Stormwater Fee Survey
Summary Report

Prepared for the
City of Manhattan Beach

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

INTRODUCTION

Located along the coastal edge of Los Angeles County, the City of Manhattan Beach is currently home to an estimated 34,284 residents.[1] 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.

As Manhattan Beach has grown, so too have the demands placed upon its facilities, services, infrastructure, and staff. Unfortunately, the City's revenue streams have not kept pace with the growing demands and escalating costs, leading to shortfalls in the funding required to provide essential municipal services at the desired levels of service. One area, in particular, has consistently experienced costs that are well in excess of dedicated revenue streams: maintaining the City's stormwater infrastructure and addressing stormwater pollution.

STORMWATER POLLUTION Under the Federal Clean Water Act, each county and municipality throughout the nation is issued a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. The goal of the permit is to stop polluted discharges from entering the storm drain system, local water sources, and coastal waters. The City of Manhattan Beach is responsible for developing and implementing public improvements and services designed to not only meet the requirements of the federal NPDES Permit, but also improve public health by identifying, controlling, and removing pollution from the stormdrain system, local water sources, and coastal waters.

In order to provide for the safety of the residents, protect property in the city from damage associated with flooding, and to meet the requirements of the NPDES permit, it is necessary to design, construct, operate, maintain, improve and replace storm drainage facilities which collect storm and surface water runoff, as well as convey and treat such runoff in a safe manner to an acceptable point of discharge. It is also necessary to inspect, monitor, and take enforcement action related to illegal dumping and illicit discharges. To adequately fund such facilities and activities, the City has determined that it is necessary to update and increase the fee for storm drainage services.[2]

MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH The primary purpose of this study was to produce an unbiased, statistically reliable evaluation of property owners' interest in supporting a local revenue measure to address stormwater infrastructure and pollution in the City of Manhattan Beach. Additionally, should the City decide to move forward with a measure, the survey data can guide how best to structure a measure so that it is consistent with the community's priorities and expressed needs. Specifically, the study was designed to:

- Gauge current, baseline support for a local revenue measure to provide funding for stormwater infrastructure repairs and to reduce stormwater pollution
- Identify the fee rate that the community is willing to support

1. Source: California Department of Finance City/County Population Estimates, January 2023.
2. Source: *Preliminary Analysis for the Stormwater Utility Fee* conducted for the City of Manhattan Beach by Harris & Associates.

- Identify the types of services and improvements that property owners are most interested in funding, should the measure pass
- Expose property owners to arguments in favor of, and against, the proposed measure to gauge how information affects support for the measure, *and*
- Estimate support for the measure once property owners are presented with the types of information they will likely be exposed to during the ballot proceeding.

It is important to note at the outset that property owners' opinions about revenue measures are often somewhat fluid, especially when the amount of information they initially have about a measure is limited. How property owners 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 in the months leading up to a vote. Accordingly, to accurately estimate the feasibility of establishing a revenue measure, it was important that in addition to measuring *current* opinions about the measure (Question 4), the survey expose respondents to the types of information property owners are likely to encounter prior to a vote—including arguments in favor (Question 8) and opposed (Question 10) to the measure—and gauge how this information ultimately impacts their voting decision (Questions 9 and 11).

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW To raise the funds needed to address stormwater pollution, the City is considering a property-related fee. A property-related fee is voted on by all property owners in the city who are being asked to pay the new fee. In addition to residential property owners, owners of other types of properties (i.e., commercial, industrial, apartments, etc.) as well as absentee owners are eligible to participate. Because all affected property owners can participate in a property-related fee, a majority of ballots returned (one vote per parcel) is required for approval. In a property-related fee ballot proceeding, all property owners are typically mailed a ballot that includes an information sheet, but does not include arguments in support or opposition as is the case with a special tax. Most of the funding measures for similar water and stormwater quality programs in California have been property-owner balloted, property-related fees.[3]

The survey methodology was appropriately tailored to measure residential property owner support for the proposed stormwater fee. Property owners were selected using a stratified, random sampling methodology to ensure the proper distribution of respondents within property size/fee categories. Once selected, property owners were recruited to participate in the survey using a combination of recruiting methods (email, text & telephone) and allowed to participate either online or by telephone. During the data collection period (July 12 to July 22, 2023), 423 residential property owners participated in the study, with telephone interviews averaging 15 minutes in length. For a full discussion of the research methods and techniques used in this study, turn to *Methodology* on page 28.[4]

3. Examples include fees established in Rancho Palos Verdes, Palo Alto, Burlingame, and San Clemente.
4. It should be noted that residential property owners represent the vast majority of the individuals who are eligible to participate in a stormwater fee ballot proceeding. However, other types of property owners—including owners of commercial, industrial, and apartments properties—are also eligible to participate. The purpose of this survey was to profile the support levels among residential property owners only. However, we have factored in the anticipated vote total and expected levels of support from non-residential property owners when drawing conclusions about the feasibility of a stormwater fee measure and making recommendations to the City about how to proceed (see *Key Findings* on page 4).

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 findings of the survey and a discussion of their implications. For the interested reader, this section is followed by a more detailed question-by-question discussion of the results from the survey by topic area (see *Table of Contents*), as well as a description of the methodology employed for collecting and analyzing the data. And, for the truly ambitious reader, the questionnaire used for the interviews is contained at the back of this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31) and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS True North thanks the City of Manhattan Beach for the opportunity to assist the City in this important effort. The collective expertise, insight, and local knowledge 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, organizational development, establishing fiscal priorities, passing revenue measures, and developing effective public information campaigns.

During their careers, Dr. McLarney and Mr. Sarles have designed and conducted over 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 successful 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 property owners' interest in supporting a local revenue measure to fund stormwater infrastructure and address stormwater pollution. 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.

Does a property-related fee to fund stormwater improvements appear feasible?

Yes. Manhattan Beach property owners value the high quality of life in the City and they recognize the role that stormwater infrastructure and clean water occupy in keeping Manhattan Beach a special place to live. These sentiments translate to solid natural support (62%) for establishing a modest property-related fee to install and maintain devices in storm drains that keep trash and pollution off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean; monitor, investigate, and prosecute illegal discharges of pollution; reconstruct or replace aging storm drains that are at risk for collapse or failure; reduce flooding in neighborhoods; and protect public health by removing pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff that drains to the ocean.

The results of this survey indicate that a stormwater measure is likely feasible in the current environment provided that it is kept affordable, focuses on projects and improvements that property owners identify as their priorities, *and* is accompanied by robust community/opinion leader engagement, education, and communication (more on this below).

Having stated that a measure appears to be feasible, it is important to note that the measure's prospects will be shaped by external factors and that a recommendation to move forward with a ballot proceeding 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.

How might owners of commercial, industrial, an apartment properties impact the measure's prospects?

Property-related fees are unique among the financial mechanisms available to public agencies. Unlike special tax measures that are decided by registered voters, a property-related fee requires that those who participate own property in the designed area. In addition to residential property owners, owners of other types of properties (i.e., commercial, industrial, apartments, etc.) as well as absentee owners[5] are eligible to

5. A person who does not live in the City but does own property in Manhattan Beach is still eligible to participate in the ballot proceeding.

participate. Assessment ballot proceedings also employ different voting procedures, as all property owners are typically mailed a ballot that includes an information sheet, but does not include arguments in support or opposition as is the case with a special tax.

Although the survey found strong support for the proposed stormwater measure among residential property owners, it is also the case that this support is likely to be tempered by lower support among owners of commercial properties, industrial properties, and apartments. Collectively, owners of these types of properties appear to account for less than 15% of parcels that would be impacted by the fee, and they also tend to cast ballots at a lower rate than residential property owners. With this in mind, we estimate that factoring in the votes from commercial, industrial and apartment property owners would reduce the overall support level for the measure by approximately 6% to 56%.

How does the proposed fee amount impact property owner support for the measure?

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

As expected, support for the proposed stormwater measure was inversely related to the proposed fee amount. However, support did not follow a linear pattern in relation to the fee. Owners of properties with a proposed fee under $75 annually were the most supportive of the measure, with 69% indicating they would support the measure at the Initial Ballot Test. Once the fee eclipsed $75, support declined, but was relatively stable across the remaining fee categories, ranging between 58% to 61% across categories of $75 to $124, $125 to $149, and $150 or more.

It is also noteworthy that reducing the proposed fees at the individual level did not result in a large change in aggregate support for the proposed measure. When the proposed fee per parcel was reduced by 25%, aggregate support for the stormwater measure increased just 3%. Even when the fee was cut in half (50%), overall support for the stormwater measure increased just 9%.

What services and projects do property owners identify as priorities for the measure?

One of the goals of this study was to identify property owners' preferences with respect to how the proceeds of a successful measure should be spent. This information can be used to ensure that the resulting list of services to be funded by the measure is consistent with property owners' priorities.

Residential property owners in Manhattan Beach clearly see a need for the proposed services and projects that could be funded by the measure. In fact, all of the services and projects tested were favored by at least 65% of respondents. That said, property owners expressed the *greatest* interest in using measure proceeds to reconstruct or replace storm drains that are identified by engineers as being at risk for collapse or failure (87% strongly or somewhat favor), install and maintain devices in storm drains that capture trash and pollution before they enter our waterways (86%), inspect and test storm water quality on a regular basis to ensure that it meets clean water standards (84%), and keep trash and pollutants off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean (84%).

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 property owners' opinions about the proposal.

It is clear from the survey results that property owners' opinions about the proposed stormwater measure are somewhat sensitive to the nature—and amount—of information that they have about the measure. Information about the specific improvements that could be funded by the measure, as well as arguments in favor of the measure, were found by many property owners to be compelling reasons to support the proposal. However, respondents also exhibited sensitivity to opposition arguments, and there is a risk that property owners could be swayed by divisive and hyper-partisan campaigning as the 2024 election cycle ramps up. Accordingly, one of the keys to building and *sustaining* support for the stormwater 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 stormwater measure is feasible. Even with lingering concerns regarding the pandemic, inflation, high gas prices, and the trajectory of the economy, property owners were supportive of the proposed stormwater measure. It is also noteworthy that support for the stormwater fee has remained quite consistent over the past few years, as the 2023 survey results are strikingly similar to those of a similar survey conducted in 2020 even though the fee amounts proposed in 2023 were significantly higher.

On the other hand, the months leading up to a ballot proceeding are likely to be punctuated with significant events on the public health, economic, and political fronts. Exactly how these events unfold and may shape voters' opinions remains to be seen. Should the economy and/or political climate improve, support for the measure could increase. Conversely, negative economic and/or political developments (including devolving into a hyper-partisan 2024 election environment) 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 respondents' opinions regarding the overall quality of life in Manhattan Beach, as well as 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, nearly all respondents (92%) shared favorable opinions of the quality of life in Manhattan Beach, with 51% reporting it is excellent and 41% stating it is good. Approximately 7% of respondents surveyed said the quality of life in the City is fair, whereas less than 1% used poor or very poor to describe the quality of life in Manhattan Beach.

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

FIGURE 1 QUALITY OF LIFE

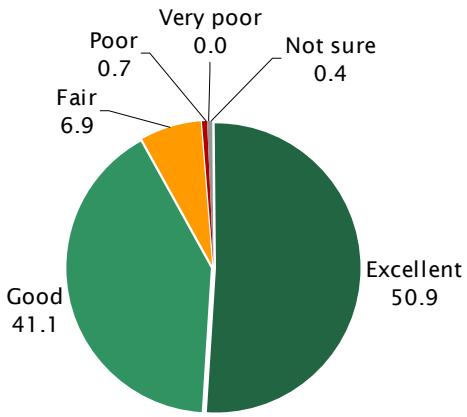
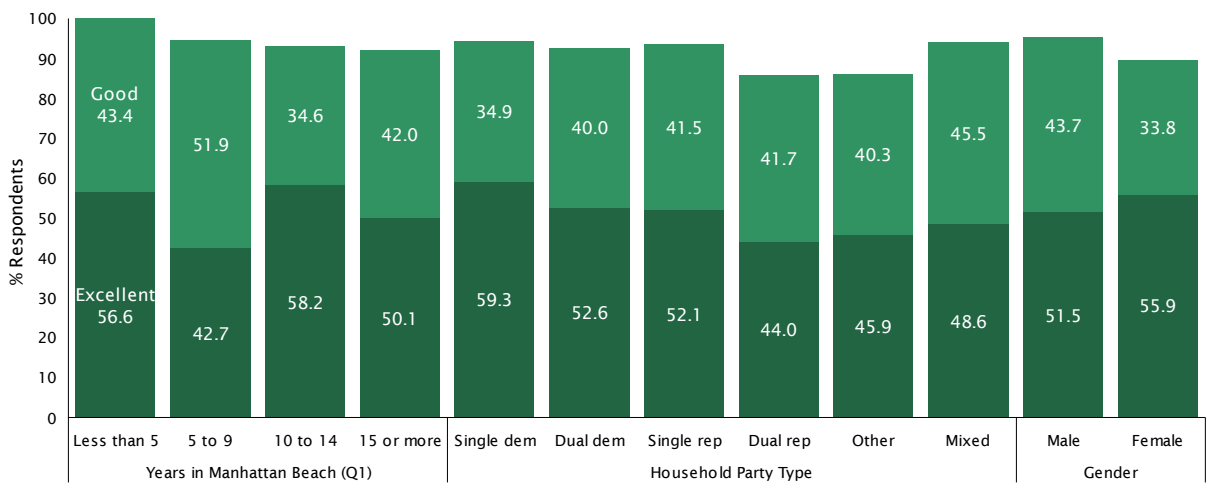


Figure 2 shows how ratings of the quality of life in Manhattan Beach varied according to length of residence, household party type, and gender. Although some subgroups (e.g., those who have lived in the City less than five years or between 10 and 14 years and single Democratic households) were more likely than their counterparts to rate the quality of life in the City as excellent, the most striking pattern in the figure is the *consistency* of opinion. At least eight-in-ten respondents in every subgroup rated the overall quality of life in Manhattan Beach as excellent or good.

FIGURE 2 QUALITY OF LIFE BY YEARS IN MANHATTAN, HOUSEHOLD PARTY TYPE & GENDER



OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING The next question in this series asked respondents to indicate if, overall, they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Manhattan Beach 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 3 below, 87% of Manhattan Beach residents surveyed indicated that they were satisfied with the City's efforts to provide municipal services, with 34% saying they were very satisfied and 53% somewhat satisfied. Approximately 10% reported that they were dissatisfied with the City's overall performance, whereas 3% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion. For the interested reader, Figure 4 displays how the percentage of respondents satisfied with the City's overall performance varied across several demographic subgroups.

Question 3 *Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Manhattan Beach is doing to provide city services?*

FIGURE 3 SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES

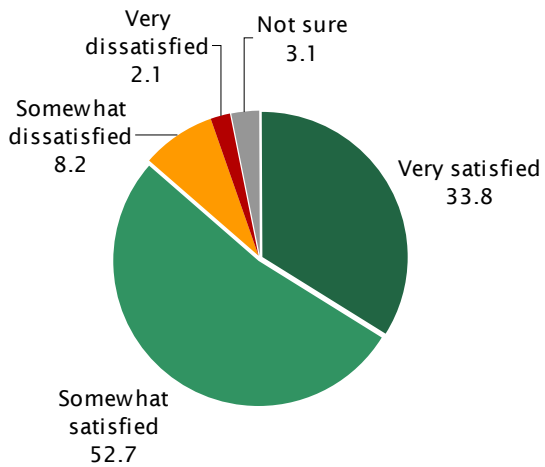
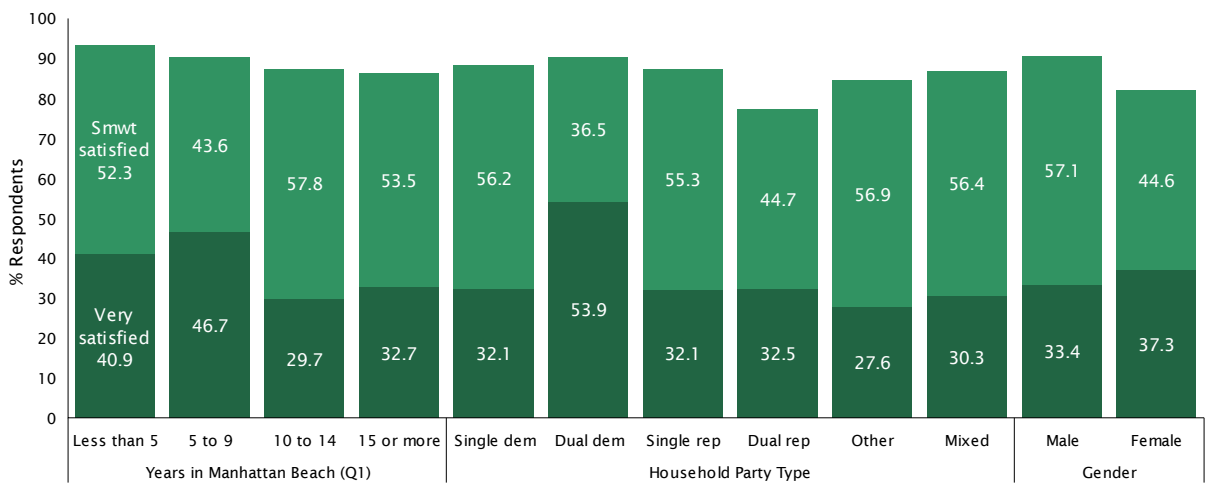


FIGURE 4 SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES BY YEARS IN MANHATTAN, HOUSEHOLD PARTY TYPE & GENDER



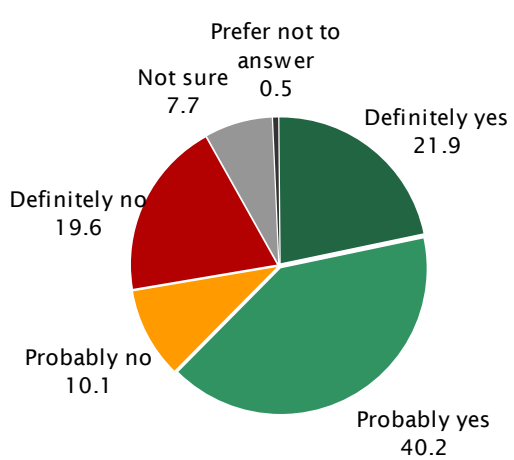
Initial Ballot Test

The primary research objective of this survey was to estimate residential property owners' support for establishing a property-related fee to install and maintain devices in storm drains that keep trash and pollution off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean; monitor, investigate, and prosecute illegal discharges of pollution; reconstruct or replace aging storm drains that are at risk for collapse or failure; reduce flooding in neighborhoods; and protect public health by removing pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff that drains to the ocean. To this end, Question 4 was designed to take an early assessment of respondents' support for the proposed measure.

The motivation for placing Question 4 near the front of the survey is twofold. First, support for a measure can often depend on the amount of information individuals 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 individual 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 respondent 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 individual support for the measure. Note that each property owner was presented with a rate that was specific to their property based on analyses conducted for the City of Manhattan Beach by Harris & Associates.

Question 4 *In order to install and maintain devices in storm drains that keep trash and pollution off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean; monitor, investigate, and prosecute illegal discharges of pollution; reconstruct or replace aging storm drains that are at risk for collapse or failure; reduce flooding in neighborhoods; and protect public health by removing pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff that drains to the ocean; shall property owners in Manhattan Beach be assessed an annual fee for each property that they own? The fee for your property would be approximately: $<<Rate A>> per year. 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, 62% of residential property owners surveyed indicated that they would support the proposed stormwater fee, whereas 30% stated that they would oppose the measure and 8% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice. For property-related fees in California, the level of support recorded at the Initial Ballot Test among residential property owners is approximately 12 percentage points above the simple majority (50%+1) required for passage.

SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS Table 1 shows how support at the Initial Ballot Test for the stormwater measure varied by the proposed rate and key demographic traits. The blue column (Approximate % of Universe) indicates the percentage of the residential property owner universe that each subgroup category comprises. When compared to their respective counterparts, initial support for the proposed stormwater fee was highest among Democrats, those generally satisfied with the City's overall performance in providing municipal services, newer residents (less than 5 years), and those with a proposed fee (Rate A) of less than $75 per year.

TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

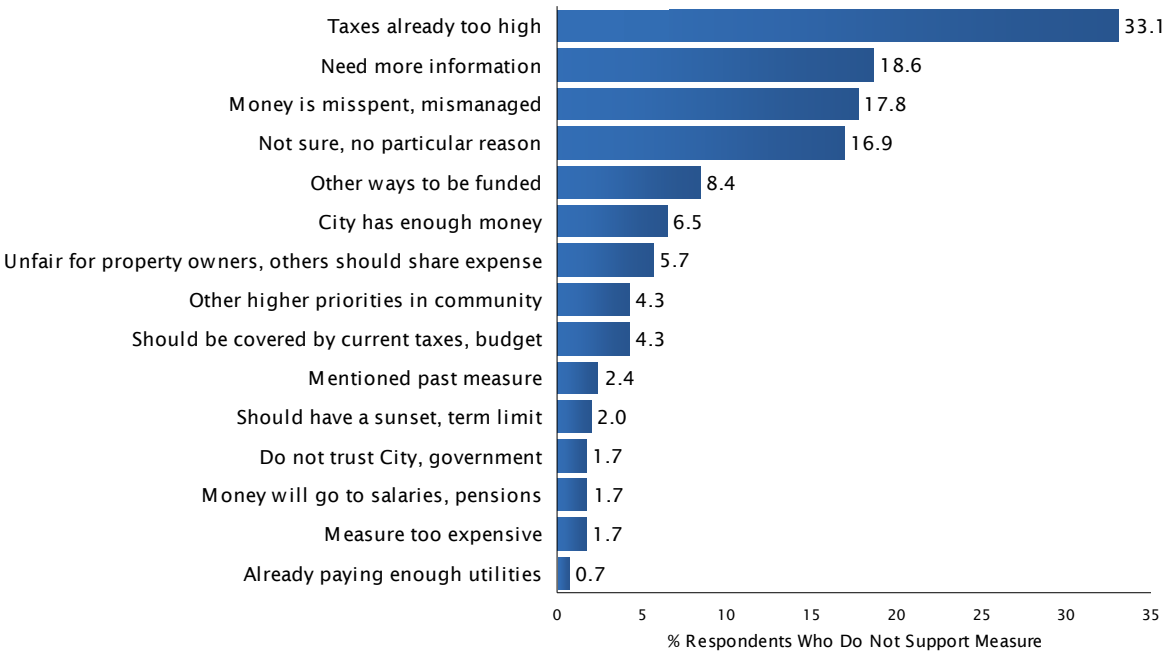
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100.0	62.1	7.7
Household Party Type	Single dem	20.2	72.1	10.5
	Dual dem	13.6	83.5	3.2
	Single rep	11.1	57.1	6.4
	Dual rep	8.0	44.5	6.7
	Other	15.4	63.5	7.6
	Mixed	31.8	52.2	8.5
Overall Satisfaction (Q3)	Satisfied	89.3	65.2	7.8
	Dissatisfied	10.7	39.2	6.6
Lot Size Sqft	<2,500	13.6	58.6	10.7
	2,500 to 3,999	20.7	68.6	5.6
	4,000 to 4,999	20.0	60.1	5.1
	5,000 to 6,999	21.9	61.2	8.2
	7,000 to 8,999	20.3	61.5	11.1
	9,000+	3.6	58.1	0.0
Years in Manhattan Beach (Q1)	Less than 5	7.0	76.0	3.9
	5 to 9	5.1	55.8	9.3
	10 to 14	10.5	57.5	7.1
	15 or more	77.4	61.7	7.8
Proposed Rate A	Less than $75	22.3	69.3	6.8
	$75 to $124	34.6	60.1	7.6
	$125 to $149	16.4	58.4	5.2
	$150 or more	26.7	61.0	10.0
Gender	Male	63.5	62.7	5.7
	Female	36.5	63.7	10.2

REASONS FOR OPPOSING 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.

Among the specific reasons offered for not supporting the measure (see Figure 6 on the next page), a belief that taxes are already too high was the most common (33%), followed by a need for additional information about the measure (19%), and concerns that city funds have been/will be mismanaged or misspent (18%).

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



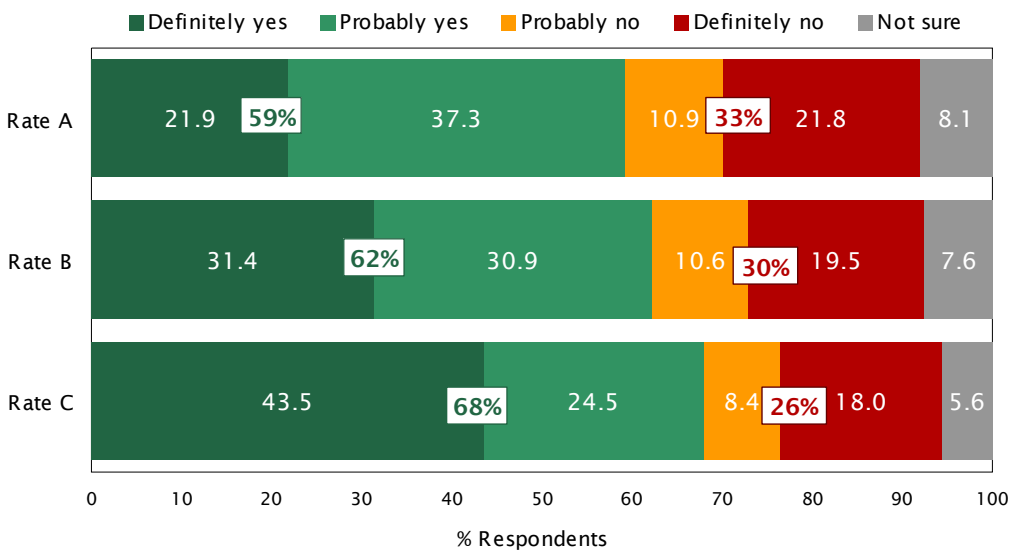
Fee Threshold

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

Question 6 was designed to do just that. Respondents were first instructed that the fee rate for the measure had yet to be determined, although several rates were being considered. They were then presented with the highest amount for their property based on the preliminary engineer's analysis (Rate A) and asked if they would support the proposed measure at that amount. If a respondent did not answer 'definitely yes', they were asked whether they would support the measure at the next lowest rate (Rate B), and so on. Note that Rate B was 75% of the Rate A amount, whereas Rate C was 50% of Rate A. The three rates tested, as well as the percentage of respondents who indicated they would vote in favor of the measure at each rate, are shown below in Figure 7 below.

Question 6 *The measure I just described would raise money from residential and commercial property owners in the City. However, the amount to be charged to each parcel has not been determined yet. If you heard that the fee would be _____ per year for each property you own in Manhattan Beach, would you vote yes or no on the measure?*

Figure 7 Tax Threshold



At the highest proposed rate for each property based on the engineer's assessment, 59% of property owners surveyed indicated they would support the measure. Incremental reductions in the fee rate resulted in incremental increases in support for the measure, with support for the proposed measure at Rate C (half of Rate A) being found among 68% of property owners.

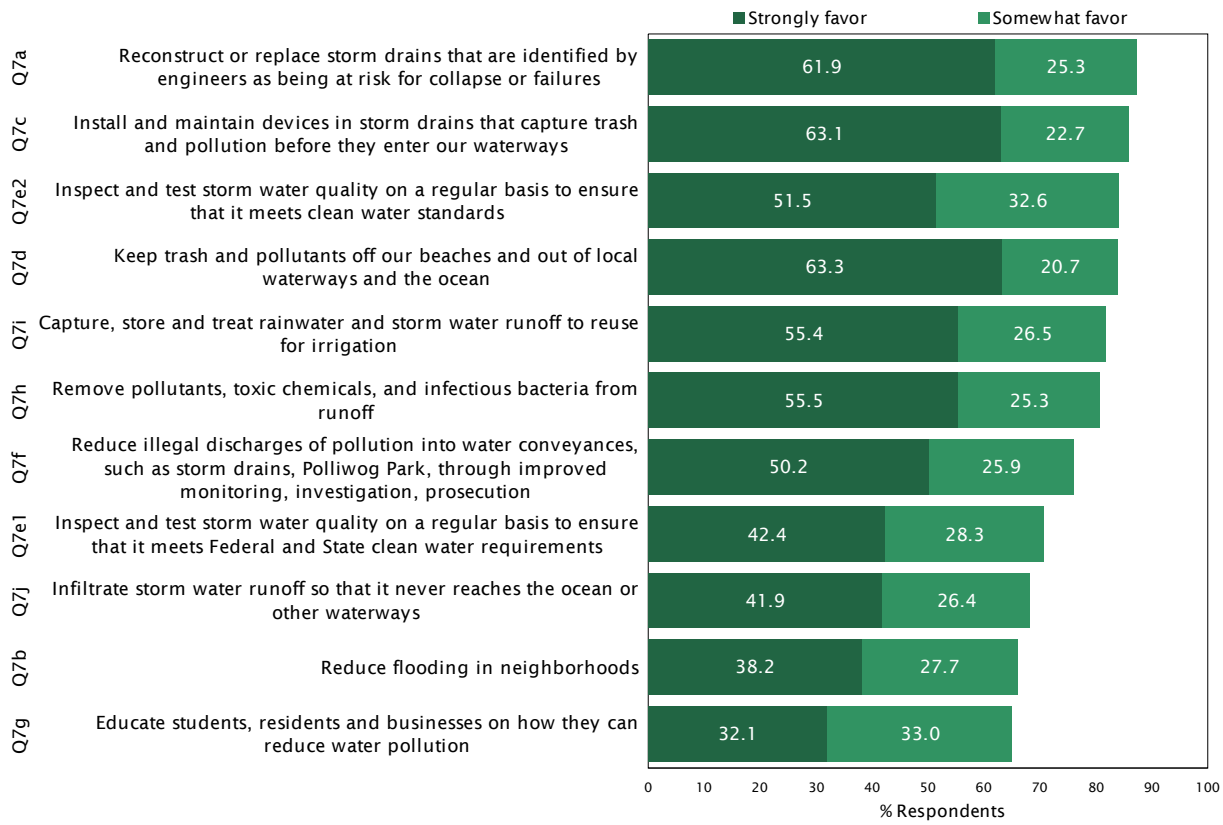
Projects & Programs

The ballot language presented in Question 4 indicated that the proposed measure would provide funding to install and maintain devices in storm drains that keep trash and pollution off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean; monitor, investigate, and prosecute illegal discharges of pollution; reconstruct or replace aging storm drains that are at risk for collapse or failure; reduce flooding in neighborhoods; and protect public health by removing pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff that drains to the ocean. 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 respondents 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 individuals' responses, are shown in Figure 8 below. 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 fund a variety of storm water-related projects and services in the City. If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion?*

Figure 8 Projects & Programs



Overall, the services that found the broadest support for funding were reconstructing or replacing storm drains that are identified by engineers as being at risk for collapse or failure (87% strongly or somewhat favor), installing and maintaining devices in storm drains that capture trash and pollution before they enter our waterways (86%), inspecting and testing storm water quality on a regular basis to ensure that it meets clean water standards (84%), and keeping trash and pollutants off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean (84%).

SERVICE RATINGS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 2 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 & PROGRAMS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q4)	Item	Project or Programs Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely **Yes** (*n* = 263)	Q7d	Keep trash and pollutants off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean	82
	Q7c	Install and maintain devices in storm drains that capture trash and pollution before they enter our waterways	81
	Q7a	Reconstruct or replace storm drains that are identified by engineers as being at risk for collapse or failures	77
	Q7h	Remove pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff	73
	Q7i	Capture, store and treat rainwater and storm water runoff to reuse for irrigation	69
Probably or Definitely **No** (*n* = 126)	Q7a	Reconstruct or replace storm drains that are identified by engineers as being at risk for collapse or failures	34
	Q7c	Install and maintain devices in storm drains that capture trash and pollution before they enter our waterways	32
	Q7d	Keep trash and pollutants off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean	30
	Q7i	Capture, store and treat rainwater and storm water runoff to reuse for irrigation	28
	Q7e2	Inspect and test storm water quality on a regular basis to ensure that it meets clean water standards	26
Not Sure (*n* = 32)	Q7a	Reconstruct or replace storm drains that are identified by engineers as being at risk for collapse or failures	51
	Q7i	Capture, store and treat rainwater and storm water runoff to reuse for irrigation	46
	Q7e1	Inspect and test storm water quality on a regular basis to ensure that it meets Federal and State clean water requirements	45
	Q7d	Keep trash and pollutants off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean	43
	Q7c	Install and maintain devices in storm drains that capture trash and pollution before they enter our waterways	42

Positive Arguments

If the City chooses to present a stormwater fee to the community for approval, property owners will be exposed to various arguments about the measure in the ensuing months. Proponents of the measure will present arguments to try to persuade the community to support a measure, just as opponents may present arguments to achieve the opposite goal. For this study to be a reliable gauge of residential property owner support for the proposed stormwater fee, 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 individuals' 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 9 Positive Arguments

Figure 9 presents the truncated positive arguments tested, as well as respondents' 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 stormwater measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive arguments were: *Most of the City's storm drainpipes were installed more than 50 years ago and are starting to fail, creating sinkholes and flooding that damage streets and private properties. This measure provides the funding needed to fix our storm drains* (75% very or somewhat convincing), *It is a lot cheaper to fix a storm drain now than to pay for reconstruction, property damage and lawsuits when a pipe fails* (74%), and *By capturing rainwater and storm water runoff to be recycled for irrigation, we can reduce the impacts of future droughts and preserve our fresh drinking water* (73%).

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 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

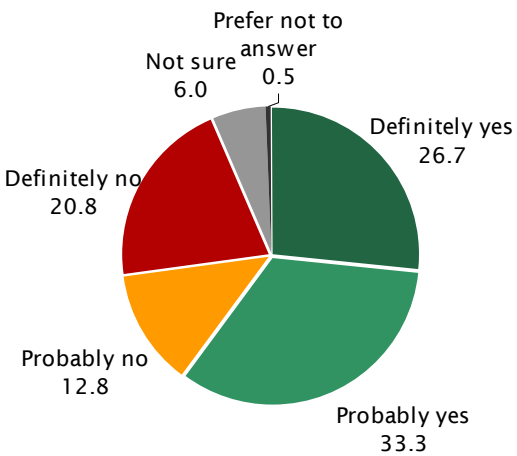
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q4)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely **Yes** (*n* = 263)	Q8h	Most of City's storm drainpipes were installed 50+ yrs ago, are starting to fail, creating sinkholes, flooding that damage streets, private properties; measure provides funding needed to fix storm drains	66
	Q8f	By law, all of money raised by measure must be spent locally to protect water quality; it can't be taken away by State, be used for other purposes	62
	Q8i	It is a lot cheaper to fix a storm drain now than to pay for reconstruction, property damage and lawsuits when a pipe fails	60
	Q8j	Every year, thousands of pounds of trash from streets washes up on local beaches; measure will help prevent, clean up trash, pollution before it ends up in water, on shorelines, beaches	58
	Q8c	Storm water runoff carries tons of trash, infectious bacteria and toxic pollutants directly to ocean, local beaches; measure is one of best ways to protect ocean water quality, public health	57
Probably or Definitely **No** (*n* = 126)	Q8f	By law, all of money raised by measure must be spent locally to protect water quality; it can't be taken away by State, be used for other purposes	17
	Q8k	By capturing rainwater, storm water runoff to be recycled for irrigation, we can reduce the impacts of future droughts, preserve fresh drinking water	13
	Q8h	Most of City's storm drainpipes were installed 50+ yrs ago, are starting to fail, creating sinkholes, flooding that damage streets, private properties; measure provides funding needed to fix storm drains	13
	Q8i	It is a lot cheaper to fix a storm drain now than to pay for reconstruction, property damage and lawsuits when a pipe fails	13
	Q8j	Every year, thousands of pounds of trash from streets washes up on local beaches; measure will help prevent, clean up trash, pollution before it ends up in water, on shorelines, beaches	12
Not Sure (*n* = 32)	Q8h	Most of City's storm drainpipes were installed 50+ yrs ago, are starting to fail, creating sinkholes, flooding that damage streets, private properties; measure provides funding needed to fix storm drains	30
	Q8i	It is a lot cheaper to fix a storm drain now than to pay for reconstruction, property damage and lawsuits when a pipe fails	24
	Q8c	Storm water runoff carries tons of trash, infectious bacteria and toxic pollutants directly to ocean, local beaches; measure is one of best ways to protect ocean water quality, public health	21
	Q8j	Every year, thousands of pounds of trash from streets washes up on local beaches; measure will help prevent, clean up trash, pollution before it ends up in water, on shorelines, beaches	21
	Q8f	By law, all of money raised by measure must be spent locally to protect water quality; it can't be taken away by State, be used for other purposes	18

Interim Ballot Test

After exposing respondents to services that could be funded by the measure as well as the types of positive arguments they may encounter during the ballot proceeding, the survey again presented respondents with the ballot language used previously to gauge how support for the proposed stormwater fee may have changed. As shown in Figure 10, overall support among residential property owners dipped slightly to 60%, with 27% indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes on the measure. Approximately 33% 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. In order to install and maintain devices in storm drains that keep trash and pollution off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean; monitor, investigate, and prosecute illegal discharges of pollution; reconstruct or replace aging storm drains that are at risk for collapse or failure; reduce flooding in neighborhoods; and protect public health by removing pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff that drains to the ocean; shall property owners in Manhattan Beach be assessed an annual fee for each property that they own? The fee for your property would be approximately: $<<Rate A>> per year. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

Figure 10 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 subgroups, as well as the change in subgroup support when compared with the Initial Ballot Test. Positive differences appear in green and negative differences appear in red. As shown in the table, support for the stormwater fee increased or decreased by modest amounts (less than 4 percentage points) between the Initial and Interim Ballot Test for nearly all residential property owner subgroups, with notable exceptions being those in single Republican households (-6%) and those who have lived in Manhattan Beach less than five years (-7%).

TABLE 4 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST

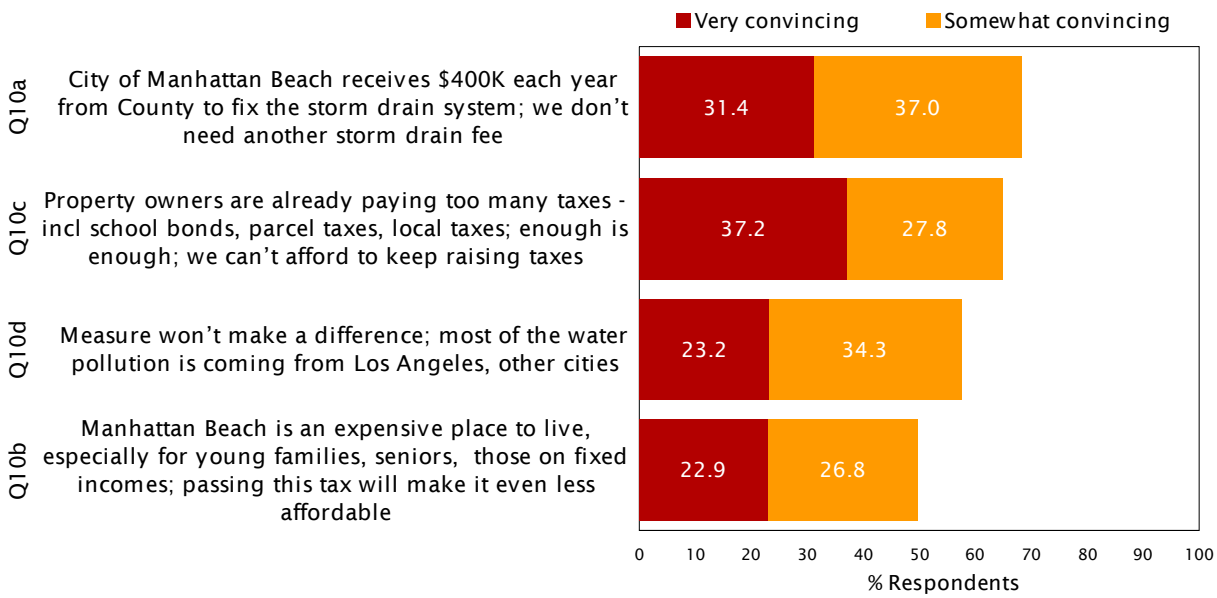
		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q4)
Overall		100.0	60.0	-2.2
Household Party Type	Single dem	20.2	73.3	+1.2
	Dual dem	13.6	87.1	+3.6
	Single rep	11.1	50.8	-6.3
	Dual rep	8.0	41.3	-3.2
	Other	15.4	60.7	-2.7
	Mixed	31.8	47.4	-4.8
Overall Satisfaction (Q3)	Satisfied	89.3	62.3	-2.8
	Dissatisfied	10.7	39.2	No change
Lot Size Sqft	<2,500	13.6	60.0	+1.4
	2,500 to 3,999	20.7	69.8	+1.2
	4,000 to 4,999	20.0	55.6	-4.5
	5,000 to 6,999	21.9	55.8	-5.4
	7,000 to 8,999	20.3	58.9	-2.6
	9,000+	3.6	58.1	No change
Years in Manhattan Beach (Q1)	Less than 5	7.0	69.1	-6.9
	5 to 9	5.1	55.6	-0.3
	10 to 14	10.5	55.4	-2.1
	15 or more	77.4	59.8	-1.9
Proposed Rate A	Less than $75	22.3	68.2	-1.1
	$75 to $124	34.6	60.1	No change
	$125 to $149	16.4	53.2	-5.2
	$150 or more	26.7	57.0	-4.0
Gender	Male	63.5	58.3	-4.4
	Female	36.5	66.5	+2.7

Negative Arguments

Whereas Question 8 of the survey presented respondents with arguments in favor of the storm-water 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 respondents' opinions about the arguments, are presented below in Figure 11.

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 11 Negative Arguments



Most respondents found the negative arguments tested to be less convincing than the positive arguments. The most compelling negative arguments were: *The City of Manhattan Beach receives 400 thousand dollars each year from the County to fix the storm drain system. We don't need another storm drain fee* (68%), *Property owners are already paying too many taxes - including school bonds, parcel taxes, and local taxes. Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes* (65%), and *This measure won't make a difference. Most of the water pollution is coming from Los Angeles and other cities* (58%).

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

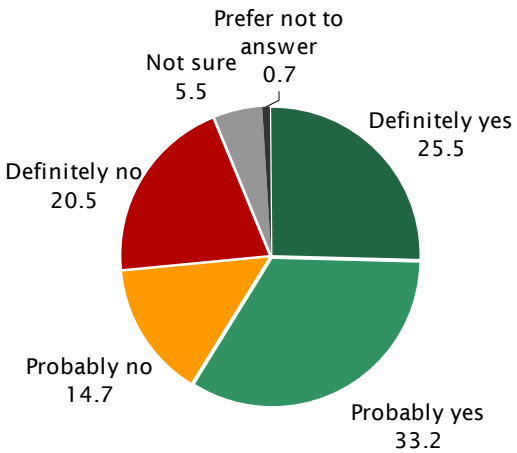
Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q4)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely **Yes** (*n* = 263)	Q10c	Property owners are already paying too many taxes - incl school bonds, parcel taxes, local taxes; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	20
	Q10a	City of Manhattan Beach receives $400K each year from County to fix the storm drain system; we don't need another storm drain fee	20
	Q10d	Measure won't make a difference; most of the water pollution is coming from Los Angeles, other cities	12
	Q10b	Manhattan Beach is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors,	10
Probably or Definitely **No** (*n* = 126)	Q10c	Property owners are already paying too many taxes - incl school bonds, parcel taxes, local taxes; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	75
	Q10a	City of Manhattan Beach receives $400K each year from County to fix the storm drain system; we don't need another storm drain fee	59
	Q10b	Manhattan Beach is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing this tax will make it even less affordable	52
	Q10d	Measure won't make a difference; most of the water pollution is coming from Los Angeles, other cities	45
Not Sure (*n* = 32)	Q10c	Property owners are already paying too many taxes - incl school bonds, parcel taxes, local taxes; enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes	33
	Q10d	Measure won't make a difference; most of the water pollution is coming from Los Angeles, other cities	28
	Q10a	City of Manhattan Beach receives $400K each year from County to fix the storm drain system; we don't need another storm drain fee	23
	Q10b	Manhattan Beach is an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing this tax will make it even less affordable	18

Final Ballot Test

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 residential property owners' 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 stormwater 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. beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean; monitor, investigate, and prosecute illegal discharges of pollution; reconstruct or replace aging storm drains that are at risk for collapse or failure; reduce flooding in neighborhoods; and protect public health by removing pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff that drains to the ocean; shall property owners in Manhattan Beach be assessed an annual fee for each property that they own? The fee for your property would be approximately: $<<Rate A>> per year. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

Figure 12 Final Ballot Test



At this point in the survey, support for the stormwater measure was found among 59% of residential property owners, with 26% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 35% of respondents were opposed to the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 6% 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 respondents. 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 (Q10)
Overall		100.0	58.7	-3.5	-1.3
Household Party Type	Single dem	20.2	72.0	-0.1	-1.3
	Dual dem	13.6	83.6	+0.1	-3.5
	Single rep	11.1	46.4	-10.7	-4.4
	Dual rep	8.0	38.0	-6.5	-3.3
	Other	15.4	59.0	-4.4	-1.7
	Mixed	31.8	48.9	-3.4	+1.4
Overall Satisfaction (Q3)	Satisfied	89.3	60.9	-4.3	-1.4
	Dissatisfied	10.7	36.7	-2.4	-2.4
Lot Size Sqft	<2,500	13.6	58.1	-0.5	-1.9
	2,500 to 3,999	20.7	65.6	-3.0	-4.2
	4,000 to 4,999	20.0	54.5	-5.6	-1.1
	5,000 to 6,999	21.9	56.4	-4.8	+0.5
	7,000 to 8,999	20.3	58.7	-2.9	-0.3
	9,000+	3.6	58.1	No change	No change
Years in Manhattan Beach (Q1)	Less than 5	7.0	75.4	-0.6	+6.3
	5 to 9	5.1	50.4	-5.4	-5.2
	10 to 14	10.5	54.9	-2.6	-0.5
	15 or more	77.4	57.9	-3.8	-1.9
Proposed Rate A	Less than $75	22.3	67.0	-2.3	-1.1
	$75 to $124	34.6	58.2	-1.9	-1.9
	$125 to $149	16.4	55.8	-2.6	+2.6
	$150 or more	26.7	54.0	-7.0	-3.0
Gender	Male	63.5	57.8	-5.0	-0.5
	Female	36.5	65.8	+2.1	-0.6

As expected, survey participants generally responded to the negative arguments with a reduction in their support for the stormwater measure when compared with levels recorded at the Interim Ballot Test. The trend over the course of the entire survey (Initial to Final Ballot Test) was also one of modestly declining support for many subgroups, averaging -4 percentage points overall. Nevertheless, among residential property owners, support for the proposed measure at the Final Ballot Test remained approximately 9 percentage points above the simple majority required for passage of a stormwater fee.

Whereas Table 6 displays change 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 21.9% of respondents who indicated that they would definitely support the measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 18.6% also indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. Approximately 2.6% moved to the probably support group, 0.3% moved to the probably oppose group, 0.0% moved to the definitely oppose group, and 0.5% 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 (Q11) Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	21.9%	18.6%	2.6%	0.3%	0.0%	0.5%
Probably support	40.2%	6.3%	27.9%	3.9%	0.0%	2.1%
Probably oppose	10.1%	0.2%	1.1%	6.1%	2.6%	0.0%
Definitely oppose	19.6%	0.0%	0.5%	1.6%	17.5%	0.0%
Not sure	8.2%	0.3%	1.2%	2.7%	0.4%	3.6%

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 respondents, 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 13% of respondents making a *fundamental*[6] shift in their opinion about the measure over the course of the interview, the net impact is that support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test (59%) was just a few percentage points different than support at the Initial Ballot Test (62%).

6. 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 used the highest proposed fee amount (Rate A) based on the preliminary engineer's analysis for the respondent's property. Respondents 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 cut by 50% (Rate C).

As shown in Figure 13, reducing the proposed fee amount for a property by 50% to Rate C resulted in just 3% of respondents switching to a *definitely* yes position. An additional 7% of respondents indicated they would *probably* support the proposal if the rate were reduced to Rate C.

Question 12 *What if the fee for your property were set at the lower amount of $<<Rate C>> per year? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

Figure 13 Final Ballot Test Rate C

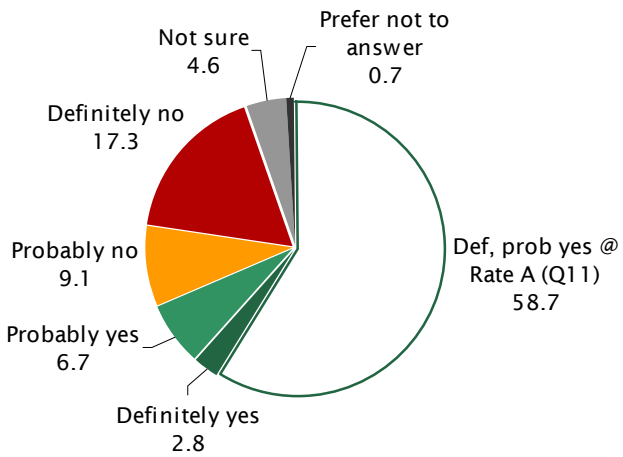


TABLE 8 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

Total Respondents	*423*
Years in Manhattan Beach (Q1)	
Less than 5	6.9
5 to 9	5.0
10 to 14	10.3
15 or more	76.1
Prefer not to answer	1.7
Proposed Rate A	
Less than $30	22.3
$30 to $49	34.6
$50 to $69	16.4
$70 or more	26.7
Lot Size Sqft	
<2,500	13.6
2,500 to 3,999	20.7
4,000 to 4,999	20.0
5,000 to 6,999	21.9
7,000 to 8,999	20.3
9,000+	3.6
Household Party Type	
Single dem	20.2
Dual dem	13.6
Single rep	11.1
Dual rep	8.0
Other	15.4
Mixed	31.8
Gender	
Male	59.4
Female	34.1
Non-binary	1.2
Prefer not to answer	5.3

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 assessors file or voter file. The profile of the residential property owner sample used for this study is shown in Table 8.

METHODOLOGY

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 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 or were unsure about the proposed fee at the Initial Ballot Test (Question 4) were asked the follow-up open-ended Question 5 regarding their reasons for not supporting the measure. The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31) identifies the skip patterns used during the survey to ensure that each respondent received the appropriate questions.

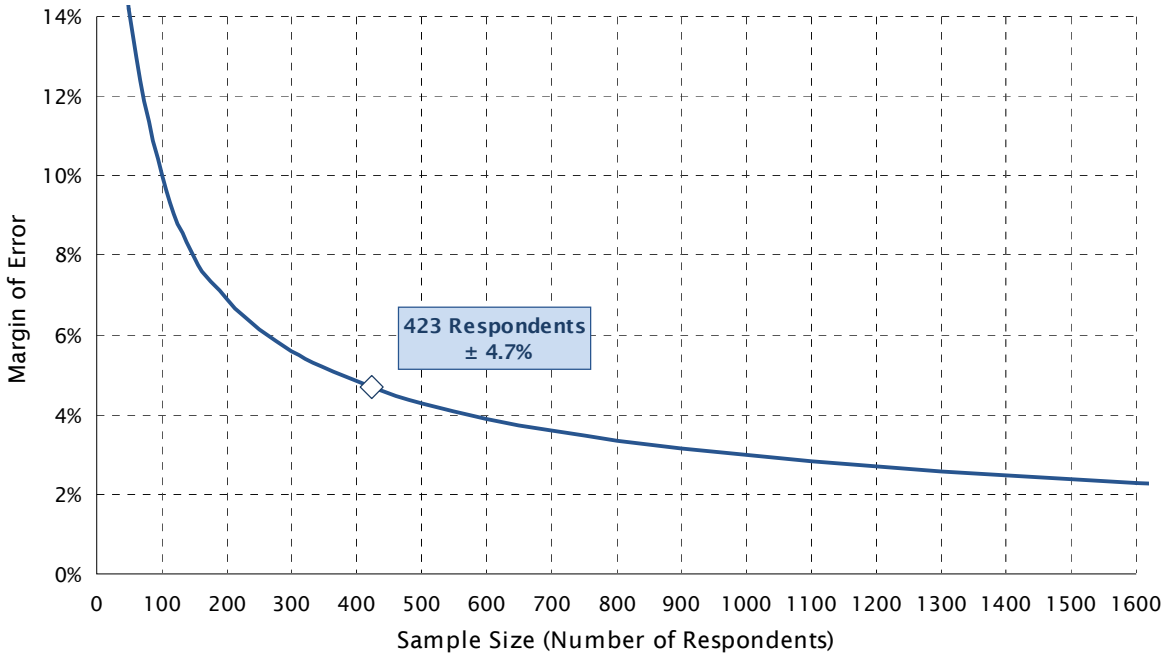
PROGRAMMING & PRE-TEST Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist interviewers when conducting telephone interviews. The CATI program automatically navigates skip patterns, randomizes the appropriate question items, and alerts 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 respondents. The integrity of the questionnaire was pre-tested internally by True North and by dialing into select households in Manhattan Beach prior to formally beginning the survey.

SAMPLE The survey was administered to a random sample of 423 residential property owners in the City who are eligible to participate in the ballot proceeding. Consistent with the profile of this universe, the sample was stratified into four property size/fee range categories to ensure that respondents represented the appropriate distribution of residential properties in the City. Individuals were then randomly selected for inclusion in the survey within their appropriate strata. This method ensures that if a property owner of a particular profile refuses to participate in the study, they are replaced by an individual who shares their same profile.

STATISTICAL MARGIN OF ERROR By using the probability-based sampling design noted above, True North ensured that the final sample was representative of residential property owners in the City of Manhattan Beach. The results of the sample can thus be used to estimate the opinions of *all* residential property owners in the city. Because not all residential property owners 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 423 property owners for a particular question and what would have been found if *all* of the estimated 12,974 residential property owners identified in the City who would receive a ballot had been surveyed for the study.

Figure 14 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 ± 4.7%.

FIGURE 14 MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR DUE TO SAMPLING



Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by subgroups such as length of residence and partisan affiliation. Figure 14 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 (email, text, and telephone) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Telephone interviews averaged 15 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.

Respondents recruited via email and text were assigned a unique passcode to ensure that only individuals who received an invitation could access the online survey site, and that each individual could complete the survey only one time. 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 423 surveys were completed between July 12 to July 22, 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 charts. Occasionally, these rounding rules lead to small discrepancies in the first decimal place when comparing tables and pie charts for a given question.

TRUE NORTH RESEARCH

City of Manhattan Beach
Storm Water Fee Survey
Final Toplines (n=423)
July 2023

Section 1: Introduction to Study
Hi, may I please speak to _____. My name is _____, and I'm calling from TNR on behalf of the City of Manhattan Beach. We're conducting a confidential survey of property owners about important issues in Manhattan Beach 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 needed:* We're an independent public opinion research firm. Your responses will be confidential and anonymous. *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: Screener for Inclusion in the Study				
SC1	Before we begin, could you please tell me whether you currently rent or own your home in Manhattan Beach?			
	1	Rent	0%	*Terminate*
	2	Own	100%	*Go to Q1*
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%	*Terminate*

Section 3: Quality of Life & City Services			
I'd like to begin by asking you a few questions about what it is like to live in the City of Manhattan Beach.			
Q1	How long have you lived in the City of Manhattan Beach?		
	1	Less than 1 year	<1%
	2	1 to 2 years	1%
	3	3 to 4 years	5%
	4	5 to 9 years	5%
	5	10 to 14 years	10%
	6	15 years or longer	76%
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%

Q2	How would you rate the overall quality of life in the City? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?		
	1	Excellent	51%
	2	Good	41%
	3	Fair	7%
	4	Poor	1%
	5	Very Poor	0%
	98	Not sure	0%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%
Q3	Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of Manhattan Beach is doing to provide city services? *Get answer, then ask:* Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?		
	1	Very satisfied	34%
	2	Somewhat satisfied	53%
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	8%
	4	Very dissatisfied	2%
	98	Not sure	3%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Section 4: Initial Ballot Test

Later this year, property owners 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

In order to:

- Install and maintain devices in storm drains that keep trash and pollution off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean
- Monitor, investigate, and prosecute illegal discharges of pollution
- Reconstruct or replace aging storm drains that are at risk for collapse or failure
- Reduce flooding in neighborhoods
- And protect public health by removing pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff that drains to the ocean

Shall property owners in Manhattan Beach be assessed an annual fee for each property that they own? The fee for your property would be approximately: **$<<Rate A>>** per year. 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	22%	*Skip to Q6*
	2	Probably yes	40%	*Skip to Q6*
	3	Probably no	10%	*Ask Q5*
	4	Definitely no	20%	*Ask Q5*
	98	Not sure	8%	*Ask Q5*
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%	*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	33%
	Need more information	19%
	Money is misspent, mismanaged	18%
	Not sure, no particular reason	17%
	Other ways to be funded	8%
	City has enough money	6%
	Unfair for property owners, others should share expense	6%
	Other higher priorities in community	4%
	Should be covered by current taxes, budget	4%
	Do not trust City, government	2%
	Measure too expensive	2%
	Mentioned past measure	2%
	Money will go to salaries, pensions	2%
	Should have a sunset, term limit	2%
	Already paying enough utilities	1%

Section 5: Fee Threshold

Only respondents with Rate A >= $10 receive this section.
All other respondents (i.e., those with Rate A < $10) skip to Q7.

Q6 The measure I just described would raise money from residential and commercial property owners in the City. However, the amount to be charged to each parcel has not been determined yet.

If you heard that the fee would be _____ per year for each property you own in Manhattan Beach, would you vote yes or no on the measure? *Get answer, then ask:* Is that definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?

Read in sequence starting with the highest amount (A), then the next highest (B), and so on. If respondent says 'definitely yes', record 'definitely yes' for all LOWER dollar amounts and go to next section.

	Ask in Order	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Probably No	Definitely No	Not Sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Rate A	22%	37%	11%	22%	8%	1%
B	Rate B (75% of Rate A)	31%	31%	11%	19%	7%	0%
C	Rate C (50% of Rate A)	44%	24%	8%	18%	5%	0%

Section 6: Projects & Programs							
Q7	The measure we've been discussing will fund a variety of storm water-related projects and services in the City. If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? *Get answer, if favor or oppose, then ask:* Would that be strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?						
	Randomize. Split Sample E1/E2	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Reconstruct or replace storm drains that are identified by engineers as being at risk for collapse or failures	62%	25%	3%	4%	3%	2%
B	Reduce flooding in neighborhoods	38%	28%	10%	11%	10%	4%
C	Install and maintain devices in storm drains that capture trash and pollution before they enter our waterways	63%	23%	1%	6%	5%	2%
D	Keep trash and pollutants off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean	63%	21%	2%	6%	5%	2%
E1	Inspect and test storm water quality on a regular basis to ensure that it meets Federal and State clean water requirements	42%	28%	8%	8%	7%	6%
E2	Inspect and test storm water quality on a regular basis to ensure that it meets clean water standards	51%	33%	2%	7%	5%	2%
F	Reduce illegal discharges of pollution into water conveyances – such as storm drains and Polliwog Park – through improved monitoring, investigation and prosecution	50%	26%	6%	8%	7%	3%
G	Educate students, residents and businesses on how they can reduce water pollution	32%	33%	11%	13%	8%	3%
H	Remove pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff	56%	25%	3%	7%	6%	2%
I	Capture, store and treat rainwater and storm water runoff to reuse for irrigation	55%	26%	5%	5%	6%	2%
J	Infiltrate storm water runoff so that it never reaches the ocean or other waterways	42%	26%	7%	9%	12%	3%

Section 7: 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 **SUPPORT** the measure?						
	Read Items A & B first, then randomize remaining items	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don' t Believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	The typical residential property owner in Manhattan Beach pays less than $20 per year to address stormwater pipes, infrastructure, and pollution. The fee was established in 1996 (more than 25 years ago) and has *never* increased.	27%	37%	22%	4%	6%	4%
B	This measure is needed to cover the **actual costs** of maintaining the stormwater system, which includes repairing and maintaining 24 miles of pipes, hundreds of catch basins, and removing trash and pollutants before they reach the ocean and local beaches.	36%	34%	16%	7%	3%	4%
C	Storm water runoff carries tons of trash, infectious bacteria and toxic pollutants directly to the ocean and local beaches. This measure is one of the best ways to protect our ocean water quality and public health.	40%	33%	16%	4%	3%	4%
D	There will be a clear system of accountability including annual independent audits to ensure that the money is spent properly.	33%	30%	20%	11%	2%	4%
E	It's our responsibility to take care of the environment and our natural resources for future generations. This measure will help improve our quality of life as well as theirs.	29%	38%	21%	5%	3%	4%
F	By law, all of the money raised by this measure must be spent locally to protect our water quality. It can't be taken away by the State or be used for other purposes.	45%	27%	13%	7%	4%	4%
G	By keeping our local beaches and waterways clean and free of pollution, this measure will help protect our quality of life in Manhattan Beach.	33%	34%	19%	6%	3%	4%
H	Most of the City's storm drainpipes were installed more than **50** years ago and are starting to fail, creating sinkholes and flooding that damage streets and private properties. This measure provides the funding needed to fix our storm drains.	47%	27%	13%	5%	3%	4%
I	It is a lot cheaper to fix a storm drain now than to pay for reconstruction, property damage and lawsuits when a pipe fails.	43%	32%	14%	5%	3%	4%

J	Every year, thousands of pounds of trash from our streets washes up on local beaches. This measure will help prevent and clean up trash and pollution before it ends up in our water and on our shorelines and beaches.	41%	30%	14%	7%	4%	4%
K	By capturing rainwater and storm water runoff to be recycled for irrigation, we can reduce the impacts of future droughts and preserve our fresh drinking water.	37%	36%	13%	7%	3%	4%

Section 8: 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 In order to:

- Install and maintain devices in storm drains that keep trash and pollution off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean
- Monitor, investigate, and prosecute illegal discharges of pollution
- Reconstruct or replace aging storm drains that are at risk for collapse or failure
- Reduce flooding in neighborhoods
- And protect public health by removing pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff that drains to the ocean

Shall property owners in Manhattan Beach be assessed an annual fee for each property that they own? The fee for your property would be approximately: **$<<Rate A>>** per year. 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	27%
2	Probably yes	33%
3	Probably no	13%
4	Definitely no	21%
98	Not sure	6%
99	Prefer not to answer	1%

Section 9: 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?

	Randomize	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	The City of Manhattan Beach receives 400 thousand dollars each year from the County to fix the storm drain system. We don't need another storm drain fee.	31%	37%	19%	3%	6%	3%

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.	23%	27%	36%	9%	2%	3%
C	Property owners are already paying too many taxes – including school bonds, parcel taxes, and local taxes. Enough is enough. We can't afford to keep raising our taxes.	37%	28%	25%	6%	1%	3%
D	This measure won't make a difference. Most of the water pollution is coming from Los Angeles and other cities.	23%	34%	27%	7%	5%	3%

Section 10: 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

In order to:

- Install and maintain devices in storm drains that keep trash and pollution off our beaches and out of local waterways and the ocean
- Monitor, investigate, and prosecute illegal discharges of pollution
- Reconstruct or replace aging storm drains that are at risk for collapse or failure
- Reduce flooding in neighborhoods
- And protect public health by removing pollutants, toxic chemicals, and infectious bacteria from runoff that drains to the ocean

Shall property owners in Manhattan Beach be assessed an annual fee for each property that they own? The fee for your property would be approximately: **$<<Rate A>>** per year. 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	25%	*Skip to closing script*
2	Probably yes	33%	*Skip to closing script*
3	Probably no	15%	*Ask Q12*
4	Definitely no	21%	*Ask Q12*
98	Not sure	5%	*Ask Q12*
99	Prefer not to answer	1%	*Skip to closing script*

Only respondents with Rate A >= $10 receive this section.
All other respondents (i.e., those with Rate A < $10) skip to end script.

Q12 What if the fee for your property were set at the lower amount of **$<<Rate C>>** per year? 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)?

	Def, prob yes @ Rate A (Q11)	59%
1	Definitely yes	3%
2	Probably yes	7%
3	Probably no	9%
4	Definitely no	17%
98	Not sure	5%
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	Male	59%
	2	Female	34%
	3	Non-binary	1%
	99	Prefer not to answer	5%
S2	Household Party Type		
	1	Single Dem	20%
	2	Dual Dem	14%
	3	Single Rep	11%
	4	Dual Rep	8%
	5	Single Other	9%
	6	Dual Other	6%
	7	Dem & Rep	8%
	8	Dem & Other	13%
	9	Rep & Other	9%
	0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	2%
S3	Proposed Rate A		
	Less than $75		22%
	$75 to $124		35%
	$125 to $149		16%
	$150 or more		27%
S4	Lot Size		
	Less than 2,500 sqft		14%
	2,500 to 3,999 sqft		21%
	4,000 to 4,999 sqft		20%
	5,000 to 6,999 sqft		22%
	7,000 to 8,999 sqft		20%
	9,000+ sqft		4%