

# Survey Reveals That the Public Wants More Options for Mass Transportation

The 2009 Growth and Transportation Survey, sponsored by the National Association of REALTORS® and Transportation America, asked Americans how their communities are handling development, how development affects them, and how the transportation needs of communities can best be met. Respondents favored increased investment in bus and rail systems and policies to encourage denser development over building new roads as priorities for federal and local governments facing challenges of economic stagnation, population growth, and traffic congestion.

## Growth and Transportation Nationwide

America's population is expected to increase 100 million by 2050. To accommodate this growth, Americans favor restoring existing roads and bridges and expanding transportation options, improving intercity rail and transit, and making it easier to walk and bike. Three out of four favor improving rail systems to handle future growth rather than building new highways and freeways.

Half of U.S. citizens believe that maintaining and repairing roads, highways, freeways and bridges should be the top priority as the federal government makes its plans for transportation funding in 2009. Just under a third (31 percent) believe

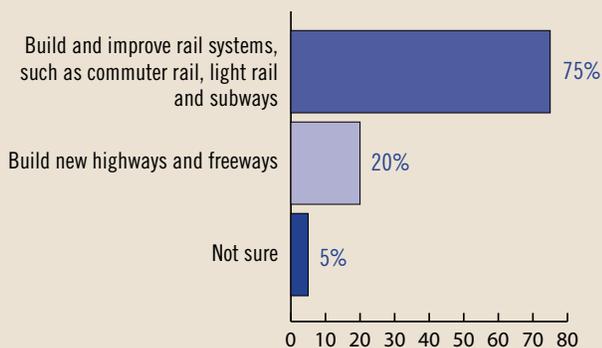
the top priority should be expanding and improving bus, rail, and other public transportation, and only 16 percent believe it should be expanding roads, highways, freeways and bridges.

What citizens want or need and what they get are two different stories. When asked which one or two types of transportation are not getting enough attention from the federal government, more than half (56 percent) responded trains or light rail systems and nearly half (48 percent) responded roads and buses.

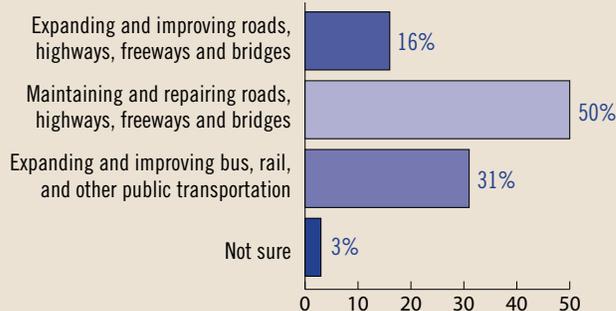
## Transportation Policy at the Local Level

Almost two-thirds of Americans believe their communities do a good or excellent job providing parks and protecting

Given that the U.S. population will increase by one hundred million people by 2050, which of the following transportation approaches do you prefer to accommodate this growth?



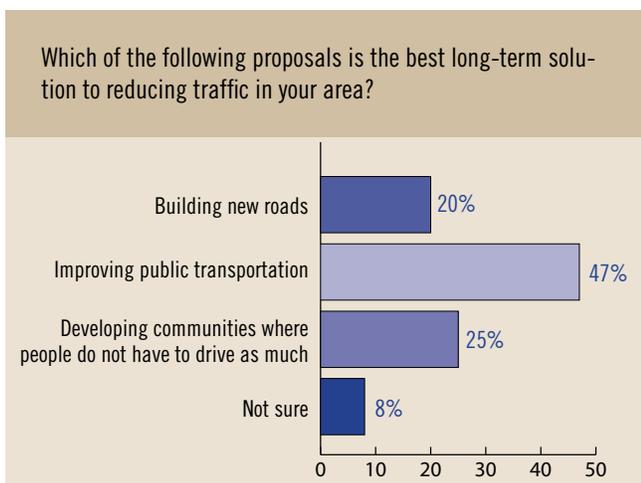
As the federal government makes its plans for transportation funding in 2009, which one of the following should be the top priority?



open space (65 percent), and more than half believe their communities do a good or excellent job providing good public schools (58 percent). When it comes to transportation, however, a majority of those surveyed think their communities do a poor or only fair job.

For instance, 56 percent think their community is doing a fair or poor job managing growth and new development. Only 7 percent believe their community is doing an excellent job providing practical and convenient public transportation.

When it comes to traffic congestion in their communities, two-thirds (67 percent) want to address the problem with improved public transportation, including trains and buses, and more options for walking and biking, while only a quarter (27 percent) want more roads built and existing roads expanded. When asked about the best long-term solution for reducing traffic, almost half (47 percent) preferred improving public transportation. A quarter chose building communities that encourage people not to drive as much, and 20 percent preferred building new roads.



More people agreed than disagreed that new home construction should be limited in outlying areas and encouraged in already developed areas, and that businesses and homes should be built closer together so that stores and restaurants are within walking distance and do not require the use of an automobile.

### The Economic Stimulus Package and Long-Term Economic Growth Priorities

Overwhelmingly, Americans agreed that transportation- and infrastructure-related projects should be included in the economic stimulus package through job creation initiatives. Most wanted highway and bridge repair projects (93 percent), alternative energies such as wind and solar power (86 per-

cent), the development and improvement of public transportation (83 percent), and developing and expanding parks that preserve green space and recreation areas in communities (71 percent) to be included.

Respondents also agreed that economic stimulus activities should be less focused on immediate needs and more on long-term economic growth. Specifically, 80 percent of Americans want transportation and other infrastructure spending included in the economic stimulus bill to go to projects that achieve multiple goals including creating new jobs, improving the environment, increasing transportation choices, and reducing dependence on foreign oil, even if it means jobs are created over a longer period of time. The top transportation-related goal in respondents' eyes is promoting long-term economic growth (41 percent).

I'm going to read you two statements, and I'd like you to tell me which one comes closer to your point of view.

A: Transportation and other infrastructure spending should only include projects that can be started right away, such as traditional highway and bridge construction, to create new jobs and provide an immediate boost to the economy.

B: Transportation and other infrastructure spending should be targeted specifically to projects that achieve multiple goals, including creating new jobs, reducing dependence on foreign oil, improving the environment, and increasing transportation choices, even if the jobs are created over a longer period of time.

| Statement   | Percentage |
|-------------|------------|
| Statement A | 15%        |
| Statement B | 80%        |
| Depends     | 2%         |
| Not sure    | 3%         |

In addition, 89 percent want transportation investments to support the goal of reducing energy use, with 58 percent wanting that strongly. Three in four also want the stimulus plan to support the reduction of carbon emissions that lead to global warming and climate change.

*The 2009 Growth and Transportation Survey was conducted by Hart Research Associates, January 5–7. Hart Research Associates telephoned 1,005 adults living in the United States. The study has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. The entire survey can be viewed at [www.realtor.org/smartgrowth](http://www.realtor.org/smartgrowth).*