

# Guelph Transportation Choices

Understanding Guelph transportation behaviour to better inform policy  
decisions

# Why do the study?

- Guelph's Transportation MasterPlan (TMP) employed a number of approaches - including "big data" sources like *Streetlight* - to build a general understanding of transportation in the city. The resulting aspirational plan was particularly sympathetic to environmental concerns and active transportation. Unfortunately this report was missing essential research to understand how and why the public makes the transportation choices that they do. The "mode share" shifting goal from vehicles to greener choices – while laudable - was not supported by evidence of any kind.
- I felt that it would be useful to contribute better understanding about why people make transportation decisions that they do. My research examined *home to downtown* as well as *home to elsewhere* in the city behaviour.

# The Study

- This study was emailed in August 2021 to 2797 recent Bookshelf customers from all over the city. 1260 recipients opened the study email, and 888 recipients completed the survey. A great response.
- In addition to answers about transportation decisions, participants were asked to provide *age group, gender, and postal code*.
- The survey asked about trip decisions for: *Food shopping, Retail/Services, Restaurants/Bars/Cafes, Entertainment, Employment, Professionals, and the Library*.
- Questions were also asked about *trip frequency and positive and negative influences* for transportation choices: *children, mobility issues, heavy bags, parking, the environment, and weather*.

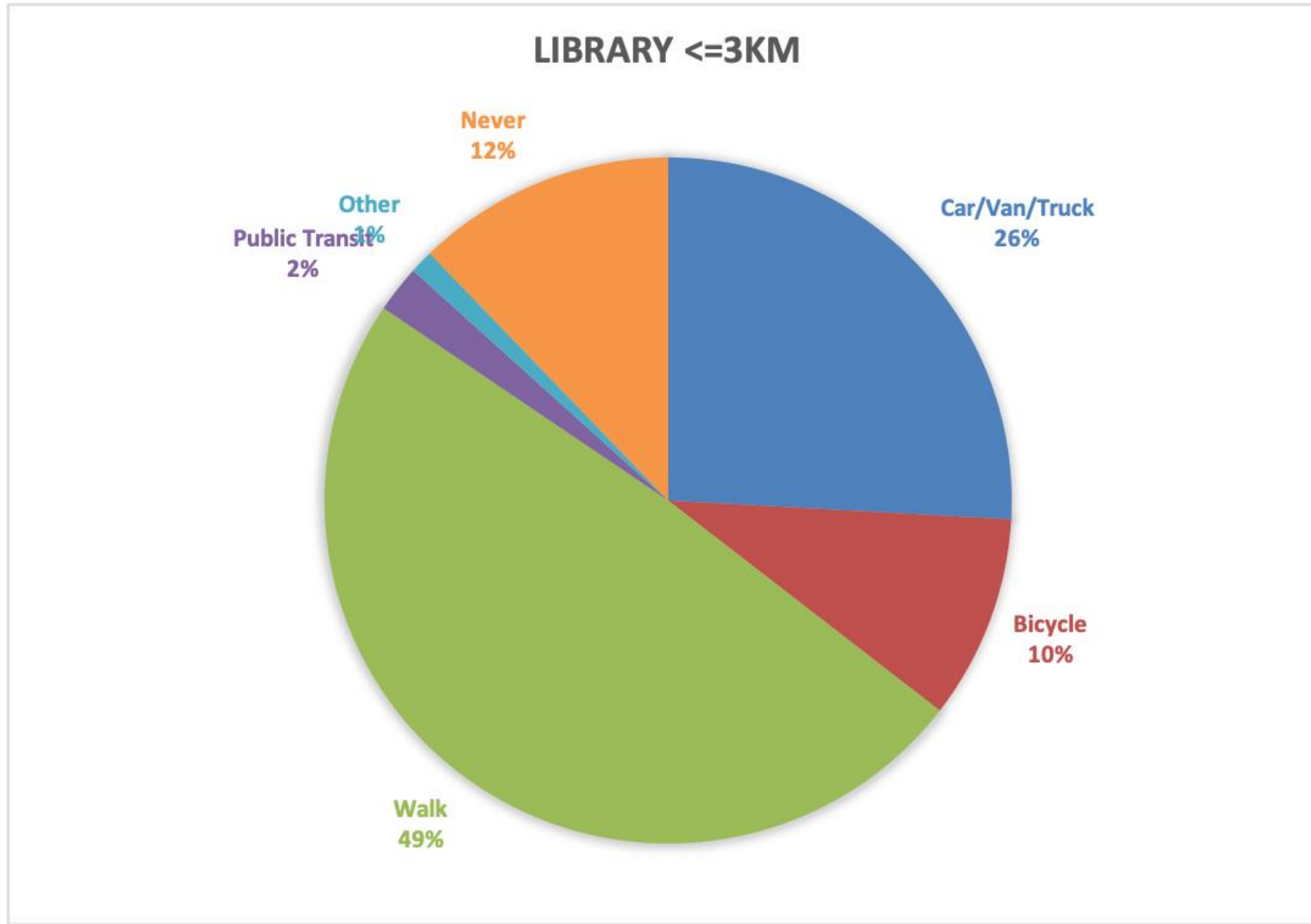
# Who participated?

- Active downtown retail customers.
- Approximately 75% were women, 25% were men.
- 61% lived less than 3km from downtown, 39% lived more than 3km from downtown.
- 43% were under 45 years old, 38% were 45-64, and 19% were 65 or older.

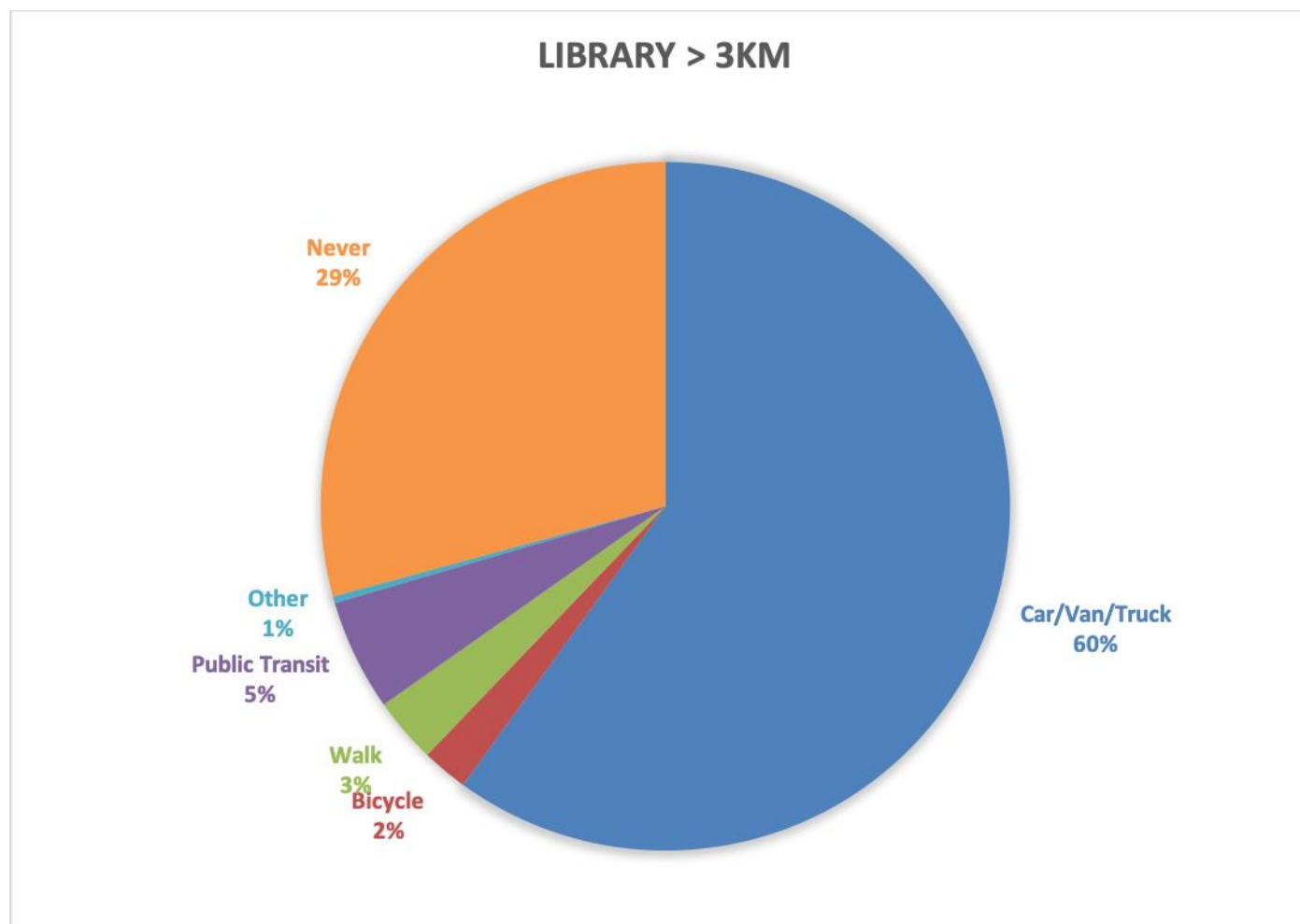
# What are the main factors that influence downtown transportation choices?

- Distance from downtown
- Trip destination
- Constraints of transportation choice for a particular activity
- It's complicated

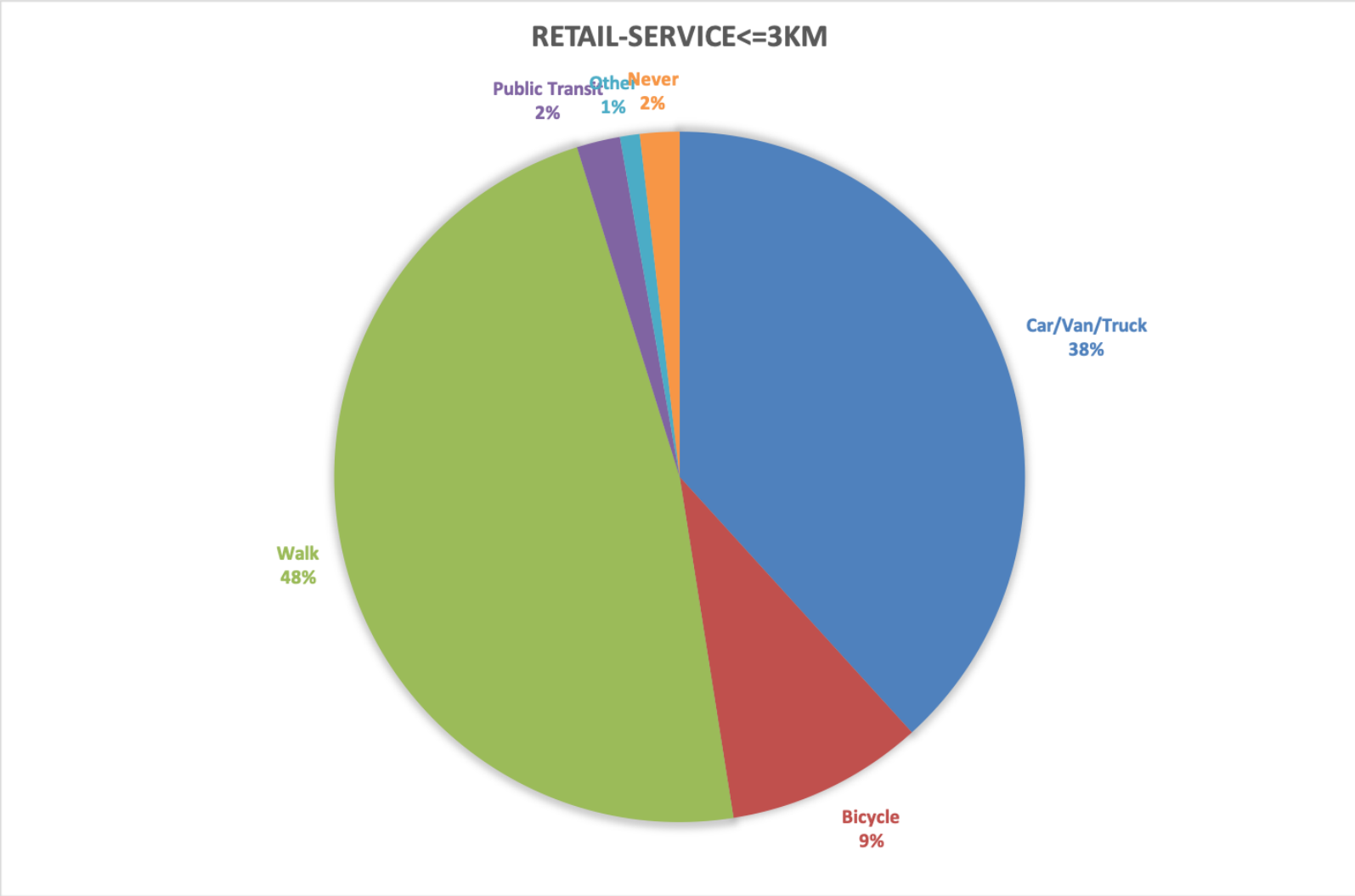
# Visits to the library (from near downtown)



# Visits to the library (from outside downtown)

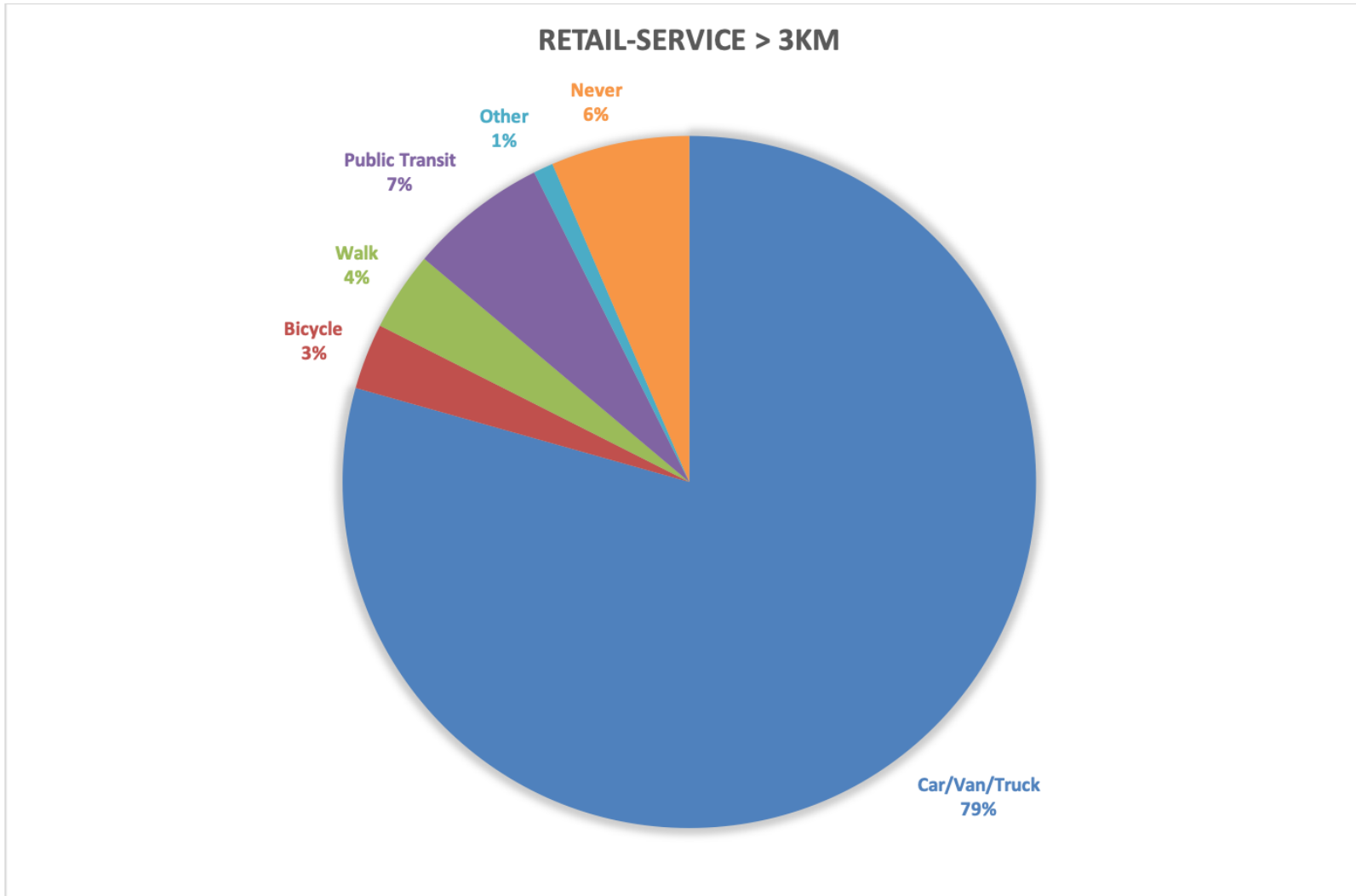


# Retail & Services (from near downtown)

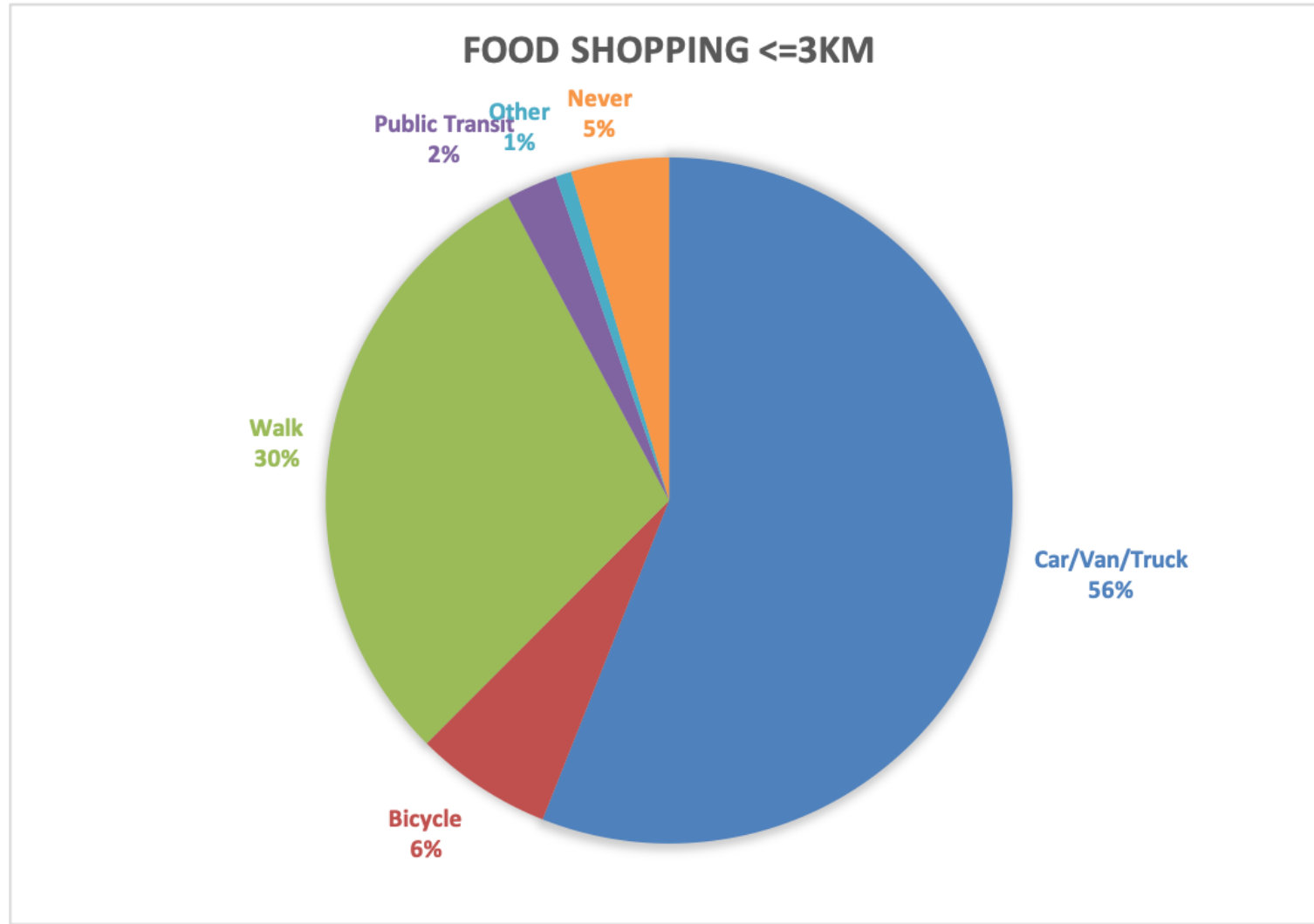




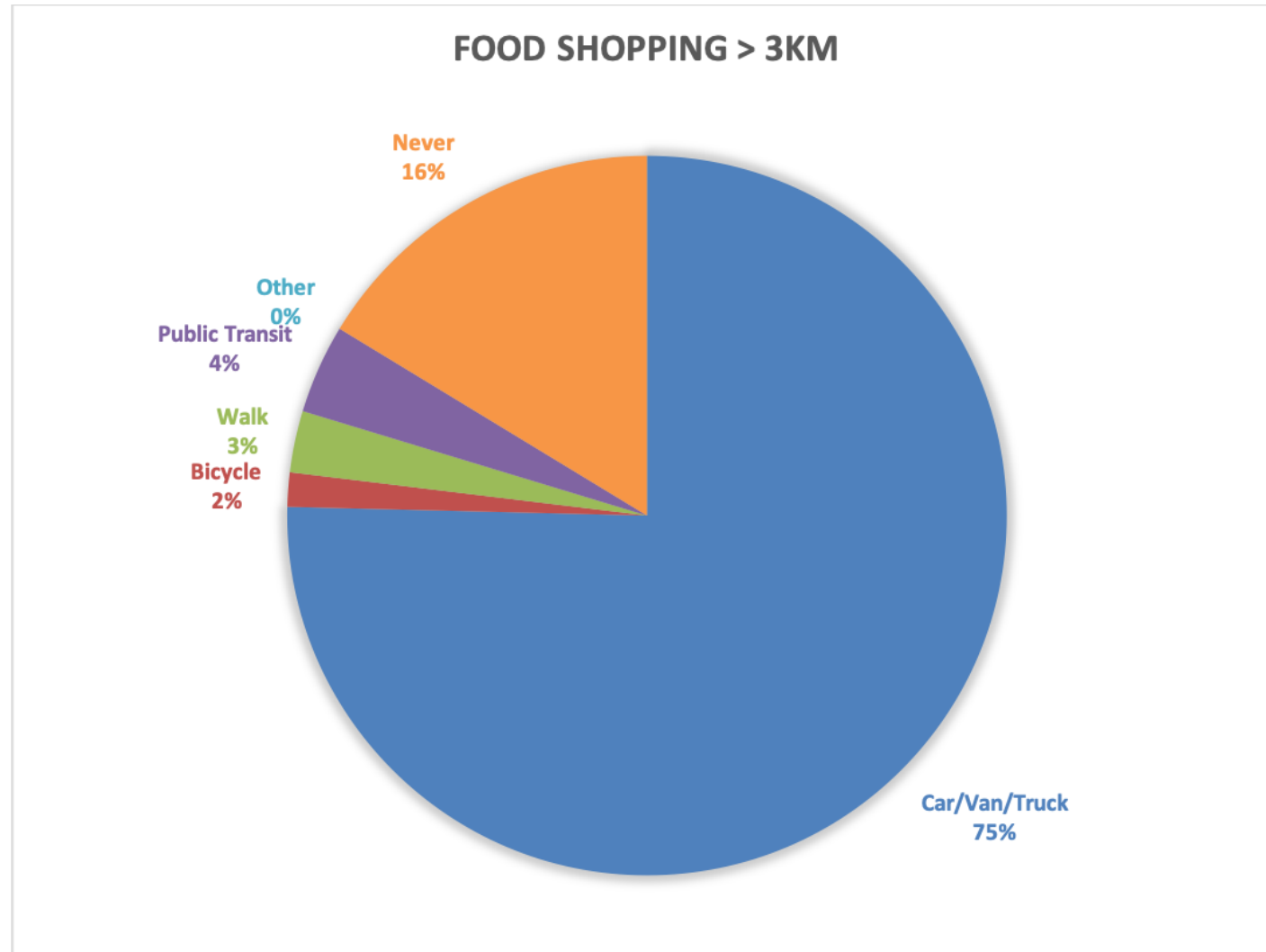
# Retail & Services (from outside downtown)



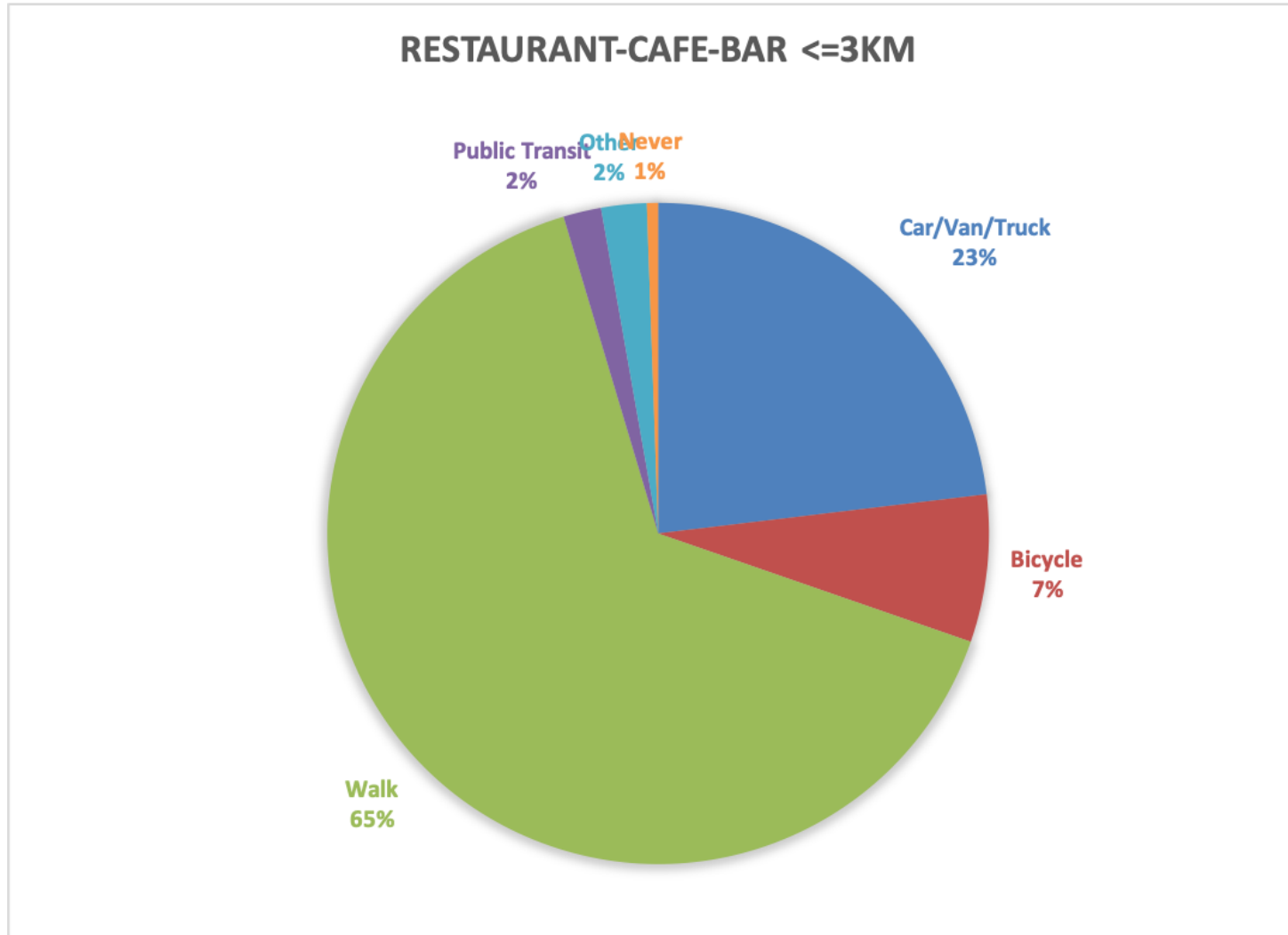
# Food Shopping (from near downtown)



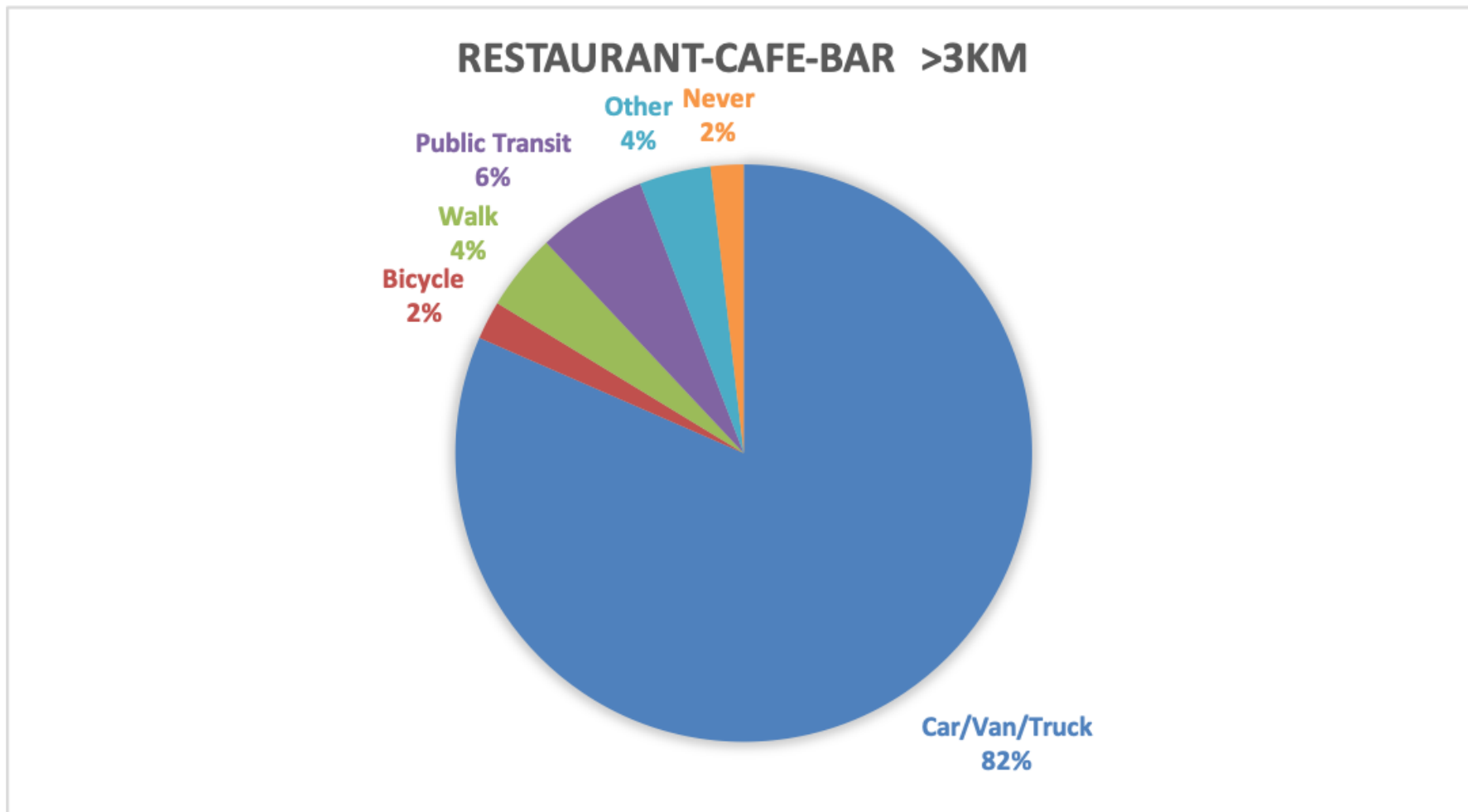
# Food Shopping (from outside downtown)



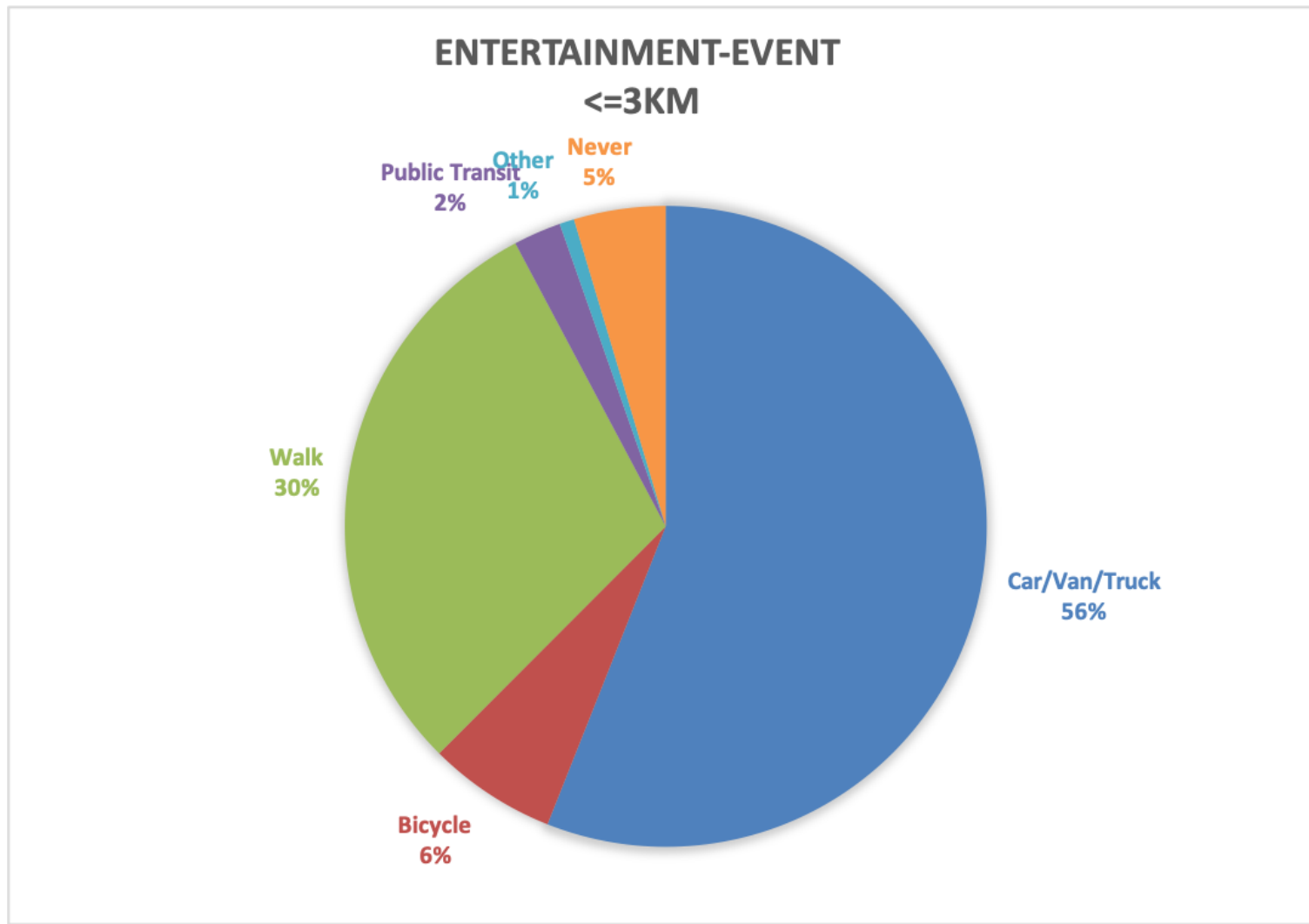
# Restaurant/Café/Bar (from near downtown)



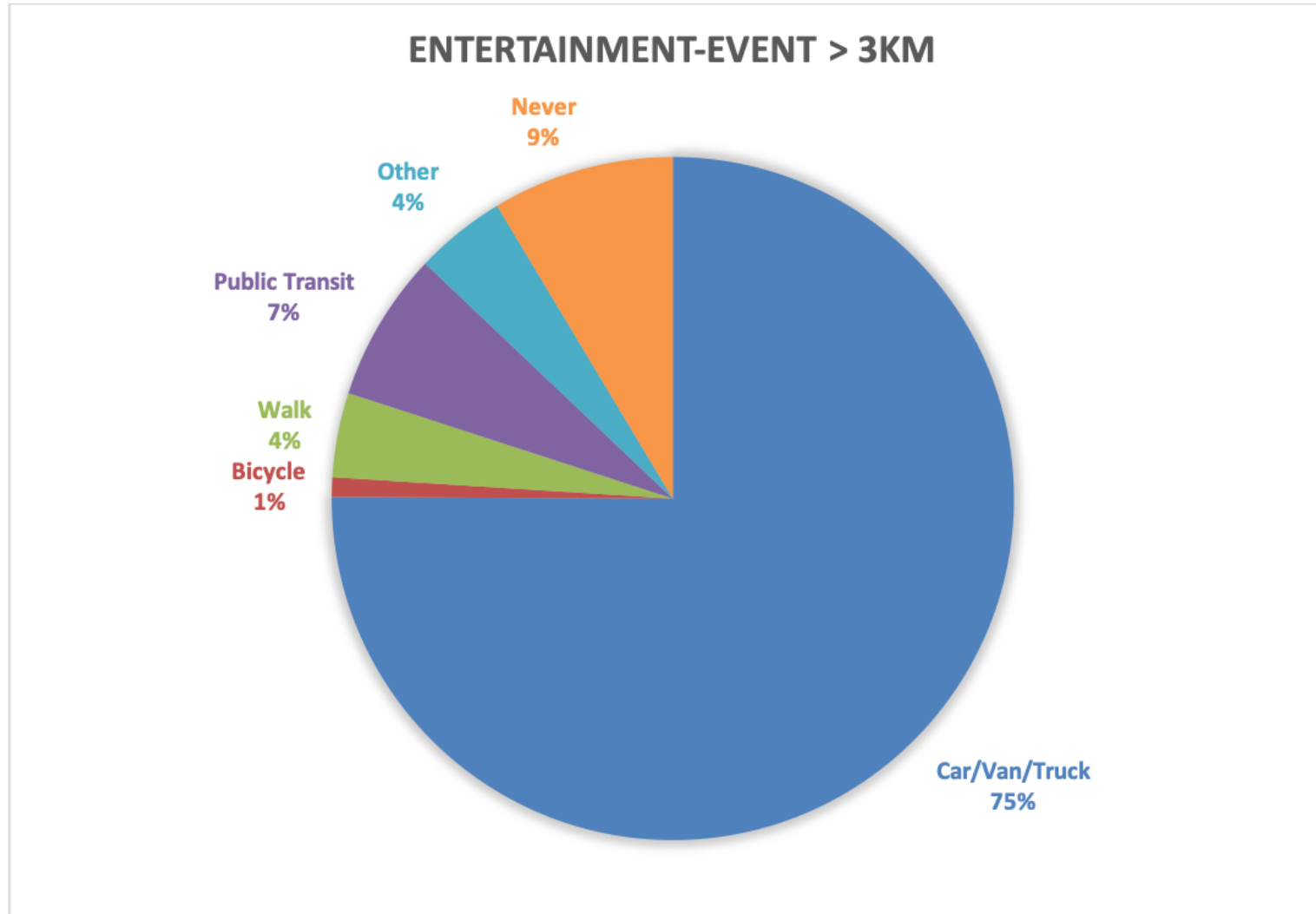
# Restaurant/Café/Bar (from outside downtown)



# Entertainment/Event (from near downtown)



# Entertainment/Event (from outside downtown)



# Research Takeaways?

- Where *trip constraints* are minimal, and within 3km of downtown, people often choose to walk. Vehicles are the second transportation choice for those close to the downtown. Bike use is minimal.
- Trips from further away than 3km are almost always by a vehicle. Bike use is minimal.
- *Trip constraints* (children, mobility issues, heavy bags, lack of time, distance, and inclement weather) are significant influencers of vehicle use. These *constraints* will never make bikes a logical 'model shift' replacement for vehicles.



# Policy Issues

- Supporting downtown businesses *and their customers* begs for policy and design decisions that are consistent with public behaviour.
  - Consider how and why the public make transportation decisions.
  - Understand the importance of *constraints* in that decision making.
  - Consider the economic implications for retail and service viability by failing to link infrastructure decisions to transportation research.
  - Consider the implications of ascribing too much importance to bike lanes.
  - Downtown already far exceeds the non-vehicle modal share targets called for in the TMP despite being just 1-2% of city land area.

# Recommendations

- Replace proposed 2 bike lanes + 2 parallel parking bays in Wyndham Street and St Georges Square corridor with one parallel parking bay and one angle parking bay.
  - Inexpensive opportunity to deliver infrastructure that is supportive of retail vitality and users of the downtown.
- Assure that all cash-in-lieu parking funds received from the development community is reserved for adding parking capacity.
  - Important to note that cash-in-lieu option will reduce retail parking supply with spillover demand from undersupply of residential capacity.