



# CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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## **“Who Bicycles in the City of Falls Church?”**

### **Measuring Demand for Bicycling in Falls Church, Virginia**

#### **Overview**

An on-line and paper survey was administered between April 22 and May 10, 2015, to help inform the planning process by gauging the demand for access to bicycle facilities throughout the City. The City received a total of 304 survey responses.

Survey respondents showed a strong preference for biking more than they do today. Many of the barriers identified by respondents that prevent them from biking more are street design issues, such as lack of designated bike facilities, intersection design, and insufficient lighting.

The age and gender of survey respondents matches fairly closely with the latest demographic estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

## Analysis

### Question 1: Types of Riders

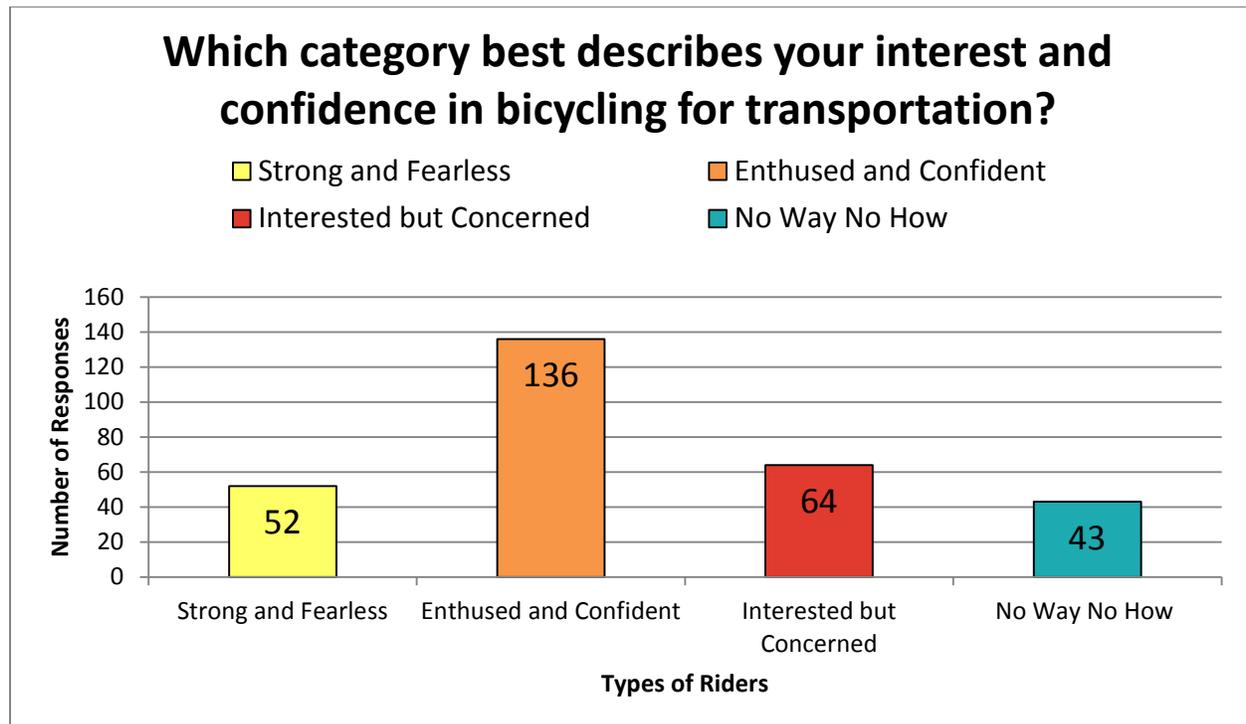
Typical transportation studies attempt to predict future traffic levels based on current usage. However, when applied to bicycling, this technique ignores residents who are interested in biking but choose not to. Low bicycling levels may be caused more by a lack of facilities or the perceived lack of safety (a.k.a. latent demand), so traditional traffic counts are not a meaningful way to assess interest in bicycling. Instead, asking residents about their level of interest in bicycling is an appropriate alternate assessment. When it comes to bicycling for transportation (as opposed to recreation) surveys of other communities in the U.S. have revealed that people generally fit into one of four categories. Which category best describes your interest and confidence in bicycling for transportation?

Respondents most commonly selected “enthused and confident”, so many people that responded to the survey ride a bicycle today when bike facilities are available.

A substantial number of respondents selected “interested but concerned”. This demonstrates that there are many people who would like to bike, but choose not to because they do not feel safe doing so.

Many respondents selected “strong and fearless”, meaning they bike today even when designated bicycle facilities are not available.

Many respondents selected “no way no how”, meaning they are not interested in biking. It is important to keep in mind that biking is not for everyone and transportation plans should balance the needs and interests of different street users.



## Question 2: Biking Destinations

*People bike for different reasons, some bike for exercise, others for work, and others still for social reasons. How often do you currently bike for these reasons and how often would you like to bike for these reasons? Please answer these questions for a typical Spring/Summer/Fall month.*

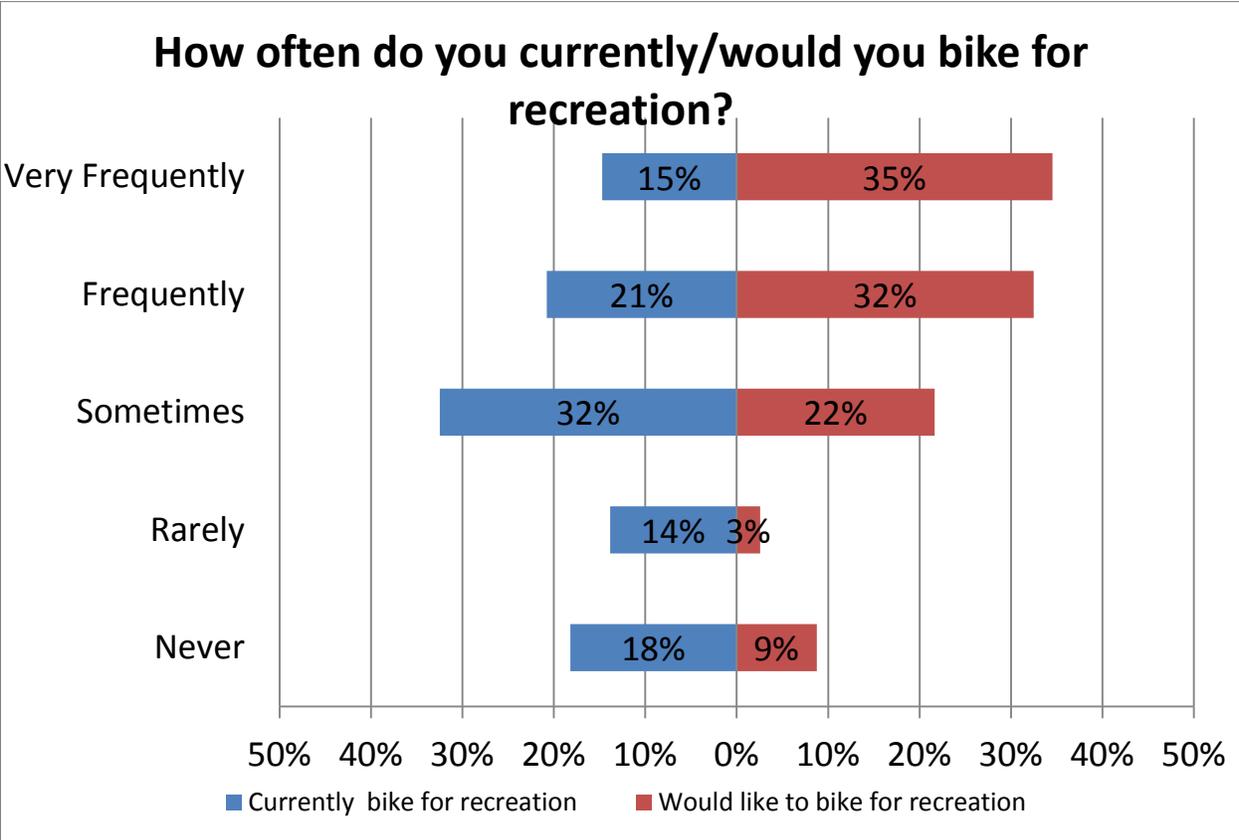
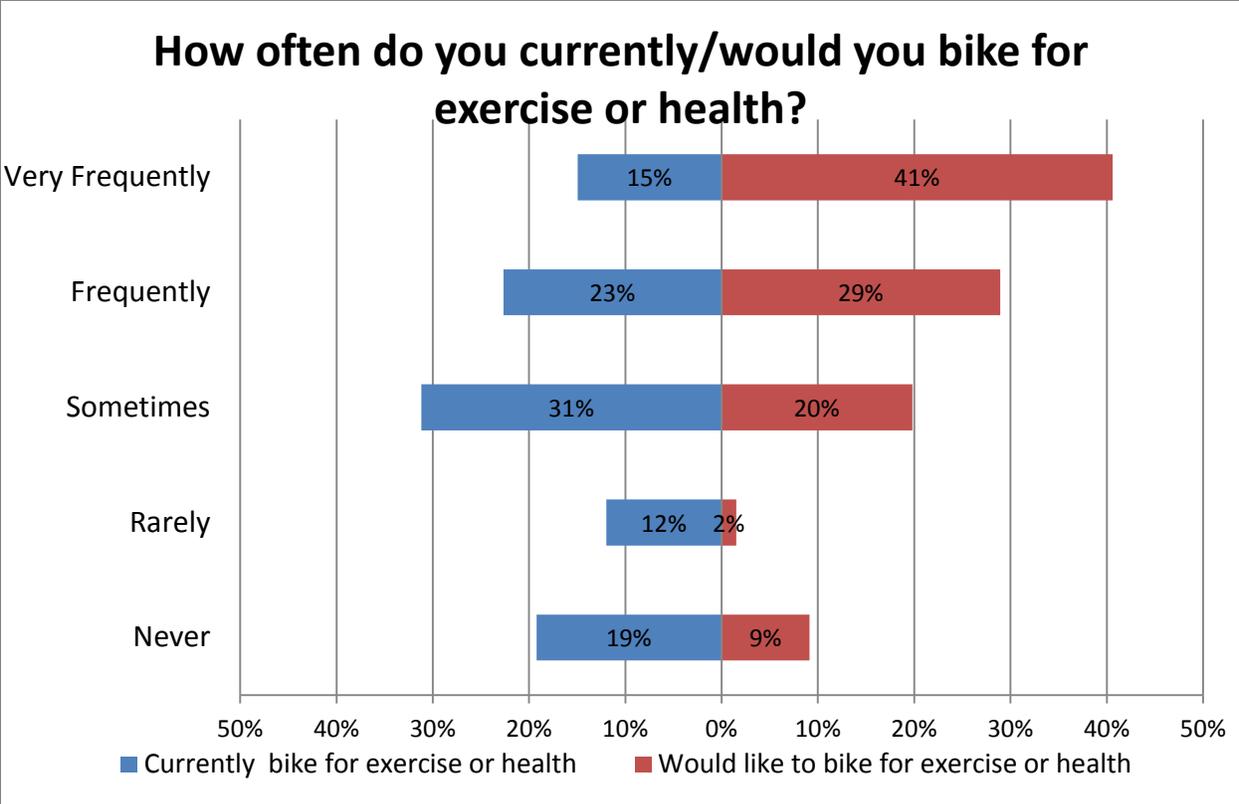
The responses show that the most common reason people choose to ride bicycles today are exercise or health and recreation. Riding a bike to run errands is also fairly common.

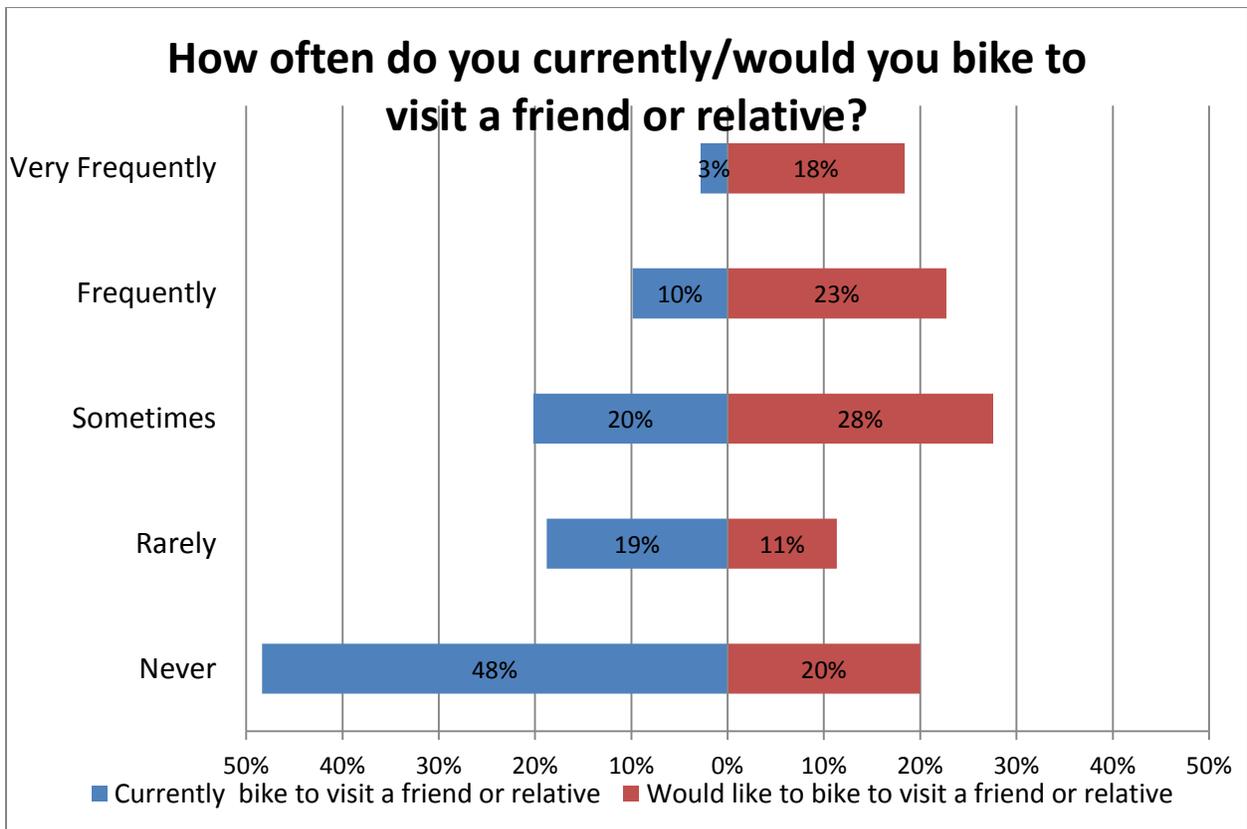
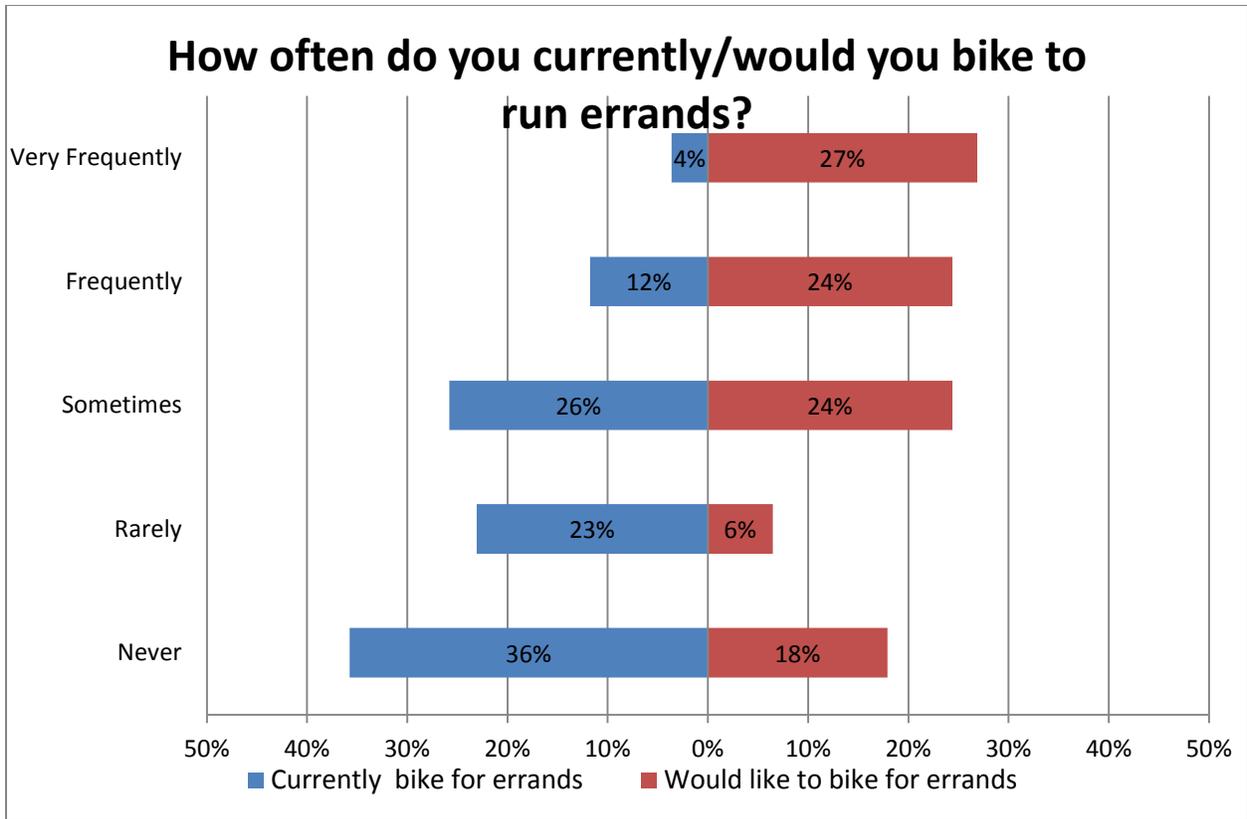
Many respondents reported a desire to bike more often than they do today. The desire to bike more stretched across many different kinds of activities, including work/school, exercise or health, recreation, running errands, and visiting friends and relatives.

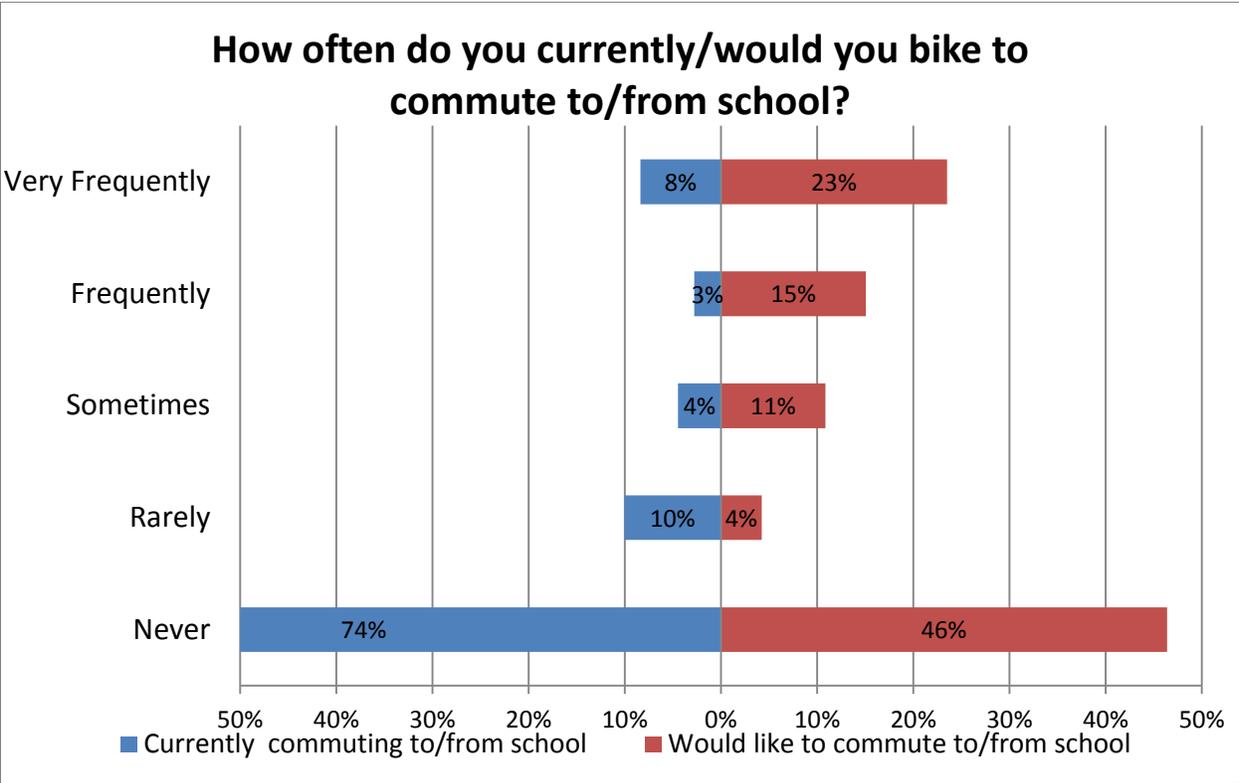
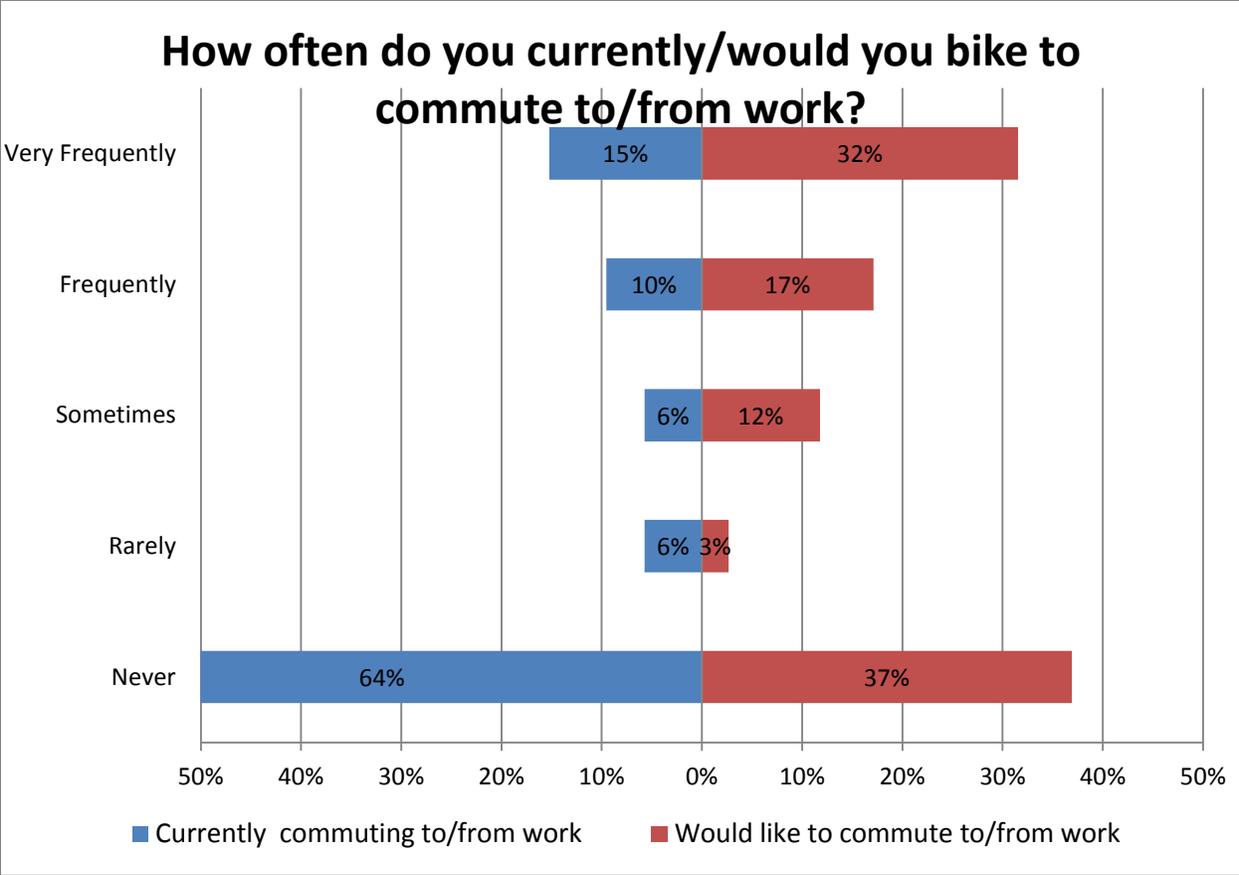
Many respondents reported that they want to increase the frequency of biking for the purposes of running errands and visiting friends and relatives. This indicates that survey respondents want to make biking a part of their everyday routines.

In the survey, the frequency terms were defined as follows:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Number of Trips</b>
Very Frequently	10 or more times per month
Frequently	3 to 9 times per month
Sometimes	1 to 2 times per month
Rarely	Less than 1 time per month
Never	0 times per month



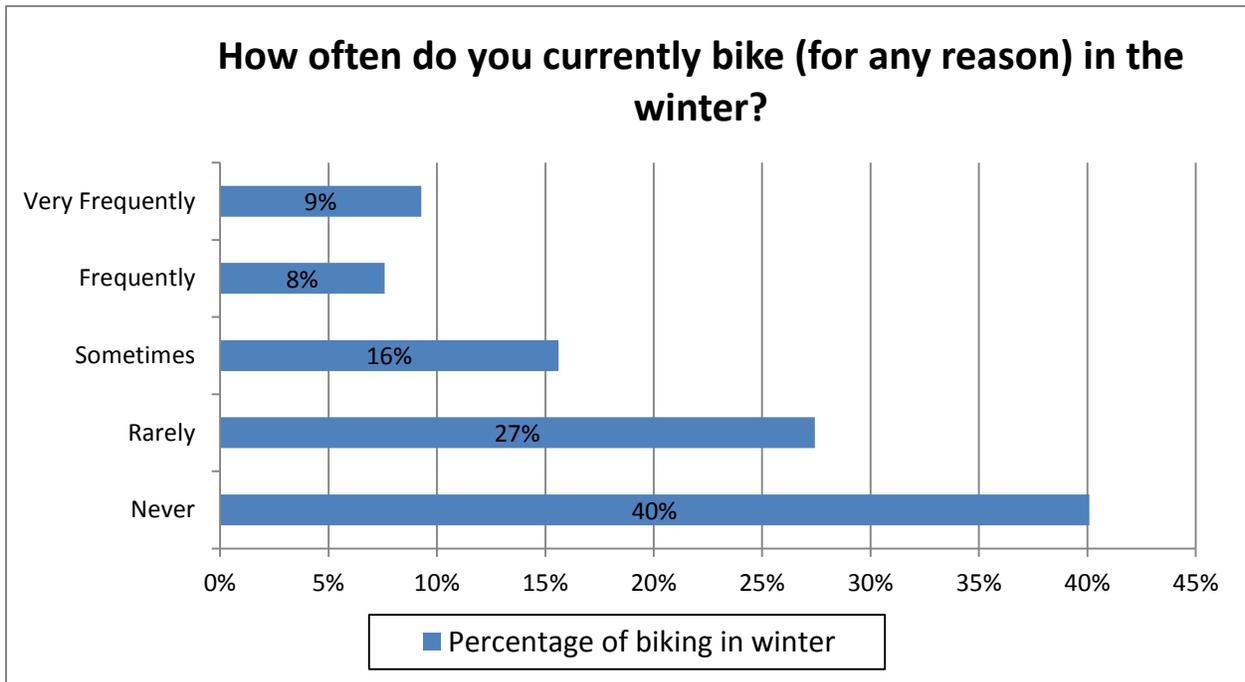




### Question 3: Biking during the Winter Months

*Biking habits can change with the seasons. Biking in winter can be more difficult because of lower temperatures and less daylight. How often do you currently bike (for any reason) in the winter?*

Survey respondents reported decreased rates of biking during winter months. Decreased winter biking can be caused by a variety of reasons, including colder temperatures, fewer daylight hours, and icy/snowy road and sidewalk conditions.

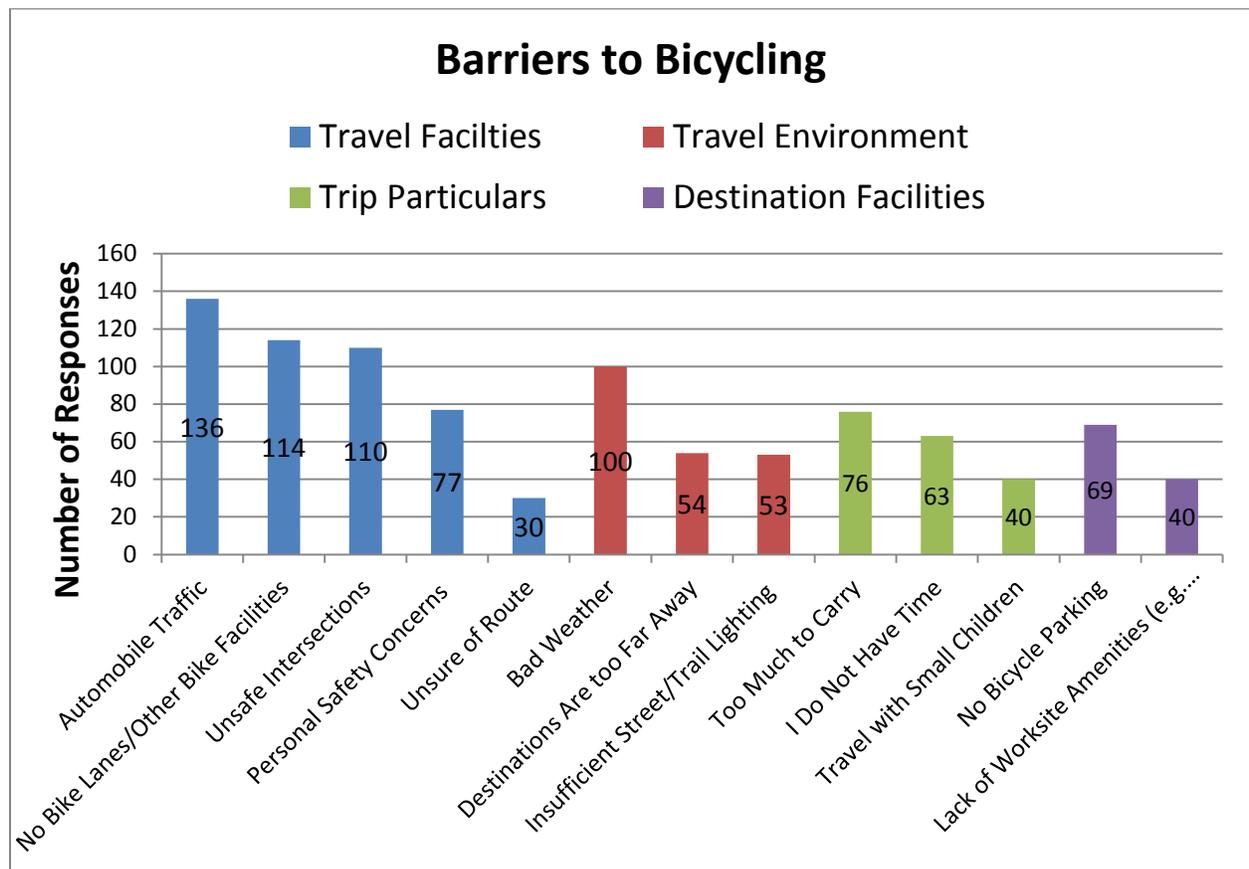


## Question 4: Barriers to Bicycling

People experience a variety of barriers to bicycling more often. What are the biggest barriers that prevent you from biking more frequently? Please choose up to five responses.

Respondents frequently selected “Automobile Traffic”, “No Bike Lanes/Other Bike Facilities”, and “Unsafe Intersections”. These responses indicate that the existing designs of the City’s streets are a major inhibitor to biking. Other commonly picked barriers included insufficient street/trail lighting and lack of bicycle parking, which are also related to street and streetscape design.

Respondents also identified some things that are outside the City’s control, such as weather, having too much to carry, and being short on time.



## Question 5: Mapping Demand

*An understanding of where people live helps inform the planning process.*

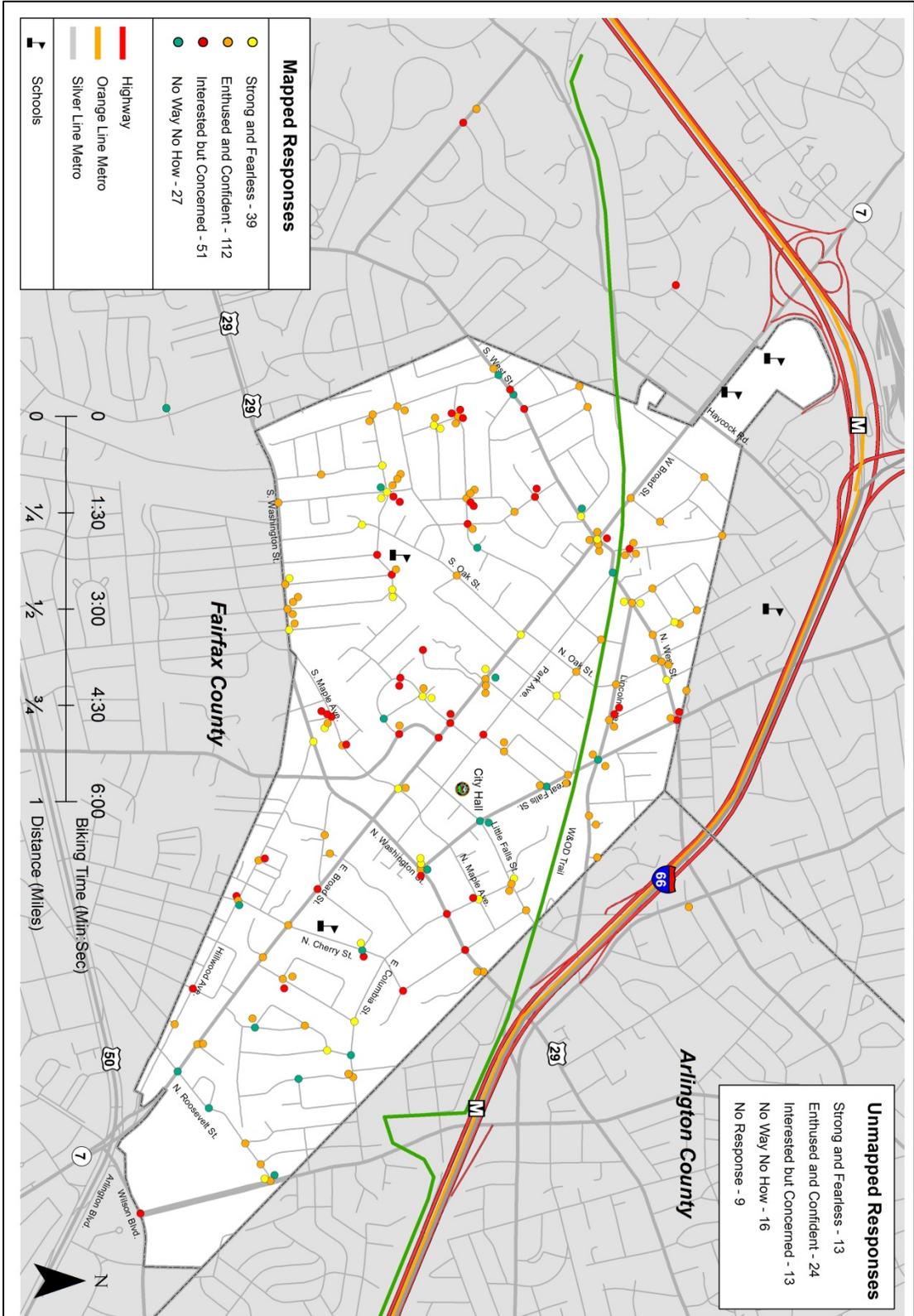
*If you live inside the City of Falls Church, what is the nearest intersection to your home?*

*Street Name \_\_\_\_\_ & Street Name \_\_\_\_\_*

*If you live outside the City of Falls Church, please fill in your zip code: \_\_\_\_\_*

Survey respondents are distributed throughout the City (see map on following page). This indicates that the survey reached the various neighborhoods in City.

The different rider types are distributed throughout the City (see map on following page). This indicates that interest in bicycling is present in all neighborhoods.



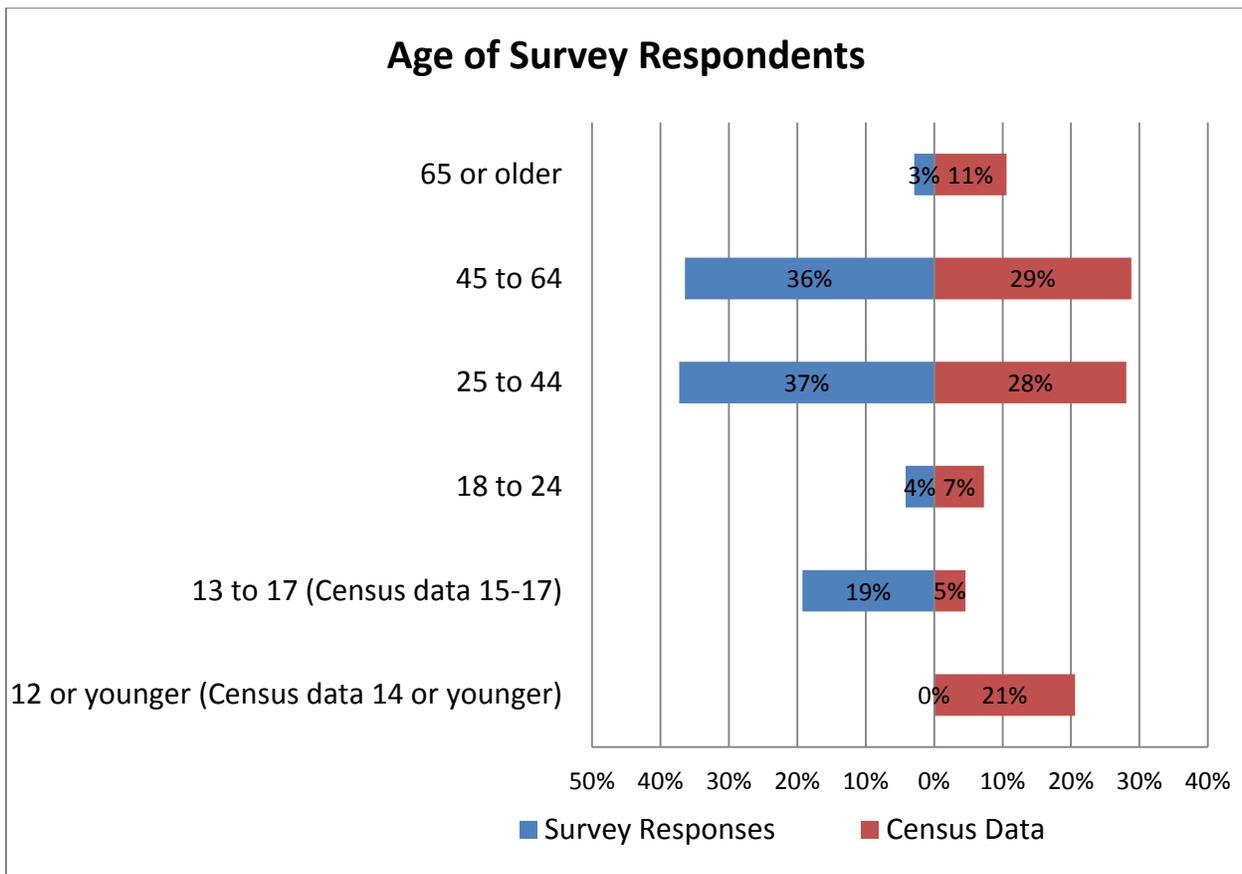
### Existing Local Bicycle Survey

## Questions 6, 7, and 8: Demographics

*In places with more biking infrastructure, people of all ages and abilities bike regularly. In places with less biking infrastructure, only particular demographic groups tend to ride bicycles. Information from the following questions will be used to help assess how well the City currently provides biking infrastructure that feels safe and is accessible for various demographic groups.*

What is your age?

The age of survey respondents matches fairly closely to the latest demographic estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.



*What is your gender?*

The gender of respondents matches fairly closely to the latest demographic estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

