



valley vision

Community Inspired Solutions

## Regional Attitudes about Transportation

January 2018



Sacramento Light Rail passes California's  
State Capitol Building



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# Contributions

## Valley Vision

For 25 years Valley Vision has helped governments, businesses, foundations and community groups better understand our region and its people through high quality research. By uncovering common ground facts using scientific opinion polls, focus groups, community needs assessments, spacial mapping, best practice reports and other research tools, Valley Vision is ideally positioned to be a trusted interpreter, commentator, forecaster, and work partner for community inspired solutions.

## Sacramento State's Institute for Social Research

Founded in 1989, Sacramento State's Institute for Social Research (ISR) harnesses the power of scientific research tools to address social problems. An interdisciplinary unit within the Capital School of Public Affairs, the ISR offers broad expertise conducting survey research, performing program/policy evaluations, and gathering/analyzing data (both quantitative and qualitative) for government agencies, non-profits, and the academic community. The hundreds of projects we have completed have provided actionable information that has enhanced public accountability, program fidelity, and the overall quality of policies designed to serve the region and the state.

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# Regional Attitudes

## A polling series of Valley Vision and Sacramento State's Institute for Social Research

Making informed choices based on solid data and evidence is difficult in this day and age. That is why Valley Vision has partnered with the Institute of Social Research (ISR) at Sacramento State. Teaming together, we are using a proven, scientific method scaled to California's Capital Region to uncover the perspectives of local residents on critical issues and share them with local policy makers. We are the first in the state – perhaps even the country – to apply this approach to a metropolitan area, creating a stronger connection between the people and those governing.

Valley Vision's poll advisory group, chaired by Jose Hermocillo of Hermocillo Azevedo Strategic Communications, will soon be underway with our next research study to help understand the most important aspects of this region's quality of life that we have all come to enjoy. Please be on the look out for these results in the coming months.

Removing some of the guesswork out of policy making is a value that Valley Vision and ISR have been committed to since our founding. Yet this new research capability would not be possible if not for

### Respondents across the board feel that transportation is of critical importance to business and job growth in the region.

Our first poll on civic amenities in June 2017 uncovered a range of insights from residents that is informing public and private investment decisions for our parks and trails, museums, art galleries, and sports and entertainment venues. Findings showed that support for these amenities transcends age, gender, wealth, or political affiliation. They unite us. An overwhelming majority of residents said they are critical to their health and well-being. Now we have facts and figures to help tell this story.

In this newest poll we asked local residents about their views and opinions regarding mobility. Transportation is the lifeblood of any community and one of the biggest factors shaping our quality of life. Residents acknowledged this strong connection to how they live, work and play, and gave us important insights about what's important to them and their families. Read on to learn more.

the generous underwriting from the Sierra Health Foundation and Western Health Advantage. We applaud their visionary leadership.

Sincerely,



**Bill Mueller**  
CEO, Valley Vision



**Shannon Williams**  
Executive Director, Institute  
for Social Research, CSUS



# Executive Summary

## introduction

Transportation infrastructure and services impact the daily well-being of residents and the economic prosperity of our region. Few issues shape our quality of life like transportation. We surveyed 788 residents in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties to investigate:

- Residents' attitudes about transportation
- The ways in which residents use transportation, including types of transportation used and key traveling locations
- Priorities and preferences related to transportation improvements and investments

Overall, we found that a growing population and a modern society increasingly on the move has driven up congestion in the Capital Region. Road users would like to see more road investments, but a systemic fix requires a broader solution with different modes and more choices that meet resident needs to avoid future bottlenecks and improve the flow of commerce.

## this research report includes:

1. An executive summary
2. A transportation “primer” – key contextual information about transportation planning efforts and funding sources in the region
3. Survey findings
4. Conclusions

## key regional transportation factors

Regional agencies, local governments and over a dozen transit agencies are working together to make transportation decisions for the 6-county Capital Region. One upcoming planning process, undertaken by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), is the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This plan will organize and prioritize regional transportation investments.

Between 2012 and 2036, the region will spend \$35 billion in federal, state and local funds on transportation, the majority of which come from state and local sources. For a variety of reasons, there is a shortfall of transportation funding in the Capital Region.

In 2018, SACOG will start MTP outreach to cities and counties and the general public to update transportation plans and priorities. This latest effort will focus on ensuring that our transportation investments advance regional economic prosperity.





## key findings from the survey

- Respondents across the board feel that transportation is of critical importance to business and job growth in the region.
- Overall, the majority of survey respondents view transportation as a problem in the region. Additionally, regional respondents feel worse about transportation than they did in 2014 when a similar region-wide poll posed some of the same questions.
- Traffic congestion and road conditions, on both local roads and freeways, were cited by respondents as today's most notable problems.
- This finding reflects a contributing factor in respondents' behavior – driving alone. 69 percent of respondents drive alone all or most of the time.
- Despite a high rate of driving alone, respondents show that they are willing to try other transportation modes. 51 percent of respondents say they drive with others or carpool, 19 percent take the bus or light rail, 32 percent bike and 46 percent walk at least sometimes.
- For those who do not use public transportation options, the main reasons are that it takes too long and is too far from their home or destination, or people have safety concerns with public transportation.
- The main improvements that would encourage public transit use are more service nearby, less time consumed on public transit, and feeling safer on public transit.
- The improvements that respondents most want to see are improvements to existing roads.
- Respondents say that reducing traffic congestion is the main reason to make transportation improvements.





**As the Capital Region plans for transportation investments in the future, this survey suggests that reducing congestion and improving roads are the main priorities of regional residents.**

## overview

Almost all of the respondents felt that transportation infrastructure is important for job and business growth in the region. As reflected in policy and priority setting across the region, decision-makers seem to agree. The region's growth and quality of life are closely tied to comprehensive decision-making about transportation. Enhancing mobility and improving our region's transportation experience will be determined by policy and investments that enable residents to make mobility choices that are healthy for individuals, the economy, and the environment.

As the Capital Region plans for transportation investments in the future, findings suggest that reducing congestion and improving roads are the main priorities of regional residents. If two-thirds of regional residents drive alone all or most of the time as reported in this survey, reducing congestion will be difficult, even with significant road improvements. Residents, transportation planners, and decision-makers must look at a broad suite of solutions capable of reducing congestion.

Additionally, a majority of respondents show that they are willing to try other modes of transportation, such as carpooling, bus, light rail, biking, or walking. Building on this willingness by increasing use of public transit and active transportation (biking and walking) and other congestion-reducing actions, like carpooling, are imperative measures to addressing the issues most cited in this survey. Perceptions of inadequate service times and unsafe conditions on public transit are noted as key barriers to public transportation use. These issues, whether perception or reality, must be overcome so that the region can benefit from a public transit system that serves the needs of residents and visitors.

The world of transportation is rapidly changing, so much that transportation options ten years from now might look very different than our options today. Technology integrations and innovative solutions coming from the private market are already, and will continue to, disrupt transportation systems. As we understand the needs of Capital Region residents, we must also consider that the infrastructure we build today should support transportation solutions of tomorrow.



# Transportation primer

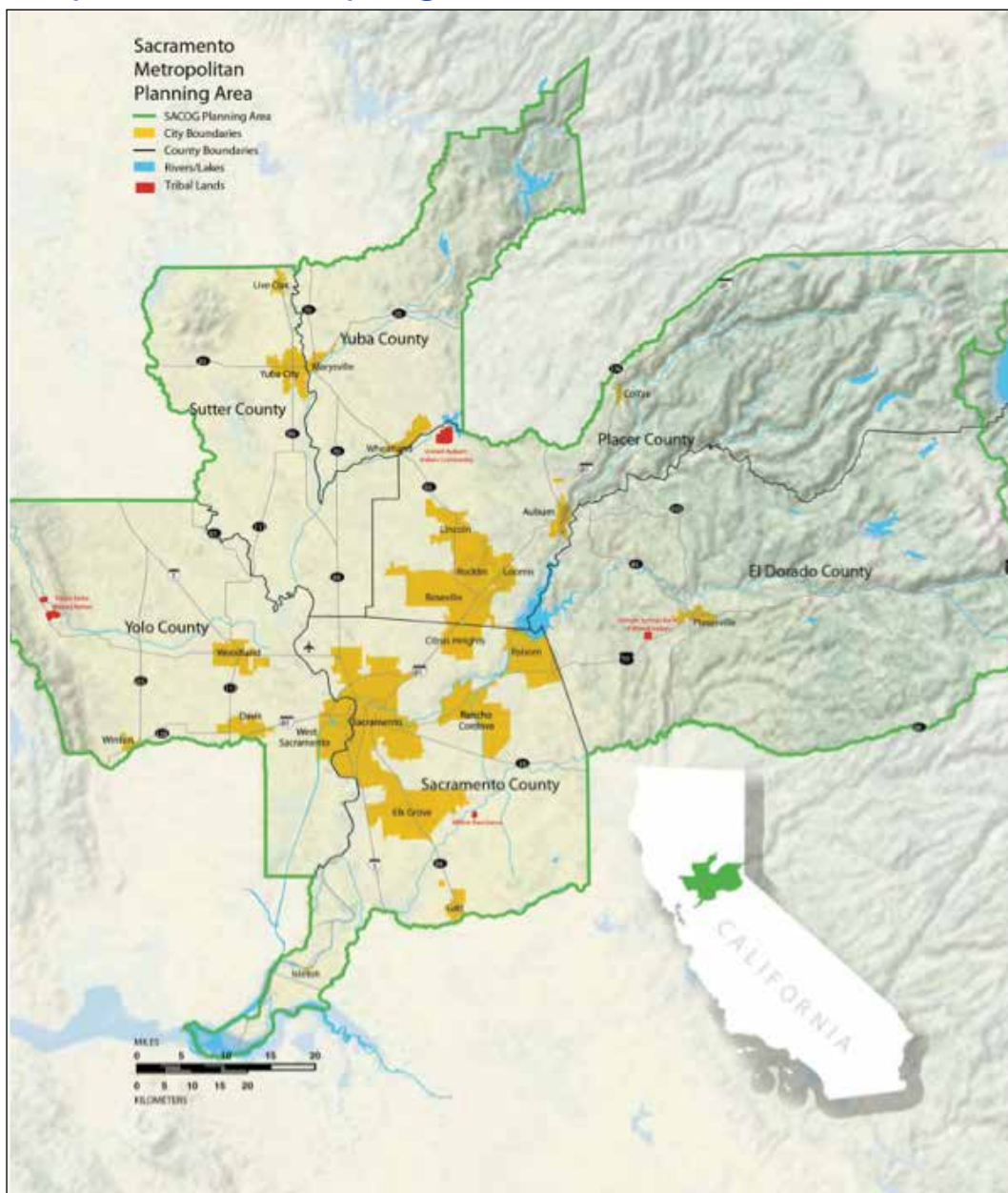
Simple transportation decisions frame our daily experiences. However, the decision-making processes and funding structures that determine the functionality of transportation systems are complex. This Transportation Primer frames:

- Overarching transportation decision-making entities and processes
- Transportation funding structure

- Transportation trends
- Timeline of regional transportation milestones

Together, with the survey results, this report offers a resource to understanding issues and perceptions that can inform decision-making that will shape the region's transportation future.

## Map of six-county region



SACOG, Jeanie Hong, November 2017.



## decision-making entities and planning processes

The Capital Region, consisting of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties, coordinates and aligns transportation infrastructure and services through the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). SACOG, in turn, works with local governments, transit agencies, Caltrans, and the U.S. Department of Transportation to use transportation and land use taxpayer dollars where they are needed most.

In 2016, SACOG adopted a 20-year plan to spend \$35 billion in federal, state and local dollars to improve the regional transportation system. This plan, the **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**, focuses on five key transportation performance outcomes:

- Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on the region's roads
- Reducing the level of congestion and delay for all modes, but especially road congestion
- Increasing transit ridership and the share of trips made by public transit modes
- Increasing travel by non-motorized travel modes (bike and walk) and the share of trips made by those modes
- Improving the maintenance and operations of existing transportation assets

The MTP prioritizes projects that maintain, preserve, and make more efficient use of existing road and transit assets to help defer, or even eliminate, the need for some road capacity expansions. This emphasis on lower-cost operational improvements and right-sizing of road expansion projects is an important component that achieves strong performance benefits with lower funding levels. The result is a more multimodal transportation system that makes better use of existing capacity and supports the fix-it-first initiative of this plan.

## paying for transportation

Between 2012 and 2036, the region will spend \$35 billion in federal, state and local funds on transportation. The majority of those funds come from state and local sources, with only about 10 percent coming from federal sources.

One major source of funding comes from SB1, a landmark transportation bill signed by Governor Brown in April 2017. SB1 provides \$5 billion a year statewide, primarily for local streets and roads, and the state highway system. \$919 million will come to the 6-county Sacramento region, with \$744 million providing road maintenance and repair, \$151 million funding transit, about \$24 million supporting active transportation.

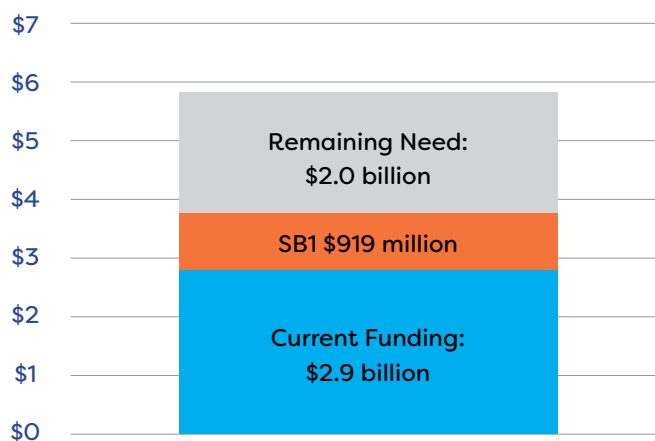
State sources, including a gas tax, make up the largest share of between 50 and 60 percent of road maintenance funding. The remaining comes from local sources including general funds, local sales taxes, and other assessments. Of all of the various sources of funding for road maintenance, gas taxes are the most significant, making up anywhere from one-third to more than half of a typical city or county's road maintenance budget.

Transit is funded primarily from local sources, with about 30 percent coming from federal and state, 30 percent from transit fares, and 30 percent through local taxes and fees. Both Sacramento County and Placer County tried to pass measures that would increase sales taxes to fund public transportation, Measure B and Measure M, but both measures lost by slim margins at the ballot box in November 2016.

## funding and policy challenges

SB1 and other funding sources fulfill part of our regional transportation funding needs, but not all. Prior to the passage of SB1, the gas tax rate had not changed since 1994. Investments fell behind as the tax did not keep up with inflation, or adjust to account for greater use of California's roadways or improved vehicle fuel efficiency. This and other factors have resulted in a \$2 billion funding gap.

**region streets & roads needs & revenues over 10 Years  
(in billions)**



Filling the gap in transportation for road maintenance will be up to local sourcing. Sacramento County has a sales tax that dedicates about ½ cent that contributes to road rehabilitation and maintenance, and Woodland and West Sacramento currently have general sales tax measures that contribute to transportation. For cities and counties without local sales taxes to help supplement funding for road maintenance, there is much greater reliance on federal and state funds as well as local general funds. Because these funds are not strictly dedicated to road maintenance that funding must compete with other local priorities such as roadway expansion, public transit, or other services paid for from general funds. This is a challenge for rural areas where they have miles of roads and not as many people.

Sacramento Regional Transit (SacRT) reports that they receive about five times less local funding than other similar-sized transit agencies. For example, 1/6 cent tax supports SacRT, compared to 3/4 cent in comparably sized Portland or 1/2 cent in San Diego. SB1 and cap and trade funding sources for transit are often competitive grant programs that require local match funding. Sacramento's relatively low level of local funding for transit puts our region at a competitive disadvantage for these programs.



## current transportation trends

From international to local, the transportation landscape is changing. Emerging technologies and applications have already transformed mobility – ride-sharing through Uber and Lyft began in the region in 2010 and already outranks public transit in frequency of use. Adding self-driving cars and other automations are not far off. Other

changes, from the way we work to our lifestyle priorities, have transportation implications. For example, as mobile devices and the “gig” economy have emerged, a demand for flexible hours and tele-commuting have increased. New electric cars, bikes, and transit offer cleaner transportation options, and housing prices statewide impact our cost of living. These considerations will affect how we live, travel, and work in the future.

### Timeline of transportation milestones in the Sacramento Region

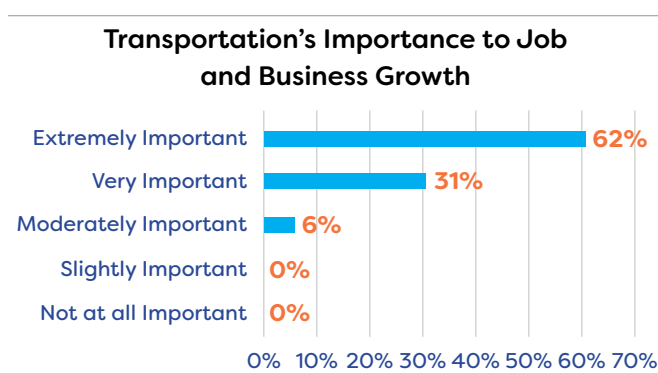
1960s	Capital City freeway opens
1967	Davis created the nation's first bike lane and installed the first bike traffic signal soon after
1987	Light rail opened
1991	Capital Corridor service started
2005	Capital Corridor tripled its service since inception
	Extension of Light Rail Gold Line to Folsom
	Davis becomes the first ever Platinum Level Bicycle Community
	e-tran, the public transit system in Elk Grove, began service
2008	Beginning of capital southeast connector for White Rock Road, a project funded out of prop 1B, first improvement on the connector
2010	Light Rail Green Line opens with service to Richards Blvd., and provides beginning of light rail to the airport
	First electric vehicle rebates are given in the Sacramento region
2011	Interstate 80 capacity improvements to remove the “80 bottleneck” from Placer/Sac County line to Highway 65 interchange, completed by the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency
2012	AB 1779 passed and enabled 8 counties in the San Joaquin Valley (including Sacramento) to form the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority to take over the administration and management of San Joaquin Rail Service
2013	Uber car service comes to metro Sacramento
	Lincoln bypass completed, reducing congestion in south Placer County
2015	Light Rail Blue Line extends service to Cosumnes River College
2017	Regional Bike Share Pilot, Tower Bridge Preview, begins
	Sacramento Valley Station is complete
2018	Full scale electric Bike Share to commence in Davis, Sacramento and West Sacramento
2022	Downtown/Riverfront Streetcar from West Sacramento to midtown scheduled to start operations



# Findings

## transportation infrastructure and economic prosperity

*SUMMARY | Transportation is the foundation for our region's economic prosperity. Across all respondents, almost all (93%) reported transportation infrastructure being 'very' or 'extremely' important for job and business growth. Almost no respondents thought it was 'slightly' or 'not' important.*



**Transportation infrastructure is seen as extremely or very important to job and business growth by most survey respondents.**

The reliance on the transportation system and interconnectivity across the region is highlighted when you look at where people live and work in the region. The map on page 13 illustrates these interconnections and makes clear that a highly functional transportation infrastructure is critical to the region's economic engine.



## Map of live and work locations of survey respondents

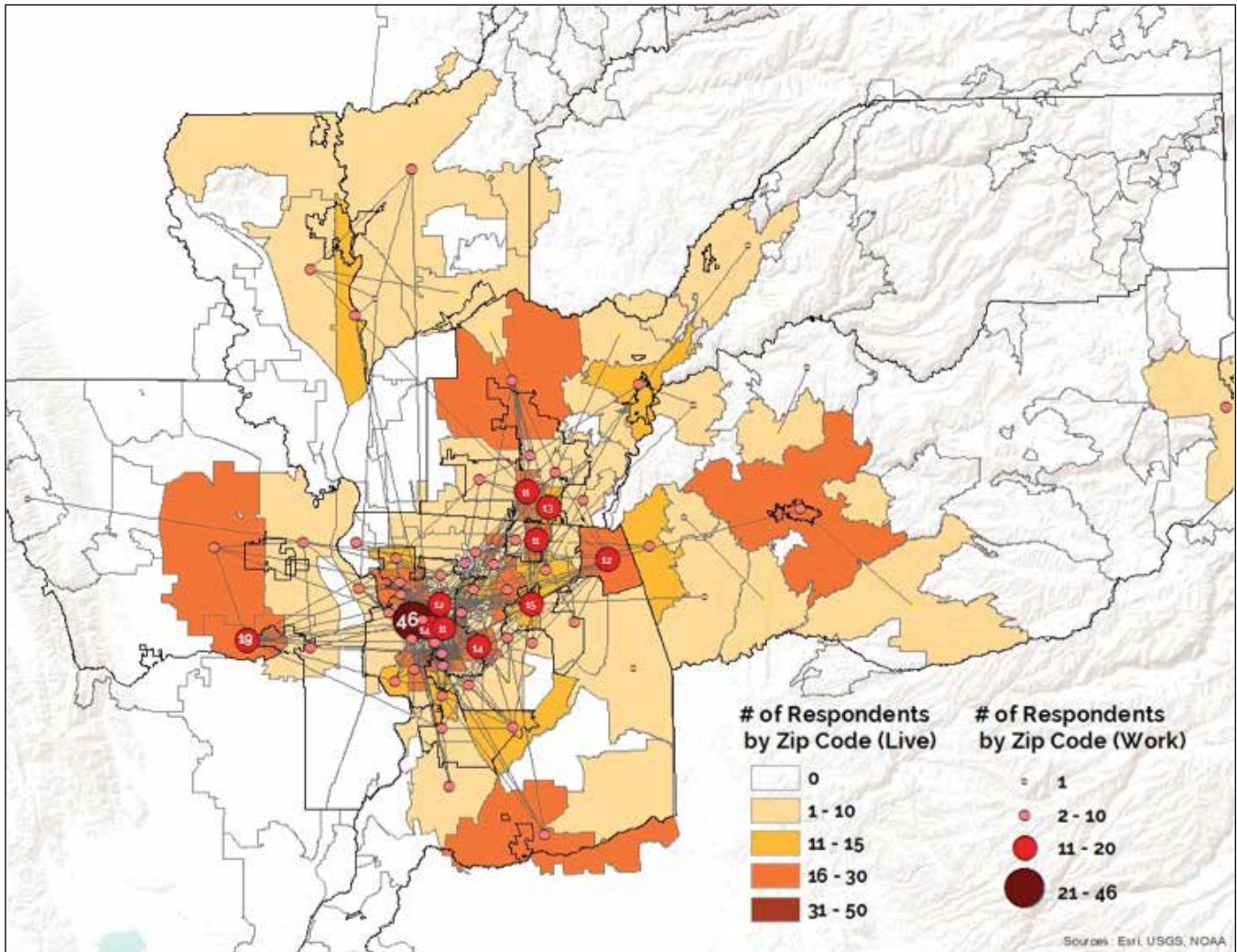


Figure 5

SACOG, Jeanie Hong, November 2017

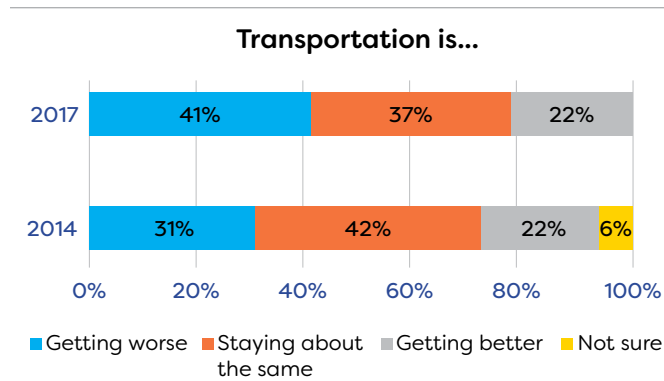


Figure 5 shows the movement across the region as respondents get from home to work and back each day. Colored census tracts, in increasingly intense colors for population concentrations, show where respondents live. The circles, getting larger for work location concentrations, show where respondents work. This map illustrates the importance of transportation systems to our economic growth and prosperity as a region, as well as the movement that occurs daily as people navigate the region for work.

# Transportation experiences

*SUMMARY | Despite the recognized importance of transportation to quality of life, job and business growth, most respondents think that transportation is “getting worse”, more so today than those who felt it was getting worse in a 2014 survey by SACOG asking the same question.*

## Is transportation getting worse, staying the same, or getting better?



“Getting worse” was the most cited category, although it is worth noting that 59 percent think that transportation is getting better or staying the same in this 2017 survey. Notably, public transportation users are slightly more optimistic than non-users about transportation: 70 percent of public transit users believe it’s the same or getting better compared to 61 percent for non-public transit users. Additionally, residents who live in more rural areas, who have a higher income, and who are older were more likely to think transportation is getting worse.

When asked this question by SACOG in 2014, respondents rated transportation more positively than they do today, with 31 percent noting that transportation is getting worse, compared to 41 percent in this poll.

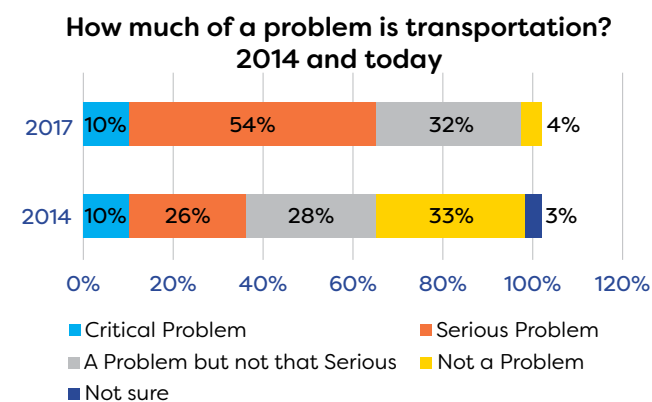
When asked if transportation is a “critical problem, serious problem, small problem, or not a problem”, 64 percent of respondents noted it as a critical or serious problem, compared to 2014 when 36 percent classified transportation as a critical or serious problem.

**10 percent more respondents said that transportation is getting worse in 2017 compared to respondents in 2014.**

1. SACOG Public Attitude Survey for 2016 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, conducted in 2014



## How much of a problem is transportation?



In this survey, more people living in suburban areas (68%) felt transportation was a critical/serious problem than in urban (60%) or rural (63%) areas. Black residents were least likely to see transportation as a problem, and were more likely to say transportation is getting better. Additionally, transportation is seen to be a more critical or serious problem compared to those who never use public transportation (66%) compared to those who at least sometimes use public transportation (57%).

**Those who use public transportation are less likely to say that transportation is getting worse over the last ten years or that transportation is a critical or serious problem in the region.**



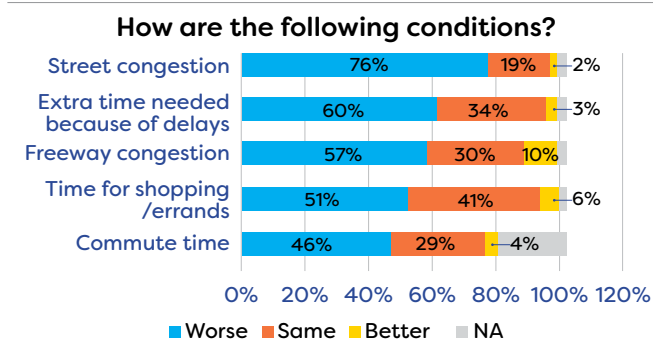
**The most serious reported transportation problems: Congestion and road conditions**

# Traffic congestion and commuter experience

**SUMMARY** | A majority of respondents felt that traffic congestion and the overall time required to travel has gotten worse over the last ten years. The likelihood that respondents are more pessimistic about traffic congestion and the time required in traveling increases with a person's level of income and their distance from urban centers. Almost half of the respondents noted that traffic congestion is at least somewhat of a barrier in obtaining or getting to work. Respondents identified work-at-home options and flexible work hours as desired employer incentives for reducing driving alone. A majority of the respondents would choose a small house with a short commute over a large house with a longer commute – a trend that is consistent across almost all subgroups.

Across all respondents, almost half (46%) reported their commute time has gotten worse over the last ten years and less than 5 percent reported commute time has gotten better.

## Are transportation conditions getting better, staying the same, or getting worse?



Those most likely to report that commute times have gotten worse include respondents with higher incomes, Whites and Hispanics, and Republicans. Democrats, Blacks, and lower income groups were more likely to say that commute times have stayed the same.

## Does traffic congestion create a barrier to obtaining or getting to work?

28 percent of all respondents mentioned that traffic congestion is a major barrier to obtaining or getting to work and another 20 percent said it was 'somewhat' of a barrier. Likewise, a long commute was seen as a major barrier (22%) or somewhat of a barrier (19%) to obtaining employment.

Additionally, respondents most frequently identified more work-at-home options (29%) and flexible hours (27%) as the employer incentives that would most influence their transportation choices. Transportation between public transit and destination (27%) and free guaranteed ride home (25%) were also highly desired employer incentives.

Across all respondents, a majority would rather have a shorter commute and smaller house (61%). This trend is consistent across groups, with slight expected variations in those who live in rural areas (56%), Blacks (51%), and Democrats (65%).

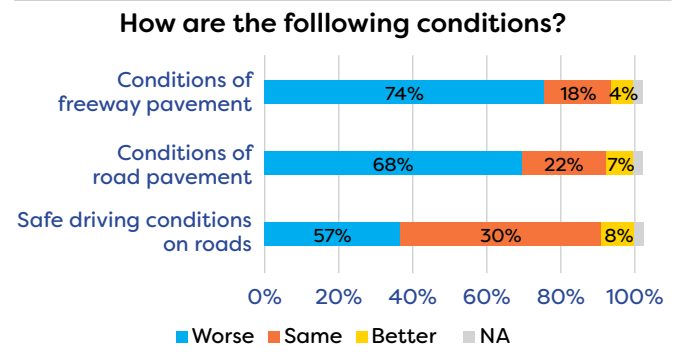
# Local road & highway conditions

*SUMMARY | The majority of respondents reported that pavement conditions for both local roads and highways have gotten worse and felt that there was a significant need for additional funding to repair them.*

The majority of respondents reported that the pavement condition on roads (68%) and highways (74%) has gotten worse. Respondents from rural areas are more likely to say the condition of pavement has gotten worse than are respondents from urban areas for both roads (75% compared to 61%) and highways (76% compared to 70%). Those in low-income groups were more likely to say conditions on roads have stayed the same than are those in high-income groups.

**Most respondents would rather have a shorter commute and a smaller house.**

## Are road conditions getting better, staying the same, or getting worse?

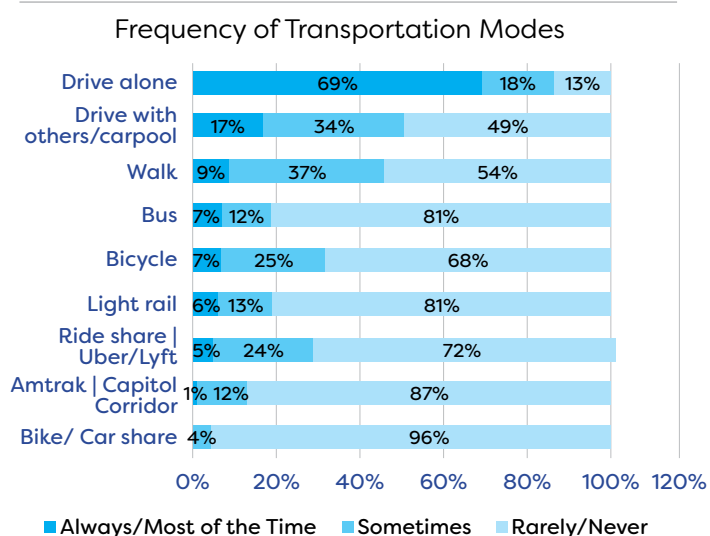




# Using transportation systems

*SUMMARY | Respondents throughout the region reported that among transportation options, they most frequently drive alone in their car, with 69% doing so always or most of the time. 31% of respondents use public transportation at least sometimes and over half drive with others/carpool at least sometimes. More people reported using ride sharing (e.g., Uber or Lyft) at least sometimes compared to using the bus or light rail. As expected, people living in rural and suburban areas were more likely to drive alone. The frequency of driving alone also increases with income.*

## Frequency of transportation modes



All modes of travel except driving and walking have decreased slightly since 2014, when SACOG released a similar study. Carpooling has seen the most significant drop, with 17 percent fewer respondents noting that they carpool at least sometimes. Nonetheless, a wide variety of transportation modes are used at least sometimes by a significant portion of respondents.



## Frequency of modes used at least sometimes, 2014 and 2017

	At least sometimes		
	2014	2017	change
Drive all the way there alone	83%	87%	4%
Drive with other people/Car pool/Vanpool	68%	51%	-17%
Take a bus	23%	19%	-4%
Take light rail	26%	20%	-6%
Ride a bicycle	33%	32%	-1%
Take Amtrak, the train also called Capital Corridor	18%	13%	-5%
Walk all the way	36%	46%	10%
Bike share, or car sharing	NA	4%	NA
Uber or Lyft	NA	29%	NA



# Public transportation use in Sacramento County

*SUMMARY | Almost one-third (33%) of respondents in Sacramento County use either a bus or light rail at least some of the time for their transportation. A consistent theme throughout the responses was safety, which was a top consideration in using (or not using) public transportation, and was consistently the most frequently noted aspect of public transit.*

Respondents use and perception of public transit is as follows:

- Overall, 19 percent of Sacramento County residents use a bus for transportation at least sometimes, and 26 percent use Light Rail at least some of the time.
- 30 percent of people who use at least one form of public transportation at least sometimes felt that local transportation was getting better, compared to 18 percent of non-public users.
- A majority of respondents said that they are at least somewhat familiar with public transportation stops near their work or home (36% said they were very familiar).
- Half of the respondents felt that their personal safety on public transit has gotten worse.
- A majority of non-public transit users say the reasons why they do not use it is because they do not know what services are available (56%) and that it doesn't feel safe (51%).
- For those that do use public transportation, the most frequently provided reasons include avoiding inconveniences of commuting such as paying for parking (41%) and traffic hassles (41%).

## Reasons for using and not using public transportation in Sacramento County

Reasons for NOT using public transport	
I don't know what services are available	56%
Doesn't feel safe	51%
Other	43%
Too far from home or destination	42%
Not comfortable	35%
Not clean	32%
Doesn't run when needed	27%
Too complicated	21%
Too expensive	17%
Area not served	13%
Takes too long	0%
Reasons for USING Public Transportation	
Avoid paying for parking	41%
Avoid traffic hassles	40%
Area is well served	21%
Cheaper	19%
More convenient	14%
Clean, comfortable option	10%
Employer reimbursement	5%



# Regional transportation priorities

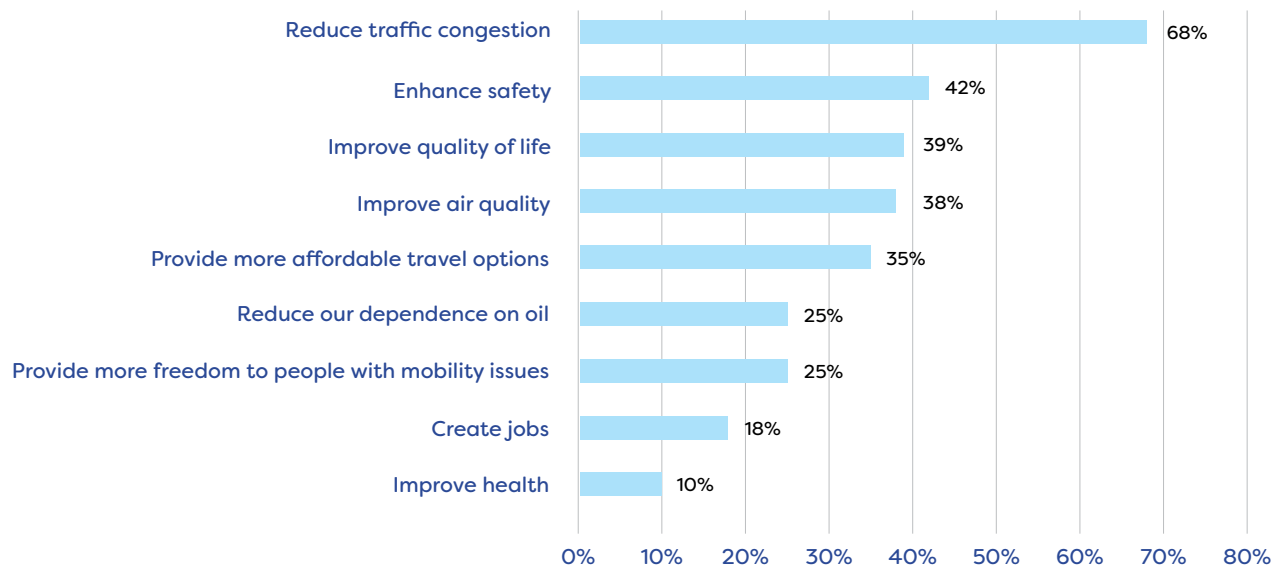
*SUMMARY | Respondents said that their top priorities for transportation improvements are reducing traffic congestion and improving local roads and highways. This is not surprising given that two-thirds of respondents drive alone all or most of the time and that respondents reported congestion and road conditions as the most serious regional transportation problem.*

## improvements to roads and freeways

Two-thirds of all respondents felt that transportation improvements should reduce traffic congestion, and 42 percent thought they should enhance safety. Black respondents felt safety was less of a priority than other groups, with 24 percent marking it as a priority compared to 49 percent of Hispanic and 42 percent of White respondents.

## Reasons for transportation investments

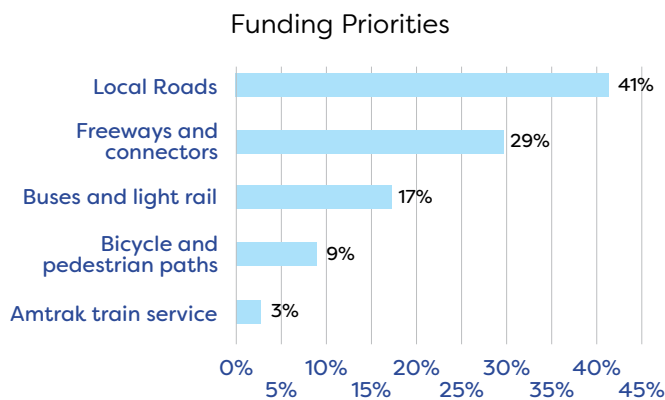
Most important reasons that policy makers should consider when spending on transportation improvements



## types of transportation most in need of improvement

Respondents identified local roads as having the greatest need for improvement, followed by freeways and connectors, and buses and light rail. Those with higher incomes and education levels are most likely to prioritize funding improvements on freeways and connectors.

### Funding priorities by transportation type



The majority of respondents reported that there is at least some need for additional funding for road improvements (93%) and highway improvements (90%). Republican respondents were more likely to cite a greater need for funding for road improvements, as were respondents living in rural areas outside of Sacramento.

If funds were made available for local road improvement, two-thirds (64%) of respondents would prefer that existing roads be repaired and only 6 percent preferred new roads. In terms of freeway and connector improvements, 40 percent would like to see the repair of existing infrastructure, 36 percent would like to see vehicle capacity increased on existing highways, and 25 percent would like to see new highways/connectors built.

## improvements to public transit

The improvement that would most encourage public transportation use was a service that was close by and “takes me where I need to go” (23%). Other top improvements were public transportation that takes less time (17%) and feels safer (16%). Nine percent of respondents said they were currently satisfied with public transit, and 8 percent said that there were no improvements that would encourage them to use public transportation.



## Improvements to encourage public transportation

Improvements that would encourage public transportation use	
Service that is nearby and takes me where I need to go	23%
Public transportation that takes less time	17%
Public transportation that feels safer	16%
Currently satisfied	9%
There are no improvements that would cause me to use public transportation	8%
Public transportation that is cheaper	8%
More service at times that I need it	7%
If I knew more about it	6%
Public transportation that is more clean	4%
Public transportation that is more comfortable	3%

When asked which transportation category was in need of the most improvement, 21 percent of Sacramento County respondents identified buses and light rail. When asked the extent of the need for additional funding in these areas, 41 percent said that there was a great need and 37 percent said that there was some need.

The most frequently identified improvements in buses and light rail for Sacramento County respondents are security and safety measures (41%) and expanded routes within cities (40%). Improving connectivity across the region (35%) and increasing the frequency of services (24%) were other areas of preferred improvements.

### Preferred improvements in buses and light rails

Preferred Improvements in buses and light rail	
Security and safety measures	41%
Expand routes within cities	40%
Improve connectivity across region	35%
Increase frequency of service	24%
Make fares more affordable	21%
Cleanliness	18%
Increase reliability of services	12%
Improve quality through repair and replacement	9%



# Conclusion

This public opinion survey is the second in an ongoing series of studies conducted by Valley Vision, together with ISR, to gather insights into residents' views about a wide variety of important regional issues affecting quality of life and livability. The findings outlined in this report provide valuable information to local policy makers, funders/investors, and lead organizations involved in advancing transportation and mobility infrastructure for our communities. Valley Vision believes that having a greater understanding of residents' perspectives about their transportation uses, needs and challenges, will serve to drive policy, investments, and regional goal-setting in an informed direction.

Based on these survey findings, following is a summary of leading observations by Valley Vision's Public Opinion Poll Advisory Committee:

## 1. Increase the region's prosperity through coordinated transportation and infrastructure planning

Regional attitudes reflect that most respondents felt that transportation infrastructure is important for job and business growth in the region. Regional growth and quality of life are directly tied to effective transportation planning and coordinated decision-making. Enhancing mobility and improving the region's transportation experience will be determined by the investments we make and policies that meet the needs of individuals, the economy, and the environment.

The region has already begun work on the Shared Economic Prosperity Plan, an effort that will link our economic prosperity with transportation policy. The Brookings Institution, a national public policy research center, is using their inclusive economy model to work with the region's major economic development entities. As part of this effort, organizations like Greater Sacramento Economic Council, Sacramento Metro Chamber, and Valley Vision are working closely with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) and other planning entities to align economic interests

with infrastructure planning, illustrating the way that regional leadership recognizes and is prioritizing the unique role of transportation in the region's economic success. We will draw on findings from this transportation survey to inform the Shared Economic Prosperity Plan and other planning efforts.

## 2. Reduce congestion

Road congestion and road improvements are cited as the main concerns of survey respondents. However, considering that two-thirds of regional residents drive alone all or most of the time as reported in this survey, reducing congestion will be difficult to achieve through road improvements alone. In fact, the more the region is able to diversify transportation mode use, the more successful we will be in relieving traffic congestion. These modes include bus, light rail, carpooling, biking and walking. For example, research shows that for every 1% increase in commuting by transit there is a 5% decrease in congestion per miles traveled. A significant finding worth noting is that a majority of respondents show that they are willing to try other modes of transportation.





Valley Vision believes this presents an important opportunity. Building on residents' willingness to increase their use of public and active transit and other congestion-reducing actions is imperative to addressing the issues most cited in this survey. First, perceptions of inadequate service times and unsafe conditions on public transit – noted by respondents as key barriers to public transportation use – must be overcome so that the region can benefit from a public transit system that serves the needs of residents .

Whether perception or reality, transit systems recognize these issues as impediments to increased ridership. That's why SacRT has been focusing on safety and security to improve the customer experience. SacRT, which operates in Sacramento County, has dedicated itself to understanding the root concerns with riding and what customers and noncustomers are experiencing or perceiving about cleanliness, safety and security. SacRT has also focused on decreasing fare evasion and reducing nuisance behavior in the system by significantly increasing staff on trains and at stations. Recent customer outreach efforts by SacRT emphasize the agency's commitment to a clean, safe, and convenient experience. These efforts aim to expand awareness, increase ridership and to ensure that light rail is a viable travel option for everyone.

However, overturning these concerns while improving service times and frequencies—also an interest of survey respondents—will require more investment. Public transit operators have limited opportunities to secure funding from state or federal sources and operations are largely funded

by local sources. Increasing levels of funding for public transit is key to making the types of service improvements and expansions that survey respondents want.

Voters will have opportunities to decide whether to increase funding to support public transit. Local leaders are looking to 2020 as the likely time period to pursue a ballot measure asking Sacramento County voters to approve a transportation sales tax increase. Drawing these connections between economic prosperity, transportation infrastructure, quality of life, and congestion relief strategies can help voters better understand critical funding gaps and influence support for tax financing measures. This will be necessary if the region is to realize a transit system that serves the needs of the community.

### 3. Plan a transportation system fit for the region's future

The world of transportation is rapidly changing, so much that transportation options ten years from now might look very different than our options today. As we understand the needs of Capital Region residents, we must also consider that the infrastructure we build today must support the transportation needs of tomorrow.

There are some significant ways that the Capital Region is preparing for that future:

- **Investment:** As part of its national settlement, Volkswagen will invest \$44 million in the City of Sacramento as a "Green City," to support zero emission vehicles. This investment will help solidify the Sacramento Region as a model for electric and zero emission vehicle infrastructure.

- **Innovation:** The Sacramento Region is home to UC Davis, a pioneer in innovative and clean transportation studies through the Institute for Transportation Studies and other research entities. Additionally, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) is an international leader on low carbon and low emission transportation. There exists a cluster of the automotive industry in the region also driving innovation and leveraging regional research and policy advancements. The innovative and future-looking orientation from research, policy, and industry will guide the region and provide international leadership in transportation innovation.



- **Influence:** Transportation innovation is currently a focus of regional political leadership. Mayor Steinberg has called for Sacramento to be an industry center for alternative energy production and electric and autonomous vehicles. Additionally, as the state capital of California and an international leader in clean energy policy, Sacramento is well-positioned to be a test ground for new technologies and a policy leader in ensuring equitable and innovative approaches to deployment.

Integrating transportation infrastructure planning, enacting congestion reducing strategies, and maximizing assets like those described above creates a unique opportunity for the Sacramento Region at a time when transportation improvements are of increasing importance. As the region's population continues to grow, our ability to coordinate planning, inject new investment, and assert policy actions are vital to ensuring regional transportation systems serve the needs of residents today and well into the future.





# Survey methodology

In cooperation with Valley Vision the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at California State University, Sacramento created an online panel of survey respondents (N=2,237) for the purpose of conducting quarterly surveys of the Sacramento region (Sacramento County and specific zip-codes in Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado, San Joaquin, Solano, Sutter, and Yuba counties).

This final respondent group from the six counties consisted of 788 individuals, with an overall margin of error of 4.7%. Responses for the survey were analyzed according to a number of factors, including how often a respondent used public transportation, current household income, political identification, and others. In addition to providing descriptive statistics of individual responses, results were reported with any statistically significant differences in sub-populations.

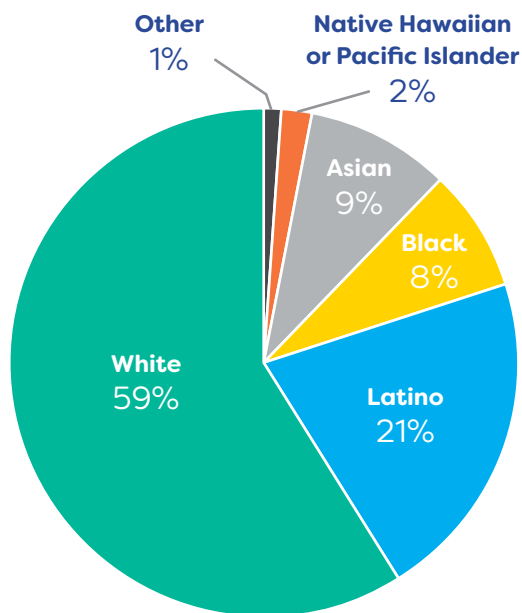
**Responses for the survey were analyzed according to a number of factors, including how often a respondent used public transportation, current household income, political identification, and others.**

After soliciting input from several community stakeholders, Valley Vision created a survey to measure public attitudes regarding transportation issues in the Sacramento region. Using the extended area panel, ISR administered the online transportation survey in September 2017. Of the 2,237 panelists, 939 completed the survey during that time frame, with an average response time of 10 minutes and an overall response rate of 42%.

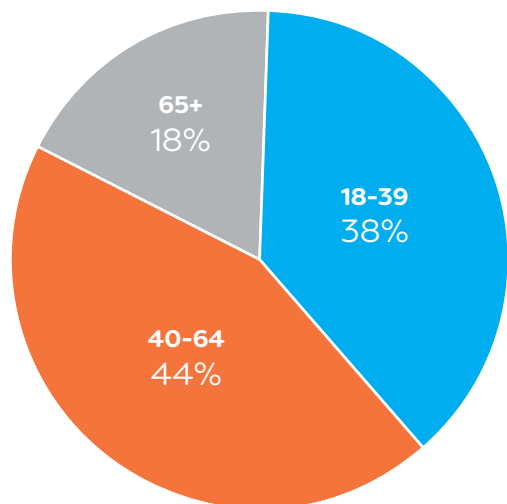
To ensure that the sample represents the population in the region, the ISR employed random probability sampling, multiple language translations, and demographic weighting. To account for any systematic differences between respondents and the full panel, the respondent group was weighted by age, education, race, and gender to match the panel within a 5% overall margin. Of the 939 weighted respondents, ISR further targeted the residents from El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties. These respondents were then calibrated to census data based on county population, gender, age, race, and education.



## Racial Make up



## Age



## Appendix A

### Panel Demographics

#### Geography

61%	Sacramento County
15%	Placer County
8%	El Dorado County
9%	Yolo County
3%	Yuba County

#### Gender

Male	49%
Female	51%

#### Income

<\$30K	26%
\$30-50K	14%
\$50-75K	20%
\$75-100K	19%
\$100-150K	14%
\$150-200K	5%
>\$200K	2%

#### Political Party ID

51%	Democrat
28%	Republican
21%	Independent

## Sources

### 2016 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy

[https://www.sacog.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/O\\_-\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](https://www.sacog.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/O_-_executive_summary.pdf)

### Friends of Light Rail, How it Happened

<http://www.friendsoflightrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/How-It-Happened.pdf>



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