

The AlaskaPoll



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Information for Solutions

- ❖ Market Research
- ❖ Public Opinion Analysis
- ❖ Political and Government Research
- ❖ Focus Groups

UPDATE:
IN-DEPTH
OPINIONS AND
PERCEPTIONS
IN THE
ANCHORAGE/MAT-SU
REGION
REGARDING
A
KNIK ARM CROSSING
II

August 2005

Prepared for

Knik Arm Bridge
And Toll Authority
(KABATA)





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IV. Verbatim Comments..... 31 - 79

“How do you personally feel about a Knik Arm crossing project? Are you mostly in favor or opposed?”

(If in Favor) Why is that? Why are you in favor? And what else might there be -- what’s another reason for being in favor?

(If Opposed) Why is that? Why are you opposed? And what else might there be -- what’s another reason for being opposed?

(If Unsure) What’s the main reason you’re unsure about it at the present time? And what else might there be -- what’s another reason you’re unsure?”

Anchorage..... 31 - 43
Mat-Su..... 44 - 57

“Have you changed your mind in the past year about the Knik Arm Crossing project? ...What helped change your mind?...” 58 - 79

“And last of all, this survey is sponsored by the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority to help in the Knik Arm Bridge decision-making process. Is there anything you’d like to add or tell them at this point?”

Anchorage..... 58 - 66
Mat-Su..... 67 - 79

V. Crosstabulations 80 - 167



Methodology





Overview

During the period August 17 through August 30, 2005, six hundred seven (n=607) Alaskans over the age of 18, located in the Municipality of Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, were personally contacted via telephone by professional interviewing employees of the Dittman Research Corporation of Alaska. The views and opinions of the Alaska residents were recorded on a strictly confidential basis.

Research Design

A divided sample was conducted; approximately half of the interviews (n=300) were completed among Municipality of Anchorage residents, while the others (n=307) were completed among Matanuska-Susitna residents. A random sample design was featured which provided that all households listed in the most current telephone directory for each region had essentially an equal chance of being interviewed.

Sample Selection

Individual respondents were randomly selected from current telephone subscribers listed in the most current directory for each sample region.

Sample Distribution

Anchorage

<u>Community</u>	<u>Zip Codes</u>	<u>Sample Size (n=)</u>	<u>% of Sample</u>
Anchorage - Downtown, West	99501, 99502, 99503, 99517, 99518	96	32%
Anchorage - East	99504, 99505, 99506, 99508	75	25%
Anchorage - South	99507, 99515, 99516, 99587	92	31%
Eagle River, Chugiak	99577, 99567, 99605	37	12%
		300	

Mat-Su Valley

<u>Community</u>	<u>Zip Codes</u>	<u>Sample Size (n=)</u>	<u>% of Sample</u>
Palmer, Sutton, Chickaloon	99645, 99674	116	38%
Wasilla	99629, 99654, 99687	156	51%
West of Wasilla*	99652, 99694, 99688, 99667, 99676, 99683	35	11%
		307	

**West of Wasilla includes Big Lake, Houston, Willow, Skwentna, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek*





Processing the Data

Dittman Research employees completed coding, editing, data entry and verification, while data processing was completed through the in-house Dittman Research Corporation computer system featuring the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The SPSS program is one of the most sophisticated research-oriented data processing and analytical systems available, and is designed specifically for the processing and analysis of survey research data.

Weighting Statement

For regional comparison purposes, the Anchorage sample (n=300) and the Mat-Su sample (n=307) were approximately equal. Then, for combined totals, Anchorage and Mat-Su respondents were appropriately “weighted” to reflect population distribution throughout the region.

Sample Error

Based on an adult (18+) population of approximately 200,000 in Anchorage and the Mat-Su area, the total sample of n=607 may yield a sample error of +/- 4.0%. On a regional basis, a sample of n=300 drawn from an Anchorage adult population of 161,000 may yield a sample error of 5.6%, while a sample of n=307 drawn from a Mat-Su adult population of 40,000 may also yield a sample error of 5.6%.

Measurement History

Citizen opinion measurements by the Dittman Research Corporation, utilizing the previously described methodology, analytical procedures and data processing systems, have proven to be virtually perfect predictors of political election results in Alaska for the past thirty-five years.

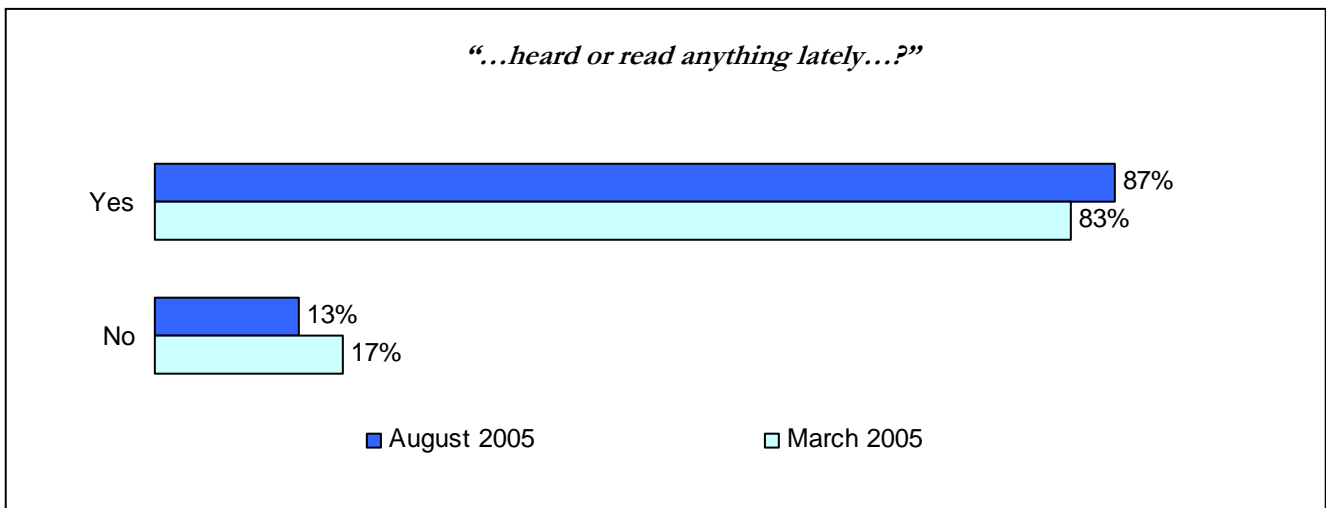
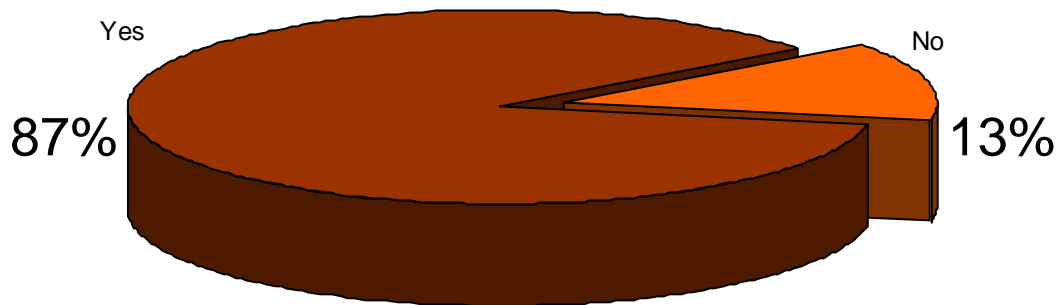
II Findings





Overall, approximately nine out of ten respondents (87%) report they had heard or read something about a Knik Arm Crossing, which is an increase of 4% since the same question was asked approximately six months ago.

Question: *Have you read or heard anything lately about the Knik Arm Crossing?*

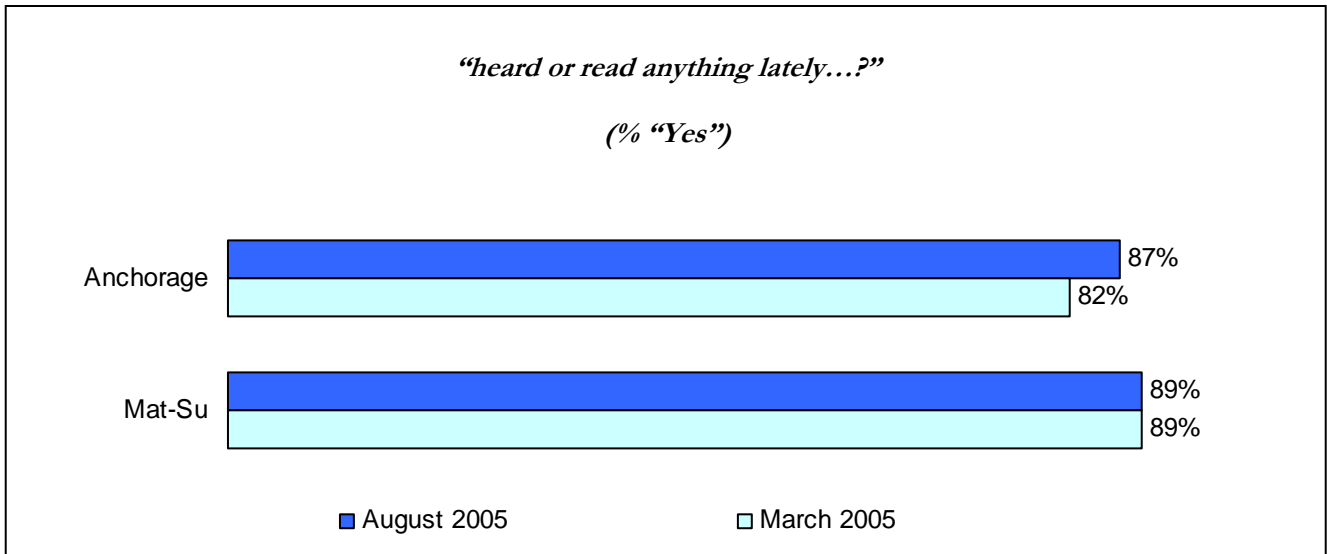
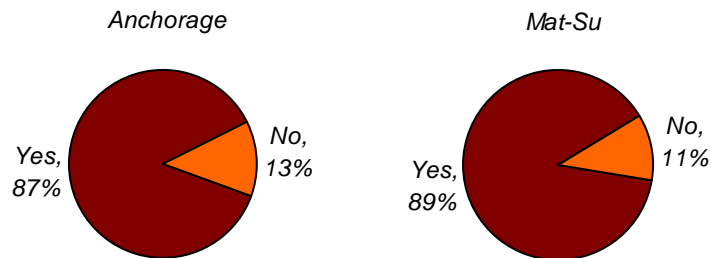




FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

Public awareness of a potential Knik Arm Crossing is now approximately equal in Anchorage and the Mat-Su region (87-89%), which reflects a 5% increase in Anchorage since last March, while Mat-Su awareness remained unchanged.

“heard or read anything lately...?”

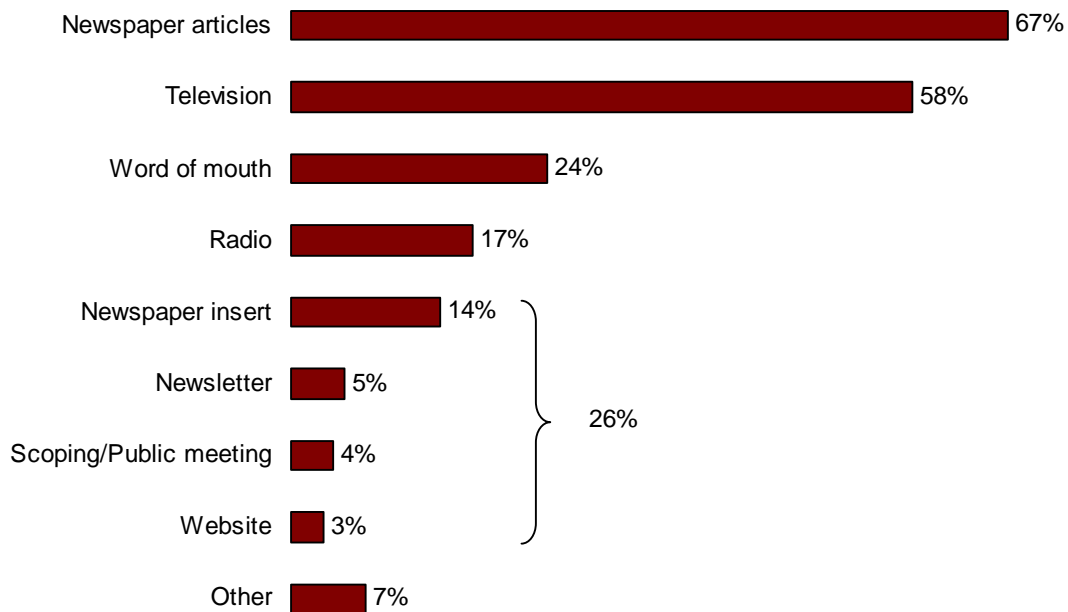




FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

“Newspaper” and “television” coverage are reported to be the primary sources of public awareness (58-67%); however, approximately one out of four sources (26%) are specifically related to public outreach efforts supported by the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA).

Question: What were the sources of information -- where did you read or hear about it?

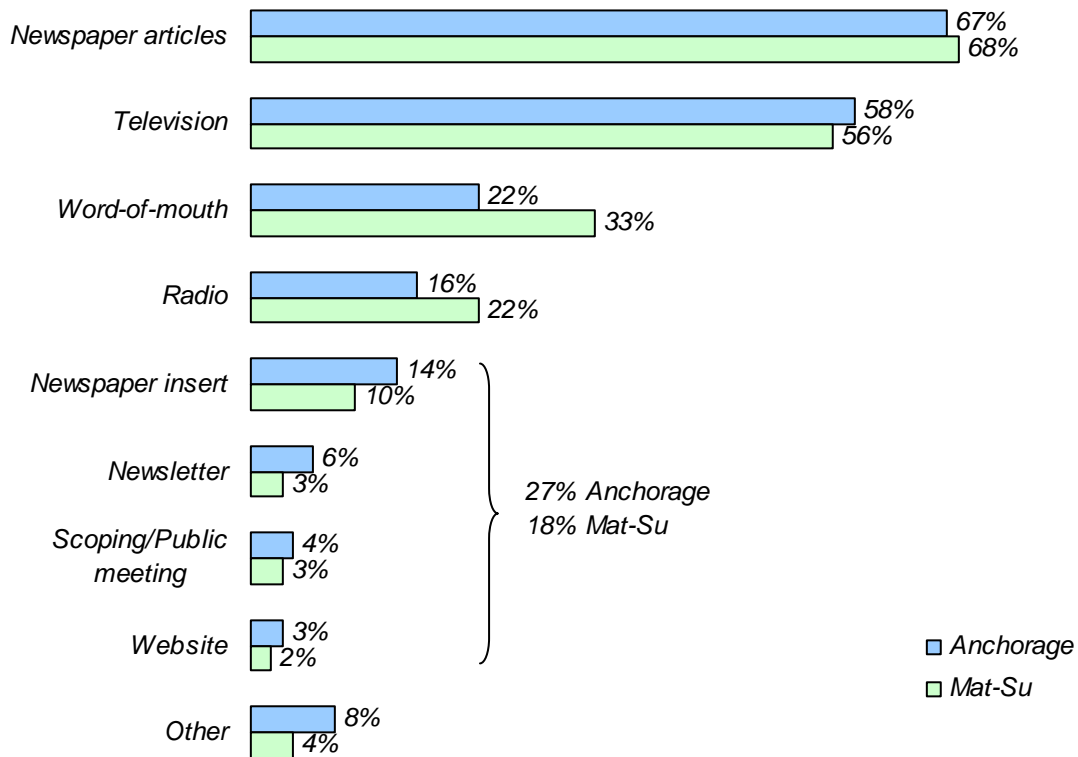




FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

Comparing the Anchorage and Mat-Su regions, there is little difference for “newspaper” (67-68%) and “television” (56-58%), but “word-of-mouth” and “radio” are more often mentioned by residents of the Mat-Su area, while the KABATA sources are more common in Anchorage (27%) compared to Mat-Su (18%).

“...what were the sources of information...?”



*Note: in March 2005 only the primary source of information was recorded. In August 2005 all sources were recorded, thus the results are not comparable.

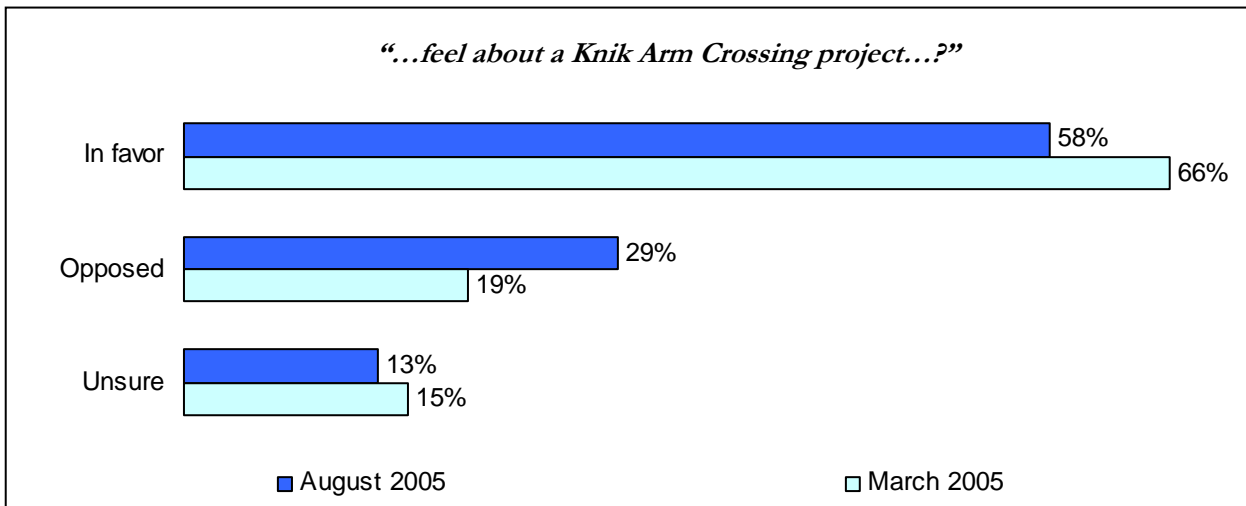
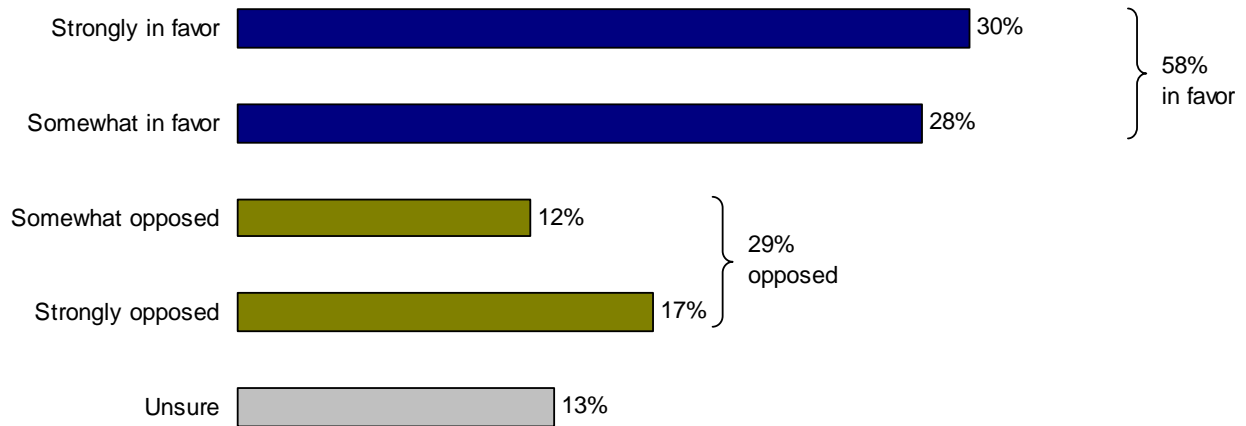




FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

Approximately three out of five respondents (58%) report support for the Knik Arm Crossing project; however, this is a decline from approximately two out of three (66%) last March.

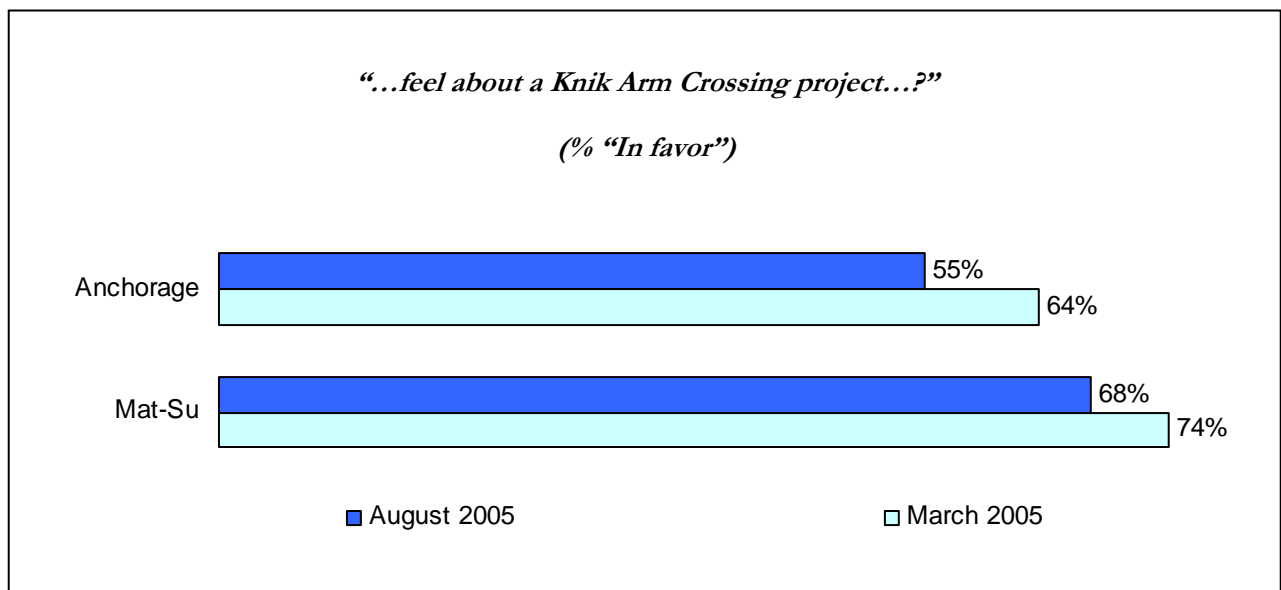
Question: How do you personally feel about a Knik Arm Crossing project? Are you mostly in favor or opposed? ...and is that strongly (in favor/opposed) or just somewhat (in favor/opposed)?





Regionally, Knik Arm Crossing support continues to be higher in the Mat-Su area (68%) compared to Anchorage (55%), which is a continuation of the pattern from approximately six months ago.

“...feel about a Knik Arm Crossing project...?”

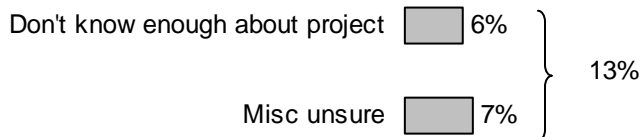
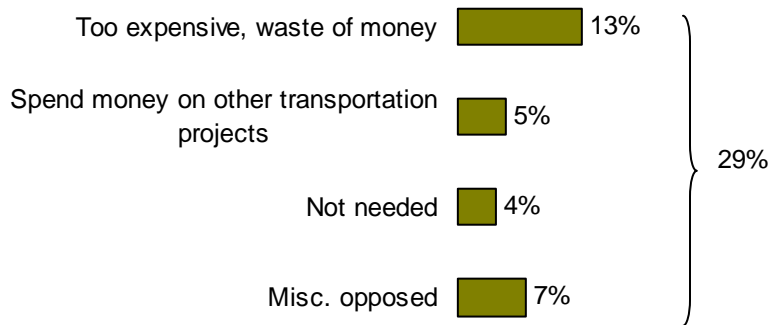
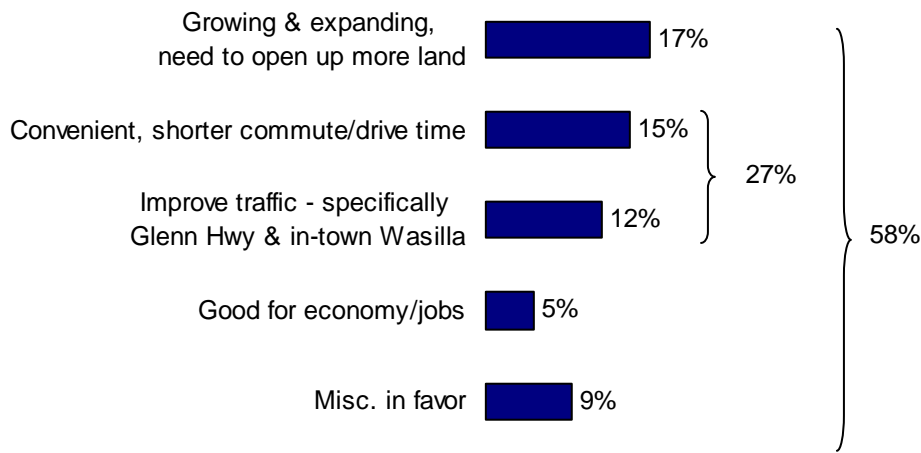




FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

Knik Arm Crossing support (58%) is primarily based on “preparing for growth” and “traffic/driving” concerns, while opposition (29%) is generally based on “financial” issues.

Question: (In favor) Why is that? Why are you (strongly/somewhat) in favor? (Opposed) Why is that? Why are you (strongly/somewhat) opposed? (Unsure) And what’s the main reason you’re unsure about it at the present time?



■ In Favor ■ Opposed ■ Unsure





FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

The overall reasons for support and opposition remain basically consistent compared to March (27% “shorter commute/improve traffic”); however, there has been a decline in support based on “preparing for growth and expansion”, and an increase in opposition based on “financial” issues.

“... Why are you in favor/opposed/unsure...?”

	<u>August 2005</u>		<u>March 2005</u>
<i>In Favor</i>			
Growing & expanding	17%		22%
Shorter, convenient commute	15%	} 27%	20%
Improve traffic	12%		7%
Good for economy	5%		5%
Misc. in favor	9%		12%
 <i>Opposed</i>			
Too expensive, waste of money	13%	} 18%	6%
Spend money on other trans. projects	5%		3%
Not needed	4%		2%
Misc. opposed	7%		8%
 <i>Unsure</i>			
Don't know enough	6%		4%
Misc. unsure	7%		11%



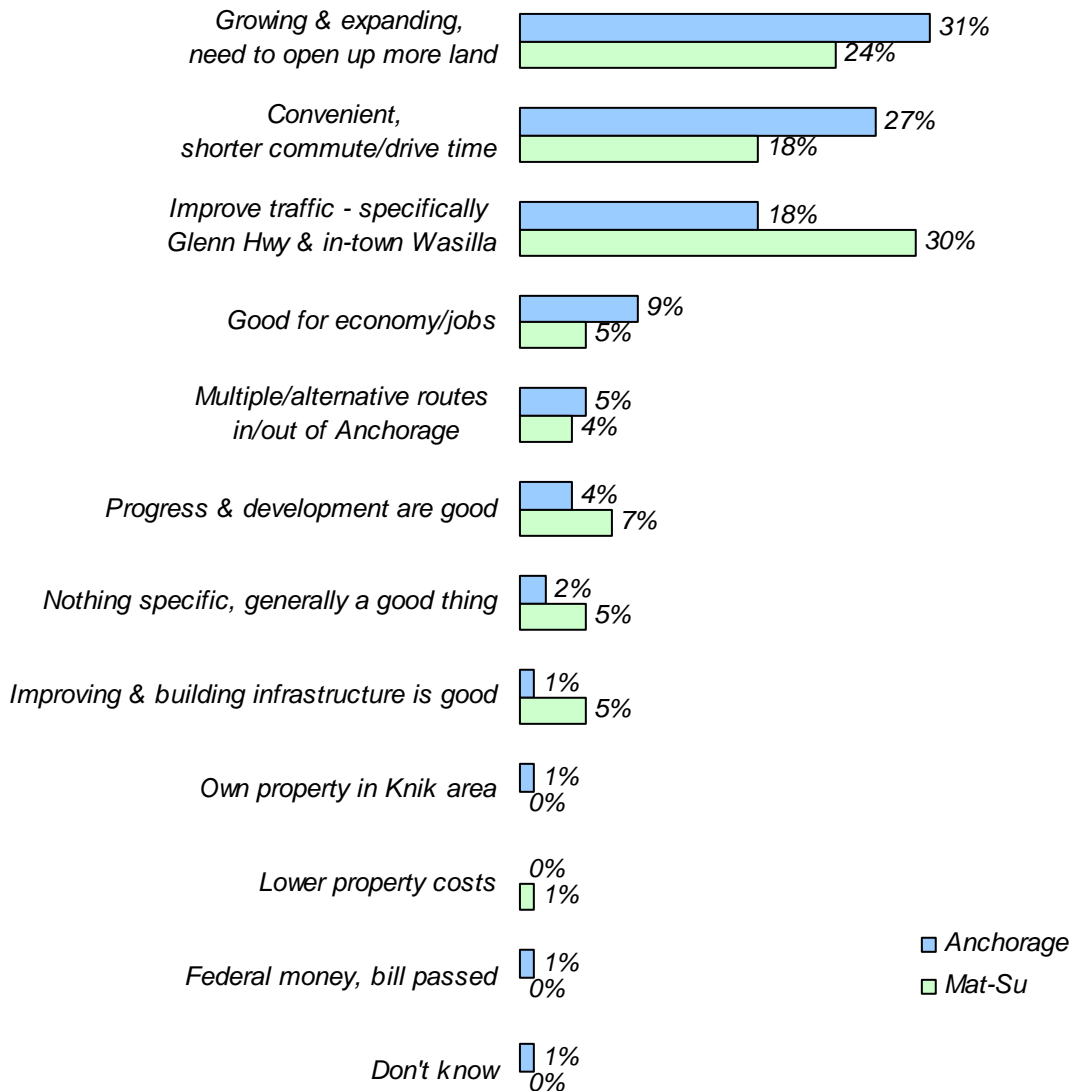


FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

On a regional basis, support in the Anchorage area is more often related to “growth/ expansion”, while Mat-Su support is most often related to “improving traffic”.

(Asked of respondents in favor of Knik Arm Crossing -- 55% Anchorage/68% Mat-Su)

“...why...in favor...?”



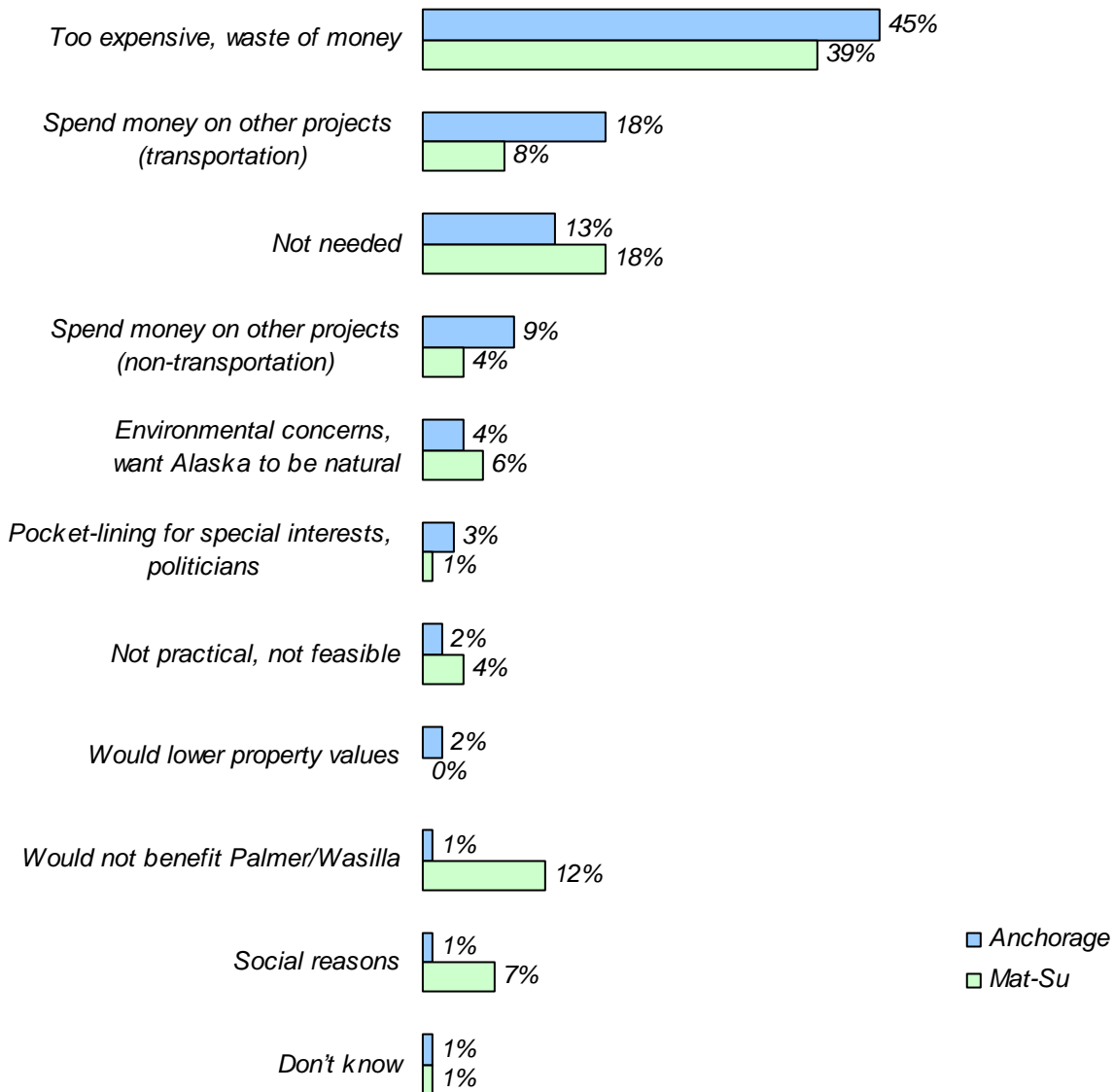


FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

Among respondents who report opposition, both Anchorage and Mat-Su respondents are most likely to refer to “*financial*” issues; however, Mat-Su respondents who are opposed also refer to a perceived “*lack of need or benefit*”.

(Asked of respondents opposed to Knik Arm Crossing -- Anchorage 30%/Mat-Su 23%)

“...why...opposed...?”

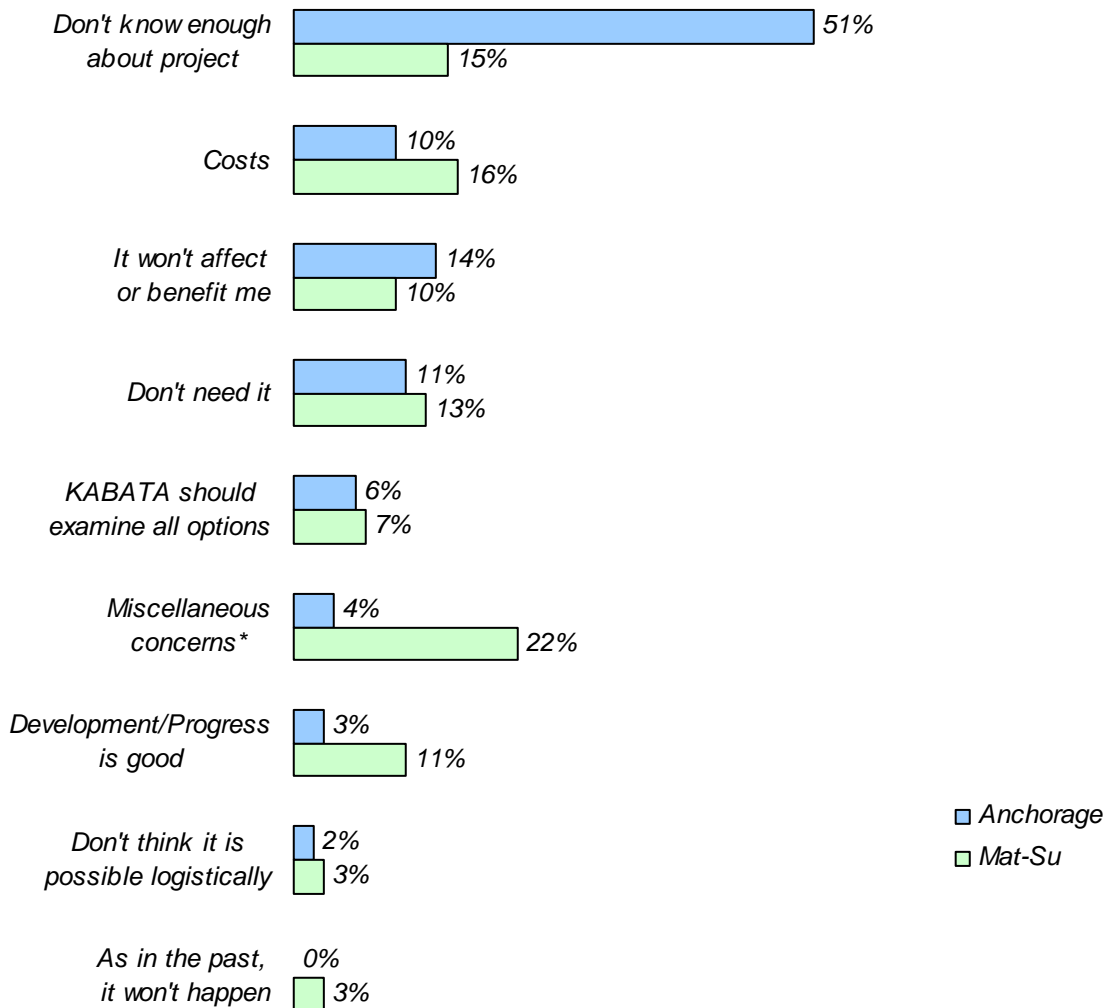




Among respondents who are unsure, Anchorage respondents are most likely to report a “general lack of information”, while unsure respondents from the Mat-Su region are more likely to describe “miscellaneous concerns” and questions concerning “costs” and “need”.

(Asked of respondents unsure about a Knik Arm Crossing -- Anchorage 15%/Mat-Su 8%)

“...why...unsure...?”



*Note: “Miscellaneous concerns” includes mentions regarding the environment, “houses everywhere”, developing the area too fast, Government Hill and downtown traffic.

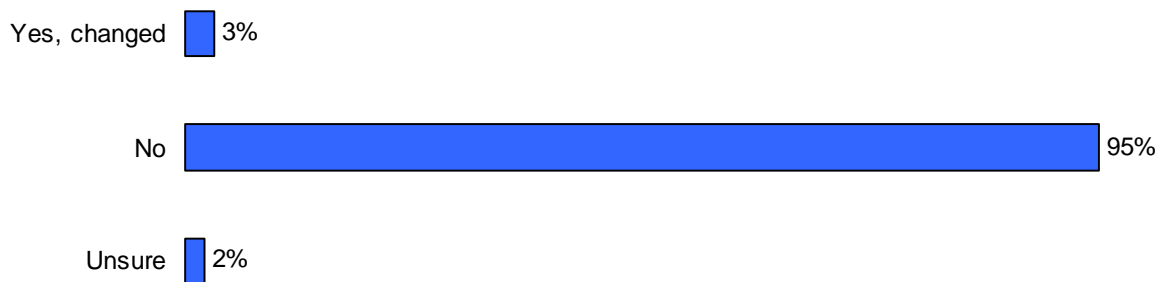




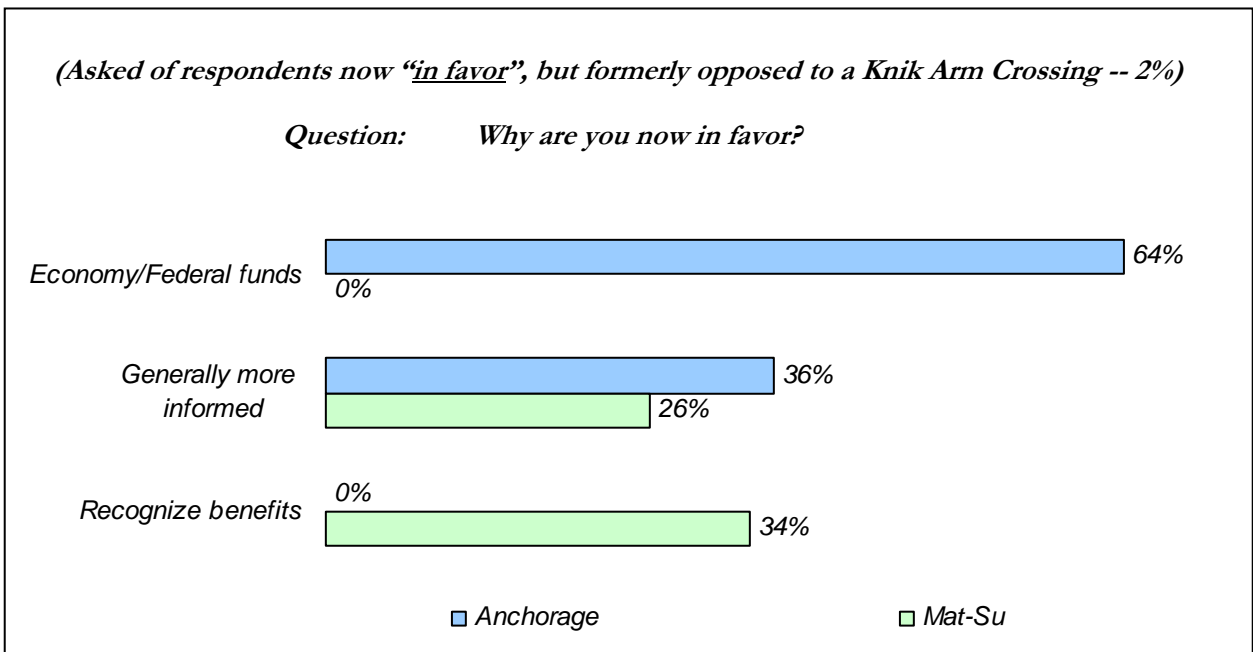
Among respondents currently in favor of a Knik Arm Crossing, 3% report they had recently changed to this position from being opposed in the past.

(Asked of respondents *“in favor”* of a Knik Arm Crossing -- 58%)

Question: *Have you changed your mind in the past year about the Knik Arm Crossing project -- were you more opposed to the project in the past?”*



The most common reasons for a change from opposition to support were related to “*economics and source of money*” factors, being “*generally more informed*” and “*recognition of benefits*”.





FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

On the other hand, among respondents currently opposed, 11% report they had previously been in support.

(Asked of respondents “opposed” to a Knik Arm Crossing -- 29%)

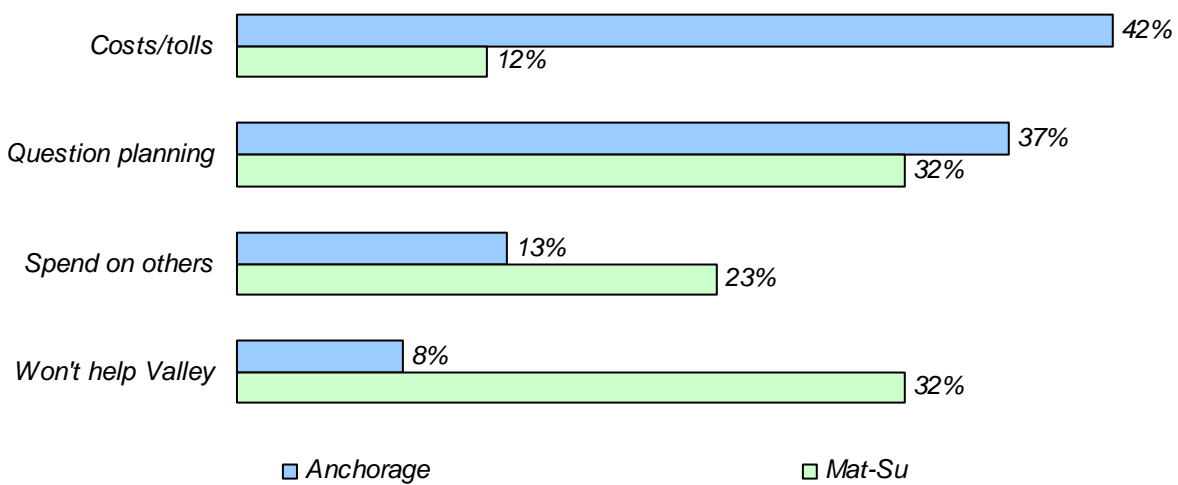
Question: *Have you changed your mind in the past year about the Knik Arm Crossing project -- were you more in favor of the project in the past?*



The primary reasons for the change from support to opposition are related to “cost and tolls”, “questions about planning”, “using the money elsewhere” and “not helping Valley residents”.

(Asked of respondents now “opposed”, but formerly if favor of a Knik Arm Crossing -- 3%)

Question: *Why are you now opposed?*





Among respondents who are currently unsure, 6% report switching from a prior position of support or opposition.

(Asked of respondents "unsure" about a Knik Arm Crossing -- 13%)

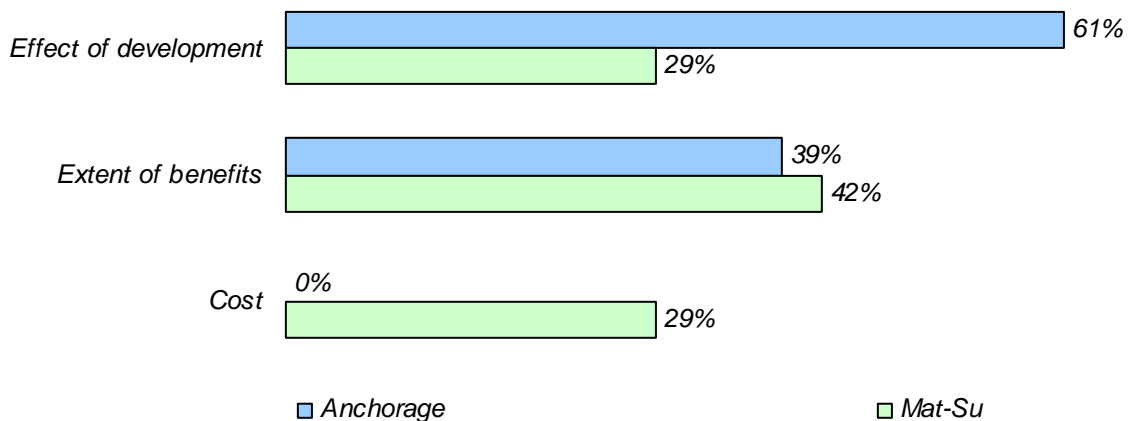
Question: *Have you changed your mind in the past year about the Knik Arm Crossing project -- were you in favor or opposed to the project in the past?"*



In these few cases*, most of the change was related to questions regarding the "benefits" and "effects of development".

(Asked of respondents now "unsure", but formerly if favor or opposed to a Knik Arm Crossing -- <1%)

Question: *Why are you now unsure?*



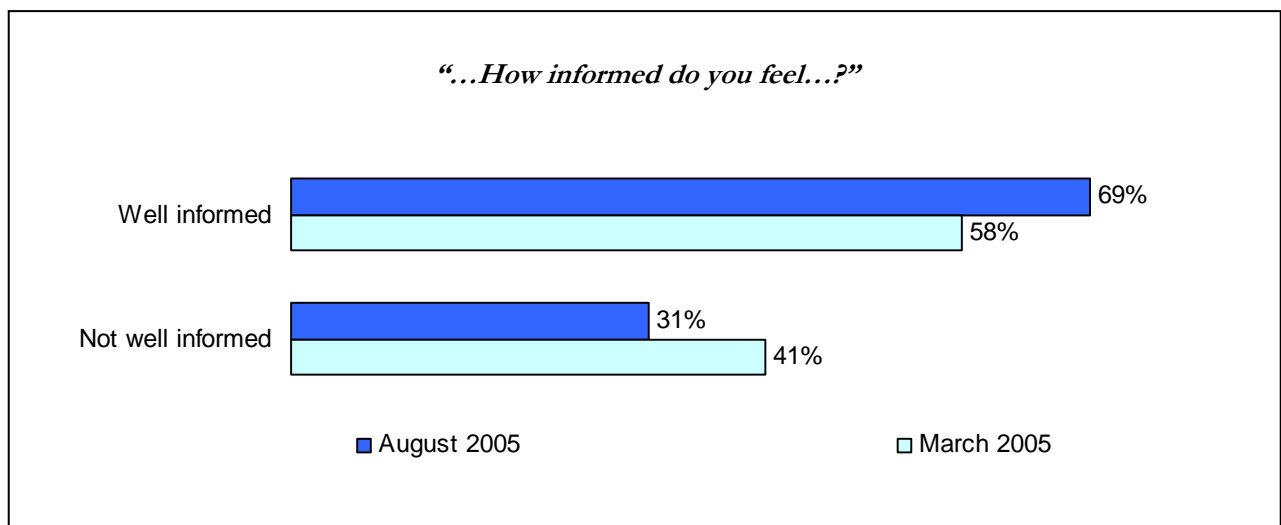
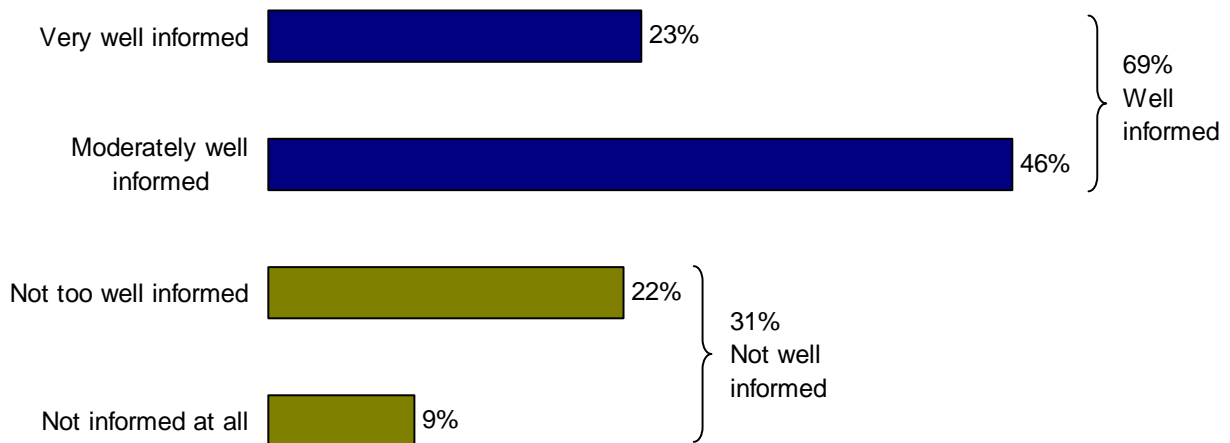
*Note: Less than 1% altogether -- a total of 13% were "unsure" and 6% of them switched to that position: 13% x .06 = .78%





Currently, over two out of three respondents (69%) feel they are “moderately” or “very well” informed -- a fairly substantial increase since last March (58%).

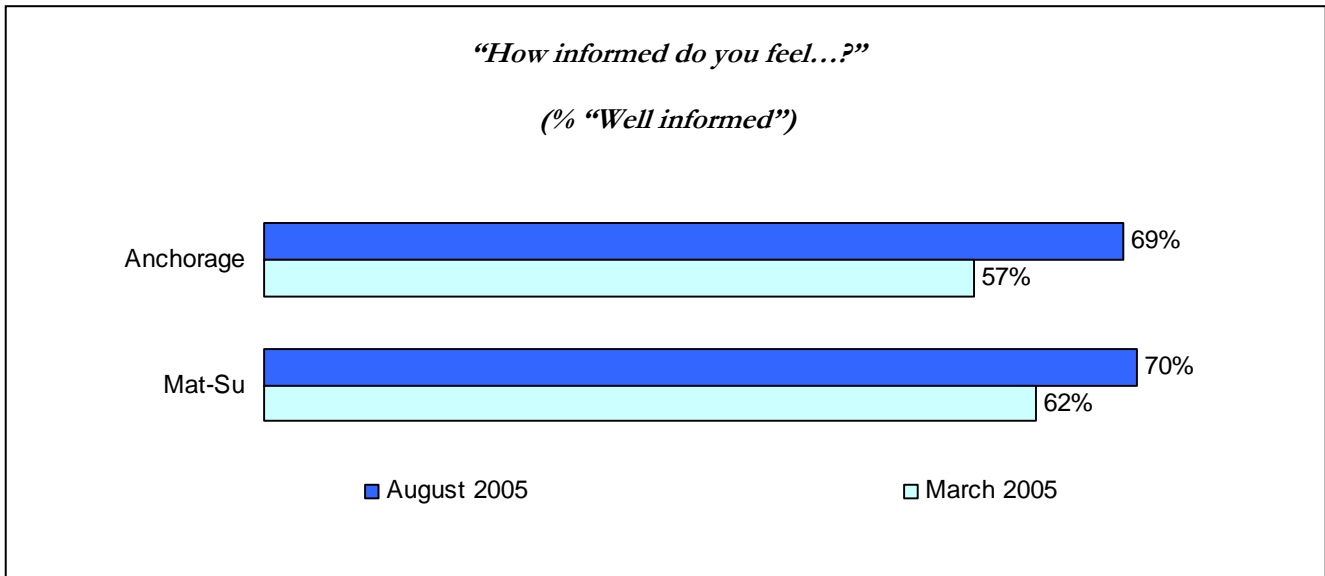
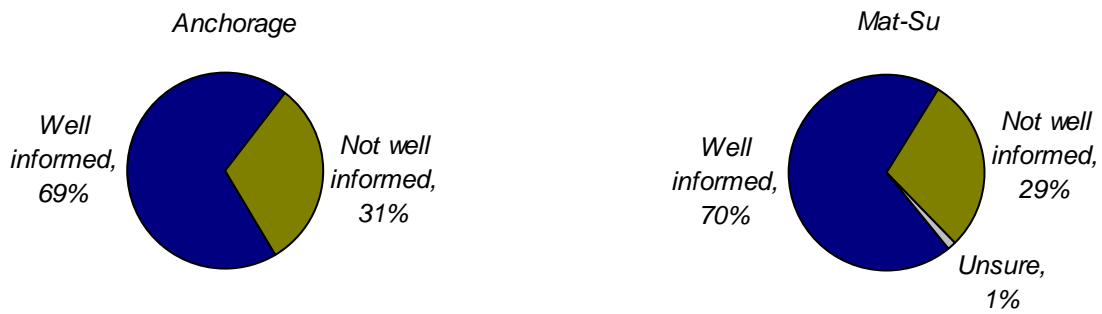
Question: How informed do you feel you are about the benefits and drawbacks that may be associated with building the Knik Arm Crossing?





Perceptions regarding being “well informed” are approximately equal in Anchorage and Mat-Su (69-70%), with Anchorage awareness increasing the most over the past 6 months.

“How informed do you feel...?”



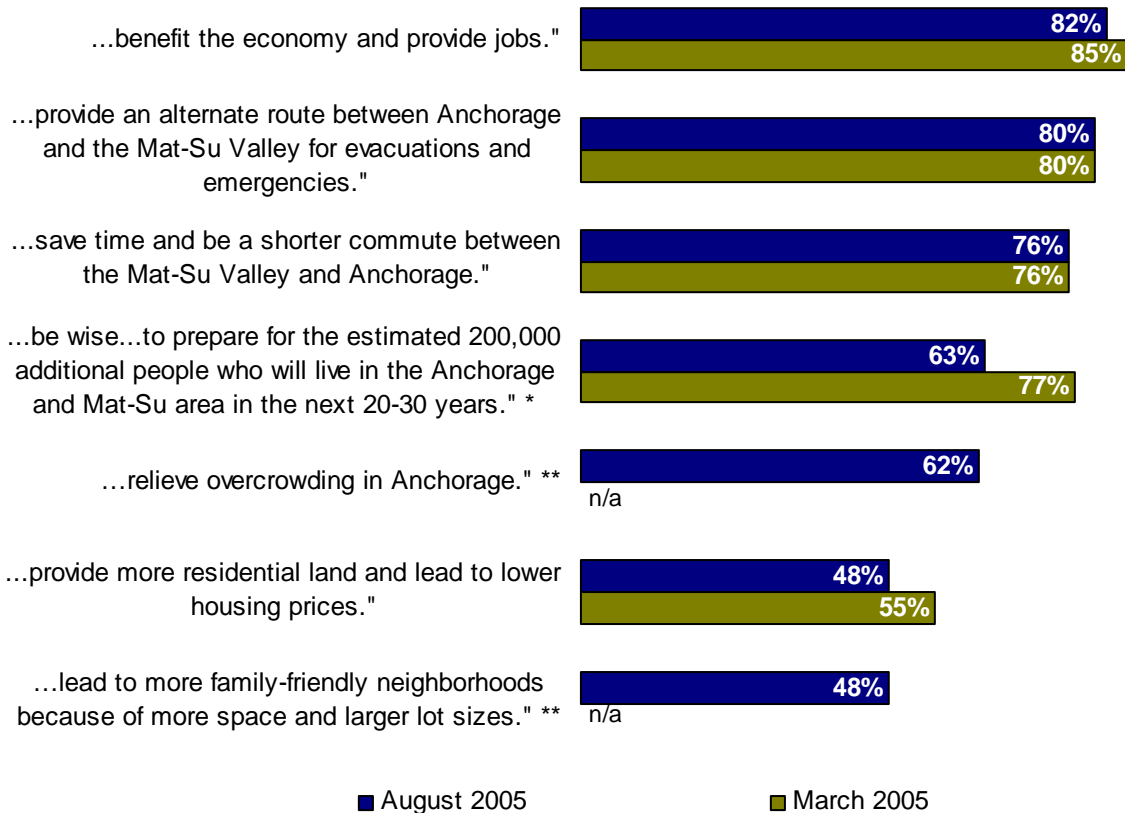


In general, most respondents agree with statements in support of a Knik Arm Crossing -- including over four out of five (82%-85%) who agree that it will "benefit the economy and provide jobs" and over three out of four (76%) that it will "save time and be a shorter commute".

Question: I'm going to read some things different people have said about a bridge across Knik Arm connecting Anchorage and the Point MacKenzie area of the Mat-Su Borough. Please tell me whether you basically agree or disagree with these other points of view.

A Knik Arm Crossing will...

(% "strongly/somewhat agree")



* Question asked as "...be a wise investment to prepare for future population growth" in March 2005.
** Question was asked only in August 2005.



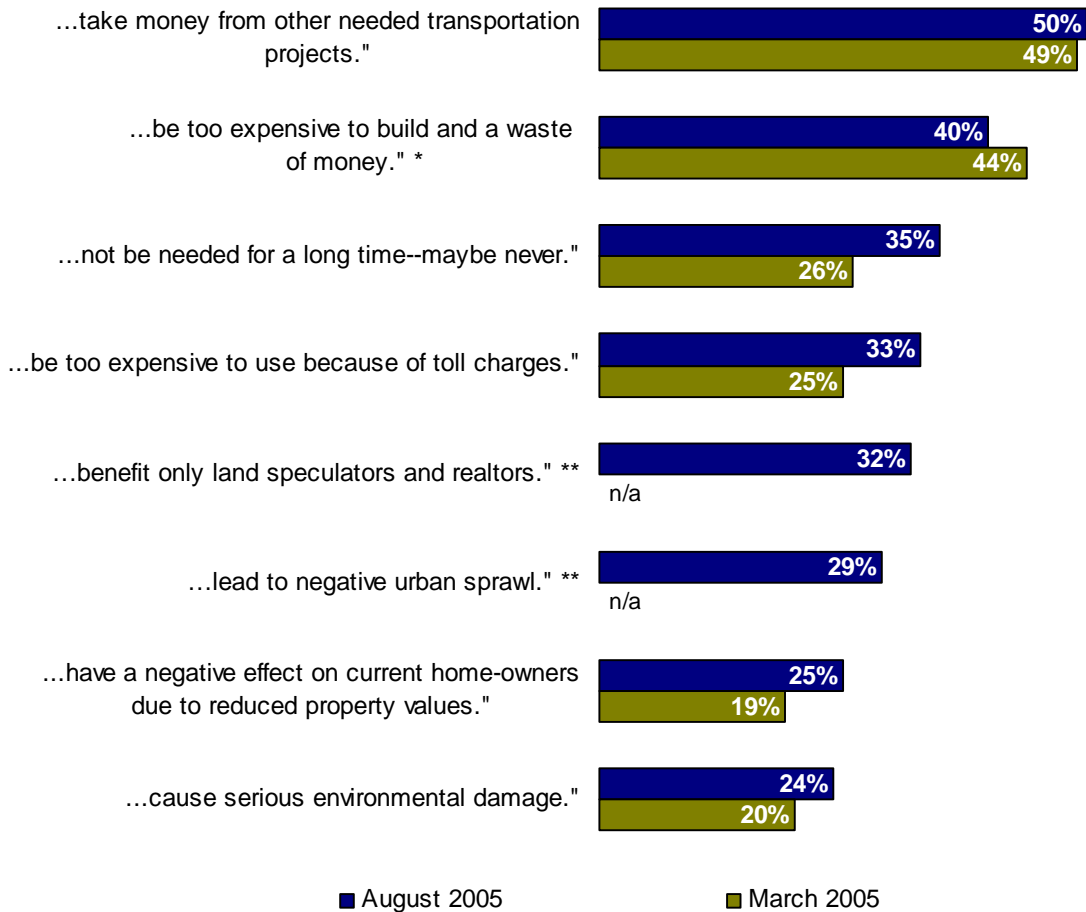


And most respondents disagree with statements critical of the Knik Arm Crossing, including fewer than one out of four (20-24%) who agree that it would "cause serious environmental damage" and approximately one out of three (26-35%) who agree that a crossing will "not be needed..."

Question: Please tell me whether you basically agree or disagree with these other points of view. (cont'd)

A Knik Arm Crossing will...

(% "strongly/somewhat agree")



* Questions was asked as "...be too expensive to build" In March 2005.

** Question was asked only in August 2005.

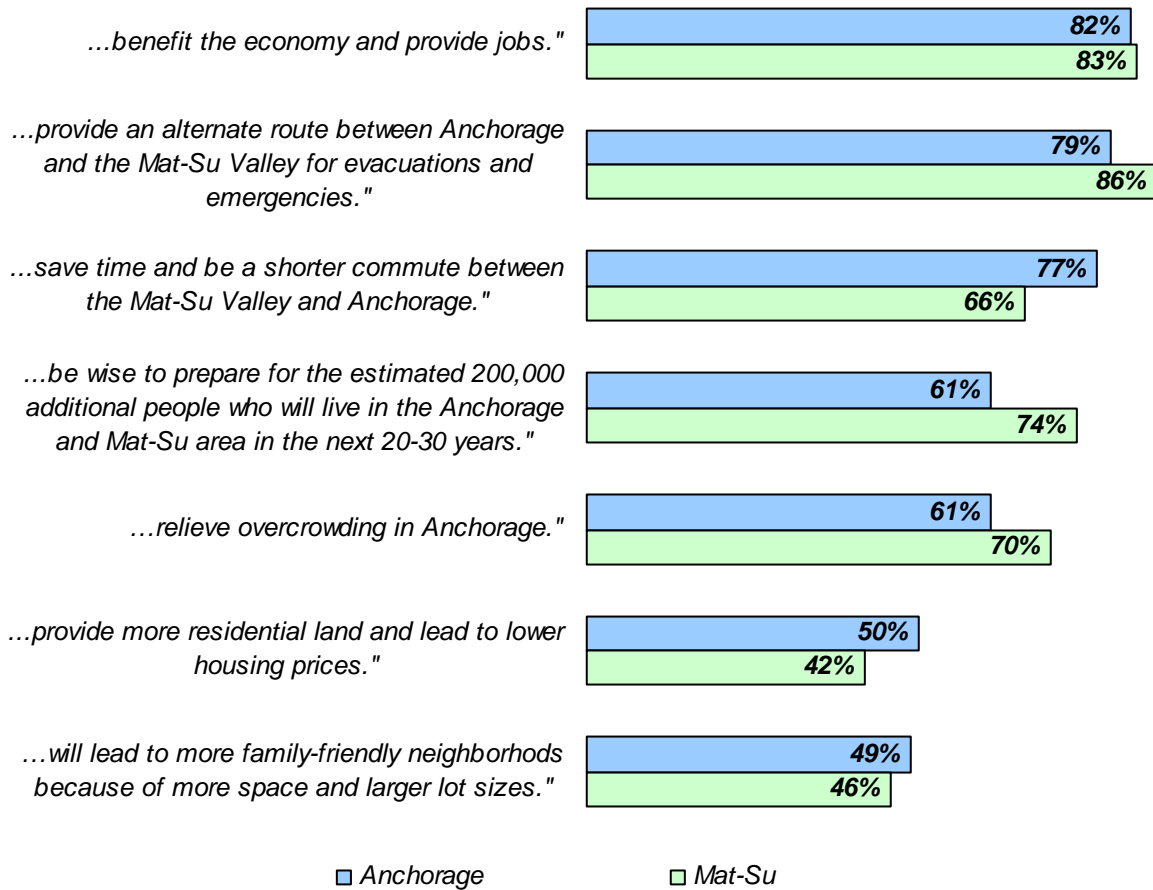




Citizen views and perceptions in Anchorage and Mat-Su are basically similar regarding the benefits of the Knik Arm Crossing; however, Mat-Su respondents are substantially more likely to see the project as a means to relieve “population growth” and “overcrowding in Anchorage”.

Question: Please tell me whether you basically agree or disagree with these other points of view. (cont'd)

**Agree or disagree with these statements...
(% “agree”)**

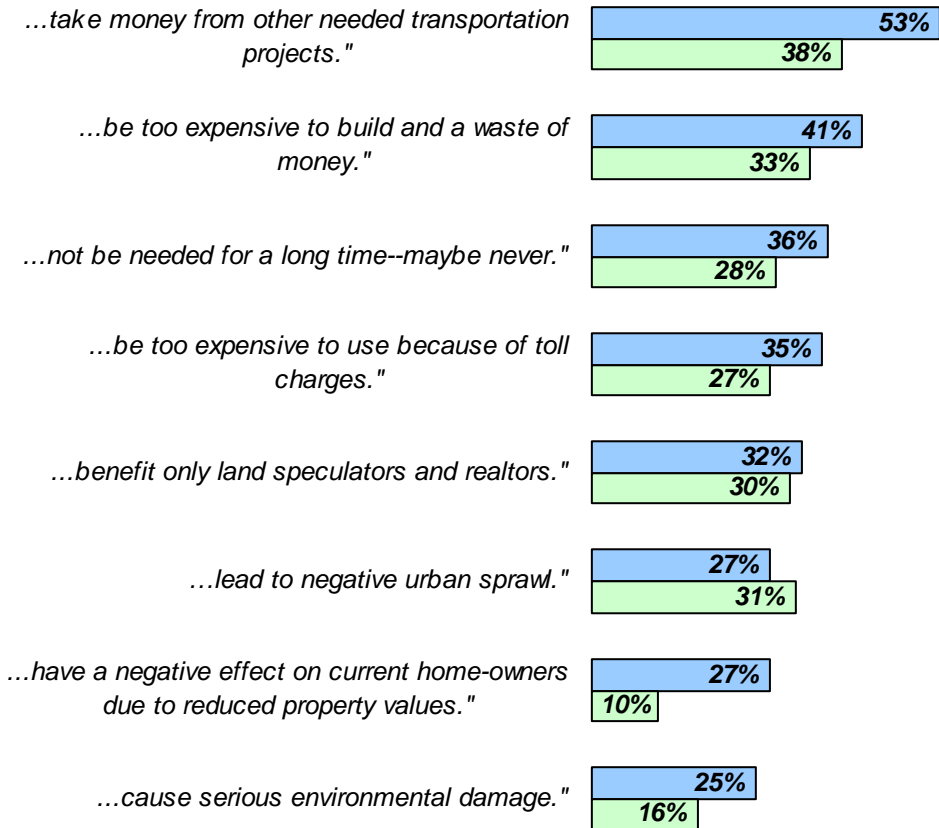




The agreement levels for non-supportive statements regarding a Knik Arm Crossing are well under 50%, with the exception of “...take money from other...projects”. Anchorage respondents are generally most likely to agree with “cost-related” statements in opposition to a crossing.

Question: Please tell me whether you basically agree or disagree with these other points of view. (cont'd)

**Agree or disagree with these statements...
(% “agree”)**



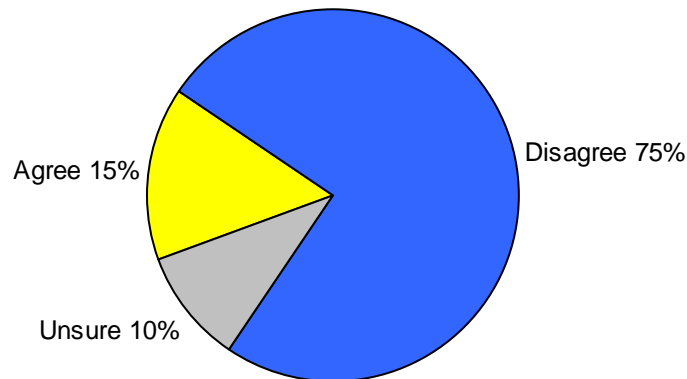
■ Anchorage □ Mat-Su



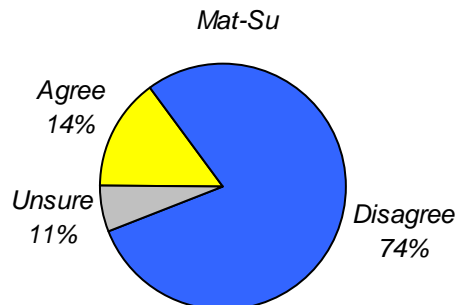
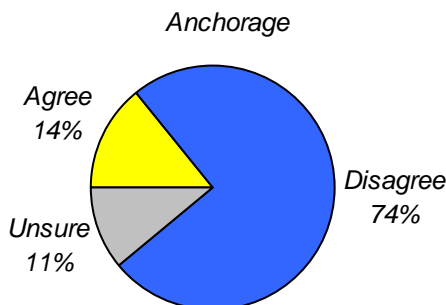


By a huge margin (75% versus 15%), Anchorage and Mat-Su residents report they disagree with the concept of avoiding “urban sprawl” by encouraging higher-density development in Anchorage.

Question: Some people who are opposed to the Knik Arm crossing say it will lead to ‘urban sprawl’ in the Mat-Su Valley, and it would be better if people stayed in Anchorage and lived in more densely populated developments with apartments, condominiums and smaller houses on smaller lots. What is your opinion? Do you agree or disagree with those who encourage higher-density development in Anchorage instead of building a Knik Arm Bridge?



“...agree or disagree with those who encourage higher-density development in Anchorage?”

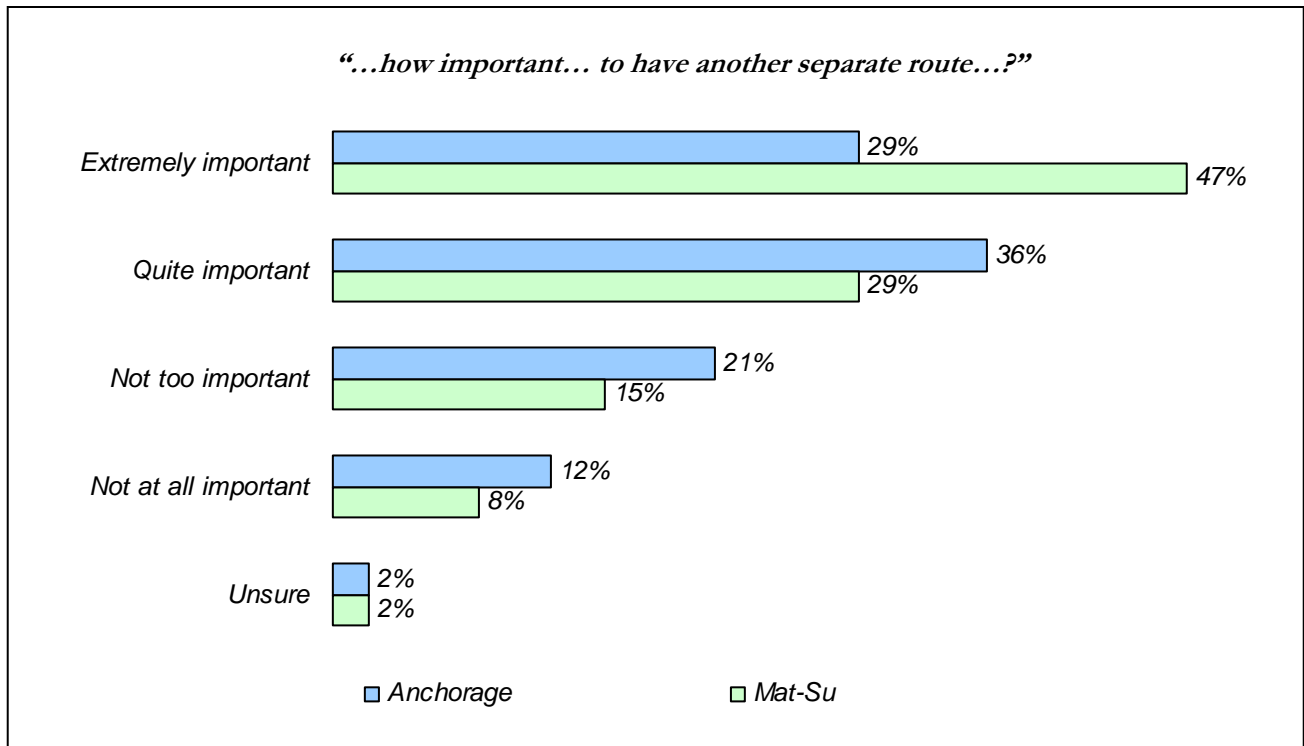
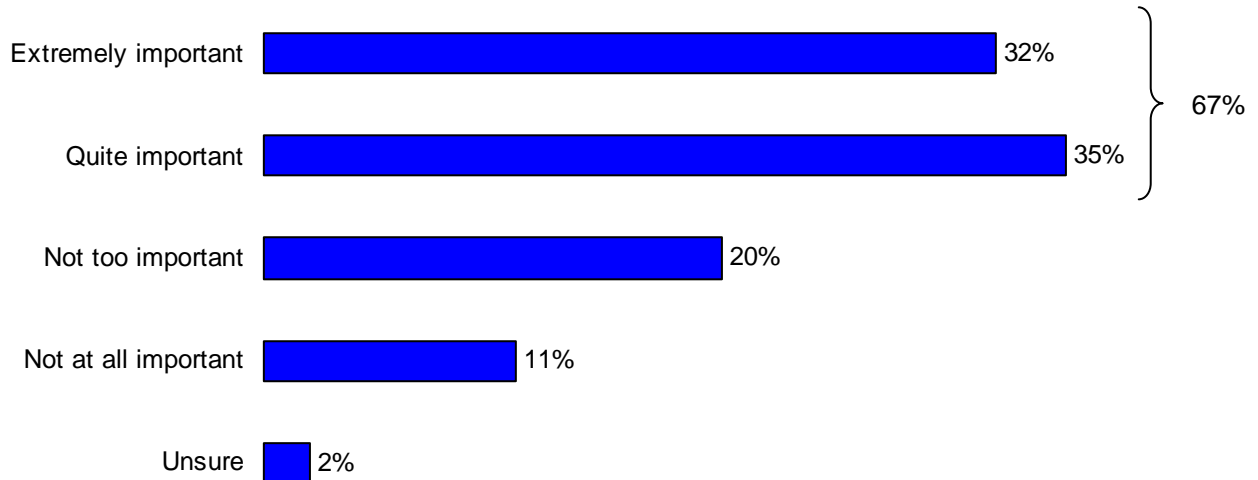




FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

Two out of three respondents (67%) believe it is “quite” or “extremely” important to have more than one route between Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley. And in this case, another separate route is particularly important to Mat-Su residents (47% “extremely important”).

Question: *In addition to the Glenn Highway, how important do you feel it will be to have another separate route between Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley in case of natural disasters or emergency evacuations?*



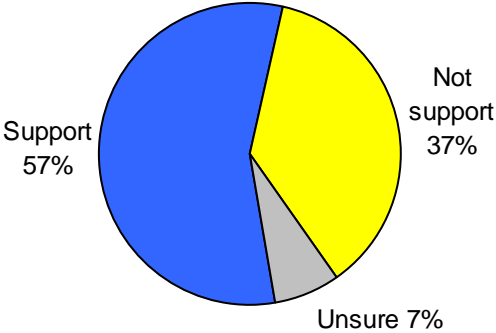


FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

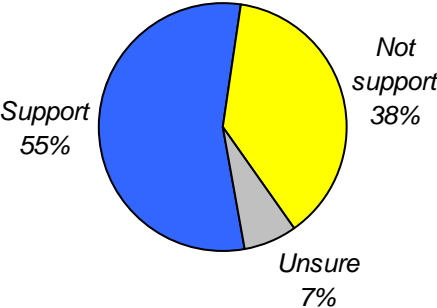
A majority of respondents (57%) in the combined Anchorage and Mat-Su regions report they support a potential three-point payment plan for a Knik Arm Crossing. On a regional basis, support exceeds opposition by 17% in Anchorage (55% compared to 38%) and 38% in the Mat-Su region (66% compared to 28%).

Question: *The cost of a Knik Arm crossing is estimated to be between 400 and 600 million dollars. Using the higher estimate of 600 million dollars for an example, about 200 million could be paid by federal gasoline taxes, which are already collected and available. Another 200 million could be provided by revenue bonds, which would be paid by bridge users through tolls. And another 200 million could be provided by state general obligation bonds, which would be paid for by interest and earnings from state savings account investments, which are separate and do not affect the Permanent Fund dividend. What's your opinion -- would you support this basic plan to pay for the Knik Arm Crossing, or not?*

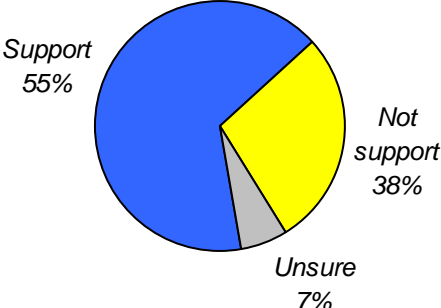
OVERALL



Anchorage



Mat-Su

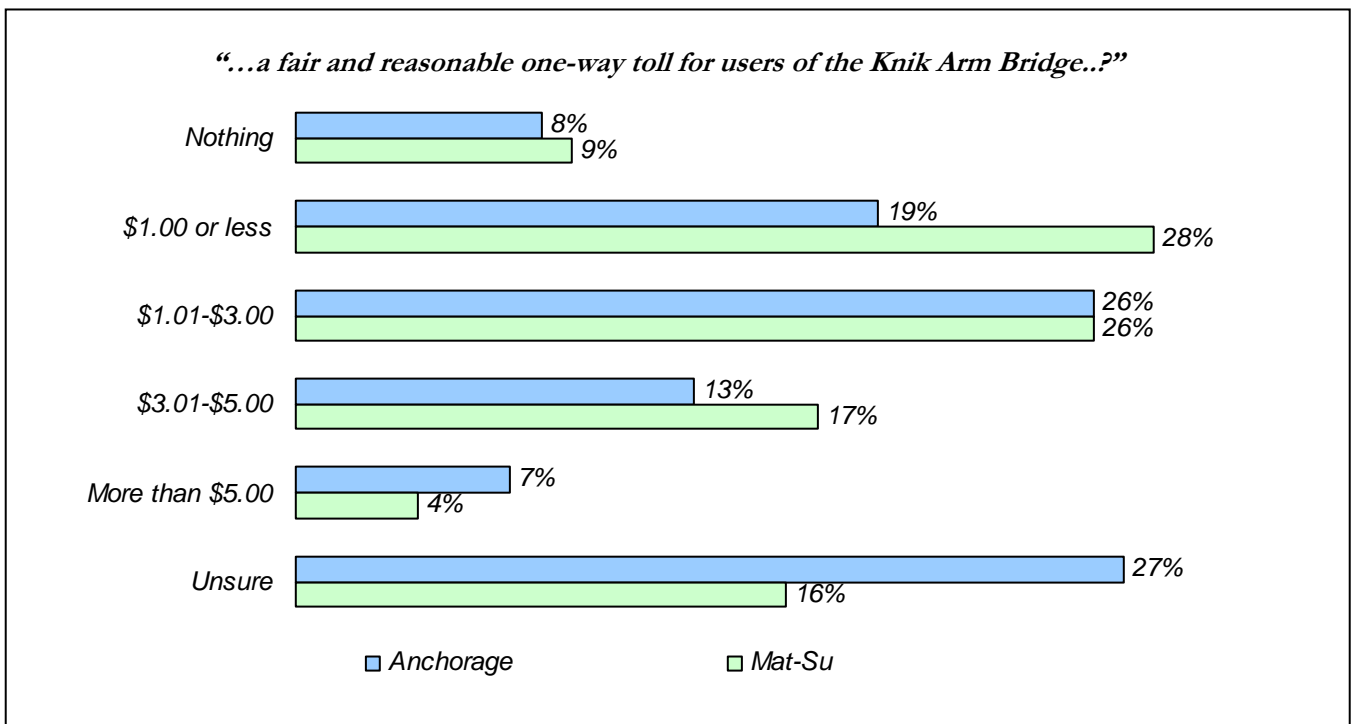
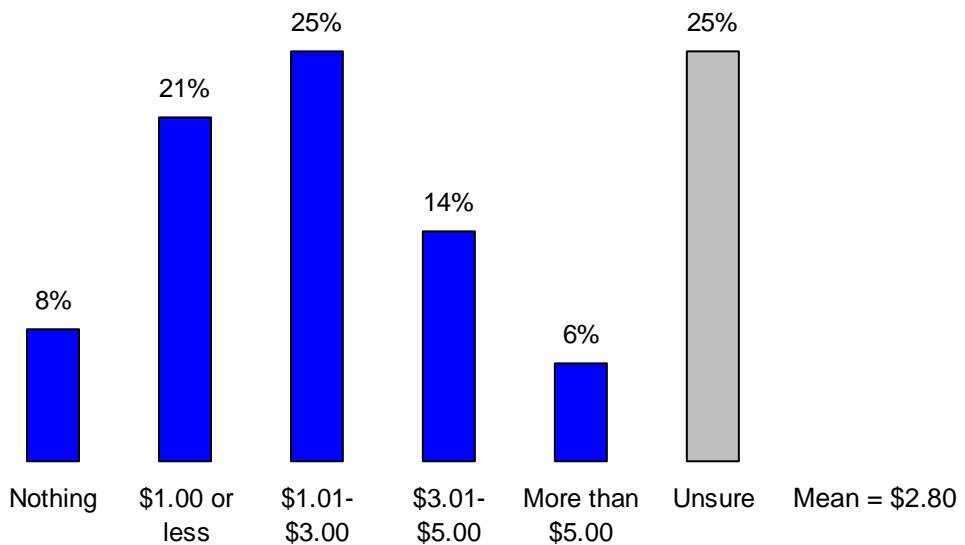




FINDINGS **UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II**

Setting aside the “*unsure*” responses and viewing the profile of respondents expressing a preference the arithmetic mean for a one-way toll is \$2.80, which corresponds with the highest point of the “bell-shaped curve” between \$1.01 and \$3.00.

Question: *What do you think would be a fair and reasonable one-way toll for users of the Knik Arm Bridge?*



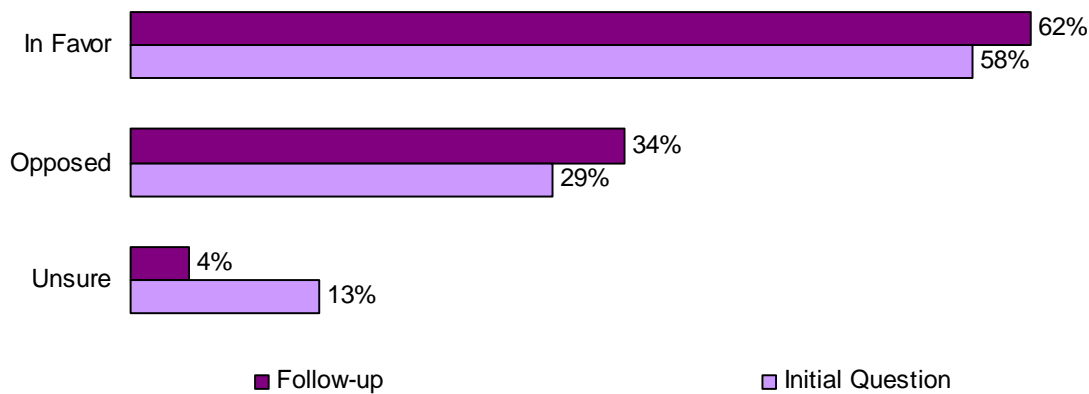


FINDINGS UPDATE: KNIK ARM CROSSING II

As public information and discussion increases and more information becomes available regarding a Knik Arm Crossing, it may be likely that support for the Crossing will continue to exceed opposition by a wide margin. At the beginning of the August UPDATE survey, the third question inquired as to their support or opposition to the Knik Arm Crossing. Following the subsequent twenty-three questions regarding advantages, disadvantages, sources of information, costs and potential methods of payment, the twenty-seventh question repeated the third question again.

Comparing the results of these questions indicates that increased public information and discussion will substantially reduce the number of respondents who are “unsure”, and increase the number both “*in favor*” (from 58% to 62%) and “*opposed*” (from 29% to 34%). The net effect is that the difference between support and opposition is virtually unchanged.

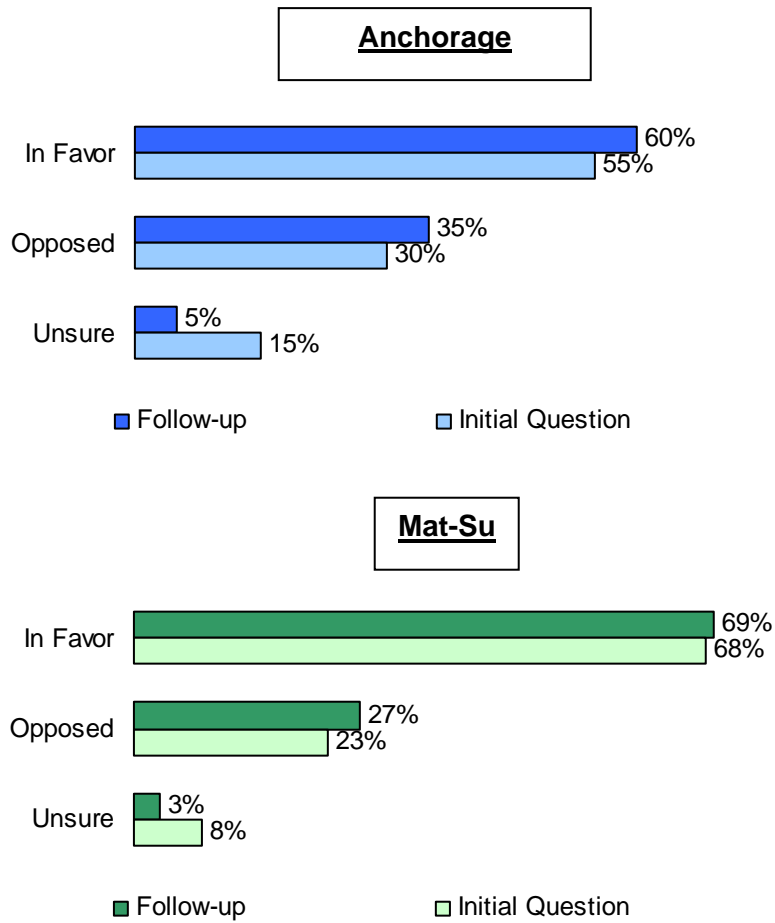
Question: Now that we’ve had a chance to talk about some considerations and different points of view, what’s your personal opinion about the Knik Arm Crossing project -- are you mostly in favor, or opposed?





Most of the change between the Initial Question and the Follow-up Question occurred in Anchorage.

“...opinion about the Knik Arm Crossing..?”



III

Summary





OVERVIEW: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- ◆ Overall, approximately nine out of ten respondents (87%) are aware of information concerning a Knik Arm Crossing, with awareness approximately equal in Anchorage (87%) and Mat-Su (89%).
- ◆ Currently, over two out of three (69%) consider themselves “well informed” compared to 58% in March.
- ◆ The sources of information are predominantly “*newspaper*” and “*television*”; however, over one out of four sources (26%) were specifically related to public outreach efforts of the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (“*newspaper insert*”, “*newsletter*”, “*scoping/public meetings*” and “*website*”).
- ◆ After more than six months of meetings, hearings, public testimony and media coverage, at the beginning of the survey respondents report 2:1 support for a Knik Arm Crossing project (58% “*in favor*”/29% “*oppose*”).
- ◆ Knik Arm Crossing support is most often based on “*traffic*” considerations (27%) and “*prepare for growth/need to expand*” (17%), while opposition is almost totally related to “*financial*” reasons (18%).
- ◆ On a regional basis, Anchorage residents are most likely to describe reasons for support in general terms: “*prepare for growth*” and “*convenience*”, on the other hand, Mat-Su residents are most likely to mention specific justifications: “*improve Glenn Highway/help in-town Wasilla traffic*”.
- ◆ Reasons for opposition to a Knik Arm Crossing on “*financial grounds*” -- “*too expensive*” and “*spend money on other projects*” -- are most common in Anchorage (72% of those opposed) compared to Mat-Su (51% of those opposed). On the other hand, Mat-Su residents are more likely to believe a crossing is not needed (18%) and that they would not benefit (12%).
- ◆ Overall, there is substantial and consistent agreement with most hypothetical statements in support of a Knik Arm Crossing, and general disagreement with statements in opposition. The strongest agreement in both Anchorage and Mat-Su is based on “*economic and employment benefits*”, “*providing an alternate route for evacuations and emergencies*”, “*saving time and shorter commute*”, “*preparing for future population growth*” and “*relieving overcrowding in Anchorage*”. The least agreement is related to “*environmental damage*”, “*leading to urban sprawl*”, “*having negative effects on current homeowners*” and “*benefiting only land speculators and realtors*”.
- ◆ Suggested encouragement for higher-density development in Anchorage to counter a Knik Arm Crossing because it could lead to “*urban sprawl*” is largely unsupported -- by approximately a 5:1 ratio (74%-14% in Anchorage; 79%-15% in Mat-Su), respondents disagreed with the higher-density development proposal.



OVERVIEW: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS (CONT'D)

- ◆ In the combined Anchorage/Mat-Su region, overall public support (57%) for a possible three-point payment plan exceeds opposition (37%) by 20%. On an individual area basis, “*net support*” is strongest in the Mat-Su region at 38% (66% “*support*”/28% “*not support*”), followed by a “*net support*” in Anchorage of 17% (55% “*support*”/38% “*not support*”).
- ◆ And in conclusion, as public information increases and more information becomes available regarding the benefits and drawbacks of a Knik Arm Crossing, it is likely that the number of Anchorage/Mat-Su residents who are “*unsure*” will decrease substantially. And it appears that those who are making up their minds are approximately equally split between support and opposition. The August UPDATE survey asked the same question twice: once at the beginning of the questionnaire, and again at the conclusion. By the concluding question, the number of “*unsure*” had declined to 4% from 13%, and of the nine percent who made a choice, 4% became “*in favor*” and 5% became “*opposed*”.

The overall “net” effect indicated virtually no change in the margin of support for the Knik Arm Crossing -- initially, support exceeded opposition by 29%; at the conclusion, the final follow-up question indicated support exceeded opposition by 28%.

Initial Question

“How do you personally feel about a Knik Arm Crossing project? Are you mostly in favor or opposed?”

58% In favor
29% Oppose
13% Unsure

Follow-up Question

“Now that we’ve had a chance to talk about some considerations and different points of view, what’s your personal opinion about the Knik Arm Crossing project -- are you mostly in favor, or opposed?”

62% In favor
34% Oppose
4% Unsure

- ◆ Looking ahead, the key considerations of a Knik Arm Crossing will most likely involve need and timing. As far as need is concerned, it’s generally agreed the crossing will be needed someday -- if not now, when? The pressure of population growth is not likely to decline. Increased awareness of the effects of natural disasters will likely emphasize the need for alternative routes between the two regions. And approximately four out of five respondents agree that the crossing will save time and energy, increase efficiency, benefit the economy, and provide jobs.

On the other hand, timing is also a consideration, and this aspect generally involves financial concerns. If a crossing is delayed, will it eventually cost more or less in the future? And the prepaid source of much of the funding is based on gasoline taxes which have already been collected -- if these funds are not used now, what will be the source in the future?

