



People of color more likely to use transit with improvements

Less likely to favor biking improvements as much



Saltwater State Park in Des Moines. Residents throughout King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties took part in the 2019 Household Travel Survey.

Survey asked questions about transportation improvements

PSRC's 2019 household travel survey asked if improvements like dedicated bike lanes or more frequent transit would make people want to use them more.

The analysis looked at data across several broad racial groups. All groups said that improvements in facilities and service would spur them to bike or use transit more. But people of color were more likely than whites to change their travel habits if transit was improved.

A total of 3,044 households took part in the travel survey, representing a cross section of the demographics and income levels throughout King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties.

Why transit matters to people of color

Data was analyzed for people grouped into four broad racial categories to provide statistical significance in terms of sample size and similarity of travel behavior.

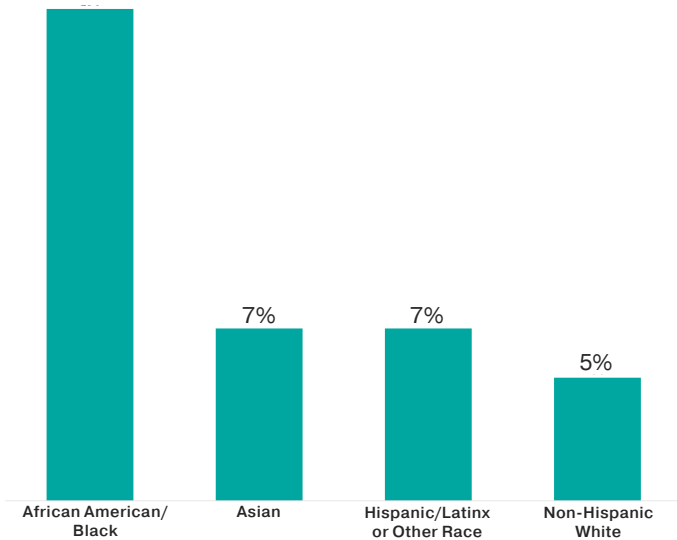
One in five Black/African American households in the region have no cars. By comparison, one in 20 white households (5%) are car-less. Asians, Hispanics, and people of other races were slightly more likely than white households to be without cars (7%).

Because people of color had fewer cars, they were significantly more likely to use transit than whites. While 16% of African Americans used transit five or more days a week, only 6% of whites rode transit this often.

On any given trip, Black survey participants were four times as likely as whites to use a bus or train. They used this mode for about 12% of their trips, while only 4% of whites used public transportation. Asians chose transit for 8% of their trips, while Hispanics and people of other races used this mode 5% of the time.

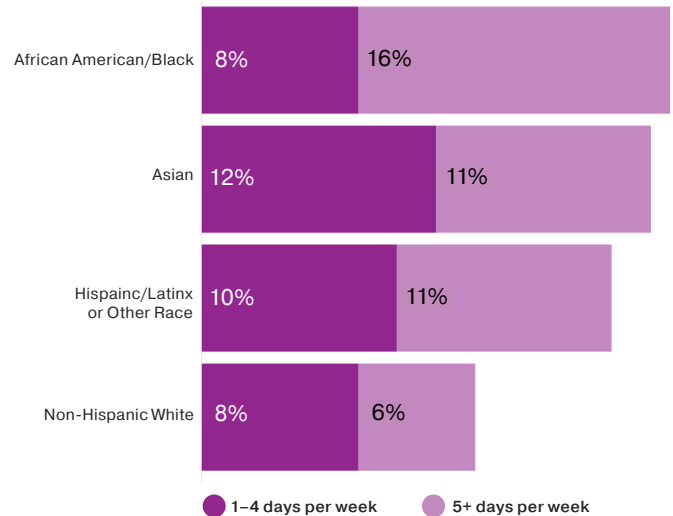
Households with Zero Cars

Percentage of households in each racial group without a car



Transit Use Frequency

How often people used transit



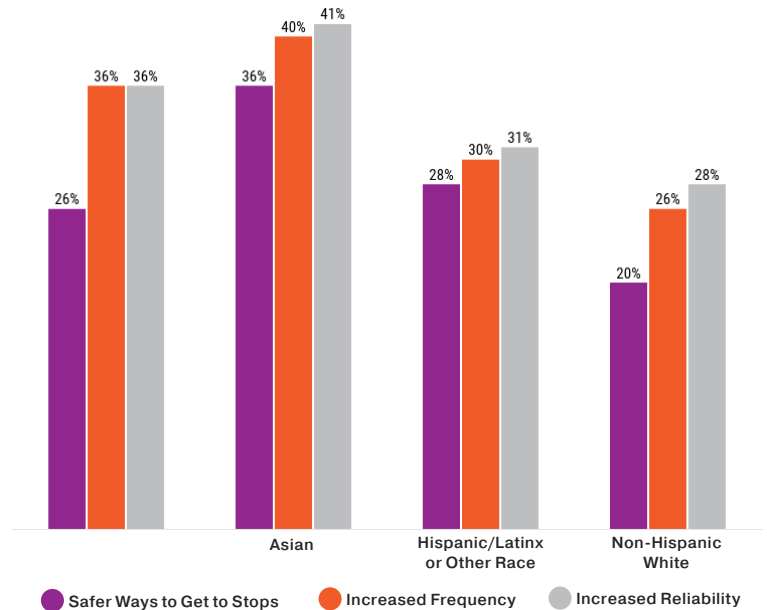
People of color were more likely to say they'd use transit with improvements

Nearly a third (30%) of the region's residents said they would take transit more if it had better frequency, reliability or safer ways to get to stops. People of color were more likely than whites to say they would ride transit more often after these changes.

Transit improvements may boost ridership among existing riders but make less of a difference to non-users. People already taking transit were more likely to say they'd increase their transit use with system changes than non-users were. Since people of color tend to ride transit more often than whites, they're also likely to increase ridership with transit improvements and to benefit from them.

People More Likely to Take Transit After Improvements

Those who would ride transit "occasionally" or "regularly" with improvements



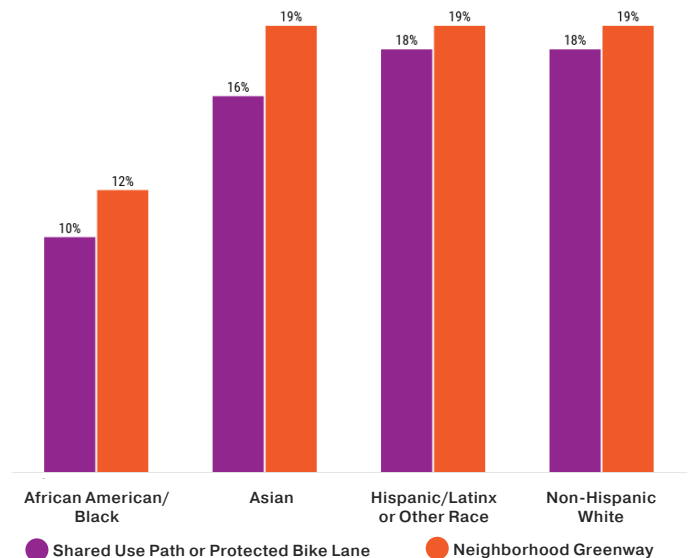
Bike improvements were less likely to spark a change in travel habits

Overall, about 15% of people in the region would bike more often if they had a shared use path or bike lane along a route they regularly take.

Black residents do not favor biking improvements as much as they do transit. They are less likely than others to say they would use a protected bike lane or greenway. More data and research are needed to understand why they do not favor bike improvements as much as other racial groups.

People More Likely to Bike After Improvements

Those who would bike "occasionally" or "regularly" with improvements



A significant takeaway from these findings is the importance of the transit system to people of color. They have fewer cars and are more likely to rely on transit than whites.

The COVID-19 pandemic compounds the disparities in mobility. Transit service has been drastically reduced since the pandemic started, and transit agencies are facing significant revenue shortfalls in the near future. On the other hand, bike lanes and neighborhood greenways may be more available during the pandemic.

PSRC's 2021 Household Travel Survey will tell us more about how COVID-19 impacts travel for people of color.

View the [2019 Household Travel Survey](#) on PSRC's website.

