



# **Greater Washington Transportation Issues Survey**

**April 18, 2016**

**Conducted December 1-5, 2015**



Full Report

*N=800 adult residents of the Greater Washington region; conducted December 1-5, 2015.*

### **Survey Overview**

The Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance and the Suburban Maryland Transportation Alliance commissioned this representative survey of residents of the Greater Washington region to measure the public's attitudes about the region's transportation network and their level of support for a variety of proposed transportation improvement projects.

A total of 800 randomly-selected adult residents of the Greater Washington region were interviewed by telephone December 1 through December 5, 2015 by OpinionWorks LLC, an independent research organization based in Annapolis, Maryland. For purposes of this survey, the Greater Washington region followed the definition of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, in other words including the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's; and the Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William, and independent cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park.

Both landlines and wireless telephones were included in the sampling frame. The results of this survey have a potential sampling error no greater than  $\pm 3.5\%$  at the 95% confidence level. A more detailed statement of survey methodology is found at the conclusion of this narrative.

### **Summary of Findings**

The survey finds that the region's residents are overwhelmingly concerned about traffic and transportation. Three times as many people volunteer transportation as the most important long-term challenge for the region compared to any other concern. Residents give poor grades to the region's transportation network and place a very high priority on reducing traffic congestion and delays.

Knowledge that there is a regional transportation plan is limited. Furthermore, hearing that there is a plan makes only a minority feel more confident that the region's transportation needs can be tackled. In fact, residents of the region strongly believe that a greater investment in transportation is needed, and they want to see a comprehensive approach that includes both roads and transit. When presented with the information that congestion will worsen if current plans are followed, the overwhelming majority of residents favor adding new capacity to the plans instead of living with worsening congestion.

Nearly every transportation project tested on the survey had majority support, ranging as high as 75% in favor. From widening I-270 and the Maryland Beltway and adding express lanes, to adding a new bridge crossing north of the American Legion Bridge, to the Purple Line and improved transit service, there is very strong support for transportation projects across the region. Voter opposition to most major transportation projects is very low.

Metro is highly valued by residents, even those who rarely or never ride it. There is near consensus that more investment in Metro is needed, and most residents want to dedicate that money to maintenance and system reliability.

Solid majorities in each jurisdiction would be willing to pay more personally to help fund transportation priorities. As is usually the case, finding the specific financial vehicle that the public will support is more difficult. A regional gas tax increase dedicated to key projects may be the most palatable funding mechanism tested in the survey.

Detailed findings for this region-wide survey follow.

N=800 adult residents of the Greater Washington region; conducted December 1-5, 2015.

### **Broad Assessment of the Region's Transportation Network**

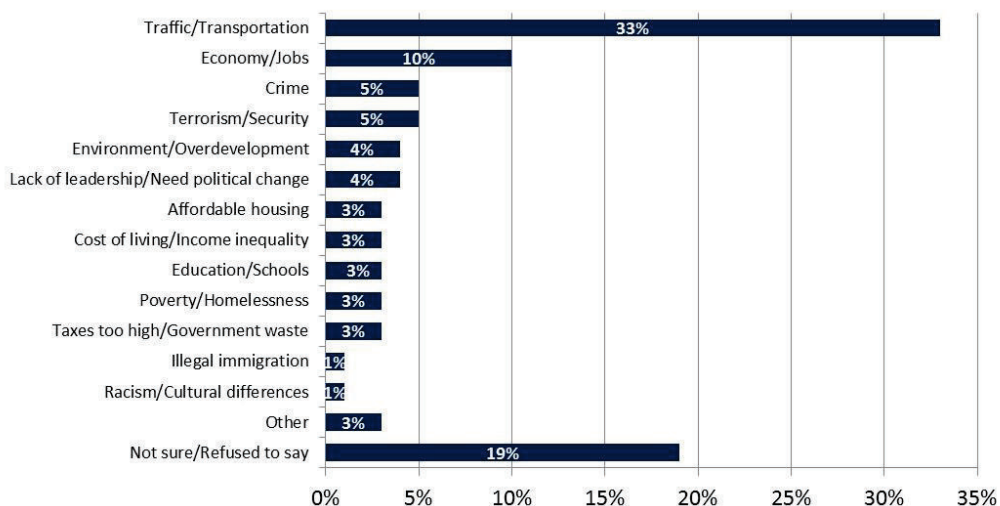
Residents of the Greater Washington region are frustrated by traffic and transportation challenges. When asked to name “the greatest long-term issue or challenge facing the Greater Washington region,” more than three times as many residents mentioned traffic or transportation compared to any other response.

In answering this open-ended question, when any response imaginable was possible, one resident in three (33%) identified traffic or transportation as the region's greatest challenge. This overwhelming concern for transportation relative to any other priority is unusual and a sign of the enormous importance of this issue in residents' minds.

The next nearest response was jobs and the economy, mentioned by only 10%. The enormous concern for transportation relative to jobs and the economy is a noteworthy outcome, just a few years removed from a major recession. Crime was mentioned by 5% of residents, as was terrorism or security.

A variety of other concerns measured 3% or less on this question.

### **Greatest Long-term Challenge Facing Region**



“In your opinion, what is the greatest long-term issue or challenge facing the Greater Washington region?” (Openended)

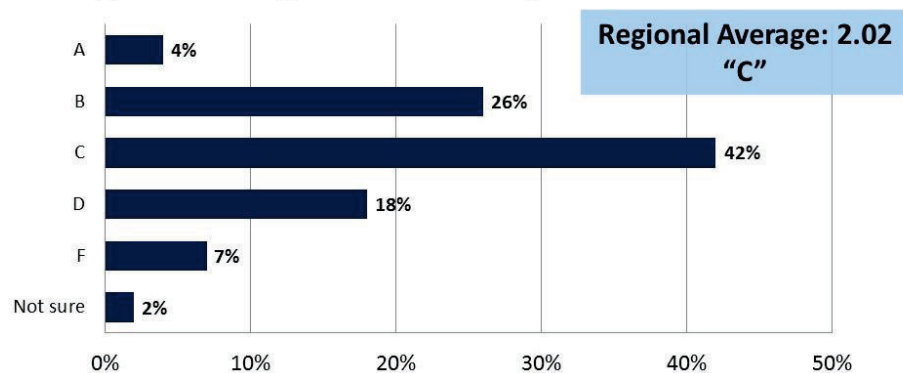
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When asked to grade the region's transportation network on a traditional A to F scale, residents offered a lukewarm assessment at best. Fewer than one in three (30%) gave an A or B grade to the transportation network, with only 4% giving the transportation network an A grade.

Meanwhile, one in four (25%) offered a very poor grade of D or F, with 7% outright failing the transportation network with a grade of F.

The most common grade was a C, with 42% of residents offering that assessment. Converting these grades to a 4.0 scale, the average region-wide was a 2.02, or a C. This poor grade is all the more noteworthy given that it was only the second question on the survey, and respondents had no idea that this survey related specifically to transportation issues.

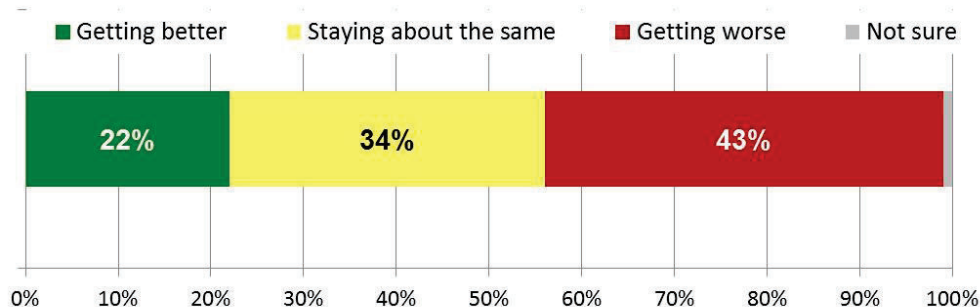
## Grading the Region's Transportation Network



"From your own experience, using the scale A, B, C, D, or F, what grade would you give the region's transportation network, including its roads, bridges, mass transit, bike lanes, and pedestrian walkways, for efficiently moving people where they want to go?"

Looking at the trendline, three-quarters (77%) of the region's residents believe the region's transportation network is staying about the same or getting worse. Furthermore, residents were twice as likely to say that the region's transportation network is getting worse rather than getting better. Twenty-two percent said the transportation network is getting better, compared to 43% who said it is getting worse. One in three (34%) said the transportation network is staying about the same, neither improving nor getting worse.

## Trend of Region's Transportation Network



"Compared to a few years ago, would you say our region's transportation network is (read and randomize): [getting better, getting worse (or) staying about the same]?"

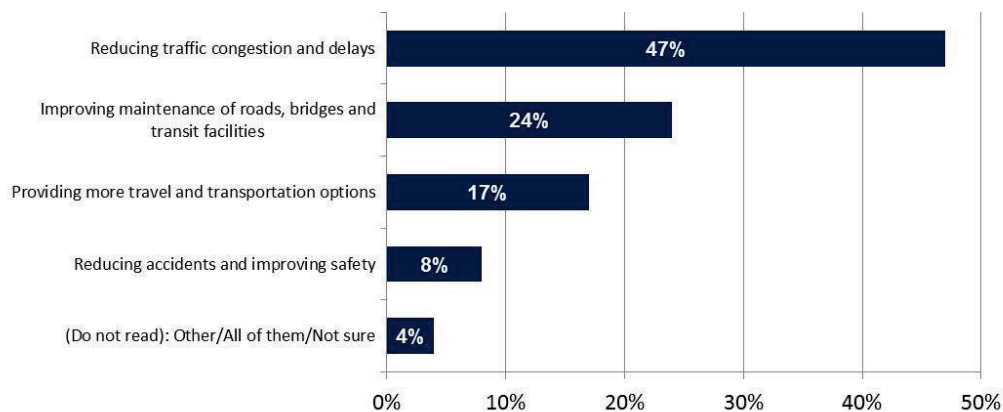


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Asked to choose from a list of four transportation priorities, a near-majority (47%) said reducing traffic congestion and delays is “the most important transportation priority that our region needs to address.”

The second priority, at 24%, is improving maintenance of roads, bridges and transit facilities, followed at 17% by providing more travel and transportation options. The least important to residents among the four priorities, at 8%, is reducing accidents and improving safety.

## Most Important Transportation Priority for the Region



“Which of these is the most important transportation priority that our region needs to address?”  
(Read and randomize choices.)

Taken together, these results indicate that the region’s residents see a broken transportation system, needing significant expansion and improvement, and want to see congestion relief as a much higher priority in future transportation investments.

### Regional Planning

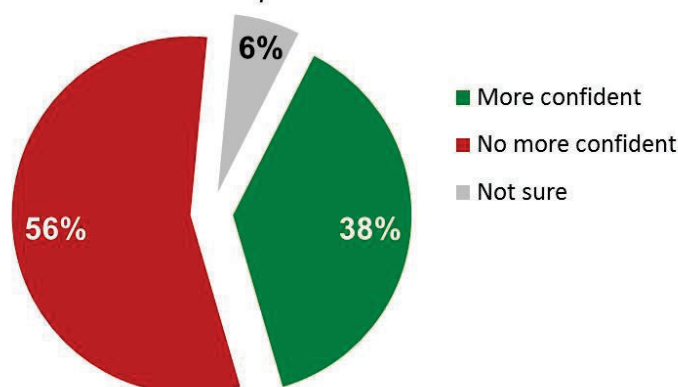
Awareness that there is a regional transportation plan is low. When told “Leaders of the Washington region have adopted a long-range transportation plan that guides future road and transit projects,” 39% of survey respondents said they were aware that such a plan existed. Six out of ten (60%) admitted that they were not aware of such a regional plan, with another 2% not sure if they were aware.

Knowing that there is such a plan makes only 38% feel more confident “that the region’s transportation needs can be tackled.” A much larger 56% are “no more confident” of that after hearing that there is a plan. Lack of confidence is significantly higher among white residents of the region, reaching 64%, and it is higher among Republicans (65%) and political conservatives (69%), suggesting that some of the lack of confidence ties to one’s underlying feelings about the role of government.

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## Impact of Knowing about Regional Transportation Plan

*Confidence that Transportation Needs Will be Tackled*



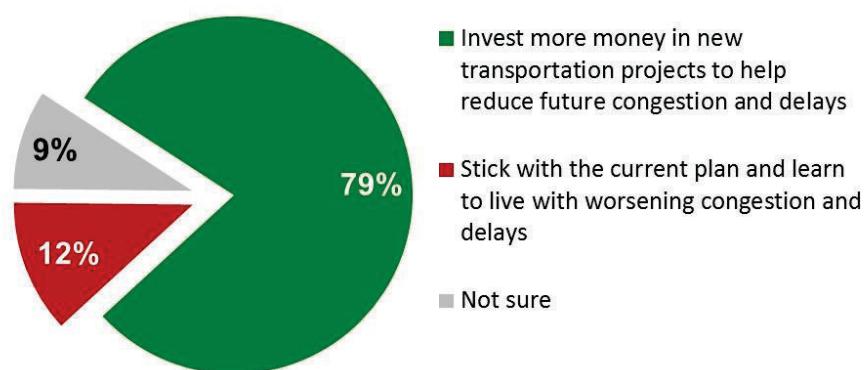
*"Does knowing that there is such a plan make you feel more confident or no more confident that the region's transportation needs can be tackled?"*

But there is also a greater lack of confidence (65%) among residents of all stripes who said traffic and transportation is the greatest long-term challenge facing the region. Among those residents, for whom transportation challenges are a very high priority, only 32% said they feel more confident knowing there is a regional plan.

There is a strong public will to invest more resources in fixing the region's transportation problems. Hearing that "the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments forecasts that under the current long-range plan, traffic congestion will get 63 percent worse by 2040," four out of five residents (79%) think "we should invest more money in new transportation projects to help reduce future congestion and delays."

## Invest More Money in New Transportation Projects

*Or Stick with the Current Plan*



*"The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments forecasts that under the current long-range plan, traffic congestion will get 63 percent worse by 2040. Does hearing that make you think we should...? (Read and rotate choices.)*

*"Invest more money in new transportation projects to help reduce future congestion and delays, (or)*

*"Stick with the current plan and learn to live with worsening congestion and delays."*

Only 12% think we should "stick with the current plan and learn to live with worsening congestion and delays" rather than investing more money. Importantly, there are no partisan differences at all on this question, with 82% of Democrats and 82% of Republicans believing

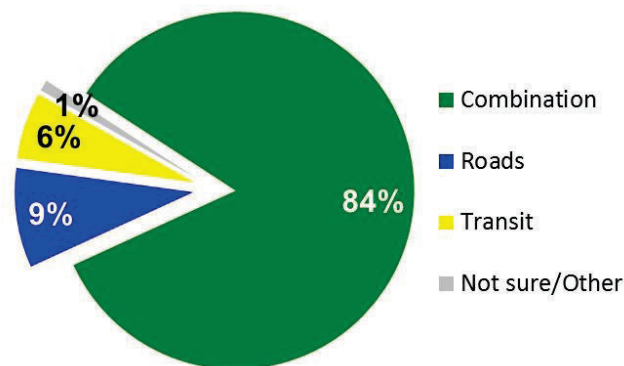
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that more money should be invested in new transportation projects. Among political Independents, the number is 74%.

Residents strongly believe that there is not one solution to the region's transportation problems. Rather, a comprehensive approach is needed. When asked whether they feel it is more important to invest in new road projects, transit projects, or a combination, an overwhelming 84% believe a combination is needed. Only 9% said roads are more important, and 6% said transit is more important.

### More Important to Invest

*In Roads, Transit, or a Combination*



"When it comes to future investment in transportation improvements, is it more important to invest in new (rotate): [road projects, transit projects], or a combination of both?"

The significance of this result must be emphasized. The question was framed in the context of importance, and residents are clearly saying that both solutions are important. Despite policy debates that often pit roads against transit, residents believe that is a false choice.

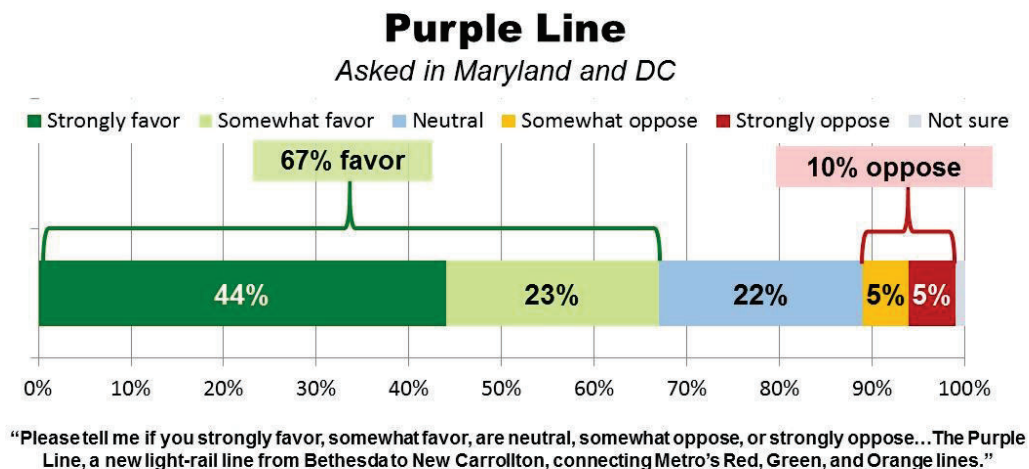
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## Transportation Projects

The survey measured the level of support or opposition that exists for a variety of major proposed transportation projects around the region. Each was described briefly and assessed on the scale: strongly favor, somewhat favor, neutral, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose. Residents were asked about projects that would be built in or would directly affect their own jurisdiction, meaning that some questions were asked in Maryland only, in Virginia only, or in a combination of jurisdictions.

### The Purple Line

The Purple Line will be a new light-rail line from Bethesda to New Carrollton, connecting Metro's Red, Green, and Orange lines. Two-thirds (67%) of residents of Maryland and D.C. support the Purple Line, with 44% strongly in favor and 23% somewhat in favor. Another 22% are neutral about the project. Only 10% of residents are opposed, with 5% strongly and 5% somewhat opposed.



In Maryland, where the Purple Line is to be built, 67% support the project, with 41% doing so strongly. Twenty-two percent are neutral in Maryland, with only 9% opposed.

Total support in Montgomery County is 65%, with 40% strongly in support. Opposition in Montgomery County is only 13%.

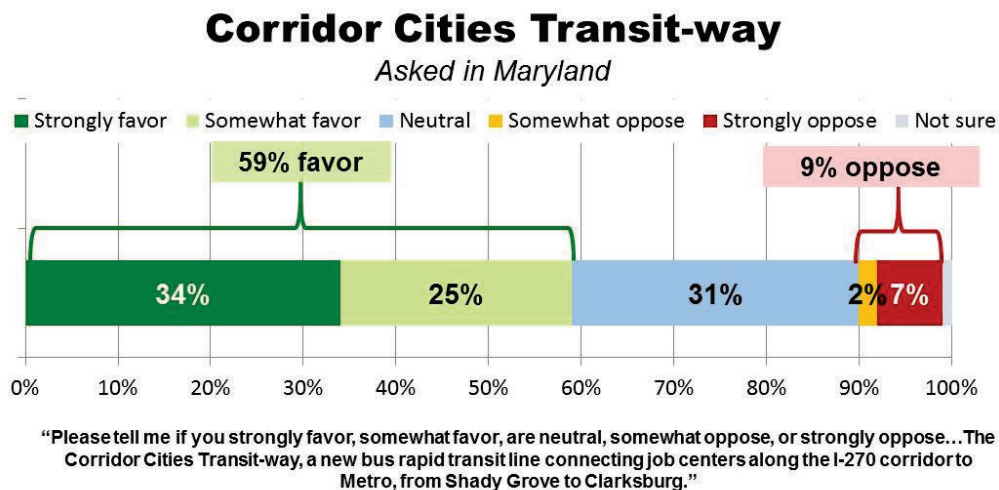
Support is even higher in Prince George's County at 74%, with 44% strongly supporting the Purple Line. Opposition in Prince George's County is a negligible 3%.

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### Corridor Cities Transit-way

The Corridor Cities Transit-way is a proposed new bus rapid transit line connecting job centers along the I-270 corridor to Metro, from Shady Grove to Clarksburg. Support for this proposal was measured in Maryland.

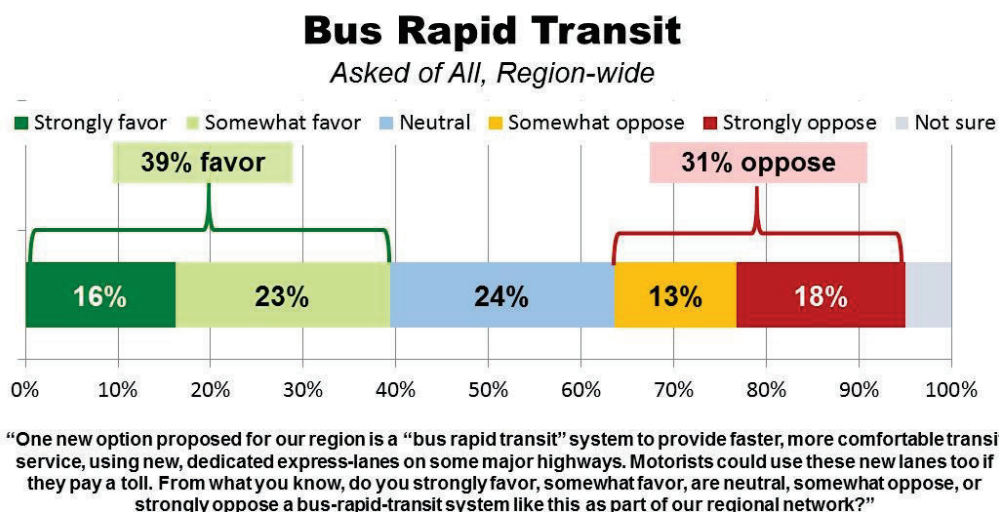
Nearly six in ten residents in the Maryland suburbs (59%) favor the Corridor Cities Transit-way, with 34% strongly favoring it and 25% favoring it somewhat. Nearly one-third (31%) are neutral about the concept, while only 9% oppose it, 2% somewhat and 7% strongly.



In Montgomery County, where the Corridor Cities Transit-way is proposed to be located, support is even stronger, with 64% in favor of the project, and 38% strongly in favor. Twenty-five percent in Montgomery are neutral, and only 9% are opposed, with 7% strongly opposed.

### Bus Rapid Transit

Residents across the region were asked generically about the concept of bus rapid transit, where buses would have access to new, dedicated express lanes on some major highways. A plurality of the region’s residents favor the concept. Nearly four in ten (39%) favor bus rapid transit, with 16% strongly in favor. This compares to 31% who are opposed, with 18% strongly opposed. One in four (24%) are neutral about the concept.





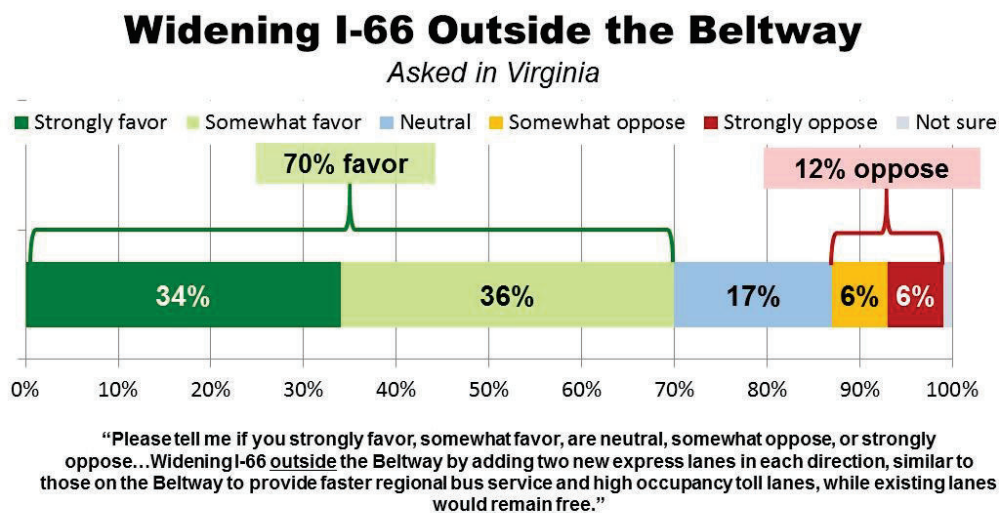
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Support for bus rapid transit is higher inside the Beltway, where 45% favor and only 23% oppose it. Support is highest in Arlington and Alexandria, where it reaches 57%, with only 12% opposed. Support is consistent across Fairfax County (41% favor, 24% oppose); Montgomery County (42% favor, 27% oppose); and Prince George's County (40% favor, 29% oppose). Public opinion is far more divided on the concept of bus rapid transit than on all of the major road and transit projects tested in Maryland, and most of the major projects in Virginia, which enjoy overwhelming public support.

### Widening I-66 Outside the Beltway

Virginia residents were asked if they would favor or oppose widening I-66 outside the Beltway by adding two new express lanes in each direction, similar to those on the Beltway, to provide faster regional bus service and high occupancy toll lanes, while existing lanes would remain free.

An overwhelming 70% favor this proposal, with 34% favoring it strongly. Seventeen percent of residents are neutral, and only 12% are opposed, with 6% saying they feel that way strongly.



Support for widening I-66 outside the Beltway is consistent geographically, with 72% of residents who live inside the Beltway and 70% of those who live outside the Beltway favoring this proposal.

Fairfax County residents as a whole favor widening I-66 outside the Beltway by 68% to 17%, and residents of Loudoun and Prince William Counties combined favor it by 73% to 9%.

There are almost no partisan differences in the level of support for this project, with 70% of Democrats, 70% of Republicans, and 66% of Independents supporting it.



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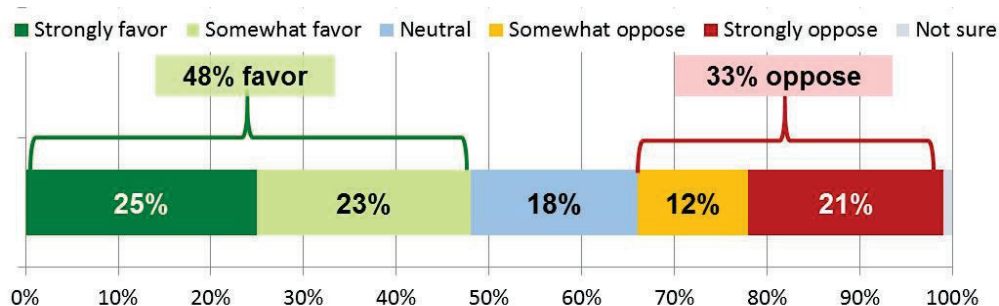
### I-66 Single Occupancy Toll Lanes Inside the Beltway

The survey measured support for *not* widening I-66 inside the Beltway, but allowing single occupancy vehicles to use it during peak hours if they pay a toll, while allowing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) drivers to continue using it for free. This question was asked of Virginia residents.

Support for this concept is mixed, and varies greatly depending on where one lives. Overall, a plurality favor this proposal, with 48% of residents favoring single occupancy toll on I-66 inside the Beltway, with 25% strongly in favor. About one in five (18%) are neutral about this concept. Opposition is 33%, with 21% strongly opposed and 12% somewhat opposed.

### I-66 Single Occupancy Toll Lanes Inside Beltway

Asked in Virginia



"Please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, are neutral, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose... Not widening I-66 inside the Beltway, but allowing single occupancy vehicles to use it during peak hours if they pay a toll, while allowing HOV drivers to continue using it for free."

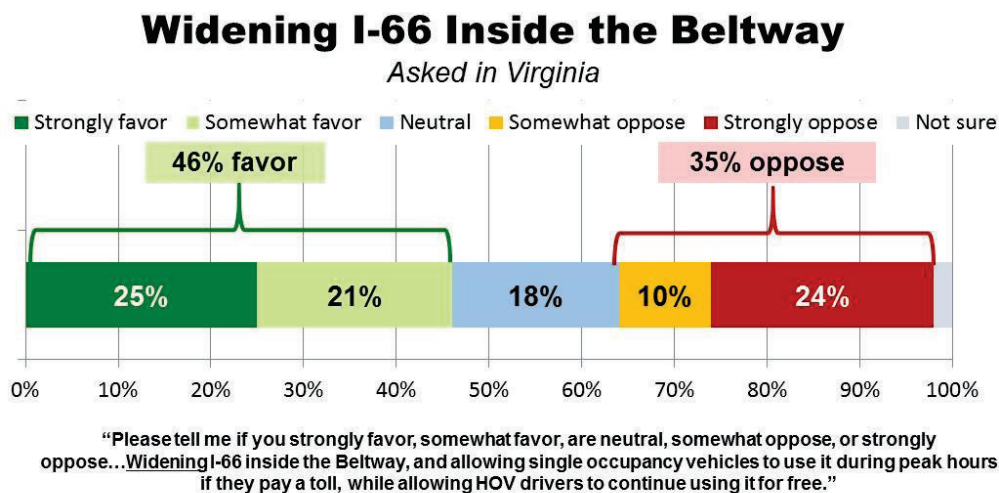
The greatest opposition to this proposal lies in Fairfax County, where 36% of residents favor it and 43% oppose it. Residents of Arlington, Alexandria, and Falls Church strongly favor the idea, however, by a margin of 58% to 19%. Similarly, residents of Loudoun and Prince William Counties favor it by 59% to 26%.

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### Widening I-66 Inside the Beltway

Testing another option, the survey measured support for widening I-66 inside the Beltway, and allowing single occupancy vehicles to use it during peak hours if they pay a toll, while allowing HOV drivers to continue using it for free. Overall support looks very similar to the prior question, but it differs greatly from the prior question at the county level.

Overall, 46% of residents in Virginia favor widening I-66 inside the Beltway, and 35% oppose it, with 18% neutral. Twenty-five percent strongly favor and 21% somewhat favor this proposal, while 24% strongly oppose and 10% somewhat oppose it.



Support for this proposal is stronger outside the Beltway, with 48% in favor and 33% opposed. Residents inside the Beltway favor it more narrowly, by 38% to 31%.

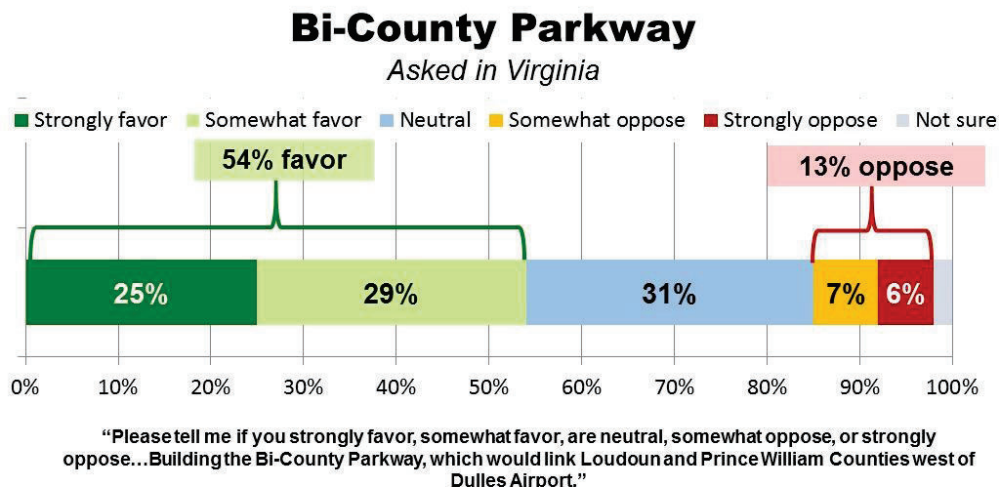
Residents of the inner Northern Virginia jurisdictions of Arlington, Alexandria, and Falls Church Favor widening I-66 by a margin of 43% to 33%. Fairfax County residents favor it by 46% to 37%. In Loudoun and Prince William Counties, support rises further to 49%, with 32% opposed.

Partisan differences are negligible, with 41% of Democrats, 46% of Republicans, and 43% of Independents favoring widening I-66 inside the Beltway.

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## Bi-County Parkway

There is solid majority support for building the Bi-County Parkway, which would link Loudoun and Prince William Counties west of Dulles Airport. Across the Virginia jurisdictions, 54% of residents favor the Bi-County Parkway, with 25% doing so strongly and 29% favoring it somewhat. Only 13% are opposed, with 6% opposing it strongly and 7% somewhat. Almost one-third (31%) are neutral about this proposal.



Support is stronger in the two counties the proposed parkway would serve. Two-thirds (66%) of residents of Loudoun and Prince William Counties support the Bi-County Parkway, with 36% strongly in favor and 31% somewhat in favor. Fewer than one resident in five (18%) in those counties opposes the project, and only 7% oppose it strongly. Sixteen percent are neutral.

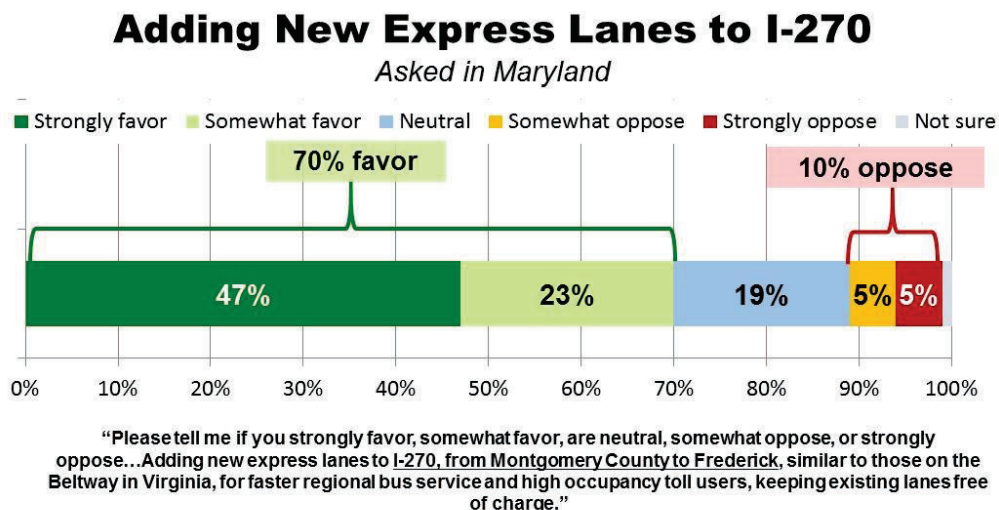
Fairfax County residents are nearly as supportive, with 50% favoring the Parkway and only 11% opposing it. Many Fairfax County residents (36%) are neutral about the proposal.

In terms of partisanship, 50% of Democrats, 59% of Republicans, and 52% of Independents favor the Bi-County Parkway. Opposition is very small, ranging from 15% of Democrats to 14% of Republicans to 11% of Independents.

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### Adding New Express Lanes to I-270

There is very strong support in Maryland for the concept of adding new express lanes to I-270 from Montgomery County to Frederick, similar to those on the Beltway in Virginia, for faster regional bus service and high occupancy toll users, keeping existing lanes free of charge. Seventy percent of Maryland residents favor this proposal, with a near majority of 47% doing so strongly. Only 10% oppose this idea, with another 19% saying they are neutral. At seven-to-one, the margin of support for this proposal is very high.



Support is very strong in Montgomery County, reaching 72%, with 43% *strongly* in favor and only 13% opposed. In Frederick County, the support is overwhelming, with 64% *strongly* favoring adding express lanes and 25% somewhat favoring that, for a total of 89%. Only 11% in Frederick County would oppose this proposal.

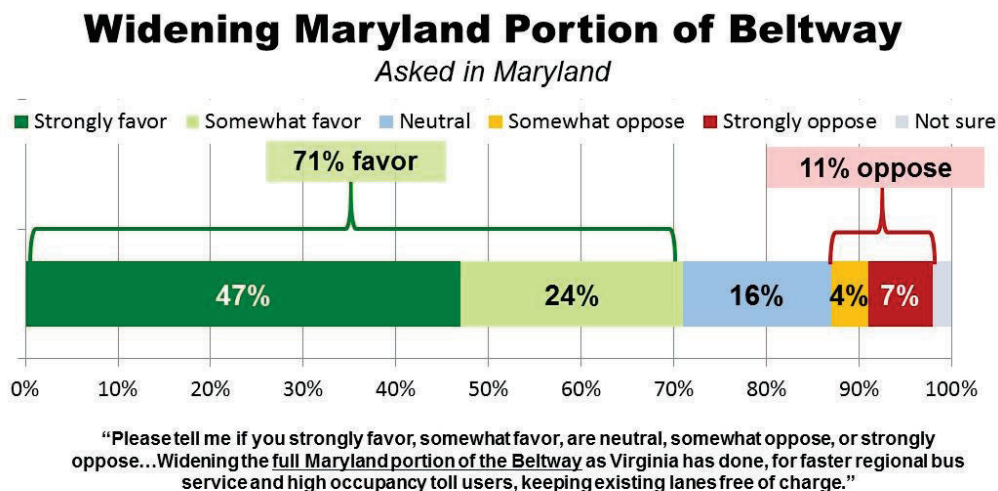
While the overall 70% to 10% margin of support for widening I-270 to Frederick indicates extremely strong public support, the intensity of support is extremely high as well, indicating that this is an extremely potent issue to voters, particularly in Montgomery and Frederick Counties.

In terms of partisanship, support is very high among Democrats at 67%, reaching even higher to 72% of Independents, and an overwhelming 82% of Republicans.

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## Widening the Maryland Portion of the Beltway

There is very strong support for widening the full Maryland portion of the Beltway as Virginia has done, for faster regional bus service and high occupancy toll users, keeping existing lanes free of charge. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of Maryland residents favor widening the Beltway, and 47% do so strongly. Only 11% are opposed, with 7% strongly opposing it. Sixteen percent of Maryland residents are neutral. At almost seven-to-one, the margin of support for widening the Beltway in Maryland is very high across-the-board and approaches consensus.



Support is nearly equal in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties, with Montgomery residents supporting widening the Beltway by a margin of 71% to 13% and Prince Georgians supporting it by 69% to 12%. *Strong* support reaches a majority (50%) in Prince George’s County, and 43% in Montgomery.

Partisan differences are small, with 71% of Democrats, 68% of Republicans, and 75% of Independents in Maryland favoring widening the Beltway. Whether one lives inside the Beltway (67% in favor) or outside of it (71%), support is very strong.

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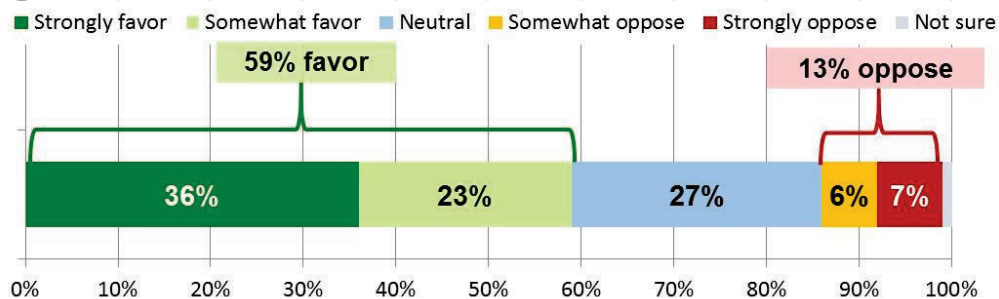
### Adding Express Lanes to the American Legion Bridge

The survey measured support for adding new express lanes to the American Legion Bridge, similar to those on the Beltway in Virginia, for faster regional bus service and high occupancy toll users, keeping existing lanes free of charge. This question was asked of all survey participants across the region.

Support for adding express lanes to the American Legion Bridge is strong. Nearly six residents in ten (59%) favor this proposal, with 39% favoring it strongly. Only 13% are opposed, with 7% opposing it strongly. One in four residents of the region (27%) are neutral.

### Adding Express Lanes to American Legion Bridge

*Asked of All, Region-wide*



"Please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, are neutral, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose... Adding new express lanes to the American Legion Bridge, similar to those on the Beltway in Virginia, for faster regional bus service and high occupancy toll users, keeping existing lanes free of charge."

Maryland residents support this proposal in the highest numbers, with 64% in favor and only 11% opposed. More than four in ten Marylanders (43%) favor this proposal strongly. Support in Montgomery County is slightly higher, with 66% favoring and 13% opposing adding express lanes to the American Legion Bridge; 38% in Montgomery County are strongly in favor.

Virginians support it by a margin of 59% to 14%, with 30% strongly in favor. Fairfax County residents favor this proposal by a 59% to 18% margin.

A plurality of D.C. residents supports the proposal (46% to 16%), but a large percentage there (38%) are neutral.

Partisan differences are few, with 57% of Democrats, 59% of Republicans, and 64% of Independents in favor.



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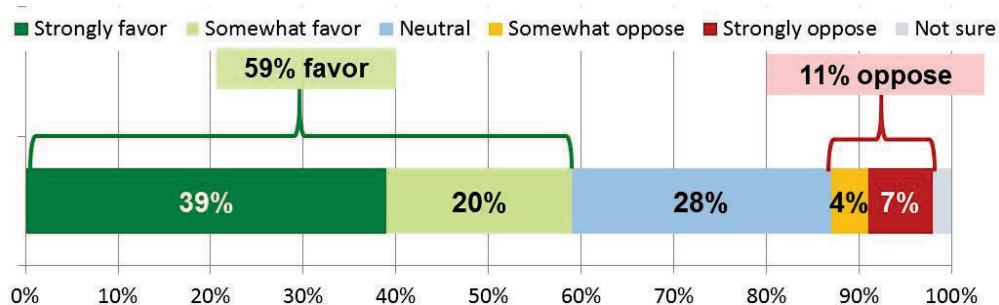
### Bridge Crossing North of American Legion Bridge

There is strong support for adding another bridge crossing north of the American Legion Bridge, to provide a direct link between the I-270 corridor in Maryland and the Dulles corridor in Virginia. Almost six in ten residents across the region (59%) favor creating a new bridge crossing, with almost four in ten (39%) strongly favoring a new bridge.

Only 11% are opposed to a new bridge crossing, with just 7% opposing it strongly. One in four (28%) are neutral.

### Bridge Crossing North of American Legion Bridge

Asked of All, Region-wide



"Please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, are neutral, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose... Adding another bridge crossing north of the American Legion Bridge, to provide a direct link between the I-270 corridor in Maryland and the Dulles corridor in Virginia."

Fairfax County closely mirrors the region, with 59% in favor and 32% strongly in favor of a northern bridge crossing. Only 9% of Fairfax County residents are opposed.

Support for a new river crossing is much greater in Montgomery County. Two-thirds (68%) of Montgomery residents support the new crossing, with a majority (52%) supporting it strongly. In Montgomery County, only 12% are opposed, with 9% opposing it strongly.

Prince Georgians are just as likely to favor a new river crossing north of the American Legion Bridge, with 64% in favor and only 3% opposed.

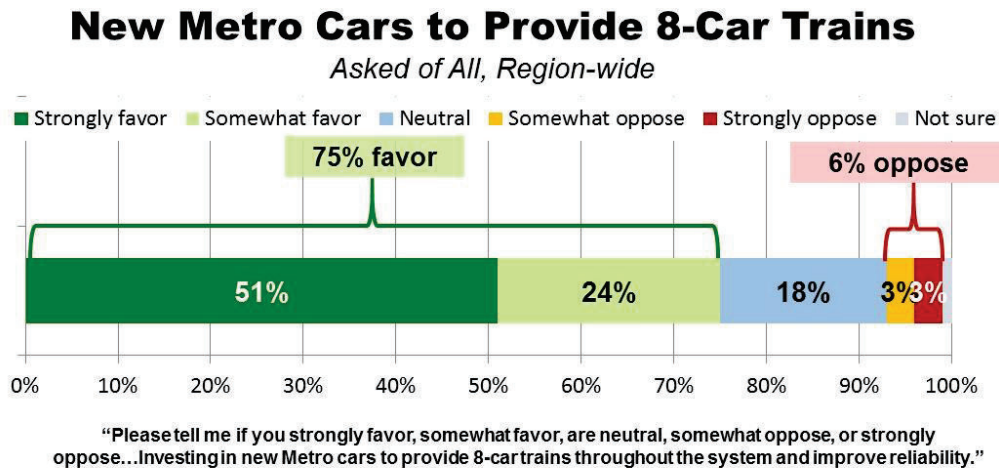
Region-wide, Republicans are the most supportive of a new bridge crossing, with 70% in favor and only 6% opposed. Independents favor a bridge crossing by a margin of 64% to 9%, while a 40-point margin of Democrats also favor it by 53% to 13%.

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## Investment in Metro

### Investing in New Metro Cars to Provide 8-Car Trains

The region's residents overwhelmingly favor investing in new Metro cars to provide 8-car trains throughout the system and improve reliability. A three-quarters (75%) majority favor this investment, including a 51% majority who strongly favor it, compared to only 6% who oppose investing in new Metro cars.



Among those who use Metro at least weekly, support rises to 81%, with an impressive 67% strongly in favor. But as a recognition of Metro's central place in this region, even 71% of residents who rarely or never ride Metro favor this investment in new rail cars. Support is so high across-the-board that it approaches a consensus.

There is very little partisan difference in these numbers, with 75% of Democrats, 70% of Republicans, and 78% of Independents in favor of 8-car Metro trains.

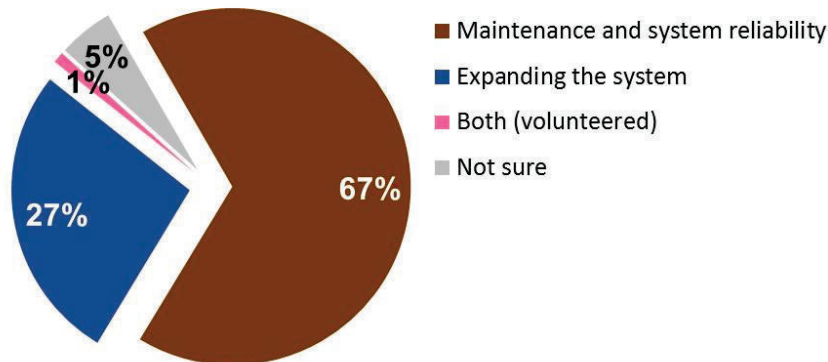
### Investing in Maintenance and System Reliability

Asked to think about what is most important for the Metro rail system, whether investing most resources in maintenance and system reliability, or investing in expanding the system further, residents strongly endorse the importance of investing in maintenance and reliability. Two-thirds (67%) favor that option, compared to only 27% who would prefer to invest in expanding the system.

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## Most Important Investment for Metro Rail

*Asked of All, Region-wide*



"In thinking about the Metro rail system, what do you think is most important?  
(Read and rotate options):  
"Investing most resources in maintenance and system reliability, (or)  
"Investing in expanding the system further."

Support for investment in maintenance and reliability is fairly consistent across-the-board, with 67% of D.C. residents, 60% of Virginians, and 75% of Marylanders favoring that option. While Fairfax County and the three inner Virginia jurisdictions closely mirror the regional numbers, residents of Loudoun and Prince William Counties are more divided. In an exception for the region, 40% of the residents of those two counties favor prioritizing expansion of the Metro system compared to 49% who favor maintenance and reliability spending. By contrast, priorities in the two outer Maryland counties of Charles and Frederick are completely different, with 87% prioritizing maintenance and reliability spending and only 13% preferring system expansion.

Frequency of riding Metro is not a predictor of support on this question, with 68% of weekly Metro riders favoring maintenance and reliability spending, along with 75% of those who ride occasionally, and 64% of residents who ride Metro rarely or never.

Democrats prefer an emphasis on maintenance and system reliability by two-to-one (62% to 30%), while Republicans (73% to 23%) and Independents (72% to 26%) prefer it by closer to three-to-one.

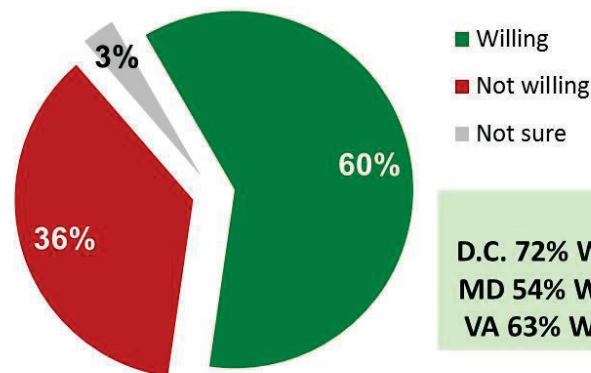
N=800 adult residents of the Greater Washington region; conducted December 1-5, 2015.

### **Willingness to Pay for Transportation Investments**

This survey has identified deep concerns about the state of the region's transportation system, and a strong public appetite for projects that will help alleviate transportation problems. As a key measure of this, by a 60% to 36% margin, residents said they would be "willing to pay a little more to make (transportation) investments happen" with the understanding that "the Washington region could reduce traffic congestion delays by up to 20 percent by 2040 by investing in a dozen or so major road and transit improvements."

## **Willingness to Pay for Transportation Investments**

*Asked of All, Region-wide*



### **By State**

D.C. 72% Willing, 26% Unwilling  
MD 54% Willing, 42% Unwilling  
VA 63% Willing, 33% Unwilling

"If you knew that the Washington region could reduce traffic congestion delays by up to 20 percent by 2040 by investing in a dozen or so major road and transit improvements, would you be willing or not willing to pay a little more to make those investments happen?"

Of the three state-level jurisdictions, D.C. residents are most willing to pay for transportation improvements at 72%.

Virginians also exhibit a high willingness to pay for transportation with 63% willing, including 72% in the three inner jurisdictions, 61% in Fairfax County, and 62% in Loudoun and Prince William Counties.

Though the least willing of the three jurisdictions, a majority of Marylanders (54%) are willing to pay more for transportation improvements, including 57% of residents in Prince George's County, 54% in Montgomery, and 50% in Charles and Frederick Counties.

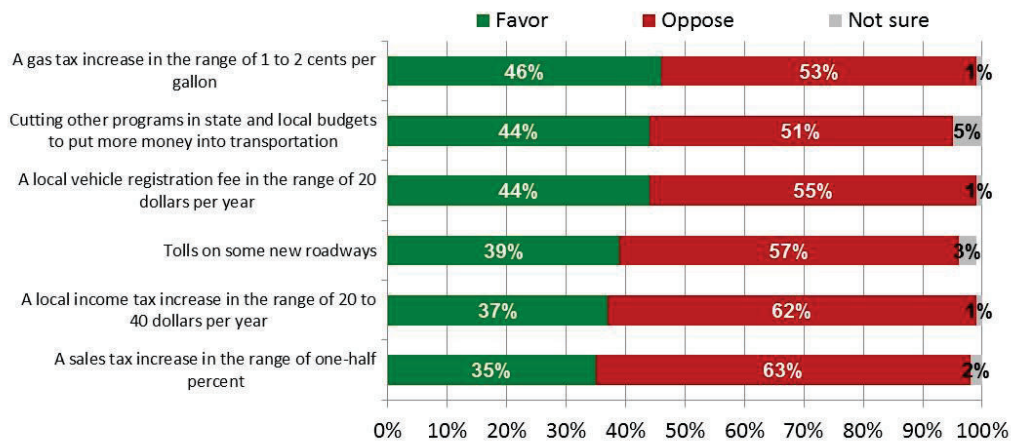
Though willingness to pay is highest among Democrats across the region (71%), a majority of political Independents (57%) and a plurality of Republicans are willing to pay for transportation (49%, vs. 45% not willing). Similarly, 54% of self-described conservatives, 64% of moderates, and 65% of liberals are willing to pay for transportation improvements.

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As is always the case, the difficulty comes in trying to choose a specific financial vehicle that the public will accept. The survey tested several options, with support ranging from 35% to 46% for each. As illustrated in the chart below, the most viable option may be a regional gas tax surcharge, which received support from 46% of the survey sample at the modest level of one to two cents per gallon.

## Willingness to Pay for Transportation Investments

*Asked of All, Region-wide*



**"I am going to list several different ways that transportation improvements could be funded. If additional funds were needed, would you favor or oppose each of these methods?"**

Supporting transportation by cutting other government programs and imposing a local vehicle registration fee of \$20 per year each received 44% support.

Roadway tolls and modest increases in the local income tax or sales tax each polled in the mid to high 30s.

While none of these options receives majority support today, the margins are close enough that several of these options could prove politically viable if voters were provided with information about specific improvements the new revenue would enable. Based on past research, it would also be persuasive to voters if they knew that funds raised would be spent only for transportation purposes, which is now a constitutional protection in Maryland since passage of the 2014 "lock-box" amendment. National data on this subject identifies significant shifts in public opinion on revenue measures when voters are provided such information through a public information campaign, and that likelihood could be tested through further research in the Greater Washington region in the future.

N=800 adult residents of the Greater Washington region; conducted December 1-5, 2015.

### Sample Characteristics

The following tables provide a snapshot of the survey sample by detailing survey participants' use of the region's transportation system and their political and demographic characteristics.

#### Transportation Behavior

<b>How often do you ride Metro rail or a bus?</b>	
Almost every day	16%
Once a week or so	9%
Less often than that	17%
Rarely or never	58%
<i>(Do not read):</i> Not sure/Refused	*%
<b>Do you work outside the home?</b>	
Yes	75%
No	24%
Not sure/Refused	1%
<b>(If work outside the home): How many others in your household work outside the home?</b>	
0	20%
1	42%
2	23%
3	8%
4	5%
5 or more	1%
Not sure/Refused	1%
<b>How often do you commute to work?</b>	
Every day	63%
Once or twice a week	8%
Less often than that	3%
Not sure/Refused	1%
<i>Do not work outside the home or not sure</i>	25%
<b>(If work outside the home): What is your most frequent means of travel to work?</b>	
Drive alone	74%
Train or bus	18%
Carpool	6%
Walk	2%
Bicycle	2%
Or something else	*%
<i>(Do not read):</i> Not sure/Refused	*%
<b>What is your most frequent means of travel for non-commuting trips, like shopping, errands, and other non-work trips?</b>	
Drive	86%
Walk	6%
Train or bus	5%
Bicycle	2%
Or something else	1%
<i>(Do not read):</i> Not sure/Refused	*%



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### Demographic and Political Characteristics

<b>Years in the Washington area</b>	
Less than 10	12%
10-24	37%
25-39	25%
40+	24%
Not sure/Refused	2%
<b>Age</b>	
Less than 25	11%
25 to 34	21%
35 to 44	18%
45 to 54	21%
55 to 64	16%
65 or more	12%
Not sure/Refused to say	1%
<b>Level of education</b>	
Less than 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	1%
12 <sup>th</sup> grade/High school diploma/GED	23%
Some college/Associate's degree	24%
Four-year degree/Bachelor's degree	27%
Graduate work/Master's/Advanced degree	25%
Not sure/Refused	1%
<b>Political party</b>	
Democrat	45%
Republican	15%
Independent	32%
Another party	*%
None/Non-political	2%
Not sure/Refused to say	5%
<b>Political philosophy</b>	
Very conservative	2%
Conservative	18%
Moderate	36%
Liberal or Progressive	28%
Very Liberal or Progressive	6%
Not sure/Refused	9%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	
Yes	9%
No	89%
Not sure/Refused	2%
<b>Race</b>	
White	49%
African-American/ Black	32%
Asian	5%
Other (includes mixed race)	12%
Not sure/Refused	2%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	50%
Female	50%

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### **Survey Methodology**

This telephone survey of 800 randomly-selected adult residents of the Greater Washington region was conducted by telephone December 1 through December 5, 2015, using trained and supervised live interviewers. Both landline and cellular telephone numbers were included in the sample.

In keeping with the principles of random sampling, the results of this survey have a maximum potential sampling error of  $\pm 3.5\%$  at the 95% confidence level; in other words, at least 95% of the time the true results would fall within that range if every adult resident of the region had been interviewed.

Interviewees were drawn randomly from commercially-available landline and wireless telephone databases of the region's residents. The two databases were blended to produce a mix of telephones in the final survey sample. The sample was balanced geographically and for key demographics during interviewing. Weights were applied to bring the final sample into compliance with the demographic breakdown of the adult population of each of six geographic sub-regions and for the overall region as a whole. The full survey questionnaire is found as an appendix to this report.