

NEW SOUTH RESEARCH

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Birmingham Business Alliance
Highway 280
Attitudes & Usage
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Introduction

- The purpose of this research was to assess perceptions and opinions concerning proposed changes to Highway 280. Specific objectives of this research included:
 - What are usage habits for Highway 280?
 - What is favorability toward proposed ideas for Highway 280?
 - How do different demographics and geographies feel toward proposals?

- To accomplish these objectives, a telephone survey was conducted with 400 heads of household who live in the zip codes that are contiguous to Highway 280. The sample was drawn to be roughly proportional to the population of each zip code. Cities that were included:
 - Birmingham
 - Chelsea
 - Homewood
 - Hoover
 - Mountain Brook
 - Unincorporated Jefferson and Shelby County
 - Vestavia

Introduction

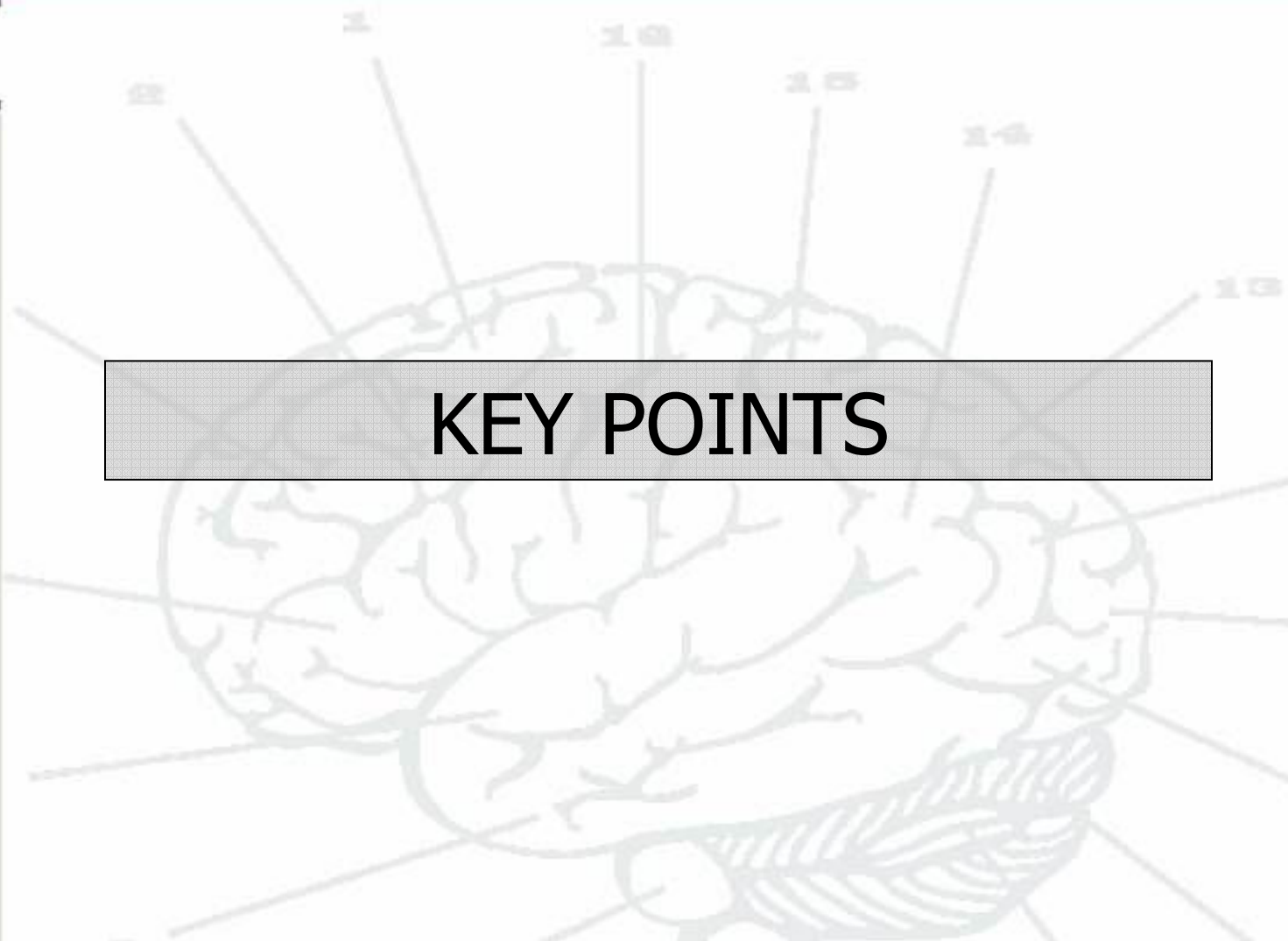
- Fieldwork was conducted by New South Research. The maximum margin of sampling error for all adults in the geographic area is +/- 4.9 percent. For results based on subsets of respondents, the margin of error will be higher.
- All telephone interviewing was conducted from a central telephone facility in Hoover, Alabama using professional interviewers. Prior to the commencement of interviewing, all interviewers were thoroughly briefed on the purposes of the study by a trained supervisor. Supervisors were present at all times interviewing was being conducted. No problems were encountered which would affect the quality of the data or the findings presented in this report.

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KEY POINTS



Key Points

➤ **What are attitudes toward tolls and elevated roadways?**

- The primary purpose of this research was to understand residents' opinions of current plans for Highway 280. A few notes that demonstrate strong support for the current ALDOT plan:
 - Nearly 60% were favorable to using tolls rather than taxes to pay for roadway improvements.
 - Over 60% were favorable towards an elevated roadway.
 - Nearly 50% were willing to pay a toll for commuting and nearly 60% were willing to pay a toll for other local trips.
 - Those unfavorable toward the roadway or tolls ranged just above 30%. This results in a 2 to 1 favorability rating for tolls and an elevated roadway.

➤ **What was usage of Highway 280 among the sample?**

- In order to understand how present usage patterns affect attitudes toward changes for 280, respondents were queried regarding their trips on 280.
 - Forty percent of the sample commute on 280 daily and another 12% commute at least one day per week.
 - Ninety-seven percent of residents are using 280 at least occasionally for local trips, with 64% using the roadway several days per week or more.

Key Points

➤ **What is awareness of the present plan?**

- Nine out of ten residents in the sample area were aware of plans to improve Highway 280. Among those aware of the plan, 64% were aware that there are two components to the plan. The net effect is nearly 44% are unaware of the state's two part plan.

➤ **What factors influence residents to be supportive of the present plans?**

- Respondents were read several factors and asked how these factors affected their attitudes toward the current plan.
 - The plan enhances safety along 280 made 79% more favorable and only 10% less favorable.
 - The plan makes mass transit possible by eliminating traffic lights made 77% more favorable and only 11% less favorable.
 - The plan offers alternatives of an express commute downtown or local lanes for business made 79% more favorable and 11% less favorable.
 - The plan would improve air quality due to shorter commutes made 73% more favorable and 11% less favorable.
 - The plan is funded by tolls and not taxes made 64% more favorable and 25% less favorable.
 - The plan uses elevated roadways made 56% more favorable and 28% less favorable – a 2 to 1 ratio.

Key Points

➤ **What factors influence residents to be supportive of the present plans? (continued)**

- What we learn from these factors is that some are clearly more important, influential and acceptable. We also learn that regardless of the question, at least 1 in 10 are against ANY form of change in this plan, as they are even against improved safety.

➤ **Where is support by age, geography and gender?**

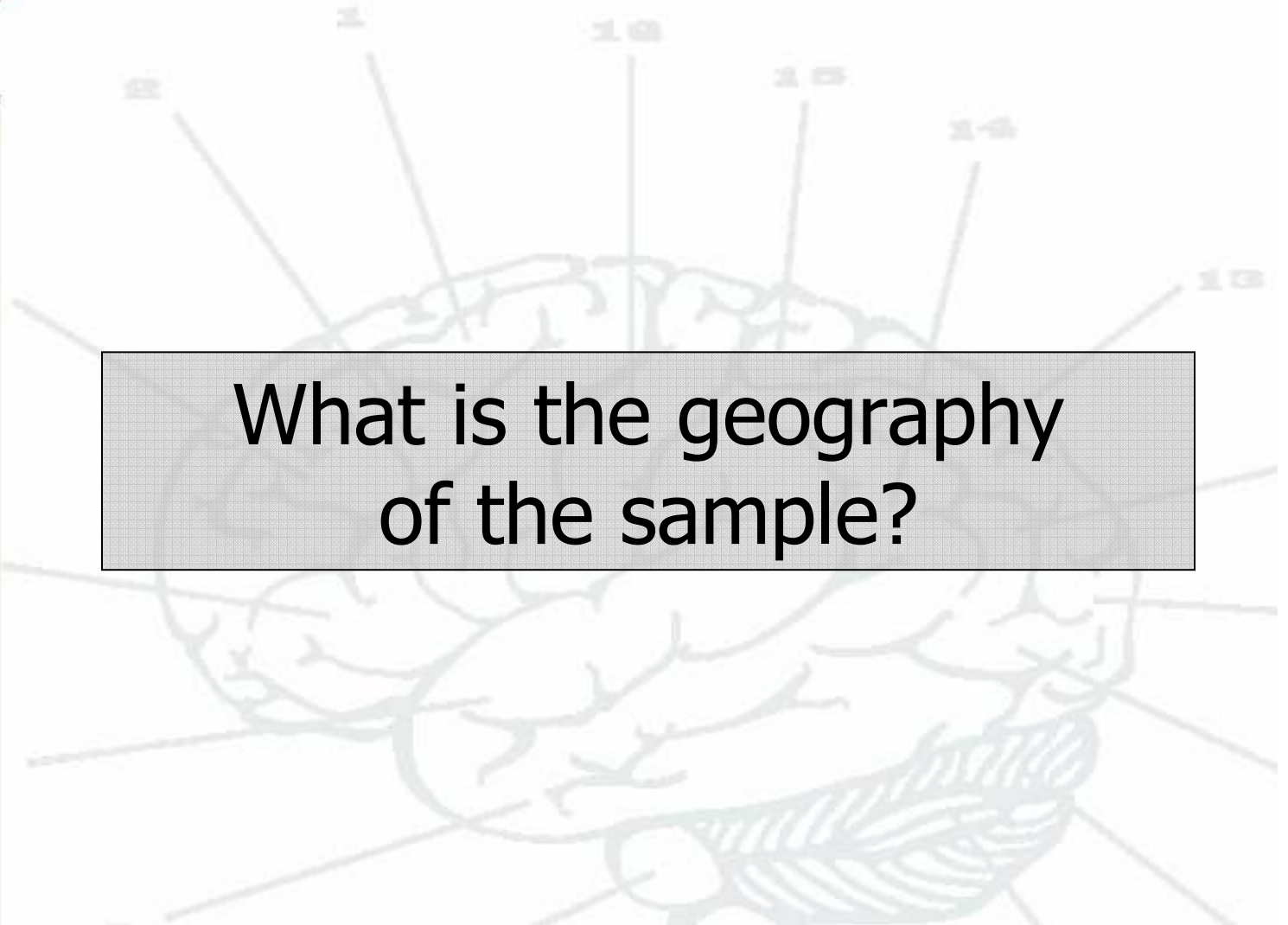
- As age increased, likelihood to favor an elevated roadway decreased.
- Males are more favorable toward an elevated roadway than females.
- Those in Vestavia, Hoover, Chelsea and Birmingham were most favorable to an elevated roadway while those in Homewood were least favorable.
 - It should be noted that even in Homewood, those who were favorable (50%) outnumbered those who were unfavorable 37%.
 - Mountain Brook was the most polarized, with 61% favorable and 30% strongly unfavorable.

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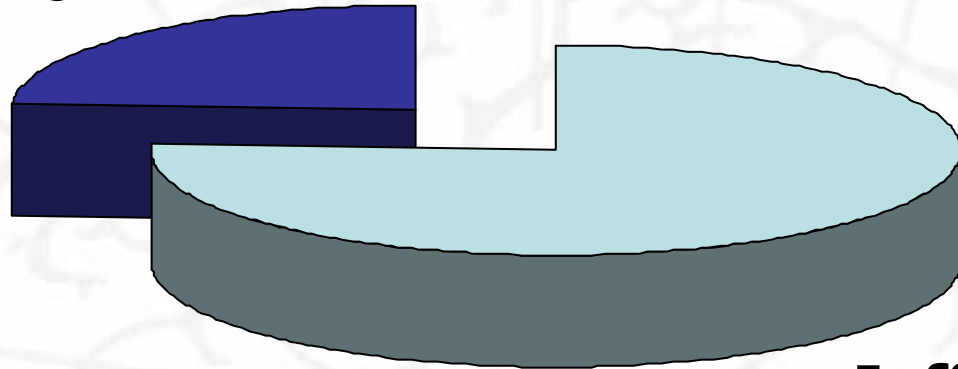
What is the geography
of the sample?



Over three-fourths of the sample was based in Jefferson County.

N = 400

**Shelby,
24%**

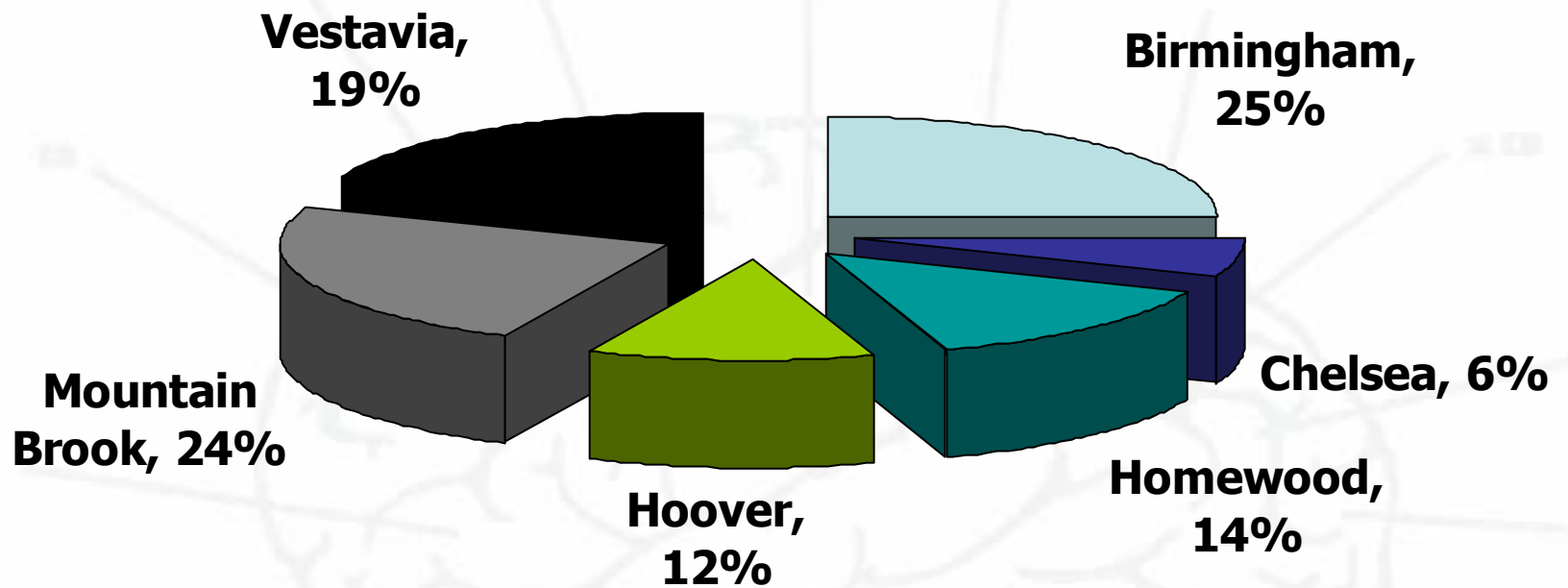


**Jefferson
, 76%**

What county do you live in?

Birmingham was the city mentioned most often, followed by Mountain Brook and Vestavia.

N = 400



16% lived in the county within no city limits.

What city do you live in?

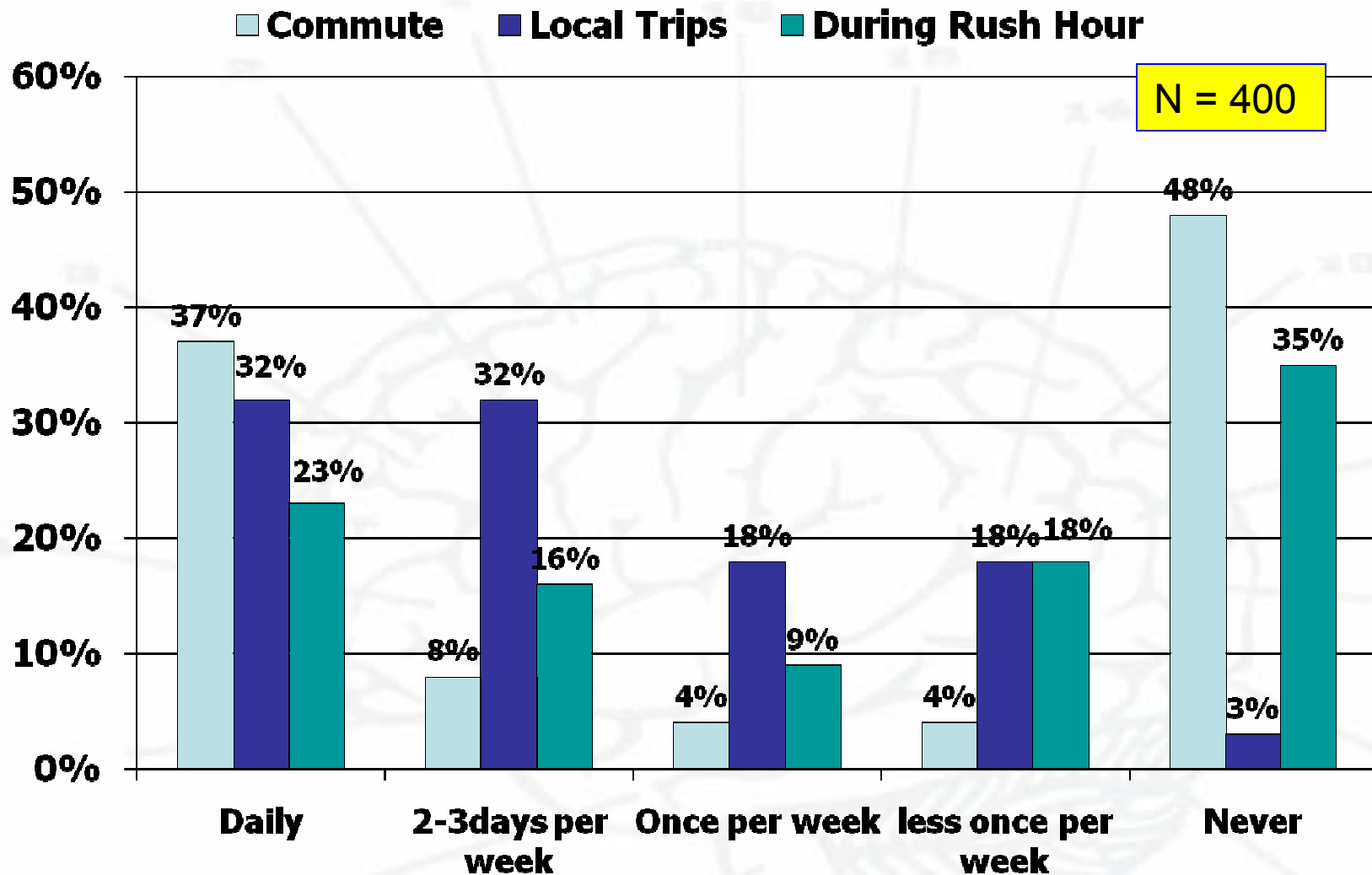
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What are usage patterns
on Highway 280?

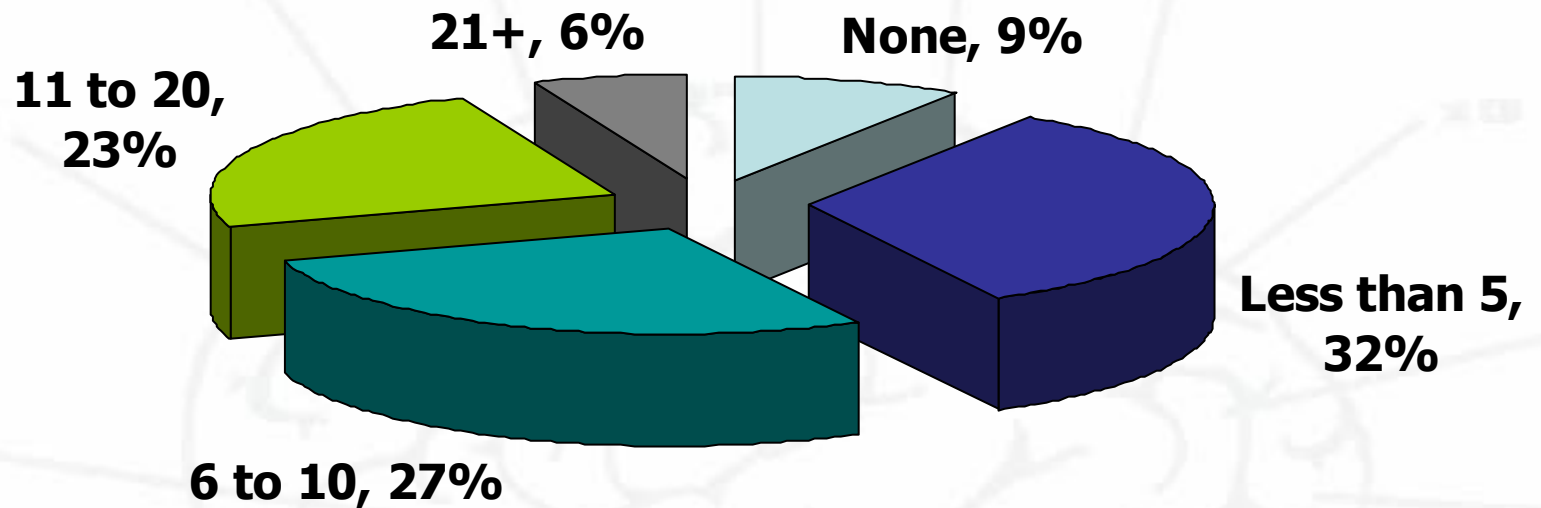
Approximately three in ten use Highway 280 daily, while 50% of the sample never use 280 for commuting.



How often do you use 280 as a part of your commute/local trips/during rush hour?

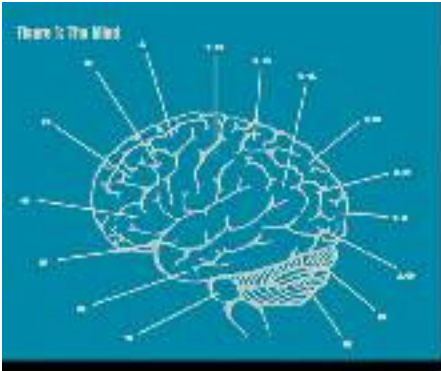
The average number of trips using Highway 280 was 9.2 per week. Nine percent of the sample never used 280, while six percent made 21 or more trips on 280 per week.

N = 400



Average trips per week: 9.2

How many trips per week do you make using Highway 280?

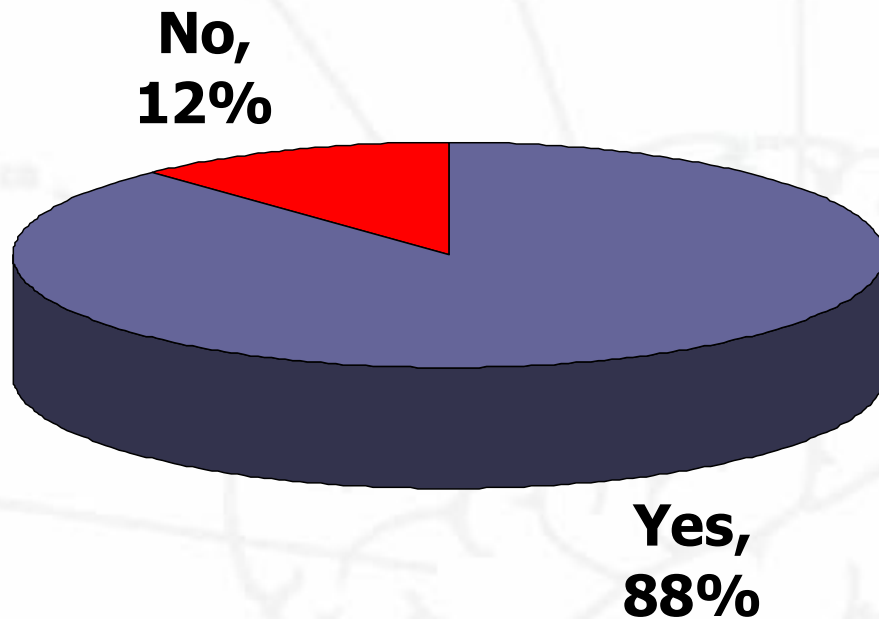


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What is awareness and attitudes toward proposed changes to Highway 280?

A strong 88% of respondents had heard of the plan for Highway 280. However, 36% were unaware there is a two part plan.

N = 400

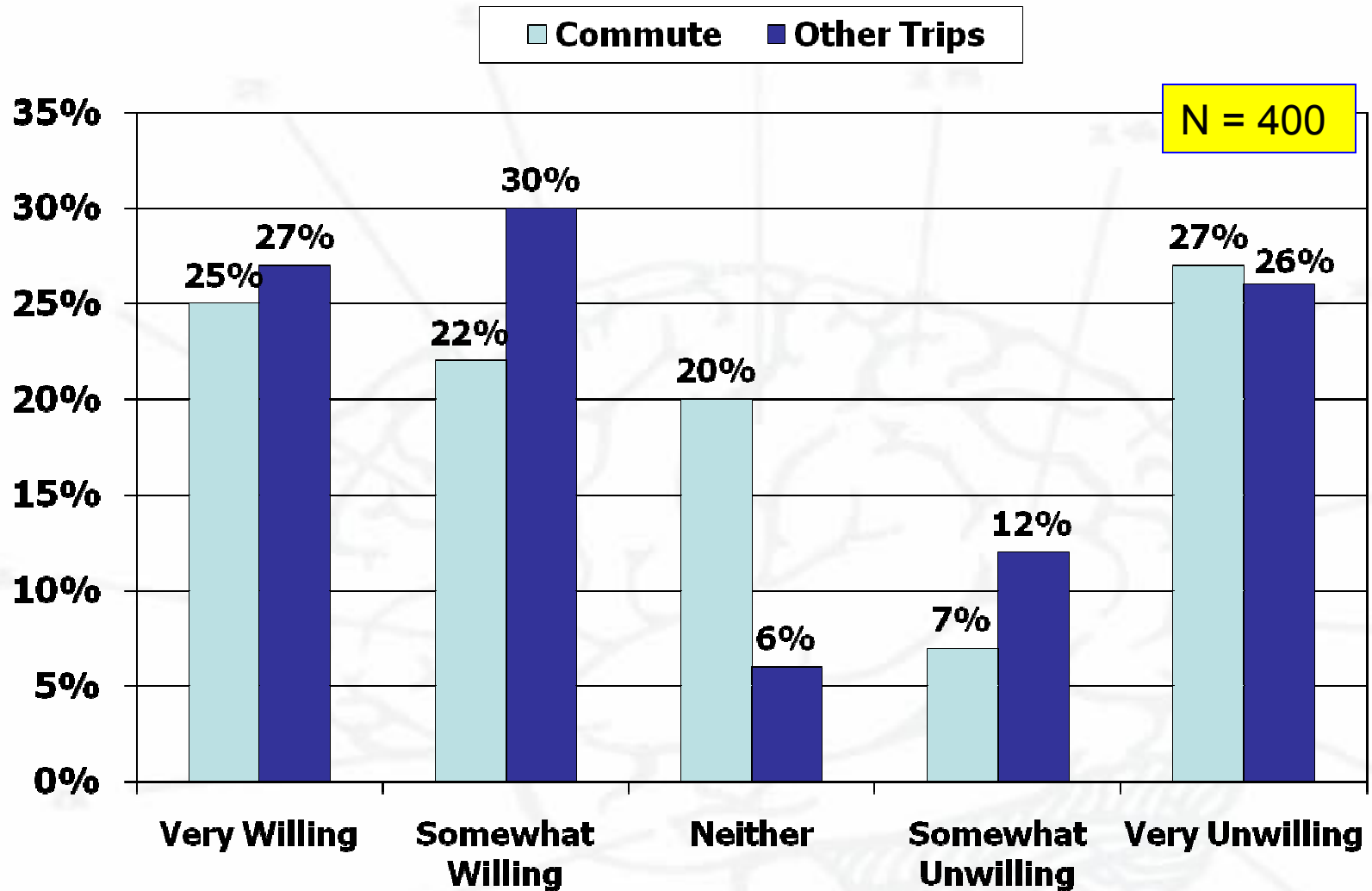


Aware plan has two components?

Yes 64%
No 29%
Unsure 7%

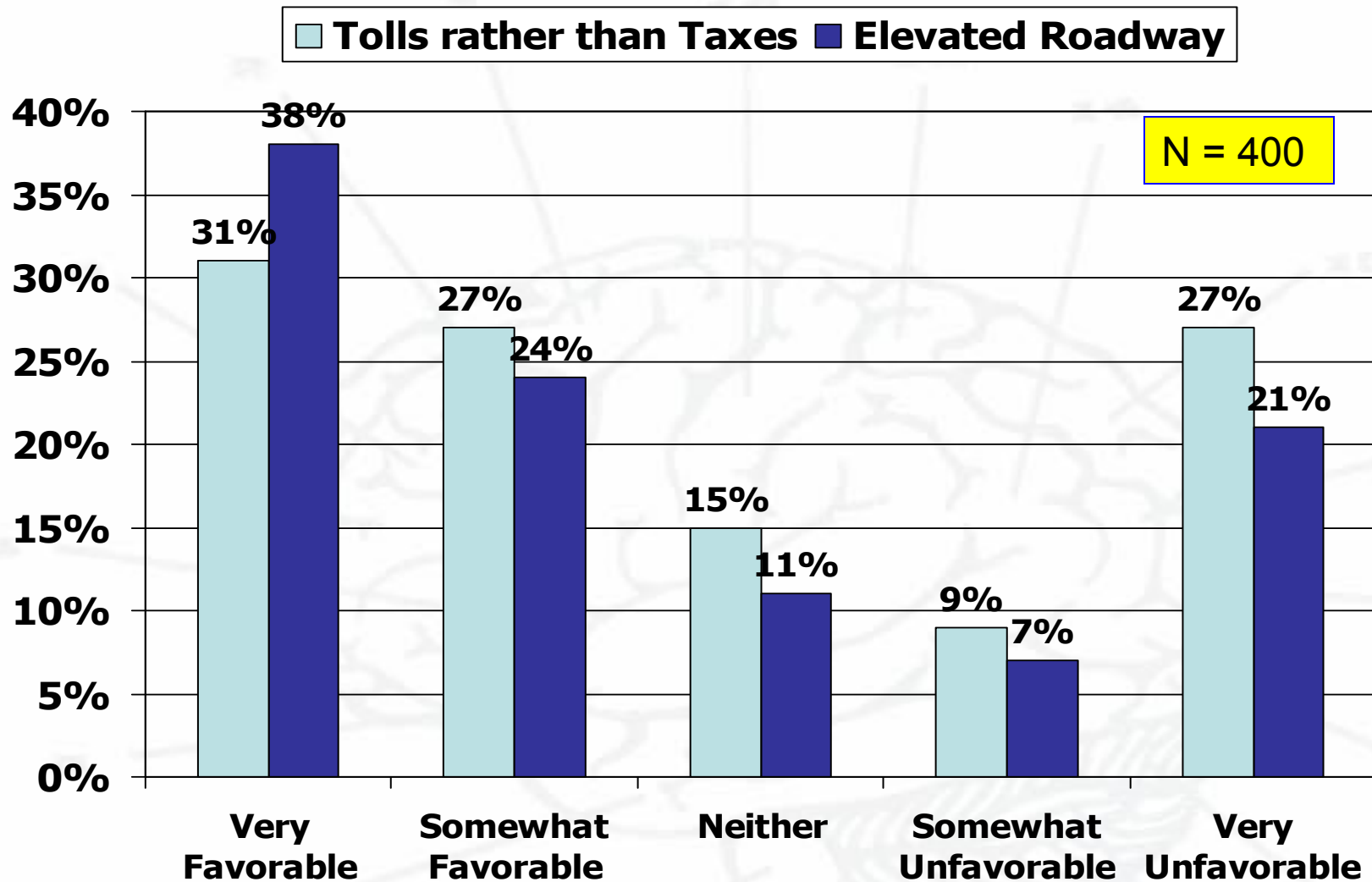
Are you aware of the State of Alabama plan for Highway 280?

One fourth of respondents were very willing to pay a 20 to 25 CENT toll for either commuting or other trips. Roughly another quarter were somewhat willing to pay.



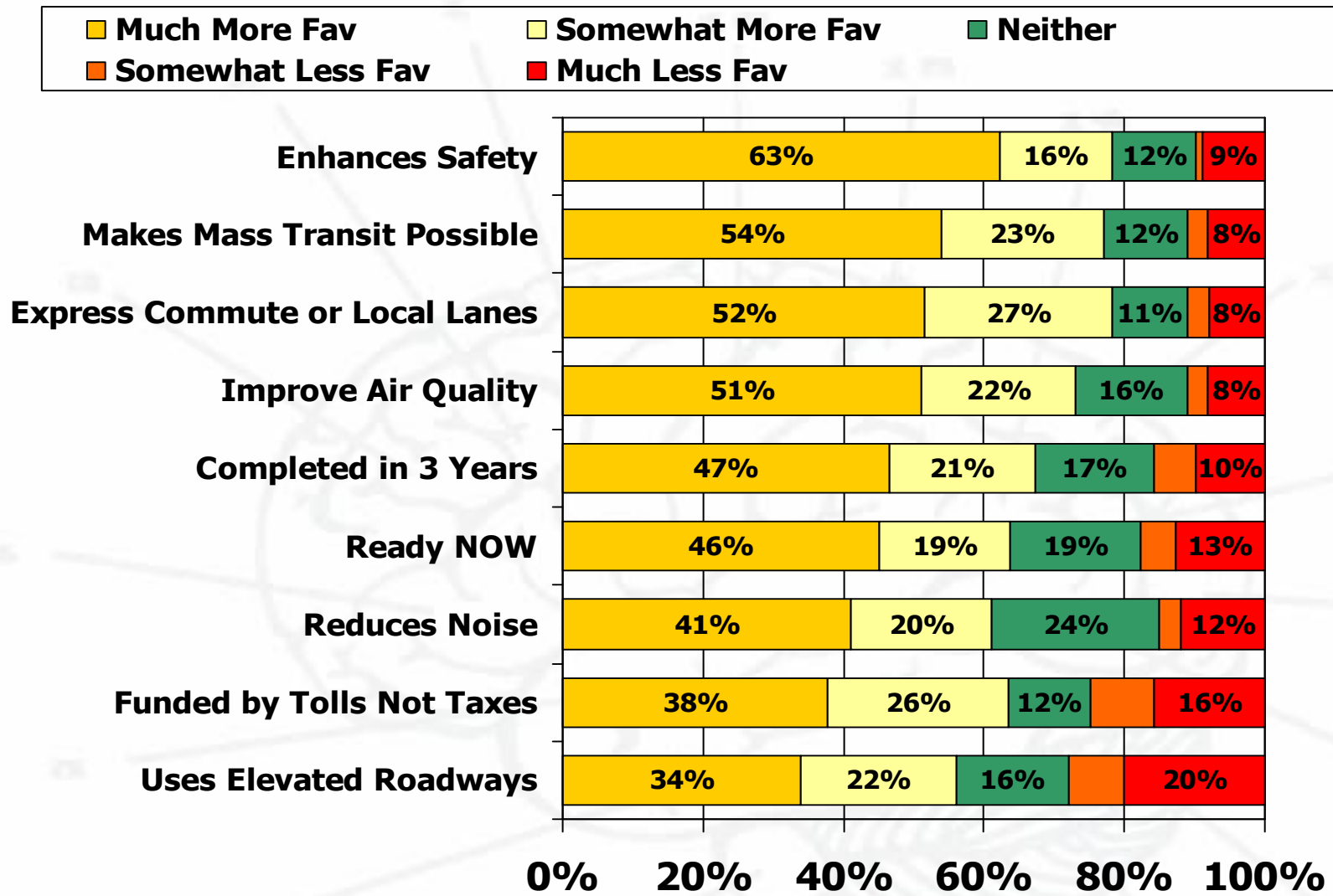
Willing to pay a 20 to 25 CENT per mile toll for commute/other trips?

Fifty-eight percent were favorable toward tolls rather than taxes and 62% were favorable toward an elevated roadway.



Favorability toward tolls vs. taxes and elevated roadway?

Safety, mass transit and optional express or local lanes were the three most favorable factors in the plan. We also learned that regardless of the aspect, 10% are against the plan.



What is effect on favorability?

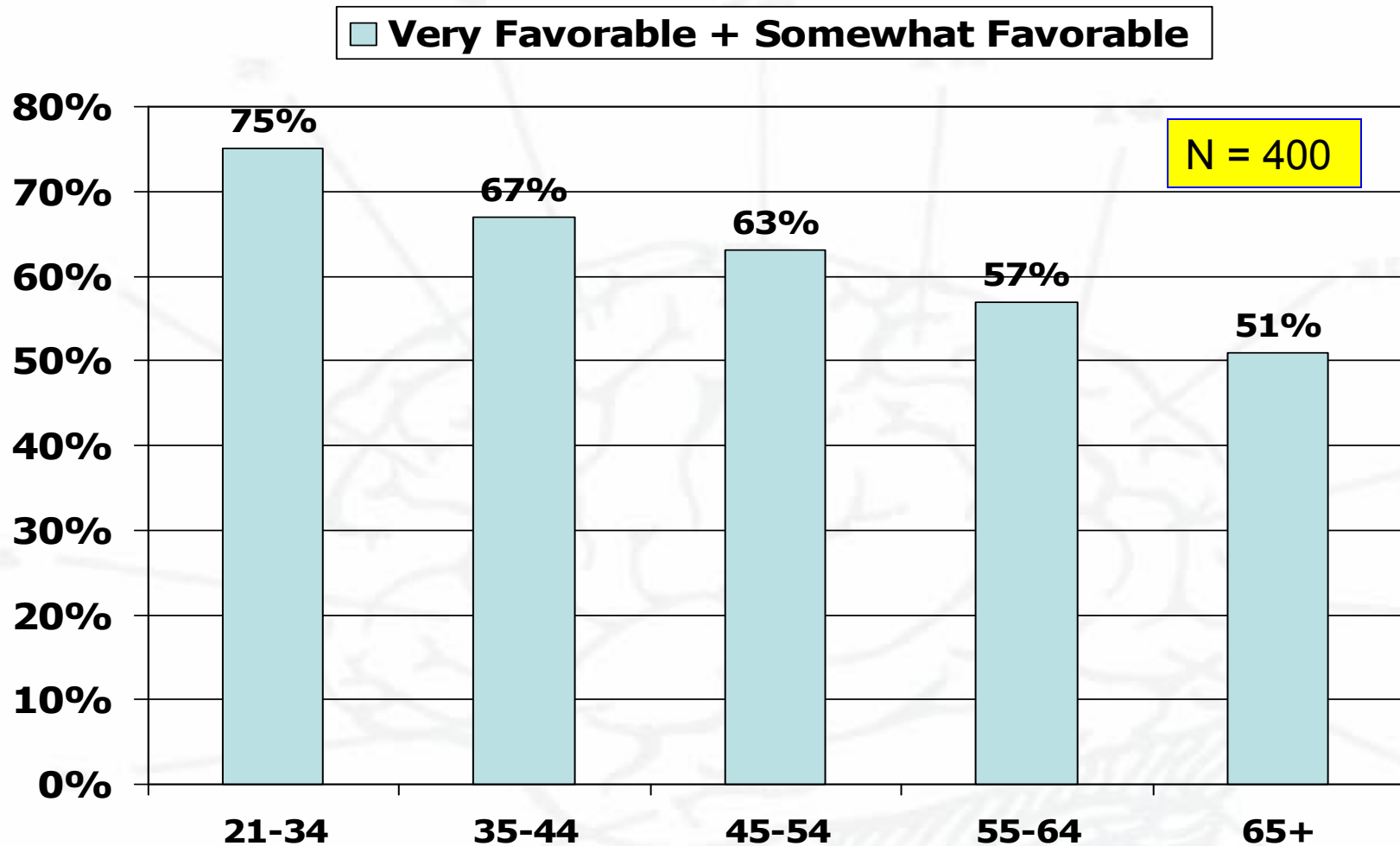
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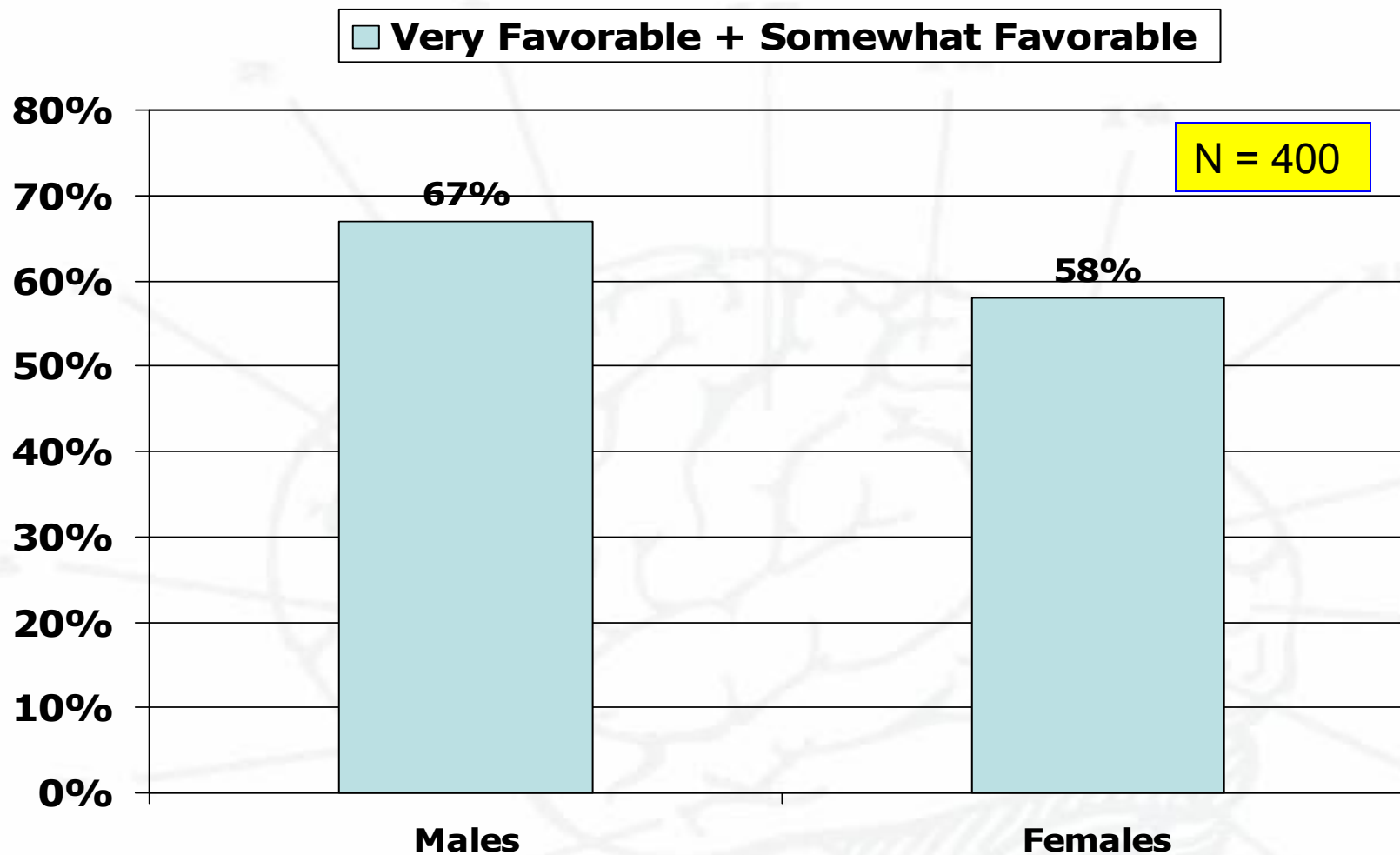
Cross-tabulations by
favorability toward an
elevated roadway

As age increases, favorability toward an elevated roadway decreases.



Favorability toward elevated roadway by age group?

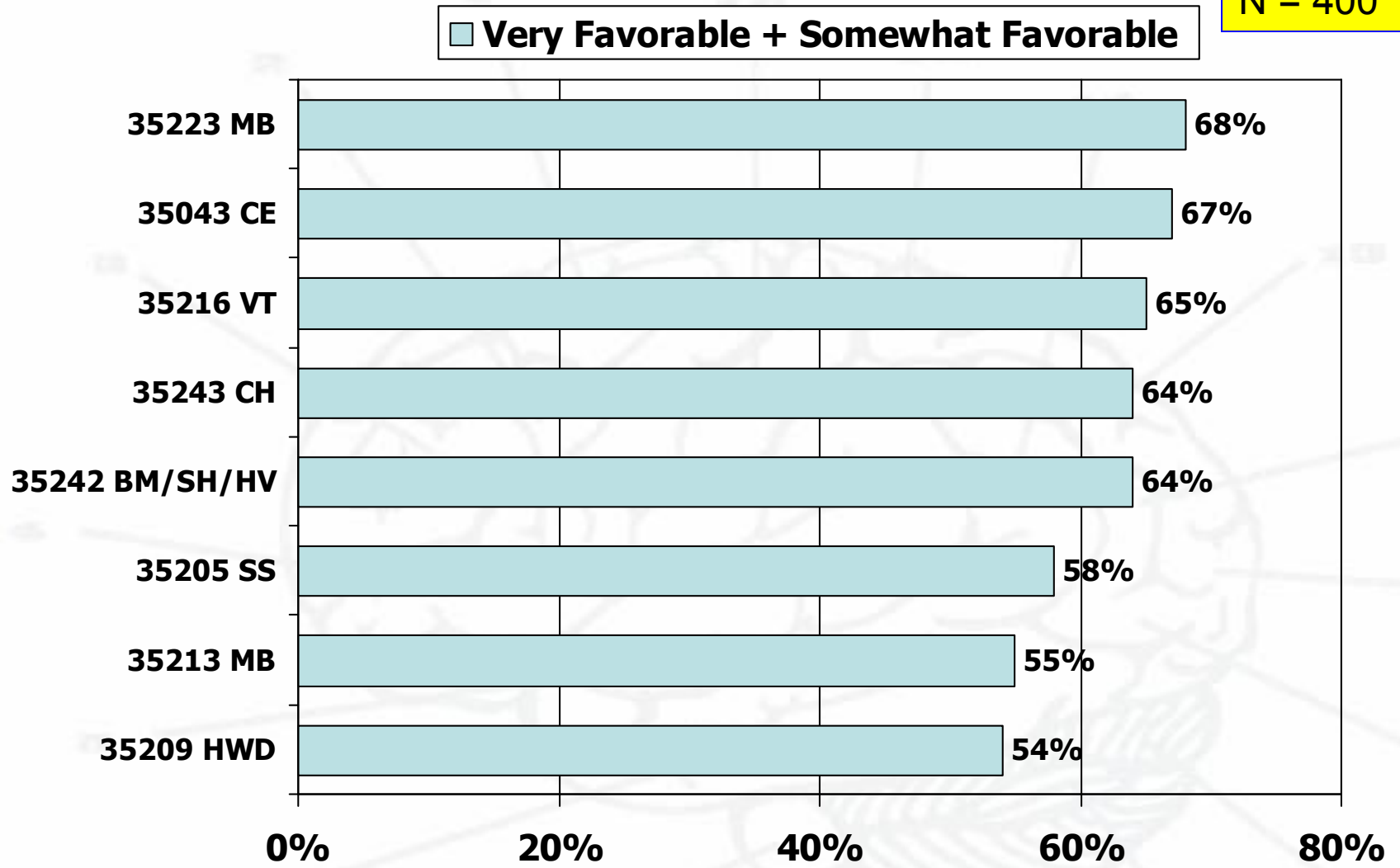
Males are more favorable toward an elevated roadway than females.



Favorability toward elevated roadway by gender?

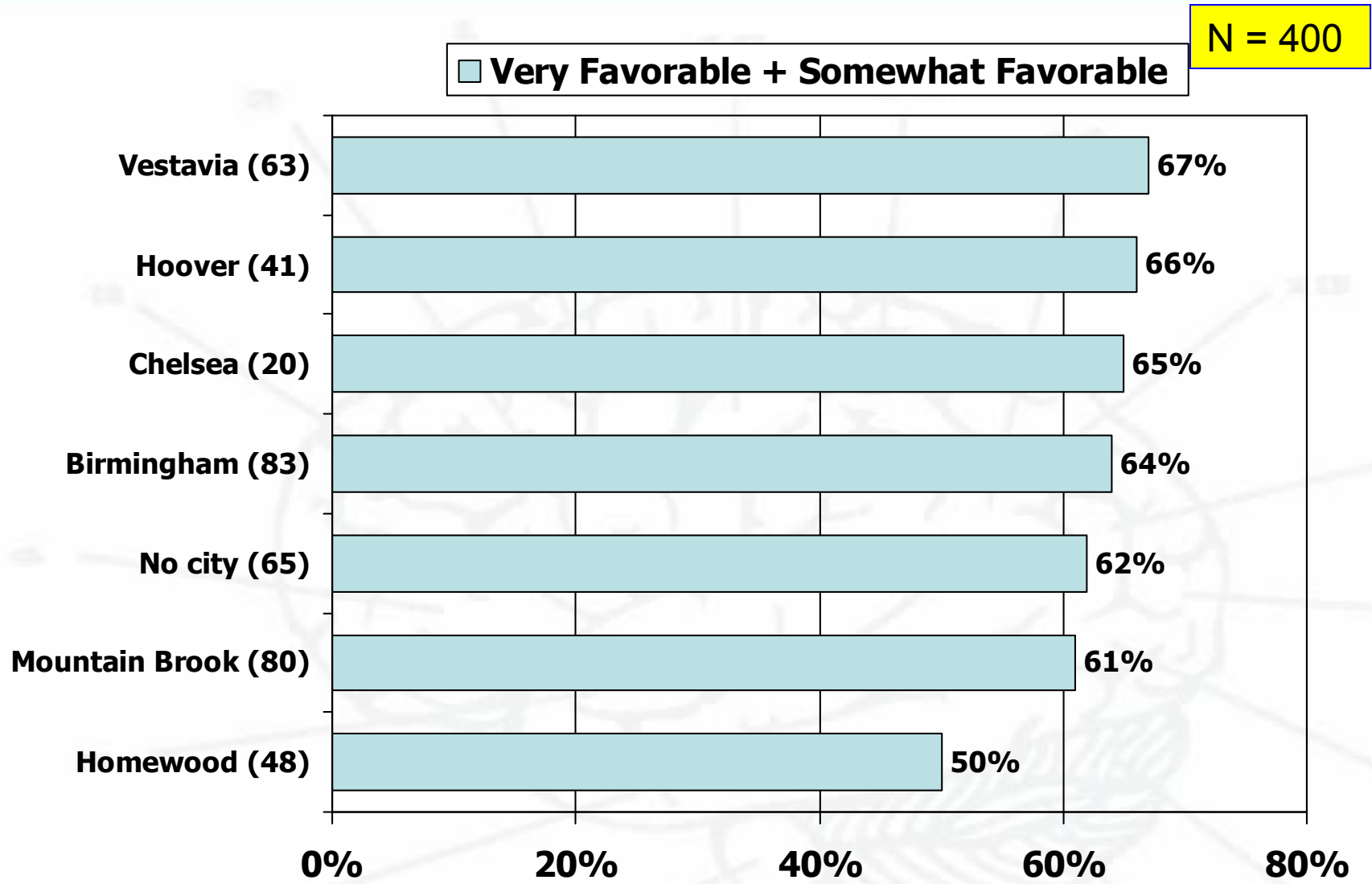
Zip codes 35223, 35043, 35216, 35243, and 35242 were all strongly supportive of an elevated roadway. 35209 was clearly the least supportive.

N = 400



Favorability toward elevated roadway by zip code?

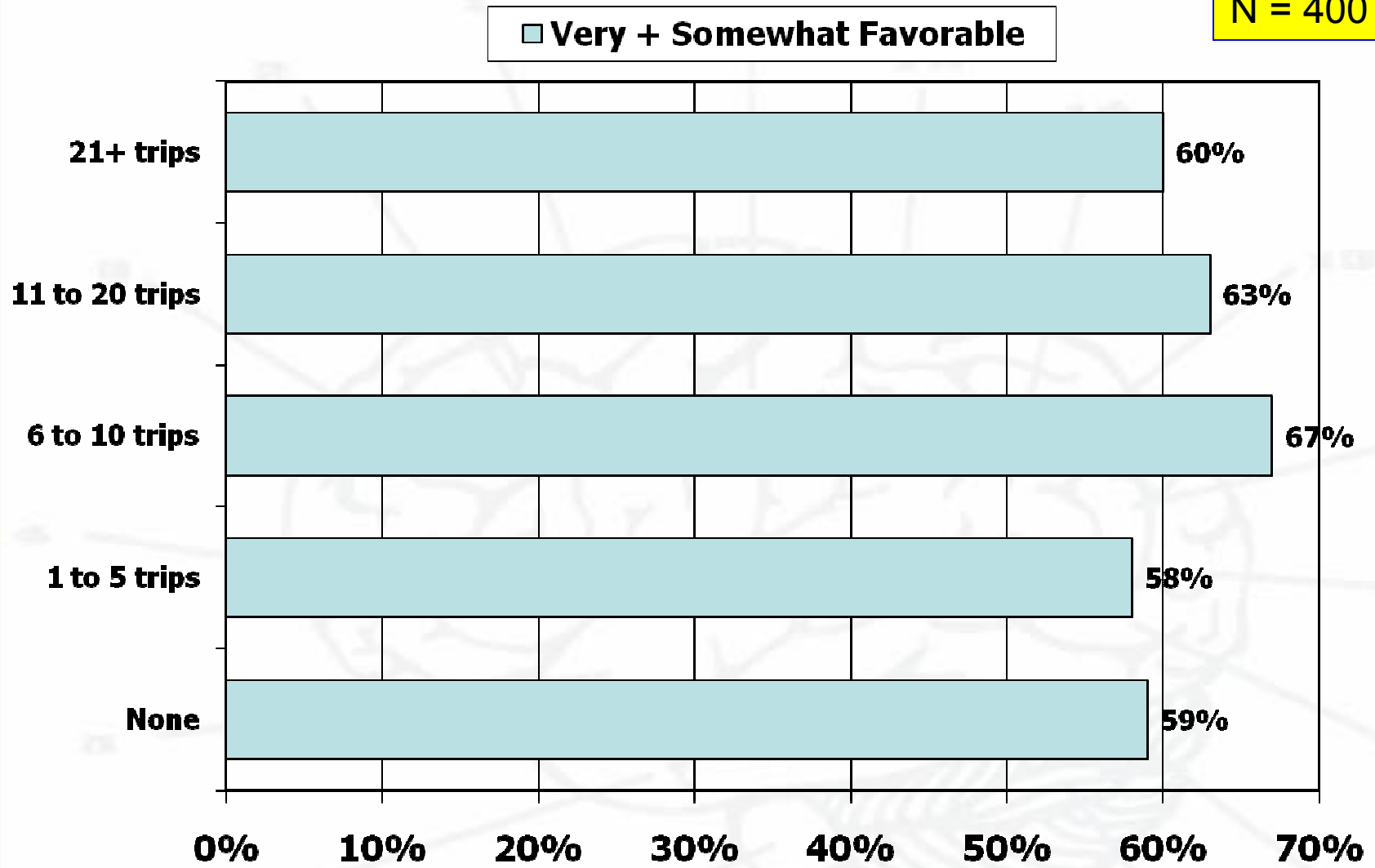
Vestavia, Hoover, Chelsea and Birmingham were the most favorable, while Homewood was the least favorable to an elevated roadway.



Favorability toward elevated roadway by city live in?

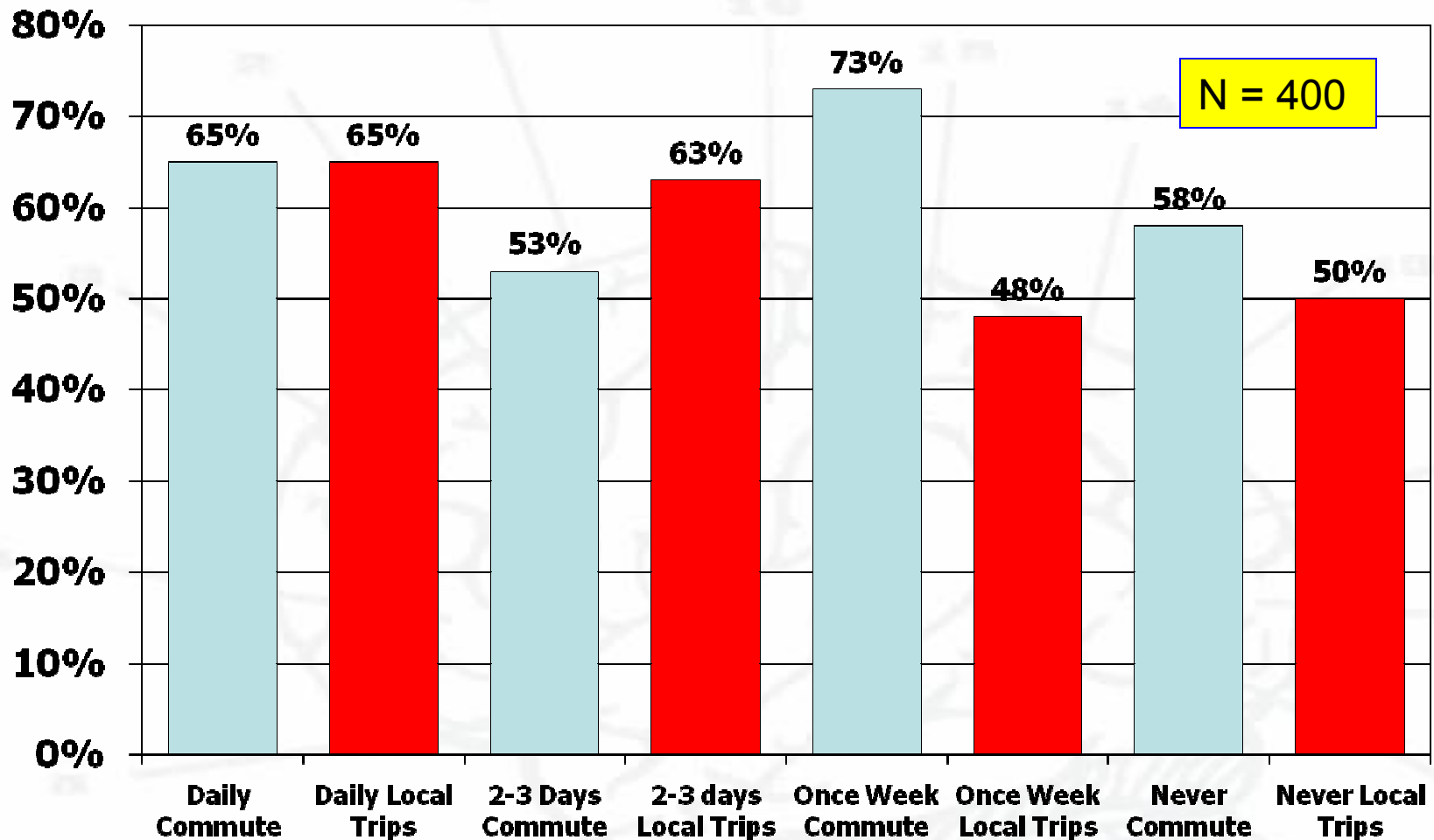
Those who used Highway 280 for six to 20 trips per week were the most supportive of an elevated roadway.

N = 400



Favorability toward elevated roadway by number of trips on 280 in a week?

The frequency of commuting on Highway 280 did not seem to correlate to support, but more frequent local trips did correlate to stronger support for an elevated roadway.



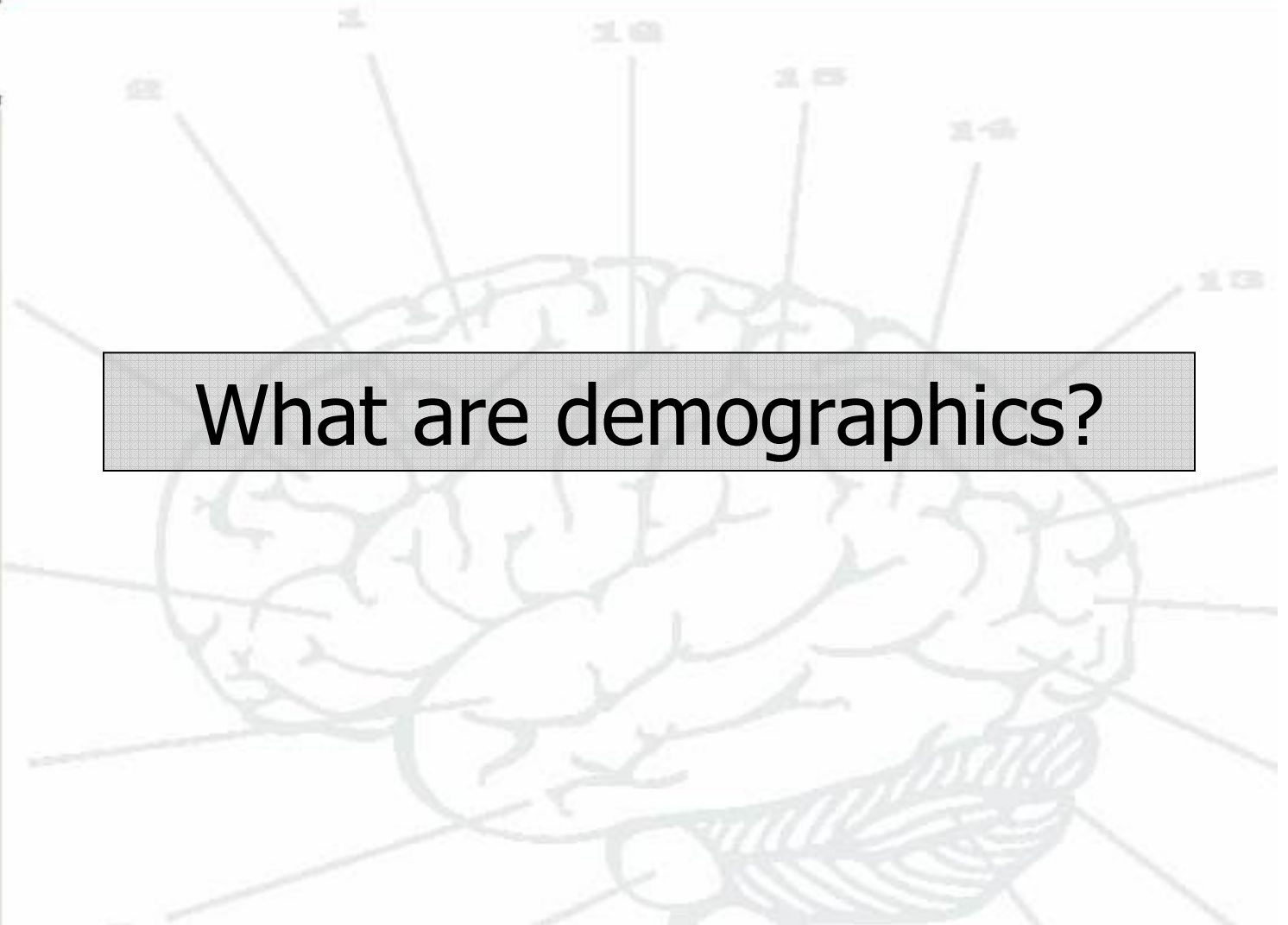
How often do you use 280 as a part of your commute/ by favorability to an elevated roadway?

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What are demographics?



Demographics

N = 400

Age		Education	
21-34	15%	High School	10%
35-44	22%	Some College	18%
45-54	28%	College	73%
55-64	19%		
65+	18%		
Race		Gender	
Caucasian	88%	Male	47%
African American	10%	Female	53%
Other	2%		