



MODUS

from insight to impact

SURREY LANGLEY SKYTRAIN, AND RAPID TRANSIT OPTIONS ON 104 AVENUE AND KING GEORGE BOULEVARD

PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared by: MODUS Planning, Design & Engagement
Prepared for: TransLink

January 2020



ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

Promotional activities:



Project microsite



Print, radio, digital ads



Transit ads



Social media



eNewsletter



Telephone town hall



Direct outreach



Community events



8,600+ Survey Respondents



2,000 Open House Participants



5,000 Telephone Town Hall Participants

KEY THEMES

Comments Regarding SkyTrain Guideway Placement

- Support for the SkyTrain and the factors that contributed to placement of the guideway
- Concern about impacts on wildlife and plant life
- Concern about traffic impacts, notably during construction
- Importance of sufficient, accessible, and affordable parking near and around each station
- Need to integrate walking and cycling infrastructure and amenities
- Need for easy connections between different transportation modes, especially improved bus service

Design Features Outside the Stations

- Features related to travel by bus, HandyDART, and foot are of primary importance

Rapid Transit on 104 Avenue & King George Boulevard

- Concern about increased vehicle congestion
- Preference for SkyTrain or other transit technology over Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Need for a high-frequency and high-capacity transit system to meet the needs of current and future users
- Perception that current bus service is sufficient

Environmental Screening Review (ESR) Process

- Vast majority (93%) indicated that the ESR process is sufficiently thorough
- Additional Review suggestions included a focus on safety and security, visual impacts, community health, and light pollution
- Concern that the ESR process might delay project delivery
- Reiteration of the need to consult with First Nations on the ESR process
- Concern about construction and operational impacts on Green Timbers Urban Forest
- Interest in how ESR results will contribute to decision-making
- Inclusion of environmental benefits of SkyTrain in the ESR

Other Comments

- Support for the SkyTrain and need for improved transit infrastructure south of the Fraser
- Desire for the Surrey Langley SkyTrain to be constructed in one stage
- Need for improved bus connections and service that integrates seamlessly with the SkyTrain
- Suggestions to plan for further expansions of the SkyTrain
- Concern about safety and security on and around public transit

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND1

WHAT WE DID3

WHAT WE HEARD5

WHO WE HEARD FROM.....13

NEXT STEPS.....15

BACKGROUND

In 2014, regional mayors on the Mayors' Council identified 104 Avenue, King George Boulevard, and Fraser Highway as priority corridors for rapid transit south of the Fraser and decided to build 27 kilometers of Light Rail Transit (LRT) to meet growing and projected ridership demand in the sub-region.

In December 2018, based on a request from Surrey City Council, the Mayors' Council directed TransLink to suspend work on the Surrey-Newton-Guildford LRT and begin planning work for SkyTrain on Fraser Highway while updating rapid transit plans for 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard.

In April 2019, TransLink carried out a first phase of public engagement to:

- Inform the public about rapid transit planning work related to the Fraser Highway, 104 Avenue, and King George Boulevard corridors
- Gather feedback on opportunities, considerations, values, and level of support for rapid transit planning on these corridors
- Ensure broad access to information, maximizing opportunities to engage

Engagement activities attracted record-level response with feedback from more than 21,000 online survey respondents from across the region, and more than 1,000 open house attendees in Surrey and Langley.

Survey results indicated widespread support for the proposed Surrey Langley SkyTrain, including 85% of respondents in Surrey and Langley, and 84% in the rest of the region.

Survey respondents were asked to rank values for consideration in rapid transit planning, including the 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard corridors. They identified the following as their top values:

- Predictable transit travel time
- Efficient use of public money
- A comfortable and safe experience
- Increased transportation options that help me choose bus, SkyTrain, SeaBus, and HandyDART over private vehicle use

And, they noted the following as important factors in considering the impacts of the proposed Surrey Langley SkyTrain:

- Safety and security
- Increased transit connectivity through and within Surrey and Langley
- Minimizing impacts to residences and businesses
- Travel time and convenience

In July 2019, TransLink provided a mid-year update to Mayors' Council (including cost estimates; design requirements; an Environmental Screening Review, or ESR, process; and results of the first phase of public engagement), after which the Mayors' Council directed TransLink to:

- Complete a Surrey Langley SkyTrain project business case
- Develop a staged construction plan, based on available funding
- Explore transit options for 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard that stay within the \$3.55 billion overall funding envelope for the three rapid transit corridors

In November 2019, TransLink undertook a second phase of public engagement on the proposed Surrey Langley SkyTrain project and rapid transit on 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard. In this phase, TransLink sought feedback on:

- The proposed placement of the SkyTrain guideway and stations along Fraser Highway, and:
- Access to SkyTrain and integration with other modes of transportation
- The Environmental Screening Review (ESR) process
- Rapid transit on 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard

WHAT WE DID

PROMOTION

Website: The project microsite, launched in February 2019, remains the primary source for interested parties to access the most up-to-date information. During this round of public engagement, users could find links to the online survey, open house information boards, engagement opportunities, news coverage, and FAQs.

Digital ads: Digital ads were posted on the following sites:

- Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram platforms
- Google Search Network, Google Display Network and Gmail
- Surrey Now-Leader, Langley Advance Times, and Vancouver Sun
- Daily Hive and Vancouver is Awesome

Newspaper and radio ads: Multilingual ads were placed with print and radio outlets, including but not limited to: Star Metro, Red FM.

Op-ed: An op-ed promoting the public engagement opportunity was provided to local newspapers.

SMS NextBus alert ads: SMS messages were sent to customers using the NextBus service in Surrey and Langley.

eNewsletters: Notification of the engagement was sent to Surrey Langley SkyTrain eNewsletter subscribers as well as those who subscribe to the general TransLink eNewsletter.

Social media: Content about the public engagement opportunity was posted on Facebook and Twitter, including Facebook events for each open house.

Direct outreach: Elected officials, representatives of local businesses and community organizations, and government leaders were invited to participate in the engagement and asked to share information (i.e., physical posters or social media posts) about it with their constituents.

Community events: To help raise awareness about the public engagement, TransLink staff participated in local community events, including the Fleetwood Festival and Surrey Tree Lighting Festival.

Street teams: Street teams promoted the public engagement with transit users at bus exchanges, SkyTrain stations, and park-and-rides in Surrey and Langley. Street teams and TransLink staff also undertook outreach activities (i.e., pop-up booths) at malls, including Hillcrest Shopping Centre in Clayton.

Information boards: Throughout the public engagement period, large boards with details about the public engagement opportunity (i.e., how to get involved) were displayed at Surrey City Hall, Langley City Hall, and Township of Langley City Hall.

Transit ads: Ads were placed at bus shelters and SkyTrain stations, including Columbia, King George, Sapperton, and Braid.

Telephone Town Hall: A Telephone Town Hall attracted approximately 5,000 participants from across the region who had an opportunity to ask questions of TransLink staff about the proposed Surrey Langley SkyTrain project and rapid transit on 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was available between November 1 – 17, 2019.

TransLink sought specific feedback on:

- The proposed placement of the SkyTrain guideway and stations along Fraser Highway
- Access to SkyTrain and integration with other modes of transportation
- The Environmental Screening Review (ESR) process
- Rapid transit on 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard

The survey was translated into Punjabi and available at open houses or electronically, by request.

In total, there were 8,624 completed surveys. Respondents provided the first 3 letters of their postal code, which is the basis for the following geographic breakdown:

- 4,689 – City of Surrey
- 879 – Township of Langley
- 651 – City of Langley
- 2,405 – Rest of Metro Vancouver

OPEN HOUSES

Open house details including date, location, time, and attendants as follows:

- Thursday, November 7 – Langley City Hall (3 - 8pm) 262 attendees
- Tuesday, November 12 – Hope Community Church (3 - 8pm) 91 attendees
- Wednesday, November 13 – Surrey Sport and Leisure Complex (3 - 8 pm) 700 attendees
- Thursday, November 14 – Kwantlen Polytechnic University (1 - 6pm) 200 attendees
- Saturday, November 16 – Central City Shopping Centre (11am - 4pm) 700+ attendees

The open houses featured a series of information boards about the project that outlined background, funding, and timelines, etc. The boards are available at: surreylangleyskytrain.ca

At the open houses, a community mapping exercise provided attendees with an opportunity to highlight additional considerations regarding guideway placement.

TransLink and municipal staff were present at the open houses to answer questions in English, Punjabi and other languages.

iPads were available to complete the online survey. Paper copies of the survey (English and Punjabi) were also available.

WHAT WE HEARD

The following is a summary of what we heard from respondents to the online survey and participants at the open houses.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING SKYTRAIN GUIDEWAY PLACEMENT

Q: The following factors were considered in the decision-making process about where the guideway is placed:

- *Minimize footprint impacts to environmentally sensitive areas*
- *Minimize property impacts*
- *Minimize project-related costs while maximizing ease of construction*
- *Minimize the number of times the guideway crosses over Fraser Highway*
- *Minimize traffic impacts*

Is there anything else that we should consider in planning where the guideway is placed on the Fraser Highway?

General Support

There was general support for the SkyTrain extension. Many respondents supported the list of factors that TransLink considered regarding placement of the guideway.

Environmental Impact

Respondents identified environmental impacts that the SkyTrain would have on the surrounding area as an area of concern. The majority of those comments related to impacts to Green Timbers Urban Forest, wildlife habitat, and tree removal during construction. Some respondents suggested sustainable disposal of construction waste and minimizing the SkyTrain's carbon footprint during operation. Others hoped that SkyTrain infrastructure would be resilient against seismic activity and natural debris that could potentially obstruct the guideway.

Traffic Impacts

Respondents expressed concern about increased vehicle traffic and the impact on local roads as a result of the SkyTrain development, particularly during daytime construction. Many suggested the widening of Fraser Highway to address current congestion and accommodate future increases in road users.

Parking Demand

Parking emerged as a key consideration. Respondents highlighted the importance of sufficient, accessible, and affordable parking near or around each station. Many expressed the need for park-and-ride facilities, and reserved spaces for car share services and electric vehicles.

Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

Respondents prioritized the need to integrate pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and amenities into new development. Many expressed a desire for future stations to be safe and easy to access for cyclists and pedestrians. Some of the specific considerations included:

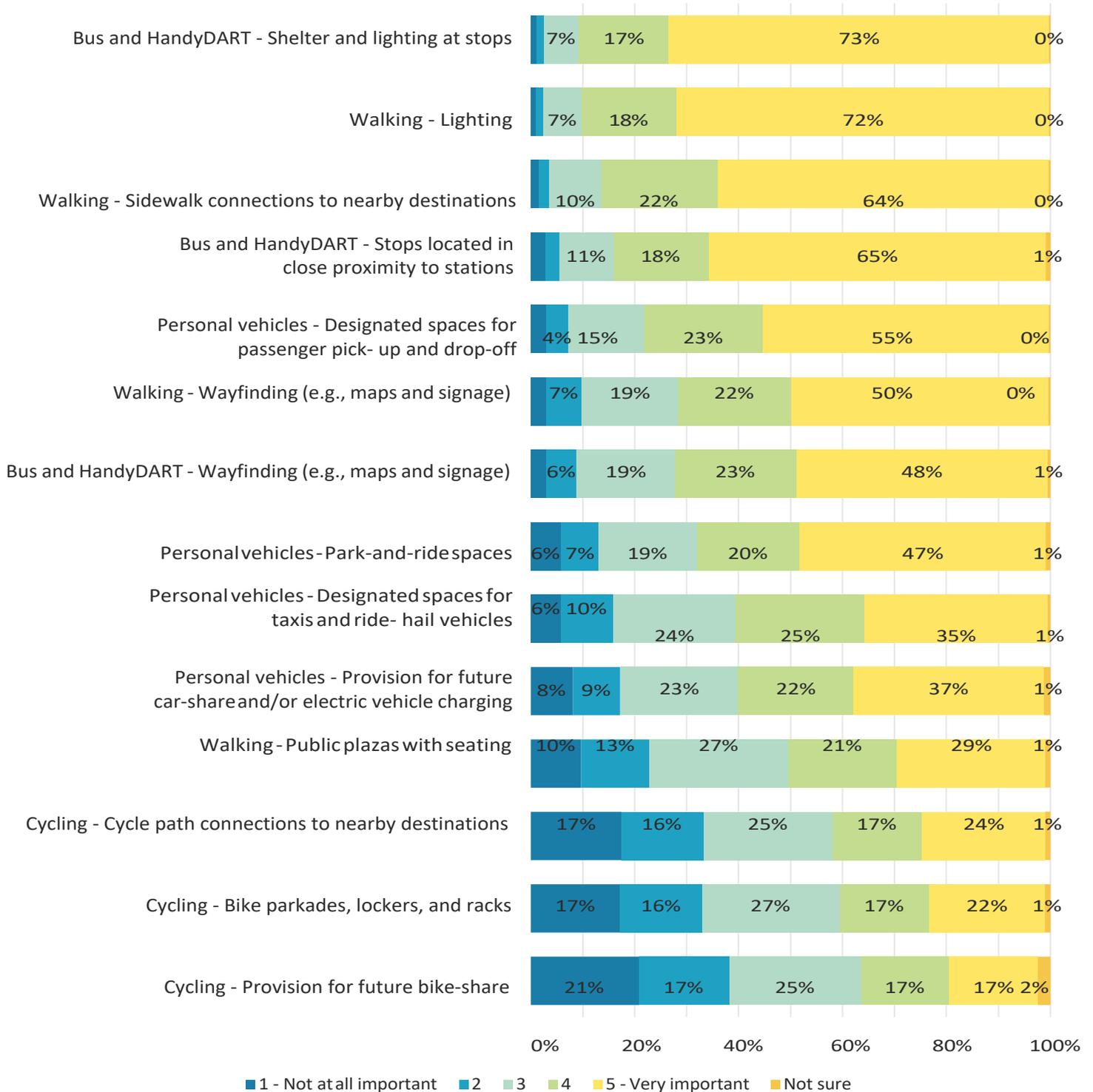
- Dedicated bike lanes and connections next to or underneath the guideway
- Pedestrian pathways and sidewalks around stations, including safety features such as lighting and designated pedestrian crossings at intersections
- Bike lockers, racks, future bikeshare, and bikes on trains
- Green spaces, community gardens, and landscaping along the guideway and around stations

Improved Bus Service and Connections

Easy connections between different transportation modes was an important consideration. Many respondents want improved bus service with increased frequency and better connectivity to areas not directly serviced by rapid transit, but that otherwise have potential demand. Other suggestions included implementing bus priority lanes, and bus exchanges at stations.

DESIGN FEATURES OUTSIDE THE STATIONS

Q: How important are each of the following to you?



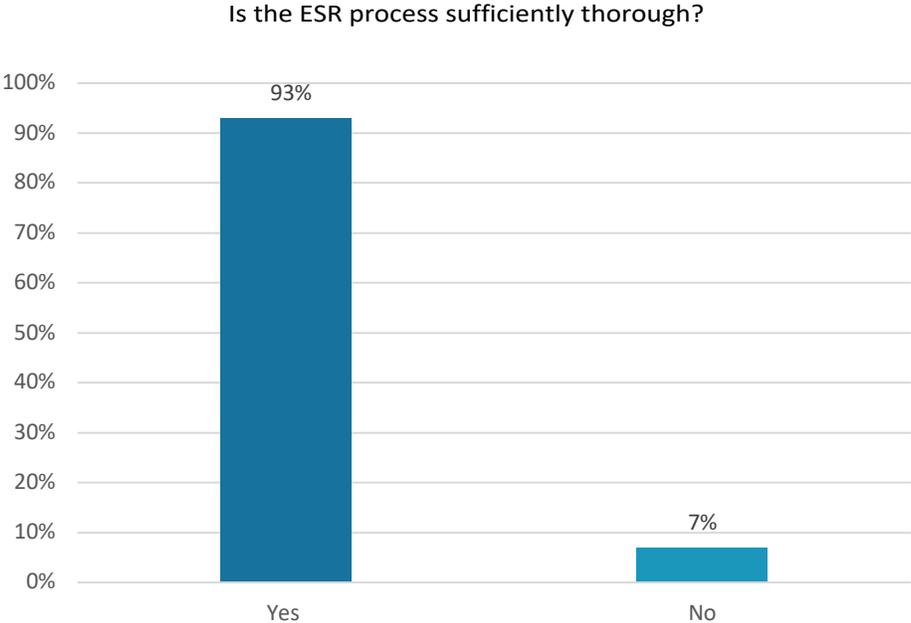
In general, respondents prioritized design features related to travel by bus, HandyDART, and foot. Design features related to cycling ranked the least important to respondents.

The majority of respondents (90%) consider shelter and lighting at bus and HandyDART stops to be key design features outside of future SkyTrain stations. Lighting for walking areas and sidewalk connections to nearby areas were equally important, with respondents (90% and 86%, respectively) responding with a 4 or 5.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING REVIEW PROCESS THOROUGHNESS

Q: Is the proposed Environmental Screening Review (ESR) process sufficiently thorough with reviews as listed:

- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases
- Agricultural Land
- Archaeology and Heritage
- Contaminated Sites
- Emergency Services
- Fisheries and Aquatics
- Land Use
- Noise and Vibration
- Traffic and Transportation
- Vegetation and Wildlife



The vast majority of survey respondents and open house attendees indicated that the ESR process is sufficiently thorough.

Q: Please feel free to elaborate

Comments from Both Yes and No Responses

The following themes emerged from respondents' comments, regardless of whether the respondent thought the ESR process was sufficiently thorough or not.

Additional Reviews

Respondents suggested that TransLink study the impacts of the SkyTrain on a number of additional areas, including surrounding neighbourhoods. Respondents cited the potential for the SkyTrain to impact housing affordability and cleanliness around stations. They also noted that the SkyTrain needs to help promote a stronger sense of place through urban design considerations. And, respondents suggested reviewing:

- Safety and security on and around the SkyTrain
- Visual impacts (i.e., obstructing views, casting shadows)
- Community health
- Light pollution

Potential Project Delays

Respondents were concerned that the ESR process might delay the project. Similar to comments expressed in the first phase of engagement, many respondents want the project built as quickly as possible.

Indigenous Consultation

Respondents were keen to know if Indigenous communities are being consulted on the ESR process.

Green Timbers Urban Forest

Respondents were concerned about construction and operational impacts on Green Timbers Urban Forest. Concerns included the number of trees that will be lost to development as well as the impacts of noise, light, and vibration on wildlife habitat.

Impacts on Decision-making

Respondents suggested that TransLink needs to ensure that the results of the ESR inform decision-making in a meaningful way, notably on minimizing impacts on all of the proposed topic areas. Some respondents were skeptical as to whether the ESR would have a meaningful impact on decision-making.

Yes, the Proposed ESR Process is Sufficiently Thorough

The following themes emerged from those who thought the ESR process is sufficiently thorough.

Environmental Benefits of SkyTrain

Respondents recognized that when the SkyTrain is built it will have many environmental benefits that should be considered as part of the ESR. For example, respondents cited several benefits of SkyTrain, which allows more people to choose transit over personal vehicle use, including:

- Lower emissions
- Improved air quality
- Reduced congestion
- Reduced need to widen roadways

Emphasizing Proposed Reviews

Respondents made specific mention of some of the proposed reviews that they are particularly interested in and consider notable to this project, including noise and vibration, and vegetation and wildlife.

No, the Proposed ESR Process is Not Sufficiently Thorough

The following themes emerged from respondents who thought the ESR process is not sufficiently thorough.

Insufficient Information or Lack of Expertise

Some respondents expressed a need for more information about the ESR (i.e., how it will be used) before they could provide informed feedback.

Other respondents cited their lack of expertise to provide informed feedback on the ESR process.

RAPID TRANSIT ON 104 AVENUE & KING GEORGE BOULEVARD

Q: What are your hopes and/or concerns about implementing BRT on 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard?

Impacts on Road Users

A large percentage of respondents expressed concern about increased congestion as a result of BRT implementation and operation. The majority of these comments highlighted the large volume of traffic that currently exists along both corridors and the fact that limited lane space would be re-allocated to a dedicated BRT lane. Concerns included:

- Construction-related delays
- Increased congestion for private vehicles
- Policing of the dedicated lane to ensure bus reliability
- Accidents between buses and personal vehicles
- Road users using the dedicated lane

Some respondents asked if a dedicated lane would be permanent or if it would only serve buses during peak hours, and some respondents suggested turning the dedicated lane into an HOV lane instead. Some respondents suggested widening the corridors to accommodate dedicated lanes and others suggested improving general traffic flow through better traffic light sequencing.

Safety and Security

Safety and security were concerns for many respondents, including a perception that the proposed SkyTrain and BRT lines would result in increased crime in Surrey and Langley. There was also concern that assaults and harassment on transit and around BRT stations at night would increase. Some respondents expressed a desire for greater policing around stations. Many respondents expressed the need for more adequate lighting to dissuade criminal activity.

Respondents also expressed concern about pedestrian safety, notably exiting and entering stations due to their proximity to vehicle traffic.

Preference for SkyTrain or Other Technology

Respondents expressed a preference for SkyTrain or other elevated transit technology as opposed to BRT. Specific concerns about BRT as an inferior technology (compared to SkyTrain) included:

- Potential accidents between buses and private vehicles
- Slower, less reliable service
- Increased congestion
- Inability to meet future ridership demands
- Other corridors were considered less important than Fraser Highway

Maintaining the Current Transit System

Some respondents thought that current bus service (96 B-Line/RapidBus) along the corridors was sufficient in terms of capacity and frequency and that BRT was not warranted. There was a general lack of understanding about the difference between the 96 B-Line/RapidBus and the proposed BRT system.

Frequency and Capacity

Respondents highlighted the need for a high-frequency, high-capacity transit system to meet the needs of current and future users. However, there was a discrepancy between how and where respondents wanted that transit service delivered. Some of the specific themes relating to transit connections included:

- An improved and better-connected public transit network in Surrey and Langley, especially for those who would prefer to drive less and take transit more often within their community
- Improved travel to and from Vancouver
- Improved rapid transit connections to municipalities further east (i.e., to Mission, Abbotsford, and Chilliwack)
- Improved rapid transit connections to municipalities further south (i.e., to South Surrey and White Rock).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add about the Surrey Langley SkyTrain project or rapid transit on 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard?

When asked what else TransLink should consider in its planning work, respondents highlighted:

Urgency to Build Transit Infrastructure

The majority of respondents who answered this question were frustrated with how long it is taking to deliver rapid transit south of the Fraser and expressed the need to expedite the project timeline to begin construction as soon as possible. Some were concerned that a prolonged planning process would result in increased costs for the project.

General Support for Surrey Langley SkyTrain

There is general support for the Surrey Langley SkyTrain with many respondents expressing a need to prioritize this project over other rapid transit initiatives, including on 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard.

Build in One Stage

Respondents commented on the need to build the Surrey Langley SkyTrain in one stage to ensure that it reaches the City of Langley. Some suggested either building the entire guideway in one stage and adding stations over time or waiting until all of the funding is secure to begin construction on the full line.

Improved Bus Connections and Service

Respondents expressed a desire for seamless integration between future SkyTrain stations and existing public transit. Respondents

suggested new bus routes that would connect neighboring communities north and east of the proposed guideway, and some specifically requested a direct connection to the Carvolth Exchange. Respondents also indicated concern with current bus capacity and frequency and the need to enhance bus service to accommodate future demand.

Plan for Future Expansion

Respondents suggested planning for future expansions. They commented on the importance of building the guideway and stations to accommodate future growth and connect with additional transit lines, including future expansions west to Richmond and Vancouver International Airport as well as other municipalities, such as Maple Ridge, Abbotsford, and Chilliwack.

Safety and Security

Respondents were concerned about safety in and around transit stations and expressed fear that the introduction of SkyTrain would lead to higher crime rates in surrounding neighbourhoods. Suggestions to enhance a sense of safety included increasing:

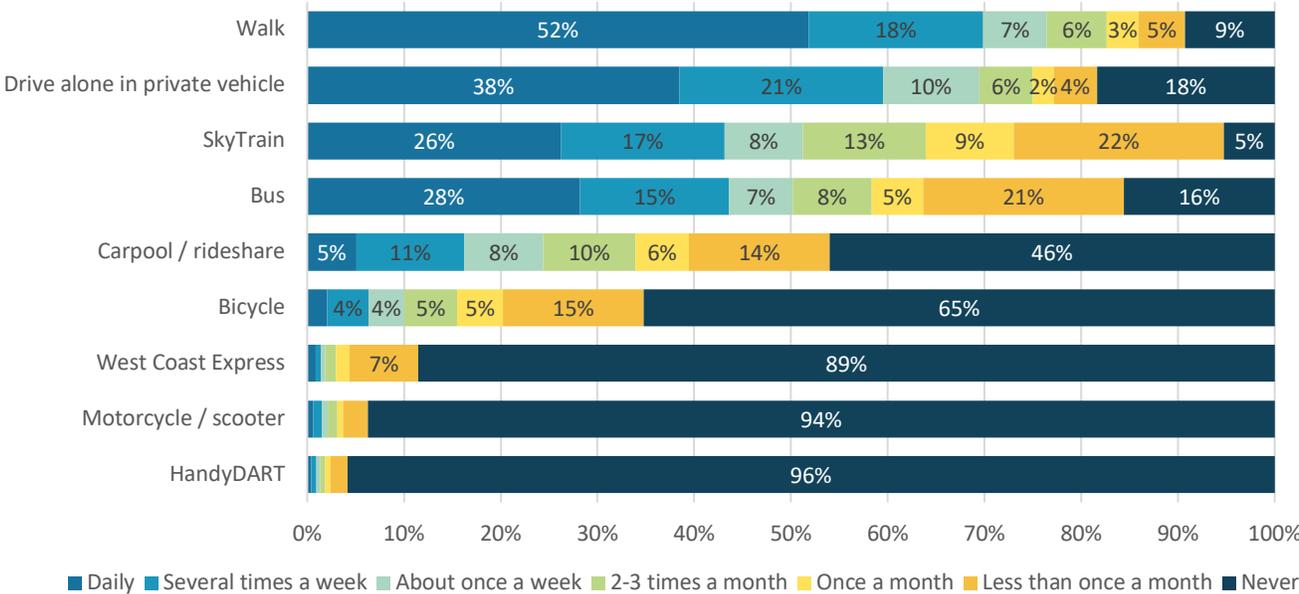
- CCTV coverage across the SkyTrain network
- Presence of Transit Security
- Lighting around SkyTrain stations

WHO WE HEARD FROM

The following is a summary of demographic information collected in the online survey.

Q: How often do you use each of the following modes of transportation?

Frequency of Transportation Mode Usage

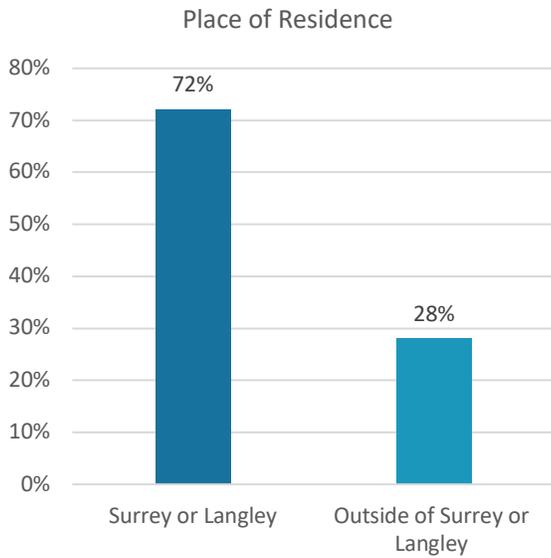


Many respondents ride the bus or take SkyTrain at least once a month.

Over two-thirds of survey respondents listed walking as a mode of transportation that they use either daily or several times a week. Driving alone in private vehicles and riding the SkyTrain were the next most frequently used modes of transportation, with over half of respondents indicating that they drive alone and just under half noting that they take SkyTrain daily or several times a week.

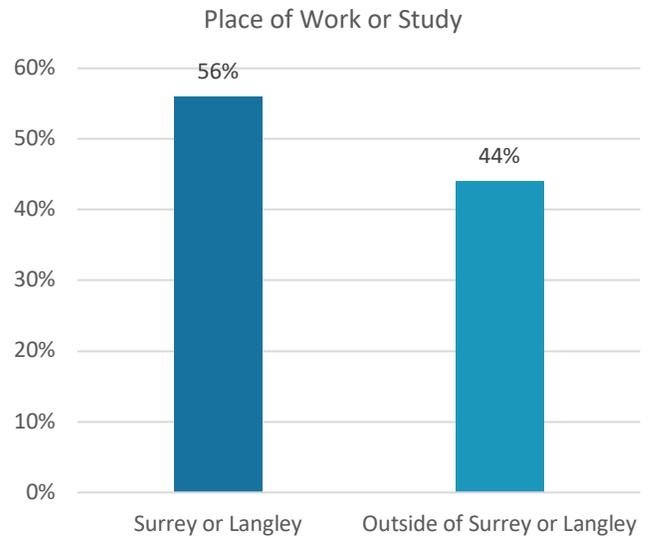
Notably, 18% of respondents never drive alone in private vehicles compared to 9% that never walk and only 5% that never ride the SkyTrain.

Q: What are the first 3 digits of your residential postal code?



Most of the respondents (72%) live in either Surrey or Langley, with the majority (54%) living in Surrey and 18% living in the City of Langley or the Township of Langley.

Q: Do you work or study in Surrey or Langley?



Just over half of the respondents (56%) either work or study in Surrey or Langley.

84% of respondents either live, work, or study in Surrey or Langley.

NEXT STEPS

The results of this public engagement will form part of the update to the Mayors' Council in January 2020.

A third round of public engagement will take place in 2020. Visit surreylangleyskytrain.ca to subscribe to the project's eNewsletter, which includes information about engagement opportunities.