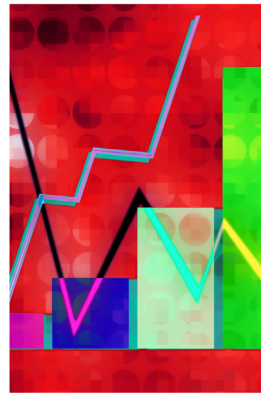




**VOTER OPINION SURVEY**  
SUMMARY REPORT FOR BASELINE STUDY

PREPARED FOR THE  
CITY OF ENCINITAS



DECEMBER 2023



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## INTRODUCTION

Located along six miles of beautiful coastline in northern San Diego County, the City of Encinitas offers a spectacular quality of life to residents and visitors alike, with miles of beaches, plentiful shopping and dining establishments, and a variety of recreation opportunities ranging from golf, to surfing, to arts and cultural events. Currently home to 61,085 residents<sup>1</sup>, the City has a dedicated team of full-time and part-time employees that provide a full suite of services to residents, visitors, and local businesses.

Over the past decade, the City of Encinitas' revenues have not kept pace with the growing costs associated with providing high quality municipal services and facilities. Although the City has been proactive in responding to this challenge by reducing its costs, deferring maintenance projects, cutting back on basic services where feasible, and through effective financial management practices, the practical reality is that existing revenues will not support the quality services that residents have come to expect. The challenge is especially acute when it comes to the City's aging infrastructure. To provide the funding required to fix potholes, maintain streets, make traffic safety improvements, repair/upgrade aging stormdrains, infrastructure, and public safety facilities, reduce water pollution, and keep Encinitas parks, beaches, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained, the City of Encinitas is considering establishing a local revenue measure.

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

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

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

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1. *Source:* California Department of Finance estimate for January 2023.

opposed to (Question 10) the measure, and gauge how this type of information ultimately impacts their voting decision (Questions 9 & 11).

**OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY** For a full discussion of the research methods and techniques used in this study, turn to *Methodology* on page 30. In brief, the survey was administered to a random sample of 1,242 voters in the City of Encinitas who are likely to participate in the November 2024 election. The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (email, text, and telephone) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Administered between December 7 and December 11, 2023, the average interview lasted 16 minutes.

**ORGANIZATION OF REPORT** This report is designed to meet the needs of readers who prefer a summary of the findings as well as those who are interested in the details of the results. For those who seek an overview of the findings, the section titled *Key Findings* is for you. It provides a summary of the most important factual findings of the survey in a Question & Answer format. 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 33), and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** True North thanks the City of Encinitas for the opportunity to assist the City in this important effort. The collective expertise, local knowledge, and insight provided by city staff and representatives improved the overall quality of the research presented here. A special thanks also to Jared Boigon (TeamCivX) for contributing to the design of the study.

**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 Encinitas. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

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

During their careers, Dr. McLarney and Mr. Sarles have designed and conducted over 1,200 survey research studies for public agencies, including more than 400 revenue measure feasibility studies. Of the measures that have gone to ballot based on Dr. McLarney’s recommendation, 95% have been successful. In total, the research that Dr. McLarney has conducted has led to over \$35 billion in voter-approved local revenue measures.



## KEY FINDINGS

As noted in the *Introduction*, this study was designed to provide the City of Encinitas with a statistically reliable understanding of voters' interest in establishing a one-cent sales tax to fund city services. Whereas subsequent sections of this report are devoted to conveying the detailed results of the survey, in this section we attempt to 'see the forest through the trees' and note how the collective results of the survey answer some of the key questions that motivated the research. The following conclusions are based on True North's and TeamCivX'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 sales tax measure on the November 2024 ballot?*

Yes. Encinitas voters have a high opinion of the quality of life in the City, and they value the services they receive from the City of Encinitas. Together, these sentiments translate into solid *natural* support (61%) for establishing a one-cent sales tax to provide funding for city services in Encinitas, such as fixing potholes, maintaining streets, making traffic safety improvements, repairing/upgrading aging stormdrains, infrastructure, and public safety facilities, reducing water pollution, and keeping Encinitas parks, beaches, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained.

The results of this survey indicate that a local sales tax measure is feasible for the November 2024 ballot provided that it focuses on the projects and services that voters identify as their priorities *and* is accompanied by robust community/opinion leader engagement, education, and communication (more on this below).

Having stated that a local sales tax measure appears feasible, it is important to note that the measure's prospects will be shaped by external factors (not within the City's or an independent campaign's control) and that a recommendation to place the measure on the November 2024 ballot comes with several qualifications and conditions. Indeed, although the results are promising, all revenue measures must overcome challenges prior to being successful. The proposed measure is no exception. The following paragraphs discuss some of the challenges and the next steps that True North and TeamCivX recommend.

*Which services do Encinitas voters view as priorities for funding?*

A general tax is "any tax imposed for general governmental purposes"<sup>2</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 municipality with ~~a great deal of~~ flexibility with respect to what is funded by the measure on a year-to-year basis.

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



Although the Encinitas City Council would have the discretion to decide how to spend the sales tax revenues, the survey results indicate that voters are *primarily* interested in using the proceeds to repair aging infrastructure including storm drains, bridges, sidewalks, curbs, and public facilities (88% strongly or somewhat favor), keep parks, beaches, recreation facilities, community centers, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained (88%), keep trash and pollution out of local lagoons, waterways, and off our beaches (86%), fix potholes (85%), and protect local public beaches, including restoring sand and protecting local reefs and marine habitat (85%).

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

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

It is clear from the survey results that some voters' opinions about the proposed measure are somewhat sensitive to the nature—and amount—of information that they have about the measure. Information about the specific services that could be funded by the sales tax, as well as arguments in favor of the measure, were found by many voters to be compelling reasons to support the measure. However, voters also exhibited sensitivity to opposition arguments, and there is a risk that voters could be swayed by divisive and hyper-partisan campaigning during the 2024 election cycle. Accordingly, one of the keys to building and *sustaining* support for a local sales tax measure will be the presence of an effective, well-organized public outreach effort, as well as an independent campaign that focuses on the need for the measure as well as the many benefits that it will bring.

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

A survey is a snapshot in time—which means the results of this study and the conclusions noted above must be viewed in light of the *current* economic and political climates. On the one hand, this should provide some reassurances to the City that a local sales tax measure is feasible. Even with lingering concerns regarding the pandemic, inflation, high gas prices, and the trajectory of the economy, voters strongly supported establishing a local sales tax to fund infrastructure repairs and essential city services.

On the other hand, the months leading up to the November 2024 election are likely to be punctuated with significant events on the economic and political fronts. Exactly how these events unfold and may shape voters' opinions remains to be seen. Should the economy and/or political climate improve, support for the measure could increase. Conversely, negative economic and/or political developments (including devolving

into a hyper-partisan environment), competing measures, and/or skewed voter turnout could dampen support for the measure below what was recorded in this study.

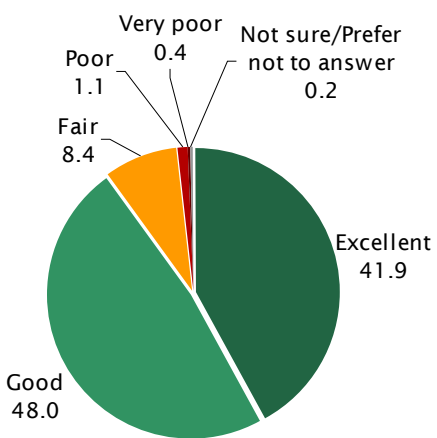
# QUALITY OF LIFE & CITY SERVICES

The opening section of the survey was designed to gauge voters' opinions regarding the quality of life in Encinitas, their ideas for how it can be improved, as well as their assessment of the City's performance in providing municipal services.

**QUALITY OF LIFE** At the outset of the interview, voters were asked to rate the quality of life in the City of Encinitas using a five-point scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor. As shown in Figure 1 below, nine-in-ten voters shared favorable opinions of the quality of life in Encinitas, with 42% reporting it is excellent and 48% stating it is good. Approximately 8% of voters surveyed rated the quality of life in the City as fair, whereas just 2% used poor or very poor to describe the quality of life in Encinitas.

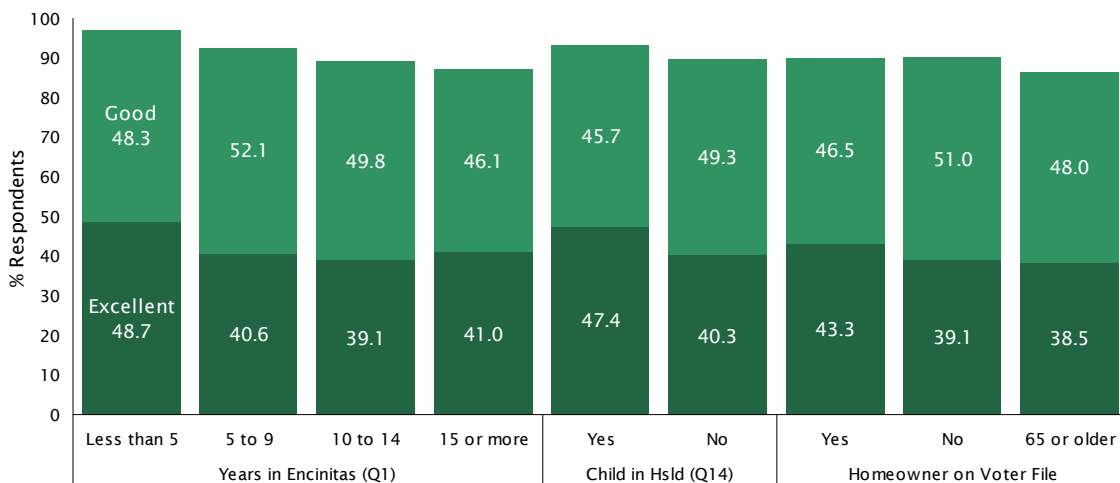
**Question 2** *How would you rate the overall quality of life in Encinitas? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?*

**FIGURE 1 QUALITY OF LIFE**

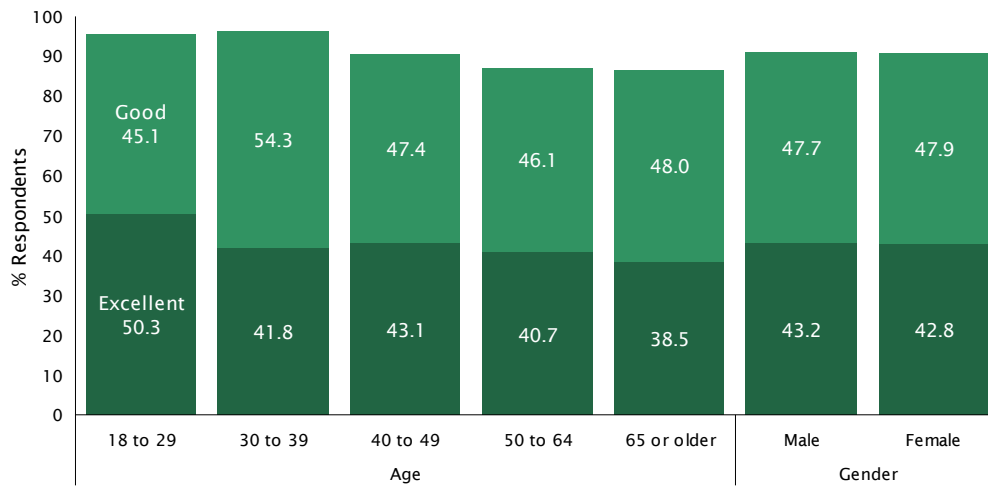


Figures 2 and 3 show how ratings of the quality of life in the City of Encinitas varied by length of residence, presence of a child in the home, home ownership, age, and gender. The most striking pattern in the figures is the *consistency* with which voters provided high ratings for the quality of life in the City, with at least 87% of respondents in *every* subgroup rating the quality of life in Encinitas as excellent or good.

**FIGURE 2 QUALITY OF LIFE BY YEARS IN ENCINITAS, CHILD IN HSLD & HOMEOWNER ON VOTER FILE**



**FIGURE 3 QUALITY OF LIFE BY AGE & GENDER**

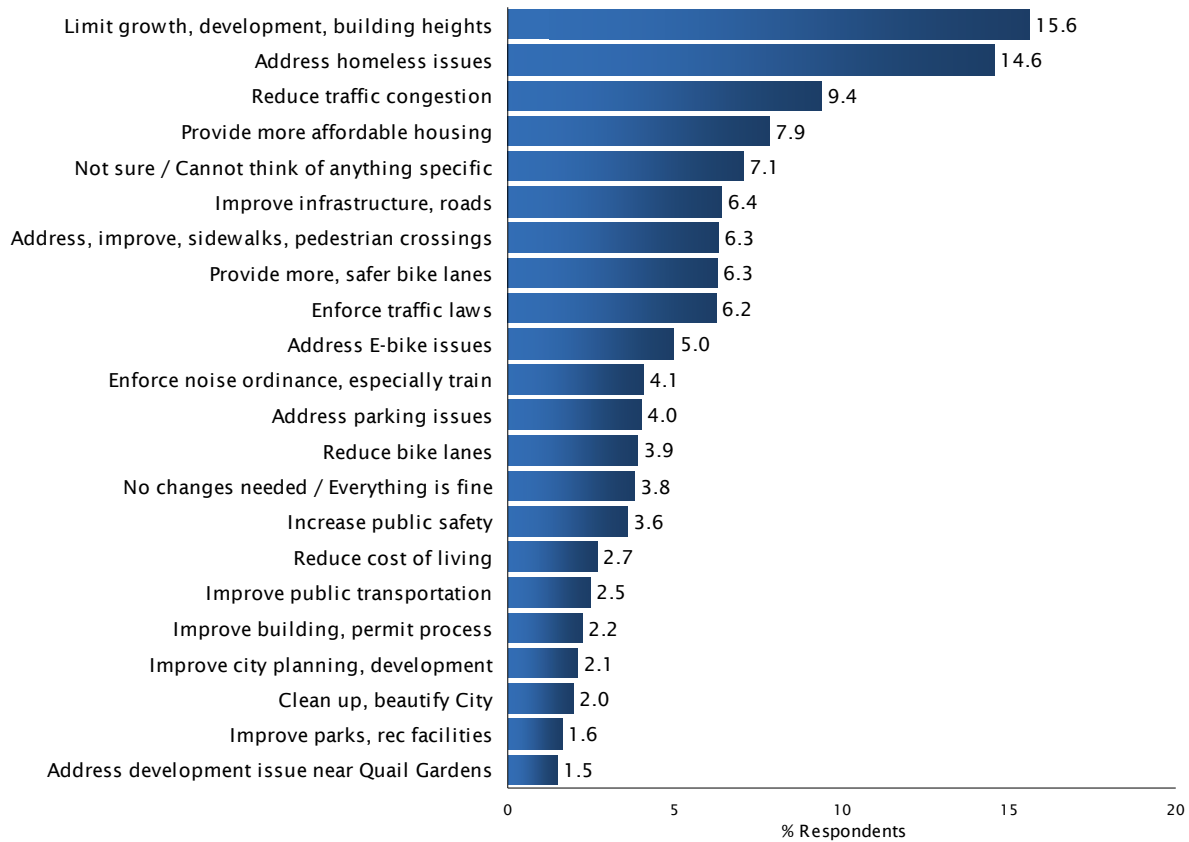


**CHANGES TO IMPROVE ENCINITAS** The next question in this series asked voters to indicate the one thing that city government could *change* to make Encinitas a better place to live, now and in the future. Question 3 was posed in an open-ended manner, allowing residents to mention any aspect or attribute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

Among specific changes desired, limiting growth/development and building heights (16%) and addressing homeless issues (15%) were the most common, followed by reducing traffic congestion (9%) and providing more affordable housing (8%). It is also worth noting that approximately 11% of respondents could not think of a change to Encinitas that they desired (7%) or indicated that no changes are needed/everything is fine as is (4%).

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

**FIGURE 4 CHANGES TO IMPROVE CITY**

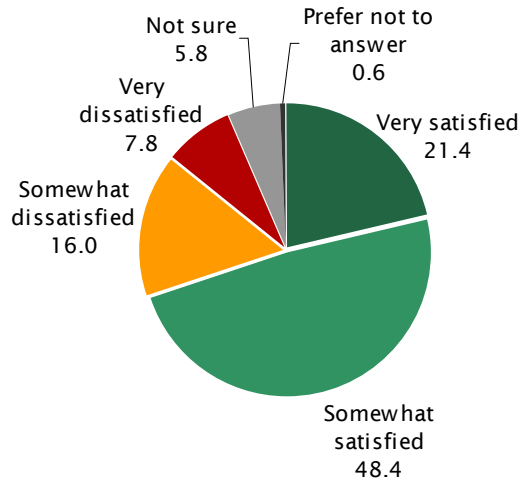


**OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING** The final question in this series asked respondents to indicate if, overall, they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Encinitas is doing to provide city services. Because this question does not reference a specific program, facility, or service and requested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

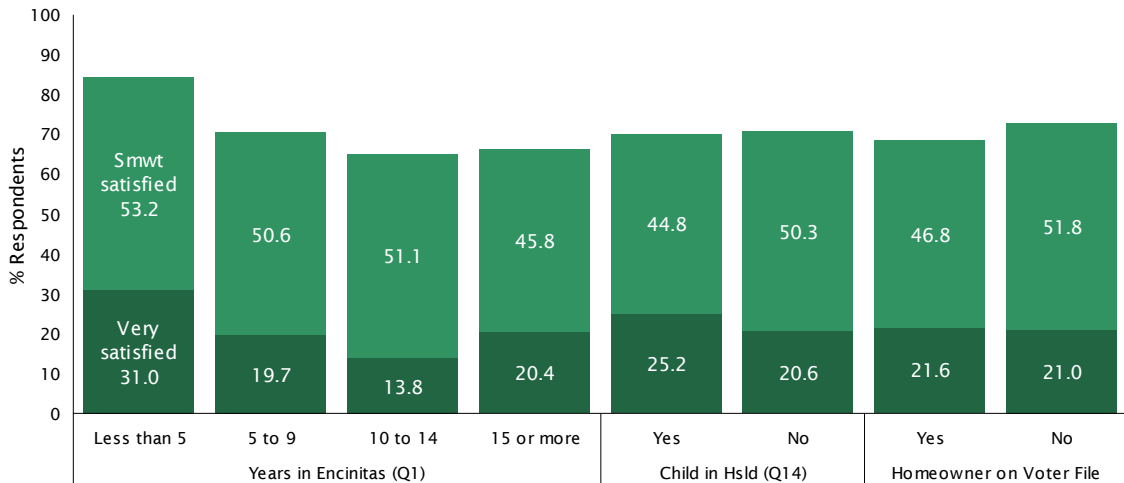
As shown in Figure 5 on the next page, seven-in-ten voters surveyed indicated that they were satisfied with the City of Encinitas’ efforts to provide municipal services, with 21% saying they were very satisfied and 48% somewhat satisfied. Approximately 24% reported that they were dissatisfied with the City’s overall performance, whereas 6% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion. For the interested reader, figures 6 and 7 display how the percentage of respondents satisfied with the City’s overall performance varied across demographic subgroups.

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

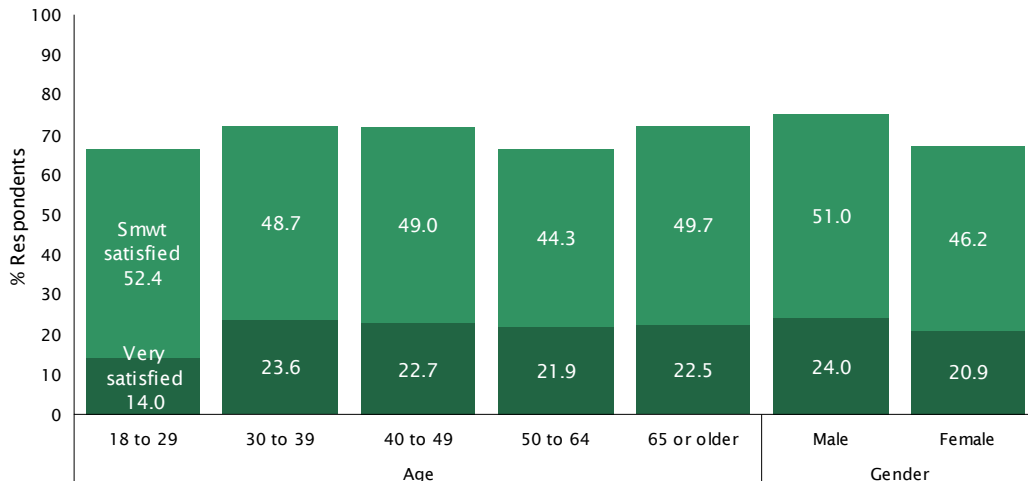
**FIGURE 5 OVERALL SATISFACTION**



**FIGURE 6 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY YEARS IN ENCINITAS, CHILD IN HSLD & HOMEOWNER ON VOTER FILE**



**FIGURE 7 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY AGE & GENDER**



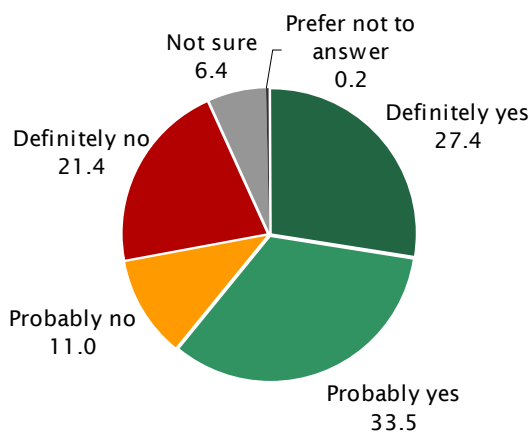
## INITIAL BALLOT TEST

The primary research objective of this survey was to estimate voters' support for establishing a one-cent sales tax to provide funding for city services in Encinitas, such as fixing potholes, maintaining streets, and traffic safety improvements; repairing/upgrading aging stormdrains, infrastructure, and public safety facilities; reducing water pollution; and keeping Encinitas parks, beaches, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained. To this end, Question 5 was designed to take an early assessment of voters' support for the proposed measure.

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

**Question 5** *Next year, voters in Encinitas may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure. To provide funding for city services in Encinitas, such as fixing potholes, maintaining streets, traffic safety improvements; repairing/upgrading aging stormdrains, infrastructure, and public safety facilities; reducing water pollution; and keeping Encinitas parks, beaches, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained; shall City of Encinitas' ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing 17 million dollars annually for general government use for 10 years, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 8 INITIAL BALLOT TEST



As shown in Figure 8, 61% of likely November 2024 voters surveyed indicated that they would support the proposed one-cent sales tax, whereas 32% stated that they would oppose the measure and 7% 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 11 percentage points above the simple majority (50%+1) required for passage.

**SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS** For the interested reader, Table 1 shows how support for the measure at the Initial Ballot Test varied by key demographic traits. The blue column (Approximate % of Universe) indicates the percentage of the likely November 2024 electorate that each subgroup category comprises. Support for the proposed measure was widespread, exceeding a majority in nearly all identified subgroups. When compared to their respective counterparts, support was strongest among newer residents (less than 5 years), respondents who rated the City's fiscal management as excellent or good, voters under 30 years of age, renters, Democrats and dual-Democrat households, respondents likely to vote by mail, lower propensity voters (likely to vote in November but not in March), individuals who registered to vote in Encinitas on or after June 2006, and those satisfied with the City's overall performance.

**TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST**

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100.0	60.9	6.4
Years in Encinitas (Q1)	Less than 5	17.8	77.6	6.7
	5 to 9	15.1	62.9	6.5
	10 to 14	12.9	57.8	9.5
	15 or more	54.2	55.6	5.4
Opinion of Fiscal Management (Q13)	Excellent, good	34.3	81.2	5.0
	Fair	27.0	55.1	5.9
	Poor, very poor	17.2	22.8	6.5
	Not sure	21.5	67.2	9.4
Age	18 to 29	13.5	75.4	3.0
	30 to 39	15.1	67.1	3.3
	40 to 49	16.9	62.0	9.4
	50 to 64	25.2	51.9	9.1
	65 or older	29.3	58.2	5.5
Child in Hsld (Q14)	Yes	31.6	62.9	7.3
	No	68.4	61.5	6.0
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	67.5	59.0	6.8
	No	32.5	64.8	5.6
Household Party Type	Single dem	21.7	73.0	5.8
	Dual dem	13.6	78.0	7.4
	Single rep	9.7	37.3	5.5
	Dual rep	8.4	42.7	7.6
	Other / Mixed	46.6	58.5	6.3
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	80.9	62.7	5.8
	No	19.1	53.1	9.1
Likely Mar 2024 Voter	Yes	76.6	58.8	6.9
	No	23.4	67.7	4.9
Party	Democrat	45.0	73.9	6.3
	Republican	23.8	38.3	7.3
	Other / DTS	31.2	59.4	5.9
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	15.8	70.6	4.2
	Jun '06 to <Nov '18	27.5	66.9	4.8
	Before Jun '06	56.7	55.3	7.8
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	74.6	70.3	6.3
	Dissatisfied	25.4	32.5	6.5
Gender	Male	50.5	64.4	4.6
	Female	49.5	60.7	8.3

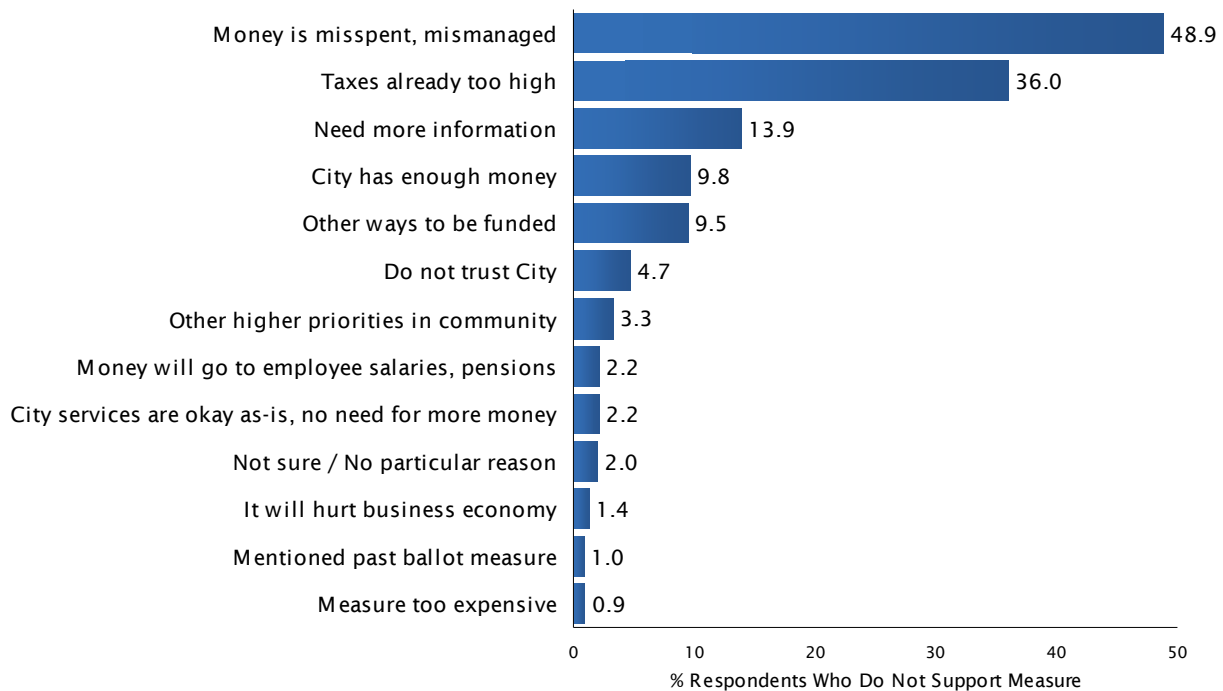


**REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE** Respondents who opposed the measure (or were unsure) at the Initial Ballot Test were subsequently asked if there was a particular reason for their position. Question 6 was asked in an open-ended manner, allowing respondents to mention any reason that came to mind without being prompted by, or restricted to, a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 9.

Among the specific reasons offered for not supporting the measure, the perception that city funds have been/will be mismanaged or misspent (49%) and a belief that taxes are already too high (36%) were the most common, followed by a need for more information (14%), the belief that the City already has enough money (10%), and the opinion that city services could be funded in other ways (10%).

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

**FIGURE 9 REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE**



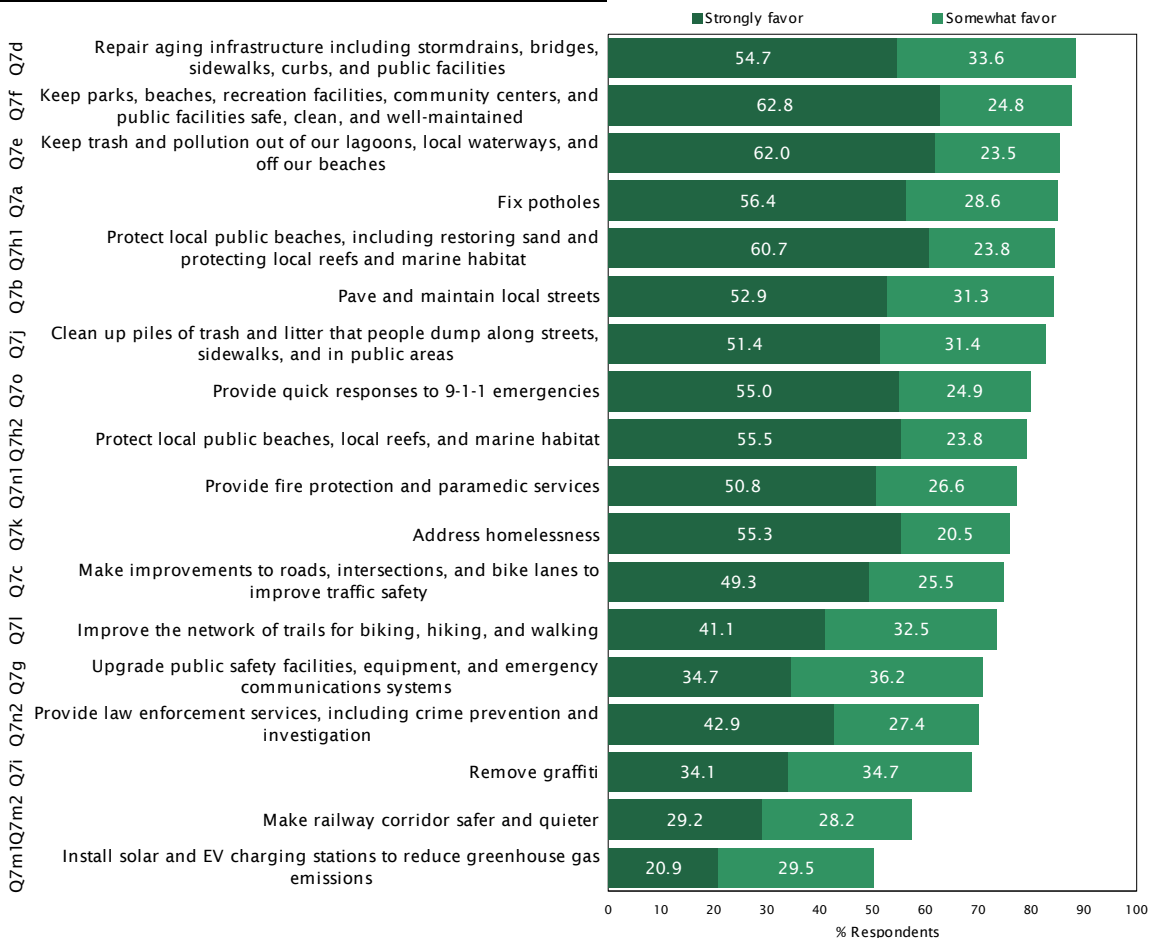
## PROJECTS & SERVICES

The ballot language presented in Question 5 indicated that the proposed measure would provide funding for city services in Encinitas, such as fixing potholes, maintaining streets, and traffic safety improvements; repairing/upgrading aging stormdrains, infrastructure, and public safety facilities; reducing water pollution; and keeping Encinitas parks, beaches, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained. The purpose of Question 7 was to provide respondents with a full range of services that may be funded by the proposed measure, as well as identify which of these services voters most favored funding with the proceeds of the measure.

After reading each service, respondents were asked if they would favor or oppose spending some of the money on that particular item assuming that the measure passed. Descriptions of the services tested, as well as voters' responses, are shown in Figure 10.<sup>3</sup> The order in which the services were presented to respondents was randomized to avoid a systematic position bias.

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

**FIGURE 10 PROJECTS & SERVICES**



3. For the full text of the services tested, turn to Question 7 in *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 33.

Nearly all projects and services tested were popular with Encinitas voters, with at least two-thirds of respondents indicating they would favor spending measure proceeds on 16 of the 18 items tested. That said, the services that resonated with the *largest* percentage of respondents were repairing aging infrastructure including storm drains, bridges, sidewalks, curbs, and public facilities (88% strongly or somewhat favor), keeping parks, beaches, recreation facilities, community centers, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained (88%), keeping trash and pollution out of our lagoons, local waterways, and off our beaches (86%), fixing potholes (85%), and protecting local public beaches, including restoring sand and protecting local reefs and marine habitat (85%).

**SERVICE RATINGS BY INITIAL SUPPORT** Table 2 on the next page presents the top five services (showing the percentage of respondents who *strongly* favor each) by position at the Initial Ballot Test. Not surprisingly, individuals who initially opposed the measure were generally less likely to favor spending money on a given service when compared with supporters. Nevertheless, initial supporters, opponents, and the undecided did agree on one of the top five priorities for funding (keeping parks, beaches, recreation facilities, community centers, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained).

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

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Project or Service Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 756)	Q7e	Keep trash and pollution out of our lagoons, local waterways, and off our beaches	78
	Q7f	Keep parks, beaches, recreation facilities, community centers, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	76
	Q7h2	Protect local public beaches, local reefs, and marine habitat	74
	Q7h1	Protect local public beaches, including restoring sand and protecting local reefs and marine habitat	73
	Q7d	Repair aging infrastructure including stormdrains, bridges, sidewalks, curbs, and public facilities	66
Probably or Definitely No (n = 403)	Q7a	Fix potholes	43
	Q7n2	Provide law enforcement services, including crime prevention and investigation	42
	Q7o	Provide quick responses to 9-1-1 emergencies	41
	Q7k	Address homelessness	39
	Q7f	Keep parks, beaches, recreation facilities, community centers, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	39
Not Sure (n = 79)	Q7a	Fix potholes	62
	Q7f	Keep parks, beaches, recreation facilities, community centers, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	61
	Q7o	Provide quick responses to 9-1-1 emergencies	60
	Q7b	Pave and maintain local streets	56
	Q7h1	Protect local public beaches, including restoring sand and protecting local reefs and marine habitat	55

## POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

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

The objective of Question 8 was thus to present respondents with arguments in favor of the proposed measure and identify whether they felt the arguments were convincing reasons to support it. Arguments in opposition to the measure were also presented and are discussed later in this report (see *Negative Arguments* on page 21). Within each series, specific arguments were administered in random order to avoid a systematic position bias.

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

**FIGURE 11 POSITIVE ARGUMENTS**



Figure 11 presents the truncated positive arguments tested, as well as voters' reactions to the arguments. The arguments are ranked from most convincing to least convincing based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the argument was either a 'very convincing' or 'somewhat convincing' reason to support the sales tax measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive arguments were: *The City's storm drainpipes were installed more than 50 years ago and are starting to fail, creating sink holes and flooding that damage streets and private properties. This measure provides the funding needed to fix our storm drains (72% very or somewhat convincing), The City maintains 172 miles of streets, 66 miles of storm drains, and 152 acres at 20 city parks. This measure will provide the funding we need to keep our streets, infrastructure, and parks in good condition. If we don't take care of it now, it will be a lot more expensive to repair in the future (70%), and Every year, thousands of pounds of trash from our streets washes up on local beaches and in our lagoons. This measure will help prevent and clean up trash and pollution before it ends up in our water, lagoons, and along our beaches (64%).*

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

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

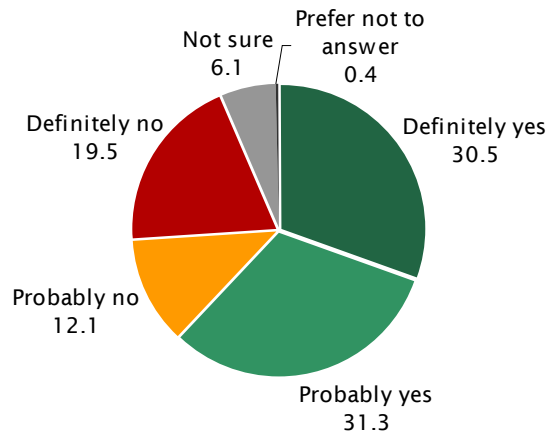
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 756)	Q8a	Every dime will be reinvested into community to fund essential services, facilities here in Encinitas; by law, money can't be taken away by State	54
	Q8j	City's storm drainpipes installed 50+ yrs ago, starting to fail, creating sink holes, flooding that damages streets, private properties; measure provides funding to fix storm drains	52
	Q8e	City maintains 172 mi of streets, 66 mi of storm drains, 152 acres at 20 parks; measure will keep streets, infrastructure, parks in good condition; if we don't take care of it now, more expensive to repair in future	51
	Q8i	Every year, thousands of pounds of trash from streets washes up on beaches, lagoons; measure will help prevent, clean up trash, pollution before it ends up in water, lagoons, beaches	51
	Q8f	Most of sales tax generated locally goes to State, County, SANDAG; measure ensures higher percentage of sales tax stays in Encinitas, we have local control over how funds are spent	48
Probably or Definitely No (n = 403)	Q8j	City's storm drainpipes installed 50+ yrs ago, starting to fail, creating sink holes, flooding that damages streets, private properties; measure provides funding to fix storm drains	11
	Q8d	Substantial amount of sales tax money will come from people who visit Encinitas, but don't live here; measure will make sure they pay their fair share for facilities, services they use in city	11
	Q8a	Every dime will be reinvested into community to fund essential services, facilities here in Encinitas; by law, money can't be taken away by State	10
	Q8b	Measure includes a clear system of accountability including citizen oversight, independent audits, public disclosure of how all funds are spent	10
	Q8i	Every year, thousands of pounds of trash from streets washes up on beaches, lagoons; measure will help prevent, clean up trash, pollution before it ends up in water, lagoons, beaches	9
Not Sure (n = 79)	Q8j	City's storm drainpipes installed 50+ yrs ago, starting to fail, creating sink holes, flooding that damages streets, private properties; measure provides funding to fix storm drains	31
	Q8f	Most of sales tax generated locally goes to State, County, SANDAG; measure ensures higher percentage of sales tax stays in Encinitas, we have local control over how funds are spent	30
	Q8a	Every dime will be reinvested into community to fund essential services, facilities here in Encinitas; by law, money can't be taken away by State	29
	Q8d	Substantial amount of sales tax money will come from people who visit Encinitas, but don't live here; measure will make sure they pay their fair share for facilities, services they use in city	28
	Q8b	Measure includes a clear system of accountability including citizen oversight, independent audits, public disclosure of how all funds are spent	24

## INTERIM BALLOT TEST

After exposing respondents to services that could be funded by the measure as well as the types of positive arguments voters may encounter during an election cycle, the survey again presented respondents with the ballot language used previously to gauge how support for the proposed sales tax measure may have changed. As shown in Figure 12, overall support among likely November 2024 voters ticked up to 62%, with 31% of voters indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes on the measure. Approximately 32% of respondents opposed the measure at this point in the survey, and an additional 7% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

**Question 9** *Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again. To provide funding for city services in Encinitas, such as fixing potholes, maintaining streets, traffic safety improvements; repairing/upgrading aging stormdrains, infrastructure, and public safety facilities; reducing water pollution; and keeping Encinitas parks, beaches, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained; shall City of Encinitas' ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing 17 million dollars annually for general government use for 10 years, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 12 INTERIM BALLOT TEST



**SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS** Table 4 on the next page shows how support for the measure at this point in the survey varied by key voter subgroups, as well as the change in subgroup support when compared with the Initial Ballot Test. Positive differences appear in green, whereas negative differences appear in red. As shown in the table, support for the sales tax measure increased or decreased by minimal amounts (2 percentage points or less) between the Initial and Interim Ballot Test for all voter subgroups.



TABLE 4 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST

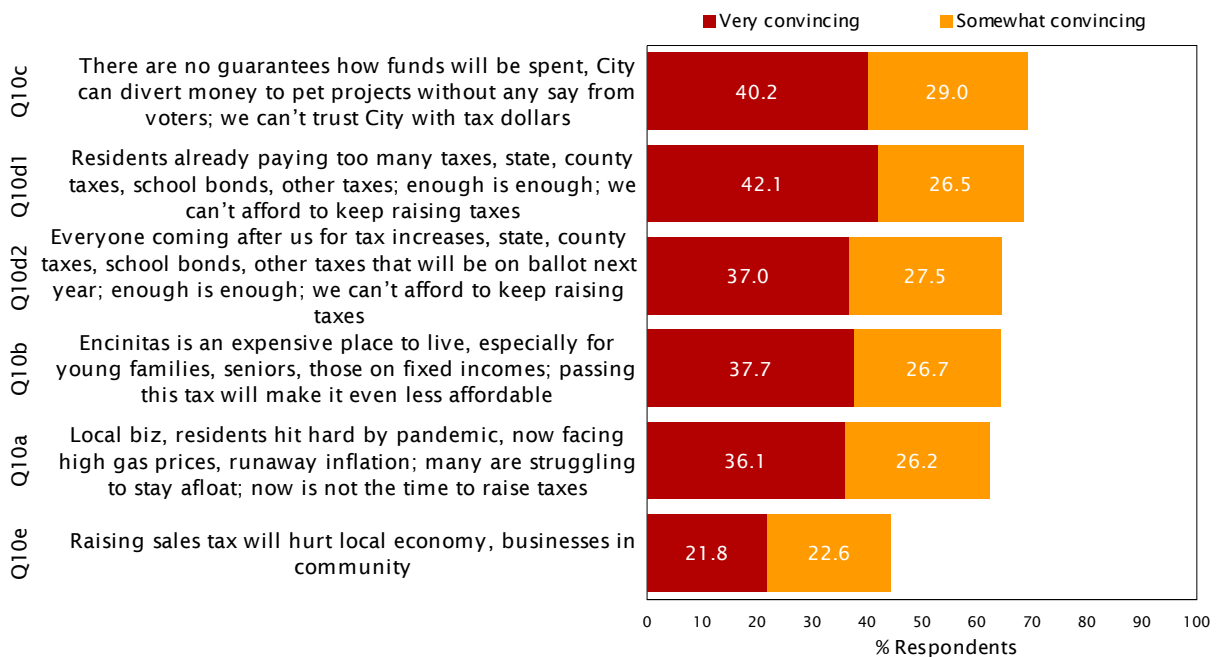
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q5)
Overall		100.0	61.8	+0.9
Years in Encinitas (Q1)	Less than 5	17.8	76.8	-0.8
	5 to 9	15.1	61.8	-1.1
	10 to 14	12.9	58.2	+0.3
	15 or more	54.2	57.8	+2.2
Opinion of Fiscal Management (Q13)	Excellent, good	34.3	82.8	+1.5
	Fair	27.0	55.7	+0.6
	Poor, very poor	17.2	22.4	-0.5
	Not sure	21.5	68.7	+1.5
Age	18 to 29	13.5	74.2	-1.2
	30 to 39	15.1	67.3	+0.2
	40 to 49	16.9	63.7	+1.7
	50 to 64	25.2	53.3	+1.4
	65 or older	29.3	59.6	+1.4
Child in Hsld (Q14)	Yes	31.6	64.4	+1.5
	No	68.4	62.3	+0.7
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	67.5	59.6	+0.6
	No	32.5	66.5	+1.6
Household Party Type	Single dem	21.7	74.8	+1.8
	Dual dem	13.6	78.2	+0.2
	Single rep	9.7	38.2	+0.9
	Dual rep	8.4	43.0	+0.3
	Other / Mixed	46.6	59.3	+0.8
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	80.9	64.2	+1.5
	No	19.1	51.6	-1.5
Likely Mar 2024 Voter	Yes	76.6	60.7	+1.9
	No	23.4	65.4	-2.3
Party	Democrat	45.0	74.8	+0.9
	Republican	23.8	39.5	+1.2
	Other / DTS	31.2	60.1	+0.7
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	15.8	70.1	-0.4
	Jun '06 to <Nov '18	27.5	67.2	+0.3
	Before Jun '06	56.7	56.9	+1.6
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	74.6	71.5	+1.2
	Dissatisfied	25.4	32.5	+0.0
Gender	Male	50.5	64.4	-0.0
	Female	49.5	63.0	+2.3

## NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

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

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

FIGURE 13 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS



The most compelling negative arguments were: *There are no guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means the City can divert the money to pet projects without any say from voters. We can't trust the City with our tax dollars* (69% very or somewhat convincing) and *Residents are already paying too many taxes - including state and county taxes, school bonds, and other taxes. Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes* (69%).

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

**TABLE 5 TOP NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST**

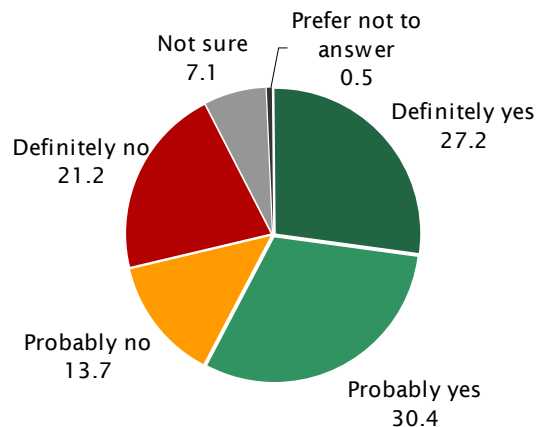
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 756)	Q10c	There are no guarantees how funds will be spent, City can divert money to pet projects without any say from voters; we can't trust City with tax dollars	23
	Q10b	Encinitas is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing this tax will make it even less affordable	22
	Q10d1	Residents already paying too many taxes, state, county taxes, school bonds, other taxes; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	22
	Q10a	Local biz, residents hit hard by pandemic, now facing high gas prices, runaway inflation; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	20
	Q10d2	Everyone coming after us for tax increases, state, county taxes, school bonds, other taxes that will be on ballot next year; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	17
Probably or Definitely No (n = 403)	Q10d1	Residents already paying too many taxes, state, county taxes, school bonds, other taxes; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	80
	Q10d2	Everyone coming after us for tax increases, state, county taxes, school bonds, other taxes that will be on ballot next year; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	69
	Q10c	There are no guarantees how funds will be spent, City can divert money to pet projects without any say from voters; we can't trust City with tax dollars	68
	Q10a	Local biz, residents hit hard by pandemic, now facing high gas prices, runaway inflation; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	65
	Q10b	Encinitas is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing this tax will make it even less affordable	65
Not Sure (n = 79)	Q10d1	Residents already paying too many taxes, state, county taxes, school bonds, other taxes; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	59
	Q10c	There are no guarantees how funds will be spent, City can divert money to pet projects without any say from voters; we can't trust City with tax dollars	56
	Q10b	Encinitas is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing this tax will make it even less affordable	46
	Q10d2	Everyone coming after us for tax increases, state, county taxes, school bonds, other taxes that will be on ballot next year; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	45
	Q10a	Local biz, residents hit hard by pandemic, now facing high gas prices, runaway inflation; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	40

## FINAL BALLOT TEST

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

**Question 11** *Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. To provide funding for city services in Encinitas, such as fixing potholes, maintaining streets, traffic safety improvements; repairing/upgrading aging stormdrains, infrastructure, and public safety facilities; reducing water pollution; and keeping Encinitas parks, beaches, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained; shall City of Encinitas' ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing 17 million dollars annually for general government use for 10 years, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 14 FINAL BALLOT TEST



At this point in the survey, support for the one-cent sales tax measure was found among 58% of likely November 2024 voters, with 27% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 35% of respondents were opposed to the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 8% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.



## CHANGE IN SUPPORT

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

**TABLE 6 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT FINAL BALLOT TEST**

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q5)	Change From Interim Ballot Test (Q9)
Overall		100.0	57.6	-3.4	-4.3
Years in Encinitas (Q1)	Less than 5	17.8	72.9	-4.6	-3.8
	5 to 9	15.1	53.2	-9.7	-8.7
	10 to 14	12.9	55.9	-1.9	-2.3
	15 or more	54.2	54.1	-1.5	-3.7
Opinion of Fiscal Management (Q13)	Excellent, good	34.3	78.6	-2.6	-4.2
	Fair	27.0	51.8	-3.4	-3.9
	Poor, very poor	17.2	16.3	-6.5	-6.0
	Not sure	21.5	65.1	-2.1	-3.5
Age	18 to 29	13.5	64.0	-11.3	-10.2
	30 to 39	15.1	58.8	-8.3	-8.5
	40 to 49	16.9	56.4	-5.6	-7.3
	50 to 64	25.2	53.5	+1.6	+0.2
	65 or older	29.3	58.1	-0.1	-1.4
Child in Hsld (Q14)	Yes	31.6	56.4	-6.5	-8.0
	No	68.4	59.5	-2.1	-2.8
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	67.5	56.2	-2.8	-3.4
	No	32.5	60.3	-4.5	-6.2
Household Party Type	Single dem	21.7	71.9	-1.1	-2.9
	Dual dem	13.6	76.7	-1.3	-1.6
	Single rep	9.7	30.8	-6.4	-7.4
	Dual rep	8.4	38.4	-4.3	-4.6
	Other / Mixed	46.6	54.3	-4.2	-5.0
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	80.9	59.5	-3.2	-4.7
	No	19.1	49.2	-3.9	-2.4
Likely Mar 2024 Voter	Yes	76.6	57.7	-1.2	-3.1
	No	23.4	57.2	-10.4	-8.2
Party	Democrat	45.0	72.0	-1.9	-2.8
	Republican	23.8	34.4	-3.9	-5.1
	Other / DTS	31.2	54.3	-5.1	-5.8
Registration Year	Since Nov '18	15.8	63.9	-6.7	-6.2
	Jun '06 to <Nov '18	27.5	59.6	-7.3	-7.6
	Before Jun '06	56.7	54.8	-0.5	-2.1
Overall Satisfaction (Q4)	Satisfied	74.6	66.5	-3.8	-5.0
	Dissatisfied	25.4	29.2	-3.3	-3.4
Gender	Male	50.5	62.0	-2.4	-2.3
	Female	49.5	56.7	-4.0	-6.3

As expected, voters generally responded to the negative arguments with a reduction in their support for the sales tax measure when compared with the levels recorded at the Interim Ballot Test. The general trend over the course of the entire survey (Initial to Final Ballot Test) was also one of declining support for most voter subgroups, averaging -3% overall. Even with this trend, however, support for the proposed sales tax measure at the Final Ballot Test (58%) remained 8% *above* the simple majority (50%+1) required for passage.

Whereas Table 6 displays changes in support for the measure over the course of the interview at the subgroup level, Table 7 displays the individual-level changes that occurred between the Initial and Final Ballot tests for the measure. On the left side of the table is shown each of the response options to the Initial Ballot Test and the percentage of respondents in each group. The cells in the body of the table depict movement within each response group (row) based on the information provided throughout the course of the survey as recorded by the Final Ballot Test. For example, in the first row we see that of the 27.4% of respondents who indicated that they would definitely support the measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 21.0% also indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. Approximately 5.3% moved to the probably support group, 0.1% moved to the probably oppose group, 0.2% moved to the definitely oppose group, and 0.8% stated they were now unsure of their vote choice.

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

**TABLE 7 MOVEMENT BETWEEN INITIAL & FINAL BALLOT TEST**

Initial Ballot Test (Q5)		Final Ballot Test (Q11)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	27.4%	21.0%	5.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.8%
Probably support	33.5%	6.1%	21.6%	2.8%	0.2%	2.8%
Probably oppose	11.0%	0.1%	1.9%	6.4%	2.0%	0.7%
Definitely oppose	21.4%	0.0%	0.2%	2.5%	18.3%	0.4%
Not sure	6.6%	0.0%	1.4%	1.8%	0.5%	2.9%

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 14% of respondents making a *fundamental*<sup>4</sup> 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 (58%) was just three percentage points different than support at the Initial Ballot Test (61%).

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

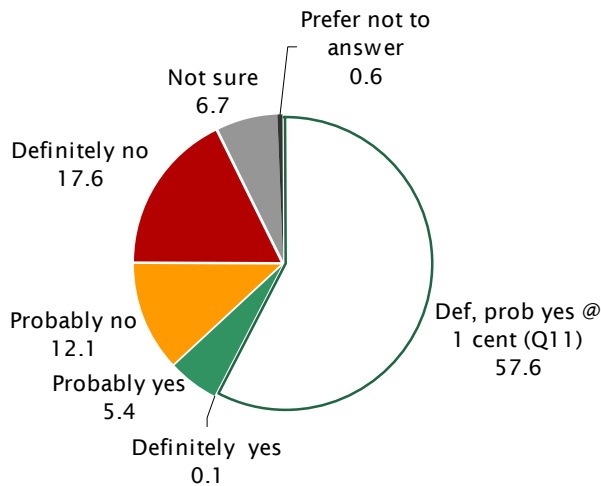
## FINAL BALLOT TEST AT LOWER RATE

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

As shown in Figure 15, lowering the tax rate to one-half cent generated a modest amount of additional support for the proposed measure. An additional 6% of voters indicated they would support the measure if the tax rate were lowered to one-half cent, although nearly all of the additional support for the measure was ‘soft’ (probably yes).

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

**FIGURE 15 FINAL BALLOT TEST @ ONE-HALF CENT**

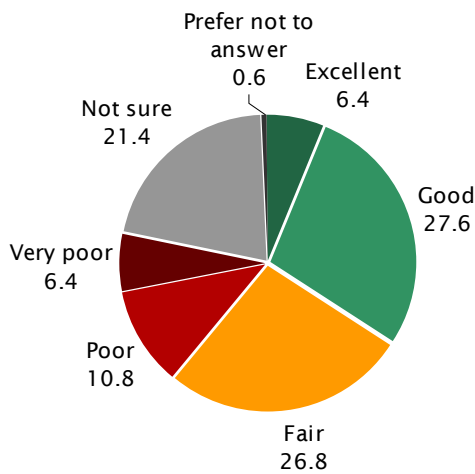


## FISCAL MANAGEMENT

The final substantive question of the survey asked respondents to rate the job the City of Encinitas has done in managing its financial resources. Six-in-ten (61% of) voters gave the City positive or neutral marks, with 6% rating the City’s performance as excellent, 28% good, and 27% fair. Approximately 17% of respondents rated the job the City has done in managing its finances as poor or very poor, while 22% confided they were not sure or preferred to not answer the question.

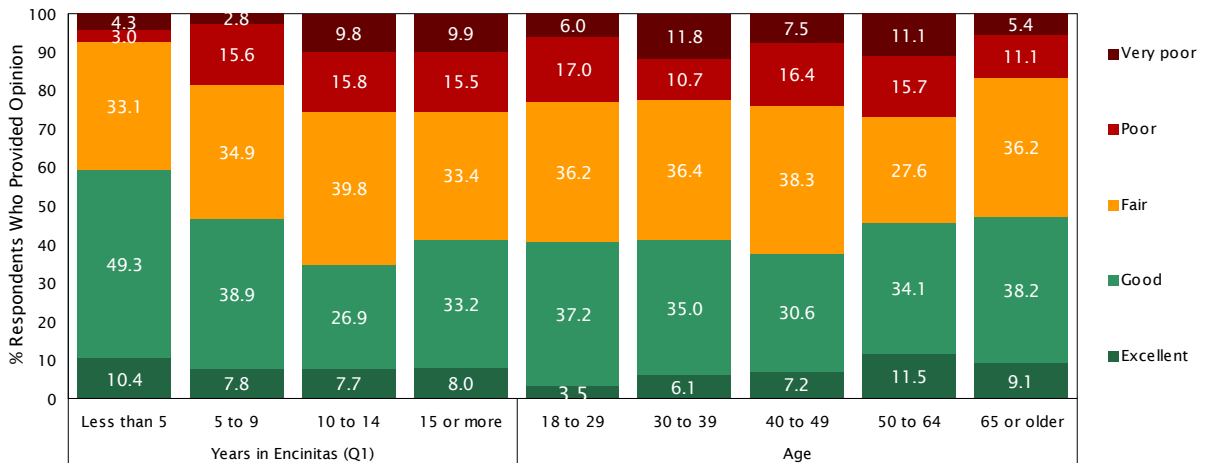
**Question 13** *In your opinion, has the City of Encinitas done an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of managing its financial resources?*

**FIGURE 16 OPINION OF FISCAL MANAGEMENT**



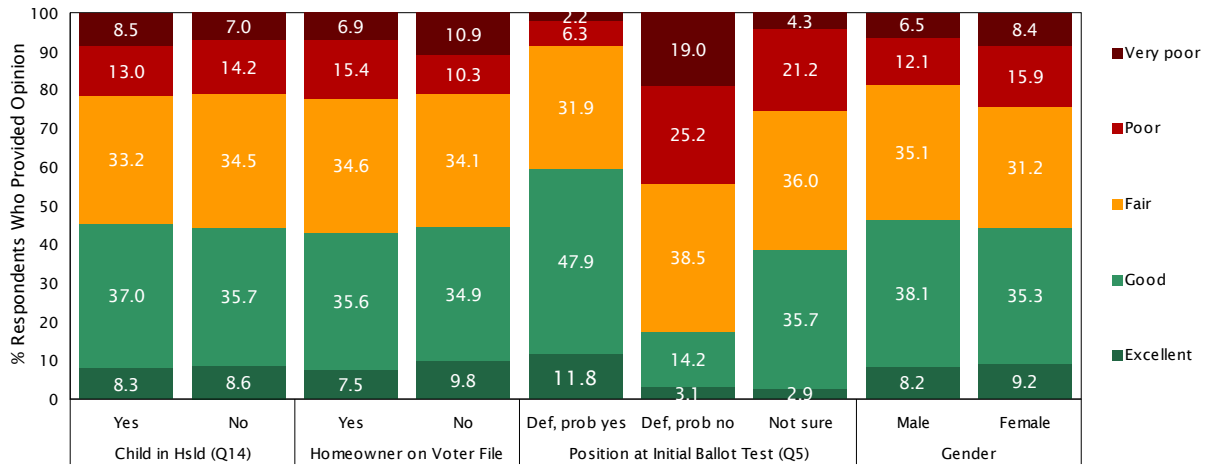
For the interested reader, figures 17 and 18 show how ratings of the City’s performance in managing its finances varied across key voter subgroups (among those with an opinion). It is worth noting the positive relationship between having a high opinion of the City’s performance in managing its financial resources and support for the proposed measure at the Initial Ballot Test.

**FIGURE 17 OPINION OF FISCAL MANAGEMENT BY YEARS IN ENCINITAS & AGE**





**FIGURE 18 OPINION OF FISCAL MANAGEMENT BY CHILD IN HSLD, HOMEOWNER ON VOTER FILE, POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST & GENDER**





# BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS

**TABLE 8 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE**

<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,242
<b>Years in Encinitas (Q1)</b>	
Less than 5	17.8
5 to 9	15.1
10 to 14	12.9
15 or more	54.0
Prefer not to answer	0.3
<b>Child in Hsld (Q14)</b>	
Yes	30.5
No	66.0
Prefer not to answer	3.5
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	47.2
Female	46.3
Non-binary	1.3
Prefer not to answer	5.2
<b>Party</b>	
Democrat	45.0
Republican	23.8
Other / DTS	31.2
<b>Age</b>	
18 to 29	13.5
30 to 39	15.1
40 to 49	16.9
50 to 64	25.2
65 or older	29.3
<b>Registration Year</b>	
Since Nov '18	15.8
Jun '06 to <Nov '18	27.5
Before Jun '06	56.7
<b>Household Party Type</b>	
Single dem	21.7
Dual dem	13.6
Single rep	9.7
Dual rep	8.4
Other / Mixed	46.6
<b>Homeowner on Voter File</b>	
Yes	67.5
No	32.5
<b>Likely to Vote by Mail</b>	
Yes	80.9
No	19.1
<b>Likely Mar 2024 Voter</b>	
Yes	76.6
No	23.4

In addition to questions directly related to the proposed measure, the study collected basic demographic information about respondents and their households. Some of this information was gathered during the interview, although much of it was collected from the voter file. The profile of the likely November 2024 voter sample represented in this report 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 Encinitas 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 for each respondent.

Some questions asked in this study were presented only to a subset of respondents. For example, only individuals who did not support the measure (or were unsure) at the Initial Ballot Test (Question 5) were asked the follow-up, open-ended Question 6 regarding their reasons for not supporting the measure. In some cases, two versions of a project or argument were tested to identify how wording differences impact perception of the item. In such cases, half the sample received the item with version 1 wording (e.g., Question 7, item H1) and the other half received version 2 (e.g., Question 7, item H2). The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 33) identifies the skip patterns that were used during the interview to ensure that each respondent received the appropriate questions.

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

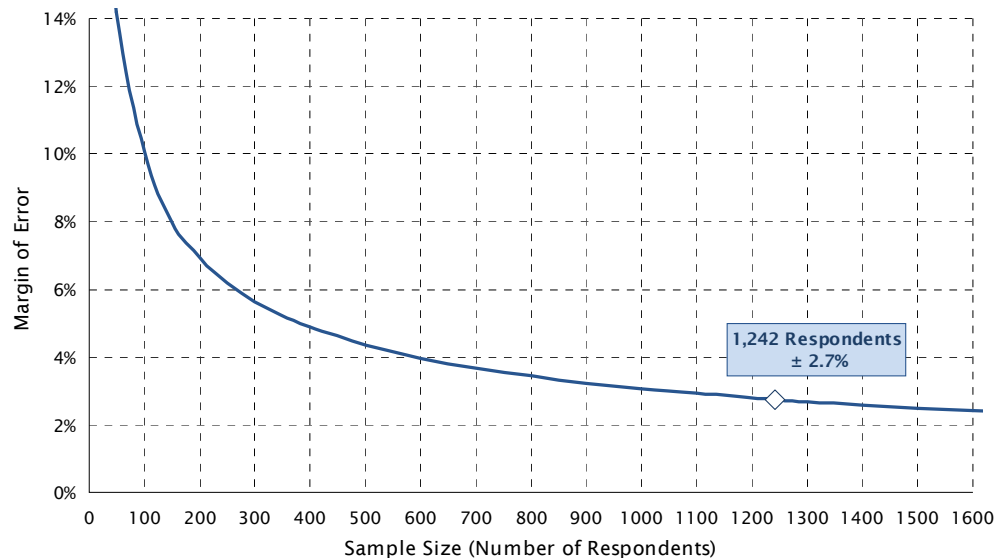
**SAMPLE** The survey was administered to a stratified and clustered random sample of registered voters in the City who are likely to participate in the November 2024 general election, with a subset of voters who are also likely to participate in the lower turnout March 2024 primary election. Consistent with the profile of this universe, the sample was stratified into clusters, each representing a combination of age, gender, and household party type. Individuals were then randomly selected based on their profile into an appropriate cluster. This method ensures that if a person of a particular profile refuses to participate, 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 2024 general election. The results of the survey can thus be used to estimate the opinions of *all* voters likely to participate in said election. Because not all voters participated in the study, however, the results have what is known as a statistical margin of error due to sampling. The margin of error refers to the difference between what was found in the survey of 1,242 voters for a particular question and what would have been

found if all of the estimated 41,833 likely November 2024 voters identified in the City had been surveyed for the study.

Figure 19 provides a graphic plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative response. For this survey, the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 2.7\%$ .

**FIGURE 19 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 19 is thus useful for understanding how the maximum margin of error for a percentage estimate will grow as the number of individuals asked a question (or in a particular subgroup) shrinks. Because the margin of error grows exponentially as the sample size decreases, the reader should use caution when generalizing and interpreting the results for small subgroups.

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

Voters recruited via email and text were assigned a unique passcode to ensure that only voters who received an invitation could access the online survey site, and that each voter could complete the survey one time only. During the data collection period, an email reminder notice was also sent to encourage participation among those who had yet to take the survey. A total of 1,242 surveys were completed between December 7 and December 11, 2023.

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

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

# QUESTIONNAIRE & TOPLINES



City of Encinitas  
 Baseline Sales Tax Feasibility Survey  
 Final Toplines (n=1,242)  
 December 2023

## 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 Encinitas (EN-suh-NEE-tuss) 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.

## Section 2: Quality of Life & City Services

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

Q1	How long have you lived in Encinitas?		
	1	Less than 1 year	3%
	2	1 to 4 years	15%
	3	5 to 9 years	15%
	4	10 to 14 years	13%
	5	15 years or longer	54%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%
Q2	How would you rate the overall quality of life in Encinitas? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?		
	1	Excellent	42%
	2	Good	48%
	3	Fair	8%
	4	Poor	1%
	5	Very poor	0%
	98	Not sure	0%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Q3	If the city government could change one thing to make Encinitas a better place to live now and in the future, what change would you like to see? Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.	
	Limit growth, development, building heights	16%
	Address homeless issues	15%
	Reduce traffic congestion	9%
	Provide more affordable housing	8%
	Not sure / Cannot think of anything specific	7%
	Enforce traffic laws	6%
	Improve infrastructure, roads	6%
	Add, improve, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings	6%
	Provide more, safer bike lanes	6%
	Address E-bike issues	5%
	Increase public safety	4%
	Address parking issues	4%
	Reduce bike lanes	4%
	Enforce noise ordinance, especially from trains	4%
	No changes needed / Everything is fine	4%
	Reduce cost of living	3%
	Improve parks, rec facilities	2%
	Improve public transportation	2%
	Clean up, beautify City	2%
	Improve city planning, development	2%
	Address development issue near Quail Gardens	2%
	Improve building, permit process	2%
Q4	Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Encinitas 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	21%
	2 Somewhat satisfied	48%
	3 Somewhat dissatisfied	16%
	4 Very dissatisfied	8%
	98 Not sure	6%
	99 Prefer not to answer	1%

**Section 3: Initial Ballot Test**

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

Q5	To provide funding for city services in Encinitas, such as:			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Fixing potholes, maintaining streets, traffic safety improvements</li> <li>o Repairing/upgrading aging stormdrains, infrastructure, and public safety facilities</li> <li>o Reducing water pollution</li> <li>o And keeping Encinitas parks, beaches, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained</li> </ul>			
	Shall City of Encinitas' ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing 17 million dollars annually for general government use for 10 years, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money locally controlled?			
	If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i>			
	1	Definitely yes	27%	Skip to Q7
	2	Probably yes	34%	Skip to Q7
	3	Probably no	11%	Ask Q6
4	Definitely no	21%	Ask Q6	
98	Not sure	6%	Ask Q6	
99	Prefer not to answer	0%	Skip to Q7	
Q6	Is there a particular reason why you do <u>not</u> support or are unsure about the measure I just described? <i>If yes, ask: Please briefly describe your reason. Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.</i>			
	Money is misspent, mismanaged		49%	
	Taxes already too high		36%	
	Need more information		14%	
	City has enough money		10%	
	Other ways to be funded		10%	
	Do not trust City		5%	
	Other higher priorities in community		3%	
	City services are okay as-is, no need for more money		2%	
	Money will go to employee salaries, pensions		2%	
	Not sure / No particular reason		2%	
	Mentioned past ballot measure		1%	
	Measure too expensive		1%	
	It will hurt business economy		1%	



<b>Section 4: Projects &amp; Services</b>							
Q7	The measure we've been discussing will provide funding for a variety of services in your community.						
	If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? <i>Get answer, if favor or oppose, then ask: Would that be strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?</i>						
	<i>Randomize. Split Sample H1/H2, M1/M2, N1/N2</i>	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Fix potholes	56%	29%	4%	4%	3%	3%
B	Pave and maintain local streets	53%	31%	6%	4%	3%	3%
C	Make improvements to roads, intersections, and bike lanes to improve traffic safety	49%	25%	10%	9%	4%	3%
D	Repair aging infrastructure including stormdrains, bridges, sidewalks, curbs, and public facilities	55%	34%	4%	3%	2%	3%
E	Keep trash and pollution out of our lagoons, local waterways, and off our beaches	62%	24%	4%	4%	4%	3%
F	Keep parks, beaches, recreation facilities, community centers, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained	63%	25%	3%	4%	3%	3%
G	Upgrade public safety facilities, equipment, and emergency communications systems	35%	36%	12%	6%	8%	3%
H1	Protect local public beaches, including restoring sand and protecting local reefs and marine habitat	61%	24%	4%	5%	4%	3%
H2	Protect local public beaches, local reefs, and marine habitat	56%	24%	7%	6%	6%	3%
I	Remove graffiti	34%	35%	12%	8%	8%	3%
J	Clean up piles of trash and litter that people dump along streets, sidewalks, and in public areas	51%	31%	5%	5%	4%	3%
K	Address homelessness	55%	21%	6%	8%	6%	4%
L	Improve the network of trails for biking, hiking, and walking	41%	32%	9%	10%	5%	3%
M1	Install solar and EV charging stations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	21%	29%	17%	23%	7%	3%
M2	Make railway corridor safer and quieter	29%	28%	17%	12%	11%	3%
N1	Provide fire protection and paramedic services	51%	27%	8%	6%	6%	3%
N2	Provide law enforcement services, including crime prevention and investigation	43%	27%	10%	10%	7%	3%
O	Provide quick responses to 9-1-1 emergencies	55%	25%	7%	4%	6%	3%

Section 5: Positive Arguments							
What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people are saying about the measure we've been discussing.							
Q8	Supporters of the measure say: ----- Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to <b>SUPPORT</b> the measure?						
	<i>Randomize</i>	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Not at all convincing	Don't believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Every dime raised by the measure will be reinvested back into the community to fund essential services and facilities here in Encinitas. By law, the money can't be taken away by the State.	38%	25%	14%	15%	5%	4%
B	The measure includes a clear system of accountability including citizen oversight, independent audits, and public disclosure of how all funds are spent.	28%	30%	16%	16%	5%	4%
C	By keeping our city safe, clean, and well-maintained, this measure will help protect our quality of life and keep Encinitas a special place to live.	28%	34%	21%	10%	4%	4%
D	A substantial amount of the money raised by the sales tax will come from people who <i>visit</i> Encinitas, but don't live here. This measure will make sure they pay their fair share for the facilities and services they use while in our city.	34%	24%	19%	16%	3%	4%
E	The City maintains 172 miles of streets, 66 miles of storm drains, and 152 acres at 20 city parks. This measure will provide the funding we need to keep our streets, infrastructure, and parks in good condition. If we don't take care of it now, it will be a lot more expensive to repair in the future.	35%	34%	16%	7%	3%	4%
F	Most of the sales tax generated locally goes to the State of California, the County, or SANDAG. This measure ensures that a higher percentage of our sales tax dollars stay here in Encinitas and we have local control over how those funds are spent.	33%	30%	16%	12%	5%	4%
G	This measure costs just one dollar for every 100 dollars purchased – and groceries, medicine, and many other essential items are excluded from the tax.	26%	26%	28%	11%	5%	4%
H	To keep our community safe, we need to upgrade our outdated emergency communications system, emergency vehicles, facilities, and life-saving equipment.	23%	33%	21%	13%	5%	4%

I	Every year, thousands of pounds of trash from our streets washes up on local beaches and in our lagoons. This measure will help prevent and clean up trash and pollution before it ends up in our water, lagoons, and along our beaches.	35%	29%	18%	10%	4%	4%
J	The City's storm drainpipes were installed more than 50 years ago and are starting to fail, creating sink holes and flooding that damage streets and private properties. This measure provides the funding needed to fix our storm drains.	37%	35%	14%	6%	4%	4%

**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.

Q9	To provide funding for city services in Encinitas, such as:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Fixing potholes, maintaining streets, traffic safety improvements</li> <li>o Repairing/upgrading aging stormdrains, infrastructure, and public safety facilities</li> <li>o Reducing water pollution</li> <li>o And keeping Encinitas parks, beaches, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained</li> </ul>		
	Shall City of Encinitas' ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing 17 million dollars annually for general government use for 10 years, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money locally controlled?		
	If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i>		
	1	Definitely yes	31%
	2	Probably yes	31%
	3	Probably no	12%
4	Definitely no	20%	
98	Not sure	6%	
99	Prefer not to answer	0%	

Section 7: Negative Arguments							
Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying.							
Q10	Opponents of the measure say: ----- Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Not at all convincing	Don't believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
	<i>Randomize. Split Sample D1/D2.</i>						
A	Local businesses and residents were hit hard by the pandemic and are now facing high gas prices and runaway inflation. Many are struggling to stay afloat. Now is not the time to raise taxes.	36%	26%	23%	9%	3%	3%
B	Encinitas is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, and those on fixed incomes. Passing this tax will make it even less affordable.	38%	27%	22%	8%	3%	3%
C	There are no guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means the City can divert the money to pet projects without any say from voters. We can't trust the City with our tax dollars.	40%	29%	15%	8%	4%	3%
D1	Residents are already paying too many taxes - including state and county taxes, school bonds, and other taxes. Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes.	42%	27%	19%	8%	2%	3%
D2	Everyone is coming after us for tax increases - including state and county taxes, school bonds, and other taxes that will be on the ballot next year. Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes.	37%	28%	20%	10%	2%	3%
E	Raising the sales tax will hurt our local economy and the businesses in our community.	22%	23%	31%	19%	3%	3%

**Section 8: Final Ballot Test**

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

Q11	To provide funding for city services in Encinitas, such as:			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Fixing potholes, maintaining streets, traffic safety improvements</li> <li>o Repairing/upgrading aging stormdrains, infrastructure, and public safety facilities</li> <li>o Reducing water pollution</li> <li>o And keeping Encinitas parks, beaches, and public facilities safe, clean, and well-maintained</li> </ul>			
	Shall City of Encinitas' ordinance establishing a one-cent sales tax be adopted, providing 17 million dollars annually for general government use for 10 years, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money locally controlled?			
	If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? <i>Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?</i>			
	1	Definitely yes	27%	Skip to Q13
	2	Probably yes	30%	Skip to Q13
	3	Probably no	14%	Ask Q12
4	Definitely no	21%	Ask Q12	
98	Not sure	7%	Ask Q12	
99	Prefer not to answer	0%	Skip to Q13	
Q12	What if the measure I just described raised the sales tax by a lower amount: <b>one-half cent</b> ? 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>			
		Def, prob yes @ 1 cent (Q11)	58%	
	1	Definitely yes	0%	
	2	Probably yes	5%	
	3	Probably no	12%	
	4	Definitely no	18%	
	98	Not sure	7%	
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%	

**Section 9: Background & Demographics**

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

Q13	In your opinion, has the City of Encinitas done an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of managing its financial resources?		
	1	Excellent	6%
	2	Good	28%
	3	Fair	27%
	4	Poor	11%
	5	Very poor	6%
	98	Not Sure	21%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%
Q14	Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household?		
	1	Yes	31%
	2	No	66%
	99	Prefer not to answer	4%

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	47%
	2	Female	46%
	3	Non-binary	1%
	99	Prefer not to answer	5%
S2	Party		
	1	Democrat	45%
	2	Republican	24%
	3	Other	7%
	4	DTS	24%

S3 Age on Voter File		
1	18 to 29	14%
2	30 to 39	15%
3	40 to 49	17%
4	50 to 64	25%
5	65 or older	29%
S4 Registration Date		
1	Since Nov 2018	16%
2	Jun 2012 to before Nov 2018	16%
3	Jun 2006 to before Jun 2012	11%
4	Before June 2006	57%
S5 Household Party Type		
1	Single Dem	22%
2	Dual Dem	14%
3	Single Rep	10%
4	Dual Rep	8%
5	Single Other	14%
6	Dual Other	7%
7	Dem & Rep	4%
8	Dem & Other	13%
9	Rep & Other	7%
0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	2%
S6 Homeowner on Voter File		
1	Yes	68%
2	No	32%
S7 Likely to Vote by Mail		
1	Yes	81%
2	No	19%

S8	Likely March 2024 Voter		
	1	Yes	77%
	2	No	23%
S9	Likely November 2024 Voter		
	1	Yes	100%
	2	No	0%
S10	Council District		
	1	One	26%
	2	Two	23%
	3	Three	25%
	4	Four	26%