

RfC Survey Research Report



Southeastern Wisconsin

Regional Transit Authority

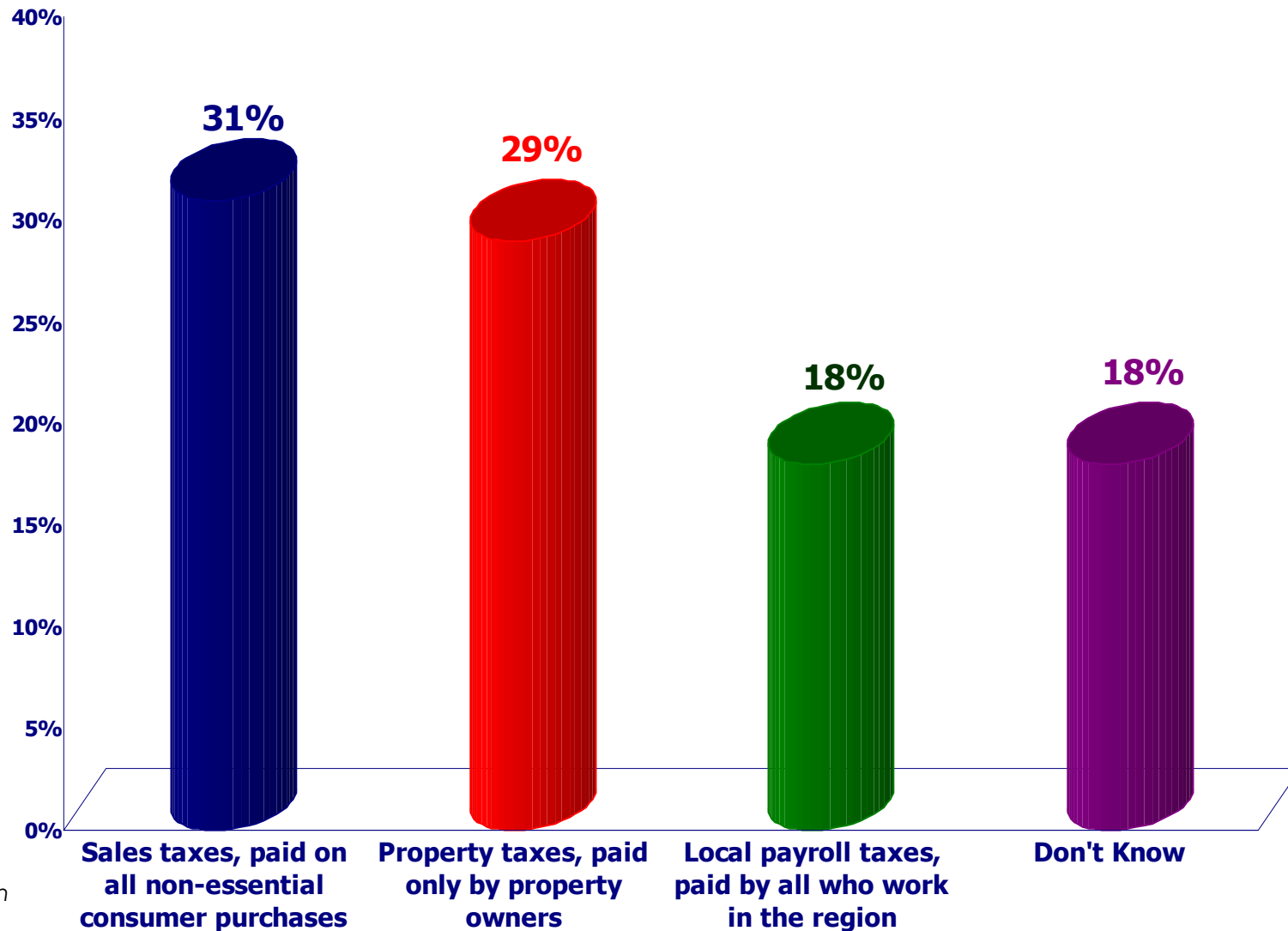
Survey of Adults in Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine Counties (N=400)

Summary Description of Methods

- **Interview dates: November 5-6, 2008**
- **400 interviews were conducted from a random digit dial sample of households in Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine Counties in Wisconsin.**
- **Maximum statistical margin of error for 400 interviews is +/- 4.9% for a random sample of adults.**
- **The data were weighted by age, gender, and county to reflect properly the demographic make up of adults in the area surveyed.**

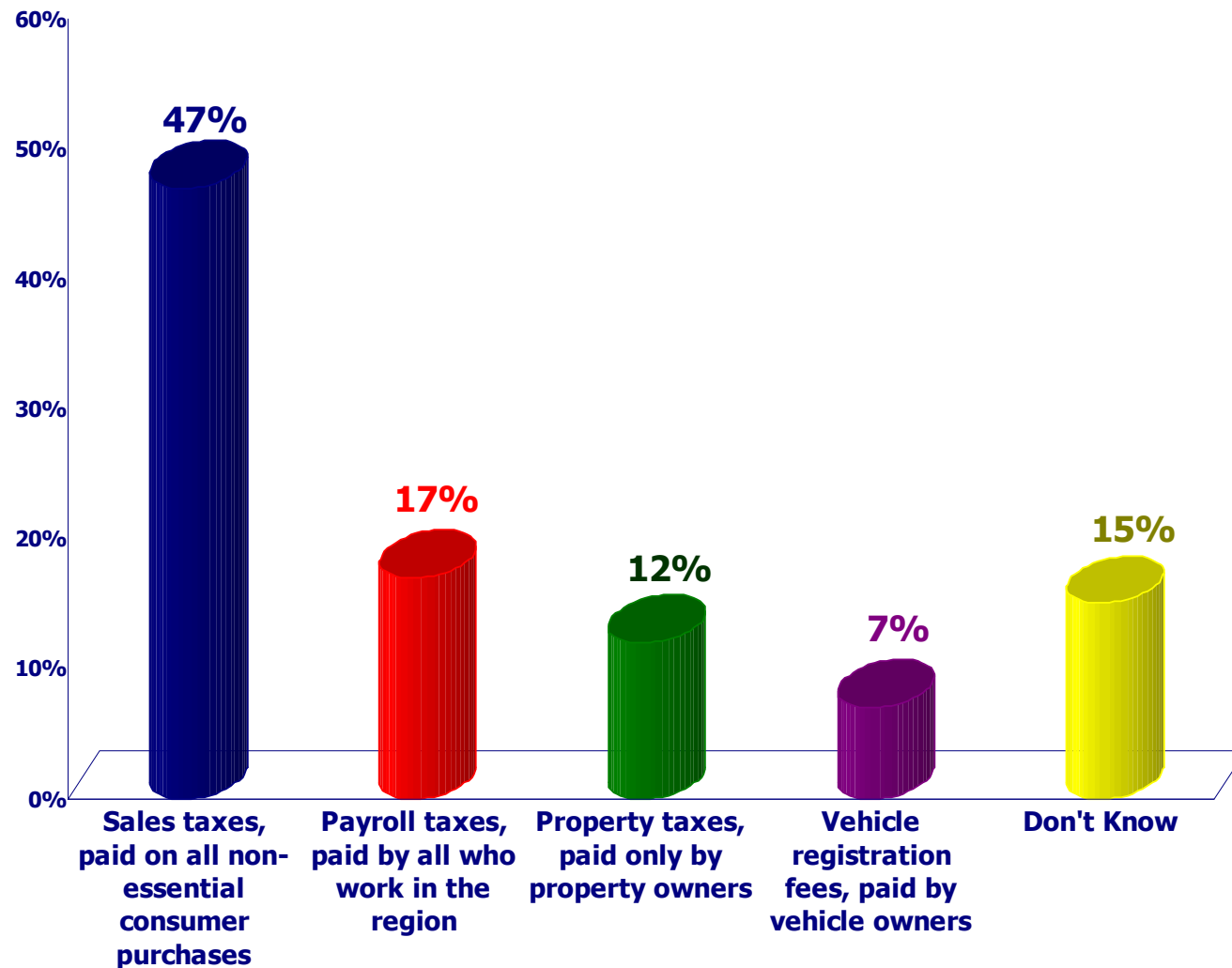
The public is not completely sure how public transit services are funded, as slightly more believe it is through the sales tax and property taxes, while some point to payroll taxes

3. Which of the following do you think is the main source of funding for public transit services in the region...



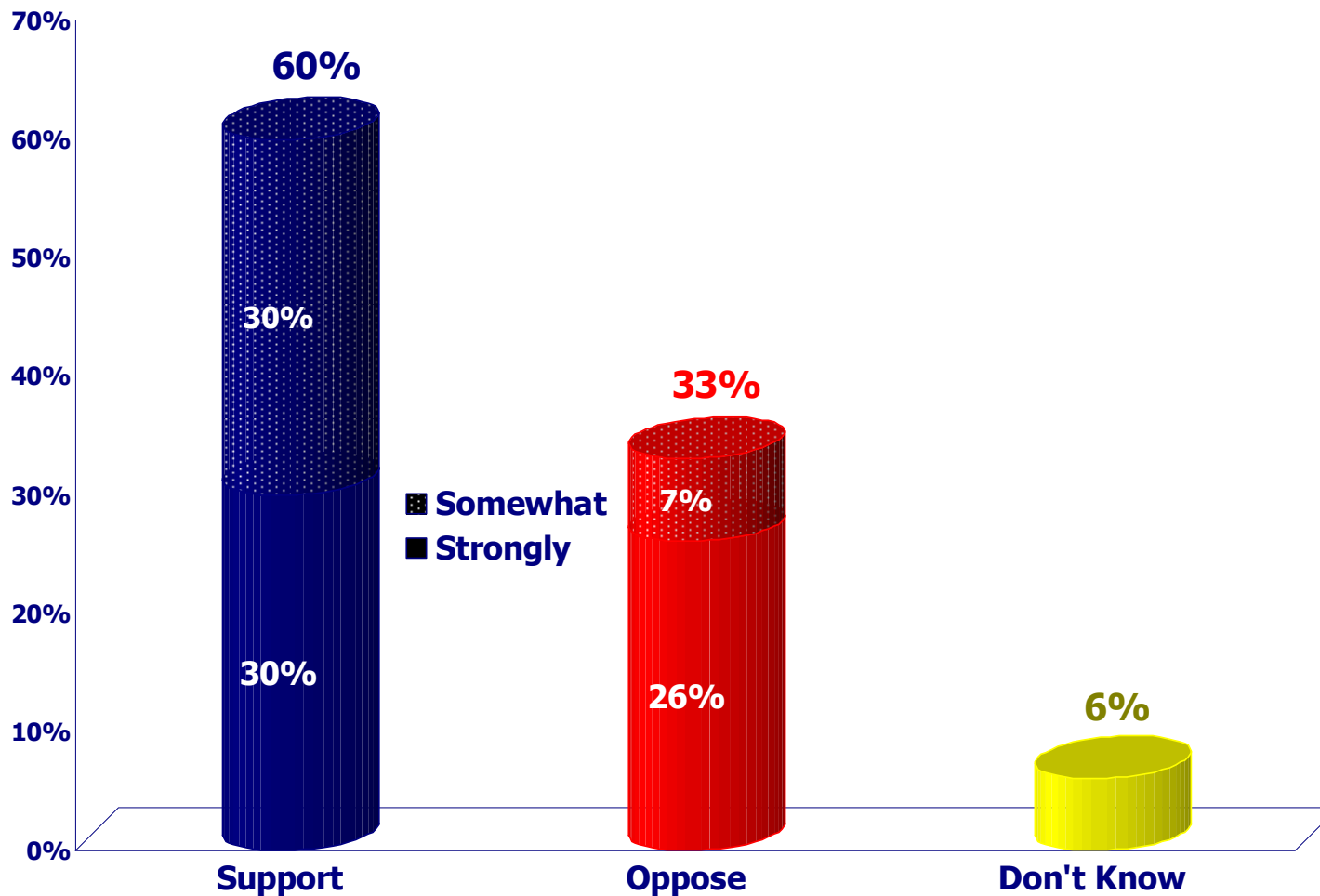
A plurality of the public prefers that the area fund transit through sales taxes, after learning that the majority of metro areas in the United States fund their transit services that way

4. If you knew that the majority of metro areas in the United States fund transit by sales tax and that a portion of southeastern Wisconsin's sales tax is paid for by visitors from outside the region, which of the following would you prefer be the primary source of funding for public transit services in Southeast Wisconsin...



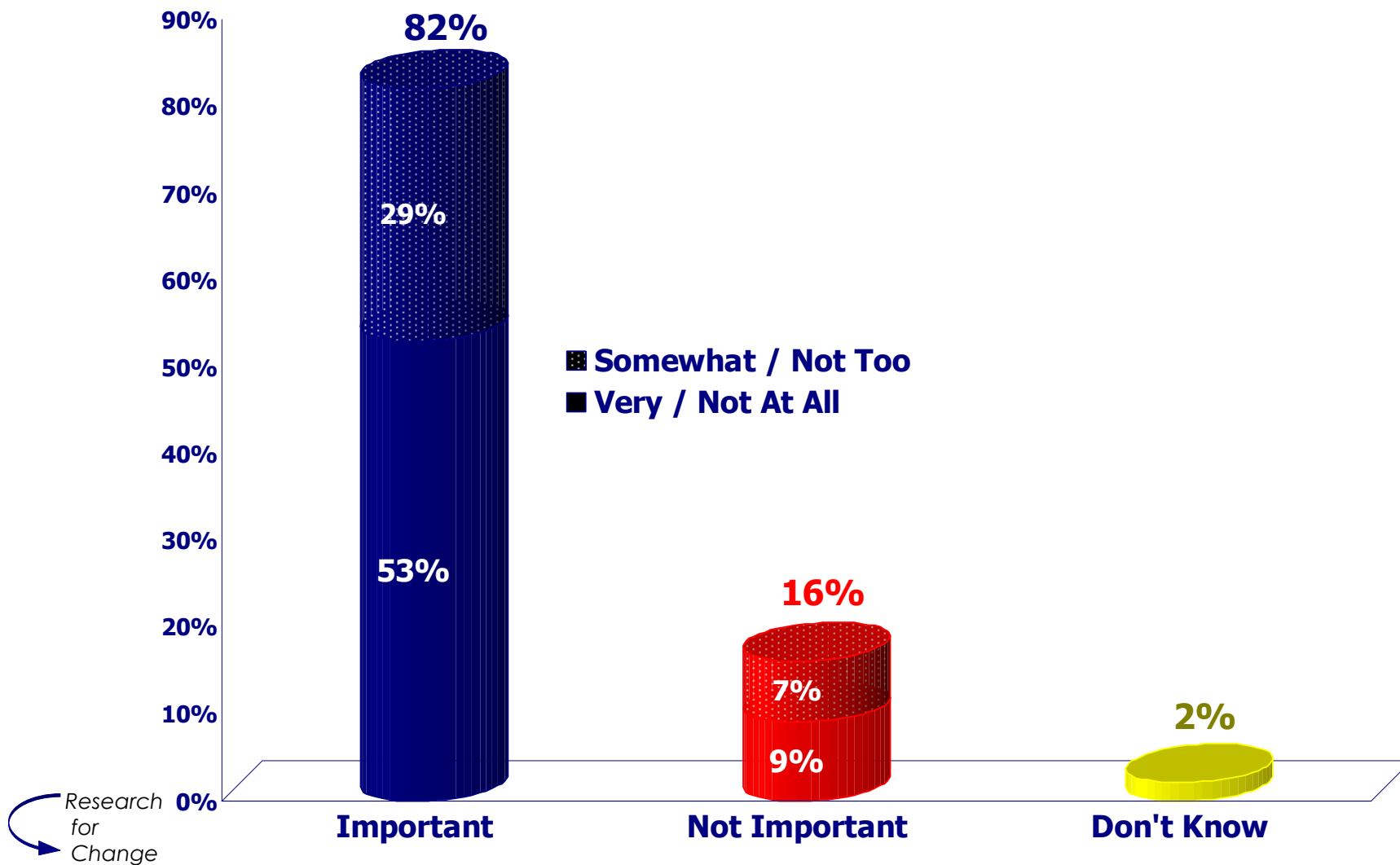
There is nearly two to one public support for a sales tax increase to expand transit services and reduce property taxes in the region

5. As you may know, local transit services in Southeastern Wisconsin are funded largely by local property taxes. Some people have suggested raising the local sales tax rate by up to one half of one percent in Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha counties to help reduce local property taxes and to fund current and expanded public transit in the area. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose raising the sales tax by one half of one percent to expand public transit in this area, and remove transit from the property tax?



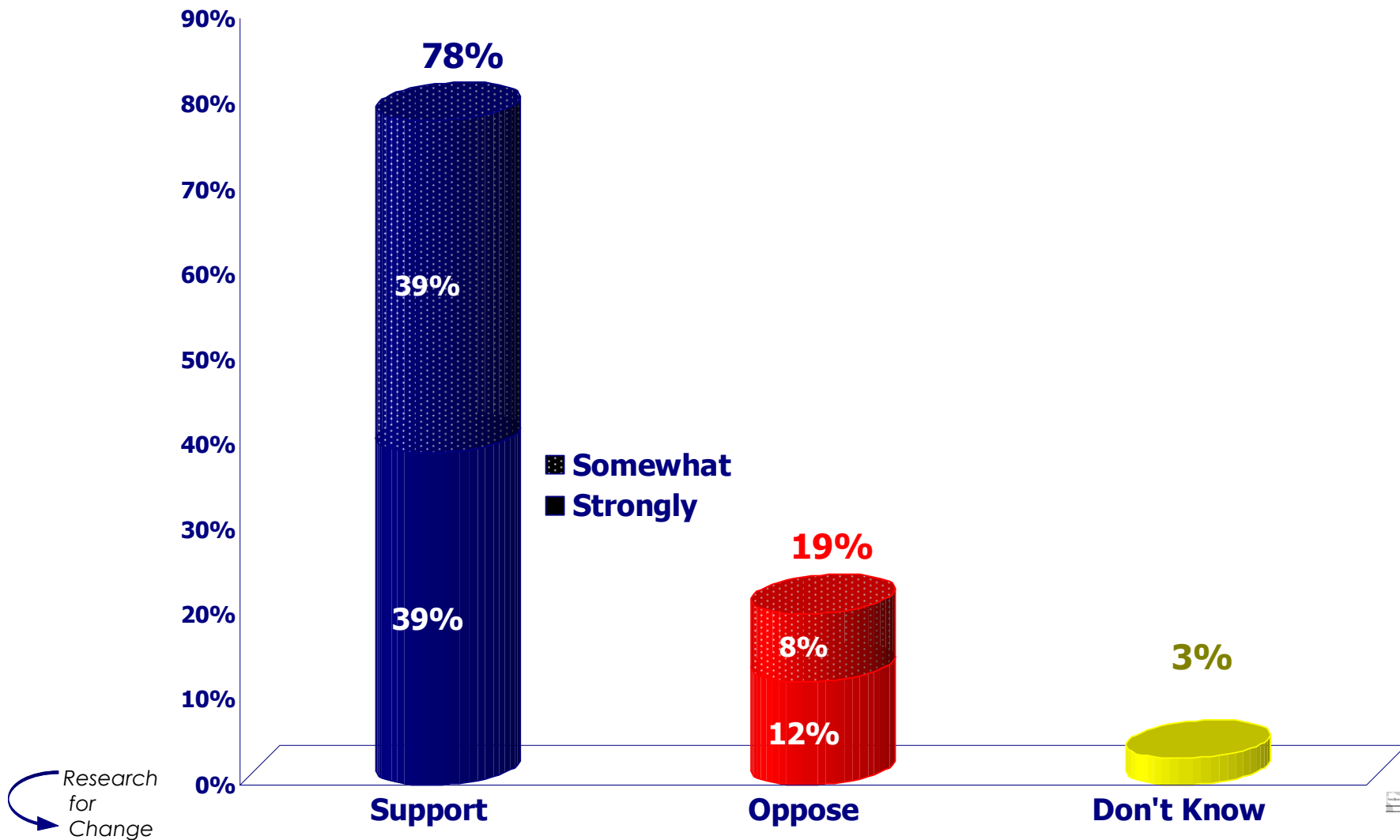
A majority of the public believes it is very important for the Milwaukee area to have a modern, efficient transportation system, and more than 4 people in 5 say it is at least somewhat important

6. Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important for the Milwaukee area to have a modern, efficient transportation system when it comes to competing with other similarly sized metro areas in the country for jobs, business and talented employees?



Once the public hears that transit is seen by top business and economic development leaders as a top priority for the economic future of the region, the public broadly supports expanding public transit in the area

7. Some people have suggested expanding public transit in Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha counties. If you knew that transit was seen as a top priority for the economic future of our region by top business and economic development leaders would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose expanding public transit in this area?

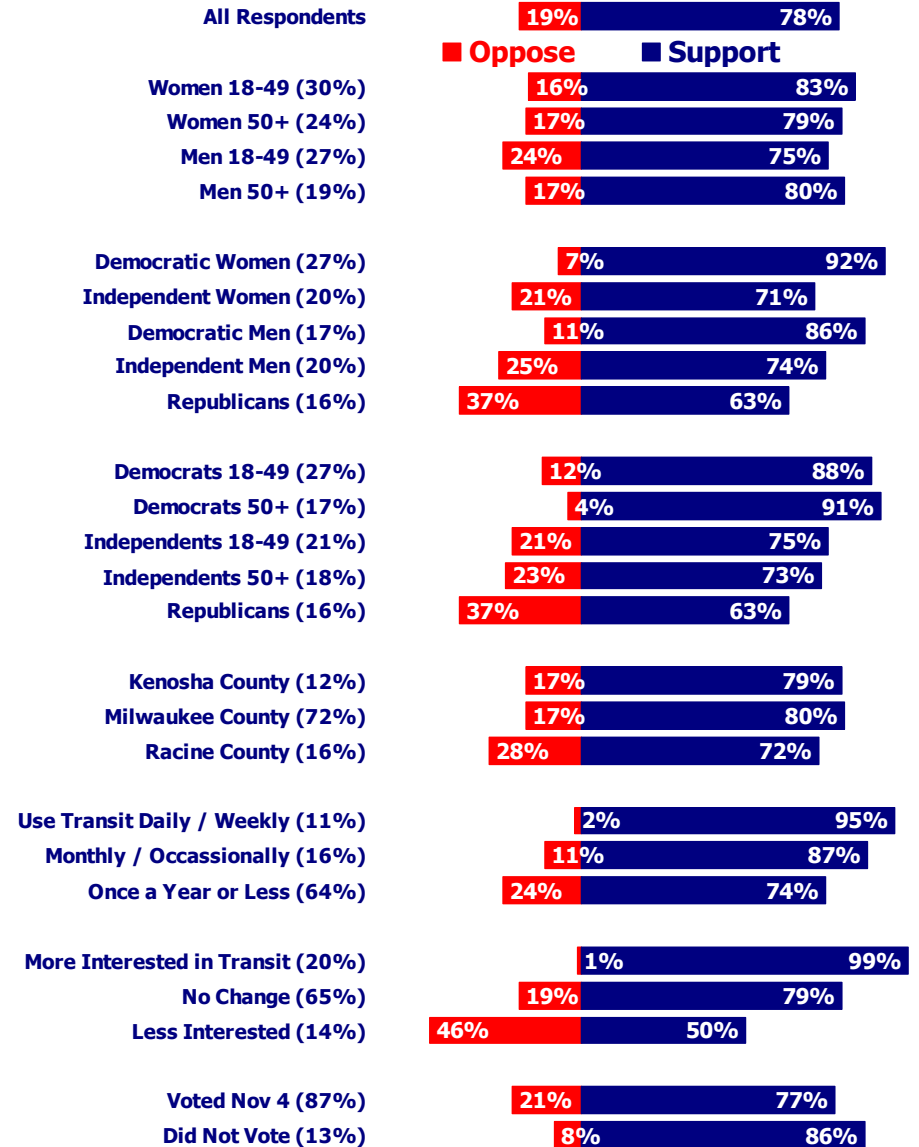
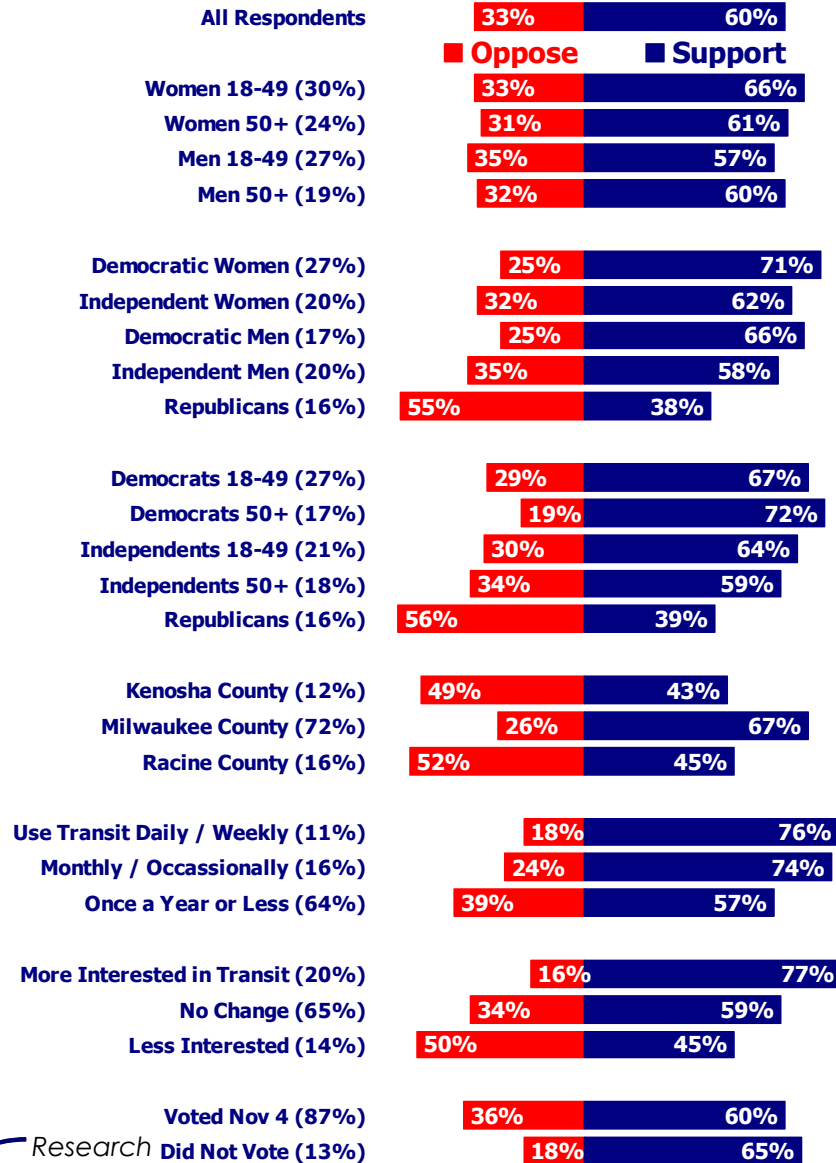


Demographic Profile – Support for Expanding Public Transit

Republicans and those from Racine or Kenosha County are much less supportive of the proposal when it includes higher sales taxes, but there is broad support for expanded transit in general

Q5: Half Cent Sales Tax Increase

Q7: Top Priority for Economic Future of Region

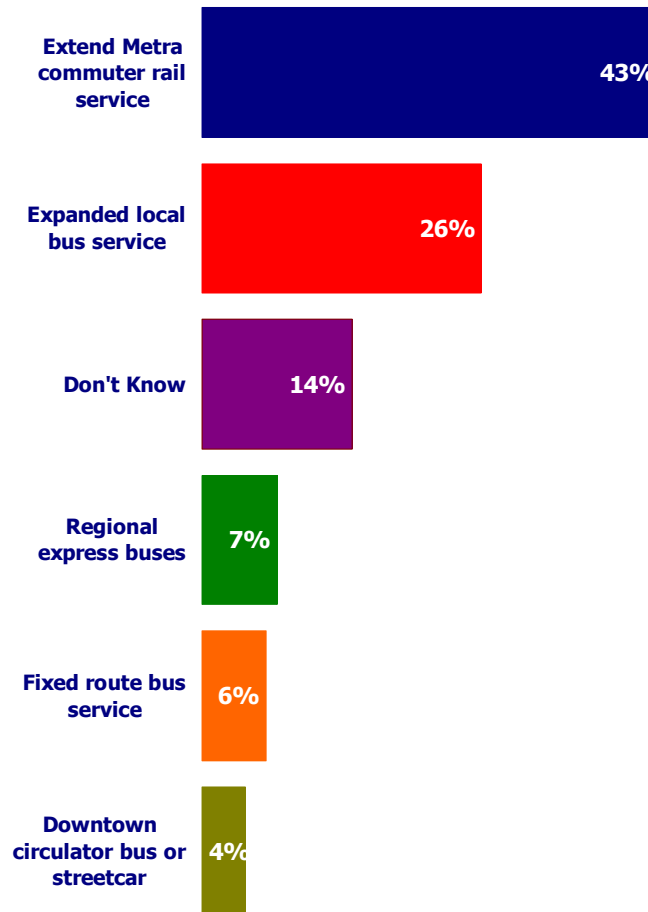


Research for Change

Extending Metra commuter rail is the most popular proposal for expanding transit, followed by increased local bus service. Other forms of expanded bus service are less popular

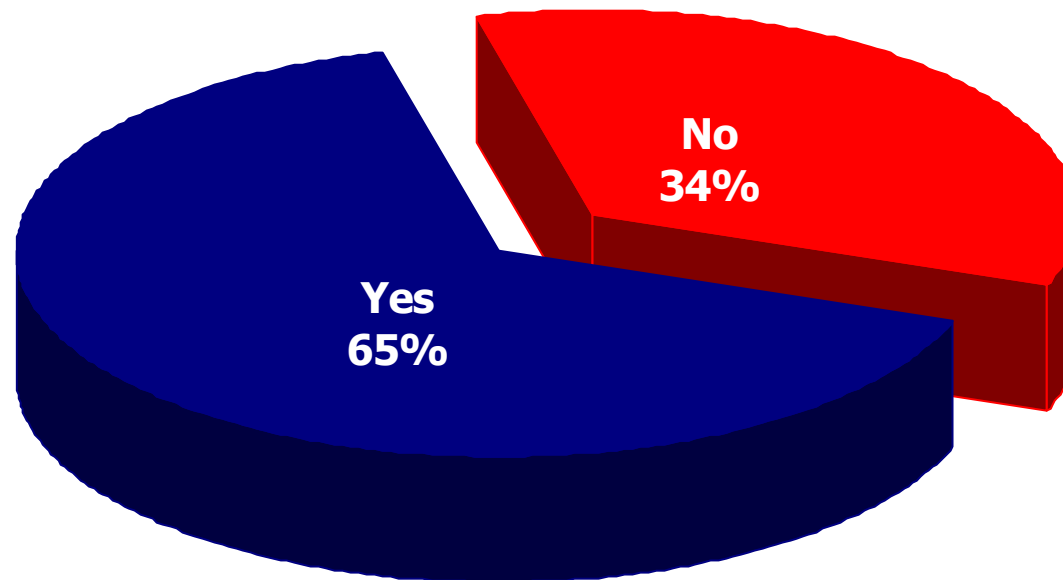
8. If public transit is to be expanded in the area, which of the following would you prefer...

- Expanded local bus service in Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha Counties
- Extend Metra commuter rail service that currently runs from Kenosha to Chicago, to provide service to Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, and Chicago
- A downtown circulator bus or streetcar
- Regional express buses
- Fixed route bus service



Nearly two-thirds of the public say they are aware that nearly all other major metropolitan areas have rail transit, while Milwaukee does not. About one-third admit that they were unaware of this.

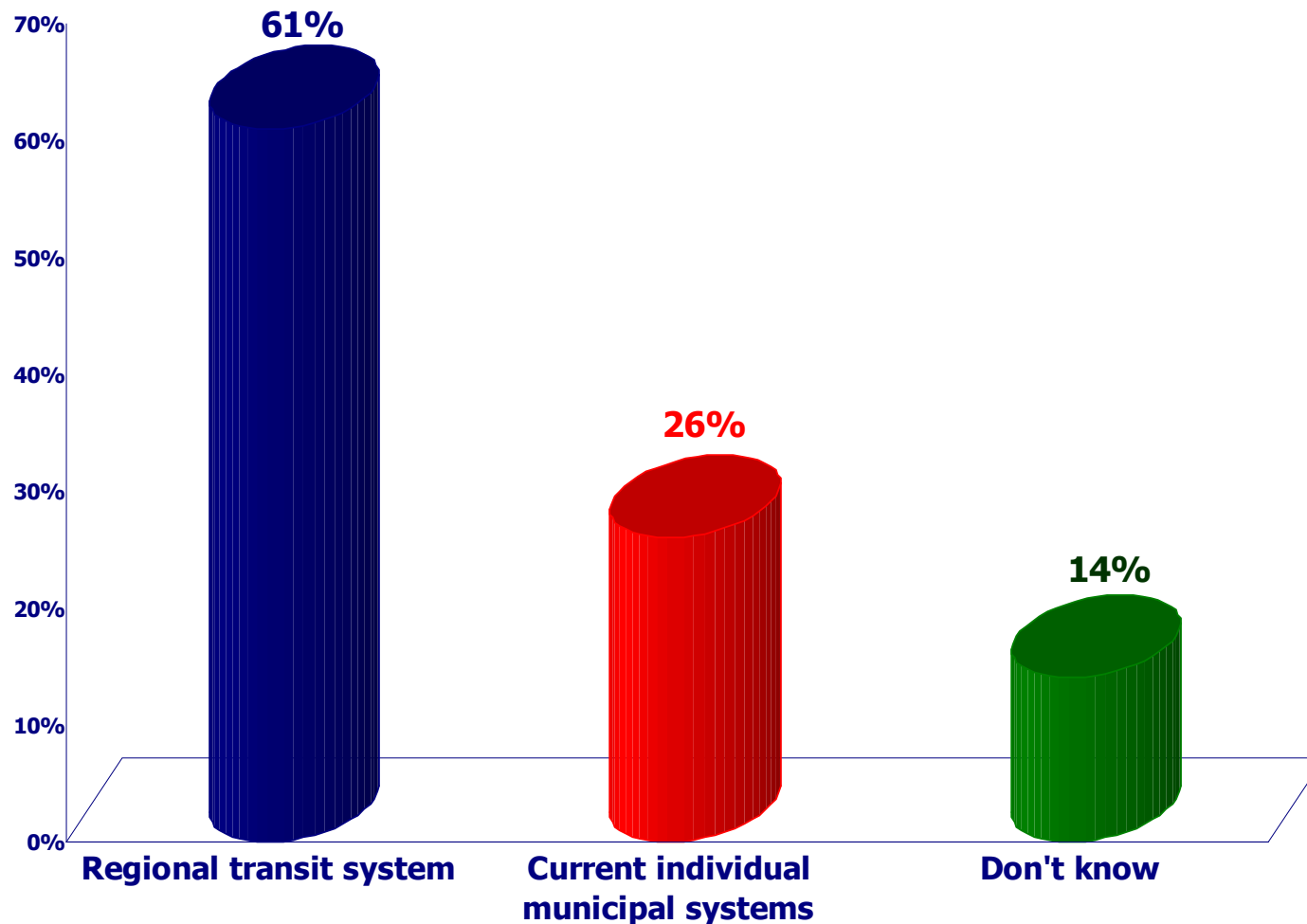
9. Are you aware that while 95% of major metropolitan areas in the US have rail transit systems that encourage urban and transit-oriented development, Milwaukee does not??



By better than two to one, the public prefers a regional transit system over the current individual municipality run system

10. Do you think you would be better served by...

- A regional transit system focused on serving people where they live and work
- The current individual municipal systems that are focused on serving residents and workers within their city and county boundaries



Summary of Research Findings

- **There is public support for expanded transit services:** There is clear public support for expanding public transit in the region, and for creating a single regional transit system. There is even support for raising sales taxes to expand transit, while also reducing property taxes. The details of any specific proposal requiring public support should be tested, as the details of the proposal may prompt significantly different reaction than the more general support identified here.
- **Voters may be less supportive than non-voters:** While those who voted in the November 4 election also support expanded transit, even with a sales tax increase, they are somewhat less supportive overall than are non-voters. Caution should be used in crafting any proposals that will require voter approval, then, as the details may be critical to winning voter support, especially if a tax increase is included as part of the proposal. There was especially weak support for a tax increase outside of Milwaukee County.
- **If transit is expanded, the most popular option is to extend Metra commuter rail:** There is significantly more support for expanding Metra commuter rail service to Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha than there is for any specific other options, though some do prefer expanded local bus service. There is less interest in a downtown circulator bus or streetcar, regional express bus service, or fixed route bus service. Combined, however, the forms of increased bus service receive similar support as does expanding Metra rail.