

Public Opinion

Polls and Surveys

The outdoor advertising industry has monitored public opinion toward billboards for over 25 years. The following recent polls, taken by various independent research groups show that Americans like billboards, believe they promote business, and are useful to drivers.

[Analysis of Polling Data](#)

The Taylor Study

Since its passage in 1965, the highway Beautification Act (HBA) has been the single most important piece of legislation regulating outdoor advertising.

Professor Charles Taylor, PhD, Professor of Marketing at Villanova University, completed an assessment of the HBA's consistency with American public opinion (April, 2002). This study analyzes the collective results of major public opinion polls conducted over 30 years. Collectively, these studies contained responses from more than 26,000 Americans.

The findings of the Taylor study suggest that the HBA's provisions are remarkably consistent with public opinion:

- Across the public opinion polls conducted over 30 years, support for a ban on billboards in recent years (i.e., the 1990s and 2000s) is lower than was the case in the 1970's.
- In terms of zoning restrictions, most than 75 % of Americans surveyed say billboards should be allowed in commercial and industrial areas.

The results of this study clearly demonstrate that a substantial majority of Americans believe that the benefits of billboards outweigh any costs associated with them:

- More than 85 % believe that billboards are useful to travelers.
- More than 80 % agree that billboards both help create jobs and help businesses attract customers.
- Over 83 % agree that billboards are informative.

While public opinion on most of the issues has remained stable over time, a few trends are worth noting:

- The proportion of the public favoring a ban on billboards has actually been lower in the 1990's and 2000's than was the case in the 1970's.
- Consumer agreement that billboards are informative has increased in recent years.
- The public increasingly agrees that billboards help businesses attract customers.

Other Significant Polls Gauging Public Opinion

Outdoor advertising is fundamentally important to small businesses and local communities. Respected independent experts have examined the relationship between outdoor advertising and the economic health of localities. Details of several studies are below

In 2000-2001, iMapData, Inc., of Washington, DC, analyzed four localities and one state to measure interrelated elements crucial to the economic dynamics of outdoor advertising:

1. What types of businesses use outdoor advertising and what their common characteristics;

2. Where do these businesses use outdoor advertising within the geography of the local community;
 3. What are the economic, spatial and political conclusions that flow from these findings
- Highlights of the iMapData Study are as follows.

Buffalo, NY

- 79% of billboard ads in Buffalo are for local businesses
- 76% of local advertisers are small businesses

State of Delaware

- 79% of billboards ads in Delaware are for local businesses
- 83% of local advertisers are small businesses

San Antonio, TX

- 74% of the billboard ads in San Antonio are for local businesses
- 79% of local advertisers are small businesses

San Francisco, CA

- 70% of the billboard ads in San Francisco are for local businesses
- 84% of local advertisers are small businesses

Tampa, FL

- 74% of the billboard ads in Tampa are for local businesses
- 79% of local advertisers are small businesses