



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Virginia Dawson

O: 415-946-8716

C: 914-924-0120

vdawson@bayareacouncil.org

2015 Bay Area Council Poll: Residents Like Driverless Cars, 2nd BART Tube; Offer Reasons for Not Riding Transit

37% of residents say getting around the Bay Area harder than a year ago, up from 25 percent in 2014; 40% say they'll buy electric car in next five years

BAY AREA, CA – Driverless cars have yet to hit the road beyond early experimental and testing projects, but that doesn't mean Bay Area motorists aren't eager to try them. That is among the findings released today as part of the *2015 Bay Area Council Poll*, which gauged attitudes on a wide range of transportation-related issues including traffic congestion, a second BART tube and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) fees to improve roads. The poll also looked at reasons more Bay Area residents don't use transit.

The *2015 Bay Area Council Poll* found that 46 percent of residents would ride in a driverless car while 40 percent prefer to remain in control and 14 percent are on the fence. Beyond being able to check email or send a text with impunity, however, residents overall appear less confident that driverless cars will be an immediate solution to traffic. A smaller 36 percent of residents overall said the new technology will help alleviate congestion, although 45 percent of millennials say driverless cars will reduce traffic while just 27 percent of residents 65 years and older agree autonomous vehicles can shave time off their commute.

[View the 2015 Bay Area Council Poll transportation results>>](#)

As bad as the Bay Area's traffic continues to be, residents ranked gridlock fourth on an overall ranking of the region's problems. That tells you a little bit about how bad residents view the drought and the region's housing crisis, both of which earned a higher ranking. Traffic shared its spot with concerns about crime and safety, according to the poll. Still, 37 percent of residents said it's harder to get around than a year ago, up from 25 percent in 2014.

"Driverless cars may be the future, but for now we need to keep both hands on the wheel in our battle against worsening gridlock," said Jim Wunderman, President and CEO of the Bay Area Council. "Innovative solutions like employer shuttles, car and ride sharing services, and advanced transit and highway management technologies – even expanding

ferry operations – can pay big dividends in easing commute times. We also must invest in improving our backbone transportation systems, including BART, Caltrain and our freeways.”

The *2015 Bay Area Council Poll* found strong support for investing in BART, with 75 percent of residents in San Francisco, Alameda and Contra Costa counties combined saying they approve issuing \$3 billion in bonds to help modernize the system, increase capacity and speed and reduce wait times and overcrowding. Just 16 percent opposed such a plan.

Building a second BART transbay tube between Oakland and San Francisco to handle record ridership won clear majority support from 59 percent of residents Bay Area wide, with 27 percent opposed and 14 percent uncertain.

Even with declining gas tax revenue and federal support, the *Bay Area Council Poll* found little appetite for new vehicle fees to pay for transportation upgrades and maintenance. Just 41 percent of residents would support a fee based on the number of miles they travel – an approach that regional transportation agencies and state lawmakers currently are exploring. Residents are even less enamored of paying a flat \$54 fee, with 32 percent in support and 61 percent opposed.

With 74 percent of residents saying they primarily drive alone to commute to work, get to school and do errands, the poll delved into the reasons that more people don't use public transit with frequency. Among non-transit users, 48 percent say that it isn't convenient and 35 percent say transit takes too long. Another 18 percent of non-transit users cited overcrowding and uncomfortable conditions as reasons for not boarding transit while 15 percent said transit is more expensive than driving. Only in San Francisco did convenience (25%) finish second to time (38%) as the reason for not using transit.

Tesla, Toyota and other manufacturers of plug-in vehicles may be encouraged to learn that 40 percent of Bay Area residents in the next five years are planning to buy an electric car, with agreement highest among millennials (42%) and GenXers (45%).

There's plenty of room for growth in the ridesharing business, with 68 percent of residents surveyed in the *2015 Bay Area Council Poll* saying they have never used the services of companies like Lyft, Uber and Sidecar. Another 16 percent say they have used ridesharing services at least once and 3 percent say they hail a ride almost every day. Big differences emerged among age groups, with 49 percent of millennials saying they have used ridesharing services one or more times, 35 percent of GenXers, 20 percent of Baby Boomers and just 7 percent of residents 65 years and older.

The *2015 Bay Area Council Poll*, which was conducted by Oakland-based public opinion research firm EMC Research, surveyed more than 1,000 residents online about a range of issues related to economic growth, housing and transportation, drought, education and workforce.

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About the Bay Area Council

The Bay Area Council is a business-sponsored, public-policy advocacy organization for the nine-county Bay Area. The Council proactively advocates for a strong economy, a vital business environment, and a better quality of life for everyone who lives here. Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council is widely respected by elected officials, policy makers and other civic leaders as the voice of Bay Area business. Today, approximately 275 of the largest employers in the region support the Bay Area Council and offer their CEO or top executive as a member. Our members employ more than 4.43 million workers and have revenues of \$1.94 trillion, worldwide.