



**SALES TAX FEASIBILITY SURVEY**  
SUMMARY REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE  
**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH**



JUNE 2024



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## INTRODUCTION

Located along the coastal edge of Los Angeles County, the City of Manhattan Beach is currently home to an estimated 34,195 residents.<sup>1</sup> Incorporated in 1912 as a General Law city, Manhattan Beach's current team of full-time and part-time employees provides a full suite of services through various departments including City Attorney, City Clerk, City Manager, Community Development, Finance, Fire, Parks & Recreation, Human Resources, Police, and Public Works.

Over the past decade, the City of Manhattan Beach's revenues have not kept pace with the growing costs associated with providing municipal services and facilities. Although the City has been proactive in responding to this challenge by reducing its costs where feasible, trimming services, deferring maintenance, and through effective financial management practices, the practical reality is that existing revenues simply do not support the high quality services that residents have come to expect. To provide additional funding for essential city services such as keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained; repairing/upgrading aging community facilities; fixing potholes; and improving parking availability and traffic safety, the City of Manhattan Beach is considering establishing a local sales tax 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 4), the survey expose respondents to the types of information voters are likely to encounter during an election cycle, including arguments in favor of (Question 7) and opposed to (Question 9) the measure, and gauge how this type of information ultimately impacts their voting decision (Questions 8 & 10).

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1. Source: California Department of Finance City/County Population Estimates, January 2024.

**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 to a random sample of 409 voters in the City of Manhattan Beach 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 June 19 and June 25, 2024, 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 31), and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** True North thanks the City of Manhattan Beach 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.

**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 Manhattan Beach. 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 1,300 survey research studies for public agencies, including more than 500 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 Manhattan Beach with a statistically reliable understanding of voters' interest in establishing a general 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 interpretations of the survey results and the firm's collective experience conducting revenue measure studies for public agencies throughout the State.

*Is it feasible to place a local sales tax measure on the November 2024 ballot?*

Yes. Manhattan Beach voters have a high opinion of the quality of life in the City and value the services they receive from the City of Manhattan Beach. Together, these sentiments translate into solid *natural* support (64%) for establishing a one-half cent sales tax to provide funding for city services in Manhattan Beach, such as keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained; repairing/upgrading aging community facilities; fixing potholes; and improving parking availability and traffic safety.

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 recommends.

*Which services do Manhattan Beach 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.

Although the Manhattan Beach 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 funding to fix potholes

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



and maintain city streets (88% strongly or somewhat favor), keep local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained (87%), improve e-bike traffic enforcement and safety (80%), make improvements to roads, intersections, bike lanes, and signals to improve traffic safety and reduce congestion (79%), and expand sidewalks downtown to allow outdoor dining and improved access (73%).

*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—effectively increasing support for the measure to 67% at the Interim Ballot Test. However, voters also exhibited sensitivity to opposition arguments, which cooled support for the measure down to 58% at the Final Ballot Test. There is also 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 inflation, high interest rates, high gas prices, and the trajectory of the economy, a clear majority of Manhattan Beach voters supported establishing a local sales tax to fund 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 Manhattan Beach, 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 Manhattan Beach using a five-point scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor. As shown in Figure 1 below, more than nine-in-ten voters (91%) shared favorable opinions of the quality of life in Manhattan Beach, with 54% reporting it is excellent and 37% stating it is good. Approximately 8% of voters surveyed rated the quality of life in the City as fair, whereas just 1% used poor or very poor to describe the quality of life in Manhattan Beach.

**Question 1** Overall, how would you rate the overall quality of life in Manhattan Beach? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?

FIGURE 1 QUALITY OF LIFE

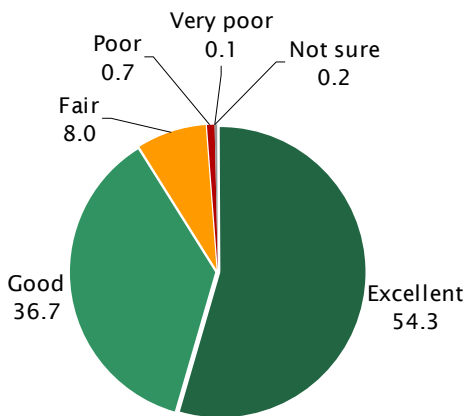
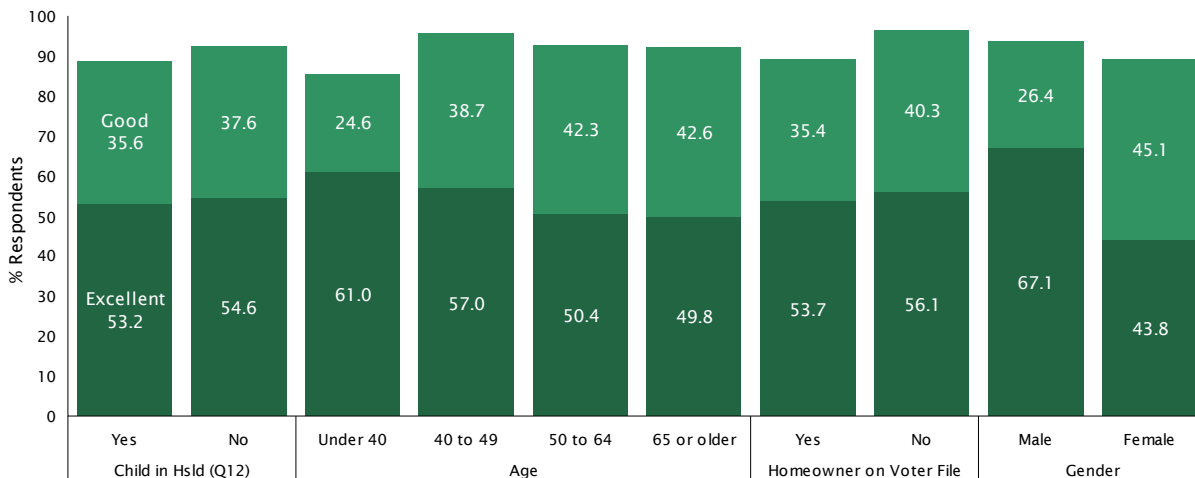


Figure 2 shows how ratings of the quality of life in the City of Manhattan Beach varied by presence of a child in the home, age, homeownership, and gender. The most striking pattern in the figure is the consistency with which voters provided high ratings for the quality of life in the City, with at least 85% of respondents in every subgroup rating the quality of life in Manhattan Beach as excellent or good.

FIGURE 2 QUALITY OF LIFE BY CHILD IN HSLD, AGE, HOMEOWNER ON VOTER FILE & GENDER

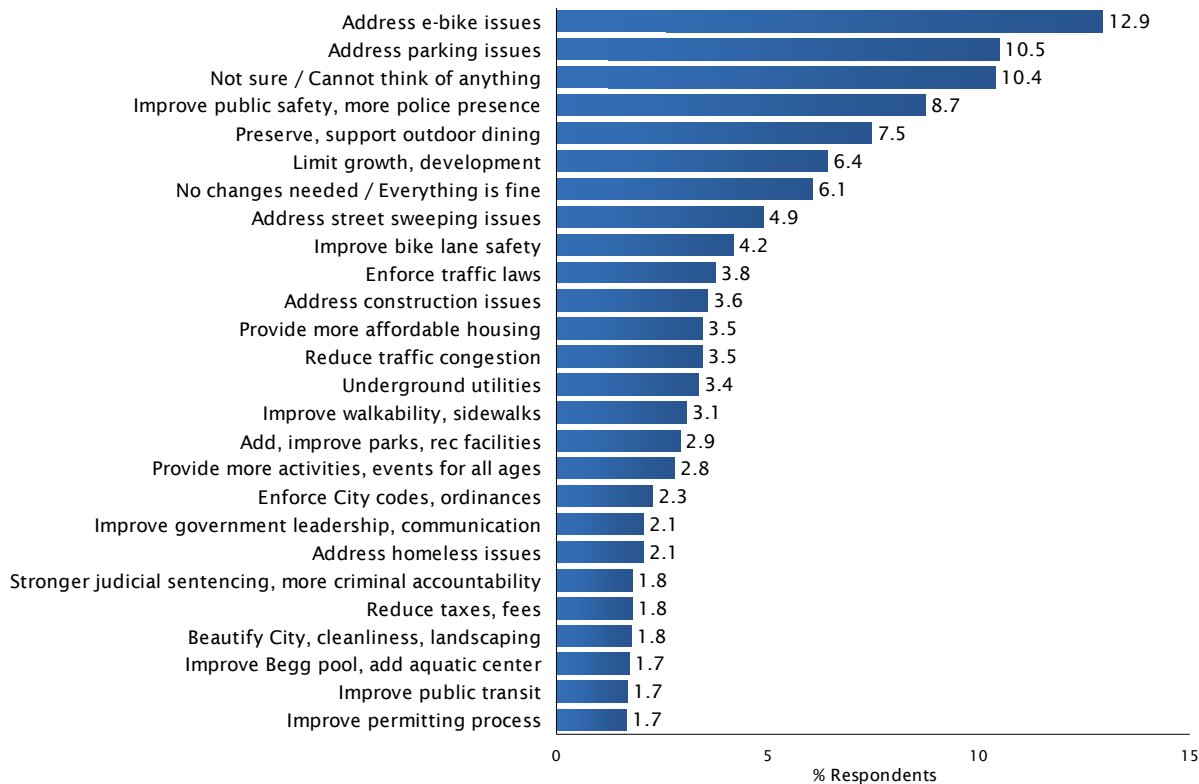


**CHANGES TO IMPROVE MANHATTAN BEACH** The next question in this series asked voters to indicate the one thing that city government could *change* to make Manhattan Beach a better place to live, now and in the future. Question 2 was posed in an open-ended manner, allowing residents to mention any aspect 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 3.

Among *specific* changes desired, addressing e-bike issues (13%) and parking issues (11%) were the most common, followed by improving public safety/more police presence (9%), preserving/supporting outdoor dining (8%), and limiting growth and development (6%). It is also worth noting that approximately 16% of respondents could not think of a change to Manhattan Beach that they desired (10%) or indicated that no changes are needed/everything is fine as is (6%).

**Question 2** *If the city government could change one thing to make Manhattan Beach a better place to live now and in the future, what change would you like to see?*

**FIGURE 3 CHANGES TO IMPROVE CITY**



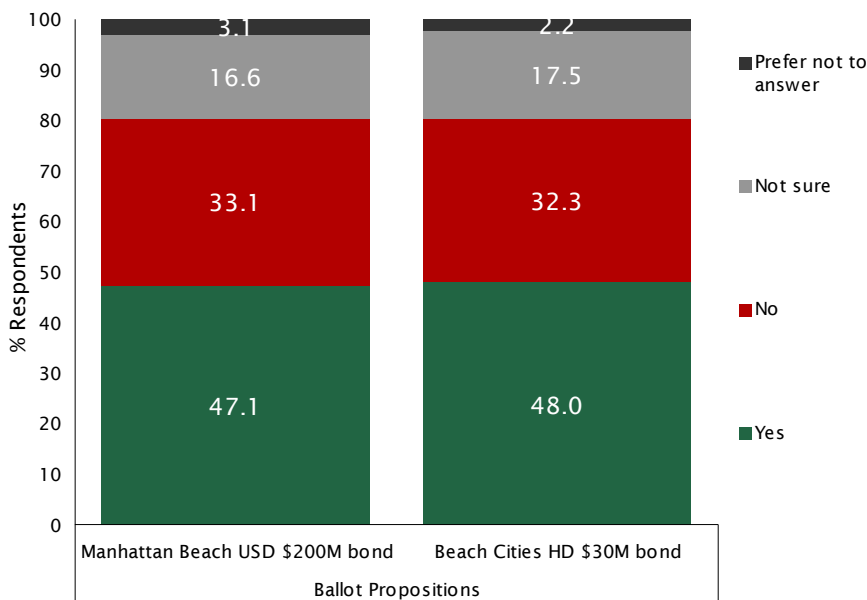
# CROWDED BALLOT SIMULATION

Different election environments present different opportunities and challenges. One of the potential concerns about the upcoming November 2024 general election is that it will be a crowded ballot, in which voters will be asked to consider several state and local tax measures prior to having the opportunity to vote on the sales tax being considered by the City. To simulate this experience in the survey, voters were first informed about two local measures that are likely to be on the ballot for Manhattan Beach voters this fall—a proposal authorizing Manhattan Beach Unified School District to issue \$200,000,000 in bonds for the repair and upgrade of local school facilities, and a proposal authorizing Beach Cities Health District to issue \$30,000,000 in bonds to build a youth mental health center.

As shown in Figure 4, approximately half of voters surveyed indicated they would support the proposed school bond measure (47%) and Beach Cities Health District bond (48%) as described in the survey. It is important to keep in mind that the point of Question 3 is to *simulate a crowded ballot scenario*, not accurately gauge voter support for the respective measures. Because truncated descriptions of each measure were provided (not the full 75 word ballot statements as they will appear on the ballot), the support levels recorded in Question 3 are not likely to be a reliable gauge of support for these two measures.

**Question 3** *This November, voters will be asked to vote on several ballot propositions at the State and local level. As I read the following propositions, please tell me whether you would vote yes or no on them if the election were held today.*

**FIGURE 4** BALLOT PROPOSITIONS



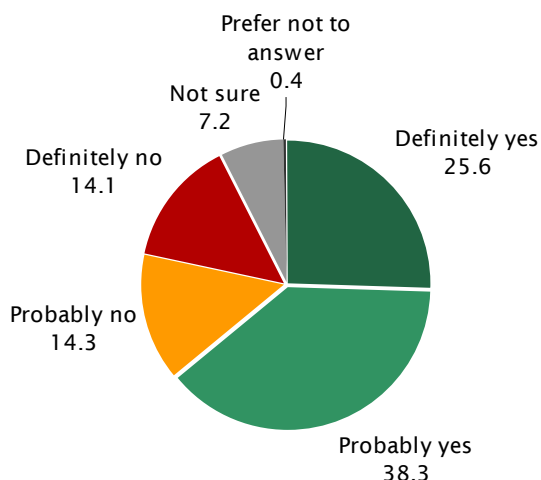
## INITIAL BALLOT TEST

The primary research objective of this survey was to estimate voters' support for establishing a one-half cent sales tax to provide funding for city services in Manhattan Beach, such as keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained; repairing/upgrading aging community facilities; fixing potholes; and improving parking availability and traffic safety. 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 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 4, 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 4** *Later this year, voters in the City of Manhattan Beach may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure. To provide funding for general city services in Manhattan Beach, such as keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained; repairing/upgrading aging community facilities; fixing potholes; and improving parking availability and traffic safety; shall City of Manhattan Beach's ordinance establishing a one-half cent sales tax be adopted, providing 5 million dollars annually until ended by voters for general government use that can't be taken away by the State, 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 5 INITIAL BALLOT TEST



As shown in Figure 5, 64% of likely November 2024 voters surveyed indicated that they would support the proposed one-half cent sales tax, whereas 28% stated that they would oppose the measure and 8% 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 14 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 all but one identified subgroup. When compared to their respective counterparts, support was strongest among voters who rate the quality of life in Manhattan Beach as excellent, rate the City’s fiscal management as excellent or good, have children in the home, Democrats, those living in dual Democrat households, voters 40 to 49 years of age, individuals who registered to vote in Manhattan Beach since June 2012, renters, low/medium propensity voters, and females.

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

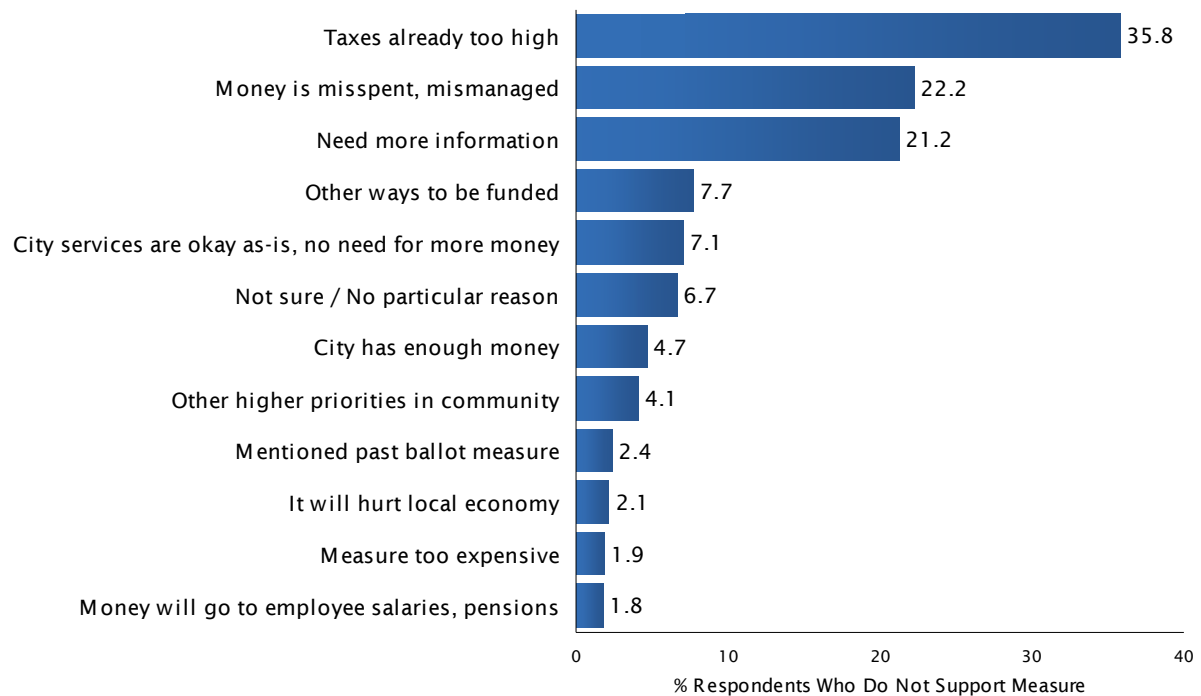
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100.0	63.9	7.2
Quality of Life (Q1)	Excellent	54.4	67.2	7.7
	Good	36.7	61.7	5.2
	Fair, poor, very poor	8.8	54.4	10.5
Fiscal Management Rating (Q11)	Excellent, good	49.9	72.3	5.2
	Fair	36.3	57.9	8.6
	Poor, very poor	13.8	40.7	7.4
Child in Hsld (Q12)	Yes	33.0	71.8	4.4
	No	67.0	59.9	8.7
Party	Democrat	41.9	75.4	5.2
	Republican	27.6	52.6	8.5
	Other / DTS	30.5	58.5	8.8
Household Party Type	Single dem	17.1	77.2	3.5
	Dual dem	13.9	81.8	3.2
	Single rep	9.5	57.9	3.7
	Dual rep	8.5	50.7	13.0
	Other	16.5	60.5	4.7
	Mixed	34.4	56.7	11.4
Age	Under 40	29.0	68.2	10.9
	40 to 49	15.8	83.6	2.3
	50 to 64	29.3	60.9	7.1
	65 or older	25.8	50.6	6.1
Registration Year	Since June 2012	32.6	67.7	12.0
	Before June 2012	67.4	62.1	4.9
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	74.3	62.4	7.3
	No	25.7	68.4	6.8
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	70.5	64.2	8.4
	No	29.5	63.3	4.4
Voting Propensity	High	76.4	62.4	6.1
	Medium / Low	23.6	68.8	10.6
Gender	Male	50.3	63.1	9.3
	Female	49.7	67.2	5.4

**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 5 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 6.

Among the reasons offered for not supporting the measure, a belief that taxes are already too high (36%) was the most common, followed by the perception that city funds have been/will be mismanaged or misspent (22%) and a need for more information (21%).

**Question 5** *Is there a particular reason why you do not support or are unsure about the measure I just described?*

**FIGURE 6 REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE**





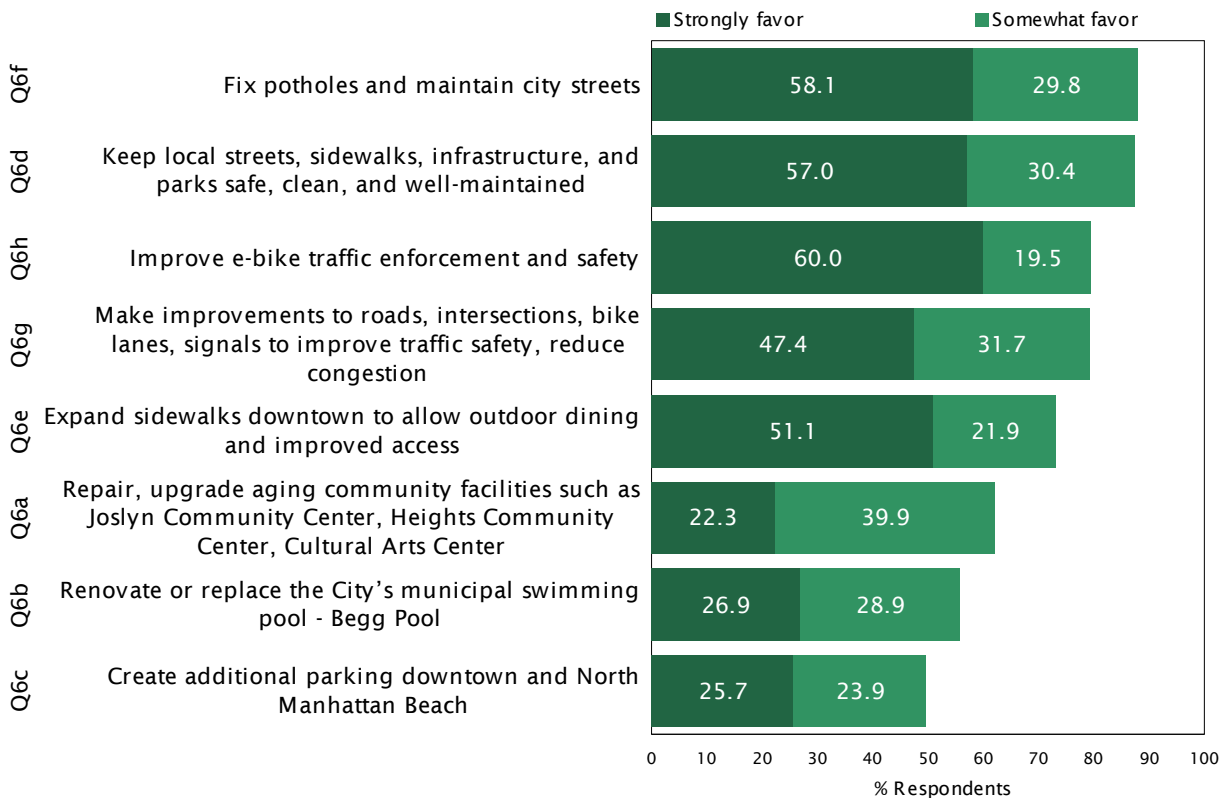
## PROJECTS & SERVICES

The ballot language presented in Question 4 indicated that the proposed measure would provide funding for city services in Manhattan Beach, such as keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained; repairing/upgrading aging community facilities; fixing potholes; and improving parking availability and traffic safety. The purpose of Question 6 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 7.<sup>3</sup> The order in which the services were presented to respondents was randomized to avoid a systematic position bias.

**Question 6** *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 7 PROJECTS & SERVICES



3. For the full text of the services tested, turn to Question 6 in *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31.

Most of the projects and services tested were popular with Manhattan Beach voters, with a majority of respondents indicating they would favor spending measure proceeds on all but one of the eight items tested. That said, the services that resonated with the *largest* percentage of respondents were fixing potholes and maintaining city streets (88% strongly or somewhat favor), keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained (87%), improving e-bike traffic enforcement and safety (80%), making improvements to roads, intersections, bike lanes, and signals to improve traffic safety and reduce congestion (79%), and expanding sidewalks downtown to allow outdoor dining and improved access (73%).

**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 four of the top five priorities for funding.

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

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q4)	Item	Project/Service Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 262)	Q6d	Keep local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained	68
	Q6f	Fix potholes and maintain city streets	68
	Q6h	Improve e-bike traffic enforcement and safety	66
	Q6e	Expand sidewalks downtown to allow outdoor dining and improved access	58
	Q6g	Make improvements to roads, intersections, bike lanes, signals to improve traffic safety, reduce congestion	57
Probably or Definitely No (n = 117)	Q6h	Improve e-bike traffic enforcement and safety	45
	Q6e	Expand sidewalks downtown to allow outdoor dining and improved access	40
	Q6f	Fix potholes and maintain city streets	40
	Q6d	Keep local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained	36
	Q6g	Make improvements to roads, intersections, bike lanes, signals to improve traffic safety, reduce congestion	22
Not Sure (n = 29)	Q6h	Improve e-bike traffic enforcement and safety	73
	Q6g	Make improvements to roads, intersections, bike lanes, signals to improve traffic safety, reduce congestion	63
	Q6f	Fix potholes and maintain city streets	49
	Q6d	Keep local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained	46
	Q6c	Create additional parking downtown and North Manhattan Beach	40

## 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 7 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 20). 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**

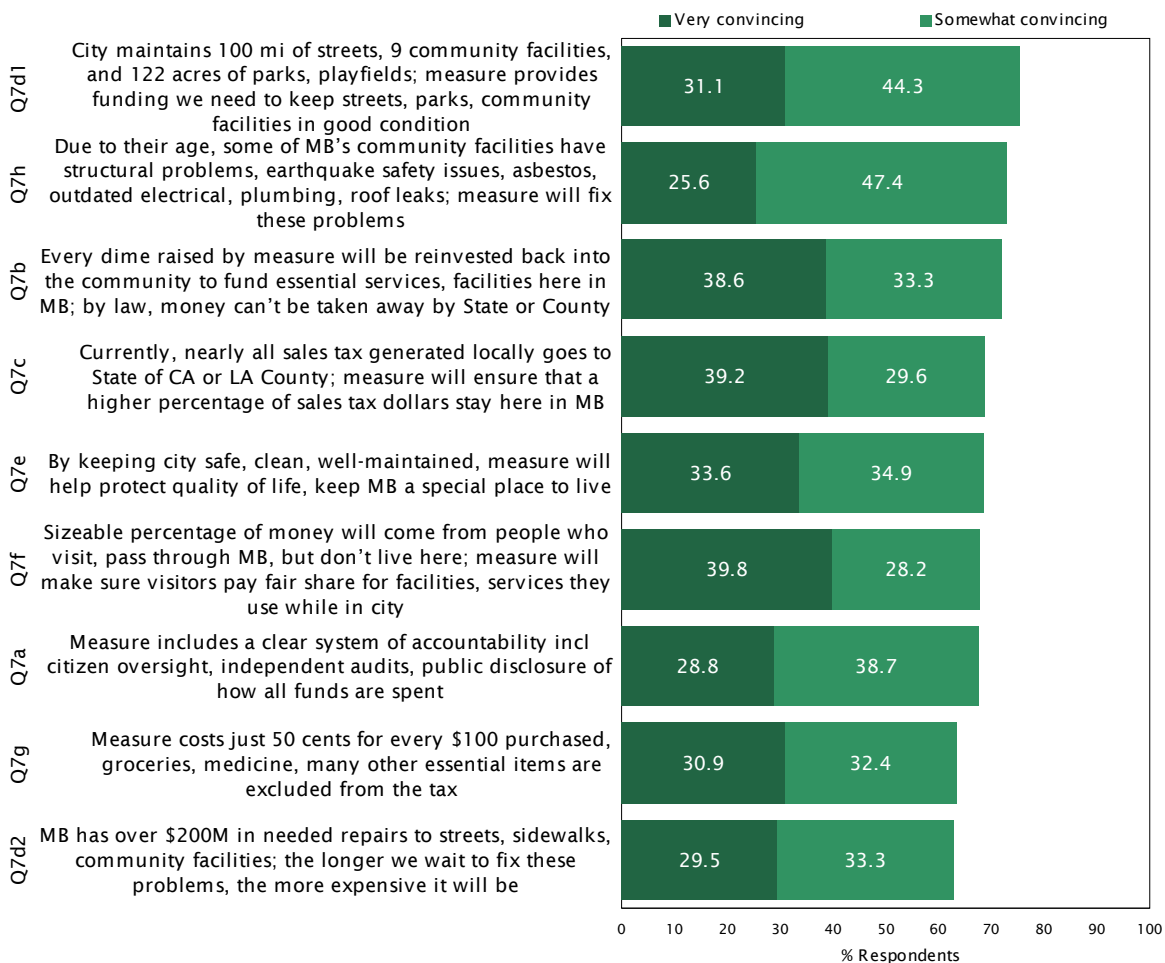


Figure 8 on the prior page presents the truncated positive arguments tested, as well as voters' reactions to the arguments. The arguments are ranked from most convincing to least convincing based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the argument was either a 'very convincing' or 'somewhat convincing' reason to support the sales tax measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive arguments were: *The City maintains 100 miles of streets, nine community facilities, and 122 acres of parks and playfields. This measure provides the funding we need to keep our streets, parks, and community facilities in good condition* (75% very or somewhat convincing), *Due to their age, some of Manhattan Beach's community facilities have structural problems, earthquake safety issues, asbestos, outdated electrical and plumbing, and roof leaks that can cause water damage and mold. This measure will fix these problems* (73%), *Every dime raised by the measure will be reinvested back into the community to fund essential services and facilities here in Manhattan Beach. By law, the money can't be taken away by the State or County* (72%), and *Currently, nearly all of the sales tax generated locally goes to the State of California or Los Angeles County. This measure will ensure that a higher percentage of our sales tax dollars stay here in Manhattan Beach* (69%).

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

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

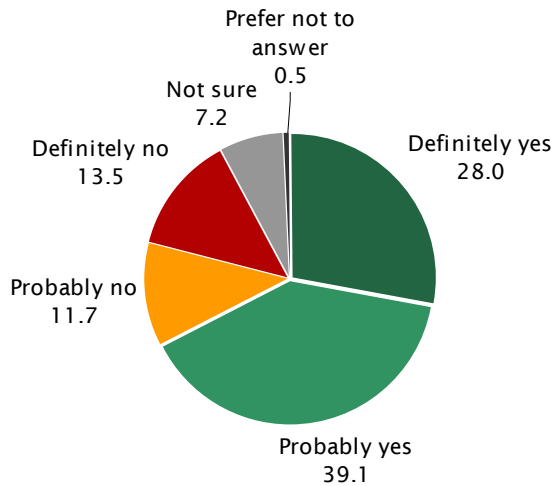
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q4)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 262)	Q7f	Sizeable percentage of money will come from people who visit, pass through MB, but don't live here; measure will make sure visitors pay fair share for facilities, services they use while in city	50
	Q7b	Every dime raised by measure will be reinvested back into the community to fund essential services, facilities here in MB; by law, money can't be taken away by State or County	50
	Q7c	Currently, nearly all sales tax generated locally goes to State of CA or LA County; measure will ensure that a higher percentage of sales tax dollars stay here in MB	49
	Q7d1	City maintains 100 mi of streets, 9 community facilities, and 122 acres of parks, playfields; measure provides funding we need to keep streets, parks, community facilities in good condition	42
	Q7e	By keeping city safe, clean, well-maintained, measure will help protect quality of life, keep MB a special place to live	42
Probably or Definitely No (n = 117)	Q7c	Currently, nearly all sales tax generated locally goes to State of CA or LA County; measure will ensure that a higher percentage of sales tax dollars stay here in MB	18
	Q7f	Sizeable percentage of money will come from people who visit, pass through MB, but don't live here; measure will make sure visitors pay fair share for facilities, services they use while in city	18
	Q7b	Every dime raised by measure will be reinvested back into the community to fund essential services, facilities here in MB; by law, money can't be taken away by State or County	14
	Q7a	Measure includes a clear system of accountability incl citizen oversight, independent audits, public disclosure of how all funds are spent	14
	Q7e	By keeping city safe, clean, well-maintained, measure will help protect quality of life, keep MB a special place to live	13
Not Sure (n = 29)	Q7c	Currently, nearly all sales tax generated locally goes to State of CA or LA County; measure will ensure that a higher percentage of sales tax dollars stay here in MB	39
	Q7g	Measure costs just 50 cents for every \$100 purchased, groceries, medicine, many other essential items are excluded from the tax	37
	Q7e	By keeping city safe, clean, well-maintained, measure will help protect quality of life, keep MB a special place to live	37
	Q7f	Sizeable percentage of money will come from people who visit, pass through MB, but don't live here; measure will make sure visitors pay fair share for facilities, services they use while in city	37
	Q7b	Every dime raised by measure will be reinvested back into the community to fund essential services, facilities here in MB; by law, money can't be taken away by State or County	35

## 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 9, overall support among likely November 2024 voters increased to 67%, with 28% of voters indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes on the measure. Approximately 25% of respondents opposed the measure at this point in the survey, and an additional 8% 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. To provide funding for general city services in Manhattan Beach, such as keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained; repairing/upgrading aging community facilities; fixing potholes; and improving parking availability and traffic safety; shall City of Manhattan Beach's ordinance establishing a one-half cent sales tax be adopted, providing 5 million dollars annually until ended by voters for general government use that can't be taken away by the State, 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 9 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 substantial amounts (8 percentage points or more) between the Initial and Interim Ballot Test for several voter subgroups. The largest shifts in support were found among voters who registered in Manhattan Beach since June 2012 (+17%), voters under the age of 40 (+16%), dual Republican households (-16%), those who rated the City's fiscal management as poor/very poor (-15%), those residing in mixed partisan households (+14%), and medium/low propensity voters (+13%).

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		100.0	67.2	+3.2
Quality of Life (Q1)	Excellent	54.4	75.8	+8.6
	Good	36.7	58.9	-2.7
	Fair, poor, very poor	8.8	49.1	-5.3
Fiscal Management Rating (Q11)	Excellent, good	49.9	78.7	+6.4
	Fair	36.3	68.5	+10.6
	Poor, very poor	13.8	26.0	-14.6
Child in Hsld (Q12)	Yes	33.0	74.4	+2.6
	No	67.0	63.5	+3.6
Party	Democrat	41.9	77.7	+2.4
	Republican	27.6	49.9	-2.7
	Other / DTS	30.5	68.2	+9.7
Household Party Type	Single dem	17.1	73.9	-3.3
	Dual dem	13.9	83.6	+1.8
	Single rep	9.5	51.1	-6.8
	Dual rep	8.5	34.9	-15.8
	Other	16.5	65.0	+4.4
	Mixed	34.4	70.6	+13.9
Age	Under 40	29.0	83.9	+15.7
	40 to 49	15.8	80.2	-3.3
	50 to 64	29.3	58.8	-2.1
	65 or older	25.8	49.7	-0.8
Registration Year	Since June 2012	32.6	84.3	+16.6
	Before June 2012	67.4	58.9	-3.2
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	74.3	67.3	+4.9
	No	25.7	66.7	-1.7
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	70.5	68.9	+4.7
	No	29.5	63.1	-0.3
Voting Propensity	High	76.4	62.6	+0.2
	Medium / Low	23.6	81.9	+13.1
Gender	Male	50.3	67.6	+4.4
	Female	49.7	69.8	+2.6

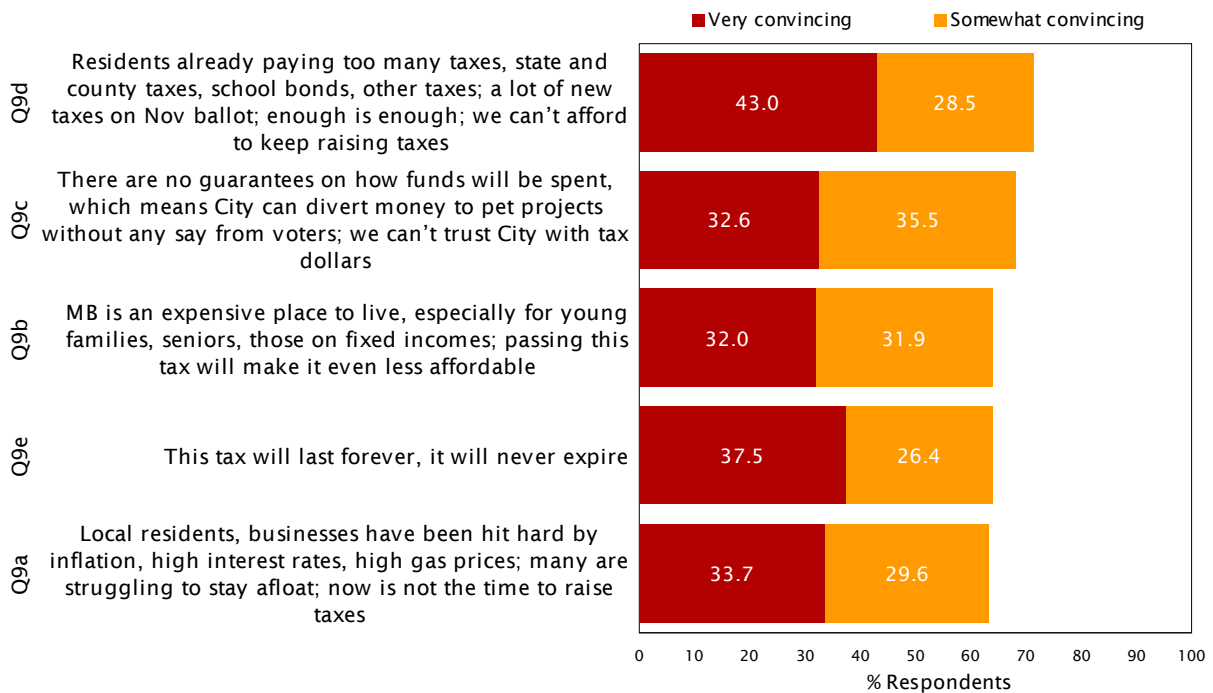


## NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Whereas Question 7 of the survey presented respondents with arguments in favor of the sales tax 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 below in Figure 10.

**Question 9** *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 10 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS



The most compelling negative arguments were: *Residents are already paying too many taxes - including state and county taxes, school bonds, and other taxes. There are also a lot of new taxes on the November ballot. Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes (72%), 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 (68%), and Manhattan Beach 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 (64%).*

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

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

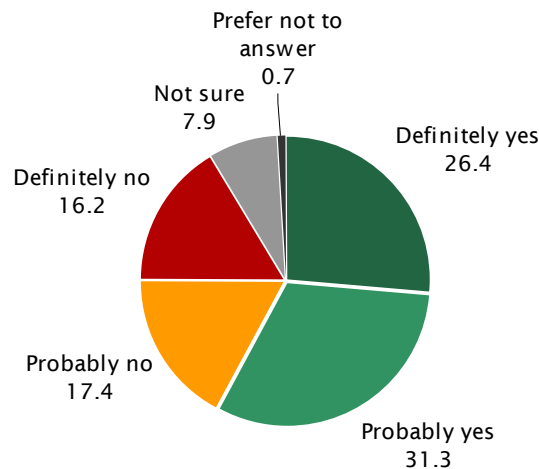
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q4)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely Yes (n = 262)	Q9d	Residents already paying too many taxes, state and county taxes, school bonds, other taxes; a lot of new taxes on Nov ballot; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	28
	Q9c	There are no guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means City can divert money to pet projects without any say from voters; we can't trust City with tax dollars	26
	Q9e	This tax will last forever, it will never expire	24
	Q9b	MB is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing this tax will make it even less affordable	20
	Q9a	Local residents, businesses have been hit hard by inflation, high interest rates, high gas prices; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	20
Probably or Definitely No (n = 117)	Q9d	Residents already paying too many taxes, state and county taxes, school bonds, other taxes; a lot of new taxes on Nov ballot; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	75
	Q9e	This tax will last forever, it will never expire	69
	Q9a	Local residents, businesses have been hit hard by inflation, high interest rates, high gas prices; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	60
	Q9b	MB is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing this tax will make it even less affordable	55
	Q9c	There are no guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means City can divert money to pet projects without any say from voters; we can't trust City with tax dollars	46
Not Sure (n = 29)	Q9a	Local residents, businesses have been hit hard by inflation, high interest rates, high gas prices; many are struggling to stay afloat; now is not the time to raise taxes	50
	Q9d	Residents already paying too many taxes, state and county taxes, school bonds, other taxes; a lot of new taxes on Nov ballot; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	47
	Q9b	MB is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing this tax will make it even less affordable	44
	Q9c	There are no guarantees on how funds will be spent, which means City can divert money to pet projects without any say from voters; we can't trust City with tax dollars	42
	Q9e	This tax will last forever, it will never expire	31

## 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 10** *Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. To provide funding for general city services in Manhattan Beach, such as keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained; repairing/upgrading aging community facilities; fixing potholes; and improving parking availability and traffic safety; shall City of Manhattan Beach's ordinance establishing a one-half cent sales tax be adopted, providing 5 million dollars annually until ended by voters for general government use that can't be taken away by the State, 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 11 FINAL BALLOT TEST



At this point in the survey, support for the one-half cent sales tax measure was found among 58% of likely November 2024 voters, with 26% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 34% of respondents were opposed to the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 9% 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 (Q4)	Change From Interim Ballot Test (Q9)
Overall		100.0	57.7	-6.2	-9.4
Quality of Life (Q1)	Excellent	54.4	68.0	+0.8	-7.9
	Good	36.7	47.5	-14.2	-11.5
	Fair, poor, very poor	8.8	38.1	-16.3	-11.0
Fiscal Management Rating (Q11)	Excellent, good	49.9	72.0	-0.2	-6.7
	Fair	36.3	55.3	-2.6	-13.2
	Poor, very poor	13.8	12.4	-28.3	-13.7
Child in Hsld (Q12)	Yes	33.0	67.8	-4.1	-6.6
	No	67.0	52.5	-7.4	-10.9
Party	Democrat	41.9	68.7	-6.7	-9.0
	Republican	27.6	37.8	-14.8	-12.1
	Other / DTS	30.5	60.7	+2.1	-7.6
Household Party Type	Single dem	17.1	69.4	-7.7	-4.4
	Dual dem	13.9	74.0	-7.8	-9.6
	Single rep	9.5	42.4	-15.5	-8.7
	Dual rep	8.5	30.9	-19.8	-4.1
	Other	16.5	61.2	+0.6	-3.8
	Mixed	34.4	54.5	-2.2	-16.1
Age	Under 40	29.0	66.0	-2.2	-18.0
	40 to 49	15.8	77.9	-5.7	-2.3
	50 to 64	29.3	51.5	-9.4	-7.3
	65 or older	25.8	43.1	-7.5	-6.7
Registration Year	Since June 2012	32.6	67.9	+0.1	-16.4
	Before June 2012	67.4	52.8	-9.3	-6.1
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	74.3	56.3	-6.1	-11.0
	No	25.7	61.8	-6.6	-4.9
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	70.5	59.4	-4.8	-9.5
	No	29.5	53.8	-9.6	-9.3
Voting Propensity	High	76.4	55.3	-7.1	-7.3
	Medium / Low	23.6	65.3	-3.4	-16.5
Gender	Male	50.3	60.1	-3.1	-7.5
	Female	49.7	57.9	-9.3	-11.9

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 across voter subgroups, averaging -6% 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 25.6% of respondents who indicated that they would definitely support the measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 17.6% also indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. Approximately 4.4% moved to the probably support group, 1.5% moved to the probably oppose group, 0.7% moved to the definitely oppose group, and 1.4% 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 (Q4)		Final Ballot Test (Q10)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	25.6% →	17.6%	4.4%	1.5%	0.7%	1.4%
Probably support	38.3% →	8.0%	21.4%	5.7%	1.1%	2.1%
Probably oppose	14.3% →	0.2%	3.4%	7.2%	2.4%	1.1%
Definitely oppose	14.1% →	0.3%	0.3%	1.6%	11.8%	0.2%
Not sure	7.6% →	0.3%	1.8%	1.5%	0.2%	3.8%

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 larger percentage found the same information to be a reason to be less supportive. Despite 22% 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 six percentage points different than support at the Initial Ballot Test (64%).

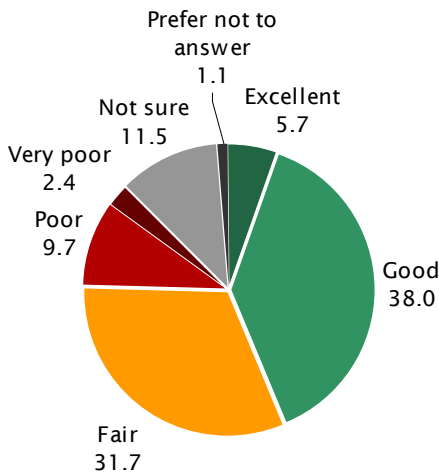
4. This is, they changed from a position of support, opposition, or undecided at the Initial Ballot Test to a different position at the Final Ballot Test.

# FISCAL MANAGEMENT

The final substantive question of the survey asked respondents to rate the job the City of Manhattan Beach has done in managing its financial resources. Approximately three-quarters of voters gave the City positive or neutral marks, with 6% rating the City’s performance as excellent, 38% good, and 32% fair. Twelve percent (12%) of respondents rated the job the City has done in managing its finances as poor or very poor, while 13% confided they were not sure or preferred to not answer the question.

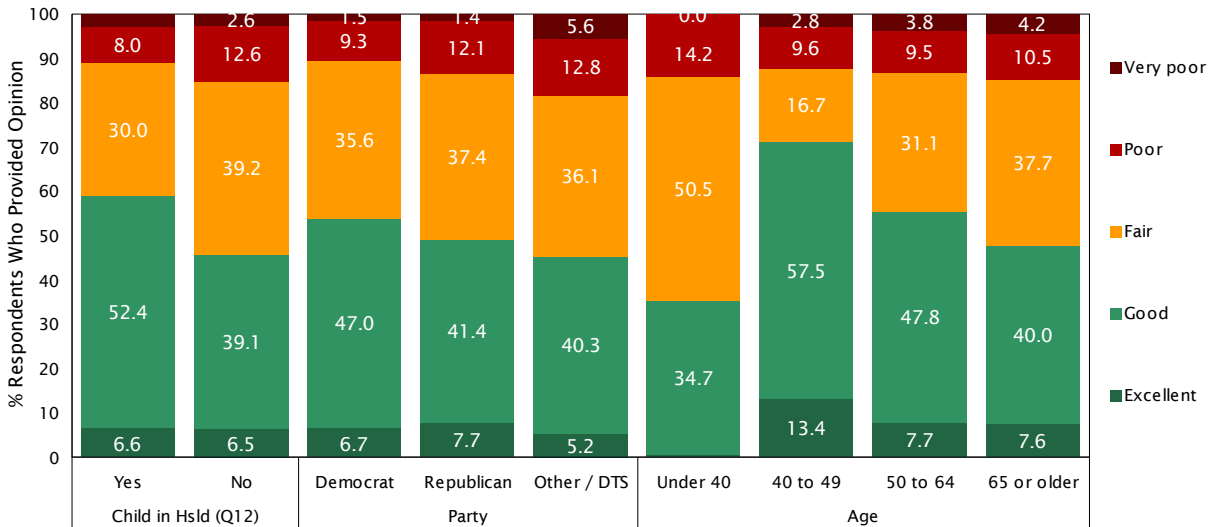
**Question 11** *In your opinion, has the City of Manhattan Beach done an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of managing its financial resources?*

**FIGURE 12 FISCAL MANAGEMENT RATING**

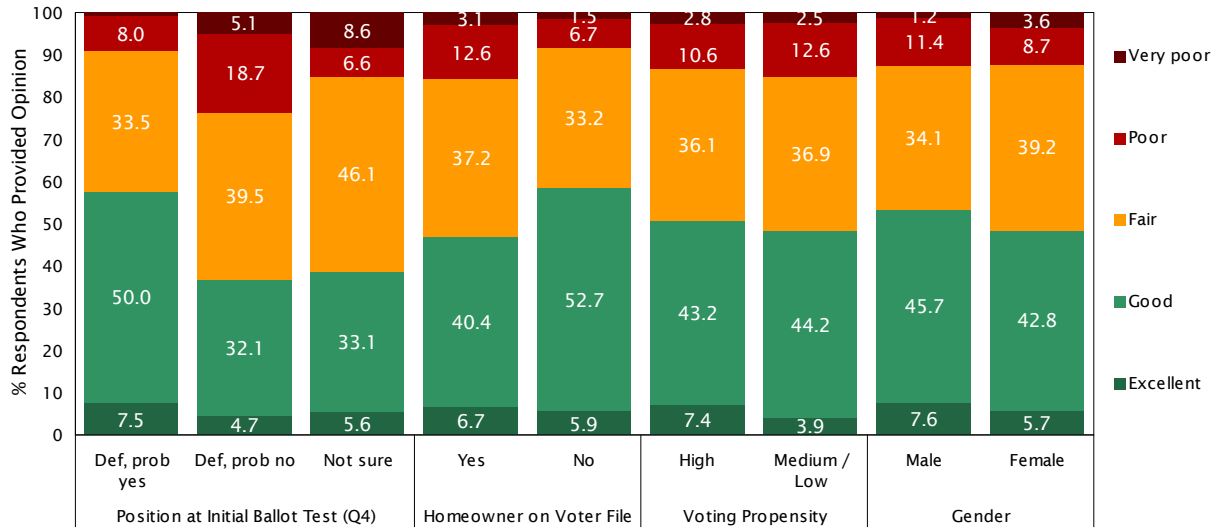


For the interested reader, figures 13 and 14 show how ratings of the City’s performance in managing its finances varied across key voter subgroups (among those with an opinion). It is worth noting the positive relationship between having a high opinion of the City’s performance in managing its financial resources and support for the proposed measure at the Initial Ballot Test.

**FIGURE 13 FISCAL MANAGEMENT RATING BY CHILD IN HSLD, PARTY & AGE**



**FIGURE 14 FISCAL MANAGEMENT RATING BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST, HOMEOWNER VOTER ON FILE, VOTING PROPENSITY & GENDER**





# BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS

**TABLE 8 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLES**

<i>Total Respondents</i>	409
<b>Fiscal Management Rating (Q11)</b>	
Excellent	54.3
Good	36.7
Fair, poor, very poor	8.8
Prefer not to answer	0.2
<b>Child in Hsld (Q12)</b>	
Yes	32.8
No	66.5
Prefer not to answer	0.7
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	49.0
Female	48.5
Non-binary	0.1
Prefer not to answer	2.3
<b>Party</b>	
Democrat	41.9
Republican	27.6
Other / DTS	30.5
<b>Age</b>	
Under 40	29.0
40 to 49	15.8
50 to 64	29.3
65 or older	25.8
<b>Registration Year</b>	
Since June 2012	32.6
Before June 2012	67.4
<b>Household Party Type</b>	
Single dem	17.1
Dual dem	13.9
Single rep	9.5
Dual rep	8.5
Other	16.5
Mixed	34.4
<b>Homeowner on Voter File</b>	
Yes	74.3
No	25.7
<b>Likely to Vote by Mail</b>	
Yes	70.5
No	29.5
<b>Voting Propensity</b>	
High	76.4
Medium / Low	23.6

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 Manhattan Beach 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 4) were asked the follow-up, open-ended Question 5 regarding their reasons for not supporting the measure. In some cases, two versions of an 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 D1) and the other half received version 2 (e.g., Question 7, item D2). The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31) 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.

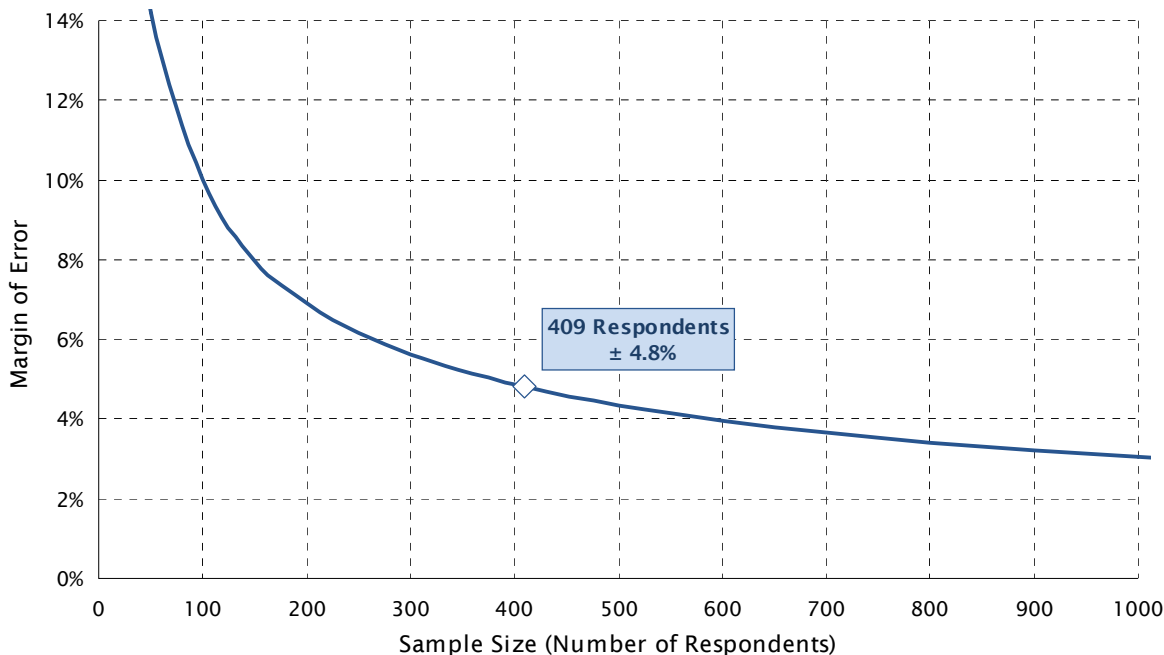
**SAMPLE** The survey was administered to a stratified and clustered random sample of registered voters in the City who are likely to participate in the November 2024 general election. Consistent with the profile of this universe, the sample was stratified into clusters, each representing a combination 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 that 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 409 voters for a particular question and what would have been

found if all of the estimated 24,406 likely November 2024 voters identified in the City had been surveyed for the study.

Figure 15 provides a graphic plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative response. For this survey, the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 4.8\%$ .

**FIGURE 15 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 15 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 409 surveys were completed in English and Spanish between June 19 and June 25, 2024.

**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 Manhattan Beach  
Sales Tax Survey  
Final Toplines (n=409)  
June 2024

## Section 1: Introduction to Study

Hi, may I please speak to \_\_\_\_\_? Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling from TNR on behalf of the City of Manhattan Beach. The City is conducting a survey about important issues in Manhattan Beach and we would 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 Manhattan Beach.

Q1	Overall, how would you rate the overall quality of life in Manhattan Beach? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?	
	1	Excellent 54%
	2	Good 37%
	3	Fair 8%
	4	Poor 1%
	5	Very poor 0%
	98	Not sure 0%
	99	Prefer not to answer 0%
Q2	If the city government could change one thing to make Manhattan Beach 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.	
	Address E-bike issues 13%	
	Address parking issues 10%	
	Not sure / Cannot think of anything 10%	
	Improve public safety, more police presence 9%	
	Preserve, support outdoor dining 7%	
	Limit growth, development 6%	
	No changes needed / Everything is fine 6%	
	Address street sweeping issues 5%	
	Enforce traffic laws 4%	
	Improve bike lane safety 4%	
	Address construction issues 4%	

Provide more affordable housing	3%
Reduce traffic congestion	3%
Underground utilities	3%
Improve walkability, sidewalks	3%
Add, improve parks, rec facilities	3%
Provide more activities, events for all ages	3%
Reduce taxes, fees	2%
Improve public transit	2%
Enforce City codes, ordinances	2%
Improve government leadership, communication	2%
Beautify City, cleanliness, landscaping	2%
Address homeless issues	2%
Improve permitting process	2%
Improve Begg pool, add aquatic center	2%
Stronger judicial sentencing, more criminal accountability	2%

**Section 3: Crowded Ballot Simulation**

Q3	This November, voters will be asked to vote on several ballot propositions at the State and local level. As I read the following propositions, please tell me whether you would vote yes or no on them if the election were held today.				
	Here is the (first/next) one: ----- . Would you vote yes or no on this measure?				
	<i>Read in Order</i>	Yes	No	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	A proposal authorizing Manhattan Beach Unified School District to issue <b>200</b> million dollars in bonds for the repair and upgrade local school facilities.	47%	33%	17%	3%
B	A proposal authorizing Beach Cities Health District to issue <b>30</b> million dollars in bonds to build a youth mental health center.	48%	32%	18%	2%

**Section 4: Initial Ballot Test**

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

**Q4** To provide funding for general city services in Manhattan Beach, such as:

- o Keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained
- o Repairing/upgrading aging community facilities
- o Fixing potholes
- o And improving parking availability and traffic safety

Shall City of Manhattan Beach’s ordinance establishing a one-half cent sales tax be adopted, providing 5 million dollars annually until ended by voters for general government use that can’t be taken away by the State, 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? *Get answer, then ask:* Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?

1	Definitely yes	26%	Skip to Q6
2	Probably yes	38%	Skip to Q6
3	Probably no	14%	Ask Q5
4	Definitely no	14%	Ask Q5
98	Not sure	7%	Ask Q5
99	Prefer not to answer	0%	Skip to Q6

**Q5** Is there a particular reason why you do not support or are unsure about the measure I just described? *If yes, ask:* Please briefly describe your reason. Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.

Taxes already too high	36%
Money is misspent, mismanaged	22%
Need more information	21%
Other ways to be funded	8%
City services are okay as-is, no need for more money	7%
Not sure / No particular reason	7%
City has enough money	5%
Other higher priorities in community	4%
Prefer not to answer	4%
Mentioned past ballot measure	2%
Measure too expensive	2%
It will hurt local economy	2%
Money will go to employee salaries, pensions	2%

<b>Section 5: Projects &amp; Services</b>							
The measure we've been discussing will provide funding for a variety of services in your community.							
Q6 If the measure <u>passes</u> , would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? <i>Get answer, if favor or oppose, then ask: Would that be strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?</i>							
	<i>Randomize</i>	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Repair and upgrade aging community facilities such as the Joslyn Community Center, Heights Community Center, and Cultural Arts Center	22%	40%	19%	8%	8%	3%
B	Renovate or replace the City's municipal swimming pool - <b>Begg Pool</b>	27%	29%	19%	11%	11%	2%
C	Create additional parking downtown and North Manhattan Beach	26%	24%	22%	17%	8%	3%
D	Keep local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained	57%	30%	4%	2%	4%	2%
E	Expand sidewalks downtown to allow outdoor dining and improved access	51%	22%	9%	11%	4%	3%
F	Fix potholes and maintain city streets	58%	30%	4%	3%	4%	2%
G	Make improvements to roads, intersections, bike lanes, and signals to improve traffic safety and reduce congestion	47%	32%	8%	5%	6%	2%
H	Improve e-bike traffic enforcement and safety	60%	20%	7%	7%	4%	2%

<b>Section 6: Positive Arguments</b>							
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 <b>SUPPORT</b> the measure?							
	<i>Randomize. Split Sample D1/D2</i>	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Not at all convincing	Don't believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	The measure includes a clear system of accountability including citizen oversight, independent audits, and public disclosure of how all funds are spent.	29%	39%	14%	13%	3%	3%
B	Every dime raised by the measure will be reinvested back into the community to fund essential services and facilities here in Manhattan Beach. By law, the money can't be taken away by the State or County.	39%	33%	12%	11%	2%	3%

C	Currently, nearly all of the sales tax generated locally goes to the State of California or Los Angeles County. This measure will ensure that a higher percentage of our sales tax dollars stay here in Manhattan Beach.	39%	30%	18%	7%	2%	3%
D1	The City maintains 100 miles of streets, nine community facilities, and 122 acres of parks and playfields. This measure provides the funding we need to keep our streets, parks, and community facilities in good condition.	31%	44%	14%	3%	5%	3%
D2	Manhattan Beach has over \$200 million in needed repairs to streets, sidewalks, and community facilities. The longer we wait to fix these problems, the more expensive it will be.	29%	33%	22%	9%	3%	3%
E	By keeping our city safe, clean, and well-maintained, this measure will help protect our quality of life and keep Manhattan Beach a special place to live.	34%	35%	20%	6%	3%	3%
F	A sizeable percentage of the money raised by the sales tax will come from people who <i>visit</i> or pass through Manhattan Beach, but don't live here. This measure will make sure visitors pay their fair share for the facilities and services they use while in our city.	40%	28%	18%	9%	2%	3%
G	This measure costs just 50 cents for every 100 dollars purchased – and groceries, medicine, and many other essential items are excluded from the tax.	31%	32%	23%	7%	3%	3%
H	Due to their age, some of Manhattan Beach's community facilities have structural problems, earthquake safety issues, asbestos, outdated electrical and plumbing, and roof leaks that can cause water damage and mold. This measure will fix these problems.	26%	47%	15%	6%	3%	3%



Section 7: 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	To provide funding for general city services in Manhattan Beach, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained</li> <li>○ Repairing/upgrading aging community facilities</li> <li>○ Fixing potholes</li> <li>○ And improving parking availability and traffic safety</li> </ul>		
	Shall City of Manhattan Beach’s ordinance establishing a one-half cent sales tax be adopted, providing 5 million dollars annually until ended by voters for general government use that can’t be taken away by the State, 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:</i> Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?		
	1	Definitely yes	28%
	2	Probably yes	39%
	3	Probably no	12%
	4	Definitely no	13%
98	Not sure	7%	
99	Prefer not to answer	0%	

Section 8: 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	Don't believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Local residents and businesses have been hit hard by inflation, high interest rates, and high gas prices. Many are struggling to stay afloat. Now is not the time to raise taxes.	34%	30%	27%	5%	3%	2%
B	Manhattan Beach 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.	32%	32%	28%	5%	2%	2%

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.	33%	36%	21%	6%	3%	2%
D	Residents are already paying too many taxes - including state and county taxes, school bonds, and other taxes. There are also a lot of <i>new</i> taxes on the November ballot. Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes.	43%	28%	23%	3%	1%	2%
E	This tax will last forever - it will never expire.	38%	26%	23%	8%	3%	1%

**Section 9: 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.

Q10	To provide funding for general city services in Manhattan Beach, such as:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Keeping local streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and parks safe, clean, and well-maintained</li> <li>o Repairing/upgrading aging community facilities</li> <li>o Fixing potholes</li> <li>o And improving parking availability and traffic safety</li> </ul>	
	Shall City of Manhattan Beach's ordinance establishing a one-half cent sales tax be adopted, providing 5 million dollars annually until ended by voters for general government use that can't be taken away by the State, 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:</i> Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?	
	1	Definitely yes 26%
	2	Probably yes 31%
	3	Probably no 17%
4	Definitely no 16%	
98	Not sure 8%	
99	Prefer not to answer 1%	

**Section 10: Background & Demographics**

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

**Q11** In your opinion, has the City of Manhattan Beach done an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job of managing its financial resources?

1	Excellent	6%
2	Good	38%
3	Fair	32%
4	Poor	10%
5	Very poor	2%
98	Not sure	11%
99	Prefer not to answer	1%

**Q12** Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household?

1	Yes	33%
2	No	66%
99	Prefer not to answer	1%

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	Democrat	49%
2	Republican	49%
3	Non-binary	0%
4	Prefer not to answer	2%

**S2** Party

1	Democrat	42%
2	Republican	28%
3	Other	8%
4	DTS	23%

S3 Age on Voter File		
1	18 to 29	17%
2	30 to 39	12%
3	40 to 49	16%
4	50 to 64	29%
5	65 or older	26%
S4 Registration Date		
1	Since Nov 2018	18%
2	Jun 2012 to before Nov 2018	15%
3	Jun 2006 to before Jun 2012	10%
4	Before June 2006	57%
S5 Household Party Type		
1	Single Dem	17%
2	Dual Dem	14%
3	Single Rep	10%
4	Dual Rep	8%
5	Single Other	11%
6	Dual Other	6%
7	Dem & Rep	6%
8	Dem & Other	12%
9	Rep & Other	13%
0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	4%
S6 Homeowner on Voter File		
1	Yes	74%
2	No	26%
S7 Likely to Vote by Mail		
1	Yes	71%
2	No	29%

S8		
Likely November 2024 Voter		
1	Yes	100%
2	No	0%
S9		
Voting Propensity		
1	High	76%
2	Medium / Low	24%