

BFCOG **REGIONAL**
TRANSPORTATION PLAN

SURVEY ANALYSIS

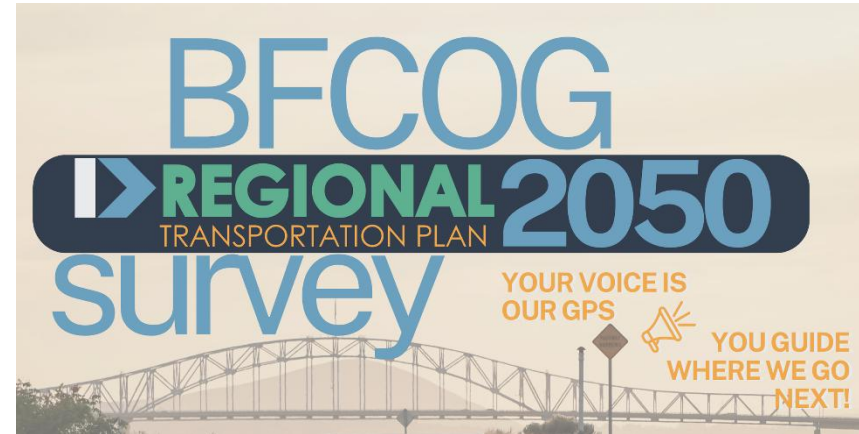


January 2026

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

Public engagement is a foundational element of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 2050. To better understand how people travel today, the challenges they experience, and the transportation investments they value most, BFCOG conducted a regionwide public survey as part of the RTP development process.

The survey was designed to gather input on travel behavior, system performance, transportation challenges, and long-term priorities. Results are used to inform RTP goals, policy direction, and investment strategies, ensuring the plan reflects community-identified needs and values.



Survey responses were analyzed using a thematic, policy-oriented framework that emphasizes patterns across questions rather than individual responses. This approach supports meaningful interpretation while maintaining analytical rigor.

Analytical Approach:

Survey results were analyzed using a thematic, policy-oriented framework, grouping responses into seven planning lenses. These groupings reflect the themes addressed by the BFCOG staff in the survey.



Implications for RTP Goals and Strategies

This approach emphasizes patterns and consistency across responses, rather than individual questions, to ensure results meaningfully inform regional decision-making. The RTP Goals include:



SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The RTP 2050 survey was administered from September 17 to December 31, 2025. The survey received 774 responses. Participation was open to anyone who lives, works, or travels in the Benton–Franklin region.

Because the survey was self-selected, the results are not statistically representative of the regional population as a whole. Certain demographic groups, particularly older adults, higher-income households, and individuals with regular access to vehicles, are overrepresented. As a result, the findings should be interpreted as directional indicators of community priorities and experiences.

Despite these limitations, the survey provides valuable insight into shared concerns, consistent priorities, and areas where transportation improvements could have the most significant impact. Complete question-by-question results are provided in Appendix A.

WHO WE HEARD FROM

Survey respondents represent a wide range of ages, household characteristics, and transportation experiences, though some groups are more represented than others.

Key characteristics of respondents include:

- A higher proportion of respondents age 55 and older
- Predominantly White or Caucasian respondents
- Most households reporting access to one or more vehicles
- Approximately one-quarter of households reporting a disability or difficulty getting around
- About one-fifth of households include children under driving age

These characteristics provide important context for interpreting survey results, particularly related to travel behavior, perceived ease of travel, and transportation priorities.

While most respondents fell within this demographic profile, we had a range of respondents across the spectrum in terms of primary mode of transportation, age, gender, household income, access to a vehicle, and race/ethnicity. This survey is not representative of the entire region; rather, it is just a sample of the population.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE RTP SURVEY



How People Travel Today

Survey results indicate that driving alone is the primary mode of travel for most respondents, reflecting the region's auto-oriented transportation system. Walking, biking, public transit, and rideshare services are used far less frequently as primary travel modes.

Public transit use is particularly limited. Nearly two-thirds of respondents report never using public transportation in a typical year, and only a small share report using transit on a daily or weekly basis. This pattern suggests that while transit is an important service for certain populations, it is not currently a regular travel option for most residents.

Overall, these findings highlight the central role of the roadway network in daily travel while also underscoring the limited reach of non-driving options for many households.



Perceived Ease of Traveling in the Region

When asked to rate their ability to move around the region, most respondents (64%) described travel as either very easy or somewhat easy. This suggests that, for many residents, particularly those who primarily drive, the transportation system generally functions well. Of the 359 people who drive alone, daily, 100% of those respondents said it was either very easy or somewhat easy to get around the region.

However, a meaningful share (32%) of respondents reported neutral or difficult travel experiences. This indicates that ease of travel is not evenly distributed and may vary based on factors such as mode choice, physical ability, vehicle access, or trip purpose.

These findings point to the importance of looking beyond average conditions to understand how different populations experience the transportation system. Furthermore, while many people have access to a vehicle, and find it relatively easy to get around, there are still community members struggling to have consistent, safe, and convenient access to transportation from point A to B.



Transportation Challenges and Barriers

Respondents were asked to rate a range of transportation challenges as a big challenge, moderate challenge, not a challenge, or no opinion. When responses are considered collectively, several challenges consistently emerge as the most significant across the region.

The highest-ranked challenges include (shown in descending order of importance):

- Driver behavior, such as speeding, distraction, and aggressive driving
- Traffic congestion and delays
- Highway safety
- Limited public transit options
- Long distances between destinations
- Safety concerns when walking or biking

These challenges reflect both system design issues and user experience concerns, with safety emerging as a dominant theme across multiple contexts. Issues such as cost of transit and personal health limitations were less frequently identified as major challenges overall, though they remain important for specific populations.



What Matters Most: Community Values and Priorities

When asked what is most important when thinking about transportation in the region, respondents most frequently selected safety for all travelers. Other highly valued considerations include reliable travel times, access to jobs, schools, and services, and having choices in how to travel.

Respondents were also asked to rank long-term RTP priorities. Safety was overwhelmingly ranked as the highest priority (68%), followed by accessibility and mobility (26% & 21%). The ranking of five priorities was (shown in descending order):

1. Safety, 2. Accessibility, 3. Mobility, 4. Maintenance and Preservation, and 5. Freight Movement

Taken together, these results demonstrate that safety is not only a stated value, but a consistently reinforced priority across multiple survey questions. Respondents express strong support for a transportation system that reduces risk, improves reliability, and serves people of all ages and abilities.



Preferred Transportation Investments

Survey participants were asked which transportation improvements would make the biggest difference in their daily lives. The most frequently selected improvements include (shown are the top 5 in descending order):

- Intersection and safety improvements
- Road maintenance and repair
- More sidewalks and safer crossings
- Additional greenways and trails
- Better connections to regional destinations

These preferences suggest that respondents prioritize maintaining and improving existing infrastructure, particularly in ways that enhance safety and accessibility, rather than focusing primarily on system expansion. Support for sidewalks, crossings, and trails also indicates broad interest in improving conditions for walking and biking, even among respondents who primarily travel by car.



Transportation and Household Context

Survey results show that transportation experiences and priorities vary based on household characteristics.

Respondents from households with limited vehicle access or with members who have disabilities are more likely to report difficulty traveling around the region and to identify mobility (37.5%) and accessibility (50%) as significant challenges. Households with children under driving age tend to place greater emphasis on safer walking or intersections, biking infrastructure, and local connectivity. Of the people with children under driving age, the top selections for the transportation improvements that would make the biggest difference in their lives were intersection and safety improvements (54%), more sidewalks and safer crossings (50%), and more greenways and trails (46%).

These differences reinforce the importance of considering household context and equity when evaluating transportation needs. A system that works well for drivers may still present barriers for people who rely on non-driving options or who face mobility limitations.



Qualitative Input: What Would Make Travel Easier

As part of the RTP 2050 public survey, respondents were asked an open-ended question: “What’s one thing that would make getting around the region easier for you?” More than 600 responses were received. Responses were reviewed and coded into thematic categories based on recurring topics and planning relevance. The qualitative findings reinforce and deepen the quantitative results, providing insight into lived travel experiences across the region.

Safety Across All Modes

Safety was the most consistently cited concern, regardless of how respondents travel. Many comments focused on aggressive or inattentive driving, unsafe intersections, and the lack of protection for people walking or biking.

“Too many dangerous and aggressive drivers.”

“Bump outs at crosswalks... keep me safe when walking.”

These responses underscore the importance of a Safe System Approach that addresses roadway design, speed management, and user behavior.

Congestion, Bottlenecks, and Traffic Operations

Congestion, particularly during peak travel times and at known choke points, was frequently mentioned as a barrier to efficient travel. Respondents emphasized operational improvements as much as capacity.

*"Time the lights! Let me repeat, TIME THE LIGHTS."
"Reduction of pinch-points & backups, especially leaving Richland."*

This highlights the value of targeted operational strategies, such as signal coordination and access management.

River Crossings as a Regional Constraint

The limited number of Columbia River crossings emerged as one of the most common and specific concerns. Respondents linked bridge congestion to delays, reliability issues, and regional connectivity.

*"The bridges are the bottleneck of the region."
"Another bridge across the Columbia to reduce traffic in Richland."*

This theme reflects the role of river crossings as a critical element of the regional transportation system.

Public Transit: Interest Limited by Service

Many respondents expressed interest in using public transportation more often but cited infrequent service, long travel times, and limited coverage as barriers.

*"Driving takes 15 minutes, but the bus takes over an hour."
"More frequent bus service and extended hours."*

These comments suggest unmet demand for transit if service were faster, more reliable, and better aligned with regional travel patterns.

Walking and Biking: Safety and Connectivity Matter

Walking and biking were frequently discussed, often with a focus on safety, continuity, and comfort.

*"I want to bike more, but it's just not safe sharing the road."
"Safe connected bicycle routes."*

Support for active transportation is broad but closely tied to the availability of protected, connected infrastructure.

Maintenance, Growth, and Long-Term Planning

Respondents also emphasized the importance of maintaining existing infrastructure and planning for growth.

“Better roads, lots of potholes.”
“Plan streets for future growth instead of just today.”

These comments reflect a desire for proactive, coordinated transportation planning that keeps pace with development.

Across all themes, respondents consistently emphasized safety, reliability, and practical improvements that make daily travel easier. While perspectives vary by mode and experience, the qualitative responses strongly support RTP priorities focused on safety, maintenance, accessibility, and long-term system resilience.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Several clear themes emerge from the survey analysis:

- Safety is the most consistent and widely shared transportation priority
- The transportation system functions best for drivers, with fewer options for non-drivers
- Maintenance and safety improvements are prioritized over system expansion
- Active transportation infrastructure gaps are widely recognized
- Transportation needs and challenges vary by household characteristics

Implications for the Regional Transportation Plan

Survey results directly support the RTP's emphasis on:

- A Safe System Approach that reduces risk for all users
- Investment in maintenance, preservation, and safety
- Multimodal improvements that expand access and travel choice
- Planning that accounts for varying household needs and barriers for specific populations

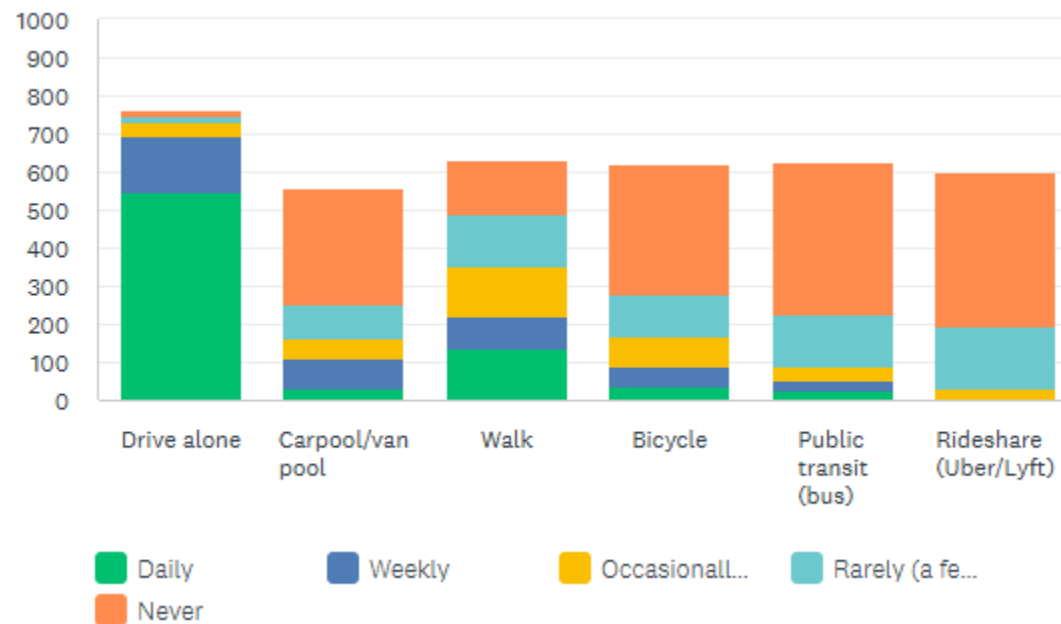
By incorporating public input throughout the plan, the RTP 2050 reflects community priorities while maintaining a strong analytical foundation to guide future transportation decisions.

APPENDIX A:

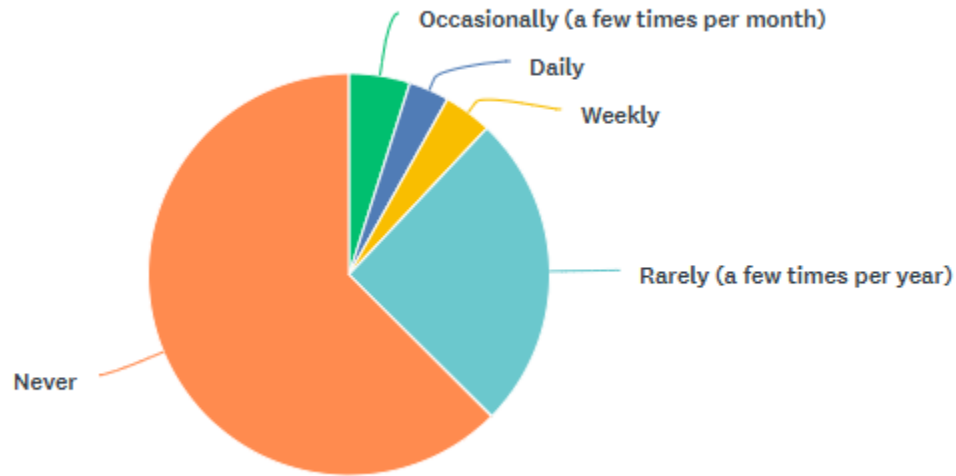
RTP: 2050 SURVEY

RESULTS

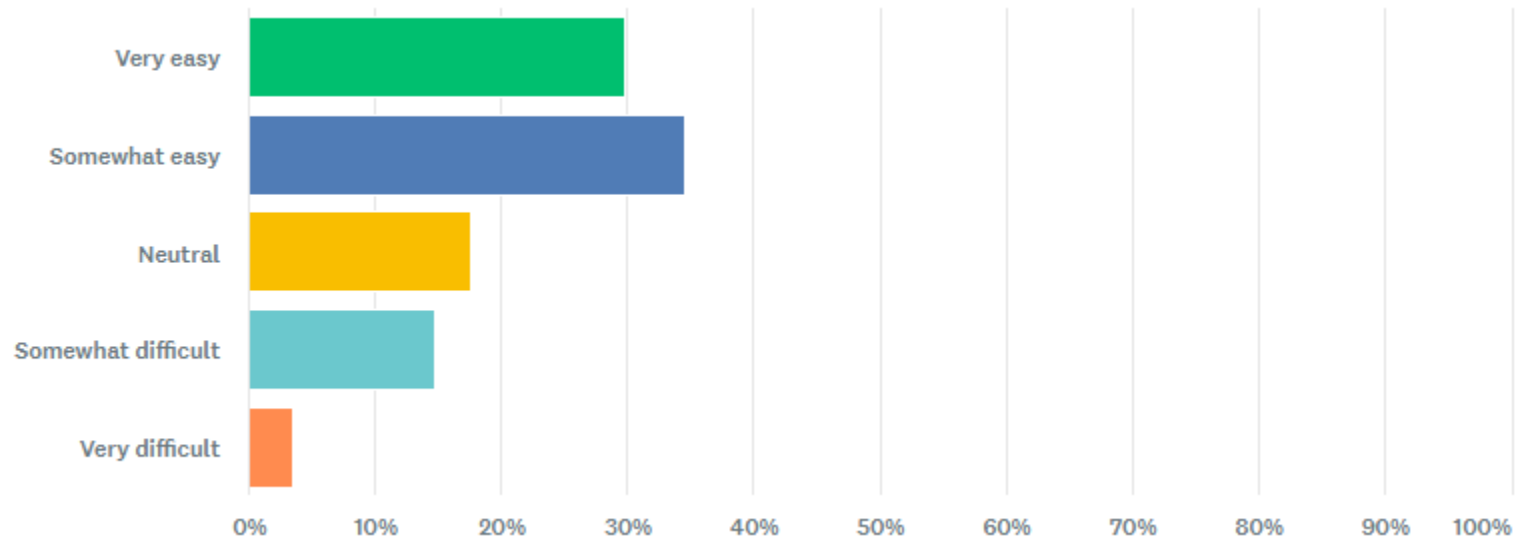
Q1. WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY WAY OF GETTING AROUND FOR MOST TRIPS?



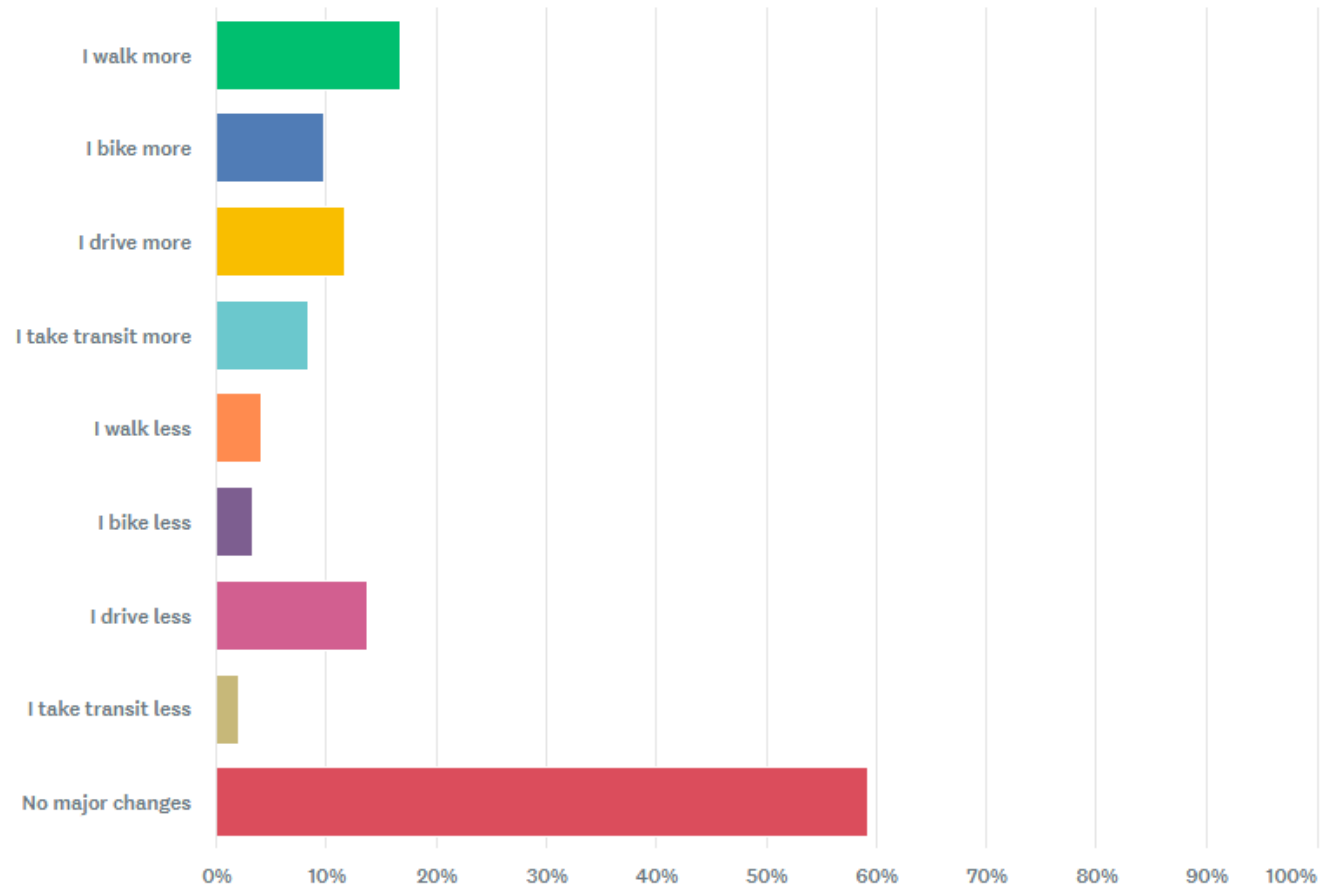
Q2. HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (E.G., BUS, DIAL-A-RIDE)?



Q3. IN THE PAST YEAR, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR ABILITY TO MOVE/TRAVEL AROUND THE REGION?



Q4. HOW HAVE YOUR TRAVEL HABITS CHANGED SINCE 2020 (COVID)? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



Q5. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT TRANSPORTATION IN OUR REGION, WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU? (SELECT UP TO 3)



Q6. WHAT'S ONE THING THAT WOULD MAKE GETTING AROUND THE REGION EASIER FOR YOU?

RESPONSE
Easily available bus schedule and nearby stops.
Coordinated stop lights
Stops by my home and on a higher frequency to/from work, currently only once per hour
Cheaper gas
Educating people about roundabouts

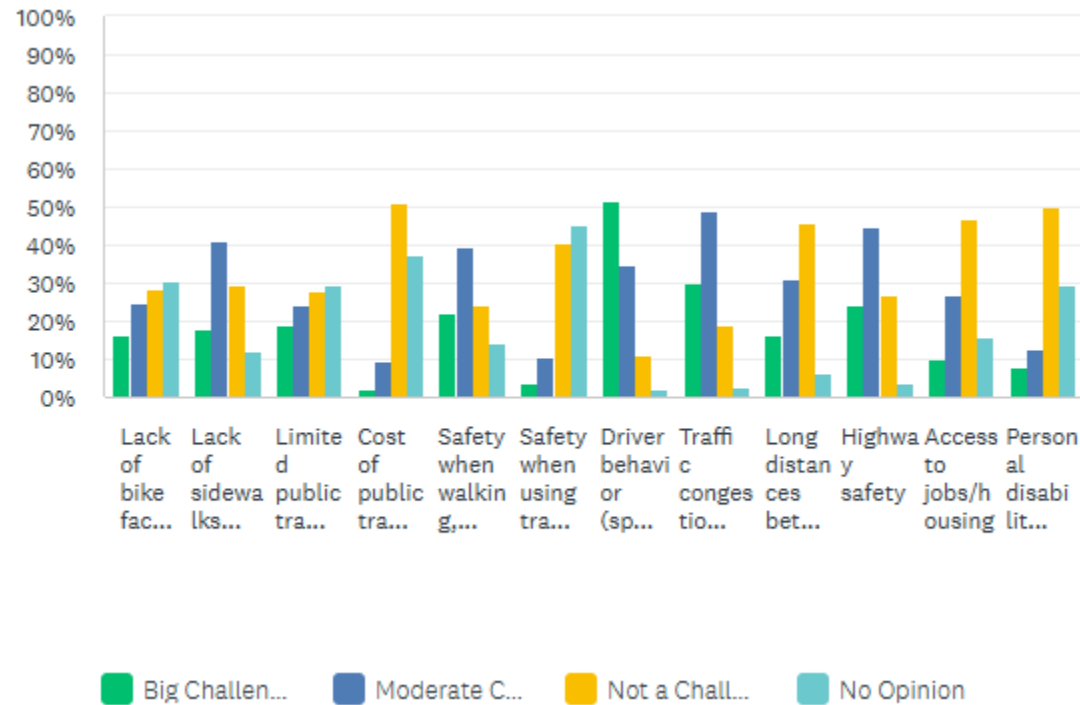
I would like to see a more efficient way to travel between the 3 cities (Pasco, Kennewick, Richland) using the local transit. I am interested and willing to use the public transportation instead of using my car to commute to work. Unfortunately the bus routes between the cities require over an hour to get from my home to work but driving is only about a 15 minute commute. Making this commute under 40 minutes using the bus would make using the transit system a possibility for me (at least 2–3 times per week).
More comfortable / safer walking and biking paths.
Reevaluate the location of traffic lights and roundabouts
Another bridge across the Columbia to reduce traffic in Richland
Nice road conditions, fill potholes that will last
More transit express routes
Bridge at Edison crossing the Columbia to Pasco
Multiple ways in and out of locations
Not slowing traffic flow by taking out traffic lanes for bike lanes. Reducing rush hour traffic on bypass GW Way
Safe bike and walking routes
More paved, hazard-free bike lanes
Diverging truck traffic on Highway 395
On and off ramps on the bypass highway replacing traffic lights
Another bridge from Kennewick to Road 100
N/A
I feel like road markings were more reflective before; overgrowth sometimes obstructs signs and line of sight
A roundabout on 395 at the Mercantile
More courteous drivers and less traffic
Better drives on the road
Enforcement of bad driving behavior
Better pedestrian safety
Less bicycle lanes
Enforcement of traffic laws
Get Highway 395 out of Kennewick
A more robust biking infrastructure
Better drivers

Less bikes on the road
More capacity on local arterials
Another bridge across the Columbia (Pasco to Kennewick)
Reliable and efficient public transportation
Less traffic
Reduced traffic on main city thoroughfares; another bridge over the Columbia River
Another bridge
Fewer roundabouts; better service times for buses
Fewer choke points
HOV lanes on SR-240
Get heavy truck traffic out of Kennewick; need a ring road
Better reflective lines on streets
Less bike lanes, more car lanes
More walking paths, sidewalks, crosswalks, protected bike lanes, and better bus stop coverage
More bus routes
Higher frequency of bus routes to Prosser
Better signup for service
It's pretty easy to get around the region
Safer biking options
More and safer bike routes
A bridge connecting Edison and Road 68
Better signage and lane planning near commercial developments
I think it's good now
Better bus system
Fewer vehicles on the roads
More bike-friendly roads and shoulders
Stops with A/C and quicker trips
Designing cycling infrastructure to be family friendly
More bus stops
No more roundabouts

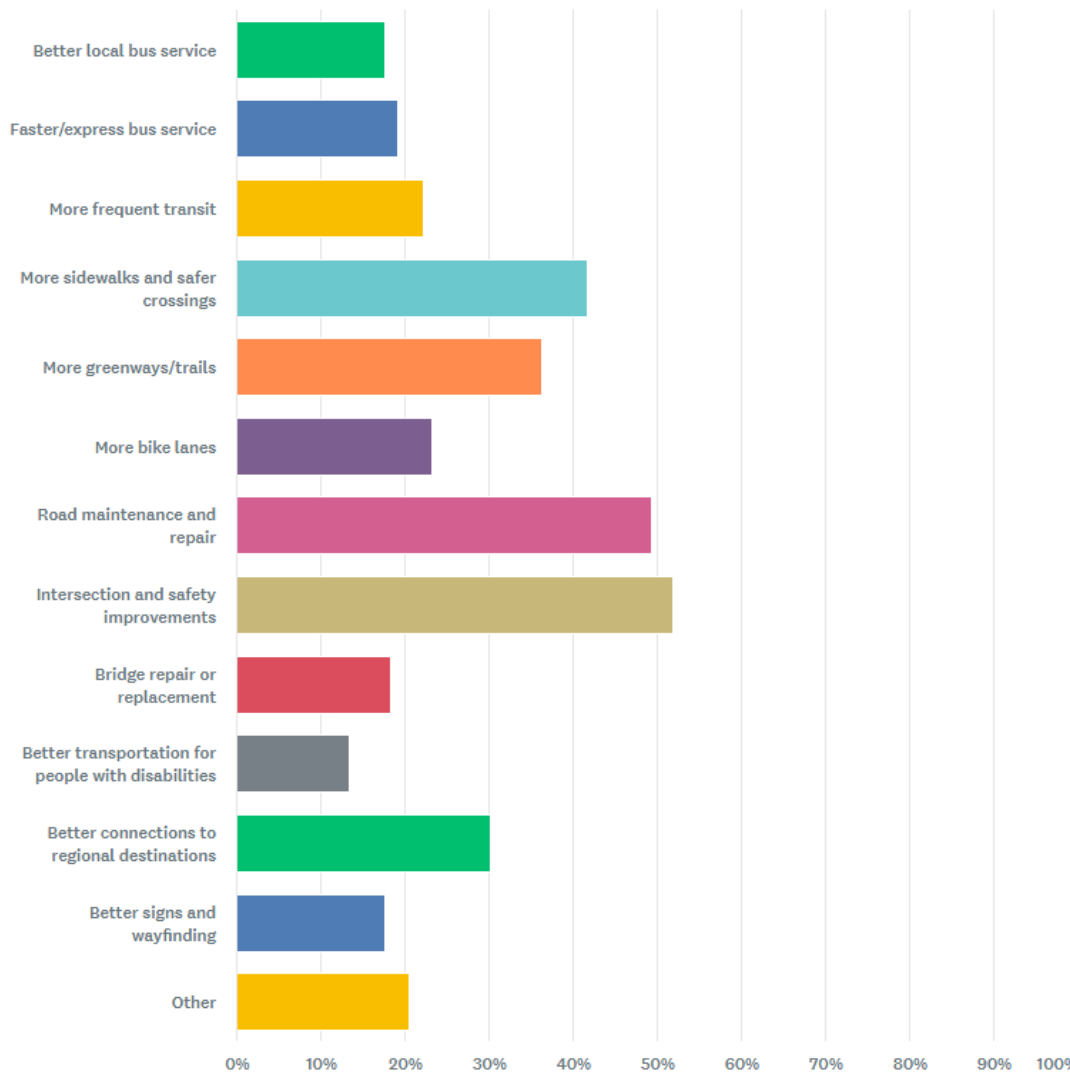
Bike paths
Accessible bus stops with benches and shelter
More bus services, express buses, and a park-and-ride campaign
Separated bike lanes
More bike/run paths separate from roadways
Walkability
Better bike trails
Transit to and from Portland and Seattle
Being able to walk or bike more
More Uber / late-night options
Handicapped access
Pedestrian/bicycle bridge across SR-240
Traffic reduction
Additional bus stops
Better transit
Free bus fare and higher frequency
Smart signal lights; clean bike paths
Safe connected bicycle routes
Signal optimization
Less congestion during rush hours
Expand dial-a-ride zones
More bike lanes and bike safety
Another bridge from Pasco to Richland
Bus routes to my neighborhood
More bridges
Better road planning before development
More officers to catch speeders
Road construction at low-traffic times
Expanded public transportation
Schools should have easy access to transit

Smooth traffic
More bike-friendly infrastructure
Much more handicap parking and enforcement
Post bus schedules at all stops
Fewer long red lights
Expressways removing semi-trucks from main roads
Better designed roads near commercial development
More support for walking, biking, and transit
Connected pathways
Better bike lanes away from traffic
More access to public transportation
Dedicated bus or rail line between cities
Less congestion
Telework
Timing traffic lights
Planning streets for future growth
Continued expansion of transit
More sidewalks
Paint street stripes
More EV charging
Less construction
Protected bike lanes
Pedestrian-centric urban planning
Better connectivity between cities
Faster transit times
Evening bus options

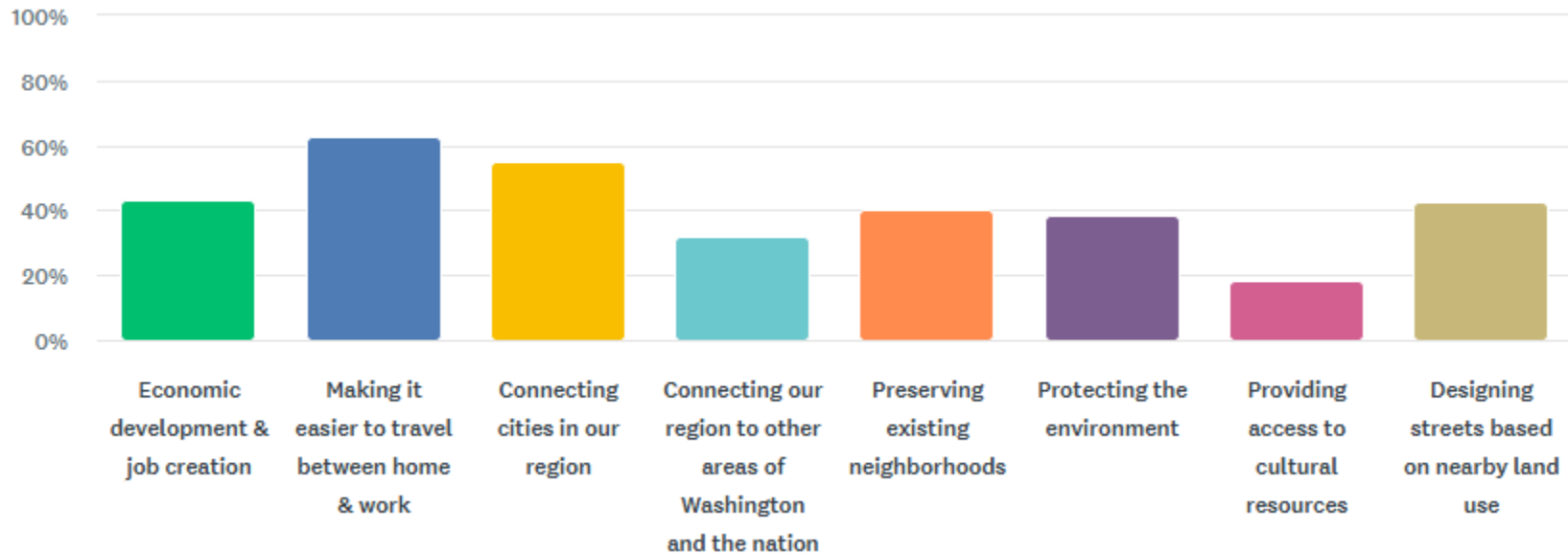
Q7. WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU EXPERIENCE WHEN TRAVELING IN THE BENTON-FRANKLIN REGION? (SELECT ONE PER ROW)



Q8. WHICH TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS WOULD MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE IN YOUR DAILY LIFE? (SELECT UP TO 5)



Q9. WHEN MAKING TRANSPORTATION DECISIONS, WE SHOULD CONSIDER: (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



Q10. PLEASE RANK THE FOLLOWING PRIORITIES FROM 1 (HIGHEST) TO 5 (LOWEST).

