How Local Officials Respond to Expressions of Public Opinion

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Abstract: A central question in political science is the extent to which elected officials should and do respond to learning the preferences of their constituents. Though recent research finds evidence that municipal policy outcomes correlate with constituents' preferences, the mechanisms leading to this are underexplored. In addition, past research has generally ignored whether officials are more responsive to different expressions of public opinion, such as comments at public hearings or representative surveys. We seek to better understand local officials' attitudes about and responsiveness to these different forms of public opinion by administering a vignette-style survey experiment to a broad sample of elected municipal officials. Across two surveys, officials believe that the opinions expressed in public hearings are not representative of their constituency, but they are nearly as responsive to public hearing data as they are to survey data. At the same time, they are not perfectly responsive to strong signals of public opinion. Even when policymakers know that 75% of their constituents oppose a development project, half of the local officials still indicate that they would be more likely than not to vote for the development. Finally, using similar survey experiments on the general public, we find that municipal officials' responsiveness to different forms of public opinion generally reflects how the general public believes officials should behave in these situations.

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A central question in political science is the extent to which elected officials should and do respond to learning the preferences of their constituents. Though a large empirical literature generally finds a correlation between voters' preferences and their representatives' issue positions and roll-call voting behavior, research is still divided on the mechanisms that lead to this correlation (e.g., Caughey and Warshaw 2017). Moreover, nearly all work on this topic has focused on representation at the state and national levels (e.g., Miller and Stokes 1963; Page and Shapiro 1983; Butler and Nickerson 2011). Though a recent body of work also finds a strong correlation between citizens' preferences and municipal policies (Palus 2010; Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2014; Einstein and Kogan 2016; Warshaw 2019), theoretical *and* empirical work on whether municipal officials adapt their preferences to line up with their constituents' is almost completely absent in political science. This gap in the literature is unfortunate given the important role played by municipalities in the US system of government. Not only do they provide key services; they are also the level of government with which citizens interact most regularly (Trounstine 2009).

Another underexplored question in the literatures on representation is whether officials respond similarly to different manifestations of public opinion. Though public opinion surveys on policy questions are readily available at the national and state levels, most elected officials make voting decisions absent such high-quality data about constituent opinion in the districts they represent, especially on specific legislation. To the extent that elected officials have survey data on district opinion, it is often on general attitudes about policies. To assess constituents' preferences on specific policy proposals, elected officials (and especially those at the local levels) rely on other manifestations of public opinion such as constituent contacts and public hearings. In a recent survey of mayors, for example, about half indicated that constituents' comments at public meetings was one of their top ways for learning constituent opinion (Einstein, Palmer, and Glick 2017). Thus, examining the effects of public opinion expressed in both surveys and public meetings will provide a more realistic view of how local officials respond to public opinion.

To expand our understanding of the relationship between municipal officials' decisions and the preferences of their constituents, we begin by presenting an argument about motivation and the electoral connection (Mayhew 1974) for municipal office: specifically, should we anticipate that municipal officials will have motivations to respond to public opinion? Though the existing evidence suggests that municipal officials do not have the same levels of ambition as their counterparts at higher levels of office, we build on past work to argue that local officials have sufficient political ambitions to merit some level of responsiveness to constituent opinion.

In line with a growing body of work on elites and representation (e.g., Grose and Peterson 2020; Sheffer et al. 2018), we explore our question empirically through a vignette-style survey experiment conducted on two national samples of municipal officials. In the vignette, municipal officials read about a city council deciding about a proposal to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. The treatments in the vignette varied whether constituents favored or opposed the development and whether public opinion was made known via public hearings, a representative survey, or both. We then asked the officials to indicate the likelihood that they would vote for or against the proposal. To further examine how local officials conceptualize public opinion information, we also measured their opinions about different aspects of public hearings and survey data.

We find that local officials believe that the opinions expressed in public hearings are not representative of their constituency, but they are nonetheless nearly as responsive to public hearing data as they are to survey data in the survey experiment. In both experiments, the probability that municipal officials express a willingness to vote in favor of a redevelopment proposal drops around 30 percentage points (from above an 80% probability to around 50%) when they learn that only 25% of their constituents support the policy. At the same time, municipal officials are not perfectly responsive to strong signals of public opinion. Even when only 25% of their constituents support the retail development project favored by the business community, half of the local officials still indicate that they would be more likely than not to vote for the development. We also find that responsiveness is slightly higher among public

officials who view themselves more as delegates than trustees when they learn that their constituents oppose the development, but even the self-described delegates indicated a 43% chance that they would vote in line with constituents when 75% of survey respondents and public hearing attendees opposed the development.

To help address the normative question of how responsive municipal officials *should* be to public opinion in this scenario, we also administered the vignette-style survey experiment to a sample of the general population in the Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES) and another nationwide sample of voters. When asked to indicate how a municipal official should vote in this situation, their responses mirror the patterns from the actual public officials, especially those officials who viewed themselves as delegates. However, the public generally thought that elected officials should be less willing to support the development, especially when public opinion opposed the development. (The gap between how citizens believed elected officials should vote and how elected officials responded in the survey was around 10 to 15% points.)

To our knowledge, this paper is one of the first presentations of a theory of re-election motivations and responsiveness among elected municipal officials. It also examines some of the first, systematic, individual-level data on whether public opinion influences municipal officials' decision-making on legislative decisions. In addition, it is the first study of which we are aware that systematically varies the type of public opinion information elected officials receive: survey evidence vs. expressed attitudes at public hearings. All three of these are important contributions to understanding representation and policymaking in municipalities. Interestingly, the results are quite similar to Butler and Nickerson (2011) who employed a field experiment where actual public opinion data were released to a random selection of US state legislators in New Mexico. Like their counterparts at the state level, municipal officials are only somewhat responsive to learning public opinion.

Correlation Between Citizens' Preferences and Policy Outcomes

The extent to which municipal officials will update their behavior in response to public opinion is quite uncertain because of a lack of research on this specific question, especially using large-N data from a variety of types of municipalities (Warshaw 2019). Though there is a literature that seeks to understand how officials at higher levels of government respond to learning their constituents' preferences (e.g., Achen 1978; Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995; Wlezien 2002; Butler and Nickerson 2011; Caughey and Warshaw 2017), this question has not been addressed to the same extent at the municipal or local levels. The absence of such evidence is due in part to the difficulties of systematically studying the behavior of officials across 50 states and thousands of municipalities (Trounstine 2010; Warshaw 2019). In some ways, work on policy congruence in municipal politics is only recently catching up to parallel work at higher levels of government due to a lack of data to even measure whether policy congruence occurs (Trounstine 2010).

Another reason why expectations in answer to this question are more unclear in the study of local politics than in the study of state and federal politics stems from the urban politics literature, which anticipates little to no correlation between constituents' preferences and policy outcomes. This expectation was due to many factors, such as constraints on cities' policymaking scope¹ (e.g., Gerber and Hopkins 2009; Oliver, Ha, and Cohen 2012), the mobility of businesses and wealthy residents² (e.g., Hunter 1953; Peterson 1981), the observation that municipal policies are more technical than ideological,³ and reliance on empirical findings from small-n case studies, often of urban cities.⁴ (For a more thorough review of this literature, see Trounstine 2010 and Warshaw 2019.)

¹ If cities' ability to implement policies is limited by state and federal laws, then municipal officials may not even have the ability to respond to public opinion in their policy decisions.

² Since cities rely on businesses and property taxes as key revenue sources, they may have a strong incentive to cater to business and wealthy interests to prevent them from relocating.

³ If municipal policies are about technical, administrative decisions over which public opinion is unformed, then it would be difficult for public opinion to correlate with policy decisions.

⁴ The concern here is that the experience of these urban cities may not be representative of municipalities in general or even other urban cities.

Despite these expectations, a more recent body of empirical research has found evidence that municipal policies generally correlate with constituents' preferences (Palus 2010, Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2014; Warshaw 2019) and partisanship (Einstein and Kogan 2016). Three of these works (Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2014; Einstein and Kogan 2016; Warshaw 2019) use data from over a thousand cities with a population of 25,000 and higher, expanding beyond the small-n analyses and urban focus of past work. Recent work on policy representation at the county level finds similar patterns in both cross-sectional (Choi et al. 2010) and panel data (Sances 2017).

The question of why we see correlation between policy outcomes and constituents' preferences is an open one, even in the more developed literatures on this topic in state and national politics (for example, see Caughey and Warshaw 2017). But understanding the mechanisms that lead to policy congruence strikes at the heart of democratic theory and, in particular, the work that claims that elected officials should respond to public opinion by adapting their voting behavior to be in line with constituents' preferences (e.g., Dahl 1989, Achen and Bartels 2016). Part of the uncertainty on this topic is that several other mechanisms may also lead to policy congruence even if policymakers do not adapt their preference upon learning public opinion. Some common alternative explanations, for example, include the replacement of incongruent politicians with challengers who are more in line with constituents (see Caughey and Warshaw 2017 for a review). Another is that residents likely choose municipalities that already reflect their policy preferences (Tiebout 1956) while candidates who sincerely share their neighbors' preferences are more likely to run (Besley and Coate 1997). Finally, citizens may even adopt the preferences of their elected officials (Broockman and Butler 2015, though see Butler and Hassell 2018). In sum, there is tremendous need for theoretical and empirical work on whether policy adaptation occurs at the municipal level.

Should We Expect Municipal Officials to Adapt?

The main theoretical justification for why scholars believe adaptation occurs is because of policymakers' desire to be re-elected and their belief that policy adaptation will improve electability (Downs 1957; Mayhew 1974; Kingdon 1989; Snyder and Ting 2003). But does this logic apply to elected municipal officials? This is a challenging question to answer because it has not been the focus of scholarship on local politics (though see Sokolow 1989; Lascher 1993; Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012) and because municipalities vary on many dimensions, including the benefits that may accrue to officeholders. The diversity of local contexts makes theorizing difficult (Trounstine 2009; Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012) because it may moderate the mechanisms that influence local politicians' and candidates' motivations for running for office. Nonetheless, we agree with Oliver, Ha, and Callen (2012) that general theorizing about municipal politicians is still possible since even running for office in small towns requires some level of political ambition and some desire for benefits that only come through running for office (Sokolow 1989; Lascher 1993). Based on this and other past work, we present in this section an argument for why local officials have sufficient political ambitions to merit some level of responsiveness to learning public opinion.

Just as members of Congress are often modeled as "single-minded reelection seekers" (Mayhew 1974, 17), local officials, especially in the small to medium-sized cities where most Americans live, are often seen as being motivated by some form of civic obligation or duty—i.e., "[t]hey are people who seem to have an intrinsic liking of politics and feel strongly about the well-being of their communities" (Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012, 101). But this civic duty approach to modeling local officials' behavior can be an oversimplification that both ignores a variety of motivations that steer people to local politics and downplays the underlying ambition that is still required to seek office (Sokolow 1989; Lascher 1993; Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012). These motivations and ambition potentially provide many local officials with a desire to avoid electoral and perhaps even social sanctions from their constituents and neighbors.

For example, Oliver, Ha, and Callen's (2012) survey of municipal officials from cities surrounding Chicago, IL shows that civic duty was only the plurality response (at 24% of respondents) in officials' self-expressed motivations for running. The majority expressed other motivations, including their affiliation with organizations involved in local politics (24%), a desire for change in local politics and who is in power (18%), policy goals (8%), and their upbringing in a politically-involved family (12%). In seeking to understand why so many local officials in small towns seek reelection even though the position offers few extrinsic benefits (such as lucrative pay or a means to winning higher office), Lascher (1993) surveys local officials and concludes that they are motivated by "high levels of intrinsic work rewards that most people want from their work" (36). In other words, they enjoy the job of being a municipal official and want to keep doing it. Similarly, Sokolow (1989) argues that local officials in small, rural towns are ambitious—not to attain higher office, but rather to enact their agenda and "produce some enduring impacts" for their community (29). Though half of the officials he interviewed were recruited to run, open expressions of ambition were tempered by the fact that it was "unseemly for citizens to openly lust for office" (29). Similarly, Oliver, Ha, and Callen (2012) argue that municipal officials are the "civic elite," who come from higher socioeconomic status and have invested incredible time into their community "to work on behalf of their neighbors" (115). 36% hold an advanced graduate degree. 28% work in a high-level management position while another 9% are attorneys.

Taken together, the work by Sokolow (1989), Lascher (1993), and Oliver, Ha, and Callen (2012) suggests that local officials are generally ambitious. We suspect that such ambitious individuals would rather not lose elections or take actions (like voting against constituents' wishes) that could damage their long-term legacy and reputation within their community. They also have goals they want to achieve in office, and thus, for many of them, staying in office is important, even if the extrinsic benefits of office-seeking are much lower than they are for members of Congress (Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012). Additionally, if they are motivated by civic

duty and believe an important part of that duty is to implement the public's preferences, then they should be responsive when they learn public opinion.

At the same time, the fact that the extrinsic benefits of holding office are lower suggests that the desire for re-election may be comparatively less intense than it is for their counterparts at higher levels of government, and an examination of the rate that incumbents run for reelection suggests as much. Consistently, 90 to 95% Among municipal officials, the rate drops to 43% (Trounstine 2013). This suggests that the reelection motivation is weaker among municipal officials, which may reduce their incentives relative to higher-level officeholders to respond to public opinion.

One reason reelection seeking is lower among local officials is because they also have the opportunity to seek higher office. In a survey of elected officials from cities and towns in the Chicago, IL metropolitan area, Oliver, Ha, and Callen (2012) found that 30% indicated some ambition for higher office. We can also make a rough comparison of local officials' political ambitions to state legislators' using Maestas' (2002) survey of state legislators and replication data from Dynes, Hassell, and Miles (2019). Overall, 32% of state legislators expressed ambition for either higher office or their current office while 49% of local officials did so. If state legislators' desire to stay in office is sufficient to lead them to adapt their legislative actions to line up with their constituents (e.g., Kousser, Lewis, and Masket 2007; Butler and Nickerson 2011; Caughey and Warshaw 2017), it is likely that municipal officials' ambitions are sufficiently strong as well to at least lead to some level of adaptation.

Of course, ambition alone is not sufficient. Ambitious municipal officials must also fear electoral sanctions for siding against their constituents. Given that many residents are ignorant of local policymaking, fear of electoral sanctions may be quite low. On the other hand, the low turnout in most municipal elections means that those who do participate in elections are often the most engaged and informed residents (Oliver and Ha 2007; Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012). In fact, despite local elections being low information affairs for many residents, ideological and issue position alignment are strong predictors of vote choice among local voters (Abrajano and

Alvarez 2005; Oliver and Ha 2007; Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012; Boudreau, Elmendorf, and MacKenzie 2015; Sances 2017).

Whether this affects municipal officials' behavior in office depends on their perceptions of the electoral pressures they face. It is possible that local officials believe they are still insulated from public opinion. However, survey experiments on municipal officials find that they believe that they face electoral punishment for their legislative actions, such as being involved in minor scandals (Dynes and Martin 2021), allocating services to other neighborhoods (Dynes 2020), or implementing a risky policy (Butler 2020). And since 75% of municipal elections are non-partisan (Wood 2002), local officials may need to rely more on their reputations and legislative actions to secure reelection because the vast majority of them lack a party label to signal issue congruence to voters (Canes-Wrone and Shotts 2007; Canes-Wrone, Clark, and Kelly 2014).

Finally, local officials, like members of Congress, may worry about how their actions on a seemingly insignificant issue could potentially upset voters down the road (Arnold 1990). This could provide additional incentives to anticipate and respond to public opinion. Though local incumbents tend to win at high rates when they run (Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012; Trounstine 2013), elections can suddenly and unexpectedly become contentious and salient due to a particularly divisive issue (Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012). In each election, one incumbent loses her reelection bid in about a quarter of cities (Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012). To avoid this fate, municipal officials may want to be aware of and responsive to public opinion even on matters that are currently noncontroversial.

Overall, the evidence suggests that local officials have reason to believe that going against public opinion could have negative electoral consequences. This, coupled with their political ambitions, should lead local officials to be responsive to learning public opinion. But just as similarly ambitious state legislators are not perfectly responsive to learning public opinion (Butler and Nickerson 2011; Caughey and Warshaw 2017), we do not anticipate that municipal officials will be either. Municipal officials are also under intense pressure to maintain their city's revenue streams and prevent capital from leaving their borders. This may make them less willing to respond to public opinion that may counter the interests of economic elites and businesses (Hunter 1953).

Sources of Public Opinion

Even if municipal officials wanted to be responsive to their constituents' preferences, do they have the means to know what public opinion is? On many issues, municipal officials may not feel the need to assess public opinion given the homogeneity of preferences over many issues addressed by municipalities (Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012). But on new issues and potentially divisive ones, an ambitious official may need more information about their constituents' views.

In general, we do not have much systematic research on how local officials access or conceptualize public opinion. Our sense (which we analyze in the survey) is that the vast majority of municipal officials do not have access to representative survey data to gauge public opinion, especially on specific issues. Instead, they likely lean on both informal means of learning constituent preferences, such as direct contact from constituents via phone calls and emails, and more formal ones like constituent participation in government meetings. In a recent survey of mayors of medium-sized to large cities (i.e., population above 75,000), about half indicated that neighborhood meetings were one of their top two ways of learning constituents' opinions (Einstein, Glick, and LeBlanc 2017). Scholars of public administration report that nearly all municipalities incorporate opportunities for the public to participate and express their opinions in government meetings, most often in the regular meeting of their governing body or at least in that body's committee meetings (Berman 1997; Adams 2004). Given the ubiquitousness of public hearings and comment time in local government meetings and their role as a key source of constituents' opinion, we believe it is important to examine their impact on local officials' legislative actions alongside the impact of representative survey data (Karpowitz 2006; Butler and Nickerson 2011).

Ex ante, it is not clear whether municipal officials will be more responsive to learning public opinion from public comment at a government meeting or from survey data. It is possible that

municipal officials believe that participants in public meetings are not representative of their constituents in general or even local voters in particular, leading them to discount its usefulness as a metric of voters' preferences. Consistent with the larger literature on voter participation in American politics (e.g., Shlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012) and local politics in particular (Hajnal and Trounstine 2016), there is a body of work that finds that participants in local meetings are unrepresentative of the broader community (Mansbridge 1980; Fiorina 1998; Kain 2012; Einstein, Palmer, and Glick 2019; Hoang 2019⁵; but see Karpowitz 2006 and Williamson and Scicchitano 2014⁶). At the same time, even if municipal officials believed that participants in public hearings were unrepresentative of the entire community, they may still be more responsive to opinion expressed in these forums since it may reflect the opinion of the most civically engaged residents or residents whose vote choice would hinge on the issue being discussed in the public meeting. Moreover, local officials may not believe that a representative survey reflects the preferences of actual voters (especially in cities with extremely low turnout) or the salience of the issue for constituents' vote choice. On the other hand, municipal officials may still be more responsive to survey data of public opinion if they are motivated by civic duty and believe part of that is respecting the public's wishes.

Overall, though we anticipate that local officials' behavior will be responsive to some degree to manifestations of public opinion, existing literature does not yield a clear prediction about whether they will give more weight to public opinion expressed in representative survey data or by participants in government meetings.

⁵ Though Hoang (2019) fails to find evidence of differential participation by race, she does find that participants in government meetings are more likely to be female, older, wealthier, and more educated.

⁶ The different findings on whether participants in local government meetings are unrepresentative could be in part the result of these studies using different methods to measure participation from a variety of different contexts. Results from nationally representative survey samples (Hoang 2019; Karpowitz 2006) rely on self-reported participation. Einstein, Palmer, and Glick 2019 are limited to particular types of neighborhood meetings in the Boston area. In addition to national data, Karpowitz (2006) reports results from a series of town meetings in Princeton, NJ in which participants' opinions about local development mirrored levels of support and opposition found among non-participants, though the intensity of opinion among meeting participants was much higher.

Surveys of Municipal Officials

To examine how municipal officials conceptualize and respond to public opinion, we conducted two nationwide studies of elected municipal officials in the U.S. – the first in 2016, followed by a pre-registered study in 2020. Additional details on both surveys as well as the pre-analysis plan are available in the supplementary appendix. ⁷ Both surveys of municipal officials targeted elected municipal executives (mayors) and legislators (e.g., city councilors, aldermen, supervisors, etc.). This sample is similar to ones used in previous work to understand municipal officials 'decision-making (e.g., Butler et al. 2017).

Both surveys were administered online using Qualtrics. Study 1 was conducted in two waves sent to two different samples of municipal officials. The first wave was conducted in May and June of 2016 and the second wave of the survey was conducted in June and July of 2016. With only a brief span between the two waves of the pilot, we combine the waves and analyze them together. Study 2 was conducted in January 2020. Samples for both studies consisted of the email addresses of elected mayors and municipal legislators for the [NAME OF SURVEY PROJECT REDACTED] conducted by [NAME(S) REDACTED]. The response rate for Study 1 was 11.2% in the first wave and 5.5% in the second. The response rate for Study 2 was 4.2%. Additional details about both studies are available in the Supplementary Appendix.

Overall, the municipal officials in both our samples come from a wide variety of municipalities from 49 states⁸ and, individually, vary significantly across a wide range of

⁷ Both surveys received IRB approval from [NAME OF UNIVERSITY REDACTED]. Our analysis for the second study was preregistered at the Open Science Framework (i.e. the OSF). Our pre-analysis plan (PAP) was written based on analysis conducted on Study 1, and as a result, our analysis of the pre-registered study was straightforward and followed the PAP exactly as outlined. Our full PAP is available in the Supplementary Appendix and also at [LINK REDACTED for review].

⁸ We do not have any officials from Hawaii since counties in this state administer the services that are normally delegated to municipalities in the rest of the US.

politically relevant variables. (See Supplementary Appendix Tables A2-A3 and Figures A8-A10 for details.) Though respondents come from larger cities than the average municipal official,⁹ these cities are generally representative in terms of cities' aggregate policy views (as measured by Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2013) and demographic features such as minority population size, median income, employment, and education levels. And while the full population of municipal officials is unknown, respondents to our survey are similar to non-respondents on gender and elected position (i.e., mayor versus city council members). Moreover, our results hold when controlling for a wide-range of individual- and municipal-level variables

To examine whether municipal officials are responsive to different manifestations of public opinion, we used a vignette-style survey experiment in which respondents read about a city council that must vote to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. The main treatments varied public support for the proposal and whether it is manifested via a survey, public hearings, or at all. Respondents were then asked to indicate the probability that they would vote to approve the proposal based on the information provided. (For the full text, see Box 1. For the treatment conditions, also see Table 1.)

⁹ The average population of all municipalities in the US is 9,118, while the average municipal population among our sample of officials is 54,777. When ordering cities from smallest to largest, the median American across these cities lives in a city with a population of about 60,000. Thus, our sample of municipal officials are more likely to come from the types of municipalities where most Americans live.

Box 1: Text of Survey Experiment and Outcome Measure

Suppose your municipality is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. [While this issue is being considered, the municipal council holds a public meeting that is attended by many residents. At the public meeting, [25 / 75]% of residents favor the project while [75 / 25]% oppose it.] [A recent survey of residents in your municipality found that about [25 / 75]% of residents favor the project while [75 / 25]% oppose it.] The members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with [half / two-thirds / one-third] of the members favoring and the other [half / one-third / two-third] opposed. Given what you know about this situation, how likely are you to vote in FAVOR of the proposal? 0% = Absolutely100% = Absolutely no chance I would certain I would vote in favor vote in favor 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 Use the bar to indicate the probability that vou would vote in favor of the proposal.

Because land use is the dominant issue faced by municipal governments (Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012; Anzia forthcoming), we used this specific topic, a proposal to approve retail development of some kind, due to its generalizability across a broad range of localities. We indicated in the vignette that the proposal was supported by the business community and that city staff had determined that it was feasible. We chose this as the baseline since we anticipate that this is often the case with viable land use proposals. At first glance, this set up may present a hard test of municipal officials' responsiveness given the dominant role developers play as an interest group in local politics (Anzia forthcoming) and the structural dynamics and need for revenue that make municipal officials generally supportive of economic development (Hunter

1953; Peterson 1981). On the other hand, Anzia (forthcoming) finds that neighborhood associations are also quite active on land use issues and likely oppose developers in many situations. On some land use policies, developers prevail. On others, the neighborhood associations and homeowners do. In either case, the issue area we examine should be familiar and salient to municipal officials from a broad range of cities.

In addition to the main treatments, which we discuss in more detail below, we also varied whether the other members of the council were evenly divided on the issue or whether a slight majority favored or opposed it. The purpose was to add some more details on the scenario and to test whether being pivotal would change officials' response. These treatments had insignificant effects on the results,¹⁰ so we do not dwell on them here.

Table 1 displays the possible treatment assignments on the two key treatments that are our current focus. These varied information about public support for the retail proposal, and each treatment had three conditions. The first treatment (columns in Table 1) varied public support for the proposal, as revealed in a survey of residents, with the following conditions: 1) Support, where 75% of residents in the survey supported the proposal; 2) Oppose, where only 25% of residents in the survey supported the proposal; or 3) No Survey, where the respondents were not given any information about public support in a survey. The second treatment (rows in Table 1) concerned public support for the proposal, as revealed in a highly attended public meeting on the matter. Here, the three conditions were: 1) Support, where 75% of residents at the public hearing supported the proposal; 2) Oppose, where only 25% of residents at the public hearing supported the proposal; 0) No Hearing, where the respondents were not given any information about a public hearing. Thus, the main treatments have a 3x3 design with respondents randomly assigned to 1 of 9 possible conditions across the two treatments. This provides us with a both a baseline of

¹⁰ Due to a coding error in setting up the Study 1 survey experiment in Qualtrics, some of the council-support treatment conditions were correlated with the other treatment conditions. However, we were able to isolate any potential effects of the council-support treatment in the cases where random assignment was done correctly. In those cases, we find that council-support treatment had a very small effect (up to 2 percentage points) that would not change the interpretation of our findings. See the discussion around Table A4 in the Supplementary Appendix for details. Study 2 corrected this coding error, and the pattern of results was very similar to Study 1.

how officials would respond without any information about public support for the proposal as well as the possibility to examine which manifestation of public opinion is more influential when survey data counters the preferences revealed in the public hearing.

Table 1: Public Opinion Treatments

		% of respondents that support		
		75%	25%	No survey
PUBLIC HEARING TREATMENT % of participants that support	75%	75% Survey 75% Hearing	25% Survey 75% Hearing	No Survey 75% Hearing
	25%	75% Survey 25% Hearing	25% Survey 25% Hearing	<i>No Survey</i> 25% Hearing
	No hearing	75% Survey No Hearing	25% Survey No Hearing	No Survey No Hearing (Baseline)

SURVEY TREATMENT

At the end of the vignette, respondents indicated how likely they would vote in favor of the proposal using a sliding bar where they could indicate the probability that they would vote for the proposal on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 was labeled with "0% = Absolutely no chance I would vote in favor" and 100 was labeled with "100% = Absolutely certain I would vote in favor." We use a scale to take advantage of the ability to measure a more fine-grained level of support for the proposal in the face of varying levels of public support.¹¹ (We also examine a binary measure of our outcome. See Footnote 15.)

Note: This table displays the 9 possible treatment conditions that respondents were assigned to based on the 3 conditions for the two main public opinion treatments: 1) Survey treatment (columns) and 2) Public Hearing treatment (rows).

¹¹ For example, take an official whose probability of voting for the proposal moves from 90% to 60% when learning that public opinion is opposed to it. This indicated that they might under some specific circumstances end up voting against a proposal of this kind. This is quite different from an official who indicates a 90% probability of supporting the proposal whether the public supports or opposes it. This official is much more rigid in their support for retail development, and our measure helps pick up on this nuance.

We believe our survey experiment approach provides several advantages over other potential research designs. First, it allows us to measure the responsiveness of a wide variety of elected officials across many types of municipalities. For example, Butler and Nickerson (2011) is the only *field* experiment we are aware of that tests how learning public opinion affects officials' actual roll call voting, but due to the challenge of surveying constituents about legislation that receives a floor vote, they only conducted the experiment in one state legislature. Conducting a field experiment on just one or even a handful of municipalities would not have enough statistical power given the low number of city councilors in most cities. Moreover, it would be challenging if not impossible to identify specific pieces of legislation that would receive a city council vote in each city. A challenge with observational work is that we would not be able to account for elected officials' knowledge of public opinion like we can in the survey experiment environment. And though Caughey and Warshaw (2018) present an observational approach for identifying adaptation among state legislators, the same amount of longitudinal data on public opinion and roll call votes at the city level is currently not available. For these reasons, we follow a growing body of work that utilizes survey experiments of elected officials to expand our understanding of representation (e.g., Butler and Dynes 2016; Butler 2018; Grose and Peterson 2020; Sheffer et al. 2018).

Results of Survey Experiments on Municipal Officials

The results of the survey experiments suggest that municipal officials respond to public opinion, but not perfectly. We also see a strong bias in favor of retail development, even when they have evidence that such development is not popular with the public. The pattern of results across the two studies proved remarkably consistent.

In Figure 1, we plot the average response in each of the 9 treatment conditions. In the baseline condition, in which respondents were not shown any information about public support for the proposal, the average response was quite supportive of the retail development. In both studies, the average response was a more than 75% probability that the officials would vote for

the development. When officials learned that public supports the proposal, either from a survey or public hearings support increased slightly to approximately 80%, and support was highest (82% in the Study 1 and 86% in Study 2) when elected officials received signals of public support from both sources. When elected officials received mixed signals about the public's views, support decreased significantly in both studies, but the average response still solidly favored voting for the proposal. Only when respondents read that both a survey and hearings indicated high opposition to the proposal did elected officials average support dip below 50%, and then, only barely and only in one study (49% in Study 1). Even in this condition, the average response was a coin toss between supporting or opposing the proposal. In the conditions where respondents saw only survey or hearing data (but not both) indicating significant public resistance to the proposal, average support was 57% in the Study 1 and again a coin flip in the preregistered Study 2 (51% for the survey only condition and 54% for the hearing only condition).¹² All of these results are strongly robust to the inclusion of controls for the characteristics of both the municipal officials themselves and the places where they serve (see Appendix Table A1).

¹² In Appendix Figure A1, we show the results when we convert the outcome measure into a binary variable, where respondents who indicated a probability of voting for the proposal above (below) 50% are counted as being willing to vote for (against) it. Those at 50% are randomly assigned to being supportive or opposed, reflecting that this was a toss-up for these officials. The results mirror those in Figure 1, an important fact, given that in actual decisions, officials are faced with a (generally) binary choice. We say "generally" binary because officials could also choose other options besides a direct up or down vote, such as delaying the decision.



Figure 1: Average Probability that Municipal Officials Would Vote for the Retail Development Conditional on Public Opinion Treatments

Note: Estimates show the average probability that a municipal official would vote for the proposal to allow a retail development within each treatment condition. Bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

In other words, on a salient vote—recall that the vignette indicated that the public hearing was highly attended by residents—a majority of officials are still willing to vote against public opinion, even in the face of evidence (whether from public hearings or surveys) of considerable public opposition. This result is remarkably similar to Butler and Nickerson (2011), who find that about half of state legislators voted for a bill even when they learned that only 30% of their district supported it. At least when it comes to retail development that is supported by the

business community, a decent proportion of municipal officials also seem to be willing to buck public opinion. Keep in mind, however, that on an issue where policymakers' support may be more marginal, the 30 percentage-point swing reported in Figure 1 would likely lead to the proposal's failure. Indeed, when the treatments go from overwhelming support to overwhelming opposition, roughly 35% of the officials also move from supporting the proposal to being more likely to oppose it. (See Figure A1 in the Supplementary Appendix.) It is likely that on many issues, such a large swing could change the policy outcome.

From the results in Figure 1, we can further examine whether municipal officials are more responsive to surveys or public hearings by comparing the responses in the treatment conditions where officials saw information about public support in both the hearings and survey. When both manifestations of public opinion indicated support for the proposal, the average response increased substantially above the baseline – a move from a 76% probability of voting for the proposal to 82% in Study 1 and from 78% to 86% in Study 2. Conversely, support from public officials dropped to about 50% in both studies when both indicators of public opinion showed strong opposition. In both studies, these changes from the baseline well exceed standard levels of statistical significance.

When the two indicators of public opinion conflict with each other, the patterns are somewhat different. In those vignette conditions where the survey indicated strong support but hearings indicated substantial opposition, elected officials' support dropped to 74% in Study 1 and 70% in Study 2 – a small to moderate size decrease from the baseline. However, when the hearings indicated high levels of public support but the survey showed public opposition, officials reported being even less likely to vote for the proposal, with the probability of doing so dropping to 64% in both studies. All of these differences are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that municipal officials may be more responsive to public opinion data expressed in surveys than they are to public opinion expressed in public hearings.

To further examine how elected official use public opinion, we probed how much the officials value different manifestations of public opinion. After the experiment, we asked a

randomly selected subset of municipal officials in Study 1 and all respondents in Study 2 to rank order several manifestations of public opinion with the following prompt: "If you wanted to gauge the sentiments of your community, which of the following would be the best source of information?" They then rank ordered 4 items: "Personal communication," "Public hearings or meetings," "Public opinion surveys," and "Letters to the editor." As shown in Figure 2, the pattern of responses was consistent across the two studies: the officials rated personal communication the highest, followed by public hearings. Contrary to the experimental results, public officials ranked public opinion surveys as only the 3rd best way to gauge public sentiments, with letters to the editor ranked last and opinions expressed in public hearings ranked as a better source of the public's sentiments than opinions expressed in a survey. However, the experiment reveals that elected officials put significant weight on both surveys and hearings as sources of public opinion. In the treatment conditions where officials saw only one source of public opinion data, their responsiveness to public opinion is essentially identical, a fact that also undermines their responses in Figure 2. It is only in the conditions where respondents see public hearing and survey data that contradict each other that we see higher responsiveness to survey data.¹³ These differences highlight how the vignette experiment can uncover patterns beyond those available from simple self-reports.

¹³ We also probed elected officials' access to public opinion survey data of their constituents by asking a randomly selected subset of respondents in Study 1 and all respondents to Study 2 whether they "Frequently," "Rarely", or "Never" "conduct public opinion surveys of people in your community or electoral district." In both studies, more than 8 in 10 respondents said that they "rarely" or "never" conducted such surveys. See Appendix Figure A2 for details. As we anticipated, for most of the respondents in our sample, access to survey data was either exceptional or nonexistent, a fact that may help explain why they tended to see surveys as a less valuable source of information about constituent preferences.



Figure 2: Municipal Officials' Rankings of Different Manifestations of Public Opinion

Note: Municipal officials' average ranking of each option in response to the following question: "If you wanted to gauge the sentiments of your community, which of the following would be the best source of information?" They ranked 4 items where 1=best.

In Study 1, we also we asked a randomly selected subset of respondents to agree or disagree with a set of statement about public hearings.¹⁴ In line with the results in Figure 2, municipal officials agreed that public hearings are an "effective way for citizens to participate in community decision-making" and that "decisions are better because public hearings are part of

¹⁴ The full results are displayed in Figure A3 in the Appendix. This question was asked post-experiment.

the process." At the same time, however, they somewhat disagreed with the idea that the "opinions expressed at public hearings are usually an accurate reflection of how most community residents feel about the issue." This suggests, then, that while public officials value public hearings generally, they simultaneously perceive that the sample of those who speak may be biased. Perhaps this combination of attitudes reflects special sensitivity on the part of public officials toward the opinions of those interested and engaged enough to share those opinions in public meetings. Though we did not ask the officials whether public comment in hearings was a better measure of salience or of the attitudes of likely voters, both are likely at play here.

We also included a survey question asking elected officials their view on whether policymakers should be delegates or trustees when representing constituents. This question gets at the idea that some officials may believe that representing their constituents' preferences, even if they disagree with them, is part of their civic duty to their community. To measure this, we presented them with the following prompt that asked them to place themselves on a 5-point scale between two extremes:

"When it comes to important issues, elected officials should..."

(1) Do what their constituents want, even if it conflicts with what the elected official thinks is right.

(5) Do what they think is right, even if it conflicts with what their constituents want.

About 60 percent of Study 1 respondents viewed themselves as trustees (scores of 4 and 5 on the 5-point scale), while less than 15 percent reported being delegates (scores of 1 and 2). In Study 2, about half of elected officials regarded themselves as trustees, and only 20 percent favored a delegate approach to representation. In both studies, the sample mean leaned well to the trustee side of the scale midpoint.¹⁵

In Figure 3, we break down the results from Figure 1 by the municipal officials' expressed views on representation. In the baseline condition (where respondents received no public opinion

¹⁵ See Figure A4 in the appendix for the full distribution of this question. This question was asked post-experiment in Study 1 and prior to the experiment in Study 2.

information) and in the conditions where residents' support was mixed or in favor of the proposal, we find no significant differences in the responses of delegates and trustees. However, in cases where public opinion is opposed to the proposal, delegates proved more responsive to public opinion than trustees. These differences are not huge, but they are statistically significant and average around 10 percentage points. Thus, when respondents learn that only 25% of constituents in a survey and public hearing support the proposal, the average response among trustees is a 58% (Study 2) or 56% (Study 1) probability of voting for the proposal while the average among delegates was substantially lower at around 43%. Policymakers' views on how they should represent their constituents thus appear to influence their responsiveness, though the general pattern of results across the conditions is the same for both delegates and trustees.¹⁶

¹⁶ Just after the survey experiment, we asked officials to indicate which of several influences would be most important to them in casting a vote about the issue described in the survey experiment. The opinions of "city or town residents" ranked highest by elected officials in both studies, followed closely by officials "own beliefs about development and zoning in general." Delegates and trustees differed in how they prioritized the opinions of town residents vs. their own beliefs about development. Details can be found in Appendix Figure A5-A6.



Figure 3: Heterogeneous Treatment Effects by Officials' Views on Representation

Note: Estimates show the average probability that a municipal official would vote for the proposal to allow a retail development within each treatment condition broken down by whether the respondent favors delegate (light blue circles for those scoring 1, 2, or 3 in Figure 1) or trustee representation (dark blue circles for those scoring 4 or 5 in Figure 1). Bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

Survey Experiments on General Population

In addition to examining whether municipal officials adapt their behavior in response to public opinion, we also bring some data to bear on the normative question of how responsive municipal officials *should* be. To do this, we also ran survey experiments on two representative samples of the general population—a study using the 2017 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

(Study 3) and a pre-registered study of registered voters in January 2020 (Study 4).¹⁷ Respondents in both studies saw the same exact vignette as the elected officials but the general population respondents in both surveys were asked to indicate on a scale from 0-100 whether they believe their city councilor *should* vote for the development proposal or not. In both studies, we also added a question asking the respondents if their city councilor *would* vote for the development to get a sense of how well constituents anticipated actual voting behavior.

Figure 4 displays the results from the survey experiments on the general public's beliefs about what the elected officials *should* do.¹⁸ For the sake of statistical power, we did not include the baseline condition in the survey of US adults in the CCES study, but this baseline condition was present in the preregistered study (Study 2). Overall, we find that the public's pattern of responsiveness to information about public opinion mirrors that of elected officials, though the public is even more sensitive to such information than are officials.¹⁹ In the baseline condition of the preregistered study, the public believed the average level of support for development should be about 68%, but this increased to as much as 79% when the public is told that 75% of the public supports the measure. When given information about public opposition, respondents to the preregistered study had dramatically different beliefs about what elected officials should do. Average level of support dropped to about 40% with one indicator of public opinion and as low as 33% when both hearings and survey information was provided. This result represents a 46 point drop from the experimental condition where respondents were told that both surveys and hearings favored development. In Study 3, the basic pattern is similar but somewhat less pronounced. In that study, the difference between support and opposition was only 27 percentage

¹⁷ See Supplementary Appendix for details of the sample and survey procedures.

¹⁸ Results with an alternative outcome measure into a binary variable, where respondents who indicated a probability of voting for the proposal above 50% are counted as being willing to vote for it while those below 50% are counted as being willing to vote against it. These results closely mirror findings in Figure 6 and can be seen in Appendix Figure A7.

¹⁹ Results are essentially unchanged by the inclusion of controls for the demographic characteristics of respondents (see Appendix Table A5).

points. Notably, in both studies, the public's expected level of city councilors' support was well under 50 in all conditions where public opinion opposed development.



Figure 4: General Populations' Preferences

Note: Estimates show the general public's average response on a 0-100 scale to whether a municipal official *should* vote for the proposal to allow a retail development within each treatment condition, where 100 means the respondent believes the official "absolutely should vote FOR the proposal" and 0 means the respondent believes the official "absolutely should vote AGAINST the proposal." Due to power concerns, the baseline condition with no information was not presented to respondents in Study 3. Bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5 uses data from Study 2 to highlight the differences between what the public expects that elected officials *should* do (in the right-hand panel) or what they expect officials *would* do

(in the left-hand panel) and what the elected officials actually said. Negative scores indicate that the public was less supportive of development than were elected officials. The right-hand panel highlights the fact that in nearly every case, a gap in preferences between existed, but this gap was largest when respondents were given information about public opposition to development. In other words, the public wanted elected officials to be more responsive to signals about public opinion than the elected officials actually were.

However, the left-hand column also shows meaningful public misperceptions of the likely behavior of elected officials. Only rarely – in the conditions where indicators of public opinion were mixed – did voters correctly perceive what elected officials actually were likely to say that they would do. When presented with evidence that public opinion favored development, voters *underestimated* the support of elected officials, and when the indicators of public support were strongest, with both surveys and hearings favoring the development, public expectations about the likely behavior of elected officials were farthest off. When hearings and surveys showed evidence of public opposition, however, voters *overestimated* the willingness of public officials to press forward with the development anyway. Given that these were the conditions where the public thought elected officials *should* oppose development and where the gap between voters' and officials' views about the right thing to do was largest, perhaps this result indicates a high level of cynicism about the likely behavior of public officials.



Figure 5: General Populations' Preferences Compared to Municipal Officials' Responses

Note: The "Gap in Expectations" represents the difference between the public's views of what elected officials *would* do and elected officials' actual responses, averaged within each experimental condition in Study 2 and Study 4. The "Gap in Preferences" represents the difference between the public's view of what elected officials *should* do and the responses of the elected officials.

Discussion

Together, our results provide some of the first systematic, individual-level evidence that learning public opinion can influence municipal officials' decision-making. But public officials tend to be strongly supportive of development generally and are not perfectly responsive to public opposition. Even when presented with evidence that the public strongly opposes development, officials report that the decision is essentially a coin toss, and self-identified trustees are more likely than not to continue their support for development. Those who identify as delegates are slightly more responsive to public opinion. Overall, however, officials' responsiveness (and delegates' in particular) mirrors the general population's preferred level of responsiveness, though voters' expectations about the behavior of elected officials were rarely accurate. These findings show that adaptation likely occurs to some level and helps explain the correlation between residents' preferences and policy outcomes in local politics found in previous work (Palus 2010; Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2014; Einstein and Kogan 2016; Warshaw 2019) in addition to other mechanisms that may also lead to policy congruence. This pushes back against earlier work in urban politics that downplayed the extent to which city officials would respond to the masses. However, the officials are far from being perfect delegates, with a large number reporting a willingness to vote against the preferences of 75% of their constituents.

In addition, to our knowledge, these studies are some of the first experimental assessments of how elected officials respond to different modes of public opinion data, an important topic given the resource limitations that local officials often face. Evidence about how public officials weigh different expressions of public opinion is mixed. When explicitly asked, officials self-report a preference for public hearings over survey data, but in the vignette, they appear to give more weight to survey data when they have access to both and the two indicators conflict. Generally speaking, our results show that officials are about as responsive to public hearings, even though they recognize such forums are often not representative, as they are to potentially more representative results from surveys.

These findings also speak to important normative concerns in the study of representation. For scholars and democratic theorists who believe that elected officials *should* respond to public opinion, our results provide a mix of positive and negative news. On the positive side, learning public opinion does shift elected officials' willingness to vote for a proposal in ways that could change the legislative outcome, with 35% of officials moving from being in favor of voting for

the proposal to being opposed to it when the treatment changes public opinion (expressed in both a survey and public hearings) from 75% in favor to 75% opposed. On the negative side, even when officials learn that just 25% of the public supports the proposal in a survey and in public hearings, half of the officials are still willing to vote for it. Thus, the officials are far from being perfect delegates. At the same time, our particular vignette could be seen as a hard test for responsiveness since we pitted public opinion against one of the most active interest groups in local politics, developers and retail businesses (Anzia forthcoming), and city officials generally prioritize economic prosperity regardless of these interest groups' influence (Peterson 1981; Anzia forthcoming). Thus, we may expect even greater responsiveness on other issues.

Another normative concern that our paper touches on is whose interests are being served when municipal officials respond to public opinion. At least when public opinion is expressed in the form of a survey, responsiveness is to residents as a whole. And indeed, we do find that when surveys and hearings present conflicting information, municipal officials are more responsive to the survey data. Of course, the countervailing opinions expressed in the public hearings moves officials' responses compared to when they only learn about public opinion via a survey. But a larger normative concern here is that municipal officials rarely have access to high quality survey data when assessing public opinion. (See footnote 16.) And when they only know public opinion expressed via public hearings, they are just responsive to it as they are to when they only know public opinion expressed via a survey. But are the views expressed in public hearings representative of their broader constituency? The officials themselves do not think it is, and some scholarship agrees with this assessment (Mansbridge 1980; Fiorina 1998; Kain 2012; Einstein, Palmer, and Glick 2019; Hoang 2019, though see Karpowitz 2006 and Williamson and Scicchitano 2014 for some contradicting findings). It is likely that the representativeness of participants in public hearings will vary depending on the context, but regardless, municipal officials are willing to respond to those who show up at public hearings even when they believe

the participants are not representative of mass opinion. This is problematic for scholars who believe the median should prevail.²⁰

One potential concern with these findings has to do with our methodology. As is the case with nearly all survey experiments, ours also lacks a level of external validity to the real world. Being asked how you would respond in a hypothetical situation is not the same as facing this choice in an actual city council vote. It is possible that officials overstate their responsiveness to public opinion, perhaps under a view that they are expected to prioritize public opinion; however, the high percentage who favor trustee representation suggests that most have few scruples with revealing the belief that their opinions should trump constituents'. If there is a bias, then, we suspect it is more likely that officials will understate their responsiveness, but this is hard to test with these data alone.

Notwithstanding this important limitation, we believe our approach still has considerable merit, addressing a key question in understanding representation and policy congruence at the municipal level with multiple high-quality surveys of municipal officials. We also believe their responses here have some correlation with how they would behave in practice. At the very least, it is plausible that an official who indicates high responsiveness to the survey treatments would be more responsive to public opinion in the real world than an official who indicates no responsiveness. Our approach also avoids some external validity problems that would exist with any field experiments testing municipal officials' responsiveness to public opinion since such field experiments would likely be limited to a few cities that may not be as representative as our sample here. Moreover, field experiments on this particular topic face considerable costs, including identifying an issue over which a vote would occur with high probability, surveying a

²⁰ On the other hand, others argue that those who have more salient preferences, which public hearing participation signifies (Karpowitz 2006), should have their views represented (e.g., Burstein 2006).

representative sample of municipal residents, and manipulating the level of support for the issue in public hearings. Given the likely limitations of other methods, we believe our survey experiment contributes significantly to our understanding of representation at the local level.

At the same time, we recognize that ours is only a first step in the effort to measure the responsiveness of local officials to various expressions of public opinion, and we look forward to additional opportunities to develop this important scholarly concern by examining how responsiveness differs across different issue areas of theoretical importance (such as redistributive spending vs. economic development [Peterson 1981; Hajnal and Trounstine 2010; Einstein and Kogan 2016]) or that involve fewer or different organized interest groups (Anzia forthcoming). Different manifestations of public opinion (such as personal communication) may also mitigate responsiveness as may theoretically important characteristics, such as electoral institutions like election timing and non-partisan elections. Of course, as an initial push in examining adaptation in municipal politics, our paper was not able to explore all of these potential avenues for future work. Nonetheless, these findings help address the key question of who governs in local politics (Dahl 1961; Hajnal and Trounstine 2010), and we find strong evidence that on salient issues, public opinion can to some degree. Moreover, the arguments we present on this electoral connection in municipal politics can serve as a theoretical foundation for the growing body of work on representation at the local level (Trounstine 2010; Warshaw 2019; Bucchianeri 2020; Kirkland 2021).

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Supplementary Appendix for "How Local Officials Respond to Expressions of Public Opinion"

December 16, 2021

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A. Supplementary Analysis

Studies 1 and 2 (Elected Municipal Officials)

Table A1: Regression Results with Covariates for Figure 1 (Average Probability that Municipal Officials Would Vote for the Retail Development Conditional on Public Opinion Treatments)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
VARIABLES	Study 1	(2) Study 2	(J) Study 1	Study 2	Study 1	Study 2
VIIIIII BEES	Study 1	Study 2	Study 1	Study 2	Study 1	Study 2
Treat: Baseline (No Info)	27.0*	27.5*	25.9*	29.4*	25.6*	31.8*
	(1.7)	(2.9)	(1.9)	(3.4)	(2.0)	(3.6)
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=75%	32.7*	35.8*	31.5*	37.6*	31.6*	38.3*
	(2.0)	(2.9)	(2.1)	(3.3)	(2.3)	(3.4)
Treat: Survey Only=75%	30.6*	30.0*	30.8*	33.0*	30.8*	33.7*
	(2.1)	(3.0)	(2.2)	(3.3)	(2.4)	(3.5)
Treat: Hearing Only=75%	31.4*	29.6*	31.4*	30.8*	30.7*	32.7*
	(2.0)	(2.9)	(2.1)	(3.3)	(2.3)	(3.5)
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%	24.4*	20.0*	23.6*	23.4*	22.3*	25.7*
	(2.0)	(3.0)	(2.2)	(3.4)	(2.3)	(3.6)
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%	14.7*	14.0*	13.7*	16.5*	13.7*	18.2*
	(2.0)	(3.0)	(2.1)	(3.3)	(2.3)	(3.5)
Treat: Survey Only=25%	7.9*	0.3	6.6*	2.6	5.9*	5.0
	(2.0)	(2.9)	(2.1)	(3.3)	(2.3)	(3.5)
Treat: Hearing Only=25%	7.9*	3.9	7.1*	5.6	6.7*	6.8
	(2.0)	(3.0)	(2.2)	(3.4)	(2.3)	(3.6)
Councilor			-2.4	-1.5	-2.5	-1.8
			(1.6)	(2.3)	(1.8)	(2.4)
Commissioner or Selectman			0.3	4.1	-0.7	7.5
			(2.7)	(6.0)	(4.1)	(11.2)
Elected Staff (e.g., City Clerk)			-6.9		-11.5*	
			(3.9)		(5.0)	
Years in Office			0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
			(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)
Republican			2.1	-2.9	2.5	-3.0
			(1.6)	(2.5)	(1.7)	(2.7)
Independent or Other			-0.3	-3.7	-0.8	-4.0
			(1.4)	(2.3)	(1.6)	(2.4)
Ideology; 7=Very Cons.			0.8	0.9	0.9	1.1
			(0.4)	(0.7)	(0.5)	(0.8)
Female			-0.7	-1.9	-0.7	-1.0
			(1.1)	(1.9)	(1.2)	(2.0)
Residents' Conservatism			3.4	-3.3	3.4	-2.4
			(2.3)	(3.6)	(2.5)	(3.8)
Log Population			0.2	0.2	0.6	0.6
			(0.5)	(0.8)	(0.5)	(0.9)
State Capital			-5.0	9.0	-3.4	3.0
			(4.5)	(8.9)	(4.9)	(10.2)
Proportion Asian			4.8	-5.8	4.4	-0.8
			(10.8)	(16.9)	(11.2)	(17.9)
Proportion Black			-1.7	-17.9*	-5.0	-15.4
			(5.1)	(8.7)	(5.5)	(9.1)
Proportion Latino			2.5	0.7	3.0	4.2

			(4.5)	(7.5)	(4.6)	(7.8)
Proportion Unemployed			28.6	0.1	33.0	0.2
			(20.3)	(0.3)	(22.1)	(0.3)
Proportion Homeowners			3.8	8.0	0.2	3.1
			(5.5)	(9.3)	(6.0)	(10.0)
Median Age			-0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.1
			(0.1)	(0.2)	(0.1)	(0.2)
Median Income (\$10,000)			-0.5	-0.5	-0.4	-0.2
			(0.3)	(0.6)	(0.4)	(0.6)
Council-Manager Form of Gov't			0.5	4.4*	0.2	3.6
			(1.3)	(2.1)	(1.4)	(2.2)
Commission or Other Form of Gov't			-3.2	0.0	-3.7	-1.5
			(1.9)	(2.9)	(2.0)	(3.0)
Elections held w/ state and nat'l					1.5	7.3*
					(1.9)	(3.2)
Partisan Elections					-2.9	-2.3
					(2.2)	(3.2)
Constant	49.0*	50.3*	51.2*	43.1*	48.9*	33.8*
	(1.4)	(2.1)	(7.2)	(12.2)	(7.7)	(13.4)
Observations	2,380	990	2,112	767	1,793	699
R-squared	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3
Number of state-level fixed effects			49	49	49	49

Note: Table presents coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses) from OLS regressions, where the dependent variable is the official's self-reported probability (from 0 to 100) of voting in favor of the retail development proposal in the survey experiment vignette. Columns 3 through 6 include state-level fixed effects. The omitted treatment category is *Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=25%*. The omitted office category is *Mayor*. The omitted form of government is *Mayor-Council Form of Gov't*. We do not have covariates for all observations in the experiments, which is why the number of observations drop when covariates are added, but the primary results remain generally the same. Though city-level demographics are readily available from the US Census, city-level institutions (like election timing and partisan elections) have to be gathered independently from government and news websites by research assistants, which is why we have the least observations of those two variables. * p-value<0.05, two-tailed.

			Std.	,		
VARIABLES	Obs.	Mean	Dev.	Min.	Max.	Source
Dep. Var.: Prob. Favor Proposal	2,380	69.23	24.95	0.00	100.00	Study 1 survey question
Treat: Baseline (No Info)	2,380	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=75%	2,380	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey Only=75%	2,380	0.09	0.29	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Hearing Only=75%	2,380	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%	2,380	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%	2,380	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey Only=25%	2,380	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Hearing Only=25%	2,380	0.10	0.29	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=25%	2,380	0.11	0.31	0.00	1.00	"
Mayor	2,380	0.11	0.32	0.00	1.00	Respondent's title & city's form of gov't
Councilor	2,380	0.77	0.42	0.00	1.00	"
Commissioner or Selectman	2,380	0.09	0.29	0.00	1.00	"
Elected Staff (e.g., City Clerk)	2,380	0.02	0.14	0.00	1.00	"
Years in Office	2,246	9.04	6.19	2.00	31.00	Study 1 survey question
Republican	2,365	0.38	0.48	0.00	1.00	"
Independent or Other	2,365	0.27	0.44	0.00	1.00	"
Democrat	2,365	0.35	0.48	0.00	1.00	"
Ideology; 7=Very Cons.	2,369	4.19	1.51	1.00	7.00	"
Female	2,361	0.29	0.45	0.00	1.00	Respondent's name & social security records
Residents' Conservatism	2,306	-0.01	0.30	-0.88	0.84	Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2015). We use
						county estimates when city estimates are
						unavailable (which is the case for cities below
						20,000 pop.)
Population (in 10k)	2,333	46	275	0.02	8,462	2016 American Community Survey
Log Population	2,333	9.55	1.39	5.01	15.95	"
State Capital	2,333	0.01	0.11	0.00	1.00	Looked up
Proportion Asian	2,333	0.04	0.06	0.00	0.59	2016 American Community Survey
Proportion Black	2,333	0.08	0.13	0.00	0.98	"
Proportion Latino	2,333	0.12	0.15	0.00	0.98	"
Proportion White	2,333	0.81	0.17	0.01	1.00	"
Proportion Unemployed	2,333	0.07	0.03	0.00	0.29	"
Proportion Homeowners	2,333	0.65	0.15	0.09	0.99	"
Median Age	2,333	38.91	6.97	19.80	67.80	"
Median Income (\$10,000)	2,333	6.31	2.79	1.75	24.37	"
Mayor-Council Form of Gov't	2,304	0.47	0.50	0.00	1.00	Census of Governments (US Census Bureau)
Council-Manager Form of Gov't	2,304	0.35	0.48	0.00	1.00	"
Commission or Other Form of Gov't	2,304	0.19	0.39	0.00	1.00	
Elections held w/ state and nat'l	1,962	0.25	0.42	0.00	1.00	Looked up
Partisan Elections	2,364	0.26	0.44	0.00	1.00	Study 1 survey question

Table A2: Descriptive Statistics for Variables and Covariates in Study 1 for Figure 1 and Table A1 (Column 1)

Note: Table presents Descriptive Statistics for Variables and Covariates on sample used in Study 1 for Figure 1 and Table A1 (Column 1). We do not have covariates for all observations in the experiments either due to respondents not answering all questions or missing data in the US Census for particular municipalities. In addition, the election timing variable was gathered independently from government and news websites by research assistants, which is why we have the least observations for that variable.

			Std.			
VARIABLES	Obs.	Mean	Dev.	Min.	Max.	Source
Dep. Var.: Prob. Favor Proposal	990	68.37	25.06	0.00	100.00	Study 2 survey question
Treat: Baseline (No Info)	990	0.11	0.32	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=75%	990	0.12	0.32	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey Only=75%	990	0.11	0.31	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Hearing Only=75%	990	0.11	0.32	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%	990	0.11	0.31	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%	990	0.11	0.31	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey Only=25%	990	0.12	0.32	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Hearing Only=25%	990	0.11	0.31	0.00	1.00	"
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=25%	990	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00	"
Mayor	990	0.16	0.36	0.00	1.00	Respondent's title & city's form of gov't
Councilor	990	0.84	0.36	0.00	1.00	"
Commissioner or Selectman	990	0.03	0.17	0.00	1.00	"
Elected Staff (e.g., City Clerk)	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	"
Years in Office	793	11.36	6.20	2.00	30.00	Study 2 survey question
Republican	984	0.45	0.50	0.00	1.00	"
Independent or Other	984	0.25	0.43	0.00	1.00	"
Democrat	984	0.29	0.45	0.00	1.00	"
Ideology; 7=Very Cons.	982	4.62	1.46	1.00	7.00	"
Female	989	0.26	0.44	0.00	1.00	"
Residents' Conservatism	984	0.08	0.30	-0.79	0.80	Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2015). We use
						county estimates when city estimates are
						unavailable (which is the case for cities below
						20,000 pop.)
Population (in 10k)	984	29	47	0.01	644	2016 American Community Survey
Log Population	984	9.53	1.26	3.93	13.38	"
State Capital	984	0.01	0.09	0.00	1.00	Looked up
Proportion Asian	984	0.03	0.05	0.00	0.61	2016 American Community Survey
Proportion Black	984	0.10	0.14	0.00	0.92	"
Proportion Latino	984	0.12	0.15	0.00	0.95	"
Proportion White	984	0.80	0.17	0.05	1.00	"
Proportion Unemployed	984	7.04	3.46	0.00	26.10	"
Proportion Homeowners	984	0.64	0.14	0.17	1.00	"
Median Age	984	38.10	6.63	20.60	64.60	"
Median Income (\$10,000)	983	5.75	2.48	1.95	24.37	"
Mayor-Council Form of Gov't	976	0.51	0.50	0.00	1.00	Census of Governments (US Census Bureau)
Council-Manager Form of Gov't	976	0.38	0.49	0.00	1.00	"
Commission or Other Form of Gov't	976	0.11	0.32	0.00	1.00	"
Elections held w/ state and nat'l	889	0.27	0.44	0.00	1.00	Looked up
Partisan Elections	883	0.17	0.38	0.00	1.00	"

Table A3: Descriptive Statistics for Variables and Covariates in Study 2 for Figure 1 and TableA1 (Column 2)

Note: Table presents Descriptive Statistics for Variables and Covariates on sample used in Study 2 for Figure 1 and Table A1 (Column 2). We do not have covariates for all observations in the experiments either due to respondents not answering all questions or missing data in the US Census for particular municipalities. In addition, the election timing and partisan election variables were gathered independently from government and news websites by research assistants, which is why we have fewer observations for those variable.

There was a coding error in the experimental vignette in Study 1 such that the assignment of some of the treatments indicating the other city councilors' support for the proposal were correlated with 6 of the 9 treatments indicating the public's support for the proposal. There were 3 possible treatments involving the city council's support for the proposal. They were either evenly split on the issue, opposed to it (just 1/3rd in favor), or supportive of it (with 2/3rd in favor). With the 3 treatments indicating that a majority of voters supported the proposal, respondents were never assigned the treatment indicating that a majority of the council also supported the proposal. With the 3 treatments indicating that a majority of voters opposed the proposal, respondents were never assigned the treatment indicating that a majority of voters opposed the analysis of voters opposed the proposal. With the 3 treatments indicating that a majority of voters opposed the proposal.

To the extent that this error affects our results, we believe it is quite minimal and is not enough to change the substantive interpretation of the results for a few reasons. First, the treatments indicating the other city councilors' support had very small effects on city officials' responses in the survey experiment. If we limit the sample to the public support treatments that included all three city council support treatments (N=1,012), we find that the treatment indicating that the rest of the council supported the proposal increases the probability that a city councilor indicates they would also support the proposal by 1.3 pts. (p=0.45) relative to the mean outcome when the respondents are told the council is split on the issue. Similarly, respondents learning that a majority of the rest of the city council opposes the proposal lowers support for the proposal by 2.9 pts. (p=0.09). If the marginal effects reported in Table A1 were off by these amounts due to this coding error, it would not change the substantive interpretation of the results and the coefficients on the citizens' support treatment variables would still be statistically significant.

Table A4 (below) presents a second reason why we are not worried that this coding error invalidates our results. In Table A4 we replicate Table A1 (Column 1) but limit the sample to respondents who were assigned the treatment where the council was split on the issue since this treatment condition was assigned across all of the citizen support treatment condition. If we limit the analysis to this subsample, the results are nearly identical to our main results as reported in Column 1 of Table A1.

A third reason why it is unlikely that the coding error had major effects on our results is because the results from Study 1 are quite similar to those from Study 2, which did not have this coding error. The substantive interpretation of these two studies is the same.

	(1)
VARIABLES	Study 1
Treat: Baseline (No Info)	31.2*
Treat: Dusenne (1(o mile)	(2.5)
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=75%	34.1*
	(2.9)
Treat: Survey Only=75%	33.2*
	(2.9)
Treat: Hearing Only=75%	35.0*
	(2.9)
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%	28.6*
	(2.9)
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%	15.0*
	(2.8)
Treat: Survey Only=25%	10.8*
	(2.9)
Treat: Hearing Only=25%	10.1*
	(2.9)
Constant	46.2*
	(2.0)
Observations	1,181
R-squared	0.2

Table A4: Replication of Table A1 (Column 1) Limited to Respondents Who Saw the TreatmentCondition Where the Council Is Split on the Proposal

Note: Table replicates Table A1 (Column 1) but limits the sample to respondents who saw the treatment condition that indicated that the city council was evenly split in their support for the proposal. The table presents coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses) from OLS regressions, where the dependent variable is the official's self-reported probability (from 0 to 100) of voting in favor of the retail development proposal in the survey experiment vignette. The omitted treatment category is *Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=25%.* * p-value<0.05, two-tailed. In addition to the Figure 1 analysis in the main text, we converted the outcome measure into a binary variable, where respondents who indicated a probability of voting for the proposal above 50% are counted as being willing to vote for it while those below 50% are counted as being willing to vote against it. Those at 50% are randomly assigned to being supportive or opposed to reflect that this was a toss-up for these officials. In the baseline condition of this alternative analysis, 87% of respondents would support the proposal in Study 1 and 90% in Study 2. This jumps up to 95% and 98%, respectively, when both the survey and public hearings reveal strong public support. (These differences are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.) When given the opposite signal from both survey and public hearings, the percent of officials who would vote for the proposal drops to 49% and 51%. When officials read that only 25% support the proposal in either a survey only or public hearing only, about 64% indicate they would vote for the policy in Study 1, compared to about 57% or 59% in Study 2.



Figure A1: Binary Version of Dependent Variable from Figure 1

Municipal Officials' Access to Surveys



Figure A2: Do You Conduct Public Opinion Surveys of People in Your Community or Electoral District?

Municipal Officials' Opinions about Public Hearings

As indicated in Footnote 17, in Study 1 we examined municipal officials' views on public hearings and the views expressed at them. To do so, we asked a randomly selected subset of respondents to "indicate how much [they] agree or disagree with each of the following sentences" using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1= "Strongly Disagree" and 5 = "Strongly Agree." The results are displayed in Figure XX below. Here are the statements they evaluated:

- "Public hearings are an effective way for community residents to participate in community decision-making."
- "The opinions expressed at public hearings are usually an accurate reflection of how most community residents feel about the issue."
- "Decisions made by elected officials are better because public hearings are part of the process."
- "The arguments or speeches residents make at public meetings are usually a repetition of things I already knew."
- "Special interests are too influential at public hearings."

In line with the results in Figure 2 in the paper, municipal officials agreed that public hearings are an effective way for citizens to participate in the decision-making process and that government decisions are better for it. At the same time, however, they somewhat disagreed with the idea that the "opinions expressed at public hearings are usually an accurate reflection of how most community residents feel about the issue." This suggests, then, that while public officials value public hearings and meetings generally, they simultaneously perceive that the sample of those who speak may be biased. Perhaps this combination of attitudes reflects special sensitivity on the part of public officials toward the opinions of those interested and engaged enough to share those opinions in public meetings. Though we did not ask the officials whether public comment in hearings was a better measure of salience or of the attitudes of likely voters, both are likely at play here. As the figure makes clear, the responses of delegates and trustees were similar, though delegates were slightly more likely to disagree that the opinions expressed in public hearings are an accurate reflection of the entire community. But overall, they still slightly disagreed with this statement.



Figure A3: Municipal Officials' Views on Public Hearings (Study 1 Only)

Note: Municipal officials' average responses to the following prompt: "Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following sentences." Agreement was measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Statements are ordered by the officials' level agreement, with the statement they agreed with the most at the top. Only a randomly selected subset of respondents was asked this question.

Delegate vs. Trustee Approaches to Representation

We presented elected officials with the following prompt that asked them to place themselves on a 5-point scale between two extremes:

"When it comes to important issues, elected officials should..."

(1) Do what their constituents want, even if it conflicts with what the elected official thinks is right.

(5) Do what they think is right, even if it conflicts with what their constituents want. The full distribution is displayed in Figure A4. About 60 percent of Study 1 respondents viewed themselves as trustees (scores of 4 and 5 on the 5-point scale), while less than 15 percent reported being delegates (scores of 1 and 2). In Study 2, responses were not quite as skewed, though about half of elected officials regarded themselves as trustees, and only 20 percent favored a delegate approach to representation. In both studies, the sample mean leaned well to the trustee side of the scale midpoint. Throughout the results sections, we will examine whether this view of how policymakers should represent their constituents correlates with their responses.

Figure A4: Municipal Officials' View on Trustee vs. Delegate Representation



Note: Municipal officials' responses to the following question: "When it comes to important issues, elected officials should..." Responses were recorded on a 5-point scale, where 1 was labeled "Do what their constituents want, even if it conflicts with what the elected official thinks is right" and 5 was labeled "Do what they think is right, even if it conflicts with what their constituents want." Higher numbers mean an officials has a more Trustee view of how an official should represent their constituents while lower numbers mean they have a more Delegate view of representation. Dashed lines represent the mean of the distribution for each study.

Just after the survey experiment (on the next webpage of the online survey), we asked a follow up question about officials' responses to the survey experiment. Specifically, we asked the following: "Thinking still about the issue in the previous question, which of the following influences would be most important to you as you prepare to cast your vote?" They were then instructed to rank order the 7 following influences, which were presented in randomized order:

- "My beliefs about development and zoning in general"
- "The opinions of other council members"
- "The opinions of city or town residents"
- "The opinions of local business leaders"
- "The opinions of neighborhood or community organizations"
- "The opinions of city or town employees or staff"
- "The opinions of local developers"



Figure A5: Most Important Influences Ranked

Note: Municipal officials' average ranking of each option in response to the following question: "Thinking still about the issue in the previous question, which of the following influences would be most important to you as you prepare to cast your vote? Please rank them in order of importance by clicking and dragging each item up or down in the list according to your preference." They ranked 7 items where 1=most important.

Figure A5 shows the average ranking of each of the items, with 1 indicating the item that was deemed most important to their decision-making. As the figure shows, the patterns were very similar across both studies, with elected officials saying that they privileged the opinions of city or town residents most, followed by their own beliefs about development. The preferences of other council members and of local developers ranked last in both studies. ¹

As Figure A6 highlights, these rankings shift slightly when disaggregated by elected officials' views about representation. In both studies, trustees ranked their own beliefs as most important, followed by the opinion of residents. Delegates weighted the two influences differently: they reported that public opinion mattered more than their own opinions. These differences are highly consistent with the fundamental tension between delegate and trustee approaches to representation. Notably, delegates and trustees did not differ in their rankings of other potential influence on decision-making.





¹ We present a somewhat naïve view here. It is possible that they actually value the opinion of business leaders and developers much more than they indicate and that their own opinion is highly influenced by these other powerful actors in local politics.

Studies 3 and 4 (What Officials *Should* Do)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	Study 3	Study 4	Study 3	Study 4
Treat: Baseline (No Info)	2000 2	35.4*	stady e	35.6*
		(2.2)		(2.2)
Treat: Survey=75%: Hearing=75%	27.1*	46.6*	29.1*	46.9*
	(2.8)	(2.2)	(3.0)	(2.2)
Treat: Survey Only=75%	29.8*	45.4*	29.8*	45.2*
	(3.0)	(2.2)	(3.2)	(2.2)
Treat: Hearing Only=75%	24.1*	43.8*	25.0*	43.9*
	(2.9)	(2.2)	(3.2)	(2.2)
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%	16.5*	27.5*	17.3*	28.1*
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	(2.9)	(2.2)	(3.1)	(2.2)
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%	14.5*	21.5*	14.2*	21.1*
	(2.8)	(2.2)	(3.1)	(2.2)
Treat: Survey Only=25%	5.6	7.0*	5.2	6.9*
	(2.8)	(2.2)	(3.0)	(2.2)
Treat: Hearing Only=25%	2.5	6.0*	2.1	6.0*
	(2.9)	(2.2)	(3.1)	(2.2)
Republican			0.9	0.4
			(2.3)	(1.6)
Independent or Other			-4.1	-3.6*
			(2.3)	(1.8)
Ideology, 7=Very Conservative			0.8	0.9
			(0.5)	(0.5)
Female			-2.3	-2.4*
			(1.5)	(1.0)
Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65			-0.7	-0.4
			(0.5)	(0.4)
Asian			5.1	1.5
			(5.5)	(4.2)
Black/African American			-1.4	4.7
			(2.5)	(2.5)
Hispanic/Latino			0.4	4.0
			(2.3)	(2.7)
Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad			0.4	
			(0.5)	
Registered to Vote			-3.2	2.3
			(2.2)	(4.3)
Donated to Political Cause			0.2	-0.1
			(2.1)	(1.2)
Volunteered for Political Cause			4.9	
Warked on a Dalitical Cause			(3.0)	2.0
worked on a Ponucal Cause				(2.9)
Constant	10.6*	27.0*	10.2*	(3.1)
Constant	(2, 1)	52.0°	(42.3)	29.8° (5.0)
Observations	070	$\frac{(1.3)}{2.401}$	002	2 274
Dusci valiolis Discusred	5/5 02	2,401	902	2,3/4
IX-Squareu	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.5

Table A5: Regression Results with Covariates for Figure 4 (General Populations' Preferences)

Note: Table presents coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses) from OLS regressions, where the dependent variable is the respondent's belief about whether a municipal should vote for or against the proposal in the vignette. The outcome was measured on a 100-point scale, where 0 was labeled "0% = They should absolutely vote

AGAINST the proposal" and 100 was labeled "100% = They should absolutely vote FOR the proposal." The covariates are all from the respondents' survey responses. The omitted treatment category is *Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=25%.* Education levels were not measured in Study 4, and Study 3 asked whether respondent's volunteered for a political cause while Study 4 asked if they had worked on one. Due to power concerns, the baseline condition with no information was not presented to respondents in Study 3. * p-value<0.05, two-tailed.

Table A6: Descriptive Statistics for	Variables and Covariant	iates in Study ?	3 for Figure 4	and T	able
	A4 (Column 1)				

			Std.		
VARIABLES	Obs.	Mean	Dev.	Min.	Max.
Dep. Var.: Officials Should Vote for Proposal	979	55.50	24.27	0	100
(100=absolutely should)					
Treat: Baseline (No Info)	979	0.00	0.00	0	0
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=75%	979	0.14	0.35	0	1
Treat: Survey Only=75%	979	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Hearing Only=75%	979	0.12	0.32	0	1
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%	979	0.13	0.34	0	1
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%	979	0.13	0.34	0	1
Treat: Survey Only=25%	979	0.13	0.34	0	1
Treat: Hearing Only=25%	979	0.13	0.33	0	1
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=25%	979	0.11	0.31	0	1
Republican	979	0.32	0.47	0	1
Independent or Other	979	0.17	0.37	0	1
Democrat	979	0.47	0.50	0	1
Ideology, 7=Very Conservative	902	3.99	1.90	1	7
Female	979	0.57	0.50	0	1
Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65	979	3.72	1.69	1	6
Asian	979	0.02	0.14	0	1
Black/African American	979	0.12	0.32	0	1
Hispanic/Latino	979	0.16	0.36	0	1
White	979	0.65	0.48	0	1
Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad	979	3.49	1.48	1	6
Registered to Vote	979	0.81	0.39	0	1
Donated to Political Cause	979	0.17	0.38	0	1
Volunteered for Political Cause	979	0.07	0.25	0	1
Worked on a Political Cause	0				

Note: Table presents descriptive statistics for variables and covariates in Study 3 for Figure 4 and Table A4 (Column 1). All variables are from respondents' answers to the survey questions and are either indicator or categorical variables, except for the dependent variable, which is measured on a scale from 0 to 100.

Table A7: Descriptive Statistics for	Variables and C	Covariates in	Study 4 for	Figure 4 an	d Table
	A4 (Column	n 2)			

			Std.		
VARIABLES	Obs.	Mean	Dev.	Min.	Max.
Dep. Var.: Officials Should Vote for Proposal	2,401	58.61	30.44	0	100
(100=absolutely should)					
Treat: Baseline (No Info)	2,401	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=75%	2,401	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Survey Only=75%	2,401	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Hearing Only=75%	2,401	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%	2,401	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%	2,401	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Survey Only=25%	2,401	0.11	0.32	0	1
Treat: Hearing Only=25%	2,401	0.11	0.32	0	1
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=25%	2,401	0.11	0.32	0	1
Republican	2,394	0.50	0.50	0	1
Independent or Other	2,401	0.88	0.32	0	1
Democrat	2,394	0.38	0.49	0	1
Ideology, 7=Very Conservative	2,393	4.44	1.65	1	7
Female	2,395	0.52	0.50	0	1
Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65	2,395	4.61	1.40	0	6
Asian	2,388	0	0	0	1
Black/African American	2,388	0.05	0.21	0	1
Hispanic/Latino	2,388	0.04	0.20	0	1
White	2,388	0.85	0.35	0	1
Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad	0				
Registered to Vote	2,401	0.99	0.12	0	1
Donated to Political Cause	2,401	0.24	0.43	0	1
Volunteered for Political Cause	0				
Worked on a Political Cause	2,401	0.03	0.17	0	1

Note: Table presents descriptive statistics for variables and covariates in Study 4 for Figure 4 and Table A4 (Column 2). All variables are from respondents' answers to the survey questions and are either indicator or categorical variables, except for the dependent variable, which is measured on a scale from 0 to 100.

In addition to the Figure 4 analysis in the main text, we converted the outcome measure into a binary variable. The original outcome was measured on a 100-point scale, where 0 was labeled "0% = They should absolutely vote AGAINST the proposal" and 100 was labeled "100% = They should absolutely vote FOR the proposal." To convert this to a binary outcome, respondents who chose a number above 50% are counted as believing that the elected officials should vote for it while those below 50% are counted as believing the elected official should vote against it. Those at 50% are randomly assigned to being supportive or opposed to reflect that this was a toss-up for these officials. The results are generally quite similar to those in Figure 4. The patterns in the second panel of Figure 5 would look similar even if Figures A1 and A7 were used to create it. In general, voters believe that municipal officials should be more willing to reject the proposal and this difference grows as the treatments indicate that more of the public opposes the proposal.









Note: Estimates show the general public's average response on a 0-100 scale to whether they believe their municipal official *would* vote for the proposal to allow a retail development within each treatment condition, where 100 means the respondent believes there is a "100% chance my city councilor would vote FOR the proposal" and 0 means the respondent believes there is a "0% chance my city councile would vote FOR the proposal." Due to power concerns, the baseline condition with no information was not presented to respondents in Study 3. Bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

VARIABLES Study 3 Study 4 Study 3 Study 4 Treat: Baseline (No Info) 8.1^* 7.9^* (2.2) (2.2) (2.2) Treat: Survey 75%; Hearing=75% 12.5^* 9.1^* 13.6^* 9.1^* Treat: Survey Only=75% 8.5^* 10.9^* 8.6^* 10.4^* Treat: Hearing Only=75% 7.0^* 8.3^* 8.2^* 8.2^* Treat: Hearing=25% 4.1 6.1^* 4.5 5.9^* Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25% 8.1^* 6.7^* 9.7^* 6.4^* Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75% 8.1^* 6.22 (2.8) (2.2) Treat: Survey Only=25% 3.2 1.3 3.6 1.2 Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.4 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) (2.1) (1.9) Ireat: Survey Only=25% 2.0 <t< th=""><th></th><th>(1)</th><th>(2)</th><th>(3)</th><th>(4)</th></t<>		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	VARIABLES	Study 3	Study 4	Study 3	Study 4
$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	Treat: Baseline (No Info)		8.1*		7.9*
Treat:Survey=75%; Hearing=75%12.5*9.1*13.6*9.1*Treat:Survey Only=75%(2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.2)Treat:Hearing Only=75%(2.8)(2.2)(2.9)(2.3)Treat:Hearing Only=75%(2.7)(2.2)(2.9)(2.2)Treat:Survey=75%; Hearing=25%4.16.1*4.55.9*(2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.2)(2.8)(2.2)Treat:Survey=25%; Hearing=75%8.1*6.7*9.7*6.4*(2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.3)(2.3)(2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.3)Treat:Survey Only=25%3.21.33.61.2(2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.3)Treat:Hearing Only=25%2.00.32.5-0.1(2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.3)Republican2.00.32.5-0.1(2.0)(1.7)(1.6)(1.7)Independent or Other2.0-1.3(2.0)(1.7)(1.9)(1.9)(1.1)Ideology, 7=Very Conservative-0.4-0.7(0.5)(0.4)Asian-4.7-6.5(0.5)(0.4)(4.3)Black/African American-2.02.3(2.1)(2.7)Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad(2.1)(2.7)(2.1)(2.7)Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad190.70.5Registered to Vote190.70.5(0.5)			(2.2)		(2.2)
$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=75%	12.5*	9.1*	13.6*	9.1*
Ireat: Survey Only=/5% 8.5° 10.9° 8.6° 10.4° (2.8)(2.2)(2.9)(2.3)Treat: Hearing Only=75%7.0* 8.3^{*} 8.2^{*} 8.2^{*} (2.7)(2.2)(2.9)(2.2)Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%4.1 6.1^{*} 4.5 5.9^{*} (2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.2)Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%8.1* 6.7^{*} 9.7^{*} 6.4^{*} (2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.3)(2.3)Treat: Survey Only=25%3.21.33.61.2(2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.3)(2.5) -0.1 (2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.3)(2.2)(2.8)(2.3)Republican2.00.32.5 -0.1 (2.6)(2.1)(1.7)Independent or Other2.01.33.61.2(2.1)(1.9)Ideology, 7=Very Conservative -0.4 -0.7 (0.5)(0.5)(0.5)Female -3.3^{*} -1.1 (1.4)(1.1)Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 650.70.2(0.5)(0.43)Black/African American -2.0 2.3(2.2)(2.6)Hispanic/Latino0.21.2(2.6)(2.1)(2.7)Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad0.3(0.5)(0.5)(0.5)Registered to Vote1.90.7(2.1)(2.7)	T (S) 1 750/	(2.6)	(2.2)	(2.8)	(2.2)
Treat: Hearing Only=75% 7.0^{*} 8.3^{*} 8.2^{*} (2.7) (2.3) (2.3) (2.3) Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%4.1 6.1^{*} 4.5 5.9^{*} Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75% 8.1^{*} 6.7^{*} 9.7^{*} 6.4^{*} Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75% 8.1^{*} 6.7^{*} 9.7^{*} 6.4^{*} Treat: Survey Only=25% 2.6 (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Republican 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.4 Independent or Other 2.0 -1.3 Ideology, 7=Very Conservative -0.4 -0.7 (0.5) (0.5) (0.5) (0.5) Female -3.3^{*} -1.1 Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65 0.7 0.2 Asian -4.7 -6.5 Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7	I reat: Survey Only=/3%	8.3^{*}	10.9^{*}	8.0^{+}	10.4^{+}
Iteal fig only = 75% 7.0 6.3 6.3 6.2 (2.7) (2.2) (2.9) (2.2) Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25% 4.1 6.1^* 4.5 5.9^* (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.2) Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75% 8.1^* 6.7^* 9.7^* 6.4^* (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Treat: Survey Only=25% 3.2 1.3 3.6 1.2 Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Republican 2.5 -0.4 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Republican 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.4 (2.0) (1.7) (1.9) (2.0) (1.7) Independent or Other 2.0 -1.3 (2.0) (1.7) Ideology, 7=Very Conservative -0.4 -0.7 (0.5) (0.5) Female -3.3^* -1.1 (1.4) (1.1) (1.4) (1.1) Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65 0.7 0.2 (2.2) (2.6) (2.2) (2.6) Hispanic/Latino (2.2) (2.2) (2.2) (2.6) (2.1) (2.7) Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 (0.5) (0.5) (0.5) Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7 (2.1) (2.7)	Treat: Hearing Only=75%	(2.8)	(2.2)	(2.9) 8.2*	(2.3)
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%(1,1)(1,2)(1,2)Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75% 8.1^{*} 6.1^{*} 4.5 5.9^{*} Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75% 8.1^{*} 6.7^{*} 9.7^{*} 6.4^{*} Treat: Survey Only=25% 3.2 1.3 3.6 1.2 Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.2) Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.2) Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Republican 2.5 -0.4 (2.0) (1.7) Independent or Other 2.0 -1.3 (2.1) (1.9) Ideology, 7=Very Conservative -0.7 (0.5) (0.5) Female -3.3^{*} -1.1 (1.4) (1.1) Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65 0.7 0.2 (2.2) Asian -2.0 2.3 (2.2) (2.6) Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 (2.6) (2.1) Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 (0.5) (0.5) Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7 0.7	Treat. Treating Only 7570	(2,7)	(2, 2)	(2.9)	(2, 2)
Claim Darry Providencing Left(2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.2)Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75% 8.1^* 6.7^* 9.7^* 6.4^* (2.6)(2.2)(2.8)(2.3)Treat: Survey Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 Republican 2.6 (2.2)(2.8)(2.3)Republican 2.5 -0.4 (2.0) (1.7) Independent or Other 2.0 -1.3 (2.1) (1.9) Ideology, 7=Very Conservative -0.4 -0.7 (0.5) (0.5) Female -3.3^* -1.1 (1.4) (1.1) (1.4) (1.1) Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65 0.7 0.2 (0.5) (0.4) Asian -4.7 -6.5 (5.0) (4.3) Black/African American $2.2.0$ 2.3 (2.2) (2.6) Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 (2.6) (2.7) Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 (0.5) (0.5) Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7 0.2	Treat: Survey=75%: Hearing=25%	4.1	6.1*	4.5	5.9*
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75% $8.1^{\frac{1}{2}}$ $6.7^{\frac{1}{2}}$ $9.7^{\frac{1}{2}}$ $6.4^{\frac{1}{2}}$ Treat: Survey Only=25% 3.2 1.3 3.6 1.2 Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Republican 2.5 -0.4 (2.0) (1.7) Independent or Other 2.0 -1.3 (2.0) (1.7) Ideology, 7=Very Conservative -0.4 -0.7 (0.5) (0.5) Female -3.3^* -1.1 (1.4) (1.1) Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65 0.7 0.2 (0.5) (0.4) Asian -2.0 2.3 (2.2) (2.6) Hispanic/Latino -2.0 2.3 (2.2) (2.6) Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 (2.1) (2.7) Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 </th <th></th> <th>(2.6)</th> <th>(2.2)</th> <th>(2.8)</th> <th>(2.2)</th>		(2.6)	(2.2)	(2.8)	(2.2)
Treat: Survey Only=25% (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Treat: Hearing Only=25% 3.2 1.3 3.6 1.2 Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Republican 2.6 (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Independent or Other 2.6 (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Ideology, 7=Very Conservative -0.4 -0.7 (0.5) (0.5) (0.5) (0.5) Female -3.3^* -1.1 Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65 0.7 0.2 (0.5) (0.4) -4.7 -6.5 (0.5) (0.4) -4.7 -6.5 Black/African American -2.0 2.3 Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 (2.1) Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 (0.5) Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7	Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%	8.1*	6.7*	9.7*	6.4*
Treat: Survey Only=25% 3.2 1.3 3.6 1.2 Treat: Hearing Only=25% 2.0 0.3 2.5 -0.1 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Republican 2.6 (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Independent or Other 2.0 -1.3 (2.0) (1.7) Independent or Other 2.0 -1.3 (2.1) (1.9) Ideology, 7=Very Conservative -0.4 -0.7 (0.5) (0.5) Female -3.3^* -1.1 (1.4) (1.1) Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65 0.7 0.2 (0.5) (0.4) Asian -4.7 -6.5 (0.5) (4.3) Black/African American -2.0 2.3 (2.2) (2.6) Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 (2.6) (2.1) (2.7) Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 (0.5) (0.5) Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7 0.5		(2.6)	(2.2)	(2.8)	(2.3)
$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	Treat: Survey Only=25%	3.2	1.3	3.6	1.2
Treat: Hearing Only=25%2.00.32.5-0.1 (2.6) (2.2) (2.8) (2.3) Republican2.5-0.4Independent or Other2.0-1.3Ideology, 7=Very Conservative-0.4-0.7 (0.5) (0.5) (0.5) Female-3.3*-1.1Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 650.70.2 (1.4) (1.1) (1.4) (1.1) Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65 0.7 0.2 (0.5) (0.4) -4.7 -6.5 (5.0) (4.3) (2.2) (2.6) Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 (2.6) Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 (2.7) Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 (0.5) Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7		(2.6)	(2.2)	(2.8)	(2.2)
$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	Treat: Hearing Only=25%	2.0	0.3	2.5	-0.1
Republican2.5 -0.4 Independent or Other(2.0)(1.7)Independent or Other2.0 -1.3 (2.1)(1.9)Ideology, 7=Very Conservative -0.4 -0.7 (0.5)(0.5)(0.5)Female -3.3^* -1.1 Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 650.70.2(0.5)(0.4)(1.4)(1.1)Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 650.70.2(0.5)(0.4)(4.7) -6.5 (5.0)(4.3)(4.3)Black/African American -2.0 2.3Hispanic/Latino0.21.2Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad0.3(0.5)Registered to Vote1.90.7		(2.6)	(2.2)	(2.8)	(2.3)
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Independent of Other2.0-1.3Ideology, 7=Very Conservative(2.1)(1.9)Ideology, 7=Very Conservative -0.4 -0.7 (0.5)(0.5)(0.5)Female -3.3^* -1.1 Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 650.70.2(0.5)(0.4)(1.4)Asian -4.7 -6.5 Black/African American -2.0 2.3Hispanic/Latino0.21.2Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad0.3Registered to Vote1.90.7	In demondant on Other			(2.0)	(1./)
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Female -3.3^* -1.1 Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65 (1.4) (1.1) Asian 0.7 0.2 Asian -4.7 -6.5 Black/African American -2.0 2.3 Black/African American -2.0 2.3 Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7				(0.5)	(0.5)
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Asian -4.7 -6.5 Black/African American(5.0)(4.3)Black/African American -2.0 2.3(2.2)(2.6)(2.2)Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 (0.5)Registered to Vote1.90.7				(0.5)	(0.4)
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Hispanic/Latino 0.2 1.2 (2.1) (2.7) Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad 0.3 (0.5) (0.5) Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7	II:			(2.2)	(2.6)
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Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7	Education 1=no HS: 6=nost-grad			(2.1)	(2.7)
Registered to Vote 1.9 0.7	Education, 1 no 115, 0 post grad			(0.5)	
1./ V./	Registered to Vote			1.9	0.7
(2.0) (4.3)	5			(2.0)	(4.3)
Donated to Political Cause 3.4 -1.3	Donated to Political Cause			3.4	-1.3
(1.9) (1.3)				(1.9)	(1.3)
Volunteered for Political Cause 0.1	Volunteered for Political Cause			0.1	
(2.7)				(2.7)	
Constant 54.2* 56.2* 50.3* 59.1*	Constant	54.2*	56.2*	50.3*	59.1*
$\begin{array}{c} (1.9) & (1.6) & (3.9) & (5.1) \\ \hline 000 & 0.217 & 0.04 & 0.202 \\ \end{array}$		(1.9)	(1.6)	(3.9)	(5.1)
Ubservations 980 2,317 904 2,293 Descripted 0.0 0.0 0.1 0.0	Ubservations Descuered	980	2,317	904	2,293
<u>N-squarcu</u> U.U U.U U.I U.U Note: Table presents coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses) from OLS regressions, where the dependent	<u>Note:</u> Table presents coefficients and standard errors (in par	U.U ontheses) from	U.U n OI S regressio	U.I	U.U dependent

Table A8: Regression Results for Figure A7 (General Population's Beliefs about What Elected Officials Would Do)

Note: Table presents coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses) from OLS regressions, where the dependent variable is the respondent's belief about whether their municipal would vote for the proposal in the vignette. The outcome was measured on a 100-point scale, where 100 was labeled "100% chance my city councilor would vote FOR the proposal" and 0 was labeled "0% chance my city councile would vote FOR the proposal." The covariates are all from the respondents' survey responses. The omitted treatment category is *Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=25%.* Education levels were not measured in Study 4, and Study 3 asked whether respondent's volunteered

for a political cause while Study 4 asked if they had worked on one. Due to power concerns, the baseline condition with no information was not presented to respondents in Study 3.

* p-value<0.05, two-tailed.

	Std.				
VARIABLES	Obs.	Mean	Dev.	Min.	Max.
Dep. Var.: Probability Officials Would Vote for Proposal	980	59.95	20.32	1	100
(100=100% probability they would)					
Treat: Baseline (No Info)	980	0.00	0.00	0	0
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=75%	980	0.14	0.35	0	1
Treat: Survey Only=75%	980	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Hearing Only=75%	980	0.12	0.32	0	1
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%	980	0.13	0.34	0	1
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%	980	0.13	0.34	0	1
Treat: Survey Only=25%	980	0.13	0.34	0	1
Treat: Hearing Only=25%	980	0.13	0.33	0	1
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=25%	980	0.11	0.31	0	1
Republican	980	0.32	0.47	0	1
Independent or Other	980	0.17	0.37	0	1
Democrat	980	0.47	0.50	0	1
Ideology, 7=Very Conservative	904	3.98	1.90	1	7
Female	980	0.57	0.50	0	1
Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65	980	3.71	1.69	1	6
Asian	980	0.02	0.14	0	1
Black/African American	980	0.12	0.33	0	1
Hispanic/Latino	980	0.15	0.36	0	1
White	980	0.65	0.48	0	1
Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad	980	3.49	1.48	1	6
Registered to Vote	980	0.81	0.39	0	1
Donated to Political Cause	980	0.17	0.38	0	1
Volunteered for Political Cause	980	0.07	0.25	0	1
Worked on a Political Cause	0				

Table A9: Descriptive Statistics for Variables and Covariates in Study 3 for Figure A7 and Table A7 (Column 1)

Note: Table presents descriptive statistics for variables and covariates in Study 3 for Figure A7 and Table A7 (Column 1). All variables are from respondents' answers to the survey questions and are either indicator or categorical variables, except for the dependent variable, which is measured on a scale from 0 to 100.

	Std.				
VARIABLES	Obs.	Mean	Dev.	Min.	Max.
Dep. Var.: Officials Should Vote for Proposal	2,317	61.79	25.47	0	100
(100=absolutely should)					
Treat: Baseline (No Info)	2,317	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=75%	2,317	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Survey Only=75%	2,317	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Hearing Only=75%	2,317	0.11	0.32	0	1
Treat: Survey=75%; Hearing=25%	2,317	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=75%	2,317	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Survey Only=25%	2,317	0.11	0.32	0	1
Treat: Hearing Only=25%	2,317	0.11	0.31	0	1
Treat: Survey=25%; Hearing=25%	2,317	0.11	0.31	0	1
Republican	2,311	0.50	0.50	0	1
Independent or Other	2,317	0.12	0.32	0	1
Democrat	2,311	0.38	0.49	0	1
Ideology, 7=Very Conservative	2,311	4.43	1.66	1	7
Female	2,311	0.52	0.50	0	1
Age Group; 1=18 to 25; 6=Over 65	2,311	4.61	1.40	0	6
Asian	2,306	0.02	0.13	0	1
Black/African American	2,306	0.05	0.21	0	1
Hispanic/Latino	2,306	0.04	0.20	0	1
White	2,306	0.85	0.35	0	1
Education, 1=no HS; 6=post-grad	0				
Registered to Vote	2,317	0.98	0.12	0	1
Donated to Political Cause	2,317	0.25	0.43	0	1
Volunteered for Political Cause	0				
Worked on a Political Cause	2,317	0.03	0.17	0	1

Table A10: Descriptive Statistics for Variables and Covariates in Study 4 for Figure A7 and Table A7 (Column 2)

Note: Table presents descriptive statistics for variables and covariates in Study 4 for Figure A7 and Table A7 (Column 1). All variables are from respondents' answers to the survey questions and are either indicator or categorical variables, except for the dependent variable, which is measured on a scale from 0 to 100.

B. Pre-registration plan

Our analyses for the Studies 2 and 4 were preregistered at the Open Science Framework (i.e. the OSF). [LINK REDACTED for review] Our preanalysis plan (PAP) was written based on the analysis conducted on our pilot study data and as a result our analysis of the pre-registered study was straightforward and followed the PAP exactly as outlined.

OSF Preregistration Plan

STUDY INFORMATION Title

Local Officials Response to Public Opinion, a Replication

Authors

[NAMES REDACTED]

Description

A central question in political science is the extent to which elected officials should and do respond to learning the preferences of their constituents. Though a large empirical literature generally finds a correlation between voters' preferences and their representatives' issue positions and roll-call voting behavior, research is still divided on the mechanisms that lead to this correlation. For example, under a citizen-candidate model (Besley and Coate 1997), we would expect to find correlation between voters' and politicians' policy preferences even if politicians ignored public opinion data once in office. Though the question of what mechanisms lead to policy congruence is still actively debated, nearly all work on this topic has focused on representation at the state and national levels (e.g., Miller and Stokes 1963; Page and Shapiro 1983; Butler and Nickerson 2011; Caughey and Warshaw 2017), ignoring local governments even though they provide key services and are the level of government with which citizens interact most regularly (Trounstine 2009).

Unlike their colleagues studying state and Congressional politics, many scholars of local politics—and urban politics in particular—anticipated "urban policy [to] rarely [be] responsive, or at least only coincidentally so" (Trounstine 2010, 413). Though citizens' mobility in choosing where to live can lead to a correlation between voters' preferences and policy outcomes (Tiebout 1956), it may also lead to policies favoring wealthy residents and businesses who are potentially more mobile and sought after as revenue sources (Hunter 1953; Peterson 1981). Additionally, municipal policies are limited by state and national governments (Gerber and Hopkins 2009; Oliver, Ha, and Cohen 2012), further diminishing municipal officials' ability to respond to public opinion in many policy areas. Despite this, more recent work finds a strong correlation between constituents' preferences and policy outcomes at the municipal level (Palus 2010; Tausanovicth and Warshaw 2014; Einstein and Kogan 2015; Warshaw 2019). Though these findings suggest the possibility that local policymakers respond to public opinion upon learning it, little work has explored the extent to which this is the case.

The second important extension in this paper is its focus on whether officials respond similarly to other manifestations of public opinion besides representative surveys. Though representative surveys of public opinion on policy questions at the national and state levels are readily available, most elected officials make voting decisions absent such high-quality data about constituent opinion in the districts they represent, especially on specific legislation. To the extent that elected officials have survey data on district opinion, it is often on general attitudes about policies. To assess constituents' preferences on specific policy proposals, elected officials (and especially those at the local levels) rely on other manifestations of public opinion such as constituent contacts and public hearings. In a recent survey of mayors, for example, about half indicated that constituents' comments at public meetings was one of their top ways for learning constituent opinion (Einstein, Palmer, and Glick 2017). Thus, examining the effects of public opinion expressed in both surveys and public meetings will provide a more realistic view of how local officials respond to public opinion.

To expand our understanding of how municipal officials respond to the preferences of their constituents, we conducted a vignette-style survey experiment on a national sample of US municipal officials. Our unit of analysis is each US municipal official respondent. Our intervention is embedded in a vignette that the survey respondents were asked to read. In the vignette, municipal officials read about a city council deciding about a proposal to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. The randomly assigned treatments in the vignette varied whether constituents favored or opposed the development and whether public opinion was made known via public hearings, a representative survey, or both. Our main outcome variable is the subjects' response to a question after the vignette asking them to indicate the likelihood that they would vote for or against the proposal described in the vignette. We also asked additional questions to measure how local officials conceptualize public opinion information and their opinions on different aspects of public hearings and survey data. These questions will be used for descriptive purposes and to examine some exploratory hypotheses.

Prior to submitting this pre-analysis plan, we conducted a survey experiment that is similar to the one presented here on a sample of US municipal officials in summer 2016. We have already analyzed those results and use them as a basis for our hypotheses presented here. We also note that the survey experiment we present in this pre-analysis plan was already administered to a sample of US municipal officials in January and February 2020. However, we have not yet analyzed their responses and are submitting this pre-analysis plan before doing so.

Hypotheses

Here is our primary hypothesis:

• H1: Respondents will be more likely to support the proposal when the public does so as well.

Based on the results of an exploratory analysis of a different sample of US municipal officials (surveyed in summer 2016, see above), we also propose hypotheses concerning whether officials will be more responsive to public opinion as expressed in surveys or public hearings. In that previous survey, we found that municipal officials rarely have survey data of public opinion on any given proposal and thus rely heavily on whatever signals of public opinion they encounter. As such, we propose the following:

• H2: When respondents only see one manifestation of public opinion on the proposal, they will be equally responsive to public opinion about the proposal, whether it favors or opposes the proposal and regardless of whether public opinion is expressed in a survey or a public hearing.

In that earlier survey, we also found that municipal officials do not believe that the opinions expressed at public hearings are representative of their constituents. Thus, when public officials have access to public opinion expressed in both a representative survey and at a public hearing, we expect officials will give more weight to the survey results than the public hearings.

• H2: Respondents will be more likely to support the proposal when public opinion expressed in a survey supports the proposal and public opinion expressed in a public hearing opposes the proposal compared to when public opinion expressed in a survey opposes the proposal and public opinion expressed in a public hearing supports the proposal

When public opinion expressed in survey data and at public hearings are at odds with one another, it may indicate that the proposal is more salient for those in the minority and that there are potential costs (including electoral repercussions) for officials who side with the majority but oppose those in the minority. As such (and based on results from an earlier exploratory analysis), we anticipate the following:

• H3: Respondents will be more (less) supportive of the proposal when they see that either or both manifestations of public opinion support (oppose) the proposal than when they see that public opinion in the survey and public hearings are at odds with one another.

Given that municipal officials do not have access to quality data on public opinion, we anticipate that they will be responsive to any signal of public opinion that they encounter. Based on the results from an earlier exploratory analysis, we anticipate the following:

• H4: Respondents will be just as responsive to public opinion expressed in a survey as they will be to public opinion expressed at public hearings when they only see one form of public opinion.

In the survey, prior to the survey experiment, we asked officials to indicate whether they favor being delegates or trustees. Since being a delegate means following constituents' opinions even when they disagree with your own and based on results from an earlier exploratory analysis, we anticipate the following:

• H5: Respondents who indicate that they favor being delegates as opposed to trustees will be more likely to oppose the proposal when public opinion is opposed to it than respondents who indicate that they favor being trustees as opposed to delegates.

With the other questions in the survey, we plan to do further exploratory analyses of respondents' beliefs about different manifestations of public opinion and to examine how well their self-reported intentions line up with their responses in the experiment. We do not have strong priors on these results. In addition and in order to avoid priming respondents before the survey experiment, we asked these questions after the survey experiment, and as such, we will not explore any heterogeneous treatment effects using those questions. The presentation of responses to these other questions will be exploratory and descriptive.

DESIGN PLAN Study Type Experiment - A researcher randomly assigns treatments to study subjects, this includes \Box eld or lab experiments. This is also known as an intervention experiment and includes randomized controlled trials.

Blinding

For studies that involve human subjects, they will not know the treatment group to which they have been assigned.

Is there any additional blinding in this study?

No

Study Design

To examine whether municipal officials are responsive to different manifestations of public opinion, we used a vignette-style survey experiment in which respondents read about a city council that must vote to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. The main treatments varied public support for the proposal and whether it is manifested via a survey, public hearings, or at all. Respondents were then asked to indicate the probability that they would vote to approve the proposal based on the information provided. (For the full text, see Box 1. For the treatment conditions, also see Table 1.)

Box OSF1: Text of Survey Experiment and Outcome Measure

Suppose your municipality is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue. [NOTE ORDER OF THE FOLLOWING 3 LINES WAS RANDOMIZED] [While this issue is being considered, the municipal council holds a public meeting that is attended by many residents. At the public meeting, [25 / 75]% of residents favor the project while [75 / 25]% oppose it.] [A recent survey of residents in your municipality found that about [25 / 75]% of residents favor the project while [75 / 25]% oppose it.] The members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with [half / two-thirds / one-third] of the members favoring and the other [half / one-third / two-third] opposed. Given what you know about this situation, how likely are you to vote in FAVOR of the proposal? (Use the bar to indicate the probability that you would vote in favor of the proposal.) 0% = Absolutely100% = Absolutelyno chance I would certain I would vote in favor vote in favor 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Because land use is the dominant issue faced by municipal governments (Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012), we used this specific topic, a proposal to approve retail development of some kind, due to its generalizability across a broad range of localities. We indicated in the vignette that the proposal was supported by the business community and that city staff had determined that it was feasible. We chose this as the baseline since we anticipate that this is often the case with viable, land use proposals. In addition to the main treatments, which we discuss in more detail below, we also varied whether the other members of the council were evenly divided on the issue or whether a slight majority favored or opposed it. The purpose was to add some more details on the scenario.

Table 1 displays the possible treatment assignments on the two key treatments that are the focus of this analysis. These varied information about public support for the retail proposal, and each treatment had three conditions. The first treatment (columns in Table 1) varied public support for the proposal, as revealed in a survey of residents, with the following conditions: 1) Support, where 75% of residents in the survey supported the proposal; 2) Oppose, where only

25% of residents in the survey supported the proposal; or 3) No Survey, where the respondents were not given any information about public support in a survey. The second treatment (rows in Table 1) concerned public support for the proposal, as revealed in a highly attended public meeting on the matter. Here, the three conditions were: 1) Support, where 75% of residents at the public hearing supported the proposal; 2) Oppose, where only 25% of residents at the public hearing supported the proposal; or 3) No Hearing, where the respondents were not given any information about a public hearing. Thus, the main treatments have a 3x3 design with respondents randomly assigned to 1 of 9 possible conditions across the two treatments. This provides us with a both a baseline of how officials would respond without any information about public support for the proposal.

Table OSF1: Public Opinion Treatments

		SURVEY TREATMENT % of respondents that support				
		75%	25%	No survey		
PUBLIC HEARING TREATMENT % of participants that support	75%	75% Survey 75% Hearing	25% Survey 75% Hearing	No Survey 75% Hearing		
	25%	75% Survey 25% Hearing	25% Survey 25% Hearing	No Survey 25% Hearing		
	No hearing	75% Survey No Hearing	25% Survey No Hearing	Baseline (No Survey No Hearing)		

Note: This table displays the 9 possible treatment conditions that respondents were assigned to based on the 3 conditions for the two main public opinion treatments: 1) Survey treatment (columns) and 2) Public Hearing treatment (rows).

We also attach a document with all of the questions asked in our survey.

Randomization

We randomize at the individual respondent level.

SAMPLING PLAN

Existing Data

We have already conducted the survey of municipal officials. It also asked questions about the respondents' demographics and political office. We will also merge the officials with city-level data about the municipality they represent.

Explanation of existing data

We have already conducted the survey of municipal officials. It also asked questions about the respondents' demographics and political office. We will also merge the officials with city-level data about the municipality they represent.

Data collection procedures

The survey was conducted online using Qualtrics. Respondents were invited to participate via email on January 29, 2020. The emails of the municipal officials were gathered in 2014 and 2016, so many of the emails were likely no longer active, or the recipient was no longer in elected office. 28,814 email invitations were sent. 1,142 participated in the survey experiment.

The city-level data comes from the US Census Bureau and online searches for data about every municipality in the US conducted by our research assistants.

Sample size

1,142 respondents completed the survey experiment.

Sample size rationale

Based on our previous exploratory analysis of an earlier sample, we knew that a sample of 1,000 officials would provide us enough statistical power assuming similar treatment effects.

Stopping rule

N/A

VARIABLES

Manipulated variables

In the vignette of the survey experiment, we vary the public's support for a proposal and the form through which that public opinion is expressed, either in a representative survey or in public hearings. The exact language of those treatments is in the section "Study Design."

Measured variables

Our primary outcome measure is the respondent's indicated probability of supporting the project proposal presented in the vignette in the survey experiment. The exact language of this outcome measure is in the section "Study Design."

We also measure the following in the survey:

- Whether they're registered to vote
- Current elected office
- Years in office
- Whether they're elected at-large or by a district
- Preferences for delegate vs. trustee representation
- Whether they conduct public opinion surveys of constituents
- Partisan Identity
- Political ideology (Very Liberal to Very Conservative)
- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity and Race
- Which factors influence them the most when deciding how to cast their vote on legislation
- Which means of gauging public sentiment provides the best information

For exact wording of these questions, see the attachment in the section "Study Design."

Indices

N/A

ANALYSIS PLAN Statistical models

Our design is simple. We will run simple t-tests/bivariate regressions/multiple regressions with baseline controls to study whether respondents support for the proposal in the vignette varies depending on the level of public support for the proposal as manipulated by our treatment conditions in the vignette. This straightforward design is justified given random assignment of our treatment of interest.

T-tests will provide mean responses and confidence intervals on our outcome measure and allow us to identify whether the difference of the means between treatment conditions are statistically significant. We will also estimate a set of ordinary least square (OLS) models with the outcome measure as the dependent variable regressed on the treatment conditions. This should provide the same estimates of the difference of means as the t-tests.

To assess H5 we will use OLS to estimate a regression of the dependent variable on the treatment condition interacted with the 5-point scale that measures whether officials favor being delegates over trustees, where 1=favor trustee and 5=favor delegate. We also use T-tests to test H5 and see if the mean responses of delegate-favoring respondents differ from those of trustee-favoring respondents. To identify the delegate-favoring and trustee-favoring respondents, we will also create two indicator variables from the 5-point scale. One will equal 1 if the respondents chose 3 to 5 and will equal 0 if they chose 1 or 2. In our exploratory analysis of a previous survey, we found that municipal officials are more likely to say they favor trustee representation. Splitting the sample this way should create roughly equal size groups of pro-delegate and protrustee respondents chose 4 or 5 and will equal 0 if they chose 1 or 2. For those who chose 3, we will randomly assign them to a 0 or 1. We will also run OLS regressions of the dependent variable regressed on the treatment condition interacted with the indicator variable, one model for the first version and another for the second version.

For all OLS models mentioned here, we will also run them with the individual-level and citylevel control variables to ensure that the results are robust to including these controls.

Transformations

To identify the delegate-favoring and trustee-favoring respondents, we will also create two indicator variables from the 5-point scale that asked respondents to indicate whether they favored being trustees or delegates, where 1=favor trustee and 5=favor delegate. One will equal 1 if the respondents chose 3 to 5 and will equal 0 if they chose 1 or 2. In our exploratory analysis of a previous survey, we found that municipal officials are more likely to say they favor trustee representation. Splitting the sample this way should create roughly equal size groups of prodelegate and pro-trustee respondents. In the second version of the indicator variable, it will equal

1 if the respondents chose 4 or 5 and will equal 0 if they chose 1 or 2. For those who chose 3, we will randomly assign them to a 0 or 1.

Inference criteria

To assess our hypotheses, we will use two-tailed hypotheses tests. We will declare statistical significance is p < 0.05.

Data exclusion

We will not exclude any data points from our analyses.

Missing data

There are about 400 respondents who started the survey but did not answer the question that is our main outcome measure in the survey experiment. These respondents will be excluded from our analyses.

Exploratory analysis

We will report respondents' answers to the other questions and show the percent of respondents choosing each option or the average response on questions where they were asked to rank different factors.

OTHER

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Addendum

In addition to analyzing a vignette-style survey experiment on US municipal officials, we will also analyze a similar vignette-style survey experiment on a sample of the general population in the US.

Prior to submitting this pre-analysis plan, we conducted this same survey experiment on a sample of US adults in the 2017 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). Instead of asking respondents how they would vote on the proposal presented in the vignette, we asked them to indicate whether they believed that the city councilor in the situation should vote against or for the proposal. Responses were measured on a 100 point scale indicating that 0% = "They should absolutely vote AGAINST the proposal" and 100% = "They should absolutely vote FOR the proposal." We then asked a follow up question asking respondents to indicate the probability that their city councilor would vote for the proposal if they were in a similar situation.

We reran this survey again on a sample of the general population in the US in January and February 2020 but have not examined these data prior to submitting this pre-analysis plan. We expect the responses from this 2020 sample to mirror those from the 2017 CCES, in which responses from the public were similar to those from the officials with the public always being more in favor of opposing the proposal. We will analyze the results from the sample of the general population using the same methods proposed for analyzing the survey of municipal officials.

We have also attached a document that has all of the questions asked in this 2020 survey of US adults and a document with the text of the vignette and its experimental elements.

Box OSF2: Text of Survey Experiment and Outcome Measure

Suppose your city councilor is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

[NOTE ORDER OF THE FOLLOWING 3 LINES WAS RANDOMIZED]

[While this issue is being considered, the municipal council holds a public meeting that is attended by many residents. At the public meeting, [25 / 75]% of residents favor the project while [75 / 25]% oppose it.]

[A recent survey of residents in your municipality found that about [25 / 75]% of residents favor the project while [75 / 25]% oppose it.]

The other members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with [half / two-thirds / one-third] of the members favoring and the other [half / one-third / two-third] opposed.

Given what you know about this situation, do you believe your city councilor should vote for or against the proposal to allow for additional retail development on this particular property?

(Use the bar to indicate your answer.)

0% abs the	= The s olutely proposa	hould vote AG al	AINST				1	.00% = ` absolute t	They sh ely vote the prop	ould FOR Iosal
0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
ŀ										-

C. Survey Details

Study 1, Elected Municipal Officials (2016 Email Survey)

The questions examined in this paper from study 1 were a small subset of the questions included in the [NAME OF SURVEY PROJECT REDACTED], which was administered by [NAME(S) & INSTITUTION(S) REDACTED]. For more details about the survey and its sample, please visit [URL REDACTED] and [URL REDACTED] in particular. The [NAME OF SURVEY PROJECT REDACTED] involved questions from multiple scholars for multiple research projects.

The survey was conducted in two waves sent to two different samples of municipal officials. Invitations to the first wave of the survey were sent in May and June of 2016 to a sample of 27,862 elected mayors and legislators (e.g., city councilors, aldermen, supervisors, etc.) and high ranking staff (such as city managers and clerks) from 4,187 cities. The sample was compiled by a for-profit organization that gathers contact information and email addresses of public officials from municipalities that have a website and a population above 10,000. The organization uses webcrawler software to identify when information changes on the contact pages of each city's website and then has research assistants update its contact list of officials accordingly. Unfortunately, this approach had a high error rate. Based on Qualtrics' email tracking, only 18,531 (or 67%) of the email invitations were delivered to an active email address. In addition, we looked up a sample of 832 officials in the list and found that only 44% of the email addresses were accurate. 1,369 officials answered our experimental question on the first wave of the survey, resulting in a response rate of 11.2 percent.

The second wave of the survey was conducted in June and early July of 2016. The sample consisted of the email addresses of elected mayors and city councilors (or equivalent) gathered previously in 2012 and 2014. Excluding the email addresses that were also in the first wave resulted in a list of 29,250 emails. The email addresses collected in 2012 were gathered in January through March of 2012 by a team of undergraduate research assistants who searched for the website of 26,566 US municipalities. The email addresses collected in 2014 were gathered in a similar fashion in early 2014 but excluded municipalities with a population below 3,000 due to the low percentage of small towns with websites. Given that these email addresses were gathered 2 to 4 years prior to this survey, we knew that a large percentage of the emails and names of the officials (in the case of cities that use generic email accounts for each office) would no longer be accurate. Indeed, 26% of the emails sent through Qualtrics were undeliverable. It is likely that many more of the email addresses are no longer monitored though they remain active. With 1,087 officials participating, the response rate for the second round of the survey was 5.5% although that probably underestimates significantly the actual response rate. In this paper, we analyze respondents from both survey rounds together.

Across a number of demographic features, the respondents to the municipal officials survey are from cities that are broadly representative of the population of US municipalities representing all states with municipalities.² Conducting a survey of municipal officials from across the US is challenging for several reasons. First, there is no central repository of municipal officials in the US, nor is there any repository of contact information for those officials. Thus, obtaining any

 $^{^{2}}$ Hawaii is the only state without respondents in the sample or sampling frame since the lowest level of government in Hawaii are counties and not municipalities.

sample (representative or unrepresentative) of municipal officials faces the headwind of sampling from an unknown population. Furthermore, because there is no dataset of demographics of municipal officials, we cannot verify the representativeness of the respondents to the survey. Instead, to approximate this, we compare the demographics of the cities from which officials responded to the demographics of the population of US cities, for which we do have data. (See Figures A8-A10.) We obtain data on the population of municipalities from the US Census bureau's 5-year estimates from the 2016 American Communities Survey. Across features of age, race, economics, and ideology (we obtain ideology estimates from the Warshaw and Tausanovitch estimates of city ideology), the cities from which we have responses are similar to the population of cities in the United States. Moreover, as shown above, our results hold even when controlling for a variety of individual-level and city-level covariates.

The major outlier is city population where respondents to our survey come from larger cities than the typical US city (Figure A8). This is, however, to be expected for a few reasons. First, there are an incredibly large number of very small municipalities in the United States (with populations below 2,000). Second, the contact information for municipal officials is more likely to be available for larger cities with a more professionalized, online presence. Third, larger municipalities are also more likely have more elected officials (i.e., city councils and mayors versus a three-person commission). Thus, a sample of municipal officials will draw more invitations and responses from officials in larger cities where there are simply more municipal officials to sample. Though our sample of officials overrepresent medium and large sized towns and cities, these are also the places where most Americans live (Oliver, Ha, and Callen 2012). If you took a list of cities and sorted them by population from smallest to largest, the median city dweller would reside in a city with a population of 60,000 people. In other words, half of Americans who live in a city are in a city with a population above 60,000.

Study 2, Elected Municipal Officials (2020 Email Survey)

The survey for Study 2 was conducted in cooperation with another team of researchers who used the response rate as part of an audit study experiment (NAMES REDACTED, forthcoming). This other team recruited participants and administered the survey. They limited invitations to municipal officials who had the title of mayor or city councilor (or similar). As show above in Tables A2 and A3, respondents in Study 2 are slightly more conservative/Republican and the sample includes a smaller percentage of respondents with titles like "Selectman" and "Alderperson." As shown above, results hold when controlling for a wide range of city-level and individual-level variables, including titles, party, ideology, and form of government. In Study 2, the email invitations to participate were sent to 34,524 elected municipal officials in January 2020. 10,827 of the emails bounced according to Qualtrics, leaving 23,697 who had a chance to see the email invite. 990 answered the main question in the survey experiment, giving a response rate of 4.2%. Though the email list for Study 2 came from the email list used for Study 1, only 20% of the respondents in Study 2 were also in Study 1.



Figure A8: Population (on logged scale) for Samples, Sampling Frames, and All Cities

Figure A9: Forms of Government for Samples, Sampling Frames, and All Cities



Note: This figure shows the percent of cities in each sample (as indicated by the legend) that use these difference forms of government: Mayor-Council, Council-Manager, Commission, Supervisor/Selectmen, and Town Meeting. Smaller municipalities (e.g., population below 10,000) are much less likely to use the Council-Manager form of government, which is why this form is much less common among all cities than in our studies' samples.



Figure A10: City-Level Demographics for Samples, Sampling Frames, and All Cities

Study 3, Public (2017 CCES)

The 2017 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) was a collaborative effort of multiple research teams and organizations, yielding an overall sample of 18,200 cases. Each research team purchased a 1,000 person national sample survey, conducted by YouGov of Redwood City, CA. For each survey of 1,000 persons, half of the questionnaire was developed and controlled entirely by each individual research team, and half of the questionnaire was devoted to Common Content. The Common Content consists of the questions common to all team modules and has a sample size equal to the total sample size of all team modules combined. Individual teams had their own principal investigators and research groups and designed their own team surveys.

Study 3 questions from the CCES were from the [REDACTED] pre-election team module. All cases were selected through the Internet and YouGov constructed matched random samples for this study. Interviews for the 2017 survey were conducted from November 8-December 12.

The 2017 CCES survey was conducted over the Internet by YouGov, and the sampling method employed YouGov's matched random sample methodology, details of which are available at <u>https://cces.gov.harvard.edu/</u>. A portion of this description is excerpted below:

Sample selection using the matching methodology is a two-stage process. First, a random sample is drawn from the target population. We call this sample the target sample. Details on how the target sample is drawn are provided below, but the essential idea is that this sample is a true probability sample and thus representative of the frame from which it was drawn. However, YouGov is not able to contact these individuals directly. Therefore, the second step is that for each member of the target sample, we select one or more matching members from our pool of opt-in respondents. This is called the matched sample. Matching is accomplished using a large set of variables that are available in consumer and voter databases for both the target population and the opt-in panel.

The purpose of matching is to find an available respondent who is as similar as possible to the selected member of the target sample. The result is a sample of respondents who have the same measured characteristics as the target sample. Under certain conditions, described below, the matched sample will have similar properties to a true random sample. That is, the matched sample mimics the characteristics of the target sample. It is, as far as we can tell, representative of the target population (because it is similar to the target sample).

Citation information for the 2017 CCES:

[Team Principal Investigator REDACTED], COOPERATIVE CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION STUDY, 2017: [TEAM NAME REDACTED] CONTENT. [Computer File] Release: January 2018. [Location of Team REDACTED]. [producer] http://cces.gov.harvard.edu

Study 4, Public (2020 Registered Voters Email Survey)

The pre-registered study of the general population was fielded at the end of January 2020 and is based on a sample 250,000 randomly chosen records from the national voter registration list compiled and maintained by DT Client Services LLC (commonly known as ``The Data Trust"). The Data Trust data includes approximately 210 million individuals. This is equivalent to roughly 80% of the adult population in the United States. The files have email addresses for approximately 40% of that sample.

The large sample size was primarily designed to meet the sampling needs of a separate study conducted by another group of scholars who attempted to obtain emails for 5,000 randomly selected voters in each state. To do this, voters were over-sampled proportional to the email coverage available in each state. Emails were then purchased (at \$0.12 per email) from the Data Trust.

After the initial survey invitation email, reminder emails were sent after three and six days to those who had not yet responded and the survey was closed after approximately 10 days in the field. The overall response rate for the public was approximately 2%. This is computed after removing bounced emails from the denominator. Approximately 20% of the emails bounced.

D. Survey Questions and Programming

Full survey programming is included for Studies 2 and 4. For Studies 1 and 3, our questions are included as part of surveys conducted with other scholars and only our questions or the ones used as covariates are included.

Study 1, Elected Municipal Officials (2016 Email Survey)

mip What is the most pressing issue facing your municipality today?

O Improving education (1)

Economic development (2)

Fragile fiscal health (3)

O Extreme weather and environmental issues (4)

O Public health (including obesity) (5)

O Deteriorating transportation infastructure (6)

• Affordable housing (7)

 \bigcirc Crime (8)

• A lack of trust in government (9)

O Preemption (i.e., state passing laws to restrict what we can pass) (11)

Other (Please specify) (10)

intro_demographics Next we'd like to ask you questions about yourself.

tenure How many years have you served in your current office?

 \bigcirc 1 (1)

Ο...

○ 30 or more (30)

party What party do you identify with?

O Republican (1)

O Democrat (2)

O Independent, or Unaffiliated (3)

Other (5) _____

libcon Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as:

```
O Very Liberal (1)
```

C Liberal (2)

O Somewhat Liberal (3)

O Middle of the Road (4)

Somewhat Conservative (5)

Conservative (6)

```
O Very Conservative (7)
```

intro_elections We would like to ask questions about elections in your city.

termlimits Are there term limits for your current office?

 \bigcirc Yes (1)

```
O No (2)
```

partisanelect Which of the following best describes how individuals are elected to your position?

 \bigcirc It is NOT an elected position (1)

O The elections are NON-PARTISAN(i.e., candidates' party DOES NOT appear on the ballot) (2)

O The elections are PARTISAN(i.e., candidates' party appear on the ballot) (3)

voteshare By how many percentage points did you win your last election for this office?

O below 1% point (1)

 \bigcirc 1 to almost 5% points (2)

○ 5 to 15% points (3)

O More than 15% points (4)

 \bigcirc I ran uncontested (5)

I lost or did not run again (6)

progamb_current This next set of questions is about your plans for running for office. How many years do you hope to serve in your current office?

 \bigcirc 1 (2)

Ο...

○ 20 or more (21)

progamb_runhigher Which best characterizes your attitudes toward running for a higher office in the future?

 \bigcirc It is something I definitely would like to undertake in the future (1)

U It is something I might undertake if the opportunity presented itself. (2)

I would not rule it out forever, but I currently have no interest. (3)

 \bigcirc It is something I would absolutely never do. (4)

progamb_whichoffice Check the level of government of any offices (besides your current one) that you might ever be interested in running for.

Local Level(e.g., city, county, school board) (1)



State Level(e.g., Legislature, Governor) (2)

National Level(e.g., Congress, President) (3)

ti_prog_ambition Timing First Click (1)

> Last Click (2) Page Submit (3) Click Count (4)

progamb_similar If you did not run for your current office in the next election, what is the likelihood that someone with similar policy views as you would win your vacated seat?
(1)

progamb_winlegis What is the likelihood that someone from your party sharing your policy views would be able to win the seat in the lower chamber of the state legislature representing the district you currently live in?
(1)

[SEVERAL PAGES OF QUESTIONS FOR OTHER PROJECTS]

policy_pref Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following policy positions.

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
We should cut taxes even if it		0	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
means deep cuts					

in government programs. (1)					
My municipality should allow for more commercial and retail	0	\bigcirc	0	0	0
(2)					

[SEVERAL PAGES OF QUESTIONS FOR OTHER PROJECTS]

pubhear

Suppose your municipality is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

[NOTE ORDER OF THE FOLLOWING 3 LINES WAS RANDOMIZED]

[While this issue is being considered, the municipal council holds a public meeting that is attended by many residents. At the public meeting, [25 / 75]% of residents favor the project while [75 / 25]% oppose it.]

[A recent survey of residents in your municipality found that about [25 / 75]% of residents favor the project while [75 / 25]% oppose it.]

The members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with [half / two-thirds / one-third] of the members favoring and the other [half / one-third / two-third] opposed.

Given what you know about this situation, how likely are you to vote in FAVOR of the proposal?

(Use the bar to indicate the probability that you would vote in favor of the proposal.)

0% no vote	= Abs chance e in fav	olutely e I wou vor	ıld				10	00% = / certa vo	Absolu in I wo te in fa	tely ould avor
0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
	-	_	-	_	_	+	-	-	_	-

pubhearfollowup Thinking still about the issue in the previous question, which of the following influences would be most important to you as you prepare to cast your vote? Please rank them in order of importance by clicking and dragging each item up or down in the list according to your preference.

My beliefs about development and zoning in general (1)

- The opinions of other council members (2)
- _____ The opinions of city or town residents (3)
- The opinions of local business leaders (4)
- _____ The opinions of neighborhood or community organizations (5)

The opinions of city or town employees or staff (6) The opinions of local developers (7)

[SEVERAL PAGES OF QUESTIONS FOR OTHER PROJECTS]

1 1	•	D1	• • •	1 1		1.	·.1 1		11
niihhe	OTT/10U/C	PLANCE	1ndicate	how much	VOII 200000	or dicourse	with each	h at the ta	llowing centences
DUDIN	ai vic ws	I ICast	multan	now much	vou agree	UI UISABICC	, while cach		nowing seniences
						<u> </u>			

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Public hearings are an effective way for community residents to participate in community decision-making. (1)	0	0	\bigcirc	0	\bigcirc
The opinions expressed at public hearings are usually an accurate reflection of how most community residents feel about the issue. (2)	\bigcirc	0	\bigcirc	0	\bigcirc
Decisions made by elected officials are better because public hearings are part of the process. (3)	0	0	\bigcirc	0	\bigcirc
The arguments or speeches residents make at public meetings are usually a repetition of things I already knew. (4)	0	0	0	0	\bigcirc
Special interests are too influential at public hearings. (5)	0	\bigcirc	0	0	\bigcirc

gaugeopinion If you wanted to gauge the sentiments of your community, which of the following would be the best source of information? Rank the items in order, with the best item at the top. Click and drag on the items to move them.

Comments from local residents at public hearings or meetings (1)

Letters to the editor of the local newspaper (2)

Public opinion surveys of local residents (3)

Personal communication from local residents to you (4)

doyousurvey Do you conduct public opinion surveys of people in your community or electoral district?

 \bigcirc Yes, frequently (1)

 \bigcirc Yes, but rarely (2)

\bigcirc Never (3)

representation Elected officials have a variety of different ideas about their relationship with their constituents. Below are two alternatives. Please click on a circle that best represents your views. If you completely agree with the statement, select the circle closest to that statement. If you don't completely agree, you may select a circle between the two statements. When it comes to important issues, elected officials should ...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Do what their constituents want, even if it conflicts with what the elected official thinks is right.: (1)						Do what they think is right, even if it conflicts with what their constituents want.

Study 2, Elected Municipal Officials (2020 Email Survey)

Start of Block: Intro

Q1 The jou currently registered to jote.
--

-	
	Yes (1)
	No (2)
Page Break	
Q2 What is the second s	your current elected office? (Check all that apply) City/Town Council (e.g., City Councilor, Alderman, Supervisor) (1) Mayor (2) Other Local Office (3) State Office (4) None. I currently do not hold an elected office (5)
Page Break	
Display This	g Question:
If Q2 !=	= 5
Q3 How ma	ny years have you served in your current office?
▼ 1 (2) 3	D or more (38)
Page Break	
Display This	g Question:
If Q2 =	
<i>Or Q2</i>	= 2
Q35 How w	ere you elected?
	By voters in the entire city (1)
	By a subset or district of voters within my city (2)

Page Break

24

Q4 Elected officials have a variety of different ideas about their relationship with their constituents. Below are two alternatives. Please click on a circle that best represents your views.

If you completely agree with the statement, select the circle closest to that statement. If you don't completely agree, you may select a circle between the two statements.

When it comes to important issues, elected officials should ...

.Skin .Matrix table thead th, .Skin .Matrix table thead td { border-bottom:1px solid black; } .Skin .Matrix table td.c3, .Skin .Matrix table th.c3 { border-left:1px solid black; } .Skin .QuestionText { border-bottom:1px solid black; }

	1(1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Do what their constituents want, even if it conflicts with what the elected official thinks is right.						Do what they think is right, even if it conflicts with what their constituents want.

Page Break

Q6 Do you conduct public opinion surveys of people in your community or electoral district?

Yes, frequently (1)
Yes, but rarely (2)
Never (3)

Page Break

Q7 Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a(n):

	Republican (1)
	Democrat (2)
	Independent, or Unaffiliated (3)
	Something else (5)

Page Break

Display This Question: If Q7 = 1

Q8 Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

	Strong Republican (1)
	Not very strong Republican (2)
Display This Ou	action :
If Q7 = 2	estion.
Q9 Would you c	all yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?
	Strong Democrat (1)
	Not very strong Democrat (2)
Display This Qu	estion:
If $Q7 = 3$	
$Or \ Q7 = 5$	

Q10 Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?

Republican (1)
Democratic (2)
Neither (3)

Page Break

Q11 Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as:

Very Liberal (1)
Liberal (2)
Somewhat Liberal (3)

	Middle of the Road (4)
	Somewhat Conservative (5)
	Conservative (6)
	Very Conservative (7)
Page Break	

 $X \rightarrow$

Q12 Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?

Male (1)
Female (2)
In another way-please specify if you wish: (3)

Page Break

Q13 What is your age?



Page Break

Q14 Are you:

- American Indian / Native American (1)
- Asian (2)
- Black / African American (3)
- Hispanic / Latino (4)
- White / Caucasian (5)
- Pacific Islander (6)
- Other, please specify: (7)

End of Block: Intro

Start of Block: Public Hearing Vignette

Display This Question:

If order = *order1*

Q15 Suppose your municipality is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

The members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with ${e://Field/council1}$ of the members favoring and the other ${e://Field/council2}$ opposed.

\${e://Field/treat1}

\${e://Field/treat2}



Q16 Suppose your municipality is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

The members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with $\{e://Field/council1\}$ of the members favoring and the other $\{e://Field/council2\}$ opposed.

\${e://Field/treat2}

\${e://Field/treat1}

Given what you know about this situation, how likely are you to vote in FAVOR of the proposal? (Use the bar to indicate the probability that you would vote in favor of the proposal.) 0% = Absolutely100% = Absolutelycertain I would no chance I would vote in favor vote in favor 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 0 Display This Question:

Q17 Suppose your municipality is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

\${e://Field/treat1}

The members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with ${e://Field/council}$ of the members favoring and the other ${e://Field/council}$ opposed.

\${e://Field/treat2}

Given what you know about this situation, how likely a	re y	ou to	o vote	in F	AVO	R of t	he pro	oposa	1?		
(Use the bar to indicate the probability that you would vote i	n fa	avor o	of the	prop	osal.)						
		0% :	= Abs	solute	ly		10	0% =	Abso	lutel	у
		no cł	nance	I wo	ıld		(certai	n I w	ould	
		VC	ote in	favor				vote	in fav	vor	
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

0	
Display This Question:	

Q18 Suppose your municipality is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

\${e://Field/treat1}

\${e://Field/treat2}

The members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with ${e://Field/council1}$ of the members favoring and the other ${e://Field/council2}$ opposed.

Given what you know about this situation, how likely are you to vote in FAVOR of the proposal? (Use the bar to indicate the probability that you would vote in favor of the proposal.)

	0% = Absolutely no chance I would vote in favor			100% = Absolutely certain I would vote in favor							
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
0			_								
Display This Question:											
If order = order5											

Q19 Suppose your municipality is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

\${e://Field/treat2}

The members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with ${e://Field/council}$ of the members favoring and the other ${e://Field/council}$ opposed.

\${e://Field/treat1}

Given what you know about this situation, how likely are you to vote in FAVOR of the proposal? (Use the bar to indicate the probability that you would vote in favor of the proposal.) 0% = Absolutely100% = Absolutelyno chance I would certain I would vote in favor vote in favor 0 10 20 30 50 60 70 80 90 100 40 Use the bar to indicate the probability that you would vote in favor of the proposal. ()

Display This Question:			
If order = order6			

Q20 Suppose your municipality is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

\${e://Field/treat2}

\${e://Field/treat1}

The members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with ${e://Field/council}$ of the members favoring and the other ${e://Field/council}$ opposed.

Given what you know about this situation, how likely are you to vote in FAVOR of the proposal? (Use the bar to indicate the probability that you would vote in favor of the proposal.) 0% = Absolutely100% = Absolutelyno chance I would certain I would vote in favor vote in favor 50 80 90 100 0 10 20 40 60 70 30 0 **End of Block: Public Hearing Vignette**

Start of Block: Block 2

24

Q22 Thinking still about the issue in the previous question, which of the following influences would be most important to you as you prepare to cast your vote? Please rank them in order of importance by clicking and dragging each item up or down in the list according to your preference.

 ______ My beliefs about development and zoning in general (1)

 ______ The opinions of other council members (2)

 ______ The opinions of city or town residents (3)

 ______ The opinions of local business leaders (4)

 ______ The opinions of neighborhood or community organizations (5)

 ______ The opinions of city or town employees or staff (6)

 The opinions of local developers (7)

Q23 Timing First Click (1) Last Click (2) Page Submit (3) Click Count (4)

Page Break



Q24 If you wanted to gauge the sentiments of your community, which of the following would be the best source of information? Rank the items in order, with the best item at the top. Click and drag on the items to move them.

Comments from local residents at public hearings or meetings (1)

Letters to the editor of the local newspaper (2)

Public opinion surveys of local residents (3)

Personal communication from local residents to you (4)

End of Block: Block 2

Study 3, Public (CCES)

YouGov

Suppose your city councilor is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff say the project is feasible.

A recent survey of residents in your municipality found that about 25% of residents favor the project while 75% oppose it.

The other members of the municipal council are divided on the issue, with half of the members favoring and the other half opposed.

While this issue is being considered, the municipal council holds a public meeting that is attended by many residents. At the public meeting, 25% of residents favor the project while 75% oppose it.

Given what you know about this situation, please indicate on a scale of to 100 whether you believe your city councilor should vote for or against the proposal to allow for additional retail development on this particular property?



YouGov

Suppose your city councilor is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff say the project is feasible.

A recent survey of residents in your municipality found that about 75% of residents favor the project while 25% oppose it.

The other members of the municipal council are divided on the issue, with two-thirds of the members favoring and the other one-third opposed.

While this issue is being considered, the municipal council holds a public meeting that is attended by many residents. At the public meeting, 75% of residents favor the project while 25% oppose it.

Given what you know about this situation, please indicate on a scale of to 100 whether you believe your city councilor should vote for or against the proposal to allow for additional retail development on this particular property?

0The city	It's a toss-up	100—The city
councilor should		councilor should
absolutely vote		absolutely for
AGAINST the		FOR the
proposal		proposal

Study 4, Public (Registered Voters Email Survey)

Start of Block:	Intro
Q1 Are you curr	ently registered to vote?
O Yes (1)	
O No (2)	
Q2 During the pa	ast year did you (Check all that apply)
	Attend local political meetings (1)
	Put up a political sign (2)
	Donate money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization (3)
	Work for a candidate or campaign (4)
	Donate blood (5)
	\otimes None of the above (6)
Q3 Have you eve	er run for elective office at any level of government (local, state or federal)?

O Yes (1)

O No (2)

Q4 Elected officials have a variety of different ideas about their relationship with their constituents. Below are two alternatives. Please click on a circle that best represents your views.

If you completely agree with the statement, select the circle closest to that statement. If you don't completely agree, you may select a circle between the two statements.

When it comes to important issues, elected officials should ...

.Skin .Matrix table thead th, .Skin .Matrix table thead td { border-bottom:1px solid black; } .Skin .Matrix table td.c3, .Skin .Matrix table th.c3 { border-left:1px solid black; } .Skin .QuestionText { border-bottom:1px solid black; }

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 ((3) 4 (4)	5 (5)
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Do what their constituents want, even if it conflicts with what the elected official thinks is right.	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	Do what they think is right, even if it conflicts with what their constituents want.		
Q6 Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a(n):								
O Republic	an (1)							
O Democra	t (2)							
O Independ	ent, or Unaffiliate	ed (3)						
O Somethin	ng else (5)							
Display This Ques If Generally s	tion: speaking, do you d	consider yourselj	f to be $a(n)$: = R	Pepublican				
Q7 Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?								
O Strong Republican (1)								
O Not very strong Republican (2)								
Display This Ouas	tion.							
Display This Question: If Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be $a(n)$: = Democrat								
Q8 Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?								
O Strong Democrat (1)								
O Not very strong Democrat (2)								
Display This Ques	tion:							
If Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be $a(n)$: = Independent, or Unaffiliated								
Of Generally speaking, as you consider yourself to be $a(n)$: = something else O9 Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?								

Republican (1)
Democratic (2)
Neither (3)

Q10 Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as:

O Very Liberal (1)

C Liberal (2)

 \bigcirc Somewhat Liberal (3)

 \bigcirc Middle of the Road (4)

 \bigcirc Somewhat Conservative (5)

O Conservative (6)

O Very Conservative (7)

Q11 Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?

 \bigcirc Male (1)

O Female (2)

O In another way-please specify if you wish: (3)

Q12 What is your age?

O Under 18 (0)

0 18 - 25 (1)

0 26 - 35 (2)

0	36 - 45	(3)
0	46 - 55	(4)
0	56 - 64	(5)
\bigcirc	Over 65	5 (6)

Q13 Are you:

	American Indian / Native American (1)
	Asian (2)
	Black / African American (3)
	Hispanic / Latino (4)
	White / Caucasian (5)
	Pacific Islander (6)
	Other, please specify: (7)

End of Block: Intro

Start of Block: Public Hearing Vignette

Display This Question:			
If order = order1			

Q14 Suppose your city councilor is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

The other members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with e://Field/council of the members favoring and the other e://Field/council opposed.

```
${e://Field/treat1}
```

```
${e://Field/treat2}
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Given what you know about this situation, do you believe your city councilor should vote for or against the proposal to allow for additional retail development on this particular property?

(Use the bar to indicate your answer.)



Q15 Suppose your city councilor is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

The other members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with $\{e://Field/council1\}$ of the members favoring and the other $\{e://Field/council2\}$ opposed.

\${e://Field/treat2}

\${e://Field/treat1}

Given what you know about this situation, do you believe your city councilor should vote for or against the proposal to allow for additional retail development on this particular property? (Use the bar to indicate your answer.)



Q16 Suppose your city councilor is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

\${e://Field/treat1}

The other members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with e://Field/council of the members favoring and the other e://Field/council opposed.

\${e://Field/treat2}

Given what you know about this situation, do you believe your city councilor should vote for or against the proposal to allow for additional retail development on this particular property?

(Use the bar to indicate your answer.)



Q17 Suppose your city councilor is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

\${e://Field/treat1}

\${e://Field/treat2}

The other members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with $\{e://Field/council1\}$ of the members favoring and the other $\{e://Field/council2\}$ opposed.

Given what you know about this situation, do you believe your city councilor should vote for or against the proposal to allow for additional retail development on this particular property? (Use the bar to indicate your answer.)



Q18 Suppose your city councilor is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

\${e://Field/treat2}

The other members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with e://Field/council of the members favoring and the other e://Field/council opposed.

\${e://Field/treat1}

Given what you know about this situation, do you believe your city councilor should vote for or against the proposal to allow for additional retail development on this particular property?

(Use the bar to indicate your answer.)



Q19 Suppose your city councilor is considering whether or not to allow for additional retail development on a particular property. Local business people mostly favor the proposal, and your municipality's staff says the project is feasible. The local press is covering this issue.

\${e://Field/treat2}

\${e://Field/treat1}

The other members of your municipal council are divided on the issue, with $\{e://Field/council1\}$ of the members favoring and the other $\{e://Field/council2\}$ opposed.

Given what you know about this situation, do you believe your city councilor should vote for or against the proposal to allow for additional retail development on this particular property? (Use the bar to indicate your answer.)



Start of Block: Block 2

Q21

In the last question, we asked whether you believed your city councilor should vote for or against a proposal to allow for additional retail development on a particular property.

Now, we would like to know what you believe is the likelihood that your city councilor would vote for this proposal if they found themselves in this situation.

(Use the bar to indicate your answer.)

0% chance 100% chance my city councilor would my city councilor would vote FOR the proposal vote FOR the proposal 10 20 30 50 70 80 90 100 0 40 60 0 Q22 Thinking still about the issue in the previous question, which of the following influences do you think should be most important to a member of the city council? Please rank them in order of importance by clicking and dragging each item up or down in the list according to your preference. Their beliefs about development and zoning in general (1) The opinions of other council members (2) The opinions of city or town residents (3) The opinions of local business leaders (4) The opinions of neighborhood or community organizations (5)

- The opinions of city or town employees or staff (6)
- The opinions of local developers (7)

24

Q24 If you wanted to gauge the sentiments of your community, which of the following would be the best source of information? Rank the items in order, with the best item at the top. Click and drag on the items to move them.

- Comments from local residents at public hearings or meetings (1)
- Letters to the editor of the local newspaper (2)
- Public opinion surveys of local residents (3)
- Personal communication from local residents to you (4)

End of Block: Block 2

E. Ethics and Transparency in Research

This paper analyzes data from four surveys conducted online. All received IRB approval from [NAME OF UNIVERSITY REDACTED]. Our analyses for Studies 2 and 4 were preregistered at the Open Science Framework (i.e. the OSF). [LINK REDACTED for review] Our pre-analysis plan (PAP) was written based on the analysis conducted on Studies 1 and 3, and as a result our analysis of the pre-registered study was straightforward and followed the PAP exactly as outlined.

Participants in Studies 1, 2, and 4 were not paid for their participation. Study 3 was part of the 2017 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) conducted by YouGov. YouGov respondents are compensated by points for taking each survey. Respondents can exchange accumulated points with gift cards and other prizes. For more details, please visit <u>https://cces.gov.harvard.edu/frequently-asked-questions</u>

The participant pools are diverse across a variety of demographics as shown in sections C above. Study 3 uses a nationally representative sample. The participant pools were not comprised mainly of members of vulnerable or marginalized groups. Studies 1 and 2 are all elected municipal officials. The research did not differentially benefit or harm particular groups. The surveys involved minimal to no risk and did not use deception.

Concerning data transparency, we cannot post complete replication data sets for Studies 1 and 2 because doing so would allow researchers to potentially identify individual respondents (as explained below). Though Studies 1 and 2 use samples of elected officials, we promised to maintain their confidentiality as part of our IRB approval.

To maintain respondents' confidentiality, we will add noise to city-level variables in the publicly available replication data for studies 1 and 2. We will still make the full, original data set available for the verification check of our analyses. We would also let other researchers know that they can access the original data by contacting us directly and agreeing to maintain subjects' confidentiality. Many of the city-level control variables, such as municipal-level ideology or population, identify each respondent's city. Once the respondent's city is identified, other control variables, such as gender, partisanship, and elected position (mayor or city councilor) would then allow for individuals to be identified among the elected officials in that city.