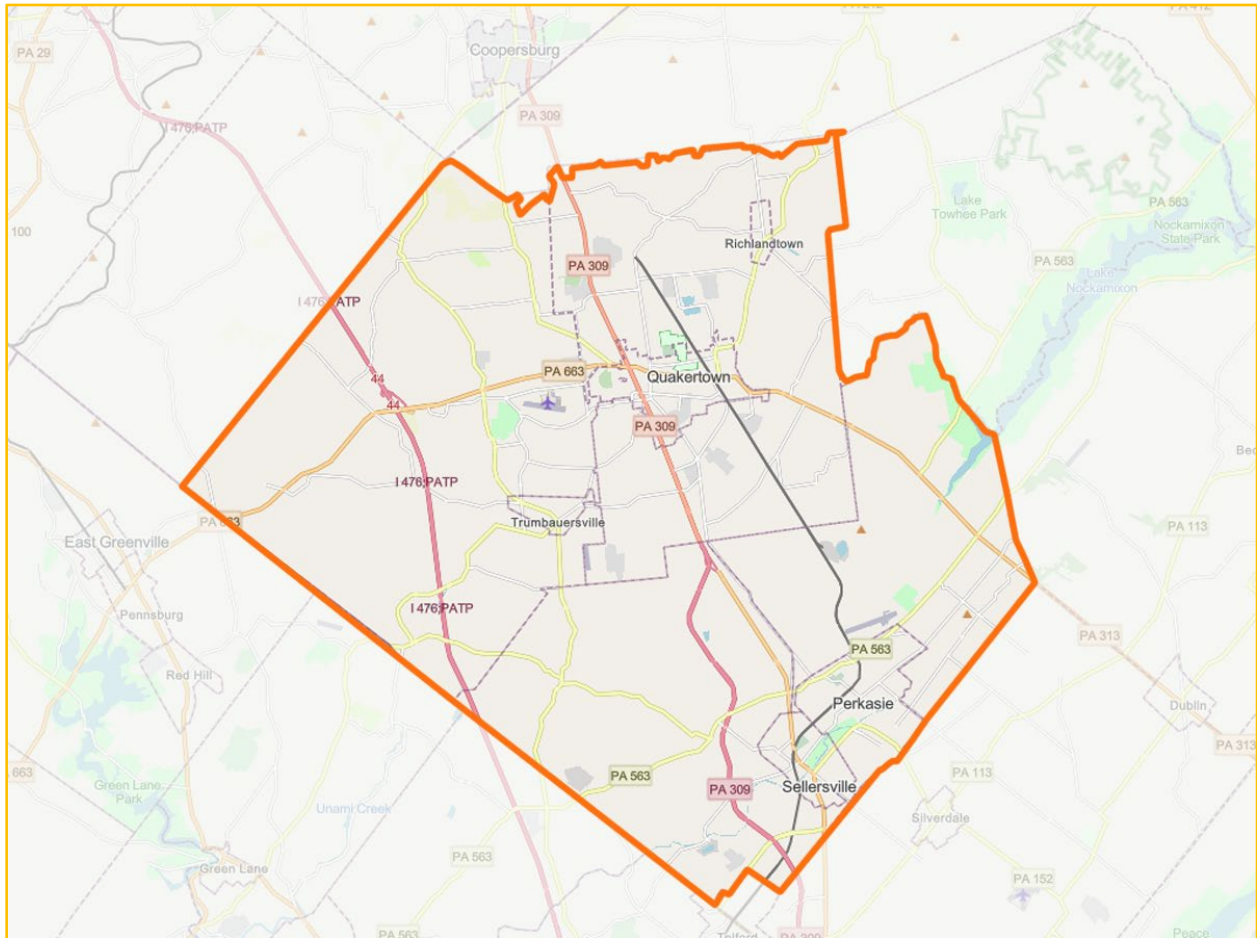


# UPPER BUCKS COUNTY AREA TRANSPORTATION NEEDS SURVEY RESULTS



**Bucks County**

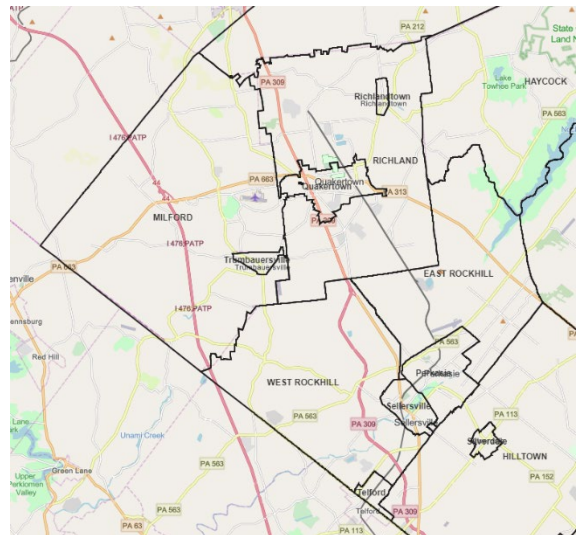
# THE UPPER BUCKS COUNTY AREA TRANSPORTATION SITUATION

## Overview

The Upper Bucks County area has not had any fixed route public transportation options since SEPTA's Regional Rail service to Quakertown was discontinued in the early 1980's. This lack of public transportation has had a significant impact on residents' options for commuting and has hindered business development as companies seek employees for their businesses.

For this report, the Upper Bucks County area has been defined to include East Rockhill Township, Haycock Township, Milford Township, Perkasie Borough, Quakertown Borough, Richland Township, Richlandtown Borough, Sellersville Borough, Trumbauersville Borough and West Rockhill Township. The area has robust highway system including Route 309, Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-476), Route 313, and Route 663. The Upper Bucks County area exhibits a full range of land uses including higher-density, mixed-use development in the older boroughs, and fragmented, small-scale, lower-density residential development in the surrounding townships.

The ten municipalities were home to over 58,000 residents in 2018 and are projected to have over 68,000 residents by 2045 according to DVRPC's population projections. The study area has a robust commercial sector, with most of this development existing along Route 309. Quakertown Borough has seen some redevelopment in recent years and is poised to continue that trend. Milford Township has had several large scale developments including St. Luke's Hospital along Route 663. East and West Rockhill townships are fairly rural, with some low density residential uses. Richland Township has large areas of industrial development.



## Survey

The Bucks County Planning Commission, on behalf of the County Commissioners, conducted a public opinion survey to assess the public transportation needs of the Upper Bucks County area during the fall of 2019. Residents were asked to provide their thoughts and opinions on the public transportation needs in this part of Bucks County. The ultimate goal of the survey is to help determine if pursuing implementation of an improved public transit system is a worthwhile endeavor. This study was conducted entirely online. The purpose of the survey was to gather input from residents regarding issues and opportunities relating to public transportation in the area.



Some of the specific topics that were addressed in the survey included:

- Methods of transportation currently used
- Perceived impacts related to the lack of public transportation

- Barriers to using public transit
- Influencing factors for transportation choices

### **Methodology**

The survey was conducted via Survey Monkey, an online polling program. The survey was designed to prevent users from submitting multiple surveys. Marketing of the survey was done by providing a digital brochure to each municipality for publishing on their respective websites. In addition, the survey was promoted on the County's social media outlets. The targeted audience for the survey was those residents who lived the Upper Bucks County area. However, the survey was open to anyone who wished to complete it.



### **Contents of the Report**

This report contains:

- Survey Findings
- Conclusions
- Survey Sample

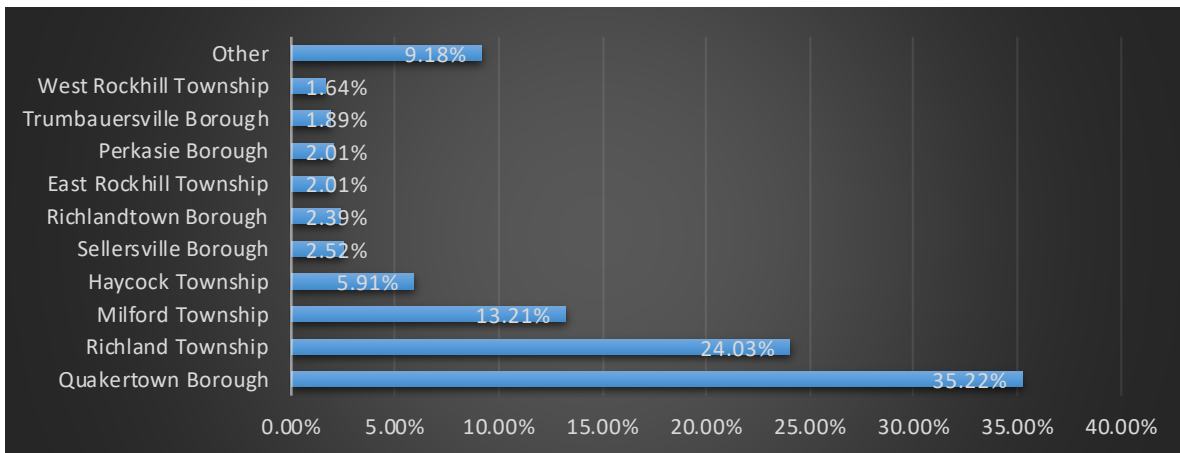
## Survey Findings

The survey was available to the public from September 2019 until the first week of January 2020. The survey was conducted via Survey Monkey, an online polling program. The survey was designed to prevent users from submitting multiple surveys. The survey was completed by 797 respondents. The following discussion indicates the results of each of the questions posed by the survey.

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### Question 1: Where Do You Live?

Each survey respondent was asked to identify where they lived. Predominantly, most surveys were completed by residents of Quakertown Borough, Richland Township and Milford Township.

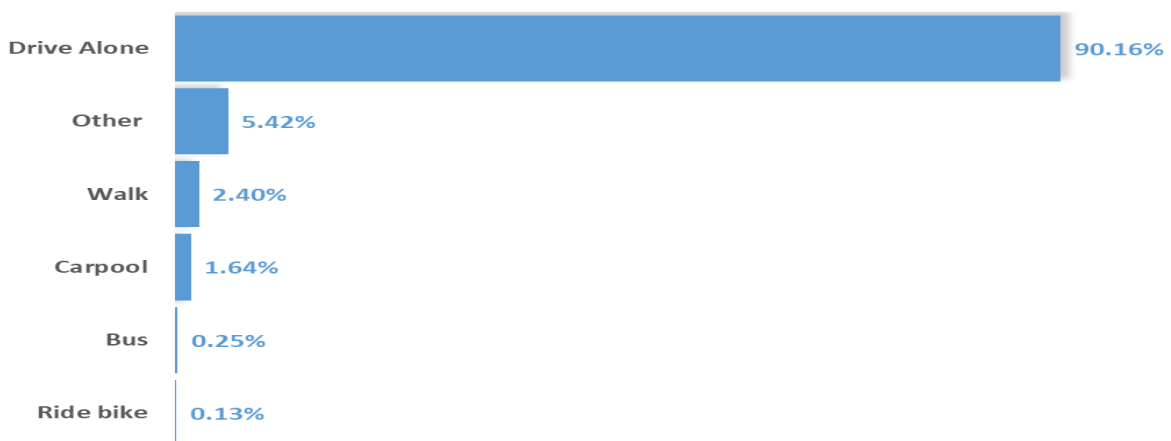


*\*The other category included municipalities not defined above.*

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### Question 2: How Do You Typically Commute To/From Work or School?

To determine potential areas in need of public transportation, each survey respondent was asked to identify where they travel to for work or school. Not surprisingly, most respondents indicated that they drove alone to work or school.



*\*The other category included answers such as retired, ride share, asking friends and family for rides.*

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**Question 3: Is Your Arrival/Departure Time To Work or School Flexible?**

To determine the need for fixed route public transportation, each survey respondent was asked to identify whether or not their arrival and/or departure times were flexible. Nearly 60% of survey respondents indicated that their arrival and departure times are not flexible. This could have an impact of the type of public transportation service that could be provided, if deemed appropriate.

- **Arrival/Departure Time is Not Flexible**      **59.5%**
- **Arrival/Departure Time is Flexible**      **40.5%**

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**Question 4: On a Typical Day, How Long Does It Take You to Travel to Work or School?**

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how long their commute took each day to work or school. The average commute time was 34 minutes, with the maximum commute time of 240 minutes and the minimum time being 0 minutes (*those respondents with a 0 minute commute time most likely work at home or are retired*)



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**Question 5: On a Scale of 1 to 10 with 1 Being Not a Factor, to 10 Being a Significant Factor, How Important is the Availability of Public Transit in Deciding Where to Live?**

In an effort to determine if the availability of public transportation influences a person's decision on where to live, each survey respondent was asked to provide a rating from 1 to 10, with 1 being low and 10 being a significant factor in their decision. The average rating was 4.9. The range of answers ran the entire gamut of 1 to 10.



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**Question 6: What Are Your Barriers to Using Public Transit?**

The survey respondents were asked to indicate some of the reasons that kept them from using public transportation. Multiple answers were allowed for this question. The lack of availability was the main barrier to using public transportation, but there were also other reasons including people’s unwillingness to give up their car for their commute.



- **Not Available Where I Live** **80.7%**
- **Faster to Drive My Own Car** **21.7%**
- **Convenience** **19.8%**
- **Scheduling** **14.8%**
- **Prefer to Drive My Own Car** **14.0%**
- **Cost** **8.3%**
- **Other** **3.8%\***

*\*The other category included answers such as didn't like public transportation, didn't go where they worked, needed car for work duties*

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**Question 7: Even If You Don't Utilize It, Does Your Employer Offer Public Transit Expense Benefits Such as a Transportation Spending Account (TSA) for Parking or Transit Passes?**

As a benefit, some employers offer their employees a Transportation Spending Account. A transportation spending account allows an employee to use pre-tax funds for work-related commuting, such as bus or train fare and parking costs. Less than 12% of all respondents were offered this benefit.

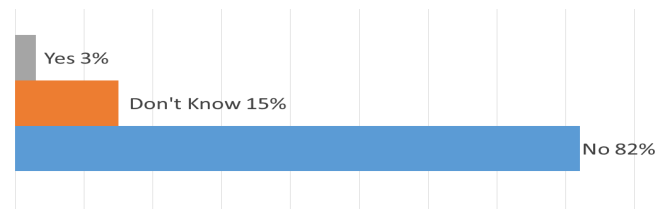


- **No** **69.6%**
- **Don't Know** **18.8%**
- **Yes** **11.6%**

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**Question 8: Does Your Employer Offer Ride Sharing Programs?**

Survey respondents were asked if their employer provided any ride sharing programs. 82% of respondents indicated that their employer did not provide any programs. Therefore, getting to work was entirely the responsibility of the survey respondent.



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**Question 9: If Your Employer Offers Ride Sharing Programs, Please Describe?**



If their employer provided any ride sharing programs, survey respondents were asked to elaborate. Answers provided included a Guaranteed Ride Program, van pool, and car pool.

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**Question 10: How Often Do You Use SEPTA/LANTA?**

Survey respondents were asked how often they use SEPTA or LANTA. Over 89% of respondents rarely or never use SEPTA or LANTA. This is probably a direct result of the fact that these services are not readily available in the study area.

- **A Few Times a Year** 45.4%
- **Never** 44.0%
- **A Few Times a Month** 6.5%
- **Monday through Friday** 3.0%
- **A Few Times a Week** 0.9%
- **Seven Days a Week** 0.2%



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**Question 11: What Kind of Trips Do You Use SEPTA/LANTA for?**

If survey respondents used SEPTA or LANTA, they were asked what kind of trips they used it for. Multiple answers were allowed for this question. Most of the respondents used it for travel to Philadelphia and travel for entertainment.

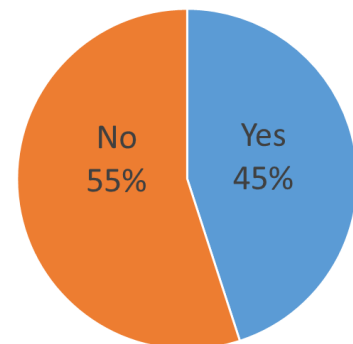


- **Travel to and from Philadelphia** 84.2%
- **Travel for Entertainment** 56.6%
- **Commuting to/from Work or Class** 11.1%
- **Travel to and from Lehigh Valley** 7.7%
- **Other** 3.7%
- **Travel to Run Errands** 3.5%
- **I Do Not Use SEPTA or LANTA** 1.4%

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**Question 12: Do You Use Rideshare Apps Like Uber or Lyft?**

Survey respondents were asked if they had used a ridesharing service. A ride sharing service can be best defined as an arrangement between a vehicle owner and an individual who provides a pickup location with their desired destination through an app or website. The use of ridesharing services such as Uber or Lyft has had a significant impact on the use of public transportations in other areas of the region. The results were split nearly in half on whether or not they had used a ridesharing service.



**Question 13: How Often Do You Use Rideshare Apps?**



If they had used a ridesharing service, survey respondents were asked how often they had used a ridesharing service. Nearly half of the answers were that they used it less than 10 times a year and only 5% had used it one or two times a week.

- **Less than 10 Times a Year**                   **45.0%**
- **Once or Twice a Month**                   **24.3%**
- **Once or Twice a Year**                   **23.7%**
- **Once or Twice a Week**                   **5.3%**
- **Almost Daily**                               **1.7%**



**Question 14: When Do You Use Ridesharing Apps Like Uber and Lyft?**

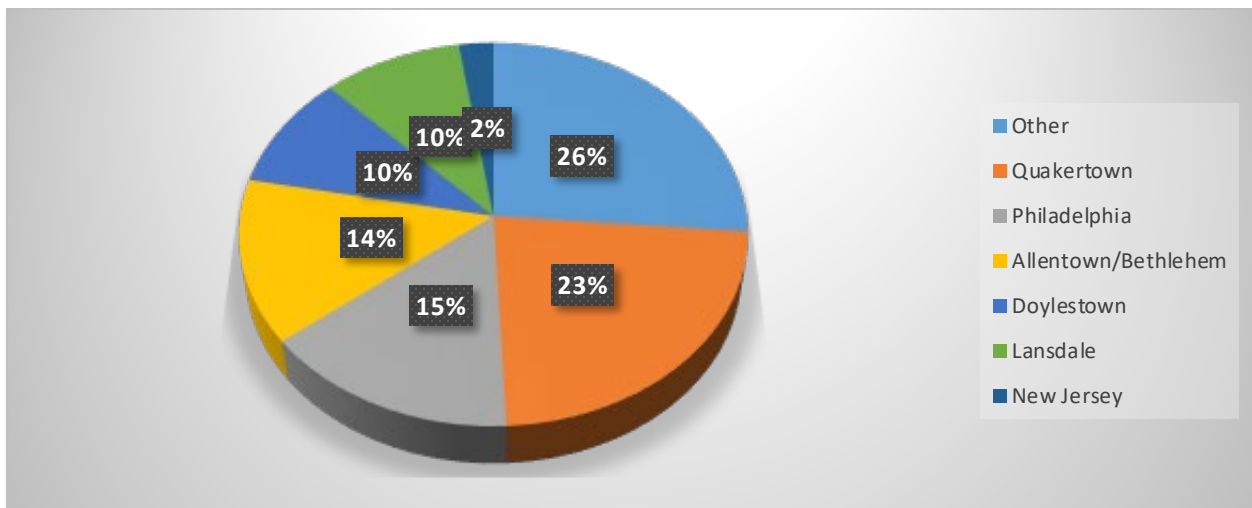
If they had used a ridesharing service, survey respondents were asked to indicate the destination while using a ridesharing service. Multiple answers were allowed for this question. Most of the respondents used it for travel for entertainment.



- **Travel for Entertainment**                   **79.9%**
- **Travel to Public Transit Station/Stop**   **20.4%**
- **Travel to and from Philadelphia**       **17.5%**
- **Other**   **14.8%**
- **Travel to and from Lehigh Valley**       **13.0%**
- **Travel to Run Errands**                   **10.7%**
- **Commuting to Work or Class**           **10.1%**

**Question 15: When You Travel for Work or School, Where Are You Traveling to?**

The destination of the survey respondent was the focus of this question. Determining the location is necessary to establish if there a specific locations in common that make public transportation fixed route service viable. Nearly 23% of respondents were headed to Quakertown, 15% were headed to Philadelphia and nearly 14% were traveling to the Lehigh Valley.



*\*The other category included various destinations not shown in the list above.*



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**Question 16: How Important is it that the Upper Bucks County Area has Access to Public Transit?**



Overall, most survey respondents felt that the provision of public transportation is important for the Upper Bucks County area. Less than 10% felt that it was not necessary.

- **Greatly Needed**            **60.1%**
- **Moderately Needed**    **19.9%**
- **Somewhat Needed**      **10.8%**
- **Not Needed**                **9.2%**



## ***Conclusion***

Based upon the results of this survey, it appears that there is a majority of survey respondents who feel the Upper Bucks County area is in need of some sort of public transportation service. This is consistent with anecdotal feedback county staff has heard from municipal officials in the subject area. Obviously, a public transportation system would benefit local residents and businesses alike.

Public transportation can take many forms. Most people envision public transportation as buses and trains running at short intervals most of the day and into the evening. A typical system also includes connections to outlying areas. Since this area is within SEPTA's franchise area, it is reasonable to assume that SEPTA could be involved in the managing of any future public transportation system. In addition, LANTA operates its bus service just north of the subject area. Their potential cooperation in future service could be a factor, as well. A bus route that merely circulates around the subject area providing service to specific destinations also has potential.

It appears that residents and officials agree that the area would benefit from the establishment of public transportation. However, in order to determine if providing public transportation service is viable and cost-efficient, the next step should be to engage the consulting services of a professional engineering firm to analyze and compare the various types of the public transportation that could be provided. This report would determine potential types of service and whether this service could be implemented at a reasonable cost. It would also provide potential funding sources, ridership and subsidies necessary to implement the service.

The project could be led by Bucks County Planning Commission with project direction provided by a steering committee that could be comprised of the following: Bucks County Transportation Management Association, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority, Quakertown Borough Economic Adviser, Upper Bucks Chamber of Commerce, Richlandtown Borough, Richland Township, Quakertown Borough, Milford Township, Trumbauersville Borough, East Rockhill Township, West Rockhill Township, Perkasio Borough and Sellersville Borough. Furthermore, the project should include a robust public involvement process that would include open house meetings conducted at critical points in the study.

## Quakertown Area Transportation Needs Survey

### 1. Where Do You Live?

- a. East Rockhill Township
- b. Haycock Township
- c. Milford Township
- d. Perkasio Borough
- e. Quakertown Borough
- f. Richland Township
- g. Richlandtown Borough
- h. Sellersville Borough
- i. Trumbauersville Borough
- j. West Rockhill Township
- k. Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. How Do You Typically Commute To/From Work or School? (*Circle one*)

- Drive Alone
- Carpool
- Walk
- Bus
- Ride bike
- Employer Vanpool
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Is Your Arrival/Departure Time to Work or School Flexible? (*Circle one*)

- Yes, my arrival/departure time is flexible
- No, my arrival/departure time is not flexible

### 4. On a Typical Day, How Long Does It Take You to Travel to Work or School? \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

### 5. On a Scale of 1 to 10 With 1 Being "Not a Factor" to 10 Being a "Significant Factor", How Important is the Availability of Public Transit in Deciding Where to Live?

\_\_\_\_\_ (*Please write in a number between 1 and 10, with 10 indicating a significant factor*)

### 6. What are Your Barriers to Using Public Transit: (*Check all that apply*)

- Not available where I live
- Cost
- Scheduling
- Convenience
- Faster to drive my own car
- Prefer to drive my own car even if public transit available
- Other: (write in) \_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Even If You Don't Utilize It, Does Your Employer Offer Public Transit Expense Benefits Such as a Transportation Spending Account (TSA) for Parking or Transit Passes?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

**8. Does Your Employer Offer Ride Sharing Programs?**

- Yes If yes, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
- No
- Don't Know

**9. How Often Do You Use SEPTA/LANTA? (Circle one)**

- Seven days a week
- Monday through Friday
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- A few times a year
- Never

**10. What Kind of Trips Do You Use SEPTA/LANTA For? (Check all that apply)**

- Commuting to/from work or class
- Travel for entertainment
- Travel to run errands
- Travel to and from Philadelphia
- Travel to and from Lehigh Valley
- I do not use SEPTA or LANTA
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Do You Use Rideshare Apps Like Uber or Lyft? (Circle one)**

- Yes. If yes, how many times per week? \_\_\_\_\_
- No

**12. When Do You Use Ridesharing Apps Like Uber and Lyft? (Check all that apply)**

- Commuting to work or class
- Travel to public transit station/stop
- Travel for entertainment
- Travel to run errands
- Travel to and from Philadelphia
- Travel to and from Lehigh Valley
- I do not use ridesharing apps
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**13. When You Travel For Work or School, Where Are You Traveling To?**

- Allentown/Bethlehem
- Doylestown
- Lansdale
- New Jersey
- Philadelphia
- Quakertown
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

