

# City of Albany Street Maintenance Funding Opinion Research

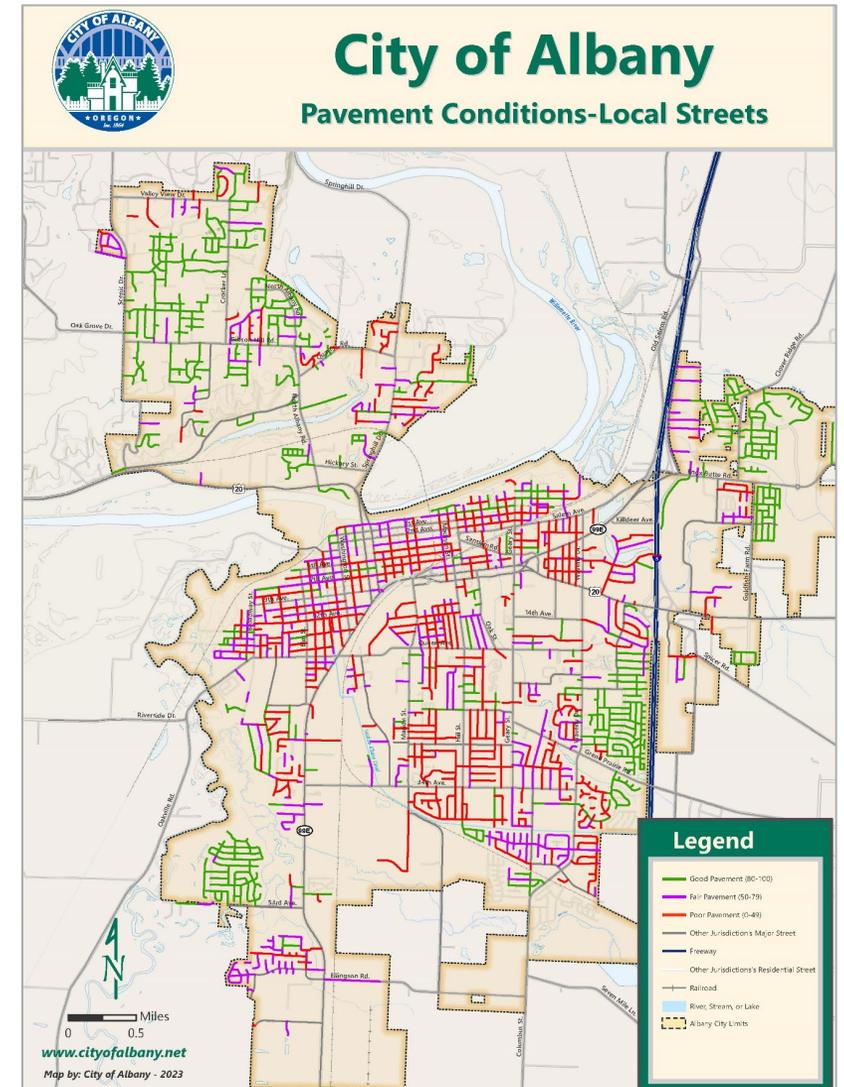
July 24, 2024 • City Council Meeting



# Opinion Research Purpose

Answer key questions:

- Views around current street condition?
- Priorities for improvement?
- Awareness of current funding?
- Willingness to pay more for street maintenance?



# Here's why...

## Combined Street Annual Funding Gap

| Arterials & Collectors         | \$1.5 million         |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Locals – Good & Fair Condition | \$3.0 million         |
| Locals – Poor Condition        | \$8.3 million         |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>\$12.8 million</b> |



# Opinion Research Process



## Interviews

- May-June
- 15 participants



## Focus Groups

- May 28-29
- 2 sessions,  
22 participants



## Voter Survey

- June 13-19
- 11 minutes,  
300 participants



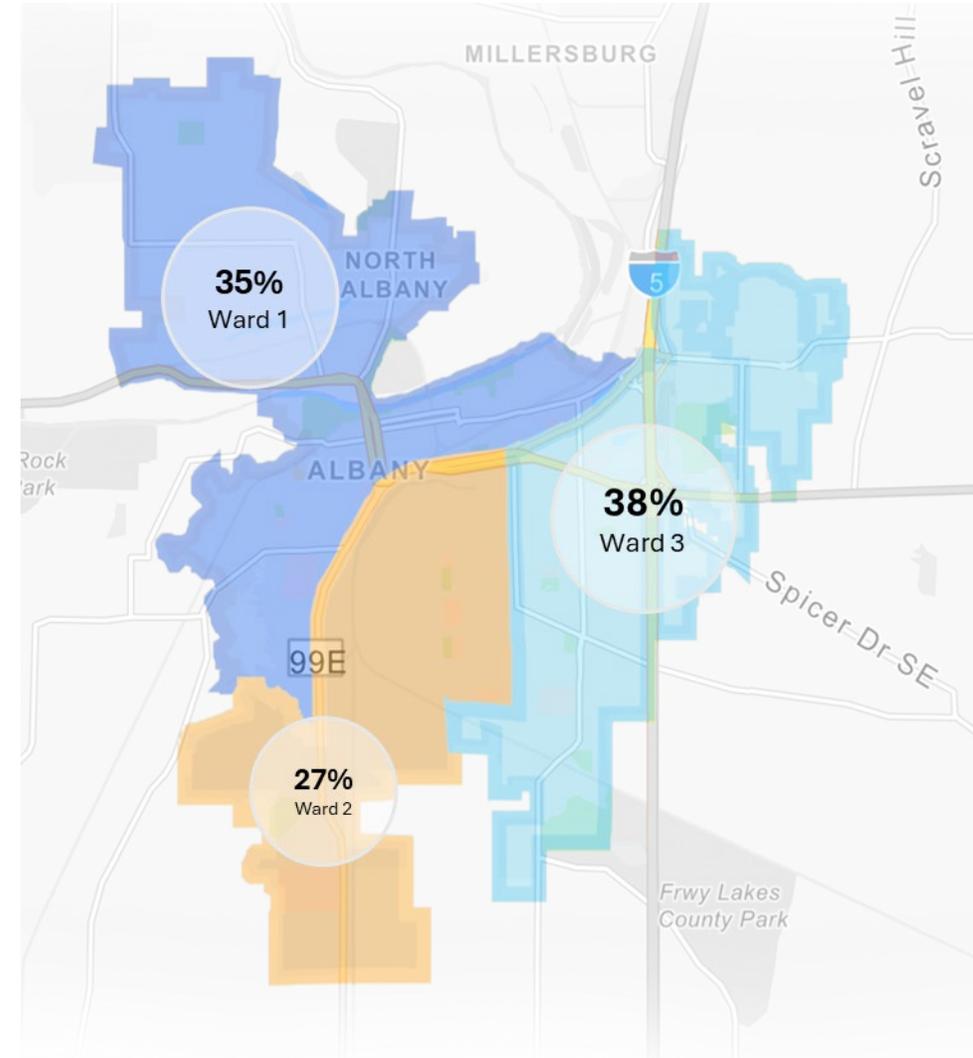
# Focus Group Methodology

- Two groups of 8-12 registered voters (total 22 paid participants)
- Two-hour sessions with professional moderator
- Written exercises combined with discussion



# Telephone Survey Methodology

- Survey of 300 Albany registered voters
- Respondents contacted by telephone plus text-to-online invites
- Quotas set by age, gender, race, education, income, party registration, ward
- Margin of error  $\pm 5.7\%$



# Review Key Findings



# Condition of Our Streets

Transportation is top of mind issue (29% vs. 31% homelessness)

“What is the most important issue facing Albany today?”

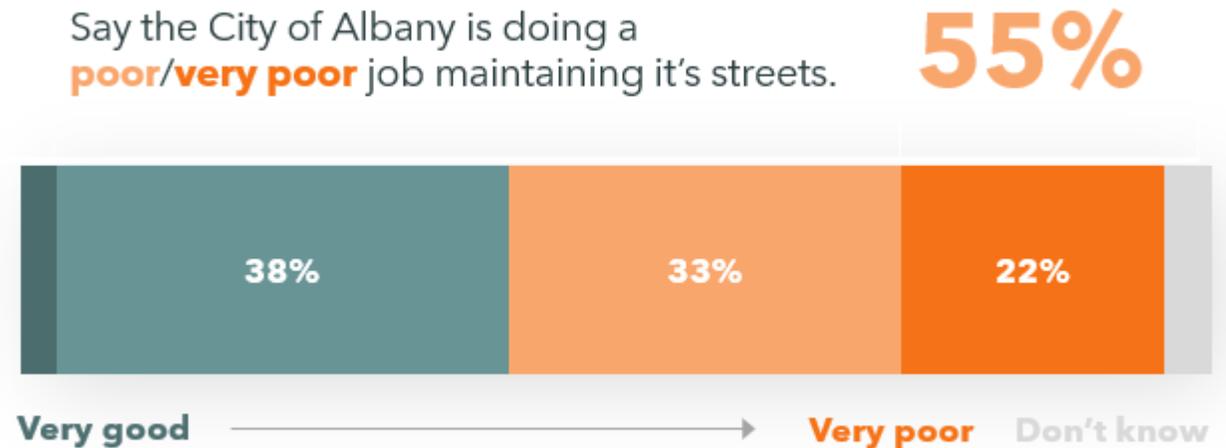


**29%**  
**Transportation**



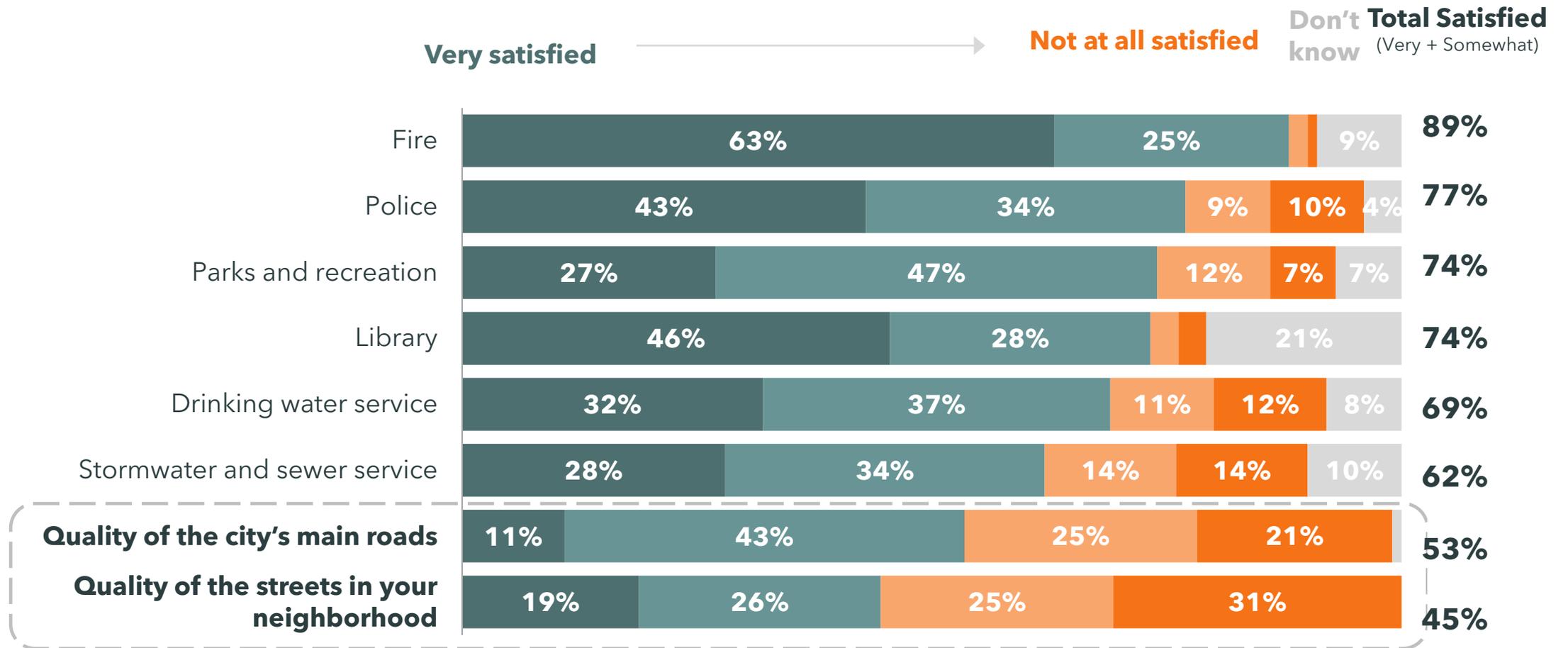
# Condition of Our Streets

55% say City is doing a poor job – no other service has more than 28% dissatisfaction.



# Condition of Our Streets

Neighborhood streets are seen as worse than arterials



# Priorities for Improvement

If more funds are available, 70% say “*worst first*” is top priority



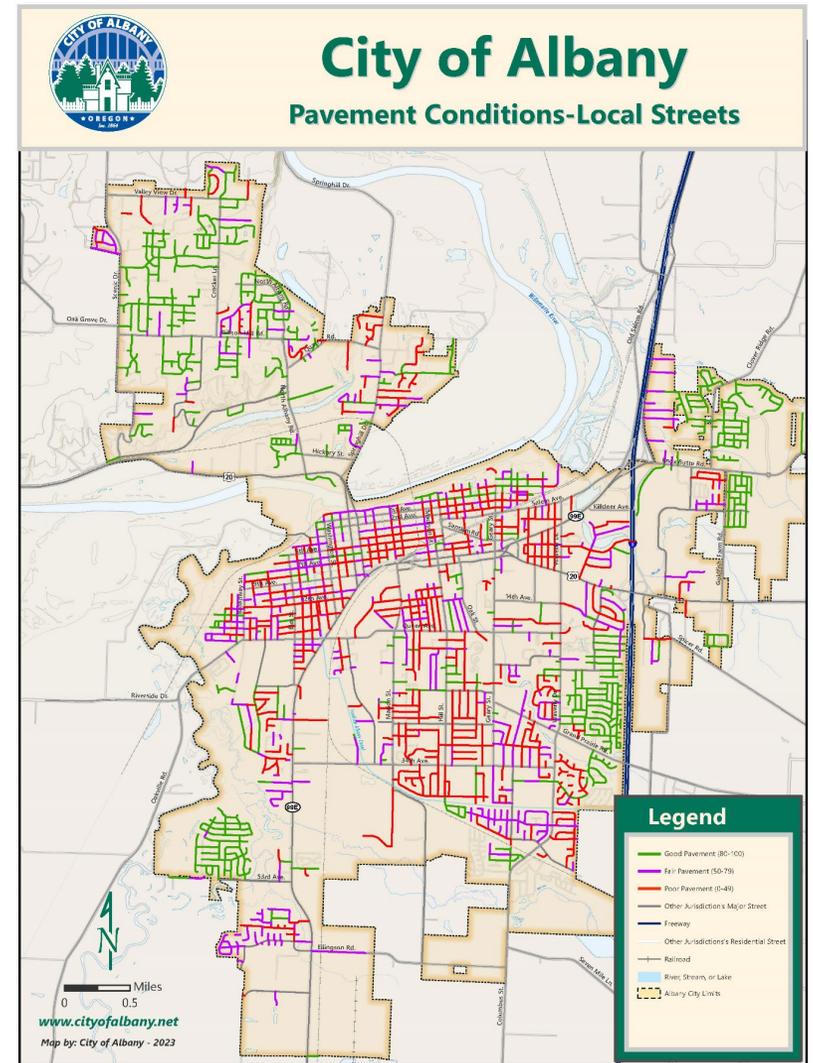
*38<sup>th</sup> Avenue 'poor condition'*



*Del Rio Avenue 'poor condition'*

# Priorities for Improvement

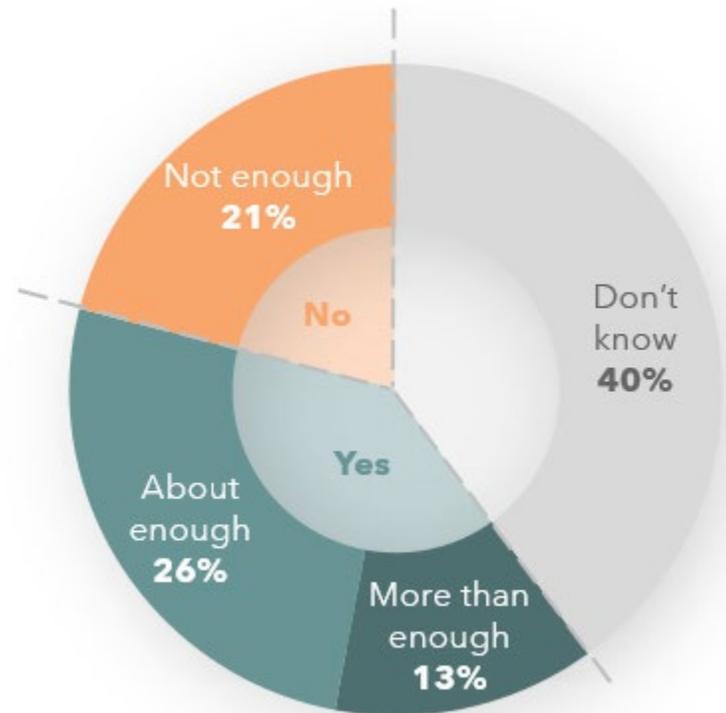
- Inequity – streets in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods seem to be in worse condition



# Awareness of Funding Situation

- Few voters understand how street maintenance is funded.
- 40% are unsure if the City has sufficient funding for street maintenance. Just 21% recognize the City doesn't have enough money.

*To the best of your knowledge, does the City of Albany have enough funding to maintain its streets to a reasonable quality?*



# Support for Additional Funding

- A local gas tax is hugely unpopular – electric vehicles don't pay the tax; gas tax revenues are flat or declining
- A street maintenance utility fee is favored as fairer (everyone pays) and more dependable. But only 35% of voters support a street maintenance fee.



# Transportation Utility Fee – Oregon Cities

30 Oregon cities have a transportation utility fee, most range from \$5-16 monthly per household

|           |             |              |             |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Ashland   | Eagle Point | Medford      | Talent      |
| Bay City  | Florence    | Milwaukie    | Tigard      |
| Bend      | Grants Pass | Myrtle Creek | Tualatin    |
| Brookings | Hillsboro   | Newberg      | West Linn   |
| Canby     | Hubbard     | North Plains | Wilsonville |
| Corvallis | La Grande   | Oregon City  |             |
| Creswell  | Lake Oswego | Philomath    |             |
| Dufur     | Madras      | Phoenix      |             |



# Best Reasons Given to Support a Utility Fee

- Money is dedicated to street maintenance (64% support)
- Funding directed to streets in worst shape (58%)
- Cost-effective maintenance is better than replacement (55%)
- Street maintenance fee would produce immediate (one-year) concrete results (55%)



# Recipe for Success

1. **Branding: “Street Maintenance Utility Fee” clearly states purpose**
2. Keep Albany’s utility fee in range of other cities – but make sure funding level is enough to make a difference (\$16/month yields \$6 million/year)
3. Publicize immediate (one year) results – be specific about outcomes: 52 blocks reconstructed or repaved in the first year
4. Target local streets in worst condition
5. Emphasize cost savings of repair vs. replacement (\$1 invested now saves \$7- \$12)
6. Ongoing public education: explain need and proposed solution
7. Since this amount won’t be enough, start a community process to pinpoint other funding options



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# Questions? Discussion



# Thank You!

