E-CARGO BIKE

Engage Ottawa
Public Survey Results

September 2024

SUMMARY

From July 25 to August 23, 2024, an online public survey was posted on the Engage Ottawa website to solicit feedback on the use of e-cargo bikes in Ottawa.

A total of 451 responses were received from both registered users and guest users of the Engage Ottawa platform. Registered users provide an email address and some basic demographic information, including the Ward in which they live and age range. In comparison, the 2021 survey of residents generated 835 responses when the initial review of interest in establishing a e-cargo bike bylaw to support the provincial pilot program.

Survey participants were asked about their support for both personal and commercial e-cargo bike use in Ottawa, as well as their current bike ownership, frequency of bicycle use, normal distance travelled and typical purpose of trips by bicycle. They were also asked about which facilities e-cargo bikes should be allowed to operate and where e-cargo bikes should be allowed to park. Responses received indicated an overwhelming support for e-cargo bikes for both personal and commercial use within Ottawa, with designated facility use and parking options. The key survey results are provided as part of this document.

LIST OF FIGURES

Types of Bicycles Currently Owned

Understanding the existing landscape and the types of bicycles that are currently owned by residents was important to identify the prevalence of e-bikes and e-cargo bikes of different sizes currently within the city. Respondents were asked to identify the different types of bicycles they own, with the results shown in **Figure 1**.

While the majority of respondents own a conventional (muscle-powered) bicycle, when compared to the 2021 survey, e-bike ownership grew from 8 to 21 percent of respondents and e-cargo bikes grew from 5 to 10 percent. E-cargo bikes owned that weigh more than the 55-kilogram weight limit defined in Bill 282 dropped to 4 percent of all e-cargo bikes from almost 33 percent in 2021.

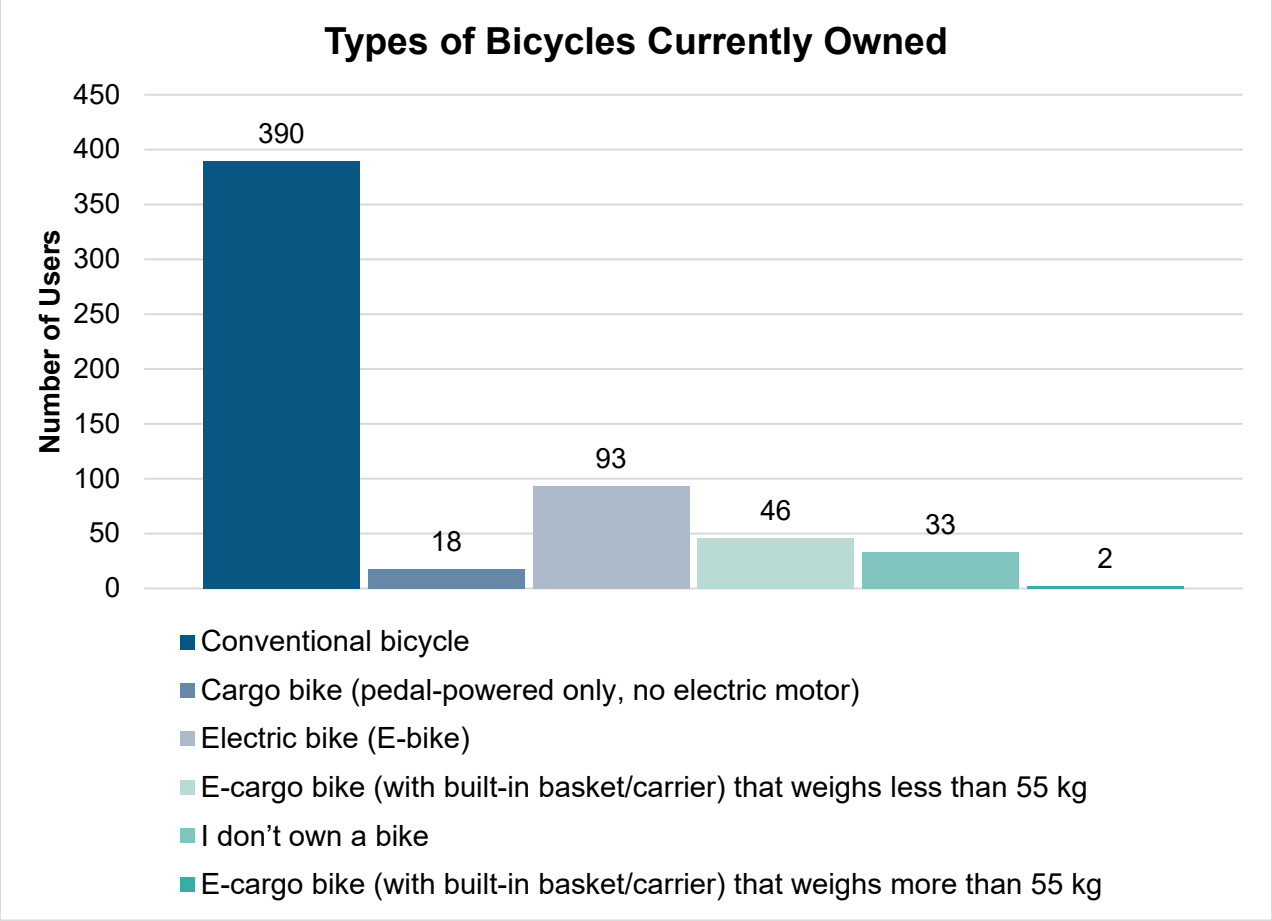

Figure 1 – Types of Bicycles Currently Owned

Types of Bicycles Expected to Purchase

As active transportation increases in popularity, the trends in the types of bicycles that people consider for purchase is important to understand future demand. **Figure 2** illustrates the type(s) of bicycles that respondents are considering to purchase within the next year, if any. The responses demonstrate the proportion of individuals who are considering e-bikes and e-cargo bikes for personal use individually equals and collectively exceeds those considering conventional bikes. By comparison, the 2021 survey showed about 180 respondents considering e-bikes or e-cargo bikes and 195 respondents considering non-electric versions.

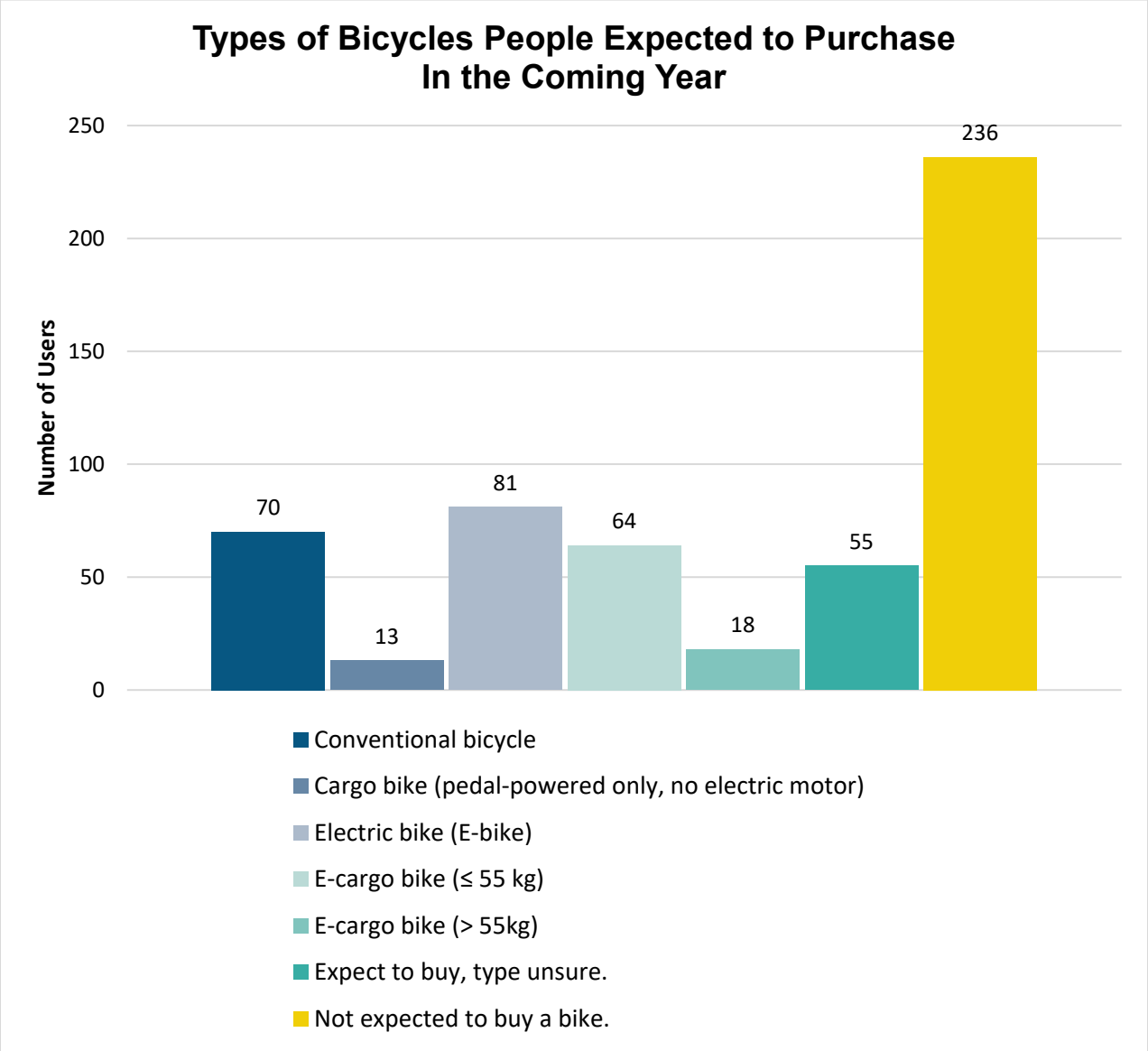

Figure 2 – Types of Bicycles Expected to Purchase

Number of Household Vehicles

Power-assisted bicycles provide users with the ability to cover longer distances with ease and thus provide a cost-effective commuting alternative to a household owning a second vehicle. The ability to use e-cargo bikes for the transport of good or children only furthers the usefulness of these types of vehicles. As shown in **Figure 3**, approximately half of respondents indicated that they only have a single vehicle in the household, with 25 percent owning no motor vehicles compared to 10 percent in the 2021 survey. The number of two car households also dropped from 28 percent in 2021 to 18 percent in 2024.

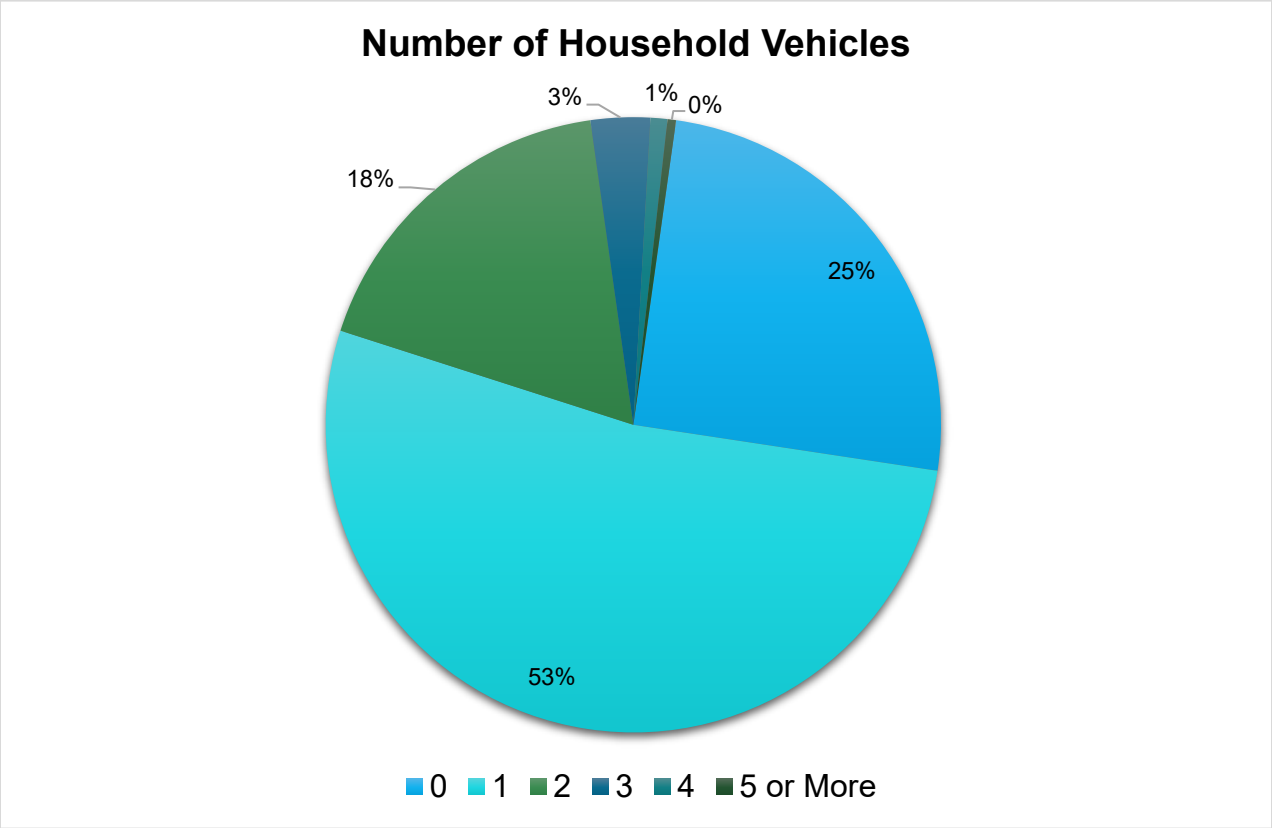

Figure 3 – Number of Household Vehicles

Purpose of Trips by Bicycle

The purpose of trips made by conventional bicycle, e-bikes or e-cargo bikes provides some insight into the main activities that respondents engage in using active transportation methods. **Figure 4** shows that while recreation and exercise is the most common of all activities, a significant number of respondents also use bicycles for commuting, shopping and to reach community destinations. A quarter of all respondents use bicycles to transport children to school or other activities. The availability of personal e-cargo bikes will further support the growth in families using personal e-cargo bikes to transport children since the power-assist capabilities make it easier for individuals to travel further distances. Compared to 2021, there was a 7 percent decrease in responses regarding transporting kids and 5 percent increase in shopping trips.

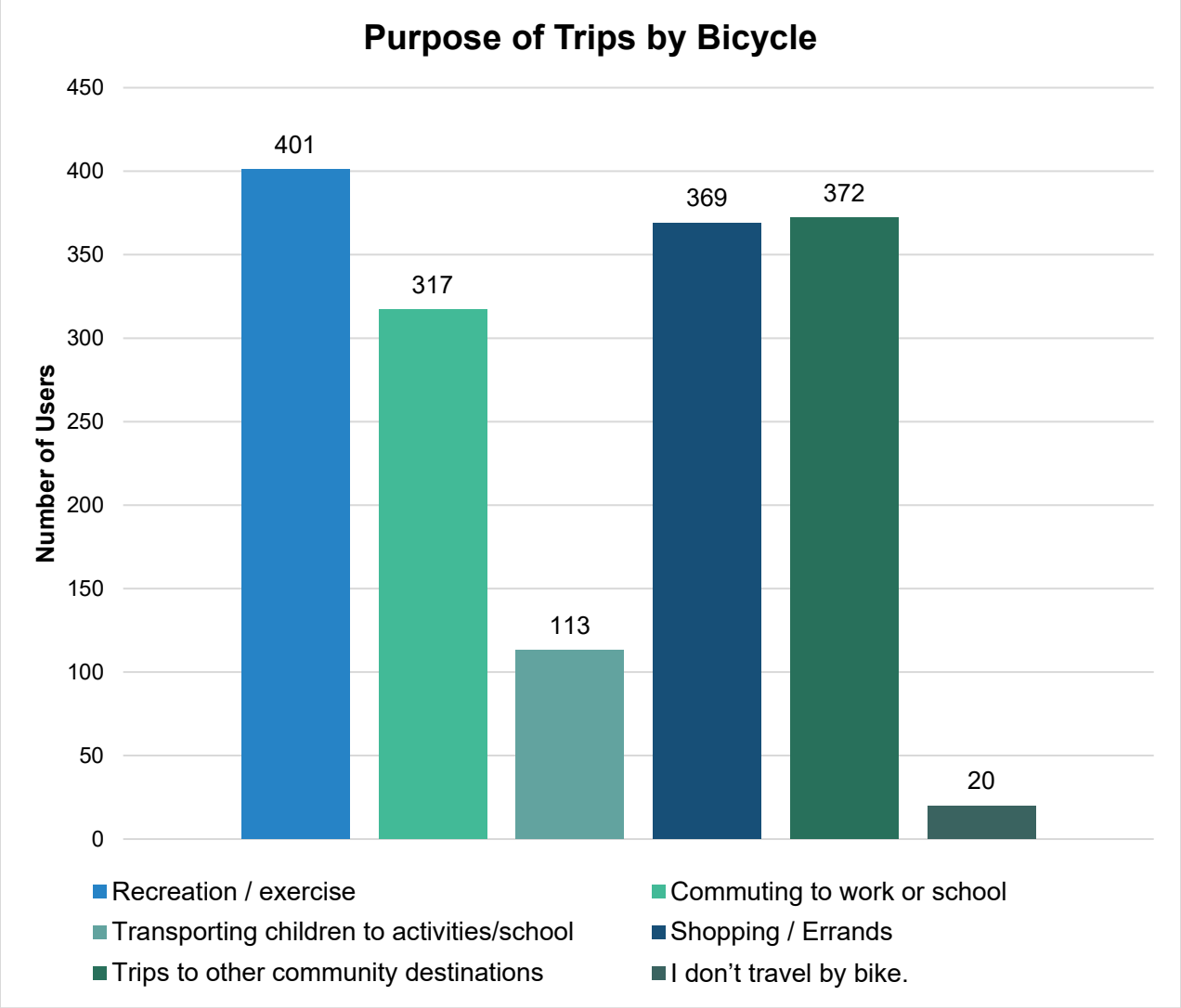

Figure 4 – Purpose of Trips by Bicycle

Distance Travelled by Bicycle

The distance that individuals travel using bicycles can be extended when e-bikes are used due to the power-assist functionality. **Figure 5** highlights that more individuals with e-bikes travel more than 10 kilometres than those using conventional bikes, which may reflect their usefulness as a commuting vehicle alternative and the pedal-assist support the electric bikes provide. E-bike respondents travelling more than 10 kilometres increased from 71 to 79 percent and e-cargo bike respondents increased from 47 to 65 percent. The percentages of distances travelled on conventional bikes remained the same between 2021 and 2024.

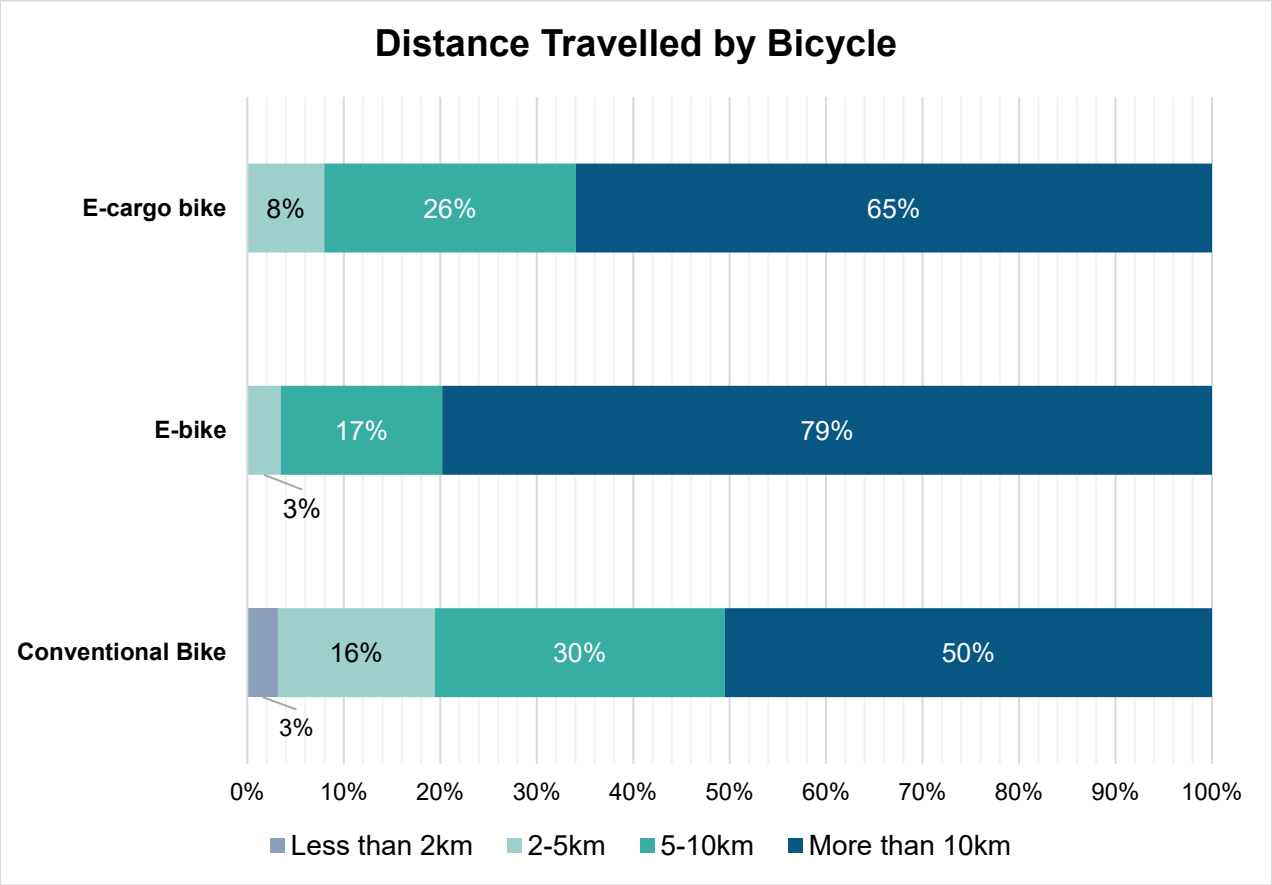

Figure 5 – Distance Travelled by Bicycle

Bicycle Usage Number in Days Per Week

Survey respondents were asked how many days of the week they typically use their bicycle. **Figure 6** shows a diverse group of respondents provided feedback to the survey, from those who seldomly use their bicycle, to those who ride it daily. There were some minor change (no more than 3 percent) in the days a bicycle was used between 2021 and 2024.

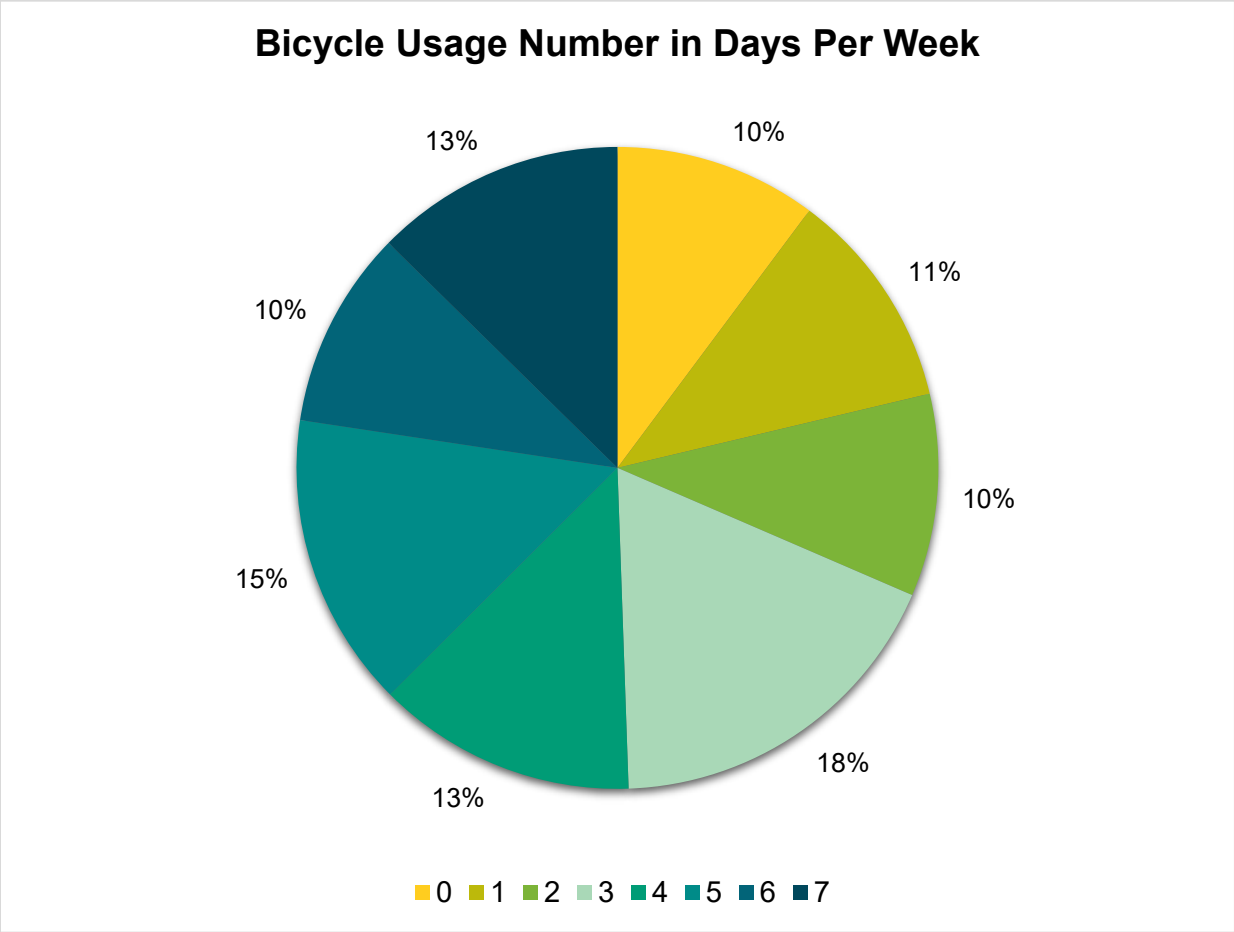

Figure 6 – Bicycle Usage Number in Days Per Week

Support for Personal E-Cargo Bikes

When asked whether they supported the use of personal e-cargo bikes, as shown in **Figure 7,** and overwhelming majority indicated they did. The support grew from 91 percent in 2021 to 96 percent in 2024.

Figure 7 – Support for Personal E-Cargo Bikes

Support for Commercial E-Cargo Bikes

When asked whether they supported the use of larger commercial e-cargo bikes in Ottawa, an equally large majority of respondents replied in the affirmative as shown in **Figure 8**. The support grew from 92 percent in 2021 to 95 percent in 2024.

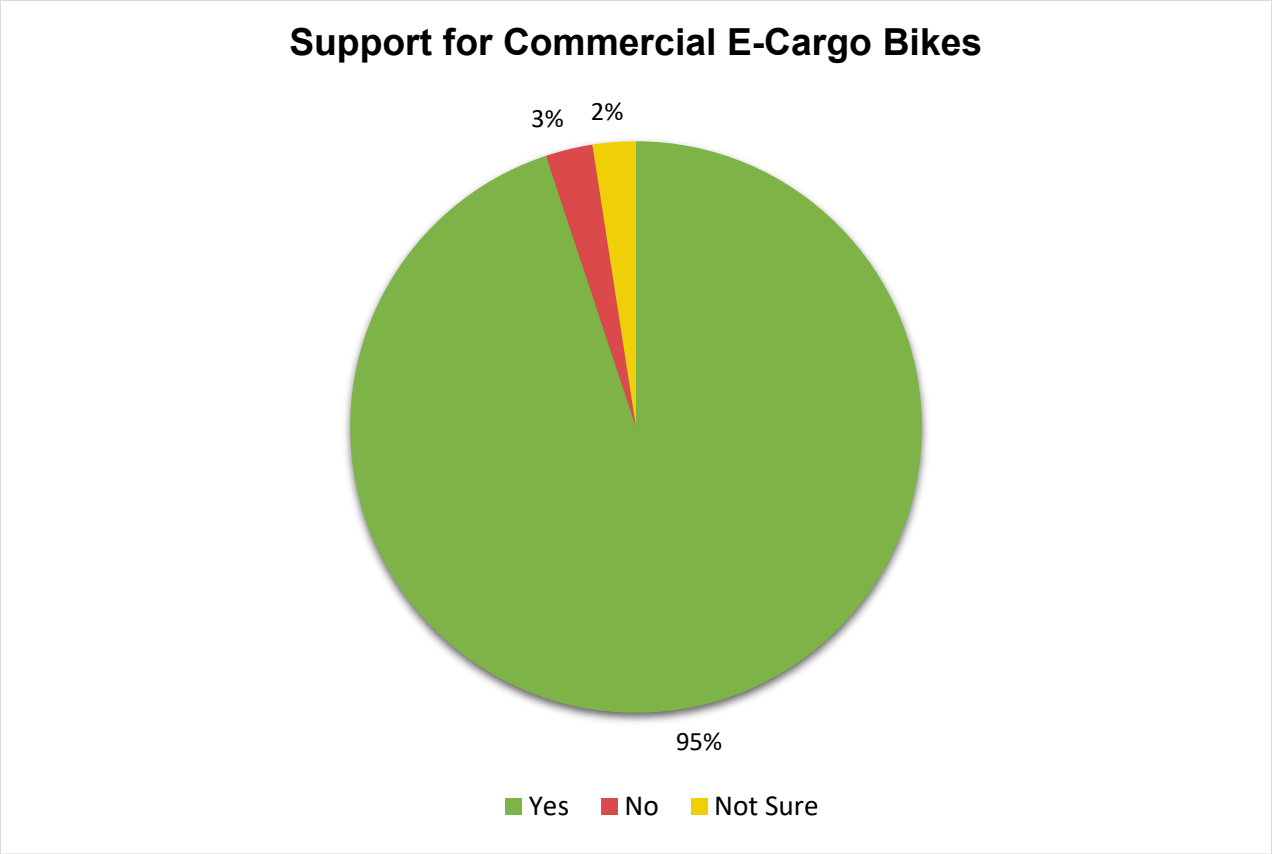

Figure 8 – Support for Commercial E-Cargo Bikes

Support of E-Cargo Use by Facility Type

The public survey also asked participants to indicate their support for allowing e-cargo bikes to use different network facilities. The results shown in **Figure 9** highlight strong support for allowing e-cargo bike use on roadways, on-street bike lanes and separate bike lanes, with all three use cases seeing an increase in support of 3 to 7 percent over the 2021 survey results. Personal e-cargo bike use on multi-use pathways dramatically grew from 63 percent support to 84 percent in 2024, however, cycle track acceptance saw a drop of 9 percent. When asked if all e-cargo bikes on multi-use pathways would be supported (i.e., including use of commercial e-cargo bikes), only 44 percent were in support (compared to 40 percent in 2021) and more than one-third of respondents were against their use of multi-use pathways.

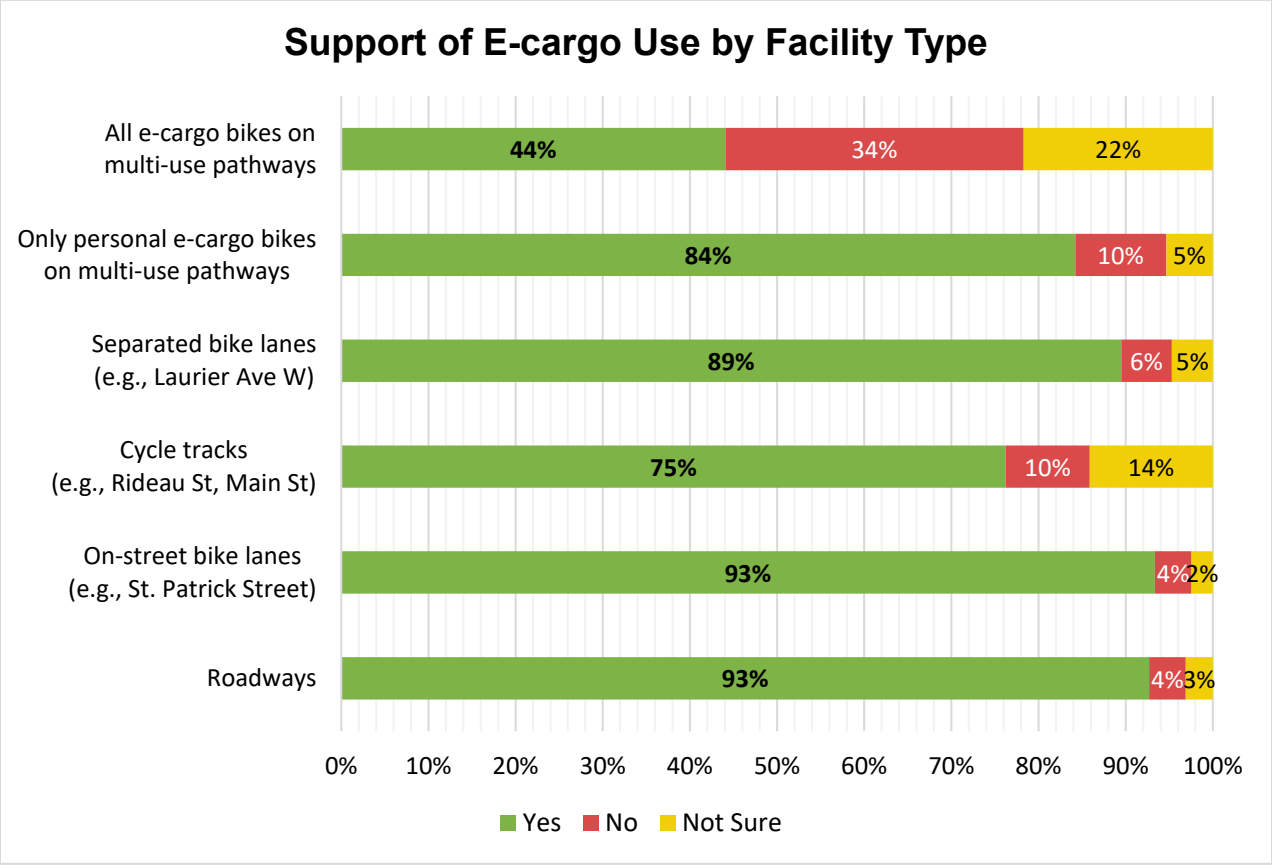

Figure 9 – Support of E-Cargo Use by Facility Type

Support for Parking of E-Cargo Bikes by Facility Type

When respondents were asked about the type of facilities that e-cargo bikes should use to park, the results were overwhelmingly in support of using boulevards, furniture zones, locations where delivery vehicles can currently park and regular vehicle parking spots (with payment where required), as shown in **Figure 10**. All four of these parking locations saw an increase in support of between 3 and 7 percent when compared to 2021 results.

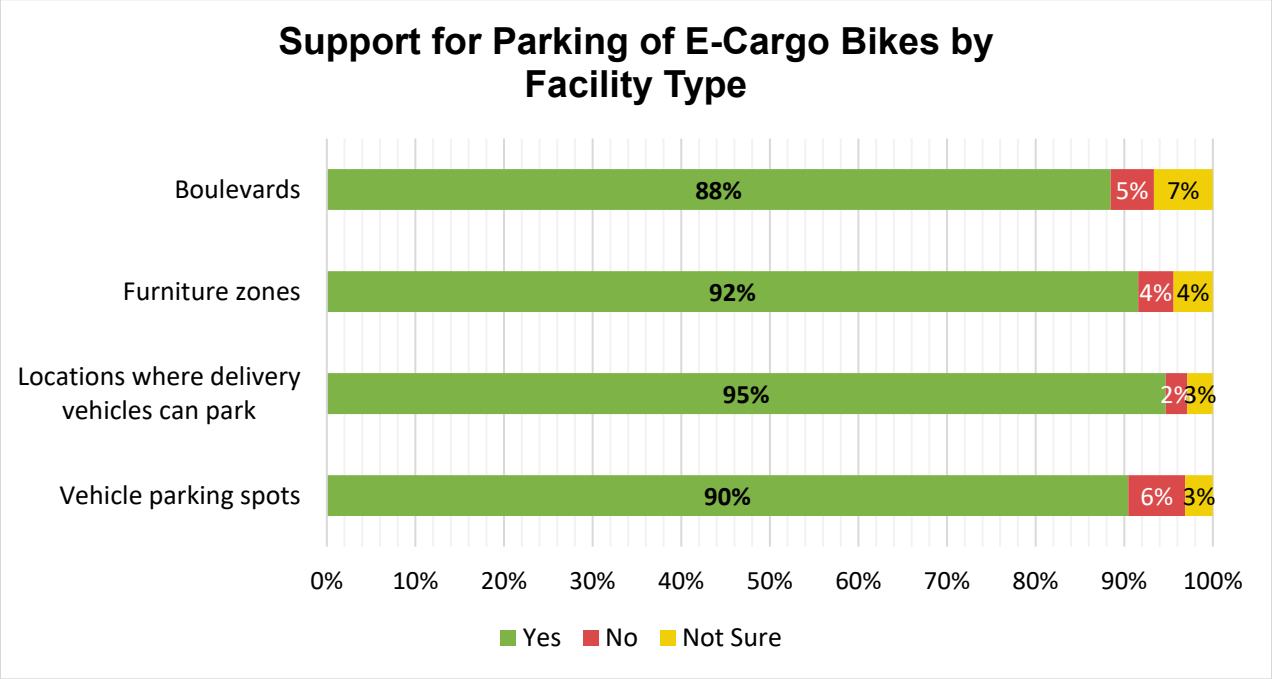

Figure 10 – Support for Parking of E-Cargo Bikes by Facility Type

Location of Respondents

Respondents were not required to provide a postal code. As shown in **Figure 11**, slightly more than half of responses came from individuals within the urban area (defined as within the Greenbelt but excluding downtown), with those living within the downtown accounting for 32 percent of the responses (up from 24 percent in 2021) and 15.5 percent from residents outside the Greenbelt (down from 18 percent in 2021).

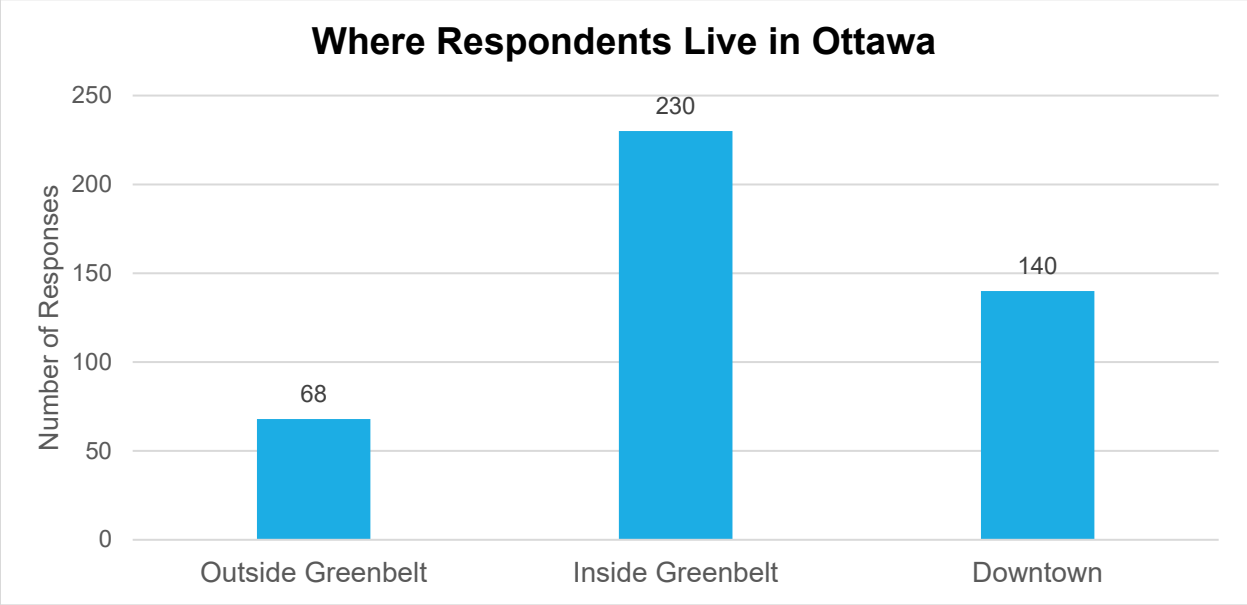

Figure 11 – Location of Respondents