225 SOUTH WASHINGTON SQUARE LANSING, MICHIGAN 48933 517.372.4400 (P) 517.372.4045 (F)

MARKETING RESOURCE GROUP, INC.

COMMUNICATIONS ♦ PUBLIC RELATIONS
PUBLIC AFFAIRS ♦ SURVEY RESEARCH

Public Opinion Survey
Michigan Roads and Bridges Funding

Executive Summary

Introduction

A survey of 600 likely voters was conducted by live interview April 2-6, 2014. A random sample of likely voters was drawn from a listed random sample of those identified as likely to vote given past voting behavior, and was stratified by county and township. In addition, voters were screened for interest in the November election. Twenty-five percent of respondents were interviewed via cell-phone.

Most Important Issue

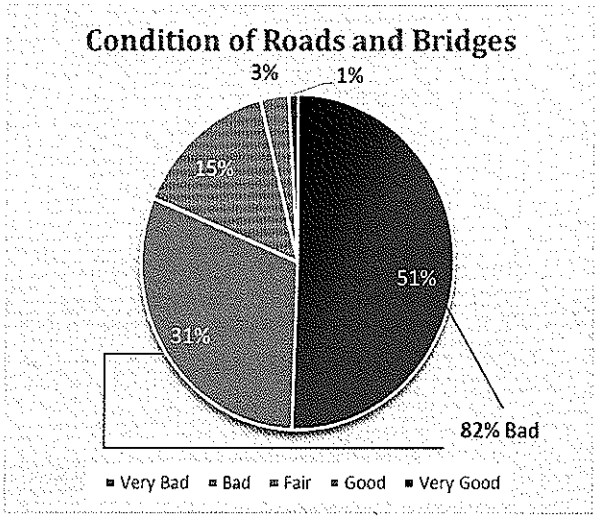
Voters were asked to choose the one issue they, personally, felt was the most important issue facing the State of Michigan at the present time.

- Roads and bridges was chosen by 23 percent of all voters, second only to "the economy and jobs" (35 percent.)
- On the MRG Michigan Poll Spring 2013, only five percent of voters said "Roads" was one of the most important issues facing Michigan. Sixty-one percent said "Jobs and the Economy," and 14 percent mentioned "Education."

Road and Bridge Conditions

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the condition of roads and bridges, satisfaction with maintenance and thoughts about spending.

- Eighty-two percent of likely voters think the current condition of roads and bridges is bad, including a majority (51 percent) who think they are "very bad."
    - A strong majority of each voting behavior group says roads are bad including 74 percent of Republicans, 78 percent of Ticket-splitters, and 74 percent of Democrats.
    - The roads are the worst in Metro-Detroit, Mid-Michigan and the Saginaw/Flint/Bay City area with over 80 percent of voters in these areas rating their roads as bad or very bad.
- Eighty percent think roads and bridges have gotten worse over the last year, including 46 percent who say "much worse."
- Voters are overwhelmingly dissatisfied (81 percent) with the condition of roads and

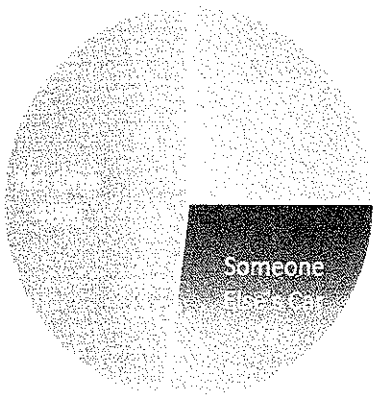


bridges in Michigan, including 49 percent who are "not at all satisfied."

The Cost of Bad Roads

- Ninety-five percent are concerned the condition of the roads may cause damage or excessive wear and tear to their vehicle, including 73 percent who are "very concerned."
- Twenty-five percent said in the last year they, personally, had sustained damage to their vehicle or been in an accident due to the condition of the roads.
    - Fifty-two percent of likely voters had either sustained damage to their own car or knew of someone else who had.
    - Twelve percent knew of more than one incident of someone's car being damaged in the last year.
- Percentage of reported damage varied by geographic area.
    - In the Metro-Detroit media market 28 percent said they personally had damage to their car, and an additional 43 percent knew of someone else who had damage.
    - Oakland County is the hardest hit with a full one-third of voters (34 percent) having damage to their car. In Oakland County, 75 percent of people either had damage to their own car or knew of someone who did.
- Eighty percent have changed their driving habits in the last year because of the roads.

Percentage of Damaged Vehicles, by Who Sustained Damage



Causes of Current Road and Bridge Conditions

Respondents were asked a series of open and close-ended questions to determine what they perceive as the cause of current road and bridge conditions.

- In an open-ended question asking the top two reasons Michigan roads are not in good condition, 42 percent of respondents mentioned the weather and 37 percent mentioned lack of funding.
- Respondents were asked specifically to rate three issues, on a scale of 1-10, that may or may not make it difficult to maintain roads. One represents "not at all difficult," and ten represents "extremely difficult." Following are the issues and their mean results:
    - Michigan's freeze and thaw weather cycle—8.3
    - Lack of funding for maintenance and improvements—7.9
    - Number of heavy trucks and semi-trucks—7.2

Funding for Roads and Bridge Maintenance and Improvement

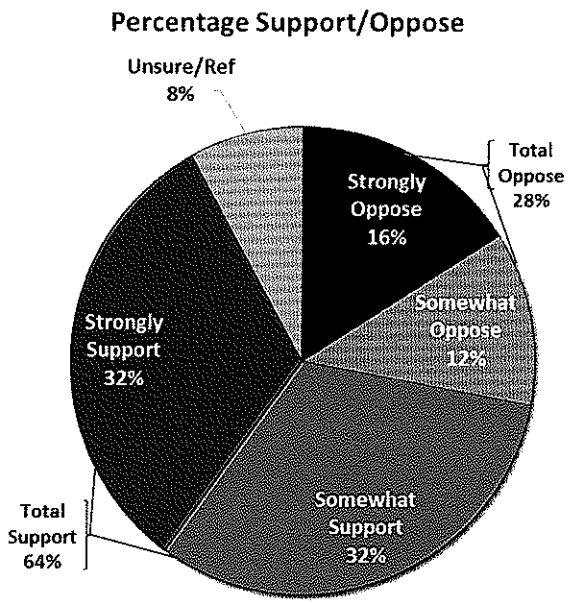
Respondents were asked questions about the current level of funding for road and bridge maintenance and improvements, their willingness to pay more, and perceived fairness of different options for raising additional revenue.

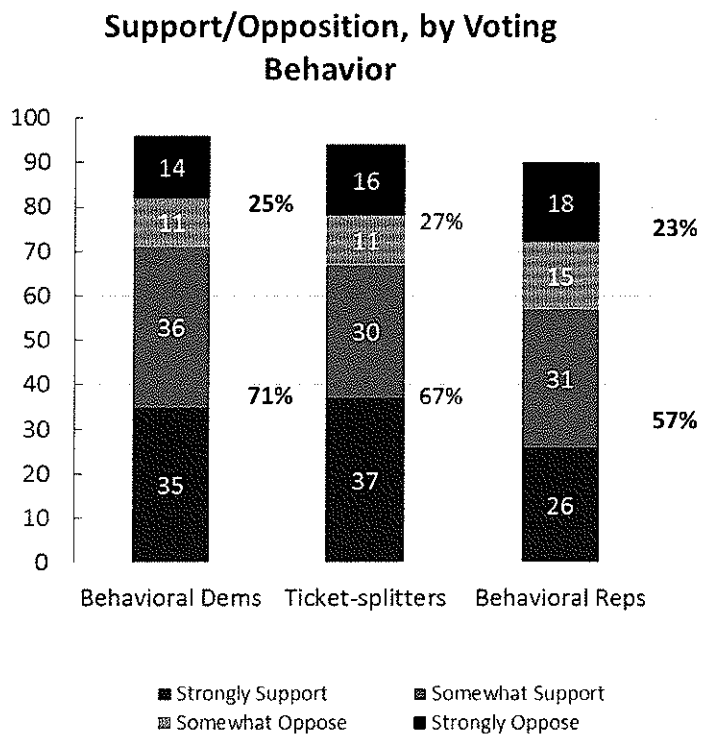
- Seventy-five percent of likely voters think the current level of spending is too low.
- Seventy-two percent favor Michigan spending an additional $1.8 billion a year for the next 10 years to maintain and improve roads and bridges.
- Sixty-eight percent favor paying an additional $10 per month in taxes or fees, for a total of an additional $120 a year, to maintain and improve roads and bridges.
    - By strong margins, all major demographic groups support paying an additional $10 per month including Republicans (59 percent support to 39 percent oppose,) Democrats (71 percent to 25 percent,) and Ticket Splitters (72 percent to 23 percent.)

Proposals

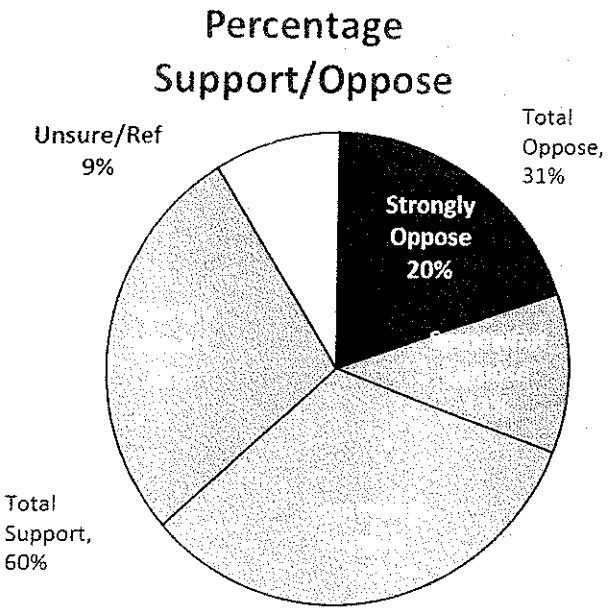
Respondents were asked to indicate if they would support or oppose two different proposals for raising an additional $1.8 billion a year for road and bridge maintenance and improvements. (Proposals were rotated to minimize order bias.)

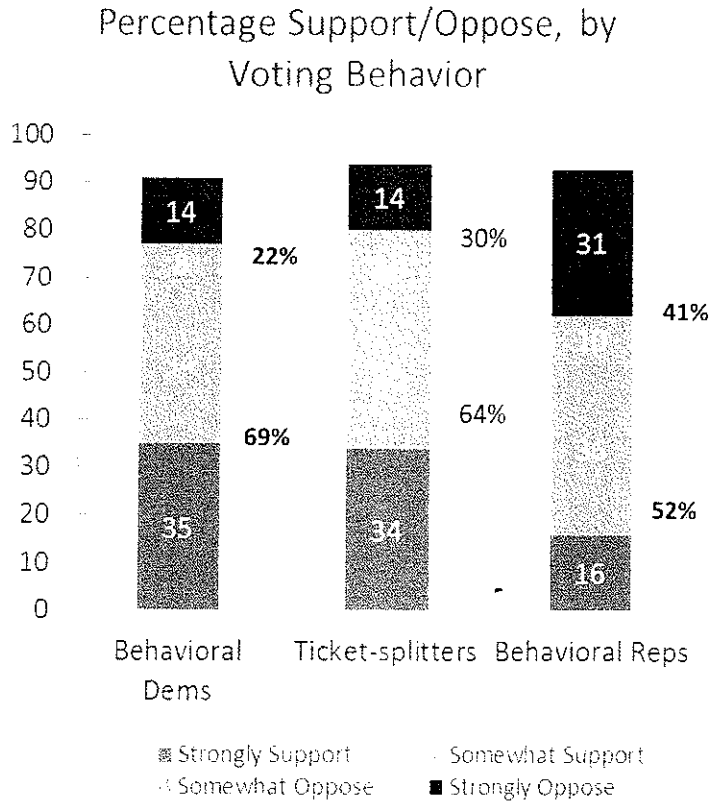
Proposal A: *Michigan would eliminate the 19 cents per gallon retail Gas Tax paid by drivers at the pump, and replace it with a tax based on the wholesale price of gas to be paid by the oil companies. This would raise a majority of the $1.8 billion in additional funds needed. Would you support or oppose such a proposal to raise additional funds to maintain and improve Michigan roads?*





Proposal B: *Michigan would change some vehicle registration fees by closing loopholes like exemptions for dealer plates and logging trucks, and eliminating some vehicle registration discounts. It would also increase registration fees for commercial trucks including the largest multi-axle trucks and semi-trucks by up to $1,000 per year, per vehicle, and replace the 19-cent-per-gallon gas tax with a wholesale tax paid by the oil companies. Would you support or oppose such a proposal to raise 1.8 billion each year in additional funds to maintain and improve Michigan roads and bridges?*

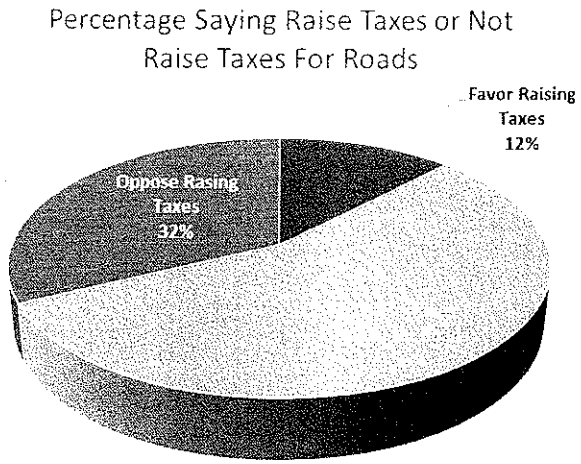




General Attitudes Regarding Taxes

Respondents were asked to respond to choose which of three statements comes closest to how they feel about tax increases: *"Which of the following three statements come closest to how you feel about paying $10 more a month for road and bridge maintenance and improvements?"*

A. *I strongly favor raising taxes on gasoline to invest more in our roads and bridges.*
B. *I normally don't favor increasing any tax, but in this case I'd reluctantly go along with a reasonable increase because our roads and bridges are in poor condition.*
C. *I oppose raising the taxes on gasoline or any other tax.*

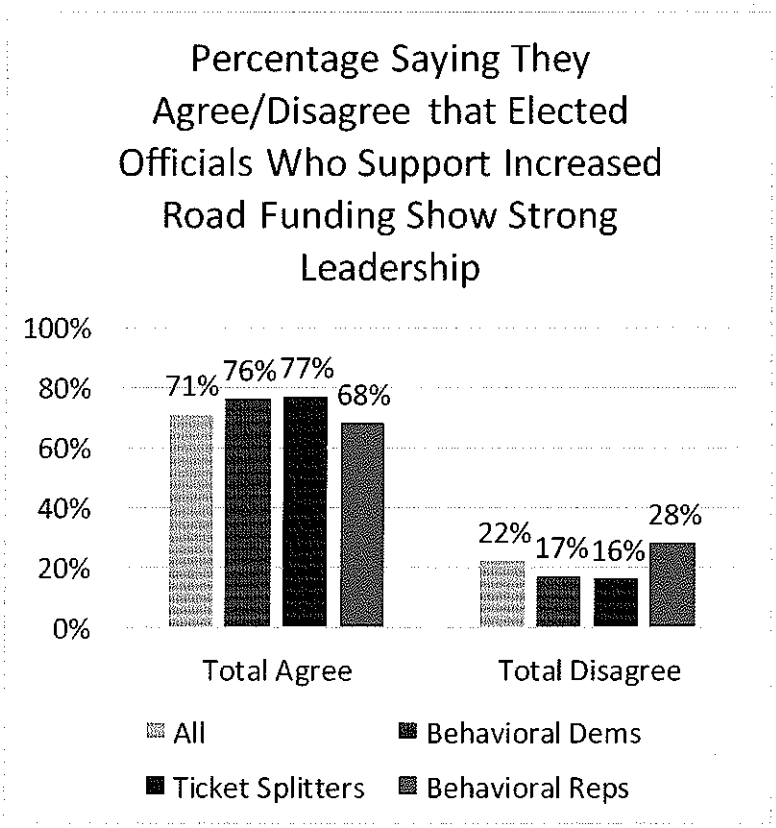


Legislative Leadership

Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with the following statement:

"Elected officials who support additional funding for roads and bridges, even if it means an increase in taxes or fees, would be showing strong leadership by putting policy before politics."

Overall, 71 percent of likely voters agree with this statement including 68 percent of Republicans, 77 percent of Ticket-Splitters and 76% of Democrats.



Overview

The voters of the state see the poor condition of our roads as a near crisis situation. The condition of our roads and bridges now is second only to jobs and the economy as the most important issue. Virtually no one believes that the condition of our roads are adequate; 80 percent have changed their driving habits, and half are personally aware of someone who has damaged their car in a pothole.

A vast majority of voters believe we are not spending enough to maintain our roads and there is solid support for spending $1.8 billion. However, voters are unwilling to give state government a blank checkbook. They will support a plan that costs them $10 per month, but they want assurances all the money goes to roads.