



MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee
FROM: Lori Zeller, TPB Transportation Planner
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SUBJECT: Visualize 2045 Public Input Survey: Preliminary Findings
DATE: October 6, 2017

INTRODUCTION

This memo presents preliminary findings from the Visualize 2045 Public Input Survey conducted over the summer of 2017. The survey aimed to gather people's general attitudes and opinions about transportation in the region for the purpose of informing ongoing discussions among elected officials and regional planners throughout the development of the Visualize 2045 long-range plan and beyond. The results of this and other public outreach activities will be included as a chapter in the final Visualize 2045 plan for use by leaders and planners as they continue to discuss, identify, and develop potential improvements to the region's transportation system.

Because it has been only a short time since the public input survey closed, this memo highlights a small number of "preliminary" findings that stood out during the initial tabulation and review of responses. More in-depth analysis will take place this fall and winter, and a complete report of survey findings will be published in early 2018.

The structure of this memo is as follows: First, we describe the background of the survey and the methods used to gather responses. Next, we share a few high-level findings from each of the main categories of questions asked in the survey, which were: 1) top factors which influence people's travel choices; 2) issues which affect people's travel experience; and 3) respondents' ideas for improving the region's transportation system. We then share some preliminary data showing the geographic breakdown of survey respondents and conclude with anticipated next steps for analysis.

BACKGROUND: VISUALIZE 2045 PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

The Visualize 2045 Public Input Survey was open for eight weeks, from June 17 to August 21, 2017. The survey aimed to gather general attitudes and opinions about transportation in the region. The purpose of gathering such information was to inform ongoing discussions among elected officials and regional planners throughout the development of the Visualize 2045 long-range plan and beyond.

The survey used MetroQuest public engagement software and was available in English and Spanish versions. The simple, fun, and interactive online survey tool asked respondents about:

- Daily travel behaviors and patterns
- Key issues related to reliability, affordability, travel time, travel options, and safety

- Suggestions for transportation projects or other improvements
- Sociodemographic characteristics

Note: View a live “demo” version of the survey: <https://visualize2045-demo.metroquest.com>.

Two different methodologies were used to gather responses to the public input survey: a random sample and an “open survey.” The random sample was meant to capture a geographically representative sample of the region while the open survey was available for any member of the public who wanted to participate.

- **Random Sample.** The random sample approach used a probability-based random sample of adults residing in households located within local jurisdictions comprising the TPB Planning Area (for a list of these jurisdictions, see the tables on page 6), in order to obtain a geographically representative sample. Households were selected to participate in the survey using an address-based sampling method and randomly selected households were invited by mail to complete the survey using a web link and a unique PIN provided in the invitation letter. To ensure a random survey, the adult household member whose birthday was next after receipt of the letter was asked to complete the survey. A \$15 gift card incentive was provided upon completion.
- **Open survey.** The open survey was available for any member of the public who wanted to participate. In order to generate a wide response to the open survey, a multifaceted public outreach strategy was developed to reach a broad cross-section of the region’s population, which is described in more detail in the memo entitled “[Visualize 2045 Public Outreach: Summary of Phase 1 Activities](#)”¹. The open survey was not designed to be statistically representative of any sociodemographic factor and was not designed to be geographically representative. Respondents to the open survey had the option of providing their e-mail address to be entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of ten \$50 Visa gift cards.

Both the random sample and open surveys were conducted concurrently and used the same web-based MetroQuest tool and survey questionnaire.

In total, there were 755 respondents in the random sample and 5,460 respondents to the open survey, for a total of 6,215 respondents.

This memo presents high-level findings from the combined responses to the two samples. The findings presented here are consistent between both the random sample and the open survey. A more detailed analysis of the survey results will be presented early in 2018.

¹ Full URL for the “Visualize 2045 Public Outreach: Summary of Phase 1 Activities” memo is: <https://www.mwcog.org/file.aspx?&A=9%2btXAwqPpzJaAJqYTbPjkT%2bnOuyWhJgYZX6BMyTtHWM%3d>

WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE PEOPLE'S TRAVEL CHOICES THE MOST?

Survey respondents were asked to identify what factors have the greatest influence on their decisions about how, when, and where to travel. The survey provided a list of five factors to choose from—reliability, affordability, travel time, travel options, and safety—and gave respondents the option to add other factors not mentioned on the list:

What's important to you?

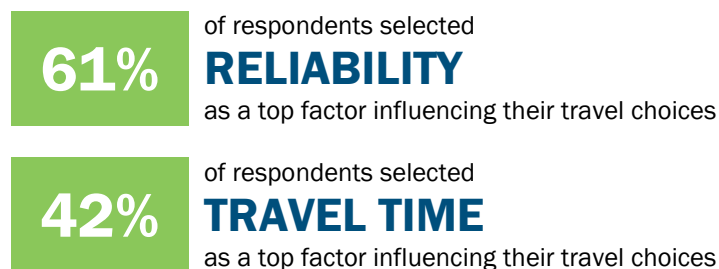
We all have different priorities when it comes to making decisions about how we get where we're going. Which factors have the greatest influence on the travel choices you make every day? (Choose two.)

Reliability	"It's important that I can count on getting where I'm going on time without unexpected delays."
Affordability	"It's important that I can afford the travel options that work best for me."
Travel Time	"It's important that I can get where I want to go as quickly as possible."
Travel Options	"It's important that I have options other than driving to get where I want to go."
Safety	"It's important that I feel safe from personal harm or injury when traveling."

"Reliability" and "Travel Time" were most often selected as top factors influencing people's travel choices. Reliability stood out as the most important factor to more than half (61 percent) of all respondents. The overwhelming response for "Reliability" placed it far ahead of the other factors. Clearly, people in the region want to be able to rely on their daily travel to get them where they are going on time and without unexpected delays.

Travel time was the second-most important factor to travelers, selected by 42 percent of respondents as one of the top two factors influencing their travel choices. This shows that people want their trips to be reliable, and they seek to reach their destinations in the shortest amount of time possible.

Top Factors Influencing People's Travel Choices



WHAT ISSUES AFFECT PEOPLE'S TRAVEL EXPERIENCE THE MOST?

Survey respondents were also asked to evaluate how different issues affect their travel experience. The purpose of asking this question was to learn more about what people in the region see as the biggest barriers to having an improved transportation experience.

The survey asked respondents about 20 different issues, grouped into categories according to the five factors on the preceding screen. Respondents were asked to rate each issue on a scale of "1" to "5", with higher ratings signifying a greater impact. As before, respondents had the opportunity to add other issues not mentioned, or to provide qualitative comments on their responses.

What affects your travel?

How much do each of the issues on this screen affect your travel? Rate each issue on a scale of "1" to "5", with higher ratings signifying a greater impact on your travel.

Reliability	Affordability	Travel Time	Travel Options	Safety
Traffic Congestion	Vehicle Ownership Costs	Time Spent in Traffic	Need for Rail Transit	Dangerous Driving
Traffic Incidents	Tolls and Parking	Time Needed for Transit	Need for Bus Transit	Infrastructure Conditions
Train Delays	Rail Fares	Lack of Faster Options	Need for Driving Options	Crime
Bus Delays	Bus Fares	Distance to Destinations	Need for Walking and Bicycling	Street Design

"Traffic congestion," "Time spent in traffic," and "Need for rail transit" rose to the top as affecting people's travel experience the most. These were the top-three rated issues in both the random sample and open survey. For all three issues, at least 55 percent of responses assigned a rating of "4" or "5" on a scale of "1" to "5", indicating a high impact on their travel experience.

Top Issues Affecting People's Travel Experience

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

"Traffic on the roads makes it hard for me to get where I'm going on time."

TIME SPENT IN TRAFFIC

"Traffic makes it take too long to drive where I need to go."

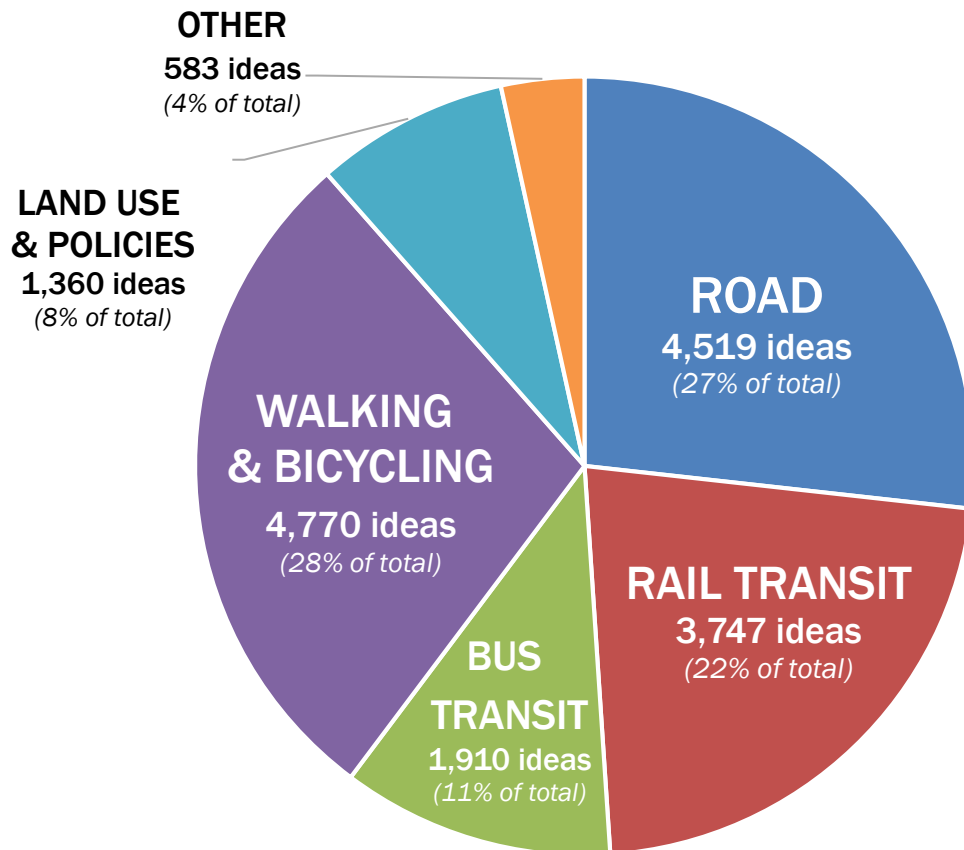
NEED FOR RAIL TRANSIT

"More or better rail transit options would make my travel experience better."

WHAT IDEAS DO PEOPLE HAVE FOR IMPROVING THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM?

Finally, respondents were invited to submit their ideas and suggestions for ways to make the region's transportation system better. Respondents could drag and drop markers onto an interactive map to identify where and what kind of improvement they thought should be made. Six main types of improvements were provided as options: road, rail transit, bus transit, walking and bicycling, land-use and policies, and other. Within each of these categories were further options, including improvements to existing facilities, construction of new facilities, and service expansions.

A total of 16,889 markers were placed on the map. The markers were spread throughout the region and included numerous ideas within each of the modal categories. Deeper analysis of these ideas and suggestions will be forthcoming in future analyses of the survey responses.



WHERE DO VISUALIZE 2045 SURVEY RESPONDENTS LIVE?

The survey aimed to reach a broad and diverse cross-section of the region's population. One particular focus was on geographic diversity. The random sample employed a sampling methodology designed specifically to capture a geographically representative sample of households in the region. The open survey, though less scientifically structured in its approach, also employed strategies aimed at reaching people in all parts of the region.

The tables below show the jurisdiction of residence of survey respondents, separated by the random sample and open survey. The tables also show the breakdown of responses by geographic sub-area (Urban Core, Inner Suburbs, Outer Suburbs). Responses were received from each of the TPB's 23 member jurisdictions. Future analysis will identify jurisdictions and sub-areas which were over- and under-represented in the random sample. It will also show the make-up of both samples in terms of other sociodemographic factors, including age, gender, race and ethnicity, disability status, income, and usual travel mode.

RANDOM SAMPLE		OPEN SURVEY	
Sub-Area/Jurisdiction	Respondents	Sub-Area/Jurisdiction	Respondents
Urban Core	213	Urban Core	1,657
City of Alexandria	29	City of Alexandria	152
Arlington County	49	Arlington County	351
District of Columbia	135	District of Columbia	1,154
Inner Suburb	395	Inner Suburb	1,969
Fairfax County*	167	Fairfax County*	723
Montgomery County	134	Montgomery County	993
Prince George's County	94	Prince George's County	253
Outer Suburb	147	Outer Suburb	897
Charles County	16	Charles County	87
Fauquier Urbanized Area	3	Fauquier Urbanized Area	14
Frederick County	35	Frederick County	250
Loudoun County	41	Loudoun County	134
Prince William County*	52	Prince William County*	412
TOTAL	755	Outside TPB Planning Area	386
		Total Reporting a ZIP Code	4,909
		No ZIP Code Reported	551
		TOTAL RESPONDENTS	5,460

NOTE: The Fairfax County total includes the independent cities of Fairfax and Falls Church and the Prince William County total includes the independent cities of Manassas and Manassas Park.

NEXT STEPS FOR ANALYSIS

Over the next few months, we will be analyzing the survey data in more detail to develop a comprehensive picture of attitudes and opinions about the region's transportation system. This more in-depth analysis will feature cross-tabulations to shed light on associations between responses. The categories of survey response data we will be working with include:

- Factors which influence people's travel choices
- Issues which affect people's travel experience
- Ideas for improving the transportation system
- Sociodemographic data (mode of travel used most frequently, race and ethnicity, income, age, gender, disability status, and home location)

Some questions we are planning to look at include:

- Did people's responses differ based on the travel mode they use most frequently?
- Did people's responses differ based on their sociodemographic characteristics such as income, race and ethnicity, gender, and disability status?
- How do respondents' selection of priorities relate to their rating of issues?
- Where are there high concentrations of ideas for transportation improvements?

The analysis will be summarized in a final report, which is planned to be released in early 2018. The results of the survey aim to inform ongoing discussions among elected officials and regional planners throughout the development of the Visualize 2045 long-range plan and beyond. The results of this and other public outreach activities will be included as a chapter in the final Visualize 2045 plan for use by leaders and planners as they continue to discuss, identify, and develop potential improvements to the region's transportation system.