



Public Attitudes About Northern Lights Express

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Agenda

- Survey Objectives
- Methodology
- Key Findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations



Survey Objectives

- Measure public attitudes, knowledge and understanding of NLX and its benefits
- Identify questions/concerns that need to be answered
- Test potential messages
- Identify opportunities to increase understanding and support



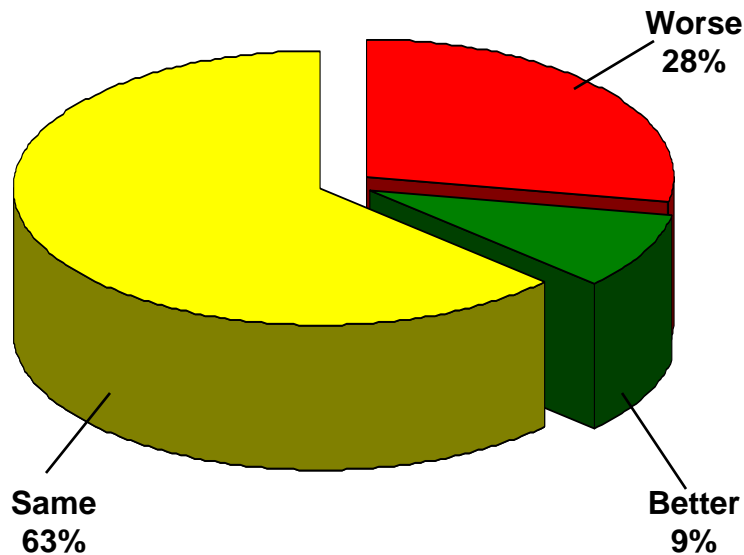
Methodology

- 514 residents
 - *City of Duluth*
 - *Central St. Louis County*
 - *Pine, Kanabec and Isanti counties*
 - *Anoka County*
- Re-weighted to reflect area population
- Conducted February 17-26, 2010 by Decision Resources, Ltd.
- Margin of error of $\pm 4.4\%$ (95% confidence level)

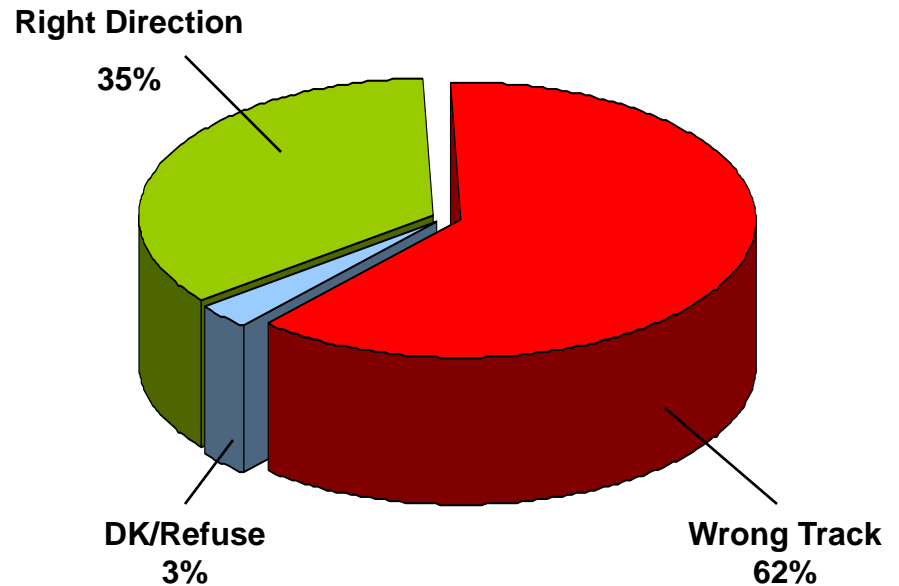


Pressure on Household Finances, Residents Pessimistic

“Is your household better/worse off financially?”



“Is the state headed in the right direction/on the wrong track?”



Transportation Improvement Priorities

First Priority

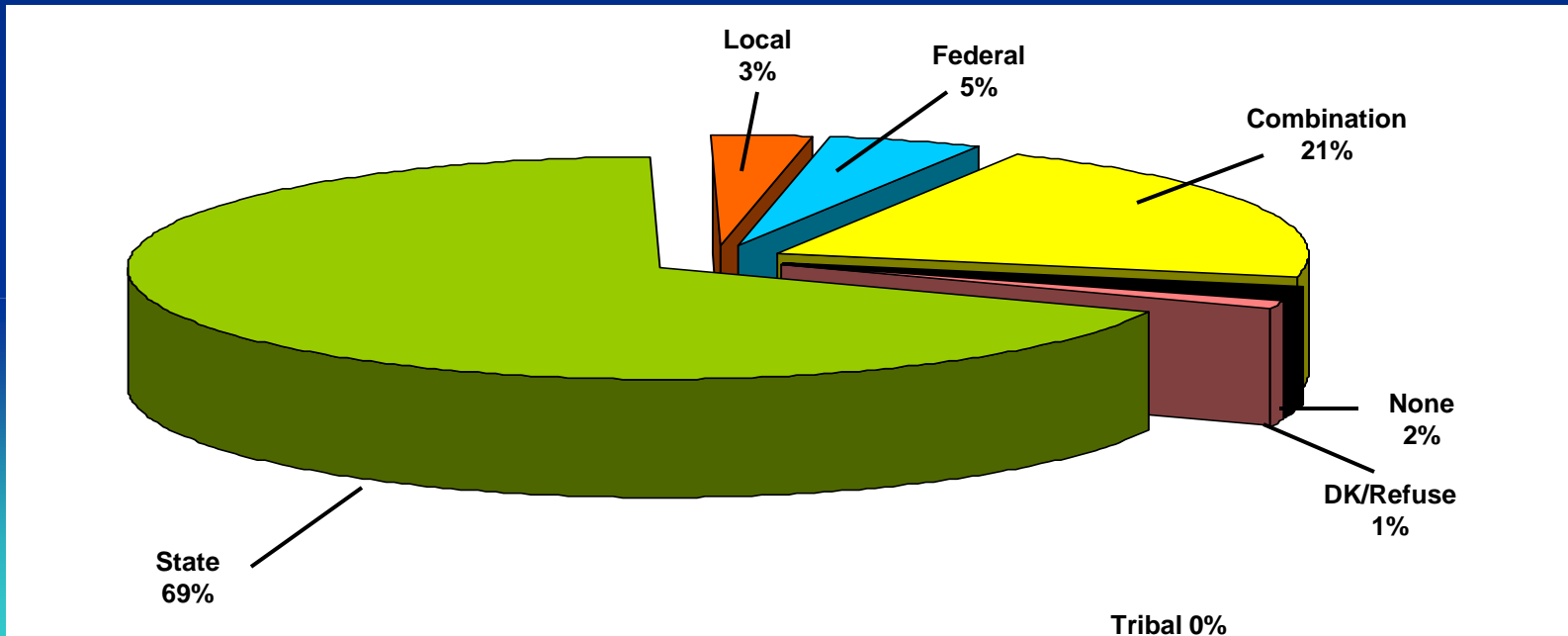
- 1) *City and rural roads (45%)*
- 2) *Regional highways and bridges (22%)*
- 3) *High speed rail between Duluth and Mpls. (18%)*

Second Priority

- 1) *Regional highways and bridges (33%)*
- 2) *High speed rail between Duluth and Mpls. (20%)*
- 3) *City and rural roads (18%)*
- 4) *I-35 (13%)*

Responsibility for Transportation Improvement

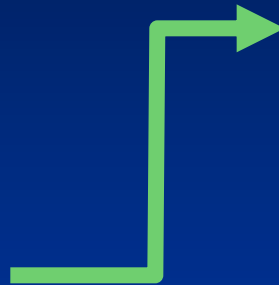
Which level of government has the primary responsibility for improving area transportation?



Currently, High Awareness of NLX

How Familiar of NLX Proposal?	
Very Familiar	13%
Somewhat Familiar	56%
Familiar	69%

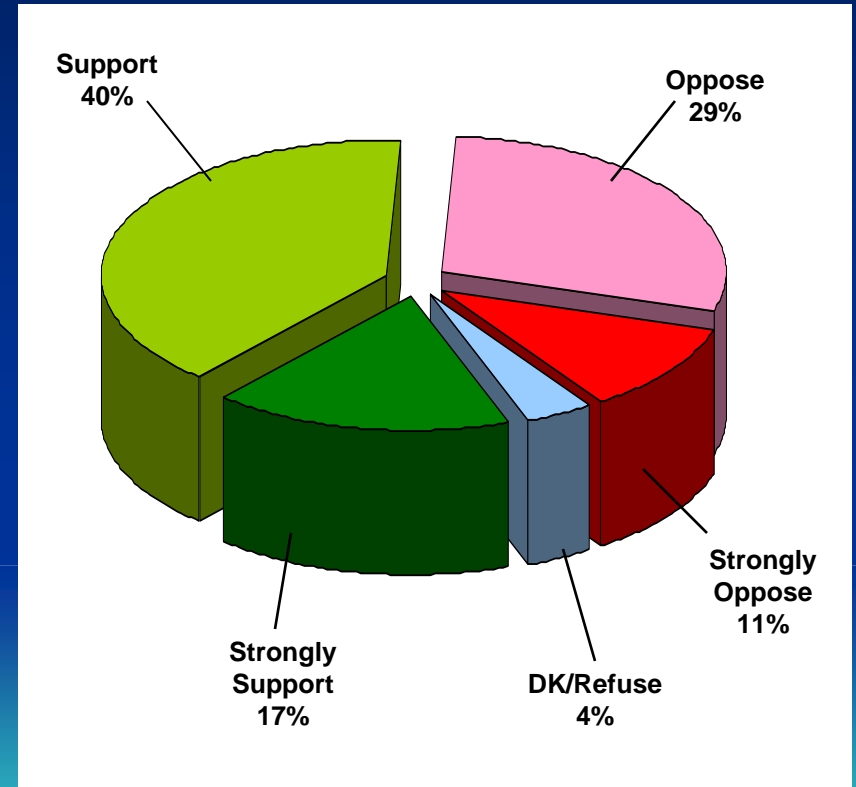
Not Very Familiar	15%
Not At All Familiar	16%
Not Familiar	31%



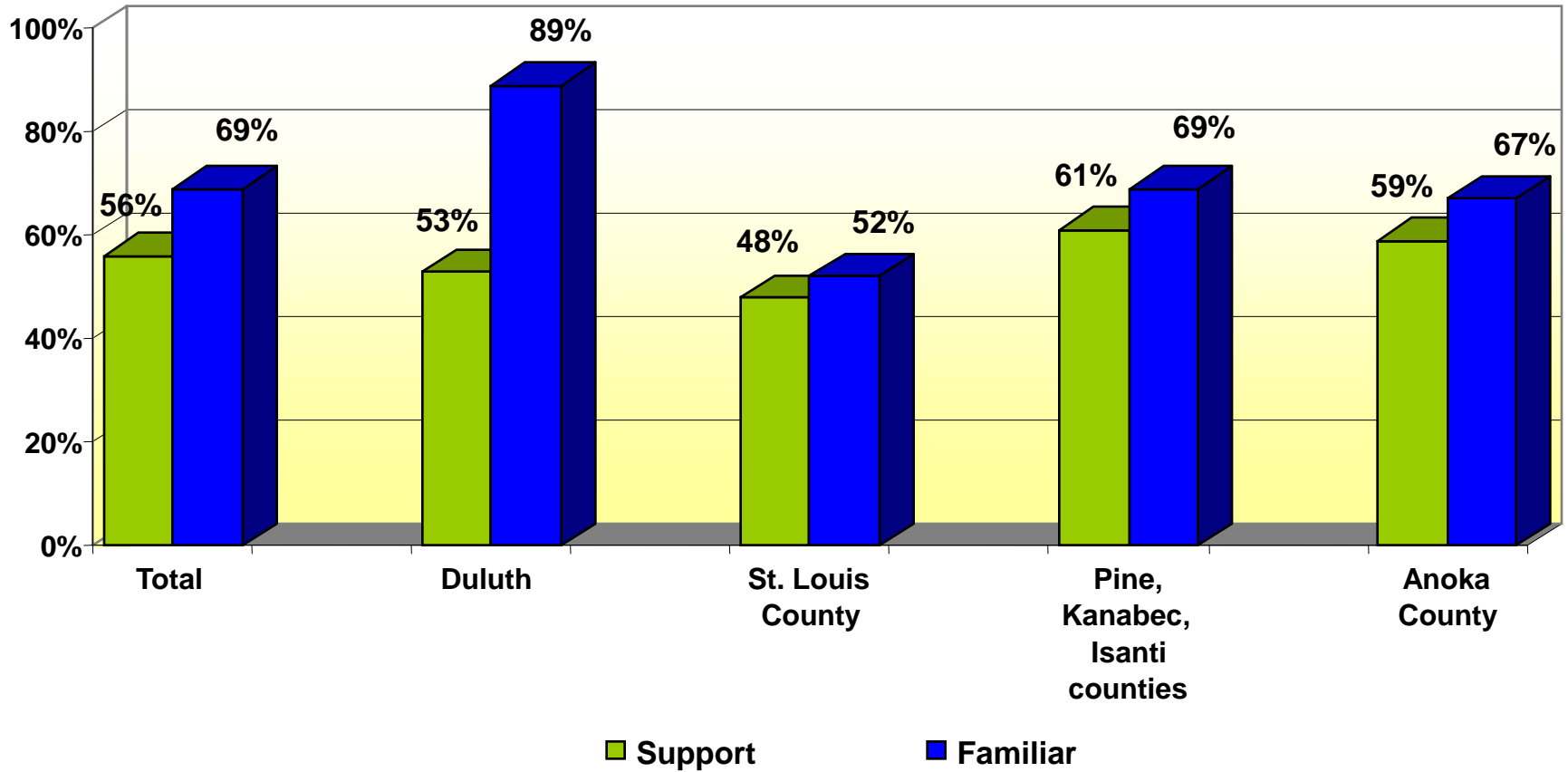
Higher Familiarity Among:	
Duluth	89%
Better Off Financially	88%
Heavy Past Rail Use	88%
College Graduate	86%
\$75K+	84%
Government Employee	83%
Transportation Needs Improvement	78%
Ages 35 – 54	78%
Male	74%

Support of NLX

- 57% support development of NLX
- *Highest support:*
 - Transportation needs improvement (strongly)
 - Heavy past rail use
 - Self-employed and government-employed
 - \$75k+
 - Pine/Kanabec/Isanti counties

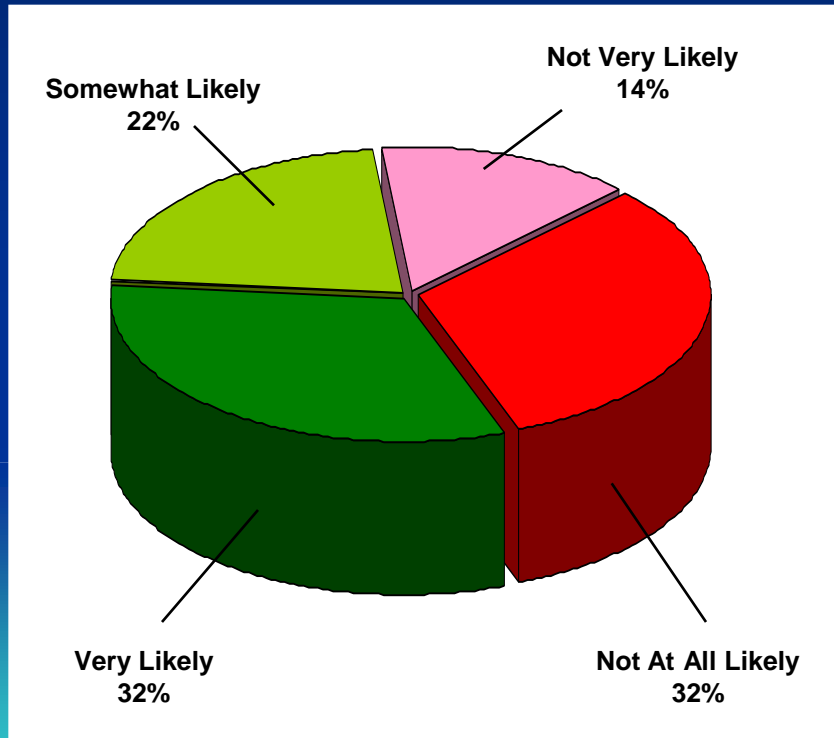


Support and Familiarity by Location



How Likely Will You Use NLX?

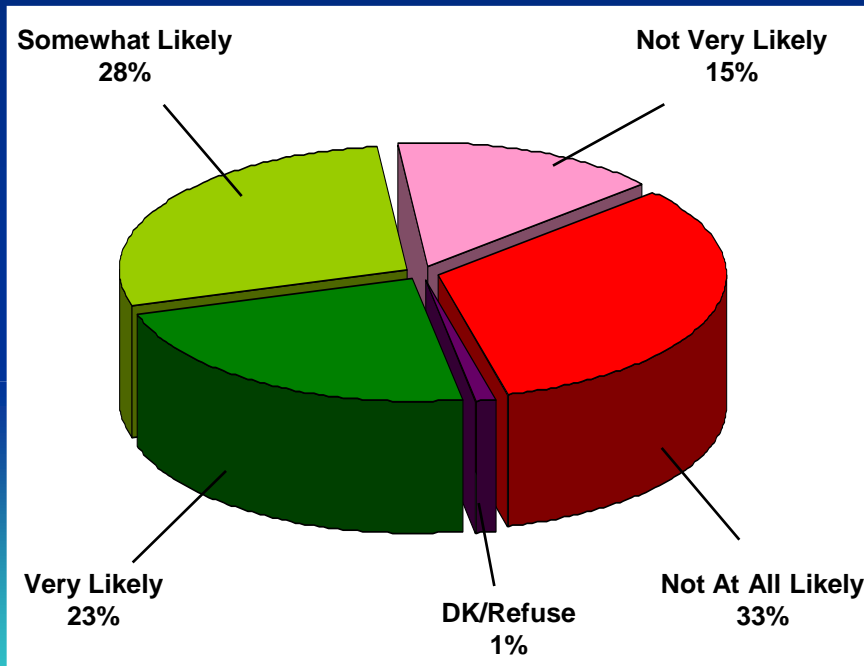
- By you: 54%



- Somewhat higher:
 - *Ages 35 – 54*
 - *Households with children*
 - *Government employees*
 - *College graduates*
 - *\$75K+*

Use NLX/Household?

- By someone else in household: 51%



- Somewhat higher:
 - *Ages 35 – 54*
 - *Households with children*
 - *Government employees*
 - *College graduates*
 - *\$75K+*

Start Points/Destinations of Likely Riders

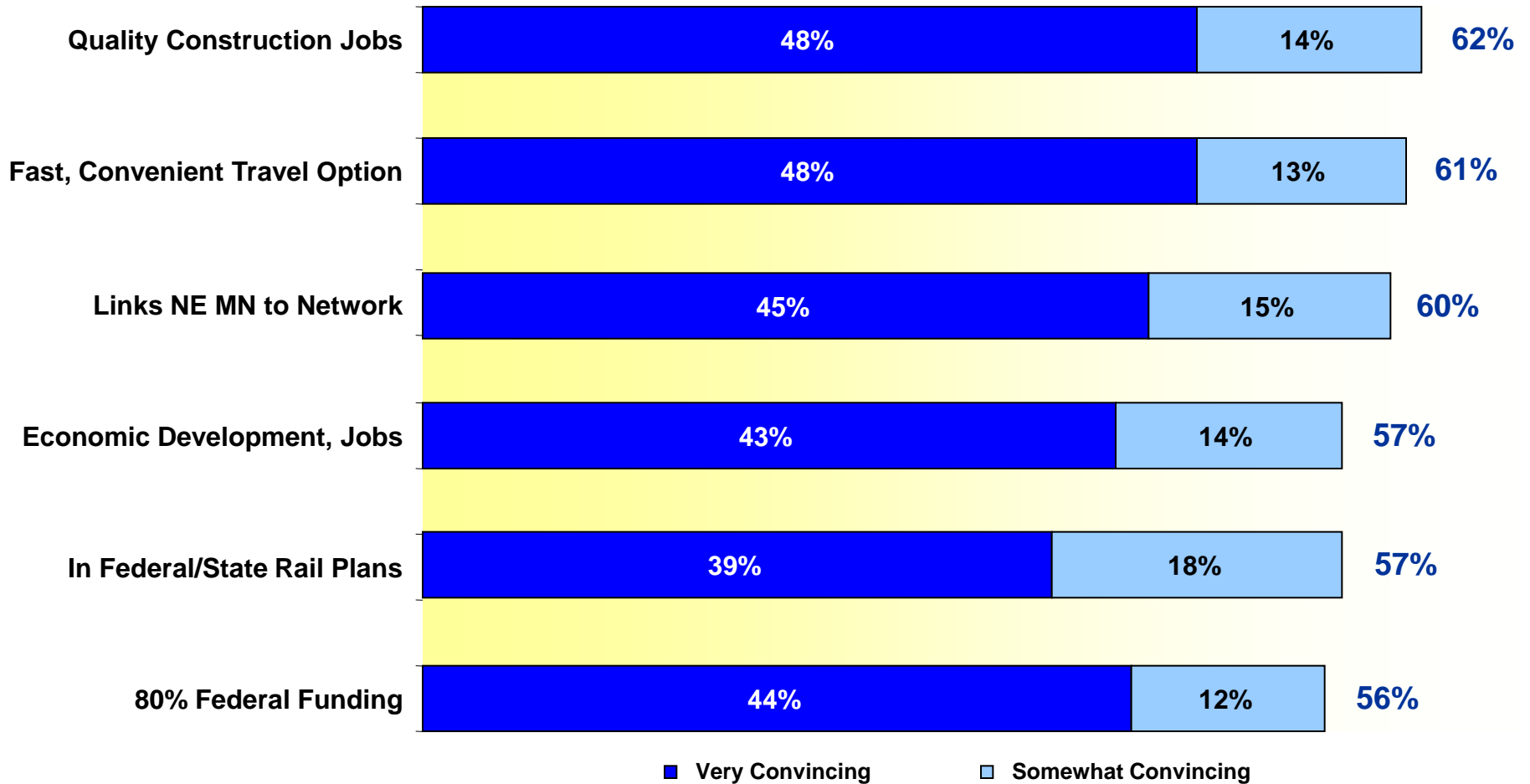
- Which proposed station would you most frequently use as your starting point/destination?

Station	Start Point	Destination
Duluth/Superior	36%	11%
Hinckley	6%	8%
Cambridge	14%	3%
Coon Rapids	41%	0%
Minneapolis	2%	77%

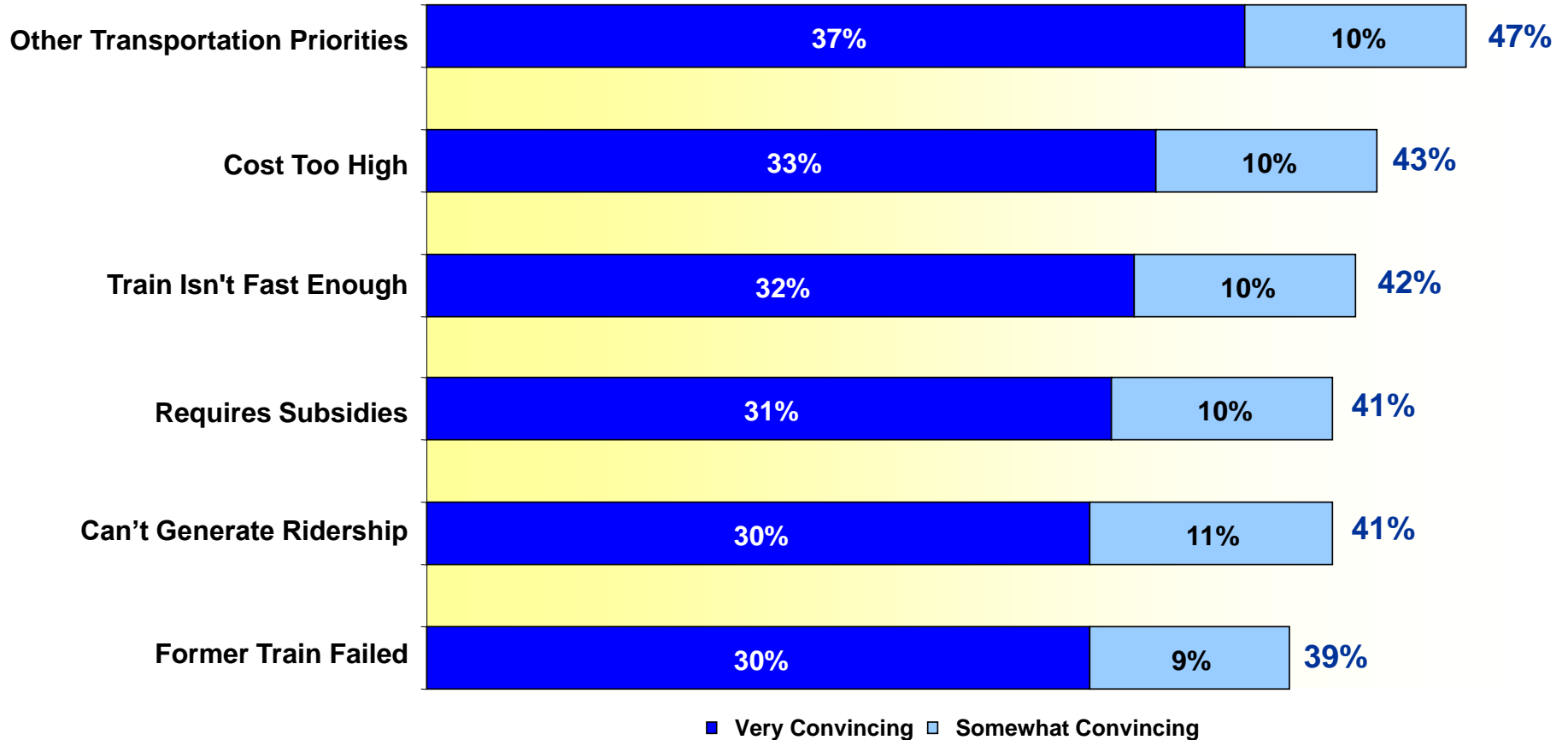
Reasons to Use NLX Among Likely Riders

Sports, arts, entertainment	74%
To airport via Hiawatha LRT	74%
Visit friends/family	71%
Shopping	71%
Outdoor recreation/tourism	47%
Connect to Northstar/other transit	44%
Visit Grand Casino Hinckley	43%
Work	29%
Other (hospital, Chicago, restaurants)	16%
School	6%

Credibility of Pro-NLX Arguments



Credibility of Opposition Arguments

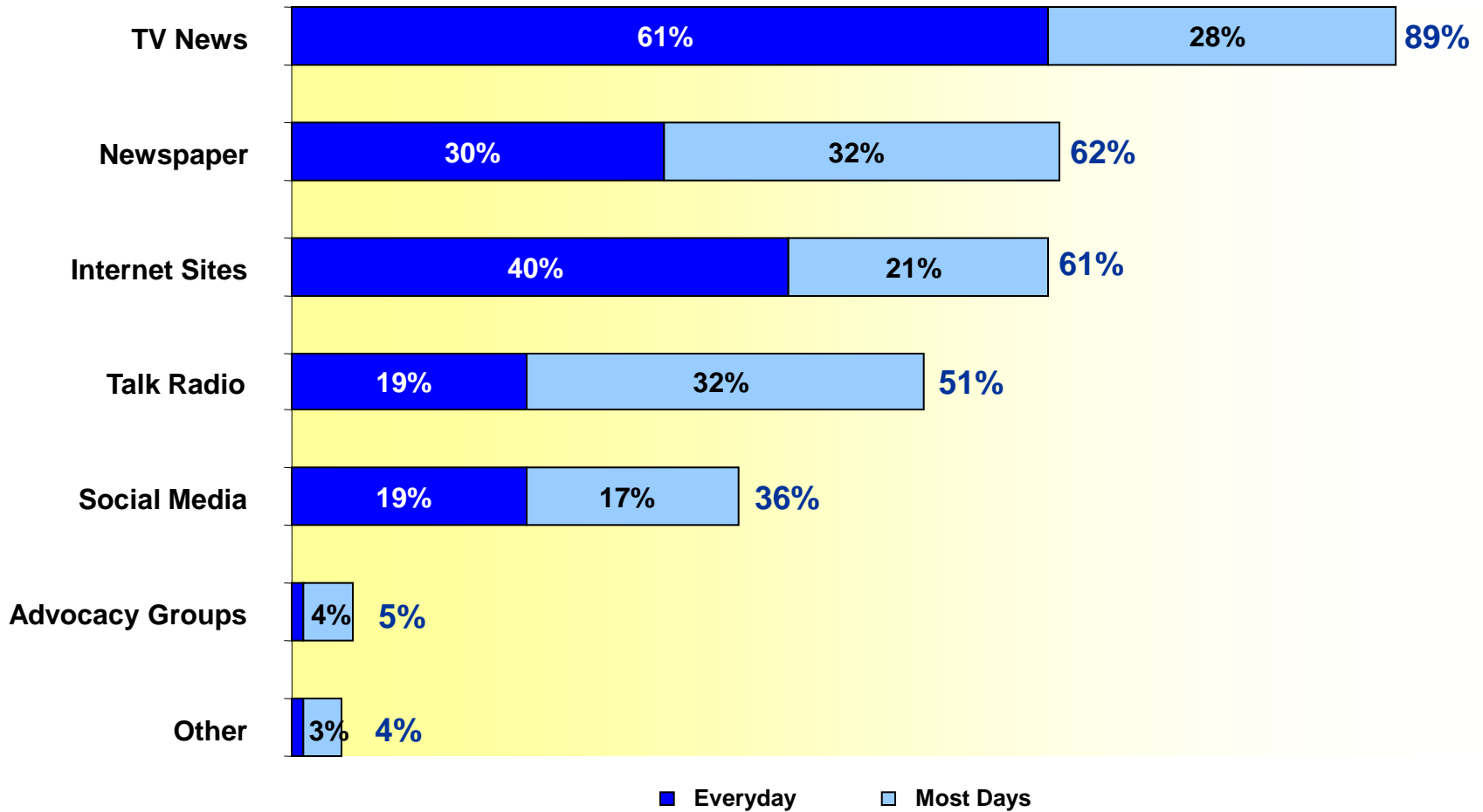


Change Opinion After Hearing Arguments?

- Do you support or oppose development of NLX?

Support	Before Pros/Cons	After Pros/Cons
Strongly Support	16%	20%
Support	40%	37%
Oppose	29%	27%
Strongly Oppose	11%	13%
DK/Refuse	4%	2%

Sources of Information



Conclusions



1) Familiarity with NLX is high

- *Particularly in Duluth*

2) Majority support NLX

- *Supporters are potential riders*
- *Broader community support not as well developed*

Conclusions



3) Strongest messages align to benefits:

- *Economy/Jobs*
- *Convenience/Fast travel*
- *Link NE MN to state network*

4) Need to address concerns:

- *Capital costs*
- *Benefits of rail vs. vehicle*
- *Questions about ridership*
- *Government subsidies*

Recommendations

- 1) Enhance the breadth (% support) and depth (intensity) of public support for NLX
 - *Build project support*
 - *Stimulate future ridership demand*
- 2) Position NLX as a regional asset
 - *Not just passenger benefits*
- 3) Expand communications
 - *Promote user/regional benefits*
 - *Address concerns, info gaps*
 - *Prepare for opposition*

Recommendations

- 4) Enlist additional messengers/allies
 - *Biz, labor, community leaders*
 - *Interested passengers*

- 5) Engage the public
 - *Interaction creates stronger support*
 - *Presentations, public meetings, online, etc.*

Questions/Discussion

