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<b>Created By:</b>	Asael Tobar, Teryn Guzman, Ian Burns		

## Phase 1

### Problem:

Over the years, commuting in Belmopan has become a much more frustrating experience. Overcrowded buses during rush hour and heavy traffic plague the streets of Belmopan City. Many people drive in their cars with empty car seats, while at the same time, others rely on the overcrowded buses, often having to stand (which is dangerous!). This creates both inefficiency and safety concerns. The purpose of this application is to help alleviate this issue by creating an interface that'll allow people to find people with whom they can commute. This application will be divided into 2 sections: a section for UB students and a section for non-UB students.

### Domain of Interest:

**Theme:** mobility

- Making Belmopan transportation more accessible by giving people a new option
- Making commuting for both students and workers alike
- Reducing the amount of people who stand in buses, making Belmopan overall a safer place for everyone

### Interviewees

2 out of 3 interviewers chose to be kept anonymous for the interviews.

- **Interviewee 1:** Jose Teck, a former UB student who commuted from Armenia village to Belmopan City. (*Interviewed on Wednesday, September 3rd, 2025*)
- **Interviewee 2:** Anonymous interviewee, a middle-aged woman who travels to Belmopan everyday to sell ideals and juice. (*Interviewed on Thursday, September 4th, 2025*)
- **Interviewee 3:** Anonymous interviewee, a teacher in her late 30s who commutes to Belmopan everyday to teach at a highschool. (*Interviewed on Sunday, August 31st, 2025*)

*Note: Interviewee 2 and 3 have chosen to stay anonymous. The 2nd interviewee was interviewed in Spanish and was roughly translated to English.*

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## Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your daily routine?
2. How do you usually travel to and from Belmopan (or within the city)?
3. Why do you choose that method over others?
4. How often do you commute into or around Belmopan?
5. How long does your usual commute take?
6. How much do you typically spend on transportation in a day or week?
7. What do you find most frustrating about commuting in Belmopan?
8. Can you describe a time when commuting was especially difficult or stressful?
9. How do you feel about the costs of transportation here?
10. What's most important to you when choosing how to travel (e.g., cost, speed, safety, comfort, convenience)?
11. How do you feel about sharing rides with others? (friends, classmates, strangers)
12. What would make you feel unsafe or hesitant about ride-sharing?
13. If there was a carpooling app for Belmopan, what would make you want to use it?
14. What features would be most important to you (e.g., trusted drivers, cheap fares, flexible routes, student-only option)?
15. What concerns would you have about using such an app?
16. Would you prefer to ride with people you know (like UB students) or anyone in Belmopan? Why?
17. What would make the app trustworthy in your eyes (ratings, verification, safety checks, etc.)

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## Interview Results

*Note: Interviewee 2 and 3 have chosen to stay anonymous. The 2nd interviewer was interviewed in Spanish and was roughly translated to English.*

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your daily routine (back when you were in UB)?

**Jose Teck:** *"Well I was a University student pursuing an associate degree in Information Technology and my daily routine was mostly about attending classes since I was a full time student, I travelled from Armenia Village to UB and mostly just focused on school. These days though, I don't usually travel that much since I don't have any need to"*

**Interviewee 2:** *"Well I'm a mother of 2 kids and get them ready for school and then I go out to Belmopan everyday, except Sundays, to sell ideals and juice. I take some slower days off to prepare to make more when I'm running low on them. I usually take them in a bucket with me and sell them around on my bicycle."*

**Interviewee 3:** *"I'm a teacher at the <omitted name for privacy> elementary school. I live in mile 39, St. Matthew's village. I commute to Belmopan every morning at 8:00AM where I teach my students. After work I usually either check papers, update my lesson plan, make charts, or complete any other responsibilities I may have. I live alone, but I do have a son who lives with his grandma."*

2. How do you usually travel to and from Belmopan (or within the city)?

**Jose Teck:** *"I usually travel using the busitos, same goes for within the city."*

**Interviewee 2:** *"I usually travel on bus or busito, depending on which one comes first. Within the city I ride my bicycle to get to the places I need to to sell my ideals and juice. I have a friend who holds it for me so I don't have to carry it with me on the bus."*

**Interviewee 3:** *"I travel by car."*

3. Why do you choose that method over others?

**Jose Teck:** *"Well, the big busses take a while to arrive, let's say maybe an hour and half while the mini vans running every 30 to 45 minutes, that is why I would prefer the mini vans. I also don't have a car or anything, sometimes I do go with my sister on her motorcycle but her schedule was different from mine so we wouldn't always get the chance to ride together."*

**Interviewee 2:** *"Well I don't really have another choice, I don't have a car or anyone that can take me there."*

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**Interviewee 3:** "Well, it's just the most convenient option I have. I don't really have any reason to take anything else unless my car is giving me problems."

4. How often do you commute into or around Belmopan?

**Jose Teck:** "Very often, I was there so often at University that it was like my second place, just didn't stay overnight."

**Interviewee 2:** "Usually it's 5 times a week, sometimes 6, sometimes 4."

**Interviewee 3:** "5 times a week for workdays"

5. How long does your usual commute take?

**Jose Teck:** "From my village to city, it's about 10 to 15 minutes. And from the terminal to University, takes about 2-3 minutes if there when I go on busito and if there is no traffic but if there is it might take 5 minutes. Usually, I'd just walk to save money, though"

**Interviewee 2:** "It takes me about 30 minutes to get there by busito or 20 minutes with the big bus."

**Interviewee 3:** "It's around a 25 minute drive. When I leave at 8:00 I arrive at work around 8:25 to 8:30 or so."

6. How much do you typically spend on transportation in a day or week?

**Jose Teck:** "I usually spend eight dollars maximum on just transportation if I take the busito from the terminal to the University. However, I usually walk so I only spend four dollars instead."

**Interviewee 2:** "I spend \$5 a day if I go on the big bus or \$4 with the busitos."

**Interviewer 3:** "Well, I'm usually filling my gas tank twice a week or so. I usually fill it up with \$50 of gas or \$30 depending on how much is left. I would say around \$80-\$100"

7. What do you find most frustrating about commuting in Belmopan?

**Jose Teck:** "Well sometimes in the morning and in the evening, employees that also commutes to Belmopan would fill up the mini vans while we students don't really get a chance to travel on time, and sometimes I might miss some minutes of my class time, same goes when going home, sometimes I end up catching the big busses due to the vans being full."

**Interviewee 2:** "It becomes difficult during the mornings and evenings, especially since I'm carrying my stuff with me. In the mornings I can usually catch a bus but in the evenings I

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*sometimes spend up to an hour trying catching one of them. Since I carry stuff I can't really fight for a seat. When I get the chance I usually just ask a friend to hold a seat for me, but I don't always get that opportunity."*

**Interviewee 3:** "Well I would say that it's not that bad, mostly in the evenings when traffic is about but I leave early enough where it's not that much of a problem."

8. Can you describe a time when commuting was especially difficult or stressful?

**Jose Teck:** "Traffic and rush hours are not my best friends, anytime I meet them I usually arrive late to where I am headed or miss an occasion for example my classes. There was a day when I had an online class in the evening. Around 5:30 my class started, I made sure I reached the mini van's parking lot and there were so many villagers that were heading home as well. As the van arrived people were crowded trying to get in, that day I missed my class due to the fact that I didn't get a chance to get on the van. It was very stressful."

**Interviewee 2:** "One evening I think two of the usual busitos wasn't running so there were a lot of people waiting for hours. I was trying to leave at 4PM but wasn't able to catch the busito, so instead I was forced to catch the 7PM big bus, as the people who were waiting filled the big buses too. It was stressful waiting for a long time for a busito only for a bunch of people to pile up like cattle and fill up the bus. Many people and I weren't able to catch the bus and were forced to try to catch one of the big buses, but those buses are already usually crowded around that time due to workers so even that was a challenge. I felt so stressed that day that it made me want to pray to god for a card."

**Interviewee 3:** "Well there was this time my car was giving me problems and I had to catch busito that morning instead of driving. The busito took a bit to arrive so I ended up arriving at around 9 or so, which was late. Then I had to pay for a taxi to drop me off at the school so I can start my teaching session."

9. How do you feel about the costs of transportation here?

**Jose Teck:** "I think it's fair, though I heard they are thinking about raising it but I don't think the service will match the cost of transportation."

**Interviewee 2:** "Well if it could be cheaper I wouldn't complain, but the cost isn't that bad."

**Interviewee 3:** "The price of gasoline is too high. The government doesn't pay for transport fees and the gas prices add up over time. If gas was cheaper I pro"

10. What's most important to you when choosing how to travel (e.g., cost, speed, safety, comfort, convenience)?

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**Jose Teck:** "As a student I would say safety and speed."

**Interviewee 2:** "As long as it can take me where I need to go."

**Interviewee 3:** "Convenience, I like to be able to go wherever I want and not have to rely on public transport since it can be unreliable."

11. How do you feel about sharing rides with others to get where you need to go? (friends, classmates, strangers).

**Jose Teck:** "It feels great especially with friends. It saves me the trouble from having to catch public transport."

**Interviewee 2:** "Well I often don't get the chance to, sometimes I see someone who knows me drives by and offers me a ride and it's a pretty relieving feeling, but this is once in a blue moon"

**Interviewee 3:** "I mean, it's fine when it's with friends but I don't really trust strangers to be in my car."

12. What would make you feel unsafe or hesitant about ride-sharing?

**Jose Teck:** "I would say a drunk person would make me feel that way. Or someone who is driving like crazy."

**Interviewee 2:** "If it were someone I didn't know, you never know what could happen."

**Interviewee 3:** "If it was a stranger. I would rather not let just anyone get in my car."

13. If there was a carpooling app for Belmopan, what would make you want to use it?

**Jose Teck:** "Traffic and avoid reaching late at school. Like it would be great if there's already someone heading there and it's like hitchhiking, except I won't feel embarrassed about begging for a ride on the street."

**Interviewee 2:** "I don't know, maybe? If it was convenient then I guess I'd use it, but I would only use it if I could find people I know."

**Interviewee 3:**

"I don't think I'd use it regularly since I already have my own car, but maybe if my car was down or I needed a backup option, it could be useful. It would save me from waiting on busitos."

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Follow-up question: Would you be willing to give people rides?

*Well, only if I got compensated for it. But I wouldn't give a ride to just anyone, like I said earlier I don't trust random people in my car.*

14. What features would be most important to you (e.g., trusted drivers, cheap fares, flexible routes, student-only option)?

**Jose Teck:** *In my opinion I think trusted drivers, regarding your safety. I don't want to get kidnapped by some random guy.*

**Interviewee 2:** *"I'm usually bad with these types of apps so I'm not sure. As long as it's easy to use and I don't miss a ride because I'm struggling to use an app like this."*

**Interviewee 3:** *"Well it'd be important for me to know that these people are real and that I can see a face. Otherwise I'm not trusting them one bit. I also need to see what other people are saying about this person, so maybe reviews would be nice."*

15. What concerns would you have about using such an app?

**Jose Teck:** *"Safety I would say, because what if anyone gets the app and then sets you up to say 'okay I am heading this way, wanna ride?'"*

**Interviewee 2:** *"Getting robbed or killed.*

**Interviewee 3:** *"Apps like these feel dangerous especially among young people, a way to prevent young people from using these types of apps seems like a no-brainer from me."*

16. What would make the app trustworthy in your eyes (ratings, verification, safety checks, etc.)?

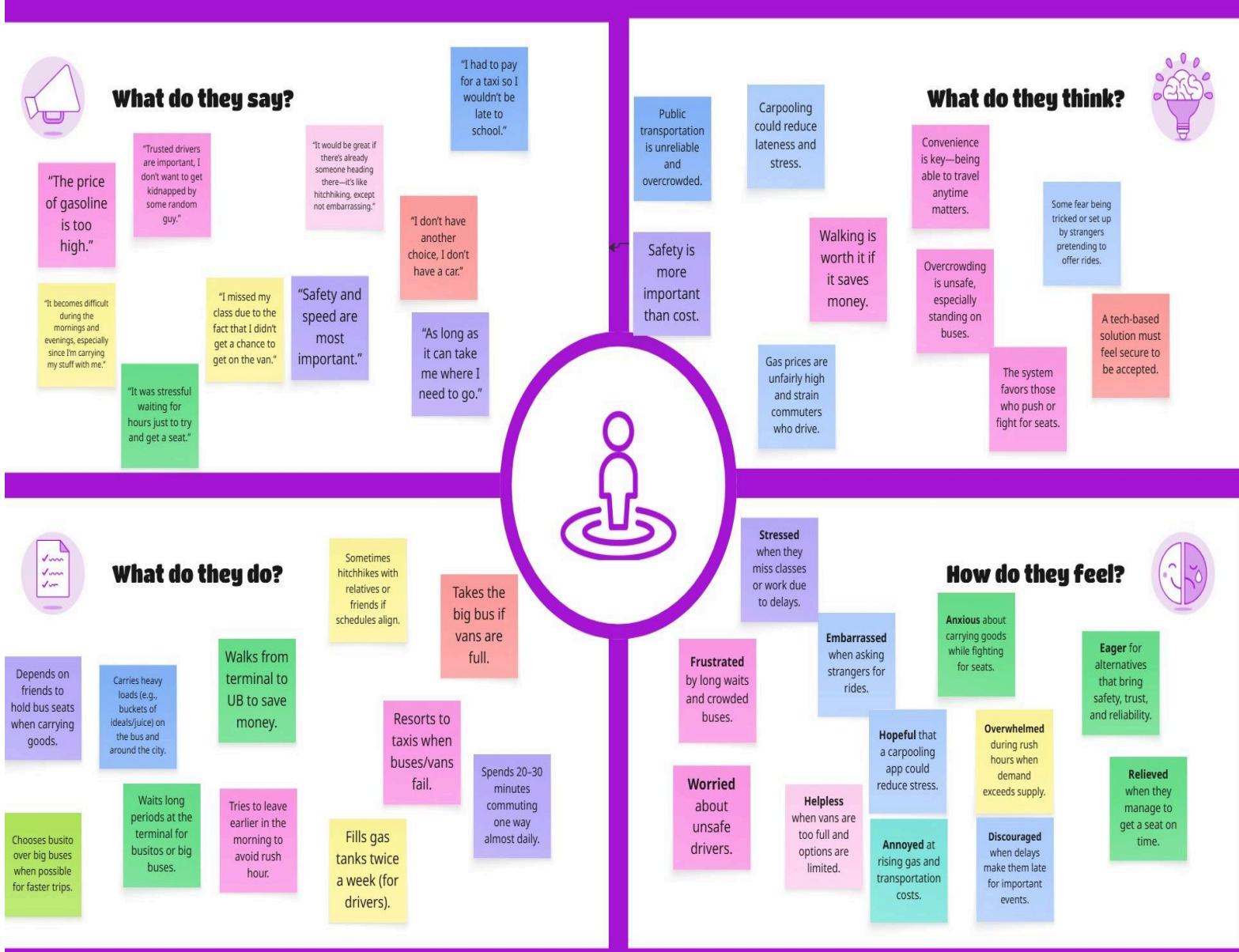
**Jose Teck:** *"To make it trustworthy I would say ratings and safety check which also includes verification. So that not just anyone can use the app."*

**Interviewee 2:** *"The only way I'd trust it is if I know the people who I'm driving with personally."*

**Interviewee 3:** *"Maybe I'd warm up to the idea of I could know for sure that these people are real and other people are saying good things about them. Otherwise, I don't know."*

## Empathy Map

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## Analysis

### Needs and Insights

#### Initial Assessment of Needs

- Reliable and on-time transportation to avoid lateness and missed opportunities.
- Affordable options for students, vendors, and commuters.
- Convenient and flexible rides that match daily schedules.
- Assurance of safety and trust (verified drivers, reliable passengers).
- Community-based travel with familiar or like-minded people.

#### Initial Assessment of Insights

- Overcrowding at peak hours creates stress, lateness, and lost productivity.
- Trust is the main barrier to adopting ride-sharing apps; verification and safety features are critical. People are very cautious of the idea of riding with strangers
- Car owners see ride-sharing as a backup, not a primary choice—apps should focus first on students and non-car owners.
- Unexpected rides from friends bring a sense of relief and emotional comfort, showing carpooling has mental as well as practical benefits.
- People are more willing to adopt ride-sharing if it feels community-driven (e.g., student-only or verified local groups).