



San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit

Office of the Inspector General

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

— OCTOBER 6, 2026 —

Bay Area residents overwhelmingly want independent oversight, and the OIG is tracking in the right direction.

Time to make OIG more visible.

Executive Summary

Independent oversight is important to the public. The biggest gap is awareness.

86%	11%	84%
Say independent oversight of BART is important	Were familiar with the BART OIG before the survey	Were unfamiliar with the BART OIG before the survey

Source: FM3 survey results; OIG survey analysis
Note: For familiarity, 5% responded “don’t know.”

Public Wants Exactly What the OIG Provides

The BART Office of the Inspector General’s first community survey results show strong public support for independent oversight of BART and a clear expectation that oversight focus on issues residents associate with accountability, service, safety, and the use of public funds. Those priorities align with areas already addressed through our audit and investigative work.

At the same time, most respondents had little or no prior familiarity with the OIG. Only 11% reported being familiar with the office before the survey, while 84% reported being unfamiliar. Favorability increased substantially after respondents were provided information about the OIG: from 12% initially, to 58% after a brief description, and to 74% after statements describing OIG work. The unfavorable share remained at 15% at each stage measured.

Taken together, the results provide evidence about how residents view independent oversight, what issues they want scrutinized, which aspects of oversight they value, which OIG results increase favorability, and where they are most likely to encounter information about the OIG. The principal opportunity identified by the survey is to make the office more visible and understandable while preserving OIG independence.

Key Takeaways

- Independent oversight has broad support, and residents value oversight that is separate from BART management.
- OIG work already aligns with public concerns, including reliability, construction costs, safety, accountability, management effectiveness, and fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Visible results build confidence. Recovering funds, transparency, follow-up, vendor accountability, independence, deterrence, and efficiency all increased favorability.
- Visibility is the main communications opportunity. Residents favor news, email, social media, community forums, and the BART website.

Background

The BART Office of the Inspector General (OIG) provides independent oversight of District operations through audits, investigations, and other reviews. Public confidence in that work depends not only on the quality and independence of the oversight itself, but also on whether residents understand our role and can see how our work relates to issues they care about.

Objective

We commissioned the survey to assess community views about independent oversight of BART; awareness and perceptions of the BART OIG; priorities for oversight; the types of OIG results that strengthen credibility; and the communication channels people are most likely to use.

Scope and Methodology

We obtained the services of FM3 to conduct a dual-mode residential survey on our behalf. They conducted the survey from June 18 through July 1, 2026, with 1,521 residents of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. Interviews were conducted in multiple languages. The full sample has a reported sampling error of ± 2.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level; half-sample results have a reported sampling error of ± 3.6 percentage points.

Because the survey measured opinions at a point in time, the results should be interpreted as evidence of resident views during the survey period rather than as a measure of operational performance. Percentages may reflect the full sample or applicable half sample as reported in the survey materials.

Measure	Survey Design
Survey period	June 18 - July 1, 2026
Mode	Telephone, email invitation, text invitation and post card invitation.
Population	Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara County Residents
Interviews	1,521, conducted in multiple languages
Sampling error	$\pm 2.5\%$ for the full sample at 95% confidence; $\pm 3.6\%$ for half-sample results

Source: FM3 survey methodology.

Survey Results

We are using the survey to learn and grow as an organization. We organized the results around five themes: demand and awareness, favorability, confidence and credibility, oversight priorities, and communication channels. Together, these themes show where we are aligned with public expectations and where additional visibility could improve public understanding of our independent oversight.

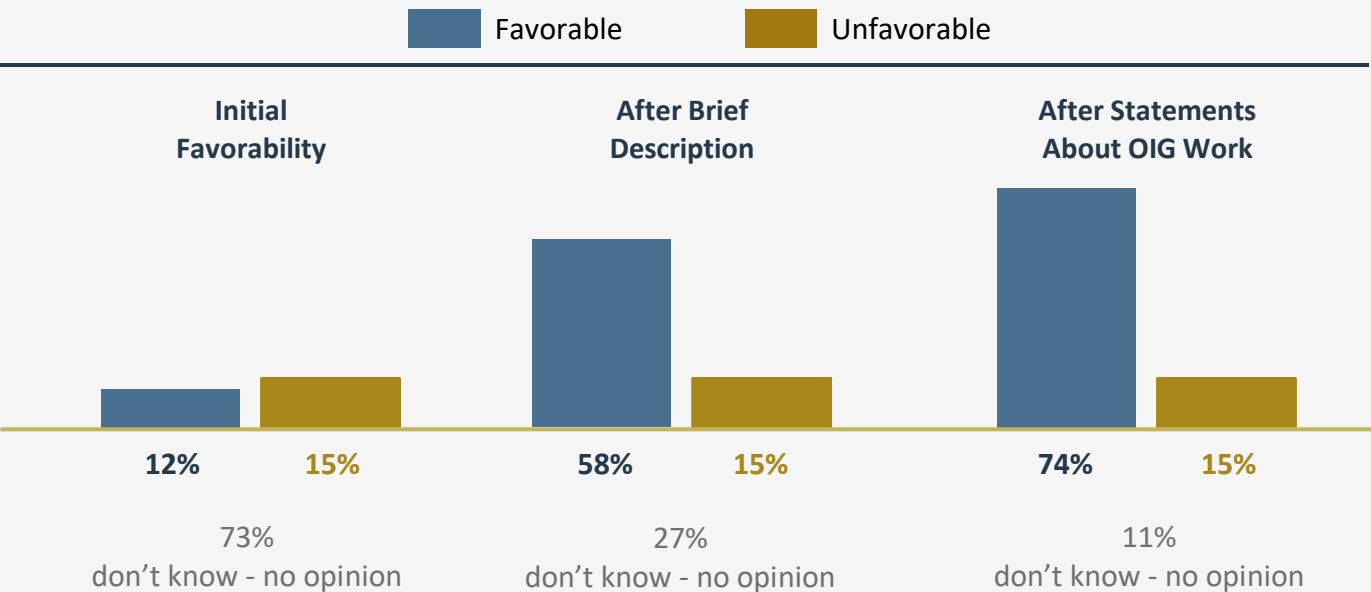
1. Residents strongly support independent oversight but are largely unfamiliar with the OIG.

Eighty-six percent of respondents said independent oversight of BART is important. In contrast, only 11% said they were familiar with the OIG before the survey, while 84% said they were unfamiliar. The survey, therefore, identified a substantial gap between the value residents place on independent oversight and their awareness of the office responsible for providing it.

That gap matters. Our independent work contributes most fully to transparency and accountability when the public knows our oversight function exists, understands that we are separate from management, and can readily find our reports and reporting channels. This is visibility issue, not a lack of public interest in oversight.

2. Favorability increased after residents received information about the OIG.

Residents expressed substantially more favorable views after they were given basic information about the OIG and examples of our work. Initial favorability was 12%, with 73% responding “don’t know/no opinion.” After a brief description of the OIG, favorability increased to 58%. After statements about OIG results, favorability increased to 74%.



Source: FM3 survey results; OIG survey analysis.

The sequence shows that respondents expressed more favorable views after receiving information about the OIG and our work. First, they learned that we are separate from management, providing independent oversight. Then they were given examples of our successes, such as recovering funds. Both resonated well with residents, resulting in a 62-percentage-point increase in overall favorability. The unfavorable share remained unchanged at 15% throughout the measures.

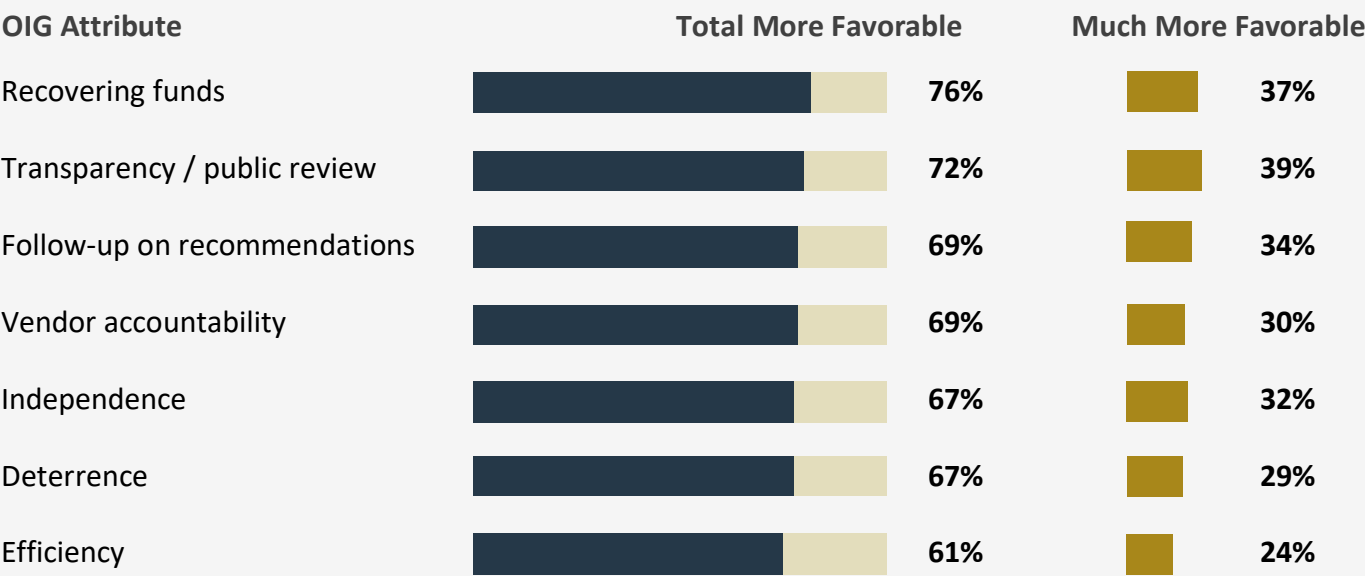
3. Residents value visible safeguards and measurable results.

Residents associated independent oversight with accountability, integrity, and protection of public funds. Forty-one percent said suspected fraud, waste, or misuse should be reported to an independent oversight office. Fifty-five percent identified ensuring accountability and integrity as a reason to provide independent oversight, and 47% identified protecting taxpayer dollars.



Source: BART OIG Resident Survey, June 18-July 1, 2026.

Residents also responded favorably to OIG attributes. Recovering funds produced the largest overall increase in favorability at 76%, followed by transparency and public review at 72%. Follow-up on recommendations and vendor accountability each reached 69%, while independence and deterrence each reached 67%.



Source: FM3 survey results; OIG survey analysis.

These results reinforce the importance of showing not only what the OIG found, but also what changed, who is accountable, whether recommendations were implemented, and whether public funds were protected or recovered.

4. Public oversight priorities align with OIG audit and investigative work.

Residents placed the highest importance on system reliability and maintenance at 83%; major construction costs and oversight at 81%; and safety and security practices at 80%. Accountability and oversight, and management and operations effectiveness, each received 79%. Fraud, waste, and abuse tips received 72%.

Top Public Oversight Priorities			OIG Audit Plan & Hotline Alignment
System reliability & maintenance	83%	→	Asset & property management; fleet maintenance & tracking
Major construction costs & oversight	81%	→	Capital projects: funding compliance, lifecycle costing, return on investment
Safety & security practices	80%	→	Security & accountability systems; physical access controls
Accountability & oversight	79%	→	Contracting, procurement, vendor performance, purchase card controls
Management & operations effectiveness	79%	→	Employee compensation, fleet utilization, internal controls
Fraud, waste, & abuse tips	72%	→	Investigations, procurement-related fraud, waste, or abuse detection, accountability systems

Source: FM3 survey results; OIG FY27-29 audit plan & work priorities.

These priorities correspond to areas reflected in our fiscal year 2027 - 2029 audit plan and investigative responsibilities. While this is encouraging, the alignment doesn't determine which projects we will perform. Project selection remains risk-based and subject to our independent professional judgment.

Results Validate Our Direction

Alignment with public priorities provides additional evidence that our risk-based work is focused on issues residents consider important. It reinforces the relevance of our planned oversight while preserving our independent project-selection process.

5. Residents prefer news and direct communication channels.

Residents were most likely to say they would pay attention to information about oversight through news articles, 84%, and local news, 83%. Email updates followed at 66%, social media at 62%, community meetings and forums at 58%, and the BART website at 52%.

Communication Channels Preferred by Residents



Source: FM3 survey results; OIG survey analysis.

The results support that we need a broader approach to extend the useful life of our public reports by presenting the same evidence through multiple channels while keeping findings, conclusions, and context under our control.

Broadcast Our Story

Our existing audit and investigative reports already contain many of the elements residents said made them view the OIG more favorably: evidence, findings, risks, recommendations or corrective actions, and follow-through. Consistently communicating this story across multiple formats will help the public more quickly understand the conclusion, the risk, the corrective action, and the accountability path.

Report Element		Purpose
1	WHAT WE FOUND	Translates the evidence into a clear public conclusion.
2	WHY IT MATTERS	Explains how independent oversight protects public trust and investment.
3	WHAT’S AT STAKE	Describes the financial, operational, compliance, safety, or accountability risk.
4	WHAT NEEDS FIXING	Shows how recommendations address the problem.
5	WHAT HAPPENS NEXT	Explain BART’s response, ownership, timing, and follow-through.

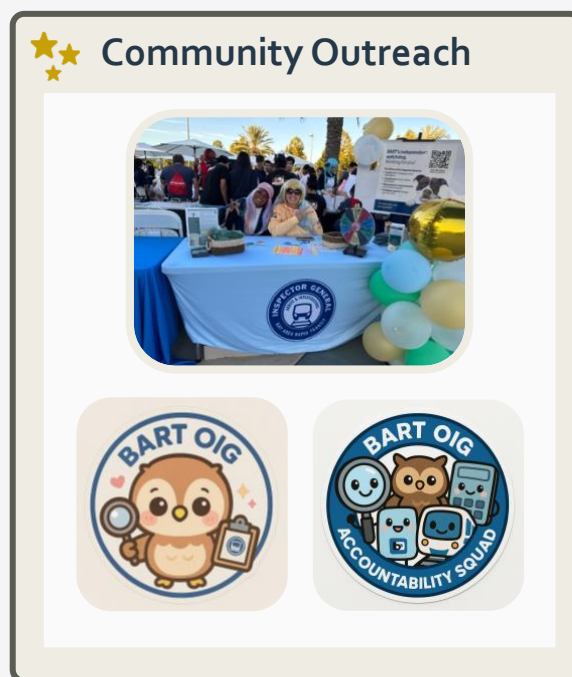
Next Steps

We are already using these results to strengthen how we communicate our results without changing the standards that govern what work we select, how we handle evidence, how we determine findings, or how we reach conclusions. We are coordinating with BART to use their communication channels to broaden distribution. This includes a targeted digital campaign, attending community events when practicable, and, if possible, using internal and external BART channels to share our results. We retain control over the substance, timing, and factual presentation of our reports to protect independence and credibility.

Future communication efforts will further emphasize visible results such as funds recovered, recommendations implemented, vendor accountability, and other measurable outcomes, while continuing to explain our independent role. We intend to use future awareness measures to assess whether these efforts improve public understanding over time.

OIG in Action

We are taking the OIG's story beyond our reports and into the community. Working with BART Marketing, we have placed OIG car cards inside trains to connect with riders and attended events to connect with community and employees across the District. At the Let's Glow! BART Anime Festival on September 19, 2026, our team shared the OIG's mission and accomplishment. Our OIG stickers were a huge hit with all ages. At BART's Health and Wealth Fair, we reinforced that the OIG is a resource for them. More outreach is on the horizon. The challenge is making time to connect with the people we serve while keeping the audits and investigations that protect their interests moving forward.



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