

2024 UTA PUBLIC IMAGE SURVEY REPORT

April 2024

Study Overview | Objectives & Methodology

UTA conducts an annual image study to measure public perceptions of the organization and inform strategy. The objectives of the study are as follows.

1 Objectives: Awareness & Perceptions

- General perception of UTA
- Understanding motivations of the infrequent rider
- Perception of UTA value
- Strategic insights into focus segments (BIPOC, 18- to 34-Year-Olds, Non-Riders)

2 Objectives: Usage

- High-level indicators on why people ride/don't ride
- Broad indicators of potential motivators to ride
- Where individuals seek information regarding UTA transit services
- Touch on innovative mobility or microtransit to help inform the survey
- Frequency of usage across all of UTA's most common transportation services

3 Methodology

To achieve the objectives above, a benchmark survey was administered online to target audiences across Utah.

- n=601 survey respondents, margin of error +/- 4%
- Surveyed six counties (Box Elder, Davis, Salt Lake, Tooele, Utah and Weber)
- Although the image study is designed for longitudinal research, survey design changes from 2023 led to a more in-depth view into the perceptions and usage of UTA services across a wide range of demographics across the state
- Demographics*:
 - Female = 63% / Male = 35% / Non-Binary/Self-Identify = 1%
 - Balanced mix of respondents aged 18+, employment status, education
 - BIPOC oversample: n=105 (17% of total)

**Note: Detailed information on demographics can be found in the Appendix section.*

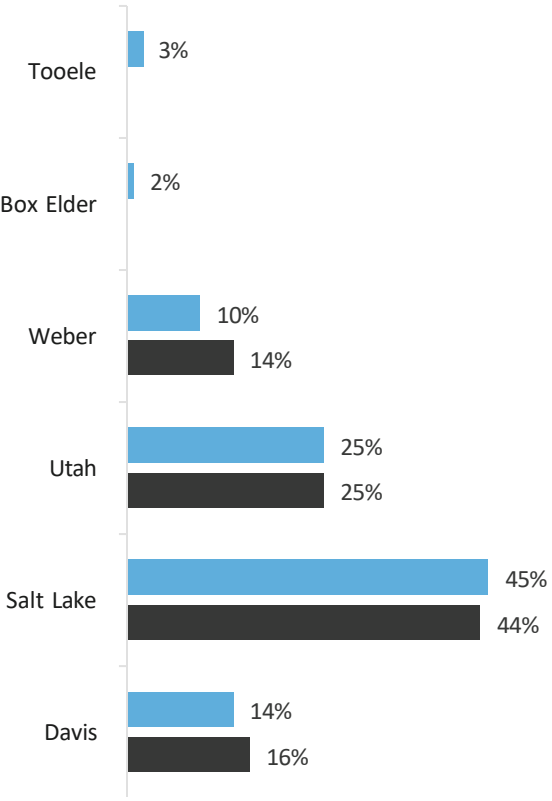
Survey Results | Respondent Overview

■ Avg '19 – '23
n = 3057

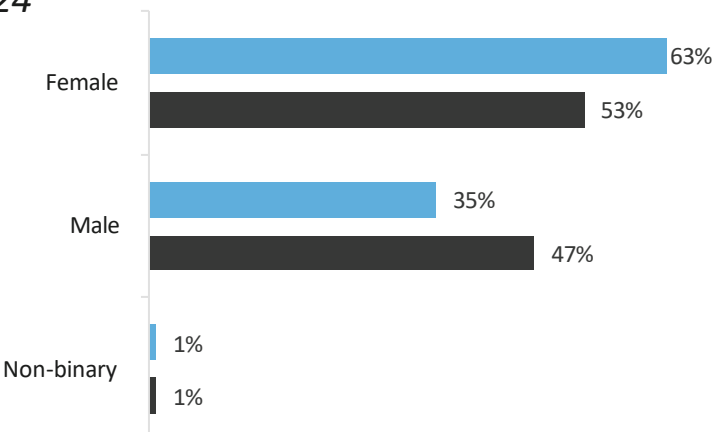
■ 2024
n = 601

601 total survey completes in 2024

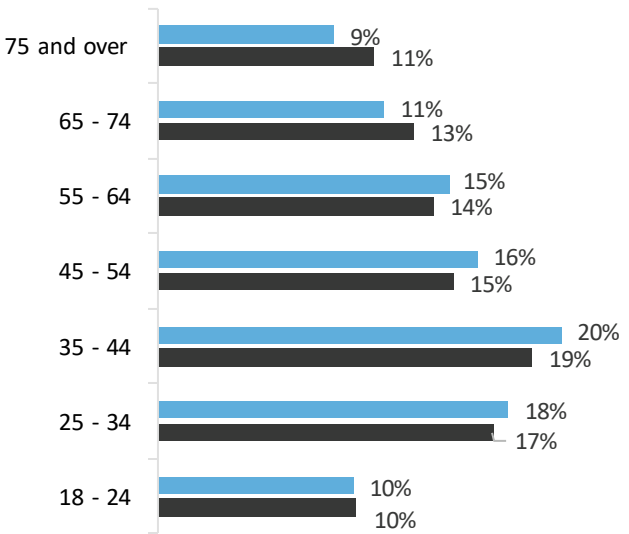
COUNTY



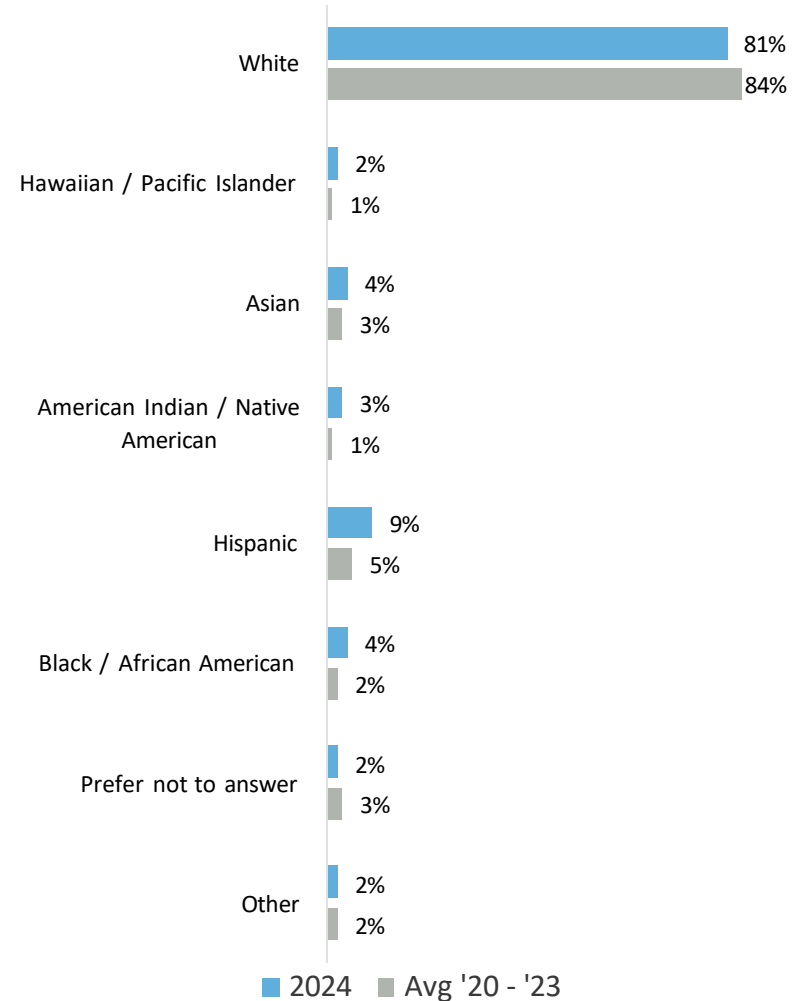
GENDER



AGE



ETHNICITY

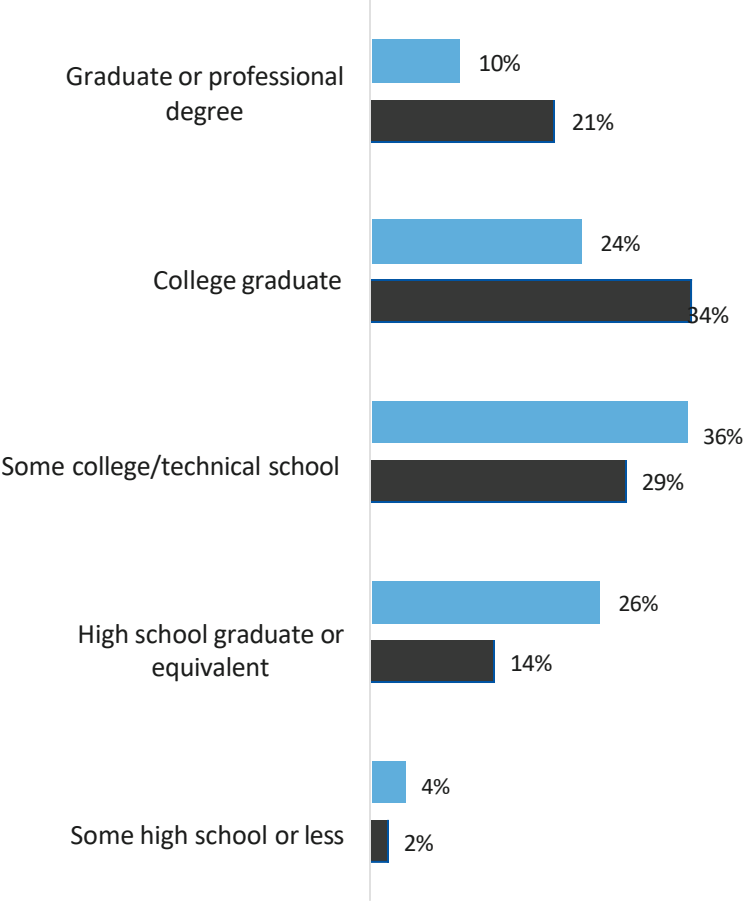


Survey Results | Respondent Overview

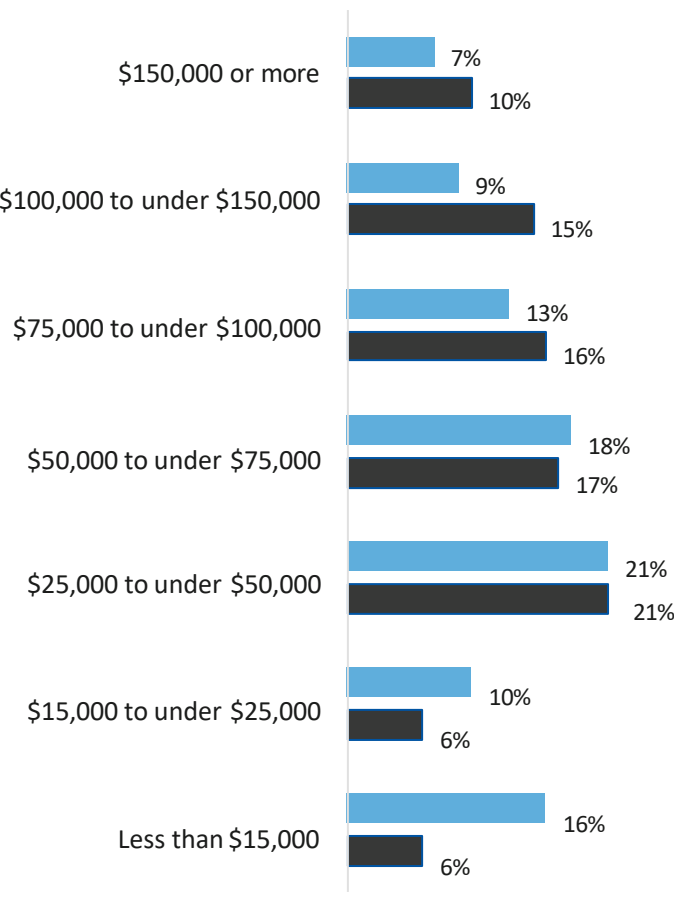
■ Avg '19 – '23
n = 3057

■ 2024
n = 601

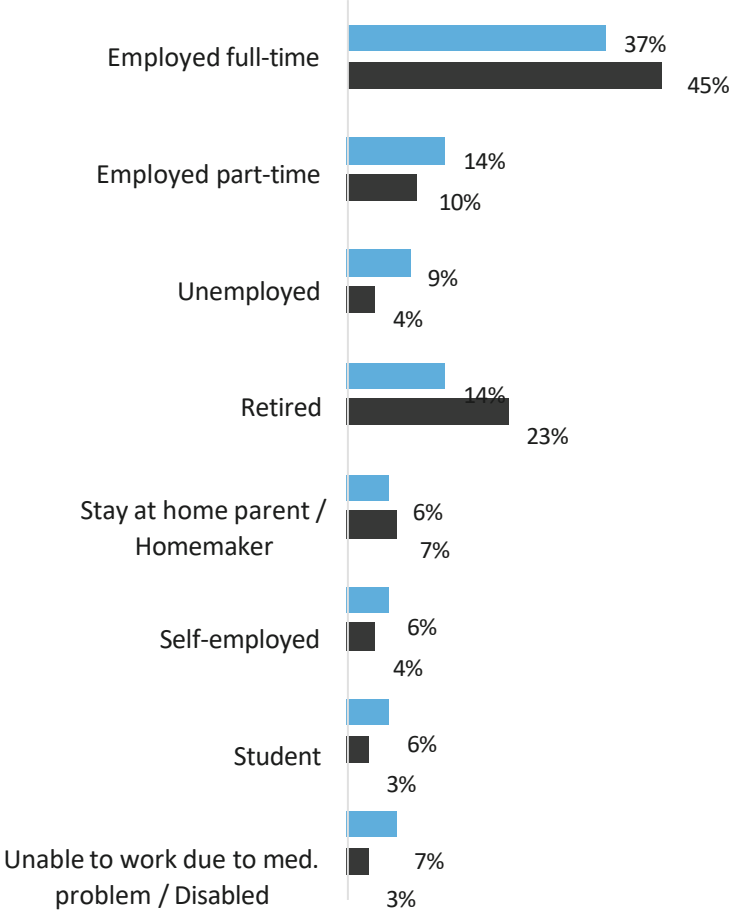
EDUCATION



HOUSEHOLD INCOME



EMPLOYMENT STATUS

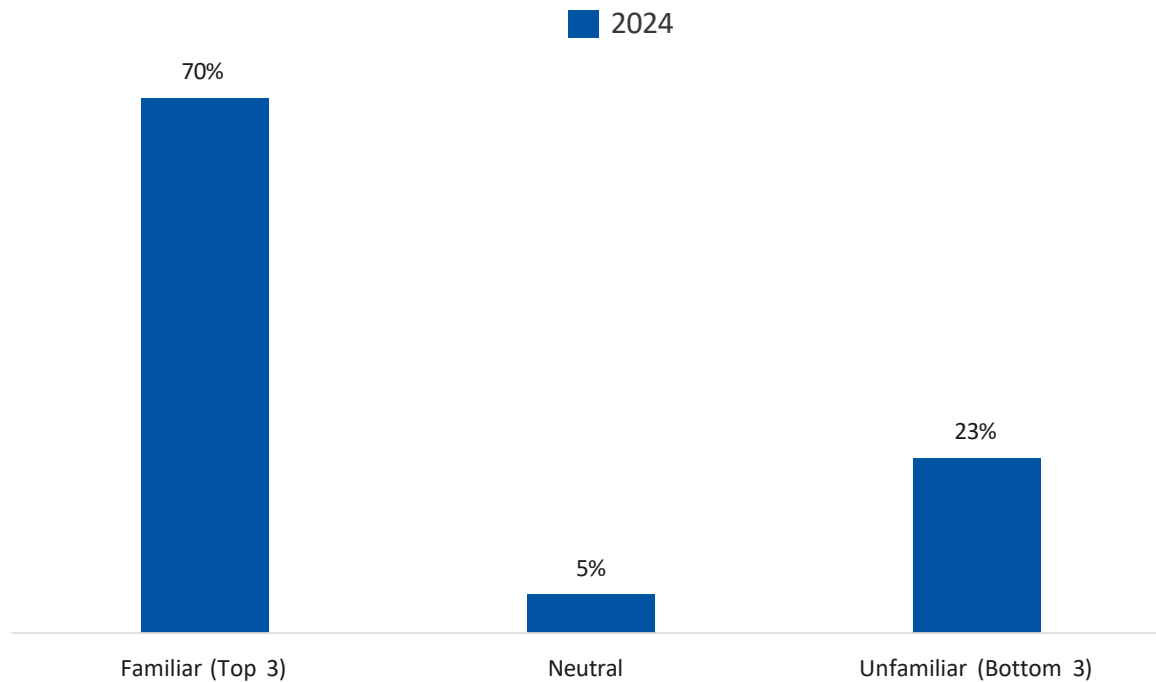


Familiarity with UTA is High

70% of Utahns are familiar with UTA, and many of those respondents associate it with their general transportation needs.

Awareness of UTA

% Selected, n = 601

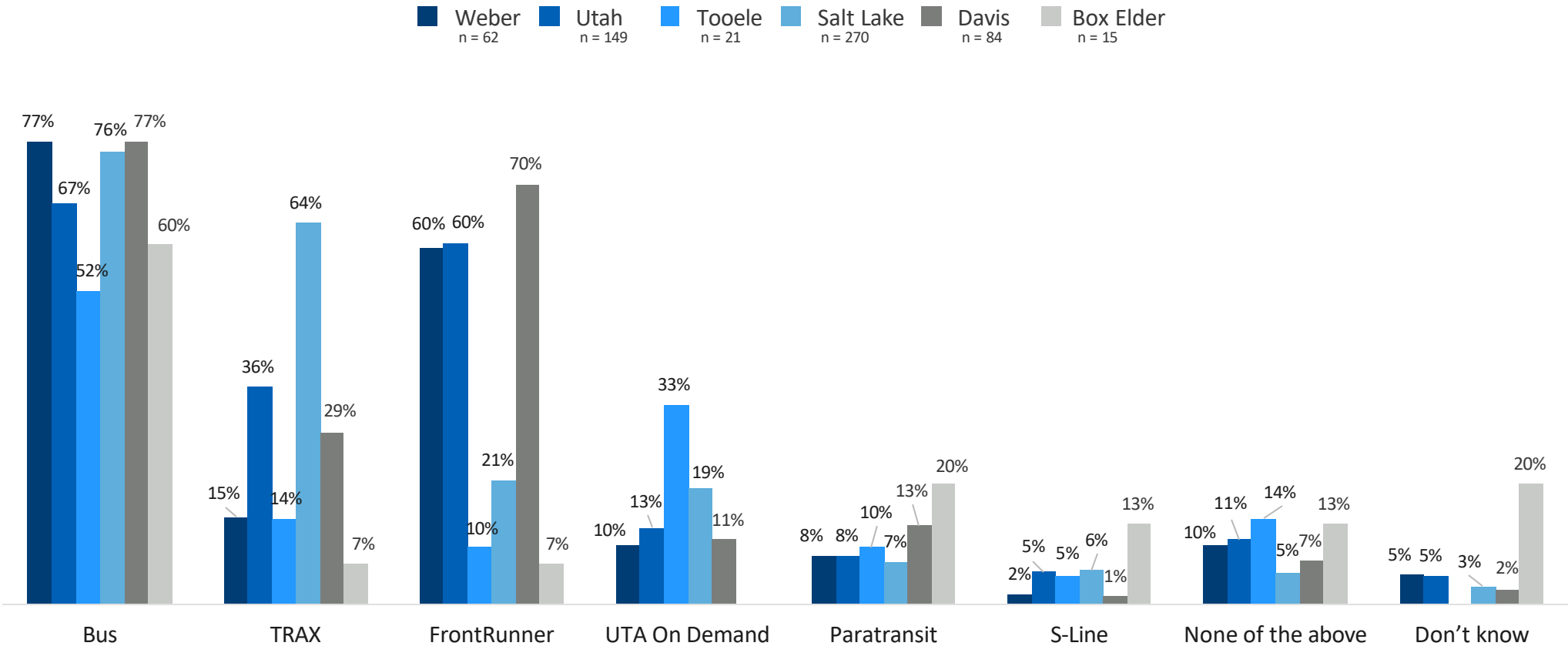


Availability of Mode Contributes to Awareness

Most residents in Weber and Utah counties report high awareness of UTA buses, whereas the TRAX and FrontRunner services are more accessible to those in Utah and Salt Lake county. Notably, a smaller percentage of respondents are aware of their proximity to Paratransit and S-Line, and UTA on Demand services.

Proximity to UTA Services

% Selected, n=601



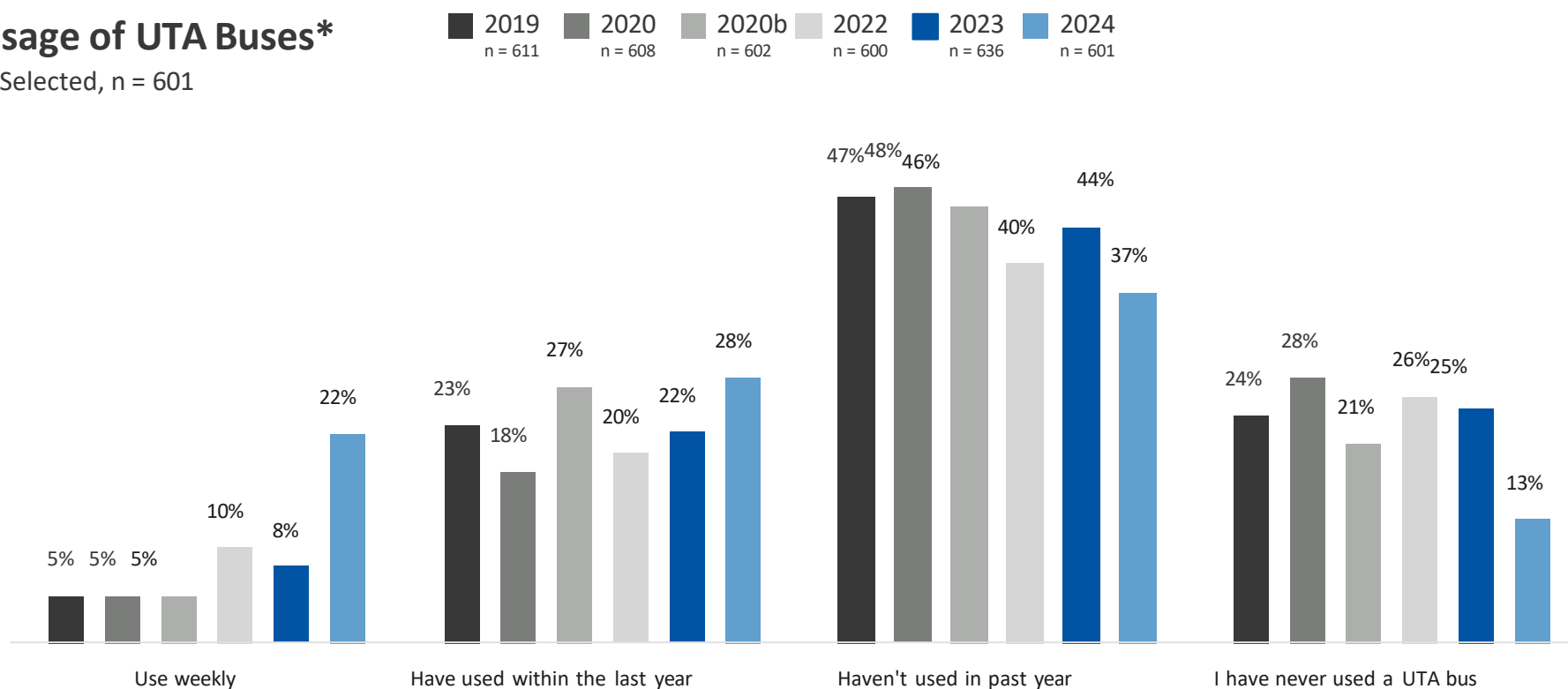
Q31: Which, if any, of the following UTA services are near your work or home?

Weekly Frequency of Bus Ridership Up 14%

The number of Utahns using the bus weekly has increased significantly (14%) over the last year while the percentage of them who have never used a bus has declined by 12%.

Usage of UTA Buses*

% Selected, n = 601

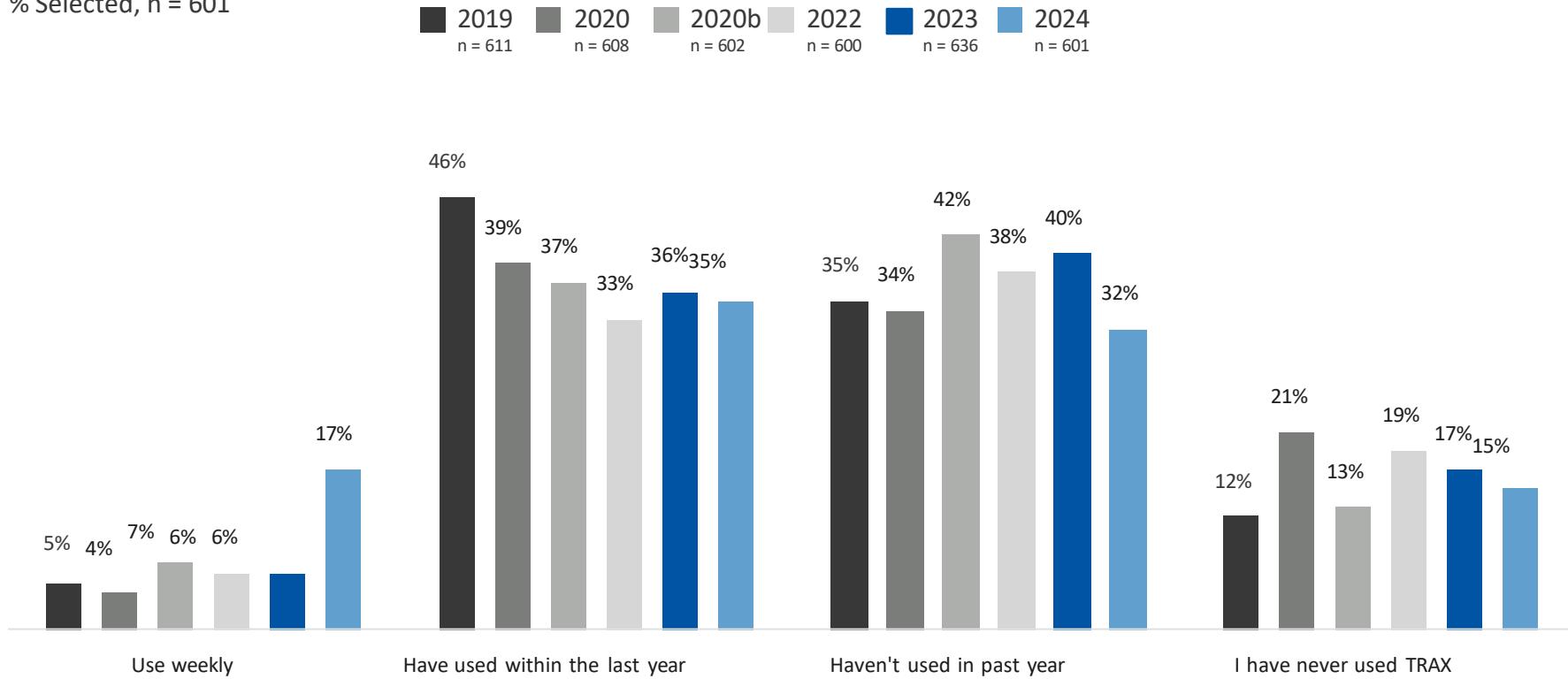


More Infrequent Riders Appear to Be Using TRAX

The number of Utahns who use the TRAX weekly has almost tripled from 6% to 17% over the past year; the number of riders who have not used TRAX within the last year has decreased by 8%, suggesting an overall increase in TRAX usage for non-riders.

Usage of TRAX*

% Selected, n = 601

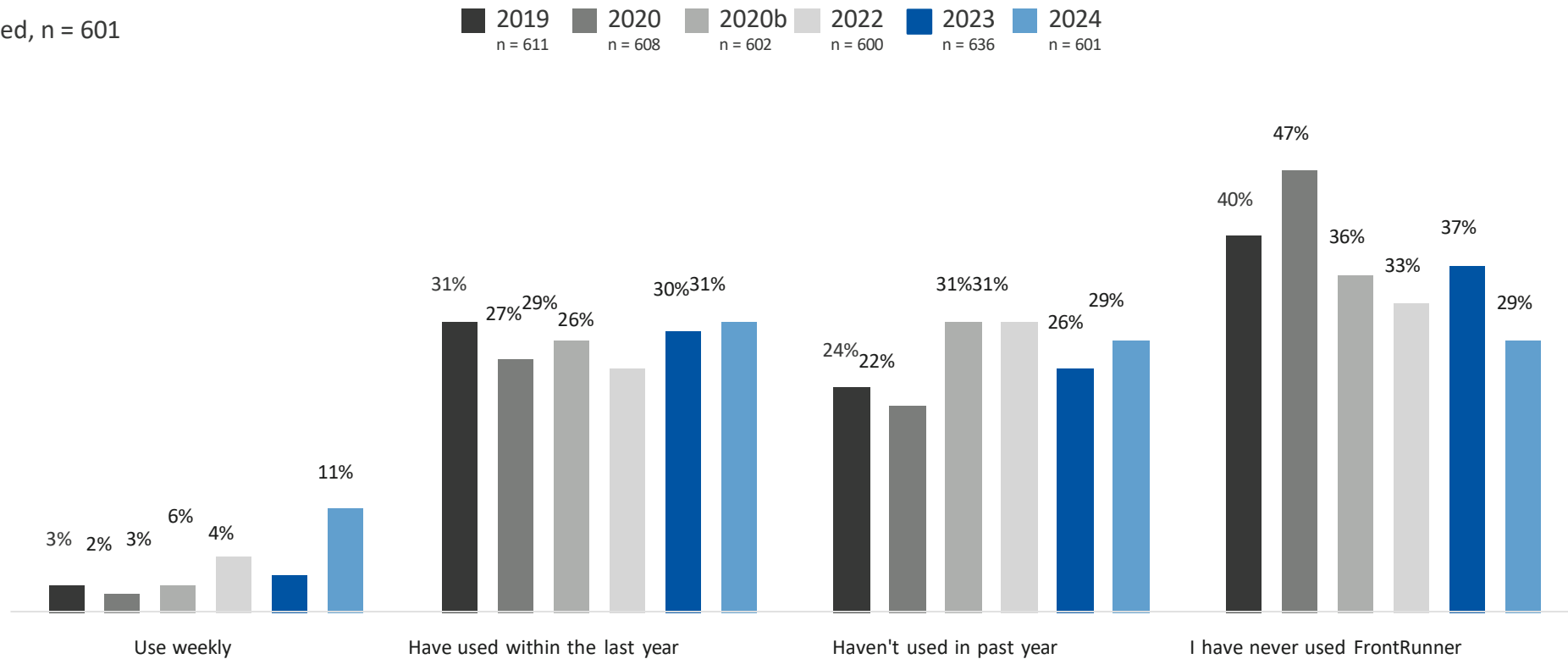


Weekly FrontRunner Use Nearly Triple

FrontRunner's weekly user base has expanded significantly, nearly tripling from 4% to 11% in recent years. Despite this growth, a substantial proportion of the population, nearly 60%, either have not used FrontRunner in the past year or not at all.

Usage of FrontRunner*

% Selected, n = 601

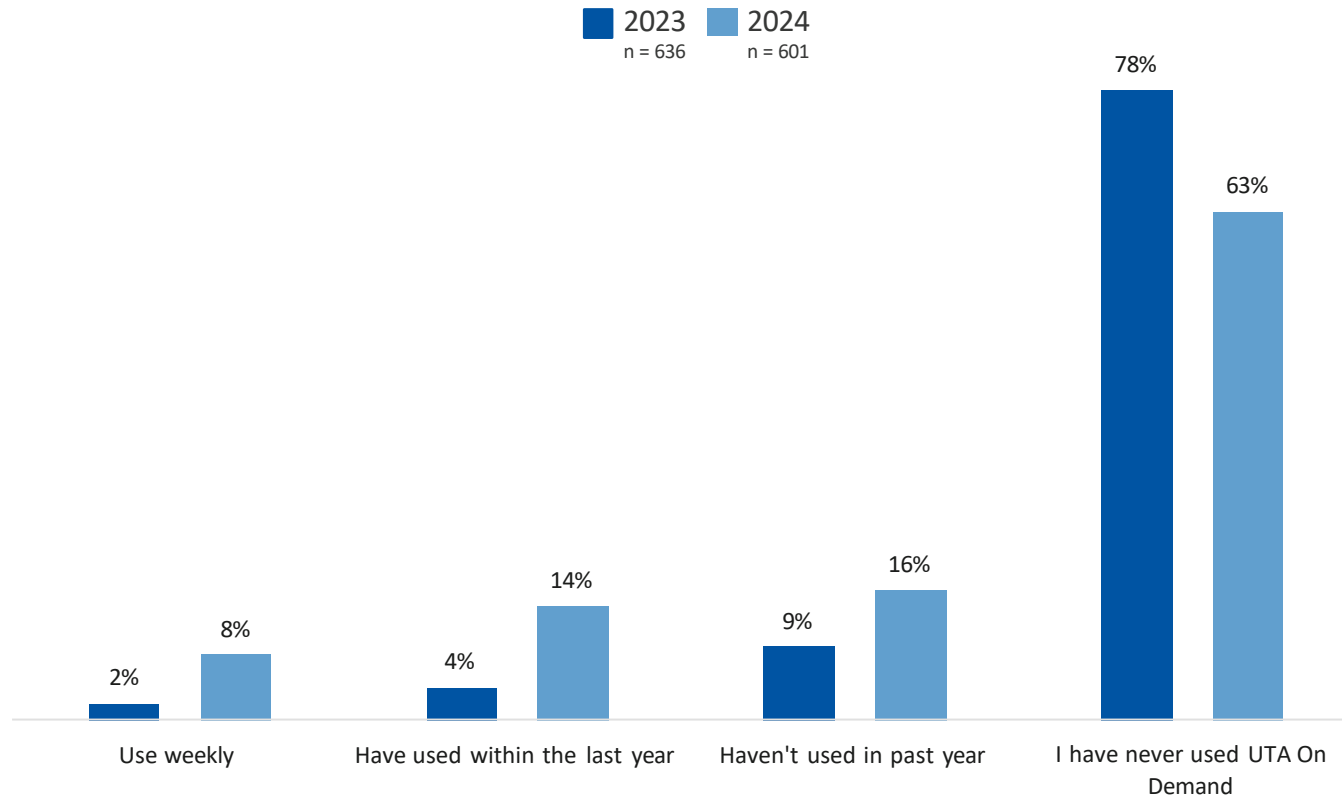


On Demand

There was significant increase in the weekly usage of UTA On Demand, which has quadrupled from 2% to 8%. Despite this growth, it is noteworthy that over 60% of Utahns have yet to use the service. This indicates a substantial opportunity for UTA to raise awareness and adoption of the On Demand service.

Usage of UTA On Demand*

% Selected, n = 601

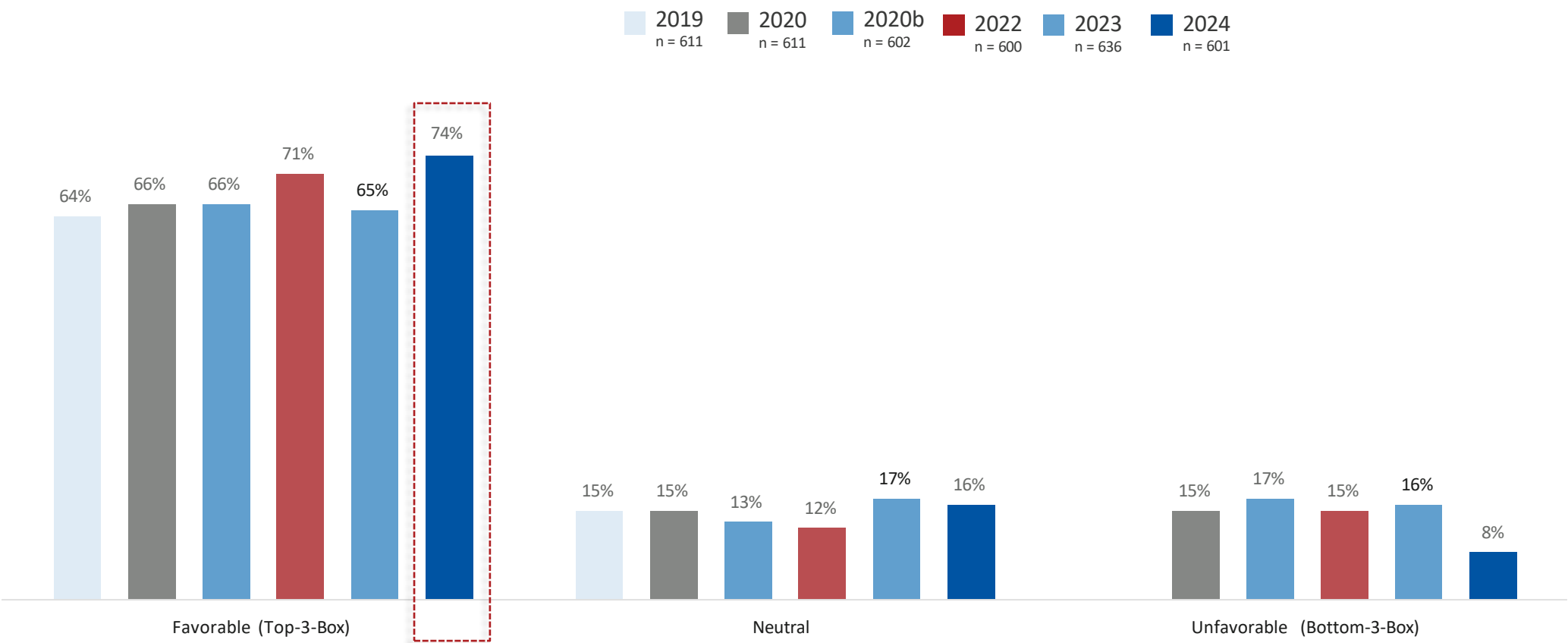


Utahns Hold Increasingly Favorable Views of UTA

From 2023 to 2024, the favorability toward UTA increased 9%. Additionally, there was an 8% drop in those reporting unfavorable views.

Favorability of UTA

% Top-3, % Middle-1, % Bottom-3

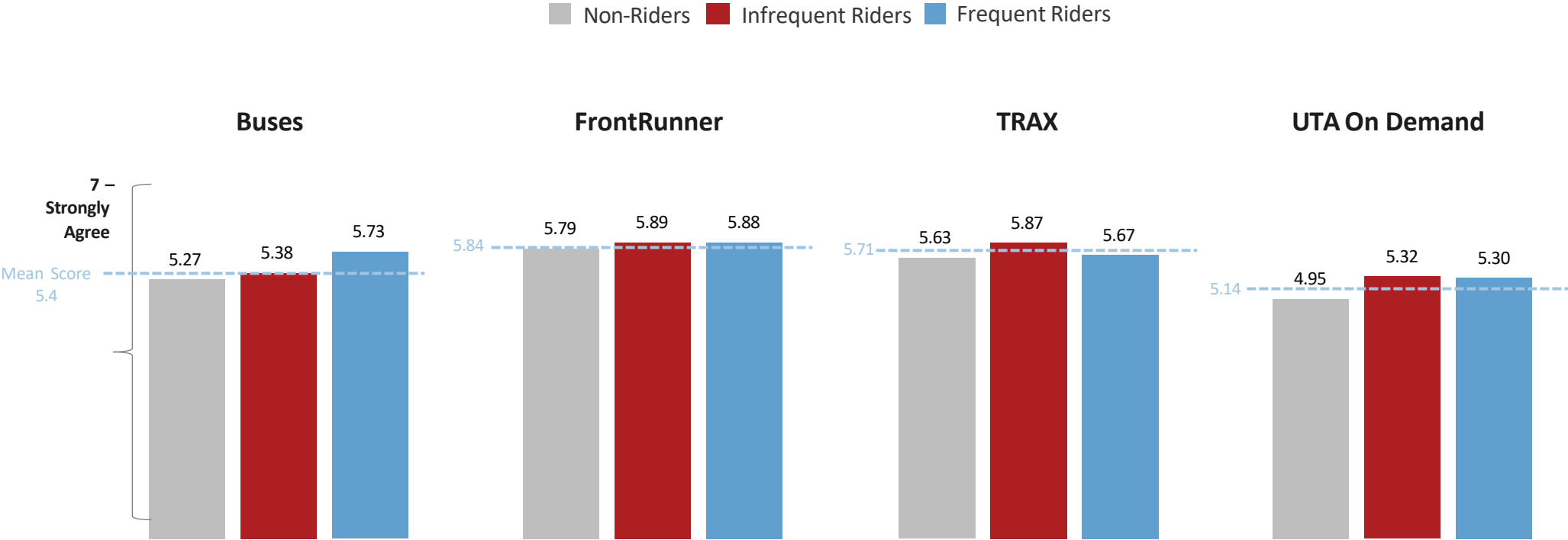


Frequent Riders Have More Positive Impressions of UTA Services

Most Utahns have a favorable impression of UTA services, regardless of riding frequency. In 2024, there were significant increases in the mean favorability of all services, with buses gaining nearly 1 point favorability on a 7-point Likert scale). This indicates positive momentum for future growth in positive perception across services.

Agreement with “I have a favorable impression of [UTA service].”

Mean Score, 7-point scale, 2024

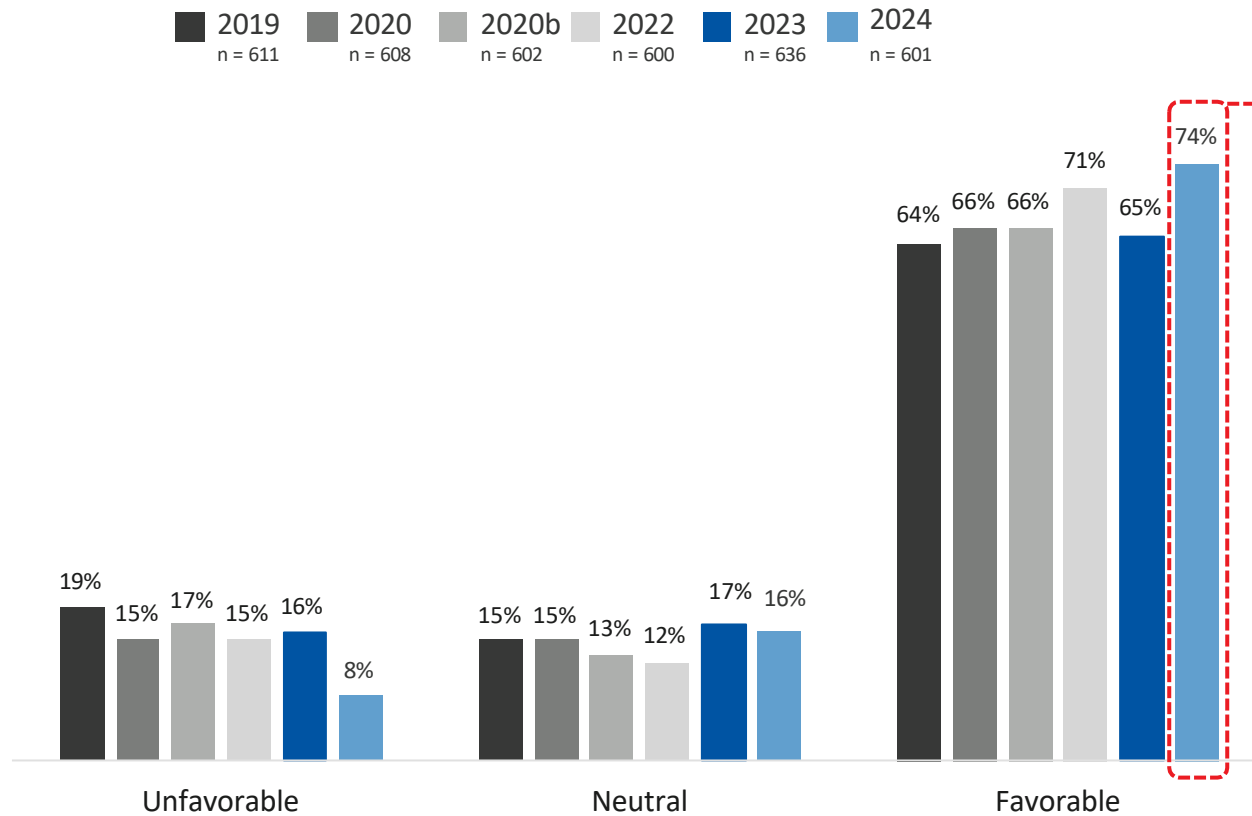


Favorability Above 70% Across All Counties Except Tooele

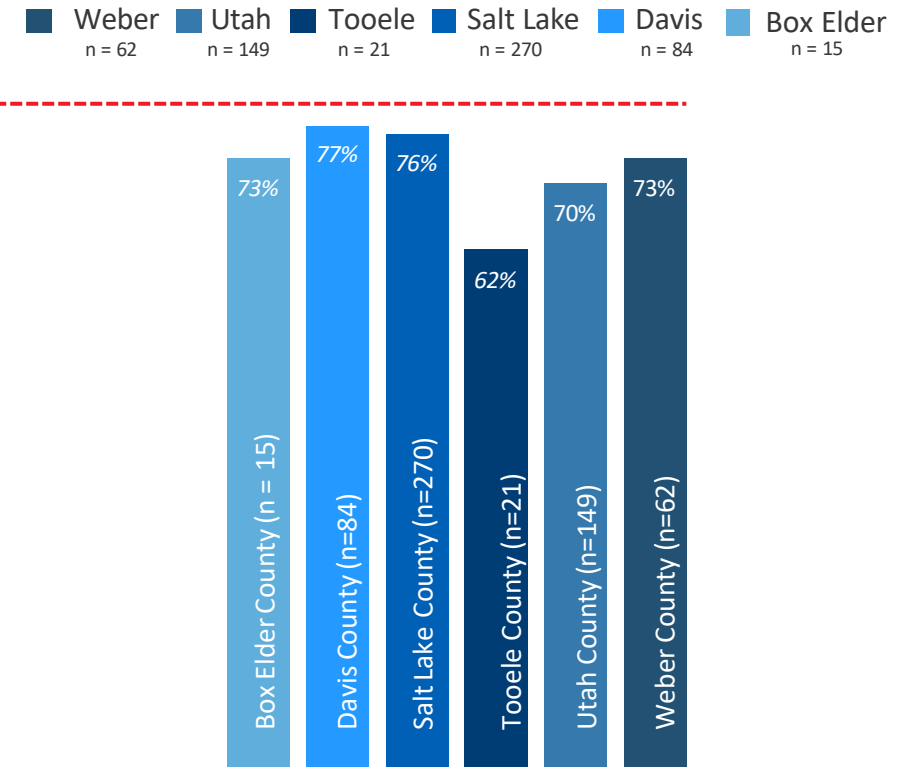
Over the past year, UTA's favorability has risen by approximately 9%, which is encouraging when considering the average favorability of the past 5 years. Davis and Salt Lake County residents view UTA most favorably at 77% and 76% respectively, while Tooele County has the lowest overall favorability at 62%.

Favorability of UTA

% Selected, Bottom-3, Middle-1, Top-3



Favorability by County

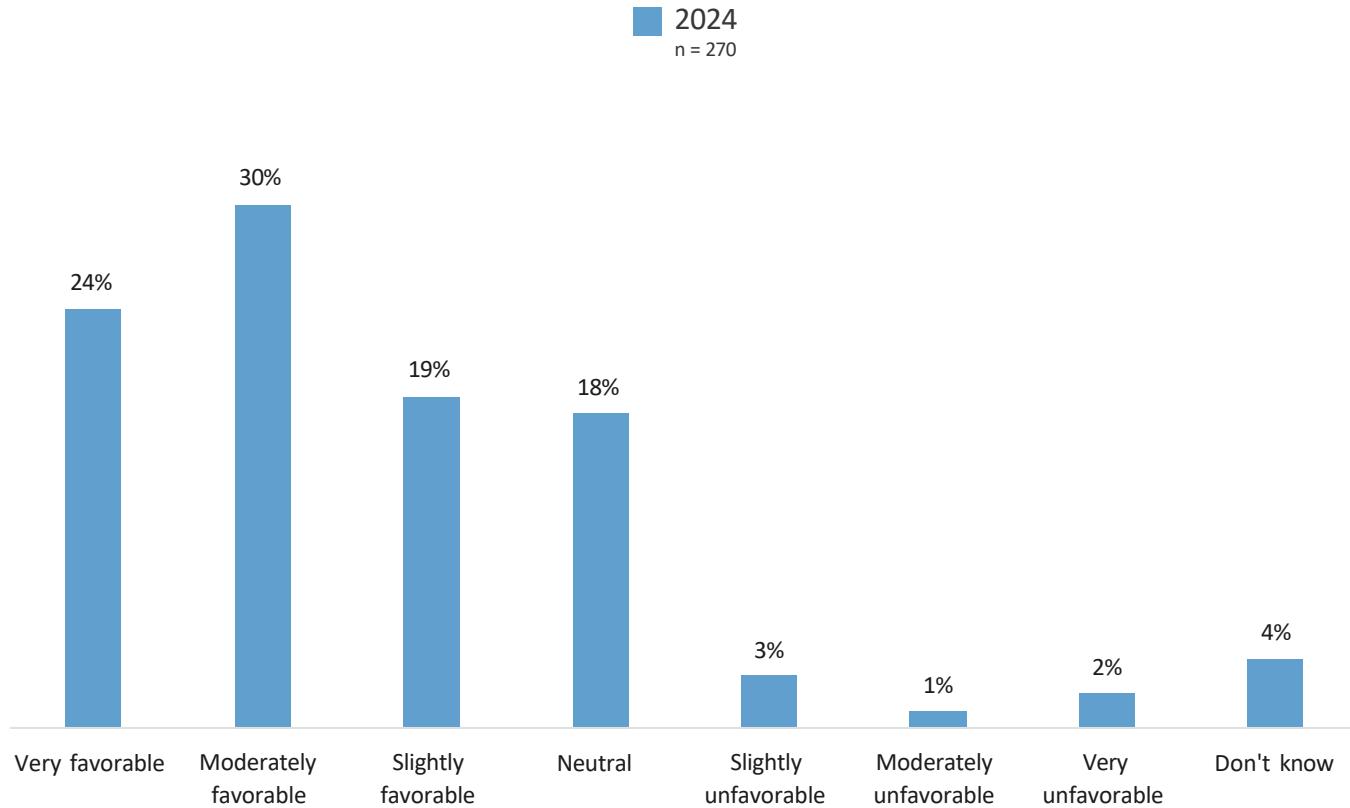


18-34-Year-Olds Mirrors Overall Favorability Score

Most 18-34-year-old Utahns, 73%, hold favorable views of UTA, appreciating the accessible transportation for those without cars and the overall positive experiences with the bus. However, the presence of other riders, particularly non-destination riders, on UTA services has been identified as a concern.

Perception of UTA, 18–34-year-olds

% Selected, n = 270

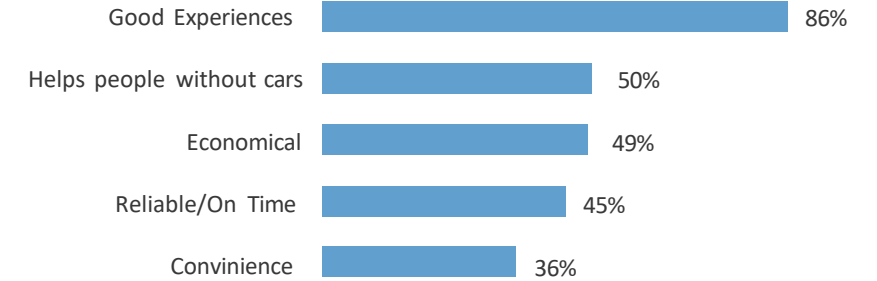


Favorable/unfavorable thoughts on UTA

Free responses answers

Favorable

n = 74



Unfavorable

n = 16

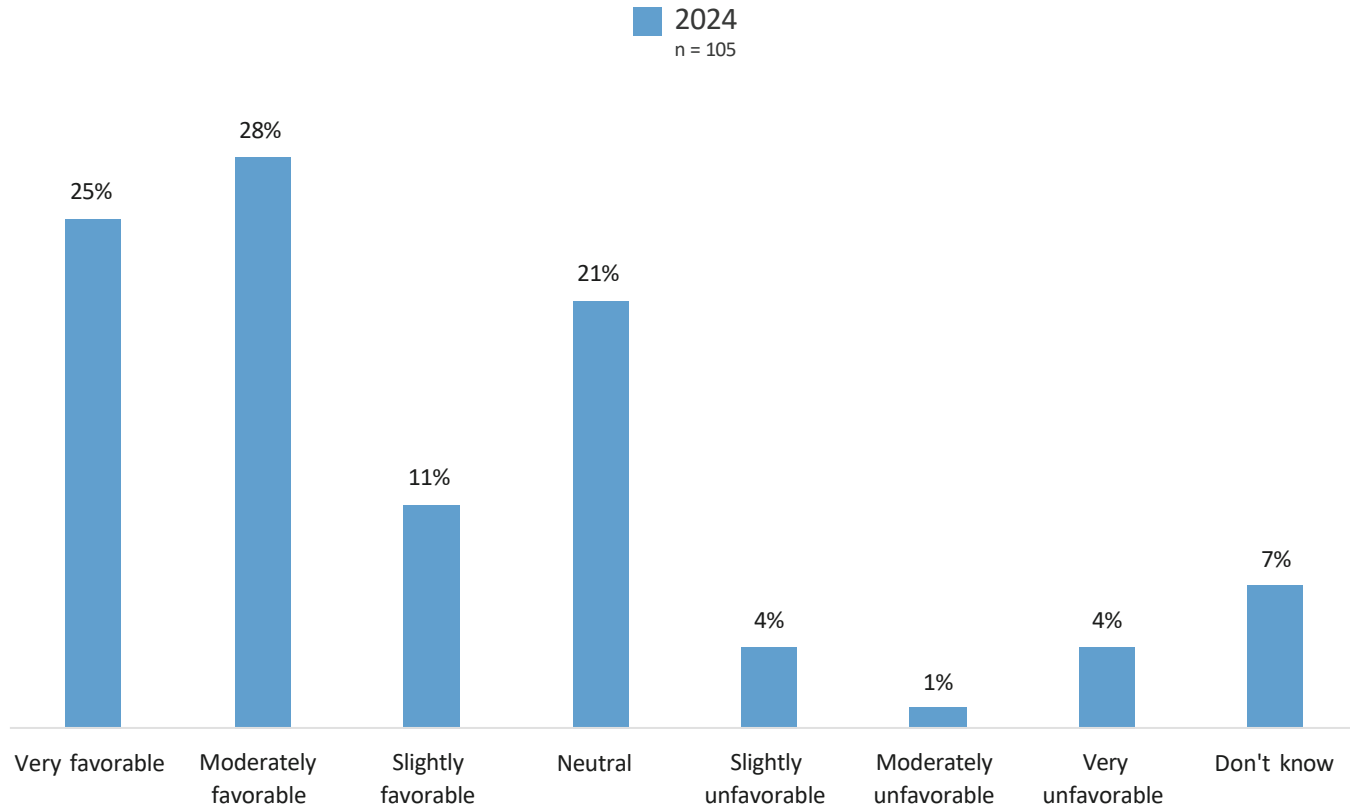


Opportunity to Improve BIPOC Favorability Score

64% of BIPOC Utahns hold favorable views of UTA, however, only 34% of them mentioned good experiences on the bus, which is significantly lower than other demographics. The presence of non-destination riders on UTA buses, as well as the treatment of riders by the drivers, are elevated concerns.

Perception of UTA, BIPOC

% Selected, n = 105

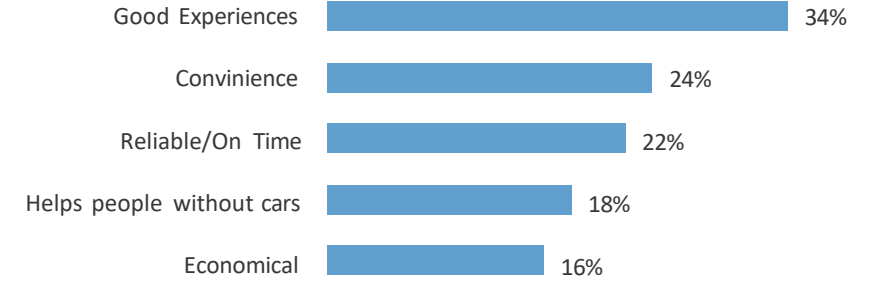


Favorable/unfavorable thoughts on UTA

Free responses answers

Favorable

n = 67



Unfavorable

n = 9

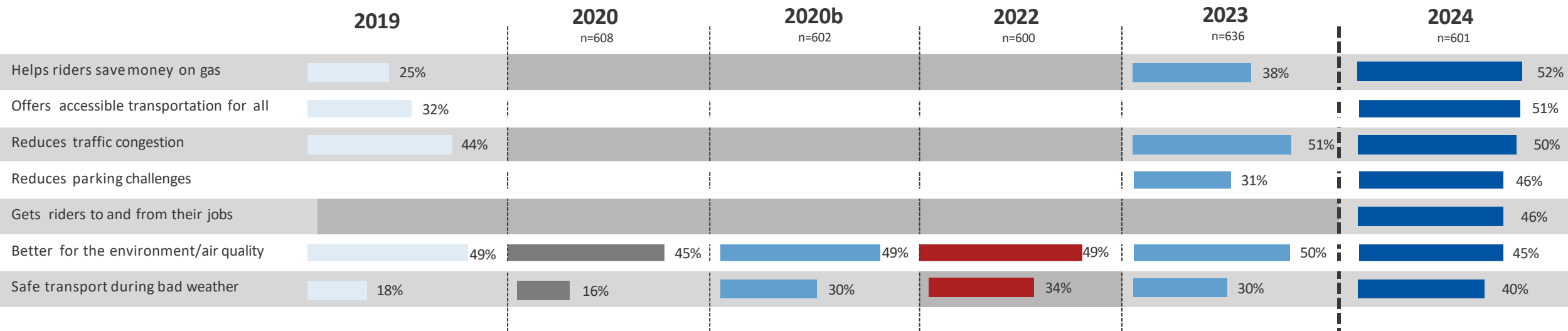


2024 Saw an Increase in Perceived Benefits of Public Transportation

Respondents report many benefits of public transportation: 14% increase in “helping riders save gas”; 15% increase in “reducing parking challenges”; and 10% increase in providing “safe transportation during bad weather.”

Benefits of a Good Public Transit System

% Mentioned



“We Move You”
2023 Brand
Campaign
Messaging:



Gas Savings
14% Increase YoY



Reduces Parking Hassles
15% Increase YoY

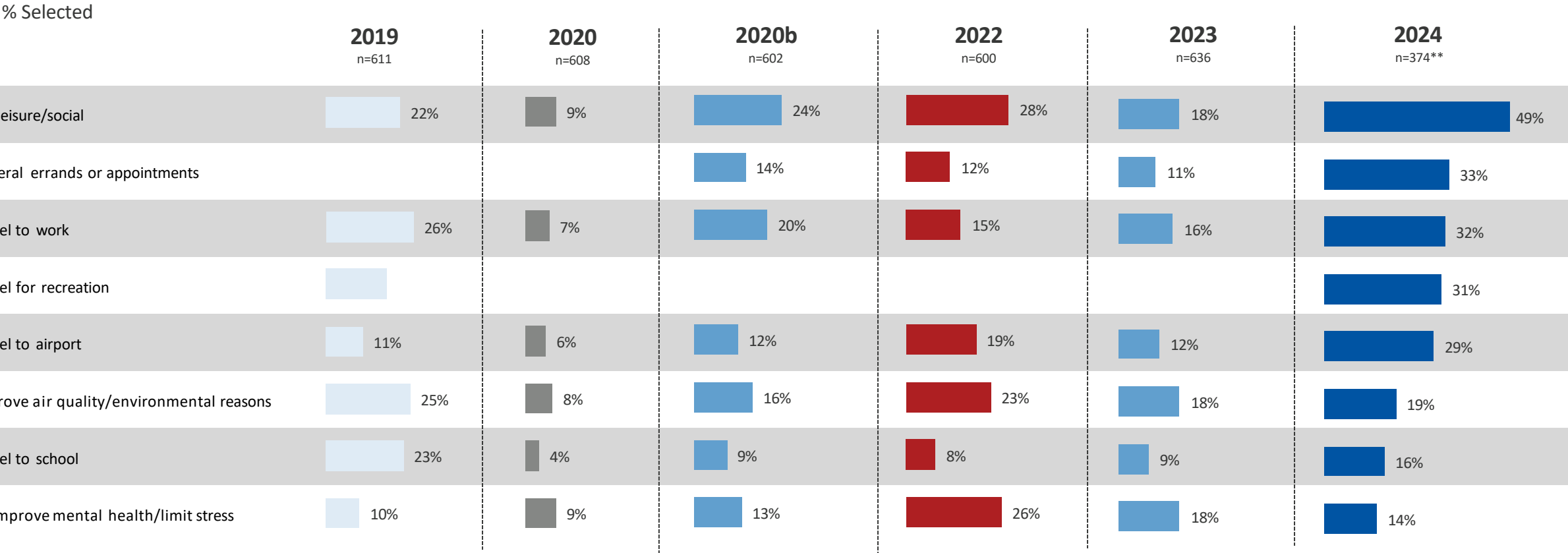


Reducing Car Expenses

Many Continue to Use Public Transportation for Leisure/Social

Utahns' usage of public transit for social activities such as shopping and dining has increased. The tripling of Utahns using UTA for general transport needs, from 11% to 33%, suggests a significant change in the attitude of Utahns toward public transportation.

Reasons for Using UTA (Riders)



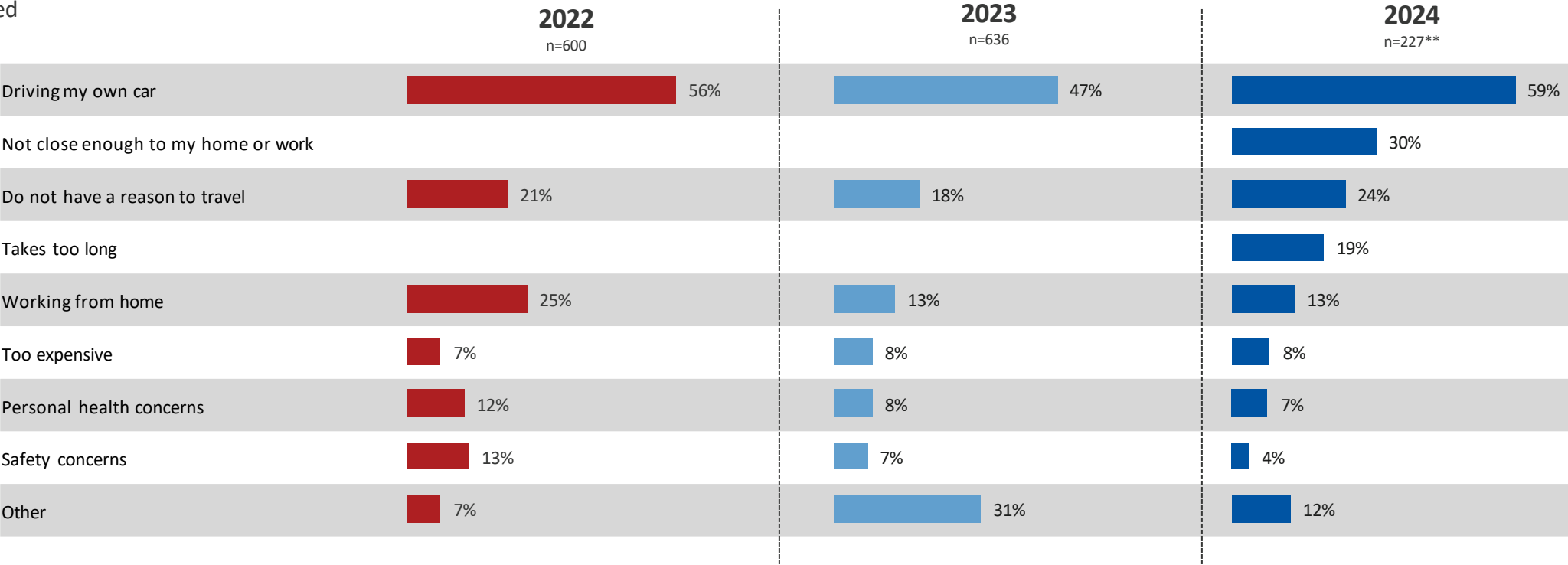
**Note: In 2024, this question was asked to only those respondents who reported that they are riders of UTA.

Personal Car Ownership Remains Top Barrier to Riding

Driving a car is the most common reason why Utahns don't use public transportation frequently; following closely is the lack of stops and routes close to their residences and workplaces.

Barriers to Using UTA (Non-riders)

% Selected



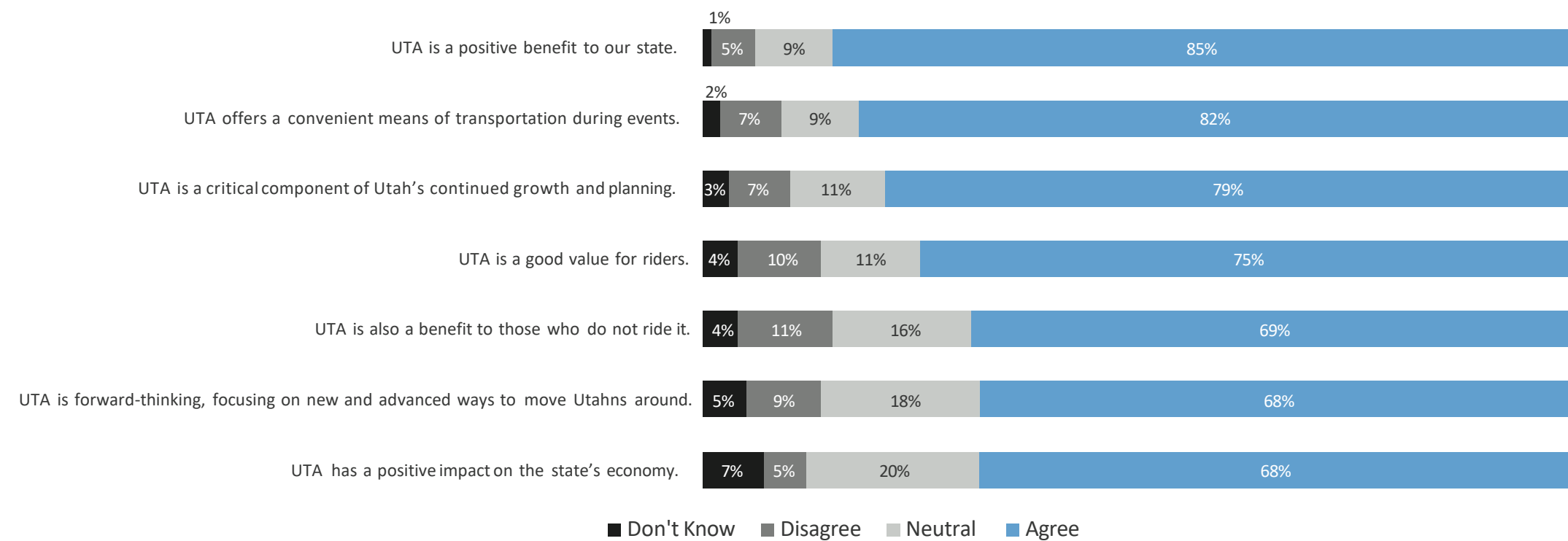
Note: In 2024, this question was asked to only those respondents who reported that they are **not riders of UTA.

Utahns Generally Believe UTA is of Great Value to the State

Overwhelmingly, respondents report great benefit of UTA to Utah (85%), that UTA is convenient to get to events (82%), and that UTA is a critical component of Utah’s continued growth and planning (79%).

Perceived Value of UTA

% Mentioned, Bottom-3, Middle-1, Top-3, n = 601



Top Benefits Vary By County

Box Elder prioritizes accessible transportation, while Davis and Tooele emphasize reducing traffic congestion. Salt Lake values environmental quality, and Utah and Weber focus on savings on gas.

Benefits to Utah of a Good Public Transit System

Top 3, % Selected

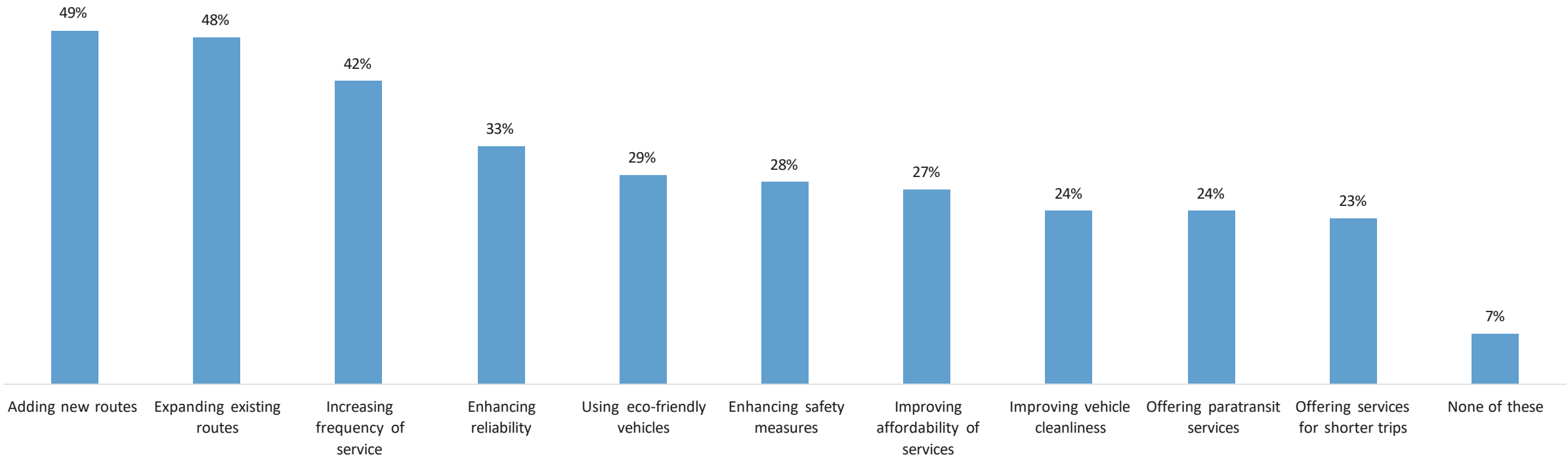
	Box Elder County n = 15	Davis County n = 84	Salt Lake County n = 270	Tooele County n = 21	Utah County n = 149	Weber County n = 62
1	Offers accessible transportation for all (73%)	Reduces traffic congestion (55%)	Better for the environment/air quality (53%)	Reduces traffic congestion (57%)	Helps riders save money on gas (62%)	Gets riders to and from their jobs (56%)
2	Helps riders save money on gas (60%)	Gets riders to and from their jobs (53%)	Offers accessible transportation for all (53%)	Gets riders to and from their jobs (48%)	Reduces traffic congestion (54%)	Offers accessible transportation for all (47%)
3	Gets riders to and from their jobs (53%)	Helps riders save money on gas (48%)	Helps riders save money on gas (51%)	Offers accessible transportation for all (43%)	Offers accessible transportation for all (50%)	Helps riders save money on gas (45%)

Adding and Expanding Routes Ranks Highest For Noticed Improvements

Utahns appreciate the effort put in by UTA to add new routes and expand existing routes with 49% and 48% of them choosing the options, respectively. The improvements to offering services for shorter trips and improving vehicle cleanliness were among lowest in terms of perceived improvements.

Thoughts about improvements made by the UTA

% Selected, n = 601

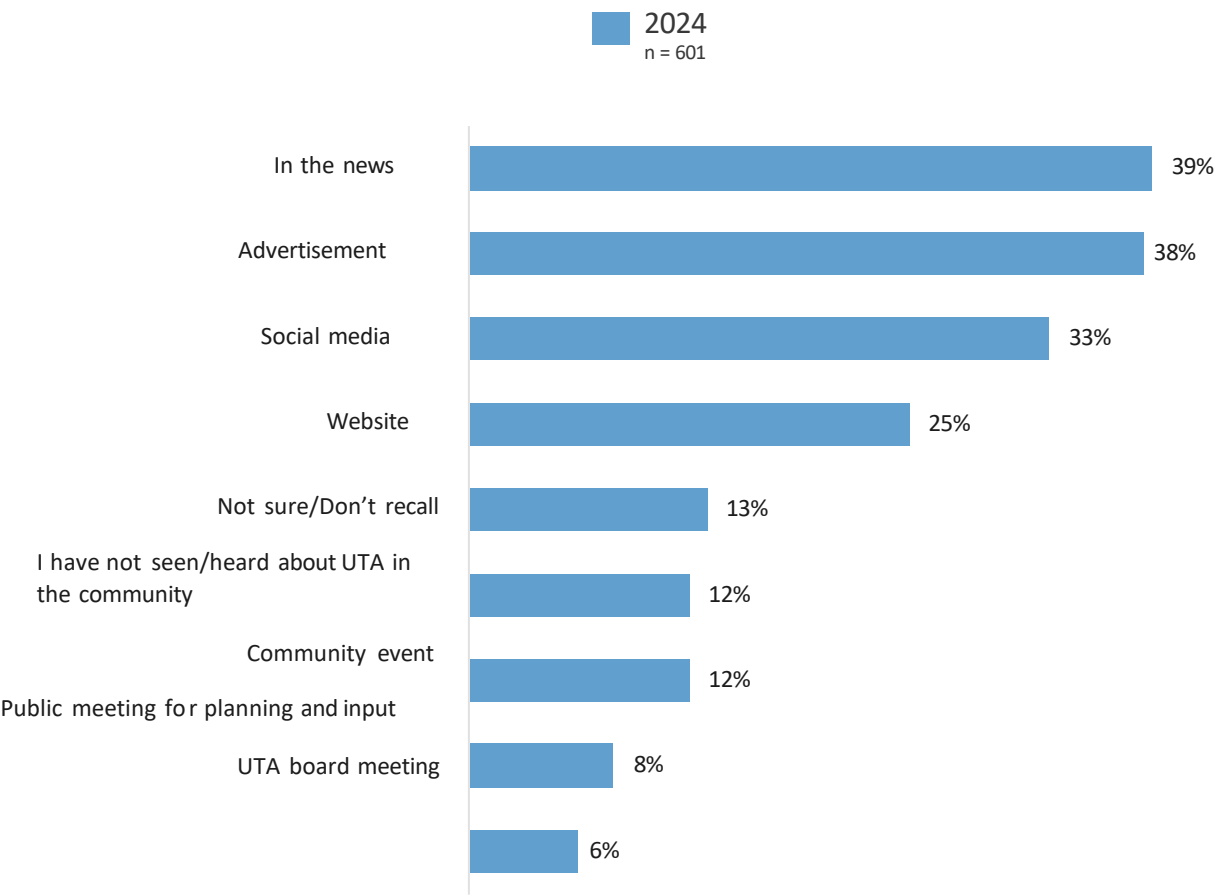


Survey Results | Awareness

News outlets and advertisements are the primary sources of UTA information for Utahns, as indicated by 39% and 38% respectively in 2024.

Sources of UTA Information

% Selected



Key Takeaways

1

Utahns continue to grow more familiar and more favorable toward UTA and its services, regardless of ridership. Buses show significant growth in favorability compared to 2023.

3

Utahns are increasingly seeing the benefits of public transportation and UTA. More are riding for leisure and infrequent uses.

4

There remains an opportunity to communicate the benefits of UTA for non-riders. With survey questions aligned with on-board and rider survey efforts, this survey could be a non-rider evaluation.

5

Utahns agree that UTA is a value to the state and benefits Utah's continued growth. Specifically, the community-centered benefits (e.g., accessible transportation) are of great value to Utahns.

6

More education and awareness of UTA's economic impact and use of public funds could help Utahns who are indifferent or negative to these measures.

Opportunity to improve rider perception among BIPOC individuals and target marketing messages in geographic locations.