

East Salem Transit Center

Outreach Milestone #1 Report: June 2026

PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

Cherriots is planning a new transit center in east Salem to meet the growing transportation needs of people who live, work, study, and visit east Salem. The new facility will be a larger, dedicated transit center designed to enhance transit connectivity, improve accessibility, strengthen safety and security, and provide a more comfortable and reliable passenger experience.

Cherriots conducted its first of two phases of outreach in Spring 2026 to gather public feedback to support the design and site selection for the new transit center. The first phase of outreach, conducted from March 2 through May 7, 2026, was focused on informing the community about the project and soliciting feedback about factors that will inform site selection and design of a new transit center in east Salem. Phase 1 outreach activities included:

- Tabling at the Chemeketa Transit Center at Chemeketa Community College (“Chemeketa”)
- Community open house at Chemeketa
- Online and in-person survey
- Posting on the project website
- Social media posts
- Press release
- Notification to neighborhood associations
- Presentation to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Outreach materials were prepared by a project team comprised of Cherriots, Parametrix, and PRR staff.

TABLING AT CHEMEKETA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Project team members from Cherriots and Parametrix hosted a tabling event outside Chemeketa Building 2 at the site of the current Chemeketa Transit Center. The event occurred on Thursday, April 16, 2026, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Three team members from Cherriots and two from Parametrix were present,



The flyer is titled "¡Se instalará un nuevo centro de transporte público en el este de Salem!" (A new public transportation center will be installed in east Salem!). It features the Cherriots logo and a bus icon. The text describes the project's goal to improve transit connectivity, accessibility, and safety. It includes a QR code for more information and a link to the project website: [Cherriots.org/ESTC](https://cherriots.org/ESTC). The flyer also mentions a survey and a prize of \$250 for completing it.

including staff fluent in Spanish. Paper surveys and informational flyers with a QR code linking to the project page and online survey were available in English and Spanish.

During the two-hour event, the project team spoke with about 25 people about the location of the current Chemeketa Transit Center and what opportunities they saw for a new transit center. Approximately five of the participants were Spanish-only speakers. Feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly in favor of the transit center staying on the Chemeketa campus. Participants were happy with the easy access to downtown Salem and expressed a desire for more amenities, such as shelters and bike parking.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

The project team hosted an open house inside Building 2 at Chemeketa on Thursday, April 16, 2026, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Three project team members from Cherriots and two from Parametrix were present to meet with the public and answer questions about the project. Open house materials included flyers summarizing the East Salem Transit Center project (in English and Spanish), paper surveys, and four boards with detailed information about the project, on which attendees could respond to prompts.

This event had five attendees. The most common request from attendees was for an indoor facility at the transit center where riders could use the restroom and charge their phones.

PUBLIC SURVEY

The project public survey opened on April 8, 2026, and closed on May 7, 2026. It was available in English and Spanish, online or on paper. PRR, an independent research firm, led survey fielding, data cleaning, and survey reporting.

Cherriots promoted the survey as part of the project tabling event and a community open house. Survey links were also shared via flyers in English and Spanish, through several posts on Cherriots social media, and in an email to students enrolled at Chemeketa in Spring 2026. The research team offered a \$250 gift card drawing to incentivize survey participation.



Figure 1: Community Open House Boards



Figure 2: Example Social Media Survey Post

Response Summary and Key Findings

The survey received 268 responses: 239 complete and 29 partial. Partial responses were included if respondents answered at least one substantive survey question about their travel in east Salem, or transit center preferences. Two responses were submitted in Spanish, one completed and one partial.

	Count	Percent
Complete	239	89%
Partial	29	11%
Total	268	100%

Survey respondents were asked to provide their home zip codes to determine the geographic reach of responses and potential travel origins. The largest proportion of respondents reside in the 97301 zip code (n = 62)

Table 1: Survey response counts

which encompasses much of central Salem, north and northeast Salem, and the 97305 zip code (n = 54) which includes east Salem area where the current Chemeketa Transit Center is located. Additional respondent information can be found in the detailed survey findings (Appendix A).

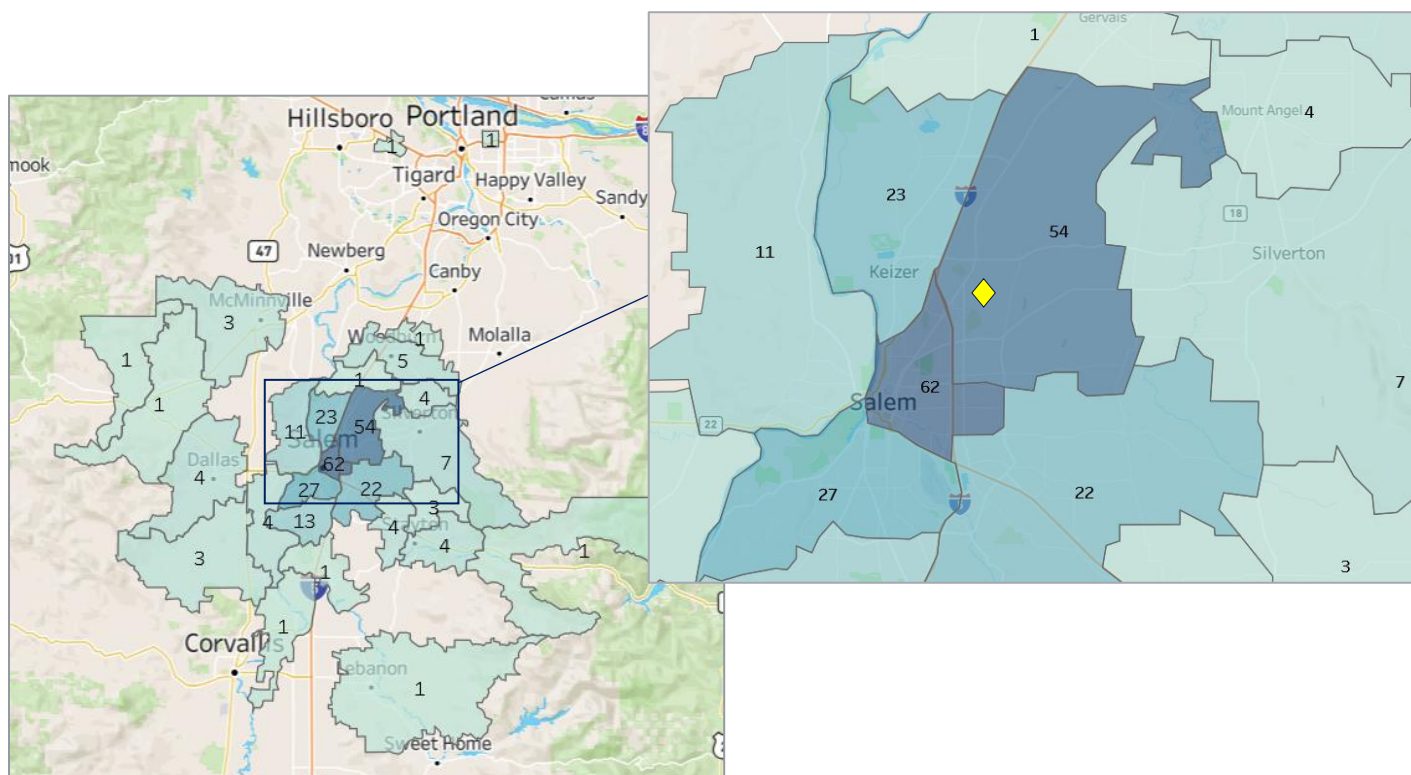


Figure 3: Maps showing survey responses by zip code. The yellow diamond indicates the approximate location of the current transit center at Chemeketa

Key Findings: Travel Behavior

- Most respondents (71%) travel in the east Salem area at least 3 days per week. Many (65%) shop, eat, worship, or recreate in the area, while about one-third live (34%) and work (32%) in east Salem.
- A large percentage of respondents are likely students or work at Chemeketa. Almost exactly half of respondents (51%) said they go to school in the east Salem area; 68% of respondents who are transit users said Chemeketa was their origin or destination; and 41% of respondents are aged 18 to 24. This aligns with much of the outreach for this survey occurring at the current Chemeketa Transit Center, or in partnership with Chemeketa.
- More than half of survey respondents currently ride public transit (56%), with nearly all of those saying they ride Cherriots Local bus service (96%) regularly and many saying they ride in east Salem at least once per week (65%).
- Nearly one-third of respondents (32%) said they would likely ride transit more often as a result of the new transit center, with another 14% saying that they might start riding transit.

Key Findings: Transit Center Preferences

- Most respondents said that it was important for the transit center to be close to places they travel often (74%). Many also said proximity to existing routes to support easy transfers (56%), proximity to housing (44%), and access to major local roads (35%) were important.
- A top request in open-ended comments was that the new transit center remain located at or very near Chemeketa, to continue to provide easy access to the campus. Others requested that the transit center be easily accessible for transit-dependent populations and feature improved walking or biking access.
- Several commenters also would like the transit center location help facilitate increased service and frequency in the area.
- Station amenities like benches, covered waiting areas, trash receptacles, and signage (76%) are the most wanted features of the new transit center, followed closely by restrooms (72%). Many also said safety features like bright lighting or emergency call boxes (54%) are important to them.
 - Safety and security features were the most common theme of open-ended survey comments, with many requesting a regular security presence and efforts to mitigate loitering or crime. Other comments focused on accessibility and making the space welcoming or multi-functional for riders and the broader community.

Detailed findings of all survey questions can be found in Appendix A.

Project Website

Cherriots established a dedicated landing page for the East Salem Transit Center project, housed on their website. It included information about the need for a new transit center, site selection considerations, timing, and ways to be involved. The project website included a link to the project survey throughout the Outreach #1 milestone engagement period. The page will remain on the Cherriots website and be updated regularly throughout the life of the project.

Social Media Posts

Cherriots released five social media posts to promote the project, the April 16 open house event at Chemeketa, and the public survey. Posts were released through Cherriots established channels on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube on April 4, April 15, April 23, April 28, and May 5.

Press Release

Cherriots issued a press release on April 8 announcing the project and inviting the community to the open house on April 16. The Salem Reporter also published an interview with Cherriots staff, relating to the Open House.

Notification to Neighborhood Associations

Cherriots sent notifications about the project and upcoming open house to City of Salem neighborhood associations on April 6.



Figure 4: East Salem Transit Center project page - Cherriots website

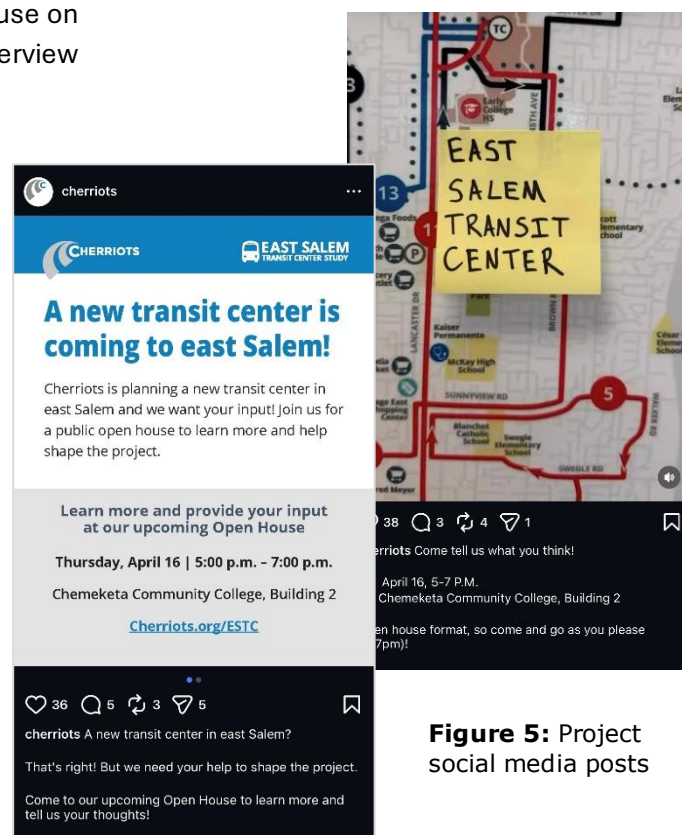


Figure 5: Project social media posts

Presentation to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Cherriots and Parametrix staff presented the project to the Cherriots Community Advisory Committee (CAC) on April 21, 2026. The presentation included an overview of the project, the project schedule, and specific project tasks. The CAC was asked for its feedback about specific needs or issues that should be addressed during the site selection process. CAC members expressed their interest in expanded business-focused outreach as the study progresses.

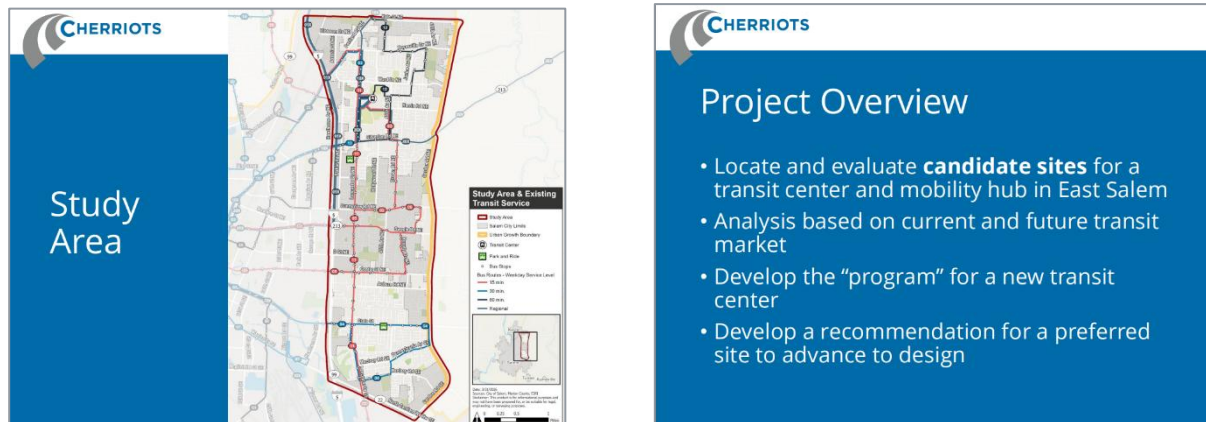


Figure 6: Example slides from CAC presentation

NEXT STEPS

Cherriots is using input received during the first phase of engagement (Milestone #1) to inform the design and site selection process for the future East Salem Transit Center. This work will continue through Summer 2026.

In early Fall 2026, Cherriots will release the preliminary findings of the siting analysis, including identified site options. Cherriots will publish these findings on the East Salem Transit Center page of their website for public review and will include a survey to collect public input on the proposed site option(s).

In December 2026, Cherriots staff will present the results of the site selection study, public input process, and final recommendations to the Board of Directors for consideration and approval, with a final report released in January 2027.

APPENDIX A – DETAILED SURVEY FINDINGS

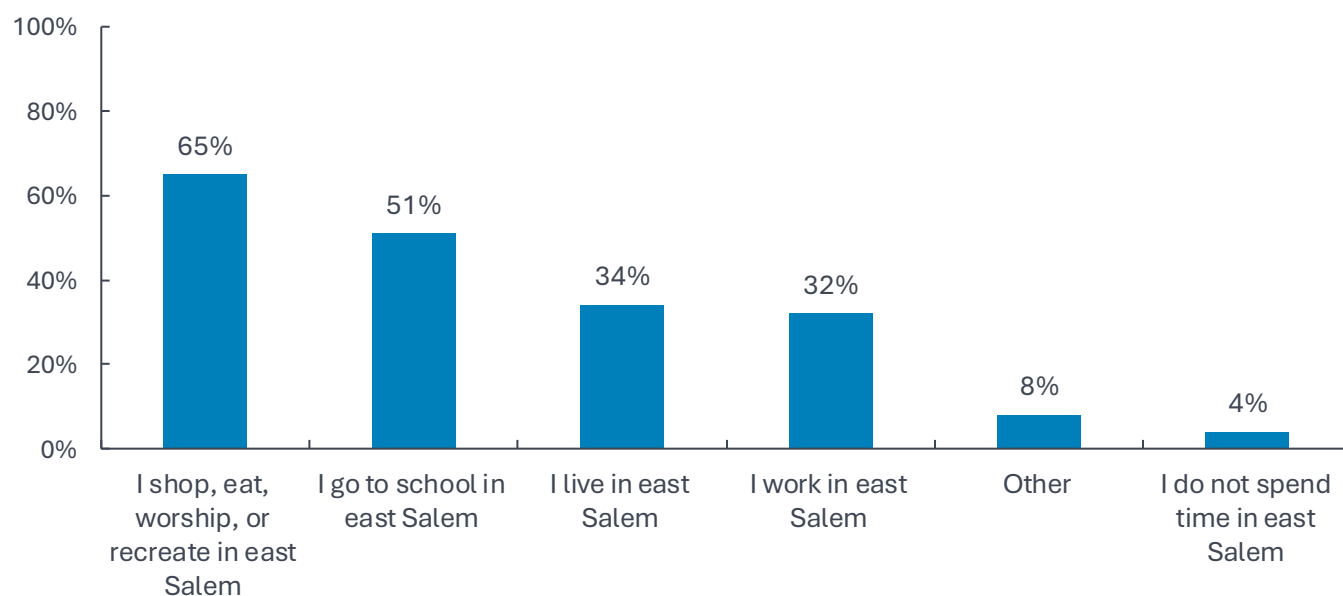
This section includes all questions asked of survey respondents, presented in a chart. The text of each question can be found in the chart title with an “n = #” indicating the number of respondents who answered the question. Some questions were only asked of certain respondents, transit riders, for example. These questions also include an indicator of the “base” response group.

Background

Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways they spend time in east Salem; most (65%) told us they conduct personal activities (shop, eat, worship, recreate, etc.) in the area, many (51%) go to school in the area, while about one-third live (34%) and work (32%) in the area. Some wrote in that they also attend medical appointments, visit friends or family, or live near but not in the east Salem area. Fewer than 5% of respondents said they do not spend time in the east Salem area.

How do you spend time in east Salem? Please select all that apply.

Base: all respondents; n = 261

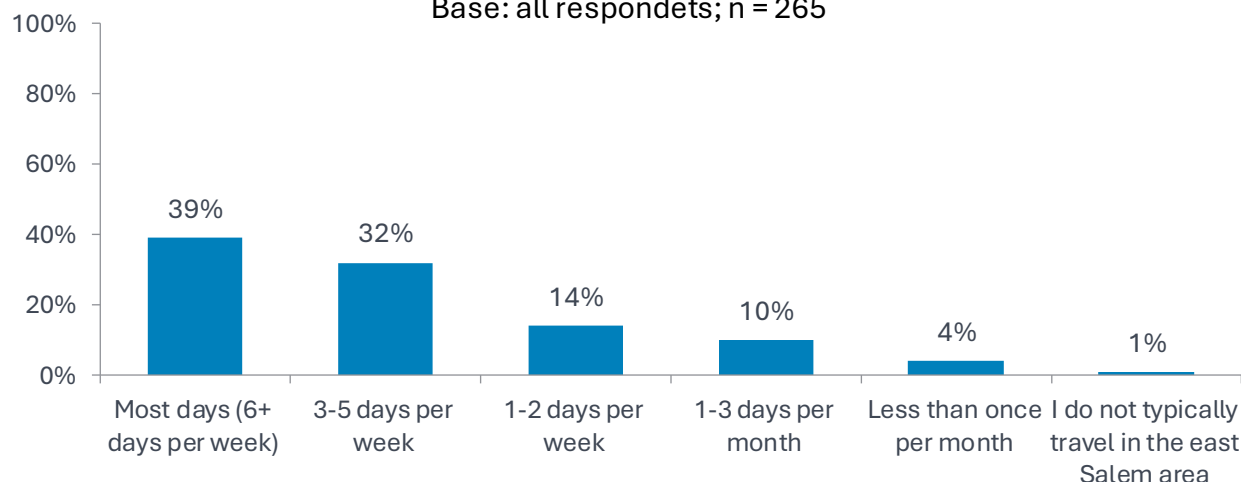


Travel Patterns & Mode

A majority (71%) of respondents said they travel in the east Salem area at least 3 days per week, with nearly 40% saying they travel there most days (six or more). Only a few (15%) said they travel in the area less than once per week, or not at all.

How often do you typically travel in or around the east Salem area?

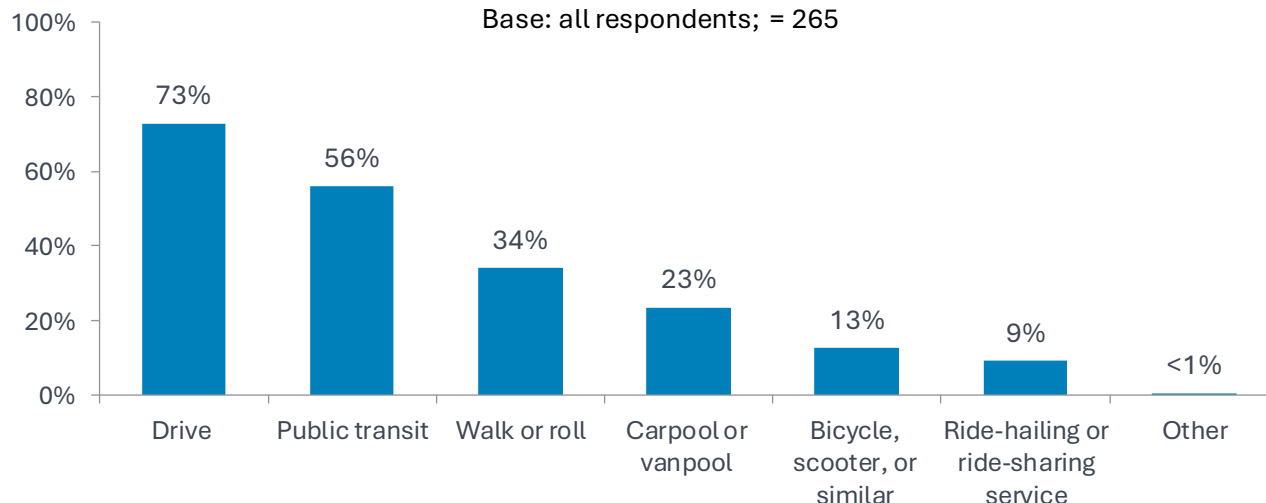
Base: all respondents; n = 265



Most respondents reported driving (73%) regularly in a typical week, while more than half also said they take public transit (56%), whether in east Salem or elsewhere. About one-third (34%) said they typically walk or roll, while just less than a quarter (23%) ride a bike, scooter, or similar vehicle.

How do you travel in a typical week? Select all that you use regularly, not just in east Salem.

Base: all respondents; n = 265



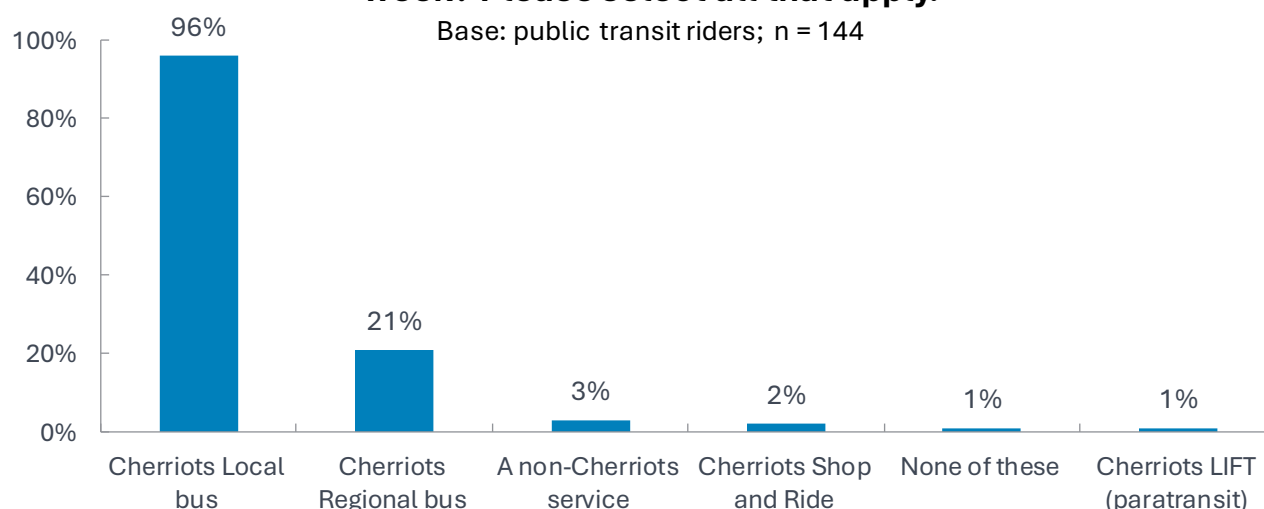
Transit Ridership

Respondents who indicated that they ride public transit received several follow-up questions about what services they ride, how often they ride in east Salem, and how they use the current Chemeketa Transit Center.

Almost all transit-riding respondents (96%) said they ride Cherriots Local bus service in a typical week. Some (21%) also indicated that they ride Cherriots Regional bus service, while a small number said they ride non-Cherriots services such as Amtrak or Point Bus (3%), Cherriots Shop and Ride (2%), or Cherriots LIFT (1%). Most of these transit riders (65%) report riding transit in the east Salem area at least once per week, with many (45%) saying they ride three or more days per week in the area.

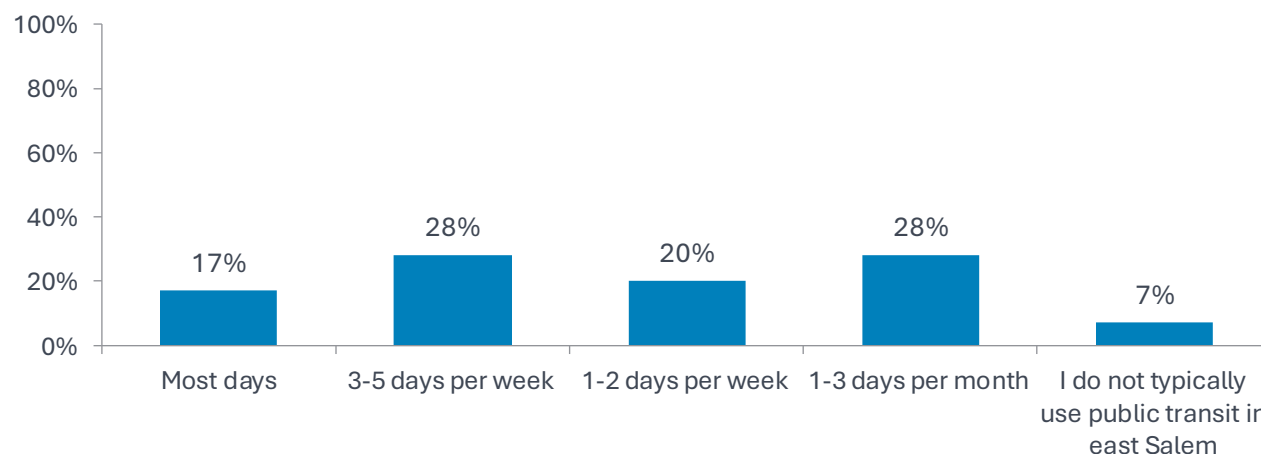
Which of these public transit services do you use in a typical week? Please select all that apply.

Base: public transit riders; n = 144



How often do you use these transit services in the east Salem area?

Base: public transit riders; n = 145

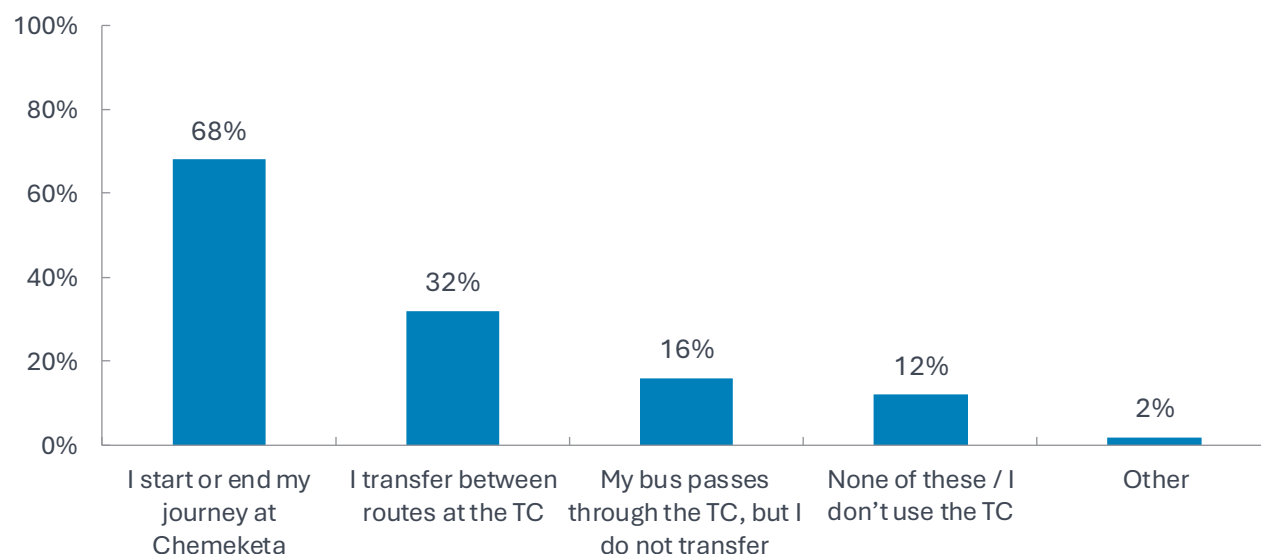


Transit riders were also asked how they use the current Chemeketa Transit Center. More than two-thirds (68%) of transit-riding respondents say that the current Chemeketa Transit Center is a start or end point for their transit journey, while nearly one-third (32%) say they make a route transfer at the current center. Some (16%) said they ride through on a route that passes through, while a few (12%) said their public transit ride does not involve the current location.

How do you use the current East Salem Transit Center at Chemeketa Community College?

Please select all that apply.

Base: public transit riders; n = 145



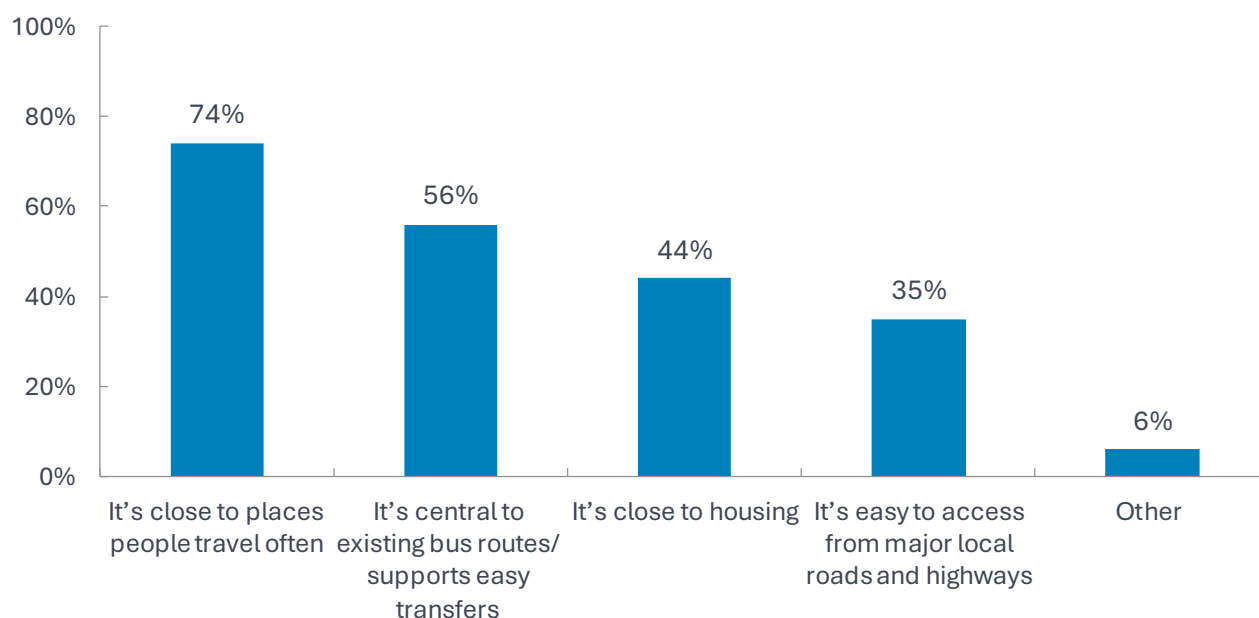
New Transit Center Priorities

Nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) said that being close to places they travel to often (work, school, retail, etc.) was an important consideration for the new transit center location. More than half (56%) said it was important that the location be central to existing bus routes to help support easy transfers, just less than half (44%) said it was important that the new transit center be close to available housing and the places people live, and just over one-third (35%) said it was important that the transit center have easy access to major area roads and highways.

Fourteen respondents (6%) added “other” considerations, including several suggesting that it be close to the current Chemeketa Transit Center location. Others opposed replacing existing farm or green lands and disruptions to local neighborhoods or traffic patterns. Some also stated that minimizing costs should be a key consideration.

What is most important to you regarding the location of the new transit center? Please select all that apply.

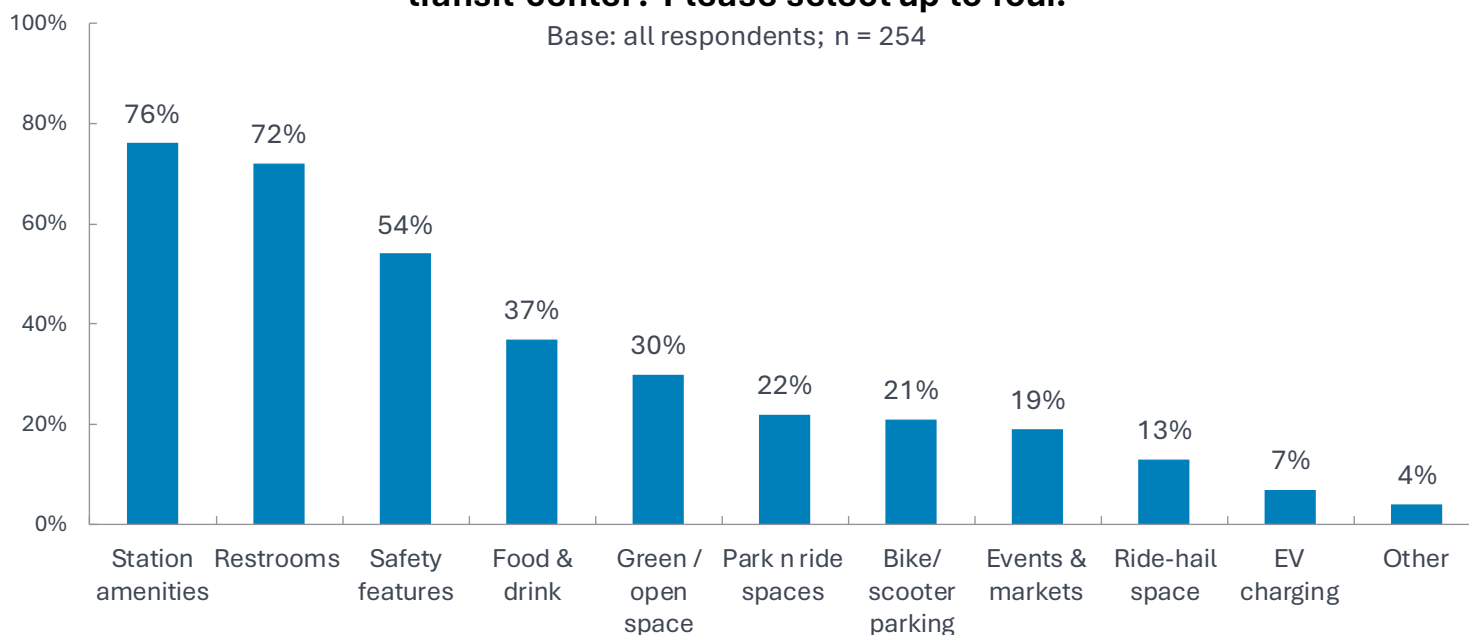
Base: all respondents; n = 253



Most respondents indicated that station amenities (76%), like benches, trash receptacles, signage, and covered waiting areas, as well as restrooms (72%), were features they would most like to see in the new transit center. About half said safety features (54%), like bright lighting or emergency call boxes, were a top request for the new location, while the ability to purchase food and beverages on site (37%) rounded out the top four requested features or amenities. Many respondents also indicated that green space or open areas for events (30%), park-and-ride parking spaces (22%), areas for bike or scooter rental or parking (21%), or pop-up events or markets (19%) were features they would like to see. Fewer selected ride-hailing areas (13%) or electric vehicle charging options (7%) among their top requests. Other responses (4%) included staff presence or other efforts to prevent crime or loitering, places to charge devices or access Wi-Fi, or local artwork and storytelling, to be included in the new transit center.

What features and amenities would you most like to see in the new transit center? Please select up to four.

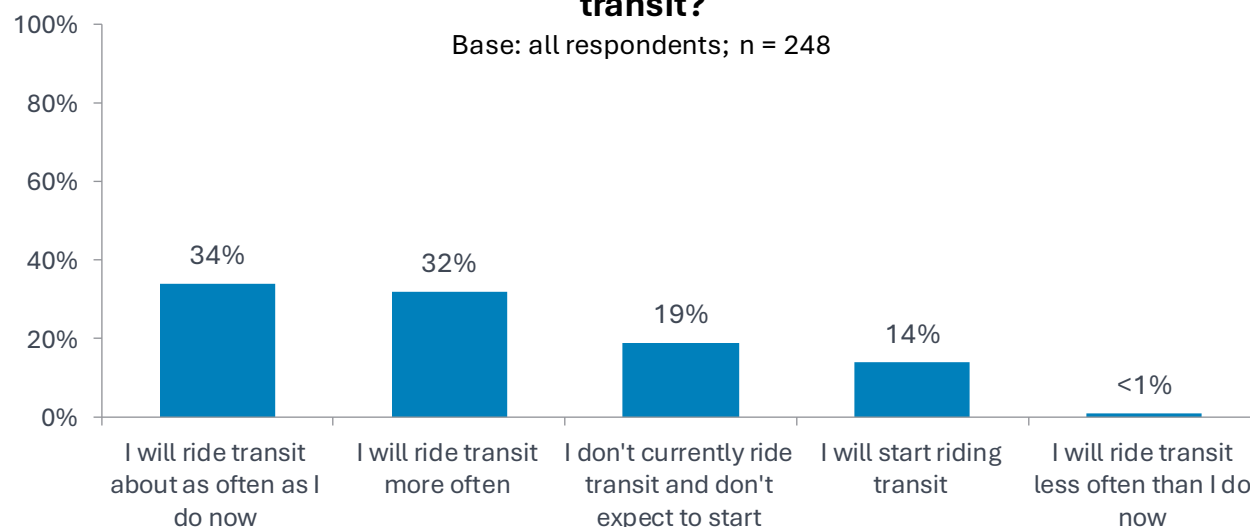
Base: all respondents; n = 254



All respondents were asked how the new transit center would impact how they use public transit. The greatest number (34%) said they will continue to ride transit about as often as they currently do, while another 19% said they are not current riders and do not expect that the transit center will cause them to start riding. However, just under one-third (32%) said they expect the new transit center to cause them to ride more often than they currently do, while another 14% said they expect they might start riding transit because of the new transit center's opening. Only a single respondent indicated they expect to ride less often when a new transit center is built.

How will the new transit center impact how you use public transit?

Base: all respondents; n = 248



General Comments

Over 100 respondents provided open-ended comments about the future of transit in east Salem, and the transit center project. Top themes from these comments included: safety and security, maintaining the current Chemeketa Transit Center or prioritizing connection there, expanding or improving service in east Salem, specific station amenities or feature requests, and station access for various populations and mode users.

Chemeketa Community College - The most frequent theme (16 comments) related to Chemeketa. Several of these comments suggest that the current Chemeketa Transit Center should be maintained as the transit center location for east Salem, perhaps with some upgrades or investment, given its convenience for students or easy access to existing amenities (green space, restrooms, and other facilities) on the campus. Other commenters requested that a frequent/direct shuttle connection to the campus be added when the new transit center is opened.

The easy connection at Chemeketa is super helpful. While the current setup needs to be improved, it would be nice if it could remain at Chemeketa.

I'm in favor of the transit center staying at Chemeketa Community College with some improvement and investments to the space... Rather than investing thousands or millions in developing new plans, investing a portion of that money into the existing space would be best for me. I... couldn't imagine where the new location would go that would have the same amenities, spacing, safety, and so on. CCC has a cafeteria, vending machines, a library, WiFi, drinking fountains, elevators, shelters, charging stations, and more resources.

Improvements to east Salem area service – Fourteen commenters expressed a hope that the new transit center would be a part of broader improvements to transit in the area, or that specific service changes or improvements would be implemented.

Expanded bus schedules would allow for more work opportunities.

There should be new routes added to better accommodate the east Salem area.

It would be very useful to have a straight route from the East Salem transit center to the Keizer and Downtown transit centers as well, so that moving between them is easier.

Safety or crime – Thirteen commenters spoke to a desire for increased safety features, staffing, or similar efforts to ensure the new transit center felt safe, clean, and free from crime. Suggestions for approaches varied.

Keep the area free of people using substances and crime by having active security guards as well as highly visible areas

I want the transit station to feel alive. Social, welcoming, and safe.

Make it safe for everyone. For students, adults and the unhoused. Covered areas, good safe lighting. No anti-homeless architecture, that is unhelpful for everyone.

It would be amazing if we could get some secure bike boxes/caged in bike racks that are monitored, so people felt comfortable leaving bicycles at the station.

General support – Thirteen commenters offered general support for the project or appreciation for greater transit investment in east Salem.

Espero sea un gran proyecto que beneficie a todos. (I hope it will be a great project that will benefit everyone.)

It is very exciting to see a new transit center that is a bit more accessible and convenient to those who live in east Salem. This will be a good project to see come to life!

Build it! Expansion is great and getting those headways down is vital.

Amenities - Twelve commenters requested or suggested specific amenities for the new transit center. These included transit amenities like pass kiosks and live schedule information, site amenities like restrooms, seating, and food and drink, and other specific requests like play areas.

Create a small, fenced play area for parents to supervise young children while they wait for the bus.

I would like to see more covered waiting spots for when there are rainy days or very hot days that can help students, adults, and the elderly be more comfortable while they wait for the bus.

Please add a place to buy stuff and add bathroom and a place to sit down and a pop up marketplace.

Accessibility – Eight commenters saw the future transit center as a major mobility opportunity for themselves or others in the community and requested that groups such as the elderly, transit-dependent, and people with disabilities be kept in mind as the center is developed.

As I am older and unable to drive, I will use transit. I will probably have a scooter.

When it comes to transit, the best thing is that it's easily accessible, while not disrupting the daily routine for other forms of commuting.

My wife works with Salem's Refugee population and providing an additional transit center would be incredible. Many of them come to the area not knowing how to drive, and an east Salem hub would increase their opportunities to not only get out and shop, but also find jobs!

General opposition - Six commenters expressed opposition to the project, citing cost concerns or arguing that other concerns (limited ridership, crime, time, etc.) do not justify the investment.

Why is Salem considering a new transit center? There is not a demand for more buses especially in NE Salem.

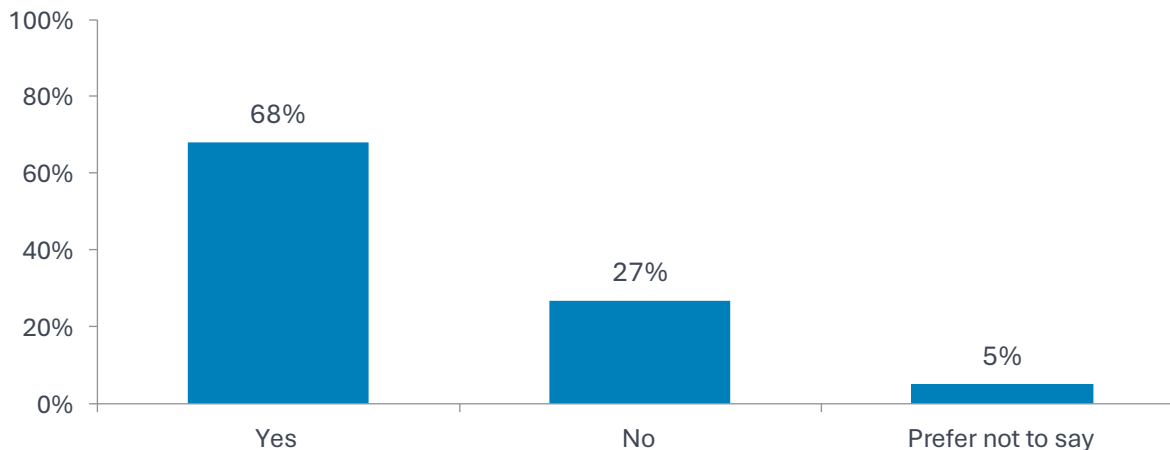
It's a waste of money. Bus systems are just not practical. I have ridden transit in the past when I had no other option; it takes 2-4x as long to get anywhere as it does to drive. That isn't sustainable in a day and age where cost of living is so high that people have to work overtime or 2 or more jobs just to survive. Nobody has time to waste on public transit. The downtown transit station has off and on been a hotbed of problems and crime, fights, theft, etc. and any new transit station will be the same.

Other themes – A few commenters expressed interest in the new center being a multi-functional and community-oriented space (n = 6), access or features for bicycles and pedestrians (n = 2), opportunities for sustainability or environmental improvements (n = 2) , while several individual comments made specific location suggestions, or spoke to personal situations.

RESPONDENT PROFILE & DEMOGRAPHICS

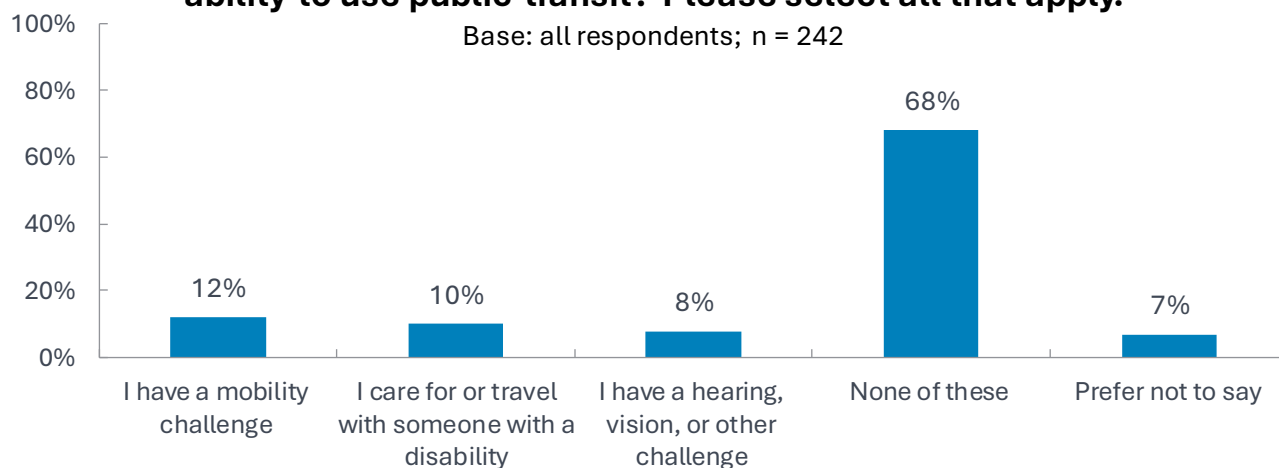
Do you regularly have access to a vehicle for your use?

Based: all respondents; n = 242



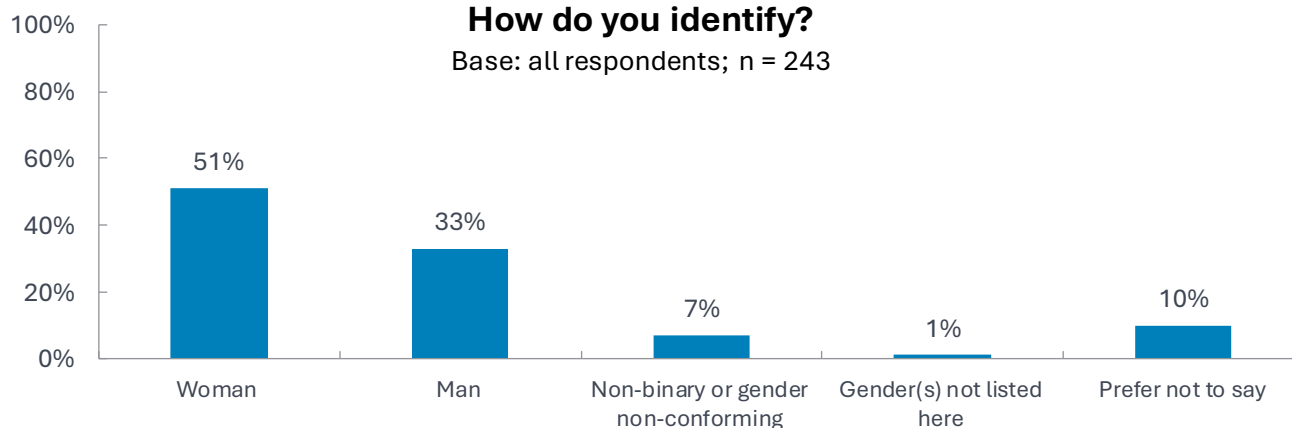
Do you have a disability that impacts your mobility, travel, or ability to use public transit? Please select all that apply.

Base: all respondents; n = 242



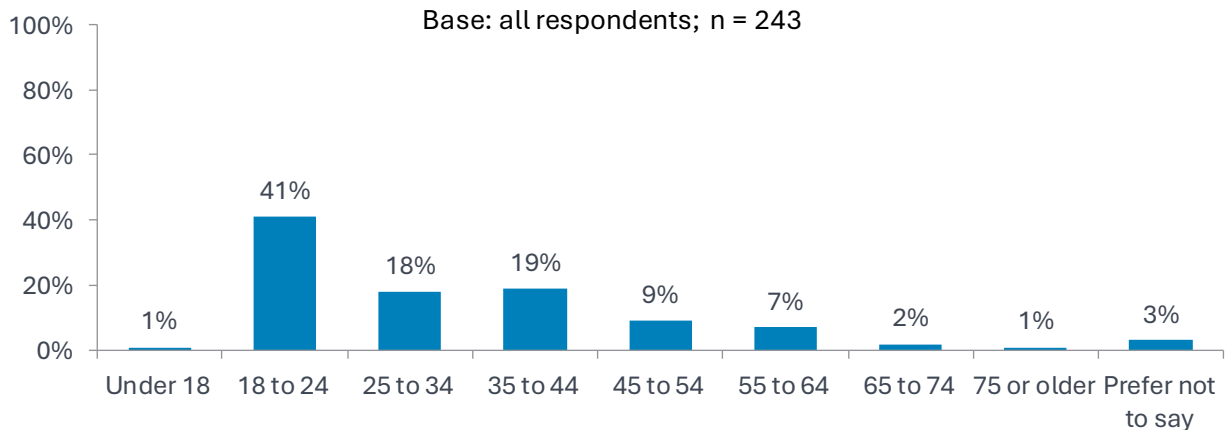
How do you identify?

Base: all respondents; n = 243



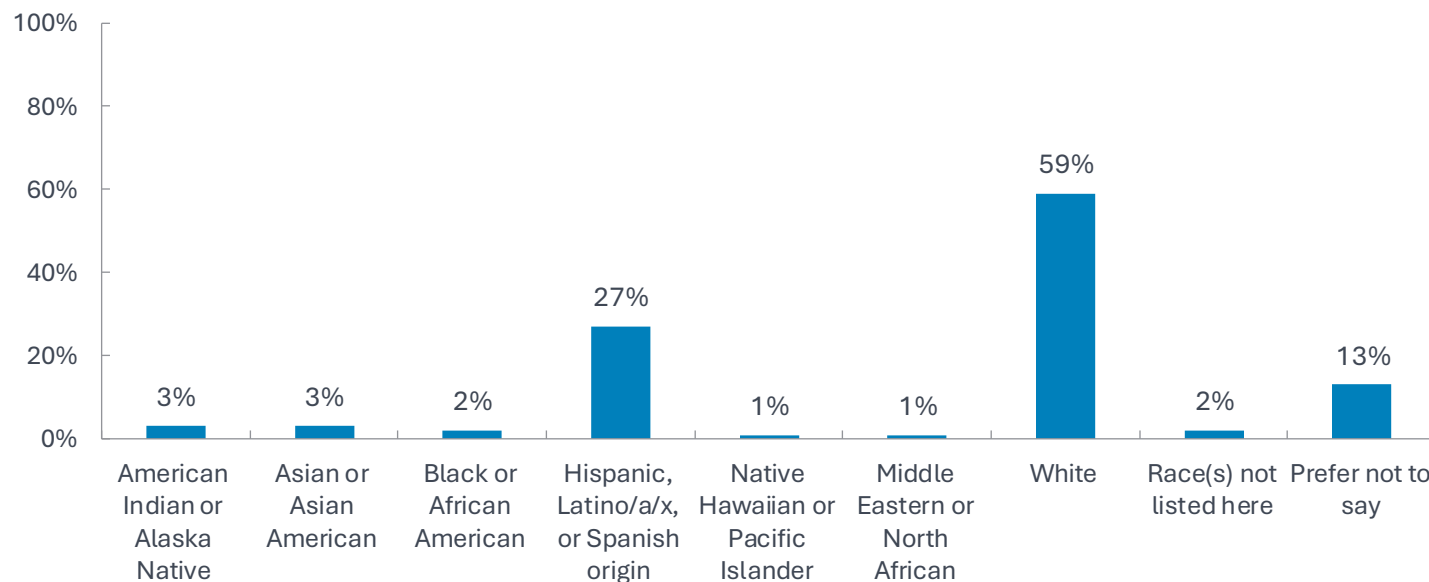
How old are you?

Base: all respondents; n = 243



How do you identify? Please select all that apply.

Base: all respondents; n = 243



What was your 2025 household income before taxes?

Your best guess is fine.

Base: all respondents; n = 242

