

2021 Focus Groups: Summary of Findings

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visualize
2045 A long-range
transportation plan
for the National
Capital Region

Access for All Advisory
Committee
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“I think [transportation] it's not just about moving people and buses and cars and trains from Point A to Point B, but it's how people actually experience these things and experience the stations and what makes you feel safe architecturally versus not feel safe. Blind spots, weird corners. I think, from a global perspective, I think we need to think in the big macro terms of moving people and goods from one place to the other, but we also think about how we experience those things as people. Whether we're young, whether we're older, whether we're physically able, whether we're physically challenged, and try to think a little bit beyond that immediate ‘this is faster, this is more efficient, this is cheaper.’”

-Isabella, Olney MD

Focus Groups: Purpose

- Understand the issues of transportation equity, safety, and climate change through different perspectives
- Empower participants to share stories about their transportation experience
- Incorporate the voices of the region directly into the research process
- Supplement quantitative data from the Voices of the Region survey

Focus Groups: Sessions

People from the core

People with low income

People from the inner suburbs

Young adults 18-25 years old

People 60+ years old

People of Color

People of Color (session 2)

Spanish speaking people

People with disabilities

People with High School Degrees or lower

People from the outer suburbs

Participant Selection

- **Purposive Sampling** is a non-probability sampling method and it involves identifying and selecting group of individuals that are especially knowledgeable or experienced with a topic of interest
- **Diversity of perspectives and backgrounds**, rather than statistical significance, guided the selection of participants
- Why purposive sampling?
 - Focus resources and recruitment to reach out to underrepresented communities
 - Forming homogenous sessions

Focus Groups: Analysis

- 17 hours of audio; 600 pages of transcripts
- MAXQDA: Qualitative data management software that is used to identify and manage emerging themes and do systematic comparisons
- Analysis process:
 - 1st Phase: Creating general codes to manage the data
 - 2ND Phase: Narrowing down the codes
 - 3rd Phase: Establishing general codes and codes for each sessions.

Summary of Findings

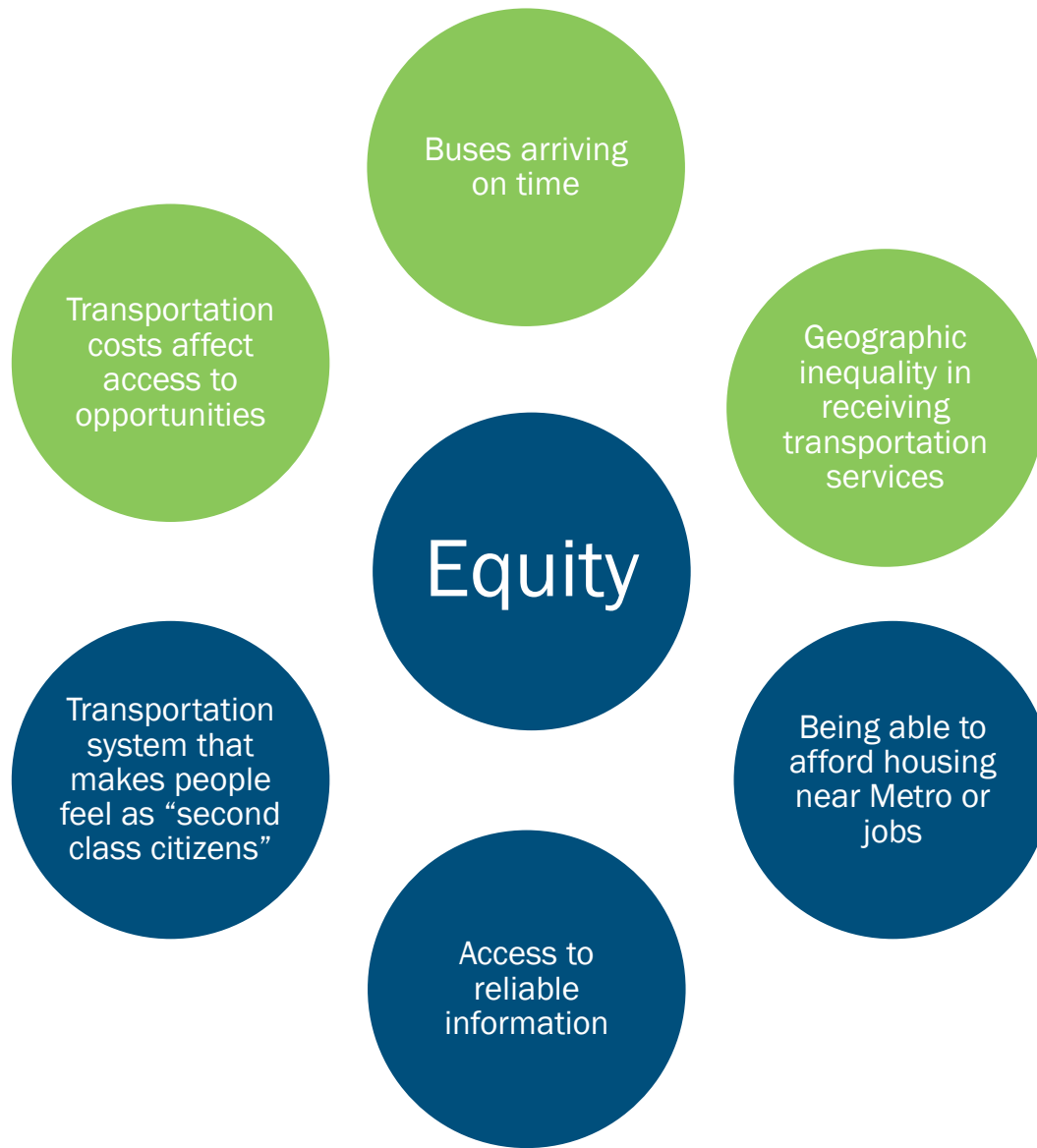
Equity: Questions

1

Based on your experience and/or observations, what are some equity issues that you believe should be getting addressed in transportation?

2

Tell me about things that transportation officials should consider in order to ensure equity in transportation?



“if you've ever been on that side of town [ward 7], even if you're in your car, you can even witness the long lines at the bus stops and see how there's people just waiting to get on the bus, especially in the winter months like now when it's freezing cold outside. Who wants to miss a bus? I don't care if it's crowded. I need to get on to get warm. I just need to get to the station. And that's when it happens, is people are just so in a rush to get comfortable, no matter what the weather -- if it's hot outside, if it's cold -- no one wants to be standing outside for hours at a time at a bus stop.”

-Nina, Washington DC

For folks that don't have that subsidy it's so expensive for you to get to work and it's so unfair if you're not making -- you're making below the minimum wage. So it's like what do you do? You have to pick and choose -- do you go to work, do you call out, do you put food on the table? So for me it's the cost. It's so unfair. Like there's no subsidies for people that make below a certain income, and it's truly, truly unfair.”

- Gladys, Landover MD

“Someone offered me a job out in Rockville for home organization, which is what I do for a living. But she was offering 15 an hour, which is minimum wage here, but you add in the cost to me of going out there and coming back, the times plus the wait, it's not worth what I'm going to spend on Metro. The big problem for me is there's other jobs I would like but I cannot take because I can't afford transportation. [...] Then, trying to live off of this disability check and dealing with the continuing rise in public transportation cost and the access is– it's really nerve-wracking. It's crazy.”

Sharon, Washington DC

Safety: Questions

1

Imagine that you are going to your job, school, to the store. Can you describe what makes you feel safe when using your preferred method of transportation?

2

What can transportation officials do to make you feel safe while using your preferred method of transportation?



“I mean, honestly, if I have to leave out at night I will make sure that the bus stop that I go to is well lit. If it's not well lit [...] will purposely walk -- even if it's like a extra block to go to another bus stop that's more lit -- it's only because I'd rather be safe than sorry.”

- Nina, Washington DC

“When I walk at night from work, I’m concerned about not being seen by drivers, walking in dark places, not enough people around, and having to deal with crime. It’s too much. Safety is not only being in the car and driving safe. Its about housing, infrastructure, people, you know, also, transportation. But people only want to see one thing.”

- Raul, Alexandria VA

I live in a senior development. And we have to cross the street, near a hill to get to the bus [...] and there's no crosswalk. You know, if you look up and down and run, you can make it. But if not, you get stuck. So if there was a crosswalk or something there to help people get across the street, that would help all of us [...] But so most of our residents take Uber, taxi, each other to get where we have to go because it's not safe crossing the street. And it's not a real thoroughfare, it's just a street. But when somebody doesn't see you and they're coming down off the top of that hill, and you can't run, you're in trouble.”

-Diane, Bladensburg MD

Being a driver and driving in rush hour or just driving when there's a lot of traffic around and then being held up and you realize you're being held up by a bike is incredibly frustrating. Frustrating for me because I'm like I wish the bike had their own lane, and it's frustrating that they're forced to - - you know, bikes move slower than cars do just by nature, so it's frustrating that the traffic's already bad, it's being held up by a cyclist, and it's also frustrating that the cyclist has no other option to get where they're trying to go. So it's like we're both -- there's a little amount of space and we're both fighting hard for it.

- Preston, Silver Spring MD

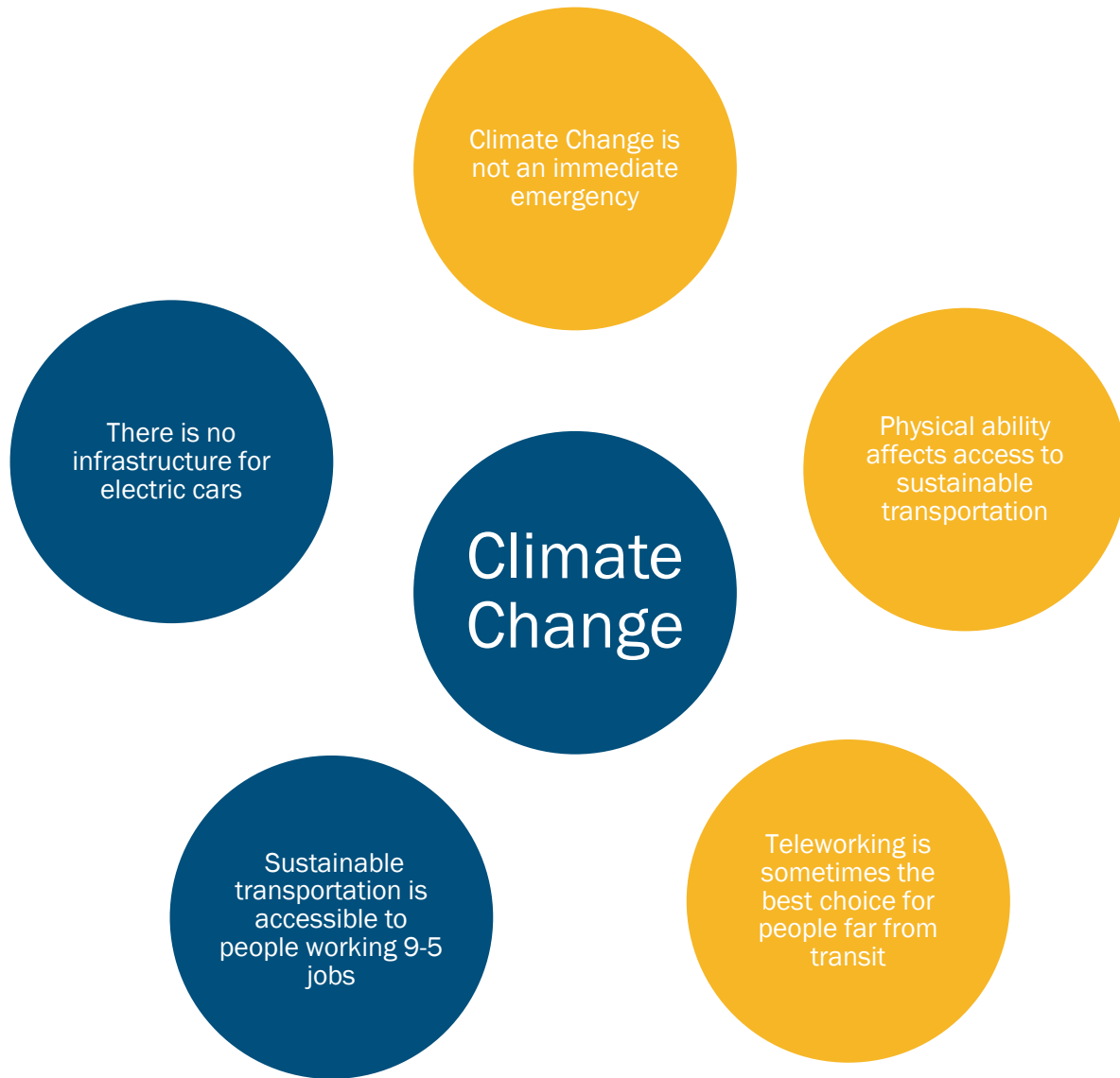
Climate Change: Questions

1

Imagine you have a magic wand that lets you do/have anything you want to reduce your transportation impact on climate change. Can you tell you about any transportation choices that you would make to reduce your impact on climate change?

2

We talked about changes that you would make with your wand. Can you tell me how transportation officials can help make these choices a reality?



“It's kind of like I look at it like if you're in an airplane you can't help somebody else if you don't take the oxygen first. And so you need to be healthy in order to be able to work in the environment for positive results. So you know, if you're deceased or you're incapable of being able to work in it, then you know, two birds is killed there. So I think I agree with most of the majority that health is most important, but I am very green oriented. I believe in the environment and all those things, and want to support it the best that I can.”

- Cindy, Washington DC

“Most people with disabilities – where most affordable housing is and most people with disabilities don't drive, most people live in affordable housing and it's not accessible, public transit. So maybe building more affordable housing, you know, lowering rent costs, and developing more walkable communities across the region. Making it a disincentive, you know. Create a system where it's a disincentive for everybody to drive everywhere almost is what we need in our society.”

-Judy, Silver Spring MD

“I think I just hope that looking forward, I think more and more people are going to be moving farther out, especially if telework continues for most people. More people are going to move out where the housing is more affordable, and I hope that the planning board people are going to be thinking about how to make those areas more accessible with the buses, with the trains, what people are talking about. Just realizing that more and more of these places that seem farther away need to be connected. As more people move out there.”

-Diana, Ashburn, VA

Other ways to engage with the information

- The focus groups report will present the general findings along with the findings by each session
- Findings will supplement the Voices of the Region Survey
- The narratives will be incorporated throughout the Visualize 2045 plan
- Voices of the Region story map

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