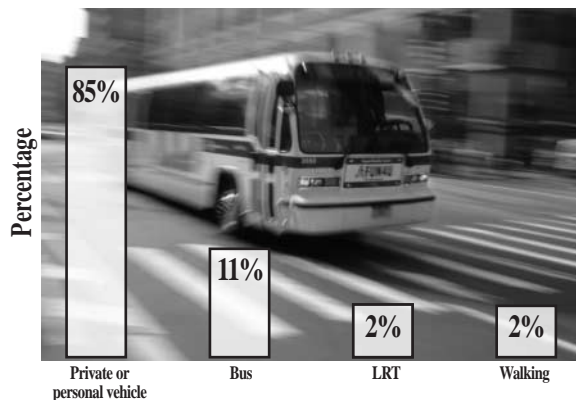


# Edmontonians' poll station

By Linda Banister

**T** It seems like every year we have to leave home a little earlier and then take longer to drive back on our daily commute to and from work. Edmonton has undergone major growth during the past few years which has taken a toll on the city's transportation system. This month, we asked Edmontonians for their opinions regarding transportation and what can be done to alleviate some of the ongoing pressures.

## WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY MODE OF TRANSPORTATION?



All respondents were asked their primary mode of transportation for their daily commute. The majority indicated they primarily use a private or personal vehicle to get around, while 11 percent take the bus, and two percent use the LRT system. An additional two percent said they travel by foot.

Respondents were then presented with several factors related to transportation in the city and asked whether they felt these factors have increased, decreased or remained the same over the past three years. The vast majority felt the volume of traffic had increased (88 percent). Many also indicated accidents (70 percent) and traffic delays (61 percent) had increased, and only 33 percent felt illegal pedestrian crossings had increased.

When asked to consider the Edmonton region, including St. Albert, Sherwood Park and Leduc, 90 percent felt the volume of traffic had increased over the past three years, while 69 percent felt traffic delays around the region had increased.

## HOW IMPORTANT ARE THESE INFRASTRUCTURE CHANGES?

Respondents were asked to rate a number of changes to Edmonton's transportation system on a scale of one to 10 (one being not at all important, and 10 being extremely important). Fifty-three percent stated it was highly important for the city to provide more mass transit by extending LRT lines; 50 percent chose

increasing public transportation such as bus service and bus routes; 46 percent favoured adding new freeways, 40 percent cited the addition of new roadways, and 38 percent preferred widening existing roadways.

Respondents were asked if they had any other ideas of how the city could alleviate the pressure on the transportation system. While most (43 percent) did not have any suggestions, of those who did, 18 percent reiterated the need to improve and increase bus service, while 16 percent would like to see the city develop the appropriate infrastructure on our existing roadways, such as more on and off ramps to the Yellowhead Trail. Other suggestions included following through with the proposed ring road (14 percent), improving the flow of traffic lights (14 percent), and improving future roadway planning and development in general (10 percent).

## HOW SHOULD IMPROVEMENTS BE FINANCED?

While respondents felt quite strongly about what needed to be done to help correct Edmonton's transportation system, they weren't particularly willing to put their support behind any one plan to finance these improvements. Just over half (52 percent) supported increasing business taxes, while just less than half (46 percent) supported a tax on vehicle registrations. One-third (33 percent) supported a tax on tires, 30 percent preferred a fuel tax, and 29 percent suggested an increase in general property taxes to finance improvements to the transportation system.

When asked for other suggestions of how to finance improvements to the transportation system, the most common were for the city to conduct better fiscal planning (18 percent), to lobby the provincial and federal governments for more funding (eight percent), and to tax non-resident commuters (four percent).

*Poll Station* surveyed 100 Edmonton residents on the topic and, while the results of the research are not statistically reliable, they do provide a qualitative indication of what Edmontonians are thinking. ✓



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