



TO Interested Parties

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FM3 Research

RE: Results of a Survey of Oregon and Washington Voters on a High-Speed Rail Project

DATE August 11, 2021

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of Oregon and Washington voters to assess their attitudes toward a high-speed rail line connecting major cities in the Northwest.¹ The survey results show **strong support for the project in both states, with voters particularly appreciating the benefits that the project would provide for reducing traffic, strengthening the regional economy, addressing climate change, and promoting more equitable connections between jobs and housing.**

Key specific findings of the survey include the following:

- **Majorities of voters are highly concerned about traffic, transportation infrastructure and climate.** While housing costs, homelessness, and the economic impacts of the pandemic are the top-ranking concerns in the region, majorities also rate climate change, traffic, and deteriorating transportation infrastructure as "extremely" or "very serious" problems facing the region.

Figure 1: Problems Facing the Region

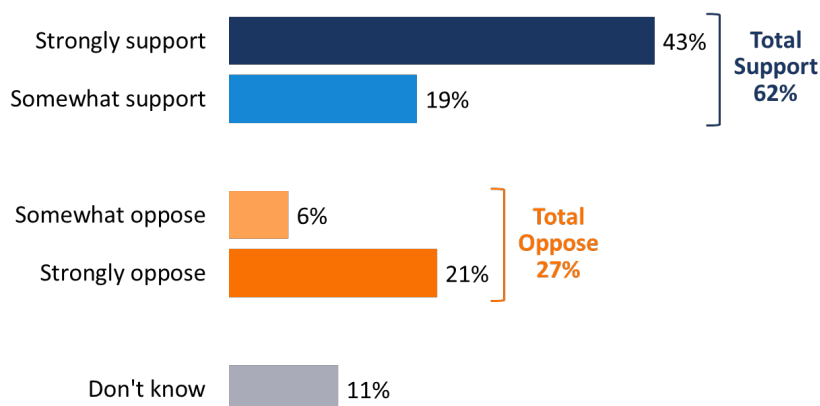
Here is a list of things some people say may be problems facing Oregon/Washington. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem for residents of your state.

Issue	% Extremely/Very Serious Problem
Homelessness	87%
The cost of housing	77%
The economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic	73%
Government waste and inefficiency	64%
Climate change	57%
Traffic	55%
Deteriorating transportation infrastructure	53%

- **More than three in five voters in Oregon and Washington support establishing a regional, high-speed rail project.** As shown in Figure 2 below, 62% support the project, with 43% backing it "strongly". Only about one-quarter would oppose the high-speed rail project.

Figure 2: Support for a High-Speed Rail Project

Here is some information about a project in the Pacific Northwest that would create a Cascadia high-speed rail system with trains that travel at 250 miles per hour on average. This would make 1-hour, direct trips between each major city between Vancouver, British Columbia, and Eugene, Oregon -- with stops in Seattle, Tacoma, Portland and potentially other cities in between. Stations in each city would be located with easy access to other transit modes and airports. This proposal would transform our passenger rail network into a faster, more integrated system that provides a safe, efficient, equitable, and affordable means of travel. Funding would come from federal infrastructure investment, as well as state and local transportation funding sources. Would you support or oppose this high-speed rail project connecting cities in the Northwest?



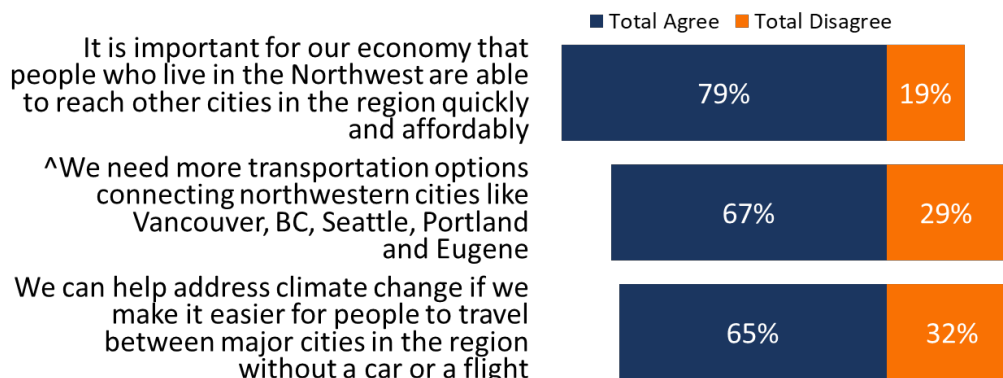
This support cuts across key demographic and geographic groups within the regional electorate, including:

- 67% of Washington voters and 60% of Oregon voters;
 - 84% of Democrats and 55% of independents;
 - 66% of women and 58% of men;
 - Majorities across every age range, specifically: 82% of voters under 30, 65% of voters in their 30s, 70% of voters in their 40s, 53% of voters ages 50 to 64, and 54% of voters age 65 and over;
 - 68% of voters with a four-year college degree, and 58% without one;
 - 65% of white voters and 66% of voters of color;
 - 70% of urban voters, 64% of medium city and suburban voters, 57% of small-town voters, and 56% of rural voters.
- **Underlying this support are the broadly-shared beliefs that the region needs more transportation options to help the economy and address climate change.** Figure 3 on the next page shows the degree to which voters agree with a range of statements about transportation in the region, and the potential impact of high-speed rail. Notably, four in five (79%) believe that quick and affordable connections between Northwestern cities

are important to our economy -- and two-thirds (67%) believe we need more transportation options between those cities.

Figure 3: Transportation System Values

Here are some statements about traffic and transportation in the Pacific Northwest. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each one.



- Broad majorities believe the high-speed rail project would have positive impacts on the economy and the environment.** As shown in Figure 4 below, some of Northwest voters' key concerns, including the economy and global warming, are things they believe would be positively impacted by this project. They also see positive impacts on travel costs and their own quality of life. As is common with large infrastructure projects, they are concerned that it could negatively impact their state budget.

Figure 4: Potential High-Speed Rail Impacts

I am going to read you a list of some different ways the high-speed rail project might impact the Pacific Northwest. Please tell me whether you think the high-speed rail line will have a positive impact, no impact, or a negative impact on that aspect of life in the Pacific Northwest.

Aspect of Life	Total Positive Impact	Total Negative Impact
Jobs and the economy	65%	11%
Traffic congestion	64%	13%
Air quality	64%	14%
Reducing global warming	59%	11%
The cost of traveling between different cities in the Northwest	56%	16%
Your quality of life	43%	12%
The affordability of housing	24%	25%
The state budget	18%	57%

- Voters most highly prioritize the project's benefits for traffic and the economy.** Three in five (62%) believe that "reducing traffic congestion and travel times" would be an important benefit of high-speed rail. Majorities say the same of potential economic benefits, including creating new jobs, connecting people to jobs and housing, and meeting the needs of a growing population. Nearly three in five (57%) view potential reductions in air pollution and smog as "very important".

Figure 5: Prioritizing Potential Benefits of High-Speed Rail

I'm going to read you a list of some of the benefits some people have said the high-speed rail line will have for the region. Please tell me how important you think that potential benefit of the project is: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important?

Potential Benefit	% Extremely/Very Important
Reducing traffic congestion and travel times	62%
Meeting the transportation needs of our growing population	58%
Connecting people to good-paying jobs and affordable housing	58%
Reducing air pollution and smog	57%
Creating new jobs	56%
Reducing carbon pollution that causes climate change	55%
Making travel cheaper	54%
Making it easier for people to live in one city and work in another city further away	53%

- Voters believe that high-speed rail will make the region more equitable.** By a 23-point margin, voters agree that the project would make the region more -- not less -- equitable by providing a cheaper, faster, and more convenient transportation option for all residents of the region.

Figure 6: Equity Impact of High-Speed Rail

Statement	% Chosen
Building a high-speed rail line will make our region more equitable, by providing a cheaper, faster, more convenient way for all residents of the region to commute to jobs	53%
Building a high-speed rail line will make our region less equitable, by investing in a new form of transportation that will mainly benefit wealthy professionals who travel between the region's cities	30%
Both/Neither/Don't know	3%

In sum, voters in the Northwest broadly support regional high-speed rail and see a variety of important benefits from such a project. They think it will help to address their existing concerns about traffic, transportation infrastructure and climate change, and believe that improving transportation connections between cities in the region will help to strengthen the economy and enhance equity.

ⁱ **Methodology:** From July 22-Aug. 3, 2021, FM3 completed 1,616 interviews on landlines, cellphones and online with likely November 2022 voters in Oregon and Washington, with at least 100 interviews per Congressional District. The margin of sampling error for the study is +/-2.5% at the 95% confidence level; it is +/-10% for each CD. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.