

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: David Metz
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates

Lori Weigel
Public Opinion Strategies

RE: Key Findings From Survey on Transportation Options – Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

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The bipartisan polling team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) recently partnered to complete a national opinion research project to assess public attitudes toward transportation, and in particular funding of public transportation and walking and biking options.¹ The research scope included a complementary set of 200 interviews with residents of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. The survey results in Mecklenburg County reveal mixed feelings about existing transportation options in their community, and show that local residents embrace a program of local investment in expanding public transportation options, including buses, trains and light rail.

Specifically, key findings in Mecklenburg County include the following:

- **Close to one-half of Mecklenburg County respondents assign “the availability of convenient public transportation system” in their community a grade of an “A” or a “B.”** Mecklenburg County residents were asked to provide a report card for the availability of public transportation in their community. While 47 percent of survey respondents give public transportation in their area positive marks (an “A” or “B”), another 30 percent only grade it a “C” – with 11 percent a “D” and six percent a failing grade of “F.”
- **Seven-in-ten local residents say they have no choice but to drive as much as they do.** Many Mecklenburg County respondents feel they have no other option than to drive (72 percent agree). Two-in-five Mecklenburg County residents (40 percent) *strongly* agree with that they have no choice but to drive.
- **Mecklenburg County residents view the current transportation system as outdated and inadequate for our current needs.** A majority of Mecklenburg County respondents (56 percent) says that “our nation's transportation infrastructure is outdated, unreliable and inefficient.”
- **Mecklenburg County respondents are nearly twice as likely to say that they would invest in public transportation – as opposed to building new roads – as a way to solve traffic problems.** A combined 61 percent of Mecklenburg County respondents say improving public transportation (39 percent) and developing communities where people don't have to drive as much (22 percent) are the best “long term solutions to reducing traffic” in their area – rather than building new roads (25 percent).

Moreover, many Mecklenburg County residents would prefer to use public transportation if it were more convenient. Three-in-five (58 percent) say that they “would like to use public transportation more often, but it is not convenient to or available from my home or work.”

- **In order to expand transportation options, Mecklenburg County respondents overwhelmingly favor increased local investment.** 71 percent of Mecklenburg County residents back increased local government spending to expand public transportation options, including buses, trains and light rail.

ⁱ **Methodology:** From June 24 – July 1, 2012, FM3 and POS completed 800 telephone interviews with registered voters nationwide likely to cast ballots this November. Interviews were conducted on land lines and cell phones. The margin of sampling error for the full national sample is +/- 3.8%; margins of error for subgroups within the sample will be larger. The survey included a complementary sample of 200 likely voters in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, with a margin of sampling error of +/- 6.9%.

Prior to the survey, FM3 and POS held seven focus groups in four communities predominantly in outlying suburban areas of major metro areas, to assess their views on key issues related to transportation: Mecklenburg County, NC on May 14th; Raleigh, NC on May 15th; Philadelphia on May 21st; and Cleveland on May 22nd.