

# Rainier Beach Transit Justice Survey

## Report Back

Transit Justice: when transportation is accessible, affordable, reliable and safe for ALL riders. The Rainier Beach Transit Justice Project puts youth, underrepresented Rainier Beach residents and workers at the center of identifying priorities for a Rainier Beach Transit Action Plan. During the month of February, the Transit Justice Youth Team surveyed over 200 Rainier Beach residents. Throughout the process they heard from many residents about safety, access and reliability, transportation choices and the importance of affordable transportation and housing. This report presents their findings and the emerging themes from the survey project.

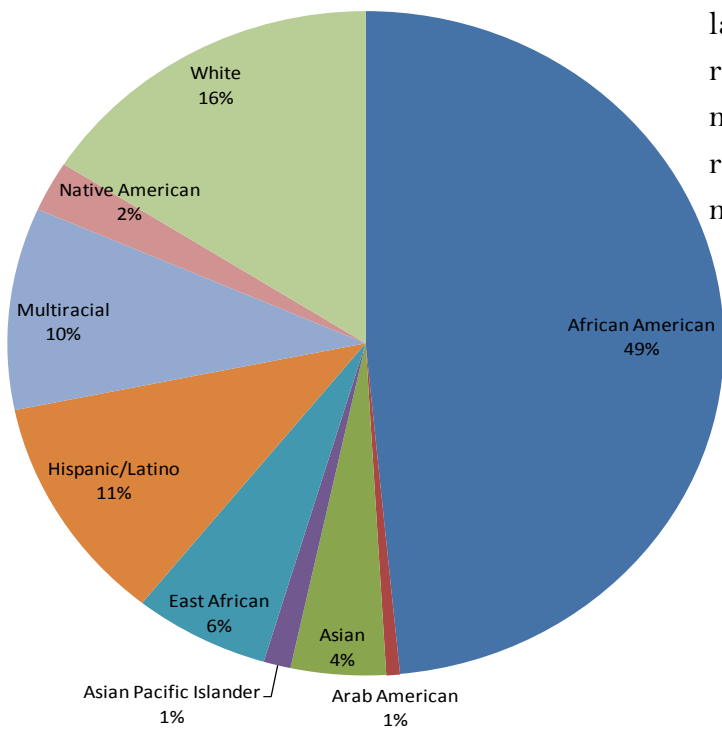


The Transit Justice Youth Team at their Leadership Training graduation!

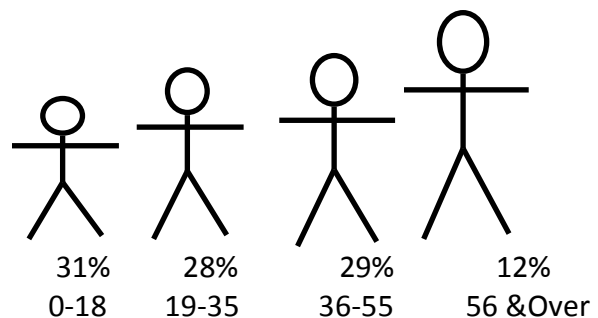
### Who we surveyed

57% of the people we surveyed live in the 98118 zip code, with another 19% living in 98178. This means we talked to many people who live in Rainier Beach and can give us detailed information about using transit here. As the pie chart shows, we spoke with a range of people who reflect the racial diversity of Rainier Valley. Additionally, we sampled a wide range of ages, with the largest group being students under the age of 18. Our results suggest that household size in Rainier Valley may be higher than in Seattle in general, with most respondents reporting that they live in a household with more than two people.

### Survey Participants by Race



### Survey Participants by Age



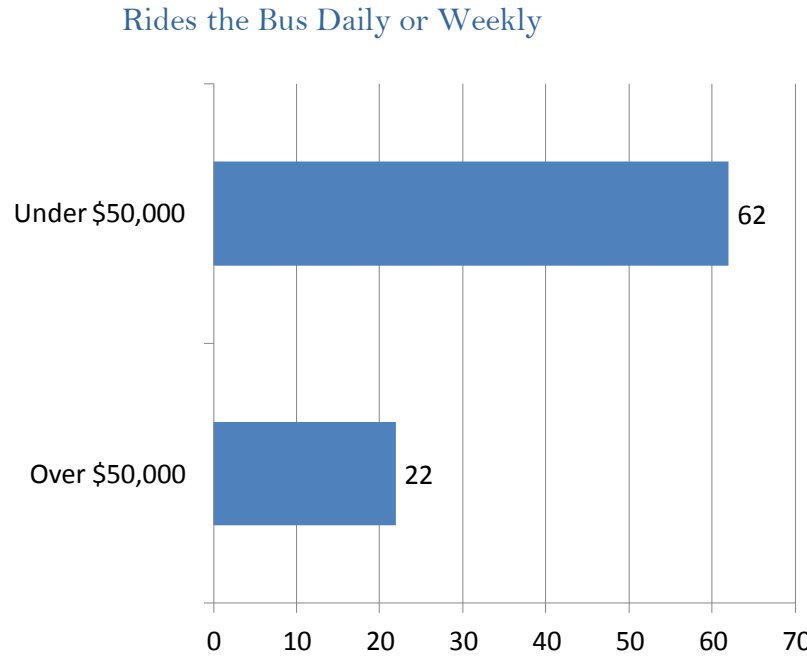
Everyone feels comfortable taking the bus. ~ Making sure that riding is affordable for all.

What does transit justice mean to you? Being able to put my daughter in the bus and making sure she is safe.

# Transportation Habits

## Who takes the bus?

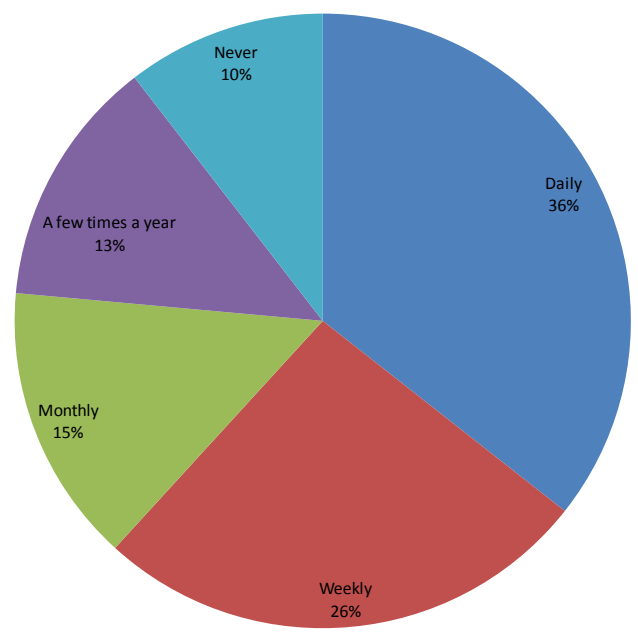
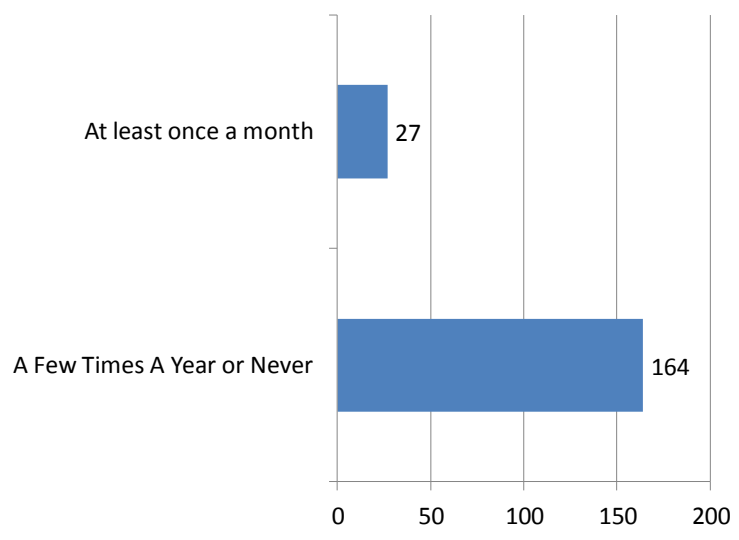
Our survey team found that many transit riders use the bus on a daily basis, and many get to work and to school on the bus. Surprisingly, even Rainier Valley residents who own cars still frequently use the bus system. Of the 50% of survey respondents that reported owning a car, 62% said that they ride the bus on a daily or weekly basis. This means that Rainier Beach is “multi-modal”, people choose to get around using different modes of transportation. It also illustrates that Rainier Valley residents are making environmentally friendly transportation choices.



Lower income respondents were more likely to ride the bus regularly than were higher income respondents, indicating that bus cuts disproportionately affect low-income people. For many people in the Rainier Beach community access to reliable, quality bus service is an important part of their daily routines.

## How often do you ride the bus?

### How often do you bike?



## Who bikes?

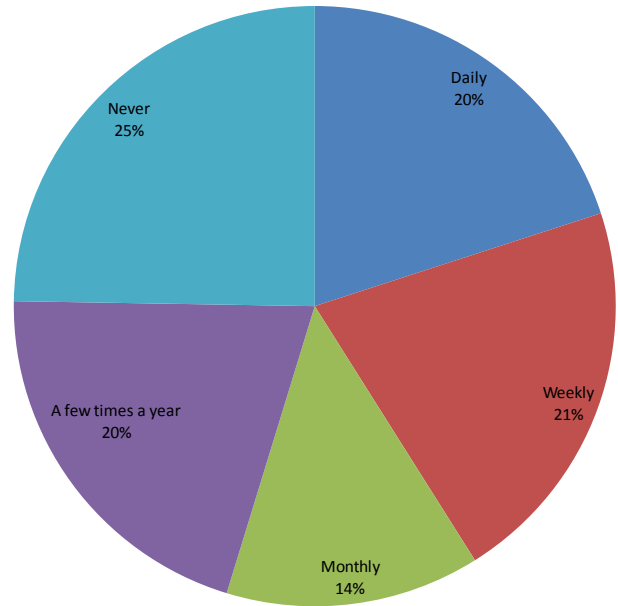
Rainier Beach does not have sufficient bike infrastructure such as signed bicycle routes. However, several high school students did report riding bikes to school. Overall, people reported very little bicycle usage, with most people surveyed responding that they never ride bicycles. This is a concern because bicycling can be a healthy and cost effective form of transportation. More research is needed to determine what people feel are barriers to bicycling in Rainier Beach.

### Who rides light rail?

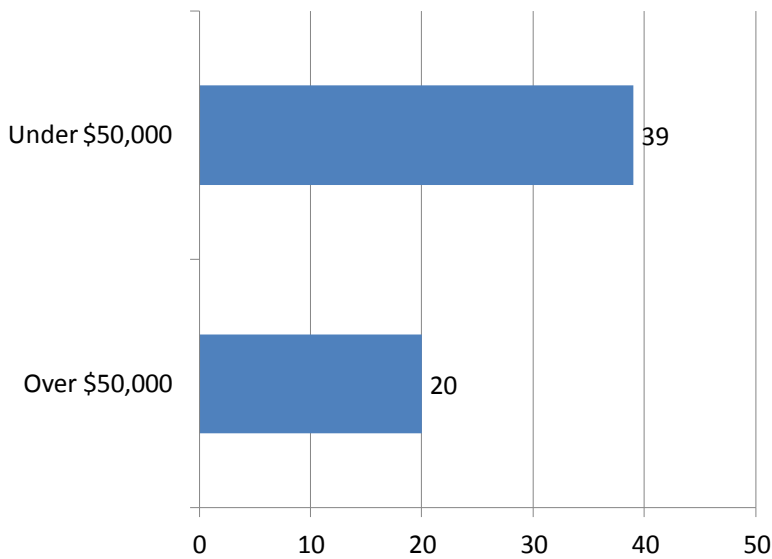
Though 62% of respondents rode the bus at least once a week, only 41% reported using light rail that often. This indicates that the light rail is not an effective mode of transportation for many of the people we surveyed.

People also reported difficulty with transferring between light rail and buses, and that the expense of light rail made it an unlikely choice for them. Long form responses lead us to believe that the transfer difficulty is due in part to residents not owning and not having easy access to Orca cards. In order to understand this trend better, barriers to using light rail for existing Rainier Valley Residents should be studied.

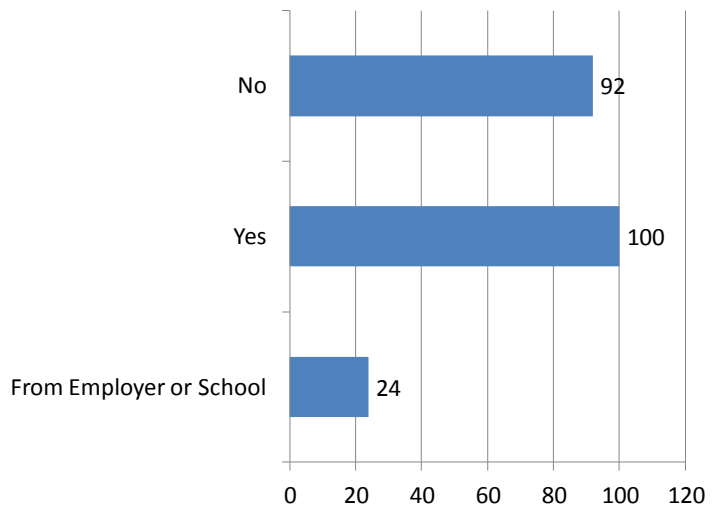
### How often do you ride the light rail?



### Rides the Light Rail Daily or Weekly



### Do you own an Orca card?



### Orca Cards and Transfers

While many people reported owning Orca cards, very few received these cards from their employers or their school. We found that people on the highest and lowest ends of the income spectrum own Orca cards, with lower rates of ownership reported by middle income individuals. Some people reported owning neither an Orca card nor a car, which indicates they are riding transit frequently without the aid of the electronic fare system. In our analysis, people not having access to Orca cards, even a small number, as unacceptable. These riders are forced to either pay twice to ride the light rail or not ride it at all.

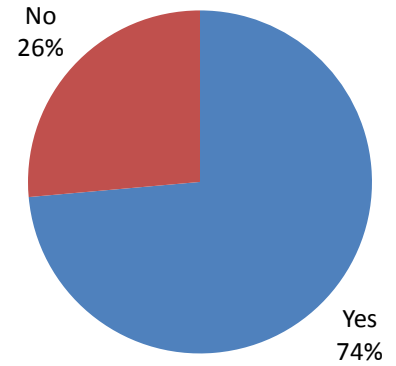
## Safety and Housing

Many in the Rainier Beach community have felt shaken by recent violence at transit stations. About a quarter of our respondents reported feeling unsafe while waiting for buses, with all local bus lines mentioned. Additionally, respondents reported lack of adequate lighting and shelter at bus stops throughout the majority of Rainier Valley bus lines.

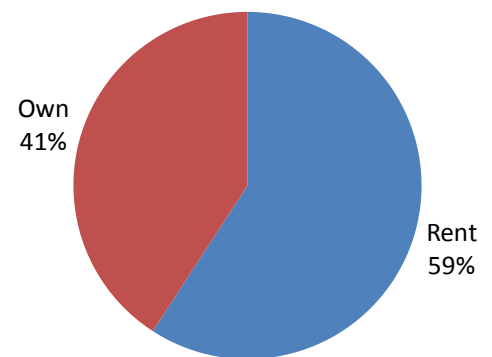
Given that many transit users are low-income and renters, affordable housing is important to transit and neighborhood safety issues. While ensuring that low income families can afford to live in the neighborhood, it is important that we find ways to improve access to high quality multi-modal transportation in Rainier Beach. Many people reported difficulty finding affordable housing in their price range. Furthermore, other respondents were unable find affordable housing at all, indicating that current rents and the number of affordable units are not meeting the needs of Rainier Beach residents.

The Rainier Beach Transit Justice Youth Project is excited to announce that this survey is only the beginning of their advocacy work. In the spring of 2012, the youth and adult mentors will re-organize, preparing to focus their efforts on their newly identified Rainier Beach Transit Action Plan informed by the findings of this survey and community outreach work.

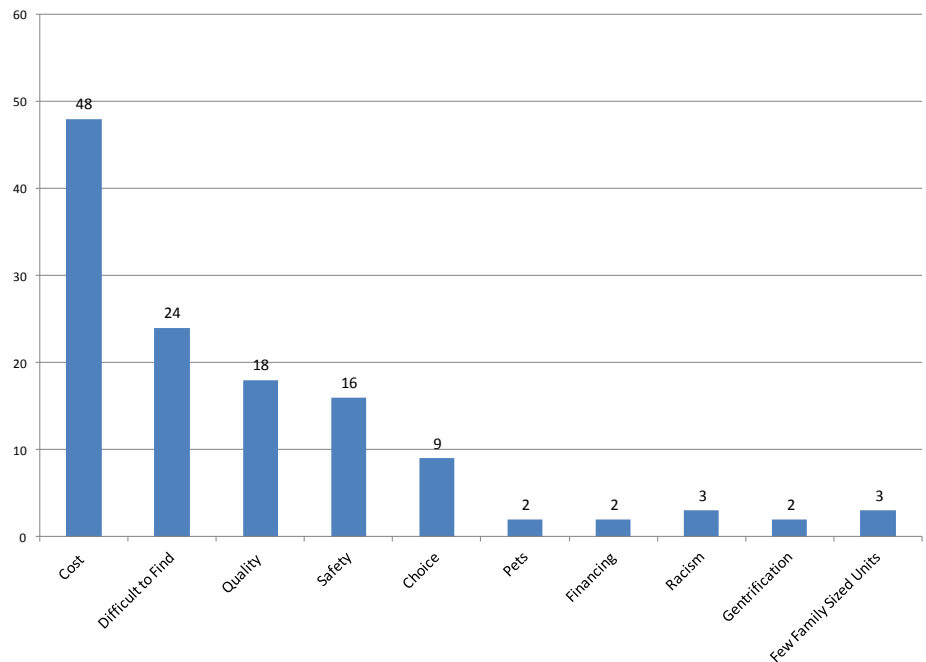
Do you feel safe waiting for the bus?



Rent vs. Own



### Challenges to Finding Affordable Housing



The Rainier Beach Transit Justice Project is a partnership between Rainier Beach Community Empowerment Coalition and Puget Sound Sage. Made possible through the generous support of the Seattle Foundation's Neighbor to Neighbor Program and the Satterberg Foundation.