

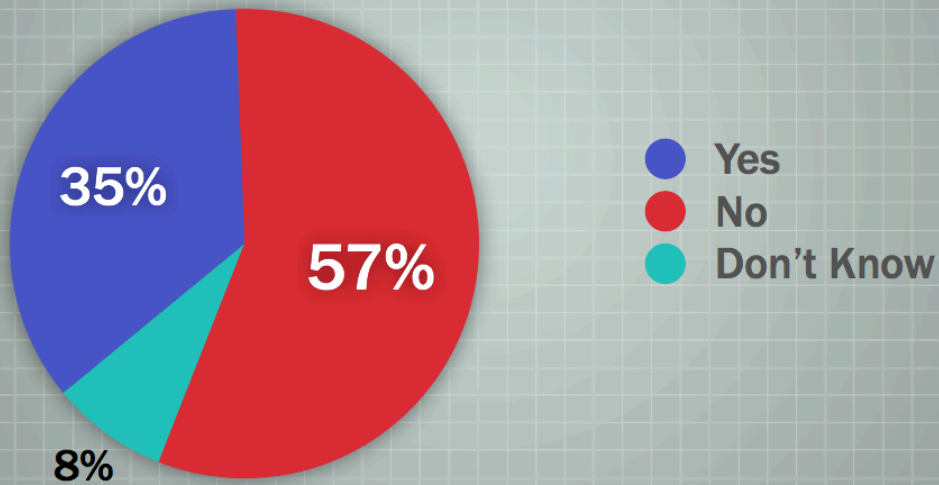
# “INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

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*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll  
for the week of December 3*

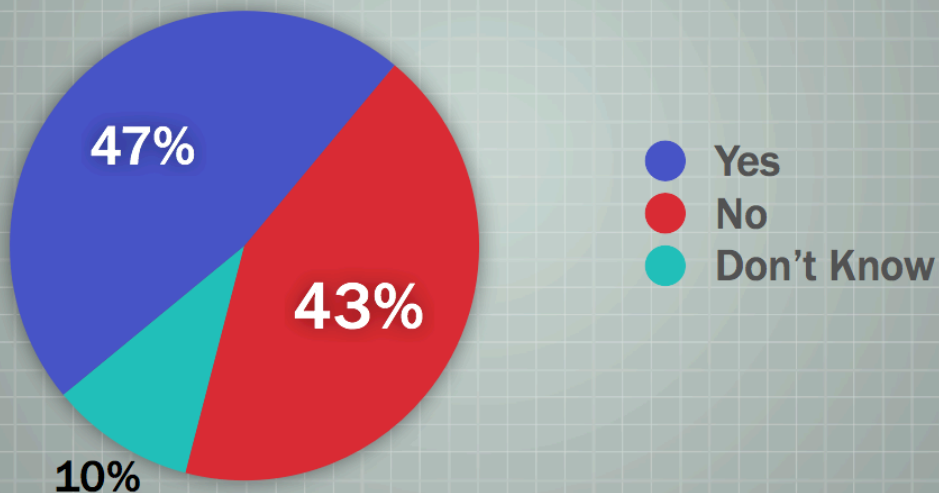
## INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Will lawmakers fund big infrastructure this session?



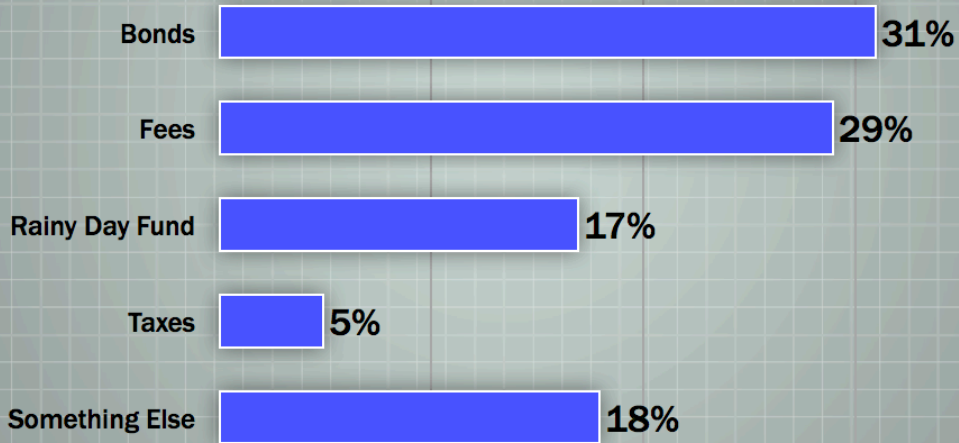
## INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Will Texas get high-speed rail?



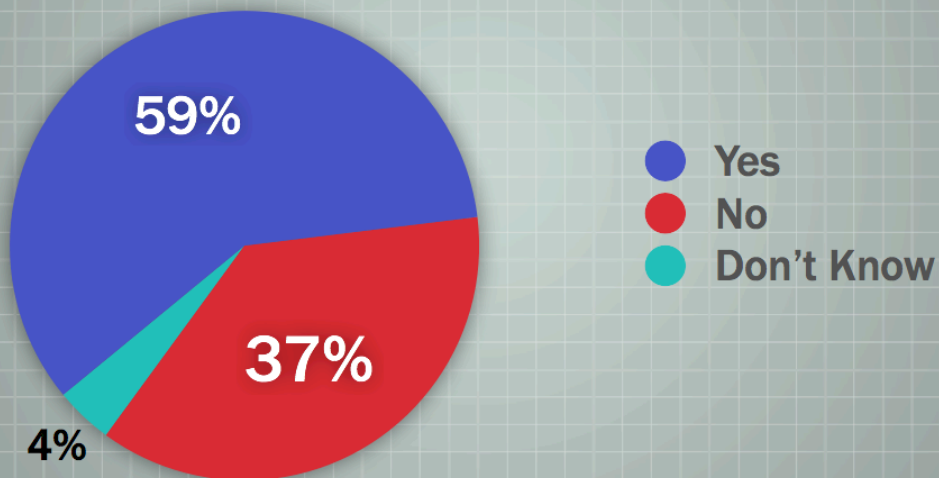
# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Where would lawmakers get money for infrastructure projects?



# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Will lawmakers tap the Rainy Day Fund?



## ***Will the state fund big-scale infrastructure needs, like water and transportation, during this year's regular session?***

- "Not with this crop of freshman members combined with the Sophs."
- "Not until education is addressed in a special."
- "But not anywhere near the extent needed"
- "Texas is a First-World-State with the infrastructure of a Third-World Country, however, no one in leadership has the courage to tell the people of Texas the big reality...we need to raise your taxes to fix our state."
- "Maybe water"
- "Water will probably get another legislative study and transportation will get some extra money but no real big-scale action to solve the State's infrastructure funding problems."
- "No leadership from Governor"
- "Both water and transportation will get additional funding as we can't keep kicking the can down the road."
- "If Perry is running for President, probably not."
- "They will definitely fund water infrastructure projects. There is unprecedented political momentum on this topic. The only question is whether it will come from new or existing revenue sources."
- "Sure... once we take care of the truly critical pressing needs like exactly how TSA agents check me for weapons, ending the pandemic we live under of "sanctuary cities" (note: there is no sanctuary city in Texas so we might as well declare victory) and ensuring welfare recipient don't smoke more weed than say suburban kids from Plano. Soon as we pass all the solutions in need of a problem, then we will talk about big-scalp infrastructure need."
- "The key word is "needs." If that's that case, then smart money management will pay for them."
- "Water, yes Transportation, maybe (more likely next session) Nichols really wants a transportation bill as his legacy"
- "If we don't handle our water business now, we might as well box up our jobs and ship them to Michigan (or some other water-rich state)."
- "No new taxes"
- "They should"
- "There will be funding increases but long-term solutions will not be found."
- "Yes but only on the margins. They will not fix any problems. Too much need and not enough money."
- "They will plug some of the holes with the RDF."
- "However, it will probably be accomplished without new statewide fees or taxes."

- "They'll do something -- but no gas tax."
- "The lege is going to run from big ticket items like coeds from a horror film monster. The focus on cuts and minimizing programs is going to make it hard to want to fund anything other than bare minimum needs."
- "Finances will still be tight and legislators will be looking to backfill funding to Medicaid, rebuild the education budget and balance the 2013-14 budget. There will be no slack for big ticket infrastructure needs even though needs are clear and growing."
- "They will finally make the investment in water and transportation."
- "Let them drink wine and travel by helicopter."
- "The state will fund a token amount of both water and transportation. They'll hold back on big amounts in case the state loses the whopper (school finance) lawsuit."
- "Of course not. Can on the road, meet the foot that will be kicking you down it..."
- "Breathing air, drinking water and driving down the road might be the only things that can get bipartisan support."
- "It is a must!"
- "Fund them? Yes. Adequately fund them? No."
- "We haven't addressed infrastructure in a real way since the prison construction boom of the mid'90s."
- "But not enough."
- "Lip service on roads."
- "Education will be the focus. Some small increases to out-of-state registration fees will probably get through but nothing major will come out of this session."
- "The Speaker would like too"
- "To a very small degree, not near what is need for the pro-business attitude of bringing in more industry"

### ***Do you think Texas will eventually have high-speed rail?***

- "Will it get cattle and crops to the markets faster?"
- "Seems suspiciously European"
- "It may not be in our lifetime, but the forces that be are starting to understand the business side of high-speed rail. Also, it doesn't hurt that a few influential conservative Texans are starting to push for it."
- "Why? We got Megabus that can get you from Austin to Houston or Austin to Dallas a little less than 3 hours for \$10."

- "Even though "eventually" can cover a really long time, as long as roads and water remain unfunded or underfunded there doesn't seem to be enough money for high speed rail."
- "Waste of money"
- "I've been praying for this for 30 years as I would love to get my land condemned for the bullet train from Houston to Dallas. Damn you Southwest Airlines for preventing this!"
- "Eventually is a long time!"
- "Though it will be based on public private partnerships by region...I don't think State govt will tackle the issue."
- "Not unless the federal government funds it. Driverless cars will soon make long-distance passenger rail service obsolete."
- "It makes too much sense, so I wouldn't expect the Legislature to move. It'll happen when business and industry push for it."
- "Eventually is the operative word"
- "The cost is prohibitive. Building roads costs less and is more useful."
- "50 years from now, built and financed by the private sector"
- "We might have high speed rail the day we figure out how to have a legislative session without tipping off the Southwest Airlines lobby team about it."
- "Right after they finish the superconductor project they will get on the high-speed rail project."
- "Not as long as Southwest Airlines is around."
- "Yes, if eventually means in two-three decades."
- "SA to Austin will be the first -- Eagle Ford Shale money will build it."
- "Texas is way behind, just beginning the planning process that the feds require before investing, but with open, flat, terrain between three of the nation's ten largest cities, high-speed rail is a no brainer."
- "My heart says yes but my head notes the prevalence and preeminence of oil companies in this state."
- "But private, not a TexTrack."
- "It takes big government to do high-speed rail, and we're even afraid of the Keystone Pipeline, which runs UNDER ground."
- "With our current dynamic state leadership, perhaps as soon as the latter half of the twenty-second century."
- "Poorly-phrased question. "Eventually"? Well sure, I think we'll have it by 2175. But in our lifetimes? Doubtful."
- "Not while we're alive!"
- "Maybe next decade."

- "Bring on Judge Robert Eckels. Yes, making a triangle from Houston to Austin to Dallas. Sorry San Antonio (Castro)."
- "Doesn't make sense for our state."
- "There is no compelling reason not to."
- "One can only hope!"
- "But not soon enough."
- "Why would I take a train to Dallas or San Antonio and then walk in a suit to

rent a car? Won't take a darn car off the road!"

- "But I'll be dead before we see it."
- "High speed rail is an inevitability if Texas is to compete economically."
- "It will be awhile though"
- "By the time we have high-speed rail, California will have teleporters."
- "But not in the lifetime of anyone able to answer this survey."

### ***Where would lawmakers go for money to fund a water plan, big transportation or other infrastructure projects?***

- "For long-lasting projects, at a time of historically low interest rates, bonds are actually the conservative approach"
- "We will not raise your taxes, but we will increase your fees."
- "The smart, and by that I mean don't tax the masses, is to go through bonds. Although the masses will end up paying for it in the end but bonds tend to sell better than taxes."
- "Lawmakers are still more likely to use debt-financing (bonds) or rainy day funds (one-time infusions) than they are to vote for taxes or for fees that can be called taxes by future opponents."
- "Any project that large requires a serious revenue stream"

- "Probably all of the above and we need to consider a gas tax modification to reflect the fleet of 2013"
- "Not only bonds for water and transportation, but maybe even schools."
- "How about revolving fund with seed money from the Rainy Day Fund. Seed money to bring projects on line. When they start serving customer the seed money is repaid to be lent to another start up."
- "They won't go anywhere, because it requires an actual backbone."
- "They'll try for fees--users pay as you go. Some of it may have to be paid from Rainy Day Funds in the end."
- "Combination of all options"

- "Closing the loop hole on bottled water tax. That's the answer. Period."
- "There are 2 major funding sources for transportation. When the legislature finally realizes that we must live within our means, they will stop pilfering those funds and direct them to their intended purposes."
- "Not taxes"
- "We should use bonds to pay for infrastructure improvements, because in Texas we lay the burden on the backs of those who benefit. Or at least we should."
- "Conservatives believe we have enough money to cover all needed projects!!"
- "Sales tax on bottle water is the best idea."
- "The state has no money. The public wants the projects. So public private partnerships are the only answer."
- "Nowhere. They didn't run on fixing water and transportation."
- "Make the frackers pay. A penny per gallon or something."
- "Combination of the above."
- "Ultimately a raising of the Rainy Day Fund maximum cap will likely provide some additional funds, but this is not likely to occur in 2013."
- "They would use the rainy day fund to set up an revolving account for funding the initial projects of the water plan and then rely on the local governments to

fund the balances. It will be up to local jurisdictions to pas bonds or raise money through taxes and fees."

- "Fees and bonds are a likely combination."
- "Grover still has stroke in the Lone Star State (to the detriment of future generations of Texans)."
- "Could be fees. It would not be taxes."
- "They'll use a small slice of rainy day fund to show they care."

Taxes"? What is "taxes"?"

- "(e) All of the above (but the taxes will be called something else to make it palatable)."
- "A combination of all the above."
- "Combination of bonds and private. They don't seem to mind borrowing since no one gets that it will cost taxpayers at some point. And they can continue the falsehood that they haven't raised taxes."

NO new taxes," the Republicans said in unison."

- "All of the above. But there is probably an appetite for dedicated funding mechanisms, constitutionally protected, to make sure it works."
- "As with education they'll kick the can down the road to municipalities."
- "Debt baby!"
- "For water, it's going to take a combination of Rainy Day funds, bonds,



and local/regional participation money."

- "Only in a post-Perry Texas."

- "Nothing makes these nitwits happier than borrowing money and saying they have cut spending."

- "Fees and rainy day fund.... fees and taxes the same, just another name..."

### ***Do you think the new legislature will vote to use the Rainy Day Fund?***

- "But not for Medicaid, as they should, but instead for a down payment on infrastructure investment."

- "The roof is on fire, but no one seems to notice or care."

- "I guess it would depend on what they decide to use it for. It was a battle to use it for public education, so I don't know what other issue is worthy of a rainy day fund vote."

- "Yes, they will use a few billion from the rainy day fund and they will justify using it on one-time, non-recurring investments such as transportation projects."

- "But only to fund prior year shortfalls"

- "Yes. The tax dollars in the fund were collected for a purpose--economic stabilization. We presently have a serious economic instability situation being created with our failure to address critical water and transportation needs to meet current and future demands."

- "If this year's primary taught us anything, there will be a shift to the right. Lessons from November will be ignored."

- "They will use part of it to balance the budget, but ONLY after they've cut the size of government to fit within our means."

- "Doesn't need to"

- "The Rainy Day Fund is too cherished a security blanket to ever snatch it from the clutches of the budget "certifiers.""

- "They will if leadership as in the big 3 support it."

- "But only to fund the shortfall from last Session. These guys didn't vote to spend the money. But now they are left holding the bag. That's a perfect and legitimate use for the Rainy Day Fund."

- "Yes, but only a small share of it."

- "Part of it"

- "If Perry agrees"

- "They'll use a little of it, but not much."

- "They may use the rainy day fund to backfill Medicaid so that anticipated revenues and expenses for 2013-14 balance."

- "The RDF has become almost a religious icon to legislators. Anyone touching it will be crucified."
- "The Rainy Day Fund comes into play only if the Legislature uses it to address the hole left by not using the Rainy Day Fund in 2011."
- "As a bonding bank"
- "If the leadership pushes it, they will. Otherwise no. As last session, Senate more likely to use than the House. That may change a little."
- "The rainy day fund could get several slices taken out of it. One for water/road infrastructure, one (possibly) to undoing the one-time smoke'n'mirrors from last time, and one for something I can't tell you."
- "But, as was the case in 2011, only to pay for past-due obligations such as the months of Medicaid expenses for which no appropriation was made."
- "Yes, but only because it will cap out and have to be spent. Otherwise, no."
- "Medicaid and education are going to force them to use part of it."
- "Yes, but only a portion of it."
- "To fulfill the 2011-2012 budget only."
- "As they said in Animal House, "We need the dues!""
- "There is little other option."
- "But only when it's too late to make truly strategic decisions."
- "They will use 4 billion"
- "Yes, but on a very limited and restricted basis."
- "They'll be forced to this Session"
- "But only to fund last session's deficit spending."
- "Limited access"

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