

2024 Mobility Outlook

This annual survey aims to gain an overview of what is ahead by asking subscribers about budgets, procurement, as well as their general sentiment about the year.

BY MISCHA WANEK-LIBMAN, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Respondents to the fifth iteration of *Mass Transit's* annual Mobility Outlook survey paint dueling scenarios of how 2024 could play out. While transit agency respondents see opportunities in technology advancements and service enhancements, challenges surrounding residual pandemic impacts to ridership, supply chain issues and persistent concerns with recruitment and retention remain. As one transit agency respondent added to a comment section, “we’re just trying to get through 2024.”

Survey respondents said budgets for 2024 have increased, with more than 70 percent of transit agency respondents reporting slightly higher or significantly higher budgets. However, agency budget shortfalls are a worry, with 21 percent of agency respondents reporting a budget shortfall in 2024 and another 36 percent anticipating a budget shortfall within the next two years. More than half of respondents from business community companies and non-transit agency companies report increased budgets in 2024 and more than 60 percent of these respondents say they do not anticipate cutting costs this year.

Top challenges cited among transit agency respondents include recruitment, supply chain and inflation issues. The business community shared the same concerns regarding supply chain and inflation challenges with one respondent, calling 2024 a “rebuilding year.”

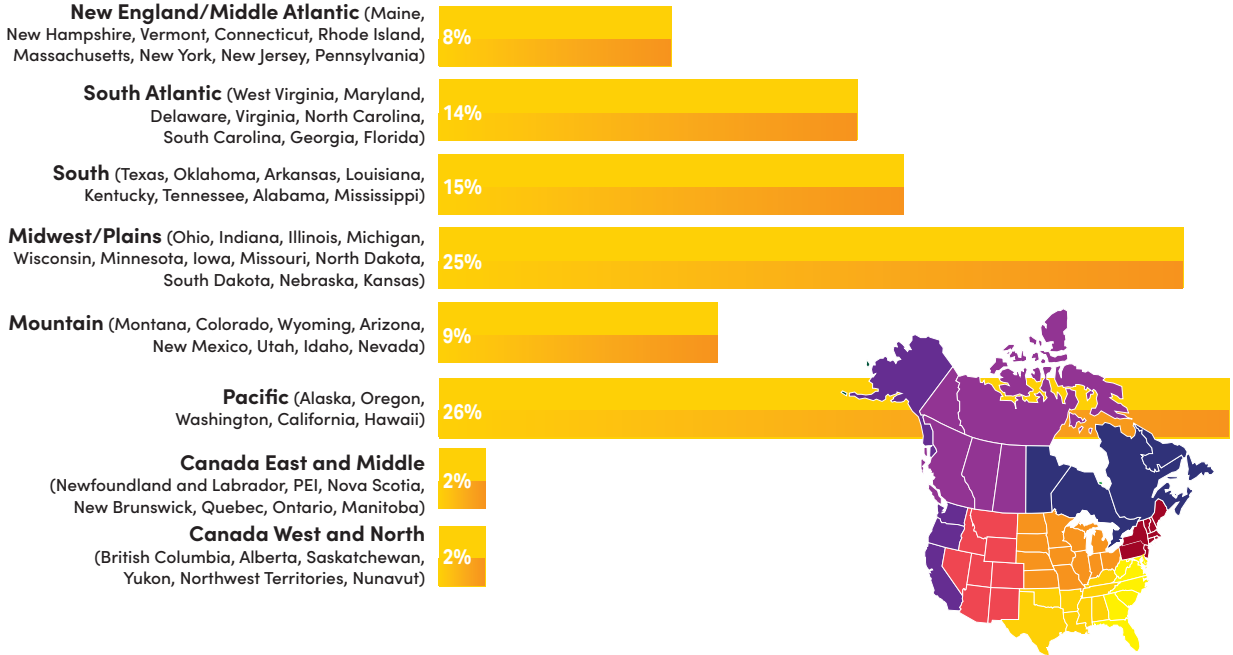
How was this information gathered?

Mass Transit queried subscribers who identify as working for a transit agency or for a business supporting transit agencies (suppliers, manufacturers, consultants, engineers) during a two-week period in January 2024. The survey received 123 responses, with 61 from transit professionals and 62 from non-transit agency professionals. The survey included intelligence with separate questions being asked of the two groups.

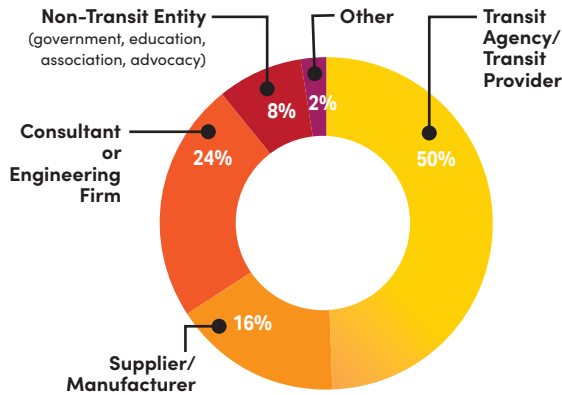
An ideal world would allow the survey to be answered by every transit provider in North America but this is not practical. We do believe the data found within this survey offers valuable insight, as the industry continues to emerge from under the umbrella of the pandemic.

Demographics

Where responding agencies are located

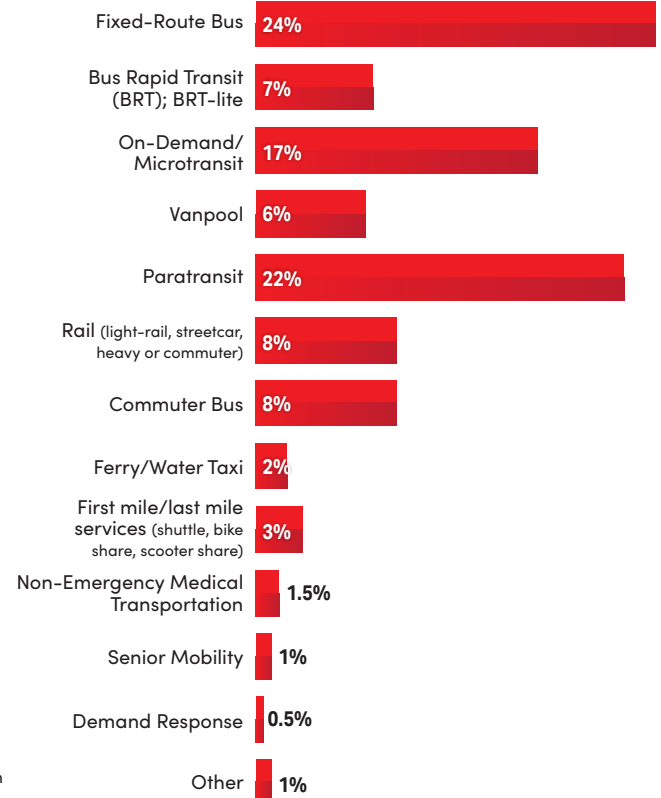


For which type of entity do you work?

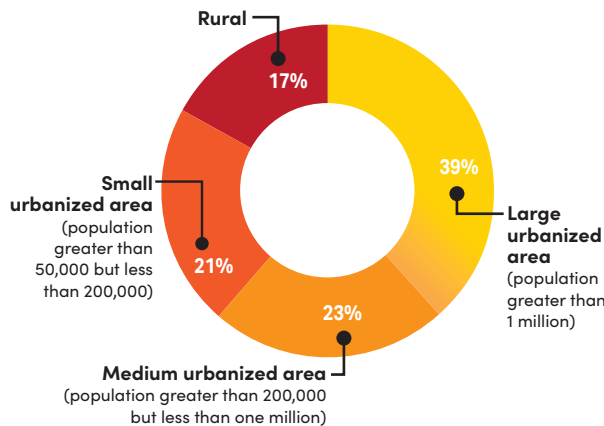


What services does your agency provide?

(select all that apply)

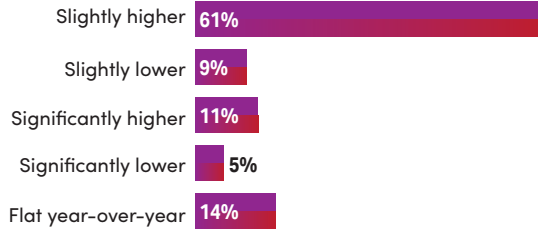


What is the population of your service area?



Budgets: 2024 budgets compared to 2023

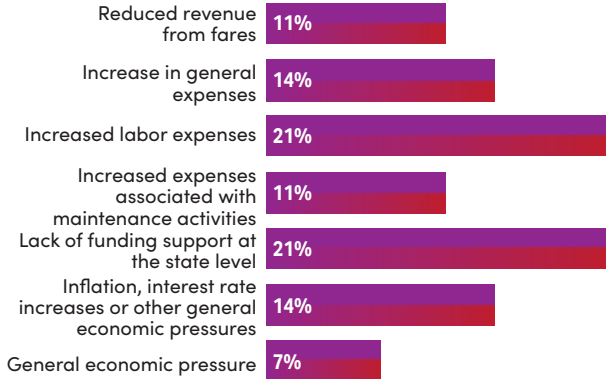
TRANSIT AGENCIES: How does your anticipated 2024 budget, both operating and capital, compare to 2023?



While 72% of respondents report higher budgets in 2024, 37% anticipate budget shortfalls within the next two years.

21% of respondents report facing a budget shortfall between \$10 million and \$100 million in 2024.

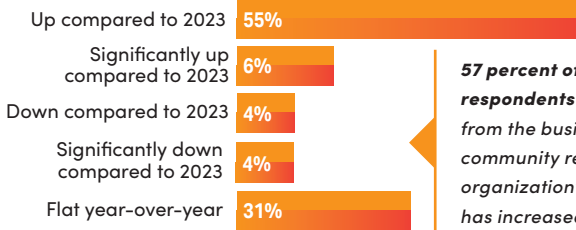
TRANSIT AGENCIES: For those agencies reporting budget shortfalls in 2024, what are the contributing factors?



More than 46 percent of respondents from small urban and medium urban agencies report no budget shortfall is anticipated within the next two years.

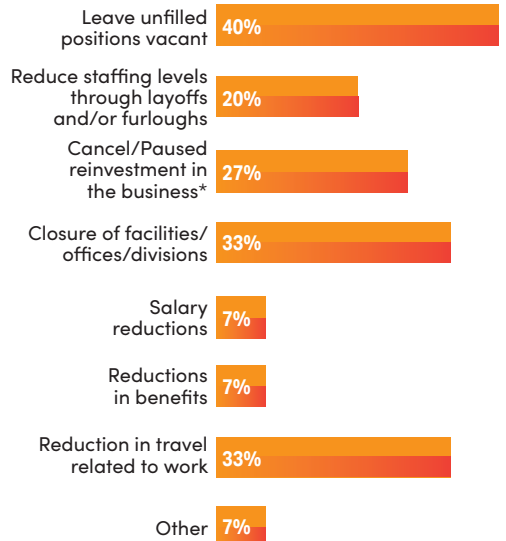


BUSINESS COMMUNITY: Where do you believe revenues will be in 2024?

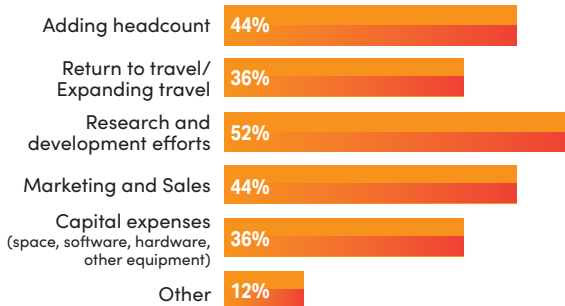


57 percent of respondents from the business community report their organization's budget has increased in 2024.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY: Where will any cost savings be realized in 2024?



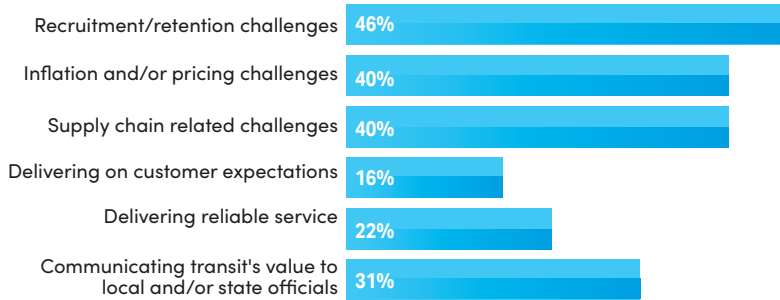
BUSINESS COMMUNITY: For anticipated budget increases in 2024, where will the increase be seen?



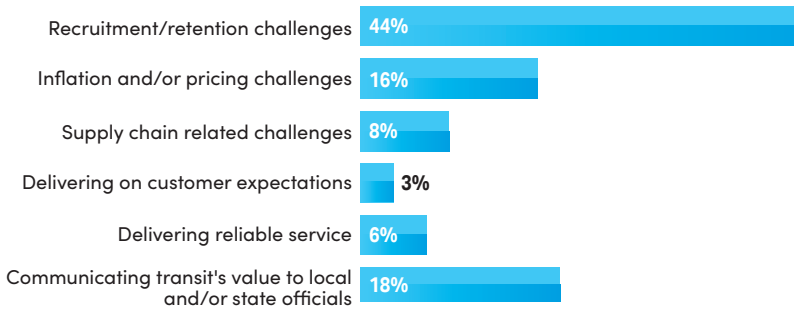
*For example through facility expansion, pausing technology upgrades, etc.

Operations: Challenges and opportunities foreseen in 2024

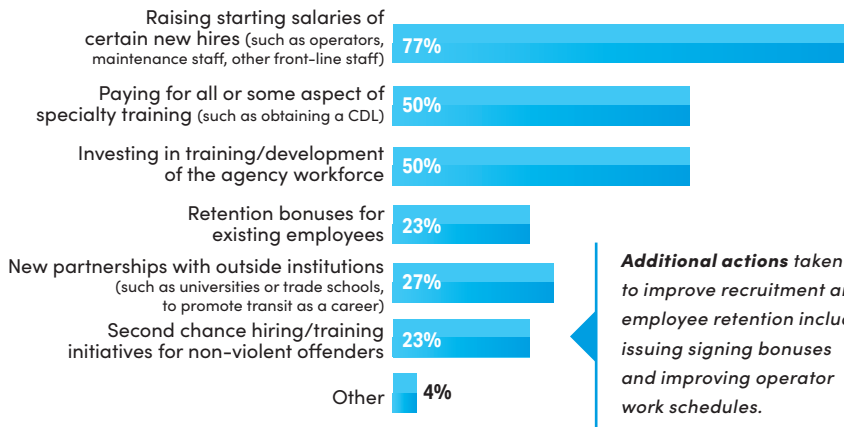
TRANSIT AGENCIES: What challenges are anticipated in 2024?



TRANSIT AGENCIES: Which would classify as the most pressing challenge?



Of those respondents who selected recruitment/retention as the most pressing challenge, what efforts has your agency taken to remedy this?

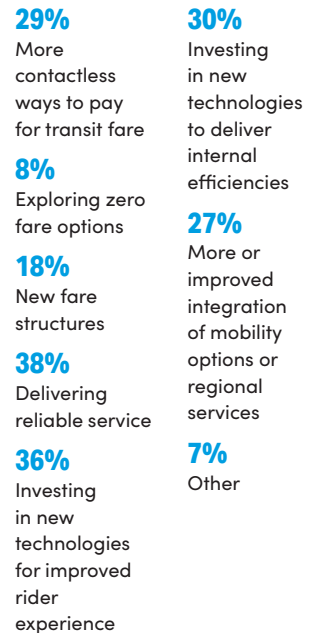


BUSINESS COMMUNITY: What is the main challenge anticipated in 2024?



TRANSIT AGENCIES:

Where do you see opportunities for your agency in 2024?



BUSINESS COMMUNITY:

Where does your organization see opportunities in 2024?

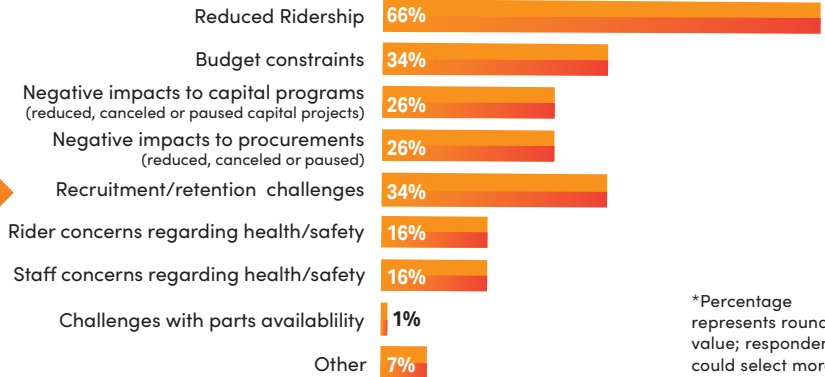


Service: Rider Experience

What residual impact does the pandemic still have on your agency?

A higher percentage of respondents in large urbanized areas report negative impacts to capital programs as a residual impact from the pandemic.

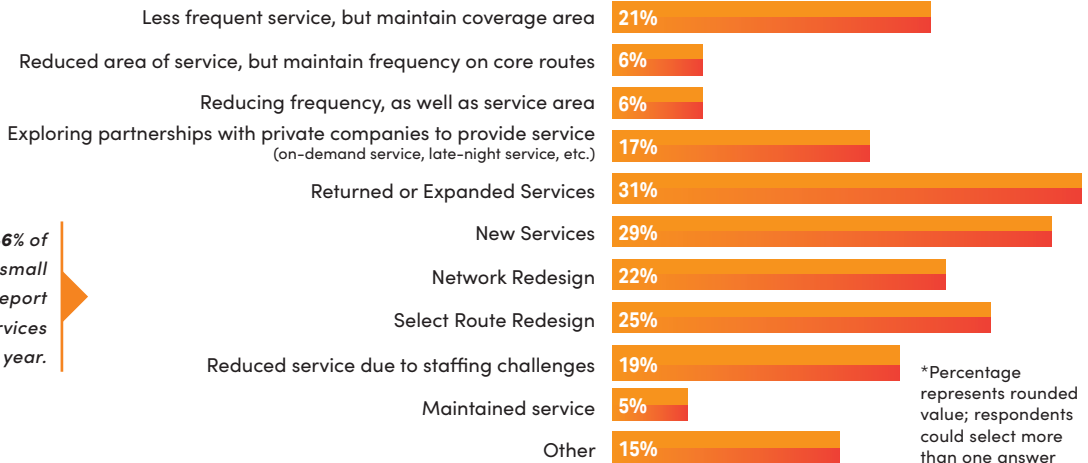
More than a quarter of respondents in small urbanized areas and rural and/or Tribal systems report negative impacts to procurements.



*Percentage represents rounded value; respondents could select more than one answer

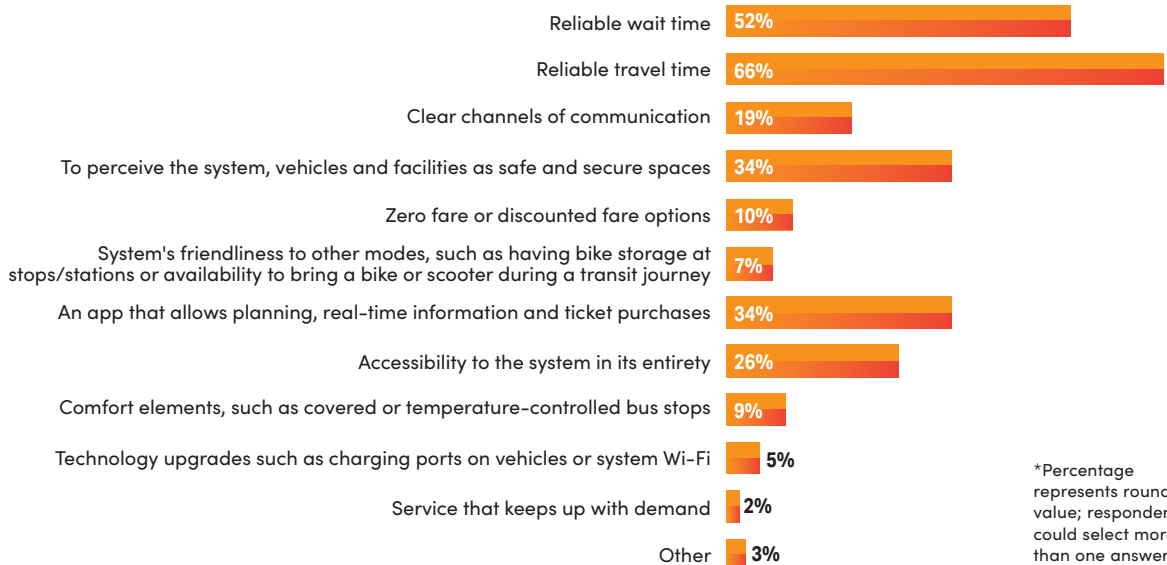
How has your agency's services changed during the past year?

More than 46% of respondents from small urbanized areas report expanded services during the past year.



*Percentage represents rounded value; respondents could select more than one answer

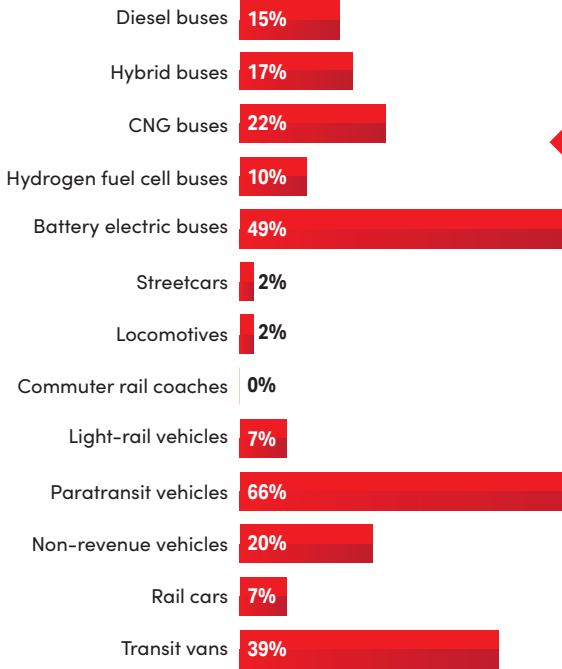
Regarding rider experience, what are the top factors that are expected from your system?



*Percentage represents rounded value; respondents could select more than one answer

Procurement: What vehicles will be procured? What purpose will they serve?

Does your agency anticipate awarding a contract(s) for new vehicles in 2024?



72% of agency respondents plan to award a new vehicle contract in 2024.

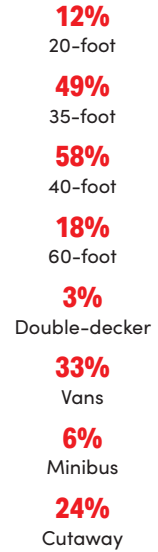
97% of planned 2024 vehicle procurements will be to replace aging fleets.

36% of planned 2024 vehicle procurements will be to accommodate new service.

18% of planned 2024 vehicle procurements will be to add capacity to existing routes.

*Percentage represents rounded value; respondents could select more than one answer

What size vehicle are you interested in procuring?



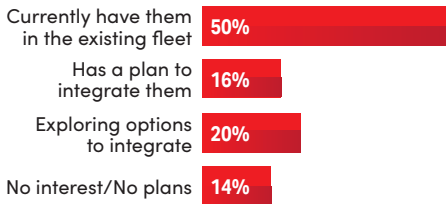
76% of agency respondents report their agencies have experienced a vehicle order cancellation or delay in vehicle delivery.

Of those respondents to experienced vehicle cancellations or delays, what size vehicle was impacted?



*Percentage represents rounded value; respondents could select more than one answer

Regarding low-emission and zero-emission buses, does your agency:

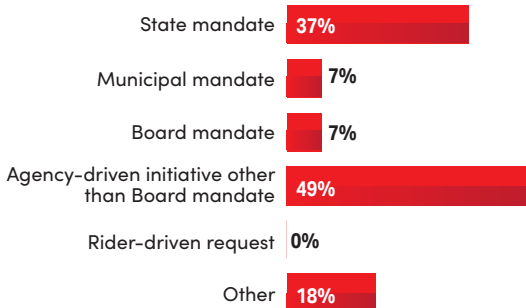


62% of respondents report their agency has a plan to transition fully to a zero-emission fleet.

Timeframe to transition to a zero-emission fleet:

9% by 2030 32% by 2035 32% by 2040 9% after 2040 18% Unsure of timeframe

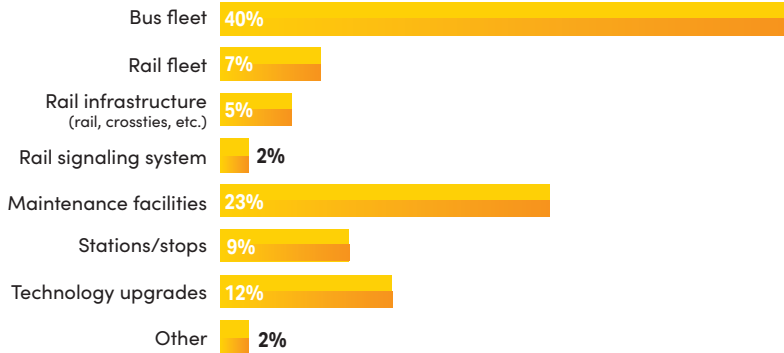
What is the main motivating factor for your agency's integration of low-emission and/or zero-emission buses?



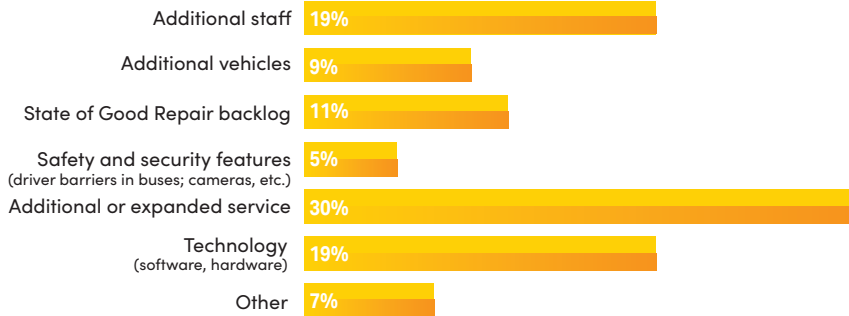
Availability of federal funds was the top "other" factor influencing pursuit of low or no emission fleets.

State of Good Repair: Where is investment needed?

Regarding the State of Good Repair backlog, what area of your transit system requires the most immediate investment?



If provided an unlimited budget, in which of the options below would your transit agency invest the most?



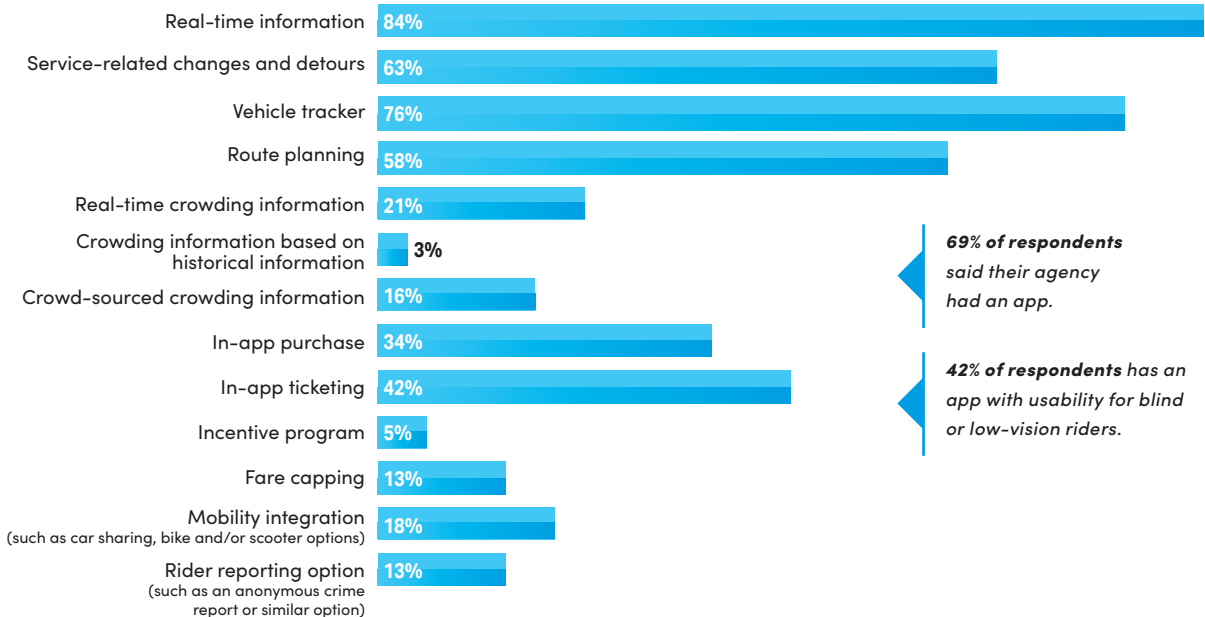
Popular "other" responses included funding to cover expanded service and additional maintenance facilities.

Respondents from rural, small urban and large urban areas would invest unlimited budgets on additional or expanded service.

Respondents from medium urban areas would invest unlimited budget in technology upgrades.

Technology: Advances for smarter transportation

What information is provided to riders in your app, select all that apply?



69% of respondents said their agency had an app.

42% of respondents has an app with usability for blind or low-vision riders.

Cybersecurity: Mitigating risks

75% of respondents responded in the affirmative when asked if cybersecurity is a concern of their agencies.

48% of respondents do not know if their agency has a cyber incident response plan, a cybersecurity designate or cybersecurity insurance.

Does your agency have the following:

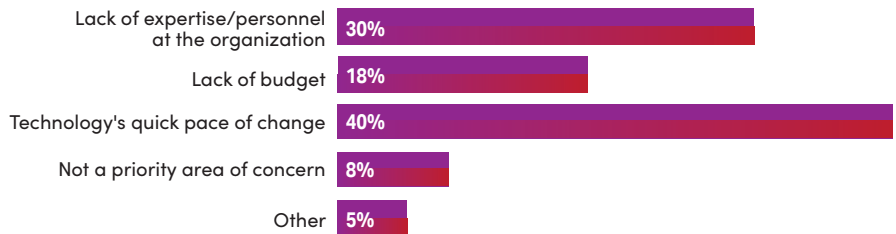
- 43%**
Cybersecurity Insurance
- 28%**
Cybersecurity designate
- 38%**
Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan
- 48%**
I don't know

More than 42% of respondents operating in small urban areas report they have both a cybersecurity incident plan and a cybersecurity designate.

How often does your agency review its Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan?

- 93%**
Once a year
- 0%**
Every few years
- 7%**
I don't know

What is your organization's biggest challenge regarding enhanced cybersecurity?



6% of respondents report their agency's have fallen victim to a cyber attack in the past year.

Of the respondents who reported their organizations were compromised by a cyberattack, two-thirds suffered a ransomware attack and one-third suffered a malware attack.

Of the respondents who reported their organizations were compromised by a cyberattack, all discovered the breach within one day.

Of the respondents who reported their organizations were compromised by a cyberattack, two-thirds report recovery took more than three months.

For those who indicated a cyberattack had occurred, it took the following amount of time to recover from that cyberattack:

