BUYING ACCESS ONE TRIP AT A TIME

Lower-Income Households and Ride-Hail

Northwest Transportation Conference 2024

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MOTIVATION

EXISTING RIDE-HAIL DATA

Travel surveys (NHTS, online, mail, etc.)

Rider intercept surveys

Trip data

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Ride-hailing?

How often do lower-income households access ride-hail services, why and why not, and for what purposes?

METHODS

Online Survey
n=830

- Prolific survey platform
- Non-representative US sample
- Descriptive statistics

Semi-structured Interviews
n=29

- Baltimore residents, <$50,000 annual income and no car
- Conducted via Zoom
- Flexible coding approach to identify six key themes

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WHAT DID WE FIND?

Car ownership matters.

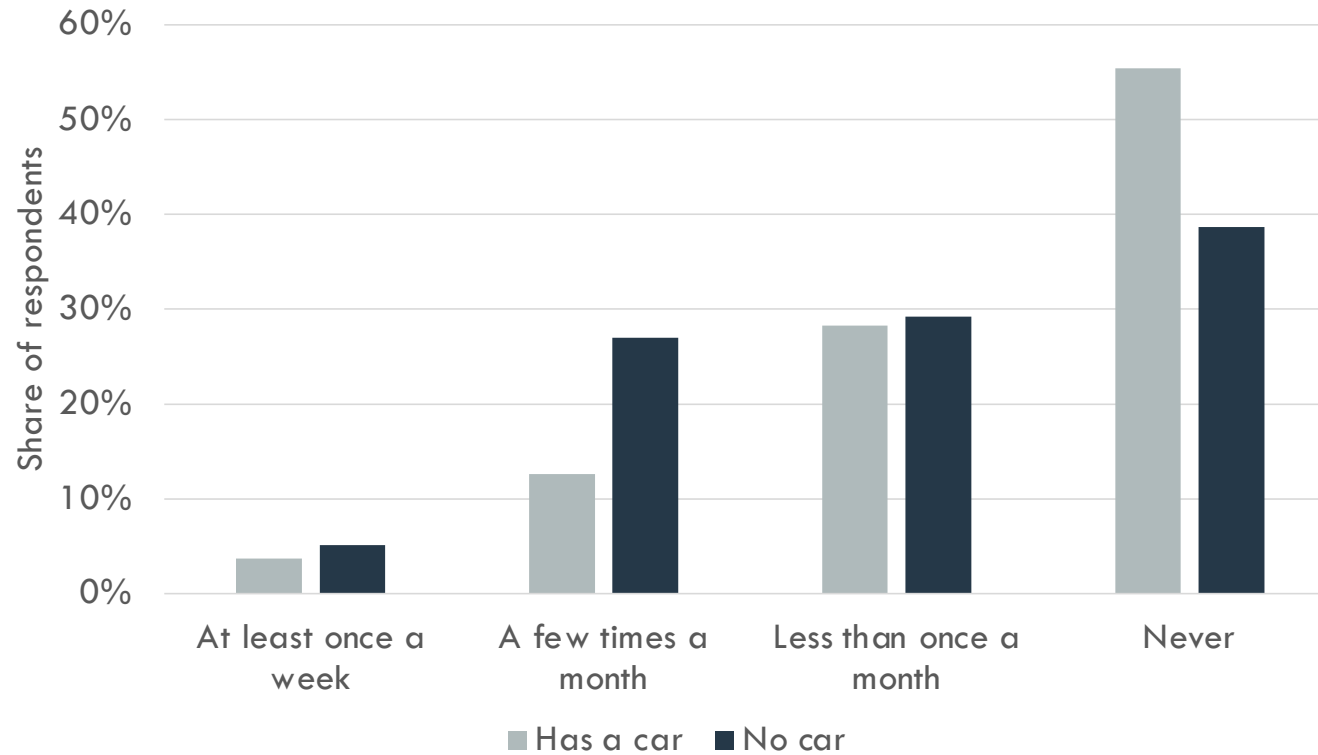**1** MOST PEOPLE HAVE USED RIDE-HAIL

72%
Overall

Has a car
70%

No car
83%

2 NO CAR, MORE RIDE-HAILING

Ride-hail Trip Frequency by Car Ownership

Share of respondents

- 60%
- 50%
- 40%
- 30%
- 20%
- 10%
- 0%

At least once a week · A few times a month · Less than once a month · Never

Has a car · No car

3 REASONS TO RIDE-HAIL VARY GREATLY

	Car ownership	
	Has car	No car
It is the fastest way to get where I need to go.	18%	49%
There are no other modes available at the times I need to travel (e.g., no buses at that time of day).	20%	42%
There are no other ways to get where I need to go (e.g., no buses go there).	20%	36%
I do not want to drink and drive.	23%	5%
I do not want to pay for and/or find parking	21%	4%
It is the safest option available at the times I need to travel.	15.%	20%

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"I use Uber a little more, because the public transportation was so unreliable, I couldn't get to work on time"

"Most of the time if I use like Uber or Lyft, I'm going way farther than I usually go. And most of the time, it means it's not accessible by bus."

"The bus don't really run on the weekend."

4 TRIP PURPOSES VARY BY CAR OWNERSHIP

	Has car	No car
Commute to/from work and/or school	9%	12%
Pick up/drop off children	1%	2%
Groceries/errands	8%	23%
Social/recreational	25%	30%
Medical appointments	8%	33%
To connect to other modes (e.g. to get to a transit station or stop)	8%	15%
Get to the airport	14%	7%
Other	4%	4%

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"90% of the time I take Uber to the large grocery stores because transportation here sucks"

"I have two jobs waitressing, had to be there. I had to get from Towson to Baltimore"

5 COST IS A PRIMARY BARRIER TO RIDE-HAIL

	Car ownership	
	Has car	No car
Cost of ride	52%	75%
Concerns about transmission of COVID-19	40%	27%
Concerns about personal safety	28%	14%
No cars available when I wanted to go	18%	29%
None of these	17%	7%
Not wanting to connect a debit/credit card to an app	12%	9%
Ride-hail doesn't exist where I live	10%	7%

Additional barriers identified but not shown.

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"I'll wait for like 30 minutes for the Uber [price] to go down but if it doesn't go down then I'll check the bus schedule."

"I mean, its higher but it's worth it. ... In getting to work, or saves you time in getting back to work and to your destination."

"In the morning is one rate, then in the afternoon, it's another rate. And then on the weekends is even higher than in the afternoon or the weekdays. That's really frustrating. I was like, 'Well, how much exactly do I need?' ... I find myself taking out loans from family, from friends to try to make ends meet."

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SO WHAT?

Implications for transportation planning & policy

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- Long term: invest in walking, biking, and transit to provide robust car alternatives

THANK YOU

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