

# 3 General Web Survey Results

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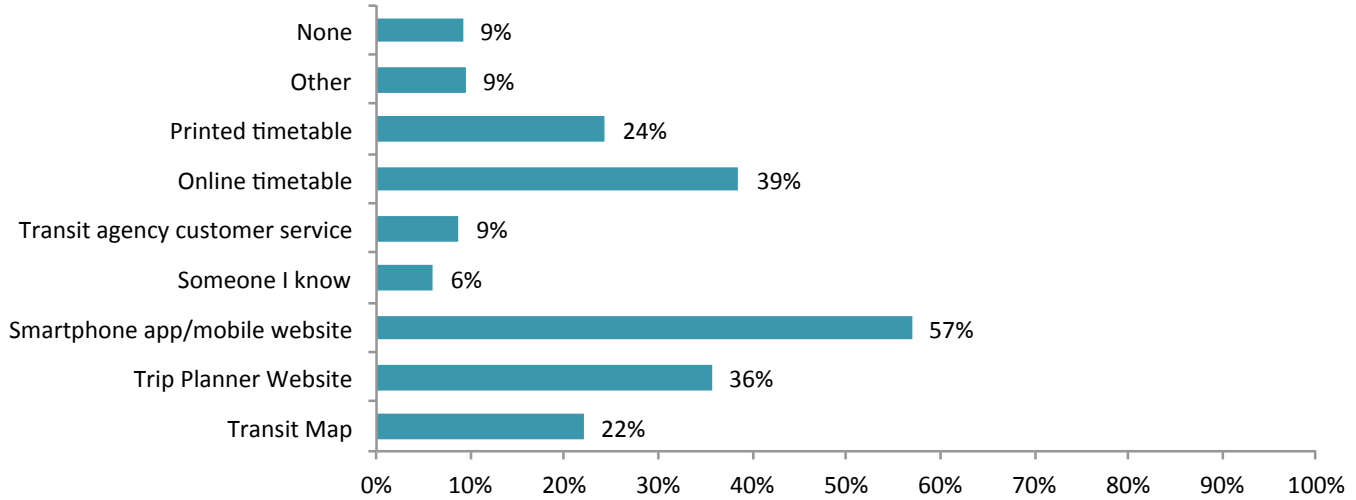
# General Web Survey Results

In November 2015, JWA and QMR conducted a web survey seeking information about how AC Transit customers access information about transit. The survey was publicized via social media, email blasts, AC Transit's website, and printed advertisements on buses, and received nearly 1900 unique responses.

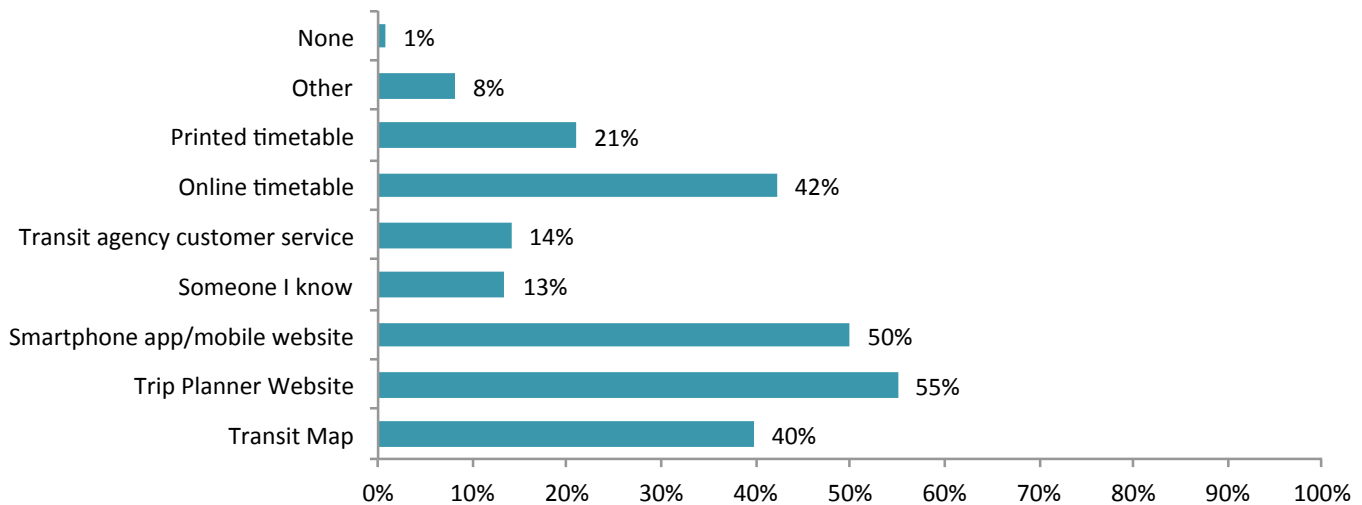
This section describes some preliminary results of this survey.

Note that for many of the following inquires, respondents were able to select multiple responses. Thus the total responses add up to more than 100%.

**When making a transit trip you make REGULARLY, which of the following do you consult? (Please select all that apply.)**



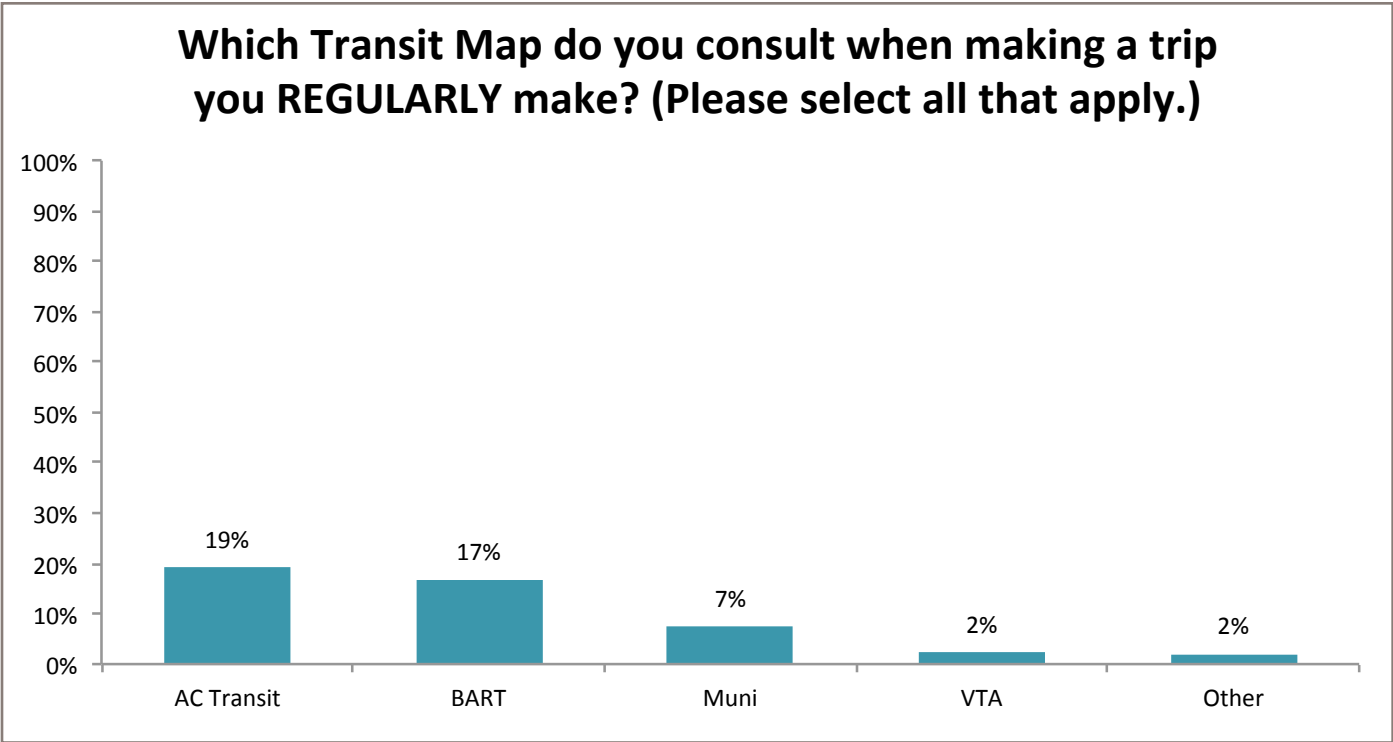
**When making a transit trip you've NEVER made before, which of the following do you consult? (Please select all that apply.)**



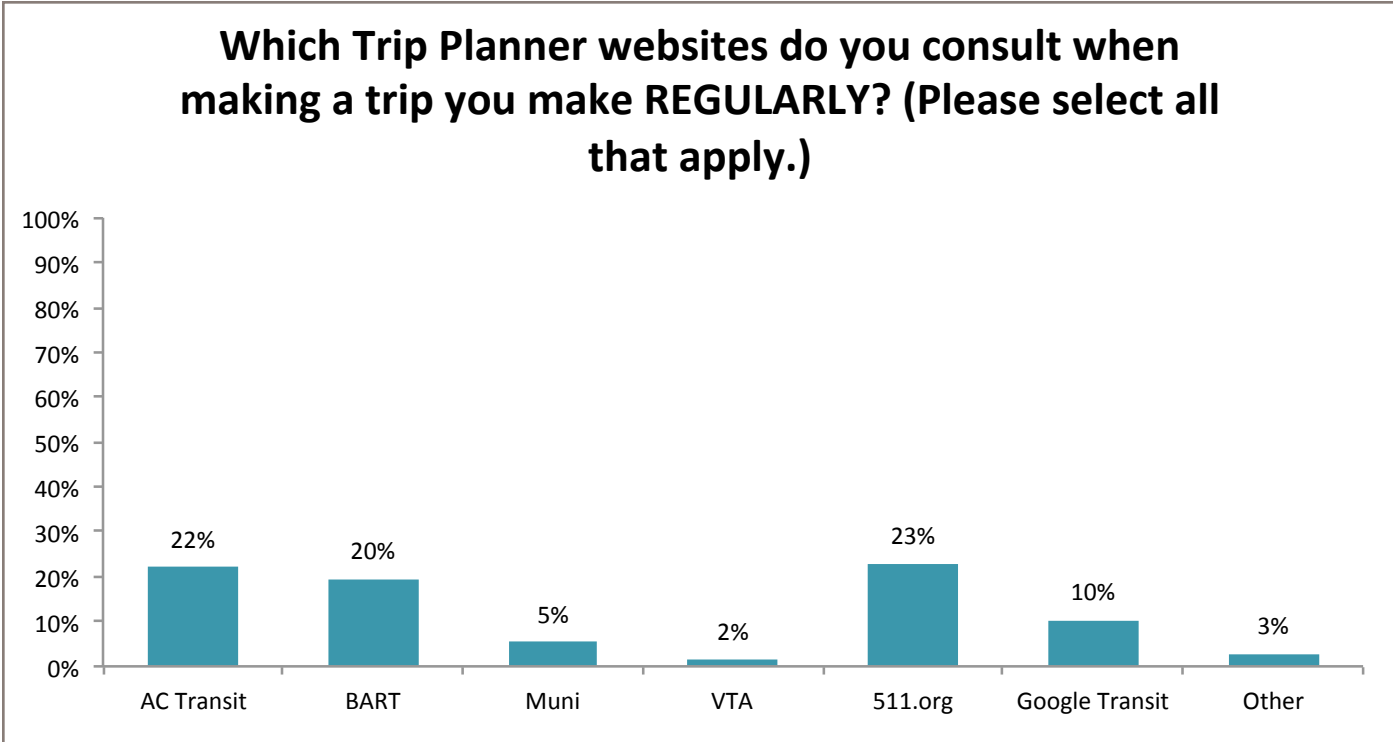
A trip planning website was the top choice for new trips, whereas an app or mobile website was the top choice for regular trips.

The transit map is used far more for planning a new trip (40%) than a regular trip (22%). Timetables - whether print or online - appear to be equally useful for new and regular trips.

A relatively high proportion of people ask customer service personnel to help them plan their trips.

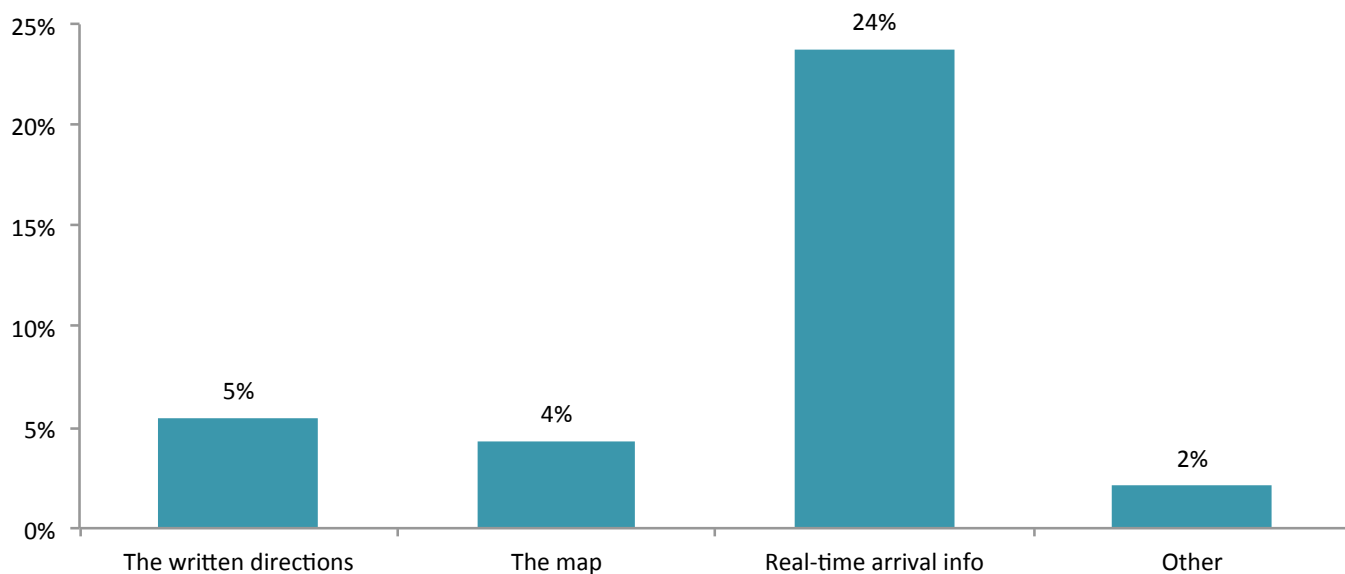


Among those who consulted a transit map, AC Transit’s map was the most frequently cited, followed by BART and Muni. Responses were very similar when we asked about new trips.

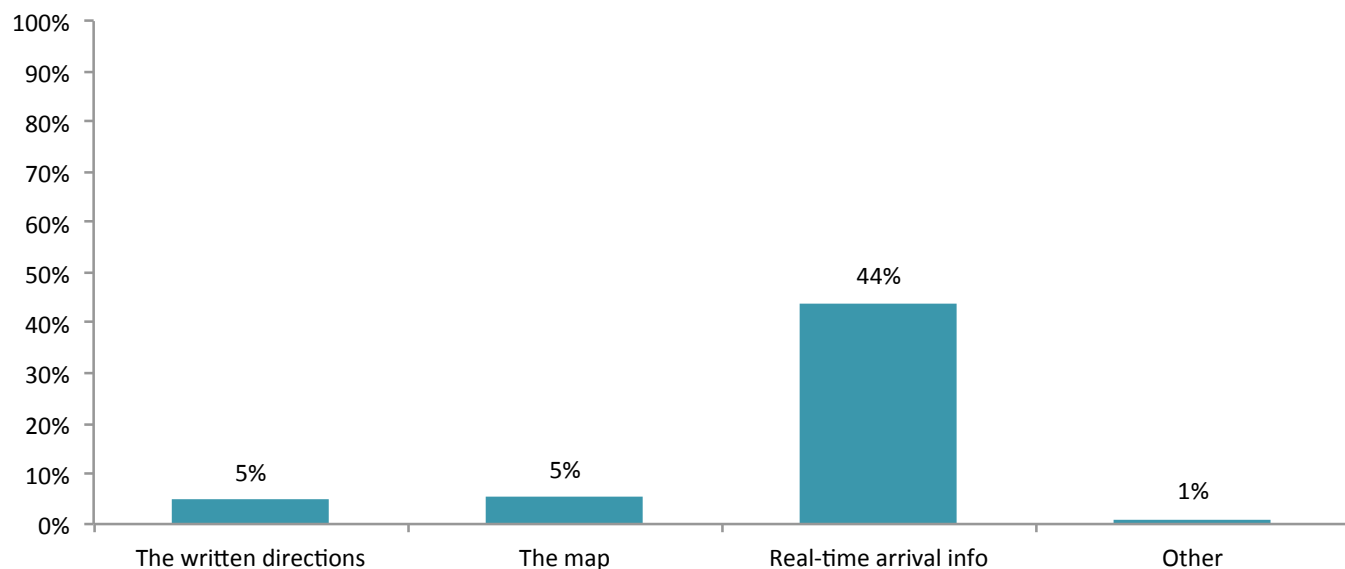


The most frequently cited trip planning websites for trips that people made regularly were 511.org, AC Transit and BART.

### What part of these trip planners do you use when taking a trip you REGULARLY take?



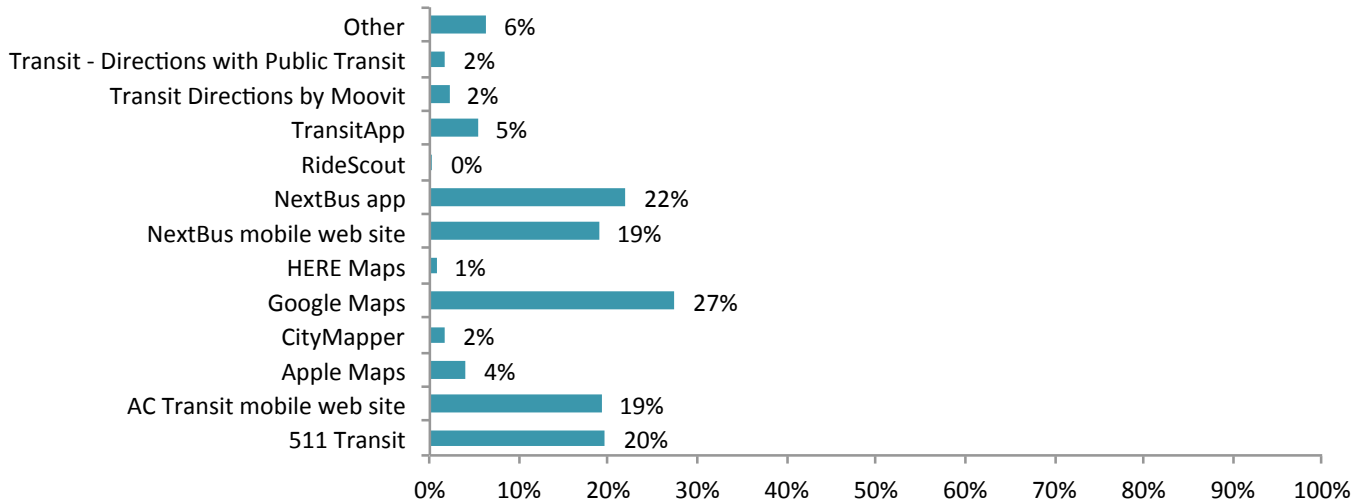
### What part of these trip planners do you use when taking a trip you've NEVER made before?



When using a trip planner for a regular trip, the overwhelming majority of people said that they use the real-time arrival information the trip planner providers. Only small numbers of people use the written directions or map. For a new trip, even more people use the real-time info.

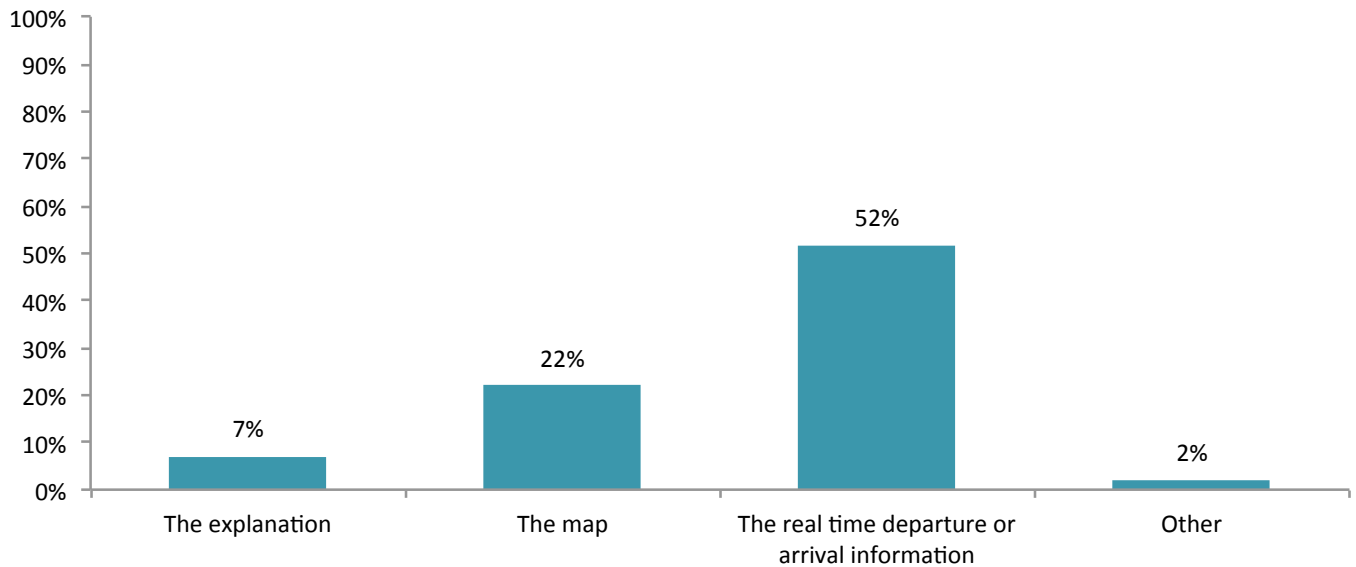
Real time info doesn't just tell people when they should plan to leave. It also helps them choose between multiple options, if there is more than one way the transit network - or the entire multi-modal transportation system - can get them to their destination.

**Which smartphone apps or mobile websites do you consult when making a trip you REGULARLY make?  
(Please select all that apply.)**

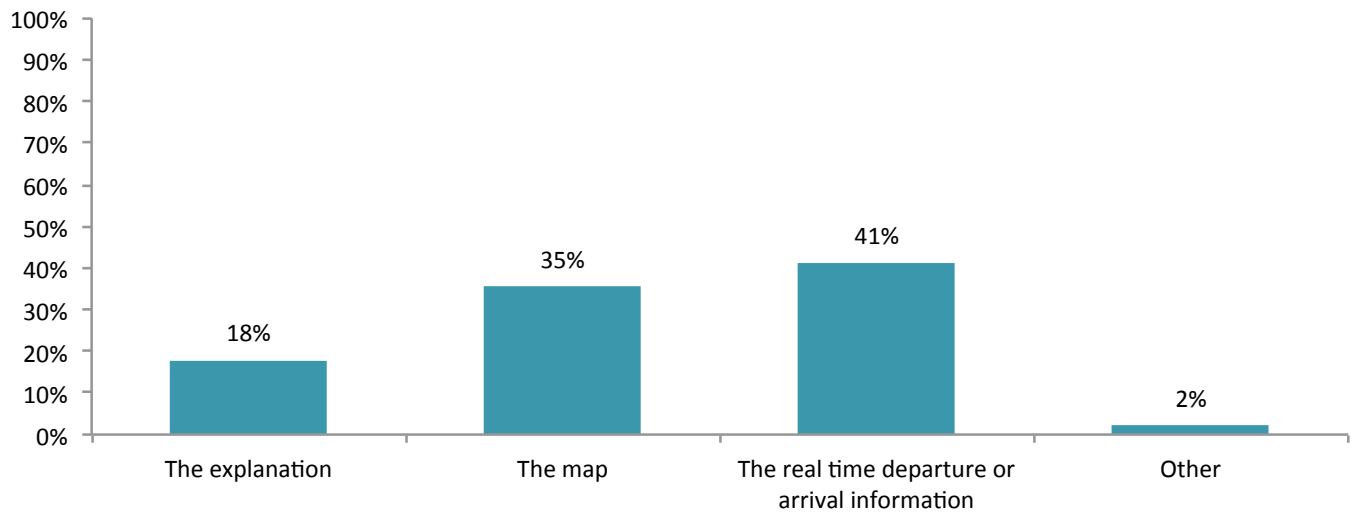


Among smartphone and mobile apps, Google Maps is the most popular for planning both regular and new trips, with slightly smaller numbers of people saying they use 511, AC Transit’s mobile site, and the NextBus app or mobile site. All of these platforms provide real-time arrival data. (The differences between responses for regular rather than new trips, on this question, were negligible.)

**What part of the apps do you use when making a trip you REGULARLY make? (Please select all that apply.)**



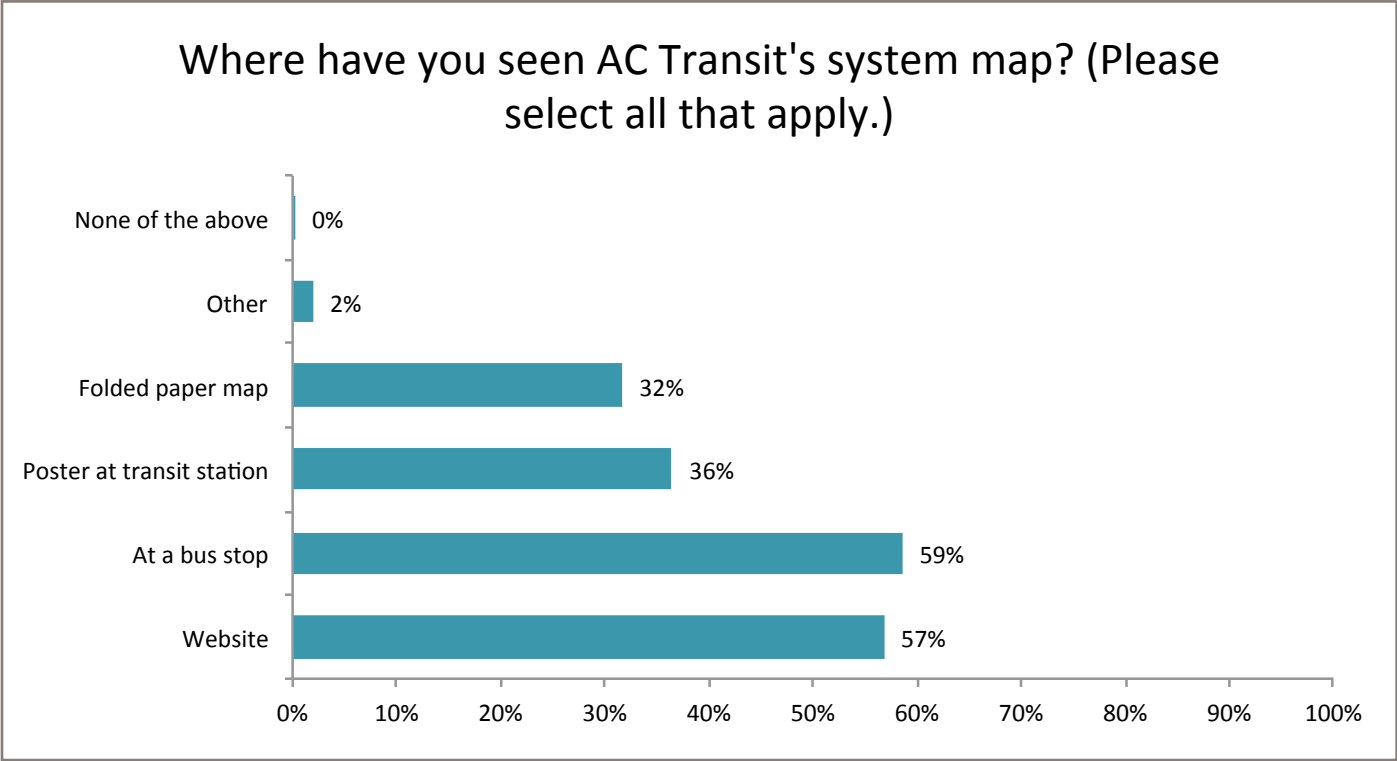
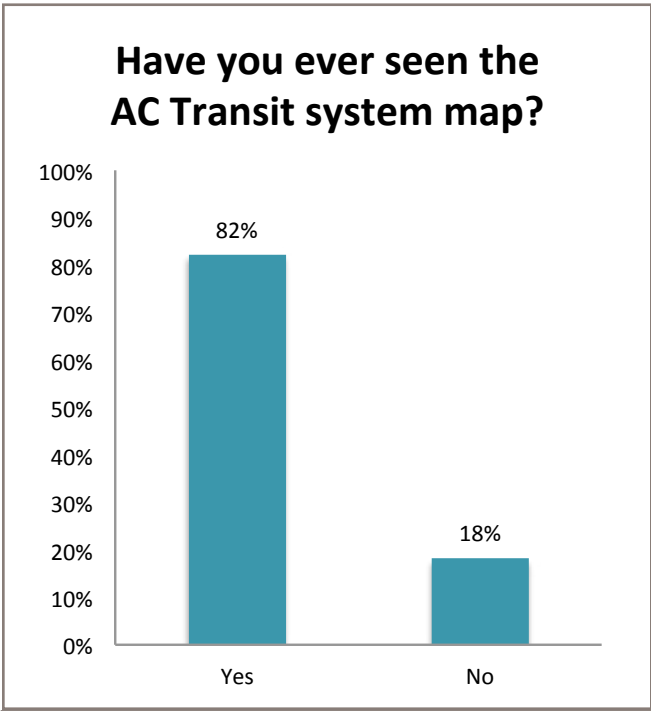
**What part of the apps do you use when making a trip you've NEVER made before? (Please select all that apply.)**



When using trip planning apps, many more people consult the explanation and map features (rather than the real time information) when they are planning a *new* trip than when they plan a *regular* trip.

The map and the explanation may be more or less integrated on different apps, so for some people it may be difficult to say which piece of information is part of the map as opposed to part of the explanation.

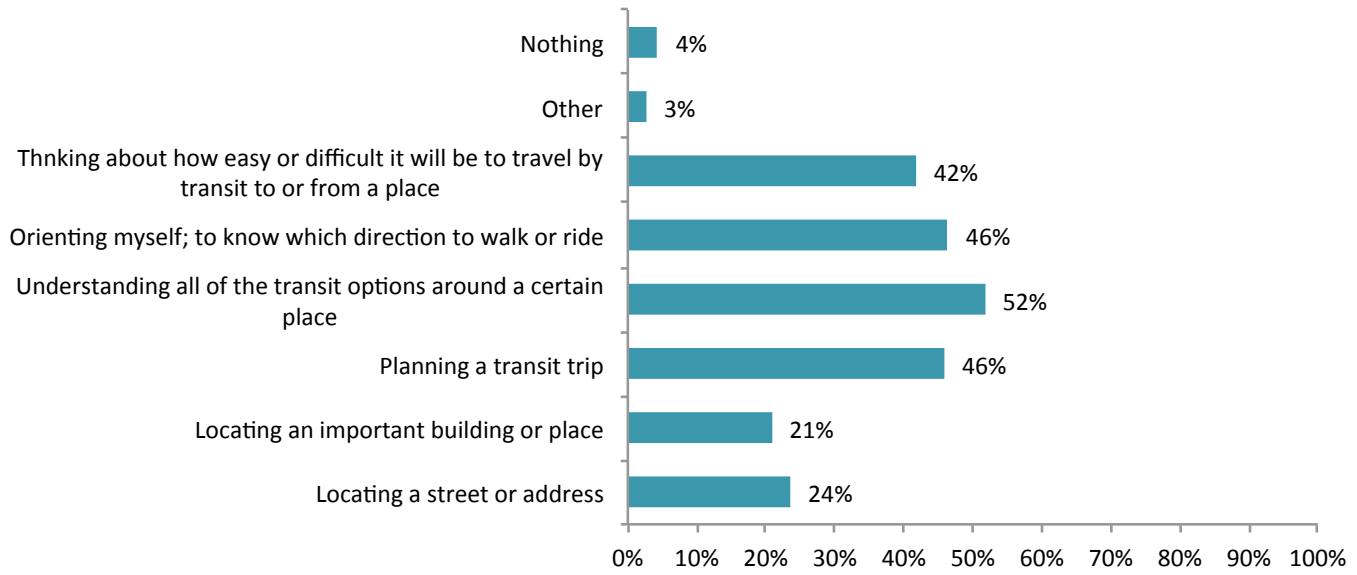
It appears, from this pair of charts, that when people use an app for a regular trip they are more likely to focus on the real-time information, but for a new trip the other two components are more important.



82% of respondents said they had at least seen the AC Transit system map, most often on the agency's website or posted at a bus stop.



**When you have seen the AC Transit system map, what have you used it for? (Please select all that apply.)**



We also asked people to tell us what they used the AC Transit system map for when they had seen it. This question offered a number of responses, that can be generally categorized into two categories:

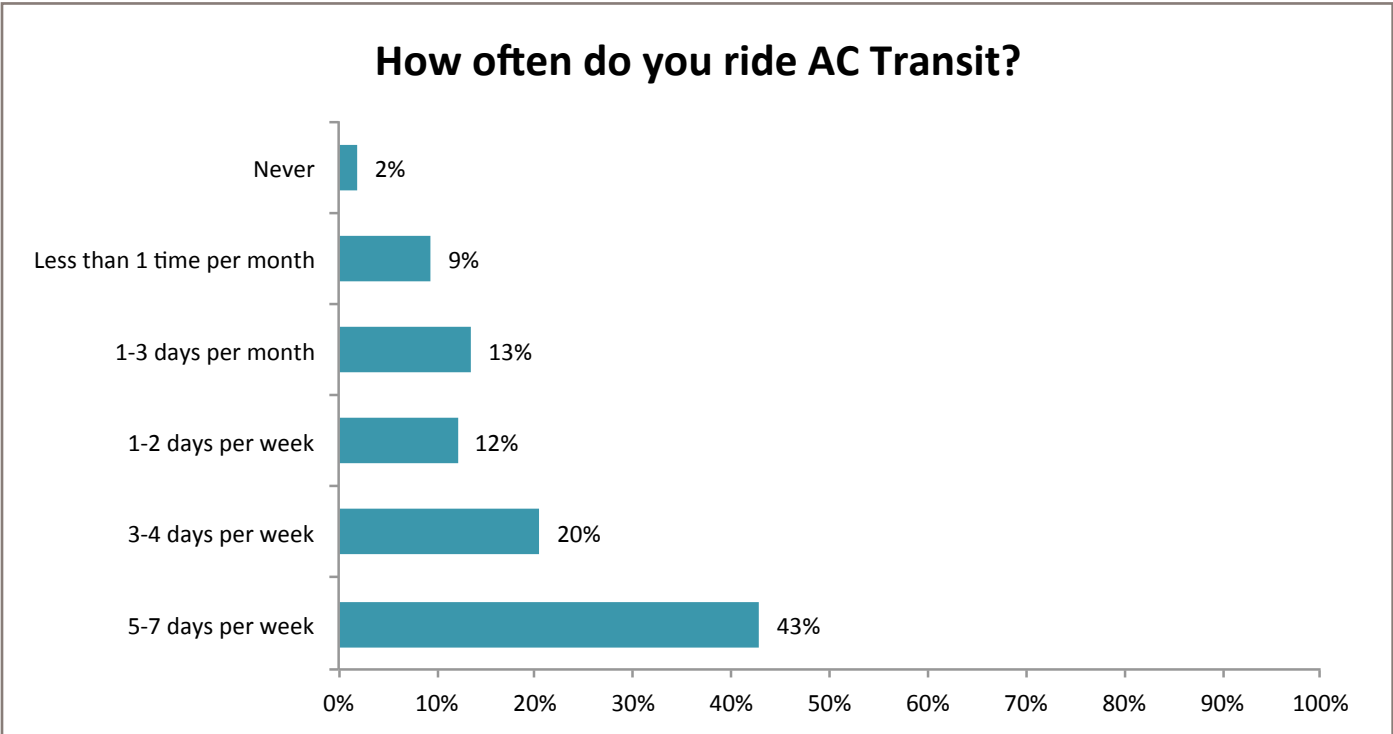
- Imminent trip planning and navigation (planning a transit trip, locating a street or address, locating an important building, orienting myself)
- General awareness of the transit network (understanding all of the transit options, thinking about how easy or difficult it will be to travel by transit)

People definitely use the map for in-the-moment navigation and trip planning. However, its clear that the map is heavily used for improving what we call (in earlier chapters) “network awareness” or “discovery.” Of the respondents, 50% say they use the map to understand all of their transit options, and 40% use it to think about how easy or difficult it would be to travel to different places by transit. Neither of these describes the kind of imminent trip planning that is delivered by trip planning websites and apps.

By examining the data, we can see that individual people are using the map for multiple purposes. Among those who said they use the map for understanding all the transit options around a certain place, 62% of them also selected “planning a transit trip”, “orienting myself”, and “thinking about how easy or difficult it would be.”

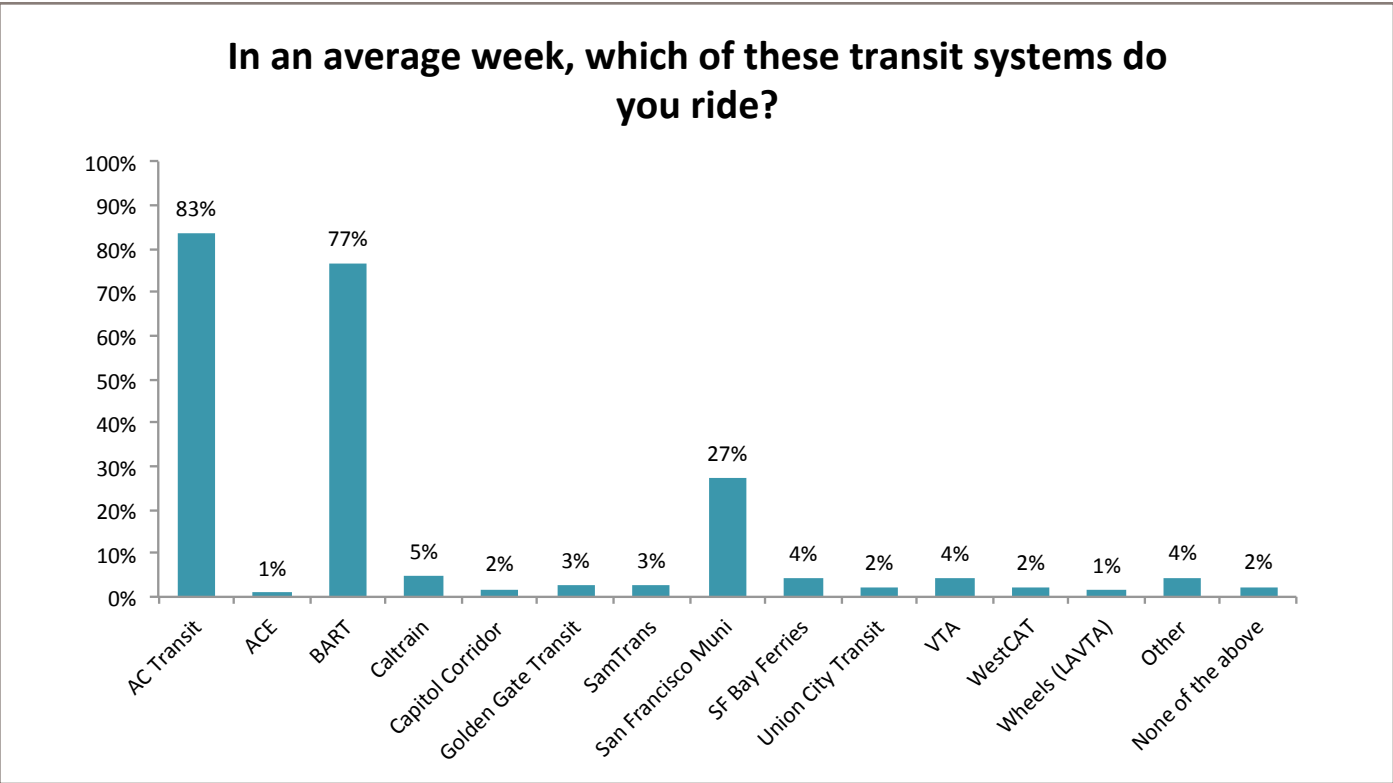
Among those who said they use the map to plan a transit trip, more than 63% said they also use it to understand the options around a place, orient themselves, or think about the general ease of travel.

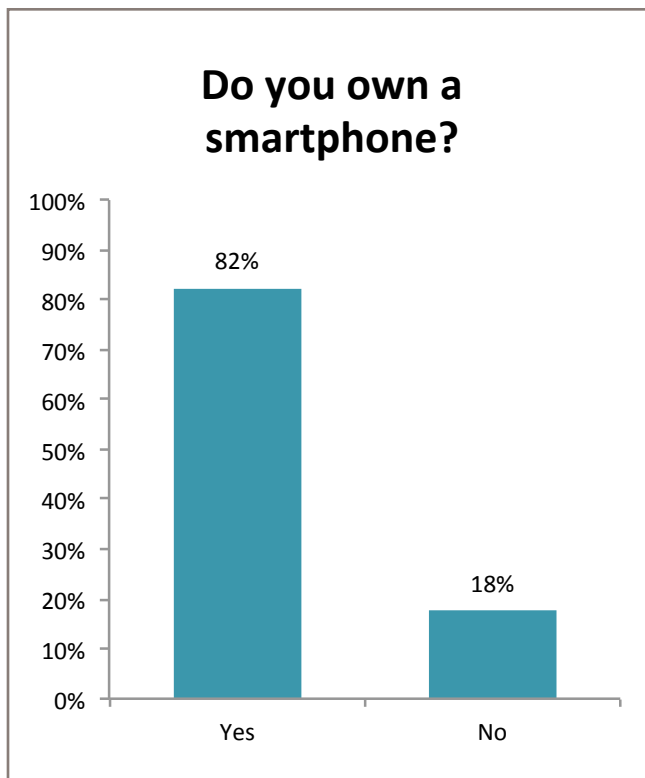
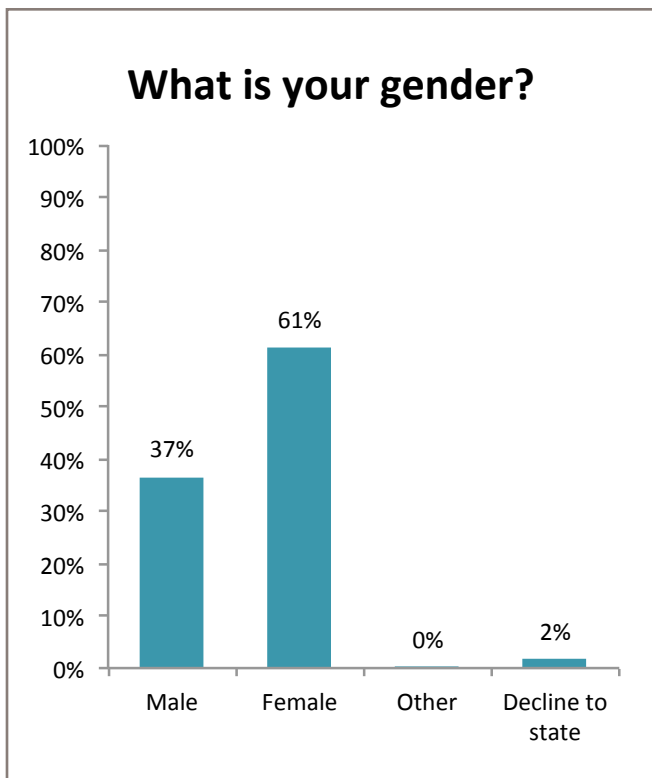
While transit maps can be designed to focus on trip planning or general transit network awareness, and to some extent these goals are in opposition, many of the survey respondents are using the current map for both purposes.



While 75% of respondents ride AC transit at least once per week, nearly as many people said they ride BART in a typical week as ride AC Transit (shown below), and 27% said they ride San Francisco Muni.

AC Transit may want to consider this when making design choices about future maps. If in a given week many AC Transit riders are already interpreting BART maps, and some are interpreting the SF Muni map, integrating the design language of the three maps could improve peoples' experiences.

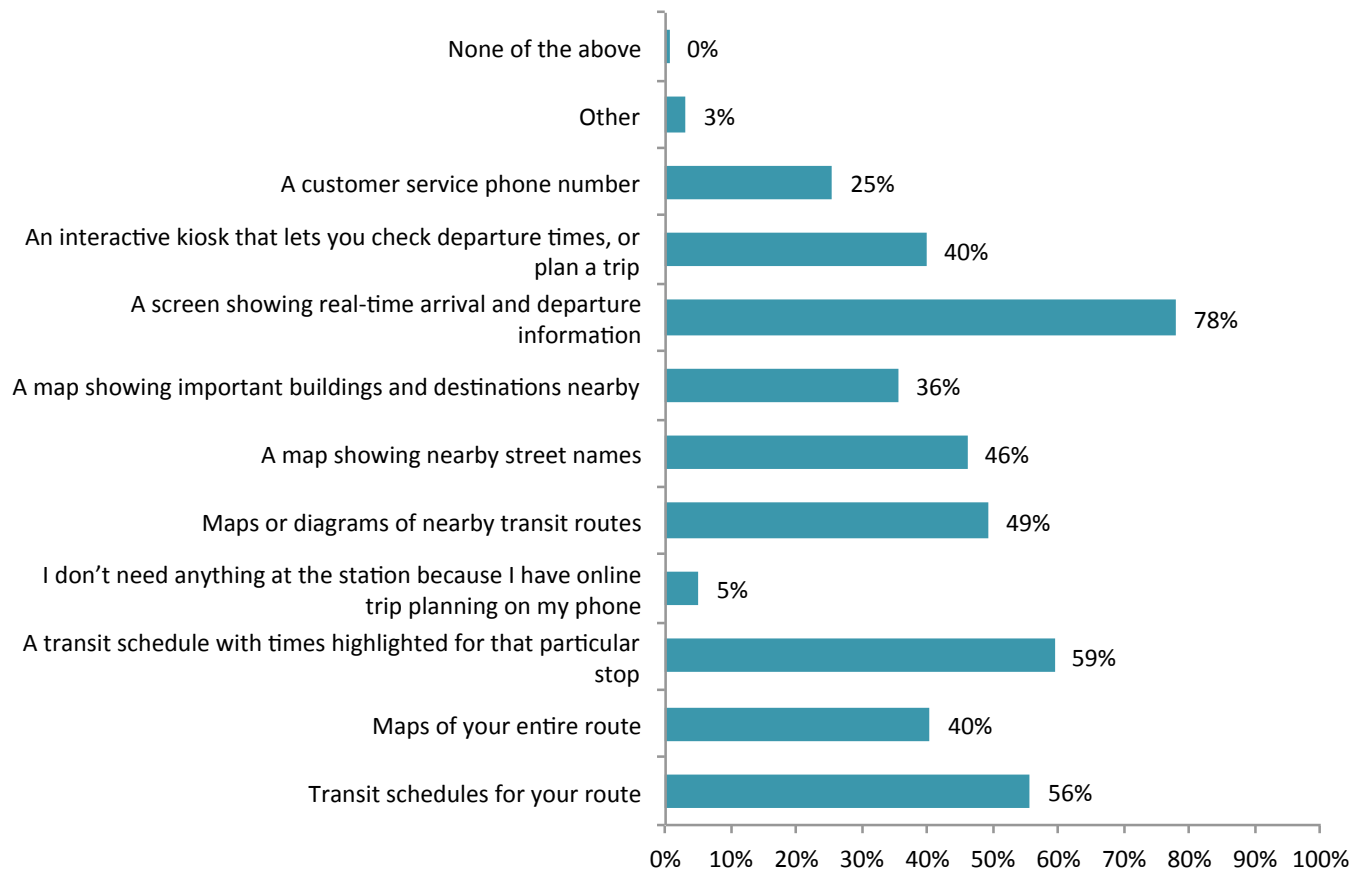




Most people who responded to the survey said that they owned a smartphone.

Curious about how smartphone ownership affected peoples’ use of transit information, we cross-tabulated smartphone ownership with responses to the earlier question, about what sources of information were used for regular and new trips. The two charts are shown on the following page.

## Which of the following do you, or would you, find most useful at a transit stop or station? (Please select all that apply.)



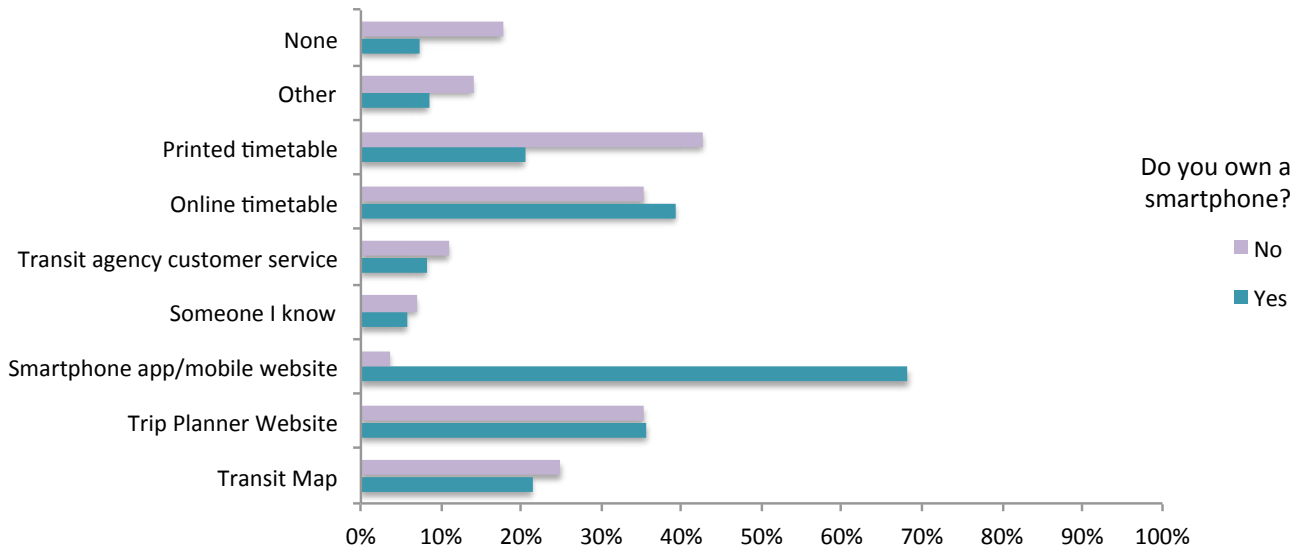
Asked to share which type of information they would find most useful posted at transit stops or stations, the most popular response by far was a screen showing real-time arrival information.

This theme dominated the open-ended responses, with many comments focused on the need for more, or more reliable, real-time arrival information.

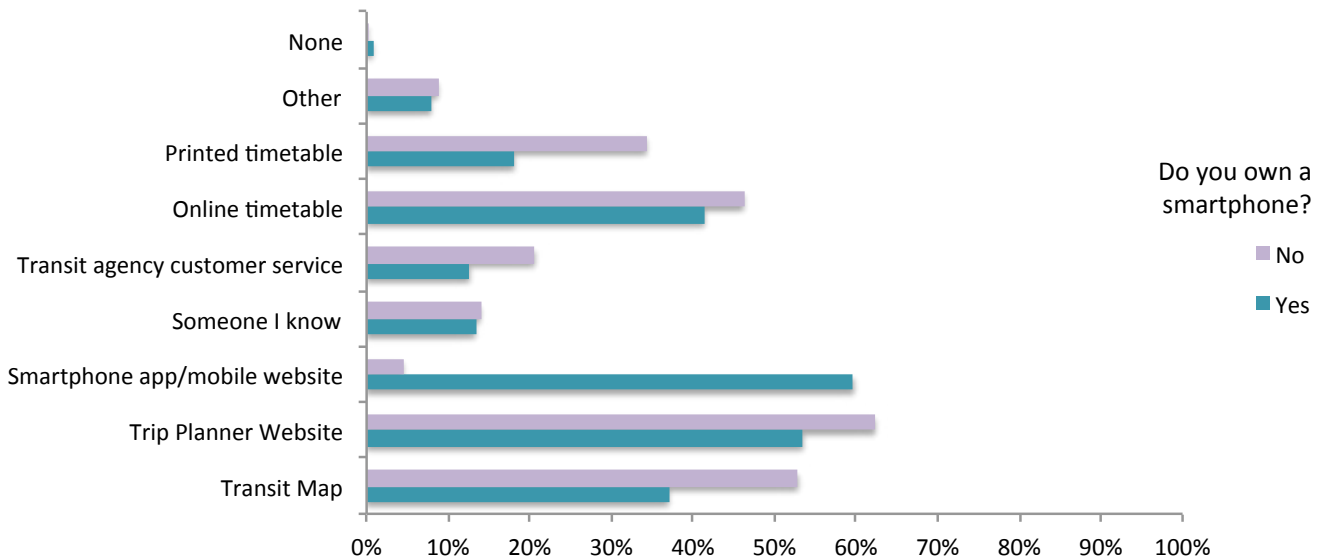
A majority of respondents also said that transit schedules of some sort would be useful to have at a stop or station.

People who have smartphones were not likely to state that they don't need anything else at a transit station - only 5% of respondents said so. This suggests that people with smartphones still value some of the same sources of information - schedules, real-time displays, maps, etc - that people without smartphones depend on. This suggests that there is not much of a conflict between the needs of more affluent and tech-savvy riders on the one hand, and less-affluent or older riders on the other hand, when it comes to the public information that AC Transit could provide for them.

### Sources of information for planning REGULAR trips, split by smartphone ownership

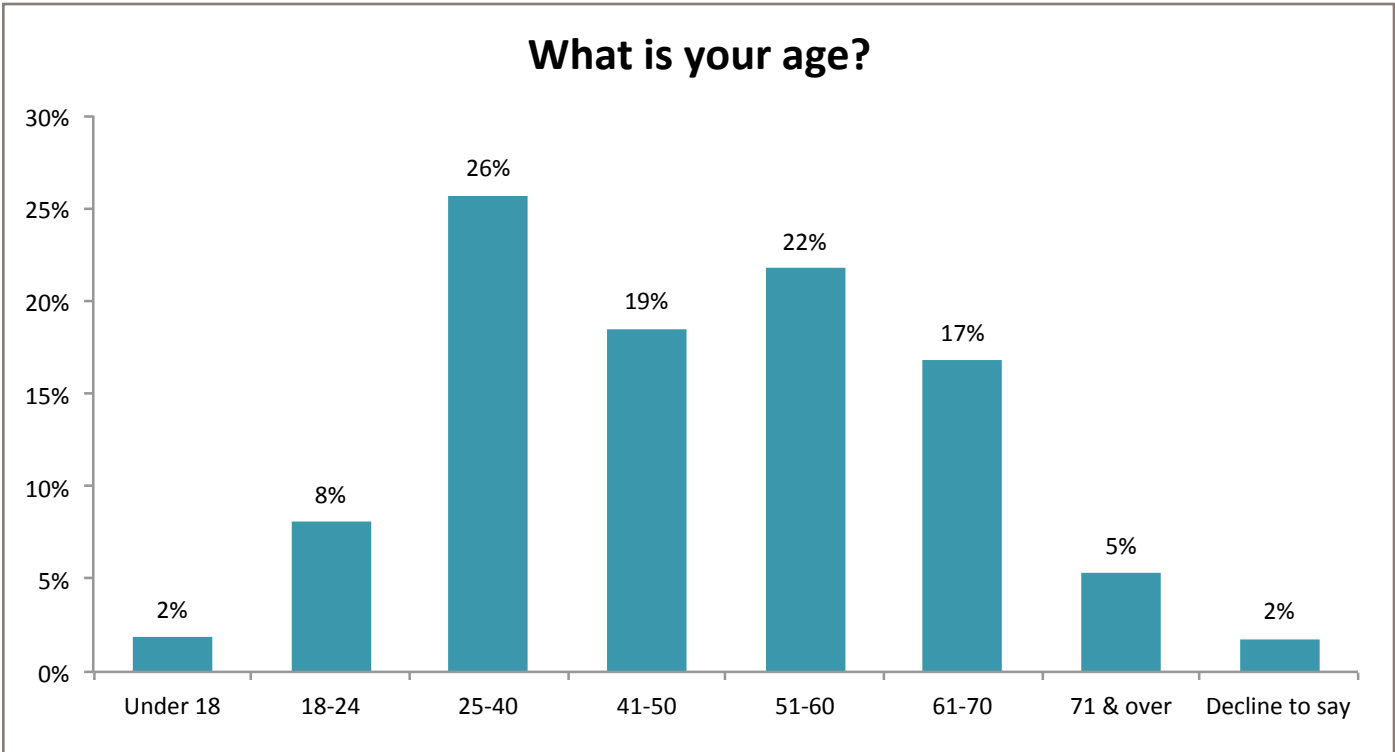


### Sources of information for planning a NEW trip, split by smartphone ownership



Smartphone owners are much more likely to use a smartphone app for information on their regular trips; correspondingly, people who do not own smartphones are much more likely to use a printed timetable. However, each group accesses online information to a similar degree. Those without smartphones are slightly more likely to use the map, call customer service, ask someone they know, or consult another source for information, for both regular and new trip planning.

Aside from smartphone apps and websites, these two groups of people do not seem to have radically different desires and needs for transit information.



When we compare the survey respondents to the current population estimate for Alameda and Contra Costa counties (ACS 2009-2014 5-year estimate), we find that the survey respondents are, on average, older than service area residents.

People in their 40's, 50's and 60's are over-represented in the survey respondents, while people in their 20's are somewhat under-represented. People under the age of 18 are severely under-represented by this survey.