

North Trenton Mobility Choices BPAC, January 25th, 2023



**Sam
Schwar**

Why are we doing this study?

- DVRPC wants to know why people use the modes of travel that they do. We want more qualitative data that can be combined with existing data sets to create a fuller picture of transportation needs in communities of concern.
- Black Lives Matter Movement and Covid-19 pandemic have further highlighted the racial inequities in mobility in our region.
- DVRPC hopes this research can inform our work program (and the work of our county and agency partners) and lead to transportation access improvements in these communities.

Research Questions

Why do individuals use the modes of travel that they do?

Why does the mode or modes of travel individuals use feel like the best or safest option for them?

Why do other modes not feel like the best or safest option?

Which modes of travel would they use if they had access to them or the appropriate infrastructure to use them safely?

Do individuals travel less frequently because of infrastructure, service or safety needs? If so, what factors contribute to this and why?

Areas Selected

- North Trenton
- Mantua + East Parkside, City of Philadelphia
- Borough of Norristown

Participation

- 185 interactions total
 - 121 surveys
 - 64 focus group attendees

HOW DO YOU GET AROUND?

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Mobility Choices Study would like to hear from residents in Norristown, Mantua & East Parkside, and North Trenton about what types of transportation you use and what impacts those choices. Participating will help DVRPC to understand transportation-related needs and barriers in your community, and ultimately explore potential ways to address them.

www.dvrpc.org/mobilitychoices

Do you live, work, or go to school in any of these communities?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• North Trenton• Norristown• Other _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mantua/East Parkside• Another neighborhood in West Philadelphia
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What transportation options do you use at least once a week?
Choose all that apply

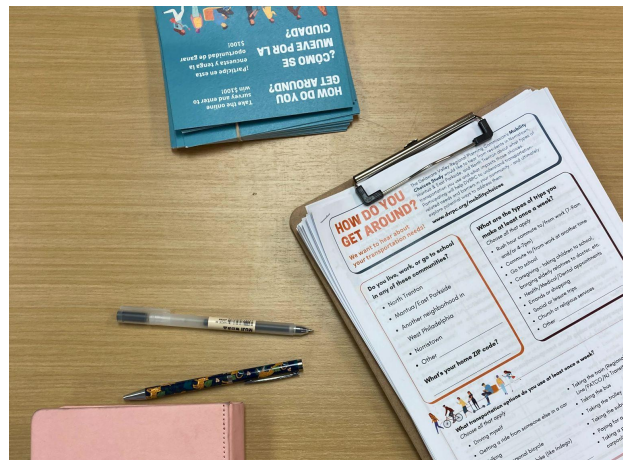
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Driving myself• Getting a ride from someone else in a car• Walking• Riding a personal bicycle• Using a bike share bike (like Indego)• An e-scooter• Other _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking the train (Regional Rail/River Line/PA/CO/NJ Transit/NBSL)• Taking the bus• Taking the trolley• Taking the subway• Paying for a ride (taxi/Uber/Lyft)• Taking a private bus/jitney/ or other carpooling or shuttle service
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What is your biggest motivation for choosing how you get around?
Pick up to 5

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost• Reliability• Being close to home• Being the fastest trip• Mobility issues or physical strain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transportation safety (fear of car crashes)• Personal safety (fear of other bodily harm)• I need something family friendly• Other _____
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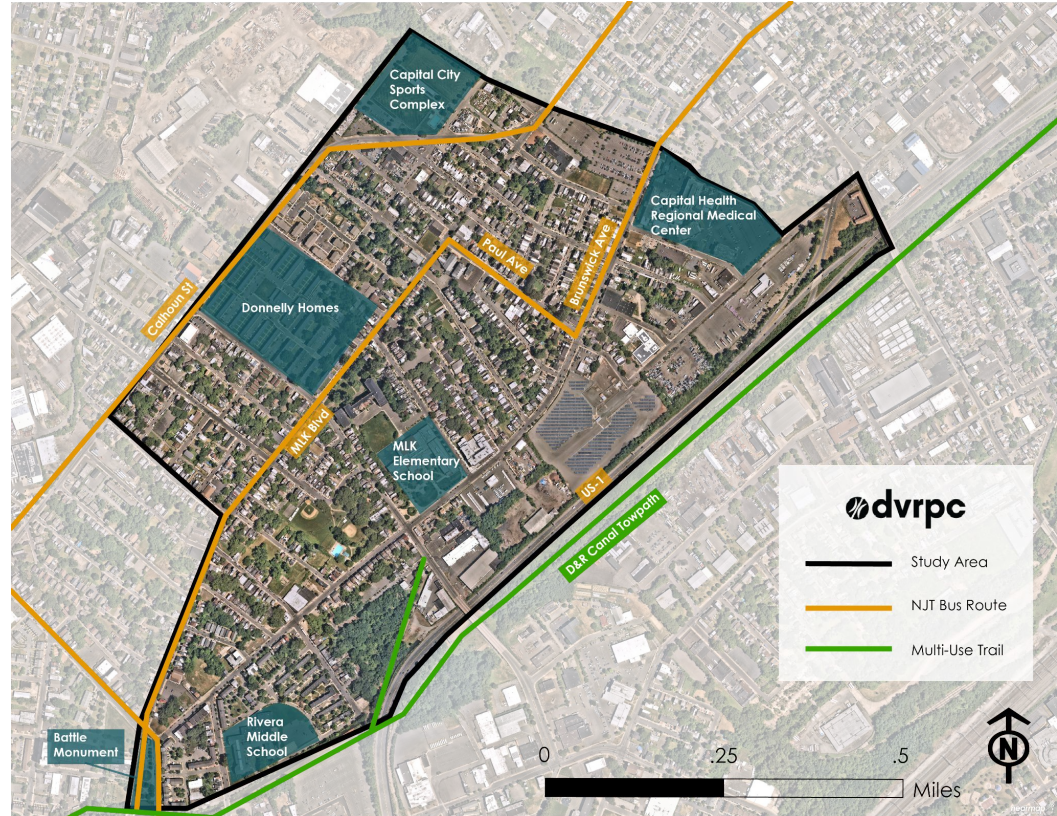
Engagement Methods

- Focus groups
- Intercept surveys
- Paper survey
- Online survey
- Community partners



Insights: North Trenton

- Population 4,100
- 74% Black, 15% Latino, 5% Non-Hispanic White
- Journey to work:
 - 21% Transit
 - 2.9% Walk
 - 1.7% Bike
- 12.5% zero car households
- 10% live in the Donnelly Homes (Trenton Housing Authority)



Insights: North Trenton

Survey Participants: 36

Focus Group Participants: 12

- Most participants in the survey and the focus group used a combination of modes: driving, walking, biking, and taking transit based on their trips.
- Grocery stores are a key destination and are not well-served by transit or walking.
- Participants in North Trenton were concerned about personal safety issues, but concerned more about transportation safety in making their decisions. Issues of personal safety motivated about 11% of transportation choices, while traffic safety was a motivator for a third of survey respondents.
- There is a focus on health in this area: Healthy choices and healthy living were brought up by participants here more than other communities.

Insights: North Trenton

Walking

In the survey, 25% of North Trenton respondents said they would walk more if there were more sidewalks, and 13% listed better maintenance of sidewalks.

25% cited safety concerns, specifically safer crossings. 19% said they would walk more if there was better lighting along their routes.

Focus Group participants discussed the lack of destinations within walking distance.



“I walk to work sometimes. I know I should walk to work more for health...but I don’t always feel like it.”

Insights: North Trenton

Biking

When asked what would make them bike more, 28% said access to a bicycle, and 22% said that safer bike lanes or trails would make them bike more.

There was a preference for on-street bicycle infrastructure over off-street trails in the Focus Group. Participants expressed concerns about personal safety in a more isolated surroundings.

Focus Group participants were supportive of bike infrastructure that did not eliminate parking and were interested in a bike library or lending system operated in the community.



“I would like to see places people could access bikes in every Ward, not just some places.”

Insights: North Trenton

Transit

Several focus group participants were transit dependent and discussed the difficulty of using transit for errands or appointments. Strollers and bags are difficult to manage, and there is no assistance or places to put bags other than seats.

Since there are no bus shelters along the bus routes serving Martin Luther King Blvd and long, unpredictable wait times, they are more likely to try to find a ride if they can avoid waiting for the bus in a vulnerable position.



“We take the bus sometimes, but the bus is always late. We always have to take the kids, but there’s not a lot of room for strollers...We are taking the bus to the grocery store, but there’s nowhere to put the bags on the bus.”

Insights: North Trenton

Driving

Driving was most appealing to some participants since it was more comfortable, reliable, and safe from violence and issues of public safety, but cost was a deterrent. Parking was also brought up frequently in this area.

There were also concerns about dangerous driving behaviors on the roadway, particularly speeding, from focus group participants. When asked directly if they speed themselves, they admitted that they do.



“I don’t have a car, but I plan to get one soon because I think that I need one. Everyone needs one.”

Insights: North Trenton

Biggest Motivation in Transportation Choices *North Trenton*

Reliability: 56%
Cost: 44%
Fastest trip: 39%

Desired Modes of Travel *North Trenton*

Driving: 39%
Bus: 19%
Walking: 14%
Biking: 11%

Biggest Barriers to Desired Transportation Options *North Trenton*

Cost: 56%
Transportation safety: 28%
Would take too long: 28%

Overall Insights

Through the course of the study, the project team learned about transportation choices from 185 individuals between focus groups, intercept surveys, and online surveys.

Key themes were seen across the three project areas through all inputs.

- **Reliability** is the biggest factor in decision making for mobility.
- Believing a mode is the **“right” choice** is not enough of a motivator to use it.
- **Caretakers** are especially sticky in their preferences.

Overall Insights: Desired Modes

Most participants preferred to drive more. 44% of those surveyed said they wish they could drive themselves more often, while rideshare was desired to be used more by 20% of survey participants.

The **bus was the most desired** form of transit, with 26% of participants saying they wish they could use one more.

Of those surveyed, 18% said they wished they could **walk** more, and 11% wanted to get around more using a **personal bicycle**.

Implications for Future Work

The insights gathered and lessons learned from this study can assist in upcoming work that overlaps with this community:

- The **Trenton Bike Plan** starting now
- Ongoing implementation of the **Choice Housing Plan**
- **MLK Blvd Streetscape** work
- The **Vision Zero** and traffic safety planning underway



Q&A



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