

**7** ←  
3 Airport/Cordata  
4 Hospital/Cordata  
15 Cordata/WCC via Meridian

1 Fairhaven via S. State → **3**

GATE  
**7**

331 Cordata/WCC via  
Alabaster/Sunset

INFORMATION



You are  
now being  
recorded

GATE  
**3**

GATE  
**2**

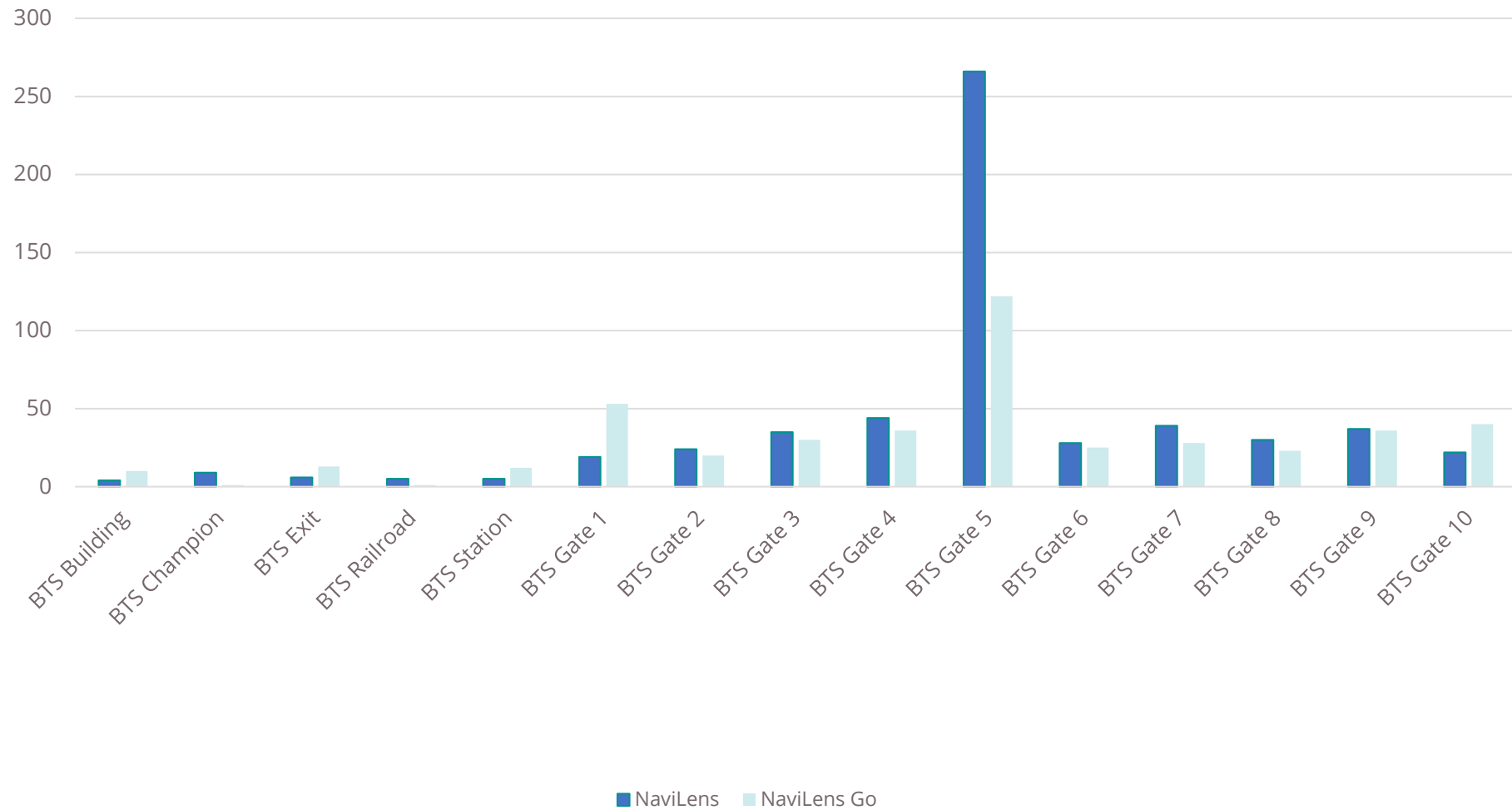
# NAVILENS PILOT

Spring 2026

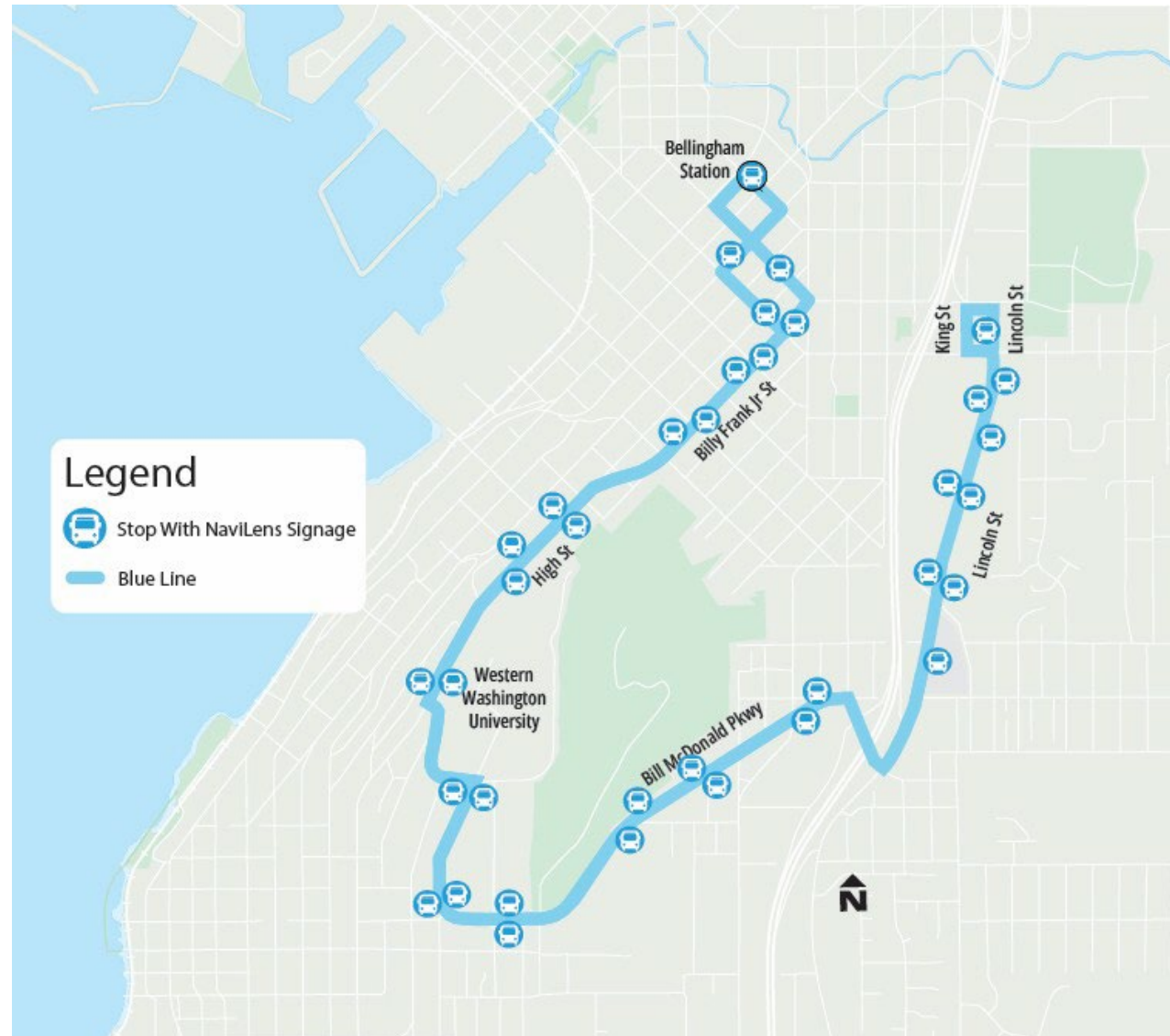
# Downtown Station



# BTS NaviLens Usage



# BlueLine Expansion



# Shelter Based Signage



# Pole Based Signage



# Download the App





*At WTA, our mission is to enhance our community by:*

Delivering safe, reliable,  
efficient, and friendly service

Offering environmentally  
sound transportation choices

Providing leadership in creating  
innovative transportation solutions

Partnering with our community to  
improve transportation systems

**WTA**

CONNECTING  
PEOPLE TO  
OPPORTUNITY

# 2026 Whatcom Region Household Travel Survey



whatcom council of governments



the science of insight®

# What is a Household Travel Survey (HTS)?

- Sample population of a region allows their daily transportation trips to be captured for study
- Non-commercial travel by all modes (e.g. car, bus, bike, etc.)
- All trips, big and small, are captured
- Provides authoritative source of travel behavior data for the region



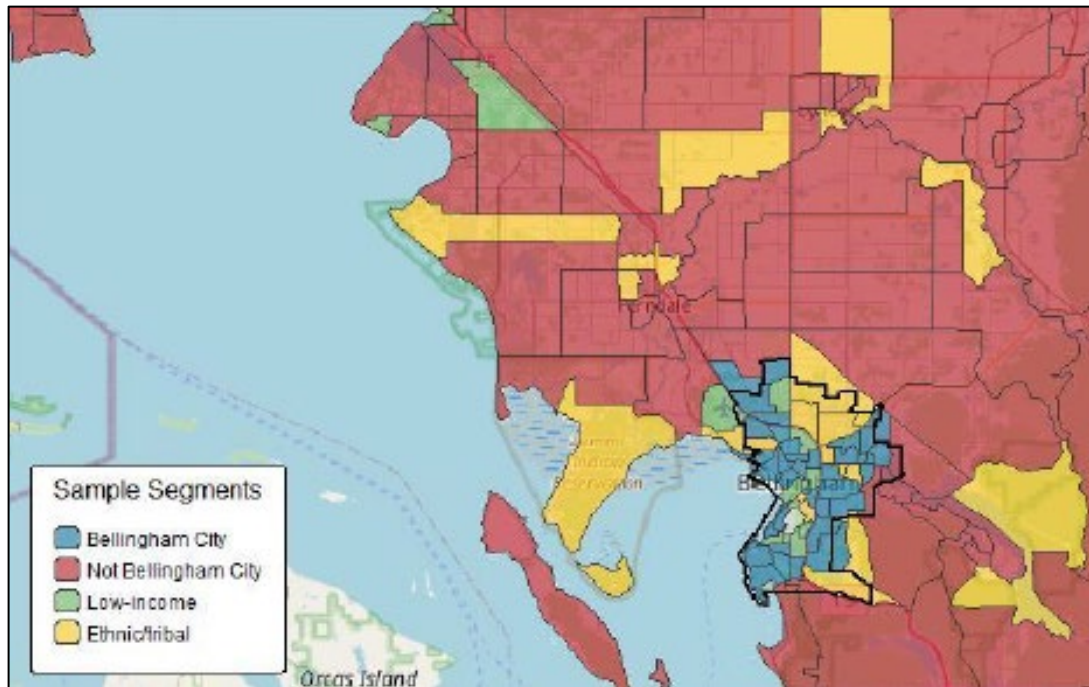


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# Why Do a Travel Survey?

- Last travel survey in Whatcom Region conducted in 2018
  - Pre-COVID travel behaviors
  - Tele-commute not tracked
- Provides critical inputs for WCOG Travel Demand Model
  - Scenario planning for transportation projects in the region
- Transportation plans and projects leverage current trends

# Whatcom Region's HTS Overview



- Survey sample divided into 4 targeted populations based on Census (ACS) data:
  - Bellingham City
  - Non-Bellingham City (oversample)
  - Low-Income (oversample)
  - Ethnic/Tribal (oversample)
- Three ways trips were captured
  - rMove smartphone app – 7 days of travel captured
  - rMove for Web (Online) – 1 typical weekday of travel captured
  - Call center (Online) – 1 typical weekday of travel captured
- Survey participants were compensated with a cash incentive (\$10-\$30)
- Survey conducted October-December 2025

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# Recruitment Summary

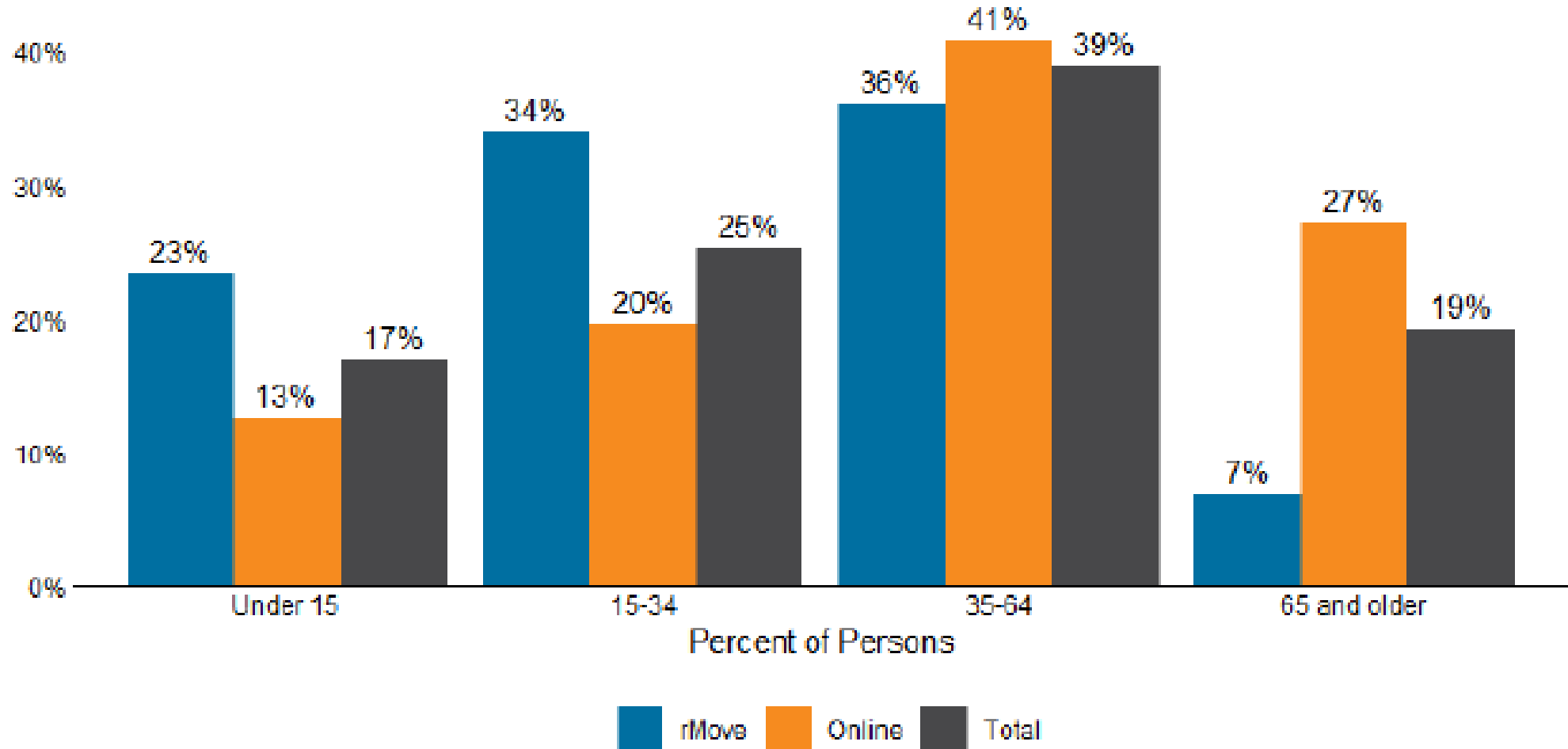
- 92,283 households reside in Whatcom County
- 70,270 households invited to participate by mail
- 1,157 households provided usable data
  - 1.8 percent response rate
  - 1.3 percent sample rate



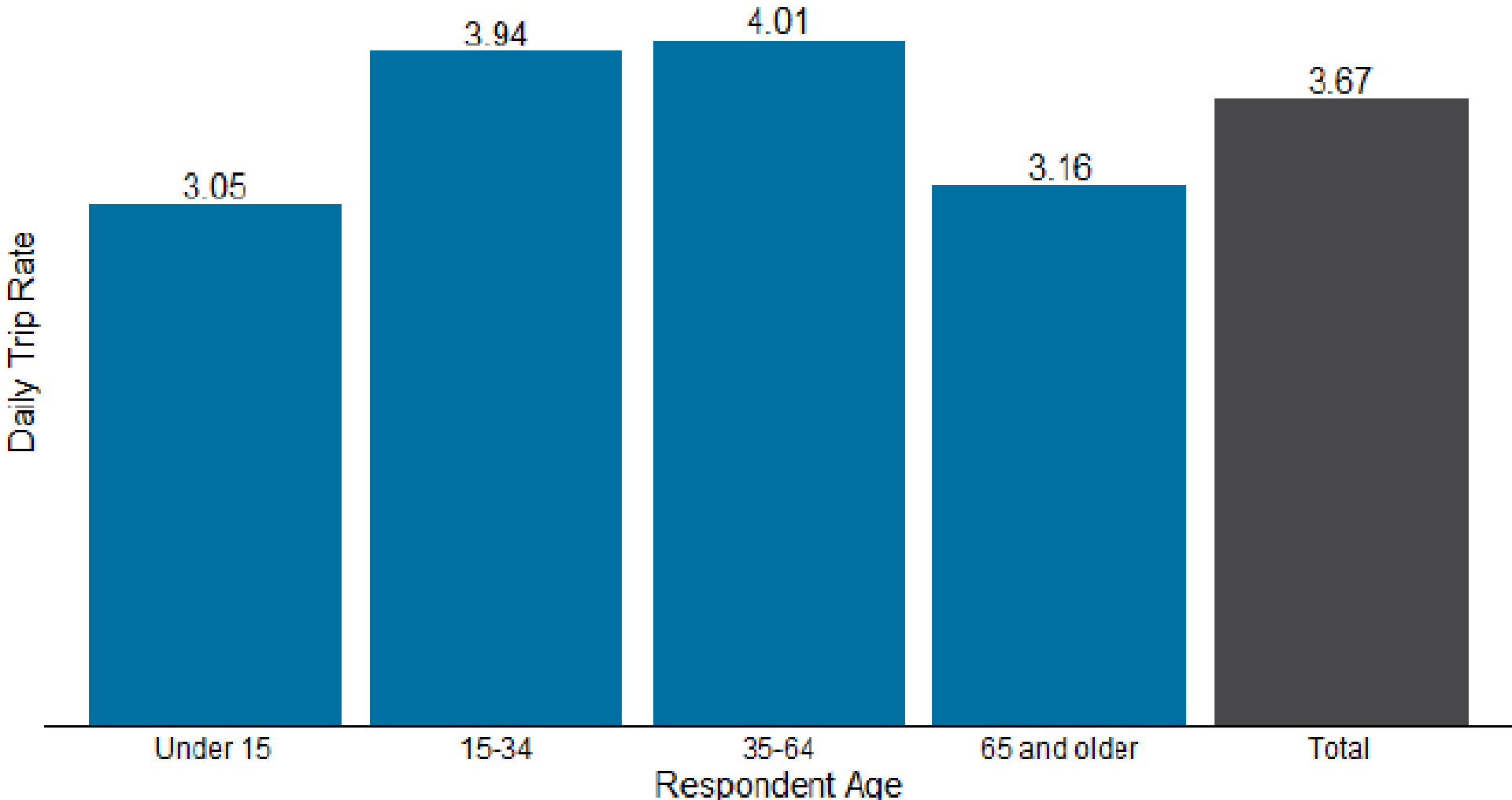
# Survey Results



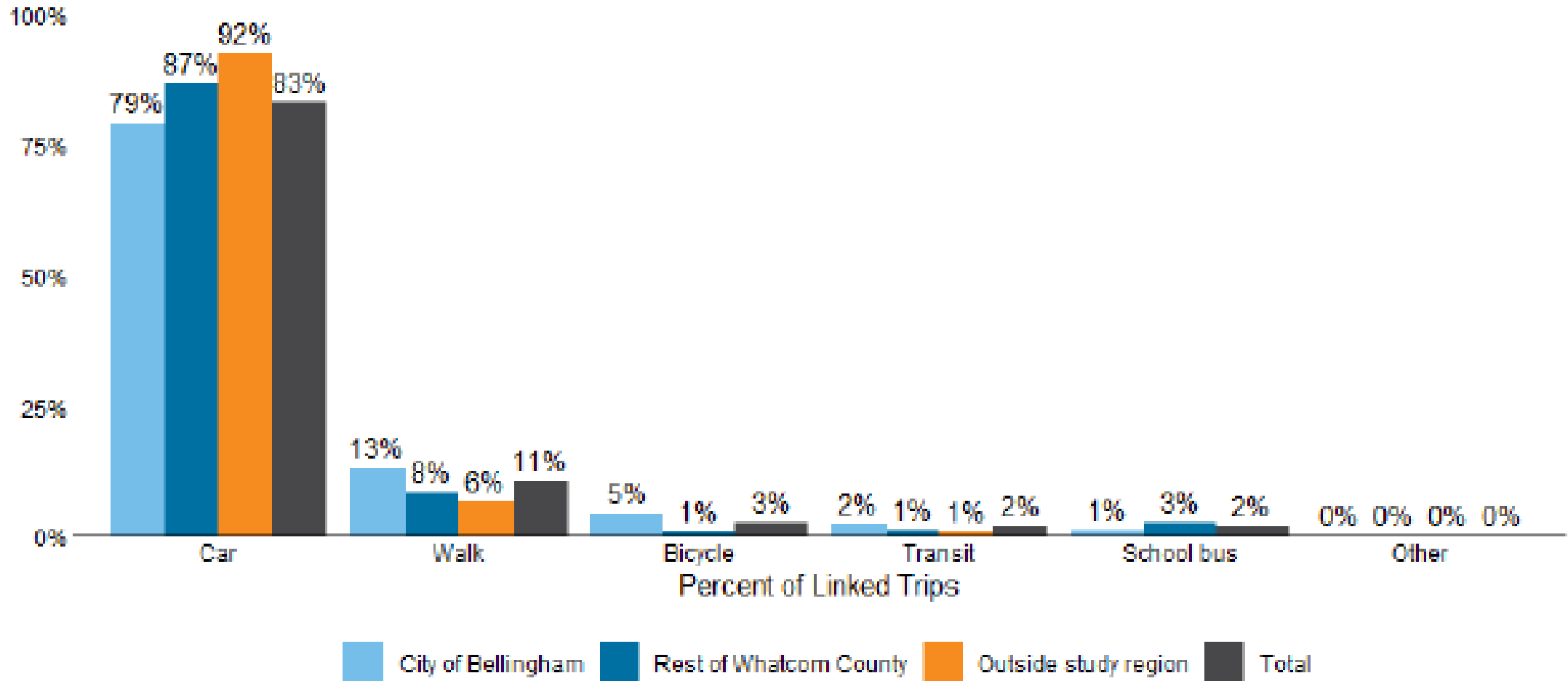
**FIGURE 13: RESPONDENT AGE, BY PARTICIPATION GROUP**



**FIGURE 22: TRIP RATE, BY RESPONDENT AGE**



**FIGURE 23: OVERALL MODE SHARE, BY DESTINATION REGION**



**FIGURE 24: TRIP PURPOSE, BY DESTINATION REGION**

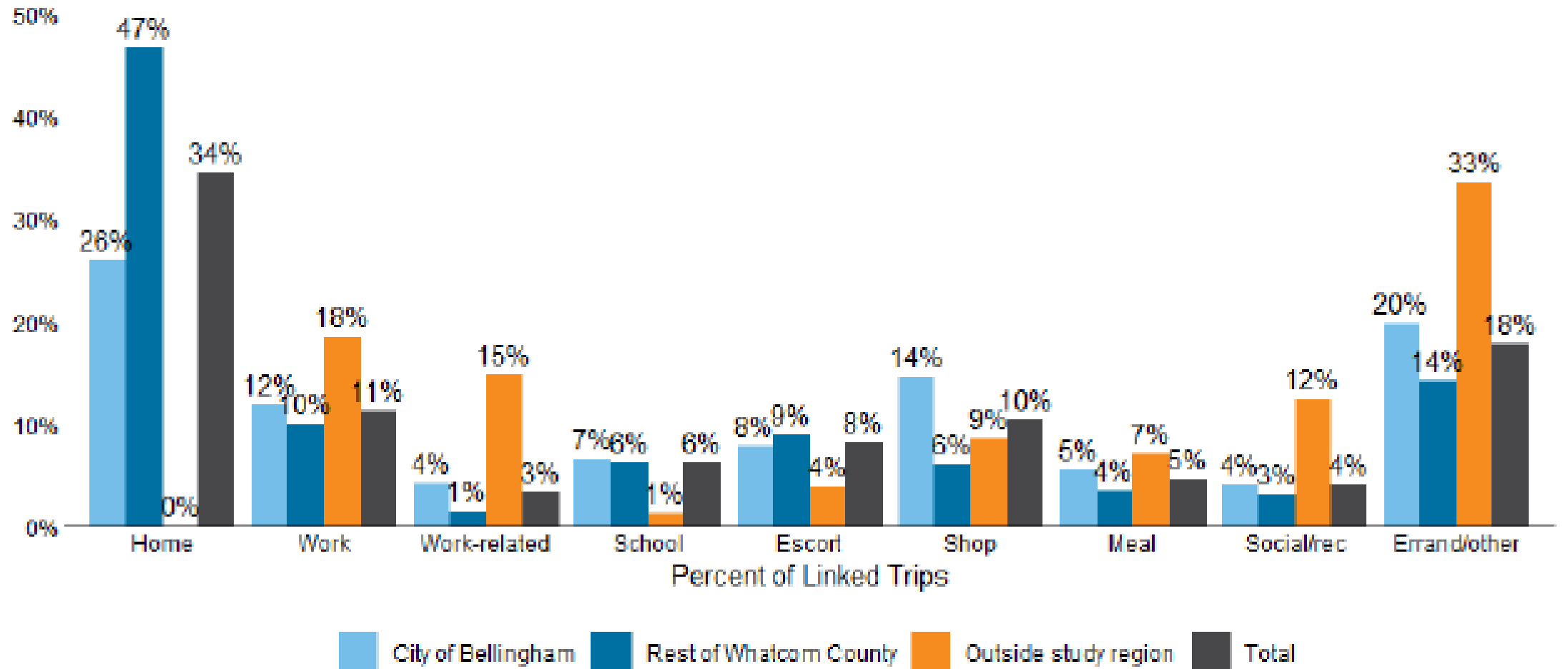


FIGURE 26: DISTRIBUTION OF TRIP START TIMES, BY MODE

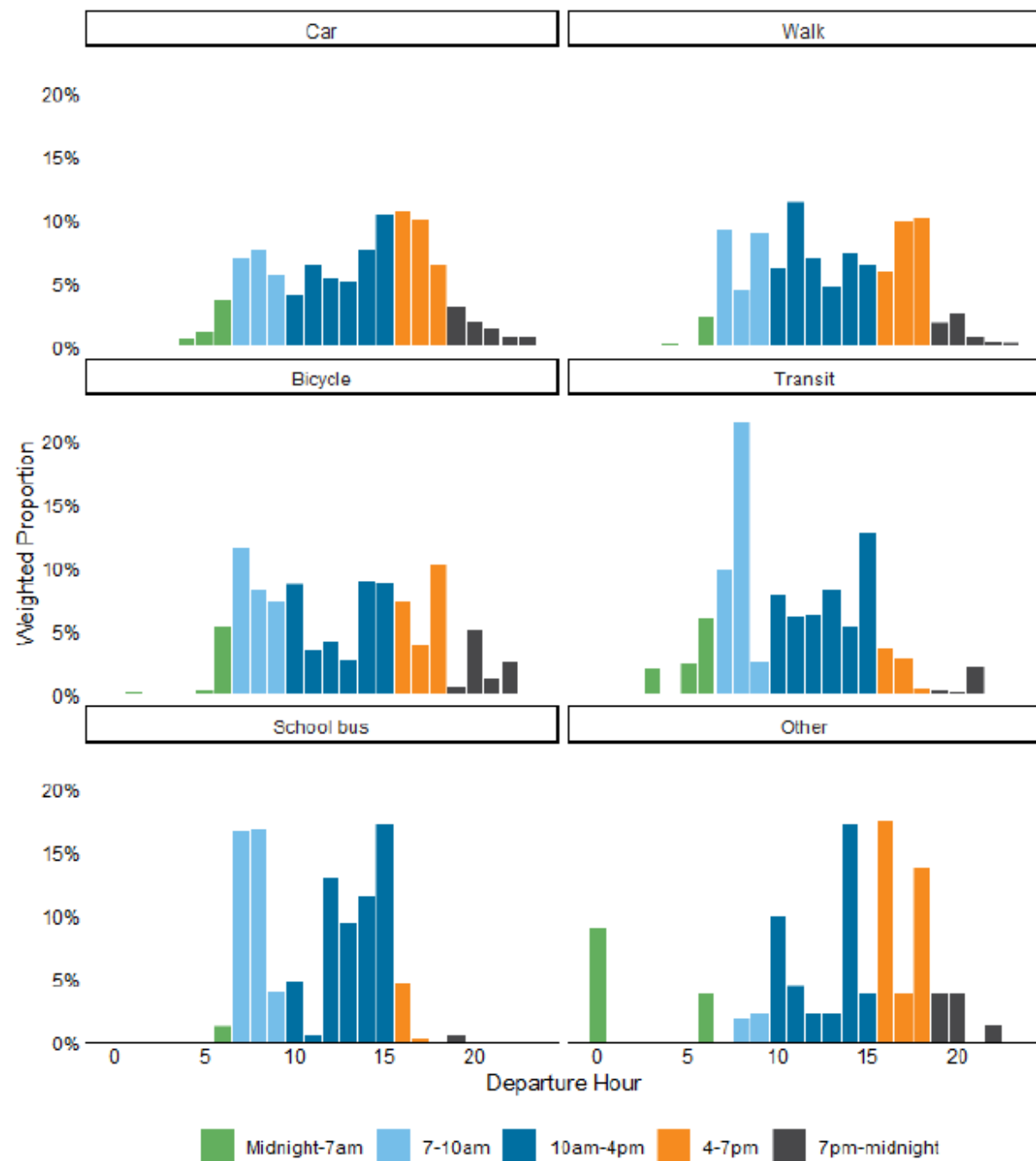
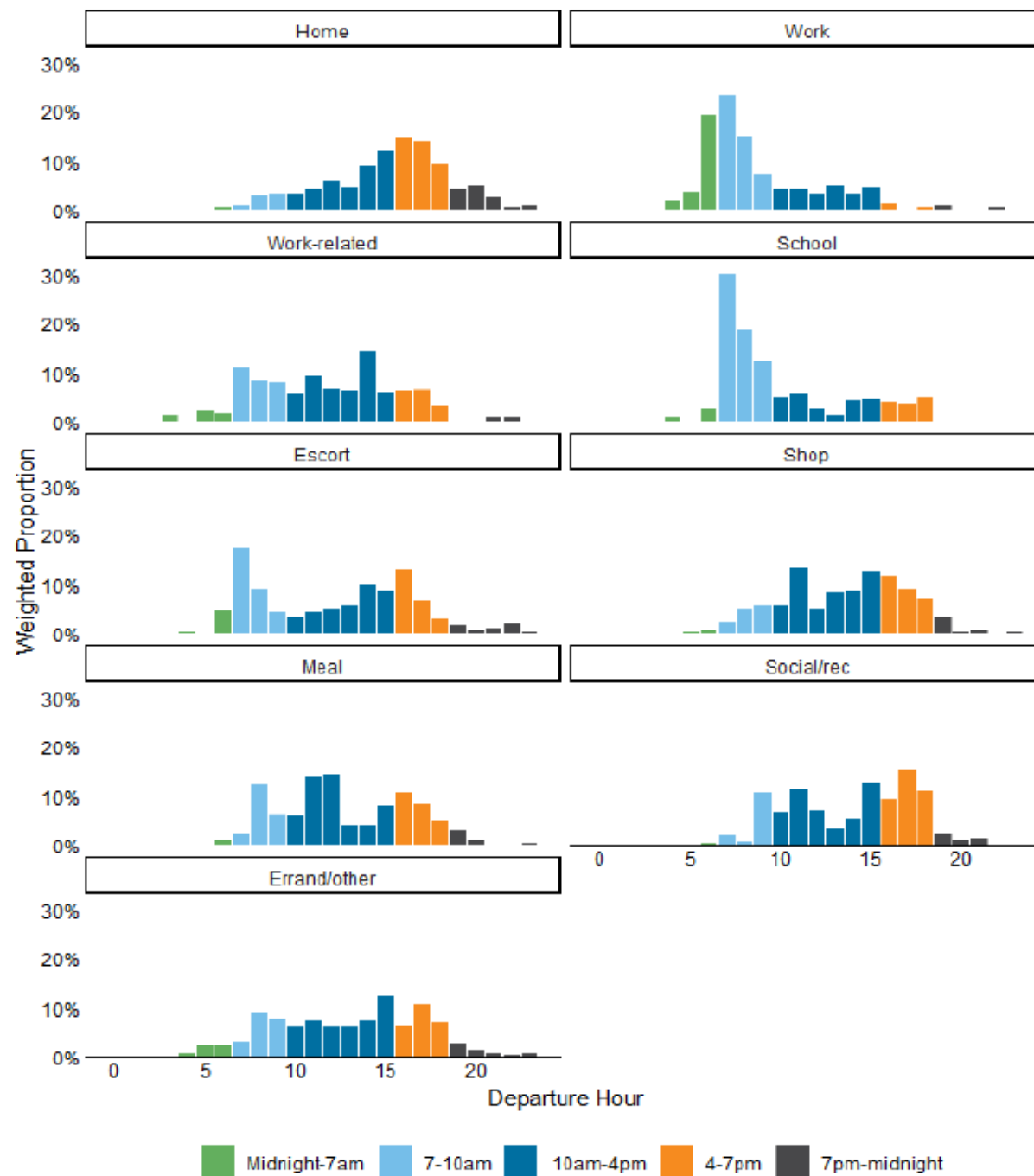
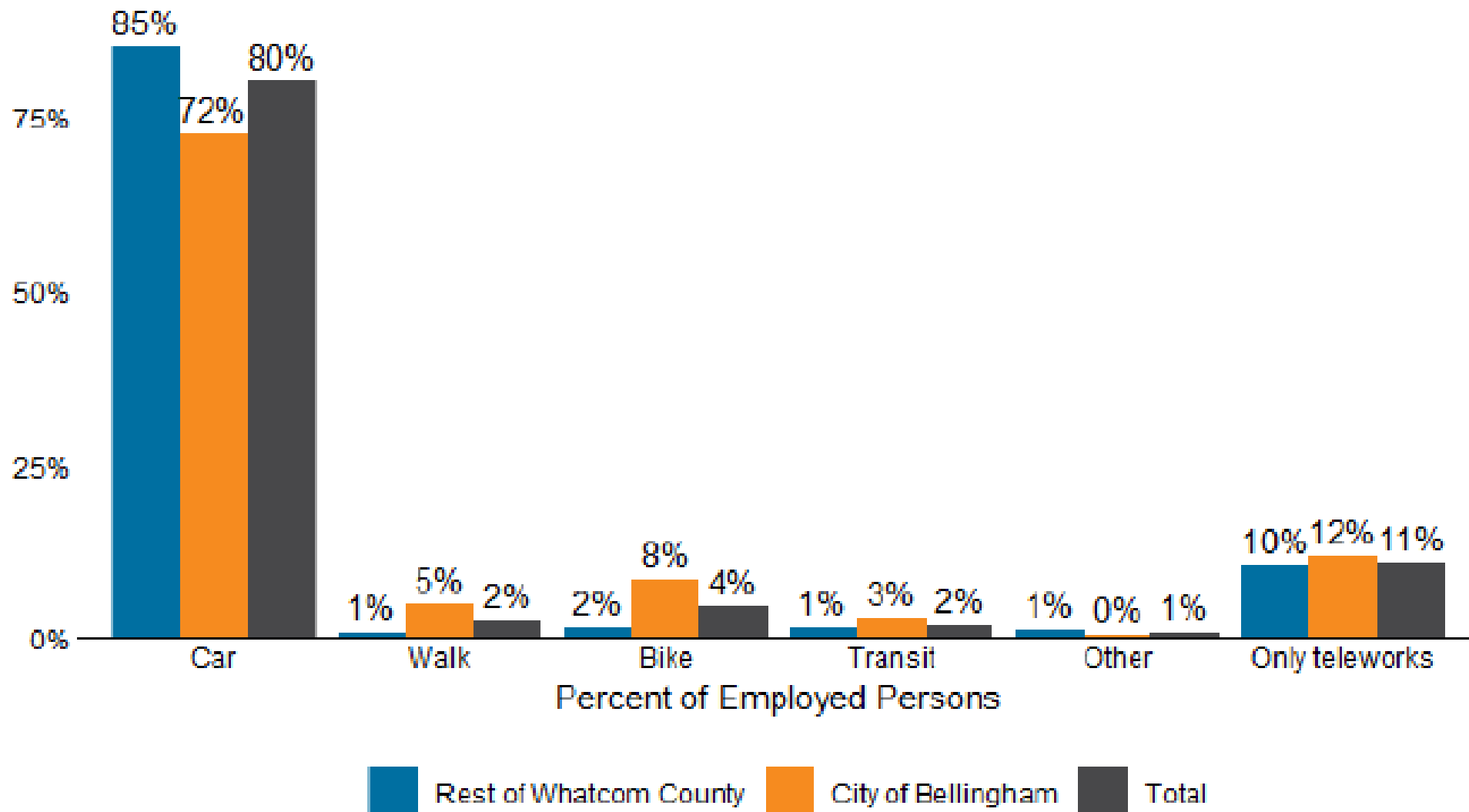


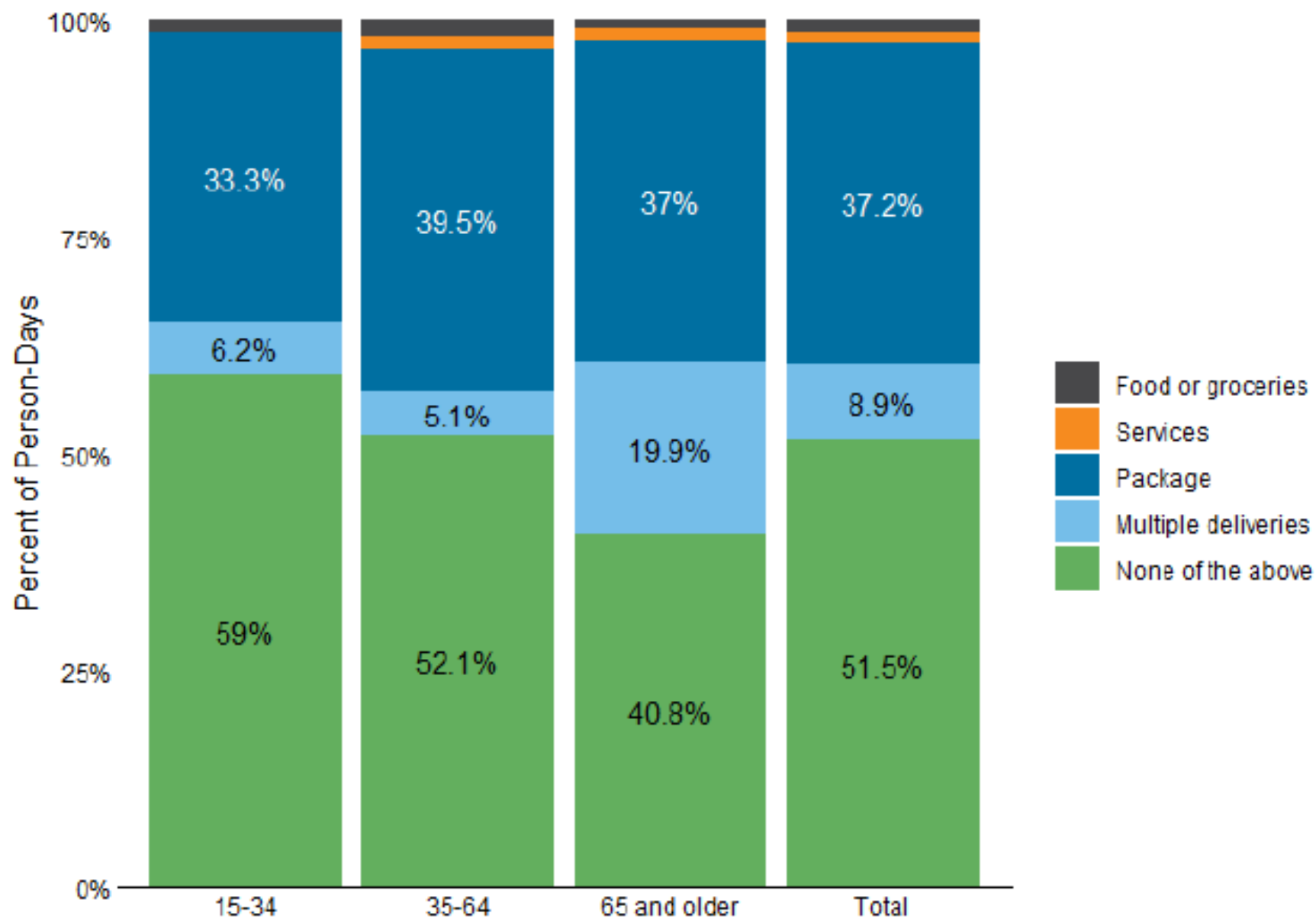
FIGURE 27: DISTRIBUTION OF TRIP START TIMES, BY PURPOSE



**FIGURE 46: TYPICAL COMMUTE MODE, BY REGION**



**FIGURE 52: DELIVERIES RECEIVED, BY RESPONDENT AGE**



# Next Steps



- RSG completes final report of project (May)
- Survey database is sent to Travel Demand Model consultant
  - New model base year of 2025 (by late 2026)
  - New forecast year of 2050 (by late 2026/early 2027)
- Data is availed to regional partners
- Whatcom Regional Transportation Plan to be completed by June 2027



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# 2025 SURVEY DATA

Summary of Passenger and  
Community Surveys



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# Surveying Methods

- **Passenger Survey:** An on-board survey of current riders across all WTA fixed routes to evaluate daily experience and usage.
- **Community Survey:** An online survey of residents in Bellingham, Lynden, Ferndale, and unincorporated Whatcom County, initiated via a mailed invitation to a random sample of households.

# The Rider Perspective

2025 On-Board Passenger Survey

# Summary of Results

- Passenger Survey: 2,750 on-board surveys completed across all fixed routes in Whatcom County.
- Overall Satisfaction: 90% of riders are satisfied with the service.
- Safety: 91% of riders report feeling safe while using WTA.
- Social Value: 91% agree that lower-emission buses are a community priority.

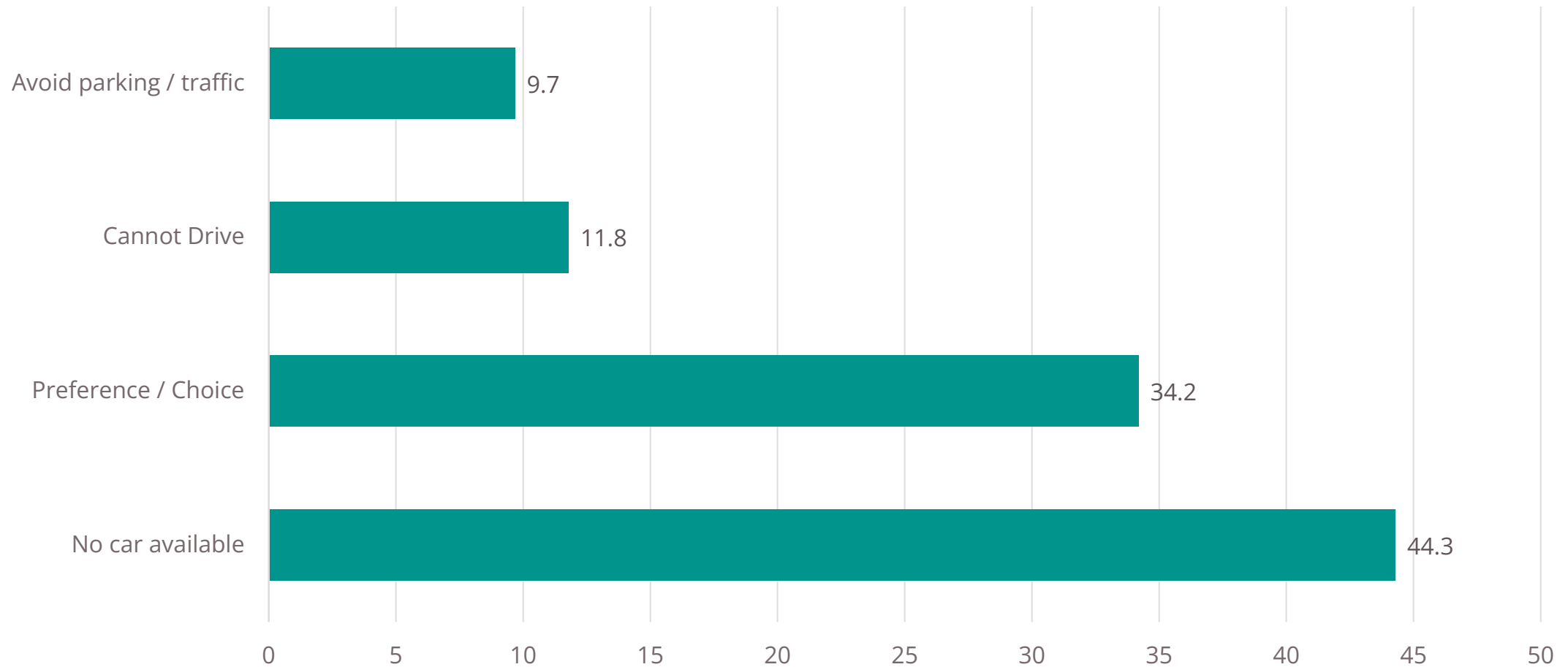
# Who is on the bus?

- Age: 63% of riders are 24 or younger
  - Nearly half in the 19-24 age bracket
- Employment: 44% are full-time students; 44% are employed (full / part time)
- Income: 42% live in households earning less than \$15,000 annually
- Language: 94% of riders primarily speak English at home

# Transit Usage & Dependency

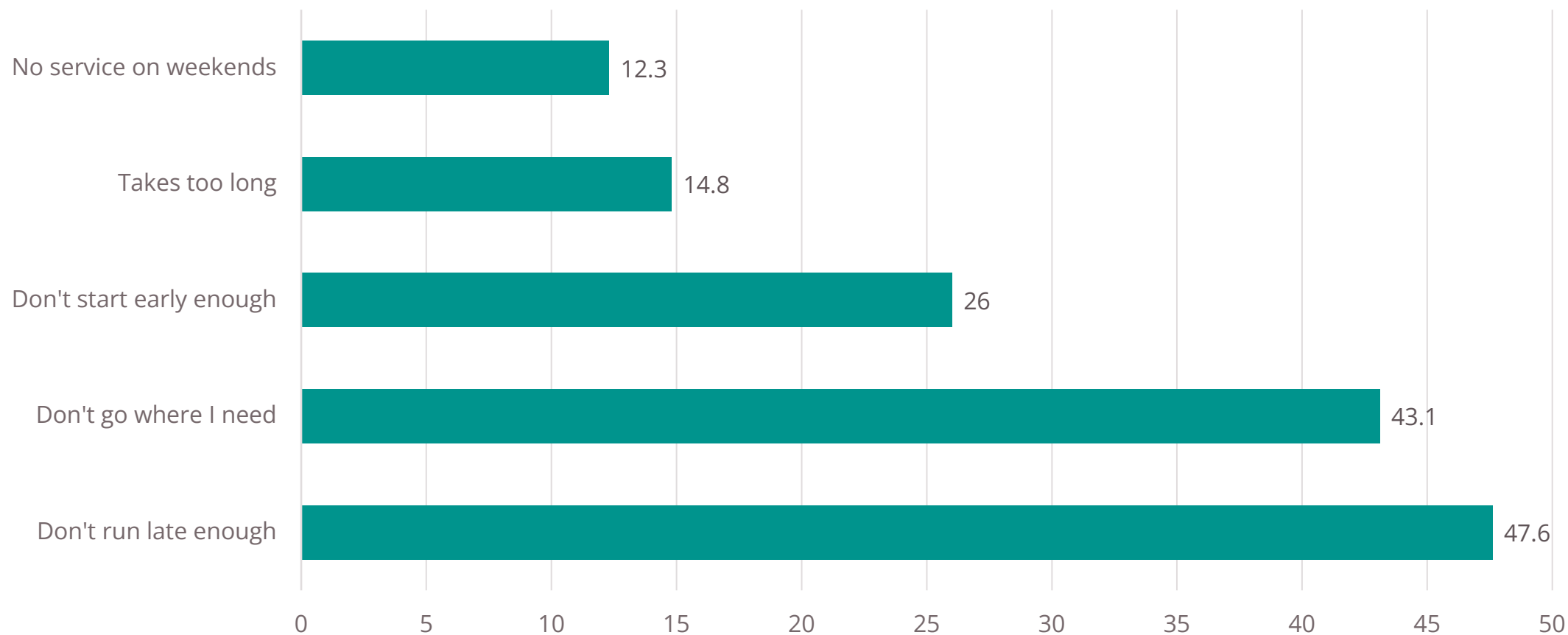
- Frequency: 47% ride 6–7 days a week; 88% ride at least 3 days a week.
- Car Access: 44% of riders do not have a car available for their trip.
- Access to the Bus: 79% walk to their stop; 73% walk less than 5 minutes.
- Trip Purpose: 43% of trips are for school; 14% for work; 12% for shopping/errands.

# Why Riders Choose WTA



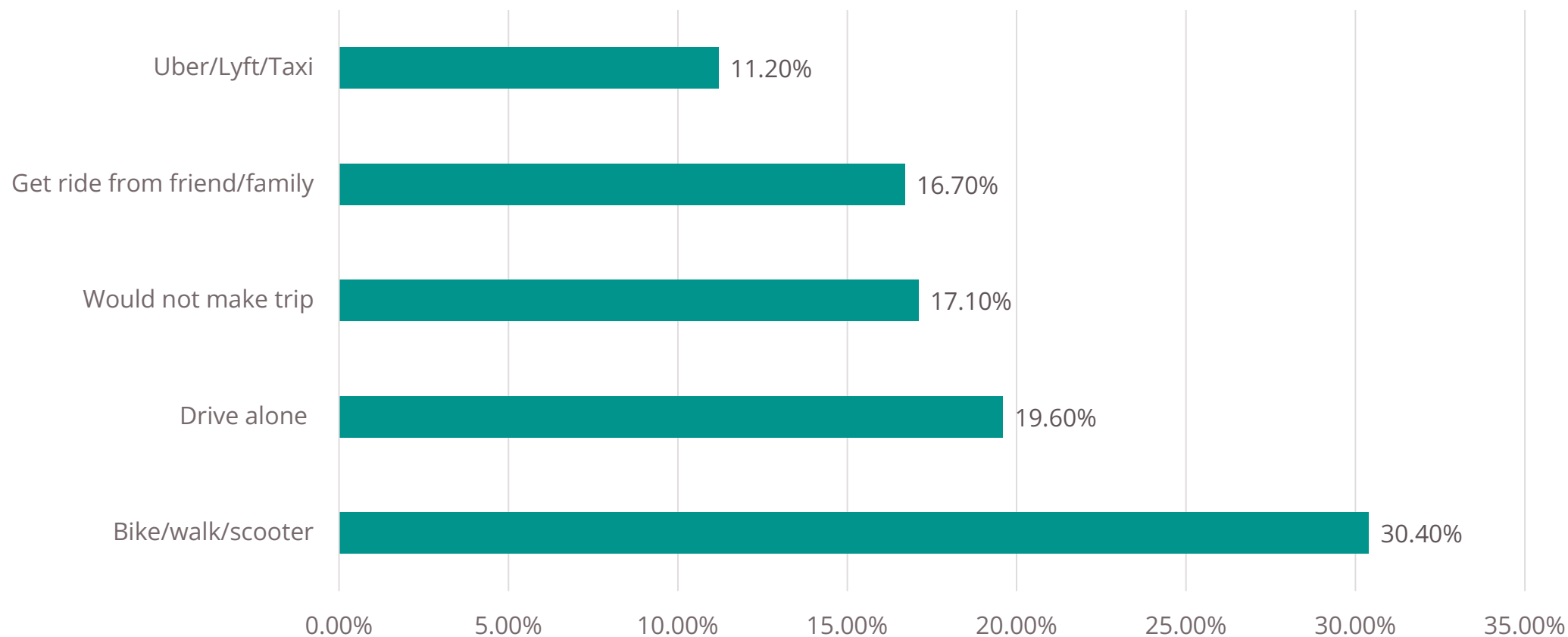
# Service Gaps: “Unmade Trips”

45% of riders say there are trips they *want* to make but cannot by bus.



# Alternatives & Impact

If transit were unavailable, how would these 2,750 people travel?



# The Community Perspective

2025 Mailed Perception Survey

# Sampling Summary

Recruitment Method	ABS Only - OVERALL	Bellingham	Ferndale & Lynden	Remainder of County
Number of Unique Addresses	53,000	26,500	7,950	18,550
Number of Postcards Sent (2 postcards per address)	106,000	53,000	15,900	37,100
Targeted Completes	800	400	120	280
Expected Response Rate	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
Margin of Error	±3 ppt	±5 ppt	± 9 ppt	±6 ppt
Actual Completes	<b>1,753</b>	<b>1,089</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>459</b>
Actual Response Rate	3.3%	4.1%	2.6%	2.5%

# Executive Summary

- Strong Community Foundation: 87% of all Whatcom County Residents (including non-riders) view WTA as a Very Important or Important community resource.
- 70% of the general community is satisfied with WTA's performance
  - Satisfaction is highest in Bellingham (79%) and slightly lower in rural/outlying areas (65-68%)
- 92% of residents agree that public transit is a necessity
- Public transportation is ranked as a Top 3 community issue, alongside housing and environment

# Demographics

- Unlike the rider survey (skewed heavily towards students), the community survey reflects a balanced mix of working professionals and retirees.
- 76% of respondents always have a vehicle available
- Regional Diversity: 62% from Bellingham, 12% from Ferndale & Lynden, 26% from Rural Whatcom County
- While riders often fall in the lower-income bracket, the community survey captures a higher percentage of middle and high-income households

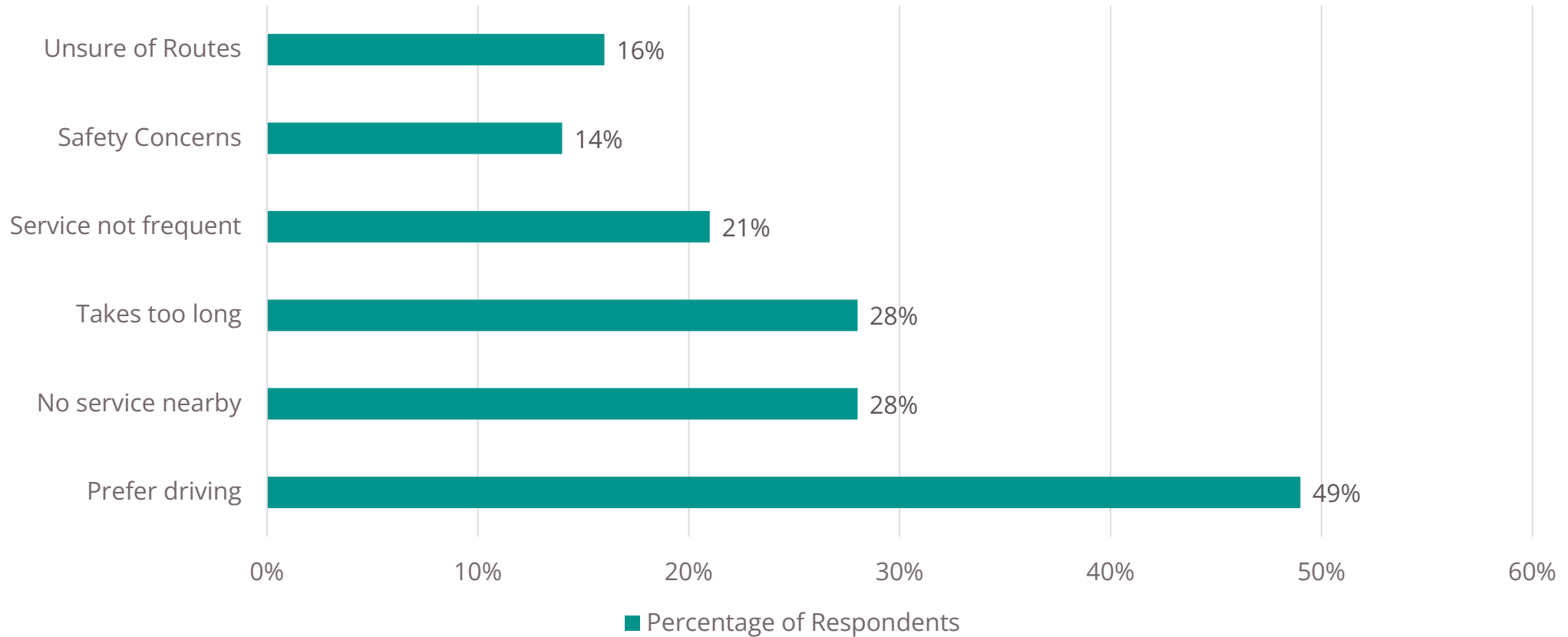
# Community Investment Priorities (the \$100 exercise)

The Methodology:  
Respondents were given a hypothetical \$100 budget and asked to distribute it across eight specific improvement categories.

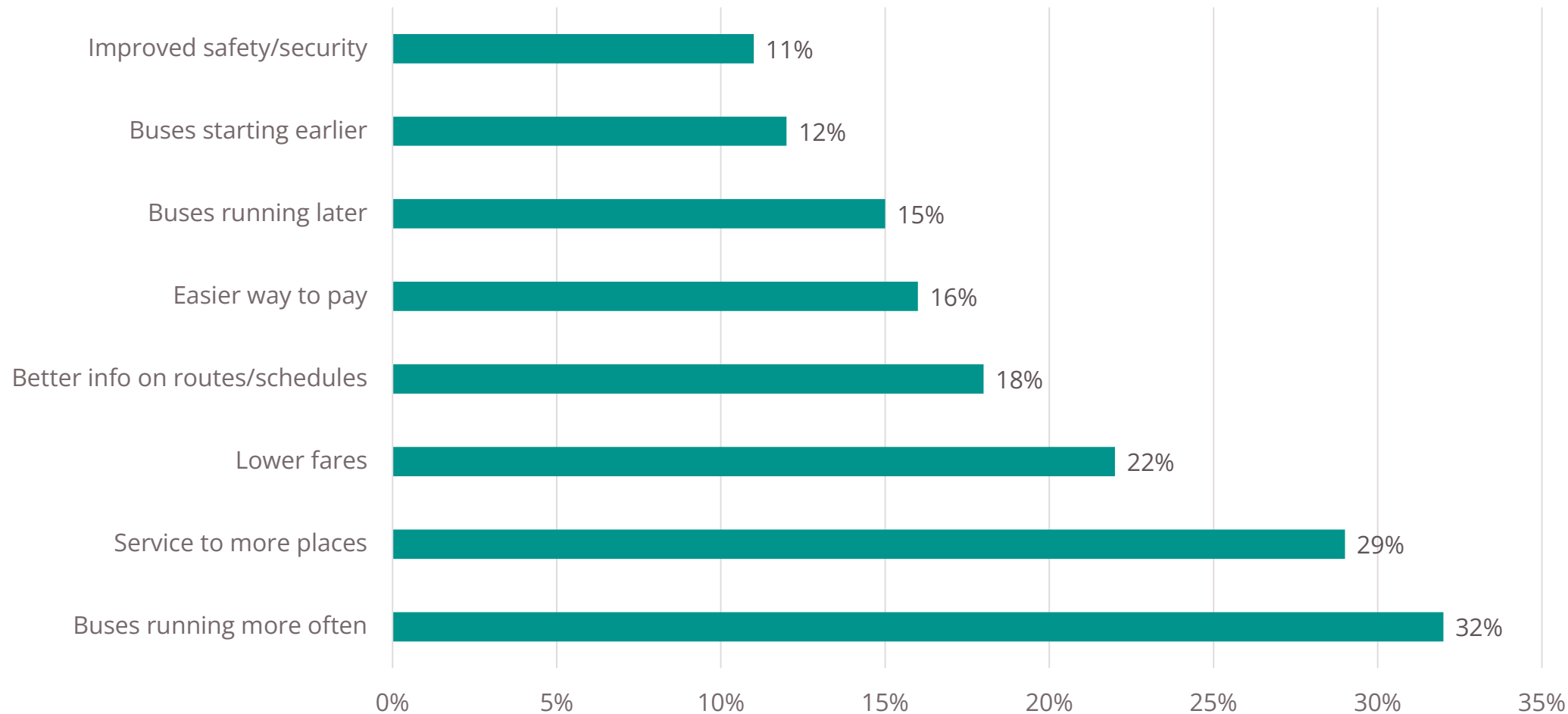
Improvement Area	Avg. Spend
More frequent buses	\$15.70
Extended service area of bus service	\$15.50
Extended service hours of bus service	\$14.90
Shared/smaller/on-demand services	\$12.40
Invest in low- or no-emission busses	\$11.00
Enhanced transit safety	\$7.90
Bus rapid transit corridors	\$7.60
Improved transit shelters	\$6.30
Make buses more comfortable	\$4.40
Improved maintenance at stops and stations	\$4.30

# Feedback From Non-Riders

The main reason for not riding is preference for personal vehicles (49%)



# What factors would increase use?



# Important Issues

WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING YOUR COMMUNITY?  
(PLEASE PICK YOUR TOP TWO)

Issue	Ferndale			Total
	Bellingham	& Lynden	Rural	
Making housing more affordable	71%	58%	58%	65%
Protecting air quality and the environment	32%	19%	31%	29%
Improving public transportation	25%	20%	21%	23%
Reducing crime	15%	22%	21%	18%
Reducing local taxes	10%	24%	22%	16%
Improving schools	13%	17%	14%	14%
Expanding bike lanes and sidewalks	14%	9%	13%	13%
Improving roads and bridges	11%	18%	15%	13%

Overall, n = 1,753; Bellingham, n = 1,089; Ferndale & Lynden, n = 205; Rural, n = 459

# Key Takeaways

- Riders love our service (90%): 9 out of 10 people currently riding the bus are happy with how it works, how safe they feel, and how easy it is to use.
- A win for the whole county (87%): Even people who never step foot on a bus believe WTA is a vital part of Whatcom County. It's seen as an essential "public good," much like our parks or libraries.
- A must-have for the all (92%): Almost everyone agrees that the bus is a lifeline for people who don't have a car or can't drive, ensuring everyone in our community can get to work, school, and appointments.
- #1 Request: More Frequency
- Getting on board: To get non-riders on the bus, we need to focus on two things: making the trip faster and making the bus stops closer to where they live and work.



# Full Report



THANK YOU