



VOTER OPINION TRACKING SURVEY
SUMMARY REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE
MADERA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION
AUTHORITY (MCTA)



APRIL 29, 2022



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INTRODUCTION

Prior to 1990, Madera County was largely dependent on state and federal funding to implement transportation improvements in the region, and these funding sources were not keeping pace with the increased demand and inflationary trends in construction, operation, and maintenance costs. In 1990, Madera County voters approved Measure A, a half-cent sales tax increase dedicated to addressing some of the region's most pressing transportation needs. In addition to the estimated \$250 million raised locally by Measure A over its initial authorization and when renewed by voters as Measure T in 2006, the measures have enabled Madera County to leverage hundreds of millions of dollars in additional state and federal matching funds for transportation projects that otherwise would have been directed to other counties. Put simply, Measures A and T have enabled the Madera County Transportation Authority (MCTA), Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC), the County of Madera, and local jurisdictions to deliver a variety of transportation improvements that would not have otherwise been possible—including improvements to regional highways, interchanges and bridges, highway and road safety projects, local street maintenance and infrastructure repairs, and expanded transit services. Unless renewed by voters, Measure T will expire in 2027.

MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH MCTA commissioned a baseline survey of voters in August 2021 to measure their transportation priorities and support for renewing Measure T. Recognizing that economic and political conditions have changed significantly since summer 2021, the primary purpose of this tracking survey was to produce an up-to-date, *statistically reliable* evaluation of voters' interest in renewing the existing Measure T half-cent transportation sales tax in the current environment. Additionally, should MCTA decide to move forward with placing a renewal measure on the ballot, the data can guide how best to structure the measure so it is consistent with voters' priorities and expressed needs. Specifically, the study was designed to:

- Gauge the current level of support for renewing the existing half-cent transportation sales tax (Measure T) for transportation projects and improvements;
- Identify the types of projects and improvements that voters are most interested in funding, should the measure be renewed;
- 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 would 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 renewing the existing half-cent transportation sales tax, it was important that in addition to measuring *current* opinions about the measure (Question 2), the survey expose respondents to the types of information voters are likely to encounter during an election cycle, including arguments in favor of (Question 5) and opposed to (Question 7) the measure, and gauge how this type of information ultimately impacts their voting decision (Questions 6 & 8).

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY For a full discussion of the research methods and techniques used in this study, turn to *Methodology* on page 27. In brief, the survey was administered to a random sample of 572 voters in Madera County who are likely to participate in the November 2022 election, with a subset who are also likely to participate in the lower turnout June 2022 primary election. The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (email, text, and phone) and multiple data collection methods (phone and online). Administered in English and Spanish between April 7 and April 14, 2022, the average interview was 17 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 sections titled *Just the Facts* and *Conclusions* are for you. They provide a summary of the most important factual findings of the survey in bullet-point format 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. And, for the truly ambitious reader, the questionnaire used for the interviews is contained at the back of this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 30) and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS True North thanks MCTA for the opportunity to assist in this important effort. The collective expertise, local knowledge, and insight provided by MCTA staff and representatives improved the overall quality of the research presented here. A special thanks also to Charles Heath and Alex Wara-Macapinlac (TBWBH Props & Measures) 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 MCTA. Any errors or 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 successful local revenue measures.



JUST THE FACTS

The following section is an outline of the main factual findings from the survey. For the reader's convenience, we have organized the findings according to the section titles used in the body of this report. Thus, if you would like to learn more about a particular finding, simply turn to the appropriate report section.

IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

- When asked to rate the importance of eight issues, improving the maintenance of local streets and roads received the highest percentage of respondents indicating that the issue was either extremely or very important (88%), followed by improving the local economy (83%), improving public safety (77%), and maintaining local infrastructure (77%).
- Given the purpose of this study, it is instructive to note that preventing local tax increases (68%) was rated lower in importance than the issues of improving the maintenance of local streets and roads (88%) and maintaining local infrastructure (77%), but higher than reducing traffic congestion (62%).

INITIAL BALLOT TEST

- With only the information provided in the ballot language, 76% of likely November 2022 voters surveyed indicated that they would support continuing the half-cent sales tax for transportation projects and services *until ended by voters*, 17% opposed, and 7% were unsure at the Initial Ballot Test. Voters who were told that the measure would last *for 30 years* were slightly more supportive, with 77% indicating they would support the proposal, 13% opposed, and 10% unsure.
- Among the minority of voters who initially opposed the measure (or were unsure), the most frequently mentioned specific reasons for their position were a concern that taxes are already too high, the perception that the money has been/will be mismanaged or misspent, and a need for more information.

PROJECTS & SERVICES

Presented with a list of 20 projects and services that could be funded by the measure, voters expressed the most interest in using the money to:

- Pave and maintain local streets and roads;
- Fix potholes;
- Complete a variety of projects in your area including reducing traffic congestion, maintenance and improvements along Avenues 12 and 17, Cleveland, Sunset, and State Routes 99 and 145, bridge improvements, local maintenance and safety improvements, and improving local transit services and bike paths [presented to Supervisorial District 3 and 4 voters];
- Complete a variety of projects in your area, including improving interchanges on State Routes 99, 152, and 233, maintaining 13th, Humboldt, Monterey, Robertson Boulevard, Road 16, and Avenue 24 ½, and improving local transit services and bike lanes [presented to Supervisorial District 2 voters]; *and*
- Add passing lanes and improve highway interchanges to improve safety and reduce head-on collisions.

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

When presented with arguments in favor of the measure, voters found the following arguments to be the most persuasive overall:

- *Madera County's population has nearly doubled during the past 30 years, and experts forecast that it will continue to grow at a fast rate. We need to continue improving our local highways, interchanges, and major streets to keep up with this growth, avoid traffic gridlock, and protect our quality of life.*
- *By law, all of the money raised by this measure must stay in Madera County to maintain and improve our transportation system. It can't be taken away by the State or used for other purposes.*
- *If voters approve this renewal measure, we will qualify for about 600 million dollars in additional state and federal matching funds to make priority repairs and transportation improvements in Madera County. Without a local measure, we will not get our fair share of State and Federal funding.*

INTERIM BALLOT TEST

- After presenting respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, projects and services that could be funded, as well as exposing them to positive arguments they may encounter about the measure, 78% of likely voters who received the *Until Ended by Voters* version supported the renewal at the Interim Ballot Test, whereas 80% of voters who received the *Duration of 30 Years* version of the measure indicated support.

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Of the arguments in opposition to the measure, voters found the following to be the most persuasive:

- *We shouldn't reward government for being wasteful by voting to increase our taxes. They already have all of the money they need—they just need to be more efficient in how they spend it.*
- *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 be raising taxes.*
- *California just raised the gas tax and the Federal Government passed a trillion dollar infrastructure bill, which will make billions available for transportation projects in California. We don't need to have a local tax too.*

FINAL BALLOT TEST

- After providing respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, projects and services that could be funded, and arguments in favor of and against the proposal, support for a sales tax renewal that would continue *until ended by voters* was found among 68% of likely November 2022 voters, with 44% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 23% of respondents opposed the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice. Support for a renewal that would last *for 30 years* was found among 71% of voters, with 41% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 20% of respondents opposed this version of the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.



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 and TBWBH Props & Measures’ interpretations of the tracking survey results and the firms’ collective experience conducting revenue measure studies for public agencies throughout the State.

Is it feasible to renew the Measure T transportation sales tax measure in 2022?

Yes. Madera County voters continue to rank improving the maintenance of local streets and roads and maintaining local infrastructure among the *most* important issues facing the County—more important than addressing homelessness, reducing traffic congestion, preventing local tax increases, and other benchmark issues. These sentiments translate into strong *natural* support (77%) for renewing the existing Measure T half-cent sales tax to keep local streets, highways, and infrastructure in good repair, fix potholes, improve highway safety, 911 vehicle access and safe routes to schools, reduce traffic congestion, and complete other transportation projects. It’s also worth noting that despite trends in inflation, higher gas prices, and other economic concerns, support for the proposed Measure T renewal has remained stable over the past eight months (no decrease).

The results of this tracking survey suggest that, if structured appropriately and combined with an effective public outreach/education effort *and* a solid independent campaign, the proposed sales tax renewal measure has a very good chance of passage if placed on the November 2022 ballot.

Having stated that a sales tax renewal 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 survey results continue to be 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 and TBWBH Props & Measures recommend.

What projects do voters identify as priorities for a future measure?

One of the goals of this study was to confirm voters’ preferences with respect to how the proceeds of a successful renewal measure should be spent. This information can be used to ensure that the measure’s expenditure plan is consistent with voters’ priorities.

Although Madera County voters clearly see a need for all of the projects, services and improvements that could be funded by the proposed measure, some projects and services stand out as priorities. Countywide,

respondents expressed the *greatest* interest in using sales tax proceeds to pave and maintain local streets and roads, fix potholes, add passing lanes and improve highway interchanges to improve safety and reduce head-on collisions, and retrofit or replace older bridges and overpasses that have structural problems. These projects were also among the top priorities as measured in the baseline survey in 2021.

Collections of *local* projects also appealed to voters in select areas of the County, such as reducing traffic congestion, maintenance and improvements along Avenues 12 and 17, Cleveland, Sunset, and State Routes 99 and 145, bridge improvements, local maintenance and safety improvements, and improving local transit services and bike paths in Supervisorial Districts 3 and 4, and improving interchanges on State Routes 99, 152, and 233, maintaining 13th, Humboldt, Monterey, Robertson Boulevard, Road 16, and Avenue 24 ½, and improving local transit services and bike lanes in Supervisorial District 2.

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 tracking survey employed a split-sample approach to test two options: until ended by voters and for 30 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 (and the prior baseline survey specific to a Measure T renewal), 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 renewal measure was nearly the same for a measure that would last 30 years (77%) as it was for a measure that would last until ended by voters (76%). At no point in the survey was there a statistically significant difference in support for the proposed measure based on the duration.¹

How might public information/education 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 revenue measure are somewhat sensitive to the nature, and amount, of information they have about the measure. Information about the specific transportation projects and services that could be funded by the measure, as well as arguments in favor of the measure, were found

1. With two independently selected random samples, a difference of 3% in support for the proposed measure at the end of the survey is not large enough to achieve statistical significance. It could also have been caused by differences in how respondents’ reacted to projects and arguments (pro/con) conveyed during the survey, rather than by the difference in duration.

by many voters to be compelling reasons to support the proposed sales tax—effectively increasing support for the measure to 79% at the Interim Ballot Test. However, voters were also sensitive to opposition arguments designed to reduce support for the measure, 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 the proposed 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 tracking 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 MCTA that a renewal of Measure T is feasible. Even with trends in inflation, high gas prices, and concerns about international conflicts and the trajectory of the economy that have cropped up during the past eight months, voter support for renewing Measure T remained as strong in this tracking survey as it was in the baseline survey from 2021.

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.

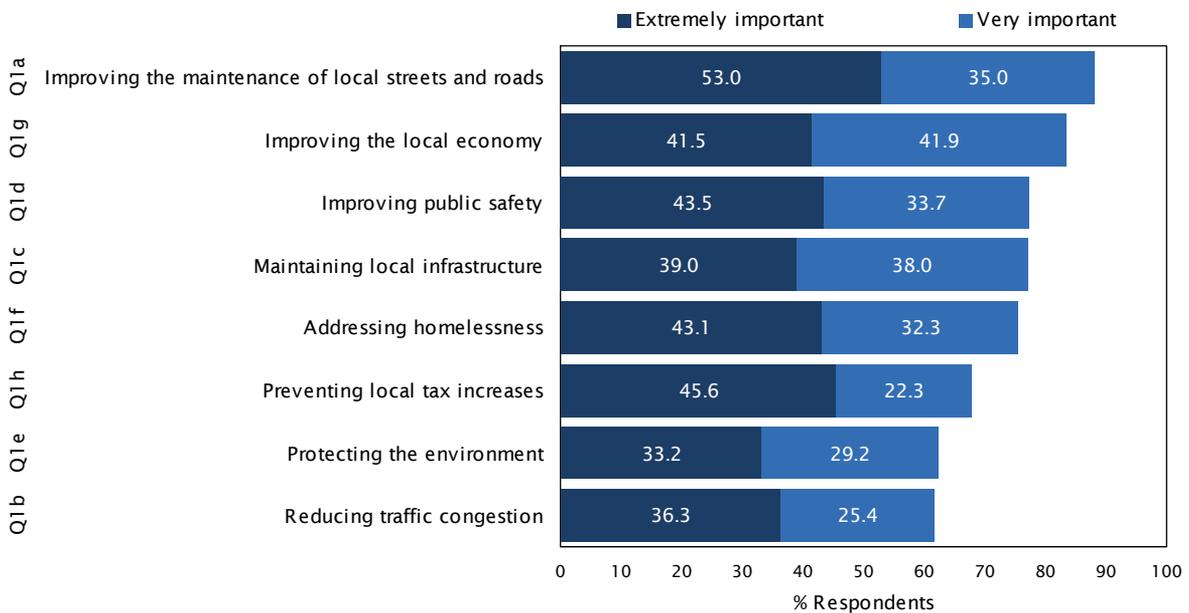
IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

The first substantive question of the survey presented respondents with several issues facing residents in the County and asked them to rate the importance of each issue. Because the same response scale was used for each issue, the results provide an insight into how important each issue is on a scale of importance *as well as* how each issue ranks in importance relative to the other issues tested. To avoid a systematic position bias, the order in which the issues were presented was randomized for each respondent.

Figure 1 presents the issues tested, as well as the importance assigned to each by survey participants, sorted by order of importance.² Overall, improving the maintenance of local streets and roads received the highest percentage of respondents indicating that the issue was either extremely or very important (88%), followed by improving the local economy (83%), improving public safety (77%), and maintaining local infrastructure (77%). Given the purpose of this study, it is instructive to note that preventing local tax increases (68%) was rated lower in importance than the issues of improving the maintenance of local streets and roads (88%) and maintaining local infrastructure (77%), but higher than reducing traffic congestion (62%).

Question 1 *To begin, I'm going to read a list of issues facing Madera County and for each one, please tell me how important you feel the issue is to you, using a scale of extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not at all important.*

FIGURE 1 IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES



2. Issues were sorted by the percentage of respondents who indicated that the issue was either *extremely* important or *very* important.

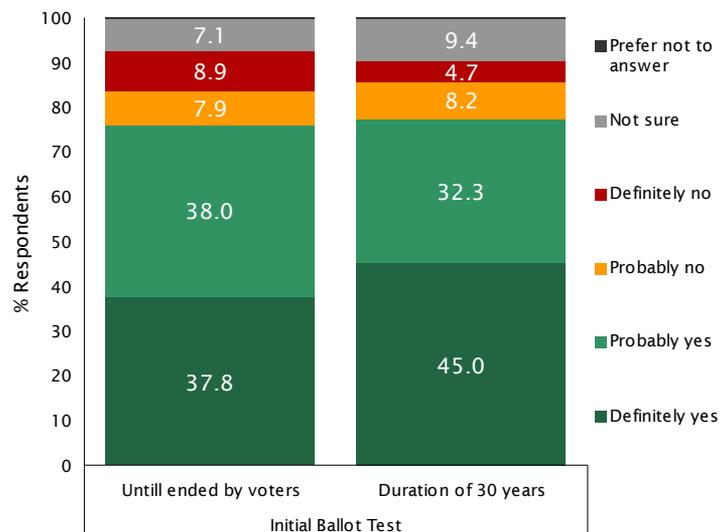
INITIAL BALLOT TEST

The primary research objective of this tracking survey was to estimate voters' support for a measure that would continue Madera County's voter-approved half-cent sales tax to keep local streets, highways, and infrastructure in good repair, fix potholes, improve highway safety, 911 vehicle access, and safe routes to schools, reduce traffic congestion, and complete other transportation projects. To this end, Question 2 was designed to take an early assessment of voters' support for the proposed measure.

The motivation for placing Question 2 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 education campaign. Question 2, 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 2 *Later this year, voters in Madera County may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure. In order to keep local streets, highways, and infrastructure in good repair; fix potholes; improve highway safety, 911 vehicle access, and safe routes to schools; reduce traffic congestion; complete other transportation projects; and qualify for 600 million dollars in State and Federal matching funds; shall an ordinance be adopted to continue Madera County's voter-approved half cent sales tax without increasing the tax rate, providing approximately 20 million dollars annually <<until ended by voters | for 30 years>>, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 2 INITIAL BALLOT TEST



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 30 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 2 on the previous page, there was a small 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, 76% supported the measure, 17% opposed, and 7% were unsure at the Initial Ballot Test. Voters who received the 30-year version were slightly more supportive overall, with 77% indicating they would support the proposal, 13% opposed, and 10% unsure. It is also worth noting that voters who received the 30-year version had a higher percentage of voters indicate that they would 'definitely' vote yes (45% vs. 38%).

The support level recorded at the Initial Ballot Test to renew the sales tax measure was 9 to 10 percentage points above the two-thirds super-majority required for passage of a special tax under California law, depending on the version tested. The findings of this tracking survey also suggest that voters' opinions about the proposed measure have remained quite stable over the past nine months, despite trends in inflation, high gas prices, and other factors. The average level of support for the proposed Measure T renewal was 77% in this tracking survey, approximately 1% higher than found in the Baseline Survey conducted in August 2021 (76%).

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 two-thirds in *all* identified subgroups. When compared to their respective counterparts, support was strongest among respondents in Supervisorial District 4, Democrats, and those living in single- or dual-Democrat households.

TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

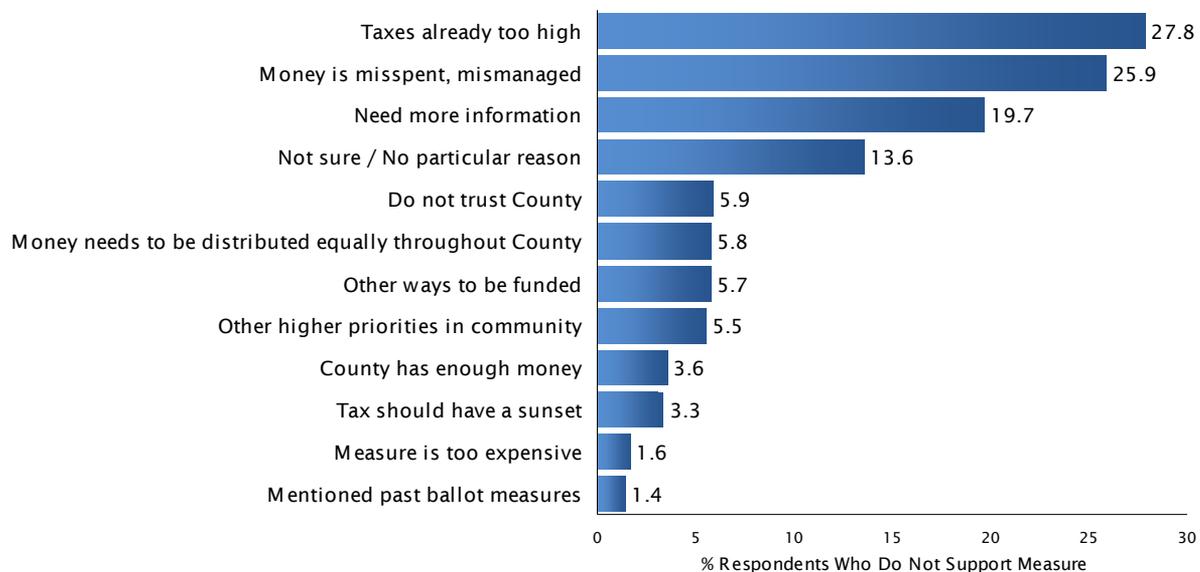
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100.0	76.6	8.3
Supervisory District	One	21.0	79.6	9.9
	Two	18.0	72.1	9.6
	Three	18.2	70.8	9.2
	Four	7.8	92.2	2.5
	Five	35.0	76.5	7.4
Party	Democrat	33.1	86.2	6.6
	Republican	44.4	69.2	8.9
	Other / DTS	22.5	77.0	9.5
Age	18 to 29	13.7	80.7	12.8
	30 to 39	15.5	77.1	6.7
	40 to 49	13.6	76.9	7.6
	50 to 64	24.5	77.7	5.9
	65 or older	32.7	73.6	9.2
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	11.0	75.5	15.3
	Jun '12 to <Nov '18	22.2	83.1	6.4
	Jun '06 to <Jun '12	8.8	77.8	13.4
	Before Jun '06	58.0	74.1	6.9
Household Party Type	Single dem	18.1	88.5	5.2
	Dual dem	9.2	85.0	4.6
	Single rep	15.0	68.8	9.0
	Dual rep	20.9	69.3	8.6
	Other	14.7	82.3	9.6
	Mixed	22.1	71.5	10.6
Child in Hsld (Q10)	Yes	30.0	76.4	7.2
	No	70.0	77.2	9.1
Gender	Male	52.3	75.9	7.6
	Female	47.7	78.9	9.3
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	68.0	74.7	6.9
	No	32.0	80.4	11.1
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	79.5	77.5	7.9
	No	20.5	73.0	9.8
Likely Jun 2022 Voter	Yes	72.2	77.4	7.1
	No	27.8	74.3	11.4
Survey Language	English	92.1	76.0	7.7
	Spanish	7.9	83.3	15.0
Commute Outside County for Work (Q9)	Yes	33.9	78.2	6.2
	No	66.1	77.2	8.2

REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE Respondents who did not support the measure at Question 2 (or were unsure) were asked if there was a particular reason for their position. Question 3 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 later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 3.

Among specific reasons offered for not supporting the measure, a concern that taxes are already too high (28%), the perception that money has been/will be mismanaged or misspent (26%), and a need for more information (20%) were the most common.

Question 3 *Is there a particular reason why you do not support or are unsure about the measure I just described?*

FIGURE 3 REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE



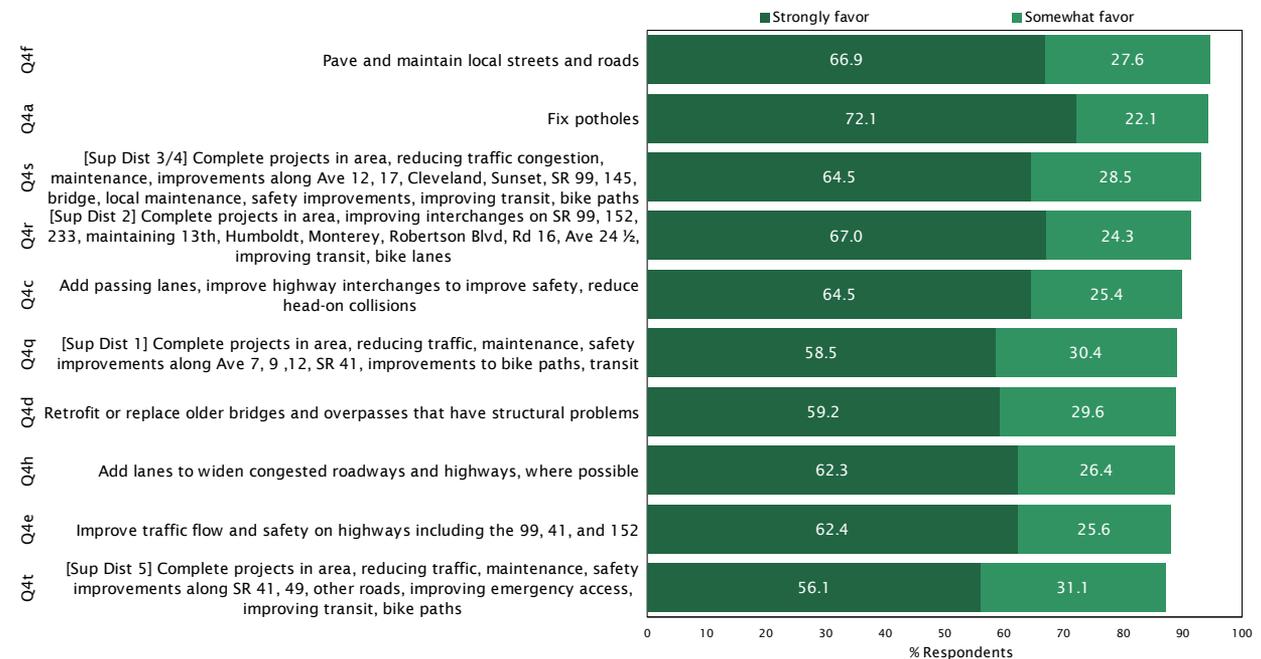
PROJECTS & SERVICES

The ballot language presented in Question 2 indicated that the proposed sales tax measure would be used to keep local streets, highways, and infrastructure in good repair, fix potholes, improve highway safety, 911 vehicle access, and safe routes to schools, reduce traffic congestion, and complete other transportation projects. The purpose of Question 4 was to provide respondents with a full range of projects and services that may be funded by the measure, and to identify which of these projects voters most favored funding with sales tax proceeds.

After reading each project that may be funded by the measure, respondents were asked if they would favor or oppose spending some of the money on that particular project assuming that the measure passes. Figures 4 and 5 present descriptions of the 20 projects tested,³ sorted into two tiers according to the percentage of respondents that indicated they would strongly or somewhat favor spending money on each. As noted in the descriptions, some projects were presented only to a subset of voters in Supervisorial Districts where specific proposed infrastructure and service improvements may occur.

Question 4 *The measure we've been discussing will provide funding for a variety of transportation projects and improvements. If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion?*

FIGURE 4 PROJECTS & SERVICES TIER 1



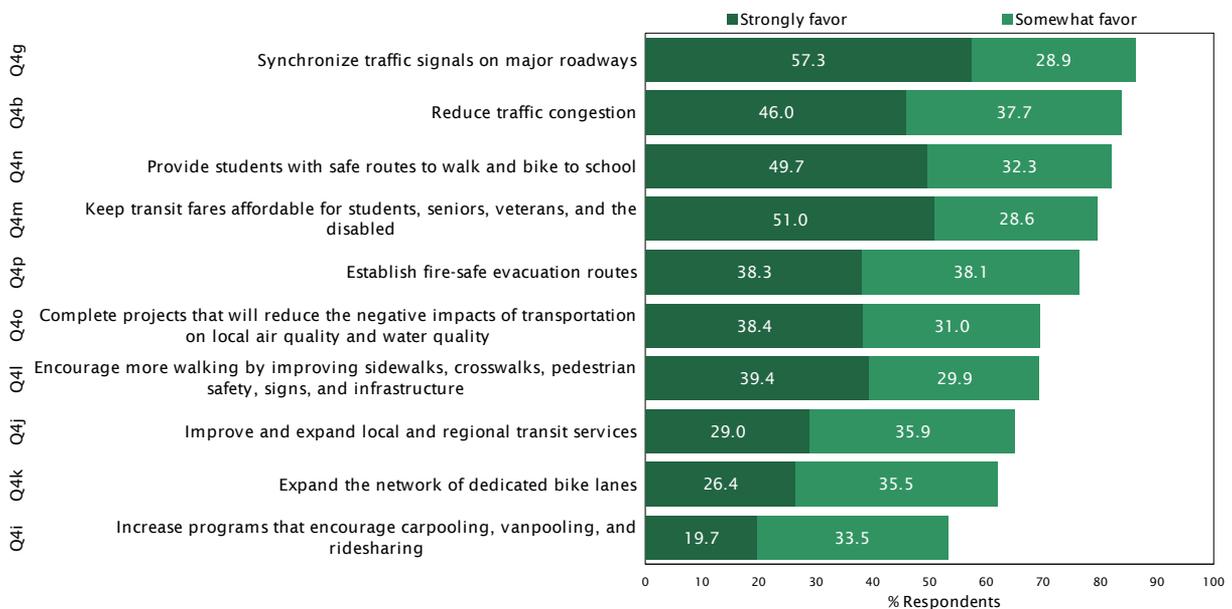
As shown in the two figures, 17 of the 20 projects tested were favored by more than two-thirds of voters surveyed. With that said, voters prioritized using funding from the measure to: pave and maintain local streets and roads (95% strongly or somewhat favor), fix potholes (94%), complete a variety of projects in your area [Supervisorial Districts 3 and 4], including reducing traffic

3. For the full text of the projects tested, turn to Question 4 in *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 30.

congestion, maintenance and improvements along Avenues 12 and 17, Cleveland, Sunset, and State Routes 99 and 145, bridge improvements, local maintenance and safety improvements, and improving local transit services and bike paths (93%), complete a variety of projects in your area [Supervisory District 2], including improving interchanges on State Routes 99, 152, and 233, maintaining 13th, Humboldt, Monterey, Robertson Boulevard, Road 16, and Avenue 24 ½, and improving local transit services and bike lanes (91%), and add passing lanes and improve highway interchanges to improve safety and reduce head-on collisions (90%).

At the other end of the spectrum, a smaller portion of voters favored spending money to increase programs that encourage carpooling, vanpooling, and ridesharing (53%), expand the network of dedicated bike lanes (62%), and improve and expand local and regional transit services (65%).

FIGURE 5 PROJECTS & SERVICES TIER 2



PROJECTS RATINGS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 2 on the next page presents the top five projects (showing the percentage of respondents who *strongly* favor each) by position at the Initial Ballot Test. Overall, initial supporters, opponents, and the undecided agreed on two of the top five priorities for funding.

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

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Item	Project or Service Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 438)	Q4a	Fix potholes	76
	Q4r	[Sup Dist 2] Complete projects in area, improving interchanges on SR 99, 152, 233, maintaining 13th, Humboldt, Monterey, Robertson Blvd, Rd 16, Ave 24 ½, improving transit, bike lanes	70
	Q4c	Add passing lanes, improve highway interchanges to improve safety, reduce head-on collisions	70
	Q4f	Pave and maintain local streets and roads	70
	Q4e	Improve traffic flow and safety on highways including the 99, 41, and 152	67
Probably or Definitely No (n = 84)	Q4r	[Sup Dist 2] Complete projects in area, improving interchanges on SR 99, 152, 233, maintaining 13th, Humboldt, Monterey, Robertson Blvd, Rd 16, Ave 24 ½, improving transit, bike lanes	73
	Q4s	[Sup Dist 3/4] Complete projects in area, reducing traffic congestion, maintenance, improvements along Ave 12, 17, Cleveland, Sunset, SR 99, 145, bridge, local maintenance, safety improvements, improving transit, bike paths	70
	Q4q	[Sup Dist 1] Complete projects in area, reducing traffic, maintenance, safety improvements along Ave 7, 9, 12, SR 41, improvements to bike paths, transit	53
	Q4f	Pave and maintain local streets and roads	50
	Q4a	Fix potholes	49
Not Sure (n = 47)	Q4s	[Sup Dist 3/4] Complete projects in area, reducing traffic congestion, maintenance, improvements along Ave 12, 17, Cleveland, Sunset, SR 99, 145, bridge, local maintenance, safety improvements, improving transit, bike paths	83
	Q4a	Fix potholes	74
	Q4c	Add passing lanes, improve highway interchanges to improve safety, reduce head-on collisions	72
	Q4f	Pave and maintain local streets and roads	70
	Q4h	Add lanes to widen congested roadways and highways, where possible	67

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

If the Board of Directors chooses to place the sales tax renewal 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 the 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 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 5 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 the measure. Arguments in opposition to the measure were also presented and are discussed later in this report (see *Negative Arguments* on page 21). Within each series, specific arguments were administered in random order to avoid a systematic position bias.

Question 5 *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 6 POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

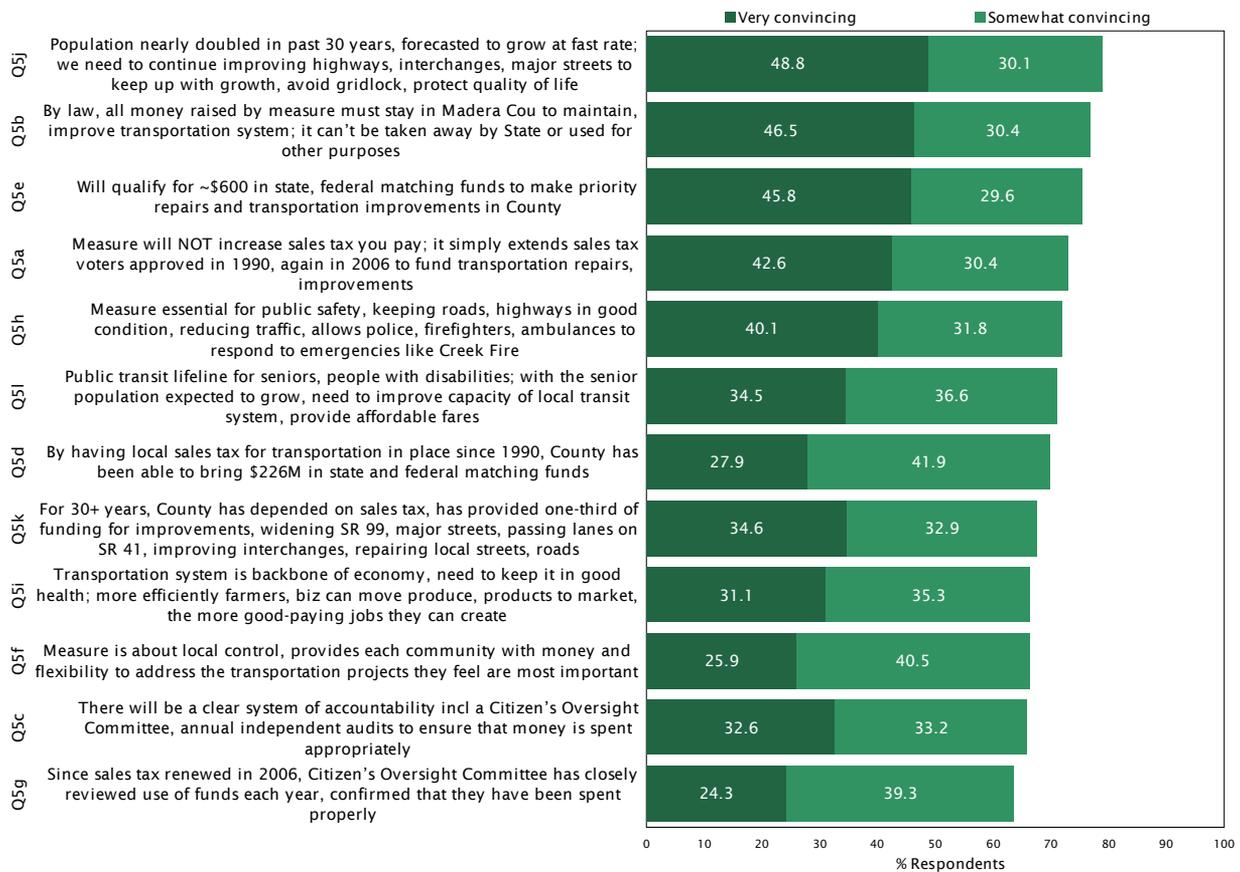


Figure 6 presents the truncated positive arguments tested, as well as voters' reactions to the arguments. The arguments are ranked from most convincing to least convincing based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the argument was either a 'very convincing' or 'somewhat convincing' reason to support the sales tax measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive arguments were: *Madera County's population has nearly doubled during the past 30 years, and experts forecast that it will continue to grow at a fast rate. We need to continue improving our local highways, interchanges, and major streets to keep up with this growth, avoid traffic gridlock, and protect our quality of life* (79% very or somewhat convincing), *By law, all of the money raised by this measure must stay in Madera County to maintain and improve our transportation system. It can't be taken away by the State or used for other purposes* (77%), and *If voters approve this renewal measure, we will qualify for about 600 million dollars in additional state and federal matching funds to make priority repairs and transportation improvements in Madera County. Without a local measure, we will not get our fair share of State and Federal funding* (75%).

TOP 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 most striking pattern in the table is that the positive arguments resonated with a much higher percentage of voters who were initially inclined to support the measure when compared to voters who initially opposed the measure or were unsure. Nevertheless, two specific arguments were ranked among the top five most compelling by supporters, opponents, and the undecided.

TABLE 3 TOP POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

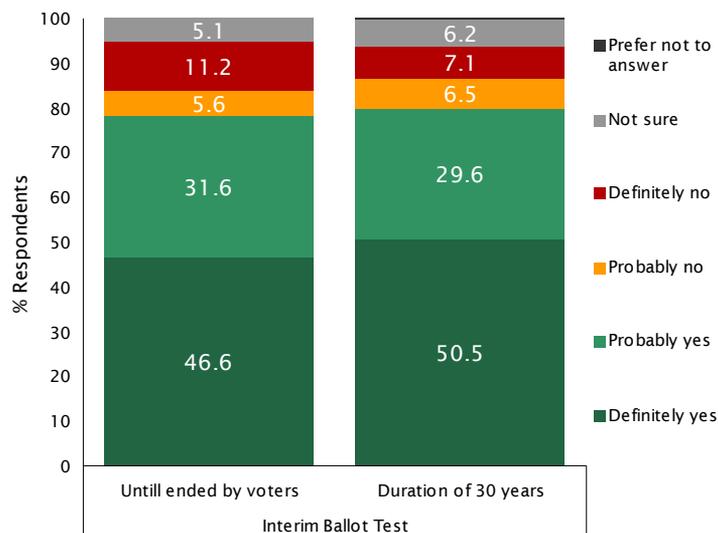
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 438)	Q5j	Population nearly doubled in past 30 years, forecasted to grow at fast rate; we need to continue improving highways, interchanges, major streets to keep up with growth, avoid gridlock, protect quality of life	56
	Q5e	Will qualify for ~\$600 in state, federal matching funds to make priority repairs and transportation improvements in County	55
	Q5b	By law, all money raised by measure must stay in Madera Cou to maintain, improve transportation system; it can't be taken away by State or used for other purposes	54
	Q5a	Measure will NOT increase sales tax you pay; it simply extends sales tax voters approved in 1990, again in 2006 to fund transportation repairs, improvements	51
	Q5h	Measure essential for public safety, keeping roads, highways in good condition, reducing traffic, allows police, firefighters, ambulances to respond to emergencies like Creek Fire	47
Probably or Definitely No (n = 84)	Q5j	Population nearly doubled in past 30 years, forecasted to grow at fast rate; we need to continue improving highways, interchanges, major streets to keep up with growth, avoid gridlock, protect quality of life	18
	Q5b	By law, all money raised by measure must stay in Madera Cou to maintain, improve transportation system; it can't be taken away by State or used for other purposes	14
	Q5l	Public transit lifeline for seniors, people with disabilities; with the senior population expected to grow, need to improve capacity of local transit system, provide affordable fares	12
	Q5e	Will qualify for ~\$600 in state, federal matching funds to make priority repairs and transportation improvements in County	9
	Q5a	Measure will NOT increase sales tax you pay; it simply extends sales tax voters approved in 1990, again in 2006 to fund transportation repairs, improvements	9
Not Sure (n = 47)	Q5j	Population nearly doubled in past 30 years, forecasted to grow at fast rate; we need to continue improving highways, interchanges, major streets to keep up with growth, avoid gridlock, protect quality of life	35
	Q5h	Measure essential for public safety, keeping roads, highways in good condition, reducing traffic, allows police, firefighters, ambulances to respond to emergencies like Creek Fire	35
	Q5b	By law, all money raised by measure must stay in Madera Cou to maintain, improve transportation system; it can't be taken away by State or used for other purposes	33
	Q5l	Public transit lifeline for seniors, people with disabilities; with the senior population expected to grow, need to improve capacity of local transit system, provide affordable fares	28
	Q5c	There will be a clear system of accountability incl a Citizen's Oversight Committee, annual independent audits to ensure that money is spent appropriately	28

INTERIM BALLOT TEST

After informing respondents about projects and services that could be funded, as well as exposing them to positive arguments they may encounter about the measure, the survey again presented voters with the ballot language used previously to gauge how their support for the proposed measure may have changed. As shown in Figure 7, support for the sales tax renewal at the Interim Ballot Test continued to show a small difference between the two durations, and support for both versions increased slightly from the levels recorded at the Initial Ballot Test. More specifically, 78% of voters at the Interim Ballot Test supported a measure that would extend *until ended by voters*, whereas 17% opposed and 5% were unsure or unwilling to share their opinion. Eighty percent (80%) of voters supported a comparable measure that would last *for 30 years* at the Interim Ballot Test, while 14% opposed and 6% were unsure or unwilling to share their opinion. It is also worth noting that aggregate support for renewing Measure T at the Interim Ballot Test in this tracking survey is strikingly similar (79%) to the level of support recorded in the baseline survey conducted eight months prior (79%).

Question 6 *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. In order to keep local streets, highways, and infrastructure in good repair; fix potholes; improve highway safety, 911 vehicle access, and safe routes to schools; reduce traffic congestion; complete other transportation projects; and qualify for 600 million dollars in State and Federal matching funds; shall an ordinance be adopted to continue Madera County's voter-approved half cent sales tax without increasing the tax rate, providing approximately 20 million dollars annually <<until ended by voters | for 30 years>>, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 7 INTERIM BALLOT TEST



INTERIM SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS Table 4 on the next page shows how support for the measure at this point in the survey varied by key demographic subgroups, as well as the percentage change in subgroup support when compared with the Initial Ballot Test. Positive differences appear in green, whereas negative differences appear in red. As shown in the table,

support for the sales tax increased by modest amounts (5 percentage points or less) between the Initial and Interim Ballot Test for most voter subgroups. The largest net gains in support were exhibited by voters under the age of 30 (+11%), those in Dual-Democrat households (+9%), respondents who took the survey interview in Spanish (+8%), and those who had registered to vote in the County since November 2018 (+8%).

TABLE 4 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST

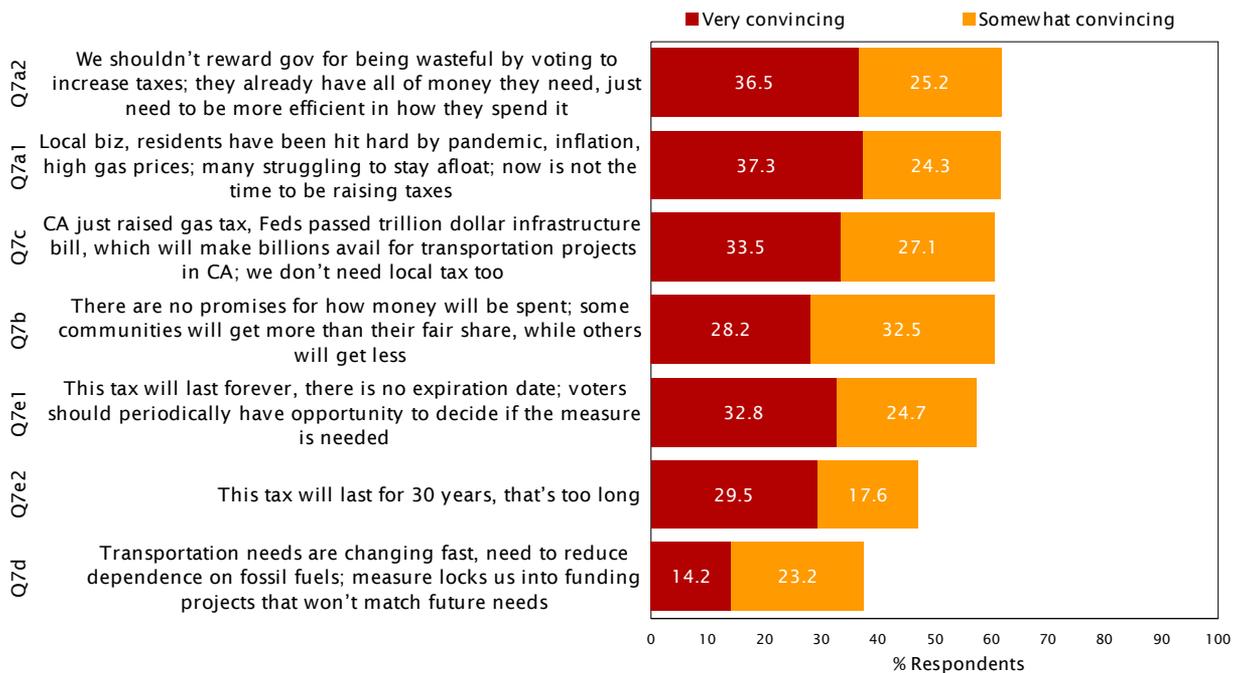
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q2)
Overall		100.0	79.1	+2.6
Supervisory District	One	21.0	82.6	+2.9
	Two	18.0	75.7	+3.6
	Three	18.2	72.9	+2.1
	Four	7.8	93.9	+1.6
	Five	35.0	78.8	+2.3
Party	Democrat	33.1	89.0	+2.8
	Republican	44.4	72.2	+3.0
	Other / DTS	22.5	78.4	+1.4
Age	18 to 29	13.7	91.2	+10.5
	30 to 39	15.5	77.9	+0.8
	40 to 49	13.6	74.5	-2.3
	50 to 64	24.5	78.9	+1.2
	65 or older	32.7	76.8	+3.2
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	11.0	83.0	+7.5
	Jun '12 to <Nov '18	22.2	81.7	-1.4
	Jun '06 to <Jun '12	8.8	72.2	-5.6
	Before Jun '06	58.0	78.5	+4.4
Household Party Type	Single dem	18.1	87.9	-0.5
	Dual dem	9.2	94.4	+9.4
	Single rep	15.0	67.9	-0.9
	Dual rep	20.9	73.8	+4.5
	Other	14.7	82.1	-0.3
	Mixed	22.1	76.3	+4.8
Child in Hsld (Q10)	Yes	30.0	78.2	+1.9
	No	70.0	80.1	+2.9
Gender	Male	52.3	77.4	+1.5
	Female	47.7	82.9	+3.9
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	68.0	76.9	+2.1
	No	32.0	83.9	+3.5
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	79.5	79.7	+2.2
	No	20.5	77.1	+4.0
Likely Jun 2022 Voter	Yes	72.2	79.9	+2.5
	No	27.8	77.2	+2.9
Survey Language	English	92.1	78.1	+2.1
	Spanish	7.9	91.5	+8.2
Commute Outside County for Work (Q9)	Yes	33.9	81.9	+3.7
	No	66.1	79.4	+2.2

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Whereas Question 5 presented respondents with arguments in favor of the measure, Question 7 presented respondents with arguments designed to elicit opposition to the measure. In the case of Question 7, however, respondents were asked if 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 in Figure 8.

Question 7 *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 8 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS



Among the negative arguments tested, the most compelling were: *We shouldn't reward government for being wasteful by voting to increase our taxes. They already have all of the money they need—they just need to be more efficient in how they spend it* (62% very or somewhat convincing), *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 be raising taxes* (62%), and *California just raised the gas tax and the Federal Government passed a trillion dollar infrastructure bill, which will make billions available for transportation projects in California. We don't need to have a local tax too* (61%).

TOP NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 5 lists the top five 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 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

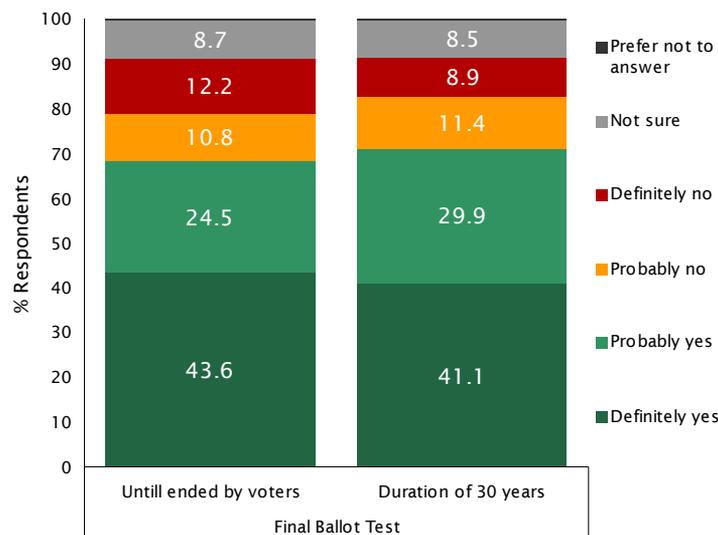
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 438)	Q7a2	We shouldn't reward gov for being wasteful by voting to increase taxes; they already have all of money they need, just need to be more efficient in how they spend it	29
	Q7a1	Local biz, residents have been hit hard by pandemic, inflation, high gas prices; many struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to be raising taxes	29
	Q7c	CA just raised gas tax, Feds passed trillion dollar infrastructure bill, which will make billions avail for transportation projects in CA; we don't need local tax too	28
	Q7e1	This tax will last forever, there is no expiration date; voters should periodically have opportunity to decide if the measure is needed	25
	Q7b	There are no promises for how money will be spent; some communities will get more	23
Probably or Definitely No (n = 84)	Q7a2	We shouldn't reward gov for being wasteful by voting to increase taxes; they already have all of money they need, just need to be more efficient in how they spend it	77
	Q7e2	This tax will last for 30 years, that's too long	67
	Q7a1	Local biz, residents have been hit hard by pandemic, inflation, high gas prices; many struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to be raising taxes	64
	Q7c	CA just raised gas tax, Feds passed trillion dollar infrastructure bill, which will make billions avail for transportation projects in CA; we don't need local tax too	58
	Q7e1	This tax will last forever, there is no expiration date; voters should periodically have opportunity to decide if the measure is needed	52
Not Sure (n = 47)	Q7e1	This tax will last forever, there is no expiration date; voters should periodically have opportunity to decide if the measure is needed	69
	Q7a1	Local biz, residents have been hit hard by pandemic, inflation, high gas prices; many struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to be raising taxes	63
	Q7a2	We shouldn't reward gov for being wasteful by voting to increase taxes; they already have all of money they need, just need to be more efficient in how they spend it	41
	Q7c	CA just raised gas tax, Feds passed trillion dollar infrastructure bill, which will make billions avail for transportation projects in CA; we don't need local tax too	39
	Q7b	There are no promises for how money will be spent; some communities will get more than their fair share, while others will get less	33

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. An important 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, projects and 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 8 *Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. In order to keep local streets, highways, and infrastructure in good repair; fix potholes; improve highway safety, 911 vehicle access, and safe routes to schools; reduce traffic congestion; complete other transportation projects; and qualify for 600 million dollars in State and Federal matching funds; shall an ordinance be adopted to continue Madera County's voter-approved half cent sales tax without increasing the tax rate, providing approximately 20 million dollars annually <<until ended by voters | for 30 years>>, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 9 FINAL BALLOT TEST



At this point in the survey, support for a sales tax renewal that would continue *until ended by voters* was found among 68% of likely November 2022 voters, with 44% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 23% of respondents opposed the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice. Support for a sales tax renewal that would last *for 30 years* was found among 71% of likely November 2022 voters, with 41% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 20% of respondents opposed the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice. Here again, the level of support found for a Measure T renewal in this tracking survey at the Final Ballot Test (69%) is similar to the level found in the baseline survey from 2021 (72%).



CHANGE IN SUPPORT

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 (Q6)
Overall		100.0	69.6	-7.0	-9.5
Supervisorial District	One	21.0	75.6	-4.1	-7.0
	Two	18.0	63.4	-8.6	-12.3
	Three	18.2	59.6	-11.2	-13.3
	Four	7.8	84.9	-7.3	-8.9
	Five	35.0	71.0	-5.5	-7.8
Party	Democrat	33.1	86.3	+0.2	-2.7
	Republican	44.4	60.9	-8.3	-11.3
	Other / DTS	22.5	62.3	-14.8	-16.1
Age	18 to 29	13.7	72.1	-8.6	-19.1
	30 to 39	15.5	61.2	-16.0	-16.8
	40 to 49	13.6	65.4	-11.5	-9.2
	50 to 64	24.5	72.7	-5.0	-6.1
	65 or older	32.7	72.0	-1.6	-4.8
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	11.0	65.5	-10.0	-17.5
	Jun '12 to <Nov '18	22.2	62.5	-20.6	-19.2
	Jun '06 to <Jun '12	8.8	67.6	-10.2	-4.6
	Before Jun '06	58.0	73.4	-0.7	-5.1
Household Party Type	Single dem	18.1	85.2	-3.3	-2.8
	Dual dem	9.2	96.1	+11.1	+1.7
	Single rep	15.0	56.2	-12.6	-11.7
	Dual rep	20.9	63.8	-5.5	-9.9
	Other	14.7	60.0	-22.3	-22.0
	Mixed	22.1	66.6	-4.8	-9.6
Child in Hsld (Q10)	Yes	30.0	65.3	-11.1	-13.0
	No	70.0	72.7	-4.5	-7.4
Gender	Male	52.3	69.0	-6.9	-8.4
	Female	47.7	72.4	-6.5	-10.5
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	68.0	71.3	-3.5	-5.6
	No	32.0	66.1	-14.4	-17.9
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	79.5	69.6	-7.9	-10.1
	No	20.5	69.5	-3.5	-7.5
Likely Jun 2022 Voter	Yes	72.2	70.2	-7.2	-9.7
	No	27.8	68.1	-6.2	-9.1
Survey Language	English	92.1	70.8	-5.1	-7.2
	Spanish	7.9	55.2	-28.1	-36.3
Commute Outside County for Work (Q9)	Yes	33.9	74.8	-3.5	-7.2
	No	66.1	68.2	-9.0	-11.2

As expected, voters generally responded to the negative arguments with a reduction in their support for the measure when compared with levels recorded at the Interim Ballot Test. The trend over the course of the entire survey (Initial to Final Ballot Test) was also one of declining support for most voter subgroups, averaging -7 percentage points overall. With that said, support for the sales tax at the Final Ballot Test remained above the two-thirds threshold required for passage.

Whereas Table 6 displays change in support for the measure over the course of the interview at the group level, Table 7 presents 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 41.6% of respondents who indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 30.1% indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. An additional 7.7% moved to the probably support group, 1.9% moved to the probably oppose group, 1.3% moved to the definitely oppose group, and 0.6% 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 (Q2)		Final Ballot Test (Q8)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	41.6% →	30.1%	7.7%	1.9%	1.3%	0.6%
Probably support	35.0% →	11.1%	16.9%	2.9%	1.2%	2.8%
Probably oppose	8.1% →	0.2%	1.3%	3.4%	2.5%	0.7%
Definitely oppose	6.7% →	0.1%	0.2%	0.7%	5.5%	0.3%
Not sure	8.7% →	0.7%	1.3%	2.2%	0.0%	4.4%

As one might expect, the information conveyed in the survey generally 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 presented in the survey did impact some voters, it did not do so in a consistent way for all respondents. Some respondents found the information provided during the course of the interview to be a reason to become more supportive of the measure, while a larger percentage found the same information reason to be less supportive. Although 18% of respondents made a *fundamental*⁴ shift in their opinion regarding the measure over the course of the interview, the net impact is that support for the *overall* measure at the Final Ballot Test (70%) was seven points lower than support at the Initial Ballot Test (77%). Examining the two tax durations separately reveals that support for a sales tax renewal that would continue *until ended by voters* declined eight percentage points from the Initial Ballot Test (76%) to the Final Ballot Test (68%), while support for a sales tax renewal that would last *for 30 years* declined six percentage points from the Initial Ballot Test (77%) to the Final Ballot Test (71%).

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.



BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS

TABLE 8 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

<i>Total Respondents</i>	572
Commute Outside County for Work (Q9)	
Yes	32.8
No	63.9
Prefer not to answer	3.3
Child in Hsld (Q10)	
Yes	29.2
No	68.1
Prefer not to answer	2.8
Gender	
Male	50.8
Female	46.3
Prefer not to answer	2.9
Party	
Democrat	33.1
Republican	44.4
Other / DTS	22.5
Age	
18 to 29	13.7
30 to 39	15.5
40 to 49	13.6
50 to 64	24.5
65 or older	32.7
Registration Year	
Since Nov '18	11.0
Jun '12 to <Nov '18	22.2
Jun '06 to <Jun '12	8.8
Before Jun '06	58.0
Household Party Type	
Single dem	18.1
Dual dem	9.2
Single rep	15.0
Dual rep	20.9
Other	14.7
Mixed	22.1
Homeowner on Voter File	
Yes	68.0
No	32.0
Likely to Vote by Mail	
Yes	79.5
No	20.5
Likely Jun 2022 Voter	
Yes	72.2
No	27.8
Survey Language	
English	92.1
Spanish	7.9
Supervisorial District	
One	21.0
Two	18.0
Three	18.2
Four	7.8
Five	35.0

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 survey, 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 MCTA 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 renewal or were unsure at the Initial Ballot Test (Question 2) were asked an open-ended question (Question 3) regarding their reasons for not supporting the measure. In some cases, two versions of an issue, project, or argument were tested to identify how wording differences impact perception of the item. In such cases, half of the sample received the item with version 1 wording (e.g., Question 7, item A1) and the other half received version 2 (e.g., Question 7, item A2). The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 30) identifies the skip patterns and programming instructions that were used during the interview to ensure that 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 the phone interviews. The CATI program automatically navigates the skip patterns, randomizes the appropriate question items, and alerts interviewers to certain types of keypunching mistakes should they happen during the interview. The survey was also programmed into a passcode-protected online survey application to allow online participation for sampled residents. The integrity of the questionnaire was pre-tested internally by True North and by dialing into random homes in the County prior to formally beginning the survey. The final questionnaire was also professionally translated into Spanish to allow for data collection in English and Spanish.

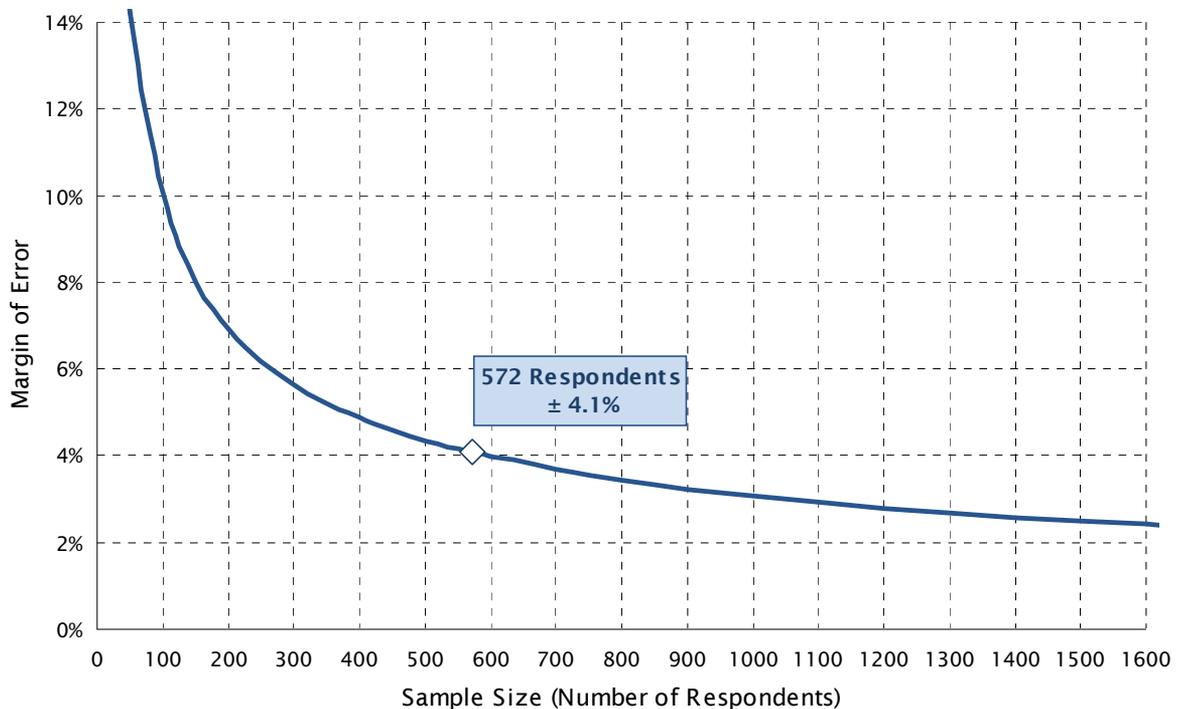
SAMPLE The survey was administered to a random sample of 572 registered voters in Madera County who are likely to participate in the November 2022 election, with a subset who are also likely to participate in the lower turnout June 2022 primary election. Consistent with the profile of this universe, 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.

To accommodate MCTA's interest in testing two tax durations, a split-sample methodology was employed such that 286 voters were asked about a sales tax that would continue *until ended by voters* at each ballot test (questions 2, 6 & 8), whereas a separate 286 voters were asked the ballot test questions regarding a sales tax that would last *for 30 years*.

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 County 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 572 voters for a particular question and what would have been found if all 46,063 likely November 2022 voters identified in the County had been surveyed for the study.

Figure 10 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 $\pm 4.1\%$.

FIGURE 10 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 10 is useful for understanding how the maximum margin of error for a percentage estimate grows 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 phone) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Telephone interviews averaged 17 minutes in length and were conducted during weekday evenings (5:30PM to 9PM) and on weekends (10AM to 5PM). It is stan-

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 or text were assigned a unique passcode to ensure that only voters who received an invitation could access the survey website, and that each voter could complete the survey only once. A total of 572 surveys were completed by phone and online between April 7 and April 14, 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.

QUESTIONNAIRE & TOPLINES



Madera County Transportation Authority
Sales Tax Renewal Tracking Survey
Final Toplines (n=572)
April 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 Madera (Muh-DARE-uh) County 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: Importance of Issues

Q1 To begin, I'm going to read a list of issues facing Madera County and for each one, please tell me how important you feel the issue is to you, using a scale of extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not at all important.

Here is the (first/next) issue: _____. Do you think this issue is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not at all important?

		Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all important	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
	<i>Randomize</i>						
A	Improving the maintenance of local streets and roads	53%	35%	11%	1%	0%	0%
B	Reducing traffic congestion	36%	25%	29%	9%	0%	0%
C	Maintaining local infrastructure	39%	38%	19%	2%	1%	0%
D	Improving public safety	43%	34%	19%	2%	1%	0%
E	Protecting the environment	33%	29%	26%	11%	1%	0%
F	Addressing homelessness	43%	32%	17%	6%	1%	1%
G	Improving the local economy	42%	42%	14%	1%	1%	0%
H	Preventing local tax increases	46%	22%	22%	9%	1%	0%

Section 3: Initial Ballot Test						
Later this year, voters in Madera County may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure.						
<i>Split Sample. Sample A receives 'until ended by voters', Sample B receives 'for 30 years'.</i>						
Q2	In order to: Keep local streets, highways, and infrastructure in good repair Fix potholes Improve highway safety, 911 vehicle access, and safe routes to schools Reduce traffic congestion Complete other transportation projects And qualify for 600 million dollars in State and Federal matching funds Shall an ordinance be adopted to continue Madera County's voter-approved half cent sales tax without increasing the tax rate, providing approximately 20 million dollars annually <<until ended by voters for 30 years>>, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money staying local? 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)?					
				Overall	Until Ended by Voters	For 30 Years
	1	Definitely yes	42%	38%	45%	Skip to Q4
	2	Probably yes	35%	38%	32%	Skip to Q4
	3	Probably no	8%	8%	8%	Ask Q3
	4	Definitely no	7%	9%	5%	Ask Q3
	98	Not sure	8%	7%	9%	Ask Q3
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%	0%	0%	Skip to Q4
Q3	Is there a particular reason why you do not support or are unsure about the measure I just described? <i>If yes, ask:</i> Please briefly describe your reason. <i>Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.</i>					
	Taxes already too high				28%	
	Money is misspent, mismanaged				26%	
	Need more information				20%	
	Not sure / No particular reason				14%	
	Other higher priorities in community				6%	
	Do not trust County				6%	
	Other ways to be funded				6%	
	Money needs to be distributed equally throughout County				6%	
	County has enough money				4%	
	Tax should have a sunset				3%	
	Measure is too expensive				2%	
	Mentioned past ballot measures				1%	

Section 4: Projects & Services							
Q4	The measure we've been discussing will provide funding for a variety of transportation projects and improvements.						
	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</i>	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Fix potholes	72%	22%	3%	2%	1%	0%
B	Reduce traffic congestion	46%	38%	8%	4%	4%	0%
C	Add passing lanes and improve highway interchanges to improve safety and reduce head-on collisions	65%	25%	3%	3%	2%	1%
D	Retrofit or replace older bridges and overpasses that have structural problems	59%	30%	4%	3%	3%	1%
E	Improve traffic flow and safety on highways including the 99, 41, and 152	62%	26%	5%	5%	1%	0%
F	Pave and maintain local streets and roads	67%	28%	1%	2%	1%	0%
G	Synchronize traffic signals on major roadways	57%	29%	5%	4%	5%	0%
H	Add lanes to widen congested roadways and highways, where possible	62%	26%	6%	2%	2%	1%
I	Increase programs that encourage carpooling, vanpooling, and ridesharing	20%	34%	24%	15%	6%	2%
J	Improve and expand local and regional transit services	29%	36%	18%	10%	6%	1%
K	Expand the network of dedicated bike lanes	26%	35%	19%	12%	6%	1%
L	Encourage more walking by improving sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian safety, signs, and infrastructure	39%	30%	16%	9%	5%	1%
M	Keep transit fares affordable for students, seniors, veterans, and the disabled	51%	29%	10%	6%	4%	1%
N	Provide students with safe routes to walk and bike to school	50%	32%	8%	5%	4%	0%
O	Complete projects that will reduce the negative impacts of transportation on local air quality and water quality	38%	31%	15%	10%	5%	0%
P	Establish fire-safe evacuation routes	38%	38%	10%	6%	6%	1%
<i>Only Ask if in Supervisorial District 1.</i>							
Q	Complete a variety of projects in <u>your</u> area, including reducing traffic congestion, maintenance and safety improvements along Avenues 7, 9 and 12 and State Route 41, and improvements to bike paths and local transit services	59%	30%	8%	3%	0%	0%
<i>Only Ask if in Supervisorial District 2.</i>							

R	Complete a variety of projects in <u>your</u> area, including improving interchanges on State Routes 99, 152 and 233, maintaining 13 th , Humboldt, Monterey, Robertson Boulevard, Road 16, and Avenue 24 ½, and improving local transit services and bike lanes	67%	24%	2%	1%	6%	0%
<i>Only Ask if in Supervisorial District 3 or District 4.</i>							
S	Complete a variety of projects in <u>your</u> area, including reducing traffic congestion, maintenance and improvements along Avenues 12 and 17, Cleveland, Sunset, and State Routes 99 and 145, bridge improvements, local maintenance and safety improvements, and improving local transit services and bike paths	65%	29%	5%	2%	0%	0%
<i>Only Ask if in Supervisorial District 5.</i>							
T	Complete a variety of projects in <u>your</u> area, including reducing traffic congestion, maintenance and safety improvements along State Routes 41 and 49 and other local roads, improving emergency access, and improving local transit services and bike paths	56%	31%	7%	3%	2%	0%

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.

Q5 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, but always read D & E back-to-back, in that order.</i>						
A	This measure will NOT increase the sales tax you pay. It simply extends the sales tax voters approved in 1990 and again in 2006 to fund transportation repairs and improvements.	43%	30%	14%	9%	2%	1%
B	By law, all of the money raised by this measure must stay in Madera County to maintain and improve our transportation system. It can't be taken away by the State or used for other purposes.	46%	30%	12%	9%	1%	1%
C	There will be a clear system of accountability including a Citizen's Oversight Committee and annual independent audits to ensure that the money is spent appropriately.	33%	33%	18%	12%	3%	1%

D	By having a local sales tax for transportation in place since 1990, our County has been able to bring in over 226 million dollars in state and federal matching funds for priority transportation projects.	28%	42%	18%	9%	3%	1%
E	If voters approve this renewal measure, we will qualify for about 600 million dollars in <i>additional</i> state and federal matching funds to make priority repairs and transportation improvements in Madera County. Without a local measure, we will not get our fair share of State and Federal funding.	46%	30%	13%	9%	2%	1%
F	This measure is about local control. It provides each community with the money and flexibility needed to address the transportation projects that they feel are most important.	26%	40%	20%	10%	3%	1%
G	Since the local sales tax was renewed in 2006, a Citizen's Oversight Committee has closely reviewed the use of funds each year and confirmed that they have been spent properly and in accordance with the voter-approved expenditure plan.	24%	39%	20%	12%	4%	1%
H	This measure is essential for our public safety. By keeping our roads and highways in good condition and reducing traffic congestion, it allows police, firefighters, and ambulances to respond quickly to emergencies. In emergencies like the Creek Fire, we can't afford to have first responders stuck in traffic or slowed-down by failing infrastructure.	40%	32%	20%	6%	2%	1%
I	The transportation system is the backbone of our regional economy – and we need to keep it in good health. The more efficiently local farmers and businesses can move produce and products to market, the more good-paying jobs they can create for local residents.	31%	35%	22%	6%	3%	1%
J	Madera County's population has nearly doubled during the past 30 years, and experts forecast that it will continue to grow at a fast rate. We need to continue improving our local highways, interchanges, and major streets to keep up with this growth, avoid traffic gridlock, and protect our quality of life.	49%	30%	13%	6%	2%	1%

K	For more than 30 years, Madera County has depended on this sales tax for everything from repairing potholes and bridges to making our highways and transit services safer and faster. It has provided about one-third of the funding required for transportation improvements such as widening State Route 99 and major streets, creating passing lanes on State Route 41, improving interchanges, and making repairs to local streets and roads.	35%	33%	20%	9%	2%	1%
L	Public transit is a lifeline for senior citizens and people with disabilities. They depend on transit to get to doctor's appointments, the grocery store, and other places of necessity. With the senior population in Madera County expected to grow, we need to improve the capacity of our local transit system and provide affordable fares.	34%	37%	20%	7%	2%	1%

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 30 years'.

Q6	<p>In order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep local streets, highways, and infrastructure in good repair Fix potholes Improve highway safety, 911 vehicle access, and safe routes to schools Reduce traffic congestion Complete other transportation projects And qualify for 600 million dollars in State and Federal matching funds <p>Shall an ordinance be adopted to continue Madera County's voter-approved half cent sales tax without increasing the tax rate, providing approximately 20 million dollars annually <<until ended by voters for 30 years>>, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money staying local?</p> <p>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)?</p>	Overall	Until Ended by Voters	For 30 Years
1	Definitely yes	49%	47%	50%
2	Probably yes	31%	32%	30%
3	Probably no	6%	6%	6%
4	Definitely no	9%	11%	7%
98	Not sure	6%	5%	6%
99	Prefer not to answer	0%	0%	0%

Section 7: Negative Arguments

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

Q7 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?

		Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
	<i>Randomize. Split Sample - Sample A receives A1 & E1, Sample B receives A2 & E2</i>						
A1	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 be raising taxes.	37%	24%	27%	9%	1%	1%
A2	We shouldn't reward government for being wasteful by voting to increase our taxes. They already have all of the money they need—they just need to be more efficient in how they spend it.	36%	25%	24%	11%	3%	0%
B	There are no promises for how the money will be spent. Some communities will get more than their fair share, while others will get less.	28%	32%	27%	7%	4%	1%
C	California just raised the gas tax and the Federal Government passed a trillion dollar infrastructure bill, which will make billions available for transportation projects in California. We don't need to have a local tax too.	34%	27%	26%	10%	3%	1%
D	Our transportation needs are changing fast, and we need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. This measure locks us into funding transportation projects that won't match our future needs.	14%	23%	37%	21%	4%	1%
E1	This tax will last forever -- there is no expiration date. Voters should periodically have the opportunity to decide if the measure is needed.	33%	25%	30%	8%	3%	1%
E2	This tax will last for 30 years - that's too long.	30%	18%	39%	7%	5%	1%

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 30 years'.

Q8	In order to:				
	Keep local streets, highways, and infrastructure in good repair				
	Fix potholes				
	Improve highway safety, 911 vehicle access, and safe routes to schools				
	Reduce traffic congestion				
	Complete other transportation projects				
	And qualify for 600 million dollars in State and Federal matching funds				
Shall an ordinance be adopted to continue Madera County's voter-approved half cent sales tax without increasing the tax rate, providing approximately 20 million dollars annually <<until ended by voters for 30 years>>, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money staying local? 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>					
			Overall	Until Ended by Voters	For 30 Years
	1	Definitely yes	42%	44%	41%
	2	Probably yes	27%	24%	30%
	3	Probably no	11%	11%	11%
	4	Definitely no	10%	12%	9%
	98	Not sure	9%	9%	9%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%	0%	0%

Section 9: Background & Demographics

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

Q9	Do you commute to a destination <i>outside</i> of Madera County for your job?		
	1	Yes	33%
	2	No	64%
	99	Prefer not to answer	3%
Q10	Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household?		
	1	Yes	29%
	2	No	68%
	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.

Post-Interview & Sample Items

S1		Gender	
1	Male		51%
2	Female		46%
99	Prefer not to answer		3%
S2		Party	
1	Democrat		33%
2	Republican		44%
3	Other		5%
4	DTS		17%
S3		Age on Voter File	
1	18 to 29		14%
2	30 to 39		15%
3	40 to 49		14%
4	50 to 64		24%
5	65 or older		33%
S4		Registration Date	
1	Since Nov 2018		11%
2	Jun 2012 to before Nov 2018		22%
3	Jun 2006 to before Jun 2012		9%
4	Before Jun 2006		58%
S5		Household Party Type	
1	Single Dem		18%
2	Dual Dem		9%
3	Single Rep		15%
4	Dual Rep		21%
5	Single Other		10%
6	Dual Other		5%

	7	Dem & Rep	4%
	8	Dem & Other	5%
	9	Rep & Other	11%
	0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	1%
S6	Homeowner on Voter File		
	1	Yes	68%
	2	No	32%
S7	Likely to Vote by Mail		
	1	Yes	80%
	2	No	20%
S8	Likely June 2022 Voter		
	1	Yes	72%
	2	No	28%
S9	Likely November 2022 Voter		
	1	Yes	100%
	2	No	0%
S10	Survey Language		
	1	English	92%
	2	Spanish	8%
S11	Ballot Test Version		
	1	Until ended by voters	47%
	2	Duration of 30 years	53%
S12	Supervisorial District		
	One		21%
	Two		18%
	Three		18%
	Four		8%
	Five		35%