

Winnipeg Free Press Probe Research Inc. News Release

MANITOBANS' VIEWS ON FINANCING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

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This province-wide Omnibus survey was designed and conducted by Probe Research Inc. via telephone interviews conducted between November 27th and December 7th, 2008 among a random and representative sampling of 1,000 Manitoba adults.

With a sample of 1,000 one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within ± 3.1 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of Manitoba had been interviewed. The margin-of-error is higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups.

Modified random digit dialling was used to ensure that all Manitoba adults would have an equal opportunity to participate in this Probe Research survey. Minor statistical weighting has been applied to this sample to ensure that the age and gender balance corresponds with that of the province as a whole.

MANITOBANS' VIEWS ON FINANCING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Winnipeg, Manitoba – One-half of Manitobans urge the provincial government to keep the budget balanced and wait until the economy recovers before it addresses the province's aging infrastructure. By comparison, only one-in-five favour increasing the Provincial Sales Tax to fund infrastructure upgrades or the option of taking the province into deficit to finance these improvements. Probe Research conducted this most recent random and representative sampling of 1,000 Manitoba adults exclusively for the Winnipeg Free Press between November 27th and December 7th, 2008.

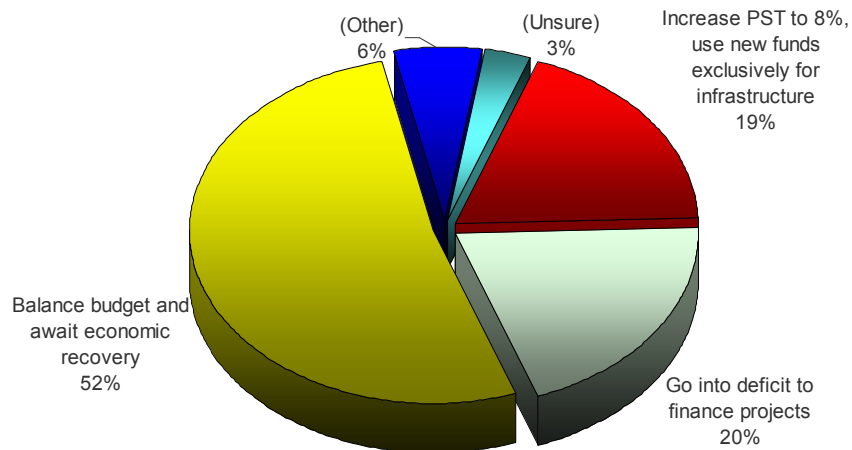
One-Half of Manitobans Say "Wait"

Respondents were presented with three options, and asked which one they thought would be the best approach to address Manitoba's aging infrastructure in the present economic environment. As the following graph illustrates, one-half of Manitobans (52%) favour keeping the budget balanced and waiting for an economic recovery before putting any more funds into infrastructure renewal. Only one-in-five (20%) favour running a deficit in order to finance infrastructure projects. About the same number favour increasing the PST by one percentage point as long as the funds raised by this tax increase are used exclusively for infrastructure renewal (19%).



Manitobans' Views on Funding Infrastructure Upgrades

"There has been a lot of talk lately about the economy and about what should be done to address Manitoba's aging infrastructure. I'd like to read you three possible actions the provincial government could take and I'd like you to tell me which one of these three you think would be the best option for Manitoba today. Please let me read all three options before you make your choice. Okay, the first one is..." (n=1,000)



Base: Manitobans aged 18+

As the table below illustrates, waiting for an economic recovery was seen by Manitobans from all walks of life as being preferable to running a deficit or increasing sales taxes in order to fund infrastructure renewal. This sentiment, however, was more common among Manitobans with Grade 12 education or less (59%, versus 48% among college and university graduates), Manitobans living outside of Winnipeg (56%, versus 49% in Winnipeg) and households earning less than \$30,000 annually (63%, versus 46% among those earning \$60,000 or more).

For their part, support for running a deficit if necessary was slightly more common among university and college graduates than among those with Grade 12 education or less (24% versus 15% respectively) and among households earning \$60,000 or more annually (24%, versus 13% among those earning less than \$30,000).

Differences in support for increasing the provincial sales tax are not considered statistically significant across the various subgroups examined.

| | Total (n=1,000) (%) | Region | | Education | | | Household Income | | |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Wpg. (n=600) (%) | Rest of MB (n=400) (%) | Gr. 12 or Less (n=323) (%) | Some Post- Sec. (n=174) (%) | Univ. / Coll. Grad (n=490) (%) | < \$30K (n=116) (%) | \$30K- \$59K (n=281) (%) | \$60K+ (n=446) (%) |
| Balance budget / Wait for recovery | 52 | 49 | 56 | 59 | 51 | 48 | 63 | 56 | 46 |
| Run deficit / Use funds for renewal | 20 | 22 | 17 | 15 | 18 | 24 | 13 | 14 | 24 |
| Increase PST / Earmark funds | 19 | 22 | 16 | 16 | 24 | 21 | 14 | 22 | 22 |
| Other | 6 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Unsure | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 |

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