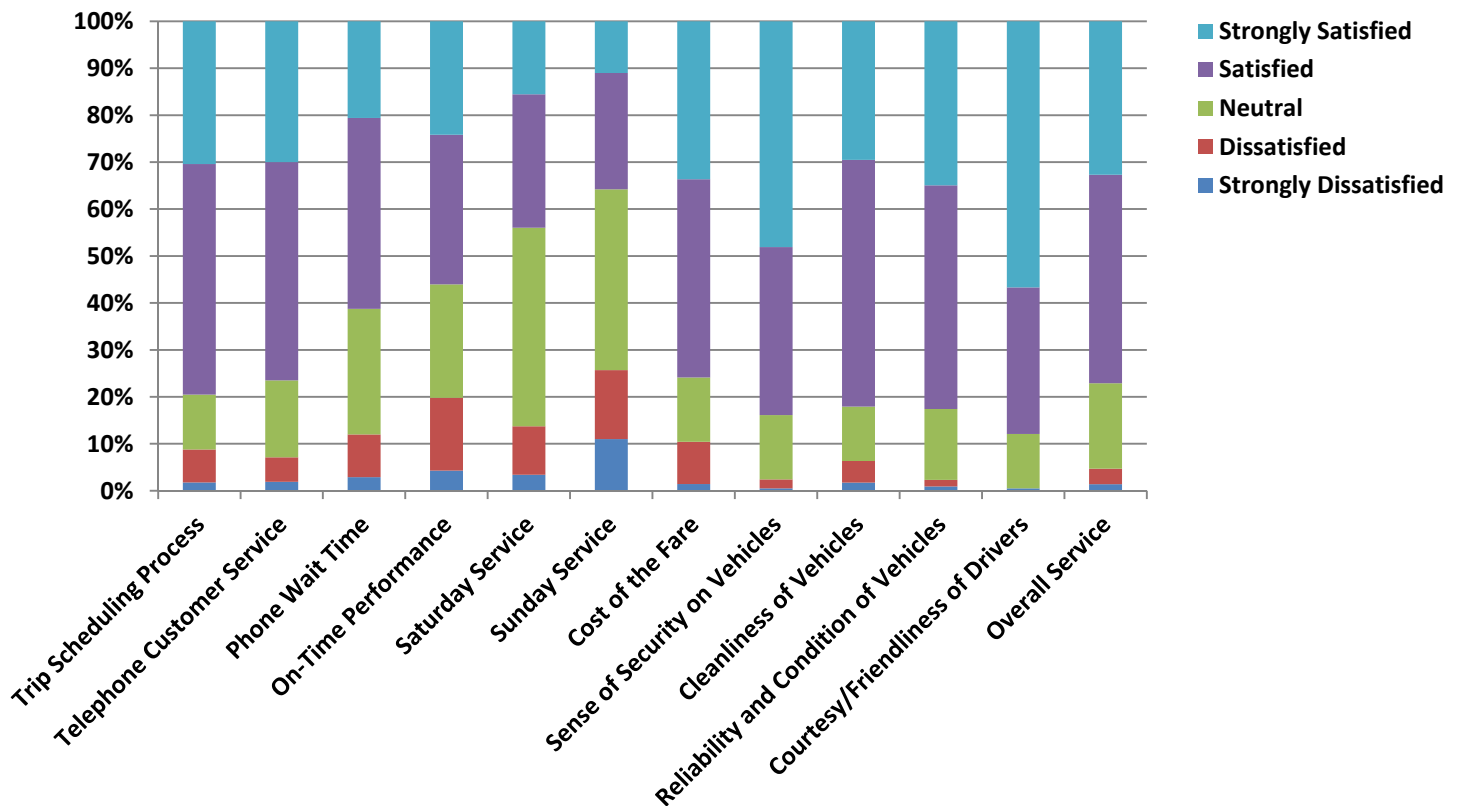


**Table 3-3: Destinations Not Served by Transit**

	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Category/ Location</b>
1.	Baltimore City, Prince George's and Baltimore Counties	Baltimore
2.	Baltimore City, Silver Spring, and Washington D.C.	Baltimore
3.	Baltimore County Medical Offices	Baltimore
4.	John Hopkins Clinic in Baltimore	Baltimore
5.	I want to go to East Columbia Library. 6600 Cradlerock Way in Owen Brown at 6:30 pm and return 9:00 pm 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month to attend the World Lang Café Meeting	East Columbia
6.	50+ Center in Elkridge, 5660 Furnace Road	Elkridge
7.	Church on Sundays	Faith
8.	Columbia Church in Ellicott City. This service will not transport to this location on Sundays.	Faith
9.	Howard County 1 <sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church	Faith
10.	Nearby Hindu temples for worship and senior programs like yoga and seminars on health	Faith
11.	St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church. Columbia Medical Campus, Charter Drive in Columbia, MD. Medical Buildings	Faith
12.	Glen Burnie, 21061. I moved to this area but RTA doesn't serve this area so therefore I have to get a cab home.	Glen Burnie
13.	Glen Burnie, MD every two weeks to visit my son, who has a mental illness and is in a group home.	Glen Burnie
14.	Bayview Asthma Clinic	Medical
15.	Eye doctor. Internist	Medical
16.	Germantown- medical services	Medical
17.	Giant Pharmacies for Rx's	Medical
18.	Hospital and doctors not in Howard County	Medical
19.	Kaiser	Medical
20.	Omni eye specialist in Baltimore	Medical
21.	Rehab. Activities Center	Medical
22.	RTA fixed-routes do not go to my medical doctor	Medical
23.	University of Maryland Hospital	Medical
24.	Wish I could go beyond Howard County. Needed to go to Annapolis for Prosthetics, was unable to	Medical
25.	Baines Senior Center	Senior Center
26.	Grocery shopping	Shopping
27.	Local Walmart	Shopping
28.	Market and mall	Shopping
29.	Glenwood, MD at 6 a.m.	Time
30.	Sunday travel	Time
31.	From drop off point in Laurel to home in West Laurel	West Laurel
32.	Deaf event outside of Howard County	Miscellaneous
33.	Maplelawn	Miscellaneous
34.	Nursing- Nama (Mom) Howard Co ling!!	Miscellaneous

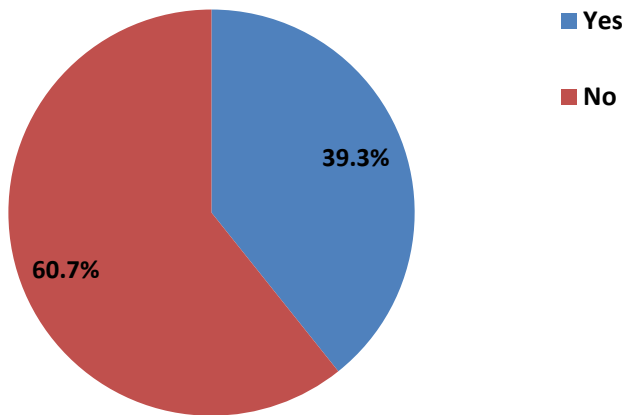
A major component of the survey concerned rider satisfaction levels with various components of RTA Mobility paratransit service. They were asked to rate their satisfaction from “strongly dissatisfied” to “strongly satisfied” for twelve aspects of RTA Mobility paratransit service and their overall satisfaction with RTA Mobility paratransit service. Overall, riders reported a high level of satisfaction with the service. The most dissatisfaction was found with the lack of Saturday and Sunday service, and on-time performance. Full results may be viewed in Figure 3-29.

**Figure 3-29: Rider Satisfaction with RTA Service by Component**

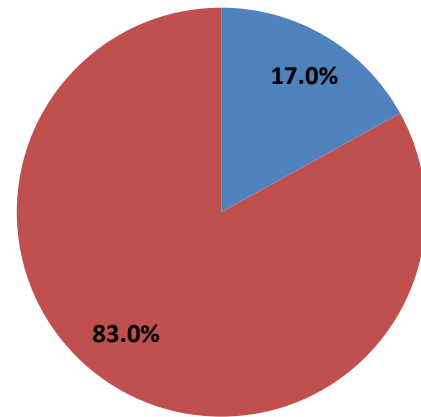


The survey sought to learn more about RTA Mobility paratransit riders. Several questions were asked to identify characteristics of RTA Mobility paratransit riders. To this end, the survey asked about their ability to drive a private vehicle. A majority (61%) of respondents indicated they did not have a driver’s license. A large majority of respondents (83%) stated they did not have a car and of the respondents that reported having a car, only eight respondents reported that the car was available for the trip. This information is displayed graphically in Figure 3-30, Figure 3-31 and Figure 3-32.

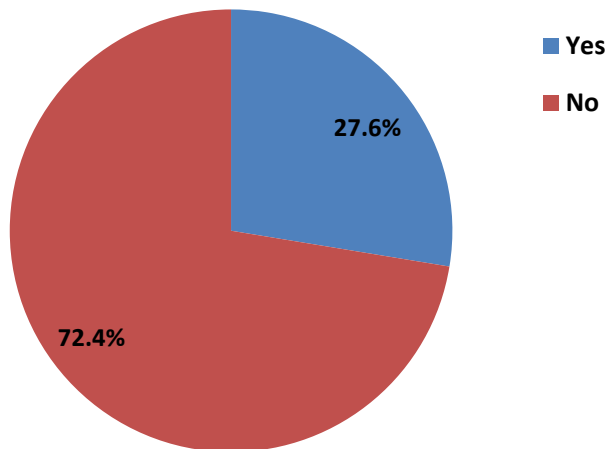
**Figure 3-30: Driver's License**



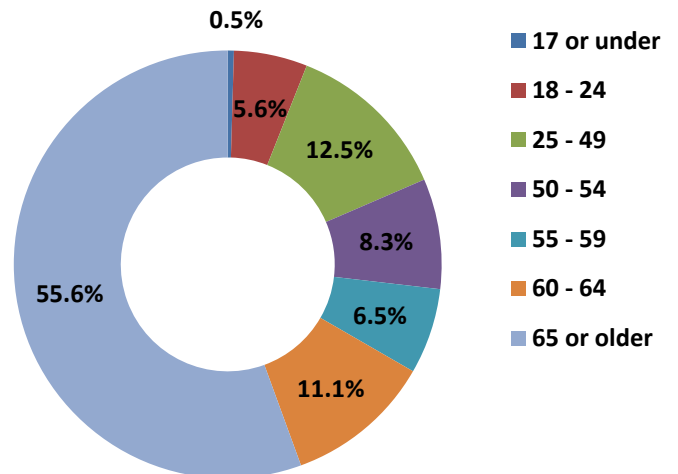
**Figure 3-31: Own Car**



**Figure 3-32: If Yes, Was a Car Available for This Trip?**



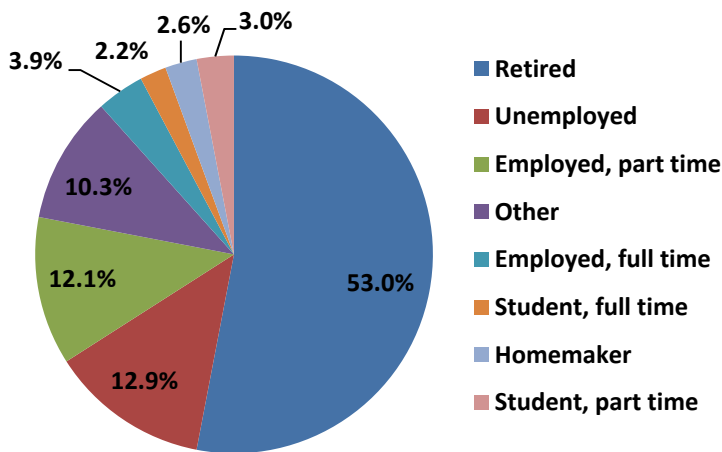
**Figure 3-33: Age of Riders**



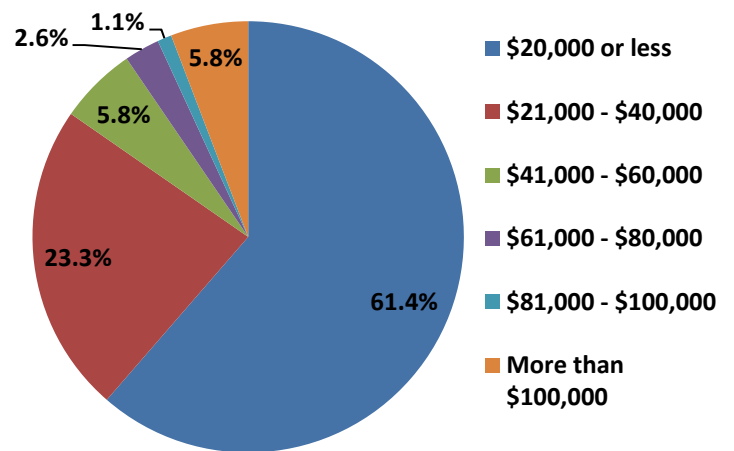
The survey then asked a series of questions to obtain demographic information pertaining to RTA Mobility paratransit riders. Regarding age, a plurality of respondents marked they were 65 or older, or 55.6 percent of the 216 participants that answered this question. Additionally, 12.5 percent of respondents indicated they were between the ages of 25 and 49 and 11.1 percent reported they were between the ages of 60 and 64. The full results can be found in Figure 3-33.

The survey continued by asking riders about their employment status and household income. Since multiple responses could be recorded for this question employment status, statistics were derived by dividing the total number of responses for each employment status by the total number of responses. More than half (53%) of respondents indicated they were retired, 12.9 percent were unemployed, and 12.1 percent were employed part-time. Full results can be seen in Figure 3-34. Additionally, a plurality of those who marked “other” indicated they were disabled. In terms of income, over sixty percent of paratransit riders have an annual income of less than \$20,000. Figure 3-35 provides of the responses for household income.

**Figure 3-34: Employment Status**



**Figure 3-35: Annual Household Income**



The survey continued by asking RTA Mobility paratransit riders about which ethnic group/groups they identified with. Since multiple responses could be recorded for this question, statistics were derived by dividing the total number of responses for each ethnicity by the total number of responses. Paratransit riders reported a higher percent of Caucasian ethnicity than the fixed route riders. More than half (51.7%) indicated they were Caucasian/white, 39.2 percent said they were African American/black, and 8.1 percent indicated they were Asian. Full results are displayed in

**Figure 3-36: Ethnic Background**

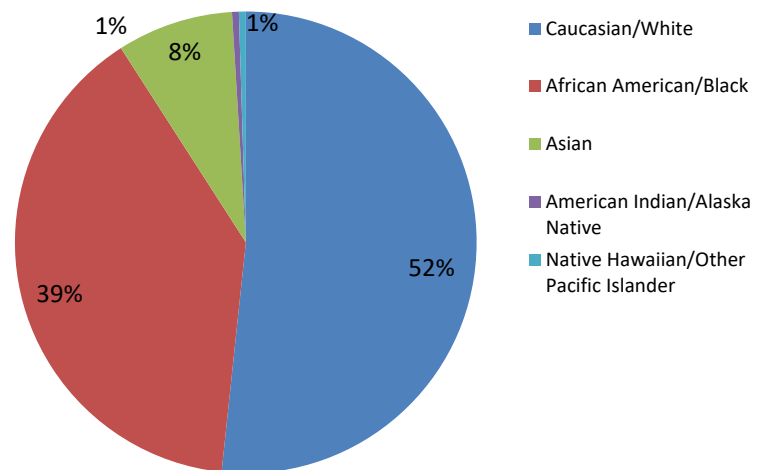
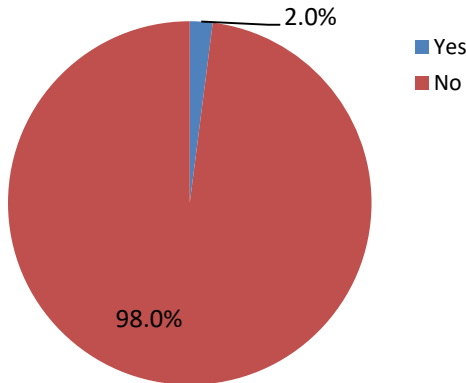


Figure 3-36.

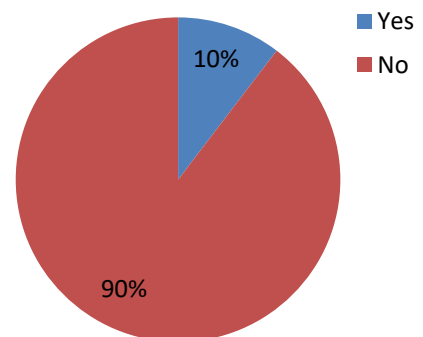
The survey asked whether or not RTA Mobility paratransit riders were of Hispanic or Latino origins. Ten and 2/10 percent of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino and 98 percent claimed they were not. This is shown in Figure 3-37.

**Figure 3-37: Status as a Hispanic or Latino**



The survey then asked several questions regarding the languages RTA Mobility paratransit riders spoke and their proficiency in English. First, respondents were asked if they spoke a language other than English at home. Ten percent indicated they spoke a language other than English at home and 89.6 percent indicated they do not. This is seen in Figure 3-38.

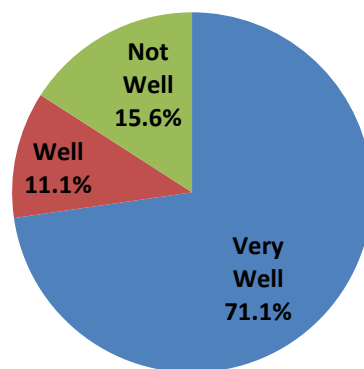
**Figure 3-38: Language Spoken Other than English**



RTA Mobility paratransit riders were asked which other language they spoke at home. Korean was the most commonly cited language, followed by Spanish and German. Full results can be viewed in Table 3-4.

Those who indicated they spoke a language other than English at home were asked how well they spoke English; 45 respondents answered this question. Seventy one percent said they spoke English “very well”, 11.1 percent stated they spoke it “well”, 15.6 percent said “not well”, and 2.2 percent, or one respondent, indicated “not at all”. This is shown in Figure 3-39.

**Figure 3-39: English Fluency**



**Table 3-4: Other Spoken Languages**

Language
Korean
Spanish
German
Hindi
Punjabi
Tamil
Ukrainian
Albanian
Krio
Telugu
Akan
American Sign Language (ASL)
French, Basaa
Sinhalese
Swahili
Urdu
Vietnamese

## Rider Suggestions and Comments

A chief aim of the survey was to ascertain RTA Mobility paratransit rider opinions about RTA service. The survey provided a space for respondents to provide open ended comments about their experience with RTA Mobility paratransit services. All of the comments are offered in Appendix E. A majority of the comments (33) were requests to expand either the service hours or service area. Some of the comments received about expanding RTA Mobility paratransit services are presented below:

*“Public transportation is not adequate to meet the needs of those who cannot drive. I am legally blind. I am very limited in looking for jobs and traveling around the area by the bus system, it does not have enough routes and there are not frequent enough pickups. It often requires transfers and takes all day to do simple errands. I wish we had a connection to DC/MD metro stations.”*

*“Need to improve overall coverage of the city of Laurel and improve the frequency of current routes.”*

*“The limitations on crossing county lines in paratransit living in Howard County severely limits ability to go to work opportunities when I can't go to Baltimore County on paratransit to be useful, there needs to be more flexibility. Also, their windows are so large as to not be useful for part-time employment. Not reliable enough for start and end times.”*



There were 25 comments complementing RTA Mobility paratransit services. RTA Mobility paratransit riders are grateful for services and complemented drivers and service in general. Some of the comments complementing RTA Mobility paratransit services are presented below:

*“As I have indicated, the RTA is a lifesaver for me. Due to my vision loss I HAD to stop driving. I have found the phone people, order takers, dispatch people, drivers to be of the highest quality. I have observed the kindness of the drivers toward wheelchair bound individuals, which goes way beyond just basic kindness. And much shown to me as well. Thank you all!”*

*“I am very pleased with your service. My husband who is actually the rider has early dementia and is never upset or nervous about the ride.”*

*“I don't know how I would get around if it wasn't for them. I am in a wheel chair and riding with RTA gives me a sense of control and security. Thank God for them.”*

Many of the remaining comments centered on improving scheduling and wait-times. The phone system and customer service also had feedback and suggestions for improvements.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

Input from the broader community was also solicited. This was accomplished with a community survey and an online interactive mapping tool called Wikimap.

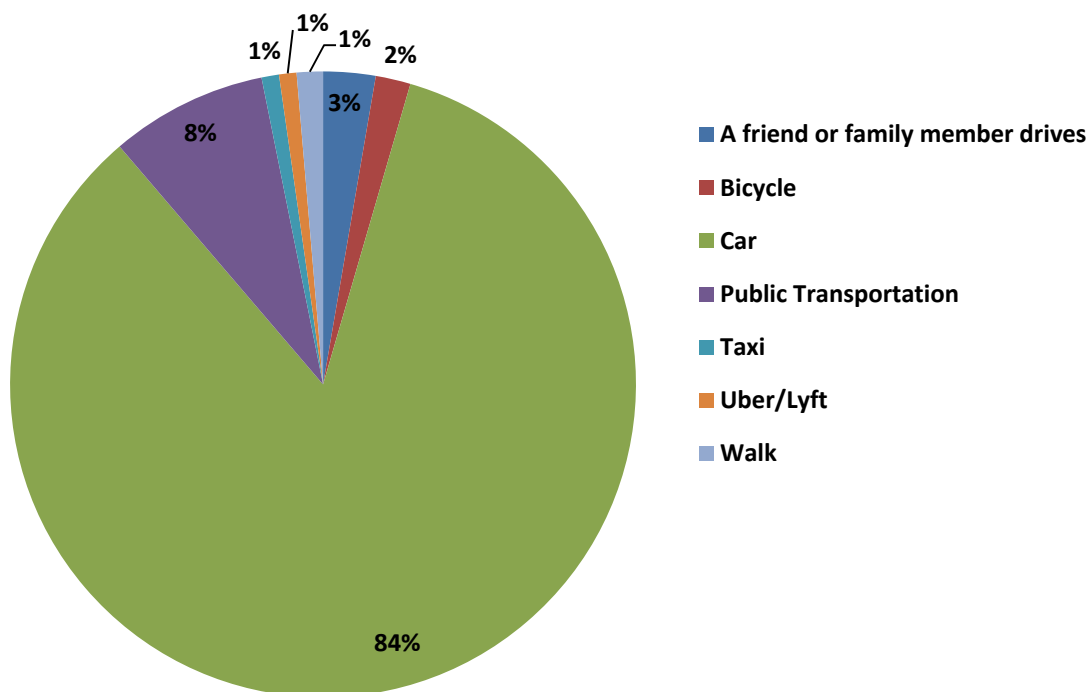
### Community Survey

The community survey was available as a paper survey and an online survey. The paper survey was provided through the public meetings and partner outlets. Members of the Central Maryland community could fill out the survey online from October 18 - December 6, 2016. Members of the public were notified of the online survey through the public meetings, government and non-profit agencies, and the project website. In total, 216 valid surveys were submitted and analyzed. A copy of the community survey is provided in Appendix F.

#### *Public Transit Use and Knowledge*

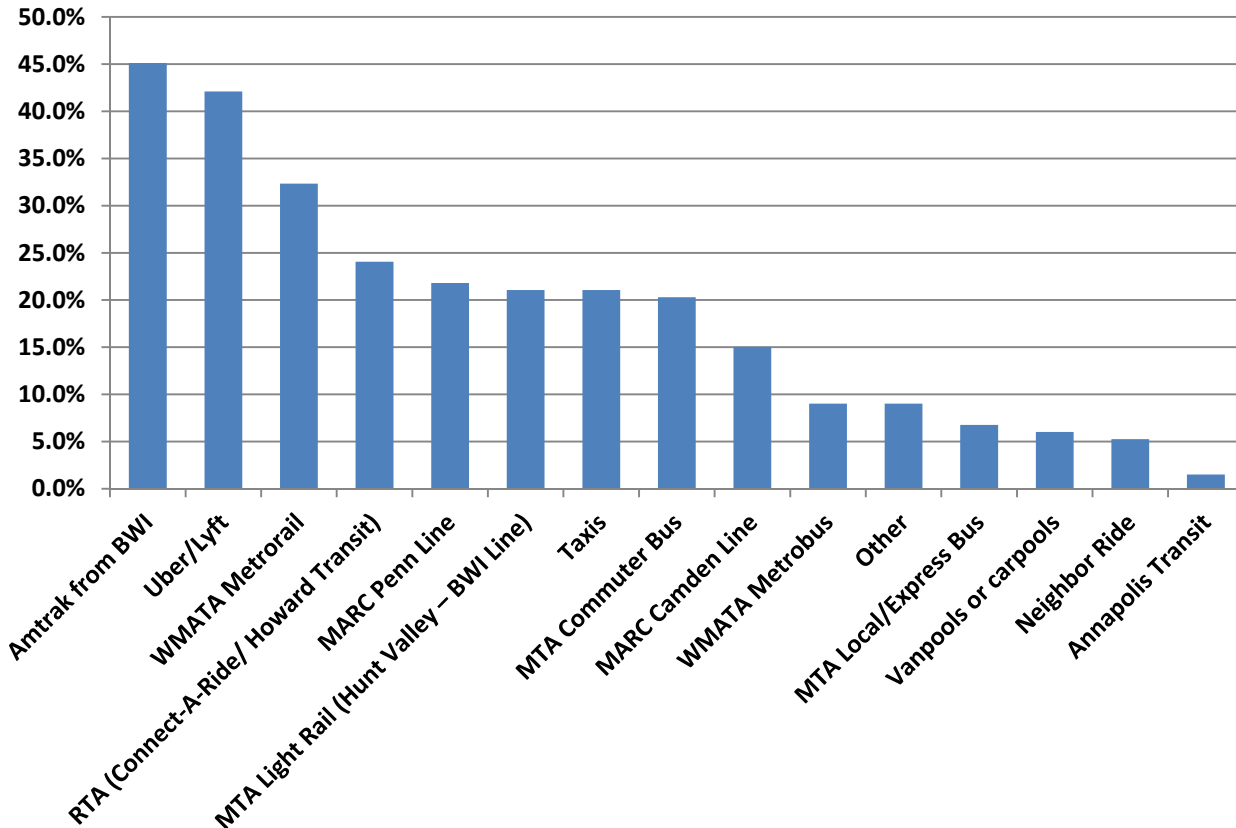
Survey respondents were asked several questions pertaining to their use of and knowledge about public transportation in Central Maryland. The first question asked participants to indicate their primary mode of transportation. Eighty-four percent of survey participants indicated that a car was their primary mode of transportation. Figure 3-40 shows transportation modes which survey participants reported using.

**Figure 3-40: Primary Transportation Mode**



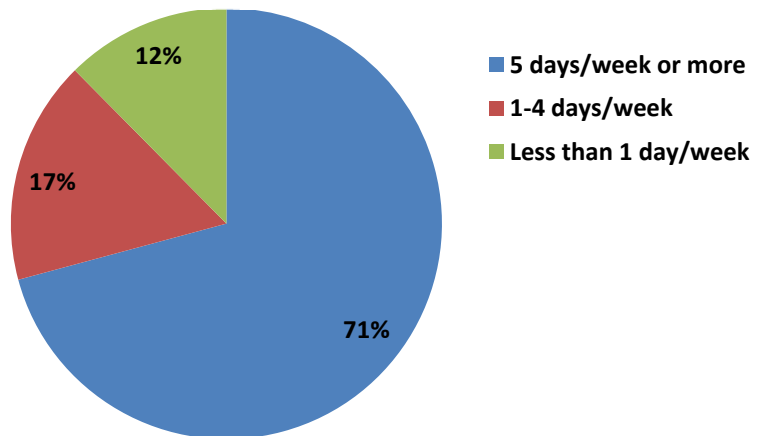
The survey then asked which, if any, of the available public transportation services participants used. Since multiple responses could be recorded for this question, statistics were derived by dividing the total number of responses for each service by the total number of responses. The top three transportation services used were Amtrak from BWI (45%), Uber/Lyft (42%) and WMATA Metrorail (32%). RTA was fourth with 24 percent of participants indicating they used this service. A plurality of riders indicated they used more than one type of transportation service. Full results may be viewed in Figure 3-41.

**Figure 3-41: Transportation Services Used**



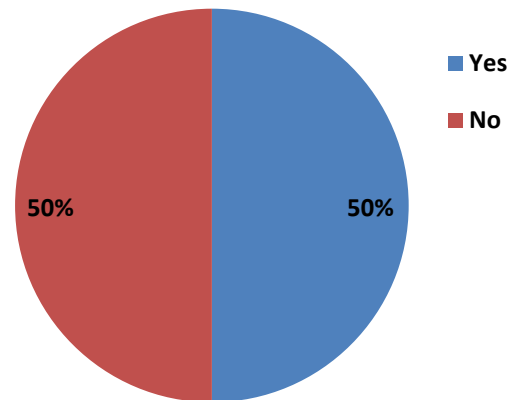
**Figure 3-42: Frequency of Transit Use**

The survey inquired about the frequency of participant’s use of public transit. One hundred and thirty seven participants out of 216 answered this question. The majority of participants that answered this question indicated they used public transportation services five days a week or more (71%). Full results are on display in Figure3-42.



The survey asked participants if there were specific destinations they needed to go on a regular basis that transit did not serve. The response was split fifty-fifty. Half said there were destinations they needed to go that were not served by transit and the other half said there were not destinations they needed to go that were not served. The full results are shown in Figure 3-43.

**Figure 3-43: Destinations Not Served by Transit**



The survey provided a space for participants to indicate places they needed to go that were not served by transit. An analysis of these responses found that most people wanted to make connections to nearby metropolitan systems like the Washington, D.C. and Baltimore transit systems. Baltimore, including BWI, was mentioned 14 times as a desirable destination. Washington D.C. and Fort Meade were both mentioned 9 times. Several destinations requested in the comments were connections to other transit systems, especially rail, including Baltimore, D.C., Greenbelt Metro Station, College Park, and Silver Spring. A full list of comments provided to this question can be found in Appendix G.

**Survey Participant Information**

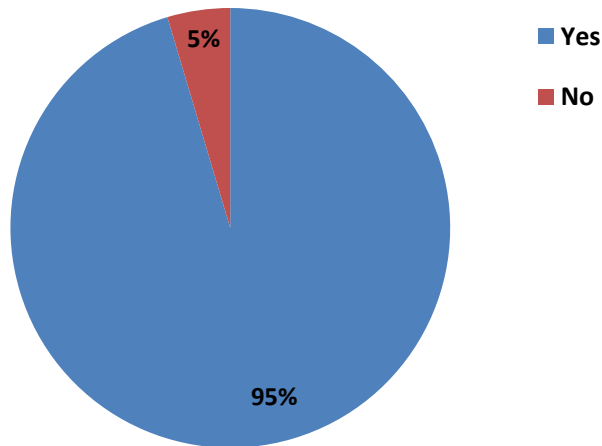
The survey sought to learn more about the community members participating in the survey. Several questions were asked to identify characteristics of participants. To this end, the survey first asked about participant’s zip codes. The majority of participants were from the Columbia and Ellicott City area. Full results are shown in Table 3-5 below.

**Table 3-5: Location of Respondents**

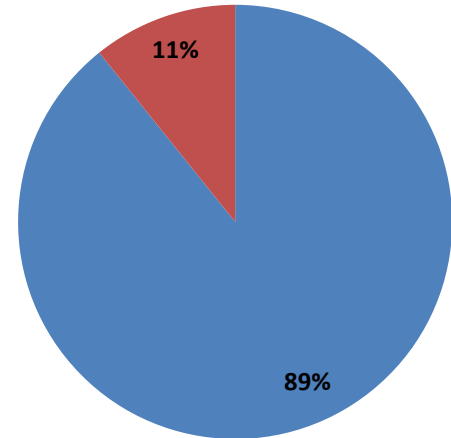
Number of Respondents	City	Number of Respondents	City	Number of Respondents	City
103	Columbia	2	Millersville	1	Pasadena
34	Ellicott City	2	Severn	1	Brooklyn
7	Laurel	2	Catonsville	1	Frederick
6	Jessup	2	Woodbine		
5	Annapolis	1	Arnold		
4	Elkridge	1	Clarksville		
4	Odenton	1	Crownsville		
3	Hanover	1	Edgewater		
3	Glen Burnie	1	Marriottsville		
2	Baltimore	1	Crofton		

The next questions about survey participants asked about the availability of travel by private vehicle. As indicated in Figure 3-44 and Figure 3-45, 95 percent of participants answered that yes, they did have a driver’s license and 89 percent indicated they have a car available to drive on a regular basis. This is in contrast to the results from the rider survey where 48 percent reported having a driver’s license and only 15 percent reported having cars.

**Figure 3-44: Driver’s License**

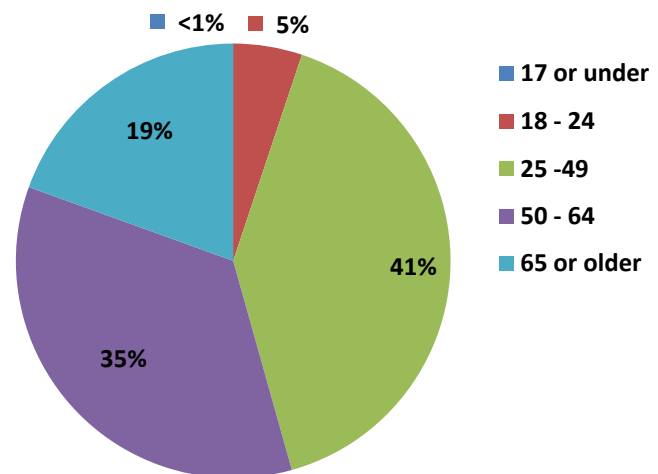


**Figure 3-45: Car Ownership**



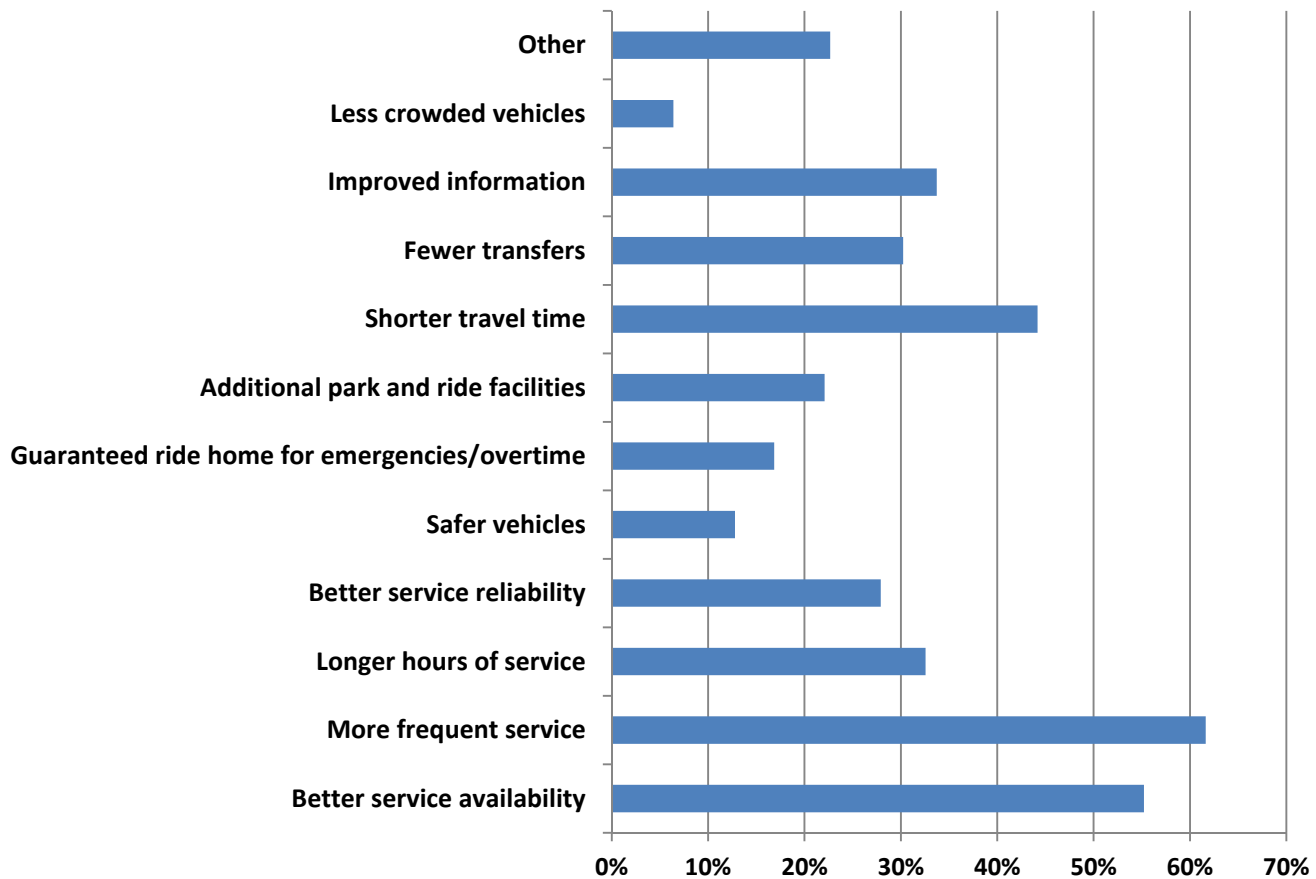
The survey asked participants to indicate their age range. Regarding age, 41 percent of respondents marked they were between the ages of 25 and 49. Additionally, 35 percent of respondents indicated they were between the ages of 50 and 64, 19 percent reported they were 65 or older and five percent reported being between the ages of 18 and 24. Full results can be seen in Figure 3-46.

**Figure 3-46: Age Distribution**



The survey then asked participants if they do not currently use public transportation, what improvements would be needed for them to ride public transportation. Since multiple responses could be recorded for this question, statistics were derived by dividing the total number of responses for each listed improvement by the total number of responses. The most popular answer selected was “more frequent service” which was selected 62 percent of the time by non-riders. Full results can be seen in Figure 3-47.

Figure 3-47: Suggested Transit Improvements

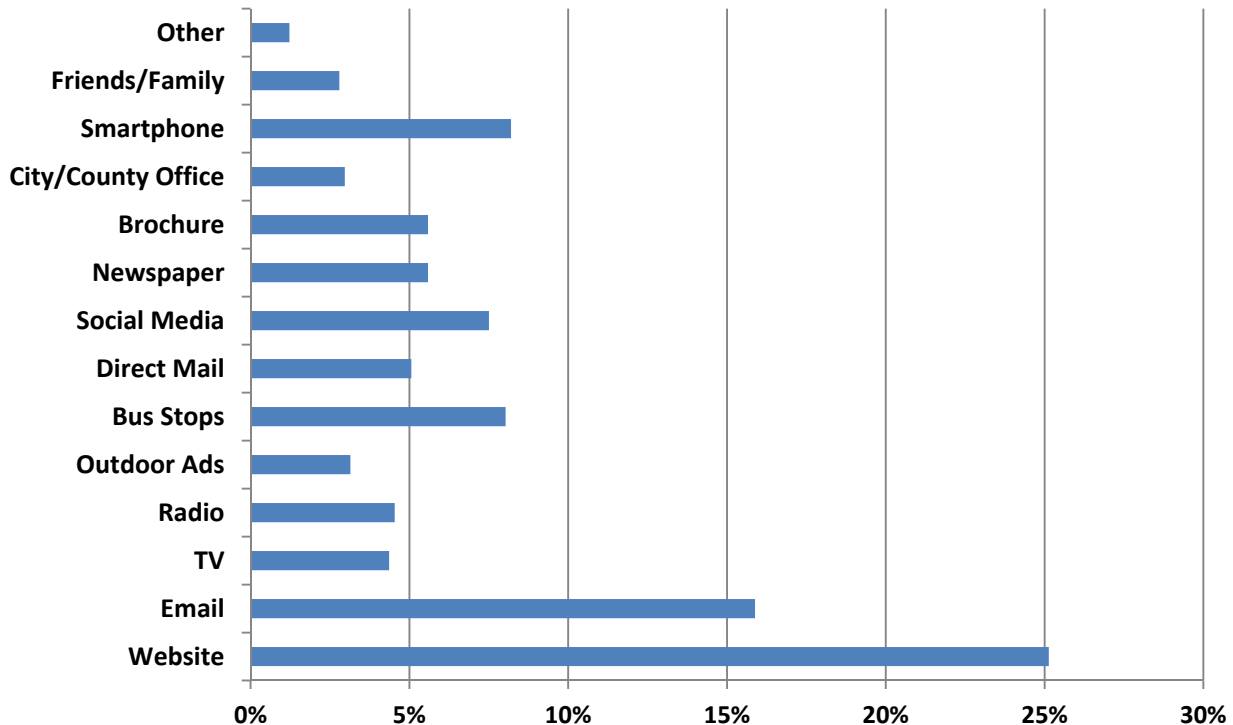


Additionally, 23 percent marked other and provided comments on improvements they would like to see in the public transit system. These comments, as received, are provided below:

- An actual, usable method to travel from Columbia (21044) to DC (Metro-Rail) within a reasonable amount of time during commuting hours.
- Better coverage of where I need to go.
- Information.
- Ability to safely walk and wait at pickup points.
- Rail between Ft. Meade and Annapolis. Rebuild Annapolis rail with connections to Baltimore, Washington, D.C.
- Safety once on the vehicle.
- Transport from Howard County to UMD.
- A train (light rail) from Columbia to Baltimore.
- Pedestrian and bike access to park and ride; better connectivity for bike to transit.

- Improved bicycle infrastructure that allows me to safely reach bus/metro stops from where I live.
- I use it for work.
- It is not a matter of improvements needed. My work and life transportation requirements do not allow me to consider public transportation.
- Support for disabled adult riders.
- Shelter during waits.
- Service within one mile of my house.
- More safety on vehicle.
- Run the RTA buses earlier in the morning and more often.
- Better and safer mobility for families with small kids.
- Better tools for figuring out how to get from point A to point B.
- New direct destinations.
- I use public transportation, why am I being forced to answer this question?
- Too numerous to get into on this form.
- Bus from Glen Burnie to Annapolis with no stops; light rail from Glen Burnie to Baltimore with no stops.
- Vehicle locator systems and transfer passes to other systems.
- Does not stop anywhere near my home.
- I would not use your loud bad air polluting traffic jamming bus.
- Do not anticipate using public transportation.
- Better bicycle routes from Arundel Mills to MARC station.
- Sheltered stop locations.
- Knowledge about the system.
- Local Howard County transportation is generally a waste of my tax dollars.
- Metro easily accessible to major cities like Baltimore and Washington, D.C.
- None- that's why we moved out here.
- Free use of transit for persons age 65+ during peak hours
- I do not think Public transportation in a suburban neighborhood is acceptable since it will ruin the quality of life/rural feel. Not a good use of our tax dollars.

The survey asked participants how they would prefer to receive information about public transportation. This question has multiple responses that could be recorded; statistics were derived by dividing the total number of responses for each listed improvement by the total number of responses. Receiving information via a website was the most frequently selected response, 25 percent . The next highest response was receiving information via email at 18%. The full range of answers is available in Figure 3-48.

**Figure 3-48: Information Dissemination Preferences**

Only a small number of respondents selected other and provided suggestions for alternative methods of communication. These suggestions included:

- Application similar to NextBus
- Laurel Leader
- Columbia Village Centers
- Office on Aging and Independence Mobility Guide for Seniors
- Special needs community channels

The survey asked participants about their employment status and household income. Fifty-seven percent of participants reported they were employed full-time, 23 percent were retired, and 9 percent were employed part-time. Full results for this question are illustrated in Figure 3-49.

For household income, 52 percent of participants indicated they had an annual household income of more than \$100,000 and 18 percent claimed between \$81,000 and \$100,000. The full results are on display in Figure 3-50.



Figure 3-49: Employment Status

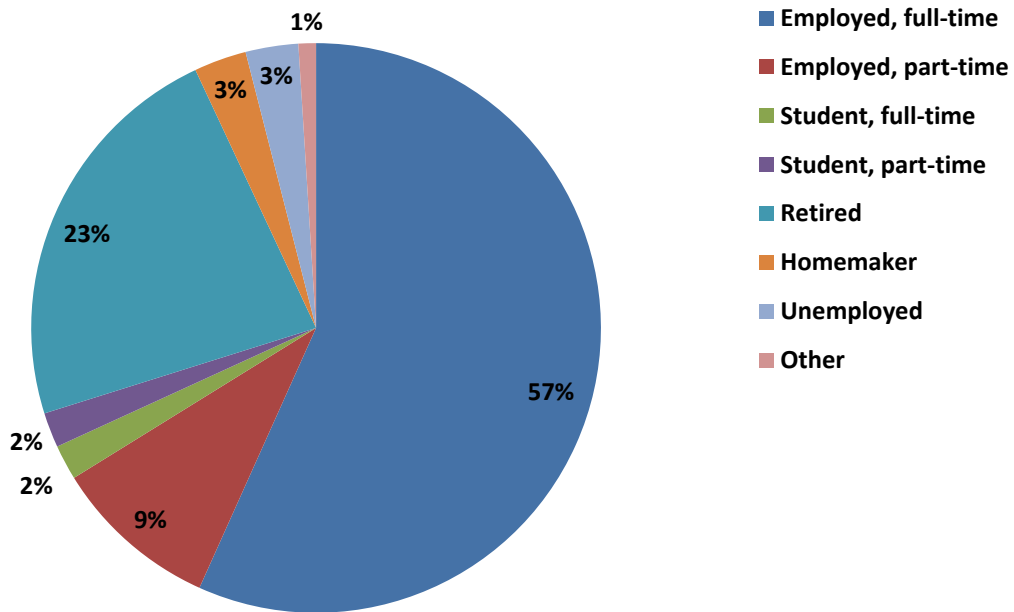
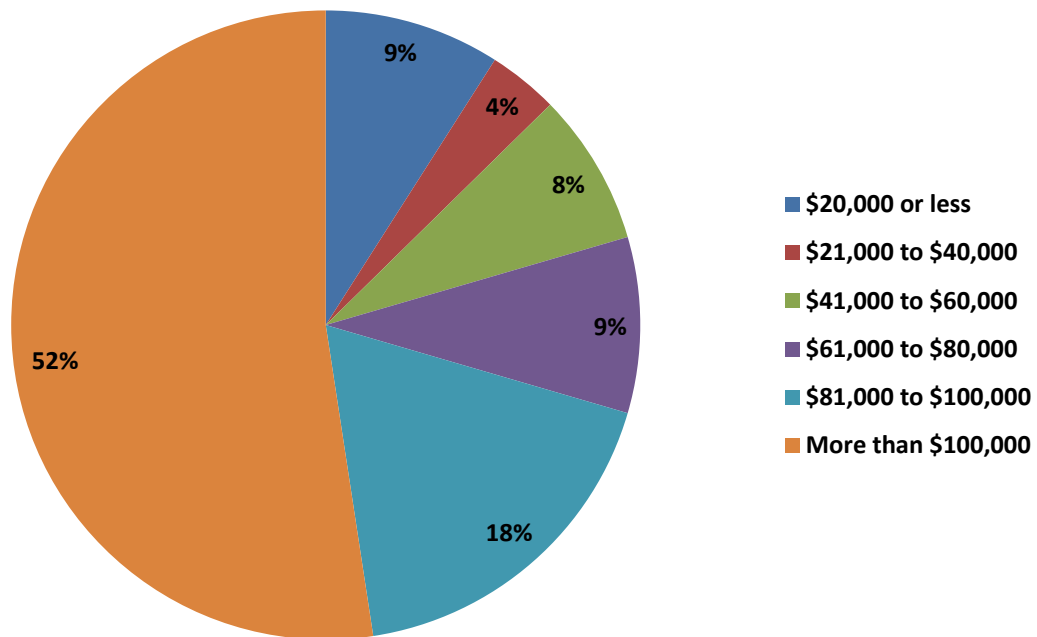
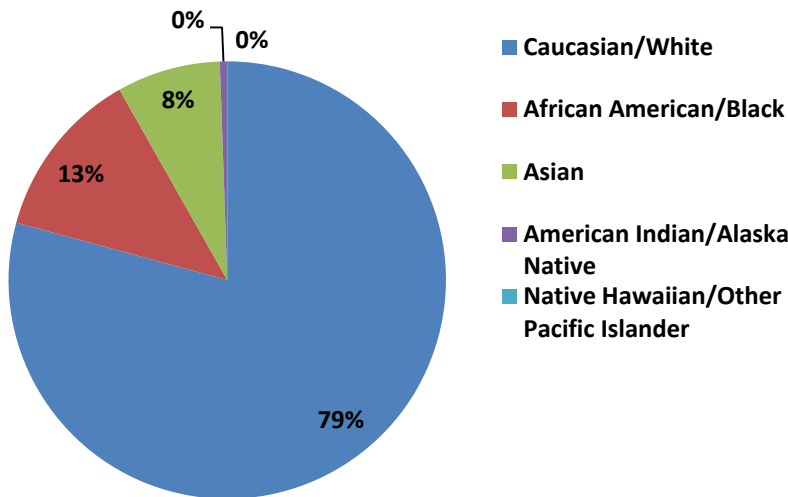


Figure 3-50: Annual Household Income

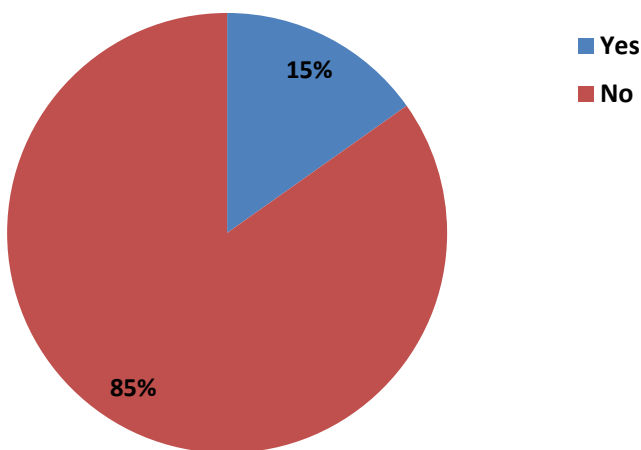


Respondents were asked to provide some demographic information. As illustrated in Figure 3-51, Figure 3-52 and Figure 3-53, the majority of participants reported they were Caucasian (79%), not of Hispanic or Latino origin (93%), and that they spoke English at home (85%).

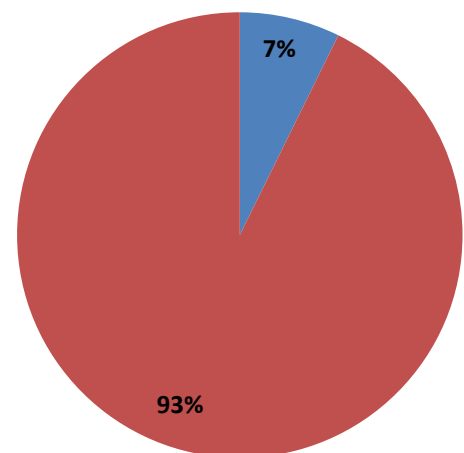
**Figure 3-51: Ethnic Background**



**Figure 3-52: Hispanic or Latino**



**Figure 3-53: Language Spoken Other than English**



### **Community Suggestions and Comments**

Seventy-seven comments were submitted by 216 survey participants. The majority of comments focused on a need to improve services (45 comments) related to scheduling like expanding services (13 comments) and increasing the frequency of buses (8 comments). Several riders commented about the need to transfer and connect to Washington, D.C. and Baltimore transit systems. Following is a sample of some comments about the need to expand service:

*"I would like to be able to take public transportation rather than to drive alone. Job opportunities at Ft Meade and in Baltimore have no public transportation att. What transportation there is would take many transfers and over 3 hours, which is not practical."*

*"It's in a sad state in Anne Arundel. Buses run once an hour on major job corridors like the 17 in the BWI area and the 14 on the Ritchie Highway corridor, connecting the state's major city the state's Capital."*

*"I live only 20 miles from my work; but it takes almost three hours of my day to get there and back. It negatively affects my family and personal life, and adds extra stressors"*

The comments are grouped into topic areas and are available for review in Appendix H.

### **Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) Public Transportation Choice Study: Attitudes and Behavior of Baltimore Area Residents with Access to Transit**

Another source of information about public perceptions of transit in the Central Maryland region is a survey conducted concurrently with the TDP by the BMC. This study surveyed the general public regarding attitudes and behavior of residents with regard to transit usage. It found that the RTA currently has both low usage and low name recognition. The study found that the RTA, in comparison to other locally-operated transit services, is rated low with regard to availability, is seen as not easy to use, and as not fitting into the lifestyles of the average central Maryland resident. The BMC surveyors found that nearly 70 percent of the residents in the RTA service area either know of the system by name only or have never heard of the RTA<sup>1</sup>. While the TDP community and user surveys reflect input from a public that is aware of the RTA and its services to some degree, the BMC findings suggest that much of the public is unaware of the existence of RTA services, and if they are aware, do not have a high regard for transit as an option. However, it must be

<sup>1</sup> Baltimore Metropolitan Council, Public Transportation Choice Study: Attitudes and Behavior of Baltimore Area Residents with Access to Transit, April 2017, p.106.

remembered that the RTA's passengers are largely low-income persons dependent on transit to access employment or education, and in that sense have lifestyles different from the average Central Maryland resident (who has access to personal transportation and a higher income).

## Online Interactive Map (Wikimap)

In addition to the community survey, an online interactive map was developed to allow individuals to provide further input about public transit in Central Maryland. The Wikimap allowed people to comment on existing routes and stops, suggest new stops and areas to serve. Comments that were provided on the Wikimap can be seen in Appendix I.

The Wikimap tool collected about 30 comments on existing and suggested bus routes and stops. There were thirteen new routes suggested, modifications to twelve existing bus stops, and suggestions for six new bus stops. Some of the input and suggestions included:

### New Stops Locations and/or Service

- Establishing service and stops to serve Maple Lawn, APL, and Clarksville.
- Establishing a stop to serve housing at Sandy Stream Road and Crest Road in Laurel.
- Service between Lancaster Foods (Jessup) and Langley Park Plaza (Hyattsville).
- Service between Columbia Mall and Maple Lawn.
- Service between Ellicott City and Elkridge (Giant Store and Montgomery Woods).
- Service between Applied Physics Lab and Weis.
- Turf Valley (Ellicott City) and Village Green Shopping Center (Ellicott City).
- Atholton Elementary School (Columbia) and Honeywell Technology Solutions (Columbia).
- Gambrills to Annapolis Mall.
- Broken Land Parkway Park and Ride Lot (Columbia) to Village Center (River Hill).
- Hickory Ridge Village Center (Columbia) to Tysons Corner (Virginia).

### Bus Stop Improvements

- Relocate stop on Ridge Road and Thames River Drive closer to Teague Road.
- Missing bus stop sign at Shaker Drive and Seneca Farm Road stop.
- Missing bus stop sign at Robinson Nature Park stop.
- Needs bench at Lincoln Tech stop.
- Needs better lighting at Snowden Square stop.
- Needs shelter and bench at Snowden River Parkway and Minstrel Way stop.
- Needs sidewalk toward Snowden River Parkway with lighting at Broken Land Parkway Park and Ride Lot.

## SURVEY COMPARISON

There were 1,243 valid rider surveys collected and analyzed. The number of public and paratransit survey results collected was smaller, with 228 and 216 responses collected and analyzed respectively.

**Table 3-6: Number of Survey Responses**

Survey Type	Number of Responses
Fixed-Route Rider Survey	1,243
Paratransit Rider Survey	228
Community Survey	216

### Survey Comparison

The profile of the respondents of the rider survey, paratransit survey and public survey had some differences. While most survey respondents spoke English, in general, their ethnicity, income, trip purpose, and vehicle ownership varied between the groups. In general, respondents to the rider survey identified as African American (71%) and low income. They reported being employed full-time (43%) and 47 percent reported employment as their trip purpose. The public survey respondents, in general, identified as mostly Caucasian (79%), employed full-time (57%) and 52 percent reported earning more than \$100,000. A majority of respondents from the rider and paratransit survey reported incomes as less than \$20,000. The majority of paratransit respondents (53%) reported being retired and riding transit to reach medical appointments. Both the rider and paratransit respondents reported a low rate of car ownership, while only 11 percent of respondents from the public survey reported not owning a vehicle.

Table 3-7 outlines selected results from the three surveys for comparison. There were multiple answers for each of the questions listed in Table 3-7. The answers selected for inclusion in the table were the highest ranking answers for each question.

**Table 3-7: Transit Rider Compared to Non-Rider**

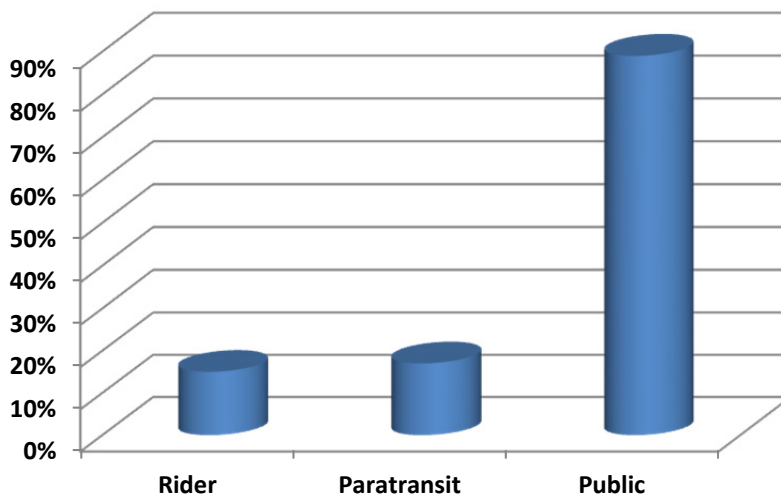
Category	Rider	Paratransit	Public
Language	96% English	98% English	95% English
Trip Purpose	47% Work 9% Medical	39% Medical 9% Work	N/A
Auto Ownership	85% No	83% No	11% No

<b>Age</b>	42%: 25 – 49 years old	56%: 65 years or older	41%: 25 – 49 years old
<b>Employment</b>	43% Employed fulltime	53% Retired	57% Employed fulltime
<b>Income</b>	44% < than \$20k	61% < than \$20k	52% > than \$100k 18% < than \$20k
<b>Ethnicity</b>	71% African American	52% Caucasian	79% Caucasian

Over 95 percent of respondents for all three surveys reported speaking English as their first language. The fixed-route riders reported their main trip purpose, at 47 percent, to be for work, while paratransit riders reported using the transportation service for primarily reaching medical services at 39 percent. Riders of paratransit services reported that only 9 percent of their trips were for work. The public survey did not ask respondents to report their trip purpose; only 8 percent of the public survey respondents reported using public transit as their primary mode of transportation.

Eighty-four percent of the public survey respondents reported that a private vehicle was used as their primary method of transportation. The rider survey found that 85 percent of respondents using RTA fixed-route services did *not* have a private vehicle, and 83 percent of paratransit riders did *not* have a private vehicle. For this same question about car ownership, 89 percent of public survey respondents reported owning a private vehicle. Figure 3-54 illustrates this graphically.

**Figure 3-54: Auto Ownership**

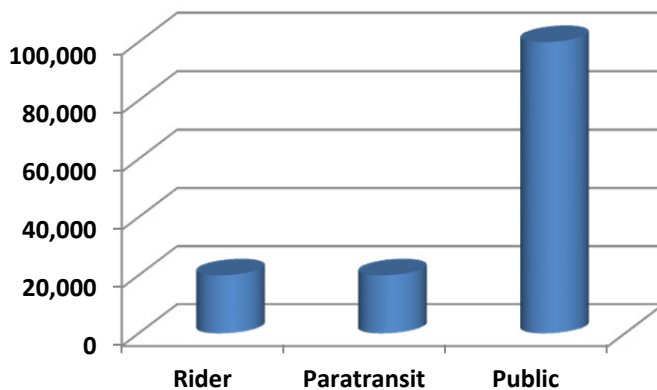


A majority of fixed-route rider and general public respondents reported being between the ages of 25 to 49 years old, as did 42 percent of rider survey respondents and 41 percent of public survey respondents. Paratransit riders were much older as a group, with 56 percent reporting being age 65 or older.

This corresponded with the respondent’s reported employment status as well. Paratransit riders reported that 53 percent were retired while fixed-route riders (43%) and public (57%) respondents reported being employed fulltime.

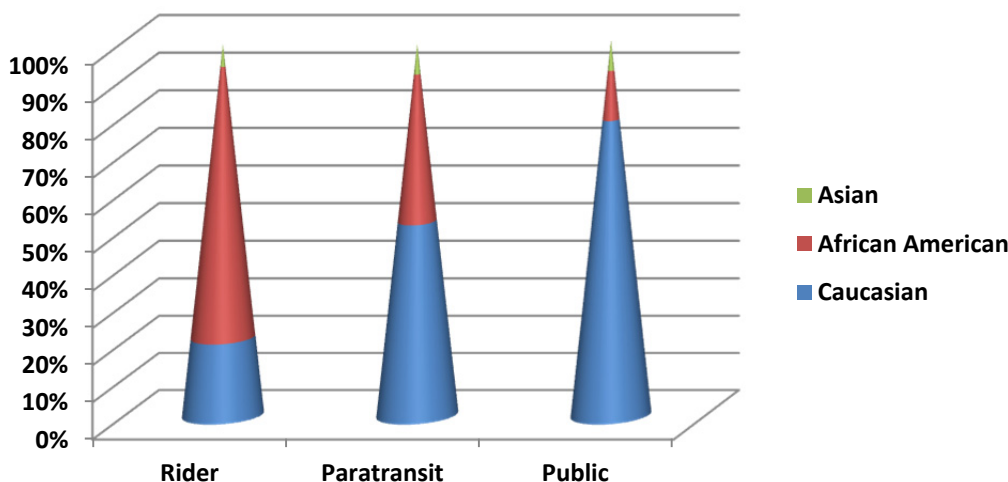
Despite being employed fulltime, 44 percent of respondents from the rider survey reported their income was less than \$20,000. Paratransit riders reported an income of less than \$20,000. Fifty-two percent of respondents from the public survey reported incomes above \$100,000 and only 18 percent reported an income of less than \$20,000. Figure 3-55 represents the reported incomes of the rider, paratransit, and public survey respondents.

**Figure 3-55: Annual Household Income**



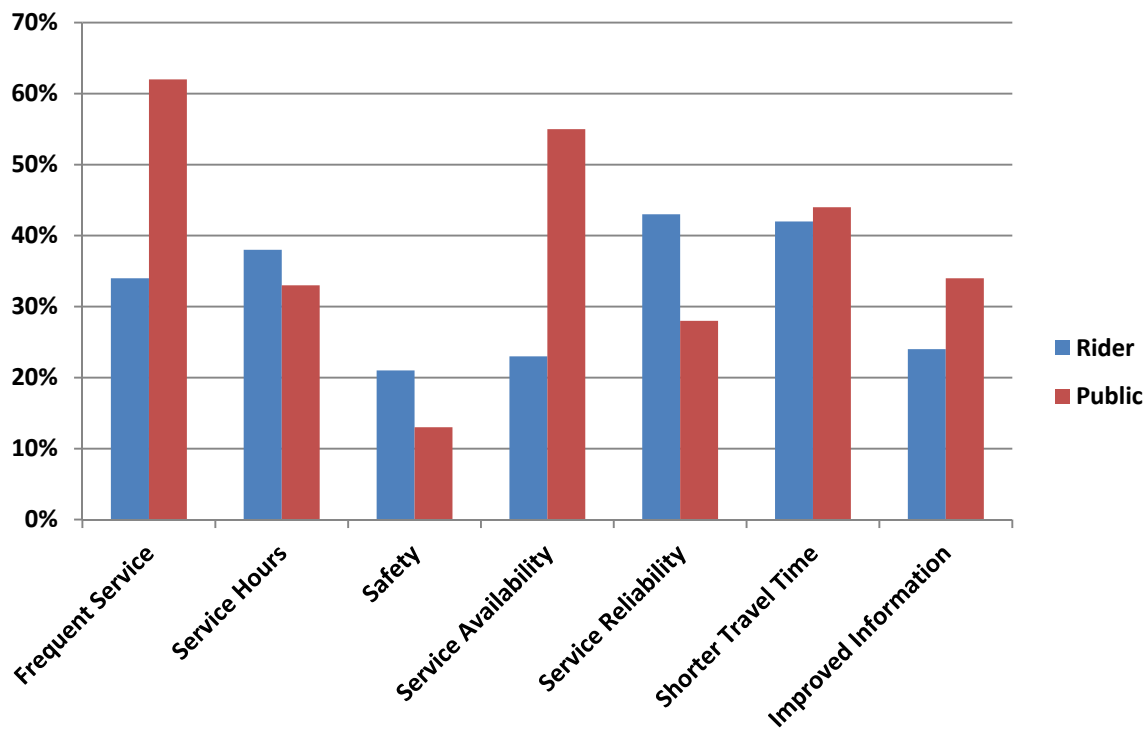
When asked about ethnicity, 71 percent of rider survey respondents reported being African American. The paratransit (52%) and public (79%) survey respondents reported their ethnicity as Caucasian. Figure 3-56 represents the top three ethnicities reported by the respondents of the three surveys.

**Figure 3-56: Top Three Ethnicities of Survey Respondents**



While the public survey did not have specific questions about respondent satisfaction with RTA services, it did ask about suggested transit improvements. Table 3-57 provides a comparison of the overlapping elements that fixed-route riders were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with and improvements that the public selected as needing. The general public indicated that frequency of service and service availability was high a priority while for the riders it was service reliability and shorter travel time. Other measures, such as reducing travel time and improving service hours, were fairly similar between the two groups.

**Figure 3-57: Rider versus General Public Priorities**



Most survey results were in agreement about increasing and improving services. There were subtle differences between the fixed-route riders and the general public.

In general, the public survey respondents focused more on metropolitan connections and wanted more rail services while riders reported more concerns with the reliability of services and the condition of buses.

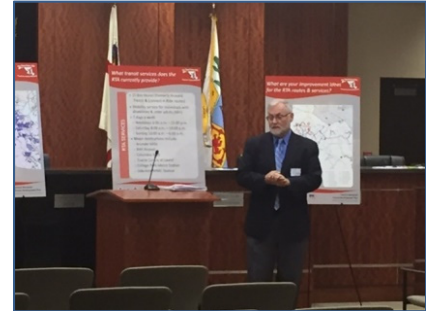
## PUBLIC MEETINGS AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

During the months of October, November and December 2016, KFH staff and project partners gathered input from the public and key stakeholders for the Central Maryland Transit Development Plan. The study team used surveys, public meetings and stakeholder

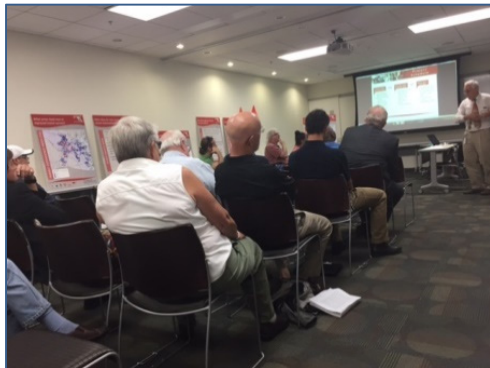


interviews to gather public and stakeholder input. Public, bus rider, paratransit rider and employer surveys were available on the project website, at public meetings and public gathering spaces like community centers and libraries, and handed out to customers on the RTA buses.

The open-ended comments from all three surveys focused on improved scheduling and increasing services. Current RTA riders were focused on reliability and timeliness of services currently offered. Both the RTA fixed-route and paratransit riders wanted increased weekend and evening services and expanded service areas. The public survey respondents focused on expanding services and in addition, making connections to metropolitan areas like Baltimore and Washington, D.C.



Five public meetings, three in Howard County and one in both Anne Arundel and Northern Prince George's Counties, were conducted to gather input from the public. In addition to the public meetings, stakeholders in all three counties were contacted and interviewed in person and over the phone. All comments were combined onto one spreadsheet, shared by all project partners. Results of the public and stakeholder meetings are summarized below.



The data collected through public and stakeholder meetings are categorized into fourteen categories, as listed below:

- New services
- Existing routes
- New stops
- Existing stops
- Vehicle/fleet issues
- Operations issues
- Passenger amenities and facility improvements
- Safety and security issues
- Fares
- Marketing, information and education
- Coordination and connections
- Non-transit modes
- Policy and funding issues

Each category is summarized in this section. The majority of comments fell under new and existing services and many were about specific routes. Specific route requests and feedback were shared with the RTA staff as they were collected.

## New Services

The majority of public and stakeholder comments were about additional locations (30 comments) to be served and the second most popular was scheduling adjustments or additional service hours and service frequency increases (15 comments). Baltimore and Washington, D.C. were the most requested connections (7 comments), in addition to rail connections to MARC. Maple Lawn and Howard County Public Schools were the next highest requested locations at three comments each. BWI, Arundel Mills Mall and Ellicott City were mentioned twice and Piney Orchard and Howard Community College were mentioned once each as areas that needed additional bus service.

Central Maryland Regional Transit staff reported that the most frequently requested places requested through their TRIP call line, that people cannot access via public transit, are:

- Fulton
- Maple Lawn
- Burtonsville
- Fort Meade
- Severn/Glen Burnie
- Woodland Job Corps Center (Laurel)

As far as scheduling requests, increasing frequency and weekend and evening services were tied with seven comments each. More service hours, better alignment and connections and faster routes were also mentioned as requested improvements. With long headways and poor timing, some transfers can take a long time and cause trips to take much longer than by other transportation modes. Some stakeholders suggested express routes for commuters.

Transportation to employment had eight mentions, with John Hopkins Hospital and Fort Meade mentioned the most. BWI and the Route 1 corridor in Jessup were also mentioned. Anne Arundel County's executive leadership indicated that transportation to employment for their low income residents was a priority for public transportation in their region. Specialized transportation for older adults was mentioned four times by stakeholders.

The full listing of input regarding new services is provided in Appendix J.

## Existing Services

While there were specific comments about route improvements, mostly from operators, the majority of comments from the public and stakeholders were about scheduling issues (11 comments), inefficient routes (7 comments) and extending service hours (7 comments) or frequency. Top among the scheduling issues mentioned was the timeliness of buses. Working on a pulse system depends on making connections and people commented that they missed connections due to late buses. The long headways were also mentioned, with one hour headways, if you missed your connection, you would be waiting an additional hour for the next bus.

The need to transfer, untimely service, and traffic can make a trip via bus much longer than driving. Some comments about inefficient routes suggested eliminating unused stops. Stakeholder feedback indicated that some routes and schedules are confusing, an example cited was the Red line stopping at some stops sometimes but not always.

People also wanted extended service hours, for shift work, nights and weekends and more services for older adults, students and people with disabilities. There were requests for more bus service in Anne Arundel County, including extending service to Pasadena and South County for people who cannot drive, like students, older adults, and people with disabilities.

The full listing of input regarding existing services is provided in Appendix K.

## Transit Stops

### *New Stops*

New stops were requested at the following locations.

- Board of Education Headquarters, and high schools in Howard County
- Homewood School (and safer pedestrian conditions)
- Northbound stop at Troy Hill
- On Guilford between National Business Park and Dorsey Run Road
- Move bus stop closer to Salvation Army of Howard County, on Pine Orchard Lane off Route 40 in Ellicott City
- Howard County Non-Profit Center, 9770 Patuxent Woods Drive
- North End, National Business Parkway (Hanover), move closer to the offices
- The new large apartment complex in the southeast quadrant of the National Business Parkway
- Downtown Ellicott City
- Blandair Park

- Goodwill Industries, 10164 Baltimore National Pike (Route 40, Ellicott City)

Stakeholders and the public mentioned the pedestrian conditions and visibility of stops. They suggested considering accessibility and safety when building new stops. Some conditions to consider include: safe accessible pathways and street crossings, wheelchair landing pads, ramps so wheelchairs do not have to wait in the street, and clear sight lines so drivers can see passengers waiting for the bus. People also asked for lighting at stops so the drivers can see them in the dark.

### **Existing Stops**

Like new stops, there was concern over accessibility and safety for existing stops as well. Stakeholders and the public requested adding benches, shelters, lighting, accessible pathways and safe street crossings to existing stops. They also mentioned that sightlines should be clear for street crossings and people waiting at the stop. Snow removal was mentioned, stops and pathways should be cleared from snow so people can access them.

The majority of comments about passenger amenities and facility improvements focused on improving pathways and bus stops. There were several comments about trash and cigarette smoke at bus stops. Stakeholders and the public also mentioned that some pathways and street crossings to bus stops were not safe. People requested more bus-stop amenities, like benches, better informational signs and shelters.

In Laurel, the city has installed some shelters but they do not have RTA branding on them. There were comments to address confusing situations, like a shelter in front of the DSS building that the bus does not stop at. There were comments about stops on one side of a street but not the other that confused people. The seniors at Parkview in Ellicott City need more time to get to the bus stop and another stop at the other building would help.

### **Vehicle Fleet Needs**

Stakeholders and the public commented that the RTA needs new buses and that this would help with service reliability. They mentioned they would like the new electric bus to be used on the Green route that serves the downtown area in Columbia. A stakeholder in Anne Arundel County mentioned that the Department of Aging and Disability Services vans were clean and well maintained.

### **Operations**

Many of the operational issues mentioned by stakeholders and the public concerned timing, for example: connections were off, the route took too long, headways were too long, ADA paratransit late notification system does not work, connections to other transit systems need to be improved and hours that transit is available need to be expanded. One

stakeholder suggested that installing real-time trackers on buses would help riders know when the bus is coming. Other suggestions included:

- Simplifying the route structure and timing
- More flexible first and last mile connections to transit
- Dedicated transit lanes
- Aligning the stop names on the schedules with Google maps
- More consistent headways
- Better notifications to passengers about late and/or canceled service
- More frequent service and extending the service hours

## **Safety and Security**

Safety and security focused on pathways, street crossings and bus stops. People were concerned about the proximity of fast moving cars combined with poor sight lines to street crossings and people waiting at bus stops. The Director of Planning and Community Affairs at the Columbia Association suggested installing additional countdown walk signals at and near bus stops to improve safety.

## **Fares**

The Central Maryland Regional Transit's staff reported that people often call their TRIP line complaining and confused about the complex fare structure. Drivers reported that the transfer system is open to fraud and difficult to enforce. People requested that they be able to pay with their smart phone, transfer to other systems, and have more locations to purchase transit passes.

## **Marketing, Information and Education**

As comments in other categories alluded to, several aspects of the public transportation system in Central Maryland are complex and difficult for the public to understand. For example, fare structures vary depending on the system and location, some route schedules vary depending on the time of the day, and there are several different transit systems that users may want to make connections between. Stakeholders and the public indicated that trip planning and public education about all the systems in one place would be helpful. Anne Arundel County mentioned the need for a mobility manager to help people navigate different systems. Another stakeholder mentioned the need for travel training and programmatic supports, especially for older populations in both Howard and Anne Arundel Counties.

## **Coordination and Connections**

The stakeholder and public comments around coordination and connections included connecting to other transit systems, coordinating with public services, and coordinating with employers. People wanted to see a more seamless transit system for Central Maryland

and beyond, with better connections between the Washington, D.C. and Baltimore systems. They also wanted to coordinate with the planning process for these larger systems to look into sharing resources.

Connecting to Baltimore and Washington, D.C. was brought up during both the public meetings and stakeholder interviews. Stakeholders and the public were concerned about attracting and keeping younger residents in Central Maryland. They noted that millennials want fast easy transit and are moving to Washington, D.C. to get it. Employers expressed concern about attracting and retaining younger employees who expect urban amenities and better transit. Easy public transit from Central Maryland to Washington, D.C. and Baltimore would allow residents and employees in Central Maryland to access attractive urban amenities and still work or live in Central Maryland.

### **Non-Transit Modes**

Stakeholders and the public urged the Central Maryland Transit Development Plan team to consider new modes of transportation and partnerships. An example would be making last mile connections using Transportation Network Companies or taxis. They also suggested creating shuttles and routes based on senior's needs, using smaller vehicles and purchasing wheelchair accessible taxis.

### **Policy and Funding**

Stakeholders and the public observed that the counties in Central Maryland do not have the same density, pedestrian and transit infrastructure as do cities. With the counties making efforts to include affordable housing, some people moving to more suburban areas rely on public transportation, so they need more urban infrastructures, like pedestrian infrastructure and transit. The aging population was mentioned throughout the public and stakeholder input process, its populations that cannot drive, but still want to be able to live in Central Maryland. They need transportation support from the counties. One stakeholder provided the following policy advice:

*"The most important thing that could be done to improve transit services would be to use outcome based decision making when it comes to transportation plans and budgets. Measure for what you want to achieve."*