

# Investing in California's Transportation Future: 2022 Public Opinion on Critical Needs

Project 2158  
July 2023

Asha Weinstein Agrawal, PhD, and Hilary Nixon, PhD

This study surveyed Californians about their basic travel behavior patterns and opinions related to transportation, information that allows state leaders to align transportation plans and policies with public priorities. The survey topics included general travel behaviors and resources, use of ride-hailing, performance ratings for the transportation system and agencies responsible for transportation, transportation system improvement priorities, and preference for how transportation funds are allocated.

## Study Methods

The research team surveyed 3,821 adult Californians with a survey platform and panel of respondents managed by Qualtrics. Quota sampling ensured that the final sample closely reflected California adults in terms of key socio-demographic characteristics and geographic distribution. In addition, the survey collected basic personal characteristics, including standard sociodemographic variables and home location.

## Findings

### *Californians are Multimodal Travelers:*

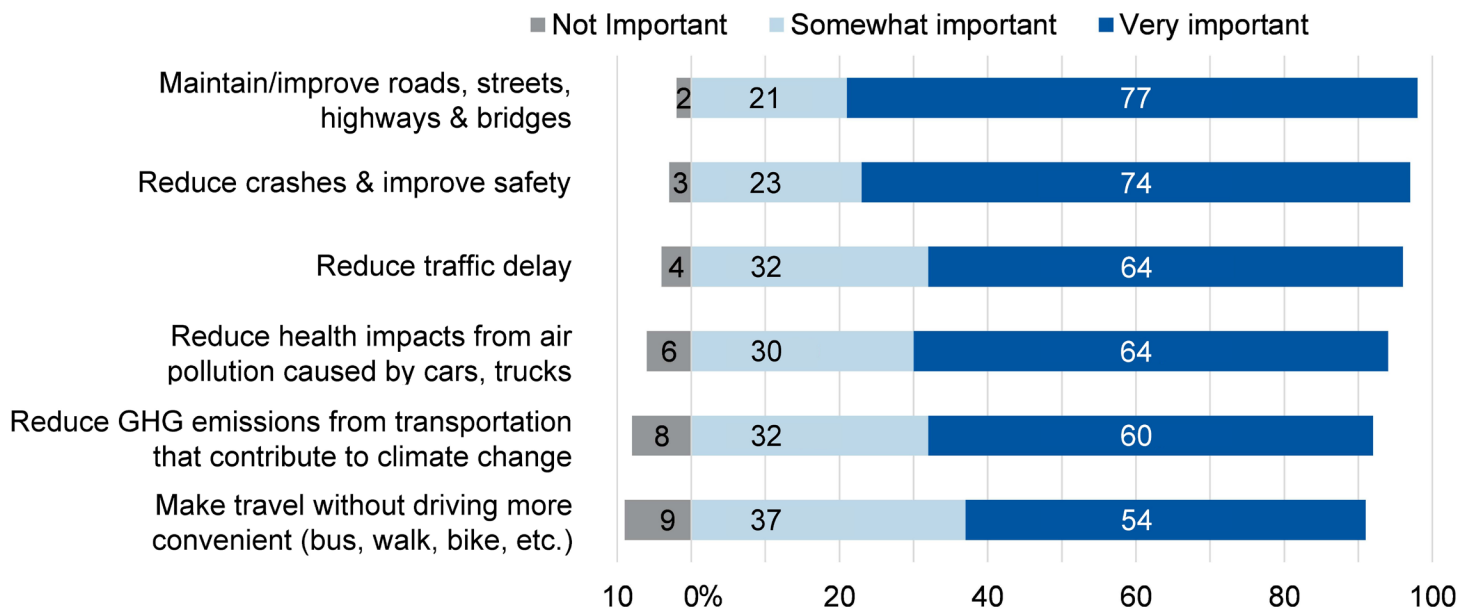
Californians rely on a range of travel modes for their everyday mobility. Although driving is widespread (85%), two-thirds also reported walking for transportation (66%). Approximately a quarter of respondents had used ride-hailing (28%), public transit (25%), or bicycling (22%), and 11% had ridden small devices like skateboards or electric scooters.

Although most respondents drove, they typically covered modest numbers of miles annually, and

the vehicles they drove most frequently were relatively fuel efficient. One-third of respondents drove no more than 5,000 miles in the previous year, and only a quarter had driven over 10,000 miles. The vehicles respondents drove most often for personal reasons had an average fuel efficiency of 26.41 miles per gallon, and only 15% of respondents drove a primary vehicle with very low fuel efficiency (18 mph or lower).

***Ride-Hailing is Widespread:*** Sixty-six percent of respondents had used ridehailing at some point, and 28% had used it recently. Further, a diverse group of Californians had used ridehailing, even if ride-hailing experience was more common among younger, urban, and higher-income employed respondents. For example, while ride-hailing was much more common among respondents living in urban areas than among respondents living in rural areas (75% vs. 45%), nevertheless close to half of rural respondents had used ridehailing.

Although ride-hailing sometimes replaced trips by transit, walking, or bicycling and micromobility, most Californians use it as a complement to transit and active travel, rather than as an across-the-board replacement for those modes. For example, only about a quarter of ride-hailers (27%) felt that they used transit less once they started ride-hailing, while 16% of ride-hailers said they rode transit more after they started ride-hailing.



Rating the Importance of Transportation-Related Goals for California (% of respondents)

**A Vision for Better Transportation:** Virtually all respondents—over 90%—wanted the state to work towards better safety and maintenance; reduced congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollution; and convenient multimodal travel options. The two goals with the widest support were to improve maintenance and safety. These were considered “very important” by 77% and 74%, respectively.

*Virtually all respondents—over 90%—wanted the state to work towards better safety and maintenance.*

**Transportation Spending Priorities:** Large majorities of respondents placed a medium or high priority on transportation spending options to support all modes. Among the 14 spending options presented, those rated as a top-three priority by particularly large proportions of respondents were better maintenance of highways (46%) and better maintenance of local streets and roads (43%).

**About the Authors**

Asha Weinstein Agrawal, PhD, is Director of the Mineta Transportation Institute’s National Transportation Finance Center. Hilary Nixon, PhD, is Deputy Executive Director of the Mineta Transportation Institute.

**To Learn More**

For more details about the study, download the full report at [transweb.sjsu.edu/research/2158](https://transweb.sjsu.edu/research/2158)



MTI is a University Transportation Center sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology and by Caltrans. The Institute is located within San José State University’s Lucas Graduate School of Business.