

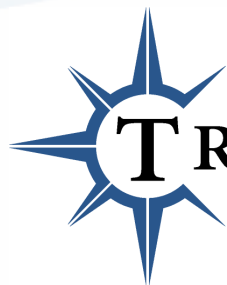


GENERAL SALES TAX FEASIBILITY STUDY

TRACKING SURVEY REPORT

CONDUCTED FOR THE
CITY OF VENTURA

JUNE 5, 2009



TRUENORTH
R E S E A R C H

741 GARDEN VIEW COURT SUITE 208
ENCINITAS, CALIFORNIA 92024
PHONE 760.632.9900
FAX 760.632.9993
WEB WWW.TN-RESEARCH.COM




TABLE OF CONTENTS


Table of Contents	i
List of Tables	iii
List of Figures	iv
Introduction	1
Motivation for Research	1
Overview of Methodology	2
Comparison to Baseline Study	2
Organization of Report	2
Acknowledgments	2
Disclaimer	3
About True North	3
Just the Facts	4
Local Issues & Overall Satisfaction	4
Initial Ballot Test	4
Projects & Services	4
Positive Arguments	5
Interim Ballot Test	5
Negative Arguments	5
Final Ballot Test	5
Awareness of Cost-Cutting	5
Conclusions	7
Local Issues & Overall Satisfaction	10
Right or Wrong Direction	10
Question 1	10
Overall Satisfaction	11
Question 2	11
Most Important Issue Facing the City	12
Question 3	12
Initial Ballot Test	13
Question 4	13
Support by Subgroups	14
Reasons for Opposing Measure	15
Question 5	15
Projects & Services	16
Question 6	16
Project Ratings by Subgroup	17
Positive Arguments	18
Question 7	18
Positive Arguments by Initial Support	19
Interim Ballot Test	20
Question 8	20
Support by Subgroups	20
Negative Arguments	22
Question 9	22
Negative Arguments by Initial Support	22
Final Ballot Test	23
Question 10	23
Change in Support	24
Awareness of Cost-Cutting	26
Question 11	26
Background & Demographics	27

Methodology 28
 Questionnaire Development 28
 Programming & Pre-Test 28
 Sample 28
 Statistical Margin of Error 28
 Data Collection 30
 Data Processing 30
 Rounding 30
Questionnaire & Toplines 31



LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Demographic Breakdown of Support at Initial Ballot Test.	14
Table 2	Top Five Projects & Services by Position at Initial Ballot Test	17
Table 3	Top Five Positive Arguments by Position at Initial Ballot Test.	19
Table 4	Demographic Breakdown of Support at Interim Ballot Test	21
Table 5	Negative Arguments by Position at Initial Ballot Test.	22
Table 6	Demographic Breakdown of Support at Final Ballot Test	24
Table 7	Movement from Initial to Final Ballot Test	25
Table 8	Demographics of Sample	27



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	General Outlook: Baseline & Tracker	10
Figure 2	Overall Satisfaction: Baseline & Tracker	11
Figure 3	Overall Satisfaction by Years in Ventura, Home Ownership Status, Party & Gender	11
Figure 4	Most Important Issue Facing City of Ventura	12
Figure 5	Initial Ballot Test	13
Figure 6	Reasons for Opposing Measure	15
Figure 7	Projects and Services	16
Figure 8	Positive Arguments	18
Figure 9	Interim Ballot Test	20
Figure 10	Negative Arguments	22
Figure 11	Final Ballot Test	23
Figure 12	Awareness of Recent Steps Taken by City	26
Figure 13	Maximum Margin of Error Due to Sampling	29



INTRODUCTION

Located in Ventura County, the City of Ventura is currently home to an estimated 108,261 residents.¹ Founded in 1782 and incorporated in 1866, the City's team of full-time and part-time employees provides a full suite of services through nine departments—City Attorney, City Manager, Community Development, Community Services, Finance & Technology, Fire/Inspection Services, Human Resources, Police, and Public Works.

As Ventura has grown, so too have the demands placed upon its facilities, services, infrastructure, and staff. Unfortunately, the City's revenue streams have not kept pace with the growing demands, leading to a sizeable shortfall in the funding required to achieve the shared vision residents have for the City as outlined in the 2005 General Plan. Despite being efficient and fiscally responsible, the City has simply not had the funding required to adequately address many of the basic needs of Ventura residents in priority areas such as public safety, street maintenance, and environmental protection. This gap between residents' vision for Ventura and the City's financial abilities to deliver on the vision has been further widened in recent years by the economic recession and the State of California taking more than \$40 million from the City in an effort to address the State's budget crisis.

The City has been proactive in seeking to address the financial crisis. In the past year alone, the City Council voted to cut the budget by \$11 million (10%), made deep cuts to services, and every city employee agreed to a 5% reduction in pay. A Citizen's Blue Ribbon Budget Committee was also convened to review the City's finances and determine whether additional revenue sources are needed. After two months of analysis and discussion, the Citizen's Committee recommended that the City place a half-cent sales tax on the November 2009 ballot in order to preserve funding for essential services.

MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH The primary purpose of this study was to produce an unbiased, statistically reliable evaluation of voters' interest in supporting a general sales tax measure to partially close the funding gap noted above, as well as identify how to structure a measure so that it is consistent with the community's priorities and expressed needs. Toward this end, the study was designed to:

- Gauge current, *baseline* support for a local sales tax increase to ensure adequate funding for general municipal services
- Identify the types of services and projects that voters are most interested in funding, should the measure pass
- Expose voters to arguments in favor of—and against—the proposed tax 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.

1. *Source:* State of California, Department of Finance, E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, 2001-2008, with 2000 Benchmark. Sacramento, California, May 2008.

It is important to note at the outset that voters' opinions about tax measures are often somewhat fluid, especially when the amount of information they initially have about a measure is limited. How voters think and feel about a measure today may not be the same way they think and feel once they have had a chance to hear more information about the measure during the election cycle. Accordingly, to accurately assess the feasibility of establishing a sales tax increase to fund municipal services, it was important that in addition to measuring *current* opinions about the measure (Question 4), the survey expose respondents to the types of information voters are likely to encounter during an election cycle—including arguments in favor (Question 7) and opposed (Question 9) to the measure—and gauge how this information ultimately impacts their voting decision (Question 10).

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY For a full discussion of the research methods and techniques used in this study, turn to *Methodology* on page 28. In brief, the survey was administered by telephone to a random sample of 400 registered voters in the City of Ventura who are likely to participate in the November 2009 election. The survey was administered between May 27 and May 31, 2009, and the average interview lasted 16 minutes.

COMPARISON TO BASELINE STUDY A Baseline Study of voters' opinions about a general sales tax increase was conducted among Ventura voters in December 2008. Because the ballot language used in that study is similar to that being used in this tracking survey, many of the figures in this study provide comparisons between the results of the Baseline Study (baseline) and the current Tracking Survey (tracker).

In such cases, True North conducted the appropriate tests of statistical significance to identify changes that likely reflect actual changes in voter opinion during this period—as opposed to being due to chance associated with selecting two samples independently and at random. Differences between the two studies are identified as *statistically significant* if we can be 95% confident that the differences reflect an actual change in voter opinion between the studies. Statistically significant differences within response categories over time are denoted by the † symbol which appears in the figure next to the appropriate response value for Tracking Survey.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT This report is designed to meet the needs of readers who prefer a summary of the findings as well as those who are interested in the details of the results. For those who seek an overview of the findings, the sections titled *Just the Facts* and *Conclusions* are for you. They provide a summary of the most important factual findings of the survey in bullet-point format and a discussion of their implications. For the interested reader, this section is followed by a more detailed question-by-question discussion of the results from the survey by topic area (see *Table of Contents*), as well as a description of the methodology employed for collecting and analyzing the data. And, for the truly ambitious reader, the questionnaire used for the interviews is contained at the back of this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31) and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS True North thanks the City of Ventura for the opportunity to conduct the study, as well as for staff's contributions to the design of the survey. 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 Ventura. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

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

During their careers, Dr. McLarney and Mr. Sarles have designed and conducted over 500 survey research studies for public agencies—including more than 250 studies for California municipalities and more than 200 revenue measure feasibility studies. Of the measures that have gone to ballot based on Dr. McLarney’s recommendation, more than 90% have been successful. In total, the research that Dr. McLarney has conducted has led to over \$19 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.

LOCAL ISSUES & OVERALL SATISFACTION

- The vast majority of voters who provided an opinion in the current tracking survey indicated that California is generally headed in the wrong direction (88%), with just 12% feeling that the State is on the right path.
- Approximately 73% of voters with an opinion indicated that the County is on the right path, with 27% feeling it is headed in the wrong direction.
- Among those with an opinion, 71% stated that the City of Ventura is going in the right direction, whereas 29% indicated that it is headed in the wrong direction.
- Three-quarters (75%) of likely November 2009 voters indicated they were generally satisfied with the City's efforts to provide municipal services, with 25% stating that they were *very* satisfied. Approximately 20% reported dissatisfaction, and 5% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion.
- When asked to identify the most important issue facing the City that they would like the City government to address, respondents were most likely to mention balancing the budget or limiting government spending as the most important issue facing the City (15%). The next most common response was 'not sure / cannot think of anything' mentioned by 12% of voters. Improving public safety (11%), limiting growth and preserving open space (9%), addressing the homeless issue (9%), developing the downtown area (7%), improving and maintaining streets and roads (7%), and changing or improving Council and the government process in general (5%) were also mentioned by at least five percent of respondents.

INITIAL BALLOT TEST

- With only the information provided in the ballot language, 60% of voters indicated they would definitely or probably support the proposed general sales tax measure at this stage in the survey, whereas 38% said they would oppose the measure and 3% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice.
- When those initially opposed to the measure were asked if there was a particular reason for their position, approximately 31% of *those opposed* felt they were already paying too much in taxes or expressed a general anti-tax sentiment, and a similar percentage (31%) felt that the City is overspending and should be better in managing its budget before they would be willing to support a tax increase. No other reasons were mentioned by at least 10% of voters who initially opposed the measure.

PROJECTS & SERVICES

- Among the programs and services that could be funded by the measure, voters most strongly favored repairing potholes and repaving streets and roads, followed by providing police services, including crime prevention, investigations, and quick emergency responses, improving the City's ability to respond quickly to a major emergency or natural disaster, keeping Wright Library open, and providing fire services including emergency response, fire prevention, and paramedic services.

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

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

- *This measure will allow the City to keep up with basic repairs and maintenance to streets and public facilities. If we don't take care of it now, it will be a lot more expensive to repair in the future.*
- *All money raised by this measure will be spent locally to maintain the quality of services in our community. It cannot be taken away by politicians in Sacramento or be used for other purposes.*
- *When you need emergency care, you need it fast. Minutes count in these situations. This measure will ensure that we have enough police officers, firefighters and paramedics so that they can respond quickly to emergencies.*

INTERIM BALLOT TEST

- After exposing respondents to the types of positive arguments they may encounter during an election cycle, support for the measure at this point increased slightly to 62%, with 41% of voters indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes on the measure. Approximately 36% of respondents opposed the measure at this point in the survey, and an additional 2% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

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

- *The City needs to live within its means, just like everyone else.*
- *People are having a hard time making ends meet with the housing crisis, high gas prices, and the economy going into a recession. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes.*
- *The State of California just raised the sales tax by 1%. Now the City wants another half percent? That's not fair to taxpayers.*

FINAL BALLOT TEST

- After providing respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, 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 59% of respondents, with 41% indicating they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 40% of respondents were opposed to the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 1% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

AWARENESS OF COST-CUTTING

- Prior to taking the survey, nearly three-quarters (71%) of voters stated they were aware that *The City has made deep cuts to services such as arts, recreation, and parks, and also reduced staff in all departments, including police and fire.*
- Just 44% of respondents indicated that they were aware that *City Council has cut next year's budget by 10%, which is a reduction of 11 million dollars.*

- A similar percentage (44%) stated they were aware that *every City employee has agreed to a 5% reduction in pay over the next 15 months.*



C O N C L U S I O N S

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

Does a general sales tax measure have a reasonable chance of success if placed on November 2009 ballot?

Yes. The vast majority of Ventura voters have a high opinion of the City’s performance in providing municipal services, and the baseline study conducted in December 2008 made it clear that voters consider maintaining the quality of city services to be among the most important issues facing the community. At that time, more than 60% of Ventura voters were prepared to support a local sales tax increase to preserve funding for essential city services.

In the six months that have elapsed since the baseline study there have been substantial economic and political changes in California, including the State enacting a short-term 1% increase in the sales tax. Despite these changes, the results of this tracking study indicate that a local general sales tax measure still has a very good chance of being supported by the necessary proportion of Ventura voters in November 2009 provided that it is packaged appropriately and combined with a broad-based and effective public education effort.

Having stated that a local sales tax measure has a good chance of success on the November ballot, it is important to note that this observation comes with several qualifications and conditions. Indeed, although the results of this study 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 recommends if the City Council chooses to place a measure on the ballot.

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.

The survey results indicate that a half-cent rate is feasible. Support for a half-cent sales tax measure remained stable at approximately 60% throughout the interview. Although reducing the rate to one-quarter cent is estimated to increase overall support for the proposed measure by 5%,² a rate reduction does not appear necessary to garner sufficient sup-

2. This finding is based on the baseline survey conducted in December 2008.

port for passage provided that the measure is accompanied by an effective public outreach effort (see below for more on the topic of public information).

Which projects and services should be emphasized in the measure and the campaign?

A general tax is “any tax imposed for general governmental purposes”³ and is distinguished from a special tax in that the funds raised by a general tax are not earmarked for a specific purpose(s). Hence, 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.

Although the City Council would have the discretion to decide how to spend the general sales tax revenues, the survey results indicate that voters are generally supportive of the Citizen’s Blue Ribbon Budget Committee’s recommendation to focus on public safety services including police, fire protection, and emergency response, library services including keeping Wright Library open, and maintaining city infrastructure including repairing potholes and repaving local streets and roads. It is worth noting, however, that voters were somewhat less supportive of funding economic development programs or using the money to bolster the City’s financial reserves.

To the extent allowed, the measure and an independently funded campaign should make clear that the general sales tax measure will prevent cuts and maintain funding in these core service areas.

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

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

It is clear from the survey results that some voters’ opinions about the proposed sales tax measure are somewhat sensitive to the nature—and amount—of information that they have about the measure. Information about the specific programs and services that could be funded by the measure, as well as arguments in favor of the proposed measure, were found by many voters to be compelling reasons to support the measure. Moreover, this information played an important role in preventing a significant erosion of support for the measure 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 the general sales tax measure will be the presence of an effective, well-man-

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

aged public education effort that focuses on the need for the measure as well as the many benefits that it will bring. An independent campaign will also be needed to help sustain support for the measure throughout the election cycle.

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

An important component of any ballot measure's potential for success is the economic and political climate surrounding the election. Concerns about the housing market, an unstable stock market, and the recession have done little to raise consumer confidence—which is currently near an all-time *low* nationwide. Together with the state of the economy, lingering concerns about the ongoing war in Iraq and the State budget crisis combine to create an economic and political climate that is not as favorable to revenue measures as it has been in prior years.

The results of this study and the conclusions noted above must be viewed in light of the current times. Indeed, the results for the proposed general sales tax are reasonably strong *despite* the general economic malaise, which speaks volumes about the value that Ventura residents place on continuing to receive high-quality municipal services. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that this poll is a snapshot in time. Should the economy and/or political climate change in ways that would be more favorable, support for the measure—and the potential effectiveness of a positive education campaign—could increase considerably. 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.

LOCAL ISSUES & OVERALL SATISFACTION

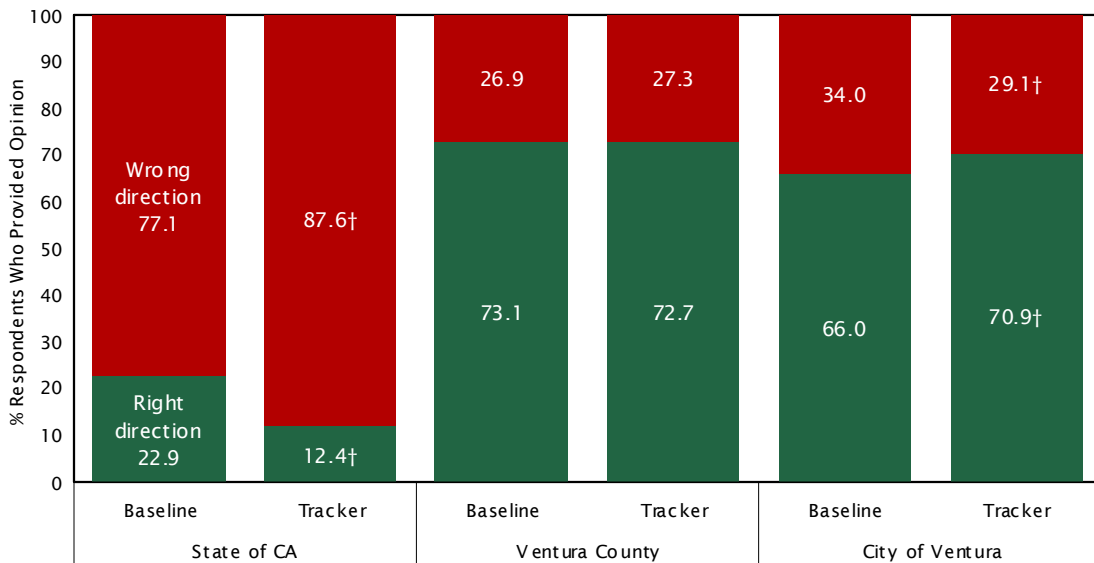
The first substantive questions of the survey were designed to gauge voters' opinions regarding the overall state of affairs in the State of California, Ventura County, and City of Ventura, assess their satisfaction with the City's performance in providing municipal services, and identify the most important issues facing the City.

RIGHT OR WRONG DIRECTION The results of Question 1 clearly indicate that voters distinguish between the activities, events and affairs of the State of California, the County of Ventura, and City of Ventura (Figure 1). The vast majority of voters who provided an opinion in the current tracking survey indicated that California is generally headed in the wrong direction (88%), with just 12% feeling that the State is on the right path. These findings represent a statistically significant change from a slightly more positive outlook found in the baseline study conducted at the end of 2008.

When it comes to Ventura County and the City of Ventura, voters were much more positive in their assessments. Approximately 73% of voters indicated that the County is on the right path, which is virtually identical to the findings of the prior study. A similar percentage (71%) indicated that the City of Ventura is going in the right direction, which was a small but significant increase from opinions measured in the prior baseline study.

Question 1 *Generally speaking, do you think things in _____ are going in the right or wrong direction?*

FIGURE 1 GENERAL OUTLOOK: BASELINE & TRACKER

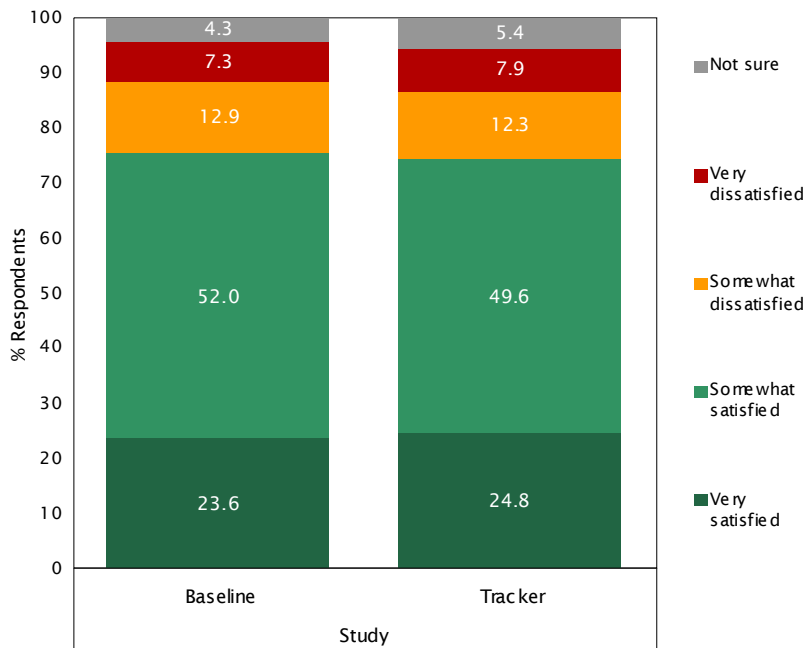


† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the baseline and tracker studies.

OVERALL SATISFACTION The next question in this series asked respondents to indicate if, overall, they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Ventura is doing to provide municipal services. Because this question does not reference a specific program, facility, or service and requested that the respondent consider the City’s performance in general, the findings of this question may be regarded as an *overall performance rating* for the City among likely November 2009 voters.

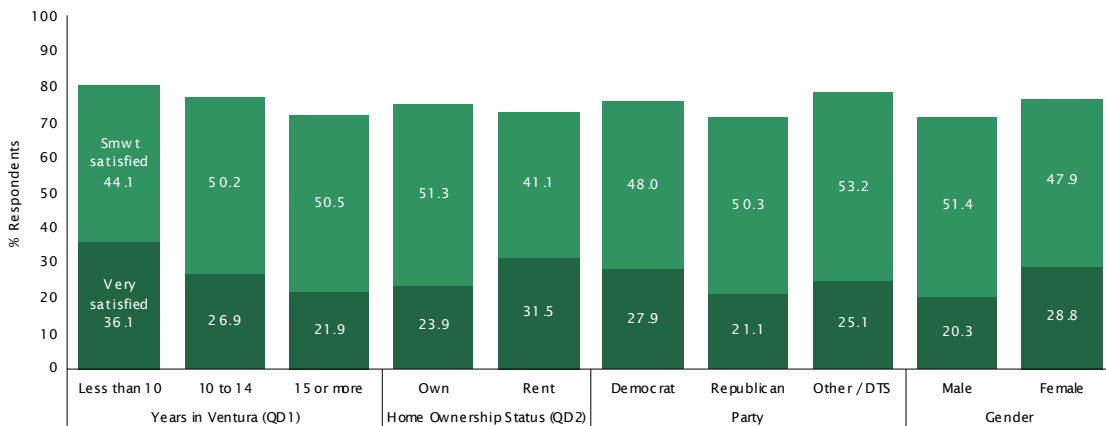
Question 2 *Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Ventura is doing to provide city services?*

FIGURE 2 OVERALL SATISFACTION: BASELINE & TRACKER



As shown in Figure 2, three-quarters (75%) of likely voters indicated they were satisfied with the City’s efforts to provide municipal services in this tracking survey, with 25% stating that they were *very* satisfied. Approximately 20% reported dissatisfaction, and 5% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion. These findings were nearly identical to those found in the baseline study. Figure 3 below displays how voters’ opinions about the City’s overall performance varied by length of residence in Ventura, home ownership status, partisan affiliation, and gender.

FIGURE 3 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY YEARS IN VENTURA, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, PARTY & GENDER

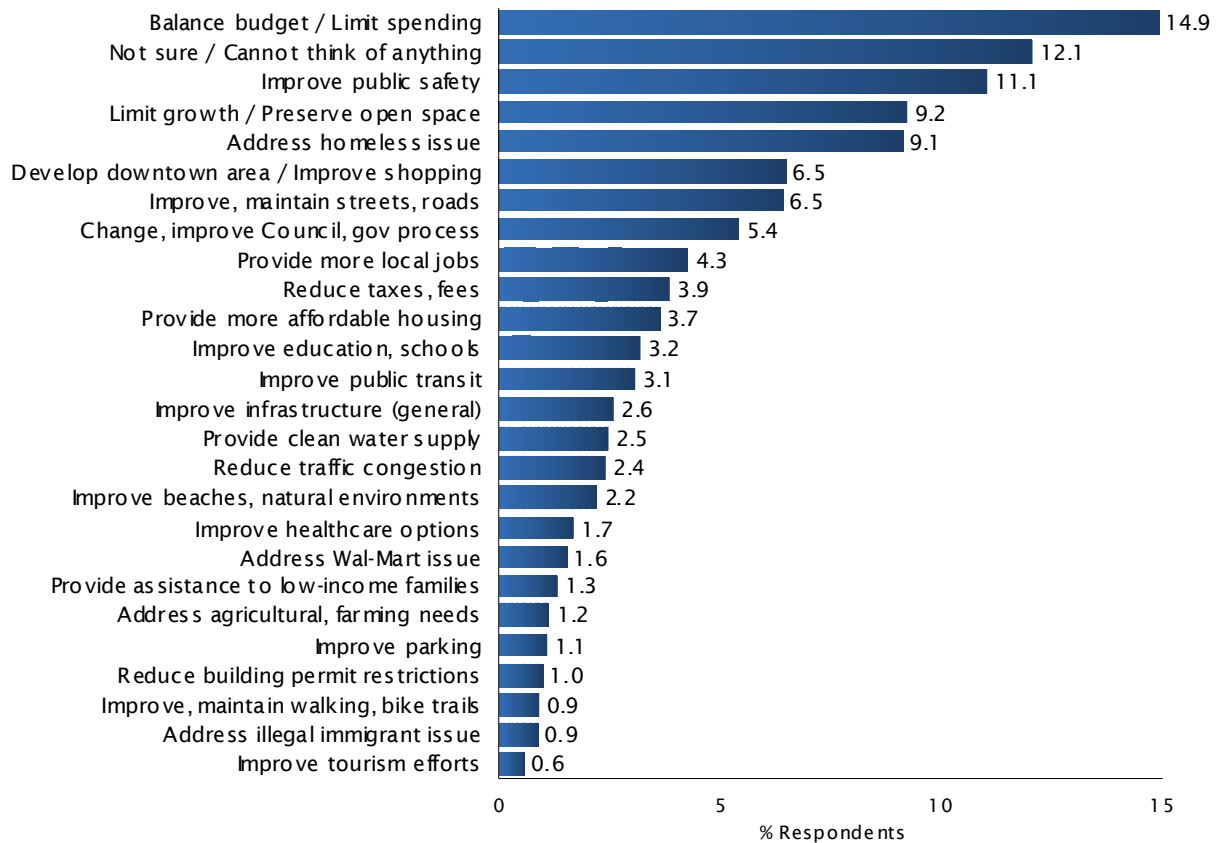


MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING THE CITY Respondents were next asked to indicate the most important issue facing the City of Ventura. Question 3 was asked in an open-ended manner, which allowed respondents to mention any change that came to mind without be prompted by or restricted to a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 4.

Respondents were most likely to mention balancing the budget or limiting government spending as the most important issue facing the City (15%). The next most common response was ‘not sure / cannot think of anything’ mentioned by 12% of voters. Improving public safety (11%), limiting growth and preserving open space (9%), addressing the homeless issue (9%), developing the downtown area (7%), improving and maintaining streets and roads (7%), and changing or improving Council and the government process in general (5%) were also mentioned by at least five percent of respondents.

Question 3 *What would you say is the most important issue facing the City of Ventura that you would like the City government to address?*

FIGURE 4 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING CITY OF VENTURA



INITIAL BALLOT TEST

The primary research objective of this survey was to estimate voters' support for establishing a general sales tax increase to preserve funding for essential city programs and services, including providing police, crime protection and gang prevention services, providing fire protection, paramedic and emergency response services, maintaining and repairing local streets, public facilities and infrastructure, providing library services, providing programs to support and improve the local economy, and ensuring adequate financial reserves. To this end, Question 4 was designed to take an early assessment of voters' support for the proposed measure.

The motivation for placing Question 4 near the front of survey is twofold. First, voter support for a measure can often depend on the amount of information they have about a measure. At this point in the survey, the respondent has not been provided information about the proposed measure beyond what is presented in the ballot language. This situation is analogous to a voter casting a ballot with limited knowledge about the measure, such as what might occur in the absence of an effective education campaign. Question 4—also known as the Initial Ballot Test—is thus a good measure of voter support for the proposed measure *as it is today*. Because the Initial Ballot Test provides a gauge of 'uninformed' support for the measure, it also serves a second purpose in that it provides a useful baseline from which to judge the impact of various information items conveyed later in the survey on voter support for the measure.

Question 4 *Later this year, voters in the City may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure. In order to prevent further cuts and preserve funding for essential City services, including providing police, crime protection and gang prevention services; providing fire protection, paramedic and emergency response services; maintaining and repairing local streets, public facilities and infrastructure; providing library services; providing programs to support and improve the local economy; and ensuring adequate financial reserves shall the City enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed four years, with annual reports on how the money is spent and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 5 INITIAL BALLOT TEST

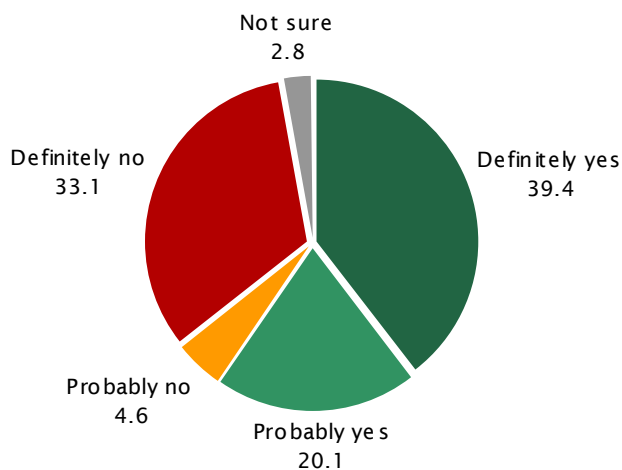


Figure 5 presents the results of the Initial Ballot Test among all respondents. Overall, 60% of voters indicated they would definitely or probably support the measure at this stage in the survey⁴, whereas 38% said they would oppose the measure and 3% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice. For general taxes in California, the level of support recorded at the Initial Ballot Test is approximately 10% above the simple majority (50% + 1) required for passage.

4. In the Baseline Study, a similar percentage of voters (62%) indicated support at the Initial Ballot Test.

SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS For the interested reader, Table 1 shows how support for the measure at the Initial Ballot Test varied by key demographic subgroups. The blue column (Approximate % of Likely Voter Universe) indicates the percentage of the universe that each subgroup category comprises. Support for the proposed measure exceeded a majority in all but six identified subgroups at the Initial Ballot Test.

TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

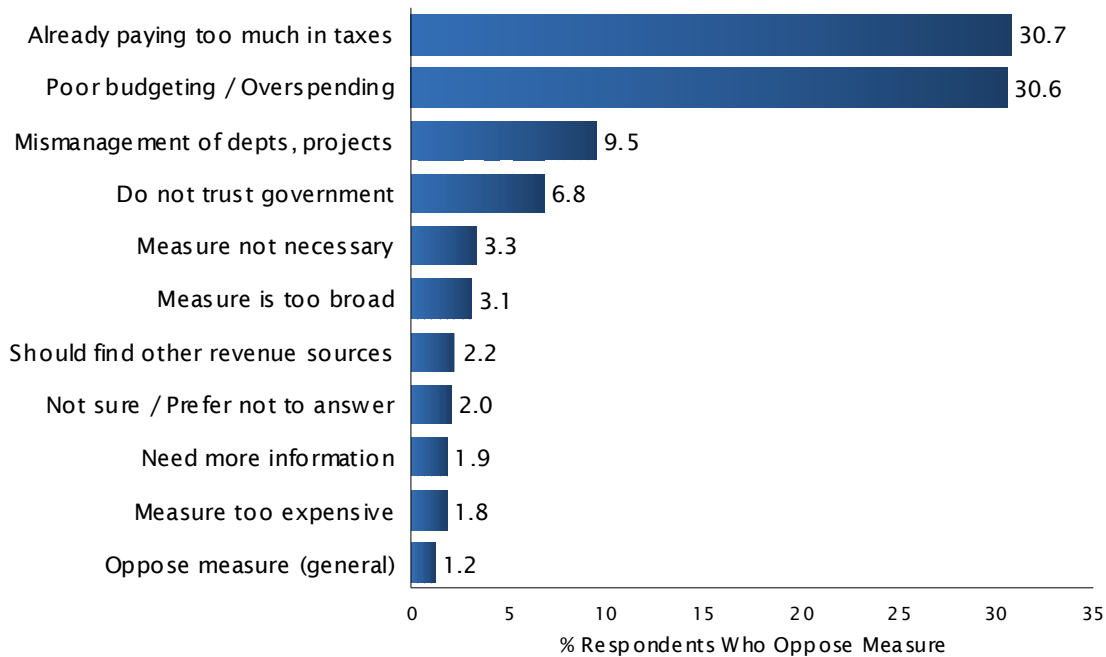
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100	59.5	2.8
Years in Ventura (QD1)	Less than 10	17	66.5	1.5
	10 to 14	14	59.9	3.8
	15 or more	69	57.1	3.0
Home Ownership Status (QD2)	Own	84	58.6	2.3
	Rent	16	62.4	6.4
Home Type (QD3)	Single family	77	59.4	1.5
	Condo / Apt	18	60.9	8.8
	Mobile home	6	53.0	3.7
Family Owns Local Biz (QD6)	Yes	16	51.1	2.9
	No	84	60.9	2.9
Child in Hsld (QD7)	Yes	22	59.4	2.1
	No	78	59.5	3.1
Gender	Male	47	48.0	2.1
	Female	53	69.7	3.6
Party	Democrat	47	76.4	3.1
	Republican	40	43.1	2.2
	Other / DTS	13	48.4	3.9
Age	18 to 29	3	77.8	0.0
	30 to 39	6	63.6	0.0
	40 to 49	14	53.5	2.3
	50 to 64	37	54.1	3.4
	65 or older	40	64.4	3.1
Household Party Type	Single dem	19	80.2	2.8
	Dual dem	20	77.7	2.3
	Single rep	15	53.4	3.1
	Dual rep	16	31.7	2.6
	Other Mixed	8 22	45.1 55.0	0.0 4.5
Registration Year	2009 to 2005	30	70.0	3.8
	2004 to 2001	19	57.6	2.7
	2000 to 1997	13	54.7	5.6
	1996 to 1990	18	48.6	2.6
	Before 1990	21	58.5	0.0
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	57	59.5	3.8
	No	43	59.4	1.6

REASONS FOR OPPOSING MEASURE Respondents who initially opposed the general sales tax measure were subsequently asked if there was a particular reason for their position. Question 6 was asked in an open-ended manner, thereby 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 6 below.

Ventura voters’ reasons for not supporting the general sales tax increase are typical of what True North has found from opponents of other revenue measures in other cities. Approximately 31% felt they were already paying too much in taxes or expressed a general anti-tax sentiment, and a similar percentage (31%) felt that the City is overspending and should be better in managing its budget before they would be willing to support a tax increase. No other issues were mentioned by at least 10% of voters who initially opposed the measure.

Question 5 *Is there a particular reason why you do not support the ballot measure I just described?*

FIGURE 6 REASONS FOR OPPOSING MEASURE



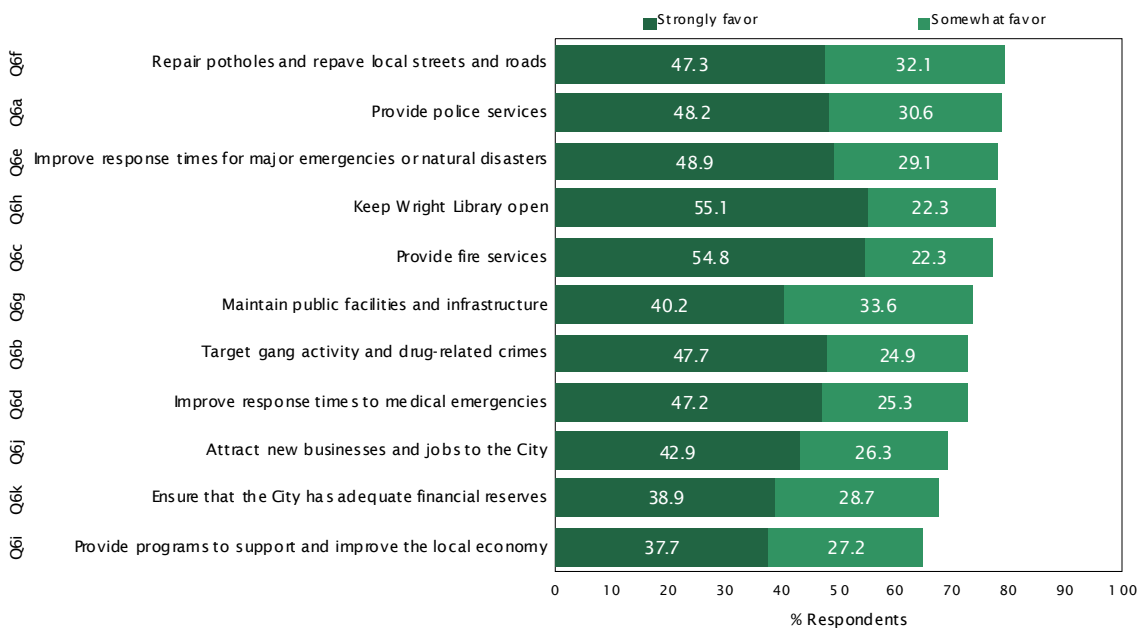
PROJECTS & SERVICES

The ballot language presented in Question 4 indicated that the proposed measure would prevent further cuts and ensure adequate funding for general city programs and services, including providing police, crime protection and gang prevention services, providing fire protection, paramedic and emergency response services, maintaining and repairing local streets, public facilities and infrastructure, providing library services, providing programs to support and improve the local economy, and ensuring adequate financial reserves. The purpose of Question 6 was to provide respondents with the full range of projects and services that may be funded by the proposed measure, as well as identify which of these services voters most favored funding with the proceeds of the measure.

After reading each project or service, respondents were asked if they would favor or oppose spending some of the money on that particular item assuming that the measure passed. Truncated descriptions of the projects and services tested, as well as voters' responses, are shown in Figure 7 below. The order in which the projects and services were read to respondents was randomized for each respondent to avoid a systematic position bias.

Question 6 *The measure we've been discussing could fund a variety of projects and services in the City. If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion?*

FIGURE 7 PROJECTS AND SERVICES



Overall, the service that resonated with the largest percentage of respondents was repairing potholes and repaving streets and roads (79%), followed by providing police services, including crime prevention, investigations, and quick emergency responses (79%), improving the City's ability to respond quickly to a major emergency or natural disaster (78%), keeping Wright Library open (77%), and providing fire services, including emergency response, fire prevention, and paramedic services (77%).

PROJECT RATINGS BY SUBGROUP Table 2 presents the top five projects (showing the percentage of respondents who *strongly* favor each) by position at the Initial Ballot Test. Not surprisingly, individuals who initially opposed the measure were generally less likely to favor spending money on a given project or service when compared to supporters. Nevertheless, initial supporters and opponents did agree on two of the top five priority projects.

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

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q4)	Item	Project or Service Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 238)	Q6c	Provide fire services	70
	Q6h	Keep Wright Library open	67
	Q6d	Improve response times to medical emergencies	62
	Q6a	Provide police services	62
	Q6e	Improve response times for major emergencies or natural disasters	61
Probably or Definitely No (n = 151)	Q6h	Keep Wright Library open	35
	Q6b	Target gang activity and drug-related crimes	35
	Q6f	Repair potholes and repave local streets and roads	34
	Q6j	Attract new businesses and jobs to the City	34
	Q6c	Provide fire services	31

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

Ballot measures do not succeed or fail in a political vacuum. During an election cycle, proponents of a measure will present arguments to try to persuade voters to support the measure, just as opponents will present arguments to achieve the opposite goal. The objective of Question 7 was thus to present respondents with arguments in favor of the proposed sales tax measure 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 22). Within each series, specific arguments were administered in random order to avoid a systematic position bias.

Question 7 *What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people are saying about the measure we've been discussing. Supporters of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to SUPPORT the measure?*

FIGURE 8 POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

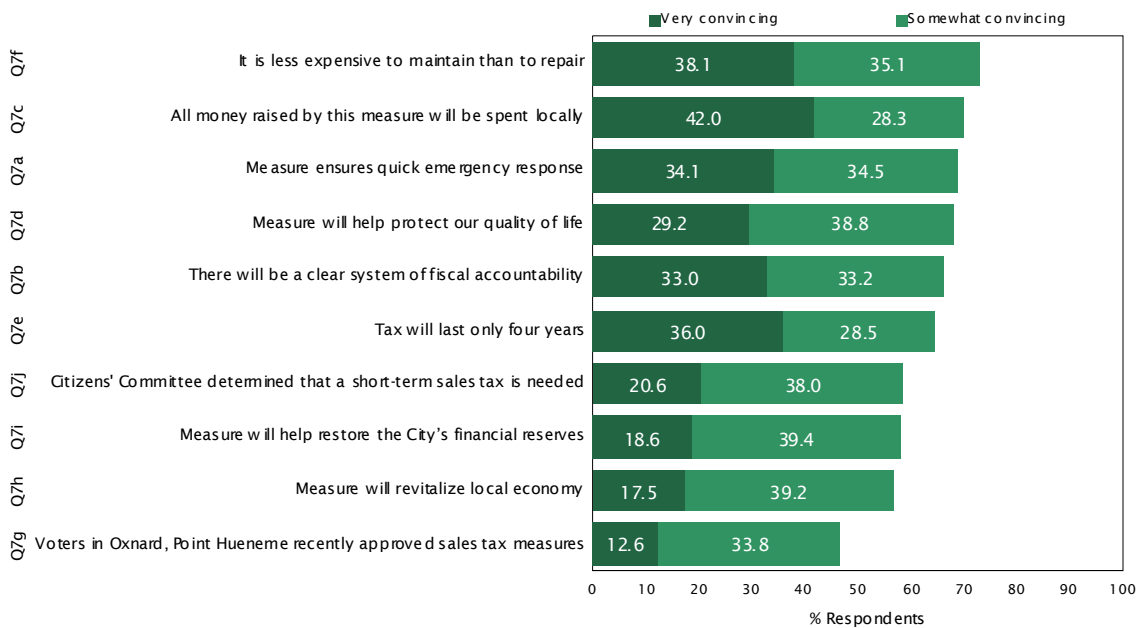


Figure 8 above presents the truncated positive arguments tested, as well as voters’ reactions to the arguments. The arguments are ranked from most convincing to least convincing based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the argument was either a ‘very convincing’ or ‘somewhat convincing’ reason to support the measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive argument was: *This measure will allow the City to keep up with basic repairs and maintenance to streets and public facilities. If we don't take care of it now, it will be a lot more expensive to repair in the future (73%), followed by All money raised by this measure will be spent locally to maintain the quality of services in our community. It cannot be taken away by politicians in Sacramento or be used for other purposes (70%), and When you need emergency care, you need it fast. Minutes count in these situations. This measure will ensure that we have enough police officers, firefighters and paramedics so that they can respond quickly to emergencies (69%).*

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 3 lists the top five most convincing positive arguments (showing the percentage of respondents who cited it as *very* convincing) according to respondents' vote choice at the Initial Ballot Test. The most striking pattern in the table is that the positive arguments resonated with a much higher percentage of voters who were initially inclined to support the measure when compared to voters who initially opposed the measure. Nevertheless, four specific arguments were ranked among the top five most compelling by both groups.

TABLE 3 TOP FIVE POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

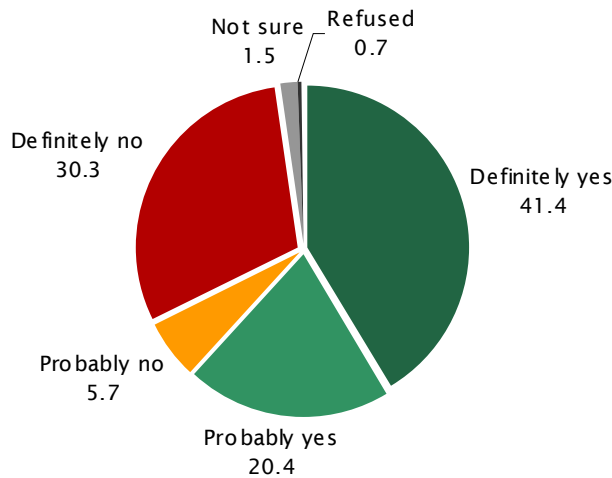
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q4)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 238)	Q7c	All money raised by this measure will be spent locally	63
	Q7f	It is less expensive to maintain than to repair	56
	Q7e	Tax will last only four years	55
	Q7a	Measure ensures quick emergency response	50
	Q7b	There will be a clear system of fiscal accountability	48
Probably or Definitely No (n = 151)	Q7d	Measure will help protect our quality of life	9
	Q7b	There will be a clear system of fiscal accountability	9
	Q7a	Measure ensures quick emergency response	9
	Q7c	All money raised by this measure will be spent locally	8
	Q7f	It is less expensive to maintain than to repair	8

INTERIM BALLOT TEST

After exposing respondents to projects that could be funded by the measure as well as the types of 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 sales tax measure may have changed. As shown in Figure 9, overall support for the measure at this point increased slightly to 62%, with 41% of voters indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes on the measure. Approximately 36% of respondents opposed the measure at this point in the survey, and an additional 2% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

Question 8 *Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again. In order to prevent further cuts and preserve funding for essential City services, including providing police, crime protection and gang prevention services; providing fire protection, paramedic and emergency response services; maintaining and repairing local streets, public facilities and infrastructure; providing library services; providing programs to support and improve the local economy; and ensuring adequate financial reserves shall the City enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed four years, with annual reports on how the money is spent and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 9 INTERIM BALLOT TEST



SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS For the interested reader, Table 4 on the next page shows how support for the measure at this point in the survey varied by key demographic subgroups, as well as the percentage change in subgroup support when compared with the Initial Ballot Test. As was the case at the Initial Ballot Test, support for the measure at the Interim Ballot Test met or exceeded a majority in all but six identified subgroups of voters.

TABLE 4 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST

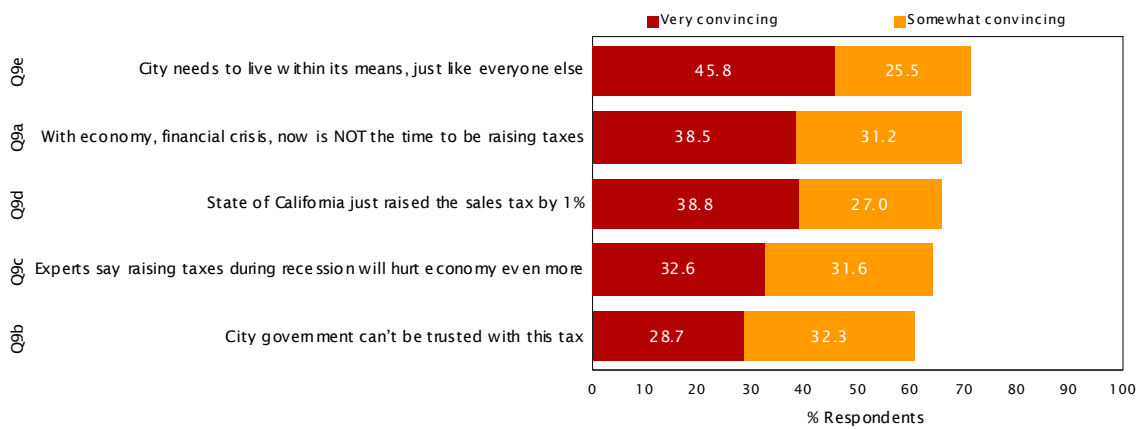
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change from Initial Ballot Test (Q4)
Overall		100	61.8	+2.4
Years in Ventura (QD1)	Less than 10	17	64.9	-1.6
	10 to 14	14	64.8	+4.9
	15 or more	69	60.5	+3.4
Home Ownership Status (QD2)	Own	84	60.3	+1.7
	Rent	16	69.7	+7.3
Home Type (QD3)	Single family	77	61.0	+1.6
	Condo / Apt	18	66.5	+5.6
	Mobile home	6	60.3	+7.3
Family Owns Local Biz (QD6)	Yes	16	47.5	-3.6
	No	84	64.7	+3.8
Child in Hsld (QD7)	Yes	22	57.9	-1.5
	No	78	63.2	+3.8
Gender	Male	47	49.4	+1.4
	Female	53	72.9	+3.2
Party	Democrat	47	79.5	+3.1
	Republican	40	45.7	+2.6
	Other / DTS	13	47.5	-1.0
Age	18 to 29	3	77.8	-0.0
	30 to 39	6	63.6	No change
	40 to 49	14	51.2	-2.3
	50 to 64	37	56.8	+2.7
	65 or older	40	68.6	+4.2
Household Party Type	Single dem	19	85.8	+5.6
	Dual dem	20	78.5	+0.8
	Single rep	15	53.4	-0.0
	Dual rep	16	37.7	+6.0
	Other	8	37.5	-7.6
Registration Year	Mixed	22	58.5	+3.5
	2009 to 2005	30	69.4	-0.6
	2004 to 2001	19	56.9	-0.7
	2000 to 1997	13	58.8	+4.1
	1996 to 1990	18	54.3	+5.8
Likely to Vote by Mail	Before 1990	21	63.7	+5.3
	Yes	57	60.7	+1.2
	No	43	63.3	+3.9

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Whereas Question 7 presented respondents with arguments in favor of the measure, Question 9 presented respondents with arguments designed to elicit opposition to the measure. In the case of Question 9, 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 10.

Question 9 *Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying.aste question text here. Opponents of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?*

FIGURE 10 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS



Among the negative arguments tested, the most compelling were: *The City needs to live within its means, just like everyone else* (71%), followed by *People are having a hard time making ends meet with the housing crisis, high gas prices, and the economy going into a recession. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes* (70%), and *The State of California just raised the sales tax by 1%. Now the City wants another half percent? That's not fair to taxpayers* (66%).

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

TABLE 5 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

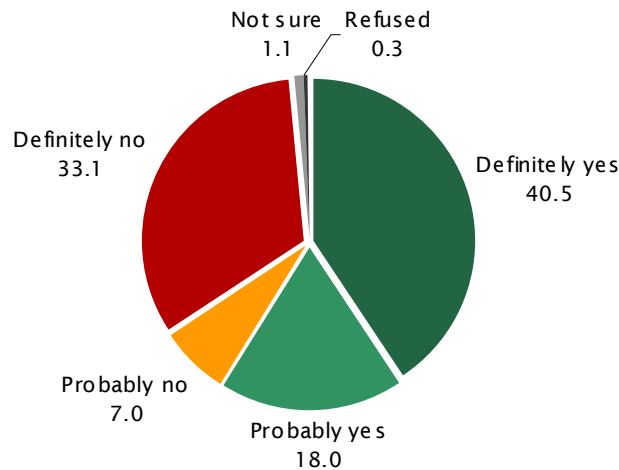
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q4)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 238)	Q9e	City needs to live within its means, just like everyone else	26
	Q9d	State of California just raised the sales tax by 1%	18
	Q9a	With economy, financial crisis, now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	18
	Q9b	City government can't be trusted with this tax	13
	Q9c	Experts say raising taxes during recession will hurt economy even more	12
Probably or Definitely No (n = 151)	Q9e	City needs to live within its means, just like everyone else	78
	Q9d	State of California just raised the sales tax by 1%	71
	Q9a	With economy, financial crisis, now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	70
	Q9c	Experts say raising taxes during recession will hurt economy even more	66
	Q9b	City government can't be trusted with this tax	53

FINAL BALLOT TEST

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

Question 10 *Now that you have heard more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. In order to prevent further cuts and preserve funding for essential City services, including providing police, crime protection and gang prevention services; providing fire protection, paramedic and emergency response services; maintaining and repairing local streets, public facilities and infrastructure; providing library services; providing programs to support and improve the local economy; and ensuring adequate financial reserves shall the City enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed four years, with annual reports on how the money is spent and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 11 FINAL BALLOT TEST



At this point in the survey, support for the sales tax measure was found among 59% of respondents, with 41% indicating they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 40% of respondents were opposed to the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 1% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.



CHANGE IN SUPPORT

Table 6 provides a closer look at how support for the measure 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 Interim, and the Final and Initial Ballot Tests. Positive differences appear in green, whereas negative differences appear in red.

TABLE 6 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT FINAL BALLOT TEST

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change from Initial Ballot Test (Q4)	Change from Interim Ballot Test (Q8)
Overall		100	58.5	-0.9	-3.3
Years in Ventura (QD1)	Less than 10	17	62.9	-3.6	-2.0
	10 to 14	14	61.9	+2.0	-2.9
	15 or more	69	56.8	-0.3	-3.7
Home Ownership Status (QD2)	Own	84	58.0	-0.6	-2.3
	Rent	16	62.1	-0.3	-7.6
Home Type (QD3)	Single family	77	58.1	-1.3	-2.9
	Condo / Apt	18	62.3	+1.4	-4.2
	Mobile home	6	56.6	+3.7	-3.7
Family Owns Local Biz (QD6)	Yes	16	45.9	-5.2	-1.6
	No	84	61.0	+0.2	-3.6
Child in Hsld (QD7)	Yes	22	55.3	-4.1	-2.6
	No	78	59.7	+0.3	-3.5
Gender	Male	47	45.7	-2.3	-3.6
	Female	53	70.0	+0.3	-2.9
Party	Democrat	47	76.4	-0.0	-3.1
	Republican	40	42.2	-0.9	-3.5
	Other / DTS	13	44.3	-4.1	-3.2
Age	18 to 29	3	77.8	-0.0	No change
	30 to 39	6	54.5	-9.1	-9.1
	40 to 49	14	48.8	-4.7	-2.3
	50 to 64	37	54.8	+0.7	-2.1
	65 or older	40	64.4	No change	-4.2
Household Party Type	Single dem	19	82.3	+2.2	-3.5
	Dual dem	20	75.5	-2.1	-3.0
	Single rep	15	48.9	-4.5	-4.5
	Dual rep	16	33.2	+1.6	-4.4
	Other	8	32.6	-12.5	-5.0
Registration Year	Mixed	22	57.5	+2.6	-1.0
	2009 to 2005	30	64.7	-5.3	-4.7
	2004 to 2001	19	55.1	-2.4	-1.7
	2000 to 1997	13	57.2	+2.5	-1.6
	1996 to 1990	18	51.5	+2.9	-2.9
Likely to Vote by Mail	Before 1990	21	59.7	+1.2	-4.0
	Yes	57	56.5	-3.0	-4.1
	No	43	61.1	+1.8	-2.1

As expected, most groups responded to the negative arguments with a modest reduction in their support for the sales tax measure when compared to the levels recorded at the Interim Ballot Test. It is worth noting, however, that even after being exposed to the negative arguments, most

identified voter subgroups continued to support the proposed measure at the required simple majority (or higher) at the conclusion of the interview.

Whereas Table 6 displays change in support for the measure over the course of the interview at the group level, Table 7 displays the individual-level changes that occurred between the Initial and Final Ballot Test. On the left side of the table is shown each of the response options to the Initial Ballot Test and the percentage of respondents in each group. The cells in the body of the table depict movement within each response group (row) based on the information provided throughout the course of the survey as recorded by the Final Ballot Test. For example, in the first row of Table 7 we see that of the 39.4% of respondents who indicated they would definitely support the sales tax measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 31.7% also indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. Approximately 5.8% moved to the probably support group, 0.4% moved to the probably oppose group, 1.1% 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 7 MOVEMENT FROM INITIAL TO FINAL BALLOT TEST

Initial Ballot Test (Q4)		Final Ballot Test (Q10)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	39.4% →	31.7%	5.8%	0.4%	1.1%	0.4%
Probably support	20.1% →	7.7%	9.8%	0.5%	1.3%	0.7%
Probably oppose	4.6% →	0.2%	1.2%	2.2%	1.0%	0.0%
Definitely oppose	33.1% →	0.2%	0.4%	3.2%	29.2%	0.0%
Not sure	2.8% →	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%

As one might expect, the information conveyed in the survey had the greatest impact on individuals who either weren't sure about how they would vote at the Initial Ballot Test or were tentative in their vote choice (probably yes or probably no). Moreover, Table 7 makes clear that although the information did impact some voters, it did not do so in a consistent way for all respondents. Some respondents found the information conveyed during the course of the interview to be a reason to become more supportive of the measure, whereas a slightly larger percentage found the same information to be a reason to be less supportive. Despite 9% of respondents making a *fundamental*⁵ shift in their opinion about the measure over the course of the interview, the net impact is that support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test (59%) was just 1% lower than support at the Initial Ballot Test (60%).

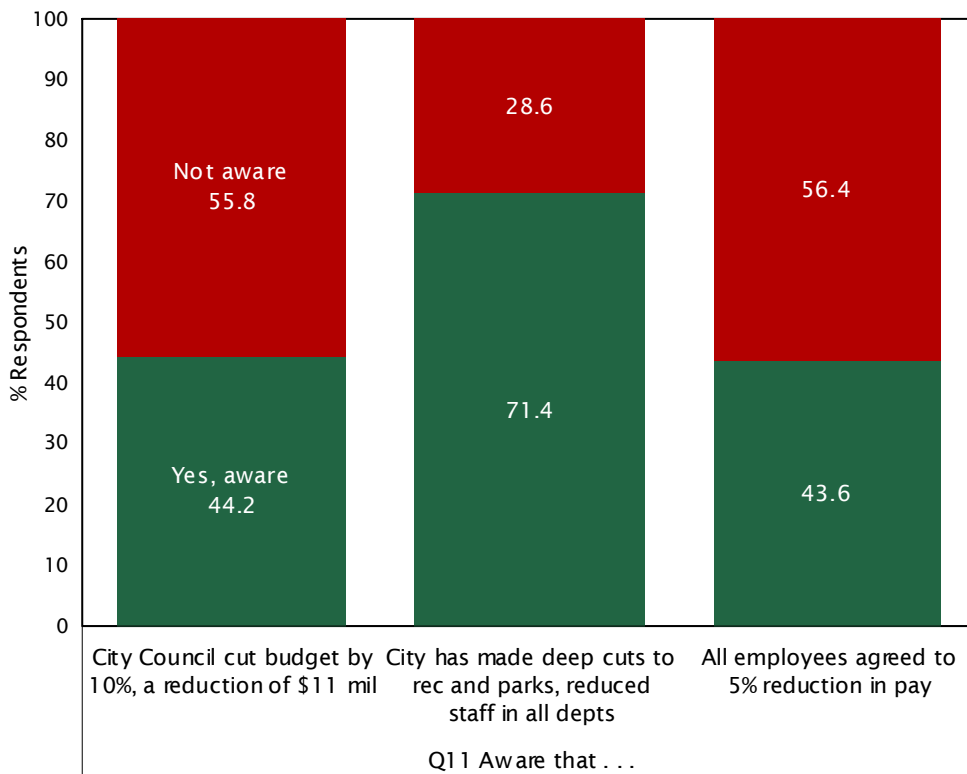
5. That is, they changed from a position of support, opposition or undecided at the Initial Ballot Test to a different position at the Final Ballot Test.

AWARENESS OF COST-CUTTING

The final substantive question of the survey was included to gauge voters' awareness of the City's budget-cutting efforts over the past six months. Figure 12 below displays truncated versions of the three specific cost reduction measures and the levels of awareness cited for each. Overall, nearly three-quarters (71%) of voters were aware that *The City has made deep cuts to services such as arts, recreation, and parks, and also reduced staff in all departments, including police and fire*. Awareness for the other two items was considerably lower, with 44% indicating they were aware that *City Council has cut next year's budget by 10%, which is a reduction of 11 million dollars*, and similar percentage (44%) stating they were aware that *every City employee has agreed to a 5% reduction in pay over the next 15 months*.

Question 11 *In response to the current recession, the City of Ventura has recently taken steps to reduce its budget. Before taking this survey, were you aware that _____?*

FIGURE 12 AWARENESS OF RECENT STEPS TAKEN BY CITY





BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS

TABLE 8 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

<i>Total Respondents</i>	400
QD1 Years in Ventura	
Less than 1	0.3
1 to 4	3.6
5 to 9	12.7
10 to 14	14.3
15 or more	68.3
Refused	0.9
QD2 Home ownership status	
Own	82.0
Rent	15.5
Refused	2.5
QD3 Home type	
Single family	74.8
Condo	6.4
Townhome	2.6
Apartment	8.2
Mobile home	5.7
Refused	2.3
QD4 Financial situation in past year	
Much / Smwt Worse	10.5
Much / Smwt Better	38.0
Stayed about the same	49.0
Refused	2.5
QD5 Financial situation in next year	
Much / Smwt Worse	22.8
Much / Smwt Better	16.8
Stay about the same	55.7
Refused	4.7
QD6 Family owns business in Ventura	
Yes	16.1
No	82.7
Refused	1.2
QD7 Child in home	
Yes	22.1
No	76.4
Refused	1.5
S1 Gender	
Male	47.2
Female	52.8
S2 Party	
Democrat	46.9
Republican	39.9
Other	4.2
DTS	9.0
S3 Age	
18 to 29	3.4
30 to 39	5.6
40 to 49	14.2
50 to 64	37.1
65 or older	39.8
Not coded	0.0
S4 Registration year	
2009 to 2005	29.5
2004 to 2001	18.9
2000 to 1997	13.2
1996 to 1990	17.7
Before 1990	20.7
S5 Household party type	
Single dem	19.3
Dual dem	19.7
Single rep	14.8
Dual rep	16.3
Other	8.4
Mixed	21.6
S9 Likely to vote by mail	
Yes	56.6
No	43.4

In addition to questions directly related to the proposed general tax increase, the study collected basic demographic information about respondents and their households. Some of this information was gathered during the interview, although much of it was collected from the voter file. The profile of the likely November 2009 voter sample used for this study is shown in Table 8.



M E T H O D O L O G Y

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

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT Dr. McLarney of True North Research worked closely with the City of Ventura to develop a questionnaire that covered the topics of interest and avoided the many 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, the items were asked in a random order for each respondent. Skip patterns were also used, where appropriate, to ensure that respondents received only the appropriate questions. See *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31 for the survey instruments used in the study.

PROGRAMMING & PRE-TEST Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist the live interviewers when conducting the telephone interviews. The CATI program automatically navigates the skip patterns, randomizes the appropriate question items, and alerts the interviewer to certain types of keypunching mistakes should they happen during the interview. 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.

SAMPLE The survey was administered to a stratified and clustered random sample of registered voters in the City of Ventura who are likely to participate in the November 2009 election.⁶ Consistent with the profile of this universe, the sample was stratified into clusters, each representing a particular combination of age, gender, and household party-type. Individuals were then randomly selected based on their profile into an appropriate cluster. This method ensures that if a person of a particular profile refuses to participate in the study, they are replaced by an individual who shares their same profile.

STATISTICAL MARGIN OF ERROR By using the probability-based sampling design noted above, True North ensured that the final sample was representative of voters in the City who are likely to participate in the November 2009 election. The results of the sample can thus be used to estimate the opinions of *all* voters likely to participate in the November 2009 election. Because not all voters participated in the study, however, the results have what is known as a statistical margin of error due to sampling. The margin of error refers to the difference between what was found in the survey of 400 voters for a particular question and what would have been found if all 24,443 likely November 2009 voters identified in the City had been surveyed for the study.

For example, in estimating the percentage of likely voters who are *very* satisfied with the City's efforts to provide municipal services (Question 3), 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

6. Voters who participated in the Baseline Study conducted in December were not included in the sample and thus ineligible to participate in this tracking study.

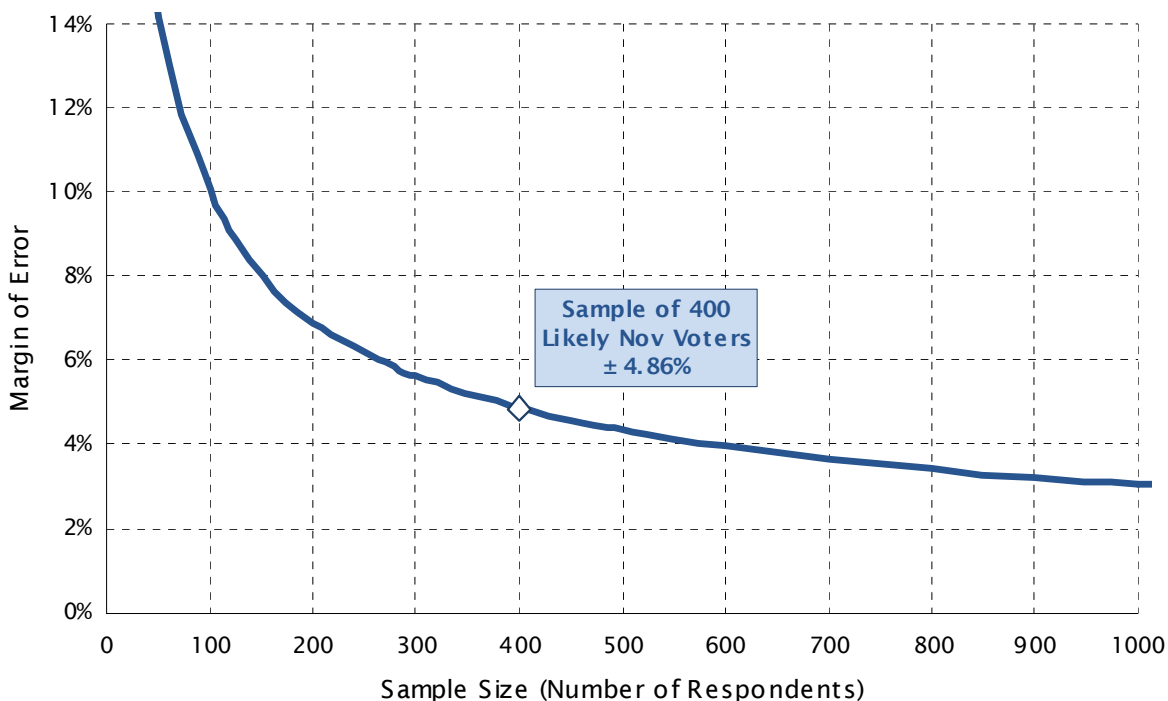
of responses to the question. The appropriate equation for estimating the margin of error, in this case, is shown below.

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

Where \hat{p} is the proportion of voters who said *very satisfied* (0.25 for 25%, for example), N is the population size of likely voters (24,443), 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 $\pm 4.21\%$. This means that with 25% of respondents indicating they are very satisfied with the City's efforts to provide municipal services, we can be 95% confident that the actual percentage of likely voters that are very satisfied in this respect is between 21% and 29%.

Figure 13 provides a graphic plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative response. For this survey, the maximum margin of error for questions answered by all 400 respondents is $\pm 4.86\%$.

FIGURE 13 MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR DUE TO SAMPLING



Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by subgroups such as age, gender, and partisan affiliation. Figure 13 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 May 27 to May 31, 2009. 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 16 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. Where appropriate, tests of statistical significance were conducted to evaluate whether a change in responses between the baseline and tracking studies was due to an actual change in opinions or was likely an artifact of independently drawn cross-sectional samples.

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 Ventura
General Tax Survey Tracker
Final Toplines
June 2009

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 the City of Ventura (Ven-Ter-uh) and I'd like to get your opinions.

If needed: This is a survey about important issues in the City of Ventura (Ven-Ter-uh). I'm NOT trying to sell anything and I won't ask for a donation.

If needed: The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.

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

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

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

Section 2: Local Issues & Overall Satisfaction

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

Q1	Generally speaking, do you think things in _____ are going in the right or wrong direction?				
	Randomize	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Not sure	Refused
A	The State of California	11%	79%	9%	1%
B	Ventura (Ven-Ter-uh) County	56%	21%	22%	1%
C	The City of Ventura (Ven-Ter-uh)	61%	25%	12%	1%
Q2	Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Ventura (Ven-Ter-Uh) is doing to provide city services? <i>Get answer, then ask:</i> Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?				
	1	Very satisfied	25%		
	2	Somewhat satisfied	50%		
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	12%		
	4	Very dissatisfied	8%		
	98	Not sure	5%		
	99	Refused	0%		

Q3	What would you say is the most important issue facing the City of Ventura that you would like the City government to address?	
	Balance budget / Reduce spending	15%
	Not sure / Cannot think of anything	12%
	Improve public safety	11%
	Limit growth / Preserve open space	9%
	Address homeless issue	9%
	Improve, maintain streets, roads	6%
	Develop downtown area / Improve shopping	6%
	Change, improve Council, gov process	5%
	Provide more affordable housing	4%
	Reduce taxes, fees	4%
	Provide more local jobs	4%
	Improve public transit	3%
	Improve education, schools	3%
	Provide clean water supply	3%
	Improve infrastructure (general)	3%
	Reduce traffic congestion	2%
	Improve beaches, natural environments	2%
	Improve healthcare options	2%
	Address Wal-Mart issue	2%
	Reduce cost of living	1%
	Improve, maintain walking, bike trails	1%
	Improve parking	1%
	Reduce building permit restrictions	1%
	Provide assistance to low-income families	1%
	Address illegal immigrant issue	1%
	Address agricultural, farming needs	1%
	Improve tourism efforts	1%

Section 3: Initial Ballot Test			
Later this year, voters in the City may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure:			
Q4	In order to prevent further cuts and preserve funding for essential City services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Providing police, crime protection and gang prevention services ◊ Providing fire protection, paramedic and emergency response services ◊ Maintaining and repairing local streets, public facilities and infrastructure ◊ Providing library services ◊ Providing programs to support and improve the local economy ◊ And ensuring adequate financial reserves 		
	Shall the City enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed four years, with annual reports on how the money is spent and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i>		
	1	Definitely yes	39%
	2	Probably yes	20%
	3	Probably no	5%
	4	Definitely no	33%
	98	Not sure	3%
	99	Refused	0%
Q5	Is there a particular reason why you do not support the ballot measure I just described?		
	Poor budgeting / Overspending		31%
	Already paying too much in taxes		31%
	Mismanagement of depts, projects		9%
	Do not trust government		7%
	Measure not necessary		3%
	Measure is too broad		3%
	Should find other revenue sources		2%
	Measure too expensive		2%
	Need more information		2%
	Not sure / Prefer not to answer		2%
	Oppose measure (general)		1%

Section 4: Projects & Services							
Q6	The measure we've been discussing could fund a variety of projects and services in the City. If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? <i>Get answer, if favor or oppose, then ask: Would that be strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?</i>						
	<i>Randomize</i>	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	No Opinion	Refused
A	Provide police services, including crime prevention, investigations, and quick emergency responses	48%	31%	6%	9%	5%	1%
B	Target gang activity and drug-related crimes	48%	25%	10%	9%	8%	0%
C	Provide fire services, including emergency response, fire prevention, and paramedic services	55%	22%	8%	9%	5%	0%
D	Improve response times to medical emergencies, such as heart attacks and car accidents	47%	25%	7%	10%	9%	1%
E	Improve the City's ability to respond quickly to a major emergency or natural disaster	49%	29%	6%	9%	7%	0%
F	Repair potholes and repave local streets and roads	47%	32%	8%	7%	5%	1%
G	Maintain public facilities and infrastructure	40%	34%	11%	4%	9%	1%
H	Keep Wright Library open	55%	22%	9%	7%	7%	0%
I	Provide programs to support and improve the local economy	38%	27%	13%	11%	10%	1%
J	Attract new businesses and jobs to the City	43%	26%	11%	12%	7%	1%
K	Ensure that the City has adequate financial reserves	39%	29%	8%	12%	10%	2%

Section 5: Positive Arguments							
What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people are saying about the measure we've been discussing.							
Q7	Supporters of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to SUPPORT the measure?						
	<i>Randomize</i>	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Not at all convincing	Do not believe	Not sure	Refused
A	When you need emergency care, you need it fast. Minutes count in these situations. This measure will ensure that we have enough police officers, firefighters and paramedics so that they can respond quickly to emergencies.	34%	35%	29%	1%	1%	0%

B	There will be a clear system of accountability including yearly reports on how the money is spent.	33%	33%	30%	2%	2%	0%
C	All money raised by this measure will be spent locally to maintain the quality of services in our community. It cannot be taken away by politicians in Sacramento or be used for other purposes.	42%	28%	27%	1%	1%	0%
D	By keeping the City safe, clean and well-maintained, this measure will help protect our quality of life.	29%	39%	29%	1%	2%	0%
E	The tax will last only four years. It can not be increased or extended without voter approval.	36%	28%	32%	2%	1%	0%
F	This measure will allow the City to keep up with basic repairs and maintenance to streets and public facilities. If we don't take care of it now, it will be a lot more expensive to repair in the future.	38%	35%	25%	1%	0%	1%
G	Voters in Oxnard and Point Hueneme (why-NEE-mee) recently approved similar sales tax measures to help pay for essential city services.	13%	34%	46%	0%	6%	1%
H	This measure will provide the funding the City needs to help revitalize the local economy, attract new businesses, and bring high-paying jobs to the community.	17%	39%	38%	3%	1%	1%
I	This measure will help restore the City's financial reserves and create a "rainy day" fund in case of emergencies.	19%	39%	37%	2%	3%	0%
J	A Citizens' Committee of 15 residents spent two months studying the City's finances and its cost-cutting measures. They determined that a short-term sales tax is needed to maintain the quality of City services.	21%	38%	38%	1%	2%	1%

Section 6: Interim Ballot Test

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

Q8	In order to prevent further cuts and preserve funding for essential City services, including:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Providing police, crime protection and gang prevention services ◊ Providing fire protection, paramedic and emergency response services ◊ Maintaining and repairing local streets, public facilities and infrastructure ◊ Providing library services ◊ Providing programs to support and improve the local economy ◊ And ensuring adequate financial reserves 		
	<p>Shall the City enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed four years, with annual reports on how the money is spent and all money staying local?</p> <p>If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i></p>		
	1	Definitely yes	41%
	2	Probably yes	20%

3	Probably no	6%
4	Definitely no	30%
98	Not sure	2%
99	Refused	1%

Section 7: Negative Arguments

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

Q9	Opponents of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?						
	<i>Randomize</i>	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Not at all convincing	Do not believe	Not sure	Refused
A	People are having a hard time making ends meet with the housing crisis, financial crisis, and the economy in recession. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes.	39%	31%	29%	0%	1%	0%
B	The City government can't be trusted with this tax. They will mismanage the money or spend it on their own pet projects.	29%	32%	36%	1%	1%	0%
C	Experts say that raising taxes during a recession will hurt the economy even more.	33%	32%	33%	1%	1%	1%
D	The State of California just raised the sales tax by 1%. Now the City wants another half percent? That's not fair to taxpayers.	39%	27%	32%	0%	1%	1%
E	The City needs to live within its means, just like everyone else.	46%	26%	26%	0%	2%	1%

Section 8: Final Ballot Test

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

Q10	<p>In order to prevent further cuts and preserve funding for essential City services, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Providing police, crime protection and gang prevention services ◊ Providing fire protection, paramedic and emergency response services ◊ Maintaining and repairing local streets, public facilities and infrastructure ◊ Providing library services ◊ Providing programs to support and improve the local economy ◊ And ensuring adequate financial reserves <p>Shall the City enact a one-half cent sales tax for a period not to exceed four years, with annual reports on how the money is spent and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask:</i> Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</p>	
1	Definitely yes	40%
2	Probably yes	18%

3	Probably no	7%
4	Definitely no	33%
98	Not sure	1%
99	Refused	0%

Section 9: Awareness of Budget Issue

In response to the current recession, the City of Ventura has recently taken steps to reduce its budget.

Q11 Before taking this survey, were you aware that _____?

		Yes, aware	Not aware / Not sure
<i>Randomize</i>			
A	City Council has cut next year's budget by 10%, which is a reduction of 11 million dollars	44%	56%
B	The City has made deep cuts to services such as arts, recreation, and parks, and also reduced staff in all departments, including police and fire	71%	29%
C	Every City employee has agreed to a 5% reduction in pay over the next 15 months	44%	56%

Section 10: Background & Demographics

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

D1 How long have you lived in the City of Ventura (Ven-Ter-uh)?

1	Less than 1 year	0%
2	1 to 4 years	4%
3	5 to 9 years	13%
4	10 to 14 years	14%
5	15 years or longer	68%
99	Refused	1%

D2 Do you own or rent your residence in Ventura (Ven-Ter-uh)?

1	Own	82%
2	Rent	16%
99	Refused	3%

D3	Which of the following best describes your current home?		
	1	Detached single family home	75%
	2	Condominium	6%
	3	Townhome	3%
	4	Apartment	8%
	5	Mobile home	6%
	99	Refused	2%
D4	In the past year, has your personal financial situation will gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same? <i>If better or worse, ask: Would that be much (better/worse) or somewhat (better/worse)?</i>		
	1	Much better	4%
	2	Somewhat better	6%
	3	Somewhat worse	26%
	4	Much worse	12%
	5	Stay about the same	49%
	99	Refused	2%
D5	In the next year, do you think your personal financial situation will get better, get worse, or stay about the same? <i>If better or worse, ask: Would that be much (better/worse) or somewhat (better/worse)?</i>		
	1	Much better	8%
	2	Somewhat better	15%
	3	Somewhat worse	13%
	4	Much worse	4%
	5	Stay about the same	56%
	99	Refused	5%
D6	Do you or your family own a business in the City of Ventura (Ven-Ter-uh)?		
	1	Yes	16%
	2	No	83%
	99	Refused	1%
D7	Do you have children under the age of 18 living with you?		
	1	Yes	22%
	2	No	76%
	99	Refused	1%

Those are all of the questions that I have for you. Thanks so much for participating in this important survey! This survey was conducted for the City of Ventura (Ven-Ter-Uh).

Post-Interview & Sample Items		
S1	Gender	
	1	Male 47%
	2	Female 53%
S2	Party	
	1	Democrat 47%
	2	Republican 40%
	3	Other 4%
	4	DTS 9%
S3	Age on Voter File	
	1	18 to 29 3%
	2	30 to 39 6%
	3	40 to 49 14%
	4	50 to 64 37%
	5	65 or older 40%
	99	Not Coded 0%
S4	Registration Date	
	1	2009 to 2005 30%
	2	2004 to 2001 19%
	3	2000 to 1997 13%
	4	1996 to 1990 18%
	5	Before 1990 21%

S5	Household Party Type		
	1	Single Dem	19%
	2	Dual Dem	20%
	3	Single Rep	15%
	4	Dual Rep	16%
	5	Single Other	6%
	6	Dual Other	2%
	7	Dem & Rep	8%
	8	Dem & Other	6%
	9	Rep & Other	5%
	0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	2%
S6	ZIP Code		
	<i>5-digit ZIP</i>		Data on file
S7	Voting History		
	<i>For last six elections</i>		Data on file
S8	Homeowner on Voter File		
	1	Yes	77%
	2	No	23%
S9	Likely to Vote by Mail		
	1	Yes	57%
	2	No	43%