



**What's at Stake Panel**

**Public Opinion and  
Traffic Congestion – A Look from the  
Western Shore**

**ESLC's 19th Annual Planning Conference  
4-18-19**

**Dan Nataf, Ph.D.**

**Director, Center for the Study of Local Issues**

**Anne Arundel Community College**

**[ddnataf@aacc.edu](mailto:ddnataf@aacc.edu)**

**[www2.aacc.edu/csli](http://www2.aacc.edu/csli)**

# Center for the Study of Local Issues: Overview of Survey Process

Conducted in March/April and  
October – since 1980

Multi-mode – telephone and online  
– Anne Arundel County only

Students used as interviewers

Completions average 450-650:  
Spring 2019, 622 cases

Margin of error for samples: 4-5%

Weighted by gender, party and  
education level

# Topics Reviewed Today

Most important problem – transportation vs. others

Development, Transportation, Environment cluster

Traffic Congestion – Continuing Citizen Pessimism

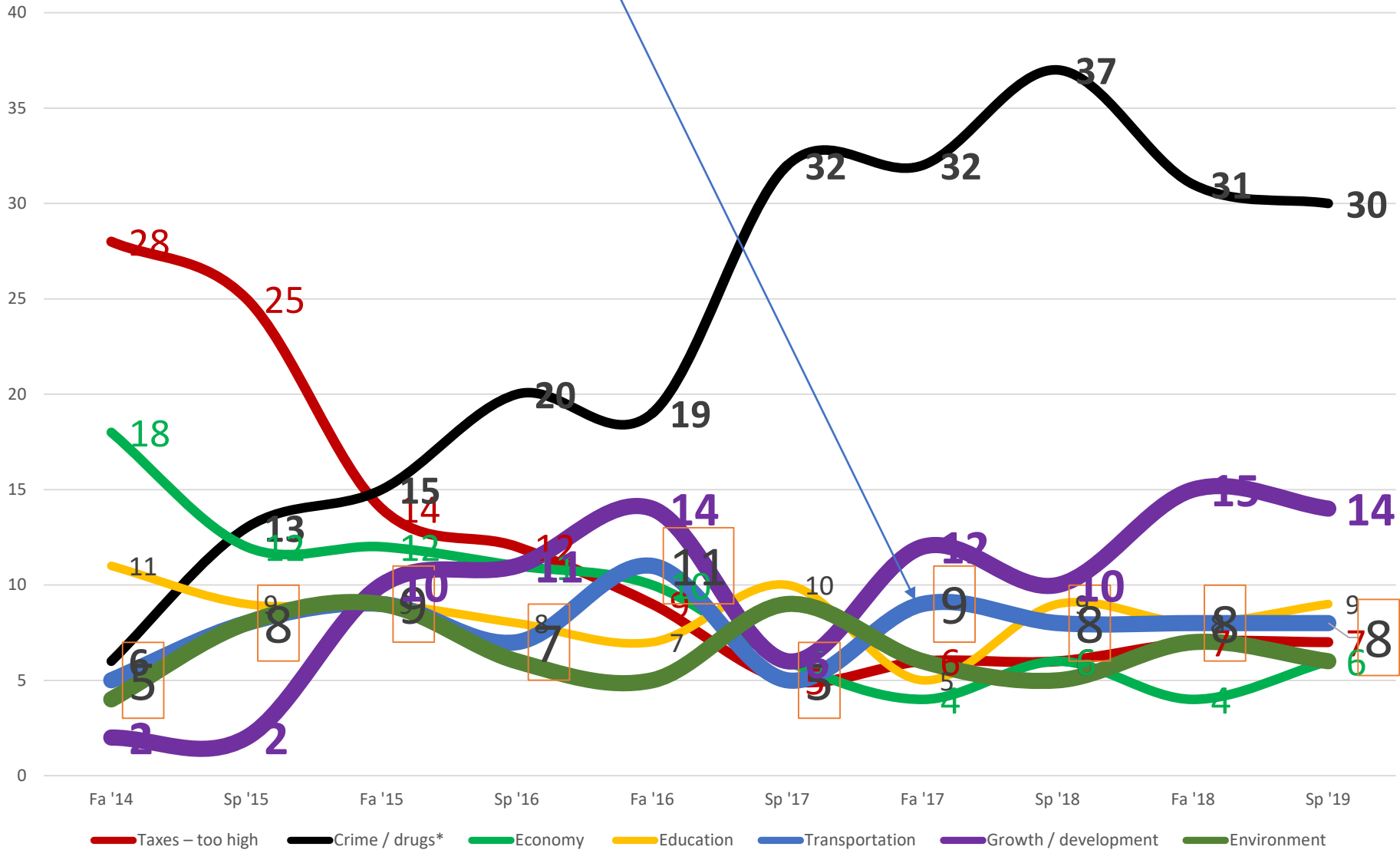
Ches. Bay Bridge – Try anything!

Reluctance to pay for solutions

Challenge for governing

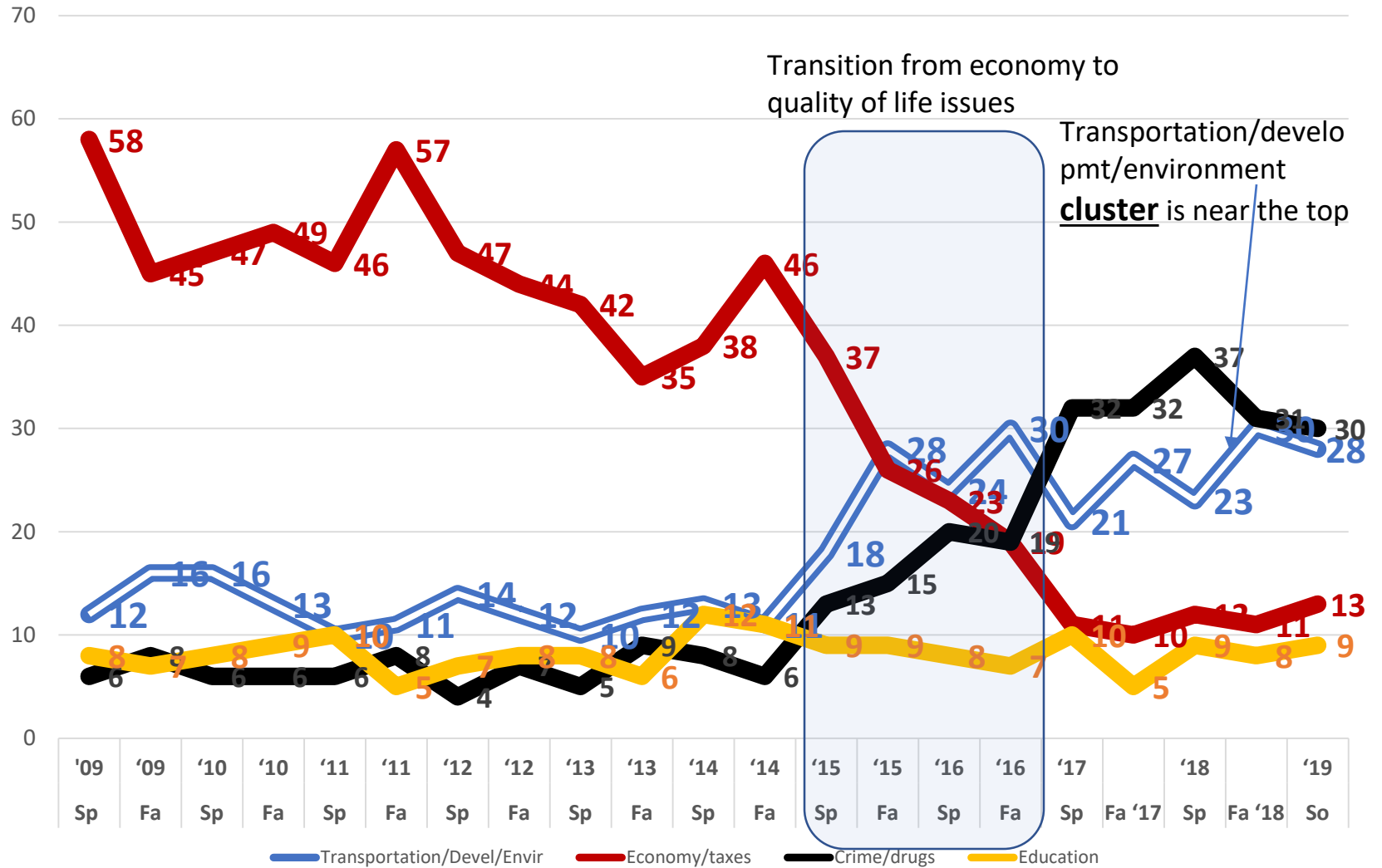
# Most important problem: Fall '14 to Spring '19

Transportation typically *not* “most important problem”



# Transportation, Development, Environment Cluster

Most Important Problem by Cluster S09 to F19



# Long-standing pessimism about traffic congestion

<b>County efforts made problem....</b>	<b>Better</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Worse</b>	<b>NA</b>
<u>Fall '18</u> Reducing traffic congestion	5	21	71	3
<u>Fall '13</u> Reducing traffic congestion	7	29	61	3
<u>Fall '02</u> Reducing traffic congestion	8	21	66	6
<u>Spring '03</u> Anticipated traffic congestion in 2010	6	8	86	0
<u>Spring '04</u> Anticipated traffic congestion in 2010	3	5	92	0

# Reducing congestion – problem getting worse...

Issues Fall 2018	Gotten better	Stayed about the same	Gotten worse	Unsure/
				NA
Improving the local economy	37	44	11	8
Improving the environment	24	42	26	8
Controlling crime such as gang violence	18	37	31	15
Improving ethics in government	16	36	36	12
Keeping taxes low	16	51	26	7
Improving the efficiency of local government	15	48	21	16
Managing growth and development	13	25	55	7
Reducing poverty and homelessness	12	43	28	17
<b>Reducing traffic congestion</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>3</b>

Spring 2015	Agree	Disagree	NA
<b>Anne Arundel County has done an excellent job maintaining its roads</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Maryland has a very effective transportation system</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>9</b>

# Transportation improvements: Top priority

Priorities for State/Local Government (F'13)	High	Med	Low	NA
Rebuilding or replacing the schools in your community	50	27	20	3
<b>Rebuilding or replacing the roads servicing your community</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Providing additional public transportation options to your community</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>
Rebuilding or replacing police or fire stations servicing your community	31	35	28	6
Rebuilding or improving facilities at Anne Arundel Community College	25	39	24	12
Providing additional recreational access to the Chesapeake Bay	23	29	41	7
Rebuilding or replacing the police training academy	18	35	35	12
Rebuilding or replacing the current computer and email system used by the county	16	26	37	21
Rebuilding or replacing your local library	15	33	48	4
Rebuilding or replacing public parks used by your community	13	39	46	2



# Approaches to Solve Traffic Congestion – Focus on CBB

State and Local Issues <b>Spring 2019</b>	Support	Oppose	Unsure/ NA
Allowing affected counties to have a veto over any building of a new bridge over the Chesapeake Bay	<b>46</b>	41	13
Expanding the current Bay Bridge so that it can handle more traffic*	<b>66</b>	25	10
Increasing bus services from the Eastern Shore to destinations in Anne Arundel County and to the DC metro system	<b>71</b>	16	13
Building a commuter rail line on Route 50 from the Eastern Shore to the DC metro system with a stop in Annapolis.	<b>62</b>	27	12
Expanding bus routes or frequency within our county**	<b>68</b>	16	16
Increasing state gas tax for road improvements and transit	38	<b>55</b>	7
Increasing tolls on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge during peak summer hours to avoid traffic jams ( <b>Fall '18</b> )	31	<b>61</b>	8

- \*No large differences between areas near the bridge (62% support) and farther away (67% support) regarding expanding current bridge.
- \*\*Partisan differences are consistent: Democrats are 10-20 points more likely to favor transit than Republicans, and around 5 points less likely to support a bridge.

# Financial Challenges in Paying for Transportation Improvements

Financing Transportation Improvements	Support	Oppose	Unsure/ NA
<b>Spring 19</b> Increasing state gas tax for road improvements and transit*	38	55	7
<b>Spring 13</b> Allowing <u>counties</u> to increase the sales tax on gasoline sales to improve roads	21	77	3
Proposal for Replenishing Transportation Trust Fund	Support	Oppose	NA
<b>Fall 11</b>			
Increase the toll on the Bay Bridge from \$2.50 to \$4.00	33	64	4
Create a new tax on ownership of vehicles	10	86	4
Increase the state's property tax, adding \$63 million to the fund	11	86	3
Increase the corporate income tax rate by one percent, adding \$100 million to the fund	57	39	4

Democrats are more willing to consider such a tax (50% agree) than Republicans (26% agree)

# Challenges for Governing: Conclusions

- **Public wants solutions** to traffic issues – open to exact methods
- **Political cost for inaction** regarding traffic congestion –
  - Growing cynicism about government competency
  - Lack of trust in politicians
  - Premise of developer control over growth priorities – higher density but inadequate infrastructure
- **Reluctance to pay** more for traffic solutions – find creative solutions?
- **Rethink development model** if financing for additional capacity isn't forthcoming

