

Synthesizing Public Opinions on Transportation Issues and Needs

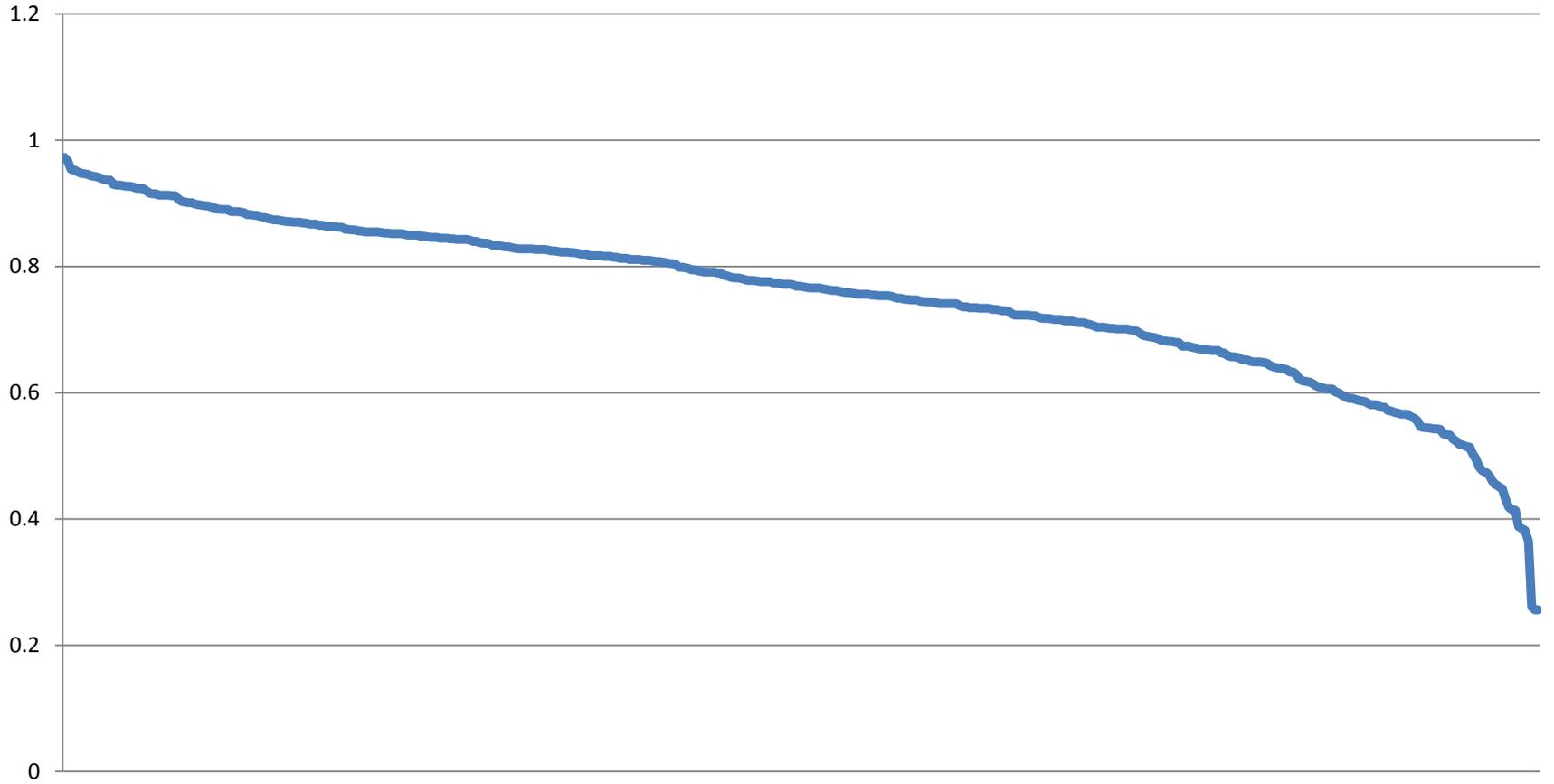
REVIEWING SURVEYED OPINIONS
PRESENTED IN PAST RESEARCH

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for
Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council

METHODOLOGY

- I began by cataloguing each data point by origin, length, means of record, time frame, geography, and social demographics when applicable.
- I constructed a frequency analysis like those above that can be sectionally manipulated to identify frequencies within cross-sections of data.
- distorted n -grams of words were used to develop a pattern of likely usage across swaths of public opinion.
- Each opinion response was algorithmically assigned a sentiment score ranging from zero to one, this is a measure of the overall “positivity” of the text in question.
- Every data point was scored for lexical variation to determine commonalities in expressed themes.
- After assigning firm linguistic character measures to each response, it became possible to plot the overall sentiment of the community on given issues or in given areas.

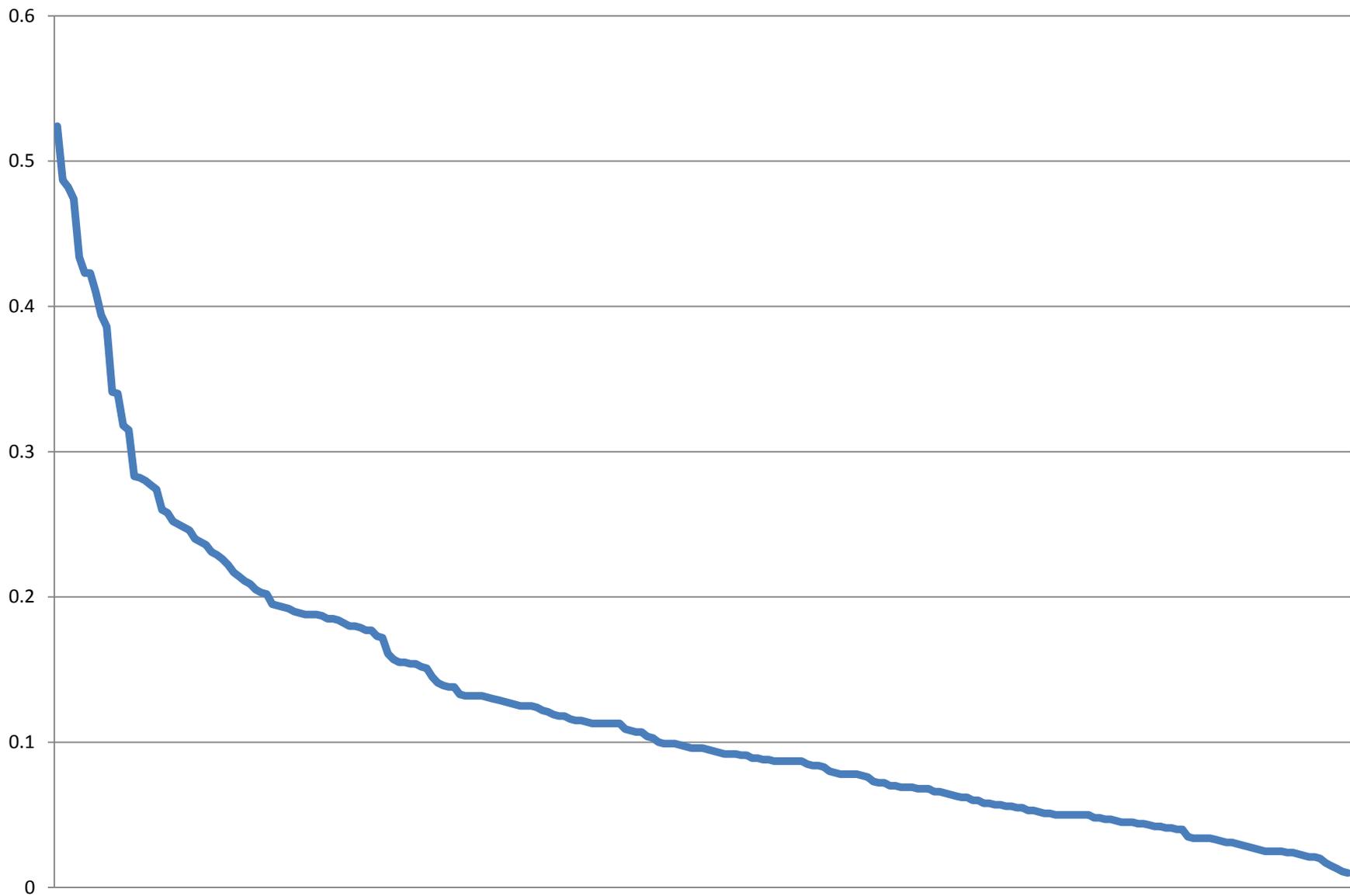
Neutral Sentiment



NEUTRAL RESPONSE WORD USE INDICATIONS

- In over half of responses using the word “rail” the word “light” or phrase “to Portland” was mentioned
- Over 90% of neutral responses mentioned the possibility of rail line as a key consideration for their support: 73% of respondents indicated that rail was necessary for their support
- The need for further investigation was the unifying theme of the neutral response pool – common issues for further consideration include “infrastructure”, “oil- transit”, “traffic”, “the river”
- Many neutral responses offered items for further consideration including environmental impact, the possibility of green space inclusion, the benefits of replacement, and the economic impact increased access

Negative Sentiment



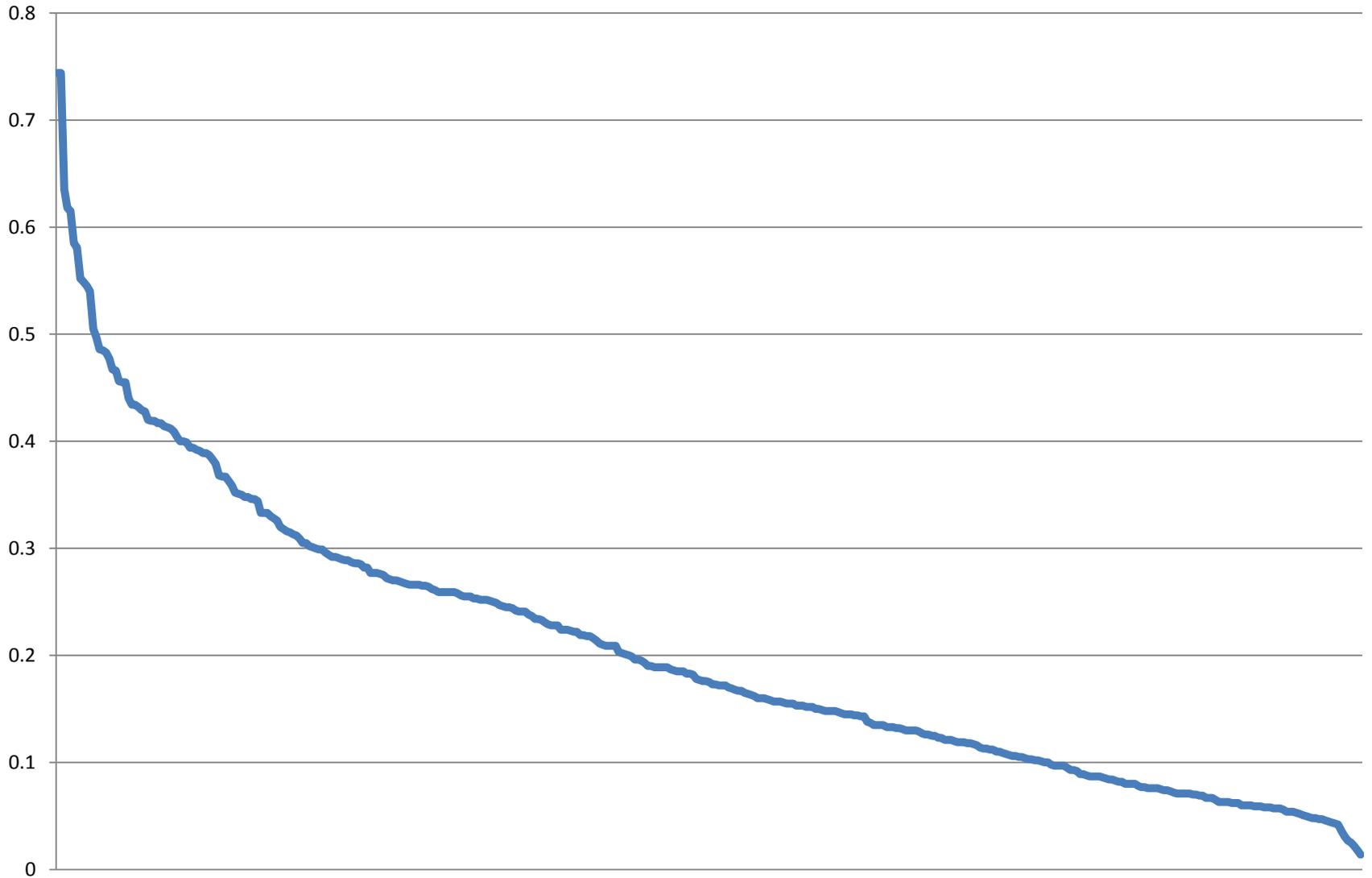
NEGATIVE RESPONSES



NEGATIVE SENTIMENT INDICATIONS

- When compared to the positive response pool, the negative group holds less intense opinions that appear to taper at a slower rate
- A slowly tapering sentiment, as shown above, often indicates a persistent presentation of opinion that is likely repetitive
- The idea that the negative response group may be less diverse in ideology is supported by the fact that over **60%** of response cases mentioned a fear of that would be brought into Southwest Washington should transit become easier.
- The negative response pool has a the shortest average response when compared to the neutral and positive subgroups; this indicates a quick opposition primarily to light rail transit
- Negative responses represent roughly **20%** of the overall response body

Positive Sentiment



POSITIVE RESPONSE WORD INDICATIONS

- Many responses that trended positive indicated the benefits of additional transportation options from the perspective of someone who enters Portland
- Over half of respondents mentioned “**access**” to “**new**” areas of interest and activities that may currently be inconvenient
- Many respondents mentioned the “**tax**” arguments although most indicated a willingness to incur the burden provided the reward was increased arterial transit
- A surprising number of respondents indicated that “**move[ing]**” was a consideration when attending to the transportation conversation
- Economic competitiveness is indicated as a need for increasing transportation options, words like “**jobs**”, “**employment**”, “**commute**”, and “**opportunities**” indicate a financial need for more options
- The overall attractiveness of the region and value of homes is a frequently mentioned concept