



The MassINC Polling Group
Barr Foundation – MBTA Poll
Survey of 1,000 Massachusetts residents
in communities served by the MBTA
Field dates: August 14-20, 2023

In a few words, what do you think is the most important issue facing Massachusetts right now? **OPEN END.**

Housing	23%
Cost of living / inflation	21%
Economy / jobs	12%
Immigration	10%
Public safety (crime, guns, drugs)	9%
Taxes	8%
Climate Change / environment	7%
Homelessness	7%
Transportation	6%
Healthcare / reproductive rights	5%
Education	5%
Infrastructure	5%
Government / politics	5%
Inequality / discrimination	3%
Other	4%
Unsure	5%

First off, which modes of travel do you use regularly to get around? **Please select all that apply.**

Drive alone	73%
Drive or ride with others	44%
Take a taxi, Uber, or Lyft	21%
Take the MBTA subway or trolley (Red, Blue, Orange, Green Lines)	25%
Take a public bus	14%
Take a corporate or private shuttle	1%
Take a ferry	2%
Take the commuter rail	11%
Ride your own bike	10%
Ride a BlueBikes or other bikeshare	2%
Walk	42%
Other	1%
Don't know / refused	<1%

ASK IF CURRENTLY RIDE ANY PUBLIC TRANSIT

You indicated that you currently ride some form of public transportation. Compared to before the COVID pandemic (March 2020), would you say that you ride public transportation now more often, less often, or about the same amount?

Ride more often	24%
Ride less often	37%
Ride same amount	38%
Don't know / refused	1%

IF RIDE LESS OFTEN ASK NEXT. OTHERWISE, SKIP

In a few words, why do you ride public transportation less often now? **OPEN END.**

Work from home	19%
Drive / use other modes	18%
Reliability / speed	15%
Don't go out as much / daily routine changes	13%
Crowds / other riders	12%
COVID / other illnesses	9%
Safety concerns	9%
Availability / frequency	7%
Costs	6%
Different job	6%
Retirement	3%
Moved	3%
Other	3%

ASK IF DOES NOT RIDE PUBLIC TRANSIT

You indicated that you do not currently ride public transportation. Thinking back to before the COVID pandemic (March 2020), did you previously ride any form of public transportation at least once a week? **Please select all that apply.**

Subway	13%
Bus	12%
Commuter rail	11%
Ferry	1%
None of the above	74%
Don't know / refused	<1%

IF SELECTED ANY TRANSIT MODE ASK NEXT. OTHERWISE, SKIP

In a few words, why did you stop riding public transportation? **OPEN END.**

Drive / use other mode	23%
Reliability / Speed	16%
COVID / Other illnesses	14%
Different job	9%
Moved	8%
Don't go out as much / daily routine changes	7%
Retired / not working	6%
Crowds / Other Riders / Cleanliness	6%
Safety	5%
Availability / frequency	4%
WFH	4%
Cost	4%
Other	12%

ASK OF ALL

If each of the following were to happen, would it make you any more likely to ride public transportation more than you do now, or would it make no difference?

ROTATE ORDER	Much more likely to ride more	A little more likely to ride more	Would make no difference	Not applicable	Don't know / refused
If MBTA service were more reliable	31%	23%	28%	16%	2%
If the MBTA were free to ride	37%	20%	28%	14%	1%
If it cost less to park at MBTA stations	16%	22%	36%	23%	2%
If the commuter rail ran more often throughout the day	22%	23%	34%	19%	2%
If parking at your destination became more expensive	16%	23%	30%	27%	4%
If there were less parking available at your destination	17%	23%	34%	23%	3%
If there were tolls (or higher tolls) on the roads to your destination	12%	19%	42%	23%	4%
If my employer let me buy a T pass pre-tax (deducted from my paycheck)	12%	15%	37%	34%	2%
If my employer paid for my T pass	28%	15%	25%	31%	1%

How would you rate the quality of the following services offered by the MBTA? Even if you haven't ridden a service yourself, please give your impression based on what you have heard or read about it.

ROTATE ORDER	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know / refused
Subway and trolley service (Red, Orange, Blue, Green Lines)	5%	23%	35%	27%	10%
Bus service	5%	30%	38%	13%	15%
Commuter rail	8%	38%	30%	10%	14%
Ferry service	7%	30%	18%	4%	42%

Thinking ahead to 10 years from now, do you think the MBTA will be...

Better than it is now	45%
Worse than it is now	16%
About the same as it is now	30%
Don't know / refused	10%

ASK FOLLOWING 2 QUESTIONS OF CURRENT AND FORMER TRANSIT RIDERS

When you ride or used to ride public transportation, how often, if at all, have you felt unsafe riding due to the condition of the trains, buses, stations, or other infrastructure?

Never	27%
Once or twice	39%
Multiple times	22%
Most of the time	9%
Don't know / refused	3%

When you ride or used to ride public transportation, how often, if at all, have you felt unsafe riding for any other reasons?

Never	30%
Once or twice	38%
Multiple times	20%
Most of the time	9%
Don't know / refused	3%

ASK ALL

As you may know, the Sumner Tunnel, which connects downtown Boston to Logan Airport and East Boston, is currently closed for two months for repairs. Has your travel around greater Boston been impacted by the Sumner Tunnel closure?

Yes	35%
No	62%
Don't know / refused	2%

How much, if at all, have you heard about the MBTA offering free or reduced-cost public transportation during the Sumner Tunnel shutdown?

Heard a lot	22%
Heard a little	34%
Heard not much	13%
Heard nothing at all	29%
Don't know / refused	2%

The MBTA has made the Blue Line subway and certain bus routes free to ride during the Sumner Tunnel shutdown. It has also reduced fares on some Commuter Rail and ferry lines, and reduced parking fees at some Blue Line stations.

Knowing this, how likely would you be to ride the MBTA instead of driving during the Sumner Tunnel shutdown?

Very likely	17%
Somewhat likely	26%
Not too likely	18%
Not likely at all	31%
Don't know / refused	7%

Thank you. We're almost done! These last questions are for statistical purposes.

How many cars, if any, does your household own or lease?

None	10%
One	39%
Two	37%
Three	9%
Four or more	5%
Don't know / refused	<1%

Do you own or rent your home, or do you have another arrangement like living with family members or student housing?

Own	61%
Rent	33%
Some other arrangement	5%
Don't know / refused	1%

Which one of the following best describes your work situation—employed full time, employed part time, or not currently employed?

Employed full time	54%
Employed part time	13%
Not currently employed	31%
Don't know / refused	1%

ASK IF NOT EMPLOYED

Are you a student, a homemaker, retired, or temporarily unemployed?

A student	5%
A homemaker	7%
Retired	62%
Temporarily unemployed	19%
None of the above	6%
Don't know / refused	0%

ASK IF EMPLOYED FULL OR PART TIME

How often do you work from home right now?

Every work day	21%
A few times a week	25%
A few times a month	7%
Less than once a month	4%
Never, I prefer not to work from home	6%
Never, this is not an option for my work	37%
Don't know / refused	1%

Demographics

Gender:

Man	48%
Woman	51%
Non-binary	1%
Some other way	0%
Don't know / refused	<1%

Age:

18-29	22%
30-44	26%
45-59	25%
60+	27%

Race:

White	67%
Black	7%
Latino	11%
Asian	9%
All other	5%
Don't know / refused	1%

Party ID:

Democrat	36%
Republican	13%
Independent / Other	46%
Don't know / refused	5%

Education:

High School or less	31%
Some college, no degree	25%
College graduate (BA/BS)	29%
Advanced degree	14%
Don't know / refused	<1%

About the poll

These results are based on a survey of 1,000 Massachusetts residents who live in the 175 communities served by MBTA. Responses were collected by online survey and live interviews via landline and cell phones August 14-20, 2023. The data were weighted to reflect known and estimated population parameters for race, age and gender, education, geography, and political identification. The credibility interval for this survey is +/- 3.3 percentage points for the entire sample, including the design effect. This project was conducted by The MassINC Polling Group and sponsored by The Barr Foundation.