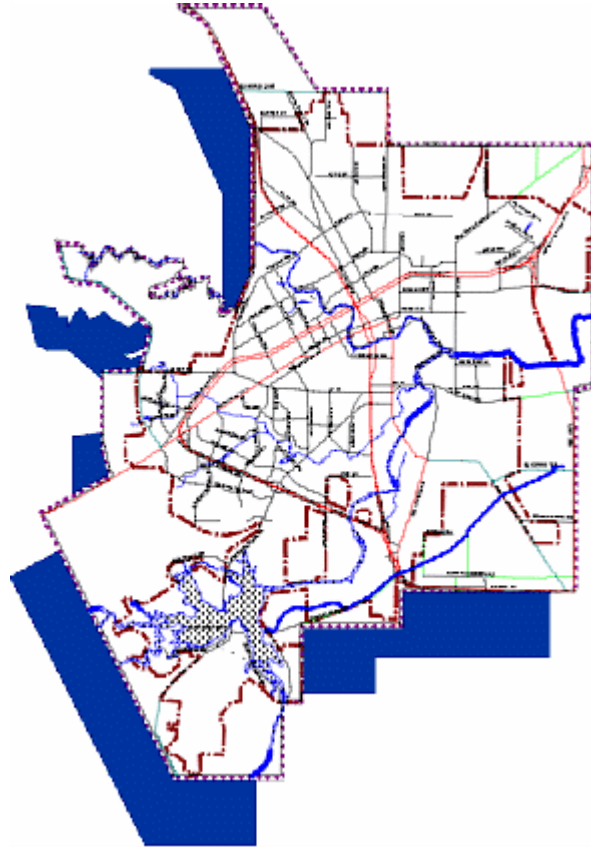


# Analyzing Public Attitude About San Angelo Transportation Needs



November 16, 2009

Prepared for the San Angelo Metropolitan Planning Organization

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## **Introduction**

The San Angelo Metropolitan Planning Organization (SAMPO) coordinates transportation planning in the Tom Green County region in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration. SAMPO is in the process of evaluating and updating the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Evaluation and updating are necessary so that SAMPO can plan and program future transportation improvements within the region. In addition, transportation planners can use the MTP to support the creation of transportation linkages with other Texas cities and substantiate funding requests.

SAMPO conducted a survey within Tom Green County in an effort to understand the transportation needs and transportation concerns of their constituents. More specifically, SAMPO analysts designed the survey to identify users, their needs, and their attitudes toward the quality of existing transportation services. In addition, the survey asked respondents to identify transportation problems, prioritize elements to include in the MTP, and identify acceptable financing methods when constructing new highways. The purpose of this report is to describe the responses to the survey.

## **Methodology**

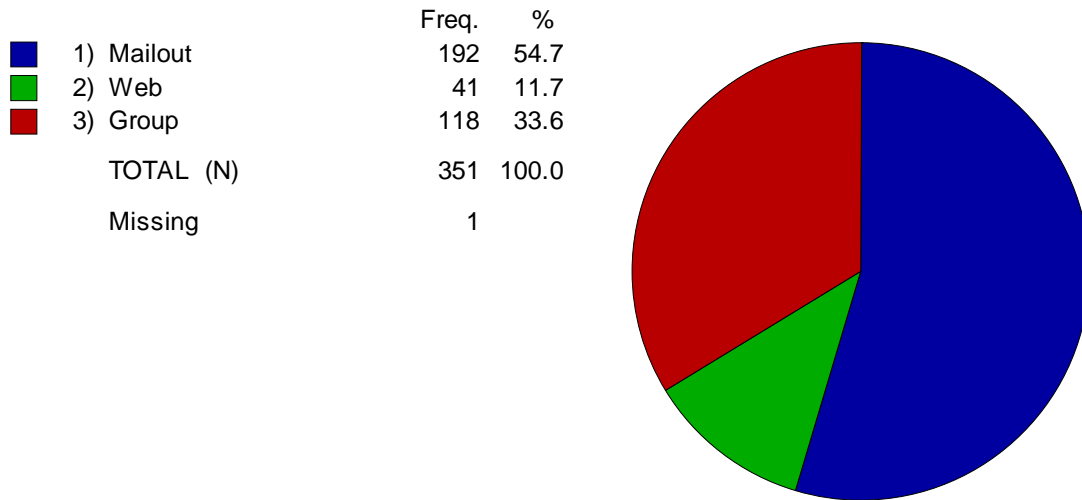
SAMPO surveyed the populace several ways. First, it mailed 2000 surveys to a random sample of residents living in Tom Green County. To enhance the return rate, individuals were encouraged to return their surveys by October 20, 2009, to be eligible for a drawing for a \$50.00 Walmart gift certificate, an introductory flying lesson at Mathis Field, and a one-year subscription to Texas Highways Magazine. Despite these efforts, only about 10 percent completed and returned surveys. (Please note that the post office returned 50 surveys as undeliverable).

Second, SAMPO used the World Wide Web (WWW) to survey 75 individuals who asked the department to keep them current on SAMPO initiatives and programs. Almost 55 percent completed the survey.

Third, SAMPO surveyed several groups, during their organization meetings. Participating groups include the Lions Club and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Some groups, that use the community's roads and highways when training and competing in running and bicycle races, also completed surveys.

**Figure 1**  
**Source of Input**

Source -- Source of input



### Data Presentation Overview

This part of the report consists of three sections. The first section presents a table showing the demographics of the *typical* respondent (Table 1) and a table describing how respondents heard about the survey (Table 2). The second section includes frequency/percentage tables and graphics that depict the distribution of responses for most of the survey questions (Figure 1 - Figure15). The third section includes tables that depict important transportation problems (Table 3), the priority levels of elements to include in the MTP (Table 4), preferred financing methods for highway construction (Table 5), and various important issues (Table 6) as perceived by the respondents. The last table in the section, Table 7, presents some of comments offered by respondents.

## Data Presentation: Section I

**Table 1**  
**The Typical Respondent**

Characteristic	Modal Response	Percentage
Zip Code	76904	42.5
Time living at current address	More than 11 Years	50.8
Age Group	40-59	41.0
Gender	Male	52.0
Ethnicity	White	69.7
Household Income	>\$70,000	33.7

The purpose of Table 1 is to identify the *typical* respondent to the SAMPO survey. Of special interest is the fact that respondents belong to an older and higher income group that has some residential stability within the community. Specifically, 44 percent of the respondents were in the 40-59 age group, more than 33 percent have a household income of at least \$70,000, and almost 51 percent have lived at their current address for at least 20 years. These results lend some support to the theory that citizens of higher socioeconomic groups are more active in completing and returning surveys of this type.

**Table 2**  
**How did you hear about the survey?**

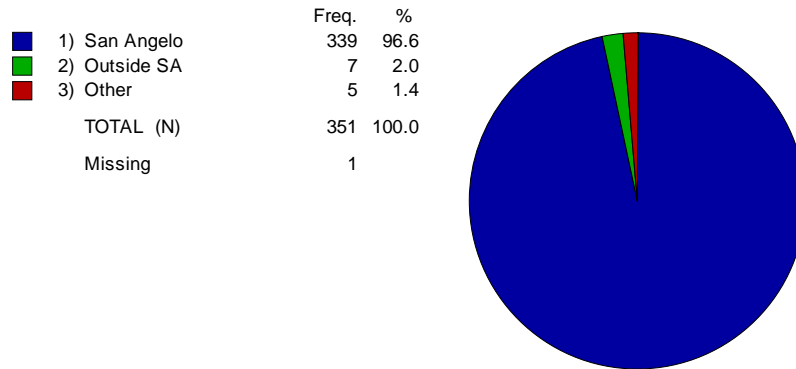
Response	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Mail	53.8	53.8
Metropolitan Planning Org	12.7	66.5
Organization	11.3	77.8
E-Mail	9.8	87.6
Other	12.4	100.0

Table 2 describes how respondents heard about the survey. The table clearly shows that the majority heard about their survey through the mail (53.8 percent). The table also shows that many (11.3 percent) learned about the survey from an organization such as the Lions Club and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In addition, 12.7% of the respondents heard about the survey from the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

## Data Presentation: Section II

**Figure 2**  
**Distribution of Respondent's Neighborhood**

Live -- Where do you live?



Zip Code -- Zip Code

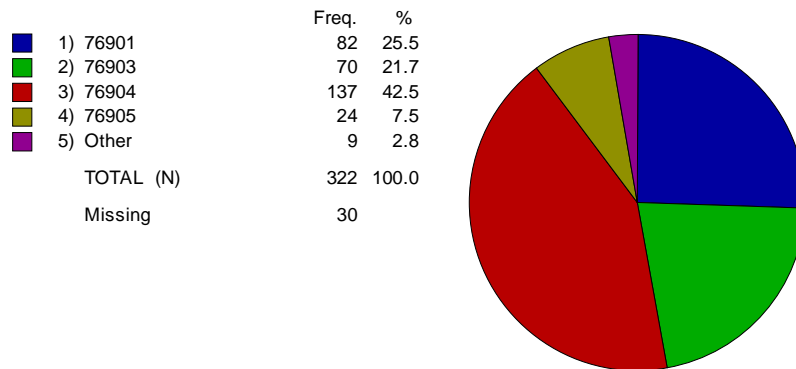


Figure 2 shows that most of the respondents (42.5%) are from San Angelo and live within the 76904 zip code.

**Figure 3**  
**Length of Time Residing in Current Residence**

How long -- How long have you lived there?

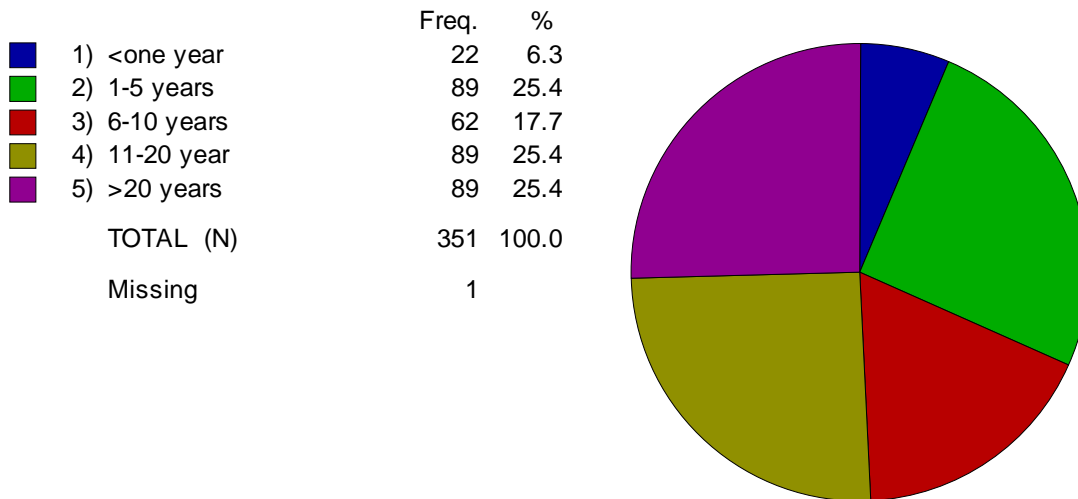
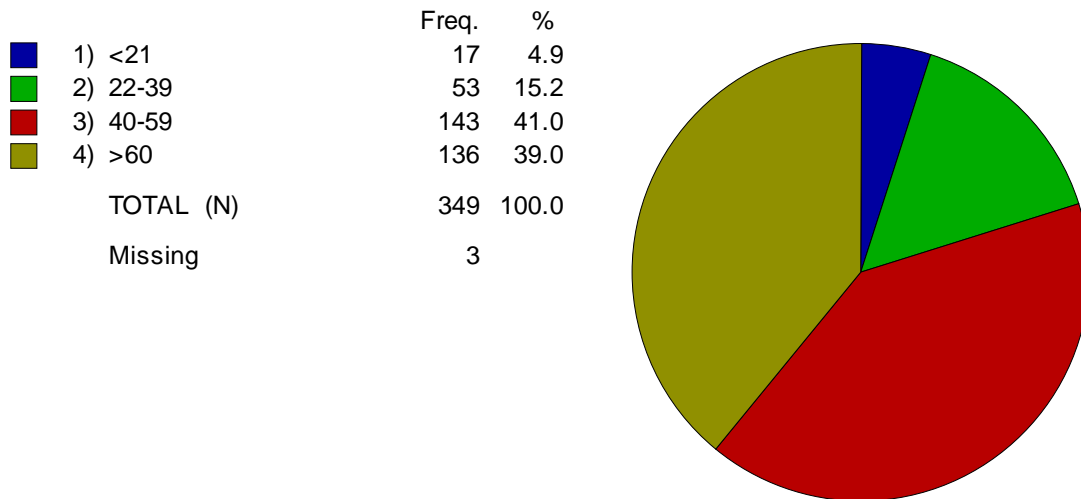


Figure 3 shows that almost 51 percent of the respondents have lived in their current residence in excess of ten years. This suggests some residential stability within the sample group.

**Figure 4**  
**Distribution of Respondent's Age**

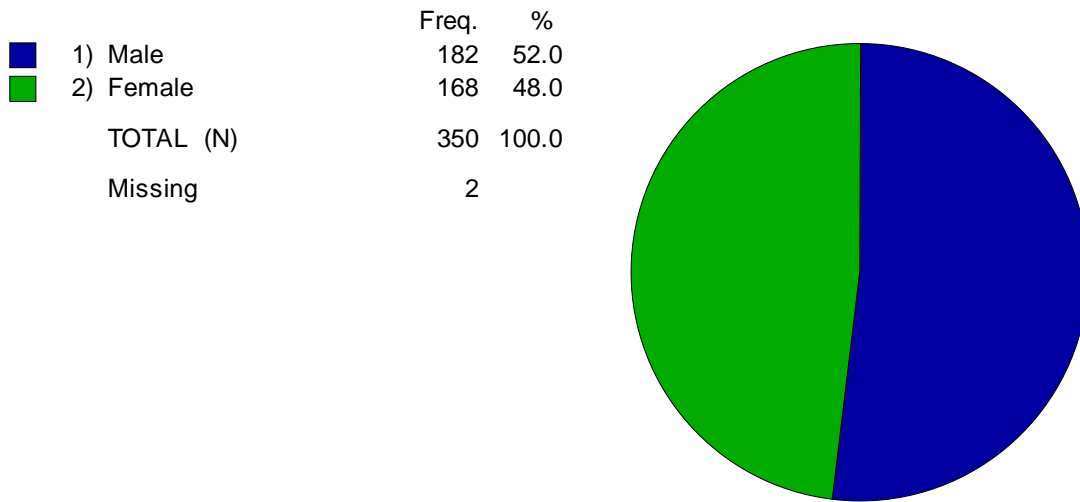
Age -- Respondent's age



The figure shows that only about 20 percent of the respondents are at least 39 years of age and 39 percent are older than 60.

**Figure 5**  
**Distribution of Respondent's Gender**

Gender -- Respondent's gender



The figure shows that the majority of the respondents (52 percent) are male.

**Figure 6**  
**Respondent's Ethnicity**

Race -- Respondent's race/ethnicity

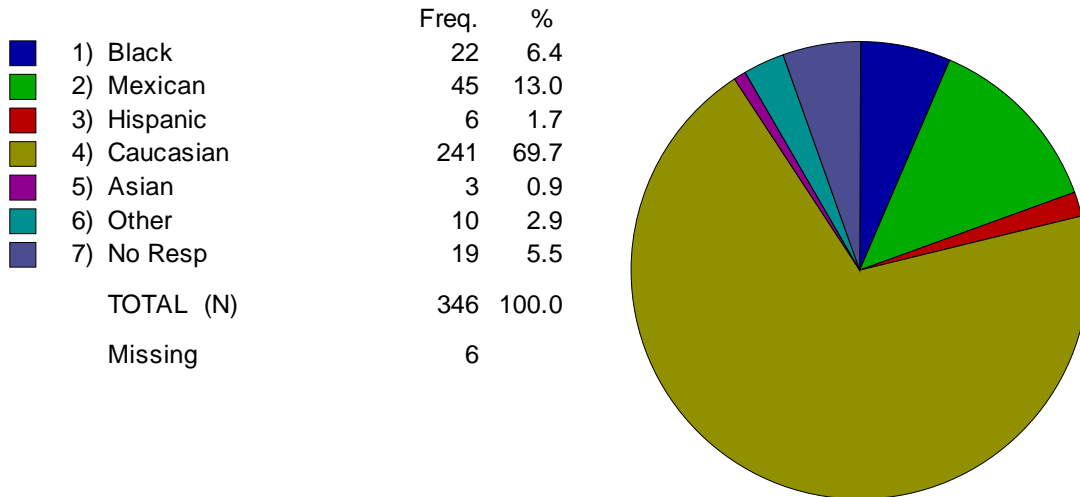
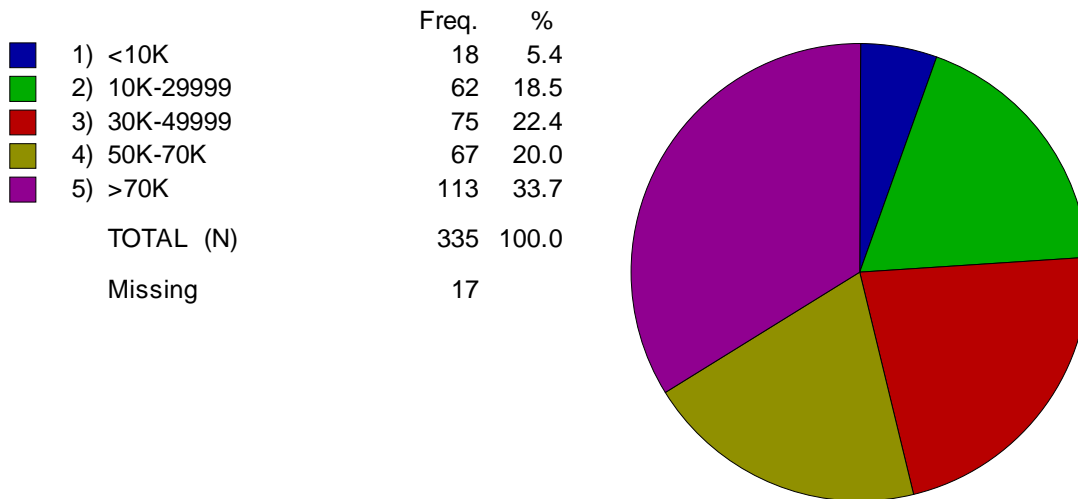


Figure 6 shows that whites make up the majority (69.7%) of the respondents. Of the other ethnic backgrounds, 14.7 percent report that they are of Mexican or Hispanic heritage. A little over 10 percent of the respondents reported that they belong to an ethnicity group other than white or Hispanic. Interestingly, more than 5 percent did not wish to respond.

**Figure 7**  
**Respondent's Household Income**

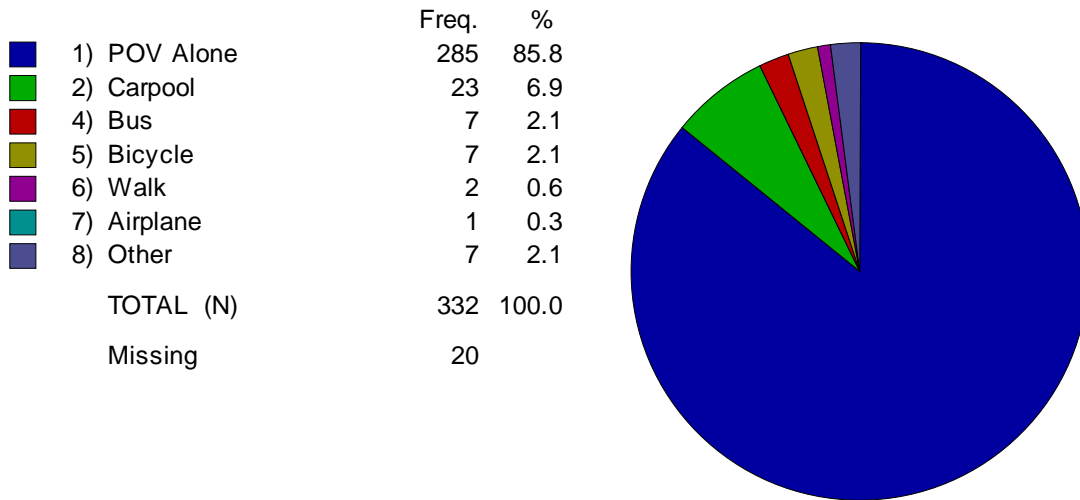
HH income -- Respondent's household total income before taxes in 2008



The majority of the respondents (53.7 percent) report an annual household income of more than \$50,000. Another 22.4 percent reported their household earnings ranged from \$30,000-\$49,999 a year. A little over 5 percent reported earnings less than \$10,000 per year.

**Figure 8**  
**Usual Mode of Travel**

Usual tran -- Which statement(s) best describes how you usually travel?



It is not surprising that almost 86 percent of the respondents reported that they use their private vehicles as their usual mode of transportation. Like most Americans, San Angelo's residents prefer the independence they experience when using their own vehicles.

Almost 4 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). There was no modal response.

**Figure 9**  
**Alternative Mode of Transportation**

Without -- If you had to go without your vehicle for a month, what would you do?

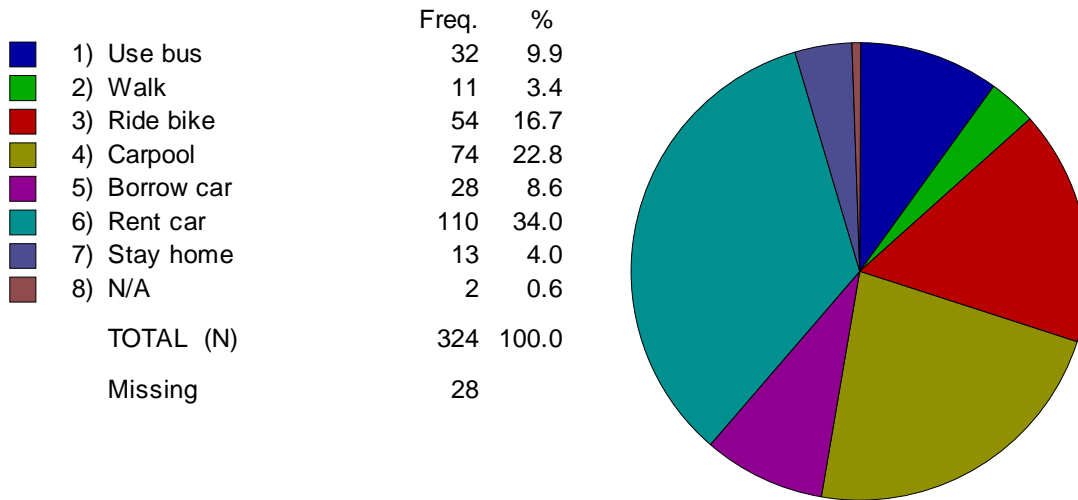
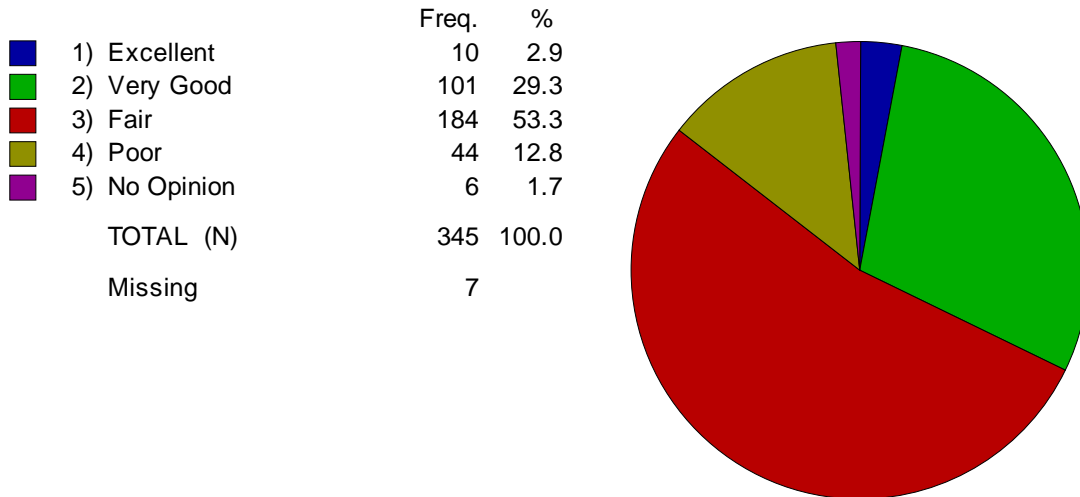


Figure 8 implies that respondents would still prefer some independence if they go without their vehicle for a month. For example, more than 42 percent would rent, or borrow, a car to satisfy their transportation needs.

Six percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Although there was no modal response, several respondents indicated that they would use a taxi as alternative transportation.

**Figure 10**  
**Attitude about Current Road/Highway System**

Roads -- How would you describe the quality of the current road/highway system in San Angelo?

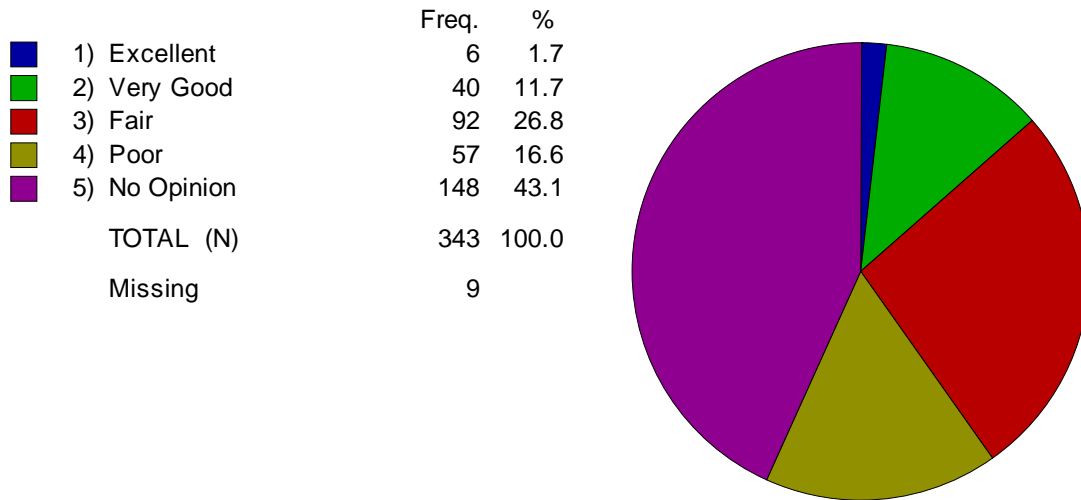


The figure shows that only a little over 32 percent of the respondents consider the quality of the current road/highway system in San Angelo to be *excellent* or *very good*.

More than 8 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Most respondents believe that the road surface throughout the city is poor. One respondent suggested that the city install sound barriers on Houston Harte from Washington Dr. to Glenna Dr. to improve the noise level in the housing area at peak traffic times.

**Figure 11**  
**Attitude about Current Transit/Bus System**

Bus -- How would you describe the quality of the current transit/bus system in San Angelo?

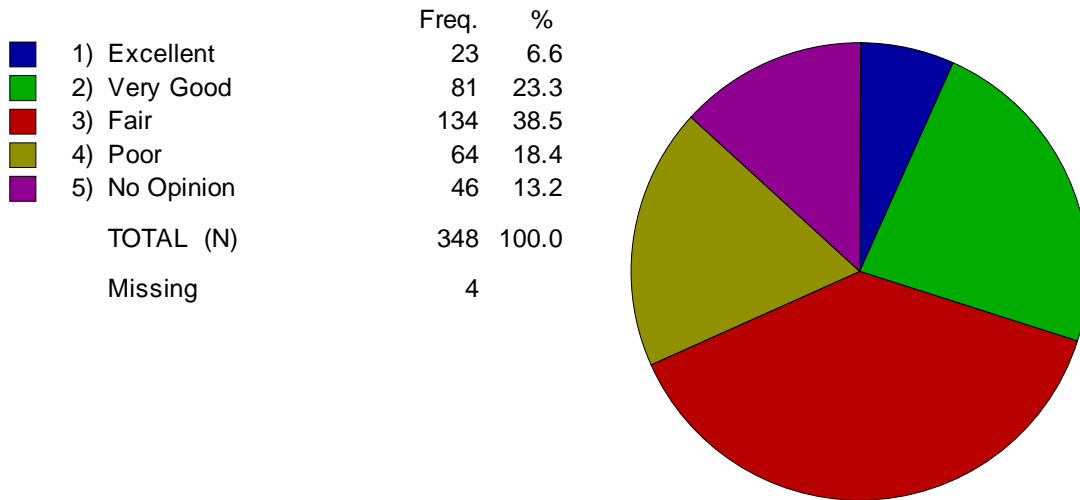


The figure shows that 43.1 percent of the respondents did not have an opinion about the quality of the current transit/bus system in San Angelo. Less than 14 percent of respondents rated the service quality as *excellent* or *very good*.

Almost 9 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Most respondents said that they never use the bus system. Several others expressed their concerns about the lack of efficient service. For example, there are not enough bus stops, the system does not operate long enough, and there are not enough routes.

**Figure 12**  
**Attitude about Current Airport System**

Airport -- How would you describe the quality of the current airport system in San Angelo?

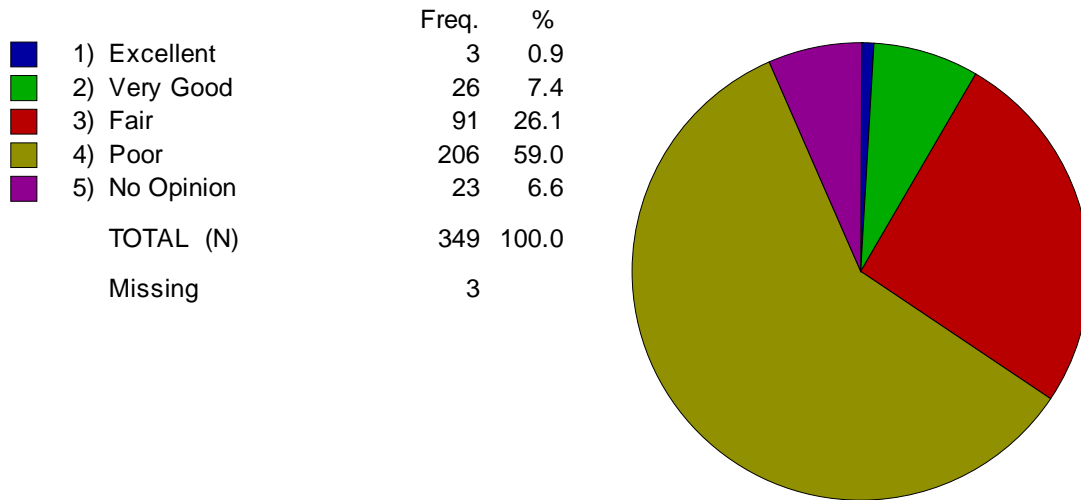


About 30 percent of the respondents consider the quality of the current airport system in San Angelo to be *very good* or *excellent*.

More than 11 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Most respondents commented about the lack of service to other destinations. While several respondents were impressed with the Mathis Field facility, many expressed their concerns about the cost of existing service.

**Figure 13**  
**Attitude about Current Sidewalk/Pedestrian System**

Sidewalks -- How would you describe the quality of the current sidewalk/pedestrian system in San

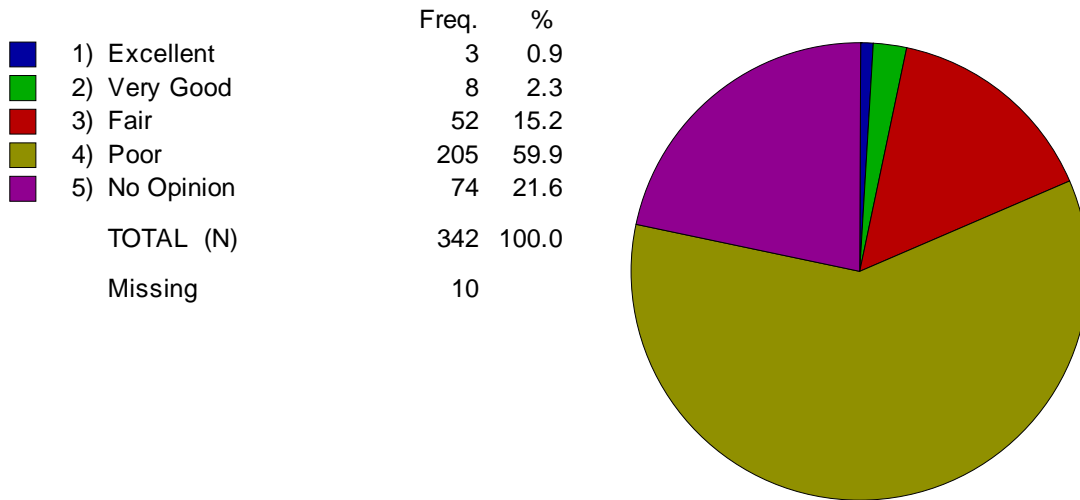


Many of the respondents are unhappy about the quality of the current sidewalk/pedestrian system in San Angelo. The figure, for example, shows that 59 percent of the respondents consider the quality of the system to be *poor*.

Almost 12 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Most respondents were concerned about the lack of sidewalks throughout the city.

**Figure 14**  
**Attitude about Current Bicycle System**

Bicycle -- How would you describe the quality of the current bicycle system in San Angelo?



The attitude respondents have about San Angelo’s bicycle system is similar to their attitude about the quality of the current sidewalk/pedestrian system in San Angelo. That is, most of the respondents consider the quality of the system to be *poor* (59.9 percent). Only 11 respondents think the system is *very good* or *excellent*.

More than 8 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Most respondents were concerned about the lack of bicycle lanes throughout the city. Several others believe that bicyclists are a traffic hazard and that San Angelo is not “biker friendly.”

**Figure 15**  
**Attitude about Current Rail System**

Rail -- How would you describe the quality of the current rail (train) system in San Angelo?

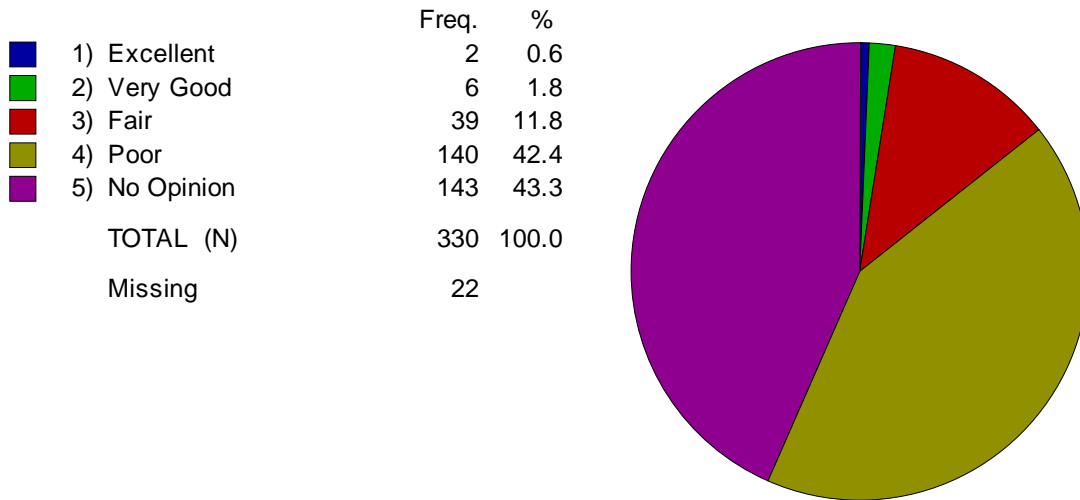
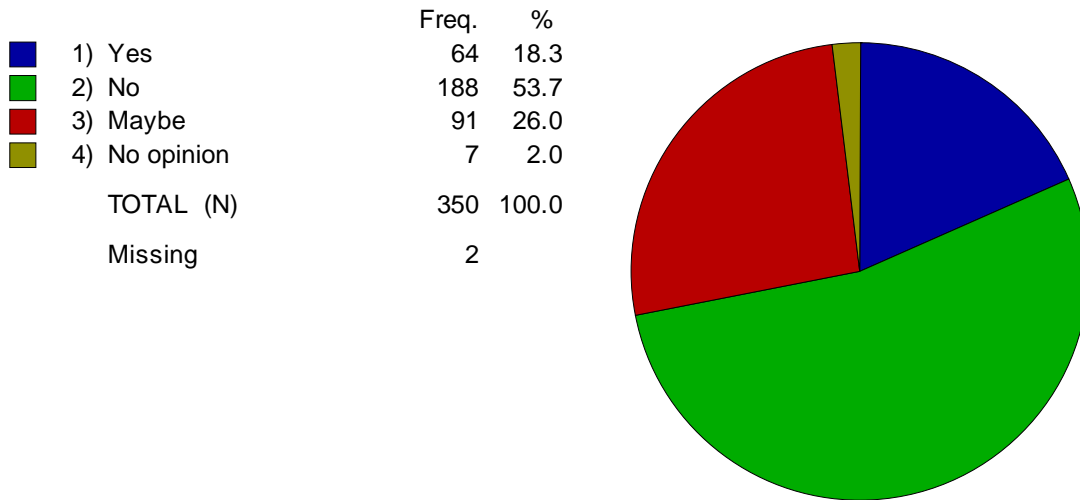


Figure 15 is similar to Figure 13 and Figure 14; most of the respondents are not happy with the current rail system.

Interestingly, over 43 percent stated that they did not have an opinion about rail service in the community. Despite this, almost 10 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Most were concerned about the lack of rail service for the city.

**Figure 16**  
**Attitude toward Toll Charges**

Toll -- Would you be willing to pay a toll charge on highways?



While most (53.7 percent) of the respondents are not willing to pay a toll charge on highways, 26 percent would be willing under the right conditions. For the most part, respondents commented that the size of San Angelo and the volume of traffic did not warrant implementing tollbooths and toll charges. Respondents also commented that they would be willing to pay a toll charge if the toll was a reasonable amount and the revenue would go toward road maintenance.

## Data Presentation: Section III

**Table 3**  
**Important Transportation Problems**

Problem	1	2	3	Score
Pavement Conditions	213	56	18	287
Lack of Sidewalks	142	84	25	251
Need for Improved Signal Timing	108	92	38	238
Lack of Bike Lanes	66	82	28	176
Lack of Destinations for Air Travel/Access	60	52	32	144
Unsafe Roads	54	46	18	118
Lack of Access to Public Transit	54	28	12	94
Congestion Problems	30	20	11	61
Other	39	4	12	55
Lack of 4-Lane Access to Interstate Highway System	30	18	5	53
Delays	21	14	12	47
Lack of passenger Rail Service	9	10	20	39
Need Improvements to Railroad Crossings	9	16	13	38

**Score:** Calculated by summing the following:

Number of respondents considering the problem to be most important \* 3

Number of respondents considering the problem to be second most important \* 2

Number of respondents considering the problem to be third most important \* 1

**Example:** Need for improved pavement conditions

Most important                      71 \* 3 = 213

Second most important            28 \* 2 = 56

Third most important              18 \* 1 = 18

**Total:** 287

Based on the scores, Table 3 shows that most respondents consider the need for improved pavement conditions (287) to be one of the three most important transportation problems. Respondents considered the second and third most important transportation problems to be the need for sidewalks (251) and improved signal timing (238). Few were concerned about the lack of passenger rail service (39) and the need to improve railroad crossings (38).

More than 10 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Many respondents were concerned about the number of rude and careless drivers in San Angelo. Several others want the police to enforce traffic ordinances more.

**Table 4**  
**Priority of Elements in the MTP**

MTP Element	1	2	3	Score
Road Maintenance	513	82	44	639
Add More Sidewalks	117	92	43	252
Add More Bike Lanes	69	90	35	194
Expand Airport Services	72	68	34	174
Expand Local Transit Service	69	68	35	172
Road Construction	45	90	37	172
Provide Non-stop highway access	39	54	23	116
Expand Rail Services	12	38	30	80
Other	15	8	7	30

**Priority levels 1-3 # of Responses** = Number of respondents that prioritized the element from one to three.

**Score:** Calculated by summing the following:

Number of respondents considering the element as their first priority \* 3

Number of respondents considering the element as their second priority \* 2

Number of respondents considering the element as their third priority \* 1

**Example:** Maintain existing roads

First	171 * 3 =	513
Second	41 * 2 =	82
Third	44 * 1 =	44

**Total:** 639

Based on the scores, Table 4 shows that respondents overwhelmingly consider the need to maintain existing roads (639) to be one of the three most important MTP priorities. Respondents considered the second and third most important MTP priorities to be the construction of new sidewalks (252) and more bicycle lanes (194).

More than 5 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Most addressed the need for better roads and sidewalks.

**Table 5**  
**Attitude toward Highway Construction Financing Methods**

<b>Method</b>	<b>#1</b>	<b>#2</b>	<b>#3</b>	<b>Score</b>
POV registration fee	138	160	57	355
Toll	249	62	32	343
Gas tax	168	96	25	289
Sales tax	120	96	34	250
None	189	8	11	208
Car parts tax	60	50	37	147
Property tax	21	22	24	67
Other	45	6	7	58

**Score:** Calculated by summing the following:

Number of respondents considering the source of funding to be the most acceptable \* 3

Number of respondents considering the source of funding to be the second most acceptable \* 2

Number of respondents considering the source of funding to be the third most acceptable \* 1

**Example:** POV Registration Fee

Most Acceptable                      46 \* 3 = 138

Second most Acceptable            80 \* 2 = 160

Third most Acceptable               57 \* 1 = 57

**Total:** 355

Based on the scores, Table 5 shows that most respondents consider a POV registration fee as the most acceptable way to finance new highway construction (355). Respondents considered the second and third most acceptable financing methods to be the use of toll charges (343) and increases in gasoline taxes (289).

Almost 8 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Some respondents thought that alternative financing sources should include “sin” taxes and valorem added taxes. However, the majority of those commenting said that they deplored additional taxation.

**Table 6**  
**Important Issues**

Issue	1	2	3	Score
The Economy	294	158	57	509
Education/School Funding	243	132	46	421
Water	216	110	63	389
Healthcare	180	150	51	381
Transportation	27	32	37	96
Insurance	12	38	35	85
The State Budget	18	22	30	70
Other	0	6	4	10

The scores, calculated as in the above tables, show that respondents are very concerned about the economy (509). They are also concerned about the education issues (421), water scarcity (389), and to some lesser degree healthcare issues (381).

Only a little more than 3 percent of the survey comments addressed this question (See Table 7). Although there was not a modal response, several respondents were concerned about water runoff and other infrastructure problems.

**Table 7**  
**Respondent's Comments**

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Number Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Quality of sidewalk/pedestrian system	9	51	11.7	11.7
Quality of current airport system	8	49	11.3	23.0
Most important transportation problem	5	44	10.1	33.1
Quality of rail system	11	42	9.7	42.8
Quality of transit/bus system	7	38	8.7	51.5
Quality of bicycle system	10	37	8.5	60.0
Quality of current highway system	6	35	8.1	68.1
Most acceptable financing of highways	15	34	7.8	75.9
Alternative travel	12	26	6.0	81.9
Transportation plan priority	13	24	5.5	87.4
Toll charge	14	24	5.5	92.9
Usual travel mode	4	16	3.6	96.5
Most important issue	16	15	3.5	100.0

Almost 12 percent of the comments addressed the city's most important transportation problem. A look at Figure 9 through Figure 14 reveals that most respondents did not have a favorable attitude about transportation services. Thus, it is not surprising that more than 56 percent of the respondents gave comments that addressed the quality of existing transportation services.

## Summary

The purpose of this report is to describe the responses to a survey administered by SAMPO to the residents of Tom Green County. SAMPO conducted the survey in an effort to understand the transportation needs and transportation concerns of their constituents. More specifically, the department designed the survey to identify users, their needs, and their attitudes toward the quality of existing transportation services. In addition, the survey asked respondents to identify transportation problems, prioritize elements to include in the MTP, and identify acceptable financing methods when constructing new highways.

To enhance the return rate, individuals were encouraged to return their surveys by August 19, 2004, to be eligible for a drawing for a \$50.00 Walmart gift certificate, an introductory flying lesson at Mathis Field, and a one-year subscription to Texas Highways Magazine. Despite these efforts, only about 10 percent completed and returned surveys. However, if you consider the percentage of WWW completed surveys, the return rate is a little more than 13 percent.

The data analysis section of the report consists of three sections. The first section presents a table showing the demographics of the *typical* respondent (Table 1) and a table describing how respondents heard about the survey (Table 2). The second section includes frequency/percentage tables and graphics that depict the distribution of responses for most of the survey questions (Figure 2 - Figure 16). The third section includes tables that depict important transportation problems (Table 3), the priority levels of elements to include in the MTP (Table 4), preferred financing methods for highway construction (Table 5), and various important issues (Table 6) as perceived by the respondents. The last table in the section, Table 7, presents a distribution of the number of comments offered by respondents.

Respondents to the survey belong to an older and higher income group that has some residential stability within the community. Specifically, 41 percent of the respondents were in the 40-59 age group, almost 34 percent have a household income greater than \$70,000, and almost 51 percent have lived in San Angelo for more than 11 years (Table 1). These results lend some support to the theory that citizens of higher socioeconomic groups are more active in completing and returning surveys of this type.

Table 2 clearly shows that the majority received their survey through the mail (53.8 percent). The table also shows that many (24 percent) picked the survey up from the MPO or organization.

It is not surprising that almost 86 percent of the respondents reported that they use their private vehicles as their usual mode of transportation (Figure 8). Like most Americans, San Angelo's residents prefer the independence they experience when using their own vehicles.

The results imply that respondents would still prefer some independence if they go without their vehicle for a month. For example, more than 42 percent would rent, or borrow, a car to satisfy their transportation needs (Figure 9).

Respondents have mixed feelings about the quality of transportation services in San Angelo. More than 85 percent of the respondents, for example, consider the quality of the current

road/highway system in San Angelo to be *fair*, *very good*, or *excellent* (Figure 10). In addition, over 68 percent of the respondents consider the quality of the current airport system in San Angelo to be *fair*, *very good*, or *excellent* (Figure 12).

On the other hand, many of the respondents are unhappy about the quality of the current sidewalk/pedestrian system in San Angelo. Specifically, 59 percent of the respondents consider the quality of the system to be *poor* (Figure 13). Additionally, the attitude respondents have about San Angelo's bicycle system is similar to their attitude about the quality of the current sidewalk/pedestrian system in San Angelo. That is, almost 60 percent of the respondents consider the quality of the bicycle system to be *poor* (Figure 14). Figure 11 shows that a little more than 43 percent of the respondents did not have an opinion about the quality of the current transit/bus system in San Angelo. Only six respondents (1.7%), however, rated the service quality as *excellent*. Most respondents said that they never use the bus system and several others expressed their concerns about the lack of efficient service. For example, there are not enough bus stops, the system does not operate long enough, and there are not enough routes. Last, most of the respondents are not happy with the current rail system (42.4%) and were concerned about the lack of rail service for the city (Figure 15).

While most (53.7 percent) of the respondents are not willing to pay a toll charge on highways, 26 percent would be willing under the right conditions. For the most part, respondents commented that the size of San Angelo and the volume of traffic did not warrant implementing tollbooths and toll charges. Respondents also commented that they would be willing to pay a toll charge if the toll was a reasonable amount and the revenue would go toward road maintenance.

Based on the scores, Table 3 shows that most respondents consider the need for improved pavement conditions to be one of the three most important transportation problems. Respondents considered the second and third most important transportation problems to be a lack of sidewalks and need for improved signal timing. Many respondents also expressed their concern about the number of rude and careless drivers in San Angelo. Several others believe the city should repair street infrastructures to alleviate street flooding as a serious transportation problem.

Most respondents consider the need to maintain existing roads to be one of the three most important MTP priorities (Table 4). Respondents considered the second and third most important MTP priorities to be the addition of more sidewalks and bicycle lanes.

Most respondents consider the use of a vehicle registration fee as the most acceptable way to finance new highway construction (Table 5). Respondents considered the second and third most acceptable financing methods to be the use of toll fees and increases in gasoline taxes. Some respondents thought that alternative financing sources should include "sin" taxes and valorem added taxes.

Respondents are also extremely pessimistic about the economy. They are also concerned about the education system, water scarcity, and to some lesser degree healthcare issues (Table 6).

