

Views on Re-Opening Portage and Main

March 2024 Probe Omnibus Survey Report

The
Free Press

PROBE
RESEARCH INC.

Contact:

Curtis Brown
Principal



(204) 926-6565



curtis@probe-research.com

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PROBE RESEARCH INC.



603 – 191 Lombard Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3B 0X1



(204) 926-6565



www.probe-research.com



Key Findings

As Winnipeg's mayor and city council prepare to vote on whether to re-open Portage and Main to pedestrians, a new Probe Research survey for the *Winnipeg Free Press* finds a majority of city residents are now in favour of this idea.

Six years after voting No in a civic plebiscite to re-open this long-barricaded intersection to pedestrian traffic, fully six in ten Winnipeggers now strongly or somewhat support the proposal to re-open Portage and Main next summer. Meanwhile, four in ten oppose this idea – including slightly more than one in five who are strongly opposed and a slightly smaller proportion who are somewhat opposed.

More than one-quarter of those who recall voting No in the October 2018 plebiscite have changed their minds and now support opening this intersection, with seven in ten who rejected re-opening in 2018 still opposed to allowing pedestrian traffic at this iconic corner. An overwhelming majority who voted Yes six years ago remain strongly in favour of opening the intersection today.

Majority support for re-opening Portage and Main exists throughout Winnipeg, with support for this idea highest in the Core (72% support). Only in northeast Winnipeg do a higher proportion of citizens oppose re-opening Portage and Main. Even in these neighbourhoods, the results are virtually split (53% opposed vs. 47% support). Opposition to re-opening is also a bit higher in other outer suburban areas of Winnipeg.

Provincial NDP supporters are more than twice as likely as supporters of the Progressive Conservatives (PCs) to be in favour of re-opening Portage and Main. Women, younger adults and university graduates are also more likely to be in favour of opening the intersection to pedestrians.

A very high proportion of Winnipeggers have recently heard, seen or read about this proposal, which Winnipeg Mayor Scott Gillingham and a majority of councillors are expected to approve this week. Nearly nine in ten adults city-wide have heard something about this issue, which is an incredibly high level of awareness.

Methodology

Probe Research surveyed a random and representative sampling of 600 adults residing in Winnipeg between March 5 to 18, 2024.

With a sample of 600, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within ± 4.0 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of Winnipeg had been surveyed. The margin of error is higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups.

The sample consists of 279 Winnipeggers randomly recruited via live-agent operator; 176 Winnipeggers randomly recruited via Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and 145 members of Probe Research's online panel. All respondents completed the survey on an online platform.

Modified random digit dialing, including both landline and wireless numbers, ensured all Winnipeg adults had an equal opportunity to participate in this Probe Research survey.

Minor statistical weighting has been applied to this sample to ensure that age and gender characteristics properly reflect known attributes of the city's population.

Results may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding. Results of <2% are not labelled in the graphs.

About the Probe Research Omnibus

For more than two decades, Probe Research Inc. has undertaken quarterly omnibus surveys of random and representative samples of Manitoba adults. These scientific telephone surveys have provided strategic and proprietary insights to hundreds of public, private and not-for-profit clients on a range of social, cultural and public policy topics. The Probe Research Omnibus Survey is the province's largest and most trusted general population survey.

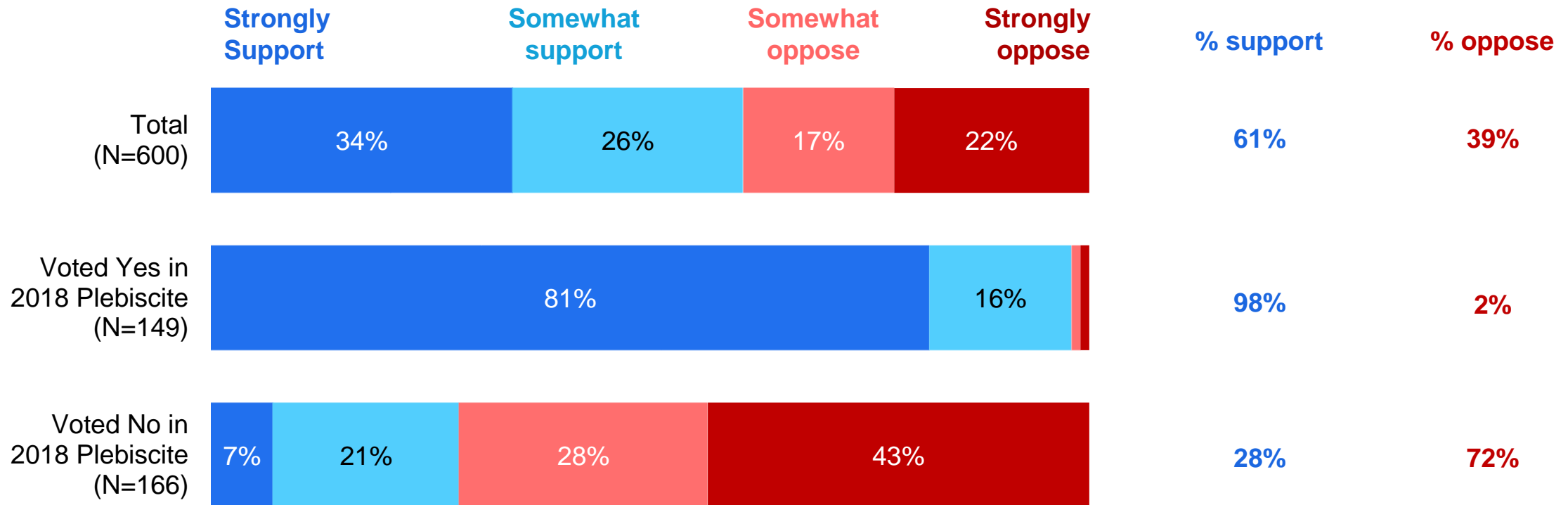
Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was designed by Probe Research in close consultation with the *Free Press*.

Support for Re-Opening Portage and Main to Pedestrians

Six in ten Winnipeggers are now in favour of opening the city's best-known intersection

PM2. On March 1, Winnipeg Mayor Scott Gillingham said he now wants to re-open Portage and Main to pedestrians beginning in the summer of 2025. This is because a draft report to City Council says it will now cost \$73 million and take four to five years to repair the intersection and the pedestrian concourse beneath it. Based on this new information and anything else you know about this issue, do you support or oppose opening Portage and Main to pedestrians? (Base: All respondents, N=600)

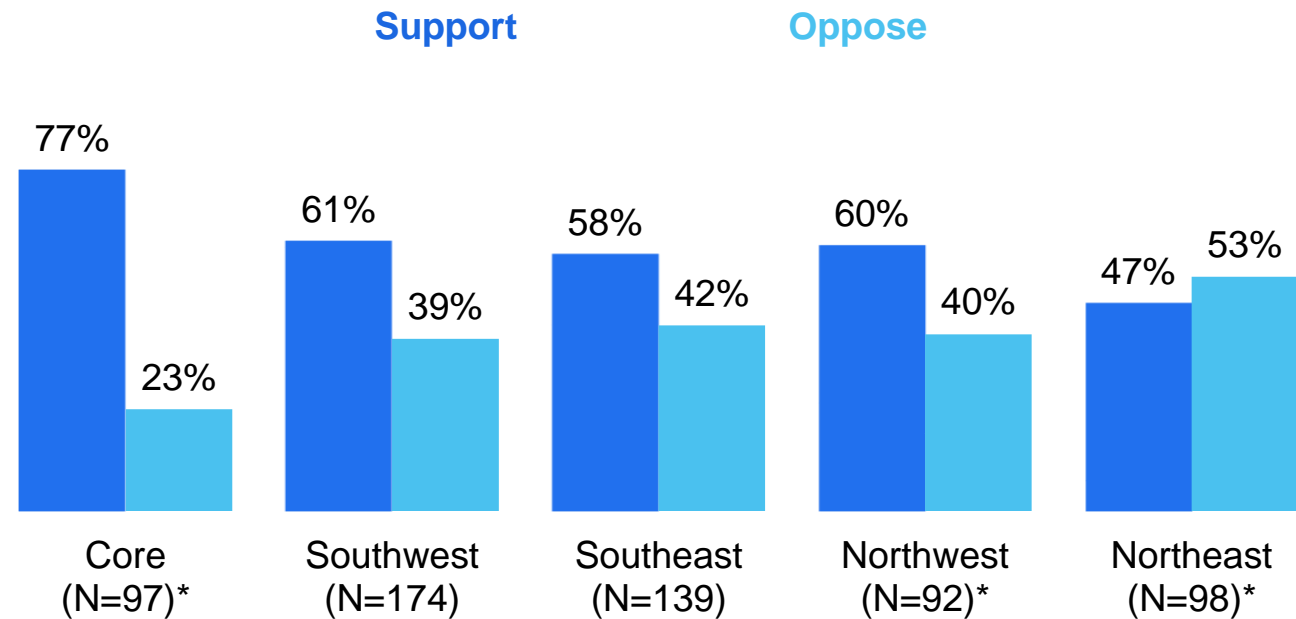


October 2018 plebiscite: **Yes: 35%** **No: 65%**

Support for Re-Opening Portage and Main: By Quadrant

There is majority support for the pedestrian crossing throughout Winnipeg – except in the northeast

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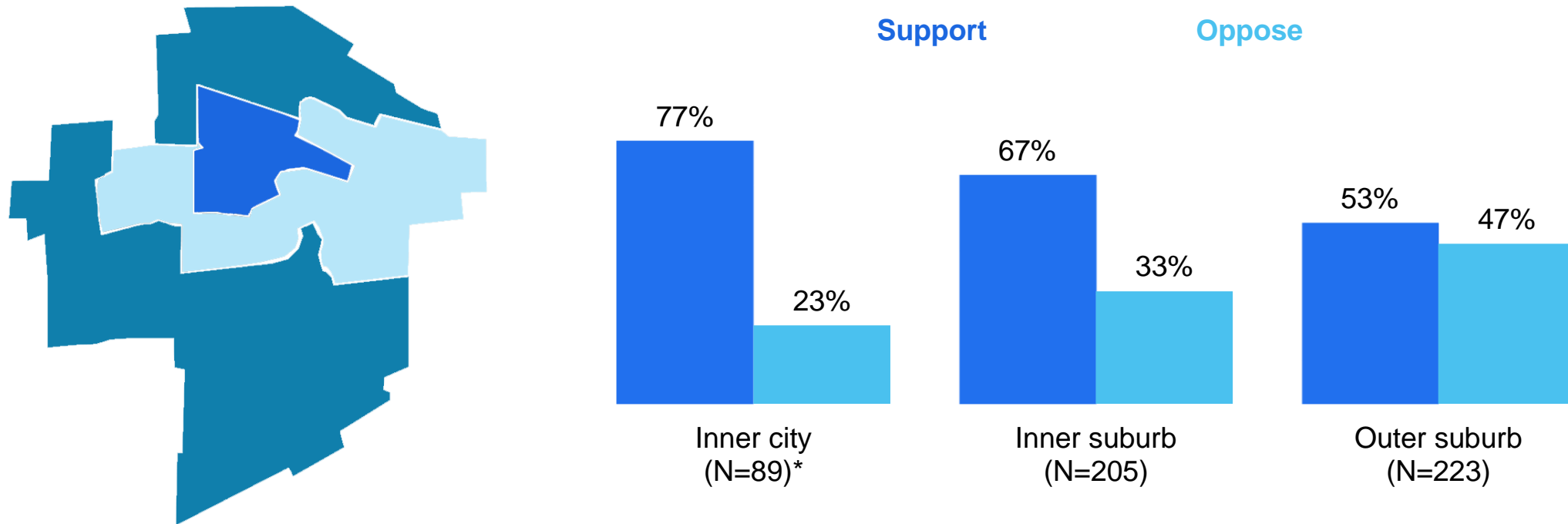


*Caution: Small base size

Support for Re-Opening Portage and Main: By Neighborhood Type

Residents of outer suburbs are less likely to be in favour of opening Portage and Main

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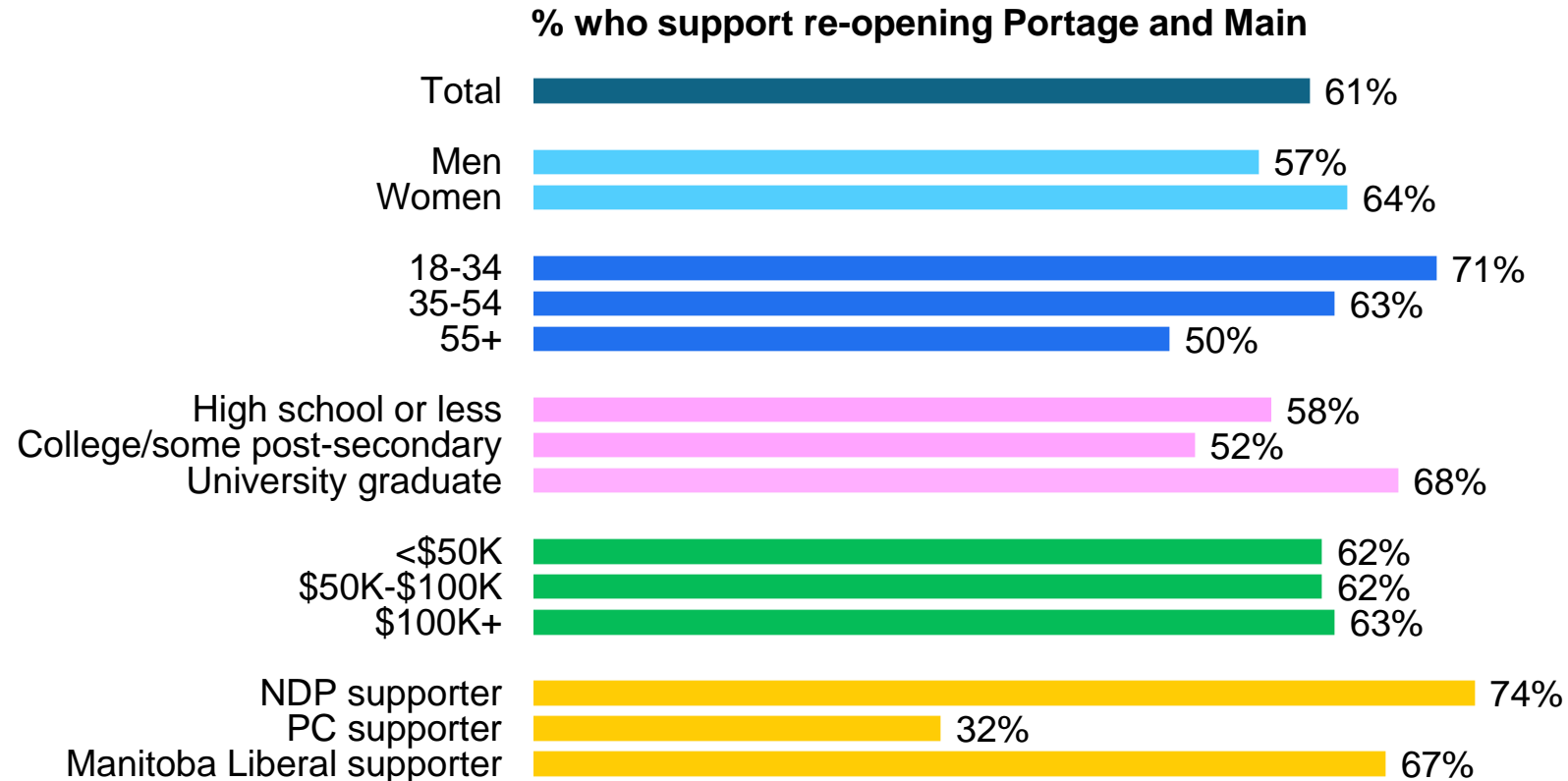


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Support for Re-Opening Portage and Main: By Subgroup

Support for re-opening is higher among women, younger adults and university graduates

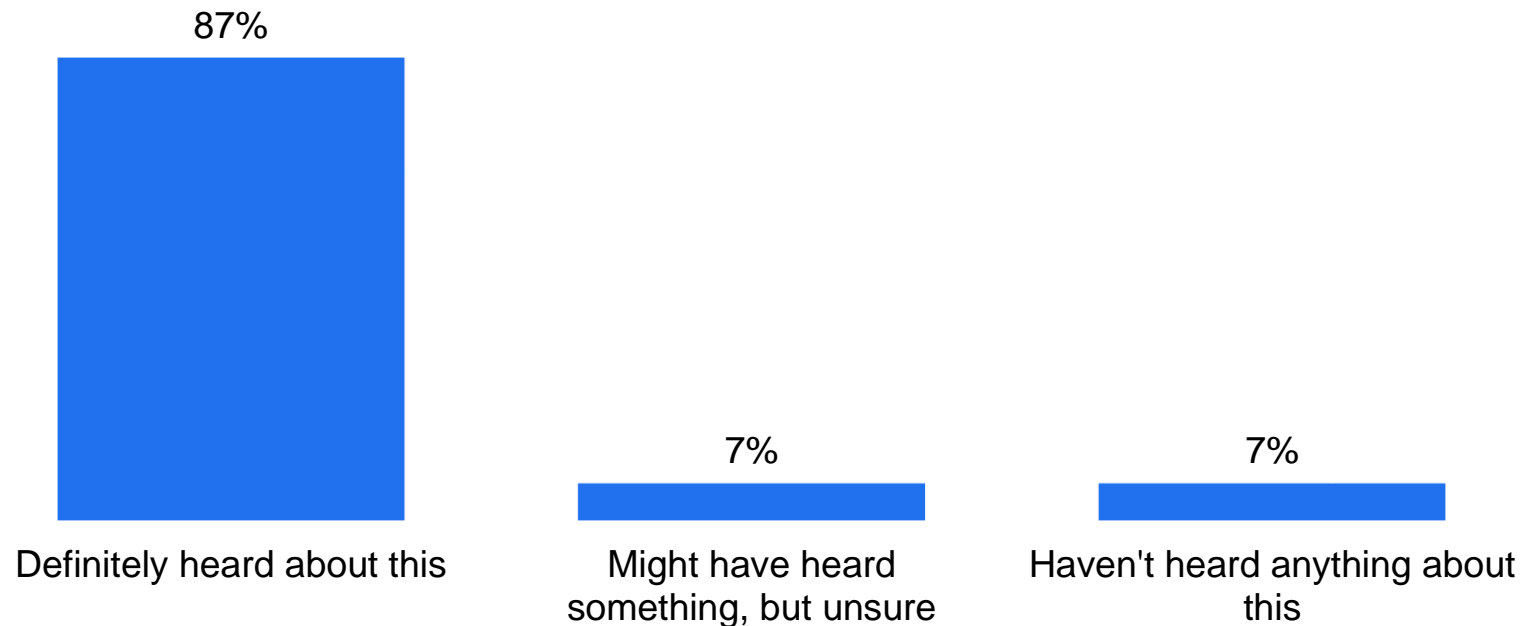
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Awareness of Re-opening Portage and Main

Virtually all Winnipeggers have heard something about the proposal to re-open the intersection

PM1. Have you seen, read or heard anything recently about possibly re-opening the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street to pedestrians? (Base: All respondents, N=600)



Those most likely to **have definitely heard something about re-opening Portage and Main** include:

- Older Winnipeggers (94% aged 55+ vs. 79% among those aged 18-34).
- Those with some post-secondary education (89% each among university graduates and those with college/partial post-secondary vs. 75% among those with high school or less).
- Those with higher household incomes (94% <\$100K+ vs. 77% <\$50K).
- Homeowners (92% vs. 78% among renters).