

LA Barometer

Top 5 Takeaways *from* The Mobility Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this Mobility Report – the second in our annual series of LABarometer surveys – is to bring much-needed data and insight to the evolving mobility landscape in our nation’s most populous and congested county.

Each year, the LABarometer Mobility survey will assess residents’ transportation behaviors, experiences, and attitudes, especially as they relate to county-wide efforts to reduce automobile congestion and increase the use of alternative transportation modes. This year’s survey covers a number of topics, from personal car ownership and car use, to public perceptions of public transit and electric scooters, to the relationship between ride-hailing and public transit, and the social conditions and attitudes that facilitate the use of alternatives to the personal car.

In our review of the results, we find that the personal car remains, by far, the most dominant mode of transportation in Los Angeles County. Ninety-percent of residents report having used a personal car at least once in the last year to travel around L.A. – twice the percentage of residents who used any other mode – and 25% report that they are likely to buy or lease a new or used car this year.

The most common substitute for the personal car in L.A. is public transit, yet public transit still lags far behind the personal car in how widely and frequently it is used. Competition from ride-hailing does not appear to be the reason, as our survey shows that residents who ride-hail are significantly more likely to use public transit than those who do not. In fact, the most frequent users of ride-hailing – lower-income residents – are also the most frequent users of public transit.

Instead, our results point to infrastructure and public perception as hurdles that dissuade public transit use. Convenience ranks high among residents as a concern with public transit– transit time tops the list of concerns with the bus while lack of nearby stops tops the list of concerns with Metro light rail.

A high percentage of residents also cite the behavior of other riders and a perceived lack of safety among their biggest concerns with public transit. Notably, we find that more travel-related incidents of harassment and assault are happening on our sidewalks than anywhere else, and to women more so than to men. Sixteen percent of women and 5% of men report that they experienced some form of sexual harassment or assault last year while traveling. The majority of these respondents were walking at the time of the incident.

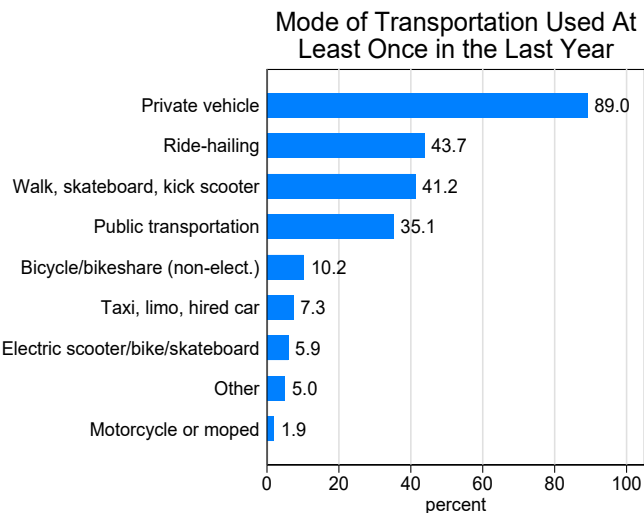
When we examine the individual attitudes and circumstances associated with increased public transit use, we find that proximity to a bus stop and lack of access to parking encourage occasional bus use, while convenience for work encourages high frequency use. In the case of the Metro, perceptions of safety and convenience for leisure activities seem to encourage occasional use, while convenience for work is, once again, central to high frequency use.

On the next page, you will find the top five takeaways from our Mobility survey. For the full set of our results, please find our final report online at https://cesr.usc.edu/labarometer/reports_releases.

TOP 5 TAKEAWAYS

1. The personal car is, by far, the most dominant mode of transportation in L.A. County.

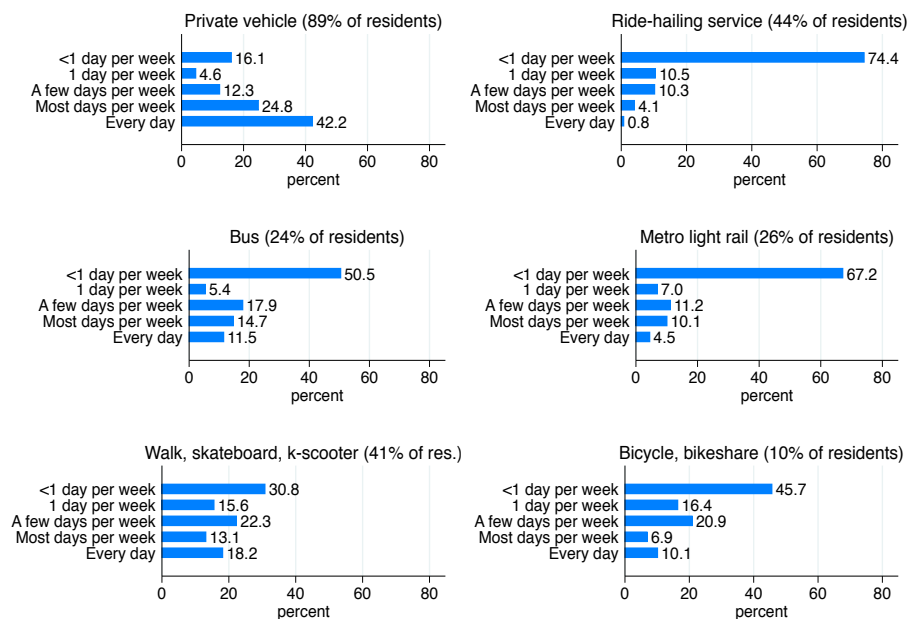
According to our results, the personal vehicle is the most widely-used mode of transportation in Los Angeles County. Eighty-nine percent of residents report that they used a personal vehicle at least once in the last year to go to places in or around L.A. – twice the percentage of residents who used any other mode of transportation. The most common alternatives to the personal vehicle are ride-hailing, walking, and public transportation



When we examine the percentage of residents who report relying on only *one* mode of transportation to travel around L.A. last year, we find that 33% of residents relied solely on a personal vehicle, compared 2% who relied solely on public transportation. A closer look at the frequency with which

residents report using different modes of transportation in a typical month reveals that the personal vehicle is also the most frequently-used in L.A. Two-thirds of car users report using a car most days a week or every day in a typical month.

Frequency of Use (among users)



Ride-hailing, in contrast, is the second most widely-used transit mode in L.A. but one of the *least frequently* used modes. Seventy-four percent of those who use ride-hailing services use them less than one day per week.

We also find that the Metro light-rail/subway is used with a substantially lower frequency than the bus. The vast majority of Metro users are occasional users. For more information about this and related findings, see pages 5-10 of our full report.

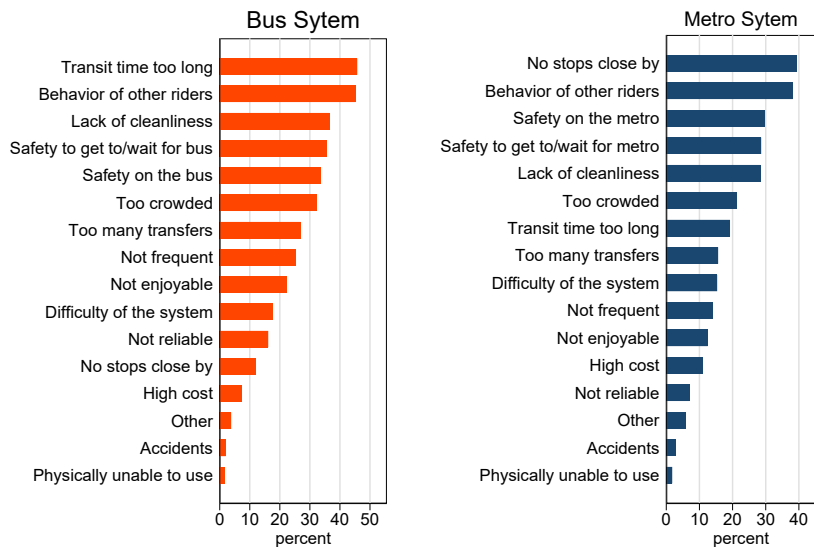
2a. Convenience and safety top the list of concerns residents have with using the bus and Metro light rail.

According to our results, one of the most commonly reported concerns both public transit users and non-users have with using the bus and the Metro is the behavior of other riders. Other frequently-cited concerns relate to cleanliness and convenience, though convenience concerns differ for bus and Metro systems.

Transit time tops the list of concerns residents have with the bus while lack of nearby Metro stops tops the list of concerns with the Metro.

Safety also ranks relatively high as both a bus and Metro concern, though safety concerns vary in the frequency with which they are cited by women versus men. Women are significantly more likely than men to select safety as a top 5 concern with both the bus and the Metro.

Concerns and Issues with Using the Bus/Metro System



2b. Proximity and safety get people on public transit; convenience for work gets people on public transit every day.

Do concerns about safety and convenience discourage public transit use in L.A.? When we examine the individual attitudes and circumstances associated with increased public transit use, we find that proximity to a bus stop and lack of access to parking encourage occasional bus use, while convenience for work or school encourages high frequency use.

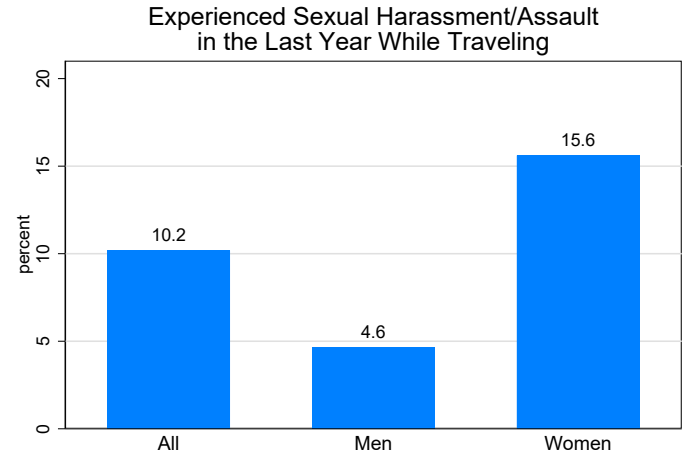
In the case of the Metro, perceptions of safety, cost, and convenience for personal or leisure activities seem to encourage occasional use. However, convenience for work or school is, again, central to high frequency Metro use.

Residents who do not own or lease a personal vehicle are also substantially more likely to use the bus and Metro, at any frequency, than residents who do own or lease a personal vehicle.

For more information about this and related findings, see pages 14-20 of our full report.

3. More travel-related experiences of sexual harassment/assault are happening on our sidewalks than anywhere else, and to women more so than to men.

According to our survey, 10% of residents experienced sexual harassment or assault while traveling in L.A. County last year. Rates of sexual harassment and assault vary substantially by gender. Sixteen percent of women report at least one experience of sexual harassment or assault, while 5% of men report at least one such experience.

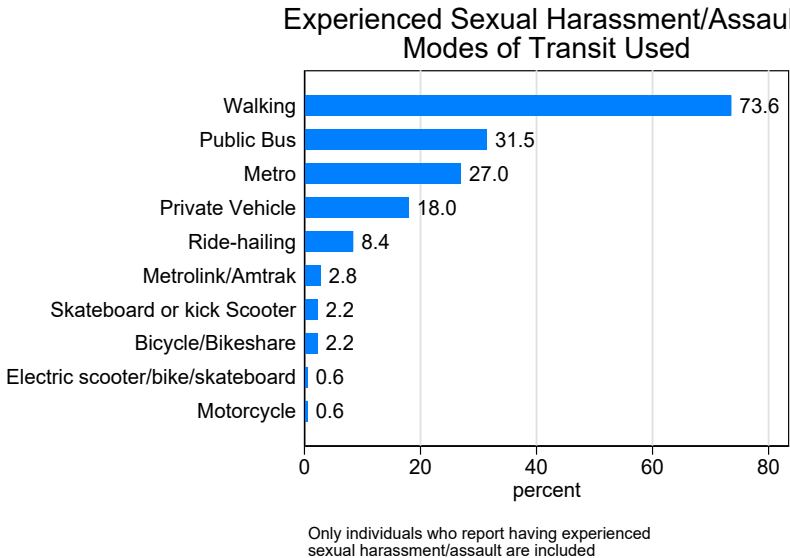


We asked respondents who experienced sexual harassment or assault while traveling to report the mode(s) of transportation they were using during the incident(s). Seventy-four percent of these respondents report that they experienced sexual harassment or assault while walking.

When we look only at residents who report having used a particular mode of transportation in the last year, we find that, among residents who walk with any frequency, 19% of women experienced sexual harassment or assault while walking, compared to 4% of men. Among bus users, 14% of women experienced sexual harassment or assault while using the bus, compared to 5% of men. Among Metro users, 12% of women experienced sexual harassment or assault while using the Metro, compared to 3% of men.

Altogether, these findings suggest that public sidewalks offer women less protection from harassment and crime than other transportation modes, which raises some important questions regarding the degree to which personal safety concerns may limit walkability for women, even in neighborhoods where improvements are being made to the density or accessibility of services and amenities.

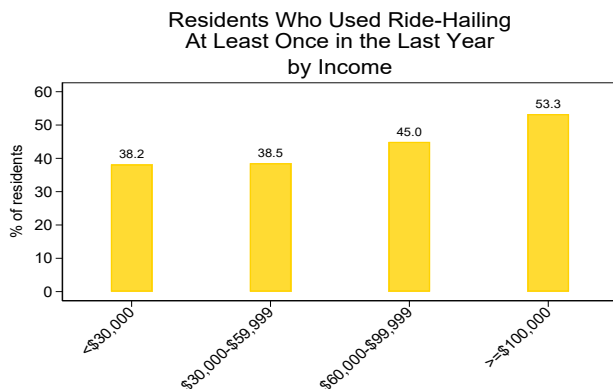
For more information about this and related findings, see pages 26-29 of our full report.



4. Ride-hailing complements public transit, and is used with the highest frequency by lower-income residents.

According to our results, residents who report that they used ride-hailing services at least once in the last year are 16.5 percentage points more likely have used public transit compared to those who did not use ride-hailing services.

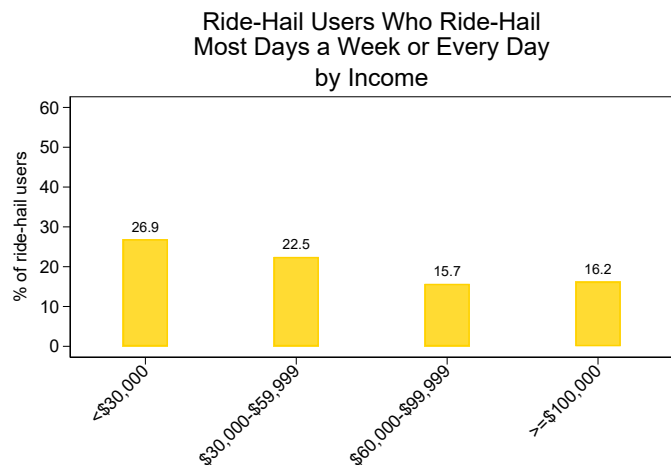
We also find that, among residents who use the bus or the Metro, those who use ride-hailing services with a high frequency (most days or every day) are more likely to use the bus or Metro with a high frequency. Altogether, these findings suggest that ride-hailing services do not compete with but rather complement public transit ridership in L.A. County.



Regarding the individual circumstances that facilitate ride-hailing use, we find that higher-income residents are more likely to use ride-hailing services than lower-income residents.

Among ride-hail users, however, we find that lower-income residents are, in fact, more likely than higher-income residents to report using ride-hailing services with a *moderate or high frequency*.

In other words, our data suggest that higher-income individuals comprise a higher percentage of occasional ride-hailing users while lower-income residents comprise a higher percentage of frequent ride-hailing users. Lower-income residents are more likely than higher-income residents to use ride-hailing, like public transit, as a substitute for the personal car. For more information about this and related findings, see pages 20-22 of our full report.

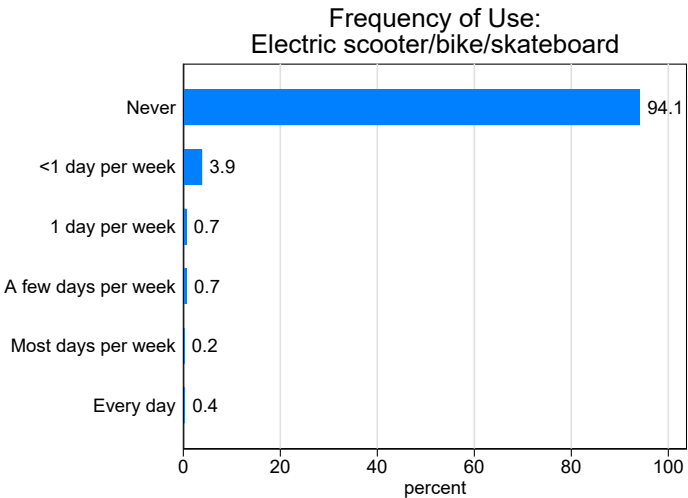


5. E-scooters are not yet commonly used or preferred by most residents.

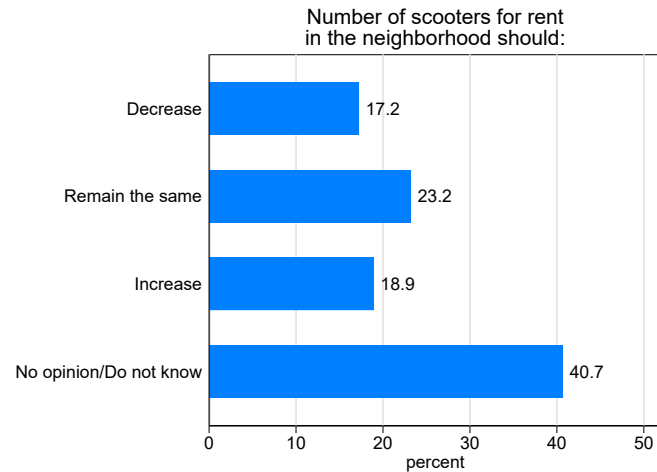
When asked to report whether or not they used an e-scooter, e-bike, or e-skateboard in the last year to go to places in or around L.A. County, 94% of residents report that they did not use one at all. Of the 6% who did use one at least once, two-thirds report using an e-scooter/e-bike/e-skateboard infrequently – less than one day per week.

Young, single, college-educated men who live in the city are the most common e-scooter/e-bike/e-skateboard users. For comparison, we find that non-electric bicycles/bikeshares are a little more widely used. Men under 60 are the most common users and manual bike/bikeshare use does not vary by education, marital status, or urbanicity.

The relatively low frequency with which e-scooters, e-bikes, and e-skateboards are used could be attributable to a lack of availability. When asked how easy or difficult it is to find scooters for rent in their neighborhood, 53% percent of residents report that it is difficult to find scooters for rent in their neighborhood; 18% do not know if it is difficult or easy, likely because they have not looked.



To better understand public sentiment around scooters, we asked residents if they think the number of scooters available for rent in their neighborhood should increase, decrease, or remain the same.



The highest percentage of respondents (40%) selected “No opinion/Don’t know,” a signal that many in L.A. County are indifferent to scooters. Seventeen percent of residents would like to see the number of scooters decrease while 19% would like to see the number of scooters increase.

According to our analyses, residents who live in neighborhoods where scooters are easier to find are more likely to say they’d like to see the number of scooters in their neighborhood decrease rather than increase. This pattern, however, is driven primarily by the majority of

residents who have not used a scooter. Residents who live in neighborhoods where scooters are easier to find and who report having used a scooter at least once in the last year are more likely to say they’d like to see the number of scooters in their neighborhood increase.

For more information about this and related findings, see pages 22-26 of our full report.

ABOUT US

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LABarometer is a quarterly, internet-based survey of approximately 1,800 randomly selected Los Angeles County residents, designed and administered by the *Center for Economic and Social Research* at the University of Southern California. The survey monitors social conditions in Los Angeles, with a focus on four key issues: livability, mobility, sustainability & resiliency, and affordability & prosperity. By following the same residents over time, LABarometer aims to capture trends and shifts in residents' attitudes and circumstances, allowing decisionmakers in the public and private sectors to better understand the evolving lives and needs of L.A. residents. LABarometer is made possible by the financial support of Union Bank.

About the Mobility Survey

The LABarometer Mobility survey assesses residents' transportation patterns, experiences, and preferences, especially as they relate to county-wide efforts to reduce automobile congestion and increase the use of alternative transportation modes. Wave 1 of the survey covers the following topics: transportation mode use (frequency, purpose), personal car ownership, public perceptions of public transit and ride-hailing, access to public transit, public sentiment around electric scooters, traffic safety, travel-related experiences of harassment and assault, and activities missed due to transportation issues.

Data and Methods

A total of 1,394 Los Angeles County residents participated in the Mobility Survey from December 11, 2019, through February 7, 2020. Participants were recruited from LABarometer's survey panel of 1,821 adults living in randomly selected households throughout Los Angeles County. The participation rate for the survey was 77%. The overall margin of sampling error[†] is 2.6 percentage points.

The survey was conducted in respondents' choice of English or Spanish. To participate in a survey, respondents could use any computer, cell phone, or tablet with Internet access. Internet-connected tablets were provided to respondents without internet access.

[†]Sampling error is calculated at the 95% confidence level, using a sample proportion of 0.5 to generate an upper bound of uncertainty. Please note that factors other than sampling error, including question wording, question order, sample type, survey method, and population coverage, may affect the results of any survey.

For More Information

For a complete description of our data, methods, and findings, please find our full Mobility Report online at https://cesr.usc.edu/labarometer/reports_releases. For more information, contact us at labarometer-l@usc.edu.