



# TOD Transit Rider Survey

## REPORT

A Report by Georgia STAND-UP in collaboration with the Atlanta Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Collaborative

February/March 2014



Funded by:



## Survey Purpose

This survey of transit riders focused primarily on automobile dependent populations using stations located in underinvested neighborhoods primed for ‘catalytic’ TOD investments. The purpose of the survey—within the limited funding available for its implementation—was to establish baseline data on opinions and perceptions of this TOD typology with regard to several core transit use criteria.

## Survey Design

A total of 350 random interviews were conducted at 11 stations. Eight of the stations—Lakewood, Oakland City, College Park, West End, Kensington, Vine City, Ashby, and Bankhead—have ‘lagging’ demographic and market profiles but potential as **catalytic TOD sites**. Three other stations were included as ‘controls’—Five Points, Lindbergh, and Decatur. The controls were selected because of specific characteristics that might provide counterpoints or confirmation of data collected at catalytic sites:

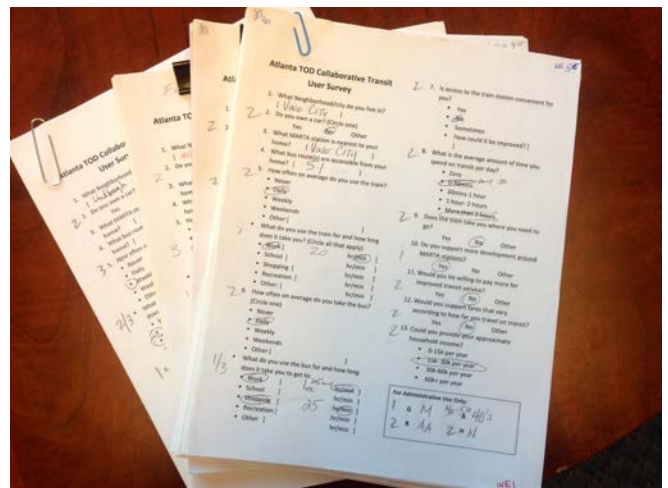
**Five Points**—The hub of the system, its traffic draws much more diversity than neighborhood-serving catalytic sites that have traffic skewed to residents of the immediate station area.

**Decatur Station**—A well-developed east line site (geographic variation) that is highly diverse both demographically and economically, exhibiting values typically associated with equitable TOD development.

**Lindbergh Station**—A well-developed north line site (geographic variation) that is highly diverse demographically and economically exhibiting values typically associated with equitable TOD.

The survey does not purport to be ‘scientific’ in any sense. It mainly establishes a data gathering precedent in that it specifically targets underinvested, transit-dependent populations at catalytic sites within disinvested communities. It is hoped that this survey can be implemented annually, that the methodology can be refined, making this initiative a useful tool for the following purposes:

- Accurately identify ways in which transit-dependent populations in catalytic neighborhoods have perceptions that differ from or correlate with other transit riding segments, or statistical norms established by broad, system-wide surveys, with the intention of designing customized community engagement strategies.
- Provide an effective way to measure both the incremental and cumulative impact of TOD outreach and community engagement efforts in catalytic neighborhoods over time.
- Identify areas in which survey refinements or deeper inquiry or research may be indicated based on significant points of divergence and other anomalies.

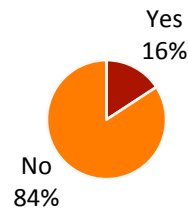


## Questions & Answers

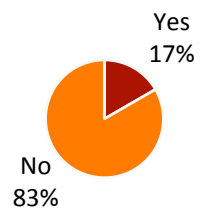
### Question: Do you own a car?

- At 6 of the 8 catalytic sites, approximately 70% to more than 80% of respondents did not own cars. Oakland City and Bankhead were tops at 83% and 84% respectively. Only Vine City and College Park reported greater than 50% car ownership.
- Among the control sites, Five Points recorded just over 50% car ownership and Decatur reported 20% car ownership, 40% not owning, but also a 40% 'other' response which may indicate alternative modes of transit that the survey was not designed to capture. Lindbergh station recorded rates of non-ownership similar to the most transit-dependent disinvested sites, almost 80%.

Oakland City



Bankhead



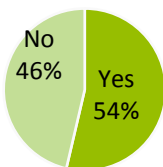
Vine City



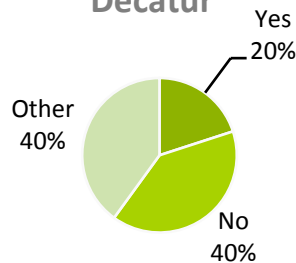
College Park



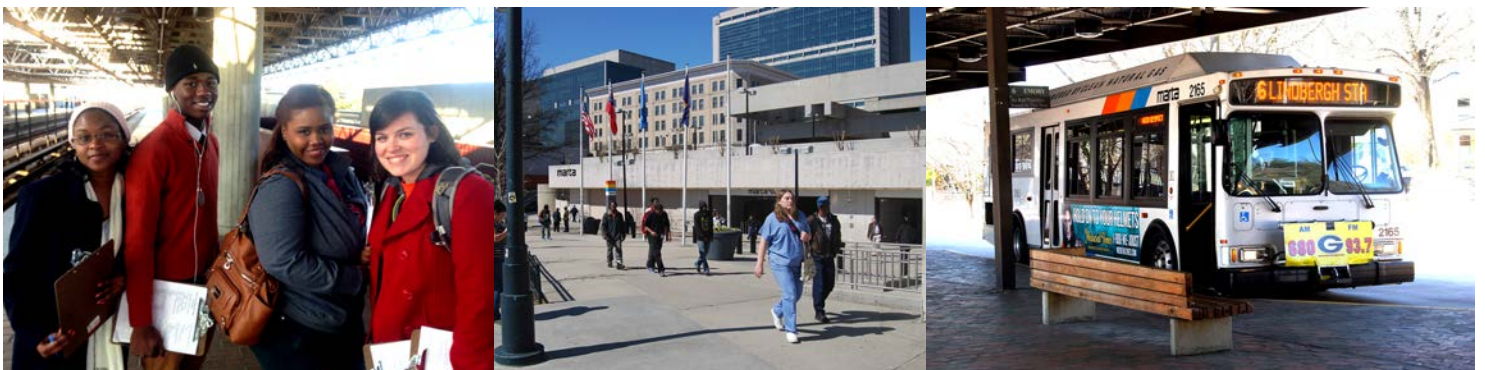
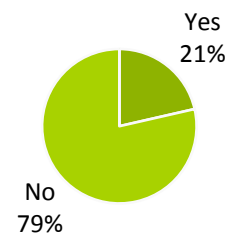
Five Points



Decatur

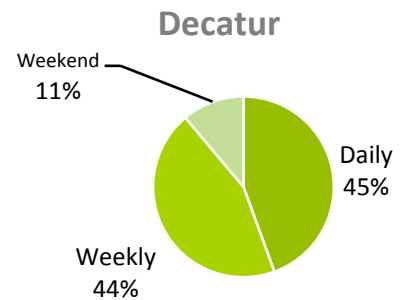
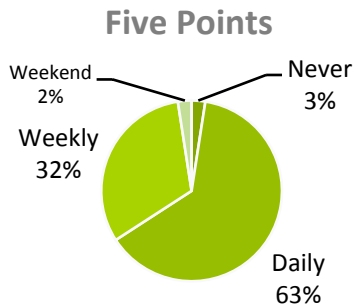
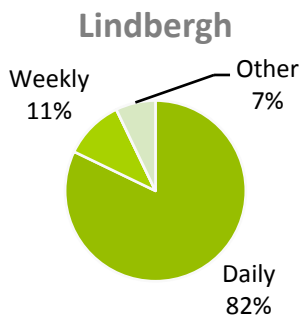
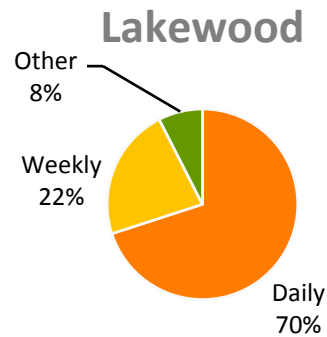


Lindbergh



**Question: How often on average do you use the train?**

- The highest daily use report among the catalytic sites was Lakewood at 70%. The other catalytic sites generally ranged in the 50 and 60 percentiles.
- Among the control sites, Lindbergh was high in daily use at over 80%, living up to its billing as a true TOD development. Five Points recorded 63%, and Decatur 45%.



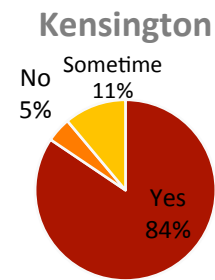
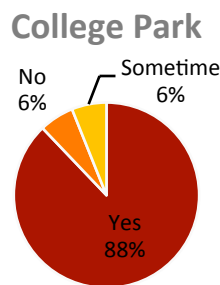
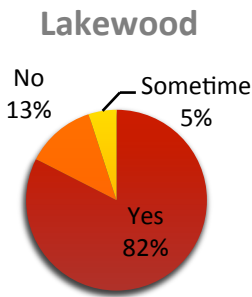
- Riders using the train at least once a week ranged from a high of 42% at Bankhead, followed by the mid-30's at Ashby, West End and College Park among catalytic sites.
- Decatur led the weekly use control sites at 44%, followed by Five Points at 32%. Lindbergh, probably due to its high daily use, only reported 11% use on a weekly basis.

**Question: How often do you take the bus?**

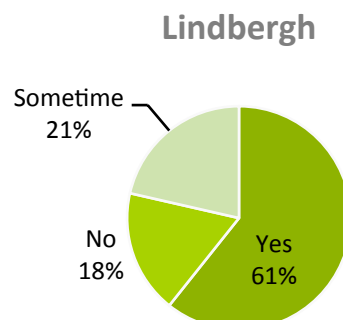
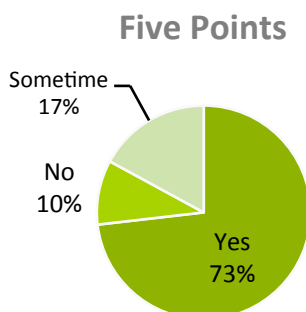
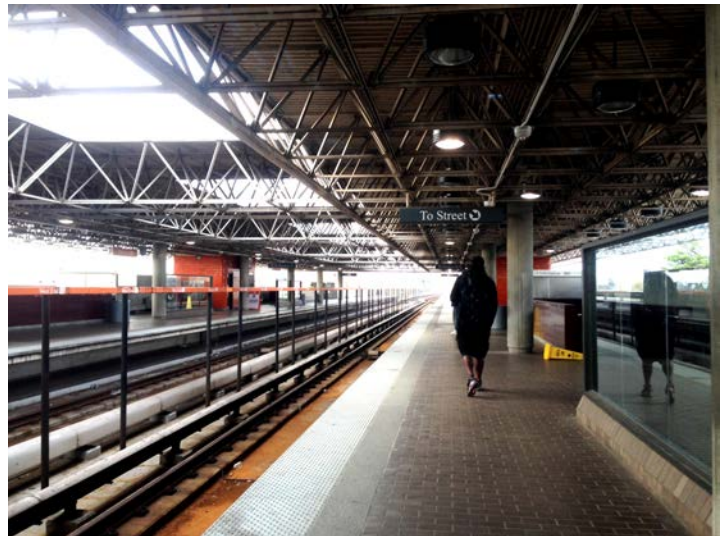
- Among catalytic sites Lakewood and Oakland City recorded the highest rates of daily bus use at 70 and 61% respectively, followed closely by Ashby, Bankhead, and Kensington ranging between 50 and 60%. Weekly ridership was much more varied, ranging from less than 20% at Vine City to as much as 42% at Bankhead. A much higher percentage of catalytic site transit users say they never ride a bus: 40% at Vine City; 34% at College Park; 22% at Kensington; 16% at West End.
- At control sites, 67% of Lindbergh riders use a bus daily, followed by Five Points at 51%. Decatur reports 33%. Decatur led with weekly riders at 56% followed by Five Points and Lindbergh at 17% and 11% respectively.

**Question: Is access to the train station convenient for you?**

- Three of the eight catalytic sites—Lakewood, College Park, and Kensington recorded over 80% affirmative responses, closely followed by Vine City, Oakland City, and West End at near or in excess of 70%. Only about 50% of Ashby and Bankhead users considered their stations convenient.



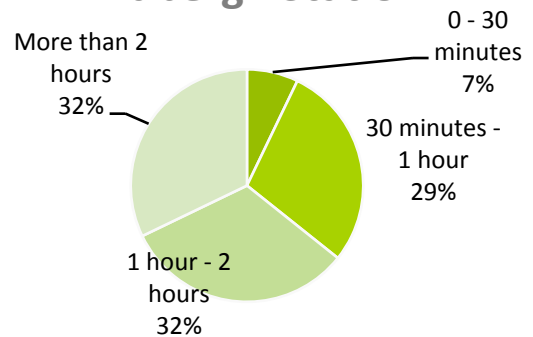
- Among the controls, 100% of Decatur users considered that station convenient. Five Points recorded 73%, and Lindbergh, interestingly, brought up the rear at 61%.



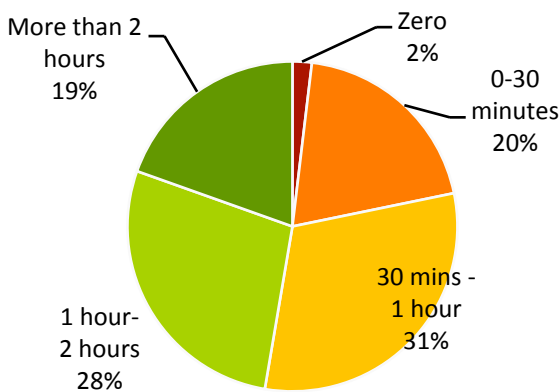
**Question: What is the average amount of time you spend on transit per day?**

- At five of the 8 catalytic stations at least one-third of respondents reported spending between 1 and two hours in transit per day. Only Lindbergh among the controls reported so high a proportion.

## Lindbergh Station



## All Stations

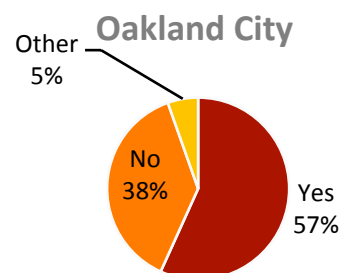
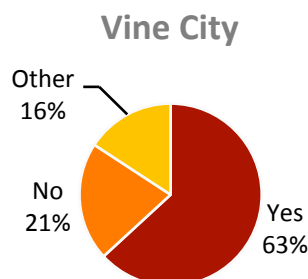
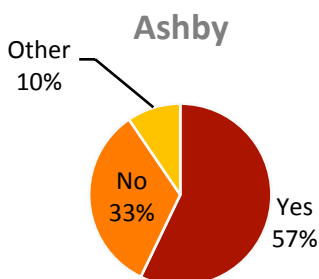


- On the other hand, commute times between 30 minutes and an hour were common among riders at all sites.

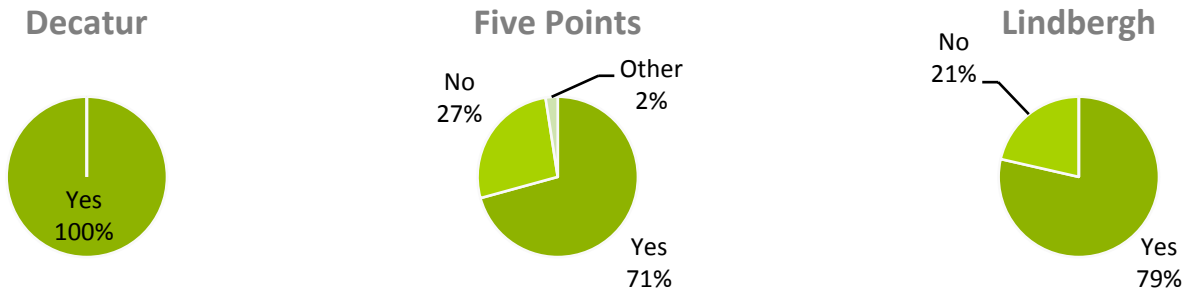


**Question: Does the train take you where you need to go?**

- Four of the eight catalytic stations recorded affirmative responses in the 70% or better range on this question (Lakewood, College Park, West End, Kensington). On the other hand, at Ashby, Vine City, Oakland City this view as held by barely more than half of users.

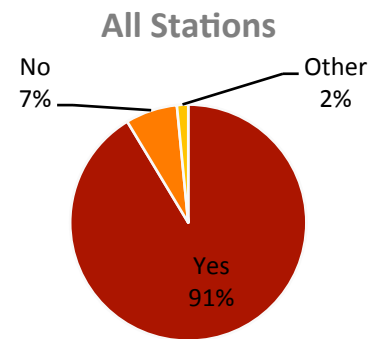


- Among the controls 100% of Decatur riders were affirmative, 71% of Five Points, and 79% of Lindbergh travelers answered yes.



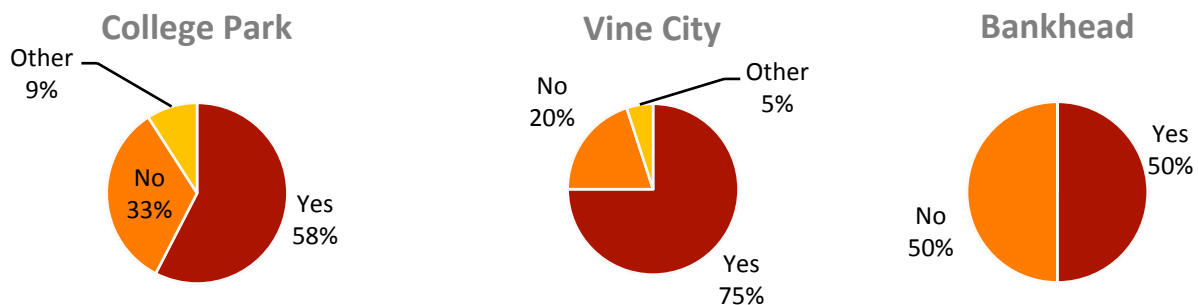
**Question: Do you support development around MARTA?**

- The response to this question was overwhelmingly affirmative. West End registered a 100% positive response; Lakewood, Oakland City, College Park, and Vine City were in the 90%+ range. Only Bankhead (83%) and Ashby (73%) fell below an 85% approval rate. Those two also registered the highest “no” responses, 17% and 23% respectively.
- Among the controls, Decatur registered 100%, Lindbergh 89% and Five Points 88%.

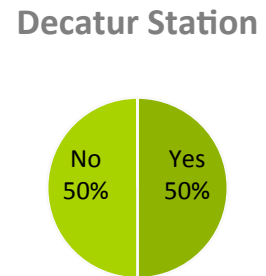
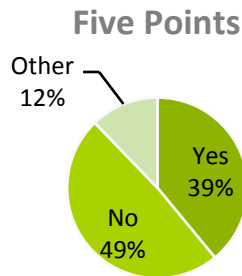
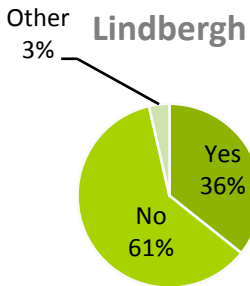


**Question: Would you be willing to pay more for improved transit service?**

- This question elicited strong and quite varied responses. Among the catalytic sites only two stations yielded affirmative majorities: College Park (58%), and Vine City (a stunning 78%). Oakland City, Vine City, Ashby, and West End on the other hand ranged from more than 60% to 75% negative. Bankhead was 50/50.

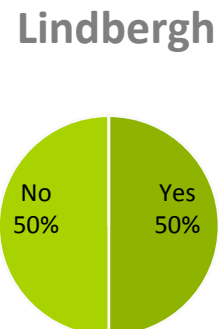
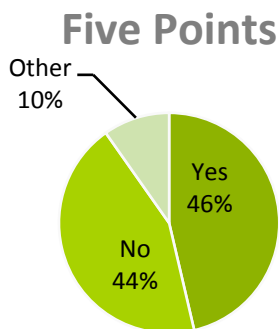
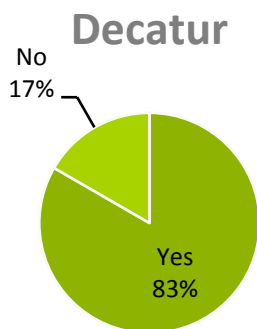
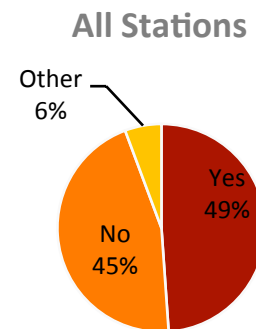


- Among the controls, Lindbergh produced a solid 61% against, while Five Points and Decatur, were evenly split (sharing that distinction somewhat oddly, with Bankhead).



**Question: Would you support fares that vary according to how far you travel on transit?**

- Among the catalytic sites, Oakland City was an emphatic no at 76% opposed. Vine City, Kensington, and College Park, eked out majorities in favor. West End and Lakewood were in the high 40's, and Bankhead was a solid 67% in favor.
- Among the control sites 83% of Decatur travelers supported variable fares. Five Points was evenly split between yes and no, as was Lindbergh.

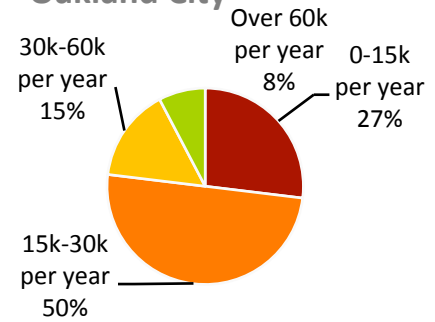




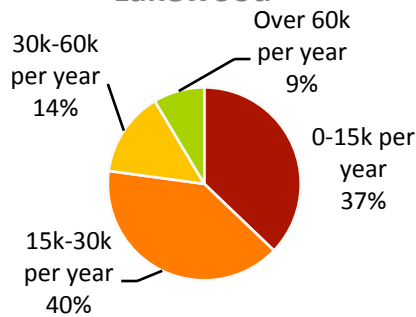
**Question: Approximate household income?**

- Most respondents at catalytic sites self-reported between \$15,000 and \$30,000 annual household income. 50% of Oakland City respondents fell in this category; Lakewood, College Park, West End, and Kensington logged responses in the low to mid-40's. Only 11% of Vine City residents reported household income in this range. West End, Kensington, Oakland City, and Lakewood had high percentages of very low-income respondents (\$0-%15,000 per year). Vine City (22%) and College Park (35%) had the highest number of financially stable households.

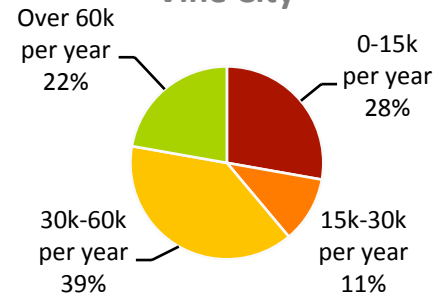
**Oakland City**



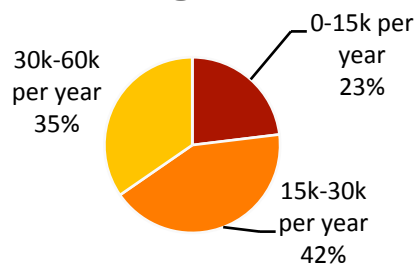
**Lakewood**



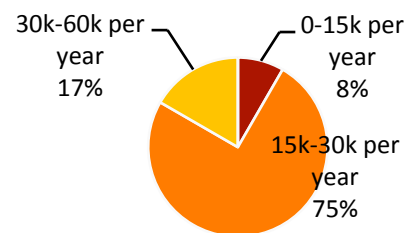
**Vine City**



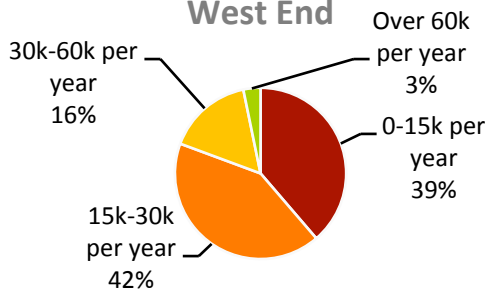
**College Park**



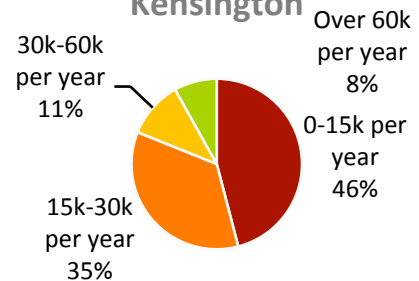
**Bankhead**



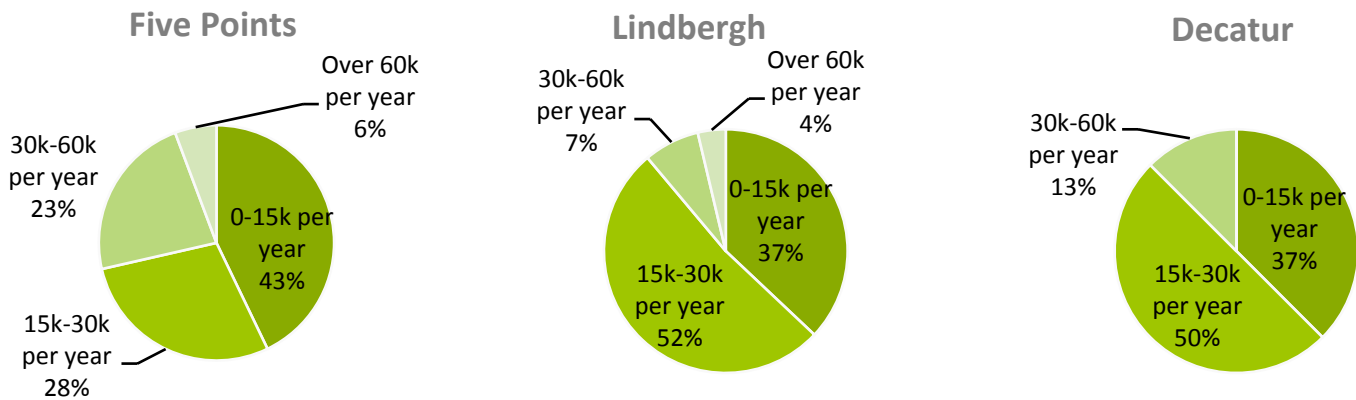
**West End**



**Kensington**



- Among the controls, all—Five Points (43%) and Lindbergh (37%), Decatur (37%)—had high percentages of very low-income households. Interestingly Decatur (13%) reported the highest number of financially stable households.



## Summary

The survey revealed an enormous transit dependency at most catalytic locations and very significant transit dependency at the more diverse control sites. Lack of automobile ownership is in fact the norm at most catalytic sites. Transit dependency is reflected in frequency of use as most catalytic site interviewees use the system daily or certainly one or more times a week. Bus travel is less popular than train use and most riders spend a large chunk of time on transit daily—typically between one and two hours. Perceptions of station access range from excellent to good to fair. Deeper exploration of what these values really mean could be addressed in future surveys. There is great resistance to any proposal for increasing fares, whether based on improved service or sliding scale fares tied to length of travel. However some of the correlations are interesting. For example on more than one occasion Vine City, which has a segment of affluent trending households, on more than one occasion came closer to reflecting Decatur’s results than those of Ashby and West End, which are much closer geographically and demographically. The greatest consensus was found around whether transit users supported further development around MARTA stations. They do overwhelmingly—a good indicator for TOD, and a good starting point for community outreach efforts.

## About the Survey and Collaborative

During the month of January 2014, Georgia STAND-UP, with the help of around 20 volunteers, conducted a Transit Rider intercept survey at 11 different MARTA stations. Those stations were Five Points, Lakewood, Lindbergh, Oakland City, College Park, West End, Kensington, Vine City, Ashby, Decatur and Bankhead. This team was able to collect a total of 350 completed surveys. The surveys were conducted during three different time frames; an early morning time frame, a late morning time frame and an afternoon time frame.

This survey was conducted as part of the work of the Atlanta Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Collaborative. The TOD Collaborative is a thirteen-member partnership of non-profits, government agencies and financial entities aimed at removing barriers to, and advancing incentives for, equitable transit-oriented development (TOD) in the Atlanta region, while increasing public understanding and awareness around the benefits of TOD. The collaborative organizations have united to leverage and organize their joint resources to ensure that metro Atlanta capitalizes on the potential of its transit investments. The ultimate goal of the Atlanta TOD Collaborative is to help the region realize high-quality, walkable, equitable, mixed-use development in and around its transit station area.

### **Atlanta Equitable TOD Collaborative Member Organizations**

*Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative (ALTC)*

*Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc. (ANDPI)*

*Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)*

*APD Solutions*

*Enterprise Community Partners*

*Fulton County/Atlanta Land Bank Authority (FCALBA)*

*Georgia STAND-UP*

*Partnership for Southern Equity (PSE)*

*Southface Energy Institute*

*SUMMECH Community Development Corporation, Inc. (SCDC)*

*Tapestry Development Corporation*

*Urban Land Institute (ULI)*

*Wells Fargo*

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