



MEMO

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: ROB AUTRY & LORI WEIGEL / PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
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DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2012
RE: KEY FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF MINNESOTA VOTERS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Key findings

1. Minnesotans say the state would benefit from expanded and improved public transportation.

It doesn't matter what political persuasion you are, what part of the state you reside in, or whether you have a two minute commute or a two hour commute; there is widespread agreement that

"Q: Minnesota would benefit from having an expanded and improved public transportation system, such as rail and buses." (76% agree, 19% disagree).

Statewide: Minnesota would benefit from expanded and improved public transportation.

76%

This view is steady through time. A 2010 survey of Minnesota voters (by the same team) found that 77% of voters agreed that public transportation gives the state broad benefits.

2. Minnesotans (57% of Republicans, 66% of Independents, and 79% of Democrats) say they would like to use public transportation more often.

Q: "I would like to use public transportation such as rail or buses more often, but it is not convenient or available from my home or work."

Statewide, would like to use public transportation more often.

69%

This statewide support and desire for transit produces support for Southwest LRT.

3. There is solid statewide voter support for funding the Southwest Light Rail. Six in ten (61%) voters statewide and nearly 64% of voters in the seven county metro region support dedicating \$25 million in state funds to move forward with the Southwest Light Rail line.

Q: “Now, a proposal is being considered that would dedicate 25 million dollars in already planned state spending to move forward with the Southwest Light Rail line that would extend from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie and connect to the other three existing rail lines. These funds would help the state secure an additional 625 million dollars in federal matching funds that combined with planned state and local spending could build the new rail line.

“Knowing this, would you support or oppose dedicating 25 million dollars in state funds to move forward with the Southwest Light Rail line?”

Statewide: 61% support, 33% oppose, 6% undecided.

Metro: 64% support, 31% oppose, 5% undecided.

Statewide, support funding for Southwest Light Rail

61%

- While support runs higher in the metro region, a majority of voters in every region across the state backs the funding proposal.

Region	Support	Oppose
Hennepin/Ramsey	69%	26%
Outer Suburbs	59%	34%
Southern Minnesota	57%	37%
Western Minnesota	52%	39%
Northeastern Minnesota	59%	37%

- Support is also high among small business owners and operators.

Among the 18% of voters who said they own or run a small business, support for the funding proposal reaches 56% (39% oppose).

4. Minnesotans see SW LRT as supporting jobs and quality of life.

The top three reasons that Minnesotans see to invest in SW LRT:

Q: “There are a number of reasons why some people say we should SUPPORT dedicating state funds to move forward with the planned Southwest Light Rail line. For each one please tell me if that statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or not at all convincing as a reason to support the State Legislature dedicating those funds.”

Total very convincing + somewhat convincing:

79% Transit ridership in the region keeps growing, and we need to continue to meet the need for a reliable way to school and work.

77% One million more people are projected to live in the Twin Cities area in the next 25 years. If we do not invest in providing more transportation options now, we'll have more traffic and clogged roads, more pollution and a worse quality of life.

74% The Southwest Light Rail line and other public transportation improvements are supported by the Minneapolis and St. Paul Chambers of Commerce, other area business groups, and hundreds of employers across the region as a way to reduce traffic congestion and provide a way for workers to get to jobs more easily.

The Bottom Line

From the Red River Valley to southeastern Minnesota's bluff country, Minnesotans from all walks of life believe the state would benefit from having an expanded and improved public transportation system. That finding helps explain why there is such solid voter support – both statewide and especially in the metro area – for moving forward with the Southwest Light Rail line.

About this survey

The bipartisan research team of Public Opinion Strategies and Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates present findings from a survey:

- Of 700 voters throughout Minnesota
- Including 400 voters in the Twin Cities metro region. *Metro region:* voters from seven counties: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington.
- Conducted January 14-17, 2012.

The statewide data have an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.7%. The metro region data have a margin of error of plus or minus 4.9%. Margins of error for sub-groups vary depending on the size of that group.