



Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District

# **2017-18 Onboard Survey**

## **Summary of Findings**

**July 2018**

**Board of Directors Meeting  
July 25, 2018  
Item 6B**

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## INTRODUCTION

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AC Transit regularly undertakes efforts to obtain an updated profile of its ridership to help the District assess policies or plans that may impact ridership. The information also helps the District improve engagement with communities of color, low-income populations, and people with limited English proficiency, and explore the possibilities of new fare-payment technologies. The ridership profile data is used in grant applications, shared with other local and national agencies, and provided in response to public requests for information. In addition, the data collected in this survey is crucial for conducting equity analyses to meet Federal Transit Administration's Title VI (Civil Rights Act) guidelines and requirements.

Since 2012, the Bay Area's metropolitan planning organization, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, has been conducting a coordinated effort among Bay Area transit agencies to collect transit passenger data as part of the region's Transit Sustainability Project. The current survey represents the second cycle of that effort, and provides a view of ridership from 2013 to 2018, as well as consistency and comparability of data between transit properties in the Bay Area.

The survey, conducted by ETC Institute, Inc., consisted of an interview conducted with a tablet computer and using random sampling methods to select participants. The survey was designed to capture each component of a rider's trip, including all trip segments, transfers, and access and egress information. In addition to travel data, the survey collected information about the rider's demographics, including languages spoken, self-identified race and ethnicity, and household income. The survey also asked how riders paid for their transit trips. The survey was conducted onboard AC Transit buses between late fall, 2017, and spring, 2018.

The goal of the survey was to collect a representative sample of 5% of all boardings for riders age 16 and older. The actual number of weekday surveys completed was 13,052, 8.2% of weekday riders. A sample size of 1,000 was selected for weekend boardings and surveys were collected in proportion to weekend boardings by route. The actual number of weekend surveys completed was 1,824, 6.3% of weekend riders.

Prior to the main onboard intercept survey, ETC Institute conducted two additional smaller surveys to prepare for the full intercept survey. The first (called the On-to-Off or O2O survey) was a pretest to ensure the survey would be properly conducted; to evaluate the sampling plan and data collection methods in order to identify and address any potential problems. A second small survey (called the Title VI survey) was administered on a subset of AC Transit routes to assist with validating and expanding the main survey data. This survey was also used to support an income imputation process for respondents who did not provide household income information in the main survey.

The following selection of information is based upon Weekday responses only from the 2017-18 on-board ridership profile survey. A companion summary of findings that includes Weekend data responses and additional data comparisons and cross-tabs will be forthcoming.

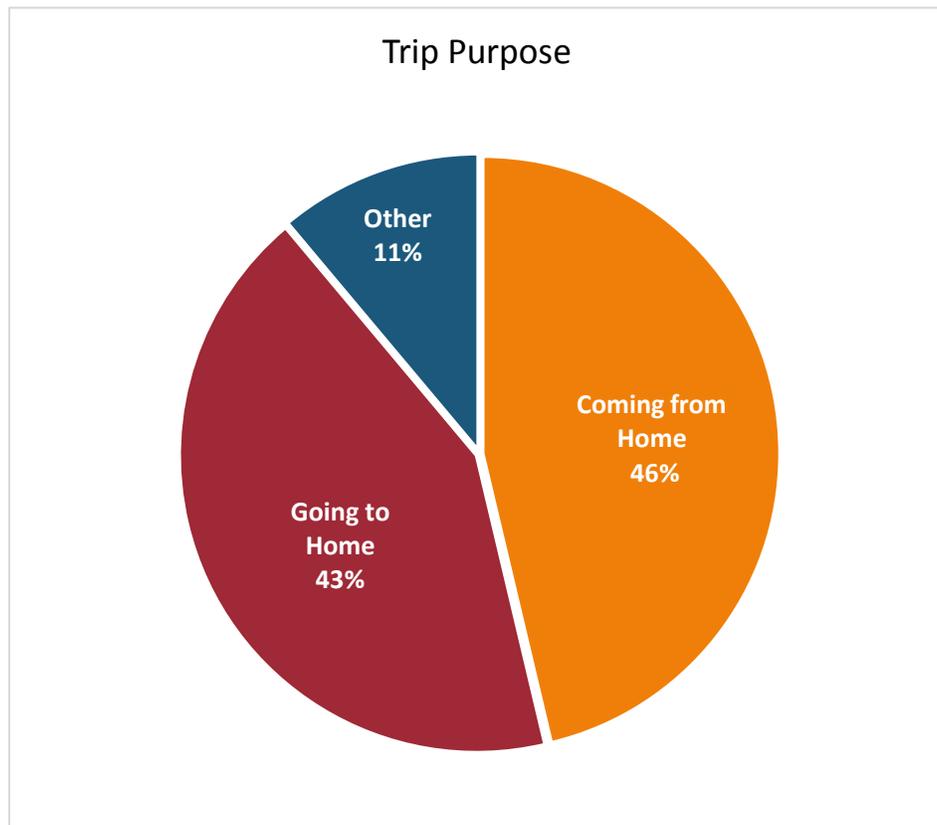
## WEEKDAY FINDINGS

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### TRIP CHARACTERISTICS

#### Trip Purpose

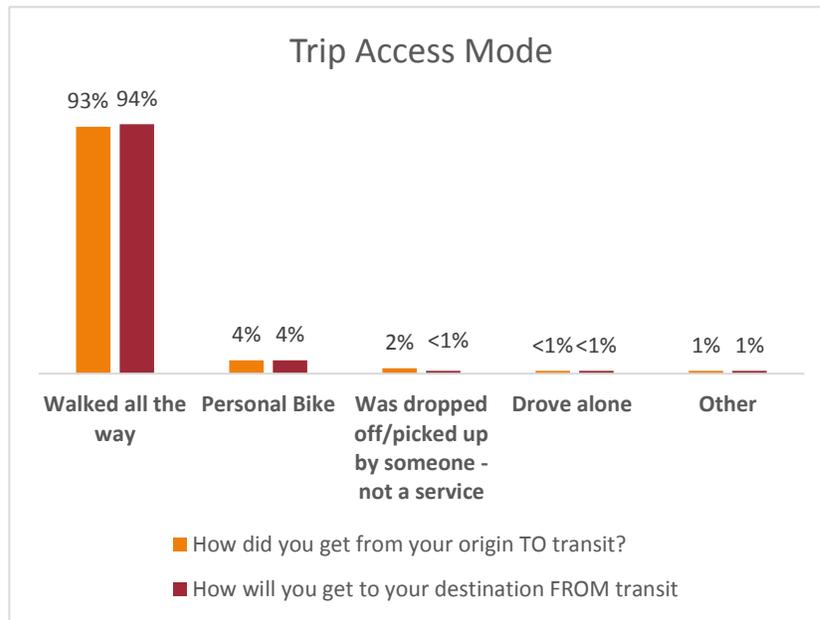
The majority of weekday riders are coming from or going to home when they ride AC Transit. Riders also use the bus to go to or from work (23% and 24% respectively) and for social or recreational activities (8% and 6%).



Weekday riders in low-income households, that is with income under \$50,000, are less likely to ride the bus to or from work than those in not low-income households (33% and 58% respectively). People of color (39%) are also less likely than non-Latino white riders (49%) to ride the bus to or from work.

### Trip Access

A very large majority of weekday riders – more than 90% – walk to begin or end their trip, and about 5% of riders use a personal bike. Adding together driving alone and being dropped off or picked up by someone they know, another 1-2% use a personal car. As seen in the chart below, how people get “to” transit and how they get “from” transit closely mirror each other.



*Note: Due to rounding, totals may add up to more than 100%*

For weekday riders that walk, almost three-quarters walk less than 2 blocks to their first transit ride, and about 70% walk less than 2 blocks from transit to their final destination.

A higher percentage of African Americans begin their trip closer to their first bus stop compared to non-Latino white riders. Overall non-Latino white riders begin their trips the furthest away from a bus stop compared to other racial or ethnic groups.

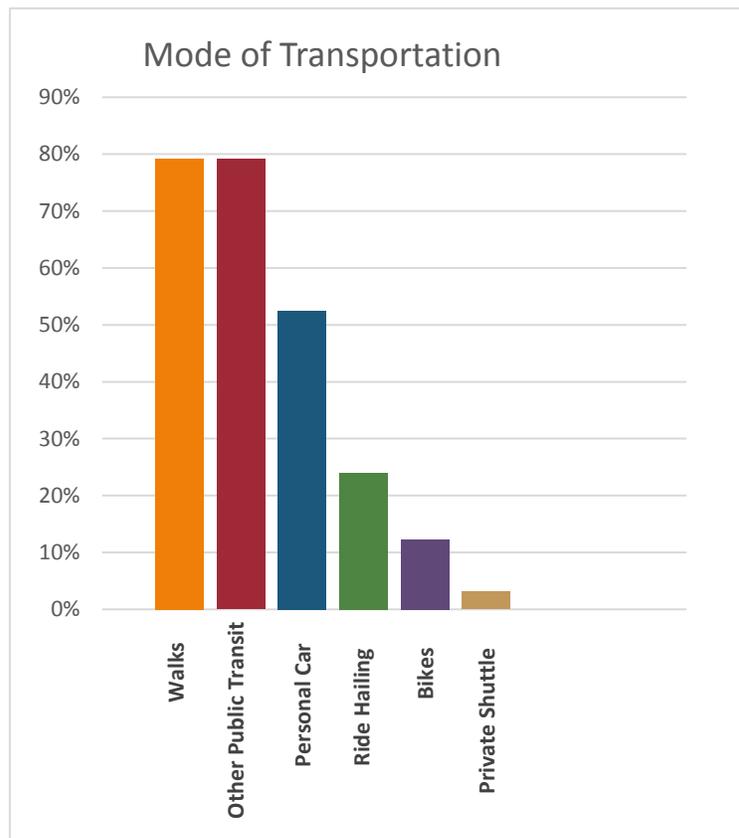
Low-income riders are more likely to start their trip closer to their first transit stop than riders who are not low-income.

### Other Modes of Transportation

Outside of riding AC Transit, walking and using other transit agencies services are the most popular ways of getting around for riders – almost 8 in 10 weekday riders report using one or both of these modes. This is followed by 52% who use a private car, including driving themselves, getting a ride from someone, or using a carpool. Twelve percent of riders say they bike, which is four times as many people as in the last survey. Although fewer than 1% of riders indicated they used a ride-hailing service (such as Lyft or Uber) to get to or from the trip on which they were surveyed, almost one in four (24%) do sometimes use a ride-hailing service to get around.

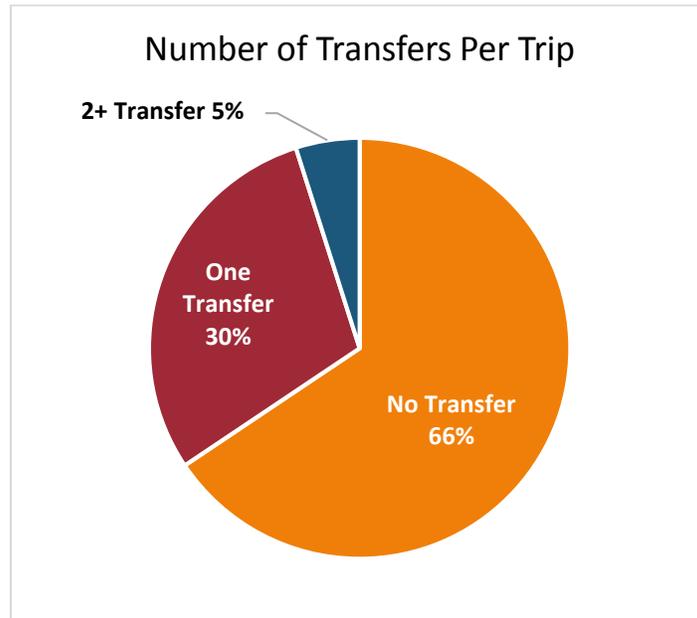
Other Modes of Transportation	
Walks	79%
Other Public Transit	79%
Personal Car	52%
Ride Hailing	24%
Bikes	12%
Private Shuttle	3%

*Note: In this question, riders were asked to mark all that apply, so percentages add up to more than 100%.*

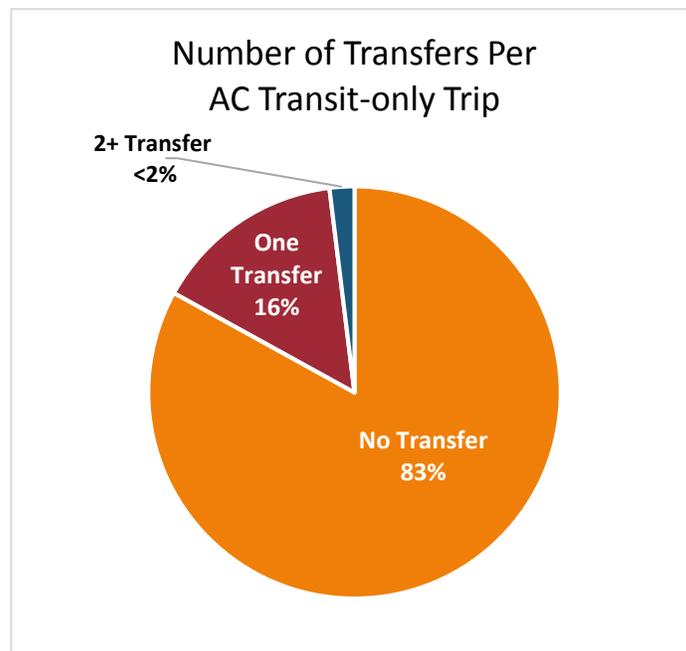


### Transfers

About two-thirds of weekday riders (66%) are able to complete their trips without making a transfer, including to/from another transit agency. This is an improvement of 10% since the 2012-13 survey.

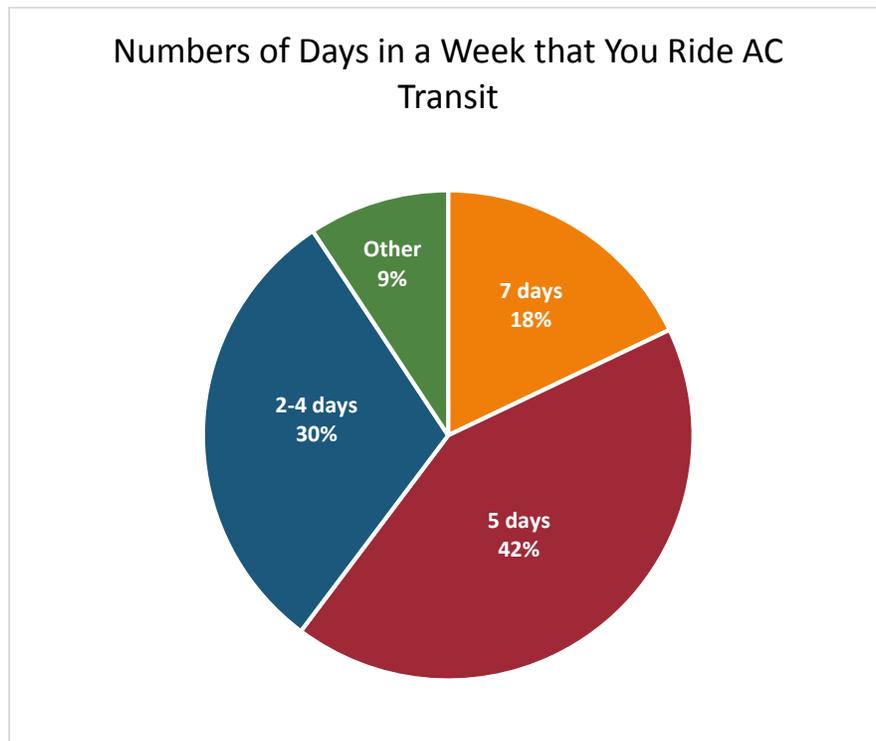


For weekday riders who begin their trip on AC Transit, even fewer transfers are needed – 83% of AC Transit-only weekday riders have a one-bus trip. About 87% of weekday riders use only AC Transit and 13% connect to another public transit agency’s services.



### Regular Use of AC Transit

A majority of weekday riders (60%) use AC Transit at least five days in a typical week, and another 30% ride it two to four days per week.



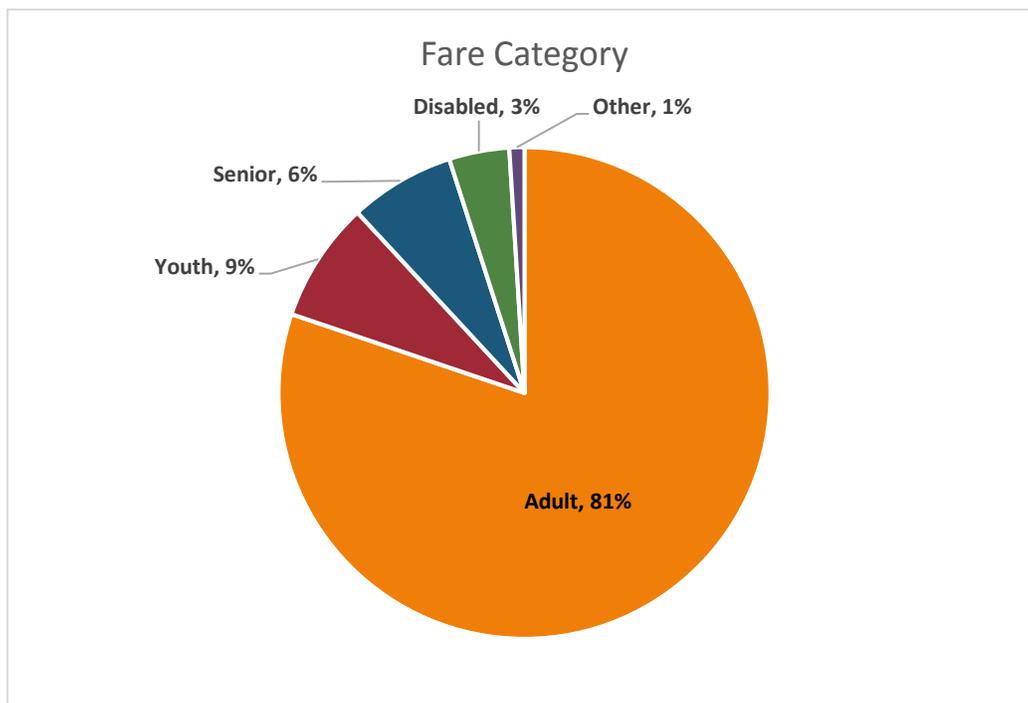
Low-income riders are more likely to use AC Transit 7 days per week compared to those with household incomes of \$50,000 or more, and people of color riders are more likely to use AC Transit compared to non-Latino white riders.

## FARE PAYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

There are a variety of ways to analyze fare payments in order to understand how AC Transit riders access the service, including what fare category riders are using and what method they use to pay. In future surveys, the survey questions may be refined in order to better analyze ridership.

### Fare Category

Eight out of ten AC Transit weekday riders pay the full adult fare. People paying a Youth fare make up about 9% of the ridership, and people paying the Senior fare (6%) and Disabled fare (3%) make up the rest.



More respondents in the discount fare categories are low-income, compared to riders as a whole. A person paying the Youth or Disabled fare category is more likely to identify as a person of color than riders in general. The Youth category has the highest percentage of person of color riders and the Disabled category has the highest percentage of low-income riders – both 90%.

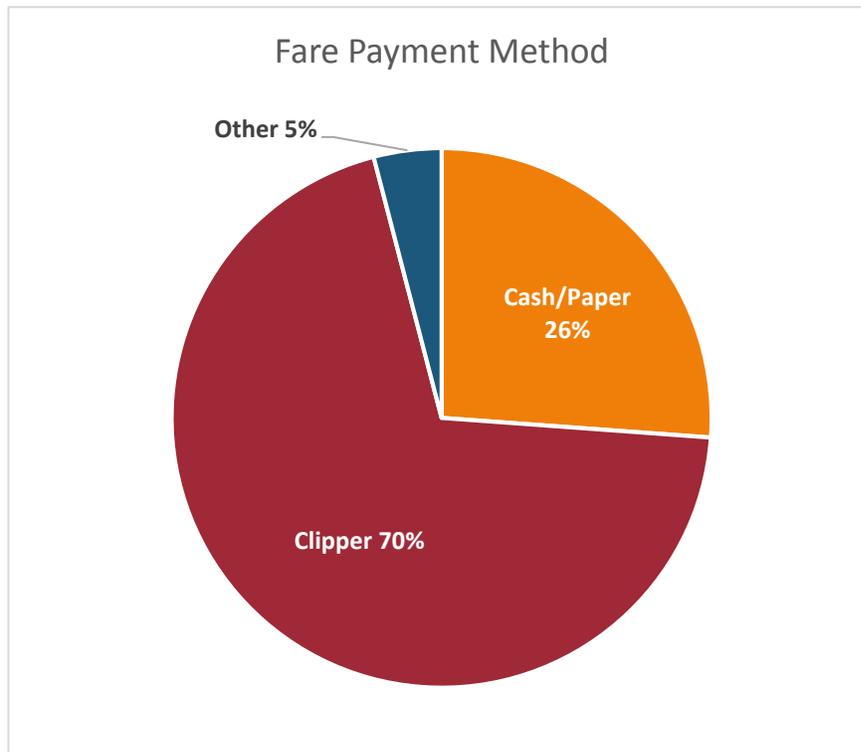
	<b>% Low-Income</b>	<b>% People of Color</b>
Adult	65%	74%
Disabled	90%	75%
Senior	81%	66%
Youth	70%	90%

*Note: Low-Income is household income under \$50,000.*

### Fare Payment Method

Seventy percent of weekday riders use Clipper to pay their fare. This is an increase of 12% since the last survey. Some of that increase might be attributed to the fact that EasyPass is now a completely Clipper product.

Clipper users includes people who buy monthly passes, who are EasyPass clients, and those who use descending cash value on their cards. Use of the Regional Transit Connection (RTC) card is included in “other.”



*Note: Due to rounding, totals may add up to more than 100%*

Weekday AC Transit riders who are low-income are less likely to use Clipper (66%) compared to those who are not low-income (77%). People of color are also more likely to use cash or paper as a way to pay their fares (29%) compared to non-Latino whites (16%).

A much larger percentage of Transbay riders (89%) use Clipper, compared to Local riders (71%).

A majority of weekday riders who use Clipper purchase a monthly pass (55%) as opposed to adding cash value to their Clipper cards (37%).

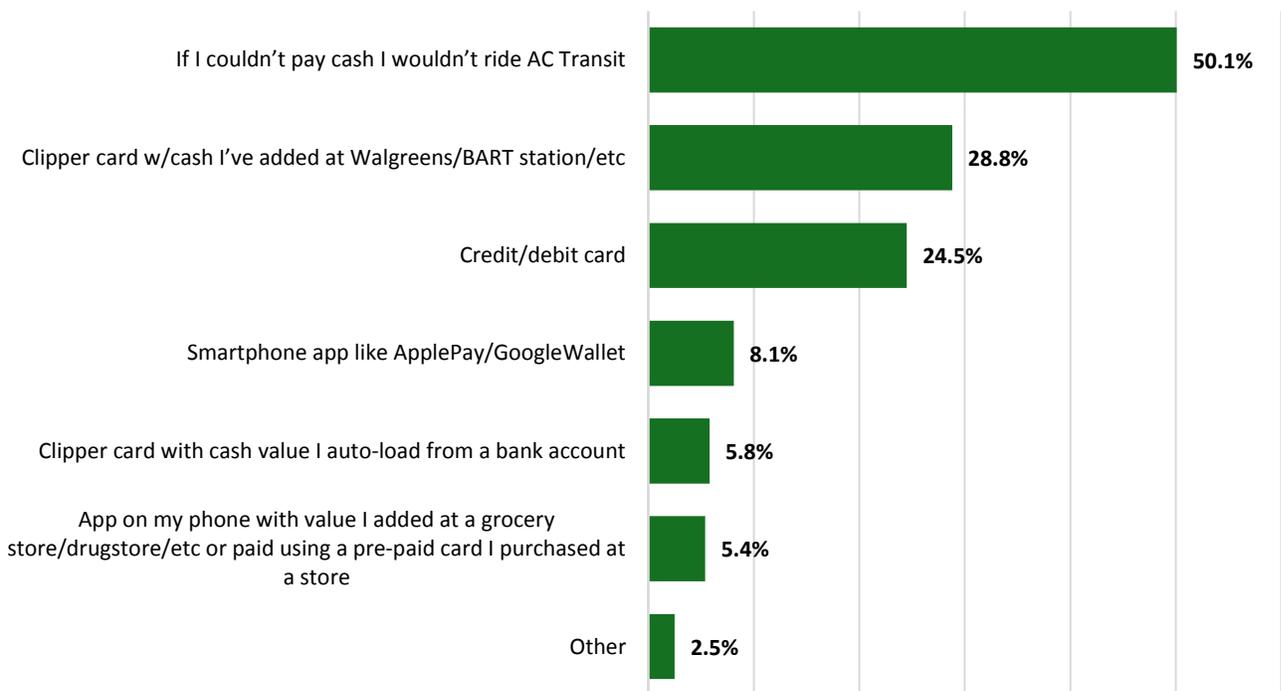
Riders purchase the Day Pass in a variety of ways: buying it with cash at the farebox on a bus, tagging their Clipper card three times over the course of the day (using the fare accumulator), or through a social service agency. More research must be done to assess how much the Day Pass has been adopted since its introduction in 2014.

### Fare Payment Alternatives

In order to assist the District’s exploration of new technologies to support alternative forms of payment, the survey asked riders who paid with cash or paper, “If you were unable to pay with cash today, which of the following payment methods might you use?” Riders could select any or all choices.

Fifty percent of these weekday riders said they wouldn’t ride AC Transit if they couldn’t pay their fare with cash. However, among riders who selected an alternative, almost 30% of cash-paying riders said they would use Clipper with cash value they added at a local store or a BART station, and one in four said they would use a credit or debit card.

Fare Payment Alternatives



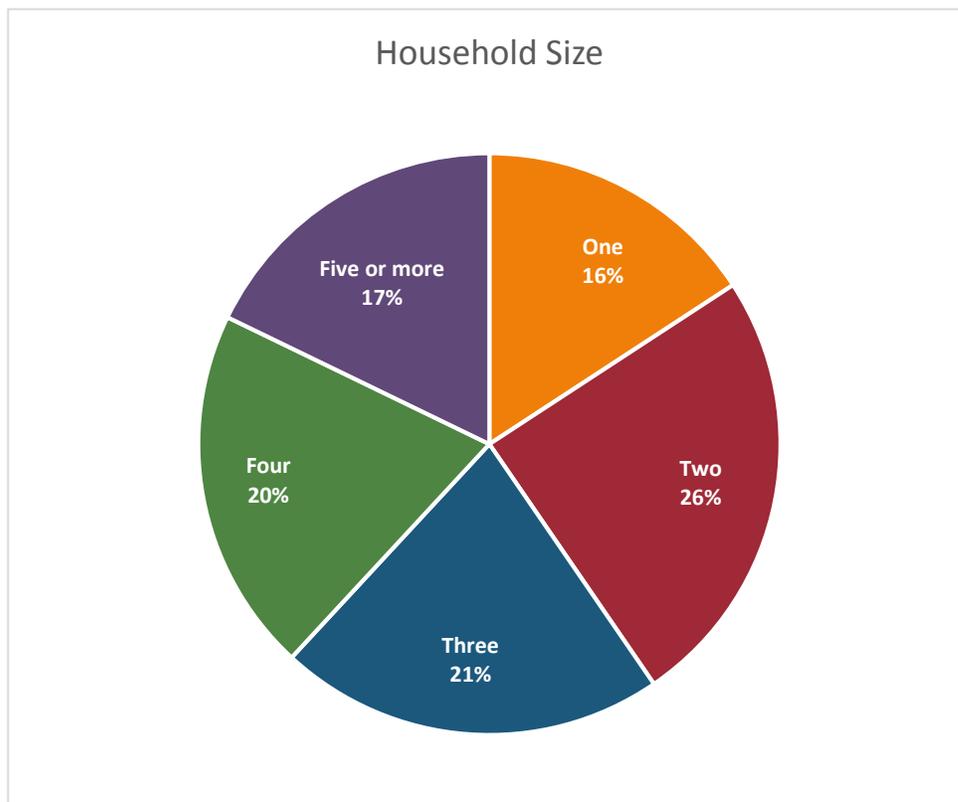
*Note: In this question, riders were asked to mark all that apply, so percentages add up to more than 100%.*

## HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

### Household Size

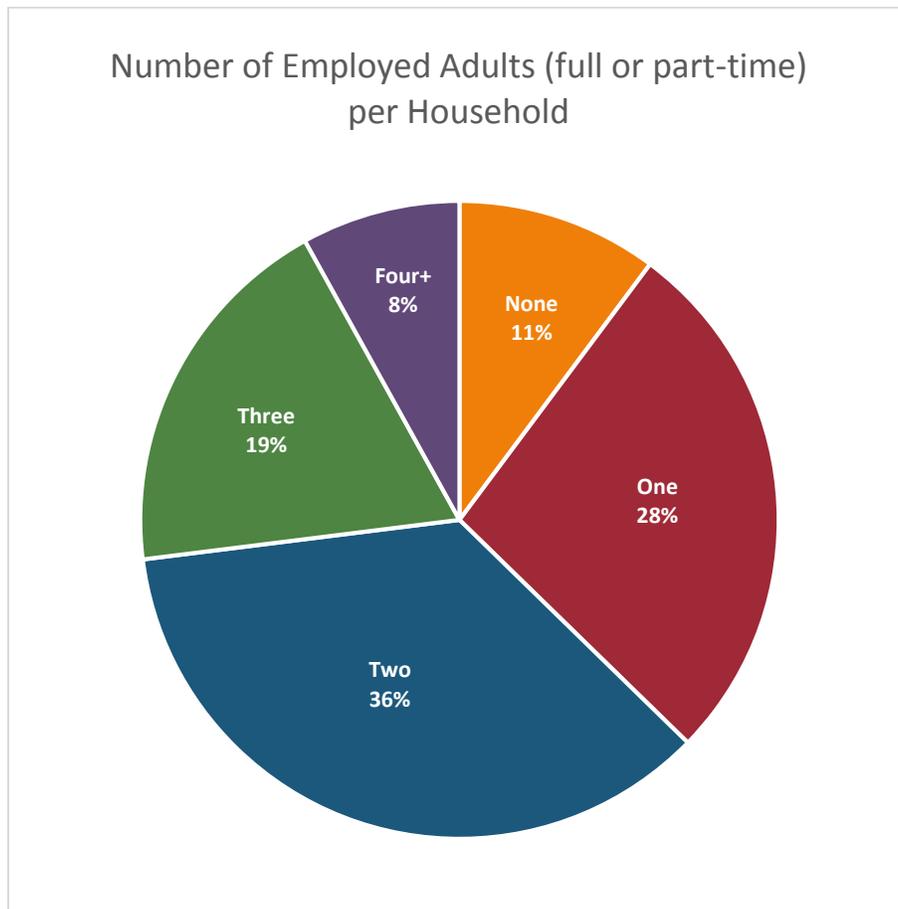
AC transit weekday riders are distributed fairly evenly in households of various sizes: most riders live in households made up of two, three, and four people (26, 21, and 20% respectively). A slightly smaller number, about 16%, live by themselves and another 17% live in larger households.

The median AC Transit weekday riders' household size is three people.



### Household Employment

Almost six in ten weekday riders live in households with at least two working adults, however, 11% of AC Transit riders live in households where no one is employed.



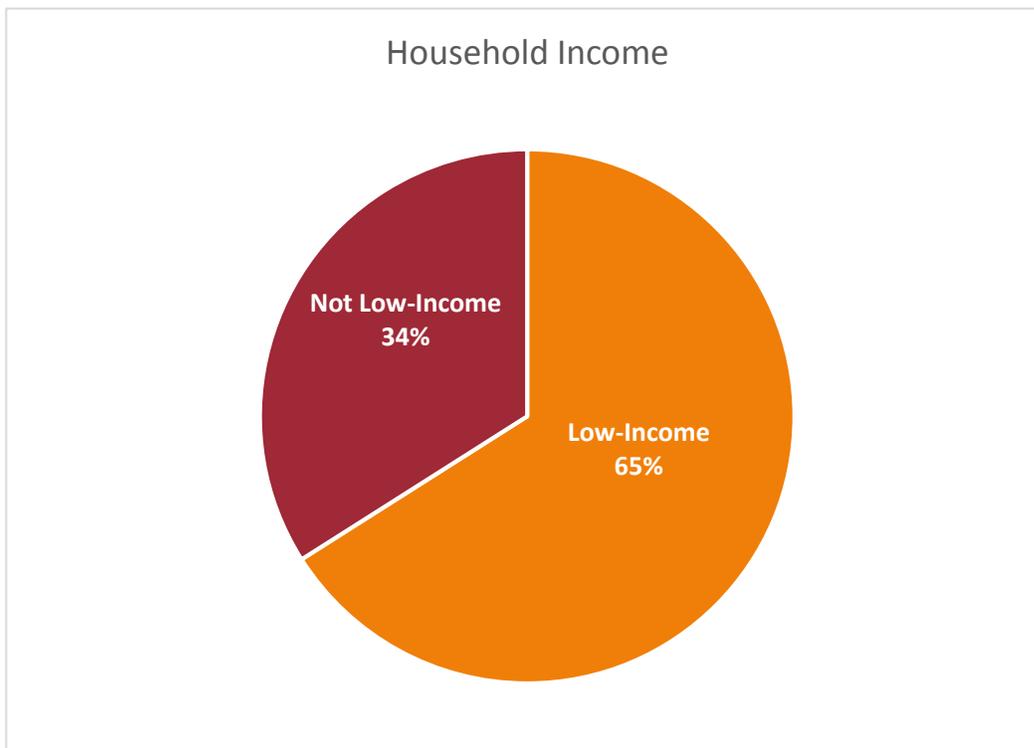
*Note: Due to rounding, totals may add up to more than 100%*

### Household Income

One in three weekday riders lives in a very low-income household, defined by having household income of below \$25,000, and almost two in three (65%) have annual household income of under \$50,000 – which is considered low-income for District data analysis purposes. The median household income of AC Transit riders is \$36,351.

Which of the following best describes your TOTAL ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME in 2016 before taxes?		Percent Low-Income
Below \$25,000	33%	65%
\$25,000-\$49,999	32%	
\$50,000 - \$99,999	25%	34%
\$100,000 or more	9%	
Other*	<2%	

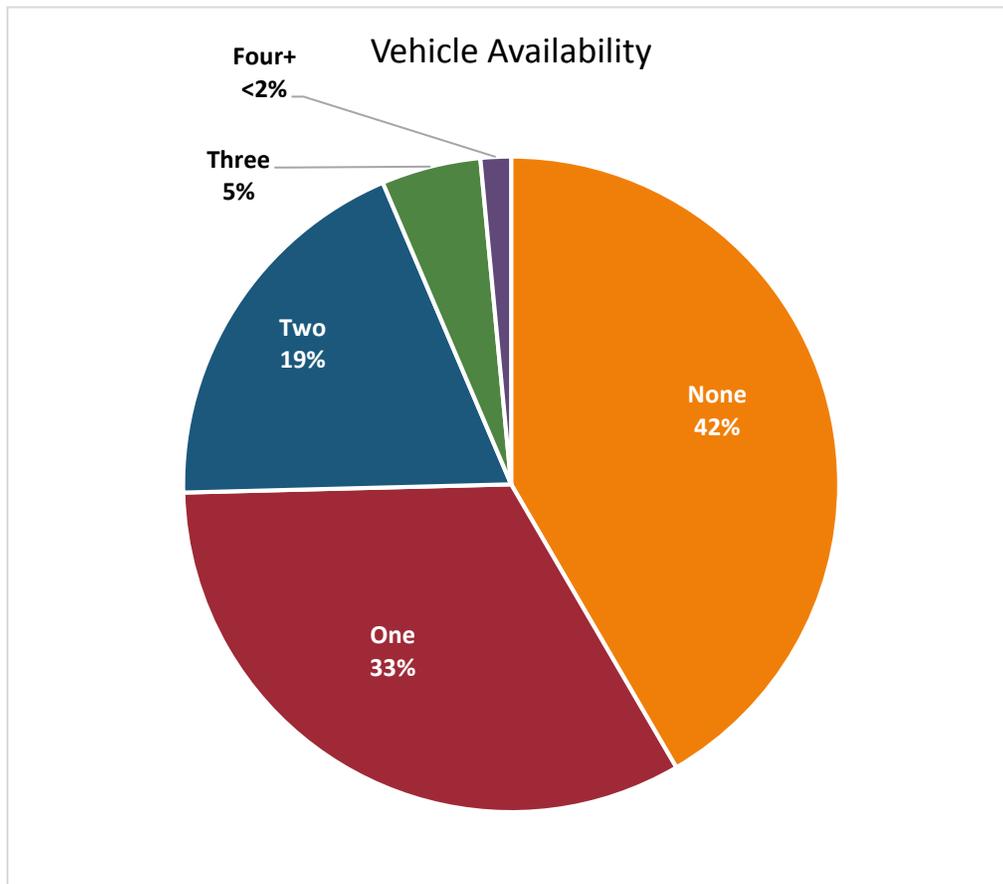
*Notes: Other includes refuse & unable to calculate*



An AC Transit rider that is a person of color is more likely to have household income under \$50,000 (70%) versus a rider who identifies as white alone, non-Latino (51%).

### Vehicle Availability

Nearly 42% of AC Transit weekday riders are without a working vehicle in their household; another 33% have access to only one vehicle.

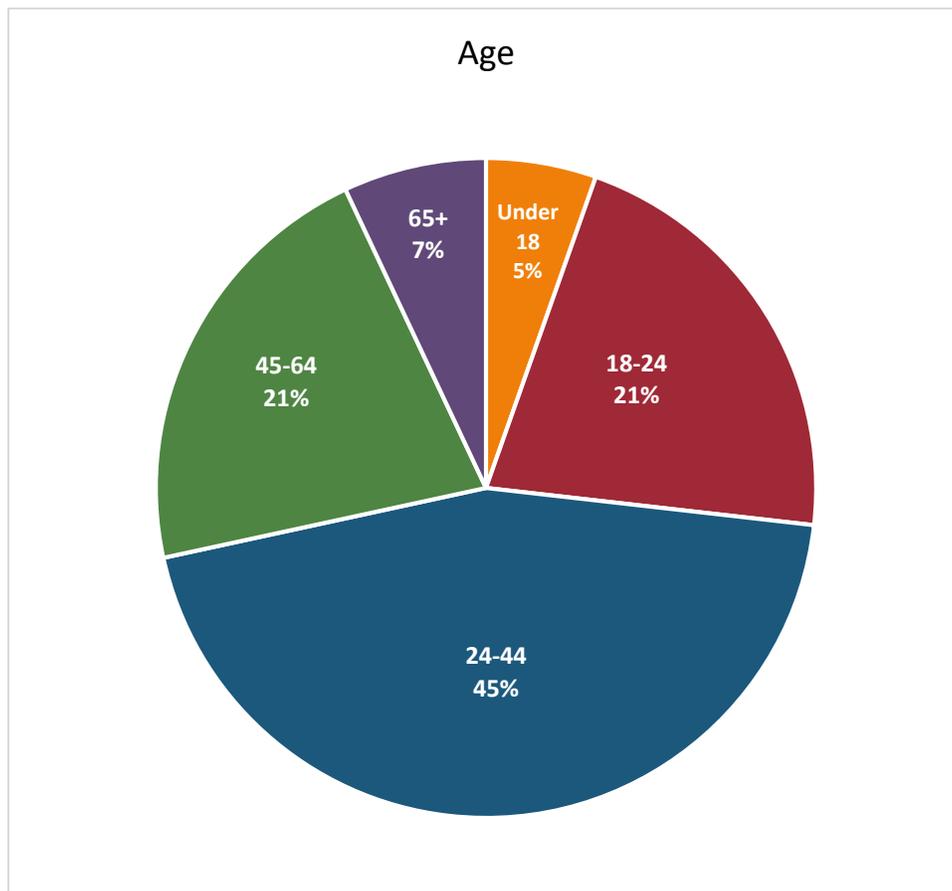


Riders with income under \$50,000 are more likely to not have access to a car (over 53%) compared to riders with income of \$50,000 or more (less than 20%).

## RIDER DEMOGRAPHICS

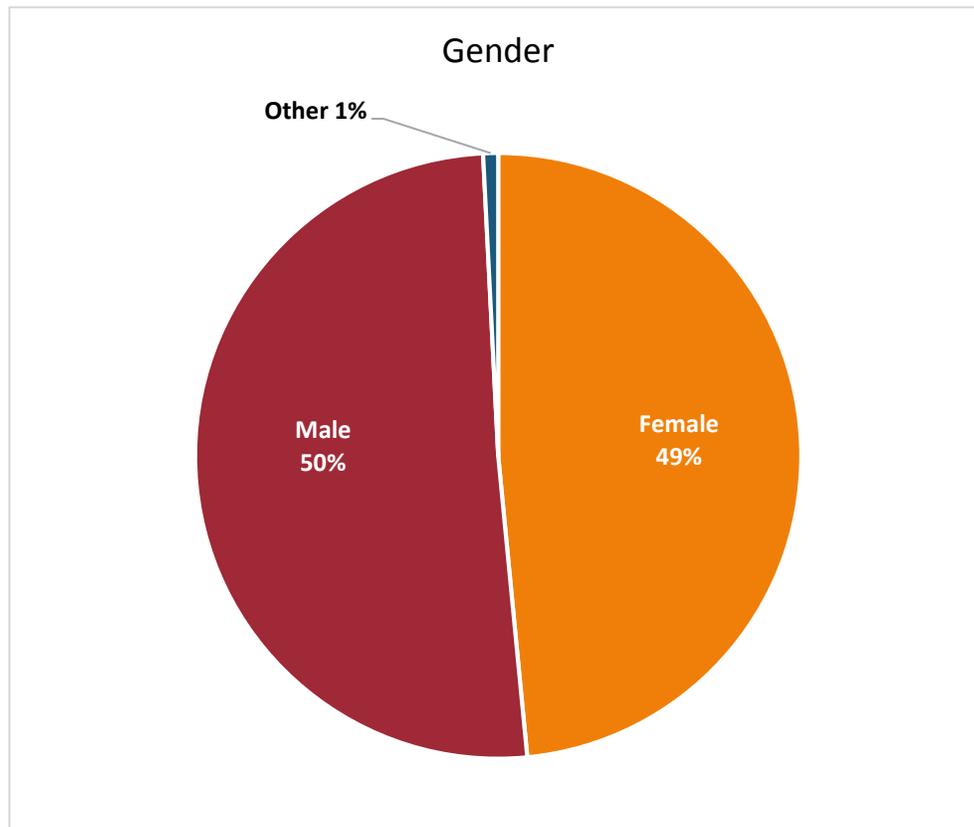
### Age

AC Transit weekday riders are roughly split between those under 35 years old (53%) and those 35 or older (47%). A rider that is a person of color is slightly more likely to be under 35 (56%), as is a rider in a low-income household (55%). The median age of AC Transit weekday riders is 33 years old.



### Gender

AC Transit riders are roughly evenly split between male (50%) and female (49%). Riders were also given “Other” as an option for gender and in this survey 0.5% of riders identified this way.



*Note: Other includes other & refuse to answer*

### Employment/Student Status

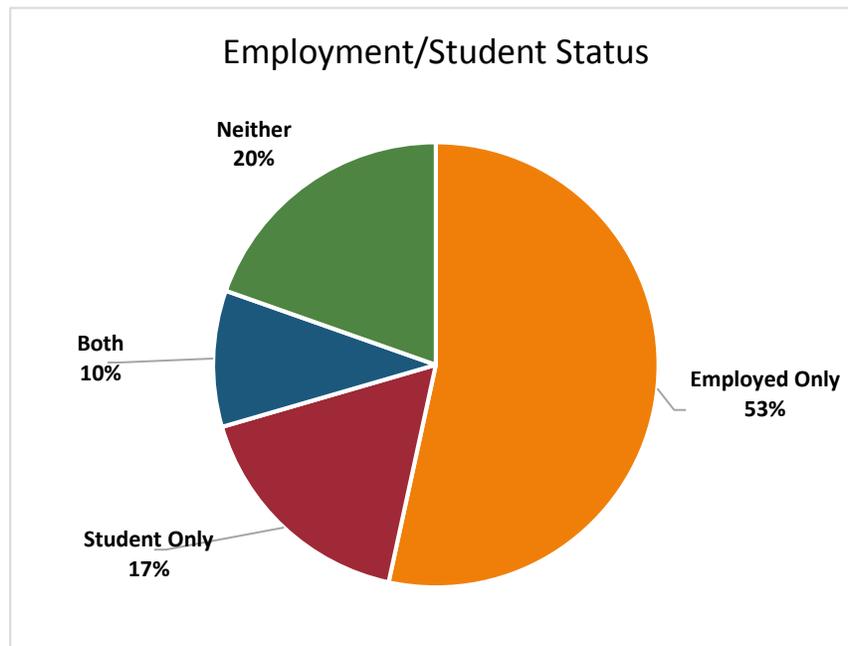
Sixty-three percent of AC Transit weekday riders are employed, either part-time or full-time, and 27% of AC Transit riders are students.

Employed	63%
Not employed	37%

Not a student	73%
Student	27%
Full Time college/university	10%
Part Time college/university	10%
K - 12th grade	8%

*Note: Due to rounding, totals may equal more than 100%*

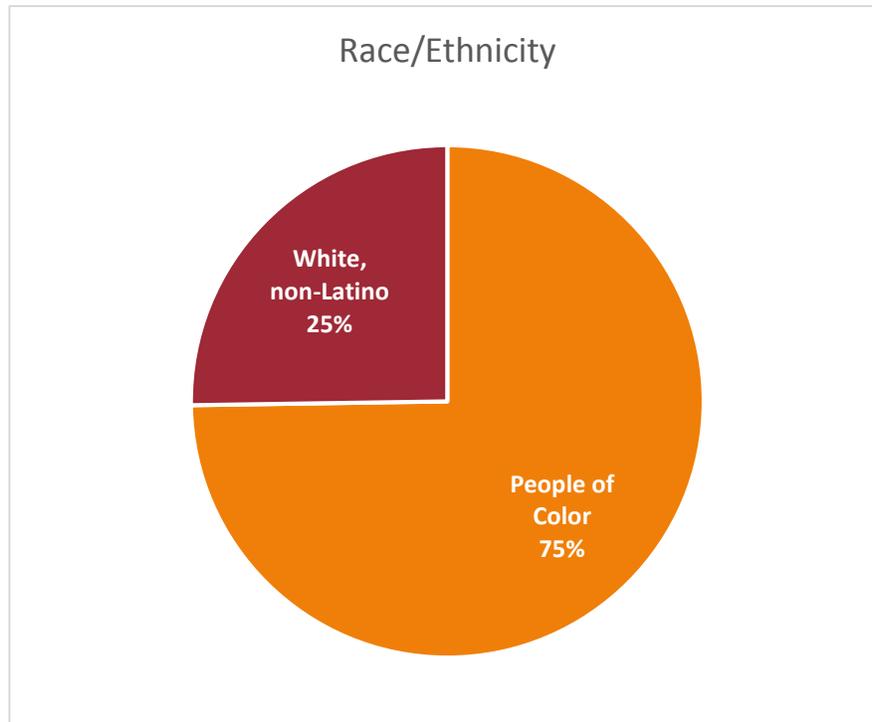
A majority of AC Transit weekday riders (53%) are employed only, that is, they are not also students; this is an increase of 9% since the last survey. Almost 10% of riders are both students and workers, and one in five riders is neither a student nor employed.



AC Transit riders under the age of 35 are less likely to be employed only (43%) versus those 35 or older (65%). Person of color riders are less likely to be employed only (51%) compared to non-Latino white riders (61%).

### Race/Ethnicity

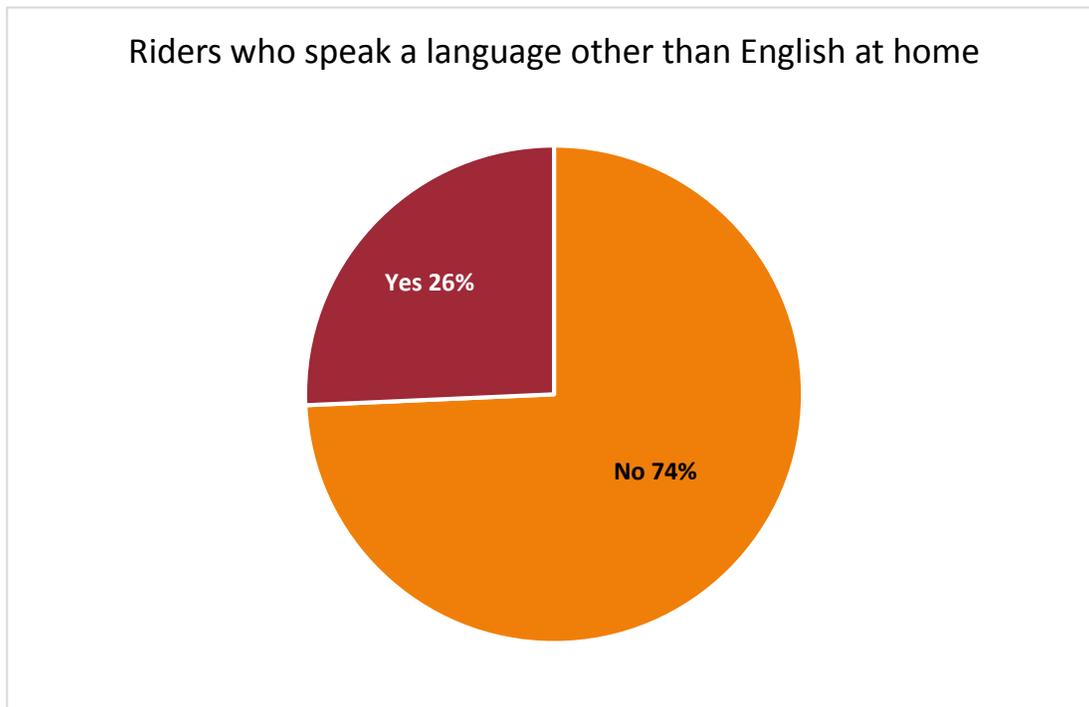
A large majority of AC Transit weekday riders are people of color (75%).



In addition, the ridership is very diverse, with the largest group (about a third of weekday riders) identifying as Black or African American. About 20% identify as Latino or Hispanic, the same as in the last survey, and another 18% identify as Asian.

## Language

One in four AC Transit weekday riders (26%) speaks a language other than English at home.



About half of weekday riders who report speaking a language other than English at home say that Spanish is the language they speak. Chinese and Tagalog are next most common.

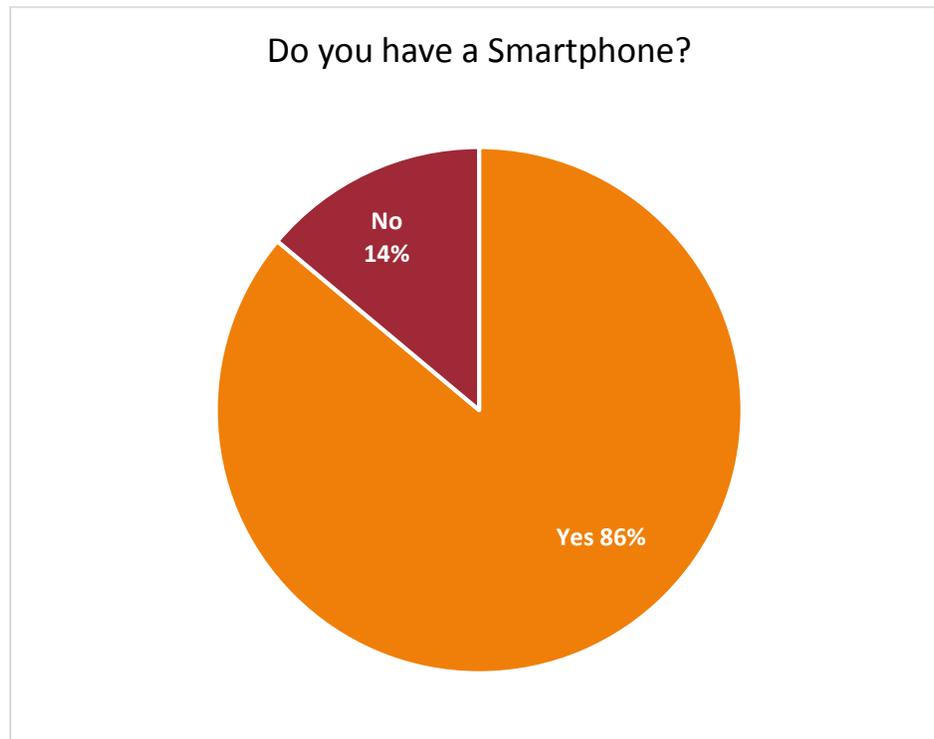
<b>Most Common Languages Spoken at Home Besides English</b>	
Spanish	51%
Chinese	14%
Tagalog	5%
Vietnamese	3%
Hindi	3%
French	3%
Korean	2%
Arabic	2%
Japanese	2%
Other	16%

Of weekday riders who speak a language other than English at home, almost three-quarters (74%) indicate they speak English very well. That means approximately 26% of AC Transit riders are considered to have limited English proficiency (LEP).

## NEW FINDINGS

### Smartphone Ownership

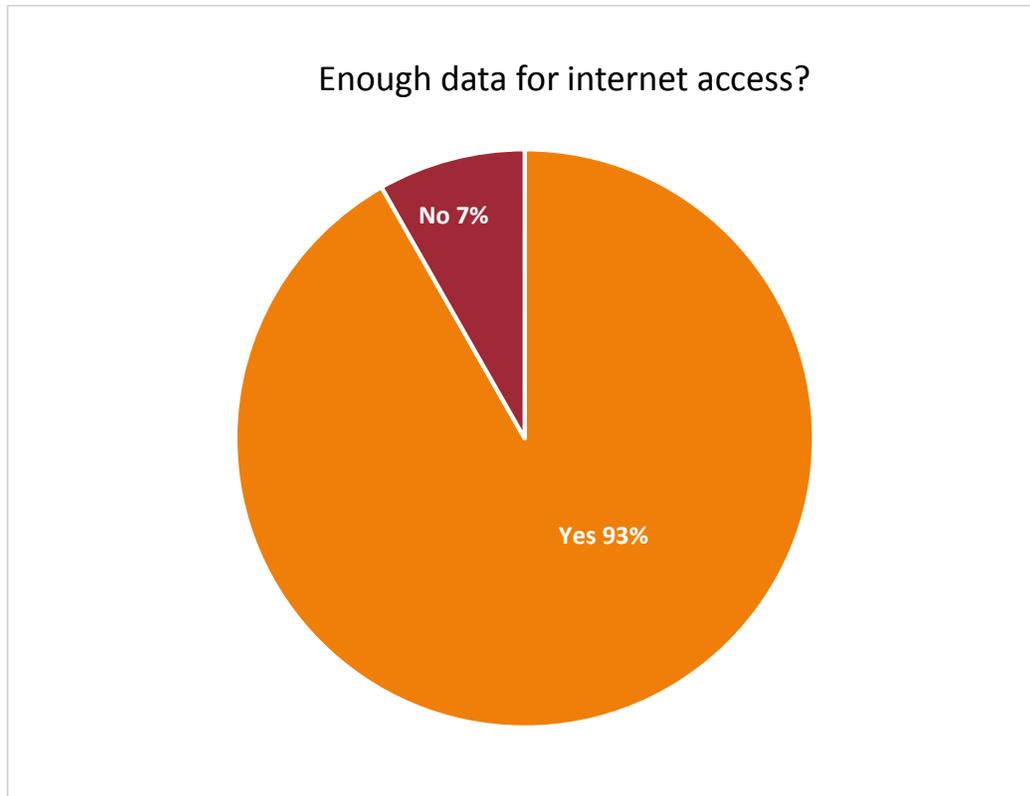
For the first time in the 2017-18 survey, riders were asked about their smartphone use and internet access. A very large majority (86%) of weekday riders own a smart phone.



Low-income riders are slightly less likely to own a smartphone (82%) than riders in general.

### Internet Access

Riders who own a smartphone were asked if they had enough data to use the internet on the day they were surveyed. More than nine out of ten (93%) say they do.



A lower percentage of weekday riders with limited English proficiency own smartphones (79%), compared to riders who speak English very well or fluently (93%).