

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates

*Opinion Research &
Public Policy Analysis*

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: David Metz
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RE: Results of Recent Survey on Voter Attitudes Toward the Arts and
Culture in Portland

DATE: March 21, 2008

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates (FMM&A) recently completed a survey of voters in the Portland region to assess their level of engagement with the arts and culture, and their support for proposals to ensure stable, ongoing funding for arts and cultural activities.¹ The survey results showed that a clear majority of Portland residents are engaged with and value the arts. While only about one-third attend arts and cultural events at least monthly, a solid majority attend at least a few times per year. And at least two-thirds of those polled see the arts and culture as vital to their family and the regional economy.

At the same time, voters do perceive threats to the arts in the Portland region. Seven out of ten residents understand that arts education is being cut back, and less than one-quarter believe that funding for the arts is increasing. As a result, a solid 70-percent majority of local voters say that arts and cultural organizations need additional, dedicated and reliable funding over the long term. All of these trends cut across all three counties in the survey: Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington.

¹ **Methodology:** From February 27 to March 2, 2008, FMM&A completed telephone interviews with 200 voters each in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties who are likely to cast ballots in the November 2008 election. Results presented here have been statistically weighted to reflect the true geographic distribution of voters throughout the three-county area. The margin of error for the sample as a whole is +/- 4.0 percentage points; margins of error for subgroups within the sample will be higher.

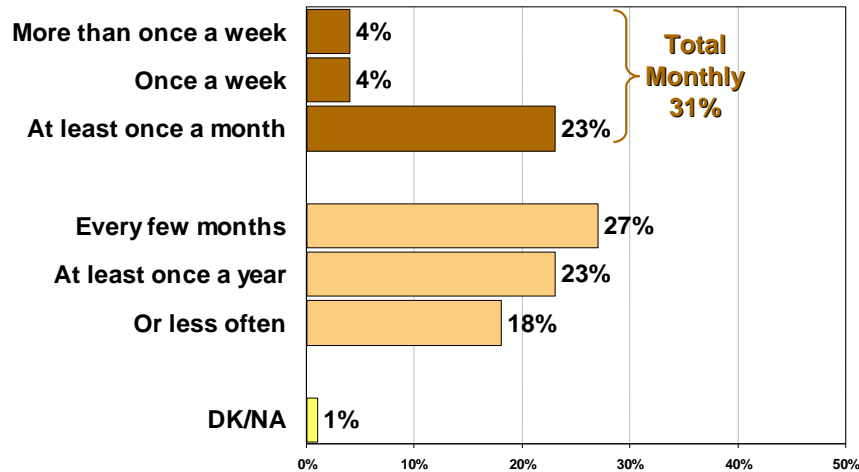
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Among the key specific findings of the survey were the following:

- **A majority of voters in the Portland region attend arts and cultural events at least a few times a year.** As shown in **Figure 1**, a 58-percent majority of voters attend arts and cultural events every few months, though smaller numbers attend monthly (31%) or weekly (eight percent). Rates of attendance vary slightly across the counties, with 63% of Multnomah County voters, 55% of Washington County voters, and 50% of Clackamas County voters attending events at least every few months.

FIGURE 1:
Frequency of Attendance at Arts and Cultural Events



- **Local voters overwhelmingly view the arts and culture in the Portland region as entertaining and educational.** As shown in **Figure 2** on the following page, survey respondents were offered a list of words and phrases and were asked to indicate how strongly each applied to the arts and culture in the Portland area. At least three in five felt strongly that arts and culture in the area encourage creativity, are enjoyable to attend in person, and create educational opportunities for children. Solid majorities also felt strongly that the arts and culture are “family friendly” and “a source of pride for our area.” At the same time, a majority of voters reject the idea that the arts and culture in the region “cater mostly to rich people.”

**FIGURE 2:
Perceptions of the Degree to Which Descriptions Apply to the
Arts and Culture in the Portland Region
(Split Sampled)**

Description	Strongly Applies	Somewhat Applies	Does Not Apply	DK/NA
Encourages creativity	67%	26%	3%	3%
Enjoyable to attend in person	65%	27%	4%	4%
Creates educational opportunities for children	60%	30%	4%	5%
Family-friendly	54%	32%	7%	6%
A source of pride for our area	53%	36%	7%	4%
A major part of what makes Portland unique	46%	37%	12%	5%
Contributes to the local economy	45%	40%	9%	6%
Appeals to people like me	45%	39%	14%	2%
Appeals to people throughout the region	44%	44%	6%	6%
Among the best in the region	39%	34%	11%	16%
Affordable	29%	55%	10%	6%
Among the best in the country	19%	43%	15%	23%
Caters mostly to rich people	9%	30%	56%	5%

➤ **Portland area voters see a number of important benefits to the arts – and many believe they are threatened.** Figure 3 highlights responses to a survey question that presented respondents with a number of statements about the arts and culture in the Portland region, and asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with each. A number of interesting findings emerged from this question:

- ✓ More than three-quarters of voters (77%) believe the arts and culture community fuels creativity that helps the local economy. This perception is shared by voters in Washington (79%), Clackamas (77%) and Multnomah (75%) Counties;
- ✓ Voters indicate that more convenience and additional information might lead them to greater attendance at arts and cultural events. A total of 70% say they would attend events more often if they heard more about them, and 63% say they would attend more if they knew more about events close to home.
- ✓ Voters feel a deep personal connection to the arts. Fully two-thirds say that the arts were an important part of their experience growing up, and 77 percent say that having opportunities to enjoy the arts and creative learning is essential to their families today.
- ✓ Voters see threats to the arts. A total of 70 percent say that arts education programs in local schools are being cut back – a perception that cuts across

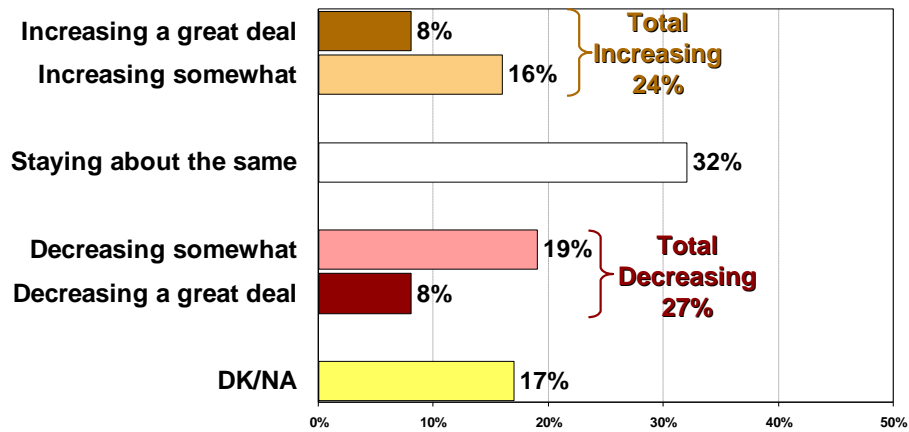
Multnomah (76%), Washington (67%) and Clackamas (65%) counties. And nearly half of voters (48%) are concerned that “in the future, there will be fewer opportunities to enjoy the arts in the Portland region,” with essentially identical numbers in each county (all between 46% and 48%).

**FIGURE 3:
Agreement with Statements About the
Arts and Culture in the Portland Region
(Split Sampled)**

Statement	TOTAL AGREE	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/ NA
Our arts and culture community helps fuel creativity and innovation that are crucial to Portland’s economy	77%	40%	37%	11%	6%	6%
Having opportunities to enjoy the arts and creative learning is essential to me and my family	77%	37%	40%	13%	9%	1%
Arts education programs in local schools are being cut back	70%	42%	28%	9%	5%	15%
If I knew or heard more about events or performances that interested me, I would attend more often	70%	32%	38%	18%	10%	2%
Participating in arts and cultural activities was an important part of my experience growing up	67%	39%	28%	18%	13%	2%
If I knew or heard more about arts and cultural events close to home, I would attend more often	63%	24%	39%	16%	16%	4%
I am concerned that in the future, there will be fewer opportunities to enjoy the arts in the Portland region	48%	18%	30%	27%	18%	7%
It’s nice to have arts and cultural activities in the Portland region, but they are <u>not</u> really essential to our quality of life	30%	14%	16%	22%	47%	1%

- **Voters have little understanding of current trends in funding for the arts, but few think it is increasing.** Survey respondents were asked whether, over time, they thought financial support for arts and cultural organizations in the region had been increasing, staying the same, or decreasing. As illustrated in **Figure 4** on the following page, fewer than one-quarter of those surveyed think funding has been increasing, while nearly half (49%) say it has been staying the same or do not offer an opinion. A little more than one-quarter understand that it has been declining. No more than 27% of voters in any of the three counties think funding has been increasing, while at least 23% in each county think it has been declining.

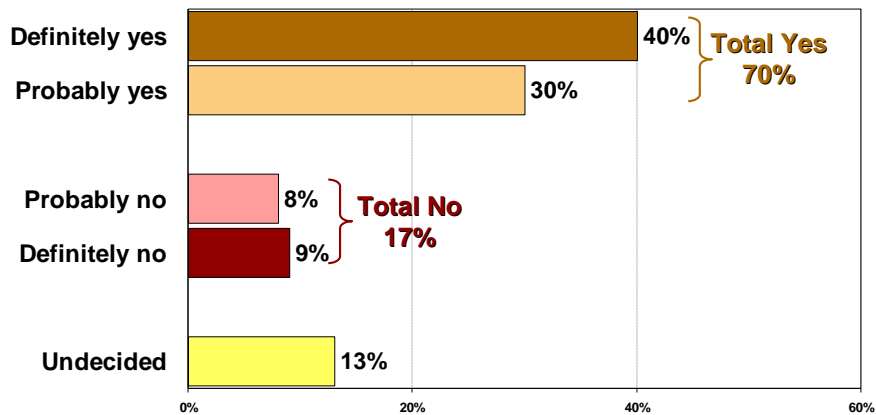
FIGURE 4:
Perception of Recent Trends in Funding for the Arts in the Portland Region



- **Voters support increased ongoing, dedicated funding for arts and cultural organizations.** As shown in **Figure 5**, a clear 70-percent majority believe such funding is needed, while fewer than one in five reject the idea. The idea is backed by 72 percent of Multnomah county voters, 70 percent of Washington County voters, and 66 percent of voters in Clackamas County – with about two in five voters in each county saying they “definitely” believe such funding is needed.

FIGURE 5:
Support for Dedicated Additional Funding for the Arts

In your personal opinion, do you think arts and cultural organizations in the Portland region need additional, dedicated and reliable funding over the long term to better reach and serve the public?



Taken together, the survey results demonstrate that **Portland-area voters strongly value the arts, believe that they benefit the community in a wide variety of ways, and support efforts to ensure that they have the ongoing funding that they need.**