



## David Binder Research

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**To:** Mary Brown  
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition

**From:** Nick Fynn  
David Binder Research

**Date:** 2/12/03

**Re:** Results of intercept survey among low-income San Francisco women

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### Overview

The following is an analysis of an intercept survey of 416 San Francisco women conducted by David Binder Research, in partnership with the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, to uncover attitudes and beliefs about bicycle transportation among low-income women in San Francisco.

Random female respondents were selected and interviewed by neutral volunteers in public places. Respondents were asked about their household income at the end of the interview and were then categorized by income level. Low-income respondents had to be either a single adult household making less than \$25,000 annually, or a two-adult household making less than \$40,000 annually. Of the 416 women interviewed, 140 met the criteria of being low-income. 191 were not considered low-income. 85 refused to divulge their income.

## General Transportation

Overall, low-income women reported being most likely to walk, use the bus or MUNI, or BART, and said they were less likely to use a car. 69% of low-income women said they walked, as did 70% of all respondents. 63% of low-income women said they used the bus or MUNI, compared to only 54% of all women surveyed. 26% of low-income women said they used BART, compared with 27% of all respondents. 23% of low-income women said they used bicycles, compared with 17% of all respondents. 26% of those who say they own a bicycle use it for general transportation. Only 12% of low-income women said they use a car, compared to 25% of all respondents.

**Two main types of transportation**  
Sorted by frequency of use among low-income women

Main Type of Transportation	Overall			Low-Income			Difference
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Total	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Total	
Walking	33	37	70	28	41	<b>69</b>	-2
Bus / MUNI	29	25	54	36	27	<b>63</b>	+9
BART	12	15	27	9	17	<b>26</b>	-1
Bicycling	8	9	17	14	9	<b>23</b>	+6
Car	16	9	25	12	<1	<b>12</b>	-13
Carpool With Others	1	2	3	0	3	<b>3</b>	0
Motorcycle / Scooter	1	1	2	2	<1	<b>2</b>	0
Taxi	0	2	2	0	2	<b>2</b>	0

More low-income women said they do not own either a car or a bicycle than said they do. 41% said they do not own a car or bicycle, compared to 34% of all respondents. 34% of low-income women said they own a bicycle, while only 25% of all women surveyed said they own a bicycle.

**Car and bicycle ownership**  
Sorted by response from low-income women

Ownership	All	Low Income Only	Difference
Do not own either a bike or car	34	41	+7
Own a bicycle	25	34	+9
Own a car	21	15	-6
Own both a bike and a car	20	11	-9

**Prior experience with bicycles**

Overall, low-income women appear to be slightly more positive about their experience with bicycles than women in general, although both groups agree that the negative experiences of fear and danger associated with sharing the road with traffic are the most common experiences. While 30% of all respondents said their prior experience using a bicycle was best described as dangerous and scary, only 27% of low-income women agreed, a 3% drop. Furthermore, 27% of low-income women describe their experience as positive, and that they use bicycles a lot, compared to only 22% of all respondents. Both groups had similar numbers of respondents saying they used to ride bicycles but do not anymore. A slightly higher number of low-income women said they cannot ride a bicycle (11%) compared to only 7% of all respondents. 8% of all respondents said they only ride recreationally while only 4% of low-income women agreed.

**“How would you describe your prior experience with using a bicycle? (OPEN ENDED) “**

	All	Low Income Only	Difference
Dangerous / Scary / Traffic	30	27	-3
Positive / Use A Lot	22	27	+5
Used to Ride / Not Anymore	17	16	-1
No Answer	12	14	+2
No Experience / Don't Ride	7	11	+4
Ride Recreationally	8	4	-4
Other	4	3	-1

### **Commute Distances**

Little difference is noted between low-income women and women in general when asked how far they travel to commute to work.

**“In a typical day, about how many miles would you say you travel in order to get to your job, to school and to run errands?”**

	All	Low Income Only
Up to 3 Miles	23	19
4 to 6 Miles	25	21
7 to 10 Miles	21	25
11 to 20 Miles	11	16
More than 20 Miles	20	20

### **Transporting Children**

Similarly, little difference appears to exist between low-income women and women in general on the issue of transporting children to school or day-care during the week.

**“Do you transport children to school or day-care during the week?”**

	All	Low Income Only
Yes	13	18
No	87	82

### **General attitudes and opinions about bicycles**

Overall, low-income women and women in general share similar attitudes and opinions about bicycles. However, more low-income women seem to feel that bicycles are easier to ride (86% accurate to 79% accurate among all women), but that bicycles are also harder to get fixed (70% accurate among low-income women vs. 62% accurate among all women.)

Below are some different descriptions people have made about using bicycles in San Francisco for day-to-day transportation. For each one, please circle when you think the phrase is extremely accurate, somewhat accurate, somewhat inaccurate, or extremely inaccurate.

		Agree			Disagree		
		all	low	Diff.	all	low	Diff.
6.	Bicycles are slow	80	83	3	12	11	-1
7.	Bicycles are affordable	68	64	-4	21	26	5
8.	Bicycles are easy to ride	28	26	-2	60	66	6
9.	Bicycles are for kids, not adults	34	36	2	57	57	0
10.	Bicycles get stolen a lot	35	39	4	50	49	-1
11.	Bicycles are hard to get fixed	41	39	-2	35	38	3
12.	Bicycles are for men, not women	19	16	-3	65	70	5
13.	Bicycles are more for recreation than transportation	47	49	2	38	39	1
14.	Bicycles are hard to ride because of hills	29	31	2	60	60	0

### **Roadblocks to bicycle usage**

Generally, low-income women and women in general encountered the same roadblocks to bicycle usage. Similar to earlier findings in this survey, large numbers of both groups reported they felt unsafe on the road with cars and other traffic. 44% of all women surveyed indicated this was a significant impediment to them using a bicycle, while slightly less, 36% of low-income women, agreed.

Many women also said they would be more likely to ride if they had access to a free or low cost bicycle. In the context of this answer, what many of them actually said was they did not own a bicycle and could not afford to purchase one. Many also indicated they commuted too far to work to consider using a bicycle practical. Many also reported that the hills in San Francisco made it too difficult to get around using a bicycle.

**Most common reasons not to use a bicycle  
Ranked in order among low-income respondents**

Statements:	Total Most Import. Reasons	
	All	Low Income
15. I don't feel safe sharing the road with cars	44	36
31. I would consider riding if I had access to a free or low-cost bicycle	11	13
19. I commute too far to work to use a bike	13	12
16. I don't like riding in the dark or in areas without much street activity	8	9
24. I'm just not the athletic type / Hills too hard	10	7
28. It is impossible to transport children or groceries on a bike	6	7
23. It takes too long to get around on a bike	4	6
17. It makes me too sweaty	5	5
18. The weather is too unpredictable to ride in	4	5
20. Bikes get stolen	3	2
22. I have the right clothes to ride a bike everywhere	3	2
27. I've had an accident in the past and now I'm afraid to ride	2	2
29. Cars are just much easier	3	2
30. I would consider riding a bicycle if there were bike lanes in my neighborhood	7	2
32. I've just never thought about using a bike for transportation	2	2
26. I can't ride a bike	1	0