

**VINEYARD TRANSPORTATION 2000:**  
**MOVING BEYOND GRIDLOCK**  
**PROTECTING OUR WAY OF LIFE**

**CITIZEN SURVEY RESULTS**

Recently many Islanders and visitors filled out an elaborate transportation survey sponsored by the County Commissioners. One was sent to every post office box, to subscribers of the Gazette, readers of the Times and attendees of several transportation surveys. Each survey contained 85 questions on various transportation issues and personal information. Of the 2,238 surveys returned 627 contained comments, letters and articles. These are the official results to the specific questions. Please note that the percentages attached to responses are the percent of those who answered that particular question.

**I. Is There a Problem?**

1. From individual comment, letters to the editor and newspaper articles, we have heard the public perception that there is a traffic problem on Martha's Vineyard. Which items below reflect your view?  
 ( check all that apply )

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. There are too many cars and trucks on the Island.   | 456   |
| b. There are too many cars and trucks in the months of June, July and August.  | 1,476 |
| c. There are too many cars and trucks on the island in the "shoulder seasons".   | 430   |
| d. The number of cars and trucks on the island is not a problem.   | 58    |
| e. Traffic problems only occur at a limited number of places for a few weeks a year.<br>It is inconvenient, but not a great concern to me. | 442   |

2. Do you think increased traffic and congestion has an effect on tourism and business?  
 Choose a score from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning that traffic promotes business and is good for the economy--to 5 meaning that traffic diminishes the Vineyard's appeal and hurts business.

1	=	152	(7%)	
2	=	157	(7%)	
3	=	415	(20%)	
4	=	530	(25%)	<b>Median Average Equals 4</b>
5	=	845	(40%)	

3. The impact of growing numbers of people on the Vineyard is of concern to me...

- |                   |                    |                |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| a. In the summer: | Agree = 1518 (83%) | Disagree = 312 |
| b. Year-round:    | Agree = 777 (49%)  | Disagree = 806 |

## II. The Steamship Authority : Level of Service

4. The Vineyard should direct the Steamship Authority to...

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| a. <b>REDUCE</b> the numbers of cars coming to the Vineyard.           | <b>1,077 (58%)</b> |
| b. <b>MAINTAIN</b> the current numbers of cars coming to the Vineyard. | <b>514 (28%)</b>   |
| c. Allow the number of cars to <b>INCREASE</b> as demand warrants.     | <b>257 (14%)</b>   |

5. The following mechanisms have been suggested for reducing the number of cars traveling to the vineyard. Do you believe the Steamship Authority should:

a. Charge higher auto rates for the busiest days and travel times.

**YES = 825 (53%)                      NO = 740 (47%)**

b. Charge higher rates for short-term auto trips originating from the mainland.

**YES = 1,147 (68%)                      NO = 551 (32%)**

c. Consider mainland parking fees as part of the strategy for reducing auto trips to the Vineyard.

**YES = 1,510 (87%)                      NO = 235 (13%)**

6. Rate the level of personal inconvenience you are willing to tolerate for the privilege of living on or visiting the island. Choose a score from **1 to 5** with 1 meaning that you want to be able to travel on the SSA at a moment's notice, to 5 meaning that you will accept not getting all the reservations you want.

**1 = 318 (15%)**

**2 = 350 (16%)**

**3 = 704 (32%)**

**4 = 382 (18%)**

**5 = 419 (19%)**

**Median Average Equals 3**

## III. Public Transportation

7. Rate our current transportation system:

(Please note that those who answered NO to whether they have used a service almost universally left whether or not that service met their needs blank. Therefore, with the exception of the results for the LIFT, "Met your needs" responses are a reflection of those who have used the service.)

a. I have used this service	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Summer Shuttle Bus Service</b>		
Used service	<b>928</b>	<b>907</b>
Met your needs	<b>723</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Park and Ride lots</b>		
Used service	<b>864</b>	<b>914</b>
Met your needs	<b>763</b>	<b>122</b>

<b>6. I have used this service</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>The LIFT (Elderly and handicapped service)</b>		
Used service	<b>85</b>	<b>1,455</b>
Met your needs	<b>73</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Taxis</b>		
Used service	<b>1,104</b>	<b>670</b>
Met your needs	<b>895</b>	<b>195</b>

8. Should our current transportation system be expanded? (check all that apply )

a. Summer Shuttle Bus Service:

- I. Increase hours of operation                   **Yes = 964**
- II. Increase frequency of service               **Yes = 1,067**
- III. Add other routes                               **Yes = 1,117**
- IV. More bus stops needed                         **Yes = 1,025**

b. Park and Ride Lots:

- I. Develop more locations                       **Yes = 928**
- II. Make available year round                   **Yes = 745**

9. How important do you think uniformly marked and recognizable vehicles are to the success of a public transit system? Choose a score from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning that similar appearing vehicles are not at all important to 5 meaning that you think it is essential.

<b>1</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>(8%)</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>(5%)</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>(21%)</b>	<b>Median Average Equals 4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>(52%)</b>	

10. Should such a system provide bus connections to the SSA, shopping areas, the beach and other visitor destinations from satellite or out-of-town parking lots?

**YES = 1,774 (94%)                   NO = 116 (6%)**

11. Should the Steamship Authority provide 'seamless' bus service from a remote lot north of Falmouth to Woods Hole and on to remote lots on the Vineyard, which would include ticketing and baggage service, bike racks, and other amenities for travelers?

**YES = 1,392 (79%)                   NO = 371 (21%)**

12. Would you use a public transportation system for any of the following? (check all that apply )  
 ( At least 86% of survey respondents were homeowners, 91% earned more than \$25,000 a year, and only .2% were under 20 years of age. Clearly, many seasonal employees, who would be a potentially large group of riders, are not represented in this question. See 'About You' section.)

a. In the summer for:

I. Work	YES = 382
II. Shopping	YES = 909
III. Recreation Sites\Beach	YES = 783
IV. Never	YES = 281
V. Not sure	YES = 438

b. Year-round for:

I. Work	YES = 283
II. Shopping	YES = 512
III. Recreation Sites\Beach	YES = 318
IV. Never	YES = 420
V. Not sure	YES = 562

c. To transport children:

I. Summer	YES = 364
II. Year-Round	YES = 353
III. Never	YES = 396
IV. Not sure	YES = 411

#### IV. Other Options

13. The following are suggestions that have been recommended as traffic and transportation solutions for the Vineyard. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each suggestion.

a. Develop an island-wide network of bike paths.

Agree = 1,696 (87%)      Disagree = 151 (8%)      No Opinion = 101 (5%)

b. Limit the supply of rental cars.

Agree = 1,012 (53%)      Disagree = 622 (33%)      No Opinion = 278 (14%)

c. Limit the supply of mopeds.

Agree = 1,812 (92%)      Disagree = 102 (5%)      No Opinion = 45 (3%)

d. Expand the role of taxis.

Agree = 1,112 (58%)      Disagree = 362 (19%)      No Opinion = 442 (23%)

e. Impose strict enforcement of speed limits.

Agree = 1,426 (73%)      Disagree = 261 (14%)      No Opinion = 254 (13%)

**Transportation Solutions continued**

f. Provide more parking spaces in the downtown areas.

**Agree = 991 (51%)      Disagree = 810 (42%)      No Opinion = 132 (7%)**

g. Install traffic lights to facilitate traffic flow.

**Agree = 520 (27%)      Disagree = 1,311 (68%)      No Opinion = 110 (5%)**

h. Develop paved by-pass roads to decrease traffic congestion.

**Agree = 933 (49%)      Disagree = 793 (42%)      No Opinion = 182 (9%)**

i. Encourage water transportation services (example: the Menemsha bike ferry).

**Agree = 1,503 (78%)      Disagree = 144 (7%)      No Opinion = 293 (15%)**

j. Regulate and limit hours of operation, size and numbers of large freight trucks on Vineyard roads.

**Agree = 1,199 (62%)      Disagree = 449 (23%)      No Opinion = 293 (15%)**

k. Ban over-sized off-island tour buses from traveling on Vineyard roads.

**Agree = 1,507 (77%)      Disagree = 318 (16%)      No Opinion = 136 (7%)**

14. Would you be willing to accept a limitation on the number of cars allowed on Martha's Vineyard to two per household? (multiple response category making percentages misleading - though it appears that Year rounders are quite willing to limit their seasonal compatriots)

a. Year round households?      **YES = 1,041      NO = 809**

b. Seasonal resident households?      **YES = 1,523      NO = 394**

c. Rental households?      **YES = 1,556      NO = 292**

**V. Funding and Implementation**

15. Indicate which method, or combination of methods, you would prefer be used to finance a public transportation system:

a. Ridership\fare box for users      **YES = 1,631      NO = 120      No Opinion = 77**

b. Paid parking (meters\permits)      **YES = 823      NO = 783      No Opinion = 91**

c. A vehicle sticker      **YES = 1,187      NO = 417      No Opinion = 133**

d. Property tax      **YES = 190      NO = 1,427      No Opinion = 79**

e. A fee added to the tickets of:

Cars	<b>YES = 927</b>
Trucks	<b>YES = 810</b>
Passengers	<b>YES = 516</b>
No added fees	<b>YES = 557</b>

f. Other Sources (*written in*)

## VI. Growth Impacts on Quality of Life

16. How serious a problem is the pace of growth and development on Martha's Vineyard? Choose a score from **1 to 5** with 1 meaning that growth and development is not a problem, to 5 meaning that growth and development is a serious problem.

<b>1</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>(3%)</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>(5%)</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>(13%)</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>(19%)</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>1,318</b>	<b>(60%)</b>

17. Do you want to set limits for growth on the Vineyard?

<b>YES = 1,410 (73%)</b>	<b>NO = 168 (9%)</b>	<b>Not Sure = 349 (8%)</b>
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18. How important is the aesthetic quality of our rural roads to you? (Such as width of travel lane and paved shoulders; style of safety barricades; signage and reflectors; preservation of tree canopy; use of curbing.) Choose a score from **1 to 5** with 1 meaning that the aesthetic quality of our roads is not important, to 5 meaning that maintaining the character of our rural roads is very important.

<b>1</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>(2%)</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>(3%)</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>(9%)</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>(16%)</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>(70%)</b>

19. Some people believe that at our present rate of growth (more houses and more people) a transportation system alone will not solve our congestion problems. Would you be willing to limit the number of building permits allowed in your town on a yearly basis?

<b>YES = 1,630 (86%)</b>	<b>NO = 272 (14%)</b>
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20. How do you believe the Island should manage issues of growth?

<b>a. Deal with it town by town</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>(20%)</b>
<b>b. Deal with it on an island-wide basis</b>	<b>1,320</b>	<b>(68%)</b>
<b>c. Both town government and island-wide</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>(12%)</b>

## VII. About you

1.

a. I am a:

Year round resident	1,124	(57%)
Seasonal resident	778	(39%)
Occasional visitor	73	(4%)

b. Town:

Oak Bluffs	443
Edgartown	516
Vineyard Haven	382
West Tisbury	300
Chilmark	215
Gay Head	51

2. I am:

Female	1,049
Male	763
Couples	152
Hermaphrodite	1

3. I own this number of houses on the Vineyard:

<b>1 house</b>	=	<b>1,669 people</b>
<b>2 houses</b>	=	<b>221 people</b>
<b>3 houses</b>	=	<b>32 people</b>
<b>4 houses</b>	=	<b>8 people</b>
<b>5 houses</b>	=	<b>4 people</b>

( 1,934 people answered this question, thus even if all of those who did not answer this question do not own a home this means that **at least 86% of survey responders are homeowners.**)

4. My household has the following number of people:

a. Children under 18    **1 child = 218 households; 2 children = 250 hh; 3 children = 91hh;**  
**4 children = 24 hh ; 5 children = 12 hh; 6 children = 10 hh;**  
**7 children = 1 hh; 8 children = 1 hh; 9 children = 2 hh.**

b. Adults over 18        **1 adult = 355 households; 2 adults = 1,328 hh; 3 adults = 196 hh;**  
**4 adults = 136 hh; 5 adults = 46 hh; 6 adults = 39 hh;**  
**7 adults = 14 hh; 8 adults = 17 hh; 9 adults = 2 hh.**

5. When on the Vineyard my household has this number of cars:

**1 car = 940 households; 2 cars = 988 hh; 3 cars = 196 hh;**  
**4 cars = 42 hh; 5 cars = 4 hh; 6 cars = 3 hh;**

VINEYARD TRANSPORTATION 2000: RESULTS

6. I am:

a. 16-19	4	(.2%)
b. 20-44	414	(22%)
c. 45-64	899	(47%)
d. 65 +	604	(31%)

7. 1996 Household income

a. \$25,000 or less	166	(9%)
b. \$25,000 to \$50,000	515	(28%)
c. \$50,001 to \$75,000	375	(21%)
d. \$75,000 or over	755	(42%)

(63% or two out of three survey responders make \$50,000 or more.)

8. Zip Code (*there were hundreds*)

9. Did you find the Informational Guide helpful in answering this survey?

<b>YES</b>	<b>1,384</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Did not use the Guide</b>	<b>453</b>

Faithfully submitted by Paul H. Foley



# CITIZEN SURVEY COMMENTS

## June-August 1997

There were over 600 surveys with written comments, either within the body of the survey or in the spaces specifically identified for comments. Many respondents felt that solutions to traffic and transportation problems were tied together and many mentioned limits would only work if a comprehensive public transportation system were available on Martha's Vineyard. The following list attempts to collect all these comments in some orderly and usable manner.

Resident preference for, SSA fee structure, reservations; keep 1-9 day Island ticket with winter rates	98
Public Transportation should be expanded and provided year round (more stops, routes, Services, inexpensive tickets)	93
Planning Efforts welcomed; more planning needed including Island-wide land use	84
SSA; reduce mainland parking fees; provide an outlying lot as proposed for Otis	74
Traffic increases, problems; serious and impacts quality of Island life	58
Growth Impacts; controls needed	54
Construct bike paths; emphasize bike safety	46
Ban mopeds and roller blades	45
SSA; angry with (June 1997)	34
Island-wide solutions (regional) are necessary	35
Ban large tour buses; stop buses from idling	28
Other options using Bermuda, Fire Island, Sanibel, Catalina, Puerto Rico etc., as models	26
Restrict cars for day trippers, 2-3 day and two week stays	26
SSA; fee structure should reflect length of stay, time of year, advance purchase	25
Delivery services needed, including mail, groceries, etc.	24
Growth impacts; environmental concerns	24
Park n Ride; expand both locations and year around service; integrate with shuttle; provide convenient lots; add Oaks Bluffs	24
SSA; problems with current reservation system (June 1997)	22
Resident preference; home owner with resident I.D. card	21
Create car-free, pedestrian areas in all three Down Island Towns	20
Public Transportation; publicize schedules including mainland interfaces to all systems (8 additional respondents asked for coordination of Bonanza Bus schedules)	19
Taxis are too expensive	19
Public Transportation vehicle types important to rider ship, i.e., trolleys, negative on school buses, white vans	18
Poor Survey; specific problems with wording or return arrangements	17
Island promotion and advertising; discontinue	16
Growth limits present problems; they are unconstitutional	15

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SSA; Standby necessary; guaranteed or in some form perhaps residents only (June 1997)	14
Ban large trucks	12
SSA; new reservations system working well (June 1997)	12
Need for Planning and foresight	11
SSA: limit boat trips to limit number of cars brought to Island	10
Taxis refuse to travel Up Island, Chappy, or other specific places and at specific times; dirty	8
Rail link; return train service to mainland and island	8
Traffic mitigation suggestions; individual specific solutions not mentioned elsewhere, i.e. 4-way stops, etc.	8
Public Transportation should NOT be provided: just "another growth factor"	7
SSA; run special boat(s) only for Islanders	7
Traffic lights needed; many thought only in summer	7
New Bedford as a port	7
SSA; angry with (June 1997)	6
Public Transportation; use electric or non-polluting vehicles	5
Road side environment; too many signs, maintain tree canopy etc.	5
Lift services should be expanded; improve present service	5
Dorm housing for summer employees	4
Encourage mopeds as alternate transportation	4
Establish "super" stores for groceries or pharmaceuticals in a non-downtown location	4
Rental cars; limit	4
Union Street, VH; reverse flow or make two-way	4
Ban parking meters	3
Build a bridge, i.e., Prince Edward Island	3
Chappy Ferry line too long	3
Park n Ride; create incentives for public and particularly employees to use	3
Park n Ride; reduce	3
Air Travel, encourage	2
Air travel, limit	2
County Commissioners; negative comments	2
Fence in Island properties; fence in the whole Island	2
Growth limits will be imposed by finite amount of water, waste disposal ability	2
Mortgage deductions for second homes; eliminate	2
PSA's on "Island Way of Life" including speed limits, pedestrian behavior as is done on Sanibel and Nantucket	2
Public Transportation; provide bike racks	2
Reduce parking to encourage public transportation use	2
SSA; no charge for bikes and cycles	2
SSA; run night freight boats	2
Island Transport wants to limit other company's tour buses	1

### Citizen Survey Comments-Page 3

Enabling legislation; do not alter	1
Growth can and should be controlled by economics	1
Improve management of Island	1
Limits to growth is proper approach	1
Negative comments on title of survey	1
Public Transportation; coordinate services on Martha's Vineyard with ferries	1
Public Transportation; cost-benefit analysis needed for each option	1
Public Transportation; in winter school buses should be integrated with public system	1
Reciprocal beach agreements	1
Reduce current speed limits	1
Share-a-Ride; develop such a program	1
Transit Authority members should be elected	1
Zero population growth	1

### A Sample of Citizen Survey Written Comments

"...I don't know the answer, but as I looked at the 'hand trucks' of freight being loaded on the Fishers Island ferry---where NO freight trucks are allowed, my spirit yearned for a simpler slower time on the Vineyard. I know we can't 'go backwards' in time, but I hope we can responsibly redeem our present time." Edgartown-Seasonal Resident

"...My own belief is that the Island's economic well being lies more with seasonal visitors (those who own second homes or rent for a month or more) than with short term visitors. The money from the former flows into a greater variety of businesses and the sentiments of many (not all by a long shot) place value on the Vineyard as a community." West Tisbury-Year Round Resident

"I doubt the willingness of year-rounders and seasonal residents to dramatically cut back on car use. Efforts should be geared to discourage short-term visitors from bringing cars, and public transportation should be particularly oriented to their needs." West Tisbury-Seasonal Resident

"Too much is heard from the business community and from the house owner-renters. The "business community" includes those who turn up in April and disappear in October. (Walk down Main Street or Circuit Avenue in December and where are these people?)...Their employees are from off-island, too, for the most part. As for the owner-renters—if they have to rent their houses to keep them they are engaged in speculation and like all speculators must take their chances. If the Island is overcrowded who's going to rent their places anyway?" Edgartown-Year Round Resident

“There is no evidence to date that public transit, in a rural application, will reduce traffic congestion, which is the premise.” West Tisbury Resident-Year Round

“...Please don't lump restrictions on renters and dog visitors with residents/taxpayers.” Edgartown-Seasonal Resident

“We believe a system of holding standby cars at a site removed from Woods Hole and allowing them to come down a few at a time as space becomes available would solve many problems and still allow people to know they can get here.” Oak Bluffs-Year Round Resident

“The SSA is not necessarily the problem. Limiting ferry access will result in more cars left at island second homes and rental for occupants to use. Rentals will increase and traffic will probably stay the same. You must emphasize a comprehensive and broad based approach.” Tisbury-Year Round Resident

“I believe we would do well to examine what Bermuda has done (of course, I am aware that we are not exactly the same). I would also suggest that you examine what has happened to Guam. Guam is only twice as big as us, and the place is a disaster—major, 6 lane intersections, with traffic lights going every which way. It should be required viewing for anyone who wants to do nothing.” Edgartown-Year Round Resident

“Develop an attitude, a cachet of public transport. Create a unique ‘Vineyardesque’ mystic that fits our worldwide reputation as different from the rest of ‘America’. Develop a consumer embraced ‘logo’ that supports public transit. Blood donors are recognized for gallons given. A collectible transport pass? Like ashi tag? Make car driving ‘uncool’. Good Luck!” Oak Bluffs-Seasonal Resident

“The island definitely has a problem. Islanders complain there are too many lousy tourists. Merchants complain there are too few people (spending money). I believe the island is at max capacity for the roads and environment. It's a dilemma.” Edgartown-Seasonal Resident

“If you change the roads to suburban-urban—you defeat the reason to come. Period...” Tisbury-Year Round Resident

“I believe that year round residents should be able to have unlimited access to SSA transportation at a constant affordable price. It is our road to and from our homes, and we should not be trapped in, or barred from, getting to our homes.” Oak Bluffs-Year Round Resident

“I feel that the traffic problems on this Island threaten to compromise our way of life here and must be attended to immediately. I feel that we must all put our own agendas and needs aside (i.e., business, profits, etc.) for the good of the Island. Good luck and you have our support.” West Tisbury-Year Round Resident

“I can foresee a time when the issue of limiting people (i.e., foot passengers) on the ferry will become as critical as limiting vehicles is becoming now. I question the wisdom of making recreation sites and beaches easily accessible to large number of people via public transportation.” Tisbury-Year Round Resident

“Incomes of year round islanders average far below mainland incomes. Gasoline costs much more here than the average. Most working islanders use cars to get to work. Please don't impose any more costs on us average workers, i.e., stickers or taxes, fees. Also, the recent changes by SSA have resulted in a loss of appeal for the island. Please try to keep this from looking like an attempt to discourage tourism. West Tisbury-Year Round Resident