

# Return To Transit Survey Results Overview

February 2022



Chicago Transit Authority

# SURVEY GOALS

- Understand ridership habits and preferences of CTA customers, including current riders and lapsed riders that have used CTA minimally or not at all since the start of the pandemic in March 2020
- Provide insight into transit choices
- Identify factors that influence ridership decisions



# QUESTION TOPICS

- Current and pre-COVID mode frequency
- Trip purposes served by CTA
- Most common bus routes/rail stations used
- Most common fare type used
- Attitudinal and satisfaction questions
- Teleworking trends
- Demographics



# SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

## Timeframe:

- Survey open from October 28, 2021 to December 13, 2021
- Survey results captured during relatively optimistic period of pandemic when local COVID-19 case count was low and news about Omicron variant was not yet dominant

## Email recruitment:

- Email survey distributed to ~44,000 Ventra customers opted-in to receive emails.
- Current riders and lapsed riders targeted based on pre-pandemic ridership (Fall 2019) and current ridership (June, July, August 2021).
- Sample proportional to service area population based on customer ZIP code, with oversampling in low-income areas and of customers using reduced or free fares.

## Car Card recruitment:

- Car cards in English and Spanish distributed on 30% of buses and train cars with link and QR code to survey



# SURVEY RESULTS

- 5,121 completed surveys (91 completed in Spanish)
  - 4,984 completes from email survey
  - 137 completes from car cards
- Prize drawing incentive offered to all respondents
- Email survey response rate = 11%\*

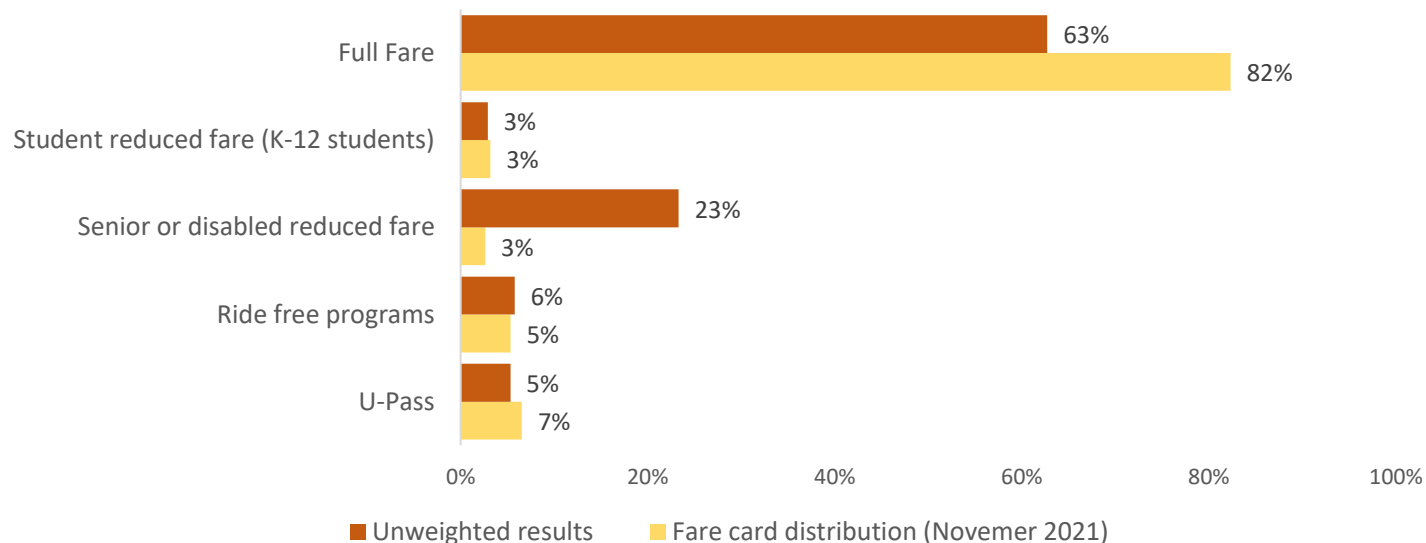
\*Results valid at the 95% confidence level with a margin of error of +/-1.31. Response rate comparable to other online surveys with prize drawing incentive provided.



# WEIGHTING

- Unweighted sample skewed toward senior or disabled reduced fare customers
- Results weighted to fare type distribution of survey period to correct imbalance
- Weighted results checked against mode breakdown, demographics, and bus route group/rail branch breakdown
- Cleaned\* and weighted dataset includes 5,118 completed surveys

FARE TYPE: UNWEIGHTED RESULTS V. FARE CARD DISTRIBUTION



\* Dataset cleaned to remove duplicate responses and surveys completed too quickly



# SEGMENTS

- Survey targeted current CTA riders and lapsed CTA riders.
- Results segmented by these groups, with sample size for each segment shown by question.
- Lapsed riders that reported not using CTA bus or train in the past few months did not view every survey question.

## Current riders:

- Used CTA bus or train 1-3 days per week or more during past few months
- Sample size = 4,312 respondents

## Lapsed riders:

- Used CTA bus or train less than once per month since the pandemic began
- Sample size = 806 respondents



# FREQUENCY SEGMENTS

Select results were further segmented into the following groups by rider frequency:

## Current frequent riders:

- Ride CTA Bus or Train 1-3 days per week or more
- Sample size = 3,409

## Current infrequent riders:

- Ride CTA Bus or Train 1-2 days per month
- Sample size = 904

## Lapsed frequent riders:

- Ride CTA Bus or Train less than once per month since before the pandemic began, but prior to March 2020 used CTA Bus or Rail 1-3 days per week or more
- Sample size = 413

## Lapsed infrequent riders:

- Ride CTA Bus or Train less than once per month since before the pandemic began, but prior to March 2020 used CTA Bus or Rail less than once per month to 1-2 days per month
- Sample size = 393

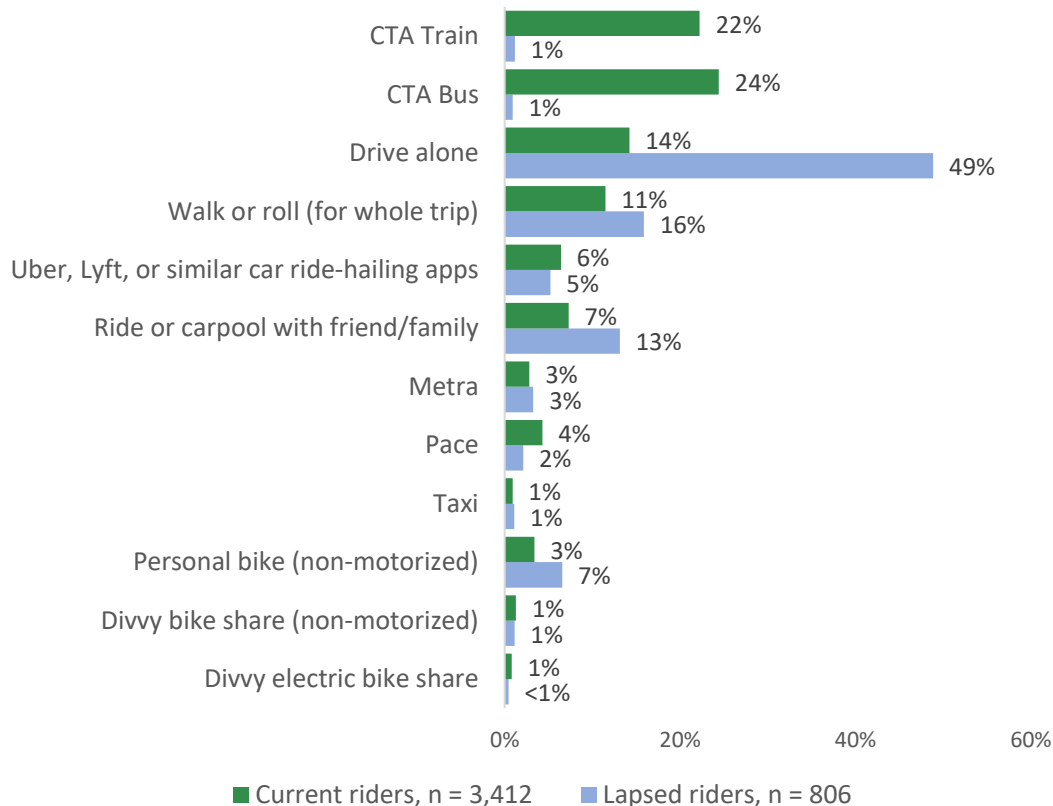




# MODE SHARE IN PAST FEW MONTHS

Over the past few months, **current riders** used a variety of modes for travel, with CTA making up 46% of trips outside the home. **Lapsed riders** relied more heavily on personal vehicles for transportation, with driving alone comprising half of trips made.

## MODE SHARE IN PAST FEW MONTHS

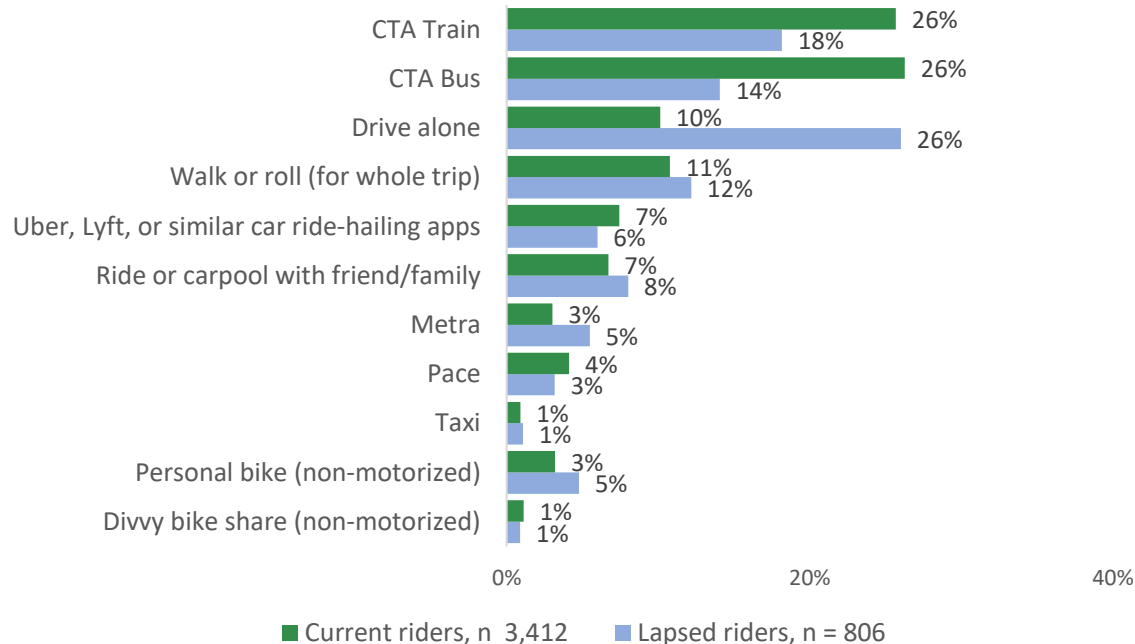


# MODE SHARE PRE-COVID

Before the pandemic, **current riders** made 52% of their trips on CTA, slightly higher than their transit mode share in the last few months. **Lapsed riders** reported making 32% of their trips on transit before the pandemic.

While many trips on transit shifted to personal car for **lapsed riders** and to a lesser extent, **current riders**, some trips are no longer being taken. Based on reported mode frequency, about 19% fewer trips are currently being made compared with before the pandemic, with more trips no longer being taken by **lapsed riders** than **current riders**.

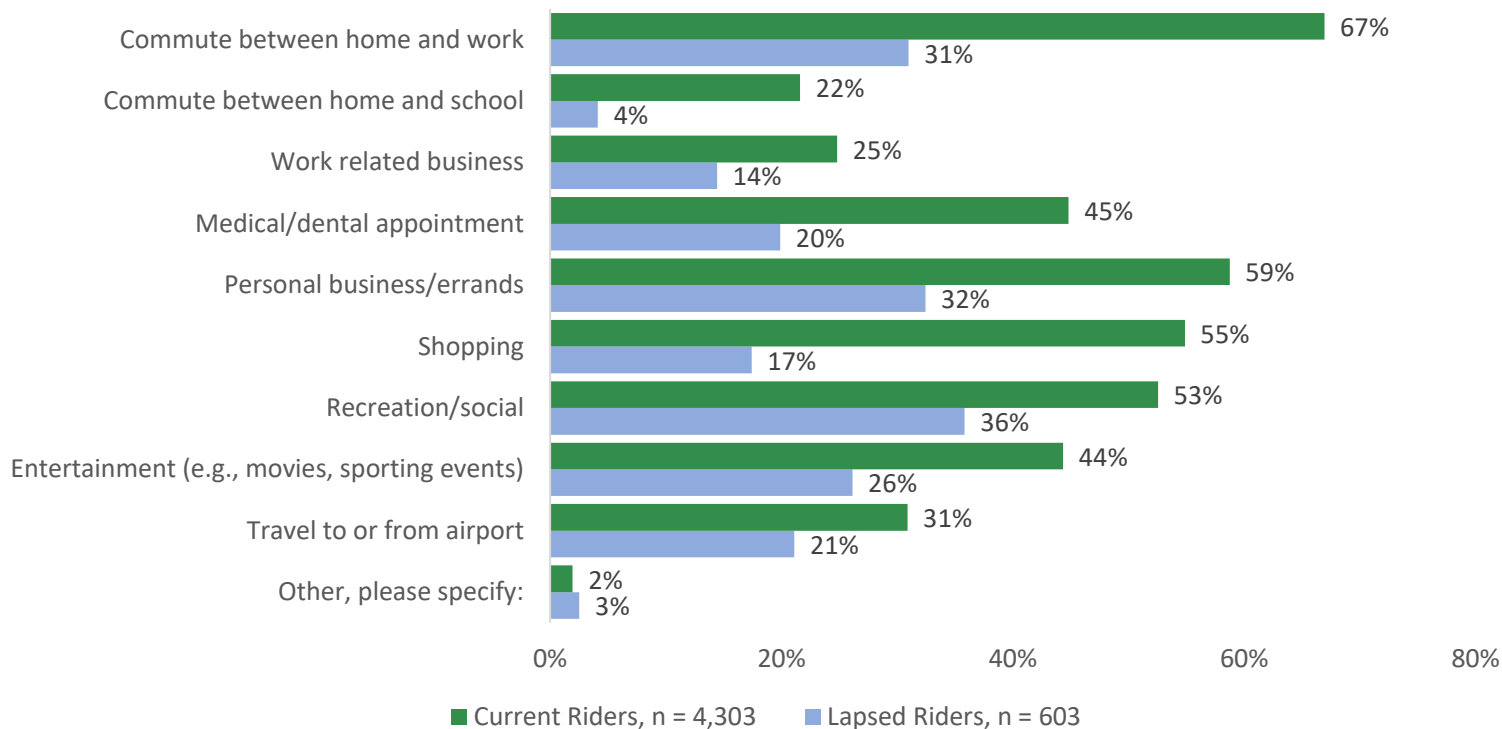
## MODE SHARE PRE-COVID



# TRIP PURPOSE ON CTA

Respondents were most likely to use CTA to commute, but trips for personal business, shopping and recreation were also common. **Current riders** were much more likely than **lapsed riders** to use CTA for a variety of trip purposes.

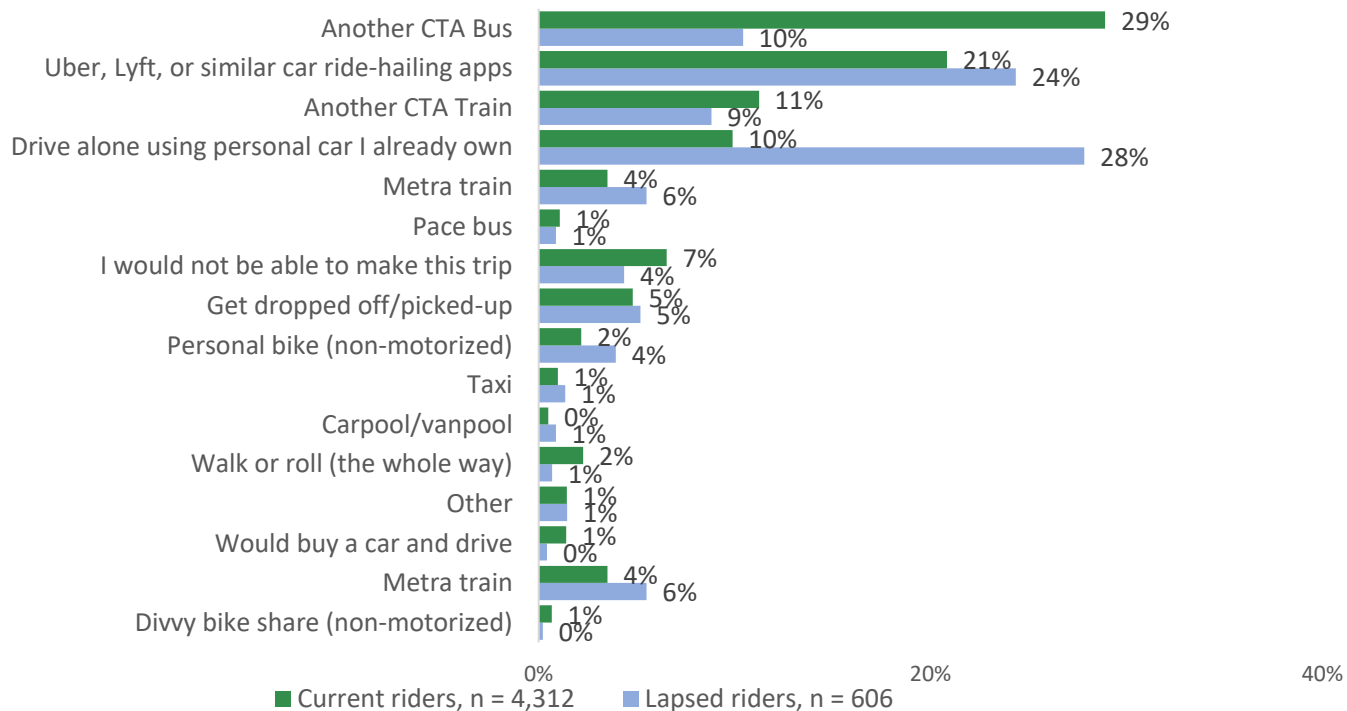
TRIP PURPOSE ON CTA (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



# TRIP REPLACEMENT MODE

**Current riders** are more likely to report that they would take another CTA Bus if their most common CTA service was not available, whereas **lapsed riders** would drive alone or use a ride-hailing service.

TRIP REPLACEMENT MODE IF CTA SERVICE UNAVAILABLE\*

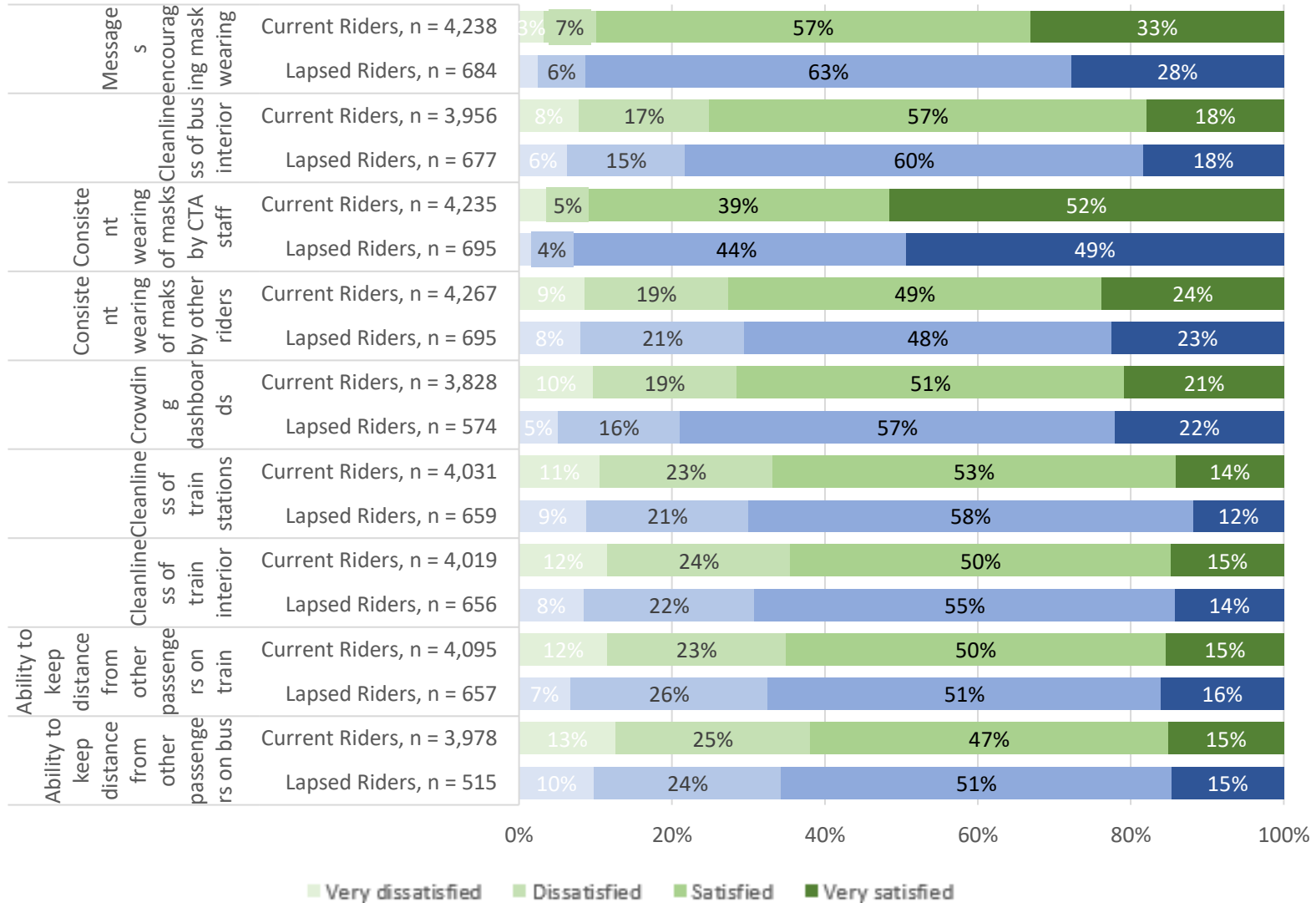


\*Answer options selected by less than 1% of respondents are not shown on chart. These include personal bike (electric), personal scooter (non-motorized), personal scooter (electric), Divvy electric bike share, and Zipcar or other car sharing service.



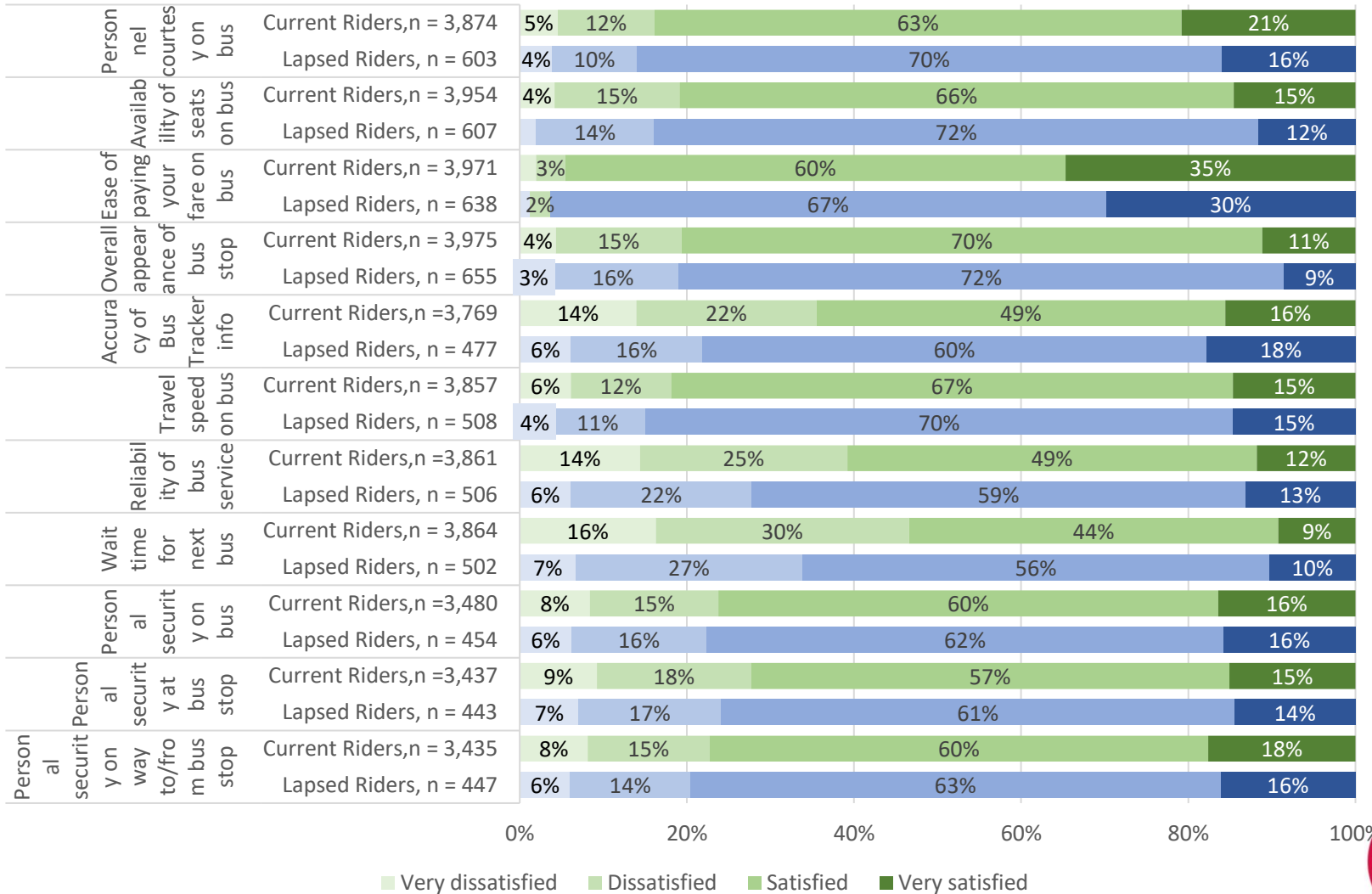
# CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: COVID-19 ATTRIBUTES

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: COVID-19 ATTRIBUTES



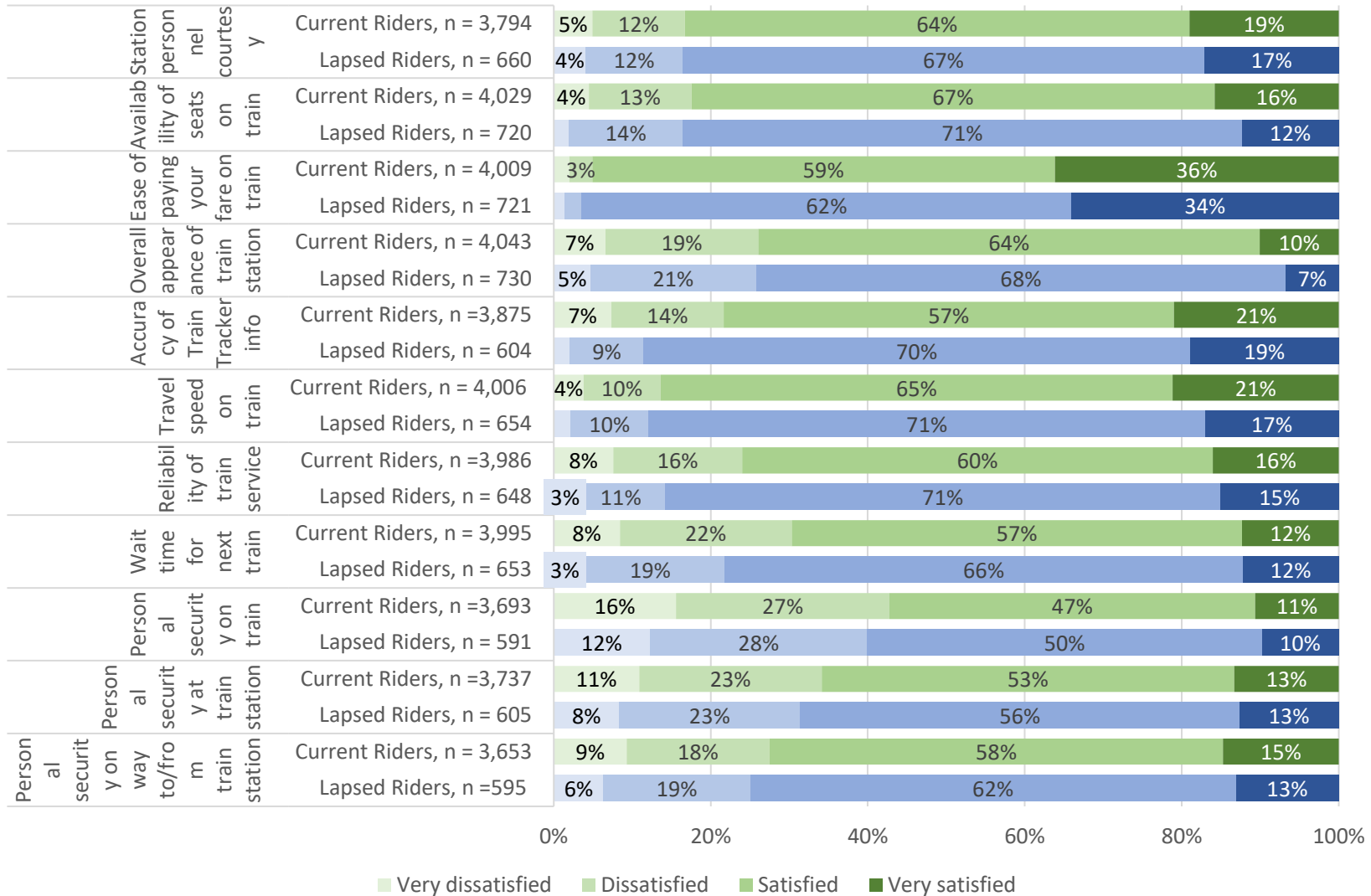
# CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: BUS ATTRIBUTES

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: CTA BUS ATTRIBUTES



# CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: TRAIN ATTRIBUTES

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: CTA TRAIN ATTRIBUTES

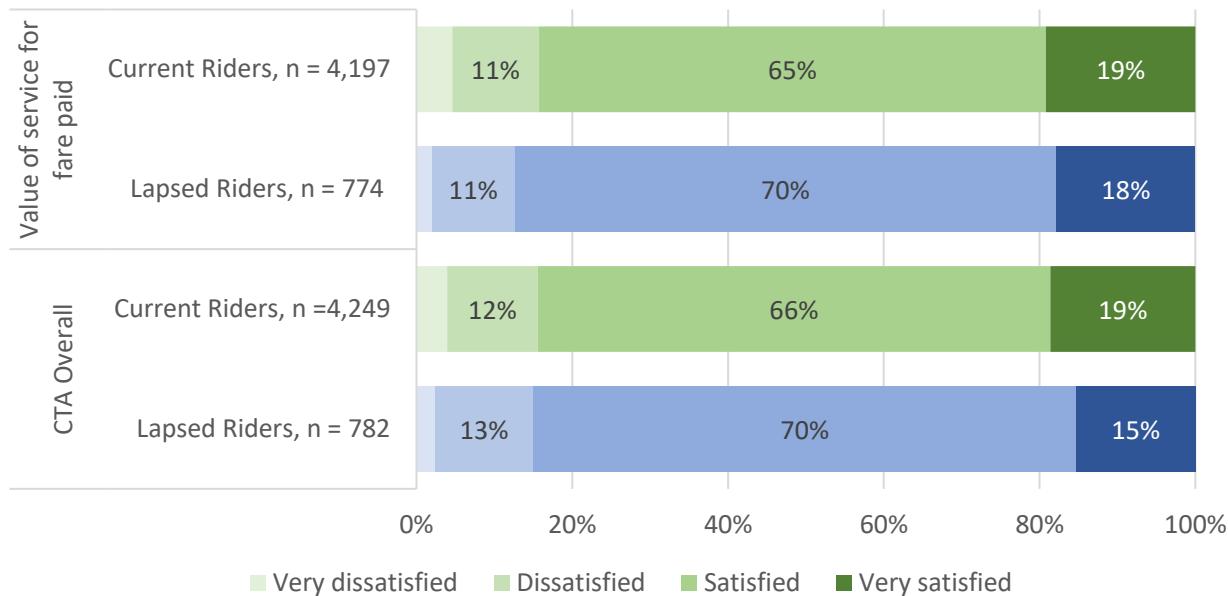


# CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: OVERALL

84% of **current riders** and 88% of **lapsed riders** were satisfied with the value of service for fare paid.

85% of all respondents were satisfied with CTA overall.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: CTA OVERALL





# PRE-COVID CUSTOMER SATISFACTION COMPARISON OVERVIEW

Customer satisfaction ratings were compared with results from the 2018 Ridership Investigation Survey\* to provide a pre-COVID benchmark.

## Bus Attributes:

With respect to wait time for the next bus, respondents were satisfied at similar rates on the 2021 Return to Transit Survey and the 2018 Ridership Investigation Survey, but satisfaction levels for bus service reliability and accuracy of bus tracker were slightly higher in 2018. Respondents on the 2021 survey reported much higher levels of satisfaction with bus cleanliness, availability of seats, and appearance of bus stops compared with 2018.

## Train Attributes:

Respondents on the 2021 survey were slightly less satisfied with wait time for the next train and much more satisfied with availability of seats compared with the 2018 survey.

## CTA Overall:

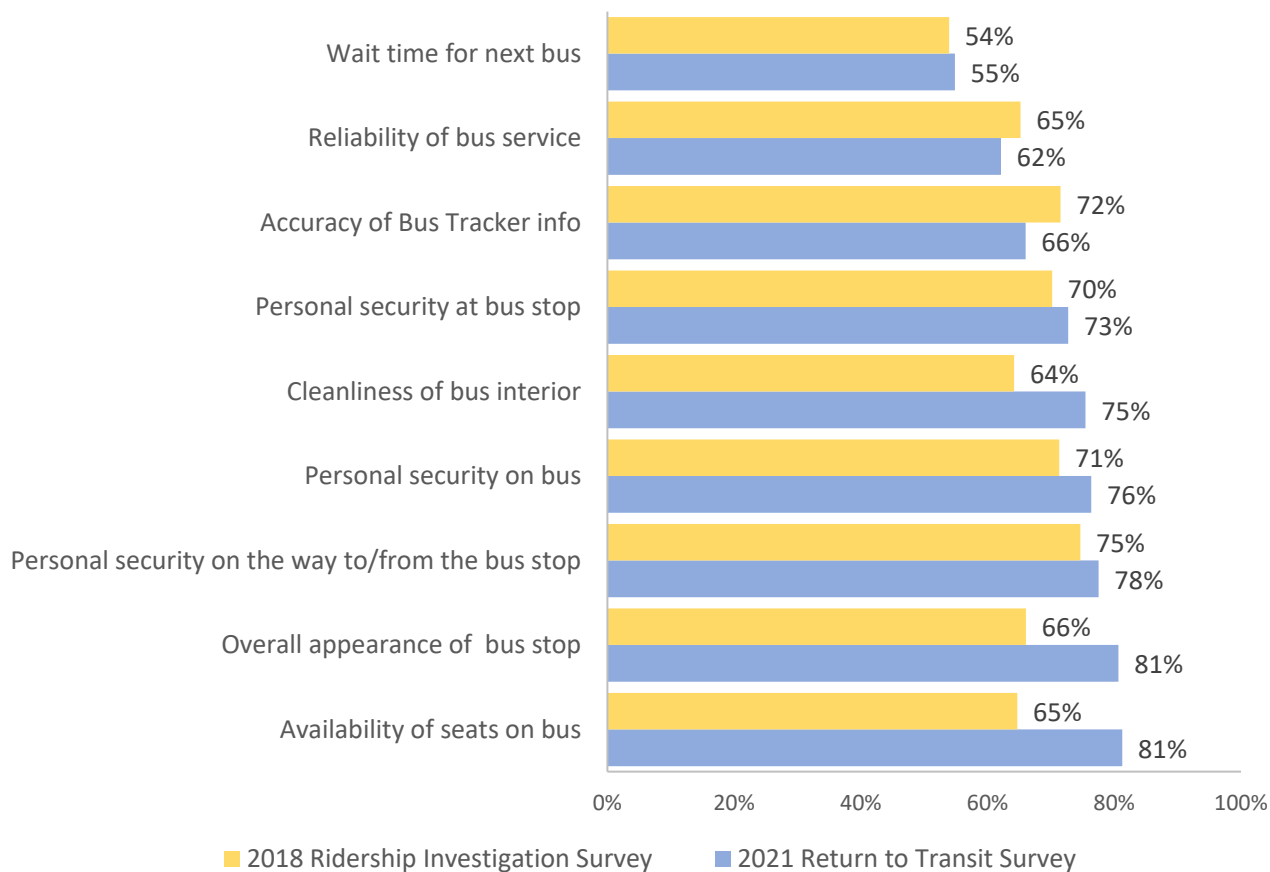
Compared with the 2018 survey, respondents reported much higher satisfaction levels with CTA overall and the value of service for fare paid on the 2021 survey.

\*Survey conducted online via email. Sample size was 5,284 responses.



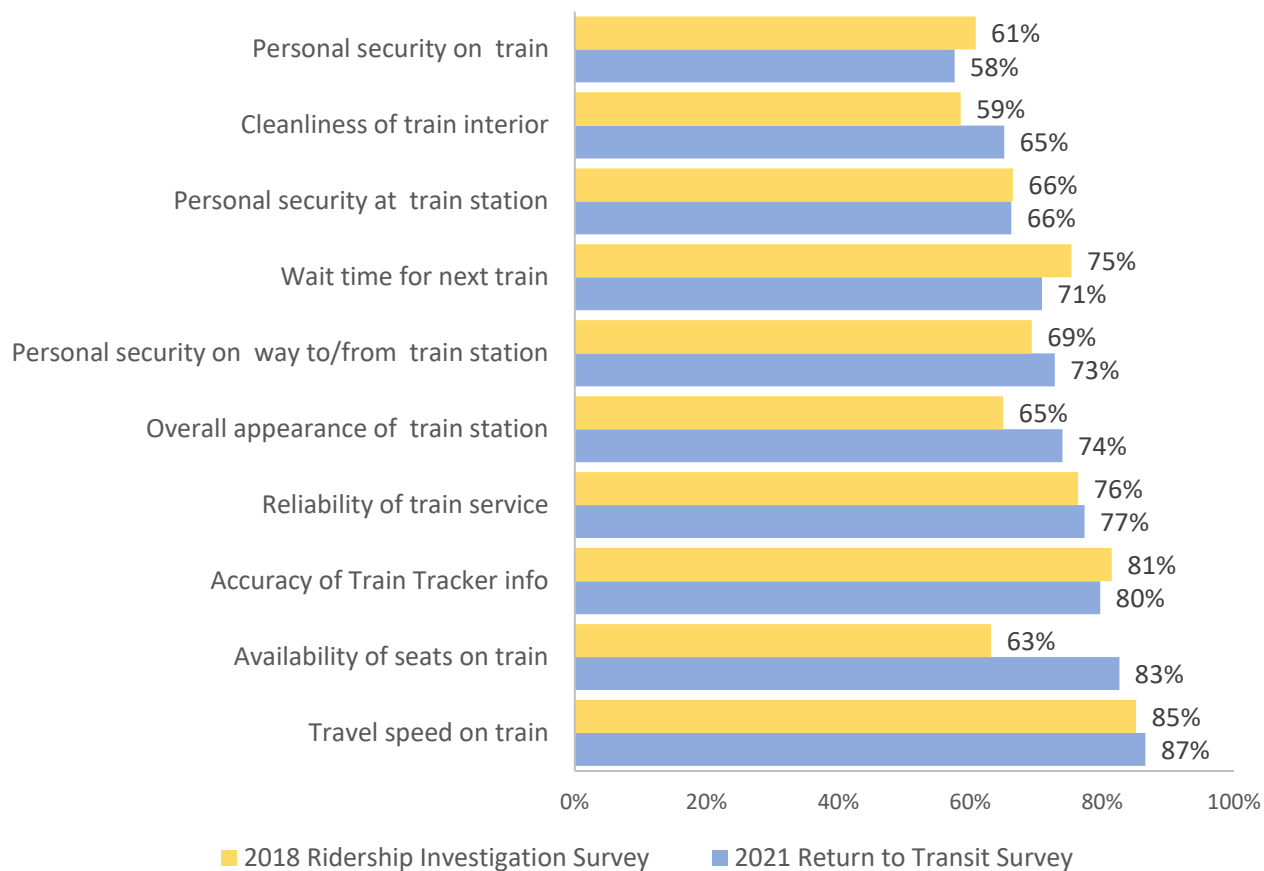
# PRE-COVID CUSTOMER SATISFACTION COMPARISONS: BUS ATTRIBUTES

PERCENT SATISFIED WITH CTA BUS ATTRIBUTES  
COMPARED WITH 2018 RIDERSHIP INVESTIGATION SURVEY



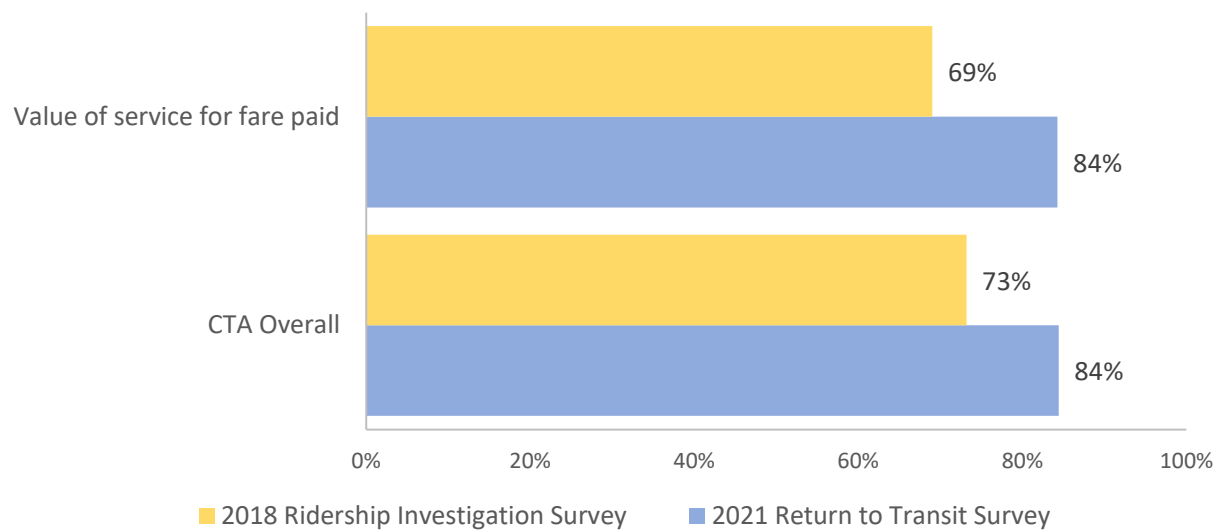
# PRE-COVID CUSTOMER SATISFACTION COMPARISONS: RAIL ATTRIBUTES

PERCENT SATISFIED WITH CTA RAIL ATTRIBUTES  
COMPARED WITH 2018 RIDERSHIP INVESTIGATION SURVEY



# PRE-COVID CUSTOMER SATISFACTION COMPARISONS: OVERALL SATISFACTION

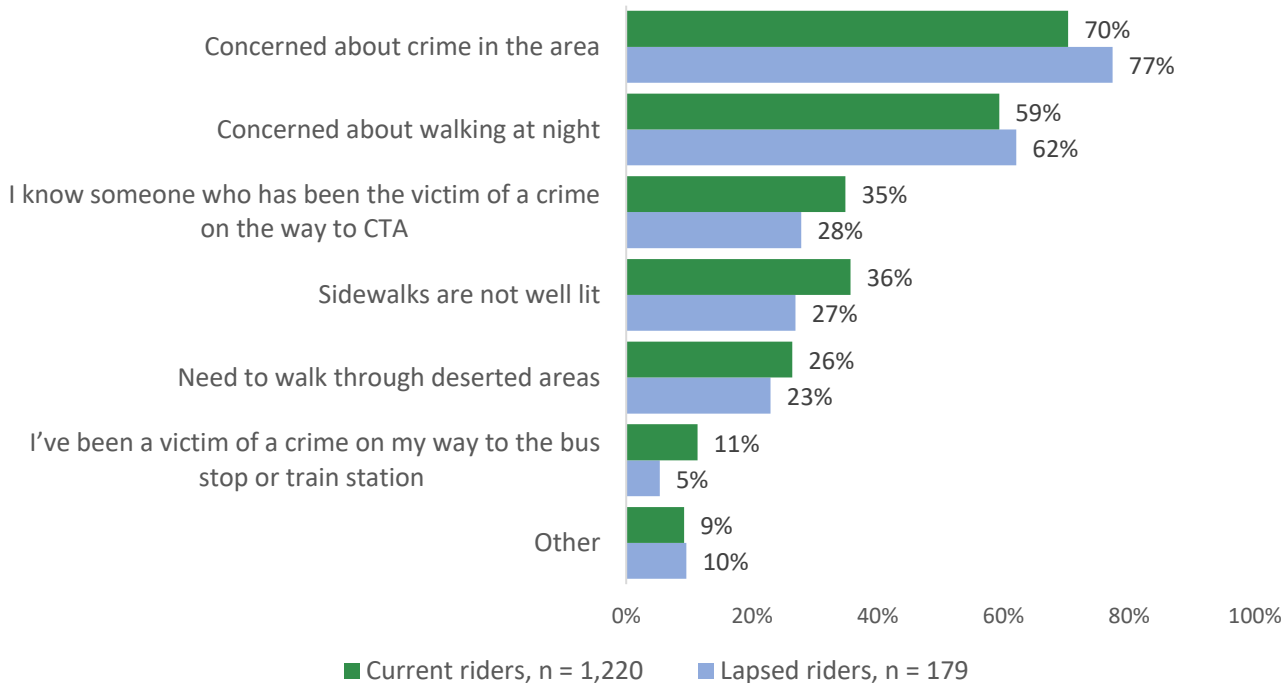
PERCENT SATISFIED WITH CTA OVERALL  
COMPARED WITH 2018 RIDERSHIP INVESTIGATION SURVEY



# REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH PERSONAL SECURITY ACCESSING CTA BUS/TRAIN

Most respondents who indicated dissatisfaction with personal security on the way to or from CTA reported concerns about crime in the area and walking at night. 35% of **current riders** also indicated knowing someone who was a crime victim on the way to CTA.

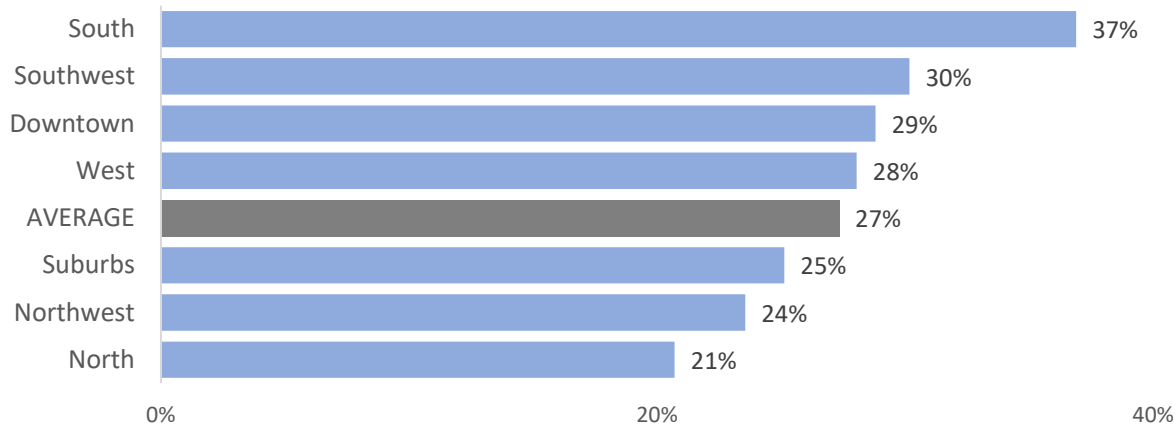
## WHY DISSATISFIED WITH PERSONAL SECURITY ACCESSING BUS/TRAIN (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



# DISSATISFACTION WITH PERSONAL SECURITY ACCESSING CTA BUS/TRAIN BY GEOGRAPHY

27% of respondents reported dissatisfaction with personal security on the way to or from CTA. Compared with the sample overall, a higher proportion of respondents (37%) living on the South Side of Chicago reported feeling unsafe accessing CTA. Only 21% of North Side respondents reported dissatisfaction.

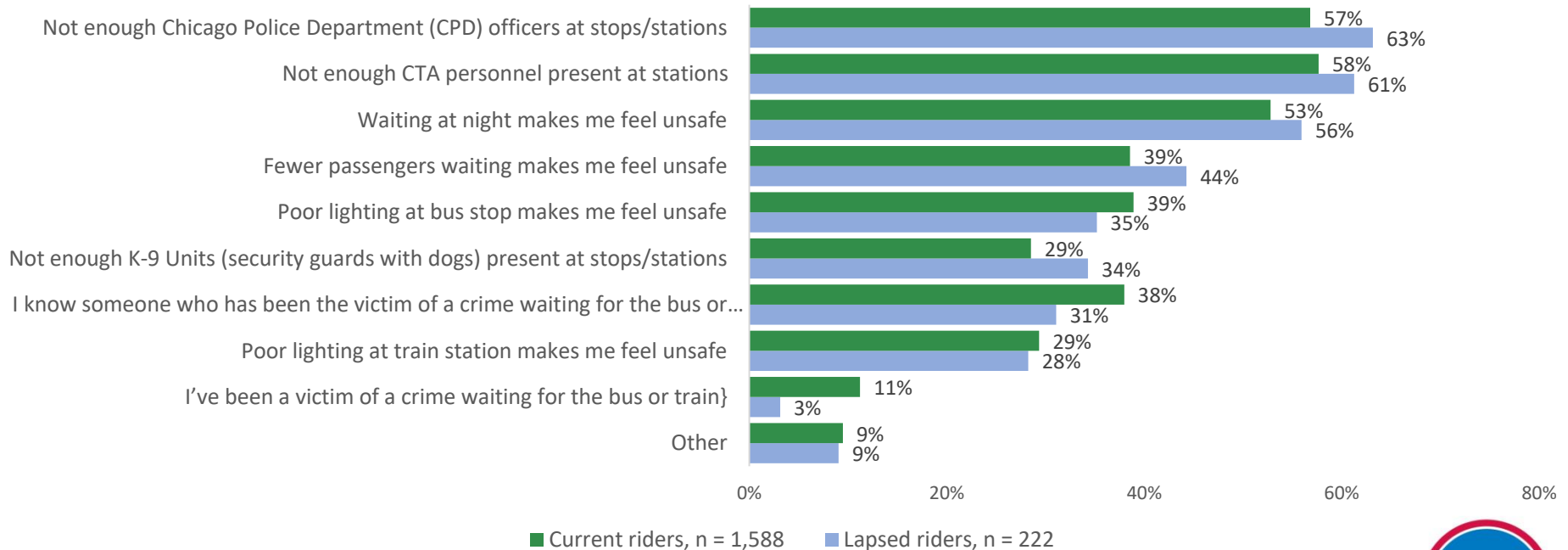
**PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS DISSATISFIED WITH  
PERSONAL SECURITY ACCESSING CTA BY HOME GEOGRAPHY**



# DISSATISFACTION WITH PERSONAL SECURITY WAITING FOR CTA BUS/TRAIN

Over half of CTA customers who indicated dissatisfaction with personal security waiting at stops and stations indicated that there was not enough CPD officers or CTA personnel present.

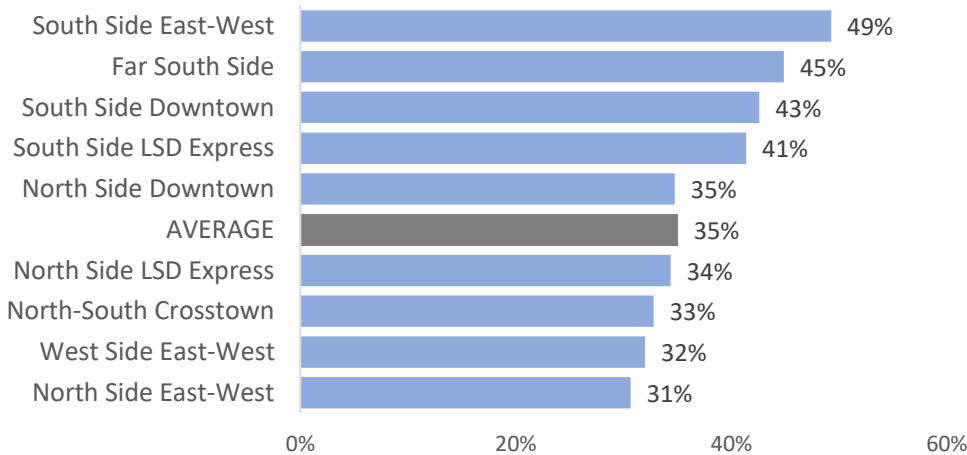
## WHY DISSATISFIED WITH PERSONAL SECURITY AT CTA STOPS/STATIONS (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



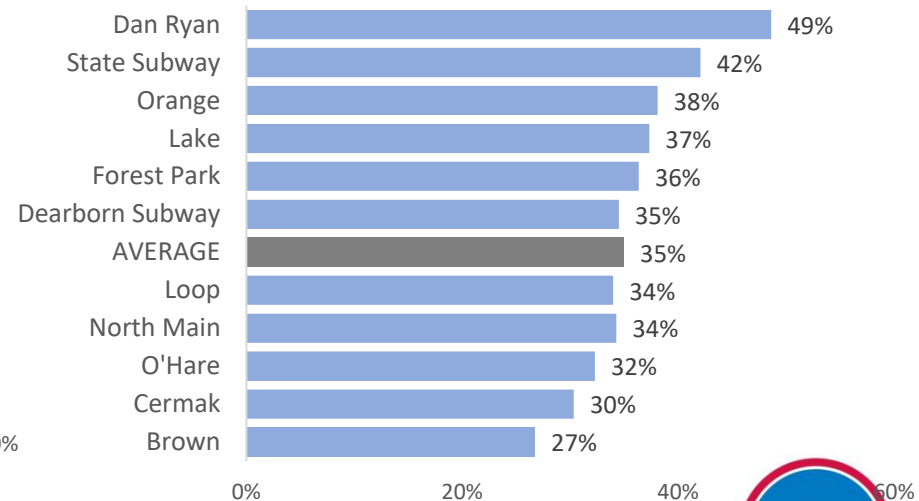
# DISSATISFACTION WITH PERSONAL SECURITY WAITING FOR CTA BUS/TRAIN BY BUS ROUTE GROUP/TRAIN BRANCH

35% of respondents reported dissatisfaction with personal security waiting for CTA. Compared with the sample overall, a higher proportion of respondents (49%) using South Side East-West bus routes as their most common bus route and the Dan Ryan rail branch reported feeling unsafe waiting for CTA. Respondents using other South Side bus route groups, the State Street Subway, and Orange Line reported feeling dissatisfied with personal security waiting for CTA at higher rates than respondents overall.

PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS DISSATISFIED WITH  
PERSONAL SECURITY WAITING FOR CTA BY BUS ROUTE  
GROUP



PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS DISSATISFIED WITH  
PERSONAL SECURITY WAITING FOR CTA BY RAIL  
BRANCH



\*Bus route groups and rail branches with small sample sizes were excluded from analysis. Respondents who utilize CTA bus reported their most used bus route. Respondents who utilize CTA rail reported their most used rail station at the beginning and end of their trip.

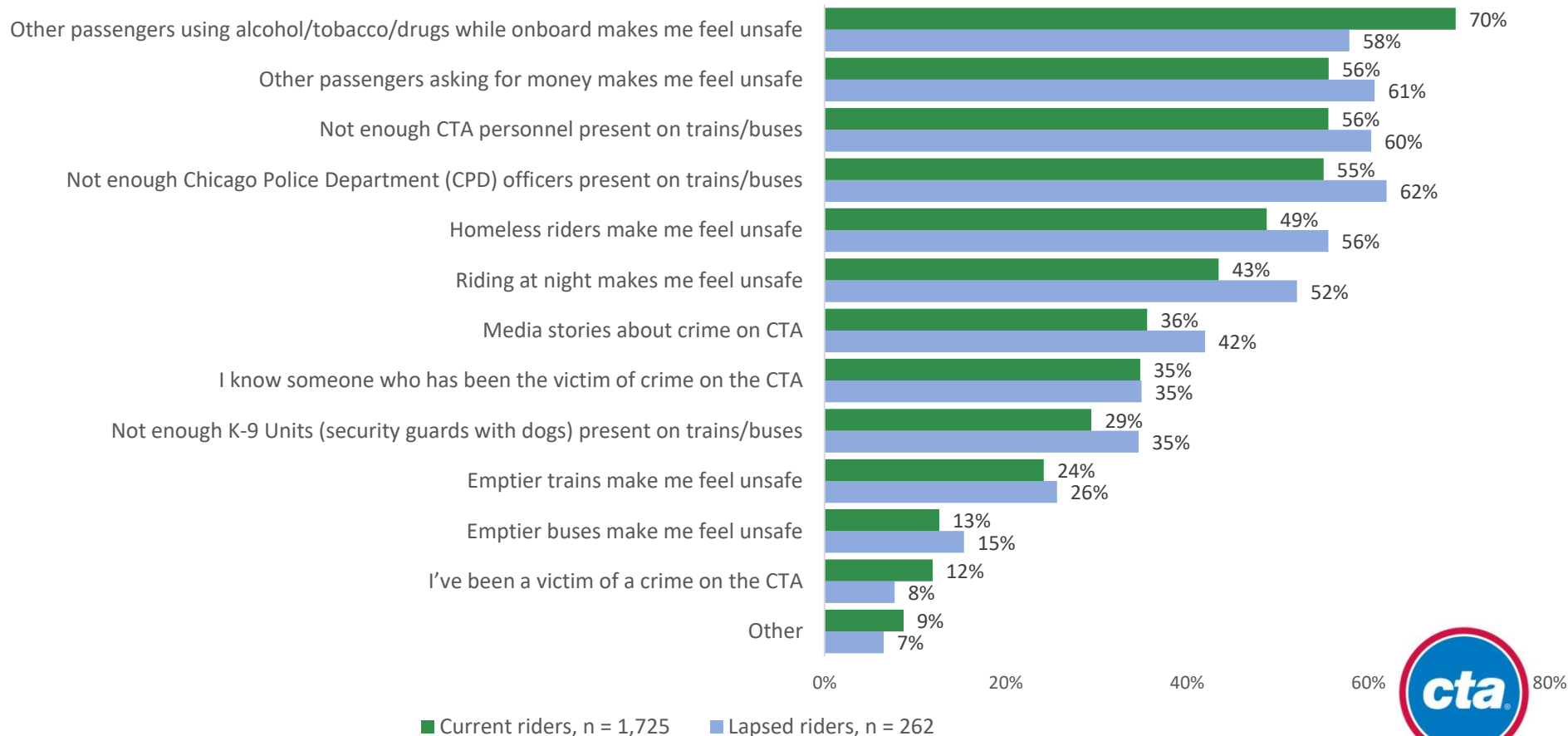




# PERSONAL SECURITY ON CTA BUS/TRAIN

68% of respondents who were dissatisfied with personal security on CTA reported that customers using alcohol, tobacco, and drugs on board makes them feel unsafe.

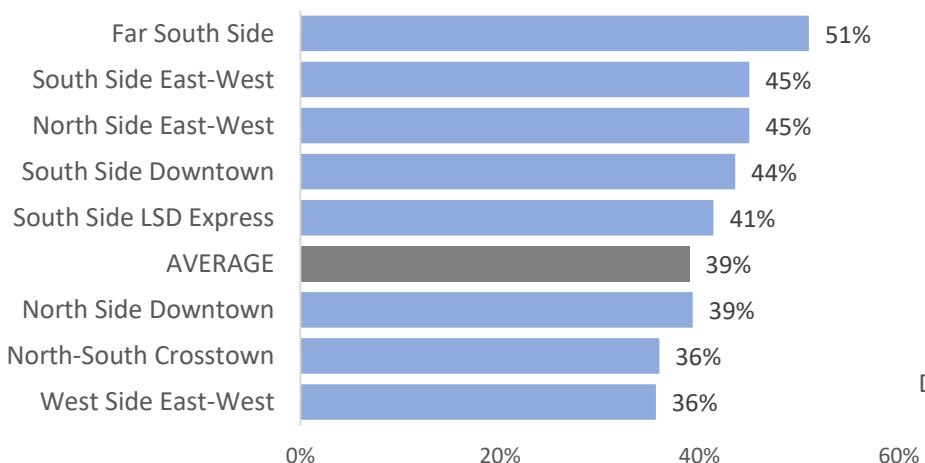
## WHY DISSATISFIED WITH PERSONAL SECURITY ON CTA (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



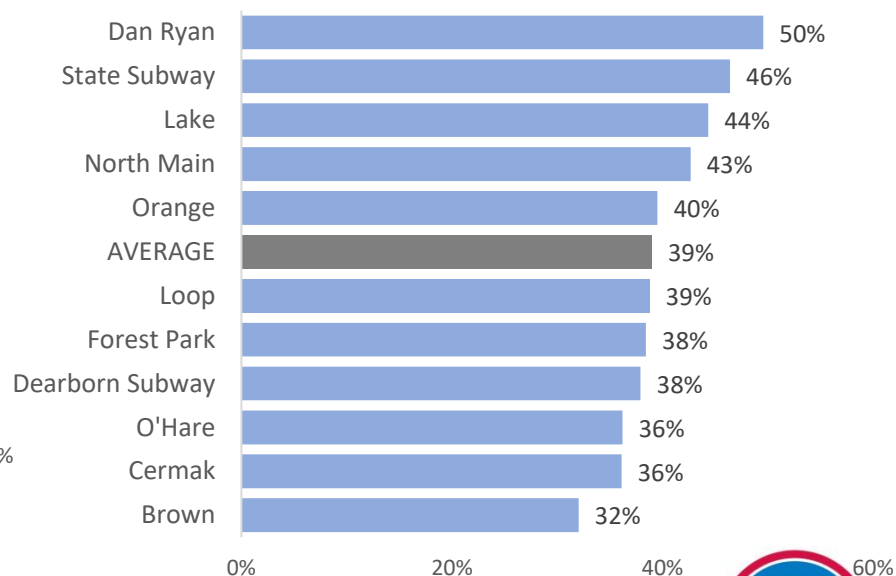
# DISSATISFACTION WITH PERSONAL SECURITY ON CTA BUS/TRAIN BY BUS ROUTE GROUP/TRAIN BRANCH

39% of respondents reported dissatisfaction with personal security waiting for CTA. Compared with the sample overall, a higher proportion of respondents using Far South Side bus routes as their most common bus route and the Dan Ryan rail branch reported feeling unsafe waiting for CTA, 51% and 50% respectively.

**PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS DISSATISFIED WITH PERSONAL SECURITY ON CTA BY BUS ROUTE GROUP\***



**PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS DISSATISFIED WITH PERSONAL SECURITY ON CTA BY RAIL BRANCH\***



\*Bus route groups and rail branches with small sample sizes were excluded from analysis. Respondents who utilize CTA bus reported their most used bus route. Respondents who utilize CTA rail reported their most used rail station at the beginning and end of their trip.

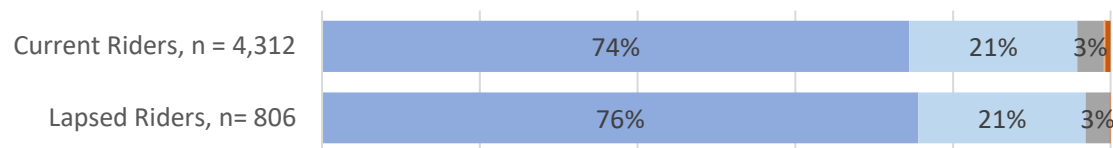


# ATTITUDE STATEMENTS: IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

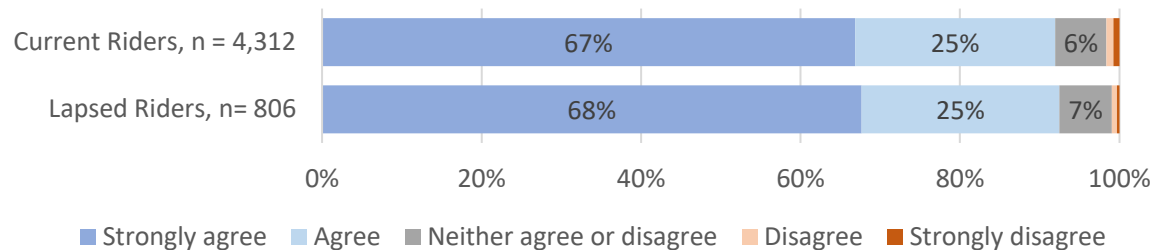
Given the current COVID-19 health environment, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements.

96% of respondents agreed that maintaining public transit is important for ensuring access to essential services and 92% agreed that maintaining transit is vital to Chicago's recovery from the pandemic.

## MAINTAINING PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES IS IMPORTANT FOR ENSURING ACCESS TO JOBS, HEALTHCARE, AND OTHER SERVICES.



## MAINTAINING PUBLIC TRANSIT IS IMPORTANT TO CHICAGO'S RECOVERY FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



# ATTITUDE STATEMENTS: COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS & SAFETY

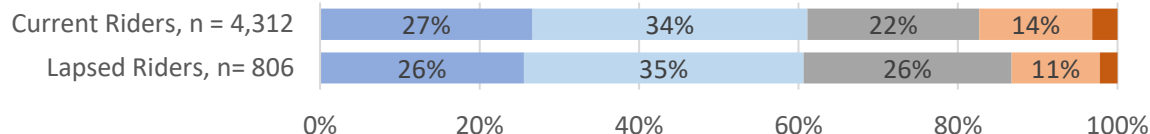
## I AM CONCERNED ABOUT WHETHER OTHER RIDERS ARE WEARING MASKS



## I AM SATISFIED WITH THE LEVEL OF EFFORT TAKEN BY CTA TO KEEP THE SYSTEM SAFE FROM THE SPREAD OF COVID-19



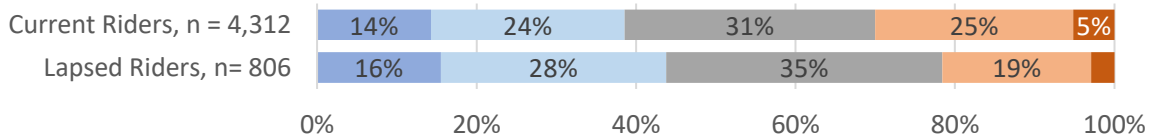
## I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE CLEANLINESS OF THE BUSES/TRAIN WITH RESPECT TO THE SPREAD OF COVID-19



## I AM PERSONALLY CONCERNED ABOUT BEING EXPOSED TO THE VIRUS WHILE TAKING PUBLIC TRANSIT



## I AM CONCERNED ABOUT MY PERSONAL SECURITY BECAUSE THERE ARE FEWER PEOPLE RIDING



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree or disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

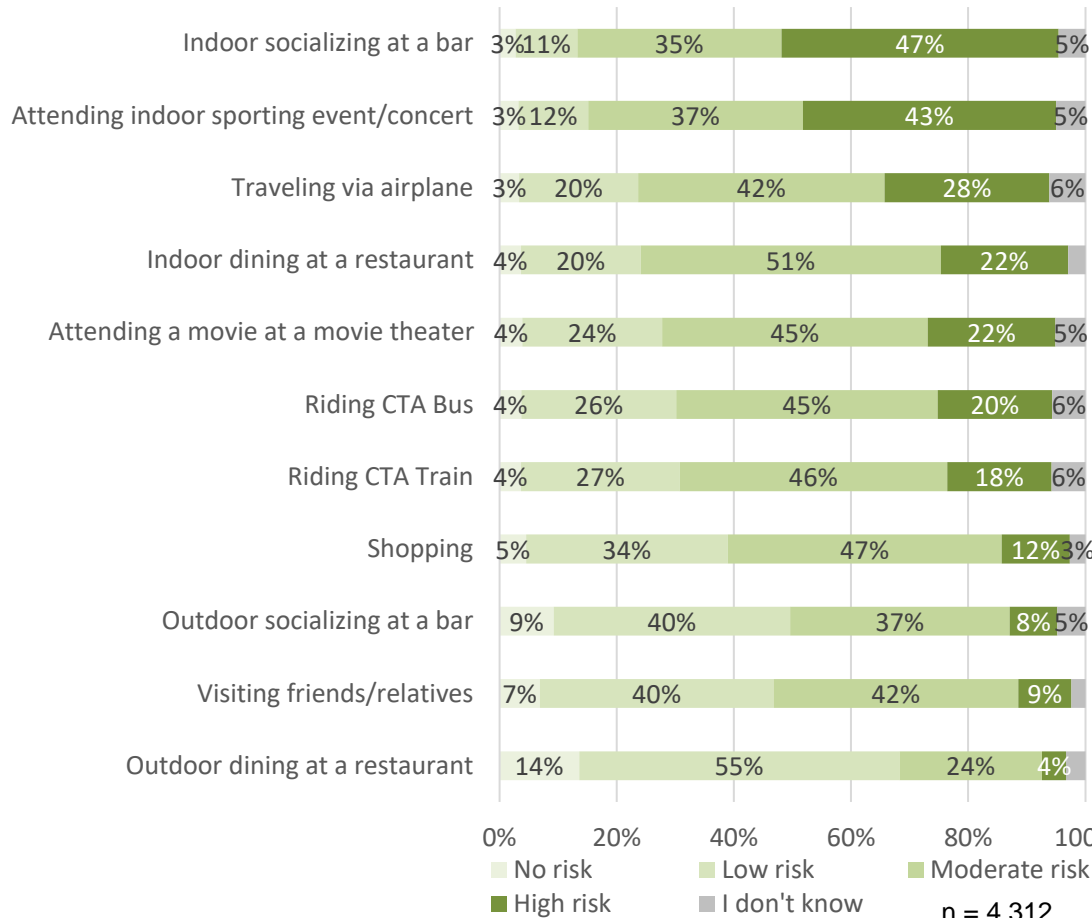
75% of **current riders** indicated concern about other riders wearing masks compared with only 56% who were concerned with the cleanliness of vehicles with respect to the spread of COVID-19, and 38% who were concerned about personal security due to fewer riders.

72% of **current riders** were satisfied with CTA's efforts to keep the system safe from the spread of COVID-19.

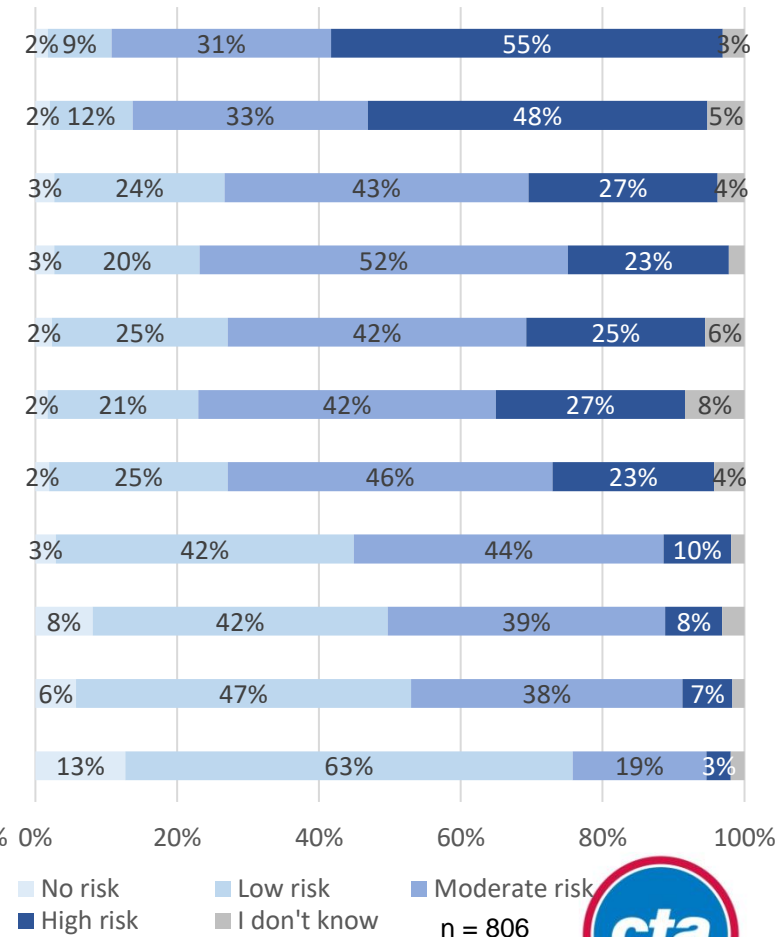


# COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT CONTINUED

**CURRENT RIDERS:  
RISK OF CONTRACTING COVID-19  
BY ACTIVITY**



**LAPSED RIDERS:  
RISK OF CONTRACTING COVID-19  
BY ACTIVITY**



# RETURN TO TRANSIT SCENARIO

Respondents were asked to imagine a scenario when the health concerns from the COVID-19 pandemic have been alleviated and there is no longer a need for special health precautions.

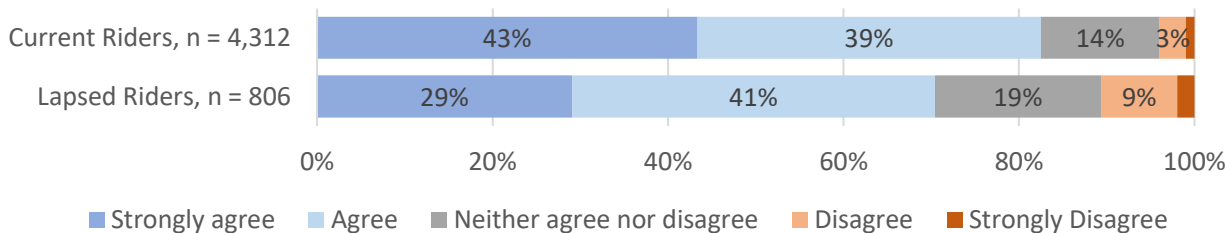
77% of **current riders** and 67% of **lapsed riders** reported that they would fully return to transit as they used it before the pandemic.

82% of **current riders** and 70% of **lapsed riders** reported that they would use CTA for their most common pre-COVID transit trip.

## I WOULD FULLY RETURN TO TRANSIT AS I USED IT BEFORE THE PANDEMIC



## I WOULD RIDE CTA FOR MY MOST COMMON PRE-COVID TRANSIT TRIP

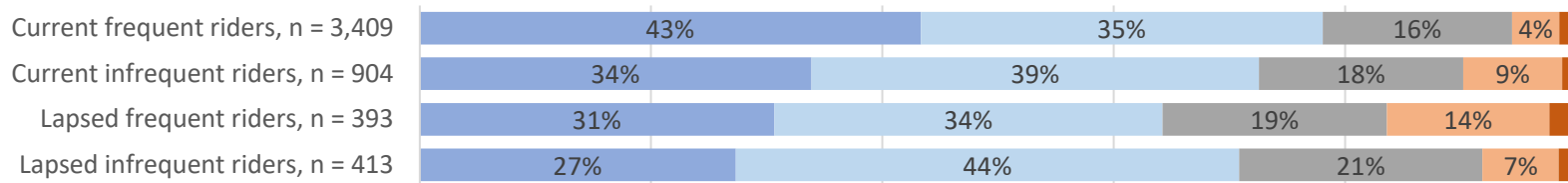


# RETURN TO TRANSIT SCENARIO CONTINUED

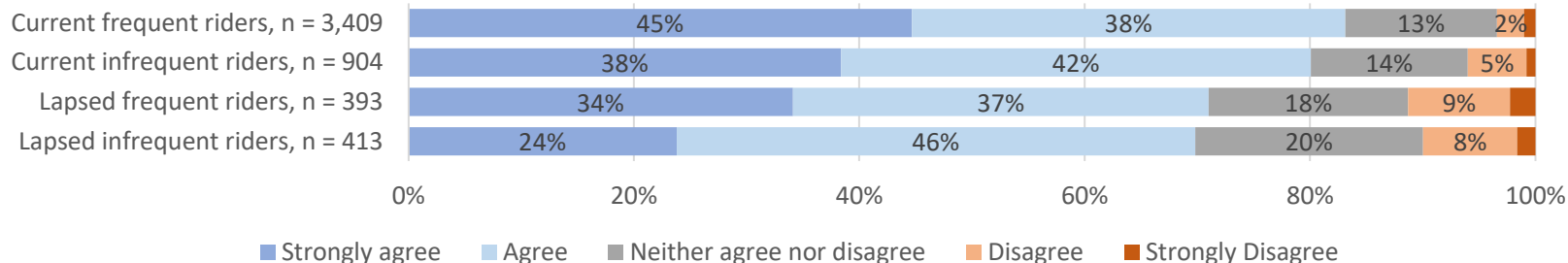
Breaking down current riders and lapsed riders based on ridership frequency, **current frequent riders** and **lapsed frequent riders** were slightly more likely than their infrequent counterparts to indicate that they would use CTA for their most common pre-COVID transit trip.

**Lapsed frequent riders** were less likely than **lapsed infrequent riders** to indicate that they would fully return to CTA as they used it before the pandemic, 65% and 71% respectively.

## I WOULD FULLY RETURN TO CTA AS I USED IT BEFORE THE PANDEMIC



## I WOULD RIDE CTA FOR MY MOST COMMON PRE-COVID TRANSIT TRIP

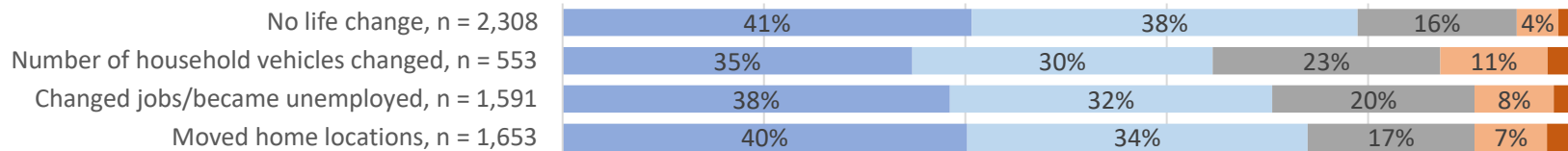


# RETURN TO TRANSIT SCENARIO BY LIFE CHANGE

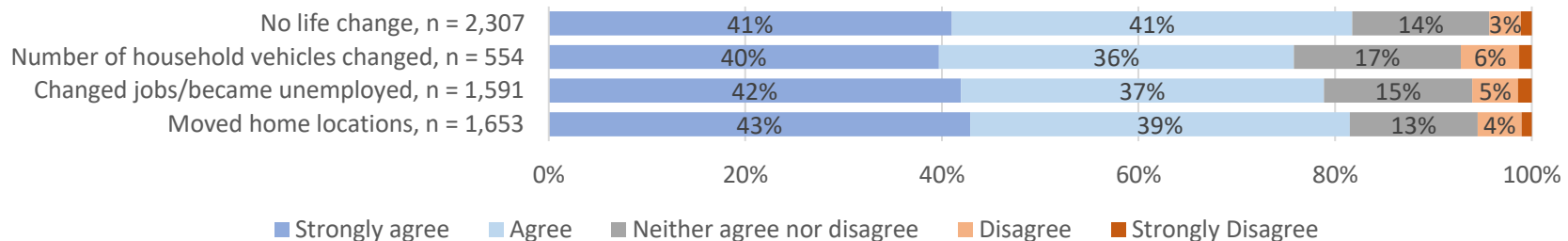
Respondents who reported a life change including changing jobs, moving, or purchasing a vehicle were less likely to indicate that they expected to fully return to CTA as they used it before the pandemic or to their most common pre-COVID transit trip, compared with respondents who did not report a life change.

Purchasing a vehicle had the largest impact on whether a respondent indicated they would fully return to transit.

**LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH "I WOULD FULLY RETURN TO CTA AS I USED IT BEFORE THE PANDEMIC" BY RECENT LIFE CHANGE**



**LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH "I WOULD RIDE CTA FOR MY MOST COMMON PRE-COVID TRANSIT TRIP" BY RECENT LIFE CHANGE**



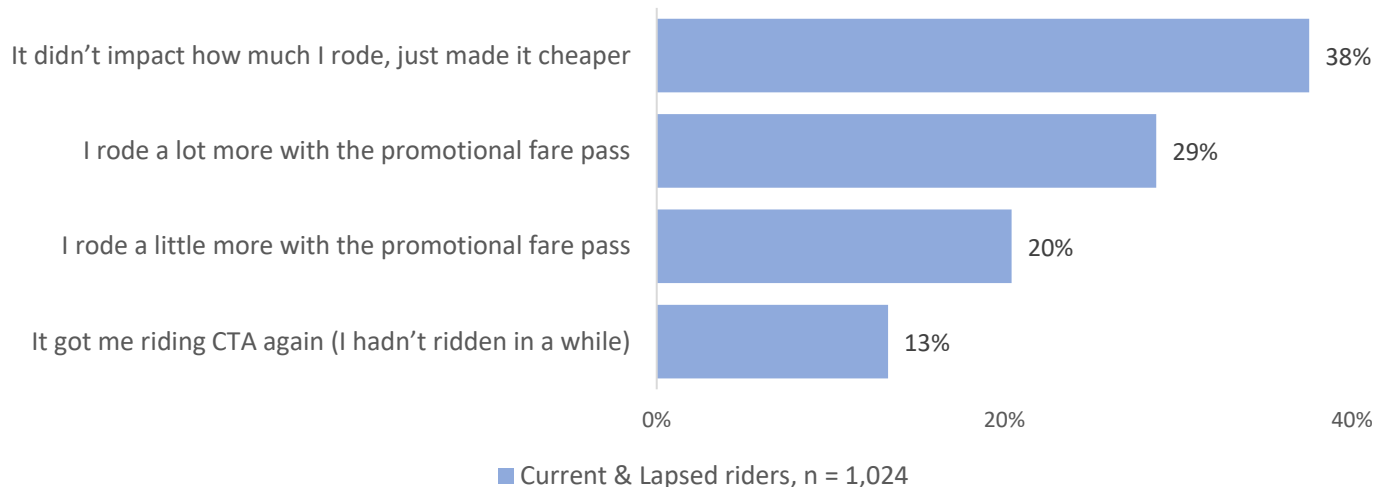


# PROMOTIONAL FARE PRODUCTS

7% of **lapsed riders** and 26% of **current riders** indicated purchasing a promotional pass between Memorial Day and November 25, 2021.

38% of respondents who purchased a promotional pass indicated that it made riding cheaper, but did not impact ridership, while 13% indicated that it got them riding again.\*

## IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL FARE PRODUCTS



\*CTA conducted a customer survey available on [transitchicago.com](https://transitchicago.com) specifically to collect feedback about the promotional fare products. Based on the most recently compiled results, 18% of respondents indicated that the passes made riding cheaper but did not impact ridership, and 20% of respondents on the survey indicated the promotional pass got them riding CTA again. The survey sample size was 329 respondents, compared to 1,024 respondents on the Return to Transit survey.

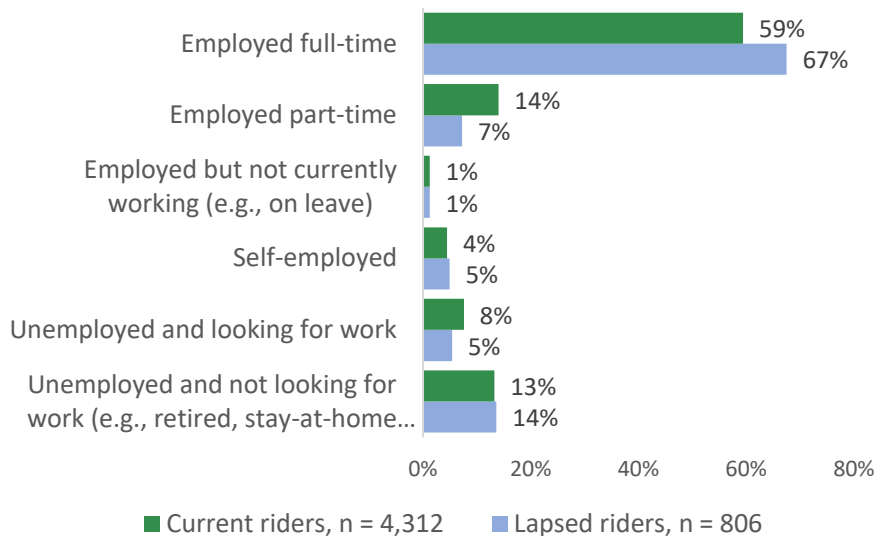


# EMPLOYMENT STATUS & ABILITY TO TELECOMMUTE

Respondents were asked a series of questions about employment status and the ability to work from home.

46% of **current riders** and 65% of **lapsed riders** indicated that their employer allowed telecommuting.

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS



Flexibility from employer to work from home/telecommute	Current Riders		Lapsed Riders	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	1489	46%	399	65%
No	1739	54%	214	35%



# TELEWORKING FREQUENCY

On average, respondents with the ability to telework reported traveling to work 2.3 days per week for **current riders** and 1.4 days per week for **lapsed riders**.

Over the next few months, **current riders** anticipated that the number of days traveling to work would increase to 2.7 days, and **lapsed riders** to 1.8 days.

Given a scenario when all public health concerns are alleviated, respondents reported that travel to work would increase to 3.2 days for **current riders** and 2.6 days for **lapsed riders**.

	Current Riders, n = 1,676	Lapsed Riders, n = 439
Average days telecommuting	3.4	4.0
Average days traveling to work	2.3	1.4

	Current Riders, n = 1,676	Lapsed Riders, n = 439
Average anticipated days traveling to work in next few months	2.7	1.8
Average anticipated days traveling to work when public health concerns alleviated	3.2	2.6

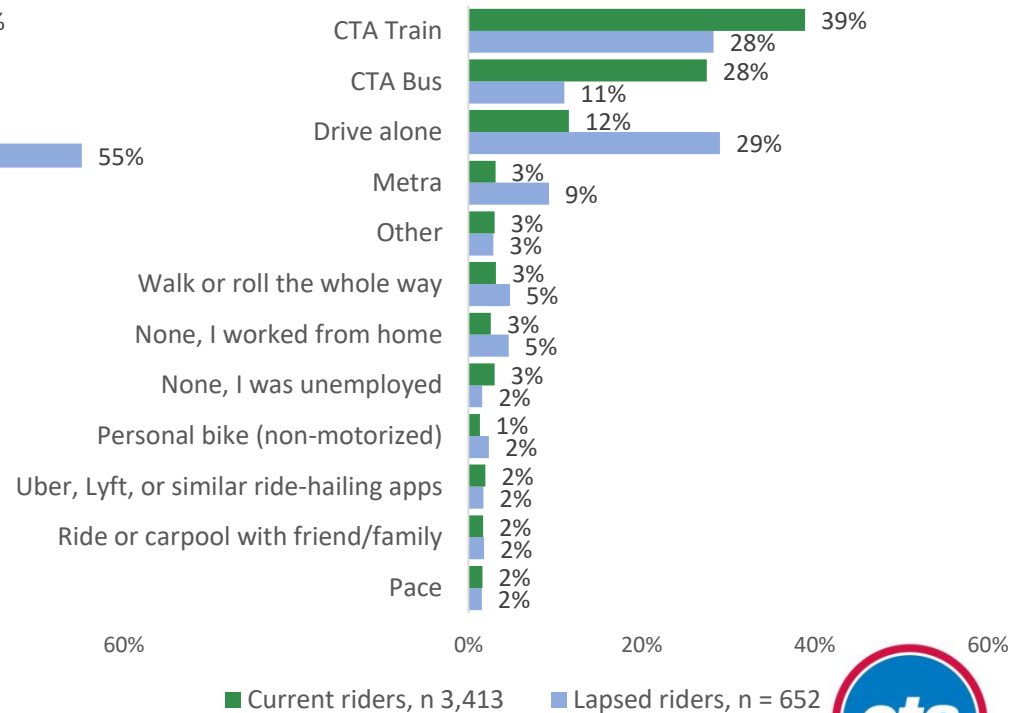
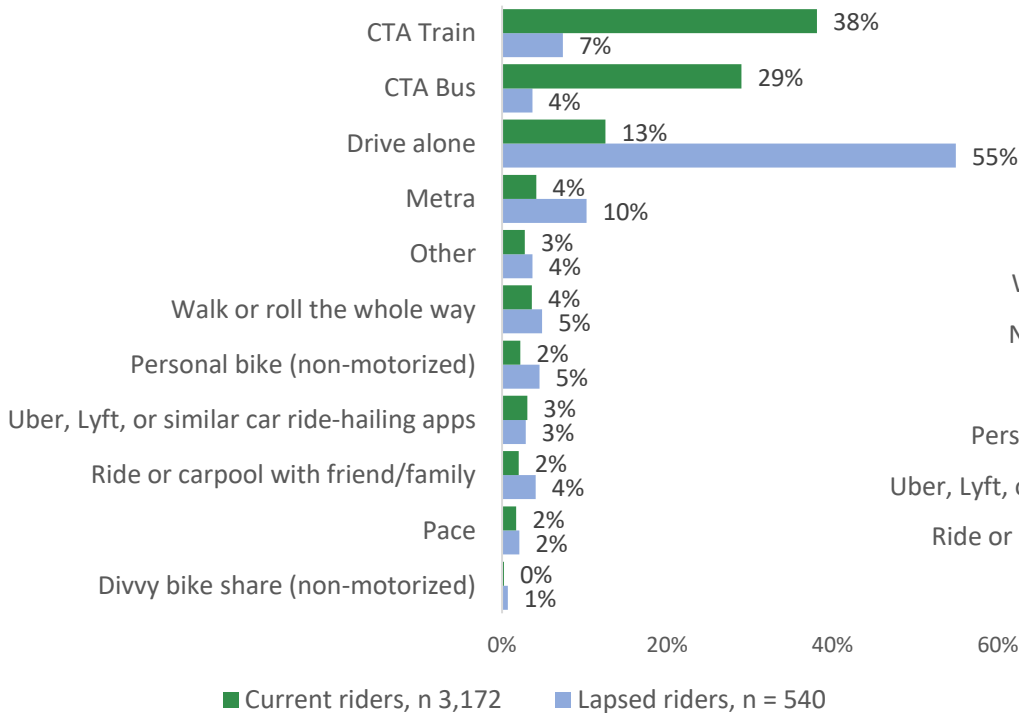


# MOST COMMON MODE TO REACH WORK

**Lapsed riders** are much less likely to use CTA to travel to work than **current riders**. **Current riders'** mode of travel to work has remained consistent with before the pandemic.

**MOST COMMON MODE USED TO TRAVEL TO WORK (CURRENTLY)**

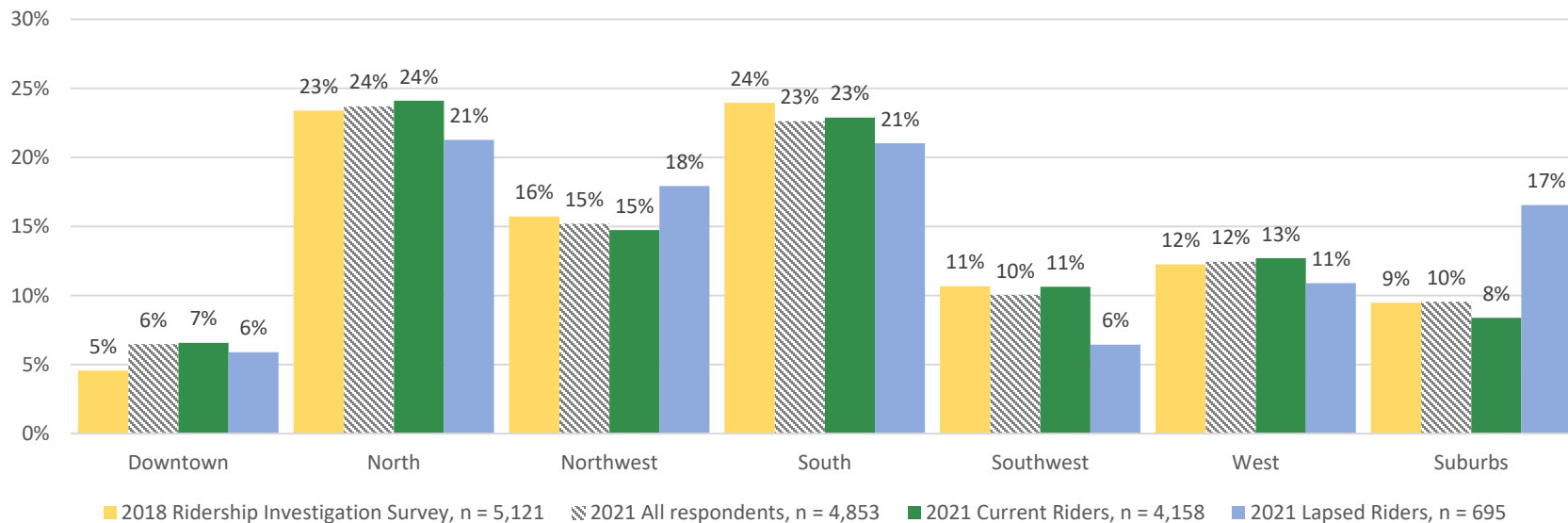
**MOST COMMON MODE USED TO TRAVEL TO WORK (PRE-PANDEMIC)**



# HOME GEOGRAPHY

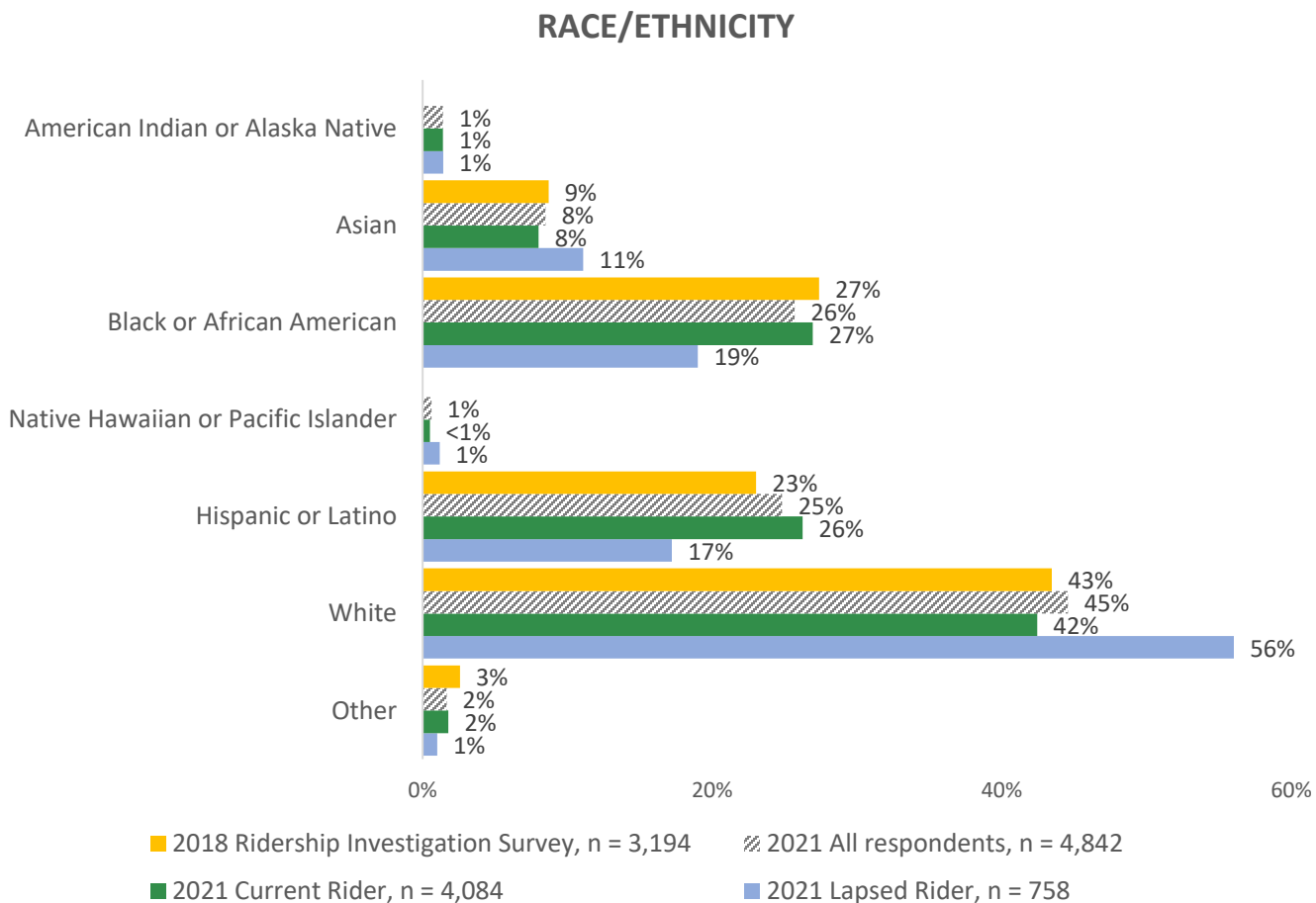
**Lapsed riders** reported living in the suburbs at higher rates and the Southwest Side of Chicago at lower rates than **current riders**.

CITY OF CHICAGO GEOGRAPHY BASED ON HOME ZIP CODE



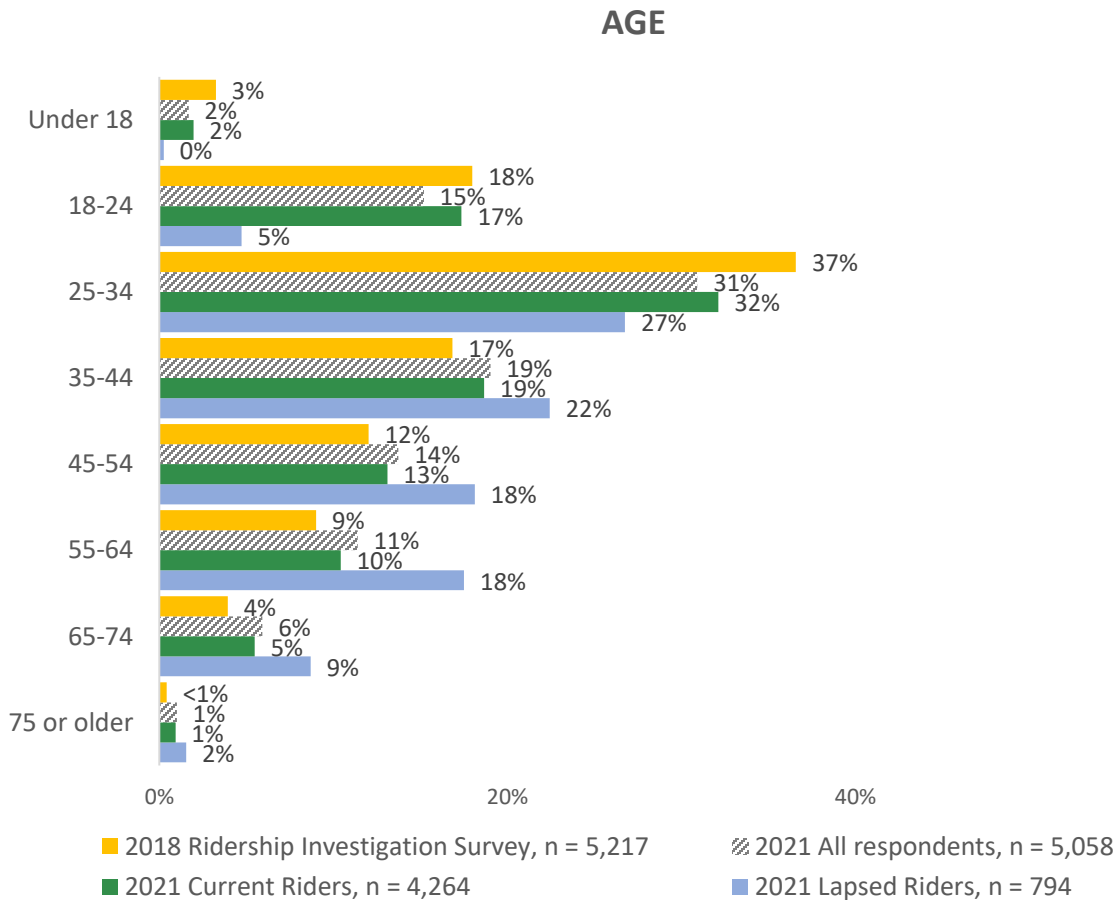
# RACE/ETHNICITY

**Lapsed riders** more likely to be White and less likely to be Black, Hispanic/Latino, or Asian than **current riders**.



# AGE & GENDER

Lapsed riders tended to skew older than current riders.



# AGE & GENDER

The breakdown of gender was consistent between **current** and **lapsed riders**, with more respondents identifying as female than male.

Gender	2018 Ridership Investigation Survey, n = 5,132	2021 All respondents, n = 5,118	2021 Current Riders, n = 4,312	2021 Lapsed Riders, n = 806
Female	63%	58%	58%	58%
Male	37%	38%	37%	38%
Gender nonbinary	n/a	2%	2%	2%
Prefer to self-describe	n/a	3%	3%	3%

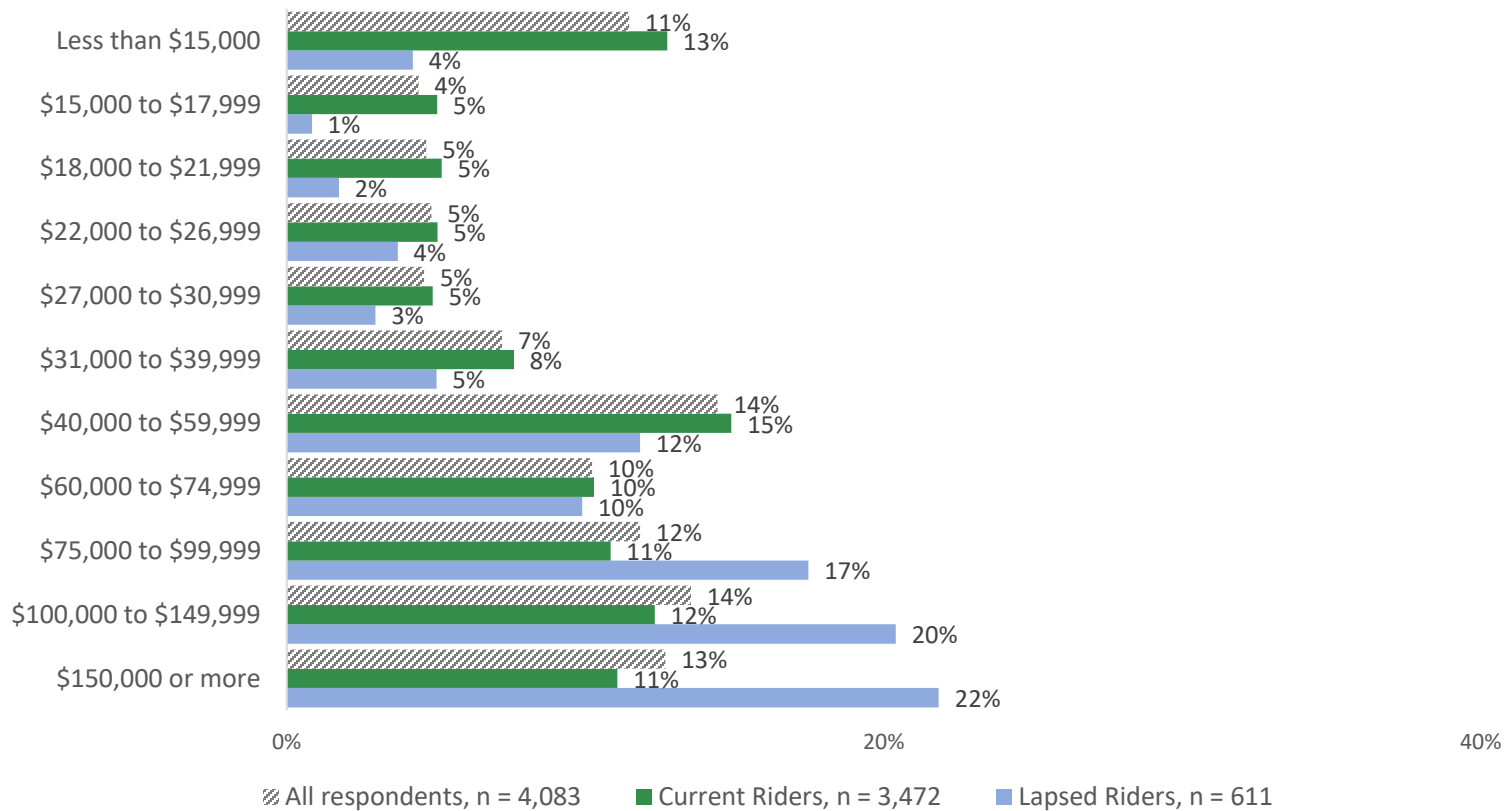




# HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Lapsed riders were more likely to have higher household income than current riders.\*

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

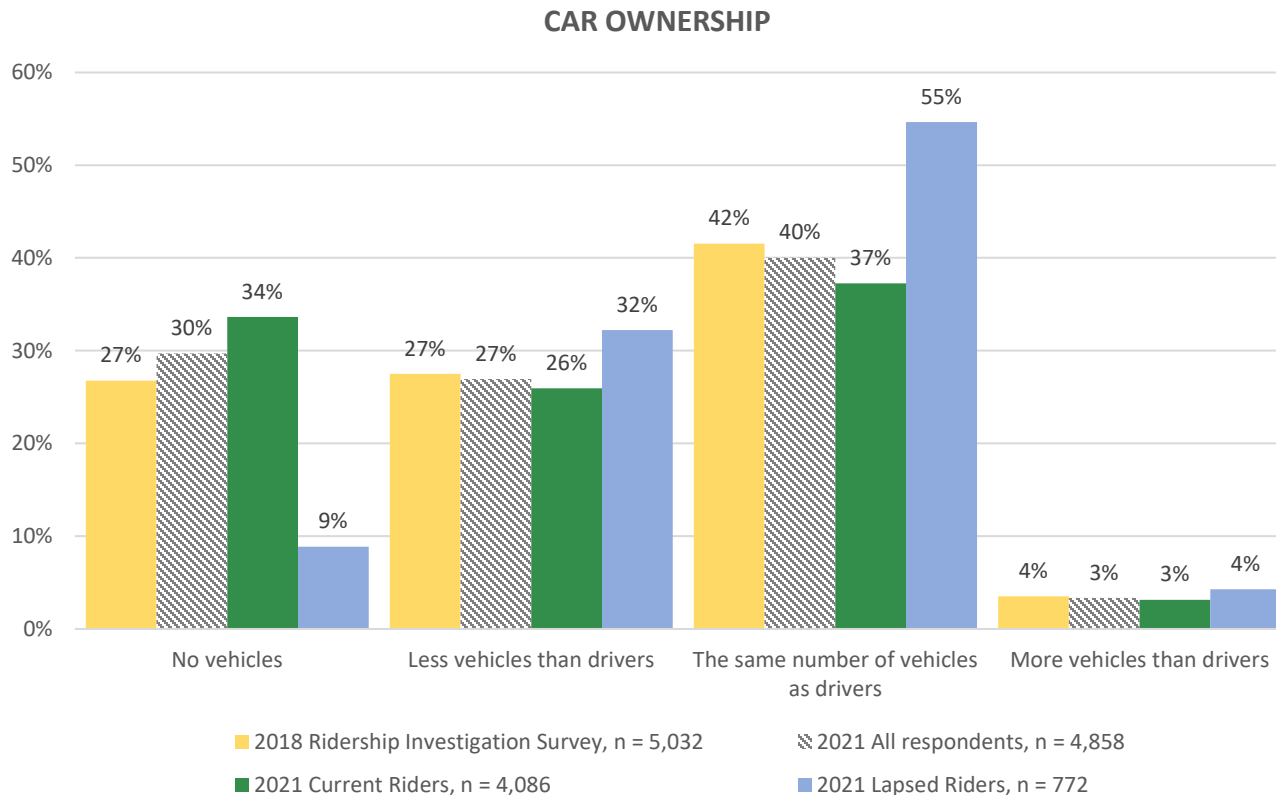


\*Income brackets on 2018 Ridership Investigation Survey were different from Return to Transit Survey, so comparisons were not possible.



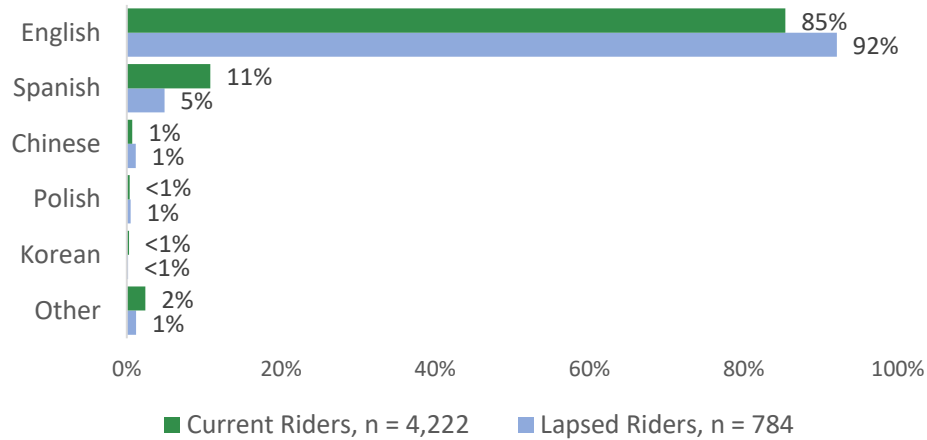
# CAR OWNERSHIP

**Current riders** were much more likely to not have a personal vehicle available or to have fewer vehicles available than drivers compared with **lapsed riders**.

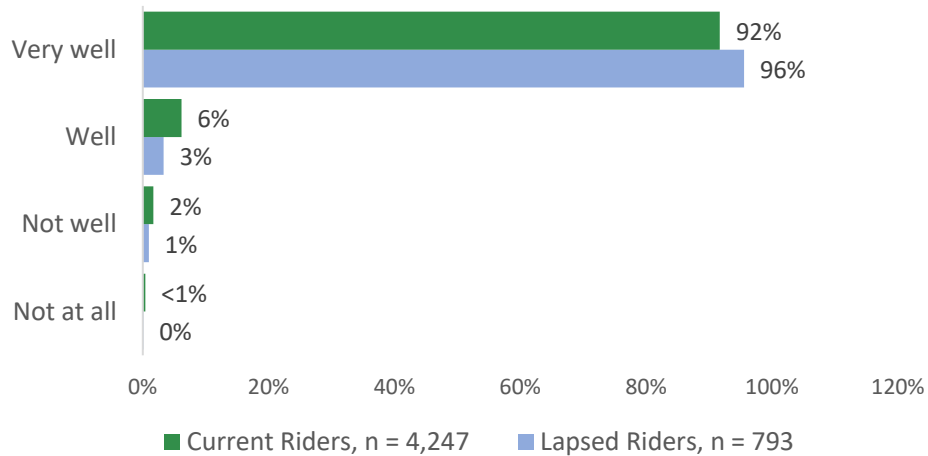


# LANGUAGE

## PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME



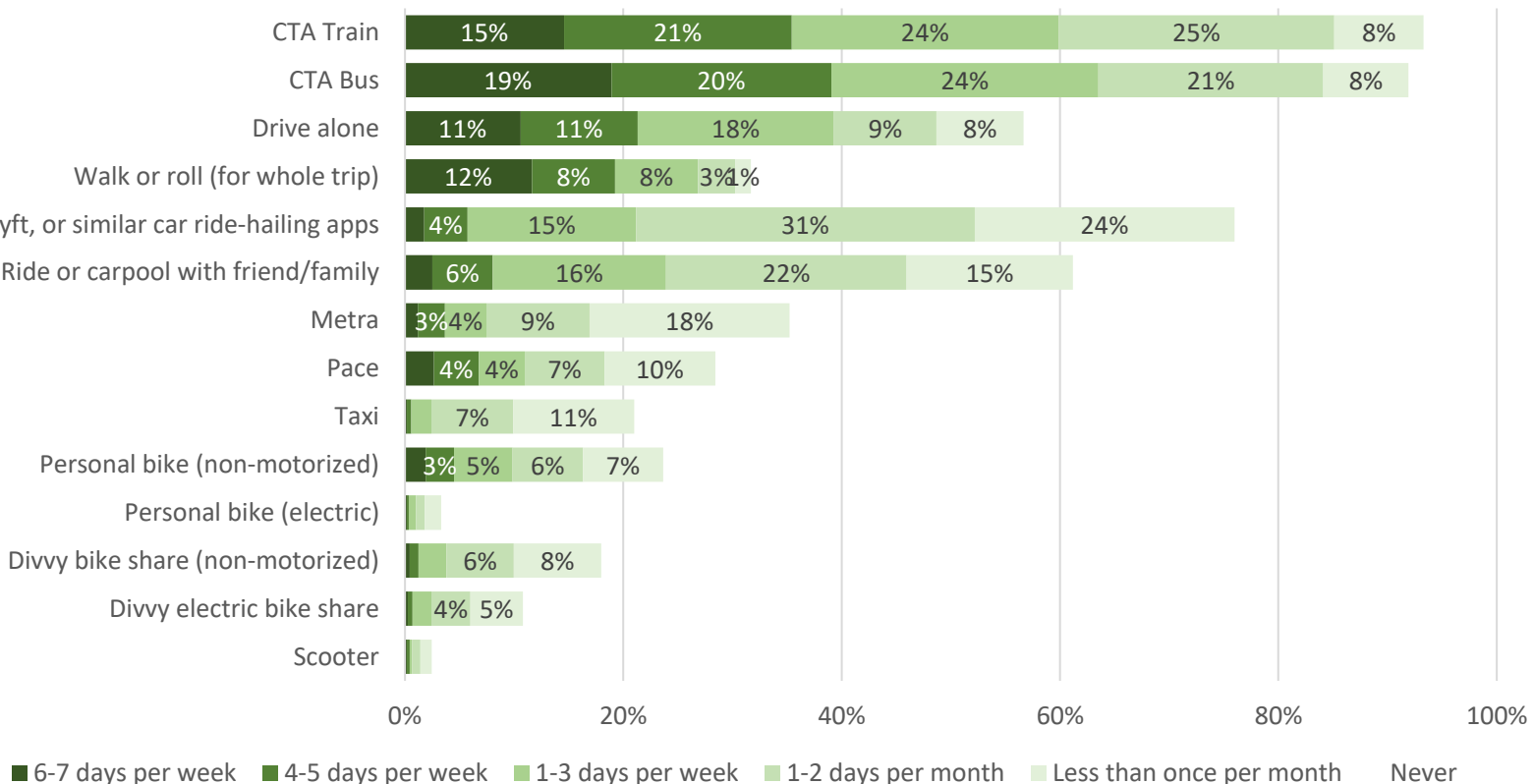
## ENGLISH PROFICIENCY



# CURRENT RIDERS: MODE FREQUENCY IN PAST FEW MONTHS

**Current riders** indicated utilizing CTA Bus and Train most often, with many respondents reporting use of driving modes such as using a personal vehicle, Uber/Lyft, and carpooling, but less frequently.

CURRENT RIDERS: MODE FREQUENCY IN PAST FEW MONTHS



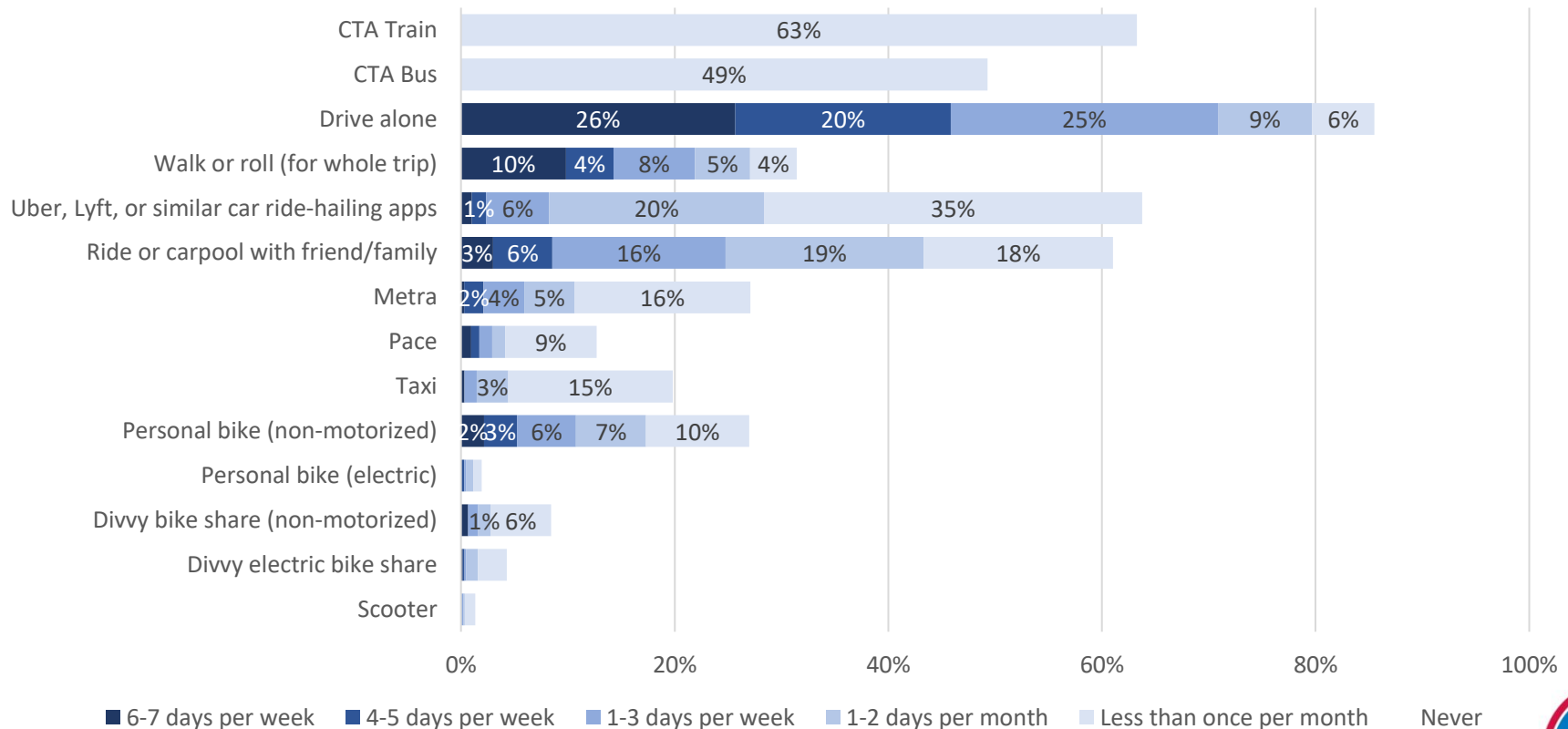
n = 4,312



# LAPSED RIDERS: MODE FREQUENCY IN PAST FEW MONTHS

By definition, **lapsed riders** rode CTA less than once per month or never in the past few months. **Lapsed riders** were more likely than current riders to rely on a personal vehicle for transportation.

LAPSED RIDERS: MODE FREQUENCY IN PAST FEW MONTHS



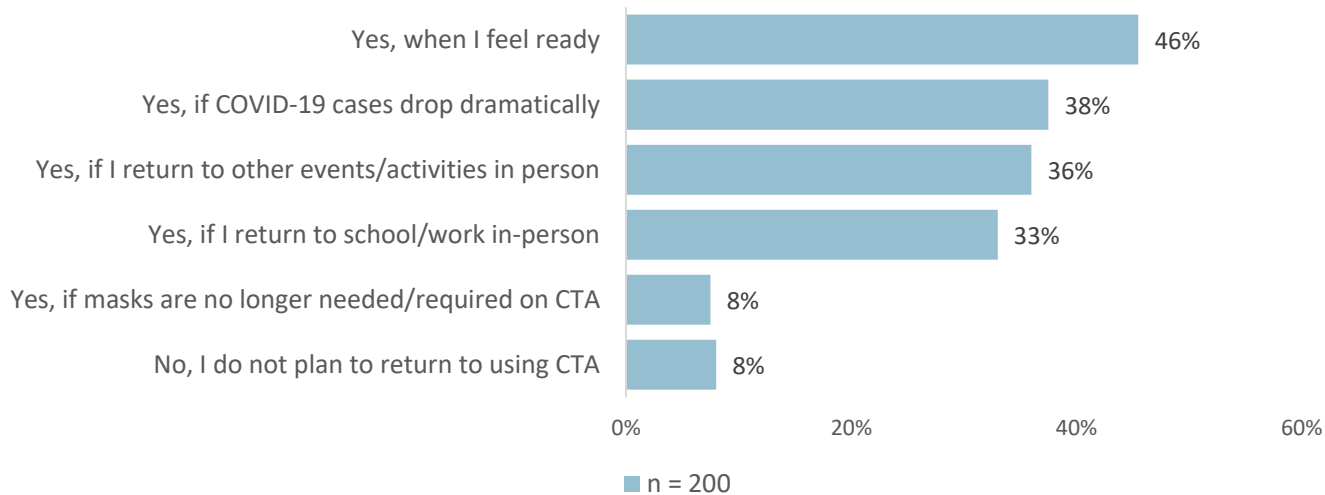
n = 806



# LAPSED RIDER RETURN TO TRANSIT

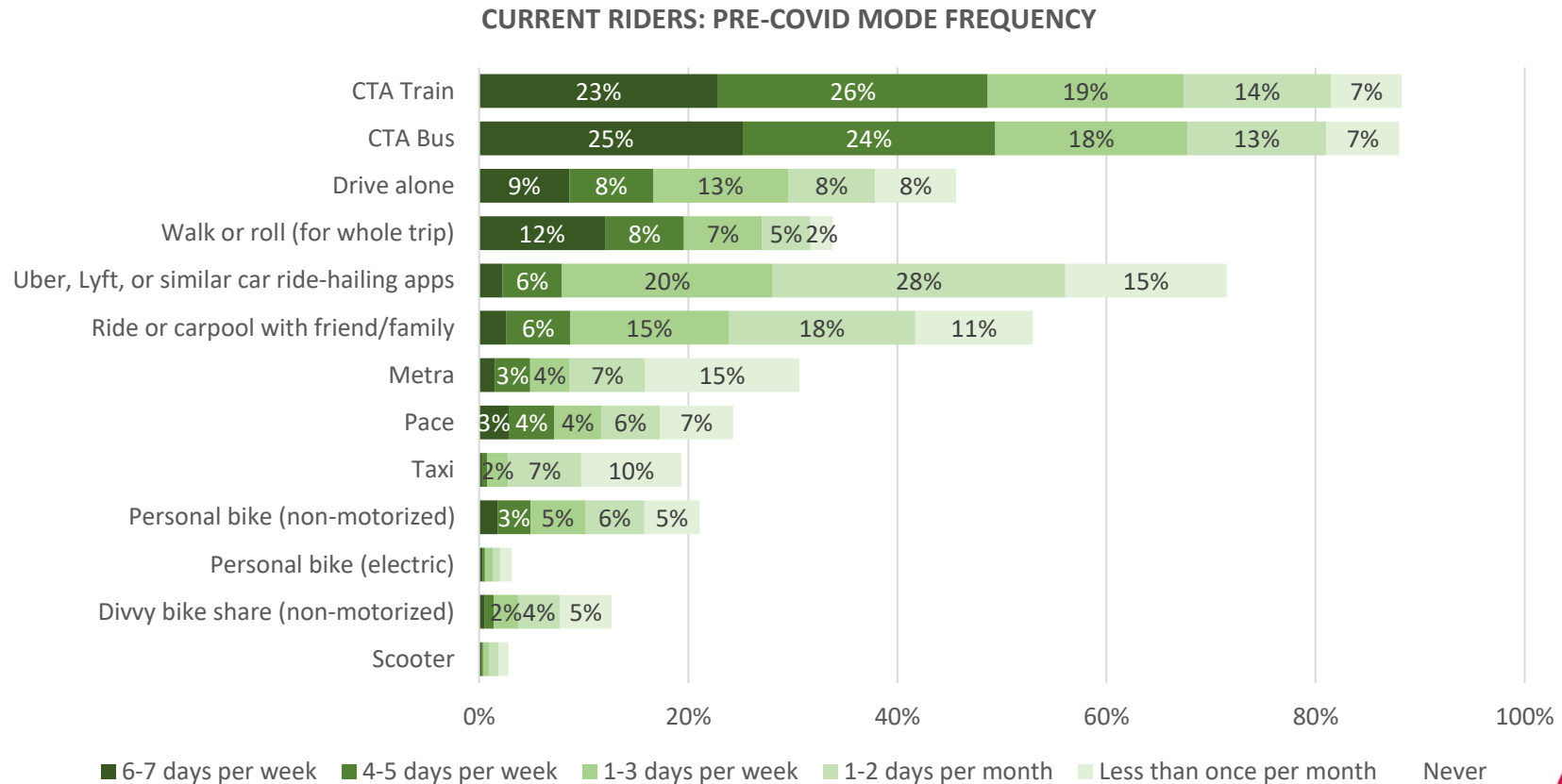
Respondents who have not ridden CTA Bus or CTA Train in the past few months indicated the circumstances under which they would use CTA in the future. 92% reported a plan to return, with “If COVID-19 cases drop dramatically” selected by 38% of respondents.

## FUTURE RETURN TO TRANSIT (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



# CURRENT RIDERS: PRE-COVID MODE FREQUENCY

Respondents reported more trips on transit and fewer trips in personal vehicles before the pandemic.



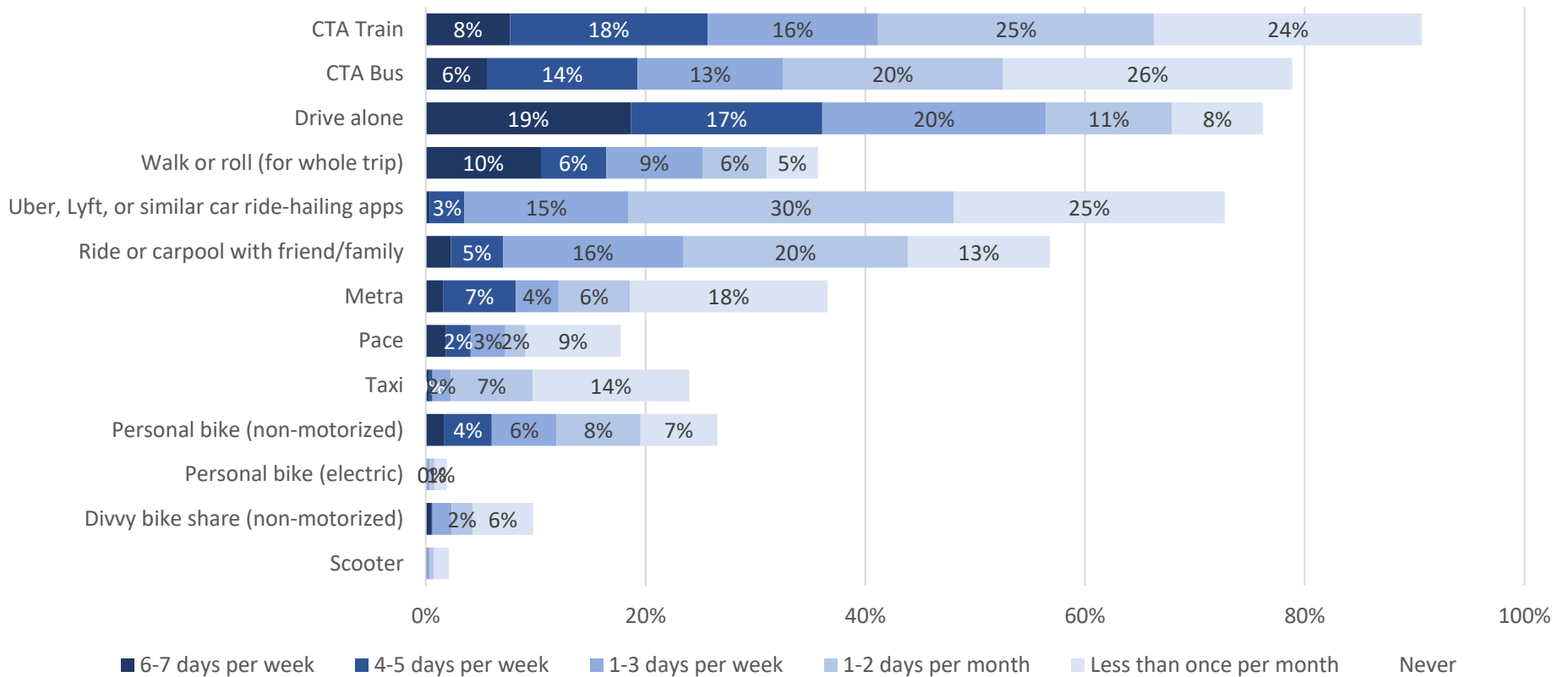
n = 4,312



# LAPSED RIDERS: PRE-COVID MODE FREQUENCY

Lapsed riders used CTA more frequently and drove less frequently before the pandemic.

LAPSED RIDERS: PRE-COVID MODE FREQUENCY



n = 806

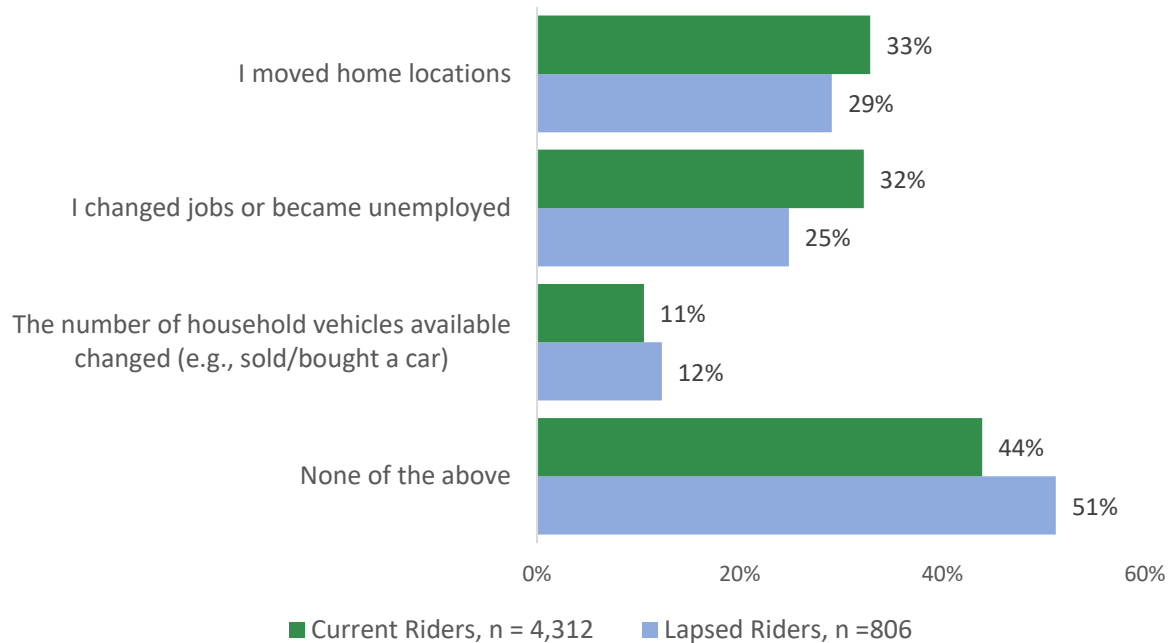




# LIFE CHANGE DURING PANDEMIC

A little over half of respondents reported a life change during the pandemic related to moving, changing jobs or buying selling a vehicle.

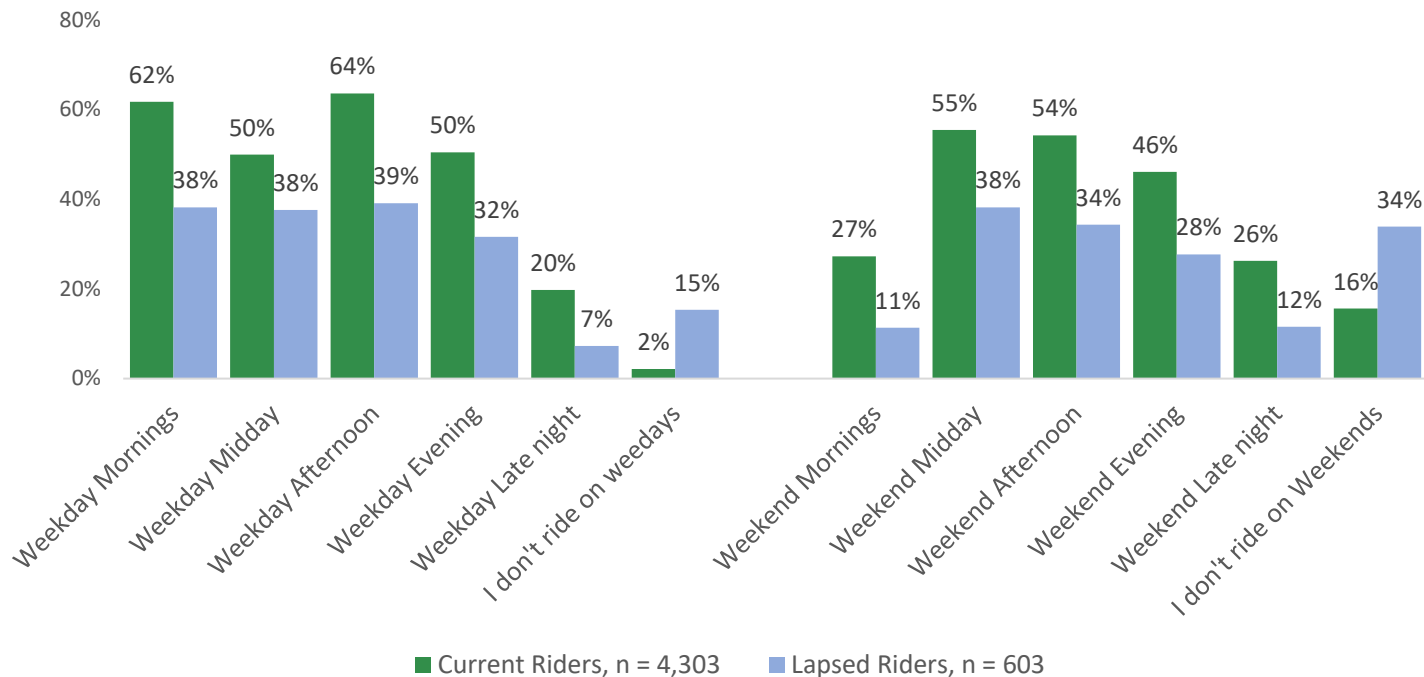
LIFE CHANGE DURING PANDEMIC (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



# TIMES OF DAY USING CTA

**Current riders** more likely to use CTA during all day types than **lapsed riders**.

TIMES OF DAY USING CTA (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



# TRANSFERS

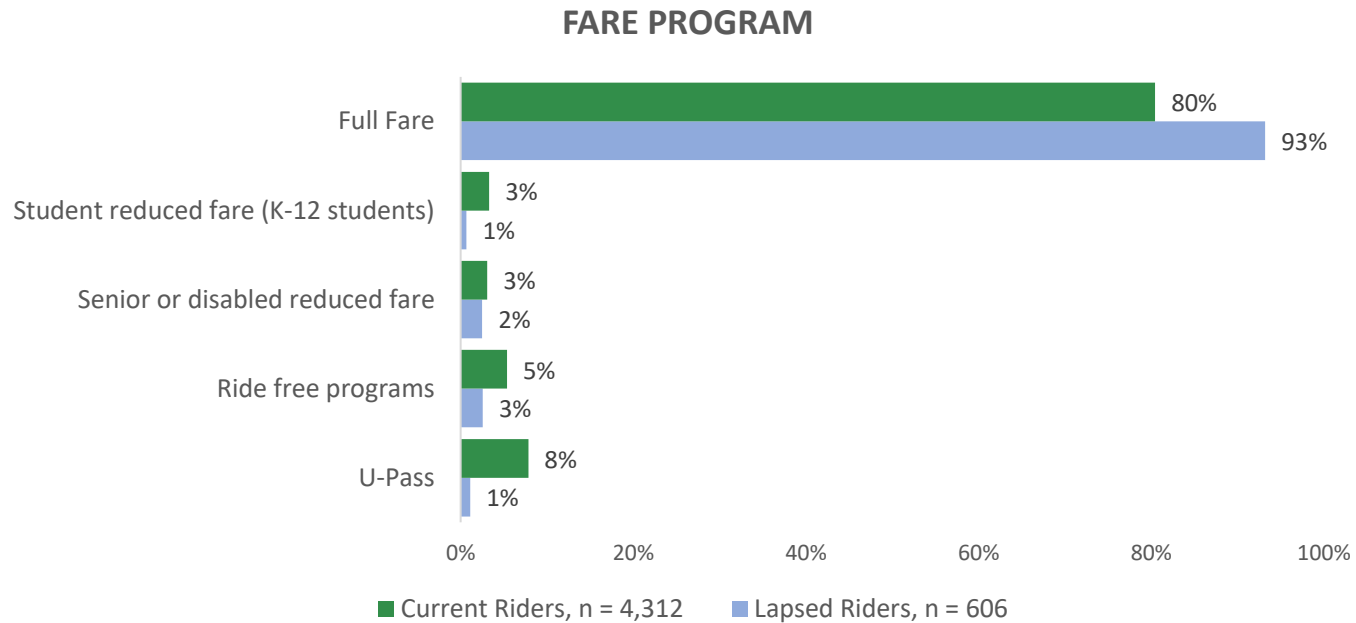
**Lapsed riders** were more likely to report a one-seat ride for their most common trip on transit, while **current riders** were more likely to take trips with two or more transfers.

Number of transfers on most frequent one-way trip	Current Riders		Lapsed Riders	
	N	%	N	%
None	1477	34%	342	56%
1	1495	35%	206	34%
2	961	22%	48	8%
3 or more	380	9%	10	2%



# FARE PROGRAM

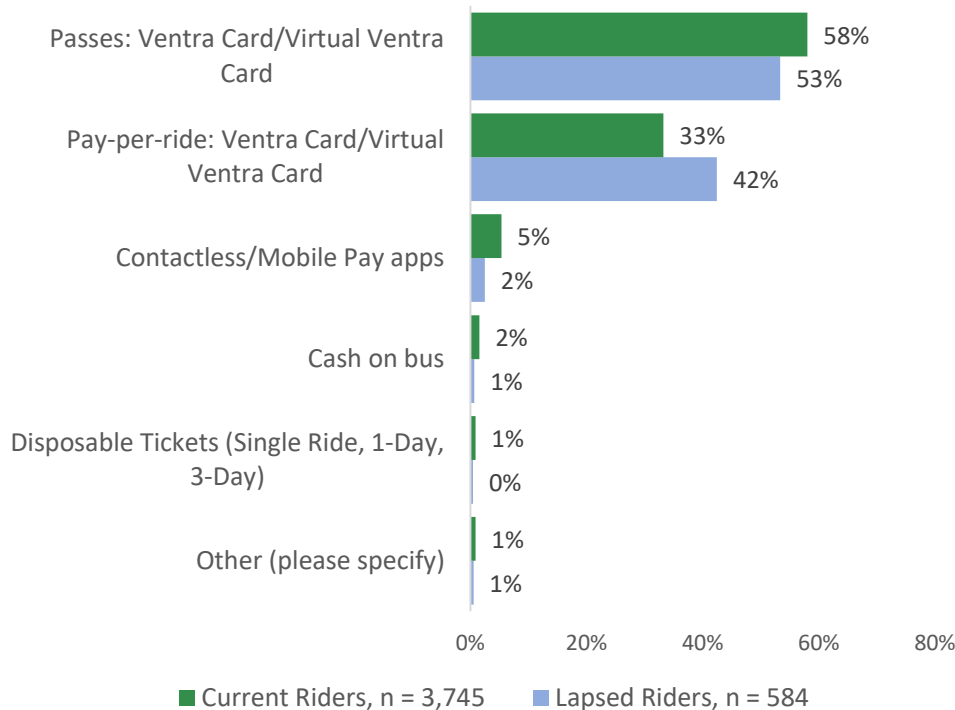
**Current riders** comprised a larger share of reduced and free ride programs compared with **lapsed riders**.



# FARE TYPE & PASS TYPE

58% of **current riders** reported using a pass, and 33% paid per ride. Of pass users, 36% indicated using a 30-Day Pass, the most common fare product.

### FARE TYPE



### PASS TYPE

