



How Voters View Transit After the 2014 Elections

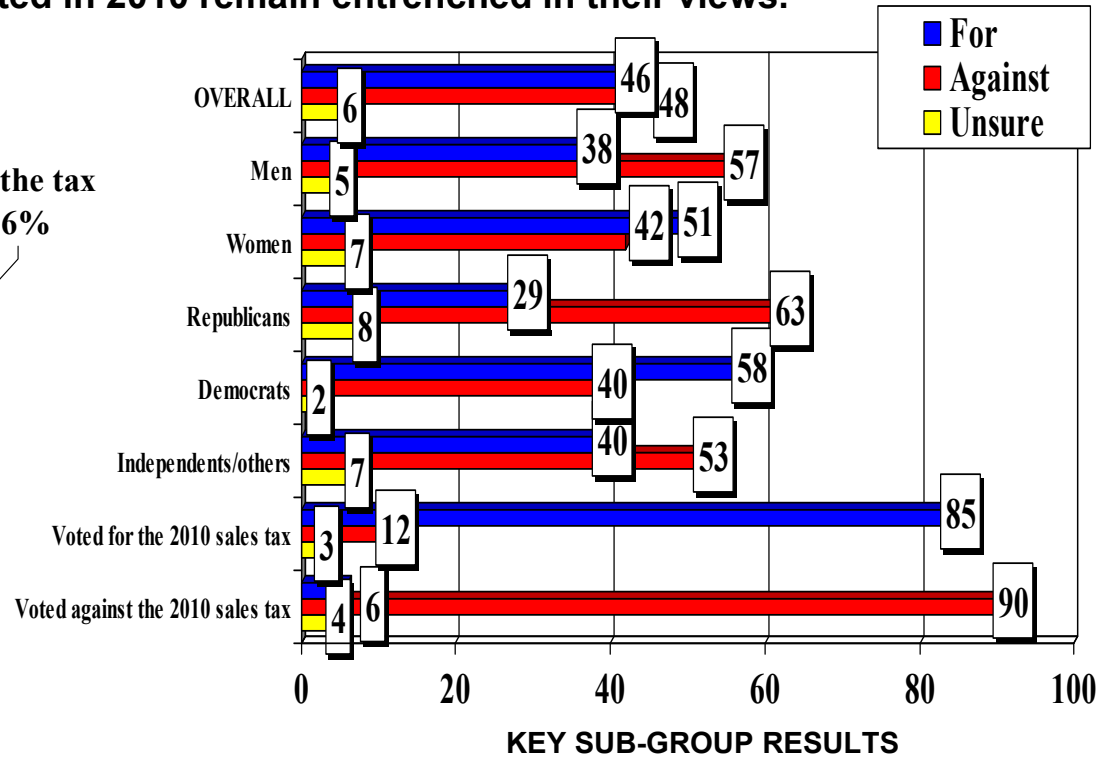
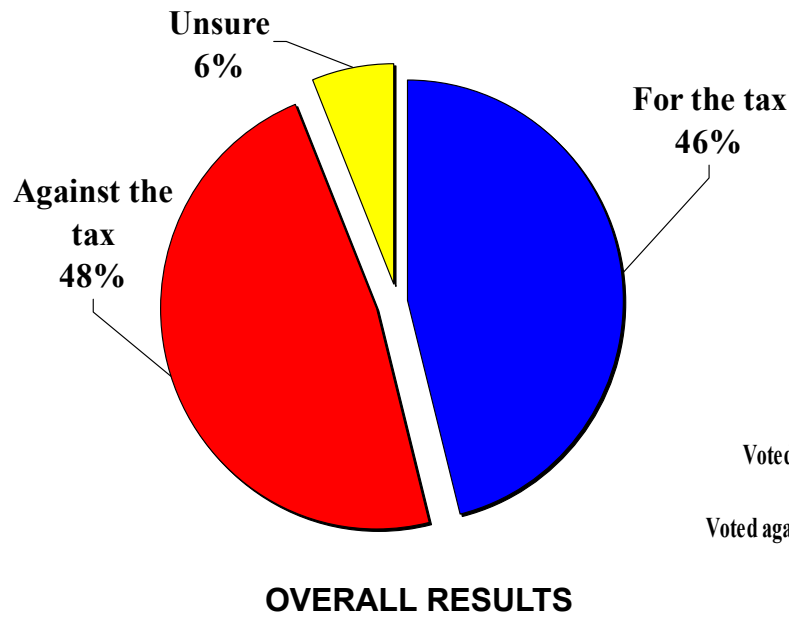
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY *Post-Election Public Opinion Survey Results*

Copyright, 2014 ©

This information is based on survey research data gathered through telephone interviews that specially-trained interviewers conducted with 300 randomly-selected registered voters in Hillsborough County, Florida who had valid residential or cellular telephone numbers and histories of voting in recent general elections or were new registrants. The interviews were performed during the period of November 5, 2014 through November 7, 2014. The overall estimated margin of sampling error is +/- 5.65%, based on a confidence level of 95%, although it varies for each individual question. This means that if this survey was repeated, 95 times out of 100 the results would be within plus or minus 5.65% of those provided herein. Adjustments were made to weight the results toward demographic and geographic characteristics of the county's electorate, in order to account for under- and over-sampling that normally occurs as a result of the random selection process, and to ensure that all major sub-groups are represented in proportion to their actual percentages. Like all polls, this opinion survey research is subject to other possible sources of error, such as unintentional bias in the wording of questions, data-entry error and nonresponse bias. Not all results will add up to 100 percent, due to rounding.

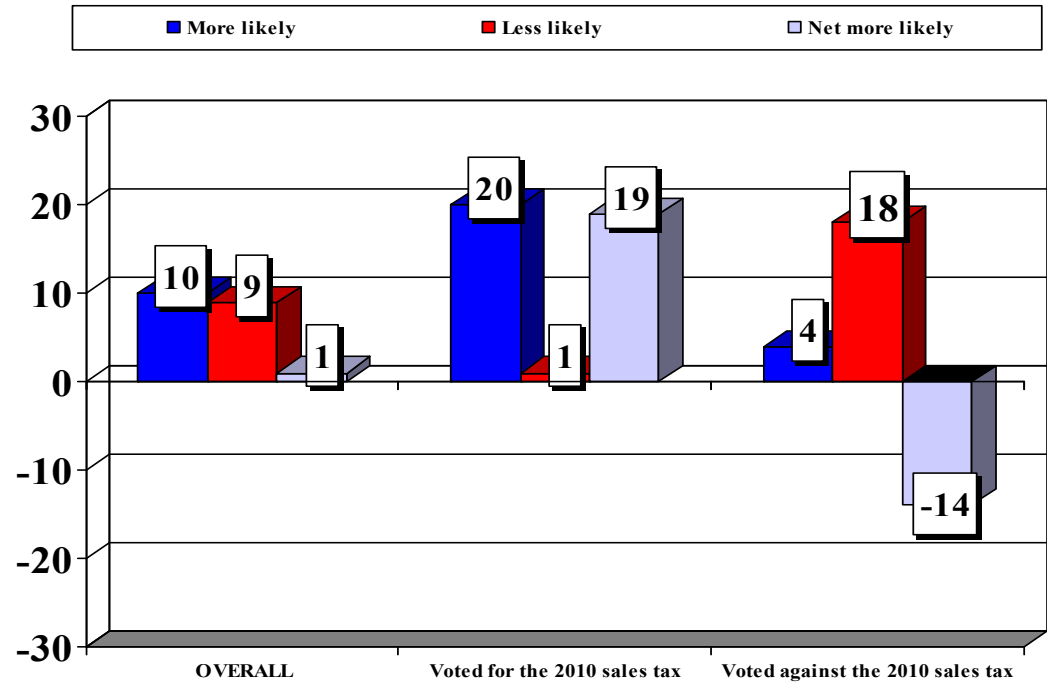
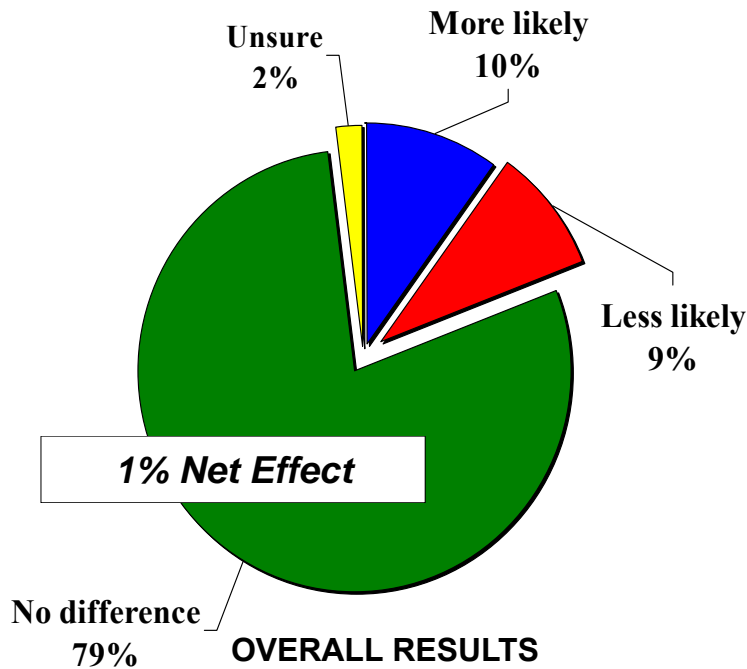
Survey Methods

At this time, the notion of a sales tax for transit and a rail system is highly polarizing, with nearly identical levels of support and opposition. The sub-group analysis indicates that, in addition to the stark differences among partisans, there is a sizeable gender gap that currently exists, with women being much more supportive than men. Time appears to have had little impact on voting preferences, as those who voted in 2010 remain entrenched in their views.



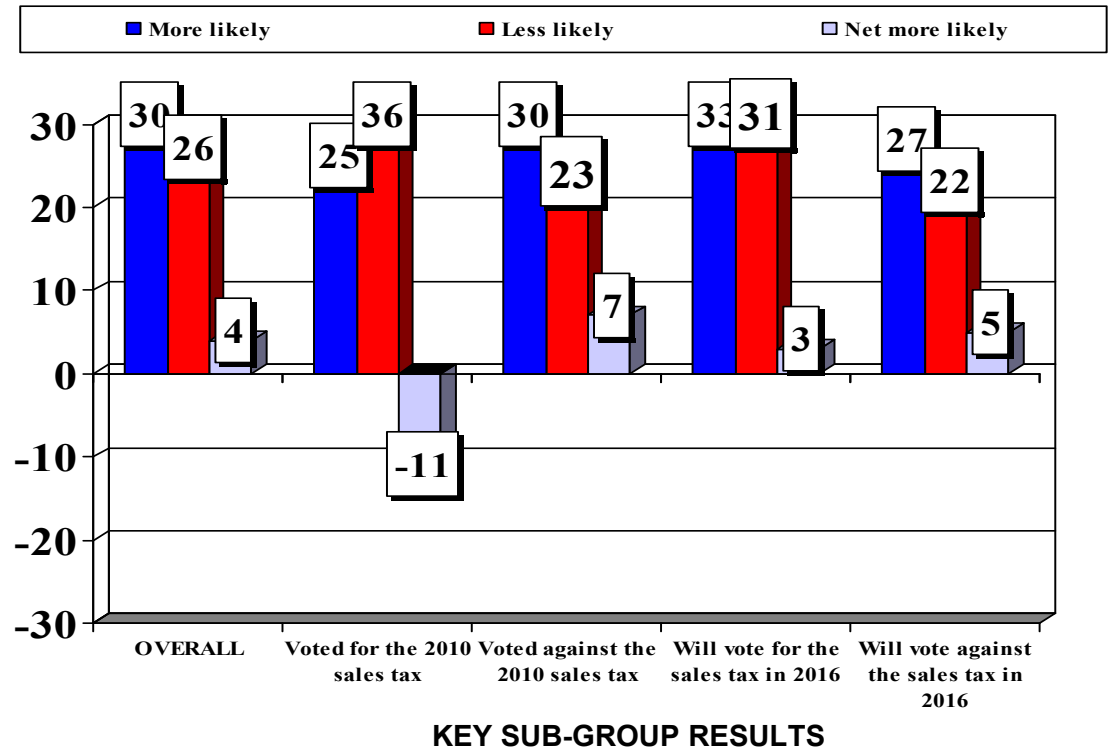
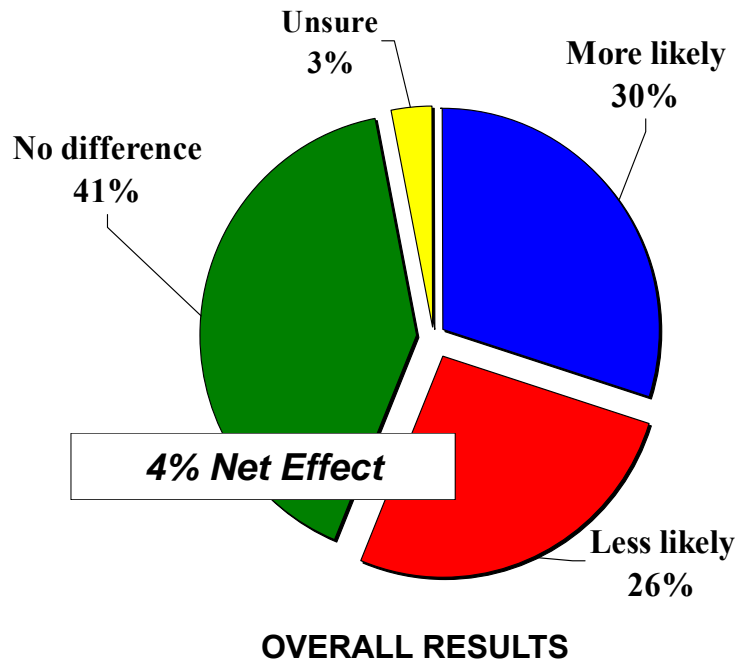
Looking ahead to an election that may be on the ballot within the next couple of years, there may be a one-cent sales tax for transit improvements and a light rail system on the ballot in Hillsborough County. If the election was held today and you were voting, would you vote for or against the one-cent transit sales tax?

Hillsborough County voters appear largely unfazed by the recent events in neighboring Pinellas County. Interestingly, the outcome had little impact on the current views of voters and seems to have merely strengthened resolve. It is another indication that other factors, like presidential election year turnout, could play a decisive role, if an issue is on the ballot in 2016.



As you may know, in the election that concluded this week, Pinellas County voters rejected a one-cent sales tax for transit improvements and a light rail system that was on the ballot. Does it make you more or less likely to vote for a one-cent sales tax for transit in 2016 in Hillsborough County, or does it make no difference in your decision?

Trying to improve the prospects of passage by removing the rail component from the sales tax request may backfire. While some of the 2010 naysayers could be persuaded to vote for it as a result, the cost comes at a loss of support among some of those voters who backed it in 2010. This could result in a zero-sum gain scenario that does not substantially improve its appeal.



If the plan did not include light rail, and would be used just to improve the bus system, streets and roads, would you be more or less likely to vote for a one-cent sales tax for transit in 2016 in Hillsborough County, or does it make no difference in your decision?

- At the time the survey was taken, 52% of voters said that Hillsborough County was moving in the right direction and 20% said it had gotten off onto the wrong track, while 9% volunteered that they had mixed opinions and 19% were unsure.
- Voters in the workforce employed outside the home – that is commuters – were only 3% more likely to support a transit tax in 2016 than other voters.
- Curiously, despite the fact that a net total of just 1% of all Hillsborough County voters were more likely to vote for a 2016 transit tax in the wake of the Pinellas County defeat, it made a net total of 13% of voters in Tampa more likely.
- Removing light rail from a prospective 2016 Hillsborough County transit tax request was somewhat well-received by a seemingly politically-incongruent mix of voters. Although the net effect was just 3% overall, it made a net total of 17% of Tampa voters more likely to vote for it, as well as net totals of 14% of Republicans, 24% of African-Americans and 9% of senior citizens (60 or older); commuters were indifferent (just 2% more likely).
- Conversely, removing light rail made a net total of 1% of Democrats less likely to vote for a transit tax, as well as 6% of Hispanic voters, 10% of political independents and 15% of 30 to 44 year-olds.

Other Results

- The intervening 4 years since the transit tax defeat have done little to bolster support for a tax to fund light rail in Hillsborough County, with most voters poised to vote as they did last time. Proponents of a rail system and tax face a daunting opinion environment with very few undecided voters available to persuade at this time, and may have to pin their hopes on presidential election year turnout of socially-conscious voters who typically do not vote in gubernatorial elections, such as the ones this year and in 2010.
- The defeat in Pinellas County appears to have had little impact on Hillsborough County voters and probably will not materially affect the public's views of a transit tax and rail system's merits or viability. Although it may reverberate in the "political echo chamber," it appears inconsequential to the electorate.
- Removing the rail system from the equation may not be the right political calculus to achieve success, as it could undermine support among key groups that would be counted on as the base upon which to build a winning electoral coalition. Simply put, it may take away as much as it adds to the potency and appeal of a tax request.
- Workforce commuters were generally no more or less likely to have views that differed from their counterparts, and they may not see themselves as having a stake or unique self-interest in a rail system or transit tax.

Key Findings Recap

These survey questions were not funded or commissioned by any organization, agency or committee, nor was Florida Opinion Research retained by any parties of interest in this matter.

The questions herein preceded other related questions asked on behalf of private clients, which are proprietary and may be released independently at their discretion.

Readers are welcome to download this information for their professional or personal use and share it with others who may find it to be beneficial.

All rights are reserved by Fallon Research & Communications, Inc., The Florida Omnibus Survey and Florida Opinion Research.

Copyright, 2014 ©

About Paul Fallon...



Paul Fallon is a public opinion researcher, political pollster and advisor for tax levy committees, local government agencies, school districts, interest groups and trade associations. He specializes in land-use policy research, education and transit matters, as well as public funding ballot issues and referendums. He has worked on issues and campaigns in 37 different states throughout the country, and has conducted opinion research and citizen satisfaction studies for transit services, school districts and government agencies of all sizes, from Florida to California.

Information

www.FloridaOpinionResearch.com

**FLORIDA
OPINION
RESEARCH**

8



How Voters View Transit After the 2014 Elections

Questions?

***For more information, call 813-283-2665
or e-mail Info@FloridaOpinionResearch.com***