



# Public Engagement Summary

September – November 2022

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# 1. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND APPROACH

Between June and November 2022, Purple Line project staff conducted engagement with the public and stakeholders to share information about the project, answer questions, and seek general input. Here are the ways in which they engaged with the public and stakeholders about the project generally:

- Reached approximately 850 people via:
  - Nine one-on-one stakeholder and business meetings/presentations
  - 13 community event pop-ups
  - Canvassing at Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing and Centromex Supermercado in St. Paul
  - Project updates via website, social media, newsletters, and new releases
  - Translated materials



**FIGURE 1. PROJECT STAFF ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS AT HMONG INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM FESTIVAL IN JULY 2022.**

The project formed several committees, including the Community and Business Advisory Committee and Purple Line Partners, to advise and receive feedback from community groups, business representatives, organizations, corridor residents, and project partners.

- Community and Business Advisory Committee
  - Comprised of local residents and business representatives along the Purple Line
  - Advise on how stations can best serve the neighborhoods and businesses where they are located
  - Two meetings in 2022: July 7 and September 13
- Purple Line Partners
  - Comprised of M Health Fairview, HealthPartners, Maplewood Mall, St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, MN Hmong Chamber of Commerce, MN Latino Chamber of Commerce, East Metro Strong, MoveMN, and All Parks Alliance for Change
  - Engage citizens, business leaders, employers, employees, non-profits and higher education institutions
  - Four meetings in 2022: January 1, April 11, June 14, and September 30

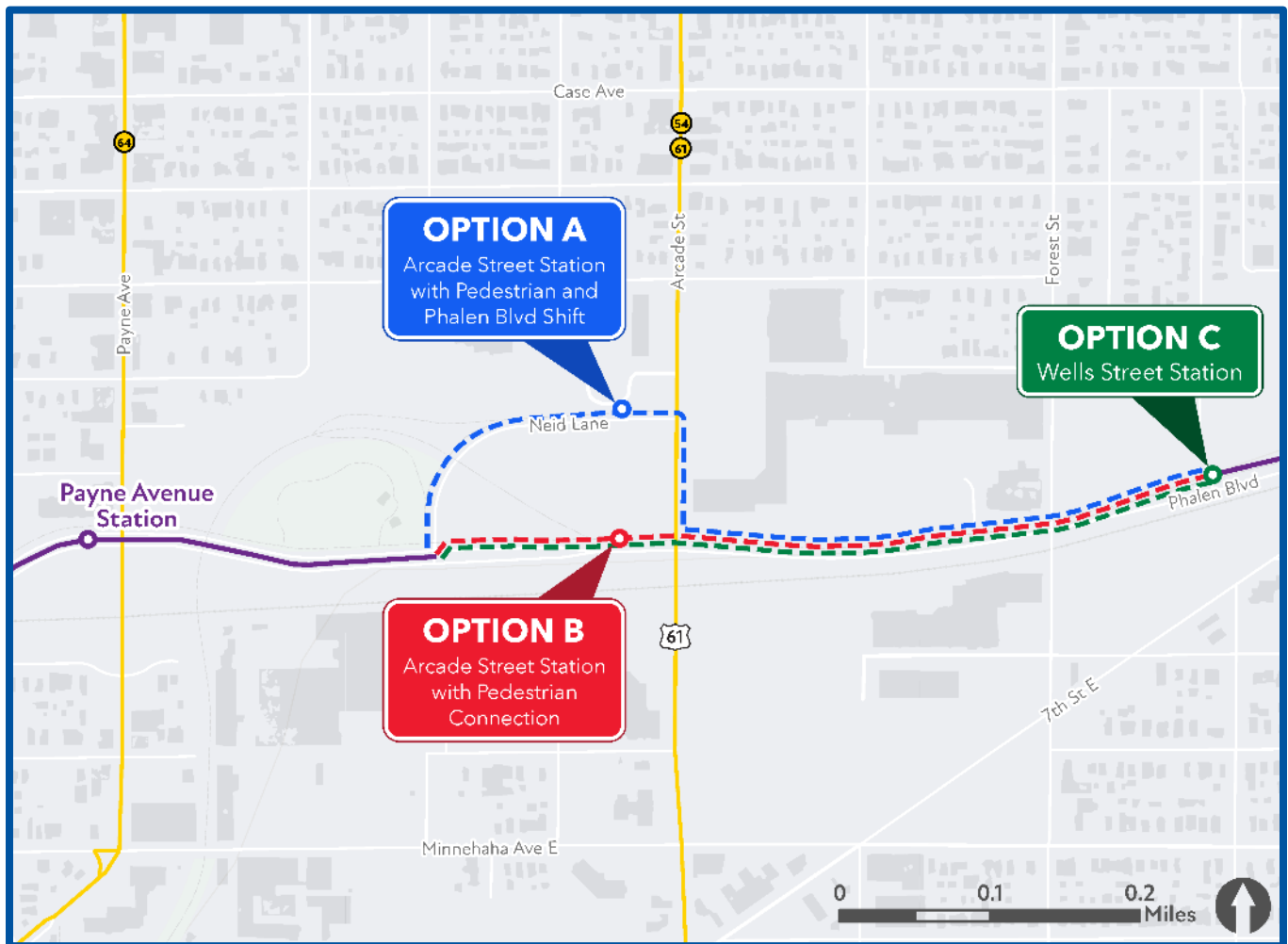
Beginning in September 2022, project staff sought input on two specific project considerations:

1. Arcade Street Station (September – November 2022): Project staff engaged current users of public transit and those located within the watershed of the proposed station options for the Arcade Street stations (options A, B, and C) (See Figure 2).
2. Century College Endpoint (October – November 2022): With partnership from Century College, the project team engaged students, faculty and staff on the value of having a Purple Line terminus at Century College.

Project staff have engaged with communities around Arcade Street Station and Century College through a variety of activities, including in-person and virtual community meetings, canvassing, tabling at community events, pop-ups, online and paper surveys, and meetings with key stakeholders. The following summarizes the feedback received from these engagement methods.

## 1.1. Arcade Street Station Outreach

Arcade Street Station outreach began with three route alternatives and were shaped by initial feedback from the property owner of Seeger Square. Project staff reviewed and ultimately brought these alternatives forward for public comment.



**FIGURE 2. MAP OF ARCADE STREET STATION LOCATION OPTIONS**

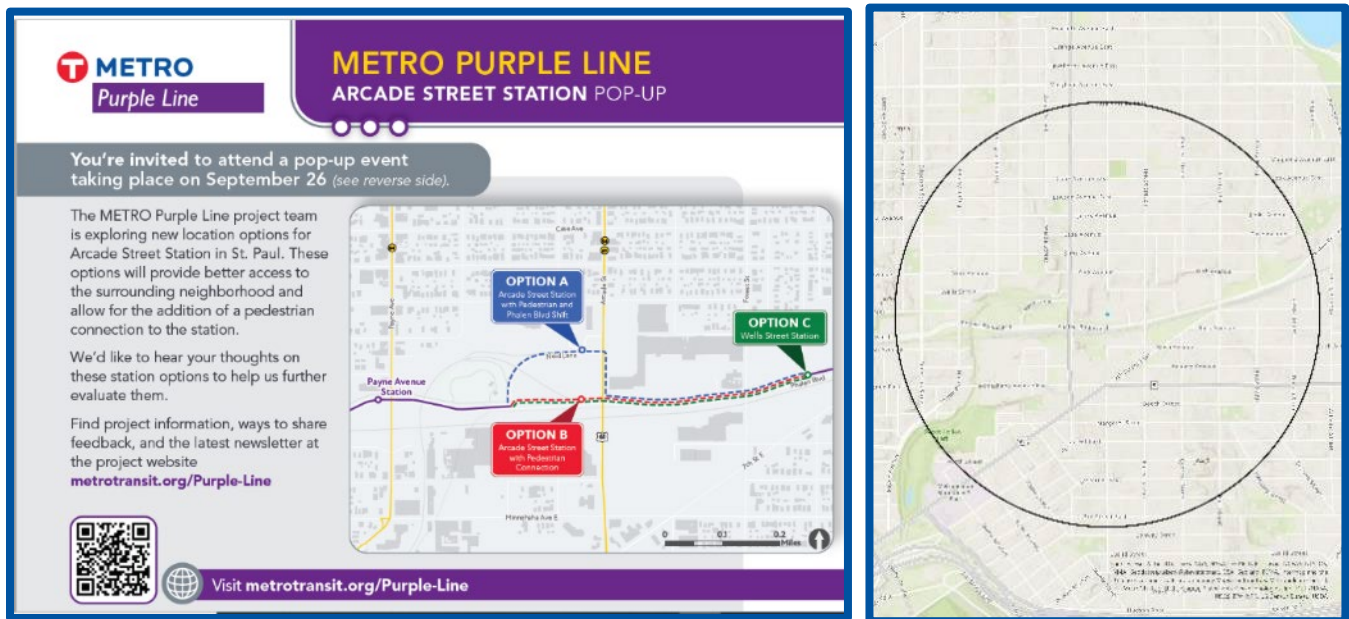
Throughout September – November 2022, project staff engaged with the public about Arcade Street through the following:

**Paper and online survey (September – November 2022)**

- Available in English, Hmong, Karen, and Spanish
- 136 responses

**Pop-ups postcard**

- Sent to nearly 4,000 properties within a 1-mile radius around station location options (See Figure 3)



**FIGURE 3. FRONT SIDE OF ARCADE STREET STATION POSTCARD (LEFT) AND MAP OF MAILING RADIUS (RIGHT)**

**Community meetings and pop-up events (247 attendees total):**

- Monday, September 26, 2022, 5 – 7 p.m., St. Paul Eastside YMCA: 26 attendees
- Friday, September 30, 2022, noon – 2 p.m., Sun World Supermarket (interpreter present): 12 attendees
- Saturday, October 1, 2022, noon – 2 p.m., Hmong Village (interpreter present): 25 people engaged, 3 surveys completed
- Tuesday, October 4, 2022, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., 800 Minnehaha Ave Building: 34 attendees
- August 26, 2022, 9 a.m. – noon, East Side YMCA Blood Drive Pop-up: 18 attendees
- October 13, 2022, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., Johnson Sr. High School: 54 attendees
- October 17, 2022, 2 – 4 p.m., CLUES: 35 attendees
- October 20, 2022, 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. Sun World Supermarket: 14 attendees
- November 8, 2022, 4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M., Centromex Supermercado: 15 attendees





**FIGURE 4. PROJECT STAFF ENGAGING COMMUNITY AT CENTROMEX SUPERMERCADO ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022**

#### **Canvassing near Arcade Street and Wells Street**

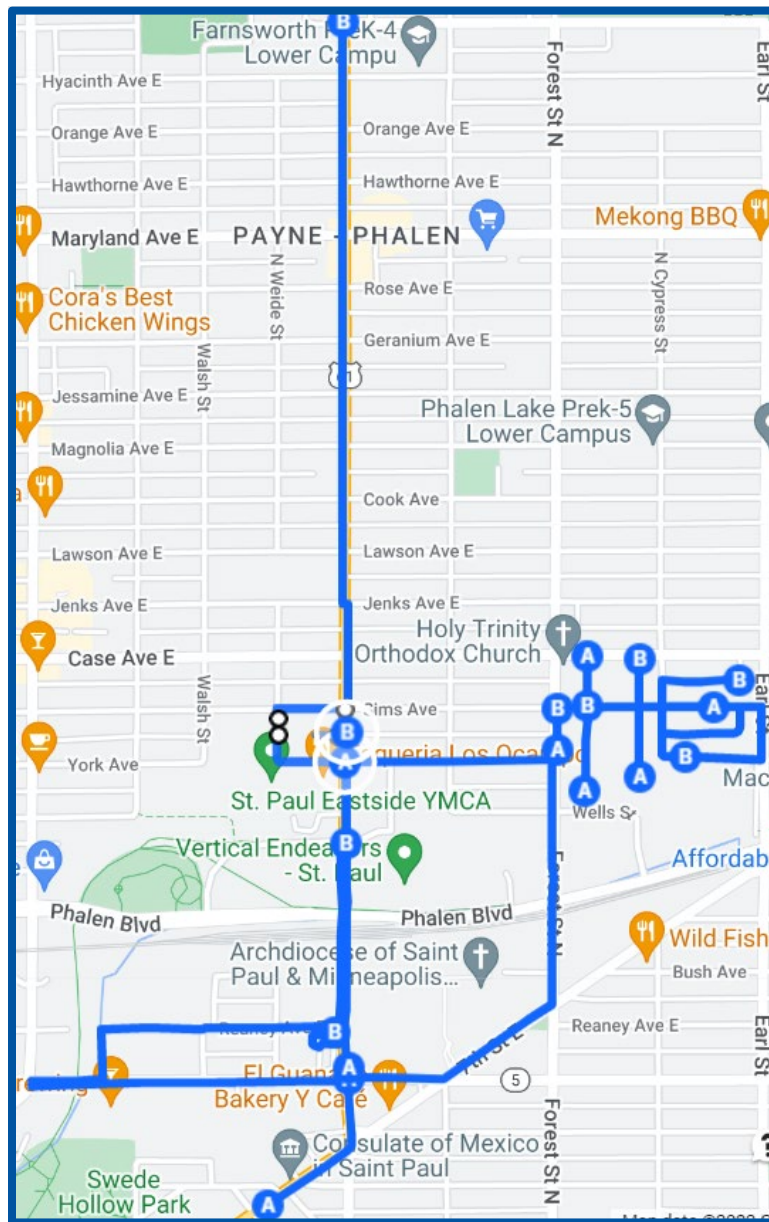
- October 4, 2022 – Arcade Street and surrounding businesses and institutions
  - Visited: Vomela, Asian Community Center, Integra Healthcare CNA Services, Arcade Laundromat, Peaceful Land Grocery Store (Karen), Bingo Oriental Market, Farnsworth Aerospace Middle school. Activities: dropping off flyers to staff on site and speaking with leadership.
  - Engaged 22 transit riders while walking around the area, 15 surveys completed.
- October 5, 2022 – Arcade Street and Minnehaha Avenue
  - Visited: Hmong American Partnership, Johnson Sr. High School, The Urban Village, Theresa Living Center. Attempted dropping off flyers to organizations.
  - 5 surveys completed.
- October 6, 2022 – Wells Street
  - Apartments engaged: 1015 York Avenue, 914 York Avenue, 1025 York Avenue. Activities: left flyers with QR codes pinned up in complex entrances.

- October 7, 2022 – Arcade Street
  - Visited businesses in Seeger Square property and distributed survey flyers to pedestrians including completing 12 surveys with pedestrians/transit riders during canvassing.
- October 24, 2022 Wells Street Canvassing
  - Visited: Earl Street and York Avenue residential properties. Activities: left flyers with QR codes

**Stakeholder meetings** (Approx. 50 stakeholders engaged total)

- City of St. Paul and agency partners at Ramsey County, MnDOT, and Metro Transit
- St. Paul Councilmember Nelsie Yang
- Seeger Square owner and tenants business outreach
- Payne-Phalen Community Council
- Beacon Bluff Business Center
- Dayton's Bluff Community Council
- Payne-Phalen Community Council Board
- Saint Paul Public Schools – Safe Routes to Schools





**FIGURE 5. MAP OF ARCADE STREET AND WELLS STREET CANVASSING LOCATIONS**

## 1.2. Survey

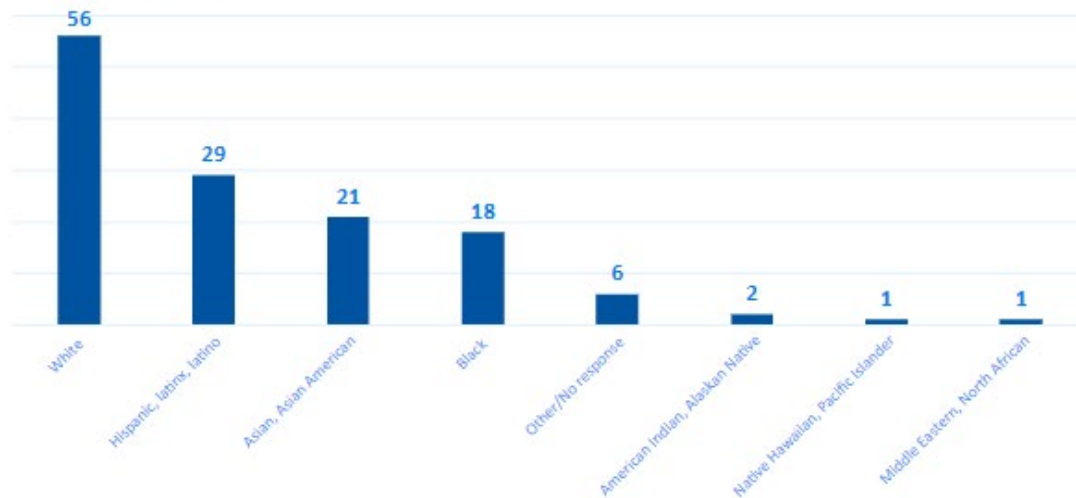
The Arcade Street Station survey was available online and in paper format in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Karen. The survey asked respondents which station location they like the best and why as well as demographic information. The survey was promoted during in-person engagement activities (community meetings, pop-ups, canvassing, etc.) and through digital advertising (social media, project emails,

project website). The project team received 136 responses to the survey. Results of the survey questions are listed below.

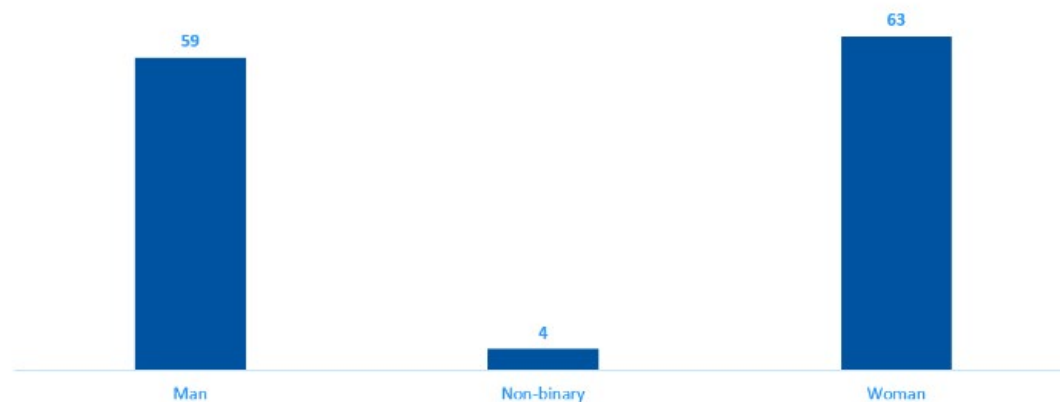
### 1.2.1. Demographics

The survey received a diverse range of respondents, with 78% of respondents identifying as a person of color or representing a racial identity from a disadvantaged community. Sixty-eight percent of respondents identified as women, while 4% identified as non-binary. Most of our respondents said they travel within the 55106 zip code (58 respondents total), which is the Payne/Phalen area of St. Paul. 55109 and 55130 were the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> most mentioned zip codes, in that order.

#### Demographics - Race

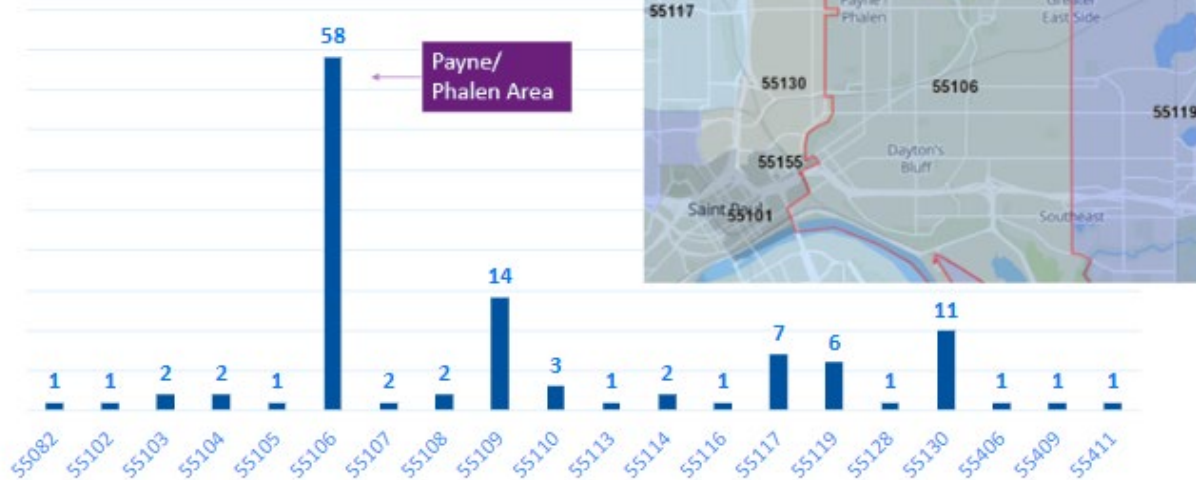


#### Demographics - Gender



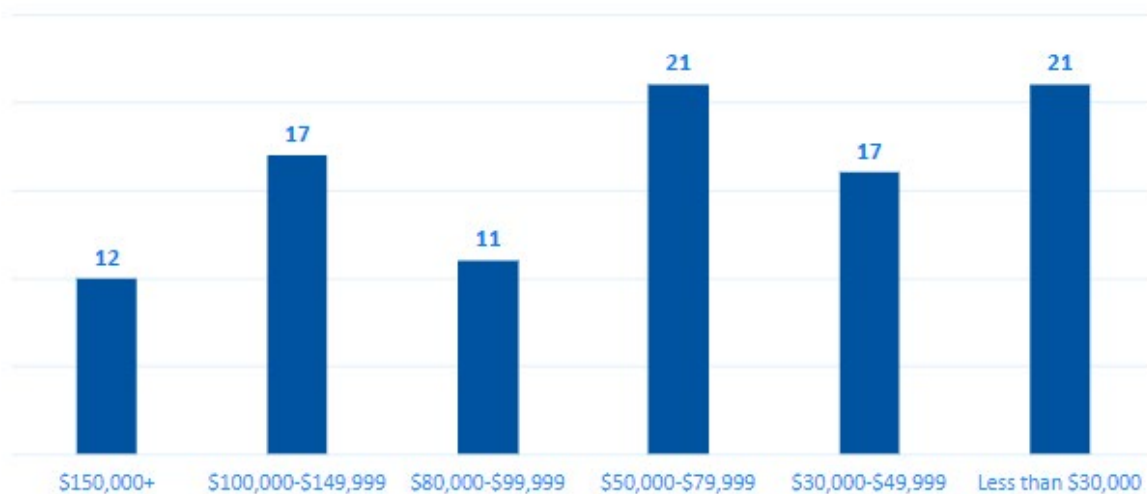
\* 10 skipped this question

## Demographics – Zip Code

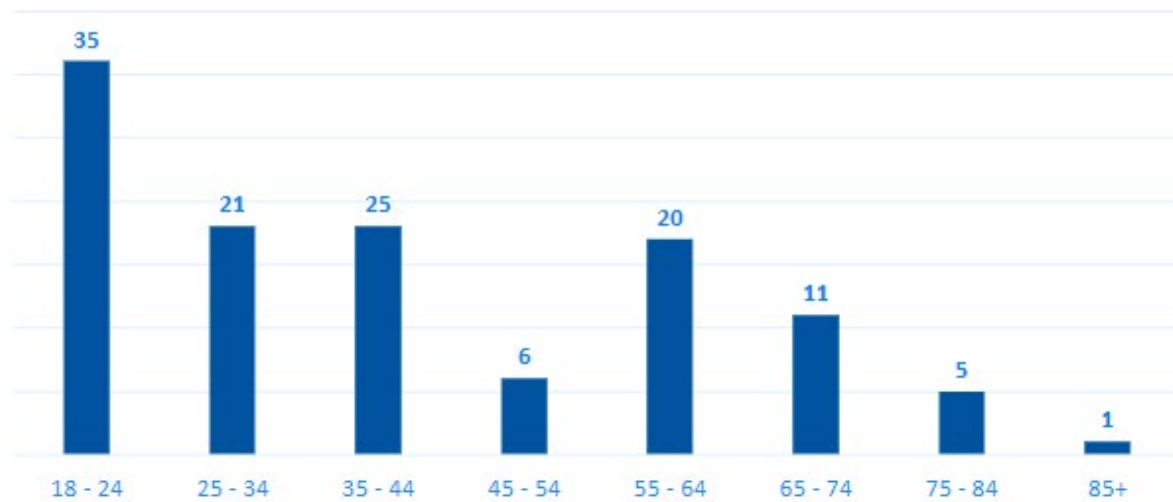


We heard from respondents in every income and age category. Regarding income, we heard the most from respondents with household incomes less than \$30,000/year and between \$50,000 - \$79,999/year. Regarding age, we heard the most (28%) from respondents who are 18 – 24 years old. This is in part due to outreach with students at Johnson Senior High School and should be taken into consideration when analyzing the survey results.

## Demographics - Income



## Demographics - Age



When asked how they currently ride Metro Transit, 98 respondents reported having utilized Metro Transit at some point within the year, while 49 said they use transit almost every day to a few times a week.

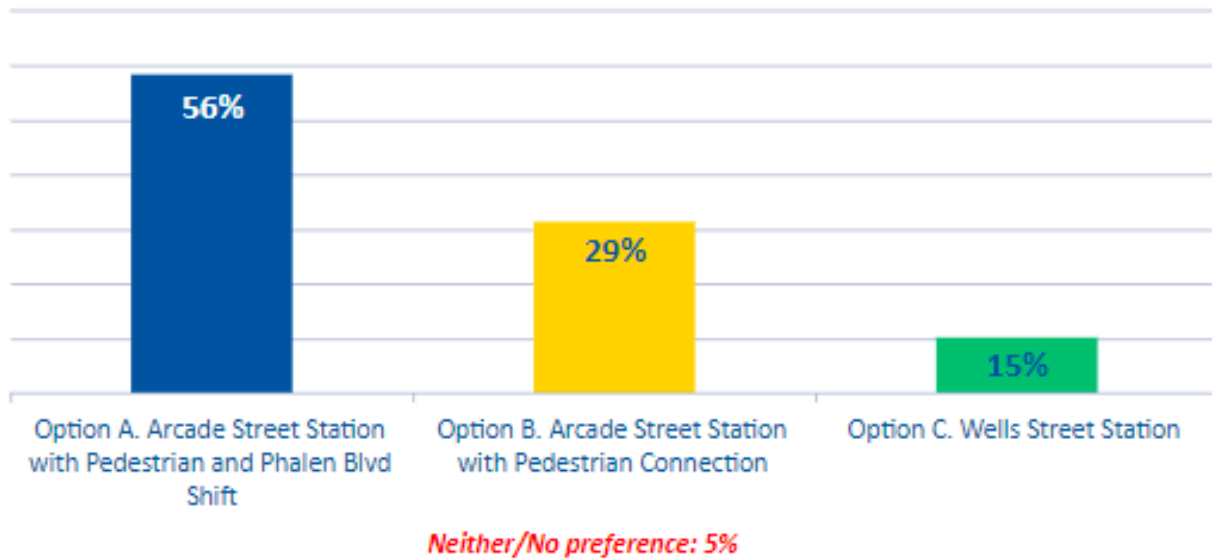
## How Often do you Currently Ride Metro Transit?



*\*10 skipped the question, 28 said they had not used transit since 2020*

### 1.2.2. Station Location Preference

**Station Option A is the most preferred location for Arcade Street Station, with 56% of respondents citing Station Option A as their preference.**



When asked why they chose this option, respondents most commonly noted the following about each option:

#### Option A:

- Proximity to shopping and other services like the YMCA.
- Convenience connecting to other routes such as the 54, 61, 74 bus stops.
- Parking for vehicles nearby.
- Other stations are more secluded and less accessible to connection points.
- A convenient stop for Saint Paul Public Schools students (Johnson Senior High School).
- Of the transit riders who take transit “almost every day,” a majority selected Option A.

#### Option B:

- Less disruptive to traffic and safer location for pedestrians to access the platforms.
- Easier transportation for park walkers.
- Station proximity to where people work.
- Greater efficiency, less turns on the route.

#### Option C:

- Spreads the stations out more evenly.
- Closer to residential areas.
- Safety: proximity to buildings vs. being out in an open field or open space.

### 1.3. Feedback from Community Meetings and Pop-Ups



**FIGURE 6. PROJECT STAFF ENGAGING COMMUNITY AT THE EASTSIDE YMCA.**

Below is a summary of the most common comments/questions we received during community meetings and pop-ups about Arcade Street Station.

- Concerns about equitability for individuals having to use a pedestrian connection from Station Option B to get up to Arcade from Phalen.
- Option A can create a “hub” for workers and shoppers in the Payne Phalen area.
- Several Individuals at the open house on 800 West Broadway expressed the safest station being Option C and closer to where they live.
- Generally, there was support for the Purple Line, and some had little or no preference for which station option. Many times, visitors wanted the line to “best serve the most people.”
- Also had individuals concerned about the Bruce Vento Trail and the impacts of the trail changes and how it may impact endangered species such as the Rusty Patch Bumblebee.
- Option A and B were preferred by our Latinx respondents who utilize transit, citing the station’s proximity to CLUES and other Hispanic community support services.
- Perceived safety of Option C was preferred due to the dense residential buildings and surrounded by buildings rather than an open field or busy commercial areas.

### 1.4. Feedback from Stakeholders

- In the initial A, B, C, and D routes, stakeholders were uninterested in Seeger Square redevelopment plans to accommodate the Purple Line going through the Seeger Square property. Option B was later removed and the station locations were narrowed down to three options (A, B, and C).



- Preserving the current trail and making sure any improvements to include the continuation of pedestrian access on Arcade Street and below on Phalen Boulevard was a major theme for accessibility.
- Dayton's Bluff is working with Beacon Bluff on an affordable housing project on 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Forest Street with recommendations to replace the Forest Street bridge.
- Development in Beacon Bluff was best served by Option A, especially as it relates to the housing developments and employers in the area such as Vomela Companies.

### 1.5. Key takeaways from Arcade Street Station engagement:

- Most respondents (78%) are using Metro Transit at some frequency today, with 39% reporting that they use transit *almost every day or a few times a week*.
- Of the three station location options, *Option A* with the pedestrian connection and Phalen Boulevard shift is the most preferred by respondents.
- Based on the survey results and in-person engagement, people like *Option A* because it's the closest to Johnson Senior High School; it's near shopping, employment, new housing development, and services (e.g., YMCA, CLUES); allows for easy transfers to connecting routes; and has vehicle parking nearby.
- Overall, community members view accessibility as a top priority and would like any improvements to include convenient pedestrian access to the station.

## 2. CENTURY COLLEGE ENDPOINT OUTREACH

Since Century College is a relatively new stakeholder to the Purple Line project, project staff and Century College staff collaborated on a survey designed to get feedback from Century College students, faculty, and staff regarding current transit use and future transit needs of the college community, especially as it relates to the value of potential Purple Line service to the college. The survey was administered and distributed by Century College. Types of questions included:

- Commute time and travel behavior.
- In-person campus attendance behaviors (hourly, weekly, annually).
- Metro Transit usage, needs and barriers to using transit.
- Demographics (COVID-19 impacts to travel, age, vehicle access, gender, race, etc.).

The survey was drafted through Century College survey tools and was distributed via e-mail to all Century College e-mail accounts. Throughout October and November, Century College and Metro Purple Line staff engaged Century College students and faculty through the following:

### Reminder e-mails

- Two reminder e-mails were sent to students, faculty and staff – one at the beginning of the survey and another at the halfway point.

### Tabling events

Purple Line staff hosted two awareness events – one on October 26 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. and another on November 16 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Event times were chosen based on feedback from Century College staff noting these times have high activity on campus. Staff engaged both the East and West Campuses.

- October 26, 2022, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
  - 15 people engaged, mostly students on their way to class
- November 16, 2022, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
  - 17 people engaged, a mixture of staff and students



**FIGURE 7. STUDENTS POSING WITH THE PURPLE LINE BUS PHOTO FRAME AT A CENTURY COLLEGE EVENT.**

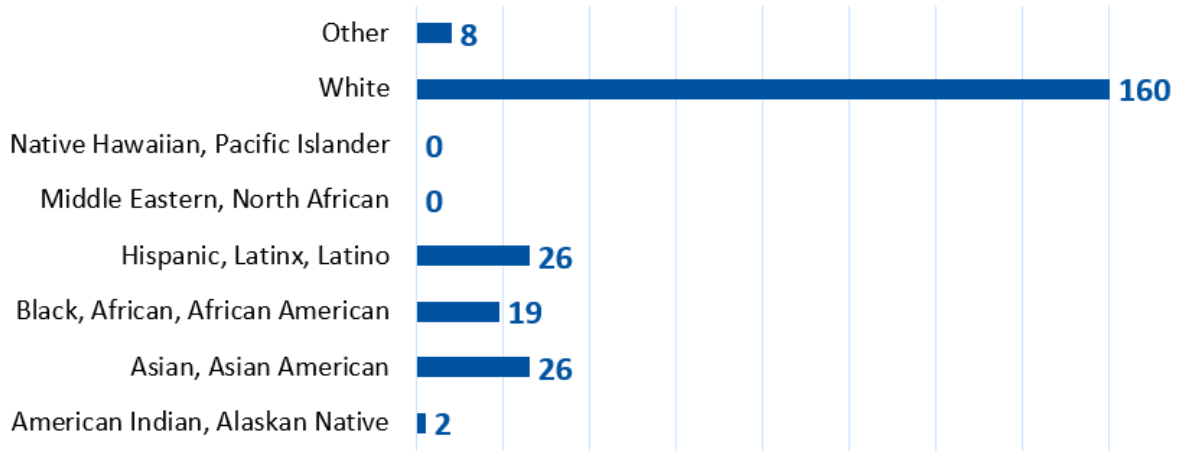
## **2.1. Survey**

The survey was available online between October 25 – November 23, 2022. Purple Line staff, in partnership with Century College staff, developed the survey questions. Century College administered the survey by sending it out to their email distribution list. The survey received 282 respondents. Results of the survey are listed below.

### **2.1.1. Demographics**

A majority of respondents identified as white, while 34% identified as having a race, ethnicity, or origin from underrepresented communities.

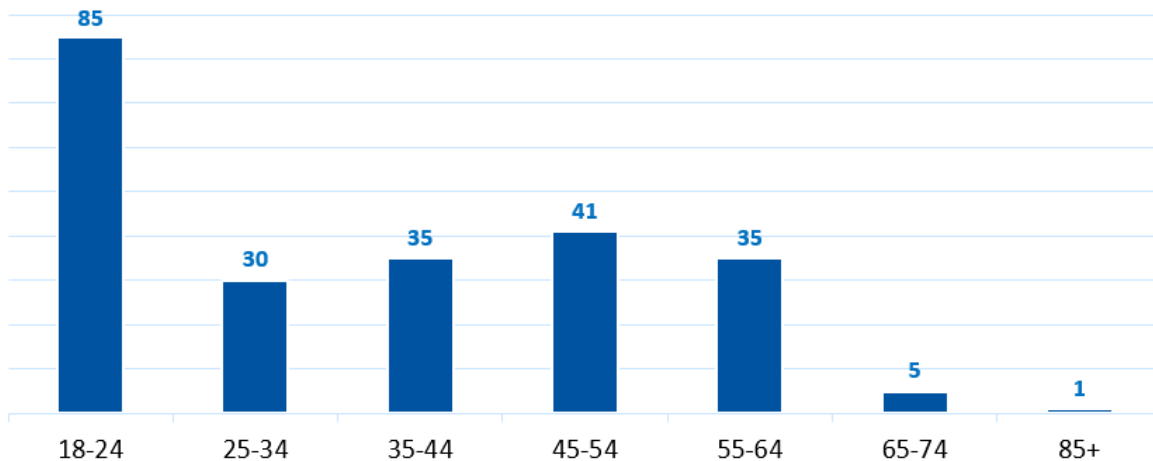
## How Would you Describe your Race, Ethnicity and/or Origin?



*\*32 skipped this question*

While we received responses from every age category, we heard the most from people ages 18-24 years old. This was expected as the survey was administered predominantly to college age students.

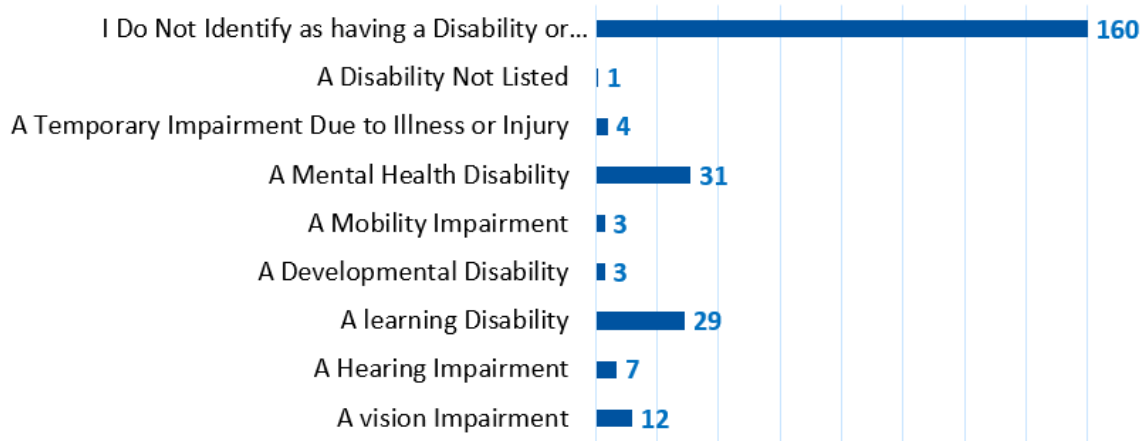
## Count of What is your Age?



*\*50 skipped this question*

Of the 56% of respondents that identified as having some form of disability, mental health disabilities and learning disabilities were the most commonly mentioned.

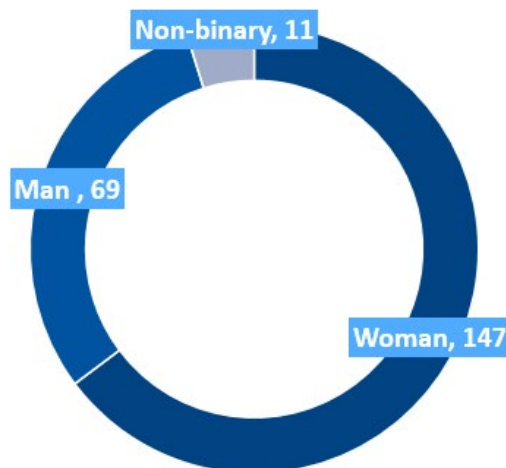
## How Would you Describe Your Disability/Ability Status?



*\*32 skipped this question*

We heard from more survey respondents that identified as female (65%) than male or non-binary.

## What is Your Gender?

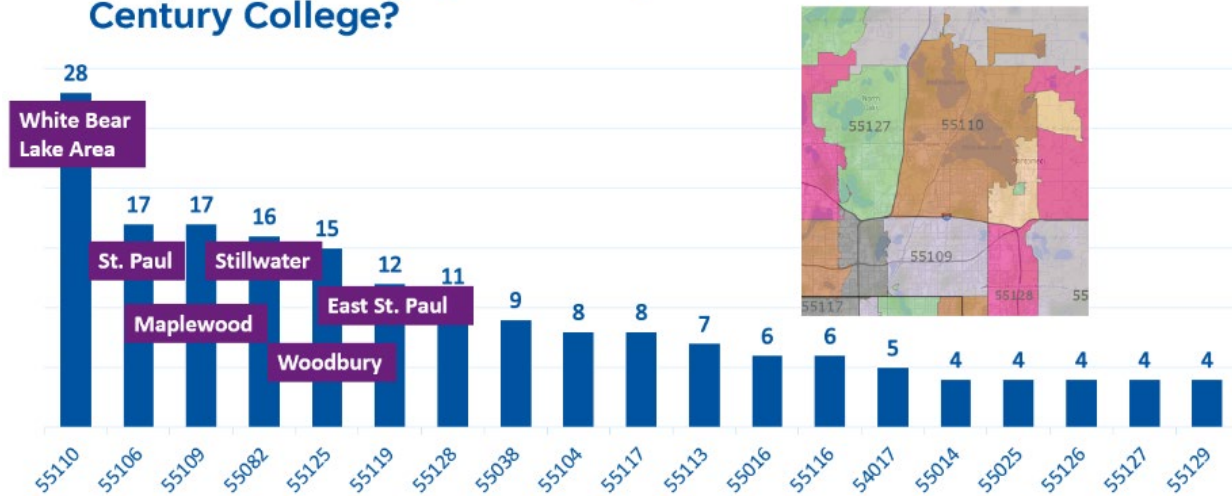


*\*55 skipped this question*

### 2.1.2. Travel Patterns

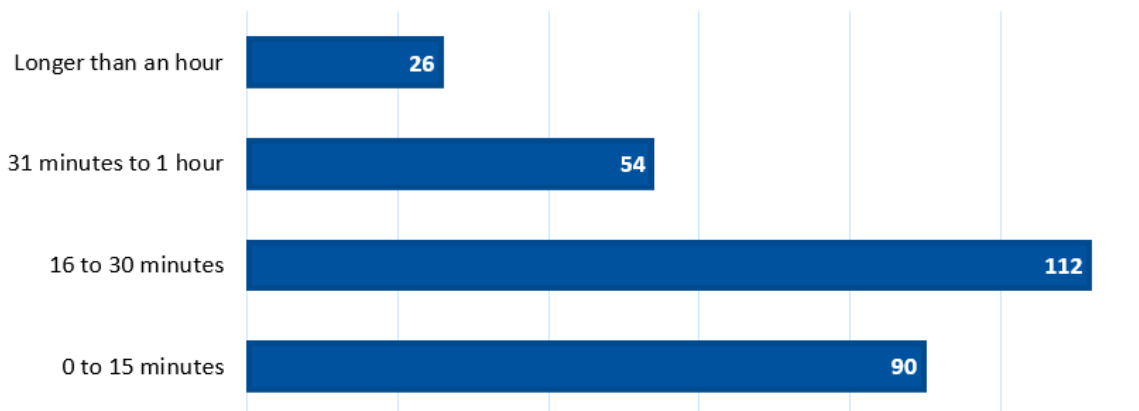
Century College has campuses in both the 55110 and 55115 zip codes. Of the survey respondents, a majority identified as usually travelling to Century College from the 55110 zip code. The second and third highest reported zip codes, 55106 and 55109, were within the east and north Saint Paul areas, respectively.

#### What Zip Code are you Usually Traveling from to get to Century College?



When asked what the usual commute time to campus is, most respondents said 16 to 30 minutes, with 0 to 15 minutes being the second highest response.

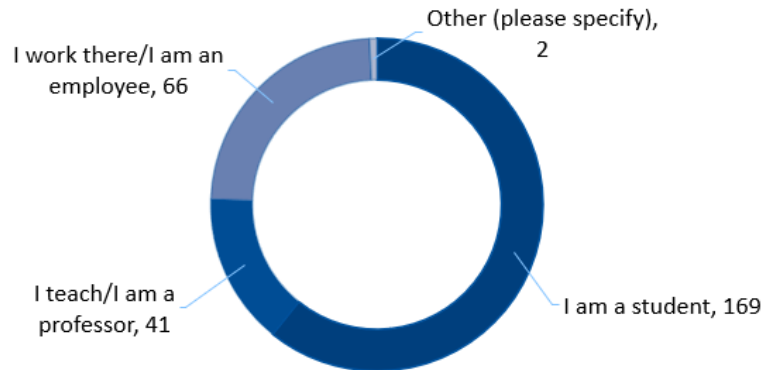
#### What is Your Usual Commute Time to Campus?





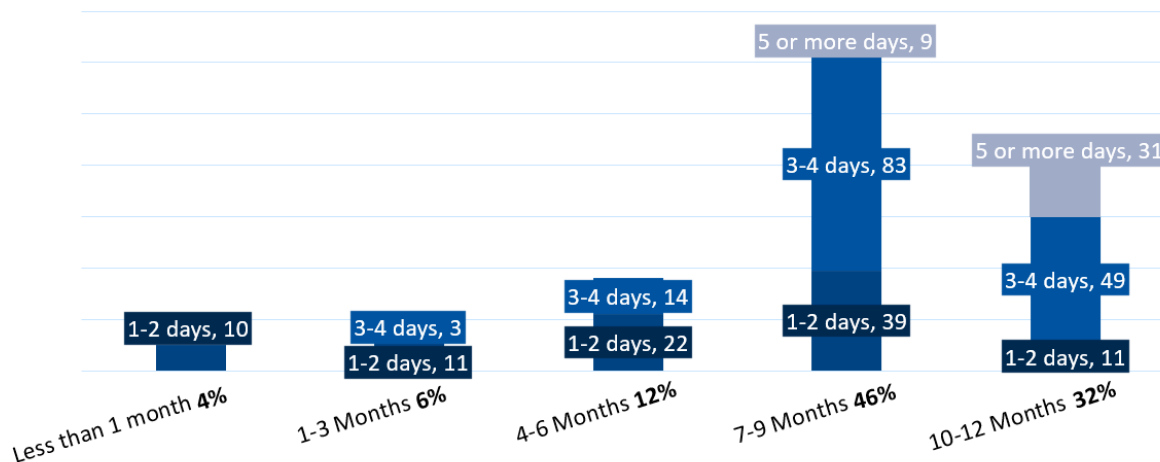
When asked their reasons for being on campus, a majority of the respondents (169) identified as students, while 66 identified as employees and 41 as professors. Examples of *Other* responses are people who reported being both a student and staff member or a volunteer.

## Primary Reason for Being at Century College



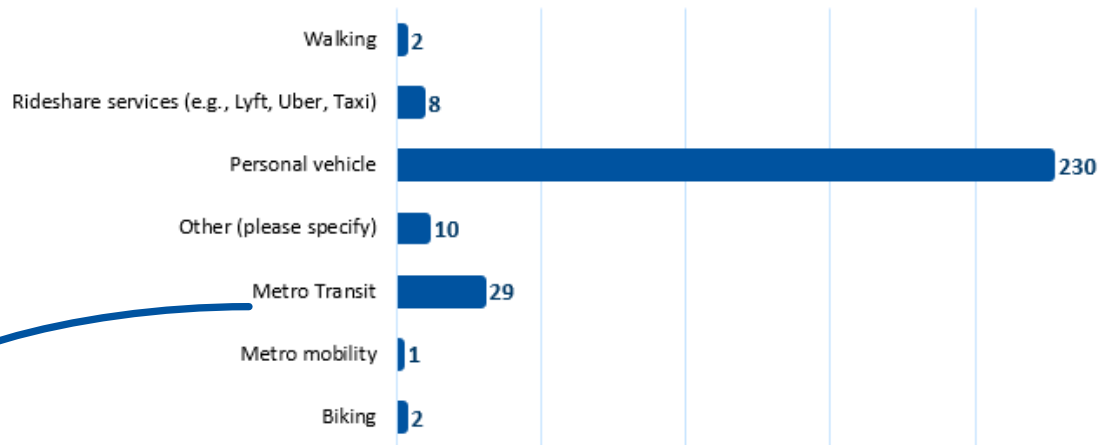
The most respondents said they were on campus for 3-4 days per week on average 7-9 months out of the year. For respondents who spend less than one month on campus, they typically visited campus 1-2 days a week. As the amount of months a respondent was on campus increased, spending 3-4 days per week became more common. Spending 5 or more days was most prevalent when respondents said they spend 10-12 months on campus.

## How Many Months are you on Campus and How Many Days of the Week are you on Campus?



Most respondents (230) to the survey said they utilize a personal vehicle to get to Century College, while 30 respondents said they use Metro Transit or Metro Mobility to get to the college campuses.

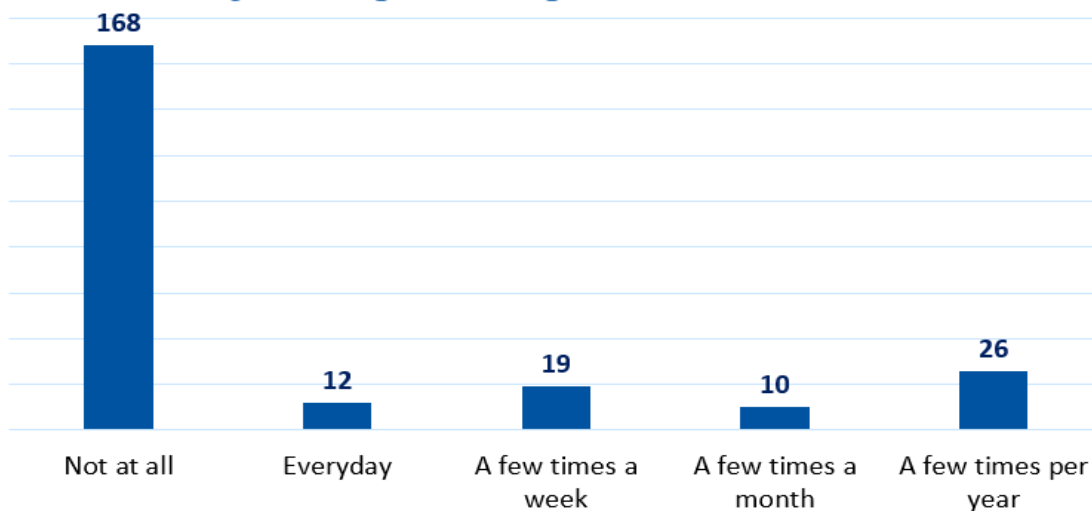
## How do you Typically Travel to Century College?



Of respondents who said they use Metro Transit to travel to Century College, route 219 (18) is the most commonly used. Some respondents said they use multiple Metro Transit routes such as the Green Line, 54, 74, 64, and 219 for their commute. Examples of *Other* responses included family members driving them and Transit Link.

Of respondents who said they currently use Metro Transit to get to Century College or to get to other destinations, the most respondents (26) said they use it *a few times per year*, while 19 said they use it *a few times a week*.

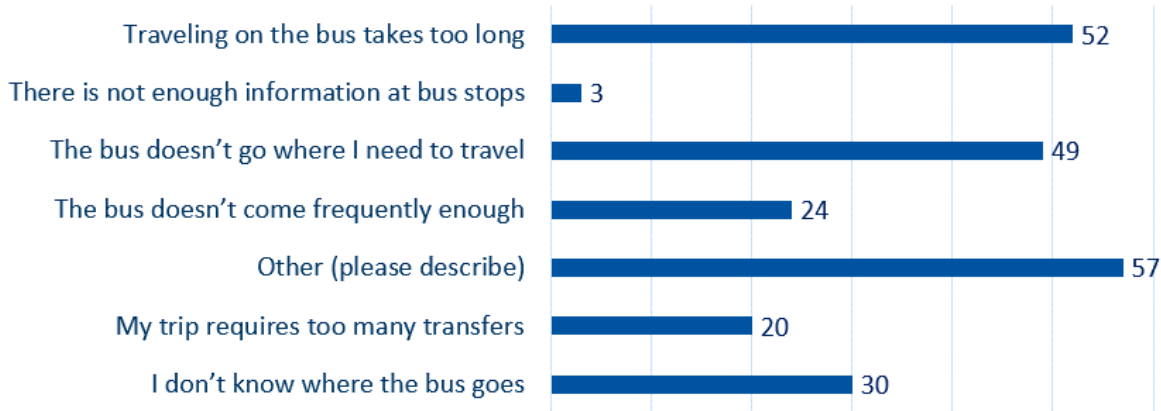
## How Often do you Currently use Metro Transit to get to Century College or to get to Other Destinations?



*\*47 skipped this question*

When asked what barriers they experience taking Metro Transit, respondents indicated that *traveling on the bus takes too long* and that *it does not go where they need to travel* as the top reasons. *Other* responses included mostly respondents who said they do not use public transportation. Respondents also mentioned that having to make multiple trips in a day via the bus (taking children to school and activities) takes too much time and is a barrier.

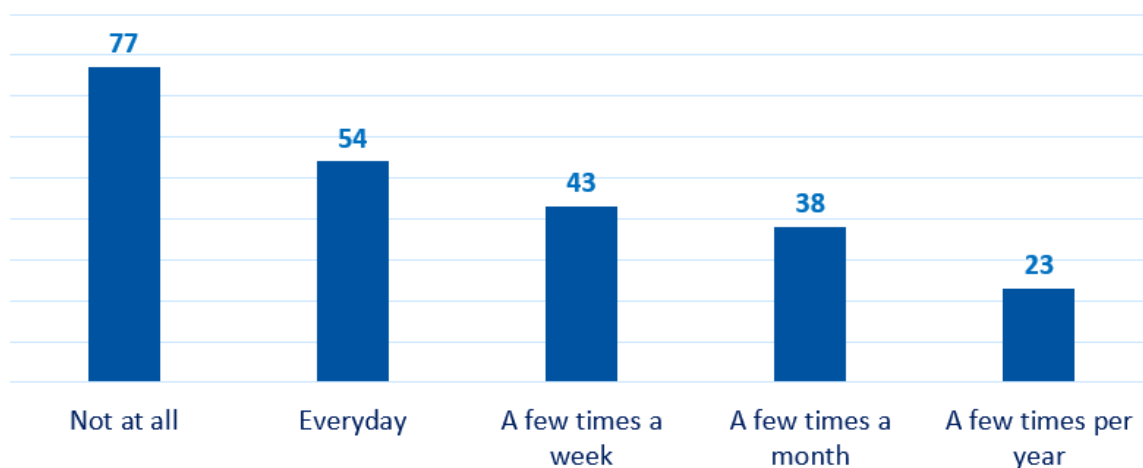
## What Barriers do you Experience Taking Metro Transit?



\*47 skipped this question

When asked how frequently they would use Metro Transit to get to Century College if transit services were improved, there was small increase in the number of respondents who said they would use transit. The frequencies of *everyday* or *a few times a week* saw the greatest increases in response. Yet, a large portion of respondents said they would not use Metro Transit services if improved.

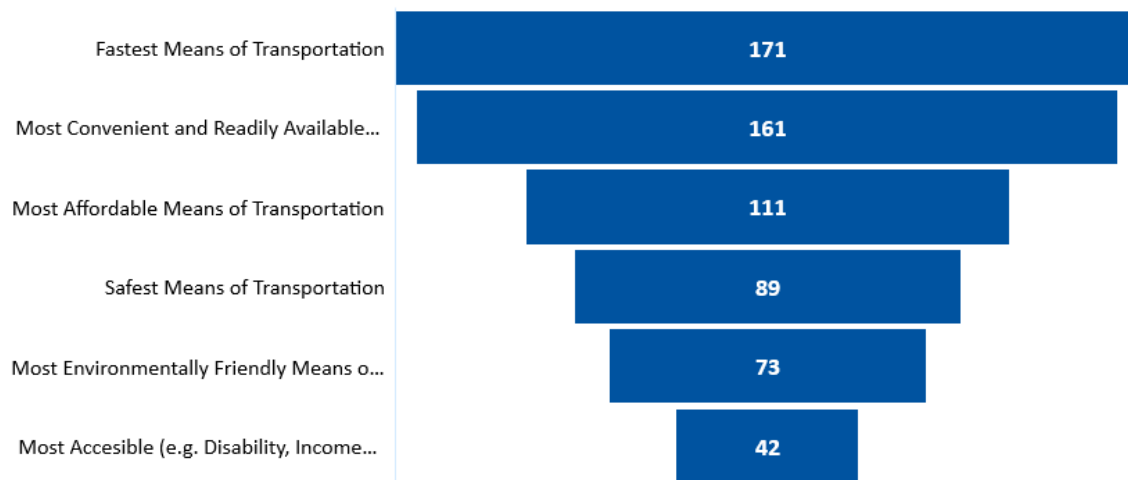
## If a More Improved Metro Transit Service Were Available, how Often Would you use it to get to Century College?



\*47 skipped the question

Respondents' continued preference for traveling via a personal vehicle aligns with the factors they considered most important for transportation when traveling to Century College. The two factors respondents considered most important are that it's the *fastest means of transportation* and *the most convenient and readily available option*. *Affordability* was the third most important factor. These three factors suggest, for folks living busy lives going to school, working, and travelling longer distances, the reason for using a personal vehicle to get to Century College and other destinations in their week is because it's the fastest, most convenient form of transportation.

## What are Your top Factors When Considering What Mode of Transportation you use to get to Century College?



*\*For this question, respondents could select all factors that applied*

## 2.2. Key takeaways from Century College engagement:

- A majority of respondents (82%) use a personal vehicle to travel to Century College, while 11% use Metro Transit or Metro Mobility.
- 29% of respondents use transit to get to Century College or other destinations at some level of frequency throughout the year.
- If transit service were improved, 67% said they would use transit at some level of frequency, indicating that if a higher level of service were available at Century College, more people would use it.
- A few factors to consider:
  - Respondents may take multiple trips throughout the day and report having unreliable transit options in the east metro.
  - Respondents prioritize fast and readily available transportation, but they also ranked affordability as their third priority, which could favor Metro Transit's initiatives.

- In-person engagement with students, faculty, and staff at Century College indicated that many were unaware of the Purple Line project before having discussed it with project staff. Increasing awareness about the Purple Line project – the service, associated infrastructure improvements, and positive impacts it will bring to transportation in the east metro – may garner additional support that’s not reflected in the current survey results.
- An improved transit service to Century College must be frequent, convenient, and as direct-as-possible (from destinations in the east metro) to compete with personal vehicle usage behaviors at Century College.