COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Outbreak Transportation Survey: May 2020

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Motivation

- Rapid changes to travel behavior
- Whether some travel behavior changes might be permanent (e.g., teleworking, online shopping, delivery services)
- Disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on the health & economy of communities of color and low-income households
- Equity of access to recreation and trails
- Anticipated changes to revenue (motor vehicle sales tax, transit fares)
- Metro Transit: consideration of policies that would protect health of riders

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Survey sample

- Pool of eligible participants: all metro-area adults who participated in the 2019 TBI, provided an email address, and agreed to be re-contacted

- 8,800 adults eligible
- ~37% response rate = 3,244 responses
- Individual responses weighted to reflect the regional population (race, age, income, household size)
- Survey was conducted May 14 – May 22
- Data received June 9

- Two additional waves planned (near-identical survey, timing TBD)

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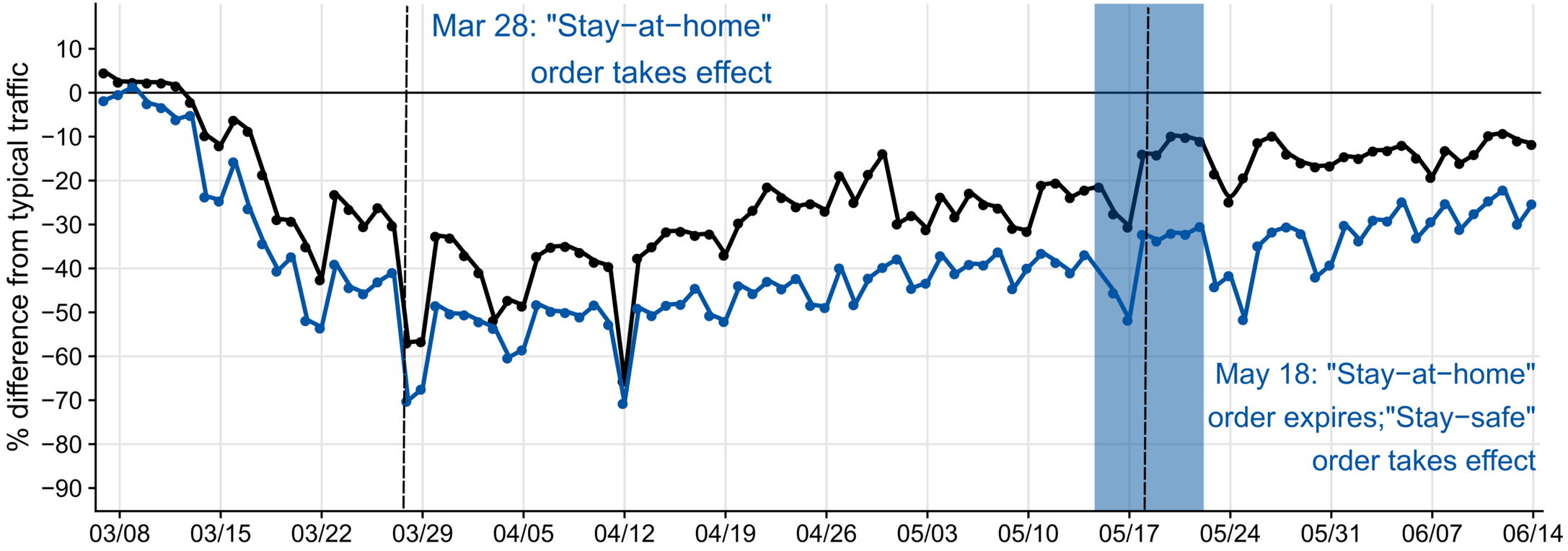
Survey timing relative to traffic trends



https://metrotransitmn.shinyapps.io/covid-traffic-trends/

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Some of the topics we asked about

- Work: employment status, telecommuting, transportation to work
- Maintenance: grocery visits, online shopping, delivery services, telehealth
- Recreation: use of trails and newly widened paths
- Perceptions of COVID-19 health risks
- Attitudes towards new/proposed COVID-19 policies in transit and air travel
- Likelihood of car and bike purchases

…

(Full list of topics at end of presentation)

- All responses can be linked back to 2019 TBI Household Survey

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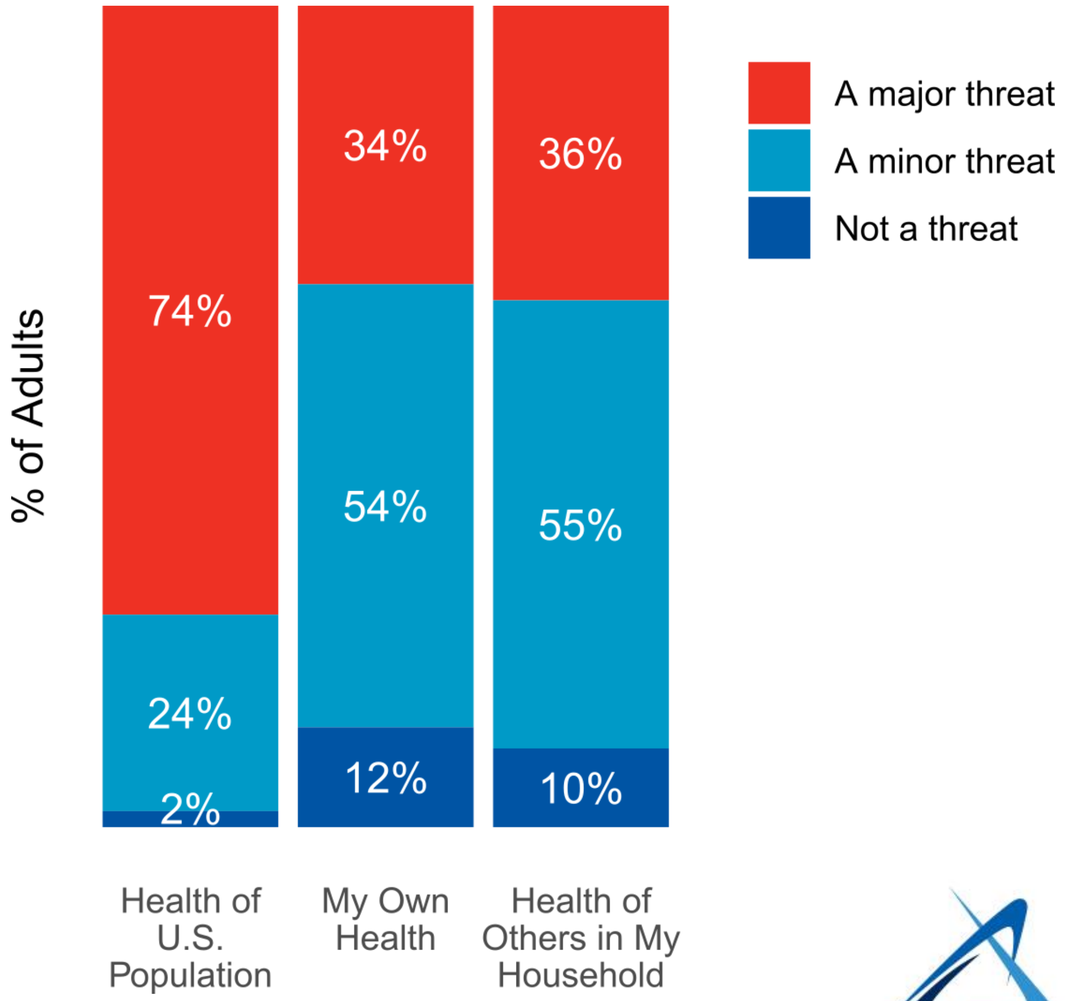
Perceived Health Threat of COVID-19

- Question borrowed from Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel survey[1]
- Vast majority see COVID-19 as a threat to public & personal health

- 2%* of respondents had been tested for COVID-19; <1%* had tested positive
- 10%* of respondents believed they previously had COVID-19, regardless of whether they had tested positive for it



[1] *https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/*

**unweighted data*

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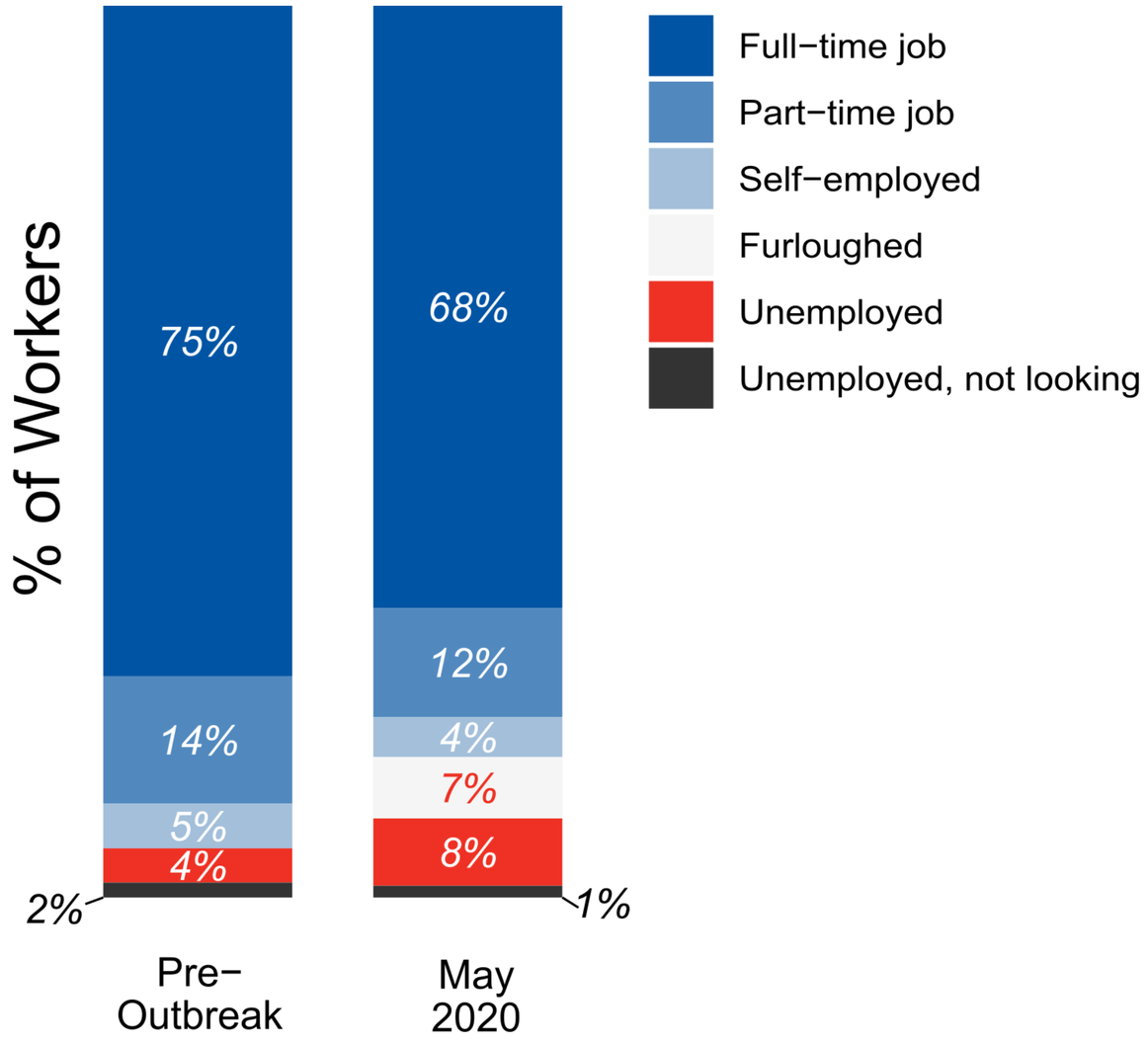
Employment, Then and Now



Our survey estimate:

8% of workers lost jobs

+ 7% of workers furloughed (most without pay)

= 15% unemployment

Met Council Community Development Research team estimate for early May 2020: 25%*

U.S. BLS estimates for April:

9.2% Metro, 8.1% MN, 14% US

*https://metrocouncil.org/Data-and-Maps/Research-and-Data/Research-by-topic/COVID-19-Economic-Impacts.aspx

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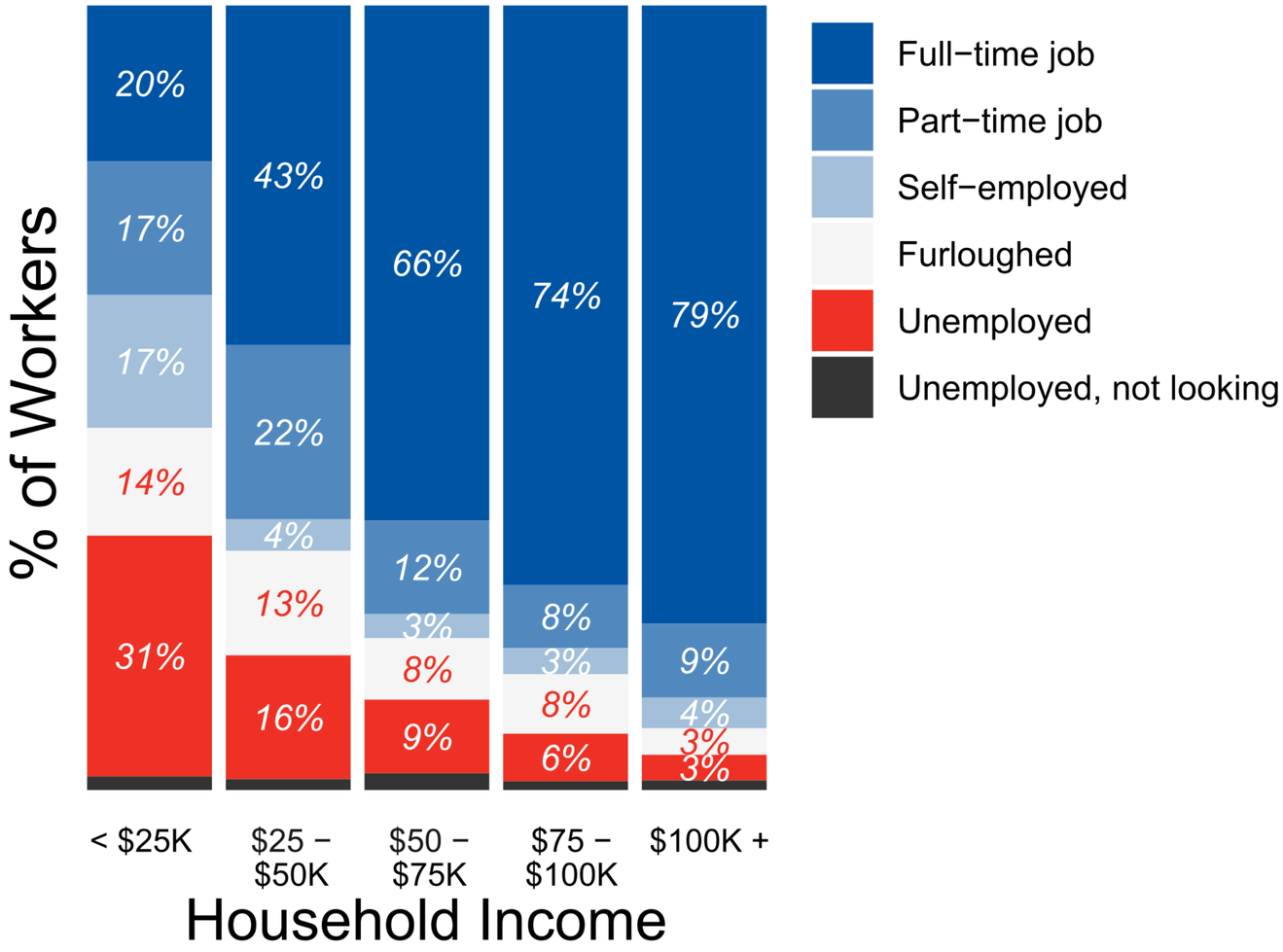
May 2020 Employment by Income



Unemployment is highest for lowest-income households (up to 45%).

Our survey data, a small sample, also showed slightly higher unemployment among workers of color, but Met Council research indicates more severe disparities:

→ 38% unemployment among Black workers and 47% unemployment among Indigenous workers compared to have applied for unemployment from March 21-June 9, compared to 23% unemployment for White workers.*

**https://metrocouncil.org/Data-and-Maps/Research-and-Data/Research-by-topic/COVID-19-Economic-Impacts.aspx*

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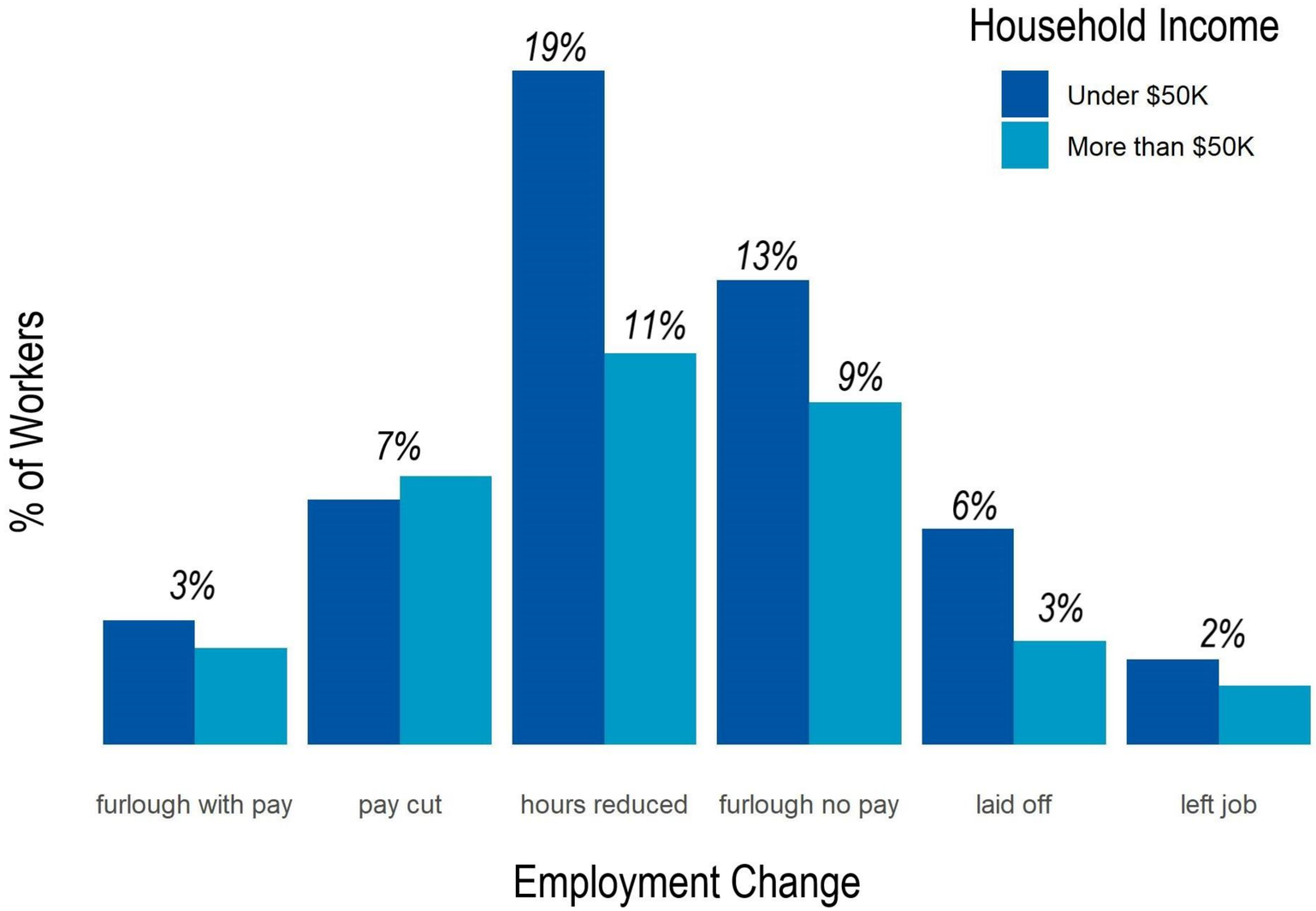
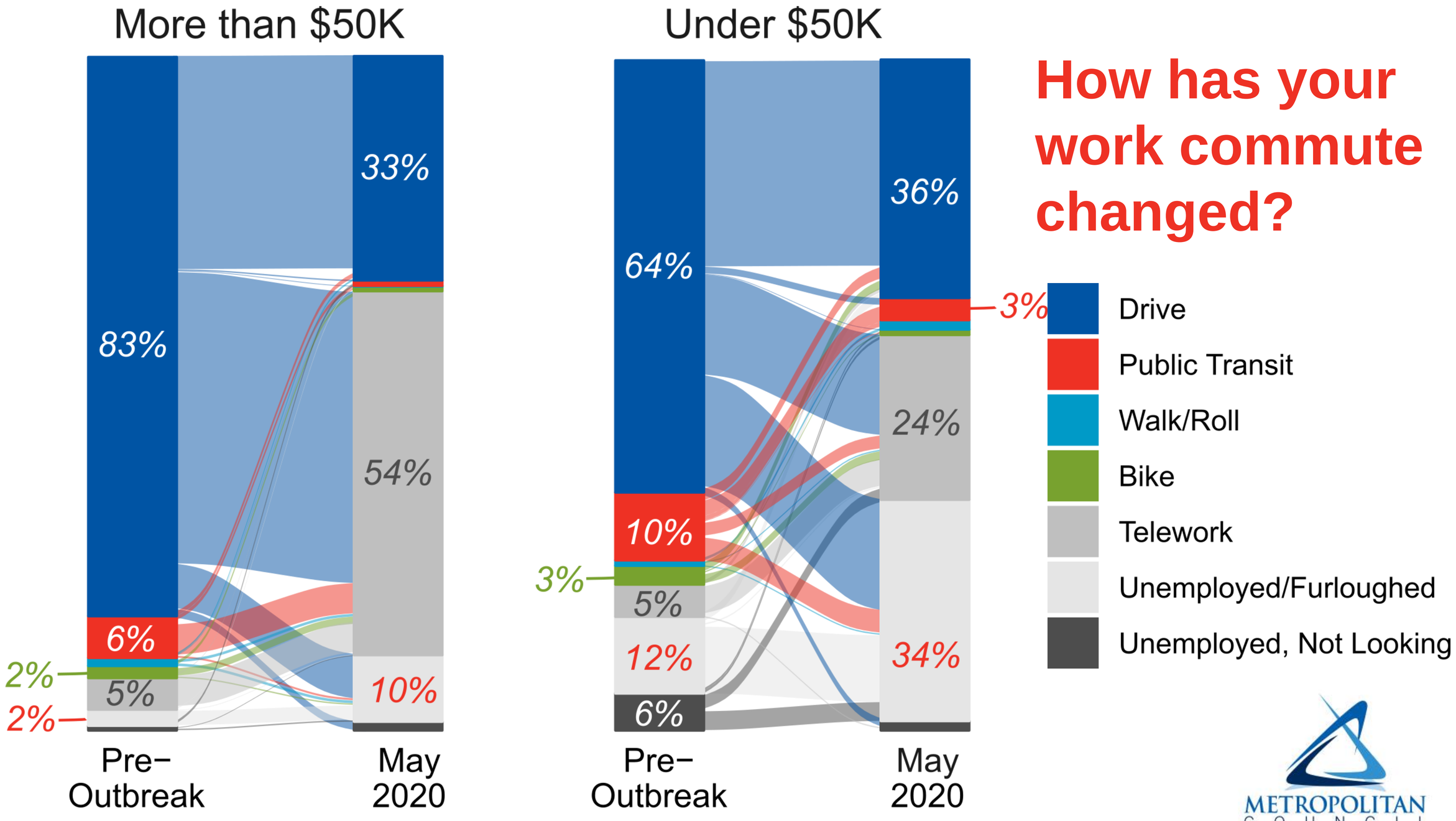
Changes to Employment, Beyond Layoffs




More than $50K
83%
6%
2%
5%
2%
33%
54%
10%
Pre−
Outbreak
May
2020
Under $50K
64%
10%
3%
5%
12%
6%
36%
3%
24%
34%
Pre−
Outbreak
May
2020
How has your work commute changed?
Drive
Public Transit
Walk/Roll
Bike
Telework
Unemployed/Furloughed
Unemployed, Not Looking

How has your work commute changed?

Relative to pre-Outbreak, & including those newly-unemployed, the number of…

car commuters shrank by 58%

bike commuters shrank by 67%

transit commuters shrank by 85%

teleworkers increased ***8x***

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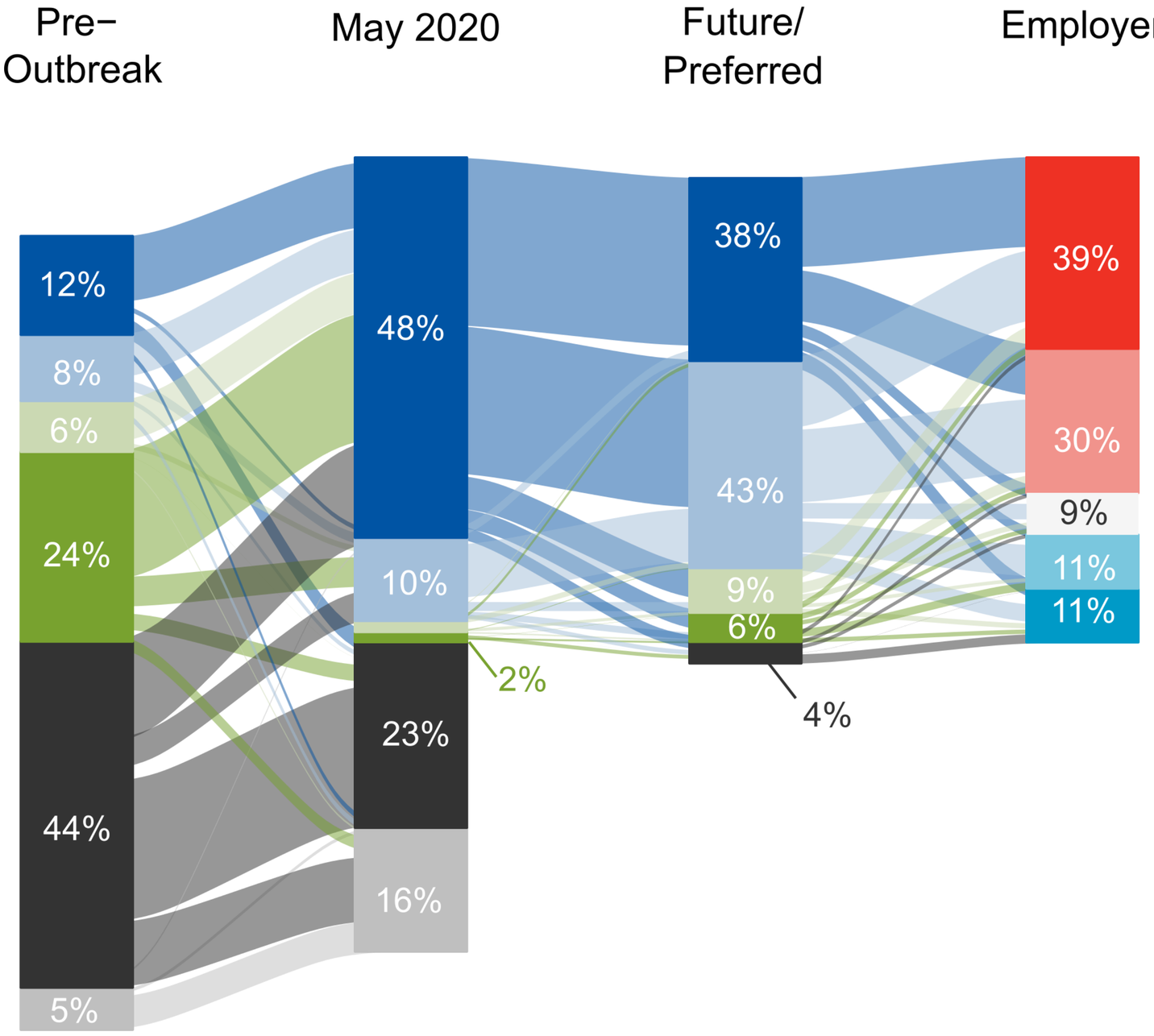

Telework Frequency

- 5+ days a week
- 2−4 days a week
- 1 day a week
- less than weekly
- Never
- Unemployed/Furloughed

Employer Support

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neutral
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

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Outdoor Recreation

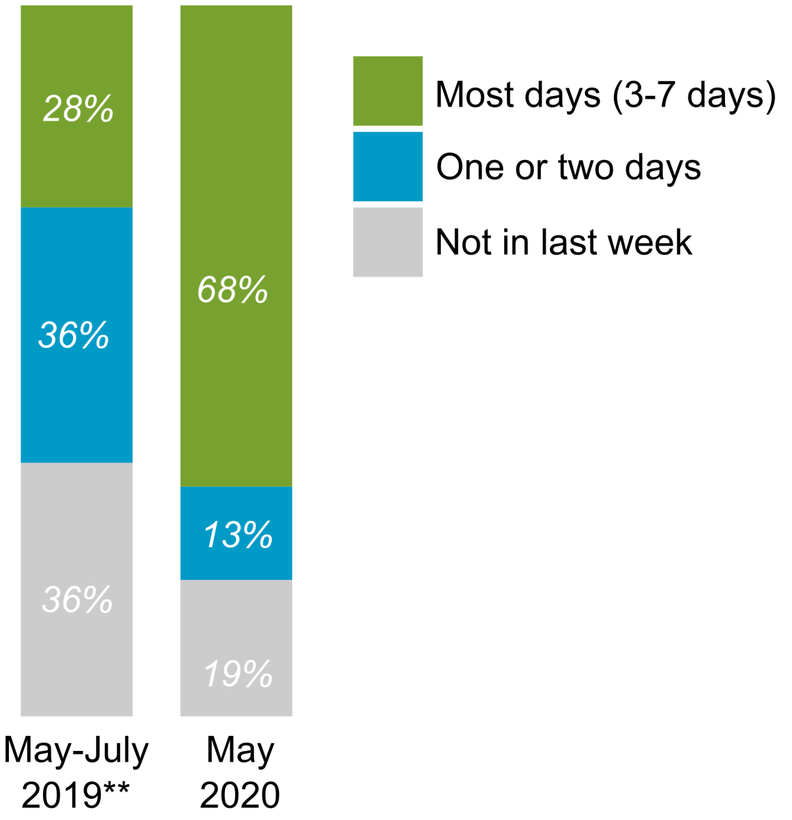
Overall, we observed greatly increased rates of outdoor exercise/recreation.

11% of adults had recently used streets that have temporarily restricted vehicle traffic to expand space for people walking, biking and rolling during the COVID-19 outbreak.

45% of respondents said they had recently used a park or trail for recreation or exercise.

Of those who had recently used a park or trail, **40%** said they drove to a park or trail at least once in the past week.

In the past 7 days, on how many days did you go outside to walk, jog, or roll using a mobility device, such as a wheelchair for exercise or recreation?*



*Comaprison includes only those survey participants who completed a 6- or 7-day 2019 TBI survey in summer months (n = 597).
**Values for summer 2019 may be over-estimates, because they include trips to gyms and other indoor exercise facilities that were closed in May 2020.

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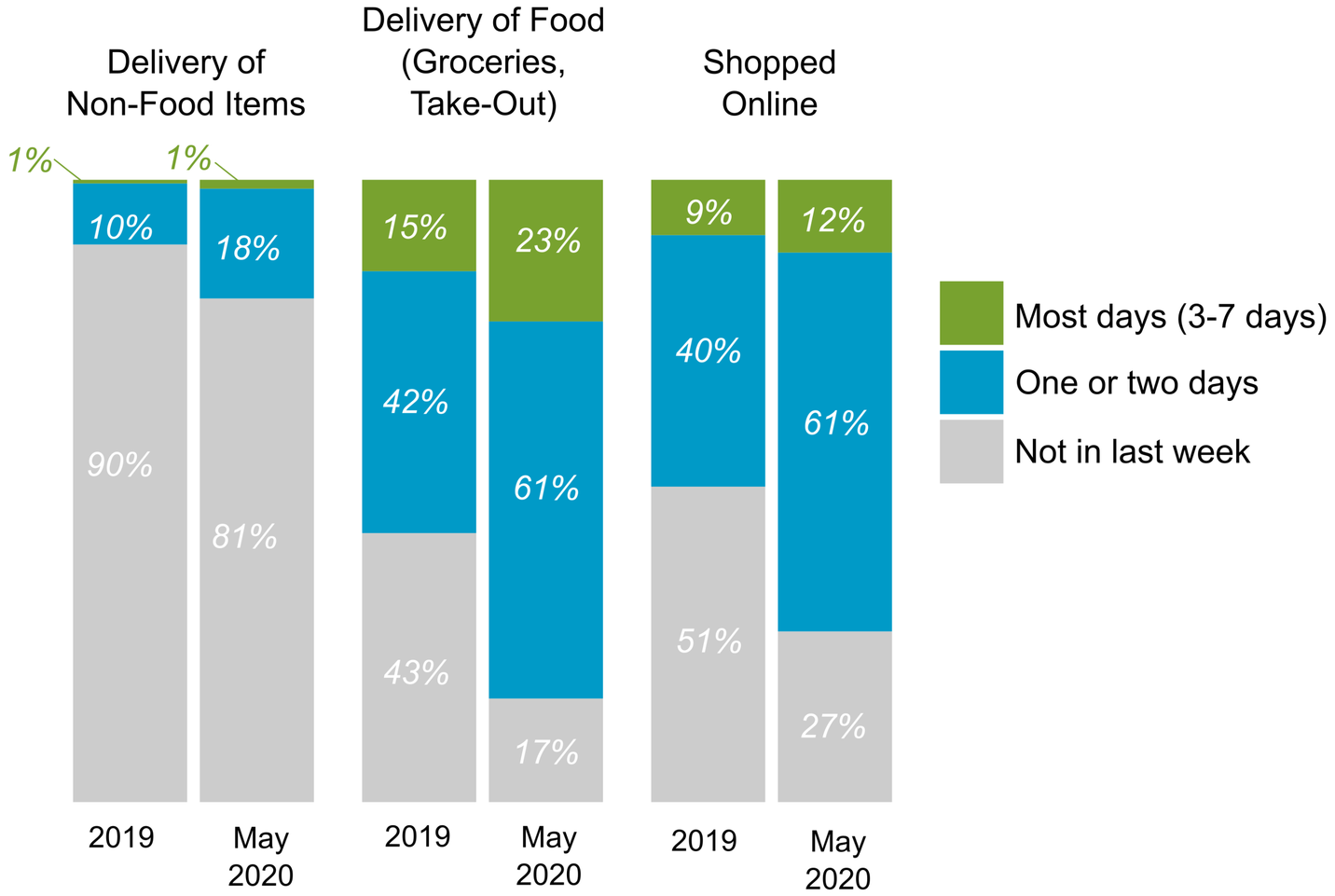
Home delivery & Online Shopping



Who had *groceries* delivered in last 7 days?

- 16% of all adults
- 12% of adults in households earning <$25K
- 12% of Black/Af-Am. adults
- 32% of adults with disabilities

*Comaprison includes only those survey participants who completed a 6- or 7-day 2019 TBI survey (n = 2321).

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Anticipated transportation purchases

- 9% (est. 193,000 people) say they are likely to buy a new/used car from a dealer in next six months (3% say they are very likely, 5% somewhat likely)

  For comparison: 250,000 cars sold statewide in Minnesota in 2018

- 9% say they might buy a new bike in next six months (3% say they are very likely, 6% somewhat likely)
- 5% say they might buy a transit pass in next six months (2% very likely, 3% somewhat likely)

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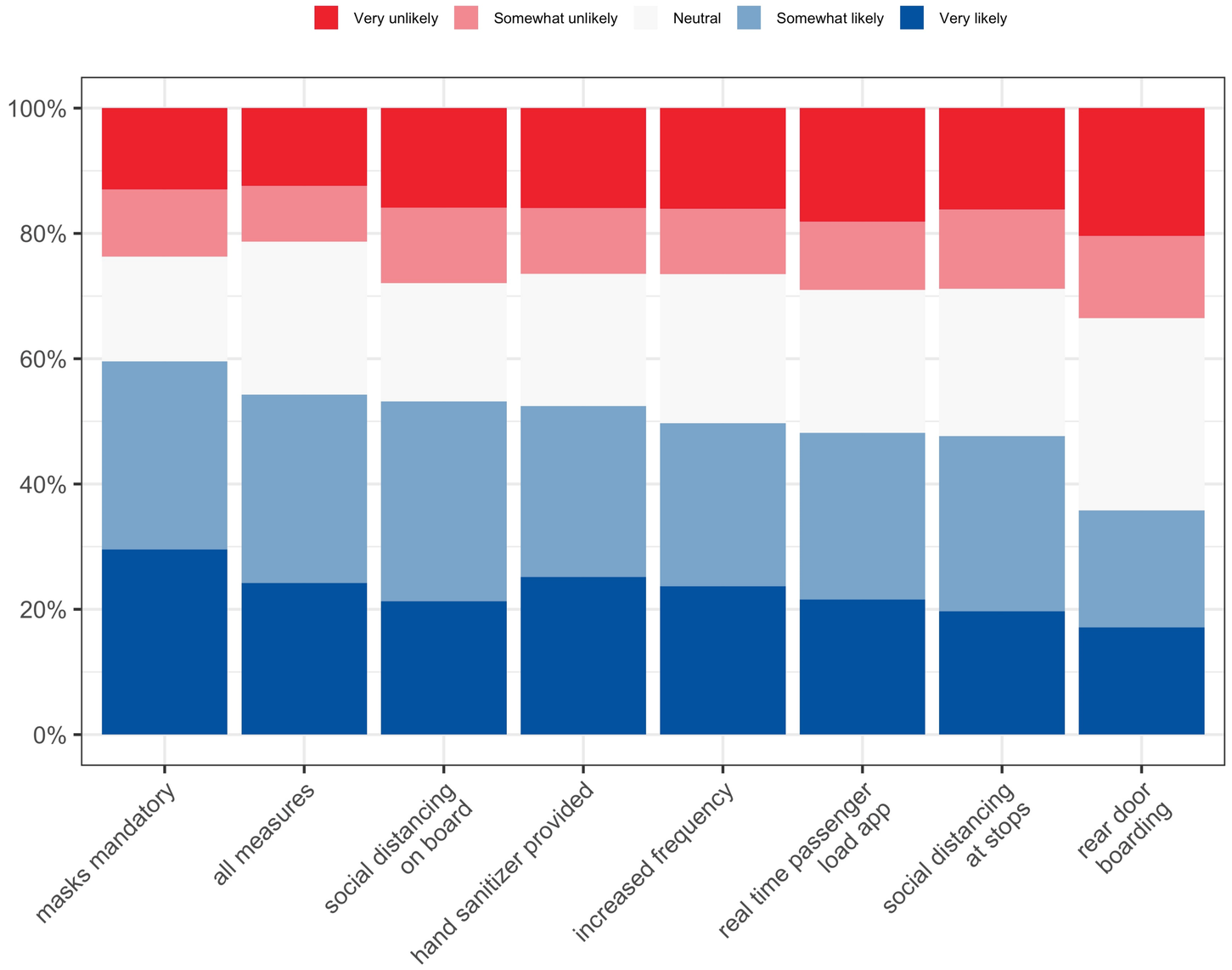
Feeling safe on board public transit



How likely are you to use public transit without a vaccine, given the specified measure?

- 825 respondents
- Metro Transit currently requires facemasks
- half of respondents neutral or unlikely to ride transit without a vaccine
- rear door boarding not as important – facilitates return to front door boarding & fare collection

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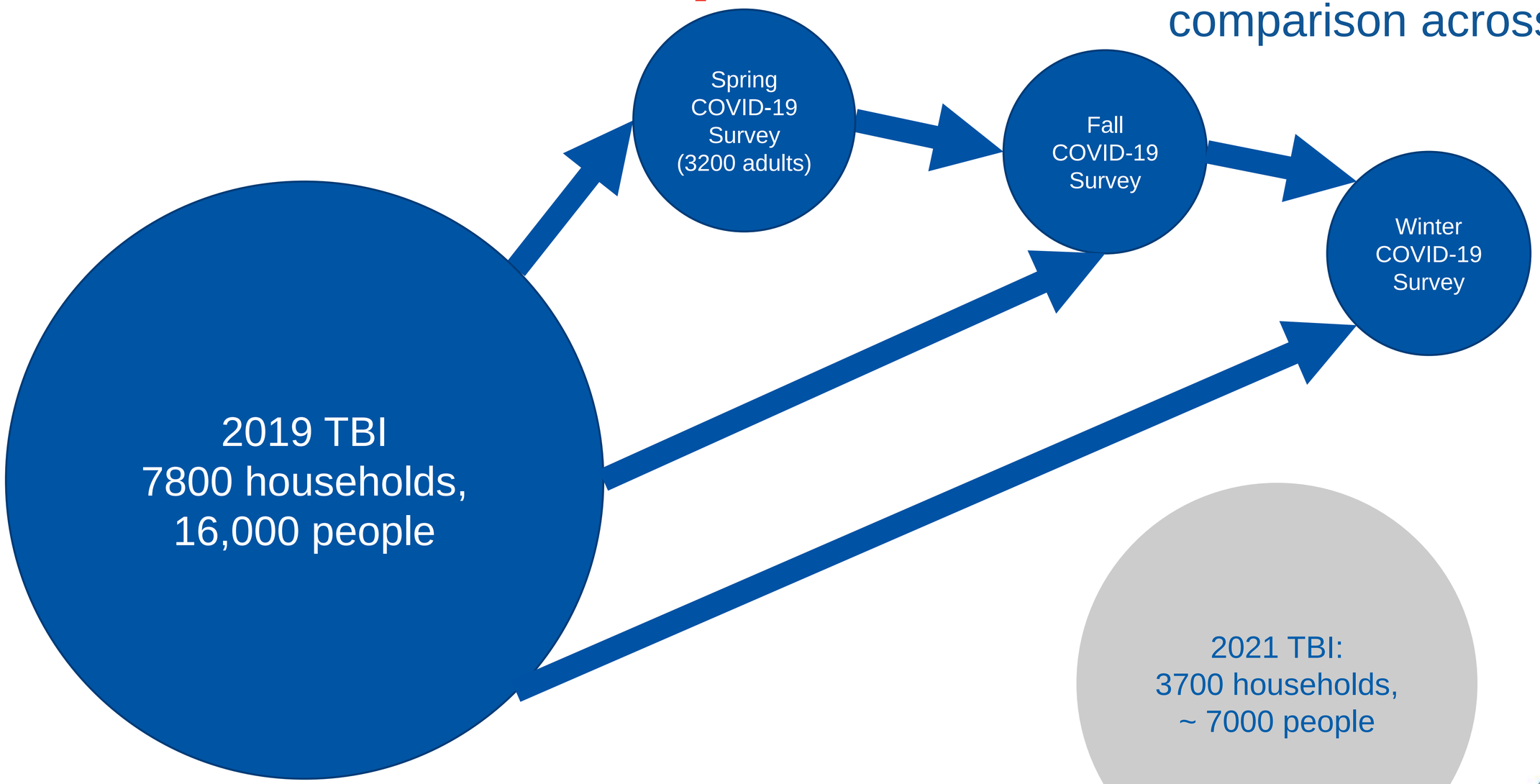
Two future waves planned

Survey will remain close to original to allow for comparison across waves



2021 TBI:
3700 households,
~ 7000 people

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List of topics covered in survey

- Exercise frequency and location
- Use of streets that have temporarily restricted vehicle traffic for social distancing
- Access to parks and trails: driving to reach parks and trails for exercise/recreation
- Bicycle frequency, trip purpose, bike share
- Grocery shopping type: in-store, delivery, pick-up
- Grocery shopping frequency
- Online shopping frequency
- All modes used last week
- All trip purposes for last week
- Travel to medical visits (and telehealth)
- Transit replacement modes
- Likelihood of purchasing a car, bike, scooter, bike share or transit pass in next six months
- Barriers to transportation
- Attitudes towards public health policies in air travel
- Attitudes towards public health policies on transit
- Demographics - change in residence, disability status, income, age, gender, race
- Size of household
- Employment status before and now
- Teleworking rates and preferences
- COVID-19 test, Missed work due to COVID-19
- Perception of COVID-19 risks
- Job type

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What questions arise for you?

- Which survey topics are of most urgent concern?
- Which findings require deeper exploration/explanation?
- What aspects of life and transportation under COVID-19 demand more study?

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Supplemental Slides

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How has your commute changed?

Across all incomes, workers who used to …

use public transit are primarily teleworking (58%), driving (12%) or unemployed (16%). Only 11% continue to take transit to work.

drive to work are teleworking (48%), or still driving to work (39%), with a smaller share unemployed or furloughed (13%).

telework continue to do so (91%), with some now driving to work (7%) and very few unemployed (2%).

bike or walk to work are most likely teleworking (62% and 31% respectively).

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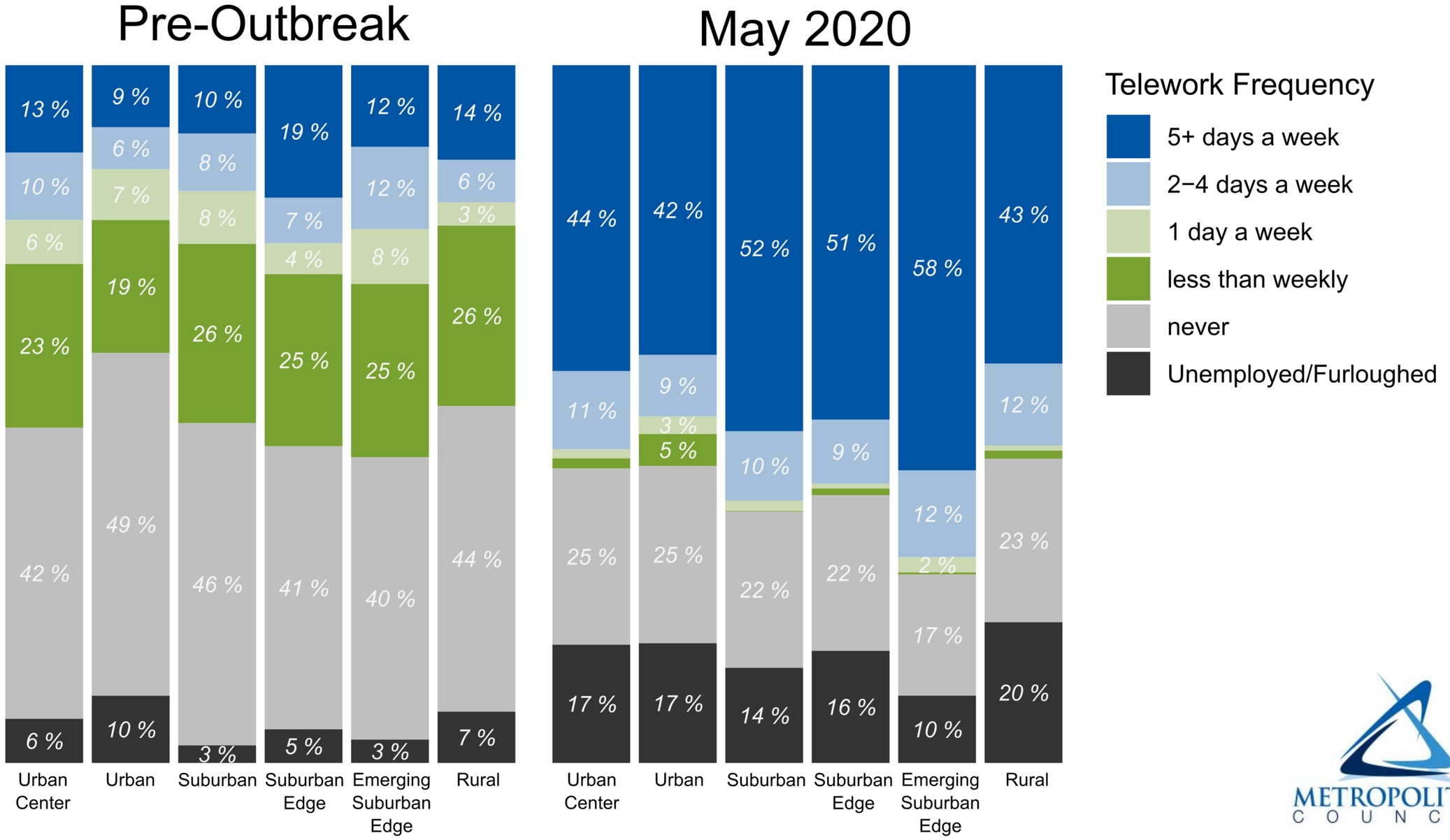
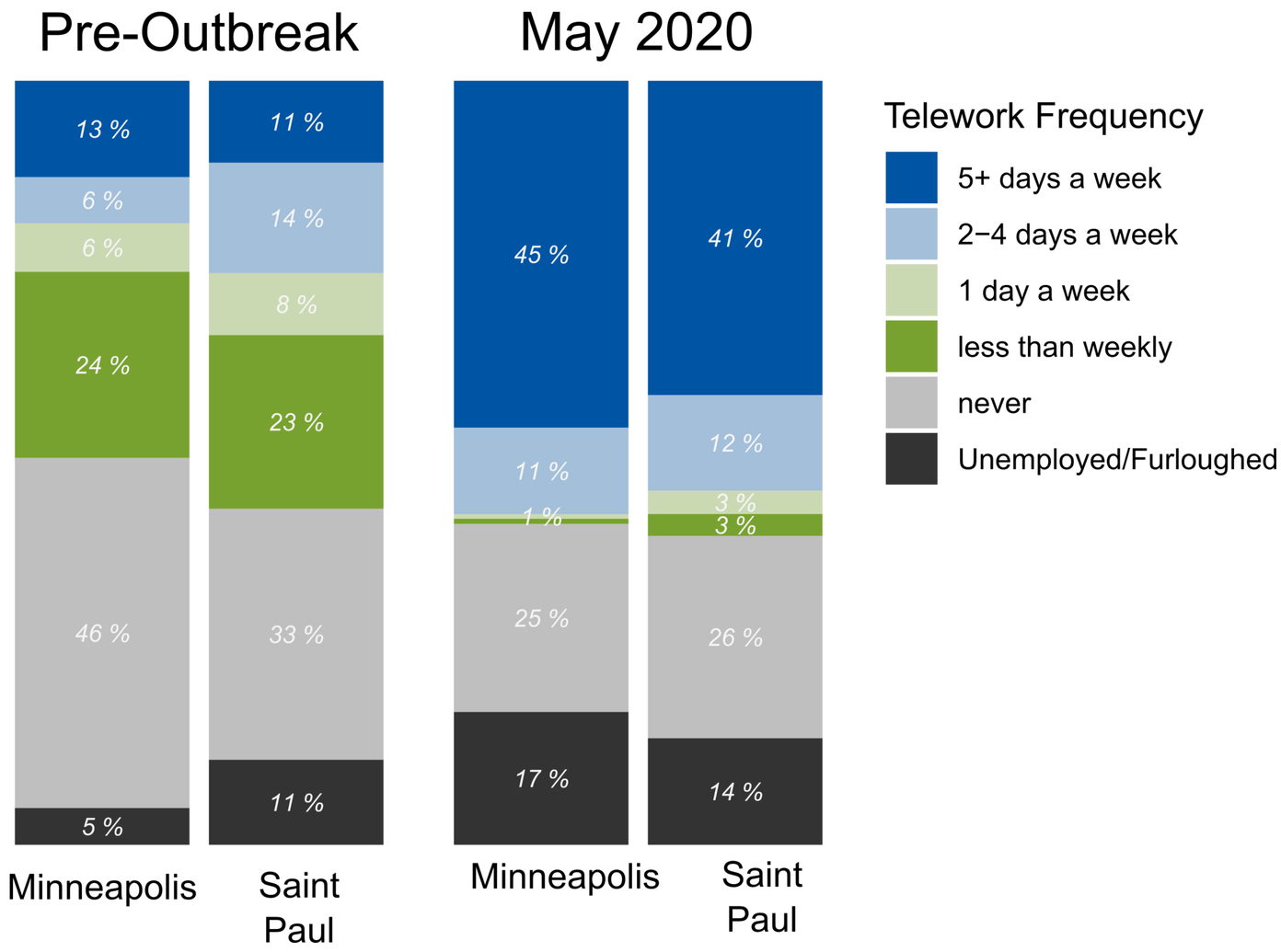
Teleworking rates by Thrive geography



Teleworking rates – Twin Cities



Employer attitudes remain important

An estimated **216,000** Metro workers (13% of the adult workforce) who had ***never*** teleworked before are now teleworking five days a week.

Of these new teleworkers, ~**183,000** (11% of the adult workforce) say they would like to continue teleworking at least one day per week in the future, with the vast majority saying they would like to telework 2+ days per week.

Of these, about half (**~83,000 workers,** 5% of the adult workforce) say their employer would be likely to support continued telework,

While another half (**~81,000 workers**) say their employer would be unfavorable to continued telework.

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Will the new telework culture reduce VMT?

Employees who are currently teleworking some amount said that they preferred to work from home 2 days more per week* than they did before the pandemic.

Counting *only* those who also said their employer was “Very likely” to support continued telework, this represents a reduction of ~650,000 round-trip commutes per week across the region.

Our next step is to translate these rough trip estimates into VMT and emissions numbers by leveraging 2019 TBI data on personal vehicles, mode type, and commute distance/route.

**unweighted average.*

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