

Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin: Voters want long-term funding solution on transportation, reject increased borrowing

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(Madison) — As lawmakers continue to grapple with our state's transportation budget, the public consensus favors a long-term funding solution that does not rely on running up the state's credit card.

More than 550 local units of government have passed resolutions encouraging lawmakers to provide enough resources to fully fund Wisconsin's transportation needs. But they are not alone in encouraging budget negotiators in Madison to "Just Fix It."

"The public wants lawmakers to develop a sustainable funding solution that will work for not only this budget, but into the future," said Craig Thompson, executive director of the Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin. "People are aware of the need to just fix it, but they are acutely adverse to papering over the problem by issuing new bonds."

Thompson pointed to data from a recent poll.

- Seventy-three percent of voters, and 69 percent of voters who identified themselves as Republican favored a long-term solution to transportation funding over increased bonding and using general purpose revenues.
- Only 5 percent of voters, including 5 percent of GOP voters indicate that borrowing is their favored approach to fund transportation projects.
- Eighty-three percent of voters, and 85% of GOP voters prefer a pay-as-you-go system over borrowing more money.
- A supermajority of voters support raising new revenue versus project delays or funding projects by borrowing additional money.

The statewide poll was conducted by respected research firm Public Opinion Strategies from May 30 – June 1, and has a margin of error of +/- 4%

“Among the public, consensus is emerging. Every taxpayer dollar needs to be stretched as far as possible, but given declining road conditions, most people understand there just aren’t enough dollars available. Continued reliance on the state’s credit card is not the answer,” said Thompson. “We need to take the first step to solving our transportation challenges, not pass the buck to our children.”

Thompson encourages lawmakers to come together with a plan to stop the deterioration of the state’s roads and invest in Wisconsin.

“Wisconsin needs a reasonable schedule for the reconstruction of the half-century-old interstate system, a plan that increases the percentage of local roads and bridges in good condition, and a long-term vision that provides adequate resources for our interconnected system of city, town, county roads, highways and interstates,” said Thompson. “It’s time for a long-term solution to just fix it.”