



Fairbanks North Star Borough
Bryce J. Ward, Borough Mayor
Senior Citizens Advisory Commission
Parks and Recreation Department
Transportation Department

Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Senior Needs Transportation Survey

DRAFT Findings and Assessment

January 2023



Photo courtesy: FNSB Transportation Department, Van Tran

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Photo courtesy: FNSB Transportation Department, Van Tran



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Overview



Fairbanks seniors use community-based senior transportation services to enjoy lunch at the Fairbanks Senior Center. Photo courtesy: North Star Council on Aging, Fairbanks Senior Center

About the FNSB Senior Citizen Advisory Commission, Parks and Recreation Department, and the Transportation Department

Purpose: The **FNSB Senior Citizen Advisory Commission (SCAC)** advises the Mayor and the Assembly regarding aspects which bear upon the welfare of senior citizens, that are within the limits of a second-class borough. The SCAC conducts surveys, compiles data, and disseminates information for the benefit of older adults on housing, transportation, health, nutrition, education, legal services, and social/mental health services. The SCAC carries out educational and public relations to raise awareness to the needs of seniors, ways in which seniors can provide community service, and promotes awareness of the resources and services available to older adults. (Established under FNSB Code Chapter 4.100.)

Purpose: The **FNSB Parks and Recreation Department** preserves and enriches an inclusive community culture by providing places and programs designed to enrich the quality of life.

The Department is working on multiple projects within the community to improve accessibility, update facilities, and promote community wellness. These projects include planning for the North Star Community Recreation Center and completion of the South Cushman Gun Range Maintenance Project. Upcoming projects include renovations to improve accessibility at Graehl Park along the Chena River and Veteran's Park in the core of Fairbanks.

Purpose: The **FNSB Transportation Department** provides public transportation services to enhance mobility throughout the community. FNSB operates fixed-route bus service (MACS) with eight routes and on-demand paratransit services (Van Tran) for passengers who experience physical, cognitive, or sensory disabilities that prevent them from using MACS.

MACS Transit provides more than 160,000 unlinked passenger trips through its fixed route bus service and approximately 14,000 paratransit on-demand unlinked trips annually.

Located in central Alaska, the Borough covers 7,338 square miles, an area about the size of the state of New Jersey. The Borough includes two cities (Fairbanks and North Pole) and two military installations.

Background and Study Objectives

Background

Older adults, especially those who do not drive or are not able to drive during difficult weather conditions, need reliable transportation to medical appointments, shopping, work/volunteer activities, visit with family/friends, and to access community life. Although transportation is frequently noted as an important need by seniors based on anecdotal comments, detailed information about the need for transportation is lacking in state and local plans targeting senior services.

The FNSB Senior Citizen Advisory Commission (SCAC), the Parks and Recreation Department, and Transportation Department heartfully thank the seniors who responded to this survey and provided us with their candid assessments of what needs attention in our transportation system, their ideas for solutions, and their praise for what is working well in the FNSB.

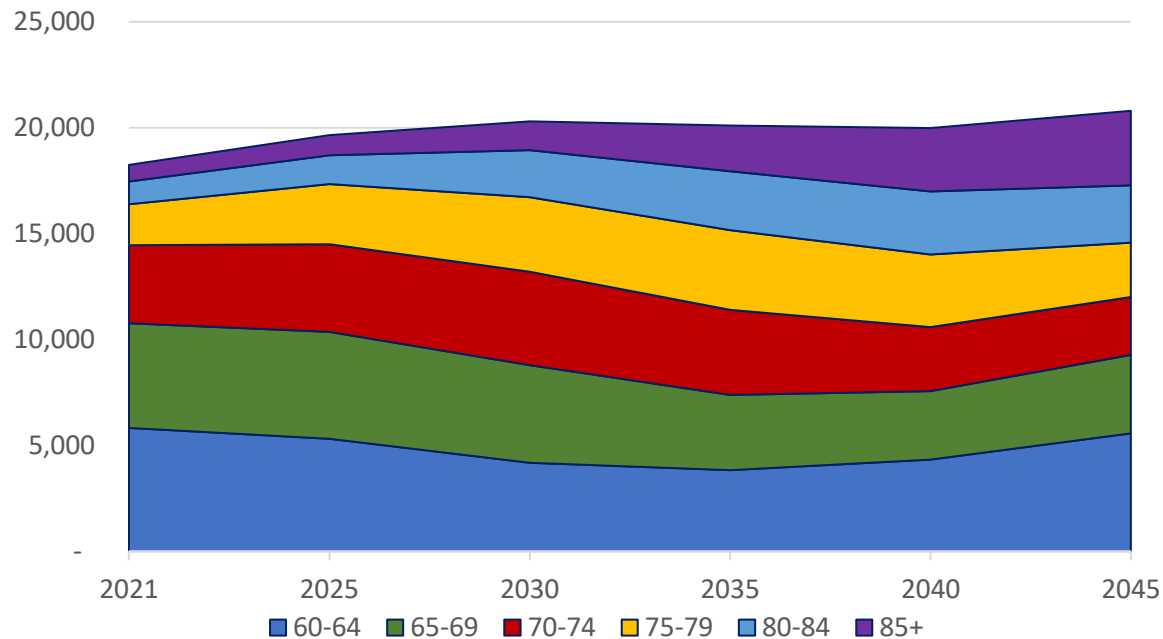
Objectives

The goals of the Senior Transportation Survey are to:

- Gather data on senior experiences and perceptions of public and private transportation options available in the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB).
- Gain insights into transportation behaviors, patterns, and needs of the Borough's older adult residents.
- Expand the current body of knowledge regarding senior transportation to better inform policies and help address current and future senior transportation needs in the in the Borough.

Why is this senior survey transportation report important?

FNSB Senior Population Projections, 2021-2045



Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, FNSB Population Projections

Because:

- The FNSB Senior population comprises more than 20% of the borough's population, or one in five residents is age 60 years and older. In 2021, there were 18,249 older adults in the Borough, which will increase to almost 20,800 by 2045.
- The fastest growing age segment in the Borough are people age 80+ who numbered 1,865 in 2021. By 2045, this population is projected to increase more than three-fold, or an estimated 6,222 people who are 80 years and older.
- Transportation provides access to resources and community life that are vital to senior health, well-being, and maintaining independence.

Methodology

The 23-question Senior Transportation Survey was conducted from December 1, 2021, through February 15, 2022, by paper and on-line formats through the FNSB Senior Advisory Commission and the FNSB Parks and Recreation websites. The paper survey was distributed in bulk to the Fairbanks Senior Center (to home-delivered meal customers), to senior housing facilities, to public places hosting senior-friendly activities, and through the FNSB Parks and Recreation Senior Newsletter. Self-addressed stamp envelopes were included with the paper copies to increase response rates. The online survey was also distributed through the UAF Osher Life-Long Learning program (OLLI) and Aging at Home Fairbanks (AAH). A free pass for a swim/skate at the FNSB Big Dipper facility and its swimming pools was attached to the survey as a token of appreciation for the participant's response. In total, there were 231 responses collected from FNSB residents, age 60 years and older throughout the Borough. There were 178 survey responses completed using paper copies and 53 surveys were taken online using the ESRI ArcGIS Survey 123. Survey respondents provided information about their demographic/socio-economic status as well as use of transportation, challenges experienced with transportation, and recommendations to improve senior transportation in the Borough. Analysis of the responses were compiled into three categories to compare differences between those who may need additional transportation supports. These categories are: (1) "All Respondents;" (2) "Those who Depend on Others for Transportation;" and (3) "Persons 80 years and older."

The senior transportation survey was a voluntary effort and responders were not randomly chosen; therefore, their response percentages cannot be said to reflect the situations of all FNSB seniors. However, distributing the surveys in paper formats through the FNSB Parks and Rec newsletter and places frequented by seniors as well as by online formats may have allowed for a more comprehensive picture of the Borough's seniors use of transportation than what would have been collected by a simple randomized telephone survey alone.

Snapshot – “All Respondents” (231 persons responding)

Key Demographics and Characteristics

Gender: 66% women | 33% men | 1% other

Age: 60-69 years, 33% | 70-79 years, 43% | 80 years+, 24%

Area of residence: Live within city limits, 51% | Live outside of city limits, 49%: Those locations include North Pole (23%); Farmers Loop (6%); Chena Ridge/Chena Pump (6%); Goldstream Valley (3%); Other locations (11%)

Place of residence: Own home, 47% | Rent an apartment or townhouse, 34% | Age restricted senior housing, 21% | Other, 1%

Total Annual Household Income: Less than \$30,000, 58% | \$30,000-\$59,999, 23% | \$60,000+, 19%

Have a mobility need: Yes, 36% | No, 64%

Able to drive and have a valid driver's license: Yes, 63% | No, 37%

Modes of Transportation and Use Patterns

Asked to identify their top 3 transportation modes, respondents said they often or sometimes:

☐ Ride with family/friends, 51%

☐ Drive their vehicle, 50%

☐ Take a taxi, 31%

☐ Walk/bike, 23%

☐ Community transit services, 37%. Options reported were Van Tran (16%); FNSB MACS bus (16%); or a nonprofit senior service provider (5%).

☐ When asked when they used transportation in the last 24 hours, most respondents reported needing rides between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Access and Barriers

☐ 68% of all respondents said that there are not enough transportation options in the FNSB for seniors and persons with disabilities.

☐ Of those respondents who were not able to get a ride to their destination in the past month, the top three places where they needed to go were (1) medical appointments (50%), (2) shopping (31%), and (3) to attend recreational/community activities (18%).

☐ While 44% reported experiencing challenges finding reliable transportation, 67% of respondents said that the people or organizations they depend on for transportation were “very” (33%) or “somewhat” reliable (34%),

☐ The majority of respondents (69%) did not experience any additional transportation challenges during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Planning and Future Needs

☐ When asked about how their transportation needs may change over the next 5 years, 45% were unsure, 32% reported needing to make more trips, 6% said fewer trips, and 16% said that their need for rides would not change.

☐ 56% of respondents said that they are interested in using door-to-door transit services. The top 3 reasons respondents listed for not using these services were (1) they do not require these services at this time (55%), don't know about the service (23%), or are not eligible for this service (17%).

☐ .When asked how they would like to receive information about transportation services, 68% said they prefer printed materials, 45% said online, and 23% noted they would like to receive information about transportation services where they live.

Snapshot – “Respondents who depend on others for transportation” (115 persons responding)

Key Demographics and Characteristics

Gender: 68% women | 32% men

Age: 60-69 years, 38% | 70-79 years, 37% | 80 years+, 25%

Residence: Live within city limits, 60% | Outside city limits, 40%: Those locations include North Pole, 26%; Farmers Loop, 4%; Chena Ridge/Chena Pump, 1%; Goldstream Valley, 3%; Other locations, 7%

Place of residence: Own home, 26% | Rent an apartment or townhouse, 46% | Age restricted senior housing, 29% | Other, 3%

Have a mobility need: Yes, 52% | No, 48%

Able to drive and have a valid driver's license: Yes, 42% | No, 58%

Modes of Transportation and Use Patterns

Asked to identify their top 3 transportation modes, respondents said they often or sometimes:

- ☐ Ride with family/friends, 70%
- ☐ Drive their vehicle, 20%
- ☐ Take a taxi, 37%
- ☐ Walk/bike, 15%
- ☐ Other, 5%
- ☐ Community transit services, 43% of respondents who depend on others for transportation. Options reported were Van Tran, (23%); FNSB MACS bus (13%); or a nonprofit senior service provider (7%).

Access and Barriers

☐ 72% of all respondents said that there are not enough transportation options in the FNSB for seniors and persons with disabilities.

☐ Of those respondents who were not able to get a ride to their destination in the past month, the top three places where they needed to go were (1) medical appointments (57%), (2) shopping (46%), and (3) to attend recreational/community activities (25%).

☐ While 63% reported experiencing challenges finding reliable transportation, 91% of respondents said that the people or organizations they depend on for transportation were “very” (44%) or “somewhat” reliable (47%),

☐ .The majority of respondents (56%) did not experience any additional transportation challenges during the COVID 19 pandemic however, 44% did report problems.

Planning and Future Needs

☐ When asked about how their transportation needs may change over the next 5 years, 46% were unsure, 33% reported needing to make more trips, 5% said fewer trips, and 16% said that their need for rides would not change.

☐ 75% of respondents said they are interested in using door-to-door transit services. The top 3 reasons respondents listed for not using these services were: (1) do not require these services at this time (40%), don't know about the service (29%), or are not eligible for this service (18%).

☐ .When asked how they would like to receive information about transportation services, 72% said they prefer printed materials, 37% said online, and 27% noted they would like to receive information about transportation services where they live.

Snapshot – Respondents “Age 80+” (55 persons responding)

Key Demographics and Characteristics

Gender: 73% women | 27% men

Age: 60-69 years, 0% | 70-79 years, 0% | 80 years+, 100%

Residence: Live within city limits, 55% | Outside city limits, 45%: Those locations include North Pole (18%); Farmers Loop (5%); Chena Ridge/Chena Pump (4%), Goldstream Valley (4%), Other locations (14%)

Place of residence: Own home, 44% | Rent an apartment or townhouse, 33% | Age restricted senior housing, 27% | Other, 0%

Have a mobility need: Yes, 38% | No, 62%

Able to drive and have a valid driver's license: Yes, 58% | No, 42%

Modes of Transportation and Use Patterns

Asked to identify their top 3 transportation modes, respondents said they often or sometimes:

- ☐ Ride with family/friends, 53%
- ☐ Drive their vehicle, 53%
- ☐ Take a taxi, 22%
- ☐ Walk/bike, 18%
- ☐ Other, 5%
- ☐ Community transit services, 29%. Options reported were Van Tran, (20%); FNSB MACS bus (5%); or a nonprofit senior service provider (4%)
- ☐ When asked when they used transportation in the last 24 hours, most respondents reported needing rides between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Access and Barriers

- ☐ 69% of all respondents said that there are not enough transportation options in the FNSB for seniors and persons with disabilities.
- ☐ Of those respondents who were not able to get a ride to their destination in the past month, the top three places where they needed to go were (1) medical appointments (38%), (2) shopping (31%), and (3) other places (25%).
- ☐ The majority (58%) of respondents age 80+ reported no challenges finding reliable transportation. Of those who noted challenges finding reliable transportation (35%), 66% of these respondents said that the people or organizations they depend on for transportation were “very” (42%) or “somewhat” reliable (24%). Forty-two percent said they rarely depend on others for transportation.
- ☐ .Eighty percent of the respondents age 80+ did not experience any additional transportation challenges during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Planning and Future Needs

- ☐ When asked about how their transportation needs may change over the next 5 years, 42% were unsure, 35% reported needing to make more trips, 9% said fewer trips, and 11% said that their need for rides would not change..
- ☐ Only 56% of respondents said they are interested in using door-to-door transit services, which is the lowest percentage across all three respondent categories compared. The top 3 reasons those 80+ reported for not using these services were (1) do not require these services at this time (53%), don't know about the service (22%), or live outside of the service area (16%).
- ☐ .When asked how they would like to receive information about transportation services, 73% said they prefer printed materials, 38% said online, and 24% noted they would like to receive information about transportation services where they live.

Executive Summary: Survey Highlights

Van Tran



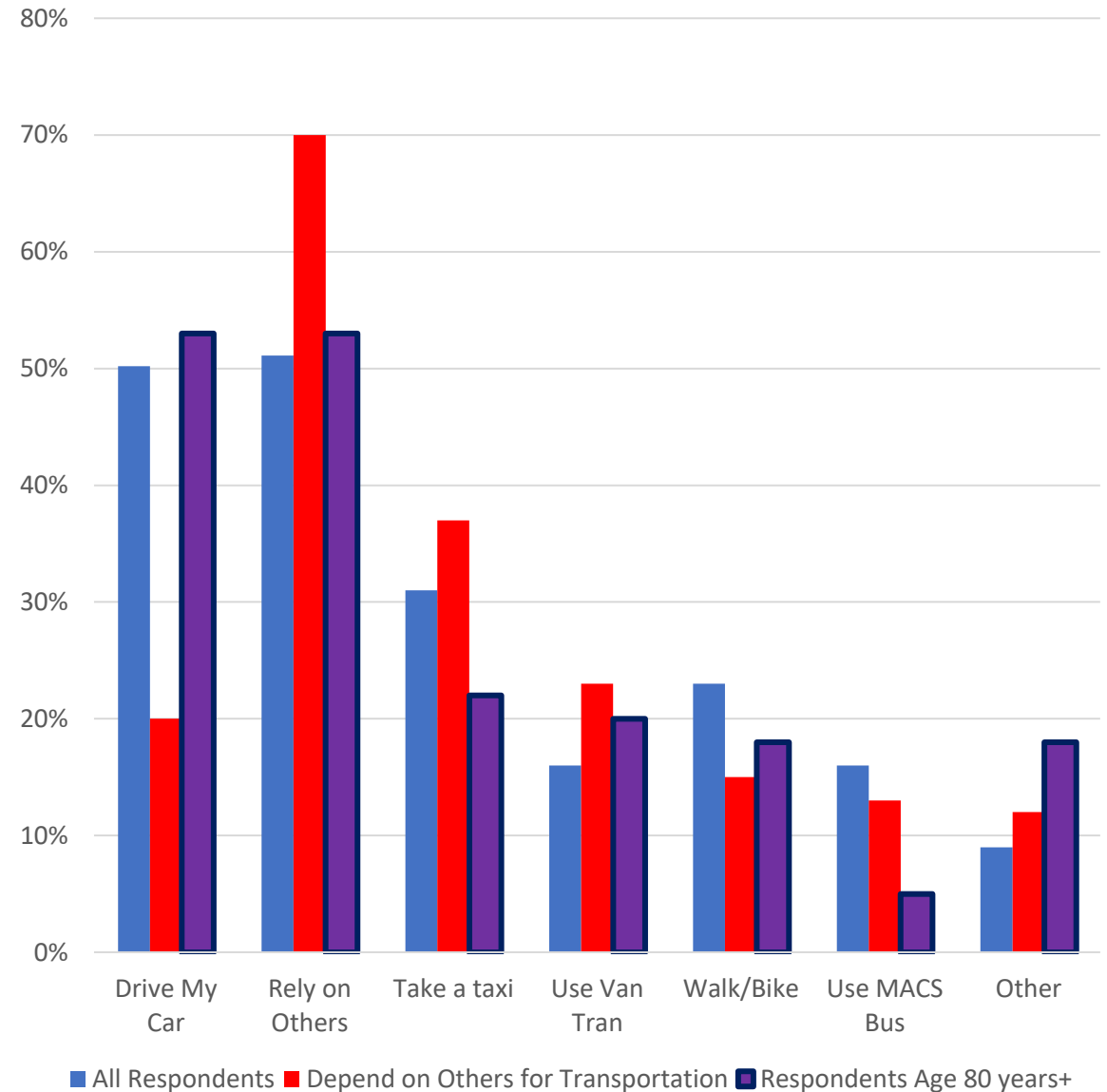
Photo courtesy: FNSB Department of Transportation

Use Patterns – Modes of transportation used by seniors.

The top three modes of transportation reported by all senior respondents in order of preference were “relying on others” such as family, friends, neighbors (51%), “driving a vehicle” (50%), and “taking a taxi” (31%).

- ❑ Sixty-three percent of “all respondents” reported having a driver’s license and are currently able to drive, including 53% of those age “80 years and older.” Only 42% of those who “rely on others for transportation” reported having a driver’s license and currently able to drive.
- ❑ About 25% or less of the respondents across all response categories reported traveling outside of their homes from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. and fewer than 10% of people responding said they travel later than 7:00 p.m. Most of the respondents travel between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- ❑ A significant percentage of senior respondents reported not traveling outside of the home in the past month, including 25% of “all respondents,” 38% of those who “depend on others for transportation,” and 33% of persons age “80 years and older.”

What forms of transportation do you use most often?
(Survey Question #2)

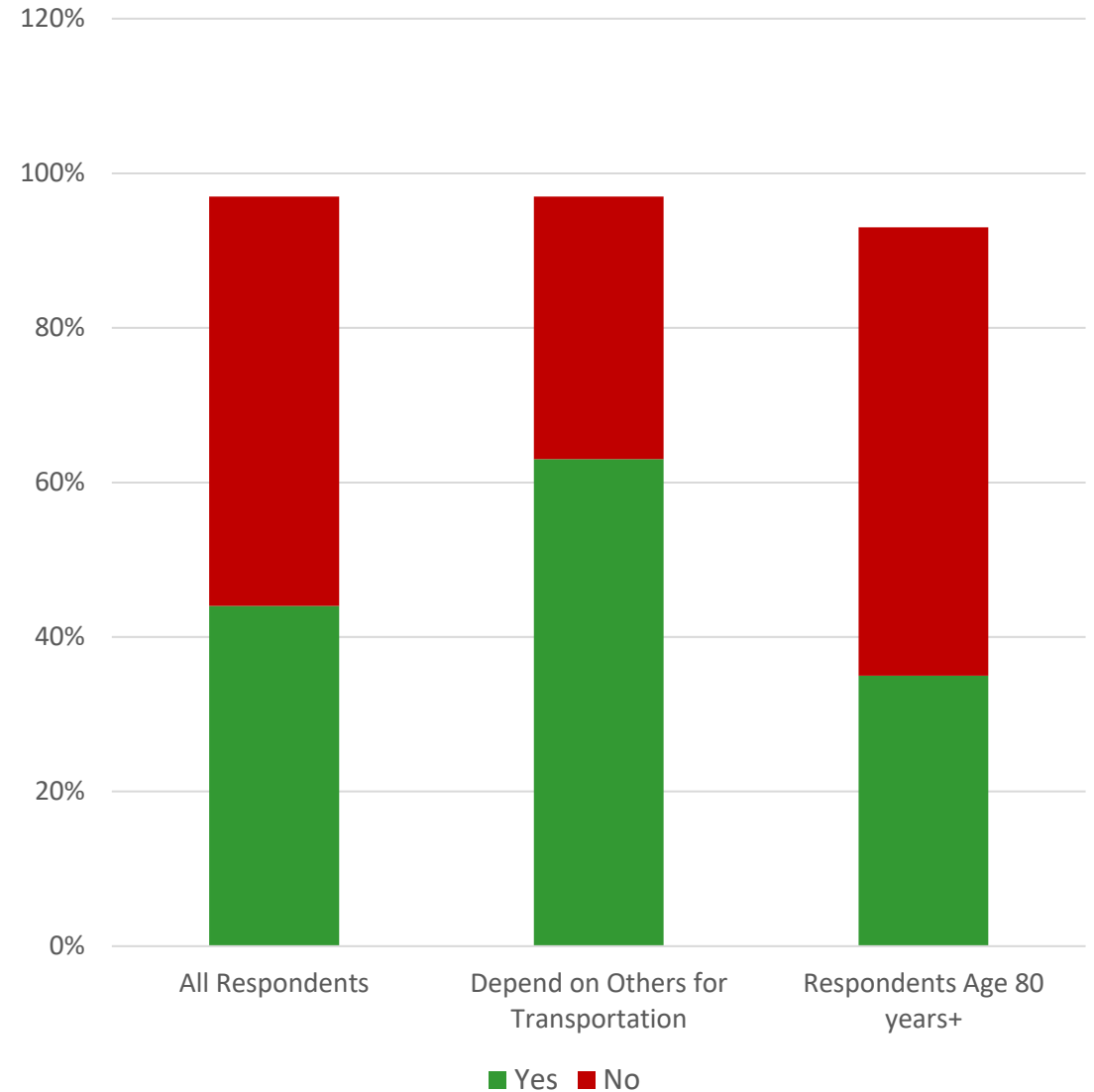


Availability – Frequency of using transportation services.

In a typical month, about half of all respondents (51%) reported “depending on others for transportation” for at least some of their trips, while the remainder said they did not depend on others for any of their trips. Some supplement with public and other forms of transportation such as taxi cabs (31%), Van Tran (16%), community social service provider (5%), or walk/bike (23%). About one in five reported using Van Tran or other community service provider.

- ❑ Across the survey categories of all responses, senior respondents were almost evenly split between relying on family/friends for transportation or driving their own vehicle in noting their top three usual modes of transportation. In looking further at the responses, 83% of seniors who “depend on others for transportation” for most (17%) or all their trips (66%), ride with family or friends. Forty-two percent of this group have a driver’s license and drive.
- ❑ Less than 20% of “all respondents” use Van Tran or other community-based door-to-door service option for their rides. In contrast, 43% of those who “depend on others” for their rides use Van Tran, the MACS bus, or other community-based transit provider.
- ❑ Most respondents across all respondent categories travel between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Almost half of the respondents travel outside of their home on the weekend and holidays.

Do you experience challenges finding reliable, daily transportation?
(Survey Question #3)

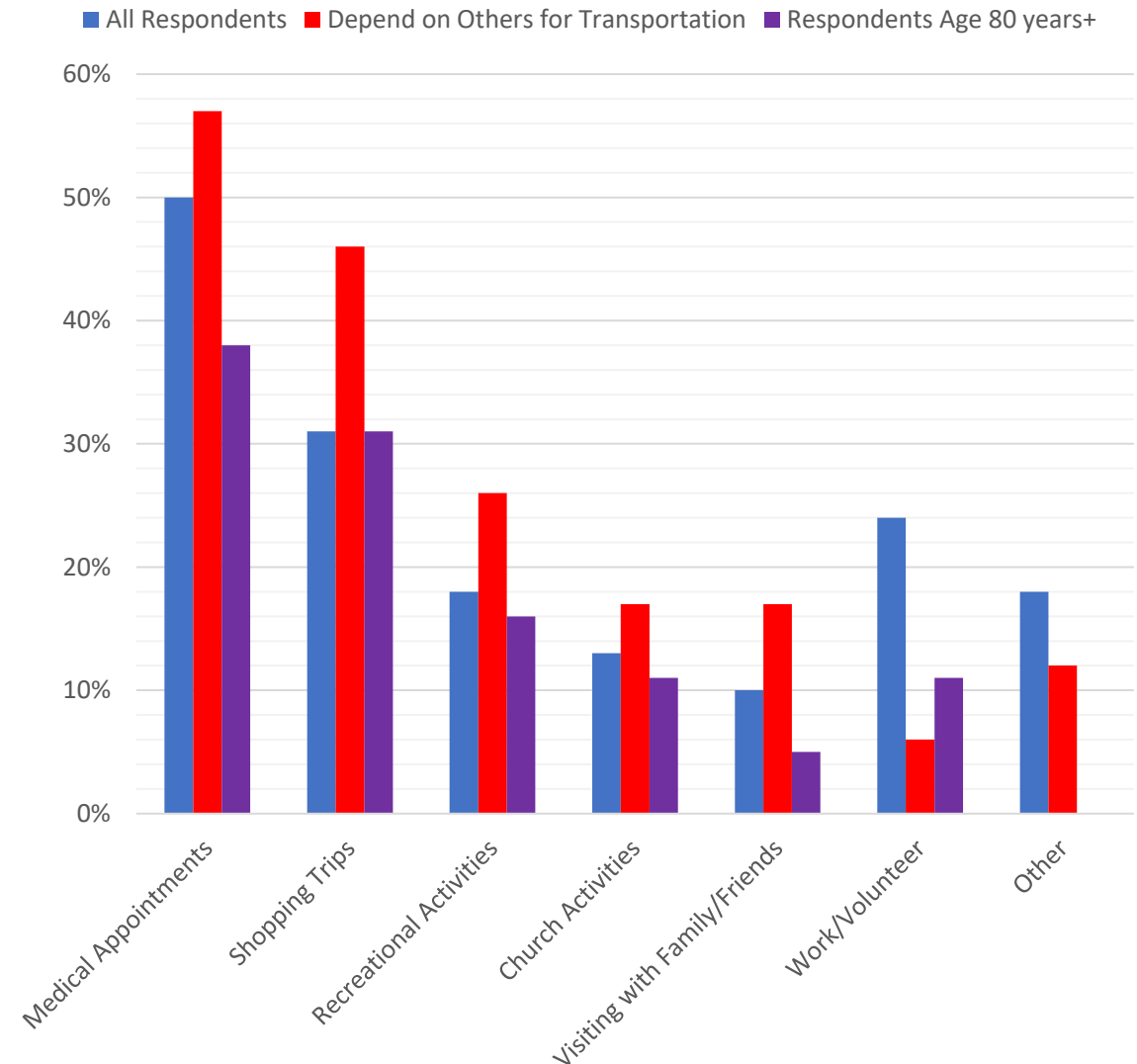


Access & Barriers – Respondent perceptions about transportation services.

More than half of “all respondents” (53%) noted that they were able to access reliable transportation when they needed it during the past month. However, of those who “depend on others for transportation,” 63% noted that they have experienced challenges finding reliable transportation in the last 30 days.

- ❑ For those who were unable to find transportation among “all respondents,” individuals most often reported having trouble finding needed transportation for medical appointments (50%), shopping/pharmacy trips (31%), and participating in community/recreational activities (18%) as their top three trip destinations.
- ❑ Sixty -eight percent of “all respondents” deemed their transportation provider as *very* or *somewhat reliable*. Ninety-one percent of those who “rely on others for transportation” rated their provider most favorably. Six percent of “all respondents” said that their provider was not reliable.
- ❑ During the pandemic, 69% of “all respondents” and 80% of respondents age “80 years and older” did not experience additional transportation problems. Forty-four percent of those who “rely on others for transportation” noted they experienced more transportation challenges during the pandemic.

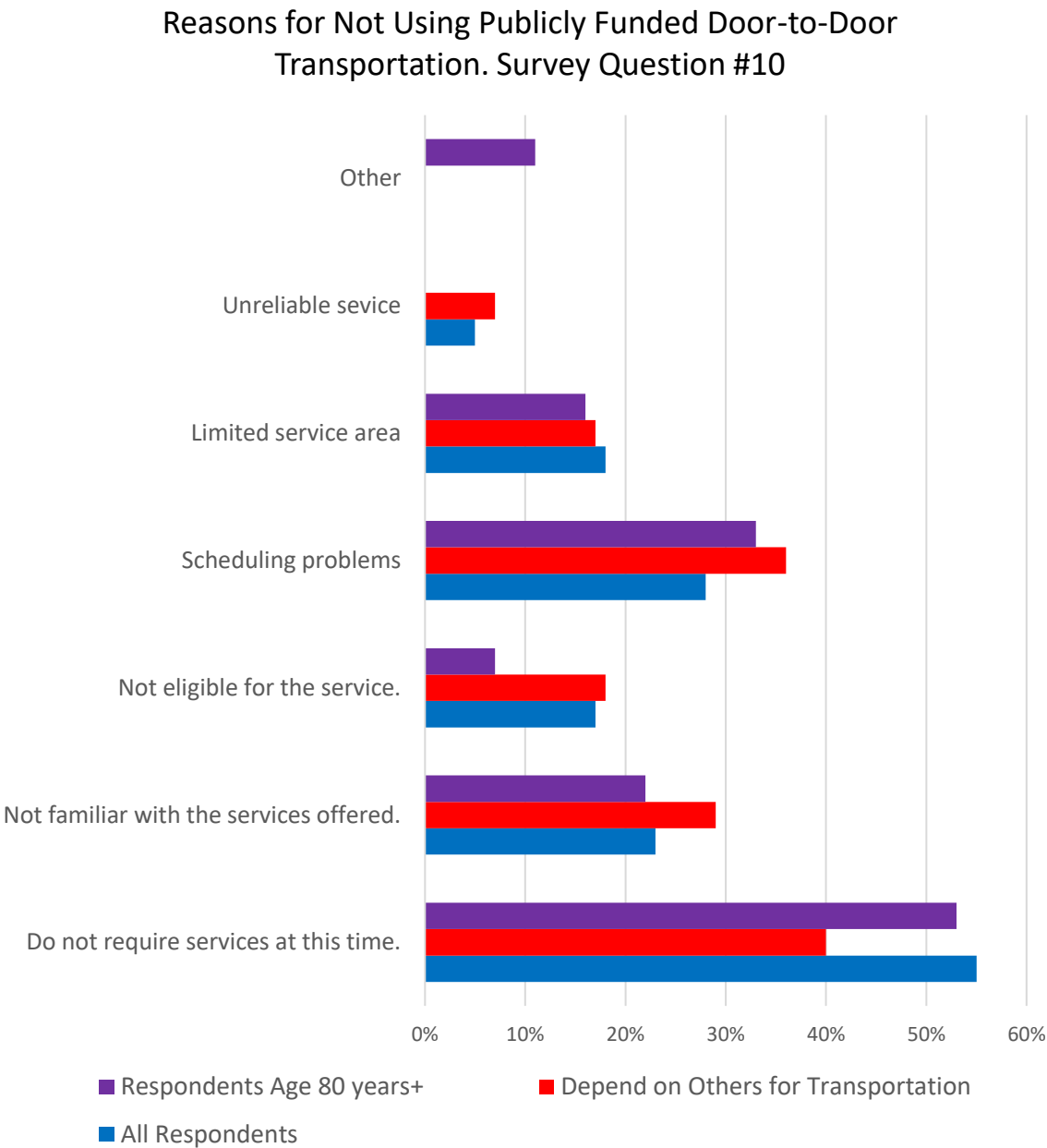
*During the past month, were there any trips that you were unable to make because you did not have transportation?
Circle all that apply. Survey Question #4*



Respondent reasons for not using publicly funded door-to-door transportation.

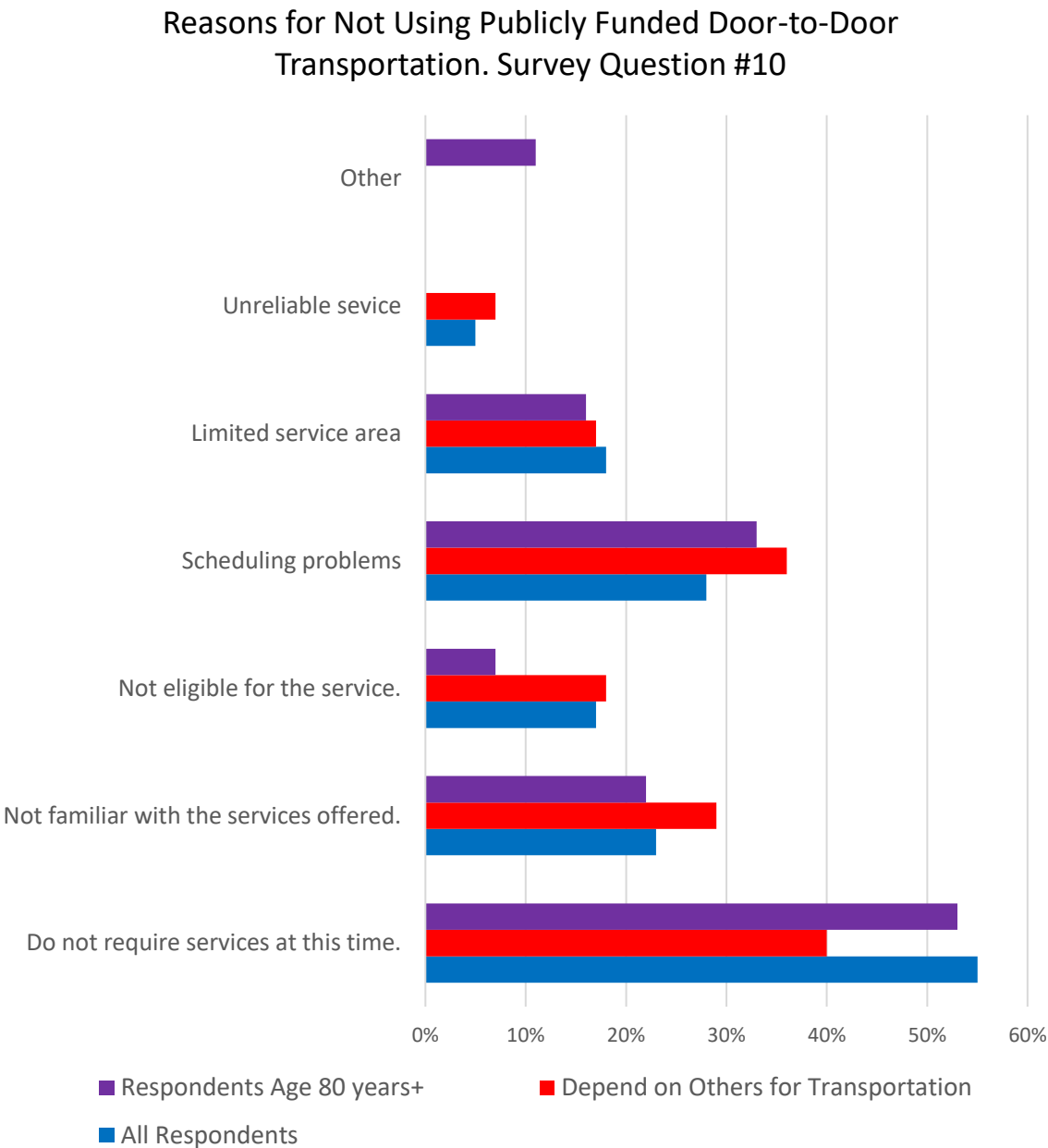
When asked about reasons for not using publicly funded transportation services such as Van Tran or other community service provider, the most popular reason cited was *not requiring these services at this time*.

- ❑ This response was cited by 55% of “all respondents,” 53% of those age “80 years and older,” and 40% by respondents who “depend on others for transportation.”
- ❑ Other reasons given were not being familiar with the services offered, not being eligible for services, and being located outside of the service area. Of “all respondents” reporting, 23% said they were not familiar with the services offered and 17% reported not being eligible for services. Of respondents who “depend on others for transportation,” 29% noted that they were not familiar with the services provided, and 18% said they were not eligible. Of respondents age “80 years and older,” 22% reported not being familiar with the services provided and 16% noted that they live outside of the service area.



Respondent reasons for not using publicly funded door-to-door transportation. (Continued)

- Additional reasons for not using publicly funded community transit services reported by “all respondents” included having to schedule rides too far in advance (13%), days or hours of service did not fit personal needs (8%), and the trip takes too long to reach their destination (7%). Five percent or less of “all respondents” reported that the service is not offered to the person’s destination or that the service is not reliable.
- Rides being too expensive, not accommodating mobility needs, and feeling unsafe were reasons not reported by respondents for using publicly funded community transit options.

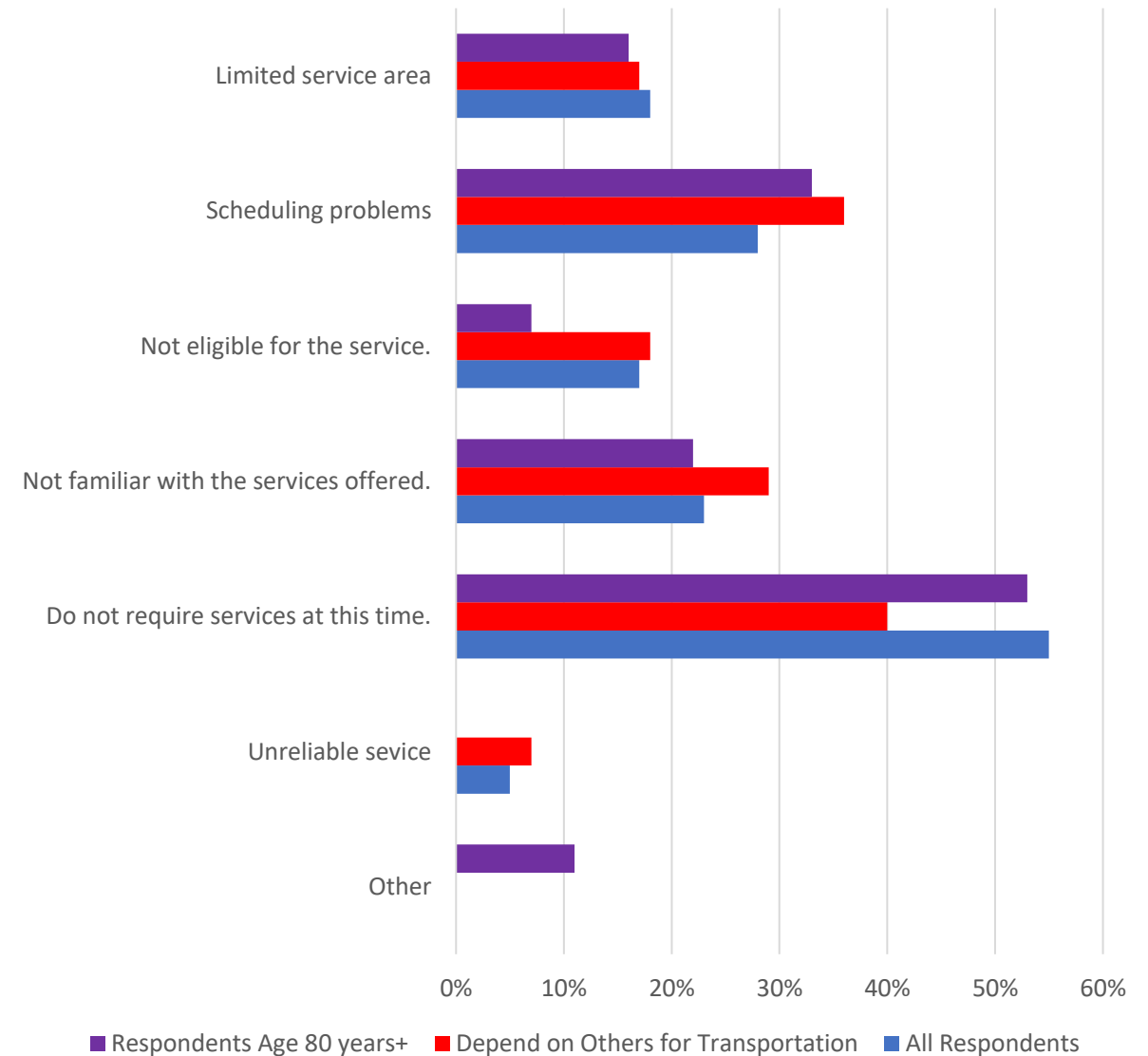


Respondent reasons for not using publicly funded door-to-door transportation

When asked about reasons for not using publicly funded transportation services such as Van Tran or other community service provider, the most popular reason cited was *not requiring these services at this time*.

- ❑ This response was cited by 55% of “all respondents,” 53% of those age “80 years and older,” and 40% by respondents who “depend on others for transportation.”
- ❑ Other reasons given were not being familiar with the services offered, not being eligible for services, and being located outside of the service area. Of “all respondents” reporting, 23% said they were not familiar with the services offered and 17% reported not being eligible for services. Of respondents who “depend on others for transportation,” 29% noted that they were not familiar with the services provided, and 18% said they were not eligible. Of respondents age “80 years and older,” 22% reported not being familiar with the services provided and 16% noted that they live outside of the service area.

What reasons do you NOT use publicly funded door-to-door transportation services such as Van Tran or a community service provider? Circle all that apply. Survey Question #10

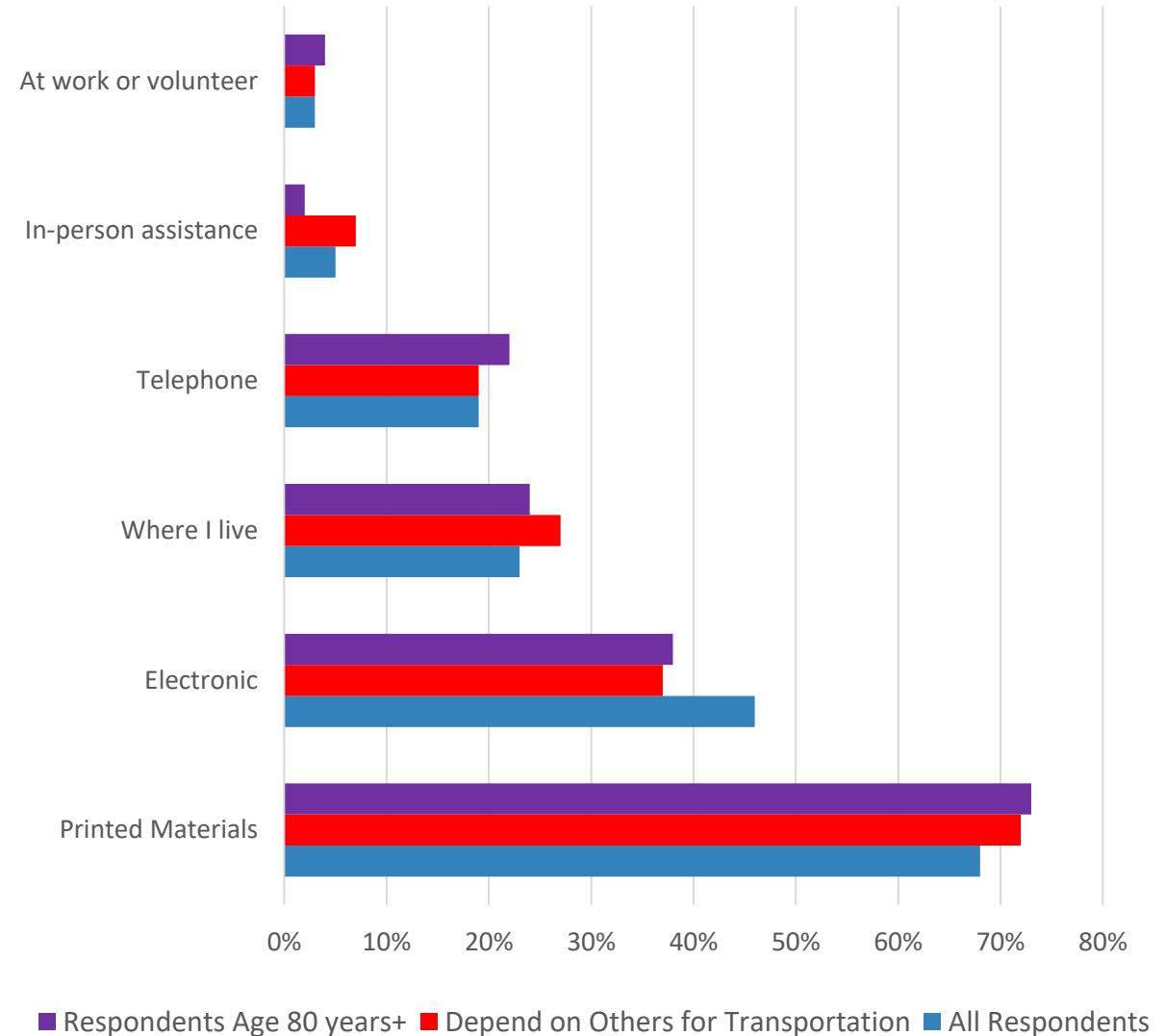


Respondent preferences for accessing information about transportation services.

Across all respondent categories, at least 68% or more prefer getting information about community transportation options through *printed materials*, and secondarily, *electronically by online means*.

- ❑ Only 38% of respondents who are “80 years and older” noted their preference for online information about community transportation.
- ❑ Twenty-three percent of “all respondents” said they prefer to receive information about transportation at their resident location.

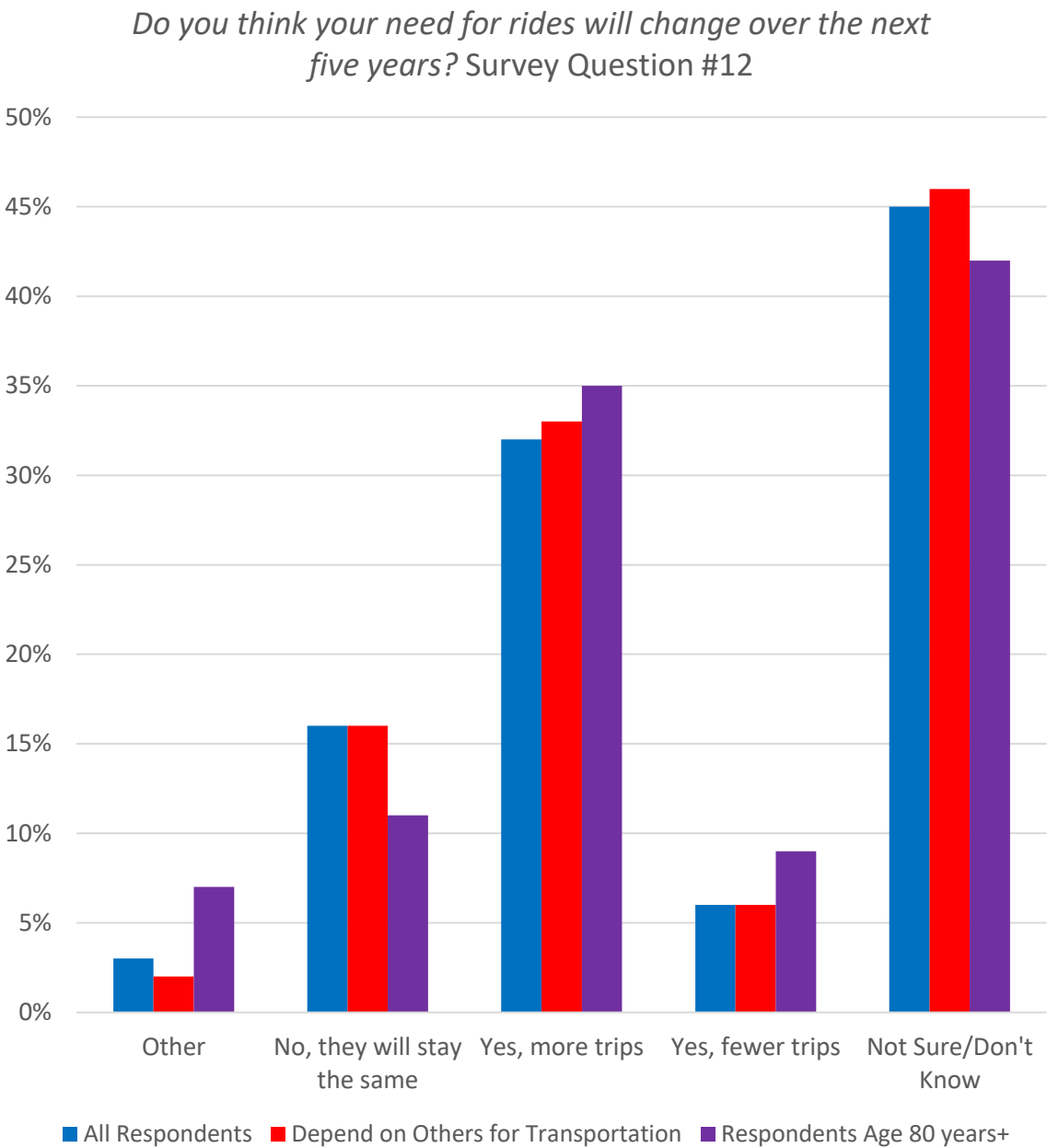
How would you prefer to get information about transportation services? Survey Question #14



Planning and Future Needs

1. When asked about how their needs for rides may change over the next five years, most respondents across all categories reported being *unsure*. This response was reported by 45% of “all respondents,” 42% of persons “age 80 and older,” and 46% of those who “depend on others” for a ride.

- ❑ The second most popular response cited a need for *more trips* going forward as reported by 32% of “all respondents,” 35% of “persons age 80+,” and 33% of those who “depend on others for transportation.”
- ❑ To a lesser degree, some respondents said that their need for transportation would *stay about the same* including 16% of “all respondents,” 11% of “persons age 80+,” and 16% of those who “depend on others” for transportation.
- ❑ Less than 10% of respondents across all categories said that their *need for transportation would be less* in the future.

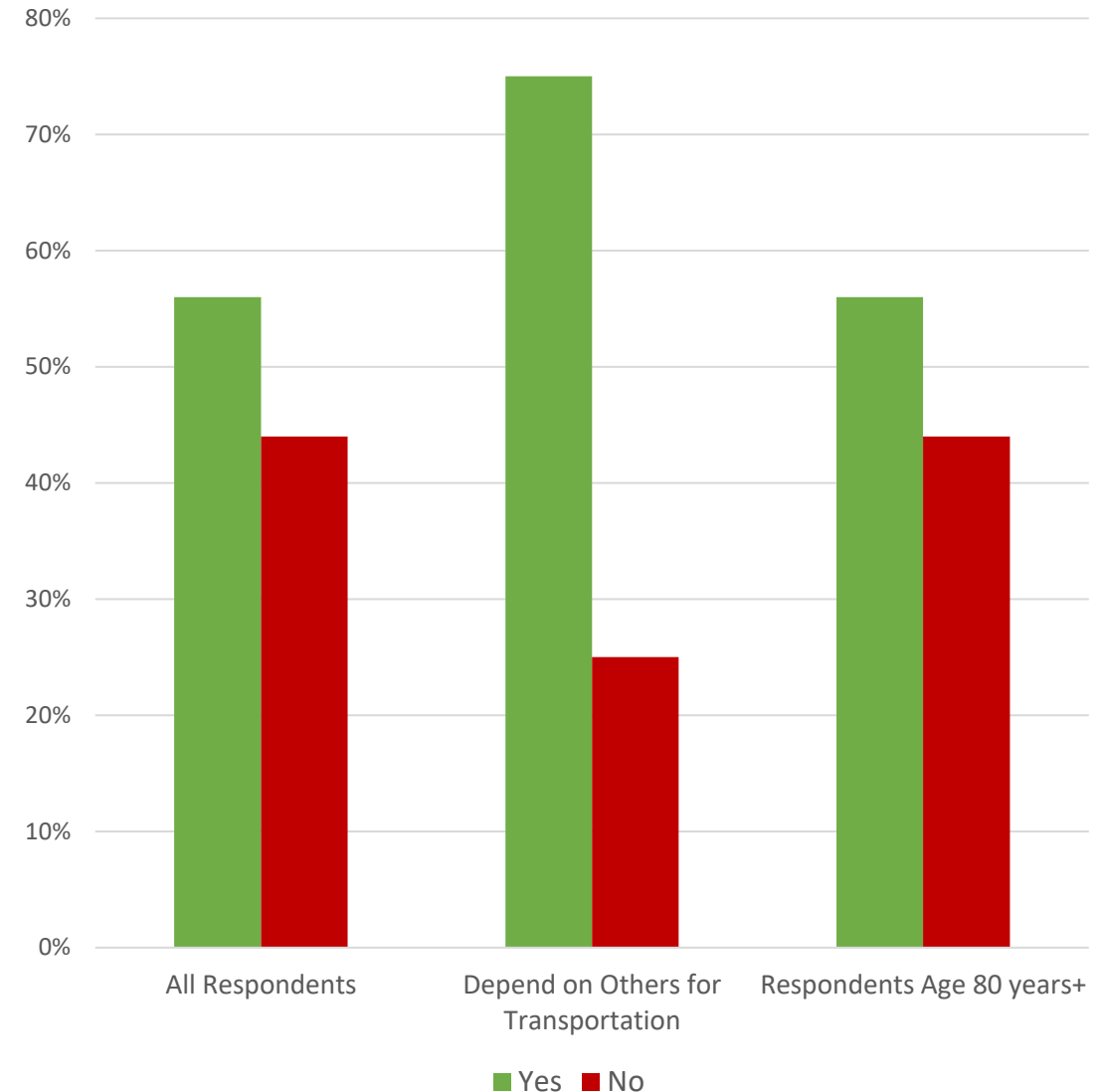


Planning and Future Needs

2. When asked if they would be interested in using door-to-door transit services, most respondents said they are *interested* in using this service.

- Seventy-five percent of those who “depend on others” for transportation reported an interest in using door-to-door transit services.
- Of “all respondents” and “persons age 80+” categories, 56% of the respondents in each group respectively expressed interest in using door-to-door transportation.

Are you interested in using door-to-door transit services?
Survey Question #11



Comments from Senior Survey Respondents

Summarized comments from survey respondents regarding transportation services in the Fairbanks North Star Borough



Senior volunteers get a ride to the Senior Center using door-to-door community-based transportation to help with the home-delivered meal program. Photo courtesy: North Star Council on Aging, Fairbanks Senior Center

Expand Services: 30 respondents provided comments.

- Expand service areas and routes for the MACS bus and Van Tran options – These areas include Ester, Goldhill, Chena Hot Springs, Chena Ridge/Chena Pump, Pleasant Valley Skyline Drive, and other areas outside of the city limits. Increase services between North Pole and Fairbanks, and in the Badger Road area, North Pole. Add a “yellow line” to the airport on weekends as well as to the train depot. Relying on unsubsidized taxis for transportation to these areas is very expensive. (20 comments)
- Include evening and weekend hours to accommodate trips for meetings, community activities, and social gatherings. (8 comments)
- Offer a shared ride shuttle to popular destinations (such as the grocery store, airport, and Pioneer Park) that can be scheduled through an appointment. (1 comment)
- Use smaller buses and shorter routes to reduce wait time. Trips can sometimes take an hour to return. (1 comment)

More transportation options are needed for seniors in the winter when dark, cold, and icy conditions make travel more hazardous.

Respondent comment



Photo courtesy: FNSB Department of Transportation, Van Tran

Widen the area of availability. When I can no longer drive, I will need to move which is not desirable. Respondent comment

Van Tran Services: 15 respondents provided comments.

- Performance - Reduce wait times for both legs of the trip, especially the wait time for the return trip home. Sometimes there are long waits to get a ride home, especially for passengers who live outside of town. Offer more flexibility if appointments take longer than planned. Observed services were compromised during COVID for seniors having mobility needs and requiring transfer assistance. (8 comments)
- Scheduling – Allow riders more flexibility if appointments take longer and allow them to schedule a ride with less lead time. (2 comments)
- Expand Van Tran – Offer more vans during busy times. Expand routes, increase buses, and drivers. Prepare for the increasing number of seniors who will need reliable transportation in our community, close to where they live. Limited services affect quality of transportation provided. (6 comments)
- User friendly – Make the application process less cumbersome and train the person answering the phone to be more knowledgeable about services provided. (1 comment)

... I have friends who waited too long for Van Tran & missed appointments and others who feel it is an affront to their dignity.

Respondent comment



Photo courtesy: FNSB Department of Transportation, Van Tran

Innovative Transportation Options: 9 respondents provided comments.

Recommendations to improve senior transportation:

- Supplement Van Tran services - Engage a subsidized senior Lyft or Uber service for seniors who live outside of the city limits and/or travel during times of no service. Implement a cab voucher (for Medicaid passengers). (4 comments)
- Resume Senior Center transportation service. (1 comment)
- Require assisted living facilities to provide transportation for their residents. (1 comment)
- Prioritize walkability for pedestrians and non-motorized transportation in planning efforts for the downtown area. (1 comment)
- Offer an online service that matches volunteer drivers with passengers (1 comment)



... I know from working decades at FMH that there are many people living outside the Van Tran area who were unable to schedule regular appointments due to lack of service. Perhaps some form of Lyft service could be subsidized to expand access for these folks. Respondent comment

Bus Stops: 3 respondents provided comments.

- Clear snow around bus stops on Farmers Loop. (1 comment)
- Increase the number of bus stops to reduce the distance people now walk to the bus stop to catch a ride. (1 comment)
- Establish bus stops with access to inside waiting areas to improve safety and comfort while waiting for the bus (1 comment)

... It makes no sense to expect people to stand around at 20 below waiting for a bus. Only the young, maybe, or the most desperate would do that. But if bus stops were established with access to inside waiting areas, ridership in the winter would increase and it is likely that more seniors would use the bus. I, for instance, on the coldest and wettest days used to stand outside waiting on the bus on the road that passes above the Butrovich Building on campus. But with a little effort, the bus could have driven right along the side of the Butrovich Building and picked up passengers waiting inside. There are many other places where this kind of bus stop could be established. Respondent comment



Outreach: 7 respondents provided comments.

- Improve public information and advertising about transportation services in printed and on-line formats in places where seniors live and visit. (6 comments)
- Respond to customer complaints. (1 comment)



... This is a new world for me, so I am learning and wish information were easily accessible. Unclear on services available – need a newspaper article. My current way of coping is to just change plans to another date when transportation is available, or I can drive. Respondent comment

Pedestrian Safety: 2 respondents provided comments.

- Keep roadways, walkways, parking lots and streets clear of snow and ice. (1 comment)
- Improve road conditions – Remove ice on Chena Ridge and Chena Pump. (1 comment)

... Pedestrian travel and access could increase if pavements were safe during long winter months.

Respondent comment



Funding: 2 respondents provided comments.

- Commit more public funding to public transportation in the city and borough. (2 comments)

... This is not just (a) Fairbanks problem but one across the country. The only way to get people to ride public transit (general, elder, disabled) is to have more scheduled trips and make it more difficult for people to drive. I am one of 75 to 100 people who constantly rode the Chena Hot Springs Road bus in the 1980s when the service REMOVED about 50 vehicles every morning and evening (on this road), aka the Kamikazee Trail. Every day, an unknown number of kindergarten students were transported both ways. We kept the route going by using it – when it was dependable. When the FNSB changed the way it was operated, dependability tanked, we stopped riding, and the route was cancelled. It was a memorable service to the public and could be returned with a little effort. Thank you for asking us...

Respondent comment



Words of Praise for FNSB Community Transit Services: 5 respondents provided comments.

- Keep the service going, Van Tran and MAC transportation. (4 comments)
- Encourage MAC transportation to provide wheel-chair use. (1 comment)
- Provide or encourage private taxi companies to include power wheelchair accessible options for times and locations not available through MACS and Van Tran. (1 comment)

Competent and caring staff, organized at scheduling and running an efficient system. Maintain safe and clean vehicles. Respondent comment



Existing Van Tran staff do a marvelous job, even under adverse conditions here, more like them and prioritize maintenance of their equipment. Respondent comment

Other Mentions: 3 respondents provided these comments.

- Be open to increase elderly needs.
- I suggest everyone work as a team and share ideas.
- No way to get my meds.



Policy Recommendations

The FNSB Senior Citizen Advisory Commission (SCAC) respectfully offers the following policy recommendations to improve transportation services in the FNSB based on senior input gathered by this survey.



Policy Recommendations

The SCAC recommends that the FNSB prepare for the increase in the number of older residents by 2030, particularly people 80 years and older and those with mobility challenges, who present unique transportation needs by implementing the following policy recommendations:

- ☐ Enhance education and marketing to increase public awareness and use of publicly funded community service transportation options through investment in printed materials, radio, and TV promotions.
- ☐ Encourage the Mayor's Office to work with local nonprofit transit providers regarding the transfer of used vehicles to increase community transit services.
- ☐ Include community nonprofit transit providers in transportation training opportunities.
- ☐ Use the Health and Social Services Commission to administer federal 5310 transportation grants to support senior transportation services.
- ☐ Expand the Van Tran service area to address unmet need and shorten the route distance to reduce travel time.

Policy Recommendations

- ❑ Subsidize transportation services for seniors by using privately owned businesses such as taxicab, Uber, and Lyft.
- ❑ Apply for grant opportunities that support nonprofit organizations providing transportation services.
- ❑ Hire a senior transit coordinator to be the point of contact who will direct seniors to appropriate transportation services.
- ❑ Create a specialized committee within Fast Planning that focuses on senior transportation and includes a focus on senior transportation in all planning documents.
- ❑ *Recommend that the FNSB Mayor share this completed report with relevant governments and planning organizations.*

The FNSB Senior Citizen Advisory Commission extends our heartfelt appreciation to the following for their support of this project:

Mayor Bryce Ward, Fairbanks North Star Borough

FNSB Parks and Recreation Department

FNSB Department of Transportation

FNSB Clerk's Office

North Star Council on Aging, Fairbanks Senior Center

Osher Life-Long Learning Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Aging at Home Fairbanks, an affiliate of the North Star Council on Aging

And especially Fairbanks seniors who took time to complete the senior transportation survey.

Thank you!



Photo courtesy: FNSB Parks and Recreation Department and Department of Transportation



**Fairbanks North Star Borough
Senior Citizen
Advisory Commission
Senior Transportation Survey**

The FNSB SCAC is working to improve transportation services for seniors in our community. Please answer this short survey about your transportation needs and suggestions for improvements. Please return the survey in the included self-addressed stamped envelope, email parks@fnsb.gov, or call the Fairbanks Senior Center if you want to do a telephone interview or information about other survey drop off places. Please return the completed survey no later than January 31, 2022.

1. Are there enough transportation options in the borough for seniors and persons with disabilities?

- Yes
- No
- Comments _____

2. Which forms of transportation do you use most often? Please circle three.

- Drive my own car
- Rely on others
(family/friends/neighbors)

- Use the FNSB bus
- Take a taxi
- Use Van Tran
- Schedule rides with the Fairbanks Senior Center, Fairbanks Resource Agency or other nonprofit social service provider.
- Walk/bike
- Other _____

3. Have you experienced any challenges finding reliable daily transportation?

- Yes
- No
- Comments _____

4. During the past month, were there any trips that you were unable to make because you did not have transportation? Circle all that apply.

- Medical appointments
- Work
- Volunteer
- Shopping trips
- Visiting with family/friends
- Church activities
- Recreational activities such as going to restaurants, cultural events, attend exercise classes, the Senior Center, etc.
- Other _____

5. Approximately how many times last month did you not have access to transportation?

- _____

6. What times of the day have you traveled in the past 24 hours? Please circle all that apply.

- Midnight – 6:00 a.m.
- 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
- 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
- 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- 7:00 p.m. to midnight
- I did not travel

7. Do you regularly travel outside of your home on weekends and/or holidays?

- Yes
- No
- Comments _____

8. What portion of your rides do you depend on others for transportation?

- All
- Most
- About half
- Less than half
- Almost none or none

9. How reliable are the people or organizations you depend on for your transportation needs?

- Very reliable
- Somewhat reliable
- Not at all reliable
- I do not depend on others for transportation

10. What reasons do you not use publicly funded door-to-door transportation services such as Van Tran or a nonprofit service provider? Circle all that apply:

- I do not require these services at this time
- I live outside of the service area
- I am not eligible for this service
- I am not familiar with the services offered
- Days or hours of service don't fit my needs or schedule
- It takes too long to get to my destination
- I have to schedule my ride too far in advance
- Service is not offered to the destination I want to go
- This service is not reliable for me
- I don't feel safe
- For health and/or mobility reasons
- Too expensive

- I use publicly funded door-to-door transit services regularly
- Other _____

11. Are you interested in using door-to-door transit services?

- Yes
- No

12. Do you think your need for rides will change over the next 5 years?

- No, they will stay the same
- Yes, more trips
- Yes, fewer trips
- Not sure/Don't know
- Comments _____

13. During the pandemic, did you experience any challenges with accessing reliable transportation?

- Yes
- No
- Describe challenges:

14. How would you prefer to get information about transportation services and programs? Please select all that apply.

- Printed materials
- Telephone
- In-person assistance
- Where I work or volunteer

- Where I live
- Electronic (websites, email, social media)

15. What are your suggestions to improve transportation services?

Thanks for your feedback! Now, please tell us a little bit more about you.

16. Do you live within the Fairbanks city limits?

- Yes
- No

17. If you live outside the city limits, please indicate which side of town:

- Chena Ridge/Chena Pump
- Ester
- Farmer's Loop
- Goldstream Valley
- North Pole
- Chena Hot Springs Road
- Moose Creek/Salcha
- Live within the city limits
- Other _____

18. Please indicate the category that best describes your age:

- 60-69 years
- 70-79 years
- 80-85 years
- 85+

19. What is your gender:

- Male
- Female

20. Are you currently able to drive and have a valid driver's license?

- Yes
- No

21. What is your total annual household income?

- Less than \$30,000
- \$30,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000-99,999
- \$100,000 or more

22. Which best describes the building where you live?

- Own my home (single-family residence, mobile home, condominium)
- Rent an apartment or townhouse
- Age-restricted, independent senior living residence
- Assisted living home (such as the Pioneer Home or private assisted living facilities)
- Nursing home

23. Do you have mobility needs (walker or wheelchair) and require assistance with getting in and out of a vehicle?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your input! The Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Senior Citizen

Advisory Commission (SCAC) meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 12:00 p.m. in the FNSB Administrative Building, Mona Lisa Drexler Assembly Chambers, located at 907 Terminal Street, Fairbanks join the meeting online. Public comment is scheduled at the start of each meeting. Everyone is most welcomed and encouraged to attend FNSB Senior Citizen Advisory Commission meetings!

As a token of appreciation for your time and thoughtful responses, please enjoy this FNSB Parks & Rec free pass!

