

INTRODUCTION

Plan Purpose, Survey, & Goals

This document summarizes the responses to a survey jointly developed by the Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments (MetroCOG) and the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) for the update of the Central Naugatuck Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (CNVMPO). The survey served as a means for people to share their thoughts on transportation in their communities and throughout the region. The survey also raised public awareness and interest in the plan.

GOAL DEVELOPMENT

Responses to the survey were utilized to develop regional transportation goals and will inform the update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). These goals will guide decision makers about where and how to invest in the transportation system in the future. Survey responses were analyzed through response theme coding (staff), natural language processing techniques, and staff review. Each task helped to develop recurring themes seen in survey responses, which were refined into seven regional goals and supporting actions. The goals were compared with the USDOT's National Transportation Performance Measures and CTDOT's State of Connecticut Transportation Performance Measures and evaluated for alignment with national and state priorities.

The goals and corresponding actions developed through this process are listed on the next page.

PLAN PURPOSE

The MTP is a federally required document that identifies potential opportunities to improve mobility for people throughout the region, from 2023 to 2050. A critical component of the MTP development process is to provide opportunities for community members to inform the plan. The GBVMPO's MTP will take a comprehensive, system-wide approach to improving all modes of transportation, as well as potential impacts to and from the system for residents, commuters, and travelers to the Greater Bridgeport Region. Federal regulations require an update on certain content and on the development process every four years.

Survey Development & Distribution

DEVELOPMENT

The survey was developed as a coordinated effort between MetroCOG and NVCOG. Organization staff utilized Esri's ArcGIS Survey 123 to develop a survey of 32 questions, available in English and Spanish versions. Survey 123 is a web and mobile application for survey design, distribution and response management. The application allows for logic-based design and manages responses through automated record keeping in a secured XLSForm. Paper versions of the survey in English and Spanish were also created (the English version can be found at the end of this document). For consistency, both COGs used a single joint survey, resulting in a combined dataset that contained all responses.

The 32 questions include a variety of required and optional open-ended/fill-ins, yes/no, multiple choice and ranking. Logic was also utilized. For example, only participants that replied

Goals for the CNVMPO Region

1. Progress the goal of Vision Zero.

To work toward the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries within the transportation system.

2. Preserve and Maximize Value of the Existing Highway System.

To maintain an efficient highway system that will provide the public with a high level of mobility, maintain the principal expressway and highway system in a state-of-good repair, address common locations of collisions, and focus on projects designed to the latest standards of safety and efficiency

3. Congestion Management

To develop and maintain a congestion management plan as the CNVMPO pursues TMA status and ensure programming of projects for areas of highest concern along the roadway network

4. Ensure Transportation System Security.

To ensure that users of the transformation feel secure, using a combination of new technologies and traditional approaches.

5. Evaluate and Utilize Advanced Technology

To better manage transportation operations, enhance safety and mobility, ensure greater travel time reliability, and provide more detailed and up-to-the-minute information to travelers and system operators through the application of various Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) actions.

6. Preserve and Enhance Public Transportation Services

To maintain essential local bus, passenger rail, and paratransit services by providing full funding for operations, replacing capital equipment on a life-cycle cost basis, renovating and rehabilitating facilities and infrastructure to a state-of-good-repair, and improving service through rationalized and better coordinated routes and reduced headways.

7. Expand Multi-Modal Opportunities

To expand opportunities for travelers to easily switch between modes, providing first/last mile options and high-quality transit services in between.

8. Enhance the Efficient Movement of Freight and Goods

To expand and enhance opportunities for expediting movement of freight.

Goals for the CNVMPO Region

9. Enhance Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

To encourage and promote the increased use of bicycling and walking/rolling as a mode of transportation.

10. Environmental Protection

To implement actions to mitigate and alleviate natural and cultural environmental impacts of transportation project.

11. Sustainability

To develop a long-range transportation plan consistent with the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development and State Plan of Conservation and Development that links local land use management, transportation improvements, sustainability and livability initiatives and principles.

12. Promote Economic Development and Revitalization

To improve transportation infrastructure critical to the economic vitality of the Naugatuck Valley planning region.

13. Environmental Justice

To identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of the transportation programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations, and identify strategies and techniques for meaningful engagement of populations meeting the needs for environmental justice.

14. Ensure Transparency and Proactive Public Involvement

To fully engage residents and stakeholders in identifying planning priorities, developing programs and projects, and publishing final products, and ensure meaningful access to participation in planning and policy decision-making processes for disadvantaged populations in our planning region.

“Yes” to “Do you ride a bike within your community?” were prompted to answer further questions about bicycling.

SURVEY DISTRIBUTION

The survey was available from August 24th, 2022 to November 30th, 2022. The CNVM-PO and GBVMPO’s Public Participation Plans were utilized to inform this distribution, which includes a comprehensive list of local, regional and statewide stakeholders with an interest in the transportation planning process. Stakeholders include municipal departments (such as planning, engineering, and health), non-profits, local service organizations and individuals who have requested inclusion in the MPOs’ email distribution lists. Many of the individuals and organizations engaged with were asked to suggest additional contacts and stakeholders. While this method encouraged participation from people who are interested in transportation and planning, the survey was not distributed through any random or scientific sampling process.

Staff attended several in-person events to raise community awareness of the plan and to distribute links to the survey (or provide paper versions upon request). Events included:

- The Bristol Mum Festival
- Shelton Day
- Waterbury Harry Potter Day
- Neighborhood Housing Services of Waterbury Housing Expo

Postcards with survey links and paper versions were distributed to:

- Libraries
- Community centers

- Senior centers
- The Kennedy Collective

Press releases were provided to the weekly newspapers, and member municipalities (for websites and newsletters). A link to the survey was also posted to NVCOG’s and MetroCOG’s website, facebook, twitter, and LinkedIn accounts.

The survey was intended to be available to people throughout the region, regardless of their age, sex, income level, ability, or ethnicity. As stated earlier, the survey was not distributed to a random sample of people. Thus, the demographics of the survey participants do not mirror the demographic composition of the region. For example:

- 18.5% of the population is over the age of 65. Of the respondents who indicated their age, 19% are 65 or older.
- The median household income in the region is \$83,841.
- The region has a large population of persons whose first language is Spanish and have limited proficiency in English. 5 people participated in the Spanish language survey.

Future outreach efforts for all CNVMPO projects and initiatives must work to engage people and organizations not reached as part of the MTP survey distribution process. Making the region aware of the public comment period for the plan is one opportunity. Additionally, abbreviated surveys with fewer questions that take less time may garner more responses, as well as offering small incentives for completion.

Filtering CNVMPO Responses for Analysis

During the roughly 3-month period that the survey was available (August 24th-November 30th), 687 online English, 5 online Spanish, and 16 paper surveys were received. To house all survey responses in a single dataset, MetroCOG staff entered paper survey responses into Survey123. NVCOG did not receive paper survey responses.

Survey distribution included NVCOG member municipalities outside of the CNVMPO region (by MetroCOG staff). Thus, respondents whose primary residence was not in the region and/or did not spend significant time in the region were removed from the CNVMPO dataset and any further analysis. Staff used the following process and criteria:

- “In what town/city is your primary residence?” response criteria included the 15 CNVMPO municipalities. Obvious misspellings were included.
- “In what town/city do you spend most of your time outside the home (work, school, etc.)?” response criteria included the GBVMPO municipalities above. Thus, participants who do not live in the region but spend a significant amount of time in the region were incorporated into the dataset. For example, if a respondent has a primary residence in Woodbury but works or spends most of their time in Fairfield, their responses were included in the GBVMPO dataset.

The resulting dataset includes CNVMPO responses.

Spanish responses to the dataset were reviewed separately and are available in an anonymized version of the dataset. Due to the low number of participants in this survey, potential identifying information was removed to ensure confidentiality and are not available separately.

ENSURING ANONYMITY

This document was created, in part, as a result of many respondents asking if the results of the survey would be publicly available. The full dataset is in excel format, and to protect the identities of participants, responses to each question were separated into an individual worksheet and sorted randomly or alphabetized.

Analyzing Open-Ended Responses

Open-ended survey responses were analyzed by staff and via digital analysis. MetroCOG staff organized responses into categories using a coding method, which involved reviewing each response and tagging the categories, or “codes,” that the response included. For example, the response “enforcement to make roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists,” would be categorized as “enforcement,” “safety,” “pedestrian,” and “biking.” The most common categories helped to determine recurring themes across all survey respondents.

WORD CLOUDS

Word clouds were generated for most of the open-ended questions via the free version of the software Alteryx. These Alteryx Designer settings were used:

- Text Pre-Processing tool: removed digits, punctuation, SpaCy default stop words (Link below) and converted words to their roots (for example, “running,” “ran,” and “runs,” all become “run” after this step).
- RegEx tool: parsed shortform text responses by “entire word,” and created a new dataset for NLP (natural language processing) with one word per one row.
- Data Cleansing tool: removed whitespaces and blank responses and modified all text to lower case.
- Word Cloud tool: created visualizations of the 200 most frequently occurring words.

Future Participation

The survey responses continue to be utilized in developing the MTP. The CNVMPO is committed to a continuous public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, and full public access to the organization’s activities at all key stages in the decision making process. Thus, the public is encouraged to comment on the MPO’s ongoing activities, including throughout the development of the MTP. Additionally, the opportunity to sign up for future MTP updates was made available to survey respondents. Those requesting updates will be informed on the ongoing progress.

The CNVMPO’s Public Participation Plan requires a formal, 30-day public comment period

prior to endorsement of the plan. Endorsement of the MTP is anticipated for the March 17th, 2023 meeting of the CNVMPO. Therefore, the MTP will be made available for public review on or before February 6th, 2023. During this period, the public will be made aware of the opportunity to comment on the plan via the following methods:

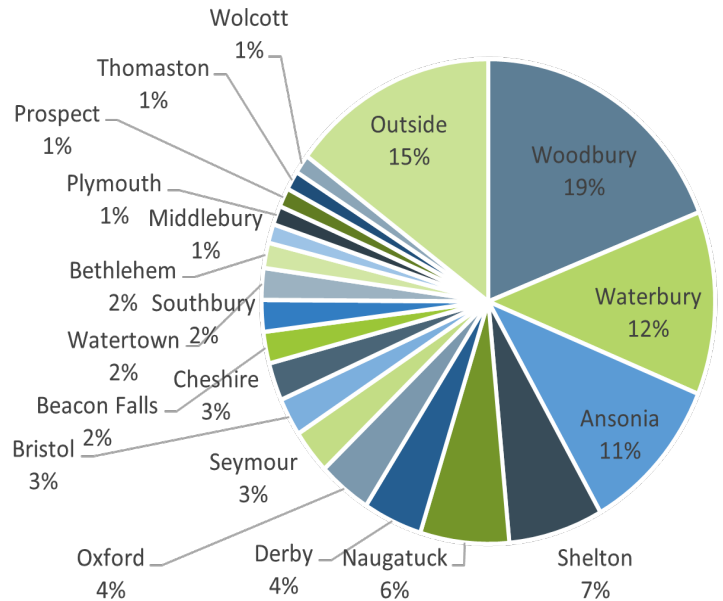
- Legal notice published in the Republican American
- Email notice to CNVMPO stakeholder list
- Social media posts
- Website notice

All notices will include a description of where to send written and/or email comments and the location, date, and time of a public meeting. The public meeting is anticipated for mid-February and will likely be held in NVCOG’s offices at 49 Leavenworth Street, 3rd Floor, Waterbury CT, 06702. An option to join virtually will also be provided.

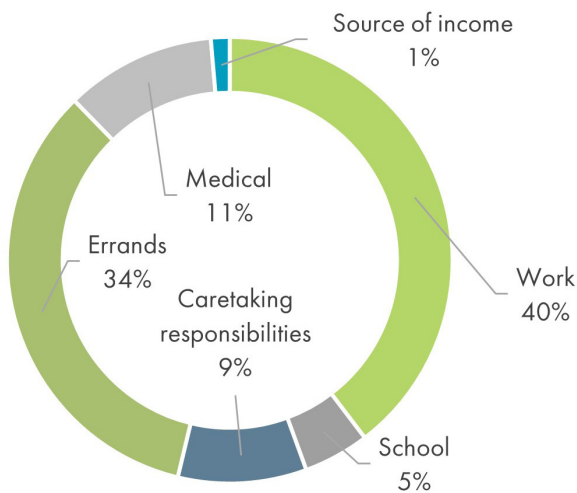
OUR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS...

Primary Residence

This pie chart is made up of the 202 respondents who live in the region. **Woodbury residents (45 people), followed by residents of Waterbury (29), Ansonia (25), Shelton (16) and Naugatuck (15)** made up the majority of responses.

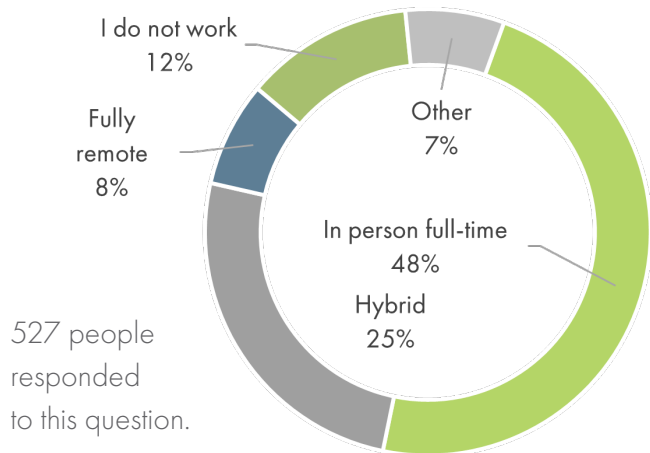


Q: To where do you travel most frequently?



463 of the 524 people who answered this question indicated more than one frequent travel location. **Work (341 people) and errands (340)** were chosen the most.

Q: How would you describe your work environment?



527 people responded to this question.

41% indicated that they work in an **in-person full-time** environment (215 people).

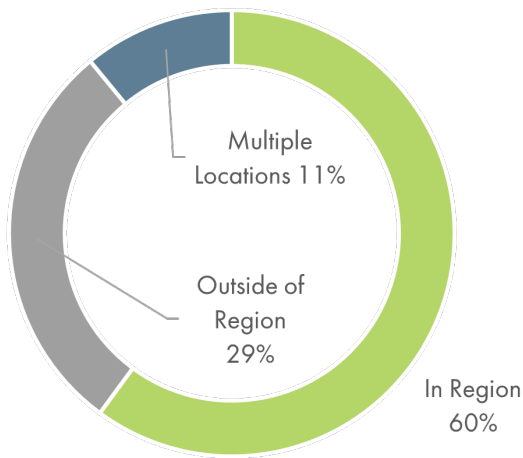
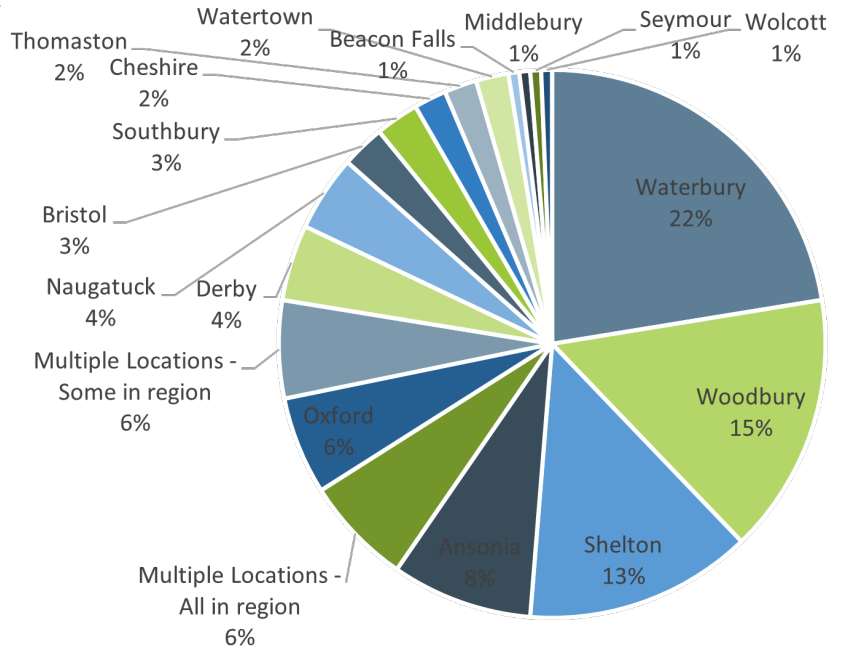
24% are **hybrid** (125)

10% are **fully remote** (55)

16% indicated that **they do not work** (87). Many of the 45 people who indicated "other" are retirees or work part-time.

Q: In what town/city do you spend most of your time outside the home (work, school, etc.)?

156 people indicated that they spend most or all their time outside of the home in the region. **Waterbury (35), Woodbury (24) and Shelton (21)** were the locations with the most responses.

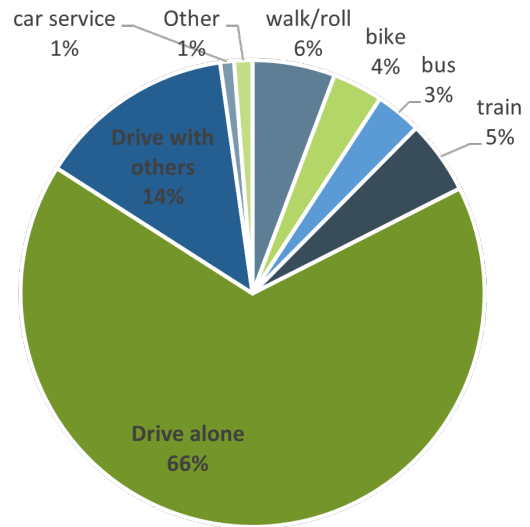


Travel Outside the Region

29% Of responders reported that when they aren't home it is typically outside of the region.

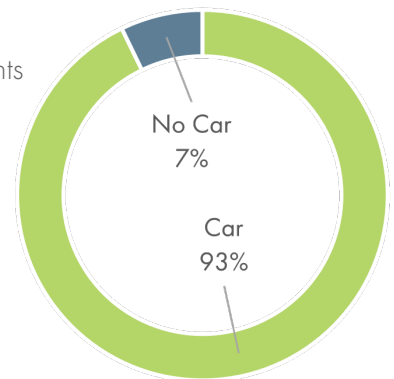
11% of all respondents reported that their travel is made up of multiple locations.

Q: How do you travel most often?



55% of respondents drive alone.

90% have consistent access to a car; 10% do not.



"Car and truck accidents on I-84; slow lights at intersections on RT 70 in Cheshire and RT 10 during the school year and during sports events at Bartlem park. More and more landscaping trucks town roads while work, blocking off lanes of travel."

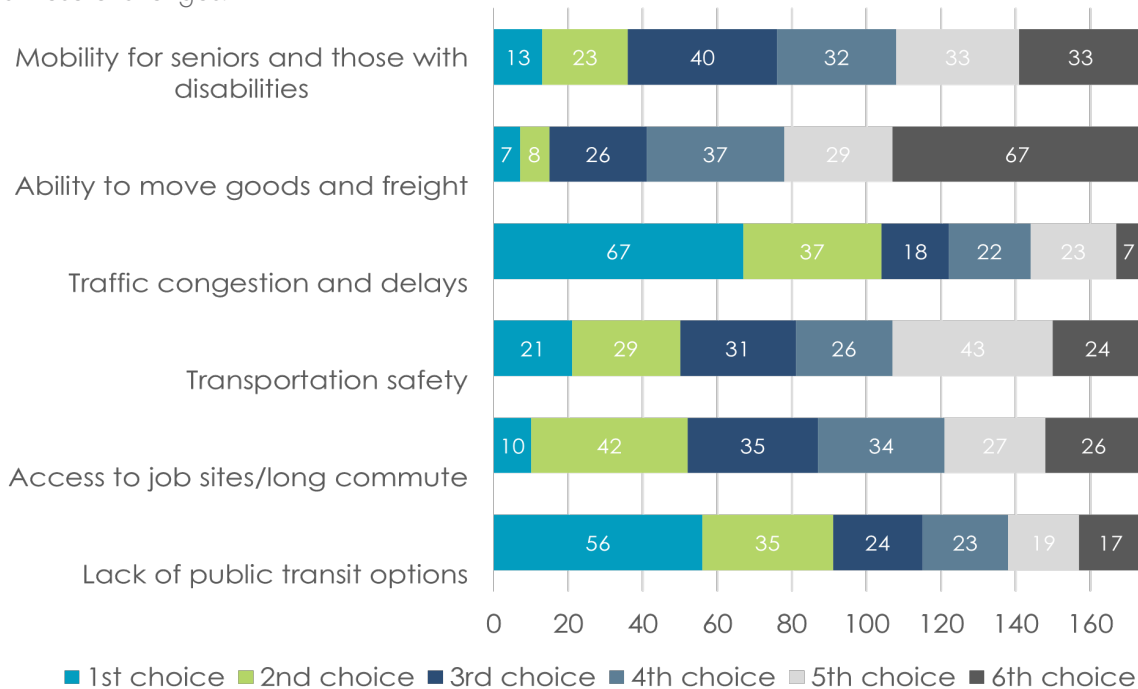
"I wish more places were walkable. I would prefer to walk a mile or two than to drive such short distances. Secondly, when I commute by car and train to NYC, I have to come home at night. Visibility is poor."

"There are limited Transportation services In Wolcott"

"Limited train service to and from Shelton/Derby station Traffic problems and accidents on Route 8 in Shelton"

Q: What do you think are the biggest transportation challenges faced by our communities?

This question asked respondents to choose or rank the region's biggest transportation challenges. 356 people ranked these challenges.



39% of respondents identified **traffic congestion and delays** as the greatest challenges (67 people).

32% identified the **lack of public transit options** as the greatest challenge (56 people).

Q: Please tell us more about the challenges faced by our transportation system.

This was an open-ended question that 173 people answered. Below, a few comments are highlighted. The word cloud indicates the words used most often in comments.

"Lack of options/steady reliable public transit. Seems like there's an accident on rt 8 almost every other day in one direction or another.."

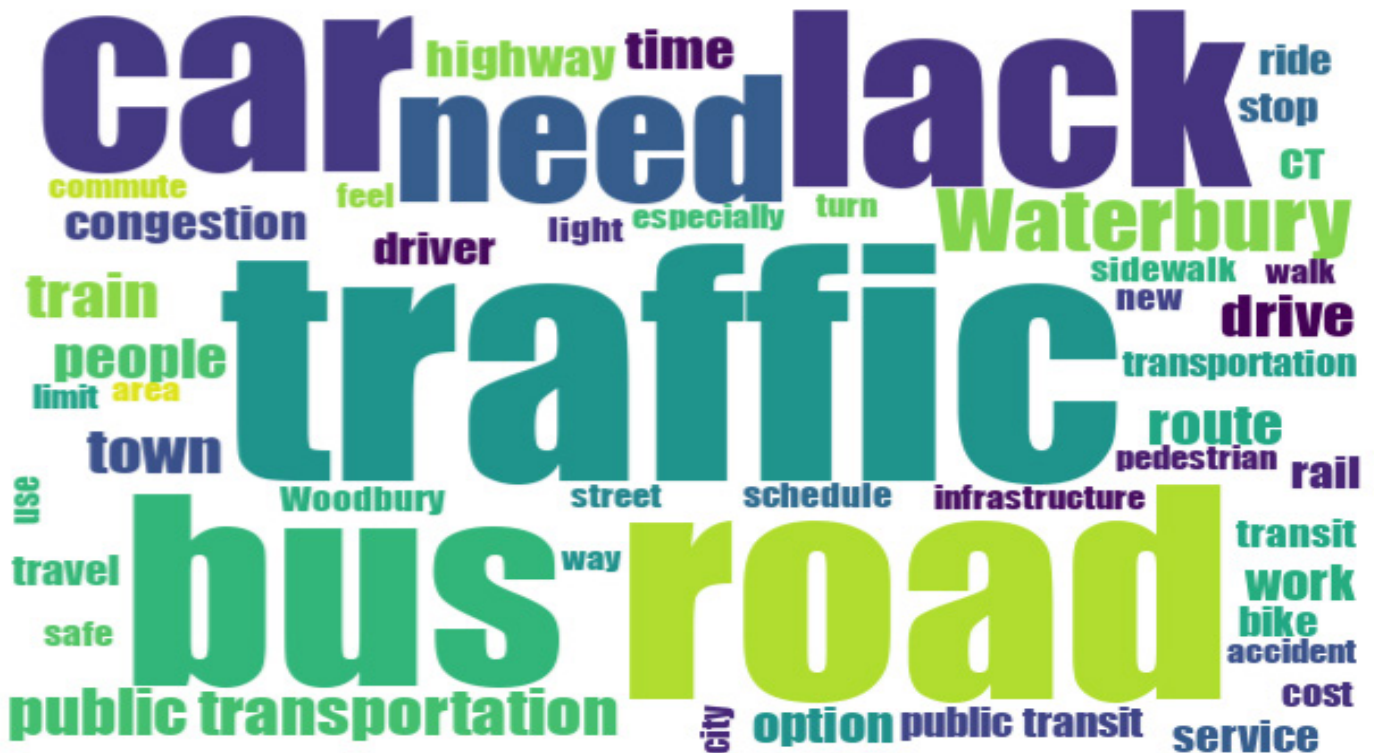
"Congestion and lack of safety frustrate and discourage commuters. Public transportation crippled by longer travel time and limited schedules..."

"Even for very short trips it is difficult to walk or bike because of the lack of good, connected sidewalks and bike lanes. There is too much traffic moving too fast to feel comfortable riding or walking in the street."

"No bus routes in Woodbury."

"Route 6, especially in Woodbury, is a traffic nightmare. Cars travel too quickly, there isn't safe access to cross the street - at any point - including the walk light by the town offices.."

"Train schedule is limited times. More times needed. Also an-sonia train station un secured. From weather and feeling safe."

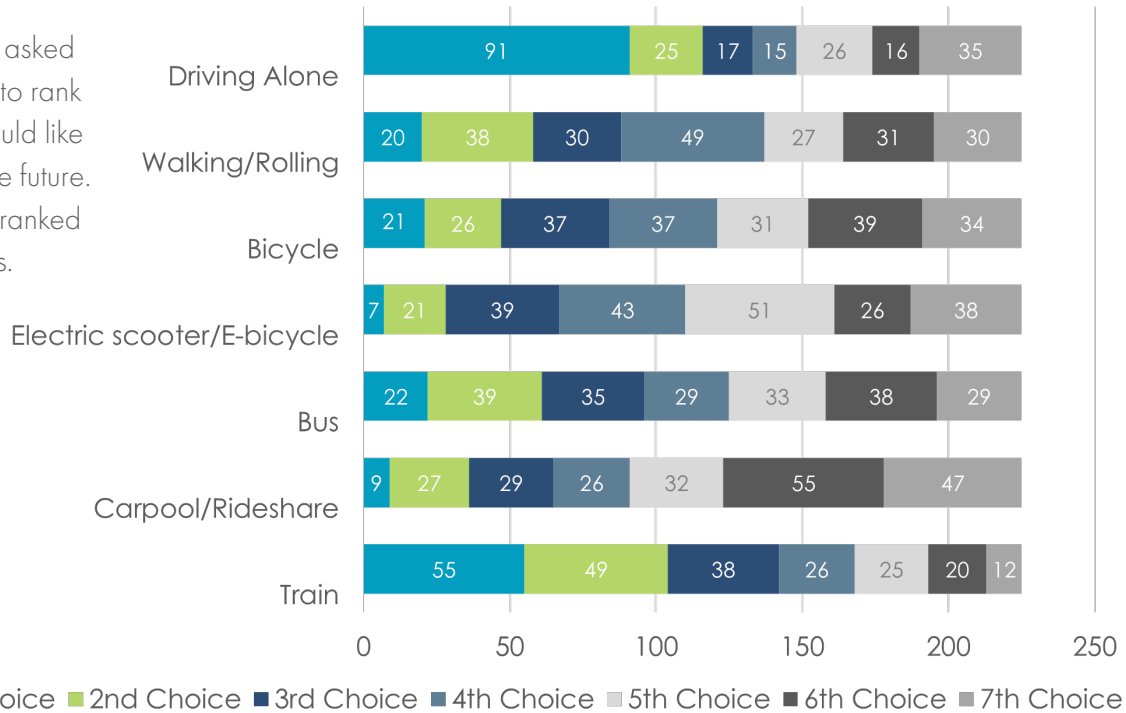


Attribute: Alteryx

FUTURE PREFERENCES

Q: Which of the following options are ways you'd like to get around in the future?

This question asked respondents to rank how they would like to travel in the future. 225 people ranked these choices.



40% of respondent's first choice was **driving alone** (91 people).

24% of respondent's first choice was **the train** (55).

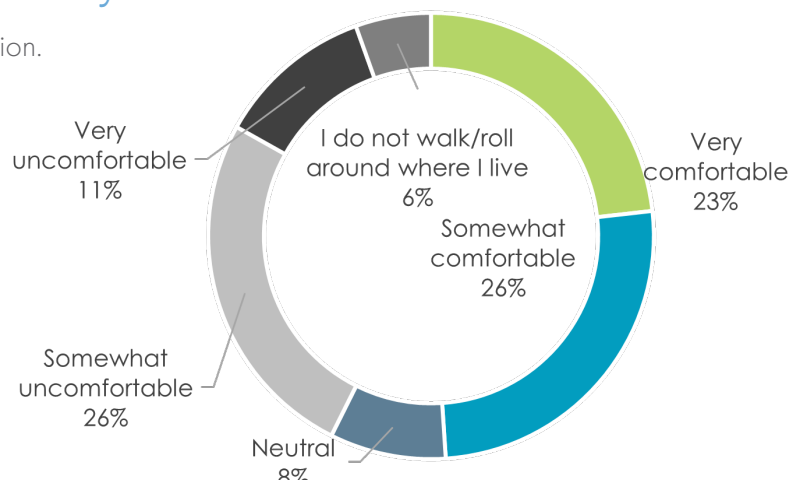
WALKING & ROLLING

Q: How comfortable do you feel walking/rolling throughout your community?

527 people provided a response to this question.

49% of respondents (116 people) **feel somewhat or very comfortable** walking or rolling in their communities.

37% (88) indicated that they **feel somewhat or very uncomfortable**. 5% (13) do not walk or roll in their communities.

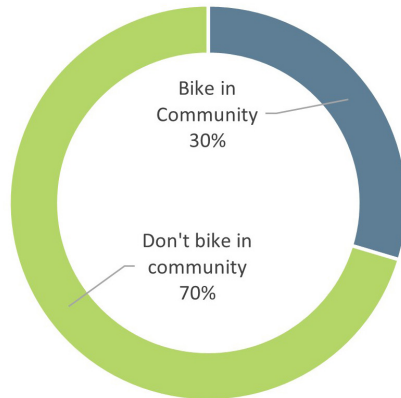


BICYCLING

Q: Do you ride a bike within your community?

27 people provided a response to this question.

30% of respondents (8 people) **bike in their community.**



Q: Please tell us more about the cycling environment within your community.

This was an open-ended question. A few comments are highlighted below. and at the bottom of the next page The word cloud on the next page indicates the words used most often in comments.

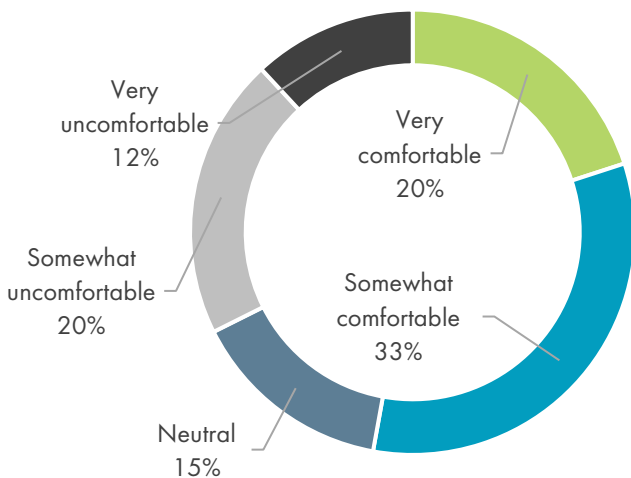
“I only bike on the rail trail. Riding on our public roads is not safe. it isn't even safe on my cul-de-sac with cars parked on the road and speeders.”

“We need bike lanes in NW CT. In towns like Woodbury there is too much priority given to cars. We need to safely share the road with pedestrian and cyclists.”

“I really don't feel that safe on the roads - I would ride a lot more if there were dedicated bike lanes.”

“I have access to trails for walking and biking purposes which are not available or known to outside communities.”

Q: How comfortable do you feel biking throughout your community?



53% (36 people) are **somewhat or very comfortable bicycling.**

32% (24) are **somewhat or very uncomfortable bicycling.**



Attribute: Alteryx

“Mostly the same as walking. Very easy in the suburbs, not as easy out on main street and larger roads. Usually am more comfortable riding on the sidewalk as not every road gives enough bike clearance and drivers tend to be aggressive in passing.”

“More bike lanes or wider shoulders would be excellent.”

SAFETY

Q: How safe do you feel traveling throughout our communities is today?

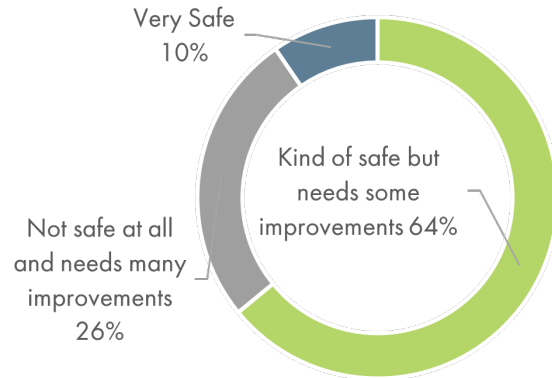
(including for yourself & people you know)

317 people responded to this question.

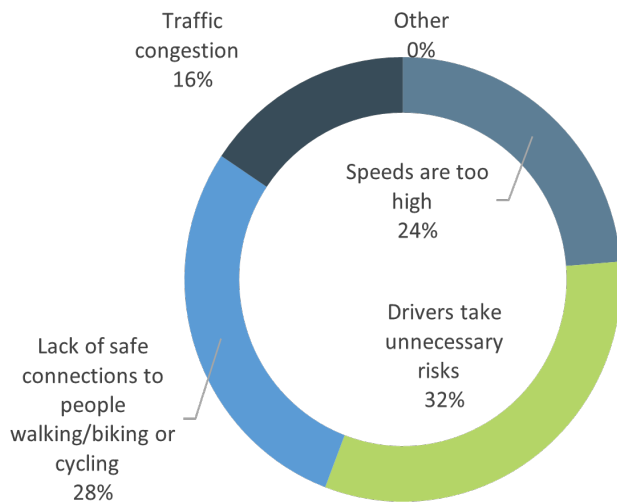
64% of respondents (107 people) felt kind of safe traveling in their communities, and that some improvements are necessary.

26% (44 people) did not feel safe at all.

10% (16) felt very safe.



Q: What makes you feel that way?



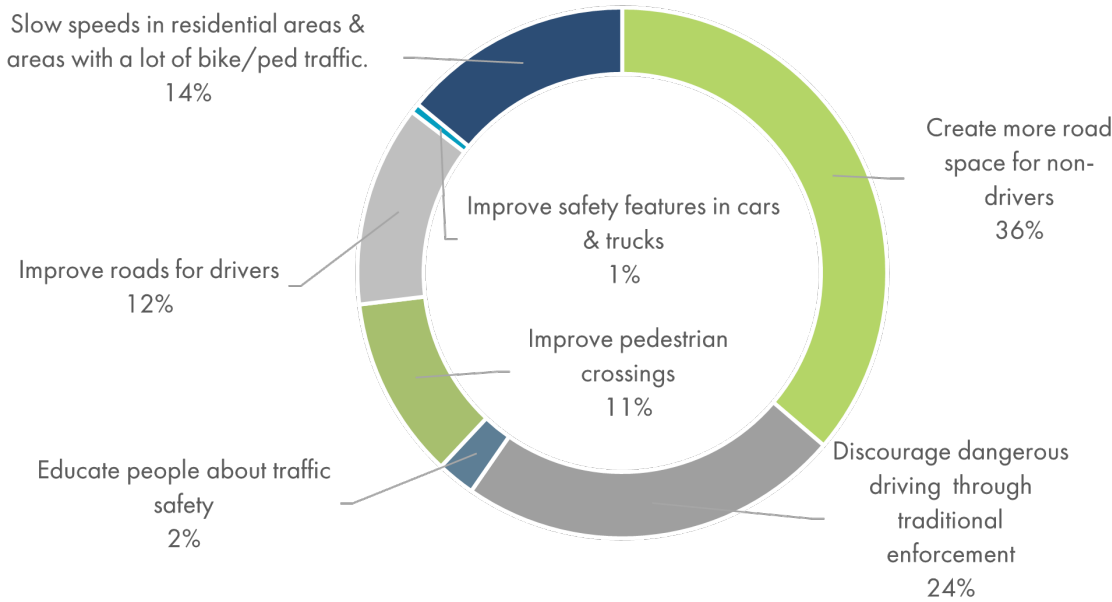
This question allowed for multiple responses. Many of the 171 people who responded thought that multiple factors impacted safe travels in their communities.

32% of respondents identified unnecessary risks by drivers.

28% of people indicated a lack of safe bicycle/pedestrian connections.

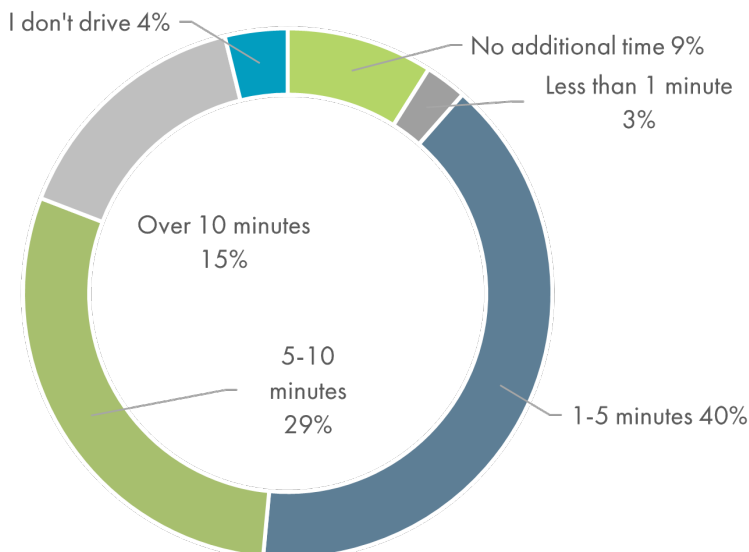
24% of respondents identified high speeds.

Q: What can be done to make your travel feel safer?



36% of respondents (62 people) thought that **more road space for non-drivers could improve safety**, with enforcement at the next highest choice, at 23% (40).

Q: Some safety improvements may involve trade-offs for people driving, including having some trips take longer. How many additional minutes would you be willing, on average, to add to your drive to improve the safety of our streets?



All respondents made a selection. **A 1-5-minute increase was selected by 40% of respondents (94 people).** 29% of respondents (69) selected 5-10 minutes.

Q: Anything else you'd like to add to the previous question?

This was an open-ended question. A few comments are highlighted. The word cloud below indicates the words used most often in comments.

"If trips become longer in a car because of safety, then more people will take alternative modes of transportation to avoid a longer drive. The safety improvements will promote alternative modes of transportation. Win-win."

"I'd need to know more about the improvements and how it may affect the time it takes to travel. And I don't drive because I can't afford a car anymore.."

"speed limit zones should be revisited"

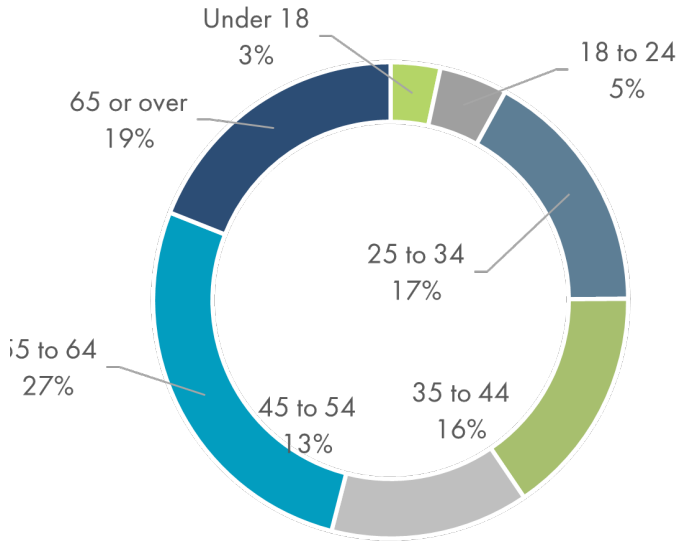
"I'm more concerned with safety than time savings"

"The main safety improvement needed is road condition. I believe that improving the condition and quality of our roads would actually improve safety and save travel time. trips would actually be shorter."

"We need better signs like adding more stop signs."



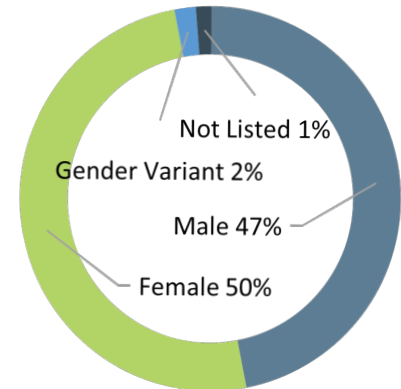
Q: Please indicate your age.



237 people indicated their age. 27% of respondents are between 55 and 64 (64), with 23% 66 or older (45). Respondents 24 and under made up only 5% of respondents (23).

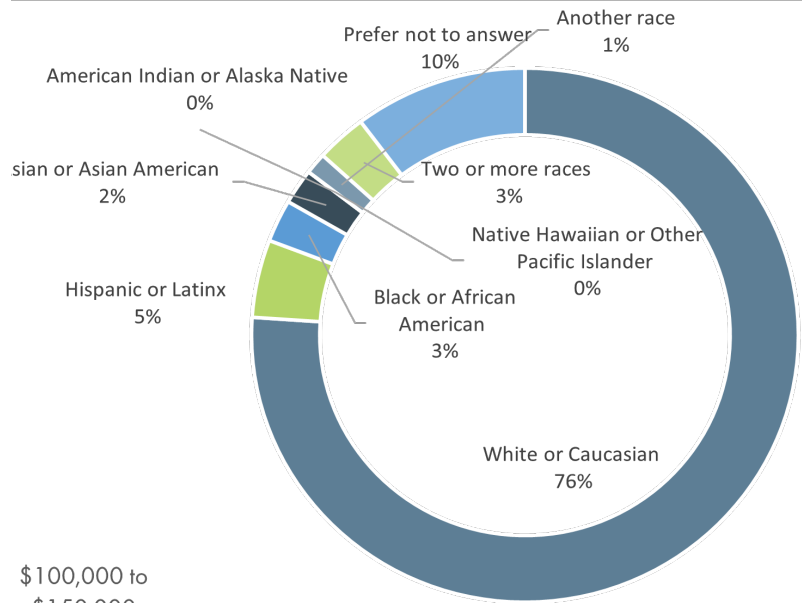
Q: What gender do you identify as?

222 people indicated their gender: 50% of respondents are female (111) and 47% are male (104) 2% indicated their gender as non-conforming (4).

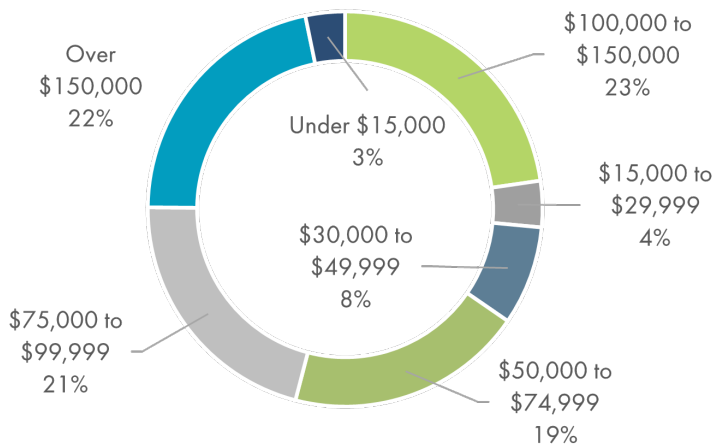


Q: How would you describe yourself?

210 people indicated their race or ethnicity. 76% of respondents reported that they are white/Caucasian (178 people). 5% of respondents are Hispanic/Latinx (11) and 3% are Black/African American (6).



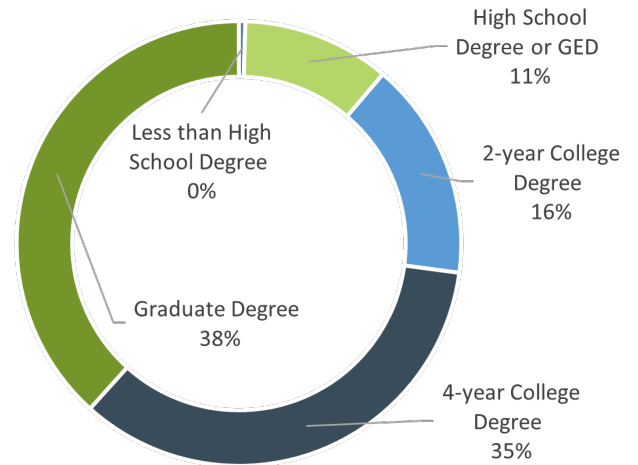
Q: What is your annual household income?



185 people indicated their annual household income. 46% of respondents (82 people) reported incomes of \$100,000 or over. 4% of respondents (7) reported incomes of less than \$30,000.

Q: What is your level of education?

214 people indicated their education: 38% of respondents (82) have a graduate degree. 35% (74) have a four-year degree 11% (23) have a high school degree/GED.



Q: Anything else you'd like to tell us?

We received a variety of responses to this question - some were "thank you", while others offered constructive feedback about the survey itself, including the need for some of the questions. Many comments drew attention to the need for location-specific amenities and improvements, and notes about transportation references, examples, and resources. A few comments are highlighted.

"I have children. Walking safety is very important to me. Some drivers exceed speed limits and wont slow down when they see children/people walking"

"Bicycle lane on Main Street Woodbury would not only increase safety, but it would attract people to live and shop in Woodbury.."

"Metro north waterbury to bridgeport needs to be better promoted with easier access to travel times posted at stations and online. constantly hear from people that it is very difficult to navigate train scheduled!"

"Fewer cars, more trains, less dependency on highways, like Rt 8, which almost destroyed the livability of the Housatonic and Naugatuck River valleys."

"Much potential for extra room on streets to bike. Many already walk sidewalks. Traffic speeds too fast. If I could take a bus to work, or bike, I would."

"Drivers seem to be more impatient, speed more, and less observant of other traffic, pedestrians, and bikers since Covid. I have asked others, and they are of the same opinion.."

"When my husband and I lived in Bridgeport we did take the bus more often. Now in Shelton we don't have convenient access to public transportation, we have to drive to get to the bus stop, which of course we don't do.."

"CT needs high speed rail and the return of trolleys.."



We want to hear what you think!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey about how you travel. Your responses will help shape our region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

This survey is being conducted to help MetroCOG and NVCOG better understand the issues and opportunities for all those who live in and travel to our regions, including motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users.

More information about the study can be found at <http://bit.ly/link>.

1. In what town/city is your primary residence?

2. To where do you travel most frequently?

- Work
- School
- Caretaker responsibilities – assisting family and friends
- Errands
- Medical
- A source of my income is made up of driving

3. How would you describe your work environment?

- In person full time
- Hybrid – some in person and some remote
- Fully remote
- Other _____

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2050

TRAVEL SURVEY

4. In what town/city do you spend most of your time outside the home (work, school, etc.) (optional)?

5. How do you travel most often?

- I walk/roll
- I bike
- I ride a bus
- I take a car service
- I ride the train
- I drive alone
- I drive with others
- Other

6. Do you have consistent access to a car?

- yes
- No

7. Do you have trouble getting where you need to go?

- No
- Yes.

8. (if yes to previous question) Please tell us more about what prevents you from getting around easily. (optional)

9 What do you think are the biggest transportation challenges faced by our communities? Please use one star for those issues you do not think apply, and five for the ones that are the biggest problems.?

	Smallest challenge			Biggest Challenge	
	1	2	3	4	5
Bicycle					
Walking					
Driving alone					
Carpooling/ ride sharing					
Electric scooter/ electric bicycle					
Bus					
Rail					

10 . Please tell us more about the challenges faced by our transportation system? (optional)

11. What suggestions may you have for the transportation system across the region?

12. Which of the following options are ways you'd like to get around in the future?
Please rank the following options according to how well they match your preference.

	least favorable			most favorable	
	1	2	3	4	5
Bicycle					
Walking					
Driving alone					
Carpooling/ ride sharing					
Electric scooter/ electric bicycle					
Bus					
Rail					

13. How comfortable do you feel walking/rolling throughout your community?

- Very comfortable
 Neutral
 Very uncomfortable
 Somewhat comfortable
 Somewhat uncomfortable
 I do not walk/roll around where I live

14. Please tell us more about the walking/rolling environment within your community? (optional)

15. Do you ride a bike in your community?

- Yes
 No

16. If you answered yes to question 15, how comfortable do you feel walking/rolling throughout your community?

- Very comfortable
 Somewhat comfortable
 Neutral
 Somewhat uncomfortable
 Very uncomfortable

17. (only if 14 is yes) Please tell us more about the cycling environment within your community? (optional)

18. How safe do you feel travel throughout our communities is today (including for yourself and people you know)?

- Not safe at all and needs many improvements
 Kind of safe but needs many improvements
 Very safe

19. What makes you feel that way? (select all that apply)

- Speeds are too high
 Drivers take unnecessary risks
 Lack of safe connections to people walking/biking or cycling
 Traffic congestion
 Other _____

20. What can be done to make ravel feel safer ?

- Discourage dangerous driving behaviors through traditional enforcement
- Improve safety features within cars and trucks
- Create more road space for people who are not driving
- Educate people about traffic safety
- Slow speeds in areas with a lot of pedestrian/bicycle traffic and within residential areas
- Improve roads for drivers (striping, signs, traffic signals, etc.)
- Other (please specify) _____

21. Some safety improvements may involve trade-offs for people driving, including having some trips take longer. How many additional minutes would you be willing, on average, to add to your drive to improve the safety of our streets?

- No additional time
- Under a minute
- 1-5 minutes
- 5-10 minutes Improve roads for drivers
- 10+ minutes
- I don't drive

22. What is your age? 18 - 24 25 -34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

23. What gender do you identify as?

- Male
- Female
- Gender variant/Non-conforming
- Not listed _____
- Prefer not to answer

24. How would you describe yourself?

- White or Caucasian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Asian or Asian American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Two or more races
- Another race _____

25. What is your annual household income?

- Under \$15,000
- Between \$15,000 and \$29,999
- Between \$30,000 and \$49,999
- Between \$50,000 and \$74,999
- Between \$75,000 and \$99,999
- Between \$100,000 and \$150,000
- Over \$150,000
- Prefer not to answer

26. What is your level of education?

- Less than High School Degree
- High School Degree or GED
- 2-year College Degree
- 4-year College Degree
- Graduate Degree
- Prefer not to answer

27. Are there any other comments you'd like to make?

THANK YOU!

This document was prepared by the CNVMPO, NVCOG and MetroCOG, in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

Staff are entirely responsible for the design and format of this report.

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