

# Mountain Metropolitan Transit 2020 Rider Survey In Brief



## FIXED-ROUTE RIDER SURVEY

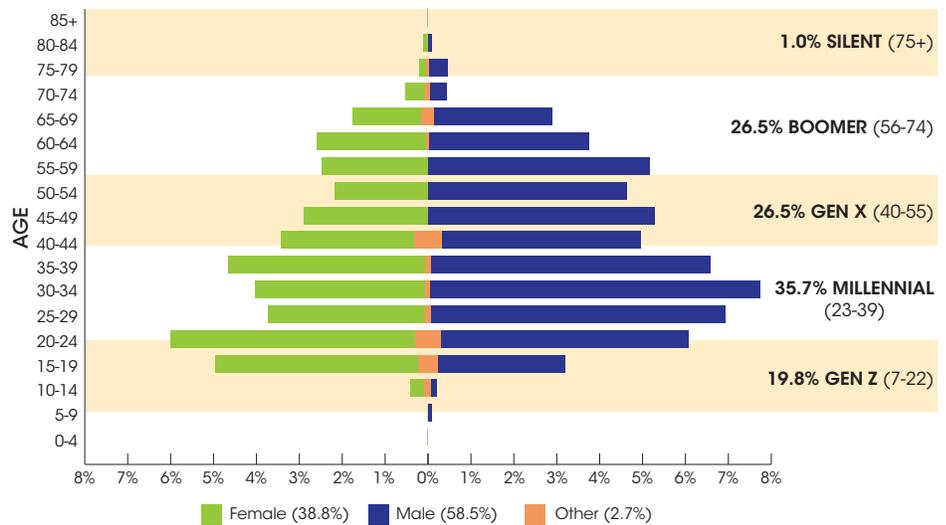
The on-board survey aims to understand riders and their trips from four different perspectives: how riders reach transit, how riders use transit, how well MMT serves their riders, and who rides MMT. The survey instrument included 33 questions and surveying was carried out on board transit buses from Sunday, March 8, 2020 to Saturday, March 14, 2020. Mid-week of surveying, closures (or announcements of imminent closures) of schools, offices, restaurants, and many other social and working or learning activities started to occur due to the COVID-19 pandemic health crisis, which led to lower-than-normal ridership and undersampling on some routes and days. Nonetheless, a valid systemwide sample was achieved at the 95% ± 5% level, with proportional representation for each route and day based on ridership. Usable collected survey forms numbered 1,493, of which 1,426 were unduplicated.

## KEY ON-BOARD SURVEY OUTCOMES

### Gender Mismatch

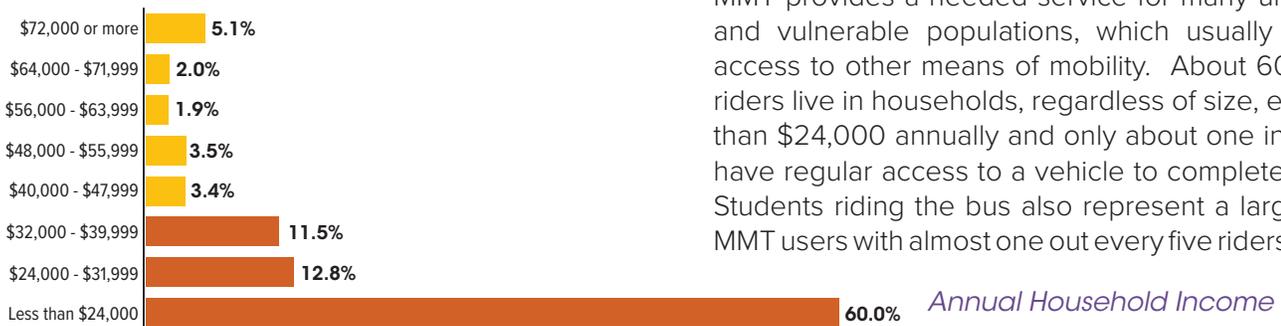
MMT ridership leans heavily male, a finding not entirely surprising since the 2017 survey showed a similar result. In 2020, an even higher discrepancy in gender share could signal a widening gap. The ratio of ridership is almost three to two, meaning that for every three male riders there are only two female riders. This difference is even more pronounced in specific subgroups such as Millennials, Gen X, and sole-purpose riders (those who primarily ride MMT for a single purpose like commuting), revealing that women aged 22 to 64 are underrepresented or avoid using transit for their trips.

MMT Rider Age and Gender

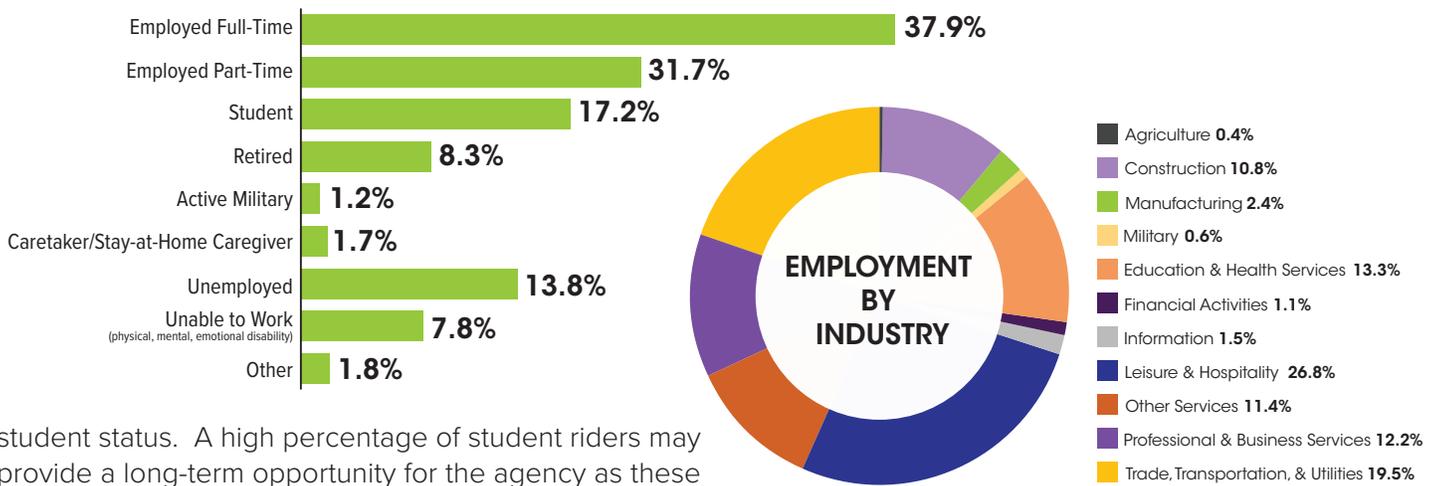


Cross-referencing customer satisfaction with gender suggests (though does not indicate a causal relationship) improvements for addressing this gap. Service frequency and its predictability and reliability have been identified as an overall challenge for MMT, but these themes are more pronounced when looking at women only. Women reported a lower satisfaction with these and ranked them at a higher importance. Safety on the bus and at MMT facilities showed similar results for women. The latter, safety at MMT facilities, moved from being a strength for the average rider, to being a challenge when gender is considered.

### Essential Service to the Community



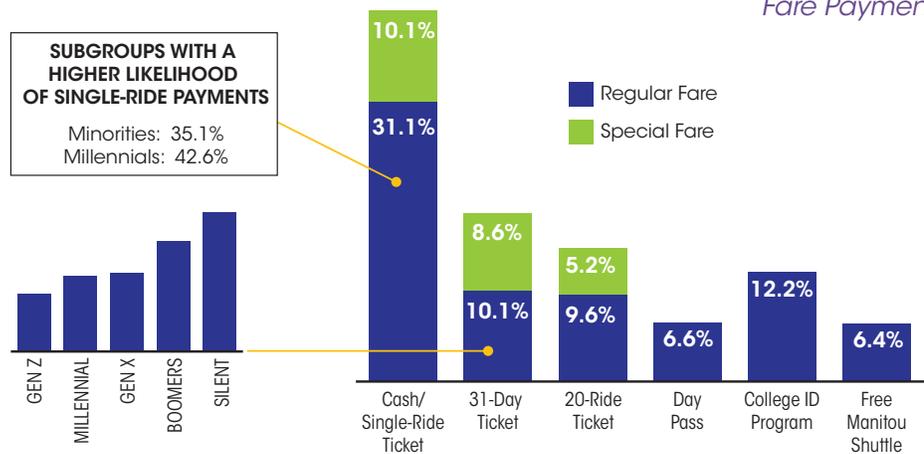
## Employment and Student Status



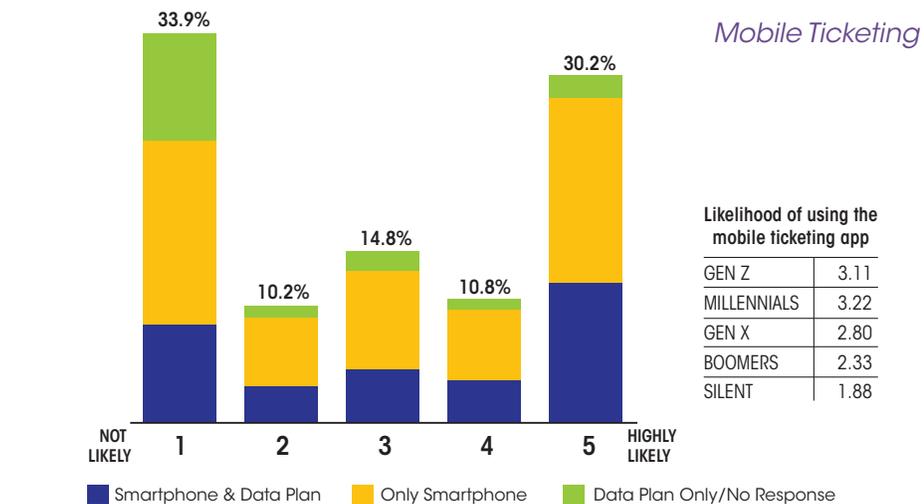
student status. A high percentage of student riders may provide a long-term opportunity for the agency as these riders move into other phases of their lives; a reliable, frequent service could lead to riders' continuing trust in the service as a choice for their travel. Additionally, many of the riders who are employed work in essential industries such as Trade, Transportation & Utilities and Education & Health Services. This exemplifies the key function MMT offers the community: offering access to jobs, school, services, grocery stores, and many other destinations, essential or otherwise.

## Fare Payment and Mobile Ticketing

The majority of MMT riders pay their fare on the bus with cash or a single-ride ticket representing 41% of all sales. A few key locations, such as the Downtown Terminal, show a majority of pass/ticket sales that occur before boarding. By



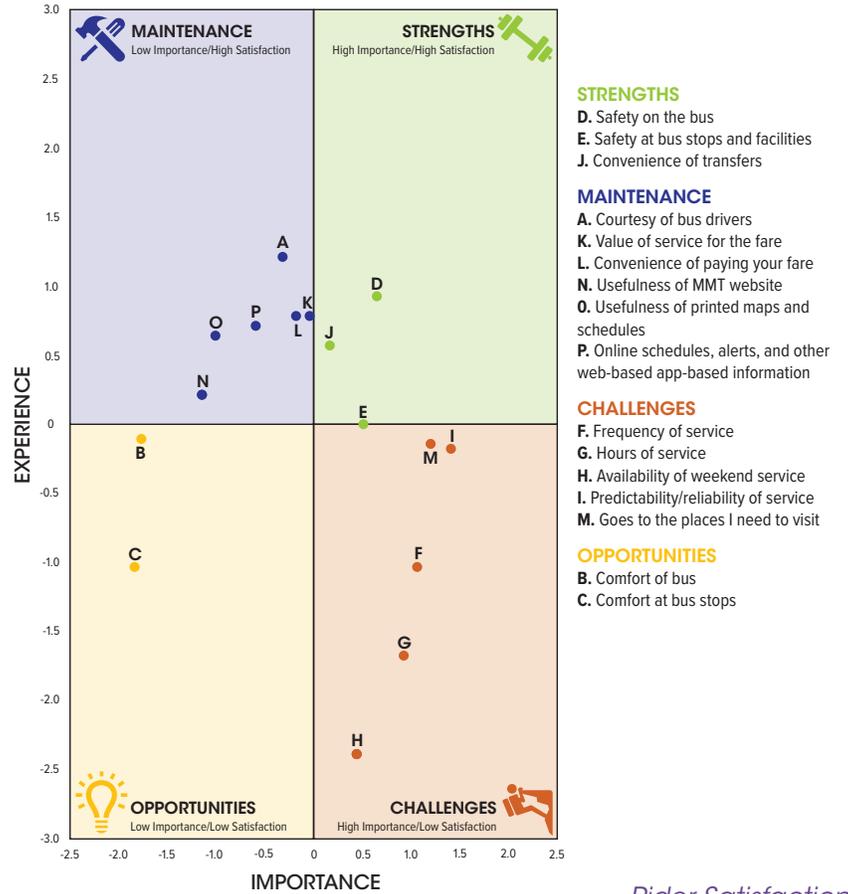
comparison, online purchase options are limited yet still represent almost 6% of all sales, offering an opportunity for diversification. Fare payments did not appear as a challenge or of great concern for improvement to MMT riders, but newer technologies offering increased rider convenience are becoming more available to transit systems, nationwide. Especially given that younger generations represent a large share of MMT users and are more adept at newer technologies, now may prove to be a critical time for MMT to begin transitioning.



These younger riders already use online services and apps to inform themselves about MMT services at a very high percentage. When asked how likely the rider would be to use mobile ticketing, overall opinion was decisively split between not likely at all and very likely to use; when results are examined by age, however, the younger the rider, the higher the likelihood of mobile-ticketing platform use.

## Overall Rider Satisfaction

The survey asked riders to rank the importance of various aspects of MMT service, as well as to rate their experience with riding. A quadrant analysis was conducted to determine areas of strength, challenge, opportunity, and maintenance. Challenges currently include service hours, coverage, and frequency. These are common themes for transit agencies, especially those of MMT's size, which must constantly balance competing goals of a) serving more areas and offering more hours/days of service with b) better frequency along dense- and high-ridership corridors. These results are supported by the written comments on the survey forms, as a significant number of riders commented on wanting longer hours of service and more weekend service. An additional challenge, and one of the highest ranked themes in terms of importance, is service reliability and predictability. Improving reliability and predictability is often a combination of changes that can range from small to large. MMT offers many industry best practices in this area, such as even and clockface headways, real-time bus information, and monitoring on-time performance. Beyond these, MMT could look at ways to improve service reliability and availability through a cost-neutral comprehensive review of their network and innovative ways to expand coverage or hours/days beyond traditional fixed routes.



Rider Satisfaction

## TYPICAL RIDERS AND THEIR TRIPS



### average rider

Age: Older Millennial (around 39 years old)

Gender: Male (about 58% M, 39% F, and 3% Other)

Race/Ethnicity: White, non-Hispanic or Latinx (61%)

Education: High school graduate with some postsecondary education (46%, another 37% with a high school diploma only)

Employment & Income: Employed (part- or full-time\*), low-income

Industry: Leisure & Hospitality

Walks or bikes to reach transit

Pays cash to board the bus

Rides for about 45 minutes

If MMT did not exist, would walk to make their trip

Accesses bus information through physical media (older generations) or web-based sources (younger generations)

Uses a smartphone to access web-based information

Housing location choice was based on access to MMT about half the time

\*About 60% of all riders are employed part- or full-time and 14% are unemployed. Respondents could also choose some other status, such as student, retired, or unable to work. The survey allowed for multiple answers to this question.

## Rider Type Profiles

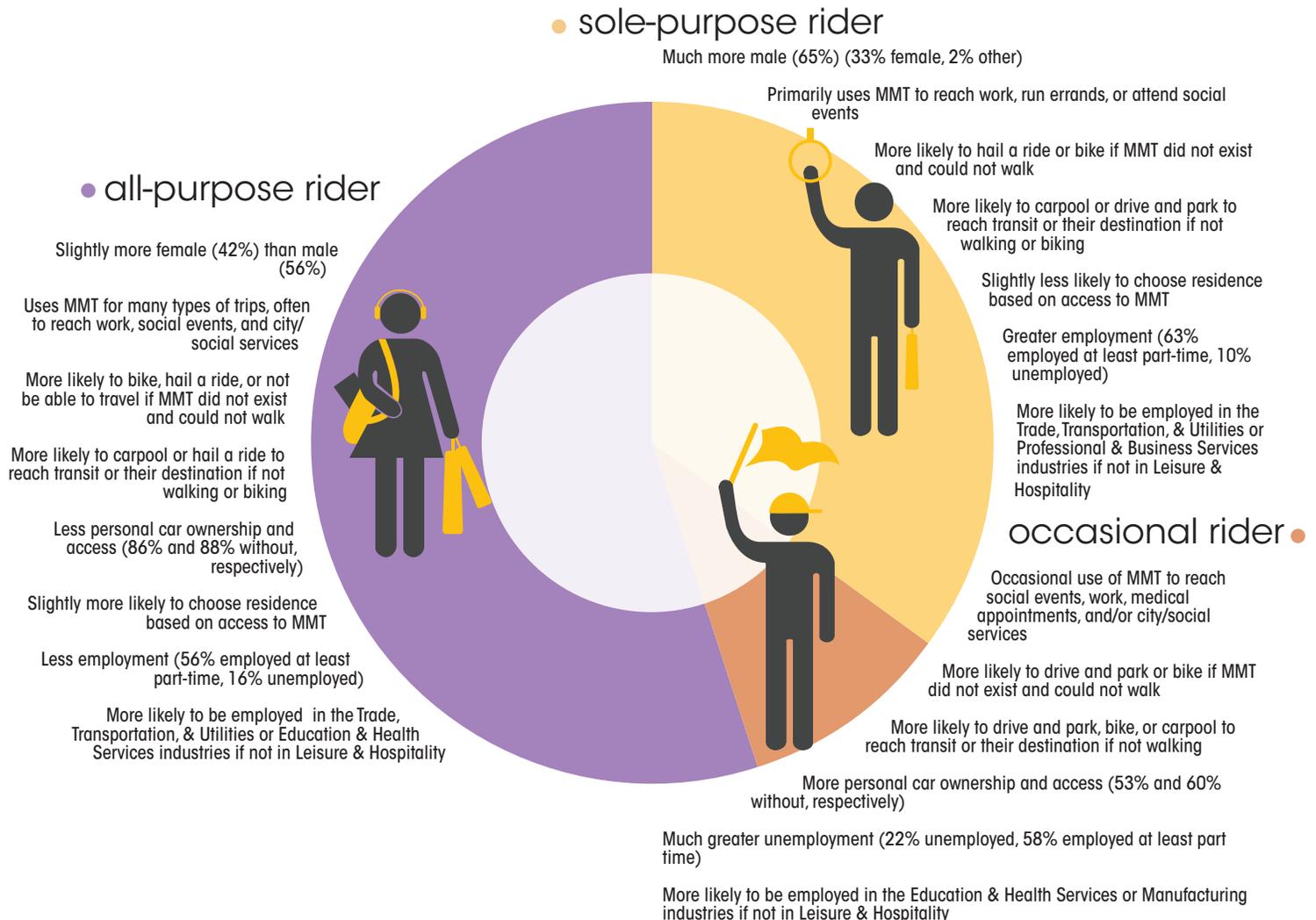
In the 2017 survey, riders were classified into categories to better understand their travel behaviors. These provide a lot of insight into how riders use MMT service and the characteristics of different types of riders:

- **The All-Purpose Rider**, who uses MMT regularly or frequently for more than one type of trip, and
- **The Sole-Purpose Rider**, who uses MMT for a specific type of trip on a regular basis but does not use the bus as much for other travel, and
- **The Occasional Rider**, who travels on MMT a few times a week or month but does not show consistent riding patterns.

All riders, no matter their patterns of travel on MMT, showcase diversity and a wide spectrum of opinions. Still, one of the primary purposes of this survey is to help MMT understand their typical or average rider. The agency can then keep these, as well as any differences or outliers, in mind when making service planning and operations decisions. The survey results provide insights into specific questions yet are also representative of all MMT riders.

**54%**  
of first-time MMT users are female

The graphic below explains how rider characteristics differ among the rider types and from the average rider. Information left out for any or all rider types means that rider type was not significantly different from the average.



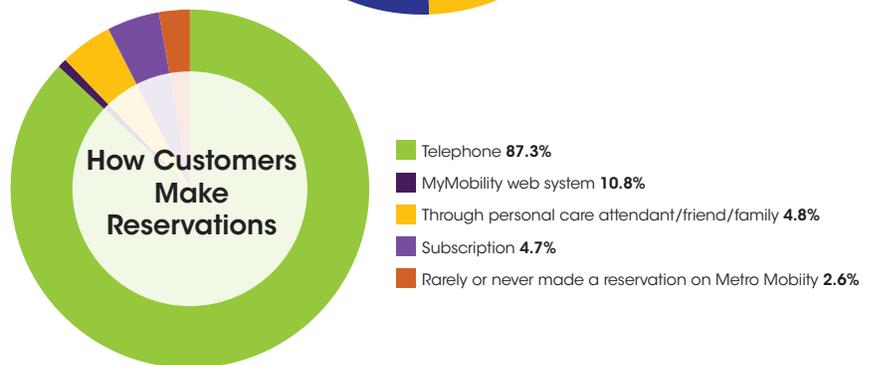
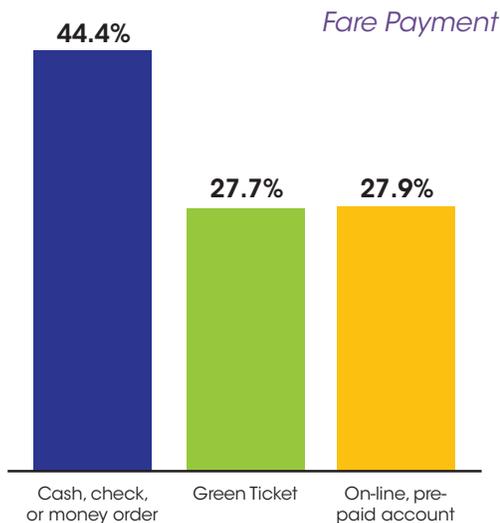
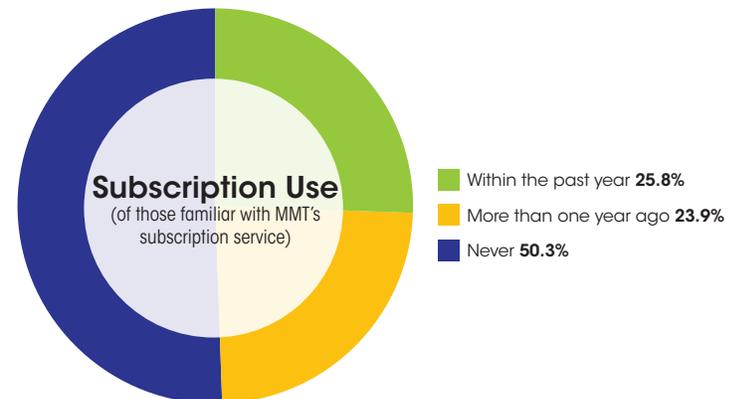
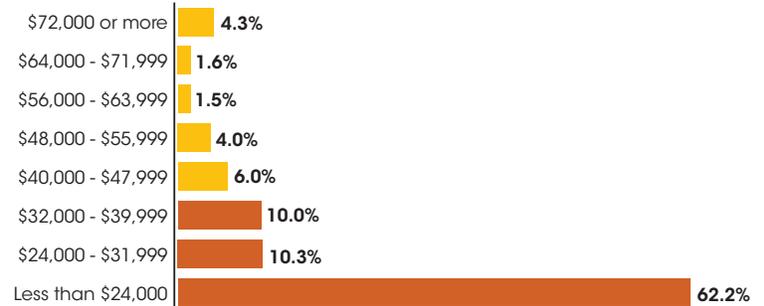
## METRO MOBILITY CLIENT SURVEY

The Metro Mobility survey was conducted over a three-week period and achieved a 95% confidence level with a margin of error just over 6%. Of the 617 clients reached, 225 responses were collected and considered valid. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and changes in usage patterns, MMT requested a simplified Metro Mobility survey, so the survey focused primarily on demographics and a few usage and satisfaction questions. Limited detailed analyses are possible with the survey results. The intent was to use this information to conduct a later, more detailed survey, ideally using the same respondents as part of the sample. Due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns, the more detailed survey has not been completed at the time of this writing.

### KEY METRO MOBILITY SURVEY OUTCOMES

The income and racial/ethnic characteristics of Metro Mobility customers are similar to fixed-route bus riders, but a much higher percentage of Metro Mobility customers are retired or unable to work, as expected. The gender mismatch also flips for Metro Mobility, with many more female customers; however, this tracks with national statistics. Reservations are overwhelmingly made via the telephone with a reservationist and most use cash to pay for their ride. Online payment is much more popular than on the fixed-route system, though. Most riders are familiar with the subscription service through MMT, rating it highly, and nearly half have used it within the recent past. Most Metro Mobility customers do not use the Taxi Choice option available through MMT but nearly a quarter ride the fixed-route system sometimes and about 10% at least once per week.

*Metro Mobility Riders' Annual Household Income*



*Metro Mobility Riders' Frequency of Use*

