

AUSTIN TRANSIT ENHANCEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

Public Outreach Summary – Round 2

INTRODUCTION

In November 2020, City of Austin voters approved \$460 million for transportation infrastructure improvements, including \$19 million for transit projects that improve the speed and reliability of local bus service while making that service safer and easier to access. Transportation and Public Works (TPW), together with CapMetro staff, is currently developing the Transit Enhancement Infrastructure Report. This report will identify roadways within the city that have high needs for transit infrastructure investment and develop planning-level project recommendations for identified locations.

Public outreach is a critical component of any transit enhancement project. The community members who rely on and interact with public transit and its infrastructure can provide meaningful insight on the types of improvements, both operational and access related, and their prioritization. The second round of public outreach was conducted from March 20, 2023 to April 7, 2023. It included in-person outreach events at 10 high-ridership transit hubs across the city as well as online outreach. Surveys were deployed in both English and Spanish and comments were geolocated on interactive maps.

The second round of public outreach focused on the trade-offs inherent to improving transit operations and access. The first trade-off question related to willingness to walk further to a bus stop to allow for faster bus service and the second trade-off question related to prioritizing transit improvements when working with a limited budget. Additionally, demographic data was collected to ensure that the public that was engaged reflected the demographics of Austin and CapMetro riders. Results are described in detail on the following pages.

IN-PERSON OUTREACH

Round 2 of public outreach, which occurred from March 30, 2023 to April 7, 2023, was conducted through a series of in-person outreach events designed to gather feedback from CapMetro's ridership. In-person outreach included a set of map exhibits and a brief community survey. These events were held at ten high-ridership transit hubs across the city of Austin:

1. Tech Ridge Park & Ride
2. North Lamar Transit Center
3. Eastside Bus Plaza
4. Norwood Transit Center
5. Westgate Transit Center
6. The Drag (UT West Mall)
7. Southpark Meadows
8. William Cannon at Bluff Springs
9. Riverside at Pleasant Valley
10. Republic Square

Survey Questions

The Austin Transit Enhancement (ATE) survey had two primary questions and five demographic data questions. The primary questions asked respondents to choose between two options as shown below:

1. Closing bus stops with low ridership can make the walk longer for some riders but can make everyone's travel time faster. Would you rather:
 - (a) Have a faster bus ride but a longer walk to the bus stop, or
 - (b) Have a slower bus ride but a shorter walk to the bus stop.
2. When working with limited funding, the City has to prioritize projects. Assuming the overall budget is the same, would you rather see us make:
 - (a) Bigger improvements in fewer locations, or
 - (b) Smaller improvements in more locations.



The demographic questions gathered information on the following topics: zip code, age, gender identity, cultural identity, disability identification and income level. All questions were optional and not all respondents answered every question.

Comparisons were drawn to the 2015 CapMetro Origin and Destination Study and the 2020 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates for the City of Austin. The comparisons examined the demographics of survey respondents as compared to previous transit survey data and the general Austin population. The 2015 CapMetro Study gathered data for different

segments of the ridership based on their transit option of choice. For the purposes of this survey comparison, the Fixed/Express category, which represents the majority of CapMetro’s bus ridership, was used. The ranges for each of the three data sets were different, so the ranges were altered to fit the other data sets where necessary.

IN-PERSON SURVEY RESULTS

In total, 402 in-person surveys were initiated, and 298 (74%) were completed. A majority of respondents indicated they would rather have a slower bus ride but a shorter walk to the bus stop, and a majority of respondents indicated they would also like to see smaller improvements in more locations. In-person surveys were filled out in both English and Spanish, with English being the majority at 326 (81%) and Spanish at 76 (19%).

Q1: Walk time / Ride time	Q2: Funding allocation
40% prefer longer walk / faster ride 60% prefer shorter walk / slower ride	37% prefer bigger improvements / fewer locations 63% prefer smaller improvements / more locations

Age and Gender Survey Results

GENDER	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
FEMALE	39%	49%	32%
MALE	60%	51%	67%
OTHER	N/A	N/A	1%
AGE	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
UNDER 18	6%	17%	1%
19-25	25%	7%	12%
26-39	31%	38%	38%
40-64	35%	22%	42%
65+	3%	9%	7%

Representation of females was lower, and males higher, than CapMetro’s ridership and the city overall. 1% of respondents listed a gender as other, which was not captured in the other two surveys.

The age ranges were captured differently for each survey, so we converted the ATE and ACS survey data to the 2015 CapMetro measurements.

Overall, the ATE data shows a middle-aged to older ridership, with the under 18 and 19-25 age ranges being quite a bit lower at 1% and 12%, respectively. The highest age range was 40-64 at 42%, while 26-39 was the same as the City data at 38%.



Cultural Identity Survey Results

For the ATE survey, respondents were allowed to select multiple cultural identities. Those that did were placed into the “Two or More” category. Additionally, the 2020 ACS data was captured differently than the ATE and CapMetro survey with those selecting Hispanic and/or Latino/Latina/Latinx also selecting another cultural identity without being in the Two or More category.

CULTURAL IDENTITY	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
ASIAN	4%	7%	3%
BLACK AND/OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	23%	8%	30%
HISPANIC AND/OR LATINO/LATINA/LATINX	34%	33%	34%
NATIVE/INDIGENOUS	1%	1%	1%
WHITE	35%	69%	25%
OTHER	2%	1%	1%
TWO OR MORE	N/A	7%	6%

The ATE survey reached a wide and diverse population. Hispanic and/or Latino/Latina/Latinx was the highest cultural identity at 34% of survey respondents, matching CapMetro data and nearly matching 2020 ACS data. Black or African American was the second highest at 30%, higher than CapMetro and much higher than the 2020 ACS. White, in third at 25%, was lower than CapMetro and much lower than the 2020 ACS at 69%. Asian (3%) was slightly lower when compared to the CapMetro survey and more significantly lower when compared to 2020 ACS data. The choices “Other” and “Two or More” were similar to the other data points. Overall, the in-person results resembled the established CapMetro ridership well.

Income Survey Results

The CapMetro survey used much lower increments of measurement for income and the highest income level stopped at \$60,000+ instead of \$150,000+. The CapMetro and 2020 ACS data were converted to the ATE data to allow for comparisons between surveys.

INCOME	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
\$0 - \$24,999	43%	14%	61%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	15%	18%	22%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	8%	17%	9%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	N/A	13%	5%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	N/A	18%	2%
\$150,000+	N/A	20%	1%

The ATE survey reached many people from lower income brackets; the top income range was the \$0-\$24,999 category at 61%. The \$25,000-49,000 range was also somewhat higher at 22% when compared to the other data sets. This was the question most frequently skipped in the survey.

Disability Survey Results

The final demographic category was respondent's identified disabilities. The CapMetro survey did not gather data on disability, so only the 2020 ACS Five-Year estimates were used for comparison. Both surveys allowed respondents to select multiple disabilities.

DISABILITY	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
COGNITIVE OR INTELLECTUAL	4%	9%
HEARING	2%	6%
VISION	2%	7%
MOBILITY	4%	16%
NONE	91%	62%

Respondents to the ATE survey expressed significantly higher rates of disability compared to the overall population of Austin. Sixty-two percent of respondents reported that they did not have a disability. Ninety-one percent of City residents reported that they did not have a disability according to the 2020 ACS survey.

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

The online surveys were advertised and distributed via Facebook ads and the City of Austin Transportation Department's social media. In total, 370 online surveys were filled out. A slight majority of respondents indicated they would rather have a slower bus ride but a shorter walk to the bus stop, and a larger majority of respondents indicated they would like to see smaller transit infrastructure improvements in more locations. A Spanish-language version of the survey was offered, but all online respondents used the English-language version.

Q1: Walk time / Ride time	Q2: Funding allocation
47% prefer longer walk / faster ride	40% prefer bigger improvements / fewer locations
53% prefer shorter walk / slower ride	60% prefer smaller improvements / more locations

Age and Gender Survey Results

GENDER	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
FEMALE	39%	49%	49%
MALE	60%	51%	48%
OTHER	N/A	N/A	3%
AGE	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
UNDER 18	6%	17%	0%
19-25	25%	7%	6%
26-39	31%	38%	60%
40-64	35%	22%	28%
65+	3%	9%	5%

The ATE online survey received a balanced response between males and females. Female response exceeded the CapMetro study while the male response rate came in significantly lower. Though data was not captured for this category in the other two surveys, 3% listed a gender as other, which was higher than the in-person data.

Overall, the ATE online survey skewed heavily towards the 26-39 category, at 60%, significantly higher than CapMetro and 2020 ACS data. The under 18 category had no responses and the 19-25 age category was underrepresented when compared to CapMetro ridership. The 40-64 age range and the 65+ category fell between the other two surveys.

Cultural Identity Survey Results

For the ATE survey, respondents were allowed to select multiple cultural identities; those that did were placed into the ‘Two or More’ category. Additionally, the 2020 ACS data was captured differently than the ATE and CapMetro survey with those selecting Hispanic and/or Latino/Latina/Latinx also selecting another cultural identity without being in the Two or More category.

CULTURAL IDENTITY	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
ASIAN	4%	7%	11%
BLACK AND/OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	23%	8%	13%
HISPANIC AND/OR LATINO/LATINA/LATINX	34%	33%	20%
NATIVE/INDIGENOUS	1%	1%	3%
WHITE	35%	69%	60%
OTHER	2%	1%	2%
TWO OR MORE	N/A	7%	N/A

The ATE online survey generally reached a less diverse group of people in comparison with in-person engagement. The largest group represented was White at 60%, though representation was still lower than the 2020 ACS by 9%. Those reporting an Asian cultural identity were significantly more represented in the online survey than the in-person, at 11%. Those identifying as Hispanic and/or Latino/Latina/Latinx were underrepresented when compared to the other surveys as well as in-person participation. Black and/or African American participation fell between the two other surveys. Native/Indigenous participation online was higher than CapMetro ridership and the City overall, as well as in-person participation.

Income Survey Results

The CapMetro survey used much lower increments of measurement for income and stopped at a lower overall income level: \$60,000+ instead of \$150,000+ when compared to the other two surveys. Both survey’s data was converted to the ATE data format because the ATE survey only captured data in the below categories.

INCOME	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
\$0 - \$24,999	43%	14%	12%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	15%	18%	15%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	8%	17%	21%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	N/A	13%	13%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	N/A	18%	17%
\$150,000+	N/A	20%	21%

Overall, the income ranges had a more even distribution than the in-person results. The \$0-24,999 category was significantly lower than the in-person results at 12%, but was similar to the 2020 ACS data. The \$25-49,000 range matched CapMetro's data. This was the question most skipped in the survey.

Disability Survey Results

The final demographic category was respondent's identified disabilities. The CapMetro survey did not gather data on disability, so only the 2020 ACS Five-Year estimates were used for comparison. Both surveys allowed respondents to select multiple disabilities.

DISABILITY	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
COGNITIVE OR INTELLECTUAL	4%	6%
HEARING	2%	6%
VISION	2%	9%
MOBILITY	4%	9%
NONE	91%	75%

Overall, ATE online survey respondents expressed a higher level of disability to the general Austin population. Seventy-five percent of respondents reported that they did not have a disability. Ninety-one percent of City residents reported that they did not have a disability according to the 2020 ACS survey.

COMBINED SURVEY RESULTS

In total, 772 online and in-person surveys were initiated. A small majority of respondents would rather have a slower bus ride but a shorter walk to the bus stop. A larger majority of respondents would like to see smaller improvements in more locations.

Q1: Walk time / Ride time	Q2: Funding allocation
43% prefer longer walk / faster ride	38% prefer bigger improvements / fewer locations
57% prefer shorter walk / slower ride	62% prefer smaller improvements / more locations

Overall, the two methods of survey outreach delivered very different results in terms of demographic participation. The in-person outreach events received feedback from community members that more closely resemble ridership identified in the 2015 CapMetro Origin and Destination Study while the online option brought commentary from a sampling that was similar to the 2020 ACS Five-Year estimates. Though the in-person outreach events required a more logistically intensive process, the results gathered a more accurate representation of transit ridership in Austin.

Below are the combined in-person and online survey results comparisons.

Age and Gender Survey Results

GENDER	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
FEMALE	39%	49%	40%
MALE	60%	51%	58%
OTHER	N/A	N/A	2%
AGE	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
UNDER 18	6%	17%	1%
19-25	25%	7%	9%
26-39	31%	38%	49%
40-64	35%	22%	35%
65+	3%	9%	6%

When combined, females were represented generally evenly when compared with CapMetro ridership data, and males were slightly underrepresented.

Overall, the ATE data shows a more middle-aged ridership, with the 26-39 group being overrepresented when compared to CapMetro and the under 18 and 19-25 age ranges being significantly lower than CapMetro's ridership.

Cultural Identity Survey Results

For the ATE survey, respondents were allowed to select multiple cultural identities. Those that did, were placed into the Two or More category. Additionally, the 2020 ACS data was captured differently than the ATE and CapMetro survey with those selecting Hispanic and/or Latino/Latina/ Latinx also selecting another cultural identity without being in the Two or More category.



CULTURAL IDENTITY	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
ASIAN	4%	7%	7%
BLACK AND/OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	23%	8%	22%
HISPANIC AND/OR LATINO/LATINA/LATINX	34%	33%	27%
NATIVE/INDIGENOUS	1%	1%	2%
WHITE	35%	69%	43%
OTHER	2%	1%	1%
TWO OR MORE	N/A	7%	3%

When examining the combined in-person and online data, it is clear that the ATE survey reached a diverse population that generally reflects CapMetro's ridership data.

Income Survey Results

The CapMetro survey used much lower increments of measurement for income and stopped at a lower overall income level: \$60,000+ instead of \$150,000+. The CapMetro and 2020 ACS data was converted to the ATE data format because the ATE survey only captured data in the following categories, which would otherwise make the final comparisons less than satisfactory.



INCOME	2015 CAPMETRO	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
\$0 - \$24,999	43%	14%	35%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	15%	18%	18%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	8%	17%	15%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	N/A	13%	9%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	N/A	18%	10%
\$150,000+	N/A	20%	12%

The ATE survey's combined results show a desirable income distribution, favoring lower income brackets when compared to ACS data.

Disability Survey Results

The final demographic category was respondent's identified disabilities. The CapMetro survey did not gather data on disability, so only the 2020 ACS Five-Year estimates were used for comparison. Both surveys allowed respondents to select multiple disabilities.

DISABILITY	2020 ACS	ATE SURVEY
COGNITIVE OR INTELLECTUAL	4%	8%
HEARING	2%	6%
VISION	2%	8%
MOBILITY	4%	13%
NONE	91%	71%

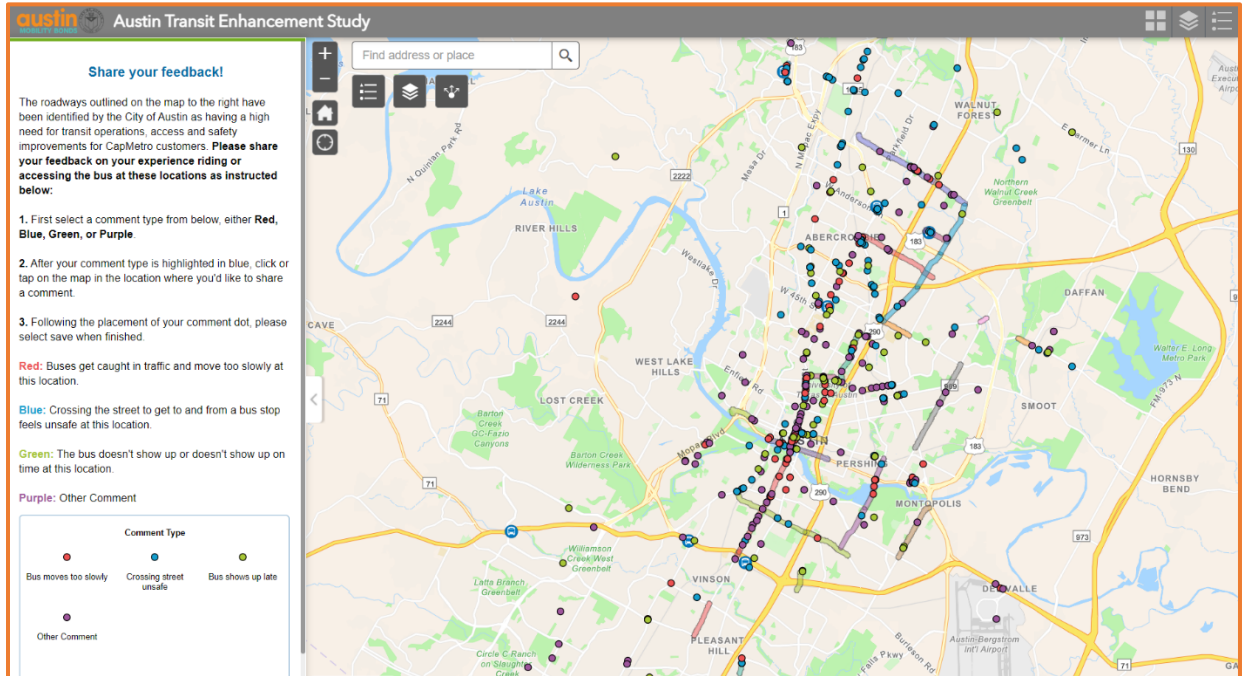
Overall, respondents to the ATE survey expressed higher rates of disability compared to the overall population of Austin.



COMMENT SUMMARY

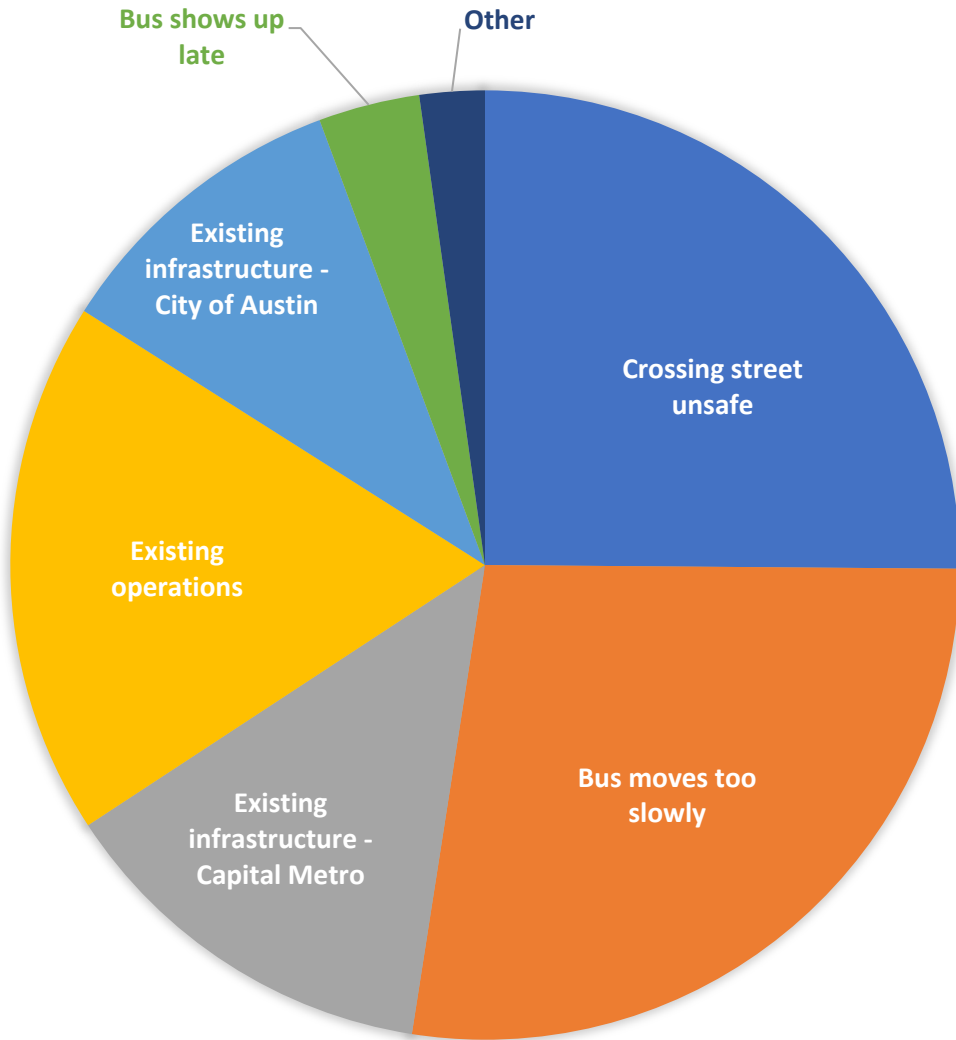
406 comments were submitted via the ArcGIS pin-drop map available on the online engagement page for this outreach. Nearly all comments fit into one of the pin categories provided, including:

- **Red:** Buses get caught in traffic and move too slowly at this location.
- **Blue:** Crossing the street to get to and from a bus stop feels unsafe at this location.
- **Green:** The bus doesn't show up or doesn't show up on time at this location.
- **Purple:** Other Comment



Additional comments were received that did not fit into one of the categories provided and may not necessarily be in the scope of the Austin Transit Enhancements Project. These comments have been routed to CapMetro for further review.

COMMENT SUMMARY

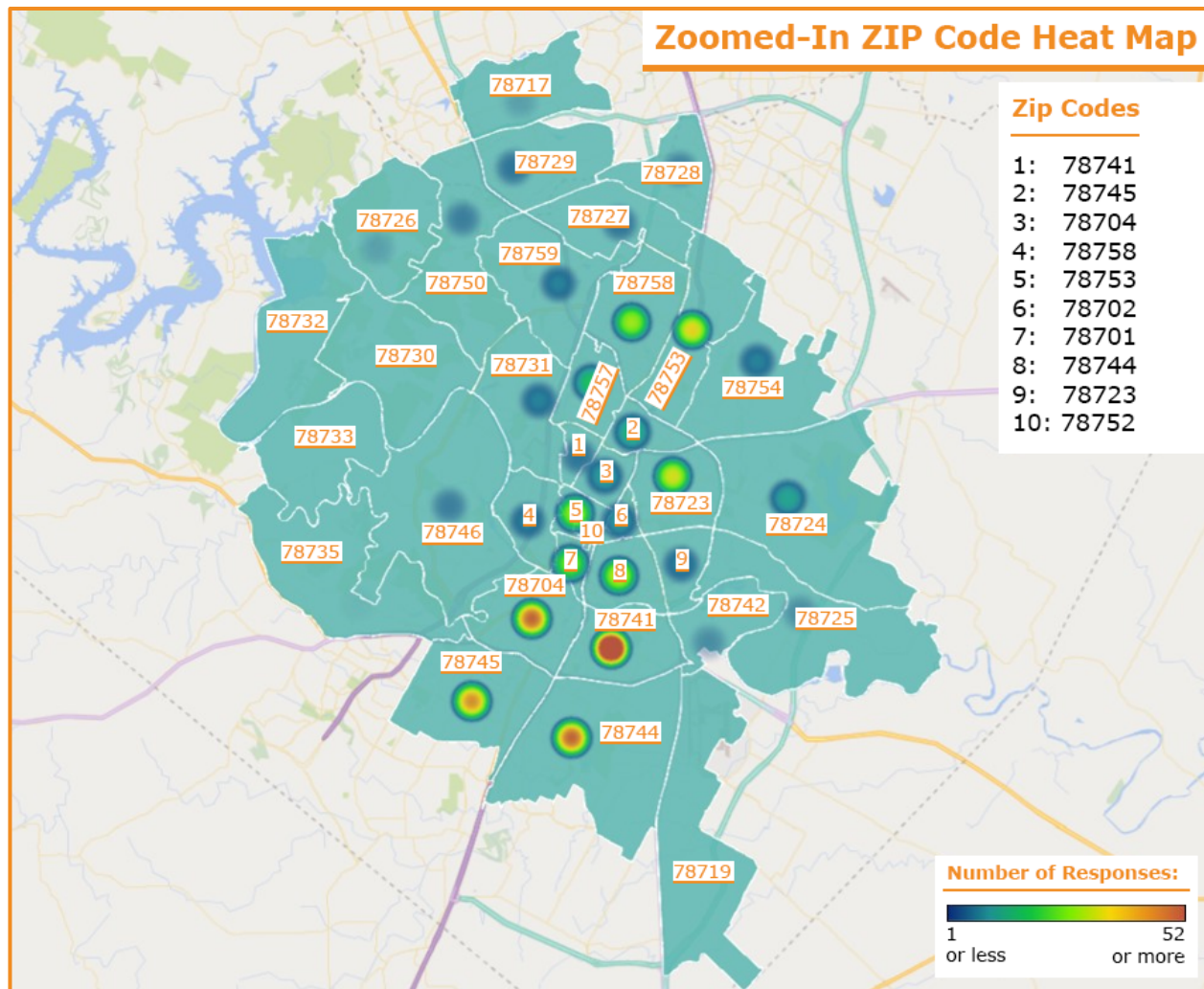


Comment Category	Comment Details	Number of Comments
Bus moves to slowly	Comments regarding long waits at intersections; need for signal priority; idle time due to congestion; need for dedicated lanes.	111
Crossing street unsafe	Comments regarding the need for increased safety at intersections; comments indicating areas where ability to cross safely is needed; suggestions for pedestrian signal improvements; locations where wide crossing or speed of traffic impacts crossing safety; suggestions to eliminate of slip lanes at	102

	specific locations; locations where unpredictable vehicle movements make crossing feel unsafe.	
Existing operations	Comments regarding recommended changes to routing, frequency, or dwell times; need for additional vehicles due to crowds; general inconsistency in operation of route.	74
Existing infrastructure - CapMetro	Comments regarding missing or broken equipment; suggested changes to stop layout or location; suggested signage improvements; need for station amenities or parking.	54
Existing infrastructure - City of Austin	Comments regarding missing or broken equipment (lighting, signage, signals, etc.); concerns with traffic speeds; suggested improvements to sidewalks or bike lanes; comments regarding roadway geometry, potholes, or dips that cause operational challenges for buses; comments related to construction that causes long-term impacts to bus lanes; suggested changes to signal timing.	42
Bus shows up late	Comments regarding construction detour signing; comments related to specific buses arriving late; comments that multiple vehicles arrive at the same time; comments related to a generally unreliable route due to delays.	14
Other	Comments related to community safety; comments related to the survey.	9

PARTICIPATION HEAT MAP

To determine whether a robust representation of the ridership was achieved, a question asking for the respondent’s ZIP code was included. From those ZIP codes, several maps were created to illustrate the survey’s reach. For the purposes of these maps, outliers from other states and countries were excluded.



CONCLUSION

Key takeaways from the survey include:

- A slight majority of survey respondents favor a longer bus ride / shorter walk combination, regardless of participation type.
- A larger majority of survey respondents favor smaller improvements in more locations.
- Overall, demographics of participants make sense in the context of the 2015 CapMetro Origin and Destination Study and 2020 American Community Survey.
- We heard from fewer women in-person but more women online.
- There was a low share of feedback from community members 25 and under.
- When in-person, a large majority of respondents were non-white and low income while online survey respondents skewed whiter and wealthier.
- Across participation types, people with disabilities were sampled at similar proportions compared to Austin as a whole.

The in-person outreach events received feedback from community members that more closely resemble ridership identified in the 2015 CapMetro Origin and Destination Study while the online option brought commentary from a sampling that was similar to the 2020 American Community Survey Five-Year estimates. Though the in-person outreach events required a more logistically intensive process, the results gathered a more accurate representation of transit ridership in Austin.

Round 2 of public outreach elicited feedback from a wide and diverse sample of the transit community in Austin. The results of the outreach will inform the development of proposed transit enhancement projects recommended in TPW's Transit Enhancement Infrastructure Report.