Public Engagement Results

Report to the Rebuilding Transportation Vision Workgroup

September 25, 2026

Analysis and memo prepared by ODOT staff

Background

The Rebuilding Our Transportation Vision Workgroup launched a public engagement opportunity from Aug. 14 – Sept. 10, 2026. The goal of the effort was for Gov. Tina Kotek's Workgroup to hear directly from Oregonians about their priorities for Oregon's transportation system. The Workgroup is tasked with developing recommendations to maintain and improve our transportation system more efficiently, outlining how Oregon should prioritize its transportation dollars fairly, and affordable options to fund it.

Feedback from the survey will help inform recommendations from the Workgroup that will be delivered to the governor in December.

Key Takeaways

The public survey results offer insight into how Oregonians view the state's transportation needs, even though the survey is not statistically representative. Across all questions and comment themes, respondents consistently emphasize three priorities:

- Maintaining and preserving existing infrastructure
- Ensuring safe travel for all users
- Delivering reliable multimodal options, especially public transit

These priorities appear repeatedly in both the quantitative rankings and the 15,000+ written comments.

Respondents also express strong expectations that transportation agencies demonstrate efficient use of funds, transparent decision-making, and visible progress on core services. Perspectives differ on issues such as bike lanes, congestion management, and the scale of investments.

Methodology for Analysis

The survey asked three quantitative questions regarding the ranking of transportation priorities, spending and impacts. The first three questions were required for respondents to complete the survey, and there was an optional comment field that accompanied each question for respondents to share more about their selections.

The fourth question was an optional open-ended question asking respondents to describe their idea of a well-managed transportation system.

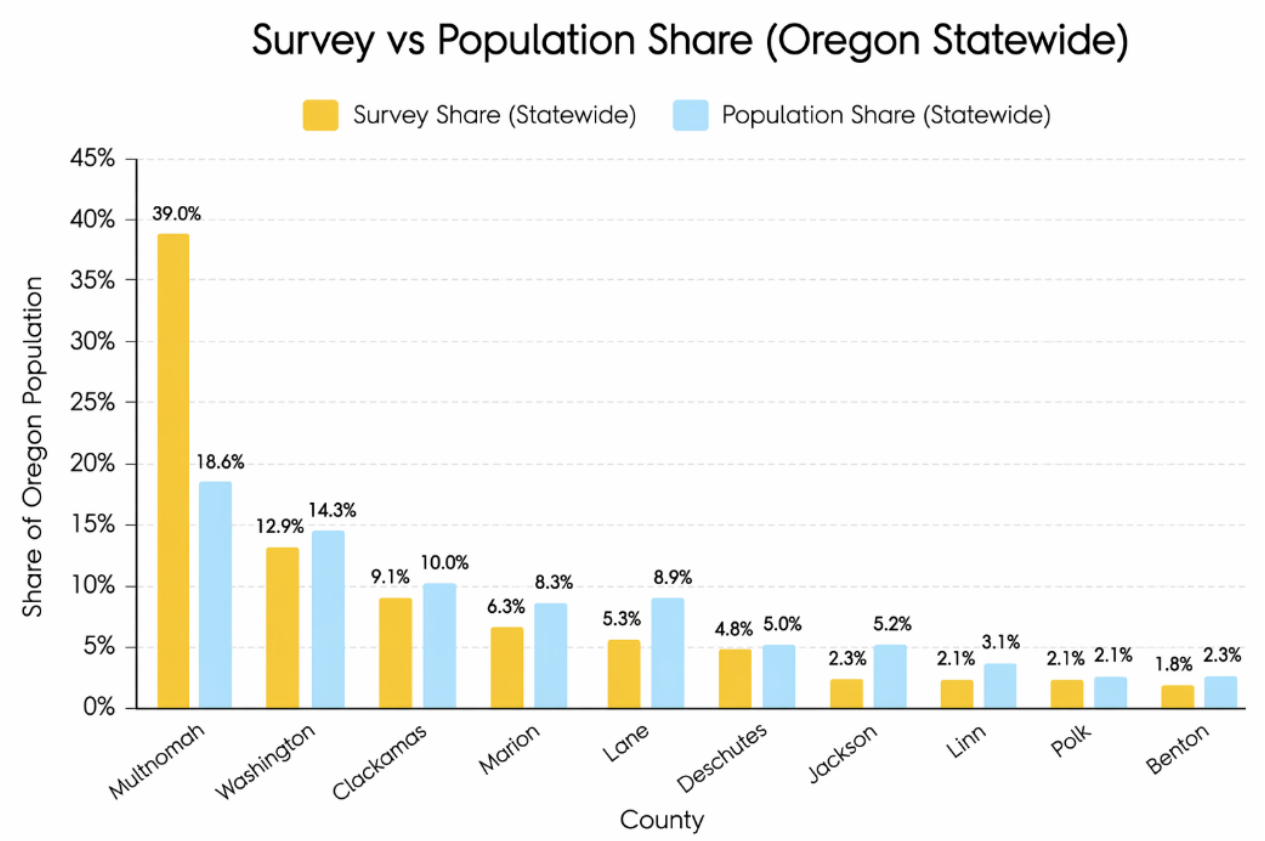
ODOT staff conducted a rank analysis of the quantitative survey results from 8,652* submissions. ODOT staff also utilized Copilot 365 to identify themes and representative quotes from 15,926 written comments (7,362 respondents submitted at least one comment but each had the opportunity to submit four written comments).

This public feedback survey was non-scientific, as respondents self-selected into taking the survey and is not a representative sample or viewpoint of Oregonians statewide. Despite limitations, consistent patterns across 8,652 ranking responses and 15,926 comments provide meaningful directional insight. The Oregon Transportation Needs and Issues Survey was last published in January 2025 and can be referenced here for further insights.

**Question 2 required that respondents' percentage allocations add up to 100%, but some did not. So only 7,961 answers to this question were analyzed for these results.*

Geographic Distribution

Respondents were required to provide a zip code before starting the survey, and 99% of respondents provided Oregon zip codes. Forty-six respondents provided Washington state zip codes, and six respondents provided California zip codes. All other states appear only at counts between 1–2.



(Chart compares the top 10 counties represented in survey)

The survey received responses from people in every Oregon county except Wheeler. Major Oregon metro areas (Portland, Salem, Eugene) make up the majority of the survey responses. The Portland metro area, including Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties represent more than 60% of respondents.

Question 1: What should Oregon's transportation priorities be?

Survey text:

Facing limited budgets, state and local transportation departments need to prioritize their spending. Please rank the outcomes below to reflect your priorities. Priority 1 should be your highest priority. Priority 6 should be your lowest priority.

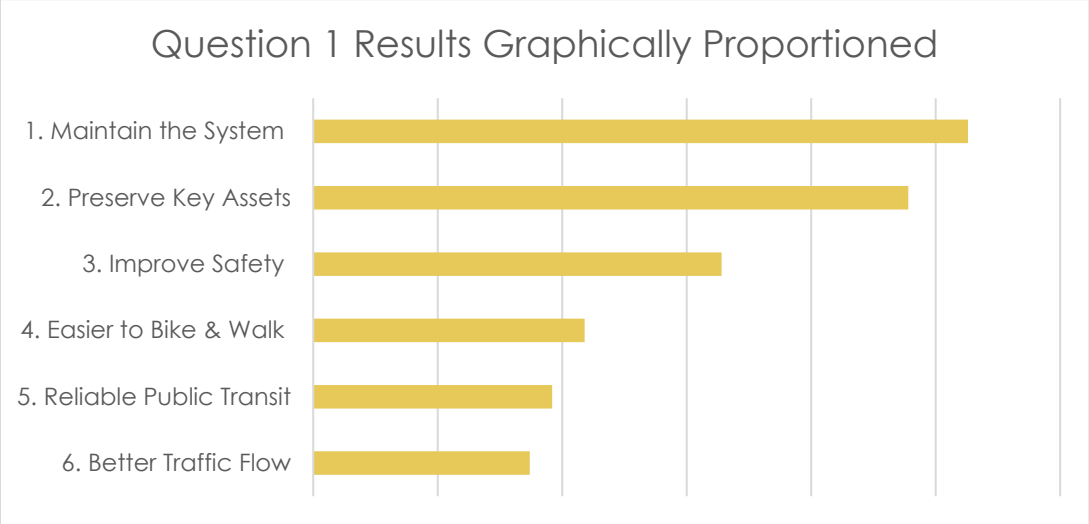
a) Preserve Key Assets: Bridges and roads are regularly repaired and replaced to ensure long term performance of Oregon's transportation system and avoid higher repair or replacement costs later.
b) Maintain the System: Roads, highways and bridges are maintained well, with crews fixing potholes, clearing debris and plowing snow quickly.
c) Reliable Public Transit: Public transit remains available and reliable for people who use it.
d) Improve Safety: People can get where they need to go safely.
e) Easier to Bike and Walk: Safe and comfortable options are available for people to walk and bike.
f) Better Traffic Flow: Highways, roads and bridges are improved through construction projects to improve traffic flow.

Results:

A total of 8,652 responses were computed by rank analysis. The rank analysis process first tallied the counts, then assigned weights from highest to lowest priorities, and lastly scored each weight-ranked priority from first to sixth.

What should Oregon's transportation priorities be?	Rank	Score*
1. Maintain the System	1	2.37
2. Preserve Key Assets	2	2.61
3. Improve Safety	3	3.36
4. Easier to Bike & Walk	4	3.91
5. Reliable Public Transit	5	4.04
6. Better Traffic Flow	6	4.13

**Lower Score indicates higher Rank. Computed by Rank Analysis.*



(Graphic proportionally scaled by taking 5 - Score = proportional length.)

Question 1 Comments

The survey gave respondents an opportunity to further explain their choices in an open-ended comment section. The comment section was optional. For Question 1, a total of 4,575 comments were received.

Across all categories, respondents emphasized the importance of **maintaining existing infrastructure, preserving critical assets, and ensuring safety**. Comments reveal strong sentiment that basic upkeep has been neglected and should take precedence over new, high-cost projects. Safety concerns extend to roadway design and public transit conditions. Comments on active transportation focus on protected, connected facilities, while comments on transit highlight funding stability and reliable service. Views on improving traffic flow are split, with many preferring small, efficient fixes over major expansions.

Question 2: How should limited transportation dollars be spent?

Survey text:

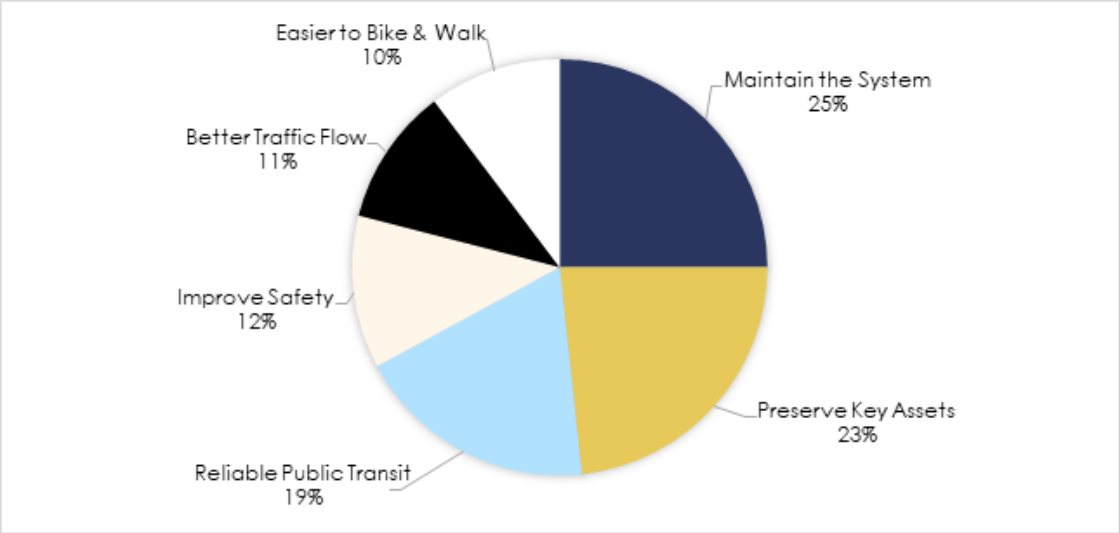
Imagine you control Oregon's transportation budget. How would you spend available funding?

The transportation categories from the previous question are listed below. To the right of each line, you'll see a box where you can set a percentage of your budget for each category. Please put the percentage of funding you think each category should receive in each box.

This question seeks to understand how Oregonians believe Oregon should spend its limited dollars managing its complex and multimodal transportation system. While entering a zero in a category is allowed, entering a number above 70 in any specific category is not. Leaving the box blank will be interpreted as a zero. The numbers need to add up to 100.

Results:

Only responses that summed to 100% were included in the analysis, as on the survey, respondents were instructed that "the numbers need to add up to 100." This meant that 7,961 responses were analyzed for this question, out of the total 8,652 survey responses. The chart below shows the average percentages allocated to each category.



Question 2 Comments

The survey gave respondents an opportunity to further explain their choices in an open-ended comment section. The comment section was optional. For Question 2, a total of 2,622 comments were received.

Respondents expressed broad support for **maintaining and preserving existing transportation assets**. Many emphasized the importance of keeping roads and bridges in good condition before expanding into new projects, closely matching the top allocations to *Maintain the System* and *Preserve Key Assets*. Support for **public transit reliability** was also prominent: respondents frequently called for more frequent, accessible, and dependable transit service, consistent with its third highest funding share. Across modes, **safety** was described as a baseline expectation rather than a discrete category—many respondents framed safety as essential to any investment. Comments showed mixed views on **traffic flow**, with some seeking targeted congestion relief and others warning against roadway expansion due to potential induced demand. Finally, respondents expressed meaningful support for **walking and biking improvements**, noting that small investments can provide substantial community benefit and complement broader goals to reduce car dependence.

Question 3: What reductions would impact you most?

Survey text:

Transportation funding is failing to keep pace with inflation. Each dollar purchases less equipment, services and materials. As a result, transportation services are at risk of being reduced. We've reframed the outcomes from the previous questions to identify what impacts there could be from declining transportation funding.

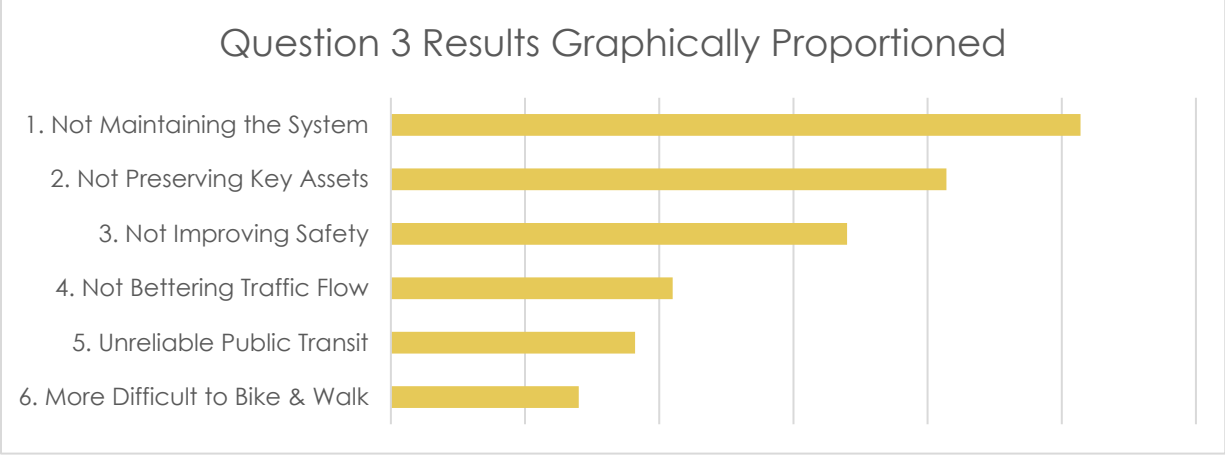
Please select the impacts below based on which would be most serious for you, your family, your community, or your business. Rank the most serious impact at #1, and the least serious at #6.

a) Roads, highways, and bridges deteriorate, leading to road closures and later to higher repair costs.
b) Potholes remain unfixed longer, debris is cleared more slowly, and snow removal is less frequent.
c) Public transportation becomes less available, less frequent, or less reliable.
d) Safety issues remain unfixed in areas where travelers are being killed or seriously injured.
e) It remains difficult to safely bike and walk in many areas, including to schools, downtowns and other areas.
f) Traffic congestion worsens and travel times become less reliable.

Results:

A total of 8,652 responses were computed by rank analysis on reduction impacts. The rank analysis process first tallied the counts, then assigned weights from highest to lowest impacts, and lastly scored each weight-ranked impact from first to sixth.

What reductions would impact you most?	Rank	Score*
1. Not Maintaining the System	1	2.43
2. Not Preserving Key Assets	2	2.93
3. Not Improving Safety	3	3.3
4. Not Bettering Traffic Flow	4	3.95
5. Unreliable Public Transit	5	4.09
6. More Difficult to Bike & Walk	6	4.3
**Lower Score indicates higher Rank. Computed by Rank Analysis.*		



(Graphic proportionally scaled by taking 5 - Score = proportional length.)

Question 3 Comments

The survey gave respondents an opportunity to further explain their choices in an open-ended comment section. The comment section was optional. For Question 3, a total of 1,855 comments were received.

Across the comments for Question 3, participants consistently emphasized concerns that align closely with the quantitative ranking. The comments show strong worry about **deteriorating roads, bridges, and basic maintenance—particularly potholes, routine repairs, and long-term infrastructure decay.** Participants also stressed unresolved safety hazards, noting locations where injuries and fatalities continue without timely fixes. Many described how congestion and unreliable travel times affect daily life, especially in areas lacking viable alternatives.

Public transit challenges appeared frequently, with participants citing reduced availability, infrequent service, and unreliable schedules. Respondents also highlighted barriers for people who cannot drive—seniors, disabled travelers, and low-income riders. Finally, many noted **unsafe or missing sidewalks and bike facilities**, though views on the importance of these investments varied between respondents who use active transportation and those who prioritize vehicle mobility.

Question 4: Accountable and efficient transportation agencies

Survey text:

City, county, and state transportation agencies and transit agencies are responsible for managing Oregon's transportation system. That system connects every Oregon community together. State leaders want to make sure these agencies deliver services to Oregonians as efficiently as possible.

What does a successful and well-managed transportation system look like to you? What would make you confident that the state's transportation dollars are being well spent?

Results:

This was an optional question, and a total of 6,874 responses were submitted. To do this analysis, we used Copilot 365 to identify themes that naturally emerge from the comments. Then we asked Copilot to clarify what each theme means for agency performance and to provide a few representative comment excerpts with the context that these responses are meant to inform recommendations to state leaders.

Theme #1: Mode Choice, Equity & Community (20% of responses)

Respondents want transportation systems that offer practical choices—driving, transit, biking, walking—that work for all income levels, abilities, and communities. They emphasize access, community connection, and reducing over-reliance on cars.

What this means for agency performance: Expand usable multimodal options and demonstrate decisions that reflect community input.

Representative excerpts:

- "People have real choices. People who need to drive should be able to, but we should also provide viable transit and active options for others."
- "Agencies and policymakers need to get input from communities to ensure investments meet people's needs."
- "That it seems like I can go where I need to go."
- "There are separate facilities for walking and biking."

Theme #2: Public Transit & Multimodal Service (19% of responses)

Comments call for transit that is more reliable, frequent, safe, and better connected to walking and biking.

What this means for agency performance: Show measurable improvements in transit reliability, coverage, and connectivity.

Representative excerpts:

- "Funding TriMet should be a top funding priority."
- "More public transportation, frequent and reliable."
- "A successful transportation system gives people the freedom to choose what transportation mode they wish to use."

Theme #3: Project Delivery & Budgeting (17% of responses)

People focus on *how* agencies deliver projects—seeking timely, cost-effective work and fewer delays.

What this means for agency performance: Improve on-time, on-budget delivery of projects and provide transparent project status reporting.

Representative excerpts:

- "Doing projects on-time and within budget."
- "Scale down and make the projects undertaken smaller so they actually finish."
- "Reducing the astronomical time/money process to get small safety improvements implemented quickly."

Theme #4: Value For Money / Performance (11% of responses)

Respondents want proof that transportation dollars deliver visible, meaningful results.

What this means for agency performance: Report clear, measurable outcomes tied to spending (safety, access, congestion, reliability).

Representative excerpts:

- "I would be confident transportation dollars were being well spent if projects reduced injuries and congestion and served low-income communities."
- "A successful and well-managed transportation system is one that shows measurable results."
- "I am already confident… when there are clear results."

Theme #5: Maintenance & Infrastructure (Roads/Bridges) (11% of responses)

Many emphasize the basic function of a well-managed system: maintained roads, bridges, and pothole repair.

What this means for agency performance: Demonstrate progress on maintenance backlogs and infrastructure conditions.

Representative excerpts:

- "Well maintained roads and bridges."
- "Safe and maintained roads/bridges."
- "Roads and bridges maintained."

Theme #6: Traffic Flow, Bike Lanes & Active Transportation (9% of responses)

People express a mix of competing priorities on traffic flow and bike infrastructure: some want congestion relief by providing more road space for cars, others emphasize safe bike and pedestrian facilities; many want clearer explanations of tradeoffs.

What this means for agency performance: Communicate data-driven reasoning behind street design, lane allocation, and congestion strategies.

Representative excerpts:

- "Bicycle paths and walking paths that are safe are good, but don't take away essential car lanes without studies."
- "Fix traffic and pot hole. No more light rail or bike nonsense that slows traffic."
- "Better sidewalks and protected bike lanes."
- "No more bike lanes taking over congested auto lanes."

Theme #7: Cost Concerns / Perceived Waste (8% of responses)

Strong sentiments surfaced regarding perceptions of wasteful or misaligned spending.

What this means for agency performance: Increase fiscal discipline and provide clear public communication on how and why funds are allocated.

Representative excerpts:

- "STOP WASTING MONEY!!!!!!"
- "More money for transportation needs."
- "Being more transparent on how and where the money is spent would increase confidence."

Theme #8: Transparency & Accountability (5% of responses)

Respondents want clearer processes, better explanations, and visible accountability.

What this means for agency performance: Use accessible dashboards, project status trackers, and regular updates to show how decisions are made and dollars are spent.

Representative excerpts:

- "Being more transparent on how and where the money is spent."
- "More transparency!!!"

Additional Comment Analysis

Comments from 7,362 survey respondents collectively emphasize a strong desire for reliable transit, well-maintained roads, safety-first design, and thoughtful funding choices. They also reveal clear tensions around investment priorities, modal emphasis, and geographic equity.

Conflicting Perspectives

Public Transit Support vs. Opposition

- Strong advocacy for significant investment in TriMet.
- Clear (but smaller) contingent calling for privatization or reduced funding.

Bike Lanes: Safety Resource vs. Wasteful or Harmful

- Many emphasize safety and mobility benefits.
- Others offer pointed opposition ("abolish bike lanes").

ODOT's Mission: Expand vs. Narrow

- Some want multimodal investment via ODOT.
- Others insist ODOT should focus solely on highways and bridges.

Revenue & Taxes: Fairness vs. Burden

- Calls to increase revenue from EV users or raise gas taxes.
- Counterpoint: strong resistance to any tax increases.

Safety vs. Spending Restraint

- Safety is invoked as justification for infrastructure investments.
- Another segment sees these investments as "waste."

Recommendations for Agencies

Several comments named Oregon's public transportation agencies, predominantly the Oregon Department of Transportation and TriMet.

Across all themes, respondents ask transportation agencies to:

- Deliver core services reliably (roads, bridges, transit)
- Improve transparency and accountability for costs and project decisions
- Explain funding fairness and clarify how revenue is used
- Balance multimodal goals with vehicle mobility needs
- Demonstrate visible stewardship through maintenance and corridor appearance

Conclusion

The results suggest that Oregonians want transportation agencies to focus on stewardship: caring for what the state already has, improving reliability and safety, and demonstrating accountability in how dollars are used. These themes can help guide policy discussions, investment strategies, and communication approaches as the Workgroup shapes its recommendations for a more stable, accountable, and affordable transportation funding system that supports economic development, affordability, and a safe, accessible, and reliable transportation system.