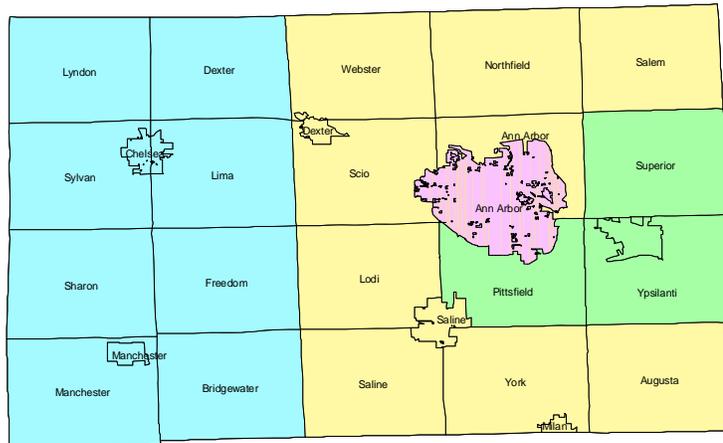


## Survey Methodology

The team of CJI Research Corporation and Triad Research Group completed a total of 1,100 telephone interviews with a random sample of registered voters in Washtenaw County between October 5 and 15, 2009. There are three objectives for the survey:

1. Examining attitudes and behaviors in the background of a transit tax increase issue, including voters' opinions of quality of life in Washtenaw County, awareness and household use of AATA and the perceived importance of providing transit service in the county.
2. Measuring voters' support for a possible one mil property tax increase for AATA and their reasons for supporting or opposing a property tax, including the services that AATA could offer if the tax increase is approved by voters.
3. Testing various reasons to vote for or against a property tax increase for AATA in order to determine the obstacles for the tax issue and identify arguments that would help increase and strengthen support for it.

For purposes of sampling and analysis, Washtenaw County was divided into four regions as shown in the varies colors on the map below. This assured adequate representation of all parts of the county.



## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

### QUALITY OF LIFE IN WASHTENAW COUNTY

- Voters' general satisfaction with the community often impacts their opinion of public agencies. Almost all voters (96%) are very (61%) or somewhat (35%) satisfied with Washtenaw County as a place to live.
- Voters are divided on whether Washtenaw County is a better or worse place to live today than it was five years ago. Almost one-fourth of voters (24%) say Washtenaw County is a **better** place to live today than it was five years ago while another fourth (25%) say it is a **worse** place to live today. A plurality (39%) voluntarily say that the county is about the same today as it was five years ago. The remaining 12% were not sure.

### USE OF AND OPINIONS ABOUT AATA

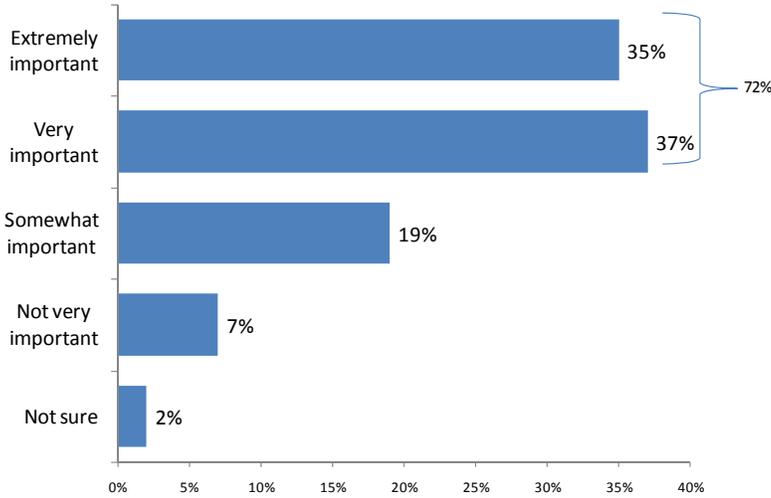
- Awareness of AATA is high, at 95% countywide.
- Of all county voters, 40% say they or another person in their household have used AATA in the past year.
- Opinions of AATA were highly favorable, with a total of 65% saying they have either a very favorable (26%) or somewhat favorable (39%) opinion of AATA.
- Similarly the "job rating" of AATA is favorable, with a total of 59% rating its job performance as excellent (15%) or good (44%).

**Importance of providing public transit**

**Almost three-fourths of voters think it is extremely important or very important to provide transit services in Washtenaw County.**

Voters tend to consider it very important to provide public transit service in Washtenaw County: 72% rated this service extremely (35%) or very (37%) important.

Q10. How important do you think it is to provide public transit services in Washtenaw County?



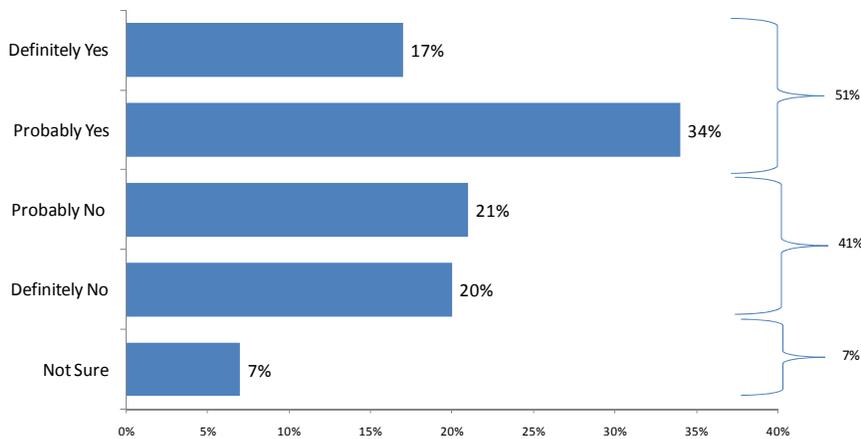
**Initial vote on a one mil transit tax increase**

**Only half (51%) of the voters would support a one mil property tax increase for AATA initially.**

Respondents were told that AATA has been asked to consider placing a tax issue on the ballot for the purpose of providing and expanding public transportation throughout all of Washtenaw County. They were told to assume that it would increase property taxes by one mil countywide. In the first vote question, half of the voters (51%) say they would definitely (17%) or probably (34%) vote "Yes" on the property tax increase while two-fifths (41%) say they would definitely (20%) or probably (21%) vote "No." Only 7% were undecided.

The fact that twice as many voters say they would "probably" than "definitely" vote "Yes" means that the supporting vote at the time of the survey was "soft" and thus potentially subject to attrition.

Q5 Sometime next year, the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, AATA, may have a tax issue on the ballot for the purpose of providing and expanding public transportation throughout all of Washtenaw County. Assuming that it would increase property taxes by



**Implications of the initial vote result**

*Although a nominal majority favor the issue today, much of the support is soft. It is essential that positive attitudes be strengthened and the narrow majority increased.*

For an issue to be successful, survey results by the time of the election must have at least 55% of the voters saying they would vote “Yes” and no more than 30% saying they would vote “No.” The reason for needing more than a 50.1% “Yes” vote is that there will be attrition among supporters, and little, if any, attrition among opponents. On transit tax increase issues (and some other issues) persons with lower tendencies to turn out to vote (e.g., lower income persons, younger persons) are more likely to favor the issue, but less likely to actually vote. There will be attrition among supporters, and there is a potential that opposing voters can become galvanized.

The vote of 51% in favor to 41% opposed does not meet either the 55% or greater pro-vote or the 30% or lower anti-vote. Too few vote for the issue and too many vote against it for it to pass easily.

However, all of this is not to say that the issue cannot pass. On balance there is reason to believe it can, although it will require a determined effort. Based on these results, the chances of passing this levy in the short run are slightly less than 50/50 at this time. The art and science of eventually passing this levy will depend upon three things:

- The ability of a campaign to solidify the attitudes of positive voters.
- The ability of the campaign to get out the positive vote.
- The ability of a campaign to change the minds of some of those who do not at present take a very positive view of the issue, but who remain somewhat open to changing their minds.

**Demographics of the voters**

*There are important demographic differences between supporters and opponents of the issue:*

- Voters living in Ann Arbor are much more likely than others to definitely (23%) or probably (36%) vote for the levy than are others. The Ann Arbor voters were informed in a later question that they were already paying 2 mils for transit and that the additional one mil constituted an increase. One-third (33%) said that fact would make them less likely to vote for the levy, but 51% said it would make no difference and a few (10%) said it would make them more likely to vote for it.
- The youngest voters are more supportive (total of 63% “Yes” voters) than the oldest voters (45%).
- Democrats favor the issue (63% vote “Yes”), Republicans oppose it (70% vote “No”) and Independents are divided (45% support, and 48% oppose).
- Voters in AATA user households support the issue (71% “Yes” voters), while those in non-user households are more divided, but are more likely to oppose it (total of 39% support and 53% oppose).
- There is very little difference in the voting tendencies of men and women. This is unusual. Women often tend to be more supportive of such issues than are men.
- There is relatively little difference in the voting tendencies by income level.

**Perceived quality of life**

*The vote on the transit tax increase issue is to some extent rooted in the larger realm of favorable and optimistic attitudes toward changes in the quality of life in Washtenaw County.*

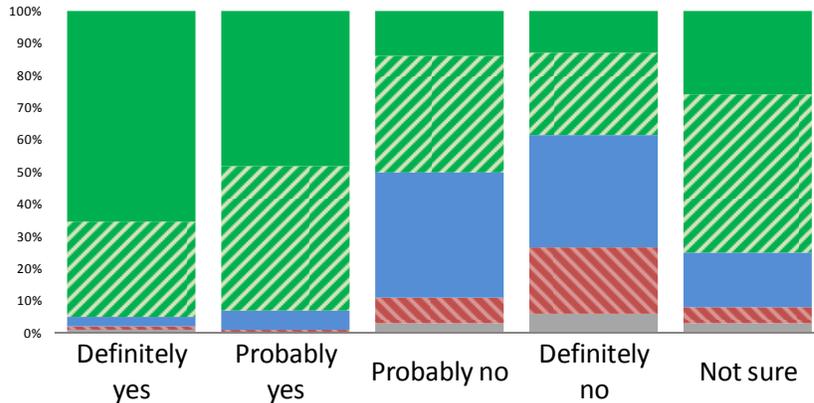
The more voters feel that living in Washtenaw County is better today than it was five years ago, the more likely they are to vote for the levy. Unfortunately, they are divided on the matter of the direction of quality of life in Washtenaw County.

Those who feel life is worse now in Washtenaw County than it was five years ago are more than three times more likely (28%) to say they would definitely vote “No” on the transit levy than they are to definitely vote “Yes” (9%). Conversely, those who feel that life is better than it was five years ago in Washtenaw County are one and one half times more likely to definitely vote “Yes” (24%) than to definitely vote “No” (16%).

*Because most voters are not transit users a key to the electoral prospects of a transit tax issue is the general perception that public transit is a very important public service for Washtenaw County regardless of one's intent to use it. AATA must try to increase the number of voters who believe AATA services are very important to provide, and that more transit services are needed.*

When we examine the relationship between the vote and the belief that it is important to provide public transit in Washtenaw County, we can see clearly that those who vote "Yes" are much more likely than those who vote "No" to perceive transit as an important public priority. While 66% of those definitely voting "Yes" consider public transit as extremely important, only 13% of those voting "No" perceive it as extremely important.

Q10 How important do you think it is to provide public transit services in Washtenaw County?



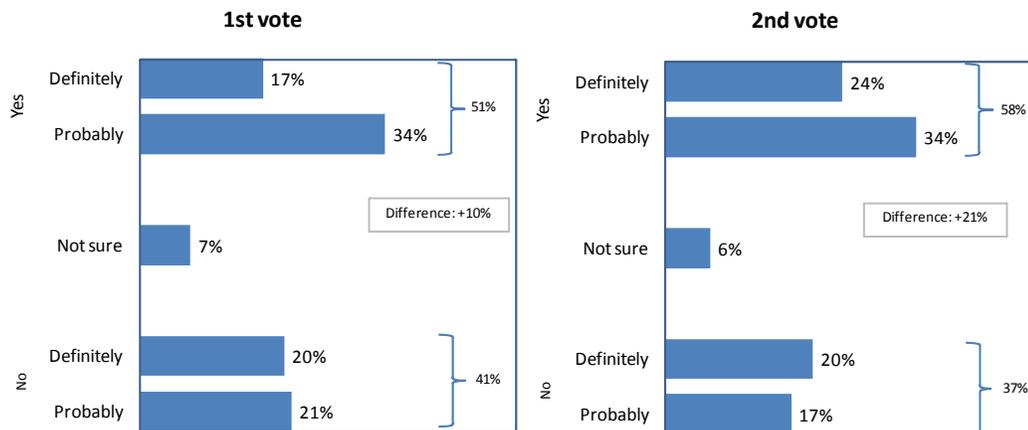
Q5. First vote on AATA's one mil property tax increase

	Definitely yes	Probably yes	Probably no	Definitely no	Not sure
Extremely important	66%	48%	14%	13%	26%
Very important	30%	45%	36%	26%	49%
Somewhat important	3%	6%	39%	35%	17%
Not very important	1%	1%	8%	21%	5%
Not sure	1%	0%	3%	6%	3%

*Exposure to pro and con arguments and information about AATA results in positive vote movement*

Respondents were asked twice during the survey to vote on the transit tax. They were asked at the beginning of the survey and near then end after exposure to various arguments for and against such a levy.

After exposure to arguments for and against the tax issue, there was movement in the vote from a 10% advantage to a 21% advantage, a vote shift of 11%. This means that if a campaign can be mounted to make the appropriate arguments to the appropriate target audiences, the campaign can improve the positive vote.



*Although issues of geographic fairness and local spending priorities are important to voters, the most important issue confronting of this levy is affordability in a time of economic uncertainty. Half of the voters are concerned about the economy and whether they can afford a tax increase.*

First we see that about half of the voters agree that affordability is a concern. That is...

- 51% agree that “I’d like to expand public transit, but I cannot afford to pay any more taxes” while 43% disagree.
- Similarly, 47% agree that “the economy is too uncertain for me to vote for this tax increase” while 48% disagree with this.

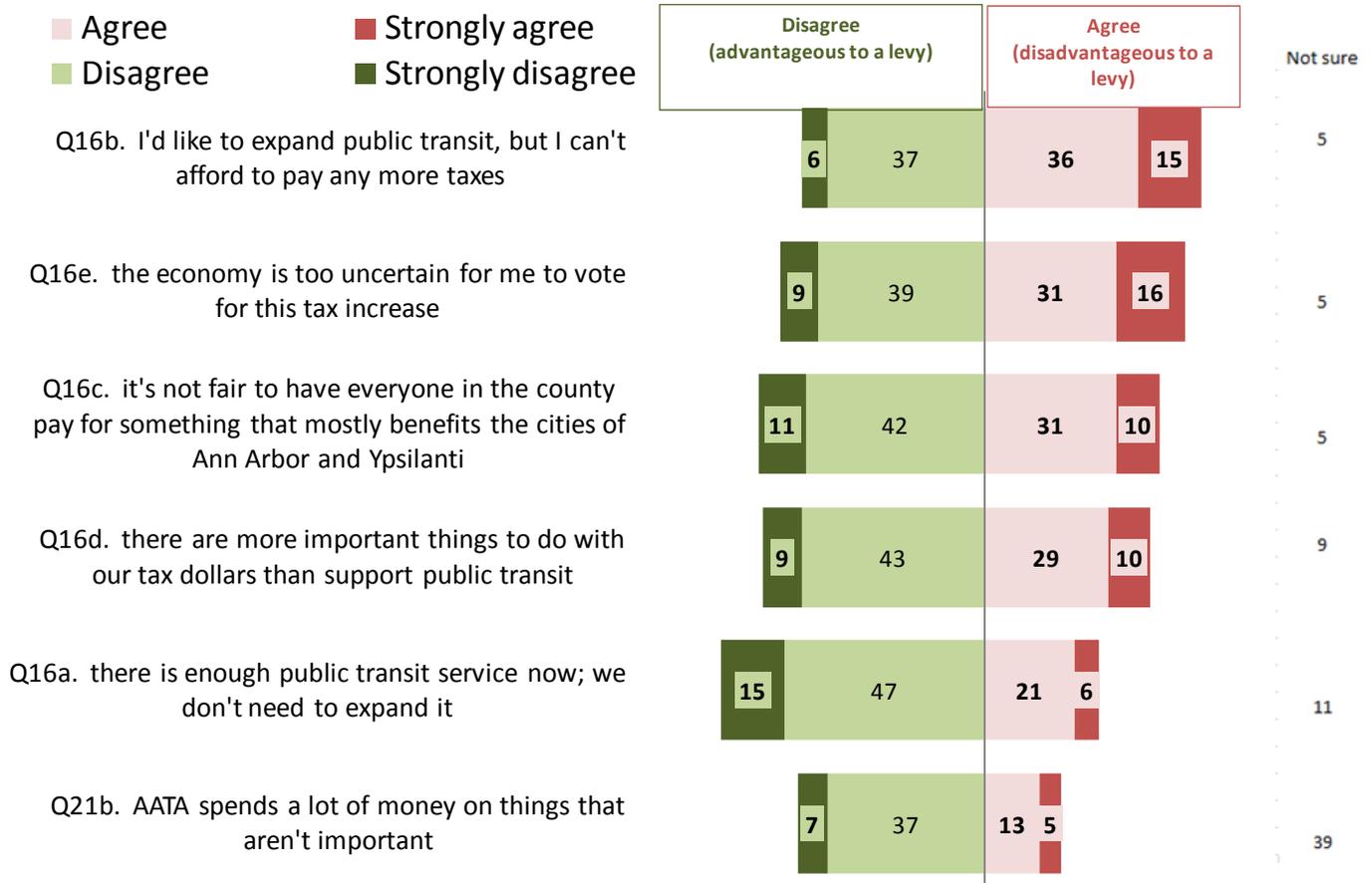
Other issues:

- Fairness is less important, but it is an issue in that 41% agree that “It’s not fair to have everyone in the county pay for something that mostly benefits Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti.” It will be important for a campaign to make it clear that the entire county would benefit if the tax passes.
- The priority of public transit is a salient anti-levy argument for 39% of voters who agree that “There are more important things to do with our tax dollars than support public transit.
- Most people (62%) reject the statement that “there is enough public transit service now; we don’t need to expand it.” This reflects a growing trend nationally concerning the importance of transit.
- A high percentage of voters (39%) do not know how to answer the assertion that “AATA spends a lot of money on things that aren’t important.” It will be important for community leaders, especially business leaders, to make it clear that AATA’s spending is frugal and effective.

**Arguments against a transit tax**

### Agreement / disagreement with statements that would undermine a vote for a transit tax

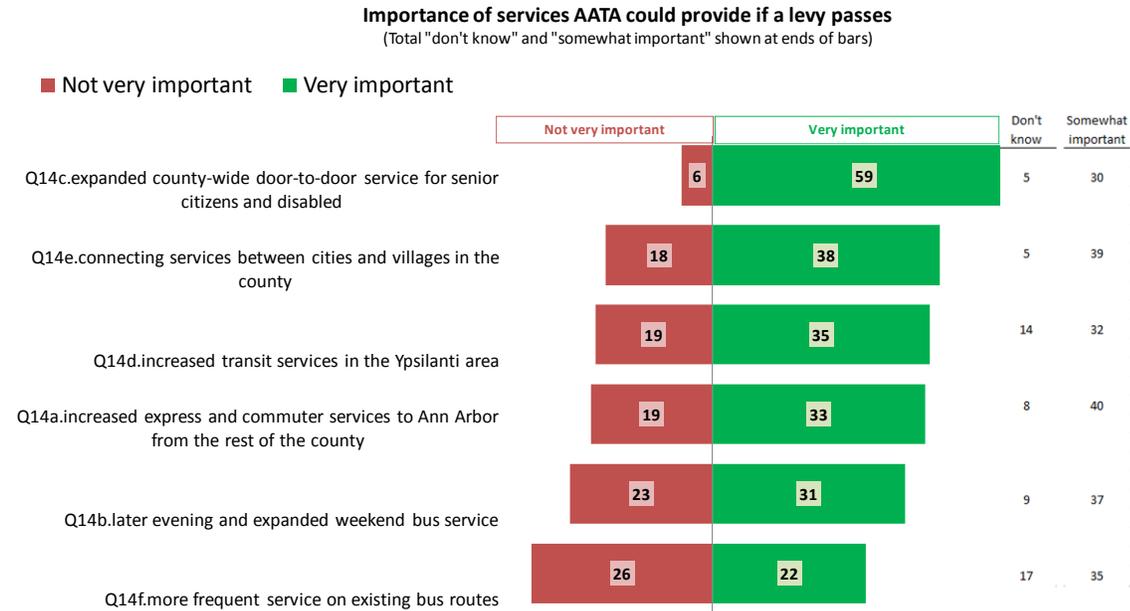
(Total "don't know" shown at ends of bars.)



**Service improvements that would be provided by the tax increase**

*The service improvement considered very important by most voters is expanded county-wide door-to-door service for seniors and persons with disabilities. Most voters do not use AATA, and this one service for others has especially great appeal to non-users.*

Other services that were considered very important by substantial numbers of voters involve services outside of Ann Arbor. These include: service connecting cities and villages of the county (38%), increased service in the Ypsilanti area (35%), increased express and commuter service from other parts of the county to Ann Arbor (33%). Later evening and expanded weekend service and more frequent service on existing routes tend to appeal to transit

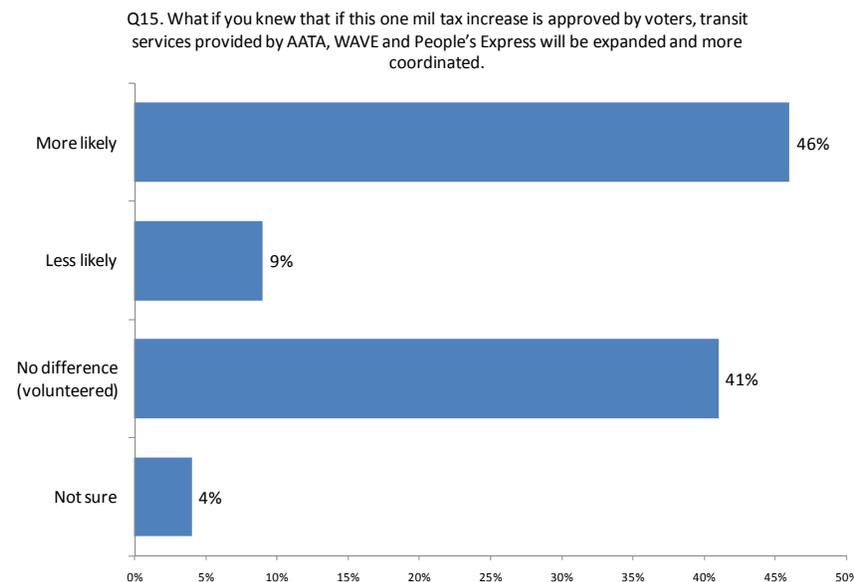


users, and most voters do not use public transit. Thus the net percent of all voters considering them very important, compared to those considering them not very important, is small.

*Voters responded favorably when told that the three transit services in the county will be expanded and more coordinated.*

When asked if they would be more likely or less likely to vote for the transit tax if they knew that services of AATA , WAVE and People's Express would be expanded and more coordinated, 46% say "more likely," while only 9% say "less likely." It is clear that voters would want to know that service would be expanded and coordinated throughout the county, and not just in Ann Arbor.

**County wide service**



**Four arguments related to community benefits AATA already provides were very strong. The prospect of service reduction in Ypsilanti is a weak argument.**

Four statements about AATA were considered good or very good reasons to support the tax increase:

- Each year, AATA makes more than 460,000 trips for older adults and persons with disabilities to places like doctors' appointments, grocery shopping and work (89% positive, with 68% saying very good reason)
- In the last four years, AATA ridership has increased by more than 40% and last year, it provided over 6 million trips to people going to school, work or health care (83% positive, with 57% very good reason)
- People who ride AATA use less fuel and help to save the environment and reduce our reliance on foreign oil (81% positive, with 54% very good)
- Public transit is a vital service to many students who go to the University of Michigan, other area colleges and local high schools (80% positive, with 53% very good).

These statements have an impact because they demonstrate that AATA is competent, is using tax money well, and is accomplishing things that are consistent with voters' sense of what is good and is needed. Making such statements heard is the key to convincing voters that the agency "deserves" additional funding. It is less the promise of new service and more the achievements of current service that provide the base of willing support for the future.

Less important to voters overall was knowing that *if this tax increase fails, service in the Ypsilanti area may have to be reduced*. Overall, 56% say that this is a very good or just a good reason to support the tax. Perhaps more importantly, 36% say it is *not* a very good reason. Even in the Ypsilanti area, only 52% of voters say it is a good reason to support the tax increase and 39% say it is not a very good reason. Voters almost always react negatively to threats of loss of service, and react more positively to demonstrations of current competence and accomplishment. In this case, it is better to focus on the positive, indicating that service in Ypsilanti or connecting services between cities could be expanded if the levy passes.

**Facts about AATA**

Q17 Is each of the following a very good reason, just a good reason or not a very good reason for supporting the tax increase?

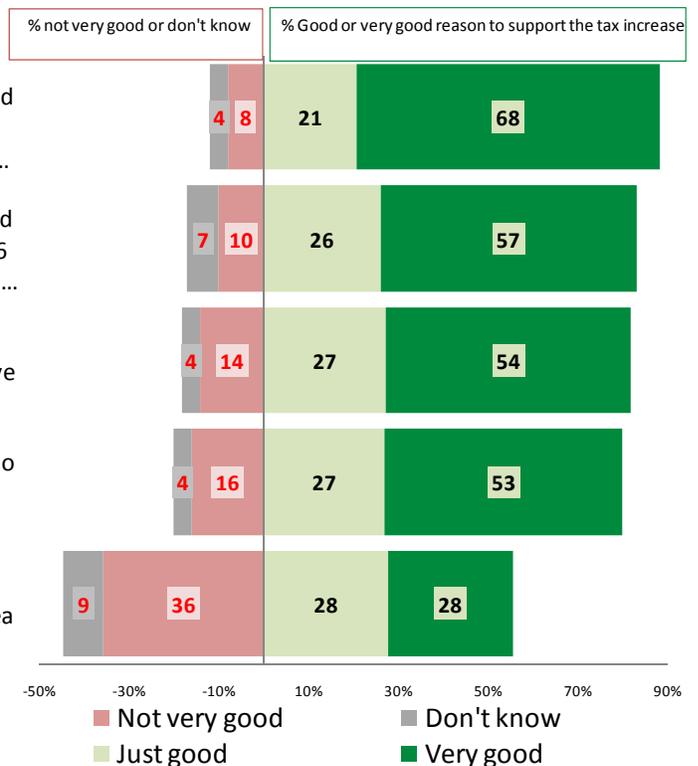
Q17b. Each year, AATA makes more than four hundred and sixty thousand trips for older adults and persons with disabilities to places like doctor's appointments, grocery ...

Q17d. In the last four years, AATA ridership has increased by more than 40 percent and last year it provided over 6 million trips to people going to school, work, health care...

Q17c. People who ride AATA use less fuel and help to save the environment and reduce our reliance on foreign oil

Q17a. Public transit is a vital service for many students who go to the University of Michigan, other area colleges and local high schools.

Q17e. If this tax increase fails, service in the Ypsilanti area may have to be reduced



**There is high agreement with four positive statements about public transit, including its importance to attracting jobs to the county and the need of seniors and persons with disabilities for transit service.**

Voters tend to see community benefits of transit:

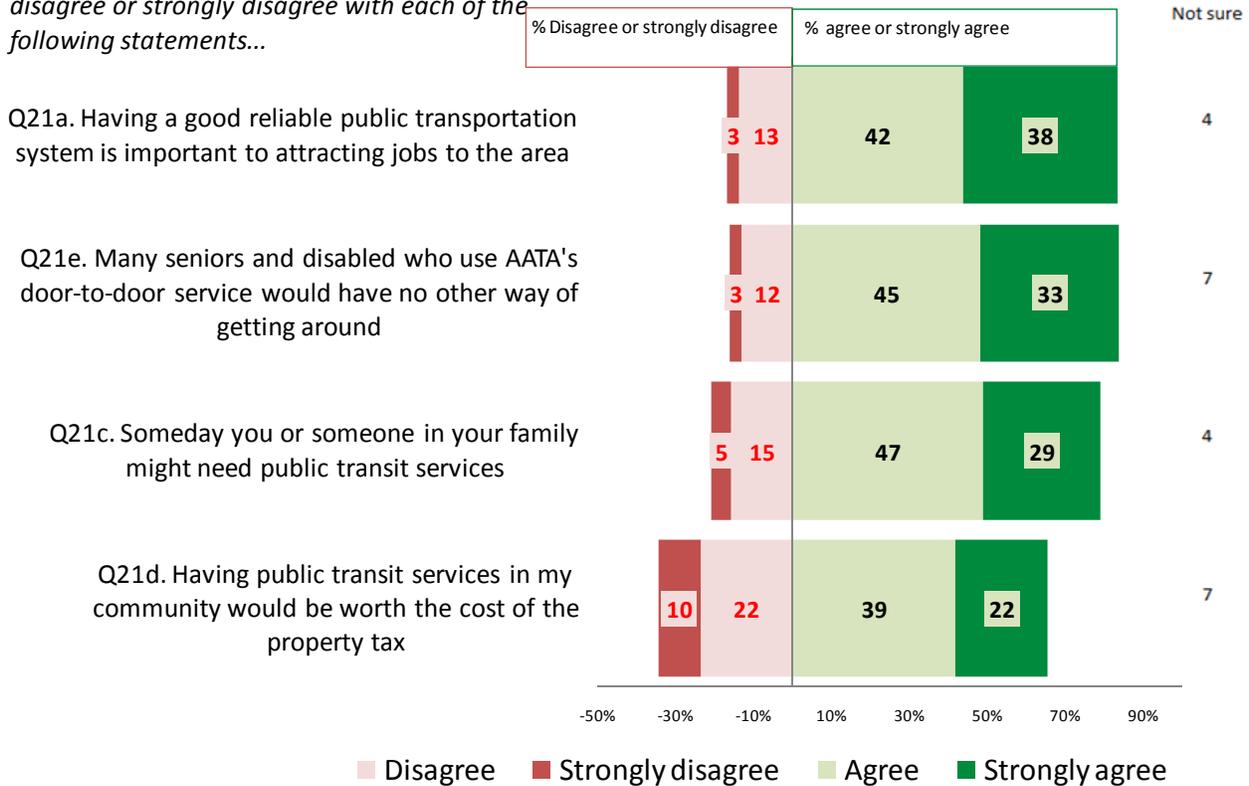
- A total of 80% agree that public transportation is important for job attraction, obviously an extremely important function in Michigan today.
- Voter empathy with the needs of seniors and persons with disabilities is also evident, with 78% agreement that those groups depend on AATA.
- In addition, 76% agree that they or another family member might need to use public transit services someday.

The pro-transit attitude is less pronounced when the costs are included. This is the affordability issue. While 61% agree that "Having public transit in my community would be worth the cost of the property tax, 32% disagree with that statement – the highest level of disagreement among the four statements in the chart. There was variation in agreement with this statement among the four regions of the county, with 68% of Ann Arbor voters agreeing, 63% of Ypsilanti voters agreeing, and fewer, though still a majority, in the area of Saline and eastern townships (54%) and Chelsea and western townships (51%) also agreeing.

The message to be conveyed to voters must be that having a good public transit system benefits the community at large, not just riders, and it has particular impact on the economy and attracting jobs. It will be essential for the campaign to enlist the testimony of significant employers and other people influential in the business community regarding the importance of public transportation to economic recovery and continuing prosperity.

**Community effects of AATA**

*Q21 Now please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements...*

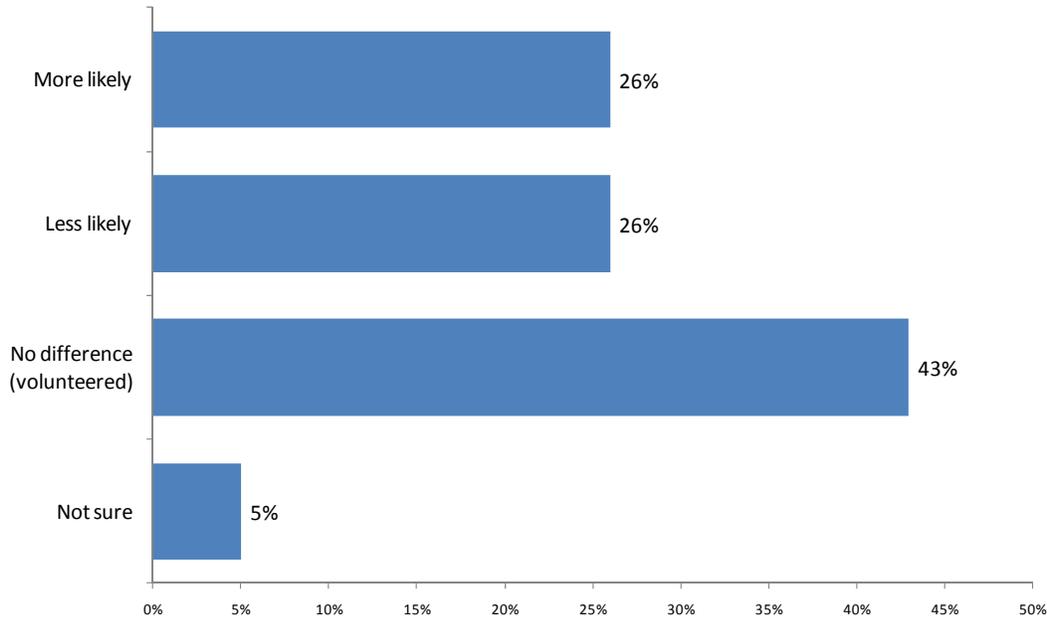


**Half have heard of the WALLY line, but there is limited voter support for it. Use of levy funds for WALLY does not aid the AATA issue.**

Overall, half of all respondents (50%) have heard or read about the WALLY line. The other half had either not heard or read anything about WALLY (48%) or were not sure (2%) if they had heard of it.

**WALLY**

Q19. If Livingston and Washtenaw counties decide to develop the WALLY line, some of the money from this tax increase would be used to provide the Washtenaw County share of money to operate the WALLY line.

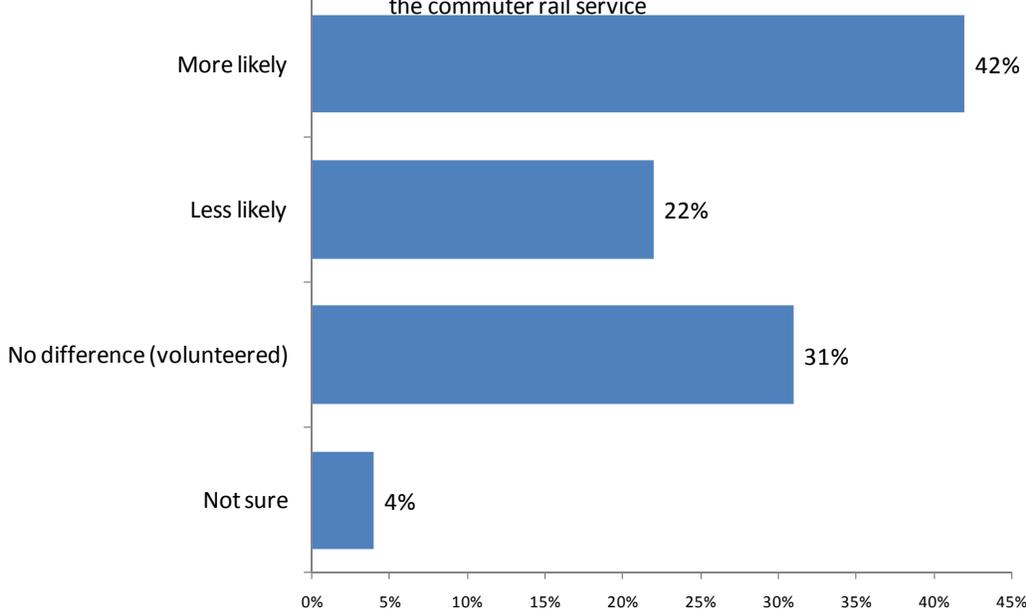


Voters were told that if Livingston and Washtenaw counties decide to develop the WALLY line, some of the money from a tax increase would be used to provide the Washtenaw County share to operate the line. Just 26% of voters say this would make them **more likely** to vote “Yes” on the tax increase, but an equal number 26% would be **less likely**, and 43% volunteered that this does not make any difference to them.

**There was more support for using some of the money to operate a commuter rail service between Ann Arbor and Detroit than for the WALLY service.**

**ANN ARBOR – DETROIT RAIL**

Q20. There has also been some discussion about operating a commuter rail service between Ann Arbor and Detroit. What if some of the money from the tax increase were used to provide the Washtenaw County share of money to operate the commuter rail service



Of all voters, 42% say they would be **more likely** to vote for the tax increase if some of the money were used to provide the Washtenaw County share of money to operate the commuter rail service between Ann Arbor and Detroit. Here too, however, about a fourth (22%) say they were **less likely** to support the tax increase knowing this, while 31% say this does not make a difference to them.

At the time of the survey (October, 2009) support for a transit tax issue, though nominally at a majority of 51%, was insufficient for it to pass. Too much of the support was half-hearted, and opposition, though in the minority, was firm. However, exposure to various arguments for and against a transit tax during the survey resulted in a gain of 10% for the issue, a fact that indicates the ability of a campaign to motivate a positive vote, not by trying to change the minds of those clearly opposed to a levy, but primarily by strengthening the interest and support of those who at the present time are only weakly committed to a positive vote on the issue.

Although households with at least one transit user are heavily in favor of a transit tax issue, and are an important constituency, they are insufficient in number to pass a transit issue. Thus the issue will turn on the broader community benefit to all, transit users and non-users alike.

The promise of improvements to existing services such as extended weekend hours and more frequent service, while probably appealing to riders, and perhaps important, do not attract voters in general. On the other hand service which broaden the usefulness of transit throughout the county have some appeal. The prospects, however, of WALLY receives a very mixed response and is not advantageous to a transit tax issue. Ann Arbor – Detroit service receives better response, but neither rail issue is, at present, a significant new plus for a transit issue, and funding for WALLY may pose a serious risk for a transit issue.

The fate of the transit tax vote will depend not on a promise of any specific service or service package, but rather on the ability of a campaign and its allies to move and solidify the positive and positive-leaning voters by informing them of AATA's existing accomplishments, its careful and productive use of public money, the county-wide nature of its future services, the need for public transit to attract jobs, and the need to expand services for seniors and those with disabilities.