

SEPTA Key 2.0

Stakeholder & Public Perspective

March 2023

A summary report on the stakeholder and public outreach conducted for SEPTA Key 2.0.



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01 Purpose & Goals

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is currently working to build its next-generation fare payment and collection system also referred to as **SEPTA Key 2.0**. The primary objective of this effort is to implement a multimodal fare collection system that represents the future needs of SEPTA customers; provides a modern and seamless rider payment experience; and addresses the system's aging fare infrastructure issues. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Improve the customer experience, making it easy to purchase and use transit fares
- Use modern technology to streamline agency fare collection
- Support efficient and reliable transit service
- Improve financial controls and processes
- Maximize system flexibility with an open architecture and off-the-shelf solutions
- Enhance data security and accessibility
- Leverage modern standards and industry best practices to maximize system security and availability

At the user- and customer-facing side of this project, SEPTA coordinated a

stakeholder outreach process engaging with internal and external stakeholders on key themes and inputs heard during the early phases of this effort in Fall 2021. This outreach effort focused on customer preferences and priorities and highlighted what features are most important to users in their SEPTA payment experience to create the vision for SEPTA Key 2.0.

The process included a visual survey through MetroQuest coupled with multiple stakeholder meetings and connected with a diverse community of riders including senior citizens, people with disabilities, residents and youth advocates.

The stakeholder outreach summary and findings, presented below, provide information to assist SEPTA to improve the customer experience by providing reliable, convenient, powerful payment options, and enhancing the rider experience. The goals of the project are:

- **Goal 1:** Understand the priorities and preferences of the general public and SEPTA stakeholders on SEPTA Key 2.0.
- **Goal 2:** Continue communication with stakeholders on the project status throughout the engagement process.
- **Goal 3:** Coordinate information with the technical team on the fare payment priorities of the public.

Summary of Previous Outreach Efforts

In the Fall of 2021, the project team conducted an extensive engagement effort to better understand the likes and dislikes of the existing SEPTA Key among SEPTA stakeholders. The outreach process was conducted with three distinct touchpoints:

- Workshops with internal stakeholders
- Workshops with external stakeholders
- Intercept survey at varying SEPTA stop locations

The internal stakeholders included front-line SEPTA employees that support customer service operators: cashiers, social media team members, and customer service representatives in various workshops/focus groups. External stakeholders included elected and non-elected officials, SEPTA Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and Youth Advisory Council (YAC), Transit Forward Philadelphia, universities, government agencies, and groups that support and advocate for people with disabilities.

The initial half of these workshops was devoted to asking guided questions on what works and does not work about the SEPTA payment system. The second half of the workshop was devoted to asking questions about what types of options would improve SEPTA Key in the future. Based on how participants responded, the facilitator presented new questions or probed further into existing topics presented by participants.

Detailed notes were collected during each workshop and were later used to create the stakeholder comment matrix (see page 6). The distinct insights gained from the internal stakeholder workshops highlighted key and repetitive “pain points” and challenges from customers and employees. Internal employees provide a unique perspective where participants understand the various

processes and organizational procedures and, at the same time, can point out what does not work effectively on a large-scale basis for customers.

An intercept survey was created to assess how the general public perceived the existing SEPTA Key card and preferences for future options. In collaboration with the SEPTA team, a seven-question survey was collected, organized, and synthesized to better understand the high-priority issues with the current key card. The in-person survey was administered at four different high-trafficked SEPTA stations across Philadelphia at varying times and days of the week.

One of the key goals for the survey location selection was to ensure that a diversity of postal zip codes was represented in the survey. Like the workshops, the questions aimed to obtain qualitative and quantitative feedback about SEPTA riders' current experience and priorities for SEPTA Key 2.0. The survey responses were later organized and analyzed to highlight key findings and unique perspectives.

The engagement of external stakeholders and SEPTA staff with public-facing roles echoed concerns heard in internal stakeholder engagement. The external stakeholders emphasized the importance of the customer experience, ease of use, varying payment methods, and multiple layers of equity considerations. The internal stakeholders emphasized areas of communication challenges, points of confusion, and difficulties within the existing set of fare policies. The stakeholder comment matrix on page 6 illustrates the significant themes we heard that cut across the organization as well as externally.



“The virtual wallet function of the Key card will be helpful as commuting has largely changed regular commuting patterns. However, there is no way to see the balance when you tap. Also, second the double tap option, I cannot travel with a friend and need two cards. The current card demagnifies easily and the laminate peels if you keep it in a wallet. The process for replacing a card is difficult and the cost of the card itself is expensive.”

Stakeholder Meeting, Fall 2021

02

Stakeholder Comment Matrix - Categorized major themes heard from stakeholder meetings

Major Themes	Examples	Total
Customer User Interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no way to see the balance when you tap. The Key website is confusing and not user-friendly. Key website should be easily accessible from SEPTA website. 	39
General Communication to Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Travel wallet" is a confusing way of just saying a balance on a card. "A lot of folks think they can only get a KEY card at stations." 	23
Expand Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no way to see the balance when you tap. The Key website is confusing and not user-friendly. Key website should be easily accessible from SEPTA website. 	18
Fare Procedures Flexibility & Convenience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key card cannot be shared and used for multiple people who are traveling together. There is no double tapping. Suggested that open payment systems such as Apple pay, Samsung pay, and Google pay be useful additional options 	58
Fare Policy Flexibility & Convenience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wants fare capping. Would like to see a cheaper ride per cost with more use 	17
Data Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Do we know what our data security measures are currently with the info held by septa key vs what would be developed in the future?" 	4
Quality Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an issue with the stock and quality of the card and the mechanism that make the card work. Cards do not work consistently. Or validators do not connect well with card 	18
Equity- related Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I would like to make sure we don't marginalize those who don't typically use phones or are tech challenged or can't afford the tech." Concern about equity and making sure there is benefit to low-income customers. Creating more options but not taking options away from customers who need to pay with cash. 	20
Internal Communication at SEPTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve coordination and communication amongst different SEPTA departments 	5
User Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges related to user behavior when using the card to pay 	3
Retailer Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The shipping price is not provided when purchasing Key Cards which makes it difficult to know the actual cost. Improve communications related to Key cards purchasing and handling for retailers 	4
Public Outreach Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "One of my concerns in speaking to very organized groups and trying to get feedback from people at the transportation stations is that you miss many of the most impacted people." 	5

Comment Matrix

The preliminary stakeholder engagement efforts conducted and analyzed in the Fall/Winter of 2021 directly informed the general public engagement efforts in the summer of 2022. From each of the stakeholder workshops conducted in 2021, the project team listed the different quotes, statements, and ideas heard from the workshops and their participants. The project team evaluated ideas in an iterative method to develop major categories of concepts that stakeholders mentioned. The list below summarizes the major range of themes relevant to the existing SEPTA Key – ultimately creating the **Stakeholder Comment Matrix**.

- **Customer User Interface**
- **General Communication with the public**
- **Expand Capacity**
- **Fare Policy & Convenience**
- **Fare Procedures Flexibility & Convenience**

- **Data Security**
- **Quality Control Issues**
- **Equity Related Issues**
- **Internal Communication at SEPTA**
- **User Behavior**
- **Retailer Challenges**
- **Public Outreach Process**

Some of the ideas discussed or mentioned in the meetings touched on multiple types of themes. For example, the quote below mentions themes of customer user interface challenges as well as fare procedures flexibility issues.

The process of evaluating each comment was applied across all stakeholder workshop notes and the results were summarized to provide a snapshot of what types of themes were most and least mentioned (see page 6). The stakeholder comments were also used to inform the MetroQuest Survey questions that reached the general public audience.



"Suggested premium pay for special Key card features such as open pay system or virtual cards on gadgets for the more tech-savvy passengers. Cost premium for virtual card features should be charged to those who wants it. Passengers who just want to ride without these extra features shouldn't be charged extra for them."

Stakeholder Meeting, Fall 2021



Simplified Chinese MetroQuest Survey - Sample Screen

Spanish MetroQuest Survey - Sample Screen

English MetroQuest Survey - Sample Screen

03

MetroQuest

Public Engagement Survey

The goal of the survey was both to educate the public on potential and planned fare payment opportunities in the near future, as well as collect robust feedback on preferred features that would ultimately help streamline the fare payment process and improve fare policies in the future. The MetroQuest survey was a critical outreach tool and an opportunity to validate the major themes and ideas that were heard in preliminary stakeholder outreach work with the general public.

MetroQuest was a helpful tool due to the visual nature of the survey – images helped the public audience understand the fare features or ideas we wanted to convey without technical language. The extensive comment opportunities (available for every question/screen) within the survey provided us with a greater depth and breadth of the public's preferences. The preliminary outreach and collaboration with the SEPTA project team, helped to develop the final MetroQuest questions. Respondents navigated through five screens:

- **Welcome screen** with a brief project description and introduction to the survey
- **Preferences screen** with five multiple choice questions related to the existing fare payment processes and preferred future payment opportunities, retail locations, and transit integration priorities (example picture included)
- **Priorities screen** with nine potential/planned features was presented, and the user needed to select and rank the top five features they would like for SEPTA Key 2.0
- **Fare Policy screen** with three Likert questions about fare policy
- **Wrap up screen** where participants have the option to indicate their age, race, gender, car ownership status, total household income,

county, and zip code (these are standardized demographic questions that SEPTA request for all of their surveys)

The survey was translated into Spanish and Simplified Chinese in order to reach a diverse linguistic audience.

04

One Page Flyer



2022 SEPTA Key 2.0 Survey

SEPTA needs your help in developing the next generation fare collection program, known as SEPTA Key 2.0, and wants to hear about your preferences and priorities.

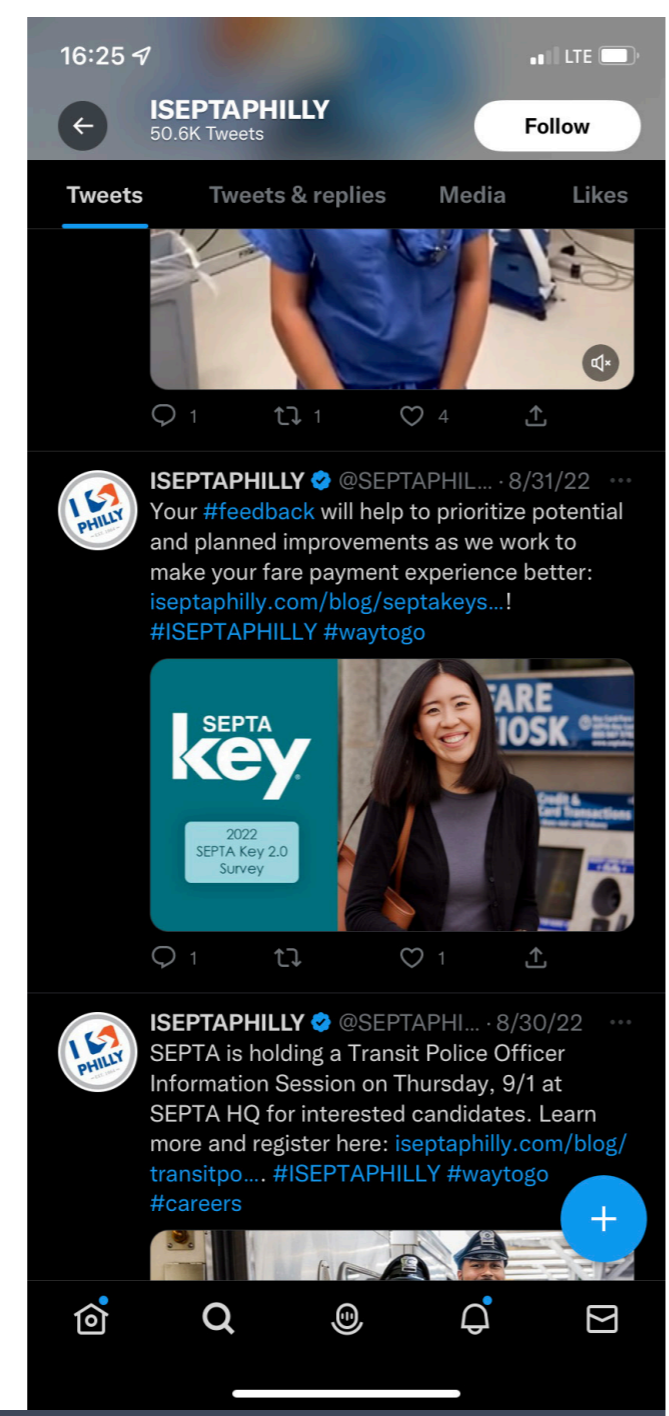
Your feedback will help SEPTA in prioritizing potential and planned improvements as we work to make your fare payment experience seamless.

Survey Link:
<https://metroquestsurvey.com/eab78>

Alternative ways to take the survey:

- Dial-In Option:** Calling-in at (215) 580-7145 and selecting OPTION #5 (Commendations and Complaints) to take the survey over phone
- Screen Reader-Friendly PDF Option:** Downloading the survey in a screen reader-friendly PDF format that is fillable and emailing it back to us at SEPTAKey2@gmail.com
- Paper Survey Option:** Users can also print the available PDF as a paper survey and complete and mail it to the below address:
SEPTA Key 2.0 Survey
1234 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107-3790

ISEPTA Philly Twitter Post - 08/31/2022



16:25 LTE

ISEPTAPHILLY
50.6K Tweets **Follow**

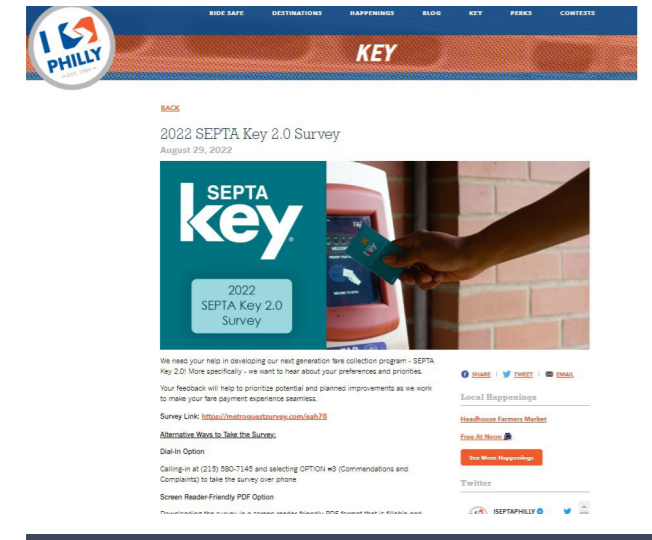
Tweets Tweets & replies Media Likes

1 1 4

ISEPTAPHILLY @SEPTAPHIL... · 8/31/22 ...
Your #feedback will help to prioritize potential and planned improvements as we work to make your fare payment experience better: iseptaphilly.com/blog/septakeys...! #ISEPTAPHILLY #waytogo

ISEPTAPHILLY @SEPTAPHIL... · 8/30/22 ...
SEPTA is holding a Transit Police Officer Information Session on Thursday, 9/1 at SEPTA HQ for interested candidates. Learn more and register here: iseptaphilly.com/blog/transitpo... #ISEPTAPHILLY #waytogo #careers

ISEPTA Philly Blog Post - 09/29/2022



KEY

2022 SEPTA Key 2.0 Survey
August 29, 2022

We need your help in developing our next generation fare collection program - SEPTA Key 2.0. More specifically, we want to hear about your preferences and priorities. Your feedback will help to prioritize potential and planned improvements as we work to make your fare payment experience seamless.

Survey Link: <https://metroquestsurvey.com/eab78>

Alternative Ways to Take the Survey:

- Dial-In Option:** Calling-in at (215) 580-7145 and selecting OPTION #5 (Commendations and Complaints) to take the survey over phone
- Screen Reader-Friendly PDF Option:** Downloading the survey in a screen reader-friendly PDF format that is fillable and emailing it back to us at SEPTAKey2@gmail.com

Promotion

Stakeholders were provided the social media toolkit to support and share project material with their networks. Promotional materials were produced in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese. The social media toolkit contained a one-page flyer, three social media images, social media posts, and pre-draft email text was produced in each of the available languages for the survey. The project team worked with University contacts, SEPTA's social media team, the government affairs team, community organizations/nonprofits, and SEPTA's expansive newsletter groups to help disseminate the survey to SEPTA riders and nonriders. Additionally, one-on-one coordination with key members of the Advocacy Forum to community organizations like Northeast Philadelphia Chinese Association (NEPCA) to reach limited English proficiency audiences were vital to engage hard-to-reach audiences.

Continued Communication with Stakeholders

Maintaining communication with SEPTA stakeholders before, during, and after the launch of the survey was central to ensuring the survey would reach a wide audience and build trust.

The project team held meetings with Transit Forward Philadelphia (TFR), a member of SEPTA's Advocacy Forum, and SEPTA's Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and Youth Advisory Council (YAC) to provide a "sneak peek" of the MetroQuest demo questions prior to its official release. Through those meetings, the stakeholders were able to add additional suggestions and edits to the survey before the official release. SEPTA Advisory Committee for Accessible Transportation (SAC) stakeholders were engaged after the launch of the survey and were provided a PDF screen reader-friendly version of the survey that could either be emailed/mailed or shared using the phone option as a resource to submit the survey. Meetings with SAC and Philadelphia Shared-Ride Program Advisory Council (PSRPAC) members allowed additional opportunities to document how senior citizens and people with disabilities have challenges with using the existing SEPTA Key card - these challenges were documented.

Throughout the engagement period, the project team held seven meetings with key stakeholders. The stakeholder meetings were meant to increase transparency and opportunities for better communication of needs, desires, and issues with the existing and future SEPTA Key. The first half of these meetings, the facilitator presented an update on the project and what has been completed, and the second half was reserved for question & answer sessions. Shortly after the closure of the MetroQuest survey, the project team held meetings with the Advocacy Forum and CAC/YAC groups to share preliminary findings and to speak more about the future Request for Proposals (RFP) alongside Clever Consulting Group.

Completed Event

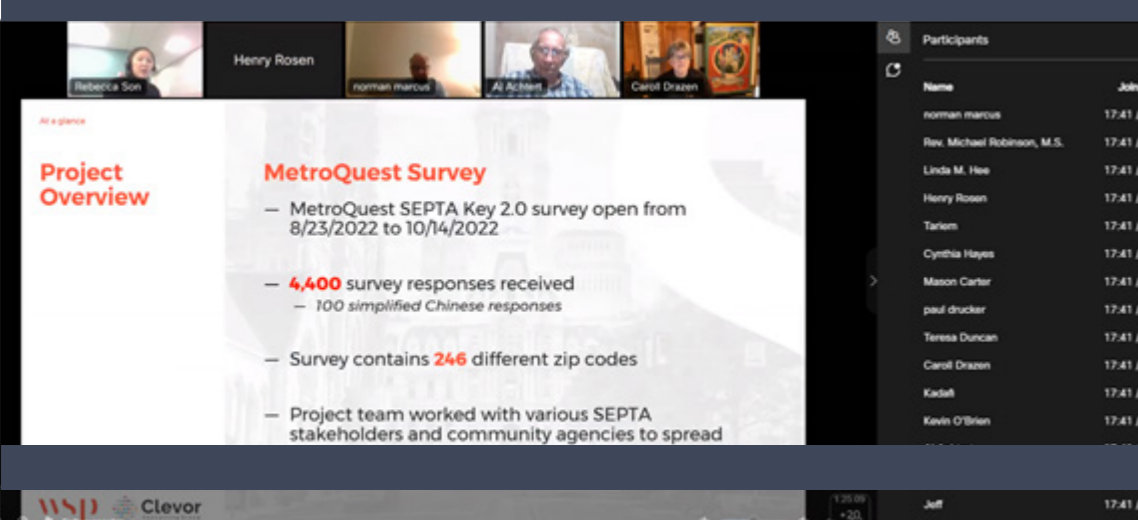
- SEPTA CAC Transit Subcommittee - 7/19/2022
- SEPTA Advocacy Forum - 7/20/2022
- SEPTA SAC Subcommittee - 9/8/2022
- SEPTA Advocacy Forum - 10/19/2022
- SEPTA CAC Transit Subcommittee - 10/25/2022
- City of Philadelphia OTIS + PCPC - 1/10/2023

Share Back

Circling back to stakeholders after the public outreach process was critical

Engaging stakeholders regularly and consistently over a longer period helped promote project awareness and create long-lasting relationships between the project team and transit stakeholders of the Philadelphia region. The project team met with stakeholders like the Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability (OTIS), the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC), and the Bicycle Transit System (BTS) to update them on the results of the survey. The project team presented a high-level summary of the survey results. In collaboration with the SEPTA project team members, results of the survey in terms of top prioritized features and least prioritized features were shared with the ISEPTA Philly newsletter subscribers. Share back information included the total number of survey respondents, total number of different zip codes reached, and top priorities from the survey. The share back period is another example of continuous communication that ultimately builds trust and transparency – all critical for the promotion of the project and its goals.

CAC/YAC Follow Up Meeting - 10/25/2022



Survey Results

05

The public outreach survey results often overlapped the thoughts and opinions we heard from both the intercept survey as well as the stakeholder meetings conducted in the Fall of 2021. The MetroQuest survey was open from August 23, 2022 to October 14, 2022. The figure below highlights the high level number of responses received and geographies reached during the outreach period.

The project team analyzed the survey responses by developing summary tables for each question and using crosstabulations to see how people from different demographics responded. The project team also reviewed and summarized over 1,000 comments received as part of the survey. The comments provided an expansion of thoughts and rationales for certain opinion. The box on the right highlights the kinds of comments that provided more depth and detail to the improvements people have seen in other transit systems and cities.

When the project team circled back with SEPTA stakeholders on the results of the MetroQuest survey, the project team highlighted the results from the priorities screen (screen 3) because this provided a sense of the most important improvements SEPTA will need to focus on for the next generation of fare payment.

“
I like the idea of bank card, and smartphone, but obviously want cash to remain accessible. Mobile tickets seem like less of a priority to me but I did have a positive experience with them on the Boston MBTA regional rail system last month. NJ Transit app and their system of having fare kiosks at every station is super simple and functional. Mobile payment would be great too but NJ Transit's paper and mobile ticketing work great for phone users and people who pay with cash.
MetroQuest Comment, Summer 2022

4,408 Total responses received



The Survey was live for 1.5 months



250 different zip codes were collected from the survey

Most Prioritized Features

Cheaper Initial Cost

Forty-two percent (42%) of all respondents chose Cheaper Initial Cost among their preferences. It was also the #2 top priority for SEPTA's core income group of riders.

Fare Capping

More than half (**54%**) of all respondents ranked Fare Capping in their top features. As part of another question, (**85%**) of respondents agree they support fare capping.

Multi-Rider Feature

Seventy-five percent (75%) of all respondents selected Multi-Rider Feature among their top priorities.

See Card Balance Upon Use

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of all survey takers ranked the ability to See Card Balance Upon Use in their top priorities.

Use Key for Other Systems

Sixty-one percent (61%) of all respondents chose Using Key for Other Systems in their priorities. Amtrak and Uber/Lyft were in the top three integration options among all respondents, minority, and SEPTA's core income rider groups.

Use Smartphone to Ride

Seventy-three percent (73%) of all respondents chose the ability to Use Smartphones to Ride in their top preferences.

06 Key Takeaways

The multilayer outreach process inform many of the major takeaways

Takeaway #1

The ability to use a smartphone to pay for transit rides is a high priority. Thirty-two percent (32%) of respondents stated that using a smartphone to ride would be the #1 priority in the next generation of SEPTA Key in screen 3 (priorities screen). Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents ranked this feature to be one of their top three preferences. There is strong support that using a smartphone to pay for SEPTA rides is not only convenient but also allows more people to easily access the SEPTA system from a variety of locations. In several points within the comments, respondents stated that an option/feature that would integrate with their Apply Pay and Google Pay application features would be helpful – several comments cited respondents' experience in different cities where this feature made their transit experience easy and seamless.

Takeaway #2

Participants want more flexibility and options in the fare payment process. Of the 4,304 people who responded to the survey, 30% of respondents selected "All Options" in screen 2 of the MetroQuest survey – which includes smartphone, SEPTA Key, bank card, mobile ticketing, and cash at the counter as methods to pay for a trip. Within the comments, many expressed that having multiple ways to pay for SEPTA trips would be helpful in instances where they are traveling differently than they usually do (i.e. a person who forgot their phone, would like to pay with a bank card). For many respondents, the theme of flexibility was relevant across many questions – such as the multi-rider feature, later expiration date, and adding fare at more places. An overall theme that cut across all questions/screen-specific comments, is that a system that is flexible and easily usable is a high priority.

Takeaway #3

Participants want a system that is friendly to potential and current SEPTA users. Through the comment section of the MetroQuest survey, the public voiced that a system that is easy for external, non-regular SEPTA riders is essential for SEPTA Key and its future. The second most prioritized feature is Multi-rider Feature where many participants in the comments mentioned that this and other combined features would make traveling with friends and family easier and more convenient on SEPTA's system. This theme resonates across several comments and questions – a system that is user-friendly to non-regular riders could also be helpful for existing SEPTA riders.

Takeaway #4

The priorities of features remained similar across different minority groups, incomes, and non-Key card users. Based on the demographics of respondents of the survey, the project team mitigated skewness in the data by taking a closer look at demographics that are more representative of SEPTA's core users. This involved comparing how minority (non-White or Hispanic), income groups between \$15K - \$35K, non-English speakers, and non-SEPTA Key card users responded to the prioritization (screen 3) survey in comparison to all participants. The project team found that there were very few significant differences between the ranking of prioritized features across these subgroups.

Takeaway #5

The priorities and concerns expressed in the survey are reiterated in the comments from the SEPTA transit stakeholders. The project team has found that the various avenues of engagement which includes the survey, comments, intercept survey, and stakeholder meetings reiterate and voice similar needs and wants for the next generation of SEPTA Key 2.0. Through various data collection methods, many of the concerns and priorities stated by SEPTA staff and transit stakeholders are similar to the needs of the general public.