



What Do Americans Think About Federal Tax Options to Support Transportation? Results from Year Fifteen of a National Survey

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WHAT DO AMERICANS THINK ABOUT FEDERAL TAX OPTIONS TO SUPPORT TRANSPORTATION? RESULTS FROM YEAR FIFTEEN OF A NATIONAL SURVEY

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16. Abstract <p>This report summarizes the results from the fifteenth year of a national public opinion survey asking U.S. adults questions related to their views on federal transportation taxes. A nationally representative sample of 2,522 respondents completed the online survey from February 7 to March 12, 2024.</p> <p>The questions test public opinions about raising the federal gas tax rate, replacing the federal gas tax with a new mileage fee, and imposing a mileage fee just on commercial travel. In addition to asking directly about support for these tax options, the survey collected data on respondents' views on the quality of their local transportation system, their priorities for federal transportation spending, their knowledge about gas taxes, their views on privacy and equity matters related to mileage fees, travel behavior, and sociodemographic characteristics.</p> <p>Key findings include that large majorities supported transportation improvements across modes and wanted to see the federal government work towards making the transportation system well maintained, safe, and equitable, as well as to reduce the system's impact on climate change. Findings related to gas taxes include that only 2% of respondents knew that the federal gas tax rate had not been raised in more than 20 years, and 74% of respondents supported increasing the federal gas tax by 10 cents per gallon if the revenue would be dedicated to maintenance. With respect to mileage fees, several options tested received support from more than half of respondents. Also, the majority of respondents supported variable mileage fee rate structure options; 62% preferred charging low-income drivers a reduced mileage fee rate, and 52% preferred charging electric vehicles at a lower rate than gas and diesel vehicles.</p> <p>The analysis of trends across the survey series, which has run annually from 2010 to 2024, shows that support for both higher gas taxes and a hypothetical new mileage fee has risen slowly but steadily.</p>			
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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from a national survey that tested public opinion in the U.S. about a variety of options to increase federal-level transportation tax revenue. The survey is the fifteenth of an annual survey series, so the results illuminate both current sentiment and trends in how public opinion about transportation taxes may be shifting over time.

Knowledge of public sentiment on the topic is critical to policymakers who face the challenge of identifying revenue sources to replace fuel tax receipts, as these are projected to dwindle in the coming years. Fuel taxes provide a large share of state and federal transportation revenue, but these revenues are predicted to drop sharply as electric and high-efficiency vehicles rise in popularity. For example, a projection study for California found that within just three years the state may face fuel tax revenue losses of more than one billion dollars annually.¹

Replacing lost fuel tax revenue will be essential for making critical transportation system upgrades to provide safe and efficient mobility options for both people and goods. The problem is in part one of deferred maintenance, as exemplified by the American Automobile Association's estimate that drivers spent more than \$25 billion in 2021 to repair damage to their vehicles caused by driving over potholes.² Also, six people tragically died in 2024 when Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed from the impact of a ship striking one of the bridge's piers, which had not been designed to withstand strikes from today's massive container ships.³ Beyond maintenance and retrofits, many communities desire substantial facility and service upgrades to better support travelers on all modes, from driving to riding public transit to walking and bicycling.

The findings from this survey series will help elected officials better understand public sentiment about two tax options under consideration for the short and longer term, raising fuel tax rates or adopting new mileage fees. The specific federal taxes tested were six variants of a gas tax increase, two variants of a new mileage fee on all travel that would replace the federal gas tax, and three variants of a mileage fee for commercial travel that would be levied in addition to the gas tax. In addition to asking directly about support for these tax options, the survey asked respondents about their views on the quality of their local transportation system, their priorities for federal transportation spending, knowledge about gas taxes, views on privacy and equity matters related to mileage fees, preferences for how a mileage fee rate might be structured, travel behavior, and standard sociodemographic characteristics.

1 Asha Weinstein Agrawal, Hannah King, and Humberto Tasaico, *How Will California's Electric Vehicle Policy Impact State-Generated Transportation Revenues? Projecting Scenarios through 2040* (Mineta Transportation Institute, 2024), <https://transweb.sjsu.edu/sites/default/files/2312-Agrawal-Transportation-Revenue-Fuel-Taxes-Electric-Vehicles.pdf>.

2 Ellen Edmonds, "AAA: Potholes Pack a Punch as Drivers Pay \$26.5 Billion in Related Vehicle Repairs" (American Automobile Association March 1, 2022), <https://newsroom.aaa.com/2022/03/aaa-potholes-pack-a-punch-as-drivers-pay-26-5-billion-in-related-vehicle-repairs/>.

3 Dakin Andone and Nic F. Anderson, "The Key Factors that Contributed to the Baltimore Bridge Collapse" (CNN.com, March 24, 2024), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/27/us/key-factors-baltimore-bridge-collapse/index.html>.

The survey questionnaire described the various tax proposals in general terms only, so the study results cannot be assumed to reflect support for any actual proposal put forward. Nevertheless, the results show likely patterns of support and, more importantly, the public's *relative* preferences among different transportation tax options.

The report presents findings from the 2024 survey and also compares the results of the fifteen surveys in the series to establish how public views may have changed since 2010.⁴ To permit reliable trend analysis, the surveys used identical question language each year to describe most of the tax options.

The remaining chapters of the report are organized as follows. Chapter 2 describes the survey methodology and presents an overview of the questionnaire and details of the implementation procedure. Next, Chapter 3 describes findings on respondents' goals for the transportation system, Chapter 4 presents findings related to the federal gas tax, and Chapter 5 presents findings related to mileage fees. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the key findings and suggests policy implications.

⁴ Reports from all years in the survey series are available at <https://transweb.sjsu.edu/about/research-centers/finance/MTI-Annual-Survey>.

2. SURVEY DESIGN AND ADMINISTRATION

The online survey was completed by 2,522 U.S. adults, who were recruited by Qualtrics through an online panel sample. This chapter describes the questionnaire design, survey sampling and administration, and characteristics of the respondents.

2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The survey questionnaire was designed to test public support for variants on taxes that could be used to raise federal transportation revenues: an increase in the federal gas tax rate, a new national mileage fee to replace the federal gas tax, and a new mileage fee assessed only on commercial travel. The exact wording used for all questions can be found in Appendix A, which reproduces the survey questionnaire.

Because gas and mileage taxes are revenue options likely to receive considerable policy scrutiny in coming years, the survey tested support for different versions of each tax. Overall, 11 different federal tax options were tested: six variants of a gas tax increase, two variants of a new mileage fee on all travel to replace the federal gas tax, and three variants of a mileage fee for commercial travel that would be levied in addition to the gas tax. To permit trend analysis, the surveys used identical language each year to ask the gas tax variant questions. The questions asking about support for a mileage fee on all travel were also asked with consistent wording over the years, with the exception of two small changes discussed below.

To make these hypothetical taxes easier for respondents to understand, the survey gave specific amounts for the gas tax increase and a rate for the mileage fee on all travel. The amounts were selected to be simple numbers within the range of mainstream current policy discussion.

Gas-tax increases. All variants of a federal gas tax increase involved raising the existing 18¢-per-gallon tax to 28¢ per gallon,⁵ but each included a different set of information for respondents to consider. The six variations were:

- A “base-case” 10¢ increase in the gas tax, with respondents given no information other than the rate and a statement that proceeds would be spent “for transportation.”
- A 10¢ increase in the gas tax, with the revenues to be spent only for projects to reduce local air pollution caused by the transportation system.
- A 10¢ increase in the gas tax, with the revenues to be spent only on projects to reduce the transportation system’s contribution to global warming.
- A 10¢ increase in the gas tax, with the revenues to be spent only on projects to maintain streets, roads, and highways.

⁵ The current federal tax on gasoline is 18.4¢ per gallon, but respondents were told that it was 18¢ per gallon in order to make the survey simpler to understand.

- A 10¢ increase in the gas tax, with the revenues to be spent only on projects to reduce accidents and improve safety.
- A 10¢ increase in the gas tax, with the revenues to be spent only on projects to reduce traffic congestion. (This option was added to the survey in 2019.)

New mileage fees to replace the gas tax. Two variants of a mileage fee on all travel were presented. Both involved replacing the federal gasoline tax with a new fee that charges drivers for each mile driven and relies on electronic meters to track mileage. For 2024, the two variants, which differed only in the rate structure, were:

- “Flat-rate” variant: a fee of three cents per mile, with every vehicle taxed at the same rate.
- “Green” variant: the *average* rate would be three cents per mile, but vehicles that pollute less would be charged less and vehicles that pollute more would be charged more.

The description of the mileage fee options changed slightly at two points during the survey series. In 2019 the question language was revised to specify that the mileage fee would replace the gas tax, whereas earlier surveys simply asked about adopting a new mileage fee. In 2021, the question was revised to change the proposed rate from one cent per mile to three cents per mile.

A Business Road-Use Fee. As of 2021, the survey has asked respondents about a hypothetical mileage fee, termed a Business Road-Use Fee, that would be assessed only on miles that commercial vehicles drive on the job. Those vehicles would continue to pay the current gas tax as well. Respondents were asked if they would support such a tax on different types of commercial travel: delivery and freight trucks, taxis, and ride-hailing vehicles.

The survey also asked several questions to test support for specific features of a hypothetical new mileage fee on all travel: whether respondents thought all-electric vehicles should pay a lower rate than gas and diesel vehicles; whether low-income drivers should pay a reduced rate; whether respondents would be bothered by having their mileage tracked; whether they see a mileage fee as more or less fair than a gas tax; and how often they would prefer to pay a new mileage fee (each time they buy gas or charge a vehicle, once a month, or annually).

For 2023 and 2024 the survey added a new question designed to gauge respondents’ conceptual preference for how the federal government raises transportation revenue. The question tested whether or not respondents intuitively supported the idea of charges on driving that corresponded to the amount of travel:

Which of the following would you prefer as a replacement for the gas tax?

- A mileage fee

- An annual charge that is the same for everyone no matter how much they drive

Finally, to provide context for understanding respondents' views on gas and mileage taxes, the questionnaire also asked respondents to rate the quality of transportation infrastructure and services in their community, their goals for improving transportation across the U.S., their priorities for different ways the federal government could spend gas tax revenues, their estimate of how recently the federal gas tax rate has been raised, simple travel behavior questions, and standard socio-demographic questions.

2.2 SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The 2024 survey was administered online, using a survey platform and panel of respondents managed by Qualtrics. Qualtrics is a so-called “panel aggregator” that recruits most survey respondents through partner organizations that maintain market research panels. In some cases, Qualtrics also recruits respondents through targeted email lists, social media, and member referrals. Qualtrics uses third parties to verify the identity of panel members (e.g., name, address, and age) and works with sample partners to ensure they meet Qualtrics' quality control standards. Respondents receive the survey invitation in various ways, including email invitation, in-app notifications, and upon signing into a panel portal. The invitation to participate describes the length of the survey and incentive amount offered, but not the specific subject matter. The nature and amount of the incentive varies, but can be cash, gift cards, or points for a customer loyalty program such as an airline frequent flier program. Finally, Qualtrics scrubs the final dataset to remove respondents who exhibit suspicious behaviors such as finishing the survey in less than half the median survey completion length or providing gibberish answers to open-ended questions.

Through the year 2018, the surveys in this series were administered with random-digit-dial telephone surveys. In 2019, we changed the survey mode to take advantage of the benefits of online surveys. Online surveys are increasingly popular due to their low cost, the speed at which they can be administered, convenience for respondents, and ability to include question design options that are difficult or impossible to implement via telephone or mail.⁶ An analysis of 2023 data collected by the Pew Research Center found that 95% of Americans are online,⁷ which suggests that online surveys are currently a reasonable method to reach a representative sample of U.S. adults, despite evidence that some population subgroups are often underrepresented in online surveys. Groups that are less well-represented online include people who are older, live in low-income households, have less formal education, live in rural communities, and do not have high-speed internet access at home.⁸

6 Valerie M. Sue and Lois A. Ritter, *Conducting Online Surveys*, 2nd edition (Sage Publications, 2012), <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781506335186>.

7 Risa Gelles-Watnick, “Americans' Use of Mobile Technology and Home Broadband” (Pew Research Center, January 2024), https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2024/01/PI_2024.01.31_Home-Broadband-Mobile-Use_FINAL.pdf.

8 Pew Research Center, *Collecting Survey Data* (no date), <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/u-s-survey-research/collecting-survey-data/>.

Sampling Approach

Quota sampling was used to ensure a sample that closely represents the U.S. adult population. The authors requested a nationally-representative sample, as defined by U.S. American Community Survey (ACS) data on gender, race and ethnicity, annual household income, and age. We set quotas close to actual population values, with slight variations to ensure enough representation by small population subgroups that these groups could be analyzed independently. Table 1 shows the ACS values used to build the quotas.

Interviews were conducted from February 7 to March 12, 2024. The median time to complete each survey was 896 seconds (14.9 minutes), and the mean time was 1,216 seconds (20.3 minutes). A total of 2,522 adults responded with usable data, or 43% of the 5,874 who received an invitation to take the survey.

Table 1. Quotas Used for Sampling

Characteristics		% of respondents
Gender	Male	49
	Female	51
Race	White (only)	68
	Black or African-American (only)	13
	Asian or Asian-American (only)	7
	Other or multi-race	12
Ethnicity	Hispanic	18
	Non-Hispanic	82
Income (annual household)	0 – \$49,999	39
	\$50,000 – \$99,999	27
	\$100,000+	34
Age (years)	18 – 34	30
	35 – 44	17
	45 – 64	33
	65+	21

2.3 SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The 2,522 adult survey respondents who provided usable data were generally representative of the U.S. population in terms of Census region and sociodemographic characteristics (Table 2). For the survey findings and analysis presented in this report, we lightly weighted the data using a raking method to match the Census Bureau's 2017-2021 American

Community Survey five-year estimates with respect to gender, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education level, household income, and age.⁹

⁹ Steven Ruggles, et al., "IPUMS USA: Version 13.0 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021" (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V13.0>.

Table 2. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents Compared to the U.S. Adult Population

Characteristics		Sample (%)	U.S. adults ^a (%)
Gender	Male	48.0	49.0
	Female	52.0	51.0
Of Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin		18.0	16.4
Race	White (only)	68.3	70.0
	Black or African-American (only)	13.9	12.2
	Asian or Asian-American (only)	7.5	5.9
	Other or multi-race	10.3	11.9
Education	Less than high school graduate	2.1	11.3
	High school graduate	21.5	27.4
	Some college	31.5	30.3
	College graduate	28.7	19.4
	Graduate degree	16.2	11.6
Income (annual household)	Less than \$25,000	18.0	18.7
	\$25,000 – \$49,999	20.9	19.8
	\$50,000 – \$74,999	16.6	15.6
	\$75,000 – \$99,999	11.6	11.4
	\$100,000 – \$149,999	18.8	13.8
	\$150,000 – \$199,999	9.0	6.6
	\$200,000+	5.1	14.1
Age (years)	18 – 24	10.1	11.9
	25 – 34	20.1	17.7
	35 – 44	16.8	16.6
	45 – 54	21.8	16.3
	55 – 64	10.9	16.8
	65 – 74	14.9	12.4
	75 – 84	5.1	5.9
	85+	0.3	2.5

^a US data are for adults 18 years and older, except that household income is for all U.S. households.

Source: Steven Ruggles, et al., IPUMS USA: Version 13.0 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V13.0>.

2.4 TREND ANALYSIS

Many of the survey questions are identical to those asked on earlier years of the annual survey series, with a few questions going back to the first survey in 2010. In the cases where we present the trend analysis, readers should note that the survey mode changed in 2019; earlier surveys collected data from a random-digit-dial (RDD) phone survey, whereas respondents from 2019 onwards came from an online panel survey. Evidence suggests that changes in survey mode can influence both who responds and how people respond to surveys. For example, the authors ran a survey experiment with the same gas tax questions presented here using both an RDD phone survey and an online panel from SurveyMonkey.¹⁰ That study found systematically higher support for the taxes among the online respondents as compared to the phone survey respondents, even though both samples were weighted to match the U.S. population across age, gender, ethnicity, race, and income. However, research suggests that questions about abstract policy matters (such as those in this survey) are less affected by survey mode than questions about potentially embarrassing personal topics where respondents may feel pressured to give socially acceptable answers. Researchers have also found that respondents to online polls are less likely than phone survey respondents to answer rating questions with the most positive answers.¹¹

10 Nixon and Agrawal, 2018.

11 Courtney Kennedy and Claudia Deane, "What Our Transition to Online Polling Means for Decades of Phone Survey Trends" (Pew Research Center, February 27, 2019), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/02/27/what-our-transition-to-online-polling-means-for-decades-of-phone-survey-trends/>.

3. FINDINGS ON TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

The survey asked simple travel behavior questions to identify the travel modes that the respondents and their household members used, how much the respondents drove for personal reasons, and the type of vehicle the respondent drove most frequently for personal reasons. (Appendix A presents the exact questionnaire language and complete top-line results.)

3.1 TRAVEL MODES USED

The survey found that most respondents lived in households that rely on a range of modes (Figure 1). When asked what modes they *or other members of the household* had used in the previous month, driving in a personal vehicle was the most common mode selected—80% of respondents reported that someone in the household had driven at least once in the previous month. However, walking was the mode used by the second largest percentage of households—48% of respondents lived in households where someone had walked in the past 30 days. The percentage of walking households was slightly higher even than the percent of households with a member who had ridden as a passenger in a private vehicle, such as getting a ride from a family member or friend (43%). About one-fifth of households had members who had ridden public transit (21%), 15% had members who had bicycled, and 24% had members who had used either ridesharing or taxis (17% and 6%, respectively). Finally, 4% of respondents lived in households where at least one person had used a skateboard, electric kick scooter, or other small device in the previous month.

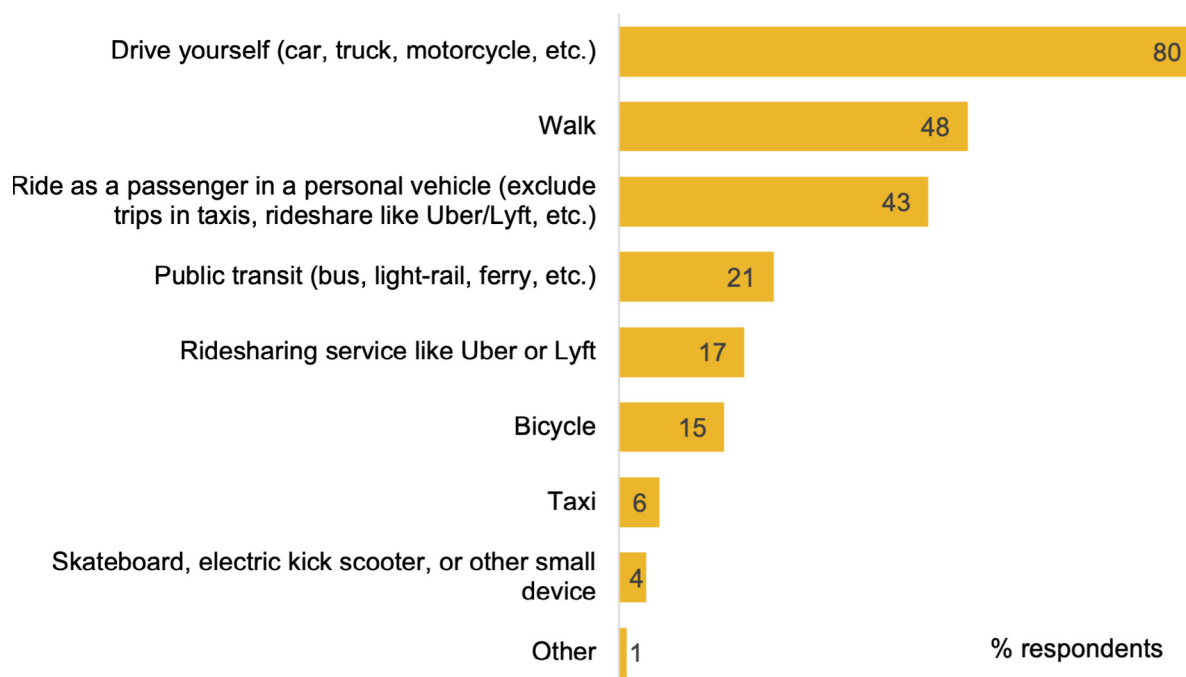


Figure 1. Travel Modes that Respondents' Households Used Within the Previous 30 Days (2024)

3.2 VEHICLE CHARACTERISTICS

Respondents who drove were asked about characteristics of the vehicle they had driven most frequently in the previous 12 months for personal reasons: model year, estimated fuel efficiency, and whether the vehicle was all-electric. In terms of age, most vehicles were relatively new. Fifty-eight percent of the vehicles were 1 to 10 years old, 34% were 11 to 20 years old, and 9% were 21 years or older (Figure 2). With respect to vehicle fuel efficiency, the mean value was 31 miles per gallon (mpg). As Figure 3 shows, 25% of respondents drove a primary vehicle with low fuel efficiency (20 mpg or less), 38% drove primary vehicles with fuel efficiency of 21 – 30 mpg, and 37% drove primary vehicles with fuel efficiency of 31 mpg or better.

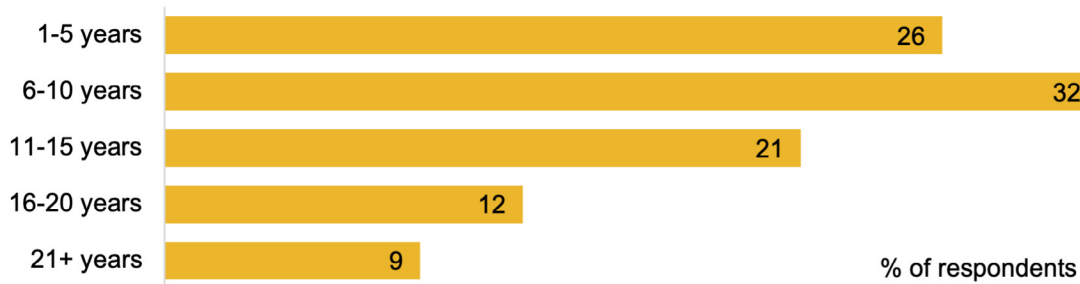


Figure 2. Age of the Vehicle that Respondents Drove the Most for Personal Reasons in the Previous 12 Months (2024)

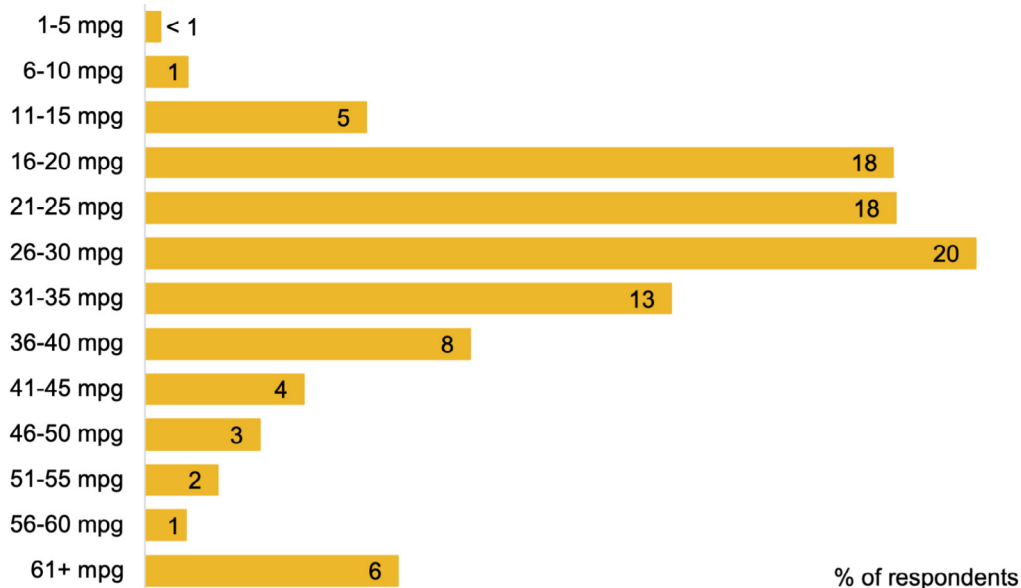


Figure 3. Estimated Fuel Efficiency of the Vehicle Respondents Drove Most Often for Personal Reasons in the Previous Twelve Months (2024)

3.3 ANNUAL MILES DRIVEN

The survey asked respondents who drove to report the mileage they drove in motorized vehicles for personal reasons during the previous 12 months (Figure 4). Across all respondents, half either did not drive at all (15%) or drove no more than 7,500 miles (35%). Just over a fifth (21%) drove 7,501 to 12,500 miles annually, and 14% drove more than 12,500 miles annually.

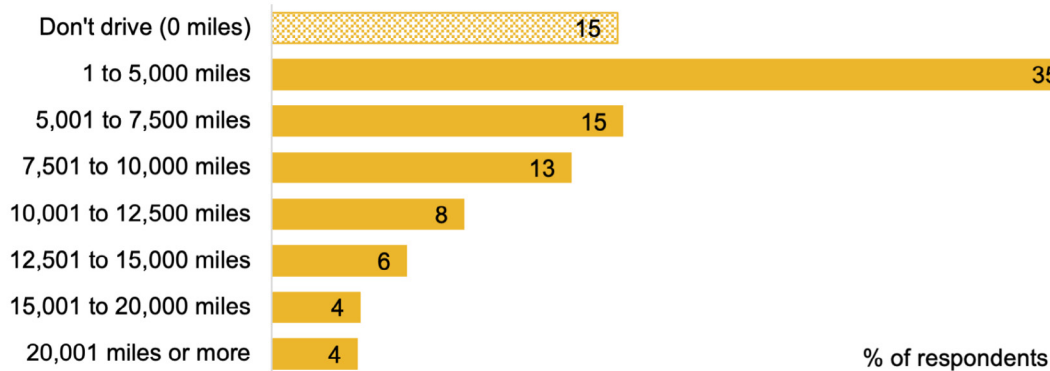


Figure 4. Estimated Miles that Respondents Drove for Personal Reasons in the Previous Twelve Months (2024)

3.4 MONTHLY TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURES

Respondents were asked to estimate how much their household spent for each of several possible transportation expenses: fuel, taxis or ride-hailing services, tolls, parking, public transit fares, and “other” transportation expenses. (The survey did not ask directly about vehicle ownership costs, such as insurance, lease payments, loan payments, or vehicle repairs.)

Fuel was by the far the largest expense for most households, at a median cost of \$100 per month for those who made fuel purchases. Also, almost all households spent at least some money on fuel (88%). The second most common expenditure was taxi or ride-hailing services; not only was the median monthly expenditure the second highest among the categories (\$30 for households who purchased these services), but the proportion of households paying for these services was higher than the proportion paying for any other type of expenditure other than fuel (29%).

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Household Transportation Expenditures (2024)

Expenditure type	Median ^a (\$)	\$0 (%)	\$1-50 (%)	\$51-100 (%)	\$101-\$100 (%)	\$151+ (%)
Fuel for personal vehicles	100	12	30	28	9	21
Taxis or ride-hailing services (e.g., Lyft or Uber)	30	71	23	4	1	2
Public transit (buses, trains, subways, ferries, etc.)	20	74	21	2	1	1
Parking	20	77	20	2	0	1
Tolls on bridges and highways, including express lane fees	20	73	24	2	0	1
Other transportation-related expenses	25	90	8	1	0	1

^a Median values calculated with responses from respondents who indicated that their household spent some money for that expense type.

3.5 MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH EXPERIENCE

The 2023 and 2024 surveys asked questions about respondents' vehicle crash experiences in the previous 12 months. In 2024, 13% of respondents reported having been in at least one motor vehicle crash in the previous 12 months. More specifically, 11% of all respondents had experienced a crash in the previous year while they were in a motor vehicle (as a passenger or driver), 2% had been in a collision when bicycling, and 2% had been in a collision when walking. (Some respondents reported more than one travel mode if they had experienced multiple crashes.) Respondents were also asked whether they had been injured in the past year in a motor vehicle collision. Nine percent of all respondents had suffered some level of injury, and 3% reported a "serious" injury.

4. FINDINGS RELATED TO RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM NEEDS

This chapter presents key findings from a set of questions asking respondents about their views related to the quality of the current transportation system and priorities for improving it. (Appendix A presents the exact questionnaire language and complete top-line results.)

The nation's transportation needs far exceed available funding, leaving policymakers to make difficult choices about which competing priorities they will fund. This survey fills a unique gap in understanding public priorities for national transportation spending. Although a number of national surveys ask a few questions on their preferred transportation system improvements, no other recent survey asks about a large number of different options so that policymakers can compare responses across spending possibilities. These *relative* preferences are far more revealing than the specific support levels for any one option.

4.1 PERCEIVED QUALITY OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Figure 5 shows how respondents assessed the quality of transportation infrastructure and services in their own community from 2019 to 2024. The dark and lighter yellow bars to the left indicate the percentage of respondents who assessed each type of transportation infrastructure or service positively (as very or somewhat good), while the blue bars to the left show the percentage of respondents who assessed each item negatively as somewhat or very bad. Finally, the gray bars on the far right show the percent who responded "don't know."

Across all years, the majority of respondents rated the transportation system positively, though with some reservations. For every item, more than half of respondents rated it as somewhat or very good. However, in all cases considerably more people selected somewhat good than very good.

Comparing responses across the four items, the category "interstates, highways, and freeways" was rated positively by the largest percent of respondents for every year (78% in 2024). The other three items were rated positively by somewhat smaller majorities. In 2024, the percentage of respondents with a positive assessment was 65% for local streets and roads, 61% for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and 55% for public transit.

Responses across the five years are very consistent, with year-to-year changes of just a few percentage points.

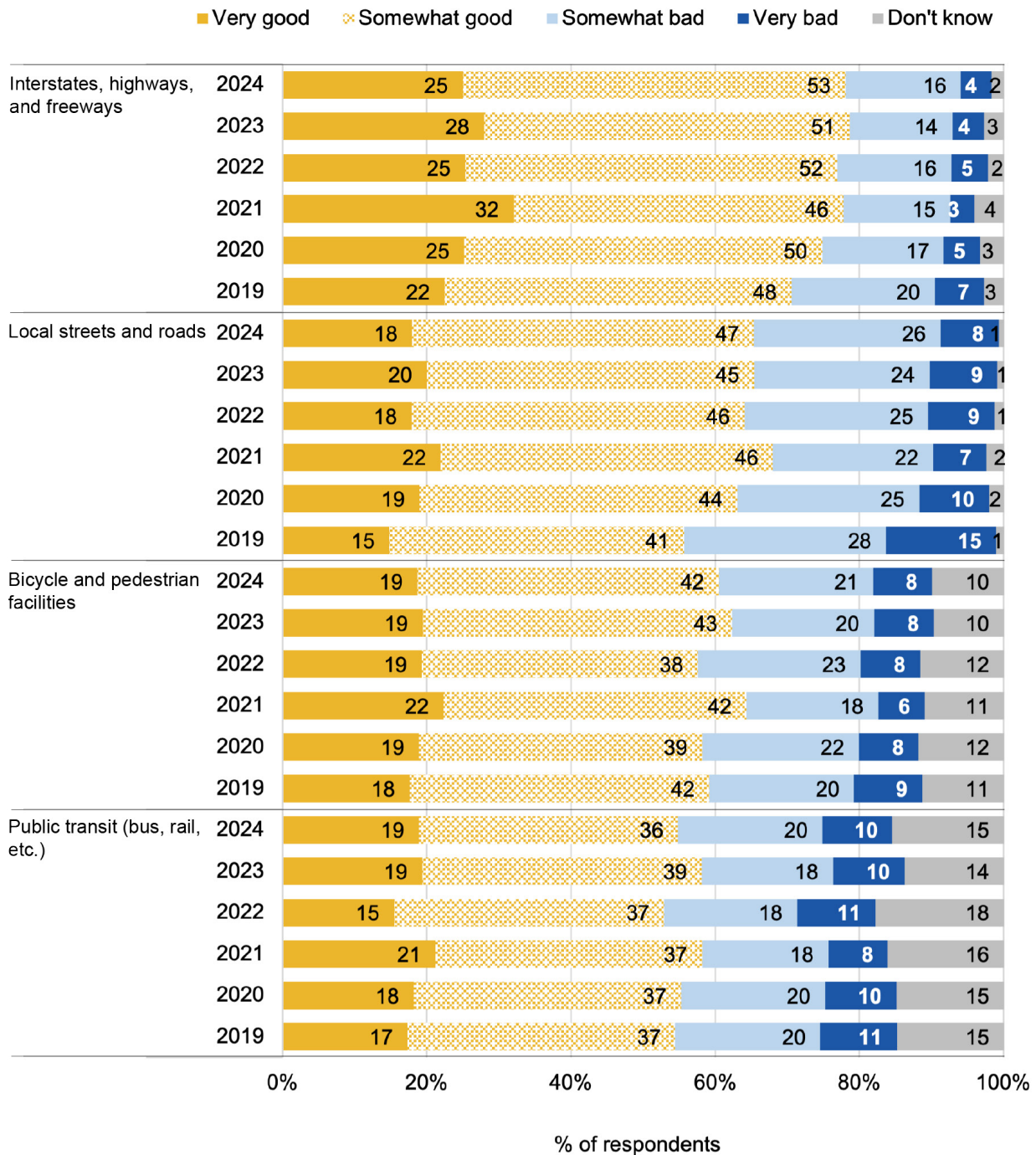


Figure 5. Assessment of the Quality of Transportation Infrastructure and Services in “Your Community” (2019 – 2024)

Note: Values shown are rounded, so values in a row do not always sum to 100%.

A separate question asked respondents if they were concerned about traffic congestion in their community (Figure 6). In 2024, 28% percent were very concerned, 46% somewhat concerned, and 27% not at all concerned. As with respondents' rating of transportation quality, the assessment of traffic congestion has changed very little since 2019.

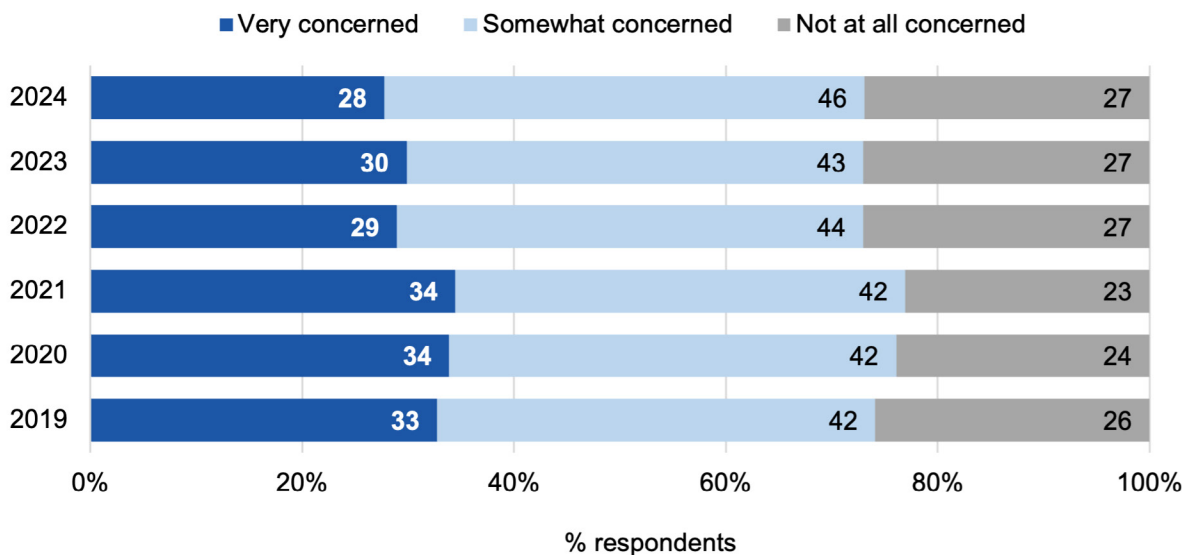


Figure 6. Level of Concern with Traffic Congestion (2019 – 2024)

Note: Values shown are rounded, so values in a row do not always sum to 100%.

Starting in 2022, the survey asked a question about resiliency: “How concerned are you that disasters such as flooding, wildfires, or hurricanes will severely damage the transportation system in your community?” Somewhat fewer respondents were concerned about resiliency than congestion. In 2024, 61% were somewhat or very concerned about resiliency vs. the 73% concerned about congestion.

Finally, starting in 2023 the survey added a question asking respondents to rate the level of road safety in their communities for different travel modes (Figure 7). A minority rated every mode as “very safe,” ranging from 24% for occupants of motor vehicles to 13% for people riding on skateboards, electric kick scooters, or other small devices. The percent who felt the modes were “not at all safe” was 9% for motor vehicle occupants and two to three times as high for all other modes. Ratings were quite similar in 2023 and 2024.

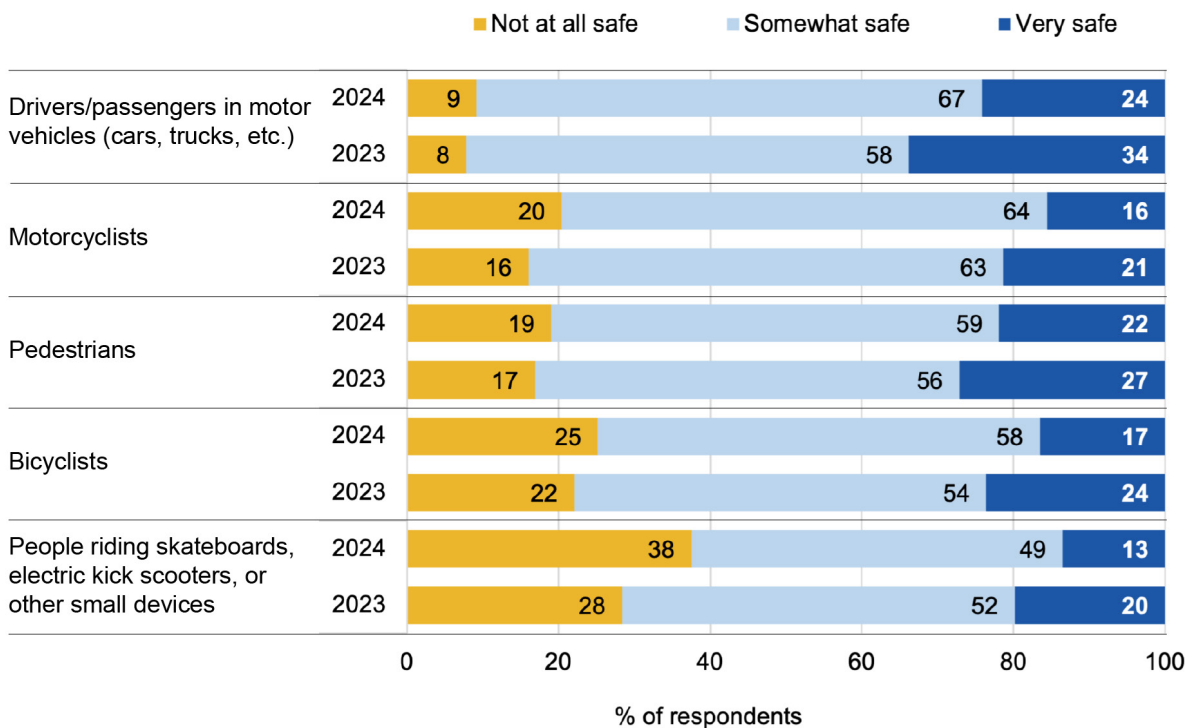


Figure 7. Assessment of Road Safety in “Your Community,” by Mode (2024)

Note: Values shown are rounded, so values in a row do not always sum to 100%.

4.2 PRIORITIES FOR THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The next set of survey questions asked respondents about their priorities for improvements to the transportation system, asking first about national goals and then about preferred ways to spend federal gas tax revenues.

Figure 8 shows the importance that respondents placed on each of six goals for improving the national transportation system, from 2019 to 2024. The light and dark blue bars to the left indicate the percentages rating each goal as “very” or “somewhat” important, and the gray bars to the right represent the proportion rating the goal as “not important.” Year after year, virtually all respondents (88% or more) rated each of the goals as “somewhat” or “very” important, with more selecting “very” than “somewhat” important. In 2024, for example, 92% of respondents said it was “somewhat” or “very important” to reduce health impacts from air pollution caused by cars and trucks.

The two most popular goals in all four years were to reduce crashes and improve safety and to ensure mobility for all. In every year, at least 96% rated those goals as somewhat or very important. The safety goal also received the highest percent of “very important” ratings for every year (from 70% to 76%).

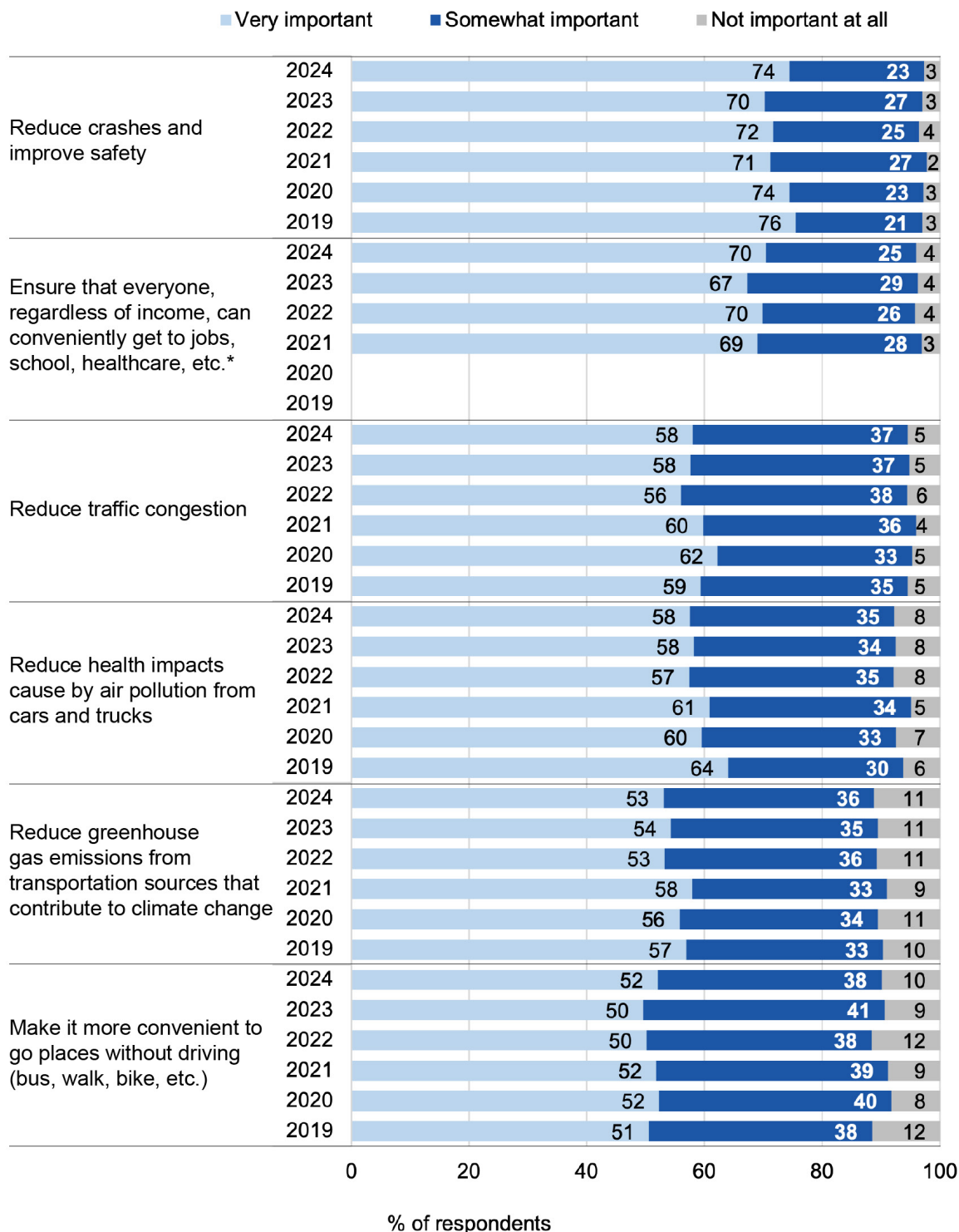


Figure 8. Assessment of the Importance of Transportation-Related Goals (2019 – 2024)

Note: Values shown are rounded, so values in a row do not always sum to 100%.

*Option not included in the 2019 or 2020 surveys. Designer to fix far-left labels and add horizontal lines

To explore with more nuance how much respondents valued each of the six goals, as of

2021 the survey included a question asking what percentage of transportation money in the coming five years should be allocated to each goal (Figure 9). Every one of the six goals had reasonably strong support, with the mean value allocated ranging from 14% to 21%. However, across all four years, two goals were the most popular: (1) ensuring that everyone, regardless of income, can access needed destinations and (2) reducing crashes and improving safety. Support was nearly identical for the two goals. For example, in 2024 the mean amount that respondents would allocate was 21% for ensuring access and 20% for improving safety. The other four goals also had strong support, however; the mean percent allocated for reducing congestion was 16%, and the remaining three goals all received a mean allocation of 14%.

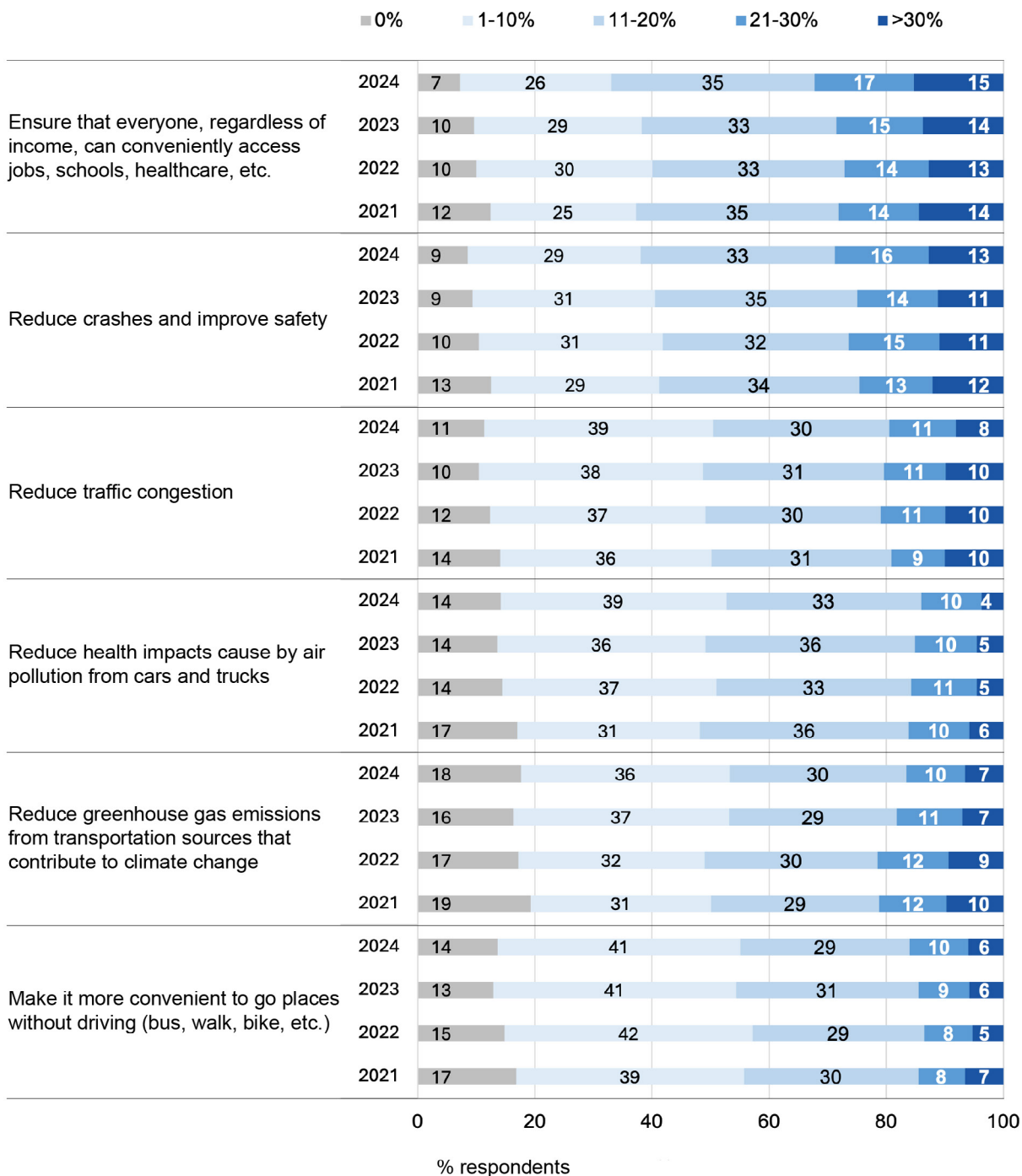


Figure 9. Percent of Federal Transportation Revenue that Respondents Would Allocate to Each Transportation-Related Goal for the U.S. (2021 – 2024)

Note: Values shown are rounded, so values in a row do not always sum to 100%.

4.3 PREFERRED OPTIONS FOR SPENDING FEDERAL FUEL TAX REVENUE

The questionnaire next explained to respondents that the federal government collects a tax on gasoline and asked them to indicate how much of a priority they would place on each of 14 different categories of spending to improve transportation. The set of spending categories covered options to improve all modes (driving, public transit, walking, cycling/micromobility), improve transportation system resiliency, and support the adoption of electric vehicles. Figure 10 presents the results for 2024.

All options had strong support. In every year, at least 55% of respondents rated every one of these options as of medium or high priority. Also, none of the spending options received a “not at all a priority” rating from more than 20% of respondents.

Comparing respondents' relative priorities, maintenance stands out as particularly popular. The spending priorities rated as a high priority by the most respondents were maintenance of interstates/highways (60%) and maintenance of local streets/roads (57%). Maintenance of public transit was a high priority for 45%, which was less than for roads and highways but nevertheless the fourth-highest rated priority.

Large majorities also rated as a high priority improvements across all major travel modes, from building and widening sidewalks (37%), to building/widening interstates, highways, and freeways (36%) and local roads and streets (33%), to offering more frequent transit service (33%), to improving bike lanes (28%). The two options with the lowest support both related to encouraging adoption of electric vehicles, but even for these more than rated them as at least a medium priority.

Finally, a follow-up question asked respondents to choose their three highest priorities from the list of 14 possible spending categories. As Figure 11 shows, no single option was selected by the majority of respondents. However, mirroring respondents' rating for each spending option, the most commonly selected top priorities were maintenance: maintaining interstates, highways, and freeways (43%) and maintaining local streets and roads (41%). The most popular public transit-related option, “discounted public transit fares for low-income people,” was selected by 26% of respondents. As for active transportation, 17% selected “building/improving sidewalks” as a top priority and 13% selected “build and improve bike lanes and paths.” The two measures to support electric vehicle ownership and use were a priority for the fewest respondents; 11% selected each of these.

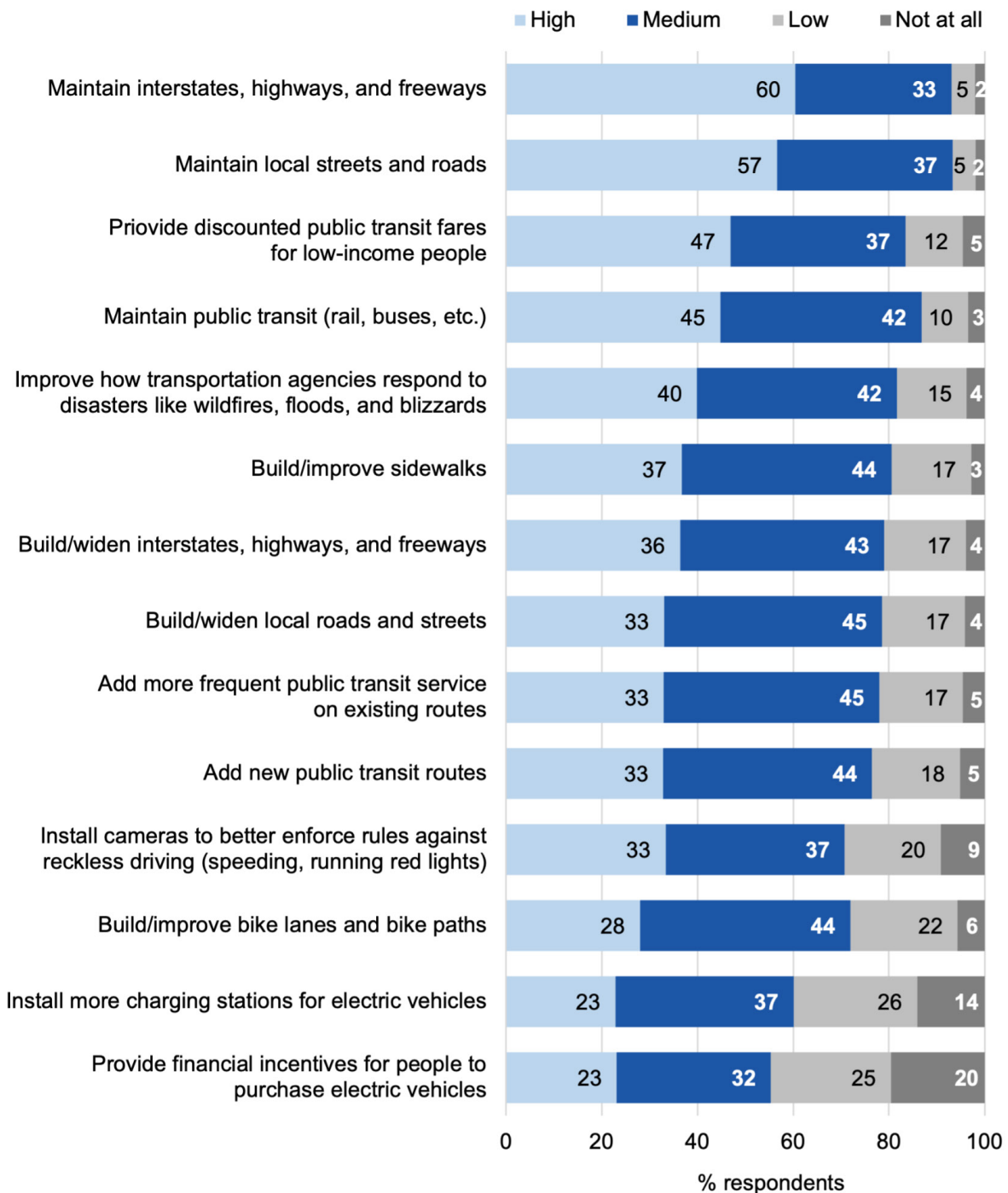


Figure 10. Priority Placed on Different Options for Spending Federal Gas Tax Revenue (2019 – 2024)

Note: Values shown are rounded, so values in a row do not always sum to 100%.

*Option not included in the 2019 and 2020 surveys.

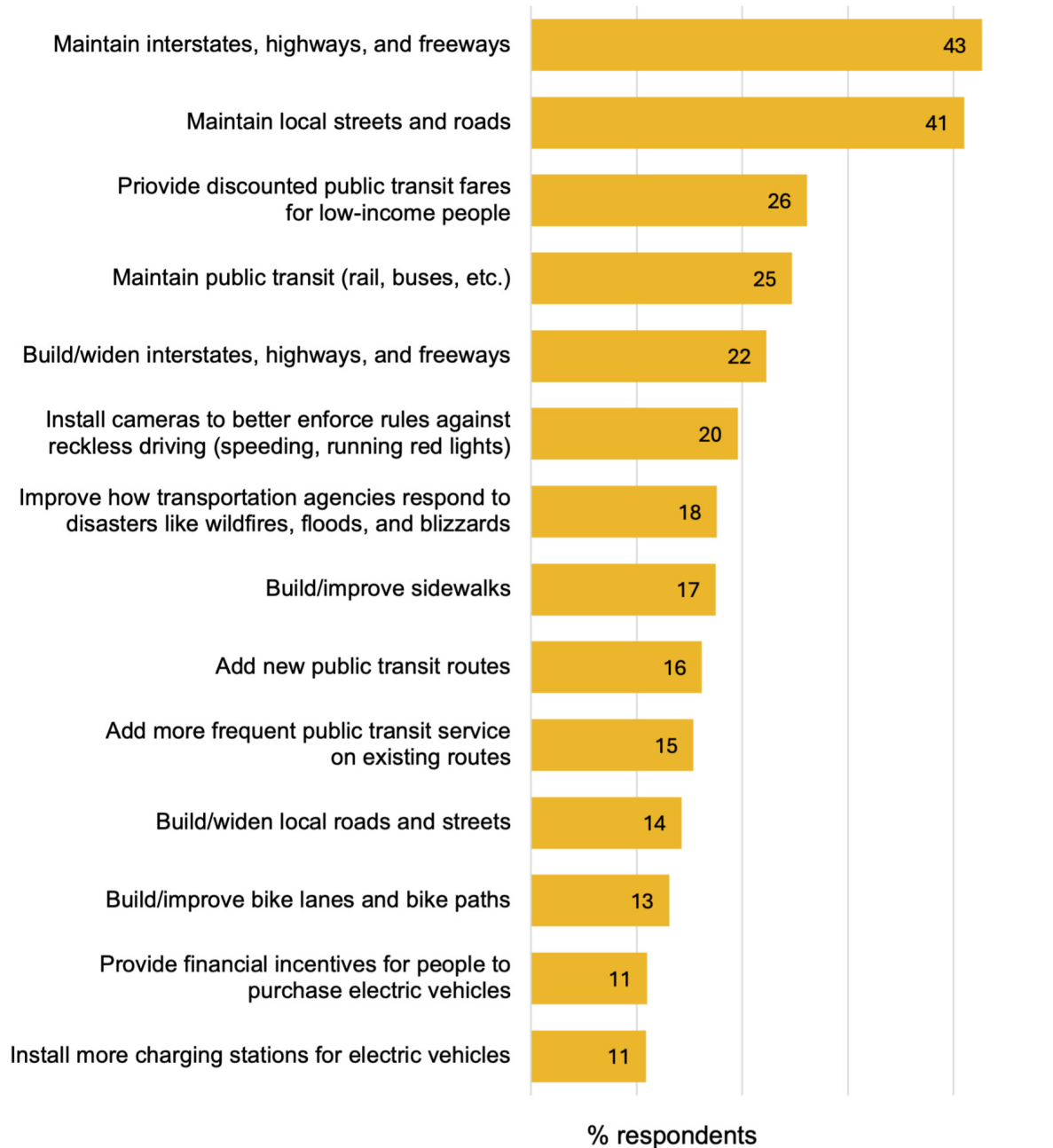


Figure 11. Options Selected as a Top-Three Priority for Spending Federal Gas Tax Revenue (2024)

5. FINDINGS ABOUT FEDERAL GAS TAXES

This chapter presents findings on questions related to knowledge and opinions about the federal gas tax. Topics covered include how recently respondents think the federal gas tax rate has been raised and support for different variants on raising the federal gas tax rate. (Appendix A presents the exact questionnaire language and topline results.)

5.1 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE FEDERAL GAS TAX RATE

Considerable anecdotal evidence suggests most Americans are unaware of how much they pay in fuel taxes, and surveys such as the 2019 report in this annual series have documented that most people overestimate the federal gas tax rate.¹² For the 2020 survey onwards, we added a question to gather evidence on a related aspect of the public's knowledge about the gas tax: their best guess about how recently the federal gas tax rate had been raised. To make the question easier to answer, respondents were asked to select a time range rather than specify the exact number of years. The options offered on the questionnaire were up to 3 years ago, 4 to 10 years ago, 11 to 15 years ago, 16 to 20 years ago, and more than 20 years ago.

Virtually none of the 2024 respondents—only 2%—knew that the federal gas tax has not been raised in more than 20 years (Figure 12). Thirty-six percent believed that the tax had been raised within the past 10 years, and well more than half simply said that they did not know (58%).

The 2024 results are very similar to those from the prior surveys. The percentage of people who knew that the federal gas tax rate had not been raised in more than 20 years was 3% in 2020 and then 2% for every year after.

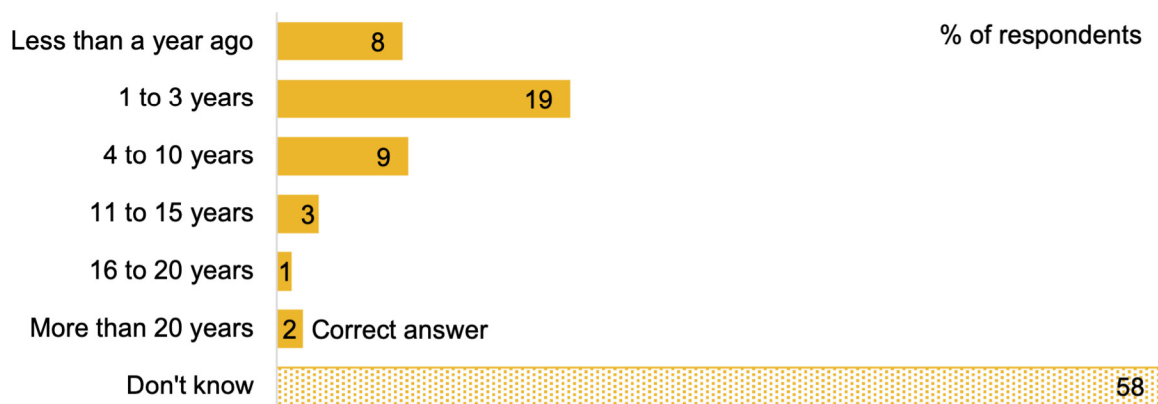


Figure 12. Belief About When the Federal Gas Tax Rate Last Increased (2024)

¹² Agrawal and Nixon, 2019.

5.2 SUPPORT FOR RAISING THE FEDERAL GAS TAX RATE

The 2024 survey found that a majority of Americans would support higher taxes for transportation—under certain conditions (Figure 13 and Table 4). Only 35% supported the “base-case” option presented, which was a 10¢-per-gallon gas tax increase. For this option, respondents were told only that the tax revenues would be spent “for transportation.” However, the five variants on that idea of a 10¢-per-gallon gas tax increase received from 60% to 74% support. For these alternatives, respondents were told that the revenue from the increase would be dedicated to a specific type of spending. The very highest level of support among all the tax options tested was for a gas tax increase of 10¢ per gallon with the proceeds dedicated to street, road, and highway maintenance. Seventy-four percent of respondents supported this option, an increase of 38 percentage points over support for the base-case gas tax increase. The next most popular options were a gas tax increase with funds devoted to reducing accidents and improving safety (70% support) and an increase with the funds devoted to reducing congestion (65%). As for the two options that linked a gas tax increase to environmental objectives—reducing local air pollution or global warming emissions—both had majority support (64% and 60%, respectively).

Support for the different gas tax rate increase options has mostly risen since the options were first tested in either 2010 or 2011. The changes from year to year are small, usually no more than a few percentage points. The largest variation in support across the full time period has been for the air pollution option: a spread of 32 percentage points—from 32% to 64%. Similarly, for the base-case option, support has ranged from 20% to 49%, a spread of 29 percentage points. In contrast, the smallest spread (10 percentage points) has been for the most popular option, the maintenance variant. The only gas tax increase option that has seen support fall is the option with revenues spent to reduce traffic congestion. Since the option was first introduced to the survey in 2017, support has fallen modestly, by seven percentage points (from 71% to 65%).¹³

13 Values reported are rounded. The difference between the unrounded values (71.4% and 64.6%) is 6.9%.

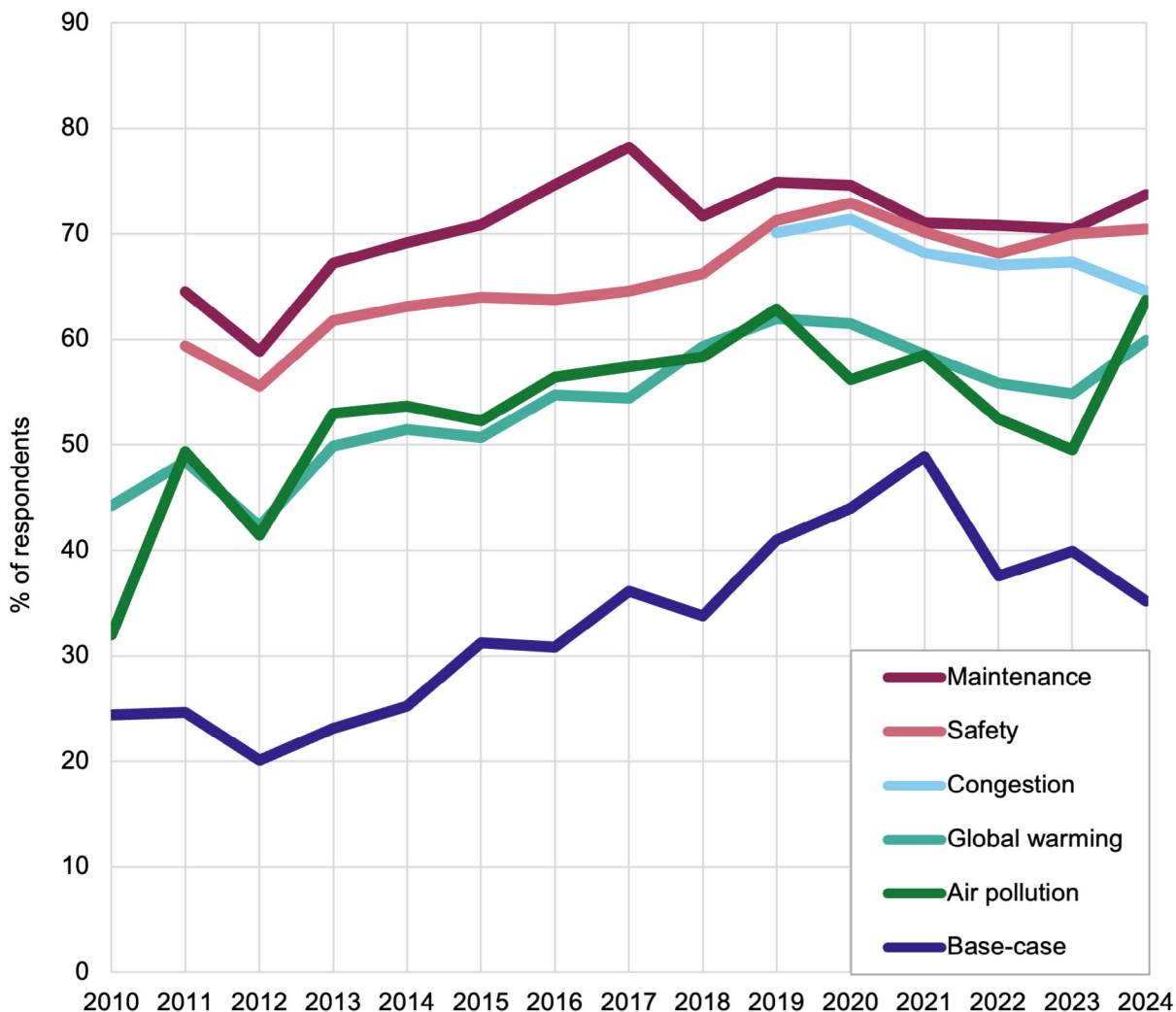


Figure 13. Trends in Support^a for the Gas Tax Options (2010 – 2024)

^a “Support” is the sum of those who “strongly” or “somewhat” supported the tax option.

Note: In 2019, the survey mode changed from a random-digit-dial phone survey to an online panel survey. Comparisons of results from before and after should be interpreted with care, since changes in survey mode can affect responses.

Table 4. Trends in the Percent of Respondents Supporting^a the Gas Tax Rate Increase Options, 2010 – 2024

Tax options	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 ^b	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Differences	
																2024 - 2011	2024 - 2023
Base case	24	25	20	23	25	31	31	36	34	41	44	49	38	40	35	11	-5
Revenues spent to reduce local air pollution	32	49	41	53	54	52	56	57	58	63	56	59	52	50	64	14	14
Revenues spent to reduce global warming	44	48	42	50	51	51	55	54	59	62	61	59	56	55	60	11	5
Revenues spent to maintain streets, roads, and highways	-- ^c	65	59	67	69	71	75	78	72	75	75	71	71	70	74	9	3
Revenues spent to reduce accidents and improve safety	-- ^c	59	56	62	63	64	64	65	66	71	73	70	68	70	70	11	0
Revenues spent to reduce congestion	-- ^d	-- ^d	-- ^d	-- ^d	-- ^d	-- ^d	-- ^d	-- ^d	-- ^d	70	71	68	67	67	63	-- ^d	-3

^a Sum of those who “strongly” or “somewhat” supported the option.

^b In 2019, the survey mode changed from a random-digit-dial phone survey to an online panel survey. Comparisons of results from before and after should be interpreted with care, since changes in survey mode can affect responses.

^c This option was not included in the 2010 survey.

^d This option was added in 2019.

5.3 SUPPORT FOR SPENDING SOME GAS TAX REVENUE ON PUBLIC TRANSIT

Another survey question probed support for spending some gas tax revenue on public transit. The question was worded as follows:

Some people say that money from gas taxes should only be spent on roads and highways, since drivers pay the tax. Other people say gas tax money should be used to pay for public transit in addition to roads and highways, because transit helps reduce traffic congestion and wear-and-tear on the roads.

Would you support or oppose spending some gas tax money on public transit?¹⁴

The option was very popular with respondents. In 2024, more than two-thirds of respondents (71%) agreed with the concept of using some gas tax revenue to support public transit. Since the question was first asked in 2013, support has always been strong, though it has varied from 61% to 72%.

14 Half of respondents received the question as worded above, and the other half received the question with the two statements in reverse order: “Some people say gas tax money should be used to pay for public transit in addition to roads and highways, because transit helps reduce traffic congestion and wear-and-tear on the roads. Other people say that money from gas taxes should only be spent on roads and highways, since drivers pay the tax. Would you support or oppose spending some gas tax money on public transit?”

6. FINDINGS ABOUT MILEAGE FEES

The survey asked a variety of questions related to mileage fees, including respondents' support for replacing the gas tax with a mileage fee or creating a mileage fee for commercial vehicles, their opinions about different mileage fee rate structure options, and opinions about privacy and fairness.

6.1 FAMILIARITY WITH MILEAGE FEES

A new question was added to the 2024 survey to find out whether respondents were familiar with mileage fees. The question was worded as:

Some states and the federal government have been discussing mileage fees as a possible replacement for the gas tax. How much, if anything, have you read or heard about this topic?

- A lot
- A little
- Nothing at all

The majority of respondents said they had heard nothing at all (60%). Only 10% said they had heard a lot, and another 31% that they had heard a little.

6.2 OPINION ABOUT PRIVACY CONCERNS AND MILEAGE FEES

The survey asked respondents a question related to potential privacy concerns, worded as follows:

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

I'm already tracked everywhere I go through my phone, so having my mileage tracked for a mileage fee wouldn't really bother me.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents were concerned.

6.3 OPINION ABOUT THE FAIRNESS OF A MILEAGE FEE COMPARED TO THE GAS TAX

The survey asked a question that probed respondents' views on the fairness of mileage taxes as compared to gas taxes:

Which of the following statements is closer to your opinion?

- A mileage fee is MORE fair than the gas tax because everyone pays the same for use of the roads, regardless of vehicle fuel efficiency or vehicle type (electric vs. gas vehicles)
- A mileage fee is LESS fair than the gas tax because the mileage fee doesn't give a break to people who buy cleaner vehicles.

Fifty-five percent of respondents thought mileage fees were fairer than gas taxes.

6.4 SUPPORT FOR DIFFERENT MILEAGE FEE OPTIONS

The survey asked respondents about their support for five variants on the idea of a new mileage fee. Two of these were variants on the concept of replacing the federal gas tax with a three-cents-per-mile fee on all travel. This rate was selected to be a simple number within the range of mainstream current policy discussion. (Previous surveys in the series used similar but not identical question language.) The other three options tested were variations on the concept of a new fee that commercial vehicles would pay in addition to fuel taxes. The specific wording for each question is as follows:

- *Flat-rate mileage fee to replace the gas tax:* Now, imagine that the US Congress decides to replace the gas tax with a mileage fee of 3¢ per mile driven. That means someone driving 10,000 miles a year would pay \$300. Vehicles would have an electronic meter to keep track of the miles driven. Would you support or oppose replacing the gas tax with such a mileage fee?
- *“Green” mileage fee to replace the gas tax:* A variation on the mileage tax just described is to have the tax rate vary depending upon how much the vehicle pollutes. On average, vehicles would be charged 3¢ per mile, but vehicles that pollute less would be charged less, and vehicles that pollute more would be charged more. Would you support or oppose this new mileage tax?
- *Business road-use fees:* Now imagine that the US Congress decides to keep the gas tax, but to add a new per-mile “Business Road-Use Fee” for miles that commercial vehicles drive on the job. (These vehicles would continue to pay the current gas tax, as well.) Would you support or oppose this new Business Road-Use Fee for the following types of commercial vehicles?
 - Delivery and freight trucks
 - Taxis
 - Ride-hailing vehicles

Figure 14 shows support for all five options. Comparing the two variants charged to all drivers, the “green” variant was considerably more popular. Fifty-one percent of respondents supported replacing the gas tax with the “green” mileage fee, for which the average rate would be three cents per mile, but vehicles that pollute less would be charged less and vehicles that pollute more would be charged more. In contrast, support for the flat-rate mileage fee was 12 percentage points lower (39%). As for the three business road-use fees, support was 53% for the fees on both ride-hailing and taxi trips and 58% for the fee on delivery and freight trucks.

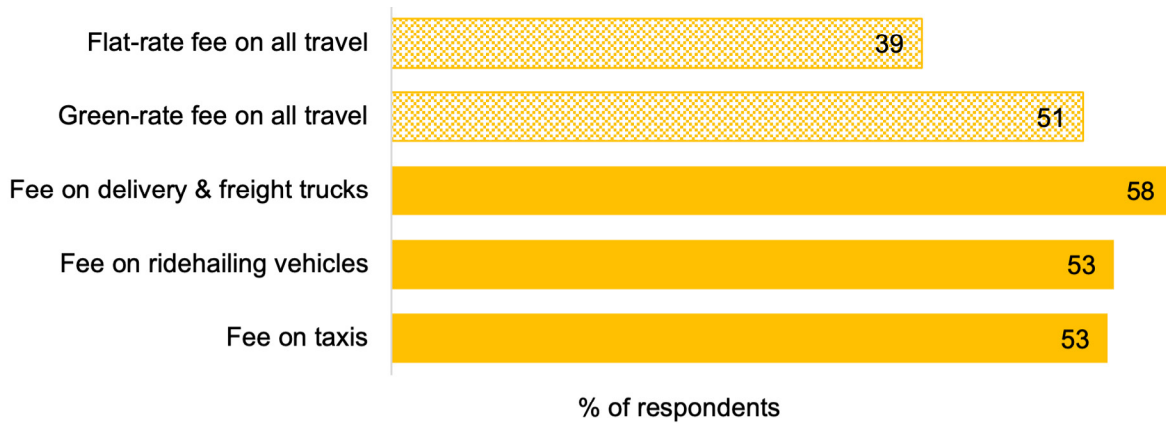


Figure 14. Figure 14: Support for the Five Mileage Fee Options (2024)

Note: “Support” is the sum of those who “strongly” or “somewhat” supported the fee option.

As an overall trend, support for mileage fees has risen slowly but steadily since 2010, even though support has sometimes dropped from one year to the next (Figure 15). Support for the flat-rate mileage fee has more than doubled, with a spread of 25 points (from 22% in 2010 to a high of 47% in 2022). Support for the “green” version of the fee has spread by 19 percentage points, from 34% in 2010 to a high of 53% in 2021.

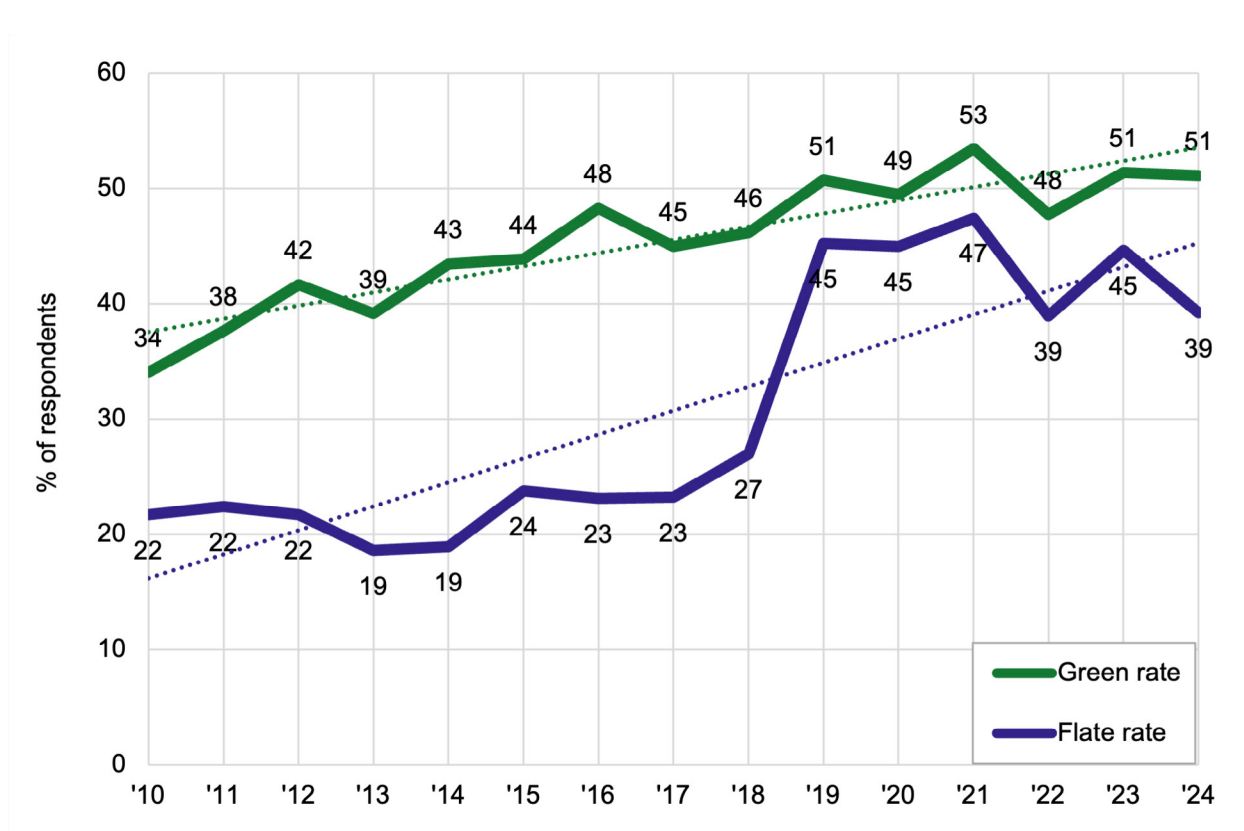


Figure 15. Trends in Support for Adopting the Flat and Green Mileage Fee Options (2010 – 2024)

Note: “Support” is the sum of those who “strongly” or “somewhat” supported the fee option. Dotted lines represent trendlines.

6.5 PREFERRED FREQUENCY FOR PAYING A MILEAGE FEE

Another question about mileage fees asked respondents how frequently they would prefer to pay mileage fee charges, should such a fee be introduced. The options were to pay at the time of purchasing fuel or charging an electric vehicle, pay a monthly bill, or pay an annual bill. The most popular option in 2024, selected by 46% of respondents, was to “Pay each time I purchase gas/diesel or charge an electric vehicle.” Thirty-one percent preferred a monthly bill, and the smallest group preferred an annual bill (23%).

6.6 PREFERRED RATE STRUCTURES FOR A FEE ON ALL TRAVEL

The survey asked respondents about three rate structure options: whether electric vehicles should pay less than gas and diesel vehicles, whether low-income drivers should pay a reduced rate, and whether respondents would prefer a block-pricing rate structure that charges a lower rate for the first 5,000 miles driven annually.

Opinions about a Block-Pricing Rate Structure

The survey asked respondents’ opinion on the concept of a block-pricing rate structure:

If Congress creates a federal mileage fee, which of the following possible fee structures would be fairer?

- The fee is the same for every mile the vehicle drives during the year
- The fee is lower for the first 5,000 miles the vehicle drives during the year, and higher for all additional miles driven that year

The respondents were almost evenly split, with 49% preferring the block rate vs. 51% preferring that the fee be the same for every mile driven during the year.

Preferred Rate for Electric Vehicles

The survey asked respondents their opinion on what rate electric vehicle owners should pay if Congress were to implement a mileage fee on all travel. The answer options were to charge electric vehicles the same rate as gas/diesel vehicles, half the rate, or nothing at all. Almost half (48%) thought electric vehicles should pay the same rate as gas and diesel vehicles, but 37% preferred charging electric vehicles only half and a small minority (15%) preferred that there be no fee at all for electric vehicles.

Preferred Rate for Low-Income Drivers

Another question asked respondents, “If Congress adopts a mileage fee, would you support or oppose charging a lower rate to low-income drivers?” Almost two-thirds (64%) supported this option.

6.6 PREFERENCE FOR AN ANNUAL FEE VS. A MILEAGE FEE

Another mileage fee question probed whether respondents preferred the concept of user fees that vary by system use vs. a flat annual fee:

Which of the following options would you prefer as a replacement for the gas tax?

- A mileage fee
- An annual charge that is the same for everyone no matter how much they drive

The respondents were almost evenly split: 48% chose the variable fee (mileage fee) and 52% chose the flat annual charge.

7. CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the report with a summary of key survey findings on four themes: travel experiences, public goals for improving the transportation system, public opinion and knowledge about the federal gas tax, and opinions about adopting a federal mileage fee. These findings about public priorities suggest opportunities for policymakers to build support for transportation funding measures through careful program design. Results presented are from the 2024 survey, unless otherwise indicated.

7.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Travel Experiences

Key findings include the following:

American households are multimodal. Although travel by personal vehicle is the dominant mode, the majority of households are multi-modal. When respondents were asked what modes of transportation they or their household members had used within the previous 30 days, 48% reported walk trips, 21% reported public transit trips, 15% reported bicycle trips, and 4% reported trips on a micro-mobility device, such as an electric kick-scooter. Further, although only 23% of respondents said the household had used a taxi or ride-hailing in the previous month, 29% of respondents estimated that in a typical month their households paid for some ride-hailing or taxi trips. Overall, 63% of respondents reported living in a household where at least one person used a mode other than driving or getting a ride from a family member or friend.

The majority of respondents drive a modest number of miles annually and do so in reasonably fuel-efficient and fairly new vehicles. Half of respondents either did not drive themselves at all or drove less than 7,500 miles per year. Of those who drove gasoline or diesel vehicles, only 25% reported that the vehicle they drove most often was very fuel inefficient (up to 20 mpg). Also, 7% of drivers reported that their primary personal vehicle is 100% battery electric. Fifty-eight percent of respondents drove a vehicle no more than 10 years old.

Fuel is by far the largest monthly transportation expense for most households. Eight-eight percent of respondents reported that their households spent money on fuel in the preceding month, with \$100 as the median amount spent. The next most common expenditure was ride-hailing or taxi services; 29% of households had spent money on these services in the preceding month.

Most Americans are (somewhat) content with the quality of transportation options in their community. Seventy-eight percent of respondents rated the quality of interstates, highways, and freeways as somewhat or very good. Additionally, 65% of respondents said the same thing about the quality of local roads, 61% about bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and 55% about public transit. However, most respondents rated the quality of each system as somewhat good rather than very good.

Most Americans are (somewhat) concerned about traffic congestion and disaster readiness. Seventy-three percent of respondents were somewhat or very concerned about traffic congestion, and 61% of respondents were somewhat or very concerned that disasters like fires or flooding will severely damage their community's transportation infrastructure.

Americans don't believe the transportation system is very safe—perhaps because so many people experience crashes. One in eight respondents (13%) reported having experienced a motor vehicle collision in the previous year, and one in eleven (9%) had suffered an injury from a collision during the same period. This personal experience with collisions may explain why the majority of respondents did not rate roads in their community as “very safe” for vehicle passengers, pedestrians, or people riding bicycles or micro-mobility devices. Even for vehicle passenger safety, which was rated the most highly, only 24% rated their community as “very” safe.

Gas Tax Findings

Key findings include the following:

Only 2% of Americans know that the federal gas tax rate has not been raised in more than 20 years. More than half of respondents (51%) said they simply didn't know when the federal rate was last raised, and another 36% incorrectly believed the rate had been raised within the past 10 years.

The majority of Americans support raising the gas tax—if the revenue is dedicated to a specific transportation purpose. The five gas-tax increase questions specifying that the revenue would be spent on specific kinds of projects had majority support. The most popular options were gas tax increases to support either maintenance or safety improvements (74% and 70% support, respectively). However, considerably less than the majority supported the same gas tax increase if the revenue were spent for undefined “transportation” purposes.

Support for raising the federal gas tax has risen since 2010. Support for all the taxes introduced early in the survey series has grown steadily. For example, the largest increase has been in support for the gas tax rate increase to support projects that reduce air pollution from vehicles. Here, support grew 32 percentage points, from 32% to 64%. In contrast, the most popular gas tax increase, to fund maintenance, has seen the smallest increase (10 percentage points).

Two-thirds of Americans believe it is appropriate to spend some gas tax revenue on public transit. When asked this question directly in 2024, more than two-thirds (71%) agreed. Support in earlier years ranged from 61% to 72%.

Mileage Fee Findings

Key findings include the following:

Few Americans know much about mileage fees. Sixty percent of respondents had never heard of mileage fees and 31% said that they had heard a little. Only 10% said they had heard a lot about mileage fees.

Support for some mileage fee options is above 50%. Support for replacing the gas tax with a mileage fee where the rate would vary according to the vehicle's pollution emissions was 51%. Also, more than half of respondents supported creating a new "Business Road-Use Fee" that would be charged to delivery and freight trucks (58%), taxis (53%), or ride-hailing vehicles (53%).

The least popular mileage fee option is a flat-rate fee on all travel. Support for this option was 39%, far lower than the 51% who supported the option where the rate varied according to the vehicle's pollution emissions.

Support for implementing a mileage fee on all travel rose from 2010 to 2024. Support for the flat-rate mileage fee grew from just 22% in 2010 to 39% in 2024. Similarly, support for the green version grew from 33% in 2010 to 51% in 2024.

Almost two-thirds of Americans would like to see lower rates for low-income drivers. Sixty-four percent of respondents said that if Congress adopts a mileage fee, they would support charging a lower rate to low-income drivers.

Americans are evenly divided on whether electric vehicles should pay a lower rate than gas and diesel vehicles. Fifty-two percent of respondents thought that electric vehicles should be charged either a lower rate than gas and diesel vehicles or no fee at all.

Americans are evenly divided on the choice between a block-pricing vs. flat-rate fee structure. Forty-nine percent of respondents supported a block-pricing rate structure where the rate is lower for the first 5,000 miles driven annually and higher for all additional miles driven that year.

Americans are split on whether a mileage fee or flat annual fee would be a better replacement for the gas tax. Forty-eight percent of respondents would prefer the gas tax to be replaced with a mileage fee, while 52% would prefer an annual charge that is the same regardless of the amount driven.

Three-quarters of Americans want to pay a mileage fee in small installments instead of paying annually. Respondents were asked if they would prefer to pay for mileage fees annually, monthly, or each time they buy fuel or charge the vehicle. The last option was the most popular of the three: 46% preferred paying with each fuel or electricity purchase. Only 23% supported the annual billing option.

7.2 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The study findings suggest the following implications for policymakers.

Mileage fee acceptance depends on program design features such as the rate structure and

payment options. The survey found that half or more of respondents supported variable rate structures such as charging lower rates to low-income drivers and less-polluting vehicles. Another popular design choice tested was to allow payment in small increments. Designing a mileage fee program with these options will likely lead to greater public acceptance.

Some though not all proposals to raise gas tax rates can be acceptable to the public. At least 60% of respondents supported each of various proposals to raise the federal gas tax rate by 10¢ where the revenue would be dedicated to one of the following specific purposes: better maintenance, improved safety, reducing emissions that contribute to air pollution and global warming, and reduced congestion. However, only 35% supported raising the rate if the money were dedicated to unspecified “transportation” purposes.

Proposals to raise gas tax rates or adopt a mileage fee should commit to spending the revenue for a specific purpose that the public values. Since 2010, the survey has consistently found that many more respondents support a gas tax increase if the money is dedicated to a specific transportation purpose, rather than being used generically “for transportation.” Far more respondents supported a 10¢ gas tax increase if funds are strictly allocated towards either safety or maintenance than supported the same increase when told the revenue will be spent generally “for transportation,” with no other details given (74% vs 35% support). It is very likely that support for mileage fee programs will also depend on how the revenue will be spent.

Prioritize maintenance and safety above all. Multiple survey questions about transportation improvement goals and priorities for transportation spending consistently found that safety and maintenance were the highest priorities. Further, more than two-thirds of the 2024 respondents supported raising the federal gas tax rate if the money were dedicated to these purposes. In addition, the data reveals a clear preference for maintaining roadway infrastructure rather than expanding it. Far more respondents viewed the upkeep of local streets/roads and freeways/highways as a high priority (57% and 60%, respectively) than viewed expanding local roads and freeways as a high priority (33% and 36%).

Design spending and tax programs to improve environmental quality. The majority of respondents rated as “very important” the goals for improving the transportation system by (1) reducing health impacts caused by air pollution from cars and trucks and (2) reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources. Similarly, the majority of respondents supported increasing the gas tax rate if the money were dedicated to programs either to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or air pollution emissions. The survey also found that respondents were more likely to support a mileage fee on all travel if the rate varied according to the vehicle’s pollution levels than if the rate were flat for all vehicles.

Ensure that spending benefits all modes. Although comparatively less popular than maintenance and safety, there was majority support for spending transportation revenue to support transit, walking, and cycling. Further, 52% of respondents thought it a very important goal to “make it more convenient to go places without driving.” This support for a multi-modal system is likely explained at least in part by the fact that many households are multi-modal; 48% of respondents said that in the previous month someone in their household had walked, and 21% reported that someone in the household had ridden transit.

Design spending and tax programs to improve travel opportunities for low-income households. In 2024, 70% of respondents said that it was a very important goal to “ensure that everyone, regardless of income, can conveniently get to jobs, school, health care, etc.,” and the majority placed a medium or high priority on spending revenue to on “provide discounted public transit fares for low-income people.” Further, if Congress were to implement a mileage fee, almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) supported charging a lower rate to lower-income drivers.

Support research to determine the true number of vehicle crashes occurring annually. The survey found crashes to be far more widespread than what is typically reported in the literature on U.S. road safety, underscoring a need for additional research to better understand the true extent of crashes. Most published research documents only the crashes officially reported to police, insurance companies, and/or hospitals, yet it is well known that many crashes are never reported in any of these ways. For example, drivers who are undocumented or uninsured frequently avoid any official reporting, and pedestrian and bicycle collisions are also frequently unreported. A 2023 publication from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimated that 53% of crashes had gone unreported in 2019.¹⁵

¹⁵ Lawrence Blincoe, et al., *The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019 (revised)* (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, February 2023).

APPENDIX - TOPLINE RESULTS FOR 2024

This appendix shows the survey question language and responses for the overall set of respondents.

Notes:

- Shows results with weighted data. Data has been weighted for gender, race, ethnicity, annual household income level, and age.
- Missing and refused responses were removed from the dataset before calculating the response rates.
- Columns of numbers in some tables do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

* * *

We are interested in your opinions about the transportation system. The “transportation system” means local streets and roads, highways, and public transit services like buses, light rail, trains, and ferries.

Q1. In your community, how is the quality of:

	Very good (%)	Somewhat good (%)	Somewhat bad (%)	Very Bad (%)	Not sure / doesn't apply (%)
Interstates, highways, and freeways	25	53	16	4	2
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities	19	42	21	8	10
Public transit (bus, rail, etc.)	19	36	20	10	15
Local streets and roads	18	47	26	8	1

Q2. How concerned are you about traffic congestion in your community?

	%
Very concerned	28
Somewhat concerned	46
Not at all concerned	27

Q3. How concerned are you that disasters such as flooding, wildfires, or hurricanes will severely damage the transportation system in your community?

	%
Very concerned	21
Somewhat concerned	39
Not at all concerned	39

Q4. How would you rate the level of road safety in your community for each of the following?

	Very safe (%)	Somewhat safe (%)	Not at all safe (%)
Drivers and passengers in motor vehicles (cars, trucks, etc.)	24	67	9
Pedestrians	22	59	19
Bicyclists	17	58	25
Motorcyclists	16	64	20
People riding a skateboard, electric kick scooter, or other small device	13	49	38

Q5. How important are the following transportation-related goals for the United States?

	Very important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Not important (%)
Reduce crashes and improve safety	74	23	3
Ensure that everyone, regardless of income, can conveniently get to jobs, school, health care, etc.	70	25	4
Reduce traffic congestion	58	37	5
Reduce health impacts caused by air pollution from cars and trucks	58	35	8
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources that contribute to climate change	53	36	11
Make it more convenient to go places without driving (bus, walk, bike, etc.)	52	38	10

Q6. Now, imagine that Congress is deciding how to spend transportation money in the next 5 years. What percent of the money should go to each of the following goals? The total must add up to 100%.

	Mean (%)	0%	1-10%	11-20%	21-30%	>30%
Ensure that everyone, regardless of income, can conveniently get to jobs, school, health care, etc.	21	7	26	35	17	15
Reduce crashes and improve safety	20	9	29	33	16	13
Reduce traffic congestion	16	11	39	30	11	8
Reduce health impacts caused by air pollution from cars and trucks	14	14	39	33	10	4
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources that contribute to climate change	14	18	36	30	10	7
Make it more convenient to go places without driving (bus, walk, bike, etc.)	14	14	41	29	10	6

Q7. As you may be aware, the federal government charges a gas tax and spends the money collected for transportation. Listed below are different ways the government could spend that money to improve the transportation system. How much of a priority should each one be?

	High (%)	Medium (%)	Low (%)	Not at all (%)
Maintain interstates, highways, and freeways	60	33	5	2
Maintain local streets and roads	57	37	5	2
Provide discounted public transit fares for low-income people	47	37	12	5
Maintain public transit	45	42	10	3
Improve how transportation agencies respond to disasters like wildfires, floods, and blizzards	40	42	15	4
Build/improve sidewalks	37	44	17	3
Build/widen interstates, highways, and freeways	36	43	17	4
Build/widen local roads and streets	33	45	17	4
Add more frequent public transit service on existing routes	33	45	17	5
Add new public transit routes	33	44	18	5
Install cameras to better enforce rules against reckless driving (speeding, running red lights)	33	37	20	9
Build/improve bike lanes and bike paths	28	44	22	6
Install more charging stations for electric vehicles	23	37	26	14
Provide financial incentives for people to purchase electric vehicles	23	32	25	20

Q8. Here is the same list of transportation purposes that the federal government could spend the gas tax money on. Select the three you think are most important.

	Selected as top 3 (%)
Maintain interstates, highways, and freeways	43
Maintain local streets and roads	41
Provide discounted public transit fares for low-income people	26
Maintain public transit	25
Build/widen interstates, highways, and freeways	22
Install cameras to better enforce rules against reckless driving (speeding, running red lights)	20
Improve how transportation agencies respond to disasters like wildfires, floods, and blizzards	18
Build/improve sidewalks	17
Add new public transit routes	16
Add more frequent public transit service on existing routes	15
Build/widen local roads and streets	14
Build/improve bike lanes and bike paths	13
Provide financial incentives for people to purchase electric vehicles	11
Install more charging stations for electric vehicles	11

The next set of questions ask about the types of transportation your household uses and how much money your household spends on certain transportation-related expenses. As a reminder, “household” means all the people currently living with you in your home. (Do not include renters or tenants.) If you live in a dormitory, in a boarding house, or with roommates, just answer the following questions for yourself.

Q9. In the last 30 days, which types of transportation have you or any other members of your household used? Check all that apply.

	In the last 30 days (%)
Drive yourself (car, truck, motorcycle, etc.)	80
Walk	48
Ride as a passenger in a personal vehicle (exclude trips in taxis, rideshare like Uber/Lyft, etc.)	43
Public transit (bus, light-rail, ferry, etc.)	21
Ridesharing service like Uber or Lyft	17
Bicycle	15
Airplane	7
Taxi	6
Skateboard, electric kick scooter, or other small device	4
Other	1

Q10. In a typical month, how much does your household spend on the following expenses?

	Mean (\$)	Median (\$)	\$0 (%)	\$1-50 (%)	\$51-100 (%)	\$101-\$100 (%)	\$151+ (%)
Fuel for personal vehicles	132	100	12	30	28	9	21
Taxis or ride-hailing services (e.g., Lyft or Uber)	64	30	71	23	4	1	2
Public transit (buses, trains, subways, ferries, etc.)	58	20	74	21	2	1	1
Parking	58	20	77	20	2	0	1
Tolls on bridges and highways, including express lane fees	43	20	73	24	2	0	1
Other transportation-related expenses	60	25	90	8	1	0	1

Q11. How often does your household not have enough money to pay for gasoline, transit fares, or other transportation costs?

	Frequently (%)	Occasionally (%)	Never (%)	Does not apply (%)
Not enough money for transportation costs	13	31	47	8

There are many ways the U.S. Congress could raise money to pay for maintaining and improving the transportation system. The next few questions ask your opinion about some of these options. In each case, assume that the money collected would be spent only for transportation purposes.

Q12. Right now the federal government collects a tax of 18¢ per gallon when people buy gasoline. One idea to raise money for transportation is to increase the federal gas tax by 10¢ a gallon, from 18¢ to 28¢. Would you support or oppose this gas tax increase?

	%
Strongly support	11
Somewhat support	24
Somewhat oppose	29
Strongly oppose	35

Q13. Now, imagine that the U.S. Congress decided that the best option to raise money for transportation is to increase the federal gas tax by ten cents per gallon. Would you support or oppose the gas tax increase if the new money were spent only on the following types of projects?

	Strongly support (%)	Somewhat support (%)	Somewhat oppose (%)	Strongly oppose (%)
Maintain streets, roads, and highways	35	39	15	12
Reduce accidents and improve safety	33	37	16	13
Reduce local air pollution caused by the transportation system	28	36	18	18
Reduce traffic congestion	25	39	20	15
Reduce the transportation system's contribution to global warming	24	36	20	20

Q14a & Q14b. Some people say that money from gas taxes should only be spent on roads and highways, since drivers pay the tax. Other people say gas tax money should be used to pay for public transit in addition to roads and highways, because transit helps reduce traffic congestion and wear-and-tear on the roads. Would you support or oppose spending some gas tax money on public transit?

	%
Support	71
Oppose	29

Note on Q14a & Q14b: Half of respondents received the question as worded here, and the other half received the question with the two statements in reverse order: Some people say gas tax money should be used to pay for public transit in addition to roads and highways, because transit helps reduce traffic congestion and wear-and-tear on the roads. Other people say that money from gas taxes should only be spent on roads and highways, since drivers pay the tax. Would you support or oppose spending some gas tax money on public transit?

Now, imagine that the U.S. Congress decides to replace the gas tax with a mileage fee of 3¢ per mile driven. That means someone driving 10,000 miles a year would pay \$300. Vehicles would have an electronic meter to keep track of the miles driven.

Q15. Would you support or oppose replacing the gas tax with such a mileage fee?

	%
Strongly support	12
Somewhat support	27
Somewhat oppose	27
Strongly oppose	34

Q16. If Congress adopts a mileage fee, would you support or oppose charging a lower rate to low-income drivers?

	%
Strongly support	30
Somewhat support	34
Somewhat oppose	17
Strongly oppose	19

Q17. A variation on the mileage fee concept is to have the fee rate vary depending upon how much the vehicle pollutes. On average, vehicles would be charged 3¢ per mile, but vehicles that pollute less would be charged less, and vehicles that pollute more would be charged more. Would you support or oppose this new mileage fee?

	%
Strongly support	15
Somewhat support	36
Somewhat oppose	23
Strongly oppose	25

Q18. Another variation on the mileage fee concept is to replace the gas tax with a mileage fee of 3¢ per mile for all gas and diesel vehicles, but with a different rate for all-electric vehicles. What rate per mile do you think electric vehicles should pay?

	%
The same rate as gas/diesel vehicles	48
Half the rate set for gas/diesel vehicles	37
Nothing (electric vehicles pay no fee)	15

Q19. Now imagine that the US Congress decides to keep the gas tax, but to add a new per-mile “Business Road-Use Fee” for miles that commercial vehicles drive on the job. (These vehicles would continue to pay the current gas tax, as well.) Would you support or oppose this new Business Road-Use Fee for the following types of commercial vehicles?

	Strongly support (%)	Somewhat support (%)	Somewhat oppose (%)	Strongly oppose (%)
Delivery and freight trucks	21	36	23	20
Ride hailing vehicles	15	38	27	20
Taxis	15	37	28	19

Q20. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

I'm already tracked everywhere I go through my phone, so having my mileage tracked for a mileage fee wouldn't really bother me.

	%
Strongly agree	15
Somewhat agree	27
Somewhat disagree	23
Strongly disagree	34

Q21. Which statement is closer to your opinion?

	%
A mileage fee is MORE fair than the gas tax because everyone pays the same for use of the roads, regardless of vehicle fuel efficiency or vehicle type (electric vs. gas vehicles)	55
A mileage fee is LESS fair than the gas tax because the mileage fee doesn't give a break to people who buy cleaner vehicles	45

Q22. If Congress creates a federal mileage fee, which of the following possible fee structures would be fairer?

	%
The fee is the same for every mile the vehicle drives during the year	51
The fee is lower for the first 5,000 miles the vehicle drives during the year, and higher for all additional miles driven that year	49

Q23. If Congress does create a federal mileage fee, how would you prefer to pay? Remember that the total amount you pay annually would be the same in each option.

	%
Pay each time I purchase gas/diesel or charge an electric vehicle	46
Pay a bill that comes once a month	31
Pay a bill that comes once a year	23

Q24. Which of the following options would you prefer as a replacement for the gas tax?

	%
A mileage fee	48
An annual charge that is the same for everyone no matter how much they drive	52

Q25. Some states and the federal government have been discussing mileage fees as a possible replacement for the gas tax. How much, if anything, have you read or heard about this topic?

	%
A lot	10
A little	31
Nothing at all	60

Q26. As best you remember, when did the federal gas tax rate last change?

	%
Less than a year ago	8
1 to 3 years ago	19
4 to 10 years ago	9
11 to 15 years ago	3
16 to 20 years ago	1
More than 20 years ago [correct answer]	2
Don't know	58

Q27. Have you been involved in any motor vehicle crashes in the last 12 months as a driver, passenger, pedestrian, bicyclist, etc.?

	%
Yes – 1 crash	9
Yes – more than 1 crash	4
No	87

[Skip To: Q32 If Have you been involved in any motor vehicle crashes in the last 12 months as a driver, passenger,... = No]

[Display This Question:

If Have you been involved in any motor vehicle crashes in the last 12 months as a driver, passenger,... = Yes - 1 crash]

Q28. Did you or anyone else report the crash to an insurance company, police, and/or other law enforcement?

	%
Yes	72
No	22
Not sure	6

[Display This Question:

If Have you been involved in any motor vehicle crashes in the last 12 months as a driver, passenger,... = Yes - more than 1 crash]

Q29. Did you or anyone else report any of the crashes to an insurance company, police, and/or other law enforcement?

	%
All the crashes were reported	53
Some, but not all, were reported	34
None of the crashes were reported	5
I'm not sure how many of the crashes were reported	8

Q30. How were you traveling when the crash(es) happened? If you were involved in more than one crash, check all that apply.*

	%
Driving or riding as a passenger in a motor vehicle (car, truck, etc.)	84
Walking	19
Bicycling	14
Riding an electric-scooter, skateboard, or other small device	3
Other	1

* Percentages based on the total number of respondents in a crash

Q31. Were you injured as a result of the crash(es) in the last 12 months? If you were involved in more than one crash, check all that apply.

	%
Yes – serious injuries	20
Yes – moderate injuries	22
Yes – minor injuries	24
No	38

* Percentages based on the total number of respondents in a crash

Q32 Do you describe yourself as a man, a woman, or in some other way?

	%
Man	47
Woman	53

Q32 How old are you? (years)

	%
18-24	15
25-54	49
55+	37

Q33 What is your current employment status?

	%
Working for pay	51
Unemployed, but looking for work	17
Not working for pay, by choice (retired, etc.)	32

Q34 Are you of Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin?

	%
Yes	18
No	82

Q35 Which of the following describe your race? Select all that apply.

	%
White	69
Black	13
Asian	5
Other, including multiracial	14

Q36 How many adults currently live in your household, including you?

	%
1	25
2	49
3	14
4+	12

Q37 How many children currently live in your household, including you?

	%
0	70
1	14
2	11
3+	5

Q38 What was your total household income last year from all sources, before taxes?

	%
\$0 to \$24,999	25
\$25,000 to \$49,999	23
\$50,000 to \$74,999	15
\$75,000 to \$99,999	10
\$100,000 to \$149,999	11
\$150,000 to \$199,999	5
\$200,000 or more	10

Q39 About how many miles did you, personally, drive during the past 12 months in all motorized vehicles? If you work, include the commute to and from work, but not any miles driven while on the job.

	%
0 miles (don't drive)	15
1 to 5,000 miles	35
5,001 to 7,500 miles	15
7,501 to 10,000 miles	13
10,001 to 12,500 miles	8
12,501 to 15,000 miles	6
15,001 to 20,000 miles	4
20,001 miles or more	4

Now think about the vehicle you drove the most in the past 12 months, to get around for personal reasons like shopping, commuting to work, or vacation trips.

Q40 What is the model year of that vehicle?

Vehicle age	%
1 – 5 years	26
6 – 10 years	32
11 – 15 years	21
16 – 20 years	12
21+ years	9

Q41 Is this vehicle a 100% all-electric vehicle?

	%
Yes	7
No	93

Q42 How many miles per gallon does the vehicle get? Your best guess is fine.

	%
19 mpg or less	18
20 to 30 mpg	45
31 mpg or more	37

Q43 How would you describe the area where you live?

	%
Urban part of a city/region	29
Suburban part of a city/region	44
Small town	12
Rural area	16

Q44 What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

	%
Less than high school	12
High school diploma or GED	27
Some college (includes vocational or technical degree)	30
Bachelor's degree	18
Graduate degree	13

Q45 Are you currently registered to vote, or have you not been able to register for one reason or another?

	%
Yes, registered to vote	82
No, not registered to vote	18

[Skip To: Q47 If Are you currently registered to vote, or have you not been able to register for one reason or another = No, not registered to vote]

Q46 How often would you say you vote?

	%
All of the time	49
Most of the time	31
Occasionally	11
Seldom	5
Never	4

Q47 In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

	%
Republican	35
Democrat	29
Independent (no party affiliation)	33
Some other party	3

[Skip to Q49 if respondent answers Republican or Democrat]

Q48 As of today, do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	%
Lean Republican	21
Lean Democrat	22
Neither	57

Q49. Does anyone in your household drive a 100% battery-electric vehicle either for personal reasons or for work-related driving?

	%
Yes	5
No	95

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