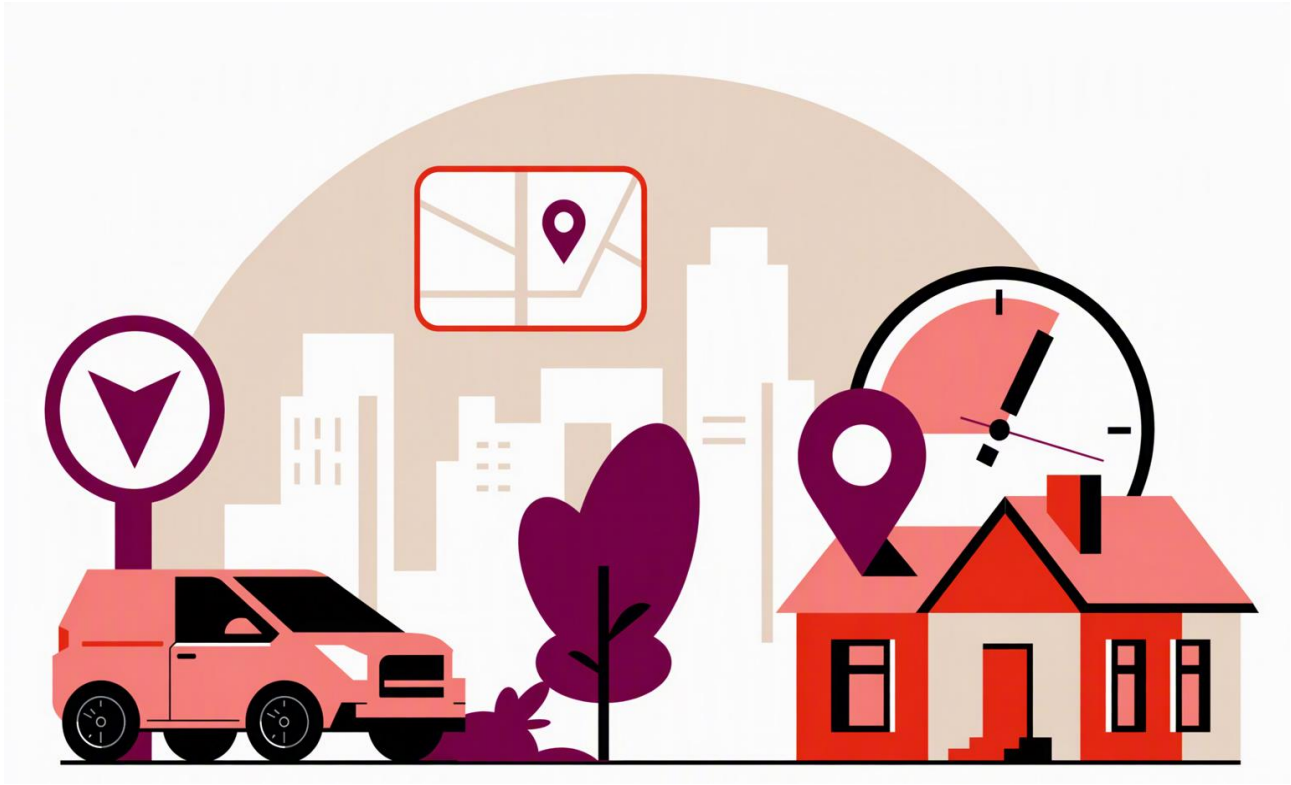


Human Services Transportation

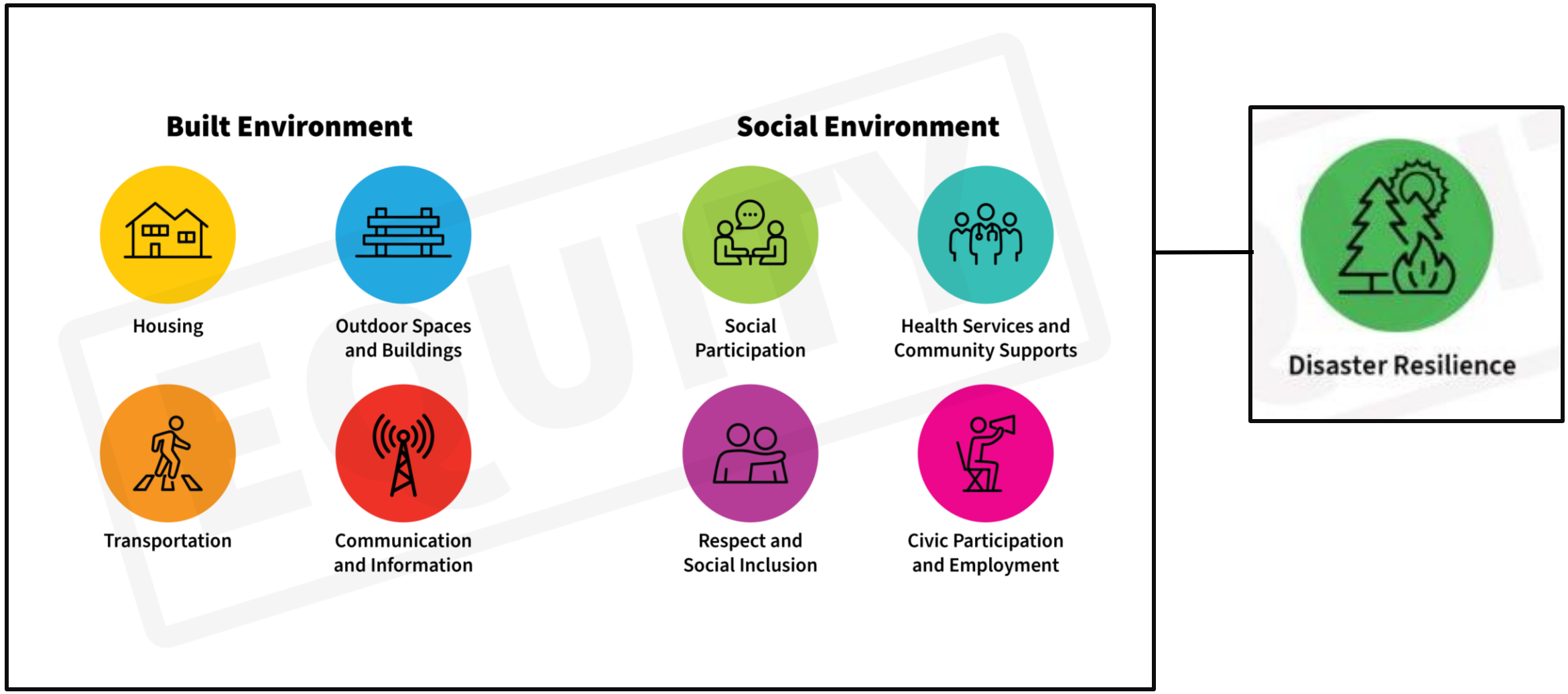
Challenges, Opportunities, and Innovation

CIVICWELL | NOVEMBER 12, 2026

David Azevedo | AARP California
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Livable Communities: The Foundation for Aging Well



California Is Aging. Our Communities Must Adapt.

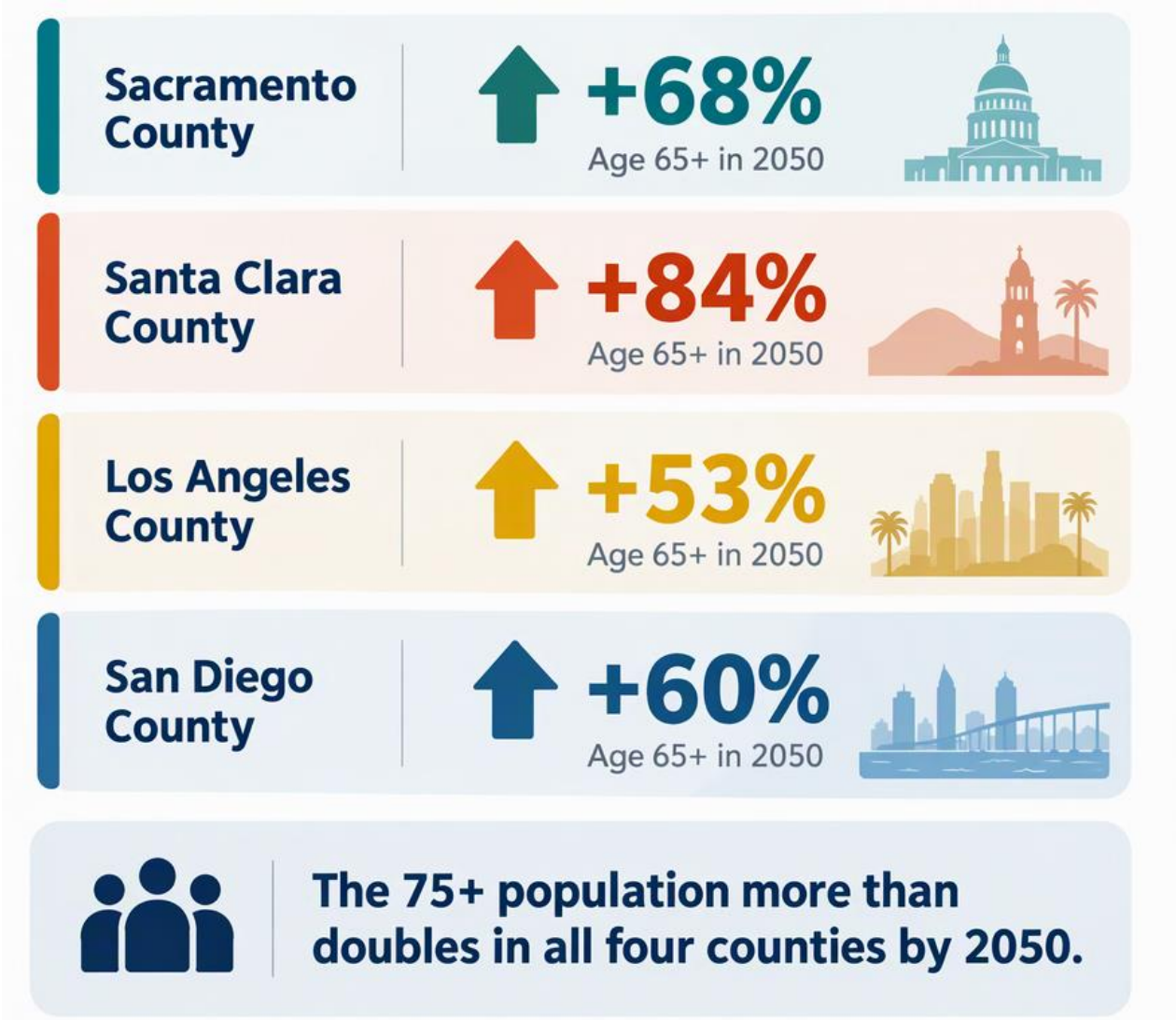
- Older adults represent a growing share of California's population.
- Aging trends affect large metropolitan regions and smaller jurisdictions.
- Transportation needs change with age, health, income, and ability.
- Today's planning decisions will shape tomorrow's independence.





The Demographic Shift Is Local

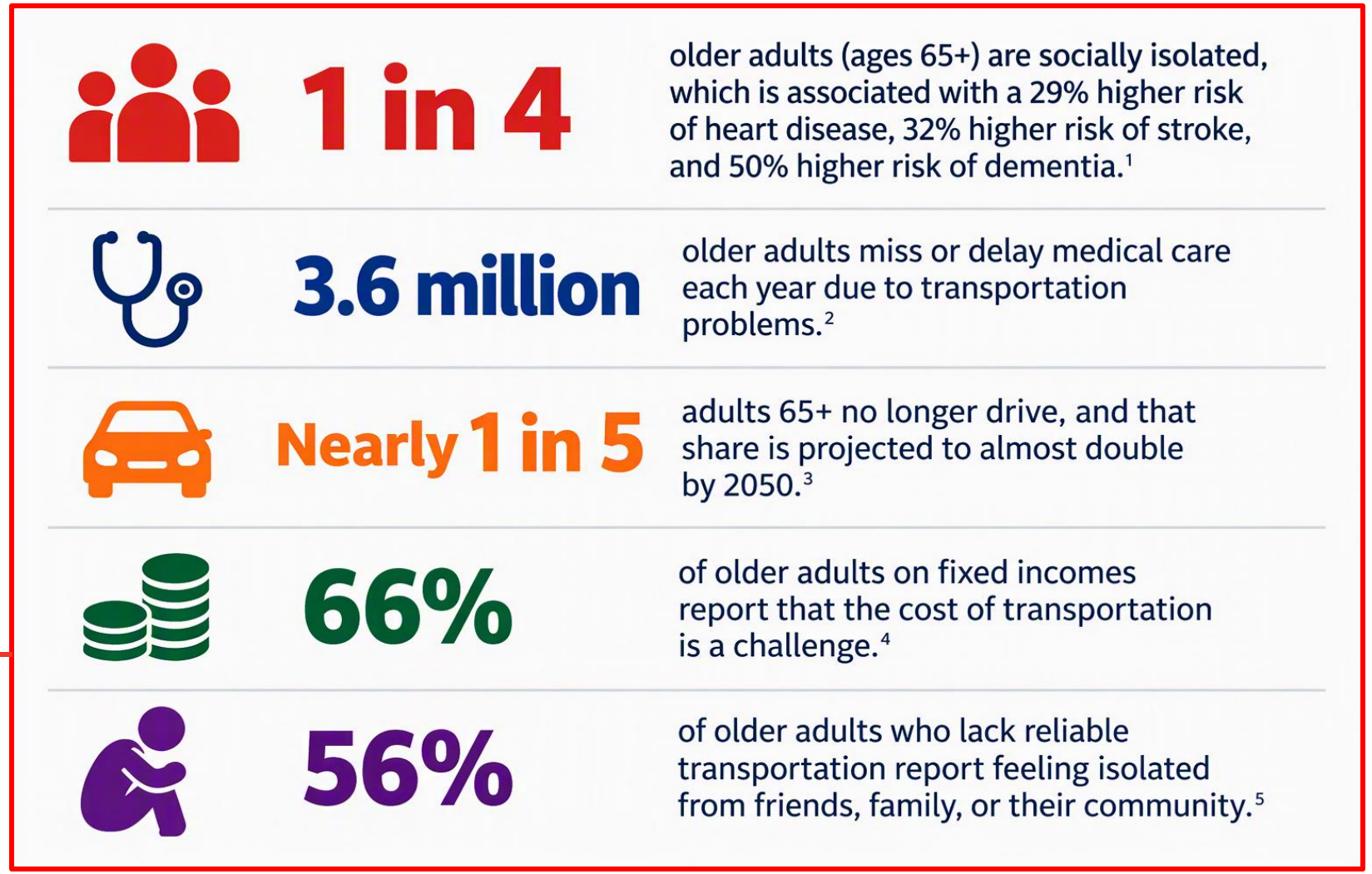
- Every jurisdiction has its own aging story.
- Look beyond 65+
  - 60+, 75+, and 85+ matter too.
- Demographic change should inform planning, services, and investment.



Transportation Is Essential to Aging in Place

Access to transportation supports health, independence, and connection.

When mobility becomes harder, the consequences can compound quickly.



The Mobility Challenge for Older Adults

Driving remains central to mobility in many California communities.

- Homes, healthcare, shopping, and services are often separated by distance.
- Transit is essential, but cannot serve every trip, destination, or circumstance.
- As residents age, car dependence can become a barrier to independence.



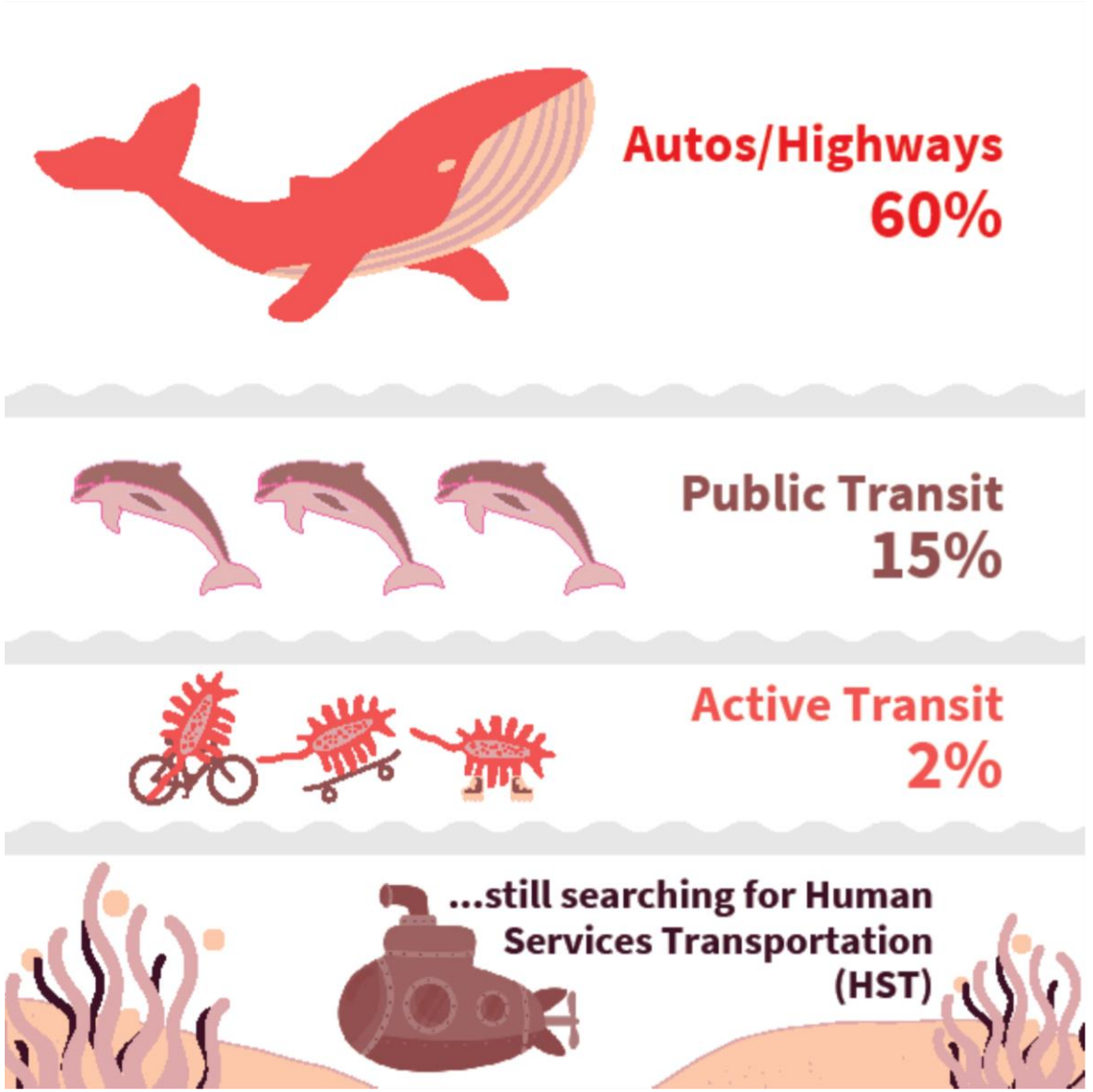
What is Human Services Transportation (HST)?

- **Human Services Transportation (also known as accessible transportation or paratransit)** includes services tailored to meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities, often through door-to-door or door-through-door paratransit services, which have been traditionally provided on request by van, small bus, or taxi.
- Various human services providers arrange this form of transportation for their clients. They are typically demand responsive services.

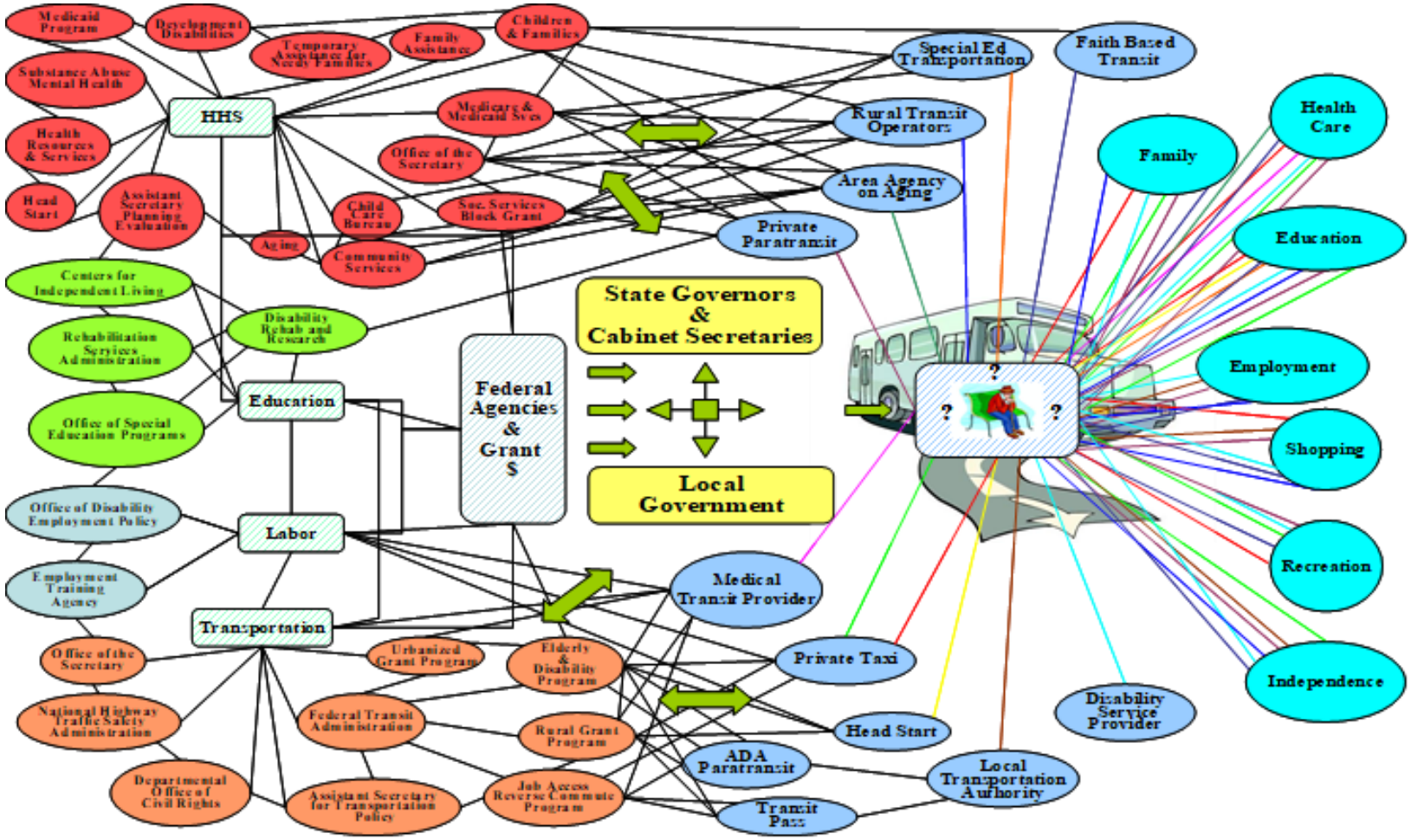




HST Funding: At The Bottom of the Funding Sea



The Logistics Nightmare: The Spaghetti Map of HST



Two Planes, One Runway

- HST needs are rising, but two planes—logistics and funding—are on track to collide.
- We need champions at the local, regional, and state level to understand that we only have one runway: an aging California.



San Diego Mobility & Aging Snapshot

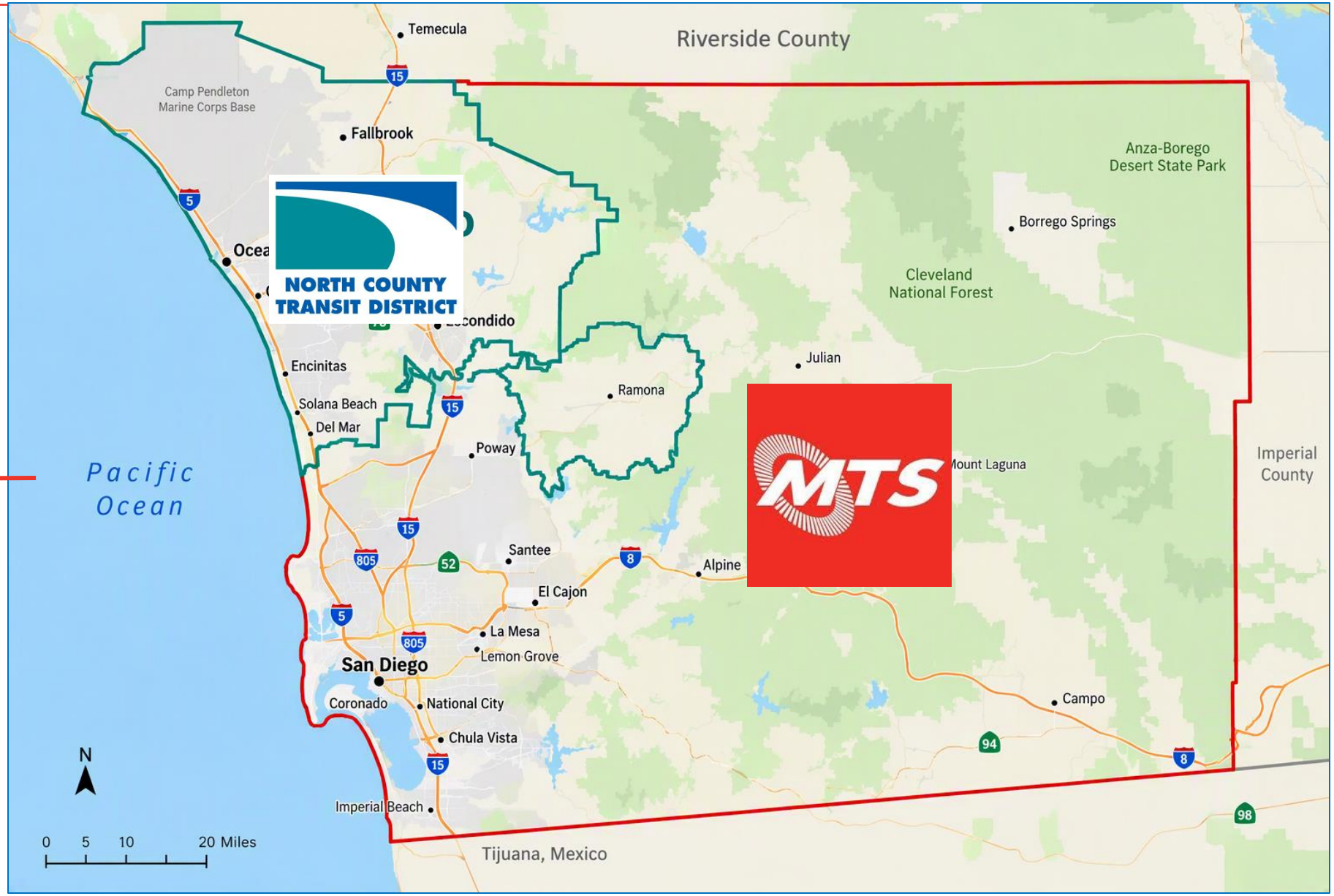
SANDAG

FACT™
Facilitating Access to Coordinated Transportation

180+
Transportation Services
Across San Diego County

2-1-1 SAN DIEGO

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Health and Human Services Agency



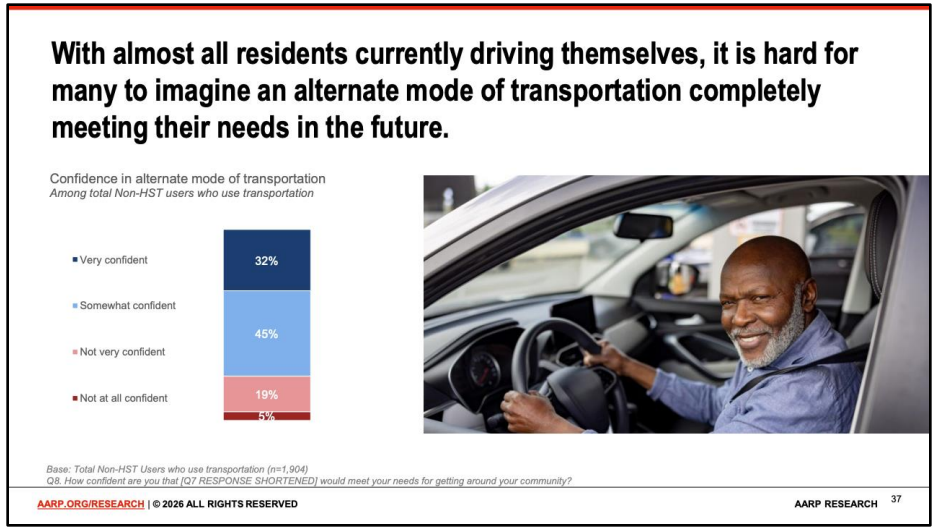
San Diego Human Services Transportation Pilot Study

2,141 San Diego County adults ages 40+

- **Focus:** Awareness, use, barriers, and opportunities for Human Services Transportation

- **Beyond the survey:** Key informant interviews with transportation and community partners





Driving oneself is the primary mode of transportation for most San Diegans age 40-plus.

This is true for all ages and abilities. That said, some people with disabilities or isolated residents indicate they rely on others as their primary mode of transportation, 28% and 27%, respectively.



Modes of transportation used
Among total respondents

Base: Total Respondents (n=2,141)
Q1. To begin, what are all the different types of transportation you use to get around your community for activities including shopping, visiting the doctor, running errands, or other things?
Q2. Which type of transportation do you rely on the most to get around your community?

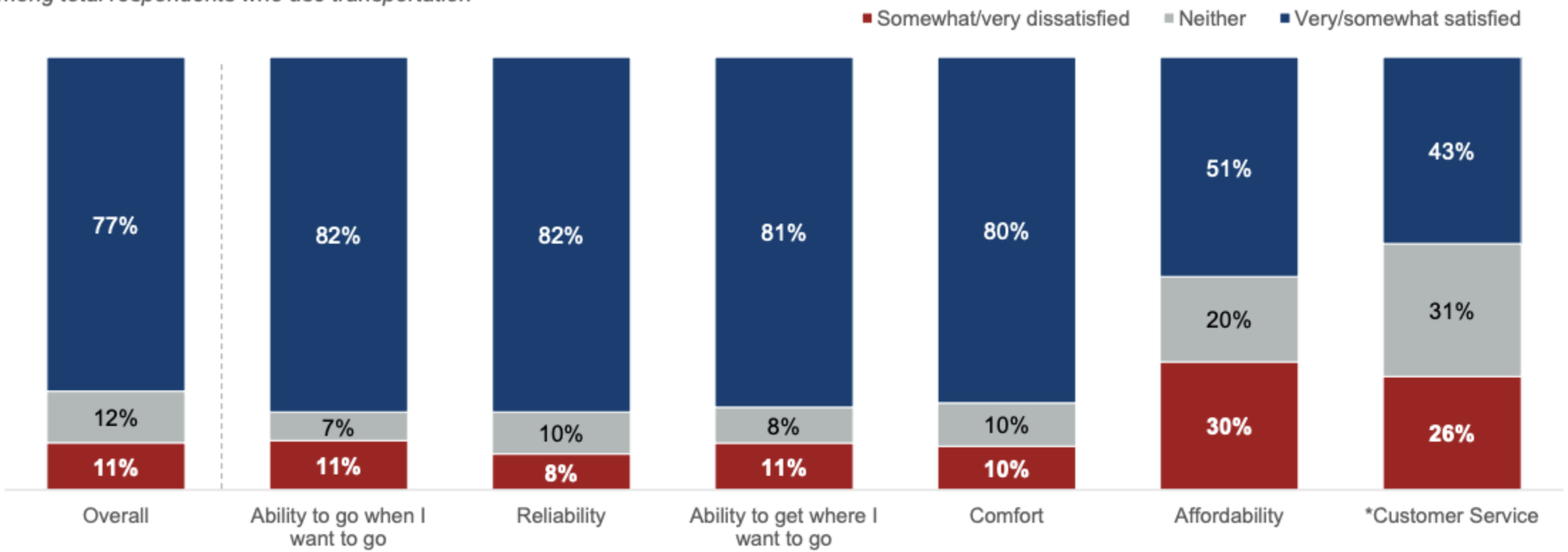
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Most are currently satisfied with their ability to get around town.

It is important to note, 88% of residents are reflecting on driving themselves in their own vehicles as they assess their satisfaction.

Satisfaction with primary mode of transportation

Among total respondents who use transportation



Base: Total Respondents using transportation (n=2,133)

Q3. Overall, how satisfied are you with [Q2 RESPONSE] to get around your community?

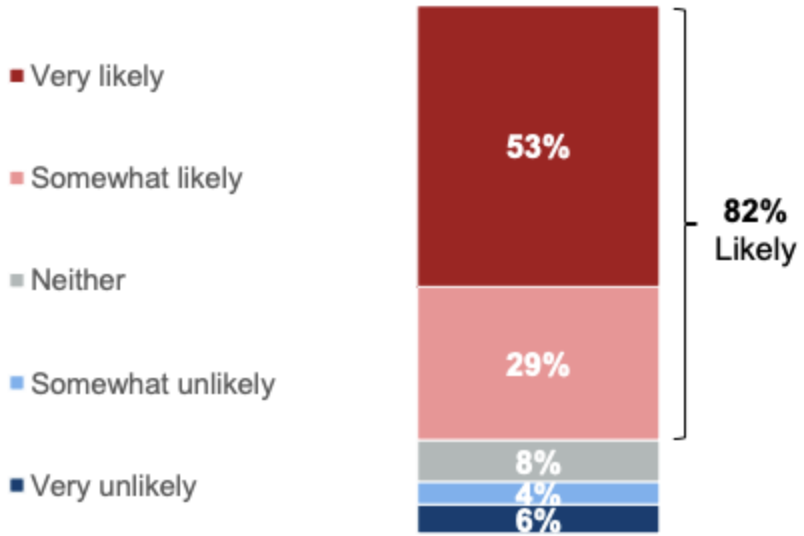
*Q4: How satisfied are you with the following aspects of [Q2 RESPONSE] as your primary mode of transportation in San Diego? *Asked only of respondents who use a taxi, public transportation, or a special transportation service.*

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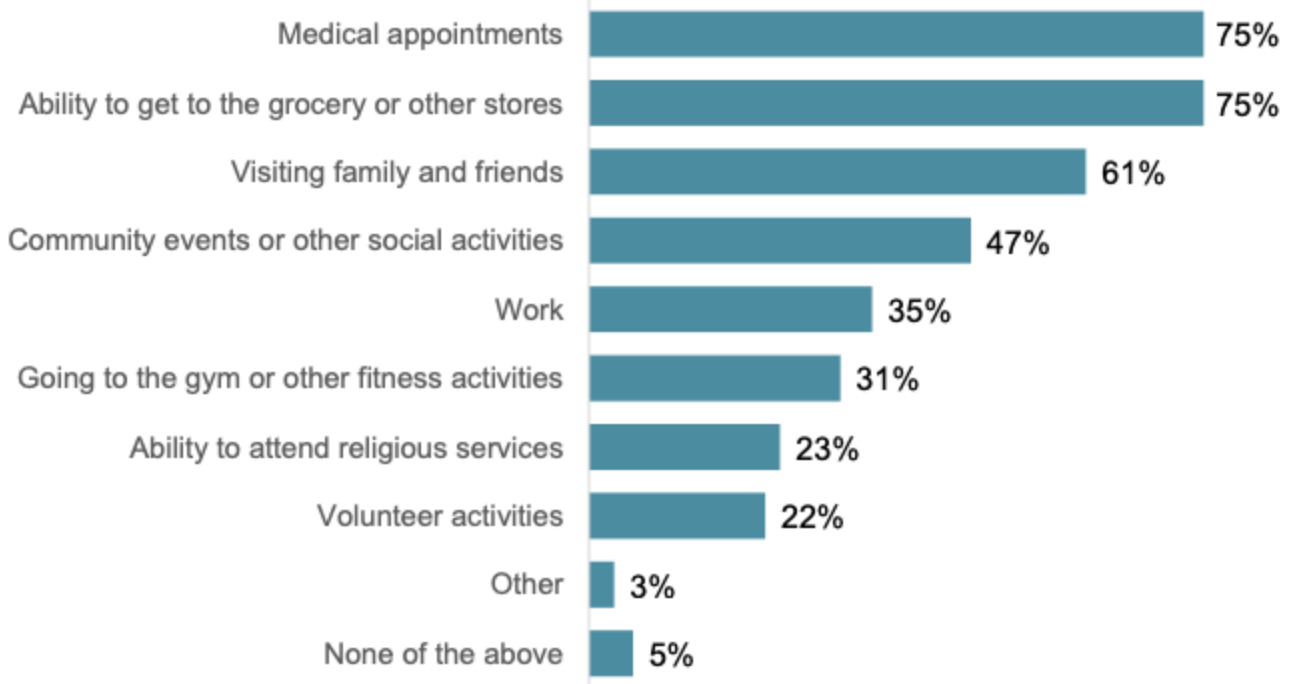
In fact, most San Diegans say they would be stressed or frustrated if they did not have access to their preferred mode of transportation.

Without it, many believe they would miss out on critical aspects of their life, such as doctor appointments, grocery shopping, and seeing family and friends.

Likelihood of stress if couldn't use preferred transportation
Among total Non-HST users who use transportation



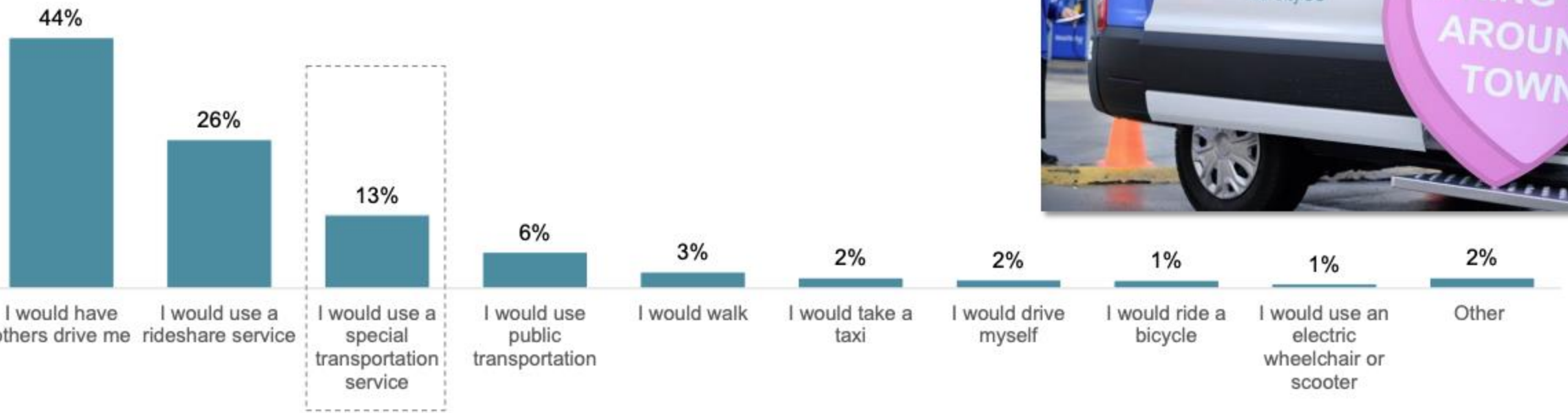
Things would miss if couldn't use preferred transportation
Among total Non-HST users who use transportation



Base: Total Non-HST Users who use transportation (n=1,904)
Q10. If you were not able to use your preferred methods of transportation, how likely would it cause anxiety, stress, or frustration?
Q9. If you were not able to use your preferred methods of transportation, what kind of things might a lack of viable transportation options cause you to miss out on?

If their primary mode of transportation were no longer available, residents would not immediately think of San Diego's special transit options.

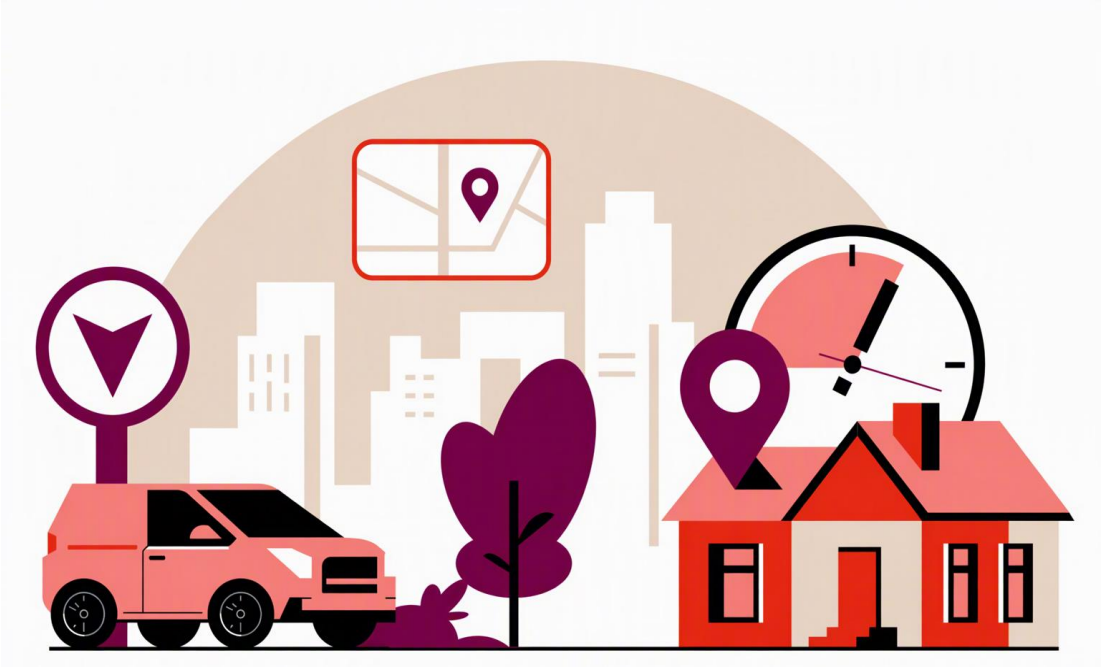
Alternative modes of transportation
Among total Non-HST users who use transportation



Base: Total Non-HST Users who use transportation (n=1,904)
Q7. If you were ever in a situation where you had health issues, injuries, or disabilities that prohibited you from [Q2 RESPONSE] to get around your community what would most likely be your preferred alternate method of transportation?

Quick Check-In: Audience Conversation

- Have you or someone you represent ever had to help a loved one get around after they could no longer drive?
- What did that experience reveal to you about the challenges of maintaining independence and staying connected?



Most San Diego residents age 40-plus have little to no knowledge or exposure to the city's current accessible transportation options.

Knowledge and exposure are even lower among those who are isolated or have a disability.

San Diego Human Services Transportation (HST) awareness and usage status

Among total respondents (n=2,141)



Among total with disabling condition (n=467)



Among total isolated (n=593)

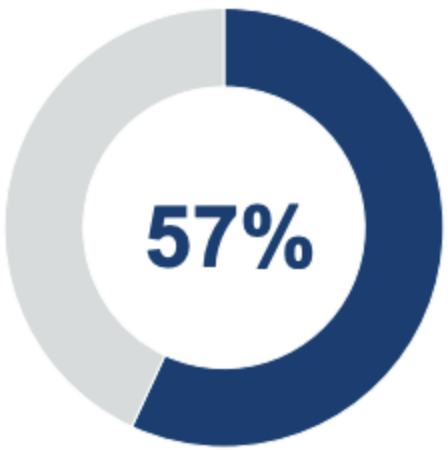


**Unaware: Respondents who do not know about HST. Aware Only: Respondents who know about HST but do not use it and do not know anyone who uses it. Exposed: Respondents who know about HST, do not use it themselves, but know someone who uses it.*

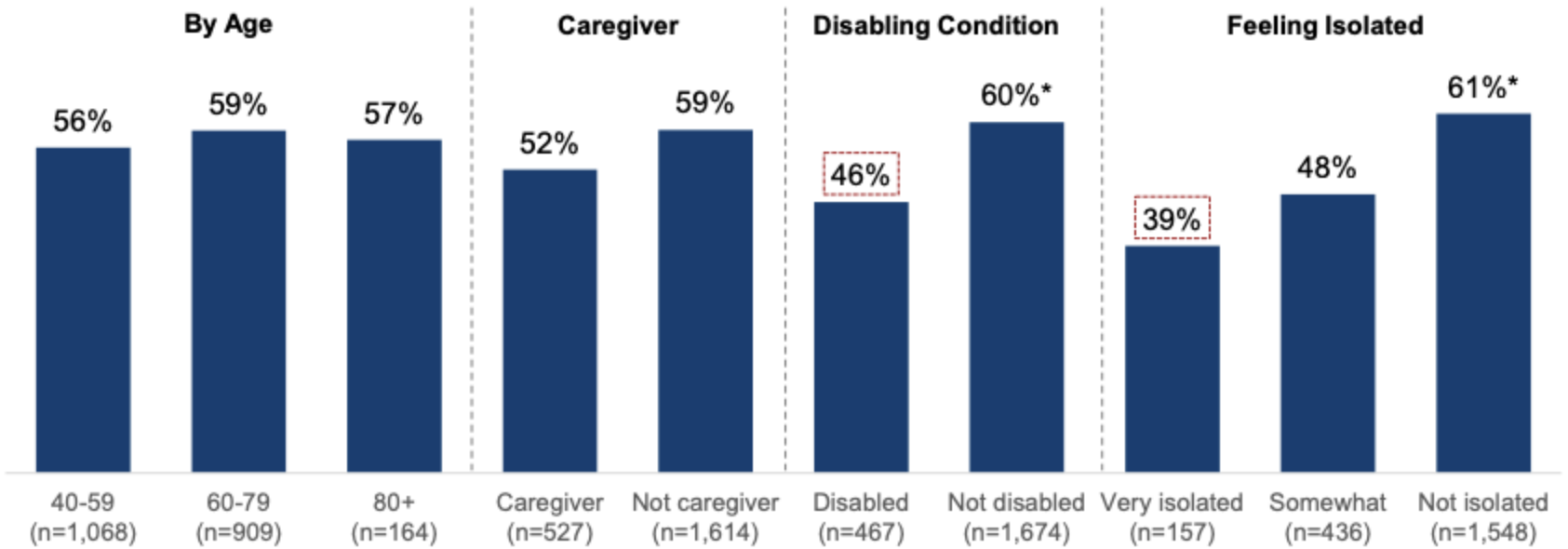
Once aided, more than half say they are aware of HST* options in San Diego.

Those who need such services the most (people with disabilities and those who feel isolated) are the least aware of the options.

Percent aware of San Diego accessible transportation services
Among total respondents and by segments



43% Unaware



Base: Total Respondents (n=2,141)
Q5. Today we'd like to talk to you about "accessible transportation." … Before today, were you aware San Diego had such accessible transportation services available? Please know, there is not a right or wrong answer.

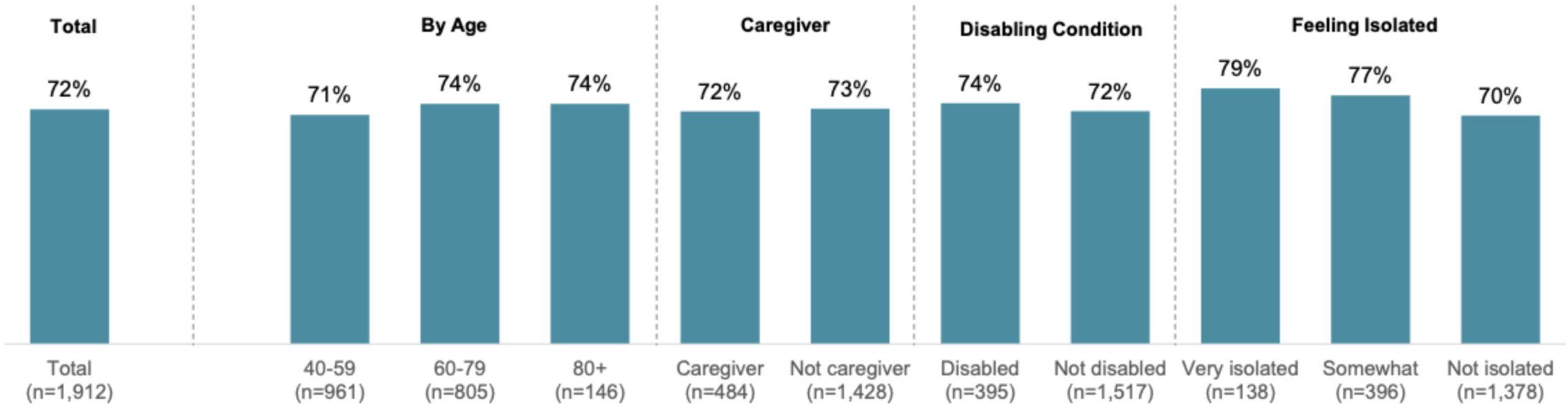
** "HST refers to various transportation options designed to meet the needs of transportation-disadvantaged populations, such as older adults, people with disabilities, and those with lower incomes. These services could include dial-a-ride, bus tokens or transit passes, taxi vouchers, and mileage reimbursement for volunteers or program participants. The goal of such services is to enhance mobility and independence for these populations by offering accessible, affordable, and reliable transportation options."*

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* *Indicates a significant difference between segments at a 95% confidence*

After exposure to the HST services, many residents would consider using them if or when they could no longer use their primary mode of transportation.

Percent likely to use accessible transportation services *(Top 2 Box – % Very/somewhat likely)*
Among total Non-HST users and by segments



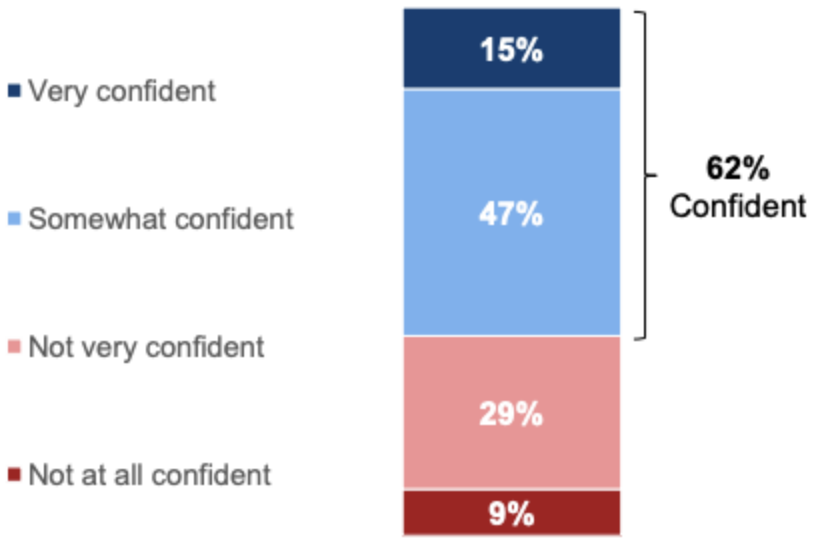
Base: Total Non-HST Users (n=1,912)
Q12. Now let's think about a time in the future, when you were no longer [Q2 RESPONSE] to get around your community. If or when that time came, how likely would you be to consider using an accessible transportation option as described here today?

These services could include dial-a-ride, bus tokens or transit passes, taxi vouchers, and mileage reimbursement for volunteers or program participants. The goal of such services is to enhance mobility and independence for these populations by offering accessible and reliable transportation options.

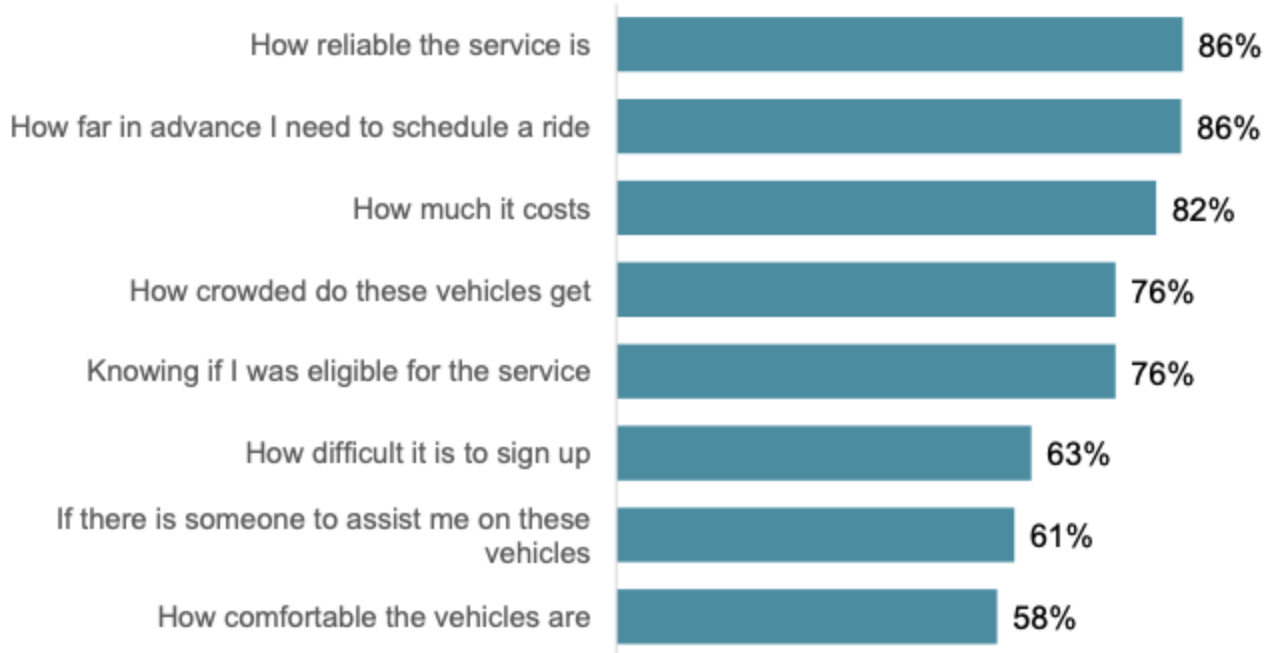
That said, not all residents are confident the current HST system would meet their needs.

Reliability, scheduling, and cost are the top concerns mentioned.

Confidence in using accessible transportation services
Among total Non-HST users



Concerns with using accessible transportation services
Top 2 Box (% very/somewhat concerned) among total Non-HST users

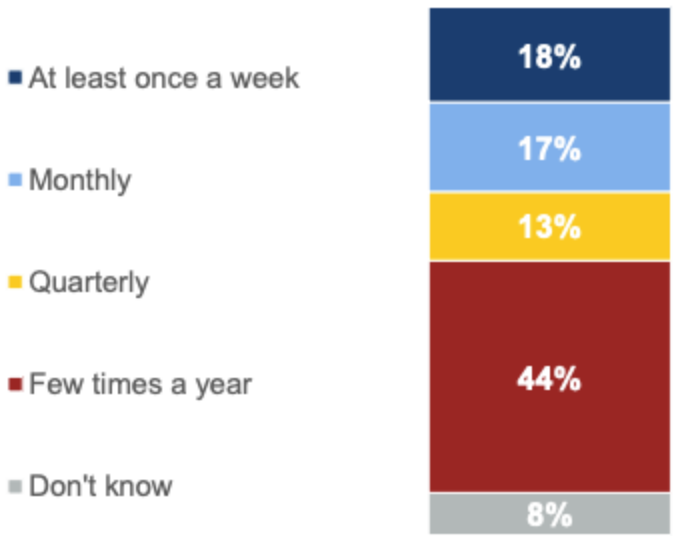


Base: Total Non-HST Users (n=1,912)
Q14. In the event you needed to rely on an accessible transportation service, how confident would you feel in using the services available today?
Q15. If you were to consider using accessible transportation services in the future, how concerned would you be about the following?

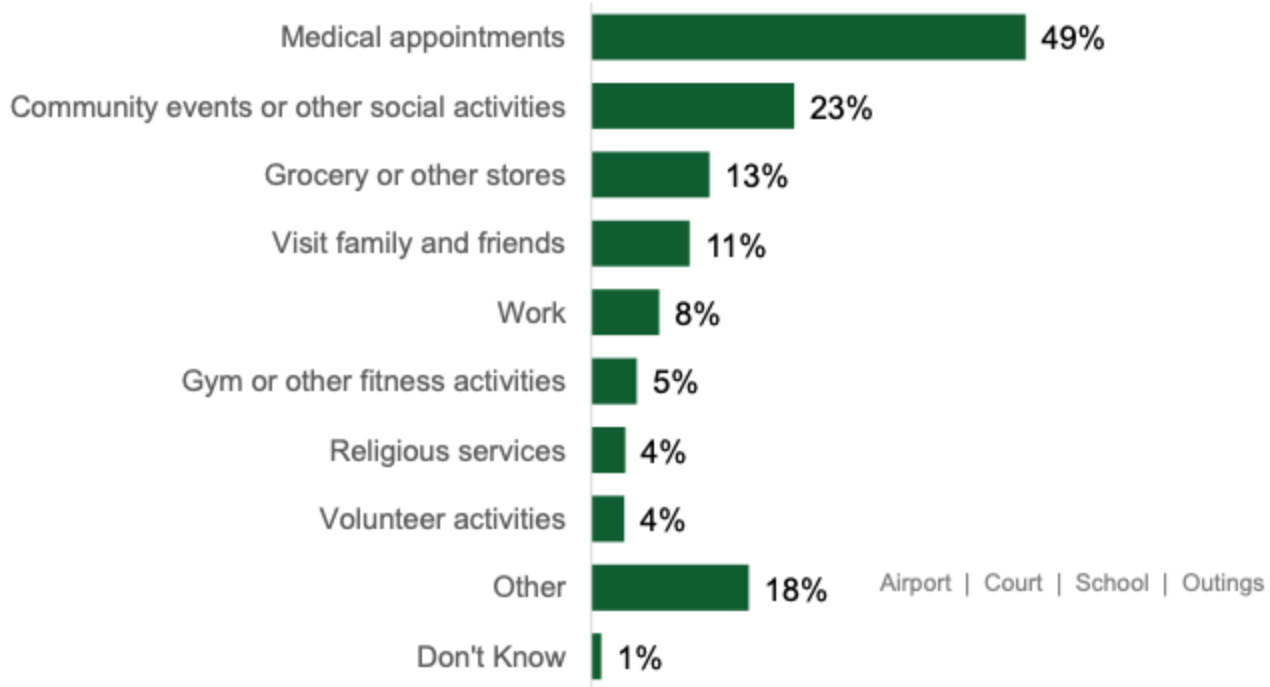
Most HST users are using the services just a few times a year, mainly for medical appointments.

Some use it for access to social events, shopping, or visiting family and friends.

Frequency of use accessible transportation services
Among total HST users and exposed



Where typically going when using accessible transportation services
Among total HST users and exposed



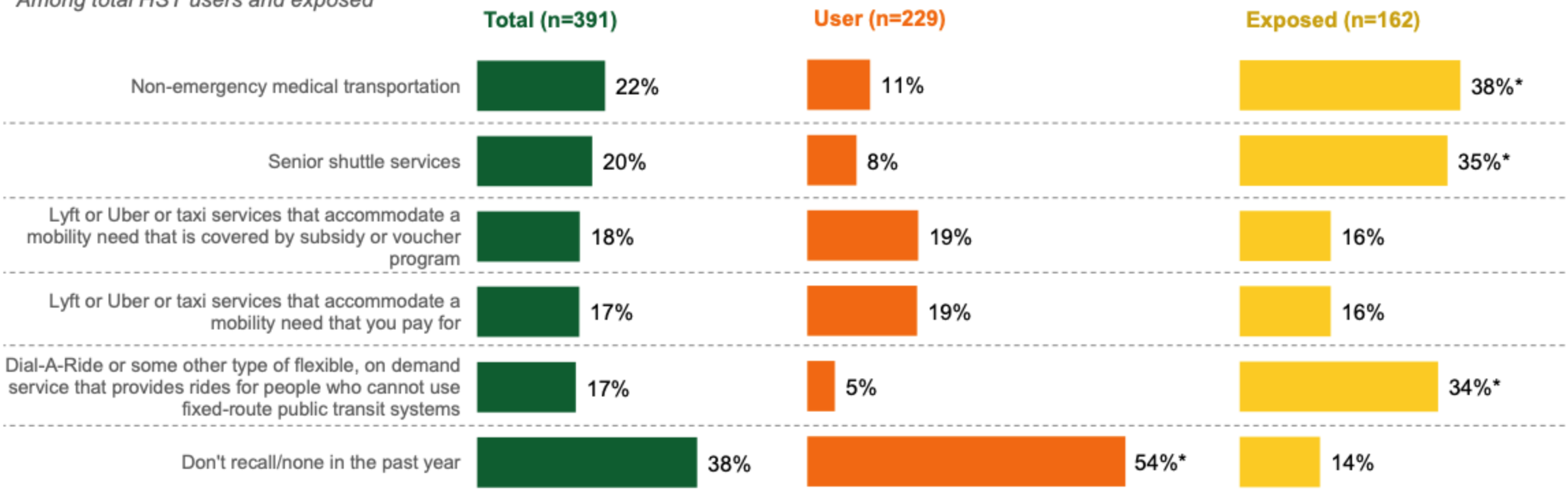
Base: Total HST Users and Exposed (n=391)
Q20. How often do you/does your friend use San Diego's accessible transportation services?
Q21. Where are you/they typically going when using San Diego's accessible transportation services?

Lyft and Uber services are twice as likely to be used by current HST users than a senior shuttle service.

Among those who know someone using HST services, non-medical transportation, senior shuttles, and Dial-A-Ride are more commonly believed to be the services that the person uses, compared to what is reported by current users themselves.

Accessible transportation services used in past year

Among total HST users and exposed



Base: Total HST Users and Exposed (n=391)

Q19. Which of the following accessible transportation services have you used in the past year, if any?

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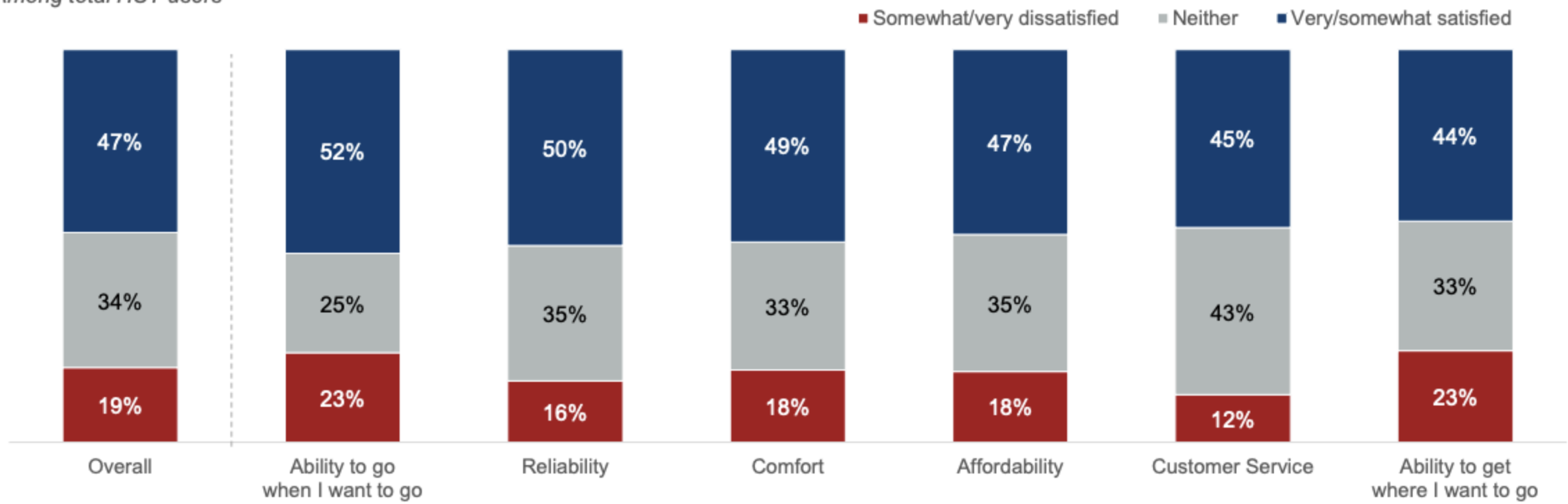
*Indicates a significant difference between segments at a 95% confidence

Less than half of the HST users express satisfaction with the current services, one in five are dissatisfied.

Scheduling, the inability to get where I need to go, when I need to go, appears to be a driver of dissatisfaction.

Satisfaction with San Diego's current accessible transportation services (HST)

Among total HST users



Base: Total HST Users (n=229)

Q22. Overall, how satisfied are you with San Diego's current accessible transportation services?

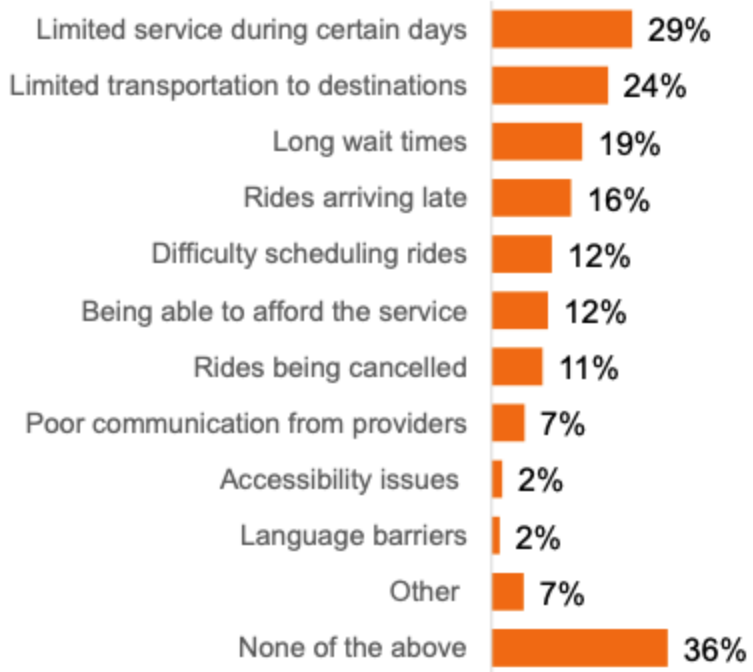
Q23. How satisfied are you with the following features of the accessible transportation services you have used?

Current HST users identify challenges with the current system.

Scheduling limitations, long wait times, and late or canceled rides are the most common issues, causing stress, anxiety, or frustration for some.

Challenges experienced with HST

Among total HST users



Base: Total HST Users (n=229)
Q24. Have you faced any of the following challenges when using San Diego's accessible transportation services?

Percent experienced cancellation

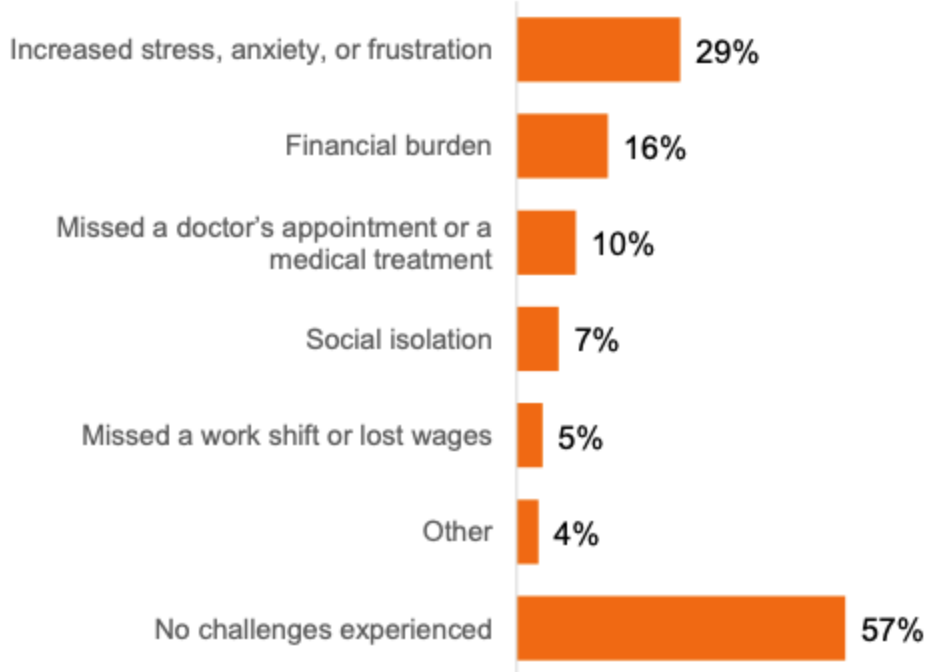
Among total HST users



Q25. In the past year when using San Diego's accessible transportation services, have you ever experienced a canceled ride or unreliable transportation?

Challenges from unreliable transportation

Among total HST users



Q28. Has unreliable transportation caused any of the following challenges for you?

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Stories from HST Users

Voices on reliability, awareness, access, and safety.

"Reliability and punctuality are crucial to increase ridership. If people know transportation is reliable, more and more people will start using it. This is an upfront investment, but eventually, people will use it more."

"Reliability is key for drivers to provide on-time pickup and drop-off to medical appointments. There are seniors that require additional time due to health issues. Categorize disabilities as high, medium, and low, and schedule drivers for each category."

"Current stops are too far and in between; service doesn't come close to where I live; transportation is almost always empty, showing a lack of planning."

"I have heard that when others use public transportation such as buses or trains, there are an amazing number of connections necessary in order to get across the city."

"They should increase service during times of need, like for the Del Mar fair."

"Most people don't know this is available, or where to access this service. So I would suggest passing out flyers in public places to get the word out. It is great to have it available and so well managed."

"The shuttle buses in my area aren't available on weekends and holidays, which makes visiting working friends harder."

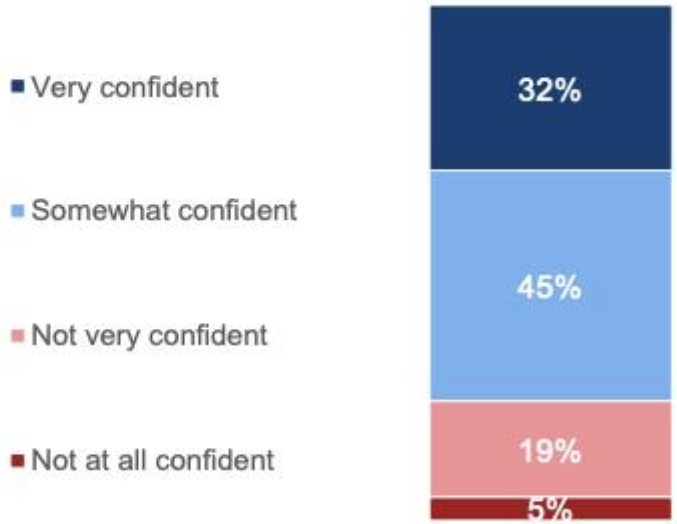
"Cleanliness and safety concerns, especially as a woman."

"I have no suggestions. The times that I missed an appointment were from miscommunication, not ordering the ride correctly."

"I do not have any suggestions for improving transportation accessibility. However, I would like to see more police presence and increased laws to improve transportation safety."

With almost all residents currently driving themselves, it is hard for many to imagine an alternate mode of transportation completely meeting their needs in the future.

Confidence in alternate mode of transportation
Among total Non-HST users who use transportation





Base: Total Non-HST Users who use transportation (n=1,904)
Q8. How confident are you that [Q7 RESPONSE SHORTENED] would meet your needs for getting around your community?

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What Stakeholders + Research Told Us

Stakeholders

1. Funding continuity
2. Operating capacity
3. Coordination gaps



Research

1. Driving remains the default
2. Awareness of available options is limited
3. Interest (and usage) grow with understanding
4. People need a system they know, can navigate, and can trust

Priorities From our Pilot Study

Ridership

1. Make services easier to find and navigate
2. Make the services more dependable & accessible
3. Make services more integrated & coordinated



Providers

1. Strengthen sustainable funding
2. Build provider capacity
3. Improve coordination across providers



What Leaders, Stakeholders, & Coalitions Can Do

1. Listen & Learn

- Research community needs and identify transportation gaps.
- Engage residents, service providers, and local stakeholders.

2. Convene & Connect

- Host transportation roundtables and build cross-sector partnerships.
- Strengthen relationships between agencies, nonprofits, and local leaders.

3. Experience & Educate

- Organize transportation field trips and firsthand demonstrations.
- Connect residents with resources through community events and transportation fairs.

4. Collaborate & Advocate

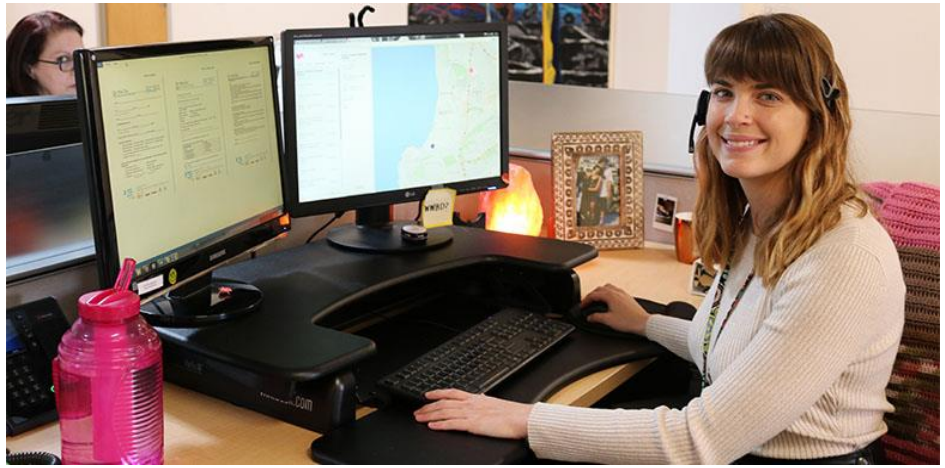
- Identify shared priorities and opportunities for local action.
- Advance practical solutions through planning, partnerships, and policy.



The Road Ahead: Innovation, Investment, Opportunity

1. Reimagine On-Demand Mobility
2. Keep Older Adults Into the Innovation Conversation
3. Expand Public-Private & Community Partnerships
4. Protect & Leverage Transportation Investment



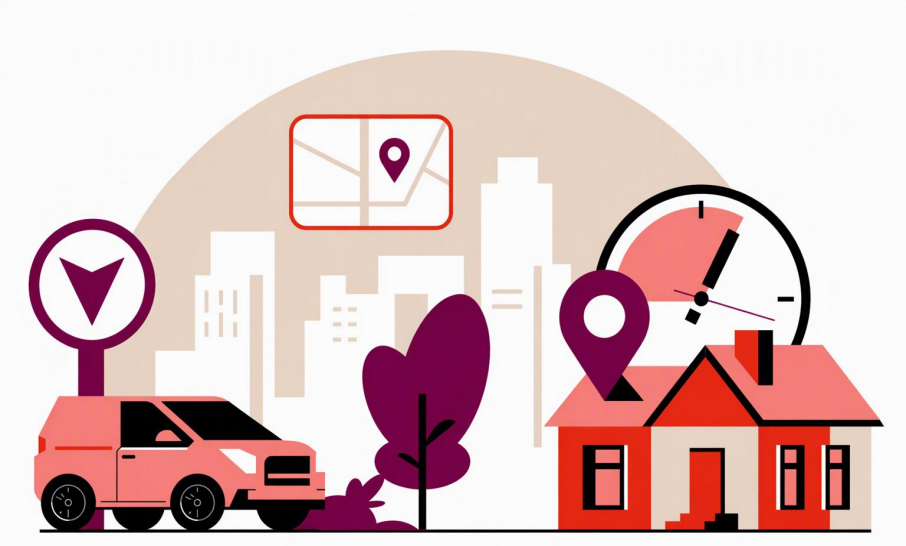


Seniors get firsthand look at a Waymo autonomous vehicle ahead of San Diego launch

San Diego seniors got a first-hand look at a Waymo ahead of the autonomous vehicle service coming to San Diego early next year.



Thank you!



Human Services Transportation

CIVICWELL | NOVEMBER 12, 2026

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