South Orange County Multimodal Transportation Study

Public Involvement Program Phase 1:

Summary of Survey Results

January 2021

Prepared by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is conducting the South Orange County Multimodal Transportation Study (Study) to examine a wide range of long-term transportation needs looking at the year 2045 and beyond, including improvements to streets, bus and other transit options, highways, and bikeways. As part of this Study, OCTA is implementing a comprehensive Public Involvement Program (PIP). Phase One of the PIP which took place in fall 2020, included an online public webinar, a key stakeholder virtual roundtable and a virtual meeting with south county elected officials. In addition, a survey was conducted which was designed to assess public perception of transportation challenges and improvement strategies in south Orange County. The survey was available September 25 to October 30, 2020 both online as well as through the project information phone line with a live person answering and conducting the survey. The engagement methods to distribute information about the survey included various channels such as emails, postcards mailed specifically to low-income and disadvantaged communities, a communications toolkit sent to cities and stakeholders, and the OCTA Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The survey research was qualitative, which means that results cannot be considered representative of the total population of interest. Informal research methods are useful to explore a group's opinions and views, allowing for the collection of verifiable data. This data can reveal information that may warrant further study and is often a cornerstone for generating new ideas. The survey accomplished the following objectives:

- Solicited public input to include in the study findings report which will include a general analysis of survey results and general comments provided
- Disseminated study information and the online survey to a vast target audience

A total of 360 surveys were collected (351 English, 8 Spanish, 1 Mandarin). The information phone line number was listed on all survey distribution materials; however, no responses were collected through the information phone line.

Key Findings

The survey respondents identified various opportunities to improve future transportation and mobility challenges within south Orange County. From the 350+ people surveyed – who reflect a wide range of demographics and preferences – a majority would like to see:

- Reduction in traffic congestion,
- Increased frequency and accessibility of multimodal transportation, and
- Increased safety and efficiency for all modes of travel.

The summary below displays the top-ranked results related to transportation preferences, perceived challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Respondents had the ability to select up to two or three responses depending on the question.

Table 1 Summary of Key Findings

Survey Question	Top Ranked	Second Ranked	Third Ranked
When you travel in and around Orange County,	Drive alone	Walk/jog/run	Carpool/vanpool

Survey Question	Top Ranked	Second Ranked	Third Ranked
how do you normally get from place to place?	41%	14%	13%
What is the most important issue concerning transportation in south Orange County? (Pick 2)	Traffic congestion on freeways/highways 27%	Traffic congestion on local streets and roads 22%	Not enough transportation choices (bus, rail, or on-demand microtransit service) 19%
What is the primary challenge to bus and rail travel in south Orange County? (Pick 2)	Access to/from destinations 38%	Service frequency 30%	Travel time 19%
What is the primary challenge of using local streets in south Orange County? (Pick 2)	Traffic congestion 36%	Safety for all users (drivers, pedestrians, cyclists) 26%	Intersection delays 25%
What is the primary challenge to using freeways/highways in south Orange County? (Pick 2)	Traffic congestion 44%	Unpredictable commute time 25%	Back-up at freeway off ramps 16%
What is the most significant barrier to active transportation (walking, cycling) in south Orange County? (Pick 2)	Safety concerns (lack of physical separation from cars, lack of pedestrian accommodations) 32%	Long distances between trip origins and destinations 26%	Gaps in the bikeway and sidewalk network 24%
Which set of transportation solutions is most important to you? (Pick 2)	Freeway maintenance, on and off ramp enhancements, and projects to improve overall traffic flow 26%	Pothole repairs, signal synchronization, and intersection improvements 21%	Bike lanes, bikeway networks, and pedestrian pathways 19%
Considering that south Orange County's population is expected to continue growing into the foreseeable future, which strategy would provide the most long-term benefits?	Land-use planning (coordinating new development with transportation) 39%	Bus, rail, and other transit services 22%	Technology to minimize traffic (signal synchronization, autonomous vehicles)

Survey Question	Top Ranked	Second Ranked	Third Ranked
			21%
What do you think is the most useful strategy to reduce traffic congestion in south Orange County? (Pick 2)	Work from home programs **38%**	Mobility hubs (shared activity centers for connecting bus/shuttle/rideshare/etc.) **27%**	Pricing (tolled express lanes, charge for parking) **13%**
Given limited space to widen freeways without impacting businesses and residences, which could help manage south Orange County freeway congestion the most? (Pick 2)	Fix chokepoints (high congestion areas) **37%**	Encourage carpools, vanpools, and ridesharing **20%**	Other **13%**
What is the best way to address traffic congestion through land-use planning (coordinating new development with transportation) in south Orange County? (Pick 2)	Concentrate business development around transit (bus/rail) centers **31%**	Encourage walkability and complete streets (streets designed and operated safely for all users like drivers, cyclists, pedestrians) **28%**	Concentrate new housing developments around transit (bus/rail) centers **23%**

*Percentages do not equal 100% because the answers were ranked.

Survey Overview

Survey Format
The survey was offered in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Korean, and Vietnamese to accommodate the south Orange County population demographics. An online survey was created using SurveyMonkey to provide a streamlined outlet to collect public input and feedback. The survey was also offered through the project information telephone line with a live operator to conduct the survey verbally, making the survey accessible to a wider range of people. The operator was available to provide the survey in English and Spanish, and for the Vietnamese, Korean and Mandarin surveys, the operator would return the stakeholder's call. The survey had a total of 17 questions that focused on the respondent's geographic location, mobility use, transportation and mobility concerns and challenges, and useful strategies to address these challenges. The survey provided respondents the ability to select up to two or three responses depending on the question. Several questions also gave respondents the option to choose "other" and individually submit an answer not already provided. The survey concluded with optional demographic questions related to age, ethnicity, and a sign-up to receive project updates.

Survey Outreach

To reach the south Orange County community at large, multiple outlets were utilized to disseminate the survey. The engagement methods included online tools, mailed postcards, communication toolkits distributed to cites and stakeholders within the project area and social media. Reference Appendix C for the outreach efforts. Through the various methods of outreach, the online survey was successfully distributed to a wide target audience which provided a good foundation for an analysis of the results. Reference Table 2 for a summary of the distribution channels.

Table 2 Summary of Survey Outreach

#.	Notification Method	Audience	Notes
1.	Community Meeting/Survey Postcard - Mailed postcards to over 13,000 stakeholders (English/ Spanish; interpretation was offered in Korean, Mandarin and Vietnamese) - Featured on project webpage	• Low income community • Disadvantaged community • Stakeholder database (including community organizations, city staff, major businesses, and facilities, etc.)	• The postcard promoted the Community Meeting as well as the online survey and project information phone line.
2.	Facebook Ads	• South Orange County • Zip codes with a high Spanish Population • Zip codes with a high Korean Population • Zip codes with a high Vietnamese Population • Zip codes with a high Mandarin Population	• Facebook Ads were developed in four languages and targeted zip codes based on demographics and interests. • Ads were placed at the beginning and end of the survey period.
3.	Twitter Posts	• OCTA Twitter Followers and General Public	• Twitter posts promoted the Community Meeting and the online survey. • Tweets were posted throughout the survey period.
4.	Communications Toolkit	• South county cities and the County • OCTA's Citizen's Advisory Committee, Special Needs	• Provided instructions to distribute the survey via electronically to the

#.	Notification Method	Audience	Notes
		Advisory Committee, and Diverse Leaders Committee • Transportation partners • Environmental Community • HOAs • Chambers	stakeholder's constituents.
5.	Digital - Email Blasts - OCTA On the Move blog - Linking to project website and survey	• Stakeholder database (including HOAs, community organizations, city staff, major businesses, and facilities, etc.)	• Eblast distributed to stakeholder database (830) and OCTA customer database (36,540). • Blog article distributed to 12,700 readers
6.	Announcement at meetings	• Stakeholder Roundtable • Technical Working Group meetings • Transportation Agency Working Group Meetings • Public Webinar • Elected Officials Roundtable	• Survey link was provided at each meeting
7.	News Release	• Media outlets	• The release promoted the Community Meeting as well as the online survey and project information phone line.

SURVEY RESULTS ANALYSIS

The survey results were analyzed based on the 360 responses collected from the 17-question survey.

Geographic Distribution

Multiple engagement methods were utilized to promote full participation within the project area. The majority of the survey respondents indicated they both lived and worked within south Orange County.

Home Zip Code

Out of the 360 surveys collected, 99% of the respondents shared their home zip code (357) and 81% of those respondents shared they live within the project area as shown in Figure 1. 13% of the respondents indicated their home zip code was outside of the project area but still within Orange County, the majority being east of the project area, with some respondents immediately adjacent to the project area. There was a higher concentration of survey participants in Newport Beach, Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, and San Clemente. This can vary for numerous reasons such as more noticing reached these respondents through the city's distribution channels, the targeted Facebook ads, etc. Although the responses are concentrated more in some areas than others, the responses collected are spread throughout the entire project area.

Figure 1: Survey Respondents - Home Zip Code

Work Zip Code

75% of the survey respondents (267) indicated their work zip code and from these respondents, 74% indicated their work zip code is within the project area. There was a higher concentration of survey participants in Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, and San Clemente. Although the responses are concentrated more in some areas than others, the responses collected are more evenly distributed throughout the entire project area slightly more than the home zip codes.

Figure 2: Survey Respondents - Work Zip Code

Transportation Preferences

One question was asked to analyze survey participants' current transportation preferences in Orange County.

When you travel in and around Orange County, how do you normally get from place to place?
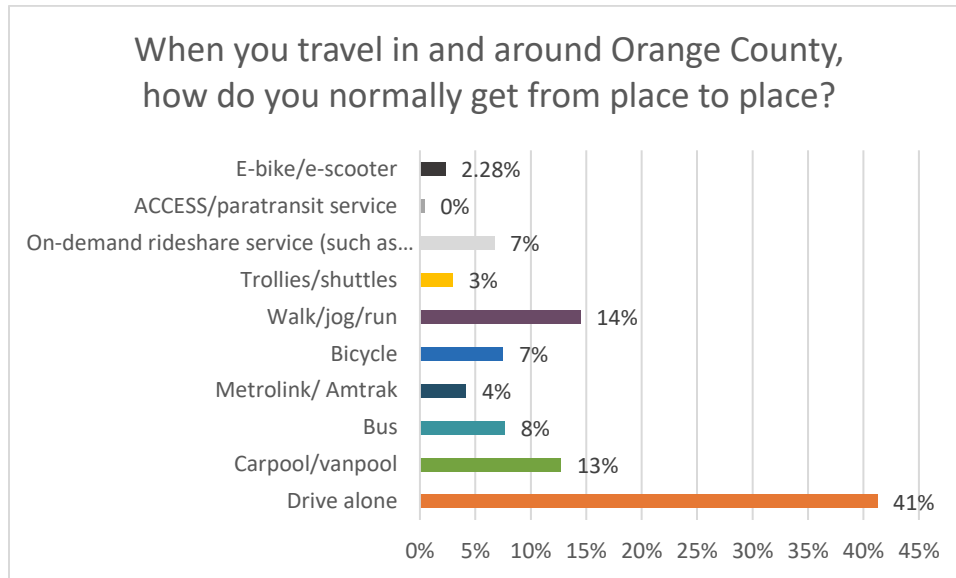
Option	Total*
Drive alone	308
Carpool/vanpool	95
Bus	57
Metrolink/ Amtrak	31
Bicycle	56
Walk/jog/run	108
Trollies/shuttles	22
On-demand rideshare service (such as Uber or Lyft)	50
ACCESS/paratransit service	3
E-bike/e-scooter	17

* Based upon 359 respondents
* Respondents allowed up to 3 choices

Perceived Challenges

Five questions were asked to assess transportation challenges experienced when traveling in south Orange County to analyze what the community sees as a top concern.
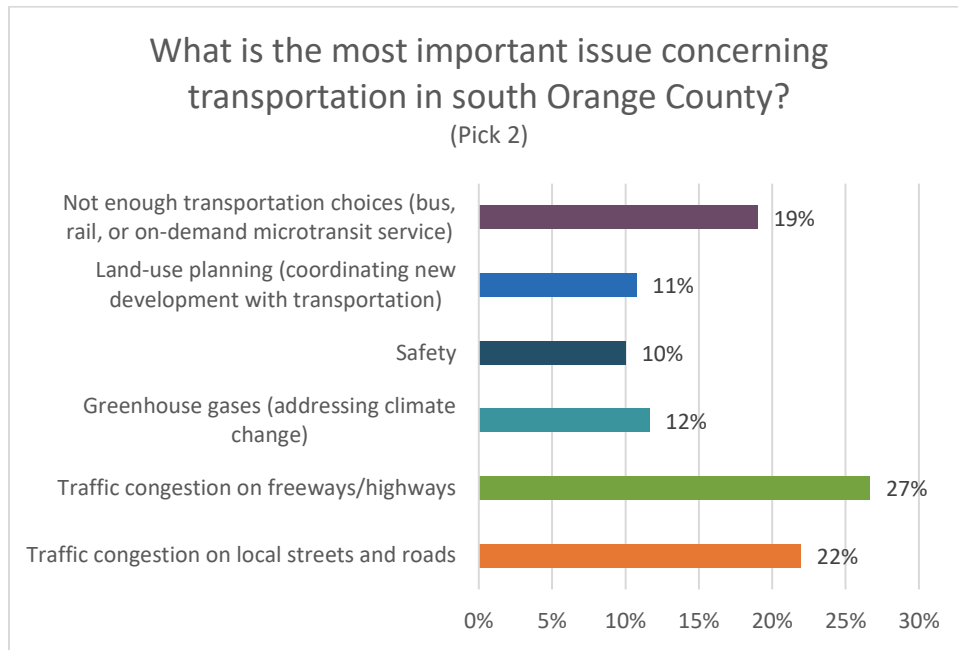
Option	Total*
Traffic congestion on local streets and roads	149
Traffic congestion on freeways/highways	181
Greenhouse gases (addressing climate change)	79
Safety	68
Land-use planning (coordinating new development with transportation)	73
Not enough transportation choices (bus, rail, or on-demand microtransit service)	129

* Based upon 358 respondents
* Respondents allowed up to 2 choices

What is the primary challenge to bus and rail travel in south Orange County?
(Pick 2)
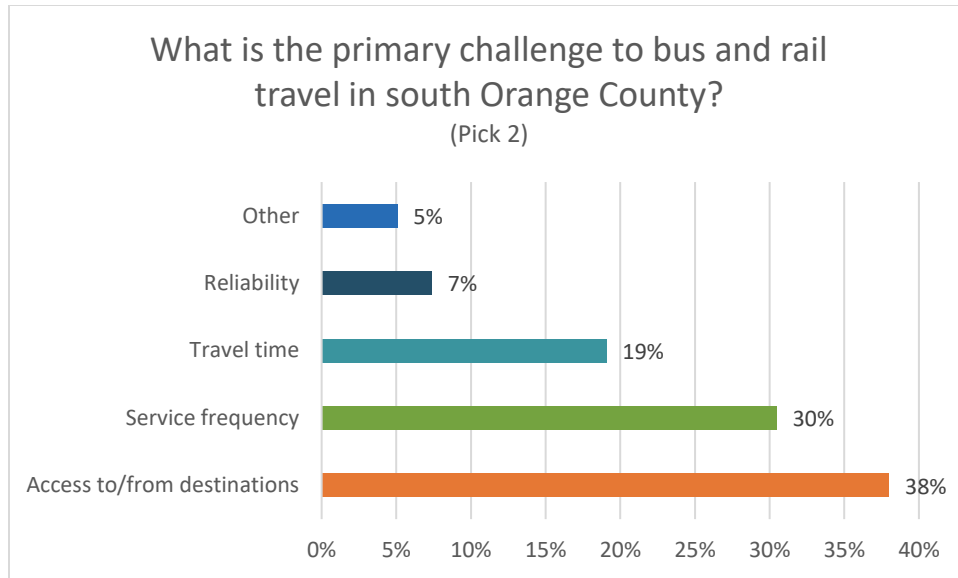
Option	Total*
Access to/from destinations	247
Service frequency	198
Travel time	124
Reliability	48
Other	33

* Based upon 354 respondents
* Respondents allowed to 2 choices

What is the primary challenge of using local streets in south Orange County?
(Pick 2)
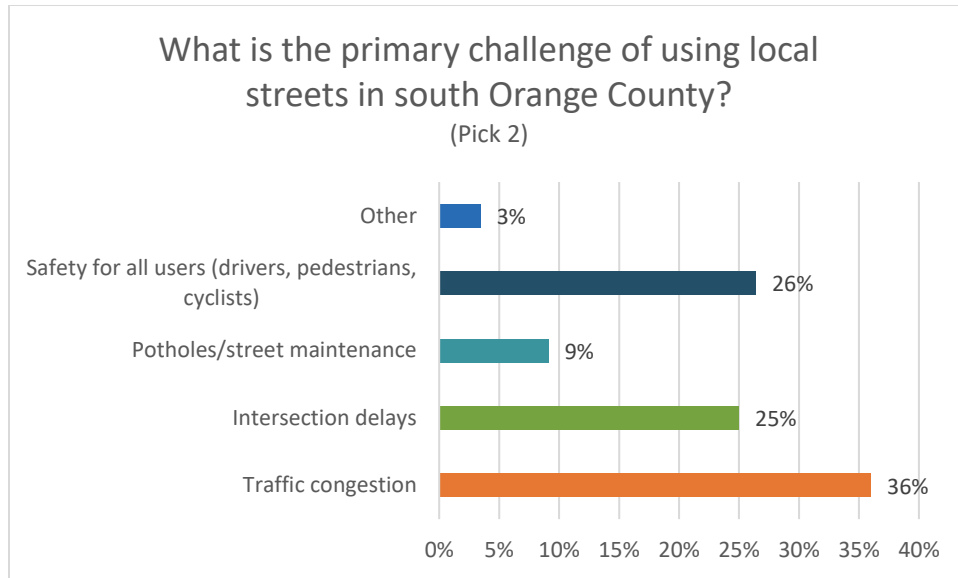
Option	Total*
Traffic congestion	229
Intersection delays	159
Potholes/street maintenance	58
Safety for all users (drivers, pedestrians, cyclists)	168
Other	22

* Based upon 358 respondents
* Respondents allowed up to 2 choices

Survey Results Analysis

What is the primary challenge to using freeways/highways in south Orange County?
(Pick 2)
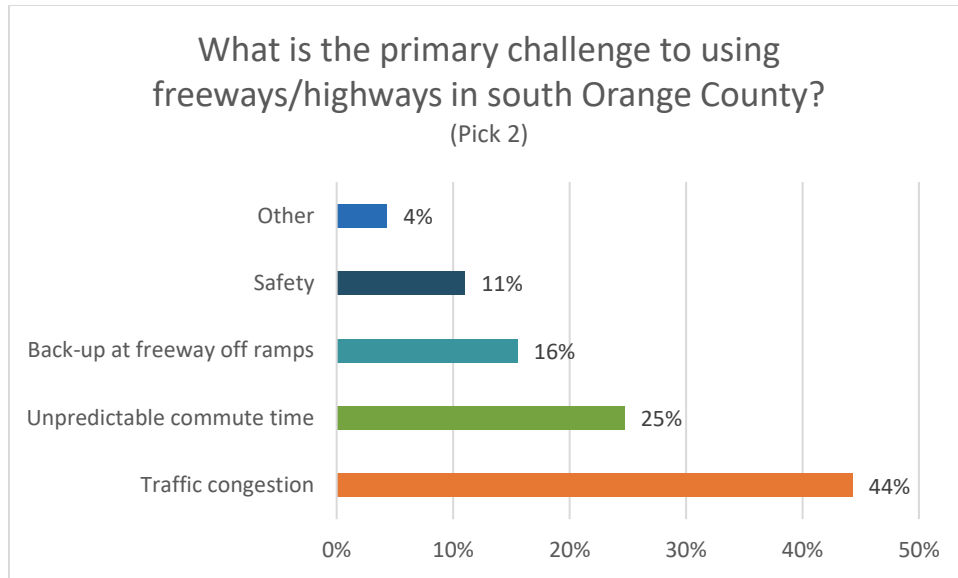
Option	Total*
Traffic congestion	285
Unpredictable commute time	159
Back-up at freeway off ramps	100
Safety	71
Other	28

* Based upon 357 respondents
* Respondents allowed up to 2 choices

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What is the most significant barrier to active transportation (walking, cycling) in south Orange County?
(Pick 2)

Barrier	Percentage
Other	3%
Topography (hilly terrain)	15%
Safety concerns (lack of physical…	32%
Long distances between trip origins and…	26%
Gaps in the bikeway and sidewalk network	24%
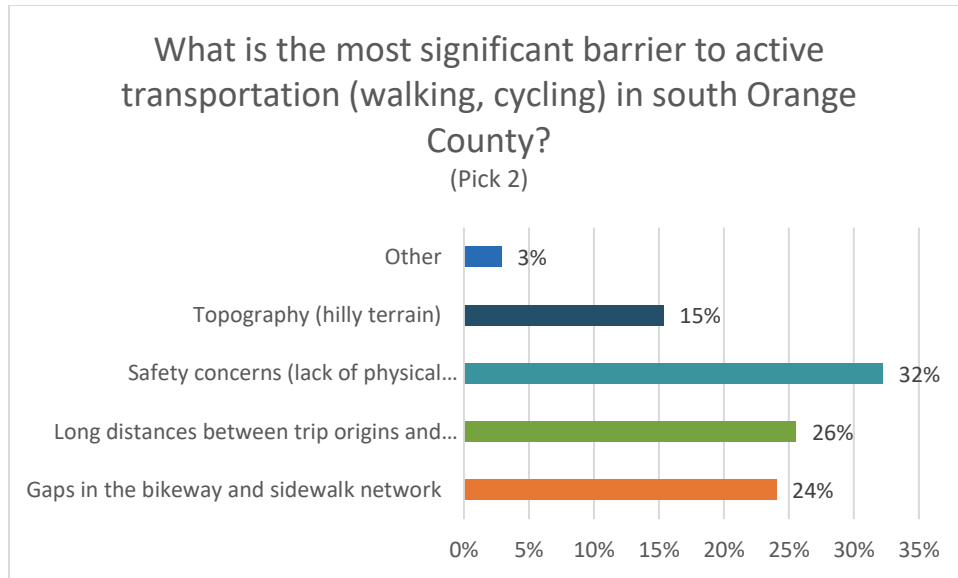
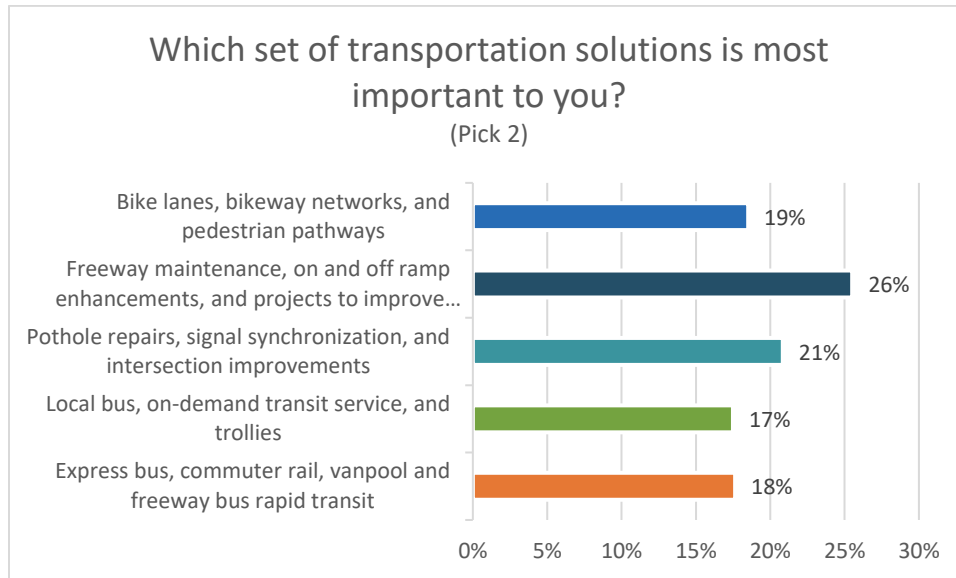| Option	Total*
Gaps in the bikeway and sidewalk network	158
Long distances between trip origins and destinations	168
Safety concerns (lack of physical separation from cars, lack of pedestrian accommodations)	212
Topography (hilly terrain)	101
Other	19

* Based upon 356 respondents
* Respondents allowed up to 2 choices

General Transportation Solutions

Two questions were asked to prioritize the top opportunities to improve transportation in Orange County overall.

Option	Total*
Express bus, commuter rail, vanpool, and freeway bus rapid transit	121
Local bus, on-demand transit service, and trollies	120
Pothole repairs, signal synchronization, and intersection improvements	143
Freeway maintenance, on and off ramp enhancements, and projects to improve overall traffic flow	175
Bike lanes, bikeway networks, and pedestrian pathways	127

* Based upon 357 respondents
* Respondents allowed up to 2 choices

Considering that south Orange County's population is expected to continue growing into the foreseeable future, which strategy would provide the most long-term benefits?
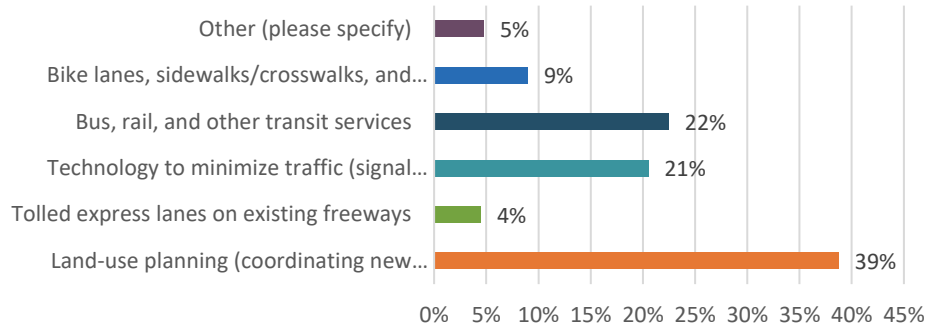
Option	Total*
Land-use planning (coordinating new development with transportation)	138
Tolled express lanes on existing freeways	16
Technology to minimize traffic (signal synchronization, autonomous vehicles)	73
Bus, rail, and other transit services	80
Bike lanes, sidewalks/crosswalks, and paved trails	32
Other (please specify)	17

* Based upon 356 respondents

Common Other Responses Received	# of Responses per Topic
Work from home initiatives	2
Autonomous vehicles	2
Limit/ remove toll road or toll road cost	3
Reduce new development	2

* Based upon comments made two or more times by 17 respondents.

Traffic Congestion Solutions

Three questions were asked to determine the best strategies to improve traffic congestion in south Orange County. This offered insight on the respondents' top priorities and solutions.
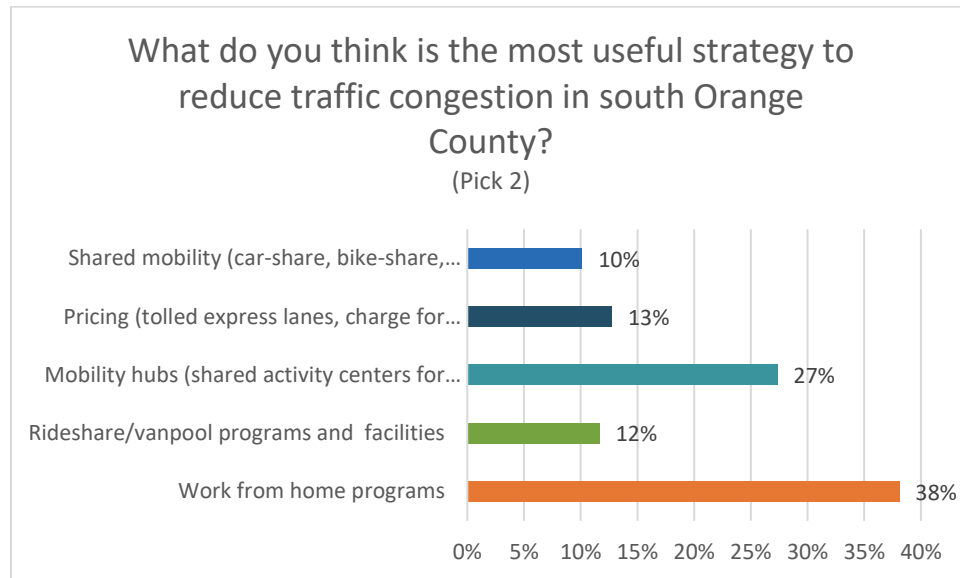
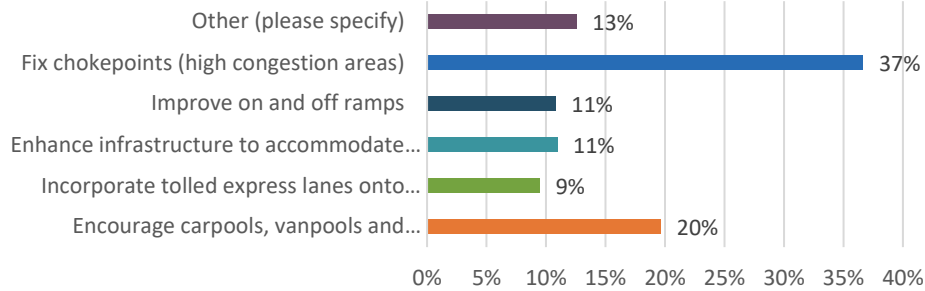| Option	Total*
Work from home programs	248
Rideshare/vanpool programs and facilities	76
Mobility hubs (shared activity centers for connecting bus/shuttle/rideshare/etc.)	178
Pricing (tolled express lanes, charge for parking)	83
Shared mobility (car-share, bike-share, scooter-share)	66

* Based upon 351 respondents
* Respondents allowed up to 2 choices

Given limited space to widen freeways without impacting businesses and residences, which could help manage south Orange County freeway congestion the most?
(Pick 2)

Option	Total*
Encourage carpools, vanpools, and ridesharing	133
Incorporate tolled express lanes onto existing freeways (91 Express Lanes)	64
Enhance infrastructure to accommodate autonomous (self-driving) vehicles	74
Improve on and off ramps	73
Fix chokepoints (high congestion areas)	248
Other (please specify)	85

* Based upon 351 respondents
* Respondents allowed up to 2 choices

Common Other Responses Received	# of Responses per Topic
Affordable public transit service	6
Increase/ improve overall trains/ bus service (especially light rail)	36
Expand bike parking	2
Double-stacked Freeways	2
Reduce construction	3
Decrease toll roads/ lanes	3

Common Other Responses Received	# of Responses per Topic
Increase multimodal options	10
Encourage toll road use/ reduce fees	2
Incentivize carpools, vanpools, or ridesharing	3
Existing roadway maintenance	3
Increase more accessibility/ public use of golf carts	3
Construct/ improve safety of cycling lanes	6
Complete roadway gaps	4
Encourage Work from Home Initiatives	3

* Based upon comments made two or more times by 85 respondents.

What is the best way to address traffic congestion through land-use planning (coordinating new development with transportation) in south Orange County?
(Pick 2)

Category	Percentage
Other (please specify)	8%
Encourage walkability and complete…	28%
Develop strategies to reduce automobile…	10%
Concentrate new housing developments…	23%
Concentrate business development…	31%
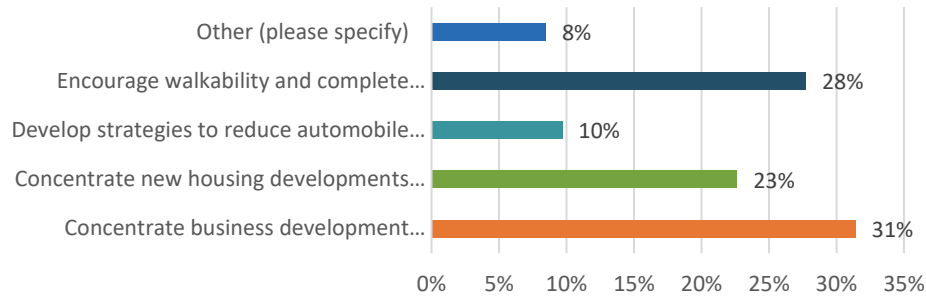
Option	Total*
Concentrate business development around transit (bus/rail) centers	204
Concentrate new housing developments around transit (bus/rail) centers	147
Develop strategies to reduce automobile dependency (i.e., charge for parking)	63
Encourage walkability and complete streets (streets designed and operated safely for all users like drivers, cyclists, pedestrians)	180
Other (please specify)	55

* Based upon 356 respondents
* Respondents allowed up to 2 choices

Common Other Responses Received	# of Responses per Topic
Rail service supplemented by local driving services	2
Eliminate parking/ toll road fees	6

Common Other Responses Received	# of Responses per Topic
Improve/ increase public transportation (bus, rail)	9
Incentivize carpools, vanpools, or ridesharing	1
Reduce residential/ commercial development	7
Create more multimodal roads (golf cart/ bike friendly)	2
Increase cost of new development	3
Encourage work from home environment	2

* Based upon comments made two or more times by 55 respondents.

Demographics

Three questions were asked to assess the demographics of the respondents.

What is your age range?
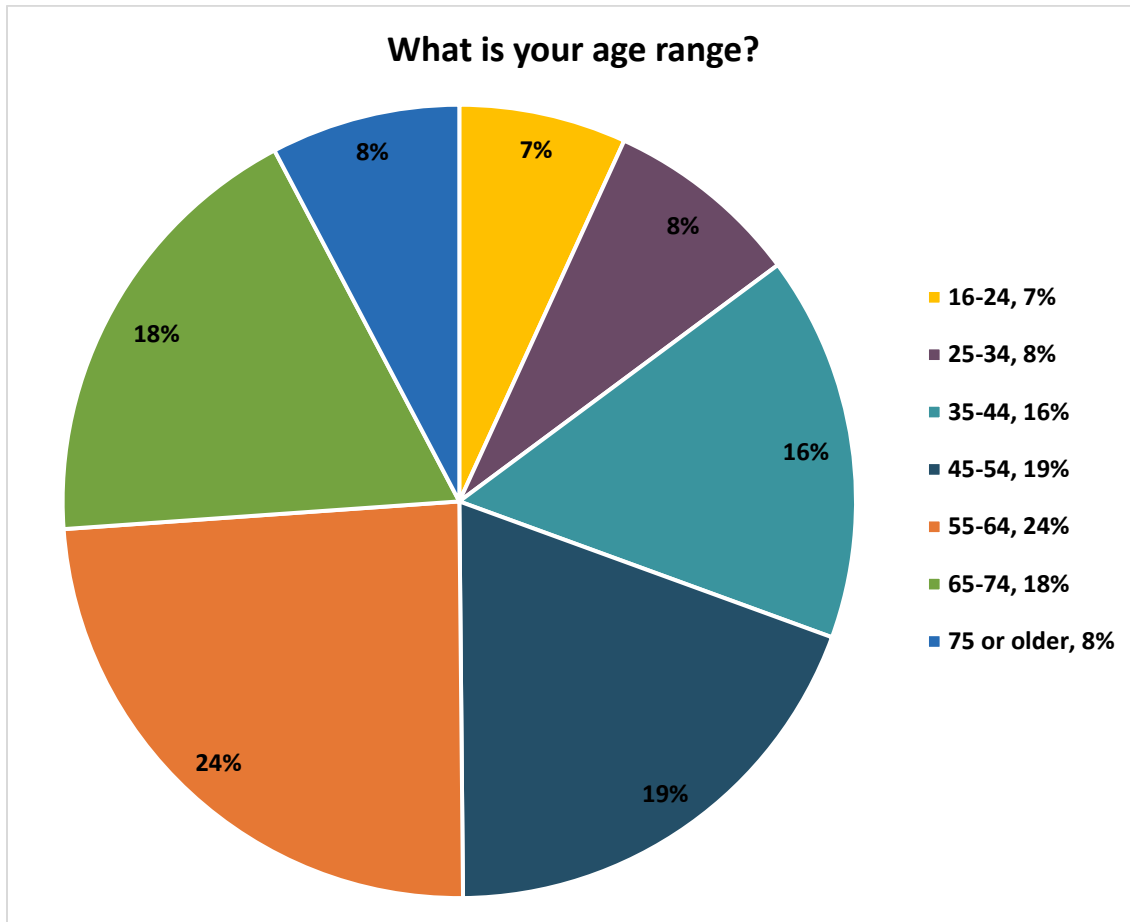
Option	Total*
16-24	23
25-34	27
35-44	53
45-54	65
55-64	81
65-74	62
75 or older	26

* Based upon 337 respondents

What is your combined annual household income?

- Less than 30,000, 5%
- 30,000 – 49,999, 6%
- 50,000 – 79,999, 9%
- 80,000 – 109,000, 11%
- 110,000 – 169,000, 18%
- 170,000 or more, 26%
- Prefer not to answer, 24%
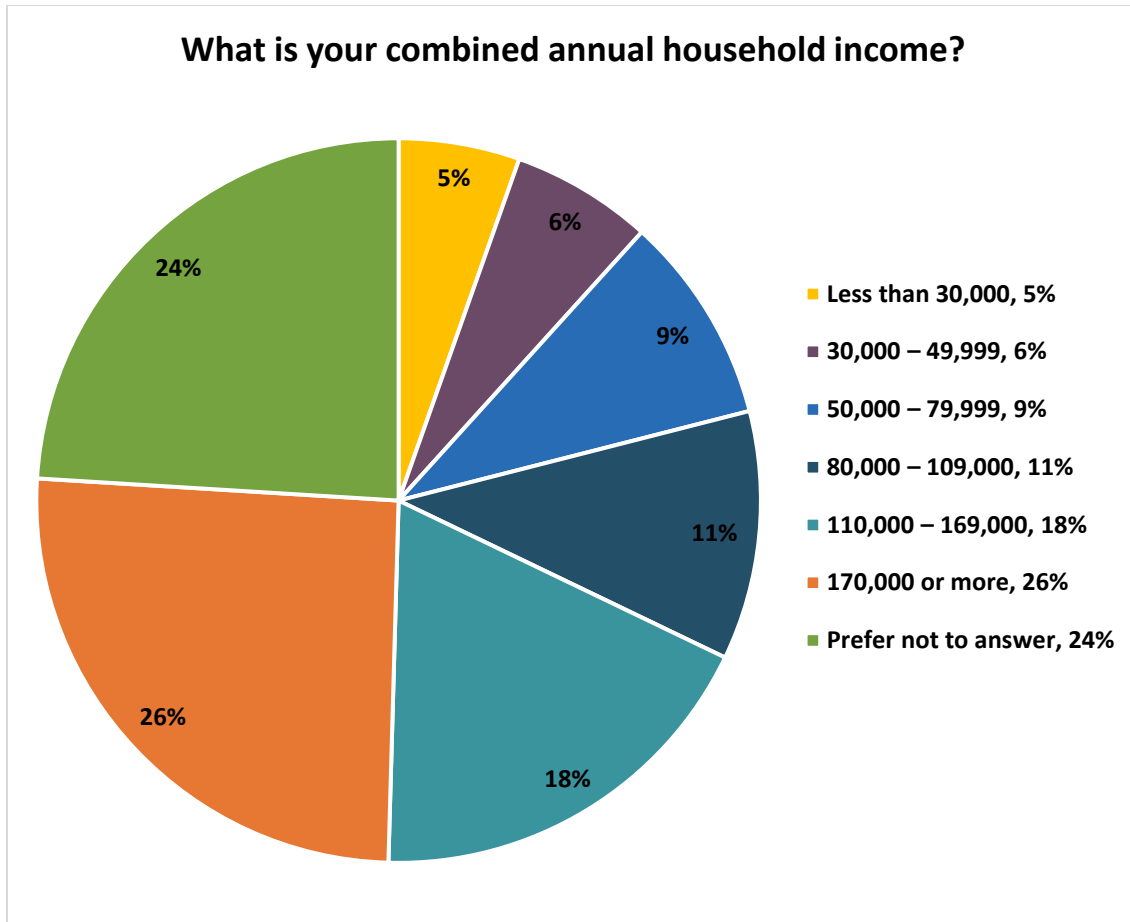
Option	Total*
Less than 30,000	18
30,000 – 49,999	21
50,000 – 79,999	31
80,000 – 109,000	37
110,000 – 169,000	61
170,000 or more	85
Prefer not to answer	80

* Based upon 333 respondents

What ethnic group do you consider yourself a part of or feel closest to?

- Caucasian/White, 63%
- Latino/Hispanic, 11%
- African American/Black, 1%
- American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1%
- Asian – Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, or other Asian, 7%
- Pacific Islander, 1%
- Middle Eastern, 0%
- Mixed Heritage, 4%
- Other, 1%
- Prefer not to answer, 11%
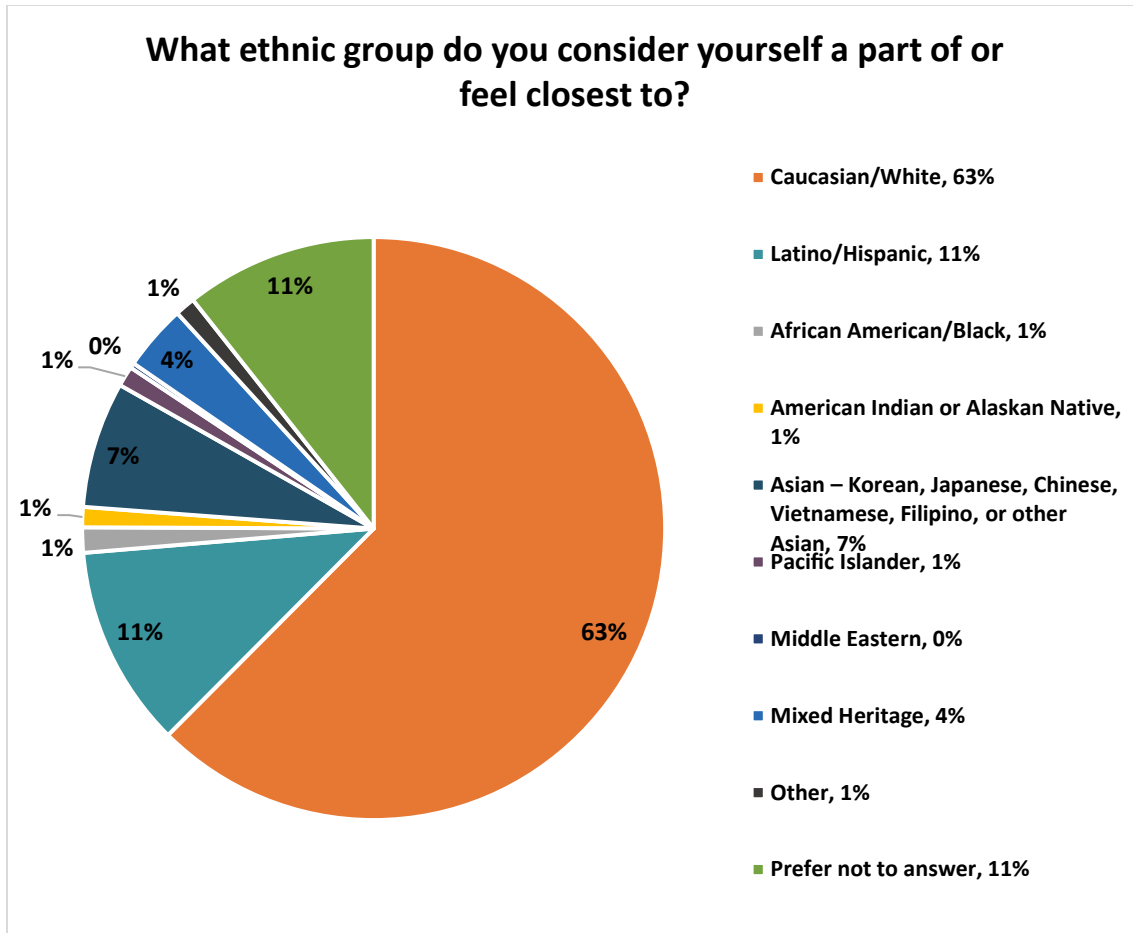
Option	Total*
Caucasian/White	223
Latino/Hispanic	40
African American/Black	5
American Indian or Alaskan Native	4
Asian – Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, or other Asian	25
Pacific Islander	4
Middle Eastern	1
Mixed Heritage	13
Other	4
Prefer not to answer	38

* Based upon 357 respondents

Stay Involved

A total of 90 email contacts were received and were included in the Stakeholder Database to receive notifications, project updates, community meeting invites and to be included in outreach during Phase 2.

CONCLUSION

The collected survey results offered insight that showed respondents recognize the need to address transportation challenges and want to see an increase in alternative transportation frequency and accessibility, a reduction in traffic congestion, and overall safer conditions for all modes of travel. Analysis of the South Orange County Multimodal Transportation Study, along with strategic planning, will help address the various challenges of transportation accessibility while providing mobility opportunities to relieve transportation congestion and acclimating to the county's rising population. During Phase 2 of the PIP, OCTA will be presenting draft multimodal alternatives to the public for review and input. The feedback collected during Phase 2 combined with the public input collected during Phase 1 will provide OCTA a solid foundation to develop recommendations to address future south Orange County's mobility needs.