

TO: Interested Parties

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RE: Key Findings From National Survey on Transportation Options

DATE: August 3, 2012

The bipartisan polling team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) recently partnered to complete a national opinion research project to assess public attitudes toward transportation, and in particular funding of public transportation and walking and biking options.¹ The survey results reveal significant public dissatisfaction with transportation options in their communities; one-third of American respondents give the public transportation system in their area a grade of “D” or an “F” – and only one third rate it either an “A” or a “B.” Americans want to spend less time in their car – time they say they would rather spend with their family, on a hobby, or getting things done at home. However, nearly three-quarters say they have no choice but to drive as much as they do.

The data makes clear that the public is looking for alternatives to a system most feel is outdated. More people say “improving public transportation” is the best long term solution to reducing traffic in their area than other options like building new roads. And most significantly, Americans embrace a program of local investment in expanding public transportation options; two-thirds say that they would like local governments in their area to invest more to expand and improve public transportation, including buses, trains and light rail.

Specifically, the survey found that:

- **Only about one-in-three Americans assign “the availability of convenient public transportation system” a grade of an “A” or a “B.”** The survey provides Americans’ report card on public transportation, with decidedly mixed responses. While 36 percent of survey respondents give public transportation in their area positive marks, another 21 percent only grade it a “C” – with 15 percent a “D” and 17 percent a failing grade of “F.”

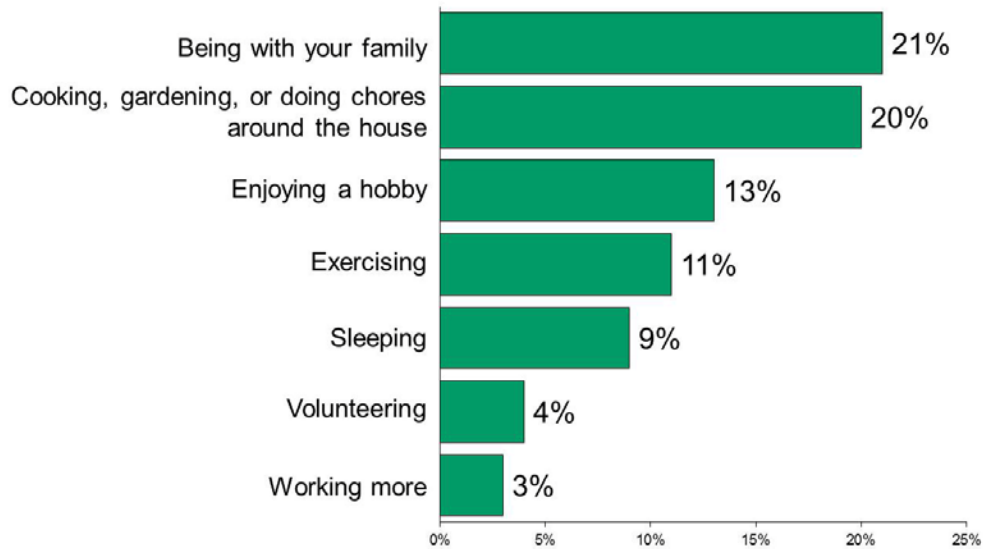
Notably, the type of community is most predictive of responses, with big city dwellers much more willing to pass out positive marks for public transportation in their community. Those in large urban areas are most apt to grade the availability of convenient public transportation highly (57 percent an “A” or “B”), while only 35 percent of suburbanites and 17 percent of rural residents say the same.

- **Seven-in-ten say they have no choice but to drive as much as they do.** Many Americans feel they have no other option than to drive (72 percent agree), with 77 percent of working Americans and 82 percent of working women saying they have no choice in how much they

drive. Nearly half of all Americans (46 percent) *strongly* agree with that they have no choice but to drive.

- **Getting out of their cars would free up time for family and household activities.** Commuters – among whom one-in-five say they are commuting an hour and a half round trip each day - say they would far prefer to be doing something other than being behind the wheel.

Activities Commuters Would Engage in if They Spent Less Time Driving



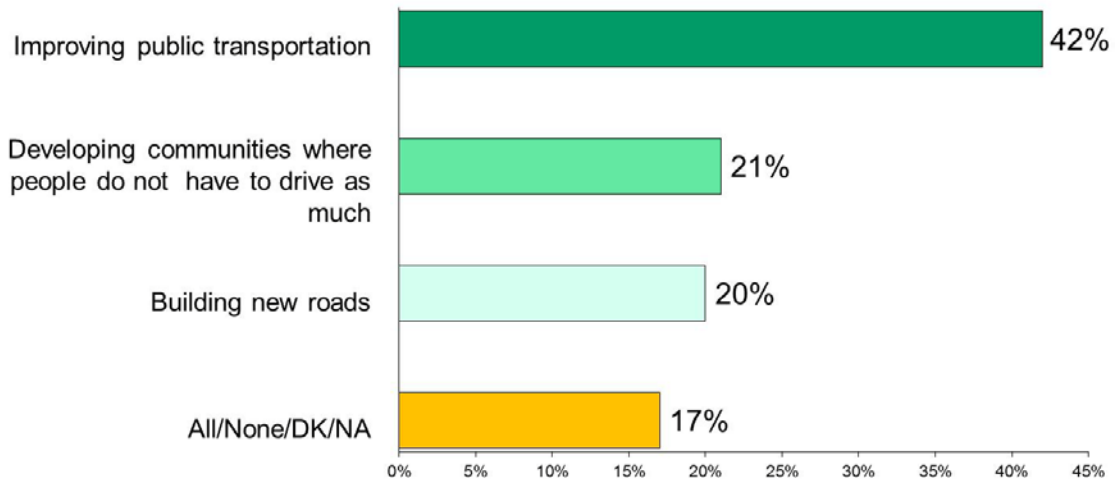
- **The current transportation system is viewed as outdated and inadequate for our current needs.** Nearly three-in-five Americans (59 percent) say that “our nation's transportation infrastructure is outdated, unreliable and inefficient.” A majority in every region of the country, of every partisan affiliation and in every type of community believe the transportation system is outdated and inadequate (with the notable exception of “big city” residents, who are the most likely to have used public transportation in the last year as well):

% Agree that Transportation Infrastructure is “Outdated, Unreliable and Inefficient”

Demographic Sub-Group	% Agree	% Disagree
Type of Community		
Big City	48%	44%
Medium/Small City	62%	28%
Suburban	61%	36%
Small Town	56%	31%
Rural	62%	26%
Region of Country		
Northeast	56%	38%
Midwest	55%	30%
South	58%	30%
West	66%	32%
Party		
Democrats	57%	34%
Independents	63%	22%
Republicans	58%	35%
ALL RESPONDENTS	59%	32%

- **Americans are twice as likely to say that they would invest in public transportation as opposed to building new roads as a way to solve long-term transportation problems.** As the following graph demonstrates, more respondents say improving public transportation is the best “long term solution to reducing traffic” in their area – rather than other options like building new roads.

% Favoring Various Approaches to Reducing Traffic Congestion



This preference for public transportation is evidenced in every single type of community, including residents of suburban, small town, and rural areas.

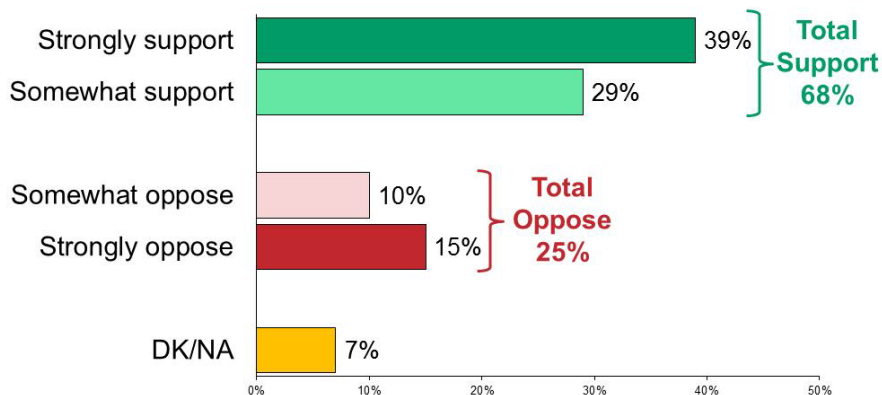
Americans have experienced the status-quo approach of adding lanes and building more roads, and can explain from their real-world experience why they reject it as a solution. As one focus group participant in Charlotte, North Carolina, pointed out: “it seems like every time they add a lane, it doesn’t improve the transportation that much. It might for a mile, and then... it bottlenecks back up.”

Moreover public transportation is often their personal preference if it were more convenient. Three-in-five (61 percent) say that they “would like to use public transportation more often, but it is not convenient to or available from my home or work.”

- **In order to expand transportation options, Americans overwhelmingly favor increased local investment in transportation.** As shown below, two out of three Americans back increased local government spending to expand public transportation options.

Support for Local Investments in Public Transportation

In order to reduce traffic congestion and provide more transportation choices, would you support or oppose local governments in your area investing more to expand and improve public transportation, including buses, trains, and light rail?



Overall, the research results show that the public grades the availability of convenient public transportation in their community as fairly mediocre; considers the current infrastructure to be behind the times; and want to shake up the status-quo mindset when it comes to relieving the traffic congestion they say they deal with all too frequently. Americans say they want to drive less, and are twice as likely to prioritize investments in public transportation and rethinking community design, rather than more roads. And they are willing to put their money where their mouth is – backing increased spending at the local level to make better public transportation a reality.

ⁱ **Methodology:** From June 24 – July 1, 2012, FM3 and POS completed 800 telephone interviews with registered voters nationwide likely to cast ballots this November. Interviews were conducted on land lines and cell phones. The margin of sampling error for the full national sample is +/- 3.8%; margins of error for subgroups within the sample will be larger.

Prior to the survey, FM3 and POS held seven focus groups in four communities predominantly in outlying suburban areas of major metro areas, to assess their views on key issues related to transportation: Charlotte, NC on May 14th; Raleigh, NC on May 15th; Philadelphia on May 21st; and Cleveland on May 22nd.