

Washington County
Transportation Futures Study
Exploring options • Informing choices

Online Open House Survey Report

December 2016

I. OVERVIEW & OUTREACH SUMMARY

Introduction

Washington County evaluated long-term transportation investments and strategies as part of the Transportation Futures Study. The purpose of the Study was to identify tradeoffs between alternative transportation investments to inform future choices and decisions.

The public was asked to participate in an online open house that was held between November 7th and December 2nd, 2016. The online open house consisted of a survey which asked participants to reflect on the Study key findings, answer questions about tradeoffs between different projects and policy choices, and prioritize which kinds of projects best meet the needs and values of the County. **A total of 5,445 people participated in the survey** with a majority answering the primary questions.

Purpose & Design

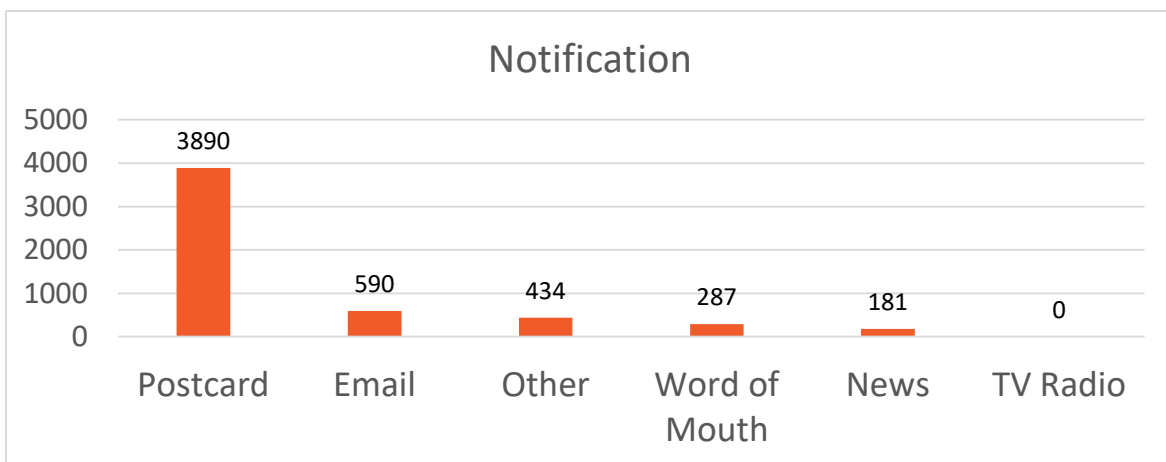
The purpose of the online open house and survey was to present the results of the Study as well as gather informed public feedback. The survey was designed to allow for participation at all levels, casual to in-depth.

Outreach & Notification

Notice of the online open house was extended using several methods. Planned outreach included:

- Interested parties email
- News media
- Advertising
- Outreach to community groups

A county-wide postcard mailing was added following the planning efforts as well as an incentive where participants were entered in a raffle to win an annual TriMet pass, \$1,100 in gas or an \$1,100 gift card to a bike shop.



As the graph above shows, the majority of participants found out about the online open house through the mailed postcard.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is based on feedback from members of the public received from the online open house. The survey was intended to evaluate and determine the needs and priorities of transportation users in Washington County to help inform allocation of funding. Here are some key findings:

- A majority of survey participants felt that transit, freeways, new roads and bike/pedestrian facilities are a priority, demonstrating **support for a multi-modal system**. They gave highest priority to transit improvements, followed closely by freeways. The highest values in selecting priorities were improved traffic flow, followed by availability of transportation alternatives and access to essential destinations.
- People **support traditional ways of paying** for improvements. 68% support or strongly support a gas tax, and 59% support/strongly support paid parking. There is less support for user charges (46%) and tolling (44%).

The survey showed the following levels of support for proposed **transportation investments**:

- **Smart technology:** 80% support/strongly support exploring ways to use smart technologies to reduce the need for widening or building new roads.
- **Programs to reduce vehicle trips:** 80-90% support/strongly support programs to increase telecommuting and ride sharing and manage parking. There is less support for tolls (43%) or user charges (39%).
- **Transit:** Between 82-91% support/strongly support each of the following: completing planned bus services, more frequent bus service, more MAX trains, express MAX, and park and rides and shuttle connections. Only about half support/strongly support investments that would impede vehicle traffic flow (buses priority at intersections and separated bus lanes).
- **Bike/ped:** Approximately 3 in 4 people support or strongly support each of the bike/ped investments proposed: complete bike lanes and sidewalks, protected bikeways on roads, off-road facilities, and safety features.
- **Arterial network:** 81% support/strongly support connecting existing arterials with new arterials, 75% support/strongly support expanding existing arterials with additional vehicle lanes, and 68% support/strongly support managed access. There is less support for reducing traffic speeds (52%).
- **New roadways:** 76% support/strongly support a new limited access road connecting Highway 26 with Highway 30 and North Portland; and 64% support/strongly support a new limited access north/south road through rural Western Washington County connecting Hillsboro and Wilsonville. There were a fair amount of undecided participants for both roadways (15-17%).
- **New freeway lanes:** 62% support/strongly support restricting access on new freeway lanes to freight, bus and HOV only; whereas 52% support/strongly support general access for all vehicles. Fewer (46%) support/strongly support charging tolls on new lanes.

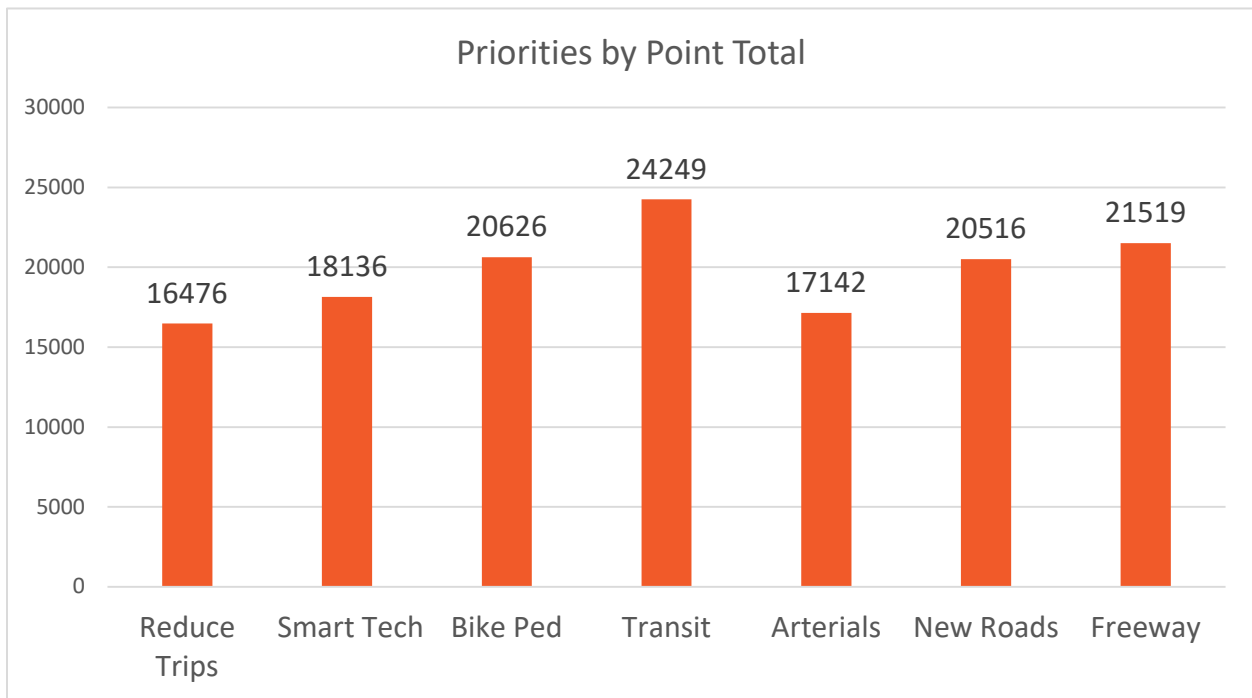
III. SURVEY RESULTS

This portion of the report summarizes responses to each of the online open house questions.

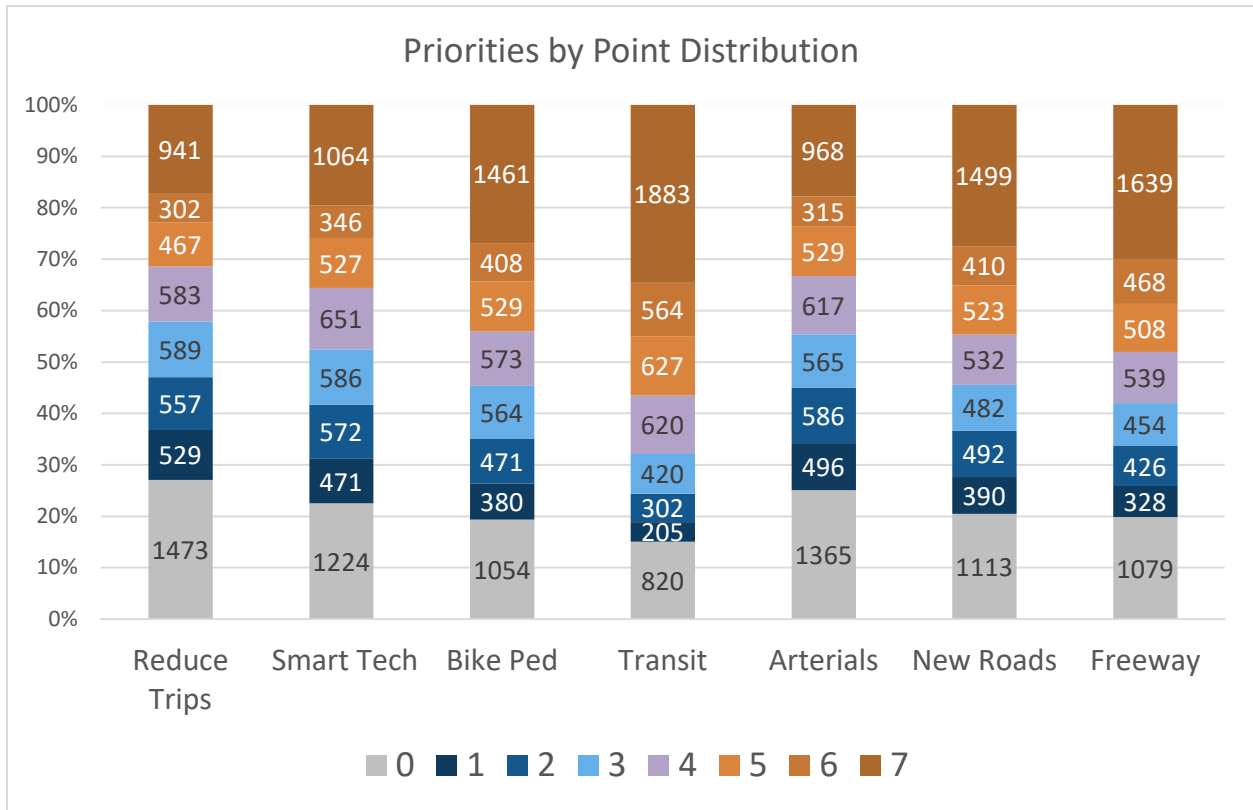
I. Investment Priorities

Considering the trade-offs, how would you prioritize these transportation options to best meet the County’s quality of life and economic health in the long term?

- Participants were given 28 points to distribute among seven transportation investment areas. No more than seven points could be assigned to any one investment area. The chart below shows how participants prioritized the seven investment areas.



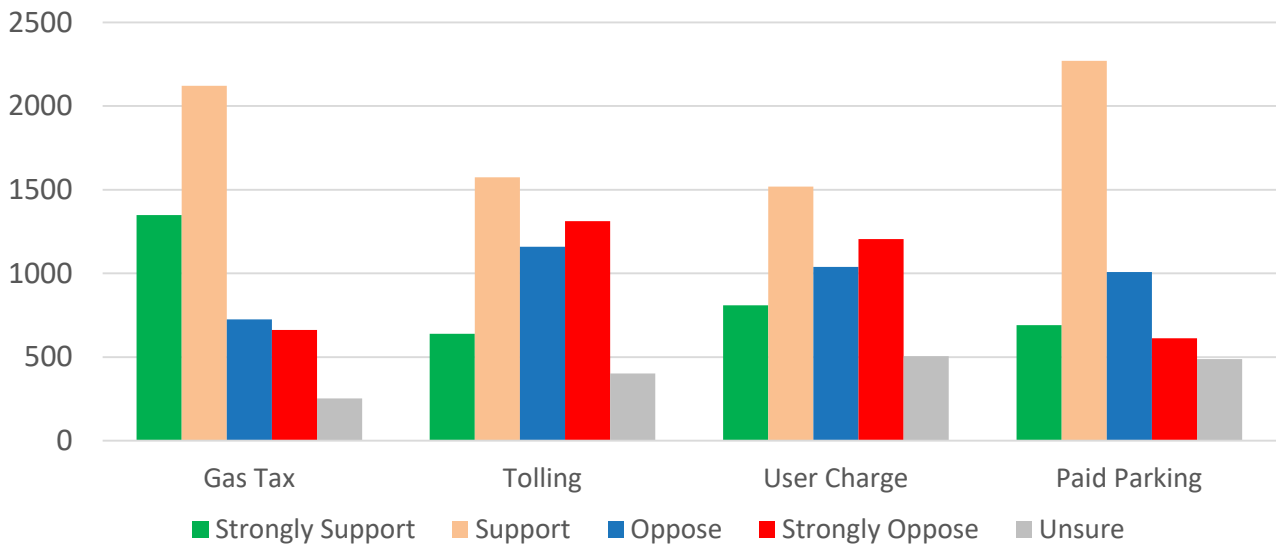
- The chart below illustrates how participants distributed their points (i.e., how many people gave 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 points to each investment area).



2. Funding Sources

To fund the priorities you listed on the previous tab, which of the following revenue sources would you support?

The online open house asked participants to indicate their support for four revenue sources. Road user charges and tolling had the least amount of positive support, and a gas tax and paid parking were more highly supported.



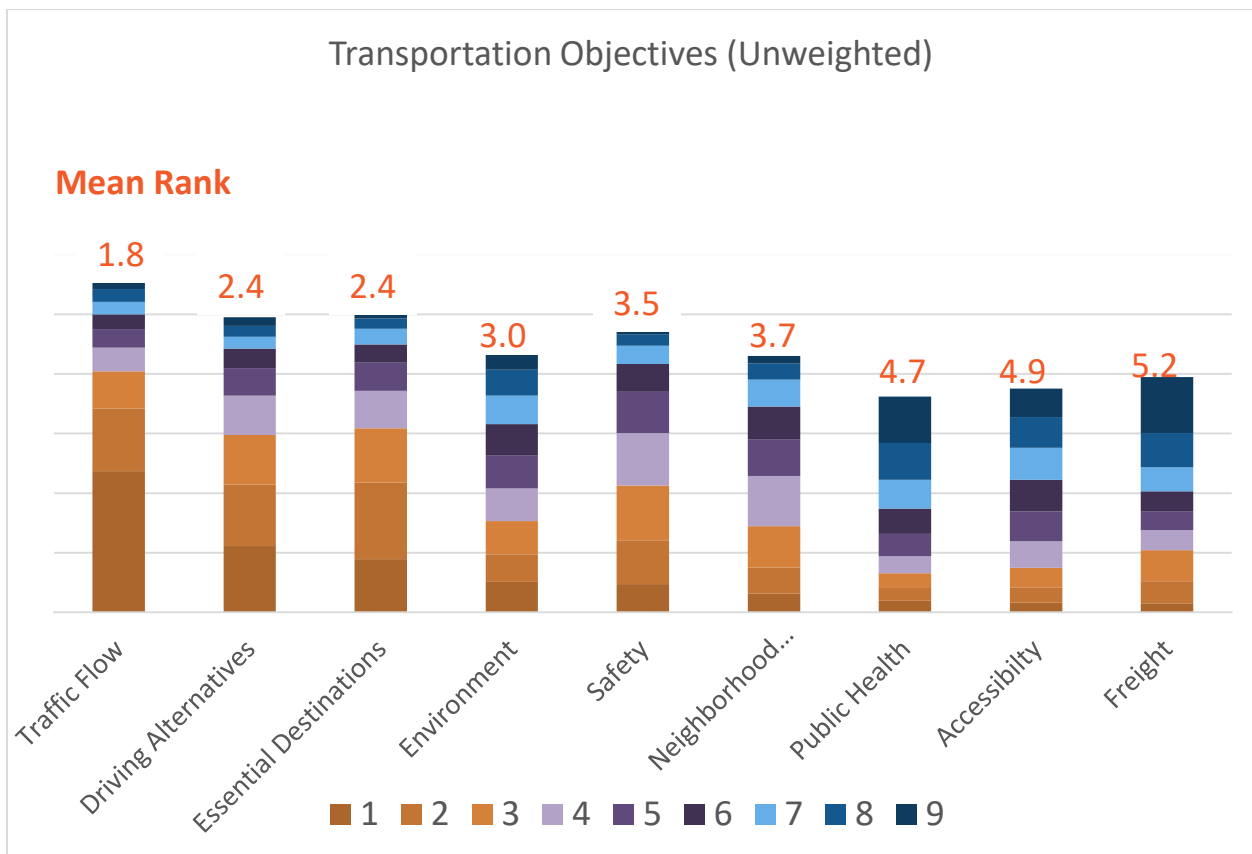
Key themes from the open-ended comments regarding funding sources were:

- Explore methods for making bikes pay
- Consider raising the vehicle registration fee
- Consider implementing a sales tax for:
 - Everything
 - All vehicles
 - Electric vehicles
 - Bicycles
- Charge higher taxes on companies and development that generate increased traffic
- Increase the Gas Tax
- Increase fees and taxes on commercial and freight vehicles

3. Transportation Objectives

Which of these objectives did you consider in selecting your investment priorities from the previous question?

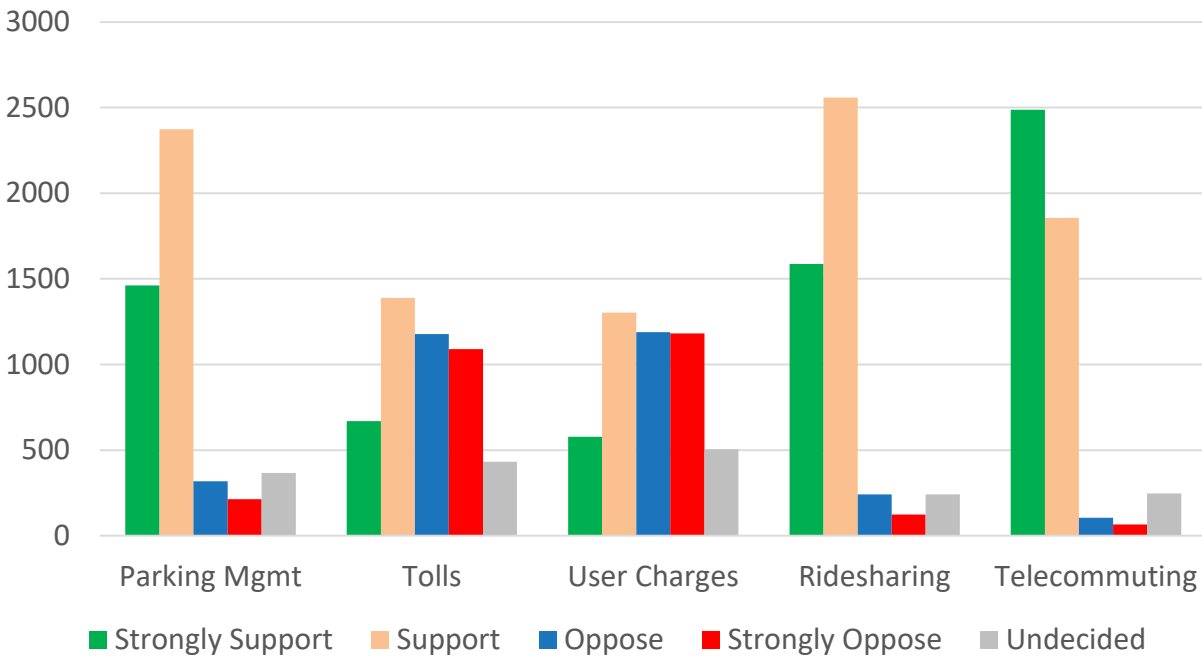
The online open house asked participants which objectives they considered in selecting their investment priorities (with 1=highest priority and 9=lowest priority). Participants ranked improving traffic flow as the highest followed by having transportation options.



4. Reducing Trips

Which of these options would you support exploring further to manage demand?

Online open house participants were provided with information about five options to manage vehicle demand and reduce vehicle trips. They expressed a high amount of support for policies and programs to increase telecommuting and ride sharing. There was not a lot of support for tolls or user charges.



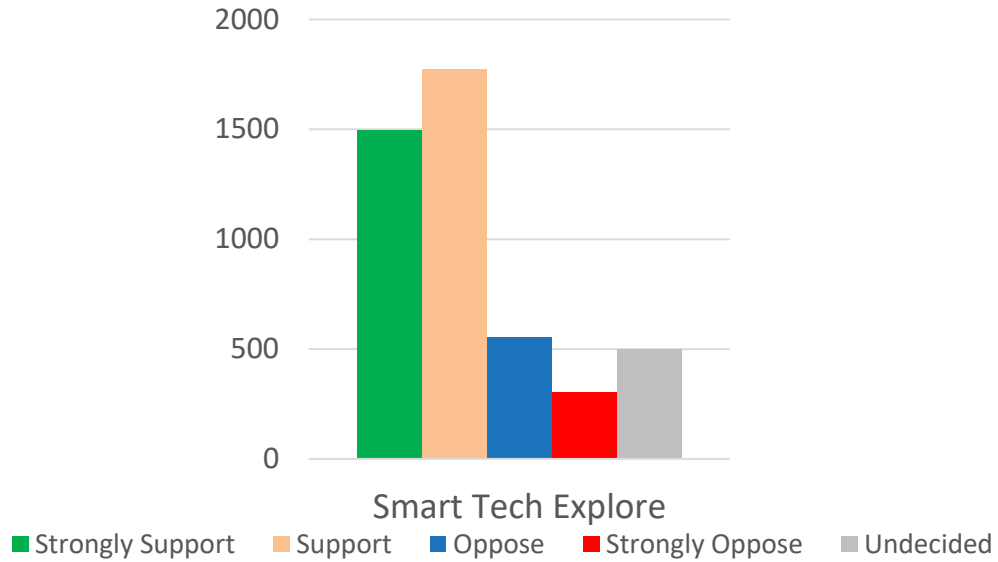
Key themes from the open-ended comments regarding reduction of trips were:

- Increase frequency and destinations of transit
 - Forest Grove
 - Tigard
 - Salem
- Expand or build freeways
- Encourage and incentivize telecommunications
- Increase park-and-ride locations
- Incentivize alternative work hours to reduce commutes during peak hours

5. Smart Technology

How strongly do you support the following statement: "We should explore ways to use safer and more efficient smart technologies to reduce the need for widening or building new roads."

Participants expressed a high amount of support for using smart technology as a way to reduce the need for widening or building new roads. A fair amount of participants were undecided



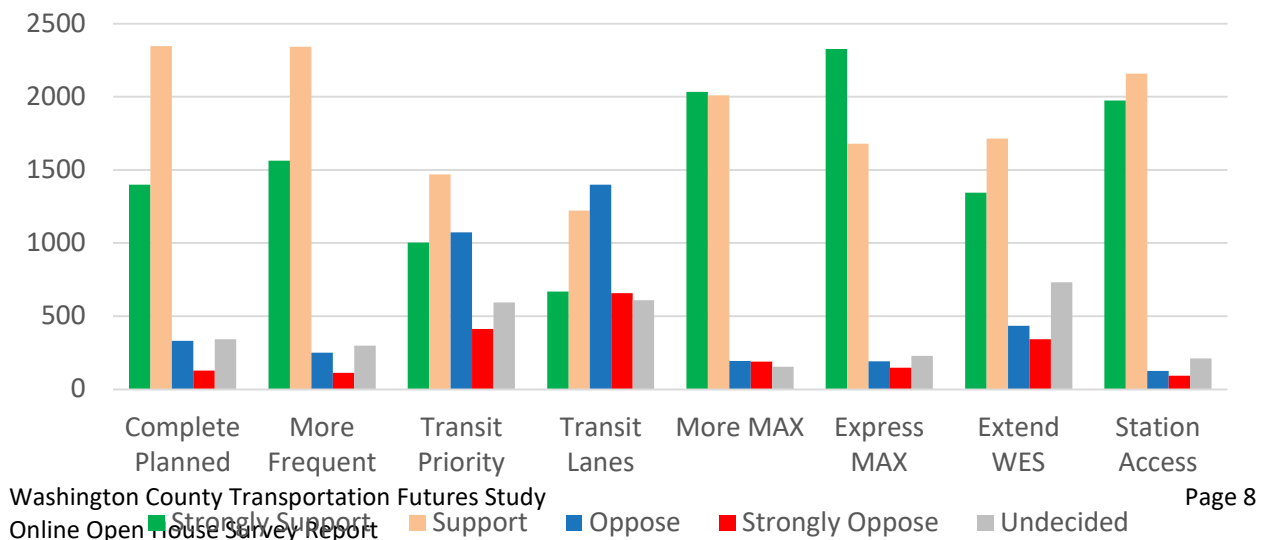
Key themes from the open-ended comments regarding smart technology were:

- Improve traffic signal synchronization for vehicles and bikes
- Employ smart technology to reduce congestion for vehicles and transit
- Enhance transit apps
- Explore and support autonomous vehicle technology and focus on safety
- Smart technology and autonomous vehicles are not viable yet

6. Transit

Which of the following would you support exploring further to meet the county's increasing transit demand?

The online open house asked participants to indicate their level of support for eight types of transit investments. Participants expressed a lot of support for transit overall, without a lot of opposition to increases in bus, MAX, and WES service. There was a fair amount of opposition for investment in transit lanes and transit priorities that reduced traffic lanes.



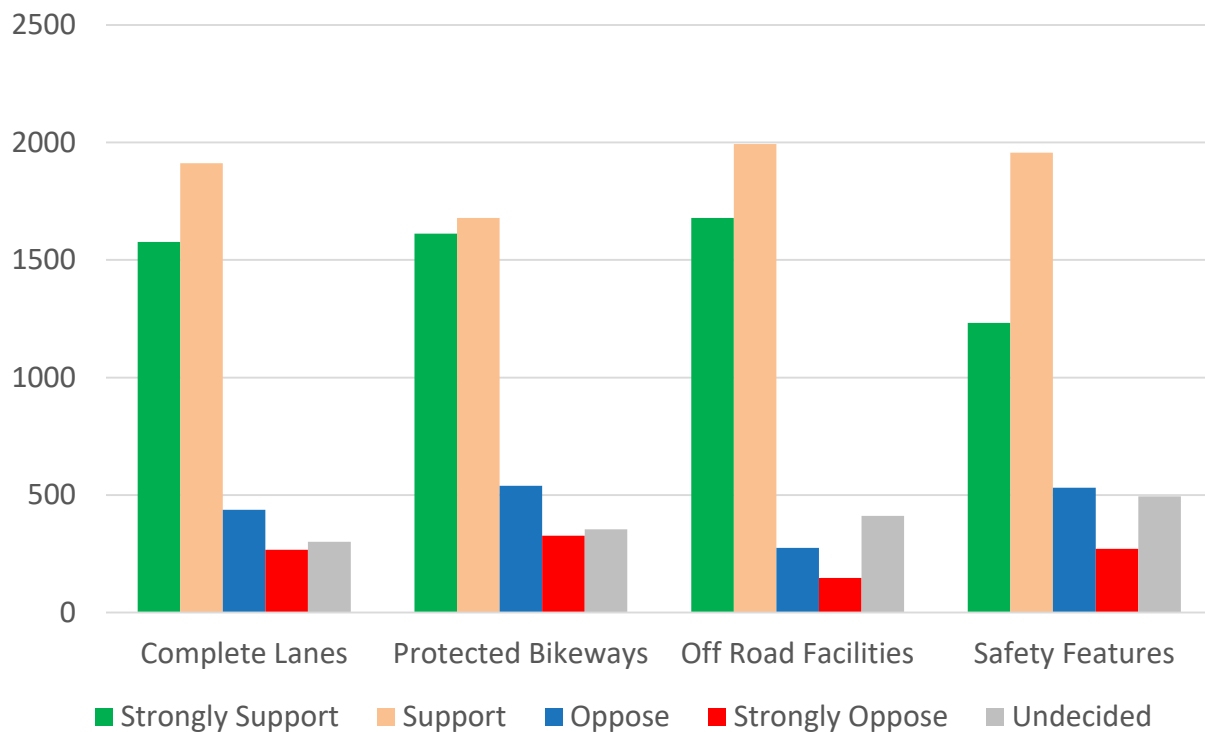
Key themes from the open-ended comments regarding transit were:

- More parking is needed at MAX stations
- Increase express light rail options
- Transit is not efficient enough
- Expand light rail and increase frequency
- Increase safety:
 - At transit stops
 - On the bus or MAX

7. Bike & Pedestrian Facilities

Which of the following bicycle/pedestrian improvements would you support exploring further?

Participants showed mostly support and strong support for each of the four bicycle/pedestrian improvements.



Key themes from the open-ended comments regarding bike and pedestrian facilities were:

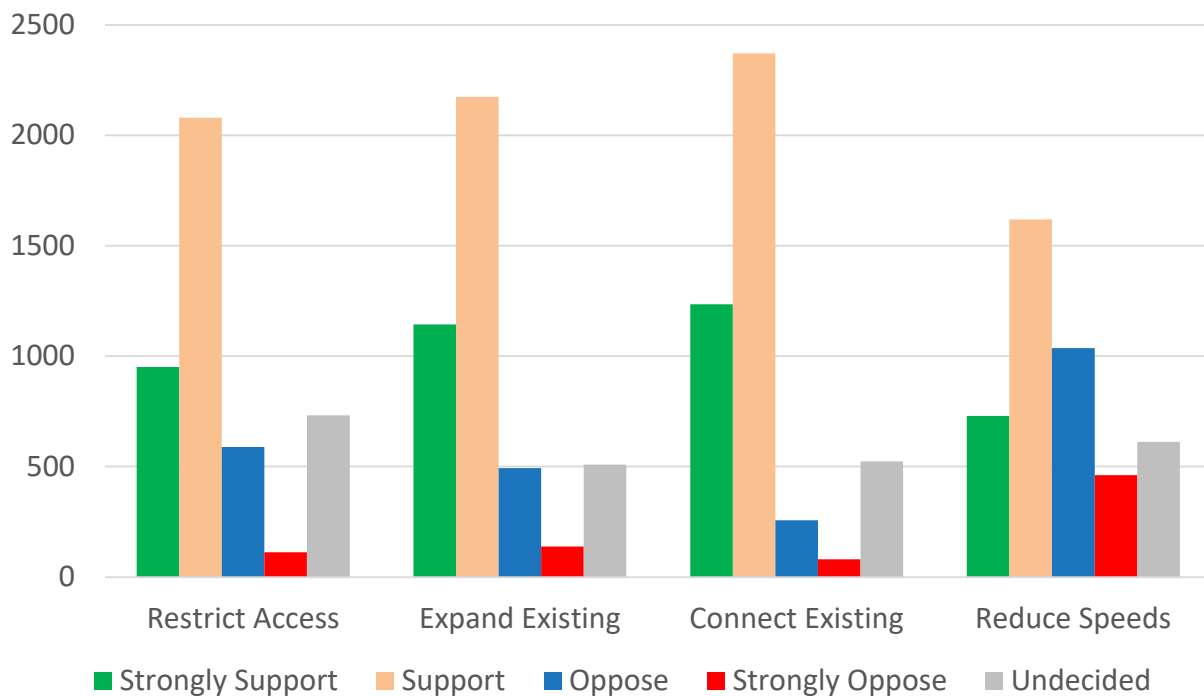
- Increase safety for bikes and explore ways to separate bike lanes when possible
- Examine options that gather revenue from bicyclists
- Be diligent about enforcing bike laws
- Don't decrease vehicle infrastructure for bike use

- Use Europe as a model for how bike infrastructure can be integrated into the transportation system

8. Arterials

What additional arterial improvements would you support exploring further?

The online open house presented information about four types of arterial investments. Participants expressed support for most of the improvements suggested, aside from reducing speeds in urban areas. Unlike the bike/ped and transit categories, a greater percentage of respondents said they were undecided or unsure about investments.



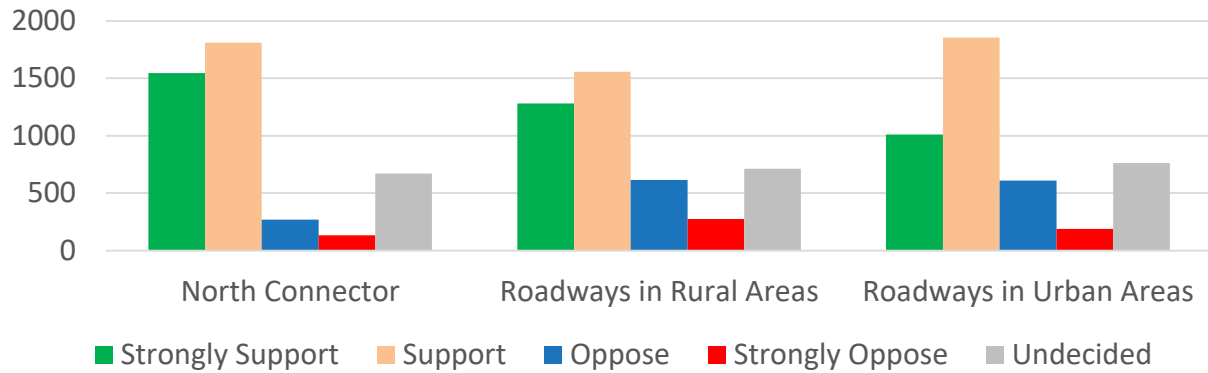
Key themes from the open-ended comments regarding arterials were:

- Do not decrease speed limits
- Expand and improve existing arterials
- Separate active transportation from vehicle infrastructure
- Add new arterials
- Avoid expanding or building new arterials

9. New Roadways

Which new roadway investments would you support exploring further?

Many participants expressing a lot of support for three new roadway options presented: a “North Connector” that would connect US 26 with North Portland, new roads in rural areas, and new roads in urban areas. At the same time, there were a fair amount of undecided participants.



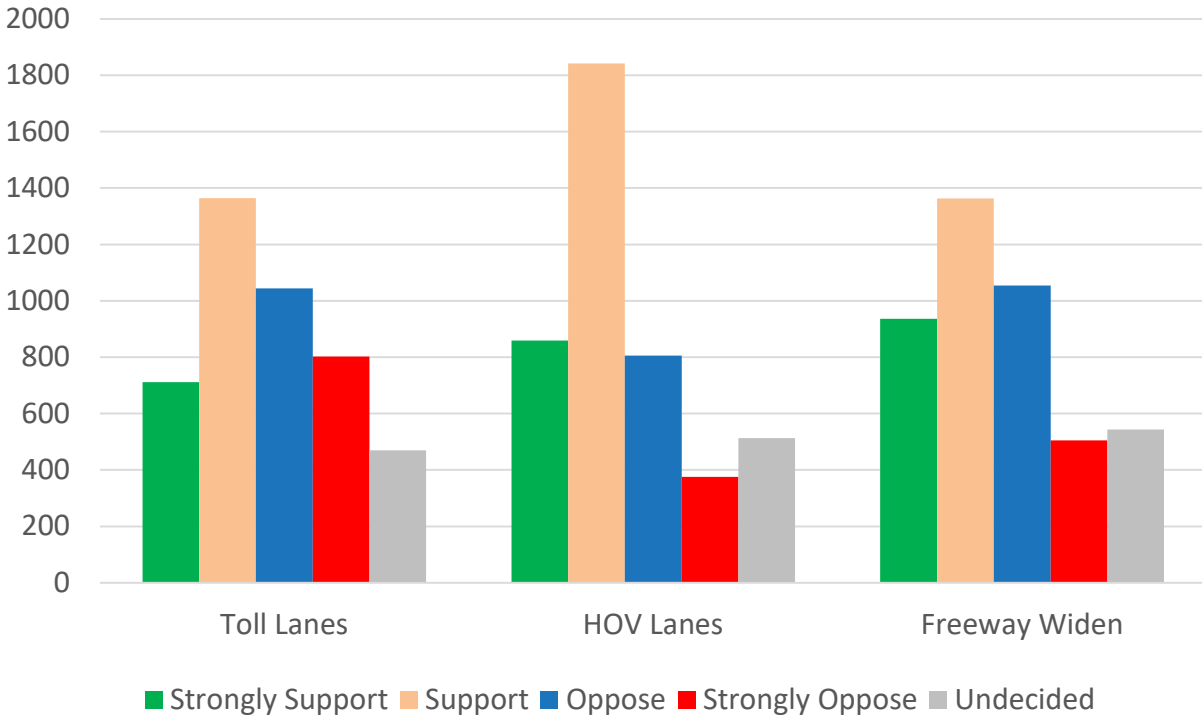
Key themes from the open-ended comments regarding new roadways were:

- Build or expand roadways, connectors and highways
- Create connections and address congestion on US-26
- Address congestion on Hwy-217
- Building or expanding automobile infrastructure will not effectively address issues
- Preserve and protect natural habitats

10. Freeways

Which new freeway lane investments would you support exploring further?

Participants expressed more polarization for investments that would widen freeways and install tolling facilities. Participants were generally supportive of HOV lanes on freeways.



Key themes from the open-ended comments regarding freeways were:

- Enforce land speed management
- Add lanes
- Restrict freight in HOV lanes 24/7
- Provide HOV lanes on more freeways
- Do not toll freeways

II. Open-Ended Comments

Do you have any thoughts or concerns to share with decision-makers as they consider strategies and investments to improve transportation outcomes for the future of Washington County?

Key themes from the overall open-ended responses were (ranked beneath each heading from most to least common):

Transit

- Increase frequency and destination of public transit
- Increase and expand light rail
- Increase appeal of public transit

Infrastructure

- Improve automobile infrastructure

- Increase and improve alternative and active transportation infrastructure
- Seek solutions that address housing, economic development and transportation
- Increase density to promote shorter commutes

Traffic

- Reduce congestion
- Reduce single-occupancy commutes (HOV lanes, car-share platforms, carpooling platforms, etc.)
- Incentivize carpooling and shuttle services for big companies to reduce single occupancy commutes

Safety

- Increase safety for active transportation users
- Increase safety for all modes
- Increase safety at transit stops (lights, shelters, etc.)

Miscellaneous

- Protect and preserve rural communities and natural habitats
- Seek long-term, comprehensive solutions
- Incentivize or require facilities at companies for active transportation users (bike racks, showers, etc.)

Funding

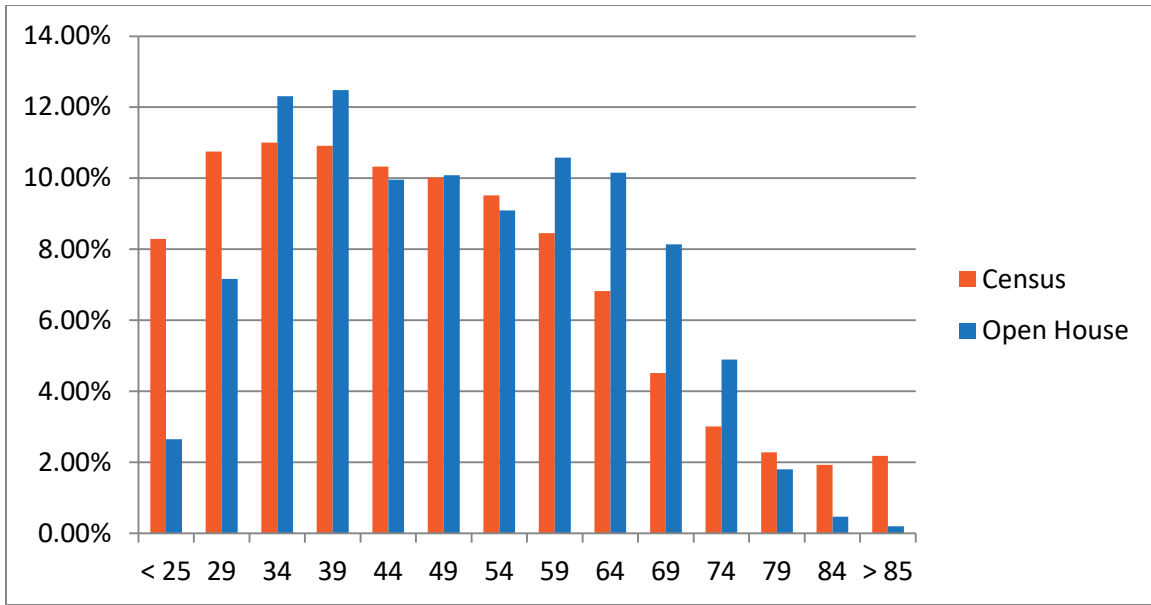
- Do not toll roads
- Consider and explore methods for charging bikes
- Charge C Class corporations higher taxes to pay for their transportation needs

IV. DEMOGRAPHICS

The online open house asked participants to provide voluntary demographic information. Below is a summary of their responses.

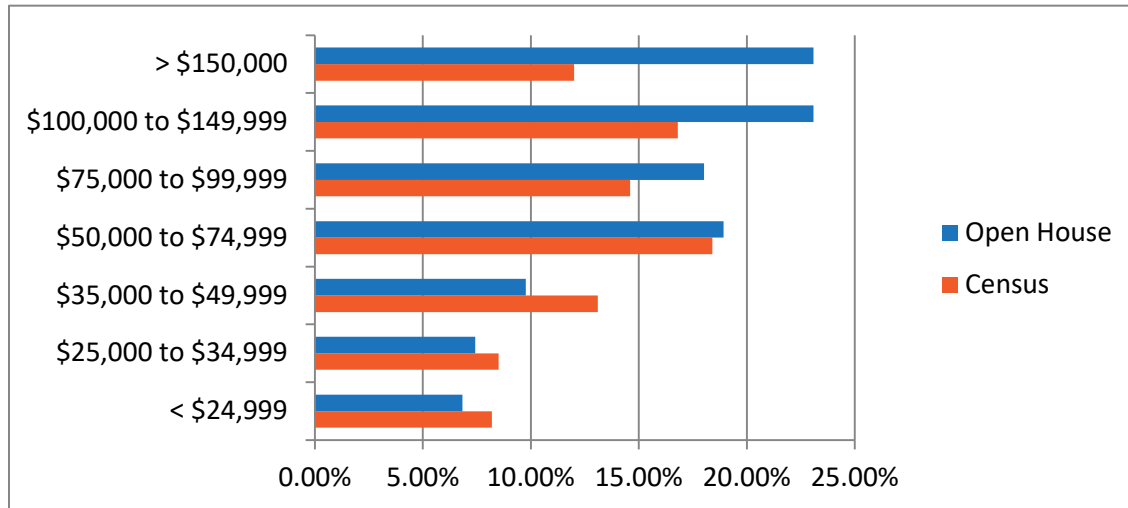
Age

This graph compares census data on the age of Washington County residents to the ages information submitted by open house participants. Online open house participants represented a slightly older population than Washington County in general.



Income

This graph compares the census data to the open house results. Participants were slightly wealthier than Washington County in general.



Zip Codes

When comparing the zip codes of the participants to the zip code population from the census data, these were the findings:

- Locations of the participants were predominantly representative of the census population data
- Key outliers were:
 - There was less participation from Aloha by population
 - There was more participation from Hillsboro/Helvetia by population

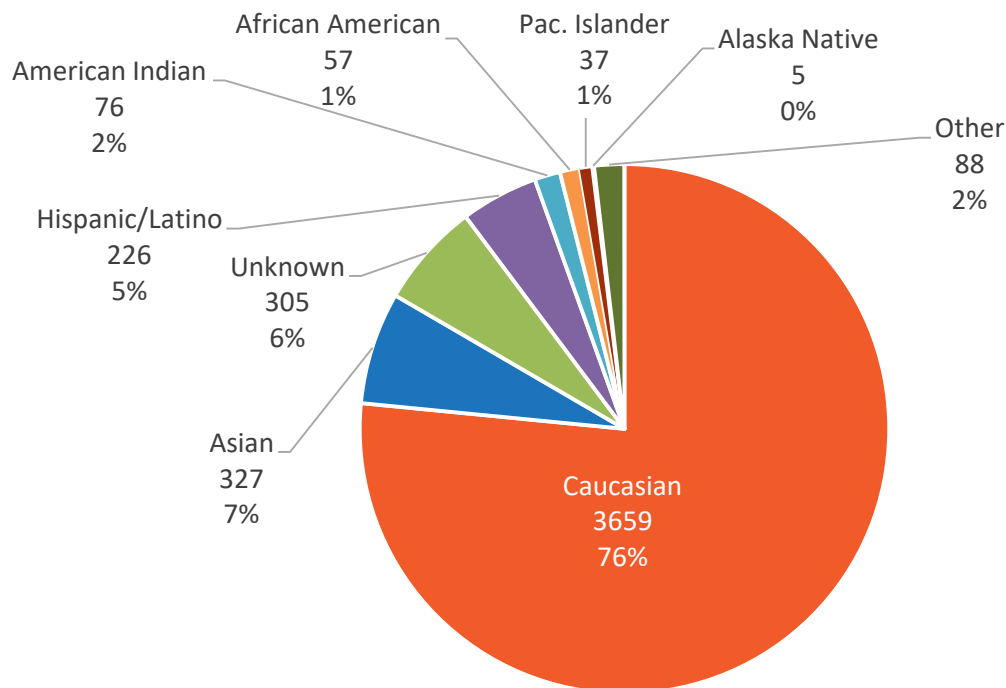
Gender

Below is the comparison between participants and census data regarding gender:



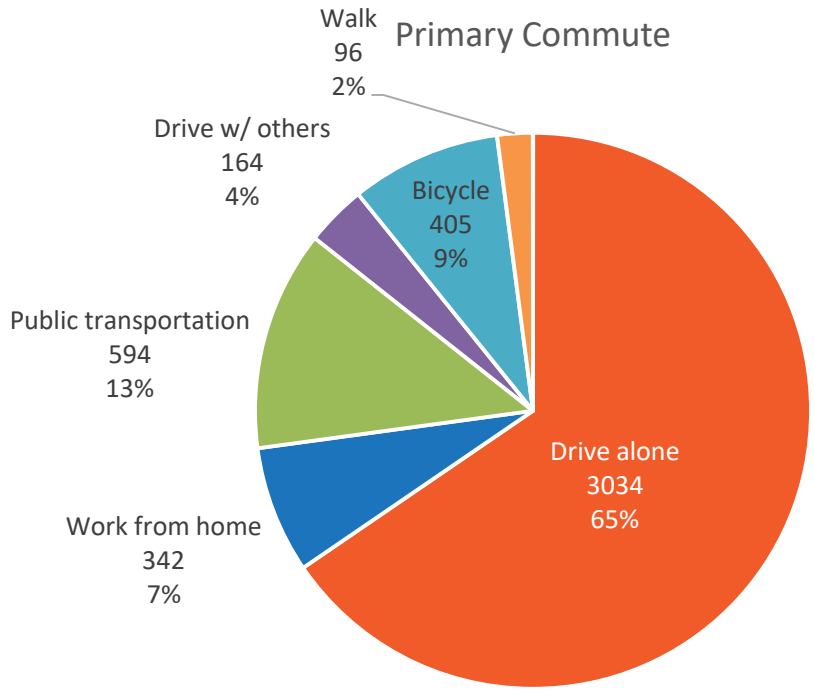
Race

The chart below shows the how participants identified their race.

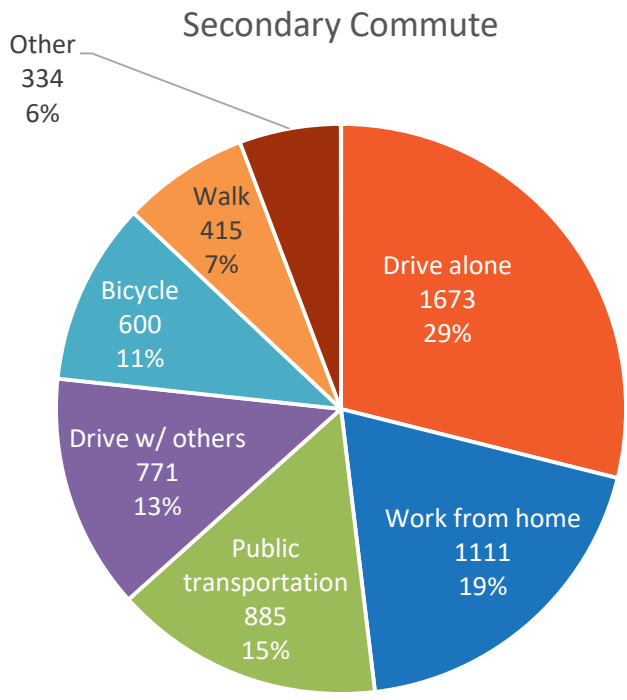


Primary Commute

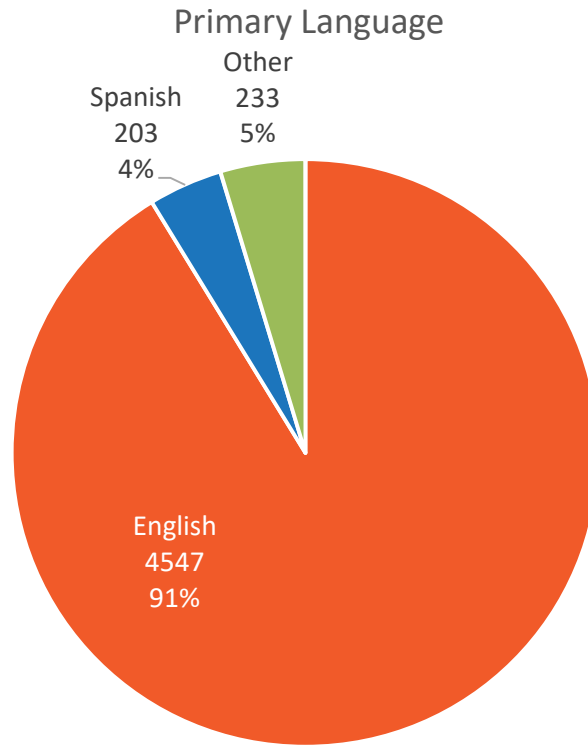
Participants were asked how they commute; 65% said they drive alone as their primary means of transportation.



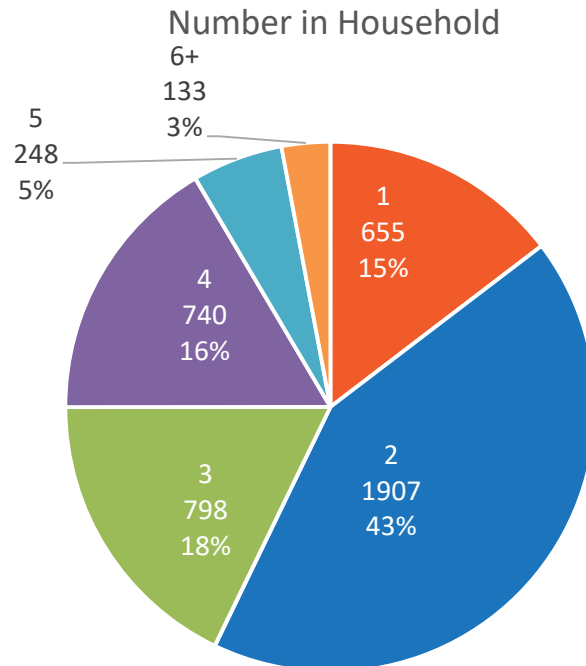
Secondary Commute



Primary Language



Number in Household



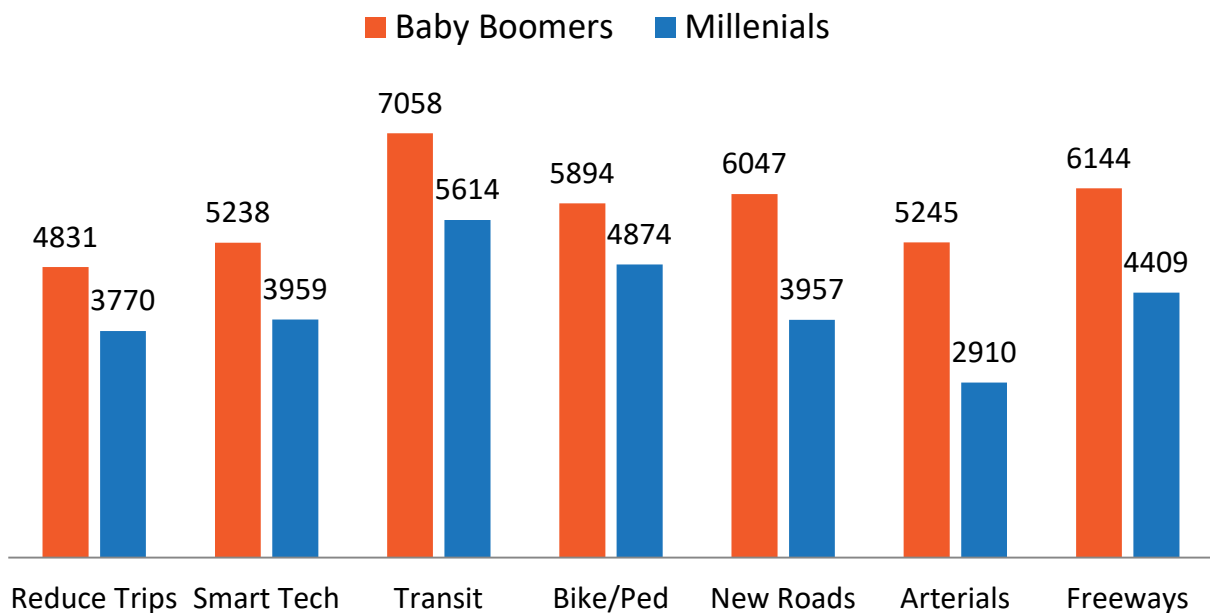
V. DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS

Baby Boomers vs. Millennials

Participants from the Baby Boomer generation had differing opinions from Millennials in several areas:

- Both agree on the order of the six highest transportation objectives
- On funding:
 - Millennials were more opposed to each category than Baby Boomers, for example: 1/3 of Millennials either opposed or strongly opposed increasing the Gas Tax compared to the less than 1/4 of Baby Boomers.
- Both ranked transit as the top priority, but investment priorities differed.

Investment Area Comparison



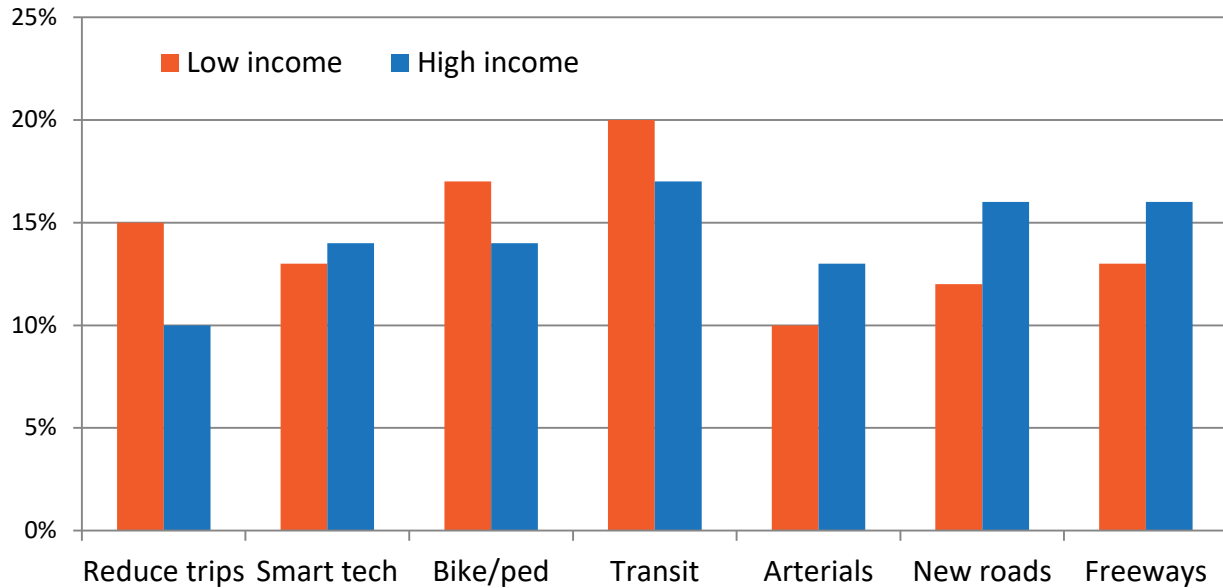
Gas Tax vs. Tolls on Investment Priorities

Comparing supporters of Gas Tax increase and supporters of tolling showed:

- Both were most supportive of transit
- Supporters of tolls were slightly more supportive of new roadways and freeways
- Supporters of a Gas Tax increase were slightly more supportive of bike and pedestrian infrastructure and reducing trips

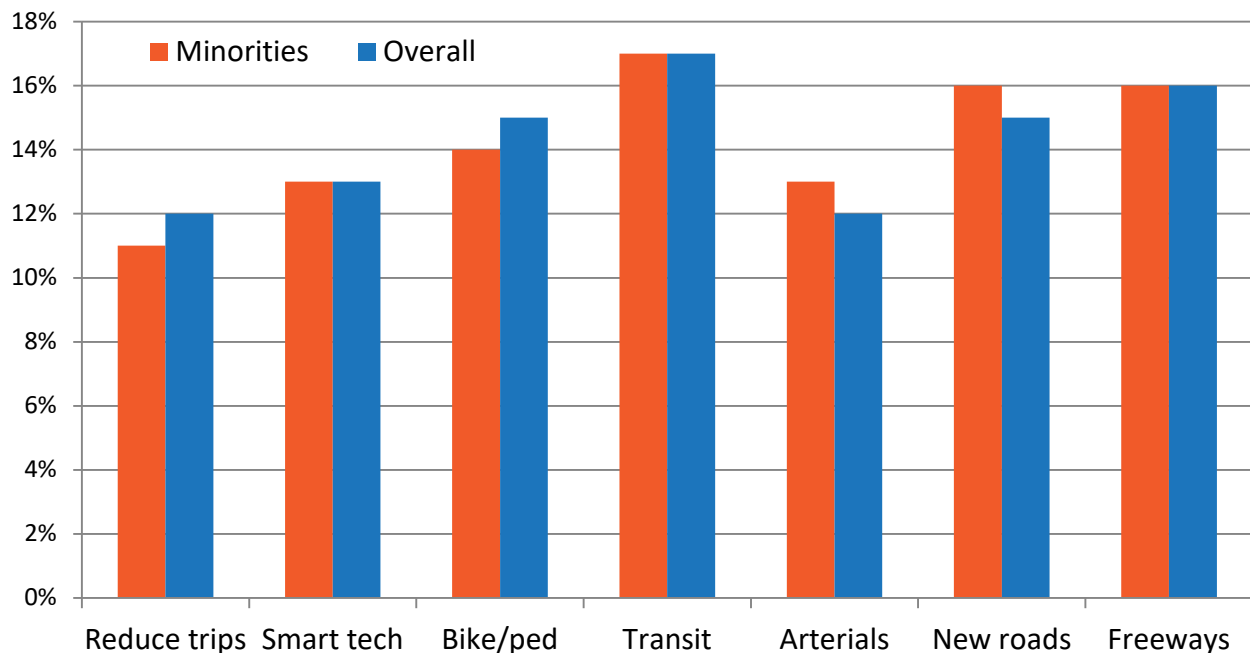
Low vs. High Incomes on Investment Priorities

Higher income earners were better represented in the survey. Lower income earners favored non-auto transportation (transit and bike/ped) investments. Road oriented investments ranked higher with higher income participants



Minorities vs. Overall on Investment Priorities

Participants' minority status did not seem to make a difference in how they ranked investment priorities. Transit ranked equal between those who said they identify as an ethnic minority and other overall participants.



VI. GEOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS

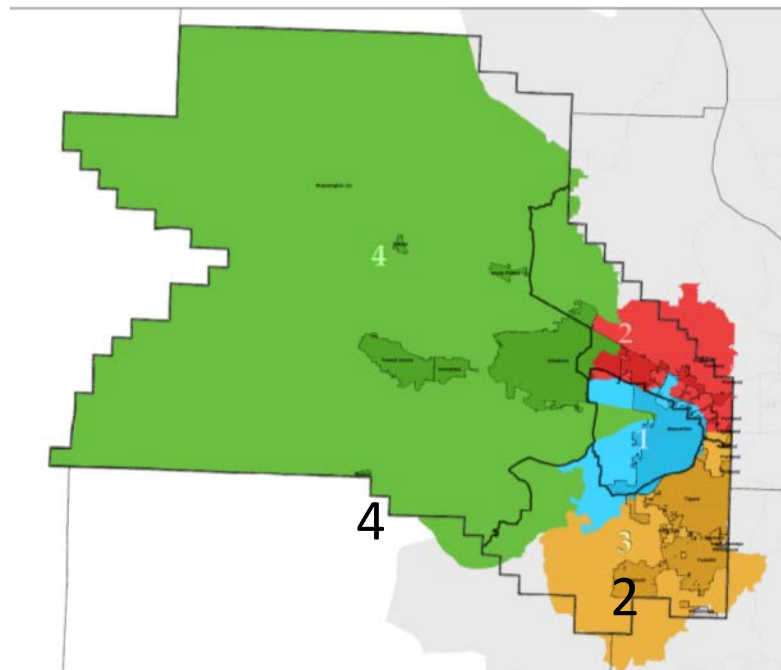
Note: A number of single zip codes encompassed large sections of both urban and rural areas, thus it was not possible to divide the county into rural and urban areas.

Results were remarkably consistent across the county, regardless of where participants lived in the county (as analyzed by zone). There was no significant difference between the zones in support for smart tech and bike/ped investments, and only slight differences between the zones in the other investment areas.

Participants who live in the western zone expressed a more notable opposition to road user fees than participants from other zones.

There is strong support for MAX from participants who live in areas where MAX currently runs. There is a little less strong support for MAX in zones that are not yet served by it, but still high levels of support.

Participants
northeastern
stronger
roads than
live in other



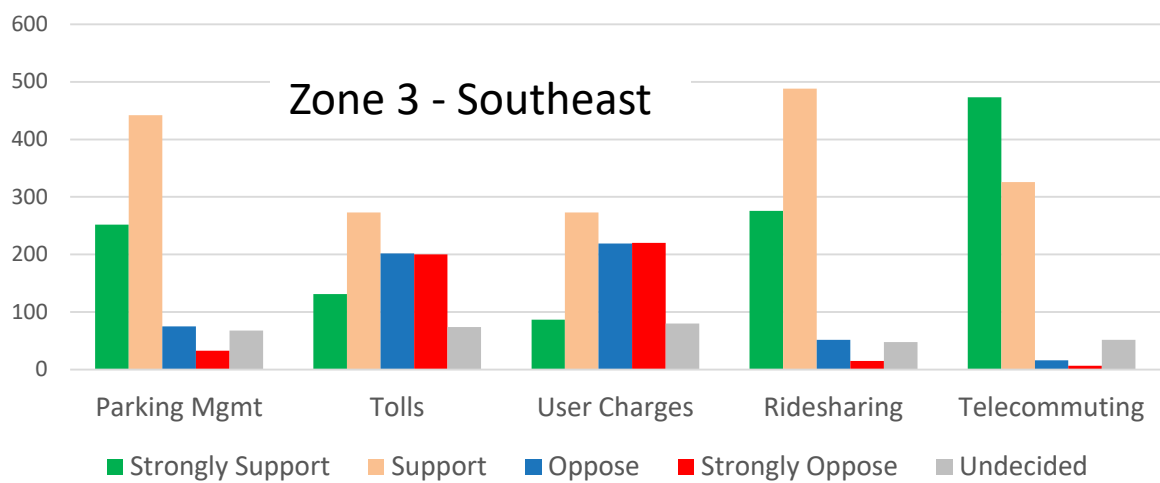
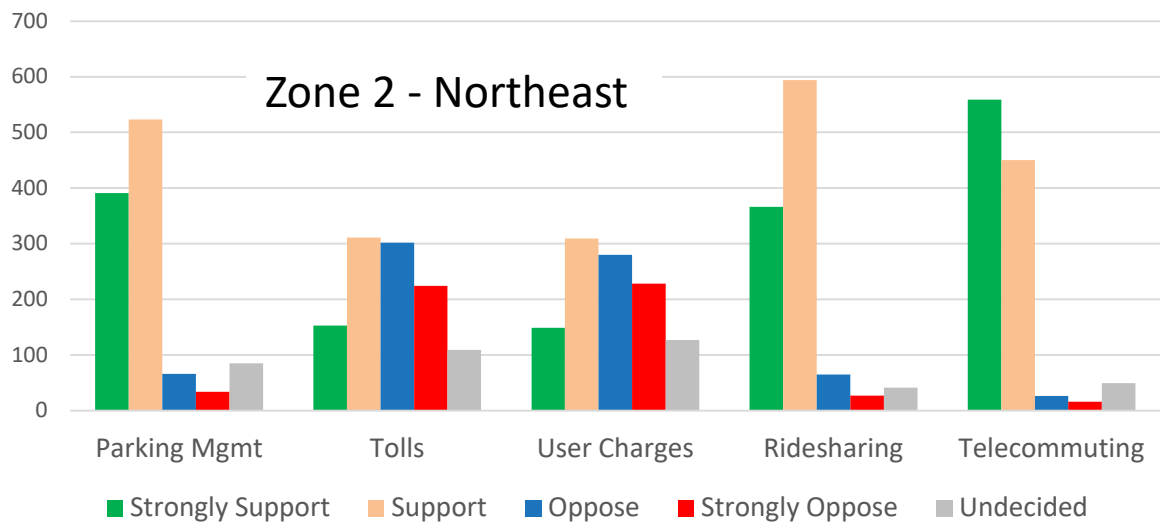
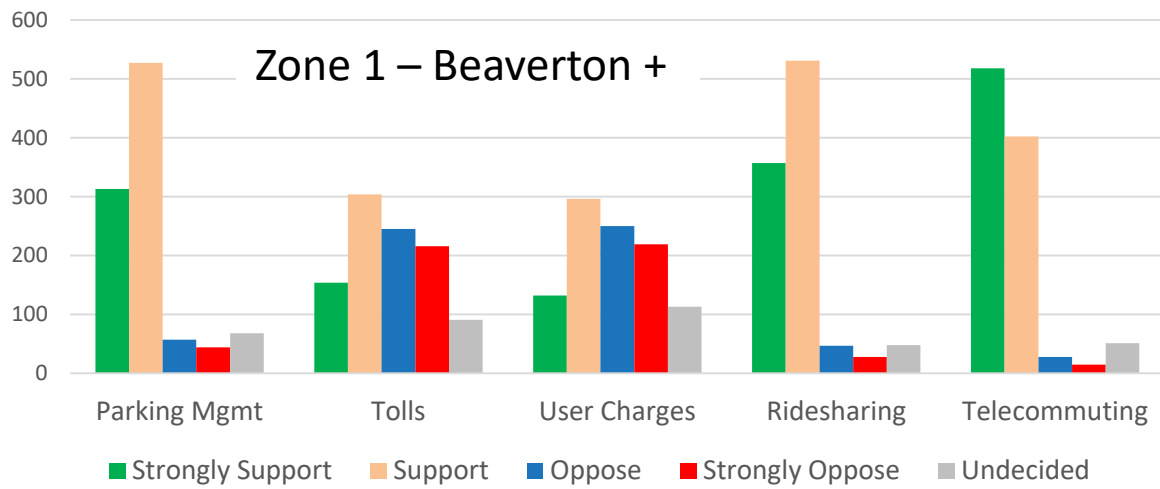
who live in the
zone expressed
support for new
participants who
live in other
zones

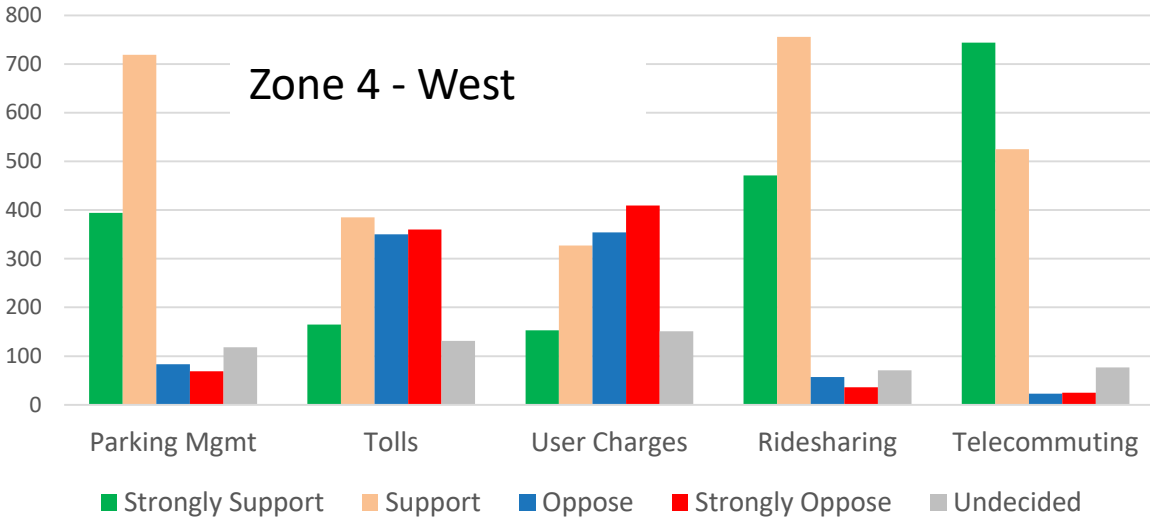
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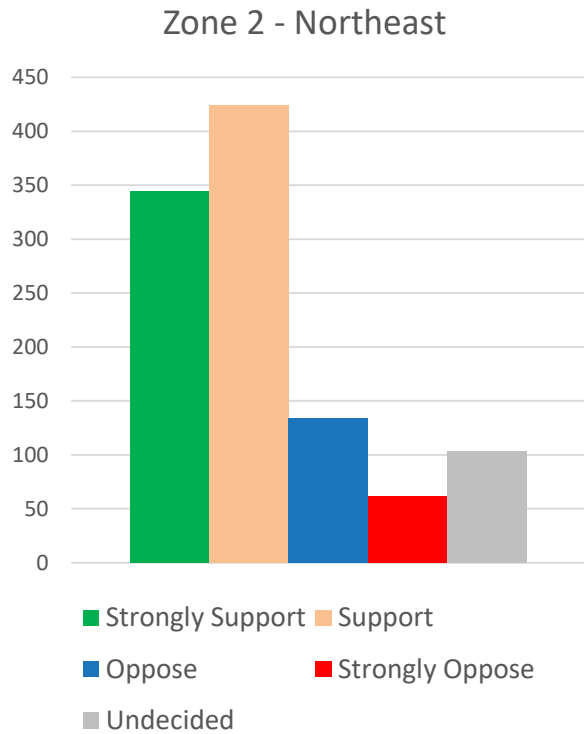
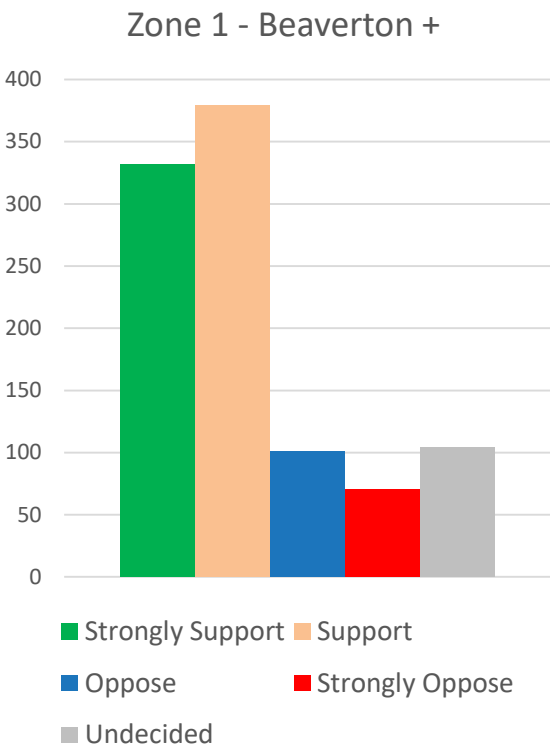
The following charts show participants' level of support for projects and strategies in the transportation investment areas, based on which of the four zones they live in.

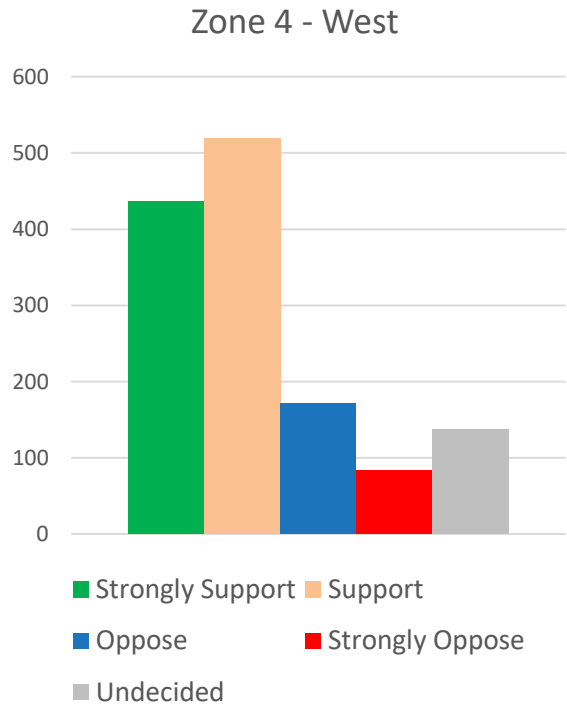
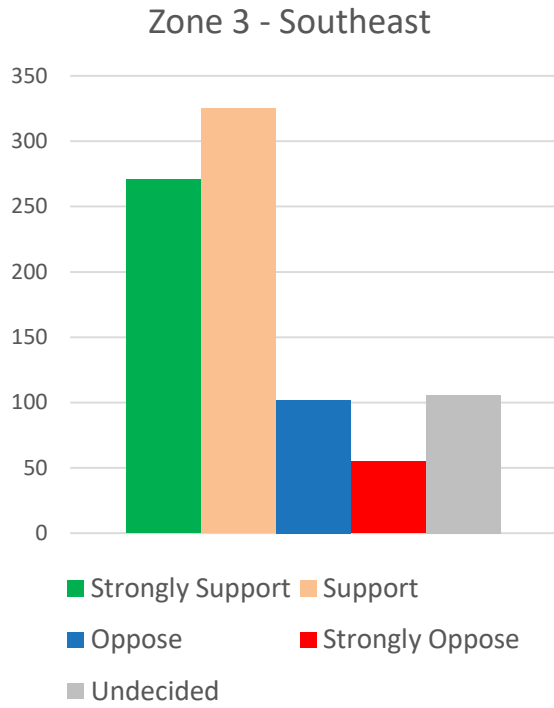
Strategies to Reduce Trips



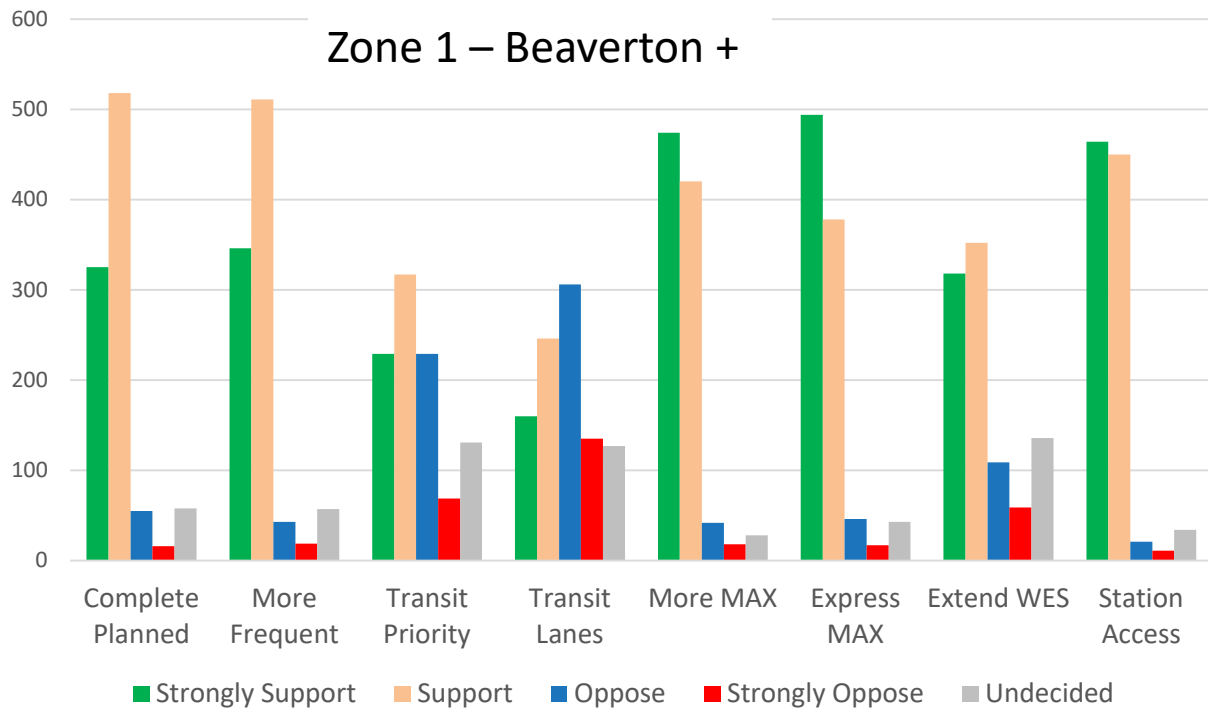


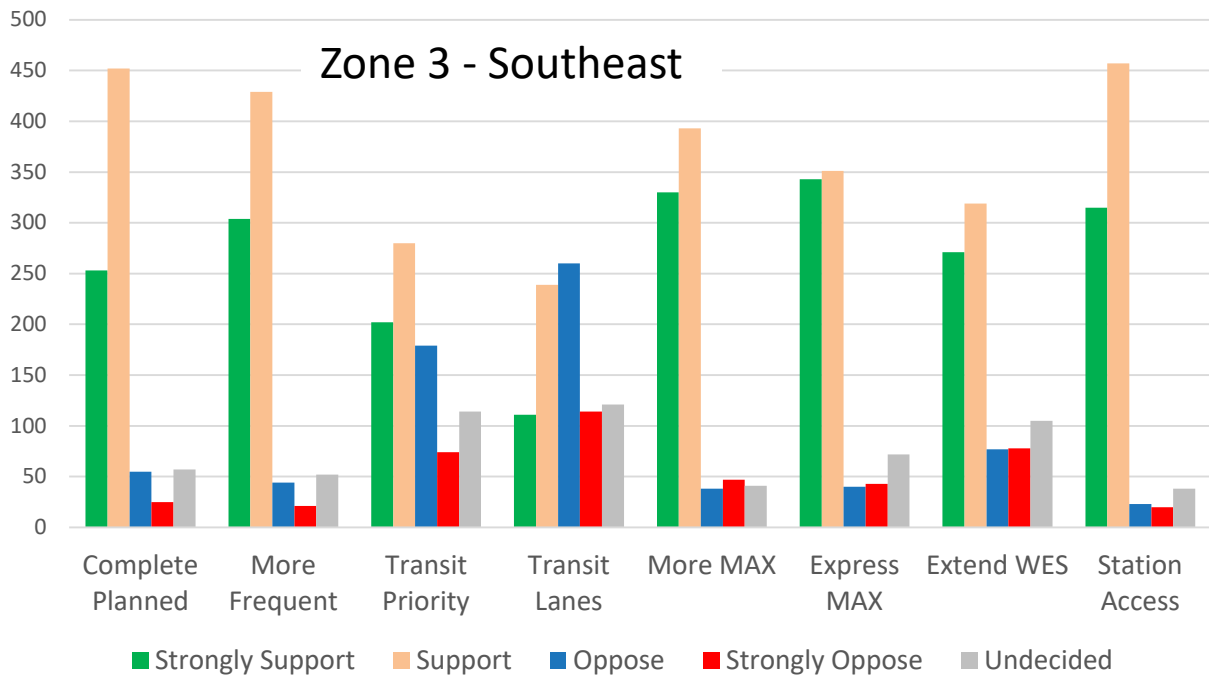
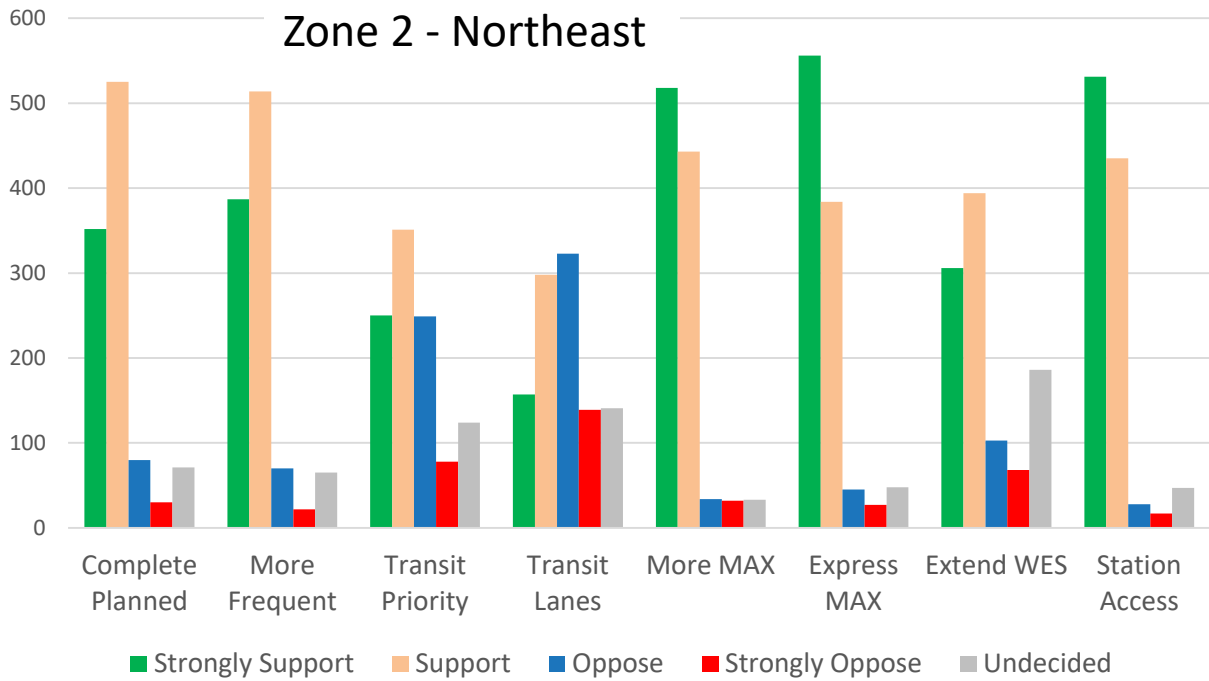
Smart Technology

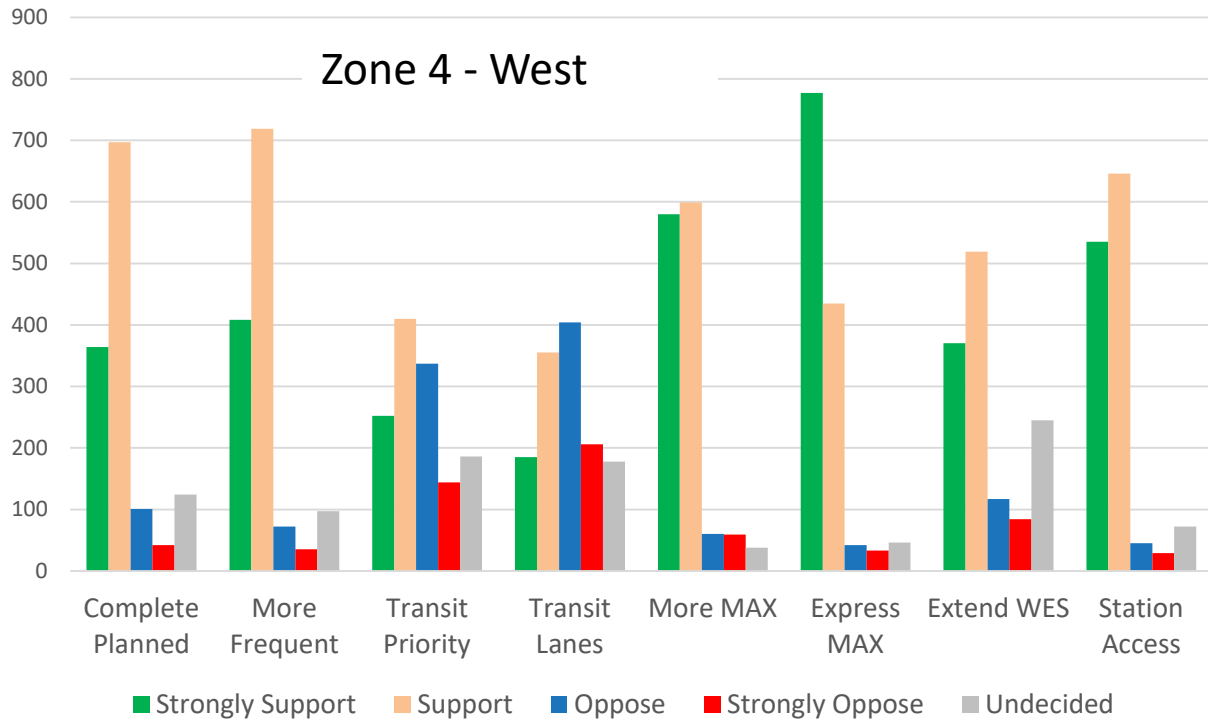




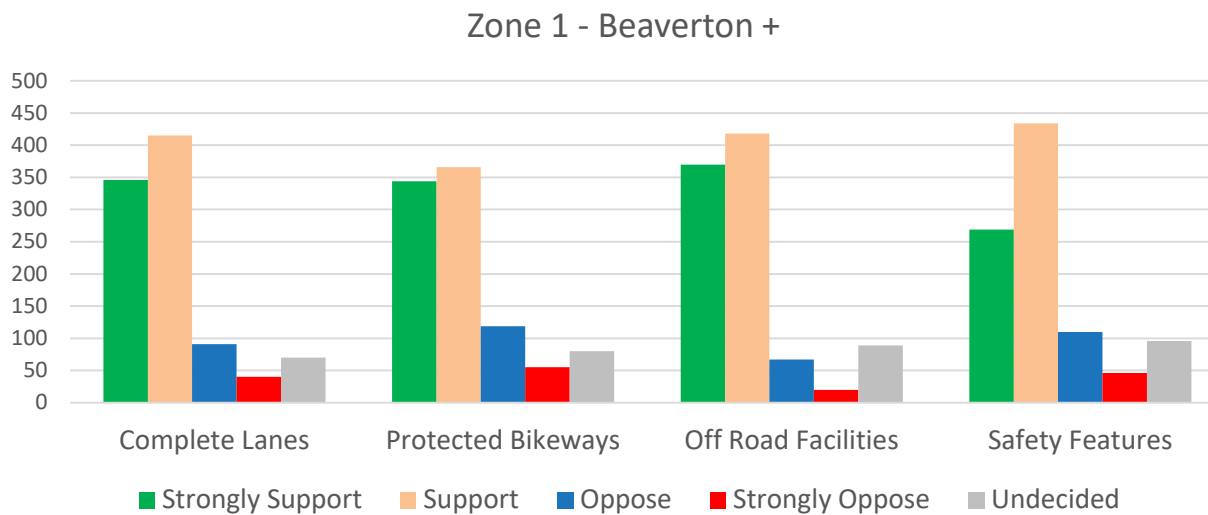
Transit



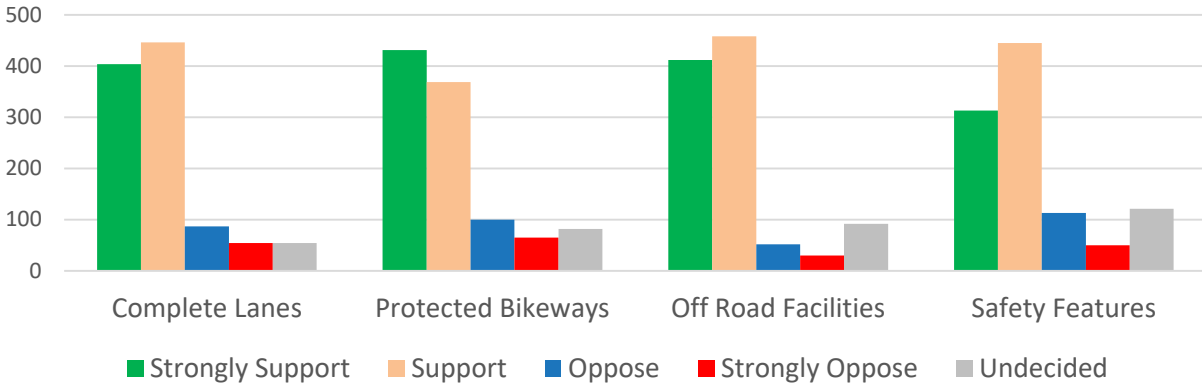




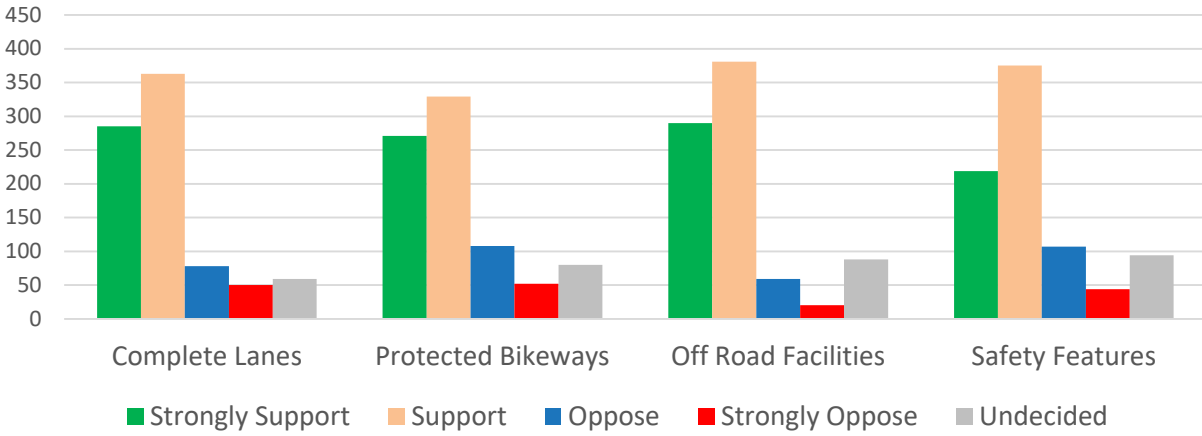
Bike & Pedestrian Facilities



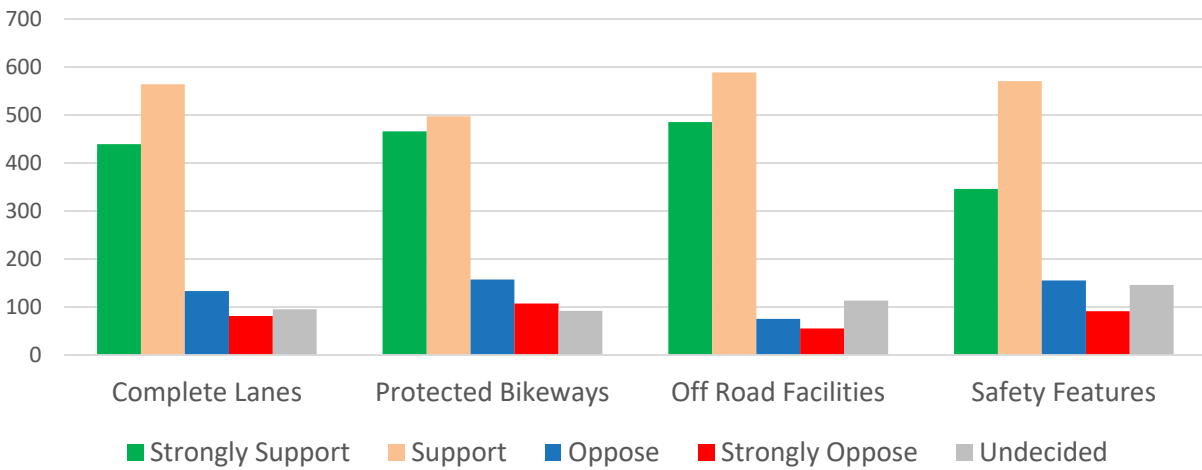
Zone 2 - Northeast



Zone 3 - Southeast

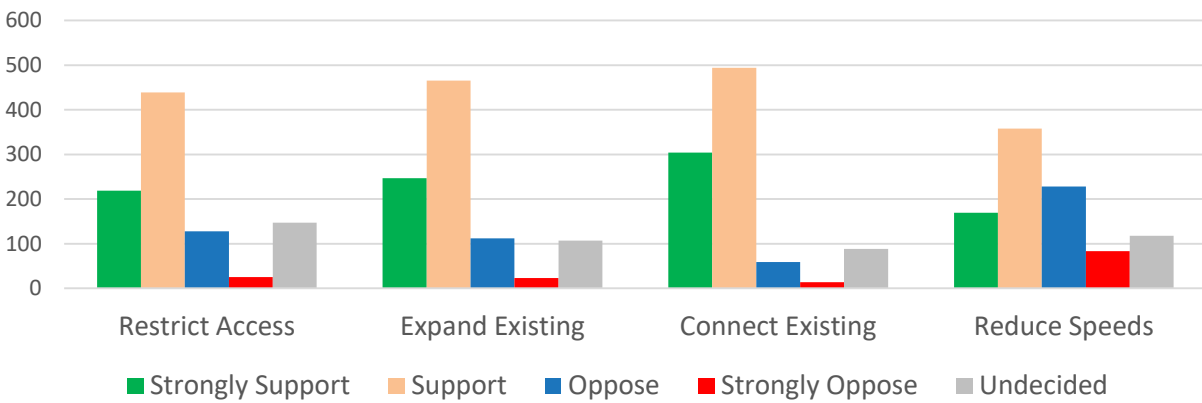


Zone 4 - West

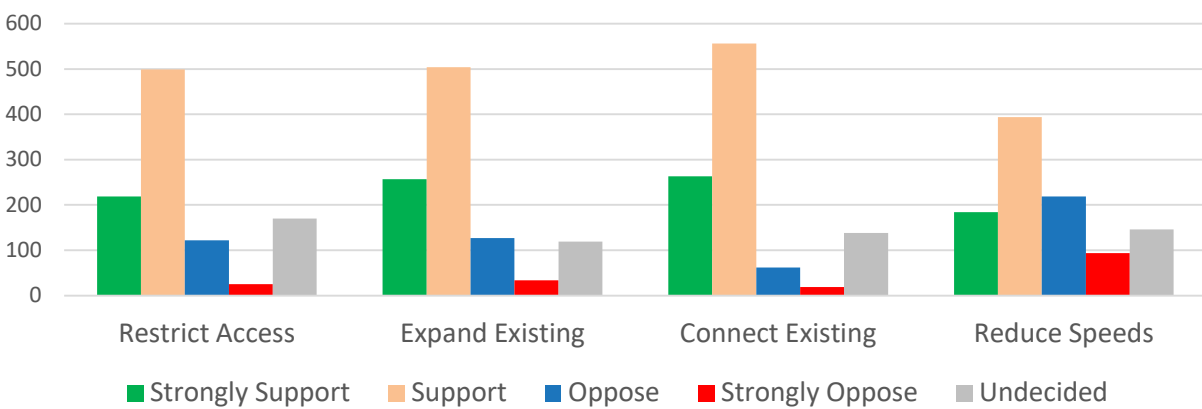


Arterials

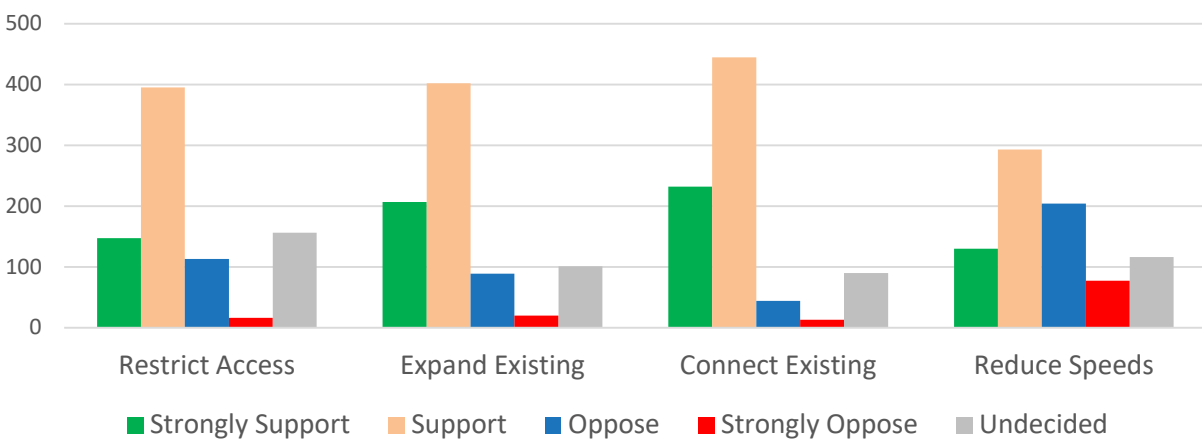
Zone 1 - Beaverton +



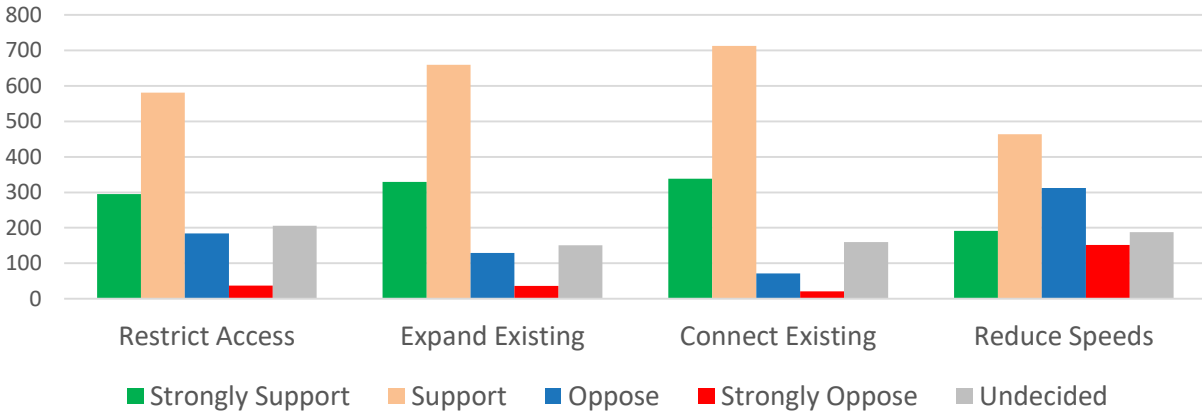
Zone 2 - Northeast



Zone 3 - Southeast

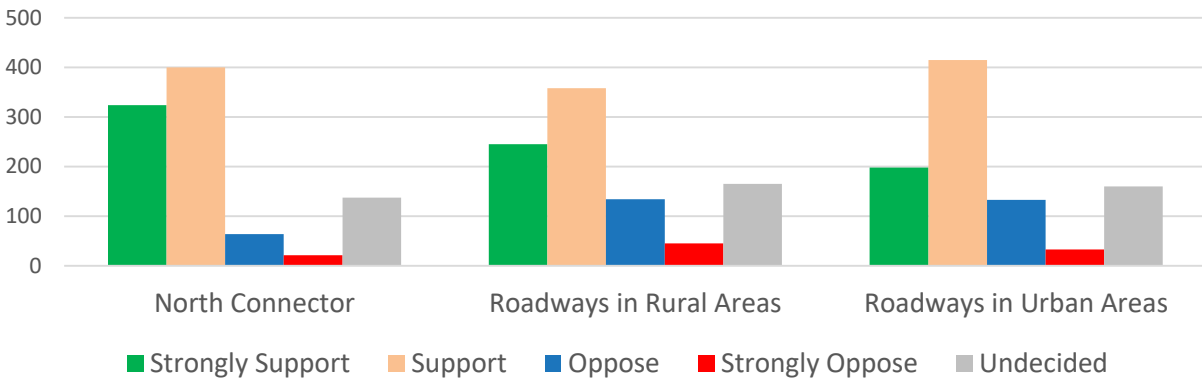


Zone 4 - West

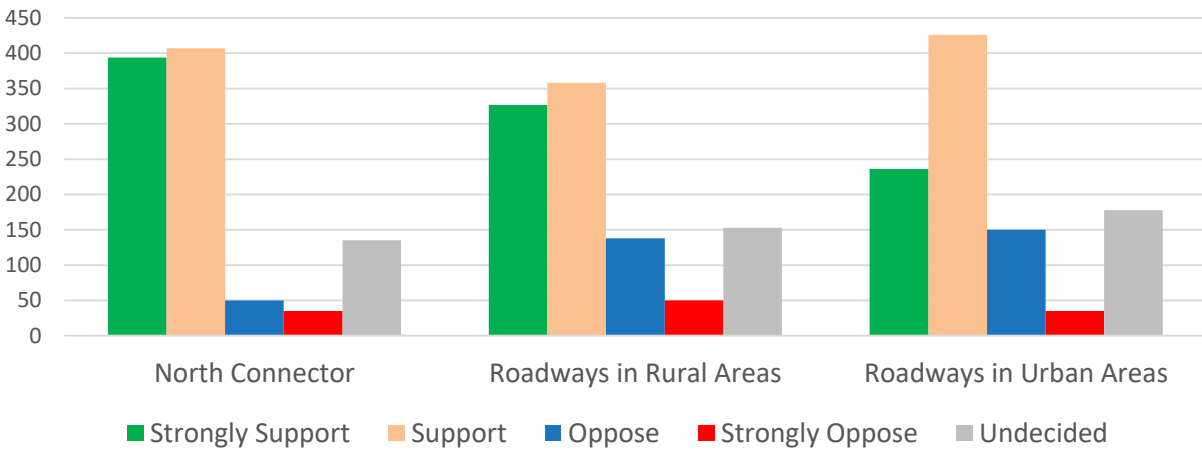


New Roadways

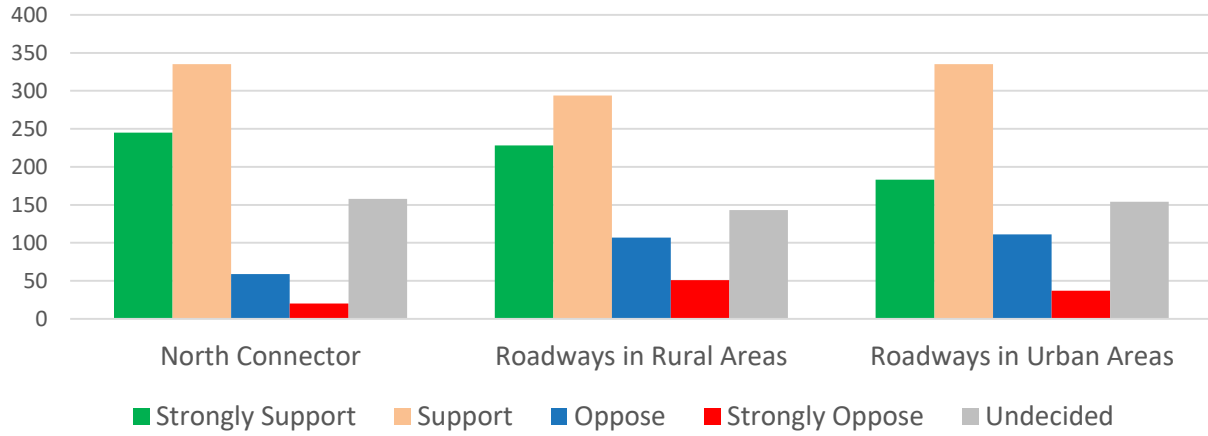
Zone 1 - Beaverton +



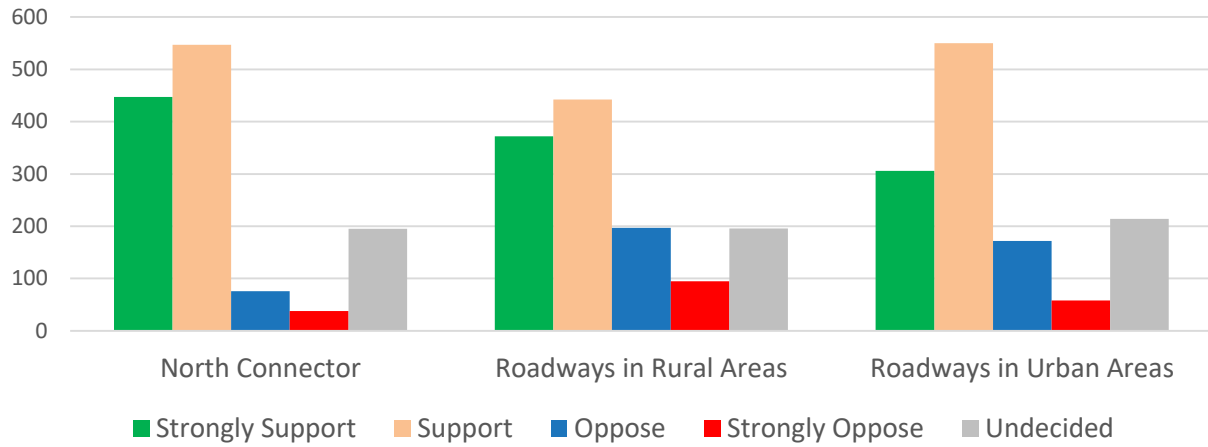
Zone 2 - Northeast



Zone 3 - Southeast

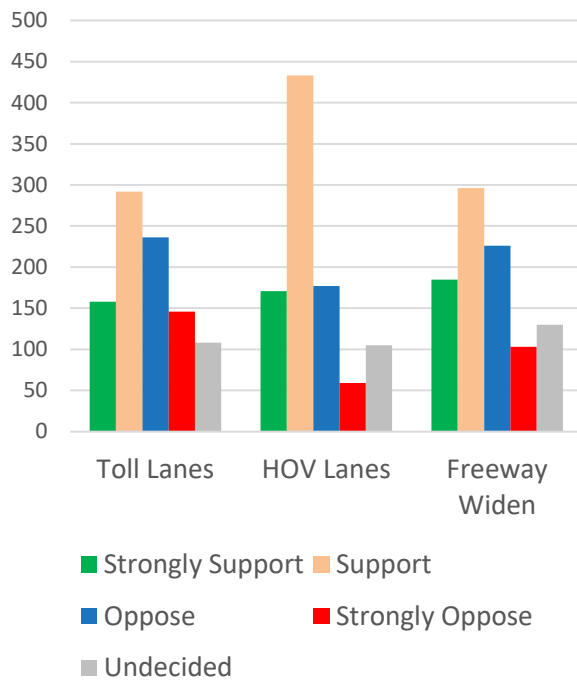


Zone 4 - West

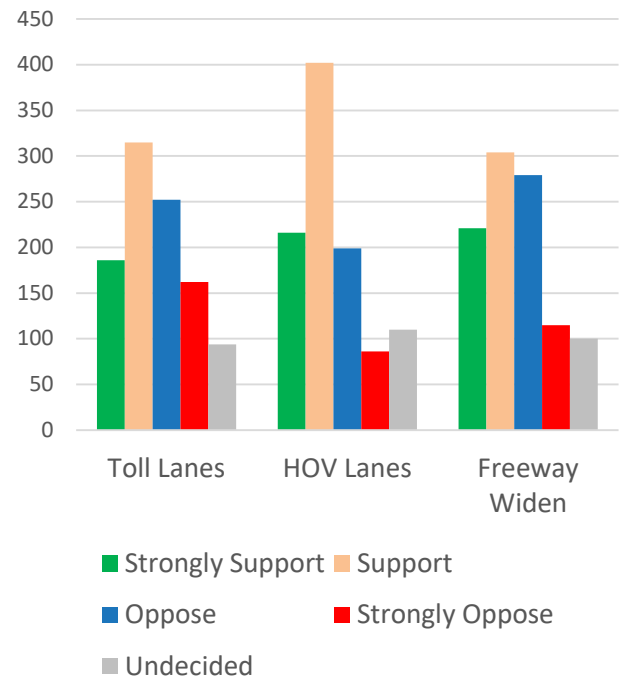


Freeways

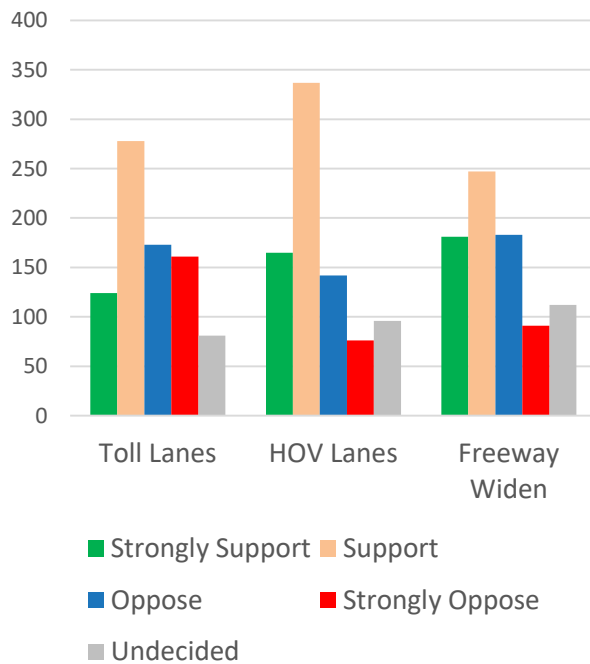
Zone 1 - Beaverton +



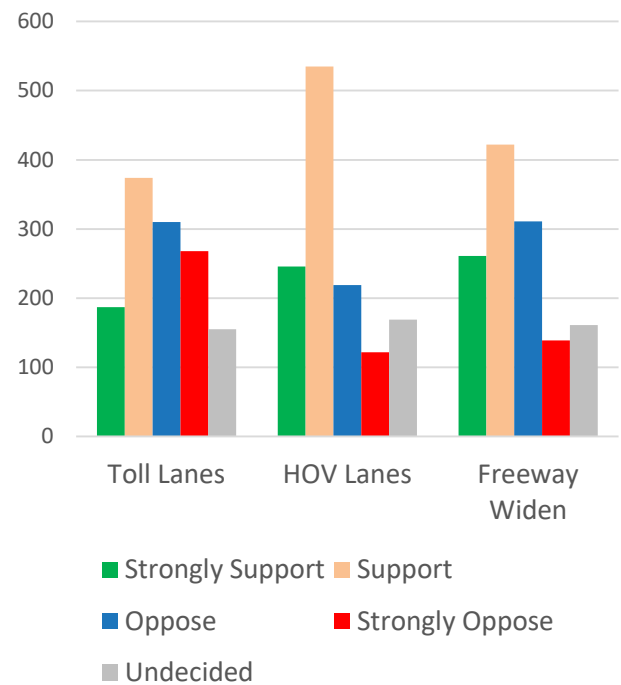
Zone 2 - Northeast



Zone 3 - Southeast



Zone 4 - West



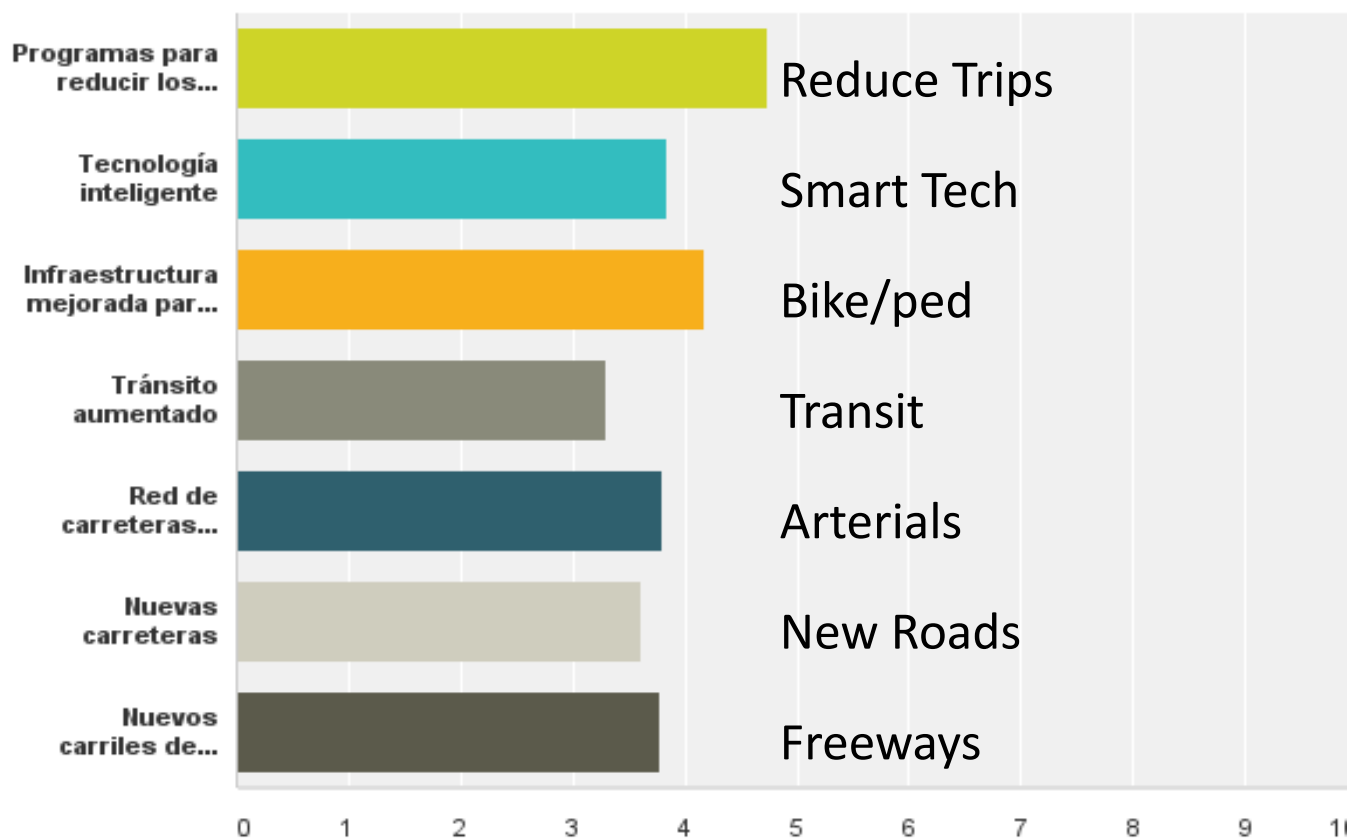
VII. SPANISH LANGUAGE SURVEY RESULTS

A Spanish-language survey was conducted with the help of Centro Cultural, who administered the survey and distributed it to Spanish-speakers. 42 people submitted completed surveys. As compared to the online survey:

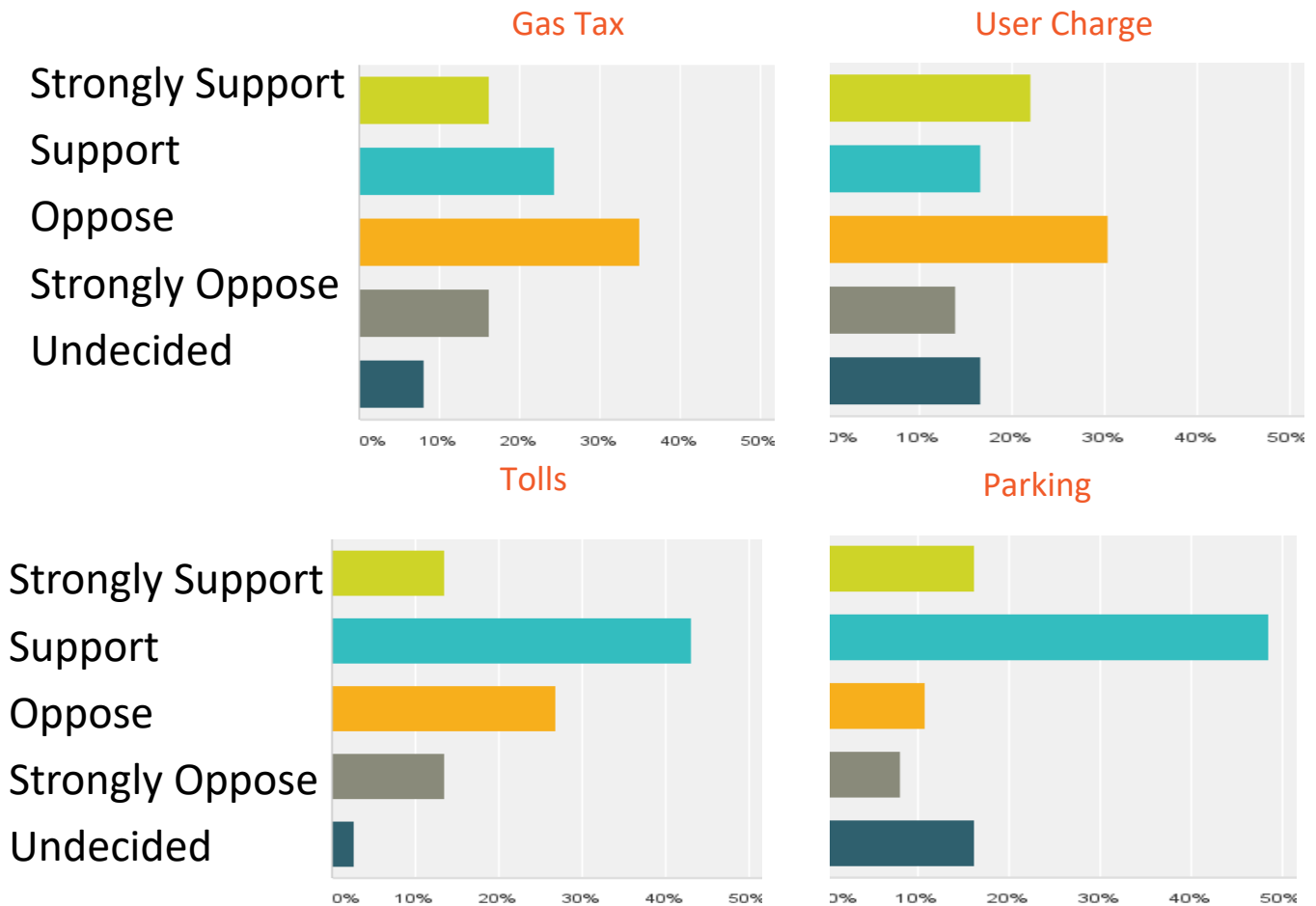
- Investments – The Spanish speaking survey showed more support for reducing trips, smart technology and bike/ped; transit received the least support.
- Funding – there is more support of tolls and less support for gas tax.
- Objectives – there is less support of traffic flow and more for environment.

The charts below show the results of the Spanish-language survey.

Investment Priorities



Funding



Objectives

There was less support for improving traffic flow and more support for protecting the environment.

