



VOTER OPINION SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE
CITY OF ESCONDIDO



JULY 6, 2022



1592 N COAST HIGHWAY 101
ENCINITAS CA 92024
760.632.9900 WWW.TN-RESEARCH.COM

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INTRODUCTION

Nestled in the foothills of North County, the City of Escondido is a diverse community known for its rich history, small town-charm, vibrant downtown, world-class arts, and a progressive vision for its future. Established in 1888 and currently home to an estimated 151,038 residents¹, the City's team of full-time and part-time employees provides a full suite of municipal services including police, fire, public works, water and wastewater utilities, planning, parks, and community services.

Over the past decade, the City of Escondido's revenues have not kept pace with the growing costs associated with providing municipal services and facilities. Although the City has been proactive in responding to this challenge by reducing its costs, deferring maintenance projects, cutting back on basic services where feasible, and through effective financial management practices, the practical reality is that existing revenues simply do not support the high quality services that residents have come to expect. The City is facing an \$8,000,000 deficit in the next fiscal year that is expected to grow to \$10,000,000 annually over the next five years. To provide the funding required to maintain and improve the quality of essential city services, the City of Escondido will need to establish a local revenue measure.

MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH The primary purpose of this study was to produce an unbiased, statistically reliable evaluation of voters' interest in supporting a general sales tax measure to provide the funding noted above. Additionally, should the City decide to move forward with a revenue measure, the survey data can guide how best to structure the measure so it is consistent with the community's priorities and expressed needs. Specifically, the study was designed to:

- Gauge current, *baseline* support for enacting a local sales tax to ensure adequate funding for general municipal services;
- Identify the types of services voters are most interested in funding, should the measure pass;
- Expose voters to arguments in favor of, and against, the proposed tax measure to assess how information affects support for the measure; and
- Estimate support for the measure once voters are presented with the types of information they will likely be exposed to during an election cycle.

It is important to note at the outset that voters' opinions about tax measures are often somewhat fluid, especially when the amount of information they initially have about a measure is limited. How voters think and feel about a measure today may not be the same way they think and feel once they have had a chance to hear more information about the measure during the election cycle. Accordingly, to accurately assess the feasibility of establishing a sales tax increase to fund municipal services, it was important that in addition to measuring *current* opinions about the measure (Question 5), the survey expose respondents to the types of information voters are likely to encounter during an election cycle, including arguments in favor of (Question 8) and opposed to (Question 10) the measure, and gauge how this type of information ultimately impacts their voting decision (Questions 9 & 11).

1. Source: US Census April 1, 2020.

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY For a full discussion of the research methods and techniques used in this study, turn to *Methodology* on page 32. In brief, the survey was administered to a random sample of 1,022 voters in the City of Escondido who are likely to participate in the November 2022 election. The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (email, text, and telephone) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Administered between May 19 and May 29, 2022, the average interview lasted 16 minutes.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT This report is designed to meet the needs of readers who prefer a summary of the findings as well as those who are interested in the details of the results. For those who seek an overview of the findings, the section titled *Key Findings & Conclusions* is for you. It provides a summary of the most important findings of the survey and a discussion of their implications. For the interested reader, this section is followed by a more detailed question-by-question discussion of the results from the survey by topic area (see *Table of Contents*), as well as a description of the methodology employed for collecting and analyzing the data. The questionnaire used for the interviews is contained at the back of this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 35).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS True North thanks the City of Escondido for the opportunity to assist the City in this important effort. The collective expertise, local knowledge, and insight provided by city staff and representatives improved the overall quality of the research presented here. A special thanks also to Catherine Lew and Rhonda Ammouri (Lew Edwards Group) for assisting in the design of the survey.

DISCLAIMER The statements and conclusions in this report are those of the authors (Dr. Timothy McLarney and Richard Sarles) at True North Research, Inc. and not necessarily those of the City of Escondido. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

ABOUT TRUE NORTH True North is a full-service survey research firm that is dedicated to providing public agencies with a clear understanding of the values, perceptions, priorities, and concerns of their residents and voters. Through designing and implementing scientific surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews as well as expert interpretation of the findings, True North helps its clients to move with confidence when making strategic decisions in a variety of areas—such as planning, policy evaluation, performance management, establishing fiscal priorities, passing revenue measures, and developing effective public information campaigns.

During their careers, Dr. McLarney and Mr. Sarles have designed and conducted over 1,200 survey research studies for public agencies, including more than 400 revenue measure feasibility studies. Of the measures that have gone to ballot based on Dr. McLarney's recommendation, 95% have been successful. In total, the research that Dr. McLarney has conducted has led to over \$34 billion in voter-approved local revenue measures.



KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The bulk of this report is devoted to conveying the details of the study findings. In this section, however, we attempt to ‘see the forest through the trees’ and note how the collective results of the survey answer the key questions that motivated the research. The following conclusions are based on True North’s interpretations of the survey results and the firm’s collective experience conducting revenue measure studies for public agencies throughout the State.

Is it feasible to place a local sales tax measure on the November 2022 ballot?

Yes. Most Escondido voters have a positive opinion of the quality of life in the city, and they value the services they receive from the City of Escondido while also seeing opportunities for improvements. Together, these sentiments translate into solid *natural* support (ranging between 62% to 68%) for establishing a one cent sales tax to provide funding for general city services such as police patrols and crime prevention, fire protection, paramedic, and 911 emergency response, keeping streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks, and facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained, addressing homelessness, traffic management, and other city services. The natural support levels for the measure tested in this study are well above the simple majority (50% +1) that is required for passage.

The results of this study suggest that if structured appropriately, focused on projects and services that voters identify as their priorities, *and* combined with effective public outreach/education and a solid independent campaign, the proposed sales tax measure has a good chance of passage if placed on the November 2022 ballot.

Having stated that a general sales tax measure is feasible, it is important to note that the measure’s prospects will be shaped by external factors and that a recommendation to place the measure on the November 2022 ballot comes with several qualifications and conditions. Indeed, although the results are promising, all revenue measures must overcome challenges prior to being successful. The proposed measure is no exception. The following paragraphs discuss some of the challenges and the next steps that True North recommends.

Which services do Escondido voters view as priorities?

A general tax is “any tax imposed for general governmental purposes”² and is distinguished from a special tax in that the funds raised by a general tax are not earmarked for a specific purpose(s). Thus, a general tax provides a municipality with a great deal of flexibility with respect to what is funded by the measure on a year-to-year basis.

Although the Escondido City Council would have the discretion to decide how to spend the revenues, the survey results indicate that voters are most interested in using the proceeds to fund public works, public safety, and address homelessness. Specifically, voters most strongly

2. Section 1, Article XIII C, California Constitution.

avored using measure proceeds to repair and maintain local streets, sidewalks and infrastructure (92% strongly or somewhat favor), keep parks and public areas safe, clean, and well-maintained (92%), provide quick responses to 911 emergencies (90%), provide fire protection and paramedic services (89%), clean up piles of trash and litter that people dump along streets, sidewalks, and in public areas (89%), and address homelessness (88%).

Does the duration of the measure strongly shape voter support?

To assess how support for the measure may vary based on the duration of the measure, the survey employed a split-sample approach to test two options: until ended by voters and for 20 years. The overall sample of voters was split into two representative subsamples, with half receiving one version and half receiving the alternative. Consistent with the findings of other similar studies, this survey found that voters tend not to assign much weight to the duration of a measure in their decision calculus. At the Initial Ballot Test, overall support for the sales tax measure was modestly lower for the measure that would last until ended by voters (62%) when compared to the measure with a 20 year duration (68%). However, this difference evaporated quickly as the interview proceeded, with support at the Final Ballot Test being 63% for a measure that would last until ended by voters, 64% for a measure that would extend for 20 years. At no point after the Initial Ballot Test was there a statistically significant difference in support for the proposed measure based on the duration.

How might a public information campaign affect support for the proposed measure?

As noted in the body of this report, individuals' opinions about revenue measures are often not rigid, especially when the amount of information presented to the public on a measure has been limited. Thus, in addition to measuring current support for the measure, one of the goals of this study was to explore how the introduction of additional information about the measure may affect voters' opinions about the proposal.

It is clear from the survey results that voters' opinions about the proposed measures are somewhat sensitive to the nature, and amount, of information they have about the measure. Information about the projects and services that could be funded by the measure as well as arguments in favor of the measure were found by many voters to be compelling reasons to support the measure—effectively increasing support for the measure to 67% at the Interim Ballot Test. That said, voters also exhibited some sensitivity to opposition arguments, and there is a risk they could be swayed by divisive and hyper-partisan campaigning during the November election cycle. Accordingly, one of the keys to building and *sustaining* support for a measure will be the presence of an effective, well-organized public outreach effort and a separate, independent campaign that focuses on the need for the measure as well as the many benefits that it will bring.

How might changes to the economic or political climate alter support for the measure?

A survey is a snapshot in time—which means the results of this study and the conclusions noted above must be viewed in light of the *current* economic and political climates. On the one hand, this should provide some reassurances to the City of Escondido that a sales tax measure is feasible. Even with concerns regarding the pandemic, inflation, high gas prices, and the trajectory of the economy, more than six-in-ten Escondido voters were supportive of the measure at every ballot test. Support for the proposed measure also appears to be quite resilient, as the support levels found in the present survey were reasonably close to those found in a 2019 survey conducted for the City (prior to the pandemic).³

On the other hand, the months leading up to the November 2022 election are likely to be punctuated with dramatic events on the public health, economic, and political fronts. Exactly how these events unfold and may shape voters' opinions remains to be seen. Should the economy and/or political climate improve, support for the measure could increase. Conversely, negative economic and/or political developments (including devolving into a hyper-partisan environment), could dampen support for the measure below what was recorded in this study.

3. In October 2019 and in the absence of the pandemic, inflation, high gas prices, etc., support for a one-cent sales tax increase to fund general city services ranged between 65% to 70% among Escondido voters.

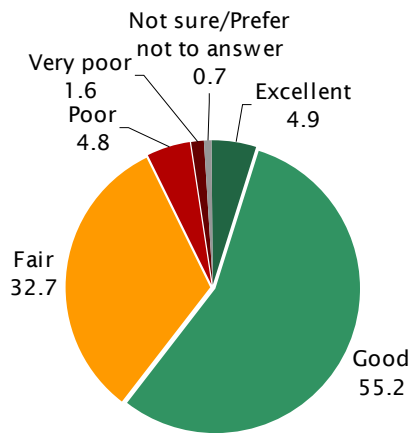
QUALITY OF LIFE & CITY SERVICES

The opening section of the survey was designed to gauge voters' opinions regarding the City of Escondido's performance in providing municipal services, as well as their perceptions of the quality of life in the City.

QUALITY OF LIFE At the outset of the interview, voters were asked to rate the quality of life in the City of Escondido using a five-point scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor. As shown in Figure 1 below, six-in-ten voters shared favorable opinions of the quality of life in Escondido, with 5% reporting it is excellent and 55% stating it is good. Approximately one-third (33%) of voters surveyed rated the quality of life in the City is fair, whereas about 6% used poor or very poor to describe the quality of life in Escondido.

Question 2 *How would you rate the overall quality of life in Escondido? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?*

FIGURE 1 QUALITY OF LIFE



Figures 2 and 3 show how ratings of the quality of life in Escondido varied across a range of subgroups. Although the majority of nearly all subgroups provided favorable quality of life ratings, the most positive assessments were provided by those who had lived in Escondido less than 10 years, those satisfied with the City's overall performance in providing municipal services, residents without children in their household, home owners, seniors, males, and those living in Council Districts 3 or 4.

FIGURE 2 QUALITY OF LIFE BY YEARS IN ESCONDIDO, OVERALL SATISFACTION, CHILD IN HSLD & HOMEOWNER VOTER ON FILE

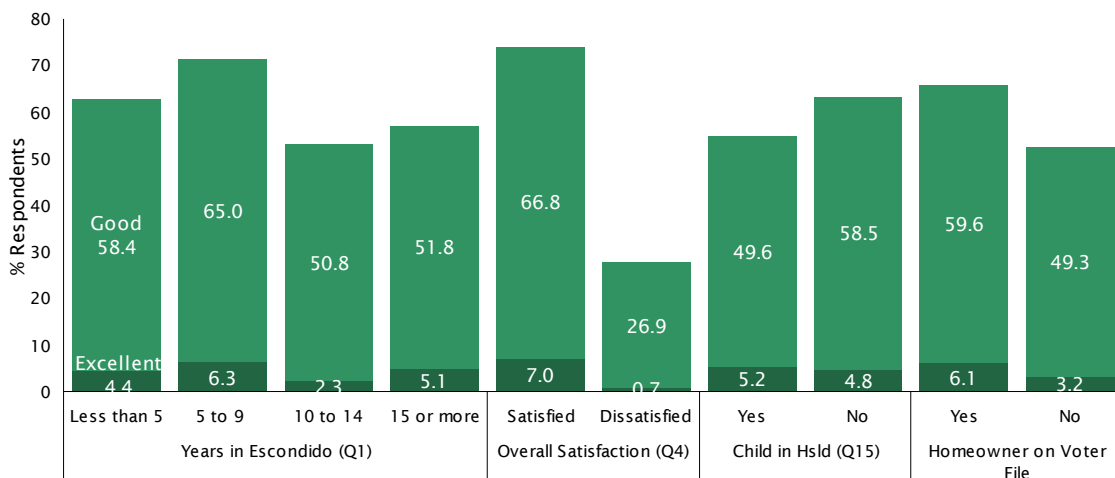
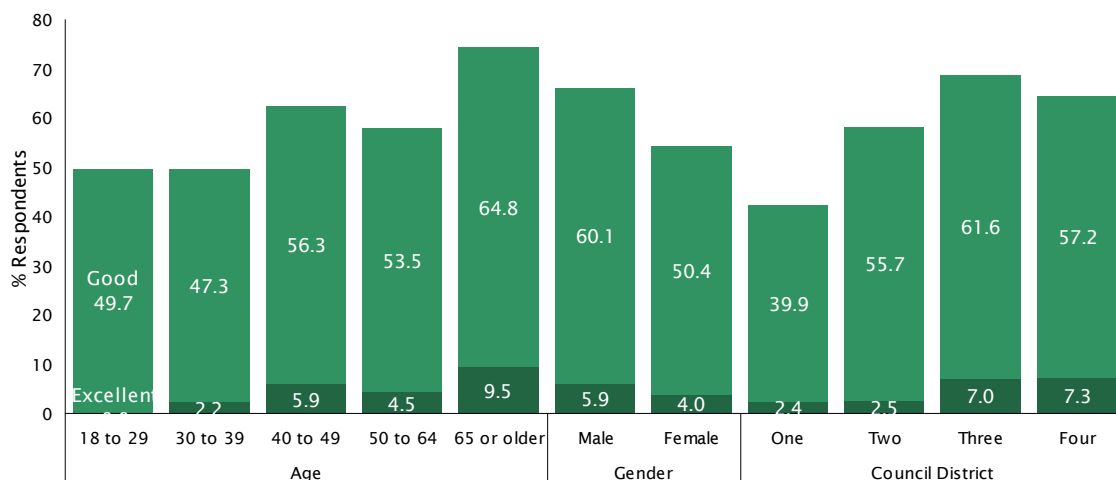


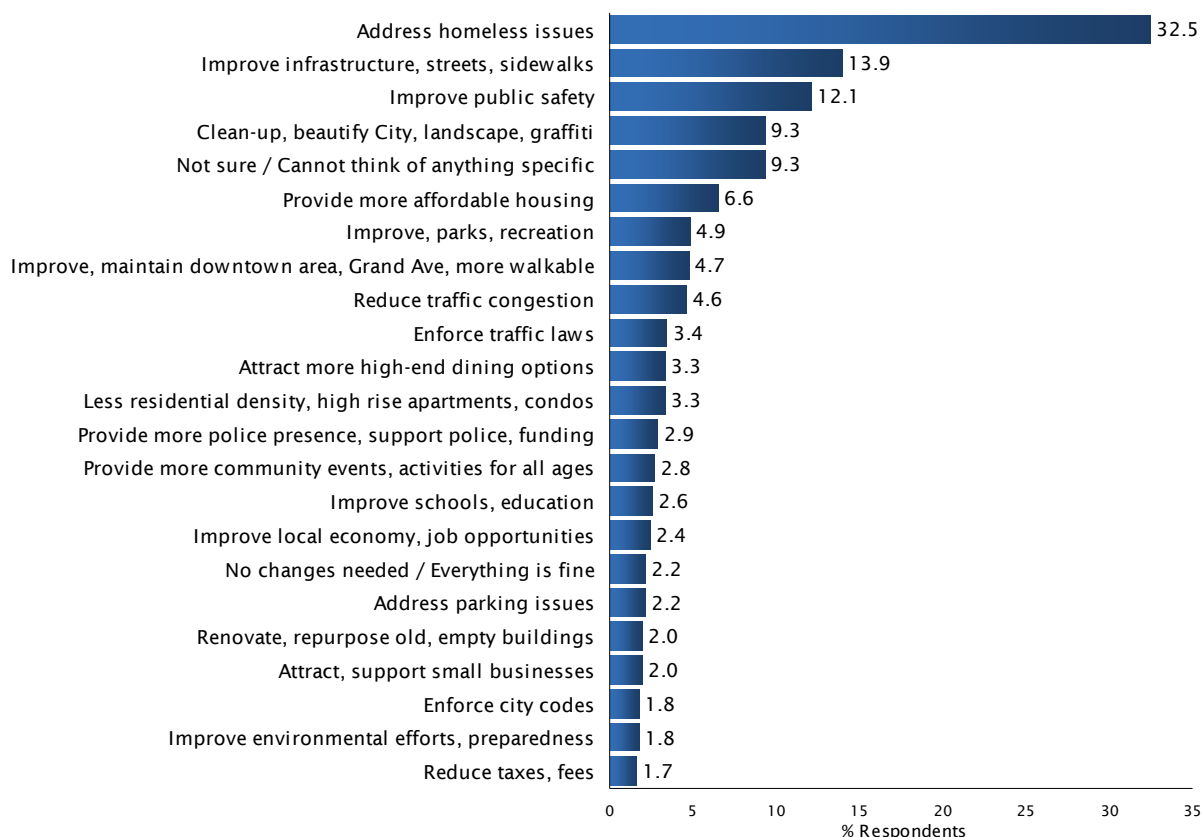
FIGURE 3 QUALITY OF LIFE BY AGE, GENDER & COUNCIL DISTRICT

CHANGES TO IMPROVE ESCONDIDO The next question in this series asked voters to indicate the one thing that city government could *change* to make Escondido a better place to live, now and in the future. Question 3 was posed in an open-ended manner, allowing residents to mention any aspect or attribute that came to mind without being prompted by or restricted to a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 4 on the next page.

Among specific changes desired, addressing homeless issues was the most common, mentioned by one-third (33%) of voters surveyed. Other top issues included improving infrastructure, streets, and sidewalks (14%), improving public safety (12%), cleaning up and beautifying the City/landscaping/removing graffiti (9%), and providing more affordable housing (7%). Eleven percent (11%) of respondents could not think of a desired change (9%) or reported that no changes are needed (2%) to make Escondido a better place to live.

Question 3 *If the city government could change one thing to make Escondido a better place to live now and in the future, what change would you like to see?*

FIGURE 4 CHANGES TO IMPROVE CITY



OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING The final question in this series asked respondents to indicate if, overall, they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Escondido is doing to provide city services. Because this question does not reference a specific program, facility, or service and requested that the respondent consider the City's performance in general, the findings of this question may be regarded as an *overall performance rating* for the City.

As shown in Figure 5 on the next page, two-thirds of Escondido voters surveyed indicated that they were satisfied with the City's efforts to provide municipal services, with 14% saying they were very satisfied and 53% somewhat satisfied. Approximately 25% reported that they were dissatisfied with the City's overall performance, and 8% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion. For the interested reader, figures 6 and 7 display how the percentage of respondents satisfied with the City's overall performance varied across several demographic subgroups.

Question 4 *Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Escondido is doing to provide city services?*

FIGURE 5 OVERALL SATISFACTION

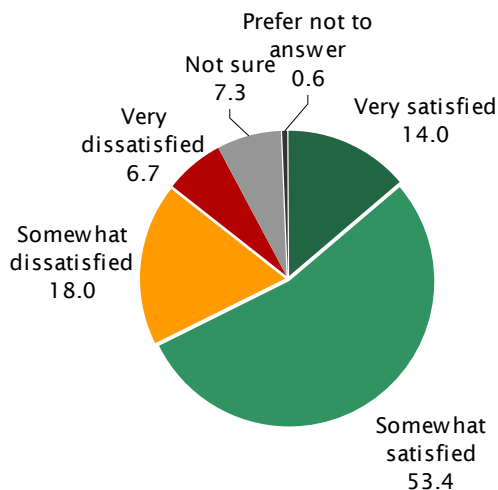


FIGURE 6 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY YEARS IN ESCONDIDO, CHILD IN HS LD, HOMEOWNER ON VOTER FILE & GENDER

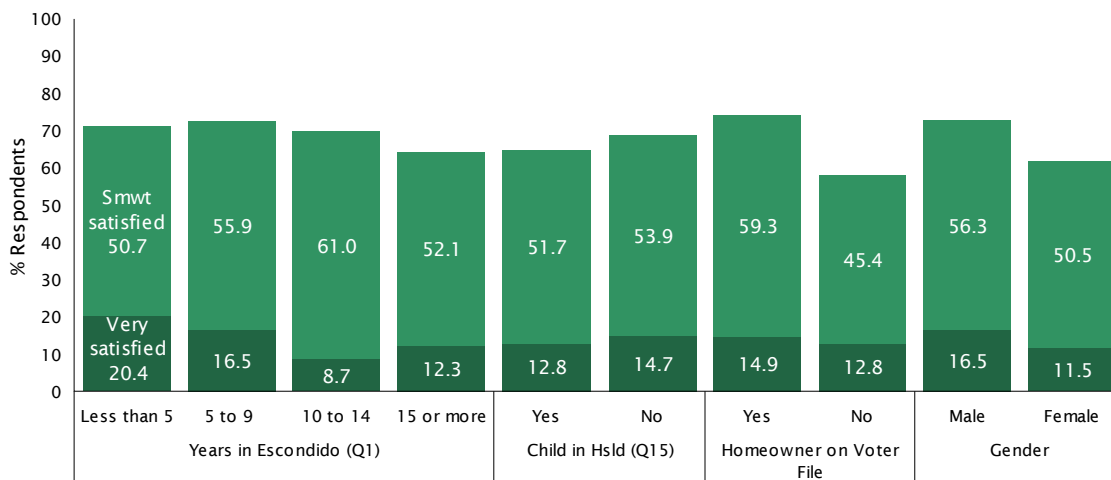
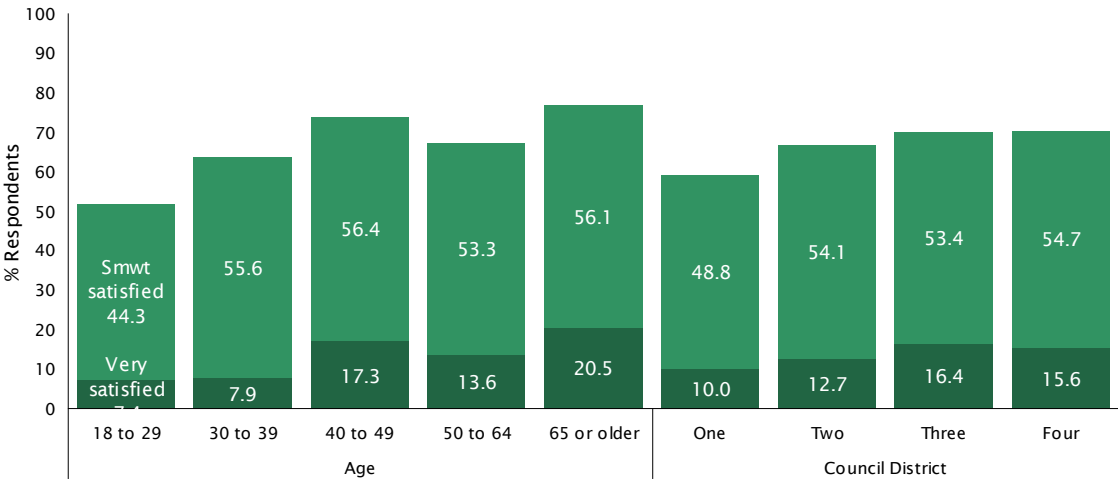


FIGURE 7 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY AGE & COUNCIL DISTRICT



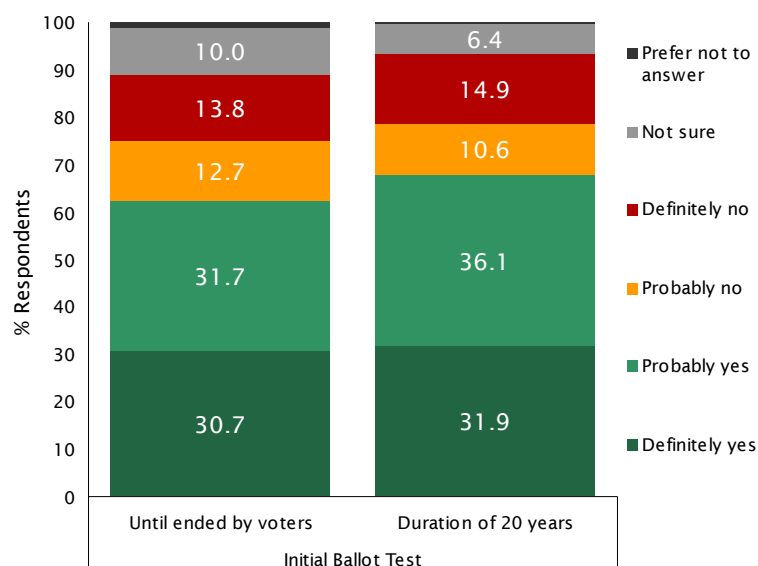
INITIAL BALLOT TEST

The primary research objective of this survey was to estimate voters' support for establishing a one-cent sales tax to provide funding for general city services in the City of Escondido, such as police patrols and crime prevention, fire protection, paramedic, and 911 emergency response, keeping streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks, and facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained, addressing homelessness, traffic management, and other city services. To this end, Question 5 was designed to take an early assessment of voters' support for the proposed measure.

The motivation for placing Question 5 near the front of the survey is twofold. First, voter support for a measure can often depend on the amount of information they have about a measure. At this point in the survey, the respondent has not been provided information about the proposed measure beyond what is presented in the ballot language. This situation is analogous to a voter casting a ballot with limited knowledge about the measure, such as what might occur in the absence of an effective campaign. Question 5, also known as the Initial Ballot Test, is thus a good measure of voter support for the proposed measure *as it is today*, on the natural. Because the Initial Ballot Test provides a gauge of natural support for the measure, it also serves a second purpose in that it provides a useful baseline from which to judge the impact of various information items conveyed later in the survey on voter support for the measure.

Question 5 *Later this year, voters in Escondido may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure. To provide funding for general services in the City of Escondido, such as police patrols and crime prevention; fire protection, paramedic, and 9-1-1 emergency response; keeping streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks, and facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained; addressing homelessness, traffic management, and other city services; shall an ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing approximately 28 million dollars annually for general government use <<until ended by voters | for 20 years>>, with independent audits, citizen oversight, and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 8 INITIAL BALLOT TEST BY DURATION OF MEASURE



To assess how support for the measure may vary based on the *duration* of the measure, the survey used a split-sample approach to test two options: *until ended by voters* and *for 20 years*. The overall sample of voters was split into two representative subsamples, with half receiving one version and the other half receiving the alternative.

As shown in Figure 8 on the previous page, there was a modest difference in voters' initial levels of support for the sales tax renewal measure based on the version tested. Among those who received a measure that would extend until ended by voters, 62% supported the measure, 27% opposed, and 11% were unsure at the Initial Ballot Test. Voters who received the 20-year version were somewhat more supportive initially, with 68% indicating they would support the proposal, 26% opposed, and 7% unsure.

The support levels recorded at the Initial Ballot Test were 12% and 18% above the simple majority required for passage of a general tax under California law, depending on the version tested. The findings of this survey also suggest that voters' opinions about the proposed measure have remained relatively stable over the past two years, despite the pandemic and trends in inflation, gas prices, and other factors. Approximately 70% of likely November 2020 voters surveyed in October 2019 (prior to the pandemic) supported a similar sales tax measure (prior to the pandemic).

INITIAL SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS For the interested reader, Table 1 on the next page combines responses for the two tax durations and shows how support for the measure at the Initial Ballot Test varied by key demographic traits. The blue column (Approximate % of Voter Universe) indicates the percentage of the likely November 2022 electorate that each subgroup category comprises, whereas the green column (% Probably or Definitely Yes) conveys the level of support for the measure. The most striking pattern in the table is that support for the measure was widespread at the Initial Ballot Test, exceeding a simple majority in *all* identified subgroups with the exception of one: respondents who rated the City's performance in managing its finances as poor or very poor.

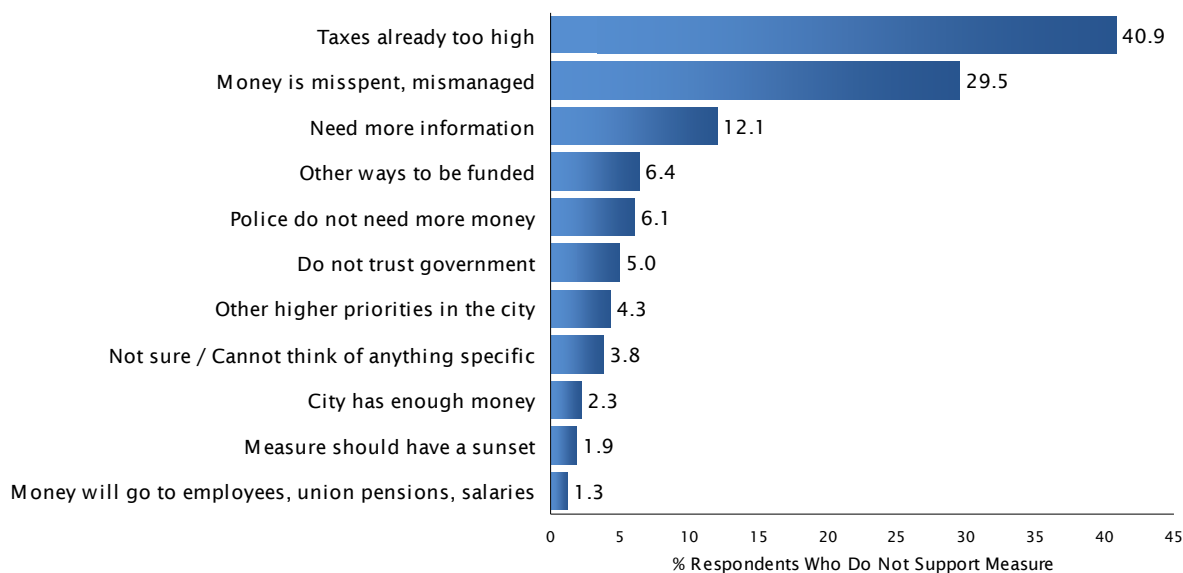
TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100.0	65.2	8.2
Years in Escondido (Q1)	Less than 5	16.7	66.7	11.0
	5 to 9	16.6	77.2	5.2
	10 to 14	8.3	61.7	10.1
	15 or more	58.4	61.6	7.9
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	73.2	69.6	6.6
	Dissatisfied	26.8	52.7	10.5
Child in Hsld (Q15)	Yes	28.7	69.6	3.8
	No	71.3	65.0	9.6
Opinion of Economy in 6 Months (Q13)	Better	9.5	80.7	5.3
	About the same	35.7	74.3	7.6
	Worse	54.8	55.6	9.2
Fiscal Management Rating (Q14)	Excellent, good	30.2	84.9	2.8
	Fair	44.4	63.4	6.3
	Poor, very poor	25.4	44.5	12.9
Party	Democrat	37.1	72.5	9.0
	Republican	35.1	56.4	7.7
	Other / DTS	27.8	66.5	7.8
Age	18 to 29	16.1	66.4	13.0
	30 to 39	17.1	67.7	4.8
	40 to 49	14.1	69.3	9.0
	50 to 64	25.9	60.9	6.7
	65 or older	26.7	64.8	8.5
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	11.8	73.8	6.6
	Jun '12 to <Nov '18	24.8	64.3	10.3
	Jun '06 to <Jun '12	11.2	59.7	5.7
	Before Jun '06	52.2	64.8	8.1
Household Party Type	Single dem	19.9	74.4	8.7
	Dual dem	10.5	70.0	9.6
	Single rep	14.2	58.4	5.6
	Dual rep	13.3	58.9	7.9
	Other	17.0	62.1	10.6
	Mixed	25.1	65.1	7.1
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	57.8	64.0	7.6
	No	42.2	66.8	9.0
Gender	Male	49.8	64.6	7.9
	Female	50.2	65.9	8.5
Council District	One	13.6	70.5	5.1
	Two	34.7	63.4	10.1
	Three	21.0	70.9	5.8
	Four	30.6	60.9	9.1
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	74.4	65.3	8.9
	No	25.6	64.9	6.0
Likely Jun 2022 Voter	Yes	65.5	64.3	8.3
	No	34.5	66.9	8.0

REASONS FOR OPPOSING MEASURE Respondents who opposed the measure (or were unsure) at the Question 5 Initial Ballot Test were subsequently asked if there was a particular reason for their position. Question 6 was asked in an open-ended manner, allowing respondents to mention any reason that came to mind without being prompted by, or restricted to, a particular list of options. True North subsequently reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 9. Among specific reasons offered for not supporting the measure or being unsure, a belief that taxes are already too high (41%) and the perception that city funds have been/will be mismanaged or misspent (30%) were the most common, followed by a need for more information (12%).

Question 6 *Is there a particular reason why you do not support or are unsure about the measure I just described?*

FIGURE 9 REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE



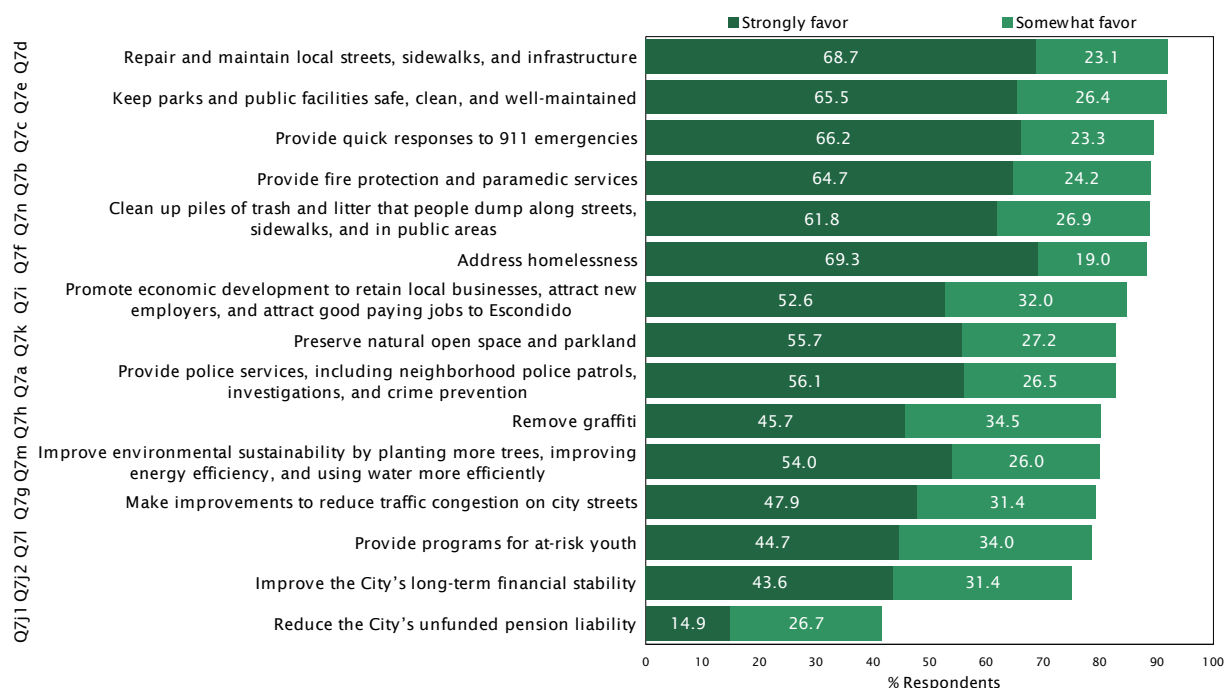
PROJECTS & SERVICES

The ballot language presented in Question 5 indicated that the proposed measure would provide funding for general city services in the City of Escondido such as police patrols and crime prevention, fire protection, paramedic, and 911 emergency response, keeping streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks, and facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained, addressing homelessness, traffic management, and other city services. The purpose of Question 7 was to provide respondents with a full range of services that may be funded by the proposed measure, as well as identify which of these services voters most favored funding with the proceeds of the measure.

After reading each service, respondents were asked if they would favor or oppose spending some of the money on that particular item assuming that the measure passed. Descriptions of the services tested, as well as voters' responses, are shown in Figure 10 below. The order in which the services were presented to respondents was randomized to avoid a systematic position bias.

Question 7 *The measure we've been discussing will provide funding for a variety of services in your community. If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: -----, or do you not have an opinion?*

FIGURE 10 PROJECTS & SERVICES



Overall, the services that resonated with the largest percentage of respondents were repairing and maintaining local streets, sidewalks and infrastructure (92% strongly or somewhat favor), keeping parks and public areas safe, clean, and well-maintained (92%), providing quick responses to 911 emergencies (90%), providing fire protection and paramedic services (89%), cleaning up piles of trash and litter that people dump along streets, sidewalks, and in public areas (89%), and addressing homelessness (88%).

SERVICE RATINGS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 2 presents the top five services (showing the percentage of respondents who *strongly* favor each) by position at the Initial Ballot Test. Not surprisingly, individuals who initially opposed the measure were generally less likely to favor spending money on a given service when compared with supporters. Nevertheless, initial supporters, opponents, and the undecided did agree on four of the top five priorities for funding.

TABLE 2 TOP PROJECTS & SERVICES BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Project or Service Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 666)	Q7f	Address homelessness	78
	Q7e	Keep parks and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	77
	Q7d	Repair and maintain local streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure	76
	Q7c	Provide quick responses to 911 emergencies	76
	Q7b	Provide fire protection and paramedic services	73
Probably or Definitely No (n = 265)	Q7d	Repair and maintain local streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure	52
	Q7f	Address homelessness	52
	Q7b	Provide fire protection and paramedic services	48
	Q7c	Provide quick responses to 911 emergencies	47
	Q7e	Keep parks and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	44
Not Sure (n = 84)	Q7d	Repair and maintain local streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure	64
	Q7f	Address homelessness	58
	Q7c	Provide quick responses to 911 emergencies	56
	Q7n	Clean up piles of trash and litter that people dump along streets, sidewalks, and in public areas	56
	Q7b	Provide fire protection and paramedic services	53

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

If the City chooses to place a measure on an upcoming ballot, voters will be exposed to various arguments about the measure in the ensuing months. Proponents of the measure will present arguments to try to persuade voters to support a measure, just as opponents may present arguments to achieve the opposite goal. For this study to be a reliable gauge of voter support for the proposed sales tax measure, it is important that the survey simulate the type of discussion and debate that will occur prior to the vote taking place and identify how this information ultimately shapes voters' opinions about the measure.

The objective of Question 8 was thus to present respondents with arguments in favor of the proposed measure and identify whether they felt the arguments were convincing reasons to support it. Arguments in opposition to the measure were also presented and are discussed later in this report (see *Negative Arguments* on page 22). Within each series, specific arguments were administered in random order to avoid a systematic position bias.

Question 8 *What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people are saying about the measure we've been discussing. Supporters of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to SUPPORT the measure?*

FIGURE 11 POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

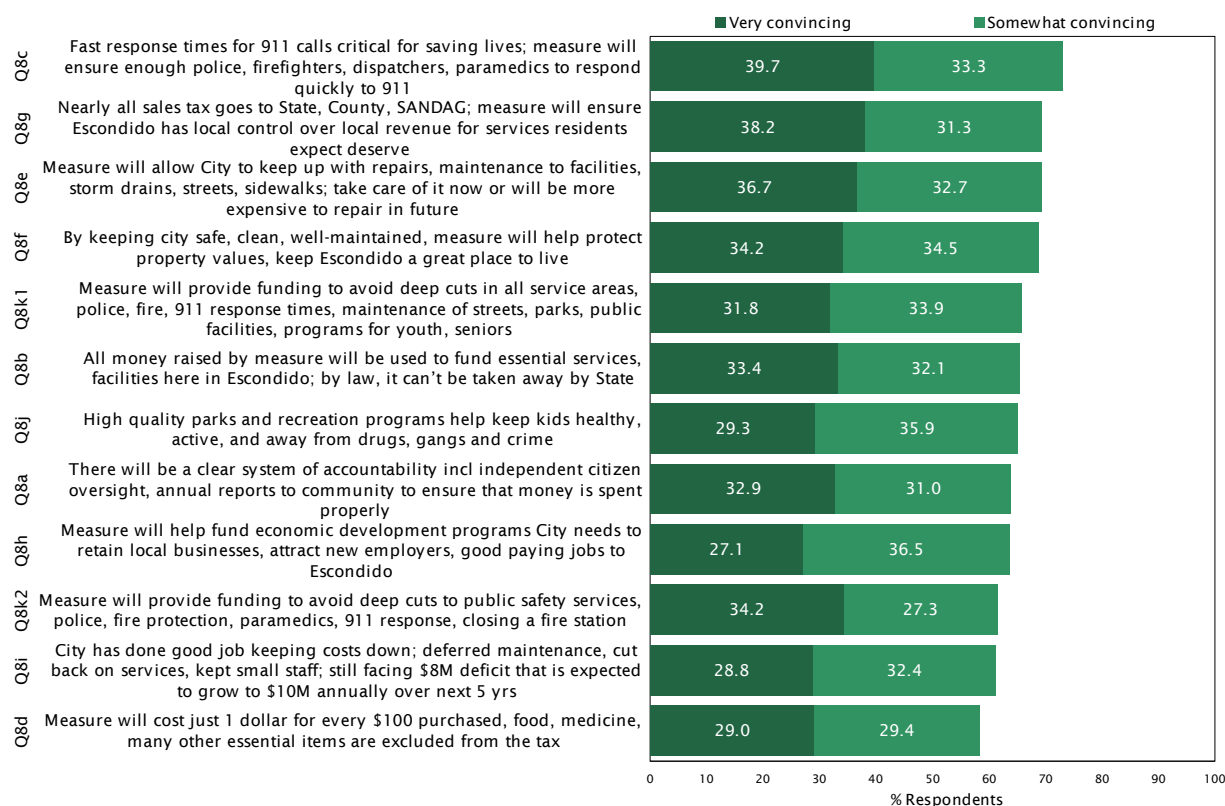


Figure 11 on the previous page presents the truncated positive arguments tested, as well as voters' reactions to the arguments. The arguments are ranked from most convincing to least convincing based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the argument was either a 'very convincing' or 'somewhat convincing' reason to support the sales tax measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive arguments were: *Fast emergency response times for 911 calls are critical for saving lives. This measure will ensure that we have enough police officers, firefighters, dispatchers, and paramedics to respond quickly to 911 emergencies* (73% very or somewhat convincing), *Currently, nearly all of the sales tax generated locally goes to the State of California, the County of San Diego, or SANDAG. This measure will ensure that Escondido has local control over local revenue for the services residents expect and deserve* (70%), and *The funding raised by this measure will allow the City to keep up with basic repairs and maintenance to public facilities, storm drains, streets, and sidewalks. If we don't take care of it now, it will be a lot more expensive to repair in the future* (69%).

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 3 on the next page lists the top five most convincing positive arguments (showing the percentage of respondents who cited it as *very convincing*) according to respondents' vote choice at the Initial Ballot Test. The positive arguments resonated with a much higher percentage of voters initially inclined to support the measure compared with those who initially opposed the measure or were unsure. Nevertheless, two arguments were ranked among the top five most compelling by all three groups.

TABLE 3 TOP POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

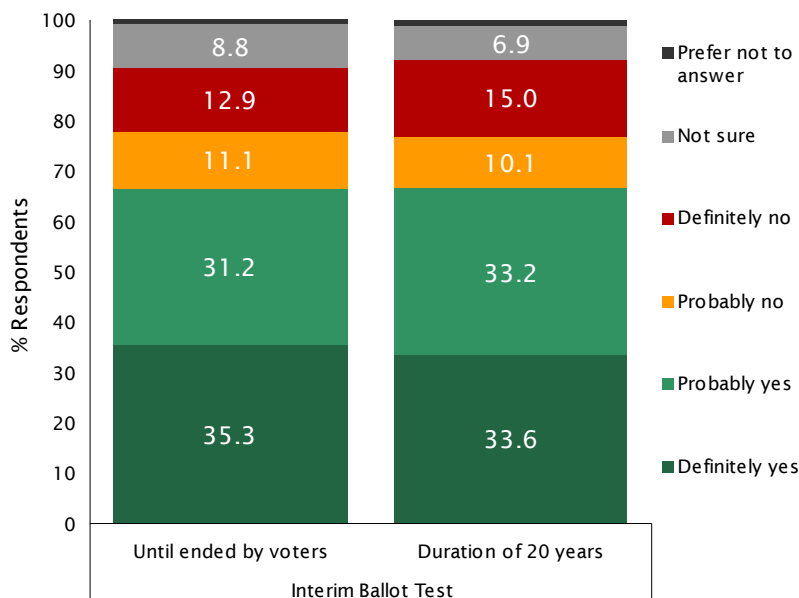
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 666)	Q8c	Fast response times for 911 calls critical for saving lives; measure will ensure enough police, firefighters, dispatchers, paramedics to respond quickly to 911	52
	Q8g	Nearly all sales tax goes to State, County, SANDAG; measure will ensure Escondido has local control over local revenue for services residents expect deserve	51
	Q8e	Measure will allow City to keep up with repairs, maintenance to facilities, storm drains, streets, sidewalks; take care of it now or will be more expensive to repair in future	48
	Q8k2	Measure will provide funding to avoid deep cuts to public safety services, police, fire protection, paramedics, 911 response, closing a fire station	48
	Q8f	By keeping city safe, clean, well-maintained, measure will help protect property values, keep Escondido a great place to live	46
Probably or Definitely No (n = 265)	Q8e	Measure will allow City to keep up with repairs, maintenance to facilities, storm drains, streets, sidewalks; take care of it now or will be more expensive to repair in future	14
	Q8c	Fast response times for 911 calls critical for saving lives; measure will ensure enough police, firefighters, dispatchers, paramedics to respond quickly to 911	12
	Q8g	Nearly all sales tax goes to State, County, SANDAG; measure will ensure Escondido has local control over local revenue for services residents expect deserve	11
	Q8f	By keeping city safe, clean, well-maintained, measure will help protect property values, keep Escondido a great place to live	9
	Q8h	Measure will help fund economic development programs City needs to retain local businesses, attract new employers, good paying jobs to Escondido	9
Not Sure (n = 84)	Q8c	Fast response times for 911 calls critical for saving lives; measure will ensure enough police, firefighters, dispatchers, paramedics to respond quickly to 911	33
	Q8k1	Measure will provide funding to avoid deep cuts in all service areas, police, fire, 911 response times, maintenance of streets, parks, public facilities, programs for youth, seniors	32
	Q8g	Nearly all sales tax goes to State, County, SANDAG; measure will ensure Escondido has local control over local revenue for services residents expect deserve	27
	Q8a	There will be a clear system of accountability incl independent citizen oversight, annual reports to community to ensure that money is spent properly	26
	Q8h	Measure will help fund economic development programs City needs to retain local businesses, attract new employers, good paying jobs to Escondido	25

INTERIM BALLOT TEST

After informing respondents about the services that could be funded by the measure as well as exposing them to positive arguments voters may encounter during an election cycle, the survey again presented respondents with the ballot language used previously to gauge how support for the proposed sales tax measure may have changed. As shown in Figure 12, at this point in the survey there was little difference in support based on the duration of the measure. Two-thirds (67%) of voters at the Interim Ballot Test supported a measure that would extend *until ended by voters*, whereas 24% opposed and 10% were unsure or unwilling to share their opinion. Two-thirds (67%) of voters also supported a comparable measure that would last *for 20 years*, while 25% opposed and 8% were unsure or unwilling to share their opinion.

Question 9 *Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again. To provide funding for general services in the City of Escondido, such as police patrols and crime prevention; fire protection, paramedic, and 9-1-1 emergency response; keeping streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks, and facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained; addressing homelessness, traffic management, and other city services; shall an ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing approximately 28 million dollars annually for general government use <<until ended by voters | for 20 years>>, with independent audits, citizen oversight, and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 12 INTERIM BALLOT TEST BY DURATION OF MEASURE



SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS Table 4 on the next page shows how support for the measure at this point in the survey varied by key voter subgroups, as well as the change in subgroup support when compared with the Initial Ballot Test. Positive differences appear in green and negative differences appear in red. As shown in the table, support for the sales tax measure increased by modest amounts (less than 5 percentage points) between the Initial and Interim Ballot Test for

most voter subgroups. Notable exceptions include recent registrants (+13%) and those who had lived in Escondido between 10 to 14 years (+7%).

TABLE 4 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST

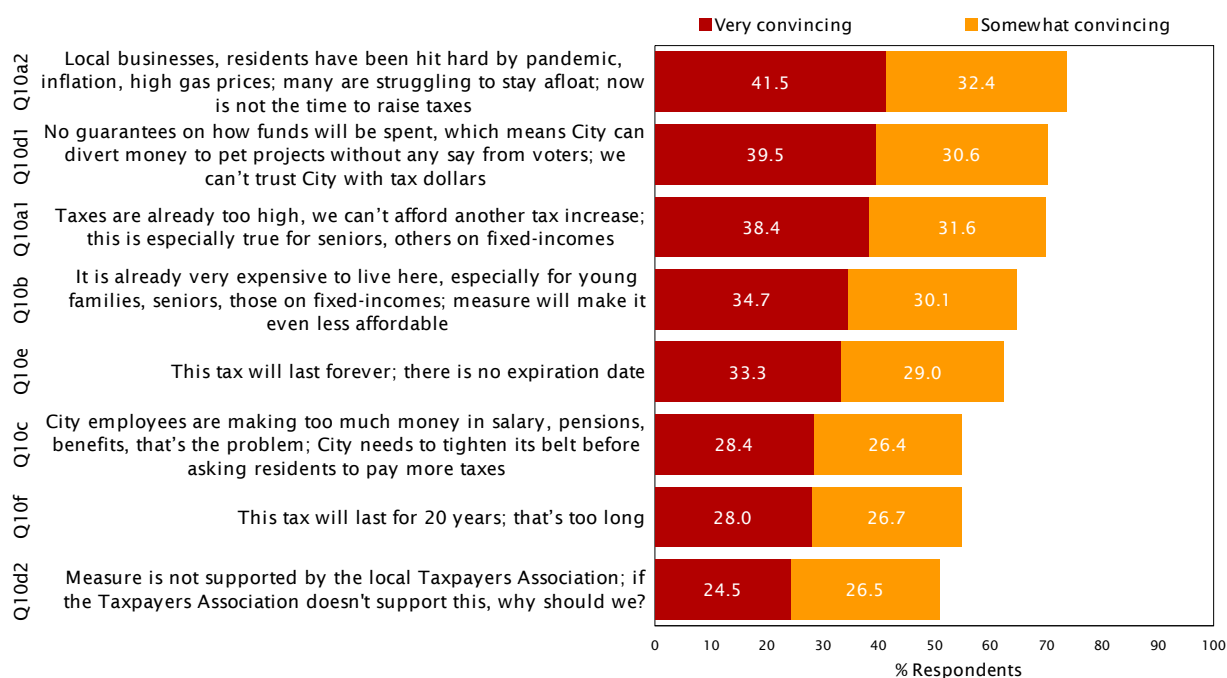
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q5)
Overall		100.0	66.6	+1.4
Years in Escondido (Q1)	Less than 5	16.7	71.5	+4.8
	5 to 9	16.6	73.4	-3.8
	10 to 14	8.3	68.7	+7.0
	15 or more	58.4	62.8	+1.2
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	73.2	71.9	+2.4
	Dissatisfied	26.8	52.8	+0.1
Child in Hsld (Q15)	Yes	28.7	72.5	+2.8
	No	71.3	66.0	+1.1
Opinion of Economy in 6 Months (Q13)	Better	9.5	84.8	+4.1
	About the same	35.7	76.6	+2.3
	Worse	54.8	56.2	+0.6
Fiscal Management Rating (Q14)	Excellent, good	30.2	87.6	+2.7
	Fair	44.4	66.0	+2.6
	Poor, very poor	25.4	42.4	-2.2
Party	Democrat	37.1	73.4	+1.0
	Republican	35.1	56.5	+0.1
	Other / DTS	27.8	70.2	+3.8
Age	18 to 29	16.1	71.3	+4.9
	30 to 39	17.1	70.0	+2.3
	40 to 49	14.1	69.3	+0.0
	50 to 64	25.9	61.2	+0.2
	65 or older	26.7	65.5	+0.7
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	11.8	86.6	+12.8
	Jun '12 to <Nov '18	24.8	62.5	-1.8
	Jun '06 to <Jun '12	11.2	62.8	+3.1
	Before Jun '06	52.2	64.8	+0.0
Household Party Type	Single dem	19.9	74.4	+0.0
	Dual dem	10.5	73.9	+3.9
	Single rep	14.2	61.9	+3.5
	Dual rep	13.3	58.2	-0.6
	Other	17.0	65.7	+3.6
	Mixed	25.1	65.1	+0.0
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	57.8	63.5	-0.5
	No	42.2	70.9	+4.1
Gender	Male	49.8	67.0	+2.4
	Female	50.2	66.3	+0.5
Council District	One	13.6	75.3	+4.8
	Two	34.7	66.5	+3.2
	Three	21.0	68.9	-2.0
	Four	30.6	61.3	+0.3
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	74.4	66.8	+1.5
	No	25.6	66.0	+1.1
Likely Jun 2022 Voter	Yes	65.5	63.9	-0.3
	No	34.5	71.7	+4.8

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Whereas Question 8 of the survey presented respondents with arguments in favor of the sales tax measure, Question 10 presented respondents with arguments designed to elicit opposition to the measure. In the case of Question 10, however, respondents were asked whether they felt that the argument was a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to *oppose* the measure. The arguments tested, as well as voters' opinions about the arguments, are presented below in Figure 13.

Question 10 *Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying. Opponents of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?*

FIGURE 13 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS



Overall, the most compelling negative arguments were: *Local businesses and residents have been hit hard by the pandemic, inflation, and high gas prices. Many are struggling to stay afloat. Now is not the time to raise taxes* (74% very or somewhat convincing), *There are no guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means the City can divert the money to pet projects without any say from voters. We can't trust the City with our tax dollars* (70%), and *Taxes are already too high - we can't afford another tax increase. This is especially true for seniors and others on fixed incomes* (70%).

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 5 on the next page ranks the negative arguments (showing the percentage of respondents who cited each as very convincing) according to respondents' vote choice at the Initial Ballot Test.

TABLE 5 TOP NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

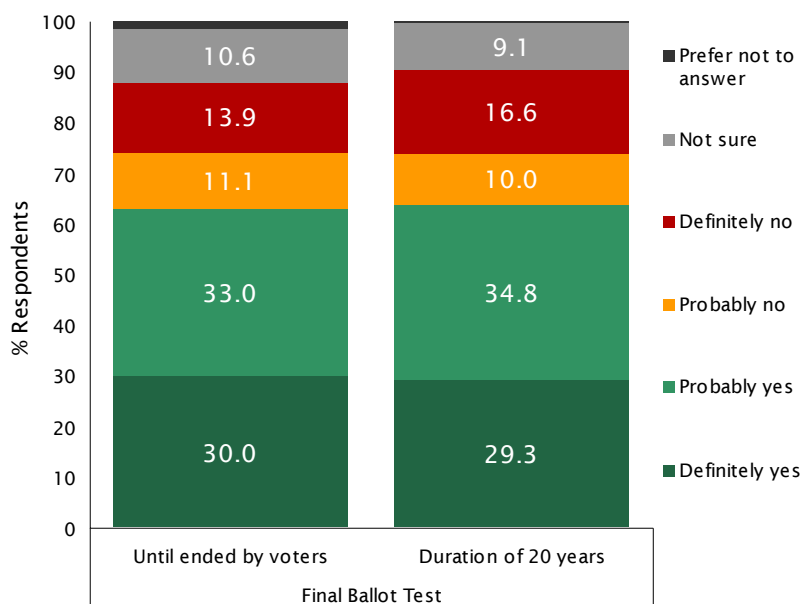
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 666)	Q10d1	No guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means City can divert money to pet projects without any say from voters; we can't trust City with tax dollars	31
	Q10a2	Local businesses, residents have been hit hard by pandemic, inflation, high gas prices; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	29
	Q10e	This tax will last forever; there is no expiration date	25
	Q10a1	Taxes are already too high, we can't afford another tax increase; this is especially true for seniors, others on fixed-incomes	25
	Q10c	City employees are making too much money in salary, pensions, benefits, that's the p	23
Probably or Definitely No (n = 265)	Q10a2	Local businesses, residents have been hit hard by pandemic, inflation, high gas prices; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	71
	Q10a1	Taxes are already too high, we can't afford another tax increase; this is especially true for seniors, others on fixed-incomes	67
	Q10b	It is already very expensive to live here, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed-incomes; measure will make it even less affordable	64
	Q10d1	No guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means City can divert money to pet projects without any say from voters; we can't trust City with tax dollars	61
	Q10e	This tax will last forever; there is no expiration date	54
Not Sure (n = 84)	Q10a2	Local businesses, residents have been hit hard by pandemic, inflation, high gas prices; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	54
	Q10a1	Taxes are already too high, we can't afford another tax increase; this is especially true for seniors, others on fixed-incomes	49
	Q10b	It is already very expensive to live here, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed-incomes; measure will make it even less affordable	42
	Q10f	This tax will last for 20 years; that's too long	39
	Q10d1	No guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means City can divert money to pet projects without any say from voters; we can't trust City with tax dollars	39

FINAL BALLOT TEST

Voters' opinions about ballot measures are often not rigid, especially when the amount of information presented to the public on a measure has been limited. A goal of the survey was thus to gauge how voters' opinions about the proposed measure may be affected by the information they could encounter during the course of an election cycle. After providing respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, services that could be funded, and arguments in favor of and against the proposal, the survey again asked voters whether they would vote 'yes' or 'no' on the proposed sales tax measure.

Question 11 *Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. To provide funding for general services in the City of Escondido, such as police patrols and crime prevention; fire protection, paramedic, and 9-1-1 emergency response; keeping streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks, and facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained; addressing homelessness, traffic management, and other city services; shall an ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing approximately 28 million dollars annually for general government use <<until ended by voters | for 20 years>>, with independent audits, citizen oversight, and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 14 FINAL BALLOT TEST BY DURATION OF MEASURE



At this point in the survey, support for a general sales tax that would continue *until ended by voters* was found among 63% of likely November 2022 voters, with 30% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 25% of respondents opposed the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 12% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice. Support for a sales tax measure that would last *for 20 years* was found among 64% of likely November 2022 voters, with 29% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 27% of respondents opposed the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

CHANGE IN SUPPORT

Combining the results for both versions of the measure, Table 6 provides a closer look at how support for the proposed measure changed over the course of the survey by calculating the difference in support between the Initial, Interim, and Final Ballot Tests within subgroups of voters. The percentage of support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test is shown in the column with the heading *% Probably or Definitely Yes*. The columns to the right show the difference between the Final and the Initial, and the Final and Interim Ballot Tests. Positive differences appear in green, and negative differences appear in red.

TABLE 6 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT FINAL BALLOT TEST

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Change From Interim Ballot Test (Q9)
Overall		100.0	63.5	-1.6	-3.1
Years in Escondido (Q1)	Less than 5	16.7	66.0	-0.6	-5.4
	5 to 9	16.6	73.3	-3.8	-0.0
	10 to 14	8.3	68.1	+6.5	-0.6
	15 or more	58.4	59.1	-2.5	-3.7
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	73.2	68.9	-0.6	-3.0
	Dissatisfied	26.8	49.7	-3.0	-3.1
Child in Hsld (Q15)	Yes	28.7	70.8	+1.1	-1.7
	No	71.3	62.5	-2.5	-3.5
Opinion of Economy in 6 Months (Q13)	Better	9.5	84.4	+3.7	-0.4
	About the same	35.7	73.1	-1.1	-3.4
	Worse	54.8	53.1	-2.4	-3.1
Fiscal Management Rating (Q14)	Excellent, good	30.2	85.4	+0.5	-2.2
	Fair	44.4	64.0	+0.7	-2.0
	Poor, very poor	25.4	38.8	-5.7	-3.6
Party	Democrat	37.1	70.5	-2.0	-2.9
	Republican	35.1	52.2	-4.2	-4.3
	Other / DTS	27.8	68.4	+2.0	-1.8
Age	18 to 29	16.1	67.7	+1.4	-3.6
	30 to 39	17.1	67.6	-0.2	-2.4
	40 to 49	14.1	67.7	-1.6	-1.6
	50 to 64	25.9	56.7	-4.3	-4.5
	65 or older	26.7	62.9	-1.9	-2.6
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	11.8	82.4	+8.6	-4.2
	Jun '12 to <Nov '18	24.8	57.5	-6.8	-5.0
	Jun '06 to <Jun '12	11.2	64.0	+4.3	+1.2
	Before Jun '06	52.2	62.0	-2.8	-2.8
Household Party Type	Single dem	19.9	72.3	-2.1	-2.1
	Dual dem	10.5	69.1	-0.9	-4.8
	Single rep	14.2	54.4	-4.0	-7.5
	Dual rep	13.3	55.6	-3.2	-2.6
	Other	17.0	65.5	+3.4	-0.2
	Mixed	25.1	62.3	-2.8	-2.9
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	57.8	60.8	-3.2	-2.7
	No	42.2	67.3	+0.5	-3.6
Gender	Male	49.8	63.6	-1.0	-3.4
	Female	50.2	63.6	-2.3	-2.8
Council District	One	13.6	73.4	+2.9	-1.9
	Two	34.7	63.0	-0.4	-3.5
	Three	21.0	68.2	-2.8	-0.7
	Four	30.6	56.6	-4.4	-4.7
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	74.4	63.0	-2.2	-3.8
	No	25.6	64.9	+0.0	-1.1
Likely Jun 2022 Voter	Yes	65.5	61.2	-3.0	-2.7
	No	34.5	67.9	+1.0	-3.8

As expected, voters generally responded to the negative arguments with a reduction in their support for the sales tax measure when compared with the levels recorded at the Interim Ballot Test. The general trend over the course of the entire survey (Initial to Final Ballot Test) was also one of slightly declining support for most voter subgroups, averaging -1.6 percentage points overall. Nevertheless, even with this decline, support for the proposed measure at the Final Ballot Test remained well above the simple majority required for passage of a general tax.

Whereas Table 6 displays change in support for the measure over the course of the interview at the subgroup level, Table 7 displays the individual-level changes that occurred between the Initial and Final Ballot tests for the measure. On the left side of the table is shown each of the response options to the Initial Ballot Test and the percentage of respondents in each group. The cells in the body of the table depict movement within each response group (row) based on the information provided throughout the course of the survey as recorded by the Final Ballot Test. For example, in the first row we see that of the 31.3% of respondents who indicated that they would definitely support the measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 22.9% also indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. Approximately 6.0% moved to the probably support group, 0.6% moved to the probably oppose group, 0.6% moved to the definitely oppose group, and 1.1% stated they were now unsure of their vote choice.

To ease interpretation of the table, the cells are color coded. Red shaded cells indicate declining support, green shaded cells indicate increasing support, whereas white cells indicate no movement. Moreover, within the cells, a white font indicates a fundamental change in the vote: from yes to no, no to yes, or not sure to either yes or no.

TABLE 7 MOVEMENT BETWEEN INITIAL & FINAL BALLOT TEST

Initial Ballot Test (Q5)		Final Ballot Test (Q11)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	31.3%	22.9%	6.0%	0.6%	0.6%	1.1%
Probably support	33.9%	6.0%	24.0%	1.1%	0.2%	2.6%
Probably oppose	11.6%	0.0%	1.9%	5.8%	2.0%	1.9%
Definitely oppose	14.3%	0.0%	0.6%	1.6%	11.6%	0.6%
Not sure	8.9%	0.6%	1.5%	1.4%	0.8%	4.6%

As one might expect, the information conveyed in the survey had the greatest impact on individuals who either weren't sure about how they would vote at the Initial Ballot Test or were tentative in their vote choice (probably yes or probably no). Moreover, Table 7 makes clear that although the information did impact some voters, it did not do so in a consistent way for all respondents. Some respondents found the information conveyed during the course of the interview to be a reason to become more supportive of the measure, whereas a slightly larger percentage found the same information to be a reason to be less supportive. Despite 15% of respondents making a *fundamental*⁴ shift in their opinion about the measure over the course of the interview, the net impact is that support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test was approximately five percentage points lower than support at the Initial Ballot Test.

4. This is, they changed from a position of support, opposition or undecided at the Initial Ballot Test to a different position at the Final Ballot Test.

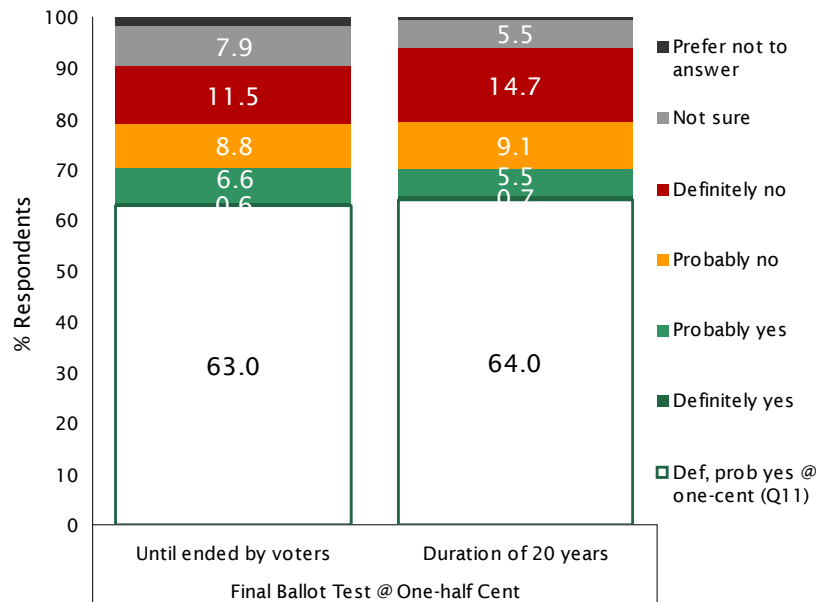
FINAL BALLOT TEST AT LOWER RATE

The ballot language tested throughout the survey indicated that the measure would increase the local sales tax rate by one cent and be used to fund general city services. Voters who did not support the proposed measure at the Final Ballot Test (Question 11) were subsequently asked if they would support the measure if the rate were set at a lower amount: one-half cent.

As shown in Figure 15, lowering the tax rate to one-half cent generated a modest amount of additional support for the proposed measure. For the version that would last *until ended by voters*, and additional 7% of voters indicated they would support the measure if the tax rate were lowered to one-half cent, although all but 0.6% of the additional support for the measure was 'soft' (probably yes). Similarly, for the measure that would last for a period of *20 years*, an additional 6% of respondents indicated they would support the measure if the rate were lowered, but just 0.7% indicated they would definitely do so.

Question 12 *What if the measure I just described raised the sales tax by a lower amount: one-half cent? Would you vote yes or no on the measure?*

FIGURE 15 FINAL BALLOT TEST AT ONE-HALF CENT



RELATED ATTITUDES

In addition to questions that were focused on the proposed sales tax measure, the survey also inquired as to voters' expectations for the economy and their assessment of the job the City has done in managing its finances to date.

ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS When asked about their expectations for the economy six months into the future, Escondido voters were mostly pessimistic, with 53% expecting the economy to be worse, 35% anticipating it will be about the same as today, while just 9% expected the economy will be better. An additional 3% preferred to not answer the question (Figure 16). When compared to their respective counterparts, Republicans and those between the ages of 50 and 64 were the most pessimistic regarding the direction of the economy (Figure 17).

Question 13 *Looking ahead six months from now, do you think the economy will be better than today, be about the same as today, or will it be worse than today?*

FIGURE 16 OPINION OF ECONOMY IN 6 MONTHS

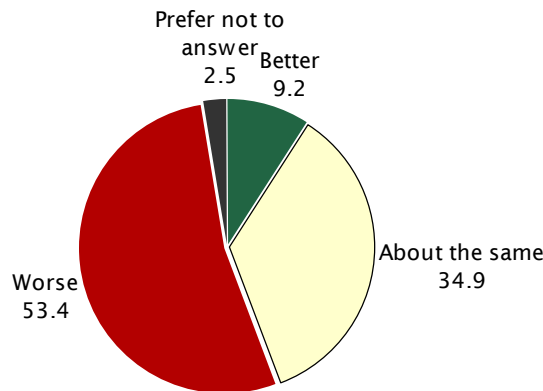
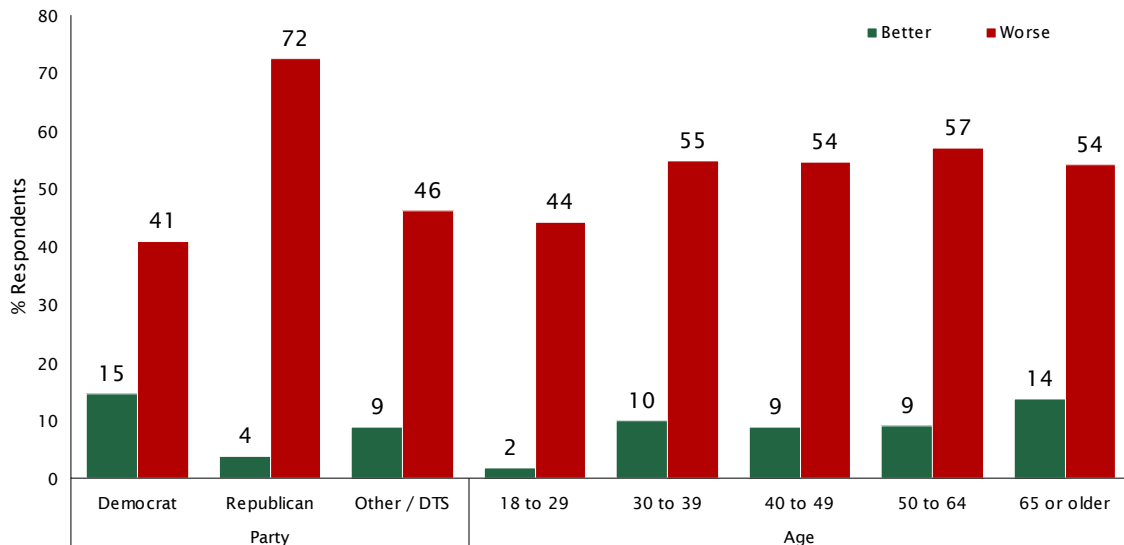


FIGURE 17 OPINION OF ECONOMY IN 6 MONTHS BY PARTY & AGE



FISCAL MANAGEMENT The final substantive question of the survey asked respondents to rate the job the City of Escondido has done in managing its financial resources. As shown in Figure 18, approximately one-quarter rated the City's performance as excellent (2%) or good (21%), 35% rated it as fair, while one-in-five respondents used poor (13%) or very poor (7%) to describe the City's performance in managing its finances. An additional 22% were not sure or preferred to not answer the question. For the interested reader, figures 19 and 20 show how the percentage who rated the City's performance in managing its finances as excellent or good varied by partisanship, age, Council District, and position at the Initial Ballot Test.

Question 14 *In your opinion, has the City of Escondido done an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of managing its financial resources?*

FIGURE 18 FISCAL MANAGEMENT RATING

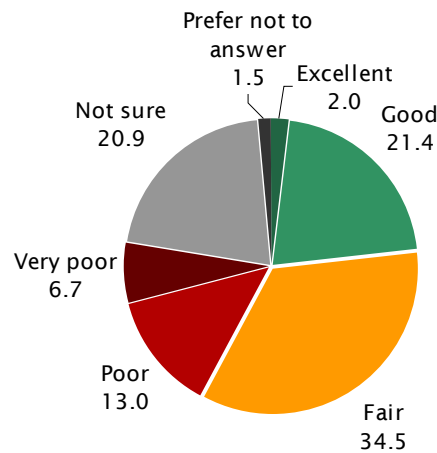


FIGURE 19 FISCAL MANAGEMENT RATING BY PARTY & AGE

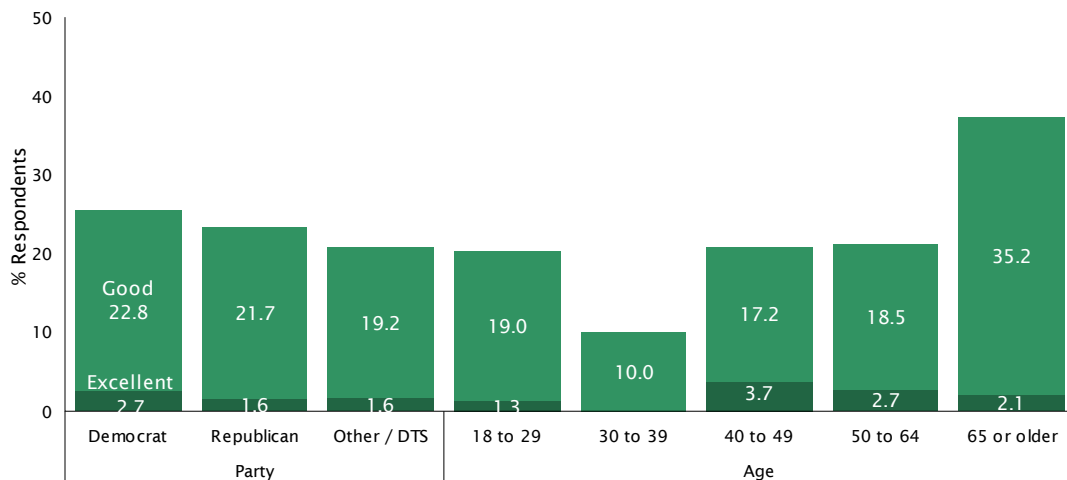
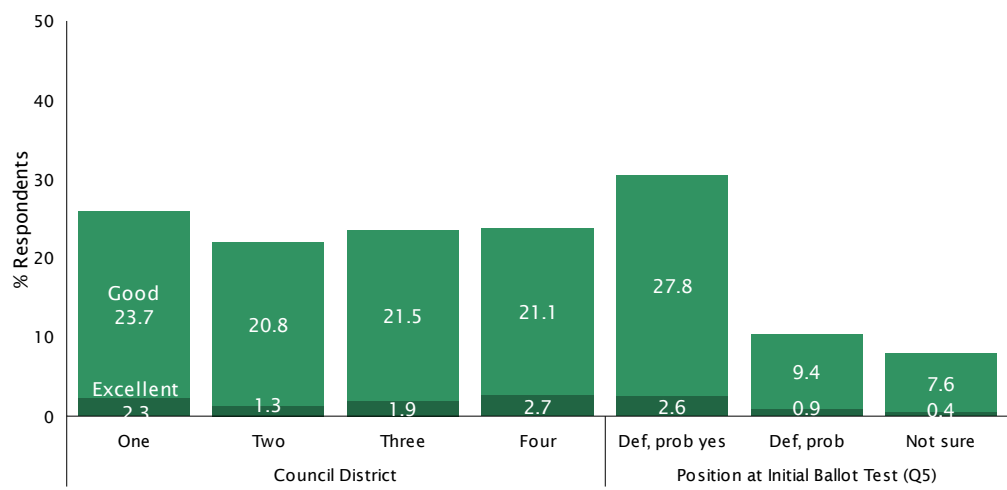


FIGURE 20 FISCAL MANAGEMENT RATING BY COUNCIL DISTRICT & POSITION INITIAL BALLOT TEST





BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS

TABLE 8 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

Total Respondents	1022
Years in Escondido (Q1)	
Less than 5	17
5 to 9	16
10 to 14	8
15 or more	58
Prefer not to answer	1
Child in Hsld (Q15)	
Yes	28
No	69
Prefer not to answer	3
Gender	
Male	50
Female	50
Prefer not to answer	0
Party	
Democrat	37
Republican	35
Other / DTS	28
Age	
18 to 29	16
30 to 39	17
40 to 49	14
50 to 64	26
65 or older	27
Registration Year	
Since Nov '18	12
Jun '12 to <Nov '18	25
Jun '06 to <Jun '12	11
Before Jun '06	52
Household Party Type	
Single dem	20
Dual dem	11
Single rep	14
Dual rep	13
Other	17
Mixed	25
Homeowner on Voter File	
Yes	58
No	42
Likely to Vote by Mail	
Yes	74
No	26
Likely Jun 2022 Voter	
Yes	66
No	34

In addition to questions directly related to the proposed measure, the study collected basic demographic information about respondents and their households. Some of this information was gathered during the interview, although much of it was collected from the voter file. The profile of the likely November 2022 voter sample used for this study is shown in Table 8.

M E T H O D O L O G Y

The following sections outline the methodology used in the study, as well as the motivation for using certain techniques.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT Dr. McLarney of True North Research worked closely with the City of Escondido to develop a questionnaire that covered the topics of interest and avoided possible sources of systematic measurement error, including position-order effects, wording effects, response-category effects, scaling effects, and priming. Several questions included multiple individual items. Because asking items in a set order can lead to a systematic position bias in responses, items were asked in random order for each respondent.

Some of the questions asked in this study were presented only to a subset of respondents. For example, only individuals who did not support the sales tax or were unsure at the Initial Ballot Test (Question 5) were asked to describe the reason for their position (Question 6). In some cases, two versions of a project or argument were tested to identify how wording differences impact perceptions of the item. In such cases, half of the sample received the item with version 1 wording (e.g., Question 8, item K1) and the other half received version 2 (e.g., Question 8, item K2). The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 35) identifies the skip patterns and programming instructions used in the survey to ensure each respondent received the appropriate questions.

PROGRAMMING, PRE-TEST & TRANSLATION Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist interviewers when conducting telephone interviews. The CATI program automatically navigates skip patterns, randomizes the appropriate question items, and alerts the interviewer to certain types of keypunching mistakes should they occur. The survey was also programmed into a passcode-protected online survey application to allow online participation for sampled voters. The integrity of the questionnaire was pre-tested internally by True North and by dialing into voter households in the City prior to formally beginning the survey. Once finalized, the survey was professionally translated into Spanish to allow for data collection in both English and Spanish languages.

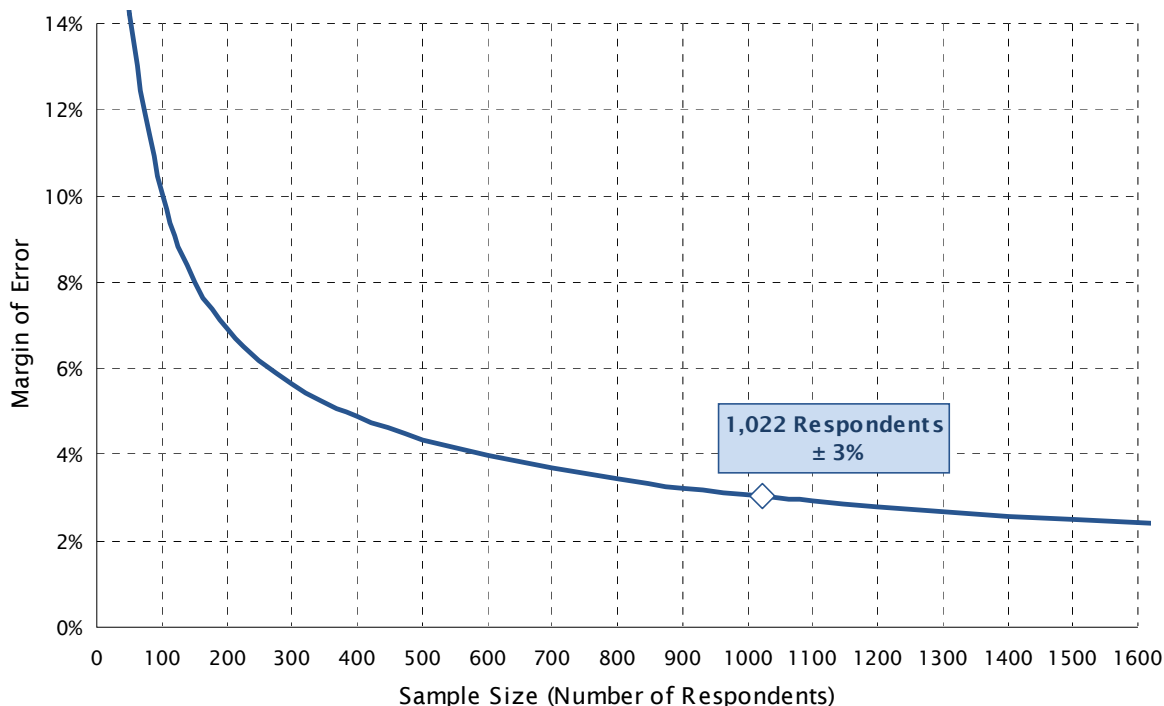
SAMPLE The survey was administered to a random sample of 1,022 registered voters in the City who are likely to participate in the November 2022 election, including a subset who are also likely to participate in the lower turnout June 2022 primary election. Consistent with the profile of this universe, the sample was stratified into clusters, each representing a combination of age, gender, and household party-type. Individuals were then randomly selected based on their profile into an appropriate cluster. This method ensures that if a person of a particular profile refuses to participate in the study, they are replaced by an individual who shares their same profile.

STATISTICAL MARGIN OF ERROR By using the probability-based sampling design noted above, True North ensured that the final sample was representative of voters in the City who are likely to participate in the November 2022 election. The results of the sample can thus be used to estimate the opinions of *all* voters likely to participate in this election. Because not all voters participated in the study, however, the results have what is known as a statistical margin

of error due to sampling. The margin of error refers to the difference between what was found in the survey of 1,022 voters for a particular question and what would have been found if all 49,610 likely November 2022 voters identified in the City had been surveyed for the study.

Figure 21 provides a graphic plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative response. For this survey, the maximum margin of error is $\pm 3\%$.

FIGURE 21 MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR DUE TO SAMPLING



Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by subgroups such as age, gender, and partisan affiliation. Figure 21 is thus useful for understanding how the maximum margin of error for a percentage estimate will grow as the number of individuals asked a question (or in a particular subgroup) shrinks. Because the margin of error grows exponentially as the sample size decreases, the reader should use caution when generalizing and interpreting the results for small subgroups.

RECRUITING & DATA COLLECTION The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (email, text, and telephone) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Telephone interviews averaged 16 minutes in length and were conducted during weekday evenings (5:30PM to 9PM) and on weekends (10AM to 5PM). It is standard practice not to call during the day on weekdays because most working adults are unavailable and thus calling during those hours would likely bias the sample.

Voters recruited via email and text were assigned a unique passcode to ensure that only voters who received an invitation could access the online survey site, and that each voter could complete the survey only one time. During the data collection period, an email reminder notice was

also sent to encourage participation among those who had yet to take the survey. A total of 1,022 surveys were completed between May 19 and May 29, 2022.

DATA PROCESSING Data processing consisted of checking the data for errors or inconsistencies, coding and recoding responses, weighting, and preparing frequency analyses and cross-tabulations.

ROUNDING Numbers that end in 0.5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole number, whereas numbers that end in 0.4 or lower are rounded down to the nearest whole number. These same rounding rules are also applied, when needed, to arrive at numbers that include a decimal place in constructing figures and tables. Occasionally, these rounding rules lead to small discrepancies in the first decimal place when comparing tables and charts for a given question. Due to rounding, some figures and narrative include numbers that add to more than or less than 100%.

QUESTIONNAIRE & TOPLINES



City of Escondido
Revenue Measure Feasibility Survey
Final Toplines (n=1,022)
June 2022

Section 1: Introduction to Study

Hi, may I please speak to _____. My name is _____, and I'm calling on behalf of TNR, an independent public opinion research firm. We're conducting a survey of voters about important issues in Escondido (ES-con-DEE-doh) and I'd like to get your opinions.

If needed: This is a survey about important issues in your community. I'm NOT trying to sell anything and I won't ask for a donation.

If needed: The survey should take about 12 minutes to complete.

If needed: If now is not a convenient time, can you let me know a better time so I can call back?

If the person asks why you need to speak to the listed person or if they ask to participate instead, explain: For statistical purposes, at this time the survey must only be completed by this particular individual.

If the person says they are an elected official or is somehow associated with the survey, politely explain that this survey is designed to measure the opinions of those not closely associated with the study, thank them for their time, and terminate the interview.

Section 2: Quality of Life & City Services

I'd like to begin by asking you a few questions about what it is like to live in Escondido.

Q1 How long have you lived in Escondido?

1	Less than 1 year	2%
2	1 to 4 years	14%
3	5 to 9 years	16%
4	10 to 14 years	8%
5	15 years or longer	58%
99	Prefer not to answer	1%

Q2 How would you rate the overall quality of life in Escondido? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?

1	Excellent	5%
2	Good	55%
3	Fair	33%
4	Poor	5%
5	Very Poor	2%
98	Not sure	1%
99	Prefer not to answer	0%

City of Escondido Survey

June 2022

Q3	If the city government could change one thing to make Escondido a better place to live now and in the future, what change would you like to see? <i>Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.</i>	
	Address homeless issues	32%
	Improve infrastructure, streets, sidewalks	14%
	Improve public safety	12%
	Clean-up, beautify City, landscape, graffiti	9%
	Not sure / Cannot think of anything specific	9%
	Provide more affordable housing	7%
	Reduce traffic congestion	5%
	Improve, maintain downtown area, Grand Ave, more walkable	5%
	Improve, parks, recreation	5%
	Less residential density, high rise apartments, condos	3%
	Attract more high-end dining options	3%
	Enforce traffic laws	3%
	Provide more police presence, support police, funding	3%
	Improve schools, education	3%
	Provide more community events, activities for all ages	3%
	Address parking issues	2%
	Improve environmental efforts, preparedness	2%
	Reduce taxes, fees	2%
	Improve local economy, job opportunities	2%
	Enforce city codes	2%
	Attract, support small businesses	2%
	Renovate, repurpose old, empty buildings	2%
	No changes needed / Everything is fine	2%
Q4	Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Escondido is doing to provide city services? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?</i>	
	1 Very satisfied	14%
	2 Somewhat satisfied	53%
	3 Somewhat dissatisfied	18%
	4 Very dissatisfied	7%
	98 Not sure	7%
	99 Prefer not to answer	1%

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City of Escondido Survey

June 2022

Section 3: Initial Ballot Test

Later this year, voters in Escondido may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure.

Split Sample. Sample A receives 'until ended by voters', Sample B receives 'for 20 years'.

Q5 To provide funding for general services in the City of Escondido, such as:

- Police patrols and crime prevention
- Fire protection, paramedic, and 9-1-1 emergency response
- Keeping streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks, and facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained
- Addressing homelessness, traffic management, and other city services

shall an ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing approximately 28 million dollars annually for general government use <<until ended by voters | for 20 years>>, with independent audits, citizen oversight, and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? *Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?*

		Until Ended by Voters	For 20 Years		
	1	Definitely yes	31%	32%	Skip to Q7
	2	Probably yes	32%	36%	Skip to Q7
	3	Probably no	13%	11%	Ask Q6
	4	Definitely no	14%	15%	Ask Q6
	98	Not sure	10%	6%	Ask Q6
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%	0%	Skip to Q7
Q6	Is there a particular reason why you do <u>not</u> support or are unsure about the measure I just described? <i>If yes, ask: Please briefly describe your reason. Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.</i>				
	Taxes already too high		41%		
	Money is misspent, mismanaged		30%		
	Need more information		12%		
	Other ways to be funded		6%		
	Police do not need more money		6%		
	Do not trust government		5%		
	Other higher priorities in the city		4%		
	Not sure / Cannot think of anything specific		4%		
	City has enough money		2%		
	Measure should have a sunset		2%		
	Measure is too expensive		1%		
	Money will go to employees, union pensions, salaries		1%		

City of Escondido Survey

June 2022

Section 4: Projects & Services

Q7	The measure we've been discussing will provide funding for a variety of services in your community.						
	If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? <i>Get answer, if favor or oppose, then ask: Would that be strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?</i>						
	<i>Randomize. Split Sample J1/J2</i>	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Provide police services, including neighborhood police patrols, investigations, and crime prevention	56%	27%	5%	6%	3%	3%
B	Provide fire protection and paramedic services	65%	24%	3%	2%	4%	3%
C	Provide quick responses to 9-1-1 emergencies	66%	23%	2%	2%	3%	3%
D	Repair and maintain local streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure	69%	23%	3%	1%	2%	2%
E	Keep parks and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	65%	26%	3%	1%	1%	3%
F	Address homelessness	69%	19%	4%	3%	2%	3%
G	Make improvements to reduce traffic congestion on city streets	48%	31%	11%	2%	4%	3%
H	Remove graffiti	46%	35%	7%	3%	7%	3%
I	Promote economic development to retain local businesses, attract new employers, and attract good paying jobs to Escondido	53%	32%	5%	3%	4%	3%
J1	Reduce the City's unfunded pension liability	15%	27%	17%	12%	22%	6%
J2	Improve the City's long-term financial stability	44%	31%	8%	4%	8%	4%
K	Preserve natural open space and parkland	56%	27%	6%	3%	5%	4%
L	Provide programs for at-risk youth	45%	34%	8%	4%	6%	3%
M	Improve environmental sustainability by planting more trees, improving energy efficiency, and using water more efficiently	54%	26%	8%	5%	4%	4%
N	Clean up piles of trash and litter that people dump along streets, sidewalks, and in public areas	62%	27%	4%	2%	2%	3%

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June 2022

Section 5: Positive Arguments

What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people are saying about the measure we've been discussing.

Q8 Supporters of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to **SUPPORT** the measure?

		Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Not Sure	Prefer not to answer
	<i>Randomize. Split Sample K1/K2</i>						
A	There will be a clear system of accountability including independent citizen oversight and annual reports to the community to ensure that the money is spent properly.	33%	31%	15%	15%	3%	4%
B	All money raised by the measure will be used to fund essential services and facilities here in Escondido. By law, it can't be taken away by the State.	33%	32%	14%	11%	4%	4%
C	Fast emergency response times for 9-1-1 calls are critical for saving lives. This measure will ensure that we have enough police officers, firefighters, dispatchers, and paramedics to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies.	40%	33%	11%	9%	3%	4%
D	This measure will cost just 1 dollar for every 100 dollars purchased – and food, medicine and many other essential items are excluded from the tax.	29%	29%	22%	10%	6%	4%
E	The funding raised by this measure will allow the City to keep up with basic repairs and maintenance to public facilities, storm drains, streets, and sidewalks. If we don't take care of it now, it will be a lot more expensive to repair in the future.	37%	33%	15%	9%	2%	4%
F	By keeping our city safe, clean and well-maintained, this measure will help protect our property values and keep Escondido a great place to live.	34%	34%	16%	8%	2%	4%
G	Currently, nearly all of the sales tax generated locally goes to the State of California, the County of San Diego, or SANDAG. This measure will ensure that Escondido has local control over local revenue for the services residents expect and deserve.	38%	31%	13%	10%	4%	4%

City of Escondido Survey

June 2022

H	This measure will help fund the economic development programs the City needs to retain local businesses and attract new employers and good paying jobs to Escondido	27%	37%	19%	10%	3%	5%
I	The City of Escondido has done a good job keeping costs down. It has deferred maintenance projects, cut back on basic services, and kept a small staff despite a growing population. Even with these cost-cutting efforts, the City is facing an 8 million dollar deficit next year that is expected to grow to 10 million dollars annually over the next five years. There is no more room to cut if we want to keep our community a safe, clean place to live. We need to support this measure.	29%	32%	17%	13%	5%	4%
J	High quality parks and recreation programs help keep kids healthy, active, and away from drugs, gangs and crime.	29%	36%	16%	10%	4%	4%
K1	This measure will provide the funding needed to avoid deep cuts in all service areas, including police, fire protection, 9-1-1 emergency response times, the maintenance of streets, parks and public facilities, as well as programs for youth and seniors.	32%	34%	12%	14%	4%	4%
K2	This measure will provide the funding needed to avoid deep cuts to public safety services including police, fire protection, paramedics, 9-1-1 emergency response, and closing a fire station.	34%	27%	17%	14%	4%	4%

City of Escondido Survey

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Section 6: Interim Ballot Test

Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again.

Split Sample. Sample A receives 'until ended by voters', Sample B receives 'for 20 years'.

Q9	To provide funding for general services in the City of Escondido, such as:				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police patrols and crime prevention • Fire protection, paramedic, and 9-1-1 emergency response • Keeping streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks, and facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained • Addressing homelessness, traffic management, and other city services 				
	shall an ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing approximately 28 million dollars annually for general government use <<until ended by voters for 20 years>>, with independent audits, citizen oversight, and all money locally controlled?				
	If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask:</i> Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?				
				Until Ended by Voters	For 20 Years
	1	Definitely yes		35%	34%
	2	Probably yes		31%	33%
98	3	Probably no		11%	10%
	4	Definitely no		13%	15%
	98	Not sure		9%	7%
	99	Prefer not to answer		1%	1%

Section 7: Negative Arguments

Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying.

Q10	Opponents of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?						
	<i>Randomize. Split Sample A1/A2, D1/D2</i>	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don' t Believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A1	Taxes are already too high – we can't afford another tax increase. This is especially true for seniors and others on fixed-incomes.	38%	32%	18%	6%	3%	3%
A2	Local businesses and residents have been hit hard by the pandemic, inflation, and high gas prices. Many are struggling to stay afloat. Now is not the time to raise taxes.	41%	32%	17%	5%	2%	2%

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B	It is already very expensive to live here, especially for young families, seniors, and those on fixed-incomes. This measure will make it even less affordable.	35%	30%	21%	8%	4%	2%
C	City employees are making too much money in salary, pensions and benefits – that's the problem. The City needs to tighten its belt before asking residents to pay more taxes.	28%	26%	24%	13%	5%	3%
D1	There are no guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means the City can divert the money to pet projects without any say from voters. We can't trust the City with our tax dollars.	40%	31%	14%	8%	5%	3%
D2	This measure is not supported by the local Taxpayers Association. If the Taxpayers Association doesn't support this, why should we?	24%	26%	32%	7%	8%	2%
<i>Only Sample A receives item E.</i>							
E	This tax will last forever. There is no expiration date.	33%	29%	23%	7%	4%	3%
<i>Only Sample B receives item F.</i>							
F	This tax will last for 20 years. That's too long.	28%	27%	26%	11%	5%	3%

Section 8: Final Ballot Test

Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time.

Split Sample. Sample A receives 'until ended by voters', Sample B receives 'for 20 years'.

Q11	To provide funding for general services in the City of Escondido, such as:				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police patrols and crime prevention• Fire protection, paramedic, and 9-1-1 emergency response• Keeping streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks, and facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained• Addressing homelessness, traffic management, and other city services				
	shall an ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing approximately 28 million dollars annually for general government use <<until ended by voters for 20 years>>, with independent audits, citizen oversight, and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i>				
			Until Ended by Voters	For 20 Years	
1	Definitely yes		30%	29%	Skip to Q13
2	Probably yes		33%	35%	Skip to Q13
3	Probably no		11%	10%	Ask Q12
4	Definitely no		14%	17%	Ask Q12
98	Not sure		11%	9%	Ask Q12
99	Prefer not to answer		1%	0%	Skip to Q13

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Q12	What if the measure I just described raised the sales tax by a lower amount: one-half cent ? Would you vote yes or no on the measure? <i>Get answer, then ask:</i> Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?		
		Until Ended by Voters	For 20 Years
	Def, prob yes @ one cent (Q11)	63%	64%
1	Definitely yes	1%	1%
2	Probably yes	7%	6%
3	Probably no	9%	9%
4	Definitely no	12%	15%
98	Not sure	8%	5%
99	Prefer not to answer	2%	0%

Section 9: Background & Demographics

Thank you so much for your participation. I have just two background questions for statistical purposes.

Q13	Looking ahead six months from now, do you think the economy will be better than today, be about the same as today, or will it be worse than today?		
1	Better	9%	
2	About the same	35%	
3	Worse	53%	
99	Prefer not to answer	2%	
Q14	In your opinion, has the City of Escondido done an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of managing its financial resources?		
1	Excellent	2%	
2	Good	21%	
3	Fair	34%	
4	Poor	13%	
5	Very poor	7%	
98	Not Sure	21%	
99	Prefer not to answer	1%	
Q15	Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household?		
1	Yes	28%	
2	No	69%	
99	Prefer not to answer	3%	

Those are all of the questions that I have for you. Thanks so much for participating in this important survey.

City of Escondido Survey

June 2022

Post-Interview & Sample Items			
S1	Gender		
	1	Male	50%
	2	Female	50%
	99	Prefer not to answer	<1%
S2	Party		
	1	Democrat	37%
	2	Republican	35%
	3	Other	6%
	4	DTS	22%
S3	Age on Voter File		
	1	18 to 29	16%
	2	30 to 39	17%
	3	40 to 49	14%
	4	50 to 64	26%
	5	65 or older	27%
S4	Registration Date		
	1	Since Nov 2018	12%
	2	Jun 2012 to before Nov 2018	25%
	3	Jun 2006 to before Jun 2012	11%
	4	Before June 2006	52%

City of Escondido Survey

June 2022

S5	Household Party Type		
	1	Single Dem	20%
	2	Dual Dem	11%
	3	Single Rep	14%
	4	Dual Rep	13%
	5	Single Other	12%
	6	Dual Other	5%
	7	Dem & Rep	4%
	8	Dem & Other	11%
	9	Rep & Other	10%
	0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	1%
S6	Homeowner on Voter File		
	1	Yes	58%
	2	No	42%
S7	Likely to Vote by Mail		
	1	Yes	74%
	2	No	26%
S8	Likely June 2022 Voter		
	1	Yes	66%
	2	No	34%
S9	Likely November 2022 Voter		
	1	Yes	100%
	2	No	0%
S10	Council District		
	1	One	14%
	2	Two	35%
	3	Three	21%
	4	Four	31%

City of Escondido Survey

June 2022

S11	Ballot Test Version		
	1	Until ended by voters	50%
	2	Duration of 20 years	50%