

**Lamar Outdoor Advertising**  
**Billboard Ordinance Study**  
**City of Spokane Summary Report**  
**July 2000**

**Prepared by:**

**Robinson Research, Inc.**  
**524 West Indiana**  
**Spokane, Washington 99205**  
**(509) 325-8080**  
**Fax: (509) 325-8068**  
**E-mail: [robinsonresearch@icehouse.net](mailto:robinsonresearch@icehouse.net)**

**Table of Contents**

Statement of Methodology..... 3

Summary ..... 5

## **Statement of Methodology**

## Statement of Methodology

Robinson Research, Inc. was commissioned by Lamar Outdoor Advertising to conduct a 400-sample telephone study with Spokane voters. The purpose of the study was to gather awareness, attitudes, and perceptions of outdoor billboard advertising.

Commercial sample lists were purchased through Labels and Lists.

All participants were screened to be registered voters living within the city limits of Spokane and to not be employed in market research or the advertising industry. Quotas were established to ensure a representative cross-section of respondents.

Calls were conducted from our facility between the dates of May 30 and June 30, 2000. No fewer than fifteen percent (15%) of the interviews were monitored in their entirety, and an additional ten percent (10%) were called back by a supervisor for verification of key points of the data. Multiple attempts were made on each number unless the interview was refused or completed with fewer attempts before a replacement number was issued.

A 400-sample survey has a margin of error of +/- 4.9%, which means that, in theory, results have a ninety-five percent chance of coming within +/- 4.9 percentage points of results that would have been obtained had all qualifying Spokane voters been interviewed.

The data were tabulated using Robinson Research systems. Questions regarding this study may be directed to:

William D. Robinson  
President  
Robinson Research, Inc.  
524 West Indiana Avenue  
Spokane, Washington 99205  
(509) 325-8080  
Fax: (509) 325-8068  
E-mail: robinsonresearch@icehouse.net

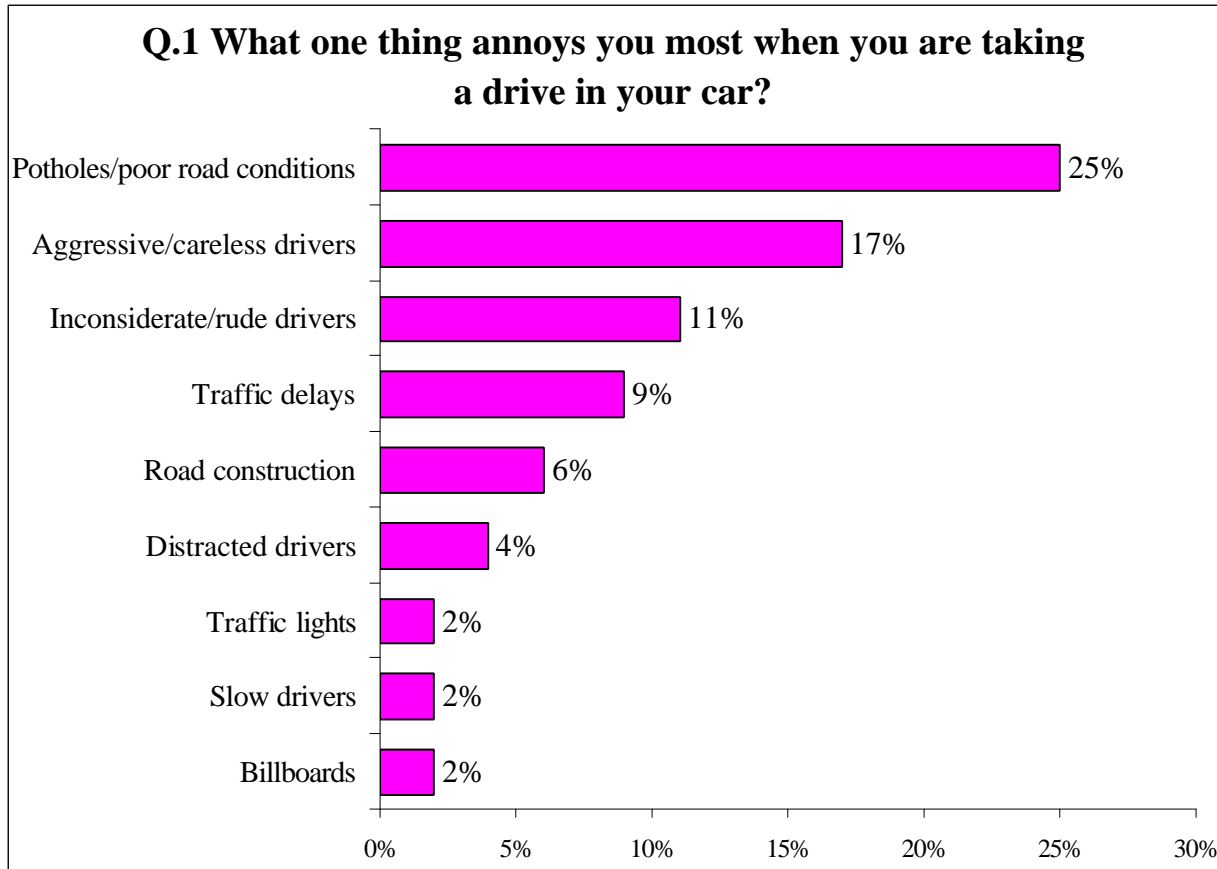
## **Summary**

**Q.1 What one thing annoys you most when you are taking a drive in your car?**

All 400 respondents were asked this unaided question. Participants were not read a list from which to select a response.

Thirty-eight percent (38%) commented in some way about the other drivers on the road when asked this question. One-fourth (25%) mentioned poor road conditions.

Two percent (2%) mentioned billboards. The graph below shows the distribution of responses.

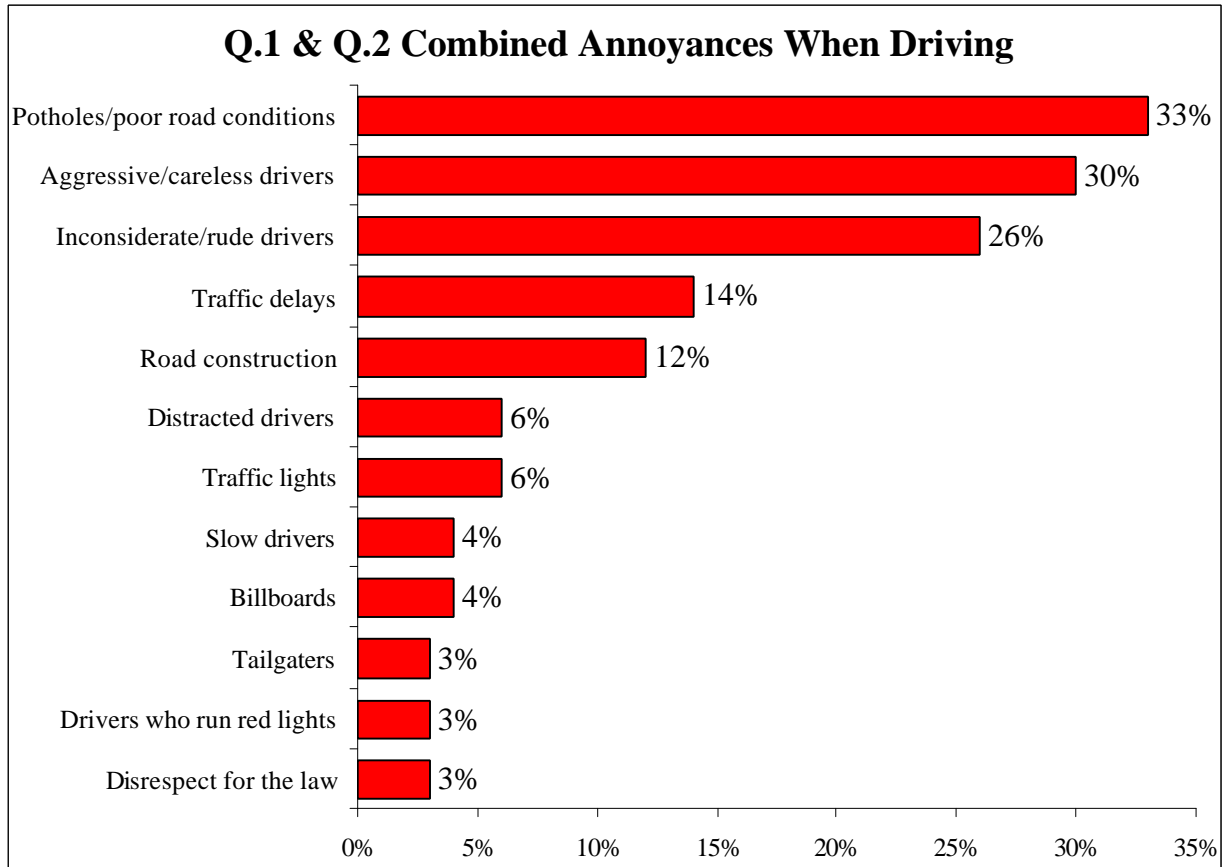


Responses spanned the subsets fairly evenly.

## Q.2 What other things do you find annoying when you are taking a drive in your car?

*This unaided question was asked of 361 offering an annoyance in Q.1. Multiple responses were allowed.*

When first-to-mind (Q.1) and subsequent (Q.2) responses are combined, we see the following:



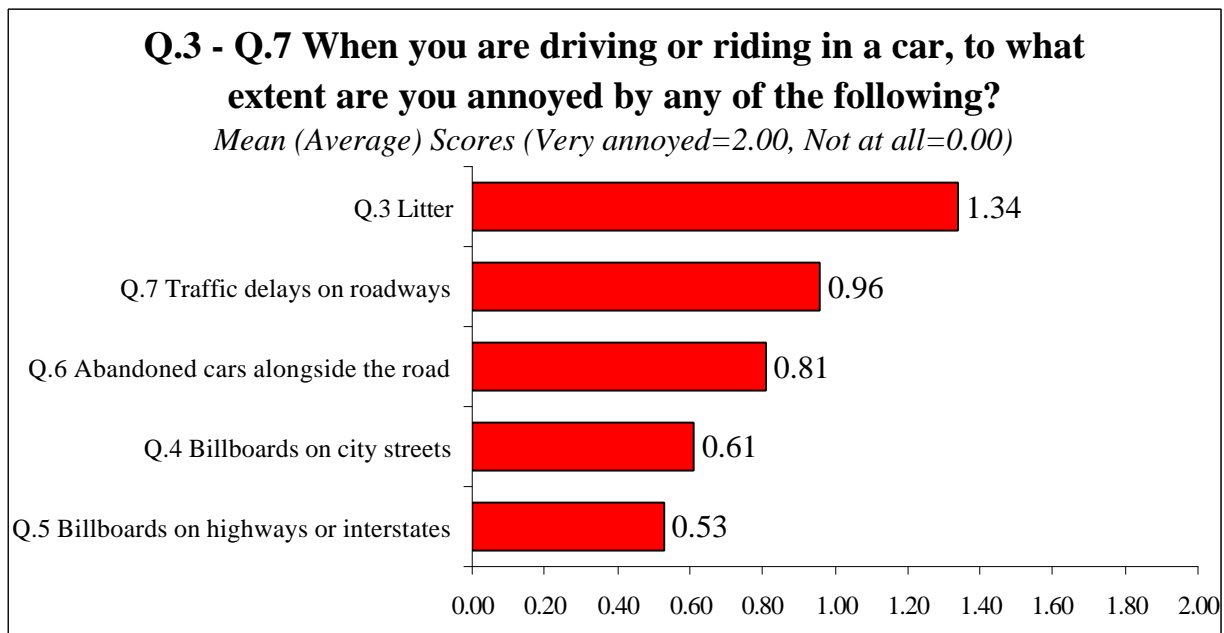
## Q.3 – Q.7 Series

**Using a scale of very annoyed, somewhat annoyed, and not at all annoyed, when you are driving or riding in a car, to what extent are you annoyed by any of the following...**

- **Litter**
- **Billboards on city streets**
- **Billboards on highways or interstates**
- **Abandoned cars alongside the road**
- **Traffic delays on roadways**

*Participants were read a randomized series and asked to rate their level of annoyance with each. To develop a mean (average) score, responses were assigned the following values: Very annoyed (2), somewhat annoyed (1), and not at all annoyed (0).*

The graph below shows the average annoyance scores.



### **Q.3 Litter**

Litter showed the highest level of annoyance with 1.34 of a possible 2.00. For every one person not at all annoyed with litter there were 3.5 who were very annoyed.

Females showed slightly higher than average annoyance scores while those politically independent with Republican leanings showed lower than average annoyance scores.

### **Q.4 Billboards on city streets**

This was rated second lowest with 0.61 of a possible 2.00. For every one person very annoyed there were 3.5 who were not at all annoyed.

Staunch independents and those under the age of thirty-five showed lower than average scores, while those identifying themselves as Democrats and respondents with household incomes in excess of \$80,000 showed higher than average annoyance scores.

### **Q.5 Billboards on highways or interstates**

This was the lowest rated of the series at 0.53 of a possible 2.00. For every one person who was very annoyed there were 4.7 who were not at all annoyed.

Staunch independents showed lower than average annoyance scores, while those considering themselves Democrat and those politically quite liberal had higher than average scores.

## Q.6 Abandoned cars alongside the road

Abandoned cars received the third highest annoyance score with 0.81 of a possible 2.00. For every one person who was very annoyed there were 1.8 who were not at all annoyed.

Responses spanned the subsets evenly.

## Q.7 Traffic delays on roadways

This received the second highest tested score with 0.96 of a possible 2.00. For every one person who was very annoyed there were 1.2 who were not at all annoyed.

Subsets with higher than average annoyance scores included: Those with children, respondents under the age of fifty-five, those employed, and those living in the Spokane area for eleven to thirty years.

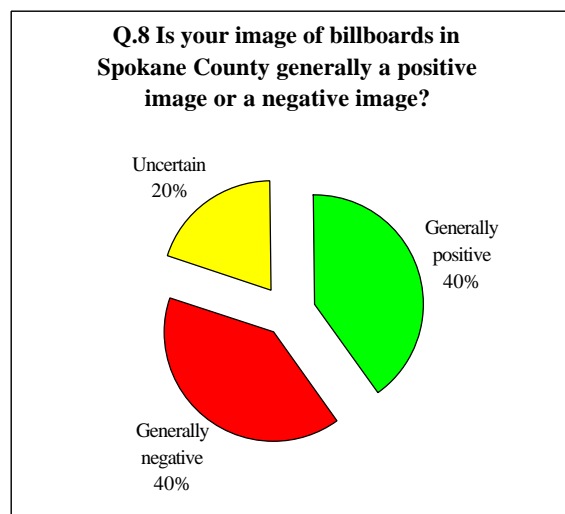
Those with no children in the household, respondents fifty-five and older, unemployed participants, and those living in the area for more than thirty years showed lower than average annoyance scores.

## Q.8 When we refer to billboards in this survey, we are referring only to the type of signs that advertise goods or services that are not available at the site of the sign. Billboards are usually rented for a temporary message and are not to be confused with the signs that businesses put up to mark the location or products available at that site. Is your image of billboards in Spokane County generally a positive image or a negative image?

*All 400 respondents were asked this question.*

Respondents were evenly split on the image of billboards. The graph to the right shows the distribution of responses.

Unmarried participants were slightly more likely than average to perceive billboards as generally positive.



**Q.9 Do you recall any billboards in the Spokane area that you found to be particularly interesting?**

*This question was asked of all respondents.*

One-fourth (24%) claimed to recall interesting billboards.

Subsets more likely than average to recall interesting billboards included: Those claiming Republican affiliation, respondents with children under the age of thirteen, those between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-four, employed respondents, and those living in the area for eleven to thirty years.

Those with lower than average recall included the following: Staunch independent respondents, independents with Democratic leanings, and unemployed participants.

**Q.9A Please specify any billboards in the Spokane area you found to be particularly interesting.**

*Those 97 respondents claiming to recall interesting billboards in Q.9 were asked to specify the billboards.*

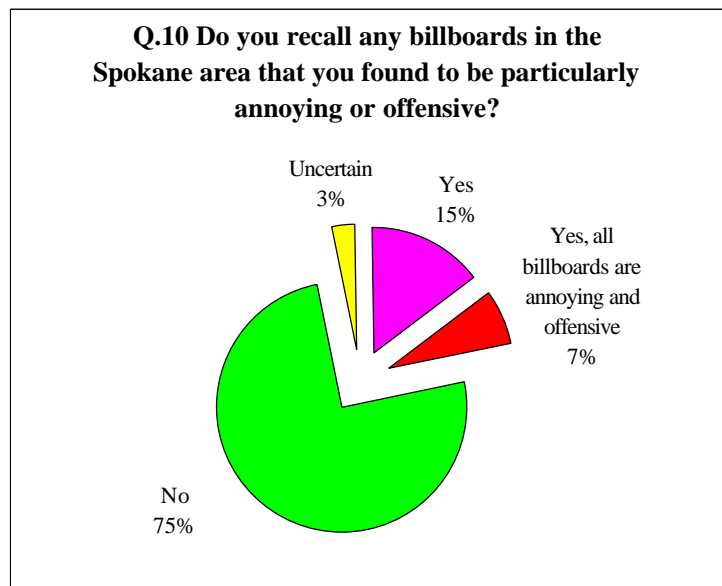
Of those recalling a specific billboard, twenty-five percent (25%) mentioned three-sided billboards. Thirteen percent (13%) mentioned stop-smoking ads, eleven percent (11%) named milk ads, and nine percent (9%) each named alcohol ads and missing women ads.

**Q.10 Do you recall any billboards in the Spokane area that you found to be particularly annoying or offensive?**

*All 400 respondents were asked this question.*

Three-fourths (75%) did not find any billboards offensive. The graph to the right shows the distribution of responses.

Those in the thirty-five to fifty-four age subset were more likely than average to recall annoying billboards.



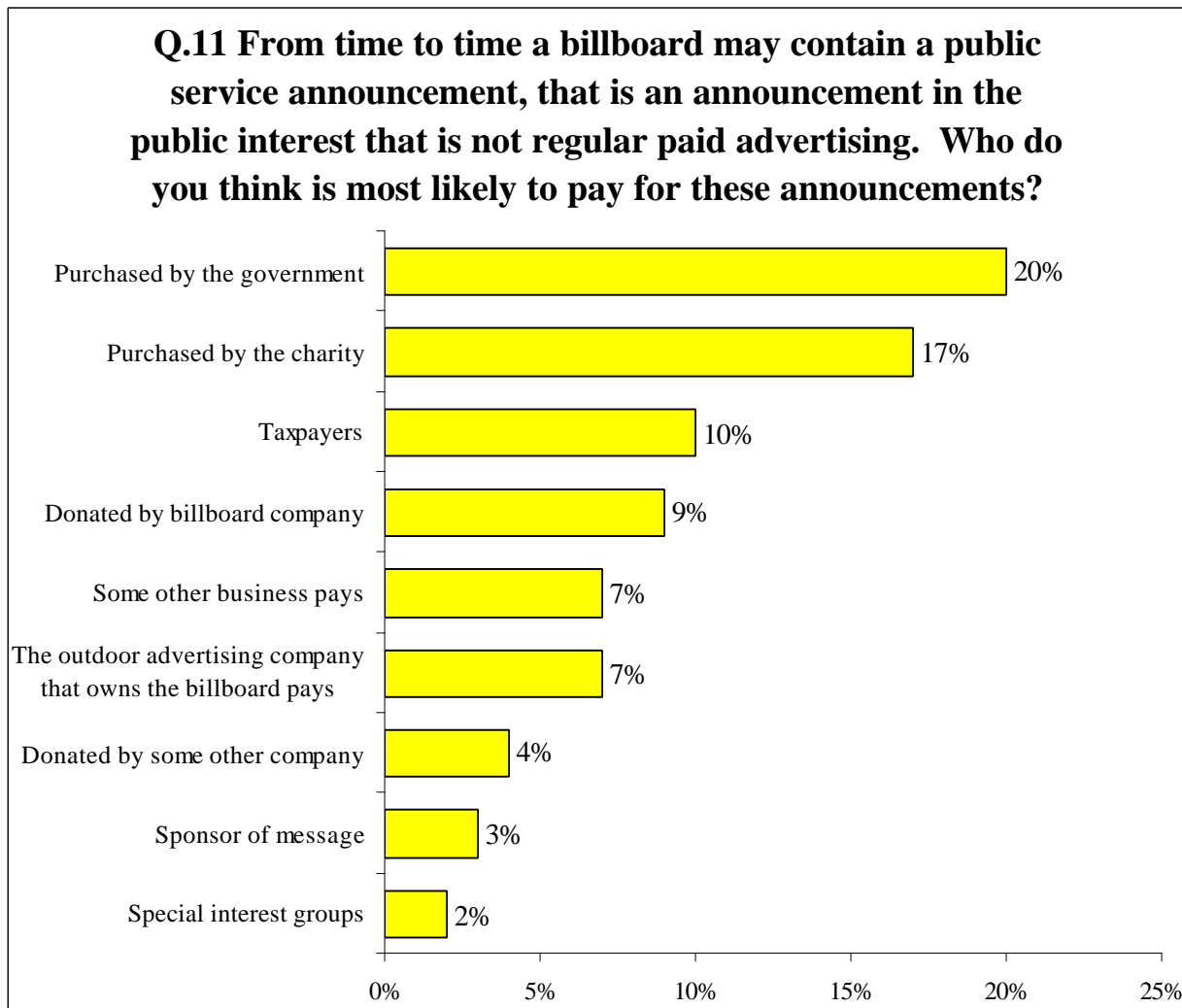
**Q.10A Please specify any billboards in the Spokane area you found particularly annoying or offensive.**

Those 61 respondents claiming to recall annoying billboards in Q.10 were asked to specify the billboards.

Of those recalling a specific billboard, twenty-six percent (26%) mentioned smoking ads. Twenty-one percent (21%) recalled billboards with sexual content. Alcohol ads were mentioned by eighteen percent (18%), and thirteen percent (13%) mentioned political ads.

**Q.11 From time to time, a billboard may contain a public service announcement, that is an announcement in the public interest that is not regular paid advertising. Who do you think is most likely to pay for these announcements?**

The graph below shows the distribution of responses.

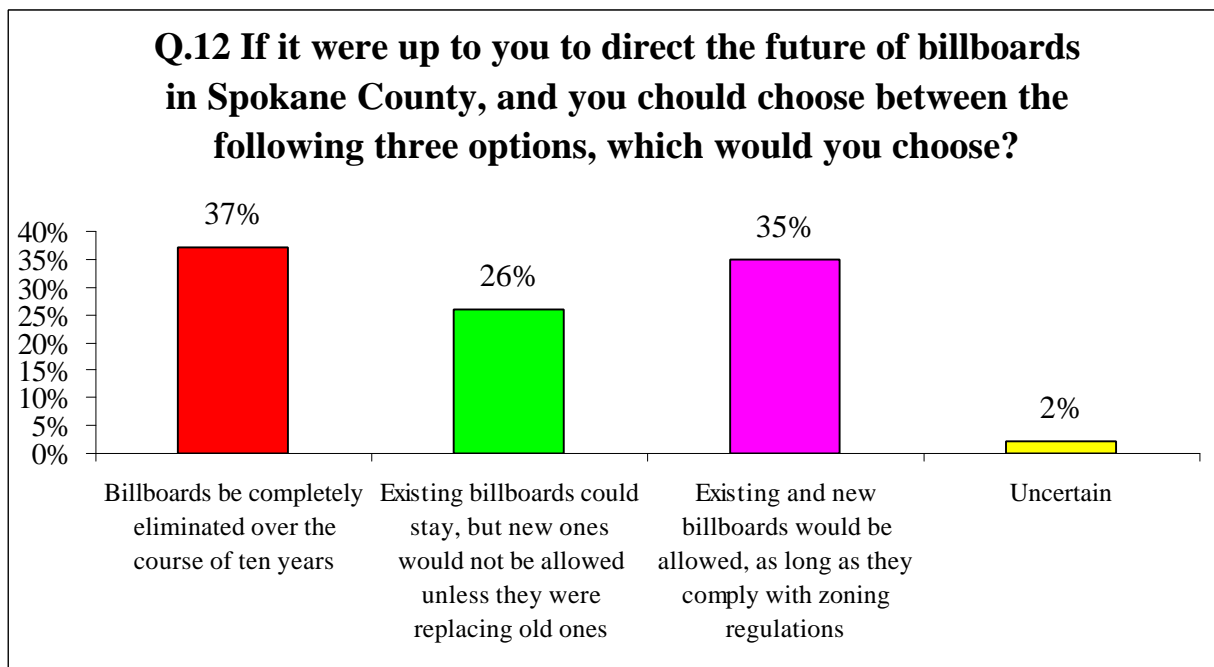


Those with Republican affiliation and those with children between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one were more likely than average to believe the government purchased billboard announcements. Political independents with Democratic leanings were more likely than average to mention billboards being purchased by charities.

**Q.12 If it were up to you to direct the future of billboards in Spokane County, and you could choose between the following three options, which would you choose: Billboards be completely eliminated over the course of ten years, existing billboards could stay but new ones would not be allowed unless they were replacing old ones, or existing and new billboards would be allowed as long as they comply with zoning regulations?**

*All 400 respondents were asked this question.*

Responses were distributed fairly evenly. The graph below shows the distribution of responses.



Those under the age of thirty-five and respondents with children under the age of thirteen were more likely than average to choose billboards to stay.

## Q.13 – Q.31 Series

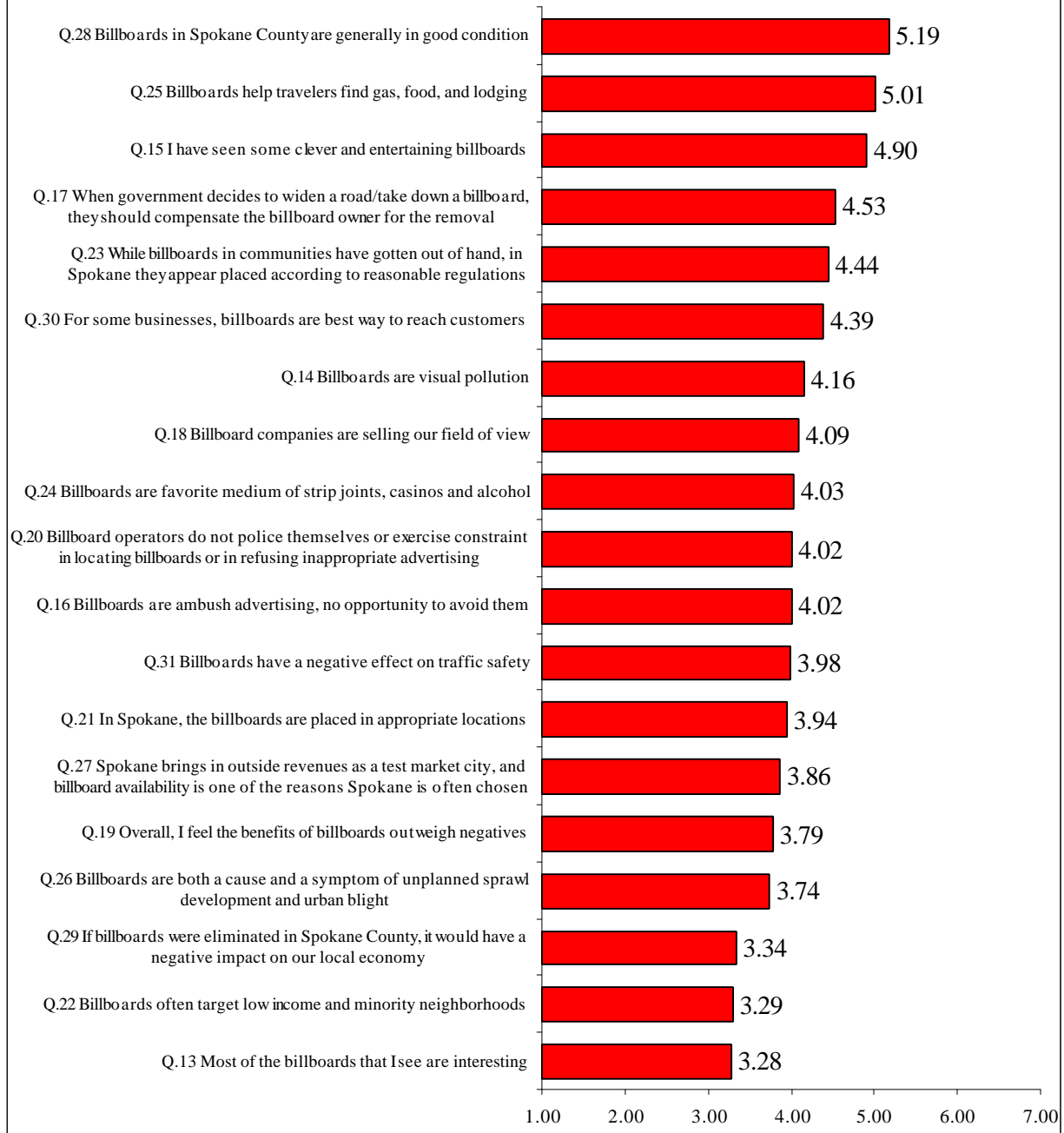
Now I will read a list of statements and after I read each one, please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with that statement by choosing any number along a seven-point scale, with one meaning strongly disagree and seven meaning strongly agree.

- **Most of the billboards that I see are interesting**
- **Billboards are visual pollution**
- **I have seen some clever and entertaining billboards**
- **Billboards are ambush advertising, you have no opportunity to avoid them**
- **When the government decides to widen a road or take down a billboard, the government should compensate that billboard owner for the removal of the billboard**
- **Billboard companies are selling something they don't own, our field of view**
- **Overall, I feel the benefits of billboards outweigh the negative aspects**
- **Billboard operators do not police themselves or exercise constraint in locating billboards or in refusing inappropriate advertising**
- **In Spokane, the billboards are nearly always placed in appropriate locations**
- **Billboards often target low income and minority neighborhoods**
- **While billboard placement in some other communities has gotten out of hand, in Spokane County, they appear to be placed according to reasonable regulations**
- **Billboards are the favorite medium of strip joint, casinos and alcohol**
- **Billboards help travelers find services such as gas, food, and lodging**
- **Billboards are both a cause and a symptom of unplanned sprawl development and urban blight**
- **Spokane brings in outside revenues as a test market city, and billboard availability is one of the reasons Spokane is often chosen**
- **The billboards in Spokane County are generally in good condition and well maintained**
- **If billboards were eliminated in Spokane County, it would have a negative impact on our local economy**
- **For some businesses, billboards are the best way to reach customers**
- **Billboards have a negative effect on traffic safety**

This series was asked of all respondents. The graph on the following page shows the mean (average) agreement scores.

### Q.13 - Q.31 Agreement Scores

Mean (Average) Scores (1.00=Strongly disagree, 7.00=Strongly agree)



#### Q.13 Most of the billboards that I see are interesting

The mean (average) score was 3.28 of a possible 7.00.

Staunch independents showed lower than average agreement scores.

**Q.14 Billboards are visual pollution**

The average score was 4.16 of a possible 7.00.

Those with Democratic political affiliation showed higher than average scores, while those under the age of thirty-five showed lower than average scores.

**Q.15 I have seen some clever and entertaining billboards**

The mean (average) agreement score was 4.90 of a possible 7.00. Responses spanned the subsets fairly evenly.

**Q.16 Billboards are ambush advertising, you have no opportunity to avoid them**

The average score was 4.02 of a possible 7.00.

Those politically independent with Republican leanings and those under the age of thirty-five showed lower than average scores.

**Q.17 When the government decides to widen a road or take down a billboard, the government should compensate that billboard owner for the removal of the billboard**

The mean (average) score was 4.53 of a possible 7.00.

Respondents considering themselves Republican and those quite conservative politically showed higher than average scores, while those somewhat liberal had lower than average scores.

**Q.18 Billboard companies are selling something they don't own, our field of view**

The average score was 4.09 of a possible 7.00.

Those considering themselves Democrats and participants quite liberal politically had higher than average agreement scores.

**Q.19 Overall, I feel the benefits of billboards outweigh the negative aspects**

The mean (average) score was 3.79 of a possible 7.00.

Participants with annual household incomes in excess of \$80,000 showed lower than average scores.

**Q.20 Billboard operators do not police themselves or exercise constraint in locating billboards or in refusing inappropriate advertising**

The average score was 4.02 of a possible 7.00.

Subsets showing lower than average scores included: Independents with Republican leanings, those somewhat politically liberal, and respondents under the age of thirty-five.

Those considering themselves quite liberal politically had higher than average agreement scores.

**Q.21 In Spokane, the billboards are nearly always placed in appropriate locations**

The mean (average) agreement score for this tested statement was 3.94 of a possible 7.00.

Participants with household incomes in excess of \$80,000 showed lower than average agreement.

**Q.22 Billboards often target low income and minority neighborhoods**

The average score was 3.29 of a possible 7.00. All subsets tested fairly evenly.

**Q.23 While billboard placement in some other communities has gotten out of hand, in Spokane County, they appear to be placed according to reasonable regulations**

The mean (average) score was 4.44 of a possible 7.00.

Unmarried respondents showed higher than average scores.

**Q.24 Billboards are the favorite medium of strip joint, casinos and alcohol**

The average score for this statement was 4.03 of a possible 7.00.

Those describing themselves as quite politically conservative had higher than average scores, while those between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-four showed lower than average scores.

**Q.25 Billboards help travelers find services such as gas, food, and lodging**

The mean (average) score was 5.01 of a possible 7.00.

Subsets showing higher than average agreement included those over the age of fifty-four and respondents living in the area for more than thirty years.

Those with lower than average scores included: Respondents somewhat politically liberal, those with children between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one, participants between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-four, and those living in the area thirty years or less.

**Q.26 Billboards are both a cause and a symptom of unplanned sprawl development and urban blight**

The average score for the tested statement was 3.74 of a possible 7.00.

Those quite liberal politically had higher than average scores while those under the age of thirty-five showed lower than average scores.

**Q.27 Spokane brings in outside revenues as a test market city, and billboard availability is one of the reasons Spokane is often chosen**

The average score was 3.86 of a possible 7.00. Responses spanned the subsets fairly evenly.

**Q.28 The billboards in Spokane County are generally in good condition and well maintained**

The mean (average) score was 5.19 of a possible 7.00.

Those under the age of fifty-five showed lower than average scores, while those over the age of fifty-four had higher than average scores.

**Q.29 If billboards were eliminated in Spokane County, it would have a negative impact on our local economy**

The average score for this statement was 3.34 of a possible 7.00. All subsets tested fairly evenly.

**Q.30 For some businesses, billboards are the best way to reach customers**

The mean (average) score was 4.39 of a possible 7.00.

Those considering themselves Republican and participants with children between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one showed higher than average agreement scores.

**Q.31 Billboards have a negative effect on traffic safety**

The average score was 3.98 of a possible 7.00.

Those who considered themselves quite liberal politically showed higher than average agreement scores while those under the age of thirty-five had lower than average agreement.

## Demographic Variables

- Thirty-three percent (33%) considered their political affiliation as Republican and twenty-two percent (22%) considered themselves Democrat. Overall, twelve percent (12%) considered themselves staunchly politically independent. Nine percent (9%) were independent with Republican leanings, and thirteen percent (13%) were independent with Democratic leanings.
- Two-thirds (65%) considered themselves quite conservative politically, with twenty-two percent (22%) claiming to be quite conservative. Twenty-nine percent (29%) were at least somewhat politically liberal, with four percent (4%) quite liberal.
- Twenty percent (20%) had children between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one. Fourteen percent (14%) had children under the age of thirteen.
- The average respondent was fifty-eight (57.94) years old. The median (point in which half are older or younger) was slightly higher at sixty (60.00) years old.
- Seventy percent (70%) were married.
- The typical average household income was \$48,452. The median (point in which half earn more or less) was slightly lower at \$43,065.
- The average respondent had lived in the Spokane area for thirty-five (35.07) years.
- Eighty-seven percent (87%) owned or were buying their current residence.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) were Caucasian.
- Fifty-one percent (51%) were male.