

REVENUE MEASURE FEASIBILITY SURVEY  
SUMMARY REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE  
CITY OF CHULA VISTA



AUGUST 28, 2015



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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Chula Vista is located at the center of one of the richest cultural, economic and environmentally diverse zones in the United States. It is the second-largest city in San Diego County with an estimated population of 257,989 residents.<sup>1</sup> Chula Vista boasts more than 50 square miles of coastal landscape, canyons, rolling hills, mountains, and a variety of natural resources. The City's dedicated team of full-time and part-time employees provides a full suite of services to residents and local businesses.

As Chula Vista has grown, so too have the demands placed upon its facilities, services, and infrastructure. Unfortunately, the City's revenue streams have not kept pace with the growing demands and escalating costs, leading to shortfalls in the funding required to adequately maintain and manage its various infrastructure systems—including streets and roads, storm drains, water and wastewater systems, parks, recreation facilities, libraries, as well as public safety facilities and equipment. Despite being efficient, fiscally responsible, and making significant budget cuts in recent years in response to the economic downturn and State raids on the City's finances, the City of Chula Vista's priority infrastructure needs far outstrip the funding available to address them appropriately.<sup>2</sup>

**MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH** The primary purpose of this study was to produce an unbiased, statistically reliable evaluation of voters' interest in supporting a sales tax *or* general obligation bond to fund priority repairs and improvements to the City's infrastructure systems. Additionally, should the City decide to move forward with a revenue measure, the survey data provide guidance as to how to structure a measure so that it is consistent with the community's priorities and expressed needs. Specifically, the study was designed to:

- Gauge current, baseline support for a local revenue measure (sales tax or bond) to fund repairs and improvements to City infrastructure
- Identify the tax rate that the community is willing to support
- Identify the types of repairs and improvements that voters are most interested in funding, should the measure pass
- Expose voters to arguments in favor of, and against, the proposed measure to gauge 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 the 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 revenue measure to fund infrastructure repairs and improvements, it was important that in addition to measuring *current* opinions about the measure, the survey expose respondents to the types of information voters are likely to encounter during an election cycle—including arguments in favor and

1. Source: California Department of Finance estimate, January 2015.

2. For more information on the City's Asset Management Program and the state of the City's infrastructure systems, go to [www.chulavista.gov/infrastructure](http://www.chulavista.gov/infrastructure).

opposed to the measure—and gauge how this information ultimately impacts their voting decision.

**TESTING TWO ALTERNATIVES: SALES TAX & BOND** One objective of this study was to determine how support for a local measure may vary depending on the type of financial mechanism employed: sales tax or general obligation bond. To reliably estimate support for both types of measures, a split-sample methodology was employed such that 400 voters were administered a survey that focused on a sales tax, whereas a separate 400 voters were asked questions regarding a potential bond measure. All 800 respondents received general questions that applied to both types of measures.

**OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY** For a full discussion of the research methods and techniques used in this study, turn to *Methodology* on page 38. In brief, the survey was administered by telephone to a random sample of 800 registered voters in the City of Chula Vista who are likely to participate in the November 2016 election. Interviews were conducted between July 27 and August 5, 2015, and the average interview lasted 19 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 surveys 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 surveys 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 41) and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results are contained in Appendix A.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** True North thanks the City of Chula Vista for the opportunity to assist the city in this important effort. A special thanks also to city staff, as well as Jared Boigon of TBWB, for providing their valuable input during the design stage of this study. Their collective expertise, local knowledge, and insight improved the overall quality of the research presented here.

**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 Chula Vista. 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 customers. 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, organizational development, establishing fiscal priorities, and developing effective public information campaigns.



During their careers, Dr. McLarney and Mr. Sarles have designed and conducted over 900 survey research studies for public agencies, including more than 300 revenue measure feasibility studies. Of the measures that have gone to ballot based on Dr. McLarney's recommendation, more than 93% have been successful. In total, the research that Dr. McLarney has conducted has led to over \$24 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 presented with a list of nine specific issues and asked to rate the importance of each, protecting the supply of water received the highest percentage of respondents indicating that the issue was either extremely or very important (93%), followed by creating jobs and improving the local economy (91%), and maintaining the quality of education in local schools (89%).
- Given the purpose of this study, it is instructive to note that preventing local tax increases (68%) was rated lower in importance than maintaining the quality of city services, facilities and infrastructure (77%).
- When asked to identify the biggest problem facing their neighborhood that they would like the City to address, just over one-fifth of respondents were either unsure of any issues facing their neighborhood (9%) or indicated that there were no issues they'd like the City to address (12%). Regarding specific suggestions, improving public safety (17%) and improving and repairing streets and roads (16%) were the top mentions, followed by addressing drought and water issues (9%), reducing traffic congestion (8%), improving the local economy and job opportunities (8%), and improving education (7%).

### INITIAL BALLOT TESTS

- **Sales Tax Version:** With only the information provided in the ballot language, 69% of voters initially indicated they would support enacting a one-half-cent sales tax in order to fund essential projects and services, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities and services; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. Approximately 23% stated that they would oppose the sales tax measure at this point in the survey, whereas 7% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice.
- Those who opposed the sales tax measure at the Initial Ballot Test (or were unsure) were most likely to cite a perception that taxes are already too high (52%), concern that the money would be mismanaged/misspent (31%), and the belief that the measure would be ineffective and that no improvements would be made (12%) as the reasons for their position.
- **Bond Version:** With only the information provided in the ballot language, 71% of respondents indicated that they would definitely or probably support a \$200 million bond to provide adequate funding for essential city projects and improvements, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. Approximately 22% stated that they would oppose the bond measure at this point in the survey, whereas 7% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice.

- Those who opposed the bond measure at the Initial Ballot Test (or were unsure) were most likely to cite the perception that taxes are already too high (36%), concerns that the money would be mismanaged/misspent (25%), and a need for more information (24%) as the reasons for their position.

## TAX THRESHOLD

- **Sales Tax Version:** Reducing the proposed tax rate to one-quarter percent did not increase overall support for the sales tax measure. In fact, a small percentage of voters (2%) who said they would *probably* support the measure at one-half cent indicated they would probably *not* support the measure at one-quarter cent or indicated they were unsure of how they would vote. This shift in support resulted in reducing overall support for the sale tax measure to 67% at this point in the survey.
- **Bond Version:** Support for the bond measure varied according to the proposed tax rate. At the highest tax rate tested (\$57 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation), just 34% of voters indicated that they would support the bond. Incremental reductions in the tax rate resulted in incremental increases in support for the measure, with 50% of voters indicating that they would support the bond at the lowest tax rate tested (\$28 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation).
- Voters responded more positively when the cost of the bond measure was expressed as an annual total for the median home owner when compared with a rate per \$100,000 of assessed valuation. When the highest tax rate (\$57 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation) was converted to an annual total of \$186 for the typical residential property owner, support for the bond increased from 34% to 43%.

## PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

- **Sales Tax Version:** Of the projects and programs that could be funded by a sales tax, voters most strongly favored paving, maintaining and repairing city streets and fixing potholes (83% strongly or somewhat favor), followed by repairing or replacing failing storm drain pipes that can create sink holes in city streets (83%), repairing broken sidewalks, curbs and gutters (81%), and upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response (81%).
- **Bond Version:** Of the projects that could be funded by a bond, voters most strongly favored paving, maintaining, and repairing city streets and fixing potholes (80% strongly or somewhat favor), upgrading the City's irrigation and drainage systems to conserve drinking water (79%), retrofitting storm drains to capture trash and reduce water pollution (77%), and maintaining parks and recreation facilities including courts, fields, pools and playgrounds (76%).

## POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

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

### Sales Tax Version

- *When you have an emergency, you need help fast. Minutes count in these situations. This measure will ensure that our police and firefighters have the vehicles and life-saving equipment they need to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies.*

- *Much of the City's storm drain system is more than 50 years old. We need to start replacing and repairing the system before pipes begin collapsing and create sink holes, flooding, pollution, and millions of dollars in property damage.*
- *By keeping our city safe, clean and well-maintained, this measure will help protect our quality of life and our property values.*

#### **Bond Version**

- *When you have an emergency, you need help fast. Minutes count in these situations. This measure will ensure that our police and firefighters have the vehicles and life-saving equipment they need to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies.*
- *Much of the City's storm drain system is more than 50 years old. We need to start replacing and repairing the system before pipes begin collapsing and create sink holes, flooding, pollution, and millions of dollars in property damage.*
- *By keeping our city safe, clean and well-maintained, this measure will help protect our quality of life and our property values.*

### **INTERIM BALLOT TESTS**

- **Sales Tax Version:** After being presented with programs and projects that could be funded as well as arguments in favor of the sales tax measure, overall support for the sales tax measure remained steady at 69%, with 27% of respondents opposed to the measure and an additional 4% unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.
- **Bond Version:** After being presented with possible tax rates, programs and projects that could be funded, as well as arguments in favor of the bond measure, overall support for the bond declined 7 percentage points from the Initial Ballot Test to 64%, with 27% of respondents opposed to the measure, and 8% unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

### **NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS**

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

#### **Sales Tax Version**

- *This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes.*
- *People are having a hard time making ends meet with high unemployment and a sluggish economy. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes.*
- *We can't trust the City with this tax. They will mismanage the money or spend it on their own pet projects.*

#### **Bond Version**

- *This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes.*
- *Raising taxes will hurt our local businesses and our local economy.*
- *Taxpayers will be paying for this bond for the next 30 years. That is too much debt.*

## FINAL BALLOT TESTS

- **Sales Tax Version:** After providing respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, possible tax rates, programs and projects that could be funded by the measure, as well as arguments in favor and against the proposal, support for the sales tax measure was found among 67% of voters, with 28% opposed to the measure and 4% unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.
- **Bond Version:** After providing respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, possible tax rates, programs and projects that could be funded by the measure, as well as arguments in favor and against the proposal, support for the bond dipped again to 60%, with 34% opposed to the measure and 7% 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 TBWB’s interpretations of the survey results and the firms’ collective experience conducting revenue measure studies for public agencies throughout the State.

*Is it feasible to place a local revenue measure on the ballot in 2016?*

Yes. Chula Vista voters have a high opinion of the quality of life in the city as well as the City’s performance in providing municipal services,<sup>3</sup> and they view maintaining the quality of city facilities, services and infrastructure as being among the most important issues facing the city. These sentiments combine to create strong natural support for a revenue measure to fund essential projects and services, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities and services; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements.

The results of this feasibility study suggest that, if crafted appropriately and combined with an effective public education effort, a revenue measure has a good chance of being supported by the necessary proportion of voters in 2016.

Having stated that a measure is feasible, it’s also important to note that this conclusion comes with several qualifications and conditions. Indeed, although the results are promising, all tax 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 TBWB recommend.

*Which funding mechanism should be selected for the revenue measure?*

One of the key objectives of this study was to determine how support for a revenue measure to ensure adequate funding for infrastructure repairs and improvements may vary depending on the *type* of funding mechanism employed: sales tax or general obligation bond. Although both mechanisms initially found two-thirds support, the study clearly indicates that Chula Vista voters prefer a sales tax measure to a bond. Support for a half-cent sales tax was steady throughout the survey, ranging between 67% and 69% depending on the context. Although support for the bond at the Initial Ballot Test was high (71%), voter sensitivity to the tax rates that could be associated with a bond, as well as opposition arguments, resulted in a 12% reduction in support for the bond over the course of the interview. Accordingly, True North and TBWB recommend that the City pursue a sales tax measure.

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3. Based on the 2014 Community Survey conducted by True North Research for the City of Chula Vista.

*What should the tax rate be for the measure?*

Naturally, the willingness of voters to support a specific revenue measure is contingent—in part—on the tax rate associated with a measure. The higher the rate, all other things being equal, the lower the level of aggregate support that can be expected. It is critical that the rate be set at a level that the necessary proportion of voters view as affordable.

Assuming the City selects a sales tax as the appropriate mechanism, the survey results indicate that a half-percent rate is appropriate. Chula Vista voters expressed strong support for a sales tax at that rate, and a reduction in the rate to one-quarter percent did not improve support.

As noted above, True North and TBWB do not recommend that the City pursue a bond measure due to insufficient support for that option. Even at the lowest tax rate tested (\$28 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation), support for the bond was well below the two-thirds threshold required for passage.

*Should the City select a special tax or a general tax option?*

California law allows the City of Chula Vista the option of pursuing a sales tax as a *special tax* or as a *general tax*. A special tax dedicates funds to specific purposes and requires two-thirds supermajority support for passage. A *general tax*, meanwhile, is “any tax imposed for general governmental purposes”<sup>4</sup> 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 city with a great deal of flexibility with respect to what is funded by the measure on a year-to-year basis. Another key difference is that a general tax requires a simple majority (50% +1) for passage, rather than the higher two-thirds threshold required for a special tax.

Choosing between a special tax and a general tax involves balancing trade-offs. A special tax guarantees funding for specific projects, but has less flexibility and involves a substantially higher risk of failure at the ballot box due to the much higher bar (two-thirds) for success. A general tax has greater flexibility in how the funds can be spent (which can be a pro or con depending on the audience), and has much less risk of failure due to the lower threshold for success (simple majority). True North and TBWB will consult with the City of Chula Vista in the coming months to identify the option that is best for the City.

*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 measures, one of the goals of this study was to explore how the introduction of additional information

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

about the measures may affect voters' opinions about the sales tax and bond options.

It is clear from the survey results that voters' opinions about the proposed measures are somewhat sensitive to the nature—and amount—of information that they have about the measures. Information about the specific improvements that could be funded by the measures, as well as arguments in favor of the proposals, were found by many voters to be compelling reasons to support the measures. Moreover, this information played an important role in limiting the erosion of support for the measures once respondents were exposed to the types of opposition arguments they will likely encounter during an election cycle.

Accordingly, one of the keys to building and *sustaining* support for a local revenue measure will be the presence of an effective, well-organized public outreach effort and independent campaign to that focuses on the need for the measure as well as the many benefits that it will bring.

*How might 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. Despite ongoing concerns about the economy and unemployment, voter support for a sales tax measure was strong, which speaks volumes about the value that Chula Vista voters place on having high quality public facilities and infrastructure. Nevertheless, should the economy and/or political climate continue to improve, support for the measure could increase. Conversely, negative economic and/or political developments, especially at the local level, could dampen support for the measure below what was recorded in this study.



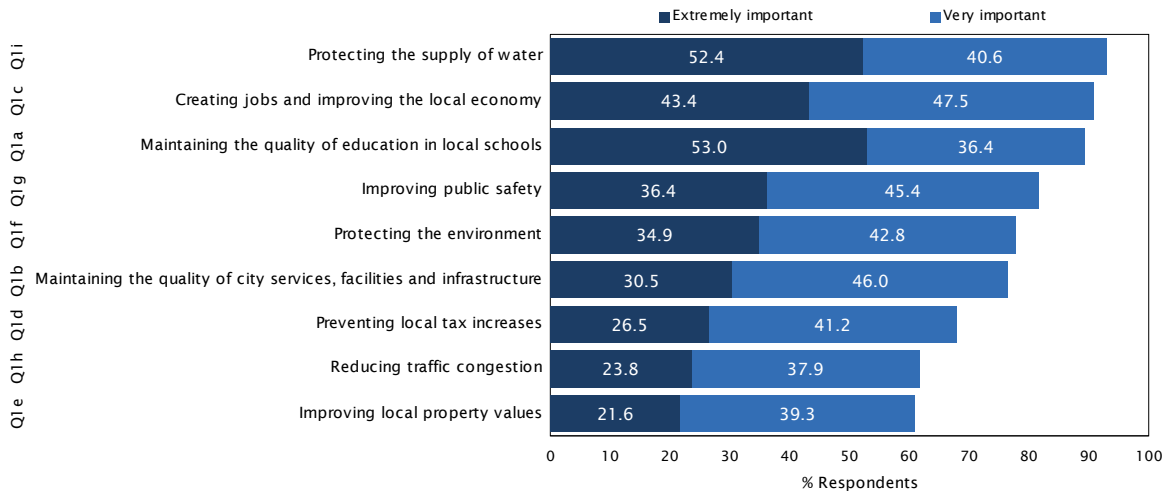
## IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

The first substantive question of the survey presented respondents with several issues facing residents in the City 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 all 800 survey respondents, sorted by order of importance.<sup>5</sup> Overall, protecting the supply of water received the highest percentage of respondents indicating that the issue was either extremely or very important (93%), followed by creating jobs and improving the local economy (91%), and maintaining the quality of education in local schools (89%). Given the purpose of this study, it is instructive to note that preventing local tax increases (68%) was rated lower in importance than maintaining the quality of city services, facilities and infrastructure (77%).

**Question 1** *To begin, I'm going to read a list of issues facing your community 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**



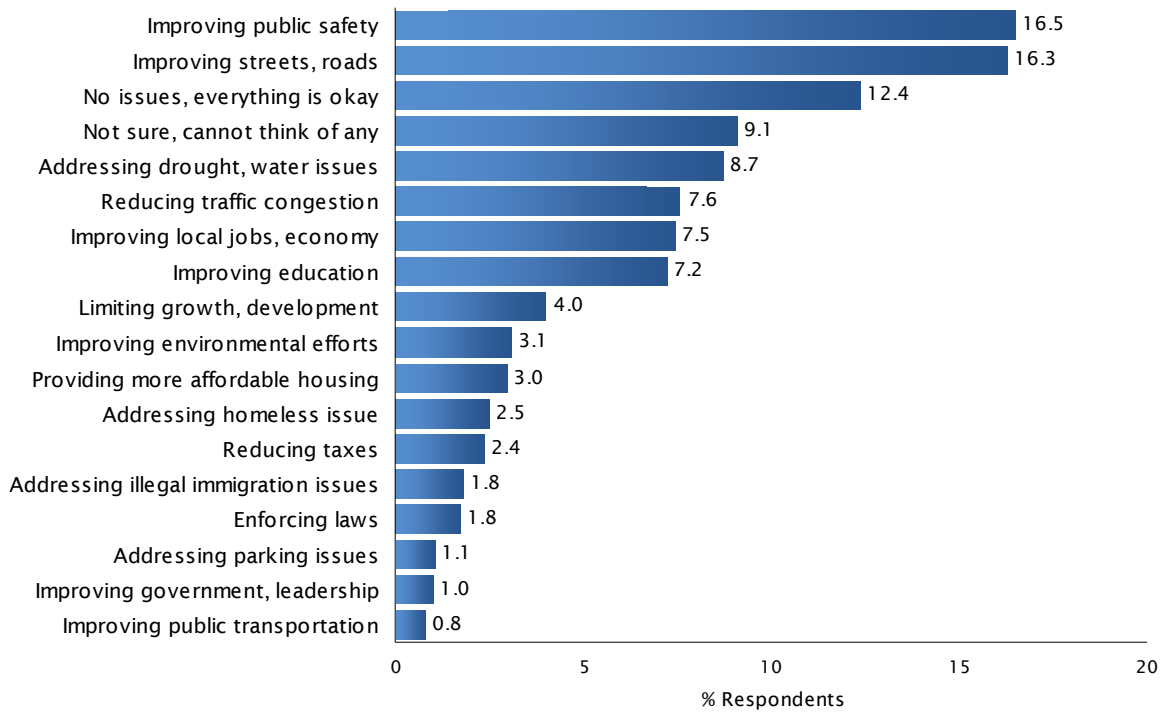
5. Issues were ranked based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the issue was either *extremely* important or *very* important.

**NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES** Respondents were next asked to identify the biggest issue facing their neighborhood that they would like the City to address. This question was asked in an open-ended manner, which allowed respondents to mention any improvement 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 2.

Just over one-fifth (22%) of respondents were either unsure of any issues facing their neighborhood (9%) or indicated that there were no issues they'd like the City to address (12%). Regarding specific suggestions, improving public safety (17%) and improving and repairing streets and roads (16%) were the top mentions, followed by addressing drought and water issues (9%), reducing traffic congestion (8%), improving the local economy and job opportunities (8%), and improving education (7%).

**Question 2** *What would you say is the biggest issue facing your neighborhood that you would like the City to address?*

**FIGURE 2 BIGGEST ISSUE FACING NEIGHBORHOOD**





## INITIAL BALLOT TESTS

The primary research objective of this survey was to estimate voter support for a local revenue measure that would fund repairs and improvements to city infrastructure. To accommodate the City's interest in understanding how support for a measure may vary depending on the type of financial mechanism employed, a split-sample methodology was utilized. Half of the sample (400 voters) were administered a survey that focused on a sales tax, whereas a separate 400 voters were asked questions regarding a potential bond measure. Once assigned a particular version of the measure, the respondent received the same version throughout the survey. Question 3 (sales tax) and 5 (bond) were designed to take an early assessment of voters' support for the proposed measures.

The motivation for placing Questions 3 and 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 education campaign. Questions 3 and 5, referred to as the Initial Ballot Test for each funding mechanism, are thus good measures 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.

**SUPPORT BY MEASURE TYPE** Figure 3 on the next page presents the results of the Initial Ballot Test for the sales tax and bond measures. Overall, 69% of voters initially indicated they would support enacting a one-half-cent sales tax in order to fund essential projects and services, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities and services; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. Approximately 23% stated that they would oppose the sales tax measure at this point in the survey, whereas 7% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice. The level of support recorded for the sales tax at the Initial Ballot Test is approximately 2 percentage points *above* the two-thirds threshold required for passage of a *specific* sales tax in California, and 19% above the majority threshold required for a *general* sales tax.

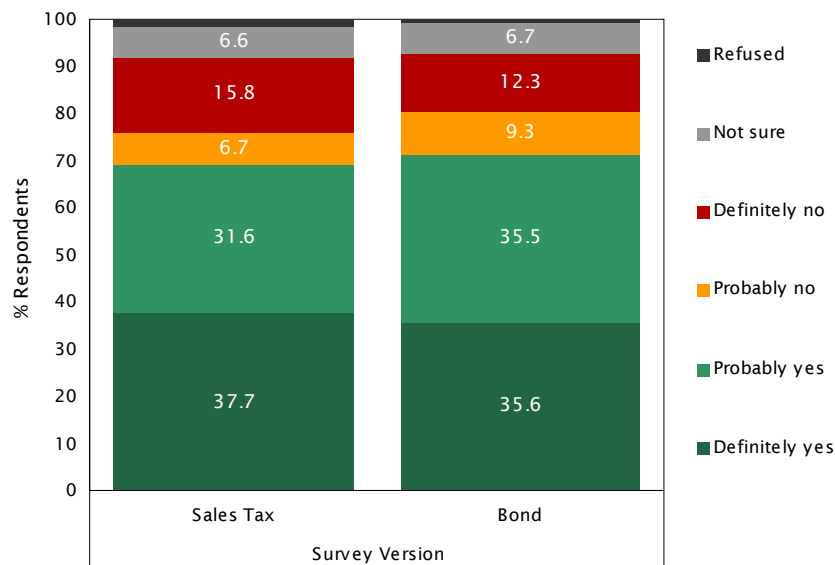
Support for the proposed bond measure at the Initial Ballot Test was similar. Overall, 71% of respondents indicated that they would definitely or probably support a \$200 million bond to provide adequate funding for essential city projects and improvements, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. Approximately 22% stated that they would oppose the bond measure at this point in the survey, whereas 7% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice. The level of support recorded for the bond measure at the Initial Ballot Test is approxi-

mately 4 percentage points *above* the two-thirds threshold required for passage of a general obligation bond in California.

**Question 3 (Sales Tax)** *To provide adequate funding for essential city projects and services, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities and services; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. Shall the City of Chula Vista enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed five years, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?*

**Question 5 (Bond)** *To provide adequate funding for essential city projects and improvements, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. Shall the City of Chula Vista issue 200 million dollars in bonds, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?*

**FIGURE 3 INITIAL BALLOT TEST BY SURVEY VERSION: SALES TAX & BOND**



**SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS** For the interested reader, Tables 1 and 2 on the following pages show how support at the Initial Ballot Test for the sales tax and bond measures varied by key demographic traits. The blue column (Approximate % of Voter Universe) indicates the percentage of the likely voter universe that each subgroup category comprises for the sales tax or bond survey. When compared with their respective counterparts, Democrats, those in Single- and Dual- Democratic households, those under the age of 40, renters, and those who live west of the 805 were the most likely to support a local revenue measure within their respective subgroups—be it a sales tax or bond.

**TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST: SALES TAX**

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100	69.3	6.6
Child in Hsld (QD1)	Yes	36	68.3	7.5
	No	64	69.4	5.8
Home Type (QD2)	Single family	73	66.7	5.4
	Apartment	10	86.9	2.5
	Condo / Town- home	12	69.6	13.4
	Mo bile home	5	70.6	12.8
Attentiveness to Local Issues (QD3)	Very	29	65.0	2.2
	Somewhat	47	67.8	5.0
	Slightly, not at all	24	76.2	14.6
Household Party Type	Single dem	21	79.9	6.5
	Dual dem	14	83.1	3.7
	Single rep	11	56.7	0.0
	Dual rep	11	51.3	13.8
	Other	18	71.2	9.0
	Mixed	26	64.7	6.5
Party	Democrat	42	83.0	4.5
	Republican	30	50.0	6.0
	Other / DTS	28	70.0	10.5
Age	18 to 39	27	80.7	6.9
	40 to 49	13	44.9	18.1
	50 to 64	34	70.9	5.0
	65 or older	26	67.2	3.1
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	70	63.8	6.8
	No	30	82.2	6.3
Registration Year	2015 to 2009	47	71.3	7.3
	2008 to 2005	18	68.7	13.1
	2004 to 2001	15	74.1	2.5
	2000 or before	20	61.6	2.1
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	38	66.5	5.2
	No	62	71.0	7.5
Likely Jun 2016 Voter	Yes	43	68.1	6.3
	No	57	70.2	6.9
Gender	Male	50	67.0	8.4
	Female	50	71.7	4.8
East or West of 805 (Precinct)	East	55	61.0	7.5
	West	45	79.6	5.6

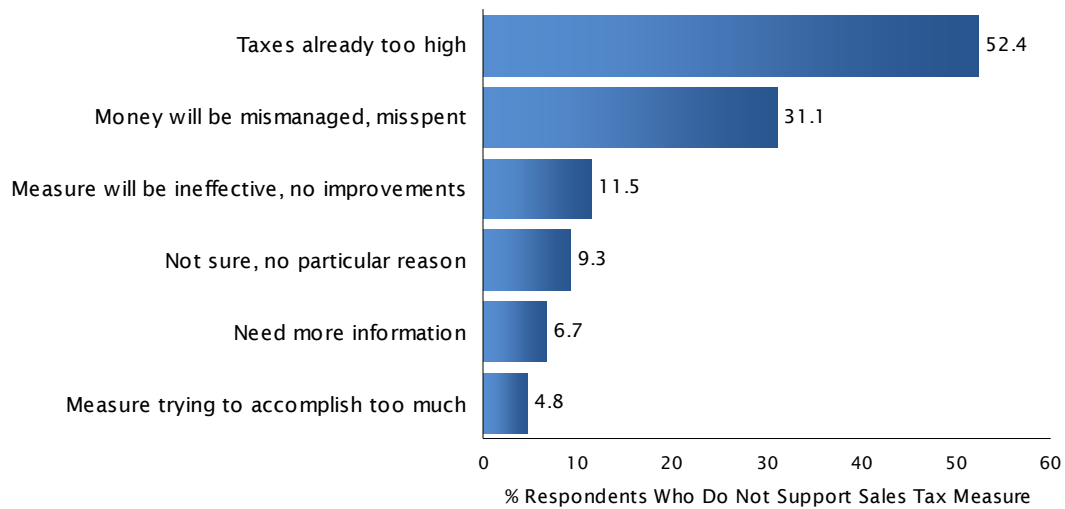
TABLE 2 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST: BOND

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100	71.1	6.7
Child in Hsld (QD1)	Yes	36	72.9	5.8
	No	64	70.2	7.5
Home Type (QD2)	Single family	69	67.3	5.7
	Apartment	13	84.2	5.6
	Condo / Town- home	13	79.9	14.5
	Mo bile home	4	85.6	3.2
Attentiveness to Local Issues (QD3)	Very	25	56.9	12.4
	Somewhat	52	78.7	2.6
	Slightly, not at all	22	74.2	12.5
Household Party Type	Single dem	20	84.2	3.5
	Dual dem	13	76.0	2.1
	Single rep	10	53.2	5.1
	Dual rep	10	35.4	19.5
	Other	19	80.9	5.2
	Mixed	27	72.4	8.3
Party	Democrat	42	79.7	4.7
	Republican	29	48.4	11.8
	Other / DTS	29	81.3	4.6
Age	18 to 39	27	83.9	3.2
	40 to 49	16	66.3	9.4
	50 to 64	28	72.5	8.3
	65 or older	29	61.3	6.0
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	64	65.7	7.9
	No	36	80.6	4.6
Registration Year	2015 to 2009	46	80.7	4.1
	2008 to 2005	19	69.3	9.5
	2004 to 2001	14	68.4	11.5
	2000 or before	21	54.1	6.7
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	37	73.1	5.1
	No	63	69.9	7.7
Likely Jun 2016 Voter	Yes	43	64.1	8.3
	No	57	76.5	5.5
Gender	Male	49	67.0	3.2
	Female	51	75.0	10.1
East or West of 805 (Precinct)	East	52	68.9	6.3
	West	48	73.5	7.1

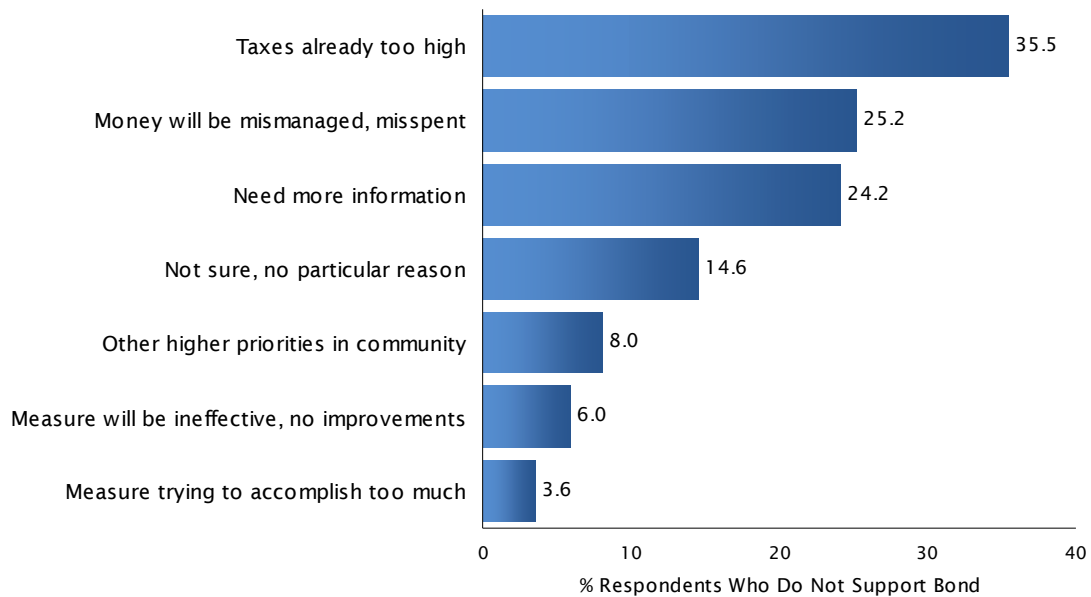
**REASONS FOR OPPOSING MEASURE** Respondents who opposed the measure at Questions 3 or 5 were subsequently asked if there was a particular reason for their position. Questions 4 and 6 were asked in an open-ended manner, allowing respondents to mention any reason that came to mind without being prompted 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 4 for the sales tax, Figure 5 for the bond. The most frequently-mentioned reason for not supporting the sales tax measure was the perception that taxes are already too high (52%), followed by concern that the money would be mismanaged/misspent (31%) and the belief that the measure would be ineffective and that no improvements would be made (12%). The most frequently-mentioned reason for not supporting the bond was also the perception that taxes are already too high (36%), followed by concerns that the money would be mismanaged/misspent (25%) and a need for more information (24%).

**Question 4/6** *Is there a particular reason why you do not support the measure I just described?*

**FIGURE 4 REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE: SALES TAX**



**FIGURE 5 REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE: BOND**



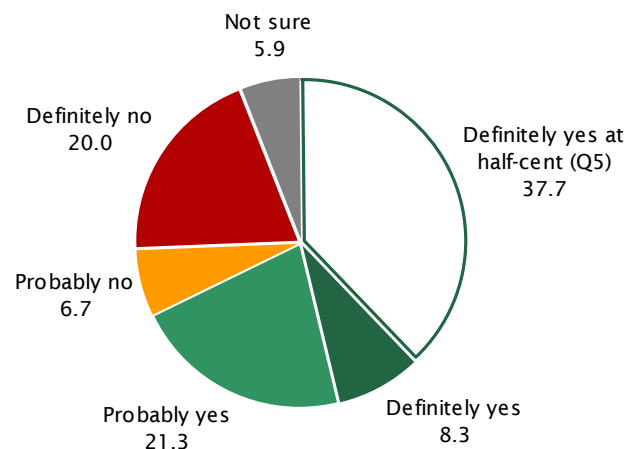
## TAX THRESHOLD

Naturally, voter support for a revenue measure is often contingent on the cost of the measure. The higher the tax rate, all other things being equal, the less likely a voter is to support the measure. One of the goals of this study was thus to gauge the impact that changes in the tax rate can be expected to have on voter support for the proposed revenue measures.

**SALES TAX** The ballot language in Question 3 indicated that the measure would enact a one-half cent sales tax. Respondents who did not say they would *definitely* support the sales tax measure at the Initial Ballot Test or were unsure were subsequently asked if they would support the proposed sales tax if the rate increase were instead one-quarter percent. As shown in Figure 6, reducing the tax rate to one-quarter percent did not increase overall support for the proposed sales tax measure. In fact, a small percentage of voters (2%) who said they would *probably* support the measure at one-half cent indicated they would probably *not* support the measure at one-quarter cent or indicated they were unsure of how they would vote. This shift in support resulted in reducing overall support for the sale tax measure to 67% at this point in the survey.

**Question 7 (Sales Tax)** *What if the measure I just described raised the sales tax by a lower amount: one-quarter cent instead of one-half cent? Would you vote yes or no on the measure?*

**FIGURE 6 TAX THRESHOLD: SALES TAX, ONE-QUARTER CENT**



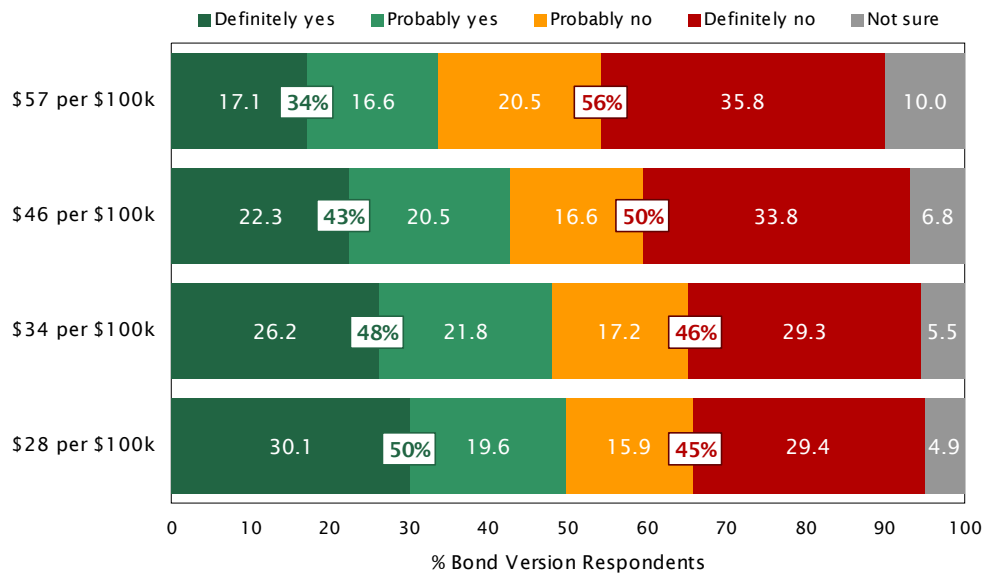
**BOND** Voter sensitivity to the possible tax impacts of the proposed bond measure was gauged using two approaches. Respondents were first instructed that the amount each home owner will pay if the measure passes depends on the *assessed* value of their home—not the market value. Voters were then presented with the highest tax rate (\$57 per \$100,000 assessed valuation) and asked if they would support the proposed measure at that rate. If a respondent did not answer *definitely yes*, they were asked whether they would support the measure at the next lowest tax rate. The four tax rates tested using this methodology and the percentage of respondents who indicated they would vote in favor of the measure at each rate are shown in Figure 7 on the next page.



The most obvious pattern revealed in Figure 7 is that voters are quite price sensitive when it comes to their support for the proposed bond measure. As the cost of the measure to their household increases, support for the bond decreases. At the highest tax rate tested (\$57 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation), just 34% of voters indicated that they would support the bond. Incremental reductions in the tax rate resulted in incremental increases in support for the measure, with 50% of voters indicating that they would support the bond at the lowest tax rate tested (\$28 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation).

**Question 8 (Bond)** *The amount home owners will pay if the bond passes depends on the assessed value of their home, not the current market value of the home. If you heard that the annual property taxes on your home would increase: \_\_\_\_\_ per 100,000 dollars of assessed valuation, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure?*

**FIGURE 7 TAX THRESHOLD: BOND**

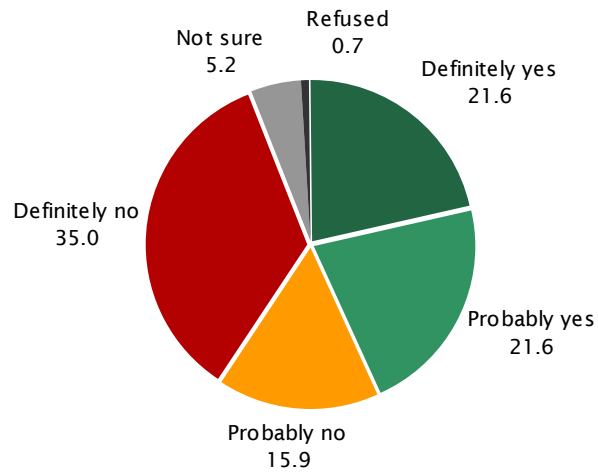


Because voters occasionally overestimate their current assessed valuation and/or have difficulty translating the tax rate into an annualized total, the survey also tested a different approach for conveying the tax rate information for the bond. In addition to presenting a rate as described above, voters were also provided with the total annual cost of the bond for the median homeowner (see Question 9) based on the highest tax rate tested in Question 8. The results to this approach are presented in Figure 8 on the next page.

Voters generally respond more positively when the cost of the measure is expressed as an annual total for the median home owner when compared with a rate per \$100,000 of assessed valuation. At the highest tax *rate* tested (\$57 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation), 34% of voters indicated that they would support the proposed bond measure (see Figure 7 above). When that rate was translated into an annual cost for the median home owner (\$186 per year), 43% of those surveyed indicated that they would support the bond (see Figure 8).

**Question 9 (Bond)** *Let me put it another way: If you knew that this measure would cost the typical home owner about \$186 per year, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure?*

**FIGURE 8 TAX THRESHOLD: BOND, AVERAGE OF \$186 PER YEAR**



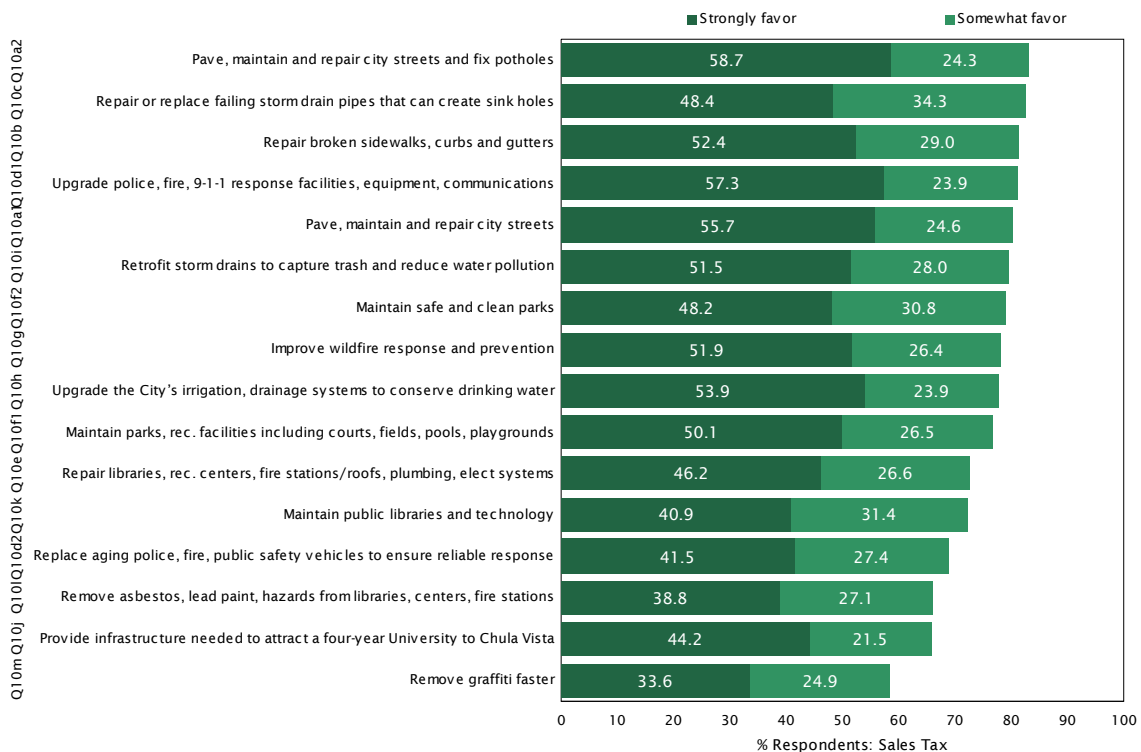
## PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

The ballot language presented in Question 3 indicated that the proposed sales tax would fund essential projects and services, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities and services; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. The bond ballot language was similar, stating that the measure would provide adequate funding for essential city projects and improvements, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. The purpose of Question 10 was to provide respondents with the full range of programs and projects that may be funded by the proposed measures, as well as identify which of these improvements voters most favored funding with measure proceeds.

After reading each item that may be funded by the measure, respondents were asked if they would favor or oppose spending some of the money on that particular item assuming that the measure passes. Truncated descriptions of the improvements tested, as well as voters' responses, are shown in Figure 9 for the sales tax, Figure 10 for the bond.

**Question 10** *The measure we've been discussing would provide funding for a variety of 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?*

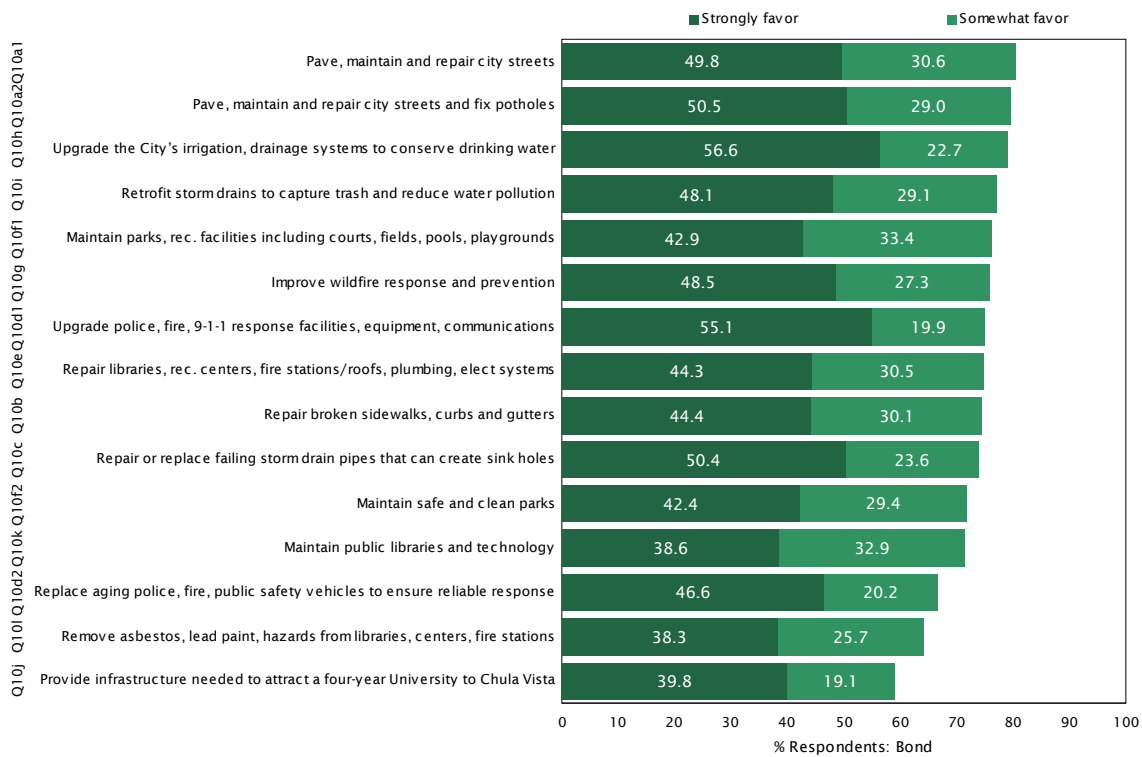
**FIGURE 9 PROGRAMS & PROJECTS: SALES TAX**



There was no shortage of projects on which voters would favor spending measure proceeds. Overall, the item that resonated with the largest percentage of respondents for the sales tax measure was paving, maintaining and repairing city streets and fixing potholes (83% strongly or somewhat favor), followed by repairing or replacing failing storm drain pipes that can create sink holes in city streets (83%), repairing broken sidewalks, curbs and gutters (81%), and upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response (81%).

For the bond, the projects that resonated with the largest percentage of respondents were paving, maintaining, and repairing city streets (80% strongly or somewhat favor) and fixing potholes (80%), upgrading the City's irrigation and drainage systems to conserve drinking water (79%), retrofitting storm drains to capture trash and reduce water pollution (77%), and maintaining parks and recreation facilities including courts, fields, pools and playgrounds (76%).

**FIGURE 10 PROGRAMS & PROJECTS: BOND**



**PROGRAM & PROJECT RATINGS BY SUBGROUP** Table 3 on the next page presents the top five sales tax programs (showing the percentage of respondents who *strongly* favor each) by position at the Initial Ballot Test. Table 4 provides the same information for the bond. Not surprisingly, individuals who initially opposed the measure or were unsure of their position were generally less likely to favor spending money on a given program or project when compared with supporters. Nevertheless, initial supporters, opponents, and the undecided did agree on several of the top priorities for funding.

**TABLE 3 TOP PROGRAMS & PROJECTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST: SALES TAX**

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q3)	Item	Program or Project Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 278)	Q10a2	Pave, maintain and repair city streets and fix potholes	72
	Q10h	Upgrade the City's irrigation, drainage systems to conserve drinking water	68
	Q10a1	Pave, maintain and repair city streets	67
	Q10d1	Upgrade police, fire, 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment, communications	67
	Q10i	Retrofit storm drains to capture trash and reduce water pollution	62
Probably or Definitely No (n = 90)	Q10d1	Upgrade police, fire, 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment, communications	40
	Q10d2	Replace aging police, fire and public safety vehicles to ensure reliable response	34
	Q10g	Improve wildfire response and prevention	33
	Q10a1	Pave, maintain and repair city streets	31
	Q10c	Repair or replace failing storm drain pipes that can create sink holes in city streets	29
Not Sure (n = 27)	Q10g	Improve wildfire response and prevention	58
	Q10j	Provide the infrastructure needed to attract a four-year University to Chula Vista	48
	Q10i	Retrofit storm drains to capture trash and reduce water pollution	44
	Q10f1	Maintain parks, recreation facilities including courts, fields, pools, playgrounds	42
	Q10f2	Maintain safe and clean parks	36

**TABLE 4 TOP PROGRAMS & PROJECTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST: BOND**

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Program or Project Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 285)	Q10h	Upgrade the City's irrigation, drainage systems to conserve drinking water	68
	Q10d1	Upgrade police, fire, 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment, communications	64
	Q10c	Repair or replace failing storm drain pipes that can create sink holes in city streets	61
	Q10a2	Pave, maintain and repair city streets and fix potholes	60
	Q10a1	Pave, maintain and repair city streets	60
Probably or Definitely No (n = 86)	Q10d1	Upgrade police, fire, 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment, communications	33
	Q10d2	Replace aging police, fire and public safety vehicles to ensure reliable response	27
	Q10a2	Pave, maintain and repair city streets and fix potholes	25
	Q10c	Repair or replace failing storm drain pipes that can create sink holes in city streets	23
	Q10g	Improve wildfire response and prevention	22
Not Sure (n = 27)	Q10a1	Pave, maintain and repair city streets	49
	Q10h	Upgrade the City's irrigation, drainage systems to conserve drinking water	44
	Q10i	Retrofit storm drains to capture trash and reduce water pollution	38
	Q10f1	Maintain parks, recreation facilities including courts, fields, pools, playgrounds	37
	Q10d1	Upgrade police, fire, 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment, communications	27

## 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 persuade voters to support it, 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 measures, 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 measures.

The objective of Question 11 was to present respondents with arguments in favor of the proposed measure (sales tax and/or bond) and identify whether they felt the arguments were convincing reasons to support it. Arguments in opposition to the measure were also presented and will be discussed later in this report (see *Negative Arguments* on page 30). Within each series, specific arguments were administered in random order to avoid a systematic position bias.

**Question 11** *What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people may say about the measure we've been discussing. Supporters of the measure will 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: SALES TAX**

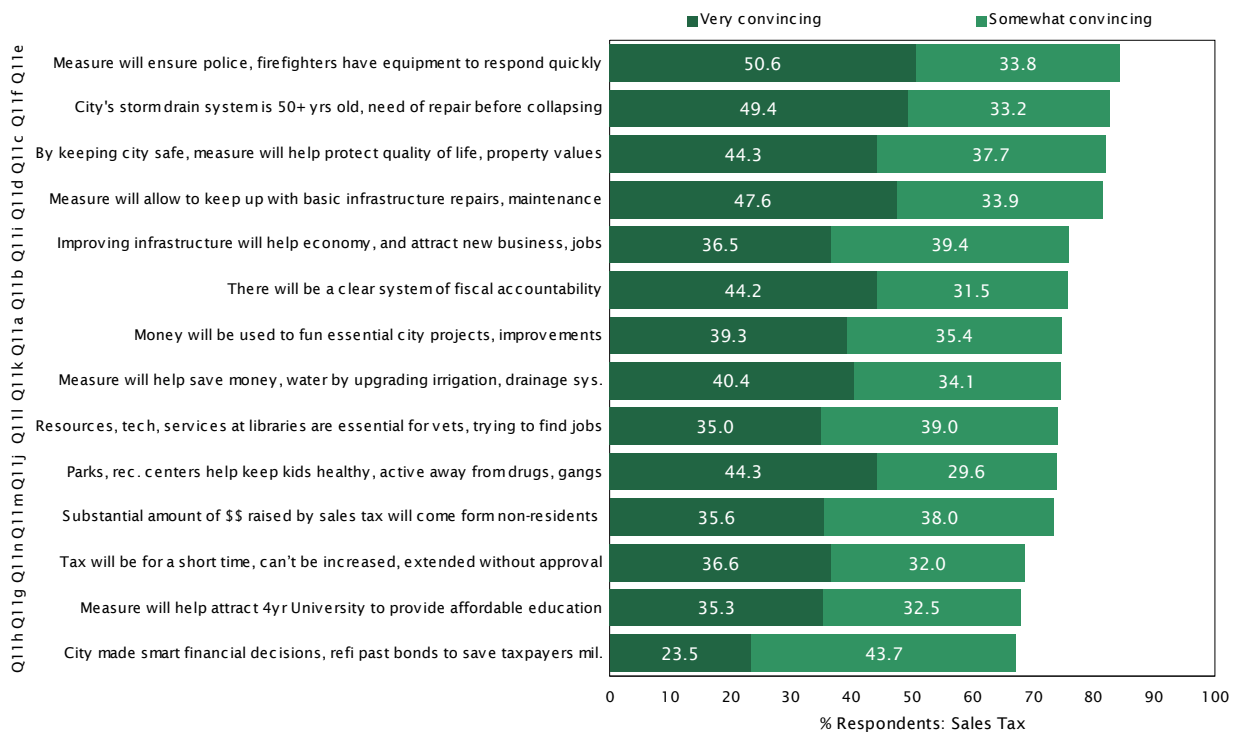
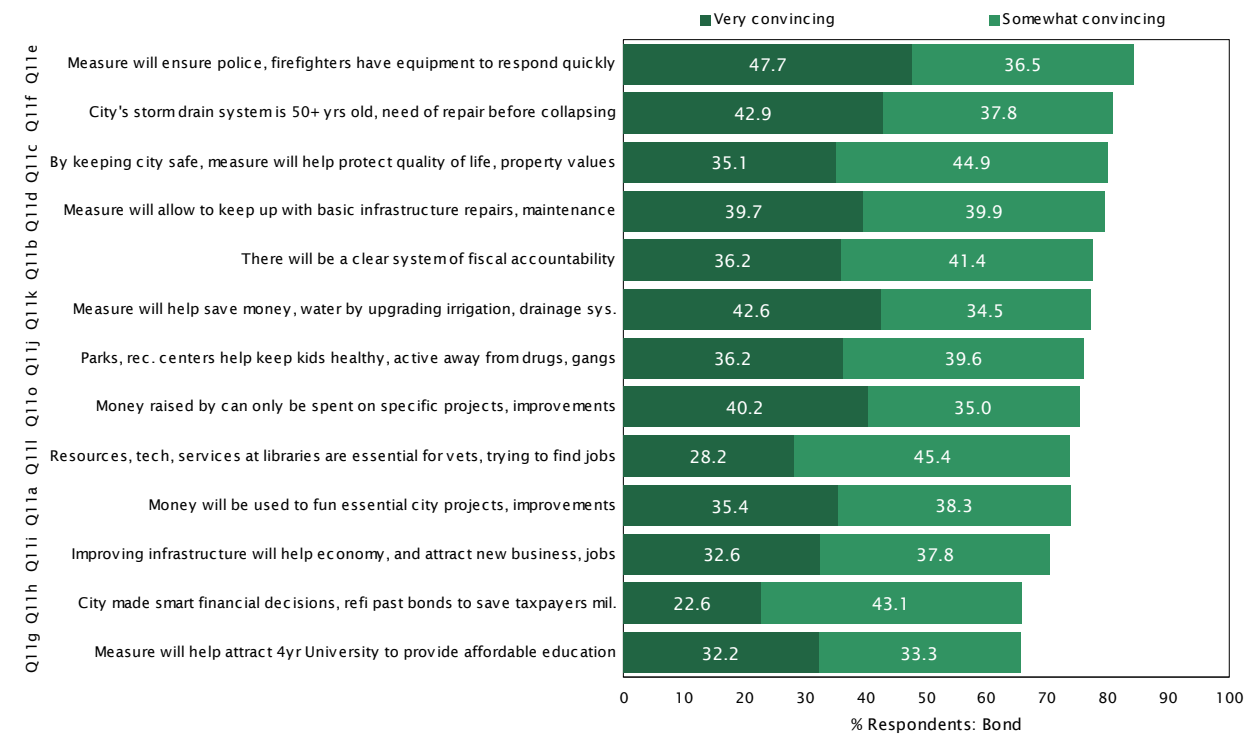


Figure 11 above presents the truncated positive arguments tested in the sales tax survey, as well as voters' reactions to the arguments. The arguments are ranked from most convincing to least convincing based on the percentage of respondents who indicated the argument was either a 'very convincing' or 'somewhat convincing' reason to support the measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive arguments were: *When you have an emergency, you need help fast. Minutes count in these situations. This measure will ensure that our police and firefighters*

have the vehicles and life-saving equipment they need to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies (84%), Much of the City's storm drain system is more than 50 years old. We need to start replacing and repairing the system before pipes begin collapsing and create sink holes, flooding, pollution, and millions of dollars in property damage (83%), and By keeping our city safe, clean and well-maintained, this measure will help protect our quality of life and our property values (82%).

For the bond survey (see Figure 12 below), the most compelling positive arguments were the same: *When you have an emergency, you need help fast. Minutes count in these situations. This measure will ensure that our police and firefighters have the vehicles and life-saving equipment they need to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies (84%), Much of the City's storm drain system is more than 50 years old. We need to start replacing and repairing the system before pipes begin collapsing and create sink holes, flooding, pollution, and millions of dollars in property damage, (81%) and By keeping our city safe, clean and well-maintained, this measure will help protect our quality of life and our property values (80%).*

**FIGURE 12 POSITIVE ARGUMENTS: BOND**



**POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT** For the interested reader, Tables 5 and 6 on the next page list 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 for the sales tax and bond surveys, respectively. The most striking pattern in the tables is that the positive arguments resonated with a much higher percentage of voters who were initially inclined to support the measure or were unsure when compared to voters who initially opposed the measure. Nevertheless, all three groups ranked several of the same arguments as being among the most compelling.

**TABLE 5 TOP POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST: SALES TAX**

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q3)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 278)	Q11e	Measure will ensure police, firefighters have vehicles, equipment to respond quickly	62
	Q11f	City's storm drain system is 50+ yrs old, need of replace, repair before collapsing	61
	Q11d	Measure will allow to keep up with basic infrastructure repairs, maintenance	61
	Q11b	There will be a clear system of fiscal accountability	56
	Q11j	Parks, recreation centers help keep kids healthy, active away from drugs, gangs, crime	56
Probably or Definitely No (n = 90)	Q11f	City's storm drain system is 50+ yrs old, need of replace, repair before collapsing	21
	Q11c	By keeping city safe, measure will help protect our quality of life, property values	19
	Q11b	There will be a clear system of fiscal accountability	18
	Q11e	Measure will ensure police, firefighters have vehicles, equipment to respond quickly	18
Not Sure (n = 27)	Q11n	Tax will be for a limited duration, can't be increased or extended without voter approval	14
	Q11e	Measure will ensure police, firefighters have vehicles, equipment to respond quickly	48
	Q11k	Measure will help save money, conserve water by upgrading irrigation, drainage systems	38
	Q11j	Parks, recreation centers help keep kids healthy, active away from drugs, gangs, crime	35
	Q11n	Tax will be for a limited duration, can't be increased or extended without voter approval	32
Q11f	City's storm drain system is 50+ yrs old, need of replace, repair before collapsing	32	

**TABLE 6 TOP POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST: BOND**

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 285)	Q11e	Measure will ensure police, firefighters have vehicles, equipment to respond quickly	57
	Q11f	City's storm drain system is 50+ yrs old, need of replace, repair before collapsing	57
	Q11k	Measure will help save money, conserve water by upgrading irrigation, drainage systems	55
	Q11d	Measure will allow to keep up with basic infrastructure repairs, maintenance	52
	Q11o	Money raised by bond can only be spent on specific projects, improvements	48
Probably or Definitely No (n = 86)	Q11e	Measure will ensure police, firefighters have vehicles, equipment to respond quickly	20
	Q11o	Money raised by bond can only be spent on specific projects, improvements	18
	Q11g	Measure will help attract 4yr University to provide affordable access to education	14
	Q11c	By keeping city safe, measure will help protect our quality of life, property values	13
Not Sure (n = 27)	Q11b	There will be a clear system of fiscal accountability	13
	Q11e	Measure will ensure police, firefighters have vehicles, equipment to respond quickly	33
	Q11a	Money will be used to fun essential city projects, improvements	32
	Q11o	Money raised by bond can only be spent on specific projects, improvements	27
	Q11b	There will be a clear system of fiscal accountability	24
Q11k	Measure will help save money, conserve water by upgrading irrigation, drainage systems	19	



## INTERIM BALLOT TESTS

After informing respondents about the potential tax rates associated with the measure, the projects that could be funded, as well as exposing them to positive arguments they may encounter during an election cycle, the survey again presented voters with the ballot language used previously to gauge how their support for the proposed sales tax or bond measure may have changed. As shown in Figure 13, overall support for the sales tax measure at this point remained steady at 69%, with 27% of respondents opposed to the measure and an additional 4% unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice. Overall support for the bond declined 7 percentage points from the Initial Ballot Test to 64%, with 27% of respondents opposed to the measure, and 8% unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

**Question 12 (Sales Tax)** *Sometimes people change their minds 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 adequate funding for essential city projects and services, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities and services; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. Shall the City of Chula Vista enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed five years, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?*

**Question 13 (Bond)** *Sometimes people change their minds 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 adequate funding for essential city projects and improvements, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. Shall the City of Chula Vista issue 200 million dollars in bonds, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?*

**FIGURE 13 INTERIM BALLOT TEST BY SURVEY VERSION: SALES TAX & BOND**



**SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS** For the interested reader, Tables 7 and 8 display how support for the sales tax and bond measures at this point in the survey varied by key demographic subgroups, as well as the percentage change in subgroup support when compared to the Initial Ballot Test. Positive differences appear in green, whereas negative differences appear in red.

**TABLE 7 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST: SALES TAX**

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q3)
Overall		100	69.0	-0.3
Child in Hsld (QD1)	Yes	36	69.4	+1.1
	No	64	68.9	-0.4
Home Type (QD2)	Single family	73	66.6	-0.0
	Apartment	10	79.9	-7.1
	Condo / Town- home	12	79.2	+9.6
	Mobile home	5	72.1	+1.5
Attentiveness to Local Issues (QD3)	Very	29	62.9	-2.1
	Somewhat	47	69.3	+1.5
	Slightly, not at all	24	77.4	+1.2
Household Party Type	Single dem	21	76.4	-3.5
	Dual dem	14	75.8	-7.4
	Single rep	11	55.5	-1.2
	Dual rep	11	65.7	+14.4
	Other	18	66.5	-4.7
	Mixed	26	68.2	+3.6
Party	Democrat	42	80.1	-2.9
	Republican	30	55.2	+5.2
	Other / DTS	28	67.7	-2.3
Age	18 to 39	27	76.8	-3.9
	40 to 49	13	58.8	+13.8
	50 to 64	34	72.3	+1.5
	65 or older	26	62.0	-5.2
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	70	63.9	+0.1
	No	30	81.1	-1.1
Registration Year	2015 to 2009	47	70.3	-1.0
	2008 to 2005	18	74.2	+5.5
	2004 to 2001	15	73.9	-0.1
	2000 or before	20	57.6	-4.1
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	38	63.3	-3.3
	No	62	72.5	+1.5
Likely Jun 2016 Voter	Yes	43	63.7	-4.4
	No	57	73.1	+2.8
Gender	Male	50	73.0	+6.0
	Female	50	65.0	-6.7
East or West of 805 (Precinct)	East	55	66.2	+5.2
	West	45	72.5	-7.0

**TABLE 8 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST: BOND**

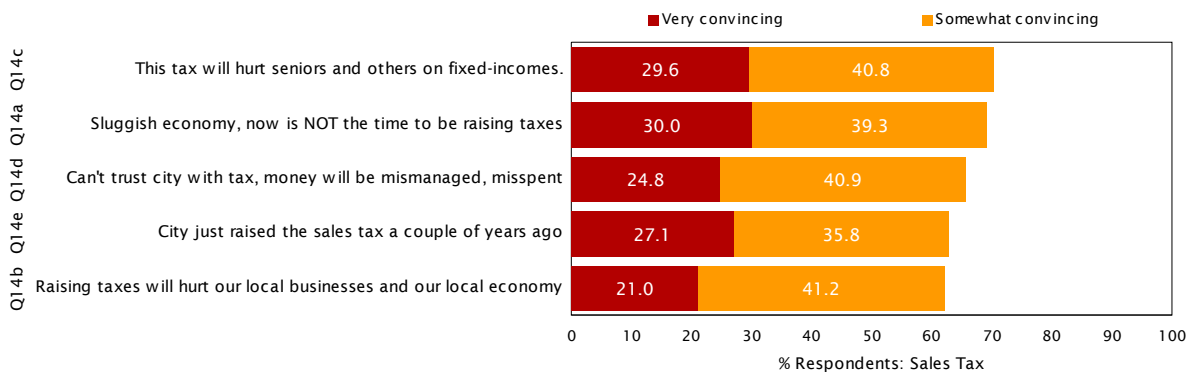
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q5)
Overall		100	64.1	-7.0
Child in Hsld (QD1)	Yes	36	64.9	-8.0
	No	64	63.2	-7.0
Home Type (QD2)	Single family	69	60.0	-7.3
	Apartment	13	85.4	+1.3
	Condo / Town- home	13	64.8	-15.1
	Mo bile home	4	67.9	-17.7
Attentiveness to Local Issues (QD3)	Very	25	47.9	-9.0
	Somewhat	52	72.0	-6.7
	Slightly, not at all	22	63.9	-10.3
Household Party Type	Single dem	20	83.0	-1.3
	Dual dem	13	66.9	-9.1
	Single rep	10	53.2	No change
	Dual rep	10	40.1	+4.8
	Other	19	70.8	-10.0
	Mixed	27	56.9	-15.5
Party	Democrat	42	74.3	-5.5
	Republican	29	47.7	-0.7
	Other / DTS	29	65.6	-15.7
Age	18 to 39	27	75.2	-8.7
	40 to 49	16	57.3	-9.0
	50 to 64	28	61.5	-10.9
	65 or older	29	59.6	-1.7
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	64	56.2	-9.5
	No	36	77.9	-2.7
Registration Year	2015 to 2009	46	71.2	-9.5
	2008 to 2005	19	67.6	-1.6
	2004 to 2001	14	59.3	-9.1
	2000 or before	21	49.0	-5.1
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	37	67.9	-5.2
	No	63	61.8	-8.1
Likely Jun 2016 Voter	Yes	43	59.8	-4.3
	No	57	67.3	-9.2
Gender	Male	49	63.2	-3.8
	Female	51	64.9	-10.1
East or West of 805 (Precinct)	East	52	59.0	-9.9
	West	48	69.5	-4.0

## NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Whereas Question 11 presented respondents with arguments in favor of the measures, Question 14 presented respondents with arguments designed to elicit opposition to the measures. In the case of Question 14, 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 in Figure 14 for the sales tax version and Figure 15 for the bond survey.

**Question 14** *Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure will say. Opponents of the measure will say: \_\_\_\_\_. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?*

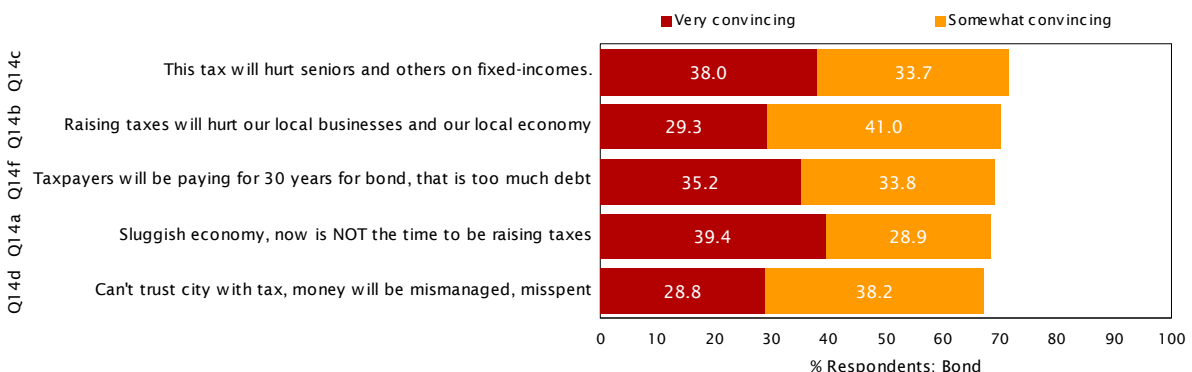
**FIGURE 14 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS: SALES TAX**



Among the negative arguments tested for the sales tax, the most compelling were: *This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes* (70%), *People are having a hard time making ends meet with high unemployment and a sluggish economy. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes* (69%), and *We can't trust the City with this tax. They will mismanage the money or spend it on their own pet projects* (66%).

Among the negative arguments tested for the bond measure, the most compelling were: *This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes* (72%), *Raising taxes will hurt our local businesses and our local economy* (70%), and *Taxpayers will be paying for this bond for the next 30 years. That is too much debt* (69%).

**FIGURE 15 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS: BOND**



**NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT** Tables 9 and 10 rank the negative arguments (showing the percentage of respondents who cited each as very convincing) according to respondents' vote choice at the Initial Ballot Test for the sales tax and bond measure, respectively.

**TABLE 9 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST: SALES TAX**

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q3)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 278)	Q14a	Sluggish economy, now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	24
	Q14c	This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes.	23
	Q14e	City just raised the sales tax a couple of years ago	20
	Q14d	Can't trust city with tax, money will be mismanaged, miss pent	17
	Q14b	Raising taxes will hurt our local businesses and our local economy	14
Probably or Definitely No (n = 90)	Q14e	City just raised the sales tax a couple of years ago	55
	Q14c	This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes.	55
	Q14a	Sluggish economy, now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	55
	Q14d	Can't trust city with tax, money will be mismanaged, miss pent	47
	Q14b	Raising taxes will hurt our local businesses and our local economy	46
Not Sure (n = 27)	Q14d	Can't trust city with tax, money will be mismanaged, miss pent	35
	Q14a	Sluggish economy, now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	19
	Q14c	This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes.	16
	Q14b	Raising taxes will hurt our local businesses and our local economy	15
	Q14e	City just raised the sales tax a couple of years ago	12

**TABLE 10 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST: BOND**

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 285)	Q14a	Sluggish economy, now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	38
	Q14c	This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes.	36
	Q14f	Taxpayers will be paying for this bond for the next 30 years, that is too much debt	28
	Q14b	Raising taxes will hurt our local businesses and our local economy	27
	Q14d	Can't trust city with tax, money will be mismanaged, miss pent	22
Probably or Definitely No (n = 86)	Q14f	Taxpayers will be paying for this bond for the next 30 years, that is too much debt	59
	Q14d	Can't trust city with tax, money will be mismanaged, miss pent	49
	Q14a	Sluggish economy, now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	45
	Q14c	This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes.	44
Not Sure (n = 27)	Q14b	Raising taxes will hurt our local businesses and our local economy	42
	Q14a	Sluggish economy, now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	44
	Q14f	Taxpayers will be paying for this bond for the next 30 years, that is too much debt	43
	Q14c	This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes.	39
	Q14d	Can't trust city with tax, money will be mismanaged, miss pent	35
Q14b	Raising taxes will hurt our local businesses and our local economy	17	

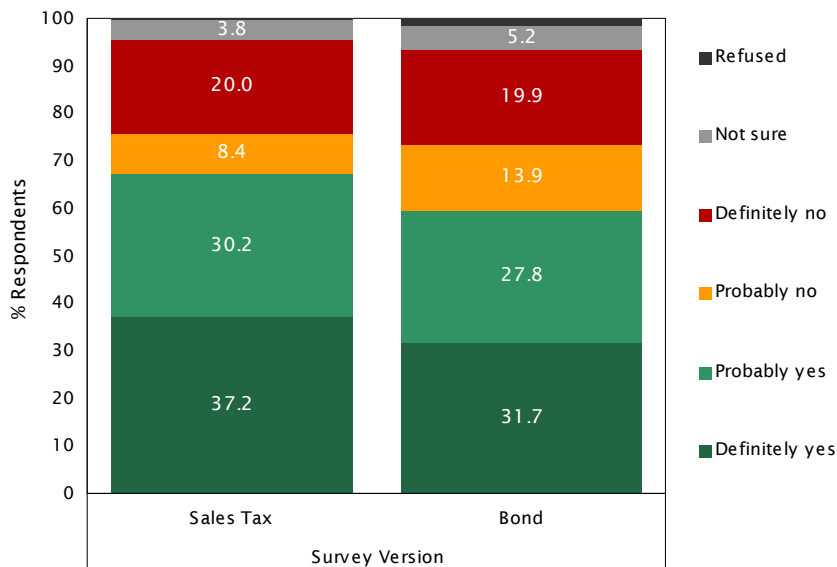
# FINAL BALLOT TESTS

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 measures 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 measures, possible tax rates, programs and projects that could be funded by the measures, as well as arguments in favor and against the proposals, respondents were again asked whether they would vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on the proposed sales tax and bond measures.

**Question 15 (Sales Tax)** *Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. To provide adequate funding for essential city projects and services, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities and services; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. Shall the City of Chula Vista enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed five years, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?*

**Question 16 (Bond)** *Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. To provide adequate funding for essential city projects and improvements, including repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains; upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response; maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities; and making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements. Shall the City of Chula Vista issue 200 million dollars in bonds, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?*

**FIGURE 16 FINAL BALLOT TEST BY SURVEY VERSION: SALES TAX & BOND**



As shown in Figure 16 on the previous page, at this point in the survey, support for the sales tax measure was found among 67% of voters, with 28% opposed to the measure and 4% unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice. Support for the bond dipped again to 60%, with 34% opposed to the measure and 7% unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.



## CHANGE IN SUPPORT

Tables 11 and 12 provide a closer look at how support for the proposed sales tax and bond measures changed over the course of the interview by calculating the difference in support between the Initial, Interim, and Final Ballot Tests within various 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, negative differences in red.

**TABLE 11 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT FINAL BALLOT TEST: SALES TAX**

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q3)	Change From Interim Ballot Test (Q12)
Overall		100	67.4	-1.9	-1.7
Child in Hsld (QD1)	Yes	36	67.6	-0.7	-1.9
	No	64	66.7	-2.7	-2.3
Home Type (QD2)	Single family	73	66.1	-0.6	-0.6
	Apartment	10	81.0	-6.0	+1.1
	Condo / Town- home	12	73.6	+3.9	-5.6
	Mobile home	5	46.0	-24.6	-26.1
Attentiveness to Local Issues (QD3)	Very	29	60.3	-4.7	-2.6
	Somewhat	47	68.1	+0.3	-1.2
	Slightly, not at all	24	71.7	-4.5	-5.6
Household Party Type	Single dem	21	75.9	-4.0	-0.5
	Dual dem	14	75.8	-7.4	No change
	Single rep	11	57.6	+0.9	+2.2
	Dual rep	11	48.4	-2.9	-17.3
	Other	18	61.8	-9.4	-4.7
	Mixed	26	71.8	+7.2	+3.6
Party	Democrat	42	79.8	-3.2	-0.3
	Republican	30	51.7	+1.7	-3.5
	Other / DTS	28	66.0	-4.1	-1.7
Age	18 to 39	27	77.0	-3.7	+0.2
	40 to 49	13	57.5	+12.6	-1.2
	50 to 64	34	70.9	+0.0	-1.4
	65 or older	26	58.0	-9.2	-4.0
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	70	63.8	-0.1	-0.1
	No	30	75.9	-6.3	-5.3
Registration Year	2015 to 2009	47	69.7	-1.5	-0.5
	2008 to 2005	18	72.8	+4.1	-1.4
	2004 to 2001	15	63.8	-10.2	-10.1
	2000 or before	20	59.2	-2.4	+1.7
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	38	58.3	-8.2	-4.9
	No	62	72.8	+1.8	+0.3
Likely Jun 2016 Voter	Yes	43	61.2	-6.9	-2.5
	No	57	72.1	+1.8	-1.0
Gender	Male	50	69.0	+2.0	-4.0
	Female	50	65.7	-6.0	+0.7
East or West of 805 (Precinct)	East	55	62.6	+1.6	-3.6
	West	45	73.2	-6.4	+0.7



**TABLE 12 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT FINAL BALLOT TEST: BOND**

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Change From Interim Ballot Test (Q13)
Overall		100	59.5	-11.6	-4.6
Child in Hsld (QD1)	Yes	36	55.4	-17.5	-9.5
	No	64	62.0	-8.2	-1.2
Home Type (QD2)	Single family	69	55.8	-11.5	-4.2
	Apartment	13	82.6	-1.6	-2.9
	Condo / Town- home	13	57.4	-22.4	-7.4
	Mobile home	4	78.4	-7.2	+10.5
Attentiveness to Local Issues (QD3)	Very	25	45.6	-11.3	-2.3
	Somewhat	52	69.8	-8.9	-2.2
	Slightly, not at all	22	56.2	-18.0	-7.7
Household Party Type	Single dem	20	76.8	-7.4	-6.2
	Dual dem	13	69.0	-7.0	+2.1
	Single rep	10	50.6	-2.6	-2.6
	Dual rep	10	26.9	-8.4	-13.2
	Other	19	68.2	-12.6	-2.6
	Mixed	27	51.4	-21.1	-5.5
Party	Democrat	42	71.9	-7.8	-2.3
	Republican	29	38.9	-9.5	-8.8
	Other / DTS	29	62.0	-19.3	-3.5
Age	18 to 39	27	67.9	-16.0	-7.3
	40 to 49	16	53.4	-12.9	-3.9
	50 to 64	28	58.6	-13.9	-2.9
	65 or older	29	56.6	-4.8	-3.0
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	64	51.6	-14.1	-4.6
	No	36	73.3	-7.2	-4.6
Registration Year	2015 to 2009	46	64.8	-15.9	-6.4
	2008 to 2005	19	59.8	-9.5	-7.9
	2004 to 2001	14	60.7	-7.7	+1.4
	2000 or before	21	47.2	-6.9	-1.8
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	37	63.5	-9.6	-4.4
	No	63	57.1	-12.8	-4.7
Likely Jun 2016 Voter	Yes	43	55.5	-8.5	-4.3
	No	57	62.5	-13.9	-4.8
Gender	Male	49	59.0	-8.0	-4.2
	Female	51	60.0	-15.0	-4.9
East or West of 805 (Precinct)	East	52	54.6	-14.3	-4.4
	West	48	64.7	-8.7	-4.7

As expected, most groups responded to the negative arguments with a reduction in their support for the sales tax and bond measures when compared with the levels recorded at the Interim Ballot Test. However, the general trend over the course of the entire survey (Initial to Final Ballot Test) was one of stability for the sales tax measure (-2%) and declining support for the bond (-12%).

Whereas Tables 11 and 12 display change in support for the measure over the course of the interview at the group level, Tables 13 and 14 on the next page display individual-level changes that occurred between the Initial and Final Ballot Tests for the respective measures. On the left side of the tables 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 tables 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 of Table 13 we see that of the 37.7% of respondents who indicated that they would definitely support the sales tax measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 28.4% also indicated that they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. Approximately 6.5% moved to the probably support group, 1.9% moved to the probably oppose group, 0.5% moved to the definitely oppose group, and 0.4% percent stated they were now unsure of their vote choice.

To ease interpretation of the tables, 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 13 MOVEMENT BETWEEN INITIAL & FINAL BALLOT TESTS: SALES TAX**

Initial Ballot Test: Sales Tax (Q3)		Final Ballot Test: Sales Tax (Q15)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	37.7%	28.4%	6.5%	1.9%	0.5%	0.4%
Probably support	31.6%	8.4%	17.8%	1.9%	2.6%	0.9%
Probably oppose	6.7%	0.0%	0.8%	2.9%	2.2%	0.8%
Definitely oppose	15.8%	0.4%	0.8%	0.3%	13.4%	0.9%
Not sure	8.2%	0.0%	4.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.2%

**TABLE 14 MOVEMENT BETWEEN INITIAL & FINAL BALLOT TESTS: BOND**

Initial Ballot Test: Bond (Q5)		Final Ballot Test: Bond (Q16)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	35.6%	23.1%	8.1%	1.4%	2.3%	0.8%
Probably support	35.5%	7.0%	16.8%	6.3%	2.6%	2.9%
Probably oppose	9.3%	1.0%	0.5%	3.2%	4.2%	0.4%
Definitely oppose	12.3%	0.0%	1.3%	0.9%	9.9%	0.1%
Not sure	7.3%	0.6%	1.1%	2.1%	1.0%	2.5%

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, Tables 13 and 14 make 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 others found the same information to be a reason to be less supportive.

Despite 19% of respondents making a *fundamental*<sup>6</sup> shift in their opinion about the sales tax measure over the course of the interview, the net impact is that support for the sales tax measure at the Final Ballot Test was approximately 2% lower than support at the Initial Ballot Test. The results were less favorable for the bond, with 24% of respondents making a fundamental shift in their opinion about the bond measure over the course of the interview, resulting in support for the bond at the Final Ballot Test being 12% lower than support at the Initial Ballot Test.

6. That 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 15 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLES**

	Survey Version	
	Sales tax	Bond
<i>Total Respondents</i>	400	400
<b>Child in Hsld (QD1)</b>		
Yes	35.0	35.3
No	62.7	62.1
Refused	2.3	2.6
<b>Home Type (QD2)</b>		
Single family	69.0	64.1
Apartment	9.2	12.4
Condo / Town- home	11.5	11.6
Mobile home	4.5	4.1
Refused	5.8	7.7
<b>Attentiveness to Local Issues (QD3)</b>		
Very	28.3	23.4
Somewhat	44.9	48.3
Slightly, not at all	23.0	20.4
Refused	3.7	7.9
<b>Household Party Type</b>		
Single dem	20.5	20.5
Dual dem	14.2	13.3
Single rep	10.7	10.5
Dual rep	10.7	10.2
Other	18.0	18.8
Mixed	25.8	26.9
<b>Party</b>		
Democrat	41.6	42.3
Republican	30.5	28.9
Other / DTS	27.9	28.8
<b>Registration Year</b>		
2015 to 2009	47.3	45.6
2008 to 2005	18.4	18.7
2004 to 2001	14.7	14.3
2000 or before	19.6	21.3
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 39	26.9	26.9
40 to 49	12.8	16.3
50 to 64	33.9	27.7
65 or older	26.2	28.8
Refused	0.3	0.3
<b>Homeowner on Voter File</b>		
Yes	70.2	63.6
No	29.8	36.4
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	50.4	49.0
Female	49.6	51.0
<b>Likely to Vote by Mail</b>		
Yes	37.6	37.3
No	62.4	62.7
<b>Likely Jun 2016 Voter</b>		
Yes	43.1	43.1
No	56.9	56.9
<b>East or West of 805 (Precinct)</b>		
East	55.2	51.5
West	44.8	48.5
<b>Survey Version</b>		
Sales tax	100.0	0.0
Bond	0.0	100.0

In addition to questions directly related to the measures, 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 profiles of the likely November 2016 voter samples used for the sales tax and bond surveys are shown in Table 15.



## 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 Chula Vista and TBWB 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 the items in a set order can lead to a systematic position bias in responses, items were asked in random order.

Some questions asked in this study were presented only to a subset of respondents. For example, only respondents who opposed the measure or were undecided at the Initial Ballot Test (Question 3 of the Sales Tax version) were asked a follow-up question regarding the reason they did not support the measure. The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 41) identifies the skip patterns used during the interview to ensure that each respondent received the appropriate questions.

**PROGRAMMING, TRANSLATION & PRE-TEST** Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist interviewers when conducting the 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 happen during the interview. After professionally translating the survey into Spanish, the integrity of the questionnaire was pre-tested internally by True North and by dialing into random homes in the City prior to formally beginning the survey.

**SPLIT-SAMPLE METHOD** The survey was administered to a stratified and clustered random sample of 800 registered voters in the City of Chula Vista who are likely to participate in the November 2016 election. To reliably estimate support for enacting a sales tax as well as a potential bond measure, a split-sample methodology was employed such that 400 voters were administered a survey that focused on a sales tax, whereas a separate 400 voters were asked questions regarding a potential bond measure. All 800 respondents received general questions that applied to both types of ballot measures.

The split-sample approach is used because it is the most reliable method of estimating voter support for alternative tax measures. Prior research, and actual election results, have consistently shown that attempting to estimate support for multiple tax measures (e.g., sales tax and bond) with the *same* respondent during the course of an interview will lead to an artificially low estimate of support for whichever measure is introduced second—and it also has a tendency to cause confusion. To avoid these sources of measurement error, it was important that each respondent was asked their opinions regarding *one* of the funding alternatives, not both.

**STATISTICAL MARGIN OF ERROR** By using the probability-based sampling design noted above, True North ensured that the final samples were representative of voters in the City likely to participate in the November 2016 election. The results of the surveys can thus be used to estimate the opinions of *all* voters likely to participate in the November 2016 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 for a particular question and what would have been found if *all* likely voters identified in the City had been surveyed for the study.

For example, in estimating the percentage of likely November 2016 voters that would *definitely* support the sales tax measure at the Initial Ballot Test (Question 3 in the survey), the margin of error can be calculated if one knows the size of the population, the size of the sample, a confidence level, and the distribution of responses to the question. The appropriate equation for estimating the margin of error, in this case, is shown below.

$$\hat{p} \pm t \sqrt{\left(\frac{N-n}{N}\right) \frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n-1}}$$

Where  $\hat{p}$  is the proportion of survey respondents who said *definitely yes* (0.38 for 38% in this example),  $N$  is the population size of likely November 2016 voters (78,757),  $n$  is the sample size that received the question (400) and  $t$  is the upper  $\alpha/2$  point for the t-distribution with  $n - 1$  degrees of freedom (1.96 for a 95% confidence interval). Solving the equation using these values reveals a margin of error of  $\pm 4.75\%$ . This means that with 38% of survey respondents indicating they would *definitely* support the sales tax measure at the Initial Ballot Test, we can be 95% confident that the actual percentage of all likely November 2016 voters that would definitely support the sales tax measure is between 33% and 43%.

**FIGURE 17 MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR DUE TO SAMPLING**

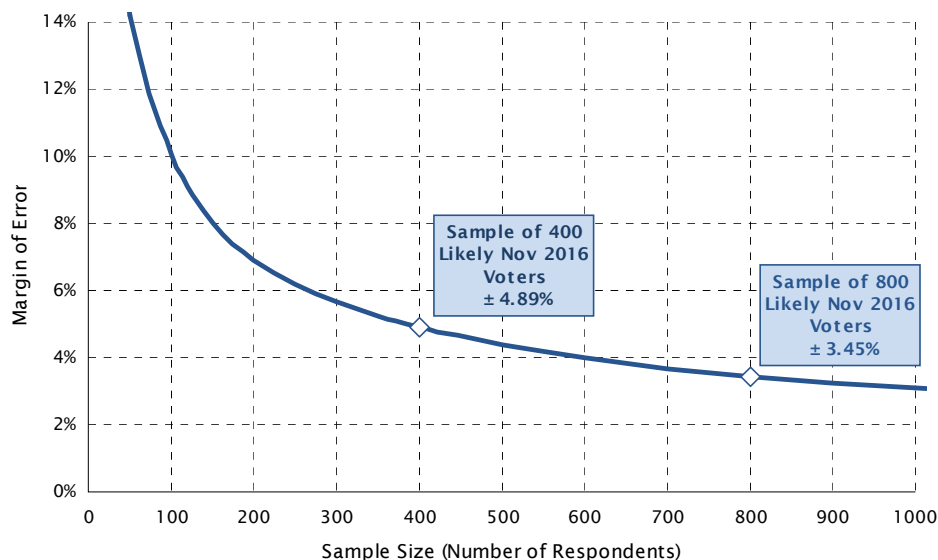


Figure 17 provides a graphic plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative. For this study, the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 4.89\%$  for questions pertaining specifically to the sales tax measure or bond measure, and  $\pm 3.45\%$  for questions asked of all 800 survey respondents.

Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by subgroups such as age, gender, and partisan affiliation. Figure 17 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.

**DATA COLLECTION** The method of data collection was telephone interviewing. Interviews were conducted during weekday evenings (5:30PM to 9PM) and on weekends (10AM to 5PM) between July 27 and August 5, 2015. 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 bias the sample. The interviews averaged 19 minutes in length.

**DATA PROCESSING** Data processing consisted of checking the data for errors or inconsistencies, coding and recoding responses, categorizing verbatim responses, and preparing frequency analyses and crosstabulations.

**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 charts. Occasionally, these rounding rules lead to small discrepancies in the first decimal place when comparing tables and pie charts for a given question.

# QUESTIONNAIRE & TOPLINES



City of Chula Vista  
 Bond & Sales Tax Survey  
 Final Toplines  
 August 2015

## 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 Chula (Chew-la) Vista 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 he/she is 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 the person 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 your community 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?

	<i>Randomize</i>	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important	Not sure	Refused
A	Maintaining the quality of education in local schools	53%	36%	6%	3%	1%	0%
B	Maintaining the quality of city services, facilities and infrastructure	30%	46%	20%	2%	1%	0%
C	Creating jobs and improving the local economy	43%	48%	7%	2%	0%	0%
D	Preventing local tax increases	27%	41%	24%	7%	1%	0%
E	Improving local property values	22%	39%	30%	7%	1%	1%
F	Protecting the environment	35%	43%	17%	4%	1%	0%
G	Improving public safety	36%	45%	15%	2%	1%	0%
H	Reducing traffic congestion	24%	38%	32%	6%	1%	0%
I	Protecting the supply of water	52%	41%	5%	1%	1%	0%

Q2	What would you say is the biggest issue facing your neighborhood that you would like the City to address? Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.	
	Improving streets, roads	16%
	Improving public safety	16%
	No issues, everything is okay	12%
	Addressing drought, water issues	9%
	Not sure, cannot think of any	9%
	Reducing traffic congestion	8%
	Improving education	7%
	Improving local jobs, economy	7%
	Limiting growth, development	4%
	Providing more affordable housing	3%
	Improving environmental efforts	3%
	Addressing homeless issue	2%
	Reducing taxes	2%
	Addressing illegal immigration issues	2%
	Enforcing laws	2%
	Addressing parking issues	1%
	Improving government, leadership	1%
	Improving public transportation	1%



**Section 3: Initial Ballot Tests**

Your household is within the City of Chula (Chew-la) Vista. Next year, voters in the city may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure.

*Split Sample. Only Sample A (sales tax) gets Q3 & Q4.*

- Q3** To provide adequate funding for essential city projects and services, including:
- ◊ Repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains
  - ◊ Upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response
  - ◊ Maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities and services
  - ◊ And making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements

Shall the City of Chula Vista enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed five years, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?

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)?

1	Definitely yes	38%	Skip to Q7
2	Probably yes	32%	Skip to Q7
3	Probably no	7%	Ask Q4
4	Definitely no	16%	Ask Q4
98	Not sure	7%	Ask Q4
99	Refused	2%	Skip to Q7

**Q4** Is there a particular reason why you do not support the measure I just described? *If yes, ask:* Please briefly describe your reason. Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.

Taxes already too high	52%
Money will be mismanaged, misspent	31%
Measure will be ineffective, no improvements	12%
Not sure, no particular reason	9%
Need more information	7%
Measure trying accomplish too much	5%

<i>Split Sample. Only Sample B (bond) gets Q5 &amp; Q6.</i>				
Q5	To provide adequate funding for essential city projects and improvements, including:			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains</li> <li>◊ Upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response</li> <li>◊ Maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities</li> <li>◊ And making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements</li> </ul>			
	Shall the City of Chula Vista issue <b>200</b> million dollars in bonds, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?			
	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)?			
	1	Definitely yes	36%	Skip to Q7
	2	Probably yes	36%	Skip to Q7
	3	Probably no	9%	Ask Q6
4	Definitely no	12%	Ask Q6	
98	Not sure	7%	Ask Q6	
99	Refused	1%	Skip to Q7	
Q6	Is there a particular reason why you do <u>not</u> support the measure I just described? <i>If yes, ask:</i> Please briefly describe your reason. Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.			
	Taxes already too high		36%	
	Money will be mismanaged, misspent		25%	
	Need more information		24%	
	Not sure, no particular reason		15%	
	Other higher priorities in community		8%	
	Measure will be ineffective, no improvements		6%	
	Measure trying to accomplish too much		4%	

Section 4: Tax Threshold							
<i>Split Sample. Only Sample A (sales tax) gets Q7.</i>							
<i>Only ask Q7 if Q5 = (2,3,4,98,99).</i>							
Q7	What if the measure I just described raised the sales tax by a lower amount: <b>one-quarter</b> cent instead of <b>one-half</b> cent? Would you vote yes or no on the measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i>						
	Definitely yes at half-cent (Q5)						38%
	1 Definitely yes						8%
	2 Probably yes						21%
	3 Probably no						7%
	4 Definitely no						20%
	98 Not sure						6%
	99 Refused						0%
<i>Split Sample. Only Sample B (bond) gets Q8 &amp; Q9.</i>							
Q8	The amount home owners will pay if the bond passes depends on the assessed value of their home - <u>not</u> the current market value of the home. If you heard that the annual property taxes on your home would increase: _____ per 100,000 (one hundred thousand) dollars of assessed valuation, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Is that definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i>						
	<i>If needed: The assessed value of your home is listed on your property tax bill.</i>						
	<i>Read in sequence starting with the highest amount (A), then the next highest (B), and so on. If respondent says 'definitely yes', record 'definitely yes' for all LOWER dollar amounts and go to next question.</i>						
	<i>Ask in Order</i>	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Probably No	Definitely No	Not Sure	Prefer not to answer
A	\$57	17%	17%	21%	36%	9%	1%
B	\$46	22%	20%	17%	34%	6%	1%
C	\$34	26%	22%	17%	29%	5%	1%
D	\$28	30%	20%	16%	29%	4%	1%
Q9	Let me put it another way: If you knew that this measure would cost the <u>typical</u> home owner about \$186 per year, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Is that definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i>						
	1 Definitely yes						22%
	2 Probably yes						22%
	3 Probably no						16%
	4 Definitely no						35%
	98 Not sure						5%
	99 Refused						1%

<b>Section 6: Programs &amp; Projects</b>							
Q10	The measure we've been discussing would provide funding for a variety of 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. Split Sample A1 &amp; A2, D1 &amp; D2, F1 &amp; F2 using odd/even clusters.</i>	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not sure	Refused
A1	Pave, maintain and repair city streets	53%	28%	3%	6%	10%	1%
A2	Pave, maintain and repair city streets and fix potholes	54%	27%	3%	8%	8%	0%
B	Repair broken sidewalks, curbs and gutters	48%	30%	6%	8%	9%	0%
C	Repair or replace failing storm drain pipes that can create sink holes in city streets	49%	29%	5%	7%	9%	1%
D1	Upgrade aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response	56%	22%	5%	8%	9%	0%
D2	Replace aging police, fire and public safety vehicles to ensure reliable response	44%	24%	8%	10%	14%	0%
E	Make essential repairs to older libraries, recreation centers and fire stations, including replacing leaky roofs, failing plumbing, and faulty electrical systems	45%	29%	5%	9%	12%	0%
F1	Maintain parks and recreation facilities including courts, fields, pools and playgrounds	47%	30%	6%	7%	10%	0%
F2	Maintain safe and clean parks	45%	30%	4%	9%	11%	0%
G	Improve wildfire response and prevention	50%	27%	3%	8%	11%	1%
H	Upgrade the City's irrigation and drainage systems to conserve drinking water	55%	23%	5%	6%	11%	0%
I	Retrofit storm drains to capture trash and reduce water pollution	50%	29%	4%	6%	10%	1%
J	Provide the infrastructure needed to attract a four-year University to Chula Vista	42%	20%	9%	16%	12%	0%
K	Maintain public libraries and technology	40%	32%	5%	10%	13%	0%
L	Remove asbestos, lead paint, and other hazards from older libraries, recreation centers and fire stations	39%	26%	9%	11%	15%	0%
<i>Only Sample A (sales tax) receives item M.</i>							
M	Remove graffiti faster	34%	25%	7%	13%	18%	3%

<b>Section 7: Positive Arguments</b>							
What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people may say about the measure we've been discussing.							
Q11	Supporters of the measure will say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to <b>SUPPORT</b> the measure?						
	<i>Randomize</i>	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Don't Know/No Opinion	Refused
<i>All respondents receive items A-L.</i>							
A	All money raised by the measure will be used to fund essential city projects and improvements in Chula Vista. It can't be taken away by the State or used for other purposes.	37%	37%	23%	0%	2%	0%
B	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.	40%	36%	21%	1%	2%	0%
C	By keeping our city safe, clean and well-maintained, this measure will help protect our quality of life and our property values.	40%	41%	17%	0%	2%	0%
D	This measure will allow the City to keep up with basic repairs and maintenance to streets, storm drains and public facilities. If we don't take care of it now, it will be a lot more expensive to repair in the future.	44%	37%	17%	0%	2%	0%
E	When you have an emergency, you need help fast. Minutes count in these situations. This measure will ensure that our police and firefighters have the vehicles and life-saving equipment they need to respond quickly to 9-1-1 emergencies.	49%	35%	14%	0%	1%	0%
F	Much of the City's storm drain system is more than 50 years old. We need to start replacing and repairing the system before pipes begin collapsing and create sink holes, flooding, pollution, and millions of dollars in property damage.	46%	36%	16%	0%	2%	0%
G	This measure will help attract a four-year University to Chula Vista, which will provide local residents with affordable access to the education and training needed to succeed in today's careers	34%	33%	31%	0%	2%	0%
H	The City has made smart financial decisions, refinancing past bonds to save taxpayers millions of dollars.	23%	43%	28%	0%	5%	0%

I	Improving our local streets, sidewalks, and essential infrastructure will help improve the local economy and attract new businesses and jobs to Chula Vista.	35%	39%	25%	0%	1%	0%
J	Parks and recreation centers help keep kids healthy, active, and away from drugs, gangs and crime.	40%	35%	23%	0%	2%	0%
K	We are facing the worst drought in California history, and the price of water is going to keep going up. This measure will help the City save money and conserve water by upgrading irrigation and drainage systems.	42%	34%	22%	0%	2%	0%
L	The resources, technology and services at our local libraries are essential for returning Veterans and other Chula Vista residents who are trying to find jobs.	32%	42%	24%	0%	2%	0%
<i>Only Sample A (sales tax) receives items M &amp; N.</i>							
M	A substantial amount of the money raised by the sales tax will come from non-residents who visit our community. This measure will make sure they pay their fair share for the facilities and services they use while in our city.	36%	38%	25%	1%	1%	0%
N	The tax will be for a limited duration and can't be increased or extended without voter approval.	37%	32%	30%	0%	1%	0%
<i>Only Sample B (bond) receives item O.</i>							
O	The money raised by the bond can only be spent on the specific projects and improvements listed in the measure. It can NOT be diverted to other uses.	40%	35%	24%	0%	1%	0%

**Section 8: Interim Ballot Tests**

Sometimes people change their minds 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. Only Sample A (sales tax) gets Q12.*

- Q12 To provide adequate funding for essential city projects and services, including:
- ◊ Repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains
  - ◊ Upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response
  - ◊ Maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities and services
  - ◊ And making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements

Shall the City of Chula Vista enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed five years, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?

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)?

1	Definitely yes	39%
2	Probably yes	30%
3	Probably no	10%
4	Definitely no	17%
98	Not sure	4%
99	Refused	0%

*Split Sample. Only Sample B (bond) gets Q13.*

- Q13 To provide adequate funding for essential city projects and improvements, including:
- ◊ Repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains
  - ◊ Upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response
  - ◊ Maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities
  - ◊ And making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements

Shall the City of Chula Vista issue **200** million dollars in bonds, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?

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)?

1	Definitely yes	34%
2	Probably yes	30%
3	Probably no	11%
4	Definitely no	16%
98	Not sure	8%
99	Refused	1%

<b>Section 9: Negative Arguments</b>							
Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure will say.							
Q14	Opponents of the measure will say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?						
	<i>Randomize</i>	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Don't Know/No Opinion	Refused
A	People are having a hard time making ends meet with high unemployment and a sluggish economy. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes.	35%	34%	30%	0%	1%	0%
B	Raising taxes will hurt our local businesses and our local economy.	25%	41%	31%	0%	3%	0%
C	This tax will hurt seniors and others on fixed-incomes.	34%	37%	25%	0%	3%	0%
D	We can't trust the City with this tax. They will mismanage the money or spend it on their own pet projects.	27%	40%	31%	0%	2%	0%
<i>Split Sample. Only Sample A (sales tax) gets item E.</i>							
E	The State of California just raised the sales tax a couple years ago. Now the City also wants to raise the sales tax? That's not fair to taxpayers.	27%	36%	35%	0%	3%	0%
<i>Split Sample. Only Sample B (bond) gets item F.</i>							
F	Taxpayers will be paying for this bond for the next 30 years. That is too much debt.	35%	34%	26%	0%	5%	0%



**Section 10: Final Ballot Tests**

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

*Split Sample. Only Sample A (sales tax) gets Q15.*

Q15 To provide adequate funding for essential city projects and services, including:

- ◊ Repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains
- ◊ Upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response
- ◊ Maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities and services
- ◊ And making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements

Shall the City of Chula Vista enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed five years, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?

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)?

1	Definitely yes	37%
2	Probably yes	30%
3	Probably no	8%
4	Definitely no	20%
98	Not sure	4%
99	Refused	0%

*Split Sample. Only Sample B (bond) gets Q16.*

Q16 To provide adequate funding for essential city projects and improvements, including:

- ◊ Repairing and maintaining city streets, fixing potholes, sidewalks and storm drains
- ◊ Upgrading aging police, fire and 9-1-1 emergency response facilities, equipment and communications to ensure reliable response
- ◊ Maintaining parks, recreation and library facilities
- ◊ And making water conservation and other infrastructure improvements

Shall the City of Chula Vista issue **200** million dollars in bonds, with independent citizen oversight, annual reports to the community, and all money used to improve Chula Vista?

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)?

1	Definitely yes	32%
2	Probably yes	28%
3	Probably no	14%
4	Definitely no	20%
98	Not sure	5%
99	Refused	2%

**Section 10: Background & Demographics**

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

D1	Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household?		
	1	Yes	35%
	2	No	62%
	99	Refused	2%
D2	Which of the following best describes your current home?		
	1	Single family detached home	67%
	2	Apartment	11%
	3	Condominium	7%
	4	Townhome	5%
	5	Mobile home	4%
	99	Refused	7%
D3	How much attention do you pay to the issues, decisions and activities of <u>your</u> City government? Would you say that you are very attentive, somewhat attentive, slightly attentive, or not at all attentive?		
	1	Very attentive	26%
	2	Somewhat attentive	47%
	3	Slightly attentive	13%
	4	Not at all attentive	8%
	98	Not sure	0%
	99	Refused	5%
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	50%
	2	Female	50%

S2 Party		
1	Democrat	42%
2	Republican	30%
3	Other	6%
4	DTS	22%
S3 Age on Voter File		
1	18 to 29	13%
2	30 to 39	14%
3	40 to 49	15%
4	50 to 64	31%
5	65 or older	28%
99	Not coded	0%
S4 Registration Date		
1	2015 to 2009	46%
2	2008 to 2005	19%
3	2004 to 2001	14%
4	2000 to 1997	6%
5	Before 1990	14%
S5 Household Party Type		
1	Single Dem	21%
2	Dual Dem	14%
3	Single Rep	11%
4	Dual Rep	10%
5	Single Other	15%
6	Dual Other	4%
7	Dem & Rep	4%
8	Dem & Other	12%
9	Rep & Other	8%
0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	2%

S6	Homeowner on Voter File		
	1	Yes	67%
	2	No	33%
S7	Likely to Vote by Mail		
	1	Yes	37%
	2	No	63%
S8	Likely June 2016		
	1	Yes	43%
	2	No	57%
S9	Likely November 2016		
	1	Yes	100%
	2	No	0%
S10	East or West of 805 (Precinct)		
	2	East	53%
	1	West	47%
S11	Survey Version		
	1	Sales tax	50%
	2	Bond	50%