

2015 Maryland Policy Choices: Transportation Questions

Public Opinion Survey Results

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maryland Policy Choices Survey is a telephone public opinion survey conducted by the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore. The survey covers a wide range of public policy topics of interest to policymakers and the general public. This excerpt analyzes questions regarding transportation and focuses on how respondents rate different transportation priorities and the differences between the opinions of respondents from Baltimore City, the Baltimore metropolitan area, and the rest of Maryland.

The transportation questions focus on a broad range of transportation priorities that respondents were read and asked to rate. The priorities include topics such as public transportation, Maryland's roads and bridges, freight, and bicycle transportation.

As a broad overview:

- The most important transportation priorities among respondents statewide are maintaining bridges and roads.
- Bicycle transportation was the least prioritized transportation mode across the board.
- Respondents favored maintaining or improving existing infrastructure and services rather than building new infrastructure or services.

METHODOLOGY

The Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore conducted a telephone survey of 884 total respondents who were at least 18 years of age, 804 of which completed the entire survey. Not all respondents answered every question. Data were collected via Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) between September 1, 2015 and October 19, 2015. The margin of error for this study is +/- 3.46% at the state level.

The Schaefer Center used a dual-frame sample to conduct the survey, one of landline telephones and one of wireless phones. The landline sample was constructed with a list-assisted random digit dial (RDD) methodology, which uses listed phone numbers to select random blocks of assigned phone numbers sufficient to obtain the necessary number of completed interviews. The wireless phone sample frame was also an RDD frame, but without the list-assisted component.

The final data is weighted to reflect the most recent estimation of wireless phone only dual use, and landline only households throughout the state and to correct for the propensity of women to answer surveys more readily than men. Proportional weighting was used to bring the distribution of respondents into alignment with the Maryland population by giving appropriate weighting factors to each respondent according to the U.S. Census Bureau's population estimates from 2015 and with estimates of the distribution of all wireless phone usage in Maryland provided by the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Results described in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage. In some cases, due to rounding, the figures reported will not sum to 100%. Refusals were omitted and responses were recalculated based on the total number of respondents who did not refuse.

ANALYSIS

This section explores specific questions and crosstabulations in detail. Selected questions of importance have been displayed for further analysis. A full listing of all questions asked in the transportation section of the survey, along with a breakdown by geographic location, can be found in Appendix A.

In order to compare results from different parts of the state, respondents were classified as residing in one of Maryland's 23 county jurisdictions or Baltimore City. The geographical breakdown consists of Baltimore City, the Baltimore metropolitan area, and the rest of Maryland. The Baltimore metropolitan area is defined as Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County, and Howard County. The rest of Maryland is defined as the remaining counties, outside of Baltimore City and the Baltimore metropolitan area.

The topics discussed in this section include what respondents reported were their most important and least important transportation priorities, how road and bridge conditions may impact perceptions, and how commuting patterns may influence what priorities respondents consider important or unimportant.

TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of a variety of transportation-related priorities on a four-point scale ranging from very important to not important at all. Chart 1 shows the top five rated priorities statewide based on those who answered either "very important," "just important," or "only somewhat important."

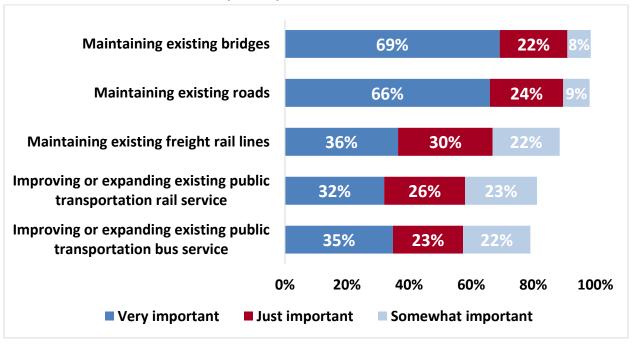


Chart 1 Top Transportation Priorities Statewide

Overall, the top two answers across the whole state are virtually indistinguishable. Maintaining existing bridges and roads were overwhelmingly the top rated transportation-related priorities. After bridges and roads, the next highest rated priority statewide was maintaining existing freight rail lines. Rounding out the top-five, improving or expanding existing public transportation rail service and bus service received support from around 80% of respondents statewide.

Chart 2 shows the lowest rated priorities among all respondents. The bottom four priorities introduce a new transportation mode not mentioned in the previous chart: bicycles. While bridges, roads, rail, and buses all appeared in the top rated priorities, priorities related to bicycle transportation did not. In fact, bicycle related priorities appeared only among the bottom three priorities.

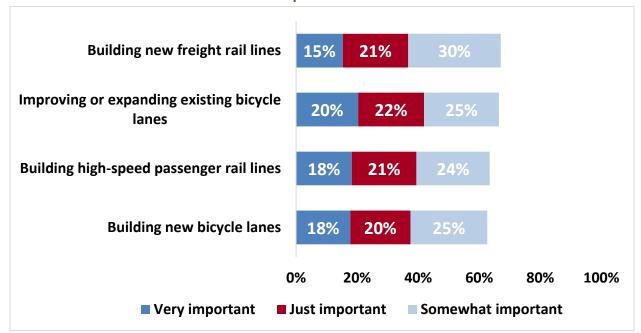


Chart 2 Lowest Transportation Priorities Statewide

In addition to bicycle related priorities, the other priorities that appeared at the bottom were building new freight rail lines and building high-speed passenger rail lines. Based on what respondents considered their top priorities, they would rather see money go towards improving existing freight and passenger rail, rather than towards the construction of new freight lines or high-speed passenger lines. Unlike the top rated priorities where two priorities in particular stand out (maintaining bridges and roads), the least rated priorities are all relatively equal, with no one priority standing out as the least popular by a wide margin.

Table 1 shows the transportation priorities of respondents living in Baltimore City, the Baltimore metropolitan area, and the rest of Maryland. Table 1 also includes those who answered "very important," "just important," and "only somewhat important." The table shows, in greater detail, the overwhelming support for maintaining bridges and roads. Nearly 100% of respondents in all jurisdictions said that maintaining bridges or roads was at least somewhat important.

Table 1 Transportation Priorities

	Baltimore City		Baltimore Metro		Rest of Maryland		All of Maryland
Percent	Response	Percent	Response	Percent	Response	Percent	Response
98%	Maintaining existing bridges	99%	Maintaining existing bridges	98%	Maintaining existing roads	99%	Maintaining existing bridges
97%	Maintaining existing roads	99%	Maintaining existing roads	98%	Maintaining existing bridges	98%	Maintaining existing roads
85%	Improving or expanding existing public transportation rail service	91%	Maintaining existing freight rail lines	89%	Maintaining existing freight rail lines	88%	Maintaining existing freight rail lines
84%	Maintaining existing freight rail lines	79%	Improving or expanding existing public transportation rail service	81%	Improving or expanding existing public transportation rail service	81%	Improving or expanding existing public transportation rail service
82%	Improving or expanding existing public transportation bus service	78%	Building new bridges	79%	Improving or expanding existing public transportation bus service	79%	Improving or expanding existing public transportation bus service
80%	Building new public transportation rail service	77%	Improving or expanding existing public transportation bus service	77%	Building new public transportation bus service	75%	Building new public transportation bus service
78%	Building new public transportation bus service	72%	Building new roads	75%	Building new public transportation rail service	75%	Building new public transportation rail service
74%	Building new roads	72%	Building new public transportation bus service	74%	Building new roads	74%	Building new bridges
73%	Building new bridges	71%	Building new public transportation rail service	72%	Building new bridges	74%	Building new roads
70%	Building new freight rail lines	71%	Building new freight rail lines	65%	Improving or expanding existing bicycle lanes	67%	Building new freight rail lines
66%	Improving or expanding existing bicycle lanes	69%	Improving or expanding existing bicycle lanes	63%	Building high-speed passenger rail lines	66%	Improving or expanding existing bicycle lanes
64%	Building new bicycle lanes	65%	Building high-speed passenger rail lines	62%	Building new bicycle lanes	63%	Building high-speed passenger rail lines
62%	Building high-speed passenger rail lines	62%	Building new bicycle lanes	62%	Building new freight rail lines	63%	Building new bicycle lanes

Weighted percent answering very important, just important, and only somewhat important.

Table 1 also shows the parity between what respondents consider the top-tier priorities, middletier priorities, and lower-tier priorities. Top-tier responses typically consisted of maintaining or improving existing infrastructure or transportation services such as bridges, roads, rail lines, and buses. The two most commonly used infrastructure types, bridges and roads, received the highest level of support from respondents. The middle-tier responses typically consisted of building new infrastructure or services. The lower-tier priorities consisted of a mixture between building new or making improvements on less common transportation modes such as bicycle transportation and high-speed rail. Interestingly, even respondents from Baltimore City, the jurisdiction with the greatest population density, rated bicycle transportation priorities very low. These respondents also rated building high-speed rail very low despite being a likely hub for any future major high-speed rail project.

PRIORITIES VS. CURRENT STATE OF TRANSPORTATION

In order to provide context to respondents' transportation priorities, statewide transportation conditions and trends published by the United States Department of Transportation were examined. Specifically, this section will look at road conditions, bridge conditions, and the forms of transportation Marylanders use to commute to work. Together, this data helps explain why respondents prioritized some items over others.

Charts 3 and 4 examine road and bridge conditions, respectively, since 2006 for the years in which data is available. Road conditions for 2014 and 2010 were not available. Chart 5 shows the breakdown of how Marylanders commute to work, based on 2012 data.

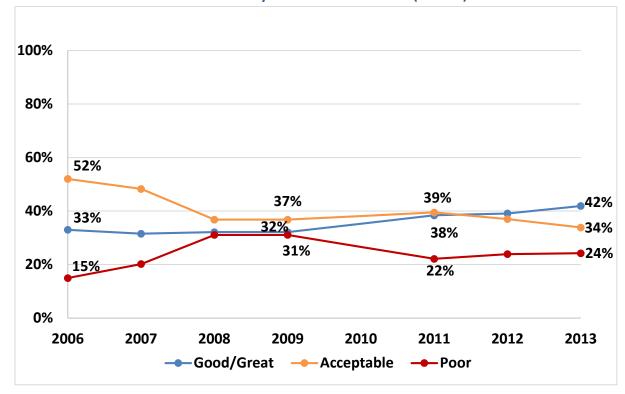


Chart 3 Maryland Road Conditions ('06-'13)1

The Maryland Policy Choices Survey found that 98% of respondents statewide thought that maintaining existing roads was at least somewhat important. Data from the U.S. Department of Transportation in Chart 3 shows that the percentage of roads listed in poor condition peaked around 2008 and has been relatively stable since 2011. Meanwhile, the percentage of roads listed in good or great condition has been climbing since 2009. Nevertheless, despite the increasing percentage of roads in either good or great condition in recent years, respondents still feel that maintaining existing roads is a top priority.

The most likely explanation for the emphasis on maintaining roads is that most respondents, if not all respondents, have frequent interactions with driving on Maryland's roads. Because it is such a common activity, respondents may care less about whether roads are in good or bad condition, and more about maintaining or improving roads no matter what the condition. Another explanation could be that while Maryland's roads seem to be improving overall,

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration. *Highway Statistics 2013*, HM-63 and HM-64 [Data files]. Retrieved from www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics.cfm

U.S. Department of Transportation/Bureau of Transportation Statistics. (2007-2014). *State Transportation Statistics*. International Roughness Index (IRI): Good <95; Acceptable 95-170; Poor >170. Data from 2010 not available.

respondents may not see improvements on certain roads that they use frequently and therefore consider maintaining roads a top priority.

Chart 4 shows data from the U.S. Department of Transportation on the condition of bridges in Maryland since 2006. This data does not use the same measure as road conditions, which rely on the International Roughness Index. Instead, bridges are inspected and rated based on criteria in the National Bridge Inspection Standards. Based on a bridge's rating, structural assessment, and functional adequacy it can be classified in two categories: "structurally deficient" and "functionally obsolete." According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, structurally deficient is characterized by "deteriorated conditions of significant bridge elements and potentially reduced load-carrying capacity," but it does not always mean that the bridge is inherently unsafe. Functionally obsolete is characterized by a bridge that does not meet its design standards due to the volume of traffic exceeding the original anticipated volume or due to a revision of design standards.

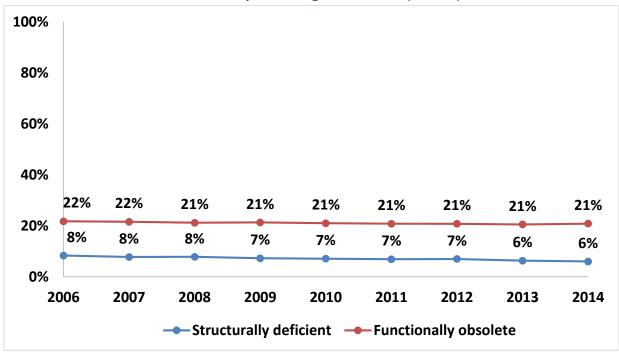


Chart 4 Maryland Bridge Conditions ('06-'14)³

Compared to road conditions, bridge conditions have seen much less fluctuation since 2006. Bridge conditions overall have not changed much since 2006. Nevertheless, respondents

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² U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration. (2014). 2010 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions & Performance. Retrieved from https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/2010cpr

³ U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration. (2015). *Deficient Bridges by State and Highway System* [Data file]. Retrieved from http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/deficient.cfm

statewide still listed maintaining existing bridges as a top priority (99%). Similar to why respondents may have prioritized maintaining roads, driving over bridges is a common activity. This may result in many people considering maintaining bridges a top priority. The idea that bridge conditions could be unsafe can be very worrisome, therefore, the idea that bridges should be maintained regularly is not unusual. In fact, data from recent Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) customer satisfaction surveys shows that a high percentage of respondents consider keeping bridges safe and maintaining roadways an extremely important function of the SHA. The survey, conducted every other year from 2008 to 2014, shows that in every year at least 96% of all respondents considered maintaining roads and keeping bridges safe extremely important or important functions of the SHA.

Chart 5 shows data from the U.S. Department of Transportation on how Marylanders commute to work. This data helps depict how often Marylanders use certain modes of transportation.

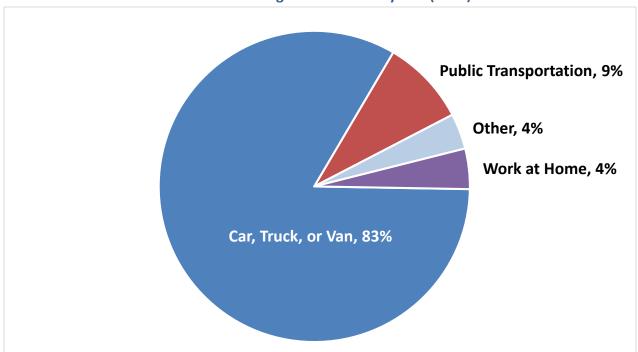


Chart 5 Commuting to Work in Maryland (2012)⁴

The vast majority of Marylanders commute to work via car, truck, or van. The popularity of commuting via car, truck, or van may help explain why respondents prioritized maintaining bridges and roads over every other transportation priority. This large figure suggests that it is

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⁴ U.S. Department of Transportation/Bureau of Transportation Statistics. (2014). *State Transportation Statistics* 2014.

very common for the vast majority of Marylanders to drive on Maryland's roads and/or bridges almost daily.

The next most common commuting method was public transportation (excluding taxis). Statewide, respondents to the Policy Choices Survey said improving existing public transportation rail service and public bus service was a top tier priority, below maintaining bridges and roads. Public transportation's rank as the second most frequent way to commute to work in Maryland may play a role in the perceived importance of improving public transportation rail and bus service. Additionally, since this chart is specific to commuting to work, it does not capture how often Marylanders use public transportation in general. Public transportation can be used and relied on by many people, regardless of how they travel to work. Therefore, it is conceivable that many respondents who might drive to work might still answer that improving existing public transportation is a top priority.

The "other" category in Chart 5 includes commuting via taxi, motorcycle, bicycle, walking, or other means. Along with working at home (those who do not commute), these transportation modes collectively make up the least popular way to commute to work in Maryland. The Policy Choices Survey found that improving and building bicycle lanes were two of the lowest transportation priorities among respondents statewide. The small percentage of people who commute to work via bicycle may help explain why respondents rated improving or building new bicycle lanes so poorly.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 2 Weighted Survey Demographics⁵

	eignted Survey Demographics	
Gender	Male	400/
Gender	Female	48%
	remale	52%
Dage	White - not Hispanic	620/
Race	Black - not Hispanic	62%
	Hispanic	30%
	Other	2%
	Other	3%
Education	Less than high school	20/
Education	High school graduate or GED	3%
		22%
	Some college or Tech School	27%
	College graduate	27%
	Graduate or Professional Education	20%
Best to a dre Wete	Yes	020/
Registered to Vote		92%
	No	7%
Doub	Democrat	F20/
Party	Republican	53%
	Green Party	26%
	Libertarian Party	<1%
	•	<1%
	Independent / Unaffiliated	13%
Ideales	Liberal	200/
Ideology	Moderate	20%
	Conservative	25%
	Do not think in those terms	19%
	Do not think in those terms	33%
lu a a ma	Less than \$25,000	130/
Income	Between \$25,000 and \$50,000	12%
	Between \$50,000 and \$100,000	21%
		24%
	Over \$100,000	25%
Ago	18 years to 34 years	1 0/
Age	35 years to 54 years	15%
	55 years to 64 years	29%
	65 years and older	22%
	,	30%

⁵ Percentages displayed have been weighted and may not equal 100% due to refusals and rounding.

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APPENDIX A: FULL RESULTS

Below are the full weighted frequencies and crosstabulations from all transportation related questions. Respondents who refused to answer have not been included in the calculated percentages.

Frequencies

Building new public transportation bus service			
Response	Percent n = 857		
Very important	27%		
Just important	23%		
Only somewhat important	25%		
Not important at all	23%		
Don't know	2%		
Total	100%		

Building new public transportation rail service			
Response	Percent n = 856		
Very important	25%		
Just important	24%		
Only somewhat important	26%		
Not important at all	24%		
Don't know	2%		
Total	100%		

Building new roads			
Response	Percent n = 856		
Very important	23%		
Just important	22%		
Only somewhat important	29%		
Not important at all	26%		
Don't know	1%		
Total	100%		

Building new bridges			
Response	Percent n = 858		
Very important	26%		
Just important	24%		
Only somewhat important	24%		
Not important at all	23%		
Don't know	3%		
Total	100%		

Building high-speed passenger rail lines			
Response	Percent n = 857		
Very important	18%		
Just important	21%		
Only somewhat important	24%		
Not important at all	35%		
Don't know	2%		
Total	100%		

Building new freight rail lines			
Response	Percent n = 858		
Very important	15%		
Just important	21%		
Only somewhat important	30%		
Not important at all	28%		
Don't know	5%		
Total	100%		

Building new bicycle lanes			
Response	Percent n = 857		
Very important	18%		
Just important	20%		
Only somewhat important	25%		
Not important at all	37%		
Don't know	0%		
Total	100%		

Improving or expanding existing public transportation bus service			
Response	Percent n = 855		
Very important	35%		
Just important	23%		
Only somewhat important	22%		
Not important at all	18%		
Don't know	3%		
Total	100%		

Improving or expanding existing public transportation rail service			
Response	Percent n = 858		
Very important	32%		
Just important	26%		
Only somewhat important	23%		
Not important at all	17%		
Don't know	1%		
Total	100%		

Maintaining existing roads			
Response	Percent n = 857		
Very important	66%		
Just important	24%		
Only somewhat important	9%		
Not important at all	2%		
Don't know	0%		
Total	100%		

Maintaining existing bridges			
Response	Percent n = 858		
Very important	69%		
Just important	22%		
Only somewhat important	8%		
Not important at all	1%		
Don't know	0%		
Total	100%		

Maintaining existing freight rail lines			
Response	Percent n = 857		
Very important	36%		
Just important	30%		
Only somewhat important	22%		
Not important at all	9%		
Don't know	3%		
Total	100%		

Improving or expanding existing bicycle lanes			
Response	Percent n = 858		
Very important	20%		
Just important	22%		
Only somewhat important	25%		
Not important at all	33%		
Don't know	1%		
Total	100%		

Crosstabulations

Building new public transportation bus service	Baltimore City n = 187	Baltimore Metro n = 290	Rest of Maryland n = 380
Very important	36%	24%	25%
Just important	24%	24%	23%
Only somewhat important	18%	24%	29%
Not important at all	21%	26%	21%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Building new public transportation rail service	Baltimore City n = 186	Baltimore Metro n = 292	Rest of Maryland n = 380
Very important	33%	22%	23%
Just important	26%	22%	23%
Only somewhat important	20%	26%	29%
Not important at all	18%	29%	22%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Building new roads	Baltimore City n = 186	Baltimore Metro n = 290	Rest of Maryland n = 379
Very important	22%	25%	22%
Just important	24%	22%	21%
Only somewhat important	28%	25%	31%
Not important at all	25%	27%	25%
Don't know	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Building new bridges	Baltimore City n = 186	Baltimore Metro n = 292	Rest of Maryland n = 380
Very important	26%	25%	26%
Just important	22%	32%	21%
Only somewhat important	25%	22%	25%
Not important at all	25%	19%	24%
Don't know	2%	2%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Building high-speed passenger rail lines	Baltimore City n = 185	Baltimore Metro n = 292	Rest of Maryland n = 380
Very important	19%	18%	18%
Just important	23%	24%	19%
Only somewhat important	20%	23%	27%
Not important at all	36%	33%	35%
Don't know	2%	3%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Building new freight rail lines	Baltimore City n = 186	Baltimore Metro n = 292	Rest of Maryland n = 381
Very important	20%	14%	14%
Just important	24%	24%	18%
Only somewhat important	26%	33%	31%
Not important at all	26%	23%	32%
Don't know	4%	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Building new bicycle lanes	Baltimore City n = 185	Baltimore Metro n = 292	Rest of Maryland n = 380
Very important	20%	19%	16%
Just important	20%	20%	20%
Only somewhat important	24%	23%	27%
Not important at all	36%	38%	37%
Don't know	0%	0%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Improving or expanding existing public transportation bus service	Baltimore City n = 186	Baltimore Metro n = 290	Rest of Maryland n = 380
Very important	48%	35%	28%
Just important	19%	20%	26%
Only somewhat important	15%	22%	25%
Not important at all	17%	20%	18%
Don't know	1%	3%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Improving or expanding existing public transportation rail service	Baltimore City n = 186	Baltimore Metro n = 292	Rest of Maryland n = 381
Very important	36%	33%	30%
Just important	32%	23%	25%
Only somewhat important	17%	24%	26%
Not important at all	15%	18%	18%
Don't know	0%	2%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Maintaining existing roads	Baltimore City n = 186	Baltimore Metro n = 291	Rest of Maryland n = 380
Very important	65%	64%	68%
Just important	24%	27%	21%
Only somewhat important	8%	9%	9%
Not important at all	3%	1%	2%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Maintaining existing bridges	Baltimore City n = 187	Baltimore Metro n = 291	Rest of Maryland n = 380
Very important	67%	74%	67%
Just important	22%	18%	24%
Only somewhat important	9%	7%	7%
Not important at all	1%	1%	2%
Don't know	1%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Maintaining existing freight rail lines	Baltimore City n = 185	Baltimore Metro n = 290	Rest of Maryland n = 379
Very important	37%	39%	34%
Just important	28%	30%	32%
Only somewhat important	19%	21%	23%
Not important at all	14%	7%	8%
Don't know	3%	2%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Improving or expanding existing bicycle lanes	Baltimore City n = 186	Baltimore Metro n = 293	Rest of Maryland n = 379
Very important	19%	22%	20%
Just important	24%	22%	20%
Only somewhat important	23%	26%	25%
Not important at all	34%	31%	34%
Don't know	0%	0%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%