



# What Maryland Voters REALLY Think About Transportation

January 2025

(It's NOT what you think)



## Two Recent Surveys Make it Clear Where Marylanders Stand on Transportation

- 2022 Greater Washington Issues Survey (OpinionWorks)
  - *Polled random sample of 868 adult residents*
- 2024 Maryland Statewide Issues Survey (Gonzales Polls)
  - *Polled random sample of 820 Maryland registered voters*

Both Polls' Findings – highly consistent with earlier poll results from 2015—2022



## 3 Top Takeaways:

1. **There is a HUGE disconnect** between political insiders' perceptions and the reality of public opinion on transportation issues in Maryland.
2. **Marylanders are MUCH more supportive of improving roads and bridges** than some Maryland elected officials assume – *Related Fact: Marylanders are NOT getting out of their cars. They are driving MORE (and using transit less) than before COVID. Over 90% of us use Maryland's road network to get around.*
3. **Marylanders REALLY want more investment in road maintenance and traffic relief** (they prioritize these over all other transportation investments) and a majority can even be persuaded to pay more in taxes to get it.

6 key data points tell the whole story...



## **Point 1:**

**Transportation is a  
TOP State and  
Regional Concern**

## Marylanders Think Transportation Funding is Very Important

- 95% of Marylanders think Infrastructure Funding is important
- 61% say “VERY” important.
- Support is overwhelming across party lines and in every demographic

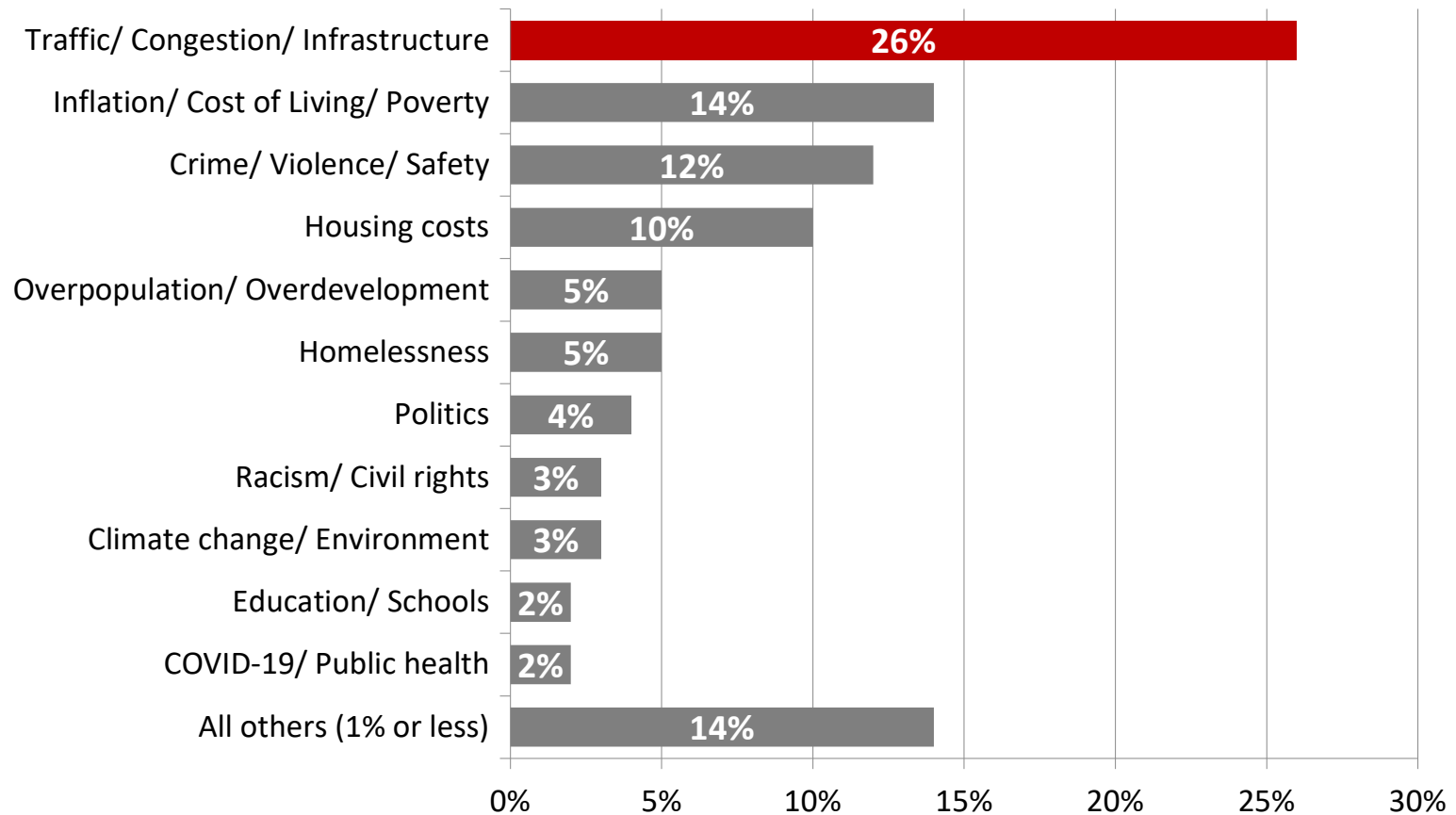
### Transportation Infrastructure Funding in Maryland

An overwhelming 95% of Marylanders think that it is important for the State to invest in improving its transportation infrastructure...61% say it’s “very” important and 34% say it is “somewhat” important to invest in transportation.

<b>Transportation Funding</b>	<b><u>Important</u></b>	<b><u>Not Important</u></b>
Statewide	95%	5%
Democrat	99%	1%
Republican	85%	15%
Independent	99%	1%
White	93%	7%
African-American	99%	1%
Women	95%	5%
Men	95%	5%

Source: Gonzales Polls, September 2024, N=820 Registered Voters

# Greatest Long-Term Regional Challenges



**In your opinion, what is the greatest long-term issue or challenge facing the Greater Washington region? (Open-ended; categorized responses shown.)**

*Source: OpinionWorks, August 2022, N=868 adult residents*



## **Point 2:**

**To Voters, Road & Bridge  
Maintenance and Traffic  
Relief are the Top Issues**

## Most Important Transportation Needs: Road/Bridge Maintenance & Traffic Relief

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*“Which of the following is the MOST important transportation need that Maryland should address...if you had to choose just one, which would it be?” (Rotated)*

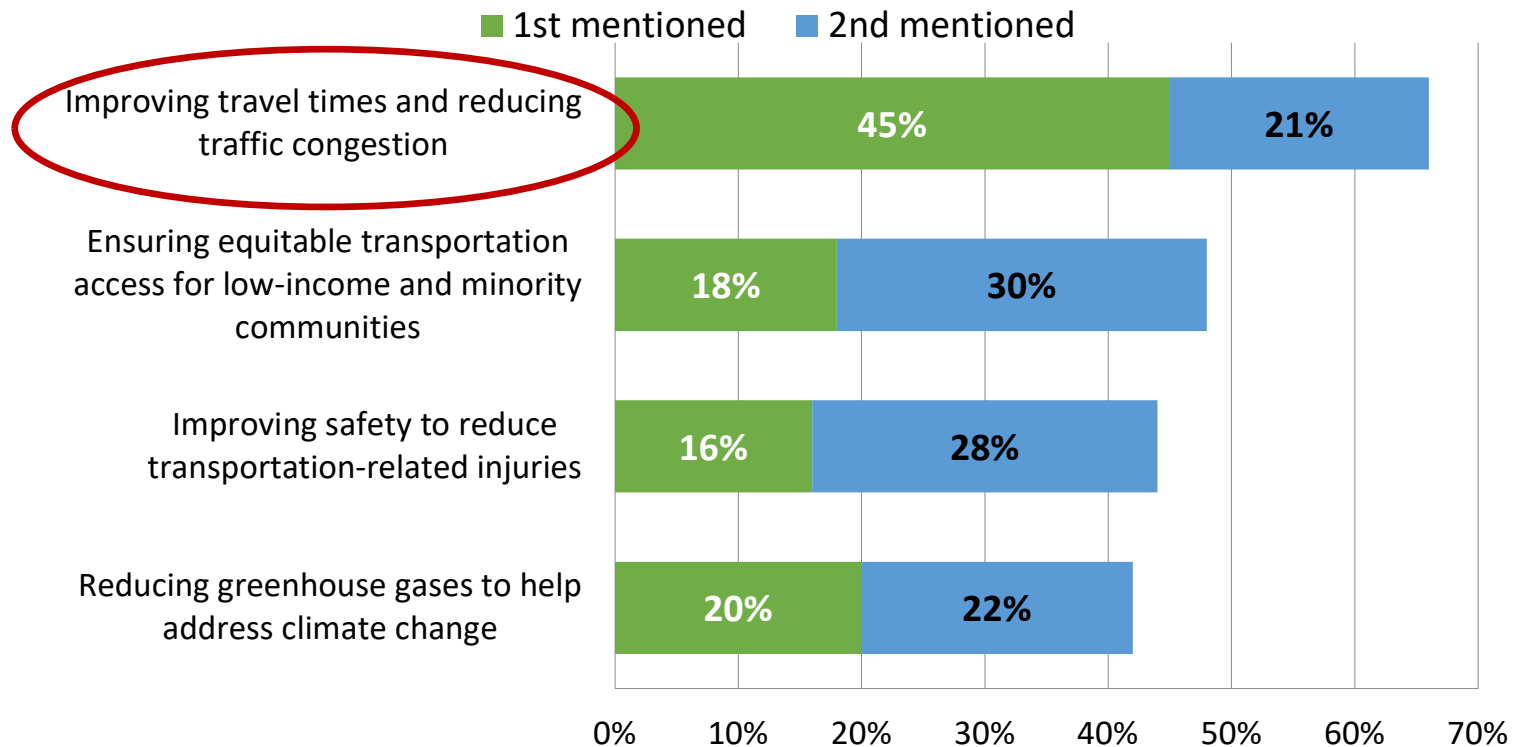
- **Improving maintenance of roads and bridges: 46%**
- **Reducing traffic congestion and delays: 26%**
- **Providing more travel & transportation options: 19%**
- **Improving maintenance of bus & transit facilities: 5%**

*Source: Gonzales Polls, September 2024, N=820 Registered Voters*



# Most Important Transportation Goals

(Combined 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice rankings)



Leaders of the Washington region have adopted a 25-year transportation plan that guides future road and transit projects. This plan focuses on achieving specific goals. Which of these goals would you rank as most important, and which one is second most important?

Source: OpinionWorks, August 2022, N=868 adult residents

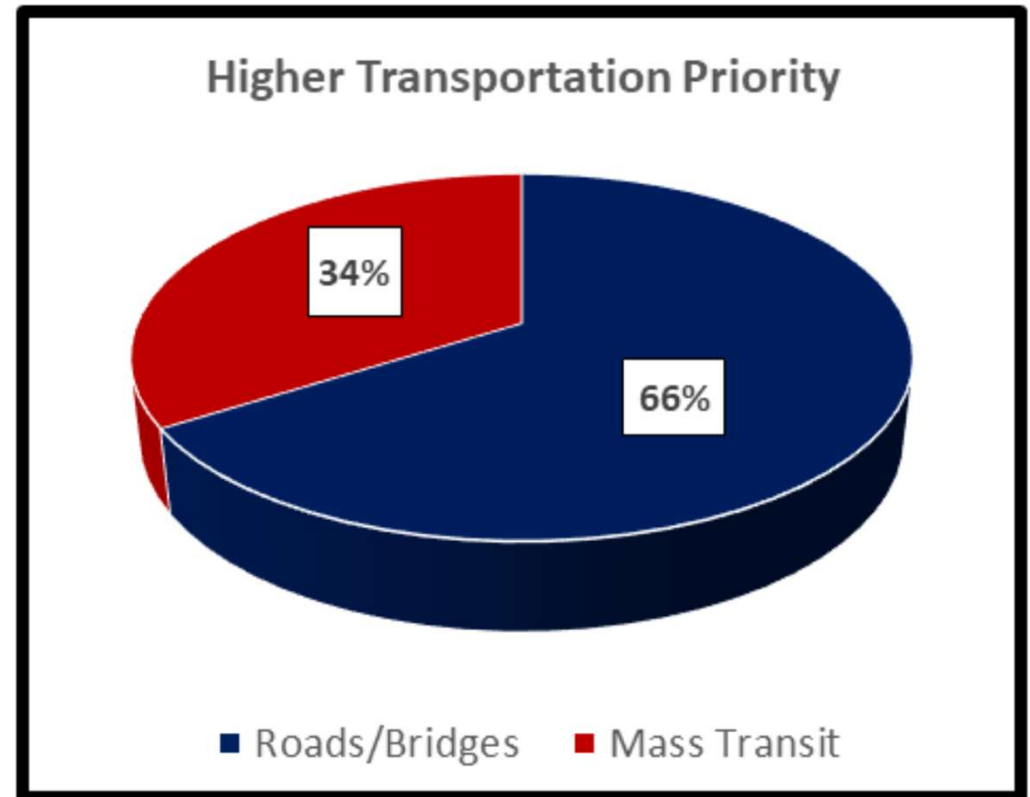


## **Point 3:**

**Marylanders Now Place  
a Higher Priority on  
Roads & Bridges than  
Transit**

## Marylanders Place a Higher Priority on Roads & Bridges Than Transit

- **66% of Marylanders say maintaining and improving state roads and bridges** should receive the higher priority when it comes to transportation funding
- 34% say maintaining and improving mass transit, such as buses, light rail and MARC trains
- A majority of voters in nearly every demographic group believe roads and bridges should receive the higher priority



Source: Gonzales Polls, September 2024, N=820 Registered MD Voters

# Maryland Officials Have Exactly the OPPOSITE Priorities

- The Daft Capital Budget (CTP) CUT state funding for roads and bridges by 23%, a reduction of more than \$1.6B, from last year (Note: some cuts have since been restored)
- Included **NO** major new road or bridge improvements that address congestion in any significant way
- Would INCREASE capital funding for MTA by 8% and for WMATA by 2%, a combined increase of **\$442M** in new transit funding compared to last year
- Would spend **\$8.1B** on the mode 5% of Marylanders use; only **\$5.7B** on the mode 95% of Marylanders use (and name as their top priority)
- Any wonder why voters are frustrated?

Exhibit 3  
Comparison of Six-year Programmed Spending by Mode  
Fiscal 2024-2030  
(\$ in Millions)

	2024 CTP	Draft 2025 CTP	Change	% Change
State Highway Administration	\$7,322.9	\$5,671.4	-\$1,651.5	-22.6%
Maryland Port Administration	1,603.6	1,445.3	-158.3	-9.9%
Maryland Aviation Administration	1,131.6	1,044.9	-86.7	-7.7%
The Secretary's Office	171.2	152.3	-18.9	-11.0%
Motor Vehicle Administration	95.8	95.9	0.1	0.1%
WMATA	3,165.6	3,236.9	71.3	2.3%
Maryland Transit Administration	4,513.5	4,886.5	373.0	8.3%
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$18,004.2</i>	<i>\$16,533.2</i>	<i>-\$1,471.0</i>	<i>-8.2%</i>
State Aid	2,152.4	2,324.5	172.1	8.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,156.6</b>	<b>\$18,857.7</b>	<b>-\$1,298.9</b>	<b>-6.4%</b>

CTP: Consolidated Transportation Program  
WMATA: Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Source: MD Dept. of Legislative Services, 2025 Issue Papers, p.106



## **Point 4:**

**Marylanders  
Overwhelmingly SUPPORT  
Major Road & Bridge  
Improvement Projects**

## Marylanders Support Major Bridge & Highway Improvements

- **71% of Marylanders favor replacing the ALB and adding new HOT lanes to I-270** (including 73% of Democrats; 41% “Strongly” favor, only 7% “Strongly” oppose)
- **60% favor adding new HOT lanes and improved bus service to the Southside portion of the Beltway** (69% of Democrats, 35% strongly favor, only 8% strongly oppose)



Photo: Farnham

**TTF** TOGETHER for  
TRANSPORTATION  
FUNDING

**71%** of  
Marylanders  
favor replacing  
the American  
Legion Bridge  
and adding  
express lanes  
to I-270.

Learn more: [www.TogetherForTransportationFunding.org](http://www.TogetherForTransportationFunding.org)

Source: Gonzales Polls, September 2024, N=820 Registered Voters



**Point 5:**

**There is a Way Forward  
on Transportation  
Funding**

# Nearly Half of Marylanders Would Pay More in Taxes for Better Roads

- 49% of Maryland voters would be willing to pay a little more for **better roads and bridges** (65% of Democrats, 28% of Republicans)
- Support drops to 44% who would be willing to pay a little more for **transit improvements**

## New Road Projects

Among voters, 49% say they would be willing to pay a little more in taxes if they knew the State could make the aforementioned road and traffic improvements happen, while 48% would not be willing to pay a little more in taxes, with 3% giving no response.

Taxes – New Road Projects	<u>Yes, Willing</u>	<u>No, Not Willing</u>
Statewide	49%	48%
Women	54%	43%
Men	43%	53%
Democrat	65%	34%
Republican	28%	63%
Independent	32%	64%
White	43%	53%
African American	63%	35%
Other	44%	51%

Source: Gonzales Polls, September 2024, N=820 Registered Voters



# Five Key Messages Effectively Sway Marylanders to Support New Revenues for Transportation:

- 1. Reduce Accident Rates** - Maryland has a 3.3-billion-dollar backlog of numerous roads, bridges and transit facilities that are aging and obsolete. Recent events, such as the Key Bridge collapse, underscore the importance of upgrading and repairing infrastructure to keep our transportation networks in good condition. Improved infrastructure can reduce accident rates and prevent tragic loss of life. **71% more likely to support funding increase, 43% much more likely** (Dems +82%, African Americans +87%).
- 2. Generate Economic Growth** - Transportation investment is crucial for Maryland's economy and our ability to attract stable, high-paying jobs. For every dollar we spend on transportation projects, we get 3 to 4 dollars back in new economic growth, while generating tens of thousands of high-paying construction jobs for Maryland workers. **69% more likely to support funding increase, 41% much more likely** (Dems/African Americans +81%).
- 3. VA and PA Investment** - Other states like Virginia and Pennsylvania are investing much more in their transportation infrastructure, and Maryland is falling further and further behind. Reports show that Maryland's infrastructure is deteriorating in condition and reliability. **64% more likely to support funding increase, 37% much more likely** (Dems +77%, African Americans +78%).
- 4. Improve Traffic Flow** - Reports show that Maryland's traffic congestion on roads and bridges is worsening each year. Several new projects have been proposed that would significantly improve traffic flow, but state leaders have continually cut this type of funding. **62% more likely to support funding increase, 36% much more likely** (Dems +72%, African Americans +77%).
- 5. Projects Delayed, Cost Billions** - Major projects like the Baltimore Red Line, a new American Legion Bridge, improvements to I-270 and US 15, and other essential initiatives can only move forward if Maryland secures additional funding. Without this, these projects will be delayed for years, costing taxpayers billions more in the long run. **61% more likely to support funding increase, 37% much more likely** (Dems +74%, African Americans +78%).

*Source: Gonzales Polls, September 2024, N=820 Registered Voters*

## Majority of Marylanders Would Pay More in Taxes for Better Roads & Transit After Hearing Those Messages

- 55% of Maryland voters would be willing to pay more in taxes for **better infrastructure** (71% of Democrats, 36% of Republicans)
- Majority of men (53%) and women (57%) support
- Support strongest in Baltimore (66%) and DC suburbs (63%)

Maryland Statewide Survey, September 2024

Gonzales Polls

*QUESTION: Tax Willingness – **Informed** Now, I'd like to ask you again...if you knew that the Maryland could significantly reduce traffic congestion, upgrade infrastructure, and enhance transit service by investing in new road and transit projects, would you be willing to pay a little more in taxes to make those investments happen, or not?*

<u>TAX WILLINGNESS - INFORMED</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes, willing	449	54.8 %
No, not willing	344	42.0 %
No answer	27	3.3 %
Total	820	100.0 %

- **21%** of those initially “not willing” to invest in road projects **become “willing”** after hearing reasons to increase transportation funding

Source: Gonzales Polls, September 2024, N=820 Registered Voters

## Most Popular Options: P3s, Regional Authorities, 1-cent Sales Tax Increase *(IF Dedicated to Transportation)*

- 66% would consider using Public-private-partnerships (P3s) to finance projects
- 65% would consider using local tax dollars to fund projects (i.e. through regional transportation authority)
- 53% of Maryland voters would be willing to support a 1-cent sales tax increase to fund transportation (Dems 66%)
- Lower levels of support for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Fee (only 36% willing); Gas tax increase (only 35% willing) – NOT POPULAR OPTIONS WITH THE PUBLIC

	Yes, Consider	No, Not Consider
Allowing more private investment by using public-private partnerships	66%	30%
Allowing local jurisdictions to fund projects using local tax dollars	65%	29%
Raising the state sales tax by 1-cent to be spent only on needed transportation improvements.	53%	44%
Introducing a fee that charges motorists based on annual Vehicle Miles Traveled	36%	58%
Raising the motor fuel tax (gas tax) when average prices drop below a certain level	35%	61%

Source: Gonzales Polls, September 2024, N=820 Registered Voters

# **The 3 Most Popular Solutions Would Close Maryland's Funding Gap**

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Maryland is facing a HUGE transportation funding shortfall of over \$1.6 Billion a year over the next 6 years.

So how much would the three new revenue sources that most voters would be willing to support yield for new infrastructure investments?

## **New Revenue Options with Majority Support:**

- **Adding 1% Sales Tax for Transportation:**
- **Regional Authorities/Using Local Tax Dollars:**
- **Using P3s to Finance Major Projects:**

## **Annual Revenue (est.)**

**\$1.0 Billion**

**\$400 Million**

**\$4 Billion or more\***

**\*(Over next 6 years)**

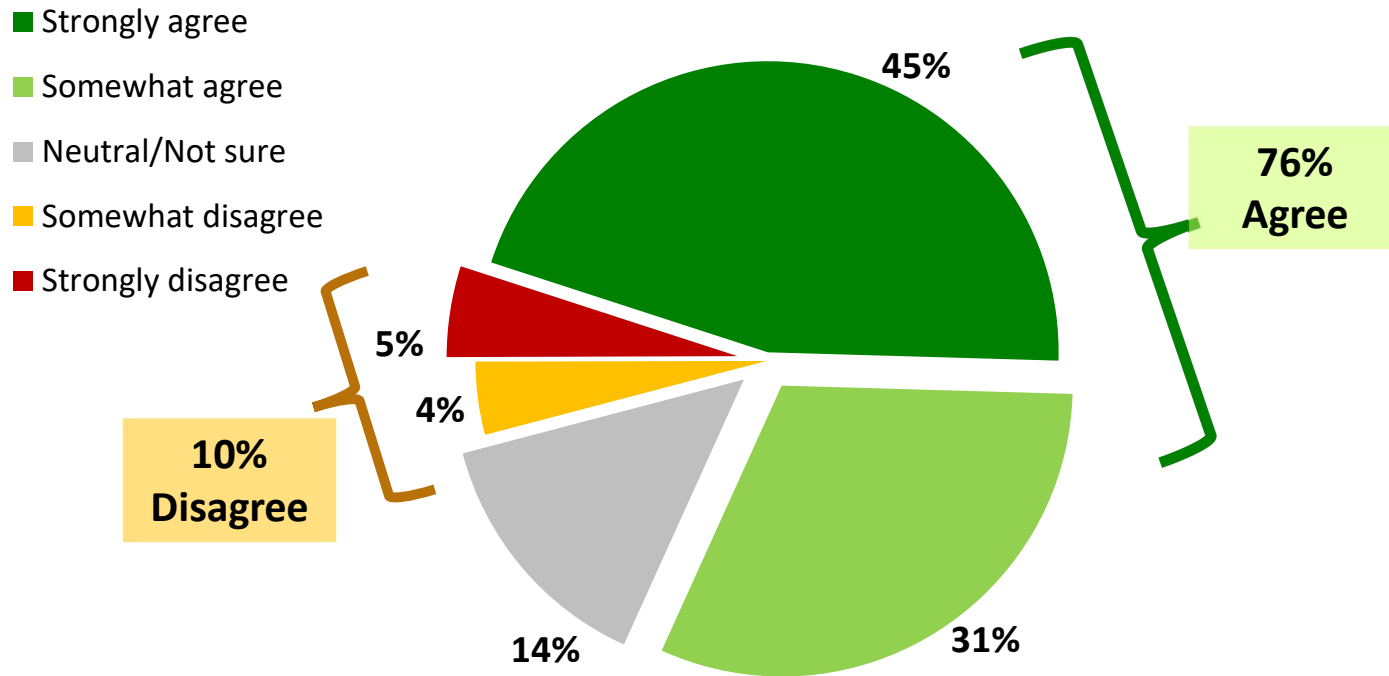
*Source: Gonzales Polls, September 2024, N=820 Registered Voters*



## **Point 6:**

**Marylanders Think Climate Impacts Should be Considered (but Give it a LOWER Priority than Traffic Relief, Equity or Safety)**

# Climate Change Impacts Should be Considered



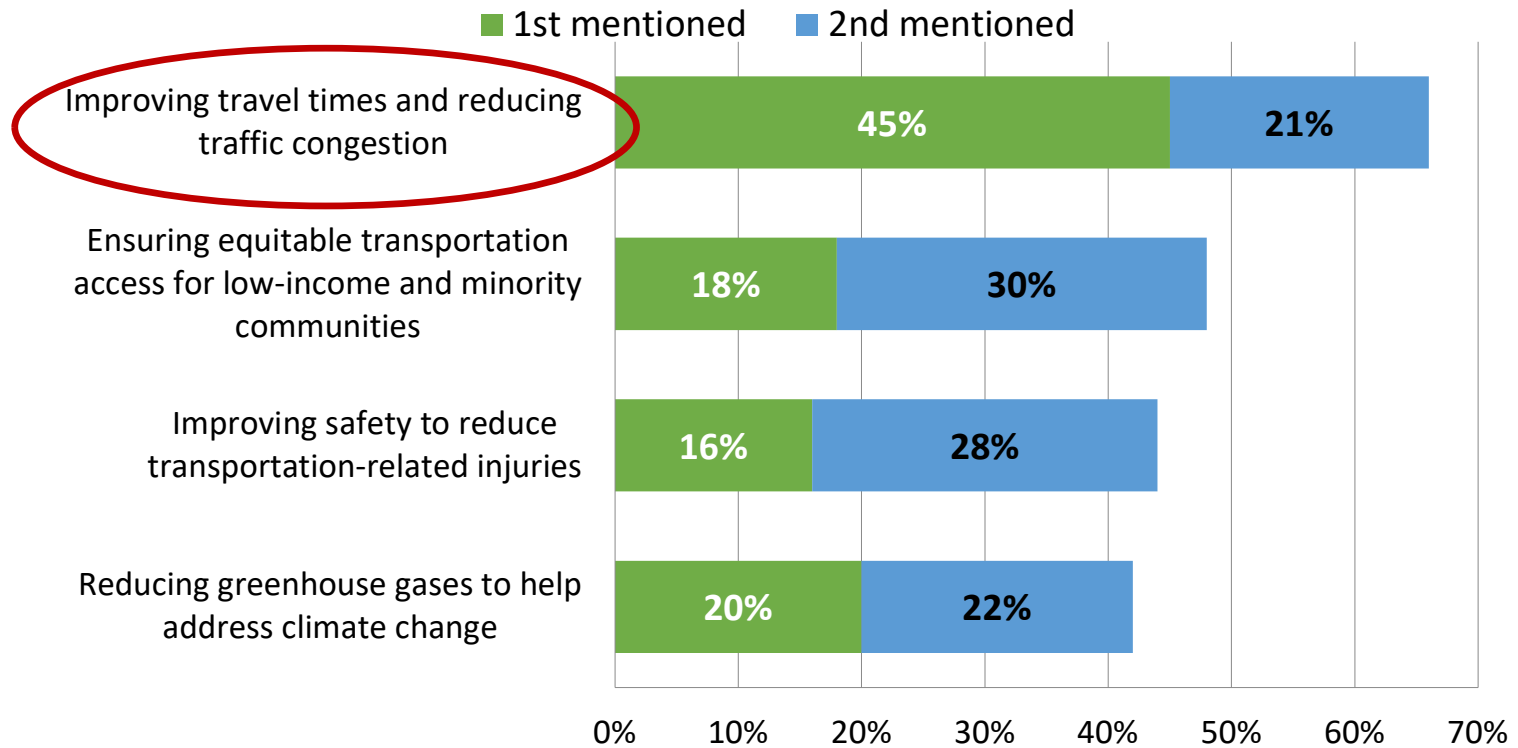
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**Elected officials need to consider the impacts of climate change when planning for transportation in the future.**

Source: OpinionWorks, August 2022, N=868 adult residents

# Most Important Transportation Goals

(Combined 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice rankings)

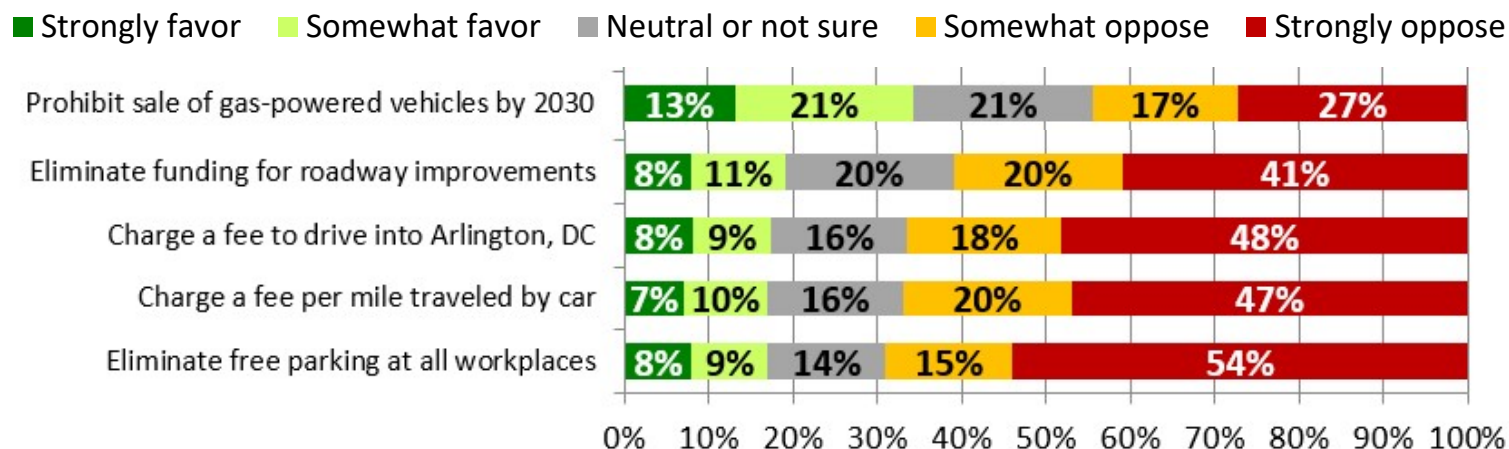


Leaders of the Washington region have adopted a 25-year transportation plan that guides future road and transit projects. This plan focuses on achieving specific goals. Which of these goals would you rank as most important, and which one is second most important?

Source: OpinionWorks, August 2022, N=868 adult residents

# Some Climate-first Strategies Are Deeply Unpopular With the Public

*Rankings based on favorability*



Following are several major strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that regional transportation planners are considering. Please say if you strongly favor, somewhat favor...

**Prohibit the sale of gas-powered vehicles by 2030: 34% favor/44% oppose.**

**Eliminate all funding for roadway widening and improvements to discourage car travel: 19% favor/61% oppose.**

**Charge a fee to drive into Arlington and DC: 17% favor/66% oppose.**

**Charge a fee of 5 to 10 cents per mile traveled by car within the Washington region: 17% favor/67% oppose.**

**Eliminate all free parking at workplaces across the region: 17% favor/69% oppose.**

*Source: OpinionWorks, August 2022, N=868 adult residents*





## Time to Act:

Transportation funding needs to be addressed as a TOP PRIORITY in this Maryland General Assembly Session

- Maryland is **facing a \$10B shortfall** in transportation funding over the next 6-year capital budget cycle and is **prioritizing the wrong things**.
- Many major and urgently needed road, bridge and transit projects that enjoy **broad public support** remain unfunded and unbuilt.
- Marylanders can be convinced to **support new taxes** and fees to pay for transportation improvements, if the money is dedicated to these projects, but elected leaders need to stand up and make the case.
- The **most popular** funding approaches are:
  - Expanding the use of Public-Private-Partnerships (P3s)
  - Creating a new Regional Transportation Authority
  - A 1-cent sales tax surcharge dedicated to transportation improvements
- Marylanders feel climate is important **but improving safety & reducing congestion are higher priorities** (and reducing congestion also reduces GHG emissions).

Visit: [MDTransportation.org](http://MDTransportation.org) to learn more