

## INFRASTRUCTURE/ROAD CONGESTION ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY AND SURVEY

Inadequate federal investment in America's travel infrastructure has increased congestion across all modes of transportation, reduced national and regional connectivity, and restricted travel demand. To better understand how traffic congestion affects domestic auto travel and to provide more insights about this issue for policymakers, the U.S. Travel Association commissioned Longwoods International to do an online self-completion survey of American auto travelers on May 3-7, 2019. The survey examines:

- The impacts of traffic congestion on travel frequency and behavior; and
- Traveler sentiments towards Congressional proposals to boost federal infrastructure investment in transportation infrastructure.

### KEY FINDINGS

---

**Traffic congestion caused Americans to avoid 47.5 million road trips in 2018, which cost the economy nearly \$30 billion in travel spending—enough to directly support 248,000 American jobs.**

- When asked if they avoided any trips by car in the previous year because the likelihood of traffic congestion would have made the trip more of a hassle:
  - Nearly one-third (32.5%) said they avoided at least **one day trip by car**; and
  - Nearly one-in-four (24.1%) Americans said they avoided at least **one overnight trip**
- According to an analysis of the survey results, every additional hour of traffic added to a trip reduces travel demand by an average of 18% or more.

**A majority of American travelers are willing to pay more for transportation improvements, particularly if assured the improvements will be made in their area.**

- More Americans support paying more for transportation improvements (62%) than oppose any additional cost (38%), with 24% saying they would support additional taxes or fees if the money was used to fund transportation improvements in their area.
- Overall, most American travelers (79%) said additional user fees would not negatively impact the frequency of their travel by car. Among these travelers, nearly 89% said up to a 25-cent gas tax increase would not negatively impact their travel.
- A majority of Americans (60%) preferred spending an additional 25 cents per gallon in gas taxes than spending 1 to 2 more hours in traffic.
- Approximately 66% of Americans said they would rather pay an additional \$2-\$3 in user fees each way than spend up to 2 more hours in traffic.

**Americans are most concerned about traffic congestion and road safety.**

- Approximately 92% of Americans said they had concerns about transportation in and around their local area, with road safety (50%) and traffic congestion (49%) listed as top concerns.

## SURVEY RESULTS

1. Did you take any day (NO nights) trips by car (at least 50 miles, one-way) in the past 12 months?	Yes	83.3%
	No	14.1%
	Don't know/Can't remember	2.6%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
2. How many day trips by car did you take in the past 12 months?	1-5 trips	67.3%
	6-10 trips	18.2%
	11-15 trips	6.2%
	16-20 trips	4.1%
	21-30 trips	1.7%
	31-40 trips	0.9%
	41-50 trips	0.7%
	8 More than 50 trips	0.9%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
3. In the past 12 months, was there ever an incident when you avoided any day trips by car (at least 50 miles, one-way) because the likelihood of road traffic congestion would have made the trip more of a hassle than it was worth?	Yes	32.5%
	No	61.4%
	Don't know/Can't remember	6.1%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
4. Did you take any overnight (one or more nights) trips by car (at least 50 miles one-way) in the past 12 months?	Yes	86.1%
	No	12.3%
	Don't know/Can't remember	1.6%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
5. How many overnight trips by car did you take in the past 12 months?	1-5 trips	79.4%
	6-10 trips	13.7%
	11-15 trips	4.5%
	16-20 trips	1.2%
	21-30 trips	0.7%
	More than 30 trips	0.5%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
6. In the past 12 months, was there ever an incident when you avoided any overnight trips by car (at least 50 miles, one-way) because the likelihood of road traffic congestion would have made the trip more of a hassle than it was worth?	Yes	24.1%
	No	71.5%
	Don't know/Can't remember	4.5%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)

7. When taking a day trip (no nights away from home), what is the maximum number of hours you are willing to drive to your destination (one way), including the time you spend on meals and short rest stops?	1 hour	5.6%
	2 hours	31.2%
	3 hours	28.9%
	4 or more hours	34.2%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0%
8. When taking a single night trip (one night away from home), what is the maximum number of hours are you willing to drive to your destination (one way), including the time you spend on meals and short rest stops?	1 hour	3.7%
	2 hours	16.9%
	3 hours	22.3%
	4 hours	22.3%
	5 hours	12.9%
	6 or more hours	21.9%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0%
9. When taking a weekend trip, what is the maximum number of hours are you willing to drive to your destination (one way), including the time you spend on meals and short rest stops?	1 hour	3.2%
	2 hours	14.4%
	3 hours	17.1%
	4 hours	21.5%
	5 hours	14.4%
	6 hours	12.8%
	7 hours	4.0%
	8 or more hours	12.7%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0%
10. When taking an extended trip, what is the maximum number of hours are you willing to drive to your destination (one way), including the time you spend on meals and short rest stops?	1 hour	4.0%
	2 hours	8.3%
	3 hours	11.4%
	4 hours	13.0%
	5 hours	8.7%
	6 hours	12.2%
	7 hours	3.2%
	8 hours	12.0%
	9 hours	3.8%
	10 or more hours	23.3%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0%

## SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)

The current federal gas tax, which is exclusively used to fund transportation improvement projects, is 18.4 cents per gallon and has not been increased since 1993. Due to insufficient investment in transportation improvement projects, congestion along major U.S. highways often increases travel time by between 1 to 2.5 hours during peak periods, according to recent statistics. There are proposals being considered in Congress to increase the gas tax by anywhere between 5 cents and 25 cents per gallon. The additional revenue that will be generated from the proposed gas tax increase would be used to exclusively fund transportation improvements projects that will reduce traffic congestion, improve safety and offer alternative transportation options to driving.

<b>11. In view of the above, which of the following statements best describes how you would react to the proposed gas tax increase?</b>	I would support a 5 to 25 cents gas tax increase because the United States should be investing more in transportation	19.1%
	I would support a 5 to 25 cents gas tax increase, but only if my Congressional Representative is able to ensure that some of the additional revenue goes towards major transportation improvement projects in my region.	30.0%
	I would NOT support any gas tax increase, but I WOULD support other fee or tax increases on road users	12.8%
	I would NOT support any gas tax increase because I am not concerned about the road conditions, traffic congestion	9.4%
	I would NOT support any gas tax increase because I do not want to pay more in gas taxes.	28.7%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>12. When traveling for a personal or business trip by car, of at least 50 miles or more one way, would you rather...</b>	Face a high likelihood of sitting in an additional 1.5 to 2 hours of traffic each way; or	33.9%
	Pay an additional \$2.00 to \$3.00 each way to fund transportation projects	66.1%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>13. Which of the following is more likely to discourage you from taking trips by car?</b>	Facing an additional 1 to 2 hours of traffic on a more consistent basis; or	59.6%
	Paying up to an additional 25 cents per gallon in gas taxes.	40.4%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>14. Which of the following statements best describes your willingness/unwillingness to support any of these proposals, knowing that your additional taxes/fees will result in the improvements in your region and across the country?</b>	Extremely willing, improving transportation is a priority for me	14.4%
	Potentially willing, ...would go toward specific transportation improvements in my region	24.4%
	Potentially willing, but I need more assurances that any tax or fee increase will be reasonable	26.0%
	Unwilling, because I cannot afford additional transportation taxes or other fees that fund transportation improvements	9.8%
	Unwilling, because there is no assurance that additional transportation taxes or fees would go to projects in my region	23.8%
	Other	1.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

## SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)

<b>15. Thinking about additional funding for transportation improvements, which of the following options do you think your Congressional Representative should support?</b>	Which of the following options do you think your Congressional Representative should support? - Increase the gas tax by no more than 25 cents per gallon	16.9%
	Which of the following options do you think your Congressional Representative should support? - Increase the gas tax by 14 cents, which is consistent with inflation since it was last raised	26.8%
	Which of the following options do you think your Congressional Representative should support? - Replace the gas tax with a comparable fee for each vehicle mile travelled	13.7%
	Which of the following options do you think your Congressional Representative should support? - Increase taxes on diesel fuels and heavy vehicles	25.8%
	Which of the following options do you think your Congressional Representative should support? - Use public bonds, private sector loans or other financing paid back by tolling roads or taxing fares for public transportation	16.6%
	Which of the following options do you think your Congressional Representative should support? - Cut spending on public transit (i.e. bus or rail service) and use the savings to fund road, highway and bridge improvements	10.5%
	Which of the following options do you think your Congressional Representative should support? - Use revenue from income taxes, corporate taxes and other taxes unrelated to transportation	23.5%
	Which of the following options do you think your Congressional Representative should support? - Other	3.1%
	Which of the following options do you think your Congressional Representative should support? - None of the above - I do not agree on investing more in transportation improvements at this point.	11.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

## METHODOLOGY

The U.S. Travel Association commissioned Longwoods International to do an online self-completion survey of American auto travelers on May 3-7, 2019, utilizing a national sample randomly drawn from Dynata’s consumer panel. Longwoods International secured 1,031 adults who took any auto overnight or day trips in 2018 (used their own car or a rental car) completes for this survey. Data (pre-screening “total” respondents) were weighted at tabulation to correct for differences between the observed sample and the sample universe using the most recent Census targets for age, gender, income, household composition and region. The survey has a margin of error of +/-3% at 95% confidence level.