

December 2024

Outlining the Transportation Priorities & Recommendations of Communities in Camden County

Authors:

Carla Villacis, M.A.

Rutgers University - Camden

Kristin Curtis, M.A.

Rutgers University - Camden

Shaghayegh Poursabbagh, M.A.

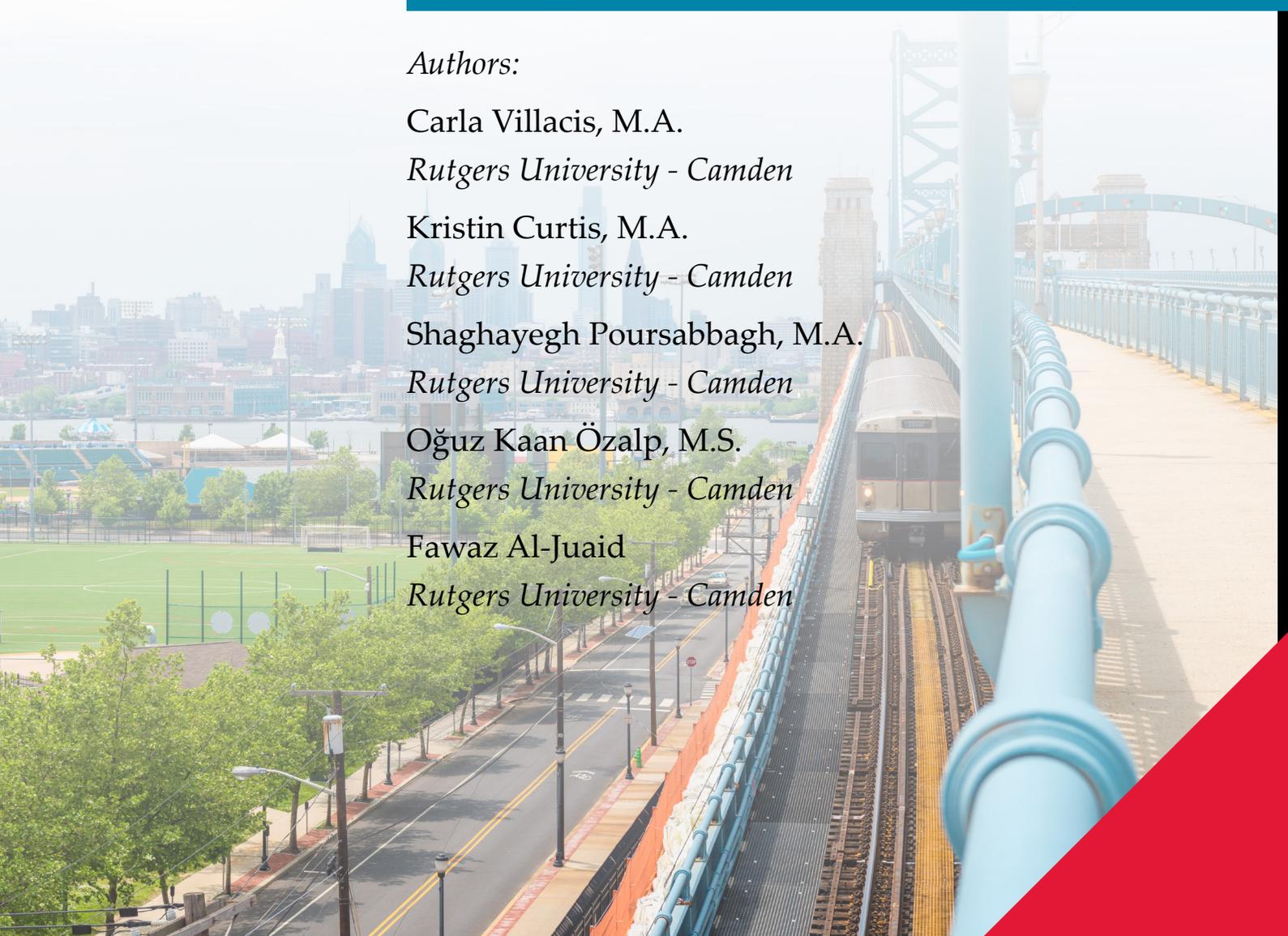
Rutgers University - Camden

Oğuz Kaan Özalp, M.S.

Rutgers University - Camden

Fawaz Al-Juaid

Rutgers University - Camden



Outlining the Transportation Priorities and Recommendations of Communities in Camden County

December 2024

Suggested Citation:

Villacis, C., Curtis, K., Poursabbagh, S., Kaan Özalp, O., and Al-Juaid, F. **Outlining the Transportation Priorities and Recommendations of Communities in Camden County**. 2024. New Jersey State Policy Lab. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University.

Retrieved from <https://policylab.rutgers.edu/projects/>

Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs:

The Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs (WRI) at Rutgers-Camden has been a long-standing and trusted regional community partner for over 20 years. WRI honors former Senator Rand's dedication to Southern New Jersey and exists to produce and highlight community-focused research and evaluation leading to sound public policy and practice. With that as a foundation, WRI convenes and engages stakeholders in making connections across research, policy, and practice in support of Camden City and Southern New Jersey residents. Using social science research methods, WRI specializes in transforming data into actionable information across a variety of areas, including workforce development, education, transportation, and public/population health. WRI reinforces and amplifies Rutgers' research, teaching, and service goals by connecting the multidisciplinary expertise of faculty to regional problems, developing research and professional skills in students, and linking the resources of higher education to communities in Southern New Jersey.

We would like to thank the **New Jersey State Policy Lab** for funding this work. The New Jersey State Policy Lab is an independent research center operated by the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy and the School of Public Affairs and Administration at Rutgers University. Elizabeth Cooner, Ed.D. serves as Executive Director of the New Jersey State Policy Lab, and Megan McCue serves as Public Relations Specialist. While the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education administers the partnership that funds the New Jersey State Policy Lab, the contents of this report do not necessarily represent the policy of the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and you should not assume endorsement by the State of New Jersey, elected leadership, or other employees of the State of New Jersey. Any omissions or errors are the sole responsibility of the author(s).

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Executive Summary	5
Public Transportation Overview for Camden County	11
Research Methods	15
Research Design: Study Protocols for Survey and Focus Groups	15
Data Collection and Analysis: Surveys and Focus Groups	16
Participant Demographics	19
Findings	25
Finding A: Most Commonly Used Modes of Transportation	25
Finding B: Reliability of Public Transportation	26
Finding C: Coverage and Accessibility of Transportation	30
Finding D: Safety and Condition of Vehicles, Facilities, and Pathways on Transit Methods	38
Finding E: Assistance, Access to Information, and Communications	43
Finding F: Economic Considerations	46
Finding G: Environmental Impact	48
Finding H: Specific Populations	51
Finding I: Public Opinion About Transportation Projects in Camden County	54
Conclusion	59
Appendices	63
Appendix A: Description of Camden County	63
Appendix B: Analysis Conducted	64
Appendix C: Additional Transportation Initiatives in Camden County	67
Appendix D: Public Transportation Options Available in Camden County	70
Appendix E: Survey for Transportation Priorities in Camden County	74
Appendix F: Focus Group Questions for Transportation Priorities in Camden County	89

Acknowledgements

WRI would like to thank NJ Transit and PATCO for their partnership in promoting this research opportunity among their transit users. WRI would also like to recognize the numerous community partners who allowed us to come to their space and speak with community members or who supported the dissemination of the survey and information about the focus groups: Food Bank of South Jersey; Camden Coalition; Cathedral Kitchen; Evolution Family Success Center; Promise Neighborhood; Orchards Family Success Center; Harambe Social Services; El Mercadito; Berlin Farmers' Market; Free Public Library of Audubon; Marie Fleche Memorial Library; Berlin Township Library; Clementon Memorial Library; Lindenwold Library; Collingswood Free Public Library; Pennsauken Free Public Library; Stratford Public Library; Cherry Hill Public Library; Haddon Heights Public Library; Haddonfield Public Library; Waterford Township Public Library; Westville Public Library; Runnemede Public Library; Camden County Library System (Anthony P. Infanti Bellmawr Library Branch, Nilsa I. Cruz-Perez Downtown Branch, Blackwood Rotary Library, William G. Rohrer Memorial Library, M. Allan Vogelsson Regional Branch, South County Regional Branch). Most importantly, WRI would like to thank each of the community members across Camden County who took the time to participate in this research.

Executive Summary

The **Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs at Rutgers-Camden (WRI)** exists to conduct community-focused research that connects to the public policy and practice issues of the day in Southern New Jersey. Public transportation access continues to be a challenge and an issue of concern for residents across the Southern New Jersey region, including Camden County. WRI's previous report, **Transportation Accessibility in Southern New Jersey: Barriers, Effects, and Considerations**, documented the challenges and barriers faced by Camden County and other South Jersey residents in accessing transportation as well as emerging trends in addressing those concerns. As a next phase to this research, in September of 2023, WRI received a grant from the **New Jersey State Policy Lab** at Rutgers University to identify community priorities and recommendations around transportation gaps in Camden County.¹

Of the eight southernmost New Jersey counties, Camden County fares best in terms of public transit access. Within this context, there remains a significant desire within communities in the county to improve and address gaps. To that end, the purpose of this study is to provide specific community-based information around transportation to help guide informed data-driven decision-making in an area of need. The research uncovered Camden County travelers' improvement priorities, areas they felt were working well, recommendations to address their needs, and existing resources that could be leveraged to improve transportation. The data also provided insight into transportation users' awareness and opinions of some of the ongoing transportation improvement efforts in Camden County. The main focus of this research was public transportation, but perspectives regarding walking and biking accessibility and safety in the neighborhoods are also included.

WRI researchers utilized a mixed-methods approach - a survey and focus groups - to capture both quantitative and qualitative perspectives from a diverse set of residents and commuters. WRI researchers worked to engage a wide array of community members across Camden County's populations most in need of transportation options, such as lower-income individuals and families in transit deserts in the eastern part of Camden County, bus transit users, residents who drive, use shared ride services, or other public transportation options. The qualitative data from the focus groups with community members provide insights that connect to quantitative survey data findings and highlight the residents' priority areas and recommendations. This report also discusses the various active current transportation projects that are underway that aim to improve the public transportation experience and access, such as the renovations and updates to the Walter Rand Transportation Center, the Glassboro-Camden Line, and other projects in Camden County.

¹ Shapiro, S. (2023). The New Jersey State Policy Lab Announces Ten New Research Projects. <https://policylab.rutgers.edu/the-new-jersey-state-policy-lab-announces-ten-new-research-projects/>

The data from the community revealed the following patterns, key priorities and recommendations:

A. Modes of Transportation in Camden County

Travelers in Camden County use a variety of modes of transportation, often combining private, public, and on-demand transit to meet their transportation needs. The reliance on private motor vehicles is higher among participants in the southeastern part of the County compared to those in the northwestern area. Some commuters and residents expressed an interest in using more public transportation if it became more accessible, reliable, and/or affordable, as well as a preference for light rail and trains which were perceived as faster and cleaner.

B. Reliability of Transportation

Reliability was a primary concern for community member participants, encompassing punctuality, schedule adherence, and consistent service. Survey and focus group results highlighted reliability as a crucial factor for selecting transportation modes and meeting key household needs such as employment, medical appointments, and education access. Participants recommend improving public transit by updating travel times to reflect actual delays, increasing bus frequency in high-traffic areas, and ensuring that buses and trains stop at all designated stops. Participants also suggest implementing a system for announcing upcoming stops or having drivers manually announce them if the system fails. Additionally, participants propose having a response plan for sudden staff absences or vehicle issues and increasing the availability of on-call staff and shuttles. Emphasizing customer service training for drivers and boosting accountability through better time management and staff recognition based on passenger feedback are also key recommendations.

C. Coverage and Accessibility of Services

Participants prioritized expanding access to transportation services. Coverage was a key priority that was noted, particularly in underserved areas and for lower-income individuals in Camden County. Participants' recommendations for improving the transportation system include expanding rail and train services and enhancing bus services. Specific suggestions for PATCO involve adding stops in the eastern part of the county, increasing weekend service, and improving cleanliness. For NJ Transit's River Line, recommendations include improved cleanliness, functional air conditioning, new trains, and expanded service. For NJ Transit buses, participants recommend increased frequency and expanded routes in the southeastern part of the county.

D. Conditions and Safety of Vehicles, Facilities, and Pathways

The condition and safety of transportation infrastructure were highlighted as significant priority areas. This includes the state of vehicles, stations, and roads. Participants recommended and emphasized the need for better maintenance of sidewalks, roads, and facilities to ensure the safety and comfort of commuters. Participants recommended increasing the presence of social workers to support individuals facing mental health and substance misuse issues and adding more plainclothes officers on trains, buses, and at transit hubs. There were calls for a ticket system for restroom access to improve station cleanliness and safety. Participants also requested more shelters at bus stops to protect them from the weather and provide seating. Improved infrastructure, such as sidewalks and better parking and drop-off facilities, were also highlighted as essential for safer and more convenient transit experiences.

E. Assistance, Information Access, and Communications

Accessing assistance and reliable information about transportation services was another key priority identified by participants. They noted that current updates on schedules, routes, and changes are often outdated or unclear, and that they would benefit from more timely notifications about delays before entering transit systems. Participants also called for more accessible and responsive customer service, including regional support numbers. Recommendations also include enhancing website explanations of transit systems and payment options. Participants called for improved communication channels, more responsive customer service, and accurate updates regarding service changes such as real-time tracking.

F. Economic Considerations

Participants expressed a desire for changes to the payment structure and acceptance methods in public transportation. Overall, there is significant interest in streamlining payment methods and making fare structures more user-friendly. Specifically, many participants recommended the option to pay via phone or app, rather than relying on exact change, would be beneficial. Further, they indicated that having the ability to add value through the PATCO app would be advantageous. Additionally, there was a strong call for eliminating zone-based pricing, with many preferring a flat rate or day pass system to simplify fares and make commuting more affordable. Some participants also voiced concerns over upcoming fare increases for NJ Transit services and proposed creating a program to assist with transportation costs, highlighting affordable options like the Camden Loop and River Line. Additionally, people reported that reliance on ride-sharing services like Uber has become increasingly burdensome, with costs significantly higher than in previous years. Focus group discussions revealed that inadequate transportation options can

hinder economic growth, given that long commutes can extend workdays by several hours and prevent individuals from pursuing job opportunities in areas lacking transit access. Participants emphasized the need for better connectivity between residential areas and employment sites to support economic development, particularly as new housing and commercial developments emerge in the region.

G. Environmental Impact

There was interest in environmentally friendly transportation measures reflecting a growing concern for sustainable transportation options. This topic came up in about half of the focus groups and identified as a priority in two of them. Survey participants (29.6%) identified making transportation more environmentally friendly as a top improvement they would like to see. In focus groups, participants strongly advocated for the adoption of environmentally friendly transportation options, such as electric buses and more electric vehicle charging stations. Participants felt that these changes could help address global warming and reduce pollution, highlighting the importance of transitioning from gas-powered vehicles to greener alternatives. They also expressed enthusiasm for increased investment in public transportation to reduce road congestion and promote sustainability, noting that cost savings from reduced gas use could benefit customers.

H. Specific Populations

Some recommendations provided insight into challenges experienced by specific populations in Camden County. Older adults recommended separating senior transportation services to prioritize timing for medical appointments. Individuals with mobility limitations emphasized the importance of ramps and lifts at stations, effective shock absorption in buses, and safe bus boarding areas for their transportation needs. Hispanic/Latino/x/e travelers reported a higher need for direct and affordable transit towards northern New Jersey, New York, and Boston, citing their reliance on private companies that target Spanish-speaking travelers and that they perceive as overpriced. Participants also offered multiple perspectives on the intersection of homelessness, mental illness, and transportation. Persons who experience homelessness or mental illness prioritized being treated with dignity and compassion by transportation staff. Other participants recommended increasing the presence of social workers and security to support vulnerable individuals while upholding the experience of all travelers.

I. Public Opinion About Camden County Transportation Projects

There are a variety of transportation projects and initiatives planned for or underway in Camden County, and researchers assessed public awareness and opinion around them. For major initiatives assessed (Camden Loop, Glassboro-Camden Line, and Walter Rand Transportation Center Improvement Project), most participants generally felt they had or would have a positive impact on transportation access, with some voicing improvement and implementation considerations.

In conclusion, this report offers recommendations around enhancing reliability, expanding coverage and access, improving the infrastructure and access to information, and promoting environmentally sustainable practices in Camden County's transportation system. Within Camden County there are suburban, rural, and urban areas, and community members from each corner of the county participated to share their challenges, priorities, and recommendations to help improve transportation access.

Public Transportation Overview for Camden County

Camden County is located across the Delaware River from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, its population is 524,907² – the most populous of the 8 counties in Southern New Jersey. Currently, Camden County has 36 municipalities, townships, and boroughs that span an area of 227 square miles. The largest municipality is the City of Camden, with over 75,000 residents.

Two other townships — Cherry Hill and Gloucester Township — have populations exceeding 50,000 and can be considered Urbanized Areas as defined by the US Census Bureau. Camden County becomes increasingly suburban and rural moving southeast from Camden City, and includes a portion of the Winslow Fish and Wildlife Management Area and the western portion of Wharton State Forest.³

Camden County is a hub for educational and health sciences, a corridor for entertainment and leisure, and a link between Philadelphia and the rest of Southern New Jersey. As seen in Table 1 (pg. 12), Camden County has a slightly higher TM Performance Score than the state average, meaning that Camden County has slightly more transit connectivity, access to jobs via transit, and more frequency of transit service than other counties across the state.

Camden County has the highest TM Performance Score of all eight South Jersey counties. The TCI (Transportation Connectivity Index) for Camden County is slightly lower than the New Jersey State average in the number of bus routes and train stations within walking distance for households within a U.S. Census-designated block group.

The usage of public transit in Camden County is about 6.6%, lower than the average usage of public transit for the State of New Jersey at 10.8%.⁴

² U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05. Retrieved May 16, 2024, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2022.DP05?q=DP05&g=050XX00US34007>.

³ For more information about the demographic characteristics of Camden County, please see Appendix A.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Commuting Characteristics. Table S0801. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov/table?t=Commuting&g=040XX00US34_050XX00US34007&y=2020

Table 1. Transit Access in Camden County and New Jersey

	TM Performance Score ⁵	Transportation Connectivity Index (TCI) ⁶	Jobs ⁷	Trips/Week ⁸
Camden County⁹	5.2	4.6	145,662	930
New Jersey¹⁰	4.6	5.0	182,759	1,170

Camden County has multiple transportation options between highways and road connections, biking lanes, NJ Transit bus and rail lines, River Line, PATCO, and forms of microtransit serving specific areas. The largest transportation hub in the area is the Walter Rand Transportation Center (WRTC). Located in Camden City, WRTC houses numerous bus lines and light rail options that connect Southern New Jersey with other parts of the state and with Philadelphia. The map¹¹ below shows the various options available for transportation in Camden County. There is one main New Jersey Transit train line (highlighted in blue on the map below) that runs through the region from Atlantic City to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and does not run as frequently (i.e., every hour to up to almost every two hours). The following stations are in Camden County: Pennsauken, Cherry Hill, Lindenwold, Atco.¹² In addition, New Jersey Transit’s River Line (highlighted in green on the map below) connects Camden City to Trenton (with seven stops in Camden County; five of those

5 TM Performance Score: AllTransit™ Performance Score (with values from 0 to 10) is a weighted sum of transit connectivity, access to land area and jobs, and frequency of service, where the higher the number the better the transit service. (see page 11 of Methods accessed at <https://alltransit.cnt.org/methods/AllTransit-Methods.pdf> on September 8, 2024)

6 TCI (Transportation Connectivity Index): TCI is based on the number of bus routes and train stations within walking distance for households in a given U.S. Census block group scaled by the Frequency of Service, with values from 0 to 100 and the higher the score the more transit connections. (see pages 3 & 11 Methods accessed at <https://alltransit.cnt.org/methods/AllTransit-Methods.pdf> on September 8, 2024)

7 Jobs (The Number of Jobs Within 30-minute Ride): the optimal number of jobs accessible within a 30 minute transit commute on average for households.(see page 10 of Methods accessed at <https://alltransit.cnt.org/methods/AllTransit-Methods.pdf> on September 8, 2024)

8 Trips/Week (Transit Trips per Week within ½ Mile): the number of transit trips inside (or within a ½ mile) of an average U.S. Census block group. (see page 3 of Methods accessed at <https://alltransit.cnt.org/methods/AllTransit-Methods.pdf> on September 8, 2024)

9 Camden County Ranking. Accessed on September 8, 2024 from <https://alltransit.cnt.org/rankings/>

10 New Jersey State Ranking. Accessed on September 8, 2024 <https://alltransit.cnt.org/rankings/>

11 The data for this map was sourced from the Camden County and New Jersey State Open Data portal and processed using Quantum Geographic Information System (QGIS).

Camden County Open Data Portal (2023), Municipality Data, https://camdencountynj-ccdpcw.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/9bea5658edfa490c9d00f98fd9efb6d6_0/explore

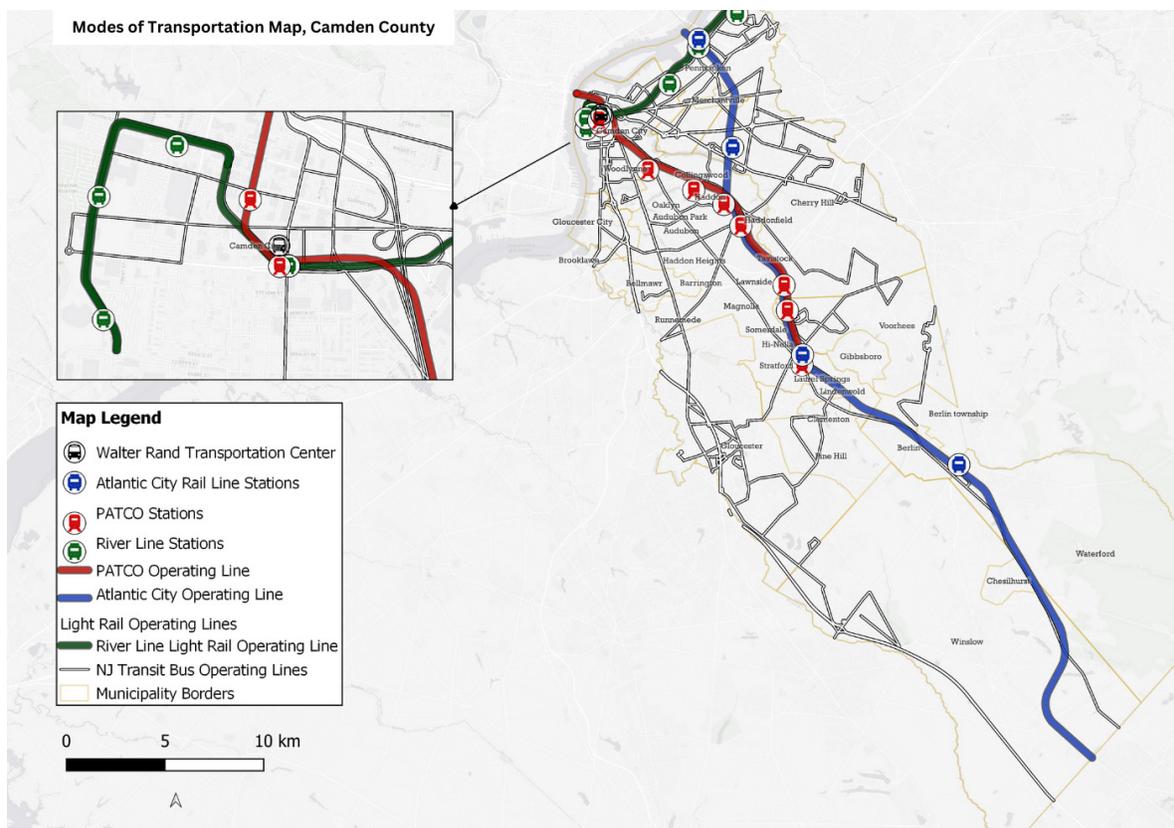
Camden County Open Data Portal (2023), Boundary Data, <https://camdencountynj-ccdpcw.opendata.arcgis.com/search?tags=boundaries>

NJGIN New Jersey Geographic Information Network) (Open Data, (2024), Transportation Data, <https://njgis-newjersey.opendata.arcgis.com/search?groupIds=60a4f9a1342f4f7a94ac986e8dd14892>

12 Accessed from <https://content.njtransit.com/sites/default/files/May%202024%20Schedules/AC-WKDY-051924.pdf>

stops are in Camden City).¹³ The Delaware River Port Authority's PATCO Speedline¹⁴ (noted in red on the map below) connects various points in Camden County from Lindenwold to Camden City with Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There are also several NJ Transit bus routes (noted by the yellow lines).¹⁵

Figure 1: Modes of Public Transportation Map, Camden County, New Jersey



As is evident, there are various public transportation options in the county, and as mentioned earlier, Camden County fares better than all other Southern New Jersey counties in terms of access. Despite this, almost one-quarter, (23%) residents in Camden County have reported that

¹³ Freedom Mortgage Pavilion, Camden Aquarium, Cooper Street/Rutgers-Camden; Walter Rand Transportation Center; 36th Street Station; Pennsauken Transit Center, and Route 73/Pennsauken. (Accessed from <https://content.njtransit.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/light-rail/T0343.pdf>)

¹⁴ Lindenwold, Ashland, Woodcrest, Haddonfield, Westmont, Collingswood, Ferry Avenue, Broadway, City Hall (Camden). Accessed from <http://www.ridepatco.org/stations/routemap.html>

NJ Transit Bus Lines: 459, 457, 453, 452, 451, 450, 413, 412, 410, 409, 408, 407, 406, 405, 404, 403, 402, 401, 400, 313/315; and 316. Obtained from the NJ Transit website.

¹⁵ Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs. (2019). Community Health Needs Assessment (2019-2021) for the South Jersey Health Collaborative. Accessed from <https://rand.camden.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2023/12/Community-Health-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

public transportation was a resource missing from their communities,¹⁶ and in a 2020 Camden County needs assessment, county residents ranked transportation as the second-greatest barrier to accessing health services.¹⁷ Across various services, low access to transportation was reported as a barrier to employment and career services (46%), health services (39%), child care services (37%), services for families caring for a child of a relative (21%), behavioral and mental health services for children (35%), behavioral and mental health services for adults (40%), substance use disorder and prevention services (36%), domestic violence services (28%), parenting skills services (35%), legal and advisory services (29%), community safety services (23%), and food services (41%).^{18 19}

16 Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs. (2019). Community Health Needs Assessment (2019-2021) for the South Jersey Health Collaborative. Accessed from <https://rand.camden.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2023/12/Community-Health-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

17 Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs (2020). Camden County Needs Assessment 2020. Accessed from <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/asi/docs/CamdenCountyNeedsAssessmentReport2020.pdf>

18 Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs (2020). Camden County Needs Assessment 2020. Accessed from <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/asi/docs/CamdenCountyNeedsAssessmentReport2020.pdf>

19 Community members report that there is a dearth of transportation resources across Camden County that pose a barrier to accessing healthcare, employment, education, and childcare as detailed in WRI's prior report, *Barriers and Effects of Transportation Accessibility on Southern New Jersey Residents*.

Research Methods

Research Design: Study Protocols for Survey and Focus Groups

The purpose of this study was to identify community transportation priorities in Camden County, as well as transportation users' awareness and opinions regarding ongoing transportation improvement efforts in Camden County. As a main connector between Southern New Jersey, Central New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, Camden County transportation serves a community larger than residents of the county. Thus, WRI researchers sought to gather input from Camden County residents, commuters, and visitors regarding transportation challenges, opportunities, priorities, and recommendations. WRI researchers used a mixed-method approach using a county-wide survey to maximize the potential number of participants and a series of focus groups to explore the more nuanced aspects of community members' experiences, especially from specific populations (e.g., unhoused, older adults).

Survey items were designed to capture participants' priorities and desired recommendations and improvements for the public transportation system as well as walking, cycling, and driving conditions. We anticipated that participants would use a combination of transportation methods and that the survey should reflect this if we wanted to understand people's experiences and preferences moving across Camden County. Items about transportation usage and transportation system priorities were adapted from the NJ Transit Public Opinion Survey.²⁰ Items about walking and biking accessibility and safety in the neighborhood were adapted from the MAPS-Mini²¹ and Physical Activity Neighborhood Environment Scale (PANES).^{22, 23} Items about availability, coverage, and satisfaction with public transportation were adapted from National Aging and Disability Transportation Center's (NADTC) Sample Transportation Survey Questions.²⁴ Other items about vehicle availability, transit information, existing transportation initiatives, and demographics were developed by the WRI research team (see Appendix E for the survey instrument).

20 DMJM Harris/AECOM. (2005 September). New Jersey Long-Range Transportation Plan 2030. Statewide Public Opinion Survey. Accessed from https://www.nj.gov/transportation/works/njchoices/pdf/Statewide_Public_Opinion_Survey_Report.pdf

21 Cain, K. L., Gavand, K. A., Conway, T. L., Geremia, C. M., Millstein, R. A., Frank, L. D., ... & Sallis, J. F. (2017). Developing and validating an abbreviated version of the Microscale Audit for Pedestrian Streetscapes (MAPS-Abbreviated). *Journal of Transport & Health*, 5, 84-96.

22 Sallis, J.F., Cain, K.L., Conway, T.L., Gavand, K.A., Millstein, R.A., Geremia, C.M., et al. (2015). Is Your Neighborhood Designed to Support Physical Activity? A Brief Streetscape Audit Tool. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 12(E141),1-11 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd12.150098>

23 Sallis, J.F., et al. (2010). Evaluating a brief self-report measure of neighborhood environments for physical activity research and surveillance: Physical Activity Neighborhood Environment Scale (PANES). *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 7(4), 533-540. doi: 10.1123/jpah.7.4.533.

24 National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. (2022). Sample Survey Questions for Transportation Surveys. Accessed from <https://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/TransportationSurveyQuestions.pdf>

The survey was available through the online survey platform Qualtrics so participants could take the survey at a time and place of their convenience. The first page of the survey displayed the consent form and the last pages asked the participants if they wished to enter the compensation and/or participate in a focus group. The survey was estimated to last approximately 10 to 20 minutes, depending on how many modes of transportation participants regularly used.

Focus Group items were developed by WRI researchers. Areas evaluated in the NJ Transit's customer satisfaction survey²⁵ were used as guidance to define the scope of the discussion questions and structure. Questions pertained to the availability of and access to transportation, safety and security, communications and customer assistance, and environmental impact (see Appendix F for the focus group guide). Focus groups were held in-person at community locations or virtually over Zoom. Including the consent process at the beginning, focus groups lasted between 45 - 60 minutes.

This research with human subjects completed by WRI researchers followed Rutgers Policy 90.2.11.²⁶ All WRI research team members have their Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certifications.²⁷ The Institutional Review Board (IRB) process at Rutgers University is based on the rules and regulations stipulated by federal agency regulations of human subjects research. The Rutgers University IRB has the authority to approve, require modifications in planned research prior to approval, or disapprove research. This research project was approved by the Rutgers University IRB (Pro2023002141).

Data Collection and Analysis: Surveys and Focus Groups

Survey Recruitment and Compensation

Given the interconnectivity of the transportation systems, WRI researchers sought the input of residents, commuters, and visitors in Camden County. Participants did not have to be residents of Camden County or users of public transportation, but they were advised that they would be expected to speak about their experiences traveling through Camden County via public transit or personal vehicle. As noted in a later section, most respondents reported to be county residents. Adults (18 years old and older) were eligible to participate in the study. All recruitment and data collection materials were available in English and Spanish. Focus group participants received a \$25.00 Visa gift card for their participation. Survey participants had the option to enter a raffle for

25 NJ Transit. (2023, September). Customer Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2023. Accessed from <https://content.njtransit.com/sites/default/files/marketing/website/pdf/2023%20Spring%20Customer%20Satisfaction%20Survey%20Presentation%20Chair%20Review%209-26-23.pdf>

26 Policy 90.2.11. Policy for Human Subjects Protection and the Institutional Review Board. Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Accessed from <https://policies.rutgers.edu/B.aspx?BookId=12049&PageId=459404>

27 The certification ensures that Rutgers University researchers are trained in human subjects research and understand the history around the development of human subject protections, ethical issues, and current regulatory and guidance information for research.

one of the five \$50.00 Visa gift cards. Participants could remain anonymous through the survey and focus groups, but those who opted in for compensation were asked to provide their contact information when mailing was necessary. This information was protected in a confidential database by WRI researchers.

From April 2024 to July 2024, the WRI team reached out to over 50 community organizations serving Camden County via email, phone call, and personal visits to share the project purpose, activities, and recruitment materials. Over 30 food pantries, family success centers, community centers, senior centers, libraries, grocery stores, and farmers' markets located in Camden County displayed the survey flyers and/or postcards at their locations or shared it with their clients and patrons electronically. To limit the risk of fraudulent survey completion (e.g., bots, VPN users with no connection to Camden County), partners were asked to refrain from sharing materials over social media.

In June 2024 and July 2024, WRI collaborated with New Jersey Transit and PATCO to promote the study among their transit users. The survey flyer was displayed at all PATCO stations in New Jersey and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from June through July 15, 2024. The ads, which were displayed on the monitors located at the station or near the platforms for seven seconds at a time, contained a QR code to the survey that passengers could scan as well as a shortened URL link. The first week of July, PATCO also organized a "seat-drop" in which 1,200 postcards containing the QR code and shortened link to the survey were placed on the seats in each car of the PATCO trains during the early morning on a weekday, ahead of the morning commuter rush. PATCO staff also offered to display study postcards at their table during the Haddonfield Craft Festival on July 13, 2024.

From June 15, 2024 to July 15, 2024, New Jersey Transit authorized WRI staff to conduct in-person canvassing at stations across the county. WRI staff were able to display flyers and hand out postcards to transportation users, discuss the project with the public, promote focus groups, and offer participants to take the survey on WRI iPads at the recruitment site if they could not connect over their phone. WRI staff canvassed at the Cherry Hill Train Station, the Pennsauken Transit Center, the Walter Rand Transportation Center, the Lindenwold Station, and the Avandale Park & Ride at historically busy days and hours according to Google data.

From July 1, 2024 to July 15, 2024, WRI also used Every-Door-Direct-Mailing (EDDM), a service offered through the United States Postal Service (USPS), to deliver 2,500 postcards with the QR code and survey link to residences in zip codes with low survey representation as of the beginning of July 2024. Three mailing routes were selected in Voorhees, Waterford, and Winslow Townships.

Data Collection: Focus Groups

Focus groups were held from April 2024 through July 2024. Over a dozen community partners offered their space to host focus groups for the community. Seven locations were selected based on room/space availability and location in the county, and six virtual focus groups were offered to account for possible transportation barriers. Participants interested in focus groups could select from a list shown at the end of the survey or provide an email address to be contacted as focus groups were scheduled. In-person focus groups were advertised via flyers posted at the locations, shared by staff with clients/patrons directly, and word-of-mouth. Participants who chose to participate in virtual focus groups were emailed the Zoom link by WRI researchers. In-person participants received their gift card in person. Virtual participants were asked to provide a mailing address and compensation was sent to them via certified mail within one week of their participation.

Focus group sessions were staffed by one facilitator and one research assistant/notetaker. After the WRI facilitator completed the consent process, the session was audio or video recorded so a transcript could be generated during analysis. The facilitator used the focus group guide to lead a semi-structured discussion which allowed participants to interact with the facilitator and each other as they responded to the answers and topics mentioned. Participants were free to answer as many or few questions as they wanted and they could leave the focus group whenever they wished. A total of 70 individuals participated across 13 focus groups.

Table 2: List of Focus Group Locations

Date	Location	Number of participants
4/25/2024	Zoom (virtual)	(data from 3 attendees excluded due to suspected fraudulent participation)
4/25/2024	Zoom (virtual)	0
4/29/2024	Camden City – Nilsa I. Cruz Perez Library	14
5/09/2024	Camden City – Nilsa I. Cruz Perez Library	13
6/05/2024	Pennsauken Public Library	2
6/12/2024	Voorhees - M. Allan Vogelsson Library	4
6/14/2024	Collingswood Public Library	3
6/14/2024	Sicklerville - Orchards Family Success Center	7
6/20/2024	Blackwood Rotary Library	4
7/02/2024	Zoom (virtual)	0
7/03/2024	Zoom (virtual)	2
7/08/2024	Zoom (virtual)	4
7/09/2024	Phone (virtual)	1 (requested by the participant who could not attend other focus groups)

7/09/2024	Camden City - Evolution Family Success Center	14 (Spanish)
7/10/2024	Zoom (virtual)	0
7/12/2024	Zoom (virtual)	1
7/15/2024	Zoom (virtual)	1
Total	17 focus groups scheduled	70 valid participants

Determining validity of data and final number of participants

A total of 304 survey responses were received through Qualtrics. These responses were examined for validity based on the following criteria: agreed consent, zip codes correspond to New Jersey or neighboring states (Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware), responses had at least a 14% completion rate. Given that the median survey completion time was around 11 minutes, responses completed in under 5 minutes were suspected of being fraudulent and categorized as invalid. After removing invalid responses, 233 responses were determined to be valid for analysis.

A total of 73 individuals participated across 17 focus groups. Three participants in the first focus group were suspected to not have any connection to Camden County due to the lack of specificity in their responses and their lack of familiarity with New Jersey at large (e.g., did not know that Camden was in New Jersey despite claiming to live in the county). Data from this first focus group was removed, meaning data from 70 participants across 13 focus groups was deemed valid for analysis. Three focus groups had zero participants.

A description of the analyses conducted can be found in Appendix B.

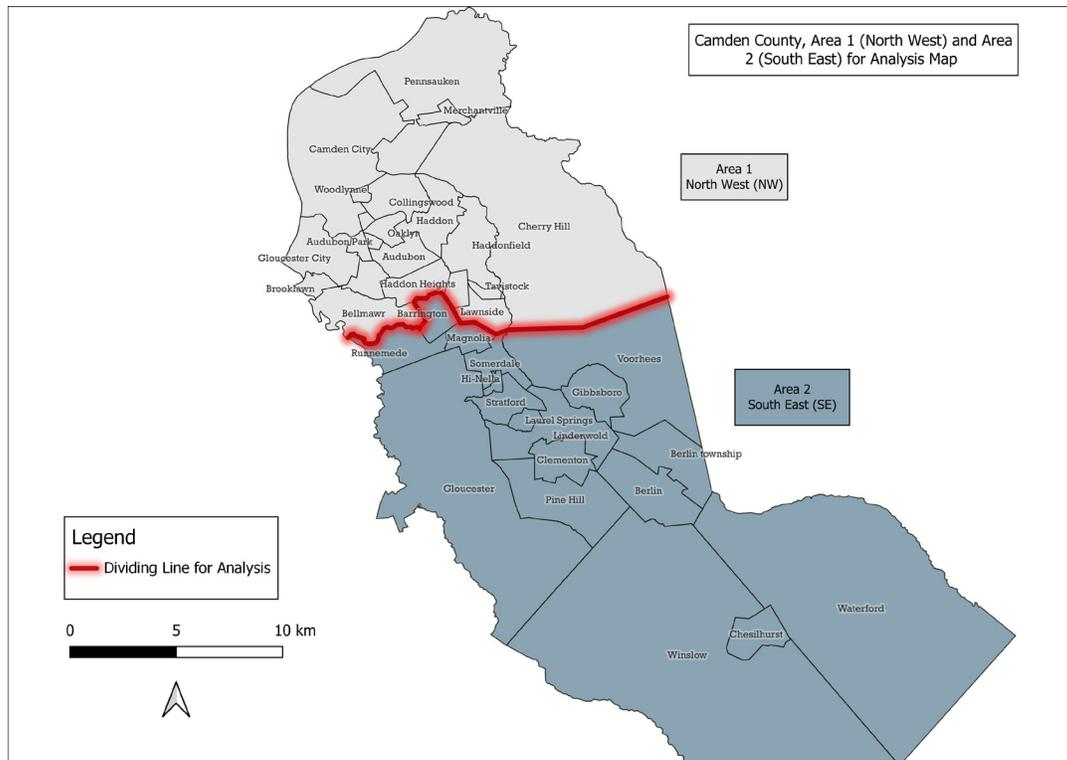
Participant Demographics

Area of Camden County residence or commute

Survey participants were asked to report the zip code that corresponds to the area where they live and the town in Camden County in which they live or to which they commute (for work or study). Two-hundred and twelve (212) of the participants (i.e. 91%) reported a zip code in Camden County, 9 reported being unhoused, and 12 reported a zip code outside of Camden (4 in Burlington County, 1 in Gloucester County, 1 in Atlantic County, 4 in Pennsylvania, 2 in New York). Based on the 212 responses to Camden County town of residence or commute, Camden City had the most representation with 87 participants, followed by Collingswood and Gloucester Township (17 participants each), Cherry Hill (15 participants), Voorhees Township (13 participants), and Winslow Township (10 participants). All other towns had fewer than 10 participants from each. Six (6) participants indicated they were visiting Camden County.

Given the small sample in most towns, we decided to create geographic area groups based on the existence of public transportation routes in the county. Specifically, the towns in the Northwest area of Camden County that are in closer proximity to the Walter Rand Transportation Center, the River Line, most of the PATCO stops, and had a higher density of NJ Transit bus routes²⁸ were grouped as Area 1 (NW). The rest of the towns toward the Southeast of the County (essentially anything below the Haddonfield PATCO stop and the 457 bus route) were grouped as Area 2 (SE). To categorize commuters' input, participants were assigned to their group based on the town they indicated as their residence or commuting location.

Figure 2: Map for Areas for Analysis



28 NJ Transit (2023, May). Walter Rand Transportation Center Rider Guide. Accessed from https://content.njtransit.com/sites/default/files/station_area_maps/WRTC_Rider_Guide_0523.pdf

Table 3: Survey Participants’ Town of Residence or Commuting Location in Camden County

Area 1 Northwest (NW)		Area 2 Southeast (SE)	
Municipality	Frequency	Municipality	Frequency
Audubon	5	Barrington	2
Audubon Park	1	Berlin	5
Bellmawr	6	Berlin Township	1
Brooklawn	1	Chesilhurst	3
Camden City	87	Clementon	4
Cherry Hill	15	Gloucester Township	17
Collingswood	17	Laurel Springs	3
Gloucester City	1	Lindenwold	4
Haddon Township	6	Magnolia	2
Haddonfield	7	Pine Hill	1
Haddon Heights	2	Somerdale	2
Merchantville	1	Stratford	4
Oaklyn	1	Voorhees Township	13
Pennsauken Township	3	Waterford Township	1
Woodlynne	1	Winslow Township	10
Audubon	5		
Total NW	154	Total SE	72

NW + SE = 226 participants. Seven participants did not select a town.

All participants in the focus groups reported living in or commuting to Camden County. A handful of focus group participants shared experiences that suggested prior or current housing insecurity.

Age

Out of 189 survey respondents who reported their age, 71.4% were between the ages of 25 and 49 years old. Fewer than 6% of respondents were 65 years old or older. Focus group participants were not asked to disclose their age, but based on observational data and self-disclosed information, there was a similar representation of age groups in focus groups.

Gender

Out of 189 survey respondents who reported their gender, there was a nearly even representation of female (46%) and male (49.7%) participants. Eight participants identified as non-binary, transgender, or other. Focus group participants were not asked to disclose their gender, but based on self-disclosed information, there was a similar representation of genders in focus groups as well.

Race and Ethnicity

About half of the survey respondents indicated their race. The majority (69.2%) identified as White, 18.2% as Black or African American, 6.6% as Hispanic/Latino/x/e, and 6% as Other. Participants could select multiple races/ethnicities. Focus group participants were not asked to disclose their race/ethnicity, but observational data and self-disclosed information suggest that there was a higher representation of Black participants (about a third) and Hispanic/Latino/x/e participants (about a fifth) in focus groups.

Employment Situation

Out of 189 survey respondents who identified their employment situation, most reported having to leave home for work purposes. Nearly 55% reported working fully in-office/field work, 21.7% reported having a hybrid arrangement for work, and 6.9% reported being unemployed and looking for work. There was not enough information from the focus groups to estimate their employment situation.

Table 4: Employment Situation - Survey Results

Employment Situation	Frequency	Percent
Fully in-office/fieldwork	103	54.5
Hybrid work	41	21.7
Fully remote/at-home work	11	5.8
On medical or parental leave	2	1.1
Unable to work or disabled	4	2.1
Retired	12	6.3
Unemployed and currently looking for work	13	6.9
Unemployed and NOT currently looking for work	3	1.6
Total	189	100.0

Household Income

Out of 188 survey participants who reported their income, almost half reported an income greater than \$100,000. To look into potential differences across income groups, three groups were created for the purpose of analyses (see table below). Focus group participants were not asked to disclose their household income, but self-disclosed information (e.g., housing insecurity, concerns about transportation costs) suggests that focus group participants, on average, may have a lower household income than that reported by survey participants.

Table 5: Household Income - Survey Results

Household Income	Frequency	Valid Percent	Tiers
Under \$15,000	9	4.8	Tier 1 n = 40
\$15,000 - \$25,000	7	3.7	
\$25,000 - \$35,000	10	5.3	
\$35,000 - \$50,000	14	7.4	
\$50,000 - \$75,000	34	18.1	Tier 2 n = 60
\$75,000 - \$100,000	26	13.8	
\$100,000 - \$125,000	26	13.8	Tier 3 n = 78
Over \$125,000	52	27.7	
I don't know	10	5.3	
Total	188	100.0	178

*N = 178 for participants grouped by tiers, excludes the 10 participants who selected "I don't know" for income.

Findings

Finding A: Most Commonly Used Modes of Transportation

Most participants identified using a mixture of private and public transportation. Out of 233 valid survey responses from residents, commuters, and visitors, 62.2% of participants reported using a household motor vehicle (car, motorcycle), 46.8% reported using light rail (PATCO, River Line, SEPTA), 17.3% reported walking, and 15.7% reported using the bus among their top three modes of transportation. Most respondents indicated having one to two household motor vehicles in working order. Only 9% of survey participants reported not having a functioning vehicle in their household; yet, 64% reported using public transportation (bus, light rail, public on-demand services) at least on a weekly basis.

When looking at the breakdown of transit use based on purpose of trip, there were some notable patterns across the Northwest (NW) and Southeast (SE) areas of Camden County. In both areas, public transit was used over household motor vehicles for commuting activities related to work and education for adults, while motor vehicles were used more for activities related to food shopping, medical appointments, other shopping trips, and play and recreation. Significantly higher proportions of SE participants used a household vehicle compared to NW participants, who reported the use of public transportation in higher proportions for childcare, food shopping, counseling and social services, and shopping centers. Similarly, SE participants used the car in higher proportions than NW participants for play/exercise and recreation purposes, while NW participants also reported walking or biking to get to these activities.

Table 6: Transit use by Area 1 (NW) or Area 2 (SE)

Total N Area 1 NW = 154 Area 2 SE = 72	Household motor vehicle		Walking / Bicycle		Public transit (bus, rail, ferry)		On-demand transit (public or private)		Other / Not Applicable	
	NW	SE	NW	SE	NW	SE	NW	SE	NW	SE
Work	26%	37.5%	9.7%	1.4%	40.3%	44.4%	11%	1.4%	12.3%	13.9%
School or adult program	17.5%	18.1%	10.4%	4.2%	23.4%	13.9%	13%	0%	31.2%	62.5%
Child's school	14.3%	27.8%	14.3%	2.8%	15.6%	5.6%	10.4%	1.4%	40.2%	61.1%
Childcare	18.2%	22.2%	8.4%	5.6%	18.2%	2.8%	9.1%	1.4%	40.9%	67.6%
Food	49.4%	83.3%	13.0%	6.9%	18.8%	2.8%	11%	1.4%	3.9%	4.2%
Medical appt	44.8%	75%	16.2%	1.4%	19.5%	12.5%	13%	2.8%	3.2%	7%
Counseling / support groups	21.4%	31.9%	10.4%	2.8%	20.8%	6.9%	11%	4.2%	31.1%	52.8%
Social services	20.8%	33.3%	13.6%	1.4%	18.8%	6.9%	9.1%	0%	33.8%	57.1%
Shopping centers	46.8%	80.6%	12.3%	4.2%	20.8%	8.3%	13.4%	2.8%	3.8%	4.2%
Play and exercise	34.4%	62.5%	35.1%	27.8%	13%	2.8%	9.1%	0%	4.5%	5.6%
Recreation (events)	31.2%	62.5%	22.7%	6.9%	26%	20.8%	13.6%	2.8%	3.2%	5.6%

Percentages indicate the proportion of total number of participants from a given area who selected a given choice. Percentage pairs in bold font indicate significant differences between areas at $p < .05$.

Focus group participants also reported using a combination of transportation modes, with a higher usage of public transportation. Most of the 70 focus group participants used the PATCO, NJ Transit buses, and the River Line. Some participants also described using a combination of public transit and a personal vehicle (car, bike, or a ride from someone) to commute to work or school. A smaller number of participants mentioned they only drove their own household vehicle or that they used public transit during short periods of time when they were unable to drive. Some participants also expressed preferences for certain modes of transportation over others. For instance, some preferred using light rail and train options as they perceived them as being faster, with more direct routes than buses. Other participants mentioned avoiding specific modes of transportation or stations due to lack of cleanliness. Some participants also shared that they would consider using public transportation over driving if the services became available in their area.

Finding B: Reliability of Public Transportation

Participants noted their need to rely on transportation that functions as expected or advertised. This category includes responses around punctuality of service, accuracy of posted schedules, completion of all planned stops, and interruptions in service. This topic was discussed at length in all thirteen focus groups and identified as a priority in eight of them. Survey participants reported that reliability of transportation (45.9%) and duration of trip (31.3%) were among their top considerations in selecting a transportation mode. Survey participants also identified reliable

transportation as their top household transportation need to reach work (49.8%), food stores (33.8%), medical appointments (29.5%), and school or training programs (27.5%). Focus group participants specified that increased punctuality and adherence to bus routes as planned were necessary for their commute and scheduled appointments. There was a mix of opinions about the reliability of public transportation that led to enlightening discussions about differences in users' experiences.

"Participant A: This state [New Jersey] has mass transportation. For the East Coast, it's got a lot of transportation. You can almost get anywhere in the state by public transportation. But the problem is that they're overcharging... what they need to focus on is being on time, because a lot of these buses are already late... these bus drivers need to do their jobs properly."

Facilitator - WRI Researcher: And what does "doing their job properly" look like?

Participant B: Stopping at a bus stop. Being courteous.

Participant A: It means being on time. Stopping when necessary. It means just doing their job.

Participant C: If they're behind [the schedule], they still gotta make their stops. Other people have to get somewhere."

- Camden City Focus Group, May 2024

As seen in the quote above, focus group participants noted the availability of multiple modes of transportation and connections in the County and state. Others praised the punctuality of PATCO and NJ Transit rail, as well as the attentiveness of some NJ Transit bus drivers.

"I find NJ Transit to be very reliable and I feel very safe when I ride it."

-Camden City Focus Group, May 2024.

"I do say the bus drivers always have a lot of patience to do what they do."

-Virtual Focus Group, July 2024.

"I've really been grateful for [PATCO]. It's very reliable. It always comes on time. I feel like it comes often enough for me, so I'm very happy with it."

- Collingswood Focus Group, June 2024.

The most recurrent recommendations addressed travelers' frustrations with frequent delays, interruptions in services, failure to provide transportation services as advertised, and inconsistent treatment towards passengers.

Prioritizing Service Punctuality and Managing Interruptions

Service punctuality was the most requested improvement for reliability. Participants reported experiencing bus and light rail delays ranging from 30 minutes to a couple of hours, often late in the evening and towards the end of the week. Delays were attributed to a variety of causes such as traffic, assisting passengers who need help boarding/offboarding, crowd management, unscheduled stops for staff getting on or off the vehicle, or poor time management by drivers or conductors. While all participants mentioned occasional delays, they agreed that the issues were most frequent along the bus routes towards Gloucester City, Cherry Hill Mall, Woodbury, and on the River Line. Participants also reported that bus drivers running behind on schedule tended to rush the boarding process by stopping past the marked bus zone and leaving within seconds. Participants waiting inside stations during inclement weather reported missing the bus because the drivers would not wait for passengers crossing the street to the stop.

Some participants also asked for better planning to avoid interruptions in services. Several participants experienced extensive delays or cancellations due to vehicle malfunction, drivers/conductors calling out, or other unspecified reasons. Participants had the option to wait longer than planned or to seek alternative modes of transportation which they may have to relocate for or pay a higher fare to use. A few participants shared stories of being stranded in other towns when the last bus failed to arrive. Without means to pay for an alternative means of transportation, one participant shared that he had to sleep outdoors in the cold weather until the first bus showed up the next morning. Some participants experienced interruptions in bus service as much as twice a month, which led them to avoid the bus and opt for light rail or a personal vehicle. Those without access to alternative means of transportation reported having to navigate the consequences of these challenges that are outside of their control:

“We all got a reality. Then what happens to those of us that rely on that bus now? When I finally got on the bus home on the way down, everybody’s getting on. The bus is crowded now because people have been waiting, and everywhere they’ve been waiting at least for two hours. It didn’t just affect me, it affected a whole lot of people. I was surprised it happened twice in a month’s time. It may happen more often, but I figured we could come up with some solution. We could do a bit better than that. What if someone were depending on using that transportation to get to work or wherever they had to be and now they have to call and explain themselves? It affects their livelihood in multiple ways.”

- Sicklerville Focus Group, June 2024

Consistent Service and Treatment for Everyone Everywhere

Bus riders also cited inconsistencies in passenger service and treatment, and requested improvements in customer service training and staff accountability. People noticed some drivers assisting disabled passengers board the bus and secure their wheelchair, while others failed to wait or stop for passengers with mobility issues or who appeared mentally/emotionally unwell or experiencing homelessness. If passengers missed their stop, some bus drivers refused to stop outside the authorized marked area for them, but appeared to be flexible for other passengers. A handful of focus group participants reported that drivers usually accommodated them if they missed their stop. Similarly, some participants praised their drivers for patiently communicating with them despite unfamiliarity with the route or language barriers, while others felt that drivers ignored their questions and refused to provide any information or assistance to get off at the right stop. Several participants also noted that drivers skip scheduled stops if they are running behind or if the stop is out of the way and not used as much as other stops. *“I just always worry that if you are taking a bus, that you got to be ready to jump up and say that you are here. Otherwise, my main concern is if they don’t make the full stop because they may be running behind. That is really my only concern at a bus stop, typically.”* (Virtual Focus Group, July 2024).

A handful of participants also described witnessing or being subjected to inappropriate and aggressive treatment by bus drivers. These incidents resulted in bodily injuries and police involvement, but participants felt drivers were not always held accountable for endangering passengers. The same participants also described professional and compassionate treatment by specific drivers. For instance, one driver was reported to notice that a passenger had paid more than the required fare, pointed it out to them, and printed out a voucher so the passenger could use it towards a future trip. Another participant from Camden City described a specific driver who *“was absolutely the best...a good bus driver. Completely consistent, never late. They’re just nice and pleasant”* and suggested that drivers should be rewarded for creating a reliable and positive experience. Among the stories of negative interactions, participants recognized the efforts of transit staff to perform their duties as best they could, and asked that these efforts become the norm rather than the exception. Through their positive anecdotes, participants demonstrated a willingness to show staff the same patience and understanding that they wanted to receive.

“...For example, [once I was] at the [Walter Rand] Transportation Center. I put my foot on the bus before I was ready to get on. The bus driver came at me like ‘You can’t get on yet!’ [I said] ‘What, I’m just taking my money out of my sock.’ Well, I got on and I spoke to the guy, and he said to me—he said something that really hit me home. He was like, ‘You know, I’m just human. I deal with a lot of people every day.’ He’s like, ‘Sometimes, you know, I might be a little short and I might lose it.’ And it made me think for a second, like, if I was in this guy’s shoes, how many people he must deal with on any given day that come at him crazy?”

- Camden City Focus Group, May 2024

Finding C: Coverage and Accessibility of Transportation

This priority category includes responses around transportation options that exist in different areas, frequency and timing of services, and accessibility of transportation options. Participants reported the need for the creation or expansion of services. This topic was discussed in all thirteen focus groups and identified as a priority in nine of them. Availability of transportation service was the top consideration reported by survey participants (47.2%) when choosing a mode of transportation. Getting a personal motor vehicle (27.5%) and spending less on transportation costs (24.6%) were among the top household transportation needs for survey participants. Expanding rail and train services (44.4%), creating more direct public transit routes outside the county (36.2%), expanding and improving bus services (34.2%), and expanding bicycle networks (31.1%) were the top improvements recommended by survey participants. Focus group participants echoed these findings in their discussions of areas underserved by public transportation, expansion of pathways for pedestrian and cyclist transit, the need for connections across the county, state, and neighboring states, and the cost of public and private transportation.

Availability of transportation options across the County

Data from the survey revealed that 77.4% of 190 participants who answered the question indicated that public transportation in Camden County meets their travel needs “Somewhat Well” to “Very Well.” Further analysis revealed that coverage and accessibility to transit was impacted by factors such as geographic area, travel purpose, and income. For instance, participants using transportation in the southeast (Area 2 SE) part of the county were more likely to indicate that public transportation met their travel needs only “Somewhat well” to “Not too well.” As seen in the Public Transportation Density Map²⁹ below, public transportation options towards the Southeast portion of Camden County are fewer. As seen in the map below, the darker the color, the more bus stops in that area (Area 1 NW). The lighter the color, the fewer bus stops that are in those areas (Area 2 SE).

“Anything that is further away from the PATCO or the River Line is very difficult to get around. The trains are more frequent than the bus service. Usually, the 410-412 buses I normally take to travel through Camden County come every two hours, so if you miss one, you’re out of luck.”

- Survey Participant

²⁹ The data for this map was sourced from the Camden County and New Jersey State Open Data portal and processed using Quantum Geographic Information System (QGIS).

Camden County Open Data Portal (2023), Municipality Data, https://camdencountynj-ccdpcw.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/9bea5658edfa490c9d00f98fd9efb6d6_0/explore

Camden County Open Data Portal (2023), Boundary Data, <https://camdencountynj-ccdpcw.opendata.arcgis.com/search?tags=boundaries>

NJGIN Open Data, (2024), Transportation Data, <https://njogis-newjersey.opendata.arcgis.com/search?groupIds=60a4f9a1342f4f7a94ac986e8dd14892>

Similarly, survey results revealed that participants in Area SE were more likely to report using a household motor vehicle (83.3%) than participants in the northwest (Area 1 NW) part (54.5%). As discussed in the Findings Overview section, availability of transportation service was the top criteria (47.2%) in survey participants' considerations for transportation mode, which implies that residents and commuters traveling in the SE area may be choosing to do so by household motor vehicles to compensate for the unavailability of alternatives. While there are additional reasons individuals choose to travel by car or motorcycle, this choice is not available to everyone. Moreover, some drivers in focus groups stated that they would prefer to have more public transit options to save on gas costs, avoid the dangers of the road, relieve some of the driving burden, and curb pollution.

When considering coverage, participants asked for officials to prioritize and advocate for the needs of people who rely on public transportation. Participants across a few focus groups raised a concern that gaps in coverage seem to persist citing examples of residents vetoing the installation of bus stops or stations. Survey results also showed that expansion of rail and train services was a higher priority for participants in the SE area (48.6%) compared to those in the NW area (33.8%). While participants noted the concerns over a potential increase in crowds, noise, and disruptive activity, they explained that these gaps are a barrier to the accessibility of both residents and travelers. These situations highlight the burden that gaps in service place on people who have fewer alternatives to move around.

Figure 3: Density of Bus Stops in Camden County, NJ (Kernel Density Estimation)

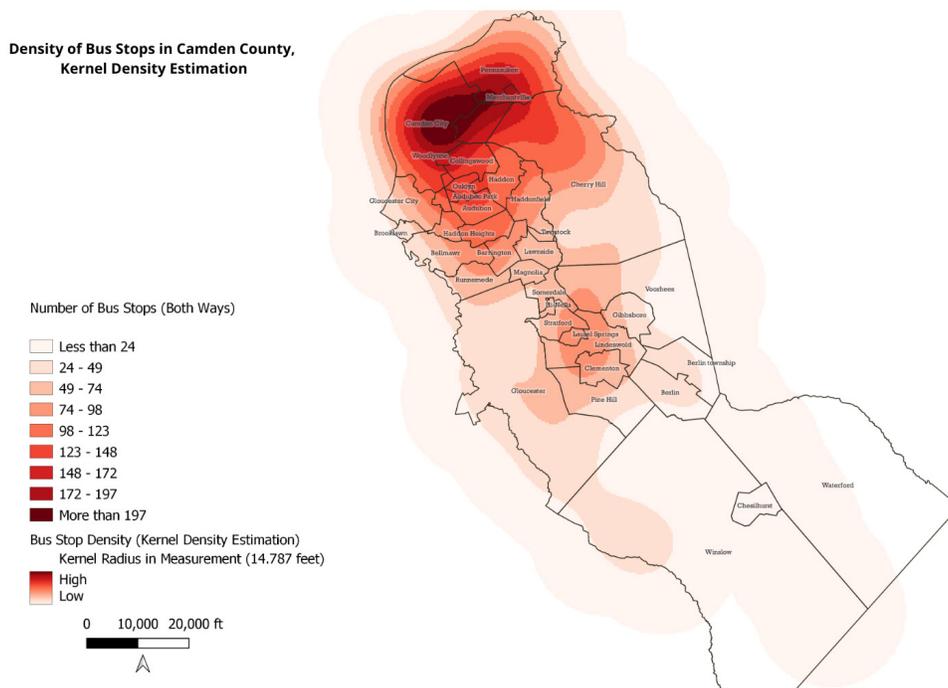
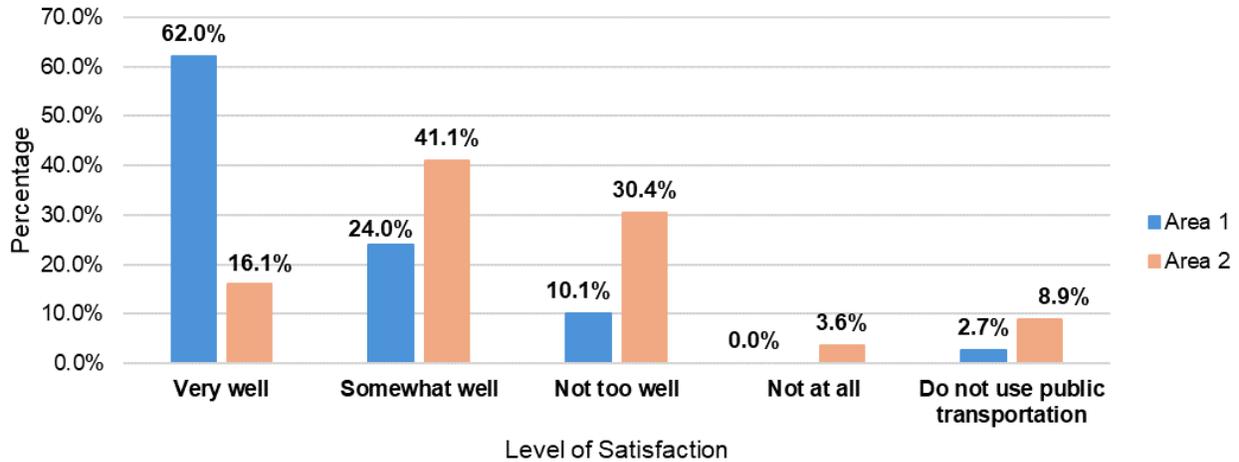


Figure 4: And as a whole, how well does public transportation in Camden County (bus, rail, ferry, Camden Loop, AccessLink, SEN-HAN) meet your travel needs?



Area 1 Northwest (NW) = 129 responses; Area 2 Southeast (SE) = 56 responses.

190 participants answered the question; only 185 participants indicated living in Areas 1 or 2.

As demonstrated in Figure 4, a large majority of northwest respondents (62.0%) noted that public transportation in Camden County worked very well for them; southeast respondents were more likely to indicate that it worked somewhat well (41.1%), not too well (30.4%) or not at all well (3.6%) for them. The following sections add context to these findings:

Expanding Service and Increasing Efficiency of Routes

During focus group discussions and open-ended survey questions, participants pointed to specific areas that they felt would benefit from expanded public transportation coverage. The following lists provide examples of the areas most often mentioned:

- *Areas within Camden County (specific roads mentioned):* Camden City (Riverfront), Pennsauken (River Road), Cramer Hill, Cherry Hill (Mall and townwide), Clementon, Gloucester City, Gloucester Township (Blackwood-Clementon Road, Gloucester Outlets), Voorhees, Pine Hill, Chesilhurst, Atco, Waterford Township, Winslow (Sicklerville Road).
- *Areas in Southern New Jersey (specific towns mentioned):* Gloucester County (Swedesboro, Paulsboro, Glassboro, Washington Township, West Deptford), Burlington County (Mount Laurel, Moorestown), Atlantic County (AC), the Shore (Wildwood, Ocean City), Cumberland County (Millville), Salem County.
- *Areas across New Jersey and beyond:* Central Jersey (Trenton), North Jersey (Morristown, Newark, Jersey City), Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), New York (New York City and upstate), Delaware, Boston (Massachusetts).

Participants offered various suggestions for ways to fill gaps in coverage. In line with preferences expressed about modes of transportation earlier, many participants expressed interest in more coverage by train. Suggestions included extending the River Line and PATCO, revitalizing unused train tracks, and building new rail lines. Others suggested adding stops to existing bus lines nearby (e.g., Sicklerville Road, Blackwood-Clementon Road).

Participants' recommendations for expanded public transit coverage centered around access to medical centers, employment opportunities, schools, and shopping areas. Some indicated general areas and towns around Camden County that need broader coverage (e.g. Cherry Hill) while others named specific roads and sectors that have long stretches of roads without stops or are not serviced at all (e.g., Sicklerville Road). Those relying mostly on public transportation recommended creating more direct and frequent connections to areas with employment opportunities (e.g., Millville, Swedesboro, Delaware) or residential development (e.g., along Route 77).

Participants also said they would like to see more direct, long-distance routes with fewer stops and shorter durations towards Philadelphia, Atlantic City, shore towns, northern New Jersey and New York. The creation of such "direct public transit routes outside the county" was a higher priority for survey respondents in the SE area (41.7%) compared to those in the NW area (26.6%). Though some focus group participants alluded to frequent commuting needs outside of the county or state, others mentioned the need for these long-distance travels more infrequently (e.g., periodic appointments with medical specialists, travel from an airport, special events).

"I'm thinking like down outside, like a couple of counties, the tip of Delaware. You know where all the jobs are really at. I think it should be invested into it..."

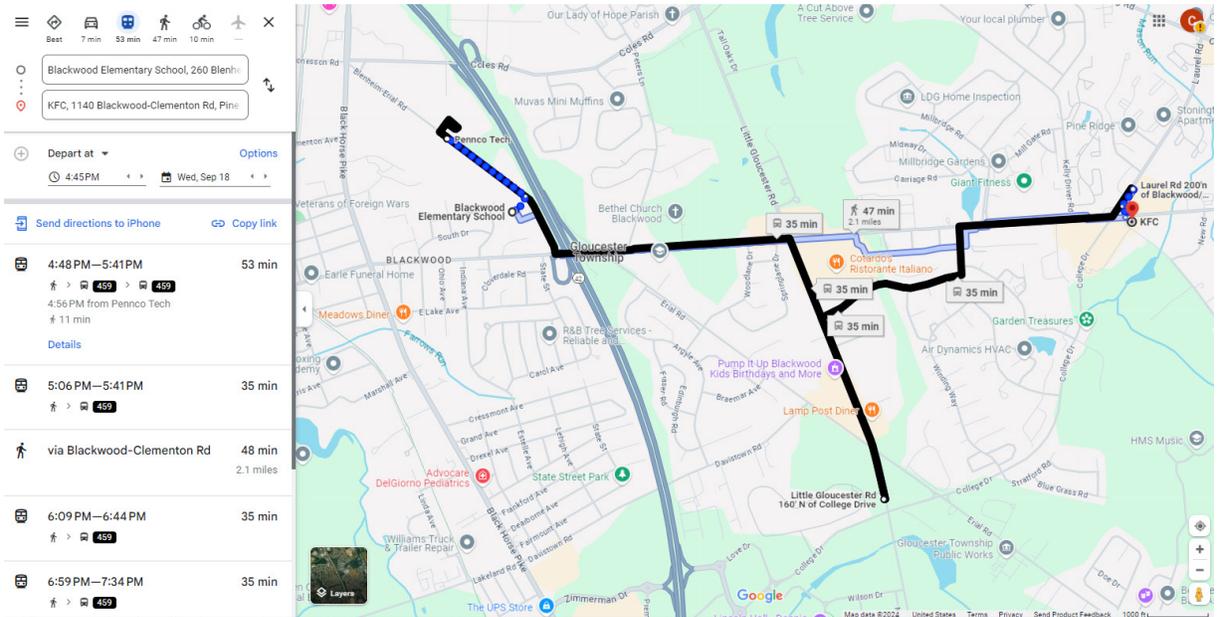
- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024

"Millville is a southern hub...The bus goes there three times a day...it's hard to get places, but you can't really just rely on the bus...Yeah, [even less on] the weekends. The reason why I mentioned Swedesboro; I got stuck out there on a Sunday. There's only one bus to take you there, one bus to come down. So if you missed those buses, you're stuck up there. Yeah, like more hourly buses just in that route alone but it's a lot of people that work out there that do not have transportation."

- Camden City Focus Group, April 2024

Participants also asked for measures to reduce the time of travel through public transportation within the county. One participant estimated that public transportation could take 1.5 to 2 times longer than direct travel by car, but many across focus groups found that travel could take 2-3 hours one way within the county based on the number of stops in a route, delays, and transfers needed. One participant shared that a 2-mile trip down Blackwood-Clementon Road from Blackwood Elementary School to a KFC could be overly complicated. As illustrated below, the short trip could take between 35 and 53 minutes (5 to 8 times as long as by car) and could require one transfer within the same bus number.

Figure 5: Google Map Directions for NJ Transit from Blackwood Elementary School to the KFC



Participants recommended additional public transit coverage throughout the day to reduce wait times, which ranged from 20 minutes to a couple hours depending on the area and day of the week. An oft-repeated challenge was access during the weekend, evening, and busy holidays across the transportation options. Out of 228 survey participants who responded to this question, a third (33%) of participants would like to see an increase in services during the hours from 6:00 am to 9:00 am, and a quarter (25%) recommended late evening and overnight coverage. Participants recommended extending services of the River Line after 9pm to facilitate commuting for travelers and students in night classes. Early morning and overnight service were very important for overnight workers as well.

“Participant A: I’m working at this company in Bellmawr. And so, Bellmawr Industrial Park, they only have like two buses that run: one in the morning time and then, I think, one at night...So when I get off in the morning time, I got to sit at the job until the bus runs at 7:40 am. I get off at 6:00 am. So they need more 400 buses to run into Bellmawr.

Participant B: I would love for buses to run at 5am because with work you have to be there at 6:00 am, 7:00 am. I’m driving now, but anything could happen. I could have my car in the shop or something.”

- Voorhees Focus Group, June 2024

“I think it would be cool if they added more buses at night because when I would get off, I’d have to wait until four o’clock in the morning or five o’clock in the morning till the first bus comes. And I get off work at 2:00 am. So I’m sitting out there for three to four hours waiting for a bus. And if he’s late or if I miss him...I gotta [sic] wait another three hours for the next bus.”

- Camden City Focus Group, April 2024

Private On-Demand Transit as an Alternative

Participants also discussed the use of on-demand private transit (e.g., Uber, Lyft, taxi) for times or locations where public transportation was not available. Though most focus participants reported using Uber/Lyft at least occasionally, experiences across focus groups indicate that this service is not available consistently at all times. Riders reported that Uber/Lyft services were unavailable or had a long wait early in the morning and late at night when travelers feel less safe in dark and isolated areas. There was also a commonly reported adverse reaction towards Camden City among Uber/Lyft drivers. Some riders recalled their drivers questioning if they “really want to go to Camden?” and others were denied services from Philadelphia into Camden. Participants recounted being in the vehicle on route when the driver realized their destination was Camden and proceeded to cancel the ride without discussion. Participants believed that drivers wanted to avoid the bridge toll to return to Philadelphia after dropping them off in Camden. No issues were cited during the middle of the day or traveling into Philadelphia from Camden.

Increasing Connections Between Transit Options

Participants shared that they would like to see increased connections across the transit options in addition to increased frequency. Some reported having to travel in the opposite direction of their destination to reach their connection and sitting through routes that lengthen travel.

“Usually, in Camden County at least, everything does pass through WRTC [Walter Rand Transportation Center in Camden City], at least for a lot of the buses...All roads lead through Camden, so, in that case [you are in Voorhees], you have to go east, say, to go south or to go west again. Sometimes you’ll be close, but that’s more intercounty. That gets a little bit dicey sometimes when you’re taking bus connections. It turns maybe, say, a 30-minute trip by car to maybe [90 minutes]...Even just having those extra little segments just on the edge of intercounty, where you might have like a population center, or like Glassboro for Rowan University, or you might have a job center. I believe some businesses are concentrated in places like Marlton and Mount Laurel. I don’t know if there are ways to collaborate with New Jersey Transit or SEPTA or other agencies... making sure those inter-county connections are strong. Especially if you’re, say, to the west of the major transportation center or, let’s say, Philadelphia or WRTC. Maybe making sure that those connections are present or reliable.”

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024

Participants also suggested facilitating connections between nearby transits by creating more walking pathways. For instance, one participant asked to reopen the underground passage between PATCO and the SEPTA Broad Line in Philadelphia as it provided an indoor connection people could use without taking the extra time to exit to the street or having to deal with poor weather. Others wanted connections between the River Line, PATCO, and bus stations, explaining that this would make connections more accessible and faster. For example, participants trying to make their bus connection at WRTC recalled being forced to remain in the bus when it was stuck at a busy intersection around the corner of WRTC, which resulted in participants missing their bus. Someone suggested that an additional stop should be created before or at the intersection so passengers could cross the street to WRTC on foot and avoid the intersection delay.

Lastly, participants also discussed connections from a broader lens. Bicycle riders asked for better connections between bicycle lanes, to extend bicycle-friendly pathways, and to add bicycle racks on buses. Riders shared that bicycles allowed them to complete the journey between the station and their destination. This thinking aligns with findings from a 2022 last mile report,³⁰ which found that connections to and from public transit can present challenges and barriers for some travelers in Camden City. A couple of participants recommended incorporating local shuttles to connect passengers between transit modes and within towns (Bellmawr, Woodcrest, Trenton were named as examples), citing positive experiences with them in the past and a need for options to move around towns upon leaving the bus or train.

“That last mile is always the toughest, usually between a station or a bus stop to your destination. That can either be the most expensive or the most frustrating sometimes, or really can make or break those decisions to use public transportation or, say, use a rideshare or a cab or something like that, or if someone is a driver, maybe just to drive instead.”

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024

Restructuring Payment Options to Increase Accessibility

The most prevalent reported barrier to accessibility was the cost and payment modes of transportation. Participants across several focus groups also said they would like to see changes to the payment structure and acceptance methods. Multiple participants noted that they liked having the option to pay via their phone or their app and that it would be helpful to have it for all transportation modes. Participants also supported the replacement of the exact change policy as it has caused confusion and delays even when the passenger can cover the additional fare.

30 Emad Alfaris, R. & Jalayer, M. (2023). Assessment of the First-and-Last Mile Problem in Underserved Communities: Case Study in Camden City, NJ. Transportation Research Record, 2677(10), 153-156. DOI: 10.11703611981231160536. Alfaris, R. (2022). Investigating the First/Last Mile Problem in Underserved Communities: A Case Study in Camden City, NJ. Theses and Dissertations. 3061. <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/3061>

“This one gentleman gets on [the bus] and he’s got a \$10 bill in his hand. And because the driver was driving or he didn’t have change, whatever, he wouldn’t let [the passenger] on. So I paid for the guy and the bus driver was pissed off at me. As a matter of fact, the guy, I didn’t know him, but he was also disabled. And I paid for his ride because we were going over to Philadelphia.”

- Camden City Focus Group, May 2024

Participants also argued for the elimination of pricing by zones. Some participants reported confusion about which zone corresponds to their stop, getting the wrong zone ticket, and being asked to get off the bus before their destination. Participants said drivers have not allowed them to pay the difference to adjust their zone, or that they have been forbidden from riding the bus any further past ticketed zones, regardless of how close their destination is. Participants recommended flat-rates and round-trip tickets as easier options for passengers potentially.

“I had this experience with a lady bus driver. Takes you out of the zones from Woodbury to Motor Vehicles. And if you don’t have a dime on you to get to the extra zone, she’ll make you get off the bus and you have to walk up the path. And if you want to get on, you have to walk back down the path to where you got on it. And what is it, like a mile or two? And you’re struggling along ‘cause [sic] you’re dying.”

- Camden City Focus Group, May 2024

Other topics that were mentioned regarding accessibility were:

- ADA (American Disabilities Act) compliance: Participants praised the installation of elevators at all the PATCO stations and asked for greater accessibility on buses through the improvement of ramps and lifts.
- Language: Participants with limited English proficiency said they would welcome the presence of staff who spoke their language, but were most appreciative of drivers’ willingness to communicate with them through gestures in lieu of a common language. Participants reported successful, positive interactions overall in this area.
- Digital literacy and app services: Some participants pointed out that some people may not know how to purchase their tickets on a transit app or use the Uber/Lyft apps.

Finding D: Safety and Conditions of Vehicles, Facilities, & Pathways on Transit Methods

“I do feel very safe in terms of a lot of the stations that I’ve encountered, and the trains and buses as well... Absolutely, I do feel very safe. I would say that if there are any particular bus stops, the big thing is really just making sure that it is in a lighted area, especially if there are no shelters for the weather.”

-Virtual Focus Group July 2024

A third priority area that emerged from the participants in Camden County centered on safety and security regarding to structural concerns and perceptions of danger from others. This category includes responses about the state of vehicles, stations, stops, and roads that contribute to the feeling of safety and comfort of passengers. This topic was discussed in most focus groups and identified as a priority in ten of them. Survey participants identified safety (36.1%), accessibility (35.6%), and parking (34.3%) among their main considerations when choosing a transportation mode. Survey respondents also reported constructing or increasing maintenance of sidewalks (31.6%) and providing better maintenance on existing roads and highways (25.5%) among the top improvements needed. Focus group participants also discussed the impact that sidewalks and roads in poor condition have on the safety of their persons and vehicles. Participants also expressed a desire for an increased sense of security in situations in which they feared crime and interactions they perceived as uncomfortable (e.g., feeling threatened by other passengers or non-riders). The cleanliness of the vehicles and stations as well as the use of these spaces by passengers and non-passengers were prevalent topics of discussion.

Table 7: Rating Safety Across Commonly used Public Transportation

		Very Safe	Somewhat Safe	Somewhat Unsafe	Very Unsafe
Bus	Waiting at stop during the day	20%	32.9%	25.7%	21.4%
	Riding during the day	17.1%	37.1%	24.3%	21.4%
	Waiting at stop at night	7.1%	30%	30%	32.9%
	Riding at night	8.7%	39.1%	30.4%	21.7%
River Line	Waiting at stop during the day	15.8%	50.9%	10.3%	15.5%
	Riding during the day	19.0%	55.2%	10.3%	15.5%
	Waiting at stop at night	7.1%	32.1%	33.9%	26.8%
	Riding at night	8.6%	43.1%	24.1%	24.1%
PATCO	Waiting at stop during the day	62.7%	27.7%	7.2%	2.4%
	Riding during the day	61.4%	25.3%	7.2%	6%
	Waiting at stop at night	12%	41%	31.3%	35.7%
	Riding at night	18.1%	47%	20.5%	14.5%

Highlighted cell pairs indicate combined values of over 60%.

As seen in Table 7, over 65% of survey participants felt very or somewhat safe riding and waiting for the River Line and the PATCO during the day; conversely, over 60% identified that waiting for the River Line, PATCO, and bus at nighttime felt somewhat or very unsafe. Over a third of respondents (38.2%) selected safety as one of their main considerations when selecting a mode of transportation, and multiple participants across focus groups reported limiting their use of public transportation they perceive as unsafe. Focus groups provided a forum for participants to expand on factors that impact their sense of security, as described below.

Managing Overcrowding and Inappropriate Use of Public Transportation

A commonly discussed topic was the management of other people's behaviors at the stations and public transit vehicles. Examples of behaviors participants described as disruptive include loitering, smoking, crossing between train cars, unwanted interactions, panhandling, drug use, public urination and defecation, and explicit verbal or physical threats. These anecdotes shared during focus groups described paying and non-paying users of public transit, unhoused individuals, and public transit staff and security as engaging in these behaviors. Participants described these experiences as ranging from uncomfortable to upsetting to scary. These incidents were not always specified as occurring during the day or night, but participants described feeling most vulnerable when there were fewer riders around or in poorly lit spaces.

"...I don't mean to be disrespectful or anything like that, but there are individuals who, maybe just with their demeanor, the way that they're acting, you know, being loud and erratic, or, you know, trying to ask you for money, certain gestures that they do, as me female traveling by myself, I don't feel safe...And a lot of times, I will, you know, sometimes take a Lyft. If something doesn't feel safe to me, I will opt out and pay more and take a Lyft home or to my destination."

- Virtual Focus Group July 2024

Participants noted they felt safer when they saw uniformed officers on patrol. One participant noted, *"I'm petrified at night. You see police activity. This morning, there were three cops at Lindenwold when I went up onto the platform, so I always feel much better when I see that."* Other participants praised their bus drivers for properly managing passengers and interfering when they engaged in prohibited behaviors. *"What I just remember was the bus driver, he stood up and he was at the front of the bus, and he was just very polite, but firm. Like, "That's not okay. If you're going to act like that, I'm going to need you to get off the bus," but at the same time, he wasn't demanding the person quit there. He was just like, "You have a choice as to how you want to do it."* (Collingswood Focus Group, June 2024).

Participants had several suggestions to help improve safety and security at the various transportation methods. Many expressed compassion for individuals who are struggling with their mental health, substance misuse, or lack of housing and suggested deploying social workers to these areas. They also stated that an increase in staff presence and security would improve their traveling experience. River Line riders, for example, felt that more consistent staff presence during the Southern leg of the trip would limit the number of non-paying riders. According to multiple participants, increased staff presence and visible police patrolling may be enough to discourage people from engaging in prohibited behaviors.

There was also a recommendation to limit access at stations so that only travelers with tickets can enter the platforms and waiting areas, citing the PATCO closed access system as an example. Participants who suggested limiting access believed that it would improve the sense of security for paying passengers, curtail littering, and decrease the wear-and-tear of facilities and vehicles. Overall, public transit users might benefit from more formal and accessible ways to get help if a situation feels threatening or escalates to an emergency.

"We found a gentleman; he was almost dead from an overdose in the stairwell. I couldn't get past him to even get to the train. Another couple came along, and we revived him and got the police there and everything. This is our reality now. There should be police or somebody, security, in the stations to keep an eye on this because this guy was right in the-- I already ran down the steps, so I didn't have any choice to go other than to run back up the steps. He totally passed out. He was blue, he was gurgling. This is our reality. This is just one of many circumstances. I don't know how you fix it other than to have more security or police presence or something because we take our lives in our own hands when we go to work every day."

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024

Investing in Maintenance of Buses and Light Rail Vehicles and Stations

Participants across all focus groups recommended that public transportation vehicles should be maintained or updated more frequently. Participants reported being on buses that appeared to have loose external metal panels and minimal shock absorption, so that the ride often felt "bumpy." The latter aspect was a safety concern for participants who disclosed that they have back injuries and have experienced pain during these rides. Other participants reported nearly falling off their seats while driving over potholes or if the driver braked abruptly, as one participant described, there are *"times where the bus is packed and you barely got your butt on the edge of the seat, and [the drivers] go slamming them brakes, and you go flying. And if you're standing, it's ridiculous. Sometimes it gets real bad."* Some participants cited electric buses as examples of comfortable and efficient vehicles. Train riders had fewer safety concerns about vehicles. One participant said the River Line trains "catch on fire" and others reported issues with temperature control which are felt the most during summer and winter when the air conditioner or heater on the train does not work.

A common concern mentioned about all vehicles and stations was cleanliness. Participants reported seeing trash that is not picked up for days and persistent, unpleasant smells from spilled food and human waste. Participants were under the impression that cleaning duties were understaffed or not completed to full capacity. Their concern lay in the belief that the improper cleaning and sanitation of facilities and vehicles could increase the spread of diseases. An exception to this pattern was the PATCO stations located in New Jersey east of the Broadway stop. Participants noted that these stations have improved over the years and appeared cleaner than the stations in Camden and Philadelphia, which were often described as "filthy."

There were also multiple calls for bus stop shelters for passengers waiting for the buses. Many recommended adding larger structures to mark bus stops, such as a bench or a bus stop shelter. One participant noticed bus stops that felt dangerous for people waiting,

“...there were two bus stops, but you’re at the edge of a road without protection. Completely, one of them is at the edge. There’s a downhill mound that even young people would be in danger, and cars whizzing by. Where do you wait if they’ve not paved the road there that’s level? Or if it’s raining and you’re sinking in the mud? The service is incomplete. It presents a safety issue.”

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024.

Other participants said that benches and bus stop shelters would be helpful for riders who may need to sit while waiting or as protection from the weather. One shared that, *“there are some places that don’t have anything. Even the bus stop right out here, it’s just the sign. There’s nowhere to sit or even a cover from the sun.”*

Participants’ recommendations to improve the condition of vehicles centered around more frequent maintenance and replacement of buses and trains. One participant who commented on the pleasant experience of riding the electric buses wondered about their state in five years and about plans to maintain them. Bus riders who felt they might fall during the drive suggested seat belts and more leveled driving by staff. Recommendations around stations centered on more frequent cleaning, and maintaining entrances and exits clear of obstacles and offensive waste. Increasing staff assignments to cleaning, overall staff presence, and restricting access were offered as plausible solutions.

Maintaining Sidewalks, Roads, and Paths for Drivers, Riders, Cyclists, and Pedestrians

As mentioned earlier, individuals in Camden County walk and use bicycles to reach their destinations or as main modes of transportation. Participants discussed a desire to see better maintenance of sidewalks and bike paths. Most survey respondents indicated that their neighborhoods had sidewalks (61.3%) and curb ramps for carts and wheelchairs (52.4%). Respondents agreed that sidewalks in their neighborhoods were well-maintained and unobstructed (50.6%) and that there were poorly maintained sections of the sidewalk that could be major tripping hazards (51.1%). Almost a third of respondents selected the construction and maintenance of sidewalks (31.6%), almost half (40.3%) of these respondents were from the SE area.

Focus group participants described the lack of sidewalks near commercial areas, such as walking from the PATCO Westmont Station to the Market Place at Garden State Park, or feeling unsafe walking by high traffic roads, such as White Horse Pike. These recommendations were also mentioned for Camden City, as participants reported people getting injured from falls on cracked sidewalks and feeling unsafe walking along roads without sidewalks. In addition to sidewalks,

participants also suggested penalizing businesses that obstruct sidewalks with over spilled trash, adding more crosswalks near business areas, and building overpass connections over high traffic roads to increase pedestrian passage and safety.

There was also an expressed need for more regulations to protect cyclists. Over half of respondents (51.5%) indicated a lack of clearly designated bicycle paths around their neighborhoods and 45% reported that traffic made it difficult or unpleasant to ride a bicycle in their neighborhood. Respondents from the SE area were more likely to report dissatisfaction with biking conditions than those in the NW area. Almost a third of respondents recommended the expansion of bicycle networks (31.1%) among their top desired improvements. Cyclists in focus groups recommended enforcing speed limits and increasing education among drivers about sharing the roads with cyclists. One participant suggested that emphasizing bicycle signs on streets could have a large impact, *“Even just painting on the road, you see not even bike lanes, but just a picture on the road that people can bike here. That makes a big difference. That’s on two streets down over there [in Collingswood]. Just signage that people can ride bikes. That makes a big difference because otherwise, people assume that you’re not supposed to bike here.”* -Collingswood Focus Group, June 2024.

Other aspects of road maintenance were mentioned by riders of public transit and those who drove their own vehicles. Drivers shared that their cars have suffered damage from the ongoing impact of riding over potholes, and bus riders pointed out that potholes caused discomfort and pain for passengers. A quarter of survey respondents (25.5%) selected better maintenance of existing roads and highways as one of their top improvement priorities. One Camden City participant praised the repairs completed on 27th St., commenting *“it looks beautiful”* to the agreement of other residents. Participants recommended more attention to roads in the southern part of Camden City and not-central areas, commenting that *“Camden [City] is like a crater; just a single hole.”*

Participants across a few focus groups also recommended investing in better street lighting and public safety. Drivers reported that poorly lit streets affect their visibility. Pedestrians reported that lack of lighting made them feel unsafe walking at night, afraid that they might get struck by a car or of crime in their area. A minority (29.6%) of survey respondents indicated insufficient street lighting in their neighborhood, which suggests this issue might have to be explored further for specific neighborhoods. A minority (34.8%) of respondents indicated feeling unsafe walking at night, this being more of a concern in the NW area. This suggests that some neighborhoods may benefit from increased public safety initiatives than others and that this should also be examined on a case-by-case basis.

“I think it’s also important to talk about safety. You cannot walk at night. It also depends on the area, but you feel insecure because you don’t know what’s out there. The police drive by but it’s not as frequent as it could be. As someone said, the light is very dim. So maybe more lights would help us feel more comfortable. I think there should be a police patrol that makes rounds all around at least every half hour, because you rarely see them.”

- Camden City Focus Group, July 2024

Finding E: Assistance, Access to Information, and Communications

This priority area includes responses about participants' ability to get assistance from a transportation provider (e.g. driver, conductor, office staff), communication channels to report concerns, accessibility of information about service interruptions, road closures, schedule timetables, connections, and fares. This topic was discussed in most focus groups and identified as a priority by participants in five of them. Information availability (access to schedules, changes in routes, etc.) was identified as a top consideration by 14.2% of survey respondents. This topic was discussed at length during focus groups as participants discussed the need for more efficient pathways to access information, more responsive customer service, and more accurate updates of changes to service. Camden County community members shared that availability, access, and accuracy of the information around transportation are sometimes a challenge. Participants noted that there are occasions when the information on websites around schedule changes, changes to routes, or the apps are not up to date. Multiple participants echoed that they would like "better communication of delays before one taps into the turnstile."

Improving Accuracy and Accessibility of Information

Travelers shared that improvements to help convey the information more clearly and in a timelier manner would be valuable to customers. Participants reported that the availability and accuracy of the information on the transit websites around cost, routes, and/or changes to the routes and schedules was not always consistent or easy to find. WRI researchers also encountered this while compiling a list of public transportation options in Camden County (Appendix D). For multiple services, information about cost, target population, and availability of service was unavailable or outdated, and required us to reach out to customer services directly to find these answers. Some participants also reported inaccurate information on the printed schedules at stations, although sometimes it was unclear if the information was outdated or if the bus/train had not shown up. Participants were appreciative of digital schedule displays and the signs counting down the time for the next bus or train arrival. Out of 209 respondents who reported using Google Maps or a transportation system app (e.g. NJ Transit, PATCO), 56% reported that the information was very accurate.

Several focus groups participants shared that they found it difficult to search for their schedules or purchase tickets through the NJ Transit app. One participant explained, "*...My point is not that the information doesn't exist. It's that it is hard to find. And in the case of delays, with all forms of transit, a better job could be done communicating about those delays. Not that the information itself does not exist...I just had no idea how to find the right information, and no one else at the station [did]. Everyone was kind of resigned to like, 'I guess we'll just wait till the River Line shows up' because nobody knew.*" PATCO app users reported no issues with the schedule but said they would like the option to buy their ticket through the app.

Participants requested more prompt updates to changes in schedule or service disruption. PATCO riders reported that their text alerts were helpful in keeping them informed of any scheduling or route changes. Others noted that the PATCO app and Twitter (X) account have been helpful as well. Bus riders who were familiar with the NJ Transit bus text alerts found them useful but not always accurate, as it would report a bus was delayed by a given number of minutes, and the time would increase or reset without the bus showing up. Both bus and train riders said they would also appreciate live updates from the conductor/driver when there are delays.

Improving Assistance from Transit Staff

Participants shared at length about seeking assistance and help from the drivers and other staff. These discussions focused on the ways in which the drivers and other staff have been helpful or unhelpful. Many participants agreed that there are “good drivers on the NJ Transit lines and buses” and that “the bus drivers and other passengers are helpful.” Several participants felt that bus drivers were rude and impatient in their interactions with passengers and that they sometimes refused to provide information. These participants asked that supervisors “make sure the bus drivers are courteous” and responsive to passenger inquiries.

Participants also requested more availability of assistance after hours and from live staff. Multiple participants across nearly all the focus groups reported getting stuck on automated lines or after-hours staff that did not have the answer to their questions. Recurring examples of after-hours needs were lost & found inquiries, issues with tickets (e.g. PATCO stations), or structural concerns at stations/vehicles (e.g. River Line). A few participants shared that they struggled to get updates on open complaints through phone or email, as described by a participant,

“...I just feel like when it comes to customer service, it’s like either you can’t get no one or when you do get someone, there’s no sense of urgency. I also try to email customer service when I don’t get anyone on the phone. Nine times out of ten I don’t get a response. And a lot of times, I do follow up with my confirmation number, and reference number that they give... and never get a response back. So, it’s almost like you feel invaluable as a customer. You’re taking my money because I’m paying my fare and everything. The least you can give me is a response to my inquiries, an ear to my complaints and my concerns.”

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024

Several customers also pointed out the need for assistance staff that was dedicated to area-specific concerns. As one participant explained,

“that [NJ Transit] customer service number that’s on the back of the schedule, that sends people to up north, that 973 number. They need a number here. I think a customer service number for like, you know, Southern New Jersey... Because I’ve been in the call center and sometimes they’re answering calls from up north where they have to plug the bus number in to even know what the heck the person is talking about. So, if they can put maybe numbers for the southern region, lost-

and-found, or customer complaint, they call that number. If you're in the South Jersey area, call this number. Same with PATCO. If your incident happened over Philly, call this number. If your incident happened between Rowan and Woodcrest, call this number. So maybe they can get better as to the areas needing customer service..."

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024

Improving Signaling and Clarity about Routes

Participants also noted that there are times when the signs on the buses or other information for the trains are unclear or malfunctioning. For example, multiple participants noted that bus stop signs are faded and easy to miss, resulting in bus drivers skipping them even though the navigation app the traveler is using tells them that it is an active stop. One participant shared that there *"...Most of the signs are faded. [Drivers] don't read them, or they just go past."* Riders suggested that signs should be checked for fading and obstructions blocking them (e.g., tree branches). Some riders also suggested that adding bus stop shelters or smaller structures such as trash cans and benches would make the stops more visible.

Other participants reported that the signaling cords and buttons on the buses did not always work, resulting in them getting off at the next, often distant stop. Participants also discussed that the electronic signs on the side of buses and trains were off or indicated the wrong direction or stop, which made it difficult for passengers to select the correct route or determine when to disembark when they are unfamiliar with the area. Participants recommended fixing broken signs alongside other structural repairs to vehicles. In the meantime, they asked that drivers and conductors announce upcoming stops when signs are not working.

Many Camden County participants shared that even if they are experienced riders, there can sometimes be confusion about which route to get on as they are similarly named. A few participants in a Camden City focus group expressed confusion about the 400 bus specifically, with one saying, *"There's like...five different 400s all going different places. Why don't you split them like 400, 400A, or 411..."* Another 400 bus user added that the confusion leads to misunderstandings between passengers and drivers *"because the 400 buses have different stops, [passengers] know the specific 400 bus they are looking for. Sometimes a 400 bus stops, but it's not the one they need. The driver gets mad at the passenger for not taking their 400 bus. Sometimes, the 400 they want does not stop at all because they see another 400 already at the stop [but it is the 400 the passenger does not want], and the passenger ends up missing the bus they wanted originally."* Participants recommended clarifying the bus labeling system.

New travelers in the area felt the bus system could be confusing and limited their public transit use to the specific routes they knew, as one traveler shared, *"I'm new to the area and have no clue how the routes work or how to pay, other than the Freedom Card and hoping I read Google Maps correctly."*

Those new in the area put the onus on themselves to learn the routes and said they would welcome guidance on finding the tools to do so. To help reduce or mitigate confusion, participants suggested that on the different transit websites, information could explain how the transit system works as opposed to just the routes. *“We haven’t found anything that’s like, ‘Here’s the guidelines when boarding the buses’ and things like that.”* Another participant shared, *“I know this sounds a little far-fetched, but maybe on the websites maybe have the prices mentioned or even a tutorial to show how the different variations of payments, like [other participant] mentioned, you can use your debit card. Do I need to have all cash or coins? Do I need to put them in the coin slot?... Just how you get on and pay, I think it would encourage more people to do it.”*

Finding F: Economic Considerations

Cost is an important factor in transportation access. The Housing and Transportation Affordability Index (HTA) created by the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) measures the cost of transportation and the cost of housing for households in the United States.³¹ The HTA Index reveals that the residents living across the eight Southern New Jersey counties spend an average of 48% to 58% of their income on housing and transportation combined.³² On average, housing costs total 26% to 33% of their income, while transportation costs total 19% to 27%.³³ In Camden County, residents spend 28% of their income on housing and 20% on transportation.³⁴ This data suggests the cost of transportation is a substantial share of Camden County’s residents income, as many are spending nearly half of it on housing and transportation.³⁵ According to the CNT, residents in Camden County spend \$14,391 per year on transportation.³⁶

There were several key priorities that were highlighted in this research, such as the cost of public transportation, cost of ride-shares, and recommendations from residents. Out of the 220 participants who responded to the survey, 49.1% listed cost / payment (e.g., ride cost, accepted forms of payment, passes, cost of gas, etc.) as one of their top considerations when choosing a transportation mode, and 24.6% indicated that their household needed to spend less money on transportation as a priority. One-fifth (20%) of the participants selected the creation of a program that helps with transportation costs. Participants appreciated the low cost of options like the

31 Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT). (n.d.). H+T Index. Accessed from <https://htaindex.cnt.org/#more>

32 Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs. (2023). Transportation Accessibility in Southern New Jersey: Barriers, Effects, and Considerations. Accessed from <https://rand.camden.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2023/12/Transportation-Accessibility-Southern-NJ-Walter-Rand-Institute-Report-12.23.pdf>

33 Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs. (2023). Transportation Accessibility in Southern New Jersey: Barriers, Effects, and Considerations. Accessed from <https://rand.camden.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2023/12/Transportation-Accessibility-Southern-NJ-Walter-Rand-Institute-Report-12.23.pdf>

34 Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT). (n.d.). H+T Fact Sheet: County: Camden, NJ. Accessed from <https://htaindex.cnt.org/fact-sheets/?lat=39.945244&lng=-75.11885&focus=county&gid=213#fs>

35 Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT). (n.d.). H+T Fact Sheet: County: Camden, NJ. Accessed from <https://htaindex.cnt.org/fact-sheets/?lat=39.945244&lng=-75.11885&focus=county&gid=213#fs>

36 Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT). (n.d.). H+T Fact Sheet: County: Camden, NJ. Accessed from <https://htaindex.cnt.org/fact-sheets/?lat=39.945244&lng=-75.11885&focus=county&gid=213#fs>

Camden Loop (\$2.00 a ride) and the River Line is (\$1.60 to Trenton). Related to this, some voiced concern about the cost going up as of July 1, 2024 by 30% for NJ Transit buses, River Line, and trains.

“What happens is that you already got people that are on budgets as it is. So, if you add to their transportation in their budget, now you’re taking away something else that they’re going to have to deal with. Either you’re taking away from your food, you’re taking away from the bills, you’re taking away from something else...”

- Camden City Focus Group, May 2024

Those who park at the stations to take the bus or PATCO also felt that the cumulative cost of parking over the week was a barrier.

“I think we shouldn’t really have to pay to park between the hours of 6:00 and 10:00 in the morning...I park way in the back because I can’t afford to pay to park every day... It’s only a dollar, but on top of your ticket as well, that becomes expensive.”

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024

Those reliant on public transit also pointed out that they sometimes had to supplement their transportation with on-demand services like Uber/Lyft, which have also raised their rates.

“...the ride shares have really become, like, too expensive to use. They started off really cheap years ago. Like you could go anywhere with a combination of bus and Uber, you know? It was expensive, but it was manageable. Now it’s not even an option most of the time. Like \$30 flat for just a short ride. Too much. Consider an average trip that you would take... an Uber to Deptford when I worked at Taco Bell there. And you’re talking about \$15 to \$18 just for that ride from Camden. And that’s not like at rush hour. If you’re talking rush hour, you’re talking \$20 to \$30. Or, I don’t know, I used to like just to run a couple of errands. I would like to take Uber and then I realized that I spent \$80 going to two or three stores, you know?”

-Camden City Focus Group, April 2024

Another key theme that emerged in the data was the interaction between transportation and economic growth of both individuals and communities. Focus group participants shared that transit organizations should consider investing in more transportation options for the purpose of increasing connectivity to employment. Discussions across multiple focus groups revealed that commuters lose time and money on commutes that are disproportionately long to the distance that they are traveling, adding up to 6 hours to their workday in some cases (e.g., some commuters between Camden and Burlington counties). Furthermore, participants reported abandoning good job prospects due to the lack of transportation access to areas where jobs are being created.

“There’s a lot of new companies now in Swedesboro. So I was trying to get out there, yeah, and Google [Maps] told me there was no route to the one job. And then like they [buses] started earlier... And we do our job searches, we’ll have x amount of time to get there and back. Yes, so if you don’t have a bus, for instance, let’s say, you get off work, they could get me back here within an hour and a half, or whatever. They’ll cancel that job for you, you know, man, which really makes the job search process that much harder.”

- Camden Focus Group, April 2024

Participants insisted that there should be proactive efforts in building connections to areas with employment opportunities, commercial development, and residential development. Focus groups participants stated they wanted to see greater connections between stations, commercial spaces, and residential areas, a desire that was a higher priority for survey respondents in the SE area (22.2%) than those in the NW area (11.7%).

“The interesting thing is that...there are big rental communities over on [Route] 73 and now they’re expanding. They’re still building more homes. Off the library in the back of Taylors Woods on Cooper’s Folly Road, off the South County Regional Library, now, they’re putting I understand townhomes. They’re actually breaking grounds for townhomes that are 55 and over. This area increases with those communities that are 55 and over. They had a big sign for years on 73: ‘Invest in Winslow Township.’ We wanted to grow, et cetera. It cannot grow. You cannot bring businesses if you don’t have transportation, because the businesses realize, ‘Hey, people won’t come.’”

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024.

Finding G: Environmental Impact

“Oh, those electric buses are the truth! They need to get more of them. ‘Cause [sic] I rode that from Cherry Hill Mall to Woodbury. It is the 455. Oh, my God, it was so smooth! It was quiet. The shocks! They gotta do those electric buses more.”

- Voorhees Focus Group, June 2024

The impact of pollution, gas, emissions, and other environmental impacts from gas-powered vehicles on the environment was highlighted by numerous Camden County residents. According to the United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT), the transportation sector in the United States is “responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than any other sector of our economy. In 2019, transportation accounted for 33% of emissions in the United States – and that statistic doesn’t even account for the full lifecycle of transportation-related emissions, such as the emissions from building our transportation infrastructure.”³⁷

³⁷ U.S. Department of Transportation. (n.d.). Climate Action. Accessed from <https://www.transportation.gov/priorities/climate-and-sustainability/climate-action>

Further, the U.S. EPA highlighted that emissions from cars and light trucks accounted for nearly 30% of the total hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen emission in the air, and these emissions also foster the development of smog in the summer.³⁸ And the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) noted that in the State of New Jersey, the “transportation sector accounts for 37% of the state’s net greenhouse gas emissions, making it the largest emissions source in the state.”³⁹ The United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (U.S. EPA) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) demonstrated that Camden County and each of New Jersey’s other 20 counties are categorized in the moderate or marginal nonattainment for ground-level ozone standards.⁴⁰

Not surprisingly, many focus group participants across Camden County discussed the need to implement environmentally friendly transportation and transit options such as electric buses and/or creating additional charging stations for electric cars. Camden County residents also shared that regulating and implementing electric vehicles may help to address global warming and help protect the Earth. And nearly 30% of survey participants shared that making transportation more environmentally was a priority. The exchange below highlights what was heard by the WRI researchers across several focus groups:

“Facilitator - WRI Researcher: When we’re talking about environmental impact, how much of a priority is that [in reference to electric buses and vehicles] for you? Thinking about all the other things that you worry about in your life?”

Focus Group Participant A: A big one...I think it’s a big issue. I mean, I’m conscious of it. Because I do recycle. Whenever I have some plastic bottles, I make sure I put them in the recycling. It’s definitely an issue that I think about, you know, global warming and all of that. I believe a lot of transportation companies are going in that direction. You know, I think it’s going to be regulated. And a lot of people will have to have a certain amount of electric vehicles. I think they’ve got to pass laws for that. It’s important.

Focus Group Participant B: It’s a major priority. I agree with what [focus group participant] said. That pollution, gas, that’s really bad, right?...Like you [referring to another focus group participant] said, the pollution is probably the main thing that’s bad. I think we might need to change to electric because of pollution because everybody’s driving now. It really wasn’t that bad down here [Voorhees]. Like when we used to go to the Lindenwold train station, it wasn’t that bad.”

- Voorhees Focus Group, June 2024

38 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. (n.d.). Drive Green New Jersey: What You Can Do. Accessed from <https://dep.nj.gov/drivegreen/reduce-emissions/#:~:text=In%20New%20Jersey%2C%20the%20transportation,emissions%20source%20in%20the%20state>

39 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. (n.d.). Drive Green New Jersey: What You Can Do. Accessed from <https://dep.nj.gov/drivegreen/reduce-emissions/#:~:text=In%20New%20Jersey%2C%20the%20transportation,emissions%20source%20in%20the%20state>

40 U.S. Department of Environmental Protection. (n.d.). New Jersey Nonattainment/Maintenance Status for Each County by Year for All Criteria Pollutants. Accessed from https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/anayo_nj.html

Nearly 55% of those surveyed (n=103) stated that electric buses in NJ Transit's fleet will have a positive impact on Camden County in the next 5 - 10 years. And several individuals also took the time to write in responses on the survey. There were several write-in responses that were similar in viewing the *"implementation of environmentally friendly practices such as hybrid or electric buses to reduce emissions and promote sustainability will be a good thing."* Many participants also shared that NJ Transit should consider *"getting more electric buses"* as they viewed them as *"quiet and comfortable."* One participant noted that the *"457 is a green bus. It's really nice. It's really pretty."*

Another important environmental concern that was raised was the availability of charging points for electric vehicles in the county. Nearly 54% of those surveyed (n=100) stated that the installation of electric car chargers in public spaces will have a positive impact on Camden County in the next 5 - 10 years. And one participant in a focus group stated, *"I'm gonna go with electric vehicles. A lot of car companies are going with electric vehicles, so I think that's the key."* Some participants advised caution to plan for the necessary infrastructure and impact ahead of the implementation of green initiatives, such as providing enough charging stations for cars that need them and making them accessible for the population at large. One participant posited, *"I guess I'm just always for renewable energy, and especially if cost savings from gas and stuff could be passed on to the consumers, I think that would also be good."* A participant from a focus group summed it up this way,

"I do think that the push for electrification and the environmental impact is definitely something that's important. You can get a lot more people to the same set of destinations with a lot less impact on public transportation than you can, even if you had to get everybody using a rideshare or using cars individually. Anything we can do, especially in New Jersey where it's very crowded, to get cars off the road and really invest in public transportation as the public service ...Not just something that is important to fund, but that may not always turn the most profit...It is a baseline service. I'm excited that there's dedicated funding now at the state level or it's on its way for this kind of initiative..."

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024

Finding H: Specific Populations

Older Adults

Older participants shared experiences using AccessLink and SEN-HAN services in addition to public transit for the general public. Riders had generally positive comments about these services. In terms of improvements, they recommended increasing their availability and frequency. One participant reported that they had been denied AccessLink services due to the lack of a public bus

stop near their home. While SEN-HAN was available in their area, they felt that the AccessLink policy limited their options and added burden to the SEN-HAN service in their area given the increase in senior housing. As they explained,

“What happens is if you only have access to one company or one service [e.g., SEN-HAN], you have to wait a longer time in this community because there’s too many people to serve and you don’t have a second alternative... The reality is that society is aging and that means in these nice so-called communities, they’re not a fairytale only for young people... When you invest in a community or in a county and you’re paying taxes at 55 and as you age, you expect these services... then they come off with certain regulations that you didn’t expect. I don’t know. It gives us the feeling like you have to be very poor or in dire straits or in what they call a marginalized neighborhood to get these services, because... if you have a backyard, you’re not going to get that. It’s outright discriminatory, in my opinion.”

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024

SEN-HAN users said that the service’s end time of 2:00 pm limited their time windows for medical appointments to mornings only. Although they adapted, they would also appreciate more flexibility. Users of AccessLink encountered issues with delays in pick-up and drop-off which resulted in long trips and missing doctor appointments.

“I go to AccessLink about an hour before my [doctor’s] appointment. By car, it would take about 20 minutes to get there. The driver kept getting calls to pick up more people. I called my doctor’s office, and they said if I could get there in 15 minutes, I would be seen, if not, I had to reschedule. I told the driver that, and she goes, ‘Oh, okay. I’ll see what I can do.’ The next thing she got another call to pick up somebody else. She told me it was not possible to get me there on time. I had to call the doctor’s office to reschedule, and then I had to wait for more people to get picked up to get brought back home. I said, ‘Well, there’s no need to go to the doctor’s office. I might as well just go back home,’ so then it still took me about another 45 minutes to get back home. It was a round trip on AccessLink home to home. Then I had to pay the fare to come back home even though I never got off of the bus... I got back home after the pickups and drops off of people visiting friends and all kinds of different things.”

- Sicklerville Focus Group, June 2024

The participant suggested that trips could be separated into “business” and “pleasure” so that riders with appointments to the doctor or services could be prioritized or transported separately from riders on social trips with more time flexibility.

Individuals with Mobility Limitations

Bus riders reported that some bus drivers were impatient with passengers who moved more slowly or needed physical accommodations to board. Travelers in wheelchairs recommended adding ramps and lifts at all stations and buses, and commended PATCO for installing elevators at all their stations. Some participants noted the poor shock absorption in older buses. While most found it uncomfortable, participants with injuries found riding the buses a painful experience. Participants recommended investing in road maintenance to reduce turbulence during rides and to improve shock absorption in vehicles.

“This is just coming from my own personal experience, especially a few years ago. I had a lot of issues with my spine and my neck and not being able to absorb shock, or any plug I can do for increasing shock absorption on the buses, or the cushion of the chairs because sometimes it could be a little painful for me personally. I think for a normal person it would probably be fine.”

- Collingswood Focus Group, June 2024

Hispanic/Latino/x/e Travelers

A larger proportion of Spanish-speaking participants in the Camden City focus group (compared to other focus groups) expressed the need for more options to travel to northern New Jersey and out-of-state places such as New York City and Boston. Participants reported using a combination of the River Line, train (NJ Transit, Amtrak), and bus companies (e.g. Peter Pan, Greyhound), but these options appeared to not meet all their needs. Most participants also commented on door-to-door services used by the Latinx/e community such as JJ and Gerardo vans. These services provide them with direct connections to Newark, Jersey City, and parts of New York state. However, they felt that their pricing strategies were excessive and unfair. They said they would like to see more affordable public transportation options connecting to areas in the north.

People Experiencing Homelessness or Mental Illness

“These bus drivers, they check us out before we get on.”

- Camden City Focus Group, May 2024

“[Drivers] treat people like crap. You know, some people have nowhere to go, like [other participant] said. I’ve seen you know, there are a few ladies that are handicapped, but they’re mentally ill and they’re in a wheelchair. And they live on the streets... Some bus drivers drive right by [past these ladies] and I had a confrontation with a bus driver for doing that. Because this older lady, she’s mentally ill. And she doesn’t know what she’s doing. But it was hot one day and he just drove right by. And I was like, ‘That is somebody’s mother.’”

- Voorhees Focus Group, June 2024

“I think safety is a concern, and I think that’s a huge concern because if you’re traveling, especially not during rush hour, you can run into anything. There’s all kinds of people. There’s people passed out on the train. A lot of people on the trains yelling and hollering, and there’s been a lot of homelessness hanging in Lindenwold’s train station.”

- Virtual Focus Group, July 2024

Public transit and stations have become temporary shelters for many people without a home. Participants in focus groups shared mixed perspectives that conveyed the discomfort, helplessness, and frustration at the intersection of transportation, homelessness, and mental health concerns. Participants who reported experiencing homelessness within recent years felt they were treated with less courtesy and flexibility than other passengers. They reported staff who blatantly ignored their questions and blocked them from boarding even as paying customers. They were more likely to describe interactions with transit staff and police that resulted in verbal or physical aggression. They also felt less protected by regulations set in place on transportation.

“They have—what’s that law, when you assault a bus driver? The violation? Assault on a bus driver gets you seven and a half years. But what about the patron? What about assault on a patron? Yeah, but he assaulted me, so where is the sign for that? Because it’s almost like a one-way thing.”

- Camden City Focus Group, May 2024

Other passengers described feeling uncomfortable and even unsafe around people behaving erratically or under the influence of drugs. They also felt that people aimlessly occupying transit spaces contributed to overcrowdedness, littering, the decay of structures and vehicles, and the contamination of spaces, which further discouraged the public from using public transportation.

“I like to use the train because it’s faster and cheaper, but there are some strange people there. Yes, security there is totally zero. I have ridden the train a couple of times to go to New York. From here to Trenton, Trenton to New York [note: referring to the River Line]. And that is an entire odyssey what goes on with those people. Well, one time I got on the train and a man got on who seemed high on drugs. And that man kept glaring at me. And he kept saying, “Fuck you, son of a bitch, fuck you.” And I had a thermos with oatmeal because I didn’t have breakfast, I so I thought, if he does something to me I can grab my thermos and hit him with it. But yeah, that happened to me. And then people also spit in there and stuff. No, I do not recommend. Well, at least that train I don’t recommend much. The other ones are more organized. The view when you’re riding it is really pretty but there’s no security. I like taking the train because you can enjoy the landscape and see a lot of nice things.”

- Camden City Focus Group, July 2024

Participants recommended the increase of staff and police presence at buses, trains, stops, and stations to discourage behavior that might be disruptive for paying customers. Some suggested that the enforcement of a restricted access system at stations would limit the presence of only paying customers in certain areas. Those who had experienced and/or witnessed discrimination asked transit staff to treat all potential riders and passengers with compassion and dignity. They also asked to consider ways to offer equitable access to transportation (e.g., complimentary rides during less busy times and zone extensions for participants who cannot afford to pay more). Most agreed that homelessness is an intersectional, systemic issue that must be addressed from multiple avenues by all structures impacted. As one participant expressed,

“[Homelessness] really is a big problem, but I don’t think it falls under the transportation system. It’s a broader problem. And it’s not gonna just take one institution to try to deal with it. Everybody has to pitch in. I’m talking about the government... And nobody seems to wanna tackle that issue, but it’s affecting everybody... So I think it takes a whole—it comes from the top. So whoever is the CEO of public transportation, he needs to start orchestrating some kind of planning. Because what they’re doing now is, over at the speedline [PATCO], they’re forcing people out. Sometimes you can’t see it, because they’re homeless, but you’re just forcing them into somebody’s neighborhood where something could possibly happen over in that neighborhood. The reason why they are [at the stations] is because they feel safe. If they didn’t feel safe, they will be out in the community. But I think it comes from the top, you know. Somebody needs to say, “Listen, let’s send some help, you know. Let’s send some social workers out there. Let’s send some people from rehab to try to get him some help. Because they can’t just sit there.”

- Voorhees Focus Group, June 2024

Finding I: Public Opinion About Transportation Projects in Camden County

The rise of transportation as a priority in the region is evident from goals and plans set by legislators and other stakeholders in the transportation sector. As such, it was relevant to gauge the awareness around transportation initiatives and their alignment with community members’ priorities. The following projects were active or in the planning stages at the time when this study was in progress.⁴¹ Many of these initiatives aim to address transportation access and quality, and this research can be useful in furthering tailoring such initiatives to community needs and/or developing new initiatives that fill remaining gaps and respond to community priorities.

- **Camden Loop:** The Camden Loop is a public microtransit initiative launched in July 2023 in Camden City. Riders can book on-demand shuttle van services to travel within its area of service in the city. The service matches riders heading in the same direction,

41

dropping them off within proximity to their destinations. This innovative approach aims to address transportation challenges faced by residents, particularly in underserved areas like North Camden, where access to essential services such as grocery stores and medical appointments is limited. The goal is to provide residents with an affordable way to access transportation in places where gaps in local bus and light rail service exist within the city.^{42 43 44} The program, funded partly by state appropriations and operated by Via, employs residents as drivers and offers affordable fares, starting at \$2.00 per ride. The service operates from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. In July 2024, the Camden Loop celebrated its first year in existence, and Via Transportation shared that it has provided nearly 50,000 rides. Nearly half of its riders use it to get to work; while 20% use it to get to school, and another 20% use it to get to medical and healthcare locations.⁴⁵

Out of 188 respondents to this item, 47.9% thought that expanding the program to cover more areas would have a positive impact on their own transportation needs. Over a fifth of respondents (22.9%) said they did not know about this program. A few participants in the Camden City focus groups mentioned using or knowing about the Camden Loop, which elicited curiosity from other participants who had not heard about it. As participants shared information with each other, researchers observed confusion and contradictions about pick-up/drop-off locations, waiting times, and helpfulness of custom service. Focus group participants generally were in favor of Camden Loop expansion.

- **Glassboro-Camden Line (GCL):** NJ Transit and the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA), which manages PATCO, are planning a light rail passenger line that will run along a railway currently used only for freight to connect Glassboro and Camden. The line is expected to include stops at Rowan University, Cooper University Health Care, and Campbell's Soup Company.⁴⁶ DRPA has acquired over \$200 million in funding for preliminary engineering and design, project management, and land acquisition, and entered a partnership with South Jersey Transit Partners in December 2022 (Fitzgerald, 2022; Higgs, 2022). The project is expected to be operational by early 2028 if it receives

42 For the sake of length, we limited this section to projects that specifically impact Camden County. We recognize that other projects were active at the time of this study, particularly around road construction and maintenance. For more projects, please see Appendix C.

43 Goldberg, T. (2023, July 13). Camden rolls out a new transportation option. NJ Spotlight News. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/camden-rolls-out-a-new-transportation-option/>

44 Perez-Castells, A. (2023, July 13). Camden residents can now travel around the city for just \$2 a ride. Philadelphia Inquirer. <https://www.inquirer.com/transportation/camden-loop-rideshare-minivan-20230713.html>

45 Via. (29 July 2024). Camden Loop celebrates one year of transformative, affordable on-demand transit; approaches 50,000 ride milestone. <https://ridewithvia.com/news/camden-loop-celebrates-one-year-of-transformative-affordable-on-demand-transit-approaches-50000-ride-milestone>

46 Note that at the time of this writing of this report (October 2024), there is an annual meeting of the shareholders to vote to officially to change the name to The Campbell's Company. Accessed from <https://www.cnn.com/2024/09/10/business/campbell-soup-company-name/index.html>

the necessary funding, with an anticipated total cost of \$1.8 billion.⁴⁷ The GCL has faced opposition, e.g., from the residents of Wenonah and Mantua Township in November 2022 and November 2023, respectively (i.e., ballot referendum results opposing the GCL).⁴⁸ In November 2024, the GCL will be on the ballot for Brooklawn and Glassboro.⁴⁹ Robinson Aerial Surveys and Colliers Engineering & Design (RAS/Colliers) are working on a field survey project in Camden and Gloucester counties to accurately map the current traffic rights of the railway for the possible construction of the GCL line.⁵⁰

Out of 187 respondents to this item, 61% indicate that the GCL would have a positive impact on their transportation needs. There was some evidence of opposition to this project, with 21.7% of respondents in the Northwest (NW) area indicating that the GCL would have a negative impact on their transportation needs. Most respondents in the Southeast (SE) area (77.2%) and the NW area (53.5%) indicated the GCL would have a positive impact for their transportation needs. Focus group participants who mentioned the GCL were in favor of its construction, with a couple of participants who expressed frustration that it has not been built yet.

- Walter Rand Transportation Center Improvement Project:** In Camden City, the Walter Rand Transportation Center received \$250 million in funding from NJ Transit in 2021 to improve the station significantly. Governor Phil Murphy has said the funding will “provide better connectivity between PATCO Speedline and the River Line” and “improve flow for the more than two dozen NJ Transit bus lines.”⁵¹ The project will provide room for independent bus services, parking, and electric vehicle charging stations. Additionally, the project will explore transit-oriented development, including adjacent housing, office, and retail space.⁵² The project is currently in the design concept phase.⁵³ The project is also seen as a potential driver for the Camden City economy by

47 Fitzgerald, T. (2022, November 2). Long-sought Glassboro-Camden rail line took a step forward. Will it get built? The Philadelphia Inquirer. <https://www.inquirer.com/transportation/glassboro-camden-rail-linetransit-gloucester-county-20221102.html>

48 Cherry Hill Courier Post. (2022 November 8, 2022). NJ elections, 2022 results: Wenonah voters oppose Glassboro-Camden light rail line <https://www.courierpostonline.com/story/news/politics/elections/2022/11/08/new-jersey-election-results-liveblog-congress-house-of-representatives/69578947007/> Metz, J. (2023 December 13). County certifies Mantua’s no vote on GCL: A majority of residents voted against the idea on Election Day. <https://thesunpapers.com/2023/12/13/county-certifies-mantuas-no-vote-on-gcl/>

49 Duhart, B. (2024 September 5). 2 towns reach out to voters to gauge interest in stalled \$2B N.J. rail project. <https://www.nj.com/news/2024/09/2-towns-reach-out-to-voters-to-gauge-interest-in-stalled-2b-nj-rail-project.html>

50 Glassboro-Camden Line (GCL). (2024 May 7). Surveying in the Field: April 2024. <https://www.glassborocamdenline.com/surveying-in-the-field-april-2024/>

51 Rodas, S. (2021, February 17). \$250M to Modernize Camden’s Walter Rand Transportation Center for First Time Since 1989 <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/camden/sections/government/articles/250m-to-modernize-camden-s-walter-rand-transportation-center-for-first-time-since-1989>

52 Burns, K. P. (2021, February 17). Downtown Camden transportation hub to get major overhaul. WHYY. <https://whyy.org/articles/camdens-walter-rand-transportation-center-to-get-major-overhaul/>

53 Burns, K. P. (2021, February 17). Downtown Camden transportation hub to get major overhaul. WHYY. <https://whyy.org/articles/camdens-walter-rand-transportation-center-to-get-major-overhaul/>; Camden County. (2023 September 22). Walter Rand Transportation Center Improvement Project Progresses. <https://www.camdencounty.com/walter-rand-transportation-center-improvement-project-progresses/>

hosting “new retail, office, and residential development and the possibility of another hotel in the city.”⁵⁴

Out of 188 respondents to this item, 62.2% indicated that this would have a positive impact on their transportation needs. This project was not mentioned in focus groups explicitly, but many participants recommended improvements to the Walter Rand Transportation Center that align with the goals of this project (e.g., renovation of facilities, better pedestrian connections).

- Environmental and Sustainability Projects: In 2022, NJ Transit rolled out its first electric bus in Camden City for Route 452. Routes 455 and 457 started using electric buses in 2023.⁵⁵ Near the end of 2023, officials in Collingswood unveiled two charging stations for electric vehicles. These charging stations are the first of their kind in Camden County located in the North Atlantic Avenue parking lot. Customers pay \$.40 cents per kilowatt-hour to use the charging station.⁵⁶ In late 2023, New Jersey implemented the Advanced Clean Cars II rule which is aimed to help improve air quality and provide additional clean options for car buyers. The State of New Jersey will require that the vehicle manufacturers make 100% zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) by 2035, starting with the requirement that 43% of their annual production volume be ZEVs by 2027.⁵⁷ NJ Transit is aiming to be 100% zero-emissions bus fleet by 2040.⁵⁸

Out of 188 respondents, over half reported that environmental sustainability projects like electric car chargers in public spaces and the use of electric buses in NJ Transit fleets would have a positive impact on their transportation needs. About a third (28-32%) felt that these initiatives would not have any impact on them. Most focus group participants who discussed the environmental impact of transportation supported the implementation of electric buses. Most supported green initiatives in general but did not have specific knowledge of what was being implemented or what could be helpful. Some participants expressed wanting to learn more about plans to maintain the new buses being rolled out

54 Borowski, N. (2024, September 18). New Walter Rand Transportation Center Seen as Economic Driver in Camden. <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/camden/sections/development/articles/new-walter-rand-transportation-center-seen-as-economic-driver-in-camden>

55 Wilson, C. (2022 October 4). Get on the electric bus: NJ Transit rolls out New Flyer with clean energy goal in mind. <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/transportation/2022/10/04/nj-transit-first-electric-bus-unveiled/6953854007/> and Waters, R. and Doh, E. (2022, November 2). South Jersey Climate News: NJ Transit debuts electric bus service in Camden. <https://sjclimate.news/3071/features/video-and-photos-new-jersey-transit-debuts-first-electric-bus-service/>

56 6abc. (2023, December 6). EV charging stations installed near downtown Collingswood. <https://6abc.com/ev-charging-stations-collingswood-new-jersey-electric-vehicles/14147174/>

57 New Jersey. (November 21, 2023). Murphy Administration Adopts Zero-Emission Vehicle Standards to Improve Air Quality, Fight Climate Change, and Promote Clean Vehicle Choice. <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/20231121a.shtml#:~:text=With%20the%20new%20rule%2C%20vehicle,percent%20in%202035%20and%20thereafter.> DiFilippo, D. (2023, November 21). New Jersey to ban sales of gas-powered cars by 2035, despite industry objections. <https://newjerseymonitor.com/briefs/state-to-ban-sales-of-gas-powered-cars-by-2035-despite-industry-objections/>

58 NJ Transit. (2024, March 14). NJ Transit Electric Bus Project Wins Engineering Award: Camden Bus Garage Project Highlights Progress Towards Zero Emissions Goal. <https://www.njtransit.com/press-releases/nj-transit-electric-bus-project-wins-engineering-award>

and to ensure drivers have enough opportunities to keep them properly charged. Some were uncertain about the practicality of electric vehicles covering long-distance routes and of solar-powered lighting functioning properly at night. A few participants stated that environmental sustainability was not as much of a priority compared to accessibility, reliance, and safety, which they felt needed more improvement.

- Camden County LINK Trail:** Camden County plans to build a 34-mile foot and bike trail from the Benjamin Franklin Bridge in Camden City to Winslow Township in Camden County. The trail will then dovetail to trails that lead into Atlantic and Cape May Counties, ending in Cape May and connecting Philadelphia to Cape May County and the larger 850-mile Circuit Trails Network⁵⁹ throughout the Southern New Jersey and Greater Philadelphia regions. Multiple pedestrian bridges will be included in the construction, and it is funded by the county and the U.S Department of Transportation's RAISE⁶⁰ program.⁶¹ The Camden Link Trail has received a \$19 million grant from RAISE. Stretching 34 miles and crossing 17 municipalities, this project aims to connect Camden County with Philadelphia. The initial designs were shared with the public in June 2020. There were two public meetings in July 2024 in Camden and Sicklerville to share more about the upcoming project.⁶²

Out of 187 respondents to this item, 61.5% reported it would have a positive impact on their transportation needs. Participants only discussed this project when the researchers mentioned it as an example of transportation projects related to cycling. A couple of participants with bicycles said they would enjoy the LINK trail for recreational cycling.

59 Circuit Trails Network website <https://circuittrails.org/home/>

60 About RAISE Grants, U.S. Department of Transportation <https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/about>

61 Kummer, F. (2023, July 3). Camden County gets \$19M toward building 34-mile trail starting at Ben Franklin Bridge. Philadelphia Inquirer. Accessed from <https://www.inquirer.com/news/camden-county-link-trail-philadelphia-capemay-20230703.html>

62 <https://www.camdencounty.com/service/parks/cross-county-trail/> and <https://www.camdencounty.com/commissioners-to-host-public-meeting-about-camden-county-link-trail/>

Conclusion

In this report, WRI researchers highlighted the critical transportation priorities and recommendations from Camden County residents. The findings highlight the services that people appreciate, emphasize the need for reliable and accessible transportation services; improved conditions and safety of transit infrastructure; better assistance and communication; and considerations around economic and environmental impacts. This report serves as a vehicle for ongoing dialogue and policy development around transportation in Camden County and the region overall.

The following table (Table 8) provides a quick reference to the top priorities identified by participants, their corresponding recommendations, and resources participants mentioned using or knowing about in their comments. Similarly, Appendix D provides a list of available public transportation in Camden County (current as of October 2024). As per participant feedback, there were things people appreciated as well as recommendations for improvement, and they offer a foundation for further addressing the needs of travelers around Camden County. We intend this report and materials to serve as an accessible and comprehensive resource for transportation planners and users in Camden County, NJ.

Table 8: Recommendations from Camden County Residents and Participants

Reliability of Public Transportation		
Priorities	Recommendations	Existing Resources
Service Punctuality and Managing Service Interruptions	<p>Reassess estimated travel time for bus and rail routes. Update timetables. Increase frequency of bus rounds for busy areas and times of day.</p> <p>Require that buses and trains stop at all planned stops on the route.</p> <p>Implement a system that announces upcoming stops so passengers can request their stop.</p>	<p>NJ Transit App</p> <p>NJ Transit Twitter (X) Account</p> <p>NJ Transit Text Alerts</p> <p>NJ Transit Website</p>
Consistent Service and Treatment for Everyone Everywhere	<p>Institute a response plan with on-call staff and shuttles in case of sudden staff absences or vehicle malfunctions. If already in place, increase the availability of these reserves.</p> <p>Emphasize customer treatment and service training for bus drivers.</p> <p>Increase accountability for drivers and conductors. Implement measures that support time management and complete service delivery. Recognize or reward staff who perform their duties as detailed and that demonstrate exceptional customer treatment (include passenger input).</p>	<p>PATCO App</p> <p>PATCO Twitter (X) Account</p> <p>PATCO Text Alerts</p> <p>PATCO Website</p> <p>Customer Service Offices for PATCO and NJ Transit</p>

Coverage and Accessibility of Transportation		
Priorities	Recommendations	Existing Resources
<p>Availability of transportation options across the county</p> <p>Expanding Service and Increasing Efficiency of Routes</p> <p>Increasing Connections Between Transit Options</p>	<p>Expand the rail, train, and bus services to cover more areas both in the county and outside of the county (pgs. 32-33).</p> <p>Expand River Line coverage to include more stops</p> <p>Expand the PATCO to include more stops (e.g., Berlin, Glassboro, Voorhees, Avondale Ride-and-Park, 30th Street Station in Philadelphia)</p> <p>More frequent weekend and holiday service for PATCO, NJ Transit River Line</p> <p>Increase frequency of bus services during peak hours, early mornings (5-7AM), and overnight.</p> <p>Reopen underground connections between PATCO stops and SEPTA.</p> <p>Add stops near WRTC before areas of known traffic congestion to prevent delays for passengers making connections (e.g., PATCO, River Line, or another bus).</p> <p>Offer shuttles between transportation modes and to town centers.</p> <p>Enhance accessibility features on buses, such as ramps or lifts for passengers with disabilities.</p> <p>Extend bicycle-friendly pathways, and add bicycle racks on buses.</p>	<p>Current rail, train, and bus routes.</p> <p>Existing cargo and unused railroad tracks that could be repurposed for passenger transportation.</p> <p>Existing connecting structures (e.g., underused railways, underground passageways between PATCO and SEPTA).</p> <p>Models of former and currently existing microtransit options (e.g. municipal buses, paratransit)</p>
Conditions and Safety of Vehicles, Facilities, & Pathways on Transit Methods		
Priorities	Recommendations	Existing Resources
<p>Maintaining Sidewalks, Roads, and Paths for Drivers, Riders, Cyclists, and Pedestrians</p> <p>Investing in Maintenance of Buses and Light Rail Vehicles and Stations</p> <p>Safety in vehicles, at stations, and stops</p>	<p>Improve signage and education to promote road sharing.</p> <p>Expand bicycle networks (bike trails, lanes, and routes).</p> <p>Increase construction and maintenance of sidewalks.</p> <p>Build crossing areas and overpasses in high-traffic areas.</p> <p>Provide maintenance on existing roads and highways.</p> <p>Improve lighting conditions in Camden City and backroads.</p> <p>Ensure temperature control on the trains and buses is operational (AC and heating)</p> <p>Additional safety measures on vehicles (e.g., seat belts, shock absorption)</p> <p>Additional bicycle storage on the transit vehicles.</p> <p>Improve cleanliness and maintenance of buses and trains</p> <p>Increase staff and police presence at buses, trains, stops, and stations.</p> <p>Enforce a restricted access system at stations so that only paying customers can access certain areas.</p> <p>Increase social work outreach to assist people facing homelessness or mental illness.</p>	<p>NJ Transit Police</p> <p>PATCO Police</p> <p>Camden Police Community Outreach Unit</p> <p>Staff and drivers who use safe de-escalation techniques</p>

Assistance, Access to Information, & Communications		
Priorities	Recommendations	Existing Resources
<p>Seeking Assistance from Transit Staff</p> <p>Lack of Clarity and Signage</p> <p>Confusion around Routes</p>	<p>Additional details and information on transit websites and other platforms that assist customers on how the transit system works (e.g., guidelines when boarding the buses and a tutorial on the prices and which payments are accepted)</p>	<p>NJ Transit App</p> <p>NJ Transit Twitter (X) Account</p> <p>NJ Transit Text Alerts</p> <p>NJ Transit Website</p> <p>PATCO App</p> <p>PATCO Twitter (X) Account</p> <p>PATCO Text Alerts</p> <p>PATCO Website</p>
Economic Considerations		
Priorities	Recommendations	Existing Resources
<p>Align transportation growth with economic potential</p> <p>Cost of public transportation and cost of ride-shares</p>	<p>Increase connections to areas with employment, commercial, and residential opportunities.</p> <p>Consider offering complimentary rides during less busy times and zone extensions for passengers.</p>	<p>Camden Loop and other existing forms of microtransit and paratransit.</p> <p>Free ticket programs available through social service organizations</p>
Environmental Impact		
Priorities	Recommendations	Existing Resources
<p>Addressing climate change and reducing carbon footprint</p> <p>Ensure proper infrastructure for green initiatives</p>	<p>Expand the fleet of electric buses for NJ Transit</p> <p>Expand availability of charging ports for electric vehicles</p>	<p>Electric buses pilot program ongoing.</p> <p>Rolling out of charging ports in some locations.</p>
Specific Populations		
Populations	Recommendations	Existing Resources
<p>Older Adults</p> <p>Individuals with Mobility Impairments</p> <p>Hispanic/Latino/x/e Travelers</p> <p>Persons who are Unhoused and Persons with Mental Illness</p>	<p>Increase availability and coverage of SEN-HAN and AccessLink</p> <p>Separate AccessLink travels into time-sensitive (e.g. medical appointments) vs non-time sensitive (e.g. errands, social appointments)</p> <p>Adding ramps to stations and sidewalk curbs</p> <p>Ensuring safe onboarding and offboarding from buses</p> <p>Need for additional connections to North Jersey</p> <p>Ensuring availability of signs in Spanish</p> <p>Determine transportation entities' ability to help alleviate homelessness</p> <p>Social worker presence at stations</p>	<p>SEN-HAN and AccessLink</p> <p>River Line, NJ Transit, Amtrak</p> <p>Municipal buses targeting older adults and disabled individuals</p> <p>Lifts available at all PATCO stations</p> <p>Bus onboarding areas (when not blocked by cars)</p> <p>Hispanic Family Success Center</p> <p>Existence of private charter buses known by the community (perceived as expensive)</p> <p>Presence of Camden Police Community Outreach Unit at stations</p>

Appendices

Appendix A: Description of Camden County

*Population: Race/Ethnicity*⁶³

According to the 2022 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census,⁶⁴ Camden County has a population of 524,907, which represents about a 3.6% increase in population from the 2019 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census. The county has the following racial/ethnic breakdown: 55% White, 18% Black, 19% Hispanic/Latino, 6% Asian, less than 1% for American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. In 2022, the largest racial or ethnic group in Camden County was White (non-Hispanic), with a population of 282,050. Between 2010 and 2022, the Hispanic/Latino population had the most growth increasing by 26,400 individuals from 73,530 in 2010 to 99,930 in 2022 – a 35% increase.

Age

The median age in Camden County, NJ, is 38.8 years old, which is slightly lower than NJ's median age of 40.4 years old. The population from 0 years old to 4 years old declined from 6.5% in 2010 to 5.9% in 2022. The age group that comprises 5 years old to 19 years old declined by 6% from 2010 to 2022. The age group that is 65 years old and older increased from 12.8% in 2010 to 16.6% in 2022, and this population increased by nearly 33% and was the fastest-growing age group during this time.

Gender

In 2022, 51.6% of Camden County identified as female, while 48.4% identified as male, according to the US Census.

⁶³ U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey Demographic and Housing Estimates. ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05. (2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, and 2022)

⁶⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2022.DP05?q=DP05&g=050XX00US34007>.

Income and Poverty

In 2022, the median household income is \$82,005⁶⁵ which was lower than NJ's \$97,126.⁶⁶ The poverty rate in Camden County was 12.4%⁶⁷ which was higher than NJ's 9.7%.⁶⁸

Employers

The largest employers in the County include the Cooper University Health System, Jefferson University Hospital, Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center, Inc., Virtua Health System Inc., American Water, Campbell Soup Company, and TD Bank. Healthcare and social assistance are major industries in Camden County, accounting for nearly 20% of all jobs. Camden County's unemployment rate currently is 4.6%, ranking second lowest in the region behind Gloucester County's 4.2%. The unemployment rates for other Southern New Jersey counties are: Salem County, 5.3%; Atlantic County, 5.7%; Cumberland County, 6.1%; and Cape May County, at 8.2%.

Appendix B: Analysis Conducted

Analyses Conducted

Survey

Frequencies were run for each survey question. Percentages reported in the following sections are based on the percentage of participants who responded to the question (valid percentage). If the number of respondents in a given question is less than the total of 233 (N), the number of respondents for that question (n) will be reported. Percentages for questions in which participants could indicate more than one option (multiple selection) may add up to more than 100%.

65 U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey. Income in the Past 12 months (in 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars). Camden County. Table S1901. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1901?g=050XX00US34007>

66 U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey. Income in the Past 12 months (in 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars). New Jersey. Table S1901. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1901?g=040XX00US34_050XX00US34007

67 U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey. Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. Camden County. Table 1701. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1701?g=050XX00US34007>

68 U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey. Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. New Jersey. Table 1701. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1701?g=040XX00US34_050XX00US34007

Additionally, some questions were further examined using crosstab comparisons based on the following factors:

Table 9: List of Variable and Groups for Analysis

Factor (variable)	Groups
Area	Area 1 Northwest (NW) Area 2 Southeast (SE)
Race & Ethnicity	White Black or African American
Income	Tier 1: < \$50,000 Tier 2: \$50,000 up to \$100,000 Tier 3: > \$100,000
Functioning vehicles at home	One or none Two or more
Public transit use	Frequently (at least once a week) Occasionally (Monthly to never)

Categorical variables were further tested for significance using a chi-square test of independence followed by pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction. Ordinal variables (i.e., Likert scales) were tested using Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Tests (binary factors) or Kruskal-Wallis Tests followed by pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction (factors with three or more groups). If responses vary significantly across groups, there is a high chance that the difference is related to the factor being tested and that the pattern can be used to predict outcomes. Significant differences will be reported by providing the statistic and significance level. All analyses for significance were performed at $\alpha = .05$, which means that there is a less than 5% chance that the significant finding is due to a random coincidence.

Focus Groups

Audio recordings of the focus groups were converted to transcripts using Otter and checked and cleaned by WRI researchers. The cleaned transcripts were analyzed using NVivo, a qualitative data management and analysis software. WRI researchers created a codebook using the grounded-theory method. Grounded theory helps researchers to interpret the interactions and experiences of the participants. The codebook was created based on the original broad categories used to develop the focus group protocol. Researchers involved in data collection identified additional recurring themes through discussion and added them to the codebook. The coding process completed by the researchers tracked what was occurring in the data and determined the point of saturation

(e.g., no new themes or information are emerging). In NVivo, once the themes were identified, a code was created and the data stored at that code. The data stored in the codes allowed researchers to pull quotes from participants and case studies to further explain the themes in this report. In the findings section, results are discussed in the aggregate⁶⁹ to protect the participants' identities.

Table 10: Codebook for Qualitative Analysis of the Focus Group Data

Code	Definition	Example
Assistance and communications	Discussions about getting help from transit drivers and staff; availability and accuracy of information on website, signs, app about cost, routes, changes to routes.	Ways in which staff have been helpful or unhelpful; contacting offices (e.g., lost and found); unclear or malfunctioning signals; confusion about prices or accepted payment methods.
Coverage	Discussions about areas or times that need more service or closer stops; how people get to/from the stations to their homes and destinations (first-last-mile). Basically, even with things working as they were planned, are there gaps?	More coverage in the late hours; more trips to industrial parks/areas of employment; more direct routes to areas in or out of the county; availability of Uber/Lyft.
Safety	Discussions about appropriate facilities and regulations to prevent injuries, accidents, or damage to the person or vehicle.	Damage to vehicles/bicycles; road/traffic safety; unsafe walking conditions (e.g., poor lighting, damaged sidewalks).
Security	Discussions of crime and uncomfortable interactions; prevention and protection	Feeling threatened by other passengers, access to platforms by non-riders, increasing presence of police.
Economic considerations	Any discussion about the cost of public transportation; opportunities for economic development.	Cost of transit; aligning transit development with employment and residential expansion.
Environmental impact	Discussions about implementing environmentally-friendly transportation or transit regulations; opinions about current initiatives.	Opinions on electric buses; concerns about efficiency of green transportation
Special Populations	Discussions about unhoused individuals, older adults, people with physical or mental concerns.	Individuals sleeping at a station or on buses; mental health and drug use in public transit; accessibility issues for older adults; individuals with back injuries feeling pain on bumpy roads.
Projects	Discussions of specific projects or initiatives participants have observed or heard of.	Development of biking routes or stations; repairs to highways or streets; awareness or lack of awareness with a project or service.

69 All identifying information from the transcripts were removed and each participant was given an ID number or ID letter.

Appendix C: Additional Transportation Initiatives in Camden County

Construction Projects

- **New Jersey Turnpike:** The New Jersey Turnpike Authority plans to add a third lane from Interchange 1 through Interchange 4 (running from Salem County to Gloucester County to Camden County to Burlington County).⁷⁰
- **Direct Connection:** I-295 and Route 42: NJDOT started the I-295/Route 42 project to enhance safety and reduce traffic in Camden County.⁷¹ Construction began in the spring of 2013 and should conclude by 2032.⁷² Recently, two new ramps at the I-295/Rt. 42 interchanges have been opened in Camden County, facilitating easier transitions for New Jersey drivers. These ramps connect northbound I-295 to southbound Rt. 42 and Route 42 northbound to I-295, enabling seamless movement between the two highways.⁷³ The next phase of this project will be the completion of work along I-76/Route 42, I-295 northbound, the ramp from I-295 south to I-76 west, and the remainder of the ramp from I-295 south to I-76 east/Route 42 south.
- **Expansion of the Atlantic City Expressway:** The South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA) is advancing the Preliminary Engineering Phase of the Atlantic City Expressway (ACE) Third Lane Widening Project to enhance traffic operations and safety. This project will add a third lane in each direction from Interchange 31 to Interchange 44, encompassing parts of Gloucester and Winslow Township in Camden County and Washington Township in Gloucester County.⁷⁴ The goal is to create a continuous third-lane section along the entire ACE corridor.

Road Improvements

- **Route 70 Corridor Improvement Project:** The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) started the Route 70 corridor improvement project in 2021. This is a \$151 million state-funded initiative⁷⁵ aimed to enhance traffic flow and pedestrian safety along a nearly 9-mile stretch from Pennsauken to Evesham. Upgrades include signal

70 Walsh, J. (2023, February 22). How a \$2B Turnpike project in South Jersey could dwarf Direct Connection. <https://www.courierpostonline.com/story/news/local/south-jersey/2023/02/22/new-jersey-turnpike-to-add-lanes-from-mount-laurel-to-delaware-memorial-bridge/69925559007/>. Higgs, L. (2024, April 24). A section of the N.J. Turnpike in South Jersey is closer to a much-needed expansion. <https://www.nj.com/news/2024/04/a-section-of-the-nj-turnpike-in-south-jersey-is-closer-to-a-much-needed-expansion.html>

71 NJDOT. (n.d.). I-295 Direct Connect. <https://www.nj.gov/transportation/commuter/roads/rt295/>

72 <https://42freeway.com/roads/direct-connection-bellmawr-video-update-july-2024-plus-update-on-when/>

73 Burns, P.K. (2023, November 23). 2 new ramps connect New Jersey drivers on I-295 and Rt. 42. <https://why.org/articles/ramp-project-interstate-295-route-42-new-jersey/>

74 Atlantic City Expressway: Third Lane Widening Project. (n.d.). <https://www.acewidening.com/>

75 Camden County. (2022, October 26). \$151 Million Investment Made in Camden County. <https://www.camdencounty.com/151-million-investment-made-in-camden-county/>

improvements, Dynamic Message Signs installation, drainage enhancements, sidewalk improvements, and road resurfacing. The project, slated for completion by early 2027, will also repave North Maple Avenue loop ramps and the Route 70/Route 73 interchange ramps.⁷⁶

- **Road improvement projects in Berlin and Winslow Township:** In early August 2024, Camden County started two road improvement projects. The first project is located in Berlin Borough and will include road striping, milling, paving, improving stormwater infrastructure as well as the installation of handicap ramps and adjacent sidewalks. Work is slated to be finished in January 2025. The second project is in Winslow Township and is a milling and paving project.⁷⁷ Also, in early August 2024, the county completed its widening of Berlin Cross Keys Road from Camden County Technical School to Turnersville Road.⁷⁸ Please visit [Camden County Upcoming/Completed Roadway Capital Improvement Projects](#) to see a comprehensive list of upcoming and completed projects.
- **Kings Highway (Audubon, Haddon Heights, & Mount Ephraim):** In late September 2024, a nearly \$11 million dollar improvement project started. This project's goal is to resurface or reconstruct a two-and-a-half-mile stretch of Kings Highway from Market Street to Hopkins Road.⁷⁹ It expected that this project would take about 12 months to complete.

Paratransit Initiatives

- **Recent Legislation: Paratransit Pilot Program:** On October 4, 2024, Governor Phil Murphy signed Bill A2607⁸⁰ into law (P.L.2024, c.82.), allowing taxis, limos, and rideshare companies to provide paratransit services in partnership with NJ Transit.⁸¹ This two-year pilot program aims to expand paratransit services for seniors and individuals with disabilities. After the pilot period, participating companies must submit reports detailing metrics, such as the number of rides provided and the number of accidents or violations which occurred, to the state government to determine whether to extend the program. Governor Murphy conditionally vetoed⁸² the legislation on September 12, 2024,

76 New Jersey Department of Transportation. (n.d.). <https://www.nj.gov/transportation/commuter/roads/rt70corridor/>

77 Camden County. (2024, August 2). Commissioners to break ground on \$2.3 million worth of roadwork next week. <https://www.camdencounty.com/commissioners-to-break-ground-on-2-3-million-worth-of-roadwork-next-week/>

78 Camden County. (2024, August 2). Cross Keys Road to reopen after major widening project. <https://www.camdencounty.com/cross-keys-road-to-reopen-after-major-widening-project/>

79 Hartman, T. (23 September 2024). \$10 million road project breaks ground in Camden County. <https://6abc.com/post/10-million-road-project-kings-highway-breaks-ground-camden-county/15345625/>

80 BillA2607 Sca w/GR (2R) Session 2024-2025. Accessed from <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2024/A2607>

81 <https://legiscan.com/NJ/bill/A2607/2024>

82 Higgs, L. (September 27, 2024). N.J. law would provide more rides for seniors, disabled persons. NJ.com. Accessed from <https://www.nj.com/news/2024/09/nj-law-would-provide-more-rides-for-seniors-disabled-persons.html>

recommending language changes to safeguard existing services provided to Medicaid beneficiaries, which was approved by the Assembly and Senate in late September 2024.

- NJ Transit: Riders' Choice Pilot Program: NJ Transit initially launched their Riders' Choice Pilot Program⁸³ in May 2023,⁸⁴ partnering with rideshare companies like Uber and Lyft to offer paratransit services using Access Link's subsidized rates. This program was introduced following concerns over delays in pick-ups and drop-offs due to Access Link's capacity limitations.⁸⁵

Public Transportation Costs and Fare Updates

New Jersey Transit (NJ Transit) implemented a 15% increase in fares across their bus, train, and light rail services starting July 1, 2024.⁸⁶ NJ Transit proposed a 15 percent fare increase for its 2025 budget, set to start on July 1, 2024 with subsequent 3% increases annually. This adjustment, the first since 2015, aims to offset pandemic-related revenue losses totaling \$2 billion, preventing service reductions. The cost increase would affect various routes, raising costs by over \$3.00 for certain one-way trips. NJ Transit emphasizes that this, along with internal efficiencies and revenue enhancements, would fully fund the FY25 budget. The increase follows a 3% toll increase on the New Jersey Turnpike and Garden State Parkway, part of broader transportation fee adjustments amidst pandemic-related financial strains, including the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's introduction of new tolls and fees in Manhattan. Similarly, the Delaware River Port Authority announced an increase in toll charges from \$5.00 to \$6.00 at all four bridges it oversees crossing the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA).⁸⁷

Both entities have stated that these increases will fund renovation and maintenance work across their structures. DRPA reported that their board opted for a 20% toll increase over the 30% recommended in the original plan. NJ Transit set a transition period throughout the month of July 2024 in which passengers could use tickets purchased at the prior lower rate. These changes are

83 Wilson, C. (September 8, 2024). NJ Transit's Access Link pilot that uses Lyft and taxis expands to Bergen, Passaic. Accessed from <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/transportation/2024/02/08/nj-transit-access-link-pilot-expands-bergen-passaic-lyft-taxi/72505848007/>

84 At the program's start, it was in Essex, Morris, Union, Somerset, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Salem counties and parts of Cumberland County.

85 Meyer, G. (April 17, 2024). NJ bill would let Uber, Lyft offer more rides to seniors, people with disabilities. Accessed from <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/transportation/2024/04/17/nj-bill-allow-uber-lyft-access-link-alternatives/73344304007/>

86 VerHelst, M. (2024, April 10). NJ Transit Fare Hike Approved: See New Rates, Timing; The NJ Transit board voted in favor of the fare increase package which will raise costs for New Jersey commuters starting July 1. https://patch.com/new-jersey/cinnaminson/s/ivu8w/nj-transit-fare-hike-approved-see-new-rates-timing?utm_source=alert-breakingnews&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=alert&user_email=787638f34e0d368479df3b0658966964b9bb644a5120b19d53489bbc6682683a&user_email_md5=70b5352509b7d62c35dc1fa028945594&lctg=5e77c3cb6c28c734923905fd

87 Mitman, H. (2024, July 17). Tolls on 4 bridges over Delaware River set to increase to \$6. The Delaware River Port Authority has announced that tolls on the Ben Franklin, Walt Whitman, Commodore Barry and Betsy Ross bridges will increase to \$6 on Sept. 1, 2024. <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/tolls-on-4-bridges-over-delaware-river-set-to-increase-to-6/3914952/#:~:text=The%20Delaware%20River%20Port%20Authority,1%2C%202024>

likely to impact in- and out-of-state commuters as well as New Jersey residents. Measures to entice travelers to use public transit were also announced. For instance, NJ Transit offered free transit tickets on holidays (e.g., Labor Day weekend⁸⁸) and discounted tickets during special events that may attract large crowds (e.g., North to Shore festival⁸⁹).

Appendix D: Public Transportation Options Available in Camden County⁹⁰

Service	Area(s) Covered	Population	Cost Range	Activity	Information and Reference Source
NJ Transit Bus	statewide	General	\$1.80-\$55.75 (One-Way) Fares are priced by number of zones traveled.	Hours vary by week days, weekends, and holidays. Mostly, Weekday 5:00 AM – 2:14 AM with service every 20 minutes, AM and PM peak, and Mid-day and every 30 minutes evenings and late night. Saturday 5:00 AM – 1:35 AM with service every 20 minutes mid-day, every 30 minutes early AM, evening and late night. Sunday 5:15 AM – 1:21 AM with service every 30 minutes, all day.	Link
NJ Transit Train	statewide	General	\$1.70-\$23.85 (One-Way) Fares are priced by origin and destination.	NJ Transit train service is not 24/7. Mostly, trains run between 5 a.m. and 1 a.m. There are several train routes that run as early as 4:00 a.m.	Link
River Line	Southern New Jersey - Connect cities between Camden and Trenton	General	\$1.80-\$2.55 (One-Way) Fares are priced by route.	Trains run from approximately early as 5 a.m. to as late as 1 a.m. daily. Schedules vary by weekdays, weekends, and holidays.	Link
PATCO	Philadelphia - Camden County	General	\$1.40-\$3.00 (One-Way) Fares are priced by origin and destination.	PATCO trains run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	Link
RideEco	Southern New Jersey	General	Free	A national program known as the commuter benefit program or the transportation fringe benefit (IRS Code 132[f]) allows employers to offer to their employees a pre-tax way to help pay for commuting on transit or by vanpool.	Link For partnership inquires: Link

88 NJ Transit. (n.d.).NJ Transit to Waive Fares on All Modes – Effective August 26 through September 2, 2024 <https://www.njtransit.com/customer-notice/1798490>

89 NJ Transit. (2024, June 5, 2024). Take NJ Transit To “Prudential Presents North To Shore Festival” This Summer: Discounted Round-Trip Tickets Available To See Iconic Entertainers in Three New Jersey Cities <https://www.njtransit.com/press-releases/take-nj-transit-prudential-presents-north-shore-festival-summer>

90 This information is accurate as of September 27, 2024. Information gathered from transit websites and/or phone calls to agencies and municipalities.

LogistiCare of New Jersey	statewide	General	Free	The shuttle operates on Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Coordinates non-emergency transportation to covered medical services. LogistiCare coordinates curb to curb, mobility assistance service (including wheelchair) and non-emergency ambulance services. Must give at least two business days prior to 2:00 pm before your appointment.	Link Phone: 1-866-527-9933
The Pureland North-South Shuttle - Camden County Shuttles	Camden County	General	Free	The shuttle operates Monday to Friday, 6:45 AM to 12:40 AM. Shuttle provides service between Camden City and the Pureland Industrial Complex, also serving Westville and Woodbury. The shuttle operates Monday-Friday.	Link Phone: 856-227-7571
The Pureland East-West Shuttle	Gloucester County with a stop at the Avondale Park and Ride in Sicklerville	General	Free	The Pureland East-West Shuttle connects the Avondale Park & Ride, Williamstown, Glassboro, Mullica Hill, Swedesboro and the Pureland Industrial Complex.	Link
The Pennsauken Industrial Park Shuttle - Camden County Shuttles	Camden County	General	Free	The shuttle operates Monday-Friday, from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm. Arrivals and departures coincide with the River Line train's arrivals. Shuttle provides service between industrial park businesses and the River Line's Route 73/Pennsauken Station.	Link
Rt. 54/40 Community Shuttle	Camden, Gloucester, Cumberland, and Atlantic County	General	Free	Shuttle operates on Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 7:45 PM.	Link Phone: 856-614-1072
Camden Loop	Camden City	General	\$2.00 per ride	Camden Loop is a public transit rideshare service that takes you anywhere in Camden that you need to go.	Link
Dial-a-Ride	Winslow	General	\$3.00 fee for general, and free of charge for kids.	Dial-a-Ride operates Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It does not operate on holidays. A prior day reservation is required	Link Phone: 928-289-1462
AccessLink	statewide	Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	Fare is based on the local fixed-route bus fare and number of zones a person will be traveling through and any applicable transfers a person makes.	Access Link service is comparable to the bus in that it is available during the same days and hours as the regularly scheduled local fixed route bus service, including weekends and holidays. If there is bus service available, Access Link service will be available. If there is no bus service, Access Link will not be available.	Link Phone: 1-800-955-2321

SEN-HAN Transit	County-Specific (Camden and Burlington)	Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	A \$2.00 suggested donation is requested for each one-way ride.	Rides are provided by reservation only and reservations must be made in advance of the day a person wishes to travel. Sen Han provides curb-to-curb rides by appointment. Designated provider of senior and disabled transportation in Camden County. SCUCS has informal agreements with doctors, municipal offices, boarding homes, senior citizen clubs, municipal coordinators on aging, boards of education, child/adult day care centers and health centers to distribute flyers/schedules describing the fixed routes and procedures/information on demand response medical transit.	Link Reservations for rides can be made two days in advance by calling 856-456-3344
Ezride	statewide	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Cost depends on what type of mode of transportation is used and length of the route. Cost is \$5 per ride for trips costing \$35 or less. Also, there is a \$10 membership fee.	Rides are provided by reservation only. 8am to 8pm Monday-Friday, and 8am to 5pm on Saturday, in partnership with Lyft and Uber.	Link Phone: 201-939-4242, Option 4
Barrington	Barrington	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Bus transportation to senior citizens and disabled residents of Barrington	856-547-1930
Bellmawr Municipality Bus Shuttle	Bellmawr	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	The shuttle operates Monday to Thursday, 9:00 AM to 1:40 PM.	Link
Berlin Borough	Berlin Borough	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Bus transportation to senior citizens and disabled residents of Berlin Borough	856-767-7777
Berlin Township	Berlin Township	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Berlin Township: Senior Transportation to confirm details of their transportation services. Provides rides for the following purposes: necessary errands, grocery shopping, or social or recreational purposes. Also, you must meet at least one of these criteria: you are 60+ years old, or you have a disability. No membership is required. The Transportation Assistance Program offers older adults the convenience of scheduled rides at no cost. Participants can book shared rides, facilitating a sense of community and camaraderie during their journeys. It is essential to plan transportation a few days in advance to ensure a seamless experience. The program provides curb-to-curb transportation, prioritizing the safety and comfort of older adults throughout their travels. By eliminating the financial barrier to transportation, this program aims to enhance the mobility and independence of older adults, enabling them to access essential services and engage in social activities with ease.	Link Phone: 856-767-1854

Brooklawn & Westville Shuttle Bus	Brooklawn & Westville	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Shuttle operates on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM.	Link Phone: 856-456-0750
Camden City	Camden City	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Bus transportation to senior citizens and disabled residents of Camden City.	856-757-7339
Gloucester Township	Gloucester Township	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Bus transportation to senior citizens and disabled residents of Gloucester Township.	Link Phone: 856-228-4000
Cherry Hill Township	Cherry Hill Township	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Shuttle operates on Monday through Friday. Service is offered within Cherry Hill's boundaries.	Link Phone: 856-661-4711 (Cherry Hill Bus East) or 856-661-4802 (Cherry Hill Bus West)
Haddon Township	Haddon Township	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Free Shopping and recreational transportation for Haddon Township Residents 60 years of age or certified handicapped. Provided by the Haddon Township & Camden County Boards of Commissioners	Link Phone: 856-854-1176
Lawnside	Lawnside	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Bus transportation to senior citizens and disabled residents of Lawnside.	609-929-7412
Lindenwold	Lindenwold	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Free bus service to local areas for Lindenwold senior citizens/handicapped.	Link Phone: 856-783-2121
Oaklyn	Oaklyn	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Bus transportation to senior citizens and disabled residents of Oaklyn.	856-858-2457
Pennsauken	Pennsauken	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Camden City	Link Phone: 856-665-1000
Runnemede	Runnemede	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Bus transportation to senior citizens and disabled residents of Runnemede.	Link Phone: 856-939-5161
Voorhees	Voorhees	Seniors and People with Disabilities	Free	Township Senior Bus Schedule: Voorhees Township provides FREE bus transportation to a limited number of locations around town. Does not provide personal or medical runs. Days and locations are subject to change.	Link Phone: 856-429-4703
Camden County Department of Health & Human Services Division of Senior & Disabled Services Shared Services with South Jersey Transportation Authority	Camden County	Must be an ambulatory Camden County Resident over 60 years who is unable to drive and has no other form of transportation. You are not eligible if you are receiving Managed Long Term Services and Supports (MLTSS).	Free	Dialysis Transportation Provides curb to curb Dialysis Transportation for ambulatory clients who cannot drive or do not have any other source of transportation. Medical Rides Provides medical rides to doctor's appointments only. This service is granted as a last resort option for individuals who are low income and do not have adequate support to attend their medical appointments. All appointments for Medical Rides are Monday – Friday between the hours of 9:30 AM – 1:00 PM.	Link

Appendix E: Survey for Transportation Priorities in Camden County

1. What is your zip code? If you are currently unhoused, please enter 000

2. In what town, township or city do you live in? If you commute to Camden County, please enter the town in which you work/study. If you are currently unhoused, please enter the town in which you spend most of your time. _____
3. How many motor vehicles in working order (e.g., cars, trucks, motorcycles) are there in your household?
 - None
 - One
 - Two
 - More than 3
 - I don't know
4. Altogether, how often do you use public transportation in Camden County (e.g., bus, light rail, train, SEN-HAN, Camden Loop, ferry)?
 - 1-3 days a week
 - 4-7 days a week
 - A few days every couple of weeks
 - A few days a month
 - A few days every few months
 - I don't use public transit in Camden County

ACCESS AND AVAILABILITY

1. Which of the following methods of transportation do you use most often in Camden County? **Please select no more than 3.**
 - Household motor vehicle (e.g., car, motorcycle)
 - Walking
 - Bicycle
 - Bus (NJ Transit, local bus)
 - Light rail (Riverline, PATCO)
 - Ferry

- On-demand public transit (AccessLink, SEN-HAN, Camden Loop)
 - On-demand private transit (Taxi, Uber, Lyft)
 - Ride from relative/acquaintance outside your household
 - Other _____
 - I have not used public transportation in Camden
2. Please rank the forms of transportation you use in Camden County, starting with your most frequent mode of transportation as 1. **Please rank the options you selected above.**
-

3. What is the primary mode of transportation you use to reach the following?

- Work
- School or adult education program
- Child's school
- Childcare
- Grocery stores or food in general
- Medical appointments
- Counseling or support groups
- Social services (e.g., family success centers, VA, government agencies)
- Shopping centers
- Play and exercise (e.g., public parks, gyms)
- Recreation (e.g., concerts, public events)

Options:

- 01. Household motor vehicle
- 02. Walking/ Bicycle
- 03. Public transit (bus, rail, ferry)
- 04. On-demand transit (public or private)
- 05. Other
- 06. Not applicable

4. When you use public transportation to get somewhere in Camden County, what is the most common method you use to figure out your route?
 - Navigation app or website (e.g., Google Maps, Mapquest)
 - Specific transportation app or page (e.g., NJ Transit, PATCO)
 - Ask a relative or friend
 - Other
5. How accurate is this information usually?
 - Very accurate
 - Somewhat accurate
 - A little wrong
 - Very wrong
6. When would you like to see more public transportation being offered? **Check all that apply.**
 - Between 12:00 am and 6:00 am
 - 6:00am-9:00am
 - 9:00am - 12:00pm
 - 12:00pm-6:00pm
 - 6:00 pm-12 am
 - I don't have a need for more times
7. When you have to go somewhere, what are the main considerations for choosing the mode of transportation that will get you there? **Please select no more than 5.**
 - Accessibility: distance to/from transit stop, wheelchair accessible, seats available, etc.
 - Parking: regulations, fees, handicap parking, etc.
 - Availability: frequency of service, days and times of service, area of service, etc.
 - Cost/payment: ride cost, accepted forms of payment, passes, price of gas, etc.
 - Documents: ID, license, medical insurance, car insurance, registration, etc.
 - Reliability: shows up on time, consistent schedule, etc.
 - Safety: safety at transit stop and during ride, road or track conditions, etc.
 - Information availability: access to schedules, changes in routes, etc.
 - Duration: length of trip, number of transfers needed to reach destination, etc.
 - Cleanliness of transit stop and vehicle

- Comfort: seating availability, temperature control
- Environmental impact
- Other _____

8. Please think about the area in Camden County where you live in or commute to, and indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

- I can access public transport (such as bus, rail, ferry) within a 10-15 minute walk from my home
- There are sidewalks on most of the streets in my neighborhood
- There are poorly maintained sections of the sidewalk that could be major trip hazards? (e.g., misalignments, cracks, overgrowth, incomplete sidewalk)
- There are ramps at most of the curbs (for carts or wheelchairs)
- There are clearly designated bicycle paths in or near my neighborhood
- The crime rate in my neighborhood makes it unsafe to go on walks at night
- There are enough street lights installed and working
- There is so much traffic on the streets that it makes it difficult or unpleasant to walk in my neighborhood.
- The sidewalks in my neighborhood are well maintained (paved, with few cracks) and not obstructed
- There is so much traffic on the streets that it makes it difficult or unpleasant to ride a bicycle in my neighborhood
- The crime rate in my neighborhood makes it unsafe to go on walks during the day
- The crime rate in my neighborhood makes it unsafe to go on walks at night
- There are many places to go within easy walking distance of my home
- There are well-maintained benches or places to sit while waiting for my transport (e.g., bus stop benches)

Options:

- 01. Strongly disagree
- 02. Somewhat disagree
- 03. Somewhat agree
- 04. Strongly agree
- 05. Don't know/Not sure

PRIORITIES

1. Of the following options, please select the top 3 transportation needs for you and your household. **Please select no more than 3.**

- Reliable transportation to work
- Reliable transportation to school or training program
- Reliable transportation to medical appointments
- Reliable transportation to food stores and shopping centers
- Reliable transportation to social services (family success center family success centers, VA, government agencies, VA, government agencies)
- Accessible transportation for people with disabilities
- A personal motor vehicle
- Fixing or replacing a current personal motor vehicle
- A bicycle or e-bike
- Getting the documents required to drive (license, car insurance, registration)
- Spending less money on transportation costs
- Other _____
- I have no immediate transportation needs

2. Of the following options, please select the transportation system improvements that would be most important to you. **Please select no more than 7.**

- Expanding and improving bus services
- Offering more buses and trains between 12am and 6am
- Offering rental bicycles or scooters to travel between the station and my final destination
- Expanding bicycle networks (bike trails, lanes and routes)
- Constructing or increasing maintenance of sidewalks
- Expanding rail and train services
- Creating more direct public transit routes outside the county
- Creating a program that helps people pay for transportation costs
- Building more connecting roads between neighborhoods and commercial areas
- Developing more parking near transit stops
- Providing better maintenance on existing roads and highways

- Widening existing highways
 - Providing special lanes on highways for carpools and buses
 - Providing special lanes on highways just for trucks
 - Implementing new technologies to make highways more efficient, such as electronic message signs, websites, and radio updates
 - Creating service patrols to quickly respond to accidents, and stalled vehicles, etc.
 - Expanding the coverage of on-demand transportation services (e.g., Camden Loop, Uber, AccessLink)
 - Making transportation more environmentally friendly
 - o Other _____
3. The following are ongoing projects in Southern New Jersey that may have an impact on Camden County in the next 5 to 10 years. For each please tell me if you think it will have a positive impact, negative impact, or no impact on your own transportation needs.
- Expansion of the Camden Loop program to cover more areas
 - Construction of the Glassboro-Camden light rail
 - Route 70 Corridor repavement and improvement project to improve signs, sidewalks, and drainage
 - Construction of ramp connections between I-295 and Rt 42
 - Installation of electric car chargers in public spaces
 - Use of electric buses in NJ transit fleet
 - Renovation of the Walter Rand Transportation Center to increase bus connections, parking, and retail presence
 - 34-mile bike trail from the Ben Franklin Bridge to Winslow
 - Sidewalk improvements in Delran, Cherry Hill, and Voorhees

Options:

- 01. Positive Impact
- 02. No impact
- 03. Negative Impact
- 04. I don't know what this is

4. In your experience, are there any areas in Camden County that are difficult to reach via public transportation? If so, which ones?
-

5. And as a whole, how well does public transportation in Camden County (bus, rail, ferry, Camden Loop, AccessLink, SEN-HAN) meet your travel needs?

- Very Well
- Somewhat Well
- Not Too Well
- Not at All
- I don't use public transportation in Camden County

BUS (if noted as a regular form of transportation)

1. How often do you ride the bus?
- 5 - 7 days per week
 - 2 - 4 days per week
 - Once a week
 - A few days per month
 - Once a month or less
2. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel about...
- Riding the bus during the day
 - Riding the bus at night
 - Waiting at the bus stop during the day
 - Waiting at the bus stop at night

Options:

- 01. Very unsafe
- 02. Somewhat unsafe
- 03. Somewhat safe
- 04. Very safe

3. How satisfied are you with the bus service in Camden county?
- Very Dissatisfied
 - Dissatisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Very Satisfied
4. Which of the following need the most improvement when it comes to buses. Please check up to 3 items.
- Availability of services (range and zones covered)
 - Frequency of services
 - More direct routes
 - Shorter travel time
 - Cleanliness of vehicle
 - Comfort of ride
 - Condition of bus stops
 - Safety at the stops or buses
 - Fare costs or method of payment (e.g. token/transit card, cash or debit/credit card)
 - Punctuality of bus
 - Other _____
5. If you like, please give some examples of what kind of improvements you would like to see.
- _____

LIGHT RAIL (if noted as a regular form of transportation)

1. How often do you ride the PATCO?
- 5 - 7 days per week
 - 2 - 4 days per week
 - Once a week
 - A few days per month
 - Once a month or less
 - I don't take the PATCO

2. How often do you ride the Riverline?
 - 5 - 7 days per week
 - 2 - 4 days per week
 - Once a week
 - A few days per month
 - Once a month or less
 - I don't take the Riverline
3. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel about...
 - Riding the PATCO during the day
 - Riding the PATCO at night
 - Waiting for PATCO during the day
 - Waiting for the PATCO at night
 - Riding the Riverline during the day
 - Riding the Riverline at night
 - Waiting for Riverline during the day
 - Waiting for the Riverline at night

Options:

01. Very unsafe
 02. Somewhat unsafe
 03. Somewhat safe
 04. Very safe
4. How satisfied are you with the PATCO service?
 - Very Dissatisfied
 - Dissatisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Very Satisfied
 5. How satisfied are you with the Riverline service?
 - Very Dissatisfied
 - Dissatisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Very Satisfied

6. Which of the following need the most improvement when it comes to PATCO? **Please check up to 3 items.**

- Availability of services (range and zones covered)
- Frequency of services
- More direct routes
- Shorter travel time
- Cleanliness of the train cars
- Comfort of ride
- Condition of the stations
- Safety at the stations or trains
- Fare costs or method of payment (e.g. token/transit card, cash or debit/credit card)
- Punctuality of the train
- Other _____

7. Which of the following need the most improvement when it comes to Riverline? **Please check up to 3 items.**

- Availability of services (range and zones covered)
- Frequency of services
- More direct routes
- Shorter travel time
- Cleanliness of the train cars
- Comfort of ride
- Condition of the stations
- Safety at the stations or trains
- Fare costs or method of payment (e.g. token/transit card, cash or debit/credit card)
- Punctuality of the train
- Other _____

8. If you can, please give some examples of what kind of improvements you would like to see.

ON-DEMAND RIDES (e.g., Uber, Lyft, Camden Loop) (if noted as regular form of transportation)

1. Which of the following have you used in Camden County?
 - Camden Loop
 - Uber/Lyft
 - Taxi
 - AccessLink
 - Sen-Han
2. Are you usually able to get an Uber, Lyft, or taxi when you are in Camden County?
 - Yes
 - No
3. If yes, in what situations is it difficult to get an Uber, Lyft, or taxi in Camden County? If possible, provide area, town, time, or issue you experienced.

4. On average, how much do you spend on uber, lyft, or taxis in a month in Camden County?
 - Under \$35 a month
 - Between \$35 and \$100 a month
 - Over \$100 a month
5. How satisfied are you with the Camden Loop?
 - Very Dissatisfied
 - Dissatisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Very Satisfied
6. Which of the following need the most improvement when it comes to Camden Loop?
 - More locations for pick-up and drop-off
 - More accessibility for people with mobility issues
 - Shorter travel time
 - Cleanliness of vehicle
 - Comfort of ride
 - Fare costs or method of payment (e.g. token/transit card, cash or debit/credit card)

- Punctuality of service
 - Improve scheduling process
 - Better communication
 - Other _____
7. Which of the following need the most improvement when it comes to AccessLink or SEN-HAN?
- More locations for pick-up and drop-off
 - More accessibility for people with mobility issues
 - Shorter travel time
 - Cleanliness of vehicle
 - Comfort of ride
 - Fare costs or method of payment (e.g., token/transit card, cash or debit/credit card)
 - Punctuality of service
 - Improve scheduling process
 - Better communication
 - Other _____
8. If you can, please give some examples of what kind of improvements you would like to see.
- _____
9. Generally, how do you prefer to schedule and get updates from your on-demand rides?
- Phone call
 - Text message
 - Email
 - Cell phone app
 - Other _____

FERRY (if noted as regular form of transportation)

1. How satisfied are you with the ferry?
- Very Dissatisfied
 - Dissatisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Very Satisfied

2. Which of the following need the most improvement when it comes to the ferry?
 - More locations for pick-up and drop-off
 - Times when service is available
 - More accessibility for people with mobility issues
 - Shorter travel time
 - Cleanliness of boat
 - Comfort of ride
 - Fare costs or method of payment (e.g. token/transit card, cash or debit/credit card)
 - Punctuality of service
 - Better communication
 - Other _____
3. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel about...
 - Riding the ferry
 - Waiting for the ferry

Options:

01. Very unsafe
 02. Somewhat unsafe
 03. Somewhat safe
 04. Very safe
4. If you can, please give some examples of what kind of improvements you would like to see.

RIDE FROM RELATIVE/ACQUAINTANCE OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSEHOLD (if noted as regular form of transportation)

1. When a friend or acquaintance outside your household gives you a ride, how often do you pay them?
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely or never

2. On average, how much do you spend on rides from a friend or acquaintance outside your household in Camden County?
 - Under \$10 a month
 - Between \$10 and \$30 a month
 - Over \$30 a month
3. Are you able to reach your destination on time?
 - Usually
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely or never

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. In which age group are you?
 - Under 18
 - 18-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-49
 - 50-64
 - 65 or over
2. How would you describe your current work situation?
 - Fully in-office/field work
 - Hybrid work
 - Fully remote/at-home work
 - On medical or parental leave
 - Unable to work or disabled
 - Retired
 - Unemployed and currently looking for work
 - Unemployed and NOT currently looking for work
3. What is your total annual family income before taxes?
 - Under 15,000
 - 15,000 - 25,000
 - 25,000 - 35,000

- 35,000 - 50,000
 - 50,000 - 75,000
 - 75,000 - 100,000
 - 100,000 - 125,000
 - Over 125,000
 - I don't know
4. What is your gender?
- Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary
 - Transgender
 - Other _____
5. What is your ethnic background? (select all that apply)
- American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic / Latino/a / Latinx
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Other _____
6. Lastly, for how many years have you lived in Camden County?
- Less than 5 years
 - 5-20 years
 - More than 20 or all my life
 - I don't live in Camden County; I work or study here
 - I don't live in Camden County; I am here for an appointment or visit

COMPENSATION

1. Would you like to enter a raffle for a \$50 gift card? Gift cards winners will be selected in September 2024.
- Yes
 - No

2. Please enter the following information to enter the raffle. We will reach out to you by September 2024 if you are the winner!
 - Name
 - Email
 - And/or Phone number
3. Would you be interested in participating in a focus group?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe

Appendix F: Focus Group Questions for Transportation Priorities in Camden County

1. To begin with, which town do you live in? How many years have you lived in Camden County? If not a resident- how long have you been commuting to Camden? From where?
2. Could you tell us about the most frequent modes of transportation you use?
 - a. How often do you use public transportation (e.g., bus, light rail, train, SEN-HAN, Camden Loop)?
 - b. How often do you have access to a car or ride from someone? Is it free?
 - c. How often do you walk or bike to your destinations?
3. Thinking about your experiences using public transportation, what are some improvements you would like to see? You may consider the distance to the bus/light rail station, parking availability at the station, accessibility for people with mobility issues, the process of planning your travel route, general availability of information, etc.
 - a. Do you currently have trouble taking any type of public transportation? Why? What would help improve your access to this transportation?
 - b. How do you get to and from the transit stop? How long are you able to walk to reach a public transit stop? What would make the access and wait easier?
4. What type of trips or destinations would you like to take that your transportation options do not reach?
5. Thinking about private door-to-door transportation services (e.g., taxis, Uber, Lyft), how does your access to these compare with other public transportation? What may lead you to choose one over the other?

6. For drivers, is there anything that would make it easier to travel/reach your destinations in Camden County? (e.g., wider lanes, better road conditions, clearer signs and lane designations)
7. Thinking about your experiences waiting for public transit, what are some measures that help you feel safer while traveling through Camden County?
 - a. What could help you feel safer riding at different times of the day or night?
 - b. What could help you feel safer walking/biking in your neighborhood?
 - c. What could help you feel safer driving/riding as a passenger on the road?
 - d. What are the conditions of the bus stop or light rail station? What would you like to see to make your wait feel safer and/or more comfortable?
8. How do you find schedule and route information for public transportation? How do you find out about changes in schedules or routes? What sort of messaging is helpful?
9. Are there any types of signage or markers that would make it easier to navigate public transportation? For drivers, any signage or communications that would make it easier to drive around Camden County?
10. Think about any interactions you have had with public transportation staff? In what way have they been helpful? How could they be more helpful to you?
11. There have been some measurements at the state level to decrease the environmental impact of motor vehicles, such as reducing the sale of gas-powered vehicles and increasing access to electric vehicles. What opportunities do you see in these changes? What considerations would you like policymakers to keep in mind as these changes are implemented?
12. When it comes to the transportation system in Camden County, what is your number one priority? What is the improvement you would most like to see?
13. Is there anything else you would like to share?

The New Jersey State Policy Lab assists the State of New Jersey and its many communities in the design, implementation, and evaluation of state policies and programs by conducting rigorous evidence-based research that considers equity, efficiency, and efficacy of public policies and programs in holistic and innovative ways.

The lab leverages input from a robust network of multidisciplinary scholars, members of the community, and outside policy experts in New Jersey to craft innovative and equitable policy solutions that are sensitive to the needs of our state's diverse population.

By utilizing the combination of strong ties to New Jersey's diverse communities and significant expertise in collecting, cleaning, and analyzing data, the New Jersey State Policy Lab engages and collaborates with stakeholders such as community groups, the state government, and municipal governments to create high quality datasets and evidence that reflects our state's diversity and empowers state policy makers to address the needs of New Jersey communities more effectively, innovatively, and equitably.



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
New Jersey State Policy Lab

*A partnership of
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers-New Brunswick and
School of Public Affairs and Administration, Rutgers-Newark*

New Jersey State Policy Lab
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
33 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, N.J. 08901

policylab@ejb.rutgers.edu policylab.rutgers.edu

© 2024, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey