

Confidential



## **Rider Experiences**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents data from a study that was conducted by researchers from Portland State University in partnership with TriMet to examine riders' experiences after joining the low-income rider program offering discounted fares, known as the Honored Citizen Program (HCP). The goal of the study was to investigate the link between access to transit, well-being, and access to opportunities (e.g., work and school), among low-income riders in comparison to other riders.

### **The general findings of this study were heavily influenced by COVID-19 such that:**

- Public transit use was still in the process of returning to normal levels during quantitative data collection (November 2021-August 2022) and qualitative data collection (August 2022-October 2022)
- Approximately **55%** of all riders believed it was *at least* somewhat likely to catch COVID-19 from public transit
- COVID-19 impacted other areas of life such as work and housing stability, which in turn relate to public transit use and other outcomes measured such as health and sense of community
- **The impact of COVID-19 interfered with this project's capacity to detect meaningful changes of rider experiences over time**

### **Differences between Low-Income Riders (LIR) and Non-Low-Income Riders (Non-LIR):**

- LIR reported higher levels of walking on average than Non-LIR
  - **Approximately 56% of LIR reported walking daily or several times a day**
- LIR reported higher levels of carpooling or ridesharing on average than Non-LIR
  - **Approximately 18% of LIR did so once a month, 18% reported a few times a month, 6% reported once a week, and 20% reported a few times a week**
- LIR reported having higher levels of psychological ill-being on average than Non-LIR. Furthermore, LIR, but *not* Non-LIR, had significantly lower ill-being scores at Time 2.
  - **LIR on average "sometimes" felt negative psychological experiences**
- LIR reported having lower sense of community (SoC) levels on average than Non-LIR.
  - **LIR reported "neutral" on average for agreements with SoC statements**

### **Qualitative Findings and Themes from Interviews with Low-Income Riders (LIR):**

- LIR reported TriMet enables them to access important resources such as community events/groups, healthcare, and work and school.
- LIR reported enrollment in the HCP improved their financial wellbeing through increasing access to job opportunities and increasing cost savings.
- LIR provided a variety of suggested improvements for TriMet including expanding access to TriMet services as well as increasing rider safety.

Based on our findings, we have highlighted the following in the body of the report: A description of survey methodology, summary statistics on the riders, and summary statistics on key findings from the two surveys. Interviews with LIR also provided qualitative data to supplement the survey responses and suggested areas of improvement for TriMet services.

## METHODS

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this research project was to assess the effectiveness of the Honored Citizens Program (HCP) expansion and its effect on the usage of transit services, psychological ill-being and social well-being, rates of experiencing homelessness, and access to opportunities including employment among low-income riders before and after their (re)enrollment in the program. To better understand potential changes in rider experiences, TriMet has collaborated with a group of interdisciplinary researchers at Portland State University including expertise in industrial and organizational psychology, community psychology, and urban studies and planning.

### II. Procedure

TriMet riders were recruited using a variety of strategies including in-person recruitment at highly trafficked TriMet stops, online ads, the Riders club listserv, as well as through the TriMet HCP online application. The research was conducted in three main phases. The first phase consisted of a 20-minute online survey that riders could access through their phones or a computer. It included questions, mostly with Likert scales, assessing access to transit, the frequency of use of TriMet services, the purpose of use of TriMet services, perceived corporate social responsibility and satisfaction with TriMet, health and wellbeing indicators, work, housing, and transit-related changes due to COVID, as well as demographic questions. Riders who completed the first phase received a \$5.00 Target gift card as compensation.

The second phase consisted of a follow-up online survey that took 20 minutes to complete. Riders were sent the follow-up survey approximately two months after their enrollment in the Honored Citizens Program. The follow-up survey primarily included the same questions from the first survey in order to assess changes in experiences before and after enrolling in the HCP. Riders who completed the second phase received a \$15.00 Target gift card as compensation.

Finally, the third phase consisted of interviews with a total of 20 low-income riders who were randomly selected and invited to participate. Interviews were conducted to better understand and contextualize findings from the two surveys in addition to gaining insight to the experiences of LIRs that were not captured in phase 1 or 2. These interviews were maximum one hour long and were conducted both in-person and virtually. Individuals who completed the interviews received a \$30 Target gift card as compensation.

**Reporting Note:** The phase 1 results are labeled as Time 1 (T1), the phase 2 results are labeled as Time 2 (T2), and the interviews are referred to directly throughout the report. The focal group in this report is labeled as “LIR” (i.e., low-income riders). The comparison group in this report is labeled as “Non-LIR”.

## RIDERSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS

### I. Ridership Breakdown

Riders were asked to indicate which type of HOP card they applied for or currently had at the time of completing the first survey. The majority of riders (83%) indicated that they were Honored Citizens: Low-Income Rider - New (64%) or Honored Citizen: Low-Income Rider - Renew (19%). The remaining riders (17%) comprised of Honored Citizens: Riders with Disabilities - Renew (3%), Honored Citizen: Seniors 65 and older and Medicare Beneficiaries - New (1%), Honored Citizen: Seniors 65 and older and Medicare Beneficiaries - Renew (2%), Regular Adult - New (5%), and Regular Adult - Renew (6%).

	<b>Rider Membership Group</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>LIR</b>	Honored Citizens: Low-Income Rider – New	64%	75	98
	Honored Citizen: Low-Income Rider – Renew	19%	23	
<b>Non-LIR</b>	Honored Citizen: Riders with Disabilities – New	0%	0	20
	Honored Citizen: Riders with Disabilities – Renew	3%	4	
	Honored Citizen: Seniors 65 and older and Medicare Beneficiaries – New	1%	1	
	Honored Citizen: Seniors 65 and older and Medicare Beneficiaries – Renew	2%	2	
	Regular Adult – New	5%	6	
	Regular Adult – Renew	6%	7	
<b>Total</b>		100%	118	118

## II. General Demographics

- A total of **118 riders** completed both the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys.
- The majority of riders were **female** for LIR (61%) and about half were **female** for Non-LIR (50%).
- The majority of riders were **White** for both LIR (66%) and Non-LIR (85%).
- The **average age** for LIR was **31.97** years old whereas the **average age** for Non-LIR was **38.95** years old.

	Age (SD)	Male	Female	Non-Binary	Other
<b>LIR</b>	31.97 (11.80)	26 (27%)	60 (61%)	10 (10%)	2 (2%)
<b>Non-LIR</b>	38.95 (16.28)	7 (35%)	10 (50%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)

	Hispanic	White	Black or African American	American Indian, Alaskan Native	Asian	Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Other
<b>LIR</b>	10 (10%)	65 (66%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	8 (8%)	0 (0%)	12 (12%)
<b>Non-LIR</b>	0 (0%)	17 (85%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)

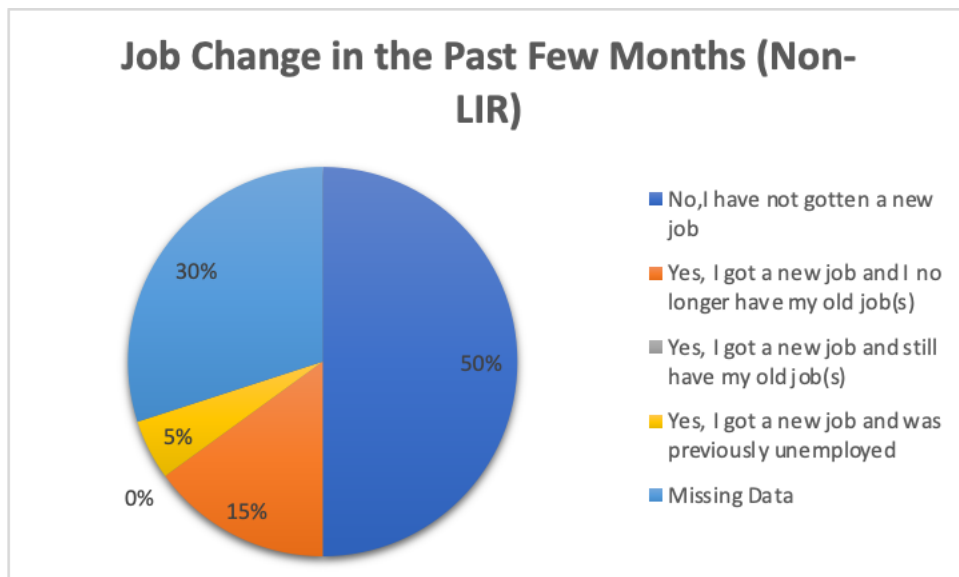
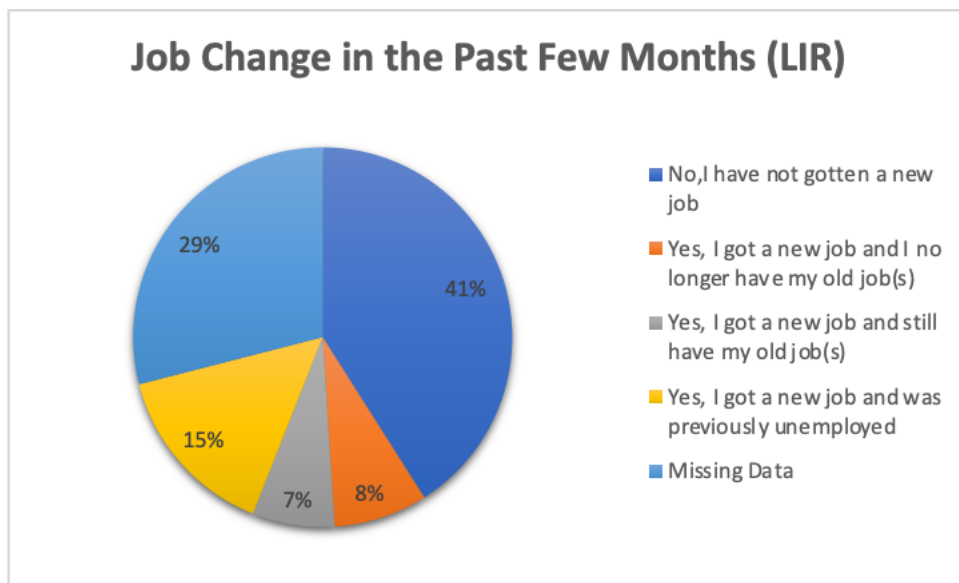
## III. Work-Related Demographics

### A. Job Status

On average, LIR reported having **1.18 jobs** whereas Non-LIR reported having **1.00 jobs**.

	Unemployed	Full-time Job	Part-time Job	Other
<b>LIR</b>	33 (34%)	24 (24%)	31 (32%)	10 (10%)
<b>Non-LIR</b>	6 (30%)	7 (35%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)

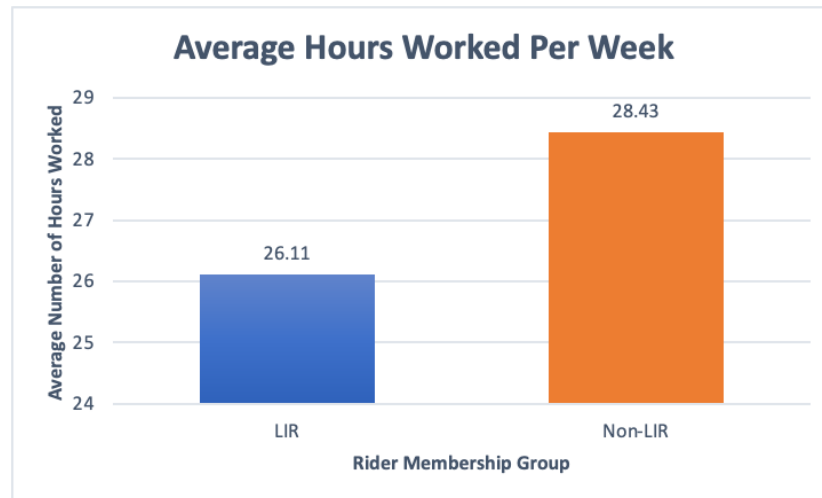
Out of the 33 LIR who were unemployed, the majority reported that they were looking for a job (**14 or 42%**) or were students (**9 or 27%**).





## B. Hours Worked Per Week (at Time 1)

- Riders were asked to report the average number of hours worked per week over the past two months. On average, **LIR** reported working **26.11 hours per week** whereas **Non-LIR** reported working **28.43 hours per week**.



## C. Industry

- Riders reported working in a variety of industries such as *government, retail, and manufacturing*. The majority of LIR worked in **Service** (29%) whereas Non-LIR worked in **'Other'** (25%) such as education.

## D. Work Schedule

- A total of 48% of LIR and 55% of Non-LIR reported that their **work schedule** stays fairly consistent week to week.

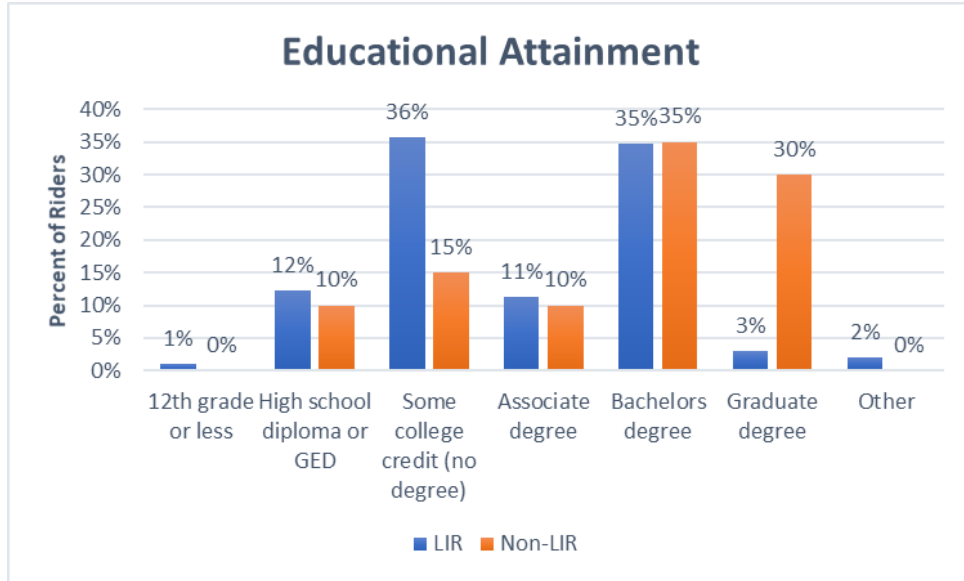
## E. Personal Vehicle

- The majority of both LIR (60%) and Non-LIR (65%) reported that their job(s) **did not** require a **personal vehicle** available while at work.

## IV. Schooling

Both LIR and Non-LIR reported being enrolled in school (either technical or university).

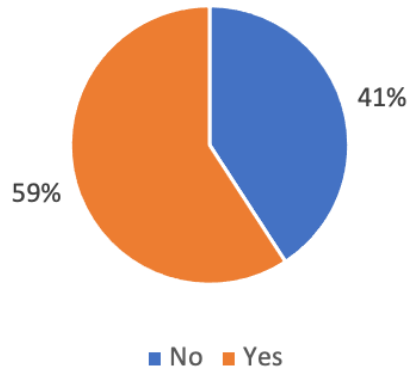
- A total of 26% of LIR reported **full time enrollment** and 11% reported **part time enrollment**.
- A total of 15% of Non-LIR reported **full time enrollment** and 0% reported **part time enrollment**.



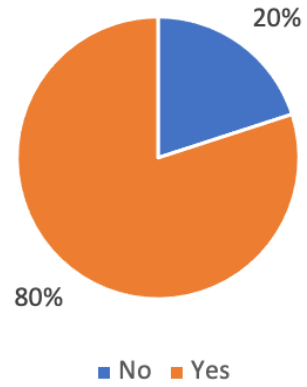
**V. Transit Dependent vs. Transit Reliant**

The following visuals compare LIR and Non-LIR and their access to transit.

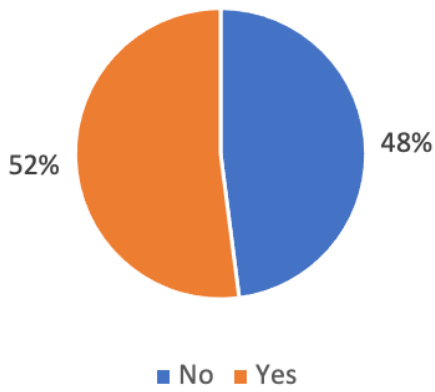
**LIR with a Driver's License**



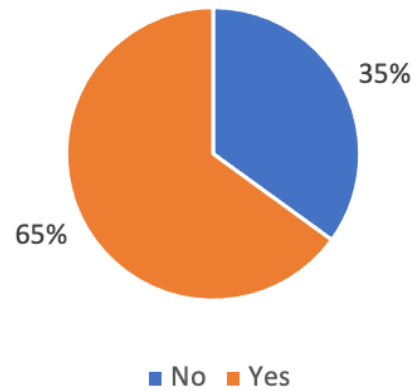
**Non-LIR with a Driver's License**



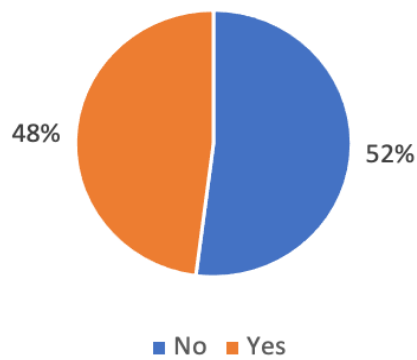
**LIR Own a Bike**



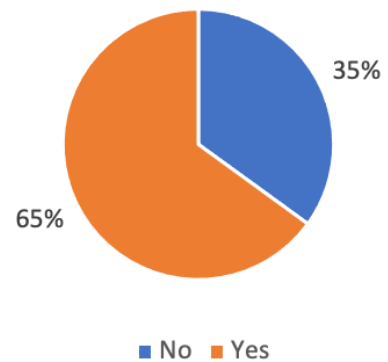
**Non-LIR Own a Bike**



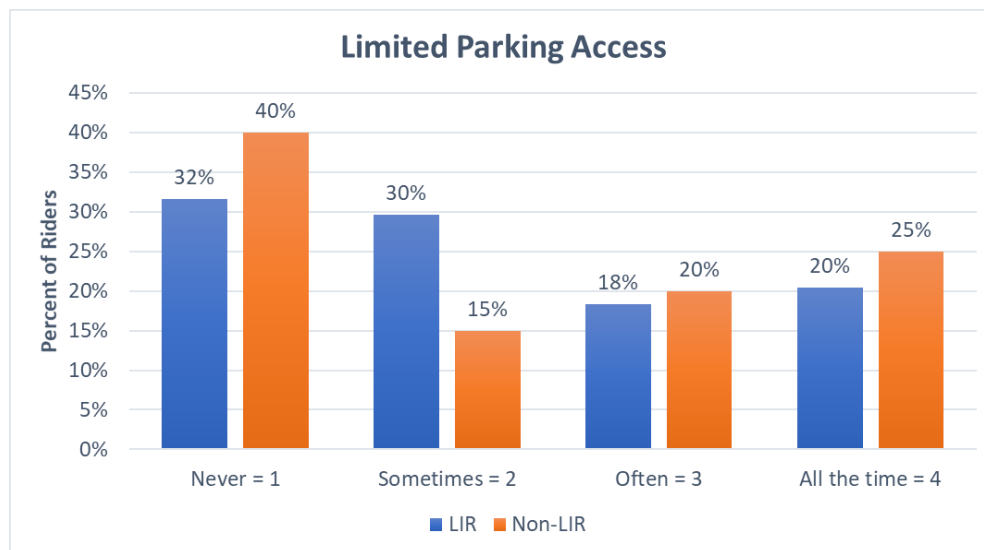
**LIR Have Car Access**



**Non-LIR Have Car Access**



Riders were also asked to report how frequently they choose not to drive because of limited or unaffordable parking.



#### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

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*“Downtown in particular is not my favorite place to drive to, even in the past couple months. And also, the cost of parking is often a deterrent. It's also similar where I'm like, ‘How much am I paying for parking on top of gas to access a job opportunity?’”*

*“I've had a couple jobs where honestly, it made sense to take the bus because one of them had very limited parking.”*

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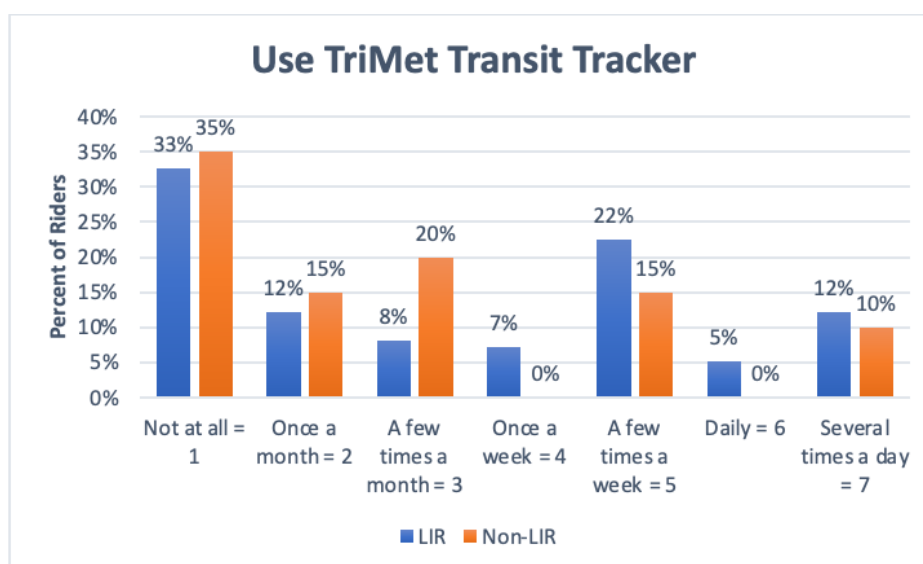
## GENERAL FINDINGS

### I. Behavioral Frequencies

Riders were asked to rate how frequently they used the following to help them get to places. Higher scores represent higher frequency of reported use. The graphs below compare the frequency of use for low-income riders (LIR) versus non-low-income riders (Non-LIR) for *Time 2 only*.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Once a month	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Daily	Several times a day

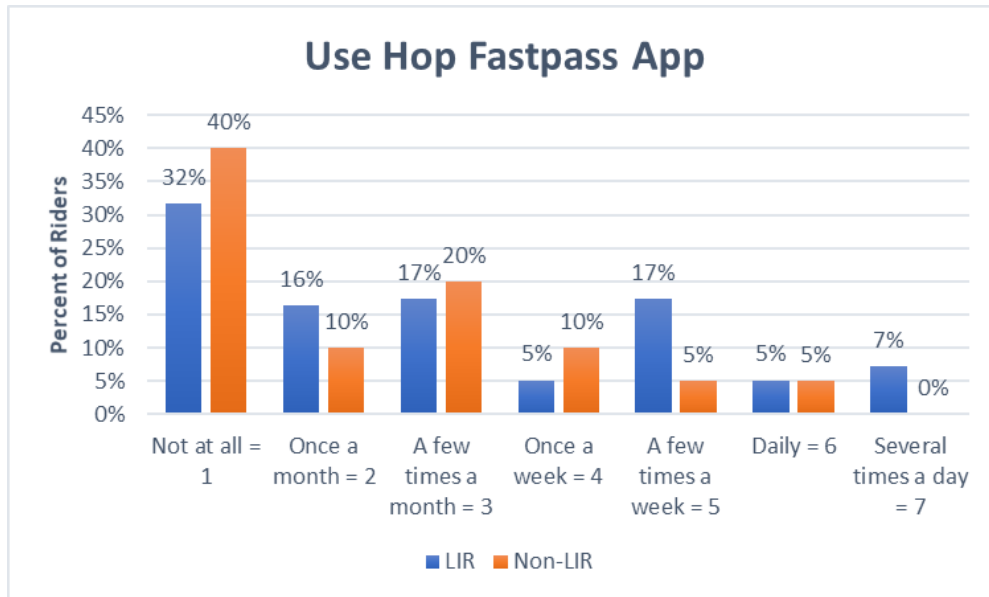
#### A. Use TriMet Transit Tracker



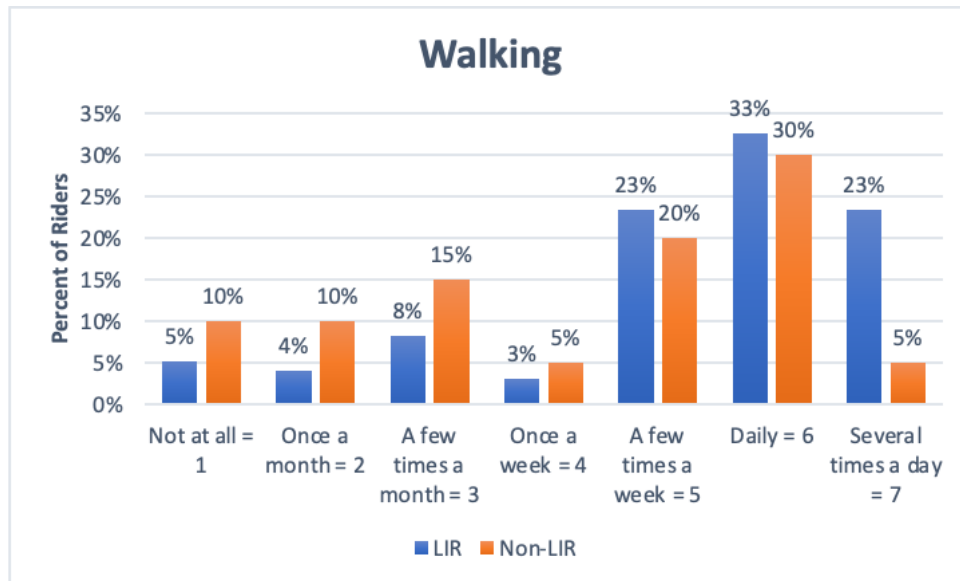
#### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

*“There’s one [bus] line over on Sandy, and when I would be doing it myself, looking at the paper schedules back in the day, I never even considered that line. But now with [the] trip planner, it plans it out for me.”*

**B. Use Hop Fastpass App**



**C. Walking**



### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

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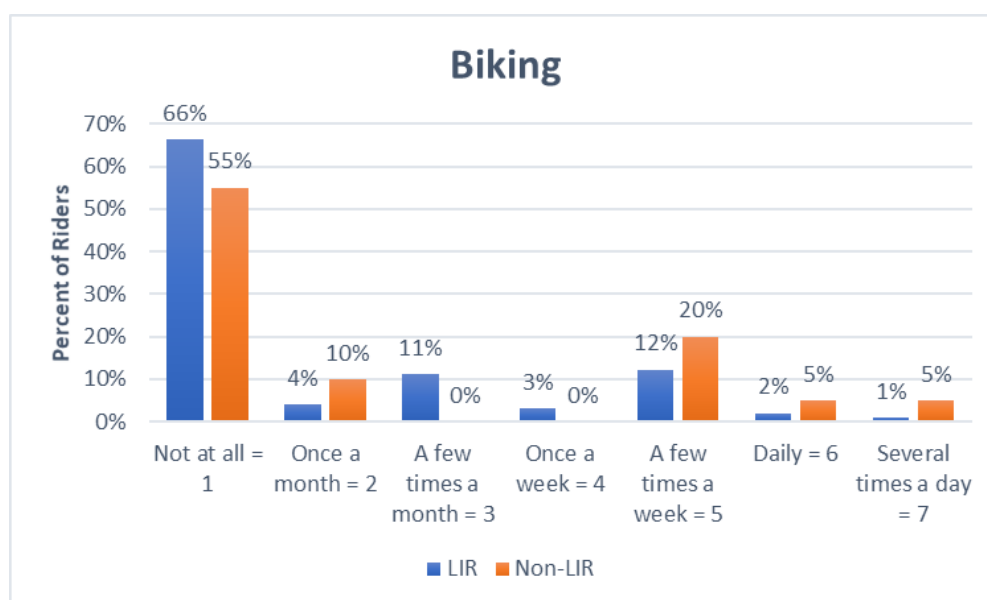
*“I work a mile away from home. So, if it's a nice day and I'm not feeling particularly lazy...So after work, it just depends on the day, I'll walk home. But I do walk to the bus stops...”*

*“I do walk about a half mile to the MAX Station and then the bus stop. When I do take the bus, it's about a three-minute walk.”*

*“If it's less than a mile or if it's just easier to walk than to take a bus.”*

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### D. Biking



### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

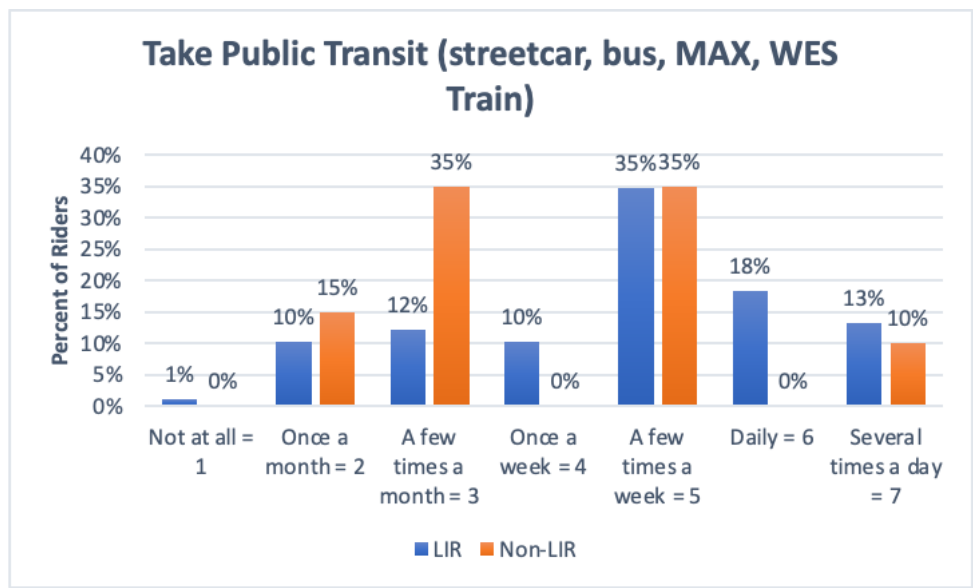
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*“I do tend to ride my bike or trike more during rush hour traffic, unless it gets way too hot outside.”*

*“One of the motivations for me to get a bike was because I was realizing that I could cut down on time if I had a bike. Mixed transit is where I found the easiest way to navigate...”*

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### E. Take Public Transit (streetcar, bus, MAX, WES train)

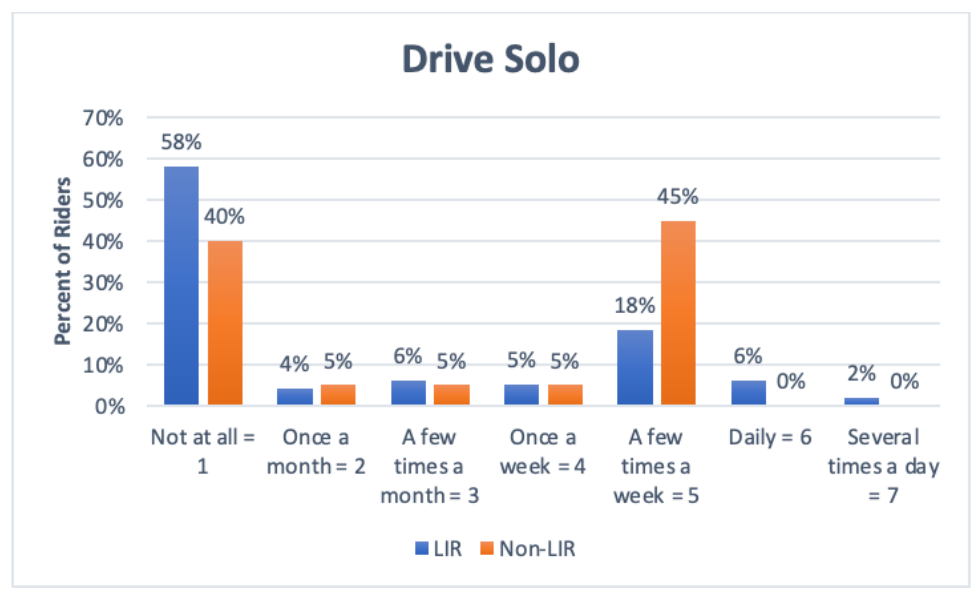


### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

*“I’d say I’ve probably increased the amount of bus rides for errands by being on the low-income pass.”*

*“Even if someone offered me a new car tomorrow, I would still take the MAX and the bus just because I don’t have the stress of the traffic.”*

### F. Drive Solo





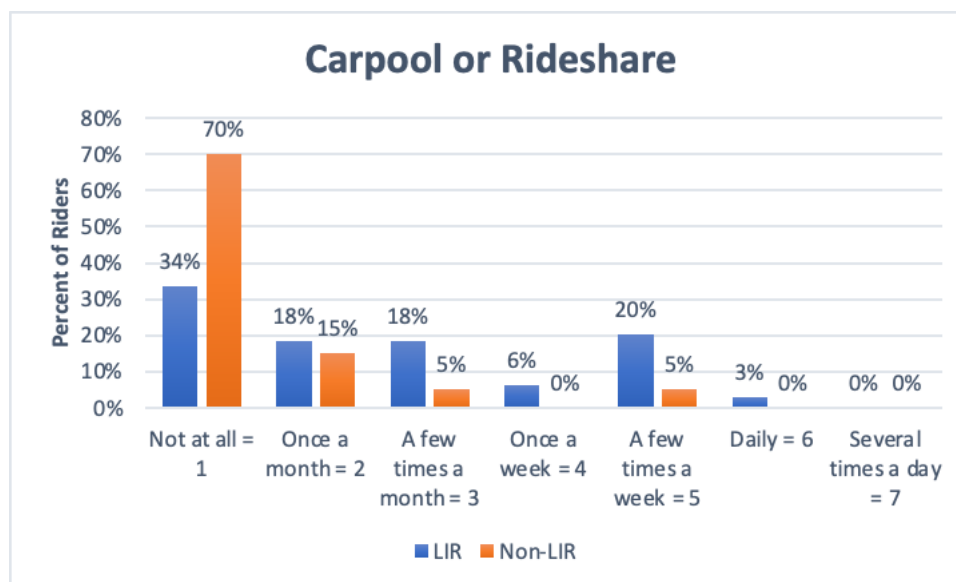
### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

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*“If I need to do a big grocery trip, I normally will drive to WinCo because it's a little bit more difficult to get there on the bus.”*

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### G. Carpool or Rideshare



### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

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*“I feel more comfortable taking a Lyft ride if something is more urgent or there's more room in my transportation budget for doing something along those lines.”*

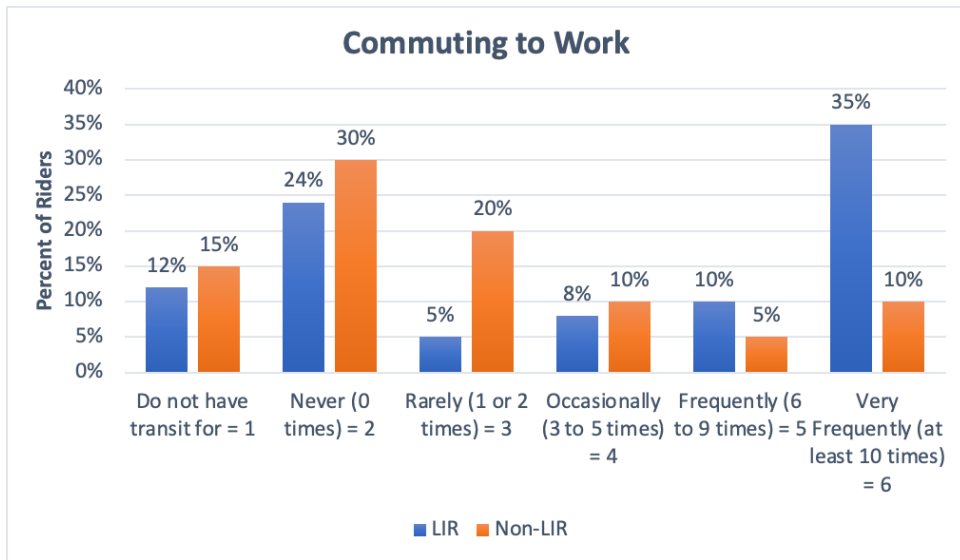
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### II. Reasons for Transit Use

Riders were asked to rate how frequently they used TriMet for ten different purposes: commuting to work, commuting to school, household errands, personal business, eating meals outside of home, healthcare, civic religious activities, socialization, recreation/entertainment, and job-related activities. Higher scores represent higher frequency of use for the specific purpose. The graphs below compare the frequency of use for low-income riders (LIR) versus non-low-income riders *for Time 2 only*.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Do not have transit for	Never (0 times)	Rarely (1 or 2 times)	Occasionally (3 to 5 times)	Frequently (6 to 9 times)	Very Frequently (at least 10 times)

**A. Commuting to Work**

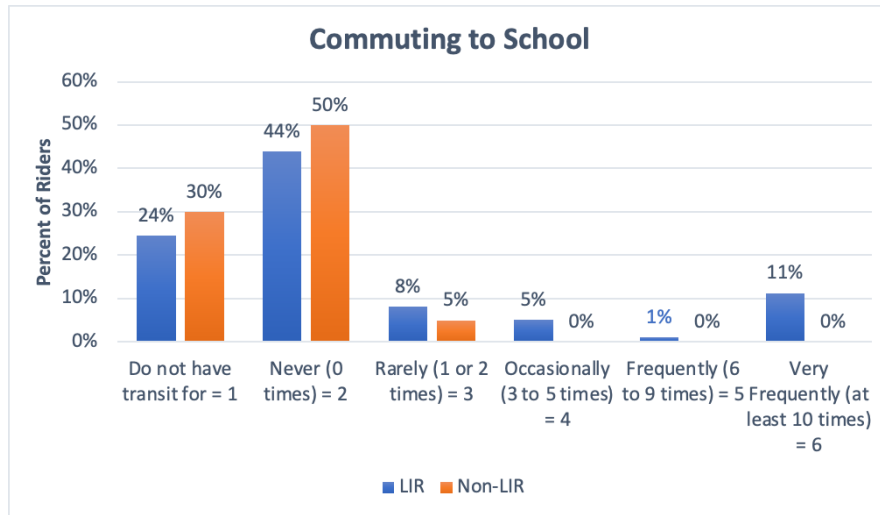


**Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:**

*“I work downtown so I would take the bus, which was one of the useful things about having the bus pass.”*

*“I’ve had a couple jobs where honestly, it made sense to take the bus because one of them had very limited parking”*

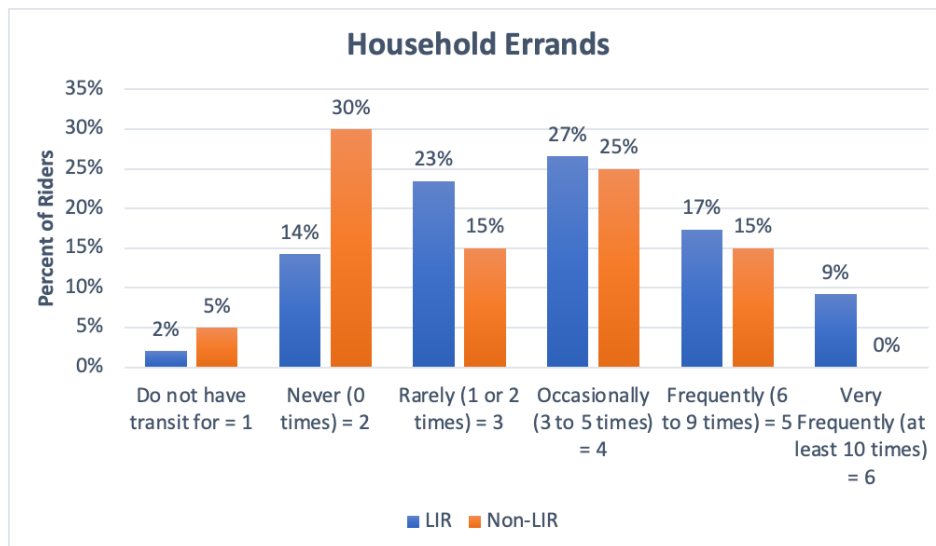
### B. Commuting to School



#### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

*“I would take TriMet, the bus to my school. I think it was Cascadia campus, and it was really beneficial. The bus drivers were always on top of the schedule at the time, and it was really consistent.”*

### C. Household Errands

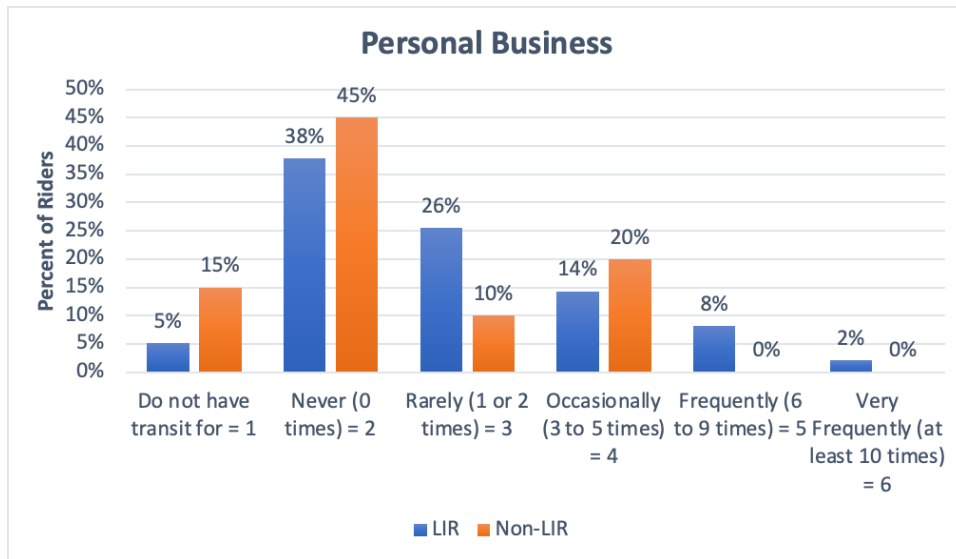


**Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:**

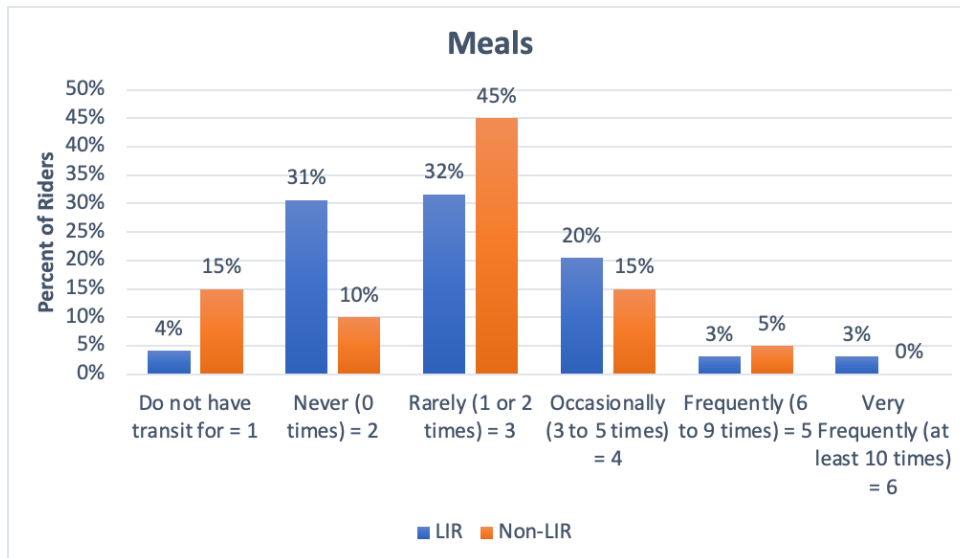
*“I often grocery shop by bus or bike.”*

*“Grocery store, anywhere off campus, pharmacy, to visit friends. Everywhere I can't walk to”*

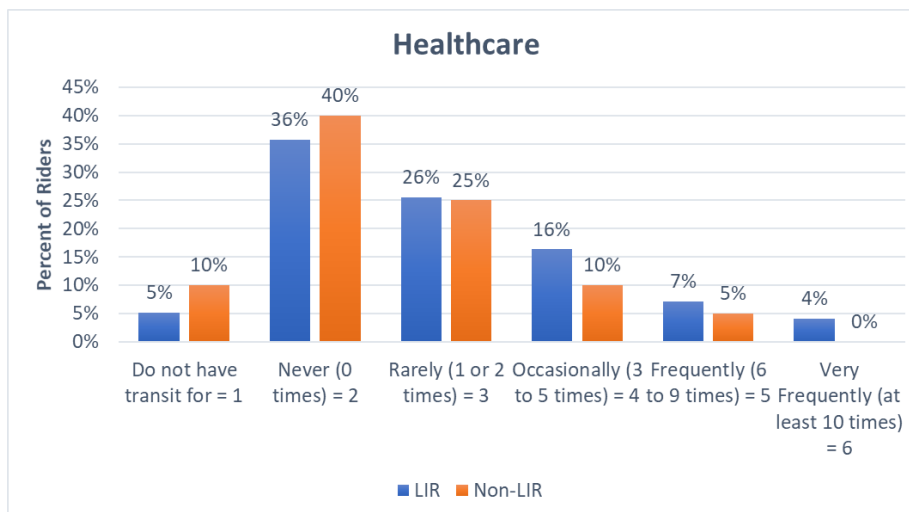
**D. Personal Business**



**E. Eating Meals Outside of Home**



## F. Healthcare

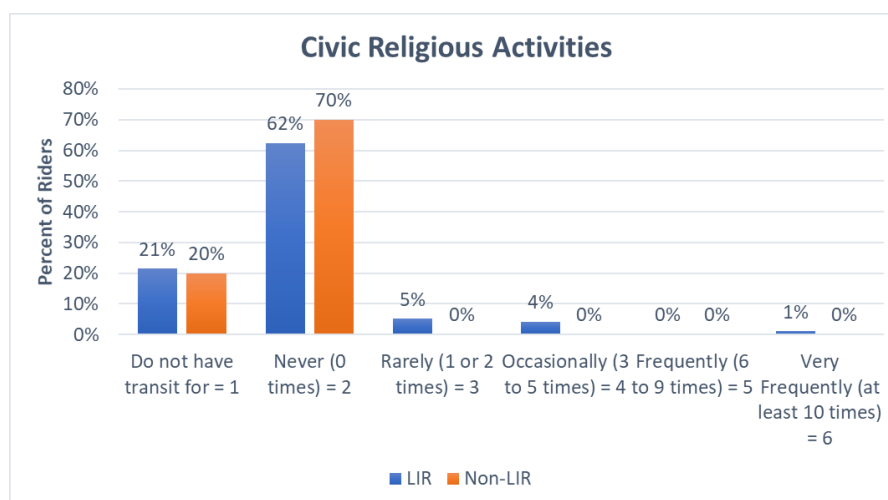


### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

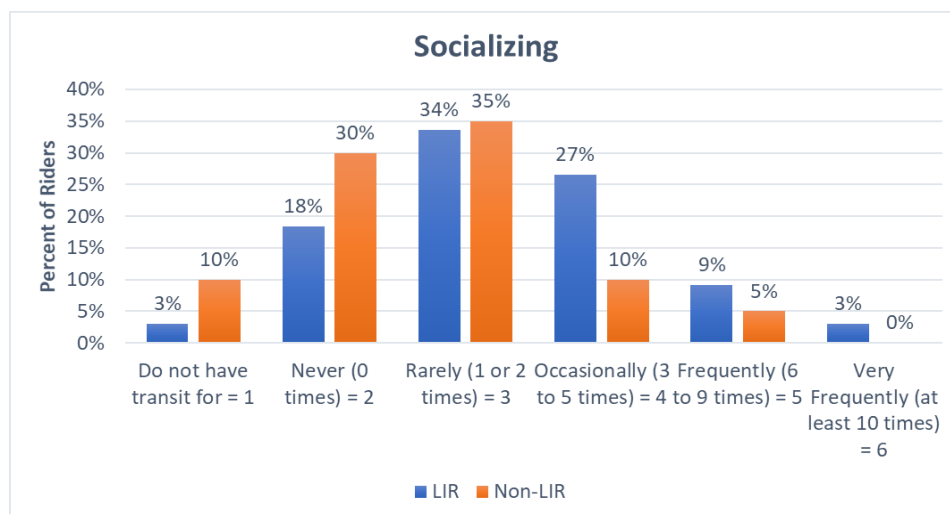
*“Well, instead of riding more, I would take the bus more, getting to and from doctor's appointments, I'll primarily go by public transportation.”*

*“Everywhere I have to go. I do not drive. Even if I wanted to drive, I don't think physically I could drive because of my issues with my back and my hips and my knees. I would go numb. All my doctor's appointments...Anything and everything, I take the bus and MAX and I also take a streetcar.”*

## G. Civic Religious Activities



## H. Socializing

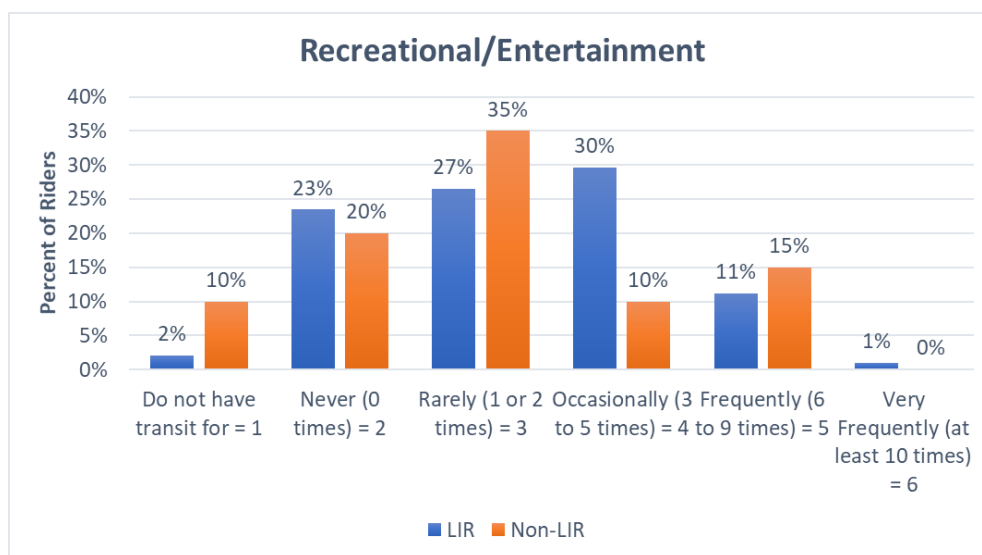


### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

*"If I'm going to a friend's house or going to go get coffee, then normally the bus or the MAX and the bus."*

*"I've started a queer book club and so it's been really nice just being able to take public transport and then some of the people who are also in the book club, they take public transport, so it's been nice for us to meet up [and] have a couple drinks..."*

## I. Recreational/Entertainment



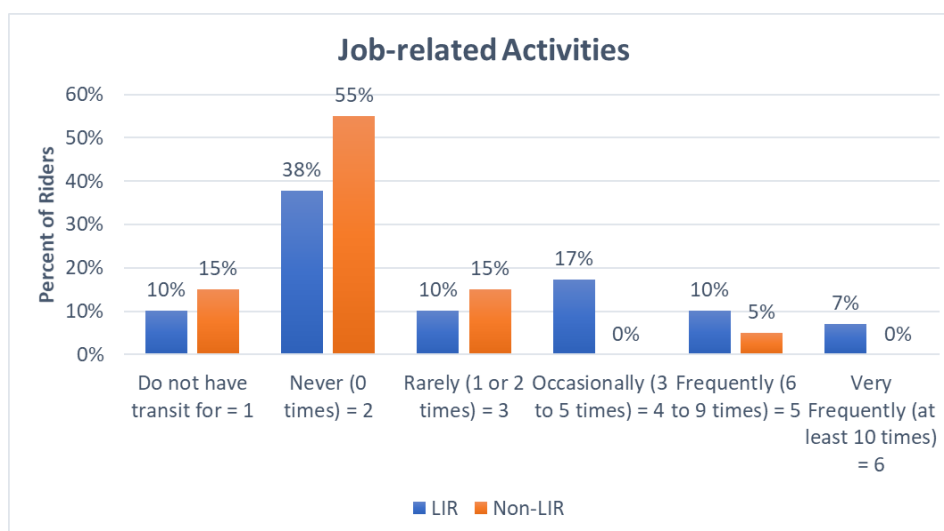
### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

*“I was able to take the MAX up and go to one of the soccer games.”*

*“I’m much more likely to do the events of Pioneer Courthouse Square, the events on the Square.”*

*“Yes, I do utilize TriMet to get to Portland and meet up with the group to do a group ride rather than riding all the way there because it’s seven miles one way.”*

### J. Job-related Activities



### III. Physical and Mental Health

#### A. Physical Health

Riders were asked to indicate on a sliding scale ranging from 0 (poor health) - 100 (great health) how good or bad their own health was in the past month.

	Time 1		Time 2	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>LIR</b>	65.02	18.49	67.64	17.29
<b>Non-LIR</b>	73.28	21.27	75.55	19.16

### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

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*“I saved up to get a gym membership, 24-Hour Fitness...I would take TriMet there because the streetcar was super close for me, because I like to stay active and exercise. So, I would just walk about 20 minutes to get there to take the streetcar/MAX there, and it would take me all the way there. It was just a five-minute walk, and I would go there several times a week just to work out and to swim. It was fun.”*

*“I would say I probably lost about eight pounds just from walking and climbing up the stairs at the MAX or wherever. I try not to use the elevators, just keep active. So, it's definitely helped me health wise, weight wise and helped with my exercise routine, I guess.”*

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### B. Positive Mood

Riders were asked to indicate how frequently they experienced five different emotions in the past month using a Likert scale. An example item included *“Please indicate to what extent you have felt **alert** in the past month.”*

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely

	Time 1		Time 2	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>LIR</b>	2.92	.77	3.07	.70
<b>Non-LIR</b>	3.22	.77	3.21	.73



### C. Psychological Ill-Being

Riders were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt mentally unwell over the past month using a Likert scale. An example item included *“Please indicate to what extent you have felt nervous over the past month.”*

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

	Time 1		Time 2	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>LIR</b>	3.06	.73	2.89	.71
<b>Non-LIR</b>	2.43	.89	2.50	.75

#### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

*“I take [the bus] to get to a mental health group”*

*“I’m not just stuck at home all day. I have this pass that’s super cheap, so I can go out and do something that is going to lift my spirits.”*

*“I used to take TriMet a lot more to go to natural areas, which is maybe a mental health need.”*

Note: Although these quotes reflect psychological well-being (rather than ill-being), they demonstrate alignment with significant differences between groups found from quantitative analyses. See the observation section below for further details.

### IV. Corporate Social Responsibility

Riders were asked to indicate their level of agreement for seven statements about TriMet using a five-point Likert scale. An example item included *“Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement - I am satisfied with TriMet transportation.”*

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

	Time 1		Time 2	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
LIR	3.59	.66	3.69	.60
Non-LIR	3.50	.75	3.55	.69

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### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

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*“And I just say that it's a really good program and even a lot of houseless people will purposely move to Portland because Portland just has a great reputation with helping out their citizens. So, I'd just say I respect TriMet a lot for what they do for people.”*

*“I think it's great because, I mean, they're offering it to people who need it. People that are elderly, or disabled, or poor. And I think that's great. Because I know other cities don't do this, and I think it's wonderful.”*

*“Yeah, I like public transportation because it's more sustainable and more accessible for a lot of people, especially because cars are expensive. Also, I did not want to bring my car to Portland because I didn't want it to get broken into or stolen. I like that they are trying to make it more accessible for low-income people with the program.”*

*“I think it makes public transport a lot more accessible, especially to lower income people, to students, to people that are using public transport the most and I really like that.”*

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### V. Sense of Community

Riders were asked to indicate their level of agreement regarding twelve statements about their neighborhood using a five-point Likert scale. Neighborhood was defined as the few blocks in any direction from the place you live or the place you spend the most time. An example item included *“Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement - **I think my neighborhood is a good place for me to live.**”*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

	Time 1		Time 2	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>LIR</b>	2.95	.61	3.00	.59
<b>Non-LIR</b>	3.32	.62	3.30	.59

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**Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:**

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*“I have more of a sense of involvement in my community or presence in my community rather because you just kind of observe people on the bus when you're just sitting there getting from one place to another. You kind of notice the people that come and go, different people that use transit.”*

*“It has made getting to farther social activities easier. I am a member of the queer community and sometimes the best stuff's always happening in Killingsworth, which can be so far. And so being able to take transit with my friends into those spaces has been helpful in the past”*

*“With my existing community, I have easier means of being in connection with them.”*

*“I've met a lot of people on the bus, just had some pleasant conversations in the past that I wouldn't have if I was sitting in a car.”*

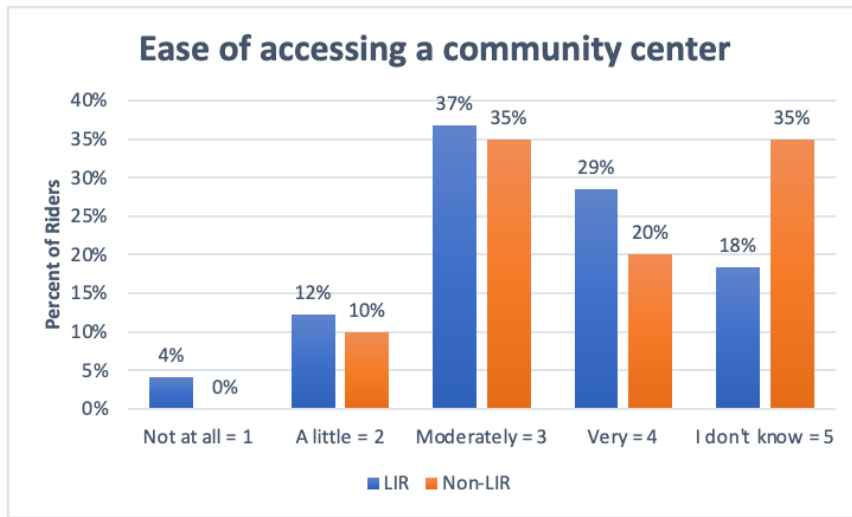
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**VI. Access based on Public Transit**

**Riders were asked to indicate their general access to nearby public transit options:**

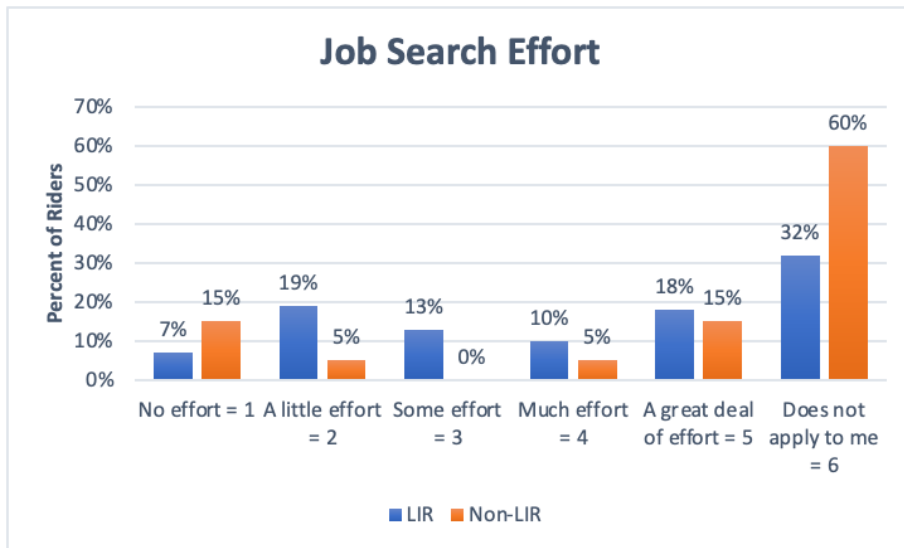
Membership Group	# of bus lines within walking distance	Do you have a streetcar, WES, or MAX stop near you?	
		Yes	No
<b>LIR</b>	Mean 3.60	60 (61%)	38 (39%)
<b>Non-LIR</b>	2.65	10 (50%)	10 (50%)

Riders were asked how easy it was for them to get to a community support center (ex. job placement, food banks, Department of Human Services office, etc.):

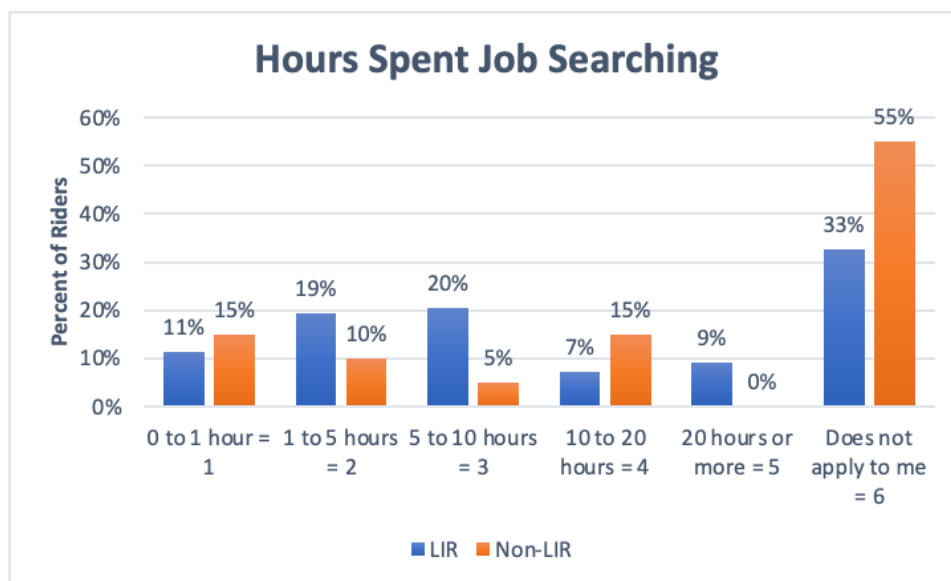


**VII. Job Seeking Behaviors**

Riders were asked to indicate the level of effort put into their job search on average per week over the last two months (or until they found a new job).



Riders were asked how many hours they spent job seeking on average per week in the last two months (or until they found a new job).



#### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

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*“I’ve had some job interviews where I’ve taken the MAX and bus, so it’s helped with that.”*

*“...especially for an interview, it’s like I’m having to make pretty frequent commutes without necessarily any promise of having any income returned down the line. So having the ability to make those commutes at a severely reduced cost I think allowed me to be more secure and focus the costs on other important things at the time when I had to be making a lot more decisions about where that money was going.”*

*“I’ve definitely used TriMet to commute to public libraries to print off resumes and documents along those lines. And I don’t know, I imagine I probably still would’ve done it. But it would’ve been a lot more difficult. It’s a bit of a walk for a library near me at the moment. But I think not having to worry about the additional costs in addition to the cost to print everything off as well, that’s maybe one area that it was helpful during the unemployment.”*

*“It [TriMet] made it so I didn’t have to just stick to a mile radius around here. It made it easier so I could look outside of just being able to walk somewhere [referring to job opportunities].”*

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## HOUSING DIFFICULTIES

The **number one reason** riders had to leave their housing situation was ***rent*** for Time 1 and Time 2. Other reasons included *problems with roommates, feeling unsafe, and illness of self or others*. Feeling unsafe was also listed as the number one reason for Time 2. Riders could select multiple reasons.

### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

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*“I would say that I took TriMet a lot when I was unhoused. I think it was really helpful to get access when I was houseless while taking TriMet, because TriMet was able to get me to use my social service agencies that I needed... TriMet was able to help me get to my care and stuff.”*

*“Most of the housing opportunities that I will have with my lack of income or even if I got my Social Security, are pretty much out in Portland and farther out... It was a 45-minute bus ride. If I didn't have those [bus lines] then, it would definitely impact my housing because again, I'd have to try to find somebody that could give me a ride. I was homeless 23 months ago. I don't really know people. I don't have a whole bunch of people I could say, “Hey, give me a ride.” TriMet is all I have.”*

*“I use TriMet, I use HCP program, and I use TriMet to get to a job, and that job gets me money that I can use to afford housing.”*

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## IMPACT OF COVID-19

### I. Impact on Housing Difficulties

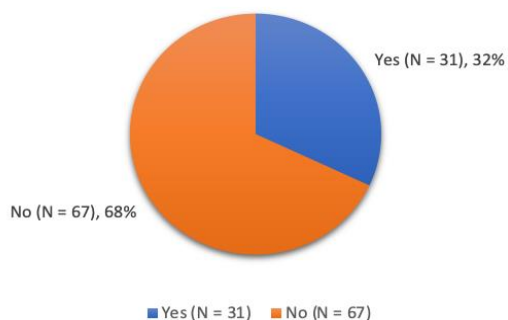
When asked to describe their experiences of housing instability or homelessness during COVID-19 in the surveys, riders shared issues that have been observed across the country such as **job loss, difficulty paying rent, difficulty finding affordable housing, (threat of) eviction, and displacement due to COVID-19 driven isolation**. Here are some representative survey responses:

- ❖ *“Lost job, was evicted from place but not for unpaid rent. It was difficult to still find a place when my unemployment had run out right when I was being evicted and hadn’t found work yet.”*
- ❖ *“I lost my main source of income when the pandemic began. I was unsure of how I would pay my rent, and was barely able to do so until I found a new job.”*
- ❖ *“Couldn't afford to keep my apartment due to job loss, had to move back with family”*
- ❖ *“Unable to find housing. Affordable housing scarcity”*
- ❖ *“Difficulty finding affordable housing”*
- ❖ *“Ex-partner owns the house where I'm living, his behavior has been more unpredictable and controlling making it harder to do some necessary tasks. My health has been negatively affected since getting COVID-19. My work declined after COVID-19 emergency declaration.”*
- ❖ *“Could not return home for some time due to contracting COVID-19 nor return to work or school. Had to stay in a different place.”*

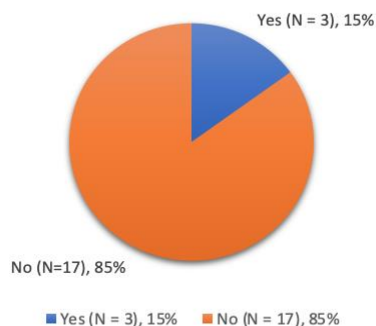
## II. Impact on Job

Approximately one-third of LIR were dismissed from their jobs due to COVID-19

LIR: Laid off or Fired due to COVID-19



Non-LIR: Laid off or Fired due to COVID-19



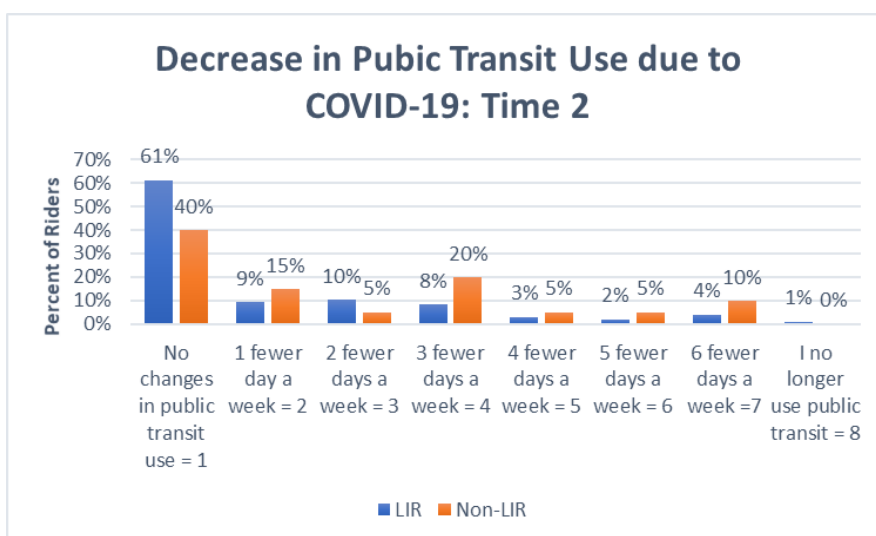
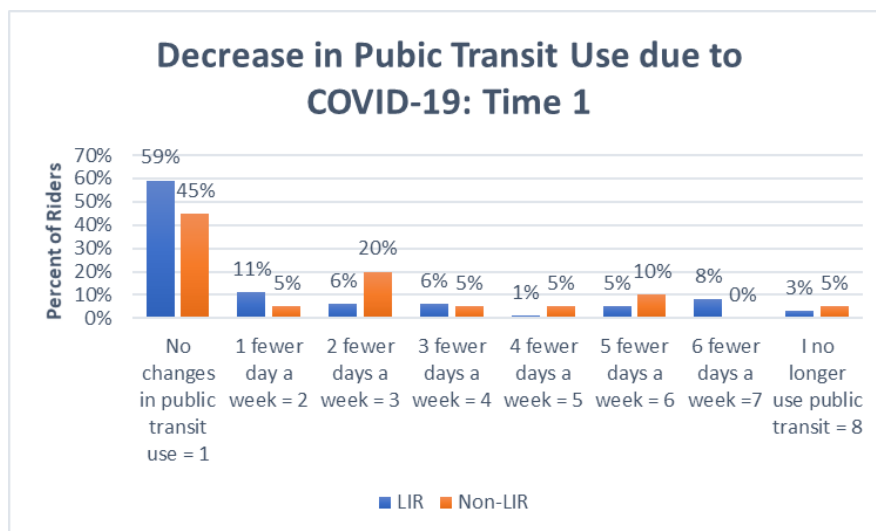
An **additional 22** low-income riders (22%) reported experiencing *reduced hours or furlough* because of COVID-19 with an **average of 52.09% reduction of hours**. **Eleven** low-income riders (11%) experienced a *pay cut* with an **average reduction of 40.73% in pay**. The pandemic *interfered with plans for employment* or paid work for **40** low-income riders (41%).

## III. Impact on Relation with Public Transit

Riders were asked to indicate how much their use of public transportation had been reduced because of the pandemic.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No changes in public transit use	1 Fewer Day A Week	2 Fewer Days A Week	3 Fewer Days A Week	4 Fewer Days A Week	5 Fewer Days A Week	6 Fewer Days A Week	I no longer use public transit





#### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

*“...pre COVID, I would very rarely use the car, actually. I even did a lot of my shopping downtown, like at the Safeway downtown, and I'd take the streetcar to do it. But post COVID, I didn't really feel comfortable taking TriMet, just because it's such close quarters, so I would always use my car.”*

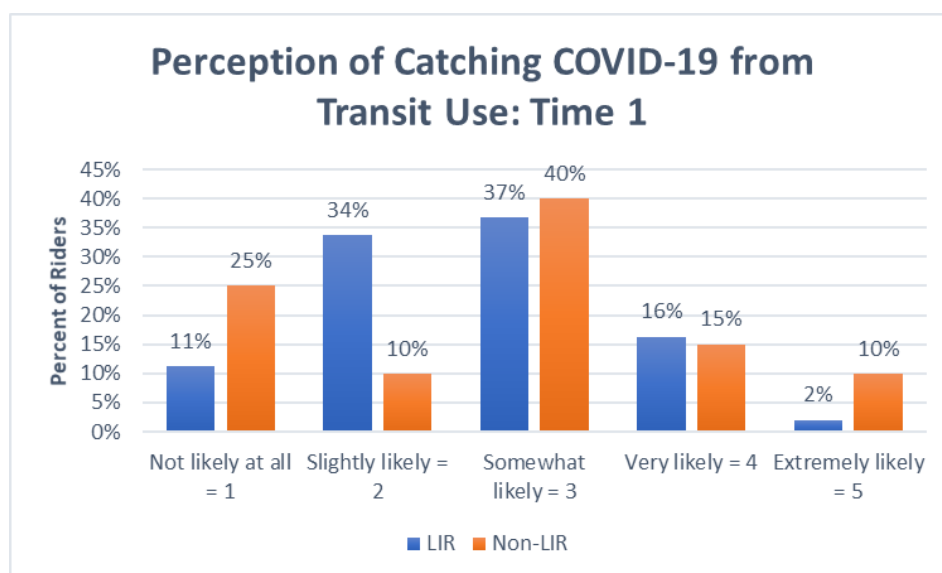
*“We're still in a pandemic, not sure how long it's going to be, but a lot of people in my life have gotten COVID, and there's a lot of immunocompromised people that ride TriMet, and I just don't like the fact that a lot of drivers don't wear masks at all anymore. I feel like it's not great for our community. A lot of my friends are immunocompromised and have actually had to stop taking TriMet and have had to drive instead because they don't want to get sick, because something bad could happen to them or their physical health. So, I think if TriMet*

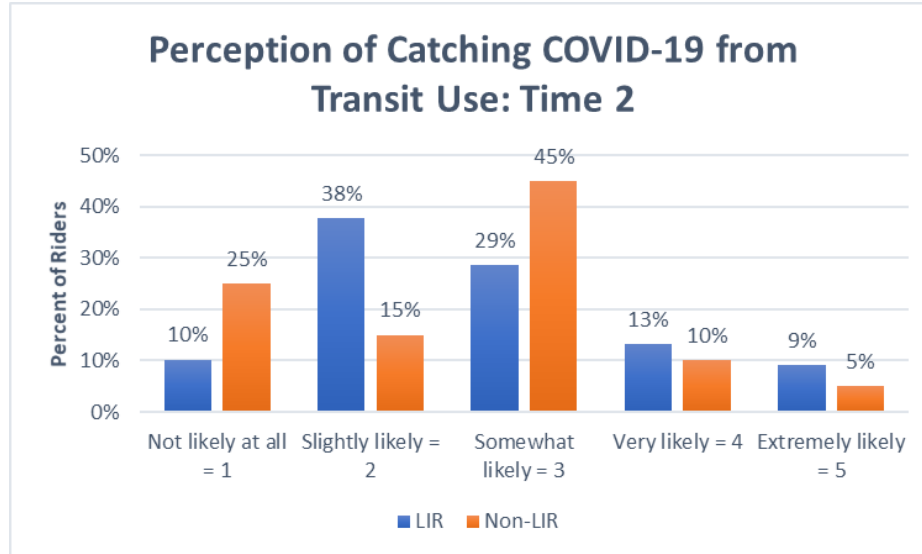
*enforced their mask mandate on their buses and stuff, it would make things a lot safer for our community.”*

*“Well, I think in the beginning of the pandemic, I had a lot of fear using the bus system because of public health. And I remember a couple times when I rode it and people weren't masking, but I was working downtown and that was causing me a lot of anxiety. And I had a housemate who was using transit and then was using TriMet and then even stopped and just took cabs for a little while, I think out of some anxiety.”*

**Riders were asked to report their perception of how likely it was for them to catch COVID-19 from taking public transit.**

1	2	3	4	5
Not Likely at All	Slightly Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely





### Quotes from interviews with low-income riders:

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*“I usually just use biking because TriMet has become really unreliable during the pandemic, and I wasn't a fan of when TriMet removed their mask mandate because I actually got sick from COVID after riding TriMet.”*

*“I felt during the pandemic I was pretty concerned in regard to the health [and] safety of riding public transit because it felt like bus drivers didn't have the resources to enforce masks very much at the time and that sort of thing. And that was my concern then.”*

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## OBSERVATIONS

1. There were significant differences between time points and groups for frequency of walking such that Time 2 had a lower mean (frequency) for both groups, LIR ( $m= 5.28$ ) and Non-LIR ( $m= 4.32$ ). This indicated that LIR walked a little more than a few times a week and Non-LIR walked at least once a week. Overall, LIR walked more frequently for both time points.
2. There was a significant interaction between time points and groups for frequency of public transit use such that Non-LIR demonstrated a significant decrease in use across time points (T1  $m= 4.65$ , T2  $m= 4.00$ ) but LIR did not (T1  $m= 4.88$ , T2  $m= 4.76$ ). This indicated that Non-LIR reported using public transit a few times a week and reduced their use to once a week on average while LIR continued to use public transit multiple times a week.
3. There were significant differences between groups at both timepoints for the frequency of carpooling or ridesharing such that LIR on average carpooled or participated in rideshares more frequently (T1  $m= 2.35$ , T2  $m= 2.70$ ) than Non-LIR (T1  $m= 1.40$ , T2  $m= 1.47$ ).
4. There were significant differences between groups at both timepoints for sense of community such that Non-LIR reported a higher sense of community on average (T1  $m= 3.32$ , T2  $m= 3.30$ ) than LIR (T1  $m= 2.95$ , T2  $m= 3.00$ ).
5. Psychological ill-being scores differed significantly between rider groups. LIR reported higher psychological ill-being at Time 1 ( $m= 3.06$ ) and Time 2 ( $m= 2.89$ ), than Non-LIR at Time 1 ( $m= 2.43$ ) and Time 2 ( $m= 2.50$ ). Additionally results demonstrated a significant interaction between time points and groups. LIR reported lower levels of psychological ill-being at Time 2, whereas Non-LIR reported higher levels of psychological ill-being at Time 2.

## **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FROM LOW-INCOME RIDERS**

Low-income riders shared a variety of suggested improvements for TriMet during their interviews. Several themes emerged and are listed below:

### **Expanding access to TriMet services**

- Riders expressed interest in expanding both bus and MAX routes to increase accessibility
- Riders reported wanting more bus drivers to increase the frequency of buses across routes
- Riders also expressed interest in increasing the hours of operation (such as 24/7 access)
- Riders expressed support to continue decreasing the cost of TriMet services by incorporating a sliding scale system, offering free or discounted passes earned through TriMet-related community service, and offering cheaper fares for shorter timeframes (e.g., 30-minute pass)
- Riders reported wanting to improve the ease of loading money onto their HOP card (i.e., loading their HOP card at bus or MAX stops)
- Riders reported wanting more frequent communication about delayed or canceled services

### **Increasing rider safety**

- Riders reported concerns with personal safety while using TriMet and have suggested increasing security presence at TriMet stops (e.g., Hollywood station) as well as intervening during unsafe situations
- Riders have expressed concern with discrimination of fare enforcement when checking rider fares