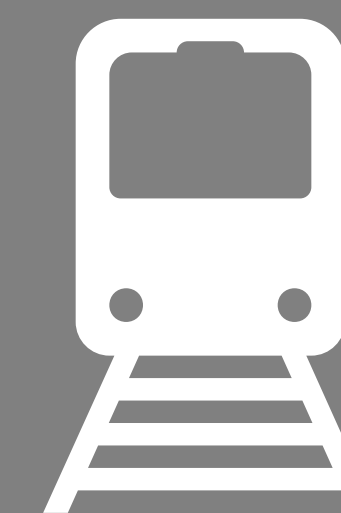




Transit Fare Policy in the United States and Canada: An Analysis of the 2022 APTA Fare Database



Alex Meyers, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
ameyer35@vols.utk.edu

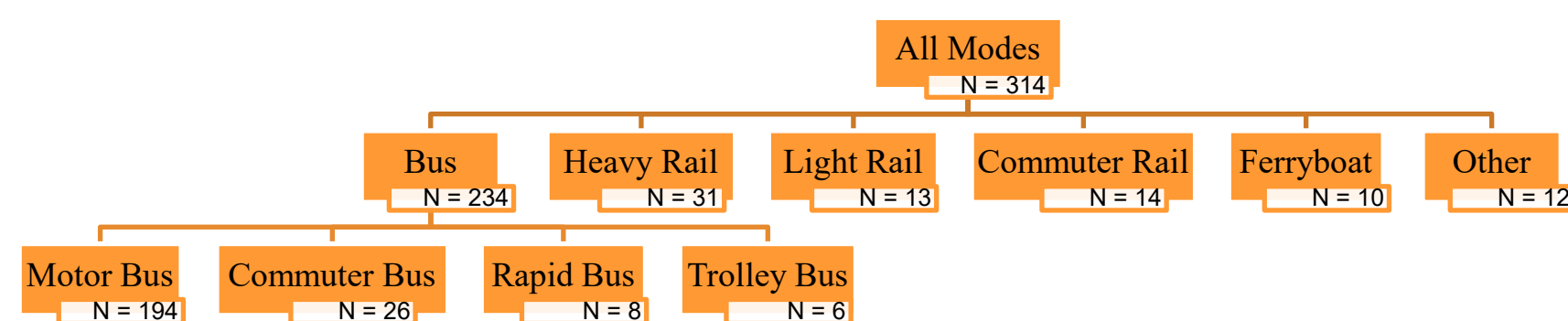
Dr. Candace Brakewood, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
cbrakewood@utk.edu

Background and Objective

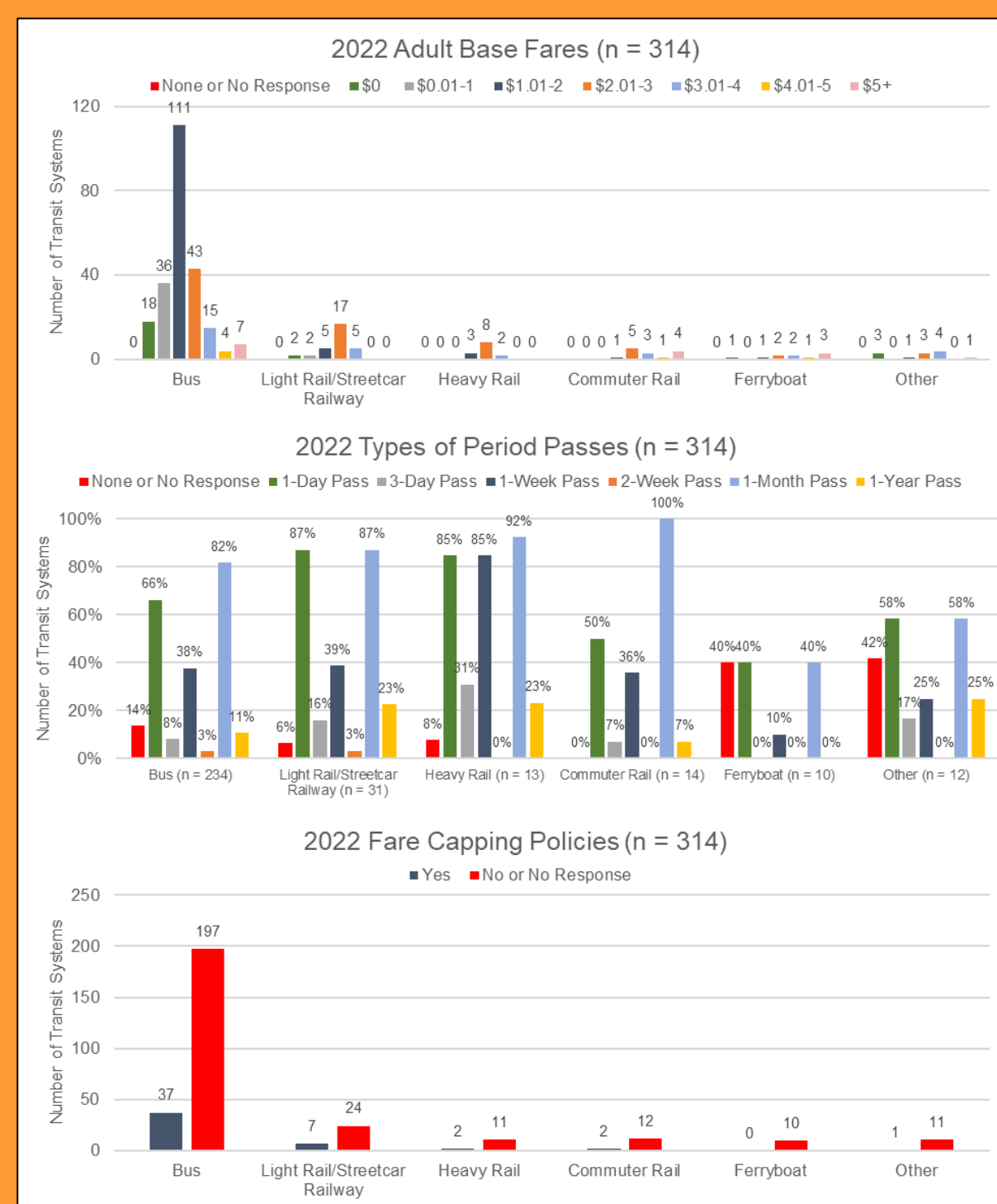
- A comprehensive overview of transit fare policies in North America has not been published since Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 94 in 2003 (1).
- An updated understanding of fare policies and structures is needed to consider the array of technology-enabled fare opportunities and to ensure access for all transit riders.

Data and Methods

- The 2022 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Public Transportation Fare Database contained 314 survey responses (2).
- Modes reported by APTA were combined into six categories: [1] bus, [2] light rail/streetcar, [3] heavy rail, [4] commuter rail, [5] ferryboat, and [6] other.



Fare Structures and Prices

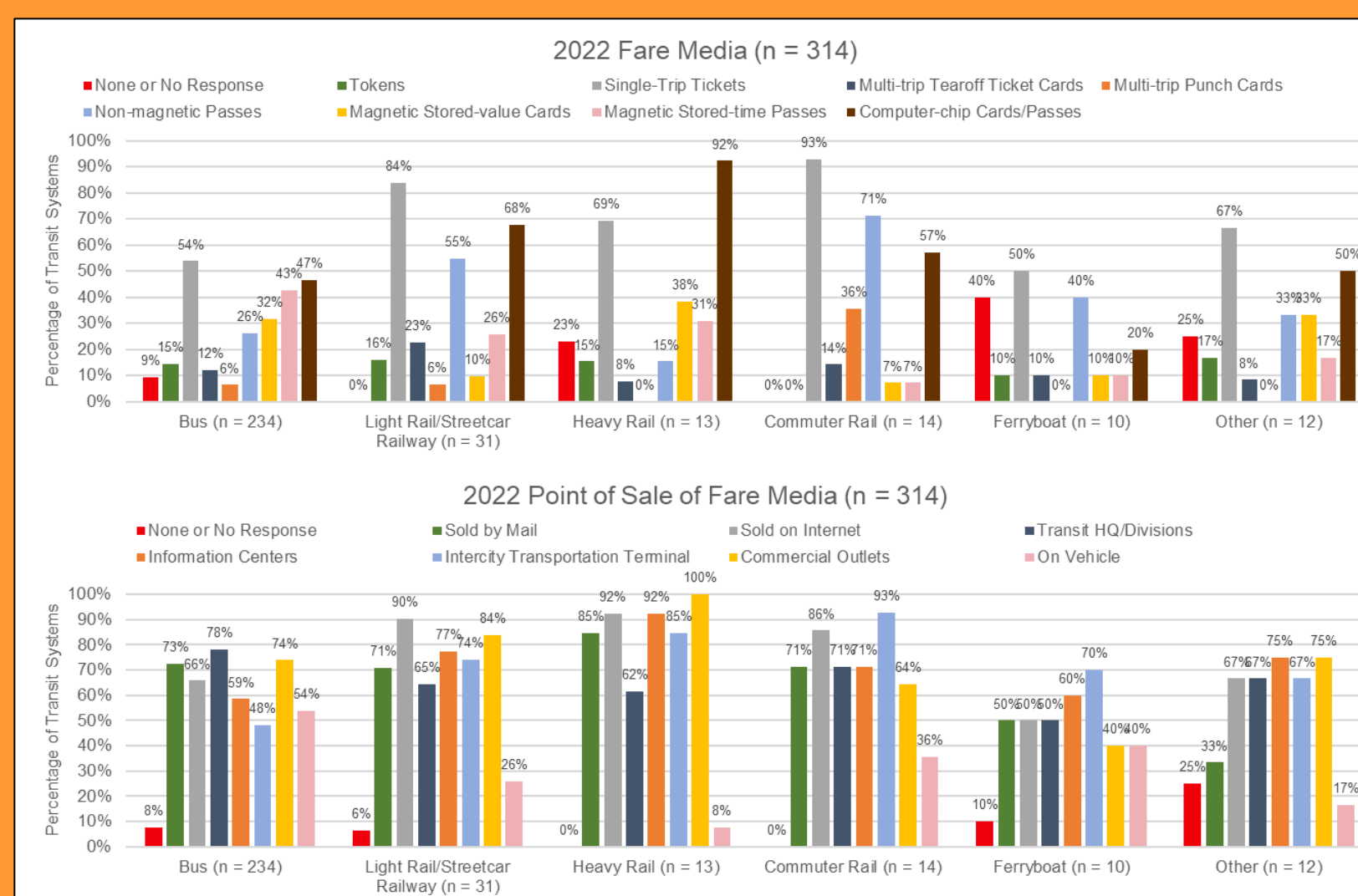


- Bus modes had the least expensive average adult base fare of \$1.96, and commuter rail had the most expensive average fare of \$3.80.

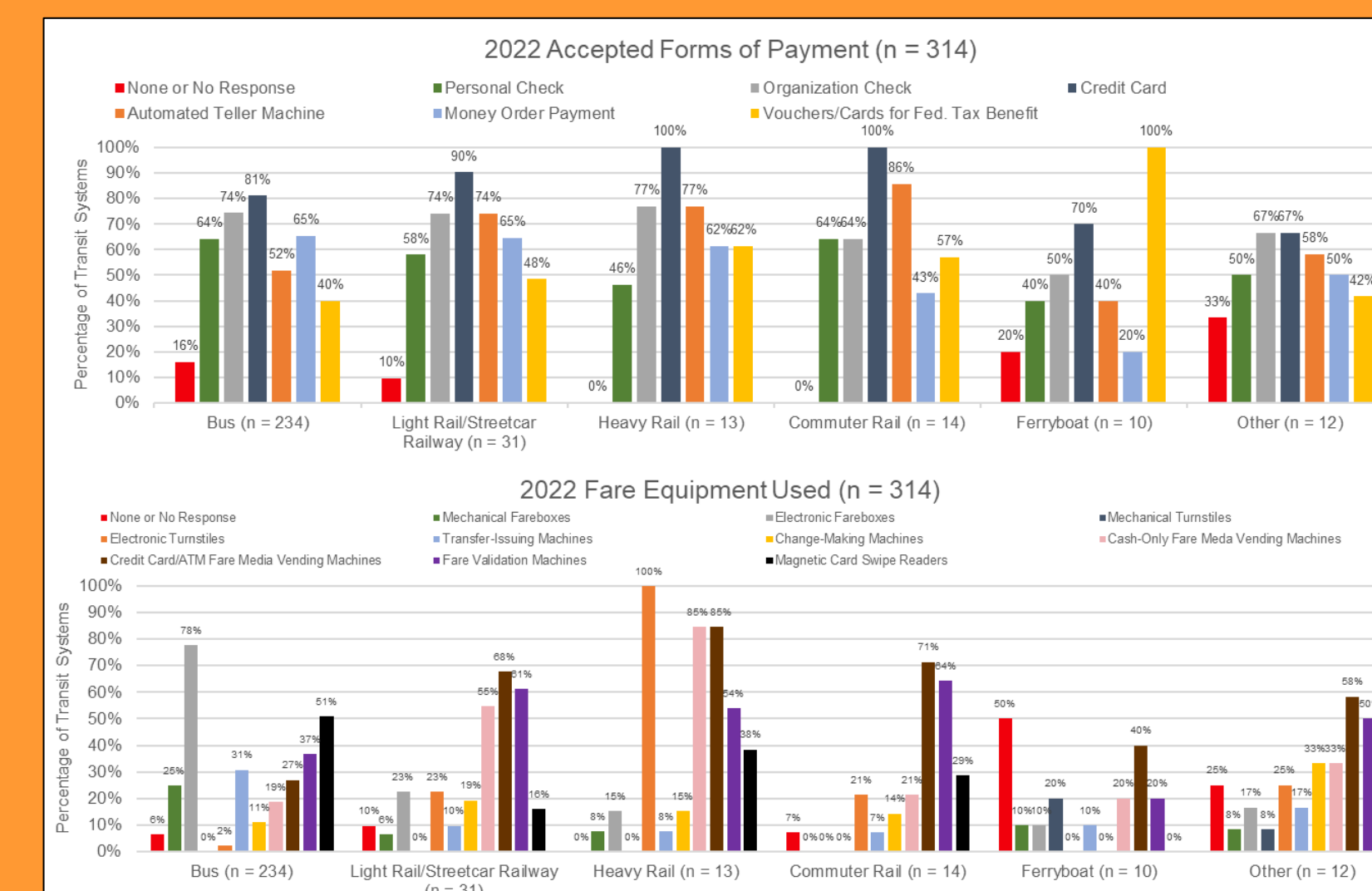
- Period passes were commonly offered, particularly 1-day (211 of 314 = 67.2% of survey respondents) and 1-month (255 of 314 = 81.2% of survey respondents) passes.

- A small but growing number (49 of 314 = 15.6%) of survey respondents reported having a fare capping policy.

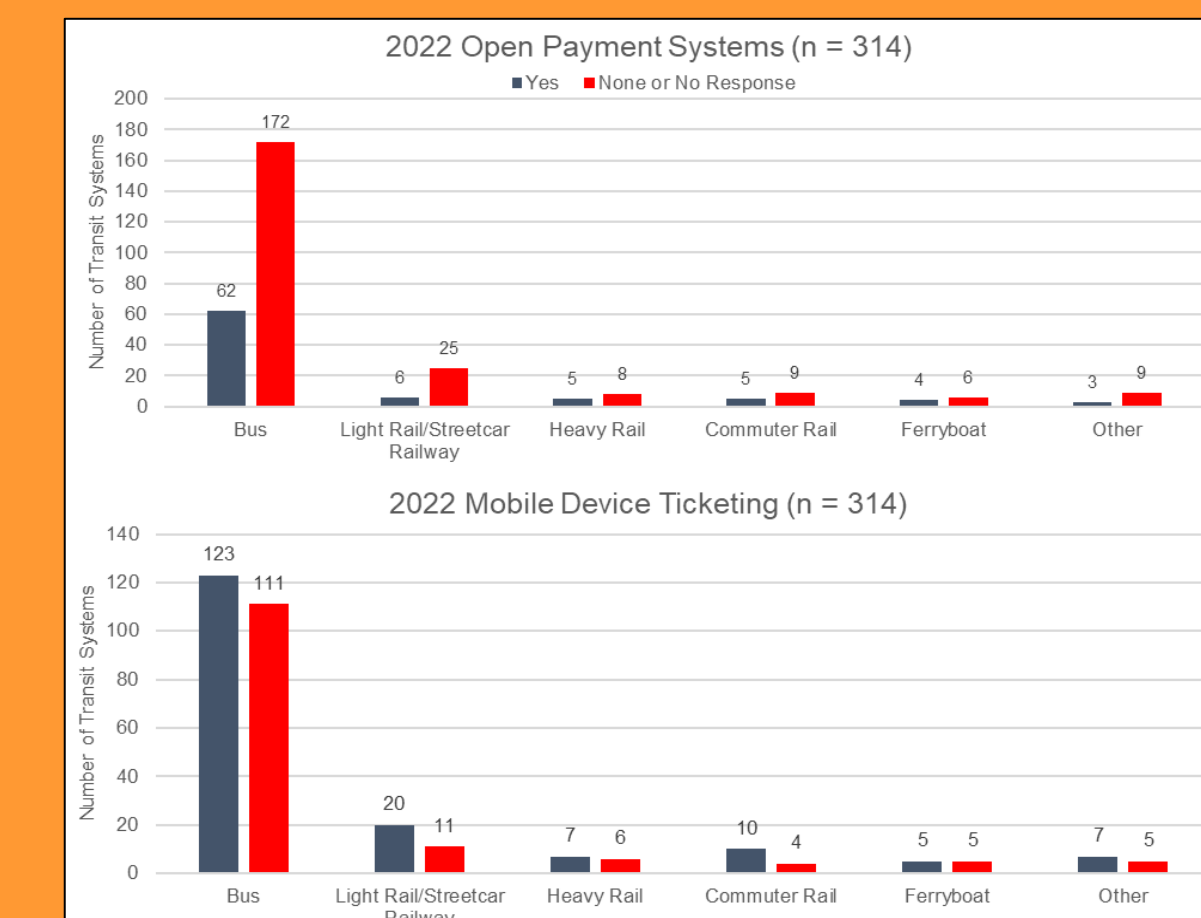
Technology, Fare Media, and Equipment



- Single-trip tickets (187 of 314 = 59.6%) and computer-chip passes (smart cards) (167 of 314 = 53.2%) were the most used fare media.



- Just over 80% of survey respondents (260 of 314 = 82.8%) reported accepting credit cards for payment for fare media, and only eight respondents did not accept credit cards.

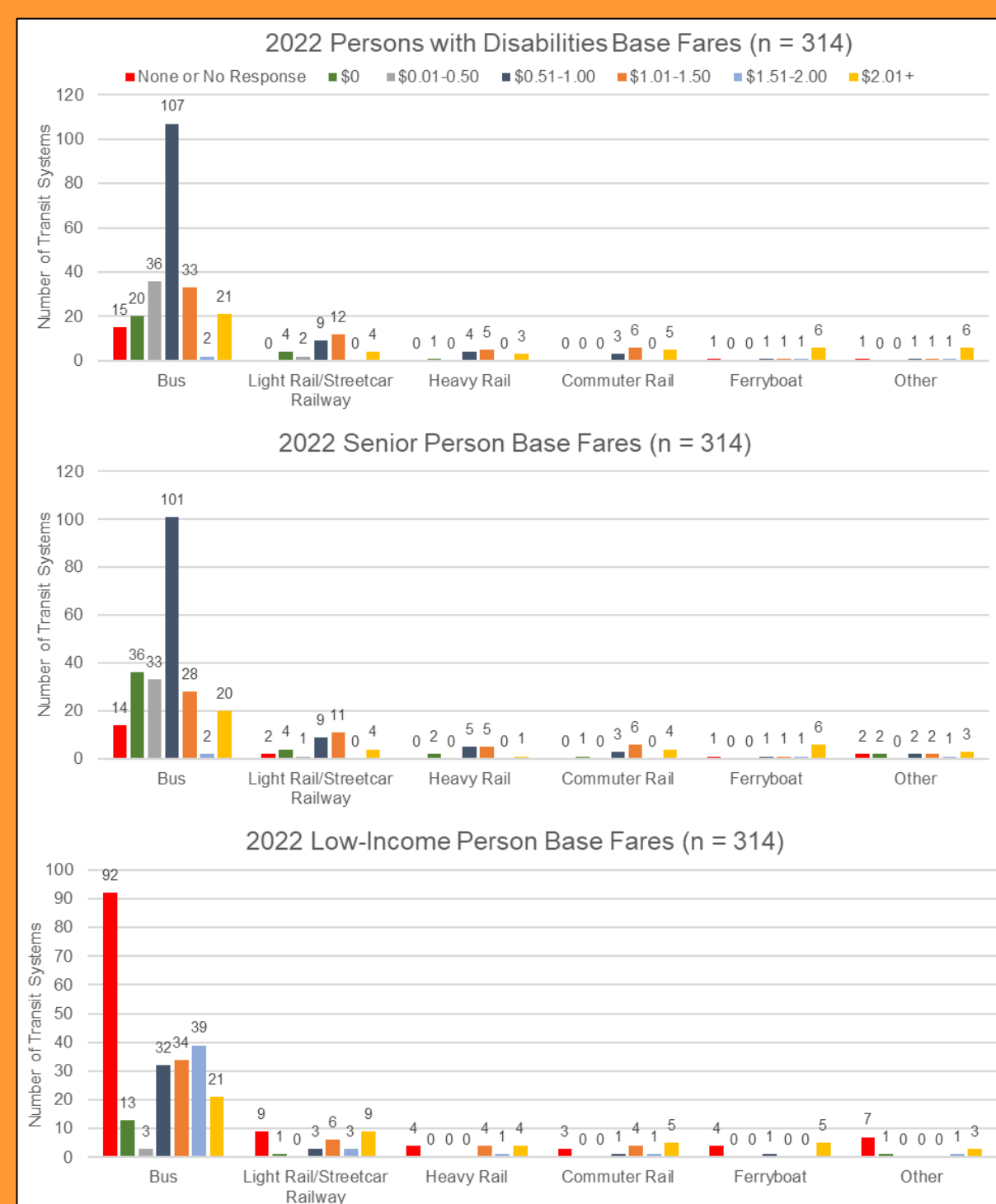


- More than one-quarter of respondents (85 of 314 = 27.1%) have open payment systems, and just over 50% (172 of 314 = 54.8%) reported using mobile device ticketing.

Comparison to TCRP Report 94

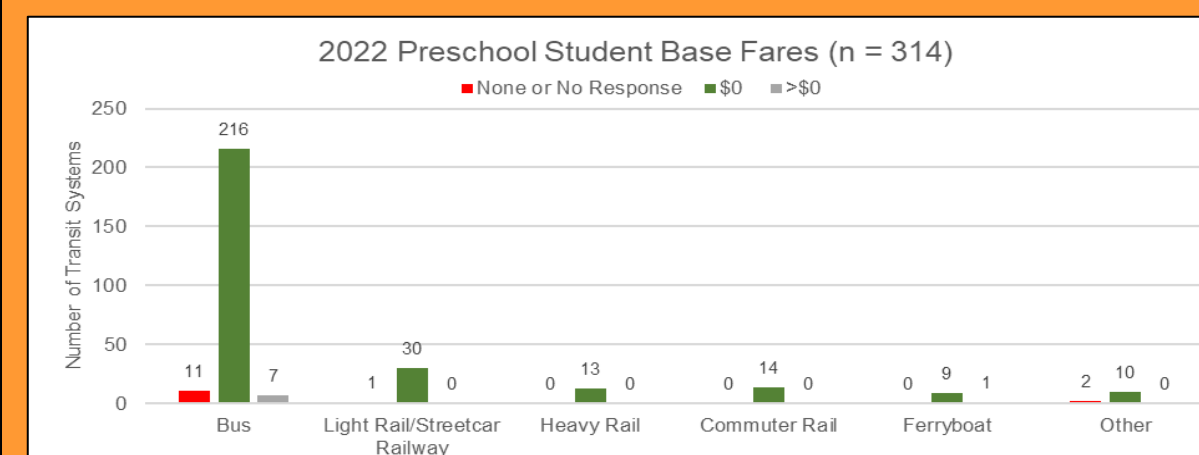
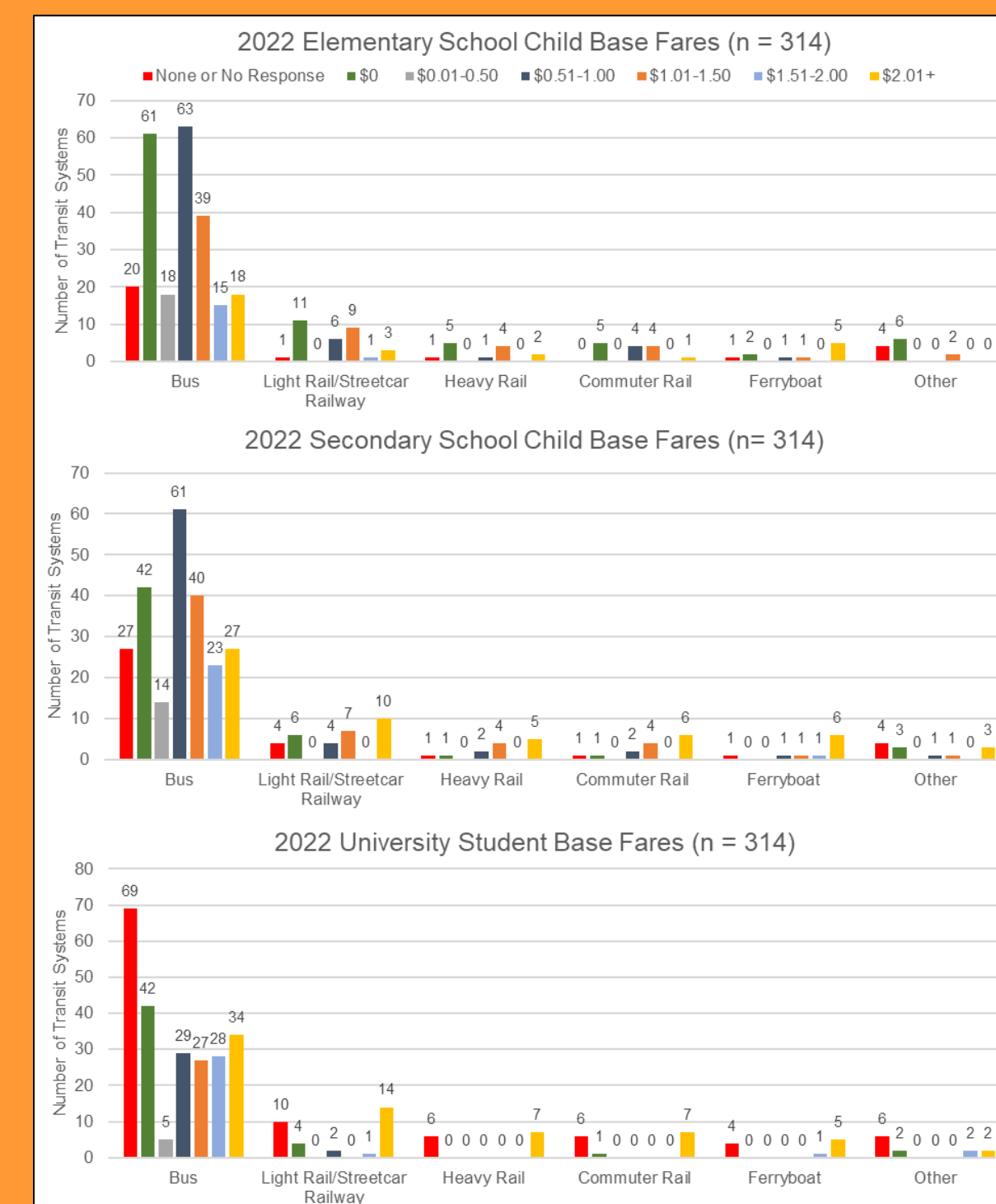
- Just under 20% of all 2022 respondents had an adult base fare of less than \$1, compared to the higher 36% that was found in TCRP Report 94.
- Over 80% of the 2022 respondents (252 of 314 = 80.2%) had an adult base fare of \$1.25 or more, which is significantly higher than the 22% of respondents found in the analysis of 2000 data from TCRP Report 94.
- Both this study and the 2000 analysis in TCRP Report 94 found that over three-quarters of survey respondents offered period passes, with both showing that monthly period passes were the most common.
- Emerging technologies such as fare capping policies, open payment systems, and mobile device ticketing were not mentioned in TCRP Report 94.

Reduced-fare Programs, Subsidized Fares, and Partnerships



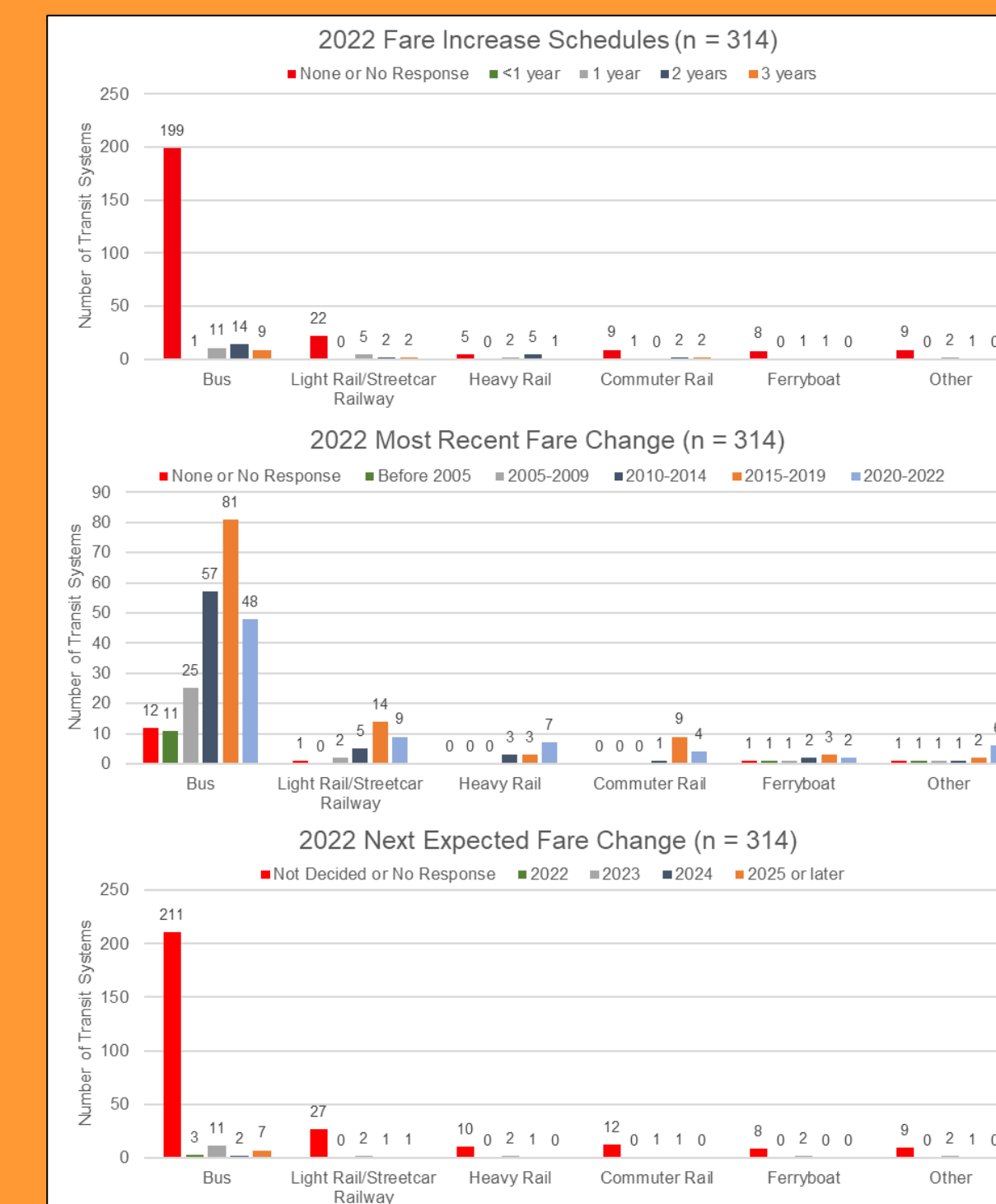
- Although both are required to be discounted by the FTA, senior fares were lower on average (\$1.08) than fares for persons with disabilities (\$1.19 on average).

- Reduced low-income fares were offered less often than discounted fares for senior people and people with disabilities.



- The average price of fares increased as a student's age increased, while most survey respondents offered free rides for preschool children (292 of 314 = 93.0% of respondents).

Fare Changes



- Most survey respondents (252 of 314 = 80.3%) did not have a plan for updating their fares in the future.
- Many of the survey respondents (112 of 314 = 35.7%) reported that their last fare change was between 2015 and 2019.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & REFERENCES

This was completed as a part of the TCRP A-49 project "Fare Policies, Structures, and Technologies – 2024 Updates"

The authors would like to acknowledge the other members of the TCRP A-49 team, particularly Anne Brown, Rebecca Martin, Cecilia Viggiano, and Daniel Mascoop.

- Multisystems Inc., Mundle & Associates Inc., & Simon & Simon Research and Associates Inc. (2003). *Fare Policies, Structures and Technologies: Update*. Transit Cooperative Research Program.
- American Public Transportation Association. "Public Transportation Fare Database." American Public Transportation Association, www.apta.com/research-technical-resources/transit-statistics/fare-database/.