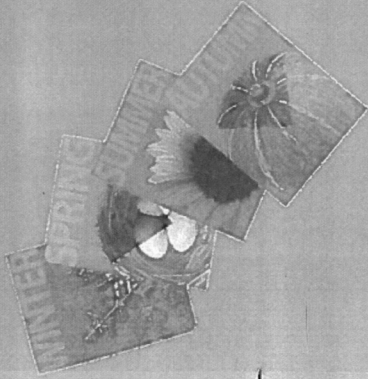


***Communications Nova Scotia  
Department of Transportation and  
Infrastructure Renewal  
Commissioned Results, Winter (Q1) 2016***

The Atlantic Quarterly®



March 2016

**NOVA SCOTIA**



**CRA**  
CORPORATE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES



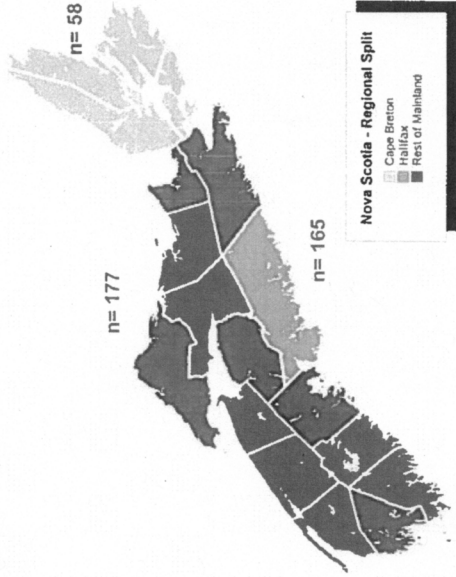
✓ Communications Nova Scotia (CNS) commissioned Corporate Research Associates (CRA) to conduct public opinion research among adult residents of Nova Scotia in Q1 2016. CRA included questions on the Nova Scotia *Atlantic Quarterly* survey for a total of 400 telephone interviews with adult residents, 18 years of age or older. The map below illustrates how *The Atlantic Quarterly*® breaks down the province for regional analysis.

✓ Results are based the following surveys:

- 2016 Atlantic Quarterly 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (February 10 to March 1, 2016)
- 2015 Atlantic Quarterly 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (February 10 to March 1, 2015)

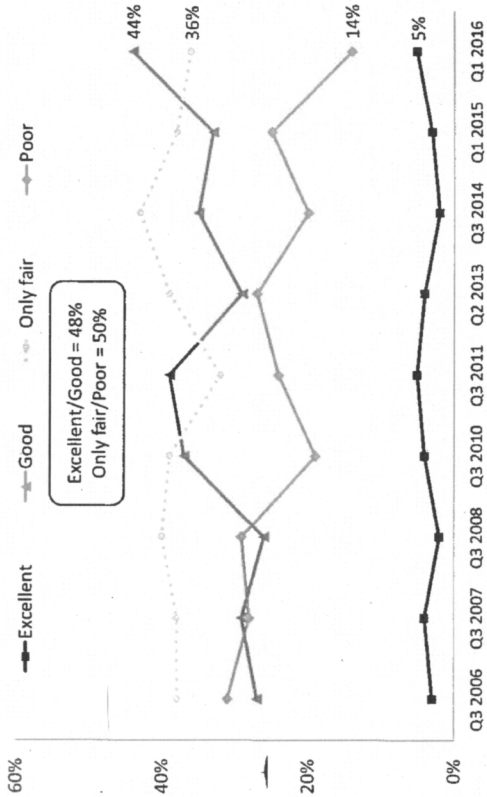
✓ The overall results are based on interviews conducted from February 10 to March 1, 2016, with results accurate to within  $\pm 4.9$  percentage points, 95 out of 100 times.

✓ Please note, results may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.



- ✓ A large majority of NS residents believe highways in the province to be safe, despite perceiving their condition negatively. Although perception of highway conditions has improved over the past year, perception of safety has remained stable.
- ✓ **Maintenance and twinning of existing major highways** is considered most important by NS residents, while **building new highways** is also important to residents, but to a relatively lesser degree. Perceptions of the importance of each has softened since last year.
- ✓ With support declining since last year, residents are now almost equally split in terms of support or opposition for additional government spending on NS highways even if it means less funding for other public services.
- ✓ — Unchanged since last year, residents are split in terms of the use of tolls to advance the twinning of NS highways. A slight majority supports it. That said, findings show the level of support has become more moderate.
- ✓ On average, NS residents consider just under two dollars a reasonable toll amount to pay for a 50 kilometer stretch of 100 series highway. Across the Province, residents in Halifax are willing to pay the lowest while those in the rest of mainland are willing to pay the highest toll amount.
- ✓ Tolls on the new section of the highway is the most preferred method of covering the costs of a new highway, followed closely by a partnership between government and a private investor, and more distantly, by government spending over and above the current budget. It should be noted that no single method is preferred by a clear majority.

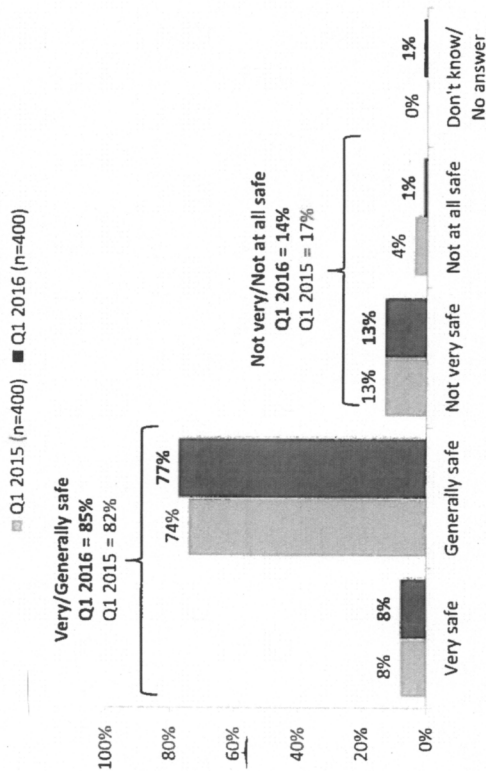
## Provincial Highway Conditions in Nova Scotia



Q1 AD\_18: How would you rate the overall condition of highways in the province? Would you say they are in excellent, good, only fair, or poor overall condition? (n=400)

- Nova Scotians are currently split in their assessment of the overall condition of highways in the Province, with perceptions improving since last year.
- Regionally, residents in mainland Nova Scotia outside of Halifax offer a less favourable assessment compared with residents in other areas of the Province. Across the population, positive perceptions are more likely as household income increases, but less likely as age increases. As well, those with at least a high school education are more likely than those with less education to hold a positive opinion. (Table AD18)

## How Safe are Nova Scotia Highways

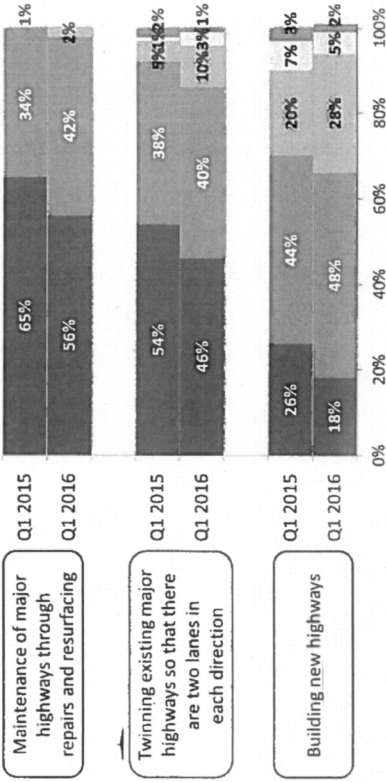


Q.AD19: Generally speaking, how safe are Nova Scotia highways? Do you think they are very safe, generally safe, not very safe, or not at all safe?

- As evident in 2015, a large majority of NS residents believe highways in the province to be safe, although most residents offer a rating of generally safe, while few indicate they are very safe. Although perceptions of highway conditions have improved and safety has not, positive perceptions of safety remains much more widespread than that of highway conditions.
- Opinions on safety are somewhat more likely in Halifax than elsewhere in the Province. Across the population, younger residents and those with higher levels of education are more likely to believe NS highways are safe. (Table AD19)

## Importance of Statements About Nova Scotia Highways

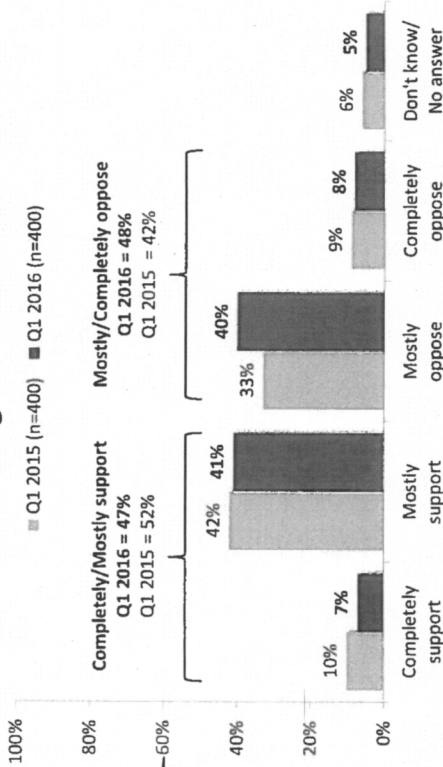
■ Critically important  
 ■ Not at all important  
 ■ Important, but not critical  
 ■ Don't know/No answer  
 ■ Not very important



Q. AD20a-c: In your opinion, how important are the following with regards to Nova Scotia highways? (Q1 2015 n=400, Q1 2016 n=400)

- Maintenance and twinning of existing major highways is important to most residents, although somewhat less so than a year ago. Over one-half of residents perceive maintenance through repairs and resurfacing to be critically important, while slightly less than one-half perceive twinning of highways to be critically important.
- Building new highways is important to residents, but considerably less so than the other two initiatives. It too has declined in terms of critical importance since last year.
- Regionally, Cape Breton residents are more likely to view all three initiatives as 'critically important' than residents elsewhere. (Table AD20a-c)
- Residents who consider the highways unsafe are more likely to assign critical importance to all three initiatives, as are those who support increased spending.

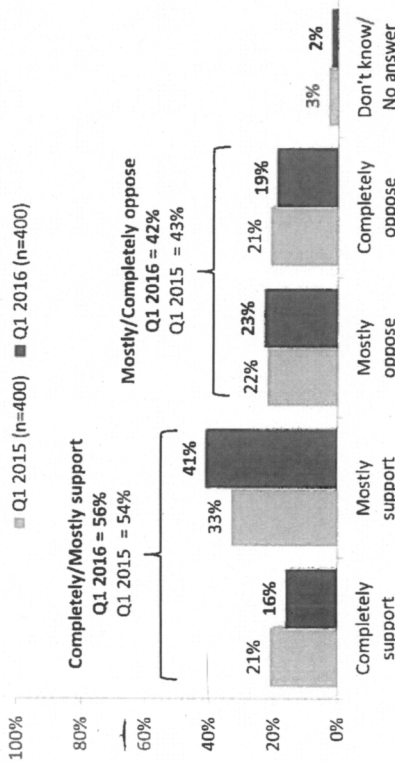
## Opinion of Additional Spending on Highways Even if it Means Less Funding For Other Public Services



- Nova Scotia residents are split in terms of their support for additional government spending on highways, with support decreasing and opposition increasing since last year.
- Males are more likely than females to support additional government spending on highways. (Table AD21)

Q.AD21: Thinking about the condition of highways in Nova Scotia, do you completely support, mostly support, mostly oppose or completely oppose additional government spending on highways even if it means less funding for other public services such as education and health care in the province?

## Opinion of Using Tolls to Advance the Twinning of Nova Scotia Highways



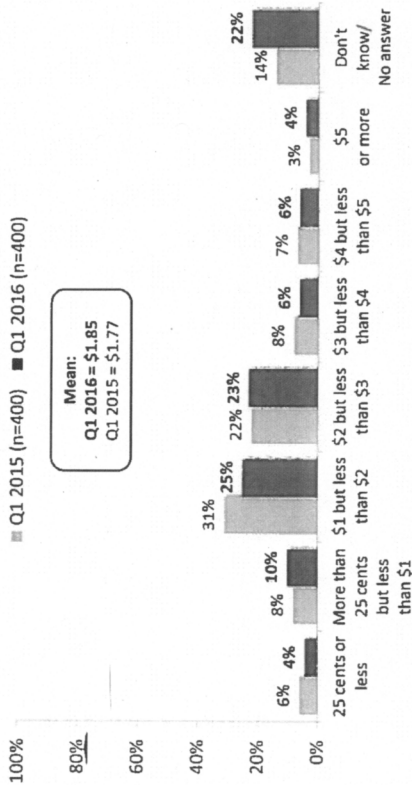
Q.AD22: Twinning highways is expensive and the majority of the current provincial highway budget goes into maintaining the existing Nova Scotia highway system that we have now. At present, the government does not have the additional funds to twin provincial highways and the use of tolls would enable government to twin sections of provincial highways much sooner than they would otherwise. Would you completely support, mostly support, mostly oppose or completely oppose the use of tolls as a means to more quickly advance the twinning of Nova Scotia highways?

- Unchanged compared with a year ago, residents are divided in terms of the use of tolls to advance the twinning of NS highways. Specifically, over one-half support, while a large minority oppose. That said, it is important to note that the level of support appears to have become more moderate (i.e. *residents are more likely to support vs. completely support*) in the past year.

- Residents aged 35 years or older and those who support additional government spending on highways are more likely to support the use of tolls to twin highways. (Table AD22)



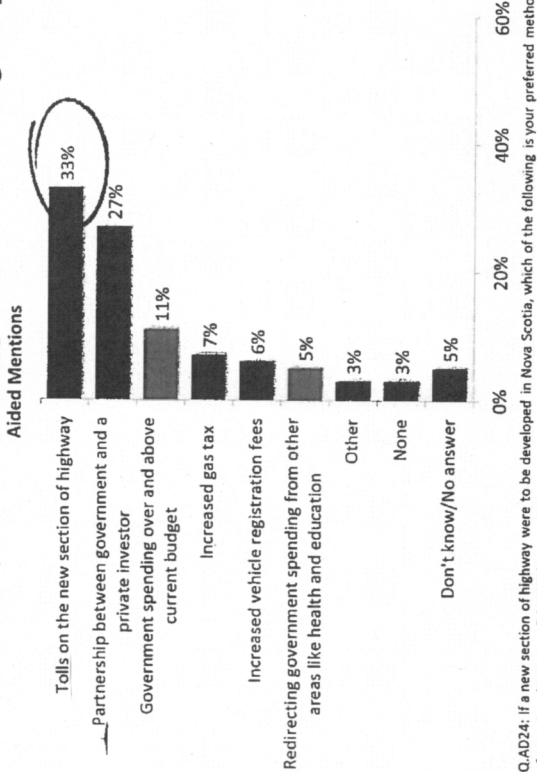
## Reasonable Toll Implemented to Pay for Twinning of a 100 Series Highway



Q.AD23: Imagine for a moment that 50 kilometers of a 100 series highway near where you live was twinned and a toll was implemented to pay for the twinning of the highway. What would be a reasonable toll amount? (IF RESPONDENT SAYS ZERO OR NO TOLL) Assuming that a toll highway is already in place and zero is not an option, what would be a reasonable toll amount? Note: 'Don't know/no answer' has been removed from the calculation of the mean score.

- On average, Nova Scotia residents believe just under two dollars is a reasonable toll amount to pay for a 50 kilometer stretch of 100 series highway.
- As might be expected, those who support the use of tolls to twin highways are more likely to indicate a notably higher toll amount than those who do not.
- Residents in Halifax are willing to pay the lowest while those in the rest of mainland are willing to pay the highest toll amount. Men, those in the highest income category, those 35 years or older, and those who support additional highway spending are willing to pay a higher toll amount. (Table AD23)

## Preferred Method of Covering Costs of a New Highway



- Tolls on the new section of the highway are the more preferred method of covering the costs of a new highway, with one in three residents preferring it. It is followed closely by a partnership between government and a private investor. One in ten prefer government spending over and above the current budget.
- While there is some variation, the top two preferred methods are generally consistent across regional and demographic segments. Exceptions include government spending over the current budget ranking second in Cape Breton, and tolls being notably less preferred than partnerships among those who oppose tolls. (Table AD24)