MEMORANDUM

To: **James Drake**

From: **Thomas Wittmann & Peter Soderberg**

Date: August 28, 2025

Subject: **On-Board Survey Analysis Results**

BACKGROUND

In March and April 2025, Sacramento Regional Transit (SacRT) conducted a weekday and weekend on-board origin-destination (OD) survey of all SacRT and Elk Grove fixed route bus and light rail services. The survey identifies the purpose, duration, and time of day of the trip, as well as key demographic information of the survey respondent. The survey also collected service ratings of the bus routes, light rail lines, and the SacRT system overall.

Purpose and Objectives

The origin-destination survey is an important tool for the agency to understand how the community is using SacRT bus and light rail service. Transit planners will use the information collected from the survey to make data-driven decisions on where transit infrastructure and services should be improved or optimized. The survey will provide data for a Comprehensive Operational Analysis and Short-Range Transit Plan for SacRT. This report summarizes the survey methods and findings.

Sampling Plan

The goal of the sampling plan was to understand patterns for bus riders, light rail riders, and weekend riders. The sampling plan goal was for the following distribution:

- 3,500 from weekday bus riders
- 2,500 from weekday light rail riders
- 175 each from Saturday Bus and light rail riders
- 175 each from Sunday bus and light rail riders

Based on 2023 ridership data, current revenue hours, and experience in expected returns, a total of approximately 1,300 hours of survey time was determined to be needed to achieve

the SacRT goals. The following formula was used to develop this number: *Required Survey Hours = Desired # of Returns / (Riders per hour X Rider Participation Rate)*

Data regarding the average number of riders per hour was taken from 2023 system information. Based on an average shift or piece-of-work (POW) of approximately 8 hours for a surveyor, the 1,300 survey hours translates to approximately 162 shifts. These shifts were then divided between weekdays and weekends and bus and light rail based on the expected returns set by SacRT.

Weekday bus sampling was set up in an attempt to cover all routes, but with a focus on the routes with higher passenger loadings, based on 2023 data, and all times of the day were addressed with an emphasis on AM peak hours as a starting point. Light rail surveying was divided evenly between the Gold and Blue lines. Weekend surveying consisted of 7 shifts each day for Bus on Saturday and Sunday and 4 shifts for light rail for each day. All bus routes surveyed were in the top 8 ridership numbers based on 2023 boardings.

The full sampling plan is included in the appendix of this report.

Design and Field Administration

Between March 3 and April 8, 2025, a total of 2,473 surveys were collected on weekdays from SacRT's fixed-route bus system, 396 surveys from Elk Grove bus routes, and 2,560 surveys from the SacRT light rail system. 423 fixed-route bus surveys and 360 light rail surveys were collected on weekends as well. The surveys utilized a self-administered survey that was distributed and collected by surveyors onboard the bus routes. The survey had questions on trip information, fare payment, rider demographics, and service ratings. Surveys were also available in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese, Punjabi, and Hmong.

Returns were secured for all routes through Route 161, with the exception of Route 20 (no returns) and Routes 103, 109, 124, 134, 138 and 161 (all with less than 10 returns). A scattered number of returns were obtained for Routes 175 through 255, primarily due to these routes being interlined with more heavily used routes. Bus surveying was scheduled for eight days, with one day being devoted to the Elk Grove system, since it is based in a separate location. Bus survey times were from 6:00 AM until 8:30 PM, while light rail survey times ranged from 5:30 AM until 10:30 PM. Surveying for the Gold and Blue Lines was scheduled for a single day for each line.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Trip Purpose** – Traveling to or from work is the most predominant trip purpose on both bus and light rail. School/college trips are the second most common. For Elk Grove routes specifically, school/college trips are the most common trip.

- **Frequency of Use** – Most respondents use SacRT regularly, with most respondents saying they use the service five days per week. Taking transit seven days per week is the next most common on SacRT bus and light rail, but much less common on Elk Grove bus routes. This is likely due to Elk Grove not operating on Sundays and holidays, as well as the emphasis on school-related trips.
- **Fare Payment** – The fare payment methods are distributed relatively evenly across the four main payment options, so there is no one dominant product used across the systems. Connect Cards are less commonly used on SacRT Bus, while cash is less commonly used on Elk Grove service.
- **Access to Transit** – Riders are most likely to walk to reach transit for each system surveyed. Light rail riders are more likely to bike, drive, or get dropped off than bus riders.
- **Demographics, Income** – Riders are most likely to be very low income (under $10,000 per year) across bus and light rail systems. Light rail and Elk Grove services have more riders with higher incomes (over $75,000 per year), likely related to commuter services and quality perceptions of rail versus bus.
- **Demographics, Minority** – SacRT Bus and light rail riders are most likely to be White/Caucasian or Black/African American, and Elk Grove bus riders are disproportionately Black/African American and Asian/Pacific Islander.
- **Demographics, Age** – SacRT Bus and light rail service are predominantly used by working-age riders, and Elk Grove ridership skews younger than the rest of the system, which reflects the school-tripper service and connections to CRC.

SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter details the survey results, which are summarized by the following categories: transit use, demographics, fare payment, personal characteristics, and service ratings.

Transit Use

This section reviews passengers' trips purposes, how often they use transit, how long they have been transit users, and how they access their transit services.

Trip Purpose

Work and school/college trips are the most common trip purposes reported on SacRT fixed route service, making up over 58% of all bus trips and 63% of light rail trips surveyed (Figure 1 and Figure 2). This shows that the majority of people who take the bus or light rail on

weekdays do so for work or school, and weekday service should continue to be evaluated for optimization to provide these essential trips.

Work and school trips were also the most common trip purposes on Elk Grove routes (Figure 3), but school/college trips made up the largest share at 43.5% of trips surveyed. This indicates that students are a core demographic of the Elk Grove ridership base and should be considered when undertaking any service changes.

Across the SacRT system, the third most common trip purpose was "other" (Figure 4), which could indicate people using transit for recreation or social activities with friends or family. The survey did not include an option for riders to elaborate when they chose "other" for their response.

"Other" trip purposes were the most common responses on weekend rider surveys on SacRT Bus and light rail (Figure 5 and Figure 6), further supporting that expanding this category in future onboard surveys will give more accurate information. Work trips were equally as common as "other" trips on weekend bus service at 30.2% but were less common on light rail during the weekends. This shows that bus service is a critical transit option for workers with less traditional work schedules.

Figure 1 "What is the purpose of this trip?" – Light Rail

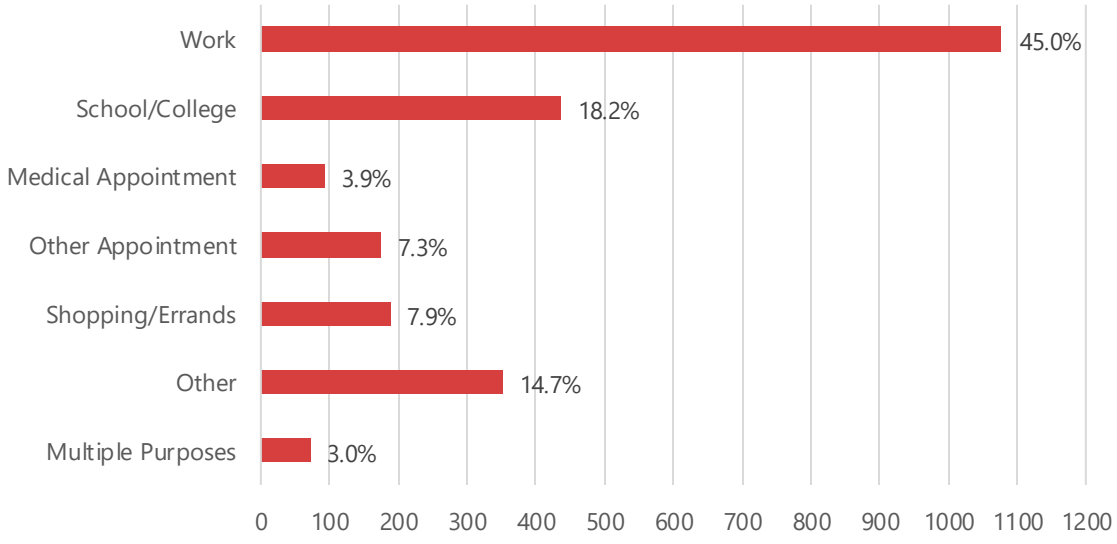


Figure 2 "What is the purpose of this trip?" – SacRT Bus

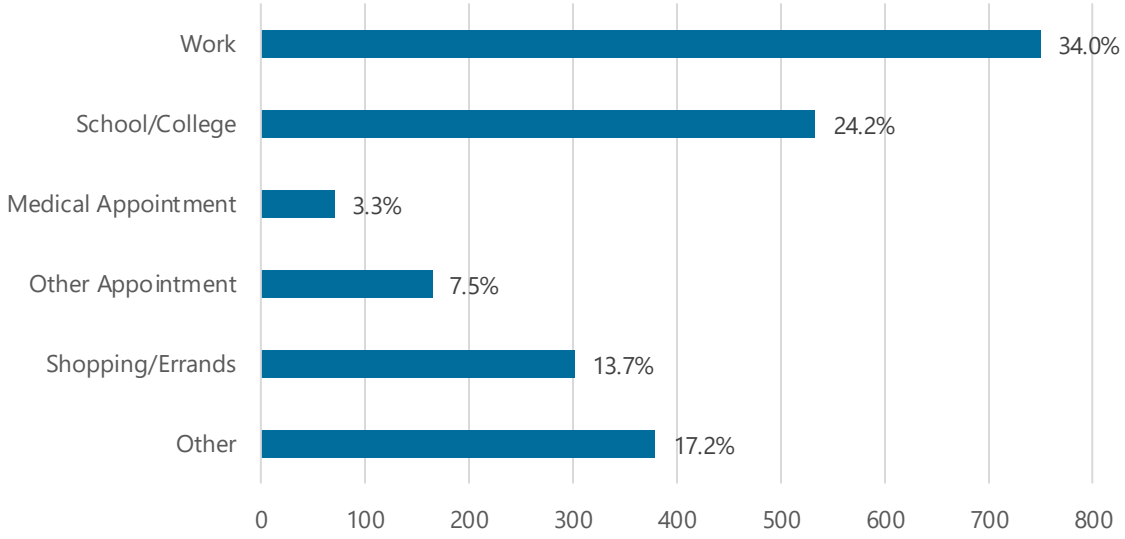


Figure 3 "What is the purpose of this trip?" – Elk Grove

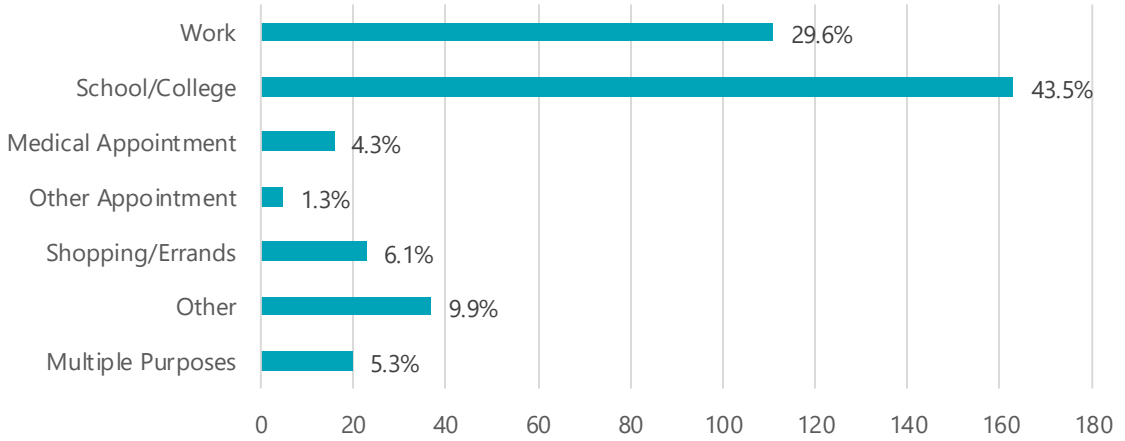


Figure 4 "What is the purpose of this trip?" – SacRT System

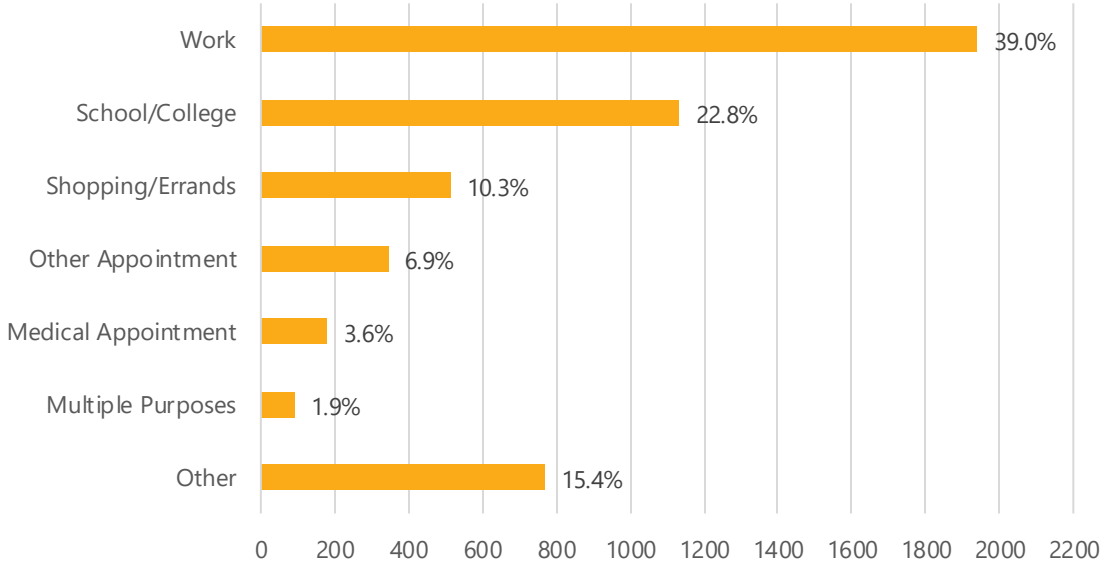


Figure 5 "What is the purpose of this trip?" – Weekend SacRT Light Rail

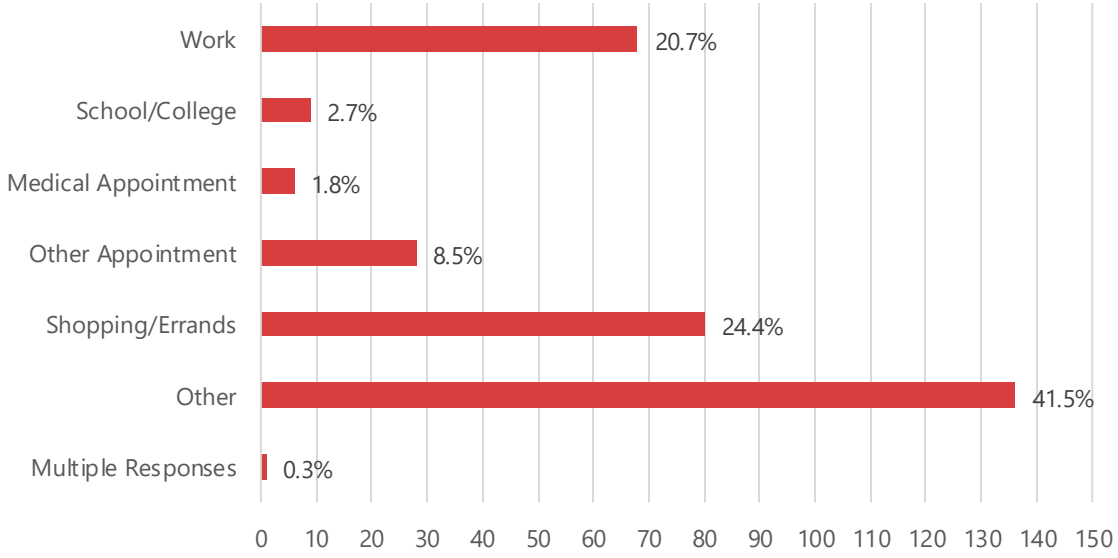
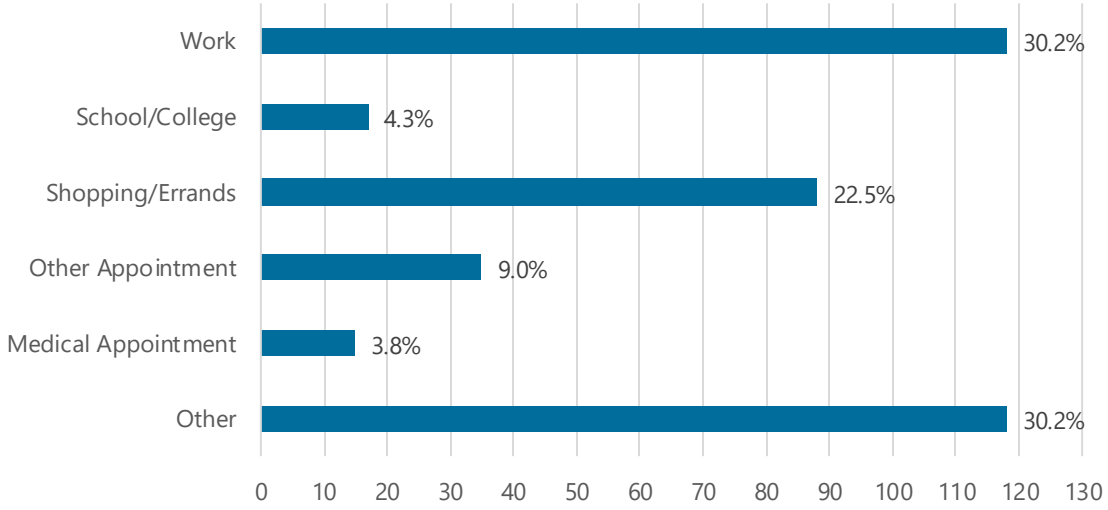


Figure 6 "What is the purpose of this trip?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Frequency of Use

Over 29% of riders use SacRT light rail five days per week, a plurality of riders. The second most frequent reported usage is seven days per week, at 15% of riders. Combined, those who ride the light rail five days a week or more represent a steady base of riders who are likely using light rail to get to schools or jobs, or who are transit dependent and use light rail nearly every day. There is a relatively even spread in the number of riders who use light rail between two and four days a week, which may reflect the prevalence of hybrid work schedules. This is also consistent with light rail demographic data that shows high-income riders as more likely to use light rail service, and high-income jobs are more likely to have flexible work schedules.

Just over 50% of riders use SacRT service 5 or more days a week, showing a core of frequent users. Nearly 32% of riders use SacRT bus service five days a week, which is the most common frequency reported for number of days of use across the SacRT system (Figure 8 and Figure 10). The second highest frequency of use is riders who use the service seven days a week, which is nearly 17% of riders. This indicates that SacRT fixed route bus has a steady base of riders who use the service daily, which is consistent with regular work and school schedules and with those trips being the most common trip purposes. It also indicates that many of the riders on SacRT's fixed-route services may be dependent on transit for their transportation needs and therefore use it nearly every day. Weekend bus and light rail survey results show that over a quarter of riders report using transit seven days a week, with five days being the next most common response (Figure 11 and Figure 12, which is consistent with a transit-dependent population.

Elk Grove riders are also a fairly consistent rider base with over 31% of riders using bus service five days a week (Figure 9), which aligns with typical K-12 school schedules. Elk Grove riders have higher rates of using the service between two and four days a week, which could align with higher education schedules or hybrid work policies.

Figure 7 "How many days do you ride RT?" – Light Rail

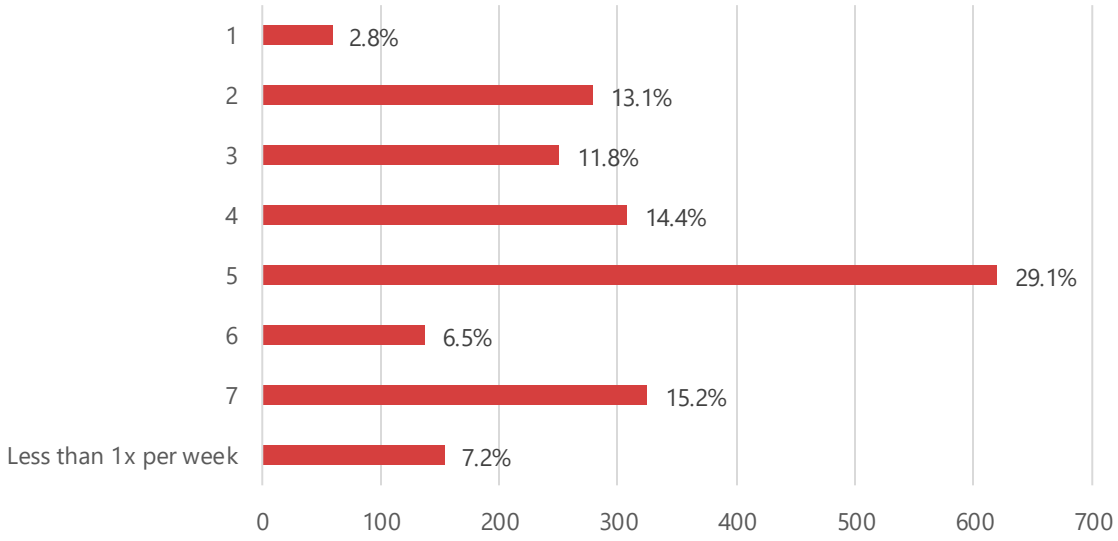


Figure 8 "How many days do you ride RT?" – SacRT Bus

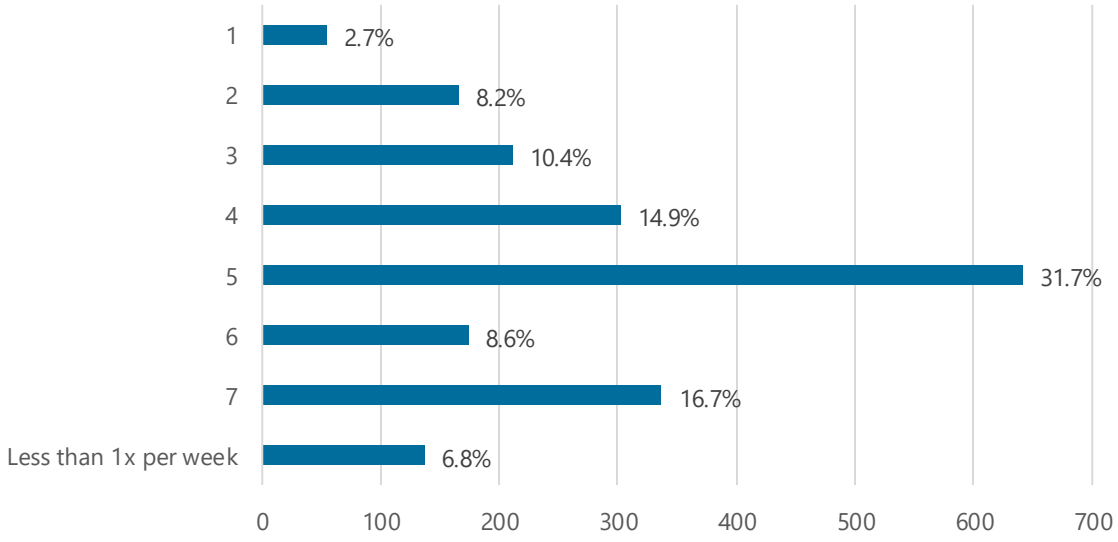


Figure 9 "How many days do you ride RT?" – Elk Grove

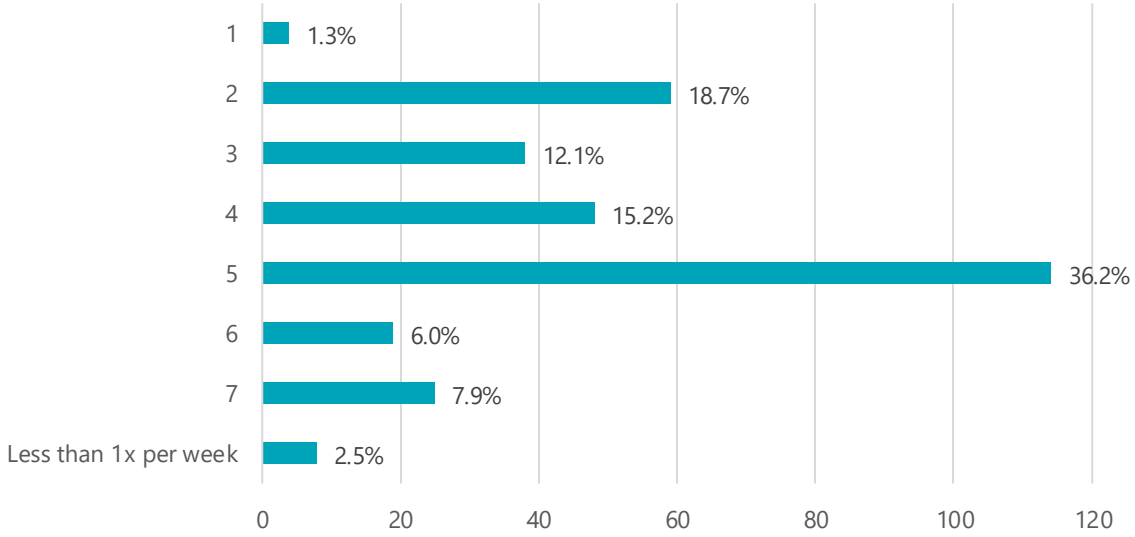


Figure 10 "How many days do you ride RT?" – SacRT System

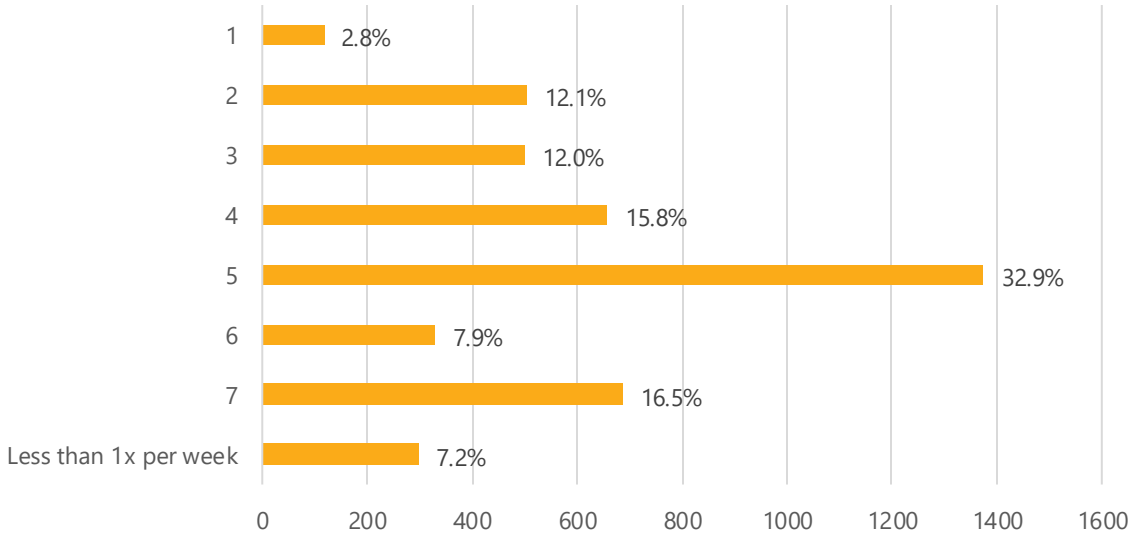


Figure 11 "How many days do you ride RT?" – Weekend Light Rail

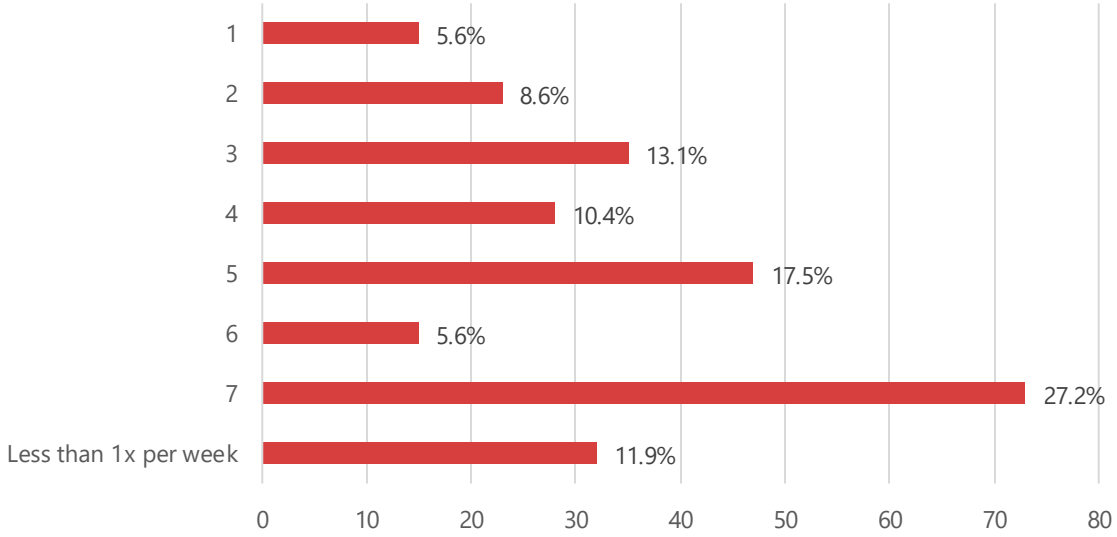
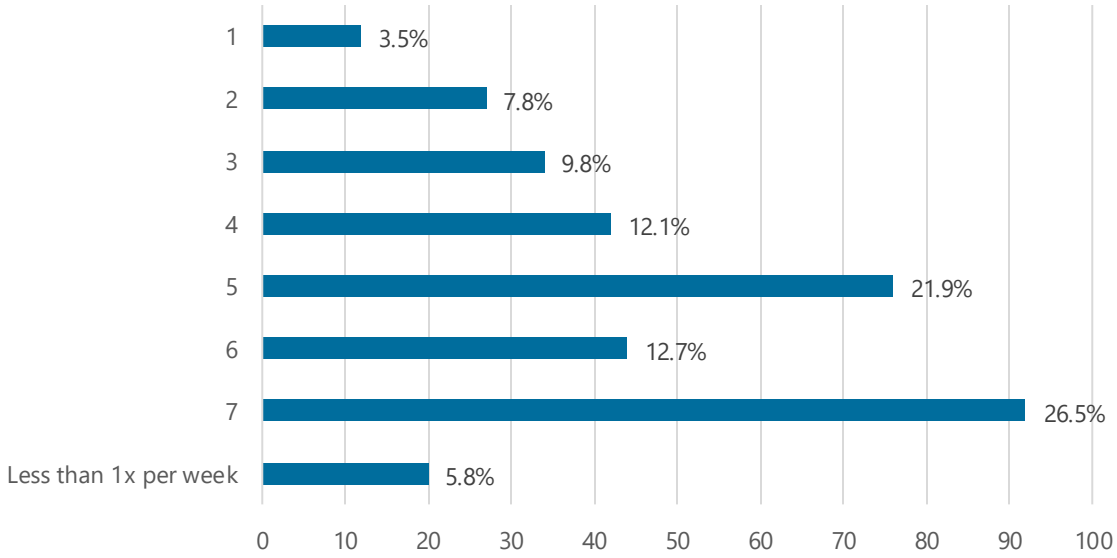


Figure 12 "How many days do you ride RT?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Transit Use Length

The majority of riders on SacRT bus and light rail reported they began using SacRT service in the last five years (Figure 13 and Figure 14). This is consistent with the demographics data collected from the surveys in which over 30% of riders reported being under the age of 24, and also with the second most common trip purpose being for school/college. Elk Grove had a larger portion of newer riders with 28% starting in the past year, and 41% in the past five years (Figure 15), and overall, Elk Grove riders are newer to using the system than the rest of the SacRT system. It is likely that passengers who began riding in the past five years could be new riders in the Sacramento K-12 schools or students at one of the colleges. Weekend riders are more likely to have been using RT services for more than 10 years than weekday riders (Figure 17 and Figure 18).

Overall, the majority of weekday riders on the SacRT system began using it in the last five years (Figure 16).

Figure 13 "In what year did you begin riding SacRT?" – Light Rail

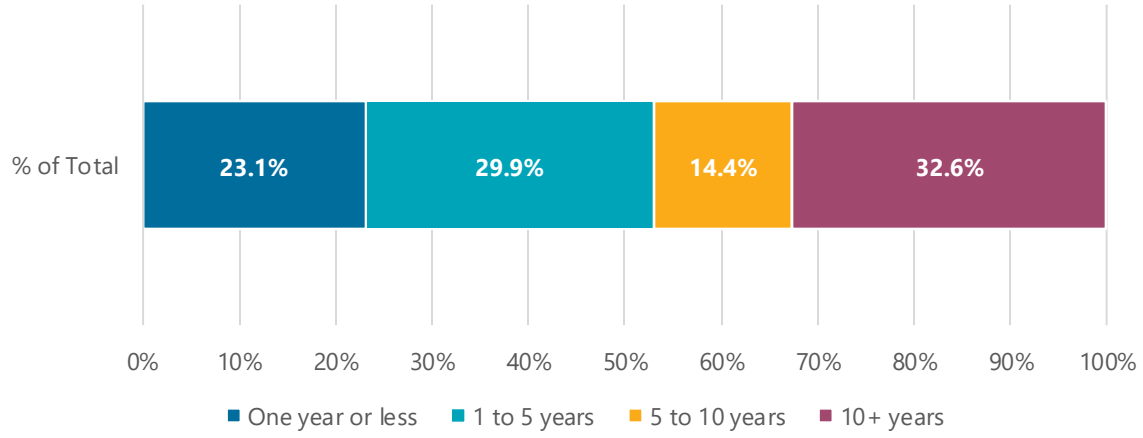


Figure 14 "In what year did you begin riding SacRT?" – SacRT Bus

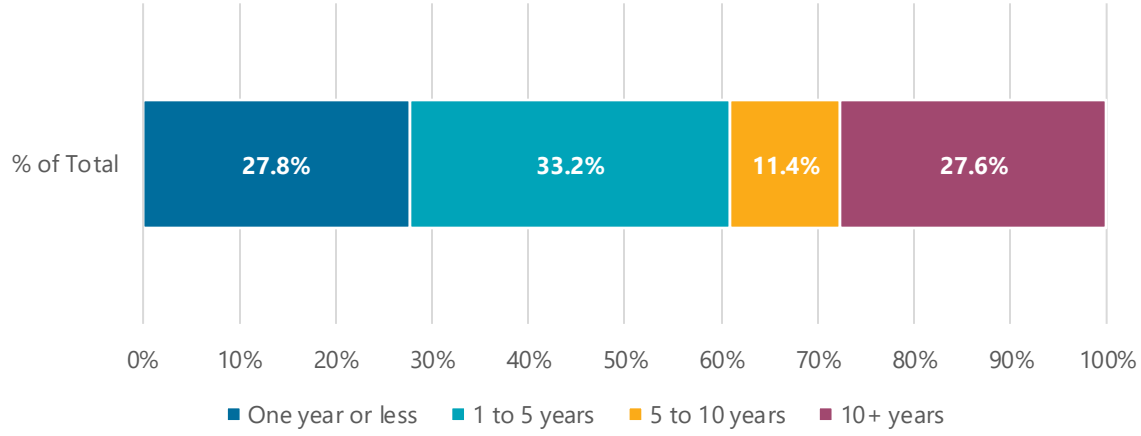


Figure 15 "In what year did you begin riding SacRT?" – Elk Grove

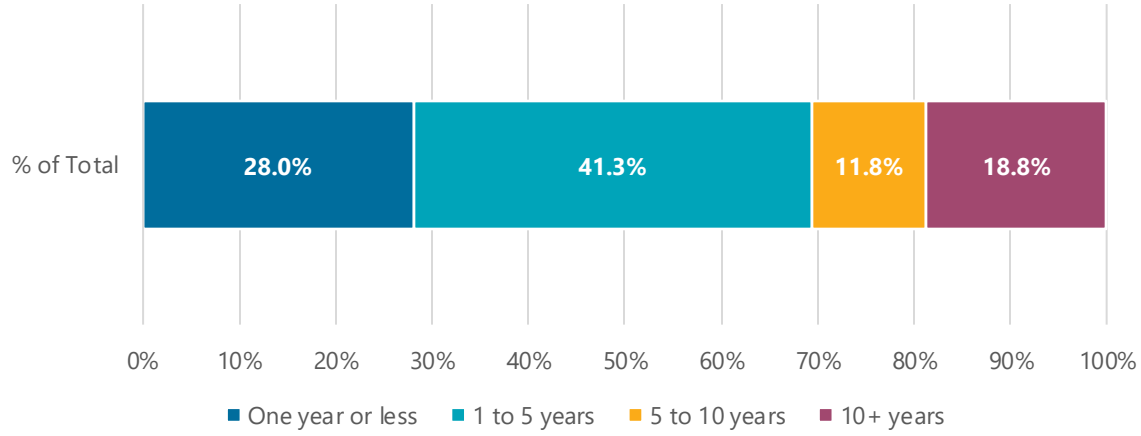


Figure 16 "In what year did you begin riding SacRT?" – SacRT Weekday System

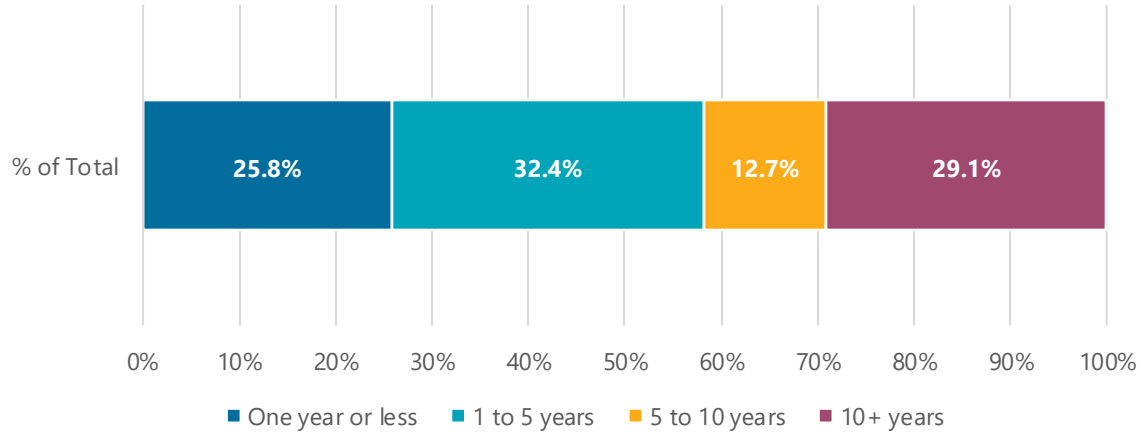


Figure 17 "In what year did you begin riding SacRT?" – Weekend Light Rail

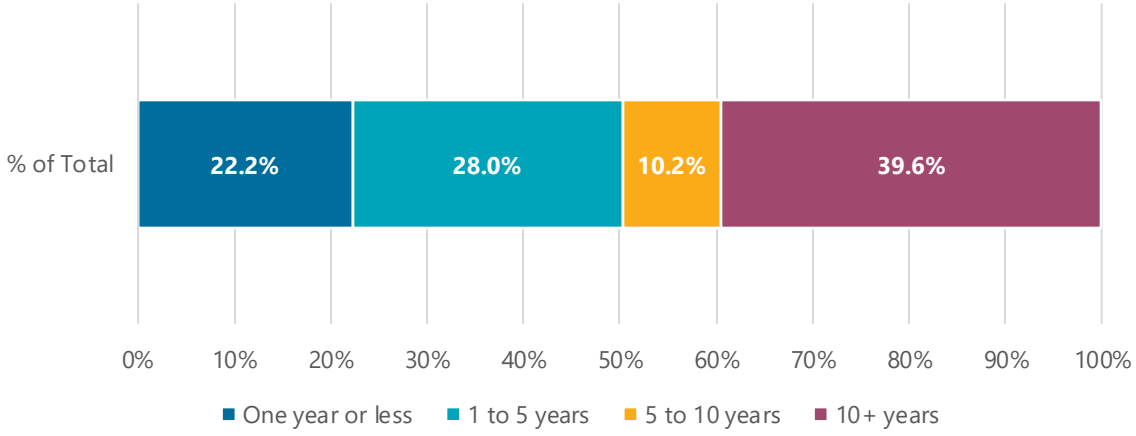
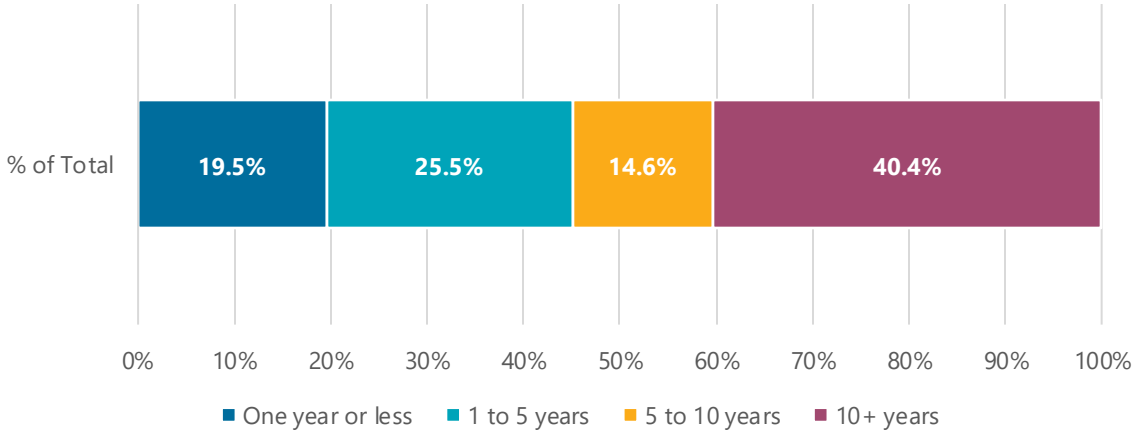


Figure 18 "In what year did you begin riding SacRT?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Transit Access

The most common means of accessing transit for all SacRT riders is walking to the bus stop or station (Figure 22). SacRT Bus and Elk Grove riders are more likely to walk to transit (Figure 19 and Figure 20) than light rail riders, but over 45% of light rail riders still reported walking to the station to access their train (Figure 21). The second most common form of access to bus routes were transfers from another SacRT bus route or light rail line, which make up about 11% of all the bus trips surveyed.

One notable difference is that nearly 14% of light rail riders reported driving to a station to board their train, while only about 3% of bus riders access their bus route via a car. This is likely due to the availability of free park-and-ride lots along the light rail system. Light rail riders are also more likely to bike or get dropped off at the station, which indicates that riders are likely willing to travel farther to reach rail service.

Walking to the bus stop or station is also the most common means of access for weekend bus and light rail riders (Figure 23 and Figure 24). Similar to weekdays, the next most common means of access for weekend bus riders is making a transfer from another SacRT bus, which demonstrates the importance of connections throughout the network on both weekends and weekdays.

Figure 19 "How did you get to the bus *you are on right now*?" – SacRT Bus

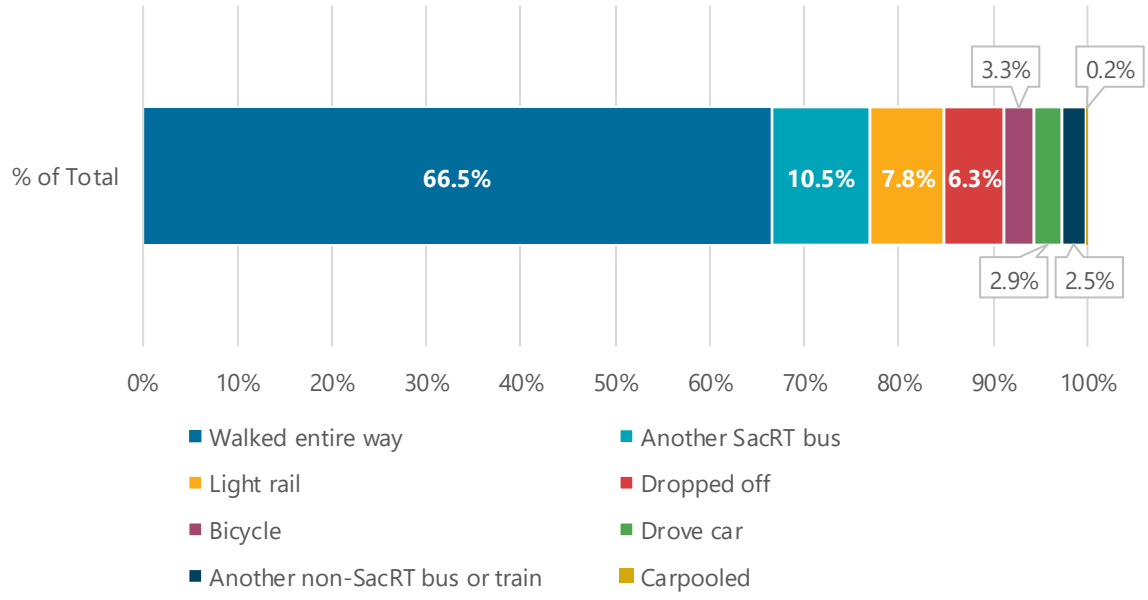


Figure 20 "How did you get to the bus *you are on right now*?" – Elk Grove

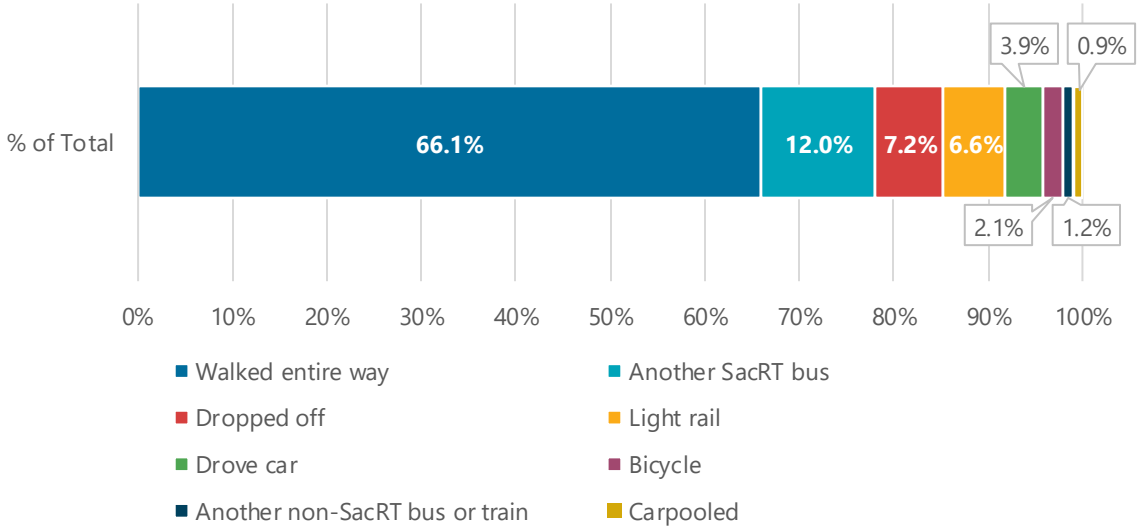


Figure 21 "How did you get to the train *you are on right now*?" – Light Rail

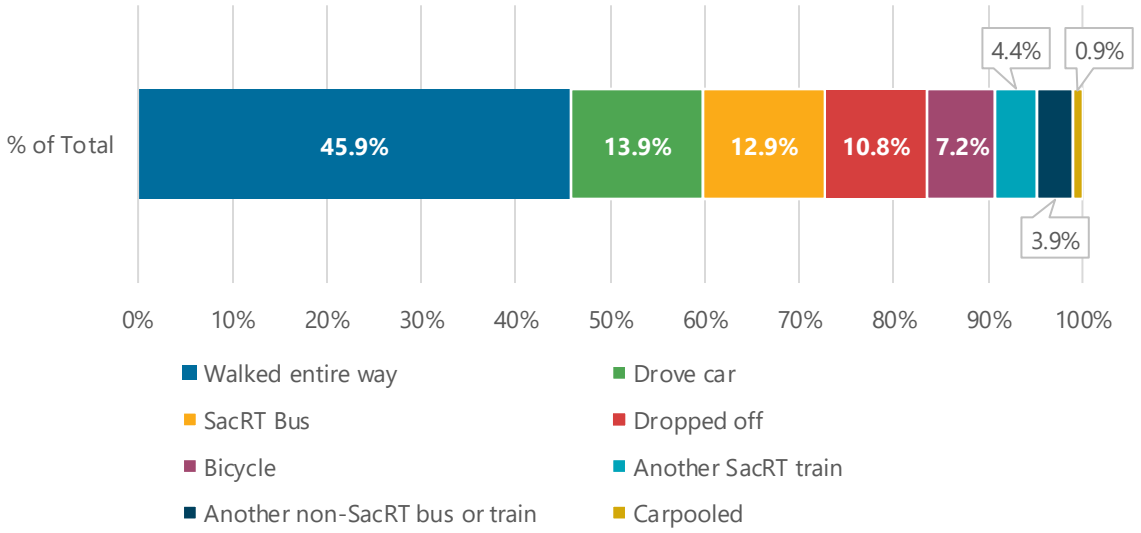


Figure 22 "How did you get to the bus or train *you are on right now*?" – SacRT System

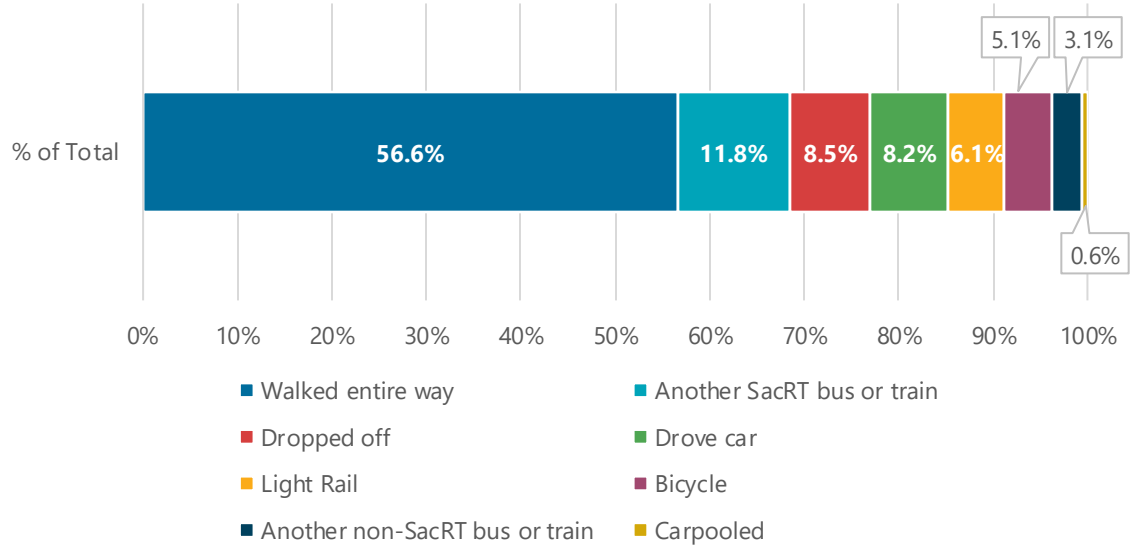


Figure 23 "How did you get to the train *you are on right now*?" – Weekend Light Rail

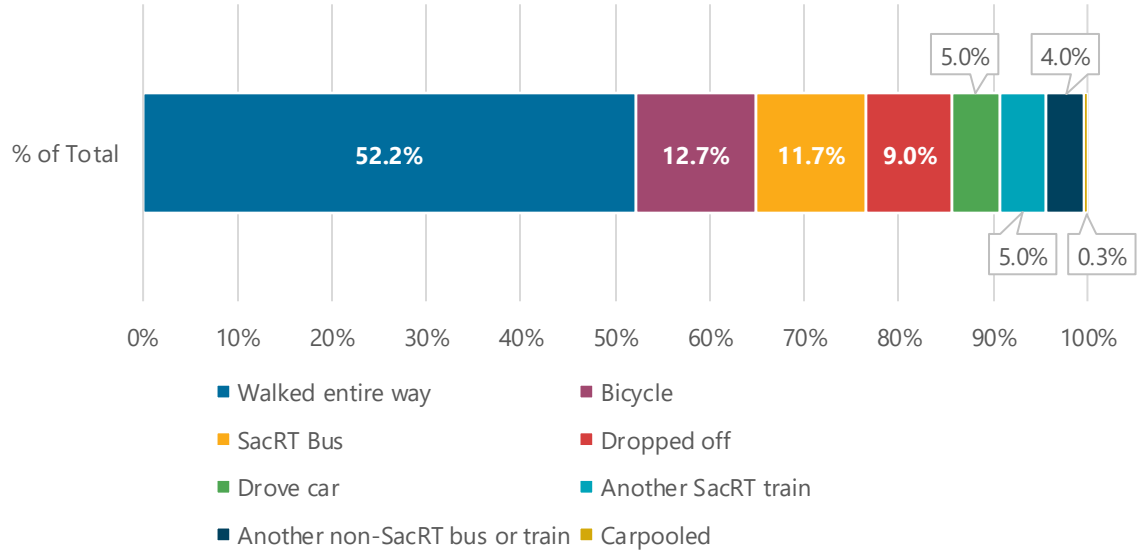
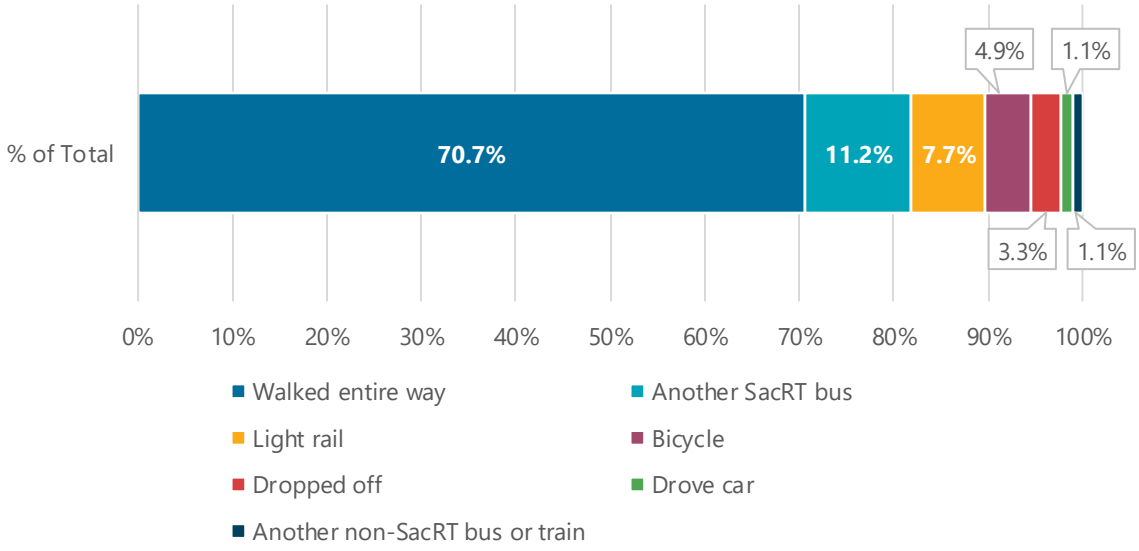


Figure 24 "How did you get to the bus *you are on right now*?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Transfers

The following transfer matrix shows the top 20 transfer pairs across the SacRT transit system. The most common transfer pairs are light rail-to-light rail or bus-to-light rail transfers. Over 10% of all transfers are Blue Line to Gold Line or Gold Line to Blue Line, and more than half of all transfers involve a light rail line.

Figure 25 Transfer Matrix – SacRT System

Starting Route	1	21	23	25	26	30	51	61	67	68	72	81	82	84	86	87	93	Blue Line	Gold Line	Light Rail
1		6	1	10	2		1					2	1	3		1	3	5		1
10						1		1			1	1		1					8	
11				4	1	1	5			1	1	1		1	2			1	3	3
13	1		2		2		1							1	2	1		1		2
21	4		2	5	1		1				3	2	1				1		10	7
23	1	1		1	1					4		1		1	1			4	5	1
25		2			2	2					1		3		4	4		3	3	3
26	3										1	2				1	4	4	7	
51					1			2	1	2			1	2				5	1	
56									4		1							6	2	
61							2					1	1		1			8		
67	1		2			1												3	6	1
68	2		4		1	3	2					1	1	1			1	4	6	2
72		1	1	1					1			2		1				3	7	1
81	4		1	1		1	4	2	2				2	1	3	4	1	5	3	2
82	1	1	2	1	2	2		1						2					9	
84	1	1		1	6			1				2	2			1	4	4	4	2
86	2		1		1	2	1	1			1						1	3	1	1
87	2					1	1	2						1	1		2	1	7	1
93	4		1	1							2			2	1	1		2		2
Blue Line	7	1	6	8	3	2	4	6	2	4	2	5		2	1	4	5		50	
Gold Line	2	7	1		6		4	1	3	3	5	7	6	3	9	7		65		
Light Rail	5				4		1	2		3		2	2	2		3				
Yolobus	2					1	1									1		7	1	

While bus-to-bus transfers are less common, several routes have over 60% of riders making transfers to or from their routes. The top five routes with the highest percentage of transferring riders are detailed in Figure 26.

Figure 26 Highest Transfer Routes – SacRT System

Route	Transfer from Total	Transfer to Total	Transfer Total
E110	*41%*	*45%*	*69%*
E115	*50%*	*19%*	*69%*
72	*35%*	*33%*	*67%*
21	*41%*	*28%*	*64%*
75	*29%*	*35%*	*62%*

Demographics

This section summarizes the key demographic information collected from passenger surveys.

Language

Nearly 93% of survey respondents on SacRT Bus and light rail reported that English is the main language spoken at home (Figure 27 and Figure 28). Five languages other than English were represented in the survey, with Spanish being the most common language spoken at home. Hmong was a survey language option, and a very small number of light rail riders, but no bus riders, reported speaking it at home. Survey results for weekend bus and light rail riders had a similar distribution of languages as weekday riders with over 91% speaking English at home (Figure 31 and Figure 32). 90% of respondents on SacRT buses and 95% of respondents on the light rail reported being fluent in English, while less than 1% reported they do not speak English (Figure 33 and Figure 34). English fluency is slightly less common among weekend riders with 91% of light rail riders and 85.8% of bus riders (Figure 37 and Figure 38).

Although surveys were provided in multiple languages, if passengers did not speak the same language as the surveyor, they may not have received a survey unless they requested one. This may explain why SacRT riders overwhelmingly reported speaking English (Figure 30) and languages other than English were underrepresented in this survey, despite Sacramento having a diverse population of languages.

Elk Grove ridership has a slightly more diverse language ridership base with about 10% of riders reporting a language other than English is the main language spoken at home (Figure 29). The Elk Grove language question differed slightly from the SacRT Bus one in that "English and a 2nd language" was an option for Elk Grove riders. Elk Grove riders also had a slightly higher percentage of fluent English speakers (Figure 35), but the distribution of English fluency was very similar to that of the general RT system (Figure 30).

Figure 27 "What is the main language you speak at home?" – Light Rail

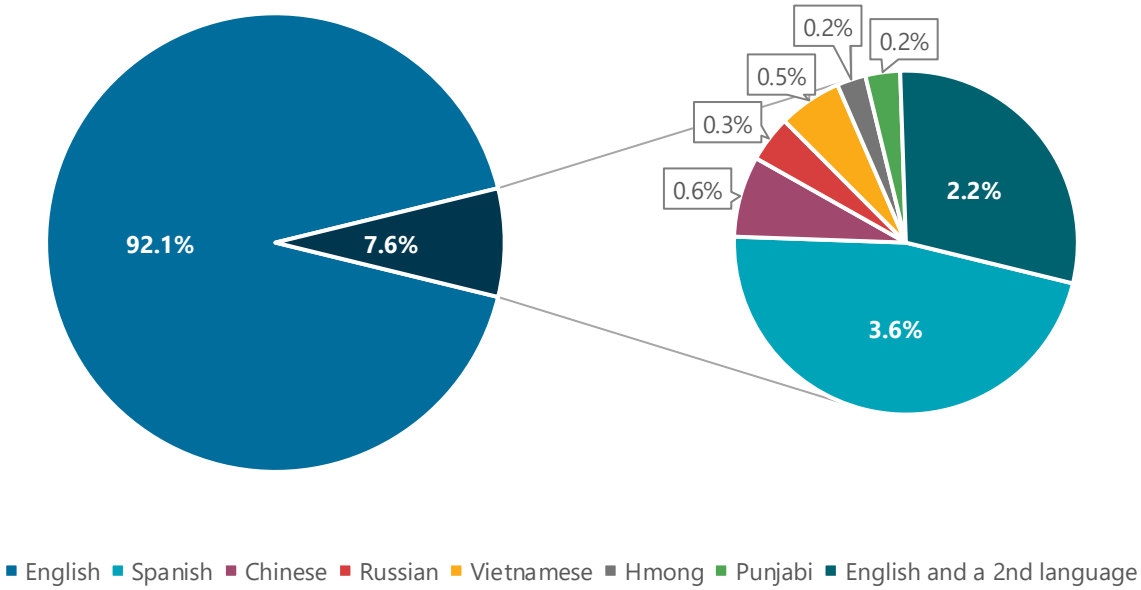


Figure 28 "What is the main language you speak at home?" – SacRT Bus

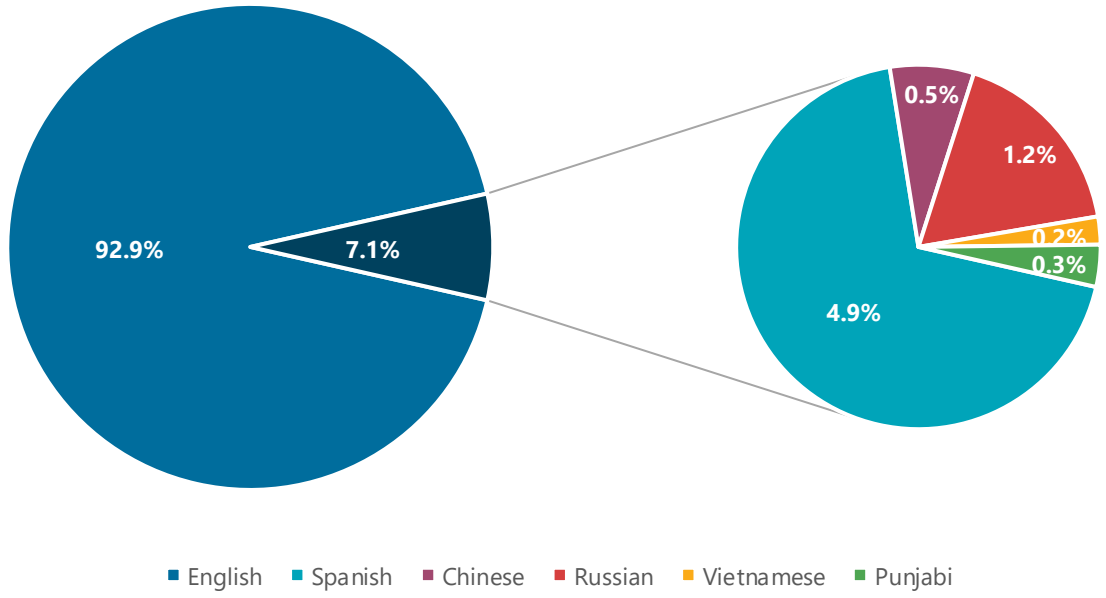


Figure 29 "What is the main language you speak at home?" – Elk Grove

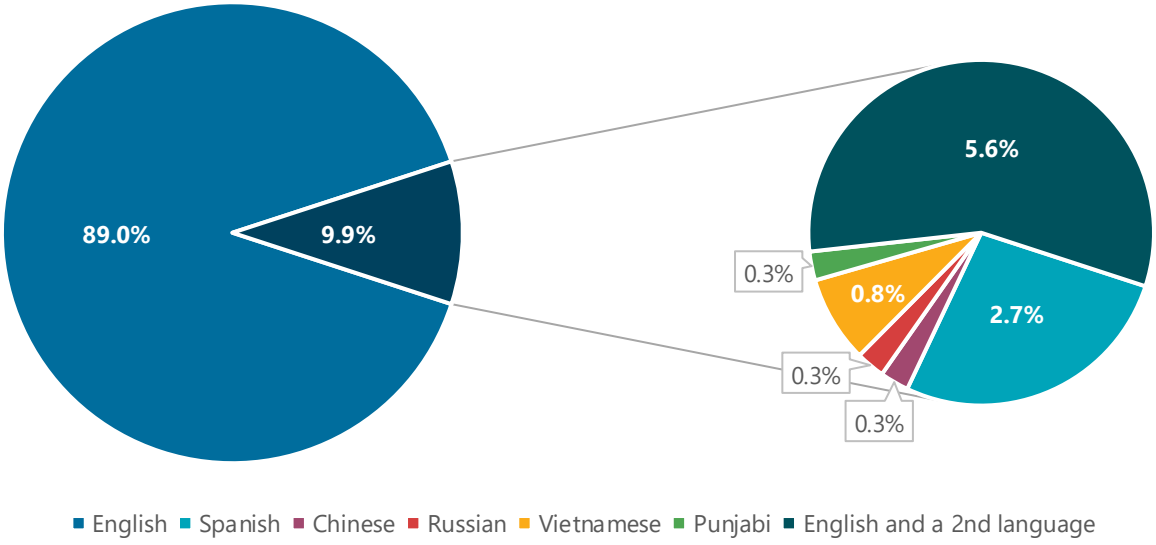


Figure 30 "What is the main language you speak at home?" – SacRT System

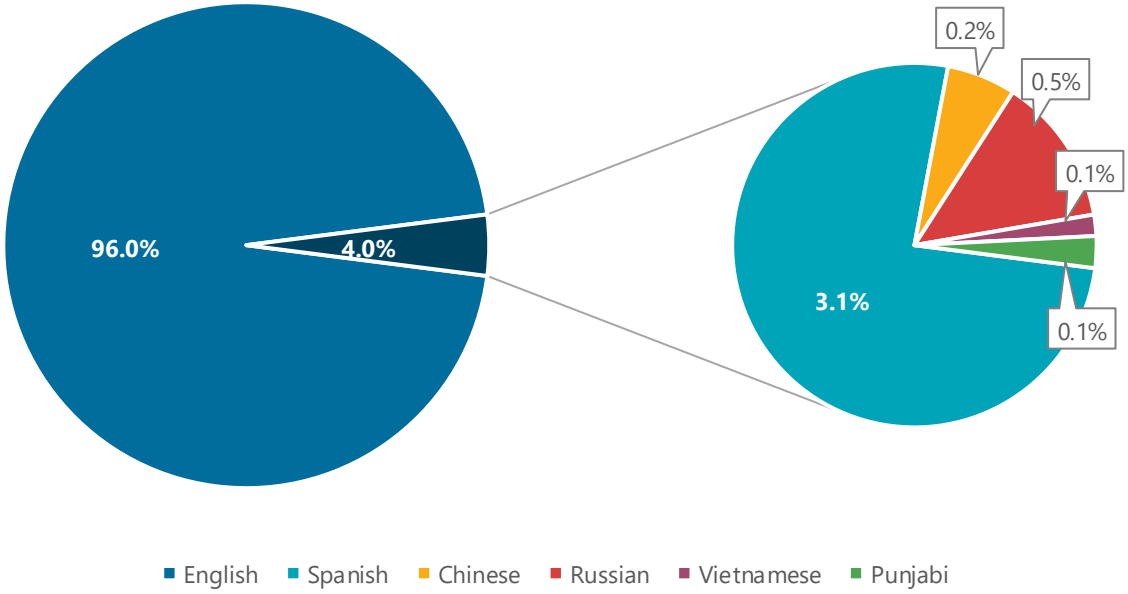


Figure 31 "What is the main language you speak at home?" – Weekend Light Rail

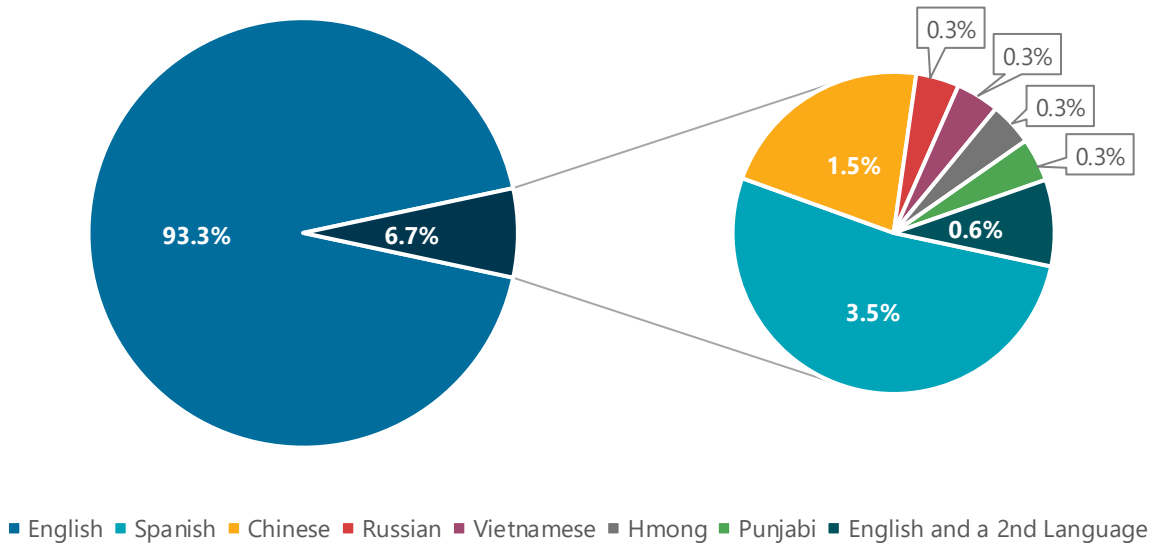


Figure 32 "What is the main language you speak at home?" – Weekend SacRT Bus

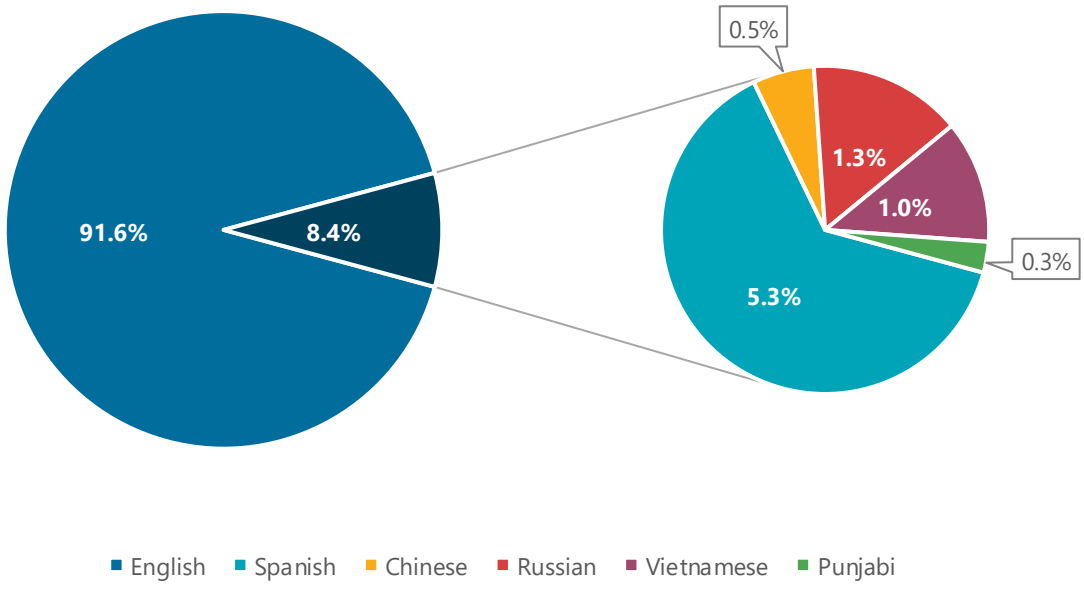


Figure 33 "Do you speak English?" – Light Rail

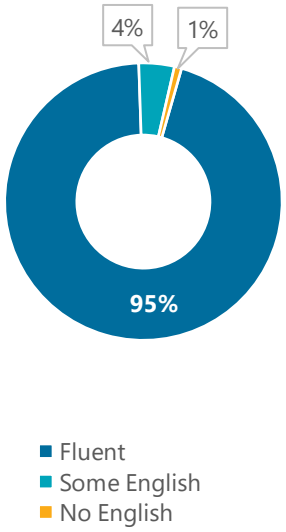


Figure 34 "Do you speak English?" – SacRT Bus

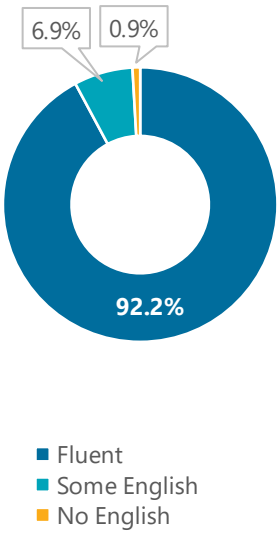


Figure 35 "Do you speak English?" – Elk Grove

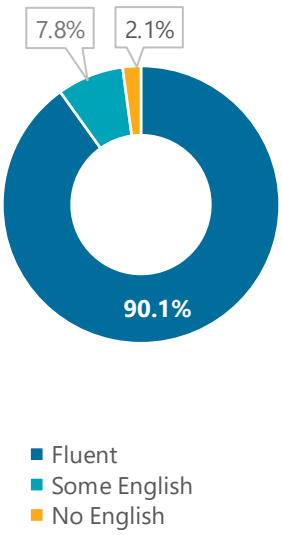


Figure 36 "Do you speak English?" – SacRT System

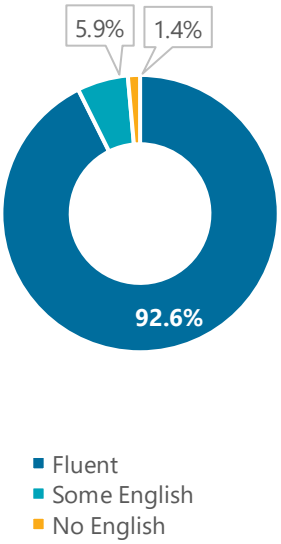


Figure 37 "Do you speak English?" – Weekend Light Rail

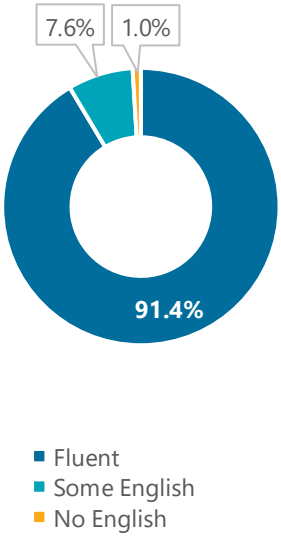
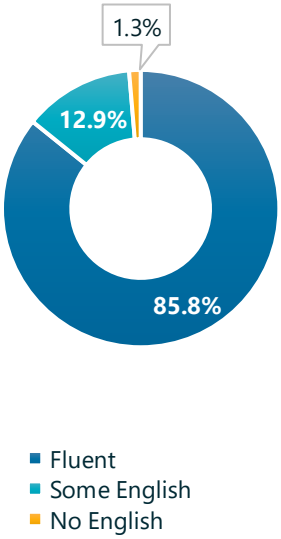


Figure 38 "Do you speak English?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Race and Ethnicity

SacRT riders on light rail and bus services had very similar demographics, with the primary difference being a lower share of Black/African American riders and a higher share of Mixed riders on light rail. White/Caucasian riders made up nearly 34% of light rail and 32% of bus survey respondents and Black/African American riders are the next largest group with 23% and 27%, respectively (Figure 39 and Figure 40). While/Caucasian and Black/African American are also the two most common races/ethnicities across the SacRT system as a whole (Figure 42). The demographics of weekend light rail riders are similar to that of weekday riders (Figure 43), while weekend bus riders have a larger share of Black/African American riders than on weekdays (Figure 44).

Similar to the limited number of non-English language respondents in the previous section, the lower percentages of Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Alaskan/Native American respondents could be due to a language barrier with the survey. These populations may have a higher percentage of non-English speakers and therefore did not engage in the survey.

The Elk Grove survey results had a different mix of race and ethnicities than the RT routes, as shown in Figure 41. Black/African American riders made up nearly a third of all the survey respondents, while Asian/Pacific Islander riders were the second most common at 22%. Elk Grove riders have a slightly larger population of fluent English speakers, so it is possible that the language barrier was less challenging on Elk Grove routes than other RT routes.

Figure 39 "What is your race/ethnicity?" – Light Rail

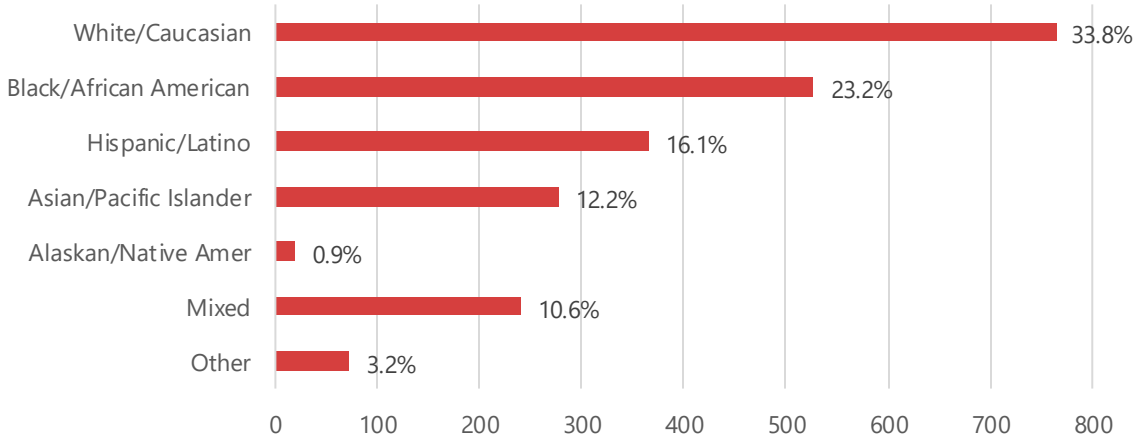


Figure 40 "What is your race/ethnicity?" – SacRT Bus

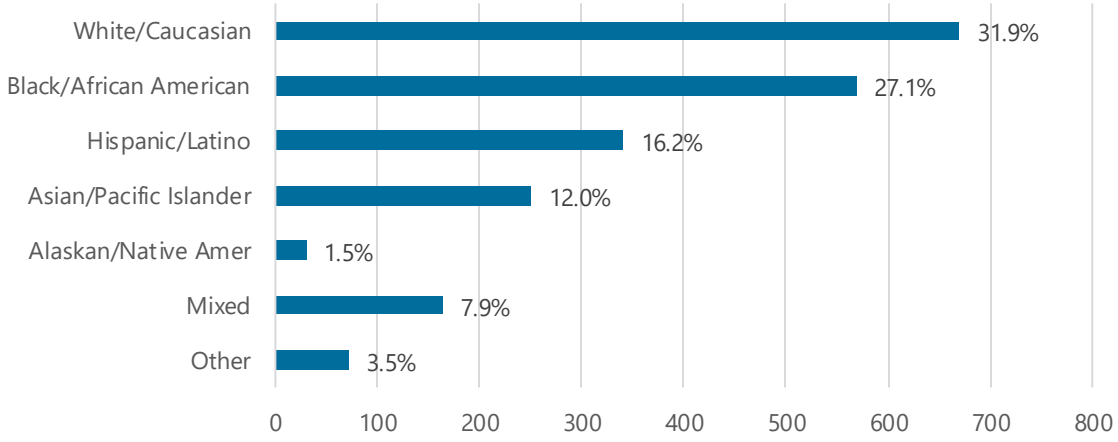


Figure 41 "What is your race/ethnicity?" – Elk Grove

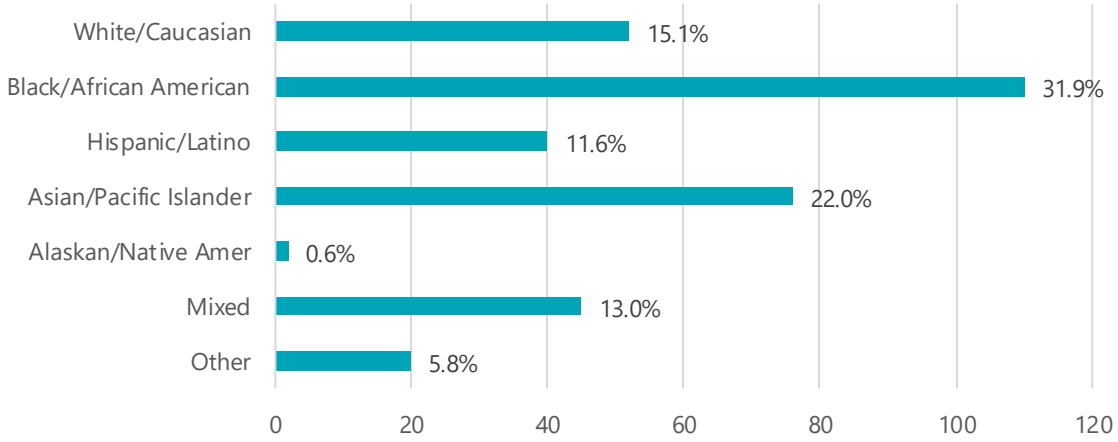


Figure 42 "What is your race/ethnicity?" – SacRT System

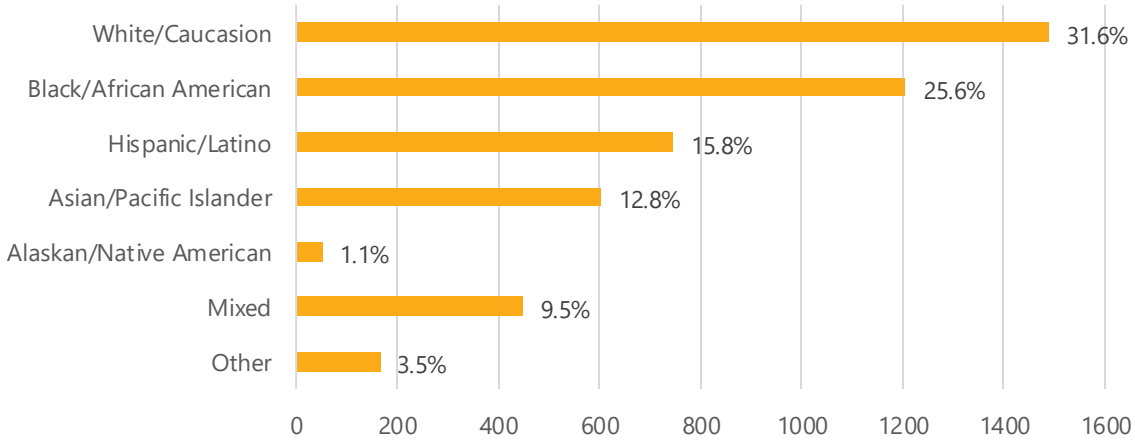


Figure 43 "What is your race/ethnicity?" – Weekend Light Rail

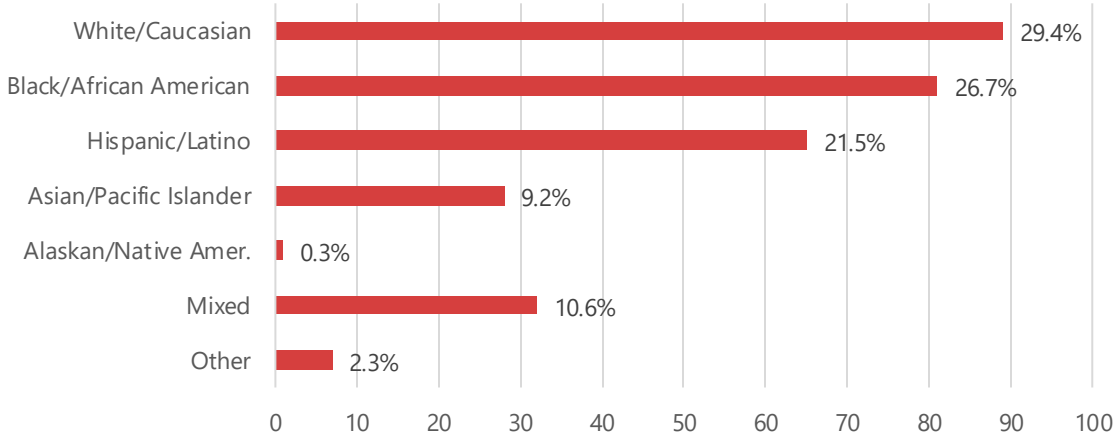
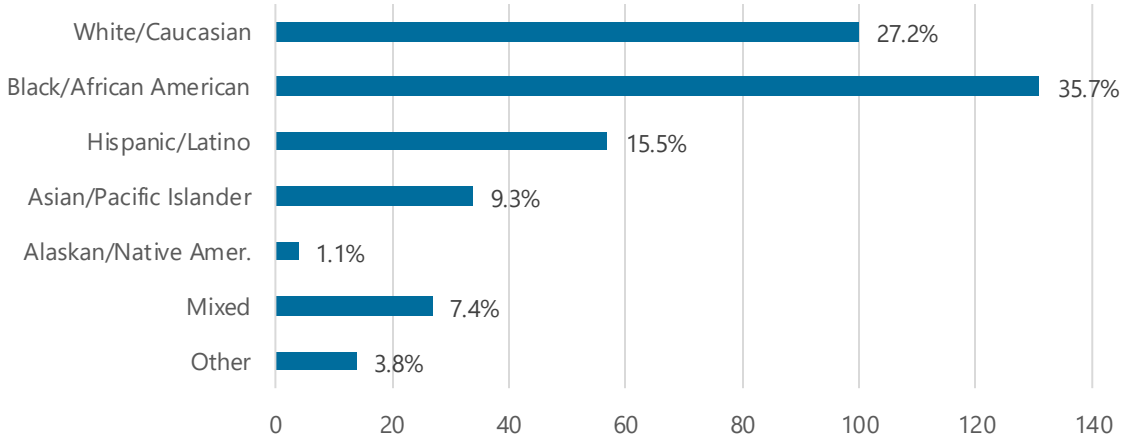


Figure 44 "What is your race/ethnicity?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Income

Light rail rider income is higher overall than bus rider income, with a lower percentage of riders in every income bracket besides the over $100,000 category, which 16% of light rail respondents belong to. Over 30% of bus riders reported that their household income falls within the lowest annual income range of under $10,000 (Figure 45 and Figure 46). Over 75% of light rail and bus survey respondents belong to households making less than $60,000 per year, which is the low-income threshold defined in the 2023 State Income Limits report. Weekend bus and light rail riders are more likely to be lower-income than weekday riders with 41.5% of light rail and 34.4% of bus riders reporting their household income as less than $10,000 (Figure 49 and Figure 50).

Elk Grove riders are generally higher earners than the rest of the RT system with over one fifth of riders making more than $75,000 per year (Figure 47). At the same time, over 50% of riders are considered low income, so there is a larger gap in income among Elk Grove riders. Overall, riders making less than $10,000 per year were most common across the SacRT system (Figure 48). People with lower incomes are often more reliant on public transit due to the costs associated with vehicle ownership.

Figure 45 "What is your household income?" – Light Rail

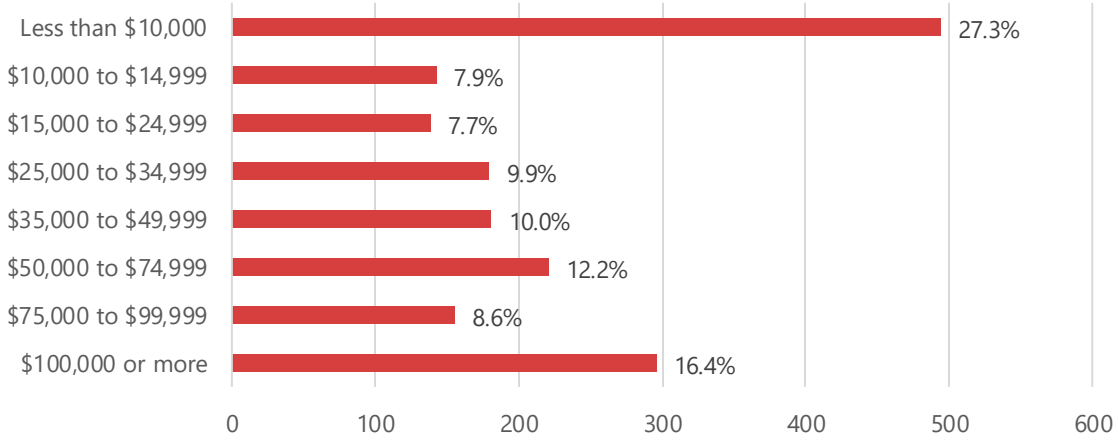


Figure 46 "What is your household income?" – SacRT Bus

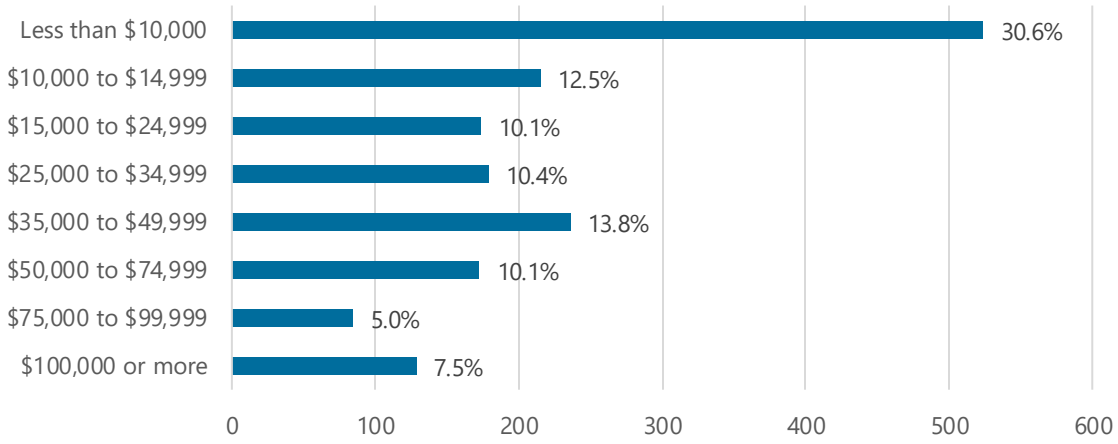


Figure 47 "What is your household income?" – Elk Grove

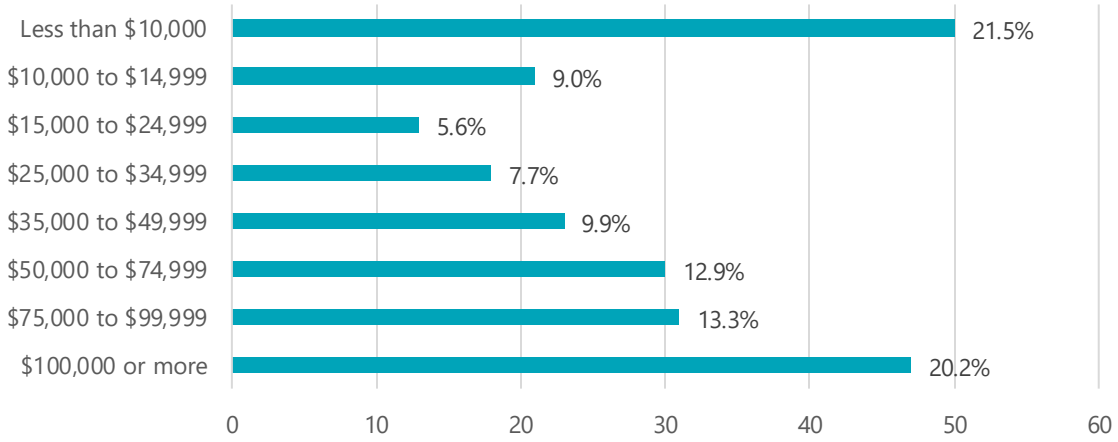


Figure 48 "What is your household income?" – SacRT System

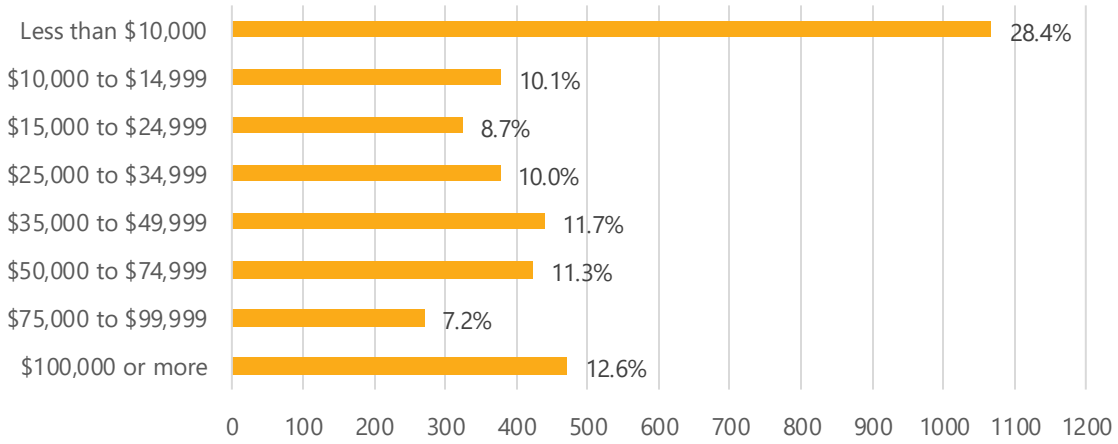


Figure 49 "What is your household income?" – Weekend Light Rail

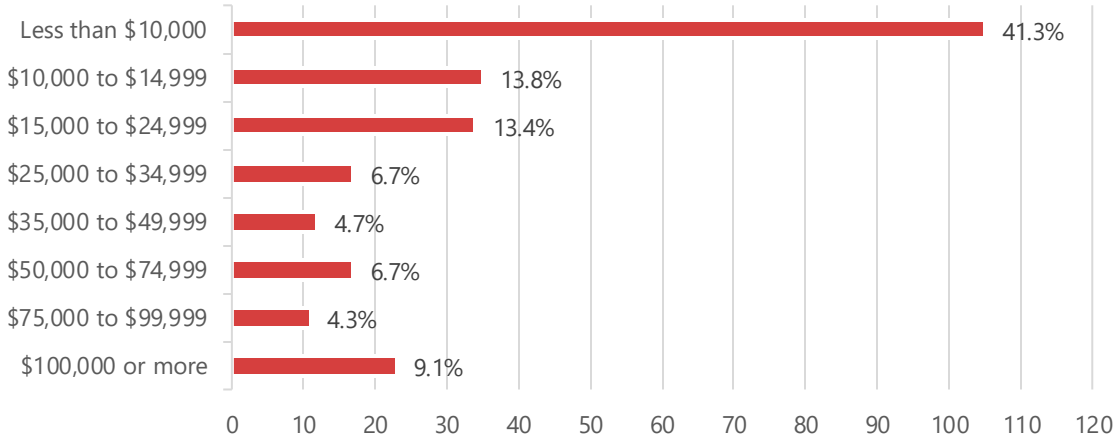
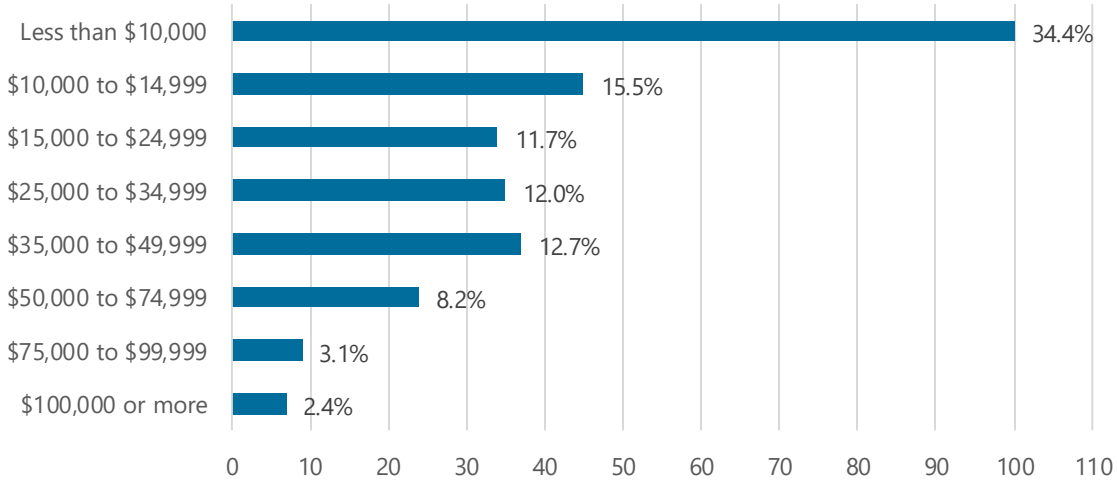


Figure 50 "What is your household income?" Weekend SacRT Bus



Employment

Full-time workers are more common on light rail service with 46.5% of light rail riders reporting that they currently work full time, a much higher percentage than respondents on SacRT bus services or in Elk Grove. 34% of light rail riders reported they are not working, with 19.5% working part time. It is important to note that "not working" is not equivalent to unemployed—about 18% of survey respondents are either under 18 or over 65 (Figure 58) and therefore may not work due to being students or retired.

For SacRT bus riders, 34.5% reported they currently work full-time, while nearly 42% reported they are not currently working (Figure 52). The results for those engaged in full-time work are consistent with the trip purpose results in the previous section that reported 34% of bus trips were for work.

The employment data was a slightly different spread for weekend bus and light rail. Full-time workers were less common on weekend bus service at 32% and weekend light rail service at 29.7%, while part-time workers and those not working were more common (Figure 55 and Figure 56). This is likely due to less commuters using transit on the weekends; however, work was the second-highest trip purpose reported, which could indicate workers traveling to part-time jobs on the weekend.

Elk Grove riders had a very similar split in employment to the rest of the RT system (Figure 59 and Figure 54). There was a slightly higher percentage of riders who reported they were not working, which could align with the larger student ridership on the Elk Grove system.

Figure 51 "Do you work?" – Light Rail

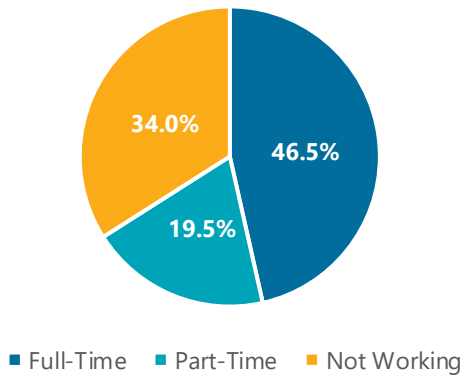


Figure 52 "Do you work?" – SacRT Bus

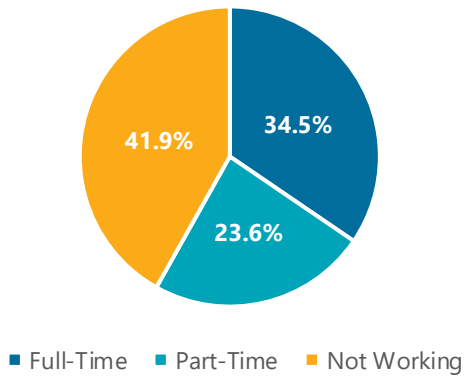


Figure 53 "Do you work?" – Elk Grove

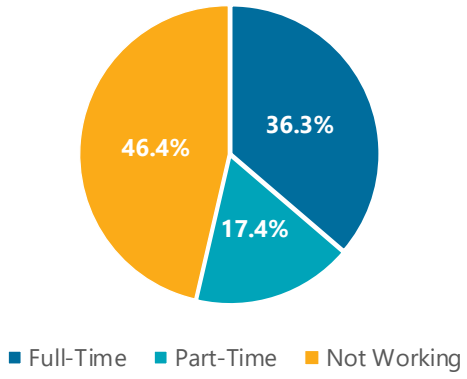


Figure 54 "Do you work?" – SacRT System

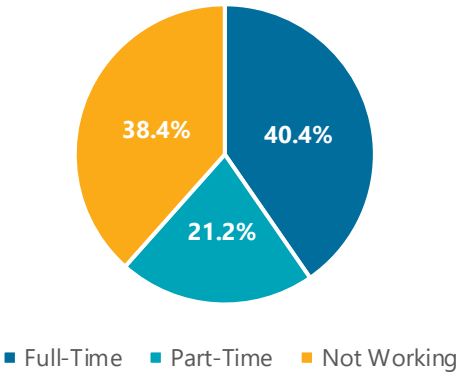


Figure 55 "Do you work?" – Weekend Light Rail

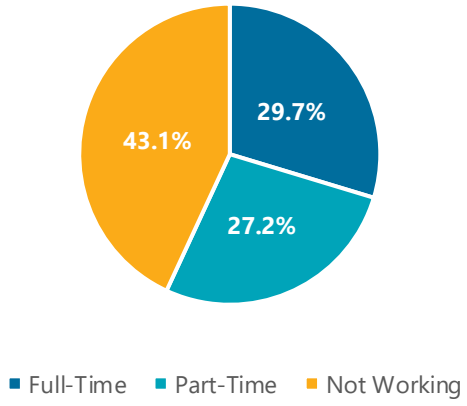
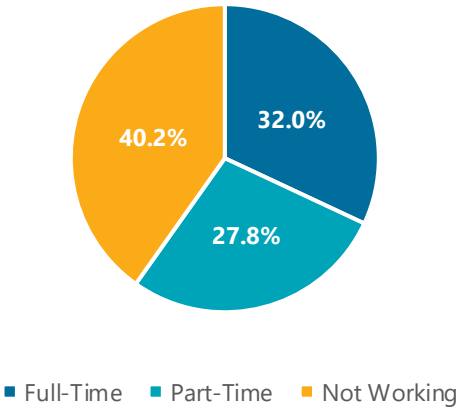


Figure 56 "Do you work?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Age

Light rail survey takers were older in general than SacRT bus or Elk Grove respondents. The largest number of responses came from the 35 to 44 age group, at 21.6%, with the next highest being 25 to 34 at 20%. Combined with income and employment demographics, this indicates that light rail riders are older, wealthier, and more likely to be employed than bus riders, likely because of the more downtown-oriented service that light rail provides. The age distribution for weekend light rail riders is similar to that on weekdays, with the largest number of responses being the 35 to 44 age group (Figure 61).

For SacRT Bus, the 25-to-34 age group had the highest number of responses at 20.5%, with the 18 to 24 age group being a close second at 19.7% of the total responses (Figure 58). Riders under 18 and over 65 were the two groups with the least number of responses at 11.8% and 6.8% respectively. This distribution is similar to that of weekend bus riders (Figure 62) and to the overall age distribution across the entire SacRT system (Figure 60).

In contrast, riders under 18 were the largest age group on Elk Grove routes (Figure 59), and over 50% of Elk Grove riders reported they were under the age of 24. As this is a typical student age, this supports the trip purpose and fare payment data collected that indicates a predominantly young student ridership base.

Figure 57 "What is your age?" – Light Rail

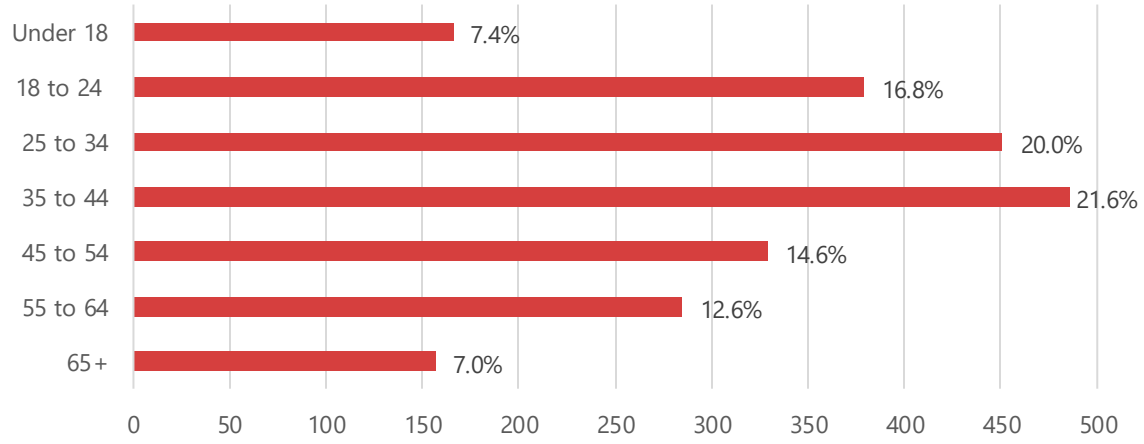


Figure 58 "What is your age?" – SacRT Bus

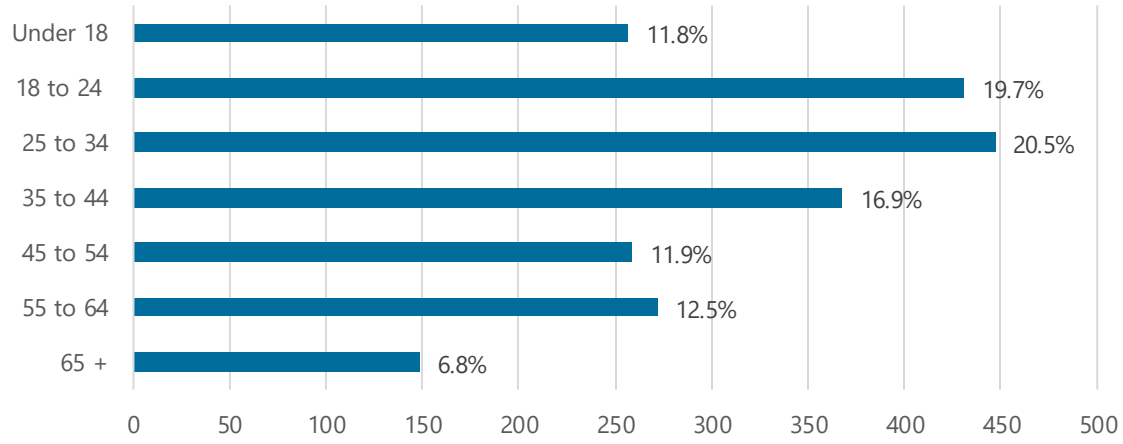


Figure 59 "What is your age?" – Elk Grove

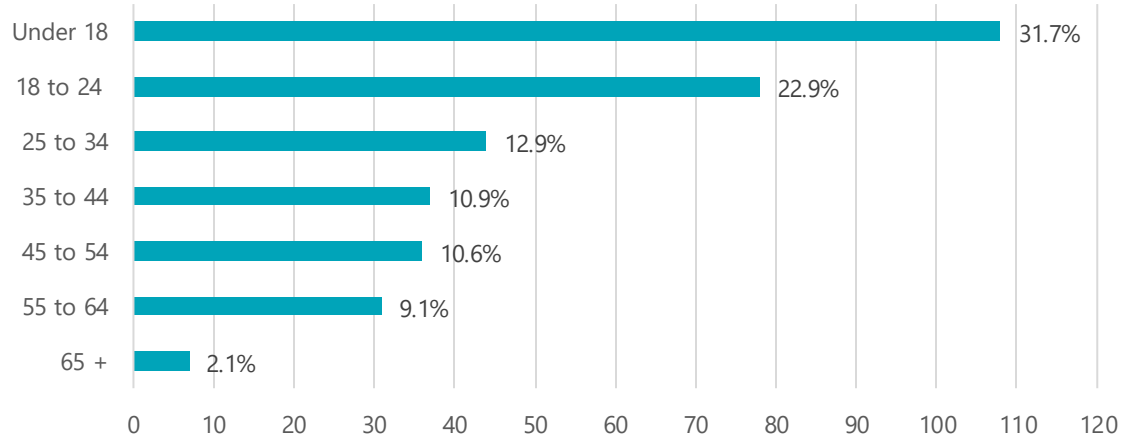


Figure 60 "What is your age?" – SacRT System

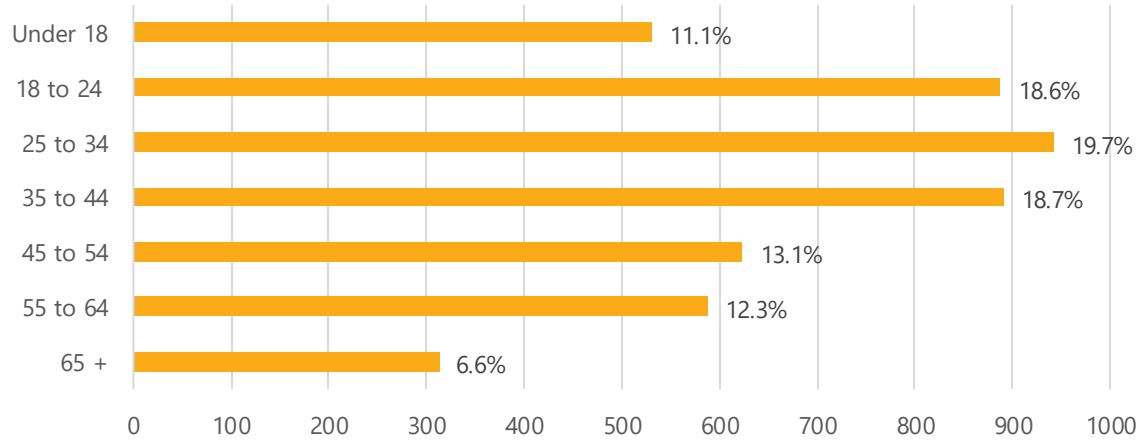


Figure 61 "What is your age?" – Weekend Light Rail

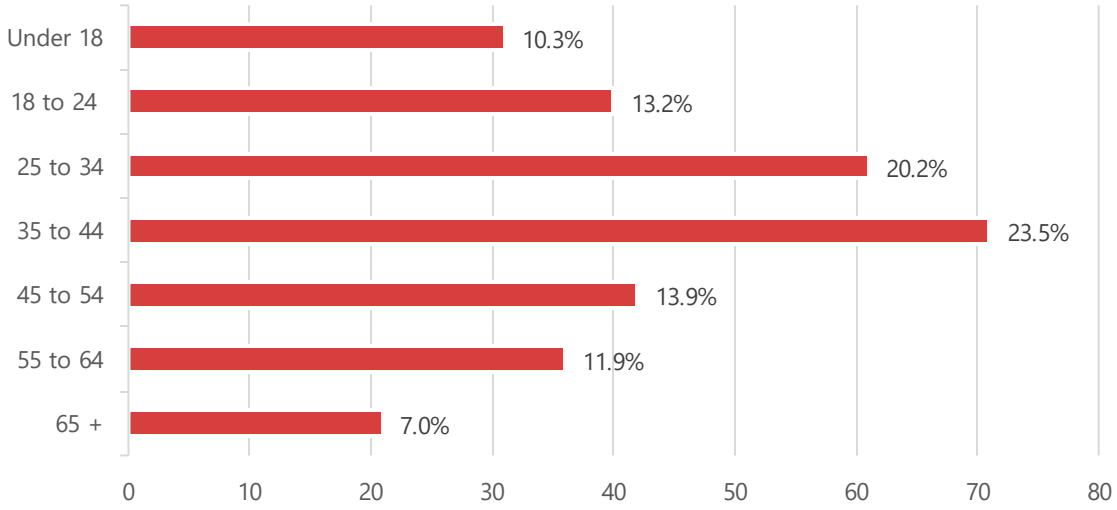
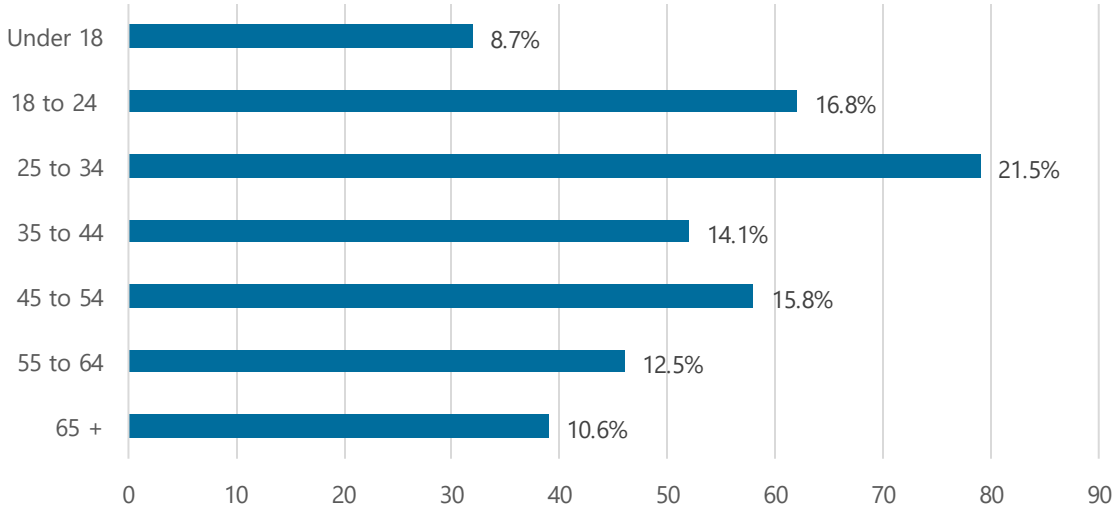


Figure 62 "What is your age?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Disability

SacRT provides ID cards for eligible riders with disabilities. Riders can show this ID card when using fixed-route service to receive a discounted fare. 10% of light rail and 9.4% of bus survey respondents reported they currently have a disability ID card to use (Figure 63 and Figure 64), while 4% of Elk Grove riders reported having one (Figure 65). SacRT provides dedicated ADA paratransit service through their SacRT GO service, which was not part of this on-board survey. This could explain why less than 10% of the SacRT riders surveyed reported having a disability card (Figure 66). In contrast, weekend riders were more likely to have a disability ID card than weekday riders, with nearly 14% of light rail and 14.5% of bus riders reporting having one (Figure 67 and Figure 68).

Figure 63 "Do you have a disabled ID card from SacRT?" – Light Rail

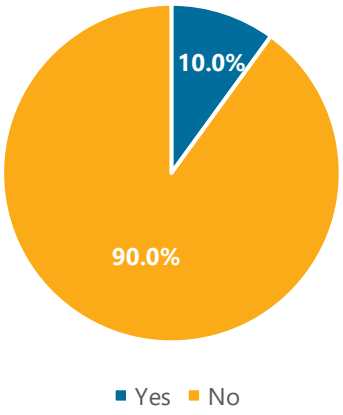


Figure 64 "Do you have a disabled ID card from SacRT?" – SacRT Bus

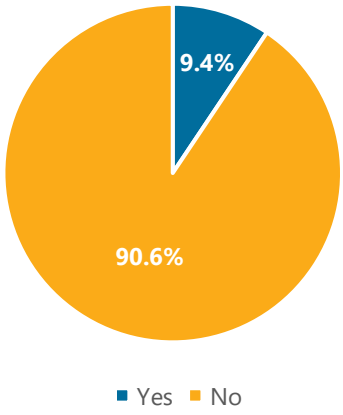


Figure 65 "Do you have a disabled ID card from SacRT?" – Elk Grove

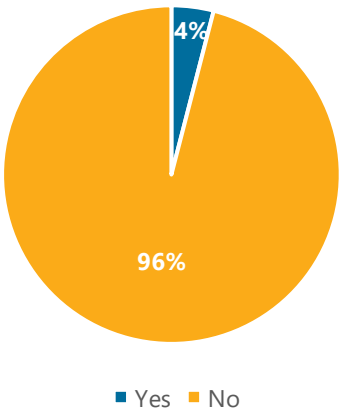


Figure 66 "Do you have a disabled ID card from SacRT?" – Weekday SacRT System

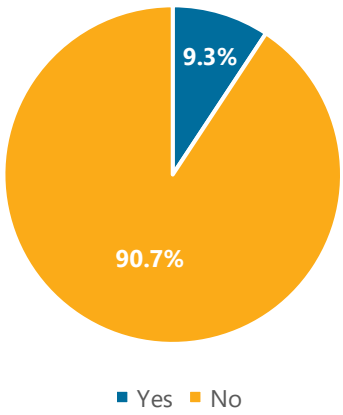


Figure 67 "Do you have a disabled ID card from SacRT?" – Weekend Light Rail

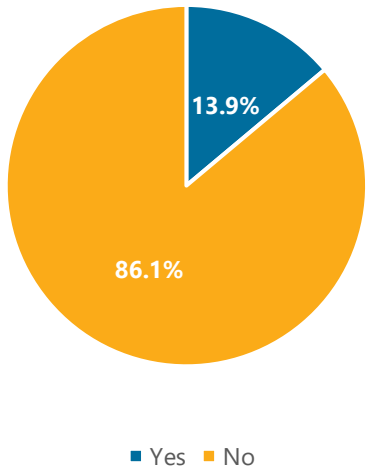
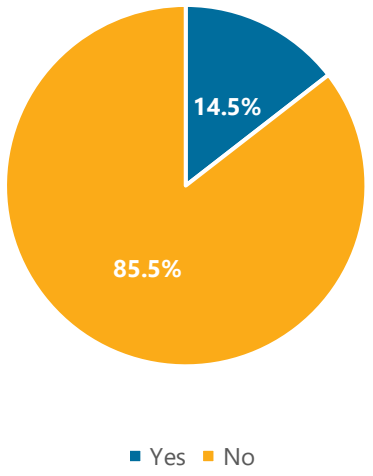


Figure 68 "Do you have a disabled ID card from SacRT?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Fare Payment

The survey includes questions about fare payment type to capture passenger demographics by fare type, such as single rides or monthly passes.

Fare Product

Figure 69 and Figure 70 shows a breakdown of the fare products riders used on their light rail and bus trip, respectively. The most common fare product on SacRT Bus was the $2.50 basic fare with 32% of riders. The next most common fare type was SacRT monthly passes for light rail, at 14.7% of riders, and RydeFreeRT for bus, at 12% of riders, which is consistent with the nearly 12% of riders reporting they were under 18 in the previous section. The $2.50 basic fare and SacRT monthly passes were the two most common products used across both bus and light rail (Figure 71). SacRT's college pass program with Los Rios Community College and CSUS had a combined 10.7% of light rail and 12.9% of bus fares used, bringing the total share of student fares to nearly 25% of all trips (Figure 73). The $2.50 basic fare was also the most common fare product for weekend bus and light rail trips (Figure 72), while student passes were used slightly less on the weekends, which aligns with the lower number of school/college trips reported.

Figure 74 shows the percentages of minority and low-income riders for each fare product. Minority riders are more than 50% of riders across each fare product except for Lifetime Pass users, which make up less than 0.5% of all riders surveyed. Across all fare types, over 69% of riders are minority. The income split is slightly more even between low and higher incomes, with 49% of riders across all fare types making less than $25,000 per year.

Figure 69 "What fare did you pay?" – Light Rail

What fare did you pay?	Responses	% of Total
$2.50 Basic Fare	*719*	*32.2%*
SacRT Monthly Pass	*329*	*14.7%*
$7.00 Daily Pass	*197*	*8.8%*
$1.25 Discount Fare	*178*	*8.0%*
RydeFreeRT (K-12)	*166*	*7.4%*
Los Rios	*135*	*6.0%*
CSUS	*104*	*4.7%*
Senior/Disabled Monthly Pass	*101*	*4.5%*
$3.50 Discount Daily Pass	*96*	*4.3%*

Other	*89*	*4.0%*
Did not pay	*83*	*3.7%*
DHA Pass	*21*	*0.9%*
Super Senior (Age 75+)	*9*	*0.4%*
Transfer from another agency	*9*	*0.4%*
Lifetime Pass (Age 75+)	*0*	*0.0%*

Figure 70 "What fare did you pay?" – SacRT Bus

What fare did you pay?	Responses	% of Total
$2.50 Basic Fare	*701*	*32.1%*
RydeFreeRT (K-12)	*264*	*12.1%*
$7.00 Daily Pass	*244*	*11.2%*
SacRT Monthly Pass	*203*	*9.3%*
$1.25 Discount Fare	*149*	*6.8%*
Los Rios	*144*	*6.6%*
CSUS	*137*	*6.3%*
$3.50 Discount Daily Pass	*117*	*5.4%*
Other	*93*	*4.3%*
Senior/Disabled Monthly Pass	*56*	*2.6%*
Did not pay	*50*	*2.3%*
DHA Pass	*17*	*0.8%*
Transfer from other agency	*11*	*0.5%*
Lifetime Pass (Age 75+)	*0*	*0.0%*

Figure 71 "What fare did you pay?" – Weekday SacRT Bus and Light Rail

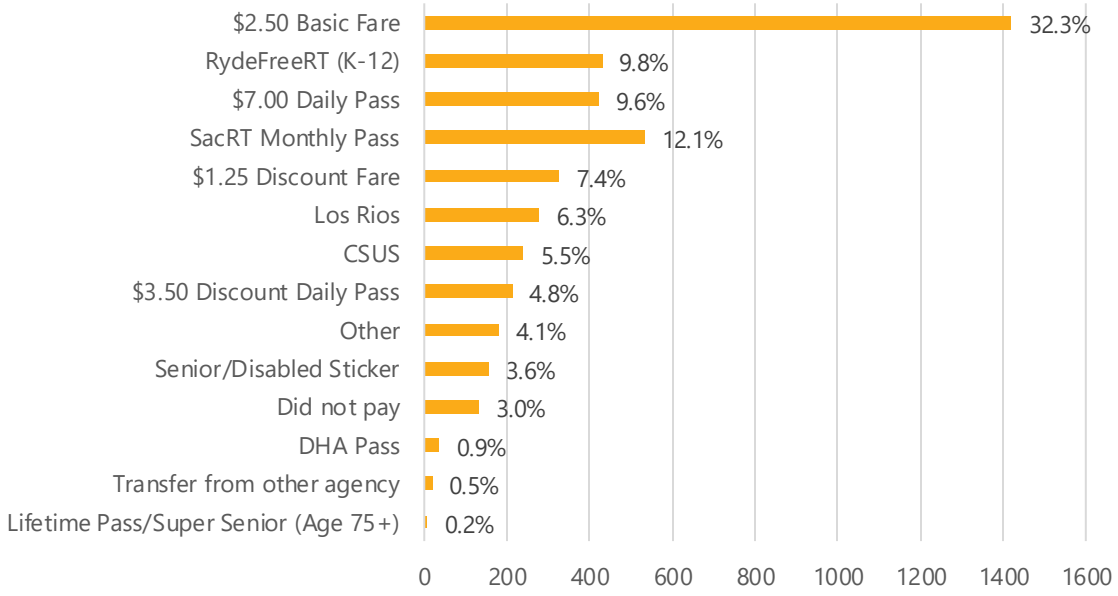


Figure 72 "What fare did you pay?" – Weekend SacRT Bus and Light Rail

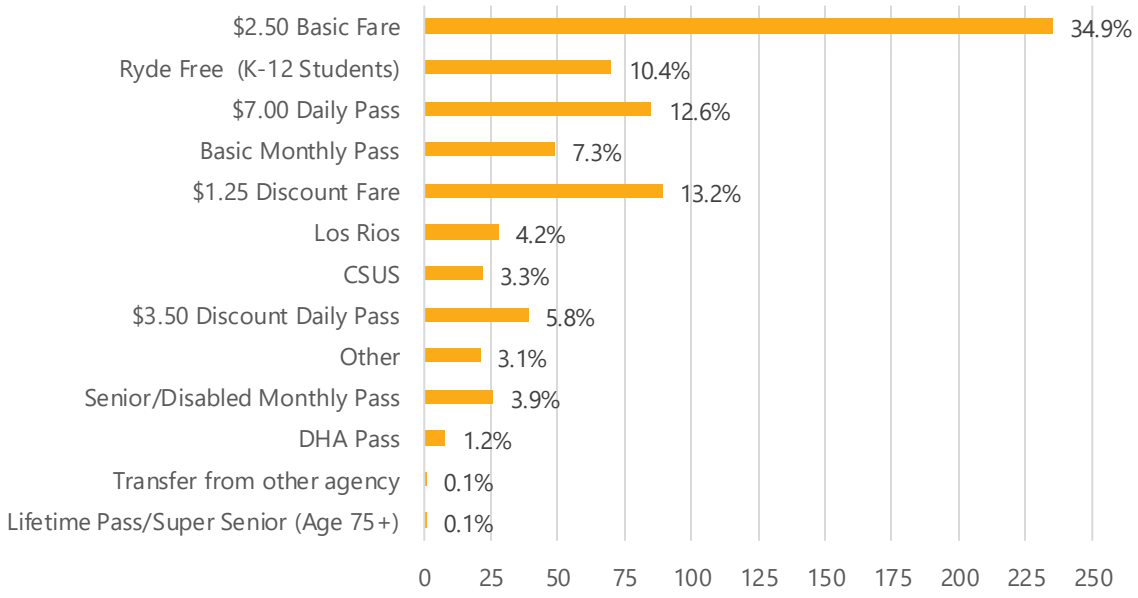


Figure 73 Weekday Student Pass Usage – SacRT Bus and Light Rail

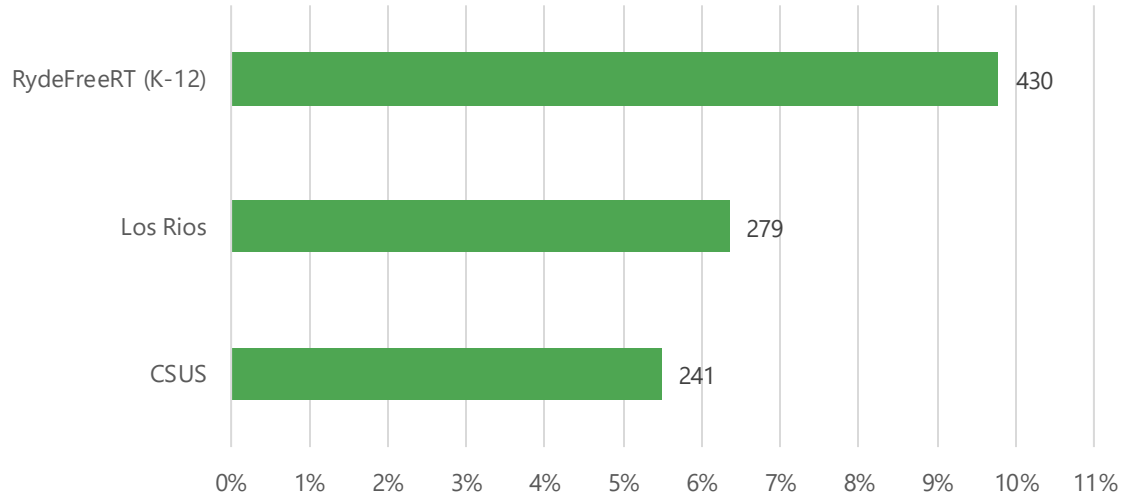


Figure 74 Fare Product Usage by Minority and Low-Income Riders

Fare Product	% Minority	% Low Income
$2.50 Basic Fare	*66.7%*	*42.7%*
$1.25 Discount Fare	*64.9%*	*54.9%*
$7.00 Daily Pass	*72.0%*	*60.0%*
$3.50 Discount Daily Pass	*67.0%*	*63.9%*
Los Rios	*68.1%*	*50.9%*
CSUS	*76.9%*	*55.6%*
RydeFreeRT (K-12)	*84.5%*	*56.3%*
DHA Pass	*73.3%*	*75.7%*
Senior/Disabled Sticker	*53.3%*	*29.6%*
SacRT Monthly Pass	*61.8%*	*46.1%*
Lifetime Pass (Age 75+)	*38.5%*	*57.1%*
Transfer from other agency	*78.6%*	*36.4%*
Did not pay	*74.2%*	*52.1%*
Other	*71.7%*	*49.6%*
SacRT Average	**69.4%**	**49.1%**

Elk Grove routes have different fare options than the rest of the SacRT system, and Figure 75 details the fare types Elk Grove riders reported using. Nearly 36% of riders reported they did not pay for their ride, and 19% said they used another fare type not listed. Over 50% of the 'other' selections wrote in that they used a student pass for a K-12 school, a Los Rios community college, or Sacramento State. Since riders under the age of 18 were the largest age group on Elk Grove routes and over 40% of riders reported their trip was to school, it is likely that many riders used some version of a free student pass. These passes were not options on the survey, so it is possible that student riders selected the "did not pay" option, as opposed to there being a high rate of fare evasion on Elk Grove routes.

Figure 75 "What fare did you pay?" – Elk Grove

What fare did you pay?	Responses	% of Total
Did not pay	*124*	*35.9%*
Other	*66*	*19.1%*
$2.25 Basic Fare	*56*	*16.2%*
$100 Monthly Pass	*29*	*8.4%*
$6.00 Daily Fare	*25*	*7.2%*
$1.10 Discount Fare	*11*	*3.2%*
$3.00 Discount Daily Fare	*9*	*2.6%*
$50 Discount Monthly Pass	*9*	*2.6%*
10-Ride Pass	*8*	*2.3%*
Transfer from other agency	*4*	*1.2%*
$40 Discount Local Monthly Pass	*2*	*0.6%*
Discount 10-Ride Pass	*1*	*0.3%*
$80 Local Monthly Pass	*1*	*0.3%*

Fare Media

Most (73.8%) of light rail respondents used some kind of prepaid pass to pay for their trip, the most common of which is the Connect Card at 28.1%, followed by the app-based ZipPass at 25.9% and all other pass types at 19.8%. About 26% of surveyed riders reported using a ticket machine, the light rail equivalent of paying with cash on the bus, about the same proportion of bus passengers who reported doing so (Figure 76). Overall, light rail riders are more likely to use Connect Cards than bus riders, but equally likely to use a pass product of some kind.

About 30% of the fare media used on SacRT bus services are prepaid tickets or passes (Figure 77). This can include single-ride tickets as well as daily and monthly passes for all fare types such as seniors, people with disabilities, and students. The Connect Card is the least common fare media reported by riders, but it is still used by 18% of riders. As discussed in the previous section, over 75% of riders surveyed fall within the low-income threshold, and low-income riders are more likely to use cash or prepaid paper tickets than electronic forms of payment. This could explain why the Connect Card had the lowest reported usage of the fare media, despite being a seamless payment option for all regional transit services.

The fare media split on Elk Grove routes continues to be consistent with the other survey results that indicate a younger rider base is using Elk Grove routes. App-based payments with ZipPass were the most common at 28% and Connect Cards and tickets/passes were close behind at over 27% each. Younger riders are more likely to use electronic forms of payment and less likely to use cash for payments, which is also reflected in Figure 78 below.

At the weekday system level, no product dominates, as the four main fare payment options each capture nearly 25% of ridership (Figure 79). However, cash or ticket machines make up over a third of fare media used on weekend bus or light rail trips, and Connect Cards were least likely to be used at 15.8% (Figure 80). This is consistent with the larger share of low-income riders using transit on the weekends, as they are more likely to use cash for their fares.

Figure 81 shows the percentages of minority and low-income riders for each fare media type. More than 50% of riders across each fare media type are minority riders, with paper tickets/passes having the highest proportion at 74.8% of riders. The income split for fare media is along digital versus physical mediums. Connect Card and ZipPass users are more likely to be higher-income, whereas cash and paper ticket users are more likely to be low-income.

Figure 76 "How did you pay your fare?" – Light Rail

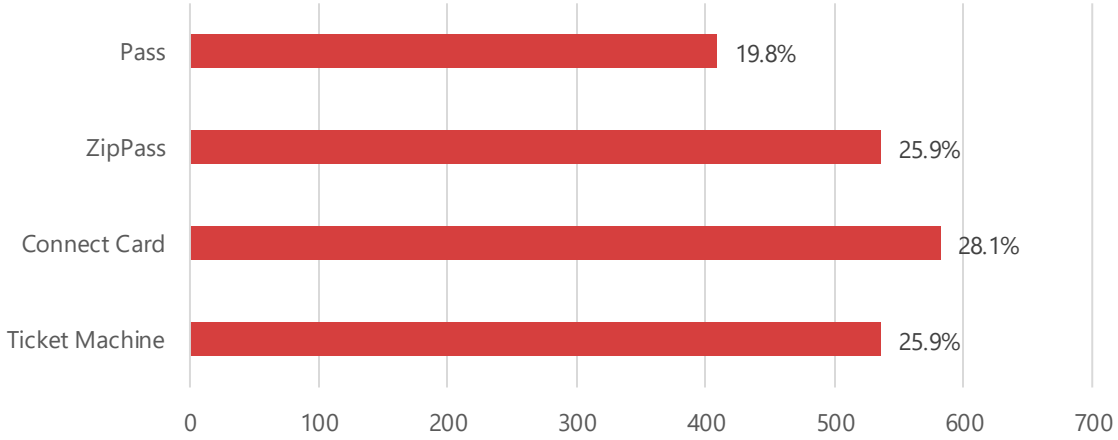


Figure 77 "How did you pay your fare?" – SacRT Bus

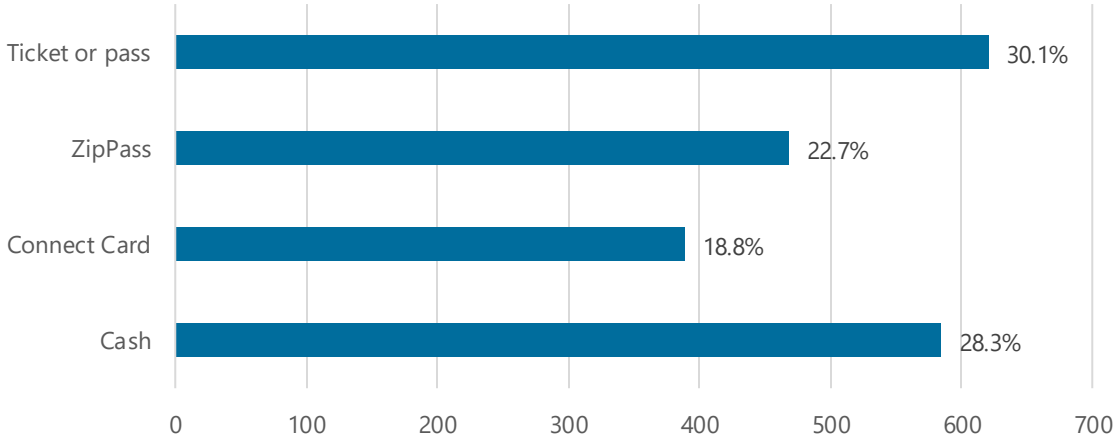


Figure 78 "How did you pay your fare?" – Elk Grove

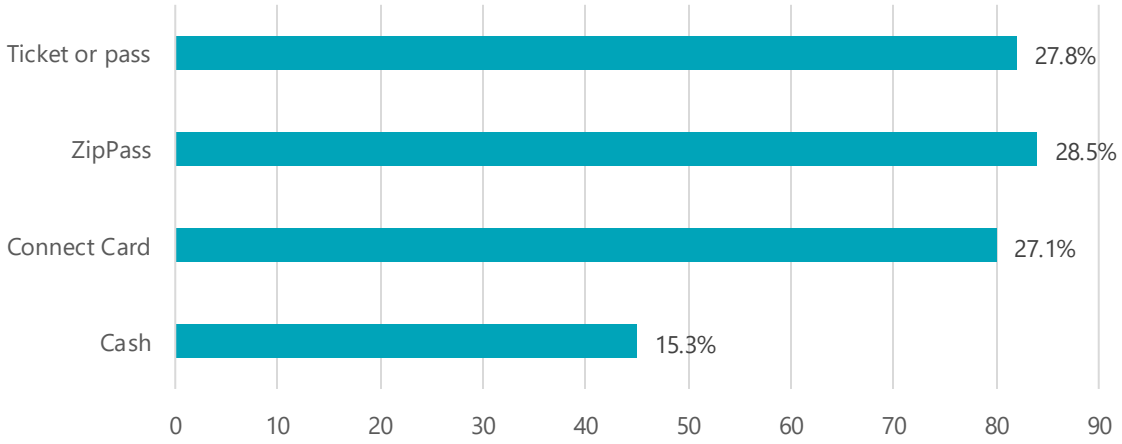


Figure 79 "How did you pay your fare?" – Weekday SacRT System

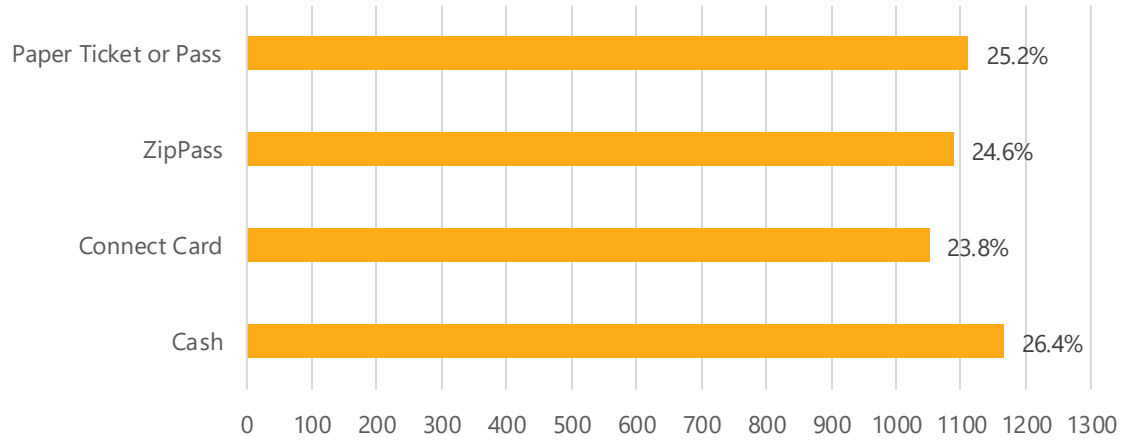


Figure 80 "How did you pay your fare?" – Weekend SacRT Bus and Light Rail

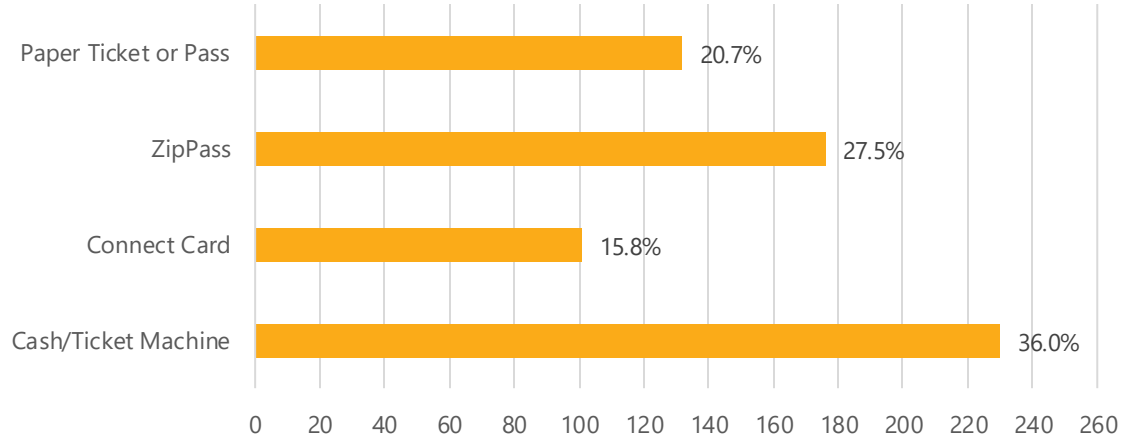


Figure 81 Fare Media Usage by Minority and Low-Income Riders

Fare Media	% Minority	% Low Income
Ticket Machine/Cash	*69.8%*	*59.5%*
Connect Card	*59.5%*	*31.8%*
Zip Pass	*67.7%*	*42.0%*
Paper Ticket or Pass	*73.8%*	*60.8%*

Employer Pass Provision

The origin-destination survey included a question to ask riders if their employer helps pay for their SacRT pass. In October 2023, SacRT implemented free transit service access to all SEIU members, and other employers such as Sacramento State, UC Davis Health, and the County of Sacramento provide free or subsidized transit to its employees and/or students. Light rail riders are more likely to have an employer-subsidized pass with 23.9% of respondents reporting having one, while only 12.8% of SacRT Bus riders had an employer pass (Figure 82 and Figure 83). More Elk Grove and light rail riders reported that their pass is paid for by their employer than riders on SacRT Bus (Figure 84), which could reflect the emphasis on school and commuter trips and connections to CRC on these systems. This also explains why the overall distribution of riders with employer passes is higher from a systemwide perspective (Figure 85). In contrast, weekend bus and light rail riders are less likely to report that they have an employer-provided pass (Figure 86 and Figure 87). Institutions that provide their employees passes are more likely to have traditional work hours, and while work trips were still a common purpose on weekends, they were likely for jobs with less traditional schedules.

While the question doesn't specify if it is a school or employer that provides the pass, riders could have chosen 'yes' if their pass had been from school. These results are consistent with the higher portion of student riders on Elk Grove routes and the more commute-focused light rail network. People are more likely to take transit to work when their employer subsidizes their transit pass, so there is opportunity here to grow this program to help build a consistent ridership base.

Figure 82 "Does your employer help pay for your SacRT pass?" – Light Rail

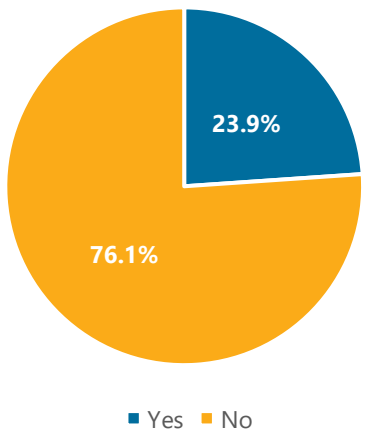


Figure 83 "Does your employer help pay for your SacRT pass?" – SacRT Bus

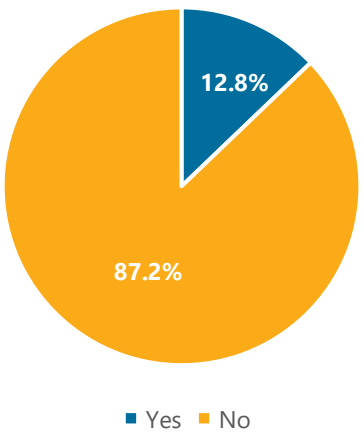


Figure 84 "Does your employer help pay for your SacRT pass?" – Elk Grove

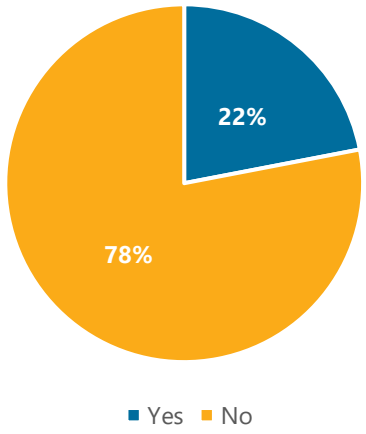


Figure 85 "Does your employer help pay for your SacRT pass?" – SacRT System

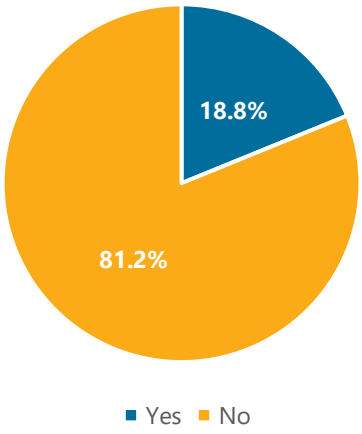


Figure 86 "Does your employer help pay for your SacRT pass?" – Weekend Light Rail

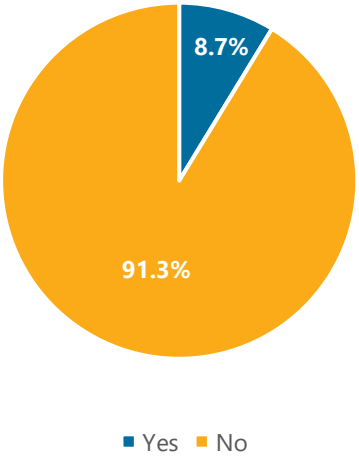
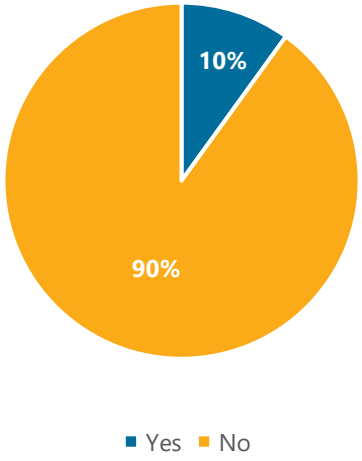


Figure 87 "Does your employer help pay for your SacRT pass?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Personal Characteristics

The survey included questions on riders' possession of the items listed in Figure 88. 'A car you can drive' was the item least available to respondents with over 56% of light rail and 76% of bus respondents reporting they did not have access to a car. Automobile access is often used as a proxy for transit dependency, and over 50% of SacRT passengers must rely on public transit for their transportation needs due to not having access to a car (Figure 91). As shown in Figure 90, the personal characteristics breakdowns between Elk Grove riders and the rest of the SacRT system are very similar, which indicates that while other characteristics of Elk Grove riders differ from other SacRT riders, they are still transit-dependent. Weekend bus and light rail rider surveys continue to point to a transit-dependent system as nearly 75% of weekend light rail riders and 82% of bus riders reported they do not have access to a car (Figure 92 and Figure 93).

Figure 88 "Do you have any of the following?" – Light Rail

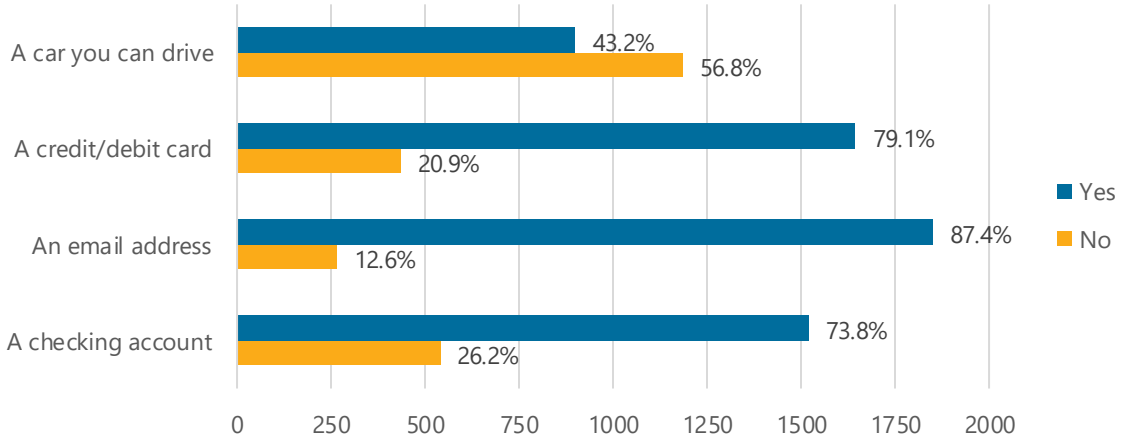


Figure 89 "Do you have any of the following?" – SacRT Bus

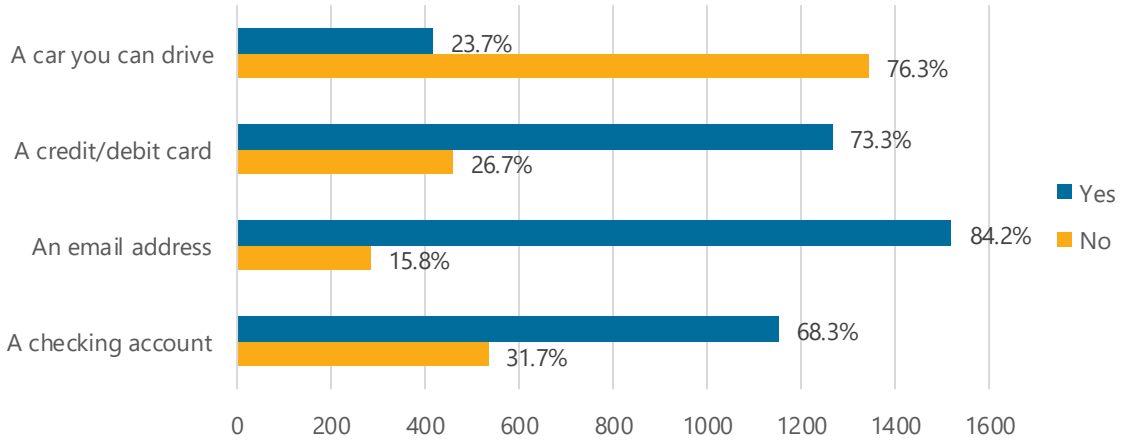


Figure 90 "Do you have any of the following?" – Elk Grove

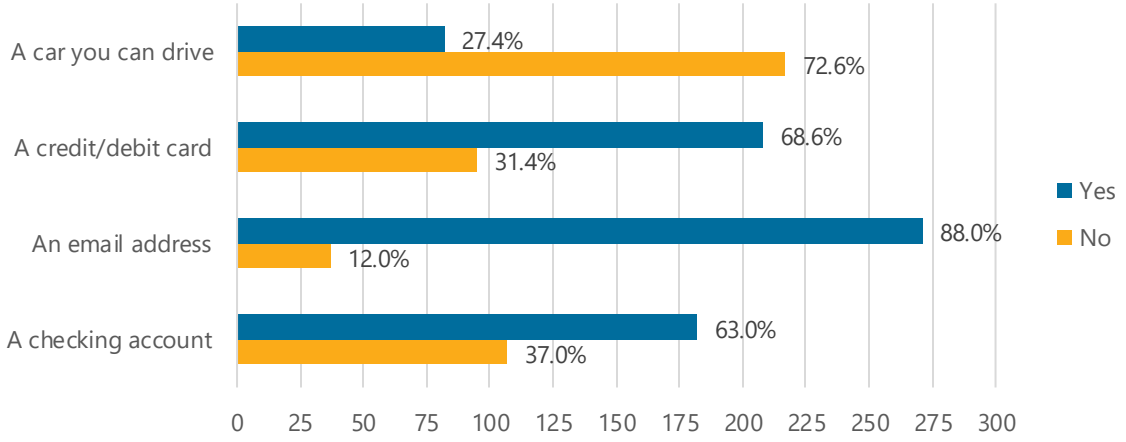


Figure 91 "Do you have any of the following?" – SacRT System

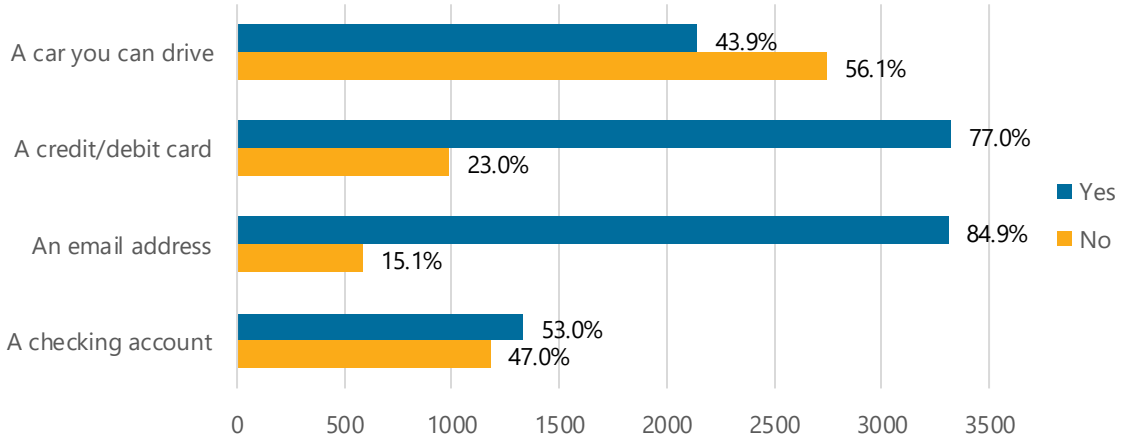


Figure 92 "Do you have any of the following?" – Weekend Light Rail

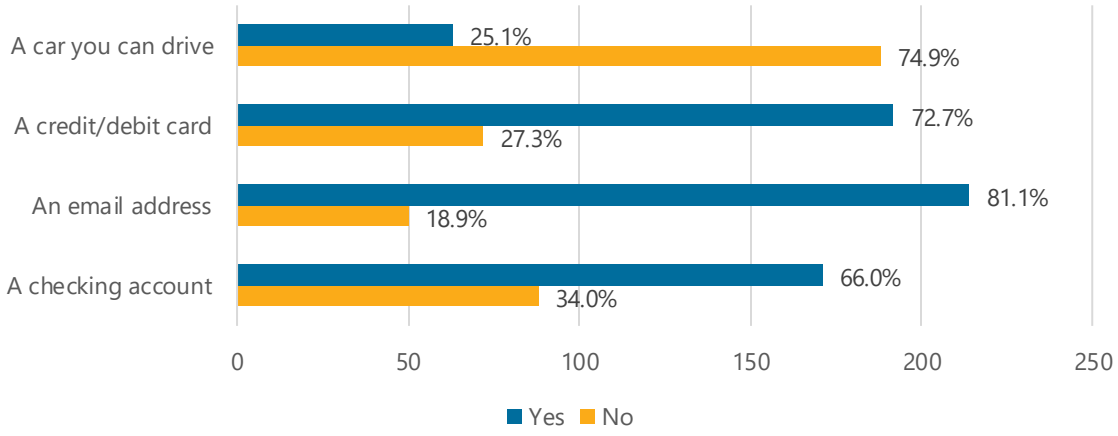
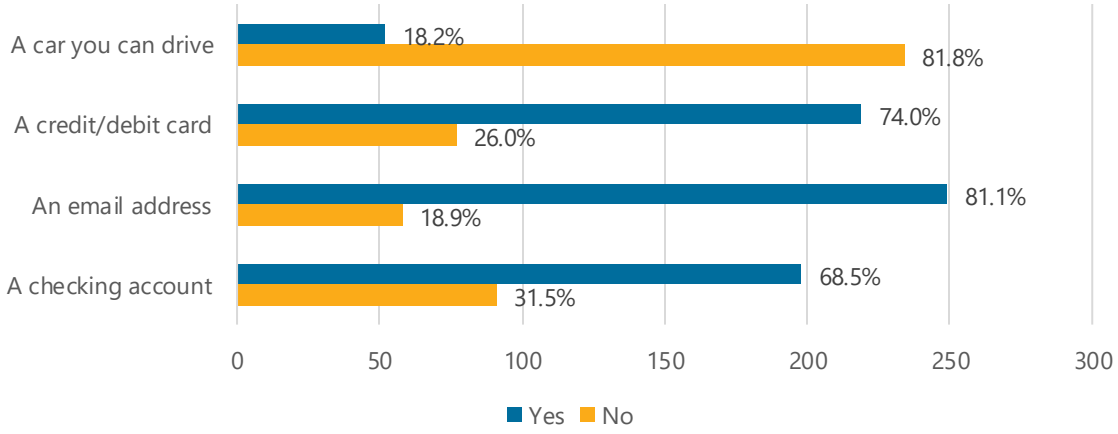


Figure 93 "Do you have any of the following?" – Weekend SacRT Bus



Service Ratings

The on-board survey included a rating section where respondents could rate the overall SacRT system on a variety of topics. The rating system is a five-point scale with one being low and five being high for each of the categories listed in Figure 94 to Figure 99, which reflect the responses on weekday SacRT routes, Elk Grove routes, and weekend SacRT routes. Across all systems, the highest scoring category was for friendliness of bus operators, while the lowest scoring category was cleanliness of light rail trains. Overall, nearly 70% of the ratings were either a four or a five, indicating that the majority of riders are having positive experiences with the system, although ratings were generally lower for light rail riders.

Figure 94 "Please rate SacRT overall" – Light Rail

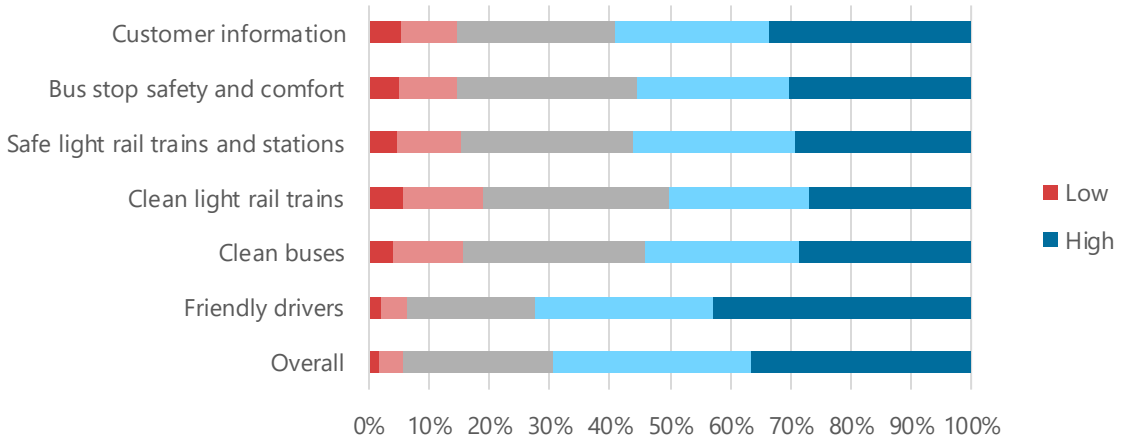


Figure 95 "Please rate SacRT overall" – SacRT Bus

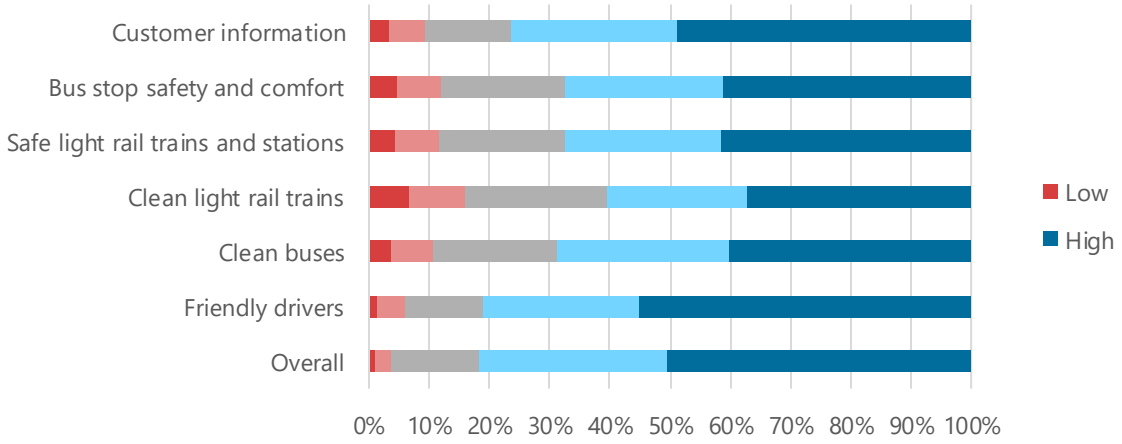


Figure 96 "Please rate SacRT overall" – Elk Grove

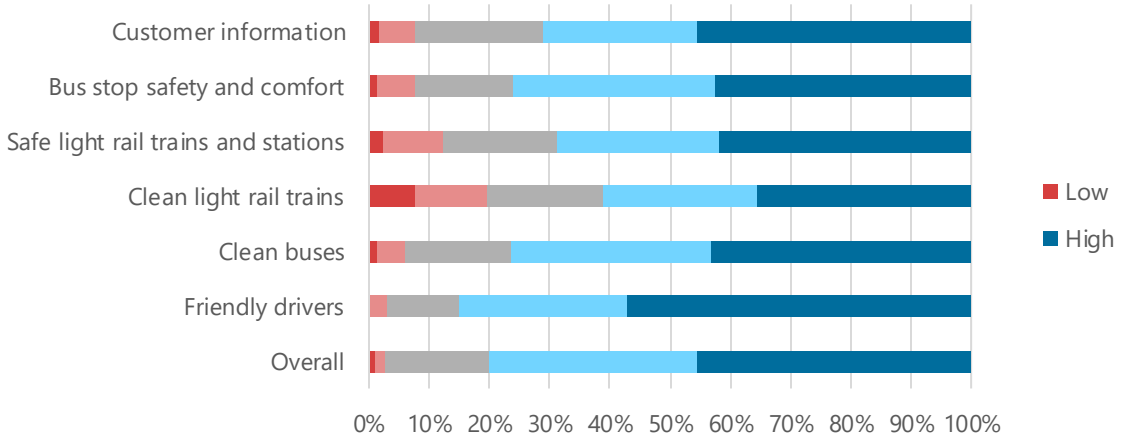


Figure 97 "Please rate SacRT overall" – SacRT System

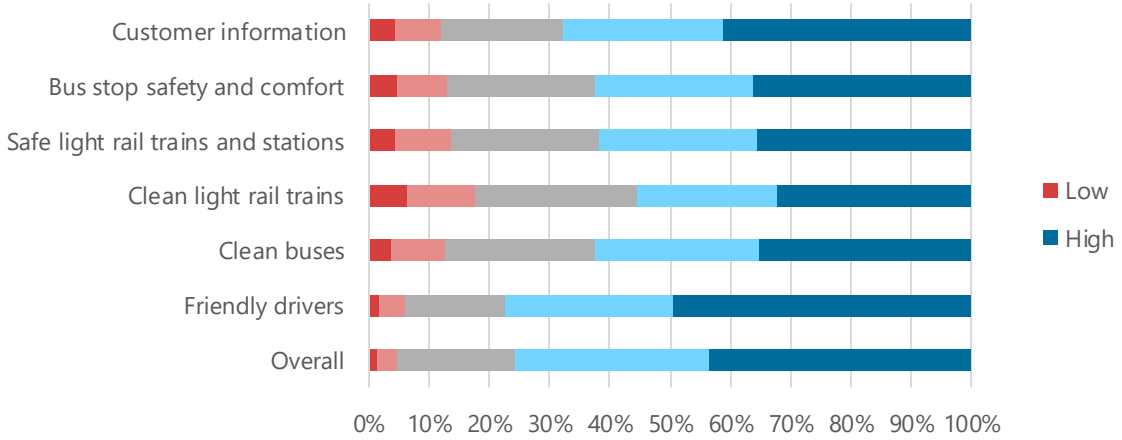


Figure 98 "Please rate SacRT overall" – Weekend Light Rail

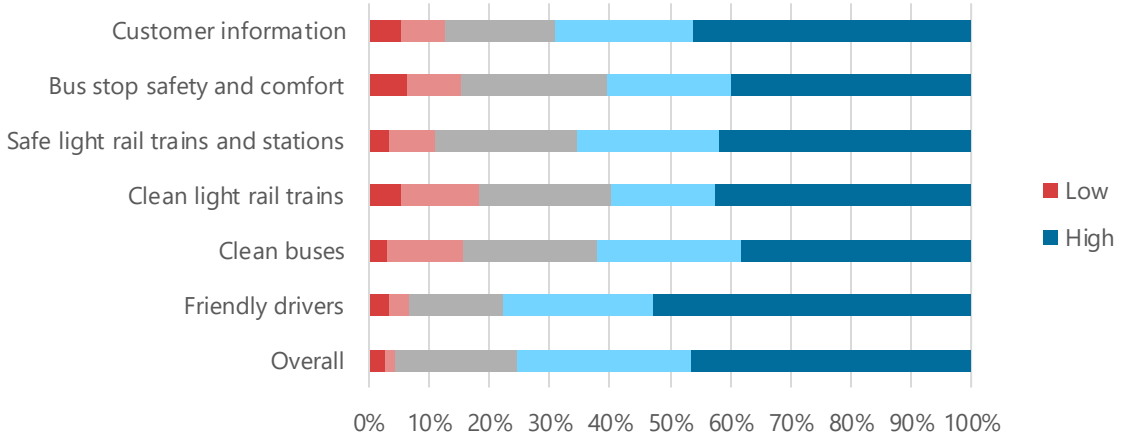
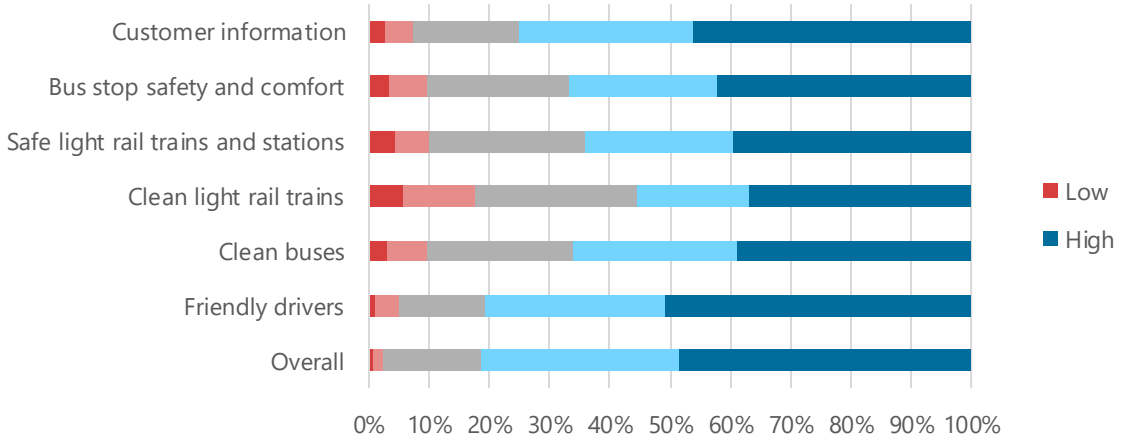


Figure 99 "Please rate SacRT overall" – Weekend SacRT Bus



APPENDIX

Sampling Methodology

Sacramento Regional Transit
Basis and Results for Onboard Rider Survey

The foundation for the sampling plan was the expectation for the results established by SacRT. They set requirements for a data file to be composed of the following number of returned surveys at a minimum:

- 3500 from Weekday Bus riders
- 2500 from Weekday LRT riders
- 175 each from Saturday Bus and LRT riders
- 175 each from Sunday Bus and LRT riders

This total of 6700 returned surveys was used to determine the number of riders to be surveyed and by extension, the number of hours of survey time which would be required to meet the SacRT quota. Based on 2023 ridership data, current revenue hours and our experience in expected returns, a total of approximately 1300 hours of survey time was determined to be needed to achieve the SacRT goals. The following formula was used to develop this number:

Required Survey Hours = Desired # of Returns / (Riders per hour X Rider Participation Rate)

Data regarding the average # of riders per hour was taken from 2023 system information. Based on an average shift or piece-of-work (POW) of approximately 8 hours for a surveyor, the 1300 survey hours translates to approximately 162 POW. These shifts were then divided between Weekdays and Weekends and Bus and LRT based on the expected returns set by SacRT.

Weekday Bus sampling was set up in an attempt to cover all routes, but with a focus on the routes with higher passenger loadings, based on 2023 data. 107 POW were allocated to the Weekday Bus effort. All times of the day were addressed with an emphasis on AM peak hours as a starting point. Our experience has always shown that better results are derived from this focus on AM peak ridership.

Two aspects of the SacRT system complicated our attempts to spread survey hours proportionately across the entire system based on passenger loadings. These are the fact that the system is interlined and the extensive employment of

split shifts for operators. Interlining and split shifts make it difficult to focus on individual routes when assigning POW when there are a limited number of shifts available.

Nonetheless, a survey schedule was set up to attempt to address all routes, with emphasis on the busier routes, at all times of the day, with emphasis on mornings with the returns noted above. The results of the survey support this thinking as 43% of the returns were derived from 8 of the top 10 routes based on 2023 daily boardings. The remaining 12 of the top 20 routes accounted for an additional 39% of the returns for a total of 82% coming from the 20 most heavily used routes. Returns were secured for all routes through Route 161, with the exception of Route 20 (no returns) and Routes 103, 109, 124, 134, 138 and 161 (all with less than 10 returns). A scattered number of returns were obtained for Routes 175 through 255, primarily due to these routes being interlined with more heavily used routes. Bus surveying was scheduled for eight days, with one day being devoted to the Elk Grove system, since it is based in a separate location.

LRT surveying was divided evenly between the Gold and Blue lines. It was initially determined that 30 POW would be needed to achieve the desired result of 2500 completed surveys. The plan was to have two surveyors on each train on 6 of 7 trains to achieve the 15 POW allocated for each route, again based on the expected results. Survey teams were sent out on eight-hour shifts between 5:30 AM and 12:30 PM on the Gold Line and between 5:30 AM and 12:00 PM on the Blue Line. Survey times ranged from 5:30 AM until 10:30 PM. Surveying for the Gold and Blue Lines was scheduled for a single day for each line.

Weekend surveying consisted of 7 POW each day for Bus on Saturday and Sunday and 4 POW for LRT for each day. All bus routes surveyed were in the top 8 based on 2023 boardings. Bus survey times were from 6:00 AM until 8:30 PM. LRT survey times were from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

It should be noted that additional POW, beyond those originally planned, were required to meet the expected results for completed surveys. This was due to a number of reasons including: prep, travel and other non-surveying time included in each POW; variations in rider participation rates; variations in surveyor abilities; variations in actual ridership due to weather or other factors. Also, POW were kept as close to 8 hours each as possible to minimize the requirements for overtime.