

## Engagement/Research Findings

These results are based on conversations and input from more than 1,000 people living and working in Delaware between March 22-May 28, 2018. MurphyEpson created an Access Delaware survey and discussion guide as the overarching framework and tools used to capture participants' comments and thoughts on transportation challenges. The survey was first discussed with and then taken by members of the City of Delaware's Citizens Academy, which kicked off the Community Forums. Modifications were made to the survey based on Citizens Academy input and the needs of the three research finding methods and evolution of the community discussions. The survey was then adapted for an online format.

### **Key influencer interviews**

Phone interviews were conducted by the project team with key community influencers between April 19-25, 2018. Influencers were selected based on their participation in the Citizens Academy or were nominated by city staff or Delaware City Council due to their interest in city affairs. Each participant was mailed a letter of invitation. Once the interview was scheduled, the participant was emailed a copy of the survey prior to the phone interview.

### **Community forums**

Surveys were discussed and collected through a special session of the City of Delaware's Citizens Academy on March 22, 2018 and from four small group forums conducted with the general public between April 30-May 5, 2018. These were held in the four quadrants of the city. Community forums were promoted by the City of Delaware through their social media sites, quarterly newsletter and a microsite:

<http://www.delawareohio.net/access-delaware/>.

### **Online survey**

The online version of the survey, created in SurveyMonkey, was launched on the Access Delaware microsite May 7-28, 2018. The survey included nine questions and was designed to take only 3-5 minutes for participants to complete. The survey was promoted through an eBlast communication sent on May 7 and May 22 to a 482-member contact database that included the city's quarterly newsletter subscribers, those that attended the community forums and citizens interested in transportation. The survey was also heavily promoted through the city's social media platforms. Survey respondents were encouraged to pass the survey on to other Delaware neighbors and friends for increased participation.

### **KEY INFLUENCER INTERVIEW RESULTS**

The project team conducted 16 open-ended, confidential interviews using a 15-question version of the Access Delaware survey. Fifteen surveys and one commentary were collected. A comprehensive summary of the Key Influencer Interview results can be found in Attachment A. An overview of the 15 survey results follows. **NOTE: Some percentages shown do not add up to 100 percent.**

## ***Participant demographics***

- Diversified age range with most between 25 to 74 years old
- Lived in Delaware for an average of 21 years (median of 20 years)
- Represented 14 different neighborhoods (13% live downtown)
- 67% work in Delaware
- Of the 33% that work outside Delaware – jobs are located in Columbus, Findlay, Lewis Center and Marion.

## ***Traveling around Delaware***

- 100% of participants often drive when they travel in Delaware
- 53% sometimes walk
- 73% never ride a bike
- 47% never carpool
- 100% never hail an Uber or ride a bus.

## ***Delaware's current transportation system***

- 67% of participants believe roads could be better maintained
- 33% think roads are well-maintained

## ***Ease of driving in and around Delaware***

- 73% of participants thought there was a little bit of a problem
- 20% have no problems
- 7% think there is a major problem
- Of those concerned, 27% think traffic congestion is part of the problem
- Participants are also concerned about:
  - East to west connections
  - Pinch points/bottlenecks
  - Driver education
  - Road maintenance
  - Limited transportation options

## ***Transportation issues facing Delaware***

- Of the transportation issues facing Delaware, those surveyed thought safer streets and limited funding for improvements were the most important issues.
- This was followed by roadway congestion and delay, age and condition of the roads.
- The availability of sidewalks, bike lanes and trails were still deemed important to residents.
- Some issues had mixed results including improved connections between sidewalks and stops and the availability of public transit.

## ***Why the 2016 transportation tax levy failed***

- #1 – Not explained well enough

- #2 – Didn't want to pay more taxes
- #3 – Other:
  - Permanent tax compared to temporary or limited tax that would be subject to reappear on a future ballot (i.e. 5 years)
  - Lack of faith and trust in city decision making
  - Citizens felt previous messaging indicated that the levy was a done deal and the city would move forward no matter what

### ***Support for increasing income tax to address transportation needs***

- 33% support increasing the income tax
- 47% support an increase but with conditions:
  - A specific transportation plan
  - Money should be spent on transportation (roadway) improvements before bike paths
  - Monies won't be spent on other non-related transportation projects
  - The tax would be temporary (future tax increases would require additional ballot) with an exact amount of increase per resident provided
  - If the tax increase keeps Delaware affordable
- 20% would not support increasing the income tax
  - City should make do with what it has
  - Don't want to pay more taxes
  - City should look for other sources of funding
  - City should cut unnecessary expenditures before raising taxes

### ***Transportation needs priorities***

- #1 – Reducing traffic congestion and delay
- #2 – Taking care of our existing roadways such as fixing potholes, paving more streets
- #3 – Improving safety
- #4 – Expanding the transportation system by constructing new roads in and around Delaware

### ***Other thoughts on transportation needs***

- Traffic needs diverted from SR 36/37 to US 23 before the "Point"
- Better public education on transportation/municipal issues is needed
- Utilize social media more as a way of informing the public about issues/meetings
- Shouldn't have to pay for a road that others are using to pass through (i.e. "Point")
- City needs to hold developers accountable for increase in traffic
- Look for better ways to spend what we currently have

### ***Commentary from Leader of the Vote No Delaware Road Tax Increase***

What Better Roads for Delaware did wrong:

- City introduced a permanent tax levy with no end that was a grab for cash
- City council wasn't willing to be flexible with proposals to residents; initiative was already a 'done deal' by the time residents had a chance to 'review'
- City was unprepared for questions that affected residents; no detailed plans were provided
- Federal and state funding was available to fund the "Point" project
- Citizens were interested in the idea of an outer belt and the city dismissed this option

## What a future initiative should do:

- Propose a project with a firm time frame, reasonable budget and clear plans
- 85% of funding should come from federal/state with 15% allotted from a levy of less than 5 years
- Maintain what you have and make sure the community agrees that the project should be built
- When city council builds trust with the community, the community will fund subsequent projects
- Current business plan isn't working (i.e. development pays for initial road and then years later city has to pay to maintain them); Hire a full-time engineer to build roads
- City should sell some of the large portfolio of properties it owns to fund road maintenance projects
- Focus on a real alternative – an outer belt, which will save existing roads from trucks

## COMMUNITY FORUM RESULTS – CITIZENS ACADEMY

An initial meeting with the City of Delaware's Citizens Academy resulted in the collection of 15 surveys. A comprehensive summary of the Community Forum results can be found in Attachment A. An overview of the survey results follows. **NOTE: Some percentages shown do not add up to 100 percent.**

### Participant demographics

- 60% of participants ranged from 45-64 years old
- Lived in Delaware for an average of 10 years (median of 4 years)
- Represented 6 different neighborhoods (40% are from Northwest Delaware)
- 40% work in Delaware
- Of the 33% that work outside Delaware – jobs are located in Fredericktown, Liberty Twp., Marysville, Westerville and Worthington (the remaining 27% are retired)

### Traveling around Delaware

- 100% of residents often drive when they travel in Delaware
- 67% sometimes walk
- 53% sometimes carpool
- 73% never ride a bike
- 100% never hail an Uber or ride a bus.

### Delaware's current transportation system

- 67% of residents believe roads could be better maintained
- 13% think roads are well-maintained

### Ease of driving in and around Delaware

- 73% of residents thought there was a major problem
- 20% think there is a little bit of a problem
- Residents are also concerned about:
  - Pinch points/bottlenecks
  - Traffic congestion
  - East to west connections

### ***Transportation issues facing Delaware***

- Of the transportation issues facing Delaware those surveyed thought safer streets, road conditions and congestion were the most important issues
- This was followed by funding and availability of sidewalks, bike lanes and trails
- The availability of transit and new housing needs for millennials and older adults were still deemed important to residents.

### ***Why the 2016 tax levy for transportation needs failed***

- #1 – Didn't want to pay more taxes
- #2 – Not explained well enough
- #3 – Other:
  - Open-ended permanent tax
  - Voters wanted others to pay for it
  - Older community/voters with a lack of vision

### ***Support for increasing income tax to improve transportation needs***

- 20% support increasing the income tax
- 27% support an increase but with conditions:
  - Explain where monies will go
  - Use multiple sources of funding – use tax, fees, licenses, income tax, property tax, etc.
  - Also open to other funding methods
- 33% would not support increasing the income tax
  - City should look for other sources of funding
  - Don't want to pay more taxes
- 20% aren't sure

### ***Transportation needs priorities***

- #1 – Reducing traffic congestion and delay
- #2 – Taking care of our existing roadways such as resurfacing them and fixing potholes
- #3 (tie) – Improving safety
- #3 (tie) – Expanding the transportation system to serve new growth
- #3 (tie) – Improving access of people to jobs, health care, education and other services

## **COMMUNITY FORUM RESULTS – NEIGHBORHOOD SMALL GROUP FORUMS**

During four neighborhood small group forums, 20 surveys were collected. A comprehensive summary of the Neighborhood Small Group Forum results can be found in Attachment A. An overview of the survey results follows. **NOTE: Not all respondents answered all questions provided and some percentages shown do not add up to 100 percent.**

## ***Participant demographics***

- 65% of participants ranged from 45-74 years old
- Lived in Delaware for an average of 15 years (median of 10 years)
- Represented 11 different neighborhoods
- 50% work in Delaware
- Of the 15% that work outside Delaware – jobs are located in Columbus and East Liberty (the remaining 35% are retired)

## ***Traveling around Delaware***

- Most residents (90%) often drive when they travel in Delaware
- 40% sometimes carpool
- 35% sometimes walk
- 80% never ride a bus
- 70% never ride a bike
- 65% never hail an Uber

## ***Delaware's current transportation system***

- 65% of residents believe roads could be better maintained
- 30% think roads are well-maintained

## ***Ease of driving in and around Delaware***

- 65% of residents think there is a little bit of a problem
- 25% thought there was a major problem
- 5% didn't think there was any problem

## ***Transportation issues facing Delaware***

- Of the transportation issues facing Delaware those surveyed thought safer streets was the most important issue
- This was followed by availability of public transit, and limited funding for transportation maintenance and improvements
- The availability of sidewalks, bike lanes and trails, improved connections between sidewalks and transit stops, age and condition of roads and roadway congestion and delay were still deemed important to residents

## ***Why the 2016 tax levy for transportation needs failed***

- #1 – Other:
  - Flawed message
  - Listing specific projects
  - Staff talking down to residents
  - Too many other competing ballot measures
  - Better prioritization
  - Residents believe politicians lie
  - Surprised measure failed
  - Negative campaign against the levy
  - Voters who need transportation can't get to the voting booth (poor, elderly)
  - Not informed enough on issue

### ***Support for increasing income tax to improve transportation needs***

- 55% support increasing the income tax
- 15% support an increase but with conditions:
  - Need to see the value
  - A limited dollar amount for a tax (not too large)
  - Tax is spread over five years
- 10% would not support increasing the income tax
- 20% aren't sure

### ***Transportation needs priorities***

- #1 – Improving access of people to jobs, health care, education and other services
- #2 – Increasing public transportation options
- #3 – Taking care of our existing roadways such as fixing potholes, paving more streets
- #3 – Increasing bicycle and pedestrian accommodations
- #3 – Improving connections between different types of transportation (e.g., walking, bicycling, riding transit, driving)

### ***Other thoughts from the community forums***

- City officials need to listen to residents more
- City is over taxed and social services that support older adults, schools and people with disabilities generally come before transportation initiatives
- Not enough public transit and walking/biking options
- Semi-trucks traveling through Delaware to US 23 are a problem
- Surprised first levy failed
- Lack of downtown parking is an issue
- Too many potholes
- Some felt that specific projects listed on the previous levy did not provide benefits

## **ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS**

The online survey collected responses from over a thousand participants between May 7-28. A comprehensive summary of the Online Survey results can be found in Attachment A. An overview of the 1,014 online survey results follows. **NOTE: Not all respondents answered all questions provided and results are based on the responses to each question.**

## ***Participant demographics***

- 72% of participants ranged from 35-64 years old

## ***Traveling around Delaware***

- Most residents (93%) often drive when they travel in Delaware
- 56% sometimes walk
- 45% sometimes carpool
- 96% never ride a bus
- 88% never hail an Uber
- 70% never ride a bike

## ***Delaware's current transportation system***

- 77% of residents believe roads could be better maintained
- 32% think there are not enough options for people who walk or ride bikes
- 23% think there is not enough public transportation

## ***Ease of driving in and around Delaware***

- 58% of residents think there is a little bit of a problem
- 23% thought there was a major problem
- 18% didn't think there was any problem

## ***Transportation issues facing Delaware***

- The top three transportation issues facing Delaware include
  - Reducing roadway congestion and delay
  - Improving condition of roads
  - Making streets safer for car, bike and pedestrian travel

## ***Why the 2016 tax levy for transportation needs failed***

- Nearly half of the respondents (47%) noted they voted for the 2016 levy
- Reasons why the levy failed:
  - People don't want to pay more taxes (17%)
  - Tax increase was not needed (11%)
  - Residents that commute to work and pay taxes in another municipality – didn't want to pay additional taxes (10%)
- 18% of respondents did not vote

## ***Support for increasing income tax to improve transportation needs***

- 30% support increasing the income tax
- 24% support an increase but with concerns
- 31% would not support increasing the income tax
- 15% aren't sure
- The top three concerns from those that support a tax with caveats and those that voted no are:
  - Need for better accountability, responsibility and efficiency in handling of financial resources
  - Over-taxation
  - Reciprocity of taxed income with cities where residents work (Columbus, etc.)

### ***Transportation needs priorities***

- #1 – Taking care of our existing roadways such as fixing potholes, re-paving more streets
- #2 – Reducing traffic congestion and delay
- #3 – Improving safety

### ***How city officials can earn the public's trust regarding transportation needs***

- 56% of respondents would like to seek more input on transportation priorities through online surveys
- 47% seek more public education from the city
- 47% seek more input on transportation priorities through public meetings
- 31% want the city to convene a community task force
- 17% gave other ideas of which the top three are:
  - Keep community frequently informed
  - Be good stewards of our tax dollars
  - Listen, consider, respond and act on residents' input